



# Communities Creating Jobs



*Summer Newsletter 2020 – Issue 29*

- **€Billions Committed to Pandemic Relief in Ireland and Europe**
- **Grace O’Sullivan, MEP, *A European Diary***
- **Neale Richmond, TD, *Solidarity and Compromise***
- **Community Finance Ireland Re-Brands**

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**LIT & CCJ Partners in Erasmus+ Proposal**

## Editorial *A Time of Great Stress and Opportunity!*



**As Covid-19** restrictions are lifted many social enterprises of proven value are considering changes in future operational strategies. Project leader /managers are examining responses to social distancing

regulations. Projects include restarts, start-ups, consolidations, expansions, changes in services and products to deal with the implications of the “**New Normal**”.

In times of crises, social enterprise, and social entrepreneurs delight in finding solutions around employment creation, second chance education, environment, healthcare, security, technology, elimination of disadvantage while championing social and economic cohesion and innovation through intergenerational learning. Social enterprise will become the new glue through which local voluntary partnerships, collaborations, task forces are formed involving all categories of the population in solving problems and improving living standards in local communities. Social entrepreneurship empowers, facilitates, and inspires people in innovating and creating new solutions and opportunities in their own place

Much of current social enterprise infrastructure forms a strong foundation upon which to build new initiatives and services. The wealth of talent, experience and commitment in communities suggest that few social enterprises will be down for long. As in previous crises they are most often last to fail and currently will surely be first to adapt to dealing with issues in the aftermath of Covid19 and Brexit. Communities of place and interest need relevant supports from the state on time to allow them to perform in line with their needs, ambitions, and resources. The “**New Normal**” will warrant “**New Supports**” that enable projects and services recover as many are too important to their communities to be allowed to fail.

There is an abundance of resources in state, private and community sectors if identified and made accessible.

There is a mass of dormant resources available if activated that could make a significant difference. Understanding of and access to relevant supports is a key requirement for future success and in convincing thousands of voluntary leaders with responsible day jobs to engage in the socio-economic recovery of their communities during their recreation time. Many people (from 500,000 retirees and the national employee cohort) are conscious of the burden being placed on their children and grandchildren through national indebtedness. They are anxious to contribute to relieving this burden in their time.

In this context there is an urgent need for the state to appoint **AFTs, (Advisor / Facilitator /Trouble Shooter)**, in every county and city to help in this work. The role of the **AFT** is to act as advisor/consultant to voluntary, social enterprise leaders and teams in implementing local recovery/development plans. Trained **AFTs** with understanding of national and county recovery plans and resources can co-ordinate and connect the dots between community needs and opportunities and agency resources.

The current fragmented state support system is a minefield and time waster for volunteer professionals. The rigidity and eligibility criteria needs of unexpected support programmes with tight application deadlines make it impossible for many social enterprise projects to access without



full time or part time staff. If **AFT** as a ‘one stop shop’ mine of advice and information ‘partnered’ with voluntary leaders through the development of the project, productivity would double within 12 months.

On the other hand, AFTs would inform programme managers of barriers to progress and the small changes required to make a big difference to outcomes. **AFTs would act as a single permanent channel into a complex, mass of state resources from across whole of government.** AFT as co-ordinator in chief on the ground would communicate advice and information on time to project leader/manager. Continuous change in social, economic, environment will require a clear, up to date, understanding of changes in supports as it gathers pace.

*Dr. Senan Cooke is Chairman of Communities Creating Jobs, (CCJ)*

AFTs can be appointed from current **Leader Partnership/ Council** staff teams without additional costs as organisation structures and job specifications change to deal with “**New Normal**”. The presence of AFTs will draw an extraordinary response from communities attracting new volunteers, resources, ideas, solutions, investments, social and economic cohesion. Social enterprise has the capacity to impact positively on the standard of living of every person in their community in the future if properly resourced and supported.

*“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success”.*  
-Henry Ford-

## Social Enterprise Policy Objectives and Definition

### Policy Objectives


**1** Building Awareness of Social Enterprise


**2** Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise


**3** Achieving better Policy Alignment

**Department of Rural and Community Development  
New social enterprise policy launched on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019 by  
Minister Michael Ring, TD, in Speedpak, Coolock**

### Social Enterprise Definition

 A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners and shareholders

 It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.

 It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and it is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission

**For social enterprise volunteer directors, volunteers and staff, support agency staff, private sector, colleges, and civic society to know and understand**

## Merkel and Macron Propose Historic €500 Billion Recovery Fund.

**Ireland Launches €40 Million Covid-19  
Support Package.**

**SFF Announces Two Funding Initiatives  
Worth Millions and  
The *Innovate Together* Fund**

France and Germany proposed early in May an emergency plan to limit the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the European economy. **The Eurogroup** which brings together the finance ministers of the **19 member states** sharing the single currency reached a deal on a response plan worth more than **€500 billion**. The proposal, which contains bold and ambitious proposals, could be a game changer for countries like Ireland who have been badly hit economically by the ongoing crisis. Hard hit countries can tap the bailout fund for up to **€240 billion** if the money is spent on their health care systems. The agreement also provides for up to **€200 billion** in credit guarantees through the **European Investment Bank** to keep companies afloat and an added **€100 billion** to make up lost wages for workers who have been put on shorter hours. **Taoiseach Leo Varadkar warned “these are all loans and guarantees and are not grants and that borrowed money must be paid back”**. The coronavirus pandemic has been described as the biggest post-war crisis to face the **European Union’s** economy. The recovery fund will be financed by borrowing from the market in the name of the **EU** and the fund will flow to the worst hit sectors and regions in the **27-member bloc**. The proposal needs the unanimous support of **EU** members to pass. (See also **Neale Richmond’s article in this Newsletter**).

### €40 Million COVID-19 Support Package Launched in Ireland

On May 8<sup>th</sup> **Michael Ring, TD and Minister for Rural and Community Development** and **Sean Canney, TD, the Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development** announced a **€40 million** package of supports for **Community and Voluntary Organisations, Charities and Social Enterprises**. The funding package is being made available through the [Dormant Accounts Fund](#), which is specifically set aside to support initiatives which will benefit the most disadvantaged groups in society.



**Above Michael Ring, TD, Minister for Rural & Community Development and, Below, Sean Canney, TD, Minister of State With responsibility for Community Development.**



**The package consists of:**

- ❖ **A €35 million ‘COVID-19 Stability Fund’** which will provide a level of support to qualifying organisations who are most in need and have seen their trading and/or fundraising income drop significantly during the crisis.

*“A Europe of health-which has never existed-has to be our priority. We need to learn all the lessons from this pandemic”*  
**-Emmanuel Macron-**



## A €5 Million Government Commitment to a Philanthropy Fund

The **'Innovate Together' Fund** starts as a **€5 million fund** which will focus on supporting innovative responses to the **Covid-19** crisis. It is a collaboration **between Government, Philanthropists, and Social Innovations.**

Supported by a commitment of **€5 million** from the **Dept. of Rural and Community Development** through the support of the Dormant Account Fund. Social Innovation Fund pledges to raise additional significant philanthropic funds for the initiative.

The **'Innovate Together' Fund** will seek applications from projects achieving impact in enabling online education, youth mental health interventions, circular economy, improving food security, new ways of working remotely, community outreach, re-skilling the workforce and physical health including online medical and physical health innovations. They are calling for philanthropists, companies, and families to get involved to support their **#InnovateTogether Fund**. All donations to the fund will be matched by the Government of Ireland. The first round of applications closed on May 27<sup>th</sup> but there are two more rounds to follow. More details can be found at [www.socialinnovation.ie/innovate-together/](http://www.socialinnovation.ie/innovate-together/)

## SFF Announces Two Funding Initiatives for Community Organisations and Social Enterprises

- **€44 Million in additional low-cost funding from Irish banks**
- **€25 Million in Loan Guarantees from European Investment Fund.**

### The First Agreement

Under this agreement, the Irish banks, (**AIB/EBS, Bank of Ireland, Permanent TSB, and Ulster Bank**), will make available an additional **€44 million** in low cost funding to the Foundation over the period 2021 to 2025.

- **€44 Million in additional low-cost funding from Irish banks**
- **€25 Million in Loan Guarantees from European Investment Fund.**
- **The Second Agreement**
- Under this agreement, the European Investment Fund has agreed to provide

loan guarantees totalling **€25 million** to support new lending by the Foundation. The **€25 million Loan Guarantee** is being made available under the **European Union's Employment and Social Innovation Programme**, part of the **Investment Plan for Europe.**

- The European Investment Fund guarantees will cover **60%** of any loan losses and the Foundation and its partners will take the remaining **40%**. The guarantee covers loans up to a maximum of **€500K** and it valid for the first ten years of the life of the loan. Until now, some social finance loans could not be funded because of the risk involved. Now with the **EIF** guarantee agreement, the Foundation through its partners can offer social finance to a greater range of social sector organisations. This Guarantee Scheme is one of many examples of the EU's commitment to the social economy under its **Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**, programme.

[Details of the Philanthropy fund can be found here](#)

[Details of the Stability fund can be found here](#)

[Government statement can be found here](#)

## Further €15 Million Fund Announced for Town and Village Renewal

- ❖ **New measure in 2020 scheme directed at the economic and social recovery of towns and villages in response to COVID-19**
- ❖ **Town and Village renewal Scheme part of €30 million package for Rural Development announced by the Minister at the end of May 2020.**

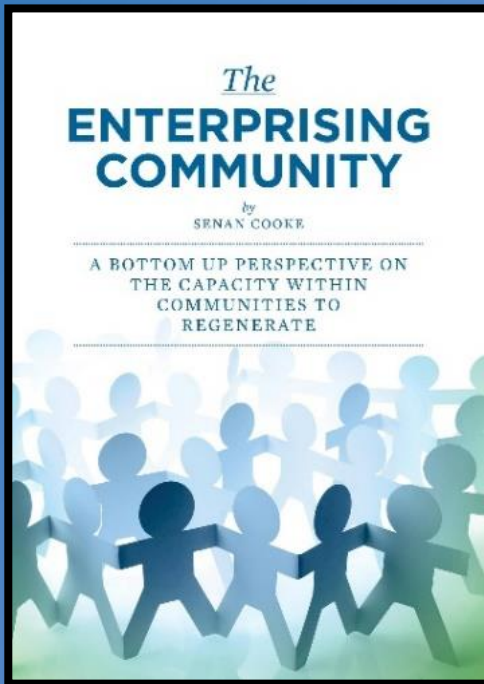
A further fund has been announced **my Mr. Michael Ring, TD and Minister for Rural and Community Development.** This fund, which is being allocated for the **Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2020**, totals **€15 million** and is one element of a **€30 million** package of integrated supports that the Minister launched beginning on May 27<sup>th</sup> last. It is also part of Mr. Ring's Department's Rural Development Investment Programme which is itself funded under **Project Ireland 2040.**

Other elements of the package are the [CLAR](#) programme launched on May 25<sup>th</sup> last, and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme also launched in late May. The Towns & Villages Renewal scheme provides funding for projects

projects aimed at supporting our rural towns and villages to be more sustainable and attractive. This year's scheme will, in particular, support projects that aid the economic and social recovery in response to **Covid-19**.

[Full Details and Ministers Speech.](#)

## *The Enterprising Community by Dr Senan Cooke*



*“I am pleased to endorse *The Enterprising Community* as a valuable reference book for bottom up community development and social enterprise. Senan Cooke’s long experience in this area makes him a highly qualified author of this roadmap, which should be of interest to community groups and social enterprises”.*

**Phil Hogan, MEP,  
Eu Commissioner for Trade**



*“This publication, that deserves to be widely read, and I am sure it will become a key reference work for scholars, students and communities throughout Ireland and beyond”*

**President Brian MacCraith,  
Dublin University**

**For students or teachers this book is invaluable to all in this field. If you would like a copy of the book please email [theccjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:theccjoffice@gmail.com)  
Or call Malcolm on 089 2529885**

## Grace O’Sullivan, MEP European Diary

**Communities Creating Jobs, (CCJ)**. The name says it all, with its laudable aims that get to the heart of being human and getting by in a way that benefits those amongst whom we live and socialise. It is a concept that is particularly relevant and highlighted in these strange and sad times.

The motto of CCJ - *There is no limit to what can be achieved by a Community working together* – **Níl neart ach cur le chéile**, has possibly never been truer. All around us over recent weeks, we have seen examples of community spirit at its finest. The camaraderie and sense of working together for the safety and good of all, has been moving and impressive.

Now, as we look towards the future and edge forward, with hope in our hearts, towards a time when we will be out the other side of this crippling pandemic, social enterprise and a business and job-creating model with an ethos that aims to create positive societal and environmental change, is one that I hope will gain even more traction.

*“Social enterprise and a business and job-creating model with an ethos that aims to create positive societal and environmental change, is one that I hope will gain even more traction”.*

I have been involved in various social enterprise projects for many years, and have experienced, first-hand, the wide benefits that can accrue. From my post-graduate studies at **Waterford IT** in ***Business, Innovation and Enterprise***, to my involvement in the start-up of **T-Bay Surf Club in Tramore** and the **Brian Ború River Tours Enterprises**, the notion of a type of business which has sustainable job creation, the betterment of society and promotion of good environmental principles at its core, is a concept very close to my heart.



*Grace O’Sullivan, MEP for Ireland South.  
A member of the Green Party in Ireland,  
Grace is also part of the  
European Green Party*



*Brian Boru River Tours Enterprises,  
(above) and T-Bay Surf Club in Tramore*





I felt great pleasure and pride when I brought fellow members of the **Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government** down to the **Dunhill Enterprise Park, (below)** to meet the team behind **CCJ**. That **CCJ's HQ** happens to be on my doorstep, was the icing on the cake of course!

**Dunhill, Fenor** and the surrounding area are a shining example of community and social enterprise, debunking the myth that enterprise



needs to be located in heavily populated areas. Ask anyone from the area and they will tell you, a model that brings sustainable jobs into the community is a win win on every front.

That **CCJ** is now a national organisation supported by countless third level institutions around the country as well as other fine community-focussed organisations like the **GAA**, is not surprising.

My work in the **European Parliament** exposes me to big ideas and big, international concepts and movements. To me though, it all has to come down to humanity, to the roof over your head and the food on your table. We can talk in ideologies and philosophies and global this or that. But at the end of the day it has to come back to a much more down to earth starting point. **COVID-19**, with the limited movement it, by necessity, inflicted on all of us, made that very clear.

It was a real pleasure to welcome some of the **CCJ** team to the **European Parliament in Brussels** earlier this year before travel restrictions were imposed. Their work is of international importance and exemplified by fine examples under the **CCJ** banner such as [Connemara West](#), the success story of a 1971- founded social

enterprise led by social entrepreneurs, long before those terms became popular.

Seeing how the **EU Anti-Poverty Programme, a Community Resource and Education Project**, played a role in supporting the production of a community information directory, the hosting of a *Wood Sculpture Symposium*, the drawing up of development plans for the area, and the establishment of [Connemara Community Radio](#) is the sort of example of top-down benefit that I hope to see replicated, and that I hope to encourage, enable and support, over the term of my time in **Brussels**.

I congratulate and applaud all those involved in this nationwide network. I look forward to hearing continued updates on the wonderful work you do. I hope that you stay safe and well as we inch out of the past few desperate months, and that you will continue to strive and work to create local, sustainable employment and social enterprises that have, as their key focus, a commitment to achieving social objectives, as opposed to maximising profits.

***“To me though, it all has to come down to humanity, to the roof over your head and the food on your table”.***

**Grace O’Sullivan has been an MEP from Ireland for the South constituency since July 2019. She is a member of the Green Party. She previously served as a Senator for the Agricultural Panel from 2016 – 2019. Grace is from Tramore in County Waterford and studied at the Waterford Institute of Technology**

**[For more on Grace O’Sullivan, MEP: Click Here](#)**

**Millennium Family Resource Centre,  
Glengoole, Co. Tipperary  
Twenty Years Serving Four Rural Parishes**



The Millennium Family Resource Centre, (pictured above), came into being as a project under the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs CDSP Programme. The service is in existence since 2000 and we moved into our current premises in 2003. The service has been managed by **Clare Cashman** since its inception. The service is based in a rural area serving four parishes in the beautiful Slieveardagh area. The main villages in the area are **Glengoole**, (where we are based), **Killenaule**, **Ballingarry**, **The Commons** and **Gortnahoe**. The area is steeped in history with monastic sites such as **Derrynaflan** and **Kilcooley** nearby and the famous **War House** in **The Commons** which was the scene of the principal action of the *Young Irelanders in the 1848 Rebellion*.

The area is mainly agricultural, and we are close to the heart of the horse breeding industry in **Fethard**. The main work in the area was in the **Ballingarry** coal mines and the nearby **Littleton Bord na Móna** briquette factory and bog. Both of those are now gone, with many people commuting to work in the nearby towns of **Thurles**, **Cashel**, **Clonmel** and **Kilkenny**.

The centre has developed and grown since it was purchased in 2002 with the addition of a childcare unit, a fully equipped commercial kitchen and rooms for meetings, training, and counselling. The

services we offer have also evolved over the years according to the needs of the community. At present we offer a preschool childcare service, summer camps, play therapy, affordable

counselling for young adults and family support services. **Julie O'Halloran**, our assistant manager, and community development worker looks after all the family support services, play therapy and counselling referrals. **Fiona McMonagle** manages the childcare service which includes the

pre-school, summer camps and homework club. **Mary Slattery** is our administrator who looks after all the payroll, finances, reports to funding bodies and administration associated with those as well as the day to day running of the office.



We also have a **Men's Shed** group on site who meet weekly and we have a day service with the **Brothers of Charity Services** which supports people with intellectual disability in the area. We have a great mix of the community on site.

We receive funding from **Tusla**, **CSP through Pobal**, and the **HSE**. We also receive funding and support through **South Tipperary Leader Company** and the **ETB**.

**The ElderCare Services** is another part of the service that has evolved from a small start with a group of local elderly people coming in for lunch one day a week to a **Meals on Wheels** delivery

running four days per week. We received funding in 2018 through the **Community Services Programme (CSP)** to employ a manager and two full time equivalent (**FTE**) staff to develop and expand the service. So, we now have me, **Mary MacMahon**, as Coordinator of the Eldercare Services and four part-time staff – **Sharon Walsh, Margaret Doyle, Bernadette Dunne and Rodger Sweeney**. We also have **Michael Power** as a **CE** worker in the kitchen, (*below*). We are very lucky to have two volunteers who been coming to us one day a week for several years to work in the kitchen, **Enid and Breda**. We continue to offer the one-day service where people



use the **Local Link Bus** or their own transport to come in for lunch and usually musical entertainment. We have some talented singers and musicians in our group and we also have the support of some local musicians who volunteer with us. We have summer outings and a **Christmas party, (above right)**, every year, along with other community fundraising events such as **Daffodil Day**.

The Meals on Wheels as social enterprise is growing and has come into its own during the current **Covid-19 Pandemic**. Up to the start of the Covid emergency we were delivering meals in the locality four days per week as well as our Wednesday service which has now been closed. We are now offering our **Meals on Wheels** two days a week in order to minimize contact for both staff and customers. We have also started to supply meals for our neighbouring community group, **Littleton Development Association**, during the crisis and we are hoping it will be a continuing partnership. While our income is reduced considerably due to the closure of the centre we are happy to be in a position to continue to support our customers during this difficult period. We are looking forward to the day we can welcome our

**Senior Social Club** back to the premises for chats, singing and dancing.

While we are meeting most of our customers on deliveries and connecting with them on the phone, they are all longing to come back to visit us and have normal encounters without the worry of the virus.

Another recent development in our social enterprise was a **community laundry, (bottom right)**, again set up with the idea of supporting not only the elderly in the area but anyone else who may need support such as carers, people recuperating from illness or anyone in need in the community. The laundry business was building slowly but has now slowed down considerably and we hope to revive it once we are at the other side of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As I write this piece about our wonderful service, I am alone in the building and listening to the beautiful birdsong outside my window, children playing across the road and lambs in the field next to us. Usually the sounds are in the background



drowned out by the chat and singing of our Senior Social Club, lots of staff running around the centre, our Men's Shed busy upcycling down the bottom of the garden, phones ringing, children in and out of the preschool and lots of people coming and going. *Will we ever see a day like that again???*



Neale Richmond, TD.  
*Solidarity and Compromise*

We are living in an unprecedented time, the **Covid-19** pandemic has swept through the world, upending our lives as we knew them. With over **1,000,000 cases in Europe** and over half of European Union Member States declaring a **State of Emergency**. The impact this crisis will have is still unknown, both in terms of what our new **'normal'** will be, and its economic impact. This virus knows no borders and does not discriminate; with every **EU Member State** prohibiting public gatherings, closing schools, and limiting travel, the ramifications are huge. As we face an unfamiliar future, our **EU** membership is more valuable than ever.

The **EU** has a key role in our weathering this storm. This crisis has been described as the **worst since World War II**, and as the saying goes, *extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures*. While major steps have been taken, there is still room for the brave and bold action the situation warrants. Regrettably, when this crisis first hit Europe, many countries were caught off-guard and acted selfishly rather than in the spirit of cooperation. This behaviour was of course not admirable, thankfully though it was short-lived.

**Ireland** has been keenly involved in the **EU's** Covid-19 response. From meetings of the **European Council** attended by the **Taoiseach**, to information sharing and status updates by **Simon Harris and Paschal Donohoe** attending marathon sessions of the **Euro Group** to negotiate financial supports. Though there has not been agreement at every stage, Ireland has banked goodwill from the **EU** over the years and this will stand to us.

The sharing of resources, information and people will always be the **EU** at its best. When we look closer, we can see the tangible impact of European solidarity. When the situation in Italy was at its worst, **France** donated **one million face masks**; **Germany** delivered **7 tonnes of medical equipment**; Germany, Luxembourg and Austria treated critically ill patients from France and Italy. **50,000 citizens were repatriated** through joint efforts on 230 flights; Ireland alone brought home **citizens from 17 countries**. A medical equipment stockpile was established so States can access

intensive care equipment, masks, laboratory supplies and vaccines with the **EU covering 90% of the cost**. With scarce supplies of **PPE**, stockpiles such as this are crucial.



With so much still unknown about this virus, supporting research is crucial. The **EU** has granted **€80 million to CureVac** to support their vaccine research, with a further **€48.5 million** pledged to projects studying the behaviour of the virus. At home, the **Irish Government** have pledged an additional **€5 million to 26 projects** researching the virus.

There has been much criticism regarding the **EU's €540 billion** financial rescue package and the many hours of debate that led to the agreement. These debates may be tedious, but they are vital to ensure that every Member State's position is heard. Under this agreement, **€240 billion** is available for health spending, **€25 billion** leveraged up to **€200 billion** is available for the corporate sector, and a further **€100 billion** is available for companies to retain their workers. Different countries, including Ireland, had strong opinions over this fund. Ireland was of the belief that coronabonds should have been included. **Coronabonds** would have allowed for the pooling of borrowing, and thus risk, to protect those worst hits by the crisis and would certainly have been a bold statement of solidarity as we face into a new unknown. However, agreements such as this do not happen without debate, and such debate should not be viewed as a sign of diminishing solidarity, but as an example of the importance of scrutiny, dialogue, and conversation. Negotiations on a trillion-euro recovery fund are ongoing, though the details are largely unknown.

**The lifting of restrictions** is the next issue Member States are facing. The EU has provided a roadmap towards the lifting of containment measures and called for coordination, providing criteria states should reach before relaxing restrictions. As **Ireland** looks towards the next phase of our response, guidelines such as this are crucial.

Coupled with EU policies, Ireland has its own supports for workers and businesses. The **Pandemic Unemployment Payment**, paid to over **600,000 workers**, supports those who have lost their income. **The Wage Subsidy Scheme** refunds employers of **up to 85% of wages** and supports over **50,400 businesses**. Small businesses that have seen a decline in turnover can avail of loans of **up to €50,000**. Vouchers of **€2,500, (see page 22)**, are available for small companies to employ consultants to form strategies of surviving this crisis. There are multitudes of supports available which, coupled with workers' supports, are seeing Irish workers and businesses through this crisis.

The beauty of the **EU** is that each Member State has a unique history and approach to governing. European solidarity does always not require unanimous agreement. Compromise and understanding are at the centre of these discussions, and at the centre of Europe. Healthy debate is important in any democracy; allowing us to develop our arguments and better understand those of others. It is vital to every democracy, and the EU is no different.

## Why the EU's €540 Billion Rescue Package is Important to Ireland

This crisis will have long lasting effects on the world. It is like nothing we have seen in our lifetime. As we face into the next phase, it is worth recalling the advice of the **WHO** that *in a pandemic, perfection is the enemy of the good*. Coordination and negotiations may not be perfect, but that should not stop us as we move forward. We are stronger together and this situation is no different. Uncomfortable discussions and bold action are what will see us through.

*“With the backdrop of the ongoing Brexit discussions, now is an ideal time for us to plan Ireland’s future at the heart of Europe”*  
-Neale Richmond, Seanad Eireann on Europe Day 2017-

We can appreciate the supports in place while calling for bolder action, just as we can still reach agreement through debate. Compromise and debate are in the nature of the EU, in good times and bad, and will help us weather this storm.

**Neale Richmond** was elected as a TD for Dublin Rathdown in the Recent General Election. He was previously elected to Seanad Eireann in April 2016.

[More information on Neale Richmond, TD can be found here.](#)

**We are inviting our readers, project teams and organisations to submit articles with photos that inform our network on any aspect of social enterprise development. Any job creation project or voluntary community development that would be helpful to others.**  
**CCJ is a shared learning network dedicated to helping fellow organisations and projects realise their ambitions and objectives. Any information, idea, solution, contact of interest and value should be shared within our network. Many thanks.**

Please think about it and contact Malcolm at [theccjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:theccjoffice@gmail.com)



## Community Finance Ireland is Re-Branding

**We are Open for Business Right Across  
Munster, Leinster, Connaught, Ulster, and  
Northern Ireland**



Our community is now adjusting to the new norm. Social capital has never been more obvious. Daily we witness the response of our community and community services in supporting the challenges faced by COVID-19

The crisis has helped amplify what we already knew – that a vibrant economy relies on the health of its volunteers and investment into **The Third Sector** – right across our island.

Our business continues to do all it can for the sector. We recognise that our **all-island client portfolio** gives us a very unique position in helping to understand the needs and collaborative spirit that exists within it. Here is some good news for you:

- ❖ **Loans in Excess of €4 Million have already been approved in 2020**, supporting community organisations to acquire new premises and equipment, restructure current debt, and bridge financial gaps caused by delayed grants and other postponed income.
- ❖ **Access to Capital at a Time When it is Really Needed.** This month our wholesale lenders announced an additional **€44 million** for us to onward lend to groups, together with **€25 million** in loan guarantees from the **European Investment Bank**. These measures confirm access to capital for the community and social enterprise market for at least another five years. It is very good news and we are on hand to help groups who want to avail of it.
- ❖ **All-Island has Never Been More Important.** Our business operates right

across the island of Ireland. “In This Together” is indeed how we see it. Our client portfolio reaches from **Kerry to Armagh** and from **Dublin to Mayo**. This unique position sees us **re-brand on July 2<sup>nd</sup>** to an all island brand.

- **One that welcomes every change-maker on the island.**
- **One that welcomes dreamers.**
- **One that wants to ensure social impact is felt not just dreamt.**

**Our new website**

[www.communityfinanceireland.com](http://www.communityfinanceireland.com) will be live on **July 2nd**. A new online loan facility is here. Our new **Podcast Series** is here. **Our client stories** are here. **Our team** are here.

Visit to hear or watch some of the clients we have supported, keep in touch with the latest news on what we are doing for the sector and the collaborations, we are undertaking with industry stakeholders on your behalf.

You can also join our network, learn about the most frequently asked questions from clients, or simply request a call back with a local executive.



**We Speak Finance but We Hear People**

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## The Struggling Entrepreneur and Social Enterprise Student

*First-hand Experience of Social Enterprise; Struggles, Hardships and Victories.*

A letter from **John Deely** here in **Galway**, a family man and struggling retail entrepreneur by trade, studying **Social Enterprise Development in Ireland**, and proud committee member of the vibrant not for profit business community group, [The Galway Latin Quarter](#). (Pictured Below).

I propose that **Social Enterprise** is in fact the 3rd sector, and just may indeed be the solution or at least the seed of the solution the world is looking for. Social enterprise is the way to go deep into the heart of each and every community, and figure out,

and bring them to life, ultimately for the good and benefit of society. In every case they have identified a need and are devising a solution. The necessary deep local knowledge and understanding to see and understand this can only come from within, combined with a passion and a drive to solve it.

My point is that many of these people are **social entrepreneurs**, trying desperately to create social enterprises, without even knowing or realizing it. These individuals and groups need to be supported, with guidance, training, facilitation, and access to funding opportunities. These early stage challenges are more often than not, simply too great to be overcome, and as a result, thousands of good proposals never come to fruition.

What I am suggesting is that, now, more than ever, social enterprise, *'business as force for good'* needs to be brought into the spotlight as a matter of urgency. **President Michael D. Higgins** said in his



as a collective, what resources we have, what the needs are, and what the steps are in between to get everyone moving in the right direction. It will require communication, and storytelling to create a shared understanding and a shared vision. Working together, collaborating, sharing learning, knowledge and understanding will help each other to grow.

One thing that I have discovered without any question, is there are lots of great people out there in communities trying to do worthwhile projects

recent interview on the **Late Late Show** with **Ryan Tubridy**, *that we need a new model, that there must be a better way other than sole relentless pursuit of shareholder value and profit.*


That said, developing the commercialization strategy aspect of the social enterprise is also key, if long term sustainable revenue streams are to be developed and grown. We know from speaking with the top tier of role model social enterprises in **Ireland** that the funding challenge remains as the

enterprise grows through the stages and in turn, it can outgrow the available sectoral support here in **Ireland**. Therefore, we must work together to grow the sector here in **Ireland** and leverage our global network to get the support in place to provide access to matched funding and shared funding as enterprises grow and mature.

When I began five years ago to develop the [Vault 'Youth Factory' Concept](#) to develop a physical space for **Galway** that linked all the creative community with the artists and innovators, in a hybrid space suitably adaptable for a myriad of events. I was unaware of the term *social enterprise*. We soon realized that the social challenges we were experiencing in our community, existed in every community bar none, throughout the country and in fact worldwide. The project organically evolved to become a network of creative enterprising communities addressing the current challenges in the island of **Ireland** brought about by **globalization, disconnection, mental health, equality of opportunity, the rapid pace of advancing technology leaving many behind, contributing to generational disconnect with our communities**. There is not a community in the country that is not touched by these same set of challenges. We must work together, build a strong connected network, creating opportunities for human connection and interaction. We must double down on the synergies brought about by collaboration. Stronger together, we can learn from each other and support each other, and shorten the early stage journeys. Perhaps most importantly, we can become a stronger voice together, representing the sector, building awareness and understanding; all this is provided we can do it through modern storytelling and communication techniques, ultimately influencing policy to funnel increased and much needed resources into the sector. The contribution value of the social enterprise community in Ireland cannot be undervalued any longer. One thing **Covid -19** has shown us is the importance of and value of community.

There has already been significant research and policy recommendations put forward. The establishment of a **National Community Regeneration Unit** as recommended in **Senan Cooke's** book, *'The Enterprising Community'* is a priority. How best to create a network of

enterprising communities, micro-economies countrywide? It is simple. Every single community in Ireland, has underutilized buildings and local talent. Let us as a sector go after that huge prize to be won in terms of future prosperity. There is only one way this can be done, by connecting the youngest generations in a community to the oldest generations in that community, and by tapping into the **heritage and DNA** of that community.



**David McWilliams**  
highlighted the  
importance of the creative  
sector in his 2016 article  
["The Rise of the Creative  
Class"](#).

Ireland like any good brand can only look forward as far as it can look back, and we can look way way back. The key to the future, therefore, lies in our past. Where we have come from, **our heritage and history** and **our communities** make up **our brand DNA**. This is our unique positioning within the globalized world. No one else can put our solution forward for us or tell our Islands story for us. This is our story; *where we have come from, what we stand for in 2020, and where we want to go together*. We are not following a route set out by others, we must carve our own path, as citizens of **Europe**, as citizens of the world, and as a **unified Ireland**, innovating at the leading edge, and certainly modelling on and taking inspiration from the best in the world. We must use the latest technological tools to build in opportunities for human connection and collaboration.

**The Social Entrepreneurs Ireland RTE series ['Changing Ireland-My Big Idea'](#) is a good starting point along with the Social Entrepreneurs Podcast, more of these, more initiatives such as these are needed, more documentaries, film and media productions highlighting the sector. It is time to get connected and join the dots between all individuals, organisations, groups and agencies**



working together toward a shared vision for Ireland. Responsible sustainable communities are possible if we work together. (Artists impression of *The Vault* pictured below)



If you would like to get in touch with John with your comments or ideas for future articles feel free to email him at [johnngdeely@gmail.com](mailto:johnngdeely@gmail.com)

### Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark Receives Further Approval

The Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark has received approval from UNESCO to continue in operation as a UNESCO Global Geopark for a further four years. This follows an evaluation process in summer 2019 during which two appointed evaluators from Portugal and China assessed the Copper Coast's progress.

The evaluators looked at how the Copper Coast Geopark and its cooperating stakeholders were engaging the community with its heritage, tourism,

and the local community. Following their visit, the evaluators wrote a report to UNESCO which recommended the Copper Coast continue as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This revalidation is part



Copper Coast UNESCO Geopark Visitors Centre

of the process of maintaining the status of a UNESCO Global Geopark which operates by a system of continuous improvement and is assessed every four years.

The Copper Coast Geopark is extremely grateful for the warm reception given to the evaluators by local businesses and individuals as well as to Waterford City and County Council and the Geological Survey of Ireland for their backing.

Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark Visitor is now unfortunately closed due to the ongoing situation, but the organisation is developing further online resources for self-guided and virtual tours of the Park.

[They can be accessed here on their website](#)

## LIT and CCJ Partner in Erasmus+ Proposal

**Erasmus+** is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Its budget of **€14.7 billion between 2015 and 2020**, has provided opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, and gain experience abroad.

The aim of **Erasmus+** is to contribute to the **Europe 2020 strategy** for growth, jobs, social equity, and inclusion, as well as the aims of the **EU's strategic framework** for education and training.

**Erasmus+** also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education and contribute to achieving the objectives of the [EU Youth Strategy](#).

**Specific issues tackled by the programme include:**

- **Reducing unemployment, especially among young people**
- **Promoting adult learning, especially for new skills and skills required by the labour market.**
- **Encouraging young people to take part in European democracy**
- **Supporting innovation, co-operation, and reform**
- **Reducing early school leaving**
- **Promoting cooperation and mobility with the EU's partner countries**

The Erasmus + programme is operated in Ireland by [Léargas](#) which is a not-for-profit organisation, wholly owned by the [Department of Education and Skills](#).

**Léargas** manage international and national exchange programmes in education, youth and community work, and vocational education and training. These exchanges connect people in different communities and countries and bring an international dimension to the work of organisations across Ireland.

[LIT](#), (**Limerick Institute of Technology**), has been very active in using the opportunities provided by **Erasmus +** and its predecessor programmes. A lot of this activity is co-ordinated by the **LIT Development Unit** based in Thurles

## Partners into the Future



*"A great opportunity for Communities Creating Jobs. It will enable the organisation to learn from peer organisations throughout Europe"*



Ciaran Lynch (Left) and Seamus Goggin, (Right).

and lead by **Séamus Hoyne**, the Institute's Head of Development.

LIT and CCJ, ([Communities Creating Jobs](#)), have a long history, with the Institute being one of the first Institutes of Technology to provide support to CCJ and to engage actively with the new organisation.

LIT and CCJ are now partnering in an application for Erasmus+ funding, together with five other partners from the **UK, Romania, Germany, and Bulgaria**. The partners are **Limerick Institute Of Technology, Ireland the project coordinators, Burgaski Svoboden Universität of Bulgaria, Fundatia Alaturi de Voi Romania of Romania, Social Enterprise Development Limited of the United Kingdom, Dee Valley Trust of the United Kingdom, ACEEU GmbH of Germany and Communities Creating Jobs**

The proposal, which is being led by **Dr. Shane O'Sullivan** of the [Department of Applied Social Sciences in LIT](#) and who is primarily responsible for its preparation, is called **ComEnt**. The proposal posits that as one response to the significant economic challenges facing Europe due to **COVID-19**, the strengthening of the social economy can have particular benefits for marginalised communities of both interest and place which are more likely to suffer socially and economically.

This transnational proposal operating across Ireland, Germany, Romania, and Bulgaria will identify innovative models of community enterprise development and associated case studies with this information being shared with community development workers and associates.

The primary target groups of this proposal include community development workers; enterprise development workers; and social entrepreneurs or innovators who are actively involved in facilitating the establishment of community enterprises.

*"The strengthening of the social economy can have particular benefits for marginalised communities which are more likely to suffer socially and economically".*

This is a great opportunity for Communities Creating Jobs who will be primarily represented by Board members **Seamus Goggin**, and **Ciaran Lynch**. It will enable the organisation both to use the experience which it has gained through its engagement with various communities throughout the country and to learn from peer organisations throughout Europe.

If approved, the project will commence in October 2020 and last for two years.

**Watch this space!!**

## 10 Ways to Support Local Businesses During Covid-19

1. **Shop Remotely: Shop Online:** Online purchases are a great way to support local without leaving home.
2. **Order Takeout or Delivery:** Most restaurants have curb side pick-up or deliver. Order local.
3. **Gift Cards:** For businesses unable to remain open, purchase vouchers for post Covid support.
4. **Order Ahead:** Place your order prior to arriving. This shortens your exposure time and lessens risks to others
5. **Buy Local:** Buy local and support small business owners, the people who live in your neighbourhood and know your name.
6. **Stay Home:** If you are feeling at all ill, a cough sore throat, runny nose, these are all

Signs. You will be helping our businesses by ensuring they stay healthy.

7. **Avoid Paying with Cash:** A simple way to limit the risk of exposure to others is to use credit or debit cards. Contactless cards get you in and out quickly.

8. **Write Good Reviews:** Try to write three positive reviews of your favourite business each week.

9. **Utilize Social Media:** Follow, like, share, comment and spread the news of your local businesses to all your friends and followers. Did you get great food or fantastic customer service to your door? Give these businesses a shout out.

10. **Be Understanding:** These are unprecedented times and even with the lock down easing some businesses will still be closed and struggling. Reach out to business owners and employees to ask how they are doing.

## EU Day Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### Social Enterprise at the heart of European Solidarity and Cohesion

In **May 2019** Rural Ireland's participation in **Europe since 1973** was celebrated with a **Citizens Dialogue** event in **Dunhill Ecopark** organised by EU Direct from **Waterford's Central Library** supported by **EU Commission Office staff in Dublin**. The crucial role of social enterprise in engaging, empowering, and challenging the inventiveness of people in their local communities was addressed on the evening. Local leaders know the needs of their communities and the best solutions.

The EU dialogue was a very successful event with close on 200 people attending the evening session which started at 6.30 p.m. The dialogue was held in the EcoPark yard on a glorious if not so warm early summer's evening. Food and refreshments were served from the **Education Centre**. Local voluntary organisations and clubs displayed samples of their activities in two large rooms and outside on tables in the yard. An open fronted tent with platform and microphones facilitated the speakers who presented on relevant topics relating to rural Ireland in a European context.

Speakers included Gerry Kiely EU Commission Office Dublin, Patrick Kleyn, EU Commission, Brussels, Brendan Whelan CEO of SFF and Chair of Social Enterprise Task Force and Janet O Toole Manager of Connemara West a very progressive social enterprise company in West Galway.

In 2020 a second Citizens Dialogue was organised for this month, May, in St Patrick's Gateway in Waterford City. It had to be postponed due to COVID19 restrictions. It will be held on a future date when safe to do so.

#### **Surprised and Delighted.**

The organisers of the 2019 event were pleasantly surprised at the attendance and interest in EU affairs. It was held at a time when **Brexit** was being hotly debated on the airwaves. Loud explanations were being put forward by a divided UK as to why it decided to leave and were being rebutted by **Remainers**. Northern Ireland and Scotland had voted to remain but in the main Unionists voted to leave, adding complexity to the UK's overall decision to leave. Many Irish people were and are utterly convinced that membership



Europe Day Dunhill 2019 (Pictured Above)



Dr. Senan Cooke (Left)  
Brendan Whelan (Right)



Gerry Kiely (above)  
Janet O'Toole (right)



of the EU has transformed Irish economy and society for the better.

### **Communications Through Engagement with Communities**

A secondary issue of concern raised was growing instability of political systems across EU states, UK, Ireland North and South and worldwide. If the **EU Commission** wants to strengthen its unity of purpose mandate it has serious work on its hands. Communities are where the people live (**voters**). A primary vehicle through which relevant information can be disseminated is through social enterprise projects in which all types of people are involved in all sorts of ways. Social enterprise projects involve elderly and youth, women, and men, employed and unemployed, native, and migrant, abled and those with disabilities. The promote intergenerational learning, between people with shared responsibilities and interests, where problems can be avoided or dealt with at source, where social and economic cohesion is possible within socio-economic eco-systems, where volunteers want to and can improve their communities and living standards.

The EU commission needs to develop a local community communications policy and implement it. The EU supports so many developments on the ground including social, economic, environment, heritage, education, health, security, disadvantage, and quality of life issues but it is seldom the dots are connected. A new communications approach is needed by government and EU over next 5/10 years to highlight the benefits of EU membership. EU citizen dialogue events are a start.

### **Brexit and European Union**

There is growing concern with the concept of the big state and its distance from the everyday lives of its citizens. This is a national and EU issue. In the ongoing debate on Brexit the positive role of EU membership and solidarity received a lot of attention and the following issues were highlighted:

- **Preservation of world peace**
- **Respect for democratic politics**
- **Growth in economic prosperity**
- **Management of climate change,**
- **Coordination of international security**

- **Free travel and employment within EU**
- **Progress through enabling directives, funding investments and supports**
- **Commitment to human rights and equality of opportunity for all citizens**
- **Cultural diversity, respect, and recognition among nation states for each other's traditions and cultural richness**

A contrary list of negative issues was highlighted by Leavers.



### **COVID19 and European Union.**

With the arrival of COVID19 many of the deepest concerns expressed on Brexit were more pronounced. COVID19, is a global disease that has challenged the health systems of so many countries. It is an unwelcome example of why the EU is so important to Ireland both South and North. In this time of great crisis EU membership became a sanctuary of sorts. We are no longer on her own but a member of an EU27 group who are committed to help us deal with the problems and recover socially and economically in the future. Research for a cure, a vaccine, anti-viral drug, sharing of resources, learning from each other, underpinning of our economy with EU loans and grants and ongoing access to EU markets provides us with a chance to recover and avoid the most disastrous consequences.

Can anyone imagine what it would be like if we were not a member of the European Union and Ireland was even more dependent on the UK and its economy. Would the Good Friday agreement

have ever been signed with EU and US acting as guarantors of an international agreement? Would we be as prosperous and as socially progressive if outside the EU over the past 47 years of membership? It isn't obvious how we could have developed our current level of prosperity and social cohesion without the massive support, financial, research, travel, knowledge exchange, open market access to 500 million consumers and the benefits of progressive legislation from EU.

### **Emigration as Release Valve**

The old Irish solution to economic crises and recessions invariably included free and open access to global emigration. That solution is now no longer so freely available outside the EU. Irish people are renowned for their creativity, adaptability, and hard work. They have over the centuries proven very successful in every country in the world in which they choose to settle. Post COVID 19, Irish society and economy will recover in time. It will recover with the help of a young educated population, a 70 million diaspora capable of opening direct links with every country worldwide.

### **A Europe- For the People- By the People!**

A major resource is membership of EU and engagement with its power, resources, imagination, innovation, and economic and cultural resilience. The EU provides Ireland with many supports and opportunities which will enable it to carve out a New Ireland, a Better Ireland, a More Socially Cohesive and Prosperous Ireland. Without EU membership it is hard to see how we could recover without suffering excessive hardships such as a 19<sup>th</sup> century famine like experience. It is certain EU membership will be key to future progress over next five to ten years. It needs though to be explained better to *'communities'* of people and interest through more dedicated country strategies.

It needs to be communicated through regeneration and transformation projects in which people are engaged and are empowered to develop the projects, own the projects, and sustain the projects over the long term for the benefit of their communities. Europe needs to become a partner, a friend to every small community in Ireland over the next five years. It can all be done through social enterprise initiatives and support programmes.



**1 Set EU Countries  
27 Country Flags**

*"The European family may well be anything but perfect. But it is the best thing we have for bringing the countries of Europe around the same table and for forging compromises so that people can live in peace, freedom and prosperity"*

**Jean-Claude Juncker President of the European Union 2014-2019.**



**We would like to thank all of you, our readers, and contributors for helping us keep this Newsletter relevant and up to date. If you have any comments or general feedback on what you would like us to include, or if you have any articles you would like to contribute please email:**

**[theccjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:theccjoffice@gmail.com) or  
call Malcolm on 089 252 9885  
Click the link below for our website**



**Communities  
Creating Jobs**

## Enterprise Hubs to open Doors to Multinationals

From the Sunday Independent – Sunday Business – May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

By Ferghal O'Connor

**Enterprises Centres** could open their doors to remote workers from Multi-national firms to give them access to key facilities. The plan would allow the country's enterprise hubs **replace SME tenants** that are going out of business due to the pandemic.



**Business Minister Heather Humphreys**, (pictured left), has given her backing to the plan which would bring new business to more than 200 State-backed enterprise hubs throughout the country.

*“There are potentially 10,000 spaces available in the nation's enterprise centres and remote working hubs”* said Gary O'Meara, (pictured below), Chairman of the National Association of Community Enterprise Centres (NACEC) which is leading the plan.



meeting rooms and Wi-Fi. Many people are now finding that work at home comes with big limitations so this could be a very welcome opportunity for many companies and their workers. It is a win-win for everyone.

Facilities available include everything from desk spaces, digital lab spaces, wet labs, kitchens,

A recent survey by **NACEC** which promotes and supports the community and regional enterprise sector found that 33% of them had tenants that which had shut down permanently. **NACEC** had estimated that the plan would **require a €5m investment**

O Meara said the plan had the potential to provide long term solutions beyond the pandemic and could be a boost for local communities.

**John O' Dea**, (pictured right), Chief Executive of **TechIreland** which represents many large multinational



**employers expressed support for the emerging plan.** *“Enabling people to work closer to where they live can have positive and long term sustainable benefits for the environment, rural regeneration and the health and well-being of employees, so utilising the national enterprise hub infrastructure to support the future of flexible working is an exciting project that we are delighted to be supporting”* he said.

Minister Humphreys said her department *“has awarded considerable funding to support the development of a national network of enterprise, technology and co-working hubs throughout Ireland”*. I believe NACEC and the wider enterprise hub network is well placed to support our multinationals, large corporates, and SMEs with their remote and flexible working requirements after the pandemic

## The Business Continuity Voucher

The new Business Continuity Voucher is now available through the Local Enterprise Offices and is open to sole traders and companies across every business sector that employs up to 50 people. The voucher is worth up to €2,500 in third party consultancy costs and can be used by companies and sole traders to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the Covid-19

pandemic. The goal is to help business owners make informed decisions about what immediate measures and remedial actions should be taken to protect staff and sales.

**What does it cover: 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Consultancy Only**

Examples of what it could be used to support include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Develop a business continuity plan

- ❖ Assess current financial needs in the short to medium term.
- ❖ Reduce variable costs, overheads, and expenses
- ❖ Review and explore supply chain financing options
- ❖ Implement remote working processes or procedures
- ❖ Leverage HR expertise
- ❖ Leverage ICT expertise
- ❖ Prepare a business case for application to emergency financial interventions available through Banks, Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, and Micro Finance Ireland.

Apply through and approved by Local Enterprise Office: [Application Here](#)

The festival was considered by the community as being a success. During the festival we had a team

Please email completed applications form to [info@leo.waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:info@leo.waterfordcouncil.ie)

**Eligibility:** Any EI, IDA, Udaras na Gaeltachta clients must contact their relevant agency.

**Company must be**

- ❖ Irish owned
- ❖ CRO registered, (company or sole trader).
- ❖

**Open to all sectors- excluding gambling, gaming, adult entertainment, tobacco.**

Up to 50 Employees

De Minimis Rules apply

One voucher per business.

## Bunclody, Co. Wexford, Leading the Way with Festivals to Include Everyone



In a response to a **Teagasc** which stated that **Bunclody** was the poorest town in Ireland, the Government declared the town a **REDZ (Rural Economic**

**Development Zone)** and invested €250,000 to regenerate the area. A Town team was appointed with the remit of overseeing the project.

One of the lists of actions that had to be carried out, was to create an annual festival to promote **Tourism, Culture, and the Arts**. *'The Streams of Bunclody Festival'* was established to run over the third weekend in July. It was decided that the festival should be community based to encourage social cohesion in the town.

**Bunclody Festivals** was set up to event manage the festival and any other events in the town, the first year the festival was entirely funded, and we were given a budget out of the REDZ funding. In **2017** the theme was *'A Midsummer's Night Dream'*. During the festival we had a team of canvassers

asking the audiences, a list of questions about the festival what they liked and what should be improved/added. The local Retailers, Pubs, Restaurant and Accommodation providers were also interviewed and reported an increase in trade over the weekend. From the questionnaires



*Opening Night of 'The Streams of Bunclody' Festival.*

completed by audiences we were able to improve the festival for 2018.

For **2018** the festival was supported by **Wexford County Council, Enniscorthy Municipal Council and Carlow County Council**, we also received sponsorship in money and kind from the local businesses and ran trolley raffles in the



town's supermarkets. Every event at the festival is free entry, so we must cover all the costs. This makes managing the festival difficult when allocation of County and Municipal funding is not decided until March/April and the Performers must be booked by the beginning of March. We again ran the survey of audiences and businesses with particularly good reports and we took on board the amendments and additions for Festival 2019.

The '*Streams of Bunclody Festival*' 2019 fell on the second weekend of a 13-week period of relaying the N80 through the town. This caused major traffic delays which resulted in a boycotting of the town by locals and passers through.

A decision had to be made and as we would have had to pay the Performers their full fees, we decided to go ahead. The audience numbers were down by 60% but those who attended enjoyed themselves.

The festival theme for **2019** was '*Irish Myths and Legends*' and again we canvassed our audiences and businesses who understood the situation but were also forthcoming in their comments and suggestions, all of which were taken on board for **2020**.

We have decided to differ the theme, in **2021** it will be '*The Works of WB Yeats*'. However, Bunclody Festivals is currently researching the viability of holding a **Halloween Street Spectacle on 31<sup>st</sup> October**.

Part of Bunclody Festivals is a **Street Spectacle** workshop and performance group, *Makers and Shakers*. This group was formed, in 2017, out of the workshop set up to create oversized animals and fairies to promote the festival. The members were, retired, unemployed or stay at home mothers, who over the course of the 12-week workshops discovered improved self-esteem, confidence, and positivity. Of the 12 participants 6 were unemployed and went on to find work or joined **C.E Schemes**, the 2 retired members became volunteers and 4 mothers started part time employment. Each year they have become more ambitious and in **2019** performed two **Street Spectacles** '*Stormin' Normans*' and '*The Cattle Raid at Cooley*', (pictured above right). The workshop group personnel have changed in the last 2 years but all the participants in the workshops and performances experience improved mental health and confidence.



*'The Cattle Raid at Cooley' (Above)*



**Festival in Full Swing, (Above)  
Craft Fair During Festivals, (Below)**



**For more Information on  
Bunclody Festivals – [Click Here](#)**

**Journal Article on Teagasc  
Report – [Click here](#)**

**REDZ-Rural Economic  
Development Zone- [Click here](#)**

Five Recommendations  
Addressing Climate Change, Ecological  
Sustainability Obligations with Regard to  
Water Quality and Biodiversity

By Rory Harrington, BAgGrSC, MFS, PhD

As Ireland is increasingly required to address its **Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG)/Carbon Sequestration, Climate Change Responsibilities, Water Quality** of its surface and inshore waters and **Biodiversity (BD)** loss. More effective management is urgently required with regard to how its land and water resources are managed. For more than 30 years the community of **Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand and Annestown** in south **County Waterford** have started to respond to these challenges, engaging collaboratively as a community and as individual landowners, with **State, EU, and Local Government** support. Through scientific direction and example-demonstrations in land and water management, effective methodologies have been developed. Collaboration between landowners and with support from State (*National Parks and Wildlife Service, Office of Public Works, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government*), **European Union (LIFE/Waterford Leader Partnership and INTERREG Wales/Ireland)** has been particularly effective.

To effectively address land and water use, **Ireland's** two primary *natural* habitat types; broadleaf/conifer woodland, and rush/reed emergent vegetated (helophytic) wetland and their ecosystem functions are essential requirements. Both have been radically reduced by human activity over many millennia. Furthermore, over the last 60 years have witnessed significant and ongoing deteriorations in biodiversity, water quality and human contact with the land. These changes are primarily due to commercial pressures to increase agricultural grass-based production in order to support farm incomes. Today's landscapes and water quality are largely influenced by maximised grass production. These changes are not sustainable without continued inputs of nutrients, capital, and energy. Increasingly these inputs are recognised as having potential for detrimental impact on the social, economic, and environmental



(Above) Agricultural Integrated Constructed Wetland running parallel with surface water at boundary of farm.



(Above) Newly planted ICW with piggery unit in the background



(Above) Woodland walk with diverse species and controlled public access



(Above) 30-Year-old Monterey Pine, (*Pinus Radiata*), from California



Woodland Corridor



(Above) Southern Beech, (*Notofagus Procera*), fast growing tree from Chile.

wellbeing of the Country. Alternative more optimal approaches to land and water management are possible and urgently required. By applying the **UN ecosystem approach** **CBD** **Guidelines: The Ecosystem Approach** challenges arising from necessary changes in land and water management may be effectively addressed. This may be accomplished by assessing the functional biogeographical structure of farms and landholdings, adjusting the management of each on the basis of costs and benefits in terms of nutrient and energy budgets and the capital investment required. The basis for such an approach are demonstrably the land boundaries of each landholding whereby key aspects of land, water and habitat diversity are assessed, and an appropriate management regime proposed. This short article is based upon four decades researching and demonstrating the role of **wetlands and woodlands** within the broad aspects of land and water management in Ireland.

**Wetlands:** The roles of emergent vegetated wetlands (**reeds, sedges and grasses**) remain largely unappreciated, sometimes even by those engaged in water treatment (**sewage/municipal wastewater, industrial wastewater, mine drainage, agriculture, forestry, and recreation**). Reanimated (constructed) wetland systems, when appropriately designed and constructed, can sustainably intercept, and treat a wide range of contaminated water sources. The accumulated inflowing matter and the vegetative litter biomass of the wetland are convertible through dewatering *in situ*, to valuable compost and at much lower cost than currently endured by slurry spreading. From a carbon sequestration perspective, the combined wetland carbon dioxide sequestration potential from Ireland's farmyards alone would exceed **2-4 million tons per year** based upon 1-2ha of functional wetland area per farm.

Furthermore, the capacity of wetlands to treat and dewater raw and anaerobic digested animal slurries has been successfully demonstrated. Along with subsequent *in situ* composting of the accumulated organic matter it provides additional capacity to sequester carbon and the supply of significantly increased nutrient management efficiencies.

**Woodland:** The role of woodlands remains greatly undervalued in Ireland and paradoxically, frequently obfuscated by unsubstantiated claims regarding tree species selection. Of special relevance are the methods by which woodlands are established and managed; innovation in how to improve forest establishment and practice is urgently required to increase crop capital value and improved ecosystem benefits. **Woodland corridors** judiciously located and scaled provide many benefits to farmers, their livestock, neighbourliness and social engagement by virtue of enhanced access to the countryside. They foster improved habitat structure/biodiversity and have additional benefits if linked to countryside promotion for tourism and social welfare.

The rationale and urgency with which Ireland must address these challenges are clearly outlined in the **UN's Sustainable Goals, (SSG's).**

#### **Sustainable Development Goals**

*(NB. Of the 17 SDGs, only one (No. 13), relates to Climate Action whereas 5 have a water component or relate to the wider environment, No. 3 addresses Good Health & Wellbeing, No. 6 Clean Water & Sanitation, No. 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities, No. 14 Life below Water and No. 15 Life on Land. The importance of delivering on all the SDGs cannot be understated.)*

The following five recommendations are based on decades of comprehensive knowledge of both the natural and social sciences. They are supported by science-based analytical endeavours and management skills.

Of immediate relevance for the country's agricultural economy is improving farmyard and farm influenced water quality management with special focus on nitrogen, phosphorus, and carbon sequestration/greenhouse gas, (GHG), emissions through functional ecosystem reanimation.

#### **Recommendation 1.**

Application of the **2010 inter-departmental DEHLG-led Guidance Document** for the implementation of **Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW)** for management of farmyard soiled water, municipal wastewater, and land drainage and **2011 DAFM's Specification** for its application for the agricultural sector.

- **Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Integrated Constructed Wetlands**
- **Farm Schemes and Payments**

As referenced in the above DEHL Guidance Document, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) for the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD)'s '**Ecosystem Approach**' **Conventions on Biological Diversity-Principles** explicitly outlines options with respect to alternative stable ecosystem states and the levels of benefits they deliver. Focusing on biodiversity potentials, carbon sequestration processes and landscape values results in a sustainable cost-effective solution to most farm derived pollution challenges, the more efficient use of phosphorus and nitrogen, and the management of carbon/GHG emissions.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Expansion of the **ICW** concept in managing water-vectored animal slurries (**cattle and pigs**), whereby water vectored animal waste (**typically 97 – 98% water**) would be *dewatered* through ICW ecosystem functionality and subsequently **composted in situ**, used for the enhancement of soil fertility and secure long-term carbon storage. Consequent optimum retention of phosphorus and nitrogen will reduce grass and crop needs for additional nitrogen and phosphorus application, resulting in minimal loss to receiving waters or to the atmosphere in the case of ammonia-nitrogen. This has been successfully demonstrated on one 300 sow integrated pig farm (*results and methodology were presented at the International Water Association meeting in Dublin in 2002.*) One of the largest pig producers in Ireland is prepared to allocate land and resources to demonstrate this. It also will adhere to the 12 principles of the **UNEP Ecosystem Approach**, thereby addressing social, economic, and wider environmental requirements.

#### **IWA 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Diffused Pollution- The use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands, (ICW's), in Animal Slurry Management**

### Recommendation 3

Reversal of the forest establishment trends that have slowed to a near standstill during the past decade. This is at a time when forest production and restoration are widely seen as necessary to offset climate change, stresses on the rural economy and biodiversity loss. Non-native species woodlands are the mainstay of the timber industry. They provide both commercial timber crops and provide surrogate habitats of significant conservation value if appropriately configured and managed.

#### (Impact of Sitka Spruce on Biodiversity in NW Europe with a Special Focus on Norway-Evidence, Perceptions, and regulations).

A wide diversity of tree species has proven records of performance in Ireland since the **‘Avondale Initiative’ in 1905.** Land that has limited economic values for conventional agricultural and may even be a liability to the state, can be socially, economically and environmentally redirected to woodland establishment in ways that would complement existing usage by means of *complementary landscape-fit and wider species selection*. Such efforts using the above-mentioned **CBD ‘Ecosystem Approach’** could furthermore significantly contribute to carbon sequestration, improve air quality, diversify habitats, provide shelter, attenuate flooding, and deliver a range of social benefits and acclaimed ecosystem services. Attention to scale and design, and avoidance of formulaic ground-preparation are paramount for the greater social, economic, and environmental gain.

### Recommendation 4

**Agro-forestry**, trailed in Ireland since the 1970’s and successfully demonstrated in most regions of the planet, has demonstrated benefits for farmers and the environment, including enhanced carbon sequestration. Its implementation in Ireland has suffered from insufficient; commitment by responsible State authorities, inadequate education and competing sectoral interests, lack of innovative adaptations to Irish climate and soil conditions, and weak general landowner support. The subject was discussed by the Oireachtas in the 1980’s.

### Recommendation 5

Woodland corridors and shelterbelts are known to provide a range of social, economic, and environmental benefits. Incorporating many of agro-forestry benefits, woodland corridors themselves can provide many additional benefits when incorporated with re-profiled field-drainage, livestock/crop shelter and social connectivity within and between landowners and communities.

#### Crann Magazine Article: A Role for Integrated Forest and Woodland Corridors

### Concluding Comment

These recommendations involve sustainable ecosystem-based services that coherently address existing and impending problems; climate change obligations, water quality management and biodiversity, and would provide significant accountable benefits. Taken together they would greatly reduce difficulties facing farmers, agriculture, the country’s environment, the beef industry, and water quality.

### Biography/authors background

A resident of Dunhill, Co. Waterford, he is a graduate of University College Dublin, Ireland and Yale



University, USA. Formally a public servant, he is currently senior scientist with **VESI Environmental Ltd.** He has been involved in a diversity of biological and engineering research projects over a career of more than five decades, ranging from conservation genetics, forestry, mammology and restoration ecology. He pioneered the ‘Integrated Constructed Wetland’ (ICW) concept.

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# Reflections on Improving Service Delivery and Quality of Life in Rural Communities

By Ciaran Lynch



*At the outset it should be stated that this does not purport to be a researched and developed proposal. It is a reflection based on the author's*

*experience and consideration of the issues involved over many years. It is hoped that it might contribute to the commencement of a debate and discussion of the topics involved. The article reflects the views of the author only and not necessarily those of Communities Creating jobs, (CCJ).*

One of the principal issues for rural communities in this era is the availability of a range of social, community and commercial services. For example, the [Eurofound Report of 2019](#) on Challenges and Prospects in the EU: Quality of life and public services states that *'Life satisfaction or discontent, trust or insecurity, are profoundly influenced by citizens 'assessments of the quality of public life and public services.'* ([Eurofound \(2019\), Challenges and prospects in the EU: Quality of life and public services, \(Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.\)](#))

**Brererton, Bullock, Clinch and Scott** have also stated that a study carried out by them in Ireland indicates that, *'not surprisingly, the main limitations of rural quality of life centre on a lack of services and facilities. Many rural households are at risk of social exclusion given the limited amount of public transport and the paucity of public rural transport schemes'.* ([Brereton et al., \(2016\), European Urban and Regional Studies, 18\(2\) 203–227, Sage\).](#))

These findings are consistent with intuitive and anecdotal findings of the importance of services to how people feel about their lives. Of course, access to services in rural areas will always be more challenged than that in larger urban areas. For many rural dwellers this lesser access is balanced

by many other benefits – access to housing; a sense of space; environmental quality and low crime rates are mentioned in the Brereton et al. study cited above. However, while a lower level of service is to be expected it is appropriate to consider how this might be minimised.

**Professor Malcolm Moseley**, speaking at the **Irish LEADER Conference in 2005**, reflected on the issue of rural service provision and noted the challenge of squaring the iron triangle of quality, price, and ubiquity of service provision. In other words, he proposes that it is not possible to provide services which are, at the same time, widely distributed, high-quality, and low-cost. It is arguable that with respect to rural areas at least, the requirements of cost and quality have taken precedence over that of ubiquity or access leading to a reduction in ease of access to such services

If this is true with regard to public services, a somewhat different situation applies to commercial services. These also have been lost in rural areas often due to changing structures of service provision, declining populations in some areas, outshopping to larger centres and smaller returns to owner/managers relative to those obtained from employment.

The big issue regarding services is ease of access and it is useful to consider how access to services can be provided. Today, services can be provided in one of four basic ways or through a combination of those ways:

1. **By bringing the user to the service**
2. **By bringing the service to the user**
3. **By delivering the service virtually**
4. **By the users delivering the service for themselves**

It is suggested that the appropriate approach to service access should be considered on a community by community basis and that the appropriate access mechanism will vary by the nature of the service and by the profile of the community involved.

The nature of the service is one factor which is relevant. A service which requires direct physical presence or intervention will require that the user go to that service or that that service be brought to the user. Many forms of health service, for example, fall into this category as do many other

personal services such as childcare, dining, hairdressing, and various recreation activities. It has been argued that for some of these at least, such as specialised health services, provision should be in major centres of excellence and, if the premise of this argument is accepted, then there is little option but to provide the service centrally.

Some services have to be delivered directly to the consumer. These include, for example, services which involve the maintenance of property or the installation of physical facilities on a site.

Other services can be delivered to the customer through use of a mobile model. This can include the delivery of goods, of services such as a travelling library, a mobile specialist shop, or a mobile provider of certain personal services.

More and more services are now suitable for delivery online and, as technology improves and develops, the range of these services is likely to increase and to expand into areas which are not even conceivable at present. Resources such as 3-d printers, holograms and XR technologies are likely to have a major impact on the mechanisms for provision in the future.

A second factor of importance is the cost involved in service delivery. For goods and services which are high-value in themselves and which rely on higher margins and fewer units of sale, bringing the good or service to the customer will make more sense and the added cost of delivery will be a small component of the overall cost. For other goods and services which require high volumes and low margins such an approach may be less viable as the relative cost of delivery is too high a percentage of the overall cost. The weekly family shop is not the same as a bottle of milk!!

A third factor of relevance is response time. Some forms of purchase are planned well in advance, do not require immediate delivery and are, therefore, more suitable to online purchase and delivery to the consumer. Others, however, require short response times and need, as far as possible to be available on demand. Some of these services can be delivered online but others require physical access at a convenient location.

### ***The requirements for the different forms of access.***

The different forms of access outlined above have requirements in order for them to be enabled. These are some of the key components for each type of access.

#### **Bring the people to the service**

- Private transport
- Public transport
- Emergency transport

#### **Bring the service to the people**

- Mobile facilities
- Delivery locations in the community

#### **Deliver the service virtually**

- Broadband
- Access to high-quality technology
- Capacity to use the technology

#### **Users delivering the service for themselves**

- Social enterprise structures
- Volunteers to manage the service
- Volunteers to deliver the service
- Premises to deliver the service
- Initial capital to facilitate the establishment of the service

The profile of each rural community with regard to service provision is somewhat different and can be evaluated in the context of the availability of the various access requirements identified above. These factors, when considered together with the characteristics of various goods and services, should allow a service delivery framework to be developed for each community.

A suggested framework might be developed along the following lines. In identifying the mechanism for the delivery of the service to be pursued, the factors set out above would be taken into account for an individual community.

The following is a notional example of what an assessment for an imaginary community might look like. The list of services is provided solely as an example and would need to be generated specifically for each community.

Delivery Method Type of Service	People & Service	Service to People – Mobile or Local Commercial	Virtual	Local Social Enterprise or Community Facility
Specialised Health	✓			
Ongoing Health		✓	✓	
Emergency Health	✓			
Hairdressing & Similar		✓		
Banking	✓			
Post Office				
Legal Service/Similar	✓		✓	
Library		✓		✓
Indoor Sport	✓			✓
Outdoor Sport	✓			✓
Theatre & Cinema	✓			✓
Small Con. Retail				✓
Large Con. Retail	✓			
House Maintenance		✓		
Garden Maintenance		✓		
Education -Primary		✓		
Education–Post Pri.	✓			
Education – Higher	✓		✓	
Education – Further			✓	
Education – CPD			✓	
Community Security				✓
Fast Food				✓
Licenced Premises				✓
Restaurants/ Cafes				✓

## Conclusion

The provision of public and commercial services in rural areas has been a matter of contention for many years and is a significant contributor to the quality of life experiences of rural residents. Access to services and not the location of the services is the key question to be addressed in respect of each community. This access can be provided in a number of different ways and the most appropriate way to provide access for different services relates to the characteristics of the community, its location relative to large centres and the availability of infrastructure in the area amongst other things.

This article suggests that a structured approach is taken to creating a framework of provision for each community and that this framework be used to identify the most appropriate way of providing access to a range of key services and to identify the mechanisms of provision that most need to be put in place to ensure maximum access.

Such a framework might be used to guide Local Authorities, service providers, utilities and others in the development of services in the area; to promote the use of particular methods of accessing services amongst the community; and to identify those areas of service provision which need to be delivered through the development of social enterprises by and within the community. It could also be used as a basis for providing or supporting the provision of an alternative means of access before a particular access route has to be withdrawn or is lost for some reason.



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