



# Communities Creating Jobs



## Spring Newsletter 2020 ~Issue 28

- ✓ Connemara West, Social Enterprise, 1971 – 2020  
*Enabling a Resilient Community*
- ✓ CCJ Join Study Group for Trip to Brussels
- ✓ New Zealand Film Crew Visit Dunhill



Study Group in Brussels

COMMUNITY  
FINANCE  
IRELAND

€3 Million  
Invested in  
Local  
Community  
Projects Across  
the South East



Film Crew at Curraghmore House



All These Stories and More in this 2020 Spring Issue



## Issue Contents

Social Enterprise Policy Objectives and Definition .....	2
Editorial.....	3
Social Enterprise Update .....	3
Communities Creating Jobs in Brussels 2020 .....	4
Loughmore Cottage, Co. Tipperary.....	7
Longford Women's Link.....	9
New Zealand Film Crew Visit Dunhill, Co. Waterford.....	11
Community Finance Ireland.....	13
WIT Launches Social Enterprise Management Course .....	14
Connemara West, (Social Enterprise), 1971-2020.....	15
Copper Coast Trad Fest Deferred .....	17
SuNSE .....	18
A Norman Legacy is Set to Regenerate a Rural Irish Town.....	19

## 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 T.D. 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 or 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 independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

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



## Editorial

By Dr. Senan Cooke

We are all experiencing the worst health crisis in the history of the state with **Covid-19**. It is challenging all of us to take care of each other by keeping informed and in responding promptly and positively to directions from our medical experts who are co-ordinating and managing the national response.

Social enterprise volunteers who believe in and live by promoting respect for people, (**every individual**), and for community solidarity will be to the forefront in doing what is required to keep people safe from the virus over the coming months. Particular care has to be taken of the elderly and those coping with underlying health issues. We must all be aware and alert of the needs of those we know facing difficult times as workers, the elderly and those with medical problems needing special attention and care. We need everyone to act responsibly and pull together for the benefit of all who live on the island of Ireland.



Senan Cooke,  
CCJ Chairman

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## Social Enterprise Update

**Communities Creating Jobs, (CCJ)**, is glad to welcome the appointment of the **Department of Rural and Community Development Social Enterprise Policy Implementation Team**. The committee has met twice in the Department and a sub-committee on '*Social Enterprise Awareness*' has been appointed. It is due to report back to the main committee by the end of **July 2020**.

Awareness of **Social Enterprise** is the first objective of the new policy and serious work will be needed to embed the concept into the mindset of **state agencies, private sector, 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Education** and **communities** many of whom are operating social enterprises but are not aware of their status and of the new policy that has been launched in July 2019.

We also welcome the establishment of county social enterprise networks in **Waterford** and **Carlow** and that **Wexford, Tipperary** and **Kilkenny** are currently planning their county networks. On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March a meeting was held in the **Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre in Kilkenny**, (pictured right), between representatives of the five south eastern counties to establish a regional network.



**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)**







## Communities Creating Jobs in Brussels 2020

*Seamus Goggin – Voluntary Director of Communities Creating Jobs*



I was delighted to be invited to join a recent **Study Trip to Brussels** organised by ***The Wheel*** and the **European Commission Representation in Ireland**.

This Study Trip was extremely well organised and for the two days we spent there we worked our way through a very busy schedule.

On the Tuesday morning we were welcomed to the **Charlemagne Building** by **Ms. Fabienne Timmemans, Visit Organiser**, from the **European Commission**.

We attended a series of eight presentations throughout the day which were all extremely interesting and enlightening from an **EU** perspective. (Links to these

presentations can be found at the end of this article).

I found the first session, **Brexit: What Future Relationship Between the EU and the UK** given by **Mr. Matthieu Hebel, Head of the Sector – Internal and External Communication, UKTF Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom** to be very informative and quite contradictory to the media reports that are coming from the UK press.

**Mr. Karl Vanderpoorten** gave an outstanding presentation on *Social Enterprise and the Social Economy Sector from the point of view of the EU*. (see ***GECEs Report 2016***). He said,

*“The Social Economy represents 10% of the total of all EU companies and employs over 11 Million people which represents 6% of all employment in the EU”.*

**EU Budget, New MFF and Programmes: with Mr. Sylvain Ylieff, Dept. Head of Unit:**

This excellent presentation on the **2021-2027 MFF, (Multiannual Financial Framework), Budgetary Policy and Coordination**, explains in detail the financial contribution and financial benefit of each of the 27 member states. For example, Ireland contributes 1.7% of the total EU Budget for 2021-2027. The total EU budget as passed in 2019 is €148.2 Billion. This figure may, however, be amended slightly depending on the Brexit outcome and withdrawal agreement settlement terms later in 2020.

**Joanna Gawrylczyk-Malesa, Programme Manager, EU Policies-Ireland & UK. DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion: The Commission priorities for 2021-2027 are given as the following:**

- A. Promote women’s labour market.
- B. Improve access to employment for all jobseekers including the inactive and underrepresented groups.
- C. Social Integration – risk of poverty and/or social exclusion.





### Labour Market Policies – [Pathways to Work: 2016-2020](#)

It is worth remembering the EU are still awaiting Ireland's new programme. This matter needs to be addressed urgently by the Dept. of Social Protection, or another relevant body. The Community & Voluntary Social Enterprise & Charities Sectors rely heavily on the national active labour market schemes.

We had a working lunch at the invitation of the **European Commission** with the participation of **Mr. Dermot Ryan**, a member of the *Cabinet of the Commission for Trade* under **Mr. Phil Hogan**, MEP. There were several other very interesting presentations throughout the day in particular: **The European Green Deal** given by **Mr. Quentin Dupriez**. **A Child Guarantee as part of the European pillar of Social Rights** given by **Mr. Julius OP De Beke**. There was also time given to educational supports for children, young people and families living in educationally marginalised communities.



### The EU Political Process:

The main European Institutions, as listed in Article 13 of the Treaty of the European Union are:

1. **The European Council – Summit of the 27 Member Heads of State of Government.**
2. **The European Commission – The Executive Arm of the EU**
3. **The Council of the European Union – The Legislative Body.**

On Wednesday morning we arrived at the **European Commission HQ Buildings, 'Le Berlaymont'**, (pictured right), and were immediately taken to the **Hemicycle** which is the venue for all **MEP** plenary sessions and important debates. The Hemicycle is the world's largest parliament room. We had the privilege of meeting with 9 of Ireland's current MEPs and they gave us a very good insight into their representative roles as our voice within the European Union. Each MEP sits as a member/delegate on one or more committees within the **European Parliament**.

After lunch we visited the **European Parliament Visitor's Centre, The Parliamentarium**. This audio-guided tour gives a very detailed account of how and, more importantly, why the EU was formed many years ago.



**The EU's Brexit Strategy: 'Settle the Past Before you Attempt to Agree the Future'**  
[Click For information on Getting Ireland Brexit Ready](#)



After our visit here we taken to the office of the **Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU**. This brings together, under one roof, civil servants from nearly every **Irish Government Department**. This is Ireland's largest collective diplomatic mission abroad. Based in Brussels, the Permanent Representation is dedicated to pursuing, securing and protecting Ireland's unique position, interests and priorities in matters concerning the negotiations on the withdrawal of the **United Kingdom** from the EU. We were given an insight into the workings of the

**Representation** by **Sarah McCabe** from the **Department of Foreign Affairs** and this completed our **Study Trip to Brussels, 2020**.



Mairead McGuinness, MEP, Vice  
Chairman of the European  
Parliament and CCJ Patron, with the  
Study Group

On behalf of CCJ – Communities Creating Jobs- ([www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)), I would like to thank the **Representation of the European Commission in Ireland** and *The Wheel* for affording me the opportunity to get such an insight in to the workings of the EU family. A special mention to **Ms. Joan Flanagan** our **Group Leader** who was responsible for our trip from start to finish.

*I feel that what is really more important than the creation of international machinery is the creation of an ideal of peace, based on the recognition of certain fundamental democratic rights.....It is essential that the people of Europe should be given some hope, based on faith and idealism.*  
(Sean MacBride, Dail Debate on United States of Europe, July 20th, 1948).

### Useful European Union Links

[The Commission and its Priorities](#)  
[Directorate General for Education & Culture](#)  
[Directorate General for Communication](#)  
[Directorate General for Regional & Urban Policy](#)  
[Supporting Education & Training in Europe & European Website on Integration; Migrant Integration Information & Good Practices](#)  
[Employment Social Affairs & Inclusion](#)  
[Regional Policy in Your Country](#)  
[DG Migration & Home Affairs EU Asylum Policy](#)  
[Transparency in Action](#)  
[What Europe Does for Me](#)

[Climate Action](#)  
[Human Resources & Security](#)  
[Budget](#)  
[Erasmus+](#)  
[Energy](#)  
[Directorate General for Trade](#)  
[Brexit Negotiations](#)  
[#EUANDME](#)  
[NEWS -Highlights Press Release & Speeches](#)  
[DG Migration & Home Affairs](#)  
[Policy Portfolio](#)





## Loughmore Cottage, Co. Tipperary

### Cottage Tearooms Reborn

Niamh Dillon, *Tipperary Star*, January 2, 2020

When **Loughmore Cottage** first opened in 2012 few could have foreseen the impact it would make on rural regeneration countrywide in the intervening years. Those involved were very generous in sharing their experiences with others which led to several replications countrywide. **Co-founder Mary Fogarty** developed a case study on it and travelled widely whenever invited to present, promote and encourage others to replicate.

Seven years on with a range of awards and commendations to their credit the project with its new premises, an old farmhouse, reputed to be the oldest building in the village, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century was officially **opened on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December**. The new premises are tastefully renovated retaining the special cottage features reminiscent of **rural 19<sup>th</sup> century Ireland**. The small windows, half door, slated roof, inside stairs, wall hangings, ceiling beams, pots, pans and aroma of kitchen cooking serves to create a unique and very welcoming atmosphere.

The success of the cottage has provided a lifeline for people in the village and the many who visit the area. **Since its foundation in 2012 The Cottage** has provided a market outlet for over **50 local food and craft suppliers**. It provides a meeting place for several clubs and associations and refreshments for locals and visitors.



In **2012** inspired by the **UK based Plunkett Foundation**, which helped rural communities set up co-operatives, they researched the possibility of setting up a tearoom in **Loughmore**. **The Cottage** quickly became a resounding success attracting over **300 local shareholders** in support of the new venture. It placed the one-time declining village on the map again providing a source of employment, a thriving tourism centre and a meeting place for so many feeling isolated in the rural environment.

The ambitious plan was supported by **Tipperary Co Council, North Tipp Leader Partnership Company** and **Clann Credo** a social finance provider in 2012 and again in 2019 when the refurbishment of the old building was being completed.

For **The Cottage**, in its new setting, the art of old school hospitality is central to its success and uniqueness. For many visitors entering through the half door it represents a step back in time. The shop space stocks a mix of cupboard essentials, such as bread and milk alongside a mix of artisan products supplied by local producers and

the all-important bags of penny sweets. Freshly baked cakes and buns greet customers upon arrival while the heady aroma of **The Cottage's** homemade soup is served up alongside brown bread and lashings of real butter which diners enjoy in the sun room area or seek out a quieter spot in the much sought after *“snug corner”*



The new tearooms can cater for up to **40 customers**. The open plan is designed to promote social inclusion while it retains many of the old architectural features from times past. Every member of the community is welcomed to the tea rooms now regarded as a home from home. From young musicians performing an impromptu jig and reel set to the friendly banter of local knitting or cycling clubs, passionate analysis of the weekend's hurling and football games and local news stories and affairs of state are shared freely by everyone. The engagement makes people feel welcome on stepping inside the door.

Builder **Pat McCormack** captures the mood created well stating that he may have *“put the body’ into the new building but it is the local community that will ‘bring the soul’”*. Since its opening on the original site in 2012 **Mary** and the **Loughmore team** have welcomed thousands of visitors including many community groups from across Ireland eager to replicate the tearoom's success in their own declining towns and villages.

In 2018 the Cottage team were nominated as pioneers in helping combat rural isolation. It culminated in **Mary Fogarty** representing **Tipperary Co Council** at a social innovation workshop in **Hungary** at which the tearooms case study was presented. Several major voluntary fundraisers were organised for the Tea Rooms. Each one of them were strongly supported by the community who treasure it, their part in its completion, their ownership of it and a very prevalent and living determination to sustain it. The employment and services provided includes a huge boost to community morale. **Eight people both part time and full- time are employed**. In summer at peak times college students are hired to cope with the additional business.

At the opening on 22<sup>nd</sup> December students from local national school sang a song specially written for them on the meaning of *‘community’* which was very well received by all in attendance.



Left front row, Dr. Senan Cooke, CCJ. Dr. Helen Foley from the Business School at WIT with a group of students on a visit to Dunhill Ecopark on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March. The aim of the visit was to gain experience of and learn about developments.





## Longford Women's Link

### Supporting Female Entrepreneurs

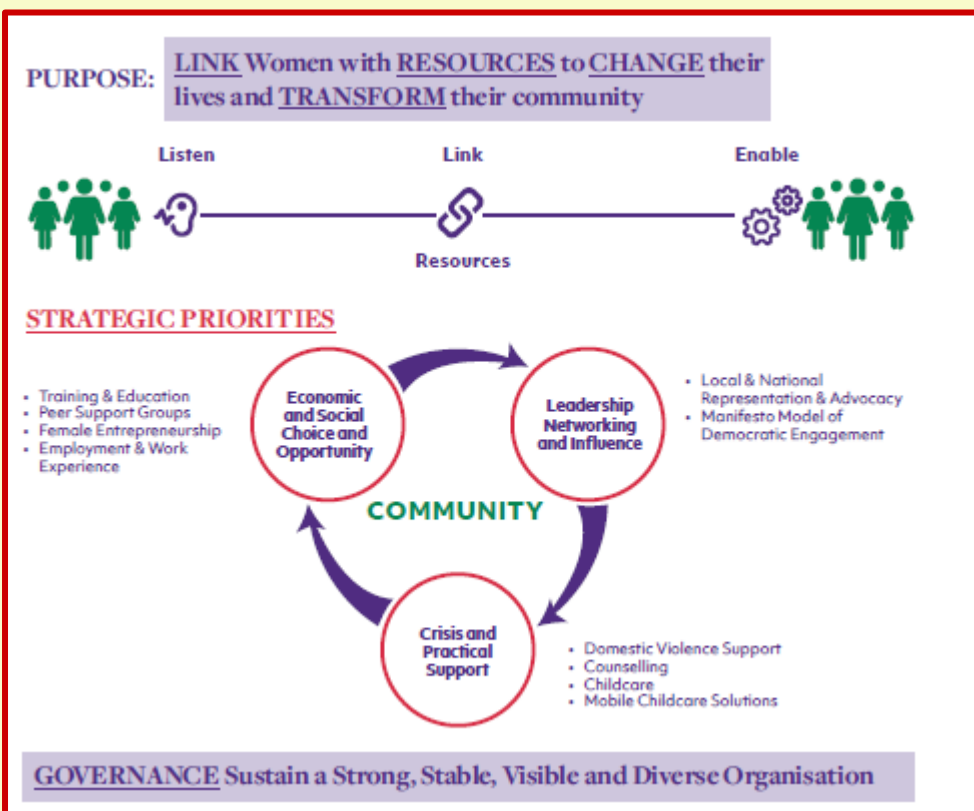
**Longford Women's Link (LWL)** is a dynamic social enterprise employing over 100 people in Longford. **Founded in 1995**, LWL links women with the resources to make their community safe and equal.



LWL **identifies and addresses key inequalities** that prevent women in Longford achieving their full social/economic potential and our work provides real and tangible opportunities for women and their families. Services provided to approximately **900 women and 170 children** in

**Longford/Midlands (2019)** enabled women to access a wide range of programmes and supports yielding real benefits for their families and the wider community. We provide women-centred services (***Education & Training, Childcare, Domestic Violence Support, Counselling, Community Employment, Female Entrepreneurship, capacity-building and local/national advocacy***). Key to the delivery of our services is our unique model of **Integrated Service Delivery (ISD)**. The implementation of this model is underpinned by the specialist, multilevel approach adopted by LWL [the ***'Double Dividend'*** (UN, 2006)]. LWL asserts that ***when we support the women of our community, we support their families.***

One aspect of our 25 years' experience as social entrepreneurs has been our success in the area of supporting female entrepreneurship. Since 1997, LWL has worked closely with local enterprise support agencies in order to build the ***'culture & conditions'*** for sustainable female entrepreneurship. Following a successful programme under the **Department of Justice/ESF Equality for Women Measure**, LWL identified the need for an expanded, gender-specific **Start Your Own Business Course** and developed ***'Building for Success – Working for Women'*** which has been **delivered to over 40 female entrepreneurs**. More recent female entrepreneurship programmes have been supported by the **Ulster Bank Community Impact Fund (2014)** and the **Ulster Bank Skills and Opportunities Fund (2019)** which funds the **WISE Programme (Women into Self-Employment)**.



This fantastic group of 23 early stage entrepreneurs have been together since **the Spring of 2019** and already, **12 are trading**. Businesses range from interior design to environmental consultancy and the group undertake a wide range of activities. Key to the success of the **WISE** programme has been the peer learning, expertly facilitated by **Programme Mentor Karen Reilly**. As well as fortnightly meetings, the group have engaged in tailor-made, gender specific **Start Your Own Business** training as well as masterclasses in key areas such as



social media and procurement. The **Longford Local Enterprise Office** have been supportive in this regard and have provided the group with experts in these critical business areas – an excellent example of how local networking and engagement can yield benefits for all involved. **WISE** have participated in **National Women's Enterprise Day 2019** as well as engaging with local business networks in Longford and are planning a showcase in Spring 2020. As with all programmes delivered at LWL, the **WISE** Programme will be evaluated but the key learning to date focuses on the need for an established organisation to support the delivery of such programmes; the requirement for childcare and the presence of an experienced facilitator who can guide participants through the necessary stages of nascent entrepreneurship. The programme is due to finish in June 2020 and it is hoped that funding can be secured to support this group to move to the next stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

**We are very active on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/LongfordWomensLink](https://www.facebook.com/LongfordWomensLink)  
Twitter at @LWLLongford**

## European Toolkit for Schools

### *Promoting Inclusive Education and Tackling Early School Leaving.*

- Are you interested in finding more effective ways to support your pupils?
- Do you want to improve attendance or reduce drop-out?
- Are you looking for ways to improve the involvement of parents in your school?
- Do you have many pupils whose mother tongue is not your language of teaching?

Then read on! This online resource provides you with a range of materials to help you!

**[Read more.](#)**

#### **BROWSE LATEST RESOURCES**

*Discover a growing collection of good practices and inspiring examples*

#### **ASSESS YOUR SCHOOL**

*Get a personalised report on your school's inclusion policies and practices*

#### **INDICATE YOUR INTERESTS**

*Retrieve documents and case studies that match your interests*

#### **SUGGEST A RESOURCE**

*Share a project or a whole-school approach on inclusive education*



## New Zealand Film Crew Visit Dunhill, Co. Waterford

In early January last, members of the **Power Clan Gathering** played host to a **Maori** family from **New Zealand**. The family were visiting the area searching for their ancestor, **Thomas Power**. Thomas was convicted of sheep stealing in 1833 and sentenced to seven years transportation to **Australia**.

Accompanying the group were a film crew hoping to incorporate the family's **Waterford** experience into a documentary about Thomas Power's life in Waterford, Australia and beyond. The group were shown around **Dunhill Castle** where a tree planting ceremony took place after which they enjoyed lunch at **Harney's Bar** in **Dunhill village**.

Visiting Professor of Maori Studies, **Tom Roa**, gave a very interesting lecture in the Sailing Club in **Dungarvan** which was well attended. His talk outlined the circumstances of the terrible massacre of the village of **Rangiaowhia** and the efforts of Thomas Power to assist in the aftermath.

The following day the visitors enjoyed a private tour of **Curraghmore House** is another site associated with the **Powers**.



Film Crew at Dunhill Castle & Curraghmore House

### The Massacre at Rangiaowhia

The massacre was part of the collateral damage caused by the Waikato Wars. The invasion of the Waikato was the most important campaign of the nineteenth century New Zealand wars. These wars were fought between the military forces of the Colonial Government and a federation of Maori tribes. The campaign was fought by, at its peak, some 14,000 Imperial and Colonial forces and 4,000 Maori warriors from various tribal groups. Rangiaowhia was occupied by Waikato Maori who were supplying food to the troops at the front. On the morning of February 21, 1864, the Colonial and British forces attacked the village in an assault that was a complete surprise to its inhabitants. When the attack ceased, the invading British forces having, among other things, burned villager's houses, lost 5 members while 12 Maori lay dead.





The group also paid a visit to **Grannagh Castle, South Kilkenny**, and various other sites around Waterford City. **Robbie Neha**, a film director and direct descendant of Thomas said of this visit.

*“My family and I have always wanted to see where our ancestor came from. We’ve really enjoyed this experience over the past few days and hope to come back and show our film in Waterford once it is complete”.*

The group also bestowed generous Maori handcrafts and gifts on their hosts, which was much appreciated by all.



**Gifts Being Exchanged, (Above), and (Right), St. Paul’s Church, Rangiaowhia, There Since the Massacre in 1864**

Please be Aware of the Coronavirus COVID-19 and Follow **Best HSE Advice**

# Coronavirus COVID-19



**If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.**

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)

## All people are advised to:

- > **Reduce** social interactions
- > **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- > **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit [hse.ie](http://hse.ie) OR phone HSE Live **1850 24 1850**

## How to Prevent



**Wash**  
your hands well and often to avoid contamination



**Cover**  
your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue



**Avoid**  
touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands



**Clean**  
and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces



**Stop**  
shaking hands or hugging when saying hello or greeting other people



**Distance**  
yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people, especially those who might be unwell

## Symptoms

> Fever (High Temperature) > A Cough > Shortness of Breath > Breathing Difficulties

## For daily updates visit

[www.gov.ie/health-covid-19](http://www.gov.ie/health-covid-19)  
[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)



## Community Finance Ireland

Community projects in the South East are invited to explore social finance opportunities with [Community Finance Ireland](#), which issued almost €3 million in financial support to groups across the counties, between 2016 and 2019.

**Community Finance Ireland** helps community projects to access finance and drive social impact. It is the fastest growing dedicated social finance provider across the island of **Ireland and the UK**. The organisation supports projects ranging from community farms and sports clubs to environmental projects and cultural events.



### 28 local organisations have benefitted from our service including:

- Mount Leinster Rangers GAA
- JFK Trust
- Cloughjordan Community Farm and
- Ossary Youth Services.

In fact, **JFK Trust** and **Cloughjordan Community Farm**, recently participated in our new podcast feature – which will be launched later this year. More on that in the summer edition of the CCJ Newsletter.

### “Open for business” in 2020

Community Finance Ireland is now inviting applications from non-profit and voluntary organisations across the south east – and throughout Ireland – that are seeking finance to sustain or grow projects with social impact.

Commenting earlier this month **Dónal Traynor, Associate Director of Community Finance Ireland**, said:

*“Since the 2008 recession, finance has been harder to come by, particularly for non-profit organisations.*

*The funding landscape has changed dramatically, with progressive organisations – such as Community Finance Ireland – developing new and innovative approaches to meeting communities’ finance needs.*

*“The organisations we work with are, typically, run by volunteers. Unlike banks, we don’t ask for personal guarantees, and our finance products are specifically tailored for the community sector. We are a registered charity, so our motivation is not profit. Any profit we generate is reinvested into onward lending.*

*“Our mission is to ensure social impact is felt, not only dreamt, and we are all well on our way to supporting this ambition”. Loans of €2,370,000 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 or other postponed income.*

*“We are very much ‘open for business’, and we encourage community projects with big ideas to approach us to discuss their finance needs. We can provide loans ranging from €30,000 to €500,000 and we are always happy to meet organisations and discuss the different funding options available to them”.*

### Business All-Star for Customer Excellence

In recent months, Community Finance Ireland was recognised by the ‘*All-Ireland Business Foundation*’, the national body responsible for identifying and accrediting best-in-class Irish businesses. Community Finance Ireland received a ‘*Business All-Star*’ award, signifying it meets the highest standards of customer service and trust.



*“Our team was thrilled to receive this award,” said Dónal Traynor. “We know we deliver significant value for local communities. Our ‘Business All-Star’ award provides further proof of that. Importantly, it also provides reassurance to existing and potential customers that they will receive an excellent service from us. “We are committed to meeting and exceeding the standards set by the All-Ireland Business Foundation and we’re looking forward to helping even more organisations grow in 2020 through job creation, community engagement and economic development.”*



*Pictured is Kapil Khanna, Managing Director of the All-Ireland Business Foundation, and Dónal Traynor, Associate Director of Community Finance Ireland*

To see if we can help you visit [Community Finance](#) or follow us @ComFinanceIrl.

## WIT Launches Social Enterprise Management Course



Waterford Institute of Technology, (WIT), has launched its Certificate in Social Enterprise Management Course Programme, Level 7. This is a practical programme designed for people working in or wishing to work in the social enterprise sector, who are seeking an accredited qualification in social enterprise management. The programme has been designed in collaboration with social enterprise practitioners and policy makers and offers students a theoretical understanding of the practical skills for managing a social enterprise. The course runs from January to September 2020. It also involves Recognition of Prior Learning. Further information of the course can be found here: [Certificate Social Enterprise Management](#)





## Connemara West, (Social Enterprise), 1971-2020

### Enabling a Resilient Community

Kevin Heanue, Michael O'Neill and Janet O'Toole

### Introduction

**Established in 1971** on foot of a local fundraising drive, **Connemara West** is owned by 500 local shareholder families in a locally managed community organisation (**social enterprise**) based in **Letterfrack in Co. Galway**. It is situated about 60 miles west of Galway city in a stunningly beautiful landscape. Its area of operation is the parish of **Ballinakill**, that is, the postal districts of **Letterfrack, Tullycross, Tully, Moynard and Kylemore**.

The parish is an English-speaking area outside of the **Connemara Gaeltacht**. For close on 50 years **Connemara West** has been an innovation enabler and development catalyst in this region and helped create a resilient community. In some cases, the company directly established projects to address community needs. Over time some of these projects became independent projects in their own right and continue to positively impact on the community. In other cases, **Connemara West** partnered with public and private organisations in Ireland and abroad in order to achieve its goals. At other times, standalone projects or companies were directly created by **Connemara West**. Different responses at different times were needed to address community needs and opportunities.



GMIT Students, Letterfrack

Connemara West's mission is ***"To create a sustainable economic, social and cultural future for North West Connemara"***. To deliver on that the company has pioneered **education, heritage, culture, tourism, childcare, housing and sports projects**. The organisation has a 33 year long educational partnership with **Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT)** called the ***"National Centre of Excellence for Furniture Design and Technology"*** which is based in the **Connemara West Centre in Letterfrack** and is attended on an annual basis by over 200

undergraduate students from around Ireland and

abroad. The company also has a 46 year partnership with **Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Michigan** which has resulted in thousands of students and their families from **Michigan** spending up to 4 months each year in **North West Connemara**, studying **Irish history, literature and culture** as part of their study abroad in Ireland programme. These exchanges also build connections between communities in the **West of Ireland** and the **Mid-West of the United States**. **Connemara West** also has a 32-year partnership with **Galway Roscommon Education Training Board (GRET)** which provides second level and adult education opportunities for 86 students each year in **Letterfrack**.

The story of **Connemara West's** evolution over the past six decades is the story of a community being brave, taking risks (some worked, some didn't), being generous with their time and financial resources and partnering with others to chart its own destiny. Although it is impossible to outline all the activities that have taken place since 1971, what is outlined below are those key milestones in each decade that were pivotal in terms of either

their size, shaping resilience in the locality or addressing specific challenges or opportunities identified by the community at a particular time.



## We Were There!

As chairman of CCJ with membership officer Seamus Goggin we were invited to visit **Connemara West** in February 2019 by **Eamon O' Cuiv T.D.** (*Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs from 2002-2010 and Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and Islands from 1997-2001*)), who resides in **Cornamona in Connemara**. After a 4-hour journey we arrived to be welcomed by Eamon and **Michael 'O'Neill**. For the next few hours, we received an in-depth explanation of the many developments and a tour of the site. Michael O'Neill was a pioneer of rural regeneration in the area from the early 1960s, from which **Connemara West** was established in 1971. Eamon as minister with responsibility for rural regeneration was very supportive and helped the development in every way possible.

It was an inspirational experience vividly demonstrating the power of voluntary commitment, around care for and commitment to people and place. It incorporated a challenging vision breaking new ground in local, national and international partnerships. The collaborative approach between state agencies, the community and a network of national and international organisations was outstanding has to be seen to be understood. It is a leading community based social enterprise development in the country and a must for all involved in social enterprise development to visit and take in what was achieved there.

Every step taken was carefully planned. Each project combined to build confidence and capacity, using setbacks as learning points. The resources involved support funding, expertise, outstanding leadership and a full-time staff shared the dream and worked tirelessly to leverage the best resources from state, community and private sector including diaspora.

**A visit is highly recommended. The full story, a five-page article is accessible through the [CCJ Website](#)**

Many thanks to Kevin, Michael and Janet for producing this social enterprise case study covering the past 50 years. We strongly advise all our readers to visit our website and access the **Connemara West** case study and then to travel there and see and hear about the what and how. You will be inspired and motivated to great things back home.



Social Housing, Letterfrack Village



Connemara Cottages, Tullycross

For more information on Connemara West click here [Connemara West](#)





## Copper Coast Trad Fest Deferred

*Inaugural Festival of Music, Song and Dance will go Ahead Next Year*

After six months of preparation by a voluntary committee the **Copper Coast TradFest** due to be held from 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of April has been deferred to early 2021 as a result of **Covid 19**. An inaugural

TradFest was organised to celebrate a unique heritage of over 200 years of traditional music in the **Dunhill** area including surrounding villages. **Dunhill, Fenor, Boatsstrand, Annestown, Kill, Bunmahon and Stradbally** make up the seven villages of the Copper Coast and this new festival was met with great support and enthusiasm by the local population

The TradFest involved such headline acts as **Altan** (below left), and **Zoe Conway with John McIntyre** (below right), along with many other well-known musicians from around the country. The events that were planned included concerts, both night-time and lunchtime, training workshops and sessions as well as competitions for younger enthusiasts. Tickets were



already sold out for all the events and it was due to be an outstanding success. It is now hoped that the event can be successfully organised in early 2021.



**Aine McCarthy- Kent**, (pictured top left), well known musician and music teacher is the promoter supported by a very active and enthusiastic voluntary committee. Having held a very successful launch in the Dunhill Hall on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of March attended by **Waterford Mayor, John Pratt**, (pictured left), it was during the following week, decided in the face of the Covid 19 pandemic to defer to 2021

Further details and future plans for the festival are on the website  
[Copper Coast TradFest](#)





**SuNSE** is short for ‘**Support Networks for Social Enterprises**’. It is a **North West Europe Interreg** project and has nine partners from **Ireland, UK, Luxembourg, France** and **The Netherlands** making up the transitional network. We are working together to develop social enterprise hubs in Ireland and across our



EU partner countries. **SuNSE** is an ambitious EU Interreg project with the goal of supporting existing social enterprises and identifying and supporting the development of new social entrepreneurs, (SE’s), and enterprises, who address a social need.

**SuNSE** will support Social Enterprises and individuals with practical business supports, primarily individual mentoring, coaching and workshops to create and/or grow local businesses. As part of the services we are developing an online business platform to assist new businesses and people thinking of starting up a social business.

**Goal:** **SuNSE’s** goal is to support entrepreneurs with a social intent to start new and to grow existing social enterprises.

**How:** By providing a range of business support services and mentoring, (in areas such as business planning, financial management, marketing and commercialising opportunities), to existing social enterprises and to new social business start-ups. (See promotional poster below right).

**Target Market:** **SuNSE** supports social entrepreneurs to start and grow social businesses, (those which deliver social as well as economic benefits). The project aims to work with groups and individuals, offering them supportive learning environments which will enable them to establish locally based social businesses. **SuNSE** supports people and enterprises across a range of sectors and across the **Southern Region**, especially nonmetropolitan and disadvantaged geographical areas, assisting them to build sustainable businesses and communities.

### Practical Supports

#### *Physical Hub*

1. Physical office space in South East BIC Incubation Centre
2. Pop up hubs around the region.

#### *Business Development Services*

1. Business Start-up advice
2. Themed Workshops
3. (Finance, pricing, governance, Marketing)
4. One to one mentoring
5. business planning and Development
6. Sourcing and applying for funding

### SuNSE: Support Network for Social Entrepreneurs

**Goal: To deliver a support programme to assist Entrepreneurs with a Social intent to start and/or grow sustainable enterprises across all sectors**

**Email:**  
[sunse@southeastbic.ie](mailto:sunse@southeastbic.ie)

**WHERE:** Southern Region of Ireland  
**Duration:** 3 years to 30 December 2021

**CONTACT:** 051 356306 or  
Carol Thurston:  
[cthurston@southeastbic.ie](mailto:cthurston@southeastbic.ie)  
Siobhan Oates: [soates@southeastbic.ie](mailto:soates@southeastbic.ie)

**HOW:** By providing mentoring, business support services and access to funding, **ASSISTING** entrepreneurs build local social businesses that will deliver economic benefits to their area and to the economy



## A Norman Legacy is Set to Regenerate a Rural Irish Town

In August 2011, Longford County Council published A Draft for Consultation prepared by consultants *Brady Shipman Martin*. The report stated that Granard town was in decline and that in order to *‘survive and thrive in the present environment Granard must reinvent itself as a destination town’*. It pointed out that Granard had much to offer visitors if it was properly marketed and it provided a *‘point of interest’* to visitors. In particular it highlighted the importance of **Granard Motte** the highest such **Norman Motte** in Ireland.

Subsequent to the publication of the report the community of Granard and the surrounding area had several meetings to discuss the findings and what could be done to help the area. What was needed was a suitable property in which to locate a good modern visitor centre.

At the time **NAMA** had taken possession of what seemed to be the ideal property. It included two new commercial units on 15 acres of land. It was located approximately 200 metres from the town centre, and it adjoined the site on which Granard Motte was located. This was considered the ideal location for a visitor centre and it already had the necessary infrastructure, (buildings, carpark and land). However, there was one big problem, **NAMA** were putting the property up for sale immediately.

The community decided that this was a *‘once off’* opportunity and that although there was no funding in place the community should try to purchase the property at a reasonable price subject to the completion of a positive feasibility study. An interim committee was put in place and in May 2012 after a bidding process it was agreed to purchase the entire property for **€265.000** subject to completion of a feasibility study.

That was when **Granard Motte Community Enterprise, LTD** was formed to drive the project. After much hard work, annual fundraising and grant sourcing, the **Knights and Conquests Heritage Centre** opened in late September 2018 on this site.

The Heritage Centre will form part of the overall development of the 15-acre site into a **Norman Living History Village**. An onsite restaurant is nearly complete and breaking ground on the park development is scheduled for Summer 2020 with the whole site scheduled to open in **Summer 2021**.

In July 2019 **Faile Ireland** announced grant aid of **€640.000** for the Heritage Park and combined with nearly €3 million in funding under the **Rural regeneration and Development Fund** this enables this key visitor centre attraction to come to life.



**Granard Motte, (pictured above).**

**A Motte -and-Bailey Castle is a fortification with a wooden or stone keep on a raised area of ground called a motte, accompanied by an enclosed courtyard, or bailey, and surrounded by a protective ditch or palisade.**



*“There is no doubt that the Norman Heritage Centre will be a key attraction in Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and the team at Failte Ireland has helped to shape the project along with key partners. This idea from conception to securing funding has been a great example of public sector and communities coming together to create a brilliant attraction for visitors and locals alike”, Head of Attractions at Failte Ireland, Mary Stack said.*

*“Vitality, it will help create jobs in our local area, and this has been a key driver for us”.  
(Fr. Simon Cadam, Chair of Granard Motte Community Enterprise, CLG.*

Fr. Simon Cadam, Chair of Granard Motte Community Enterprise CLG (GMCE), said of the project:  
*“This is a community driven project which will bring to life one of the finest examples of an Anglo-Norman fortification in Ireland. Granard is home to the highest Norman Motte in Ireland, commanding spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and this new attraction will transform the visitor experience here. Vitality, it will help to create jobs in our local area, and this has been a key driver for us in the Granard Motte Community Enterprise”.*

**Links:**

[Knights and Conquests](#)  
[Granard Motte](#)  
[Motte and Bailey Castles](#)

**Pictures from  
Knights and  
Conquests  
Exhibition**

