

Communities Creating Jobs



Congratulations to CCJ Network Members on National and Global Awards in 2015!



**Copper Coast Geopark
Co. Waterford designated by
UNESCO as a Global Geopark**



**John Kearney, Irish Community
Rapid Response (ICRR) wins
Global Ashoka Award**

**U-Casadh Ltd Receiving Ireland 2015 Impact Award
(L-R) Madi Sharma UK, Richie Grant, Waterford/
Wexford E.T.B., Catherine Power Waterford Area Part-
nership and Stephen Plunkett C.E.O U-Casadh Ltd.**



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Table of Contents

CCJ Editorial	3
Copper Coast Geopark goes Global.....	4
U-Casadh wins Social Impact Award.....	5
John Kearney, ASHOKA Award Winner.....	6
Slane, Royal Meath's Jewel in the Crown.....	7
Moate Action Group, Plans for the Future.....	10
Killeshandra, A Community of Interest.....	12
Loughmore Café Co. Tipperary.....	14
RYE Connect, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone.....	16
West Cork News.....	18
Ballingarry (Thurles) Community Development.....	19
Waterford Suir Valley Railway.....	20
New Book; The Sociology of Unemployment.....	20



Grow Stronger and Faster Through CCJ Shared Learning Network!



Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) invites community development groups to form a voluntary national shared learning network focused on the development of social and community enterprises and jobs. In joining the network we can together create a stock of knowledge of immense benefit to community start ups, consolidations and expansions. CCJ provides access to new ideas, solutions, enabling tools, best practices, funding sources, replicable projects, site visits with briefings and access to its members with vast experience in community development projects. The support is **free of charge!**

CCJ offers 3 types of membership:

- **Ordinary** –community groups engaged in development and considering starting up.
- **Special**- individuals, organisations, clubs and institutions interested in helping such communities i.e. Councils, Institutes of Technologies, Private Industries, Leader Partnerships, LEOs, SICAPs etc.
- **Patrons** – Well-known people in business, education, sport, arts and civic society willing to endorse creation of jobs in local communities/clubs in their own counties/ regions

Membership fees: Organisations €25, Individuals €10 and Job Seekers €5

For further information visit www.ccj.ie or contact Seamus at ccj@dunhillecopark.com /051-396623

CCJ Editorial



Congratulations are due to :

- CCJ Board director John Kearney, Skibbereen on winning the ASHOKA Global Entrepreneurial Award
- Stephen Plunkett, CEO, U-Casadh on winning the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Impact Award.
- Copper Coast Geopark on being designated by UNESCO as a Global Geopark (2015).

The 3 awards are outstanding examples of social Enterprises with voluntary origins excelling within a few years on national, EU and global stages.

The past year witnessed very exciting developments in the community/ social enterprise sector. Government established an inter-department group on social enterprise to implement recommendations in Forfas Report (July 2013), under Minister for Rural Affairs Anne Phelan T.D., who is also charged with implementation of the 34 recommendations of the CEDRA Report (Commission for the

Economic Development of Rural Areas) An Expert Advisory Group was appointed to CEDRA implementation process. CCJ are well represented on CEDRA and Social Enterprise Task Force (SETF) which are engaged in both areas of community enterprise implementation.

Several new funding streams have been launched in 2015 under CEDRA including:

- ♣ Launch of Enterprise Ireland €5m community enterprise fund
- ♣ Launch of €30m fund for village and town renewal programme.
- ♣ Piloting of Regional Economic Development Zones (REDZ) projects (€3.6m)

Regional Action Plan for Jobs in every region. Government has provided €250m over 5 years to 2020 to drive new projects and innovations. Leader Partnership funding (2014-2020) is due in early 2016 with funds from Council's and LEOs. Social Innovation Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is all committed to supporting social enterprise development in 2016.

The year, 2016 has much promise and possibility for community groups engaged in enterprise and job creation.

Voluntary community enterprise organisations should consider joining CCJ to avail of the help being offered

See www.ccj.ie for further information including membership details.



*Communities Creating Jobs Ltd would like to wish everyone
A Very Happy Christmas and A Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.*

*We would also like to thank all our contributors to our quarterly Newsletter
throughout the year. Donal Traynor, Chairman.*

Further information www.ccj.ie

Copper Coast Geopark Awarded New UNESCO Global Geopark Designation



This Designation Offers a Powerful Tourism Development Incentive to Local Communities

Copper Coast Geopark, Waterford has been designated a UNESCO Global Geopark. It now has the same status as a World Heritage Site. The decision was taken by a vote at the General Conference in Paris in November. This is excellent news for Waterford as it recognizes the importance of this geological heritage site across the world. Chairman, Mike Sweeney says ‘This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the support of the communities within our boundary and the dedicated work of a small number of volunteers. The Copper Coast Geopark covers an area of 90 sq. km. including the villages of Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand, Anestown, Bunmahon, Stradbally and Kill. We are a charity and a largely voluntary organization and are most grateful for the help of local agencies including Solas and TÚS colleagues who have provided full time and part time staff support in recent years.’

The Geopark has come a long way since becoming the seventh Geopark in the world in 2001. The movement now includes 120 Geoparks throughout the world. Working with other Geoparks within the Geopark Network meant that the Copper Coast could participate in a number of InterReg funding projects (2004-14) which allowed us to develop a deeper understanding of the area’s rich geological and industrial past, enriching this with the experience of other geoparks throughout Europe. Funds also allowed for the purchase and conservation of a number of key buildings notably the engine house at Tankardstown and the old church at Bunmahon. Funding has been provided by a grant from Leader and loan support from Clan Credo to refurbish and extend the former church at Bunmahon which now acts as our headquarters and Visitor Centre, housing a café, a craft shop and an exhibition dedicated to the area’s rich cultural and geological heritage.

Mike also explains that purpose of a Geopark is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area’s natural, cultural and intangible heritages. They are about reconnecting human society at all levels to the planet we call home and to celebrate how our planet’s history has shaped every aspect of our lives and societies. Geoparks bring benefit to the regional economy, primarily through the promotion of tourism, but they also have an important role in education and working with communities to build pride of place. Ireland has 3 World Heritage sites Newgrange, Meath: Skellig Michael, Kerry: Giant’s Causeway, Antrim. It now has 3 UNESCO Global Geoparks:- Copper Coast Geopark Waterford-(the oldest Geopark in Ireland); Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, Clare: Marble Arch Caves Geopark in Fermanagh/Cavan.

For further information see www.coppercoastgeopark.com



 Copper Coast HQ Bunmahon Co Waterford and students receiving certs under Interreg Hercules Project 2013

Stephen Plunkett CEO, U-Casadh wins Social Entrepreneurs Ireland 2015 Impact Award

The Mansion House, Dublin – October 13th, 2015. U-Casadh were awarded the most sought-after prize in Irish Social Enterprise - the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) Impact award. The award includes €140,000 in cash, as well as expertise from some of the finest minds in the Irish business world. The venue was full to capacity as U-Casadh CEO, Stephen Plunkett, received his award from renowned Irish entrepreneur, Norah Casey, who excelled in her MC duties on the night. To make the moment even sweeter, U-Casadh had been commissioned by SEI to create the hand-crafted, slate and timber trophies which were presented to all 9 awardees on the night. Three organisations (U-Casadh, Nurture and Pro-Social Driving) received the Impact-level award, while 6 organisations received the Elevator award, which includes €30,000 in cash.

Stephen Plunkett, in his acceptance speech, thanked the Department of Social Protection and the Probation Service for their ongoing support of the project. He went on to speak about the average cost of keeping a person in prison for a year being a minimum of €65,000 and stated: "this isn't just a social injustice - it's a terrible business plan". He also stated that U-Casadh has "more than halved the re-offending rate" among its service-users. "Encouragement and belief, occupation and purpose" are the core beliefs at U-Casadh, while the "mantra", according to Stephen, is simple: "you can be whatever you want to be".

Stephen Plunkett is a former prison-officer who left the prison service in 2008 after being afforded an opportunity to do outreach work with the Waterford Area Partnership. In an effort to provide a community-based support that would prevent so many of the same people coming back through the 'revolving doors' of the jails, Stephen and supporters developed the U-Casadh Project as a company with charitable status in 2012 with the support of Waterford Area Partnership. U-Casadh means 'U-Turn', from the Irish word 'Casadh' - to twist or turn. The project is a registered charity which aims to: "be a catalyst for change in attitudes to crime, social exclusion, rehabilitation and justice".

The project has a 3-phase approach to supporting its service-users. Firstly, stabilisation around self-destructive behaviours, as well as supports around accessing fundamental needs, such as housing. Secondly, training/education based on the person's interests. Thirdly, "occupation with purpose" – which means supporting the person in relation to employment or entrepreneurship.

U-Casadh's 'World of Work' programme, which encapsulates this approach into a scalable (franchisable) model, means that organisations or individuals nationwide who wish to start an U-Casadh in their local area will soon be able to do so, with support from company headquarters in Ferrybank.

In attendance was Kilkenny-based Minister for Social Enterprise and Rural Affairs, Ann Phelan, who was delighted to see an organisation representing of the South-East winning one of this year's main awards. A video of the Stephen Plunkett's acceptance speech is available now on the www.ucasadh.ie blog.

Contact: Barry Grant, Tel: 0876714259, Email: press@ucasadh.ie



Stephen Plunkett CEO of U-Casadh Accepting Reward

Global award for West Cork-based social entrepreneur, John Kearney, “Bringing AandE Out Of The Hospital Directly To Those Who Need It.”

Serial social entrepreneur and local hero John Kearney has received a prestigious global Ashoka Fellowship award for revolutionising emergency response in rural parts of Ireland with his organisation, Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR). The award was announced on Tuesday September 15th



John Kearney, Carbery Enterprise Skibbereen is a founding member of CCJ.

Ashoka provides start-up finance and professional support services to over 3,000 social entrepreneurs (Ashoka Fellows) tackling social, environmental and economic challenges in over 70 countries. John Kearney joins this global network as the 14th Irish-based Fellow.

In times of acute medical need, such as cardiac arrest, 70% of patients in Ireland die at home while waiting for emergency medical attention. Particularly in rural areas, ambulance services are overstretched and it can take hours before critically ill patients reach an AandE unit.

John Kearney’s Irish Community Rapid Response (ICRR) is focused on the ‘golden hour’, the critical time when high-level early intervention can save a life. Across Ireland, over 100 rural-based GPs who have signed up to the ICCR system have trained as rapid responders. They now volunteer their time to attend to emergencies in their local area, working as part of the 112 and 999 emergency telephone number systems in conjunction with the National Ambulance Service. Since ICCR was established in 2008,

It is estimated to have saved over 100 lives.



A native of Baltimore in West Cork, Kearney chased adventure from an early age.

After stints in the Irish Navy and working as a pilot, he returned to Baltimore and set up a diving centre. After a diving accident resulted in a close friend becoming paraplegic, Kearney decided to set

up a team of volunteers to run an emergency intervention unit, the core of which subsequently became ICRR.

In July 2015, Kearney was involved in the search and rescue mission that followed the drowning of Barry Ryan, the son of Primark/Penneys founder Arthur Ryan, and two others in Baltimore.

In a media interview earlier this year, Kearney described ICCR as “*a mobile intensive care unit: we try to bring as much care to the emergency site as you would get in the emergency department early on.*”

He now aims to further expand ICCR across Ireland by training up to 300 GPs as volunteer responders through a new partnership with University College Dublin.

The Ashoka Fellowship brings international recognition to Kearney’s work in Ireland, and represents a vote of confidence that his model has the potential to scale internationally.

Commenting on the Fellowship award, Director of Ashoka Ireland Serena Mizzoni said:” “

John Kearney’s organisation has the unique power of providing a much-needed service while uniting communities around a common cause. His innovative and positive approach to emergency care will be an inspiration to the global community of Ashoka Fellows. We are delighted to welcome him into the network.”

For more information about ICRR and for details on how to contribute, please visit: www.icrr.ie



John Kearney of ICRR who received the global Ashoka Fellowship Award





The Jewel in the Crown of Royal Meath

Slane, a village community of 2,000 people is located in the heart of the Boyne Valley is one of the most unique heritage areas of Europe. The river Boyne winds its way through a landscape steeped in historical significance with remains from prehistoric times as far back as 10,000 years ago. This period covers the Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, early Medieval period, the coming of Christianity and Medieval period up to the present day.

Slane Castle is home to Lord Henry Mountcharles and is famous for hosting famous pop concerts involving the world's leading music bands and solo artistes to help fund the maintenance of castle and estate.

An issue that maintains a high profile for the village in the public eye is the ongoing debate on the most suitable route for a by-pass to facilitate the heavy flow of traffic through the village and minimise possible damage to the rich heritage legacy bestowed on the region.

Slane is 40 kilometres from Dublin with many people from local area employed in the capital and in the main county towns. The other main business activity is farming with rich farm lands dominating the surrounding landscape. Like many other small villages and towns countrywide Slane was badly hit by the financial meltdown of 2008. Many businesses, shops, buildings and sites closed including the local hotel.

In 2011 in order to stimulate an economic recovery and breathe new life into the village and surrounding areas a small group of people led by local businessman Pat Doyle organized a general meeting to consider and discuss a bottom up approach to economic regeneration. An invitation was issued to every house and voluntary group requesting representatives at the meeting. The meeting decided to establish 'Slane Community Forum' and adopted a constitution to guide its affairs. Representatives from 35 voluntary groups and private business interests now make up the membership of the forum. A needs analysis was completed following the distribution of a survey form to every house in the community.

Slane Community Forum is an umbrella body overseeing the implementation of a community development plan that involves the co-ordination of the work of all voluntary and business groups in Slane. The plan involves a collective vision for Slane as an innovator and driver of heritage, arts, crafts, food and music. Slane regards itself as the development hub for the Boyne Valley. The forum meets every 6 weeks to receive updates from the various groups and to review progress and plans.

A key piece of infrastructure for the village has been the establishment of the Community Hub Office which doubles as a Failte Ireland approved tourism office. It provides a service hub for all community groups and a support centre for all community activities. It employs 5 workers through various work schemes and operates on a 7 day week basis.

Achievements to Date (2011-2015)

Slane is Open for Business

Ten new or re-opened businesses including the Coyningham Hotel, craft shop, art gallery, restaurants, bakery, artisan food shop and others are building a new enterprise momentum in village life.

Twelve new voluntary groups have been established since 2011 and many existing voluntary and business groups have been re-energised. The new organisations include, Tourism Group, Craft Collective, Arts Studio, Youth Cafe, Enterprise and Development Group, Hill of Slane Archaeological Project, Hill of Slane Tour Guides, Slane Striders Walking Group, Mums and Toddlers Group, Communications Group, Tidy Towns Group, Community Alert, Boyne Canal Restoration Group, Slane Ancestry Group, Slane Community Centre Development Group and Slane Long Term Strategic Development Group.

A number of one-off and annual events include Flame of Slane Festival (€50,000 event); The Slane Mill Gathering, The Johnson's Music Festival, Solstice Festival, The Gourmet Food Festival, The Ledwidge Day Festival, The Lady Well Fete and the Hill of Slane Archaeological Field School have combined to transform the social, economic and cultural life of the area.

Projects Completed and Underway

An outstanding project has been the branding of an area in the village the 'Arty Quarter'. It hosts a number of gift and craft shops with select ranges of quality goods and gifts on offer. One such shop is the 'Craft Collective' which displays, promotes and sells the work of 14 crafts people from the local area. The 14 suppliers manage the shop in rotation throughout the week, promoting and selling each other's products. The subsequent low overheads make the project viable and sustainable. It has celebrated its 3rd anniversary in November 2015.

A major project currently under way is 'Waterways Through Time'. The Boyne Navigation is 39kms long linking Drogheda to Navan. En route it includes Newgrange, Oldbridge (site of Battle of Boyne) and Slane Castle to mention but a few outstanding heritage site. It has 10 river sections, 10 canal sections, 20 locks and 4 river crossings. The towpath is being transforming a Greenway and facilitating a wide range of facilities and developments. It is planned to become a major draw in attracting and retaining visitors in the Heritage Capital of Ireland. It will act as a strategic location for tourism in Ireland's Ancient East Tourism Project. The planned development of water and riverbank based activities and supporting facilities and services is targeting the creation of 300 additional sustainable jobs by 2020. Slane Community Forum has identified the absence of a central sports and community centre as a major deficiency in the village. This has now become the priority project for the village. **Slane Community Centre Ltd** has been established to construct and manage this facility. A multi-disciplinary group has been assembled to research, design, fund and implement an appropriate facility. The architect plans have been developed and project plans are being submitted to Council for planning permission. The building will be funded through a mixture of public grant applications (Sports Capital Grant and LEADER) and local fund raising.



The Boyne Canal and Towpath Greenway, -Before and After

Other significant projects in the village include:

- Slane Youth Café which involved the refurbishment of an old building with the community raising €100,000 to complete it.

Restoration of Boyne Canal and towpath/greenway- which is ongoing

- Setting up of a Failte Ireland office in Community Hub and run by the community.
- Renovation of Village Centre Square by Tidy Towns Group
- Hill of Slane Archaeological Project including trained group of volunteer guides.
- Hill of Slane Trail development and promotion
- Francis Ledwidge Cottage facilities (famous literary figure)
- Slane Wanderers Soccer Club facilities
- Slane GAA Club facilities



The Youth Café recently opened in Slane



The Hill of Slane

Slane Community Forum’s first phase of development ended in 2015. The second phase is now ready for implementation. The people of the village are very passionate about Slane and the success of the community forum has motivated and empowered them to build on its many assets and attractions. The forum has become a catalyst for dramatic and positive change over the past 5 years. There are many new opportunities for development around archaeology, built environment, restoration work, waterways, tourism, literature, crafts, enterprise and social innovation.

Slane Community has benefited from the manpower resources provided by various ‘back to work’ schemes: Community Employment, Tus, Rural Social Scheme and Gateway provide approx. 25 participants working on projects in Slane at any one time.

Many awards have been won including Top Community in Meath and All-Ireland Pride of Place. Craft Collective has won first place in the retail category in 2014 Meath Business and Tourism Awards. The



Pat Rhoda and Karen at the Community Hub

agencies have been very supportive including Meath Co Council, LEO, Leader Partnership, Tourism Ireland, Failte Ireland, Heritage Council, Crafts Council of Ireland and others.

Given Slane’s success to date the best has yet to come for the community of Slane. With inspired and visionary leadership, widespread volunteer participation and continued support of the agencies Slane is looking forward to introducing many new improvements over the coming years to 2020.

Slane has offered this project template to ‘Communities Creating Jobs’ as an enabling tool for other communities countrywide. It’s officers are willing to share the model with interested community groups. For further information contact Pat Doyle pm1arts@gmail.com or Donal O’Gorman donal.ogorman@dcu.ie



Moate Action Group Plans a Sustainable Future (Together We Can Make a Difference)

Background

Moate is a town in Westmeath with a population of 2,732 with a hinterland population of 4,817. The town suffered many setbacks during the financial recession (2008-2015) but is now organising a recovery mainly from within its own resources. The town lost a bank (AIB), pubs, shops and industries. It has been bypassed by the M6 motorway and is facing new competition from the opening of a motorway service station 3km west of the town.

On the positive side, the Dublin/Galway Cycleway is currently being completed along the old Midlands and Great Western Rail line. This work includes a partial refurbishment of the railway station which is part of the local heritage. The town has excellent educational facilities including a community school, 2 primary schools and Moate Business College.

Community Engagement

The town has some very active community groups who have enhanced the reputation of the area. These include the Moate All Whites GAA club and Community School, All Island Choir winners in 2015. The relatively recent developments of the Tuar Ard Theatre and Arts Centre, a sculpture "The Bargain", by Jackie McKenna, a major sports centre, a 30 acre amenity and heritage park and all-weather 5 a side pitches and tennis courts have provided a top class range of facilities that strengthens the spirit of the people and the social fabric of the community.

It is fair to state that Moate is a town with a purpose supported by highly motivated volunteers with a proven track record on community development across a wide range of interests and disciplines. It also has an enviable record on voluntary fundraising which provides matching funding for various projects.

Moate Action Group

Moate Action Group (MAG) was set up in April 2014 by a group involving Westmeath Co. Council, local councillors and representatives from community groups in the town. The aim is to address economic, social and environmental issues and opportunities in the town and hinterland. To make Moate one of the best small towns in Ireland the over riding objective is make it a better place in which to live, work, establish a business and visit. Moate Action Group wishes to liaise with other

groups in identifying added value projects that will enhance the area. It wants to work closely with statutory agencies including the Co. Council and attract and activate local investment where ever possible. The Director of Service, Westmeath Co. Council and local councillors are members of the management committee. The group is supported by sub committees covering planning, finance and community administration.

In its 18 months of existence Moate Action Group has produced a development model it wishes to share with other communities. As a member of CCJ it will accommodate site visits and briefings. Communities Creating Jobs are listing this development model as an enabling tool for promotion countrywide.

Recent activities and achievements include a community office with 2 staff members. A consultant was appointed in April 2015 to assist in preparing a



5 year regeneration plan for the town and include consultations with local groups/agencies – Westmeath Co. Council, Westmeath Community Development, Education and Training Board, Tidy Towns Committee, Residential groups, Environmental Project Groups. The 5 year plan was launched in September 2015 and is now in implementation stage. It contains over 60 recommendations all of which can be implemented using in the main local resources with some help from the agencies. The recommendations will be implemented if current resolve and collaboration is maintained.

Projects

In December 2014 a group was formed to establish a 'Mens Sheds Project' It is focused on providing activities for unemployed males and others living

alone. A building was identified where men can meet, pursue hobbies, share knowledge and enjoy refreshments together.

The Action Group is currently agreeing a budget to implement a number of environmental projects in 2016. The projects include

- (1) Relocation of a children's playground
- (2) Provision of a linear park
- (3) Promoting of the **Quaker heritage** in the town by erecting plaques, information signs and maps.
- (4) Westmeath Co. Council is providing a grant to help install a 1916 centenary Garden.
- (5) Moate Action Group hosted the opening of the Mullingar/ Athlone greenway 'along the old railway line.



The 'Old Rail Trail'

- (6) A successful **Bike Fest** was organised to coincide with the official opening.
- 7) It is intended to apply to Leader Partnership for funding to restore and reuse the old Railway station possibly as overnight accommodation.
- (8) The community office staff as part of their brief are working on a parking survey, a Diaspora register and a volunteer register.
- (9) Currently work is progressing on the renovation of *the Courthouse* into a Civic Centre with a plaza in the centre of the town. The refurbished Courthouse will accommodate a library and other community facilities.

(10) The **Dún na Sí Heritage Centre** on the Lake Road, the county Genealogy Centre, a restaurant, reproductions of various types of indigenous dwellings, and preserved farm machinery. The park was officially opened in 2015 and is an outstanding facility for town and surrounding areas. Dún na Sí also has its museum, housing artefacts found in the area dating from the Stone Age to the modern era. Dún na Sí employs up to 40 people and is mainly managed by volunteers.

(11) The extent of activities associated with the **Tuar Ard Arts and Enterprise centre** and Dún na Sí, **Midlands Amenity Park, Cycle Way** and other developments will present real opportunities in the future for this vibrant community.

(12) The projects / facilities in place, future projects contained in the 60 recommendations will create over 100 new job opportunities which will revitalise the local economy.

The 5 year plan offers an extremely bright future for the town of Moate and its environs.

If current levels of collaboration and motivation is maintained it will become one of the best small towns in Ireland.

Moate has in its favour a potent mix, of inspired local leadership, willing project teams of committed and competent volunteers, rich local assets, the support of the agencies and a desire to be the best it can possibly be.

There is no limit to what Moate Action Group can achieve in the future if it continues with its integrated approach to community development.



Moate Railway Station –a Potential Hostel Along the Greenway Route.

For Further Information contact Moate Action Group Community Office telephone no. 090 6466404

Killeshandra: Preparing for New Growth!



Killeshandra is a village in North West Cavan with a population of 400 and a combined hinterland population of 1,100. It is one of the most historic places in Ireland its origin dating back to Norman times. It is steeped in centuries of agriculture, archaeology, commerce, fishing, tourism and church histories. It has the potential to become a listed heritage town if sufficient finance can be sourced to restore a number of prime archaeological sites. Killeshandra has a long and proud record of progressive community action. In more recent times a cross-

section of voluntary groups are involved in pastoral council, community council, tidy towns, resource centre management, enterprise centre, elderly care homes, music and dance and the GAA are progressing their development strategies and plans. Positive actions are aimed at countering the economic decline that became so evident from the 1960s/ 1970s and 1980s onwards. During that period major businesses closed, Holy Rosary Sisters Order departed and young talent emigrated in search of employment opportunities.

Killeshandra has a proud farming tradition with the old Agriculture Dairying Co-operative Society founded in 1896 becoming the headquarters of Lakelands Dairies, now a worldwide exporting giant selling added value dairy products on the world market. Killeshandra is also a proud premier Angling Centre of Excellence with 7 of Cavan's 365 lakes located in its hinterland. A variety of fish species including pike, beam, roach, perch, carp, trout and others attract anglers from home and overseas. The lakes are also special areas of conservation renowned for its wildfowl including Great Crested Grebe, Mallard duck and Whooper swans which migrate from Iceland for the winter months. Killeshandra has also a strong tradition for Irish music which adds to its tourism potential. For visitors wanting an authentic Irish holiday Killeshandra is a dream destination.

With rural Ireland under the spotlight in the media and subject to much economic analysis and debate there is a new determination on the part of the politicians to promote its regeneration following study recommendations and supported by funding programmes. For communities to maximise support there is a need to produce integrated development plans in line with county, regional and national plan priorities.



The Vibrant Community of Killeshandra at work and play

New Opportunities Coming on Stream!

Killeshandra has a strong network of resources in its:

- Parish Council
- Family Resource Centre
- Pastoral Council
- Tidy Towns Group
- GAA Club- won Intermediate Football champion-



ship in 2013 and is part of a long proud tradition. They have contested a senior semi – final since then.

- Enterprise Centre with vacant unit space
- Rich agricultural hinterland, tradition and expertise
- Prime angling facilities
- Killokeen forest (Coillte) is open to new community tourism partnership strategy
- Global dairy giant Lakeland Dairies exporting value added dairy products worldwide
- Outstanding heritage sites involving built and written heritage for the culturally curious



The unique Rath Church on site of a 15th century church

- Close connectivity with Northern Ireland. (exports and joint venture potential)
- Local business network with shared, economic interests

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

Isaac Newton stated 'If we have been able to see further it is that we have been standing on the shoulders of giants'. In December 1994 a town plan was launched including developments in:

- Tourism
- Small and Medium Enterprise
- Built Environment
- Community and Social Infrastructure
- Agriculture

Significant progress was made in the intervening years under hard working local leaders and groups. It is now 21 years since that plan was unveiled.

A Time for Renewal

The national recovery is beginning to provide new funding streams and a more support environment for community enterprise groups in particular those focused on creating new job opportunities (2016-2020)

There are many communities ready for action if empowered. They are very capable of responding to incentives with a bottom up, self-reliant development agenda.

This new determination is surfacing at local level with support from Co Councils, Leader Partnerships, Local Enterprise Offices, Implementation of (1) CEDRA Report's 34 recommendations (2) Regional Action Plan for Jobs (3) Forfas Report (July 2013) on Social Enterprise. There is now a minister for state placed in charge of 2 inter-department committees (implementation of CEDRA recommendations and Social Enterprise development to ensure progress).

Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) jobs initiative is being piloted in Co Galway by Galway GAA, GMIT and CCJ. If successful it will be rolled out country-wide in 2016.

Social enterprise is gradually gaining recognition as the sponsor of new job creation in communities. There is no doubt that empowered communities with support from the agencies can make a significant contribution to the regeneration of the rural economy. Killeshandra is determined to be at the leading edge of development in Co. Cavan.



The church in Killeshandra on the 1st edition map



Sunset over Killeshandra Town Lake

For further information contact Eamonn Sexton; Killcomco@gmail.com or Chris Kirk; aervac2@hotmail.com.

LOUGHMORE COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD THE COTTAGE COMMUNITY SHOP AND TEAROOMS

Loughmore Community Co-operative was set up in 2012, its aim being to combat the lack of services and huge problem of rural isolation in the parish.



Loughmore is a small rural community in North Tipperary, with the village situated 6 miles from Thurles and 3 miles from Templemore. It has a population of 800, with approx. 300 houses in the parish. At one stage Loughmore was a thriving community with 7 businesses but sadly each one closed, except for one local pub that opened in the evenings. As a result the village was dying, One could drive through Loughmore on any given day and have no reason to stop. Unless you were going to Mass on a Sunday or had a child in the National School you would not meet anyone. The village was literally dying.

In 2011 two local ladies – Maeve O’Hair and Mary Fogarty were quite separately considering ideas of doing something to address the situation. Maeve had been actively thinking of opening a tearooms in order to create a social space in the village and Mary was thinking of reopening her parent’s grocery shop.

Maeve had first hand experience of rural isolation as she was left a young widow in 2006. She was running her organic farm and rearing her two children by herself. Mary was recovering from breast cancer and didn’t have the energy to travel to Thurles or Templemore for her messages. Mary was lamenting the fact that there were no shopping facilities in the village. By chance both ladies met and shared their thoughts, which ultimately led to them coming together to set up Loughmore Community Co-Op. Mary had researched the Plunkett Foundation UK model for several months and loved the concept of a community coming together to solve its problems.

The Plunkett Co-Operatives are run by communities for their own benefit, on a not for profit basis, with all profits going back into the community. As fate would have it Maeve’s sister owned a beautifully and lovingly restored old stone cottage in the centre of the village and offered it for rent. It is an ideal premises and Maeve and Mary were thrilled with the offer. So the seed for the development of Loughmore Community Co-Op was sown!!

Their next step was to organise a Christmas Market in the local community centre, at which the local food producers and crafts people were asked if they were interested in selling their goods on a more permanent basis in The Cottage Shop Tearooms, to which they all said a resounding YES!!!



A public meeting was called to which all the parishioners were invited. At this meeting the CEO of The Plunkett Foundation UK Peter Couchman attended and spoke about the 300 community shops that were trading very successfully all over the English countryside. Pat Killeen from North Tipperary Leader also spoke, as did Seamus O'Donoghue from ICOS and Rita Guinan from The North Tipperary Enterprise Board. The prospect of opening a Shop and Tearooms was put to the parish and they were offered the opportunity to become shareholders in the Co-op. Approximately 300 householders took up the offer of shares at €10 each which was a tremendous acknowledgement of their support.

North Tipperary Leader were very excited about this new project as it is the first of its kind in Ireland. Pat Killeen from North Tipperary Leader was a huge support to Maeve and Mary, offering all the help and advice available and also arranged for them to attend various conferences to gain experience and knowledge. At a conference in Athlone, Maeve and Mary met Peter Couchman from the Plunkett Foundation and were invited to England to see how the UK shops are run on a community on a not for profit basis, which they did. They were both very encouraged by their visit and knew that this model would work very well in Loughmore.

North Tipperary Leader sanctioned 75% funding for the project and the funds raised from the shareholding offer funded the cost of stocking the shop. The North Tipperary Enterprise Board organised free HACCP training for all the staff and volunteers and Maeve and Mary attended courses in Tearoom management in Ballymaloe, Co. Cork.

The doors of The Cottage Shop and Tearooms opened in August 2012 and has thrived and flourished ever since. It is going from strength to strength and has gained much attraction, not only locally, but nationally and internationally. This concept has the potential to change the face of rural Ireland and could be replicated by any community. Many, many groups have visited The Cottage, with Mary and Maeve offering their advice, knowledge and experience to anyone interested in setting up a Co-Op Shop and Tearooms.

They have also spoken at many meetings and conferences and were the keynote speakers at the Plunkett Foundation AGM in Oxford last year.

The Cottage now employs 4 people on a permanent and part time basis, with two Tús employees and a lady with special needs also working in the Co-op. About 12 volunteers also work at The Cottage, with many of the young teenagers gaining valuable work experience there during the summer months. Students also do their Transition Year experience and Gaisce Awards experience at The Cottage. Nine people supply local foods, and ten people sell their crafts through the Co-op.

This is a prime example of how a community works at its best. Words could not adequately express the life it has brought back to Loughmore. It has offered a beacon of light and hope to a once dying community. It has fulfilled all our ambitions and dreams and surpassed all our expectations.

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Founders Maeve O Hair and Mary

The project has won the Community Innovation award from CAVA and the overall CAVA award for setting up the project. In 2014 it was voted THE BEST TEAROOMS IN IRELAND by The Irish Times, which was a very proud moment for the entire parish.



Northern Ireland



RDC Welcomes Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) On Board RYE Connect

RYE Connect is a 3 year transnational enterprise programme targeting young people aged between 16 to 30 years living in rural areas. The initiative is joint funded by the EU Northern Periphery and Artic Programme (2014 – 2020) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development under their Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework.

The project will be delivered in Northern Ireland through a partnership comprising of RDC and Advantage with partners in Finland, Greenland and a wider Associate Network spanning the Northern Periphery and Artic (NPA) region.



L-R .Olga Gallagher, Director of Programmes Northern Ireland Rural Development Council, Senan Cooke Dunhill Rural Enterprises/ CCJ, Teresa Canavan CEO Northern Ireland RDC and Seamus Goggin Membership Officer CCJ at the signing of the Official Associate Partnership Agreement in Dunhill.

RDC are delighted to welcome Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) as our first Associate partner in Ireland. CCJ with its huge reservoir of knowledge, experience and skills will in conjunction with RDC be able to share best practice as well as provide opportunities to access RYE Connect resources. The extensive outreach activity undertaken within the RYE Connect programme will be supported by CCJ opening channels of communication with the young people in rural Ireland. CCJ as an Associate of RYE Connect can offer opportunities for young entrepreneurs locally, nationally, and internationally. RYE is a member of CCJ Network.

Rye Connect will offer solutions for young entrepreneurs through the use of online tools, international networks, and events, including:

- Access to all project resources and tools
- Access to an online Enterprise Support Platform
- Access to Business Investor Network
- Access to Transnational business market opportunities

A new set of training and online resources are currently being developed that will support young entrepreneurs at a number of key stages:-

- **Pre Start** Takes any young person with little or no previous business knowledge through what it takes to start a business, and helps to build confidence and a winning idea.
- **Start** Helps a young person learn how to get their business idea off the ground. Business resources, profiles and fact sheets will be available. Insights from experienced business people helps to avoid pitfalls.
- **Growth** Helps young entrepreneurs already running a business explore opportunities for growth. Helps taking the first steps towards trading outside home country.
- **Turn around** A support path for a struggling business. Promotes greater understanding of current situation and supports the young entrepreneur to plan a course of corrective action.

The programme aims to support young people wishing to set up a new business, entrepreneurs who have an existing business who wish to grow their business through export opportunities and those who are facing difficulties within their existing business who require support and guidance to turn their business around. RYE Connect will lend itself to allow young people throughout Ireland to engage and communicate with other entrepreneurs from within the NPA region.



RYE Connect Young Entrepreneurs

For further information on the programme please contact RDC on info@rdc.org.uk

or telephone 028 8676 6980.



News from West Cork -Carol Gilbert

Transatlantic Flights from Cork Airport

October's announcement that direct transatlantic flights are to begin next May from Cork airport to Boston, was enthusiastically welcomed across the board. With Cork to Barcelona also planned for May, and direct flights from Cork to New York City planned for 2017 Norwegian airlines is the carrier for these three new routes.

It's good news all the way with flights from Cork to Cardiff with Flybe one of the new routes started summer 2015 and Cork to London city started in October, with CityJet. Aer Lingus will operate a new route from Cork to Dusseldorf also from May 2016. Cork airport is calling for support for these new routes. It's the boost the south and south west has needed and has been calling for, for a long time past. **However, if we don't use it, we will lose it.**

Well done to all the teams who have worked on establishing these new routes. They are badly needed with the increasing numbers of tourists attracted to this country in no small way through what must be the best branding initiative of the century, the Wild Atlantic Way. The perfect starting point is of course from Cork as drivers and their passengers are travelling on the side of the road which enables them to enjoy the best view of the coastline.



The Ludgate Hub

The Ludgate Hub was launched by Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Alex White TD in August and opened in November. Skibbereen's new Digital Hub, Ludgate@Skibbereen, is an initiative that aims to create an entrepreneurial "ecosystem" in the region and seeks to create 500 jobs in five years with an initial 75 plus jobs in the start-up phase.

The Old Bakery building was made available by local entrepreneur, John Field and is in the process of refurbishment. The centre is named after Percy Ludgate, a Skibbereen native who is credited as the inventor of one of the world's first programmable portable computers.

Ludgate@Skibbereen was pioneered by a group of entrepreneurs, digital ambassadors and local business owners that were brought together by West Cork resident and Glen Dimplex CEO, Seán O'Driscoll.

The group operates as a non-profit company and has worked on a pro-bono basis over the last 12 months. With their networks reaching into global companies and organisations, their aim is to provide start-ups with the environment and mentoring support required to research and commercialise opportunities to compete on a global scale. The initiative will also work to attract the wider Irish Diaspora to bring their ideas and talent to Skibbereen.

Vodafone Ireland will be the telecoms partner to the project and SIRO, the ESB and Vodafone fibre broadband joint venture company, will provide the infrastructure to support 1000 Mbps speeds of high quality fibre broadband connectivity. It is hoped Ludgate@Skibbereen will create 500 direct jobs over the next five years while providing a blueprint that will help other rural communities to become part of Ireland's fast-growing digital economy.



Minister Alex White at Ludgate Hub Launch

Leonard Donnelly, of the Ludgate@Skibbereen steering group and former chairman of Dublin Digital Hub Development Agency said, "The hub will act as a catalyst for local economic development by initially housing up to 75 digital, technology and science innovators. Our formula at its simplest is a fusion of global business experience with first generation entrepreneurs and scientists. Our bottom up plan for the area is a new bandwidth based bridge where we can now link arms to promote Skibbereen with Government Agencies, form partnerships with other Digital Co Ops and most importantly involve all our families working abroad and away from home, to shape their future in the place they all call home in West Cork." Anne O'Leary, CEO Vodafone Ireland and a member of the steering committee added, "We are delighted to provide dedicated connectivity for Ludgate@Skibbereen which demonstrates our on-going and long-term commitment to investing in and supporting business in Ireland and as well

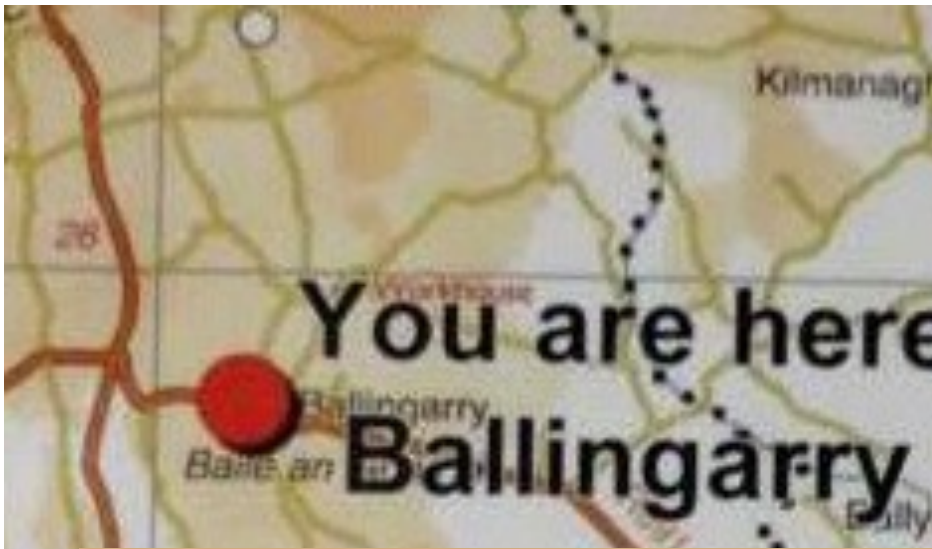
as providing connectivity to rural areas. The commitment and support from Vodafone and SIRO will amplify the efforts to create an innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem, and illustrates once 'connected' you can successfully work from one of the most beautiful locations in the world".

Ludgate@Skibbereen will host Ireland's first ever National Digital Week in November 2015 to coincide with its official opening. This will showcase high profile international and national speakers and will host a multitude of seminars, workshops and activities. The full steering group consists of: Kevin Buckley, Co-Founder and CEO, Spearline Labs; Leonard Donnelly, Technology Entrepreneur; Oliver Farrell, Co-Founder and Chairman, Vilicom; John Field, JJ. Field and Co; Dee Forbes, President of Discovery Networks, Northern Europe; Lord David Puttnam, award winning film producer and digital champion for Ireland; Sean O'Driscoll, Chairman and CEO, Glen Dimplex Group; Anne O'Leary: CEO Vodafone, Ireland and Adam Walsh, General Manager at JJ. Field and Co. Further information on Ludgate@Skibbereen can be found at www.ludgate.ie.

And there's more good news

The first ever Master's course in Organic Horticulture in Europe takes place at Lissard Estate, on the outskirts of Skibbereen. The course, now in its fourth year, is accredited by University College Cork, and this year's intake includes graduates from Germany, the United States and India as well as a good representation from Ireland.





Staff and Board Ballingarry

Ballingarry (Thurles) Community Development Ltd is a company was founded in 2002. It is a limited company affiliated to Muintir Na Tire. The Community Development Centre is located one mile from Ballingarry village in The Ballingarry Enterprise Centre.

The projects we are currently sponsoring are Slieveardagh CITE which is an I.T centre and Brightsparks Childcare. The Community Employment Scheme is a trading entity under the company name. The scheme is for Ballingarry, The Commons, Mullinahone, Drangan and Cloneen. James Ivors is the CE supervisor and there are 15 participants on the scheme.

Our programmes are part funded by POBAL through a Community Services programme. Unfortunately over the last year, we have suffered cuts to our funding. As a company we are continuously looking to develop Social Enterprises. The company also administers the Senior Alert Alarms scheme, SAS. This is funded through POBAL At present we are supporting local businesses with premises to rent in the enterprise centre. Businesses operating from the Enterprise centre are Bodyworks Physical Therapy and Mobile Magnet.

The Slieveardagh CITE office continues to be a real asset in the community where people can avail of our office services including internet access. We can help you with online motor tax, booking flights on line, printing, photocopying, faxing, scanning and sending documents. We also provide a space for hot desking (a quiet space/work station to enable people to work and access Wi-Fi). Over the last year we have provided training for CE schemes and basic computer classes for people in the community. We are hoping to run more I.T courses in the future (subject to funding) and also agricultural courses for the rural community.

We are subject to public funding at all times; therefore there is always the possibility of the loss or reduction in funding. Trying to stay within budget is a struggle during the current economic climate. Fundraising will always be necessary. Linkage to county structure Public Participation Network (PPN) and Communities Creating Jobs will be necessary for our organisation in the future.

In total the company employs 30 staff between childcare staff, CE scheme participants and CSP Manager/staff. In looking to the future we would like to consolidate the services we have and retain our current level of funding and continue to develop enterprise and create jobs where possible. Feel free to check out our Facebook page (Slieveardagh Cite) and please contact Avril/Linda if you are interested in finding out more about any of our current initiatives/training programmes etc. or Sally for childcare information 052 9154896 or email :

slieveardaghcite@gmail.com

Present Board of Directors are Michael Kealy, Sr. Patricia Wall, Annie Heapy, Bill Martin, John O Connell, Dan Finnegan, and Kathleen Walton.

Waterford and Suir Valley Railway

The Waterford and Suir Valley Railway Company is a Social Enterprise based in Kilmeadan Station, Kilmeadan, Co Waterford. It was set up in 2000 to develop a narrow gauge railway as a tourist attraction on a section of the abandoned Waterford – Cork railway line between Kilmeadan and Bilberry outside Waterford City. The railway opened to the public in 2003 and now welcomes an average of 27,000 visitors per year to enjoy the railway experience of a 45 minute journey through the countryside and along the banks of the River Suir, through the Magic Wood and on to the Toll Plaza for the River Suir Bridge (Thomas Francis Meagher Bridge).

Waterford Council is developing the 48km Waterford Greenway from Waterford City to Dungarvan, 10km of which will run adjacent to the railway track. The Greenway development includes station platforms at Mount Congreve Gardens and Bilberry and will open in May 2016.

In December, the Waterford and Suir Valley Railway operates the Santa Express. On arrival to Kilmeadan Station the conductor checks your tickets and gives you red blankets to keep you warm, listening to Christmas music set off on a 20 minute train journey to meet Mrs Claus in the Magic Wood, return to the Station to visit Santa in his cosy railway cottage.

While at the station, meet the Mayfield Birds of Prey and enjoy a hot chocolate from Mrs Claus's Hot Chocolate Stand.

Fares for children are €16 and Adults .

**This is a very popular event and must be booked in advance.
To reserve your tickets telephone 051 384058**



Communities Creating Jobs: Christmas Book Choice' The Sociology of Unemployment by Tom Boland and Ray Griffin

The Sociology of Unemployment (2015) Edited by Tom Boland and Ray Griffin, Manchester University Press

Both editors are lecturers in Waterford Institute of Technology. They have organised a series of chapter themes that explore important issues on unemployment. The chapters range from 'Experiencing Unemployment to a Case Study on Waterford Crystal's Redundant Workers, to Irish Social Welfare System, to Statistics: Statistical Composition of Unemployment and much more.

The book is essential reading for stakeholders in the Irish economy and for Irish citizens concerned with the effects of unemployment. It is of particular interest to those involved in supporting the unemployed in returning to work in motivating and upgrading their skills base. The public service, education system and employers will gain valuable insights into the nightmare experiences faced

by them, in particular the young long term unemployed and elderly redundant.

The demeaning and undermining elements of the social welfare process is well documented. The negative impact on individual, family, community and society in general creates needs an urgent solution. The unemployed deserve more than statistical examination as problems and liabilities. They are assets with potential to be refined and returned to the workforce at earliest opportunity. A change of strategy and

structure is needed in order to re-employ the rich dormant skills and experiences that were once in the gift of wealth creators when in work. The redundant are poorly served by a one cap fits all support system that is slow, inflexible and unimaginative in reengaging lost talent in a growing economy and society so badly in need of it. A worthwhile read with plenty food for thought.

