



Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann

Autumn News 2015

Email: info@irishrurallink.ie Tel. (090) 6482744 Unit 2A, Moate Business Park, Clara Rd,

Renewal of Towns & Villages in North Westmeath



IRL held a seminar on the renewal of towns and villages in association with Westmeath County Council in the Hotel Castlepollard in June.

The seminar was opened by Cllr. Paddy Hill Cahtaoir-leach and was addressed by Seamus Boland, Pat Gallagher CEO Westmeath County Council, Peadar O'Casey Ogonnelloe Project and Hugh O'Reilly Chief officer Westmeath Local Development Committee.

The round tables discussion identified a number of development opportunities for North Westmeath including

building on the natural landscape as a tourist attraction, the local heritage, a strong sense of community etc. A cooperative approach between local community and the relevant agencies can maximize the local assets/opportunities for the benefit of North Westmeath. To truly address the potential the lack of infrastructure will need to be addressed. The local residents in attendance believed that the lack of rural transport and broadband especially limiting the development of the area.

The seminar identified a number of opportunities to assist the development of North Westmeath, the community and Westmeath County Council must now work together

to develop these opportunities.

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IRL has identified rural broadband as a priority for this year's budget. IRL believes an appropriate budget must be allocated to deliver high speed broadband to the last 400,000 rural households and premises in rural Ireland. The lack of adequate broadband is preventing the rural economy from reaching its full potential. Rural areas require sufficient infrastructure to allow them to compete with urban centre's

See IRL's Budget Submission on

www.irishrurallink.ie

Western Meals on Wheels Network Launched By An Taoiseach

IRL are delighted that An Taoiseach Enda Kenny launched the newly formed Western Meals on Wheels Network in Castlebar in June.

IRL are please to represent the views of the meals on wheels groups all over the country. These groups provide a valuable service to those that are most isolated.

The aim of the Western Meals on Wheels is to provide a local; community led professional facility to as-

sist people who require services to maintain optimum health and independence.

Members of the new Network include; Forum Social Care; Mayo Abbey CRC; Brickens Care for the Elderly; Castlebar Social Voluntary Services, Ballina Community Centre, Seirbhisi Curam Chill Chomain, South West Mayo Development Company, Louisburgh/Killeen Meals on Wheels, Oughterard Meals on Wheels,

Ballinasloe Social Services, Westport Social Services, Elphin Social Services, Solas FRC, Longford Meals on Wheels, Ballyshannon Meals on Wheels.

According to An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny 'Meals on Wheels are a very important part of social services provided throughout the country. Its very good that MoW falls under the IRL Umbrella, I think that very commendable.'

For information contact James@irishrurallink.ie



**Promoting
Optimal Health
& Independence
in our
Communities**

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Seamus Boland IRL, Martina Gavin Forum Social Services, An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Clare Purton Westport Social Services & PJ Nally Castlebar Social Services at the Launch of Western Meals on Wheels Network

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Community Wetlands Forum

Community Wetlands Forum

In late August, the Community Wetlands Forum met in Corlea Visitor Centre for the third Annual Barry Raftery Conference. The conference heard from a range of different speakers including forum members Chris Uys, Donal Mac An Bheatha and Seamus Boland. The Community Wetlands Forum would like to thank Wetlands Heritage Ireland for organising this interesting and informative event and look forward to next

year's conference.

In the upcoming months, the Community Wetlands Forum will be working with students from NUI Galway to investigate how communities can benefit from wetland sites while also being mindful of conservation. We look forward to hearing ideas from the students.

Noel Kinahan joins the IRL Team-

Noel hails from Castlepollard, Co Westmeath, and will be working as a Policy Researcher and currently has responsibility for IRL's Funding for Rural Small Businesses..

Noel brings a wide skillset to his work thanks to his project management and business development work. Since moving from Dublin to Westmeath nearly 25 years ago he has enjoyed becoming involved in the local community. We welcome Noel to the IRL team.

IRL's meeting with the Savings Bank Foundation for International Cooperation (SBFIC)

Photo: Nielaus Nergmann (CEO SBFIC) and Dr. Juergen Engel (Eiropo Project Manager) with Seamus Boland and Noel Kinahan during their recent visit to IRL.



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Cllr Paddy Hill Cearthaoirleach Westmeath County Council addressing the Castlepollard Seminar Below Local TD Robert Troy with Donie Cassidy attend the Castlepollard Seminar



IRL's Benefit 4 Program has recommenced.

We are offering Basic Computer Training FREE to over 65's At venues near you!

If you are interested in offering Computer training to your members or want to receive training contact: Chrissy@irishrurallink.ie



Meals On Wheels Invitation

A Meals on Wheel Network has now been formed under the umbrella of Irish Rural Link to tackle the issues affecting the delivery of the service. Issues include cuts to funding, increasing bureaucracy, food labelling, employment schemes etc. Irish Rural Link are calling on Meals on Wheels organisations around the country to

contact them if they are interested in becoming members of this network.

You can contact James Claffey IRL on 090 6482744 or email james@irishrurallink.ie for more information



IRL Coordinated the Eircode Community Outreach Programme During April—July 2015 To assist the more vulnerable members of our society to understand the benefits and encourage uptake of EIRCODE in partnership with the Wheel.



ISSUE	RECOMMENDATIONS
Rural Strategies	The establishment of a cabinet committee to oversee rural regeneration as outlines in the CEDRA report
Rural Income Protection	Maintain current levels of Social Welfare to those at the lowest level of income in rural Ireland Expand the Rural Social Scheme & Community Services Scheme Maintain current levels of Farm Assist
Education	A full review of grant and other supports to students attending second and third level education , with particular emphasis on the cost for rural based students A comprehensive analysis of affordability of school, particularly for families who are on low wage employment Cost benefit analysis approach to amalgamation of rural primary schools
Rural Energy Poverty	Develop an Energy Poverty Strategy & adopt proposals of the Energy Poverty Coalition Ring fence revenue from carbon tax to off set fuel poverty and provide support for alternative fuels and heating systems
Community led Renewable Energy Projects	There is a need to offer financial support to community led projects for the initial structural costs
Rural Enterprise & Employment	Support entrepreneurialism and diversity employment in rural areas
Local Public Banking	Develop an employment based training programme A nationwide network of 8—10 local public banks which are managed independently but with an identical business model working under identical management principles
Investment Policy	Continue investment in Broadband infrastructure
Rural Development Programme	Develop microfinance for small or rural enterprises Design environmental programmes which will protect the environment and will also create jobs
Rain Water Harvest	Put in place rain water collection systems on every farm using existing infrastructure. Financial support to farmers would be designed under the new EU programmes for rural development
Regional Development	Issue a new White Paper on rural development and undertake to prioritise investment in rural community development Implement the CEDRA Report Activate and continue Gateway Innovation FUND Engage with communities to tackle ghost estates
Small Towns /Villages	Launch a targeted stimulus programme aimed at regenerating rural towns and villages
Service	Establish a study of the feasibility of essential services to rural areas using a cost benefit approach
Septic Tank Grants	Expand the grant system. Raise the level of grants
Benefit 4 Basic Computer Training Programme	The decision to cut funding to the Benefit 4 programme should be reversed immediately as this programme provides essential training to those marginalised in the new digital age.

Your business tag line here.

BUSINESS NAME

Primary Business Address
Your Address Line 2
Your Address Line 3
Your Address Line 4
Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
E-mail:
someone@example.com

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

**We're on the
Web!
example.com**

Back Page Story Headline

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to

give your newsletter a personal touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.



Caption describing picture or graphic.