



Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann

SPRING NEWSLETTER

March 2018

Date for Your Diary:

Irish Rural Link Annual Conference will take place on **Friday 11th May in Cavan Crystal Hotel, Cavan** at 9.00am. The Conference will be opened
by

**Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation Heather
Humphreys.**

Details to follow



Getting Citizens Online class in Athlone receiving their Certificates

Getting Citizens Online

Getting Citizens Online and IT Skills for Farmers - Free Basic Computer Classes delivered by Irish Rural Link commenced again in January and continue to take place across the country, providing basic digital skills training to people in the community that have never used a computer before. Getting Citizens Online Programme is a continuation of the BenefIT programme which IRL ran for 3 years and trained over 4,500 citizens. These computer courses are free and took place at a range of venues around the country and on the Islands. The main objective is to get more people online and be able to send an email, Skype with friends and family around the world, while the IT Skills for Farmers covers Farmer Registration, Calf and Herd Registration, Computer Literacy, Compliance Certs, Internet Search, Revenue and other Government websites and banking online. Classes are free and take place over a 5 week period with 2 hour classes per week. Training is provided by fully qualified Computer Tutors.

For further information, contact Training Co-coordinator Mary Keyes Cornally 090 6482744



ALL IN
FOR
'GETTING
CITIZENS
ON LINE'
FARMER
TRAINING

IRL's Local Public Banking Project

A date in September has now been set for the proposed visit to Germany of the Finance Committee to see the operation of the Sparkassen banks following on from Irish Rural Links's appearance before that committee in November 2017.

Irish Rural Link and Sparkassen met with the Oireachtas Committee on Business Enterprise and Innovation on Tuesday 30th January to discuss how Local Public Banking can build local communities and their economies and circulate sustainable credit for SME's and Micro Enterprises. Opening Statements from Irish Rural Link Seamus Boland and from Harald Felzen, Sparkassen Foundation, are available on our website at www.irishrurallink.ie/category/public-banking/. An invitation has also been made to the Committee to travel to Germany to investigate the model further.

Link to the Committee meeting is available on <http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=37714&&CatID=127> and starts at about 2h 15mins in.

The report on the Consultation on Community Banking is expected before Easter. Over the last number of months IRL have been working with both the Department of Finance and the Department of Rural and Community Development to provide further detail on the submission made to the consultation process.

What is Sparkasse!

Below is link to a short video explaining how German Sparkasse model of banking works. Irish Rural Link have been working with Sparkasse Germany for over two years on how this model of

Local Public Banking could work in Ireland and have made proposals to Government to pilot this model in the Midlands region of the country

<https://youtu.be/lewMhfftIFk>

IRL & Sparkassen with members of the Oireachtas Committee on Business, Enterprise and Innovation in January 2018



MICRO Partners in Malaga January 2018

MICRO - ERASMUS Project 2016 - 2018

The third partner meeting of the MICRO project was in Malaga on January 25th and 26th, a Project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, Key Action 2, Strategic Partnerships for Vocational and Educational Training. Maria Pettit and Siobhan Kinahan were representing IRL at the meeting and one of our board members, Maria O’Gorman also travelled to observe.

MICRO is implemented by 7 partners from 6 countries (Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia and Spain), with IRL as the lead partner.

The idea behind MICRO is to sustain the growth and competitiveness of rural microenterprises by developing practical training resources and a dedicated Open Educational Resource (OER Platform). The platform will initially contain short focused online training on topics suggested from a consultation with microenterprises in rural areas in each of the 6 participating countries.

During the meeting, partners revised the OER Platform and finalized the training courses we have developed. Furthermore, we agreed upon the timeline for delivering training under the Test and Validation phase.

Pilot training is starting to be rolled out across all the partner countries to the target group of rural micro enterprises, to obtain vital feedback to fine-tune the modules and website platform.

An important issue discussed in the meeting was dissemination activities. Partners are strongly committed to give great visibility to the Project, and as part of this a dedicated Multiplier Event will be held in each Project country during the next months in addition to normal online and offline dissemination activities. IRL will dedicate our Annual Conference in May this year to promote the MICRO project. More information about MICRO and Educational Modules are available on <http://www.microsmetraining.eu/>



MICRO Project Partners – 3rd meeting in Malaga January 2018

Submissions, Advocacy and Media Work

A number of submissions were made since January to different Government Departments on various strategies and policies including Submissions to each of the Regional Assembly's (Eastern & Midlands, Northern & Western and Southern) Spatial and Economic Strategy; Submission to the Future of Mental Healthcare, The Future of Policing, Submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Education & Skills, All submissions are available on <http://www.irishrurallink.ie/category/resources/publications/>

IRL were in front of Oireachtas Committee for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation on Public Banking in January and Oireachtas Committee on Education & Skills on Education and Inequalities in February. We also attended the Monitoring Committee Meeting on Action Plan for Rural Development in Killaloe, where the focus was on rural jobs.

IRL participated in a number of media interviews -Local and National radio and newspapers on different topics including; National Broadband Plan and withdrawal by Eir from the tender process, launch of National Planning Framework - Ireland 2040, rural crime and security and call for establishment of policing forum. Ahead of Storm Emma and the cold weather, we made a public plea for people to check in on elderly and vulnerable neighbours, especially those living alone, during the days of the snow and ensure they had enough food and fuel over the few days.



Seamus Boland speaking at Wicklow PPN event in February 2018

Introducing *The Next Chapter* ...

... a new project targeting women to develop their ideas, build communities and support the transition out of conflict. *The Next Chapter* aims to improve the representation of women in public and political life and contribute to a more gender-sensitive society in Northern Ireland and the border regions of the Republic of Ireland.

Why do we need it? It is widely accepted that there has been insufficient representation of women in peace negotiations and in engagement in community reconciliation. However, in order to create a lasting legacy we need to make sure that women's voices are heard. Peace is something more than the absence of violence – it's a vision for a shared, diverse society where all lives are respected and valued.

Who are the partners and funders? The project will be delivered in partnership by Politics Plus, Irish Rural Link and Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), and is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). *The Next Chapter* will contribute to SEUPB's overarching programme output of regional level projects that result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between persons from different communities.

When is it happening? *The Next Chapter* is a two-year project. ***Plans are currently underway and the launch will take place in Spring 2018.***

Where is it taking place? The project will take place right across Northern Ireland and the border regions of the Republic of Ireland.

How can you get involved? *The Next Chapter* will include the creation of a network of people working together to support peace and reconciliation, mobilising social change in their own communities and nurturing aspirations on a shared future. 10 Chapters will be set up, with three of these based in the border region of the Republic of Ireland.

If you know of any individuals or groups who would like to participate in the project or for further information please contact Sinead Dooley at sinead@irishrurallink.ie or Project Co-ordinator Sarah Malone at Sarah@irishrurallink.ie

The Next Chapter
Steering group with
SEUPB in Belfast.



NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK CONGRATULATES 19 PROJECTS SHORTLISTED FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF THE EUROPEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE (EIP)

The National Rural Network today congratulated the 19 local projects shortlisted to proceed to the second round of the European Innovation Partnerships Initiative (EIP). These projects will now be funded to develop a project plan, and a smaller number will then be selected to move to full implementation.

The National Rural Network in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine held a workshop in Portlaoise on 14th March 2018 to assist the 19 groups in developing their project plans.

The EIP is part of Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014–2020, and it involves groups coming together to develop and implement innovative ideas to address key challenges for the agri-food sector. The programme has two streams: the first focusses on themes such as farm viability, economic performance, sustainable forest management and innovative technologies. The second stream focuses on challenges related to environmental, biodiversity and climate change issues.



EIP Event March 2018



EIP event March 2018



EIP event in the Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise, Wednesday 14th March

Networks

Irish Rural Link continue to work with Rural Transport Network, Community Wetlands Forum and Meals on Wheels Network.

Rural Transport Network

Irish Rural Link continue to provide administrative support to the Rural Transport Network. RTN is the independent & collective voice for the ongoing development of integrated transport solutions. It is a network of the 17 Local Link TCU's. There are 17 Local Link companies nationwide providing public transport in rural areas. The three service models provided are; Scheduled Fixed Transport: High frequency services with a regular route, stopping places and timetables; Scheduled Flexible Transport: Timetabled regular departure but deviates from route to pick up/set down passengers closer to their destination and Demand Responsive: respond to requests for services and operate by making specific trips to pick up and drop off passengers at the door.

To find your nearest Local Link, services and timetables are available on www.locallink.ie/en/contact-us/

Date for Your Diary: 'Let's Talk Cleaner Greener Transport' Conference 4th April at 9.30 am in Mill Park Hotel , Donegal Town

SITT/Locallink Donegal will host a conference on Wednesday 4th April in Donegal town where the findings of a recent Pilot Scheme on greener transport will be presented.

Over February and into March 2018, Local Link Donegal partnered with a number of Stakeholders; Letterkenny Hospital, Private Hackney/Taxi operators, SEAI, NTA, Dept of Transport, ESB eCars and 2 electric car manufacturers for a pilot scheme that aims to move Renal Dialysis Transport, which Local Link Donegal coordinate and manage, from diesel fuelled taxis/hackneys to more sustainable transport that will be more efficient and reduce carbon footprint. Six of their current vehicles were replaced by a mix of 7 sustainable vehicles; 2 x Electric Vehicles, 3 x Plug in Hybrids and 2x Hybrids.

To register for this conference please contact Claire on Tel: 07497 41644 or Email: donegal@locallink.ie More information about this conference and pilot scheme are available on <http://locallinkdonegal.ie/>

Community Wetlands Forum

The Community Wetlands Forum had a meeting on the 26th January in Meath. Girley Bog hosted the meeting in Drewstown House. Transition Year Students, Emma Kelly and Brian Conlon from Moate Community College presented their BT Young Scientist project to the group. Their project looked at the impact Gorse Fires have on ecological system and won a display award for their project. Pat Martin from EU LIFE also presented at the meeting on making an application to EU LIFE projects. Following the meeting, the group were brought on a walk of Girley Bog. The next CWF meeting will take place on Friday 23rd March, in St. Killian's Heritage Centre, Mullagh, Co, Cavan and will be hosted by Killyconny Bog.

More information about CWF and Strategic Plan is available on <http://www.communitywetlandsforum.ie/> You can follow CWF on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/communitywetlandsforum/>

Save the Date: Review of CWF Strategic Plan will take place in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary on Friday 25th May. More Details to follow. New members welcome.



Community Wetlands Forum meeting hosted by Girley Bog in Drewstown House, Co. Meath in January 2018



TY Students Brian Conlon and Emma Kelly from Moate Community College presenting their project to the Community Wetlands Forum



Meals on Wheels Network

Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Jim Daly visited Castlebar Meals on Wheels on Tuesday 13th February. During his visit, the Minister acknowledged the important and vital service Meals on Wheels provide to older people in the community. He is committed to making Meals on Wheels one of his main priorities while in office. He is aiming for Meals on Wheels to become a standardised, properly funded service the length and breadth of the country. The Minister took a tour of the kitchen and spoke with the Chefs, van drivers and volunteers about the meals they cook and deliver on 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

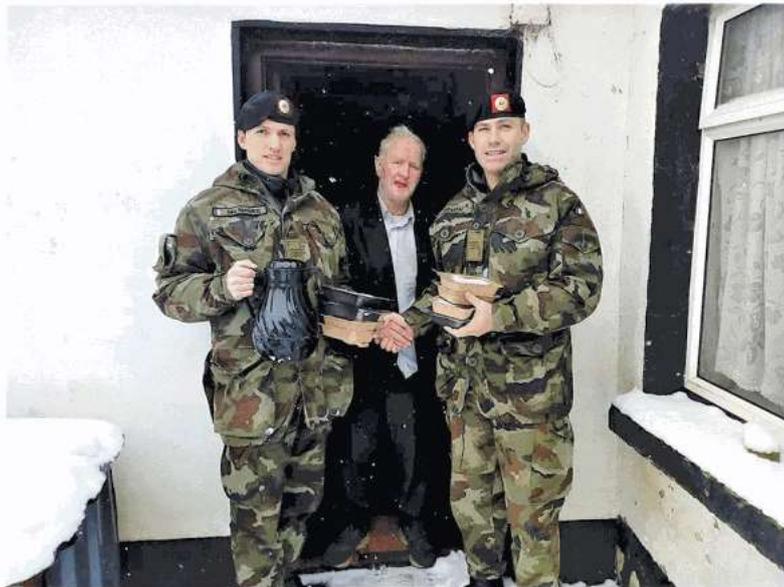
The recent Storm Emma brought most parts of the country to a standstill. It was a particular worrying time for older and vulnerable people, especially those where the roads were impassible and receive Meals on Wheels. However, there was help on hand from Civil Defence, Red Cross, Army, Search and Rescue teams as well as local farmers who assisted groups around the country to deliver the meals. In Longford, the Army came to help deliver meals on the Thursday and Friday and even on the Monday. Enniscorthy Meals on Wheels had to suspend delivery of dinners on Friday due to Storm Emma but were able to resume on the Saturday with the assistance of a large 4x4 vehicle owned and maned by Slaney Search and Rescue and other volunteers driving their four wheel drives over 50 dinners were delivered. In other parts of the country that were not as affected by the Storm, they were able to plan to deliver enough meals for the day they were unable to go out.

Irish Rural Link would like to join Meals on Wheels Network in thanking the Army, Civil Defence, Red Cross, Slaney Search and Rescue, farmers and contractors and all those who assisted in getting meals delivered to customers.



Minister Daly on a recent visit with Chefs and Deirdre Waldron of Castlebar Meals on Wheels

Happy Longford Meals on Wheels client received delivery from Army personnel



IRL Photo Gallery

Army personnel and Meals on Wheels Volunteer Jason Bratten load the Jeep for deliveries



PJ McManus
Longford Meals on
Wheels with Army
personnel
delivering meals in
the snow



PJ McManus and Elaine Keogh (Longford Meals on Wheels) with Army Personnel out delivering in the snow



Attendees during Minister Daly's visit to Castlebar Meals on Wheels

Kate Flood Girley
Bog gives a tour to
Community
Wetlands Forum
members



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