



Irish Rural Link would like to wish all our members and followers a very Kappy and Joyful Christmas & Peaceful New Year. Thank you for your support in 2018 and look forward to working with you all again in 2019



Irish Rural Link
Nasc Tuaithe na hÉireann

Winter Newsletter

December 2018

Midlands Community Services Information Evening



Minister of State, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran with Athlone Access Services at the Midlands Community Services Evening in the Sheraton Hotel Athlone on 15th November 2018

Irish Rural Link held a Community Services Evening in the Sheraton Hotel Athlone on the 15th November for Community Groups providing services in the Midlands Region. It was an opportunity for the groups to network with each other and also meet with local public representatives to discuss the work they do, how it is contributing to the Midlands region and challenges they are currently facing. Over 20 community services groups attended the evening.

Minister of State, Kevin 'Boxer' Moran opened the event and stayed to meet with all the community services groups attending.

We will hold similar events in other parts of the country in the new year and will update members when these events will take place.

EU Projects



IRL's Mary Keyes Cornally, Sinead Dooley, Marie O'Gorman (Board Member) along with Tara Farrell, Longford Women's Link, Michael Kenny, Maynooth University - Irish Partners as well as Partners from Belgium, Spain, Italy, Hungary and Poland on the DELSA Project in Brussels on the 6th December

Irish Rural Link travelled to Brussels on the 5th and 6th December 2018 to attend Kick Off meetings for two new EU Erasmus + funded projects Sustain it and DELSA. We are delighted to be working once again with some of our Partners from the MICRO Project - IHP, Belgium, IDP, Italy and IWS, Spain on both of these new projects as well as Maynooth University on DELSA.

The first Kick Off meeting, on the 5th December was for the project Sustain it – Sustainable Tourism Innovative Training- in which IRL is one of 8 partners across 6 EU countries. The lead partner is an educational provider in North Iceland with another Icelandic and Italian partner as well as partner from Cyprus. The goal of Sustain it is to reinforce capacities of European workers and professionals in the sustainable tourism sector to enhance their employability while reigniting the sectors' growth and competitiveness. It will develop innovative, concrete and actionable training to be delivered via traditional means (face-2-face) and the dedicated Open Educational Resource (OER).

The second Kick - Off meeting on the following day was for the project entitled DELSA – Digital Empowerment for Low Skilled Adult. DELSA addresses the needs of low-skilled adults by developing and deploying OER targeted at low-skilled adults to sustain their digital competences and lead to their socio-economic empowerment (and employment). DELSA becomes the concrete platform for collaboration among the various actors involved in digital skills for adult education: AE providers, private sector, facilitators, NGOs. Such a comprehensive Partnership empowers DELSA to respond to the pressing challenge of providing concrete educational solutions for low-skilled adults.

IRL are lead partner in this exciting new project along with 2 other Irish partners – Longford Women’s Link and Maynooth University as well as partners from Belgium, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Poland.

Both these projects will run until the end of 2020.



IRL's Seamus Boland and Louise Lennon with Partners from Belgium, Cyprus, Iceland, Italy and Spain for Kick Off Meeting for SustainIT Project in Brussels on 5th December

RUBIZMO

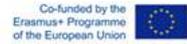
Work continues on **RUBIZMO - Replicable Business Models for Modern Rural Economies** - EU Horizon 2020 funded project - The project is currently working on selecting business cases as well as business cases and models that emerged from previous EU and national funded projects that were interviewed following the screening stage.

RUBIZMO is a consortium of 16 partners across 11 EU countries. The main objective of the project is to generate jobs and growth in highly diverse rural areas by replicating successful rural business models in sectors, but not limited to the food sector, bio-based value chains and eco-system services.

You can follow RUBIZMO on Twitter @rubizmo

MICRO

MICRO is now completed. However, the online platform which has ten training topics in areas that are useful for micro-enterprises will continue to be accessible and are available on www.microsmetraining.eu



Micro Getting Citizens Online



Minister of State, Sean Canney TD, presenting 92 year old Mary Murphy with her certificate on completion of Getting Citizens Online computer course in Solas FRC, Headford recently. Also pictured is IRL Tutor Geraldine Delaney who delivered the class.

Under the Getting Citizens Online programme, Irish Rural Link is continuing to provide Free Basic Computer Training Classes in 16 counties, and IT Skills for Farmers with the cooperation of the DAFM. These computer courses are free and take place at a range of venues around the country and on the Islands.



Residents of Temple Accommodation, Horseleap, Co. Westmeath who recently completed 'Getting Citizens Online' computer course.

During November and December we delivered IT Skills for Farmers classes in Athenry, in Co. Galway as well as across the counties of Mayo, Kerry, Wexford, Laois and Offlay. We also delivered Getting Citizens Online training to people in Solas FRC in Headford, in Temple Accommodation in Horseshleap, Westmeath, Cavan and Dublin.

Classes are now finished for the Christmas period and will commence again in the New Year. If you know someone who would be interested in and would benefit from these classes or for information on classes in your area please call Mary on (090) 6482744 or email maryk@irishrurallink.ie



Policy and Advocacy

IRL appeared before the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on Small and Medium Sized Business in Ireland at a public hearing on November 13th and before the Rural and Community Development Committee on November 14th to discuss the topic of Sustaining Small Rural and Community Businesses. The importance of micro and small and medium sized companies to rural economies and rural development was discussed as well as importance of community services and local public banking.

Submissions were made on the Initial Consultation on the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030, National Digital Strategy, Seasonal Clock Change and 2019 Evaluation of Rural Development Programme.

Under Social Dialogue;

As members of the C&V Pillar, IRL attended meetings with the Department of Health, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform and Department of Justice and Equality.

IRL also attended the Consultation on Future Jobs and the sixth meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Action Plan on Rural Development. The third progress report on the Action Plan is available to download on <https://drccd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/APRD-Third-Progress-Report.pdf>

European Rural Parliament - ROAD Project

IRL travelled to Stranraer in Scotland for the Scottish Rural Parliament to meet with our ERP partners from the UK and Northern Ireland to discuss the ERP ROAD Project.



IRL's Louise Lennon with Joe Saunders and Eamonn O'Reilly, ILDN and ERP Partners from Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales at the Scottish Rural Parliament in November

As a partner of the European Rural Parliament (ERP), IRL are involved in a project entitled ROAD (Rural Opinion Advocacy Development) with our colleagues in the UK and Northern Ireland. The aim of the project is to enable ERP partners in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to demonstrate their commitment to European relations and having a voice in Europe. Partners consider the situation of rural development post-Brexit and future working relations with EU countries and between Ireland and the UK.

We are asking people to complete a short survey to gather their views on Brexit and ideas on how links with the UK and Northern Ireland can be maintained post-Brexit. The survey can be completed here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MMVS2NC> We will also be holding three workshops in the New Year to discuss ideas further.



IRL's Louise Lennon and Mary Keynes Cornally with ILDN and Scottish Cabinet Secretary Michael Russel at the Scottish Rural Parliament in November

National Rural Network



LEADER Social Inclusion and Broadband Workshop

The LEADER Social Inclusion and Broadband workshop took place on the 4th December in Tullamore and brought together over 80 members of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Implementing Partners.

The morning session focused on rural youth and basic services targeted at hard to reach communities which underpin the social inclusion LEADER theme. Barbara Carolan from Accora Orchestra and Abiodun Ladigbolu from Ankara festival discussed how LEADER funding has contributed to expanding and developing these projects. Anne Walsh from the National Youth Council and Seamus Boland of Irish Rural Link both gave presentations highlighting rural social inclusion issues, challenges and needs.

The afternoon session focused on the LEADER Broadband theme. Dr Stjohn O'Connor from the DRCD's Regional Telecommunications Unit discussed how no infrastructure can be funded under LEADER but projects should focus on demand elements that support digital engagement once infrastructure is in place. Local Authority Broadband Officers, such as Christine Collins who gave an overview of their work, are a key contact and resource to reach out to. David Hodge of Coder Dojo Ireland its network of groups is weaker in rural areas, representing an opportunity for LEADER funding.

Cutting across the workshop's two focus areas, the need for project examples demonstrating successful projects and what is possible clearly emerged. Posters developed by the NRN were displayed at the event featuring four broadband and 10 social inclusion projects. The NRN will continue to develop project case studies to help address this need.

LEADER Programme 2014-2020: Project Case Study - Corduff Raferagh Community Centre



The NRN have been compiling case studies of LEADER funded projects from across the country. Corduff Raferagh Community Centre is one example of utilising LEADER Funding to Safeguard and Sustain Vital Community Infrastructure. The rural communities of Corduff and Raferagh are located near Carrickmacross in county Monaghan. Originally built in 1983, the Corduff Raferagh Community Centre is a vital community infrastructure that serves a diverse range of needs. It is a hub for all community activities, such as sport, dance, heritage and drama. Around 15 community groups use the centre each day.

In June 2017, Corduff Raferagh Community Association CLG were approved for LEADER support at a rate of 75% to a maximum amount of €133,561.50. To assist with cash-flow, the group availed of phased payments. The local community also carried out fundraising to generate the to generate the outstanding finance required.

The project included improvements to the community centre's energy efficiency, installing solar panels, a new insulated roof and ceiling, as well as insulation of the heating system. The centre's carbon footprint and running costs have now reduced. Within the hall, a new stage lighting system was installed, a projector and screen, as well as acoustic panels on the ceiling for sound dampening. A new up to date computer suite also formed part of the project and the local Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) now provide adult computer training at the community centre. As a result of the project, the Corduff Raferagh Community Centre can now be used for a greater variety of purposes and it is preserved for future years. For more information see: <https://www.facebook.com/corduff.raferagh>

More examples of LEADER Funded projects can be accessed from NRN's Leader Storyboards on <https://www.nationalruralnetwork.ie/leader>

Corduff Raferagh Community Centre roof before upgrade works. Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre roof after upgrade works and installation of solar panels. Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association



NRN LEADER 2018 Newsletter Out Now

Read the 2018 edition of the National Rural Network's [#LEADER](#) newsletter. Features include an update on the LEADER Programme, the ENRD 'Smart Villages' Initiative, project case studies and much more. Developed by the NRN team at [NUI Galway Rural Research](#) and [Irish Rural Link](#). https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/2a834d_e14037f3679244cfa00713441600cc9a.pdf

Image Source: NRN

Source: NRN

Politics Plus



Participants from 'Next Chapter' Hubs in Monaghan, Cavan and Louth

The Next Chapter Hubs continued to meet in Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Donegal. Training in Module One has been completed in these hubs.

“I really enjoyed the training and found it very thought provoking. It was inspiring to see how much ordinary women have impacted on the NI peace process and what they overcame to be part of that process.” Participant from Cavan Hub

More testimonials from participants on both sides of the border are available on <https://www.thenextchapter.eu/news/learning-about-peacebuilders-from-the-past/>

More information about 'The Next Chapter' and how to participate in this cross border project are available on <https://www.thenextchapter.eu/>

Local Public Banking

The second delegation of Oireachtas members to Germany took place on the 22nd October following on from the successful Finance Committee delegation in September. The Business, Enterprise and Innovation Committee were represented by Senator James Reilly and Noel Rock TD, with Senator Marie Louise O'Donnell and Fingal Councillor Tom O'Leary also travelling. Sinead Dooley and Noel Kinahan represented Irish Rural Link on this trip.

A roundtable discussion concerning the “Local Public Banking in Ireland” report took place on October 23rd in front of the Finance Committee. Irish Rural Link was invited to attend and Seamus and Sinead both took part. The three Credit Union representative bodies, CUDA, CUMA and ILCU were also present. This was an interesting discussion and the focus was largely on the Credit Union movement and the difficulties they faced in their goal of increasing their

lending. Following on from the publication of the “Local Public Banking in Ireland” report Irish Rural Link prepared a rebuttal which outlined the areas of the report we felt had misunderstood or misinterpreted the model of bank we were proposing. The rebuttal has been widely circulated and is available to download from our [website](#).



Attending the Seanad Public Consultation were Maria O’Gorman, Board Member of IRL, Siobhan Kinahan, Noel Kinahan, Seamus Boland and Olivia Hausen (Lobbying/PR representative German Irish Chamber of Commerce)

IRL appeared before the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on Small and Medium Sized Business in Ireland at a public hearing on November 13th and before the Rural and Community Development Committee on November 14th to discuss the topic of Sustaining Small Rural and Community Businesses. Both Committee meetings gave the opportunity to discuss the way in which the Local Public Banking model could benefit small businesses especially in a rural context.

The Government has committed to an independent evaluation of ways in which local public banking could be promoted in Ireland and Irish Rural Link was asked to input into the Terms of Reference for the tender for this. The Tender was issued in November with a closing date of 18th December which should allow for the envisaged stakeholder forum to begin by the end of January 2019. We are looking forward to contributing to the stakeholder forum in the New Year and engaging with the various other stakeholders to explore how Local Public Banking can be progressed.

Networks

Community Wetlands Forum



New CWF members Shannon Town Wetlands: Shannon Wetlands Restoration Project at the first meeting of its Technical Advisory Group

Chris Uys, CWF Development Officer, met with new members Shannon Town Wetlands: Shannon Wetlands Restoration Project and attended their first meeting of its Technical Advisory Group in the premises of the local Shannon Men's Shed. This is a great collaborative community-led project involving stakeholders from state agencies and local county council - Dúchas na Sionna, Clare County Council, Community Wetlands Forum, The Waters and Communities Office, NPWS, EPA, Malachy Walsh and Partners. It is just another example of how community led projects are a key factor in the conservation of our peatlands and wetlands and mitigating climate change.

More information about the CWF or if you would like to join the forum are available on <http://www.communitywetlandsforum.ie/> or follow on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/communitywetlandsforum/> and twitter @forum_wetlands

Dates for your Diary

Funding workshop for Community Groups will take place on Friday 18th January 2019 in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone from 9.30am. Speakers from agencies providing Bridging loans to community groups will be attending on the day. More details and how to register will be available in New Year.

World Wetlands Day - will take place on 2nd February 2019. CWF will be marking this day and will post details on its facebook page in early January.

National Biodiversity Conference - 20th and 21st February Dublin castle <https://www.biodiversityconference.ie/>

Meals On Wheels

Longford Meals on Wheels attended the IRL Midlands Community Services event in Athlone on the 15th November last. They had the opportunity to speak with other groups from the region as well as local public representatives.



Elaine Keogh and Colleague from Longford Meals on Wheels at the IRL Community Services Event in Athlone

Date for your Diary: Food Hygiene Training will take place on Monday 14th January in Castlebar Social Services, Mayo from 1.30pm. If your Meals on Wheels group would be interested in attending this, please contact Louise on 090 6482744 or by email louise@irishrurallink.ie

SEAI PUBLIC CONSULTATION



IRL's Sinead Dooley with Minister of State Sean Canney, TD and Geraldine Delaney at the SEAI Public Consultation evening in Peacocke's Hotel, Maams Cross, Galway

IRL are working with SEAI again on hosting public consultation on its Better Energy Homes and Warmer Homes Grants. To date consultations took place in Birr and Endenderry, Co. Offaly and Maams Cross, Co. Galway and Galway City. Both these grants aim to help home owners make their homes warmer and more comfortable while also reducing their energy bills. The Better Energy Home Grant is also available to landlords, while the Warmer Homes Grant is aimed at home owners in receipt of some social welfare payments and fuel allowance. For more details on these grants you can contact sinead@irishrurallink.ie or log onto SEAI website <https://www.seai.ie/grants/home-energy-grants/>

More Public Consultation Events will take place in 2019

Launch of New Report by 24-7 Family Carers Group

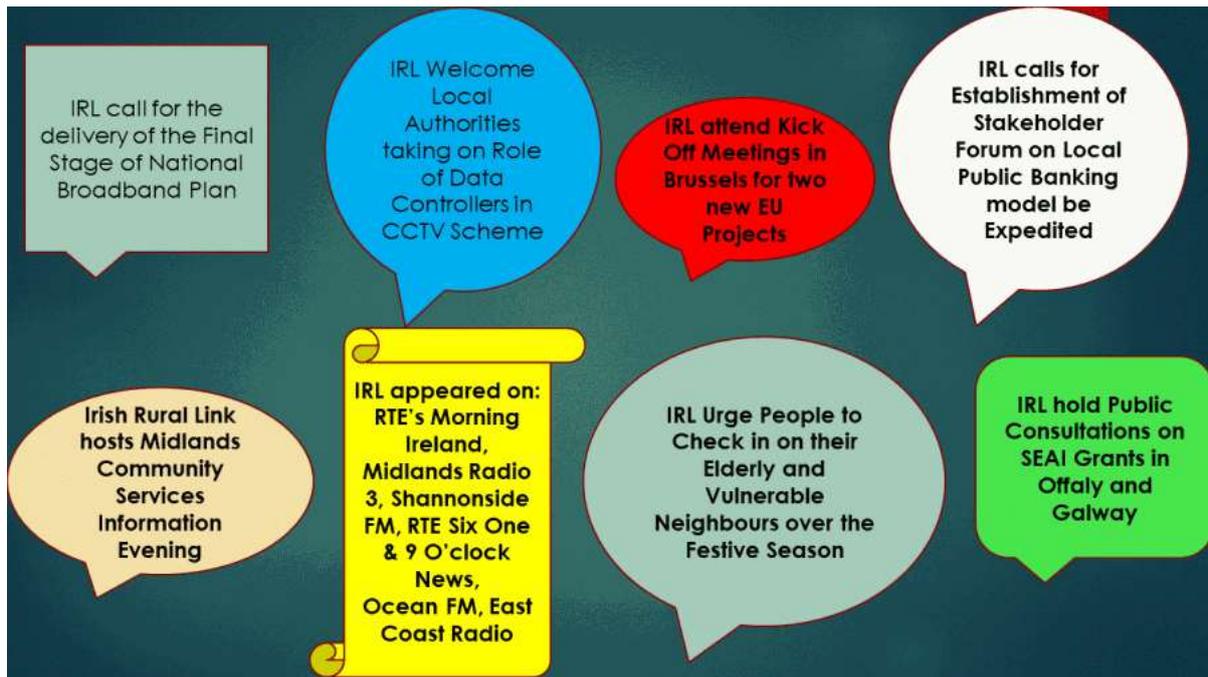
A new report '**Who Cares? Barriers to having a Good Quality of Life for Family Carers in North Leitrim**' was launched by 24-7 Family Carers Group in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. 24-7 Family Carers are an independent group of family carers. The report highlights the challenges and difficulties carers face on a daily basis in rural Leitrim but experienced in all rural areas across the country and outlines recommendations for better supports for carers. More

information about the launch and to read the report are available on <https://www.leitrimppn.ie/who-cares-for-carers-report-launch/>



In the News

IRL are urging people to check in on elderly neighbours during the festive season. Christmas can very often be a lonely time for people, especially for older people living alone who may not have family or may not be with family at this time of year. We urge people to be extra mindful of elderly and other vulnerable neighbours at this time and not to presume that their family is with them, they have gone to family or friends for the Christmas or that another neighbour has looked in on them.



Dates For Your Diary

Friday 18th January Funding workshop with CWF and IRL will take place on **from 9.30am in the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone**. Speakers from various Funding and community finance providers for will be there to provide information on what funding is available, how to access this funding and to access bridging loans.

20th and 21st February - ENRD Conference will take place in Athlone over the two days. More details to follow.

PHOTO GALLERY - MIDLANDS COMMUNITY SERVICES INFORMATION EVENING - 15th November 2018





PHOTO GALLERY - COMPUTER CLASSES





PHOTO GALLERY - SEAI PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS IN BIRR, EDENDERRY AND GALWAY



