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Forbairt Iarthar Luimní
West Limerick Resources CLG

2021
Annual Report





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Administrative Details

Registered Office

West Limerick Resources CLG
St. Mary's Road
Newcastle West,
Co. Limerick
V42AN22

Auditors

PCB Accountants Ltd.
t/a Byrne and Company Chartered Accountants
and Registered Auditors,
Church Street,
Newcastle West,
Co. Limerick

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
The Square
Newcastle West
Co. Limerick.

Solicitors

Robert Cussen & Co.
North Quay,
Newcastle West,
Co. Limerick.

Company Number

206973

CHY No.

CHY11712

Charities Regulatory Authority Number

20032746



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Foreword

2021 was another significant year for West Limerick Resources CLG. While the impact of Covid-19 continued to be felt throughout the year, great progress was made in delivering across the range of Programmes administered by the Company.

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Internally, our robust Covid-19 related policies and procedures ensured our work was carried out in a safe manner protecting our Communities and individual clients while also protecting our staff in a safe work environment. Substantial work was undertaken consolidating our policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Governance Code and our Board and Staff were engaged in this process during the year. We are delighted to present this annual report on behalf of the Board and Staff, as a reflection on our activity in 2021.

Key Achievements

Over the course of 2021, each individual programme worked towards the various targets and programme objectives. Each Programme we administer has its own priorities, funding arrangements and timelines associated with it. Across the Company, we place a lot of emphasis on trying to ensure there is a strong collaboration and high level of co-operation both between the various programmes internally and working with other agencies externally. This collaboration is done so as to achieve the maximum cost efficiency while increasing the impact for Community Groups and individual clients across West Limerick. The necessary continuance of Covid-19 restrictions often challenged such collaboration but despite this some great initiatives were developed that we expect to build on into the future. Some highlights of the year include:

- The announcement by Minister Humphries of an **additional €1.37m in Transitional funding** was a significant boost having fully allocated the LEADER Budget under the 2014-2020 round. This in effect meant the project application process could be reopened with new projects benefitting while assisting projects already approved to progress their claims for payment. A total of €1,288,840 was committed to 28 projects with a total of €713,838 paid out to approved projects over the course of the year.
- **The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)** continued to impact positively on Communities and individuals through West Limerick meeting and surpassing all targets set within the programme. Key statistics from the year include: 213 individuals supported on a one to one basis, 25 individuals supported into employment and 5 individuals supported into self-employment, 88 individuals participated in Lifelong Learning,



Family supports provided to 159 Children and 108 Parents and Guardians and 38 Community Groups and 7 Social Enterprises supported. A wide range of initiatives were delivered over the course of the year. Examples of two of these initiatives are profiled later in this report including an initiative focused on working with the residents of the housing estates in Abbeyfeale in collaboration with the Abbeyfeale Family and Community Network. The development of a “Pie Club” focused on engaging with older men and promoting healthy eating while connecting together is also highlighted.

- **The West Limerick Primary Healthcare Programme for Travellers (WLPHCP)** had a very successful year engaging with the Traveller Community across West Limerick. The team had a total of 1967 contacts over the course of the year with 84% of these with women. Under the specific Key Performance Indicators 153 individuals received Type 2 diabetes prevention or management information, 156 received cardiovascular information and a further 172 people benefitting from mental health and well being information. A pilot Family Cookery project was developed in collaboration with the SICAP team and worked with 27 Traveller Families over the course of the year focused on promoting healthy eating and cooking on a limited budget.
- **TÚS** continued to be impacted by Covid-19 over the course of 2021. A total of 79 participants were supported on TÚS with 37 Community organisations benefitting from having TÚS placements. Many participants on TÚS were offered contract extensions to remain on TÚS reflecting the fact that many may not have benefited from the full 12 months placement due to lockdowns impacting on placement roles. Very few referrals of new candidates were received from the Department of Social Protection with only 21 new starters commencing. A collaboration with SICAP focused on supporting greater Traveller engagement on TÚS proved worthwhile supporting three placements in Abbeyfeale giving rise to very positive feedback from all involved.
- **The Rural Social Scheme** had 49 participants engaged over the course of 2021 with 29 community organisations benefitting from regular placements. A number of one-off projects in communities were also supported. Similar to TÚS Covid-19 impacted with lock downs impacting on many placements. With many RSS participants involved in trail maintenance a Trail Maintenance and Monitoring training programme was organised in collaboration with the LEADER programme Staff. This was delivered by the National Trails Office and proved to be very successful with representatives from a number of local walking trail committees also in attendance.
- **Social Farming** saw a significant increase in activity over the course of 2021. 53 participants were placed on 14 active Social Farms with 494 placement days completed. 25 Services were actively engaged with Social Farming during this



period. With hosting Open days possible again, a number of events particularly in North Tipperary and Clare reflecting the growing interest there, were organised with great attendance and follow through in terms of interest and placements confirmed.

- The **Job Club** experienced another challenging year with only 141 referrals from the Department of Social Protection. In total 205 clients were dealt with during the year with many former clients returning seeking updates to CV's etc. 51 clients were recorded to have progressed into employment. With the Government announcing that a new service encompassing Job Clubs and Local Employment Services nationally was to be established and procured there is a lot of uncertainty about the continuation of the Job Club into the future.
- **Limerick Volunteer Centre** had another successful year with 542 new volunteers registered exceeding the annual target of 500. Reflecting the impact of Covid-19 a total of 12,889 Volunteer Hours were recorded against the annual target of 20,000. The Volunteer Centre assisted with the recruitment of volunteers to assist with the roll out of the Mass Vaccination programmes. A total of 84 volunteers assisted contributing over 8000 hours between the two vaccination centres in the Radisson Blu Hotel and the Limerick Racecourse.
- **Rathkeale Pre Social Cohesion Initiative** became active again in the second half of 2021. Due to Covid and the absence of project Staff, much of the activity on the ground had been suspended in the earlier part of the year. Following the successful recruitment of the Project Co-ordinator and Community Support Officer a new project workplan was developed in conjunction with the Steering Committee. A range of activities focused on cross community engagement were organised including a Womens Walking Group, a Rathkeale Book of Prayers Working Group and a Christmas event. There has been great uptake of the supports being provided by the Community Support Officer from the very beginning and this service continues to engage with clients across a range of issues.
- The **Charities Regulator Governance Code** sets out the minimum standards that should be in place to manage and control a charitable organisation. The Code details the legal duties of the company's directors and lists the six governance principals that must be applied. Working with the Board of Directors, a comprehensive exercise was undertaken during 2021 to ensure West Limerick Resources achieves its charitable objectives with integrity and is managed in an effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent way. Following this work the Board of Directors ratified that the company is in compliance with the Governance Code.



The Year Ahead

The Company commenced a strategic planning process late in 2021 which is to be continued and concluded in 2022. It is expected that this Strategic plan for the company 2022-2026 will set out the blueprint for how the company develops and prioritises action areas for the coming years. Over the next 2-3 years there will be a significant amount of change as we expect the procurement process for the new Local Area Employment Service LAES to commence impacting on the Job Club, the renewal of the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) and procurement of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme at the end of 2023. As we hopefully see the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic recede, the commencement of the war in Ukraine as this report is being prepared will undoubtedly present new challenges ahead.

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Thanks

It is important to acknowledge the huge number of people who have contributed to the success of the company over the last year. We would like to thank our Board members who volunteer their time and contribute so much to the running of our company. Thanks must go to Mike O'Flynn as former Chairperson of the Board, who retired following rotation at the AGM. His commitment to the Board and various Sub-committees as well as engagement with staff was very much appreciated. We say thanks to our staff who work tirelessly supporting Communities and individual clients right across West Limerick under each of the different Programmes. We would like to acknowledge all the volunteers in the Community groups and organisations we work with without whom much of what we do would not be possible. To our many partners in other organisations and agencies and Government Departments who co-operate with us at so many different levels and in particular Limerick City & County Council who we engage with through the Local Community Development Committee across a range of our programmes.

We look forward to continuing to engage with individuals and communities across West Limerick in the coming year.

Pat Brennan

Pat Brennan
Chairperson

Shay Riordan

Shay Riordan
Manager





About Us

West Limerick Resources originated from a local initiative by individuals and groups in West Limerick to establish a rural resource organisation that would work to address the collective issues, changes and challenges impacting on the community and life of individuals in the area.

Originally established in 1991, West Limerick Resources set out to attract resources – funding and supports – from national programmes and other sources to support local initiatives and projects for community development in West Limerick. It was established as a limited company in 1993.

Since its establishment, West Limerick Resources has seen significant change as a constant feature of its operating environment.

Ongoing changes in national policy, regulation and resource availability have all impacted on how the Organisation has evolved and developed since 1991.

The roles and priorities of many of the key Statutory Agencies including Local Authorities have changed and this has impacted on the relationships and interaction WLR has with them.

Communities too have experienced significant change in the social, economic and environmental issues that impact on them.

To date, the Organisation has successfully responded to the various challenges presented arising from change. The Organisation has continued to develop its capacity and expanded the range of programmes delivered and services provided to the individuals and communities of West Limerick.

The Board of the Company is based on the partnership model bringing together representatives of the Local Community, Statutory Agencies, Social Partners and Public Representatives.



Our Vision

A stronger, vibrant and inclusive West Limerick community with enhanced personal and community identity, values, opportunities, structures, services, facilities, health and sustainability.



Company Mission

West Limerick Resources is the community development organisation that works to achieve positive change in the lives of people and groups in West Limerick.



Job Club

The Job Club is funded by the Department of Social Protection, it provides one-to-one supports, group workshops and facilities to assist people in their job search. This service is a free service for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

The Job Club works with job ready clients who seek support and advice on job seeking skills. All participants on Employment Programmes (CE, TÚS & LTI) can avail of the services. We also help people to prepare for interviews, including hosting mock interviews.

Supports available

- Access to Job Club facilities
- Help with CV preparation, cover letter writing and job applications.
- Development of job seeking skills with either one-to-one tuition or group training sessions.
- We can provide training and support in the individual areas that people feel they require assistance.

Actual Targets set out by DSP.

170 Workshops
270 Clients
60 CV prep
Total No of Referrals
500

Facilities offered

- One-to-one tuition
- Group training courses
- Access to the internet, telephone, photocopier, stationery, and job notice board.
- Assistance with uploading CVs to the internet or job websites
- Outreach to clients who cannot travel to the West Limerick Job Club

Total clients dealt with

205

Total referrals from DSP

141

Referral breakdown

26 workshop clients
113 1-1 clients
2 CV prep

Workshop (group) training

- CV and cover letter writing
- Improving your job searching
- Applying for jobs via email
- Interview skills and mock interviews



Total no of clients into employment full time/ part-time

51

The past year of 2021 has been very challenging for the Job Club because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and Government policy changes to how employment services are to be structured into the future. Activation services in DSP who refer clients to the Job Club were impacted by the pandemic, and Job Club services were forced to find innovative ways to meet client needs and engage with participants without the normal face-to-face and walk-in assistance. The announcement by Government that employment services, including Job Clubs, are to be restructured with a procurement process to be put in place for a new Local Area Employment Service. This decision has introduced a degree of uncertainty as to the future of the Job Club service in West Limerick and it will be 2022 before some clarity will emerge on our continued involvement in the provision of these services or not.



Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers

PHCP Annual Report 2021

2021 was an exciting and productive year for the West Limerick Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers (PHCP). The project is funded by the Traveller Health Unit (THU) in the HSE and managed by West Limerick Resources CLG. The project employs six qualified and experienced Community Health Workers all members of the Traveller Community and a Project Coordinator. The aim of the project is to improve the health and quality of life of the Traveller Community in the area.



Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the project and the team adapted the work to meet the needs of the Traveller Community in West Limerick. The team had contact with 1,967, 84% were females in 2021, all key performance indicators were achieved with 153 individuals receiving type 2 diabetes

prevention or management information, 156 receiving cardio-vascular and 172 people benefitting from mental health and well-being information.

In 2021, the project collaborated with several stakeholders on new projects and initiatives. Within West Limerick Resources the project worked together with various partners on numerous initiatives, including SICAP- (Social Farming, Family Support, Rural Employment Service & Community Development) and Job Club. Moreover, the team experimented with multiple mediums to communicate important health messages with the community. Initiatives included, Covid-19 health information, cookery, and healthy eating, Covid-19 vaccine information, money advice and budgeting service (MABS), social farming, planting, one million stars and nursery rhyme videos. Additionally, the projects Facebook page grew by 108 % in 2021, 27 videos in total were created by the Community Health Workers, the project shared its content on the West Limerick You Tube channel, What's App, Facebook, Facebook messenger and by text message assisting the project to reach and engage with the wider Traveller Community.

5 Project Achievements by the PHCP in 2021

01

CONTACTS IN
THE
COMMUNITY

1967 Contacts;
84 % were
Female

Facebook page grew
by 300 % from 303
Followers in Jan 2021
to 631 Followers in
2022. There were
413 Facebook posts

02

SOCIAL MEDIA

03

27 VIDEOS
CREATED

Project staff created
27 videos to help
communicate
important health
messages

172 people were
provided with Mental
Health; 153 with
Diabetes & 156 with
Cardio-vascular
disease information

04

KPI'S MET &
ACHIEVED

05

NEW INITIATIVES
& PROJECTS

Family Cookery
Project; MABS; Social
Farming; Wellness
Wednesday; One
Million Stars &
Nursery Rhymes video
series





Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers

Case Study of One Project undertaken in 2021

Together with SICAP, additional funding was secured from Limerick City and County Council, in 2020 under the Covid-19 Traveller Emergency Response Fund. In 2021 the funding was used to pilot and deliver a family cookery programme to 27 Traveller families in Askeaton, Abbeyfeale and Newcastle West.

The project was implemented as a response to need. Findings from the (unpublished) HSE, *Baseline Health Study (2020)* outline a demand for programmes and advice on healthy eating and cooking on a limited budget.

The project was delivered at a time when Ireland was in level 5, lockdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was developed with families in mind, the project aimed to raise awareness of low- cost, budget-friendly, healthy recipes that the whole family could enjoy, encouraging family time, involving children and young people in meal preparation, cooking and the development of life skills.

The family cookery project also sought to demonstrate that small changes make a big difference when it comes to healthy eating and family health.

The family cookery project was a huge success and generated a lot of interest from the Traveller Community. Each week a dinner and a lunchtime meal were chosen. Recipes and dishes were reviewed by the PHCP project staff and together with their colleague Finn Fitzgerald in SICAP, videos on how to make the recipes that week were shared with each participating family.

Food hampers with that week's ingredients were delivered safely to the door of each household. Embedded within the methodology and delivery of this project was participation.

To receive the food ingredients for the following week all families were asked to return photos of cooking, preparing, or eating together, showing that the ingredients were used for their intended purpose. This was a new approach adopted by the project and was welcomed by all.

The feedback obtained following project evaluation was phenomenal and demonstrates the need for further food related projects or initiatives, that support families to eat well on a limited budget. Families reported that the project gave them





Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers

ideas on healthy eating by showing a “healthy way to put veg into children, dinners kids loved, and the family were all part of the project”, “it was great, to try new recipes and it was only because of taking part in this project that I did so” “I found it a great way to learn about getting good food on a low budget”. Families were also asked have they made any changes, even small changes or tried anything new, since the cookery project, the feedback was, “yes, I now add extra little things like stock cubes, different herbs and spices for taste, the kids help me more and more tasty food” “yes, I found a lot better by cooking myself, instead of going down to the chipper and it can cost a lot less” “homemade food is a lot nicer than packet foods and try different recipes at least once a week” “yes, buy more veg and fruit less sweets for the children.

The feedback from the Family Cookery Project demonstrates an immediate change in some household’s health behaviour following completion of this family cookery project. In future, it would be useful to embed a follow up evaluation three- and six-months post programme to measure any sustained changes. In conclusion, while this was a pilot project it was an invaluable learning experience for all staff involved.

The views of the community, the families, their engagement, and interest in this project were not only rewarding but also exciting. The PHCP project wishes to express gratitude to Limerick City & County Council & SICAP for funding this project, to the Community Health Workers and all the families that took part.

“ I found a lot better by cooking myself, instead of going down to the chipper and it can cost a lot less

“ I found it a great way to learn about getting good food on a low budget

“ I now add extra little things like stock cubes, different herbs and spices for taste, the kids help me more and more tasty food

“ Homemade food is a lot nicer than packet foods and try different recipes at least once a week





LEADER Rural Development Programme

Overview of Delivery 2021				
Subtheme	Number of projects approved	LEADER Grant Amount approved	Number of Claims Processed	Value of Claims Processed
Rural Tourism	6	€136,751	6	€116,197
Enterprise Development	1	€18,358	5	€168,060
Rural Towns	1	€7,885	6	€159,973
Broadband	1	€17,789	3	€16,498
Basic Services for Hard-to-Reach Communities	0	€0	2	€29,683
Rural Youth	2	€68,911	4	€135,679
Water Resources	2	€6,325	0	€0
Local Biodiversity	2	€30,026	1	€12,916
Renewable Energy	1	€19,947	2	€12,885
Cooperation Projects	7	€433,853	0	€0
LEADER Food	5	€548,997	2	€61,947
	28	€1,288,840	31	€713,838

Internal Projects Delivered in 2021

Social Enterprise Training Initiative:

The Social Enterprise Training Initiative **“Cooperating to Succeed”** is a co-operation project led by West Limerick Resources CLG in partnership with South Tipperary Development Company CLG and South West Mayo Development Company CLG.



Cooperating to Succeed
Social Enterprise Development Initiative

The training programme is being carried out over approximately an 18 month period with the launch held on June 10th 2021. The aim of the training initiative is to strengthen sustainability and social impact of new and existing social enterprises.

The initiative focuses on targeted, hands on training that addresses specific needs of participants and encourages participants to look beyond their own experience to see how Social Enterprises in other parts of the country are operating and achieving their objectives. Ten Social Enterprises from each location were selected and have been working alongside Caroline Egan from CramdenTECH who carried out a Training Needs Analysis for each participant and developed individual training plans to address individual needs. Ongoing work is being carried out delivering the supports to each of the participants. In addition to the individual training programme, a number of group based training sessions have also been delivered at regular intervals throughout the programme to promote cross-participant learning and networking.



LEADER Rural Development Programme

West Limerick Food Series Phase 2:

This training programme aimed to engage the many and varied businesses in the West Limerick Food and Tourism sectors with a view to increasing networking, events, PR and Marketing. A Learning Management System was also developed to ensure the sustainability of the programme so that others might benefit from the materials developed. It was necessary to adapt the training to an on-line programme which commenced in February 2021.



Three trainers delivered the course over 15 modules which included an experiential Familiarisation Trip to Taste of Dublin and the Boyne Valley. There were 12 modules delivered over Zoom, and two event planning site visits for the spring-board event at Barnagh Greenway Hub which was a Spring Festival event and a 10-course menu as an evening event. The training coordinator was Sharon Noonan who lives in Newcastle West and who is involved heavily in the Irish Food Scene. The other trainers were Tadhg O'Donovan with years of experience in events development and promotion, and Peter Nash also a Newcastle West native who has worked with Diagio and Tourism Ireland for more than 20 years. The trainers were complemented by expert panellists on the different module topics which ranged from Branding and Marketing, Digital Marketing, to PR and Media Training. Over 150 sector representatives were engaged, with an average of 20 participants on each module ranging from a variety of businesses including Fitzgerald's Woodlands Hotel, Rigney's Farm, and Chef Tom Flavin, as well as West Limerick Tourism. Participants found the training enjoyable, informative, and inspiring and a steering group and WhatsApp group as well as social media accounts were developed as a part of the programme. The group will form as a subcommittee under the West Limerick Tourism group and work on continuing the success of the festivals and events programme by working together to promote them as a destination.

Case Studies of External Projects Completed In 2021

Economic Development Theme Case Study:

Co-Working Hub – Newcastle West

D&G Purpose Giving Foundation CLG was established in 2019 and trades under the registered business name of D&G Foundation. It was developed to support initiatives that are sustainable and provide platforms for starting and growing businesses which in turn contribute to local economic development. In December 2019, the promoter purchased the former Ulster Bank in Newcastle West. A decision was made to set up a co-working/shared office space to be called The Yard. Funding was sought to fit out a new Co-Working Hub. The promoters and their advisors worked with Innovate Limerick in this phase of the project with the aim of developing Limerick's business ecosystem and position Limerick City and County as a most attractive





LEADER Rural Development Programme

location to start and grow a business. The promoter designed a high-end professional space, providing an important service to their business community. People now have a place to work, collaborate and achieve their best in their local area. The collaboration with Innovate Limerick has attracted key business and increased occupancy to The Yard, providing access to expertise and experience in the industry. Lessons learned and key opportunities are shared to help drive the Mid-West network of e-hubs.

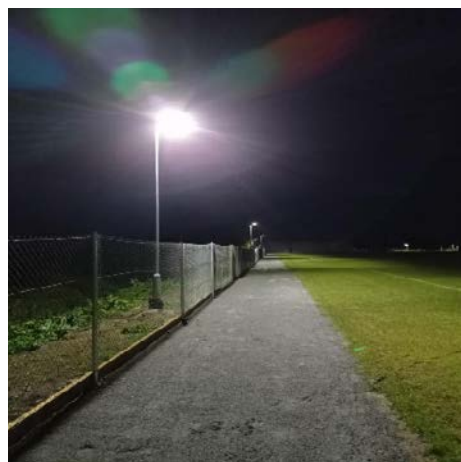
**LEADER Funding
Approved:**

€46,173.40

Social Inclusion Theme Case Study:

Development Of Walkway – Crecora Manister GAA

Crecora Manister GAA Club was formed in 1885 managed by a Club Committee of approx. 30 members with several sub committees. Following community engagement, the promoter found there was a definite interest in developing a community walkway. There was no similar type of outdoor facility available in the Crecora Manister area and it was clear that the area lacked a defined focal point for community engagement so the development of a walking track, with an improvement in Club facilities, was a way to encourage and foster greater community participation and engagement. There has been increased participation by members of the Community using the newly constructed pathways around the perimeter of Crecora Manister GAA pitch with greater engagement between the Club and Community who now use the GAA grounds to access the Walking Track. There has been a notable increase in parents of players using the Walking Track for exercise while their children are in training and there have been improved social contacts across members, parents, players, and wider community due to increased interaction. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the promoter has found that the Walking Track has provided a safe focal point for people to meet in an outdoor setting, encouraging exercise and activity across all age groups. Low energy lighting was selected for optimum performance, all fittings are energy efficient LED's using 75% less energy than traditional fittings with an expected lifetime of up to twenty times longer than conventional lighting.



**LEADER Funding
Approved:**

€36,295.59



LEADER Rural Development Programme

Rural Environment Theme Case Study:

Expansion Of Wood Processing Business

The Promoter manages his forestry plantation harvesting timber sustainably. With many years overall experience, training and qualifications, the company, Liston Fuel Logs, was formed in 2011 to supply a niche in the market which demanded dried timber-based fuel.

The promoter sought funding for the purchase of new machinery to replace ageing machines, buy solar panels to generate renewable electricity to dry wood products. The new machine doubled production capacity and the solar panels supply enough energy to run the business. Since completion, the promoter is now able to supply quality kiln dried timber fuel to the wider community/economy at competitive costs.

The finance from the project helped to install solar panels and machines worked by renewable energy. Utilising solar and battery storage technology has greatly reduced the promoters use of carbon-based fuels and reduced overall CO2 emissions. Production of dry, combustible quality fuel gives greater heat conversion with more complete combustion, resulting in significantly reduced carbon emissions and lower cleaning costs of stoves and chimneys.



**LEADER Funding
Approved:**

€32,500

LEO Funded Enterprise Training 2021

West Limerick Resources secured funding of €16,892.50 from the Local Enterprise Office in 2021 to carry out Enterprise training targeting the West Limerick Area.

A total of 189 places were taken up across the following courses, the majority of which were adapted to be delivered online due to Covid-19:

Bookkeeping Basics for Small Business Start Ups

How to Adapt to Managing People in Changing Times

Developing Sales Growth Strategies for the Retail Sector including 1:1 Business Assessments

Merchandising and Display Best Practices including 1:1 Business Assessments

Start Your Own Business

Health and Safety Legislation & Guidelines to Preparing a Safety Statement

Social Media Training Programme

Selling Online – Moving Your Business Online

Developing Videos to Market Your Business

Employment Law for Small Businesses

Branding Yourself as A Female Entrepreneur (National Woman's Enterprise Day)

Introduction to Word Press

Sourcing Funding for Small Businesses



Rural Social Scheme

Key Statistics For 2021

49

Participants engaged on the RSS ↓ 7.5% v 2020.

7

Participants left the RSS scheme in 2021.

2

New participants joined the scheme in 2021.

€662,712

WLR RSS payroll for 2021

29

Community Organisations availed of regular RSS assistance ↑ 7.5% v 2020.

13

Community Organisations received assistance with one – off projects such as the erection of a small altar at the entrance to Templeglantine graveyard, graveyard maintenance in Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West and Mellon (Pallaskenry), transport (Community Blooms project), assistance with recycling / disposal.

48

Participants availed of training in First Aid and Safe use of small engine equipment.

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS), administered by West Limerick Resources provides financial support offering part time employment to low-income farmers who are on a long-term social welfare payment.

Scheme participants provide assistance in their local communities by working 19.5 hours each week in projects such as (though not limited to) walking / cycle trails, village enhancement, community / sports centres, care for the elderly and not for profit organisations.

The type of work carried out by RSS participants

- maintaining & enhancing waymarked ways /agreed walks
- village & countryside enhancement projects
- social care & care of the elderly, community care for both pre-school and after-school
- environmental maintenance work – maintenance and caretaking of graveyards, community, and sporting facilities
- projects relating to not for profit cultural and heritage centres
- community administration/clerical duties
- any other appropriate community project identified during the scheme

Work during Lockdown

Most of the RSS participants (as indeed the whole country) were confined to their homes due to the Covid-19 restrictions for the first number of months of the year. However, a small number were involved in certain projects that were deemed necessary or possible during this period, such as:

- One driver with the Blood Bike service (delivering blood to the hospitals) and St. John's Ambulance (driving patients to and from hospital and nursing homes).
- One was involved helping the SICAP programme Wednesday Club project. Phoning members of the club weekly for a friendly chat. This was a good way to keep in touch for some of these people who may not otherwise have any daily contact with others.
- One was used regularly to help the SICAP programme with any transportation and delivery requirements using the RSS van.

One – off Projects

Bulbs for Bees:



In September the RSS office in conjunction with the SICAP team played a role in the Gaisce BULBS for BEES initiative in county Limerick. To help celebrate Gaisce's 35th President's Award they created a very special Gaisce Challenge, one that everyone could get involved in. Designed in conjunction with the All-Island Pollinator Plan and supported by President Michael D Higgins #Bulbs for Bees is a national action plan to protect one of the most important players in the climate change and biodiversity battle: the bee. Simply put they were asking everyone in Ireland to plant a pollinator - friendly bulb in the autumn to flower the following spring. The RSS office was the base for the distribution of over 1200 bulbs for planting to all the Tidy Towns / community organisations throughout the county and assisted with delivery.

Trails Maintenance and Monitoring training

After almost two years and a couple of false starts (with Covid-19 interruptions) the National Trails office, under the auspices of the Irish Sports Council delivered a three-day training course on trails maintenance and monitoring, which commenced in October. Seven RSS participants along with the coordinator and fourteen members of the Broadford / Ashford, Mullaghareirk and Knockfierna walking trail committee attended and gained valuable and practical experience in trail construction, maintenance, and monitoring. The course was funded under WLR RDP and proved to be very successful.



Group attending Trails maintenance course



Preparation of walking trail around lake at EcoPark



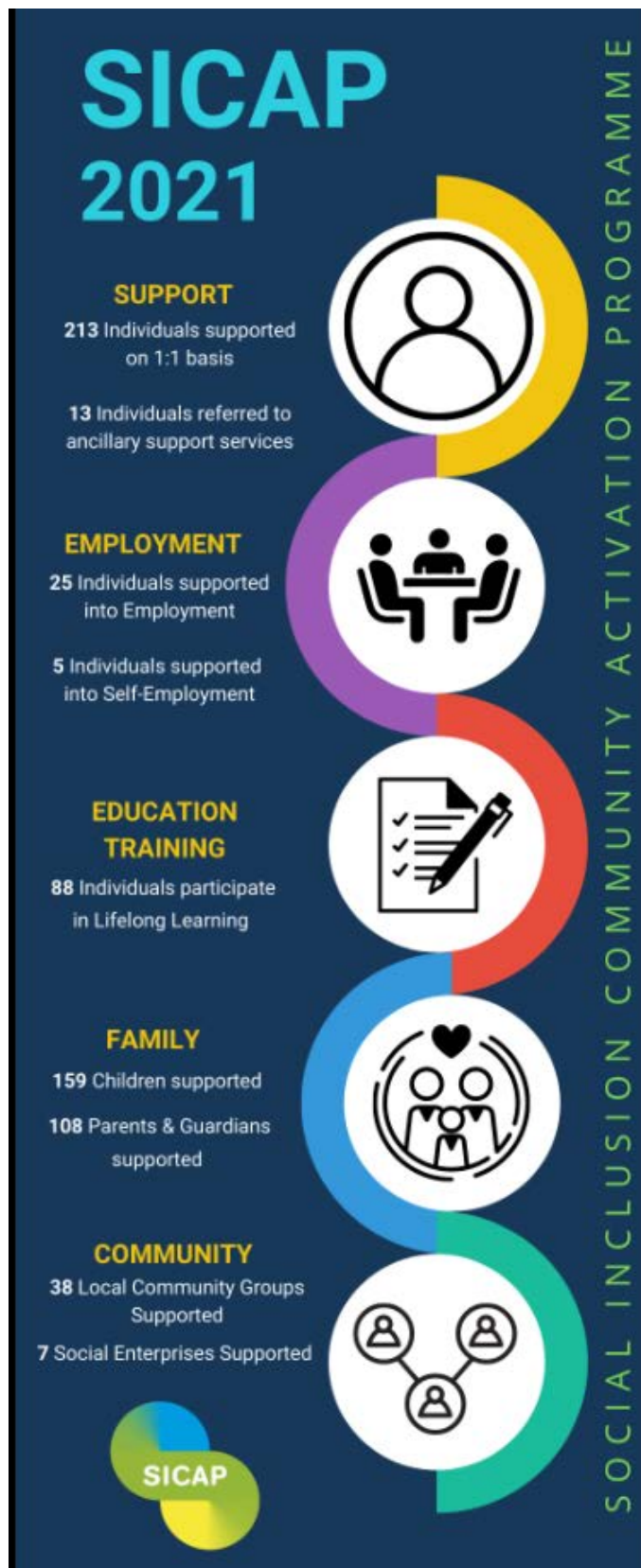
Staff Changes On The RSS

RSS supervisor Michelle McCarthy left the scheme on a fixed term leave of absence in October, having joined the team in 2015. In that time Michelle made a valuable contribution to the smooth operation of the scheme in general and to the administration of the RSS. In November, Maria McNamara was appointed as the replacement supervisor where she brings a different dynamic and experience to the role with her qualification and vast experience as a horticulturalist and in sales. The company are very grateful to Michelle for her time with the RSS and at the same time welcome Maria to the staff at WLR.





Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report



SICAP Goals

The programme has two goals that focus on a) supporting communities and b) individuals:



Goal 1

Aim is to support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of local community groups and creating more sustainable communities.



Goal 2

Aim to support disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports.



Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report

GOAL 1

Action – A2105

Community Networks and Strategic Collaborations

Abbeyfeale Family and Community Network

Background

The action has two aspects; one is to strengthen the capacity of Local Community Groups (LCGs) to create natural local networks grouped by their common goals and objectives i.e., Parent & Toddler Groups, Men's Sheds, disability networks and to support them to participate meaningfully in local, regional decision-making structures.

The second aspect is to build opportunities for agencies, services to connect and collaborate strategically while addressing local issues, supporting local responses. SICAP staff are instrumental in developing, leading, facilitating and having representation on a wide range of collaborative projects. Key to our work is the understanding of the need for collaboration and co-operation with a wider number of agencies, across a range of projects, addressing the issues which result in social exclusion, marginalisation, poverty, disadvantage, early school leaving, and long-term unemployment.

Response

In 2018, the Family & Community Development Worker (F&CDW) based in Abbeyfeale mapped out a series of needs reported through her door: door work and community engagement, and from this put together the design and structure of what became the **Abbeyfeale Family and Community Network**. Looking at the needs and the areas of support needed, invitations were sent to partner agencies to join the new Network, so we could support each other and collaborate while responding to the needs. Many of the needs are above the remit and response capacity of the SICAP programme, where they need a multidisciplinary response. This structure enables this to happen.

Membership of the Network includes SICAP, PHCP for Travellers, Abbeyfeale Community Council, An Garda Síochána, Foróige, LCETB, LCCC, University of Limerick, TUSLA, Limerick Children & Young Peoples Service's Committee (CYPSC), School Completion Programme, Teachers from Local Schools, Community Misuse Substance Team (CMST), Limerick Social Services Centre.

In 2021 The Tusla/SICAP funded Family & Community Development Worker through the Abbeyfeale Family & Community Network (AFCN) planned a project which had several aspects and anticipated outcomes -

- Acknowledge and celebrate the Estate's **50 years** since the first Tigin's were built, while building and establishing a more positive sense of belonging, ownership, responsibility.
- **Community Blooms**- preparation of a flower box working with a number of residents for each house in the estate (62 in all), followed by an instructional video on how to take care of the flower box, with scope to continue this project into next year to plant lettuces and herbs.
- Use **creativity** as a support for community involvement and supporting mental and emotional health promotion social connectedness while promoting Pride of Place.
- **Community Art** – It is hoped to create mural on a wall in Pairc Luachra involving Parent/Teenagers and children of the Estate. The estate residents will be involved planning the project, giving them voice in the design.
- **Pride of Place** by improving the aesthetics of the Estate.



Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report

GOAL 1

Action – A2105

Community Networks and Strategic Collaborations

Abbeyfeale Family and Community Network

Many hands make light work!

The elements of the project directly within SICAP role and action, was focussed on the preparation and planting of the planter boxes. The boxes were designed and made locally through the Glin Mens' Shed and were then painted and planted with help from the residents, SICAP and PHCP staff. Plants were sourced through Limerick City and County Council (LCCC), Estates Liaison Officer with the remaining resources coming from SICAP.

Over a series of mornings, residents joined staff to undertake the work of painting and planting the boxes. We discussed the project and the history of the Estates, impact of Covid-19 and affairs of the world! This hands-on element has contributed to building stronger connections to the residents and enabled them to access support from other team members, including employment supports.



The SICAP team worked with Social Farming Development Officer and colleagues from the PHCP team in recording instructional videos on planting up and caring for the flower boxes which was filmed at an active social farm in West Limerick. Two members of the Travelling Community from this Estate also took part in this farm visit. For them it was an introduction to the concept of Social Farming and how it can support positive outcomes, improve physical and mental health, and build skills.



Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report

GOAL 1

Action – A2105

Community Networks and Strategic Collaborations

Abbeyfeale Family and Community Network

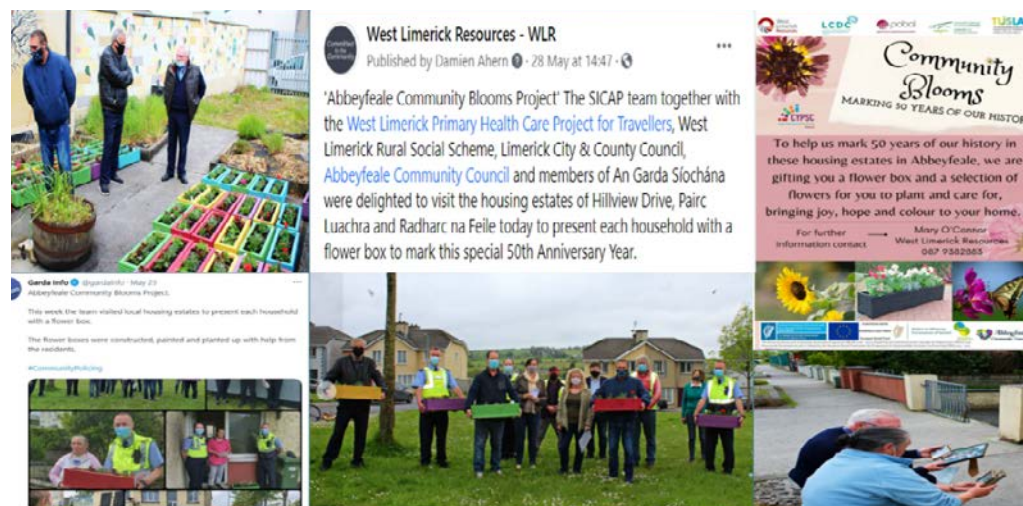
Outcomes

The SICAP team together with colleagues on the West Limerick Primary Health Care Project (PHCP) for Travellers, participants of the Rural Social Scheme, Limerick City & County Council, Abbeyfeale Community Council and members of An Garda Síochána visited the three housing estates of Hillview Drive, Pairc Luachra and Radharc na Feile on May 28th to present the 62 households with a flower box, the printed blessing and holy water from the local Parish Priest to mark this special 50th Anniversary Year. All this was conducted outside and in adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

It was hugely encouraging to see such cooperation and good will among organisations, services, and Estate residents. Despite masks and Covid-19 regulations there was a sense of celebration with each resident coming to the door to receive their planter even the oldest resident, with wheelchair & walking aid came to meet and greet. The Estates were also supported to enter the 'Limerick Going for Gold' competition to showcase the positive benefits of this project.

There was a very definite sense of pride by the three Traveller Men from the Estate who helped with painting, planting, and delivery. From these connections and conversations, planning for the next phase involving the mural took place among residents, to hear their ideas.

By building on this experience and interactions of the Community Blooms initiative, RES staff supported a number of Traveller men as part of their interview for WLR TÚS programme, to which employment progressions were made. This has been one of the main outcomes of the project; building the individual capacities but also that of greater community integration and social inclusion. This has opened conversations and opportunities to build on, by beginning to bridge the distance between both communities.





Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report

GOAL 2

Action – B2107 Connecting Together

Background

The aim of this action is to increase the connectivity of older males in West Limerick by taking part in a social space, using cooking-based activity – The Pie Club - to tackle social isolation and loneliness while also helping to improve the men's physical and mental health. The population for County Limerick aged from 55yrs – 84 years increased by over 50% from 2011-2016. Elderly people living in isolated rural areas in West Limerick are amongst the most vulnerable groups in relation to loneliness and social isolation. The Irish Health Survey 2015 stated that 61% of males are either overweight or obese. The Connecting Together action had not attracted male participants over the last two years from either new or existing clients. By creating a group specifically for men, we established a space for them to feel comfortable to come together while learning a valuable skill set, reducing the feelings of isolation, developing confidence and improving health and wellbeing. Covid-19 added its own layer of challenge over the two years, exasperating further social and rural isolation, so this action would be crucial to provide a safe and welcomed space for re-engagement.

Response

Staff set about planning for each session, combining both learning, emphasis on social interaction and fun into each session. This action roll out is always set for the latter part of the year, to accommodate a cohort of our smallholders, however the model being used can be used at any point and is a transferable model of engagement.

A pilot was designed, and a cohort of men currently engaged with the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) were targeted along with some other male clients on the caseload. While it received a very positive response, there were of course some that were reluctant and anxious as Omicron and its presence and transmissibility continued to affect the community.

The Pie Club

While the Pie Club concept can be described as a cooking skills-based class, it allowed for so much more. At each session men learned the basics of pie making with a focus on healthy fillings while also providing time and space to chat and interact with others. By learning to plan, prepare and produce pies from scratch they had a tasty and tangible result of their learning while also building a new social network.

The Pie Club took place in Newcastle West Community Centre. Resources and equipment were purchased through the SICAP budget, for the duration of the programme. All resources are compact, a small hob top and pie maker per participant, so the resources are transportable that can be used in more programmes, in any community space.

It was facilitated by a SICAP team member trained under the HSE Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) programme supported through the Limerick Food Partnership (Goal 1 Action 5 Community Networks & Strategic Collaborations). While it was and is planned to have the model of delivery, inclusive of guest speakers covering topics of physical and mental health, the high numbers and interest of safety this was postponed.





Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2021 Annual Report

GOAL 2

Action – B2107 Connecting Together

Progression and Outcomes

10 male clients were supported to participate in The Pie Club throughout November 2021, with each one completing a Personal Action Plan (PAP) which is integral to the work carried out by staff with the clients, and a pre-requisite of the programme. The men were of varying ages and from various geographical areas.

Each participant spoke of their increased social connectedness through the weekly meeting. Focus on healthy eating and managing a budget for purchasing elements were built into the project. The sessions provided an opportunity for tasting the product and talking which are key elements in addressing social exclusion. The 4-week project provided overall an improved sense of well-being delivered through the project; for the individuals and the group including mental health, physical wellbeing, and communication skills. Simple recipes were used and then on completion given to each participant, with tips on how to use up left over food in their fridges, avoiding food waste. The information packs also included other relevant information on physical and mental health supports. This plays into the life skills element, home economics and food safety aspect that is crucial. This also links to our next phase of planning for the delivery of the HSE Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) programme. SICAP was also facilitating a student placement from LIT at the end of 2021 and she was given the opportunity to support the initiative and see first-hand the learning in action, which was complimentary to her own learning outcomes for her Community Development course.

A transferable model of engagement has been established and tested for future projects across West Limerick, which we will plan for with a wider audience of engagement. As all resources are portable, this will enable us to deliver the project anywhere, demonstrating the flexibility of the programme also. We would be very hopeful that as the Covid-19 situation improves, we can look forward to increasing participant numbers. There was a weekly post on FB page, highlighting the achievement of the group and raising awareness of our projects, every post received great encouragement.

Key Statistics For 2021

37

Community Organisations were supported by TÚS

Areas supported:

Environmental Services, GAA clubs, Rugby clubs, Soccer clubs, Golf clubs, Community Centres, Graveyards, Clonshire Equestrian Centre, Day Care Centres, Meals on Wheels, Youth Spaces, Charity Shops, Community Crèches, Scouts, Tidy Towns, Tourism Centres and facilities.

79

participants were supported by TÚS in 2021

€895,475

was total payroll figure for TÚS for 2021

17

participants received Manual Handling Training

11

participants received Safepass Training

22

participants received Basic First Aid Training

13

participants received Safe Use of Small Equipment Training.

TÚS is a national community-based work placement programme offering short-term working opportunities to those on the live register.

These work opportunities are provided by Community and Voluntary organisations who deliver services that are vital to their community. TÚS gives those who participate on the programme the opportunity to learn and develop new skills, while also networking and gaining confidence to re-join the workforce in a part time capacity.

- Allocation of TÚS participants to West Limerick Resources is 120 participants.
- Five TÚS supervisors.
- Due to Covid-19 restrictions during the year, recruitment was extremely difficult. DEASP extended contract end dates to February 11th, 2022, onwards.

Period Jan to May 2021

TÚS participants were in lockdown and had to remain at home due to Covid-19 government restrictions from January to May 2021.

However, a number were able to continue to deliver certain services to the public:

- 14 TÚS participants continued to work in their placements
- Placements providing essential services like Meals on Wheels, assistance in Community Crèches/ Rathfredagh/West Limerick Radio 102FM and maintenance of walkways for the public.

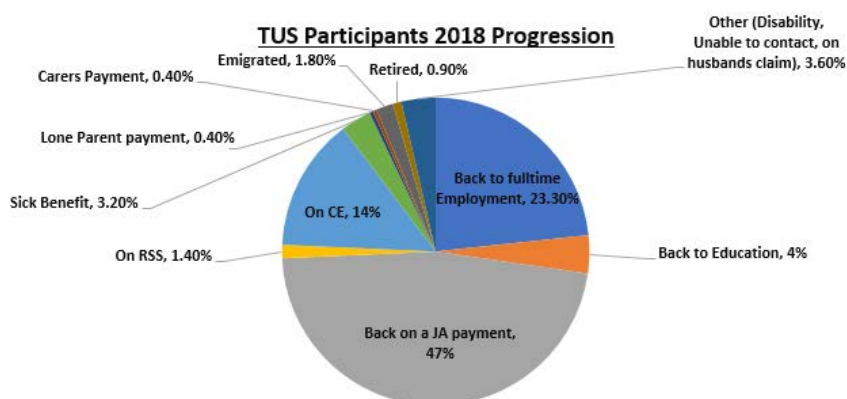
During this lockdown period TÚS Supervisors liaised continuously with participants who were working and those who were at home. Supervisors also availed of the opportunity to complete some online training:

- Managing Probationary Periods
- Art in Action for young people in Direct Provision
- Understanding Microsoft Teams
- Research-how to fight Prejudice & Discrimination towards Irish Travellers – webinar
- Bullying Code of Practice
- Digital Media Marketing

TÚS Participant Survey 2018

Supervisors conducted a comprehensive TÚS Participant Survey of participants who were on payroll for 2018. **219** participants were contacted to establish their progression after leaving the TÚS programme. The pie chart below has a full breakdown of their progression. It is worth noting the following:

- **Over 50%** of participants did not return to jobseekers' payment.
- **23.3%** are in full time employment (this includes being self-employed)
- **14%** progressed to Community Employment Schemes demonstrating the very good working relationship with local CE supervisors.



WLR Cross Collaboration Group

There were several candidates on the TÚS panel from the Travelling Community without placements in Abbeyfeale. A West Limerick Resources Cross Collaboration group was set up and a meeting was held online to discuss options for these candidates going forward. Each candidate was contacted to discuss their eligibility for TÚS. Approximately 66% were reached successfully. The remaining number could not be contacted.

Outcome:

1. Those eligible for TÚS were interviewed by TÚS and SICAP in May 2021.
2. Those not eligible – interviewed by SICAP who gave information on the services available within the SICAP programme at West Limerick Resources and were then offered the appropriate supports.
3. Three candidates from the Travelling Community were successfully placed on the TÚS programme in July 2021 working at Reilig Íde Naofa graveyard in Abbeyfeale. The feedback from this collaboration has been very positive, the participants have taken ownership of the project, clearly taking great pride in their work, and have demonstrated an awareness of the sensitivities often associated with work undertaken in graveyards. The public, for their part are also quick to show their appreciation with words of praise for the efforts of the men whenever they visit the graveyard in question.

Period May to Dec 2021

With the lifting of restrictions in May 2021, a significant number of both indoor and outdoor placements became available again.

- 46 TÚS participants returned to their respective placements.
- Covid induction training was provided to all participants by their TÚS Supervisor.
- Unfortunately, the West Limerick Resources Back2New Upcycling workshop and Store remained closed due to Covid-19 and closed fully in June 2021. This was a big loss for the TÚS programme as it offered valuable work placements.
- Face to face TÚS interviews also recommenced in May 2021.

Referrals from DEASP

152 Referrals were received from the DEASP in 2021 (please note 56 of these referrals were referred in late Nov/early Dec 2021 making it difficult to proceed with a placement in 2021, given the short turn around and payroll cut off for starters in early Dec). Of these 152 referrals, several of them were duplicate names so the actual number of referrals received in 2021 was **128**.

Actual number of referrals	128
Referred back to DEASP (see reasons below)	64
Number commenced on TÚS	13
Number on panel	26
Number to be interviewed in Jan 2022	25

Reasons to be referred back to DEASP:

No show at interview
No suitable placement – previously dismissed from TÚS or organisations won't engage with candidate for various reasons.
Currently engaging with Jobpath and won't complete both TÚS and Jobpath together
Not Financially viable
Lack of transport
Returned to employment
Medical issues
Childcare issues
Would not open a Bank/Credit Union account
Literacy/language issues

Early leavers

Progressed to Employment	9
Back to Education	2

DEASP TÚS Remote Monitoring Inspection

In May 2021, a DEASP TÚS Remote Monitoring Inspection took place. TÚS Supervisors completed the questionnaires and provided all the relevant supporting documentation for the audit to the TÚS Co-ordinator for submission. In October 2021 the manager received confirmation that, following the inspection, the existence of policies and procedures was demonstrated and that they were deemed to be in compliance with the TÚS Programme Operating Procedures.

Tea Break Tuesdays Talks with SICAP

Three TÚS supervisors took part in “Tea Break Tuesdays – Jobs for June” webinar series hosted by the WLR SICAP team, whereby they delivered information on the TÚS programme relevant to the Caring, Retail and Administration employment sectors.

Good news stories

TÚS: individual success stories:

- A participant with Newcastle West Town FC working as grounds maintenance worker (who has a BA in Business Studies with Sports Management and has additional coaching training with FAI and UEFA) was given the opportunity by his mentor to provide coaching theory to transition year students in SMI Secondary School Newcastle West on behalf of NCW Town FC.
- A participant who was on the programme in 2020 in Kilcolman Crèche pursued a Childcare course after her placement. She is now back working in Kilcolman Crèche on a full-time basis having secured her qualification.
- A participant who was previously on the TÚS programme in NCBI progressed to a CE Scheme there. She has now subsequently been appointed as the new manager in NCBI Newcastle West.
- Two participants on the programme in 2021 went back to education and commenced the Healthcare Support and Childcare Course in Kilmeedy which started in September 2021.
- Ballingarry Development/ Ballingarry Heritage recently forged links with the Open House Limerick (OHL) organisation and hosted an event on October 31st, 2021, offering tours of the restored Mausoleum and attached graveyard and of Ballingarry castle (external only). The castle courtyard area was very overgrown and needed to be cleared before the event could take place. This once off project was facilitated by the TÚS office and the participant placed in Ballingarry.

- A participant has worked tirelessly on his own in clearing a neglected graveyard in Ballingarry. The committee hired a contractor to remove the large trees and undergrowth, but the participant has cleared the rest of the site. Sarah McCutcheon (Executive Archaeologist with Limerick City and County Council) called to the graveyard in September 2021 and was impressed with the volume of work undertaken and was satisfied that gravestones and footstones had been unearthed but not disturbed. The graveyard was inaccessible for decades but now because it is accessible, people have come in to trace their ancestry. The graveyard and ruins of the old church date back to the 13th Century at least and hosts a Mausoleum and several different tombs and graves. The volume of work undertaken by this participant is greatly appreciated (see pictures).



Resignation

Michaela Donegan resigned from West Limerick Resources in November 2021 after approximately seven years' service as a TÚS Supervisor. This departure reduces the number of TÚS Supervisors to four. Michaela managed the Back2New Upcycling unit in Newcastle West and enjoyed many successes there. Michaela also collaborated in various projects with other programmes within West Limerick Resources over the years which was greatly appreciated. Best wishes were extended to Michaela for the future.

RIP

Sadly, during the year, the TÚS programme lost two participants. To their families and friends, the TÚS office offer their sincere condolences and thank them for their work on the TÚS programme. May they Rest In Peace.



Social Farming

Social Farming offers people who are socially, physically, mentally, or intellectually disadvantaged the opportunity to spend time on a family farm in a healthy, supportive, and inclusive environment. A person may choose to spend a fixed amount of time on the farm participating in a range of activities they may be interested in such as gardening, animal care or indoor activities such as baking bread or jam making.



Social Farming activity takes place in a safe and supportive environment cognisant of an individual's abilities, skills, and their interests. Focus remains on encouraging participants to socialise, gain confidence, and build relationships and increase their participation in community.

The farms are not specialised treatment farms; they are typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from relationship building through farm activities in a nonclinical environment. While those participating in Social Farming activities may derive therapeutic benefit from it, this is not the main purpose or aim and the farmers are not playing the role of therapists. Social Farming supports people in living ordinary lives, interacting with their community and environment, developing their potential.

Funding for Social Farming is provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) and the CEDRA Fund. Social Farming Ireland is based in Leitrim and led by Leitrim Development Company. It supports the development of a national Social Farming network in collaboration with fellow Local Development Companies (LDCs), Waterford

Leader Partnership and Southwest Mayo Development Company. The Southwest Social Farming Regional Development Officer (RDO), based in West Limerick Resources CLG has a geographical remit which includes Limerick, Clare, North Tipperary, Kerry, and areas of Cork.

The work of Social Farming is supported by a number of committees, the National Advisory Committee (NAC) and the National Coordination Committee (NCC) and at a regional level, the Social Farming Network, with membership drawn from the Southwest region, services, and agencies, facilitated by WLR and chaired by one of the social farmers.

Social Farming Open Days

As the newly appointed Social Farming Regional Development Officer re-engaged with social farmers in early 2021, farmers began to become active with placements once again. Covid-19 had as with so many services, disrupted the provision in 2020. It was evident from early – mid 2021 that there was a steadily increasing interest from services, farmers, and participants throughout the year. Social Farming would be a key element in terms of people's recovery and community re-engagement post Covid-19. Social Farming could offer that opportunity, within a safe framework. There was a keen interest from specific areas in the region, particularly Tipperary, to learn more about Social Farming and to eventually become active with placements supporting individuals in their communities.

A flyer was developed and distributed to local support services, farmers and interested individuals. Alongside this, both development officers took part in several radio interviews prior to the open day to promote the day. This also provided an opportunity to share information on Social Farming overall. These interviews were with Tipp Fm and Tipp Midwest radio. Our radio interview with Jim Finn can be heard back on the following links.

[Ag Report with Jim Finn 18/Sep - Tipp FM](#)

Our Open Day welcomed farmers, participants, services, and families to Séan's farm, where attendees were offered the opportunity to learn more about social farming and to hear from Séan on his experience as a farmer with social farming Ireland and so much more. The day's events are outlined on our programme below:



Social Farming Open Day

Venue: Farm of Sean O'Farrell, Cloncannon, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.

Date: Wednesday, 29 September 2021

Time: 10:00-12:00

Social Farming Information Morning

RSVP to
Email: eoconnell@wip.ie or christine.ross@wip.ie
Phone: Eadaoin 0873443842 or Christine 0872311061
Directions given on booking.

Logos: Social Farming Ireland, Healthy Ireland, Pobal, CEDRA, Leitrim company, West Limerick Research, etc.



Social Farming Open Day
County Tipperary
29 September 2021
Farm of Sean O'Farrell

Programme

09:30	Registration
10:00	Take seats
10:05	Words of Welcome by Farmer Sean O'Farrell
10:10	Introduction to Social Farming by Helen Doherty, SoFI
10:25	Comments by Dan Downey, Healthy Ireland
10:30	Social Farming in County Tipperary, Eadaoin O'Connell, WLR
10:35	A Farmer's Experience by Sean O'Farrell
10:45	A Service/Participant's Experience
11:00	Q&A
11:20	Tea & Coffee
11:40	Farm Walk-About led by Sean O'Farrell

Logos: Social Farming Ireland, Healthy Ireland, Pobal, CEDRA, Leitrim company, West Limerick Research, etc.

In understanding this interest, the Social Farming Regional Development Officer (RDO) worked in conjunction with the RDO in Waterford Leadership Partnership, who covers Social Farming in South Tipperary, to organise an Open Day event there. This event was held on the 29th of September on Séan O'Farrell's Farm in Moneygall and was funded by Healthy Ireland (HI).

We welcomed just under 30 attendees to our open day on Séan's farm where farmers, services and participants had an opportunity to connect with one another and to learn about social farming and ask questions and get a taste of what a day might look like. Farm brochures were also developed for farmers across Tipperary, funded by Healthy Ireland, to enable farmers in the region further promote their farms and the opportunities they provide through Social Farming to individuals in the community. These brochures were available on the day and thereafter.

Social Farming & Mental Health Service Engagement

Social Farming in the Southwest saw an increase in interest from HSE Mental Health Support Services across Limerick, North Tipperary, and Clare in 2021. Both previous participants and new participants got in contact to engage in placements. Likewise, staff and management who had previously been involved in placements returned with interest alongside new senior staff who had a curiosity about the work we do.

In June 2021, we responded to this interest in Tipperary firstly, by welcoming staff and management from St Marys, HSE Mental Health Service, in Thurles to Séan O'Farrell's farm in Tipperary for a farm visit. This supported a placement which was in planning with St Mary's, while also engaging management in the work we do, and the process involved for all. Having the staff participate gives greater understanding and meaning when agreeing outcomes for the service users. It is also very positive when staff can then advocate for and promote Social Farming in a wider context and particularly among work colleagues; locally, regionally, and nationally. Work continues as we strive to build a stronger understanding of Social Farming and work to secure funding.

While this placement began for St Marys, supported by Healthy Ireland, we continued to see interest from Mental Health Services in Limerick. The Social Farming RDO organised an Information Day specifically for two Newcastle West based services; Churchtown Day Hospital and O'Connell House connecting service users to another social farm; Celia and Geoffrey Brightens in Rathkeale, who have been with Social Farming since the beginning.

This Information Day aimed to develop participants understanding of Social Farming and to support them in choosing, for themselves, if they wanted to participate in a placement. We received great feedback from all in attendance with 12 participants continuing to engage in Social Farming placements on social farms in Limerick, as a result.

One of the key outcomes resulting from these information days was that we successfully worked with the HSE to secure funding for 10 placements throughout Limerick, Clare, and North Tipperary for 40 participants to engage in Social Farming for early 2022 under the Winter Initiatives Funding.

These Information Days or farm visits for HSE staff and participants across the region proved to be a positive space for learning, connecting, and sharing of information. This type of networking is hugely valuable to and for Social Farming as it continues to develop. Social Farming also featured on the front page on the HSE mental health recovery newsletter for Winter 2021.





Limerick Volunteer Centre

Limerick Volunteer Centre (LVC) had a target of registering 500 new Volunteers and recording 20,000 Volunteer Hours in 2021.

Total new Volunteers Registered by 31st December was **542** or 107% of target but only **12,889** Volunteer hours were recorded which equates to 65% of hours target.

We received **€146,600** funding from DRCD but if charged at average industrial wage volunteer hours would still represent a contribution of **€257,950** into the local economy.

Once again most of our registrations were people who wanted to assist in the effort against Covid-19.

Only **14** new organisations registered with LVC in 2021

36 new opportunities were created and advertised on www.volunteerlimerick.ie.

292 volunteers applied for volunteer roles and engaged with the volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) between themselves and people already registered with LVC they made over **800** applications in the year.

We placed **151** volunteers in 2021.

We didn't physically meet people in 2021 because of restrictions and the rise of variants but we did record the following:

Irish people represented a whopping 70% of all our Volunteers as opposed to just 55% but we still registered 49 other nationalities.

Here are the top 5:

Irish	382
Brazilian	25
Indian	22
Nigerian	10
Spanish	07

Garda Vetting

LVC provided a Garda Vetting Service to 41 Limerick based organisations. Because of Covid-19 restrictions we suspended fees for small organisations but continued to charge CE Schemes, Garda Vetting Training went online to 11 Organisations.

Outreach

Outreach events were severely restricted in 2021 the principal ones being training and induction sessions for volunteers in our Mass Vaccination Centres.

Pandemic Measures

Mass Vaccination Centre Volunteers Waiting for the rush...



Before the shift begins.



Limerick Volunteer Centre



Mass Vaccination Centres 2021

The stop-start nature of business in 2021 was problematic but consequently one very big story sticks out, and it's quite a story. In March 2021 Ireland was ready to roll out a massive vaccination of our entire population and the HSE in the Mid-West called upon ourselves to assist them in the programme.

Initially they wanted us to recruit volunteer stewards for the Vaccination Centre in the Radisson Hotel, but it quickly became apparent that they needed us to completely schedule and manage the voluntary effort in this very historic project.

Limerick Volunteer Centre managed the full programme of shifts for volunteers from April to August. The size of the task was enormous, and the following represents the staggering results.

I don't know what you did last summer but...

Beginning on April 22nd in Radisson Blu Hotel and concluding August 13th in Limerick Racecourse. The group of 84 Limerick Volunteers achieved the following:

- They completed over 1200 6-hour shifts.
- They contributed over 8,000 hours while working 8.00am to 8.00pm 7 days a week including bank holidays.
- The HSE have directly connected their mammoth effort to the vaccination of 185,509 people in Limerick.
- On their very first day in the Radisson Hotel, they stewarded the 772 vaccinations.
- By June 21st they were stewarding 17,698 people a week.

The total achieved suggest that most citizens and every household in Limerick was served by their voluntary effort. It might just be one of the greatest citizen efforts ever recorded in Limerick city and county.

The Legacy of Volunteer Centre Action in 2021

The Department of Rural and Community Development have recognised Volunteer Centre contribution in 2021 and identified our potential with “**Community Volunteers**” essentially, they are proposing to fund us to create a local body of volunteers who will assist in delivering our county's civic calendar. We will achieve this in a strategic partnership with our local authority. (Watch this space)

Training

Our training schedule was immensely curtailed by covid, but we did deliver “Recovery” training online in conjunction with “The Carmichael Centre”. It was of benefit to 30 of our Volunteer Involving Organisations. We also delivered “Garda Vetting” training over Zoom to new Garda Vetting Officers.

Financial Impact of LVC in 2021

Funding from Dept.	€ 146,600
Volunteering hours contributed into local economy	12,889
Impact in €	€257,950



Rathkeale Pre Social Cohesion Group



Rathkeale Pre Social Cohesion

This report covers the activities of the Group for the year ended 31 December 2021.

The Group is a joint venture between the Methodist, Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Churches ('the Churches'), West Limerick Resources, and the Rathkeale community.

The aims and objectives of the Group are to help to facilitate reconciliation and justice - through the organisation and provision of events, programmes, and other initiatives and activities - within and between the Traveller and Settled Communities of Rathkeale. Reflecting the Group's ecumenical origins, a Christian ethos underpins all the activities carried out by the Group in pursuit of its aims.

The day to day activities of the Group are managed by an Executive Committee representative of the stakeholders and chaired by an independent chairperson appointed by the Churches. The Executive Committee reports to an Oversight Committee, which is responsible for constitutional, policy and budgetary issues.

The Covid-19 Pandemic

The pandemic continued to be a severe constraint on the Group's activities and our original workplan was largely suspended on that account. It was not until the second half of the year that face-to-face meetings resumed and activity levels began to increase.

Staffing

Denis Robinson, our Community Development Officer, who had resigned in late 2020, was re-employed by the Group in July 2021 and has brought his experience and enthusiasm to bear with considerable effect since then. Lillian Doolan was appointed to the newly-created part-time position of Community Support Worker in December 2021. Lillian's expertise as a result of her previous work with the Citizens Information service should be of great benefit to the Group in 2022.

Meetings in 2021

In 2021 the Executive Committee had 10 meetings 4 of which were held via 'Zoom'. Representatives of An Garda Síochána attended 2 of the meetings. The Chairperson, and the manager of West Limerick Resources (who is a member of both the Executive and Oversight Committees) also had 2 further important meetings: (i) with officials from the Department of Rural and Community Development and Limerick City and County Council, and (ii) with the local leaders of the three Churches (the District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, and the Catholic and Church of Ireland Bishops of Limerick).



Rathkeale Pre Social Cohesion Group

Activities in 2021

As mentioned, the Pandemic severely curtailed our activities in 2021, but there were nevertheless a number of significant events and activities worth noting, as follows:

- Funding of €4,000, related to the Group's national Pride of Place award, was donated to the 4 schools in Rathkeale for the purchase of electronic educational aids (February).
- Meeting on 2 occasions with representatives of An Garda Síochána to discuss policing issues which arose in the 2020 Christmas period and to plan for Christmas 2021 (March 8 and September 24).
- Meeting with the 3 Church leaders to review the role that faith-based and ecumenical initiatives should play in the Group's activities, and the extent to which the members of the church congregations can become involved (March 16).
- The appointment of Denis Robinson as Community Development Officer (July 14), the position having remained vacant since October 2020.
- Formation of weekly women's walking group, in collaboration with the Primary Healthcare Project for Traveller Health (Autumn).
- Contribution towards a Parents' Support Room in St Joseph's Boys School (November).
- Setting up a group to work on a proposed Rathkeale Book of Prayers, with assistance from LCETB and local volunteers (November) capturing locally used prayer and sayings withing the Community.
- Blessing of Crib, and Ecumenical service in the Augustinian Abbey (5 December).
- Provision of financial support for the town's new Christmas lighting system (December).
- Community Support Worker appointed (December).
- Revised Constitution drafted (December).
- Contribution of €1,000 towards Palatine Museum feasibility study (December).
- New office premises agreed, subject to contract (December).

Activities postponed

As a result of the Covid-19 restrictions, a number of events planned for 2021 had to be postponed until later in 2022. These included:

- A Christmas Camp for local children, in conjunction with Foróige and Limerick Youth Service.
- A day visit to Glenstal Abbey.
- An ecumenical Advent service in Ballingrane Methodist Church.

Planning for 2022

With much of the Covid-19 related restrictions lifted and with a full cohort of staff on board planning for a full programme of activities for 2022 commenced in the last quarter with a view to reenergising and revitalising the activities of the group into the new year.



Community Outreach

Annual Facebook Results for 2021

During the Covid-19 pandemic our website and Facebook page became key tools for sharing information on all community resources and supports, including online training workshops, parenting and mental health supports, our programmes and much more. It allowed us to connect with our community and to share updates. The following analysis provides an insight into the level of activity and engagement achieved over the course of the year.

Total		Content		
Posts	509	Recent content ↑↓	Type	Reach ⓘ ↓
Reach <i>No. of people who saw any post at least once</i>	74,816	Take a look at the wonderful mini h... Nov 10, 2021	Post	Boost unavailable 35,466
Engagement <i>No. of interactions users have with your page and its posts e.g., likes & comments</i>	24,755	A beautiful afternoon at The Barna... Jul 23, 2021	Post	Boost post 5,412
Likes <i>No. of new likes of your Facebook page during the year</i>	2,802	'Abbeyfeale Community Blooms Pr... May 28, 2021	Post	Boost post 4,607
		On yer Bike! Bike Week is a celebra... Sep 10, 2021	Post	Boost post 3,386
		A fantastic achievement by Athea ... Nov 17, 2021	Post	Boost post 2,954

Top Posts

Below are our most successful Facebook posts. This is our most attention-grabbing content which drives the most engagement from our followers.

No.1

Boost unavailable

Take a look at the wonderful mini hats that have been lovingly made by memb...
November 10, 2021 at 12:55 PM
ID: 4466109303458841

Interactions

268 reactions 19 comments 2 shares

Performance

Reach	Reactions, comments and sha...	Results
<p>Total</p> <p>35,468</p> <p>Worst Best</p> <p>This post reached more people than 100% of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.</p>	<p>Total</p> <p>289</p> <p>Worst Best</p> <p>This post received more reactions, comments and shares than 100% of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.</p>	<p>Total</p> <p>663</p> <p>Worst Best</p> <p>This post received more link clicks than 100% of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.</p>
<p>Reach</p> <p>35,468</p>	<p>Reactions</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Shares</p> <p>268</p> <p>19</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Link clicks</p> <p>663</p>



Community Outreach

No.2



Boost post

A beautiful afternoon at The Barnagh Greenway Hub with Brothers of Charit...

July 23, 2021 at 3:15 PM

ID: 4127606337309141

Interactions

176 reactions

11 comments

19 shares

Performance

Reach

Total
5,412 Worst Best

This post reached more people than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach 5,412

Reactions, comments and shares

Total
206 Worst Best

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions	176
Comments	11
Shares	19

Results

Total
626 Worst Best

This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks	626
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No.3



Boost post

'Abbeyfeale Community Blooms Project' The SICAP team together with the ...

May 28, 2021 at 2:47 PM

ID: 3969678566435253

Interactions

73 reactions

6 comments

13 shares

Performance

Reach

Total
4,607 Worst Best

This post reached more people than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach 4,607

Reactions, comments and shares

Total
92 Worst Best

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions	73
Comments	6

Results

Total
675 Worst Best

This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks	675
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Community Outreach

No.4



Boost post

On yer Bike! Bike Week Is a celebration and promotion of the benefits of cycli...
September 10, 2021 at 4:14 PM

ID: 4274977725905334

Interactions

31 reactions

7 comments

18 shares

Performance

Reach

Total
3,391 Worst Best

This post reached more people than **98%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach 3,391

Reactions, comments and sha...

Total
56 Worst Best

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **98%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions	31
Comments	7
Shares	18

Results

Total
164 Worst Best

This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks	164
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No.5



Boost post

A fantastic achievement by Athea Craft Group, contributing a whopping 1150...
November 17, 2021 at 1:49 PM

ID: 4488642331205538

Interactions

128 reactions

32 comments

9 shares

Performance

Reach

Total
2,954 Worst Best

This post reached more people than **98%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reach 2,954

Reactions, comments and sha...

Total
169 Worst Best

This post received more reactions, comments and shares than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Reactions	128
Comments	32
Shares	9

Results

Total
326 Worst Best

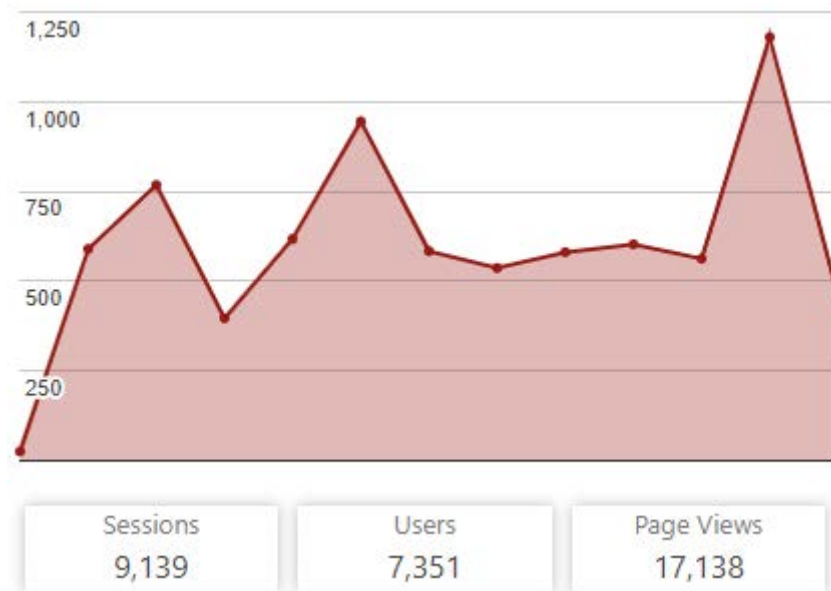
This post received more link clicks than **100%** of your 50 most recent Facebook posts and stories.

Link clicks	326
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Community Outreach

Our Website Google Analytics



Sessions - Sometimes called a Visit, is the set of interactions, or web requests, made within a given time frame by a single user visiting a specific website.

Users - a user is a visitor who has initiated a session on your website.

Page Views - A pageview (or pageview hit, page tracking hit) is an instance of a page being loaded (or reloaded) in a browser.



Governance & Compliance

West Limerick Resources is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

The Board of Director membership as at 31st December 2021 and the sectors they represent are listed as follows:

Name	Representing
Noelle Madigan	Community - Estuary
Maeve Martin-Kelly	Community - Rathkeale
Frank Dennison	Community - Abbeyfeale
Pat Brennan	Community - Newcastle West
David Browne	Community - Deel Upper
Helen Harnett	St. Vincent de Paul - Social Issues
Richie Bowens	Foroige - Social Issues
Kevin Fitzgerald	Teagasc-Statutory
Sean Lavery	IFA - Social Partners
Rory O'Dwyer	IBEC - Social Partners
Dan Aherne	SIPTU - Social Partners
John Cremin	ICMSA - Social Partners
Josephine Fogarty	HSE - Statutory
Alberta McWalter	An Garda Síochána - Statutory
Lorraine O' Donnell	Inland Fisheries Ireland - Statutory
Martin Cournane	Limerick & Clare Education and Training Board - Statutory
Michael Collins	Limerick City & County Council - Elected Representative
Elisa O' Donovan	Limerick City & County Council - Elected Representative
Bridie Collins	Limerick City & County Council - Elected Representative
Tom Ruddle	Limerick City & County Council - Elected Representative

Our board of directors met 9 times in 2021 with the AGM held via Zoom on 26th May 2021. The Board appoints a number of sub-committees to oversee the company's compliance and operational obligations.

The subcommittees include:

- Board Executive subcommittee
- Finance & Audit subcommittee



Governance & Compliance

Financial Statements

Schedule of Income and Expenditure Account 31st December 2021

INCOME	€
Department Employment Affairs & Social Protection	
Job Club	79,389
Rural Social Scheme	49,792
Tús	90,480
Department of Rural & Community Development	
Limerick Volunteer Centre	128,532
Social Enterprise Grant	3,311
Limerick City and County Council	
Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme	557,039
LEADER 2014-20	317,870
Rathkeale Pre-Social Cohesion	54,273
Local Agenda 21	1,356
Rural Development Fund	271,660
Covid Fund	1,999
Healthy Ireland Fund	5,590
HSE - Primary Health Care Project	138,328
Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine - Social Farming	61,182
TUSLA Child & Family Agency - Family Support Project	31,476
Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board	360
Other Income	122,508
Total Income	1,915,145

EXPENDITURE	€
Project and Admin Staff costs	1,139,325
Project Specific costs	514,549
Admin and Overhead costs	257,029
Total Expenditure	1,910,903
Surplus / (Deficit) for the financial year	4,242



Governance & Compliance

Financial Statements

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2021

FIXED ASSETS	€	€
Tangible Assets		68,390
Current Assets		
Debtors	235,056	
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>716,083</u>	
	951,139	
Creditors		
Amounts falling due within one year	(726,698)	
Amounts falling due after one year	<u>(200,000)</u>	
Net Current Assets		24,441
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<u>92,831</u>
Capital and Reserves		
Revenue Reserves		<u>92,831</u>
Reserves		<u>92,831</u>







Forbairt Iarthar Luimní
West Limerick Resources CLG