



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

TURASCÁIL BHLIANTÚIL

ANNUAL REPORT



2023



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

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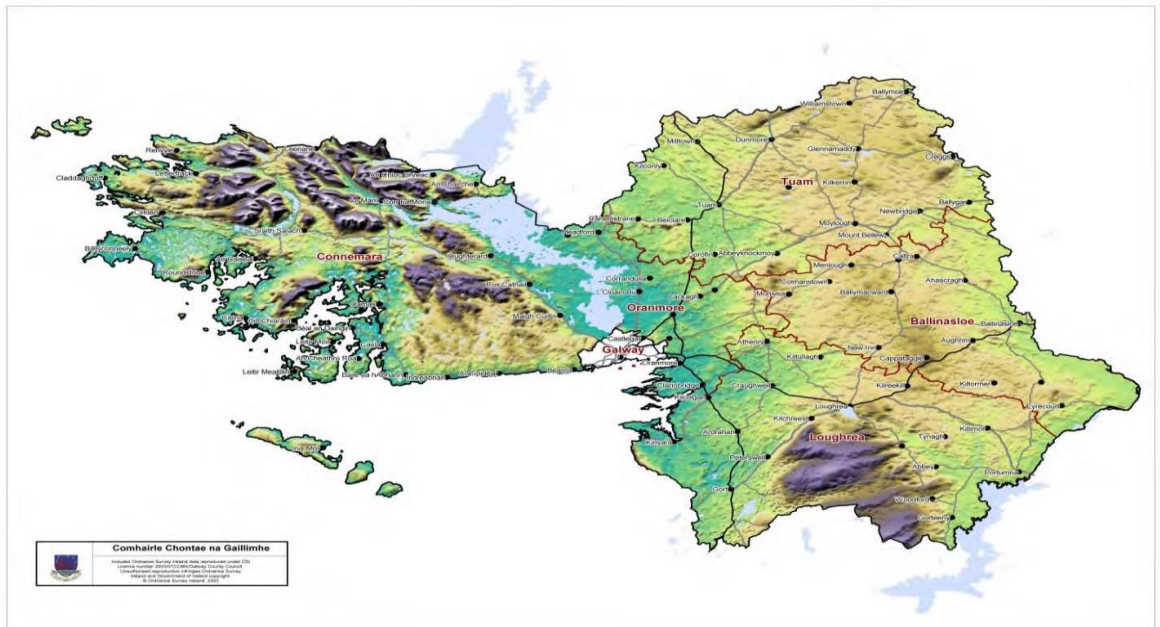
INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the quality of life for the people of County Galway by leading and strengthening Community and Economic development and delivering efficient and sustainable services.



CORE VALUES AND VISION



CORE VALUES

- **Accountable**
- **Helpful**
- **Inclusive**
- **Democratic**
- **Sustainable**
- **Value for Money**

VISION FOR GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

A county with a clear sense of identity, reflecting its heritage, language, and culture, that promotes sustainable economic and community development, citizen and stakeholder engagement, develops essential infrastructure and protects our environment.



As Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway, it gives me great pleasure to introduce on behalf of Galway County Council, this Annual Report which records the progress of services delivered in 2023 and demonstrates the wonderful work, initiatives and achievements that can be delivered through engagement and collaboration.

As a previously elected Mayor in 2014, it was a great honour to be re-elected as the Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway on the 19th June 2023 and to represent the County and its peoples as its first citizen.

Galway County Council is among the largest public service providers in the County and seeks to continually improve the economic, social, cultural and physical infrastructure throughout the County for all our citizens through the provision of a range of services including housing, roads, water, planning, library, fire, environmental, motor tax, community, recreation & amenity and veterinary in an efficient, reliable and cost-effective manner.

Galway County Council hosted several Civic Receptions during 2023 including for the Turloughmore U15 Camogie Team, All-Ireland Féile U15 Division 1 Champions, Athenry U15 Hurlers, All-Ireland Féile na Gael U15 Division 1 Champions, the Galway & District League Team, winners of the Kennedy Cup 2023, Martin Mulkerrins, World Senior Handball Champion, Teresa Smyth, silver medal winner, for Darts at the World Transplant Games, Eamonn Burke gold medal winner at the National Ploughing Championships in 2022.

Since becoming the Cathaoirleach of the County I have had the pleasure of visiting and working with a very large number of communities around the County and witnessing all the great work that you do. I wish to sincerely thank all those involved and to acknowledge all local community activists for their dedication to enhancing their local communities.

In 2023, Galway County Council in conjunction with the IDA, played a central role in attracting investment by Dexcom to Athenry. The new Dexcom facility in Athenry will be one of the largest single private sector investments in the West of Ireland and will provide a major boost to the economy of not only the County of Galway but also to the West, Midwest and Midlands regions.

One of the significant highlights for me was participating in the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade in March 2024 as a guest of the Galway Association of New York, where the Galway County Council delegation received a special audience with the IDA together with meetings with Tourism Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Failte Ireland and the Irish Consulate to further highlight and drive the County of Galway as an excellent place to live and do business.

As Cathaoirleach of the Council, I wish to sincerely thank the staff of the organisation for their work throughout the year. I wish to thank our Chief Executive Mr. Liam Conneally and his Management team for supporting me and my fellow Elected Members in our work.

I would also like to thank Cllr. Michael 'Moegie' Maher who presided as Cathaoirleach for the first six months in 2023 and also sincerely thank my colleagues on the Council for their support and co-operation during my term as Cathaoirleach of the County with a special word of thanks to my Leas-Chathaoirleach, Cllr. Evelyn Francis Parsons.

Is onóir mhór dom gur toghadh mar Chathaoirleach ar Chontae na Gaillimhe mé. Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a chur in iúl leis na comhairleoirí eile, leis an bhfoireann feidhmiúcháin agus le foireann na Comhairle ar fad. Leanfaimid orainn ag obair linn agus ag comhoibriú lena chéile, ar son mhuintir na Gaillimhe ar fad.

Cllr. Liam Carroll

Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



I welcome the publication of the Annual Report for 2023 which details the Council's progress on delivering the strategic goals of our Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 and highlights the essential work and achievements of the Council in the past year in all our business areas.

Like many local authorities the Council was quick to respond and in the early days of the Ukrainian crisis set up an emergency shelter in Oranmore with tremendous assistance from the local community. The response has had to continue through 2023 and now over 3,500 Ukrainian nationals have been accommodated throughout the length and breadth of County Galway and received warmly into local communities. The Council's response to the Ukrainian crisis has been positive and effective and for this I thank the staff and members of Galway County Council.

Supporting the Government's plan to increase social housing supply under the 'Housing for All' plan remains a priority for the Council. In 2023 the Council delivered 226 new homes and over the course of the year created a total of 291 new tenancies including 72 nominated to AHB properties.

During 2023, the implementation of the County Development Plan 2022-2028 continued to provide a policy platform for the granting of sustainable development throughout the County. The Plan promotes the sustainable development of the County as an attractive place to live, work and invest, facilitating population growth in sustainable development patterns and enabling employment creation throughout the County.

Throughout 2023 the Council continued to collaborate closely with the IDA and EI in seeking to attract inward investment and open up the Galway Strategic Economic Corridor. The Strategic Economic Corridor includes the site at Oranmore, where a significant land bank has been assembled, the old Airport at Carnmore and other locations of Oranmore and Athenry.

In 2023, the Dexcom planning application was granted and site development commenced, this is the first installment and, I am confident that the enormous employment and economic potential of our Strategic Economic Corridor between Oranmore and Athenry will be realised in the short to medium term.

Efficient transportation is critical to the economic development of the County and in 2023 the council invested more than €39.9M in the maintenance and upkeep of our regional and local road network, with an additional €17.9M on National Roads and Greenways. In 2023 development works has continued on the Conamara Greenway between Clifden and Recess. To date over 13KM has been completed and open to the public and a further 5.5KM under construction. It is planned to complete this section and progress land acquisition for Recess to Oughterard in 2024.

The N6 - Galway City Ring Road received planning approval in December 2021 was the subject of judicial review proceedings and has since been remitted back to An Bord Pleanála for further consideration. In December 2023 the board requested further information on the Galway City Ring Road application and

preparation on this request is underway. The Galway City Ring Road remains an absolute priority for the sustainable development of the County, City and region. In 2023 the Maigh Cuilinn bypass was officially opened by An Taoiseach, Mr. Leo Varadkar and is now open to traffic.

Land acquisition by Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the Inis Orr Pier redevelopment has been completed. The process to procure a works contractor commenced in 2023 with prequalification documents published in the fourth quarter with the intention to appoint a contractor to commence construction in mid-2024 with an 18-month construction period.

The provision of enhanced landing facilities on Inis Meáin is being actively pursued through ongoing engagement with the DRCD. A funding application for the appointment of a consultant to progress this project was submitted in Q4 2023 with an appointment anticipated in early 2024.”

Galway County Council’s first Tourism Strategy was adopted by elected members in 2023. It reflects the importance of tourism as a regional driver of economic social and cultural regeneration and the importance of Galway in this sector.

A dedicated Climate Unit was established to develop and support a wider work programme to reduce emissions from council activities, support emission reductions in the wider community and ensure adaption to climate risk. Work is ongoing in areas including social housing retrofit, public lighting energy efficiency, active travel initiatives, biodiversity protection and provision of support for community climate action. Following extensive consultation, a comprehensive Climate Action Plan was prepared setting out actions for 2024-2029.

ICT commenced work on the website procurement process and Digital Strategy in 2023. The Council will continue their work on Digital and ICT strategy in 2024 which will be directed in terms of themes and enablers by the published Ireland’s Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy 2030 .

The Council will also have a program commencing in Q1 2024 for a full Website replacement that will be designed around public service delivery and engagement using open-source technology for sharing of built solutions with other local authorities.

Galway County Council engaged the services of Grant Thornton’s People Strategy team in September 2023, to develop a Strategic Workforce Plan that provides a number of recommendations that will ensure Galway County Council has the necessary staff resources, skillsets and organisational structure to efficiently and effectively meet the increasing volume, diversity and complexity of demands for services that are placed on the Council. Galway County Council was benchmarked against comparator Local Authorities to assist in informing staff resourcing recommendations with a focus on ensuring that Galway County Council has the necessary staff resources in place to leverage the full range and extent of Government funded programs and initiatives that will deliver the best possible services and outcomes for our customers, citizens and service users. An implementation plan will be developed to deliver recommendations of the Strategic Workforce Plan on a phased basis over 3 years. In 2023 the Council has increased staff resources in the Housing Capital unit, with delivery of Council build properties a main

priority. Due diligence started in 2023 on the transfer to Dunguaire Castle with more work to continue into 2024.

2023 was an extremely busy and productive year and I would like to thank Cathaoirligh Cllr. Michael 'Moegie' Maher and Cllr. Liam Carroll and all the elected members for their help and support in delivering what was a significant work programme in 2023. Their commitment to the development of the county is critical to its success.

Throughout 2023, we have seen a strong emphasis on delivery of key strategic objectives of the County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 in areas, such as economic development, transport and goods and people movement, climate change, energy and renewable resources and tourism.

Looking forward to the 2024 Adopted Budget the financial supports from the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government have been essential in the drafting of a workable budget for 2024. Though the Council remains underfunded relative to comparable local authorities, our budget spend and service provision for 2024 is a significant uplift on 2023. This €173m spend on the governance and provision of public services is critical for the local economy of County Galway.

Finally, I want to thank the entire staff of Galway County Council for their dedication and commitment in providing vital public services to the citizens of County Galway.

Liam Conneally

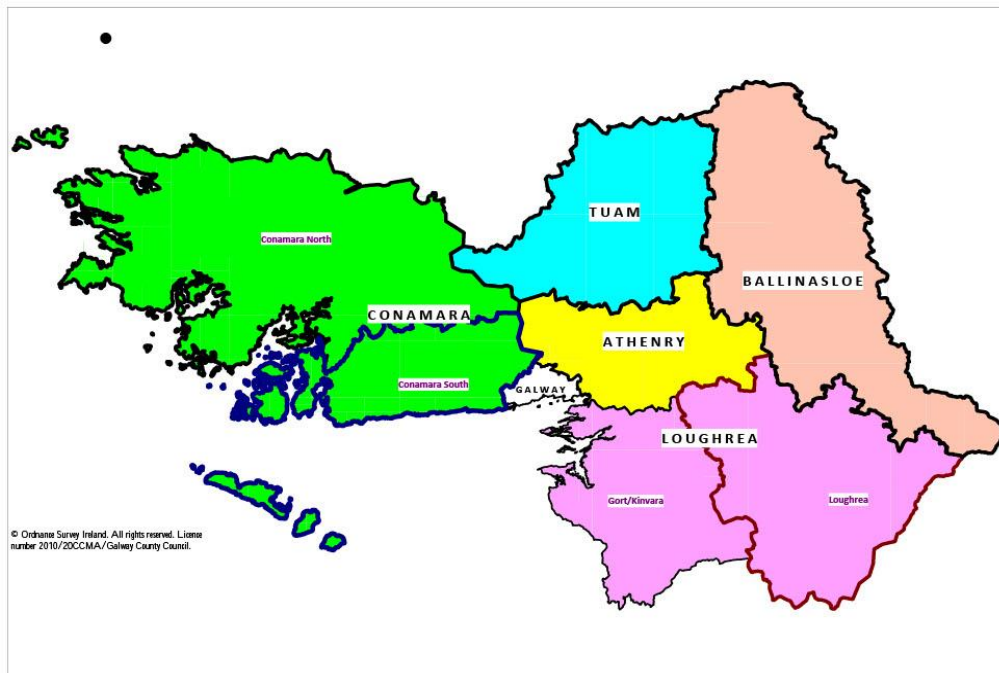
Chief Executive, Galway County Council

LOCAL ELECTORAL AREAS/MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

In accordance with Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 618/218 - *County of Galway Local Electoral Areas and Municipal Districts Order 2018*, “the County of Galway shall have the following municipal districts for the purposes of section 22A (inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 (No. 1 of 2014)) of the Local Government Act 2001 (No. 37 of 2001)”. The effect of the Order is to amend the division of County Galway into local electoral areas, to fix the number of members of Galway County Council to be elected for each such area and to determine the Municipal Districts for County Galway as follows:

- (a) The Municipal District of Ballinasloe consisting of the Local Electoral Area of Ballinasloe.
- (b) The Municipal District of Conamara consisting of the Local Electoral Area of Conamara North and the Local Electoral Area of Conamara South.
- (c) The Municipal District of Loughrea consisting of the Local Electoral Area of Loughrea and the Local Electoral Area of Gort — Kinvara.
- (d) The Municipal District of Athenry consisting of the Local Electoral Area of Athenry-Oranmore.
- (e) The Municipal District of Tuam consisting of the Local Electoral Area of Tuam.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS MAP

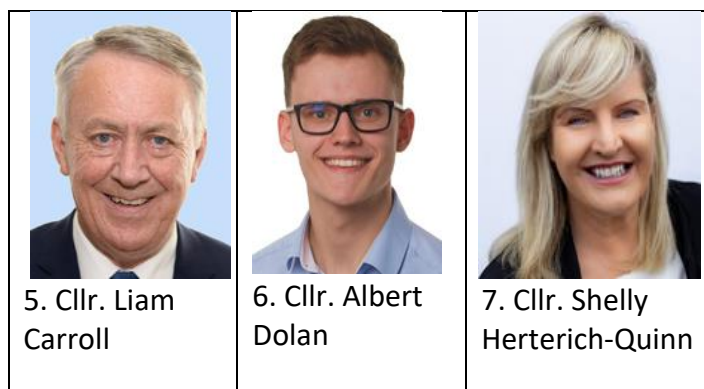


ELECTED MEMBERS BY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The following pages list the Elected Members of Galway County Council for each Municipal District /Local Electoral Area:

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF ATHENRY - ORANMORE

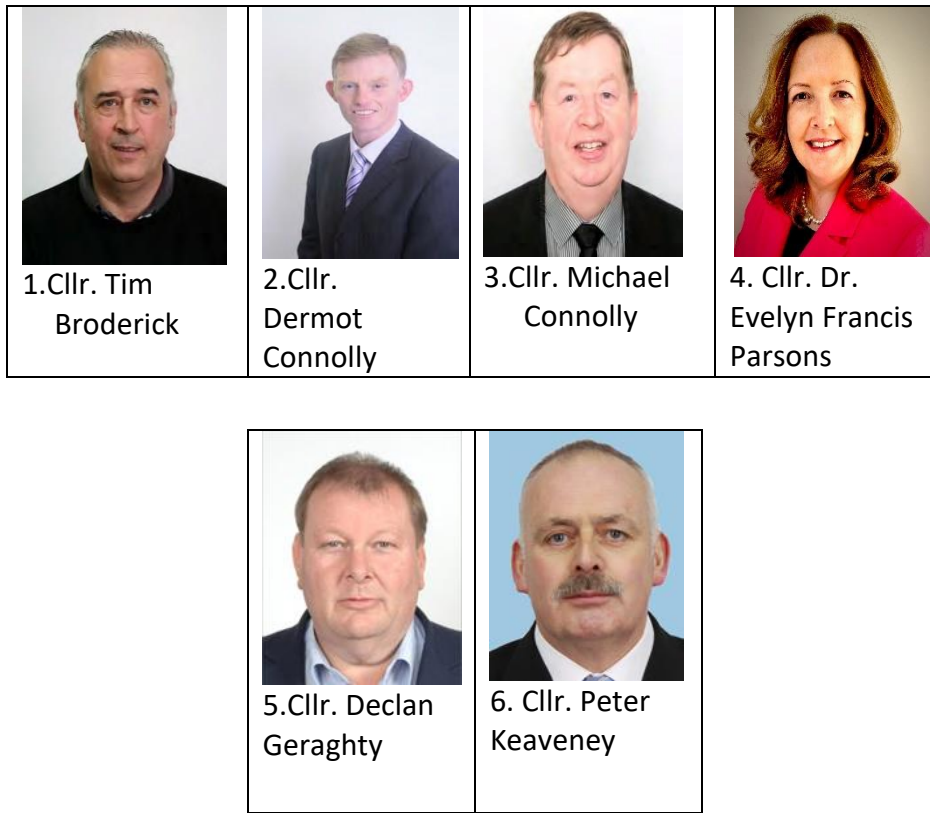
Athenry – Oranmore Local Electoral Area (7 Members)



| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. James Charity, Tonegurrane, Cor an Dola, Co. Galway. | - | 087 2191792 |
| 2. Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly, Cloonkeen, Athenry, Co. Galway. | - | 087 2066810 |
| 3. Cllr. Jim Cuddy, An Laighdeacán, An Carn Mór, Oranmore, Co. Galway. | 091 798136 | 087 6360242 |
| 4. Cllr. David Collins, Waterview, Turloughmore, Co. Galway. | - | 087 7831687 |
| 5. Cllr. Liam Carroll, Frenchfort, Oranmore, Co. Galway. | 091 794677 | 087 6488684 |
| 6. Cllr. Albert Dolan, Monivea, Athenry, Co. Galway. | - | 086 7358081 |
| 7. Cllr. Shelly Herterich-Quinn, The Forge, Old Church Street, Athenry, Co. Galway. | - | 087 2871355 |

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BALLINASLOE

Ballinasloe Local Electoral Area (6 Members)



| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. Tim Broderick, Corraneena, Kilconnell, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. | 090 9686896 | 087 2728058 |
| 2. Cllr. Dermot Connolly, Glennavaddogue, Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. | 090 9642986 | 086 0886160 |
| 3. Cllr. Michael Connolly, Moyloughmore, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. | 090 9679465 | 087 6829049 |
| 4. Cllr. Dr. Evelyn Francis Parsons, Beechlawn Hill, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. | - | 087 1365793 |
| 5. Cllr. Declan Geraghty, Williamstown Via Castlerea, Co. Galway. | 094 9643355 | 086 2543304 |
| 6. Cllr. Peter Keaveney, Bushtown, Glenamaddy, Galway. | 094 9659388 | 087 2533098 |


MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF CONAMARA

Conamara North Local Electoral Area (4 Members)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| 1. Cllr. Eileen Mannion | 2. Cllr. Thomas Welby | 3. Cllr. Séamus Walsh | 4. Cllr. Gerry King |

| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. Eileen Mannion, Sky Road, Clifden, Co. Galway. | - | 087 9555645 |
| 2. Cllr. Thomas Welby, Cregg, Oughterard, Co. Galway. | 091 552748 | 087 2855676 |
| 3. Cllr. Séamus Walsh, Glann, Oughterard, Co. Galway | 091 552726 | 087 0519884 |
| 4. Cllr. Gerry King, Errislannan, Clifden, Co. Galway. | - | 086 1798749 |

Conamara South Local Electoral Area (5 Members)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. An Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin | 2. Cllr. Noel Thomas | 3. An Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin | 4. An Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | 5. Cllr. Alastair McKinstry |

| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|------------|-------------|
| 1. An Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin, Na Foráí Maola Thiar, Bearna, Co. Galway. | - | 087 2933782 |
| 2. Cllr. Noel Thomas, Gort an Chalaídh, Maigh Cuilinn, Gaillimh. | - | 087 7372147 |
| 3. An Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin, Cor na Rón Láir, Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe. | - | 087 9023755 |
| 4. An Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire, Na Doireadh, Baile na hAbhann, Co. na Gaillimhe. | 091 572974 | 087 9213795 |
| 5. Cllr. Alastair McKinstry, Croílár, Baile na hAille, Maigh Cuilinn, Co. na Gaillimhe. | 091 868678 | 087 6847928 |

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LOUGHREA

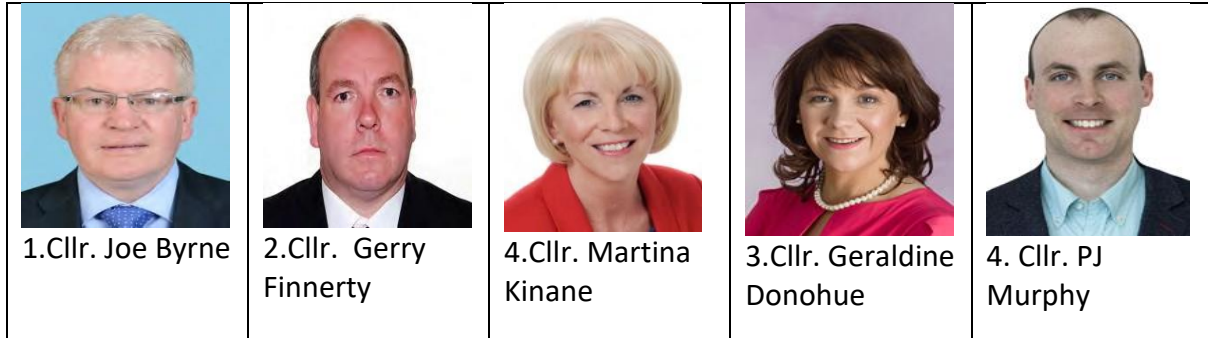
Loughrea Local Electoral Area (5 Members)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher | 2.Cllr. Jimmy McClearn | 3.Cllr. Declan Kelly | 4. Cllr. Ivan Canning | 5. Cllr. Shane Curley |

| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher, Clostown, Loughrea, Co. Galway. | 091-842968 | 086 8109185 |
| 2. Cllr. Jimmy Mc Clearn, Tynagh Road, Killimor, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. | 090 9676235/9676963 | 087 2548723 |
| 3. Cllr. Declan Kelly, 7 College Green, St Brigid's Road, Portumna Co. Galway | - | 086 8032732 |
| 4. Cllr. Ivan Canning, Lecarrow Gortanumera, Portumna, Co. Galway. | - | 087 1376666 |
| 5. Cllr. Shane Curley, Raheen, Loughrea, Co. Galway. | - | 086 2706550 |

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF GORT-KINVARA

Gort-Kinvara Local Electoral Area (5 Members)



| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. Joe Byrne, Highfield House, Cloonasee, Kinvara, Co. Galway | 091-638130 | 087 2625775 |
| 2. Cllr. Gerry Finnerty, Ballymurphy, Gort, Co. Galway | 091-632167 /091-633291 | 087 2674295 |
| 3. Cllr. Martina Kinane, Stradbally North, Clarenbridge, Co. Galway. | - | 087 2692102 |
| 4. Cllr. Geraldine Donohue, Springvale, Kylebrack, Loughrea, Co. Galway | - | 086 1692827 |
| 5. Cllr. PJ Murphy, Ballindive, Ardahan, Co. Galway | - | 087 7905401 |

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TUAM

Tuam Electoral Area (7 Members)



| Elected Members | Telephone | Mobile |
|---|------------|-------------|
| 1. Cllr. Mary Hoade, Main Street, Headford, Co. Galway | 091 789854 | 087 2255979 |
| 2. Cllr. Peter Roche, Moyne, Abbeyknockmoy, Tuam, Co. Galway | 093 49187 | 087 8251470 |
| 3. Cllr. Donagh Mark Killilea, 171 Palace Fields, Tuam, Co. Galway | - | 086 6079563 |
| 4. Cllr. Karey Mc Hugh Farag, Brooklodge Demesne, Ballyglunin, Tuam, Co. Galway | - | 087 2822225 |
| 5. Cllr. Steven Mc Hugh, Tuam Co. Galway | | |
| 6. Cllr. Colm Keaveney, Kilcreevanty, Tuam, Co. Galway | - | 087 6776812 |
| 7. Cllr Andrew Reddington, Coarsepark, Headford, Galway | | 087 6458115 |
| 8. Cllr. Joe Sheridan, Milltown, Tuam, Co. Galway | | 087 9897072 |

** At the September 2023 Plenary meeting held on the 25th September 2023, Mr. Steven McHugh was nominated, proposed, seconded and agreed to fill a vacancy in the Membership of the Council following the temporary absence of Cllr. K. McHugh Farag.*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Galway County Council is responsible for the administrative area of County Galway, excluding Galway City. The Council is responsible for the planning, design and construction of roads, drainage facilities, housing, fire stations, libraries, and burial grounds. Galway County Council is the custodian of the environment and through its planning and environment policies seeks to enhance the county while protecting its unique character and atmosphere. It also plays an active role in the development of the county's industrial, economic, business, social, arts, heritage, and cultural affairs.

In accordance with the Irish system of local government, which encompasses both democratic representation and public administration, Galway County Council as a local authority performs both a **representational** and **operational role**.

The functions performed by the elected Members are called "**reserved functions**". These lay down the framework of policy, under which the Chief Executive operates.

Such functions include:

- adoption of annual Budget.
- making or varying the County Development Plan.
- adoption of the Allocation Scheme for social housing.
- making, amending, and revoking bye-laws.
- approval for borrowing money.
- declaration of roads to be public roads.

The Council makes its decisions by resolution at its meetings.

The Chief Executive and staff perform the **operational role** of Galway County Council. They are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the County Council. The Chief Executive performs, what are called, the "**executive functions**" and the Chief Executive's decisions are made by written "Chief Executive Order".

These functions include:

- the allocation of houses
- the granting or refusal of planning permissions
- the appointment, of staff etc.,

The Chief Executive, in making decisions, must act in a way that is consistent with the policy, which has been established by the elected members while, at the same time, advising the members in relation to the performance of their reserved functions.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE IN GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2001, and Local Government Reform Act 2014 a primary function of the local authority is to provide a forum for the democratic representation of the local community and provide the community with civic leadership. In addition, the local authority has responsibility for the provision of a range of services, regulatory and enforcement functions and for the development of key areas including economic, business, heritage and cultural affairs.

The Reform Act which established the Municipal Districts and dissolved the Town Councils also introduced Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) to be established as committees of the local authority in each local government area. The legislation provided for the cessation of the County Development Boards and the introduction of the Public Participation Network.

THE COUNCIL

The thirty-nine elected Councillors from the Municipal Districts collectively lay down the framework for the policy under which an Executive Team operates. A Corporate Policy Group and six Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) formulate and agree policy. The SPCs comprise of elected councillors and voluntary/sectoral representatives who review and formulate policy across the range of Council functions. The Executive Team headed by Chief Executive operates in an executive capacity.

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

Five Municipal Districts are established in the County of Galway, (with seven Local Electoral Areas), and are served by the elected representatives from that Area. The Municipal Districts are designed to enhance democratic governance, subsidiarity, and accountability. These arrangements are also intended to improve operational efficiency and value for money, with a single county-wide executive and operational structure. The Municipal Districts are decision-making entities rather than corporate structures.

CORPORATE POLICY GROUP (CPG)

The Corporate Policy Group comprises the Cathaoirleach of the County Council, Chairs of the Strategic Policy Committees and is supported by the Chief Executive. The CPG links the work of the different SPCs and provides a forum where policy positions affecting the whole Council can be agreed for submission to the full Council. The CPG advises and assists the Council and provides input on matters of general concern. It also has a role to monitor the overall performance of the local authority.

9 Meetings of the CPG took place in 2023.

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE (SPC)

The SPC structure makes available to elected representatives a framework and opportunity to fulfil their role as overall policy makers and furthermore, enables opportunities for partnerships with local interests and community representatives. SPCs provide a forum for better and enhanced capacity for involvement

in policy formulation, review, and evaluation, with inbuilt assistance of relevant sectoral interests and supported by a Director of Services.

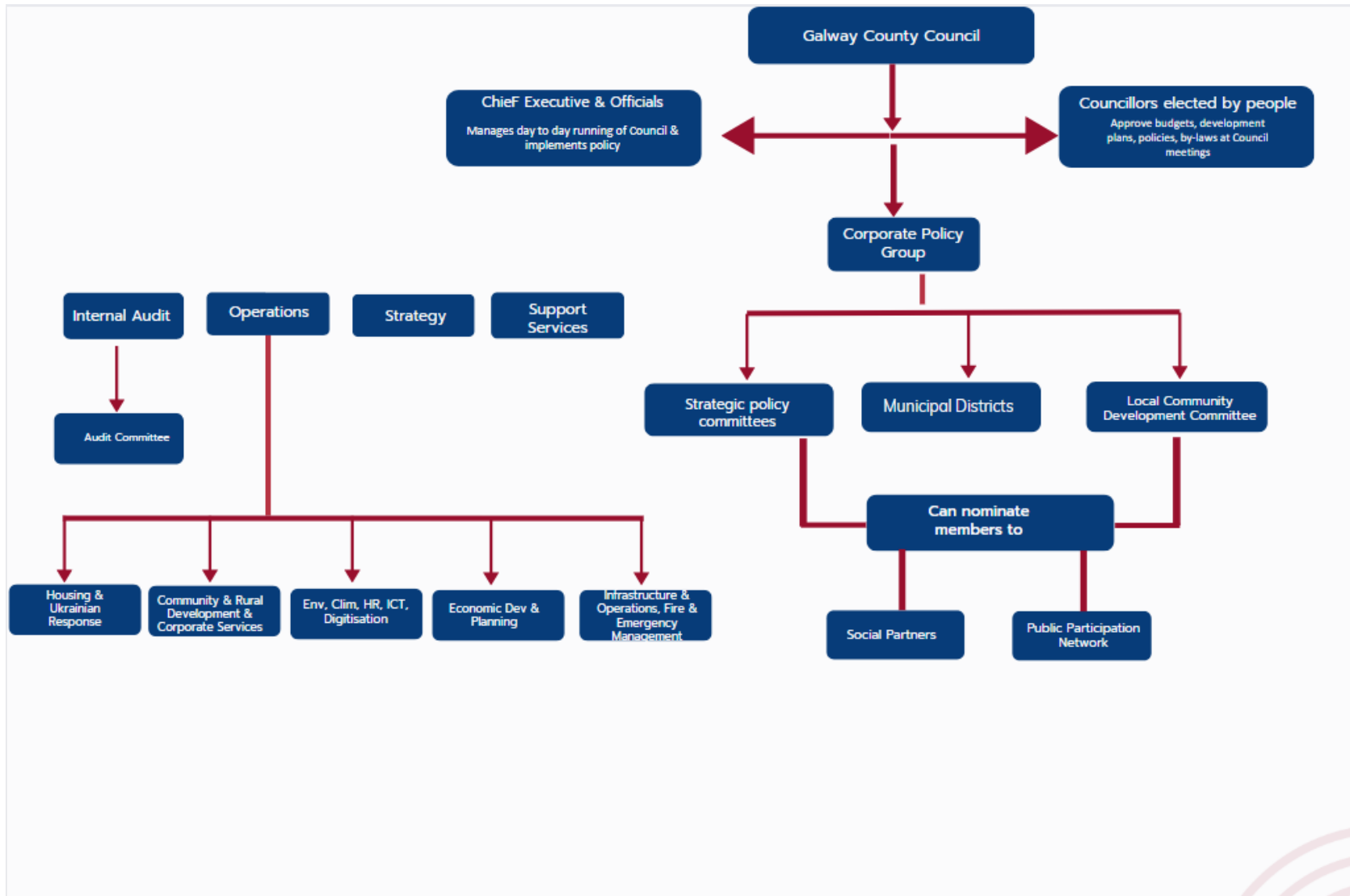
Six Strategic Policy Committees comprised of Councillors and Sectoral Representatives have been established in the Council as set out in the following table:

| SPC | Elected Members | Sectoral Representations | Committee Total |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Housing | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Economic Development & Enterprise | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services Community | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Transport & Infrastructure | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Community & Cultural Development | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Climate Change & Biodiversity | 6 | 4 | 10 |

Executive Team

The Management Team is headed by the Chief Executive and consists of Directors of Services, Head of Finance, the Law Agent, and the County Secretary.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2023



GOVERNANCE

Governance is concerned with developing the appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing Galway County Council so that stakeholders can be assured that Galway County Council is operating effectively and efficiently. Governance focuses on the legal, regulatory, and service obligations and on the sets of relationships between the Council, the Committees, the individual Members, the Chief Executive, the Executive Team, staff, and stakeholders in determining the direction and performance of this Council.

The following six good governance principles and supporting principles, help to guide Galway County Council in its delivery of service.

CORE PRINCIPLE 1

Good Governance means focusing on the purpose of the authority, on the outcomes that deliver sustainable economic and societal benefits and on implementing a vision for the local authority.

Supporting Principles

1. Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision through the corporate plan and ensuring that service users receive a high-quality service.
2. Ensuring that the authority, through its service delivery plan, makes best use of resources to ensure achievement of outcomes is optimised.

CORE PRINCIPLE 2

Good governance means members and officials working together to achieve a common purpose within a framework of clearly defined functions and roles.

Supporting Principles

1. Exercising effective leadership throughout the authority, being clear about reserved and executive functions and the respective roles and responsibilities of members and officials.
2. Creating a constructive and respectful working relationship between members and officials and ensuring that the functions of the Authority are performed to a high standard.

CORE PRINCIPLE 3

Good governance means promoting and demonstrating public service values through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

Supporting Principles

1. Ensuring members and officials, in exercising leadership, behave in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct, ethical behaviour and effective governance.
2. Fostering a culture and ensuring mechanisms that encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to the organisational values as espoused in the corporate plan.

CORE PRINCIPLE 4

Good governance means taking better informed and transparent decisions and managing risk and performances.

Supporting Principles

1. Being rigorous and transparent about the decision-making process and having good quality information, advice and support available to decision makers.
2. Ensuring that an effective risk, financial and performance management systems are in place. Which address uncertainties and exposures, enforce financial discipline, and emphasises strategic resource allocation and the efficient and effective delivery of services

CORE PRINCIPLE 5

Good governance means developing the organisational capacity and the leadership capability and competencies of members and officials to operate effectively and the purpose of the organisation.

Supporting Principles

1. Ensuring that members and officials have the supports and appropriate structures they need to perform effectively in their roles.
2. Developing the capability of those with governance and leadership responsibilities to ensure outcomes achieved are consistent with good governance obligations.

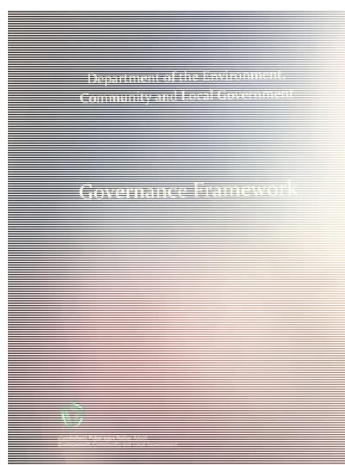
CORE PRINCIPLE 6

Good governance means engaging openly and comprehensively with local people, citizens, and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

Supporting Principles

1. Providing clarity in relation to accountability relationships and organisational assurance, audit, and scrutiny functions.

2. Ensuring there is a process and mechanism that deliver clear communication, effective stewardship, and accountability to stakeholders.



STATEMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL 2023

Introduction

I, Liam Conneally, Chief Executive (CE) of Galway County Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Head of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Galway County Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents *fairly the financial position* of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Galway County Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Galway County Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The *Statement of Comprehensive Income* represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Galway County Council.

The key sources of income for Galway County Council are as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 |
| | € | € |
| Goods & Services | 29,368,317 | 28,334,689 |
| Grants & Subsidies | 84,722,200 | 70,696,453 |
| Other Contributions (as appropriate) | 9,031,702 | 8,652,121 |
| Rates | 32,770,432 | 31,244,499 |
| Local Property Tax | 14,517,890 | 14,517,890 |

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|--|--------------|---------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 |
| | € | € |
| Total Income (including rates and LPT) | 170,410,541 | 153,445,652 |
| Expenditure | 168,147,829 | 150,488,115 |
| Transfers to Capital | 2,259,434 | 2,942,527 |
| Surplus for | 3,278 | 15,101 |
| Opening Revenue Reserve | 42,926 | 27,916 |
| Closing Revenue Reserve | 46,204 | 42,926 |

The total income in the current year of 31 December 2023 saw an increase year on year of nearly €17m (11%) and an increase of €12m when compared to the Adopted Budget. This level of growth in expenditure is indicative of the level of services Galway County Council is providing to the local economy.

The income and expenditure account covers the everyday expenses of the Council, to include expenditure such as the maintenance of housing, roads, Uisce Éireann, land-use planning, provision of waste management infrastructure, pollution control, fire protection and firefighting, library services, administration and support service costs, payroll, repayment of loan charges, insurance, central management charges and payment of government funded support grants for various schemes.

The main drivers of this increase when compared to the prior year, include:

- Road Transport & Safety saw a net increase in expenditure of €1.8m. The main drivers for the increase relate to the funding made available by the Department for additional maintenance and improvement works.
- Environmental Services saw a net increase of nearly €1.4m. The main drivers for the increase relate to the increase in the provisions for fire services and climate change.

The *Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)* represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets.
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank.
- Current and long-term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings
- Various Reserves/Balances.

The Net Assets of Galway County Council at the end of 2023 total €3,874,256,522 and are as follows:

| | Current Year | Previous Year |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 |
| | € | € |
| Fixed Assets | 3,664,954,141 | 3,666,415,505 |
| Works in Progress | 188,644,938 | 176,968,738 |
| Long Term debtors | 48,662,270 | 41,635,882 |
| Current Assets | 82,303,178 | 92,330,189 |
| Current Liabilities | 46,590,766 | 54,775,505 |
| Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities) | 35,712,412 | 37,554,684 |
| Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year) | 63,717,239 | 56,871,111 |
| Net Assets/(Liabilities) | 3,874,256,522 | 3,865,703,699 |

A *Statement of Funds Flow* was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

System of Internal Financial Controls

As Chief Executive of Galway County Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Galway County Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Galway County Council.

Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Financial control environment

As CE of Galway County Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

As Chief Executive of Galway County Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented.
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

Procurement compliance

Galway County Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

As Chief Executive, I can confirm that Galway County Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Galway County Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Galway County Council has an effective audit committee which carries out an annual effectiveness review of their activities. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it.
- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function.
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its chief executive in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings.
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Galway County Council.

Risk and control framework

Galway County Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As Chief Executive, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2020 – 2024

The Galway County Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 as adopted by the Elected Members of Galway County Council, provides the framework to enable Galway County Council to guide the strategic direction and development of the County of Galway for the period 2020 - 2024.

The strategic goals and supporting strategies identified in the Plan support Galway County Council in carrying out its functions, prioritising its actions, and assessing its progress. The core values will underpin and guide the delivery of local authority services over the period 2020 - 2024, while the mission reflects the importance of enhancing the quality of life for people of County Galway by leading and strengthening community and economic development and delivering efficient and sustainable services.

The achievement of our mission and vision will be realised through the attainment of a number of interrelated Goals. To deliver these goals the council will implement a range of Supporting Strategies. These Supporting Strategies will form the basis of the functions as set out in the Annual Service Delivery Plans and schedule of Municipal District works.

An assessment of our performance against the targets set in the 2023 Annual Service Delivery Plan is also included on pages 347 to 380, while details of our performance against the national performance indicators is included on pages 319.

Galway County Council's Annual Budget 2023, for additional information on the Annual Progress Report on the Galway County Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 is available to view at <http://www.galway.ie/en/services/yourcouncil/finance/annualbudgets/>.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Community Participation

“To facilitate the broadest possible participation by citizens in local decision making and the sustainable development of their communities and their county.”

Economic & Enterprise Development

“To maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our county.”

Infrastructural Capacity

“To ensure that our physical and social infrastructure is sufficiently developed to support economic development, and to enhance our quality of life.”

Organisational Capacity

“To maximise organisational capacity through the continuous review of operational efficiency, financial and risk management and the development of our Staff and Elected Members.”

Protection of Environment & Heritage

“To improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage and language in the interests of present and future generations.”

Quality Customer Service

“To ensure that quality customer service is at the centre of everything we do.”

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING

In 2023 the Planning Unit continued to promote and support the sustainable development of the county so that our citizens can live in vibrant communities, where cultural differences are valued and encouraged, where everyone can be actively involved in economic, social, and cultural life, and where people have access to an acceptable level of services and infrastructure.

FORWARD PLANNING

Review of draft Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029

The Draft Tuam Local Area Plan/Local Transport Plan 2023-2029 was placed on public display for six weeks, from 8th February – 23rd March 2023.

As part of the consultation process for the Draft Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029, Galway County Council organized a Public Consultation Drop-In Session on 6th March 2023 in Tuam Library. Galway County Council organized the hosting of a public Webinar Event on 9th March 2023 which gave an overview of the Draft Local Area Plan and guidance on how to make a submission. Public awareness was done through Twitter and Facebook Posts and adverts on Mid-West Radio and Galway Bay FM.

A total number of 62 no. submissions were received within the public consultation period.

The Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received was published in May 2023. Tuam Municipal District Meeting was held on 6th June for consideration of same.

A number of proposed Material Alterations (Amendments) to the Draft LAP were agreed by the Members and those went out on public display from 27th June to 26th July 2023. The Chief Executive's Report on the Material Alterations was prepared and circulated to all Members. A further meeting was held in September 2023 for consideration of same.

The Tuam Local Area Plan 2023-2029 was adopted in September 2023. Plan came into effect on 23rd October 2023.

Review of Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030

The Draft Athenry Local Area Plan/Local Transport Plan 2024-2030 was placed on public display for six weeks, from 25th May – 7th July 2023.

As part of the consultation process for the Draft Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030, Galway County Council organized a Public Consultation Drop-In Session on 22nd June 2023 in Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry. Galway County Council organized the hosting of a public Webinar Event on 29th June 2023 which gave an overview of the Draft Local Area Plan and guidance on how to make a submission. Public awareness was done through Twitter and Facebook Posts and adverts on Galway Bay FM.

A total of 134 no. submissions were received within the public consultation period.

The Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received was published in August 2023. Athenry Municipal District Meeting was held in September 2023 for consideration of same.

A number of proposed Material Alterations (Amendments) to the Draft LAP were agreed by the Members and those went out on public display from 5th October – 3rd November 2023. A total of 30 no. submissions were received within the public consultation period. The Chief Executive's Report on the Material Alterations was prepared and circulated to all Members. A further meeting was held in January 2024 for consideration of same.

The Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030 was finalized and adopted in January 2024 and came into effect on the 20th February 2024.

Ministerial Direction

A Draft Ministerial Direction was received on the Athenry Local Plan 2024-2030 in February 2024. Submissions were invited from 29th February – 14th March 2024 and a subsequent Chief Executives Report will be prepared, which will be forwarded to Minister and Office of Planning Regulator.

Review of Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030

The Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan/Local Transport Plan 2024-2030 was placed on public display for six weeks, from 24th November 2023 – 15th January 2024.

As part of the consultation process for the Draft Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030, Galway County Council organized a Public Consultation Drop-In Session on 5th December 2023 in Loughrea Hotel & Spa. Galway County Council organized the hosting of a public Webinar Event on 14th December 2023 which gave an overview of the Draft Local Area Plan and guidance on how to make a submission. Public awareness was done through Twitter and Facebook Posts and adverts on Galway Bay FM.

A total number of 880 no. submissions were received within the public consultation period.

The Chief Executive's Report on the submissions received was published in February 2024. A Loughrea Municipal District Meeting was held on 26th March 2024 for consideration of same.

Review of outstanding Local Area Plan

Review of Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2023 and preparation of Gort Local Area Plan 2024-2030/Local Transport Plan to commence in Q3 2024.

Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF)

Project manage and progress the delivery of URDF funding project awarded in March 2021 with Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, Irish Rail, and NTA.

Prepared and agreed the Governance Structure with Irish Rail, NTA, Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government.

Prepared and submitted a Draft Business Case of Planning to the Department for review.

Preparing Tender Documents for a) Design of Local Centre; b) Design of Multi-Storey Carpark Structure (architectural/structural engineering detail) and c) Landscaping Plan (for public use).

Preparing Tender Documents for a Typology Study – Design Guidelines and preparation of Tender Documents.

residential zoned land tax (rzlt)

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced by the Finance Act 2021 and the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. RZLT applies to serviced land zoned suitable for residential development on or after 1st January 2022. Local Authorities were tasked to prepare a map indicating lands within their functional area which meet the relevant criteria within the scope of RZLT. In the course of 2022 and 2023, Draft Maps were prepared by Galway County Council identifying land within the scope.

The Annual Draft Map was published and went on public display from 31/01/24-01/04/24.

TRANSPORT STRATEGIES

Prepared Tender Documents with the Infrastructure and Operations Directorate.

Work underway on Local Transport Plans with Consultants

PLANNING SPATIAL DATA CAPTURE PILOT INITIATIVE

Participated in the Planning Spatial Data Capture Pilot Initiative with the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government. This initiative aims to capture all spatial Data within the county.

SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE OF GALWAY COUNTY

A socio-economic profile of Galway County was prepared which contained relevant information from the Census 2022 and land use zonings for several towns in the county.

A COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY, PRESENTATION COLLEGE GALWAY AND GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

A collaboration with students and lecturers from the University of Galway's MA in Planning and Development and second level students and Geography Teachers from the Presentation College in Athenry participated in a Retail Planning exercise with the Planners from the Forward Planning Section of Galway County Council over two days Wednesday the 21st of February and Thursday the 22nd of February 2024.

The aim of this project was to link spatial planning as a statutory exercise conducted by local authorities to youth participants and engage them in shaping their places. The main vehicle for contributing to spatial planning is through local authority plan-making, county plans, and local area plans. In this instance the focus was on retail planning.

MASTER PLANNING FOR THE FORMER GALWAY AIRPORT LANDS

Stage 1 of the procurement process commenced in Q1 of 2024.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SECTION

Galway County Council's user data on the Online Planning Application Portal continues to increase with up to 89% of applications are being submitted via the National Portal and we have received very positive feedback from the agents. The portal is now operational for Submissions and the Part 8 modules which provides a means of doing business when the office is closed, the national rollout is nearing completion with other Local Authorities around the country.

- 2,083 Planning Applications were received in the Planning Office in 2023.
- 1,548 Planning decisions were made in 2023, permission granted represented 78% and 22% refused

€910,897.02 was received in Planning Fees in 2023.

- 132 Exempted Development Declaration Applications were presented to the Planning Office in 2023.

Large Scale Residential Developments, Majors and Strategic Infrastructure Developments 2023

During 2023 there was much engagement in relation to large projects within the county.

One of notable mention was the Dexcom project which was granted planning permission. The Director of Services – Economic Development and Planning and his senior planning team held 3 major meetings and 5 follow up meetings to progress this project.

The following meeting were held in relation to Large Scale Residential Developments, Majors and Strategic Infrastructure Developments:

Stage 1 LRD – 3

Stage 2 LRD – 2

Major meetings 26

SID meetings 2

Strate

ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

It is the policy of Galway County Council to secure compliance with Planning Permission and to prevent Unauthorised Development in accordance with the statutory requirements as set out in the Planning and Development Act and the Planning and Development Regulations.

| | |
|--|-----|
| No. of complaints received in 2023 | 234 |
| Warning Letters served | 119 |
| Enforcement Notice served | 70 |
| No. of new cases referred to Law Agent for Summary Proceedings | 14 |

BUILDING CONTROL

The Building Control staff carry out the following duties in conjunction with other Statutory Bodies.

- (a) Validating and registering Commencement Notices/7 Day Notices through the Building Control Management System,
- (b) Processing applications for Fire Safety Certificates and Disability Access Certificates through the Fire Service,
- (c) Advising Designers/Assigned Certifiers in relation to issues of compliance with the Building Regulations 1997,
- (d) Validating and registering the Certificate of Compliance on Completion,
- (e) Maintaining the Statutory Register,
- (f) Inspecting construction works in progress in relation to compliance with the Building Regulations 1997 and carrying out enforcement as necessary.
- (g) Ensuring compliance of Construction Products in line with EU(Construction Products) Regulations 2013(S I No. 225 of 2013) in conjunction with the National Building Control and Market Surveillance Office.
- (h) Ensuring compliance of Building Energy Rating Certificates in line with the EU(Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulation 2012 (SI No. 243 of 2012)

COMMENCEMENT NOTICES FOR 2023

| Number | Status on BCMS |
|---------|---|
| 788 no. | Validated Commencement Notice on the BCMS: |
| 161 no. | Validated Certificates of Compliance on Completion on the BCMS |

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION

Galway County Council continued to work to implement the statutory legislation set out in Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) which provides for the protection of the architectural heritage, which is a unique resource for County Galway. This included the provision of advice to the statutory agencies, local communities and to owners and occupiers of buildings and places of special architectural merit.

The Conservation Unit continued in 2023 to promote awareness of historic buildings and places and the traditional skills and materials necessary to secure their survival into the future. Best practice in conservation and traditional skills was promoted through various conservation projects, and in cooperation with national bodies and community groups in securing the conservation of traditional buildings of special interest.

A collaborative approach was adopted to promote place making with local communities to make our towns and villages better places to live, visit and work.

The following are the core activities undertaken in 2023:

- Identified, evaluated and provided advice on structures, groups of structures, areas and other features of architectural heritage significance and provided advice to owners and occupiers of historic structures on good practice and on the availability of assistance, including financial assistance, for such conservation.
- Preplanning consultations and advice given on architectural conservation within the local authority and to the statutory and non-statutory bodies.
- Assessed structures on Record of Protected Structures (RPS) with a view to issuing Declarations as to works that require planning permission and provide pre planning advice to owners /occupiers. Reported and advised on planning applications where architectural heritage issues arise.
- Monitored the state of repair of structures on RPS, and as necessary, made recommendations on the need, if any, for the planning authority to take enforcement action.
- Inspected and assessed structures for inclusion on RPS, including a Section 55 review of proposed additions and deletions. The Elected Members considered and decided on

these proposals at the January 2020 County Council Meeting, adding 4 structures and deleting one, leaving a total of 1524 structures on the Record of Protected Structures.

- Carried out Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) assessments, including of historic demesnes.
- Maintained the Architectural Inventory System (AIS) database of protected structures in liaison with GIS section.
- Liaison with community groups and statutory bodies regarding the conservation of graveyards.
- Liaised with local communities and tourism development bodies regarding Tidy Towns.
- Liaison with ICOMOS Ireland
- Participant in Creative Ireland Team.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES FUND 2023

The **Historic Structures Fund** invests essential capital in our valuable built heritage and helps the owners and custodians of historic structures to safeguard them into the future for the benefit of communities and the public.

The core aims of this fund are to:

☐ **enable** larger scale conservation works to be carried out on heritage structures which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support;

☐ **encourage** the regeneration and reuse of heritage properties and to help to secure the preservation of protected structures and/or historic-culturally significant assets; ☐ **support** the investment of private capital in labour-intensive projects to conserve historic structures in public and private ownership for community use.

The Department encourages project promoters to incorporate a traditional skills training element in the project.

The Historic Structures Fund provides capital funding for works to qualifying structures which include the following:

- (i) **Protected Structures:** Structures in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of each Local Authority;
- (ii) **Structures eligible for or proposed for inclusion in the RPS** but not yet formally approved for inclusion. Such structures must meet the criteria for inclusion in the RPS by the Local Authority, i.e. must be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view;
- (iii) **Structures or works within Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)**, or within the amenity of a National Monument, where exceptional circumstances apply.

The Scheme was advertised, and recommendations made from 14 applications received.

Funding of €20,000 was received for repairs to Cill Einde, An Spideal.



Cill Einde, An Spideal – repairs to South façade pointing & to rainwater goods

BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME 2023

The **Built Heritage Investment Scheme** seeks to encourage the investment of private capital in a number of small-scale, labour-intensive projects to repair and conserve historic structures and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craft workers and tradespeople. The scheme is designed as a support to owners and custodians in caring for our built heritage and ensuring that it is protected into the future.

Galway was allocated **€260,654.16** which was fully allocated to **27 projects**, including thatching roofs, repair of slate roofs, repair of sash windows and stabilisation of masonry, throughout the county providing 355 days of employment to skilled tradesmen and women, and professional advisors in building conservation.

TABLE OF FUNDING UNDER THE BUILT HERITAGE INVESTMENT SCHEME 2023

| Structure | Works | Paid |
|--|--------|----------------|
| Thatch, Middle March Kilcaimin, Maree | Thatch | €20,000 |
| Thatch, Newtown Lynch, Doorus, Kinvara | Thatch | €5,650 |
| Thatch, Ballyconlough Tuam | Thatch | €15,000 |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Thatch, Tynagh, Loughrea | Interior Structure Repair | €20,000 |
| Thatch, Cloonaglasha, Tuam | External Joinery Repair | €10,000 |
| Thatch, Gortrevagh, Oughterard | Thatch | €8,000 |
| Thatch, River Road, Spiddal | Thatch | €10,000 |
| Rose Cottage, Kilcolgan | Thatch | €10,000 |
| Thatch, Cluide, Corrandulla | Thatch | €4,000 |
| Thatch, Frenchfort, Oranmore | Masonry stabilisation & Thatch | €9,000 |
| Thatch Killeely Mor, Kilcolgan | Thatch | €3,984 |
| 2 Ellis Workshops, Letterfrack | External joinery repair | €2,941 |
| Prospect House, Athenry | External joinery repair | €12,000 |
| St. Peter & Paul Church, Ballymacward | External joinery repair | €6,000 |
| Creggs House | External joinery repair | €10,000 |
| St. Patrick's Church Glenamaddy | Structural Stability | €15,000 |
| Thatch Oranhill | External Wall Repair | €6,539 |
| Church of Immaculate Conception, Oughterard | Rainwater goods repair | €12,485 |
| Our Lady of the Wayside, Creeragh, Kylemore | External joinery repair | €15,000 |
| Kilcummin Parish Church, Oughteard | Stabilisation of Masonry | €6,407 |
| The old School House, Oranmore | Roof Repair | €10,000 |
| Clareville House, Oughterard | Rainwater goods repair & roof repair | €10,000 |
| 8 St. Patrick's Street, Portumna | Roof Repair | €9,310.08 |
| Thatch Inis Meain | Thatch | €9,310.08 |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| | | | |
| | Crumlin Park House, Ballyglunin, Tuam | External joinery repair | €13,208 |
| | Stowlin House, Eyrecourt | Stabilisation of Masonry | €4,000 |
| | Thatch, Cluide Corrandulla | Thatch | €3,000 |

Repair to Sash Windows, Athenry



Repair to Thatch, Durus Kinvara



Keane's House – repair to windows 2023



HISTORIC ASSETS

The Historic Assets group works in a cross departmental manner within Galway County Council to manage strategically buildings in the ownership of the local authority which are on the Record of Protected Structures or landmark buildings in an Architectural Conservation Area. In 2023 the Architectural Conservation office liaised with the regeneration team on the refurbishment of the former courthouse in Portumna, the Town Halls in Loughrea and Tuam and on town centre refurbishment and regeneration.

RAISING AWARENESS

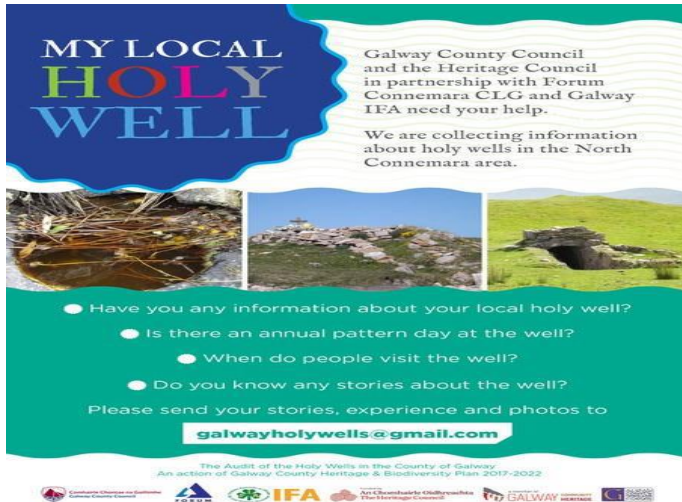
Galway Architectural Conservation unit supported **Architecture at the Edge** which is a celebration of architecture in the West of Ireland and was held on 29th September – 8th October 2023.

Featuring a series of online talks, tours, workshops and exhibitions, the festival invited people of all ages to explore the built environment of their city and county. Architecture at the Edge encourages debate on standards of urban design, planning and sustainability through public engagement in a variety of events in 2023.

Ireland's exhibit at this year's **Venice Architecture Biennale**, *In Search of Hy-Brasil*, presents fieldwork from Ireland's remote islands, investigating their diverse cultures, communities, and experiences. Inis Meáin is featured, along with islands in Sceilg Mhichil Kerry and Cliara in Mayo. The involvement of the architectural conservation office ensures that the exhibition and association workshops and talks will return to County Galway to raise awareness of the issues raised.

HERITAGE

During 2023, the Heritage Office of County Council continued its work to promote awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the rich heritage and biodiversity of the county of Galway. The Heritage Office works to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in the heritage of County Galway. The following are some of the projects undertaken in 2023:



1. Holy Wells Audit 2023

The Audit of the Holy Wells in the County of Galway was initiated in order to collect and collate as much information as possible about this valuable aspect of our intangible heritage.

The Audit of the Holy Wells of the County of Galway is being undertaken in a series of phases. Phase 4 was completed in 2023 when the holy wells of the North Connemara

area were recorded using the specially designed 'Galway Holy Wells Survey 123 App'. The aim of the Audit of the Holy Wells of the County of Galway is to collect and collate information which may be in danger of being lost due to a largely, older generational knowledge base and development pressures, including land clearance. The data being collected through the County-wide audit of each holy well includes location, infrastructure, physical condition, access, protection status, ownership, archaeology, biodiversity, traditions, folklore, oral heritage and customs associated with and connected to the holy wells. This information will be used to develop high quality promotional resources for this aspect of the County's Heritage in the longer term. All data collected on each well is entered onto The 'Galway Holy Wells Survey 123 App'. This allows for the uploading of written description, location co-ordinates and up to 20 photographs during field survey. This information is then added to through community consultation and published sources of information. The collected data for each well is then uploaded to the Audit of Galway Holy Wells web platform hosted by Galway County Council. General and specific reports can now be generated from the stored data, including text and photographs, through Galway County Council's map based GIS.

The main issues which arose during Phase 4 of the Audit in North Connemara was access to holy well sites due to remoteness from roadways and the rough, boggy and mountainous terrain. Noticeable are the number of recorded holy wells which are now largely forgotten and abandoned by the local community. This position appears to reflect the changes in agricultural land use over the past 50 years. Less intensive farming practices and the abandonment of land in some areas due to a smaller number of farmers and smaller grazing flocks has led to scrub growth in places and especially Bracken and Rhododendron on the upper slopes. Invasive species such as Rhododendron, Japanese Knotweed, Gunnera and Himalayan Balsam have also taken a strong hold in places. These issues have also resulted in trackways that previously led to the wells, becoming overgrown and inaccessible in some cases. In some cases, a number of return visits were made before the site was identified or could be accessed. The area of audit in 2023 covered a large geographical area with holy well sites located long distances from each other. These issues made field work progress much slower than anticipated.

TOBAR MHIURE AGUS
FEICHIN DUBHACHTA
TOWNLAND



During National Heritage Week 2023, a public talk was held in Áras Uillin, Moycullen organised in conjunction with Moycullen Heritage Group. The event was well attended with an

audience of approximately 30 individuals. A presentation of the holy wells audited in the Moycullen region was presented by Zena Hctor (Audit researcher) and this was followed by a presentation by Hazel Morrison, Moycullen Heritage Group, on the research carried out by the community group on the wells. A lively discussion followed on the topic of ‘who decides if a well is a holy well?’

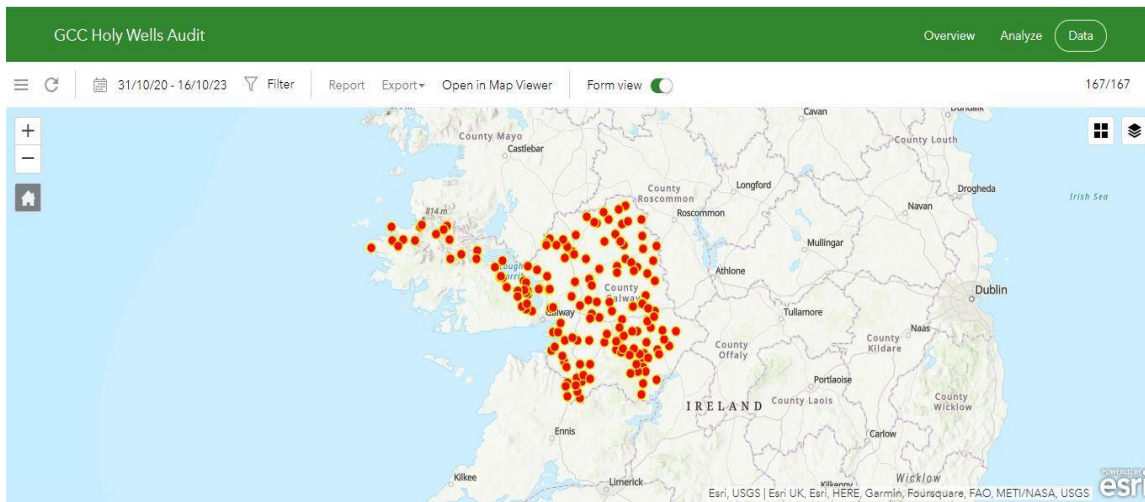


FIGURE 2: LOCATIONAL MAP OF THE WELLS RECORDED IN THE NORTH CONNEMARA AREA IN PHASE 4, 2023 AND THOSE COLLECTED DURING PHASES 2-3 ON THE GALWAY HOLY WELLS AUDIT SURVEY 123 WEB BASED PLATFORM HOSTED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Field Research and other outputs

Written descriptions and photographic details for 35 holy wells were collected and uploaded to the Galway Holy Wells Survey 123 web-based platform during the 2023 audit period, bringing the total number of wells recorded to 167 to date.

During the development stage of the 'Galway Holy Wells Digital App' the primary aim was that the data collection, storage and dissemination approach used for all future phases of the Audit would be future proofed in terms of:

- its potential to be developed as a Citizen Science data collection tool for local communities
- its potential adaptation for other similar heritage initiatives data collection
- the dissemination of heritage information through the Galway County Council GIS structure
- and its transferability for use in other Counties through the Heritage Council's Heritage Officer programme.

The app has proved to be an invaluable field data collection tool. It's easy to use format provides a potential template for data collection for other heritage initiatives. It is readily transferable for use in other County Holy wells Audits.

During the 2022 Phase 3 of the Holy Wells Audit the connection of the Traveller community culture with holy wells in the County was explored by working closely with Sr. Agnes Curley of the Eco-Congregation in Tuam and members of the travelling community. Some information was found in relation to past pilgrimages to wells in the East Galway area but information for North Connemara is scant.

As part of Phase 4 of the Audit in 2023, Sally-Ann Barrett, Freeway Media undertook two podcasts for the project and interviewed Mary Moriarty who shares her memories of the traveller traditions associated with holy wells and the holy wells she visited with her family. The second podcast with Sr Agnes Curley recounts veneration to holy wells in particular by members of the travelling community. The podcasts are available @

https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/beogalway/episodes/2023-12-21T23_14_48-08_00

This project was funded by Galway County Council and the Heritage Council.



The screenshot shows the Podomatic website interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the 'podomatic' logo on the left, a 'Start Your Free Podcast' button, and 'Listen' and 'Create' buttons on the right. Below the navigation bar, there are menu items: 'Feed', 'Quick Discovery', 'Trending', 'Following', and 'Playlists'. A search icon is visible on the right. The main content area features a large image of a stone wall. To the right of the image, the text reads 'Galway County Heritage Office' in a large font, followed by 'By Galway County Heritage Office'. Below this, there are icons for 'History', 'Dublin', '1 Followers', and '35 Episodes'. There are also 'Share' and 'Follow' buttons. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a short description: 'Galway County Heritage Office was founded in June 2000, to facilitate and promote awareness, knowledge and pride in the heritage of County Galway.'

AUDIT OF HOLY WELLS OF COUNTY GALWAY PODCAST SITE

Digital Mapping of Graveyards Project 2023

This project was developed by the Heritage Office in partnership with the GIS Section of Galway County Council. It was funded by Galway County Council and the Heritage Council. The aim of the project is to support our communities to connect with their past by unlocking valuable graveyard data sources and making them available as open-source data that will be free for all to use.

A drone and remote controller has been procured and drone training has been completed by the GIS Officer. The drone has been used to survey a number of graveyards and imagery products have been created from use in Graveyard Surveys.

The new Graveyard Search application has been designed, developed and is currently in user acceptance testing phase. The application consists of 3 main elements enabling public user to:

The new Graveyard Search application has been designed, developed and is currently in user acceptance testing phase. The application consists of 3 main elements enabling public user to:

- Search for Burials
- Download Burial data (Open Data)
- View and interact with Burial Statistics.

The application will be available through the County Council and Galway Community Heritage websites, and code can also be provided to integrate into any website of interest.

Training and support to local community and heritage groups is being provided by in relation to how to

carry out surveys using the mobile Graveyard Survey app developed by the Council. Technical support is being provided by the Councils GIS section.



Launch of Project during Heritage Week

On Monday 14th August (Heritage Week) over 25,000 graveyard memorial records were released as part of Galway County Digital Mapping of Graveyards Project.



Galway County Council working with various community groups and organisations have been collecting and collating valuable data relating to those who are buried in various graveyards for several years. Galway County Council, with funding from the Heritage Council, the Open Data Engagement Fund and it's own resources has developed and made available an app specifically for use by

surveyors at the local level for memorial surveys, along with associated data management and validation processes.

In addition to this Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development, Forum Connemara and the Heritage Council has provided funding to local groups to employ experts to work with and train local communities on how to use this technology and to undertake drone mapping of graveyards.

Through this funding and the hard work and dedication of community volunteers we how are in the position to make available these 25,000 records.



LAUNCH OF THE DIGITAL MAPPING OF GRAVEYARDS PROJECT IN LETTERFRACK.

Digital Transformation Award for Galway Graveyards Project



Galway County Council has picked up one of the main accolades at the Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards 2023 for its innovative digital project that mapped over 40,000 graveyard memorial records across County Galway and made them publicly available online.

The Digital Mapping of Graveyards Project was named overall winner of the 'Best Community Engagement' category of the competition at a ceremony held in Dublin's Shelbourne Hotel on Thursday 5th October 2023.

Organised by *The Sunday Business Post*, the awards recognise the achievements of public sector organisations that have made significant contributions to advancing digital transformation across Ireland. Galway County Council beat off competition from a shortlist of organisations that

included Dublin City Council in partnership with Trinity College Dublin, CAWT and Aurion Learning, Longford County Council and Tipperary County Council to win the top award.

Where to find this data

A Burial Search Application has been created to allow easy searching and display of the data. This information will be made available through Galway County Council's Open Data Portal galwaycoco.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html and <https://data.gov.ie/>



Audit of Oral heritage recordings in County Galway 2023 (Phase1)

The project has generated a coherent representation and deepened appreciation for thirty-five oral



heritage collections and 1,035 items of recorded memory, within and relating to East Galway, in both born digital and legacy formats. It also illuminates the cultural and educational benefit of identified collections, for primary, secondary and third level education, as well as broader scholarship. The audit

identifies areas of culture, history, and folklore or 'knowledge value' that identified collections illuminate, both for the educational sector and broader society in Galway. Through the establishment of temporal, geographic and associative relevance of collections, the applicant also underlines the value of collections.

Analysis of findings have uncovered patterns which illuminate both the nature and content of collections, including a predominance of men within recorded memory. It also underlines the tendency for legacy collections, recorded on analogue devices to remain largely undigitized, in addition to inaccessible. This consequently limits dramatically and, in some cases, totally, their potential educational and cultural value. The findings of the audit are displayed in a way that informs both collection holders and future collectors, regarding the key issues associated with developing and maintaining oral history collections. The report includes a summary of best practice, which will help inform future collection in the county and lead to greater coherence regarding both past and future collection activity. The report also provides a statement on the archival compatibility and issues around consolidation of sample identified collections. This organised knowledge will help stabilize and conserve collections, bringing their management into line with current archival and Digital Cultural Heritage Best Practice.



For Heritage Week 2023, the consultant delivered an illustrated lecture at Abbey Community Centre, which explained the aims of the project and underlined the importance of oral history and the recording of local memory. For the event, two interviews, undertaken in the past relating to Abbey were used: A recording by the late Jim Fahy with Palkie Conroy and an interview undertaken by Frances Holohan in 2015, with the late Nora Hynes, former Post Mistress for Abbey. In addition, a recording undertaken in 1996 by John Joe Conwell in Woodford with the late Anthony 'Sonny' Hackett, uncovered as part of the audit in 2023, was also used to illustrate the type of material recorded in the area and that which the audit was seeking to document.

Following the event in Abbey, there was a 45 minute engagement with attendees where memories reflected in the presentations were discussed and enhanced.

Another community event was held in Skehana on 2nd November. This was also a very successful event and was well attended and valuable oral heritage material was found for the audit. This project was funded by Galway County Council and the Heritage Council.

Galway Community Archaeology Project

The Community Archaeologist provides support and advice to individuals, schools, organisations and groups. We have produced a variety of projects and online events to promote greater awareness and appreciation of our archaeological heritage. This year the Community Archaeologist contributed to a number of conferences, seminars and local heritage lectures. She dealt with numerous emails or phone calls from individuals and group representatives seeking advice or help in relation to archaeology or archaeological related matters and topics. She works with schools, community groups, societies, farmers and other individuals on an ongoing basis. She played a major role in assisting community groups apply for the Community Monument Fund and Heritage Council Community Grants, as well as promoting Heritage in Schools, Heritage Keepers and Adopt a Monument Scheme.



**GALWAY COMMUNITY
ARCHAEOLOGIST**

**GALWAY
COMMUNITY
ARCHAEOLOGY**
BEADAN-AN-ATHA RÓDAIL AN GHAIBHINN

The Galway Community Archaeologist provides advice and support relating to archaeological monuments in the community. She is available to answer your queries on maintenance, preservation, education and promotion of our diverse range of archaeology which spans over ten thousand years. Now available to liaise with educators, community groups, farmers, individuals and custodians of Galway's archaeological heritage.

Contact: Bernadette Doherty
Carra, Bullaun, Loughrea, Co. Galway

Mobile: 086 100 3888

Website: <https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/>

Email: g.c.archaeology@gmail.com

Facebook: Galway Community Archaeology

This project is funded by Galway County Council and The Heritage Council



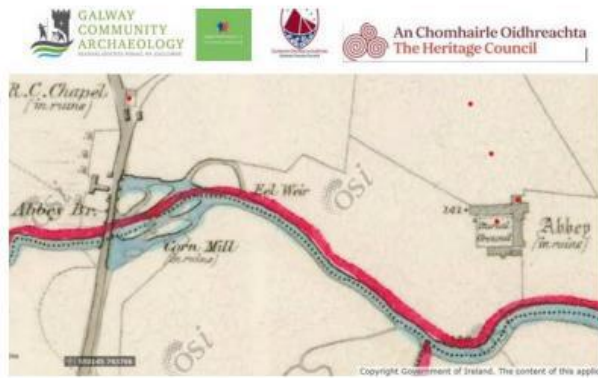
The following is a very small sample of the work of the Community Archaeologist:

Galway Community Archaeology Project was asked to present to CAHG Groups in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales highlighting the work being carried out and how we utilise our website in informing, promoting and advising communities and individuals about our archaeological sites and monuments. This took place on-line 15th May 2023 and was attended by many groups from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales.

Working with community groups, heritage groups, tidy towns and cemetery groups the Community Archaeologist assisted with informing best heritage practice in recording and promoting our archaeological heritage. Where applicable I have assisted groups in notifying the National Monuments Service on proposed works and carried out archaeological monitoring and reporting of same. Projects in 2023 include Clonbern Graveyard - installation of map signage Seefin, Craughwell – ongoing, awaiting permissions from NMS. Willmount Graveyard – Notification for signage, digital mapping of graveyard.

Galway Community Archaeologist undertook numerous site visits to members of the farming community, landowners, historic graveyards and general queries from members of the public. She also assisted groups with the Community Monument Fund applications and undertook site visits on several occasions to Community Monument Projects during the course of their plans and/or works.

The Archaeology of Abbeyknockmoy



Screengrab showing Heritage Week Poster prepared for Heritage Week Website & Before Talk

Galway Community Archaeologist was approached to provide assistance in setting up a new heritage group in Abbeyknockmoy. The purpose of the group is highlighting and promoting the Cultural Heritage of the area. Her talk focused on the archaeology in the immediate area of Abbeyknockmoy and how that can be promoted in a positive manner. Ideas for projects were shared among the attendees and support through the Galway Community Archaeology Project is available when required. Screengrab showing Heritage Week Poster prepared for Heritage Week Website etc.

This is an example of one of the numerous community initiatives that the Community Archaeologist was involved in during the year.

The Galway Community Archaeologist has prepared a CPD tutorial for Galway County Council staff to raise awareness on responsibilities within the local authority as custodians of archaeological sites and monuments.

The Community Archaeologist has provided help and assistance with Athenry Walled Town Day, Loughrea Medieval Festival, Galway Forged Gates Project, The Digital Mapping of Graveyards Project and directly inputs to the Irish Community Archives Project as well as numerous other Council and community events and projects.

Athenry Town Walls Capital Works Programme 2023

The South Tower and southern section of town wall are situated in an open field that is lined by Prospect Road, the land rising from east to west. To the other side of the road is Athenry Shopping Centre and a number of houses and commercial units. The interior face of the tower is contained within Kenny Park, the local GAA grounds with a viewing stand



located close to the wall. Constructed during the fourteenth century, this structure remains prominent though in a ruinous state in a field on the southern approach to the town. This portion of the wall stretches approximately 400 metres in length between the sites of the former Loro and Spittle gates. It survives to a height of approximately two to four metres being quite uneven along the wall head. It is one of the most impressive and intact stretches of wall to have survived in Athenry. It ranges in thickness from the base of approximately 800mm to 1500mm.

The original facing stone to the town wall has survived along much of its length on both the interior and exterior, but has been rebuilt with inferior rubble stone or salvaged dressed stone in isolated sections and along its top. In 2014, the tower was conserved with assistance from an IWTN grant removing the risk to the historic fabric due to further damage and collapse. Further repairs were carried out in 2015, 2021, 2022 and 2023 to portions of the wall. In 2015 a portion of the wall which was bulging considerably was temporarily supported with timber propping. It was not possible in 2015 to carry out wholesale repair to this wall. In 2021 the bulging portion was grouted, and further sections repaired in 2022 and 2023. Following public procurement processes a suitably qualified heritage contractor was appointed to carry out these repair works. Inspections were undertaken by the conservation architect and structural engineer. The works to the south wall of Athenry consisted of vegetation removal, cleaning, raking out of cement pointing, insertion of pinning stone, grouting of the wall and repointing of all joints with a lime mix.

Completed Works 2023:

1. Careful removal of vegetation along the inner face of the wall – approx. 10.8m length along this face (GAA side) of the wall. Note this wall is approx. 2m in height.
2. Careful removal of vegetation along the outer face of the wall – approx. 10.8m length along this face (field side) of the wall.
3. Joints were raked out – with the removal of inappropriate cement pointing – and pinning stones were inserted where required to close up wider joints.
4. The wall which is approx. 1.5m in thickness in this location, was fully grouted with an approved mix selected by the engineer and injected in gradual lifts up the masonry wall. This process was undertaken in the following way: Grout insertion by tube, using a plastic coke bottle as a mini hopper, minimal hydraulic head; just 500mm; and 25mm flexible pipe as grout duct. Using approximately 1000 litres of grout per metre run of wall. The cross sectional area is c.6 square metres and this represents 17% voids ratio being filled. (extract for Structural Engineer's site notes).
5. The repointing lime mix for the wall was a local sand, NHL 3.5 Otterbein lime.
6. The wall was carefully cleaned on both sides before and after works.
7. Advance works were carried out to a further 2.4m of wall in preparation for future funding.

Athenry Walled Town Day



The echoes of the past reverberated through the streets and ancient walls of Athenry as the town hosted its annual Walled Towns Day last Sunday, 13th August. This year's Athenry Medieval Festival proved to be a resounding success, drawing an impressive crowd of seven and a half thousand attendees. Transported back in time to the medieval era, visitors of all ages were captivated by a mesmerising fusion of history, culture, and entertainment. The day-long festival, a cherished tradition since its inception in 2006, unfolded across Athenry's iconic landmarks: the Athenry Community Park, the Athenry Arts & Heritage Centre, and Athenry Castle. With a diverse range of activities thoughtfully curated to illuminate the Anglo-Norman influences on the medieval town, Athenry Walled Town Day delivered an immersive experience like no other. Eager participants were treated to an authentic voyage into the heart of medieval life, where the air resonated with the melodies of ancient instruments and the rhythmic beats of distant drums. Key highlights included spellbinding performances by talented jesters, musicians, dancers, and drummers. The Gliondar stilt walkers dazzled onlookers with their skill and charisma, leaving an indelible mark on the crowd. The Galway Early Music group and acclaimed performers Carmel Dempsey, Mike Stewart, Brendan Curtin, Lisa Whelan, Úna Ní Fhlannagáin, along with Siobhán and Saoirse from the Hession School of Dance, transported attendees with captivating melodies and mesmerizing acts. The younger audience members were enthralled by Drumadore's captivating rhythms. The 1316 Medieval Athenry Fight Club donned elaborate armour and engaged in exhilarating clashes of steel, leaving the audience breathless. Aspiring young knights seized the opportunity to hone their skills under the guidance of the Irish School of Historical Combat. The living history group Cláíomh reconstructed

scenes from Ireland's medieval past, offering a genuine window into history. Scotia Living History Display further enriched the experience with interactive displays and skilled medieval re-enactors. The festival also celebrated regional arts and crafts, providing a platform for artisans to showcase their masterpieces. Attendees marvelled at medieval bead-making demonstrations by Mags Mannion, intricate spinning and wool crafts by the Irish Fibre Crafters, and captivating basket weaving by Niall Murphy. Animal Magic showcased majestic birds of prey, while the Loughrea Craft Club engaged younger visitors with medieval arts and crafts. Children and adults alike enjoyed puppet shows by Custard Pie, and even a charming Flea Circus by PigNut. The Moth & Butterfly Storytelling held audiences spellbound with their ancient tales.

Participants of all ages had the unique opportunity to uncover treasures and a carefully reconstructed skeleton, guided by archaeologist Kat Thompson, creating an unforgettable hands-on experience. Food Historian Anna O'Donnell tantalized taste buds with a delectable array of medieval-inspired fare, providing a taste of the era's rich culinary traditions. Athenry Community Park was enlivened by the towering presence of Gliondar stilt walkers, while Máire Daly skillfully painted the faces of eager children, transforming them into medieval Lords, Ladies, and mythical creatures.

The Athenry Arts & Heritage Centre showcased the ancient art of archery, inviting attendees to try their hand at this traditional skill. Additionally, the centre offered complimentary guided tours, unveiling Athenry's captivating medieval history. Local Failte Ireland Tour Guide Gerry Burke led two informative walking tours that were met with resounding success. Visitor Numbers Over 7500 people attended the event. The event was funded by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council.

Loughrea Medieval Festival



The medieval spirit came alive at the highly successful Medieval Festival held at Loughrea. This one-of-a-kind event captivated local people and visitors of all ages, offering a delightful blend of music, immersive walks, intricate crafts, engaging films, and a specially crafted

children's activity book.

The festival showcased a diverse range of activities and entertainment that delighted attendees. Music aficionados were treated to a mesmerizing fusion of traditional and contemporary music performed by the very talented Carmel Dempsey, Mike Stewart, Brenda Curtin (ex Lord of the Dance Show) and Joe Higgins with special guests Pádraig Connaughton and Ali Fleming in the Loughrea Hotel & Spa. World champions Evan O'Brien and Owen Gaughan from the Hession School Galway, with their amazing dexterity, grace and precision enchanted the audience with their intricate footwork. Lots of members of the audience got in on the act and dressed up as Medieval Lords and Ladies! While there was also a fantastic exhibition of photographs by Loughrea camera club members with magnificent poems from Baffle poetry society on display in the Loughrea Hotel & Spa over the weekend.

For eager explorers, captivating guided walks by expert guides Colman Shaughnessy and Joe Loughnane provided an immersive experience that took those who went on the walks back in time to the heart of a bygone era and showcased the rich heritage of Loughrea. A highlight of the festival was the launch of the specially crafted bi-lingual children's activity book, designed to entertain and educate the young ones. Packed with engaging puzzles, coloring pages, and historical trivia, the activity book was a perfect companion for children eager to delve into the medieval world. It ensured that the festival became a family-friendly experience, igniting a love for history within the hearts of the next generation. The workbook produced by Loughrea Medieval Heritage Committee, Heritage Office, Galway County Council and Gaeilge Locha Riach and supported by Loughrea Public Library. Movie buffs were treated to screenings of video shorts relating to various aspects of the rich heritage of Loughrea including the Deerpark, Our Lady of Gyór, the windows of the Carmelite Abbey and St Brendan's Cathedral, the History of St Brigid's Shoe, The Walks, St Mary's Abbey and Clonfert Diocesan Museum. On Sunday afternoon in the Loughrea Hotel & Spa artisans and craftsmen, skilled in age-old techniques, showcased their talents of weaving, carving and sculpting, where they transformed raw materials into works of art. There were intricate demonstrations of metalwork, beadmaking, spinning, weaving, pottery, basketwork, calligraphy, medieval brooch making, make and do, circus and lego craft and even bodhrán making! Attendees had the unique opportunity to witness the craftsmanship first hand and even try their hand at these ancient arts

under the guidance of skilled artisans. The audience eagerly unleashed their creative talents with many taking home your very own medieval masterpiece! The event was funded by the Heritage Council and Galway County Council.

Community Monuments Fund 2023

A total of eight projects within the County of Galway were awarded funding under the Community Monuments Fund 2023. This enabled capital works at a number of vulnerable sites and the preparation of conservation and management plans. The Community Monuments Fund is administered through Galway County Council on behalf of The National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

€505,000 was allocated to Eight Community Monument Projects in the County of Galway. Projects include funding for Conservation Management Plans for Kilcreevanty, Killogilleen and Temple Jarlath under Stream 2. A Conservation Management Plan is a multi-disciplinary assessment and plan for a site including input from a Conservation Architect, Archaeologist, Structural Engineer and Ecologist.

Capital Works

Funding was allocated towards capital works under Stream 1 at Issertkelly, St Mary's Athenry, Kilboght and St Kerrill's Gurteen. Each of these sites had previously been funded for Conservation Management Plans through the same scheme. Abbeygormacan was funded under Stream 3 for an interpretive plan. This follows the preparation of a Conservation Management plan and essential repairs and capital works at the site.

Kilboght Church and Mausoleum

Conservation works to the ruined medieval church and Blake Mausoleum were carried out in 2023 after the preparation of a CMP 2021. The church was the site of a nunnery founded by St Richella from which nearby Kilreekil derives its name. The extent of loose stonework was visible for a number of years and a scope of repairs were necessary to enable safe access to the site. Repointing of the walls using lime mortars and flaunching of the wall heads stabilised the church. A new lintel was required to support the door. Repairs were carried out to the Blake mausoleum also. See more

<https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/community-archaeology/community-monuments-fund-2023/kilboght-church-and-mausoleum>

Kilcreevanty Church and Graveyard

Kilcreevanty Graveyard Committee and Galway County Council procured the services of Aegis Archaeology to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Kilcreevanty, Recorded Monument GA029-096001- (Religious house—Benedictine nuns), Co. Galway. This is a national monument in the ownership of the Local Authority. The site is surrounded by private farm land, with major access issues.

Killogilleen Church and Graveyard
Conservation and Management Plan



Multi-discipline consultation



CARVED HEAD USED AS GRAVE MARKER KILLOGILLEEN



LOOKING WEST SHOWING KILLOGILLEEN CHURCH RUIN

Galway County Council procured the services of Aegis Archaeology to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Killogilleen, Recorded Monument GA104-148—comprising church, graveyard and associated features. A multi-disciplinary team included a conservation architect, structural engineer, archaeologists and ecologist.. Measured Building Survey, Photogrammetry & Laser Scanning as well as aerial photographs and a photographic survey of the ruins was carried out which provides a concise and accurate record for the site 2023. Notable features are carved heads, one of which was not previously recorded and the identification of a possible ring barrow in the adjoining field. The plan is available on-line via <https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/community-archaeology/community-monuments-fund-2023/killogilleen-church-and-graveyard>

St Kerrill's Abbey, Cloonkeenkerrill, Gurteen

Gurteen Community Council were successful in their application for Community Monuments Funding 2023. Following on from the preparation of a [conservation management plan 2021](#), and an initial phase of [capital works in 2022](#), The community were delighted to see works progress further in stabilising the structure that has been iconic in this rural landscape of East Galway. See more <https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/new-contributions/st-kerrills-abbey-cloonkeenkerrill-2>

Ogee headed window before and conservation works



Temple Jarlath, Tuam

Galway County Council procured the services of 7L Architects to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Temple Jarlath, Tuam comprising church, graveyard and associated features. A multi-disciplinary team included a conservation architect, structural engineer, archaeologists and ecologist. Measured Building Survey, Photogrammetry & Laser Scanning as well as aerial photographs and a photographic survey of the ruins was carried out which provides a concise and accurate record for the site 2023. Notable features are a series of carved heads at the interior wall and window of the church. Trees impacting the recording and assessment were removed by heritage contractors under ministerial consent and monitored by the consultant archaeologist. The CMP is available to view on-line via

<https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/community-archaeology/community-monuments-fund-2023/temple-jarlath>

Issertkelly

A second phase of immediate necessary conservation works were carried out at the ruined church and graveyard after the completion of a CMP. This medieval stone church with adjoining graveyard has long been in a ruinous state, with a significant loss of masonry to the north, east and west wall, with only a portion of the south wall still upstanding. While support was introduced to stabilise the structure in 2022, further collapse in 2023 required methodological changes. See more via

<https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/archaeology/churches/issertkelly-church-and-graveyard>

Abbeygormican

Following three phases of conservation works from 2020, in 2023 we advanced an interpretation strategy for Abbeygormican, Co. Galway. The site is a lesser-known twelfth-century Augustinian house situated in East Galway close to more celebrated sites at Clonfert, Clontuskert, Meelick and Kilconnell. What remained was an amalgam of 12c., 15c. & 17c.

phases almost completely shrouded in ivy. Now conserved, the interpretation strategy focussed on finding a suitable setting for the carved stone head recovered in the 1990s and in storage. Geophysical survey works contributed to determine the nature of a cloister attached to the church. The extensive collection of carved stone was recorded and inventoried, in advance of a reconstruction image to be commissioned. Consultation was carried out with local stakeholders and state bodies with responsibility for the monuments. See more via <https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/community-archaeology/community-monuments-fund-2022/abbeygormican>

Féile na gCloch



The objectives and goals of Féile na gCloch, the Inis Oírr Stone Festival, are centered around promoting the cultural heritage of the island, boosting tourism, supporting local businesses, and

fostering community engagement.

From 14th to 17th September 2023, the annual festival of stone, *Féile na gCloch*, took place on Inis Oírr. The theme in 2023 was : *Lámha trasna na hEorpa*, Hands Across Europe represented the cultural exchange between participants from around the world.

During the course of the four day festival, representatives from dry stone construction communities met to exchange knowledge and celebrate the craftsmanship, heritage, and the timeless beauty of stone work that can be found on Inis Oírr, various parts of Ireland and around the world.

The Art of Dry Stone Construction, Knowledge and Techniques was officially inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018. Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland were included in this initial inscription. In March 2023 an application was submitted to UNESCO seeking to add Ireland, Austria, Andorra, Belgium and Luxembourg to the inscription. UNESCO's decision on this application is expected in December 2024.

To mark this application to UNESCO and further support international partnership and knowledge sharing, Ireland invited representatives from each of the countries involved in the inscription to attend Féile na gCloch 2023. As part of the festival programme, whilst also immersing themselves in island culture, the international delegation gave talks and presentations as well as participated in building an International wall.

Interesting information on dry stone construction was shared including ongoing projects and initiatives around this millennia-old practice, framed by workshops on dry stone walling; letter and stone carving; hot lime mortar mixing and application; and sketching. The fast programme of events reflected the versatility of this important intangible cultural heritage tradition. The exhibition ‘*Lámha trasna na hEorpa*’ (Hands Across Europe) was also launched during the festival. This exhibition showcased the rich traditional artistry of drystone construction in Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain. Over 150 people attended the festival in total.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL DECADE OF CENTENARIES PROJECTS

Bi-lingual Book: *A History of An Garda Síochána in County Galway: A Century of Service*

In 2023 it was decided to concentrate on collecting content for the book, proofing the content, translation of the publication and to deliver the print aspect of the project in 2024 as the amount of material received was a lot more substantial than originally thought. In addition to this the fact that it is a bi-lingual publication means that a considerable amount of time had to be given to getting chapters of the book translated and cross-checking the Irish with the English version of the book.

The publication deals with the formation of An Garda Síochána, the coming of the force to Galway on 25 September 1922. It showcases how An Garda Síochána has contributed to building a safe and peaceful society in particular as it relates to County Galway and how members of An Garda Síochána contribute to the local areas in which they work and live. In addition to this it shows the changing roles of An Garda Síochána over the past 100 years.

The target audience for the publication is the general public, individuals, retired and serving members of An Garda Síochána (including other police forces) and schools in the county and the diaspora as well as researchers and academics.

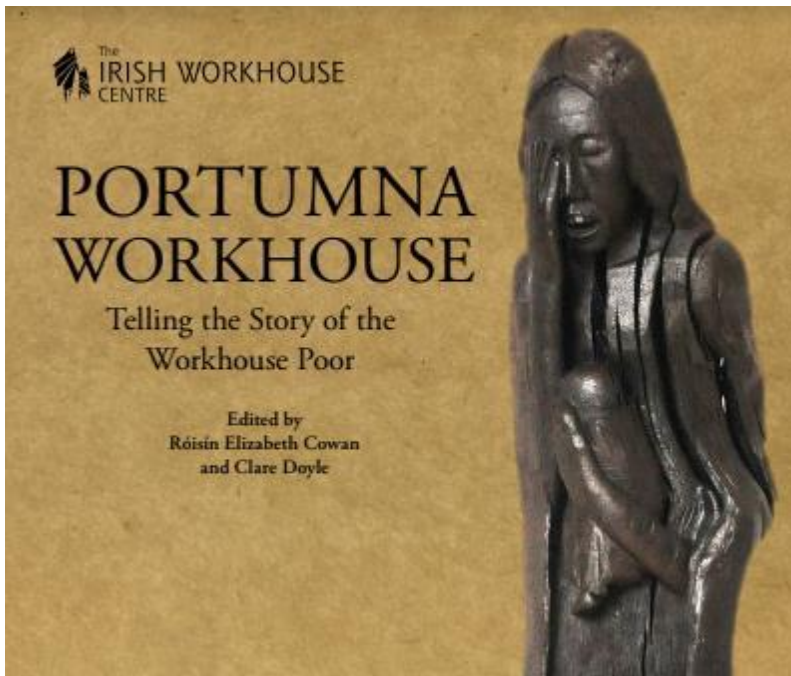
It is hoped that this bi-lingual publication will raise awareness and knowledge with regards to this pivotal time in our history. In addition to this it will seek to show the contributions of An Garda Síochána to all aspects of the life of Galway over the past one hundred years.

Workbook on *An Garda Síochána in County Galway: A Century of Service* for primary schools

This bi-lingual workbook is aimed at 5th and 6th class students will be integrated into the primary school curriculum and will focus in on creating an awareness, knowledge and interpretation of life in 1920s Ireland and the role of An Garda Síochána over the past 100 years. The target audience is Primary School students and their teachers.

It is hoped that this project will raise awareness and knowledge with regards to this pivotal time in our history. In addition to this it will seek to show the contributions of An Garda Síochána to all aspects of the life of Galway over the past one hundred years. The publication will be launched in 2024 and distributed to the schools in the county by Galway County Council Mobile Library Service.

Portumna Workhouse: Telling the Story of the Workhouse Poor



Until recently, not much was known about the life and death experiences of the paupers of Portumna Workhouse. The Union of Portumna was declared on 22 February 1850 and the workhouse building was opened in 1852 with a capacity for 600 but scant original records about the Union of Portumna remain. There are, for example, no registers of admittance or discharge for inmates or original minutes of Portumna Board of Guardians meetings, no Masters' Punishments Books, or other relevant, primary sources. As a result, research has been difficult and focused on the

summary of Guardians' meetings published in the local newspapers and available online through the Irish and British newspaper archives respectively.

While these secondary sources are invaluable, they do not tell us about the lived experience of the paupers as these records cannot always be relied upon to detail the varied experiences of those who entered Portumna Workhouse. While other published works can inform about the social institution that was the poor law, we can only guess the effects of intergenerational trauma, the limitation of rights and needs of individuals and their families, the gender perspectives, and long-term harm caused by institutionalisation. Initial impetus for this research was provided in 2019 when local historian David Broderick published *Finding Ogle: The Mystery of the Disappearing Workhouse Master*. David's research focused mostly on the mid-1860s but touched too on the establishment of Portumna Poor Law Union. More importantly, his work showed how officials responded to poverty, disease, and death. This renewed interest in the paupers of the workhouse has given them a voice and provided the opportunity to build on the valuable information he shared.

The research for this publication was carried out during Covid restrictions in 2020 when staff at the Irish Workhouse Centre could not travel or provide tours of the building. It was decided that the enforced break would provide much-needed time to research more fully the history of Portumna Workhouse. In completing this research to date, we remember all those who lived and died in Portumna Workhouse. We still have much to learn about Portumna Workhouse and the people who walked the halls before us, but this book is a good start.

Unveiling the Shadows: Pop-up Exhibition

Our exhibition accompanies the book and introduces the main chapters, focusing on the Poor Law, Workhouse Architecture, Board of Guardians and Staff, Life and Death in the Workhouse and the Closure of the Workhouses in Ireland.

The Nurse in the Workhouse: Short Film

Film maker Paul Murphy was engaged to create a short film about one aspect of the workhouse's history that had yet to be properly researched. Working with workhouse friend and volunteer, Lisa McGeeney, the film charts the role of nursing in the workhouse system, and the vital part played by the infirmary in the local area until its closure.

Audit of Wayside Memorials in County Galway: Phase 1

Phase One of the Galway Audit of Wayside Memorials, commissioned by the County Galway Heritage Office in 2023. Phase 1 largely focused on desktop research on identifiable wayside memorials as well as follow up fields and contextual exploration. In phase two, a greater focus on public engagement and community interaction to identify further memorials, as well as deepen contextual and historical information.

A Microsoft excel Database was created for the purpose of recording, with fields corresponding to the data generated. Each memorial was surveyed and has its individual record, identified by a unique number. Importantly, the database accords with the ISAD international archival standard and enables a hyperlinking of related records across multiple sites.

Decade of Commemorations closing event

The “Embracing the Past” which took place on Thursday 14th December was the closing event of Galway County Council’s Decade of Commemoration programme. This was a joint initiative between the Heritage Office, County and City Library Service and the Archives Department of Galway County Council.

Members of the public joined with community organisations, historians, heritage experts and local authority elected members and officials to acknowledge the past ten years of remembering the momentous and defining period in Ireland’s and the county of Galway’s history.



The event was launched by Councillor Dr. Evelyn Parsons, Leas Chathaoirleach of Galway County Council, and featured a keynote address by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh,

Professor Emeritus in History and former Dean of Arts and Vice-President of NUI Galway. Throughout the day reminders of various exhibitions researched and held during the decade were on view, together with a craft display, various publications, and a showcase of videos and films. Tomás Mannion, Carmel Dempsey and guests also presented an Aeraíocht of music and dance.

The recording and publishing of previously unheard and unwritten stories of Galway’s central role in the revolutionary period from 1913 to 1923 is a very important legacy project of the Decade of Commemorations Strategy for the county of Galway. Visit the award-winning Decade of Commemorations website at

www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org and <https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/beogalway> for more information.

ICAN – Community Heritage website

The Heritage Office continued to work in partnership with the Museum of County Life Castlebar and various communities throughout the county to further develop this website. Both technical and heritage training has been provided to the groups throughout the year.

The Heritage Office continued to work in partnership with the Museum of County Life Castlebar and various communities throughout the county to further develop this website. Both technical and heritage training has been provided to the groups throughout the year.

Galway Community Heritage – ICAN (Irish Community Archive Network) Meeting in Skehana

A meeting of the members of Galway Community Heritage – ICAN took place on Wednesday 10th May in Screens of Guilkagh. Members from Oughterard Heritage Group, Moycullen Heritage Group, Claregalway Heritage Group, Killarerin Heritage Group, Moylough Heritage Group, Skehana Heritage Group, Abbey Heritage Group, Galway Community Archaeology and Woodlawn Heritage Group attended as well as Lorna Elms and Hassan Dabbagh from the National Museum of County Life. It was the first in-person meeting since February 2020. Meetings were held online for the intervening 3 years.



Townland Research

Working with Galway Community Heritage, GRD, Forum Connemara, Athenry Active Retirement, CDS Cornamona, University of Galway students on recording and documenting townland historical research. Please see the following for more information:

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/townlands-of-county-galway>

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/joyce-country-places>

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/galway-east-townland-research>

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/places/connemara-roots-nw-connemara-heritage>

Community Support Scheme Grants: Heritage

Rolled out of the Heritage Grant Scheme as part of Galway County Council's Community Support Scheme Grants.

Golden Mile Calendar

The *Golden Mile Calendar* was produced in partnership with Galway Rural Development in 2023 and distributed throughout the county.

National Heritage Week 2023

National Heritage Week 2023 took place from Saturday 12th to Sunday 20nd August 2023. The Heritage Council once again invited individuals, communities and organisations to develop Heritage Week projects. The theme for National Heritage Week was 'Living Heritage' which is defined as the practices, knowledge and skills that have been passed from one generation to the next, and are still in use today.

A total of **1860** in person events were held nationwide and a total of **69** digital heritage projects were also hosted during heritage week. **100** in person events were held in Galway County and **7** digital projects were also hosted (excluding Galway City). Events were held in all parts of the county.

The following is the link to the 100 in person Galway County events:

<https://www.heritageweek.ie/event-listings?q=&where%5B%5D=galway-county#listings>

The following is the link to the 7 digital Galway County Heritage events:

<https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects?q=&where%5B%5D=galway-county#listings>

Go Explore the heritage of Connemara & Lough Corrib! Bus & Boat Tour

This heritage week event was held in partnership with Oughterard Heritage & Galway County Council Heritage Office.



This event was held on Thursday 17th August and 49 people attend this event (max capacity). They visited Oughterard Courthouse and viewed the Garda Exhibition, then when on a boat trip to Inagoill island, had a walking tour of Cong given by Vincent Campbell, tour guide. This was followed by lunch in Burkes of Clonbur and a talk given by Michael Hegarty, Manager, Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark who gave a talk on Joyce Country Geopark.

"Tracing your Galway Roots: Discover Your Family History" Uncover the Stories of Your Ancestors

This event was held on Tuesday 15th August 2023 in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Galway County Council, Prospect Hill, Galway H91 H6KX.

Mapping Galway surnames" talk was given by John Grenham. It explored ways in which visualising the locations of households of particular surnames in Griffith's, census records and records of births, marriages and deaths can help with genealogy and local history, providing vivid examples of just how local some names are and how impossibly widespread others can be. The talk gave some of the technical background involved in creating the maps, but will mostly focus on the names.

This talk was followed by the interactive workshop where members of the public got one to one advice with regards to your genealogical research queries.

This event is being organised by the Heritage Office of Galway County Council in partnership with Galway County Council Archives, Local Studies, Galway Public Libraries, East Galway Family History Society, Galway Family History Society West (Limited), Western Family History Association, Ireland XO, Oughterard Heritage & Skehana and District Heritage Group.



THE HERITAGE COUNCIL JOINS THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND AND PARTICIPATING LOCAL AUTHORITIES INCLUDING GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL IN FUNDING THE DIGITISATION OF IRELAND'S COMMUNITY ARCHIVES, THROUGH ICAN



GALWAY COMMUNITY HERITAGE GROUPS FROM ABBEY, WOODLAWN, KILLERERIN, MOYLROUGH, SHEHANA, MILLTOWN, CLAREGALWAY, MOYCULLEN & OUGHTERARD WITH DR MARTINA MOLONEY, CHAIRPERSON OF THE HERITAGE COUNCIL, VIRGINIA TEEHAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE HERITAGE COUNCIL, MARIE MANNION, HERITAGE OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, ROSINA JOYCE, BIODIVERSITY OFFICER, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND BERNIE DOHERTY, GALWAY COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGIST AT THE LAUNCH IN WICKLOW.

An event was held in Wicklow on 31 May to mark a new chapter for the award-winning Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN), the leading organisation championing and supporting community archives in Ireland.

Since 2009, iCAN has supported the creation of 33 online digital archives in Clare, Cork, Galway, Mayo and Wicklow, and there are three more currently in development. Over 180 volunteers are involved in managing and supporting the existing community archives.

iCAN was established by the National Museum of Ireland and has been developed in partnership with participating local authority Heritage Officers and with support from Creative Ireland.

The local authority partnership model provides funding, guidance and resources at local level and was spearheaded in 2014 with Galway County Council Heritage Office. This led to the establishment of iCAN's first bi-lingual archive and the first county-based, multi-site digital archive platform, which has since been adopted by other County Councils around the country. Between 2019 and 2020, iCAN was supported by the Creative Ireland Programme.

iCAN community archive websites are contributory, which means that anyone, anywhere in the world can contribute their photos, maps, letters, records, stories and documents to help build the collections. As well as documenting information about local heritage sites, traditions and well-known local people, the archives are also a valuable source for genealogy and ancestry projects.

Many of the archives also include oral histories and videos and valuable resources such as local 'census' documents dating from before the famine, and visitors can access digital and searchable archives relating to specific graveyards, townlands, and even houses - which in turn gives a unique and valuable insight into family records.

The diaspora uses the iCAN community archives to connect with local groups, who in turn assist with their family history enquiries. These connections frequently result in visits to Ireland with the local group bringing visitors to ancestral homes and graves and re-connecting them with unknown or lost family members. Several of the archives have volunteers who are based abroad in countries such as America and Australia. The iCAN network has been visited.

2,244,000 times by visitors from 215 countries, or 16,000 cities, across the world - more than 5,750,000 pages of Irish heritage content has been explored.

Links to the Galway Community Websites can be found here:

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/>

<https://galwaycommunityheritage.org/>

Creative Ireland Project, Heritage Office Galway Forged Gates Project

About the Project

The vernacular forged wrought iron field gate is a very valuable, but often neglected, aspect of the cultural heritage of our rural landscape in county Galway. These field gates were for the most part forged in the local blacksmith's forge.

They are practical and functional while at the same time are an artistic expression of the blacksmith who made them. During the twentieth century cast-iron, tubular steel and other mass produced gates became more common while at the same time the forged wrought iron gates went into decline as did the blacksmiths forge. In addition to this changing farming practices has led to many of these gates being abandoned in hedges and fields throughout the county, as the older forged wrought iron field gates became too small to accommodate new big machines entering fields. However, to the careful observer there are still many beautifully crafted wrought iron field gate to be found around the county.

According to ICMOS "The built vernacular heritage is important; it is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory and, at the same time, the expression of the world's cultural diversity."

Therefore, the aim of this project is to identify, record, raise awareness and knowledge of the wealth of wrought iron field gates that are to be found in the county of Galway. It will also seek to identify the names of the local blacksmiths and their forges.

A crowd of over 280 people from aged 9 to 90 attended "The Galway County Forged Gates Project" which was officially launched by Cllr. Eileen Mannion, Leas Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council, on Friday last at Mountbellew Agricultural College/ATU Campus, Mountbellew, Co. Galway.

This project had very simple beginnings, when the Heritage Office of Galway County Council and the Skehana & District Heritage had independently embarked on separate initiatives relating to collecting and collating information,



oral heritage and images of forged gates, the craft of the blacksmith and the forge. It was only when the two groups crossed paths, that the project blossomed and resulted in the start of the Galway Forged Gates Project.

Cllr Eileen Mannion, Leas Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway said “that the project captures and preserves the significance of the blacksmith and the forge as told by blacksmiths themselves and their descendants as they recall and relay their recollections from childhood memories and stories from their ancestors.” She also said “Thanks to this new Creative Ireland and Galway County Council funded initiative and the voluntary contribution of Skehana and District Heritage Group and Holy



Rosary College, Mountbellew, all this very valuable information is captured on short films, audio interviews and recordings, photographs, pull-up banners and postcards which were produced with the assistance and contributions of local volunteers and media professionals and is now available free of charge for all to appreciate and use.”



Jimmy Laffey, PRO, Skehana and District Heritage Group said “In Ireland, the blacksmith traditionally played an important role in the community and while they primarily shod farm horses, ponies and donkeys as farriers, they also repaired and manufactured agricultural implements, shod wheels and made gates and railings amongst many other tasks to include making their own

tools of the trade. It used to be that every town and village in Ireland had at the very least, one forge and a blacksmith. Another key service which their premises provided was that of a community gathering point as a social outlet where locals exchanged ideas, advice, stories, news and without doubt some gossip as well.”

Speaking at the launch Emma Laffey, as principal project co-ordinator with the Skehana & District Heritage Group, recalls “for me it started in a very simple way really as I began to notice the huge number of wrought iron gates on the roadsides as I drove to work and around the Skehana area. I started to take pictures of the more local ones, just on my phone, getting permissions from the landowners and householders as well as any story or history associated with the gates from them. It was amazing the local communities response and information they had. So I decided to put all the information I had gathered into an online hardback book as a keepsake for the Skehana & District

Heritage Group. I printed a couple of copies and with Jimmy Laffey's suggestion I sent a copy to our Galway Heritage Officer Marie Mannion, that I realised she already had the skeleton of a larger project on forges and blacksmiths in the melting pot. The rest is history and has culminated in the final product that we, as a team, now have. I found it to be a most rewarding journey along which I met and worked with so many wonderful people and learned so much from them. I am so grateful to each and everyone of them. I also learned that it is so important to capture what you can before it is too late as we have lost two brilliant participants and reservoirs of information for the project, John Mannion and John Joe Ward, just in the last few months.”

According to Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council “The vernacular forged wrought iron field gate is a very valuable, but often neglected, aspect of the cultural heritage of our rural landscape in county Galway. These field gates were for the most part forged in the local blacksmith’s forge.

They are practical and functional while at the same time are an artistic expression of the blacksmith who made them. During the twentieth century cast-iron, tubular steel and other mass produced gates became more common while at the same time the forged wrought iron gates went into decline as did the blacksmiths forge. In addition to this changing farming practices has led to many of these gates being abandoned in hedges and fields throughout the county, as the older forged wrought iron field gates became too small to accommodate new big machines entering fields. However, to the careful observer there are still many beautifully crafted wrought iron field gate to be found around the county.

Therefore, the aim of this project was to identify, record, raise awareness and knowledge of the wealth of wrought iron field gates that are to be found in the county of Galway. It sought to identify the names of the local blacksmiths and their forges. As this project shows the best way to capture this information is to work with our local communities and Skehana & District Heritage Group who have a great understanding and knowledge of their local heritage. Working with Holy Rosary College, Mountbellew we have now uncovered a wealth of our rich hidden local heritage.”





Following the launch proper a presentation, of a beautiful fully functional, swinging and latching, replica gate complete with pillars was made to participants involved in audio recordings, film making and publications as well as the steering committee members.

In addition a special presentation was made to John Feeney, a retired blacksmith from Ballyedmond, who made a great comeback last year to make four wonderful films for the archives. This was a beautiful true to life painting of John working at his forge fire, as he made a sheep crook, with the reflection of the red glow on his face and glasses being most striking features. This was done by Eve Murray from Skehana who a second-year art student in Limerick is and is a credit to her undoubted talents.



Ever and Always The Marvellous Story of Aleen Cust ‘Britain And Ireland’s First Female Vet’ (a Bilingual Primary School workbook)

Niamh Ní Chróinín, TG4’s newly appointed ambassador for children and presenter of the dedicated children’s channel Cula4 and Cllr Michael Maher, Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway launched a bilingual workbook on Aleen Cust; the first female veterinary surgeon to work in Ireland, or indeed the world, in 1900 in Mountbellew Agricultural College ATU on April 21st.

In the region of 150 students from Mountbellew National School, Moylough National School, Holy Rosary College, Coláiste an Chreagáin and members of the public attended the launch. In attendance was Martin Blake, Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Cllr Roger Kennedy, Tipperary County Council, Cllr. Joe Murphy, Chairperson of County Roscommon Heritage Forum, Cllr Dr Evelyn Parsons, Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District and Senator Victor Boyhan.



Eithne O'Halloran of Kylemore Abbey wrote the text and designed the layout aided by superb illustrations of Sara Nylund. The workbook is in a bilingual format and will appeal to a wide audience of younger readers, has added educational value, each section having an exercise to provoke searching minds, quizzes, word games and artistic challenges. Feedback to date suggests that the book will entertain both young and indeed older readers.

Aleen Cust was Irish born at Cordangan Manor, close to Tipperary town in 1868 to Leopold and Lady

Cust, a land agent for the Smith-Barry estate. After Leopold's untimely death in 1878 at forty-six years of age, the family moved back to England and Aleen became a ward of the Widdrington family of Newton Hall,



Northumberland, close to the Scottish border. Aleen always wanted to be a vet and despite being disowned by her family she went to the New Veterinary College in Edinburgh and graduated with merit in 1900. The Royal College in London refused her permission to sit their final examinations because she was a woman. Undeterred Aleen returned to Ireland and took a position assisting a well-known veterinary surgeon in Athleague, Co. Roscommon, William Augustine Byrne. Aleen was

an excellent practitioner and a very fine horse woman; accepted by the community and kind and compassionate to her clientele. In 1905 Aleen obtained a controversial position as a Local Authority Veterinary Inspector for the Mountbellew district (described by the Western People as ‘disgusting, if not absolutely indecent’), which she held until 1915 when she drove her own car to France to assist the treatment of injured horses during World War 1.

‘Miss Cust’ or ‘Vet Cust’ as she was known rode a white Arabian stallion in her earlier years at work and is remembered in Galway and Roscommon for her integrity, intelligence, wit, charm, determination. The women who followed in her footsteps found employment difficult as societal prejudices and economic depression were formidable barriers in the earlier years. In the present time the intake of females far surpasses that of male applicants to veterinary schools around the world. The feminisation of the veterinary profession is well and truly complete.

Cllr Michael ‘Moegie’ Maher, Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway speaking at the launch said “Well thankfully things have changed and one hundred year’s later the majority of the 3000 plus registered vets in Ireland today are female. I am delighted that this bi-lingual workbook which tells Aleen’s story will be available for all schools in Galway, Roscommon and Tipperary.” Addressing the students present he added “I hope that Aleen’s story inspires you and that by believing in yourself anything is possible”.

Workbook as an eternal legacy to the memory of this trailblazing, courageous woman”

This workbook was funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Decade of Centenaries Local Authority Funding); Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council and Tipperary County Council. It is an action of Galway County Council’s Decade of Commemoration Strategy 2013-2023. A digital copy of the workbook is available on the following link: <https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/people/aleen-cust/ever-and-always>

Presentation of National Tidy Town’s Heritage Award to Williamstown Heritage Group and Williamstown Tidy Towns

The presentation of the National Tidy Town Heritage Award was presented to Williamstown Heritage Group and Williamstown Tidy Towns on Sunday 26th November at Templetogether Mill, Williamstown.



For an outstanding 20 years, Williamstown Heritage Group and Williamstown Tidy Towns have been at the forefront of preserving, conserving and enhancing Williamstown’s rich heritage. Their commitment to

fundraising, conducting detailed specialist studies, and developing and conserving iconic landmarks such as the Templetoger Mill and the Mills House, as well as creating a wildlife and biodiversity friendly garden is truly commendable. These historical structures and biodiversity garden hold deep



significance in the community and give a great sense of pride and identity to the area.

The transformation of the disused Templetoger Mill into a focal point for the local community is particularly remarkable. It

not only enhances the aesthetics of the area but also serves as a reminder of our industrial heritage, providing a link between the past and present. The Heritage Group's efforts in creating a biodiversity garden further contribute to the preservation of our natural environment, promoting sustainability, and supporting local ecosystems.

It is important to acknowledge the significant role the local community has played in supporting Williamstown Heritage Group and Williamstown Tidy Towns throughout these endeavours. Their collective effort and unwavering support have been vital in bringing these projects to fruition. Moreover, the funding and support received from various agencies such as Galway County Council, The Heritage Council and Galway Rural Development has been instrumental in aiding the Group's accomplishments.

BIODIVERSITY

Galway County Council appointed Ms. Rosina Joyce as their first full-time Biodiversity Officer in May 2023. This appointment has been made possible through the support of the Heritage Council, who provide 100% of the funding for Year 1 of the position and continued support for Year 2 and Year 3 of the contract. The role falls under the remit of the Forward Planning Unit of the Planning and Sustainable Development Section. The Heritage Officer, Ms. Marie Mannion, who previously oversaw the Biodiversity and Natural Heritage responsibilities for Galway County Council, is also positioned in this section, allowing for a smooth handover, guidance, and regular collaboration, especially regarding the development of the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024 – 2030.

DATA COLLATION, COLLECTION AND CONSERVATION PROJECTS

There were a significant number of Biodiversity projects carried out by Galway County Council throughout 2023 though the funding streams awarded by the Heritage Council's Heritage Stewardship Fund (HSF) and the National Parks & Wildlife Service's Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF). Galway County Council were awarded a total of €103,476 from the National Parks &

Wildlife Service for a series of projects under LBAF and €28,033 for the Tree Management Projects through the Heritage Council's Heritage Stewardship Fund.

QUAGGA MUSSEL SURVEY

For the second year running, Galway County Council and 8 other local authorities, partnered with Dr. Jan Robert Baars and his team at UCD to look at the distributions and concentrations of the invasive Quagga Mussel in the Shannon River. The final report showed established Quagga populations were found to be largely increasing in density, biomass, and proportion relative to the zebra mussel with quagga mussels accounting for ~80% of mussel density in the system in areas where they were previously found to be established. Rapidly increasing populations were also found in Lough Key, despite establishment there being relatively recent. Quagga settlement was confirmed to be facilitated on both soft and hard substrate and through the attachment to biota such as the invasive Asian clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) and the invasive macrophyte starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*). High dispersal rates were recorded through boat movement via direct attachment to boat hulls and through *Nitellopsis* fragments. Additionally, due to the quagga mussels softer shell and high density, certain fish species are beginning to consume the quagga and therefore contributing to the food web. Further analysis is to be conducted to see the relationship between the invasive bivalve presence and changes in water chemistry. The project this year expanded the survey to the Shannon-Erne canal, the Grand Canal and Royal Canal, which were found to be largely free of the quagga mussel although pose a significant threat of spread of this and other aquatic invasive species.

ALPINE NEWT SURVEY

A population of invasive Alpine Newt was surveyed in a location in Connemara where they were first detected in 2014. Alpine Newts are still present in the ornamental pond they were originally recorded in and are now also present in two additional waterbodies on the same site. They were not found in the surrounding bogs although efts may have emerged earlier in the season avoiding detection in the water bodies. An eradication programme is planned for 2024 – 2026 through LBAF.

CONNEMARA INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT SPECIES (IAPS) SURVEY & CLIFDEN IAPS TREATMENT

The Connemara IAPS Survey was completed for the public road network of the Carna peninsula. This builds on previous survey work carried out in Connemara. Follow-up treatment work was carried on IAPS in Clifden. This has been the third year of the treatment and infestations of Gunnera, knotweeds, and Himalayan Balsam in the town have seen a significant reduction.

NITELLOPSIS OBTUSE SURVEY

The distribution of *Nitellopsis obtusa* in Lough Ree was recorded in October 2023 through the use of grapnel sampling and a novel surveying method utilising a fish finder to map the areas covered by dense monocultures. Infested areas were mapped and transects were completed to determine the depth at which *Nitellopsis* grows.

The results indicate that *Nitellopsis obtusa* is widely distributed in Lough Ree and present over at least 231.7 hectares of the lake substrates with a total biovolume equal to over 37 000 shipping containers. However, only approximately half of the lake was surveyed and therefore the figures for the whole lake are likely higher. *N. obtusa* is forming dense, monotypic meadows which stand over 1.5 m from the lake floor, blocking light and disrupting waterflow. Its ability to form dense stands at lake depths from 2 to 6.7 m suggests that much of the nearshore lake habitat is suitable for colonisation by *N. obtusa*. This availability of yet uninvaded habitat, suggests that *N. obtusa* may still be expanding its range within Lough Ree.

NORTHEAST GALWAY WETLANDS PROJECT

This project looked at the 442 wetlands identified in the NE Galway Wetland Audit and using a number of parameters assessed their restoration potential. Initially looking at the Local Authority owned lands, the remit of the project, pivoted more to look at the proximity of community groups to suitable wetlands and how to engage with them to direct suitable funding sources. This project is particularly timely given the funding available for such community climate action projects. An ArcGIS dashboard was developed by MKO to display the results and is currently in consultation with LAWPRO, NPWS and others to see how to develop it further.

NATIONAL TREE MAP

The National Tree Map for County Galway was obtained BlueSky Ireland as part of the Tree Management Principles for County Galway through HSF. This dataset provides valuable insights into the spatial tree distribution throughout the county, detailing the location, crown canopy and tree height. Using i-Tree, the data from County Galway's over 9 million trees has been processed, to estimate carbon capture and value ecosystem services. A dashboard was developed to display the data on the internal Galway County Council GIS system. Staff workshops on this data set and potential uses are planned for Q1 and Q2 of 2024 and it will also be used to inform a Circuitscape Project planned for 2025.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVICE

The Biodiversity Officer provided formal and informal advice and direction regularly to staff within Galway County Council since her appointment in May 2023. As an internal appointment, many of the staff already were familiar with her expertise and regularly liaised with her on biodiversity matters. A wide range of matters regularly cross the desk from Ash dieback, rodent infestations, invasive species management, plant species identification, mowing regimes, herbicide alternatives, habitat creation, landscape plans, provision of signage, wasps, and funding for biodiversity measures.

SUSTAINABLE PLANT MANAGEMENT PLAN

In September 2023, Galway County Council’s Sustainable Plant Management Plan 2023-2025 was adopted by the Climate Change and Biodiversity SPC. The document was developed by a steering group made up of the members from various sections of the local authority, including the Biodiversity Officer. The aim of the plan is to work towards a reduction in use of pesticides throughout the county, in-line with the relevant national and EU legislation for the use of pesticides and various national policy documents. The plan sets out the legislation, proposed targets, and legal requirements. It also provides a comprehensive desk study of alternative methods to that of pesticide treatment. A recording template was also devised to ascertain a baseline figure.

TREE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITIES AND DEVELOPERS

Two sets of targeted bi-lingual guidelines were developed to provide tailored advice on tree projects in the county as part of Galway County Council’s Heritage Stewardship Grant Project. An A2 double-sided poster on tree management for Communities was developed with a captivating illustration by Damien Goodfellow showing the outline of the county and highlighting good examples of community tree projects, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps. It also provides a step-by-step guide to planning tree planting projects, as developed by Brady Shipman Martin. Trees in Development – Guidance for Landowners, Developers and their Agents in the County of Galway provides clear guidance on how to incorporate trees into development projects and how to enhance sites with appropriate tree planting with the text also developed by Brady Shipman Martin.



RESPONSIBLE USE OF RODENTICIDE VIDEO

This video was developed in collaboration with BirdWatch Ireland. This is specifically targeted at the farming community and provides clear practical advice on integrated pest management. It explains

about the various types of rodenticides and their potency and the impact it can have on species further up the food-chain. The video will be launched later in Summer 2024 and will be used in training programmes with Teagasc and Acres.

THE CORRIB - WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER WATER QUALITY

In September 2023, the Biodiversity Officer participated in a stakeholder workshop on The Corrib - Working Together for Better Water Quality organised by LAWPRO and the Rivers Trust. This setting presented an excellent opportunity to engage with local representatives, the public, community groups, NGOs, and other state agencies to explore and develop the best way to work together to protect, monitor, and promote the Corrib.

DÚLRA PROJECT STEERING GROUP

The Biodiversity Officer was appointed to the Dúlra Project Steering Group. Dúlra, meaning 'Nature' in Irish, is a community-led peatland restoration project operating within three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in South Mayo and Connemara – namely the Mwealrea/Sheeffrey/Erriff Complex SAC, Connemara Bog Complex SAC and Twelve Bens/Garraun Complex SAC. The project is funded by the National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) and is led by FORUM Connemara CLG, in partnership with the Leenane Development Association and Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP and is overseen by a steering group made up of local farmers, state agencies, and community groups.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING

Community engagement and awareness raising were identified as strategic key areas of focus in the first year of the position of the Biodiversity Officer in Galway County Council. This resulted in a successful multi-faceted approach to engaging audiences in-person and online and widening the core audience for the biodiversity programme for the year ahead. In line with Galway County Council Irish language policy, all resources produced are bi-lingual.

BIODIVERSITY WEEK 2023

Biodiversity Week 2023 saw the first official public engagements of the Biodiversity Officer. A series of events were held around the county including a Wildflower Identification Workshop at Brigit's Garden, Rosscahill. Galway County Council's swatch on wildflowers which was developed with horticulturist Kay Synott was launched at this workshop by Dr. Caitriona Carlin. Galway County Council held two Orchard Management Workshops with the Headford Environment Group in the Headford Community Orchard with the Irish Seed Savers Association. These workshops were funded by the Heritage Council through the Heritage Stewardship Grant. A sustainable gardening workshop with horticulturist Aoife Munn was held in Loughrea. This event had a full attendance of 40 people from across East Galway. This workshop was a joint initiative between the Galway County Council's Tidy Towns Coordinator and the Biodiversity Office. All workshops organised by Galway County Council during Biodiversity Week were fully booked out. Attendees included members of local Tidy Towns groups, heritage groups, community garden volunteers, Community Employment Scheme participants, council staff and horticulturists.



ORCHARD MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP HELD AT THE HEADFORD COMMUNITY ORCHARD AS PART OF THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY WEEK PROGRAMME FOR 2023. THIS WORKSHOP WAS FUNDED THROUGH THE HERITAGE COUNCIL'S HERITAGE STEWARDSHIP FUND.

The Mountbellew BioBlitz and Biodiversity festival was held on the 26th & 27th May. The events were run in partnership with MKO, the Holy Rosary College and Galway County Council. A team of ecologists, the Biodiversity Officer and volunteers recorded over 500 species in the 24-hour period. The festival also included a bat walk, bog walks, a conservation dog demonstration, a woodland walk, and aquatic surveying. Each of these events had between 20 to 40 members of the public present.

National Biodiversity Week concluded with a Dawn Chorus Walk led by Kate McAney and Pete Tyndall on Sunday 28th May at 5am in Greenfields. This was run in association with the Headford Environment Group. 38 species of bird were recorded.

BLUE DOTS OF CONNEMARA (LBAF)

This joint project with Galway County Council and Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) highlighted the Blue Dot Sites of Connemara by collaborating with local communities to protect and improve our pristine waters so that the benefits to biodiversity, our health and well-being, our heritage and the climate can be enjoyed by current and future generations.

The project had three distinct elements:

1. Delivery of 10 School Workshops in the Connemara area
2. Production of a high-quality educational video
3. Publication of a bi-lingual information booklet

These workshops, video and publications increased awareness on river corridor ecology and water quality; helped reconnect communities with their river catchment, discussed best practice and promote community projects and initiatives.

Coomhola Salmon Trust Ltd. (a non-profit NGO specialist in the field of aquatic environmental education), working in conjunction with Galway County Council, LAWPRO, and VERI-Connect, produced outreach StreamScapes courses for the 10 Connemara primary level schools, together with a supporting publication (in both [English](#) & [Irish](#) editions) – ‘Connemara Blue Dots: A Precious Resource’. These will be launched during World Wetlands Day 2024 and circulated to the local schools and library branches. Conor Ruane, LAWPRO produced a 19-minute [video](#) highlighting the importance of these sites and this was launched on Water Heritage Day as part of National Heritage Week and uploaded to the GCC YouTube Channel and included a brief interview with Galway County Council’s Biodiversity Officer. Shorter videos were also developed for social media and shared widely.

COASTAL AMENITY PLANTING FOR COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP: 6TH – 7TH SEPTEMBER 2023.

This workshop was developed in response to a direct request made by a number of the coastal Tidy Town groups in the county who wished to develop their amenity planting schemes in a more sustainable manner and resilient to the tough growing conditions experienced along our coasts. Through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund from the NPWS, a group of 12, including members of community groups, horticulturists and ecologists travelled to Mullaghmore, Co. Sligo and Falcarragh, Co. Donegal. Training was provided on native plant species that occur in dune and coastal habitats, how to document them in citizen science initiatives with the National Biodiversity Data Centre and which native species could be incorporated into amenity planting schemes. Seamus O’Donnell at Cluain na dTór Seaside Gardens and Nurseries demonstrated how the combination of native planting and ornamental planting can work together to survive the exposed conditions. This trip was particularly successful as it cultivated links within our own coastal communities from Kinvara to Inishbofin, together with groups in Mullaghmore and Cliffoney with Ruth Hanniffy, Sligo County Council Biodiversity Officer.



COASTAL PLANTING WORKSHOP FOR COMMUNITIES. GROUPS FROM GALWAY COASTAL GROUPS MET WITH SLIGO BIODIVERSITY OFFICER, RUTH HANNIFFY, AND MEMBERS OF MULLAGHMORE ACTIVE AND CLIFFONEY COMMUNITY FORUM FOR A FIELD TRIP OF DUNES AND DISCUSSION SUSTAINABLE PLANTING STRATEGIES.

BARN OWL BOOKLET

Galway County Council in collaboration with Kerry County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Offaly County Council, Waterford City and County Council, Westmeath County Council and Wexford County Council) supported BirdWatch Ireland to produced a Barn Owl booklet, detailing new and engaging ecological information and innovative conservation advice specific to Ireland. This is a culmination of fifteen years of extensive research on the species, including information generated through recent survey and monitoring supported by the Local Action Biodiversity Plan Fund in Galway and the other contributing counties. This publication appeals to a wide target audience, particularly the public, landowners and wildlife enthusiasts, to facilitate an increased understanding and appreciation of the species and its conservation requirements; to encourage public participation and responsibility in the future conservation of Barn Owls and thus to promote and deliver wider ecosystem benefits. The booklet is professionally designed with bespoke illustrations, images and maps in A4 format and 36 pages containing the latest information on Barn Owls, their status, ecology and their conservation through disseminating practical guidance (such as the provision of nest boxes, rodent control, habitat management and links to other resources including a series of videos created with the support of LBAF).

CONNEMARA BOGS NATURAL HERITAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMME.

Through this project, Galway County Council and BirdWatch Ireland set out to use the information gathered on the bird communities in Connemara as part of the survey to produce a range of outputs to increase awareness, appreciation and engagement with the biodiversity of Connemara across a

wide audience including local communities. A bilingual poster displaying the breeding birds of Connemara was produced. The poster has been printed and has been made available to communities in Connemara through schools, tourism and community groups as well as disseminated on social media and websites. A podcast on Connemara, with a focus on the birds of Connemara in association with 'In Your Nature' podcast series was produced and aired on the 27th of November 2023. A Story Map was developed to showcase the natural heritage of Connemara including information on walking routes in the region and the wildlife that can be observed in these areas.

Initial footage for a short documentary on Connemara and its unique biodiversity was captured in 2023 and filming will continue for this feature into spring 2024 with the aim of completing and releasing in the summer of 2024.



A POSTER SHOWING SOME OF THE BREEDING BIRDS OF CONNEMARA, PRODUCED AS PART OF THE CONNEMARA BOGS NATURAL HERITAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMME.

NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK 2023

Discover The Beach: An Trá Mhór, An Indreabhán 18th August. Together with the Environment Section, the Biodiversity Officer was on the beach, uncovering and documenting the intertidal species on the shore at this bilingual event. The clean waters of this Blue Flag Beach support a wide range of species and over the course of the two hours, together with the Galway Atlantaaquarium,

Leave No Trace and Clean Coasts, over 40 intertidal species were observed and recorded with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Ms. Joyce attended the three Heritage Council Biodiversity Officer training events throughout the year in Cork, Birr and Kilkenny. These provided key learning opportunities for core issues relating to the role and the responsibilities set out with the position.

The Biodiversity Officer provided training to Galway County Council Community Wardens on the identification and mapping of Invasive Alien Plant Species. Students from University of Galway Applied Ecology MSc programmes were given a lecture and site excursion examining many of the issues that local authorities face when dealing with invasive species. The Biodiversity Office supported and assisted the National Biodiversity Data Centre in running a Dragonfly and Damselfly Identification Workshop in Rosscahill in June 2023. The Biodiversity Officer attended the workshop which was facilitated by Nature Learn. Ms Joyce also undertook a semester of conversational Irish classes, provided by Galway County Council. This is particularly important due to the Irish language policy and obligations set out by the local authority.

TRAINING GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY WARDENS IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING OF INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT SPECIES.



I-WEBS SURVEY TRAINING

Galway County Council supported BirdWatch Ireland in running an Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) workshop in October at the Marine Institute, Rinvilla. The indoor lecture to provide background information on monitoring and methodology for counting and identifying birds. This was followed by a field session where attendees observed birds in the field and tested out new optical equipment purchased for the project. Over 70 people attended the event.



PHOTO OF THE ATTENDEES AT THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL I-WEBS SURVEY TRAINING EVENT WITH BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT THE MARINE INSTITUTE IN OCTOBER 2023.

The primary aim of the events was to recruit survey volunteers in County Galway – in particular for the Inner Galway Bay count team, who have struggled in recent years. The growth of the Inner Galway Bay Team and their ability to restart monitoring, over the next two field seasons (Sept -Mar), will be a measure of this project's success.

The use of the optical equipment (available to borrow from the library, for the survey) as training tools by novice counters, will be a lasting legacy for the project. In addition to the growth of the Inner Galway Bay count team.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The Galway People and Nature Project Facebook page was reactivated and launched as the Galway County Biodiversity Office and was used to actively support and highlight the work of community groups around the county as well as the events, publications and key messaging of the Biodiversity Officer. From May to December 2023 there was a reach of 50,600 through the Facebook posts. An Instagram account was set up in June 2023 and this has been used to feature original content and had a reach of 2,700. Other biodiversity content has also been supplied to and featured on the main Galway County Council social media channels.

BirdWatch Ireland's Junior Members magazine Bird Detectives featured a two-page spread on the recent winning artwork from the Golden Wings Competition that was run by Galway County Council and the bird conservation group. BirdWatch Ireland has a membership of over 15,000 and this feature has highlighted the role that Galway County Council play in nature conservation on a national stage.

The Biodiversity Officer has also conducted three local radio interviews since her appointment with Galway Bay FM and Connemara Community Radio.

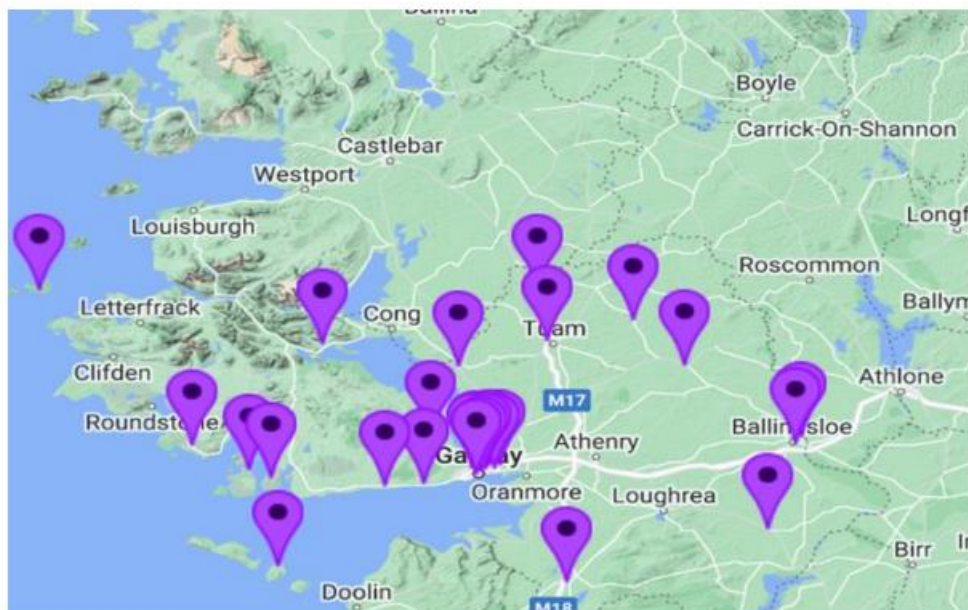
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



Connected Hubs Platform

connectedhubs 148 Hubs registered on Atlantic Economic Corridor hubs on platform, 38 with the activation link.

Overall, 356 Hubs live on the platform, with continuous improvements and new features going live every month. <https://connectedhubs.ie/>



Reports and Updates:

- Report on economic impact of hubs. Report finalised by Western Development Commission and with DRCD for review.
- Occupancy and capacity survey ongoing
- Report on economic impact of hubs. Report Completed by Western Development Commission and is being reviewed by the Department of Rural & Community Development.
- Learning in the Hubs - Promoted by Western Development Commission
- Art in the Hubs – Hubs encouraged to participate – Western Development Commission.
- A Corporate scheme has been developed and The Western Development Commission are working with pilot hubs on corporate’s specific requirements. Promotion plan is with DRCD communications.

Community Network: Support for Hubs

Western Development Commission Fortnightly Wednesday networking sessions continue.

- Newsletter prepared every month.
- Marketing & promotion one to one sessions available for hubs with Western Development Commission.

Hubs Information and Networking Event

The Rural and Community Development Unit & Broadband Office hosted an Information and Networking Event for existing and developing Hubs in Galway County on 26th January, 2023, titled Working Well for 2023 & Beyond.

The Event, which was held in the Claregalway Hotel, was well attended with representation from Operating Hubs, Hub Management Committees, Community Hub Facilities and those considering establishing a Hub. Guest Speakers included: Mr. Jake Ryan Principal Officer, Regional Development & Innovation Unit, Department of Rural & Community Development. Mr. Stephen Carolan, National Hub Network Programme Manager, Western Development Commission. Ms. Joanne Mangan, Employers Lead, Grow Remote. Ms. Lyn Donnelly – Manager, Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre. Mr. Noel Madden, Broadband Officer, Galway County Council, and Mr. Alan Farrell, A/Director of Services, Galway County Council.



Staff from Galway County Council Town and Village Renewal, AEC and Broadband Team attended the Connected Hubs www.connectedhubs.ie National Summit in Tullamore on November 22nd, 2023, organised by Western Development Commission and Department of Community and Rural

Development. Staff attended as part of the co-funding of Hubs and BCP's under Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Galway County Council is working with many local groups to help advance Hubs and linked with local groups on the day.



PICTURED AT THE NATIONAL HUBS SUMMIT 2023: L TO R: TERRY O'TOOLE CLIFDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, ÉIMEAR DOLAN, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, LYN DONNELLY, MANAGER BALLINASLOE AREA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LTD., BERNIE DONNELLAN GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, ANNE DE COURCY, CLIFDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Shared Island Project

A signature Shared Island project first phase was concluded in 2023. €250,000 had been secured for a unique collaboration with a shared commitment of Galway and Leitrim County Councils partnered with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to develop Excellence Centres in Food Innovation and Agritech. Across three key themes and eight actions of Priming Capital Plans, Climate Action, and the establishment of the first cross-border Food + Agritech Innovation Network, the project will test the feasibility of new investment projects to be delivered by our cross-border Local Authority partnerships. There were several engagements hosted by the three partners over the course of the project. One key such initiative was the Shared Island Climate Action Conference in October.



A feasibility study submitted to the Department outlines the potential with this collaboration and the commitment that is there from the three locations involved in the project. A link to same can be found here [Shared Island feasibility report.pdf](#).

TOURISM

The Tourism Office in Galway County Council continued to deliver on the strategic objectives within the Community and Rural Development Unit in 2023, working with partners across Galway County Council, in neighbouring Counties, in State Agencies, in strategic tourism networks, the tourism trade and festivals partners.

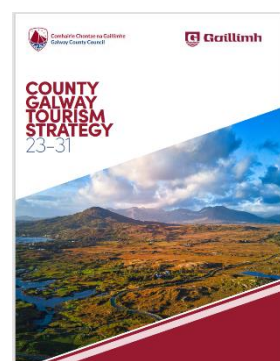
The programme of work was resourced by the Tourism budget; ERCD budgets, co-funded programmes, and grant schemes. The Tourism Officer implemented numerous projects in house; and supported projects implemented via the Municipal District Offices, the National Roads Project Office, the Climate Action Group, Regeneration Projects, Portumna Vision 2030, Clifden Destination Town Project as well as supporting projects led by Fáilte Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Waterways Ireland, Connemara and Islands Tourism Network, Destination Lough Derg, Joyce Country Western Lakes Geopark, the Galway Convention Bureau.

In 2023 in a significant step for local development in Connacht, Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark underwent an assessment mission by UNESCO, which it is hoped will lead to achieving UNESCO Global Geopark status in the near future. Over a three-day period, two UNESCO assessors were guided through a kaleidoscope of fascinating heritage features, local businesses and communities in the beautiful Joyce Country and Western Lakes area of north County Galway and south County Mayo. Mountains, lakes, fjord, rivers, woodlands, geological sites, local business and start-ups, community development groups, stand-out visitor attractions – they were all in the mix. The itinerary included an event for Key Stakeholders (funders/other partners, communities, politicians) at Kylemore Abbey (co-hosted by University of Notre Dame campus). This was attended by the Cathaoirleach, Chief Executive and Director of Services. The Chief Executive and Director of Services met with the international judges to confirm the support of the Council for the project and engage with them as part of the judging regarding the UNESCO designation.

COUNTY GALWAY TOURISM STRATEGY

Galway County Council Launches New Tourism Strategy

Galway County Council is delighted to announce the adoption of a groundbreaking tourism strategy aimed at enhancing and expanding the region's tourism offerings. The new strategy was unanimously adopted by the members of the Galway County Council, who have played a pivotal role in its development and provided steadfast support throughout the process.



The Council extends its deepest gratitude to all members for their invaluable contributions and commitment to shaping the future of tourism in County Galway. Their collaborative efforts and insightful feedback have been instrumental in crafting a visionary plan that promises to bolster local tourism and foster economic growth.

As part of this ambitious initiative, the tourism team at Galway County Council is eager to begin the implementation phase of the strategy. This comprehensive plan focuses on supporting the existing tourism industry and destinations while simultaneously developing new and exciting tourism offerings in less developed areas of the county.

Through a strategic mix of marketing, capacity building, and innovative tourism development, the new strategy is poised to make Galway an even more compelling destination for visitors both domestic and international. Special attention will be given to enhancing the unique cultural, historical, and natural attractions of the county, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are felt across the region.

As we move forward, Galway County Council looks forward to working in close partnership with local businesses, stakeholders, and the community to bring this strategy to life. Together, we will continue to promote Galway as a leading destination for cultural and natural heritage tourism.

The full strategy document is available for review. We invite all interested parties to explore the exciting opportunities that this strategy represents for the future of tourism in Galway.

Galway County Council is committed to promoting the economic, social, and cultural development of Galway County through a range of strategic initiatives and collaborative partnerships. With a focus on sustainability and community benefit, the Council strives to enhance the quality of life for all residents while ensuring the preservation of the county's rich heritage and natural beauty.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME FESTIVAL AND EVENTS

Community Support Scheme Grants continue to be drawn down monthly. Total funding allocated for 2023 Regional, Economic and Festival & events is €87,250.00.

Discover Galway Digital Marketing:

In 2023, our commitment to enhancing the Discover Galway digital marketing strategy remains steadfast. While significant strides were made in 2022, we continue to progress the Discover Galway website as a vital project aligned with our broader marketing strategy. Development of the website continued throughout the year, strategically promoting tourism attractions and visitor experiences across all areas within Galway County.

Despite minimal investment in 2022, the Discover Galway platforms have been diligently maintained. Our focus has been on ensuring the website’s stability and relevance while preparing for the upcoming brand launch. Additionally, the website highlights Discover Galway Food Experiences, inviting visitors to explore the culinary delights of our region. The newly produced first draft of the Galway attractions map, created by the County Tourism Office, continues to serve as a valuable resource. This map was previously utilized during the County Council’s Representation at the Milwaukee Festival in August 2022 and will be further refined in accordance with the Galway County Tourism Strategy 2023-2031 recommendations. Our ongoing efforts contribute significantly to positioning Galway as an enticing and memorable destination, and we eagerly anticipate the full realization of our collective brand, which will elevate the visitor experience and showcase Galway’s unique offerings.

DESTINATION GALWAY BRAND DEVELOPMENT

We are thrilled to announce the successful launch of the new Galway tourism brand, developed in 2023. This initiative is a result of the robust collaboration between Galway County Council, Galway City Council, and Fáilte Ireland. Throughout 2022, our dedicated Tourism Officers, alongside Búa Marketing—a seasoned team deeply ingrained in the Wild Atlantic Way's vibrant culture— spearheaded this endeavor. Their efforts included comprehensive surveys in both Gaelge and English to involve industry stakeholders and a pivotal consultation workshop with local experts held in June 2022 at The Dean Hotel.

As the project progressed through its final design phase by the end of 2022, we also secured additional support from Fáilte Ireland’s ‘Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands’ team. This crucial funding allowed us to acquire additional imagery from East Galway during the off-peak season, setting a solid foundation for the brand's rollout in 2023.



Milwaukee 2023

Milwaukee Irish Festival is the largest celebration of Irish culture and heritage in the United States and takes place in Lake Michigan in Wisconsin. Members of Galway County Council and Galway City Council attended the four-day festival. Staff working in the tourism function in Galway County Council worked with the Tourism Officer in Galway City Council and tourism Ireland in designing a new Galway stand, banners, pop ups, backdrop and PR material for the festival showcasing the new Galway Brand. Maps of County Galway including visitors’ attractions, visitor information and Connemara maps were organised and printed in Milwaukee with Pens, Tote Bags and T Shirts for distribution. Further literature and information on County Galway’s tourism attractions were also

sent over. This festival has a huge audience of more than 130,000 visitors and was a great opportunity to showcase all what Galway has to offer.

REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The Regeneration Section is co-ordinating and delivering on funding approvals under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for the following locations: Athenry, Tuam, Kinvara, Portumna, Loughrea, Gort and Clifden. Over 6m euro in funding has been secured by the Rural Regeneration Team. Throughout 2023 the Regeneration Team have prepared funding applications for circa €15 million in project funding across RRDF and ERDF for submission in early 2024.

| Cumulative Programme – Regeneration Team 2023 | Amount of RRDF Grant Funding Secured. |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Athenry | €2,927,310 |
| Tuam | €175,000 |
| Kinvara | €122,790 |
| Loughrea | €1,678,879 |
| Clifden | €792,029 |
| Portumna Vision | €1,192,855 |
| Gort | €798,584 |
| Portumna Courthouse | €2,552,309 |

Athenry: An allocation of €3,554,000 was made to Athenry Town and the BIA Innovator Campus. This project supports regeneration in Athenry Town with a number of improvements to be made in the Town Centre and provides a significant level of funding to enable the delivery of the BIA Innovator Campus which is co-located at the Teagasc Campus on the outskirts of Athenry.



The BIA Innovator Campus is driven by the BIA Innovator Campus CLG which includes representatives from Teagasc, Western Development Commission, GRET, Athenry Community Council, Private Industry and Directors appointed from the Local Enterprise Office and Galway County Council Executive as founding members of the initiative.

In 2023 construction was completed encompassing production units, co-working kitchens and the innovation centre which will include food technology support services. The Campus delivered three buildings spanning 2301 square metres (23, 767 sq. ft.) of food specific resources to support over 40 plus food

related business driving innovation and sustainability of the food sector in the West region.



The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar TD officially opened

the BIA Innovator Campus in January 2024. The collaborative approach which is central to the development of the campus was highlighted in the various inputs from guest speakers on the day itself.

The works in Athenry Town Centre under RRDF will see physical improvements and enhanced public realm, improvement to shop fronts and development of the Athenry Town Park. The works are being delivered collaboratively by a range of partners including the local area office, Athenry Community Council, Athenry Tidy Towns, Athenry Heritage Centre, the business community, and a local social enterprise group.

ATHENRY TOWN CENTRE FIRST

The Town Regeneration officer is preparing a Tender for consultant services to deliver County Galway's second Town Centre First Plan for Athenry. The tender should be published in early 2024, with the establishment of a formal Town Team in accordance with the Town Centre First policy, commencing in the new year to help support delivery of the plan and the projects/proposals which emerge from the consultation process.

TUAM MASTERPLAN

The Tuam Regeneration Masterplan was Environmentally assessed in Q1 2021 before being presented and formally endorsed by the elected members of the Municipal District of Tuam on 12th April 2021. The Plan emerged from extensive consultation and provided a launch pad for future funding applications for the town and routes to delivery outlined. The Regeneration team expects to complete the Part 8 planning application for the redevelopment of the Tuam Shambles project with a view to submitting for capital project funding under the RRDF call 1 in Q1 2024.



SOURCE IMAGE: REGENERATION TEAM, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DESIGN CONSULTANTS

KINVARA BAY BOARDWALK

The aim of the project is to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between Dunguaire Castle and Kinvara village to include a dedicated cycleway, separate from the road carriageway. Several design proposals were investigated in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders. A draft construction management plan was prepared for the preferred option including Environmental assessments.

This project development plans are now being incorporated into a larger scale project being undertaken by the National Roads Project Officer of Galway County Council under the stewardship of Transport Infrastructure Ireland.



SOURCE IMAGE: REGENERATION TEAM, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DESIGN CONSULTANTS

PORTUMNA – COURTHOUSE REFURBISHMENT

The intention of the project is to bring this prominent historic local building back into community use. Having successfully secured Cat 2 funding for Portumna Courthouse in early 2020, The Regeneration Team progressed plans for a change of use to include event space, Flexible Office

Space, and café. A part 8 planning permission was secured for the proposal in 2021. The project is currently at construction with an anticipated 18 month build-programme.

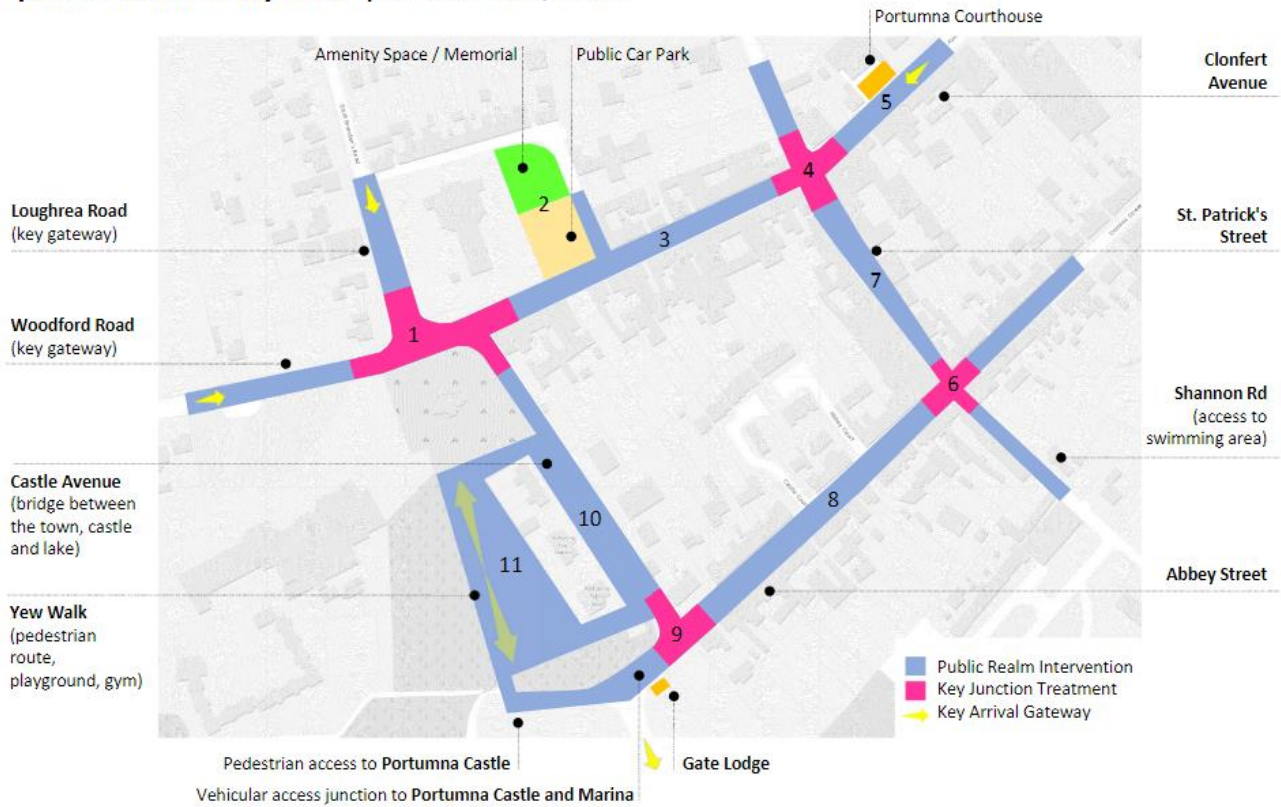


SOURCE IMAGE:
REGENERATION
TEAM, GALWAY
COUNTY
COUNCIL,
DESIGN
CONSULTANTS

PORTUMNA – PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT

The master-planning process for a public realm enhancement scheme that will play a key role in the wider transformation of Portumna has commenced as the first stage of public consultation took place in January 2023. This project has been commissioned by Galway County Council, led by the Regeneration Team and is being prepared by a consultancy team led by the RPS Group. It is funded through the Rural Regeneration and development fund, a key element of Project Ireland 2040. It forms one part of the wider Portumna Vision 2030 regeneration programme being delivered for Portumna through rural regeneration funding, including the redevelopment of the iconic Courthouse on Clonfert venue.

public realm study area | boundaries and key features



SOURCE IMAGE: REGENERATION TEAM, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DESIGN CONSULTANTS

LOUGHREA TOWN HALL

This project will involve the renovation of the main building and the demolition of the existing rear annex building to make way for the construction of a new, universally accessible, and code compliant building. The design has developed through to Tender Stage to include a detailed cost analysis with a view to securing additional funding. The construction tender package is completed with a view to going to tender in Q2 2024.

GORT – PUBLIC REALM

Galway County Council has appointed BDP to prepare the Town Centre First and Public Realm Improvement Plan for Gort Town Centre. The decision-making process will be informed by the Town Centre First Plan. This plan will be issued as part of the collaborative, information/data gathering process for the drafting of the Gort Local Area Plan, the Gort Traffic Management Plan, the Local Transport Plan, and the Walking and Cycling Strategy. The first phase of public consultation took place in the first quarter of 2023. The public realm project is in its final stages of detailed design in preparation for the submission of a planning application, environmental screenings of the project are currently being undertaken.



SOURCE IMAGE: REGENERATION TEAM, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

TOWN CENTRE FIRST

The Town Regeneration Officer (TRO) has worked closely with the Gort Town Team finalising the content of the pilot Town Centre First (TCF) plan for Gort. The plan is now completed and a formal launch of the final plan was held in December. The plan has outlined 12 key themes, each theme having approximately 2 projects identified as short, medium or long term proposals. The TRO has submitted 2 subsequent funding applications from the TCF plan, the Heritage Stewardship Fund from the Heritage Council for the Gort Town Hall, as well as the TVRS application for streetscape enhancement for Gort, application since the completion of the TCF plan.



CLIFDEN – TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT

The aim of the project is to deliver a cohesive design approach for Clifden focusing on three main areas:

- Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement
- Harbour Park
- Beach Road Quay

Galway County Council have appointment Land Use Consultants (LUC) along with their sub consultants, Tobin and MKO. They



have produced conceptual design which fed into their public consultation strategy in 2022. These designs have now been further developed and it is anticipated that the final design will inform a planning application to An Bord Pleanála in Q2 of 2024.

SOURCE IMAGE: REGENERATION TEAM, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DESIGN CONSULTANTS

The Regeneration team have advanced works on Destination Towns initiatives have taken them through the Procurement process and Contractors O Malley Tarmacadam have been appointed to the Greenway Readiness works at the Ard Bear Bridge, the installation of gateway signage within the town and NUARK are to carry out improvement Works at the Pavilion at the Coach Station.

TUAM – TOWNHALL REFURBISHMENT

The project aim is to redevelop the former Town Hall in Tuam for use as a multi-functional space to include a creative and enterprise hub and co-working space, offices, meeting rooms and supporting spaces. Site investigation works were undertaken in Q4 2021 to inform any subsequent planning and funding applications. Part 8 planning application was secured in 2022 for the purposed works, and it is anticipated that this project will be included in a future RRDF CAT 1 capital funding application in Q1 2024.

IMAGE SOURCE:

REGENERATION TEAM,
MASTERPLAN COMMISSIONED
FOR TUAM.



URBAN AND RURAL REGENERATION FUND CALL 3

GCC Has secured €2,000,000.00 in funding for Tuam, Ballinasloe and Oranmore under the URDF. The award represents a rolling fund which will be used to purchase and bring to the market identified vacant and derelict properties across these settlements. A team is being assembled to manage the fund and work on reducing vacancy and dereliction in our towns and villages.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEMES & STREETScape ENHANCEMENT MEASURES



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



The Scheme is targeted at the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre regeneration and enhancing economic and social vibrancy in line with the Town Centre First policy and Our Rural Future. The Scheme funded by the Department of Community and Rural Development is for shovel ready capital projects with an emphasis on projects that bring economic and social vibrancy to town and village centres and help bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as community or multipurpose spaces/hubs and public realm initiatives. In 2023 a new additional category for inhabited off-shore Islands was introduced and for the first time the Scheme could consider refurbishment of existing community centres.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) were sought by Galway County Council from Business Representative Groups, Community and Voluntary Groups for the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme by end of September 2023 with submissions made in early November 2023. Twenty-three Expression of Interest were received, and four proposals were put forward. For counties in the Northwest Transition Region, including Co. Galway, grant aid of 95% of the total project cost could be sought. programme invited applications The Department will issue a Decision on Applications in early 2024 with an implementation period of 18 months.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| TV23GY01 | Gort – Streetscape Scheme |
| TV23GY02 | Dunmore – Community Centre |
| TV23GY03 | Maree – Community Centre |
| TV23GY04 | Ballinasloe – 3 Community Properties |

During 2023 projects continued to be delivered under previous schemes, examples of Community and Council led projects completed in this period were Ballyglunin and Bar na Dearg.

- Ballyglunin Railway Restoration Project €100,000 @80% of Costs
- Barnaderg Village Enhancements €91,661 @90% of Costs

Ballyglunin Railway Station was established in 1860 under the Tuam-Athenry railway line. The significance of the local train station in the Irish emigrant journey is a theme best illustrated in the film *The Quiet Man* with iconic scenes featuring John Wayne and Maureen O’Hara filmed on the platform at Ballyglunin in June 1951. Ballyglunin Community Development Company was set up in 2004 by a group of local volunteers to repurpose Ballyglunin Station as a vibrant resource for visitors and the community to enjoy.

They were approved for a Town & Village Renewal Grant of €100,000 towards the refurbishment of the main Station House. Without this funding, this building and its original features were in danger of being lost forever. Ballyglunin Station is re-opening once again as a heritage site, visitor centre, award-winning biodiversity park, community hub and unique events venue.

The Tuam Municipal District lead on the implementation of Barnaderg Village Enhancements, upgrading safe pedestrian routes, pathways and access in the village area connecting the Church and community buildings. The project resulted in the installation of new street lighting, pedestrian crossings, footpaths, and street furniture to connect amenities and businesses in this rural village. The project arose out of community consultation when investment in the community playground and overall connectivity with safe and accessible movement between amenities became a key local issue.



PICTURED AT BALLYGLUNIN RAILWAY STATION ARE ÉIMEAR DOLAN, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MARK GIBSON, AND JOYCE LAFFEY FROM BALLYGLUNIN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY AND TARA TAHENY, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OFFICER FROM DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL STREETScape SCHEME - PORTUMNA

Approved under the 2022 Scheme this project was awarded funding in early 2023 and launched in the first quarter with assistance from Portumna Chamber of Commerce, Tidy Town and local groups that engaged with the Regeneration Plans for Portumna. The focus of the Scheme is to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades of defined areas within selected rural town/village centres.

Two information events were held by staff of the Council in Portumna in Community Centre and Famine Workhouse on 18/4/2023 & 25/4/2023 with applications sought in May 2023. The programme sought applications from property owners and tenants for upgrade to properties within the central streetscapes and qualifying zones in the programme with grants of up to 3500 per property or up to 80% of estimated costs for painting your property. The Loughrea Municipal District, were presented with in relation to Portumna Streetscape Scheme on the 10/07/2023. Portumna Chamber of Commerce and Galway County Council engaged with Dulux on a recommended colour scheme to help advise property owners and encourage to engagement the Scheme. Take up was significant in Portumna with over 50 properties awarded funding. Over 50k has been draw-down during 2023 of the 96k allocated. The average grant to business and property owners/tenants is 2.3k.



TUAM STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

By October 2023, Galway County Council recouped €85,008.44 from the Department of Community and Rural Development further to investment in the Tuam Town Centre Streetscape Enhancement Scheme funded by the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.



Tuam Streetscape Enhancement Scheme Sample Before & After

Over 40 Offers of Grant Funding were made to applicants within the Town Centre zone extending from Market Square in the 2022-2023 period. 32 Properties completed and successfully drew down grant funding of up to 80% of their costs within the Scheme deadline which ran to the end of October 2023. The main type of work completed was façade painting, some lighting and general declutter works. High Street Businesses in particular, succeeded in completing a higher volume of adjacent properties resulting in a positive visual improvement. Stakeholders in the roll-out included Local Business Networks, Auctioneering Companies, Tuam Tidy Towns and Tuam Lions Club who contributed to the promotion and information on the Scheme further to Galway County Council Public Information Workshops and Advisory Clinics held regularly in the Tuam Regional Office. It is noted that the support of the Elected Members in promoting the Scheme and assistance of the Staff in the Tuam MD Office, as well as local business and community networks contributed greatly to the implementation of the Scheme.

CLÁR PROGRAMME FOR SMALL- SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide for small infrastructural projects in areas that have experienced population decline. Expression of Interests were sought by Community and Rural Development Unit in May 2023, with final applications submitted to the Department of Community and Rural Development (DRCD) in June 2023. It is noted that in 2023 DRCD introduced to CLÁR that there must be evidence of a minimum lease of 15 years post completion or full legal ownership of a site/property, extending the period of lease from 5 in previous schemes to 15 years which challenged many applicants to complete the legalities in time to be considered as eligible applicants.

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced those approved on Friday, 1st December 2023. The following groups from Co. Galway were shortlisted from 28 Applicants and approved for funding under Measure 1 (Developing Community Facilities and Amenities) by the Department of Community and Rural Development. Projects will be implemented over the next 12-18 months period.

- East Galway United Community Development Group €50,000
- Portumna GAA Club €50,000
- Beagh GAA €50,000
- Killimor GAA Spectator Stand €45,000
- Tommy Larkins (Woodford) €43,184
- St Brendan's GAA, Ballygar €50,000
- Tynagh Abbey Duniry Hurling Club €50,000
- Ballinakill, Leitir Mealláin- €21,942
- Dunmore NS-€50,000
- Ballinakill National School, Loughrea €50,000
- Caltra National School €42,278
- Milltown Community Council Ltd €50,000
- Ballinasloe Social Services €50,000
- Comhar Chuigéal Teoranta Comhar Chuigéal (Leitir Mealláin) Teoranta, €41,027

In 2023 over 14 projects approved in 2022 were completed with support of the Unit and successful in draw-down over 600k in capital funding for small scale projects.



EÍMEAR DOLAN, AO COMMUNITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH MEMBERS OF CLEGGAN, CLADDAGHDUFF COMMUNITY COUNCIL AT REDEVELOPED BALL COURT IN CLEGGAN VILLAGE COMPLETED IN 2023, FUNDED BY DRCD, CLAR 2023 PROGRAMME.

RURAL SCHEMES - OUTDOOR RECREATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. (Adventure Tourism type projects, Blueways, Walking Trails, Boardwalks, etc).

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2023

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure. It also provides support for the necessary repair, maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.

The scheme supports sporting and recreational pursuits. It helps to make use of the resources of the countryside that contribute to healthy active lifestyles. It supports the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike.

It provides funding for:

- Development, extensions and repair of trails, walkways, cycleways and blueways
- improved access to outdoor leisure or recreational facilities
- development of outdoor recreational infrastructure
- **Measure 1** for small scale projects requiring funding of up to €30,000,
- **Measure 2** for medium scale projects with funding of up to €200,000,
- **Measure 3** for large scale projects seeking funding of up to €500,000, and
- **Project Development Measure** funding of up to €50,000 for development costs for strategic large-scale projects.

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME (ORIS) 2023

The Following Measure 1 Projects were applied for and approved by the Department of Rural & Community Development, under the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

| Scheme Measure | Project Name: | Project Description (less than 30 words): | Amount of ORIS funding requested |
|----------------|--|--|----------------------------------|
| M1 | Creggs Wildlife Garden accessibility upgrade | Enhancement of wheelchair accessible walkways within Creggs Wildlife Park | 22,600 |
| M1 | Gateway to the Corrib | Installation of signage for a new cycle route in the Claren area of Headford | 20,000 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| M1 | Hymany Way Upgrade | Upgrade the Beara Breifne/Hyman Way Walking Trail | 33,010 |
| M1 | Lackagh Knockdoemore Walkway 2023 Enhancements | Walkway safety enhancements and Maintenance to existing Knockdoemore Park - Lackagh walkway. | 30,500 |
| M1 | Traught Beach Accessibility Upgrade | Accessibility Upgrades to Traught Beach to provide improvements to walkway, access ramp and seating. | 33,000 |
| M1 | An Trá Mhor Inverin Accessibility Upgrade | Accessibility Upgrades to An Trá Mhor to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities. | 33,000 |
| M1 | Cill Murvey Beach Accessibility Upgrade | Accessibility Upgrades to Cill Murvey to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities. | 33,000 |
| Scheme Measure | Project Name: | Project Description (less than 30 words): | Amount of ORIS funding requested |
| Project Dev | Renville Forest Park Masterplan | To Develop a Major Tourism Attraction, Building on the Unique Heritage of the park for Galway County and the Western Region. | 49,950 |
| Project Dev | Ballinasloe Outdoor Recreation Park | To carry out a feasibility study exploring the options for the development of a public park in Ballinasloe that reflects good practice in line with Proper Planning and Sustainable development. | 49,950 |
| Project Dev | Linn Taoide Arainn | Feasibility Study for Provision of tidal pool on Arainn along the seashore that will offer recreational opportunities for the island community as well as visitors to the island and provide a habitat for marine life. | 49,950 |

The Following Measure 2 & 3 Projects were applied for and are pending approval by the Department of Rural & Community Development, under the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

| Scheme Measure | Project Name: | Project Description (less than 30 words): | Amount of ORIS funding requested |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| M2 | Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails Group | Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails aims to develop both Castlegrove Woods and Barracks as Nature Trails, Historic Trails and Heritage Display centre. | 47,820 |

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|--|---------|
| M2 | Glinsk Community Development Society | Glinsk Heritage Park Repair and Upgrade of 2km of Existing Trails to improve accessibility | 200,000 |
| M2 | Coiste Forbartha an Mháma | The construction of a car park which will facilitate cars and buses for those who enjoy walking the western way. | 172,582 |
| M3 | Oranmore Maree GAA | Rinville Park is an outstanding amenity with existing unlit walkways. This project adds 2.5km of lit walkways incorporating key new features, namely a sensory garden and interpretative signage for the ringfort. | 351,000 |

OTHER INITIATIVES:

[COOP4RURALGOV](#)

In 2022 Galway County Council was successful in securing funding for a rural proofing project looking at cooperation for sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountain focused governance.

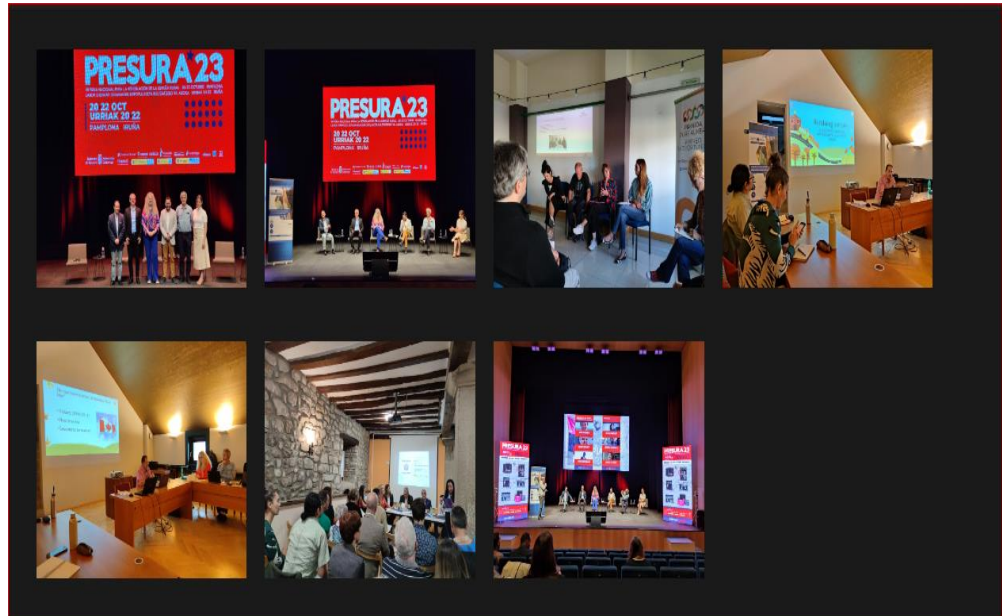
The Rural Proofing Project is predicated on the Local Economic and Community Plan (countywide). Through this Plan, it is anticipated that good practice examples may emerge as part of the LECP implementation plan, the implementation piece will commence when the Local Economic & Community Plan is adopted in 2024.

The Coop4RURALGov project will improve "governance" capabilities in its scope and area of influence by measuring the expected impact on rural and coastal areas of measures adopted in the LECP that will contribute to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, and other benefits to a society, community, or group of people through one or more development interventions. The LECP, as a statutory process, will facilitate the delivery of agreed key actions while fulfilling governance responsibilities. The other partners represent communities and municipalities based in Spain (lead), Bulgaria and Estonia.

There have been two meetings of the partners so far with both hosted by the lead partner in Pamplona, Spain. The European Interreg project 'Coop4RURALGov. Rural Proofing. Cooperation for better sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountain focused governance' held its kick-off meeting in Pamplona on 26 and 27 April, with the presence of representatives from the countries that are part of it:

Estonia, Bulgaria, Ireland, and Spain.

The project partners met again in Pamplona the week of 16-22nd October, in a meeting framed within the Presura 2023 'Amanecer Rural' Fair, which took place from 20-22 October in the capital of Navarre,



each partner participated in a panel of the event's programme. The working sessions during the day, were supported by presentations and documentation from experts in the field, aimed to illustrate the magnitude of the challenge faced by the project and to address the variety of solutions offered by the participating regions.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEMES

The Galway County Council Community Support Schemes encourage community and voluntary groups to take an active part in the development of their communities by providing small-scale funding for projects which are of benefit to their local community and improve the economic, community and cultural aspects of their surrounding areas. In 2023 a total of €294,830, including €18,000 for Regional Festivals & Participative Events from Fáilte Ireland, and extend supports to communities right across the county. This funding supplements the other significant work programmes that the Council undertakes at local level, as well as investment through various other Departmental funding schemes.

The allocations under the Council's Community Support Schemes are listed under the individual categories of funding which are as follows, and in accordance with the adjustments made to the relevant Support Schemes at the Annual Budget Meeting:

| Category of Funding | Budget | Allocation |
|--|--------|------------|
| Support Scheme for Economic Development: | 69,250 | 69,250 |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| Support Scheme for Community Development: | 104,250 | 104,250 |
| Support Scheme for Cultural Development - Arts Act Grants; €60,000 - Heritage Grants; €40,000 - Irish Language Activities €3,300 | 103,330 | 103,330 |
| TOTAL BUDGET | €276,830 | €276,830 |

Economic Development Support Scheme:

In line with previous years, applications for arts festivals were assessed and approved under the Economic Development Support Scheme, to ensure that a Calendar of Events is identified which engages residents and visitors alike, and which delivers social, cultural, tourism and economic benefits to the County. By assessing all applications for Festivals & Participative events together, we have identified those which are more localized in scale and will be supported by Galway County Council under this Support Scheme, and separately identified those which will be supported under Fáilte Ireland’s Regional Festivals and Participative Events funding. In addition, the Scheme supports a range of economic development initiatives to promote economic activity through materials and /or initiatives to increase footfall in the relevant local areas.

Community Development Support Scheme:

The aims of this category are to build capacity of community-owned buildings to leverage capital funding by applying for funding towards Energy Audits, and to support groups who enhance public amenity areas and open spaces. The County continues to improve in the National Tidy Towns Competition year-on-year with over 42 Tidy Towns Groups entering in 2023, with Milltown and Abbey retaining their gold and silver medal status respectively, and An Spidéal building on their excellent progress over the last 2 years by achieving Third Place in the County. The work of Tidy Towns Groups is evident across the County and contributes greatly to quality of life and the visual appearance and sustainable improvement of our towns and villages. This is reflected in the range of projects for recommendation, including improvements to approach roads, upgrading to long-life planters and benches, and a strong focus on planting for biodiversity and pollinators. As always, this Support Scheme was heavily over-subscribed, therefore, cognizance was given to other funding sources such as the Local Enhancement Programme which will award over €150,000 in funding towards community facilities through the General Fund, and over €30,000 in funding towards Women’s Groups.

Cultural Development Support Scheme:

The aim of Arts Act Grants is to provide financial assistance to community arts groups to carry out an arts activity or project which stimulates interest and participation in a broad range of art forms. The quality and range of cultural projects proposed by the community & voluntary sector were of a very high standard which reflects the rich traditions of arts & culture in County Galway. Successful projects cover a broad spectrum of art forms such as music, literature, drama, and film, in addition to focusing on building capacity and knowledge through a variety of training and interactive workshops run by community arts groups. The aim of heritage grants is to support schools and the community & voluntary sector to increase awareness of, and participate in projects to manage, protect, or promote our rich heritage. The range of projects supported demonstrate the strong focus on gathering, sharing, promoting, and preserving specific aspects of our natural, cultural, and built heritage in County Galway, by funding a broad range of publications, digitization initiatives, local heritage activities, events, and exhibitions. A range of grants have also been awarded to promote the delivery of social, cultural and leisure activities through the medium of the Irish Language, which contribute to our aim of promoting the use of Irish across communities in the County.

In common with previous years, the total amount sought greatly exceeded the available budget, therefore, a thorough and comprehensive assessment process was undertaken to ensure that the most appropriate projects were funded under this scheme and eligible costs only were funded. This cross-departmental assessment process resulted in 267 of the 311 applications being recommended for funding, with most unsuccessful applications having proposals for funding which were outside the remit of the Community Support Scheme. In that regard, the assessment process and subsequent notifications have had regard to the following factors:

- Ensuring there was no duplication of funding sources and where applicants were ineligible for funding under these Support Schemes, they were advised of other more suitable internal or external funding sources.
- Ensuring that projects were assessed having regard to relevant strategies and policies, and projects of benefit to the wider community were prioritized for funding, which is the primary purpose of the Community Support Schemes.
- Ensuring that feedback is given to unsuccessful applicants, as well as applicants who received reduced funding for a reason other than the scheme being over-subscribed, so they can improve future applications and understanding of funding schemes.

This year saw the introduction of an online application process through the Submit Platform, which has received very favorable feedback from applicants, and streamlined the application and assessment process considerably for Council staff. All applicants who requested assistance with the online application system received one-to-one guidance to complete their application, and all incomplete applications were followed-up at the closing date to ensure every effort was made to facilitate groups who wished to close out the application process.



The Arts Office continued to promote all elements of the arts, supporting an ethos of participation, access, and inclusion throughout 2023. It was an extremely busy year with several high-profile events being directly produced by the Arts Office. County based artists were eager to create and present work in 2023 and the interest in the arts amongst communities was very strong. We note that the demand for cultural services and supports is

growing with many artists living and working in the county and many more relocating to rural areas. In 2023 our key supports, and programmes included:

Artists Supports: The Arts Office hosted an Artist Funding Workshop for Galway County based artists which took place on the 1st of February with 42 artists in attendance online. The workshop was led by artist and facilitator Róisín Stack.

Artist Support Scheme Bursary 2023 supported 11 artists to create develop their practice and create new work in 2023. Successful applicants included: Ceara Conway, Brigid Mulligan, Anne Marie Deacy, Louise Manifold, Selma Makela, Emma O’ Grady, Bryony Hussey, Samir Mahmood, Alannah Robbins, Hilary Woods, Noeline Kavanagh. The applications were assessed by a peer panel.

Artist Residencies for artists based in Galway County were funded through the Arts Office in 2023. Residencies for Galway County artists were awarded across the following centres Arás Éanna, Interface, Cultural Irlandais and Air on the Edge (International). Following an open call process, artist Noeline Kavanagh was selected as the Galway County residency at Interface in Inagh Valley this year The Arts Office was delighted to share that Magdalena Hylak was successful in her Dance Artist Residency Scheme application to the Arts Council. Magdalena worked with 3 communities in Galway County as part of this capacity building residency for contemporary dance. Magdalena Hylak and Lionel Kasparian undertook their first two weeks of residency at Nun’s Island Theatre at the end of June and were invited to complete workshops with” Something in The Water Festival “in Headford. Selma Makela was awarded Centre Cultural Irlandais (Paris) residency.



International Residency Exchange. In June Galway County Arts Office in collaboration with Áras Éanna was successful in being awarded Internationally Residency Exchange with 4 European partners to the value of €50,000.

Two Galway County Artists (Noelle Gallagher & Daniel Mocci) were awarded a month-long funded residency to Leeuwarden, The Netherlands and Denmark. Áras Éanna will host two artists from Serbia and Finland . The selection process and project management for this residency was supported by the Arts Office.

From 12th July artists were invited to apply for one of ten [AIR on the Edge](#) residencies in Ireland, The Netherlands, Serbia, Denmark and Finland. Artist studio space, self-catering accommodation, artists fees and travel expenses will be provided for successful artists. Two artists from Galway County to be selected. AIR on the Edge is a one-month international artist residency exchange between Denmark, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands and Serbia. It focuses on artists professional development, creating opportunities for artists to engage with rural communities and is rooted in rural places and cities on the edges of Europe.

128 applications were received from artists in our 5 partner countries before the deadline for this international residency opportunity. Out of 16 artists who applied from Ireland 9 of those were eligible artists based in Galway County.

We were delighted to announce the 2 Galway County artists who will travel to our [AIR on the Edge](#) partners for month-long residencies. Noelle Gallagher will work with Brogården Kulturvæksthus in Denmark. Daniel Mocci will work with Arcadia in The Netherlands. We can't wait to hear about how Noelle and Daniel engage with communities in Ringkøbing-Skjern (Denmark) and Fryslan (The Netherlands). Galway County Artist Noelle Gallagher completed her month-long residency in at Brogården Kulturvæksthus in Ringkøbing-Skjern Kommune in Denmark.

Mobile Library

Galway Schools Library Service has been given a vibrant and joyous cheerful look by illustrator, artist, and children's book author Chris Judge. The once cool, grey exterior of the mobile library has become a wonderland of creativity; an updated look to inspire a love of reading and to reflect the inner world of Galway County's children. This project was led by Galway County

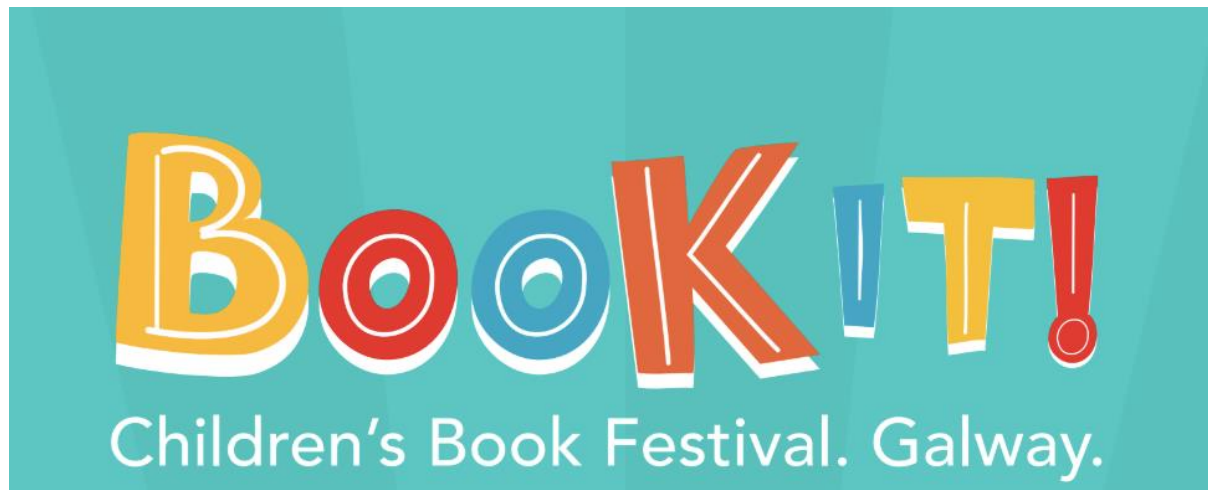


Arts Office in collaboration with Galway Public Libraries Schools section, Clontuskert NS and Scoil An Chroí Naofa, Ballinasloe with funding support from Galway County Council and The Arts Council.

As a starting point for the artwork, Judge visited students at Clontuskert National School and Scoil An Chroí Naofa, Ballinasloe National School to ask for their help with the design.

Book it Children's Book Festival

The Arts Office funds and supports the Library Service's Book It! Children's Book Festival. The annual festival programmes an excellent series of exciting events in libraries and schools across the county. It celebrates reading, writing, storytelling and imagination.



Artists in Schools 2023: 5 Schools awarded funding for the Artist in Schools programme; Scoil Naisiunta Na Bhforbacha, St. Brendan's National School Portumna, St. Patrick's National School Ballinasloe, Claregalway Educate Together National School and Scoil Naisiunta Inis Meain. The Artists worked on projects across a wide range of mediums including traditional arts, visual arts and film.

Creative Schools Bridging Workshops: Joanna McGlynn delivered an arts and education focused workshop in Tuam Town Hall for 15 Galway County based artists interested in working in this area.

Macnas at School: Following the success of Culture Night late with Crom. Macnas completed workshops with TY students at Colaiste an Eachreidh, Athenry.

Writers in Schools: Supported GRETB's programme which featured writers Darach Mac Con Iomaire, Trish Forde, Luke Morgan and Órla McGovern worked with 7 schools across Galway County.

Galway Community Circus:



The Arts Office supported a pilot offering free term in September of circus for children in Tuam aged 5-11yrs. This pilot has led to regular circus offerings in Tuam.

Galway Film Fleadh 2023

Cathaoirleach Liam Carroll and Arts Officer Sharon O'Grady attended the programme launch of the 35th Galway Film Fleadh on 27 June. The festival ran from 11-16 July.

<https://www.galwayfilmfleadh.com/>

Congratulations to David McDonagh for winning the Best Short Documentary and for his nomination to the Bingham Ray New Talent Award at this year's Galway Film Fleadh. David received the first Mísealóir Short Documentary Bursary in 2021. This project is supported by Galway County Council Arts Office.

Galway Theatre Festival: Galway County Arts Office supported a Speed Creating event for creatives based in the county on the 2nd May & 17th September 2023. The professional development workshops were facilitated by Aoife Noone, the artists devised new work, shared ideas and made connections with other county-based creatives. Participants were also encouraged to apply for Galway Theatre Festival's 2024 Open Call to be considered for their programme next year. Galway Theatre Festival launched their programme on 28 March.

Irish Theatre Institute's Six in the Attic Programme:

The Arts Office is delighted to be one of six strategic local authority partners for Irish Theatre Institute's Six in the Attic programme 2023/2024. ITI is the national resource organisation for theatre. This is their key artistic development programme for theatre makers with an artist practice bursary of €1,300.

Theatre: Galway County Arts Office contributed to Meitheal an initiative to support theatre artists creating work for young audiences developed and delivered by Branar. Brú Theatre's Remote Control emerging artist programme was supported by Arts Office and took part in a four-day residency on Inis Oírr from 4-8 September.

Music for Galway County wide programme: On Thursday 19 October Music for Galway in partnership with Galway County Arts Office and Athenry Arts & Heritage Centre were programmed a performance of Elégie: Rachmaninov - A Heart in Exile in the Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry which was postponed until January 28th 2024.



Galway County and City Artist Networking morning took place on Friday 3rd May with over 50 County and City based visual artists networking with a range of local stakeholders at Portershed a Dó. The event is part of a series of professional development events for Galway County and City visual artists presented by Galway County Council Arts Office, Galway City Council Arts Office, and Galway Culture Company in partnership with Visual Artists Ireland. An Artist's Guide to Tax Webinar took place on Tuesday 14th June 2023 at 2pm. Followed by 1-2-1 Clinics with Gaby Smyth from 3pm-5.20pm. Free for all Galway based visual artists.

Art | Disability | Climate Change: The Arts Office is supported Alan James Burns exhibition's



public engagement programme which included the Art, Disability , Climate Change webinar on Thursday 20th July. Through the webinar art, lived experience of disability, climate change, and their intersections were explored by leading Irish and international arts professionals in an afternoon of free online panel discussions.

Culture Night an annual national event that invites everyone, everywhere on one joyful night, to discover and celebrate in towns and villages across the county all that our culture is today. This night brought communities together to revel in the vibrancy and diversity of culture in the county. All events were completely free due to support from the Galway County Council Arts Office and the Arts Council. 37 Culture Night events were funded through the Arts Office this year.

A BILINGUAL NIGHT OF MUSIC AND SEAN-NÓS SINGING IN LOUGHREA AT LEABHARLANN BHAILE LOCHA RIACH, LED BY PROFESSOR LILLIS Ó LAOIRE.



Highlights included:

- Sonic Strings, a dynamic teenage orchestra from Coole Music and Arts, guided the scenic Gort River Walk with harmonious melodies that create an enchanting ambiance.
- Tuam Family Centre enjoyed a cross-cultural celebration as musicians from North Africa weave their melodies with the enchanting verses of Farsi Poetry.
- Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre celebrated the rich heritage and vibrant culture of the Traveler community with photo exhibitions, workshops, showcases and performances, offering an authentic glimpse into Traveler culture.

Culture Night late Funding 2023 enabled the opportunity to produce a large scale, world class event “Take a walk with CROM “ with Macnas in Athenry which was an amazing event. An estimated 5,000 people lined the medieval streets of Athenry to witness a spectacular Culture Night event with Macnas in partnership with Galway County Arts Office and Athenry Arts & Heritage Centre. The performance involved 64 artists and performers, 43 community volunteers, alongside staff and crew. It was a joyous night of culture that has left a year-long impact on our local places and artists. Culture Night Galway County featured on RTE News at One and RTE Six One news.



TORCHBEARERS AND GUARDIANS OF CROM, TY STUDENTS AT COLÁISTE AN EACHRÉIDH, ATHENRY. PHOTO: ALAN BURGESS

Community Support Scheme, Cultural Development (Arts Act Grants)

The aim of this category is to provide financial assistance to voluntary arts groups/organisations to carry out an arts activity or project within the community. In 2023 the CSS Cultural Fund supported 48 arts projects led by professional and voluntary groups in the County. Supported voluntary groups in the county which included: KAVA, Ballinasloe Musical Society, Kinvara Community Orchestra, Solstice Arts Group, Milltown Drama Society, Glenamaddy Players, Brothers of Charity -Limelight Creative Arts, Oughterard Courthouse Arts Programme, Coole Voices Community Choir, Headford Lace Project, Portumna Arts Group, It also supported arts programmes run by professional organisations in the county including: Branar, Music for Galway, Galway Music Residency, Blue Teapot Theatre Company, Galway Dance Project.

Creative Places Tuam- continues to develop and collaborate with all artists in the Tuam environs with support from Arts office, Galway County Council. Among many projects completed this year the West Awake Community weekend held in 19th & 20th August was a resounding success.

Arts Office took part in the Creative Places National Networking Event in Tuam on the 10/11 November, led by Creative Places Tuam. A host of panellists, guest speakers visited Tuam alongside other Creative Places in Ireland. During this two-day event, our invited speakers will propose a series of methodologies that can be used in order to build networks of support and solidarity for and between collaborative, socially engaged practitioners and communities.

Culture Up -The Arts Office engaged project manager Fiona Hession to support the Culture Up partners to compile an application for the Arts Council's International Residency Initiatives Scheme. Notifications to applicants received by mid-June. We continue to collaborate on the future of the Culture Up network with our partners in advance of EU funding deadlines in 2024.

Public Art

The Galway County Public Art Management Group was set up to support the Public Art Policy 2020-2024 and oversee the public art programme. Managed by the Arts Office the Public Art Management Group includes members of the executive, nominated elected members and three external Art Experts.

Request For Quotations has been prepared and published for services to project manage two flood relief Percent for Art Schemes on behalf of Galway County Council and the OPW Provision of Services for Public Art Project Co-ordinator on schemes: 1) Dunkellin River / Aggard Stream and 2) Claregalway Closing date was January 2023

Rina Whyte was appointed as Public Art Project Co-ordinator for the two Galway County Council/ OPW flood relief schemes in March 2023. An introductory meeting was held on 10 March and a site visit with stakeholders took place. Both projects are progressing.

OPW GCC DSP Tuam Mural: After a process of consultation with the Youth Advisory Group, Joanna McGlynn issued invites on 03 April to shortlisted artists to submit proposals in advance of the deadline on 04 June. Following a competitive tendering process, Galway City resident Shane O'Malley was successful and started his development of the mural, inspired and informed in conjunction with young people involved. Shane's vibrant use of colour stems from his background in graffiti. This project was managed directly by the Galway County Arts Office.

SHANE O'MALLEY - TUAM PROJECT - MURAL



The Office of Public Works and Galway County Council unite to brighten the streets with art.

It was installed on the wall of the newly developed Department of Social Protection (DSP) Centre at the Old Library on Shop Street in Tuam.

Funding for the mural was provided as part of

the Per Cent for Arts scheme, a government initiative whereby 1% of the cost of any publicly funded capital, infrastructural and building development can be allocated to the commissioning of a work of art.

Music Generation Galway County

4,711 students are now engaging with Music Generation's programmes on an ongoing basis across a variety of contexts in Galway County. These areas of provision include educational settings (primary schools, post-primary schools, Youthreach centres (pre-schools) and community settings (after-school/evening music hubs and camps across the County). In addition, in partnership with youth services, Music Generation Galway County targets areas where vulnerable communities exist, where remote geographical location leads to access issues, while it engages with children and young people with disabilities and those that are marginalised or disenfranchised in any way.

New programme developments for 2023 include: New Music Hubs Expansion across the County Brass, Strings & Wind promotion of niche instruments, Livefeed, performance opportunities for Young People at GEATA Irish Traditional Arts initiative/festival.

Connemara Sea Week: The Arts Office supported the creative and cultural aspects that artist Alannah Robins produced as part of Galway County Arts Office supported a Creative Schools Bridging Workshop for Artists & Creative Practitioners in Tuam on furthering their potential to work in schools, 28th November at Tuam Town Hall.

Northeast Galway Fit Up Festival 2023: The festival returned to County Galway for in 2023. Rural villages in Northeast Galway enjoyed three weeks of fantastic theatre in late September/Early October. Three Rings in association with Galway County Council Arts Office with support from the Arts Council presented three award winning plays to Galway communities. Three Rings programmed and produced 3 one-act plays that toured to 6 theatres, community centres and town halls in Skehana, Newbridge, Dunmore, Fohenagh.

Shorelines Arts Festival September 14-17th 2023: Shorelines Arts Festival features a host of music, drama, exhibitions, workshops and more over three days in Portumna. Highlights include Irish Folk winners Ye Vagabonds and well as Cathy Davey & her band in concert. Theatre performances include Seamus O' Rourke's show The Ballad of Mossy Flood and newcomer Dee Keogh's Why haven't I met Oprah. For literary fans the programme features poets Amy Barry, Noelle Lynskey and Luke Morgan. The Festival also included Street and family entertainment, a film programme and school events. This festival is supported by Galway County Council.

46th Clifden Arts Festival 13th to 24th September 2023: The launch of the festival took place on Wednesday 13th September in Clifden Town Hall. Clifden Arts Festival is supported by Galway County Council. Clifden Community Arts Festival, the longest running community arts festival in Ireland, now heading into its 46th year took place from September 13-24 with large attendance.

Galway International Arts Festival 2023: Arts Officer Sharon O’Grady opened the Galway International Arts Festival exhibition, **All the Dark Places** at Interface, Inagh Valley on 13th July 2023.

DIRECTOR OF INTERFACE ALANNAH ROBINS,
CLLR. EILEEN MANION AND SHARON O’GRADY
AT THE LAUNCH.



Something in the Water: The Arts Office was delighted to support a new arts festival in Headford.



The inaugural Something in the Water festival took place in venues across Headford from 6-8 October 2023. The programme featured an inspired mix of architecture, craft, dance, literature, music, storytelling and visual art events and workshops. Congratulations to the organisers who created a wonderful community led Festival supported strongly by local audiences.

Poetry Day Ireland: Galway County Arts office supported 'Letters to the Universe' a celebration of poetry by The Ploughed Field Collective, a creative writing arts group based in Gort celebrated over five events from 27th –30th April. They are committed to the development of inclusive and accessible poetry and creative writing in their community.



Other supports offered by the Arts Office:

- Supported Screen Commission West, UNESCO City of Film and Wrap Fund.
- Supported Áras Éanna Arts Centre on Inis Oírr.

Creative Communities Officer: We are delighted to report that a new Creative Communities Officer, Valerie Kelly joined the team under the Creative Ireland umbrella in August 2023.

CREATIVE IRELAND PROGRAMME

CREATIVE IRELAND 2023

County Galway has long been associated with the arts and culture, with our unique quality of life and natural landscape offering artists the type of environment for creativity to thrive. Underpinning the support of our creative community is a responsibility to ensure we preserve our landscape, our built and natural heritage to attract further development and ensure that the factors which are so conducive to creativity are preserved.

The Creative Ireland Programme is led by the Arts Office in collaboration with the Galway County Culture team which includes the following services: Archives, Arts, Conservation, Community, Enterprise, Heritage, Libraries and Tourism. The Galway County Creative Ireland programme is funded by Creative Ireland under the Creative Communities strand which aims to:

1. Broaden access to, and participation in, cultural and creative activities locally.
2. Use culture and creativity as a catalyst for collaboration and innovation in achieving greater wellbeing, social cohesion, and economic development.
3. Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to integrate culture and creativity across place-making, regeneration, renewal, and the development of more vibrant, creative, and sustainable places.
4. Investing in culture and creativity to support delivery of wider local authority agendas.
5. Build on the agility and integrated approach of Culture and Creativity Teams to deliver targeted collaborative programmes.

In 2023 our Creative Ireland budget for was **€230,290** (€161,290 Core funding + €30,000 Cruinniú na nÓg funding + €35,000 Creativity in Older Years Funding + €4,000 for a Youth Consultation). This budget allowed Galway County Council to deliver collaborative projects of scale, innovation, and ambition in 2023. In 2023 the Culture Team supported 54 projects with an audience reach of over 8,000. 2023 also saw the expansion of Galway County Council's capacity to deliver their Creative Ireland programme with the hiring of a dedicated staff member. The Creative Communities Engagement Officer started in August of 2023 and it is their responsibility to manage Creative Ireland funding for Galway County, engage with communities to learn what areas of creativity they are interested in exploring, and to collaborate with other local authorities and the departmental Creative Ireland office to secure additional funding and deliver projects of scale and impact.

Cruinniú na nÓg: the National Day of Creativity for children, was a massive success on Saturday 10th



of June. Twenty-nine projects directly received support from the programme with events happening with groups of young people throughout the county. These events were wide ranging, covering activities such as coding, painting, screen printing, sculpture, dance, music, theatre, and circus skills.

CRUINNIÚ NA NÓG LAUNCH 2023



CULTURE TEAM PROJECTS

The Galway County Creative Ireland Culture Team delivered a wide range of exciting projects across the county in 2023.

Galway Forged Gates Project 2023: The vernacular forged wrought iron field gate is a very valuable, but often neglected, aspect of the cultural heritage of our rural landscape in county Galway. These field gates were for the most part forged in the local blacksmith's forge. They are practical and functional while at the same time are an artistic expression of the blacksmith who made them. This is an ongoing project run by Heritage Officer, Marie Mannion and funded by Creative Ireland.

Hidden Lakes of Connemara: Artisan House, Letterfrack produced a fabulous publication, '*Hidden Lakes of Connemara*'. It contains the work of four Dutch environmentalists who conducted a 35+ year study of the lakes of Connemara, analysing the botanical and chemical changes occurring over the course of those years. The book also contains original watercolour illustrations, poems, and essays describing the changing landscape of Connemara.

BIA Innovator Food Trail: As part of the launch of the highly successful BIA Innovator campus in Athenry, Galway County Council committed to fund an Artisan Food Trail for the creators at BIA Innovator to showcase their work. This was due to take place in late 2023 but was rescheduled to early 2024 to allow for An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to attend.

The Great Read - Round the House and Mind the Dresser: The annual Great Galway Read took place in Winter 2023 across a number of library branches in North and South Galway. The aim of the Great Read is to promote literary and musical heritage as well as Galway's unique culture in these areas.

Ballinasloe ComicCon: Ballinasloe ComicCon happened over 2 days and featured a variety of events aimed at all ages. The ComicCon was held in Ballinasloe Library with 1 event happening in a local secondary school. The arrival of the 501st Ireland Garrison Star Wars costuming club led to great excitement as they brought the ComicCon to the streets of Ballinasloe. People of all ages were delighted to have their picture taken with their favourite superstar. Audience reaction was excellent. All the workshops were booked out and the creators panel attracted a lively and very interested audience.



ARTS OFFICER, SHARON O'GRADY & CREATIVE COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT OFFICER, VALERIE KELLY AT COMICCON

Words from the Workhouse: A series of creative writing workshops took place at The Irish Workhouse Centre, Portumna. Over the course of several weeks, the participants were instructed by writer Gerard Hanberry and guided through the process of creating original pieces inspired by the artefacts held in the Irish Workhouse Centre's Museum. These works were then collated into a publication which has itself become part of the Workhouse collection.



GERARD HANBERRY WITH PARTICIPANTS IN 'WORDS FROM THE WORKHOUSE' CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME.

Going Coastal: Going Coastal is a festival of contemporary original music from the western edge of Ireland. As part of the festival the pioneering pop band Electric Dreams were joined by guests Anna Mullarkey and Emma Lohan for a daytime concert in Nun's Island Theatre. Electric Dreams are a group of musicians from 'That's Life' a musical programme of the Brothers of Charity Service.

The Plassey Project: Keith Wallace is a musical artist known for his use of field recordings to create pieces of music. He describes these as ‘sonic postcards’. In late 2023, Keith travelled to Inis Oírr to record the sounds of the MV Plassey shipwreck and how the wind and rain interact with it. He also spoke to a local inhabitant who remembered the night of the shipwreck and the heroic rescue carried out by the people of Inis Oírr. This conversation was also recorded and woven into the resulting sound piece, thus preserving a vital aspect of island history in a new and exciting format.



IMAGE C/O KEITH WALLACE

Cear dlann Dramaíochta: Scoil na bhForbacha availed of Creative Ireland funding to hire a dramatist for a number of school visits. Through these sessions, Caitríona Ní Dhomhnaill workshopped a script and acting skills with the children, resulting in an original dramatic production in the Irish language.

Creativity in Older Age Funding Projects: The Culture Team applied for funding (€35,000) under the Creativity in Older Years in collaboration with the Healthy Ireland & Age Friendly Coordinator and were successful in being awarded support. This funding was used to support three large scale projects.

ConTempo in Residence: Galway Music Residency (GMR), in partnership with ConTempo Quartet gave a number of performances in long term residential care facilities around Galway County throughout the months of Q4 2023. Through a process of consultation, they determined which genres of music would best suit each of the four locations. GMR also developed a number of workbooks which allowed the residents to learn about the different instruments, musical styles, and even join in if they felt inspired to do so. The project was incredibly well received with participants describing it as “absolutely gorgeous”. The entire process was described by residents, care staff, and performers alike, as having had a profoundly impactful, moving effect.

The Rhythm of Life: Drumming group Drumadore carried out workshops with two communities of older people, the Mystical Rose Nursing Home in Claregalway, and Moycullen Active Retirement Association. The sessions culminated in a public performance in Moycullen in October. The response from participants was resoundingly positive as they expressed their joy at getting to try out a new form of creative expression.

Bottle Cap Art: Glenamaddy Tidy Towns ran a project where local residents created a large-scale piece of art using old bottle caps. The piece allowed elderly members of the community to engage with their creativity and also provided the town with eye catching art works which can be moved and remounted with ease.



BOTTLE CAP ART IN GLENAMADDY

CREATIVE IRELAND BURSARIES

13 Bursary Projects were awarded to community groups and artists in 2023 three of which are highlighted below.

Fite Fuaite: Gort Arts Group ran a varied programme of creative workshops. These were all booked out long in advance and were extremely well received. The participants got to try their hands at painting, storytelling, and lantern making to name but a few. The popularity of these workshops, and the high standards of creativity which they produced have highlighted the immense amount of talent and passion that is in Gort.

Biddy Early Folk Opera: Kinvara Community Orchestra staged an original piece, a folk opera describing the life and times of Biddy Early. The role of Biddy in local history has become almost folkloric at this point and it was wonderful to see a community take ownership of a woman who's story has inspired generations of historians, artists, and authors. The folk opera was performed over the course of two nights in early December to sell out audiences.

KINVARA
COMMUNITY
ORCHESTRA



Brú Bríde Engage Project: Brú Bríde is a Youth Project based in Tuam. They work in conjunction with the Western Traveller and Intercultural Development Centre to engage with children from the Travelling community through art and creativity. In 2023, they were awarded Creative Ireland funding to run a series of after school workshops in circus skills. They engaged Galway Community Circus and ran the programme in October 2023. It was very well attended, and the children reported enjoying engaging with creativity in an active, fun, and dynamic way. There is very high demand to run the programme again in 2024 as it has helped the children immensely with their confidence and social engagement.

HOUSING AND UKRAINIAN RESPONSE

HOUSING

Strategic Goal

To ensure that our physical and social infrastructure is sufficiently developed to support economic development, and to enhance our quality of life.

The Housing & Ukrainian Response Directorate of Galway County Council strives to provide a service for those individuals and communities that require assistance in the areas such as social housing provision, regulation of standards in the private rented sector and estate management. The housing unit carries out its activities within the governance frameworks of the local authority sector.

Galway County Council provides approx. 2,800 social houses. As of the end of 2023 the vacancy rate was 6.12% and the weeks vacated was 52.9 weeks. This was reduced from 77 weeks in 2022, following a significant turnover of voids units with energy retrofits by the maintenance team and a concentrated effort by staff on the Allocations team to nominate tenants to properties.

The Capital Build programme delivered 226 new build social homes across Galway County Council Social Housing and Approved Housing Bodies.

HOUSING FOR ALL

Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland' is the government's housing plan.

It is a multi-annual, multi-billion-euro plan which will improve Ireland's housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs.

The government's overall objective is that every citizen in the State should have access to good quality homes:

- to purchase or rent at an affordable price
- built to a high standard and in the right place
- offering a high quality of life

The government's vision for the housing system over the longer term is to achieve a steady supply of housing in the right locations with economic, social, and environmental sustainability built into the system.

It is estimated that Ireland will need an average of 33,000 new homes to be provided each year from 2021 to 2030.

The policy has four pathways to achieving housing for all:

- supporting home ownership and increasing affordability
- eradicating homelessness, increasing social housing delivery, and supporting social inclusion
- increasing new housing supply

- addressing vacancy and efficient use of existing stock

The pathways contain actions to be taken by government departments, local authorities, State agencies and others. The pathways are supported by actions to enable a sustainable housing system.

Housing for All contains 213 actions which will deliver a range of housing options for individuals, couples, and families.

PART V ACTIVITY

A total of 25 units (LA and AHB) were completed and acquired under Part V Agreements in 2023 at the following locations throughout Galway County:

Local Authority:

- An Saileachan, Athenry (8 units)
- Coran Eiscir Riada, Limehill Dunlo, Ballinasloe (8 units)
- Tobhair Orain, Oranhill, Oranmore (4 units)



4 No. Part V units at Tobhair Orain, Oranhill, Oranmore

Approved Housing Bodies:

- Plas an Chruicheid, Cricket Place, Tuam (1 unit)
- Tir and Choir, Vicars Coral, Tuam (3 units)
- Rivercrest, Tuam (1 unit)

A further 3 Part V Agreements were signed in 2023, which will deliver a combined total of 14 Part V Units at the following locations:

- Tobhair Orain Oranhill, Oranmore (4 units)
- Kilgarve, Ballinsloe (4 units)
- Vicars Coral, Tuam (5 units)

A total of 33 pre-planning “Letters of Understanding” were issued in 2023 with a combined potential total of a future 191 units subject to planning.

Under the Affordable Housing Act 2021 provision for Part V compliance increased in September 2021 from 10% to 20% under certain criteria included within the Act. A quarter of all “Letters of Understanding” provided in 2023 include the provision of 20% which if granted will see a substantial increase in both social and affordable housing delivery via this process in the years ahead.

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Gort Na gCloch, Clifden (26 Units) Steeped in a rich history and yet carrying a burden of a sensitive and disquieting past, St. Josephs in Clifden, Co. Galway was a former Mercy Convent orphanage and later an Industrial School & Laundry dating back to 1862.

Being a prominent landmark in Clifden, Galway County Council believed that this project represented an opportunity to change the focus of this, at times, unsettling history to one of comfort and protection for the people of Clifden, in providing homes for a variety of occupiers, that sensitively creates a place that its residents can be proud to call home.



Lakeview, Glenamaddy (22 Units): The Housing Unit completed the advance purchase acquisition of 22 units at Lakeview, Glenamaddy in 2023. This development was an extension of the existing Lakeview Estate and hence promotes sustain communities and mixed tenure developments.



Eiscir Riada, Ballinasloe (78 Units): In partnership with Cluid Housing Association, Galway County Council completed the advance purchase of 40 units within this development of 78 units. The remaining 38 units were acquired by Cluid Housing Association. This development is in a prominent town centre location and has a great mix of unit types addressing the housing needs of many applicants on Galway County Council waiting list.



Tobar Mhuire, Ahascragh (18 Units): A major redevelopment of Bridge Court, Ahascragh saw the demolition of 10 units, deep retro fit of 6 units, the construction of 12 new units and the renaming of this estate to Tobar Mhuire, Ahascargh.



Pairc an Darach, Ballymoe (8 units): Approval was received from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in Q3 2023 to proceed to tender for construction for 8 housing units in Ballymoe village, Galway further to successful grant of Part 8 planning permission. Works on the Development commenced in Q4 2023 with completion due in Q4 2024.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION PHOTO AT BALLYMOE MARCH 2024

DESIGN & PLANNING ACTIVITY

Caislean Raithin, Ardrahan (10 units): Part 8 Planning permission was prepared in late 2022 for the provision of a 10-unit housing development as an extension to the Caislean Raithin estate in Ardrahan, The 10 units comprise: 6 No. 2 bed 2 storey units, 3 No. 2 bed 1 storey and 1 No. 3 bed 2 storey. All of the units are south-west facing and have dual aspect with private open space directly accessible from the main living space. A contractor was appointed in Q1 2024 with a completion date in Q1 2025.



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF 10-UNIT DEVELOPMENT AT CAISLEAN RAITHIN, ARDRAHAN

Gort Ui Lochlainn, Maigh Cuilinn (24 units): There was a previous unsuccessful Part 8 planning application for 31 units at this site in 2021. A re-design of this scheme, which includes the reduction in the number of houses and the inclusion of community facilities, commenced in 2022. It is envisaged that a revised planning application will be lodged in 2024. The planning route will be determined by the outcome of environmental screening reports to be undertaken.



PROPOSED LAYOUT AT GORT UI LOCHLAINN, MAIGH CUILINN.

Droim na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (89 units): Design Team were appointed in 2021 for the provision of a mixed tenure social: affordable scheme at this location. Design, specialist reports and site investigations continued in 2022. Planning was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in September 2023.



PROPOSED LAYOUT AT DROIM NA GAOITHE, BAILE CHLÁIR.

Cosmona, Loughrea (55 units): A Design Team were appointed in Q1 2024 for the provision of a social housing scheme at Cosmona, Loughrea. Preliminary Designs and specialist surveys are currently being prepared with a view to lodging a planning application in Q3 2024.



PROPOSED LAYOUT COSMONA, LOUGHREA.

St, Joseph’s, Ballinasloe (8 units): A Design Team were appointed in Q3 2022 for the design of an 8-unit infill housing development at the existing St. Joseph’s estate in Ballinasloe. Specialist reports and surveys were undertaken in 2022. Part 8 planning was granted in Q3 2023 with construction commencing in Q2 2024.



ARTIST IMPRESSION OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT AT ST. JOSEPH’S BALLINASLOE

Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe (13 units): A Conservation Architect led Design Team were appointed for a town centre regeneration housing scheme at Dunlo Hill in Ballinasloe. The existing buildings comprise a terraced row of 7 houses fronting onto Dunlo Hill, a protected 3 storey building with chamfer corner, an adjacent 3 storey house and out-buildings in a courtyard to the rear. Specialist surveys and reports were procured including surveying and modelling of the existing buildings.



ARTIST IMPRESSIONS OF COURTYARD AND STREETScape AT DUNLO HILL BALLINASLOE

Design proposals have been developed in consultation with Galway County Council’s Conservation Officer, Planning, and adjacent Landowner. The existing buildings will be renovated, and an internal courtyard will accommodate and additional 3 new build units. Part 8 planning was granted in Q4 2023 with construction starting in Q4 2024.

High Street, Tuam: (10 Units): A design team were appointed in Q 1 2024 for the redevelopment of Tuam Fire Station to provide 10 housing units on the site. Specialist surveys will be completed in Q2 2024 where it is envisaged that a planning application will be submitted in Q4 2024.



PROPOSED LAYOUT – HIGH STREET TUAM

St Bridgit’s Road, Portumna (11 Units): Departmental approval has been given for the redevelopment of housing units at St. Bridgit’s Road in Portumna. The scheme will involve the demolition of existing vacant units and the construction of 11 two bed bungalows. A design team will be appointed in Q2 2024, with specialist surveys taking place thereafter.



A planning application will be submitted in Q1 2025 with construction commencing Q2 2025.

PROPOSED LAYOUT – ST. BRIDGIT’S ROAD PORTUMNA



Galway Road Tuam (75 Units): A design team for the 75-unit development at Dublin Road in Tuam will be appointed in Q2 2024. A planning application will be submitted in Q1 2025.

PROPOSED LAYOUT – GALWAY ROAD TUAM

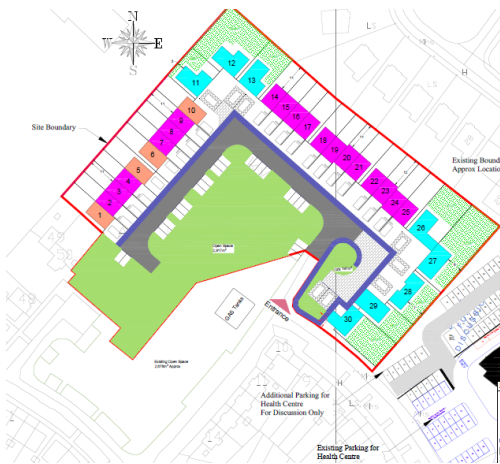
St Joseph’s Road, Portumna (24 Units): Galway County Council has received approval from the Department of Housing to appoint a design team for a 24 unit development on St Joseph’s Road in Portumna with a view to submitting a planning application in Q4 2024.



PROPOSED LAYOUT – ST. JOSEPH’S ROAD PORTUMNA

Cullaribaun, Athenry: (11 units): Departmental approval has been given to proceed with appointing a design team for an age friendly infill development at the Cullaribaun Estate in Athenry. It is proposed to provide ten 2 bed bungalows and a 5-bed community facility the at the development. A design team will be appointed in Q2 2024 with a planning application submitted in Q4 2024.

Gort Mahoilir, Athenry (34 Units): The Department of Housing has given approval for the appointment of a design team for a housing development at the Gort Mahoilir Estate in Athenry.



It is proposed to provide a mixed development of 34 units in the estate. The design team will be appointed in Q2 2024 with a planning application submitted in Q1 2025.

PROPOSED LAYOUT – GORT MHAOILIR, ATHENRY

Infill Developments- Parkmore, Tuam (4 units) & Hillcrest, Loughrea (3 Units): The housing unit is currently progressing with 2 infill developments under Section 179a of the planning act (exempted developments) at Parkmore Tuam and Hillcrest in Loughrea. Construction on both developments will commence in Q1 2025.



PROPOSED LAYOUT – PARKMORE TUAM



ELEVATIONS - HILLCREST

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As part of Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028, a Housing Demand/Needs Assessment was undertaken which identified the need to address the affordability constraint in Galway County. Subsequently, affordable housing targets under central government's programme, Housing for All were assigned to Galway County Council from 2022 to 2026.

The Affordable Housing Act 2021 (“the Act”) (No. 25 of 2021) was enacted on 21st July 2021. The Affordable Housing Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 183 of 2022) and the Affordable Housing (No. 2) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 184 of 2022) came into effect on 13th April 2022. The legislation sets out a requirement for the establishment of a Scheme of Priority by which affordable dwelling purchase arrangements are made available by Local Authorities. This Scheme of Priority is made under Section 11 of the Act.

A new scheme of Priority for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements was approved at the April 2023 Meeting of the Housing SPC and was adopted at the May Meeting of Galway County Council. Minister O’Brien approved the Galway County Council Scheme of Priority on 2nd June 2023. Under the scheme of priorities, 70% of the dwellings, after applying relevant criteria, priority shall be given to the eligible applicants in the date and time order that their applications were received. The remaining 30% of the applicants will be prioritised based on several factors including 1) the need to have lived in Galway for 2 years 2) to have an outstanding connection with the area, and 3) to live in the Municipal District of the scheme or within 10km of the scheme. A lottery system will be used if there still are more applications than available properties.

Galway County Council are advancing a number of schemes under Affordable Housing. We are currently designing Droim na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir to be a mixed tenure development, delivering both social and affordable housing with an expected delivery of 45 affordable units.

In 2023, the Housing Unit advertised for expressions of interest for advanced purchase agreements for both social and affordable housing. We are currently progressing one proposal for a turn key development (62 units) in Lakeview, Claregalway.

HOUSE PURCHASES

Galway County Council purchased 14 properties (vacant properties and Tenant in Situ) across all five Municipal districts under the Social Housing Investment Programme in 2023.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP)

Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a social housing support that has been in operation in Galway County Council since November 2015. HAP is available to anyone with a confirmed social housing need. The introduction of HAP means that housing authorities can provide housing assistance to many more households with a long-term housing need, including many long-term rent supplement recipients.

HAP will provide for the transfer of responsibility for recipients of Rent Supplement with a long-term housing need from the Department of Social Protection (DSP) to housing authorities and provides a new approach in responding to households with a social need.

However, unlike Rent Supplement recipients, HAP recipients can work full-time and retain their HAP support - thus removing a barrier to employment. HAP recipients will source their own accommodation in the private rented market and will enter into a tenancy agreement with the landlord of the property.

Those households eligible for HAP are:

- Any household that qualifies for social housing support
- Any current Rent Supplement recipients who qualify for social housing support.

In order to further assist homeless households in exiting emergency accommodation, the Homeless Place Finder Service is also available in Galway County Council. It is a targeted support for homeless households who are finding it difficult to secure HAP tenancies. It provides additional financial and related supports to tenants and landlords.

The Council supported an additional 214 households to meet their housing need by means of the Housing Assistance Payment in 2023 enabling individuals to work and also have autonomy in choosing the location and type of accommodation, depending on their own particular preference. There are 1,471 HAP tenancies held by Galway County Council.

RECORD OF QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLDS (HOUSING WAITING LIST)

Galway County Council completed an assessment of housing need in 2023. The applications of 1200 households, which had not been reviewed since the previous Summary of Social Housing Needs Assessment in 2022, were reviewed and assessed to ascertain if they still qualified for social housing supports. The assessment of housing need was completed under the following headings:

1. Provision of Housing Accommodation in its functional area for persons who require accommodation from Galway County Council and who, in the opinion of the County Council are in need of such accommodation and unable to provide it from their own resources.
2. Provision of residential caravan parks for members of the Traveller Community in the functional area of the County Council for persons who are likely to require sites from the County Council are in need of such sites and unable to provide them from their own resources.

Applications from persons who are eligible for and in need of social housing support are qualified for such support under the following headings:

1. Income

2. Residency Status
3. Availability of accommodation
4. Rent Arrears.

The total number of Housing Applicants on the Housing List on 31st December 2023 was 2,932

RENTAL ACCOMMADATION SCHEME (RAS)

The Government has allocated funding for local authorities and approved housing bodies to lease or rent private residential properties for applicants on the housing list. Traditionally RAS is aimed at persons who are in receipt of rent supplement for a period more than 18 months. Since the 1st April 2011, any housing applicants that are in RAS type accommodation are deemed to have their housing need met.

The (RAS)/Leasing is operated on a tenancy-by-tenancy basis and Galway County Council has been entering into such arrangements, with private landlords, since 2007. Total RAS accounts was 345 at the end of December 2023.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RENTED ACCOMMADATION

The Inspectorate Unit of Galway County Council undertook 1879 *Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation* Inspections in 2023. This number exceeded our Yearly Target for Rental Standards Inspections.

Breakdown of Inspections:

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| HAP Accommodation: | 1299 |
| RAS Accommodation: | 54 |
| Complaints: | 21 |
| Virtual Inspections: | 0 |
| Other: | 553 |

Inspection Outcomes:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| First Inspection – Non-Compliant: | 814 |
| First inspection Compliant: | 0 |
| Compliant: | 127 |
| Improvement Letter Issued: | 1715 |
| Improvement Notice Issued: | 63 |
| Prohibition Notice Issued: | 0 |
| Legal Proceedings Issued: | 0 |

The Inspectorate Unit of Galway County Council is tasked with Inspection of Private Rented Dwellings for compliance with the *Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation*, as is required by Legislation, in the jurisdiction of Galway County and its Islands.

REPAIR & LEASING SCHEME

The scheme is aimed at better utilisation of existing housing stock and assists with the re-generation of Town Centres. It assists owners of vacant properties who cannot afford the repairs needed to bring their property up to the standard required to rent it out. Properties in need of repair are brought back into use for social housing. The houses to be targeted under the Repair & Leasing Scheme (RLS) are in areas of social housing need in town centres, urban and rural areas all around the county. Properties must be vacant for at least 1 year, and property owners and contractors engaged under the scheme must demonstrate that they are tax compliant through the provision of tax clearance certificates on request.

The ideal units targeted under the RLS will require a low level of investment to bring them to the required standard for renting. An interest-free loan up to €80,000 maximum (incl. VAT) per unit can be sought through the scheme.

All direct leases must be for duration of between 5-20 years. No shorter terms will be eligible. The cost of the repairs shall be offset against the agreed rental payment until the value of the works is repaid.

The benefits of the RLS in conjunction with the lease arrangement to the property include:

- Guaranteed rent on a property that has not been generating income
- Upgrade of property that might otherwise become derelict.
- No loss of rent during vacant periods.
- No dealing with tenants and day-to-day maintenance.
- No need to collect rent or find a new tenant.
- Avoid advertising costs
- The property will be returned to the property owner at the end of the term in good repair order and condition, save for fair wear and tear.

In 2023, Galway County Council received several expressions of interest in the scheme and negotiations are ongoing on some of these.

BUY AND RENEW

The Buy & Renew scheme complements the Repair & Leasing Scheme, in this scheme an owner of a vacant property that is in need of repair/remediation have an option of selling this property to the Local Authority. A particular focus of the scheme is on older homes to tackle the problem of dereliction and improve the appearance of the Countryside and towns.

CROÍ CÓNAITHE (TOWNS) FUND REFURBISHMENT GRANT

The aim of the Crói Cónaithe fund is to get rid of dereliction and to reuse old vacant properties thereby adding vibrancy to an Area /Community and making the Countryside a nicer place to live in. The aim is to reduce Carbon Footprint by re-using existing buildings and using SEAI grants to reduce energy use.

From 01st May 2023, the scheme was expanded, and the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) is now available for the refurbishment of a vacant or derelict property for occupation as a principle private residence and for properties that may be made available for rent.

A grant of up to a maximum of €50,000 is available for the refurbishment of a vacant property for occupation of the homeowner, including the conversion of a property which has not been used as residential heretofore (subject to appropriate planning exemptions or permission being in place), as a principal private residence/rental. Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €50,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 will be available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e. structurally unsound and dangerous) or if the property is already on the Derelict Sites Register bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €70,000. Property must be built before 1/1/2008 and it must be vacant for 2 years or more at the time of application.

From 01st July 2023, additional support under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) is available to support vacant and derelict properties located on the islands to bring them back in to use. The maximum rate of the VPRG payable is up to 20% higher for vacant and derelict properties on qualifying islands which are Inishbofin, Árainn (Inis Mór), Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin in County

Galway. This brings the maximum grant rates for refurbishing properties on the islands up to €60,000 for the vacant properties and up to €84,000 where the property is confirmed to be derelict.

The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) continued to be rolled out in 2023 with 287 applications received (of which 73 were withdrawn) and of which 112 have received approval.

See before and after photos below of a property in County Galway which has been brought back in to use through the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (Croí Cónaithe Scheme):



BEFORE REFURBISHMENT



AFTER REFURBISHMENT

GEO-DIRECTORY VACANCY DATA SURVEY

The Geo-Directory Vacancy Data Survey was commenced in 2023. There were 1708 properties identified to be surveyed. Information leaflets on the various schemes available were created and used as part of the Geo-Directory Vacancy Data Survey. The primary purpose of the survey is to

establish if the properties are vacant so that this data can then be utilised to bring them back into use.



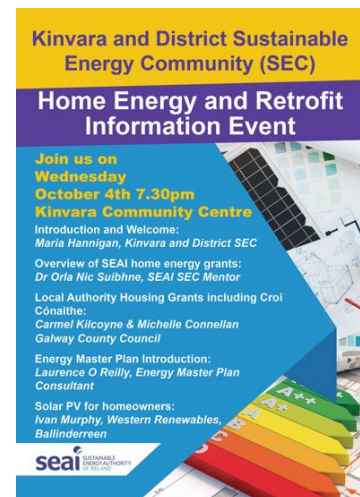
An App was developed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) which was pre-populated with the properties to be surveyed to assist local authorities in identifying properties which may be recoverable into use. The initial part of the survey, whereby the properties identified on the APP were visited, to determine whether the property was vacant, began in September 2023. 43 settlements were identified by the Department (DHLGH) to be surveyed within the urban settings of Galway County and a perimeter of 1km from a central hub point. 7 large towns, 11 major settlements and 25 minor settlements were selected.

The information gathered during this survey will be used as a database to inform the next steps to be taken to address vacancy. See photos below of vacant properties which have been visited since the survey commenced.



INFORMATION EVENTS 2023

Vacant Homes information evenings were held in conjunction with SEAI and Galway Chamber of Commerce to promote the schemes available to bring vacant properties back in to use. Information evenings were held in Cill Chiaráin, Glinsk, Portumna and Kinvara. Information leaflets on the various schemes available were distributed.



MORTGAGE TO RENT SCHEME

The Mortgage to Rent (MTR) scheme is a government scheme which was introduced in 2012 to help homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes due to mortgage arrears. It lets homeowners in mortgage difficulty switch from owning their home to renting their home as social housing tenants.

The MTR scheme is a social housing option only available if one is eligible for social housing support and the mortgage is unsustainable. To qualify for the scheme the property owner must have participated in their lender's Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), a process which the lender and the owner must take in order to try and resolve their financial difficulties.

Approved applicants will voluntarily surrender possession of their home to their mortgage lender who immediately sells it to a housing association who will then rent it back to the family. The proceeds from the sale of property to the housing association will go towards the mortgage debt and the applicant makes an arrangement with their lender for any remaining payments owed, if any. There is potential to buy back the home after a period of 5 years if the household's financial

situation improves. 3 Mortgage to Rent tenancies were completed in 2023 two with Home for Life and one with an AHB. 1 Local Authority Mortgage To Rent application closed in 2023.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOME LOAN

A Local Authority Home Loan is a government backed mortgage for first time buyers and fresh start applicants and is available nationwide from local authorities. It can be used to purchase a new or second-hand property or for self-build.

A Local Authority Home Loan provides up to 90% of the market value of the property. The maximum loan amount is determined by where the property is located.

- Maximum market values of the property in Galway County are €330,000
- Applicants may borrow up to 90% of market value of property (or a maximum of €297,000)

72 applications were received in 2023 with 33 loans approved. The average loan amount approved was €177,125.

VOLUNTARY HOUSING

The Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) is a facility available to Approved Housing Bodies to assist them in accessing Private or Housing Finance Agency finance for the purchase or construction of units. The units are made available exclusively for social housing purposes under a leasing agreement for a set period of time, typically 25 years.

The Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) provides capital funding of up to 100% of the project costs to AHBs to provide housing for specific categories of housing needs, including age friendly housing, families who are homeless and for people with a disability.

94 units were delivered under the CALF scheme with 2 units delivered under CAS Acquisitions in 2023.

Several potential units have been identified and agreements are under active consideration for inclusion under both schemes in the future.

47 potential units have been identified and are under active consideration for inclusion under the CAS scheme. 106 units are in progress under the CALF Scheme and are expected to be delivered in 2024.

TENANT PURCHASE

Under this scheme, eligible local authority tenants can apply to buy their local authority home, at a discounted rate based on the applicant's income.

A new Tenant Purchase Scheme came into effect on the 1st February 2022. This new scheme, the Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, gave effect to amendments which include changes to (a) minimum income criteria for applicants and (b) the period of time applicants must have been receiving social housing support to be eligible under the scheme.

Throughout 2023, Galway County Council received 21 valid applications from local authority tenants to purchase their house and issued 52 house purchase offers, of which 17 were completed.

HOUSING AID FOR OLDER PEOPLE, MOBILITY AID GRANT & HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANT FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The Housing Aid for Older People Grant continues to provide funding for persons aged over 66 years of age to carry out essential repairs so that they can continue to live in their own home.

In 2023 499 valid Housing Aid for Older People grants were received and 330 applications were paid to a total value of €1,920,393.

The Mobility Aid Grant continues to provide funding for older persons or with a disability to address mobility issues in their own home.

In 2023 281 valid Mobility Aid grant applications were received and 133 valid applications were paid to a total value of €669,061.

The Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability continues to provide funding for people with a physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability so that improvements can be made to entry to or how you move around your home.

In 2023 112 valid Housing Adaptation grant applications were received and 103 valid applications were paid to a total value of €1,226,285.

HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANTS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES

ACCESSIBLE BATHROOM – LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSE

The Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability living in Local Authority Houses is made available to assist in carrying out works which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person who has enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment. Galway County Council continues to assess applications under this scheme and prioritise those in most need.



There was expenditure totalling €610,674 on 57 housing Adaption Grants, including the provision of 2 extensions in 2023, with an amount of €467,555 recouped from the DHLGH.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE

The Council has a housing stock of approx. 2,790 properties at the 31st December 2023. A significant programme of planned maintenance works is ongoing in these properties.

4,053 repair requests were received in 2023, with 1,446 of these repair requests deemed to be valid requests by the technical team.

The Online Logging Repair Request system, in operation since December 2020, which allows tenants to log their housing repair requests online, has proved to be extremely beneficial for council tenants. These requests may be logged through the Report It of www.galway.ie or through the link at <https://www.galway.ie/RepairRequest> . There has been a very large level of take-up by our tenants who have found it to be a very easy to use system. The advantage of the new system is that tenants may log repair requests at any time and are updated as their repair request is progressed by the maintenance team.

Refurbishment works at a cost of €1,457,408 were completed on vacant properties in 2023 which facilitated the allocation of new tenancies in each of these dwellings. A total of €623,516 was recouped from the DHLGH for refurbishment works on properties under the Voids Programme. A maximum amount of €11,000 is payable for each property refurbished under the Voids Programme and is payable once only on each property, regardless of the number of times the property is re-tenanted.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

Housing Maintenance are moving from a mainly Reactive Maintenance practice to a more structured Planned Maintenance Programme. Prior to Covid 19 approximately 84% of the housing stock was surveyed. Following the analysis of this information a number of planned maintenance projects were prioritised. The first project was to carry out an electrical Periodic Inspection Report (PIR) on all houses over 10 years old. In conjunction with this, any issues identified are being rectified and new fire alarms to current building regulation standard are being installed. The second programme rolled out is the annual servicing of all heat pumps on our register. Initially there was 160 units on the register, there are now 340 units for 2024 and it is expected there will be over 1,000 heat pumps on the register by the end of 2026.

Other programmes currently being considered is the upgrading of single dwelling wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks.



DEEP ENERGY RETROFIT – ST LAURENCESFIELDS, LOUGHREA

In County Galway, deep energy retrofit works were completed on 86 properties during 2023 at a cost of €3,055,468.53. Of this, €2,891,711 was funded under the Department of Housing’s Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme. These properties are in Loughrea, Gort, Tuam, Headford, Roundstone & Ballinasloe.

The programme is rolling over into 2024 with works planned for houses in Loughrea, Athenry & Ballygar.

HOMELESSNESS

The demand on homeless services continues to be significant with all available facilities at full capacity during the year. There are, on average, 13 families and 12 single people who are homeless accommodated weekly in Private Emergency Accommodation. The lack of supply of private rented properties has increased the demand for homeless accommodation for longer periods of time. Larger sized families face difficulties in sourcing private rented property and the availability of larger social houses is also limited.

HOUSING FIRST

Housing First, a housing-led approach that enables people with a history of rough sleeping or long-term use of emergency accommodation and with complex medical needs or chronic addiction, to obtain permanent secure accommodation, with the provision of intensive supports to help them to maintain their tenancies. This scheme is operational in County Galway since December 2021 with a total of 15 individuals housed by the end of December 2023 who would otherwise have not secured a tenancy. The Council is required to house 18 individuals with Housing First supports by end of 2024.

COMMUNITY BASED HOUSING

The Council expanded its allocation of Council houses to Community Based Supported Shared Housing Scheme to 5 houses in 2023, with houses in Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam. Supports to the 10 tenants sharing the properties is provided by Galway Simon. Due to the success of this project, it is intended to expand the service, with up to 12 houses in the scheme by end of 2024, depending on available funding.

YOUTH HOUSING

It has become apparent in recent years that there is a need to provide accommodation targeted at young people who are vulnerable and at risk of long-term homelessness. The provision of strong interventions and shared housing with supports will reduce the risk of young people experiencing long-term homelessness. Galway County Council allocated 2 houses in Tuam to facilitate supported housing for 4 young people, with supports provided by Galway Simon, TUSLA, HSE as needed for the occupants. Some of the occupants have previously been in care, whilst others have moved from households with challenging situations. This service will be expanded to other towns in the coming years with up to 6 houses in various locations in the County to be allocated to the scheme, based on the presenting needs of the housing applicants.

HOUSING LED – SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR FAMILIES

The Housing Led – Supported Housing for Families is a new joint pilot initiative with DHLGH, Galway County and City Councils, TUSLA, HSE and NGO. It involves the provision of suitable accommodation with supports to families with complex needs who are entrenched in homelessness. The primary focus is to support them to progress to a secure, sustainable tenancy where the family become an integral part of their community. In 2023 it is intended to house 2 families under this scheme in Q2 in 2024, initially for 18 months, the duration of the pilot.

HOMELESS PLACE FINDER SERVICE

The appointment of the Homeless HAP Place Finder in November 2018 has played a significant role in reducing homeless numbers in County Galway. In 2023, 38 HAP tenancies were completed which includes families with children, couples and single people who were assisted in securing HAP properties including households who had resided previously in Emergency Accommodation. Others who have been assisted under the highly successful programme include those who have been

served with Notices-to-Quit from their accommodation, people leaving hospital or other institutions after long-term care and those from Direct Provision.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME



REFURBISHED AND ADAPTED TRAVELLER SPECIFIC HOUSE

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME 2019 – 2024

Galway County has a population of 2,647 travellers and is the County with the highest number of travellers in Ireland. The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 outlines the accommodation requirements of the Traveller Community over a five-year period. 39 Traveller families were allocated social housing tenancies in 2023 of which 31 were in Local Authority owned properties, 5 nominated to tenancies with AHBs and 3 allocated tenancies in Traveller Specific Accommodation.

The following works were undertaken in 2023 on Traveller Specific Accommodation –

| Location | No of Properties | Works | Status as at 31/12/2023 |
|-------------|------------------|---|--|
| Ballinasloe | 1 | Purchase, adaptation and extension | Works complete and property tenanted |
| Clontuskert | 3 | Major refurbishment, including upgrade of | Works completed and properties re-tenanted |

| | | | |
|----------|----|---|--|
| | | waster water treatment plant. Extension to one property. Provision of on-site temporary accommodation | |
| Athenry | 1 | Major refurbishment and extension | Works ongoing. To be completed in Q2 2024. |
| Athenry | 2 | Refurbishment and adaptation. Extension to one property. Family temporarily relocated to other Council property. | Works ongoing. To be completed in Q2 2024. |
| Ballygar | 10 | Major refurbishment. Upgrade of waste water treatment. One vacant property refurbished and allocated for rehousing households during works programme. | Works ongoing. To be completed in Q4 2024. |

Further successfully funding submissions were made for Traveller Specific Accommodation in 2023:

1. Athenry – Major refurbishment and extension of existing Traveller Specific property in Athenry
2. Headford – Purchase, adaptation and extension of property for family in Headford

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

Galway County Council is the host Local Authority for the resettlement of up to 150 refugees under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. In 2023, 12 families from Syria and Afghanistan were successfully resettled in 6 towns across County Galway, bringing the total number of families rehoused since the commencement of the programme to 27.

SOCIAL WORK

Overview

The Social Work Team consists of two staff grade Social Workers and one Senior Social Worker. The Senior Social Worker provides social work service geographically in addition to supervision of Social

Workers. Complex cases are responded to under the categories of need outlined below. The Senior Social Worker is the Child Protection Liaison Officer and the SOLO (Sexual Offences Liaison Officer) for Galway County Council, a corporate function in addition to the role within Housing.

In Local authorities's the role of the Social Work has evolved over the years due to the emerging needs of clients. The role was initially established in LA's in the 1960's and has since broadened from being a Traveler specific role to include:

- Potentially all applicants & existing tenants who are identified as vulnerable
- Disability (Physical, Sensory, Intellectual) - *HSDG & Subgroups*
- Older persons
- Vulnerable Adults (safeguarding)
- Child Welfare Liaison work
- Homelessness
- Mental Health
- LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex)
- Work with other marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups

In addition to the above, the Social Work team respond to referrals regarding:

- Social Work Assessment
- Crisis Intervention
- Bereavement and Loss
- Advocacy
- Concerns regarding capacity of clients (Ref: Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015)

The aim of the Social Work service within Housing is to work with clients who are experiencing difficulties in the social areas of their lives. Social Work may be required either alone or as part of a multi-faceted intervention, multi-disciplinary teams etc.

Priorities & Trends during 2023:

- Ongoing management of referred & prioritised Cases.
- Allocation of referrals
- Child Protection Officer for Galway County Council – required additional input from SSW during 2023.
- Sexual Offenders Liaison Officer Role – additional referrals in 2023.
- Case Conferences on allocated cases / complex cases / Homeless / Mental health clients.
- Disability / Liaison work with Stakeholders - (Disability Strategy)
- Increase in referrals for East Galway and South Galway, from Tusla, Prison discharges and SOLO cases (SSW)
- Increase in referrals for Disability MH clients and Disability 'Physical' in particular
- Tusla & Aftercare (Steering Group) & subsequent caseload (SSW)
- Vulnerable Adults / Safeguarding Work

- LGMA Working Group – National Social Work Review. Senior Social Work one of three SW reps nationally on this group. *Ref. Social Work Strategy.*

Examples of Strategic Developments

Housing Disability Steering Group:

- Mental Health Action Team - Nomination for LAMA award in 2023.
- Physical & Sensory Action Team established during 2023.
- Intellectual Disability Action team established during 2023.
- Processes and systems in place for all HDSG subgroups / Action Teams.
- Plan to establish a Children’s Disability Action Team during 2024.

Social Work Strategy and Caseload Management System:

- Approved by SPC. Included in LGMA / IPA case study publication in 2022.

‘CAS for Care’ (Aftercare):

- Recent meeting with Tusla, PMVT and Galway County Council. PMVT progressing to seeking properties for 2-3 clients initially (medium to long term Aftercare clients).
- Separate project to the Youth Homelessness project (homeless unit) which will cater for the short to medium term progression for youth homeless clients - more urgent cases.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HOUSING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The purpose of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disability 2021-2026 is to facilitate access for people with disabilities to the appropriate range of housing supports, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice, and independent living. The Strategic Plan that has been developed by Galway County Council in partnership with stakeholders such as the HSE, Disability Service Providers and Housing service providers is working well. The purpose of the Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability is for Galway County Council to work towards meeting the identified housing needs of housing applicants with a disability who:

- are linked to a disability service provider / HSE and living in the community (with their families, carers)
- are not linked to a disability service provider / HSE but have a identified disability
- are transitioning from a congregated or service setting

The purpose of Galway County Council’s strategic plan is to work towards a rights-based approach to housing, universal access, and community inclusion for people with disabilities living in County Galway. Galway County Council will endeavour to achieve this within the mainstream housing environment.

The four categories of disability referred to in this strategy are:

1. Sensory disability
2. Mental health disability
3. Physical disability
4. Intellectual disability

Autism is recognised by Galway County Council as a disability. Currently it is not recognised on the Disability and/or Medical Information Form (HMD - Form 1) as a category of its own – this will require addressing nationally. Galway County Council consider each application on its own merit.

The Housing Disability Steering Group (HDSG) has been set up and is jointly coordinated by the Senior Executive Officer and Senior Social Worker within Housing. A detailed Action Plan is available on Page 23 of the Galway County Council Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disability 2021-2026. Since 2021, there have been subgroups set up with stakeholders under the above categories of disability. As a result, many individuals have been supported to progress to social housing with Galway County Council with supports from the relevant service provider.

Housing Disability Action Teams

The Housing Disability Action Teams are an example of good practice in this area. They are a ‘second layer’ under the wider HDSG. There is one for each of the categories of Disability. The person-centred Action Teams allow for case discussion and progression of complex cases of vulnerable clients that would otherwise struggle to make an application for housing, obtain a property and maintain a tenancy. It is a partnership approach between Galway County Council (Housing) and HSE Community Healthcare West Mental Health Services & Voluntary (Disability) organisations to progress mutual clients. The Action Teams allow for discussions of cases, development of action plans and bridging the gap between the local authority and stakeholders. It offers a communication pathway and for decisions to be made. More importantly, it allows for vulnerable clients with additional needs to progress having their own homes and tenancies utilising a rights and community-based approach.

The Action Teams, consist of the following staff within Galway County Council and includes reps from the relevant stakeholders also:

- Senior Social Worker, Galway County Council
- Senior Executive Officer, Galway County Council
- Housing Liaison Officers (as required for specific cases in their areas), Galway County Council

The wider Housing Disability Steering Group meet regularly throughout the year to oversee the work of the strategy.

TENANCY & ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The Tenancy & Estate Management Unit was established in 2013 within the Housing Unit of Galway County Council to clearly show the Council’s commitment to provide secure and lasting homes and

the care and support to develop stable and sustainable communities, prevent tenancy breakdown and possible homelessness,

The Tenancy Sustainment Strategy for the County outlines the interventions and supports available to assist our tenants in sustaining their tenancy and contributes positively to their neighbourhood and community. An inter-departmental and inter-agency approach is adopted by the Housing Unit and its partners, in an effort to improve the quality of life for residents in our housing estates with staff regularly meeting with relevant staff from the HSE, An Garda Síochána, Galway/Roscommon Education Training Board and other agencies as necessary.

Galway County Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy recognises that anti-social behaviour can have an adverse effect on the quality of life of our tenants and the stability and sustainability of communities. The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy acknowledges the importance of a multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing incidences of anti-social behaviour. This Strategy outlines the responsibilities and contributions of both the Council and the tenants to the development of sustainable communities. It also lays out the process for investigating and dealing with complaints including setting out the actions that may be taken by the Council in relation to same. This can include the use of CCTV systems, in accordance with Galway County Council’s CCTV and Data Protection Policies. CCTV systems are in operation in the following locations:

- Crowe Street, Gort;
- Gilmartin Road Tuam;
- Cloontue / Tirboy, Tuam
- Parkmore, Tuam.

A total of no. 132 complaints were investigated by the Tenancy and Estate Management Unit in 2023. Details by category below:

| Complaints Investigated 2023 | |
|---|---------------|
| Category | Number |
| Category A – Drug dealing | 0 |
| Category B – Abandoned dwelling | 12 |
| Category B – Anti social Behaviour | 39 |
| Category B – Unlawful Occupation | 14 |
| Category B – Threats / Intimidation/ violence | 7 |
| Category B – Unauthorised Caravans | 5 |
| Category C – Animal Nuisance | 15 |
| Category C – Boundary / Parking disputes | 1 |
| Category C – Damage to property | 15 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Category C – Refuse / Litter | 18 |
| Category C – Noise Disturbance | 6 |
| | Total: 132 |

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The NOAC Performance Indicator report will be published in September 2024 and will be added once received.

COMMUNITY AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
& CORPORATE
SERVICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community & Rural Development Department supports the revitalisation of towns and villages to improve the living and working environment of their communities and increase their potential to support increased economic activity into the future. It also supports a number of key sectors including Tourism, Hospitality, Food, Creative and Cultural sectors.

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

The Galway County Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has 19 members drawn from the public and private sectors. The membership brings together the expertise and skills of people actively working in local development and community development with local authority members, officials, and state agencies, to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programmes. Four meetings of the LCDC took place in 2023, and membership of the LCDC comprised of the following at year-end:



| Pillar | No. | Nominating Body | Name of Nominee |
|---|-----|---------------------------------|---|
| Public Sector - 9 | | | |
| Local Authority Elected Members | 3 | Galway County Council | Cllr. Noel Thomas - Chairperson Cllr. Gabe Cronnelly Cllr. Padraic Mac An Iomaire |
| Local Authority Officials | 2 | Galway County Council | Liam Conneally, Chief Executive Valerie Kelly, LEO |
| State Agencies | 4 | Health Service Executive | Laurence Gaughan, Project Manager |
| | | Department of Social Protection | Regina Higgins, Divisional Manager West |
| | | GRETB | Donal Walsh, Adult Education Officer |
| | | Údarás na Gaeltachta | Sean O'Coisdealbha, Bainisteoir Réigiún An Iarthar |
| Private Sector - 10 | | | |
| Local Development & Community Development Bodies | 3 | Galway Rural Development | Steve Dolan, CEO |
| | | FORUM Connemara | Terry Keenan, Chairperson |
| | | Comhar na nOileán CTR | Máire Uí Mhaoiláin, Bainisteoir |
| Sectoral Interests | 2 | Employers & Business | Kenny Deery, Galway Chamber |
| | | Agriculture & Farming | Anne Mitchell, IFA |

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Community & Voluntary Interests | 5 | PPN – Social Inclusion College | Kevin Gavin |
| | | PPN – Social Inclusion College | Peter Gohery |
| | | PPN – Community & Voluntary College | Máirín Ní Chonghaile |
| | | PPN – Community & Voluntary College | Gerard Costello |
| | | PPN – Environmental College | Jen Fisher |

The LCDC appoints a chairperson who consults with the Chief Officer on matters relating to the LCDC’s administration and operation and has an overall co-ordination role and responsibility for the effective functioning and management of meetings. Cllr. Noel Thomas is the current Chairperson of the LCDC and Mr. Terry Keenan is the current Vice-Chairperson.

The Chief Executive assigns staff to assist the LCDC in the exercise of its functions, including an assignment to the post of Chief Officer. The Chief Officer is not a voting member of the Committee but attends and participates at all meetings in an advisory and support capacity, particularly regarding policy and strategic direction, promotion of inter-agency working through the Public Participation Network (PPN), and providing an information flow with the local authority, particularly the Economic Development SPC. Mr. Kieran Coyne, Senior Executive Officer, Galway County Council, holds the position of Chief Officer to the LCDC. Other staff members assigned to assist the LCDC in the execution of its functions include Mary McGann Administrative Officer; Helen Melia Senior Staff Officer; Linda Potter Staff Officer; Ramona Burke Clerical Officer. At the end of 2023, the position of Healthy Ireland Coordinator was vacant and recruitment for the temporary vacancy is ongoing.

LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP):

Following the establishment of the Advisory Steering Group, and review of the LECP for 2016-2022, work began on the development of a Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals for the LECP for 2023-2028. The primary preparatory work for this stage involved socio-economic analysis based on available data sources, review of policy documents, and the review and consultancy work carried out on the LECP for 2016-2022. This culminated in the development of a Socio-Economic Statement, which was subsequently updated to include Census 2022 data as it became available. The analysis of this data led to the development of the following Vision Statement and High-Level Goals to underpin the strategic framework of the LECP:

Vision:

An inclusive County, with a clear sense of identity, where we work together to achieve the full economic, social, community, linguistic, and cultural potential of County Galway and its people, through citizen engagement at a local level.

High-Level Goals:

1. **ACTIVE, HEALTHY, AND SAFE COMMUNITIES**
To improve the health, wellbeing, and sense of safety & security, of individuals and communities across County Galway.
2. **EQUAL, INCLUSIVE, AND ENGAGED COMMUNITIES**
To reduce the levels and prevalence of poverty, disadvantage, and social exclusion in County Galway, through active citizen engagement and participation.
3. **A CULTURALLY RICH COUNTY**
A County with a clear sense of identity, reflecting its heritage, language, and culture.
4. **A COUNTY WITH VIBRANT URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENTS**
A County that is dedicated to the revitalisation and regeneration of its towns, villages, and islands in a sustainable manner.
5. **A SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT COUNTY**
A County that protects its environment and supports the transformation to a climate-neutral society.
6. **AN ECONOMICALLY RESILIENT COUNTY**
A County that promotes sustainable economic and enterprise development and innovation.

Followed preparation and agreement by the Advisory Steering Group, the Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals were presented to the Economic SPC and the LCDC and were signed-off at their meetings held on 13th December 2023, and 10th January 2024 respectively. This completed Stage 1 of the LECF process, and following the appointment of a Consultant, the Advisory Steering Group will progress to Stage 2 of the process which is the formal public consultation process. Following targeted stakeholder and public consultations, the Socio-Economic Statement will be revised if necessary, with objectives and actions identified to form part of the more detailed Implementation Plan for the LECF.

SICAP:

SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion and supports disadvantaged communities and individuals including unemployed people, people living in disadvantaged areas, people with disabilities, lone parents, people on a low income, members of the Traveller and Roma community and other disadvantaged groups. The following is the situation regarding the achievement of KPI's under the programme for 2023:



- Under Goal 1, 138 Local Community Groups were supported versus the KPI of 115, with 20% of the groups being newly registered groups in 2023.
- Under Goal 2, 1,143 Individuals were supported versus the KPI of 900 and of these individuals, 257 (or 28.56%) were from disadvantaged areas which met the required KPI of 27% in this regard.

Some of the specific initiatives implemented during the 2023 programme were:

- €38,058.15 was provided in grants to 35 Local Community Groups to support a range of training, events, and equipment for groups such as Men’s Sheds, Women’s Groups, Resident Associations in disadvantaged areas, and support for groups to participate in events and cultural occasions throughout the year.
- €7,996.41 was provided in grants to 25 Social Enterprises, to support training, upskilling, marketing, and capacity building to meet the needs of their client groups and areas, with a total of 8 jobs created through these mentoring and training supports. Work also progressed on a Feasibility Study for the establishment of a paint reuse social enterprise which was completed in December 2023 and will further progress in 2024.
- €30,755.91 was provided in grants to 96 Individuals from the SICAP Target Groups, to support participation in education & training courses. 68% of the individuals supported were newly registered in 2023, and these individuals were supported to overcome barriers to participation in education, training, and lifelong learning, with 15 individuals progressing into employment, 8 into State Employment schemes, and 13 into self-employment. Under Goal 2, supports were also provided to disadvantaged children and families, with the primary support in the Lot, being After-School supports and Homework Clubs.
- Under a ring-fenced allocation for support, supports were provided to Ukrainian and International Protection Accommodation Centres in the form of Interpretation Training, and funding supports to relevant communities to support social integration activities. Work is ongoing with Fáilte Isteach, to expand informal conversational English classes to locations across the County, and other initiatives supported included Summer Camps, and ‘Spraoi’, an Irish/Ukrainian vocabulary and colouring book for primary school children which was developed in collaboration with Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta. The book was made available for free to other groups, Co-Ops, and Primary Schools, and after being featured in a wide range of media outlets such as RTE News and the Irish Independent, was also distributed nationally to Gaeltacht Schools and other relevant organisations. A range of supports were also provided under this Action to Individuals, in the form of supports to develop CV’s, access to relevant education and training programmes and signposting or supports for other services such as school transport.
- A range of targeted programmes were delivered throughout the county including 5 health checks organised with Croi in marts and agricultural shows, Health and Wellbeing events in Gort and Glenamaddy, activities organised with Galway Sports Partnership and Parkrun supported to start an event on Inis Meain and start the process in Tuam.



LAUNCH OF SPRAOI/ЗАБАВА' - GAEILGE/UKRAINIAN COLOURING BOOK WHICH WAS AN INITIATIVE OF GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TUISMITHEOIRÍ NA GAELTACHTA UNDER SICAP – PHOTO TAKEN AT SCOIL CHOLMÁIN MUIGH-INIS

Also, during 2023, the procurement process for the new SICAP Programme 2024-2028 was commenced with the issue of a PIN (Prior Information Notice) by the Department of Rural and Community Development in April 2023. This was followed by notification to LCDC's to notify the Department if they required changes to Lot boundaries, and this matter was brought to the LCDC Meeting on 14th June for consideration. A Lot for the purposes of SICAP can comprise an entire local authority area, or legally defined sub-divisions of the area, for example, Municipal Districts. At Galway County level, the entire local authority area had been treated as one Lot area for the purposes of SICAP since 2014. Following a briefing and discussion on the programme, and declaration of Conflict of Interests on the matter, the LCDC in accordance with Standing Order provisions, voted to increase the number of Lots in the County to 3, as follows:

- Galway East: Municipal Districts of Athenry-Oranmore, Ballinasloe, Loughrea & Tuam
- Galway West: Municipal District of Conamara excluding Galway Islands
- Galway Islands: Galway Islands (Inis Mór, Inis Meain, Inis Oirr, Inisbofin)

Galway County LCDC subsequently published the formal Request for Tender (RFT) to deliver SICAP 2024-2028 in July 2023, and invited Tenderer submissions according to a Single Stage Procedure with Negotiation Meetings. As this process was not completed by end 2023, SICAP 2018-2023 was extended by 3 months into Quarter 1 2024, when the tendering process will be finalised.

THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND (COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME)

Galway County LCDC received an allocation of €300,432 under the Community Support Fund from the Department of Rural and Community Development. The purpose of the Community Support Fund was to support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with:

- Capital projects such as repairs and improvements to facilities, and purchase of equipment.
- Their non-pay running costs such as energy costs or other operating costs.

Under the terms of the scheme, funding was to be allocated as equally as possible across the above Capital and Current Expenditure categories, and the final allocation of Galway County LCDC was 51% towards capital grants and 49% towards grants for operating/running costs.

A total of 274 applications were received by the LCDC, and 15 applications were deemed ineligible, with a further 66 applications unsuccessful in being awarded funding. This gave a total of 193 successful applications with the types of funding awarded categorized as follows:

- In accordance with a Departmental recommendation, a sum of €3,203 was ringfenced for Women's Sheds, and this allocation was specifically awarded to support the operating and running costs of these groups.
- In accordance with a Departmental recommendation, approximately 30% of the fund was allocated towards small grants under €1,000. These grants are specifically aimed at small grassroots community groups with limited funding resources and while small in nature, are very beneficial to communities on the ground. The type of groups which received funding under this stream were Youth Clubs, Older People's Groups, Tidy Towns Groups, Men's and Women's Sheds, Heritage Groups, etc., typically for equipment and small-scale capital projects, or funding towards running costs such as insurance, electricity, etc.
- The LCDC set a maximum grant of €5,000 and priority was given to projects which would enhance disadvantaged areas or assist disadvantaged groups. The types of groups which received funding under this stream were Community Centres and other services targeting disadvantaged groups, and funding was allocated towards upgrade of community facilities, accessibility and safety improvements to community amenities, and community safety initiatives. One of the initiatives funded was a proposal by Clarinbridge Men's Shed to purchase a second Property Marking Machine for the County, and roll this out by training other Men's Sheds on the use of the machine, so that it could visit different areas of the County, and act as a crime prevention measure, by permanently marking important property with the owner's Eircode. Training for the Men's Sheds on the Property Marking Machine was funded under SICAP, demonstrating the collaboration across the various LCDC programmes.



SGT. MICHAEL WALSH GARDA CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER, LAUNCHING THE PROPERTY MARKING MACHINE WITH CLLR. LIAM CARROLL CATHAOIRLEACH, MR. LIAM CONNEALLY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MR. VINCENT LYONS GALWAY COUNTY PPN, MARY MCGANN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTION, WILLIE BEIRNE CLARINBRIDGE MEN'S SHED AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MEN'S SHED.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME 2023

The Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) is a national €2m pilot programme which targets 14 small areas with the highest socio-economic deprivation (as measured by the Pobal HP Deprivation Index). The purpose of the programme is to tackle disadvantage and social exclusion using a community development approach, by developing relationships with community stakeholders / groups and collaborating with statutory agencies and other structures to implement tailored responses to identified challenges. In particular, the ECP is intended to work closely with other government-funded initiatives such as Community Safety Partnerships/Joint Policing Committee, Local Drug Task Forces, Youth Justice, Healthy Ireland, etc. The small area selected for County Galway is Ballinasloe Urban Small Area (comprising St. Grellan's Terrace & St. Theresa's Park) which has a deprivation rating of -30.93 under Census 2016, making it one of the highest deprivation areas in the country. Each small area selected for the pilot project was allocated a baseline budget to recruit a Community Engagement Worker and cover other administrative overheads and costs, as well as direct programme costs associated with community engagement activities, connecting people with services, and other activities falling under the local needs planning. The budget allocation is based on the level of population in each small area and Ballinasloe Urban received an allocation of €140,000, and the programme is administered by Galway Rural Development CLG.

Some of the projects undertaken during the year 2023:

- The Empowering Communities Programme in conjunction with SICAP and in collaboration with the Children's Disability Network Team supported the Brickx Club, a new initiative to

Ballinasloe. The Brickx Club training is designed to enable people to teach children important communication and social skills using LEGO bricks. The trainees learnt how to use LEGO bricks as a tool to facilitate learning and interaction among children. The bricks can be used to build models, play games or engage in other activities that provide opportunities for conversation, teamwork, problem-solving and creativity. The main aims of Bricks Club training for trainers is to equip the trainers with the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to effectively facilitate Brick play and communication. Fourteen people were trained from different agencies which makes this a sustainable project (Parent Child Plus, Involve, Scoil an Chroi Noafa, Infinity Friends Autism Club Athlone, Brothers of Charity, HSE) Working with children including those with extra needs of neurodivergent and other anxiety issues. This programme is currently being delivered every Wednesday in the library from 3.30 and will continue for the foreseeable future as a direct result from this training.

- Galway County Council, Residents group and the Empowering Communities Programme collaborated to install a defibrillator to the front wall of a house at St Grellans Estate, as a centre point of access for the three estates. To build on this event a consultation was carried out with the

Residents Committee and it was decided that the ECP would provide Cardiac First Responder (CFR) training. The certified training was delivered in June 2023 in the



Social Services Centre as this was the nearest suitable venue for hire.

YVONNE HOARY FROM GRD'S EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME, TOGETHER WITH COMMITTEE MEMBERS HELEN FOGARTY, NORA DOWD, LINDA DOWD, AND MARIE FOGARTY, AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE DEFIBRILLATOR.

HEALTHY GALWAY

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The National Policy document "A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025" has 4 key goals:

- Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life.
- Goal 2: Reduce health inequalities.
- Goal 3: Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing.



- Goal 4: Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

The Healthy Ireland Fund Local Strategy for the Galway County Council area identified the following priority focus area which will be the focus of Annual Workplans under the Healthy Ireland Fund, which is monitored by the Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee:



“To increase the percentage of people aged 50+ who engage in one or more social / leisure activity at least once a week.”

Some of the projects and initiatives which were delivered during 2023 included:

- Delivered targeted physical activity programmes for older people such as Good to Go training and Activator Pole classes which were rolled out in conjunction with installing Activator Pole signage in Palace Grounds Tuam.
- Other equipment for programmes was loaned to groups, in addition to running “come and try” events to broaden awareness and knowledge of available programmes.
- A pilot programme of Siel Bleu exercise classes were delivered in Tuam, Claregalway, Ardahan, Oranmore and Ballinasloe.
- A new beach wheelchair was purchased for Spiddal Beach and the Beach Wheelchair for Traught Beach received upgrades.
- A project to provide an Accessible Equipment Hub for Portumna Forest Park was developed in conjunction with the Area Office.
- A pilot project to map social & leisure activities was undertaken in Oughterard culminating in the publication of a Booklet of Activities for Oughterard, and it is hoped to roll out this initiative in other locations going forward.

Accessible Equipment Packs were delivered to Ability West Clifden, and Sensory Equipment Loan Boxes were also initiated. In conjunction with the Community Section, Sensory Equipment boxes were also disbursed in St. Grellan’s Estate in conjunction with National Play Day, and a collaborative project was undertaken with SICAP and the Local Enhancement Programme to develop accessible outdoor play equipment in Carna.

A Healthy Islands Roadshow was developed and delivered jointly by Galway County Council under the Healthy Galway Programme, and Galway Rural Development under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). This involved a coming together of over 20 statutory, community and voluntary Organisations, all with a unified aim to promote health and wellbeing, to improve communication, and enhance people’s knowledge of services available to them. Over 200

people attending the events which featured free activities and resources including pulse and blood pressure checks, healthy cooking demonstration workshops, a community fun-run, yoga, relationship and sexual health education, citizen information advice, and exercise and fitness tips. Participating Organisations and services included Galway County Council, Croí, Healthy Ireland at your Library, Galway Sports Partnership, Galway Public Participation Network, Age Friendly Homes, Sexual Health West, Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland, Mental Health Ireland, Chime, ALONE, Irish Wheelchair Association, HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Unit, Jigsaw, Parkrun Ireland, West Be Well Suicide Prevention Service, Domestic Violence Response Galway, and the local Public Health Nurses and Gardai. Access to information and services was one of the key barriers identified by islanders, and this event sought to overcome this barrier and create ongoing linkages with the relevant services.

OVER 20 AGENCIES TAKING PART IN THE HEALTHY ISLANDS ROADSHOW ON INIS MÓR IN APRIL 2023



The ‘Healthy Islands’ project was nominated by Galway County Council for an Age Friendly Award, and on Thursday 30th November, was announced as the Age Friendly Active & Healthy Ageing Award Winner at the National Age Friendly Awards held in Wexford.

HELEN MELIA, ALAN FARRELL,
ANDREW MCBRIDE – GALWAY
COUNTY COUNCIL; ANNE CASSIDY

GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT, CLLR LIAM CARROLL, CATHAOIRLEACH; MARY CRONIN, GALWAY OLDER PEOPLE’S COUNCIL, AT THE NATIONAL AGE FRIENDLY AWARDS.

UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY RESPONSE FORUM

A number of meetings of the Forum were held throughout 2023 to coordinate supports to Ukrainian Accommodation Centres, in addition to discussing specific issues such as the Community Recognition Fund 2023, an Information Session for Ukrainian Accommodation Centres which was coordinated by Tusla, Community Car Initiative, Offer a Home Programme, and a briefing on Modular Homes project in Ballinasloe by the DCEDIY (Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth). Notifications from the Department regarding upcoming Accommodation Centres and transfers of BOTP’s (Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection) were shared with members of the Forum to facilitate the delivery of wraparound supports and services to Accommodation Centres.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND

The Department of Rural and Community Development announced a €50m Community Recognition Fund in 2023, as a major initiative to support communities across the country that were hosting people from Ukraine or other countries. The funding was allocated across various local authorities based on the number of new arrivals located there, and County Galway was allocated an amount of €1,333,290 which was allocated across 33 projects in the following locations:

| Location | Brief Description of Projects | Amount Allocated |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Oranmore | Playground & Park Upgrades | €157,510 |
| Esker/Athenry/Kiltullagh | Playground & Natural Play Areas | €96,000 |
| An Cheathrú Rua | Community Centre & Astro Turf Upgrades | €143,936 |
| Clifden | Playground & Equipment Upgrades | €87,160 |
| Maam Cross/Maam | Community Centre & Playground Upgrades | €71,627 |
| Tuam | Park Upgrades & Sensory Play Equipment | €73,000 |
| Carna | Outdoor Plaza & Bus Shelter | €85,000 |
| An Spidéal | Accessible Walkway to Beach | €25,000 |
| Claregalway | Community Recreation Area Upgrades | €81,844 |
| Oughterard | Playground & Community Gym Equipment | €60,167 |
| Kinvara | Playground & Park Upgrades | €58,350 |
| Glenamaddy | Community Facilities & Walkway Upgrades | €62,639 |
| Barna | Playground Upgrades | €46,582 |
| Letterfrack | Outdoor Shelter | €16,374 |
| Gort | Community Centre & Playground Upgrades | €54,676 |
| Loughrea | Playground Upgrades | €57,000 |
| Kiltormer | Playground Upgrades | €50,000 |
| Clonbur | Community Centre Upgrades | €47,760 |

COMMUNITY AWARDS

CATHAOIRLEACH AWARDS 2023

The Cathaoirleach Awards for 2023 were held in conjunction with the Cathaoirleach's Charity Ball on Saturday 27th May, in the Meadowcourt Hotel, Loughrea. The Awards were hosted by the Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael (Moegie) Maher, and MC for the evening was Bernadette Prendergast of Galway Bay FM. The Awards to recognise the contribution of Community Groups were presented as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Arts & Culture Award: | Glenamaddy Theatre Festival |
| - Best Contribution to Heritage Award: | Milltown Heritage Group |
| - Social Inclusion Award: | CURVE |
| - Environment & Climate Action Award: B | East Corrib Alliance |
| - Sports Award: | Tuam Women's Shed |
| - Heritage Publication Award: | Emma Laffey – "An Bhean Ghlúine" |
| - Gradam na Gailege: | Ceoltóirí Óga Cois Fharraige |
| - Tidy Towns Recognition Award: | Abbey Community Development Association |
| - Pride of Place: | Creggs Rural Development Gort River Walk Group |
| - Cathaoirleach's Special Award | Aileen Cust Memorial Society |

PRIDE OF PLACE 2023

Organised by peacebuilding charity Co-operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance, the annual Pride of Place awards showcase and celebrate exceptional community development efforts across the island of Ireland. County Galway's 2 entrants were recognised at the Annual Cathaoirleach Awards, following which a Judges Visit took place in August, where the Judges received a tour of both areas and a presentation on the work being progressed under the Award Category. This year marked the 21st anniversary of the awards, and the Awards Ceremony was hosted by UTV's Pamela Ballen and was held in Armagh.

County Galway continued its history of success in the IPB Pride of Place competition with Creggs Rural Development Group named the overall winner in the Climate Action & Biodiversity Category. They become the inaugural winner of this new Category in the All-Island Competition. The Climate Action & Biodiversity Category recognises a community's commitment to promote, educate, raise

awareness, and enhance biodiversity & climate action, and introducing the winners, the host Pamela Ballen remarked that the Judges felt that the winner showed how a small rural community can lead the way in this regard.

MEMBERS OF CREGGS RURAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP CELEBRATING THEIR SUCCESS WITH CLLR. EVELYN PARSONS LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH, ALAN FARRELL AND KIERAN COYNE OF GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL.



County Galway's other participant in this year's competition was the Gort River Walk Group who were nominated in the Community Wellbeing Category in recognition of their continued development of a 3km looped walk encompassing biodiversity areas, rest areas, and a new footbridge, which has become a valued amenity for the town & environs with huge benefits for health & wellbeing.

TIDY TOWNS

Tidy Towns Groups across County Galway continue to improve their marks in the Supervalu National Tidy Towns Competition results year-on-year, while carrying out invaluable work in their respective communities. First place in the County, and their Gold Medal status, was retained by **Milltown**, while **Abbey** retained second place in the County and their Silver Medal status. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals are awarded to entrants who fall within a limited number of marks of the overall winner of the competition, and this demonstrates the high quality of improvement works being carried out in their communities. In this regard, **An Spidéal** retained third place in the County and their Bronze Medal which they achieved for the first time last year – they also received a special mention at the Awards Ceremony by Mary Kennedy for the substantial improvements they have made over the last 2 years, so congratulations to all involved! Every year, there is also an Endeavour Award which recognises the community who have achieved the highest increase in marks in the County – well done to **Tullycross** who achieved a huge increase of 37 marks over last year. In addition, to the Medals, there are a number of Special Award Categories in the National Tidy Towns Competition to recognise excellence in particular areas, and County Galway continued its proud

record of high achievement in this area with the following honoured with special prizes at the Awards Ceremony:

- Williamstown Tidy Towns who were the overall winner of the National Heritage Award
- Monivea Tidy Towns who were the overall winner of the Gum Litter Taskforce Award
- Northampton National School who were a regional winner in the Supervalu Schools Award
- Woodford Parish Development who were Highly Commended for their work towards the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

GALWAY COUNTY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)

Galway County Public Participation Network (PPN) is open to all community & voluntary groups based in the County and its membership continues to grow year-on-year with 1,267 member groups registered with the PPN at the end of 2023, making it one of the largest PPN's in the country. The following is a summary of the PPN activities for the year under its 3 main categories of activity:



INFORMATION SHARING AND COMMUNICATION

A key function of the PPN is to act as a link through which the Council connects with groups active throughout the County. In this regard, Webinars were organised throughout the year to provide information on funding schemes as they were launched, and the PPN issued comprehensive Newsletters which include a broad range of information across national and local funding programmes and initiatives which are very well received across communities. The PPN also sends a Weekly Digest containing relevant information on funding, events, and workshops to its members.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF PPN MEMBER GROUPS

The PPN carries out regular consultations with its member groups to identify training courses which will build their capacity to contribute to their local areas. Examples of training undertaken in 2023 include Business Planning for Voluntary Groups, Grow your Social Enterprise, Disability Awareness Training, training on the Sustainable Development Goals, and an Information Webinar on Biodiversity & Climate Change.

FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND REPRESENTATION

PPN Representatives perform an important function on behalf of the PPNs by representing the wider membership on a range of local authority committees and other Boards such as the SPC's (Strategic Policy Committees), LCDC (Local Community Development Committee), Joint Policing Committee, Galway Sports Partnership, and a range of other boards. During the year the PPN worked closely with its 30 elected representatives to ensure a positive relationship was upheld with the various bodies they sit on. Members are regularly informed of local and national level consultations and the PPN welcomes submissions from member groups on issues that concern them. All

representatives' posts remained filled throughout the year. Also, during the year, the following Linkage Groups were strengthened: The Galway County Intercultural Forum, Galway County Disability Forum, the Housing Linkage Group and the Green Recovery Working Group. These groups help the PPN address issues and concerns of member groups through a range of local campaigns and projects. The PPN began the process of setting up an Energy Master Plan for Galway County through SEAI and work progressed throughout the year with Consultants.

AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

Age Friendly Ireland is the organisation responsible for the national Age Friendly Programme, which is affiliated to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Counties. In 2019, Ireland was formally recognised by the World Health Organisation as an international leader and the first Age Friendly country in the world. The Age Friendly Alliance met 3 times throughout 2023 to coordinate the delivery of initiatives under the Workplan. The Alliance, which is led jointly by Galway City & County Councils, brings together many stakeholders from other public bodies, community & voluntary organisations, universities, and representatives of the Older People's Councils, with the purpose of planning and delivering services and initiatives in an age friendly way. The Older People's Council is a representative structure for older people. Its aims are to represent the voice of older people and to support and participate in the development of the County as a great place in which to grow old. The OPC met 5 times throughout the year and a primary focus was to feedback on the development of the Directory of Services for Older People, in addition to the development of Age Friendly Libraries.

Directory of Services for Older People:

One of the main issues raised by older people is knowing how and where to access the information they need. During 2023, a Working Group was established with staff from the HSE and local authorities to update the Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City & County which was last published in 2015. The Directory provides a wealth of useful information not only for older people and their families, but also for carers and service providers. Its user-friendly format covers information on many of the activities, services, and supports available for older people in Galway City & County. The Directory of Services has been distributed through An Garda Síochána Community Guards, HSE and Primary Care Centres, Libraries and Mobile Libraries, and Community Groups. The

Directory of Services was launched at an Information Event held in November 2023 which included Information Stands from over 15 agencies and speakers on a range of topics including the Directory of Services, Health Services for Older People, and Community Safety.





OVER 15 AGENCIES AND 200 OLDER PEOPLE FROM ACROSS GALWAY CITY & COUNTY ATTENDING AN INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION EVENT ON FRIDAY 24TH NOVEMBER, AT WHICH THE DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE, AND A NEW PROPERTY MARKING MACHINE PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH MEN'S SHEDS, WERE LAUNCHED.

SPORTS PARTNERSHIP



Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) is a joint City and County Council Service with most staff based in the ERCD Section of Galway County Council. During 2023 one of the Community Sports Development Officers departed and an Acting Co-ordinator began later in the year. The GSP plays a lead role in the co-ordination, development and delivery of sport and physical activity opportunities for the communities of Galway. The following are examples of programs:

Trainings and Courses

| Course | No. of Courses | No. of Participants |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Safeguarding 1 | 34 | 541 |
| Safeguarding 2 | 12 | 115 |
| Safeguarding 3 | 11 | 80 |
| First Aid | 12 | 81 |
| Volunteer Support Training | 3 | 36 |

Programmes and Activities:

Good2Go

Good2Go was run in Clarinbridge, Caltra and Rossaveel throughout 2023 and we have almost 50 individuals across disability services and active retirement groups who have completed the trainings. These trainings were run by FitWalk Ireland and supported by the SIDO and was fully funded and part funded in some cases by Healthy Galway County. After the 5 weeks of training the SIDO supports the participants to get these activities running in their groups, to support with information on grants they can avail of and to loan equipment from Galway Sports Partnership and Healthy Galway.

Her Outdoors week 14th-20th August

HER Outdoors is an initiative run by Sport Ireland to encourage women and girls to engage and get involved with outdoor activities. Galway Sports Partnership ran a number of programs during this week including Activator Pole Walking Taster in Portumna, Outdoor Fitness Class with a (silent) difference at Loughrea Lake and Renville playground, Buggy Buddies Tasters in Tuam and Ballinasloe, Outdoor Yoga in Merlin Woods and a Social Bike Ride in Gort. 43 women in total took part in the events.



Inclusive Triathlon

Galway Sports Partnerships (GSP's) second annual Inclusive Triathlon took place on Tuesday 26th September as part of European Week of Sport. This event was a partnership between GSP, Healthy Galway County and Triathlon Ireland and was delivered to adults in Brothers of Charity Services on the grounds of Kilcornan Clarinbridge. There were 37 participants who took part in the event (11 teams of 3 (1x swimmer, 1x triker/biker and 1x walker/runner) and 2 individuals who completed the 3 elements themselves. There were supporters from each residential/day service



present with posters to cheer on their teams. All participants received a medal and there were some spot prizes

for individuals who were nominated and individuals who stood out on the day for their achievements.

Stand-up Paddleboarding

In July 2023 Galway Sports Partnership ran a number of Stand-up Paddleboarding programs one of which was for Parents of Autism Loughrea (PALS). Children with autism and their families took part in taster sessions over a 5 week period and thoroughly enjoyed this program. The stand up paddleboarding was very beneficial in relaxing the participants and building on their confidence in the water and also their confidence to try something new.



CORPORATE SERVICES

The Corporate Services Unit offers trusted and consistent excellence in administrative services to the Elected Members, Plenary Council, Senior Management, and the general public. The Unit aims to continually develop a positive Corporate image of the Council, through the provision of efficient professional support services in the form of Corporate Secretariat to the Council and its sub-structure as well as a wide variety of services including the Register of Electors, Freedom of Information, Promotion of the Irish Language, Recreation & Amenity Policies, Customer Services, Casual Trading, Corporate Policies, Management and Servicing of the Council Office Network, Archives and Records Management, Library Services, Internal Audit and Legal Services.

Progress and achievements of the Unit for 2023 are presented below appropriate to the relevant strategic priorities contained in the Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.

CORPORATE PLANNING & SUPPORT

Galway County Council's Plenary Council of 39 members met for eleven monthly meetings in 2023, to carry out their Reserved functions and consider the social, economic and cultural issues critical to the sustainable development of the County in line with the Strategic Priorities and Objectives of the Corporate Plan.

The Annual Meeting of the Plenary Council was held on 19th June 2023 in Council Chamber in the Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae. Cllr. Liam Carroll was elected to replace Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher as Cathaoirleach. Cllr. Evelyn Francis Parsons was nominated to replace Cllr. Eileen Mannion as Leas-Chathaoirleach.

CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. LIAM CARROLL AND LEAS-CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. EVELYN FRANCIS PARSONS



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCILLORS FROM ANNUAL MEETING 19TH JUNE 2023



The Council held its Annual Statutory Budget Meeting on 4th December 2023 in Chamber, Áras an Chontae to consider and adopt the 2024 Revenue Budget and Three-Year Capital Programme.

| Monthly Meetings of the Council | Meetings |
|---|----------|
| Ordinary Monthly Meetings | 11 |
| Special Meetings – Appointment of Chief Executive | 1 |
| Annual Meeting | 1 |
| Budget Meeting | 1 |

CIVIC RECEPTIONS 2023

ON 27TH MARCH 2023 A CIVIC RECEPTION WAS HELD IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE TO HONOUR THE FOLLOWING:

Cliona D’Arcy on her achievement of winning the Heavyweight Gold Medal at the World Youth Championships in 2022.



Sarsfield Camogie on their achievement of winning the All-Ireland Senior Club Camogie Championship in 2019, 2021 and 2022.



The U17 Galway All Ireland Minor Football Champions 2022.



The University of Galway/Maree Basketball Team on winning the Pat Duffy National Cup title 2022/2023.



ON 22ND MAY 2023 A CIVIC RECEPTION WAS HELD IN LOUGHREA TO HONOUR THE FOLLOWING:

Kilkerran-Clonberne Ladies
Football Team on being crowned
All-Ireland Senior Club Football
Champions for 2022.



Lawrencetown Community Development Group on the achievement of winning the Category for Villages with 300-1000 Population at the National Pride of Place Awards 2022.



Woodford Parish Development on the achievement placing Runner-Up in the Creative Place Category at the National Pride of Place Awards 2022.



ON 23RD OCTOBER 2023 A CIVIC RECEPTION WAS HELD IN LOUGHREA TO HONOUR THE FOLLOWING:

Turloughmore U15 Camogie Team, All-Ireland Féile U15 Division 1 Champions



Athenry U15 Hurlers, All-Ireland Féile na Gael U15 Division 1 Champions



The Galway & District League Team, winners of the Kennedy Cup 2023



Martin Mulherrins, World Senior Handball Champion



Teresa Smyth, silver medal winner, for Darts at the World Transplant Games



Eamonn Burke gold medal winner at the National Ploughing Championships in 2022



WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD DELEGATION VISIT TO GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE RENEWAL OF OUR SISTER COUNTY PARTNERSHIP APRIL 2023

A Delegation from Washington County, Wisconsin visited Galway County Council in honour of the 20-year Sister Partnership between Washington County, State of Wisconsin, USA, and the County of Galway. The Delegation arrived at Dublin Airport on April 22nd, 2023, to begin their five-day trip to County Galway.

The members of the delegation from Washington County, Wisconsin included County Board Chairman Jeffrey Schleif and his wife Pam, County Board Vice-Chair Carroll Merry and his spouse Jean, County Board Supervisor Lois Krueger-Gundrum, State Representative Rick Gundrum, County



Board Supervisor John Schodron and his wife Dawn, County Board Supervisor Pam Konrath and County Board Supervisor Tony Thoma and his spouse Susan.

At the Plenary meeting on April 24th 2023 The Cathaoirleach along with the Chairman of the Washington County Board Mr Jeffrey Schleif signed a Charter to further strengthen the friendship ties and cooperation that join the

County of Galway and Washington County. The Cathaoirleach presented Washington County with a wall hanging 'Contours' a replica of the wall hanging outside the Council Chamber that reflects the design and inspiration for the bespoke carpet that forms the central design element for the Council Chamber. After the presentation and exchange of gifts the delegation and members of the Council gathered outside Áras and Chontae for a tree planting ceremony. Later that evening in County Hall a Cultural Evening was held which was a celebration and showcase of Galway culture through music, poetry, song, and dance.



The Delegation from Washington were accompanied by both officials and members throughout their five-day trip to County Galway. They visited Loughrea, Connemara, Clifden, Portumna, Athenry, Ballinasloe and Inis Mor Island as part of their extensive itinerary.

CE LIAM CONNEALLY, AND HIS WIFE LINDA, COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMAN JEFFREY SCHLEIF AND HIS WIFE PAM, CLLR. MOEGIE MAHER AND HIS WIFE TINA



PROMOTION OF GALWAY COUNTY AS VISITOR DESTINATION AT MILWAUKEE IRISH FESTIVAL 2023

The 42nd annual Milwaukee Irish Fest- the largest celebration of Irish culture and heritage in the United States took place in Wisconsin over four days from the 17th August to 20th August 2023 in the Henry Maier Festival Park. The festival has a huge attendance with more than 130,000 visitors every year. Galway County and City had a promotional stand located in the Irish destinations area of the festival which presented an ideal opportunity for the Galway County Delegation to spearhead the promotion of the County as a desirable visitor destination to the many prospective American visitors. The United States remains an extremely important market for tourism to Ireland as more than a million people visit from there each year delivering more than €1.5 billion for the economy.

At this year's Milwaukee Fest, Galway County was represented by Cathaoirleach Liam Carroll, Councillors Michael Moegie Maher and Seamus Walsh, Director of Services, Derek Pender, and the County Secretary Jean Brann. The Delegation also attended several stakeholder meetings over the course of a busy weekend including an official gathering at City Hall, Milwaukee.



EIMEAR MCALLISTER, TOURISM IRELAND; RUAIRI LEHMANN, TOURISM OFFICER GALWAY CITY COUNCIL, CATHAOIRLEACH LIAM CARROLL, CLLR. MICHAEL MAHER, CLLR FRANK FAHY, GALWAY CITY COUNCIL; AND PAUL MCDONAGH, TOURISM IRELAND, AT THE GALWAY STAND.

The Galway County Delegation also travelled to Washington County our Sister County to meet with the Members and the Executive of Washington County, Wisconsin. The Delegation were introduced to a number of local projects and initiatives relating to housing, tourism, heritage, agricultural and community development across the region. The visit proved very beneficial and will assist our Counties building even further on those business, economic, political, community and cultural links that have been framed during the last twenty years.



CATHAOIRLEACH LIAM CARROLL WITH MEMBERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY AND THEIR EXECUTIVE AT THE CIVIC OFFICES OF WASHINGTON COUNTY IN WESTBEND. GALWAY CO COUNCIL AND WASHINGTON COUNTY MARK 20 YEARS OF THE SISTER COUNTIES TWINNING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTIES.



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND CATHAOIRLEACH LIAM CARROLL WERE DELIGHTED TO ATTEND A SPECIAL RECEPTION IN CITY HALL, MILWAUKEE, WITH SPECIAL GUESTS, CONSUL GENERAL OF IRELAND TO CHICAGO, KEVIN BYRNE AND MAYOR OF GALWAY CITY, EDWARD HOARE.

JAPANESE AMBASSADOR VISIT TO GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL – APRIL 2023

His Excellency, the Ambassador of Japan Maruyama, visited Áras an Chontae to meet with the

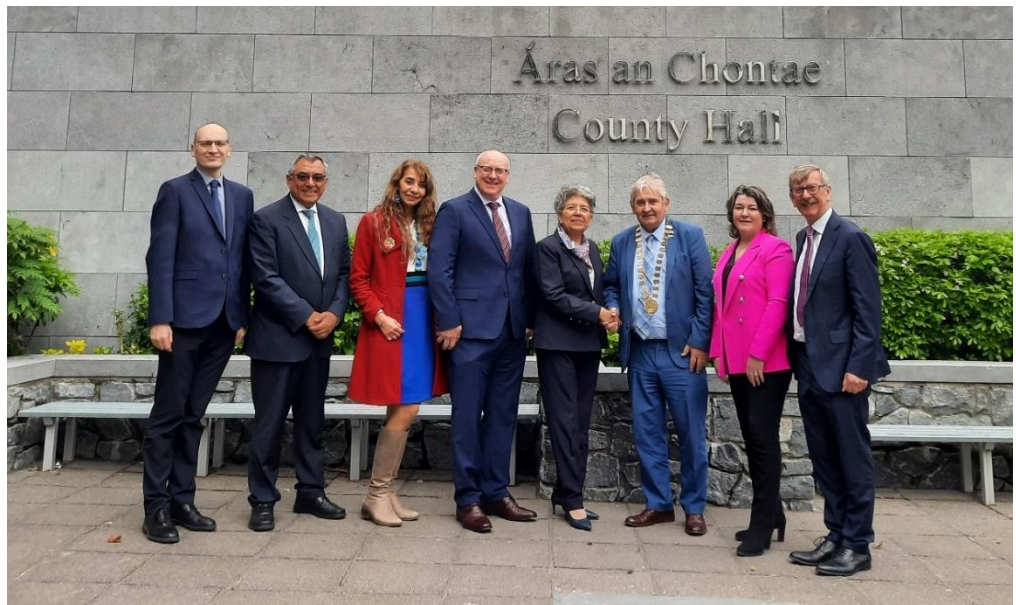


Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway Cllr. Michael Moegie Maher. They were joined by Deputy Chief Executive Michael Owens and the County Secretary Jean Brann. The visit marked an important occasion to explore the potential of forging links to develop new connections and shared learning between Japan and Galway County Council in many areas of common interest.

MEXICAN AMBASSADOR VISIT TO GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL – MAY 2023

Her Excellency the Ambassador of Mexico, Ms Carolina Zaragoza visited Áras an Chontae to meet with the Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway Cllr. Michael (Moegie) Maher and the Chief Executive Liam Conneally. They were joined by the Leas- Cathaoirleach of the County Cllr. Eileen

Mannion and Director of Services Michael Owens. Accompanying the Ambassador was Mr. Tomas Olvera, Head of Consular Section and Cultural Promotion and Mr. David Niland, Honorary Consul of Mexico. The Twinning Agreement



between Clifden and the Borough of Coyocan, Mexico City was signed in 2012. Today's visit marks an important milestone to further strengthen the close friendship ties and the continued economic co-operation and support between the two communities.

ESTONIAN AMBASSADOR VISIT TO GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER 2023

The Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway, Councillor Liam Carroll, welcomed, the Ambassador of Estonia, Her Excellency Mrs. Kairi Künka, to Áras an Chontae. Also in attendance



were the Chief Executive, Liam Conneally, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell, Ms. Helena Kock, Consul, Diplomat and Liadhan Keady Administrative Officer. The visit marked an important occasion to explore the potential of forging links to develop new connections and shared learning between Estonia and Galway County Council in many areas of common interest.

Cathaoirleach Liam Carroll and Chief Executive Liam Conneally welcomed Ambassador of Estonia, Her Excellency Mrs. Kairi Künka to Áras an Chontae

CATHAOIRLEACH’S CHARITY BALL & CATHAOIRLEACH’S AWARDS 2023

Cathaoirleach Cllr. Michael “Moegie” Maher held the Cathaoirleach’s Charity Ball & Cathaoirleach’s Awards on Saturday 27th May 2023 in the Meadow Court Hotel, Loughrea.

Proceeds from the Cathaoirleach’s Ball were donated to two very worthwhile organisations the Galway Hospice and the Galway Parkinsons Association. It was a wonderful night celebrating the amazing work both charities provide to the people of County Galway while also recognising through the Cathaoirleach’s awards the wonderful work communities deliver across the county.







CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

The Corporate Policy Group is organised and administered by Corporate Services and is supported by the Chief Executive.

| Corporate Policy Group | Meetings |
|------------------------|----------|
| Corporate Policy Group | 9 |

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The legislative framework for the establishment of Joint Policing Committees is set out in Section 36 (2) of An Garda Síochána Act 2005:

“The joint policing committee’s function is to serve as a forum for consultations, discussions and recommendations on matters affecting the policing of the local authority’s administrative area”

Section 37(1) also provides:

“A local authority shall, in performing its functions, have regard to the importance of taking steps to prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour within its area of responsibility.”

JPCs operate under revised guidelines issued by the Policing Authority in 2022 after consultation with the Minister for Justice, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Garda Commissioner.

The County Galway JPC meetings were held on the following dates during 2023:

- 30th January 2023

- 3rd April 2023
- 19th June 2023
- 4th September 2023
- 6th November 2023 – our Annual Public Meeting

ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Our Annual Public Meeting was held in the Meadow Court Hotel in Clostown, Loughrea on the 6th November 2023. We had over 50 in attendance on the night, with a significant amount of engagement throughout the meeting.



MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY GALWAY JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE, INCLUDING OIREACTHAS MEMBERS
DEPUTY SEAN CANNEY AND DEPUTY ANNE RABBITTE

The continuing work of two sub-committees afforded the JPC the opportunity to progress some key initiatives as set out in their Annual Work Plan for 2023.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE JPC

The following table shows the numbers applicable for each category of membership for the County Galway Joint Policing Committee.

| Local Authority Elected Members | Oireachtas Members | Local Authority Officials | An Garda Síochána | Community/Voluntary Representatives |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 15 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 7 |

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The Council is responsible for the compilation of the Register of Electors for County Galway (excluding Galway City area). The total number of Electors on the Register of Electors at the 4th January 2024 was 140,536.

ELECTORAL REFORM ACT 2022

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 was signed into law by the President on 25 July 2022. The Act provided the legislative underpinning for a range of significant electoral reforms:

- The establishment of an independent electoral commission – An Coimisiún Toghcháin
- The modernisation of our electoral registration process to deliver greater accessibility and improved integrity
- The regulation of online political advertising to provide for transparency during electoral campaigns and ensure that our elections remain free from hidden influences on how we vote
- The protection of the integrity of our electoral processes which will see the regulation of electoral process information, and online electoral information to guard against manipulative or inauthentic behaviour during electoral campaigns
- The strengthening of our regulatory regime in respect of political donations and accounts, including the provision of new investigatory and enforcement powers to the Standards in Public Office Commission
- Amendments to electoral law to provide that voting on the islands will take place on the same day as for the rest of the country; and

From the 13th October 2022, the legislative framework for the modernisation of our electoral registration process, including the move to a rolling, or continuous, registration, and the standardisation and simplification of the registration process came into effect. All applications will be made to the registration authority in the first instance and only appeals will fall to be considered by County Registrars.

It sets out to provide a clear legal basis for data sharing and the use of PPSNs in the process and includes several new provisions including supporting registration for those who have no address, and anonymous registration for persons whose safety may be at risk if their names are published in the register.

Existing flexible voting facilities which are currently available to persons with physical difficulties are also being extended to electors with mental health difficulties. It also makes provision to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register and abolishes the edited register.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

A total of 126 requests were received by Galway County Council during 2023 under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

| Decision | Number |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Requests Granted | 31 |
| Requests Part-granted | 36 |
| Requests Refused | 32 |
| Requests Transferred | 4 |
| Requests Withdrawn | 4 |
| Withdrawn and handled outside of FOI | 19 |

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

A total of 36 requests were received by Galway County Council during 2023 under the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007-2018.

| Decision | Number |
|--|---------------|
| Requests Granted | 12 |
| Requests Part-granted | 17 |
| Requests Refused | 3 |
| Requests Transferred | 1 |
| Requests Withdrawn | 2 |
| Requests Withdrawn and handled under FOI | 1 |
| Deemed Refusal | 0 |

DATA PROTECTION

In performing its functions, Galway County Council is required to process significant amounts of “Personal Data” within the meaning of the Data Protection Acts and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Galway County Council respects the privacy rights of those whose personal data we process, and we are conscious of our obligations under Data Protection Law.

Galway County Council’s commitment is that the personal data individuals may be required to supply to us is:

- Obtained lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Obtained for only specified, explicit and legitimate purposes
- Adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary for the purpose for which it was obtained

- Recorded, stored accurately and securely and where necessary kept up to date
- Kept only for as long as is necessary for the purposes for which it was obtained.
- Kept in a form which permits identification of the data subject
- Processed only in a manner that ensures the appropriate security of the personal data including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing.

Galway County Council has implemented a Data Protection Management System across the organisation to assist with the Council's continued compliance with GDPR and Data Protection law.

STAFF TRAINING 2023

Staff training and induction in relation to Data Protection & Cyber Security was provided online. In-person Staff Awareness Training was also made available for staff and a Staff Newsletter was published quarterly to promote awareness in relation to Data Protection.

DATA ACCESS REQUESTS 2023

- 13 Data Subject Access Requests were received and responded to.
- 5 Third Party Access Requests (e.g. from An Garda Síochána) were received and responded to.

The Council's Data Protection Officer is part of the Corporate Services Team and can be contacted by email at: dpo@galwaycoco.ie or by phone at: (091) 509319.

PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY



Section 42(2) (a) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires an organisation to set out in

its strategic plan “an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues.”



In 2023, Galway County Council progressed an initiative to implement the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty). A cross-organisational working group was established to create the conditions necessary for effectively and efficiently implementing the Duty. The core task for the working group is to create the conditions for implementation of the Duty. This involved working with an external consultant to develop key foundations of:

- An equality and human rights values statement to provide a frame and benchmarks for implementing the Duty;
- Assessment of equality and human rights issues relevant to the functions of Galway County Council, the first step required under the Duty; and
- Implementation Plan for the Duty in Galway County Council.

This initiative will ensure inclusive policies and practices continue while informing the implementation of the Duty across the organisation.



Galway County Council's Management Team, on the 25th July 2023, adopted the Implementation Plan for the duty in Galway County Council. The Human Rights and Equality Assessment (Evidence Book), together with the Implementation Plan for the Duty in Galway County Council, identifies the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address the issues identified in the assessment and is available to view on our website at the following link: <https://www.galway.ie/en/services/yourcouncil/corpdocs/>.

We will continue to report, in a manner that is accessible to the public, on developments and achievements – in respect of the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address issues identified in our assessment - in our annual reports.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

- The Facilities Section continued to provide caretaking and facilities management services for the Council's building network of offices and libraries, of which 26 no. are directly owned by Galway County Council. There are presently 38 different types of planned preventative maintenance contracts in place which give rise to over 1,500 different inspections across this network of buildings.
- The Facilities Unit continued to undertake procurement processes for a range of facilities management related contracts to ensure value for money and quality of services are maintained.
- Facilities carried out the installation and integration of the door access control system at Ballinasloe Library building in view of creating a centralised administrative system.
- Facilities assisted the library section in obtaining the first operational My Open Library at Ballinasloe Library.
- Obtained Part 8 planning permission and fire certificate application access improvement works to the Oranmore Library building.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT & ENERGY REDUCTION INITIATIVES

- Energy efficiency monitoring and management continued to be a priority focus for the facilities unit.
- County Hall continued to improve its operational Building Energy Rating (BER).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The Corporate Services Unit continued to deliver on its requirements under the Safety Management Programme in areas such as PAT testing, legionella testing,

periodic testing of electrical installations, VDU assessments for all Offices and Libraries, fire alarm and emergency light testing & maintenance programme, statutory inspection and maintenance of passenger lifts, roof access systems and heating system operating on Gas.

- Health & Safety Inspections continued to be carried out on a regular basis in line with implementation of the Council's Health & Safety Management Plan.
- Rinville Park landscaping maintenance was undertaken while continuing to work in conjunction with the local Community & Employment Scheme. Upgrade works were completed to the public seating areas and waste collection facilities.
- Facilities in collaboration with our Human Resources section, undertake the role out of Fire Warden training.

CORONERS SERVICE

CORONERS SERVICE

The Council continued to provide administrative support for the processing of all payments of fees for the City and County Coroners Service. The full cost of the Coroners Service is borne by the Council through its revenue budget, with no mechanism for recoupment.

INTERNAL AUDIT/LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICE

INTERNAL AUDIT

The purpose of the Internal Audit Unit is to provide the Audit Committee and Management, with an independent and objective opinion on governance, risk management and internal control and their effectiveness in achieving Galway County Council agreed objectives. It also has an independent and objective advisory role to help line managers improve governance, risk management and internal controls.

Each year the annual Internal Audit Plan is prepared in consultation with Management of the Council, Local Government Auditor and the Audit Committee and it forms part of the programme of works for the Audit Committee. The Internal Audit Plan for 2023 was presented and agreed by the Audit Committee on 13th December 2022.

The Internal Audit Plan 2023 contained 10 areas for audit examination, subject to available resources, and completion of reviews carried forward from previous year.

Internal Audit Work Undertaken in 2023

The audit findings in respect of each review, together with our recommendations for action and the management responses are set out in our detailed reports.

Internal Audit undertook five audit reviews during 2023, four of which were completed by year end, one in progress and a number were rescheduled as outlined below.

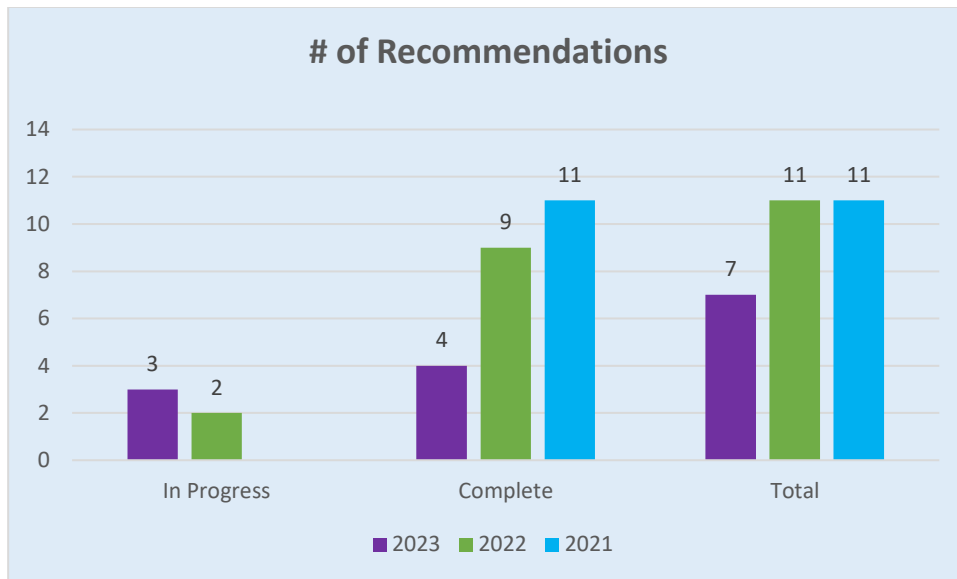
| Audit Area Audits - Final Reports | Assurance Level | Recommendations | | | Total | Accepted |
|---|---|-----------------|--------|-----|-------|----------|
| | | High | Medium | Low | | |
| Commercial Rates Waiver 2021 | Substantial | - | - | - | - | |
| Capital Works Construction of Fána Bhuí Tuam N7-2-300 | Substantial | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Public Spending Code – Quality Assurance | Substantial | - | - | - | - | |
| Town & Village Renewal Scheme | Moderate | | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Work In Progress | Status as at 31/12/2023 | | | | | |
| Development Contributions | In Progress | | | | | |
| IAP2023 Audit Plan | Status as at 31/12/2023 | | | | | |
| Staff Turnover – Review of staff exit policy & procedures | Scheduled – for inclusion in Strategic Audit Plan | | | | | |
| Financial Management System | Scheduled – included in 2024 plan | | | | | |
| 2022 SICAP - Verification review | Scheduled – included in 2024 plan | | | | | |
| Cybersecurity | Scheduled – in 2024 plan – to be outsourced | | | | | |
| Corporate Risk Register | Scheduled – for inclusion in Strategic Audit Plan | | | | | |
| Health & Safety Training | Scheduled – for inclusion in Strategic Audit Plan | | | | | |
| Fire Safety Training at Halting sites | Scheduled – for inclusion in Strategic Audit Plan | | | | | |

In addition to the audit reviews listed above, compliance checks are done, subject to availability of resources, on various areas within the Council, on a periodic basis. During 2023, checks were carried out in - Motor Tax Office (HQ & Area Offices), Cash Office, Burial Ground income, Prompt Payment Interest, and the Ethics Register.

The Internal Audit Unit consists of 3 staff members, of which two of the positions were vacant for a period in Q1 & Q2 of 2023. Current complement of staff in situ from May 2023. On-the-job training is continually being provided, along with outsourced training for new and existing staff.

Implementation of Recommendations

The following table provides a status of agreed audit actions. Five recommendations are ‘in progress’ at year end and are due for review in 2024.



Networking

Galway County Council hosted the Local Government Internal Auditor Network (LGIAN) hybrid meeting in the Council Chamber on 25th October 2023. The members were welcomed by A. Farrell, A/Director of Services, Community Development & Corporate, who emphasised the importance and value to which the Internal Audit function adds to the organisation. This forum is for internal auditors within local government to share knowledge and experiences to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Internal Audit function across the sector.

The LGIAN meets twice yearly and covers a broad spectrum of topics that is relevant to all local authorities and reports to the CCMA Finance Committee. Presentations were provided on various topics, during 2023 these included – Risk Management, Procurement, MyPay Payroll & Superannuation, Active Travel, Strategic Audit Planning, Debt Management, Impact of Culture on Governance, NOAC and VFM updates. As a subsidiary of this, there is also the Northwest Internal Auditors Network (NWIAN) in which there were a further 4 meetings held during 2023.

Support to Audit Committee

The Head of Internal Audit is currently acting as the meetings administrator to the Audit Committee (AC), which in addition to day to day working of the IAU is actively involved in facilitating the requirements of the Audit Committee. In addition to meeting preparations, this also involves liaison and follow-up with other sections within the organisation on issues raised by the A.C. members, drafting AC statutory reports and any other actions as requested by the AC.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee fulfils an important role in the governance framework by assisting the Council monitor the internal control environment, risk management, financial reporting, and internal/external audit functions.

There were 4 no. Audit Committee meetings held in 2023 and there was strong participation from all Committee members at each meeting.

| Audit Committee Members | Meeting Dates | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 14/02/2023 | 20/06/2023 | 07/11/2023 | 12/12/2023 |
| Mr. Des Mahon, Chairperson | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mr. Seamus Duffy | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ms. Sarah Roarty | ✓* | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cllr. James Charity | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

During 2023, the Audit Committee fulfilled its obligation to prepare two statutory reports to the Council as set out below:

The Audit Committees activities during the year is document in their Annual Report under Section 15 of Local Government (Audit Committee Regulations 2014). The Committee’s 2022 Annual Report on activity was presented to the Council at the plenary meeting held on the 27th February 2023. [Minute 4108](#)

Pursuant to Section 60 of the Local Government Act 2014 the Audit Committee prepared a statutory report on the Local Government Auditor’s 2022 Annual Financial Statement which was presented to the Council at the plenary meeting held on 18th December 2023. [Minute 4261](#)

LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICE

The Law Agent Department continued to provide the usual legal and advisory services for all programme areas and Directorates during 2023.

These services included the acquisition and sale of properties (an area of practice which continued to return to usual levels following the impacts of the Covid 19 Pandemic), the conduct of litigation to include District Court enforcement prosecutions, Circuit and High Court, including Judicial Review, all of which have now resumed to normal levels with developments within the Court Services to provide for both in-person and online court hearings. The completion of land acquisitions, CPOs on inter-urban routes and road widening schemes, were also substantial areas of work for the Law Agent Department. Code Enforcement also represents a significant workload for the department involving both planning and environmental prosecutions at various court jurisdictions.

The Case Management System, which facilitates the use of templates to create workflows for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of legal services, has undergone the most complete update in recent years and this update was completed in November 2023.

Work has continued on the council Register of Lands, in co-operation with our partners in other units such as IT, Finance and Housing. Significant progress has been achieved in terms of the

Property Interest Register, and indeed on the Archiving of old files. Funding for a software solution for the Property Interest Register has been approved and the Law Agent Office has engaged with various service providers with the view to finalising this system acquisition. Staffing for a new Property Interest Register Unit has also been approved and initial staff identified. This is in line with Local Government Auditor requirements.

The Law Agent Department has also provided additional support and advisory services to the Executive of the Council and organisational staff within the specialised areas of Data Protection and Freedom of Information, to include the sourcing of specific Advice and Opinion from Legal Counsel, as and when appropriate.

OPERATION OF MARKETS. CASUAL TRADING & FILM LICENCES

The Casual Trading License year runs from the 1st April until the 31st March. Licenses are issued annually on payment of a fee for several towns and villages throughout the County in line with the Casual Trading Byelaws.

The locations of the towns and villages are as follows:

- Athenry
- Ballinasloe
- Clifden
- Dunmore
- Gort
- Headford
- Loughrea
- Mountbellew
- Tuam
- Portumna

CASUAL TRADING BAYS

| Annual Licenses | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Area | No. of Licenses issued 2023 |
| Athenry | 6 |
| Ballinasloe (St. Mary's Square) | 10 |
| Clifden | 8 |
| Dunmore | 2 |
| Gort | 8 |
| Headford | 1 |
| Loughrea | 2 |
| Mountbellew | 10 |
| Portumna | 2 |
| Tuam | 9 |

| Special Event Licences | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Area | No. of Licences Issued 2023 |
| Ballygar | 23 |
| Clifden | 11 |
| Maam | 11 |
| Dumore | 27 |
| Permits for Ice Cream Vendors at Designated Beaches/Park | |
| Area | No. of Licences Issued 2023 |
| Tracht, Kinvara | 1 |
| Tra na bhForbacha | 1 |
| Céibh Nua an Spidéil | 1 |
| Roundstone | 1 |
| An Trá Mhór, Indreabhán | 1 |

Film Licences

During the course of 2023 Corporate Services received 12 requests from film production companies for use of public property to film. Some of the requests were for a day whilst others would extend to a few days.

RECREATION, AMENITY, PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Galway County Council continues to invest in play facilities in the County by providing public liability insurance to a number of community managed playgrounds as part of formal maintenance agreements with local groups, as well as the direct maintenance of playgrounds in our main towns. In accordance with previous commitments under the Council's Play Policy, assistance has been provided to playgrounds through direct funding and provision of insurance. To-date, a total of 80 playgrounds have been developed in the County, under this policy which provides one of the most extensive networks of playgrounds in any County available free of charge to residents of all main settlement centres and in key tourist locations.

Galway County Council are pleased to confirm that works and upgrades were recently completed by Murphys Playground Services Ltd and Galway County Council at Portumna Playground funded by Department of Rural and Community Development and Galway County Council under the Clár 2022 Scheme.

Our Clár application, aimed to ensure inclusivity for all children by replacing single spring rockers with double rockers which encourages children to play together, along with the installation of an inclusive wheelchair roundabout and necessary repairs to existing play apparatus to ensure safety for all users.



BEFORE & AFTER AT PORTUMNA PLAYGROUND, INSTALLATION OF WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE CAROUSEL





INSTALLATION OF NEW EQUIPMENT AT PORTUMNA PLAYGROUND



BEFORE AND AFTER, CLEANING OF PLAYGROUND

Galway County Council are pleased to confirm the recent installation of a wheelchair accessible roundabout and repairs to existing equipment at the Loughrea Playground after successfully securing funding from the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth 2023.



The on-line inspection 'app' continued to work well in 2023 as it assists Community Wardens carry out inspections using their smartphones and submit reports automatically. Reports are automatically filed providing a record of weekly inspections required for maintenance and insurance purposes.

RINVILLE PARK

Rinville Park is one of the County's largest parks, with a network of walkways, a playground, and an outdoor gym. Rinville Park is managed by Galway County Council is owned jointly by Galway County Council and Galway City Council. It is a designated location on the 'Wild Atlantic Way'. It is used extensively by local residents, visitors, and local organisations such as Scouting Groups.

A seasonal Caretaker was employed by the Council from March to October 2023. A Concession for the provision to sell light refreshments at Rinville Park from March to September was continued.



PICNIC SEATING AT RINVILLE PARK ORANMORE

DUNLO ATHLETIC TRACK, BALLINASLOE

Dunlo Athletic Track is a valuable amenity for the community of Ballinasloe and East Galway region in the ownership of Galway County Council.

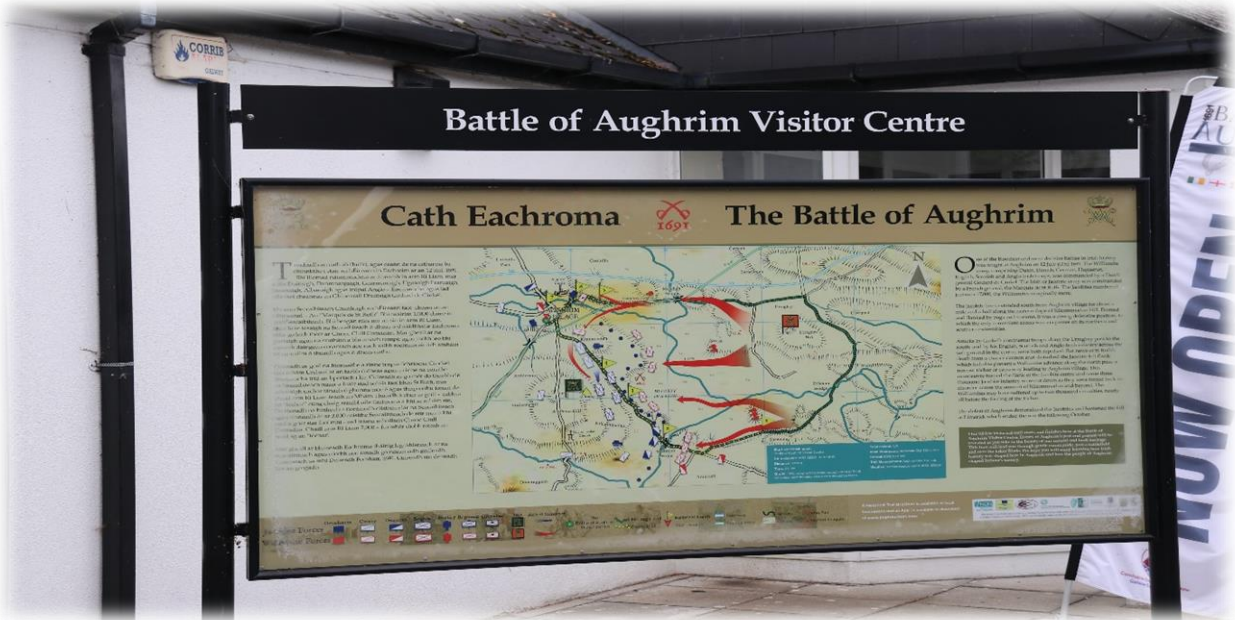
Galway County Council acknowledges the support of the TUS programme in the provision of services at the facility. The support services provided under the Scheme supports the operation of the facility and ensures that the facilities can be made available for the enjoyment and benefit of the local community and clubs.



DUNLO RUNNING TRACK, BALLINASLOE

BATTLE OF AUGHRIM VISITOR CENTRE

In May 2023, the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre reopened for the summer season May to September. There were approximately 800 visitors coming to the centre for its summer season, including a number of school tours from the region and neighbouring counties.



HERITAGE WEEK

On Saturday 19th August 2023, the Cath Eachroma 1691 group held a brilliantly attended Walk About and Talk About Event at the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre for Heritage Week.

Over 80 people attended to listen to stories of the battle and then participate in a walk of the battlefield.



LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PROGRAMME

Strategic Priority:

To enhance the well-being of the county, its communities and people, developing sustainable communities, maximizing social inclusion and supporting active citizenship.

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES PROGRAMME

Galway Public Libraries worked extensively throughout 2023 to deliver an enhanced, inclusive, and supportive service to communities in both urban and rural settings. Library services continue to be an important resource for children, adults and families in Galway city and county. Throughout 2023 the library delivered a tailored suite of services, programmes, workshops, lectures, and projects that maximized inclusion, promoted literacy awareness, and encouraged active citizenship.

To deliver on the strategic priorities, Galway Public Libraries provides a diverse range of services throughout the extensive network. These are listed here to give a service overview.

- 29 Branch Libraries
- Mobile library service
- Schools service for primary and post-primary schools
- Archives Department
- Local History service
- Audio-Book Service for persons with a visual impairment
- Sensory services and programming
- A Virtual Library platform offering services 24/7 these include the following:
 - eBooks and eAudiobooks
 - eMagazine subscriptions
 - Graphic novels and comics
 - Online courses covering a vast array of subjects, topics, and skillsets
 - Literacy supports for children with access to learning support platforms such as Nessy learning, TTRS.
 - Multi-lingual resources allowing children learn, read, and experience up to 300+ languages through LOTE website.
 - Medici TV – providing free online access to a wealth of musical resources, lectures and master classes
 - Access to International newspapers

The active library membership for Galway Public Libraries was 39,716 an increase of over 18%

In 2023, 676,043 items were issued (this figure does not include eBooks and eAudio books) and there was in excess of 510,874 visits to our libraries an increase of 40% approx.

Indicative Activities in 2023:

- Libraries remained one of the most visited public spaces in County Galway. Our libraries are established civic and cultural centres in their communities, a free amenity with a welcome for all.
- Public reaction to the National Distribution service has been hugely positive due to the availability of out-of-print titles, access to new fiction and non-fiction and course textbooks. This service continues to increase in use in line with our increased footfall post pandemic.
- Public internet access was upgraded in branch libraries throughout the city and county. WIFI services were also extended and upgraded in a few libraries including our Mobile Library
- The continuous promotion and the awareness around online resources has had multiple benefits with various languages, courses and learning platforms now supporting our diverse communities. Staff have assisted in digital skills training, and this has contributed to a sustained rise in usage.
- Key priorities within our business plan were delivered as part of the successful funding applications that were made to the Dormant Accounts Fund. These programmes focused on supporting those who are marginalized, socially excluded, and disadvantaged within our communities. Funding was also received to provide digital equity and facilitated the purchase of literacy, numeracy and digital skills licenses and apps.
- The roll out of Sensory services was enhanced with the provision of two sensory cubbies to two County branches Tuam and Ballinasloe in Q4 2023. Information leaflets designed specifically to highlight the range of associated sensory services available in the city and county were also circulated. Staff were trained in Autism Awareness and the library service renewed its commitment to supporting the J.A.M Initiative across all its network.
- The second Galway Public Libraries MOL (My Open Library) was started in Clifden Library in March 2023 with a total refurbishment of the branch. Proposed opening of the MOL is Q2 2024.
- The National Age Friendly Library Recognition Programme has been successfully rolled out in Galway Public Library service. All library service points including our Mobile Library have been awarded the Age Friendly Charter.
- Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated again in 2023 with wonderful displays of Irish language material which are available in all our library branches for both adults and children. Galway Public library service is committed to allocating a percentage of its book fund to the purchase of Irish language material. Irish language versions of popular board games such as Scrabble and Monopoly were also distributed to our libraries.
- Ukrainian support continued to be provided for those displaced by the ongoing war. The application process to join the library was reviewed and streamlined to allow for immediate access to our resources. Our outreach initiatives ensured that all support workers were advised of the free WIFI and public PC access that our libraries have for public use. Our libraries also hosted community integration events such as ‘Stay and Play’ and coffee mornings.
- The success of the MakerSpaces in the city libraries was further developed with the assistance of Creative Ireland Galway City which allowed for the expansion of the space in

Ballybane Library to allow for mixed Art medium workshops, sensory play programmes and water and wet clay modelling classes.

- In partnership with Music Generation Galway City the early years programme of rhyme time sessions was extended to the three city libraries.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES:

Healthy Ireland at Your Library

Galway Public Libraries participates in the national Healthy Ireland at Your Library Initiative which aims to establish public libraries as a valuable source of health information for communities. The Healthy Ireland at Your Library focuses on key elements as identified in the new public library strategy ‘The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration 2023-2027. Three actions were targeted during our Autumn/Winter programme but are reflective of the 2023 themes as a whole:

- Health Literacy
- Health Awareness
- Sustainable lifestyles

Galway Public Libraries Healthy Ireland programme featured many topics for lectures and workshops for 2023 examples include:

- Further provision of Autism awareness talks and parental supports are a key element for the Autumn schedule.
- Women and Girls in Sport – inclusion strategies
- Loneliness & depression – Winter
- Grief & Anxiety
- Foot Health and Fall Prevention
- Pilates for Fall prevention: strengthening your inner core.
- Oral Health: What’s it all about? Sugars and hygiene aids
- Body Image in Children and Teens: Eating disorders.
- Supporting people living with Dementia
- Diabetes and diet during Christmas
- Diet and wellbeing during recovery post Stroke.
- Irish Heart Foundation ‘Health Checks’ Roadshow

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Number of Events for 2023 | 52 |
| Number of sessions for Yoga & Pilates | 36 X 8 participants in attendance |
| Total number of participants at events | 2493 |

There was huge interest in the Autumn/Winter programme for Chair Yoga for those over 55 as well as Pilates for fall prevention. We also worked with the newly established social prescriber and the

Sláintecare Healthy Communities team and targeted programmes to support migrant and minority communities.



The **Right to Read** programme

The new National Public Library Strategy ‘The Library is the Place, Information, Recreation, Inspiration 2023 – 2027’ firmly places Reading and Literacy at the heart of what we do. At the centre of this action is The *Right to Read* programme, the national programme to promote literacy and reading development for people of all ages. The programme currently includes four national programmes designed to promote children's reading and literacy. The four programmes are as follows:

- Spring into Storytime
- Summer Stars
- Children’s Book Festival
- Family Time at Your Library

During the months of April and May, Galway Public Libraries hosted 15 online and in-branch story-time and craft workshops to celebrate **Spring into Storytime** with over 166 participants taking part. This represents a massive 500%+ in events and participation rates from 2022.

The **Summer Stars** reading adventure took place throughout the County with 3,578 children registering to take part. Our Libraries organized 145 throughout the Summer with over 2,400 children participating in these events. These included author visits, pottery, dance, pollinator, Lego and circus workshops, 3D experiences, and craft workshops ranging from jewellery making to origami.

Books Before Bedtime – To celebrate Family Time at Your Library children under 5 were invited to visit the library and pick up a free book in Irish or English. Parents are encouraged to read their children a book before bedtime during the winter.

Family Time at Your Library was a great success with 50 events hosted at family friendly times with 527 participants. The library service chairs the local Right to Read Network, which includes representatives of agencies working in the area of literacy development and support. The Network meets twice a year.



Children’s Book Festival ‘Book It!’ is a Children's Book Festival which takes place each October throughout Galway Public Libraries with the support of the Galway County Arts Office and the Galway City Arts Office. The festival is a celebration of books and reading and is a chance to meet new or favourite authors, participate in various workshops and enjoy the process of reading.

BookIt! Children’s Book Festival is an integral feature in our library calendar. It gives us the opportunity as Librarians to encourage children to get involved with literature, reading, art and engagement with storytellers, authors and facilitators. We are acutely aware of the importance of reading for children and understand that our events both in the classroom and in our libraries may be the only opportunity some children have to experience books and to meet authors. Through our partnership with Galway County & City Arts Offices, we are in a very strong position to bring creativity and children’s imagination to life across all ages throughout County Galway.



My Little Library Bag initiative is a new collaboration between libraries, the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. All children starting school in 2023 were invited to collect a bag of books just for them at their local library. In excess of 3,000 bags were distributed to children throughout the county. Each My Little Library Book Bag contained:

- Three books on starting school, making friends and being comfortable to be yourself.
- A story card on going to the library.
- A postcard the child could write or draw on and send to their new teacher or bring to give to the teacher on their first day at school.
- Their very own library card and special 'My Little Library' cardholder.
- Book bags are available in both Irish and English.

FEBRUARY 25TH2023: IRELAND READS DAY

Ireland Reads is the National day to celebrate reading with libraries across the city and county hosting events and programmes to encourage reading in all formats.

Teddy bear picnics, storytimes, arts and crafts happened in our libraries. Ballinasloe Library hosted a major event focusing on the medieval beads that were found in Ballinasloe. Speakers included

Archaeologist Fiona Maguire and Galway Community Archaeologist Bernie Doherty. A replica of the beads was presented to Ballinasloe Library for public display.

All our events were supported by Elected Members, writers and poets who joined in various reading campaigns.



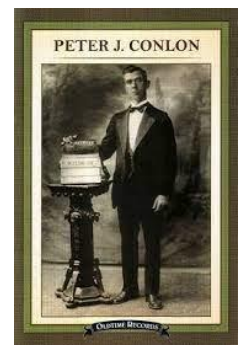
CREATIVE IRELAND

GALWAY'S GREAT READ 2023: *AROUND THE HOUSE AND MIND THE DRESSER*

Galway's Great Read is an annual programme of events, organised by Galway Public Libraries during November. Its purpose is to promote our literary heritage, history, and our unique culture, and foster an appreciation for its diversity and richness. The Great Read 2023 *Around the House and Mind the Dresser* highlighted the rich musical and song writing traditions of North and East Galway; explored the various storytelling voices of South Connemara and our Islands; re-ignited in our older audiences' memories of times past and inspired our younger generations to value and participate in this exploration of our Culture. The series of free events concentrated on music and



song collecting in North Galway; the musical traditions of East Galway; storytelling from South Galway and Connemara and a residency in popular music with Ultan Conlan in East Galway.



DECADE OF CENTENARIES

Galway Public Libraires as part of Galway County Council's Decade of Centenaries programme launched ' **1923: Respond, Reflect, Rejoice: *Through the Lens of our Literary and Artistic Creatives*** and as part of Galway City Council's Decade of Centenaries programme launched '**Reflections' - *In Commemoration to the Women of 1923***

These projects focused on the everyday experiences of the remarkable women and creatives living in extraordinary times.

The Finale of the Decade of Commemorations for Galway County Council took place in Claregalway Castle December 2023

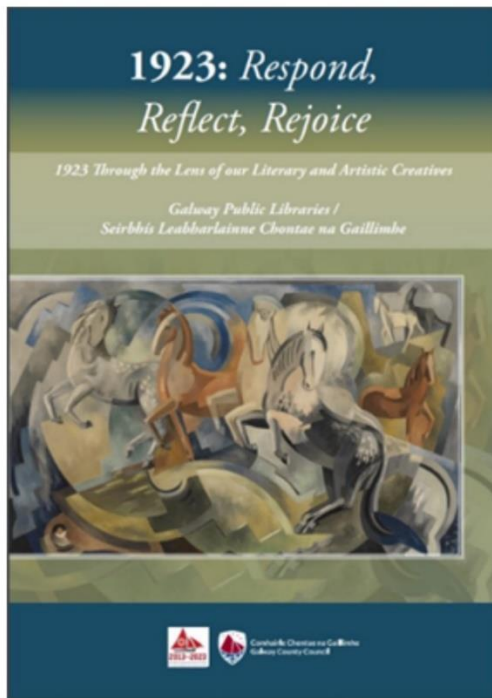


DECADE OF COMMEMORATIONS, CLAREGALWAY CASTLE

1923: Respond, Reflect, Rejoice: *Through the Lens of our Literary and Artistic Creatives* presented an exhibition and a series of talks, commissions and residencies which aimed to honour the artists who created works during this time of turbulent history. The project reflected on Elizabeth Bowen, Sean O'Casey, W.B. Yeats, Mainie Jellet and Liam O'Flaherty



1923: Respond, Reflect, Rejoice



1923 2023 Decade of Centenaries
Loughrea Library
Wednesday 8th November 5.30pm

Live performance:
A scene from Act I of "The
Shadow of a Gunman" by Sean
O'Casey

By students from the BA in Drama,
Theatre and Performance, University of
Galway, followed by a talk with the cast
and Dr Ian R. Walsh, Head of Drama and
Theatre Studies.

No booking required. All are welcome to
this free event.

1923-2023

1923 Respond, Reflect, Rejoice
Leabharlann na Ceathrún Rua
9ú Samhain, 600Ln

1923 An saol in Éirinn
Léacht gearr le Mary Clancy

Liam Ó Fháltheartha agus a
Chuid Gearrscéalta
Léacht le Michael Ó Chonghaile

I gCúlmhne Liam Uí Fháltheartha
Seoladh píosa nua-éireannach do phianó agus dhá
fháidil le Risteard Ó h'Aedha, Peadar Tom Mercier
agus Bois Ní Chonghaile

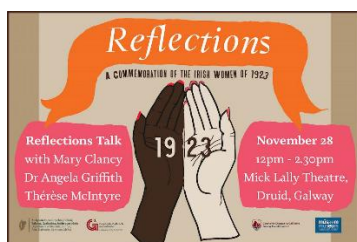
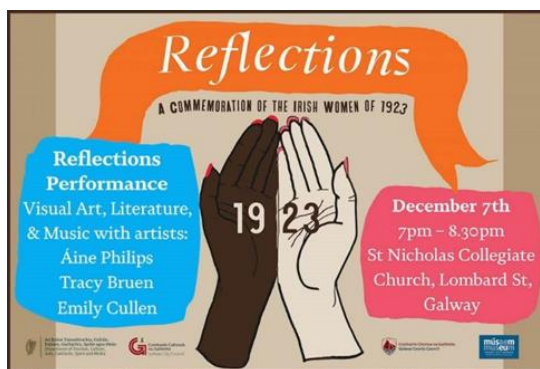
Fáilte roimh 'chuire dhuine!

1923-2023



"REFLECTIONS" - IN COMMEMORATION TO THE WOMEN OF 1923

Galway Public Libraries, Galway City Council and Galway City Museum presented "Reflections," a programme commemorating the remarkable women of 1923 as part of the Decade of Centenaries 2012 - 2023 initiative, supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports, and Media. This multifaceted project was developed in August 2023, and was a heartfelt tribute to the women who shaped Irish history during a pivotal era. It has offered a platform for in-depth discussions, artist residencies, and creative exploration of their lives and contributions.



We are indebted to all our creatives who worked on these two projects.

EUROPE DIRECT CENTRE

Europe Direct Ballinasloe Library provides information materials, answers questions and hosts events based on European priorities and activities. Ballinasloe Library also manages a European Information Point in Leabharlainn na Ceathrún Rua to insure access to materials as Gaeilge.

2023 activities included:

- Europe Direct hosted a group of 45 secondary school students and 2 teachers for a series of marine energy events, in support of the European Green Deal, and to raise awareness about the seas and oceans and their importance to our environment, economy and culture.
- In October the Centre brought 3 exceptional young people who had just undertaken Erasmus+ opportunities to 2 secondary schools to talk about their experiences.
- The Centre hosted the INTO Europe exhibition, a major element in the EU50 series of events commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- A major Sustainable Energy Saving Event focusing on sustainable energy saving for home and small business owners.



CLIMATE ACTION 2023

EMBL (European Molecular Biology Lab) TREC (Traversing European Coastlines)

In September the EMBL boat and testing teams arrived in Galway as part of their journey traversing European coastlines, studying ecosystems and their response to the environment. Galway Public Libraries were honored to officially welcome their community engagement officer Dr. Michele Fontana to Galway City and County. Cathaoirleach Liam Carroll, Leas Cathaoirleach Cllr. De Evelyn Parsons along with County Librarian Jo Vahey kickstarted 5 days of library activities in Ballinasloe Library on Sept. 9.



EMBL TREC welcome in Ballinasloe, Galway 2023

Climate Action Activities

To support SDG week Galway Public Libraries have organised and hosted a number of events to support Climate Action. Ballinasloe Library hosted a Sustainable Energy Saving Event with lots of information for homeowners about grant applications, solar panels, heat recovery systems and much more.

City Libraries in conjunction with the National Aquarium of Ireland and the Marine Institute hosted biofact workshops and held Marine awareness talks showcasing the ecology of the coastlines and assisted in the beach clean-up days.

Home Energy Saving Kits – Due to demand 5 extra kits were acquired for libraries to loan to library members. There were also online tutorials provided and a kids energy saving experiment workshop. Feedback is sent to CODEMA to further improve the kits and the service.

AGE FRIENDLY LIBRARIES

Galway Public Libraries have been involved in the Age Friendly programme since 2019. In 2023 all our libraries had identified an Age Friendly Champion and had achieved the Age Friendly Charter. Actions undertaken included:

- Provision of magnifying glass and/or glasses
- Seating suitable for older people was purchased
- Book stock was re-organized to increase accessibility
- A dedicated area was identified and marked as an Age Friendly area.
- Commitment to stay in touch with older communities
- Commitment to undergo training when available
- Events and activities that welcome older people



EVENTS FOR ADULTS:

- **Culture night** Culture Night/Oíche Chultúir which took place on 22 Sept 2023, is an annual, all-island public event which celebrates culture, creativity and the arts. It is a night to promote our rich and varied culture and showcase that it is treasured and nurtured in people's lives. Galway Public Libraries hosted many events including

Galway City Libraries:

Westside - Wood Turning with Mairtín Mac Donnacha, Galway City – Podcasting & Storytelling, Ballybane – Rita Ann Higgins and poetry night.

Galway County Libraries:

Oranmore – Music session circle, Ballinasloe – The Tallest Smallest theatre, Tuam Library – Jennifer Cunningham exhibition Bringing the Magic, Loughrea – 'Oíche Chultúir' with Lilis Ó Laoire & Róisín Seoighe, Gort Library – A night of traditional crafting.

CULTURE NIGHT 2023 GALWAY PUBLIC LIBRARIES OÍCHE CHULTUÍR

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 3pm-5pm | Westside Library | Taispeántas Stúim Láimhe Tradisiúnta agus Téarmaíocht le Mairín Davy |
| 4- 4.40pm and 6- 6.40pm | Ballinasloe Library | Tallest Smallest Theatre |
| 5-5.50pm and 6-6.50pm | Tuam Library | Customised Culture - textile workshops with Kathy Ross |
| 6:15-7:30pm | Galway City Library | Podcasting in Galway: Featuring 3 Galway Podcasters |
| 6:15-7:30pm | Ballybane Library | Poetic Voices With Rita Ann Higgins |
| 6-8pm | Gort Library | An Evening Of Traditional Crafting |
| 6.30-8pm | Oranmore Library | "Music and Song" from the children and adults of Oranmore branch of Camhallas Ceoldóirí Éireann |

The Art of Reading Book Club
With Colm Tóibín & Kevin Power
Ballinasloe Library
Saturday 1st July 2.30pm

Booking: [essential@galwaylibraries.ie](https://www.galwaylibraries.ie)

- Westside Public Library in conjunction with community partners delivered the Westside Arts Festival
- Bealtaine Festival in May was celebrated in a number of libraries
- Art exhibitions, book launches and readings were held in all our bigger branches
- Digital literacy classes delivered as part of our Age Friendly initiative.
- Ballinasloe Library hosted internationally acclaimed author Colm Tóibín, currently the [The Laureate For Irish Fiction](#) and novelist Kevin Power as part of the 'The Art of Reading The Art BookClub'
- Galway Public Libraries had some very interesting events scheduled around the County for Heritage week 2023

Galway Libraries Heritage Week Events August 2023

- Art Exhibition "On Our Doorstep" Ballinasloe Church Gallery**
Ballinasloe Library
Co. Galway - County
30000-30005, Ballinasloe
17 August 2.30pm - 4.30pm
- Aleen Curt Exhibition**
Friends of Aleen Curt
North Street, Co. Sligo - County
Church House, 50 St. Fl. Galway
12, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18 August, 10am - 4pm
- Archaeology of Loughrea**
Galway County Council & Loughrea Medical Festival
Loughrea Library, Co. Galway - County
Church Street, Loughrea
18 August 2pm - 3pm
- The Presentation Sisters in Oranmore - Photo Exhibition in Oranmore Library**
Oranmore Heritage
Oranmore Public Library, Co. Galway - County
Main Street, Oranmore
12 August, 10am - 3pm
14 August, 10.30am - 3pm
16 August, 10am - 3pm
18 August, 10am - 3pm
19 August, 10am - 12pm
- Talk: Dr. Geraldine Carrin on the Ballinasloe Girls Reformatory School**
Ballinasloe Library
Co. Galway - County
30000-30005
15 August 10.30am - 11.30am
- Heritage Hour at Oranmore Public Library**
Oranmore Heritage
Oranmore Public Library, Co. Galway - County
Main Street, Oranmore
16 August, 10am - 3pm



PRIORITIES FOR 2024

- Work will continue to maintain and improve library services in Galway as per the new Public Library Strategy 2023-2027 *The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration*, while being mindful of budgetary constraints
- National programmes including Right to Read, and Healthy Ireland at Your Library will continue to be rolled out across the branch library network, availing of relevant funding streams, with the aim of ensuring a range of services in both urban and rural branch libraries
- Planned opening of Galway Public Libraries second My Open Library (MOL) in Clifden
- Efforts to enhance the use of technology will continue, with the extension of self-service technologies and promotion of online resources
- Automation of smaller branch libraries will continue, subject to staffing levels and funding

- Galway Public Libraries will apply for a second Citizen Science Kit. The Citizen Science Kit Pilot Programme is an initiative that will empower the public to collect information about biodiversity in their local area.
- Galway Public Libraries will continue to develop our events and outreach programmes, engaging with individuals and communities, availing of national funding opportunities, while operating within the constraints of local funding.
- Galway Public Libraries will continue to maintain the library vehicle fleet and explore upgrade options under green procurement.

ARCHIVES & MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS

The collective memory of the people of Galway is of vital importance in preserving cultural identities, in bridging the past and the present and in shaping the future. The local authority archives service hold records relating to the governance of the county of Galway and the communities that live there. Its collections include records such as council minutes, decisions, electoral registers, burial registers, and records from all sections within the authority, together with material from local communities and individuals.

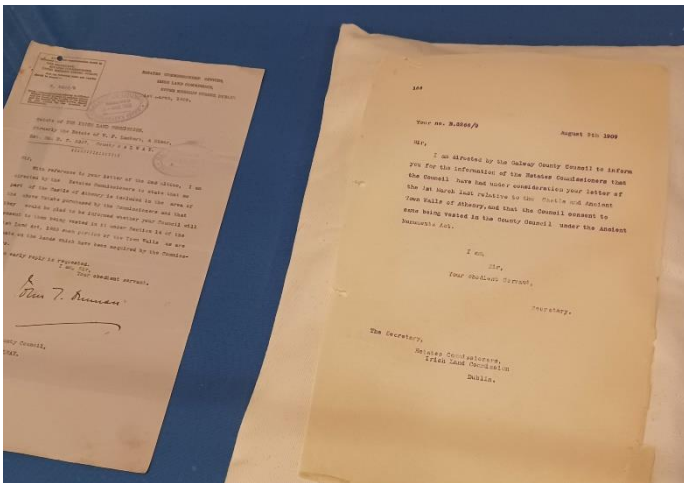
The Archives play a vital role in transparency, accountability, and democracy within local government.

The documentary heritage residing in Galway County Council Archives constitutes a major part of that memory and reflects the diversity of the people, history and culture of the county. The Archives strives on a continual basis to preserve, manage and make accessible that memory. It undertakes to provide *bona fide* users access to the archives consistent with preservation requirements and within the limitations of available resources. The Section also provides policy advice to the Council on the care and management of its records.

- Continued to provide access to information on Galway County Council's archival holdings through its descriptive lists and its fully searchable on-line catalogue, and through various archival portals, and social media posts.
- Continued processing archive collections¹.
- Continued the programme of providing security backup and reference surrogates to collections, through the digitisation programme. Items included in the 2023 programme

¹ Collections / items processed and added to the online catalogue include additional volume minutes for Tuam Board of Guardians, 1843-1850 (GPL5/); Galway Board of Guardian minutes (GPL6/); Map of Mongan's Fisheries, Carna, c.1920s (GS23/001); Monsignor Joyce, History of Portumna and Notes (GS23/01); Papers relating to the families of Purefoy of Offaly and Turbett of Dublin, 1732 – 1920 (GP16/); Pilgrimages to Lourdes, 1952-54, photographs (GS23/03); Ballinasloe Urban Council - Town Council / Planning Policy & Development/ Town Development Plans and associated records x 6, 1967-2009 (BUC/PD/DP); County Surveyor's Damp Press Letter Copy Book, 1907-1909 (GC/CS/18); and various Galway County Council accruals such as Corporate Service National Monument files (GC/CC15/1/NM1-12); Register of Electors, 2020-2022; County Development Plan 2015-2021 (GC/P1/1/2015), 2022-2028 (GC/P1/1/2022), and related records (GC/P1/1/17D, GC/P1/1/2022B) additions to the Piers & Harbours series x 8 (such as GC/CSO/002/019c, GC/CSO/002/034, GC/CSO/002/064C); Labourers Cottages, Labourers Acts Ledger, 1935-1947 (GC/HSG/LC/02) and Labourers Cottages, Capital Account, 1948-1972 (GC/HSG/LC/03), Register of Interments, Moorpark (Athenry), 1954-1968 (GC/ENV2/111) and additional accruals to the County Library Collection (e.g., G01/05/19-20).

- Connemara radio interview to discuss the Archive's publication *Island Images: From the Chambers Archive, 1929-1938*.
- Partnered with the Heritage Office and Library Services to deliver *Who do you think you are? Tracing your Galway Roots*, Heritage Week event.
- Numerous social media posts highlighting the archive collection.
- Provided advice on records management best practice and assistance to Sections within Galway County Council, as required, together with assistance with Disposal Certificates and associated data management.
- Continued the management of non-current record transfers to storage (approx. 7,496 boxes of managed material currently in commercial storage); 1,058 recall requests processed in 2023. At the end of 2023 there were approx. 141,185 entries on ArcLink, the records management database.



DISPLAY OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL, IN ÁRAS AN CHONTAE, FROM AN ATHENRY WALLS & CASTLE FILE, 1914 (GC/CC15/1/NM3)

SELECTION OF ANNUAL REPORTS (GC5/36), ISSUED BY THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER TO GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL, DATING FROM 1931 TO 1943, ACQUIRED BY GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHIVES IN 2023.



PROMOTION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE

Galway County Council is committed to improving services through Irish and to continue to meet the relevant obligations under the Official Languages Acts 2003 & 2021 together with the implementation of our Language scheme. The Council also looks to support and promote the Irish language throughout the County. Some of the activities undertaken in 2023 were:

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Irish language was specifically included as a category in the Community Support Schemes in 2023. Small scale grants totalling €4,000.00 was allocated for projects by Community & Voluntary Organisations to support the promotion and increased use of the Irish language.

PROMOTION OF GAEILGE

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe continued its support of the promotion of Irish in communities throughout the County through sponsorship of a Glór na nGael Award, which was presented to Comhar Chuigéal, Leitir Mealláin, Co. na Gaillimhe, in April 2023.



The email address gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie continues to be promoted to customers as part of enhanced service delivery.

Irish language classes (beginner and intermediate levels) were available online for staff of the local authority and classes were also available for Councillors who expressed an interest in same.

Information and consultation continues to be provided to staff of Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe regarding language duties, obligations and legislation, including ensuring bilingualism on www.galway.ie / www.gaillimh.ie, in line with our language scheme and the Official Languages Acts.

Mobile Simultaneous translation equipment continued to be available for Council meetings or other meetings at which translation may have been required.

Scoláireachtaí Gaeltachta Phádraig Mhic Phiarais /Pádraig Pearse Scholarships:

12 scholarships were awarded and there were 2 scholarships to each of the six following Gaeltacht colleges:

- Coláiste Chonnacht, An Spidéal,
- Spleodar, Ros Muc/ Corr na móna/Leitir Mealláin/Leitir Móir
- Coláiste Sheosaimh, Carna/Cill Chiaráin
- Coláiste Chamuis, An Tulach/Camus/Ros an Mhíl,
- Coláiste Lurgan, Indreabhán, Coláiste Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua



STUDENTS RECEIVING THEIR GAELTACHT SCHOLARSHIP CERTIFICATES FROM

CATHAOIRLEACH MICHAEL 'MOEGIE' MAHER

Scoil Samhraidh An Phiarsaigh

Scoil Samhraidh An Phiarsaigh was held in Rosmuc, Co. Galway on the 27th & 28th July 2023 where there was a wide variety of free events for the public from guided tours around Pearse's cottage, lectures, drama, music, debating and information about various hobbies available in the Connemara areas.



CATHAOIRLEACH LIAM CARROLL

DIRECTOR OF SERVICES ALAN FARRELL



CEOLTÓIRÍ ÓGA Ó CHOMHALTAS CHEOLTOIRI CHARNA –

YOUNG MUSICIANS FROM CHOMHALTAS CHEOLTOIRI CHARNA



DIARMUID DE FAOITE
DÍOSPÓIREACHTA

DEBATING PANEL /PAINÉAL

Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga

The Council continued to co-operate with Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga, in dealing with issues raised by members of the public, regarding Irish language services and legislation.

We received four complaints from Oifig an Choimisinéara Teanga and these were relating to incorrect placenames on signage. These were addressed and amended, and the cases were completed satisfactorily.

As part of our obligations in Galway County Council as a public body under the Official Languages Act – Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla 2003 & 2021 we will be monitored each year as to our advertising.

Public bodies must have a minimum of 20% of their advertisements through Irish that is one in five advertisements. This would be advertisements in local and national papers or paid advertising platforms and 20% of postings on social media must be in Irish. Public bodies must spend 5% of their annual advertising budget with an Irish media company, this would be a media company that would be publishing a minimum of 50% of their content through the medium of Irish.

Galway County Council in 2023 achieved to publish 28.53% of their adverts in Irish in the local and national papers and 29.7% of adverts on social media in Irish and 3.5% of our annual advertising budget with an Irish media company Tuairisc.ie .

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The email address, customerservices@galwaycoco.ie and gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie remains a central point of access to information for Staff and Customers alike. Staff are asked to submit information on projects, campaigns, events, works etc. so that the Customer Services Team are aware what events are taking place across the Council and are better informed to handle queries. The general public can also email these addresses with general queries, which are acknowledged and directed to the relevant sections as required for their attention.

Customer Services continues to maintain the system of re-formatting new application forms and updating existing forms when requested. We now have 287 forms and memorandums in total on our register/coding system, available via our website. Door access system cards and car park fobs continue to be issued and maintained by Customer Services.

Advance copies of public notices prior to notices appearing in the various newspapers appear on social media and are sent to Elected Members with relevant contact details included.

CUSTOMER SERVICES DESK & COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

The Customer Services Desk continues to provide efficient referral/query handling for customers as they enter Áras an Chontae. The phone service continues to be operated from the Customer Services Communications Centre on the second floor of Áras an Chontae.

Corporate Services staff based in Customer Services are assigned to support the Mobile Phone Policy of the organisation and day to day administration of the account.

COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA



Galway County Council grew its Facebook followers by 11% to 15,687 and its X (previously Twitter) followers by 3% to 16,594 from 2022 to 2023. The Galway County Council's Instagram page followers grew by over 200%, generating 833 followers by the end of 2023. Overall, women constitute 68% of all followers compared to 32% of men, with 35 – 44-year-olds being the largest demographic at 25%.

Social Media has been integrated with Advertising and other Promotional Campaigns of the Council and specific attention given to the use of social media during severe weather events. There has been an increase in the posting of events on behalf of staff with a focus on Road Works, Water Disruptions and any other day to day events happening throughout the County.



The Customer Services team participated in 'Your Council Day' National Campaign as coordinated by the LGMA on the 23rd June 2023.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL #YOURCOUNCILDAY

ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE CHANGE,
HUMAN RESOURCES &
ICT & DIGITISATION

ENVIRONMENT

The role of the Environment Section is to protect and enhance the Environment in the County of Galway in the interests of quality of life, economic development, and regulatory compliance. This is to be achieved through the implementation of numerous plans, measures, and programmes to be delivered throughout the Unit.

Strategic Goals

To maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our county

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

The awareness team continued to engage with the domestic and commercial sectors in promoting environmental awareness.

- Litter Management Plan was reviewed and updated for 2023-2025.
- Information was provided on awareness and environmental activities through local media, social media, cinema, schools, voluntary groups, community events, leaflets, PPN, etc.
- There was ongoing involvement with Tidy Towns groups.
- The Green Schools programme continues in the schools.
- There were a numerous Anti-Litter initiatives rolled out and funded by Galway County Council. The dog fouling campaign continued, The Picker Pals Anti-Litter programme was delivered in 72 classes with 25 sponsored by Galway County Council, an Anti-Litter Poster Competition was organised for National Schools, Anti-Litter pitch campaign, 2 radio adverts were funded, and a bilingual cinema advert was run in cinemas.
- "Leave No Trace" programme was supported, and principles integrated into Environment campaigns.
- Anti-Litter audio programme was continued at 5 sites.
- An Anti-Litter programme for beach areas was developed.
- A pilot "Beach Awareness Day" was delivered as part of heritage week.
- Grants were given to communities to maintain bring banks and burial grounds.
- Delivery of National Spring Clean, National Tree Week, Reuse Month, Community Clean Up Initiatives, and Christmas Tree Collections.
- Mobile WEEE collections were delivered in 22 communities.
- Gum Litter Taskforce and Irish Business against Litter campaigns were supported.





Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Litter Management Plan 2023 – 2025

Adopted by Galway County Council on the 26th July 2023



Please Play Your Part – Keep County Galway Litter Free



SEASHORE EVENT

PLANNING

207 planning applications and planning compliance referrals with a significant environmental risk were reviewed by the Environment Section. Staff attend pre-planning meetings, review planning applications and plans and make recommendations in relation to conditions/further information/grant/refusal. The available staff resource is assigned to the highest risk activities.

WASTE SERVICES

Waste Service

Three Civic Amenity Sites are provided in the county at Tuam, Ballinasloe and Clifden which are operated on behalf of the Council by Barna Recycling. Following a tendering process, a new operations contract was awarded to the incumbent for three years until 2024. In conjunction with the contract the facilities at the sites were upgraded and the range of acceptable waste types extended. In relation to Gort Civic Amenity Site resources will have to be examined for the delivery of this project.

Historic Landfills

Environments risk assessments, monitoring and responses to further information requests by the EPA were undertaken throughout the year to progress Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) applications for historic landfills in the County. A further three applications are with the EPA for consideration. Consultants are in place and progressing the risk assessments for a further two applications which are expected to be submitted in 2024.

With funding support from Department of Environment, Climate and Communications the aftercare at Kilconnell landfill was operated and maintained per the conditions of its waste license. An external design team are preparing design documentation for an Eco-Park on the landfill site. The goal is to submit a planning application in 2024. A design team led by landscape architects Brady Shipman Martin have been engaged to prepare a preliminary design report for an amenity facility

at Pollboy landfill which is expected to be ready for presentation to the Municipal District Council Members in 2024. In each of the amenity projects public engagement was conducted by way of public information days and inviting opinions and ideals via the council's consultation portal.

Strategic Priority

To improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage, and language in the interests of present and future generations.

The Environment Section manages 615 permits, certificates, and registrations in relation to waste and water activities.

WATER PROTECTION

Thirty inspections of domestic wastewater treatment systems were carried out under the National Inspection Plan. 17 inspections were carried out under the Farm Inspection Programme and an additional 17 inspections were instigated on foot of complaints received. 136 inspections of sites with discharge licences were carried out. Enforcement related to the inspections detailed above was carried out where necessary. This is a significant issue in our functional area which requires a lot of resources.

The following monitoring programmes were fully completed, including investigative monitoring where required: rivers, lakes, bathing waters, drinking water private supplies, drinking water public supplies and public wastewater facilities. Public health was protected through the implementation of the non-compliance protocols where required.

405 water, air and noise complaints were investigated in 2023.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

Investigations were carried out in response to complaints received from the National Illegal Dumping line, public, council staff and the EPA referral system in line with national priorities and within the timelines set out in the Enforcement Policy where possible.

Waste enforcement inspections were carried out in relation to permitted and certified waste facilities, commercial premises, permitted and bogus waste collectors, illegal dumping and construction and development sites. 1133 investigations were carried out in relation to waste and litter complaints. During 2023, 350 inspections were carried out under the Waste Presentation Byelaws. The areas that were chosen had been the subject of numerous complaints. All non-compliant households were given verbal Section 14 Directions in relation to waste segregation and where required they were directed to obtain a brown bin. Non-compliant households will be reinspected. Three fixed payment notices were issued to households in 2023 under these Byelaws for not having bins or for not segregating correctly. These fines were not paid so legal cases will be initiated.

In 2023 the Environment Section carried out 9 projects under the ADI scheme. Bulky goods collections were carried out at our 3 civic amenity sites and individual one day collections at Loughrea Mart and Gort Mart. A total of 70 tonnes of bulky goods was collected.

Several clean ups were carried out at problem housing estates which were generating a lot of complaints. Galway County Council also carried out an anti-dumping awareness campaign. This included the hire of electronic billboards for a few weeks displaying an Anti-Dumping message. These were installed at known dumping blackspots and on the approach roads to the major towns in the county. Advertising billboards were also used to highlight the consequences of using unauthorised waste collectors.

190 groups registered with the National Spring Clean were assisted through the provision of pickers, bags, gloves, and collection services.

Significant work was carried out on sites of interest in 2023. A major site of interest was one at which approximately 8,000 tonnes of tyres was identified in 2022. This was a former authorised facility. The council revoked the permit and initiated legal proceedings in 2021. Galway County Council, with the assistance of WERLA, secured funding from the relevant Department to facilitate the clean-up of the site. This project began in April 2023 and was completed by the end of May. The project ran smoothly, there were slightly less tyres on site that we had initially estimated.

Full details in relation to inspections and enforcement activities in the areas of waste, water, air, and noise are set out in the RMCEI returns for 2023.

BEACHES

The following 6 beaches achieved Blue Flag status in 2023:

- Trá an Dóilín, An Cheathrú Rua
- Loughrea Lake
- An Trá Mhór, Indreabhán
- Cill Mhuirbhigh, Inis Mór
- Bathing Place at Portumna
- Trá Inis Oirr (Main Beach)

The following 6 beaches achieved Green Coast Award status in 2023:

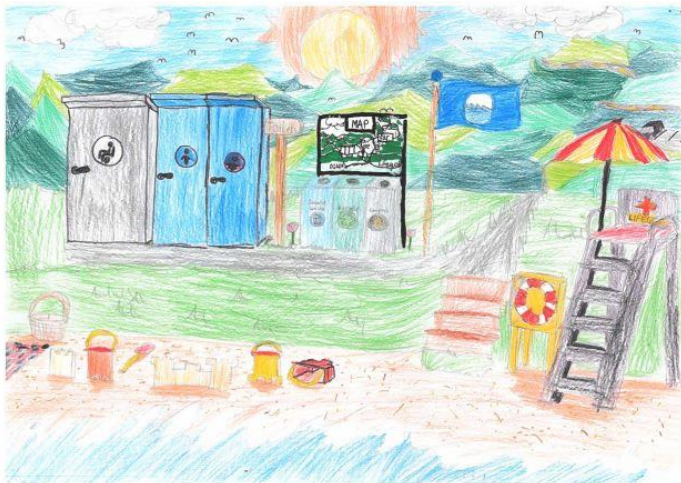
- Trá Inis Oirr (Main Beach)
- Aillebrack, Ballyconneely
- East End, Inishbofin
- Dumhach, Inishbofin
- Renvyle Beach (Whitestrans Beach)
- Poll na gCaorach, Formna, Inis Oirr

On Friday 18 August 2023 Galway County Council Environment Section hosted the inaugural bilingual Sea Shore Event at An Trá Mhór, Indreabhán. The event formed part of the National Heritage Week and included a Scavenger Hunt, Seashore Bio-Blitz, Litter Clean up, Sand Sculptor Challenge and Litter Study.



On 21st June 2023 prizes were presented to the winners of the Anti-Litter Poster competition and Blue Flag Beach Art Competition. There were 760 entries received in total for both competitions. The competition provided the students with the opportunity to develop their learning experiences by showing their creativity through language and art and increasing their awareness and responsibility for the Environment.

The students were asked to design and paint a picture depicting Blue Flag Beaches. As part of the Anti-Litter Poster Competition, they were asked to design a poster demonstrating the anti-litter theme. In an age of technology, it is wonderful that they get to use their artistic skills whenever possible.



TWO OF THE ENTRIES

Actions were taken to protect public health by continuing to monitor bathing water quality and implement non-compliance protocols at 28 bathing areas during the bathing water season.

There were two reported algal blooms in several locations on Lough Corrib at which people bathe but which are not included in our bathing water monitoring programme. Permanent signage was erected at numerous locations on both the east and west sides of the lake in 2022 and 2023, warning people of the risk to human and animal health.

Water Safety Programme

The Water Safety Programme involves the recruitment of a panel of 50 trained lifeguards to provide services at ten locations in the county and six locations in the city as part of a Shared Service Agreement with Galway City Council. Two lifeguards are provided at all beaches in compliance with International Lifesaving Federation of Europe (ILSE). This season the lifeguards will start working weekends in June and working fulltime in July and August, finishing on the second weekend in September. City and County Beaches operate between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Galway County Council supports the work of the Galway Water Safety Area Committee, who provide water safety weeks on the mainland and the Aran Islands, with the assistance of the lifeguard service and the Water Safety Awareness and Development Officer.

Galway County Council shared service employs a fulltime Water Safety Awareness and Development Officer who supervises the Water Safety Lifeguard Programme, development of the service as well as advising both local authorities on all aspects of water safety and implementation of Water Safety Ireland's guidance notes.

Galway County Council makes a yearly contribution to Water Safety Ireland of €6,150. Beach-friendly wheelchairs are available from the lifeguard huts for people with mobility issues at Tracht Beach, Kinvara and An Tra Mór, Indreabhan.



AN TRA MR, INDREABHAN, LIFEGUARD HUT

Strategic Priority

To maximise organisational capacity through the continuous review of operational efficiency, financial and risk management and the development of our Staff and Elected Members

BURIAL GROUNDS

Extensions to burial grounds were completed in Creagh (Ballinasloe) and Duniry, providing approximately 500 additional double plots. The development of an extension at Ballyconnelly consisting of 150 plots was substantially completed. A planning submission was made for an extension to the burial ground in Kilbannon.

A public expression of interest campaign was run during year to reach out to landowners in the South Connemara area for suitable lands for burial ground development.

With support from local burial ground committees, several minor works / projects were also undertaken to improve and maintain our existing burial grounds throughout the County. An annual grant of between €150 - €1,400 was provided to committees who maintain burial grounds in their area. A total of €130,000 was paid to 150 committees.

Strategic Priority

To facilitate the broadest possible participation by citizens in local decision making and the sustainable development of their communities and their county

VETERINARY SERVICES

The Council provides a Veterinary Public Health Inspection Service in both Galway City and County. This service fulfils the terms of its service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. There is currently one fulltime veterinarian in the service, following the retirement of the County Veterinary Officer in September 2022. A recruitment campaign for an additional vet to join the service on temporary contract ran in November and December 2023 with a panel formed.

Discussions are still ongoing between the CCMA and the DAFM in respect of the transfer of veterinary officers from all local authorities to the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine. The contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland contract was extended from December 2023 to 29th February 2024.

There are 11 low throughput abattoirs in the county which slaughter cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry, and process wild game. The Council also supervised 10 approved and 3 registered meat processing premises in both the city and county in 2023. Veterinary Inspectors inspected 11,490 animals (bovine, ovine, caprine) in 9 local abattoirs as well carrying out ante and post-mortem sessions on 2553 birds in 2 poultry establishments in 2023.

A further 95 official control inspections were completed over all the establishments in 2023.

52 samples were taken for microbiological and chemical safety of food and for the presence of antibiotic, heavy metal, and anthelmintic residues, as part of an EC monitoring program in 2023.

Galway County Council's Veterinary Service has an advisory role for existing and prospective meat food business operators at start-up phase and has an advisory role to the BIA Innovator campus Athenry.

Dog Control

Dog control and the promotion of responsible dog ownership in the County continues to be monitored by our dog warden service. 2023 was another very challenging year for the service with continued large numbers of stray and abandoned dogs entering the system. All complaints received by the dog warden service continued to be logged and responded to during 2023. 67 fines for breaches of the Control of Dogs Act were issued during 2023. Approx. 91% of dogs which came through the LA pound system were rehomed in 2023.

In April 2023 Galway County Council ran a tender for the provision of dog shelter and associated services for Galway County. An evaluation was done and there was one successful tenderer and Galway County Council awarded the contract for the provision of these services in July 2023.

In March 2023 Galway Council partnered with MADRA on 'Millie's fund', a spay campaign for female dogs in the County which was set up to reduce the number of unwanted puppies being born in Galway. This campaign has been a significant success with 122 vouchers issued to dog owners in the county during 2023.



The Council also provides a large Animal Pound facility at Ballinasloe. The Council veterinary service provides advice and assistance to the Housing Section in the implementation of the Control of Horses Act. Eight Dog Breeding Establishments are registered with Galway County Council, and these are inspected, and risk assessed as per the Dog Breeding Establishment legislation.

Galway County Council's Veterinary Service continues to participate in the cross agency Western Zoonosis Committee with the HSE and Department Agriculture, Food, and the Marine.

Galway County Councils Veterinary Officer participated in the Ministerial Working Group on Control of Dogs throughout 2023, which produced the action report on Control of Dogs signed off Ministers for Rural Community and Agriculture and then by Government Cabinet.

Animal Welfare cases were logged and where relevant, investigated in conjunction with the competent authorities, providing advice and assistance and action (including seizure, fines, and legal proceedings) where necessary. Cross reporting occurred when appropriate.

Marine mammal cases were investigated in conjunction with agencies and area offices and advice given.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Governance and staff resources

A Climate Action Officer was appointed in May and a Community Climate Action Officer was appointed in June 2023. These positions are funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. They joined the Climate Change Coordinator and Energy Officer within the Climate Unit. Meetings of the full Climate Action Steering Group, Energy Team and Climate Action Team were limited in 2023 as members were asked to attend sectoral workshops and meetings instead to develop the actions for the GCC Climate Action Plan.

Community support

The Community Climate Action Fund was opened for applications in December 2023. A significant public awareness campaign was run in advance. An online application system was put in place to ensure efficiencies in the application process.

Under SEAI's Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) Program, the Environment Section have engaged with several SECs to support the development of their Energy Master Plans (EMPs). Galway County Council appointed consultants to deliver EMPs for Clifden Glen, Kinvara and the Galway County PPN in 2023.

The Climate Unit are members of the steering group for the PPN Green Recovery Group Energy Masterplan. As part of the development of the plan and with the support of the Community and Enterprise Section, energy assessments were carried out on 40 Community Buildings.

Work is ongoing on the CONNECTED project, a Decarbonisation Zone Protect project managed by NUIG and supported by Galway County Council and other partners. The project was awarded funding under the Community Climate Action Programme administered by Pobal. In summary, the aims of the project are to develop an engagement, dialogue, and participation tool; a local DZ plan procedure guide to ensure input from marginalised communities; exemplar case studies and provide training.

Work is also ongoing on the Local Energy Agencies in Peripheral Regions LIFE funded project. The Climate Unit are on the steering group for this project. The Islands and the Gaeltacht Local Energy Agency was established under this project in 2023 and staff were appointed. The project aims to develop a pipeline of home retrofitting projects and partners include Udaras, ATU and a number of Local Authorities.

The Clean energy for EU islands initiative provides a long-term framework to help islands generate their own sustainable, low-cost energy. The secretariat acts as a platform to exchange best practices and provides dedicated capacity building and advisory services. Galway County Council supported applications for both the Aran Islands and Inishbofin under the *30 islands for 2030* programme. Both applications were successful, and the secretariat will now provide significant technical and organisational support to the island communities and Galway County Council.

Internal Energy use

The Climate Unit completed the SEAI Accelerator Programme to enable training of key staff in relation to the requirements of ISO50001 Energy Management accreditation and develop required documentation. Work commenced on the establishment of an Energy Management System that complies with the requirements of ISO50001 with a view to reapplying for accreditation in 2024. Our significant energy users were identified, and work is ongoing to reduce energy use.

A regional tender for a metering and data management system panel was completed and a panel of approved contractors was established. It is expected that work will be carried out in Q2 2024. Four buildings were prioritised for preliminary work under the Pathfinder Programme. A regional tender process was completed, however, there were no tenders submitted. This will now be readvertised on a local basis. Pre-retrofit works including Asbestos Surveys and Air Permeability Testing were completed on the four buildings. The Regional Energy Bureau and Energy Bureau Officer supported this work.

The National Reduce Your Use Campaign was rolled out in Q4 2022 and Q1 2023 to promote energy efficiency behaviour at work, at home and as we travel.

Climate Action Plan

Background work was carried out to support the development of the Galway County Council Climate Action Plan including:

- Workshops and meetings with staff, community groups, sectoral representatives, elected representatives, the Climate and Biodiversity SPC and members of the public,
- County Wide, and Decarbonisation Zone, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Assessment,
- Climate Change Risk Assessment,
- Review of existing actions in National Plans, Sectoral plans, Galway County Council Climate Adaptation Plans,
- Development of Engagement Strategy, Issues Paper, draft Climate Action Plan, and completion of SEA / AA
- Implementation of pre-draft Public Engagement Strategy including public survey and stands at events such as Cruinniú na mBad, Dunmore Festival and Who's Who on the Corrib.



County Council launches survey as part of new climate action, heritage and biodiversity plans

Galway County Council has this week launched two public consultation processes which will help to inform the local authority's Climate Action Plan, and a Heritage and Biodiversity Plan for the county.

Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council, Cllr Liam Carroll, launched the consultation process on Monday. The Cathaoirleach welcomed the consultation as "an important step in enabling the voice of all members of the community to be heard to ensure that they can play a part in developing a vision for a sustainable future".

Liam Conneally, chief executive of Galway County Council, is encouraging people across the county to get involved in the consultation process. "There are challenges

benefits," Mr Conneally said at the launch. "The preparation of the County Galway Climate Action Plan will assist our county in the identification of strategic climate action policies and the implementation of a roadmap towards net zero emissions. The feedback will help to shape Galway's future and I would encourage the public to participate so that Galway County Council can deliver the best plans for the people of Galway."

The consultation includes a survey that will help guide Galway County Council in co-creating the Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029 and the Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030.

"The survey will enable citizens and businesses to identify the actions they would like to see in their towns, villages and communities and



From left: Tina Ryan, climate action coordinator; Liam Hanrahan, director of services; Marie Mannion, heritage officer; Cllr Alastair McKinstry, chair of Climate and Biodiversity SPC; Cllr Liam Carroll, Cathaoirleach; Liam Conneally, chief executive; Rosina Joyce, biodiversity officer.

our shared heritage to lead to its proper conservation, management and protection.

"It is an opportunity for Galway County Council to engage with our communities, listen to their insights and incorporate their perspectives into the development of these plans," said Liam Hanrahan, director of services for economic development and planning. "I firmly believe that collaboration and inclusivity are key to achieving our shared vision of a sustainable and resilient environment."

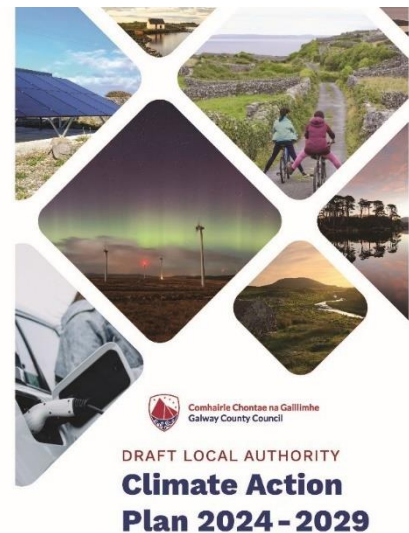
The consultation period lasts until August 25. Hard copies of the survey will be available in libraries, and the council also plans to engage with interested groups and sectors as part of the process. Submissions can be

As part of the pre-draft Public Engagement Strategy, the Climate Unit were involved in organising the Galway County Youth Climate Assembly in conjunction with the SAUTI Youth Project and Youth Work Ireland Galway. It was one of the first assemblies of its kind at a local level in Ireland. The event provided a space for 57 young people from 13 of our secondary schools and youth organisations to gather to discuss climate action. The participants were introduced to policies, projects and research being undertaken in County Galway to tackle the Climate and Biodiversity Crises and were encouraged to initiate positive change through their school and/or youth/community group. The feedback from the event was incorporated into the draft Climate Action Plan. In this way, young people were supported to influence and shape local government policies.





The draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was published in November 2023. The public were invited to submit observations and recommendations. Public information events to support consultation on the draft Climate Action Plan and the Community Climate Action Fund were held in libraries in each Municipal District and there were presentations and stands at a number of events including the Green Recovery Working Group meeting, Celebrating Biodiversity Event in Newbridge, Community Health and Wellbeing Event in Gort, PPN Plenary, Claregalway, Comhairle na nOg Plenary, Salthill and the launch event for Gnómhareacht Fuinnimh an Iarthair. There was significant media coverage of the consultation and fund which included both print media and radio interviews. An online Climate Action Fund Webinar took place in December and was very well attended.



Climate Action Conference

As part of the shared island fund cross-border project, we were involved in organising the climate action conference 'From the Ground Up | Cultivating Innovation and Growth' which took place in October at the BIA Innovator Campus.



Eirgrid Roadshow

EirGrid has embarked on a series of public roadshow events aimed at informing local communities on plans to future-proof the electricity grid as well as providing information about microgeneration, home energy upgrades and retrofitting grants. The Climate Action Unit presented at the Roadshow providing information in relation to Galway County Council Climate Action and funding.

Adaptation

We were involved in developing and supporting the national Protect Our Dunes awareness campaign. Damage to sand dunes is evident all around the coast and the campaign aims to highlight the importance and fragility of these natural coastal protections and important habitats.

Electric Vehicles

Area Engineers worked with EIR/Easy Go to identify 17 suitable locations for the installation of public EV chargers. A Regional EV Strategy is being developed and is expected to be completed in Q2 2024. Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) Unit in the Department of Transport opened a fund for EV chargers with the Just Transition Area. Applications were submitted by Galway County Council for Mountbellew Square, Leisure Centre Tuam, Glenamaddy Town Centre and Aughrim Interpretive Centre.

Green Public Procurement

Galway County Council engaged with the Cities4Forests' "Partner Forest Program". As part of the engagement, the Pilot Projects Organisation appointed Greenville Procurement Partners Ltd to support GCC to co-create a comprehensive Green and Sustainable Procurement policy for public projects and tenders relating to wood specification and purchases. The draft policy produced includes a framework for comparison of sustainability credentials between wood choices originating from different sources, such as "reuse" wood, "local urban" wood, "certified" wood, and wood from "social forestry" enterprises. The project includes a collaboration with the Atlantic Technological University. Advanced design and woodworking students will build full-scale fully functional public space infrastructure to demonstrate carbon negative circular design and how FSC Certified Conservation Timber can be used in Galway County Council urban regeneration projects. Conservation Timber is wood harvested from well-managed natural forests at below replacement rates that support community livelihoods and prevents deforestation.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Having the right culture in our organisation is critical to realising our vision and all our staff play their part in creating a desirable culture for the Council. It is built by people who demonstrate behaviours and attitudes that are aligned with our values of integrity, accountability, respect, and excellence.

The Human Resources Department engages with line managers and staff in promoting their personal and career development thus enabling them to reach their potential and contribute fully to the achievement of the Council's strategic and business objectives.

The Human Resources Department through the implementation of Council policies and procedures support good governance and provide transparency and clarity to all employees about the principles, rules and guidelines that apply to their work and conditions of employment; promote a positive working environment for our dedicated and highly skilled workforce; work to attract and retain the workforce we need to deliver on our commitments; provide training and development opportunities for staff within financial constraints; make provision for flexible work arrangements and deliver statutory and non-statutory leave variations and staff welfare policies which create a positive work environment to improve work life balance and maintain stable industrial relations.

WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT/RECRUITMENT

The Human Resources Department of Galway County Council is responsible for managing the Council's workforce by facilitating the assignment of staff throughout the organization. The primary objective is to enable effective and efficient service delivery with the staff level available within financial resources. To achieve this, the Human Resources Department runs recruitment competitions to fill vacant positions, manages the council's recruitment process, and ensures that the organization has the right people with the right skills to meet its service delivery needs.

The section also works closely with managers across the council to identify staffing needs and develop strategies to meet those needs.

Additionally, the Human Resources Department promotes equality and diversity in the workplace and ensures that the Council's recruitment processes are fair, transparent, and compliant with relevant legislation. The Human Resources Department is responsible for developing and implementing a workforce plan to meet the council's current and future service delivery needs. Overall, the Human Resources Department plays a critical role in ensuring that Galway County Council has the right people in the right roles to deliver high-quality services to the community.

Galway County Council's Staff Headcount at the end of Quarter 4, 2023 is as follows:

| Category | Headcount |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Core Staff</i> | <i>875</i> |
| <i>Retained Fire Fighters</i> | <i>104</i> |
| <i>Non DHLGH</i> | <i>80</i> |

The Human Resources Department ran 87 recruitment competitions up to the end of Quarter 4, 2023.

Joiners 2023

| Job Title Description | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Administrative Officer | 2 |
| Afghan Intercultural Support Worker | 1 |
| Architectural Technician Grade 1 | 1 |
| Assistant Engineer | 1 |
| Assistant Planner | 1 |
| Assistant Staff Officer | 4 |
| Tour Guide Aughrim | 1 |
| Beach Lifeguard | 53 |
| Brand Librarian | 4 |

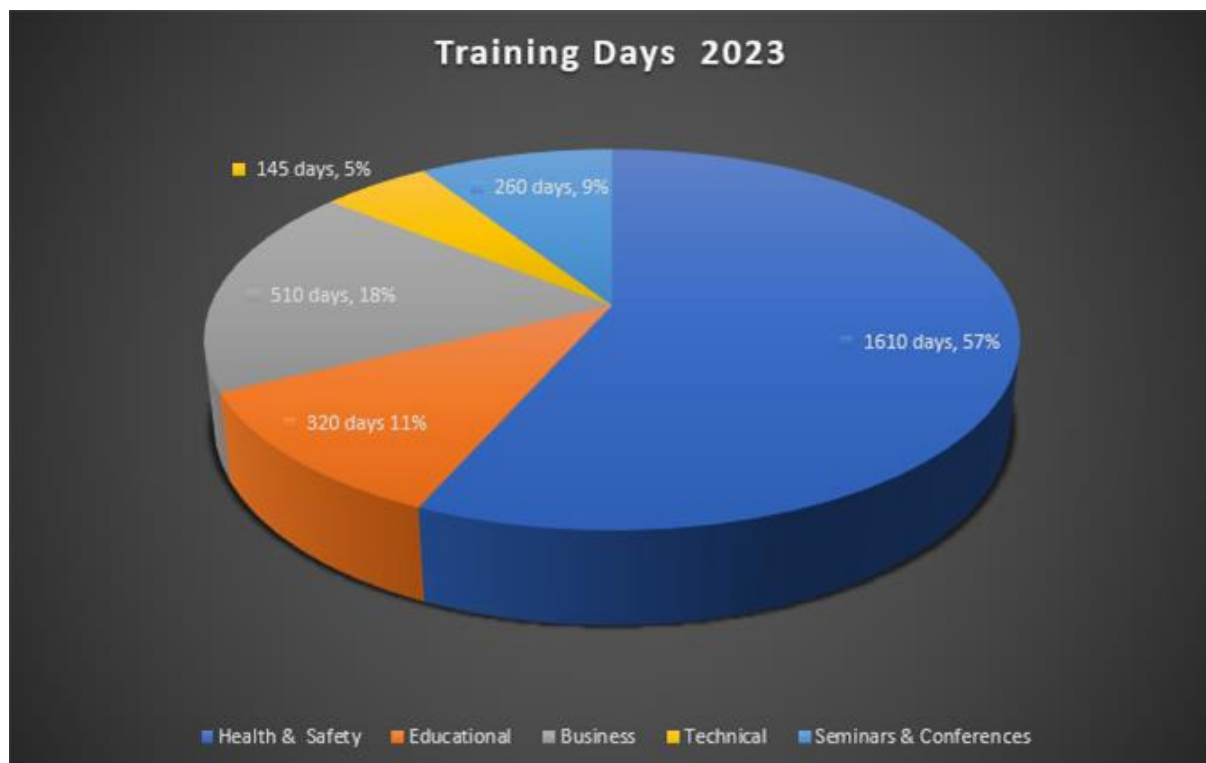
| | |
|---|------------|
| Caretaker – Renville Park | 1 |
| Chief Executive | 1 |
| Civil Technician 11 | 3 |
| Clerical Officer (CD) | 24 |
| Climate Action Officer | 1 |
| Community Warden | 3 |
| Creative Communities Engagement Officer | 1 |
| Exec. Health & Safety Officer/Advisor | 1 |
| Executive Architect | 1 |
| Executive Engineer | 6 |
| General Operative | 6 |
| GIS ANALYST | 2 |
| Graduate Planner | 2 |
| Head of Finance | 1 |
| IS Analyst Developer | 2 |
| Mobile Library/Driver Assistant | 1 |
| Senior Executive Engineer | 1 |
| Senior Staff Officer | 4 |
| Staff Officer | 4 |
| Technician Grade I | 1 |
| TOURISM OFFICER | 1 |
| Grand Total | 135 |

Galway County Council continues to facilitate Community Employment Scheme Placements and work experience placements from Third Level Institutions.

STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive training for staff was carried out in 2023 with the main focus on Statutory and Health & Safety Training. National Training Grants in the areas of Water Services, Environmental and Non-National Roads supported the Council in the provision of this training. The Council continued to support further education, IPA Local Government Programmes, and the attendance of staff at Seminars and Conferences in 2023.

The total number of Training Days in 2023 was 2845 as set out hereunder:



STAFF WELFARE

Galway County Council, in recognising that work is just one part of employees' lives, makes available through the Human Resources department, a range of work/life balance schemes to assist staff in achieving work-life balance.

In 2023, six hundred and eighty seven staff availed of family friendly schemes, through the Human Resources Department which include: The Shorter Working Year Scheme, Maternity Leave Scheme, Parental Leave Scheme, Paternity Leave, New Parent Leave, Work Sharing, Career Breaks, Carer's Leave, and Travel Pass Schemes together with Force Majeure leave, Bereavement Leave and the Cycle to Work Scheme.

The Human Resources Department continues to implement the standardised provisions of the Public Service Management (Sick Leave) Regulations 2014 and facilitates the provision of an independent Employee Assistance Service (EAS).

This EAS Programme is a free, confidential and independent counselling service and provides support in relation to, e.g., family issues, work issues, addiction, bereavement and financial matters.

The Human Resources Department was successful in getting maximum funding of €9,000 from Healthy Ireland Wellbeing Fund, through a project proposal to the LGMA. The project includes developing a Wellbeing Strategy through a Wellbeing Committee, with new Wellbeing initiatives for staff being rolled out in 2024.

PENSIONS

In 2023, twenty-two fulltime employees retired from the service of Galway County Council. Six employees of the Retained Fire Service also retired from their posts with Galway County Council.

The Management and staff of the Council would like to take this opportunity to record its thanks to all the retirees for their years of dedicated service and commitment to Galway County Council.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In 2023 with the blended remote working arrangement the Council has over 450 staff who have full remote ICT operational capabilities. Staff's remote working ICT capability has been enhanced to give the same experience and capability as in the office. Cyber Security and systems protection is a very high priority with constant improvements of the Councils ability to defend and mitigate attacks and compromise attempts.

Highlight Projects and Initiatives

- Audio Visual Conferencing Systems installed in Tuam, Loughrea and Ballinasloe Municipal District Offices to facilitate remote attendees to meetings.
- Council Chamber legacy Video Distribution replaced and enhanced with additional capacity for future meeting live streaming and facilitate attendees to wireless cast from their mobile devices to the projector and monitors.
- Geographics Information Systems (GIS) Team developing and leading a 100 % resourced and developed an inhouse innovative project for a National Fire Services domestic and commercial building risk model.
- Continuing engagement and development by GIS Team with national award-winning Community Archaeology program.
- Development of Council capability by GIS Team of heritage graveyard 3D photographic models using best of breed technology and expanding specialised reach of operations with local SME provider of services.
- Commencement and enhancement of existing field data capture for Housing enhancement grants, recreational amenities and environmental inspections.
- Software Systems backup solution change to enable greater resilience and reliability of operations.

- Moved 091 telephone numbers to Telecoms Provider cloud hosted platform giving the Council complete independence of office facility power and network availability.
- Provided continuing service support to elected member and staff. Staff numbers have expanded during 2023 and the sector has seen increased movement of staff who are facilitated with systems access on day 1 of commencement with the council.
- Provided access and ensured strict governance on Artificial Intelligence Software with utilisation of existing investment in productivity suite subscriptions.
- Managed and procured a full turnkey network solution for the Athenry Bia Innovator hub utilizing the campus Irish Government 10 Gigabit ring and with a modern software defined network solution. Business Intelligence development for climate action metrics and key performance indicators.
- Case Tracker Developed for management of Freedom of Information (FOI), Access to Environmental Information (AIE) and Ombudsman related cases.

FINANCE & MOTOR TAXATION

The Finance Department has primary responsibility for a range of functions including financial accounting and reporting, budgeting, commercial rates billing and collection, supplier payments, payroll administration, procurement compliance, the budget process, treasury management and other accounting and compliance activities. The Finance Department oversees effective expenditure controls and debt collection, with the overall objective of providing support services to the Social, Economic, Physical and Rural directorates of the Council where total annual expenditure for 2023 exceeded €168million.

MOTOR TAXATION

Indicative Activities in 2023:

The number of **motor tax** transactions carried out by Galway County Council motor tax offices in 2023 was 58,872. Over €9.9m was taken in by Galway Motor Tax Offices for this period.

- Approximately 84% of total motor tax transactions for the Galway area were carried out online in 2023. The motor tax office continues to deal with phone queries in relation to the on-line taxing of vehicles.
- The motor tax offices issue tax discs for private and commercial vehicles, tractors, hackneys, taxis and large public service vehicles. Trade plates, trailer licences, replacement documents are also issued and Garda queries and other Local authority queries i.e., S103s and CT53s are also processed.

UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

Galway County Council adopted a Development Contribution Scheme under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 in March 2016.

To meet the Council's core objectives, as outlined in the Corporate Plan, there is a requirement for significant investment in creating the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of an expanding population. The Development Contribution Scheme is designed to help bridge the funding gap between the actual cost of creating that infrastructure and the exchequer and other funding that will be available. Since the inception of the scheme, whilst significant funding has been raised, the demands being placed on the Council are proving to far exceed the funding available.

During 2023 the collection of Development Contributions remained a priority for the Council. The monies collected will be used to assist in the provision of necessary public infrastructure and community facilities for the County. A sum of €3.467 million was collected under the Council's Section 48 Development Contribution scheme in 2023.

The Government introduced the Temporary Time-Limited Waiver in respect of Development Contributions for all residential developments that commence on or after 25th April 2023 and before the 24th April 2024. The developments must be completed by 31st December 2025.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023

The Annual Financial Statement 2023 gives an overview of the financial position of Galway County Council at 31st December 2023. The tables below outline the results for the year in abridged format. I am pleased to report that the 2023 Statement of Comprehensive Income (Income and Expenditure Account) shows a near balanced position. This represents a positive outcome and builds on the results of recent years.

| STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023 | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | 2023 | 2023 |
| | €'000 | €'000 |
| Goods and services | 29,368 | 28,335 |
| Grants and subsidies | 84,722 | 70,696 |
| Other contributions | 9,032 | 8,652 |
| Rates | 32,770 | 31,244 |
| Local Property Tax | 14,518 | 14,518 |
| Total Income | 170,411 | 153,446 |
| Total expenditure | 168,148 | 150,488 |
| Surplus for the year before transfers | 2,263 | 2,958 |
| Transfers to reserves | 2,259 | 2,943 |
| Overall surplus for the year | 3 | 15 |
| Opening general reserve | 43 | 28 |
| Closing general reserve | 46 | 43 |

| STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (BALANCE SHEET) AT 31st DECEMBER 2023 | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 |
| | €'000 | €'000 |
| Fixed Assets | 3,664,954 | 3,666,416 |
| Work in Progress and Preliminary Expenses | 188,645 | 176,969 |
| Long Term Debtors | 48,662 | 41,636 |
| Current Assets | 82,303 | 92,330 |
| Current Liabilities (Amounts falling due within one year) | 46,591 | 54,776 |
| Creditors (Amounts falling due after more than one year) | 63,717 | 56,871 |
| Net Assets | 3,874,257 | 3,865,704 |
| Represented by: | | |
| Capitalisation Account | 3,664,954 | 3,666,416 |
| Income WIP | 186,615 | 175,818 |
| General Revenue Reserve | 46 | 43 |
| Other Specific Reserves | 212 | 212 |
| Other Balances | 22,430 | 23,215 |
| Total Reserves | 3,874,257 | 3,865,704 |

Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997

The Council operated to the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) procurement framework. In 2023 this area supported all sections as expenditure across all directorates reached a level in excess of €168m. Further system and process enhancements are planned for 2024. Galway County Council abides by the requirements of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997.

INFRASTRUCTURE &
OPERATIONS AND FIRE
& EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

The Infrastructure & Operations Unit will ensure continued improvement on the roads network through delivery of both the National and Non- National Roads Programme. In collaboration with various government departments, i.e., Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Galway County Council will continue with its infrastructure development which will include an emphasis on sustainable transport options across the entire county.



FERRY TRANSPORTING ROAD RESURFACING VEHICLES TO THE ISLANDS

The Unit is responsible for the design, maintenance, and improvement of the National, Regional and Local Road Network throughout the County and has responsibility for Road Safety, Marine and Arterial Drainage.



ROAD RESURFACING IN TUAM

Strategic Goal: Community Participation & Social Inclusion

To facilitate the broadest possible participation by citizens in local decision making and the sustainable development of their communities and their county.

2023 ROADS UNIT

The 2023 Roads Programme was prepared following allocations for National and Non-National Road construction, repairs and maintenance grants totalling €83,895,918 from Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and an allocation from Galway County Council:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| National Roads | - | €44,566,418 |
| Non-National Roads | - | €39,329,500 |

The Roads Programme was prepared in consultation with the elected members, reviewed and adopted by each Municipal District.

The grant allocated by Transport Infrastructure Ireland for the Motorway & National Roads for the year 2022 was €38,857,958.

The 2023 allocation of €44,566,418 was divided as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Improvement Works | €38,868,060 |
| Maintenance Works | €1,048,358 |
| Greenways | €4,650,000 |

Funding continued to be provided in 2023 to facilitate the continued advancement and delivery of the Major Inter Urban Routes. The following major/minor projects were managed by the Galway National Roads Project Office and the costs associated with this programme recouped in full, from Transport Infrastructure Ireland:

| National Secondary Major Schemes | | |
|---|--|--------------------|
| N59 | Clifden to Oughterard | € 400,000 |
| N59 | Maigh Cuilinn Bypass | € 25,000,000 |
| Total National Secondary Major Schemes | | €25,400,000 |
| National Secondary Minor Works Schemes | | |
| N59 | Oughterard Bridge | €1,000,000 |
| N59 | Bunnakill to Claremount | € 500,000 |
| N63 | Abbeyknockmoy to Annagh (Part of Gort / Tuam Residual Network) | € 100,000 |
| N63 | Liss to Abbey Realignment (Minor 2016) | € 200,000 |
| N65 | Kilmeen Cross | € 50,000 |
| N84 | Galway to Curraghmore | €100,000 |
| N63 | AT – Abbeyknockmoy Village | € 200,000 |
| N67 | AT – Clarenbridge to Oranmore | € 80,000 |
| N67 | AT – Kinvara Village | € 300,000 |
| N67 | AT – South of Ballindereen Cycleway | € 85,000 |
| Total National Secondary Minor Works Schemes | | € 2,615,000 |
| National Secondary Pavement Schemes | | |
| N59 | Crocknaraw | € 350,000 |
| N59 | Derrynacleigh | € 1,080,000 |
| N65 | Killimor to Ramore Cross | € 880,000 |
| N83 | Baile Chláir | € 1,200 ,000 |

**Total National Secondary Pavement
Schemes**

€ 3,510,000

LAND ACQUISITIONS

- Land acquisitions were ongoing for the N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass.
- Purchase of land continued to facilitate the N63 Abbeyknockmoy to Annagh Hill road projects.
- Negotiations for land acquisitions in relation to N59 Maam Cross to Oughterard scheme were ongoing.
- Negotiations for land acquisitions in relation to the Connemara Greenway scheme were ongoing.
- Negotiations for land acquisitions in relation to the N17 Milltown to Gortnagunned scheme were ongoing

REGIONAL & LOCAL ROADS

The expenditure incurred by Galway County Council for Regional and Local Roads, as funded by Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, in 2023 was €39,329,263 divided as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Improvement Works | €33,996,263 |
| Maintenance Works | €5,333,000 |



OVERLAY ON FORMER NATIONAL ROAD AT DARTFIELD, LOUGHREA – R446

The expenditure can be classified under the following broad headings:

| Grant Category | 2023 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Improvement Grant | €20,455,000 |
| Restoration Maintenance Grant | €5,333,000 |
| Discretionary Grant | €5,659,500 |
| Specific Improvement Grants | €1,000,000 |
| Low-Cost Safety Improvement Grants | €418,400 |
| Bridge Rehabilitation Programme | €630,000 |
| Speed Limits in Housing Estates | €32,900 |
| Speed Limits – Rural Signage | €34,000 |
| Cycle Signs | €12,540 |
| Strategic Regional and Local Roads | €1,100,000 |
| Drainage Works | €1,397,500 |
| Training | €128,000 |
| Community Involvement Scheme | €1,131,840 |
| Former National Roads | €775,000 |
| PSCI – Survey Support | €52,000 |
| Overall Total | €39,329,263 |

Local Roads Maintenance:

The sum provided from the Council's own resources in 2023 was €8,526,786.

The Local Roads General Maintenance allocation of €3,026,765 which includes a provision of €1,206,950 for ongoing operational costs.

The sum of €2,287,000 was allocated amongst the Municipal District for Local Roads Maintenance as follows:

| Local Road General Maintenance – Council Funds | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Municipal District | Length of Road Local Roads KM | Total Allocation |
| Athenry / Oranmore | 555.40 | € 226,296 |
| Ballinasloe | 1350.98 | € 550,453 |
| Conamara | 1142.68 | € 465,582 |
| Loughrea | 1626.50 | € 662,713 |
| Tuam | 937.44 | € 381,957 |
| Total | 5,613.00 | € 2,287,000 |

This sum provides for all types of maintenance including Verge Trimming, Drainage, Renewal and Provision of Signage, Bridge, and General Maintenance.

An allocation of €265,000 was provided for Winter Maintenance in 2023, from the Discretionary Maintenance Grant allocated by the Department of Transport. This allocation funds the gritting of priority routes in the county in accordance with the Winter Service Plan 2021-2023.

REGIONAL & LOCAL ROAD BRIDGE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME 2023

Funding of €630,000 was allocated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport towards the rehabilitation of 13 specific bridges in County Galway (7no designs & 6no works). The €100,000 initially allocated towards the rehabilitation of Formaoil Bridge (Seanadh Phéistín), currently awaiting approval from ABP, was re-allocated to include additional works/ devegetation in the 2023 programme. An additional €395,000 was allocated from the Discretionary Grant towards the repair of bridges on Regional and local roads. The overall allocation towards the repairs of Non- National Road Bridges for 2023 was €1,025,000, which was the same as the 2022 allocation.

| Proposed Bridge Rehabilitation Programme 2023 | | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Municipal District | Road Number | Bridge Name & Location | 2023 Allocation | Total Municipal District |
| | | | | €630,000 |
| Ballinasloe | R363 | Ballinamore Bridge | € 70,000 | €190,000 |
| | R348 | Suck Bridge, Ballinasloe | € 120,000 | |
| Conamara | R336 | Waterfall Bridge (Design) | € 15,000 | €230,000 |
| | R345 | Cornamona Bridge (Design) | € 15,000 | |
| | L-51374 | Derrynavglau, Ballinamad | € 200,000 | |
| Tuam | L-6143 | Mahanagh, Levally (Design) | €20,000 | €20,000 |
| Athenry/Oranmore | L-3117 | Cormacuagh (Clogh) Bridge (Design) | €20,000 | €20,000 |
| Loughrea | L-8229 | Derrygarriff (Design) | €20,000 | €125,000 |
| | L-85141 | Derreen Bridge 4 (Design) | €20,000 | |
| | L-87902 | Mountain Park Bridge (Design) | €20,000 | |

| | | | | |
|------------|---------|---------------------|---------|----------------|
| | L-50101 | Tirneevin Gort | €30,000 | |
| | L-8515 | Ballardiggan, Gort | €15,000 | |
| | L-8795 | Cloonmoylan Bridge | €20,000 | |
| All | - | Bridge Devegetation | €45,000 | €45,000 |

| Proposed Bridge Repairs Programme 2023 | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Municipal District | Road Number | Bridge Name & Location | 2023 Proposed Expenditure € | Total Municipal District |
| Athenry/Oranmore | L-74195 | Corskeagh | 10,000 | €10,000 |
| Ballinasloe | L-74191 | Ballinlough, Woodlawn | 10,000 | €50,000 |
| | R-362 | Gortnadeeva West | 10,000 | |
| | L-6331 | Rushestown | 15,000 | |
| | L-87171 | Ballymanagh Bridge | 15,000 | |
| Conamara | R-336 | Culliaghmore Bridge, Leenaun | 30,000 | €150,000 |
| | L-12053 | Derryadda East, Recess | 70,000 | |
| | Off N59 | Carrowlustraun Bridge, Moycullen | 30,000 | |
| | L-53313 | Claremount, Oughterard | 20,000 | |
| Loughrea | L-85144 | Derreen Footbridge, Gort | 60,000 | €85,000 |
| | L-4301 | Cloonineen | 5,000 | |
| | L-8510 | Beagh, Gort | 20,000 | |
| Tuam | L-2103 | Ballynakillev | 10,000 | €20,000 |
| | L-6526 | Woodquay | 10,000 | |
| All | | Completion of 2022 Programme | 20,000 | €80,000 |
| | | 2023 Emergency Bridge Repairs | 40,000 | |
| | | De-Vegetation | 10,000 | |
| | | Land Acquisition | 10,000 | |
| | | | TOTAL | €395,000 |



SUCK (WEST) BRIDGE, BALLINASLOE – NATIONAL MONUMENT

TAKING IN CHARGE – UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

There are many different aspects to dealing with housing estates whether they are in the Taking in Charge or Unfinished Housing Estates category.

The Taking in Charge section continues to engage proactively with Residents, Developers/Owners, Agents, Bondholders, and other relevant Third Parties for the completion of Residential Estates to a standard for Taking in Charge and/or Bond Release.

The number of estates for Taking in Charge and/or for Bond Release in 2023 were:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----|
| No. of Estates Taken in Charge | – | 16 |
| No. of Estates – Bond Released | - | 2 |

The Taking in Charge section is currently engaged with over 70 developments which are at various stages in the Taking in Charge process.

The financial resources available to the Taking in Charge Section is by way of Bonds, specifically assigned to developments and/or funding received through Site Resolution with Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water). For the past few years, the Council allocated €100,000 in its budget for the Taking in Charge of Historical Residential Estates, enabling these estates to be completed and brought to required standard for taking in charge.

The progress of works on estates is governed by the funding available, engagement with third parties and the complexity of the work involved which may include wayleave agreements. While much progress has been made, there remains a significant amount of work to improve the living conditions of many house owners across the country.

MARINE MAINTENANCE

Galway County Council is progressing the marine facilities upgrade and maintenance programme prioritising works as the budget will allow. There are in excess of 200 coastal piers listed following the last review within the County. A priority list of landing places has been identified in order to implement a programme of necessary works including repairs and replacements to ladders and railings, regular removal of algae growth on slipways, and safety improvements to piers. Marine Maintenance also includes maintenance of visitor yacht moorings and the navigation lights that are in the charge of Galway County Council.

In 2022 an initial tranche of funding was secured under the Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI) funding programme. A further allocation was secured for a programme of works to be brought to completion before the end of 2023. The locations and funding allocations for that second tranche of projects is confirmed in the table below. An element of Galway County Council matched funding was required in each case.

| BALAMI Funded Projects 2023 | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Location | Eligible Project Costs | Maximum Funding Conferred |
| Bealcarra | €85,000 | €80,750 |
| Killeenaran | €40,000 | €38,000 |
| Derryinver | €40,000 | €38,000 |
| Maumeen | €25,000 | €23,750 |
| Kilkieran | €28,000 | €26,600 |
| Kilronan | €500,000 | €475,000 |
| Roundstone | €55,000 | €52,250 |
| Kinvara | €25,000 | €23,750 |
| Garafin | €22,000 | €20,900 |
| Cashel No. 1 | €31,000 | €29,450 |
| Pollagh | €20,000 | €19,000 |
| Total | €871,000 | €827,450 |

All of the approved works were completed within the allowed timeframe and the full monetary allocation drawn down.

Regular maintenance activity across the coastal infrastructure continued in parallel utilising the Galway Council budget provision under this heading. Works completed included lighting upgrades at Inis Oírr pier, programme of safety improvement works including algae removal at priority slipways, minor improvement works to protect existing facilities. An allocation received under the Islands Minor Works Capital Programme was utilised to carry out scour protection works at Cill Muirbhígh pier on Inis Mór.

As part of the ongoing navigation lights maintenance programme repairs were carried out in 2023 as required through engagement with the Commissioner for Irish Lights.

There are approximately 60 moorings spread over 8 separate locations. A replacement programme continued through 2023 with further such work programmed for 2024.



PONTOON INSTALLATION AT KILRONAN - BALAMI FUNDED PROJECT



BEALCARRA STORM WALL - BALAMI FUNDED PROJECT

STRATEGIC HARBOURS

Caladh Inis Oírr

The acquisition of all necessary lands for the Inis Oírr Pier Redevelopment Project by Compulsory Purchase Order was completed in the first half of 2023. Progress towards the commencement of works continued through the year.

The two-stage procurement process to appoint a works contractor commenced in the fourth quarter with the publication of the pre-qualification stage documents. A contractor appointment will be made in the second quarter of 2024.

The major on-site works will be completed during the summer season 2025. The project will be complete with facility ready for use for the 2026 summer season.

Inis Meáin Pier Facilities

Galway County Council submitted a Strategic Assessment Report to the DRCD in 2023 seeking funding to procure consultants to undertake a Feasibility Study of the options, and costs of same, for improved marine infrastructure at Inis Meain.

The feasibility assessment will examine the potential options to upgrade landing facilities on Inis Meáin to ensure adequate and appropriate provision is made for passenger and cargo services to the island over a significant future time horizon. A wide range of potential options will be assessed – a key part of their brief they will be consulting widely with relevant stakeholders including the DRCD (funders and managing authority for the publicly procured passenger and cargo ferry services), the island community, pier users including passenger and cargo operators and fishermen.

The output from this exercise will form the Preliminary Business Case required to facilitate moving through Decision Gate 1 of the Public Spending Code.

Pending approval from the DRCD and completion of the feasibility assessment, progress of the scheme thereafter will follow the requirements of the Public Spending Code and the Capital Works Management Framework. Galway County Council will be striving to move through the funding approval, design, planning and construction stages as efficiently as the governing processes allow.

GREENWAYS

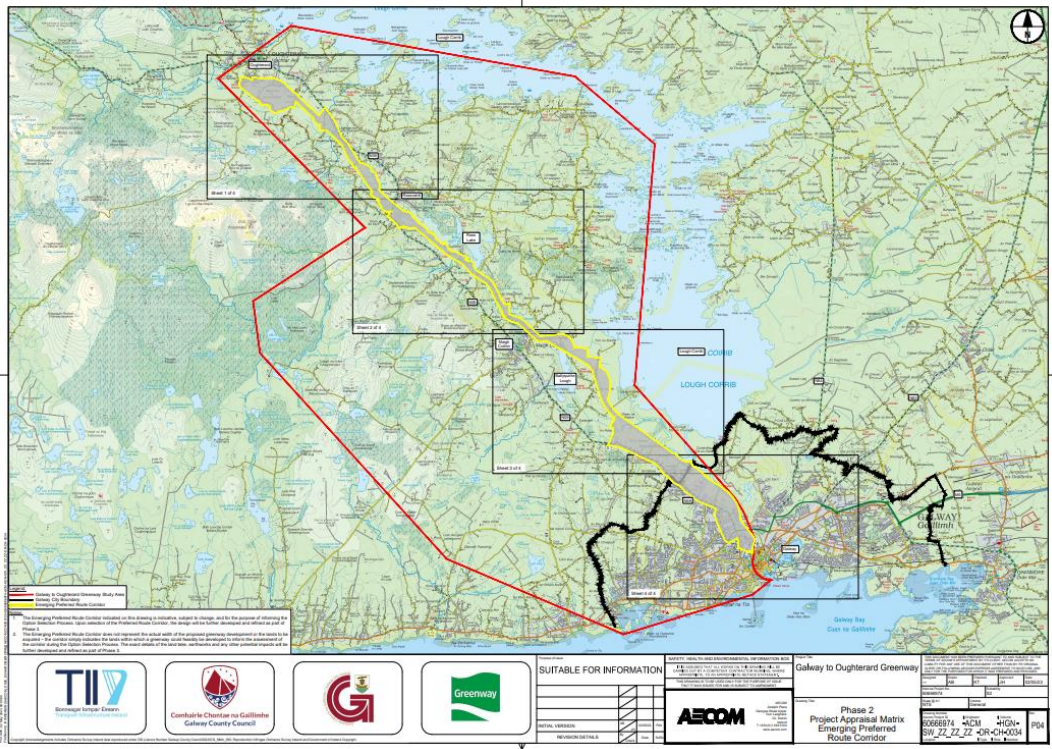
GALWAY TO CLIFDEN GREENWAY

SECTION 1: GALWAY TO OUGHTERARD

The Galway to Oughterard Greenway is being developed by the NRPO with AECOM Consultant Engineers. The Galway to Oughterard Greenway will form an integral part of the Connemara

Greenway. The overall length of the scheme is approximately 28km and will join the Oughterard to Clifden greenway to form an 80km Greenway from Galway City to Clifden.

The publication of the emerging preferred route along with Public Consultation 3 took place in Q2 2023. This was followed by the commencement of the design to better define the route. Further consultation with landowners will commence in Q1 2024 to finalise the route.



SECTION 2: CLIFDEN TO OUGHTERARD

To date over 13km has been completed and open to the public with a further 5.5km under construction. Initially a permissive access model was being used to secure the lands however the purchase of the land by voluntary agreement is now sought.

Through TII funding was provided to complete the 22km section between Clifden and Recess Village. In 2023 negotiations were ongoing to acquire by agreement the land in private ownership for the remaining 4km section.

Surfacing works took place on a further 2 Kms of completed Greenway in 2023.

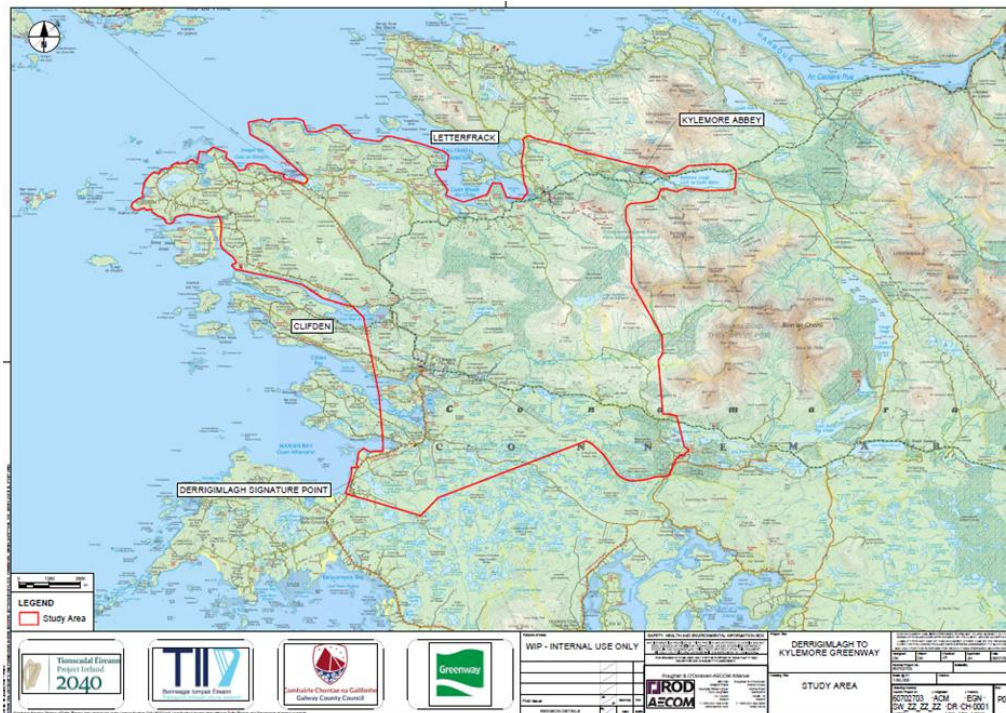


ATHENRY TO MILLTOWN GREENWAY

Galway County Council have procured RPS Consulting Engineers to prepare a Feasibility Study and Route Options Assessment for a potential future Greenway from Athenry to Milltown Greenway, in Co. Galway. A feasibility report has been prepared and forwarded to TII. The completion of the

All-Island Strategic Rail Review may have an impact on the scheme and the project will be reviewed once it is published.

DERRIGIMLAGH TO KYLEMORE ABBEY GREENWAY



In 2023 AECOM consulting engineers commenced the Scope & Pre-Appraisal and Concept & Feasibility stages for a Greenway route between the Marconi Site at Derrigimlagh going northwards to Kylemore Abbey and established a study area for constraints identification and route options.

GALWAY TO ATHLONE CYCLEWAY PROJECT

Liaison with landowners on potential routes for the cycleway within the emerging preferred route corridor was ongoing through 2023. Phase 3 Design was progressing in preparation of a planning application to An Bord Pleanála. However, RPS consulting engineers sought and obtained mutual termination of their contract citing the scale and complexity of the project. As a result of this development, Westmeath County Council developed a new approach for delivering the scheme through the design and environmental evaluation processes in partnership with Galway County Council. Public engagement and landowner liaison continued during this period along with preparations for the appointment of new consultant to provide engineering, planning and environmental services for the Galway to Athlone Cycleway.



Strategic Goal Economic & Enterprise Development

To maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our county.

FLOOD RELIEF SCHEMES

Galway County Council and the OPW work in partnership to deliver Flood Relief Schemes (substantial schemes) and Flood Mitigation works (local mitigation). The OPW funds all major flood relief schemes - schemes are carried out directly by the OPW under the Arterial Drainage Acts or can be carried out by Galway County Council under the Planning & Development Acts. The OPW also provides 90% funding towards local flood mitigation works. A steering group meets regularly to ensure timely delivery of proposals that will reduce the risk of future flooding.

The OPW also provides advice and assistance to Galway County Council when flood events occur.

SOUTH GALWAY, GORT LOWLANDS FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

In 2023, the project agronomist completed the extensive engagement with landowners that will be affected by the proposed flood relief scheme. Comments and findings from the engagements were assessed by the project team and several minor changes were incorporated into the proposed scheme, to accommodate landowners.

Ecological surveys were substantially completed, and technical environmental assessments were completed on engineering proposals. Following these examinations, a number of flow control structures have now been included in the scheme.

The EIAR and NIS were advanced, with the majority of chapters in draft stage and under review.

BALLINASLOE FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

The draft factual report relating to the Ground Investigation works was completed in early 2023. The final aquatic ecology survey report was approved by OPW in Q1 2023 while the Archaeological Impact report was also carried out in this period. The third Public Consultation Period (Emerging Preferred Option) took place in Q2 2023. The third Options Development workshop took place in Q2 2023. In early Q3 2023 a technical note was prepared by Arup as the designers outlining recommendations for the preferred option in several areas of the scheme

CLIFDEN FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME

Engineering, along with ecological surveys and extensive ground investigations works were completed in mid-late 2022. The development and appraisal of potential flood relief options commenced in Q2 2023 along with additional Environmental Surveys which feed into the design of options.

The Statutory Environmental Impact Assessment which is an integral element of the scheme development commenced in Q3 2023. Option development and associated constraint review continued throughout the remainder of 2023.



CLIFDEN FLOOD RELIEF SCHEME – FLOOD WATERS, CLIFDEN SEPTEMBER 2020

FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS

The Council completed works at 6 locations in 2023, under the OPW funded Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Scheme. Total funding received of €143,550 in 2023, which cover 90% of the total cost with the balance funded by Galway County Council. Applications submitted for another 2 locations are currently under consideration by the OPW.



FLOOD DEFENCE WORKS COMPLETED AT PRIBBAUN, ROSCAHILL 2023

DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

The Council discharges its statutory responsibility for the maintenance of certain drainage works in the County through the Roads and Transportation Unit and the Council's Municipal District Offices. The Council has charge of twelve Drainage Districts and continues to allocate funds towards two former Joint Drainage Districts that were dissolved in 2014. The Council spent €175,000 on Drainage District works in 2023.

In 2023 maintenance works were carried out in the following Drainage Districts: - Ahascragh, Dunkellin, Kellysgrove, Kilchreest, Lavally, Meelick & Mountbellew.

Strategic Goal Organisational Capacity

To maximise organisational capacity through the continuous review of operational efficiency, financial and risk management and the development of our Staff and Elected Members

MACHINERY YARD

The supply and maintenance of Plant and Machinery for the Council's use is managed by the Machinery Yard. The Council is committed to the ongoing development of this service in order to provide an efficient and effective resource to facilitate the delivery of the Council's Work Programmes.

Salting of roads through the Winter Service Plan is a critical piece of work delivered from the machinery yard. Fifteen different routes are covered with twelve of these looked after by Galway County Council vehicles and drivers and a further three the responsibility of private contractors.

Salt is stored in four separate locations. At salt barns in Tuam, Loughrea and Gort and in the Machinery Yard. This ensures an adequate supply in reasonable proximity to all routes.

In the 2022/2023 winter season a cumulative total of over 60,000km of roadway was treated with callouts on some routes on 58 separate occasions.

Strategic Goal Infrastructural Capacity

To ensure that our physical and social infrastructure is sufficiently developed to support economic development, and to enhance our quality of life

NATIONAL PRIMARY & SECONDARY ROAD NETWORK

N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD

On 6th December 2021 An Bord Pleanála approved with conditions the N6 GCRR Proposed Road Development and approved with modifications the Motorway Scheme and the Protected Road Scheme. On 30 January 2023 the High Court made orders quashing the decisions of the Board approving the N6 GCRR. However, the Court also ordered that the applications for approval be remitted back to Board from the point in time immediately after the submission of the Inspector's Report. On 6 December 2023 a Request for Further Information (RFI) was issued by the Board. The RFI invited Galway County Council (GCC) to update the development consent application and the compulsory acquisition schemes. It also invited submissions on the the current Climate Action Plan and the new Galway City Development Plan. The Board requested a response regarding the timescales involved in these matters. In anticipation of the Request for Further Information work had been ongoing to ensuring that the information and data in the EIAR and NIS were valid and kept up to date. On 20 December 2023 GCC responded advising that the additional information would be provided on or before 20 September 2024.

N59 MAIGH CUILINN BYPASS

This scheme involves the construction a Type 1 single carriageway road of length 4.3 kms from Clydagh to the east of the village towards Drimcong to the west of the village. The main elements of the proposed scheme include 4.6km of type 1 single carriageway, realignment of the Knockferry roads over 850m, 1.7km of farm/accommodation roads, 2 no. at-grade roundabouts and 8 structures consisting of 5 bridges, 2 underpasses and 1 culvert.

Substantial Completion of the mainline was achieved on 8 December 2023 and it was officially opened to traffic on the 11 December 2023. Works on the Knockferry Road and adjacent to the western tie-in are ongoing and are to be complete in April 2024.

N17 MILLTOWN TO GORTNAGUNNAD

This scheme is the construction of 3.0km of Type 1 single carriageway national primary road immediately north of Milltown. Applications for approval of a CPO and an appropriate assessment (NIS) were submitted to An Bord Pleanála, with both being approved, March and October 2022 respectively. The period for Judicial Review applications lapsed on 12th December 2022 and Notice to Treat has been served in January 2023 on the affected landowners. Liney were appointed valuers for GCC to negotiate on 51 plots including 3 residential properties.

Land acquisition negotiations and detailed design progressed through 2023. A Ground Investigation contract and an Archaeological Investigation Contract commenced December 2023.

N63 LISS TO ABBEY REALIGNMENT SCHEME

The proposed N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment Scheme consists of the construction of 2.3km of Type 2 single carriageway National Secondary Road with pedestrian and cycle facilities including a bridge over the River Abbert. An application for approval of the CPO and Proposed Road Development was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in February 2022. An Bord Pleanála approved the scheme and confirmed the CPO on 25th May 2023.

A competition for of consultants for TII's PMGs was October 2023. The assessed in and the successful appointed.



the procurement Phases 5, 6 & 7 of advertised in tenders were December 2023 consultant was

N84 GALWAY TO BRIDGE

Barry were appointed Consultants for (stage 1 options PMGs in May 2023.

CURRAGHMORE

Transportation Technical Phase 0, 1 and 2 preliminary assessment) of TII's A Project Outline

Document has been produced and Phase 0 Gate Review Statement Approval was submitted in December 2023.

N59 BUNNAKILL TO CLAREMOUNT

Galway County Council are obliged to get the approval from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Inland Fisheries Ireland for the construction stage method statements. On 27 June 2023 the NPWS wrote to Galway County Council advising that the responsibility for ensuring that the method statements comply with the EU Habitats Directive lies with Galway County Council. A competition was held to procure a legal team to advise on progressing to construction stage.

PAVEMENT SCHEMES

Pavement works were completed at N59 Cnocknaraw, N59 Derrynacleigh and N65 Killimor.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS, SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The CPO for the **Athenry Northern Ring Road** western section (at Raheen) was approved by An Bord Pleanála in Q1 2023. Work began on the preparation of the tender documents for construction of this section. Advance works of tree felling and fencing commenced in Q4 2023. Land acquisition is continuing. It is intended to proceed to construction in Q3 2024. Irish Rail was appointed to complete a design for the railway overbridge on the eastern section. A design is expected from Irish Rail in Q2 2024.

Advance Works on the Athenry Northern Ring Road at Raheen.

The **Kilbannon SIG scheme** in Tuam progressed further in respect of drafting of tender documents for construction, and land acquisition continuing throughout 2023. For the 2024 it is intended that the tender for construction would be published, and that the land acquisition would be fully completed. The DoT has continued the funding support for this scheme in 2024.

Further design work took place on the **Causeways SIG scheme** in Conamara South, with review by Galway County Council as to design considerations. This scheme will continue in 2024 with the support of the DoT and it is intended that the design will be finalised, and an ecological screening assessment undertaken. Depending on the outcome of the ecological assessment, the scheme will proceed via a Part 8 or Part 10 (NIS) planning application. Further funding support has been awarded to this scheme for 2024.

Design work on the **Belleville SIG scheme** in Athenry continued and the Design Report is substantially ready. Negotiations with landowners continued. It is intended to publish the Part 8 for this scheme in Q3 2024.

EXISTING BENDS AT BELLEVILLE



An application was made in April 2023 for a new scheme in Conamara at **Cuan na Loinge**. The purpose of this scheme is to raise the local tertiary road to ensure access for the local community during severe weather events. Approval was received in Q1 2024 to proceed with this scheme.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUNDING & ACTIVE TRAVEL

CLIMATE CHANGE AND REHABILITATION SCHEME 2023

An allocation of €1,169,193 was given to Galway County Council by the Department of Transport in 2023 to complete several projects under the Climate Change Adaptation and Rehabilitation scheme (CCAR). The purpose of this scheme is to deliver roads infrastructural projects which would have a significant and quantifiable impact on combating climate change and address damage to the network from severe weather. The projects completed in Galway typically included road-raising measures, installation of drains and gullies, installation of culverts and other flood

prevention measures. A total number of 28 schemes were completed across the county in 2023. The DoT has reconfirmed its commitment to this scheme by making it available to local authorities again in 2024.

Photos of drainage works completed under this scheme in 2023:



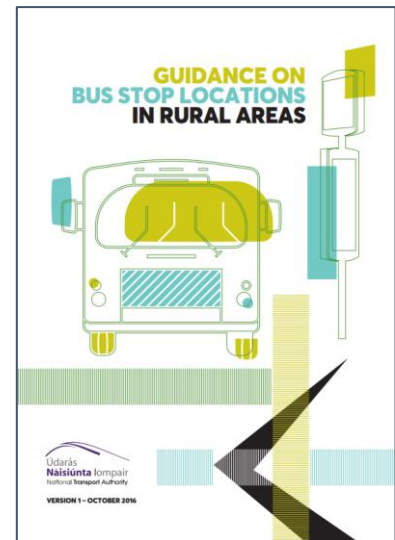
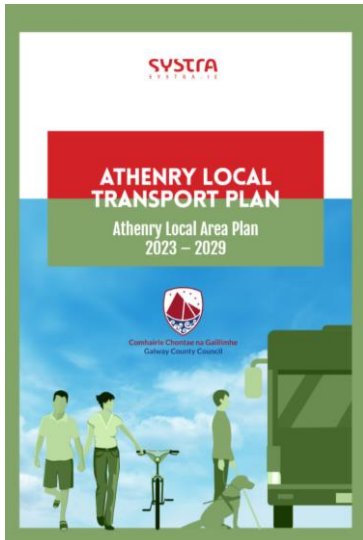
ACTIVE TRAVEL 2023

A major national target objective of the NTA Active Travel Programme is the delivery of 1000km of new walking and cycling infrastructure by the end of 2025 – this is a key component in the government’s strategy to achieve a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 (ref. Climate Action Plan, 2023).

The Active Travel Programme is set up to enable delivery of a safer and more accessible network which will encourage people to commute safely, walking and cycling between home, school, and business. By providing an alternative means of sustainable commuting, the need for short car journeys will reduce resulting in a greater modal shift.

NTA funded Active Travel works are for non-National roads and for locations within defined speed limits of 50/60kmh. This scheme continues as a rolling, multi-annual programme of works which continue to be worked around the County.

In 2023, Galway County Council received an Active Travel funding allocation of €3 million to deliver its Active Travel Programme for the year. A particular focus of the 2023 programme was the drafting of Local Transport Plans and the commencement of Community Transport Studies. In 2023 a number of new allocations were made for design projects in larger urban areas. Allocations were also made for a number of Safe Routes to School Projects and preliminary designs were commenced. This work is continuing into 2024 and an annual allocation of €3 million has been granted to Galway County Council. In tandem with the Active Travel projects, a separate body of work is proceeding with the NTA in respect of delivery of bus shelters across the county and this work will be funded separately from the main Active Travel allocation.



Strategic Goal Quality Customer Service

To ensure that quality customer service is at the centre of everything we do

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- The Unit continued to operate an Online Payment Facility to allow for the payment of Fixed Charge Notices (Parking Fines).
- The Unit continued to avail of www.galway.ie throughout 2023 to provide a Traffic Information Service, providing information on traffic disruptions arising as a result of road works, temporary road closures, roadworks speed limits etc.
- The Unit communicated with the public using various media, such as local radio, website, twitter, local newspapers, e-mails, texts, through the usage of the on-line customer comments system.
- The Roads and Transportation Unit successfully and efficiently delivered an extensive programme of works in 2023, which included works in addition to those included in the Roads Programmes, funded by other Government Departments such as Department of Rural and Community Development, An Roinn Cultúir, Oidreachta agus Gaeltachta.

ROAD SAFETY TOGETHER COMMITTEE

The Road Safety Together Committee met three times during 2023 – continuing its active role in the promotion of road safety in Galway County and City.



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY TOGETHER COMMITTEE

Specific road safety initiatives undertaken by the Council during 2023 included:

- Support for the operation of the Junior School Warden Scheme
- Funding of Cycle Training to National Schools and funding of bike racks

Galway County Council, in conjunction with NUI Galway's Students Union, ran a road safety awareness campaign encouraging students who walk or cycle to college to arrive safely. High visibility vests were distributed to students attending the college during Road Safety Week, courtesy of the Road Safety Authority.

NUIG STUDENTS

Irish Road Safety Week took place from 2nd to 8th October 2023 and the Council raised road safety awareness amongst the public by the distribution of leaflets such as speeding, tyre depth gauge, learner drivers, the correct use of lights on



vehicles, drink

and drug driving, driver tiredness, mobile phone use, correct use of roundabouts, etc., and free reflective materials were provided.

To ensure the correct vision for driving, everyone was encouraged to get a Sight Test at least every 2 years. For the month of October, '23, Specsavers offered standard Sight Tests for €15.00.

The Council teamed up with GMIT's Students Union and high visibility rucksack covers were distributed to students attending the college.



Galway Co. Council's 'Arrive Alive' initiative advises on No Texting and Driving. Discs are available, free of charge, to members of the public through its Motor Tax Offices and Area Offices.



Galway County Council, in conjunction with Galway Fire & Rescue Service, An Cheathrú Rua; HSE Ambulance Service; Galway Civil Defence and An Garda Síochána, teamed up for a road safety awareness event aimed at teenagers at Scoil Chuimsitheach Chiaráin, An Cheathrú Rua, on 3rd October.

The secondary school students who are about to become young drivers had an opportunity to experience what happens at the scene of a road traffic collision – a car dismantling demonstration took place, and a person was released from a vehicle. Crew from the Fire Service, Ambulance Service and Civil Defence were present, along with An Garda Síochána, to advise the 90 plus students present.

The aim of this initiative was to raise awareness of what happens at the scene of an accident which will hopefully prevent the young drivers-to-be becoming involved in road traffic incidents that all too often result in serious injury or death.

During October, '23, BestDrive offered road-users the opportunity to avail of BestDrive's FREE 5 Point Safety Check to ensure that the vehicle's Tyres, Brakes, Shocks, Lights/ Levels and Wipers are working correctly for the winter months ahead. They also circulated high visibility vests to members of the public, free of charge.

BESTDRIVE WILL DISTRIBUTE HIGH VISIBILITY VESTS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS DURING THE WINTER MONTHS, COURTESY OF THE COUNCIL & RSA



Strategic Goal Protection of Environment & Heritage

To improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage, and language in the interests of present and future generations.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

The Council, in partnership with the Department of Social Protection and the local community, continue to promote and encourage the development of Community Employment.

In 2023 the Council continued to sponsor five schemes with 78 participants in the following locations: Maigh Cuilinn/Oughterard, Laurencetown/Abbey, Gort & Environs, Tuam & Environs and Cloch na Ron/Clifden.



(FLOWER BEDS AT PALACE GROUNDS, CARRIED OUT BY TUAM & ENVIRONS COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN ROADS SCHEMES

The Council continued to actively promote the Community Involvement in Roadworks Scheme as a means of harnessing community support for road works on suitable local roads. A total of €1,131,840 was expended on 28 no. projects during 2023, funded by allocation under the Department of Transport Regional & Local Road.

THE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN.

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is a government policy that aims to ensure that every home, school, and business in Ireland – regardless of how remote or rural – has access to high-speed broadband.

This is being achieved through a combination of Commercial investment across the country and a State Intervention in those areas where commercial operators acting alone are unlikely to invest.

NBP STATE INTERVENTION AREA

In November 2019, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications appointed NBI as the company to build, maintain and operate the State Intervention network for the next 25 years.

The National Broadband Plan is set to deliver high-speed fibre broadband to over 544,000 premises in the State, over 40,000 of which are in Co. Galway and the projected investment in Co. Galway over the life of the project is €153 Million.

By the end of 2023 just over 17,000 premises were passed with a Fibre to the home (FTTH) service in Co. Galway by NBI and were able to pre-order/order a service, this represents 44% of the Premises in the intervention area in County Galway.

In 2023 the Deployment areas of Kilkerrin and Gurteen where substantially completed.

NBI projects by the end of 2024 53% of the Premises in the intervention area in County Galway will be able to pre-order/order a service.

NBI current published build plan indicates they will have completed their network roll out in Co. Galway by December 2026.

Up to date information on NBI build plan for County Galway can be found <https://nbi.ie/where-are-we-working/>

COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT DELIVERING FTTH SERVICES

A key principle of the NBP is to support and stimulate commercial investment through policy and regulatory measures. This has acted as a catalyst to commercial investment by the telecommunications sector.

By the end of 2023 over 75,000 Eircode's in Co. Galway (including Galway City) were passed by commercial companies with Fibre to the home (FTTH) networks.

Fibre network build was on going in the towns of Loughrea and Ballinasloe throughout 2023.

In September 2023 further investment was announced for the building of two new fibre networks in the towns of Gort and Athenry.

THE WIFI4EU INITIATIVE

The WiFi4EU initiative promotes free outdoor access to Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens in public spaces including parks, squares, public buildings, libraries, health centres and museums in municipalities throughout Europe. By the end of 2023, 41 wi-fi access points were live across the county, providing free Wi-Fi access to locals and visitors alike.

THE BCP (BROADBAND CONNECTION POINTS) INITIATIVE

The BCP initiative is a pivotal part of the National Broadband Plan which will see high-speed connectivity brought to key public locations in areas which currently cannot access high-speed broadband. This is in advance of National Broadband Ireland rolling out fibre connectivity in these areas. BCPs will provide free Wi-Fi hotspots to the public, with some offering additional services to their communities, such as remote working spaces or locations for skills training. Currently there are 21 BCPs that are live and offering public Wi-Fi. One remaining BCP is expected to be connected to the government funded network in 2024.

REGION MAPPING OF DIGITAL RESOURCES.

The ArcGIS Map displays digital hubs, Libraries, buildings with public wi-fi and computers stock for public access, WIFI4EU -public Wi-Fi points and BCP locations and their service offering.

COMMUNITY WARDENS

The Community Wardens are a uniformed service of the Local Authority with several roles across a range of Local Authority functions including:

- Enforcement - statutory traffic offences, litter offences, abandoned vehicles, waste disposal/illegal dumping, dog licenses and casual trading.
- Monitoring - housing estates, public amenities such as recycling centres, bring banks, parks, beaches and playgrounds.



- Assistance – to tourists, elderly, schools, neighborhood communities, An Garda Síochána and other state agencies.
- Litter pollution/Derelict Sites Surveys were carried out, whilst regular inspections of playgrounds, parks Local Authority estates, Halting Sites, pier, ring buoys and bottle banks continued to be undertaken by the Community Wardens during 2023 and the assistance with Community Clean ups continued during the year.
- 1128 investigations under Air Pollution, Waste Management and Water Pollution legislation were carried out.
- 186 surveys were carried out by the Community Wardens Service in relation to litter pollution in accordance with National Service indicators.

- Environmental Enforcement including the issuing of litter fines and notices under the Waste Management and Water Pollution Acts continued to be undertaken by the Community wardens. A total of 83 litter fines were issued in 2023 for offences under the Litter Pollution Act 1997 As Amended.
- Community Wardens continued to assist with the operation of pay and display parking and the implementation of traffic management plans in several towns across the County.
- The Housing Department request the services of the Community Wardens in implementation of the Control of Horses Act 1996.
- Dog licensing inspection campaigns also continued throughout the year.
- Community Wardens under the Roads Act 1993 assisted in the removal of abandoned vehicles throughout the year.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Introduction

Galway Fire & Rescue service (GFRS) has the following responsibilities in that it:

- Responds to emergencies other than just fires, such as road traffic collisions, hazardous materials incidents, water rescues, flooding and major accidental hazards.
- Aspires to prevent emergencies happening in the first place through a range of fire prevention and technical fire safety work carried out within the County and City and various community fire safety initiatives.
- Is the Local Authority Principal Emergency Service (PES) in Galway City and County Councils, who as Local Authorities are Principal Response Agencies (PRA) in accordance with the National Framework for Major Emergency Management 2006.

There are currently 11 stations serving Galway County with a population of 193,323 people and Galway city with a population of 84,414 (CSO statistics 2022) as shown in Figure 1.

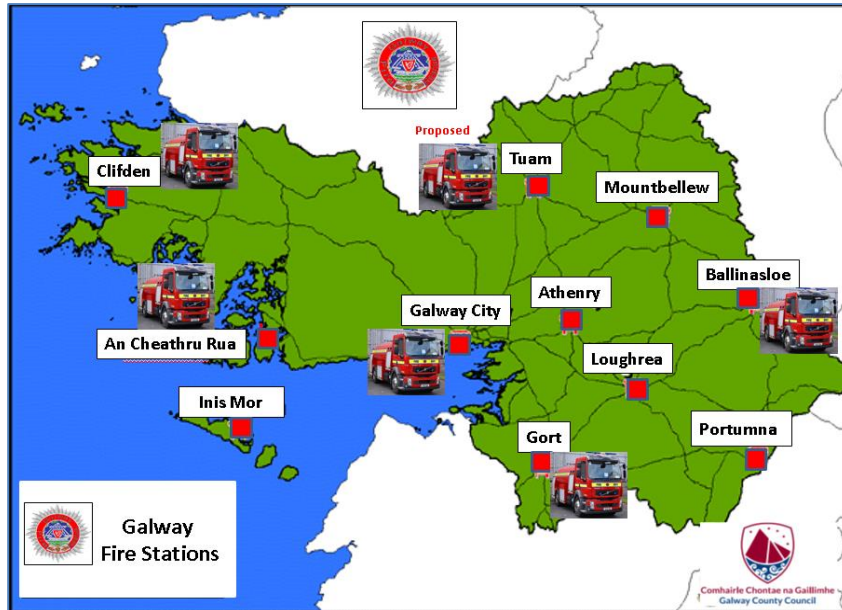


Figure 1: GFRS Fire Station Locations

Fire Stations are located at:

- Athenry
- Ballinasloe
- Clifden
- Galway City (Headquarters)
- Gort
- Inis Mór
- Loughrea
- Mountbellew
- Portumna
- Tuam
- An Cheathrú Rua

The Council now employs 165 fire-fighting personnel in Galway Fire and Rescue Service including full time and retained fire-fighters in the City and County, senior fire officers, a brigade mechanic and a Civil Defence Officer. In addition, Galway FRS has 7 civilian administrative support staff as Headquarters staff who are based in Galway City Fire station.

National Retained Fire Fighter Industrial Action and WRC Agreement

In June 2023 retained fire fighters nationally engaged in industrial action focused mainly around pay and terms and pay and conditions, which were both major contributing factors in the difficulty of all fire authorities in recruiting and retaining fire fighters. In the context of pay, new arrangements were agreed which ensure minimum earnings for all retained fire fighters. Some of the elements of the agreement centring around rates of pay, include guaranteed community fire safety hours, optional community fire safety hours being made available, an extension of the premium rate hours and increase rates of pay for attendance at drill training.

In the context of terms and conditions, the biggest issue was the time commitment to be available to attend calls. In the WRC it was agreed that all personnel would be provided the opportunity to be available for incidents on a week on / week off (flexible) basis, with the option to attend calls on the week off (flexible) if so desired. In essence this means that, to ensure sufficient personnel to mobilise a fire appliance at all times, it is necessary to increase the strength of personnel in all stations by 3. The process of recruitment and training of these additional personnel commenced in Q4 2023 and will continue throughout 2024.

Strategic Goal

“To improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage and language in the interests of present and future generations.”

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE – A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY IN IRELAND

“Keeping Communities Safe”, which is the outcome of a review of Fire Services and Fire Safety in Ireland was published in February 2013 by the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management (NDFEM). “Keeping Communities Safe” (KCS) is an integrated blueprint for the development of the critical public safety roles performed by Fire Services, to be implemented in the period of 2013-2015, that manages risk, by addressing public safety improvement, incident reduction, response standards and service delivery structures for the decade ahead.

The area risk categorisation (ARC) for all Fire Station grounds in Galway was completed and was submitted to NDFEM in summer of 2015 to form part of the 1st National External Validation Group (EVG) report, as requested by NDFEM Circular 05/2015. A national EVG 1 Report was issued by NDFEM in 2016. A second round of EVG visits was due to take place in 2020 which because of the pandemic, did not occur.

Because of the pandemic, it was not possible for the NDFEM to conduct the planned EVG II visit in 2020. In its stead the NDFEM conducted a “Capacity Review” of all fire services to ascertain how those services planned and conducted its business during the pandemic. The “capacity review board” issued its report in October 2020. Galway Fire and Rescue Service fared very well in the report and was held up as an example of the use of ArcGIS for operational intelligence and management in the area of Community Fire Safety and Severe Weather Emergency Management. As a result of the Capacity Review, a senior fire officer from GFRS assisted, and is continuing to assist the NDFEM to develop our ArcGIS based operational intelligence platform to roll it out nationally to all fire authorities.

CAMP WEST (WEST REGION FIRE CONTROL)

Galway FRS continued to run and pilot the CAMP Next Generation mobilisation trial at Galway City fire station as part of roll-out of new out-station equipment in Fire Stations in West region as part of Camp C_{Trí} project. Technical preparatory work has been carried out in 2018 and 2019 in all Fire stations to enable the transfer over to the National digital radio system (TETRA) in all vehicles and

HQ Fire Station which has now been completed. The C_{Tri} project board have gone to tender for the procurement of digital radios to replace all UHF (incident ground) radios in service nationally thereby improving incident ground communications and creating resilience in the service.

HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Galway FRS Health and Safety policy is contained in Galway County Council's Local Authority Safety Management System Manual / Safety Statement. The Council Safety manual as customised for Galway FRS addresses the working environments encountered by the Fire Service, where combining need, risk, and resources in a wide range of situations has long been a feature of service management. Galway County Council's Local Authority Safety Management System Manual / Safety Statement sets out the approach, which this Fire Authority adopts in relation to managing safety and in particular meeting its statutory obligations under Section 20 of the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

ISO 45001: Occupational Health & Safety Management System

Having achieved accreditation to the OHSAS 18001 safety management system in December 2016 the retention of this accreditation and the H&S management programme have been major drivers of much of the fire service's H&S related activities in 2023 and are briefly summarised as follows: -

ISO 45001

In October 2018 Galway FRS successfully achieved accreditation to the new Internationally Recognised Standard ISO 45001. Surveillance audits conducted by the accreditation body (NSAI in this case) play a key role of the ISO 45001 system to ensure that safety management systems are constantly maintained and consistently improved as per the requirements of the code of practice. In this regard Galway FRS successfully passed a surveillance audit that was conducted in May 2023 and the next audit is scheduled for March 2024. In the period between NSAI surveillance audits, Galway FRS underwent 2 internal audits to ensure the maintenance of, and compliance with NSAI standards.

- **Fire Station Safety Checks**

A new initiative of carrying out regular safety checks in fire stations was commenced in 2017. The purpose of these checks, which are conducted on a six-monthly basis for county retained fire stations and on a quarterly basis for Galway City fire station, is to augment the existing suite of static risk assessments of our fire stations (which are reviewed on a three yearly basis). They also allow for the early identification of potential hazards in the fire stations thus expediting the implementation of appropriate control measures and corrective actions.

- **Meetings / Consultations**

Galway FRS H&S Steering Group continued to meet on a regular basis in 2023. All such meeting were held either in person or via the MS Teams platform, a capability embraced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The conduction of H&S Operational Group meetings for the City & City Retained personnel and separately for County Retained personnel was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as the feasibility to hold on site meetings was very much restricted. Nonetheless a reduced amount of such meetings took place in 2020 and 2021. These meetings were as per the required schedule, either in person or via MS Teams

- **Audits**

As mentioned above the last ISO 45001 surveillance audit was conducted in May 2023 by the NSAI. Fire service personnel made significant efforts to ensure that their fire stations were well presented. The NSAI found that there was no area of concern to warrant the withdrawal of certification and the ISO 45001 certification was successfully retained. The next audits are scheduled for March 2024.

- **Legionella Control**

Following the legionella risk assessments of the fire stations that took place in 2016 a Legionella Control programme was developed and instigated in 2017. The programme involves the monthly monitoring of water services infrastructure in all fire stations by a specialist contractor. In parallel to this particular programme a separate programme of carrying out remedial works to water services infrastructure in all fire stations was initiated to address issues identified in the legionella risk assessments. These works were predominantly concluded in December 2017. Legionella monitoring continued in 2023 in order to continue to lower the legionella risk rating in fire stations.

- **Hygiene Subgroup**

Following international research into the potential health consequences of exposure to the products of combustion to fire fighters, and in response to discussions held during the Health and Safety Operational Group meetings, a Hygiene Subgroup was established consisting of representatives of fire service management and retained and full-time fire fighters. This group is looking at national and international research and has produced a draft report containing possible control measures to be considered to reduce any potential risks.

- **H&S Documentation**

A number of documents relating to the safety management system were reviewed & updated in 2023 and copies of same issued to fire stations. We have continued to upload documentation relating to the safety management system onto the library function of the Incident Control Room software system and appliance tablets. It is planned to keep all such H&S documentation in this manner thus ensuring that the most up to date documentation will always be available to all fire crews. All operational guidance is circulated in the same manner.

FIRE OPERATIONS (RESPONSE)

The total number of emergency responses by Galway Fire Rescue Service (GFRS) in Galway City and County respectively in 2023 was 1846 (1534 incidents) with 733 in Galway City Fire Ground and 1113 emergency responses in remainder of Galway County. The overall call rate increases from 2022 with an increase of 34 calls in the City and a decrease of 18 calls in the County. Overall though there is a decrease in incidents of 155. Figure 2 shows the trend of incidents /responses from 2013 – 2023 for Galway City and County. Following a decrease in the trend of the number of incidents / responses attended in 2019, 2020 and 2021 there has been a significant increase in 2022 and 2023. Much of this increase is attributable to the marked increase in the number of gorse and wildland fires attended in the spring/summer of 2022 and 2023. Figure 3 shows trends of incidents / responses in the City and County Fire ground areas respectively from 2013 -2023.

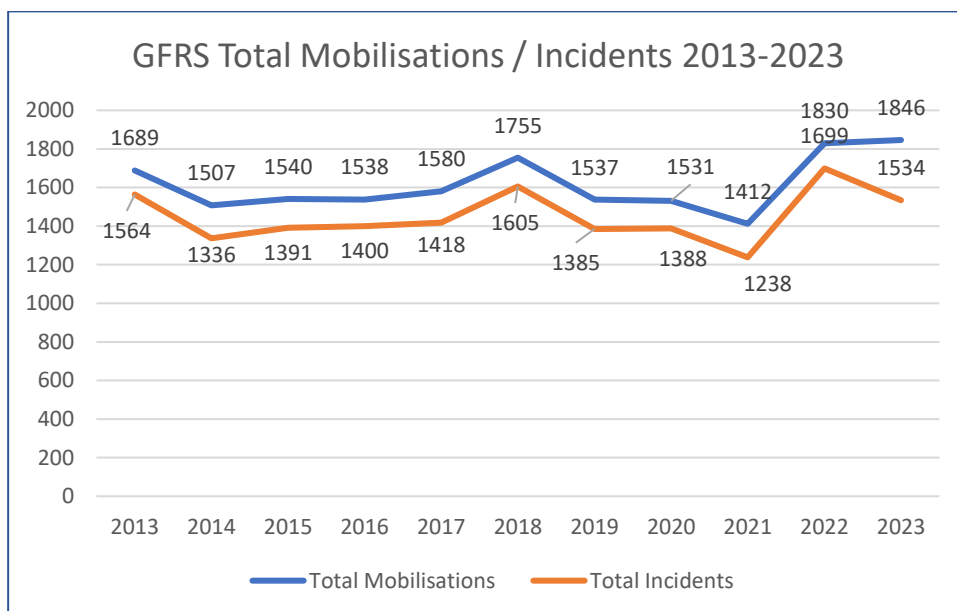


Figure 2: Incident Trends for Galway City and County 2013 – 2023

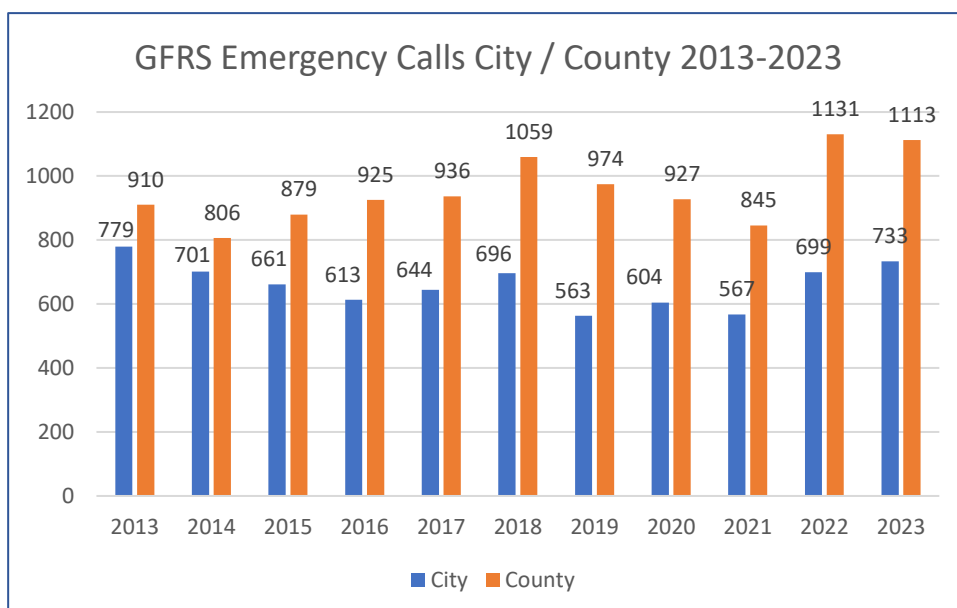


Figure 3: Incident Trends for City & County Fire Ground Areas 2013-2023

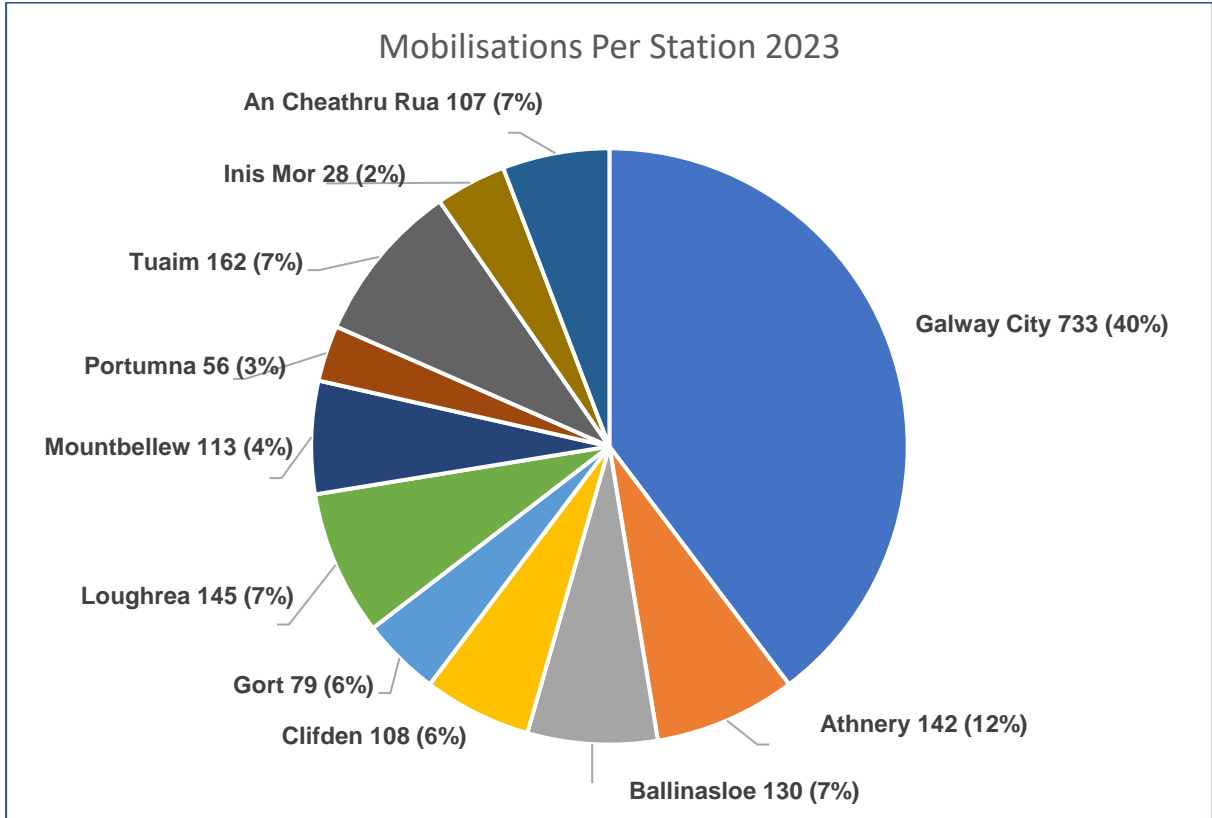


Figure 4: Breakdown of Mobilisations per Station in 2023

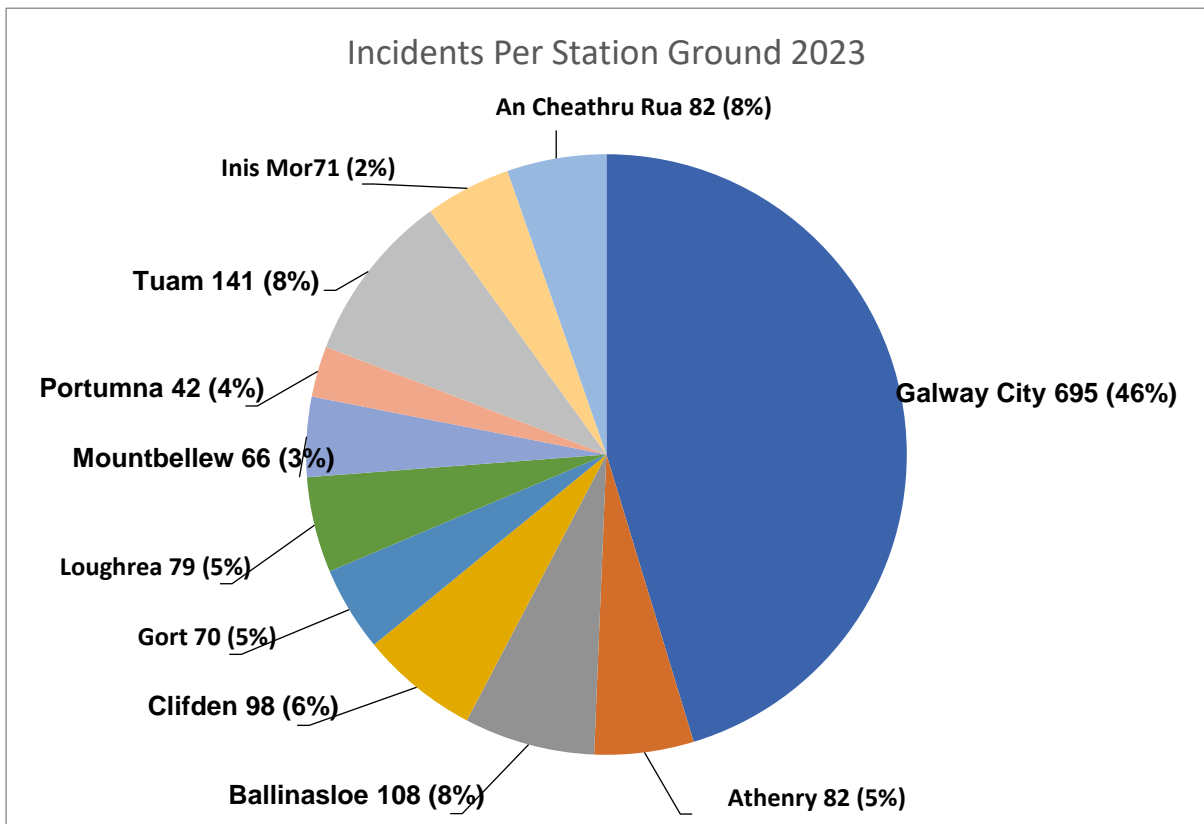


Figure 5: Breakdown of Incidents per Station in 2023

Figure 4 gives a breakdown of mobilisations per station 2023, while Figure 5 shows the incidents per Galway Station Ground Areas. Overall activity levels have increased from 2022 levels for the reasons outlined above with the percentage activity per station remaining relatively steady.

Fire Fatalities

Regrettably there was one fire fatality due to accidental fire in 2023 in Galway city and county.

MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MEM)

The Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC) which was established by the Council as part of New National Framework for Major Emergency Management (MEM) continued its work. The GCC Major Emergency Plan was submitted and signed off in 2021, therefore only updates to Appendix B1 and B2 “Key Role Holders” took place in 2023. This was managed by the Human Resources Department.

As part of Severe Weather planning, Galway County Council continued the development of a Severe Weather Incident Mapping System (SWEMS) as shown in Figure 6. The system is used for reporting and recording on an ARC GIS live map, the locations, and incidences of all flooding events in the Galway County Council functional area. The system is linked automatically to the GCC Weather Related Road Closure Map on the GCC Website, to MapAlerter and to the GCC Twitter page, which all allow for automatic updates to be provided to the public during a weather event. Refresher training with all Municipal Districts took place during 2023 and will continue throughout 2024.

Locally, the MEM committee continued their work on the revision of External Emergency Plans (EEP) for Upper Tier Seveso Site (under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances Regulations 2015). Under these regulations the relevant Principal Response Agencies (PRA’s), termed Local Competent Authorities (LCA’s), must review EEPs every three years including the running of exercises. The agencies (LCA’s) involved include Galway County Council (including Galway Fire and Rescue Service as it’s PES), Galway City Council, Galway Garda Division, HSE West (including the National Ambulance Service (NAS)) and the site operator and other agencies including the Port Authority, if applicable.

The following major emergency exercises and training were held in 2023:

- On-Site Co-ordination Training on the 10th November 2023.
- Major Emergency Management, Information Manager Training on the 28th and 29th February 2023.
- Aer Arann/Island Response Exercise on 28th November 2023.
- On-Site Co-ordination Mobilisation as Part of Coast Guard Exercise Blue Horizon on 17th May 2023.
- Local Co-ordination Centre Exercise on the 3rd March 2023

- As part of these exercises, GFRS continued to embed the Mobile On-Site Co-Ordination Unit (based in Gort fire station) and the Local Co-Ordination Centre. Both use the new electronic information management system (eIMS).

Galway County Council personnel also continued their participation in both the MEM West Regional Steering and the MEM West Regional Working Groups involving members of the Principal Emergency Services (PES) in the West Region (Local Authority Fire Services, Local Garda Divisions and HSE West Ambulance Service).

Galway County Council Headquarters continues as the main location of the Local Co-Ordination Centre (LCC) for the three Principal Response Agencies (PRA's), Galway County Council, HSE West and Galway Garda Division, for Major Emergencies in the Galway City and County area. In mid-2018 a case was submitted to the NDFEM for funding to provide a back-up generator for the LCC as part of GCC's business continuity plan.

Galway County Council also managed the annual regional claim on behalf of the 8 PRA's in the West Region in 2023 as in previous years.

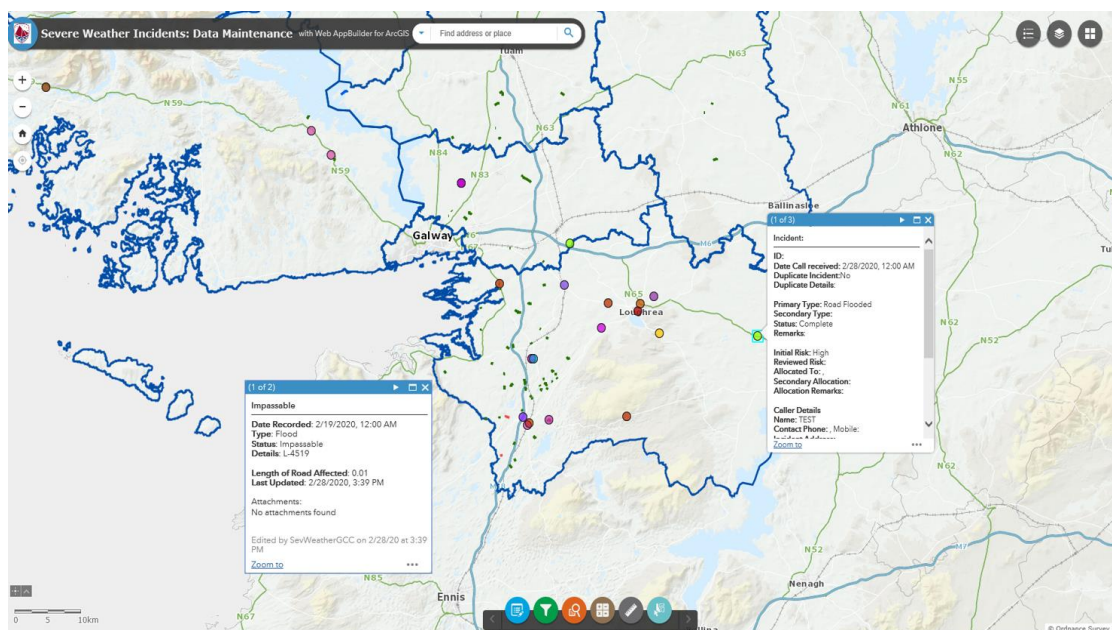


Figure 6: Severe Weather Event Management System

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Galway County Council as contracting authority for the local authority Fire Services in the CAMP West region continues to manage a contract by Inspire Ltd for the provision of CISM services to Fire Services in the West region from October 2021 to September 2024.

Strategic Goal

“To facilitate the broadest possible participation by citizens in local decision making and the sustainable development of their communities and their county.”

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY & PREVENTION

Work was ongoing in the Fire Prevention & Fire Safety Section throughout 2023. While the schools programme was suspended during the pandemic, it was resumed in 2023.

Inspections

The Fire Prevention Section carried out 228 inspections of premises in 2023 as part of its Fire Prevention Function, under the Fire Services Act 1981, Building Control Act 1990 and 2014, Licensing Acts, Planning Acts, and the Dangerous Substances Act. This figure represents a decrease in inspections of 9 less than 2022.

Public License Applications

The Fire Prevention Section received 149 public licence applications in 2023. Public license activity from 2011 to 2022 is shown in Figure 7.

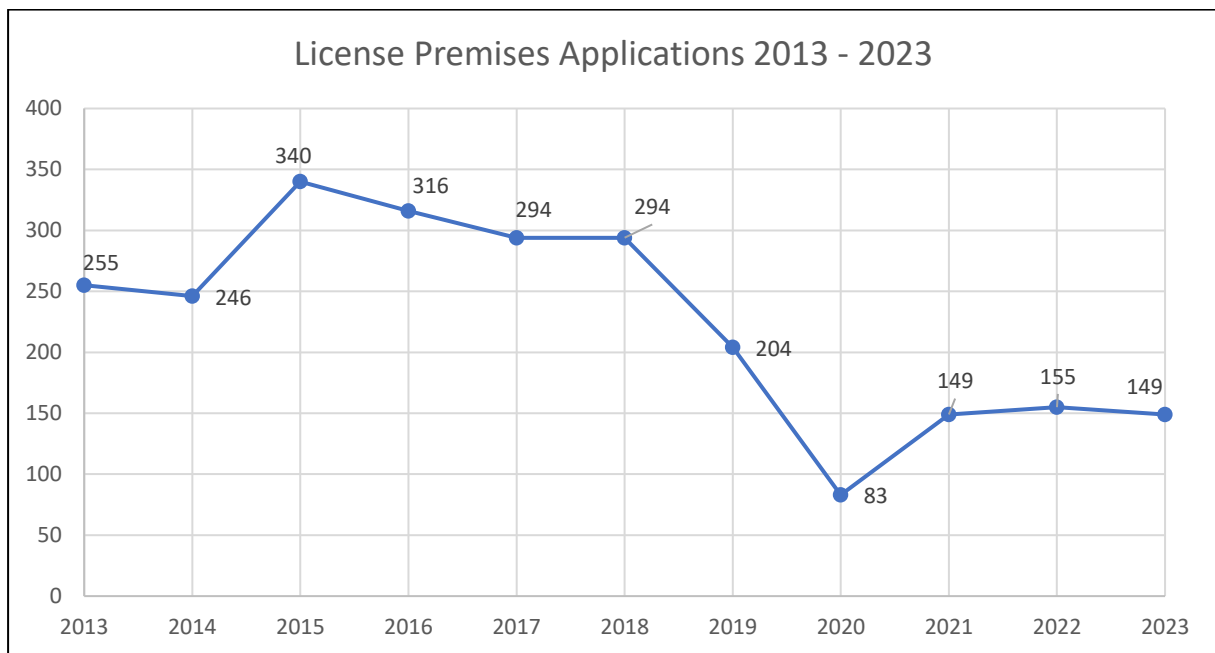


Figure 7: Public License Applications 2013- 2023

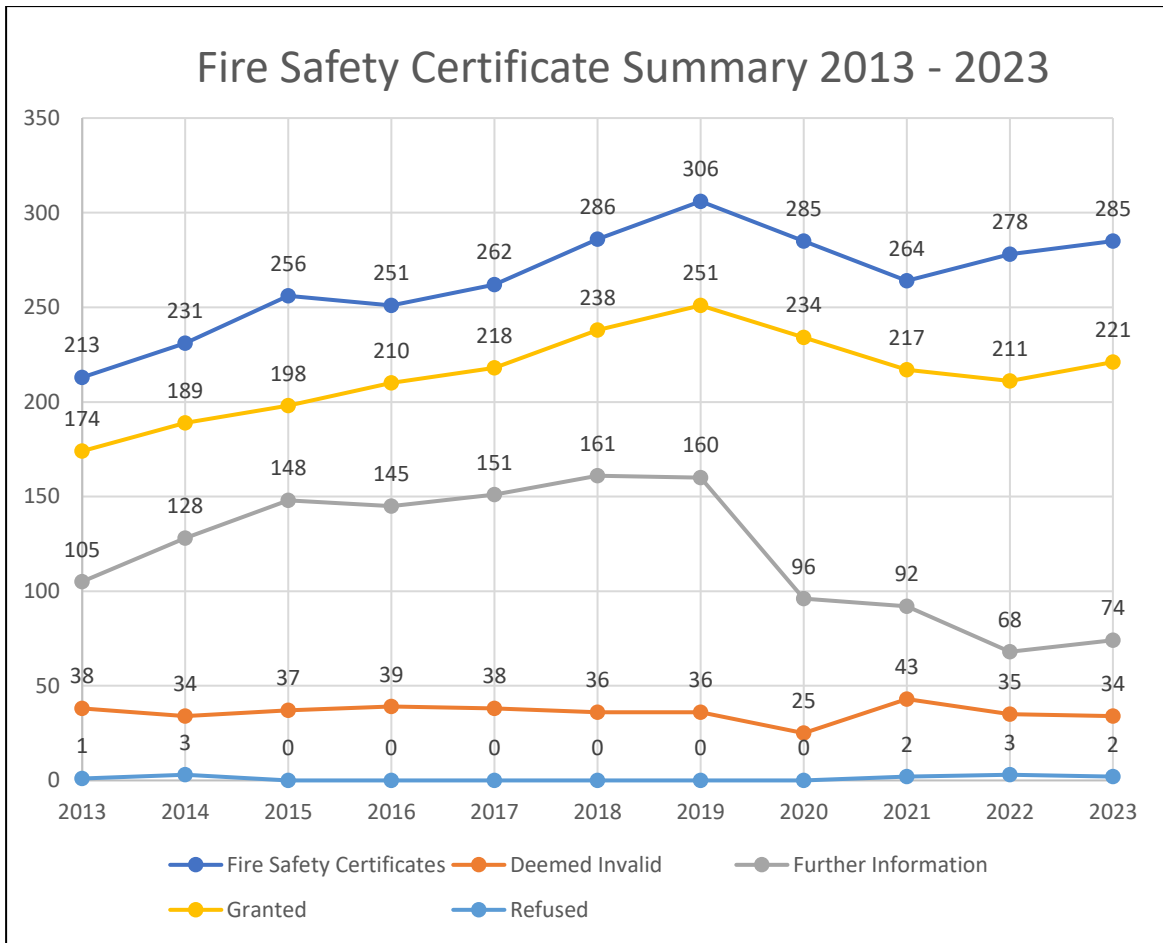


Figure 8: Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) Activity 2013- 2023

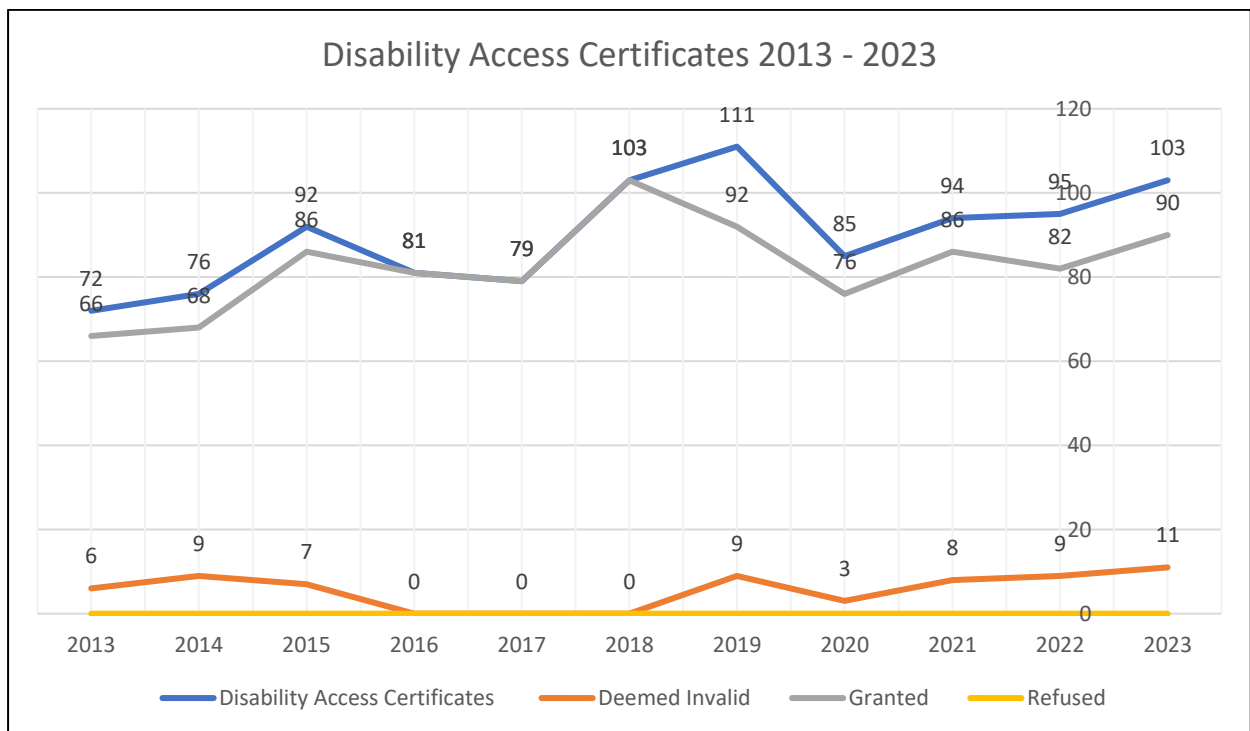


Figure 9: Disability Access Certificate Activity 2013-2023

Fire Safety Certificate Applications

The Fire Prevention Section dealt with 285 Fire Safety Certificate Applications of all types under the Building Control Regulations. The overall number of Fire Safety Certificate applications represents an increase of 7 from 2022. Fire Safety Certificate activity from 2013 to 2023 is shown in Figure 8.

Disability Access Certificates

The total number of Disability Access Certificates dealt with in 2022 was 103, an increase of 8 from 2021. Disability Access Certificate activity from 2012 to 2022 is shown in Figure 17.

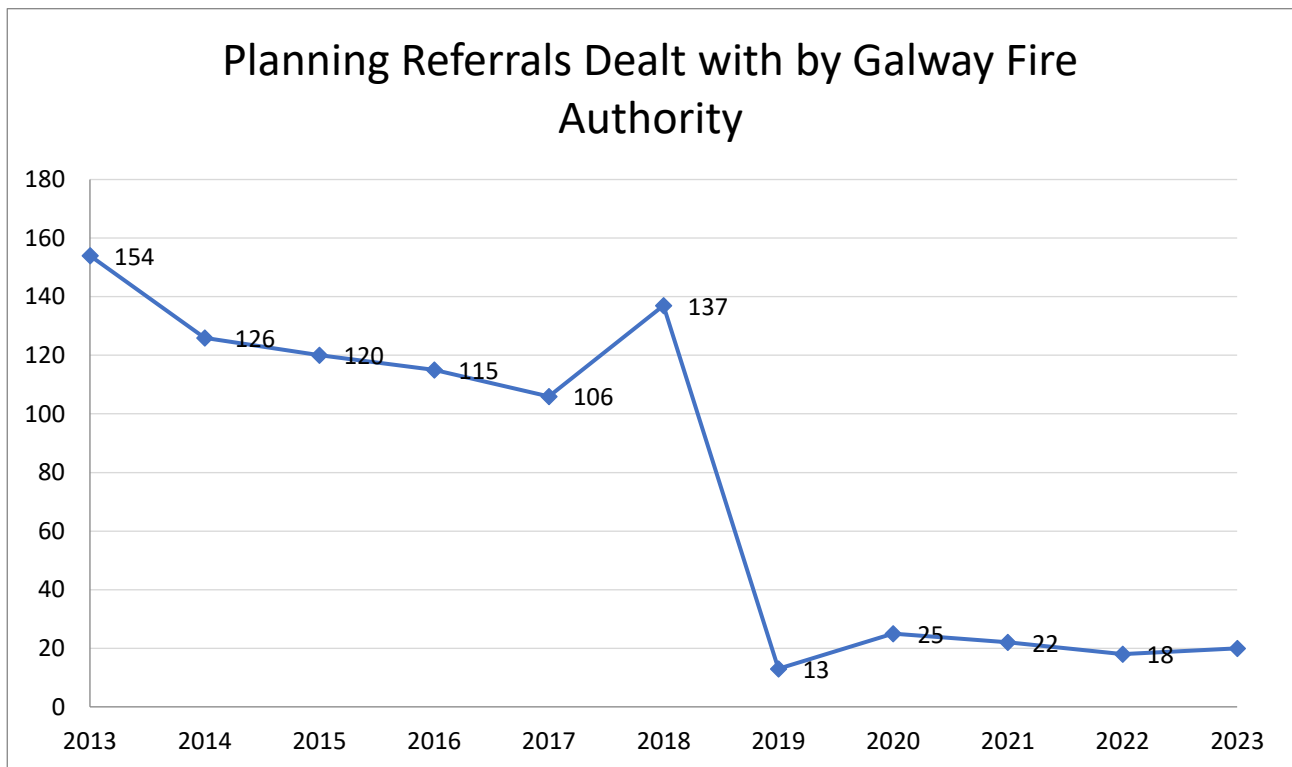


Figure 10: Planning Referrals 2013-2023

Planning Referrals

There was a slight decrease in planning referrals in 2023 with the total number of planning referrals in 2023 for the City and County being 20. The planning referral activity from 2013 to 2023 are shown in Figure 18.

Community and Island Fire Safety

During 2023 Galway Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) procured 700 No. self-contained smoke alarms with long life batteries. Along with existing stock, these smoke alarms were installed in households throughout Galway. A Home Fire Safety Check was also carried out for each dwelling at the time of the smoke alarm installation.

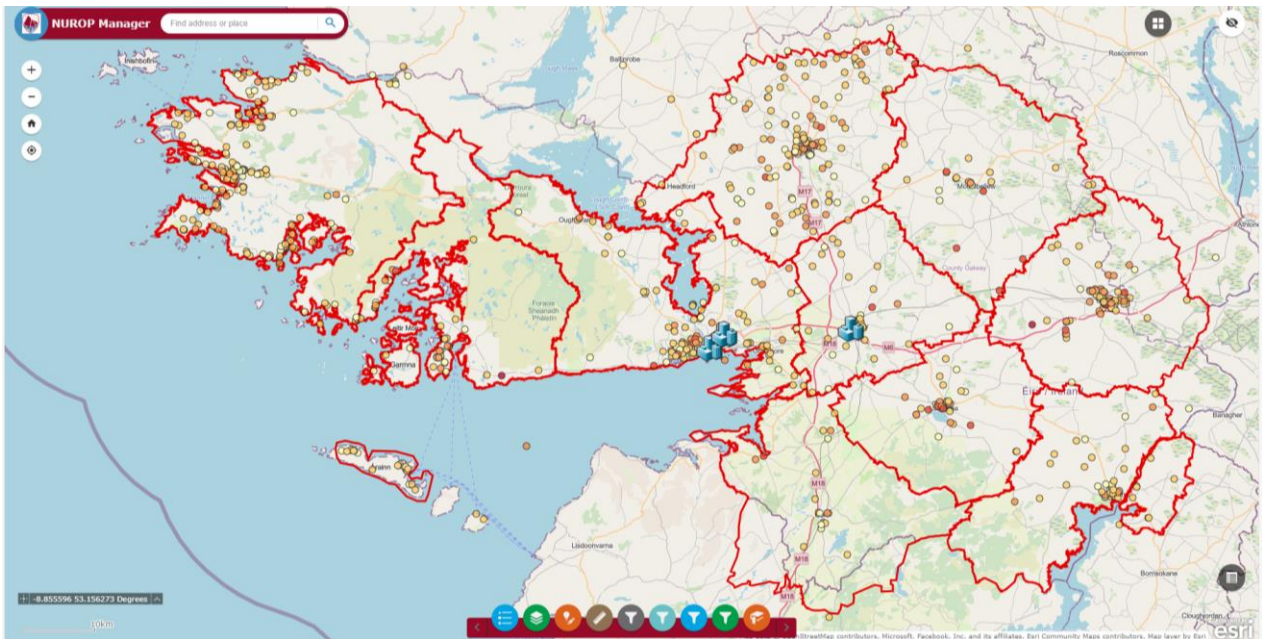


Figure 11: NUROP extract of Home Fire Safety Checks

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|
|  | <p>Galway Fire & Rescue Service Seirbhís Dóiteáin & Tarrthála na Gaillimhe</p> |  | <p>An Garda Síochána</p> |
| <p>Wildfire Information for Farmers & Landowners</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is illegal to burn on open ground for the control of growing vegetation between February 28th and September 1st Farmers and landowners in breach risk prosecution and or penalties under the Dept. of Agriculture's support payments for farmers (Single Farm Payment, AEOS, REPS, Disadvantaged Area Scheme) Galway County Council will impose a charge on the owners or the beneficial occupiers of the land or property in relation to the attendance of the Fire Service | | | |
|  | |  | |
| <p>Wildfire Information for the Public</p> | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid lighting fires outdoors when there are high winds or high temperatures Do not discard cigarette ends – make sure they are extinguished completely Report anyone acting irresponsibly or carelessly with fire in the countryside | | | |
| <p>PLEASE REMEMBER!</p> <p>Wildfires are a serious drain on Fire Service resources. Fire crews may be delayed in attending life threatening house fires or road traffic collisions when fighting wildfires.</p> | | | |

Figure 12: Wildfire Prevention Campaign Poster



Figure 13: Appliance Community Fire Safety Message

Unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, GFRS had to put on hold all non-emergency public contact such as fire safety talks, fire appliance visits to schools and the opening of fire stations to members of the public. The Primary Schools Programme to 3rd class pupils was also paused during 2021 and 2022. These all resumed in 2023.

GFRS ran a wildfire advertisement campaign (see Figure 13) in local newspapers and on social media to try to reduce the number of wildfires particularly in Connemara and the South of the County. The posters were also displayed in prominent business in the areas. GFRS continued community safety message on fire appliances reflecting the National STOP Fire campaign.

Stategic Goal

To maximise organisational capacity through the continuous review of operational efficiency, financial and risk management and the development of our Staff and Elected Members

CAPITAL

In 2023, Galway Fire and Rescue Service progressed the projects approved under the Fire Service Capital Programme 2020 – 2025 with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) of the Department of Housing, Planning, and Community & Local Government. This relates to the following.

- Procurement of a new Class B Fire Appliance for Galway City. The new Class B appliance was received in Q3 2023
- New Fire Station Athenry – The construction of the New Fire Station in Athenry is expected to be completed in Q2 2024 with the official opening occurring in the latter part of the year

- New Fire Station Loughrea – Approval in principle was received for the project. Due to engagement with the local community and An Bord Planeala, progress has been slow. The planning design is completed and it is expected the Part 8 application will be before the Municipal District for mention in Q3 2024
- New Brigade Mechanic Workshop – Following the submission of a case and Capital Appraisal to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM), approval in principle was received from the NDFEM to construct a brigade mechanics workshop co-located with the new fire station in Athenry. Documents are being drawn to appoint a design team for the project. The project will be on the same site of the New Fire Station in Athenry and it cannot commence until the current contract has left the site.

The latest Fire Appliance procurement programme as allocated 2 new fire appliances to Galway Fire and Rescue Service. It is expected that we will receive delivery of same in the latter part of 2025.

Galway Fire and Rescue Service acknowledges the receipt of this vital support to the Council, in supporting the provision of fire and emergency services by the Council in the city and county area.

TRAINING

Throughout the course of 2023 Galway Fire and Rescue Service personnel completed training at station local and national level. On station training consists of generally the following:

- Drill night training at retained stations in the City and County
- Daily watch training in Galway City full-time station
- Centralised training courses both initial and refresher

Drill Night Training Programme

On-station training concentrates on core skills and is delivered by officers at each station.

Daily Watch Training Programme

On-station training concentrates on core skills and is delivered by officers at each station.

This training concentrates on core skills and is delivered by officers at each station. Skills maintenance for specialist roles was also carried out based on special appliances located at the station including the:

- Hazmat unit
- Foam unit

- Emergency tender
- Aerial ladder platform (ALP)
- Fire Fighting Skills
- High Risk Premises familiarisation visits.

Galway Fire Service Centralised Training Programme

Initial training courses and refresher courses were organised centrally, as in previous years. Courses conducted included:

- Fire Fighting Skills Course
- Wearing Breathing Apparatus
- Breathing Apparatus Set Maintenance
- Asset Management
- Emergency First Responder Refresher
- Rope rescue
- Water Rescue
- Manual Handling Refresher
- ALP Operators
- CISM
- Driving Training
- Effective Decision-Making Training
- Radiological Safety Training
- Radio Communications
- Working at Heights
- Powerboat training
- Chemical Spectrometer user
- Fire Station Trainer
- Remote Operated Vehicle Operator

Centralised National Training

Galway FRS sent students on centralised training courses conducted by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) and LASNTG at various training centres around the country. These included:

- Breathing apparatus Initial Wearers
- Breathing Apparatus Instructors Course
- Module 1 for Junior Officers
- Module 2 for Junior Officers
- Effective Decision-Making Courses
- RTC Instructors courses
- Pump Operator Instructor Course
- Fire Engineering and Operational Command Seminars for Senior Officers
- Fire Service Management 1
- Pump Operators
- Building Control Officers Seminars
- Chief Fire Officers Association Conference
- Fire Investigation Seminar
- Cardiac First Responder Instructor Course
- Fire Station Trainer
- Emergency Service Driving Standards Instructor Recertification

PERSONNEL

Maintaining crew numbers is a constant challenge in the retained service and difficulties in recruiting make it difficult to maintain required availability arrangements. Ongoing recruitment continues on an annual basis. The LGMA and NDFEM recently approved a Review of the Retained Fire Service in Ireland Report with a view, in conjunction with employee representatives, to implementing measures to improve recruitment and retention in the retained fire service. The recommendations of the Review are discussed above in the context of the National Retained WRC Agreement.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Galway Civil Defence, through their 5 training centres, Galway City, Oranmore, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Clonberne. Recertification locally has continued along with Central training at the Civil Defence College in Roscrea.

The new e-learning site was developed and updated for volunteers. All modules and training materials were accessed on this site during the year 2023.

Galway Civil Defence assisted the AGS with Missing Person Search's in 2023. Search drone and boat crews were tasked to numerous different searches throughout 2023. Assistance was also provided to Mayo Civil Defence and Clare Civil Defence for missing person searches. Searches involved land based and water-based searches. All searches were of long duration periods to the volunteers, who were extremely professional and dedicated to the requests.

A programme of training in Cardiac First Response, First Aid Responder, Emergency First Response was held via our new e-learning site through 2023 to keep our members up to date on these Responder levels. Manual Handling and People Moving recertification also took place for members due.

€35,000 was allocated to Galway by the Dept. of Defence, Civil Defence Branch with funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund. This funding was used to procure a 4 x 4 vehicle for Galway Civil Defence.

All units will again be responding to their community's requests for assistance at local community events, providing first aid cover and other assistance that may be requested where possible.

The Civil Defence Officer participated in Galway County Council and Galway City Council Community Forum and Civil Defence members carried out tasks for vulnerable persons identified in the forum groups, which included transportation of vulnerable persons for vital medical appointments. The Civil Defence Officer is also a member of the Galway County Council Major Emergency Management Committee and participated in the Major Emergency exercises held throughout the year.

Each of the Civil Defence Units were actively recruiting new members throughout 2023.

All new members completed their Garda Vetting and attended training. Recruiting is ongoing currently.

Civil Defence continued their use of the e-vetting system for new and current members in 2023. This system continues to prove more efficient and vetting status returns are received in a much shorter timeframe.



Figure 14: Civil Defence SUA Team conducting a missing person search near Galway Harbour.



Figure 15: Cardiac First Responder Advanced Training Course in Clonberne.

Strategic Goal

To ensure that quality customer service is at the centre of everything we do.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Galway Fire and Rescue Service processed and addressed fire prevention complaints as received on a prioritised basis. A new Customer Service section has been included in the Draft Section 26 Fire and Emergency Operations Plan.

WATER SERVICES

WATER CONSERVATION

During 2023 works continued to reduce leakage from the water distribution network through planned and reactive intervention works through the Leakage Reduction Programme (LRP), in conjunction with rehabilitation works under the Water Network Programme (WNP).

In 2023 significant rehabilitation works were undertaken in Ballinasloe, Eyrecourt, Casla, Inis Oirr, Inisbofin which will improve water quality and supply issues in these areas.

Looking Forward, 2024 will see continued investment in the network through the WNP with rehabilitation and continued reduction in leakage through the LRP.

Other key work streams running in parallel and expected to deliver further benefits within the County include the following:

- Capital Find & Fix utilising the resources of Galway County Council Operational and Find Fix crews and Contractors across several District Metering Areas (DMA's) throughout the County.
- Pressure Management utilising the resources of Galway County Council Operational and Find Fix crews and Contractors across all Water Service Divisions North, South & West.
- Mains Rehabilitation (including lead replacement) are continuing via the Contractor Mains Rehab Crews across all Water Service Divisions North, South & West.
- First Fix activities are ongoing countywide via the Contractor Mains Rehab Crews.
- Metering (Non-Domestic) via the Contractor Mains Rehab Crews at location throughout the County.

As work progresses on these work streams in the coming years, significant water savings will be achieved delivering tangible benefits to both customers and the wider community.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

Galway County Council is the Supervisory Authority for the group water scheme sector in its functional area, this means that it has an equivalent role to that of the EPA in its oversight of Uisce Éireann. The RWP provides support to group schemes through Annual subsidy and the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme. The MARWP is a government funded, three-year rolling programme which provides capital investment to the sector. The current plan (MARWP 2019-2021) has run over its designated period due to the pandemic. The next MARWP will run from 2024-2026.

The Rural Water Programme also carries out auditing of group schemes. The purpose of auditing is to review the process of water provision from the catchment, through abstraction, water treatment and delivery to the customer's tap via the mains network. The audits provides the

opportunity to collaborate with the scheme to identify areas for action and provide support to the scheme in the daily delivery of water to its customers. The audit seeks to confirm the presence of robust barriers to contaminated water entering supply.

The RWP also provides subsidy grants towards the ongoing operation and maintenance of group water schemes. The issue of water quality and compliance with Drinking Water Regulation standards is central to investment decisions. The minimum subsidy is 85% of the annual running costs depending on the quantity of domestic connections in the scheme.

The MARWP, funded by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage provides capital funding to schemes with the level of grant support varying from 75% to 100% depending on the category of works.

The hyperinflation in materials and energy made for a very challenging for schemes during 2023 but a reduction in inflation and energy costs was noted which benefited the operation of schemes throughout the county.

The details of the funding measures under the programme are set out below.

Measure 1: Source Protection

(GWS Sector) – Protection of raw water source of existing GWS(Was 2(e)). This is Phase 1 and Phase 2.

- Phase 1 was the ZOC reports (€3,000 X 85% max grant).
- Phase 2 is at 100% subject to max per house of 9,000 across all funding headings.

Measure 2: Public Health Compliance

Upgrading of Treatment Facilities

- a. Water Treatment Improvements (RAL) 100%
- b. Amalgamation/rationalisation 100%
- c. Capital replacement costs 85%

Measure 3: Enhancement of Existing Schemes Including Water Conservation (

GWS Sector)Water conservation and network upgrades including storage.

- a. Water Conservation (85%)
- b. Network Upgrades (85%)

Measure 4: New Group Water Schemes

- a. Standalone Schemes
- b. Extensions

85% subject to normal limits or 90% in exceptional cases.

Measure 5: Transition of Existing Group Water Schemes and Group Sewerage Schemes to the Public (Irish Water) Water Sector

Existing schemes that wish to be taken in charge.

Measure 6: Community Connections (Water and Wastewater)

Extensions off the public network

Measure 7: Innovation and Research

- a. Proposals for use of new technology in the group water sector
- b. Projects in the rural water sector to support Water Framework Directives objectives, including awareness.

Measure 8: Individual Wells (75%) and on-site wastewater treatment systems (means tested).

The Multi Annual Rural Water programme 2019-2021 concluded in 2021 but carried forward into 2022 and 2023 as the implementation of the programme was affected adversely by the Covid pandemic. Any projects not completed under the programme will be re-submitted for funding under the next programme.

All the funding measures have certain conditions and ceilings which will apply and be explained when applying.

MARWP 2023-2025: Measure A8 (Network and Treatment for unsewered villages)

In advance of publication of the next Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme MARWP, the Minister published requests for submissions for funding from a €50M fund to address villages and towns that do not have foul sewer networks or wastewater treatment. The criteria for selection were harm to the environment, harm to human health and provision of housing. A team from Housing, Environment, Planning and Water Services assessed the list of unsewered villages and towns. Craughwell and Clarinbridge were selected based on the criteria and two applications for funding were submitted.

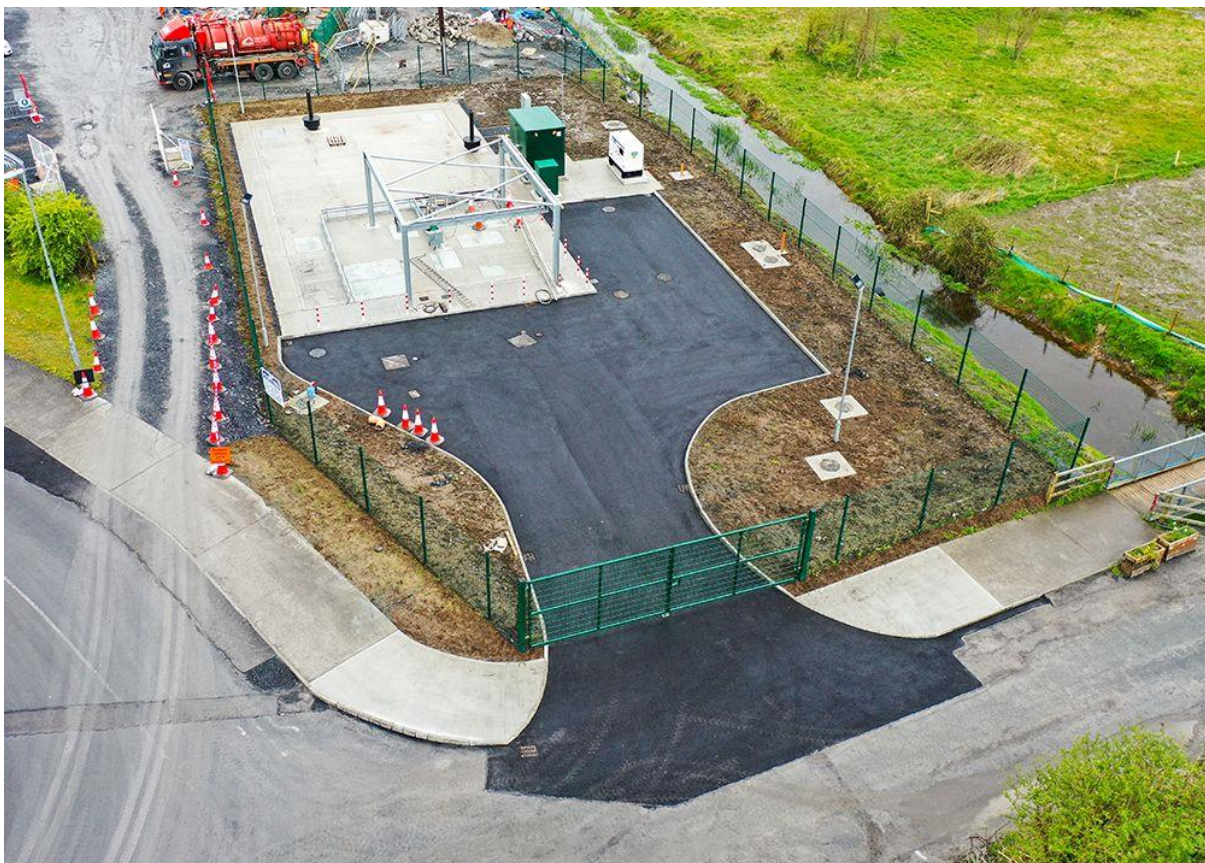
The Council were successful in receiving funding approval for both villages, the amount of funding and the local contribution required are shown in the following table;

| Villages | Total Estimated Cost (€m) | Approved Funding (€m) | Local Authority funding (15%) (€m) |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Craughwell | €11.9m | €10.4m | €1.5m |
| Clarinbridge | €10.0m | €8.9m | €1.1m |

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME

Galway County Council continues to progress Water Services projects on Irish Water’s Infrastructure and Capital Works Programmes, in accordance with the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water. Projects are prioritised by Irish Water to provide, or improve existing, water services infrastructure that will facilitate compliance with the Urban Wastewater Directive and Water Framework Directive. Irish Water’s Capital Investment Plan is prepared at least every five years and submitted to the Commission of Regulation of Utilities for approval of funding.

Coffey Construction Ltd. commenced works on the Athenry Wastewater Network project in February 2023 and work has been significantly advanced. The construction of the network itself is substantially complete and a new pumping station at Pairc na hAbhainn is expected to be fully commissioned in the coming months.



Pairc na hAbhainn Pumping Station, Athenry

The new wastewater treatment plants at Spiddal and Ahascragh were completed 2023. They are currently being operated by Coffey Water Ltd. The contract included for a 12-month operate phase for both plants. Both are secondary treatment plants – Spiddal has a design capacity of 1,000 P.E. and Ahascragh has a capacity of 470 P.E. Both plants have produced effluent that is well within their ELV limits to date.



Ahascragh Wastewater Treatment Plant



Spiddal Wastewater Treatment Plant



Official Opening of Spiddal Wastewater Treatment Plant, 24th November 2023

Planning and design work has progressed for Ballygar WWTP and Mountbellew WWTP. Site investigation and land acquisition has been completed for both projects. It is proposed to discharge the treated effluent from the upgraded wastewater treatment plant at Ballygar to the River Suck, which will require a new rising main of approx. 3km. It is intended that Ballygar and Mountbellew will be progressed as a single contract for construction towards the end of 2025.

The Carraroe WWTP and Roundstone WWTP projects had stalled due to judicial reviews of the CPO process for the proposed WWTP sites. In the meantime, site investigation for the proposed terminal pumping station at Roundstone, (which is required in any case), has been completed. Uisce Éireann has decided to withdraw the CPO for the site at Carraroe and a consultant has been appointed to re-examine the project.

Planning and preliminary design is also progressing on Eyrecourt WWTP. A shortlist of options is currently being assessed with a view to selecting an optimum solution for Eyrecourt. Works are also progressing on eliminating a discharge of untreated effluent at the Creagh Road in Ballinasloe and reduction in storm overflows at Station Road in Loughrea.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

****To be updated pending final publication from NOAC****

Section 126(c) of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provided for the establishment of a National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC). A function of the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) is to scrutinise the performance of any local government body against or in comparison with relevant indicators that the Commission considers it appropriate to refer to, and which includes relevant indicators relating to customer service.

Local Authorities are asked to validate and submit information and data on 42 Performance Indicators. This data is collated by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and is made available to the NOAC for further analysis and publication as part of a National report on Local Authority Performance Indicators. In addition to information supplied from the Council, data is provided by external bodies (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's (D/TTaS) Vehicle Registration Unit (VRU), the EPA, Road Management Office (RMO) which is based on other national reporting systems to which the Council must submit data. This information is saved and validated by the Council as part of the national returns using an on-line e-returns system.

The indicators attempt to deliver a common approach to measurement and benchmarking and the availability of the information is intended to support all local authorities to improve the services they provide to local communities. NOAC believes that, by learning from one another, there is scope to develop and enhance best practice in the performance by local government bodies of their functions.

Work on refining the indicators is an on-going process and NOAC recognises that a number of the indicators require modification or replacement with a more relevant data set.

For 2023, there were 45 local authority performance indicators, as outlined below.

Each Indicator is provided with a reference as follows:

- Housing (H1 to H7)
- Roads (R1 to R3)
- Water (W1 and W2)
- Waste/Environment (E1 to E7)
- Planning (P1 to P5)
- Fire Service (F1 to F3)
- Library/Recreation (L1 and L2)
- Youth/Community (Y1 and Y2)
- Corporate (C1 to C5)
- Finance (M1 to M4)
- Economic Development (J1 to J5)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SPC

Membership

| Name | Chair | Economic Development & Enterprise |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Cllr. Karey McHugh *Cllr. Steven McHugh was agreed to replace her for a period during 2023 | 4 | 4 |
| Cllr. David Collins | | 3 |
| Cllr. Declan Geraghty | | 4 |
| Cllr. Gerry Finnerty | | 4 |
| Cllr. Mary Hoade | | 2 |
| Cllr. Tim Broderick | | 3 |
| Cllr Shane Curley (added to the membership in 2023) | | 2 |
| Community/Voluntary | | |
| Mr. Dan Dowling (Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd) | | 3 |
| Trade Union | | |
| Ms Marian Spellman | | 3 |
| Development & Construction Sector | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Mr. Paul Carey | | 3 |
| Business/Commercial Sector | | |
| Mr. David Hickey | | 2 |

4 Meetings of the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC took place in 2023.

The SPC undertook significant work on a number of areas and heard several presentations and updates on these areas of work. These included the following:

- Tourism Strategy Update and next steps after adoption at plenary council in the Autumn of 2023
- The Local Economic & Community Plan
- Overview of TVRS and Streetscape schemes 2023
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund project
- Bia Food Innovation Hub in Athenry – overview and updates

Much of the work undertaken in 2023 will contribute to the ongoing economic and enterprise development of Galway and will continue to be priority actions over the coming years as per the agreed LECP.

Cllr Shane Curley was added to the membership during 2023 in place of Cllr Mary Hoade.

On the 25th September 2023, at the September Plenary Meeting, Mr. Steven McHugh was nominated, proposed, seconded and agreed to fill a vacancy on the SPC and as Chairperson of the SPC following the temporary absence of Cllr. K. McHugh Farag.

HOUSING SPC

Membership

| Name | Chair | Housing |
|----------------------|-------|---------|
| Cllr. Joe Byrne | 1 | 1 |
| Cllr. Thomas Welby | | 1 |
| Cllr. Eileen Mannion | | 1 |
| Cllr. Jimmy McClearn | | 1 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------|
| Cllr. Colm Keaveney | | 1 |
| Cllr. James Charity | | 1 |
| Cllr. Seamus Walsh | | 1 |
| Community/Voluntary | | |
| Ms. Marcella Conneally | | 1 |
| Social Inclusion | | |
| Mr. Martin Ward | | 1 |
| Business | | |
| Mr. Kenny Deery | | 1 |
| Construction Sector | | |
| Mr. Mark Coffey | | 1 |

During 2023 the following members were replaced

- Community/Voluntary – Ms. Aimee McGee was replaced by Marcella Conneally
- Business – Mr. Enda McGuane replaced by Mr. Kenny Deery
- Social Inclusion – Mss. Nora Corcoran replaced by Mr. Martin Ward

Dates of Meetings

- 1st February 2023
- 5th April 2023
- 7th June 2023
- 6th September 2023
- 15th November 2023

The following are the main policy issues discussed and considered by the Housing SPC in 2023:

- Housing for All
- Housing Delivery Action Plan

- Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Housing
- Acquisitions Under the Tenant in Situ Scheme
- Social Housing Allocations Scheme
- Approved Housing Bodies and the New CALF Scheme
- Tenancy Estate Management
- Refugee Resettlement Programme
- Vacant Homes including Croi Conaithe
- Ukraine Response
- Homeless Services
- Housing Maintenance
- Presentations from Outside Bodies including Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme and a presentation from Peter McVerry.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE SPC

Membership

| Name | Chair | Roads, Transportation & Marine |
|--|-------|--------------------------------|
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 1 | 1 |
| Cllr. Geraldine Donohue | | 1 |
| Comh. Tomás Ó Curraoin | | 1 |
| Cllr. Declan Kelly | | 1 |
| Cllr. Jim Cuddy | | 1 |
| Cllr. Gerry King | | 1 |
| Cllr. Albert Dolan | | 1 |
| Agriculture/Farming | | |
| Mr. John Finn | | 1 |
| Business/Commercial Sector | | |
| Mr. Kenny Deery Chamber of Commerce | | 1 |

| | | |
|---|--|----------|
| Community/Voluntary | | |
| Mr. Tom Madden, Ballinasloe Training for Employment Ltd., Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre | | 1 |
| Development and Construction Sector | | |
| Mr. Diarmaid Kelly, Cuan (Beo) (PPN) | | 1 |

The Roads Strategic Policy Committee convened three times in 2023.

The following topics were discussed and progressed at these meetings:

1. Draft Sustainable Plant Management Plan
2. Policy for Public Transport
3. Update on the N63 Liss to Abbey Scheme Realignment
4. Update on the Inis Oírr Pier Development
5. Update on Local Transport Plans
6. Update on Taking in Charge
7. Update on the Roads Programme 2023

In March 2023, Ms Valerie Loughnane, Senior Planner provided answers to queries raised on Objective MCC4 – Integrated Framework Management Plan of the County Development Plan.

Rachel Lowe, Senior Engineer presented and outlined to the committee members an update on the development of a Sustainable Plant Protection Plan which will assist in reducing the number of pesticides used throughout the county.

Mr Pender A/ Director of Services informed the members that the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) is currently under review.

Rachel Lowe, Senior Engineer gave an update on the roads work programme and advised that the major challenge facing the work programme was the inflation in costs of materials and labour.

In June 2023 the NRDO office presented an update on the N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment.

At the September SPC Meeting, Ms Sarah Silke provided an update on the Inis Oírr Pier development. Ms Kasia Garvey gave a presentation on the Local Transport Plans and Ms Edel Hourigan, Administrative Officer, gave an update on the Taking in Charge process.

Membership

| Name | Chair | Planning & Community |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Shane Curley | Sept 2022 to sept 2023 | |
| Mary Hoade | Mary Hoade sept 2023 to present | |
| Michael Connolly | | |
| PJ Murphy | | |
| Donagh Killilea | | |
| Michael Maher | | |
| Dáithí Ó Cualáin | | |
| Shelly Herterich Quinn | | |
| PPN | | |
| Mark Green | | |
| Aodán Mac Donnacha | | |
| Construction Industry Federation | | |
| Colm Ryan | | |
| Irish Farmers Association | | |
| | | No rep from IFA on committee at present due to the retirement of Ann Mitchell |

4 meetings of Planning, Environment, Agriculture and Emergency Services were held including two joint meetings with Galway City Planning SPC.

Discussions at Joint SPC included:

- MASP Governance
- Former Airport site

Among the items discussed in 2023 were:

- New County Development Plan 2022-2028

- Large scale developments legislation
- Residential Zoned Land Tax
- Burial grounds
- Anti – dumping initiative

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SPC

Membership

| Name | Chair | Community & Cultural Development |
|-----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Cllr. Dermot Connolly | 4 | 4 |
| Cllr. Ivan Canning | | 3 |
| Cllr. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | | 3 |
| Cllr. Peter Keaveney | | 4 |
| Cllr. Andrew Reddington | | 3 |
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | | 4 |
| Community Voluntary Sector | | |
| Ms. Megan Flynn | | 4 |
| Business Sector | | |
| Ms. Helena McElmeel (RIAI) | | 3 |
| Social Inclusion Sector | | |
| Mr. Máirtín Davy | | 4 |

The Community and Culture Strategic Policy Committee met on 4 occasions in 2023, on the 8th February 2023, 22nd February 2023, 29th November 2023 and 11th December 2023.

The following are the main policy issues relating to Community & Culture discussed and considered by the Community and Culture SPC in 2023.

- Galway County Council Draft Beach Bye-Laws
- Age Friendly Libraries
- National Public Library Strategy “The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration”.
- Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City & County
- Awards:
 - National Tidy Towns Competition Awards
 - IPB All-Island Pride of Place Awards
 - National Age Friendly Awards
- Update on Arts Programme 2023
- Update on Creative Ireland Programme 2023
- Update on Public Art Programme 2023.

CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY SPC

Membership

| Name | Chair | Climate Change & Biodiversity |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Cllr. Alastair McKinstry | 1 | 1 |
| Cllr. Gabrielle Cronnelly | | 1 |
| Cllr. Noel Thomas | | 1 |
| Cllr. Joe Sheridan | | 1 |
| Cllr. Evelyn Parsons | | 1 |
| Cllr. Martina Kinane | | 1 |
| Community/Voluntary | | |
| Mags Sheehan | | 1 |
| Peter Butler | | 1 |
| Business/Commercial Sector | | |
| John Hynes | | 1 |
| Agriculture / Farming | | |

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| Henry Walsh | | 1 |
|-------------|--|---|

4 No Meetings and 1 No Workshop of the Climate Change and Biodiversity SPC took place in 2023.

The following topics were discussed and progressed at these meetings:

- EV Charging Strategy
- Biodiversity
- Climate Action Plan
- Integration and Implementation of the Rights of Nature into Council workings
- Workshop on Climate Action and Biodiversity Potential Actions for the Plans

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS REPORTS

BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The Municipal District of Ballinasloe met fourteen times in 2023. Two of these meetings were special meetings. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.00pm except for the month of August. The following provides a flavour of the many topics and issues that the Councillors worked on during 2023:

PRESENTATIONS/DEPUTATIONS RECEIVED BY THE MEMBERS IN 2023:

During 2023 the Members received:

- A presentation on Active Travel by Ms. Paula Higgins, Galway County Council
- A presentation on Fáilte Ireland, Tourism and Just Transition by Mr. Matthews, Head of Operations, Ireland Hidden Heartlands
- An information session on Poolboy Amenity Park by Mr. Mike Melody, Galway County Council
- A presentation on InPLACE project in Mountbellew Moylough
- A presentation on Galway Rural Development by Mr. Steve Dolan, Mr. Sean Broderick and Mr. Sean Larkin.
- A presentation on the Framework Plan for East Galway Eco Park by Mr. Mike Melody, Galway County Council



BALLINASLOE FAIR OCTOBER 2023

DECLARATIONS OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC BY THE MEMBERS IN 2023:

In accordance with the Roads Act, 1993 the Municipal District of Ballinasloe declared two roads to be public roads in 2023.

CONSIDERATION OF PART 8 DEVELOPMENTS BY THE MEMBERS IN 2023:

The Members Considered 2 reports under part eight of planning and development regulations 2001:

- for the 8 No. Unit Housing Development at Garbally Demesne, St. Joseph’s Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- for the 13. No. Unit Housing Development at Dunlo Hill, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.



FIRST BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT MEETING WITH NEW CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. DECLAN GERAGHTY AND LEAS- CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. TIMOTHY BRODERICK.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BALLINASLOE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT IN 2023:

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 14th of June 2023; during which it was proposed that Cllr. Declan Geraghty be elected Cathaoirleach and that Cllr. Tim Broderick be elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



PHOTOGRAPHED ABOVE ARE OUT GOING CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. DR. EVELYN PARSONS AND INCOMING CATHAOIRLEACH CLLR. DECLAN GERAGHTY.

TUAM MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The members of the Municipal District of Tuam held twelve meetings during 2023, including a budget meeting and the Annual General Meeting as well as a special meeting on the Tuam Local Area Plan.

The Schedule of Works for the Municipal District was approved by the Members on the 2nd March 2023 which amounted to €688,913 in accordance with Section 103A of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended). The Members also considered and approved the Annual Roadworks Programme for the Municipal District of Tuam with annual allocations for restoration improvements of €3,239,740 and Restoration Maintenance of €844,661 for 2023.

At the Annual General Meeting held on 12th June 2023, Cllr. Donagh Killilea was elected as Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Mary Hoade was elected Leas Cathaoirleach of the Municipal District of Tuam for a period of 12 months.

Members received presentations throughout the year from the following groups:

- Galway Rural Development
- Creative Places Tuam
- Reimagine Tuam

- L2123 Neighbourhood Road Safety Action Group

The members approved the draft General Municipal Allocation of €6,865,425 on the 13th November 2023 in advance of the 2024 Annual Budget meeting in accordance with Section 58 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

A special meeting was convened in May to discuss the Draft Local Area Plan for Tuam.

A second special meeting was convened to resume consideration of submissions received in relation to Draft Tuam Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029.

The Litter Management Plan was approved at the July Municipal District Meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF ROADS TO BE PUBLIC BY THE MEMBERS IN 2023

In accordance with the Roads Act, 1993 the Municipal District of Tuam declared four roads to be public roads in 2023.

There were 3 deputations held during 2023.

The Municipal District Meetings were facilitated by the Meetings Administrator Ms. Geraldine Byrne and attended by Mr Derek Pender, A/Director of Services for the Municipal District. Engineering and Administrative Staff from the Roads Section, Mr John Coyle, Mr Paul Connolly, Mr Tom Regan and Ms Sinead Naughton. The Municipal District Office and other Council Departments also attended the Meetings to deal with queries and issues raised by the Members.

LOUGHREA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The Municipal District of Loughrea includes the towns of Loughrea, Portumna, Gort and environs. The Municipal District held 11 monthly meetings, 1 Annual Meeting, 1 Special Meeting and 1 Budget Meeting during 2023.

The Members considered a wide range of topics which including:

- Election of Cathaoirleach and Leas Cathaoirleach
- The adoption of the Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District
- Schedule of Works for 2023
- Roads Programme 2023
- Flooding
- Declaration of roads to be public roads
- Taking in Charge
- GreenwayUpdates
- Part 8 Planning Reports
- Illegal dumping / bring banks / Burial Grounds
- Litter Management Plan 2023-2025
- Portumna Streetscape Scheme

- Town Hall Loughrea
- Making a Strategic Infrastructure Development Application (Tynagh Power Station)
- Gort Town Centre First Plan

Members met three Deputations during 2023 to listen to their concerns and to address same.

CONAMARA MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The members of the Municipal District of Connemara held nine meetings in 2023 including an Annual Meeting and a Budget Meeting.

At their meeting on the 23rd February, 2023 the members approved the Schedule of Municipal District Works 2023 (to include Roads Programme and Environment, Housing, Recreation and Amenity Schedule of repairs and maintenance) for the Municipal District of Connemara.

A meeting was held in Seanscoil Sailearna, Indreabhan on the 18th May 2023.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 13th June, 2023 where Cllr. Noel Thomas was elected Cathaoirleach and Comh Daithi O Cualainn was elected Leas Cathaoirleach for 2023.

In accordance with the Roads Act, 1993 the Municipal District of Connemara declared eight roads to be public roads in 2023.

The Members considered a wide range of topics which included the following:

- Roads Programme 2023
- Flooding/Clifden Flood Relief Scheme
- Declaration of roads to be public roads
- Taking in Charge
- Water Quality
- Caravan Parking
- Burial Grounds
- Piers & Harbours
- Road Safety/Hedge Trimming/Cold Weather response
- School Safety
- Connemara Greenway/Active Travel
- Moycullen Bypass
- Coach Parking Oughterard/Bus Shelters
- Policing Connemara Area
- Clifden Regeneration
- Deer Crossing signage
- Pedestrian Bridge Oughterard

- Litter Management Plan
- Provision of Bus shelters

Members received presentations on the following:

- Update on Clifden Regeneration Programme.
- Presentation on Water Safety Awareness
- Presentation Scoil Samhraidh an Phiarsaigh 2023
- Presentation on the Clifden Flood Relief Scheme.
- Presentation Draft Litter Management Plan 2023- 2025
- Presentation on Active Travel.
- Briefing An Garda Siochana Operating Model - Keeping people safe.

ATHENRY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

The Municipal District of Athenry consists of the Local Electoral Area of Athenry-Oranmore. The Municipal District Members are elected to the Council at the Local Elections for a term of five years. The Members of the Athenry Municipal District met on ten occasions in 2023 to discuss the provision of services for the Municipal District, policy matters, community issues and concerns and matters relating to their representational role. The Meetings convened in Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

The district extends from the Galway City Boundary on the North, East and South and includes the main towns and villages of Athenry, Oranmore, Baile Chláir, Clarenbridge and Cór an Dola, as well as dispersed rural areas that have experienced consistent population growth. Issues relating to road maintenance, active travel, Oranmore railway, speed limits, road safety and traffic calming measures, were discussed at the Meetings and updates were given to the Members by the Engineers for the area.

The following are the members of the Athenry Municipal District.

- Cllr. Liam Carroll, Fine Gael
- Cllr. James Charity, Non-Party
- Cllr. David Collins, Fine Gael
- Cllr. Gabe Cronnelly, Non-Party
- Cllr. Jim Cuddy, Non-Party
- Cllr. Albert Dolan, Fianna Fáil
- Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn, Fianna Fáil

During 2023, Members approved the Declaration of several roads to be made Public Roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993.

At the March Meeting, the Municipal District Schedule of Works, which included the Roads Programme 2023, was presented to the Members and, following consideration and discussion, the Members approved the Schedule of Works and Roads Programme.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the 6th of June 2023 and Cllr. Charity was elected Cathaoirleach, for 2023-2024. Cllr. Cuddy was elected as Leas Chathaoirleach.

At the January meeting the staff of the Planning Unit made a presentation on the Review of the Athenry LAP 2012-2022 and commencement of New Athenry LAP 2023-2029. A meeting was held on the 19th September to consider “The Chief Executive Report on submissions received on the Draft Athenry Local Area Plan 2023-29 and subsequently consider the proposal to make, amend or revoke the Athenry Local Areal Plan 2023-2029”.

The Municipal District Budget Meeting was held on the 14th of November 2023 to consider (with or without amendment) a Draft Budgetary Plan for the Municipal District. Following consideration and discussion, the Members approved the Draft Municipal District Budget for Athenry Oranmore.

Presentations were made by the GCC Public Participation Network.

The Litter Management Plan 2023-2025 was approved.

The Municipal District Meetings were facilitated by the Meetings Administrator Ms. Margaret Jordan and attended by Mr Alan Farrell, Director of Services for the Municipal District. Engineering and Administrative Staff from the Roads Section Ms Rachel Lowe, Mr Sean Whelan, Mr Peter Gavin, and Ms Geraldine Cooley. The Municipal District Office and other Council Departments also attended the Meetings to deal with queries and issues raised by the Members.

ELECTED MEMBERS NOMINATED TO COMMITTEES, CONFERENCES & TRAINING EXPENSES

ELECTED MEMBERS NOMINATED TO COMMITTEES & OTHER BODIES

| Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Mr. David Luskin | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Andrew Reddington | 26.09.2022 |

| Northern & Western Regional Assembly Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Tim Broderick | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. David Collins | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Joseph Sheridan | 07.06.2019 |

| Athenry Heritage and Tourism Co. Ltd. Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. David Collins | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly | 07.06.2019 |

| Association of Irish Local Government Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. Mary Hoade | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Jimmy McClearn | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Thomas Welby | 07.06.2019 |

| Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd. Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | 07.06.2019 |

| Loughrea Heritage Committee | Membership Date |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. PJ Murphy | 07.06.2019 |

| Local Authority Members Association (LAMA) Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Thomas Welby | 07.06.2019 |

| Western Inter-County Rail Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. Michael Connolly | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Eileen Mannion | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Alastair McKinstry | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. PJ Murphy | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Joseph Sheridan | 07.06.2019 |

| Galway & Roscommon Education & Training Board (Formerly VEC) Committee | Membership Date |
|---|-------------------------|
| Cllr. Shane Curley | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Mary Hoade | 28.02.2022 |
| Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Karey McHugh Farag | 28.02.2022 – 25.09.2023 |
| Cllr. Dr. Evelyn Francis Parsons | 25.09.2023 |
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Thomas Welby | 07.06.2019 |

| Regional Health Forum Representation, West Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Dr Evelyn Francis Parsons | 27.07.2020 |
| Cllr. Donagh Killilea | 07.06.2019 |
| Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 07.06.2019 |

| Joint Policing Committee | Membership Date |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cllr. Jim Cuddy | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Joe Byrne | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. James Charity | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Mary Hoade | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Colm Keaveney | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Gerry King | 07.06.2019 |
| Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Karey McHugh Farag | 07.06.2019 – 25.09.2023 |
| Cllr. Steven Mc Hugh | 25.09.2023 |
| Cllr. PJ Murphy | 07.06.2019 |
| Comh. Dáithí Ó Cualáin | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Andrew Reddington | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 07.06.2019 |

| Galway Rural Development Company Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Martina Kinane | 26.06.2017 |
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 26.06.2017 |

| Forum Conamara Ltd. Committee | Membership Date |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Seamus Walsh | 21.10.2019 |
| Cllr. Eileen Mannion | 29.06.2020 |
| Cllr. Thomas Welby | 07.06.2019 |

| Comhar na nOileán Teoranta Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | 21.10.2019 |

| Governing Authority of National University of Ireland, Galway Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. Eileen Mannion | 25.01.2021 |

| Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Gerry Finnerty | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Shane Curley | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Michael "Moegie" Maher | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Peter Roche | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Tim Broderick | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly | 07.06.2019 |

| County (Local) Rural Water Monitoring Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. Gerry King | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Joe Byrne | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Tim Broderick | 07.06.2019 |

| County Galway Local Sports Partnership | Membership Date |
|---|------------------------|
| Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly | 07.06.2019 |

| Local Community Development Committee | Membership Date |
|--|------------------------|
| Cllr. Noel Thomas | 07.06.2019 |
| Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. Gabriel Cronnelly | 28.02.2022 |

| Audit Committee | Membership Date |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Liam Carroll | 07.06.2019 |
| Cllr. James Charity | 07.06.2019 |

| Road Safety Together Committee | Membership Date |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Shelly Herterich Quinn | 25.11.2019 |

| Public Art Management Group | Membership Date |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cllr. Dr Evelyn Francis Parsons | 22.11.2021 |
| Cllr. Eileen Mannion | 22.11.2021 |
| Cllr. Donagh Killilea | 24.10.2022 |

| Údarás na Gaeltachta | Membership Date |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Comh. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire | 28.11.2022 |

CONFERENCES ATTENDED BY ELECTED MEMBERS

| | Conference | Organised By | Venue & Date | Attendees |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | The Finance Act 2021 | Celtic Conferences | 6 th – 8 th January 2023 in Carlingford, Co. Louth | 1 |
| 2 | Modular Housing in Ireland | Celtic Conferences | 3 rd -5 th February 2023 in Carlingford, Co. Louth | 1 |
| 3 | Association of Irish Regions | Celtic Conferences | 7 th -9 th February 2023 in Monaghan. | 9 |
| 4 | Suck Valley Way | | 5 th & 6 th April 2023 in Roscommon | 5 |

TRAINING EVENTS ATTENDED BY ELECTED MEMBERS

| | Training Event | Organised By | Venue & Date | Attendees |
|----------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Module 1 – Electoral Reform | AILG | 23 rd February 2023 Tullamore, Co. Offaly. 25 th February 2023 Limerick | 7 1 |
| 2 | LAMA Spring Seminar | LAMA | 2 nd -4 th March 2023 Bantry, Co. Cork | 8 |

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| 3 | Module 2 – Climate Action | AILG | 23 rd March 2023 in Wexford | 1 |
| | | | 25 th March 2023 in Dundalk | 4 |
| 4 | Annual Training Conference | AILG | 19 th -20 th April in Kilkenny | 11 |
| 5 | Women’s Caucus | AILG | 5 th May 2023 in Mullingar | 1 |
| 6 | Module 3 Planning Legislation & policy guidance | AILG | 15 th June 2023 in Mullingar | 3 |
| | | | 17 th June 2023 in Kilkenny | 1 |
| 7 | Module 4 – Uisce Eireann (Irish Water) – A Briefing for Councillors | AILG | 20 th – 22 nd July 2023 in Sligo | 6 |
| 8 | Autumn Training Seminar 2023- “The Future of Local Government in Ireland – Time for Honest Conversation” | AILG | 13 th & 14 th September 2023 in Sligo | 6 |
| 9 | AILG Module 5 – Elected Members Personal Security – Positive Home, Workplace & Mobile Security Practices | AILG | 19 th & 20 th October 2023 in Tralee | 4 |
| | | | 18 th October 2023 in Cavan | 1 |
| 10 | LAMA Training Seminar – Climate Action, Sustainable Businesses and Balanced Regional Development | LAMA | 25 th & 26 th October 2023, Tuam, Co. Galway | 3 |

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| 11 | AILG Module 6 “Road Safety – New Speed Limit Policy and Safeguarding Road Users” | AILG | 16 th & 18 th November 2023 Ballybrit,, Galway | 2 |
| | | | 16 th & 18 th Waterford | 1 |

ELECTED MEMBERS EXPENSES

| Name of Elected Member | Annual Allowance | Salary | Cathaoirleach Allowance | Leas-Cathaoirleach Allowance | SPC Chair Allowance | Municipal District Chair Allowance | Expenses re attendance at training | Expenses re attendance at Conferences | Other Expenses | Foreign Travel Expenses | Total |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Broderick Tim | 11,776.18 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | 439.05 | | | 41,093.06 |
| Byrne Joe | 6,993.42 | 28,877.83 | | | 6,000.02 | | | | | | 41,871.27 |
| Canning Ivan | 12,230.29 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 41,108.12 |
| Carroll Liam | 5,222.88 | 28,877.83 | 12,384.68 | | | 3,000.01 | | | | | 49,485.40 |
| Charity James | 8,322.34 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | | | | | 40,200.18 |

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|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|----------|----------|--------|--------|--|--|------------------|
| Collins David | 6,620.90 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | 483.09 | | | 35,981.82 |
| Connolly Dermot | 6,844.68 | 28,877.83 | | | 6,000.02 | | | | | | 41,722.53 |
| Connolly Michael | 11,776.18 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 40,654.01 |
| Cronnelly Gabriel | 5,717.40 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 34,595.23 |
| Cualáin Dáithí Ó | 6,648.48 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | | | | | 38,526.32 |
| Cuddy Jim | 3,619.57 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 289.74 | | | | 32,787.14 |

| Name of Elected Member | Annual Allowance | Salary | Cathaoirleach Allowance | Leas-Cathaoirleach Allowance | SPC Chair Allowance | Municipal District Chair Allowance | Expenses re attendance at training | Expenses re attendance at Conferences | Other Expenses | Foreign Travel Expenses | Total |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Curley Shane | 5,501.61 | 28,877.83 | | | 4,961.55 | | 435.87 | | | | 39,776.86 |

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|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--|--|----------|----------|----------|--------|--------|--|------------------|
| Curraoin Tomás Ó | 3,753.54 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 2,234.62 | 600.00 | | | 35,465.99 |
| Dolan Albert | 8,019.70 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 36,897.53 |
| Donohue Geraldine | 7,856.56 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 178.25 | | | | 36,912.64 |
| Finnerty Gerry | 5,549.32 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 34,427.15 |
| Geraghty Declan | 10,223.36 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | | 76.40 | | | 42,177.60 |
| Herterich Quinn Shelly | 10,156.59 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 276.27 | 504.55 | | | 39,815.24 |
| Hoade Mary | 8,737.30 | 28,877.83 | | | 1,038.47 | | 3,719.84 | 499.78 | 395.90 | | 43,269.12 |
| Keaveney Colm | 5,611.50 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | 514.63 | | | | 38,003.97 |
| Keaveney Peter | 12,401.74 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 41,279.57 |

| Name of Elected Member | Annual Allowance | Salary | Cathaoirleach Allowance | Leas-Cathaoirleach Allowance | SPC Chair Allowance | Municipal District Chair Allowance | Expenses re attendance at training | Expenses re attendance at Conferences | | Foreign Travel Expenses | Total |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| Kelly, Declan | 10,874.26 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 39,752.09 |
| Killilea Donagh Mark | 5,625.73 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | 431.57 | 518.49 | | | 38,453.63 |
| Kinane Martina | 6,621.16 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 688.96 | 509.75 | | | 36,697.70 |
| King Gerry | 12,202.43 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 1,681.73 | 600.00 | | | 43,361.99 |
| Mac An Iomaire Padráig | 6,375.68 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 35,253.51 |
| Maher "Moegie" Michael | 7,810.71 | 28,877.83 | 13,274.65 | | | | 1,594.99 | 251.18 | | | 51,809.37 |
| Mannion Eileen | 8,367.43 | 28,877.83 | | 2,769.24 | | | | | | | 40,014.50 |
| McClearn Jimmy | 9,823.06 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | 2,095.00 | 478.36 | | | 44,274.26 |

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| McHugh Farag Karey | 3,110.54 | 28,877.83 | | | 6,000.02 | | | | | | 37,988.39 |
| McHugh Steven | 1,472.03 | 7,145.14 | | | 1,500.01 | | | | | | 10,117.18 |
| McKinstry Alastair | 8,222.68 | 28,877.83 | | | 6,000.02 | | | | | | 43,100.53 |
| Murphy PJ | 7,001.03 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | | | | | 38,878.87 |

| Name of Elected Member | Annual Allowance | Salary | Cathaoirleach Allowance | Leas-Cathaoirleach Allowance | SPC Chair Allowance | Municipal District Chair Allowance | Expenses re attendance at training | Expenses re attendance at Conferences | Other Expenses | Foreign Travel Expenses | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Parsons, Evelyn Dr | 12,142.78 | 28,877.83 | | 3,230.78 | | 3,000.01 | 391.89 | 103.35 | 177.55 | 426.89 | 48,351.08 |
| Reddington Andrew | 4,777.60 | 28,877.83 | | | | | | | | | 33,655.43 |
| Roche Peter | 8,478.76 | 28,877.83 | | | 6,000.02 | | 959.67 | | | 435.56 | 44,751.84 |

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| Sheridan Joseph | 11,711.44 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 910.97 | 495.97 | | | 41,996.21 |
| Thomas Noel | 6,222.06 | 28,877.83 | | | | 3,000.01 | | | | | 38,099.90 |
| Walsh Séamus | 10,096.84 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 759.51 | | | | 39,734.18 |
| Welby, Thomas | 6,258.72 | 28,877.83 | | | | | 2,844.87 | 490.00 | | | 38,471.42 |
| Total | 310,778.48 | 1,133,380.51 | 25,659.33 | 6,000.02 | 37,500.13 | 30,000.10 | 20,008.38 | 6,049.98 | 573.45 | 862.45 | 1,570,812.83 |

PAYMENTS MADE TO NON-ELECTED MEMBERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMITTEES:

| Committee | Amount paid |
|---|--------------------|
| Joint Policing Committee | €197.37 |
| Planning, Environment, Agriculture & Emergency Services SPC | €106.85 |

| Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023 | | | |
|---|--|-------------|---|
| STRATEGIC GOAL: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & SOCIAL INCLUSION | | | |
| <i>"To facilitate the broadest possible participation by citizens in local decision making and the sustainable development of their communities and their county"</i> | | | |
| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
| Work in partnership with the key stakeholders including local community groups in the promotion of heritage, fire prevention, water safety, climate change and environmental enhancement/awareness. | Conduct Schools Programme to educate young children in the importance and elements of Fire Safety and Prevention | Continuous | Conducted during 2023 |
| | Continue Community Fire Safety initiative with community groups and vulnerable sections of society | | Conducted in cooperation with community groups and the Community Smoke Alarm Scheme |
| | Work with Fire Safety consultants to ensure all proposed construction and development projects achieve the required level of fire safety for the protection of life and property. | | Achieved and ongoing |
| | Work with GCC Housing and IPAS to ensure appropriate fire safety standards for emergency accommodation displaced persons and international protection applicants. | | Achieved and ongoing |
| Provide advice and financial resources to support communities and the sustainable development of the county. | Complete the delivery of the Multi Annual Rural Water Programme 2019 - 2021 as efficiently as possible within available resources and liaise with the Department to put in place a new Multi Annual Rural Water Programme for the group scheme sector in the county. The Rural Water Programme includes the payment of group scheme grants for the construction and upgrading of rural group water schemes and the ongoing support of the schemes through group water scheme subsidy. The programme also includes a funding heading for the provision of well grants to eligible houses. | Dec-23 | Achieved & ongoing |

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| Supporting the Age Friendly initiative ensuring that the fact of an ageing population informs our policies and actions. | Our service is inclusive of all and the free open nature of library membership lends itself to the social inclusion of marginalised groups. | Ongoing promotion of the various resources we offer to our communities. Continued engagement across all platforms to create awareness of the scope and remit of libraries in their localities. | Ongoing |
| | A commitment to the Galway Age Friendly Strategy with the support of the various organisational partners ensuring access for those with mobility issues or difficulties | We will continue to review with the support of our Age Friendly Ambassadors our branches and services and will provide: •Appropriate seating •Large print collections •Audio eBook service •Showcase our digital library services | Ongoing |
| Work with the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's), the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent integrated approach to local and community development. | * Support the Community & Culture SPC & Economic Development & Enterprise SPC on the development of plans, strategies and policies * Support the LCDC and its subcommittees to achieve a joined-up approach to service delivery and delivery of LECP | 4 SPC Meetings 6 LCDC Meetings 2 Meetings per Sub-Committee No. of policies discussed and agreed. | Achieved |
| Work in partnership with the key stakeholders including local community groups in the promotion of heritage, fire prevention, water safety, climate change and environmental enhancement/awareness. | * Promote fire safety and energy efficiency works in community facilities through all appropriate funding schemes, and in homes through the Smoke Alarm Scheme. Build capacity of local community groups in the areas of climate change and environmental awareness / enhancement through targeted PPN training programmes. | Ongoing, KPIs include No. of grants awarded for community facilities upgrades & tidy towns initiatives No. in Smoke Alarm Scheme No. of PPN training programmes | Ongoing |
| Promote participation in sport and recreation in association with other agencies and the community, maximising the opportunities available through the Galway Sports Partnership and other appropriate schemes. | * Support the GSP to drive strategic direction of access to sports. * Promote and develop sports participation programmes for individuals of all abilities and communities and maximise the number of programme and participants within available budgets. * Leverage other funding schemes to maximise participation of disadvantaged groups and communities in sporting programmes. | 4 GSP Meetings. No. of programmes. No. of participants. Level of leveraging and participation of marginalised groups. | Achieved |

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| Coordinate the implementation of relevant Community Development Programmes and funding schemes, including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), in association with the LCDC and other relevant stakeholders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor SICAP to ensure effective and efficient delivery and conduct site visits to increase LCDC knowledge. * Develop a Healthy Ireland Plan to identify emerging priorities from the Covid-19 pandemic for delivery through a Programme of Works under Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund. * Attend all LEADER Evaluation Meetings and comply with Section 48 requests . Allocate Community Enhancement Programme funding to enhance community facilities. | Ongoing, KPIs include Compliance with annual monitoring schedule and attainment of SICAP KPI's Compliance with HIF deadlines & purposes. No. of CEP grants awarded and appropriate targeting of grants | Delivered as per agreed programme |
| Maintain and develop an arts service in line with the Galway County Arts Plan to ensure that the arts contribute to the enrichment of people's lives while supporting the celebration of County Galway's unique traditions and culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Arts Plan 2020-2024: continue to develop and support the Arts Programme; make funding application for support funding to the Arts Council in line with Framework Agreement. * In consultation with Public Art Management Group, implement public art programme in line with Galway County Council Public Art Policy 2020-2024. * Various Arts programmes and initiatives to be progressed through the Arts Office Programme * Deliver and programme Creative Ireland programme 2022 including Cruinniú na nÓg programme. * Deliver Arts Act grants (CSS Cultural Grants) * Participate as Partner in Erasmus+ project Culture Up Round 2 * Support Creative Places Tuam Pilot * Support Music Generation, Aras Eanna, Unesco City of Film, Wrap Fund * Support Strategic Planning for Arts Festivals in the county and develop new festivals in collaboration with communities * Programme Culture Night * Programme Local Live Performance Scheme | No. of initiatives and programmes supported through Arts Grants - 50 Annual Plan developed to implement Arts Plan. - 35 initiatives No. of initiatives supported under Creative Ireland and compliance with deadlines - 25 initiatives No of Initiatives supported by Cruinniú na nÓg is 30 Culture Night - 40 events No of Arts Festivals Supported - 10 No of Public Art Projects 3 | On balance targets achieved. For Arts grants and the Creative Ireland programme the number of grants/initiatives just under target. Some of the initiatives were larger than expected and absorbed more resource. For Culture night target was reached and for the other areas within Arts targets were exceeded. |
| Provide advice and financial resources to support communities and the sustainable development of the county. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support the PPN as a one-stop shop for funding information and support through funding workshops, Grants Information Booklet, and capacity building training. * Support communities to enter national competitions such as Pride of Place. | Clear information provided for PPN Members. No. of national competition entrants and performance | Achieved |
| Review and implement the community elements within the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) to promote and support community development and social inclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete the LECP 2023-2028 process for sign off and publication by the Local Authority | Socio economic statement and high-level goals to be agreed by ASG and signed off by the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC and LCDC by end of Q2 | Achieved by end of Q4 |

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| Supporting the Age Friendly initiative ensuring that the fact of an ageing population informs our policies and actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support the Age Friendly Alliance and OPC to deliver activities and improvements in consultation with older people. * Implement Annual Workplan * Establish an Interdepartmental Committee to reflect the cross-departmental nature of developing an age-friendly County | 4 meetings p.a. No. of initiatives supported. | Ongoing |
| Support the development of the Public Participation Network (PPN) structures for community engagement and wellbeing, ensuring that these structures inform and are aligned with local government policy and activity. | * Support PPN Secretariat to manage PPN Membership, budget and to develop and implement an Annual Work Plan aimed at capacity building, information sharing and supporting effective representation on Committees. | No. of PPN Member Groups and % of these in SI college & no. of SI reps on LCDC (KPI Y2) No. of LA Departments utilising PPN for consultations No. of Committees with PPN representation. No. of training days for LA staff and elected members on PPN. | Ongoing |
| To promote social inclusion and reduction of social inequalities by engaging with communities and other agencies to improve the quality of life for marginalised groups, including youth, migrants, travellers, socially and financially disadvantaged. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Manage Comhairle na nOg and support the delivery of key annual topics and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan * Coordinate supports with Ukraine Community Response Forum for Ukrainians under Temporary Protection Scheme. * Support the Traveller Interagency Group to develop a local Strategic Plan for the Traveller community in the County. * Implement the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund to increase opportunities for People with Disabilities in community life * Enable the voice of Older People through the Older People's Council. * Develop a programme of social inclusion events to celebrate diversity and inclusion. | % of schools participating in CNN (KPI - Y1). Progress on key CNN topics. No of meetings of TIG. No. of SI Events. | Achieved |
| Maximise the potential of the European Capital of Culture 2020 designation and its legacy to the local community and local economy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collaborate with Galway Culture Company and support their mission statement of bringing together key agencies and stakeholders to drive forward a collective creative vision for Galway through meaningful partnership and collaboration to better support cultural placemaking, artists, and those working in Culture and Creative Industries * Seek opportunities to support creative collaboration on European Projects with other EU Countries and organisations and artists living in the County. * Support the delivery of Orbs to Galway 2020 Opening Ceremony towns in line with Town Enhancement proposals and the MDs | * Attend quarterly EU collaboration meetings * | Ongoing |
| Work with the Strategic Policy Committees | Coordinate the development of a 6-year LECP through the Advisory Steering Group | End 2023 | Achieved |

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| <p>(SPC's), the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent integrated approach to local and community development.</p> | <p>Facilitate the Elected Member and Community Representative within our democratic structures in carrying out their representational role in response to the needs of the Community</p> | <p>4 meeting p.a.</p> | <p>Achieved</p> |
| <p>Work in partnership with the key stakeholders including local community groups in the promotion of heritage, fire prevention, water safety, climate change and environmental enhancement/awareness.</p> | <p>Galway Public Libraries:</p> <p>Local History and Archives are key elements that Galway Public Libraries work to progress through the continuous acquisition, cataloguing and promotion of records, materials and publications.</p> <p>Promotion of our current collections through our vast network of organisations and community groups and provide access for citizens to the collections and archives.</p> <p>Ensure public are aware of all the online resources that are currently available.</p> <p>Develop exhibitions and Social Media campaigns in conjunction with the Promotions Team to highlight the importance of these collections.</p> <p>Participate in national initiatives such as Heritage Week and provide events, exhibitions and displays highlighting our materials</p> | <p>Ongoing throughout the year including as appropriate for Heritage Week (12th - 20th August 2023) and other national and local awareness initiatives.</p> | <p>Achieved</p> |
| <p>To promote social inclusion and reduction of social inequalities by engaging with communities and other agencies to improve the quality of life for marginalised groups, including youth, migrants, travellers, socially and financially disadvantaged.</p> | <p>Galway Public Libraries:</p> <p>Our library service is inclusive of all and the free open nature of library membership lends itself to the social inclusion of marginalised groups.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion of the various resources we offer to our communities.</p> <p>Continued engagement across all platforms to create awareness of the scope and remit of libraries in their localities.</p> | <p>Ongoing throughout the year including as appropriate to support national and local events and initiatives.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>Supporting the Age Friendly initiative ensuring that the fact of an ageing population informs our policies and actions.</p> | <p>Galway Public Libraries:</p> <p>A commitment to the Galway Age Friendly Strategy with the support of the various organisational partners ensuring access for those with mobility issues or difficulties.</p> | <p>Continue to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Designated Age Friendly spaces. •Large print collections. •Provision of visual aids. •Showcase our digital library services & focused programming. | <p>Achieved and ongoing</p> |

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023

STRATEGIC GOAL: ECONOMIC & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

"To maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our county"

| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
|---|--|--------------------|--|
| Promote and support festivals, fairs and events throughout the County. | Grant licenses and advise of fire safety requirements as appropriate for events. | Ongoing | Achieved |
| Develop master plans for key strategic sites to ensure that they deliver on their potential in a planned and sustainable way. | Draw up proposals for the development of a portion of the Galway Airport Site as a Regional Fire Service Training Centre for presentation to Galway County Council and The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) | Q1 | Proposal drafted and presented to the DOS and The NDFEM. Before progression, awaiting the City and County Councils strategic plan for the Airport site. GFRS uses the site for training and the NDFEM proposes to use it for QQI training. |
| Lead the development of funding applications for urban and rural regeneration programmes and other funding programmes to revitalize our towns and villages. | Regeneration team to lead on all ongoing Reperation funding applications at targeted settlements across the County. The Capital Team in Water Services will continue to assist and input into Uisce Eireann's Capital Investment Plan along with colleagues in Planning so as to ensure that any infrastructure investment by Uisce Eireann is aligned with current development plans. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Implement the Digital Strategy and identify opportunities for hubs / co-working spaces at community level. | Maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our County | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Facilitate roll-out of National Broadband Plan | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Support Implantation of new Digital Strategy | Q4, 2023 | Proposal drafted for 2nd Digital Strategy and presented to MT |
| | Faciliate provision of BCP's and WiFi4EU locations and continue to support funding applications | Ongoing | Supported BCPs & WIFI4EU points in 2023 with resolving connectivity issues as they arose. |

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| Through our Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to be a primary driver of enterprise, development, support. | Providing a "First stop shop" service to the business community - delivering business advice, direction and signposting to relevant supports and agencies, business training and mentoring. | (1) Achieve annual targets as stated in service level agreement and annual agreed matrixes from EI (2) Utilise 100% funding provided by Enterprise Ireland. | Achieved |
| | Providing support (including Finance via Loans/Grants and Vouchers) to private sector to secure the establishment and/or expansion of commercially viable micro-enterprise projects and providing comprehensive pre-and post-start-up supports to new and expanding micro-enterprises; | | Achieved |
| Lead the development of funding applications for urban and rural regeneration programmes and other funding programmes to revitalize our towns and villages. | The Regeneration team to lead on all ongoing and future funding applications at targeted settlements across the County. The Capital Team in Water Services assist and input to Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan along with colleagues in Planning to ensure that infrastructure investment by Irish Water is aligned with development plans. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Follow up two applications for funding under the new funding measure A8 - Waste Water Collection and Treatment needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services. | Dec-23 | Achieved Funding for Clarinbridge and Craughwell under Measure A8 of MARWP. |
| Guide the sustainable development and growth of the County in accordance with EU, National and Regional policy, including through the implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning and Sustainable Development: Implement the County Development Plan in accordance with Policy Objectives and Development Management Standards to support the strategic goals and supporting strategies of the Council including by way of appropriate funding applications e.g. URDF. | Applications submitted under URDF. | Ongoing |
| Enhance urban environments by the implementation of streetscape improvement projects and the elimination of dereliction. | * Consider a part of funding proposals including URDF/RRDF/T&V strategies/proposals. *Finalise the Street Schemes in towns under pilot programme and T&V programme and continue to develop and implement schemes such as Streetscape/shopfront to improve the aesthetics and encourage use of vacant properties. | Ongoing, key KPIs include Number of applications submitted including proposals for vacant/under utilised sites. Number of applications submitted under the streetscape/shopfront scheme. | TVRS target achieved and no. of streetscape submissions met submission deadline |
| | *Proactively target public or community owned vacant or underused properties as part of Expression of Interest Processes and applications to Town and Village Renewal Scheme(s) to maximise their value as community assets for social and economic benefit. | * End of QT2 2023 and Maximise No. of Applications Submitted for Vacant Properties under TVRS Scheme(s) | Achieved |

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| | Implement National Streetscape Enhancement and Painting Schemes for Tuam (Key Town) , Portumna and An Spidéal to improve visual appearance of Towns and encourage use of vacant properties. Funded by Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). | * End of QT4 2023 - Complete Programme Implementation in Each Town. * Ongoing- Support adjacent businesses, property owners and tenants to maximise draw-down of funding approved and create street by street improvements. | Achieved |
| | Progress Implementation of Action to Address Issues specified in the Council Adopted Tuam Masterplan including the possibility of progressing it under URDF | Pending, subject to funding approval | Ongoing |
| | Appoint Town Regeneration Officer to co-ordinate local delivery of Town Centre First Priorities in agreed Settlements and multi-faceted approach to Town Centre Vacancy-Dereliction. | Pending, subject to completion of recruitment process | Complete |
| Develop and implement a Tourism Strategy and facilitate the continued expansion of the tourism sector by developing key branding, promotional and funding initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Complete a review of the economic elements of the LECP by end Q2 and commence development of new LECP in accordance with Guidelines from the DRCD * Implement and resource Tourism Strategy. * Launch Destination Brand for Galway (County and City) and implement destination marketing plan * Support Tourism product development initiatives where they align with County Development Plan and Tourism Strategy *Support the Food Sector in association with the BIA Innovator Campus *Support the Creative Sector including AV in association with the Galway Film Centre and initiative such as the WRAP fund and UNESCO City of Film | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *LECP progressed in line with guidelines *Launch Tourism Strategy Q2 2023 <p>Ongoing initiatives and support for key sectors and initiative under the high level framework and action plan to be developed under LECP</p> | LECP ongoing. Tourism Strategy launched Q3 2023 |
| Facilitate the provision of commercial and enterprise space in a structured manner across the county. | * Progress the development BIA Innovator Campus Ltd, Regional Food Innovation Hub, Athenry as a flagship project of local, regional and national importance in association with relevant partners. Administer and Monitor RRDF Funding in BIA; Continue provide strategic leadership in an advisory capacity and at Director level on the Board. | Ongoing with completed drawdown of RRDF Funding in line with progress and DRCD agreement | Achieved. Campus officially opened in January 2024 |

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| Facilitate the provision of commercial and enterprise space in a structured manner across the county. | *Progress the development of the AV/Film Production facilities at the former Airport site in Carnmore Progress and complete the Shared Island funded initiative *Progress project under the Just Transition funding designation and the EU Interreg Rural Proofing initiative | *For the AV/Film project a section 183 to be brought before the members by the end of Q2 2023 *Complete the Shared Island initiative by end of 2023 | AV/Film project has not progressed to a full sec 183 process as negotiations only reached a certain point. Shared Island project was completed as per target date |
| Work with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Údáras na Gaeltachta and other agencies in identifying and attracting opportunities for investment and job creation. | * Liaise with other agencies to maximise use of existing commercial and enterprise spaces for investment and job creation. | Ongoing. | Ongoing |
| Promote and support festivals, fairs and events throughout the County. | Support tourism and economic development initiatives through the <u>Community Support Schemes and capacity building events.</u> | CSS rolled out in accordance with timelines | Achieved |
| | *Continue to work with Fáilte Ireland with Wild Atlantic Way and the Hidden Heartlands brands and participate with destination working groups/taskforces. Work with partner local authorities and destination management organisations to deliver on shared objectives relating to tourism product development and marketing projects | Ongoing. | Achieved |
| Implement the Digital Strategy and identify opportunities for hubs / co-working spaces at community level. | * Support the development of community hub proposals under the range of funding schemes available and assist communities in the development of same including linking initiatives such as WDC where appropriate | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Lead the development of funding applications for urban and rural regeneration programmes and other funding programmes to revitalize our towns and villages. | * Progress applications under RRDF/Town & Village Renewal Programme and other relevant programmes in line with calls for proposals | Ongoing - progress delivery of ongoing projects and develop new initiatives in line with funding calls. | TVRS for 2023 on target and historic projects pre 2023 substantially progressed or closed out |
| To develop a multi-faceted approach to tackling vacant and under-utilised properties in our town and village centres. | * Develop and implement Masterplans/Strategies for priority towns including Tuam Masterplan and the development of a plan for Gort and other funded towns. Implement policy around Town Centres First in line with opportunities | Ongoing and within funding calls provisions | Ongoing |
| Develop master plans for key strategic sites to ensure that they deliver on their potential in a planned and sustainable way. | * Work with Planning & Sustainable Development unit and with key stakeholders in the furtherance of the Masterplan for the former Galway Airport site | Masterplan tender progressed in 2023 | Ongoing |

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| Maximise the potential of Broadband connectivity throughout the county in co-operation with Government initiatives. | *Leverage funding where possible to develop Broadband Connection Points. *Assist hubs with their development including linking with WDC and other initiatives where appropriate to assist with marketing and development to ensure occupancy | Ongoing | Achieved -All BCPs in County Galway were kept up to date on programs and funding schemes promoted by Dept. RCD and of opportunities to host digital skills courses. |
| Through our Local Enterprise Office (LEO) to be a primary driver of enterprise, development, support. | Providing a "First stop shop" service to the business community - delivering business advice, direction and signposting to relevant supports and agencies, business training and mentoring. | (1) Achieve annual targets as stated in service level agreement and annual agreed matrixes from EI (2) Utilise 100% funding provided by Enterprise Ireland. | Achieved |
| | Providing support (including Finance via Loans/Grants and Vouchers) to private sector to secure the establishment and/or expansion of commercially viable micro-enterprise projects and providing comprehensive pre-and post-start-up supports to new and expanding micro-enterprises; | | Achieved |
| Implement the Digital Strategy and identify opportunities for hubs / co-working spaces at community level. | Maximise the continued and sustainable economic and enterprise development of our County | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Facilitate roll-out of National Broadband Plan | Ongoing, by the end of 2023 44% of Eircode's in the intervention area passed with FTTH | NBI currently anticipated date for completion of fibre roll out to the intervention areas in County Galway is Dec. 2026 |
| | Support Implementation of Digital Strategy | Q4, 2023 | Ongoing throughout 2023 -Proposal drafted for 2nd Digital Strategy and presented to MT. |
| Maximise the potential of Broadband connectivity throughout the county in co-operation with Government initiatives. | Facilitate roll-out of Broadband connection points (22 no.) and support funding applications. | Ongoing | 21 BCPs now connected to the Government funded network, last BCP is projected to be connected in 2024, interim solution in place. |
| Promote and support festivals, fairs and events throughout the County. | Process Special Event Licences. Engaging with community group via the Heritage office to support festivals and community activities | Within Statutory timeframe | Achieved |
| Promote and support festivals, fairs and events throughout the County. | Process applications for casual trading, special events and filming licences | Within 15 days of application | Achieved |
| Promote and support festivals, fairs and events throughout the County. | Planning for twinning and civic events including Washington County Delegation to Galway and GCC delegation to visit Washington County and Milwaukee Irish Fest. | As per scheduled dates for April and August 2023 | Achieved |

| Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023 | | | |
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| STRATEGIC GOAL: INFRASTRUCTURAL CAPACITY | | | |
| "To ensure that our physical and social infrastructure is sufficiently developed to support economic development, and to enhance our quality of life" | | | |
| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
| Review office accommodation arrangements and develop proposals for the efficient delivery of office accommodation | Work with the DoHLGH for funding for the construction of a new Galway City Fire Station and Headquarters. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Appoint PSCS for the Construction of New Athenry Fire Station | Q1 | Achieved |
| | Progress the design and construction of a New Fire Station in Loughrea | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Develop plans for the upgrade of Ballinasloe Fire Station | Q3 | |
| Plan for the protection of our citizens through the emergency management framework for response to flooding, adverse weather and other emergencies | Participate in the Local Authority MEDC and Interagency Regional Working, Steering and Subgroups to develop, review and practice flooding and severe weather plans. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Continued implementation and review of organisation-wide Health and Safety Management System. | Participation in Fire Service H&S Steering and Operational Groups | Continuous | Ongoing |
| | Present new SOG's issued by the NDFEM through the safety management implementation process | | |
| To deliver early inter-agency supports and provide stable and supported housing options to homeless individuals and families to reduce the reliance on emergency accommodation. | <p>Delivery and management of homeless services in accordance with the Regional Action Plan.</p> <p>Develop internal and inter-agency protocols to guide the delivery of homeless services, addressing presentation, assessment, placement, referrals, transition and support housing to achieve a reduction in the level of long term homelessness.</p> <p>To ensure that priority is afforded in the operation of the Housing Allocation Scheme to homeless households who have qualified for social housing support.</p> <p>To continue to develop Housing First and increase provision</p> <p>To develop a county response to homeless provision by means of an application for Homeless Shelter and domestic violence response in Galway - Tuam and Ballinasloe</p> <p>To support After Care response to youth homeless via early intervention/case conferences</p> | <p>No. of Adults in Emergency Accommodation that are Long-Term Homeless as % of the Total No. of Homeless Adults in Emergency Accommodation at the End of Q 4 2023 (H6: Long Term Homeless Adults) - Q4 .</p> <p>Number of Adults exiting Emergency Accommodation during 2023 with a Support Plan</p> <p>Number of Adults in Emergency Accommodation that transfer to (a) Social Housing (b) Social Housing Supports including HAP & (c) Homeless HAP</p> <p>Number of Community Based Housing and Youth Housing placements during 2023. 18 housing applicants in tenancies with Housing First supports - Q4. 2 families housed with housing support under new Housing Led - Supported Housing for Families. in 2023.</p> <p>Number of allocations to homeless households who have qualified for social housing support in 2023 GCC: (a) Social Housing (b) AHB's (c) Transition Housing Support (d) Leasing properties.</p> <p>To ensure that priority is afforded in the operation of the Housing Allocation Scheme to homeless households who have qualified for social housing support.</p> | <p>57.63%</p> <p>8 adults exiting Emergency Accommodation during 2023 with a support plan.</p> <p>25 Number of adults in emergency accommodation that transfer to (a) Social Housing 23 - (b) Social Housing with Supports 2 (c) Homeless HAP</p> <p>76 housing allocations to households categorised as homeless in 2023 -</p> <p>22 allocations to Approved Housing Bodies, 54 allocations to Local Authority properties.</p> <p>13 housing applicants in tenancies with Housing First supports.</p> <p>Pilot Housing Led - Supported Housing for Families being progressed with DHLGH and Galway City Council, families to be insitu Q2 2024.</p> |

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| <p>To accelerate the delivery of well managed and maintained social housing in sustainable communities for people to live while maximising the contribution to a climate friendly built environment.</p> | <p>Housing Supply - Advance 'Housing for All - a New Housing Plan for Ireland'; the Government's housing policy to 2030, delivering units under the construction, acquisition, turnkey, Part V, CAS, CALF, Buy & Renew, Repair & Leasing and Voids. (H1:Social Housing Stock. Move to increase the directly provided dwellings whether constructed or acquired by local authorities less the no. of units sold to tenant purchasers).</p> | <p>Progress the Housing Capital Programme in accordance with the targets and funding as per the Housing for All Plan and Galway County Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan.</p> <p>Work in close partnership with Approved Housing bodies (AHBs) to assist in progressing their Capital & SHCEP projects.</p> <p>Work to deliver 1717 build units over the lifetime of Housing for All 2022-2026. To deliver 351 social units in 2023.</p> <p>Advertise for expressions of interest and advance purchase of affordable turnkeys in Q1 2023.</p> <p>Identify land acquisition opportunities and progress to completion where feasible. Consider the acquisition of derelict properties with the prospect of bringing urban regeneration to locations.</p> <p>Scheduled meetings held of the LA & AHB Housing Delivery Forum.</p> <p>Work to incorporate specific requirements into the design of new social housing estates to reflect disabilities, age-friendly housing guidance etc.</p> | <p>Progressed the Housing Capital Programme in accordance with Housing for All and the Housing Delivery Action Plan.</p> <p>Supported AHB's in the delivery of 101 new homes during 2023.</p> <p>Delivered 226 new social homes during 2023.</p> <p>Advertised for Expressions of Interest and Advance Purchase of Affordable Turnkey in 2023.</p> <p>Progressed the acquisition of land in a number of locations during 2023 including lands in Portumna and Tuam.</p> <p>Meeting of the AHB Forum held during 2023.</p> <p>Specific requirements incorporated into the design of new social housing developments as appropriate to meet the particular needs of specific housing applicants</p> |
| <p>To accelerate the delivery of well managed and maintained social housing in sustainable communities for people to live while maximising the contribution to a climate friendly built environment.</p> | <p>Delivery of the Affordable Housing Scheme.</p> | <p>Provide schemes of Affordable Housing for the county via the Affordable Housing Fund or other funding available.</p> <p>To deliver Affordable unit targets (57) for 2022 & 2023 combined.</p> <p>Review Affordable Scheme & procedures.</p> | <p>An updated Scheme of Priorities for Affordable Dwelling Purchase Arrangements was adopted at the May Plenary meeting and was approved by the Minister in June 2023.</p> <p>Part 10 Planning Application was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in August 2023 for the development of 45 affordable homes in Baile Chlair.</p> <p>We are currently progressing one proposal for a turnkey development (62 Units) in Lakeview, Claregalway.</p> |
| <p>To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.</p> | <p>Delivery of Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) & Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Look at HAP to Long Term Leasing options.</p> | <p>No. of Units Provided Under the RAS in 2023.</p> <p>No. of Units Provided Under HAP in 2023.</p> | <p>6 new tenancies created under RAS in 2023.</p> <p>216 new tenancies created under HAP in 2023.</p> |
| <p>To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.</p> | <p>To deliver on Vacant Homes Office work.</p> <p>Prioritise Croi Conaithe loan scheme</p> <p>Delivery of Repair & Lease/Leasing/Enhanced leasing and/or Buy & Renew Schemes as resources allow.</p> | <p>The Number of Croi Conaithe grants approved by end of year.</p> <p>The number of units provided under Leasing/Repair & Leasing/Enhanced Leasing in 2023.</p> <p>The number of units provided under Buy & Renew in 2023.</p> | <p>112 Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants received initial approval by the 31.12.2023</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p> |

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| <p>To accelerate the delivery of well managed and maintained social housing in sustainable communities for people to live while maximising the contribution to a climate friendly built environment.</p> | <p>Tenancy Sustainment Strategy-Implementation of the Tenancy Sustainment & Estate Management Strategy & ASB Policy</p> | <p>No. of Tenancy Sustainment Home Visits carried out by 31.12.2023.</p> <p>Roll out of GCC revised Tenant and Council responsibilities document.</p> <p>No. of support plans in place for LA tenancies.</p> <p>No. of ASB complaints dealt with in 2023.</p> | <p>Tenancy Sustainment Home Visits undertaken by the Housing Liaison Officers, Tenancy Sustainment Officer and Social Work Team as appropriate to support new and existing tenants.</p> <p>Support Plans developed for LA tenancies to support Housing First and tenancies as deemed appropriate.</p> <p>Under review during 2023.</p> |
| <p>To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.</p> | <p>Continue to adopt and implement the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024.</p> <p>Completion of adaptation and extension works at individual properties various locations.</p> <p>Ongoing submission of new TAP funding applications to the Dept.</p> | <p>Total No. of Traveller families accommodated as a % of overall targets set in the Programme.</p> <p>Complete refurbishment, upgrade and construction works on three houses at Traveller Group Scheme housing in Clontuskert, Ballinasloe, including provision of extension to provide for multi-generational living by Q4 2023.</p> <p>Complete extension and refurbishment works at Traveller specific property in Cosmona, Loughrea by Q3 2023.</p> <p>Progress major refurbishment works at ten houses at Cloonlyon Traveller Specific Group Housing Scheme in Ballygar.</p> <p>Progress refurbishment and extension at 2 Traveller Specific properties at Ballygurrane, Athenry by Q4 2023.</p> <p>Submit application for funding to Traveller Accommodation Unit for the major refurbishment and upgrading and extension to Traveller Specific property at Kingsland, Athenry by Q3 2023.</p> <p>Continue to submit funding applications to the Traveller Accommodation Unit for refurbishment, upgrades and extensions to Traveller Specific Accommodation to meet the needs of Traveller families during the year.</p> <p>Progress the redevelopment of Tuam Halting Site to deliver Traveller specific Group Housing Scheme for current occupants of halting site by Q4 2023.</p> <p>Progress the redevelopment and extension of Creggane Traveller Specific Group Housing Scheme to facilitate multi-generational living at this location by Q4 2023.</p> <p>Apply for funding for the acquisition and appropriate adaptation of standard housing for Traveller Families during the year.</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |

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| <p>To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status.</p> | <p>Implement the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability for County Galway 2021-2026 Progressing the establishment of sub groups.</p> <p>Continued Rollout of the completion of all disability priority forms for all existing applicants.</p> | <p>Targets as detailed in the Housing Strategy for People with a Disability.</p> <p>Disability Steering Group to agree details of allocations procedures & nominations to Voluntary bodies as well as information sharing re care plans and risk assessments.</p> <p>To ensure that priority is afforded in the maintenance and upgrade of Council stock for disabled persons.</p> <p>To support roll out of Disability & Mobility Grants as funding permits.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>499 valid HAOP grant applications were received and 330 grants were paid to a total value of 1,920,393.</p> <p>281 valid Mobility Aid Grant applications were received and 133 grants were paid to a total value of 669,061.</p> <p>112 valid Housing Adaptation Grant applications were received and 103 grants were paid to a total value of 1,226,285.</p> |
| <p>To accelerate the delivery of well managed and maintained social housing in sustainable communities for people to live while maximising the contribution to a climate friendly built environment.</p> | <p>Preventative Maintenance Programme for Housing Stock</p> | <p>Progress the programme of Planned Maintenance works for 2023 .</p> <p>Progress contracts for further priority works for delivery in 2023.</p> <p>80% of all electrical and fire safety works to be completed across the County by end 2023.</p> <p>Carry out annual service on all registered heat pumps by end of 2023.</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Complete</p> |
| <p>To ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible to improve the quality of housing stock and to contribute to the renewal of the built environment.</p> | <p>Complete Housing Repairs (H4: Housing Maintenance Direct Costs).</p> | <p>Repairs completed on an assessed priority basis.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>To ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible to improve the quality of housing stock and to contribute to the renewal of the built environment.</p> | <p>Progress a scheme of works to improve energy efficiency in the Council's stock and to contribute to efforts against climate change.</p> <p>Improve the Energy Efficiency of existing Housing stock while reducing carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuel as a heat source and thereby reducing the risk of fuel poverty for occupants.</p> | <p>Submit a proposal to the DoHLGH in Q2 for 2023 works programme under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2021 -2030.</p> <p>Complete works on the agreed Energy Retrofit Programme, dependent on allocated funding.</p> <p>Continue to achieve BER A ratings on properties.</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>98% achieved</p> <p>Achieved</p> |
| <p>To ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible to improve the quality of housing stock and to contribute to the renewal of the built environment.</p> | <p>Effectively Manage Housing Vacancies & Voids</p> | <p>To achieve a reduction in the % of housing vacancies @ end Q4 2023 versus % of housing vacancies @ end Q4 2022 (H2: Housing Vacancies, H3: Average re-letting time and direct costs).</p> <p>Monthly review meetings to be held on housing maintenance budget</p> | <p>Achieved</p> |

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| To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status. | Effectively Manage Housing Applications, Vacancies, Rents, Purchases and Loans. | Review procedures for processing housing applications and engaging with housing applicants. To progress with scanning project to include new applications and old files. Number of rent reviews completed and new rents implemented - Number of Home Loans issued Number of Tenant Purchases applications completed. To develop online IT solutions - online application process, summary of social housing assessment (SSHA) and Housing List Dashboard stats. | Additional staff resources in place and processing of housing applications streamlined. Retrospective scanning of housing applications completed. 399 rent reviews completed in 2023. 13 Tenant Purchase applications completed 16.55 home loans issued (including 3 self-build loans partially drawn down) Online option developed and available to respond to SSHA. Housing List Dashboard available on galway.ie |
| To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status. | Completion of the current Irish Refugee Resettlement Programme for County Galway. | 31 refugee families resettled in 6 towns across County Galway. | 27 families resettled in 6 towns across County Galway. |
| To ensure that existing housing stock is used to the maximum degree possible to improve the quality of housing stock and to contribute to the renewal of the built environment. | Proceed with the inspections of private rented properties (RTB, HAP, RAS). Inspections of private rented properties will contribute to the improvement of living standards Co. Galway tenants, including those in the HAP and RAS schemes. Complete inspections related to requests for grants to assist with disability and ageing; to facilitate improvements to existing housing and quality of life of occupants. | Complete 1879 inspection target for minimum rented standards for 2023 (<i>H5: Private Rented Sector Inspections</i>) . Complete inspections in a timely manner for persons seeking grant aid to assist with disabilities and ageing. Issue legal notices when required and in line with government guidance re: Covid 19 protocols and restrictions. | 1,879 inspections completed in 2023. |
| To help individuals and families meet their housing needs in communities of persons of varied ages, family composition, ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic status. | To coordinate the Ukrainian Response in Galway County including: Offer a home scheme, Emergency Rest Centres as required, Liaise with IPAS on commercial contracts etc | No of Offer a Home Properties progressed. | 57 |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuillinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Advance Major Schemes on the National Primary & National Secondary routes | | |
| | N6 GCRR - Galway City Ring Road - Scheme has been remitted back to An Bord Pleanála for further consideration. Respond to request for further information when ABP seeks same. | Q4 2023/Q1 2024 | Ongoing |
| | N59 Clifden to Maam Cross- Strategic Assessment Report submitted to Department of Transport for approval | Q2 2023 | Ongoing |
| | Maigh Cuillinn Bypass - Reach substantial completion | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | N59 Bunnakill to Claremount - Agree final draft of construction stage method statements with NPWS and IFI | Q3 2023 | Ongoing |
| | N84 Galway to Curraghmore- procure consultants to undertake feasibility study . | Q2 2023 | Complete |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuillinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Advance minor scheme on the National Primary & National Secondary routes | | |
| | N17 Milltown to Gortagunnad Realignment. CPO approved and statutory planning consent received from ABP. Advance to Phase 5 -7 of TII PMG's and issue Notice to Treat and complete detailed design. | Q4 2023 | Ongoing |

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| | N83 - Baile Chláir Traffic Calming scheme Advace. Land acquisition complete. Appoint consultants and advance to Phase 5 -7 of TII PMG's. Complete detailed design and draft tender documents and have peer review complete. | Q4 2023 | Ongoing |
| | N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment - CPO and NIS submitted to ABP in 2022. Oral hearing concluded in November 2022. Await decision from ABP. If approval granted, advance to Phase 5 -7 of TII PMG's | Q1 2023 Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | N65 Kilmeeen Cross. Publish Emerging Preferred Route and complete all environmental and ecological assessments | Q4 2023 | Ongoing |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Advance Strategic Regional and Local Road Schemes | | |
| | Athenry Ring Road sections 3 and 5. CPO with ABP awaiting confirmation of same. Pending approval, issue Notice to Treat and acquire lands. Complete tender pack for procurement of construction contractor. | Q4 2023 | CPO Approved. Permission from DoT to proceed to Tender. Detailed design ongoing on eastern section. |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Advance Specific Improvement Grants | | |
| | R332 Kilbannon. Complete land acquisition, appoint contractor and commence construction | | Land Acquisition agreements substantially completed and conveyancing underway. Tender pack still under review. |
| | R374 Causeways and Bridges. Complete detailed design | Q2 2023 | Architectural heritage requires further consideration. |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | R339 Belville. Complete detailed design | Q2 2023 | Detailed design complete. |
| | Advance Climate Change Adaption and Resilience Works | | |
| | L-6214 Clogher Flood relief | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4512 Ballyboy | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-6412 at Cloondroon | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-5140 Inishbofin rock armour and sea wall | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-7125 Ballydavid South Flood relief | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-353 Ballyturin | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2209 at Kilgevrin | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-341 Ballinahinch rising level of road | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-3112 Gloves West Flood relief | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-332 at Grange | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-5394 Doire Lochán Thoir, an Spidéal | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2117 Lisheenananan Flood relief | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2105 Weir Road | Q4 2023 | Complete |

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| | L-3117 Cormachugh Flood relief | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-8789 Lackan | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-81065 Tonroe | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4514 Sheenaun | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-6488 Road Drainage at Pollacorragune | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R360 at Balladorragha | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2219 Ahaun | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-6102 Newline, Caherlistrane | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2219 Ahaun | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4312 Tynagh | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2123 Myles Park | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4311 Lisheennagat | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-7408 Bredagh, Caltra | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-7415 Lissyegan, Ahascragh | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-8244 Ballydoogan | Q4 2023 | Complete |
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| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Bridge Rehabilitation Works on Regional and Local Roads | | |
| | L-6143 Mahanagh Bridge 1 | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-3117 Cormacuagh (Clogh) | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-8229 Derrygarriff | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-85141 Derreen Bridge 4 | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-336 Waterfall Bridge | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-87902 Mountain Park Bridge | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-345 Cornamona Bridge | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-12010 Formweel, Shannapheasteen | Q4 2023 | Delayed, ABP approval pending |
| | R-348 Suck Bridge, Ballinasloe | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-51374 Derrynavglau, Ballinafad | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-50101 Tirneevin, Gort | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-363 Ballinamore Bridge | Q4 2023 | Complete |
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| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Safety Improvement Works on Regional and Local Roads | | |
| | Derrydonnell Beg, Junction of R348/R446 | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R374 Casla to Bealadangan, Carrowroe West | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R446 Moyveela (Oranmore to Craughwell) | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R446 Oranbeg (Oranmore to Craughwell) | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4304/L-43042 Narrow junction with poor visibility close to dangerous bend | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R380/R460 Series of sharp bends and narrow road due to bridge parapets (6 No.) and approach to Gort Town (4No.) | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R-333/L-2109 Creavins Bend, Caherlistrane - Sightlines | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R360 Knockaunbrack - Sightlines | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-4322 Killimor to Kiltormer road at Derrew Cross | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R341 Derrigimlagh | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | R363/L-3210 Poor sight visibility to the left when entering R363 | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-1322/L-5383/L-5382 Boleybeg East | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | L-2212 Dalgin - Improvement of Sight lines | Q4 2023 | Complete |
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| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuilinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Former National Roads Rehabilitation Works | | |
| | R446 formerly N6 @ 2 locations - provide pavement overlays | Q3 2023 | Complete |

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| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cullinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Work & liaise with Residents, Developers, thier Agents, Bondholders and other relevant Third Parties for the completion of Residential Estates to a standard for Taking in Charge and/or Bond Release | On-going - Target - 12 Estates Taken in Charge and/or Bond Released - | Target exceeded @ Q4 - 2023 |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cullinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Maintain & Improve the roads Networks of 6941KM throughout the County | | |
| | Prepare a road maintenance programme for non national roads and Annual Roads Programme to be adopted by Elected Members | Q1, 2023 | Complete |
| | Undertake and complete a maintenance and resurfacing programme for regional and local routes, incorporating ordinary maintenance (verge trimming, drainage and signage provision/renewal), bridge maintenance, winter maintenance and route lighting maintenance within the limits of available funding and as agreed with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland/Department of Transport Tourism & Sport | Completion of Annual Roads Programme by Q4, 2023 as set in DTTAS Circular RW 02 of 2023 Road Grant funding fully recouped by deadline set by DTTAS in Circular RW 02 of 2023 | Complete |
| | Number of Local Tertiary Roads to be repaired | 42 | Complete |
| | Number of kilometres of Regional Road to be improved, as funded by Restoration Improvement Grant | 17Km | Complete |
| | Number of kilometres of Local Roads improved, as funded by Restoration Improvement Grant | 140km approx | Complete |
| | Number of bridges to be improved - Rehabilitation Works | 12 | Complete |
| | Number of kilometres of Regional Road to be surface dressed, as funded by Restoration Maintenance Grant | 40km approx | Complete |
| | Number of kilometres of Local Road to be surface dressed, as funded by Restoration Maintenance Grant | 180km approx | Complete |
| | Pothole Repairs – response time – number of working days, dependent on resources available: National Roads Regional Roads Local Primary & Secondary Roads Local Tertiary Roads | 2 5 10 20 | Complete |
| Winter Service Programme – monitor weather conditions, and implement salting/gritting programme on identified priority routes as required | Ongoing Winter Service | Salting programme delivered in accordance with the Winter Service Plan | |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cullinn Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Promote scheme for the improvement of private roads within the County | | |
| | Promote the Local Improvement Scheme to facilitate improvements on private roads. 23Nr schemes will be completed based on the allocated funding from DRCD notified on 13th Feb 2023. Separately for 2023 there is funding provided and ringfenced for schemes on the islands. The allocation provided from the DRCD will allow for 11 schemes on the islands to progress. | Complete schemes Q4 2023 Fully recoup funding by Dealine set by DRCD Q4 2023 | Complete |
| Promote and support the development of walking and cycling routes throughout the county. | Support the Development of a National Cycle Networks/Greenways throughout the County | | |

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| | Conamara Greenway Continue Land Acquisition by Voluntary Acquisition Clifden to Recess - complete construction pending land acquisition Oughterard to Galway - publish emerging preferred corridor followed by preferred route Derrigimlagh - Kylemore Abbey - Advance to Phase 0/1 of TII PMG Athenry - Milltown - Publish Feasibility Report then advance to Phase 0/1 of TII PMG Galway to Athlone Cycleway - Preferred Route selected and preliminary design commences | Ongoing Construction ongoing. Section to be complete Q3 2023 Q1 2023 Q1 2023 Q2 2023 Q1 2023 Q3 2023 Q1 2023 | Ongoing Complete Complete Complete Complete Pending Ongoing |
| | Maximise funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Support the Development of Walking routes throughout the County Complete and close out on all current Active Travel projects that are Contractually Committed and that are currently in Construction Prioritise delivery of the Safe Routes To School programme SRTS Round 1 - 7 Schools Oranmore – Calasanctius College, Gaelscoil de hÍde and Scoil Íosaif Naofa Athenry – Scoil Chroí Naofa and Athenry Boys National School Conamara - St Pauls Secondary School, Oughterard and Scoile Baile Nua, Maigh Cuillin SRTS Round 2 – 5 Schools Scoil Sailearna, Indreabhán Scoil na bhForbacha, An Spideal Gort Community School St. Brendans National School Loughrea Ballindereen National School | Ongoing Q1, 2023 | Ongoing (Annually) Complete Ongoing for next no. of years. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. Measures drafted. |
| To provide a safe and efficient road network for all road users including the development of N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR), N59 including the Maigh Cuillin Bypass, the Conamara Greenway and the Dublin-Galway Greenway. | Continue to Develop Road Safety Initiative Number of schools for which support will be provided for Cycling Training Programme Number of schools for which support will be provided for Drive for Life Programme Successful operation of Junior School Warden scheme in County Galway | 35 15 JSW scheme operations in 3 schools | Achieved and Ongoing 0 - Course no longer taking place Achieved |
| Prepare Traffic Management Plans for towns to enhance the quality of life in our communities. | Traffic Management # of parking permits issued annually # of parking tickets issued annually Deliver a suite of Local Transport Plans and Strategies, which include: a. a County Transport Modelling Assessment b. Local Transportation Plans for Tuam, Athenry, Loughrea and Gort c. East Galway City Suburbs Local Transport Plan to include Oranmore d. Community Transport Study for 6 towns - Headford, Kinvara, Portumna, Oughterard, Maigh Cuillin and Clifden | 210 1200 Q4 2023 Q3 2023 Q4 2023 Q4 2023 | 276 2334 Athenry LTP delivered. Loughrea LTP delivered. Gort preparation ongoing -subject to align Ongoing Substantially Complete Ongoing Ongoing |

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| | e. collaboration with the NTA National Cycle Project Office teams to develop a National Cycle Network - Cycle Connects strategy currently being developed by the NTA | Q4 2023 | Ongoing |
| Continue collaboration with OPW on Flood Risk Management and maintenance. | Drainage Maintenance | | |
| | Number of kilometres of drainage maintenance completed by year end | 3km by Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Minor Works Scheme | | |
| | Continue to identify and submit projects for funding for minor flood relief works | 15 submissions by Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Complete minor flood relief works | 15 schemes by Q4, 2023 | Complete |
| | Identify and submit projects for funding to OPW | 3 schemes to be submitted by Q4, 2023 | Complete |
| | Work with OPW in relation to flood risk management | | |
| | Dunkellin FRS - Finalise compensation payments | Q1, 2023 | Complete |
| | South Galway FRS - Preparation for Public Exhibition | Q2, 2023 | Ongoing, additional environmental surveys and assessments required. Public exhibition delayed |
| | Ballinasloe FRS - Development & Design | Q2, 2023 | Target achieved |
| | Clifden FRS - Development & Design | Q2, 2023 | Target achieved |
| | To deliver a programme of minor flood mitigation works to minimise and in so far as it is possible prevent flooding within the limits of available resources | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| To continue to develop our Piers and Harbours. | Advance the Maritime Infrastructure Development & Coastal Protection Programme | | |
| | Bealcarra Pier Construction of 1.25m high storm wall | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Killeenaran Pier Repair works | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Derrylnver Repair works | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Maumeen Pier Install edge protection and safety works | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Kilkieran Pier Edge protection, repairs to slipway and turning area. | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Kilronan Pier and Harbour Provision of floating pontoon berthing face | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Roundstone Installation of access ladders, repair/replacement of handrails and repair of wall at the pier | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Kinvara Pier and Harbour Install edge protection and repairs to access steps and pier wall | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Garafin Pier Repairs to deck and pier wall. Install handrails and edge protection | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Cashel No. 1 Repairs to pier deck and slipway | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Pollagh Replace existing deck and install new ladder | Q4 2023 | Complete |
| | Inis Orr Pier - Awaiting approval of CPO from ABP. Complete tender documents (subject to funding approval) and procure contractor for Q4 2023 mobilisation and Q1 2024 construction commencement. | Q4, 2023 | Procurement commenced but not fully complete by end 2023 |
| | Prepare and deliver routine maintenance & minor improvements programme for Piers, Harbours and yacht moorings - subject to available funding | # of piers maintained # of Harbours maintained # of Yacht moorings maintained | Complete |
| | To revitalise town, villages and islands of County Galway and to improve the connectivity of communities, the built environment and public spaces. | The Capital Team in Water Services assist and input to Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan along with colleagues in Planning to ensure that infrastructure investment by Irish Water is aligned with development plans. | Ongoing |

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| | Follow up two applications for funding under the new funding measure A8 - Waste Water Collection and Treatment needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services. | Dec-23 | Achieved Funding for Clarinbridge and Craughwell under Measure A8 of MARWP. |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Commence preparation of a Recreation and Amenity Development Strategy for County Galway. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Manage and maintain Playgrounds owned by Galway County Council. | Ongoing programme | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre - Management of the Centre and implementation of actions to increase visitor numbers via tours, publications and the holding of Lecture Series at the Centre | Increase in visitor numbers | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Maintain Parks and Open Space including Rinville Park, Oranmore, Palace Grounds, Tuam and the Cowpark Clarenbridge. | Ongoing Maintenance Programme | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Manage Water Safety/Beach Lifeguard Service in County & City (Shared Service) | Number of Lifeguard Hour provided during Bathing Season. | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Monitor and oversee the operation, management and maintenance of Tuam & Ballinasloe Leisure Centres under Licence Agreement with private operator. | Membership and Visits to each Leisure Centre. | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Provide a number of free community hours per week at Tuam All-Weather Pitch when open and operating. | 40 hours | Achieved |
| Develop a strategy for the delivery and improvement of Recreational and Amenity facilities including inland Blue Economy and Sport across the county. | Provide public access to Dunlo Recreational Park, Ballinasloe. | 48 hours | Achieved |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure that all local communities are aware of their local library service and what each library has to offer. We will participate in national promotional campaigns and showcase our services through the use of mixed media channels including social media, local press and radio, community partnerships and mailing lists. | Number of visits to each library. | 510,874 (up 39.5%) |
| | | Number of books issued. | 676,043 (up 9.45%) |
| | | Number of active memberships. | 39716 (up 18.57%) |
| | | Target 0.25% increase quarterly in all of the above. | ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure where possible that all branch libraries organise/host a range of activities including exhibitions, readings, book-clubs, lectures and cultural events for their community. | Number of events held in libraries | 2490 |

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| | | Target 0.25% increase quarterly in all of the above. | Achieved |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure the provision of library services in all areas of our large County through our extensive mobile library network and to support our Island populations with branch support and relevant resources. | Number of members on mobile library. | 2,736 |
| | | Number of items issued on mobile library. | Moving to LMS |
| | | Target 0.25% increase quarterly in all of the above. | Ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To encourage library usage by children and young adults. | Number of items issued. | 440,605 |
| | | Number who participated in the Summer Stars Programme. | 3,578 |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To encourage staff to build on previous successful ideas that keep children visiting and engaging with our services. | Number of organised events for Children's Book Festival. | 46 |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To actively support schools and teachers with relevant materials, class sets and school library materials and to continue the schools outreach program across our library service encouraging class visits to libraries throughout the year. | Number of attendees at Children's Book Festival events. | 1173 |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To provide quality children's literature and young adult book collections that are carefully selected to encompass diversity and inclusion. | Number of other events organised for children and young adults. | 85% increase |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure continued involvement in all aspects of the "Right to Read Programme" by participating in 'Spring into Storytime', 'Summer Stars', 'Children's Book Festival' and 'Family Time at your Library'. These have been very important in encouraging children to utilise our services and will continue to be an important factor going forward. | Increased participation in the various relevant initiatives and events. | 75% increase |
| | | To ensure continued involvement in National Children's events e.g. Cruinniú na nÓg. | Increased participation in the various relevant initiatives and events. |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To plan and provide for the provision of new infrastructure to enable the improved access for patrons across all platforms such as desktop PC's, WIFI and continuing to connect our branch libraries to the National Library Management System. | Online services usage. | |
| | | Number of internet sessions (PC and WIFI). | 11,468 PC internet sessions |
| | | Usage of new ICT equipment e.g. Tovertafel, interactive screens, laptop dispensers, tablet dispensers. | Ongoing |
| | | Target 0.25% increase quarterly in all of the above. | Achieved |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure that our library resources are available online 24/7 and that communities are aware of these extensive collections. | Number of branches newly connected to National LMS. | 1 |

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| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure that our library resources are available online 24/7 and that communities are aware of these extensive collections. | Increase the number of branch libraries providing free WIFI. | Ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To continue to explore avenues to extend our Library services and facilities to meet community needs. | Each library to continue to be aware of the needs of the local community | Achieved |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To continue to provide a comprehensive service to the visually impaired. | Introduction of sensory equipment and facilities. | Achieved |
| | | Provision of Visually Impaired Services. Develop the Postal Audio Service to the visually impaired. | Achieved |
| | | Target 0.25% increase quarterly | |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To actively engage with community groups, organisations and other agencies to promote social inclusion and determine how our services can support community needs for those marginalised and disadvantaged. | Provision of translated materials to support community engagement and target social inequalities. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To continue to maintain the Library Vehicle Fleet and explore upgrade options. | WIFI enable Mobile Library Vehicle | Achieved Q2 2023 |
| | | Assess the current mechanical and physical condition of the fleet. | Ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure the library service is a focal point for the provision of information on our local history and culture by acquiring, preserving and managing local records and archives. | To acquire, catalogue and collate Local History material to ensure its accessibility for all citizens. | Achieved and ongoing |
| Develop and promote a Library Service to enable lifelong learning, information provision, literacy development, community engagement, health and wellbeing, cultural identity and creativity. | To ensure that Galway Library Service preserves and develops its rich Irish language collection. | To acquire, catalogue and collate Irish Language material to ensure its accessibility for all citizens. | Achieved and ongoing |

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023

STRATEGIC GOAL: ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

"To maximise organisational capacity through the continuous review of operational efficiency, financial and risk management and the development of our Staff and Elected Members"

| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
|--|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Implementation of the Local Authority People Strategy to provide a Workforce of the Future with Capacity and Capability delivered through Effective Management having regard to legislative, financial and changing circumstances. | Review personnel strenghts in stations to ensure staffing sufficient to provide effective emergency response and minimise mobilisation of additional resources to incidents | Q2 2023 | HR Ongoing |
| | Review the recommendations of the report "A Review of Recruitment and Retention and the Future Sustainability of Service Delivery" with a view to ensuring greater recruitment and retention of retained fire service personnel | | HR and Fire Service Ongoing |
| | Ensure cross training of Administrative personnel to ensure unforeseen absences do not adversely effect the performance of the administrative role with the service | | Ongoing (new staff). |
| Plan for the protection of our citizens through the emergency management framework for response to flooding, adverse weather and other emergencies. | Ensure continued review of severe weather and flooding emergency reponse plans | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Continued use of the ArcGIS based Severe Weather Emergency Management System (SWEMS) | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Fully explore and maximise opportunities that may arise through increased use of shared services and continue to deliver quality service under the existing shared service arrangement with Galway City Council for the Library, Fire Service, Local Enterprise Office and other services. | Liaise with Galway City Council re site for a New Galway City Fire Station | Ongoing | Ongoing |

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| Review office accommodation arrangements and develop proposals for the efficient delivery of office accommodation requirements. | Liaise with the NDFEM for the capital funding of the construction of a New Galway City Fire Station and Headquarters office accommodation | Ongoing | Ongoing. Dependant on securing appropriate site |
| Provide and accelerate Digital Transformation in all Council processes and activities. | Introduce the use of ICR Incident command software into the Full Time Station in Galway City | Q2 2023 | Ongoing |
| | Liaise with Software providers for the development of Watch Mangement software to streamline operational administration of the full time service | Q4 2023 | In progress |
| Plan for the protection of our citizens through the emergency management framework for response to flooding, adverse weather and other emergencies. | Ensure continued review of severe weather and flooding emergency reponse plans | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Continued use of the ArcGIS based Severe Weather Emergency Management System (SWEMS) | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Work with the Elected Members to ensure that the Municipal Districts operate to their maximum potential. | Co-Ordinate Municipal District Schedules of Work | Early February | Achieved |
| Ensure the property and assets of the Council are managed in a manner which maximises their present and future potential. | Continue programme of upgrading of Council fleet subject to availability of financial resources. Velocity patcher purchased in 2022. Truscks (5Nr) to be acquired in 2023 | Q4 2023 ahead of the winter service plan mobilisation | Procurement of trucks commenced but not completed in 2023 |
| Maintain and develop effective financial management systems which are responsive to our ever- changing needs, obtain value for money at all times, consist of strong cash-flow management and robust budgetary control. | Ensure that monthly Payroll data checking template is returned to Irish Water to avoid any delay in recoupmnt of wages paid out under the SLA | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Return all data on any audit queries raised by Irish Water | Dec-23 | Ongoing |
| Work with the Elected Members to ensure that the Municipal Districts operate to their maximum potential. | Co-Ordinate Municipal District Schedules of Work. | Q1 2023. | Ongoing |
| Continued implementation and review of corporate governance structures and systems including risk management, procurement, audit and statutory obligations under FOI, GDPR, Protected Disclosures and Official Languages Act. | Co-ordinate public right of access to records in line with the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and Access to Information on the Environment Regulations. | 100% compliance with FOI Act 2014 and the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations | Achieved |

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| Continued implementation and review of corporate governance structures and systems including risk management, procurement, audit and statutory obligations under FOI, GDPR, Protected Disclosures and Official Languages Act. | Facilitate the County Joint Policing Committee, support public awareness of the JPC and co-ordinate monitoring of its Annual Workplan. | Consistent compliance with Statutory Regulations for the JPC. Delivery of the JPC Annual Work Plan 2023. | Achieved |
| Continued implementation and review of corporate governance structures and systems including risk management, procurement, audit and statutory obligations under FOI, GDPR, Protected Disclosures and Official Languages Act. | Co-ordinate Data Subject's Right of Access to their personal data processed by Galway County Council in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts 1988-2018. | Compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 in respect of the management of mandatory log for Data Subject Access Requests. | Achieved |
| Continued implementation and review of corporate governance structures and systems including risk management, procurement, audit and statutory obligations under FOI, GDPR, Protected Disclosures and Official Languages Act. | Implementation of the Galway County Council's Child Protection and Welfare Policy & Procedures and Galway County Council's Child Safeguarding Statement across the organisation | Ongoing | Achieved |
| Fully explore and maximise opportunities that may arise through increased use of shared services and continue to deliver quality service under the existing shared service arrangement with Galway City Council for the Library, Fire Service, Local Enterprise Office and other services. | Galway Public Libraries: Continued provision of city-based library service that establishes and enhances the quality of life for citizens and develops the social infrastructure in the city. | Community awareness of the city library service reflected in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Number of visits to each library •Number of books issued. •Number of active memberships •Number of events and activities held | 241,287 visits to city libraries. 20,210 children attending 1,310 events |

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023

STRATEGIC GOAL: PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

"To improve, protect and promote our environment, culture, heritage and language in the interests of present and future generations"

| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
|--|--|--------------------|--|
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Assess level of risk of referred planning applications and issue responses where required | Ongoing | 207 planning files assessed |
| Protection and Improvement of Water Quality and Catchment Management. | Complete national inspection plan for septic tanks(110 tanks). | 31/12/2023 | Only 26 inspections were completed. A technician who previously carried out most of the NIP inspections left GCC in January 2023. This position was not filled again until January 2024 |
| | Undertake farm inspection programme | 31/12/2023 | 17 "complaint related" and 17 planned farm inspections were completed. 107 planning applications for agriculture based developments and 46 applications for sewage sludge spreading on farmland were assessed |
| | Carry out monitoring of rivers, lakes, discharge licences, bathing waters on a priority basis in accordance with legal requirements and monitoring programmes. | Ongoing | All rivers, lakes and bathing water sampling plans were 100% completed. 91% of discharge licenced sites were inspected |
| | Enforcement of Discharge Licence legislation priortising high risk sites | Ongoing | 136 inspections of licenced facilities - 1 inspection of unlicenced facility - 82 warning letters - 10 Section 12 notices - 1 Discharge licence submitted to Law Agents for prosecution. |
| | Highlight beaches with excellent water quality and facilities by achievieg either Blue Flag or Green Coast status (5 with blue flag, 6 with green coast award). | 30/6/2023 | ongoing |
| | Protect public health by continuing to monitor bathing water quality at our beaches and implementing non-compliance protocols (26 bathing waters). | 31/09/2023 | ongoing |
| | Carry out enforcement in relation to water complaints. | Ongoing | 18 Warning letters issued. 18 Section 12 notices issued and 1 file sent to Law Agent |
| | Implement the Irish Water SLA for drinking water and wastewater facilities by completing the monitoring programme and incident response. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Manage Private Water Supply monitoring programme | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Implement Catchment Management Plans in conjunction with LAWPRO | Ongoing | implemented and works continued |
| Monitoring and enforcement of illegal dumping and litter. | Investigate all environmental complaints in line with national priorities and within the timelines set out in the Enforcement Policy. | Q4 | 1229 environmental complaints were recieved and investigated in line with the National priorities and within the timelines set out in our Enforcement policy |
| Implementation of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan. | Carry out inspections of high risk waste facility permits and certs, household and commercial premises, permitted and bogus waste collectors, illegal dumping and C&D sites - 100% of identified high risk sites/collectors. | Q4 | All 22 waste facility permits and certificates of registration were inspected in 2023. All complaints received regarding unauthorised collectors and illegal dumping were followed up on and the appropriate enforcement action taken. |
| | Carry out joint inspections with the WERLA, the NTFSO and the Gardai and other regulatory bodies | Ongoing | Eight roadside checkpoints were carried out with the Gardai in 2023. Two of these checkpoints were attended by the WERLA also. Two joint inspections were carried out with the NTFSO. |
| | Carry out enforcement in relation to illegal dumping and PRI referrals, Log all complaints and investigate in accordance with our enforcement policy | Ongoing | 951 waste complaints were recieved in 2023 and all of these were investigated and action taken in line with our enforcement policy |
| | Ensure appropriate management of construction and demolition waste, sewage sludge, agricultural burning, household waste, tyres, commercial food waste, end of life vehicles | Ongoing | Audits were carried out on building sites, in garages, shops etc to ensure that all waste types were being stored and disposed of correctly. |

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| | Manage ADI projects, invoicing, monitoring of spend, compliance with RCT and Procurement Legislation | Q4 | 10 projects completed including bulky goods collections, awareness campaigns, once off clean ups of sites and purchased some solar compacted bins. 60,400 Euro spent |
| | Manage CCTV programme when approval is given for the use of CCTV | Ongoing | Approval was not given for the use of CCTV until early 2024 |
| | Follow up actions on the waste presentation by law inspections carried out in 2022 and new inspections to be carried out in 2023 | Ongoing | In total 350 waste presentation by law inspections were carried out including follow ups from 2022. Three fixed payment notices were issued for households not complying with the bye laws |
| | Set up and manage working groups in relation to areas of the county that have specific issues re illegal waste activities | Q4 | Working group set up to deal with multiple complaints of dumping on the N84. The group consisted of members of Galway City Council and local councillors. Actions were decided upon and will be implemented in 2024 |
| | Ensure compliance with waste collection permits, including the continued roll-out of the Brown Bin in designated areas and monitoring of compliance in skip hire sector | Q4 | Audits were carried out on all the major waste companies in Galway County Council area to ensure that brown bins are provided to all applicable agglomerations and to all commercial customers. A warning letter was sent to one of the collectors directing them to comply with the regulations |
| | Enforce requirements in relation to Deco Paints, Solid Fuel and Solvents, carry out inspections in relation to Deco paints, solid fuel and solvents, Carry out enforcement in relation to air and noise, implement the Air Monitoring programme as per EPA requirements. The amount of work carried out here is dependant on the amount of resources available | Q4 | Five deco paint audits, one inspection under the solvent regulations and one inspection under the petroleum vapour regulations were carried out. Grants were received from the Department of the Environment for works under the solid fuel regulations. With this grant, we contracted a consultant to carry out an initial assessment of the number of premises selling solid fuel in the county and which were complaint. In addition, ten fuels were tested to see if they complied with the regulations. Further follow up actions are planned for 2024 |
| | To continue to provide recycling facilities for members of the public and extend where possible | Ongoing | Ongoing and no new facilities |
| | Investigate and report on all complaints received regarding derelict sites and enter on Derelict Sites register where appropriate | Ongoing | 28 complaints received regarding derelict properties during 2023 - 2 properties placed on register. |
| | Promote Green Programme with primary and secondary schools and other educational establishments and encourage more participation | Ongoing - 31/12/2023 | 35 Green school visit, Anti-Litter poster competition, 1 school grant aided fro water font, 2 competitions |
| Implementation of County Litter Management Plan. | Support and encourage community cleanups | Number of groups registered with An Taisce National Spring Clean. Number of groups supported outside NSC | 183 groups registered with NSC. Ongoing support at area office level for cleanups |
| | Promote the use of social media platforms in highlighting illegal dumping | Ongoing | website, X/Twitter, Facebook and Instagram |
| | Deliver an efficient and co-ordinated approach to the enforcement of litter poll | Work in partnership with Community/Voluntary/Education Sector in educating and raising awareness of the effects of litter on our Environment. No. of meetings, campaigns and initiatives. | Continued AntiDog fouling camapign, developed beach litter camapign, financial support to "Leave No Trace" |
| | Work in partnership with the Connacht Regional Waste Management office in disseminating awareness and information of waste management practices and campaigns in all sectors. | No. of campaigns - 31/12/2023 | Food Recycling Campaign, WEEE Campaign, Cigarette Litter campaign, Christmas waste reduction campaign, Circular Living Camapign |
| | Provide financial support and advice to Community/voluntary/ social enterprise sectors in relation to environmental projects | No. of projects/funding - 31/12/2023 | 2 radio adverts, 1anti-dog fouling camapign, Picker pPals in schools, Green schools programme, 1 cinema advert, Ati-litter poster competition, Anti-litter beach campaign, Leave No Trace campaign, Anti-Litter pitch campaign, attendance at 5 community events, 145 Burial Ground Maintenance Grants, 36 for bring banks, 1 school grant aided for wate font, 600 saplings distributed National Tree Week, supported 22 Mobile WEEE events, Attended 1 new tenants awareness day with Housing section, |
| | Development of New Litter Management Plan - 2023 - 2025 | Q3 | Done |

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| | Deliver an efficient and co-ordinated approach to the enforcement of litter pollution thorough completion of the NLPMS Surveys | 31/12/2023 | 186 surveys completed by Community Wardens in respect of the NLPMS - 141 pollution surveys and 46 quantification surveys. |
| | Provide Burial Grounds in association with the Community | | |
| | Acquire new sites for the provision of burial ground facilities - complete Part 8 | 2 by 31/12/2023 | One completed - Kilbannon |
| | Complete works on new extensions | 3 by 31/12/2023 | Two completed - Duniry & Ballyconnelly |
| Implement statutory and contractual obligations in local abattoirs and small meat manufacturing plants in fulfillment of service contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. | Comply with Service contract with the FSAI (current service contract expires 31/12/2023). Prioritise inspections of high risk premises and local abattoirs. Carry out risk assessments on all approved premises with audits completed as per risk assessments. Carry out agreed sampling program in accordance with Service Plan to include residue samples, chemical additive sampling, microbiological sampling. Ongoing monitoring of Welfare and standards in 11 local abattoirs within the counties. | In line with service contract | Service contract with the FSAI rolled over to March 22nd 2024 from Feb 29th 2024 - Ongoing discussions between CCMA and the LGMA with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the proposed transfer of the Local Authority veterinary service to the department. 95 official control inspections were carried out in 2023. 52 samples were taken for microbiological and chemical safety of food and for the presence of antibiotic, heavy metal and anthelmintic residues, as part of an EC monitoring program. Veterinary Inspectors inspected 11,490 animals (bovine, ovine, caprine) in 9 local abattoirs as well carrying out ante and post-mortem sessions on 2553 birds in poultry establishments. Section currently on 50% resources. |
| | Participate in FSAI and LAVS working groups. Attend and participate in Western Regional Zoonosis Working Group Meetings as well as outbreak control training with other regulatory authorities. | Ongoing | Veterinary Officer is a member of the following working groups: FSAI Food Fraud Working Group, LAVS Standard Operating Procedures WG, CCMA Control of Dogs WG, DAFM Cross Agency Control of Dogs WG, Western Zoonoses Regional Committee |
| | Supervise and organise TVI service in local abattoirs, to include implementation of SOP's in light of changing legislation and maintaining existong standards | Ongoing | A service of 6 TVIs servicing 9 local abattoirs is managed in line with service contract and subject to resources available. |
| | Accurate returns completed and returned to FSAI within criteria set. | Ongoing | All returns completed and returned to FSAI via OAPI as per criteria laid down in service contract |
| | Provide training and advisory services to Start Ups and existing Food Business Operators. Liasie with the the Councils' Economic, Rural and Community Development Section in regards to food sector development in the region. | Ongoing | Startup advice for small food business operators - continued input in to the development of the BIA Hub in Athenry |
| Implement regulatory framework in respect of animal welfare including dog and horse control. | Increase level of dog licencing and microchipping compliance in the county | 31/12/2023 | 5% increase in licencing achieved on 2022 with over 9,144 licences purchased in 2023. Door to door licence/responsible dog ownership campaigns carried out by dog warden/community warden service |
| | Participate in CCMA led National Dog Control Working Group | Ongoing | GCC Veterinary Inspector continued to participate in this working group which fed directly into changes made to Dog Control Legislation in 2023 |
| | Ongoing training for dog wardens/community wardens and review of current SOPs. Protocols in place for interaction with the Council's Housing Section and An Garda Siochana. | Ongoing | National Dog Control Seminar took place in Tullamore on 7 th September and was attended by dog wardens and administrative staff. Presentation given by GCC Veterinary Inspector in regard to GCC's involvement in MADRA's Spay initiative for female dogs in the County, Millie's Fund |
| | Implement national An Garda Siochána / Local Authority Dog Warden Protocol and continue local liaison with nominated Garda inspectorate | Ongoing | Ongoing as required - |
| | Implement the DBE Act through inspections and risk analysis of registered DBE premises. All complaints of DBE's to be followed up. | Ongoing | All registered DBE's in the County were inspected by the dog wardens/veterinary officers in 2023.. All issues arising from inspections followed up on by wardens/veterinary officers. |
| | Continue to promote and support initiatives which assist in ensuring responsible dog ownership across the county | Ongoing | GCC partnered with dog charity MADRA in regard to the launch of a Spay campaign for female dogs in Galway County - This initiative went live in March 2023 and 122 vouchers were issued by 31.12.2023. |

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| | Provide advice and assistance to GCC Housing Section regarding the implementation of Control of Horses Act and also in respect of dog control in local authority properties | Ongoing | Continued liaison as required. GCC veterinary personnel and dog warden service involved in a serious Animal Health & Welfare case in Tuam with assistance from GCC Housing Section and outside agencies the case of which is to be heard in the District Court shortly. |
| | Provide advice and assistance in regards to Animal Welfare/Horse Control/Marine Mammals. Liaise with other agencies as required. Ensure all complaints received are logged and actioned. | Ongoing | Continued co-operation and liaison with DAFM as the central competent authority for animal welfare in regard to the welfare of farmed animals and horse welfare issues. Complaints logged on the Environment database and cross reported as appropriate. 3 marine strandings dealt with in 2023 |
| | Advertise tender for the provision of a Dog shelter facility and related services fro County Galway | 31/04/2023 | Complete - Contract commenced with Cloonmore Kennels with effect from the 7th July 2023 for a period of 3 years |
| | Provide advice and assistance in regards to Animal Welfare/Horse Control/Marine Mammals. Liaise with other agencies as required. Ensure all complaints received are logged and actioned. | Ongoing | All complaints logged and followed up as required. |
| | Oversee Large animal pound in line with legislation (Pounds Act) and liase as necessary with public & external agencies regarding its use e.g. An Garda Siochana, rehoming charities | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Assess all welfare complaints and cross report if necessary to pertinent agency. | Ongoing | Continued assessment of all cases reported and liaison with DAFM in regard to reporting of animal welfare cases where required |
| | Assist the council in intervening in complex situations where large numbers of dogs are kept at a single property i.e. veterinary involvement in removal , assessment, treatment, rehoming, legal guidance surrounding cases | Ongoing | 1 major incident in regard to animal welfare at a property in Tuam where a number of dogs were removed by an outside agency with assistance from the dog warden/veterinary services and the Council's housing section. This operation required major planning and significant veterinary input in terms of legal advice, treatment of the dogs seized and subsequent rehoming of same |
| | Consult with multiple rescue agencies in seeking places for large volumes of stray and unwanted dogs entering the care of Galway County Council | Ongoing | Ongoing - Continued to be a very challenging year for the service in respect of the rehoming of stray and abandoned dogs. Regular liaison with multiple animal welfare |
| Implement the action plan in Galway County Council's adopted Climate Adaptation Strategy to deliver improved resilience to the impacts of climate change at a local level. | In consultation with the relevant departments, review the actions set out in the Climate Adaptation Strategy to determine: Actions that can be progressed in the short term, Actions that cannot be progressed, Actions that should be put forward into the draft Climate Action Plan. | Q3 2023 | Completed - Reviewed and carried forward relevant actions to LACAP |
| Implement with stakeholders the Climate Adaptation Strategy and develop the Climate Mitigation Strategy within the supports offered by the National Climate Action Plan, National Adaptation Framework and Mitigation Plans, and EU funding in Europe 2020. | Prioritise the short-term actions in the Adaptation Strategy and work with relevant departments to progress them. | Ongoing | Completed - Reviewed and carried forward relevant actions to LACAP. The majority of the actions within the Adaptation Plan were outside the remit of the Environment Section. |
| | Manage and support the GCC Climate Action Steering Group and Climate Action Team. Support staff to implement actions and develop leaders across the organisation. | Ongoing | Workshops and meetings held with relevant staff to identify actions for LACAP. |
| | Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and carry out meaningful engagement with all relevant stakeholders. Develop submissions system. | Q2 2023 | Comprehensive stakeholder engagement carried out including pre-draft public survey, Youth Climate Assembly, extensive consultation on draft LACAP |
| | Establish Decarbonisation Zone Steering Group and develop specific Emissions Assessment | Q4 2023 | Completed |
| | Develop draft GCC Climate Action Plan including greenhouse gas emissions and Tier 1 high-level risk assessment, carry out public consultation, develop report on submissions. Appoint consultants and manage SEA/AA process for Climate Action Plan. | Q4 2023 | Completed |

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| | Support the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Program and the development of Energy Master Plans including the community-led County Level Energy Master Plan. | Ongoing | Support ongoing for development of Energy Masterplans for a number of SECs |
| | Implement the Community Climate Action Programme. Work with IT Section to develop system to manage information. | Ongoing | Submission system developed and applications opened. |
| | Cultivate and actively participate in partnerships with enterprise, community, voluntary sectors, third level institutions and the research community to deliver on initiatives that reduce climate impact including the following projects: PPN Green Recovery Group EMP; CONNECTED; LEAP; EMERGE; Cities4Forests; Shared Green Deal | Ongoing | PPN Green Recovery Group - EMP at draft stage CONNECTED - support provided LEAP - member of Steering Group, GFI Energy Agency established and recruitment completed Cities4Forests - draft Timber Policy developed and heads of GPP strategy Shared Green Deal - supported Climate and Agriculture Conference |
| Continue to implement an Energy Efficiency Strategy to deliver a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to meet National and International obligations. | Manage the GCC Energy Team and support the development and implementation of a prioritised work program to ensure energy targets are met. Maximise on the input from the Regional Energy Bureau and the Energy Bureau Officer in developing and delivering the prioritised work program. | Q4 2023 | Comprehensive energy review completed. Buildings prioritised for upgrade. Regional tender for pathfinder projects advertised but not progressed. To be progressed on local level. |
| | Build expertise within the GCC Energy Team by identifying training needs and organising relevant training. | Q4 2023 | Ongoing |
| | Work with the Roads and Transport Dept and regional LAs/CARO to develop a Regional EV Strategy. Support the electrification of the fleet. Support the installation of EV chargers in line with procurement requirements. | Q4 2023 | Applications submitted for four public chargers in Ballinalisoe JTF area. Working group established to progress Regional EV Strategy. To be lead by Donegal Co Co. Strategy expected Q2 2024. |
| | In consultation with the Regional Energy Bureau and regional LAs/CARO put in place an Energy Management System and potentially reapply for ISO50001 if deemed appropriate following review. | Q4 2023 | Background work required to apply for ISO50001 ongoing. Expect to apply for certification by Q4 2024. |
| | Explore and develop opportunities to build and strengthen partnerships with Third Level Institutes promoting cross-sectoral communication and cooperation in the pursuit and implementation of appropriate Energy / Emission Projects. | Ongoing | Limited work in this area in 2023. |
| To provide a fire and rescue service focused on protecting its personnel, the public, property and the environment. | Ensure effective response to all emergencies meeting KPI's in terms of "mobilisation" times and "in attendance" | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Ensure ongoing training of Fire Service personnel to keep up to date with new fire fighting methodologies, and refresh skills on an ongoing basis. | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| | Role out Fire engineering training for fire fighting personnel to give them a greater appreciation of building design and enable them better understand how fire will develop and how best to halt that development | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| To ensure that Major Emergencies can be safely and effectively dealt with in collaboration with our partner Principle Response Agencies (PRA). | Review County Council MEP, train key response personnel and review external emergency plans in accordance with the Frammwork for Major Emergency Management and the Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 | Rolling cycle | Achieved and ongoing |
| Review and implement Fire and Emergency Operations Plan. | Develop new Fire and Emergency Operations Plan 2023 - 2027 | Q2 2023 | Ongoing |
| Implement with stakeholders the Climate Adaption Strategy and develop the Climate Mitigation Strategy within the supports offered by the National Climate Action Plan, National Adaption Framework and Mitigation Plans, and EU funding in Europe 2020. | Investigate the procurement of low carbon emmision tools, equipment and vehicles when replacing existing equipment or purchasing new equipment | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Continue to pursue reductions in energy use through initiatives such as street lighting replacement, flood management and electric charging point provision. | Public Lighting Replacement programme - tender for P.L. retrofit - facilitate Mayo CoCo as Lead Authority | Tender award expected in Q1 2023 | Tender award subject to legal challenge. Process delayed and contract did not commence in 2023 |

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| Minimise impact on the environment from Galway County Council activities including energy efficiency measures and reduced carbon emissions. | All of these supporting strategies are supported by the work of the Councils operations teams in conjunction with Irish Water under the Annual Service Plan. | Ongoing - Compliance with relevant KPIs set out by Irish Water in the Annual Service Plan | Ongoing |
| Continue to implement an Energy Efficiency Strategy to deliver a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to meet National and International obligations. | | | Ongoing |
| Support Irish Water in leak detection and promotion of water conservation to minimise wastage. | | | Ongoing |
| Protection and Improvement of Water Quality and Catchment Management. | | | Ongoing |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Provide an efficient, effective and equitable planning service. | NOAC Performance Indicator: P4: Cost per Capita of the Planning Service. | Ongoing |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Ensure that decision-making is carried out in a open and transparent manner that supports public participation and confidence in the planning process. | Update online planning application system within 24 working hours of decision. Avail of the consult.ie platform for all public consultation during 2023. | Achieved and ongoing Achieved |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Operate a Development Management System in compliance with legislative and policy requirements including the processing of all planning applications, appeals, declarations, extension of duration applications and Part 8's within statutory timeframes. | NOAC Performance Indicator: P2: Number/% of Planning Decisions confirmed by An Bord Pleanála. | Achieved - 80% confirmed by An Bord Pleanála |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Operate an enforcement system to monitor, investigate and take appropriate enforcement action. | NOAC Performance Indicator: P3: % of Planning Enforcement cases closed as resolved. | Achieved |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: To develop an effective and responsive local planning policy framework within legislative and policy requirements. Organise meetings of the Planning, Environment, Agriculture and Emergency Services SPC during 2023 | Minimum of 4 meetings. | Achieved |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Progress the Garraun URDF Project in partnership with Irish Rail as appropriate to include: 1. Railway Infrastructure Upgrades to include a 1km passing railway loop at existing Oranmore Train Station, including additional platform and associated infrastructure. 2. Design of a local centre (at Oranmore Train Station) and lands south of the train station to include a detailed design of the local centre; associated carpark (existing) (architectural/structural engineering detail) and landscaping plan (for public use). 3.A study on the Design Development of Typologies to implement the adopted Urban Framework Plan. | RFT for 2 - Q1 2023 Planning Application for 1 - Q2 2023 | Ongoing in conjunction with Iarnród Éireann |

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| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | <p>Planning & Sustainable Development:</p> <p>Facilitate the preparation of draft, supplementary and final maps for the purposes of the Residential Zoned Land Tax including public consultation and support for the related statutory appeals process.</p> | In accordance with relevant statutory timeframes. | Achieved and ongoing as required |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | <p>Planning and Sustainable Development:</p> <p>Commence the preparation of Local Area Plans for Tuam, Athenry, Loughrea and Gort.</p> | Complete within statutory timeframes following commencement of the process. | Tuam, Athenry & Loughrea commenced. Athenry adopted in 2023. Gort-screening only |
| Secure the sustainable development of the county through the review and implementation of the County Development Plan. | <p>Planning and Sustainable Development:</p> <p>Promote awareness of historic buildings and places and the traditional skills and materials necessary to secure their survival into the future.</p> <p>Apply for funding under the Historic Structures Fund and the Built Heritage Investment Scheme.</p> | Number of funding applications submitted. | Historic Structures fund applications in 2023=14, Built Heritage Investment Scheme applications in 2023 = 28. |
| Protect and maintain the natural environment of the county and implement the actions of our Biodiversity Plan, supported by the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 and subsequent plans. | <p>Planning and Sustainable Development:</p> <p>Create an awareness, knowledge and pride in the natural environment of the county and plan for its protection and maintenance by commencing the preparation of the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2023-2030.</p> <p>Promote National Biodiversity Week 2023.</p> | <p>Plan Adopted by December 2023.</p> <p>Number of events held, facilitated or promoted.</p> | <p>Process of developing the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024 - 2030 commenced in Q3 2023 with online pre-draft public consultation and policy review.</p> <p>Biodiversity Week 2023 was promoted and Galway County Council ran a series of 6 in-person events around the county.</p> |
| Protect and enhance the natural and built environment by implementation of our Heritage Plan. | <p>Planning & Sustainable Development:</p> <p>Promote and advise on the Built Heritage in the County of Galway.</p> <p>Promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of our diverse archaeological resource.</p> <p>Complete Heritage Council funded projects.</p> <p>Apply for funding under the Community Monuments Fund 2023</p> <p>Promote National Heritage Week 2023.</p> | <p>Number of projects undertaken during 2023.</p> <p>Complete Heritage Council projects by December 2023.</p> <p>Number of funding applications submitted.</p> | <p>Galway County Council ran a series of events around the county for National Heritage Week and supported local community groups in organising and running their own events for the week.</p> <p>Heritage Stewardship Fund, Heritage Plan Projects, CMF Projects & Decade of Centenaries Projects Funding Applied for and projects delivered.</p> |
| Ensure provision of safe and sustainable buildings within the county through effective implementation and monitoring of Building Control Regulations. | <p>Planning & Sustainable Development:</p> <p>To ensure safe and sustainable buildings by meeting the minimum target (15%) for inspections within statutory timeframes.</p> | <p>NOAC Performance Indicator:</p> <p>P1: New Buildings Inspected</p> | Achieved - 14.60% |
| To promote and support use of the Irish language and recognise its unique contribution to the cultural diversity of our county. | <p>Galway Public Libraries:</p> <p>Continued commitment to the provision of services in the Irish language</p> | <p>Proactive purchasing of Irish language books for distribution within the library branch network.</p> <p>Provision of event programming throughout the year in the Irish language.</p> <p>Provision of class novels through the schools' library network.</p> | Achieved and ongoing |

Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023

STRATEGIC GOAL: QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

"To ensure that quality customer service is at the centre of everything we do"

| SUPPORTING STRATEGY | BUSINESS PLAN ACTION | TARGET DATE | Outcome |
|--|--|---|---|
| Support the introduction and implementation of ePlanning. | Planning & Sustainable Development: Continue to promote ePlanning to agents and all customers in order to maximise the numbers of planning applications made electronically, providing a quality customer service and achieving operational efficiencies. | Minimum of 70% of relevant planning applications to be submitted via ePlanning during 2023. | Achieved |
| Optimise service delivery and customer care through the review and implementation of our Customer Charter and Code of Conduct. | Implement Customer Charter and Code of Conduct | Daily | Ongoing |
| Review and implement our Customer Services Action Plan. | Continue to implement the Customer Service Action Plan in line with targets as set out in Quality Customer Services Strategy. | Daily | Ongoing |
| Provide efficient services to our customers both internal and external in an equitable and courteous manner. | Sustain a consistent incoming call answer rate on our Main Phone Number (091) 509000 throughout the working day | Minimum 90% call answer of less than 25 seconds | Ongoing |
| | Acknowledge all correspondence (letter and email) | Within 5 working days | Ongoing |
| | Endeavour to reply to all correspondence (letter and email) | Within 15 working days | Ongoing |
| | Number of complaints upheld by the Office of the Ombudsman | Less than 5 | Notifications received to date: 1 upheld, 2 partially upheld (Awaiting Ombudsman Annual Report 2023 for final figure) |
| | Number of followers on Twitter @GalwayCoCo | 20,000 | 16594 |
| | Number of followers on Instagram @GalwayCoco | 300 | 833 |
| | Number of followers on Facebook (Galway County) | 17,500 | 15687 |
| | Number of Website Page Views | 1,500,000 | 910268 |

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS/COUNCIL OFFICES

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Chief Executive: Liam Conneally

HOUSING & UKRAINIAN RESPONSE

Director of Services: Michael Owens

Senior Executive Officers, Housing: Patrick Gerard Scully
Carmel Kilcoyne

Administrative Officer, Housing: Nuala Heffernan, Angela Spelman

Senior Social Worker: Kieran Keon

Senior Engineer: Damien Mitchell

Senior Executive Engineers: Eithne Murphy
Kevin Murphy
Daithi Flood (Acting)

INFRASTRUCTURE & OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Director of Services: Uinsinn Finn

Administrative Officers: Geraldine Byrne, Edel Hourigan

Senior Engineers: Rachel Lowe
Sean Devaney (acting)
Tom Prendergast

Senior Executive Engineers: Aengus Breathnach
Sean Breathnach

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|---|----------------------------|
| | Enda Gallagher |
| | Derek Troy |
| | Gerard Haugh |
| | Paraic Breathnach |
| | John Coyle |
| | Paula Higgins |
| | Sean Whelan |
| | Stephen Lally (Acting) |
| | TJ Redmond (Acting) |
| Chief Technician: | Enda Thompson |
| | John Maloney |
| Administrative Officer, Water Services: | Enda Moloney |
| Senior Engineer, Water Services: | Eoin McHugh (Acting) |
| | Fergal O’Sullivan (Acting) |
| | Martina Connaughton |
| | Mike Sheil |
| | Anne Marie Johnston |
| Safety Advisor/Health & Safety Officer: | Joanne King (Acting) |

AREA ENGINEERS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Municipal District Ballinasloe: | Paul Batty |
| | Philip McLynn |
| Municipal District Loughrea/Portumna: | John Coyle |
| Municipal District Loughrea (Gort): | Niall Kennedy |
| Municipal District Athenry/Oranmore: | Peter Gavin |
| Municipal District Tuam: | Tom Regan |
| Municipal District Conamara: | T.J. Redmond |

Chief Fire Officer: Gerry O'Malley

Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officers:
Antony Travers
Gearoid Blake
Joseph Kelly
Paul G. Duffy

Civil Defence Officer: Brendan Qualter

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

Director of Services: Liam Hanrahan

Senior Planner: Valerie Loughnane

Senior Executive Planners:
Saoirse Kennedy
Brendan Dunne (Acting)
Eimear O'Doherty (Acting)

Administrative Officer, Planning: Eileen Keaveney

Heritage Officer: Marie Mannion

Conservation Officer: Mairin Doddy

Senior Executive Engineer, ERCD: Ciaran Wynne

CORPORATE SERVICES AND COMMUNITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A/Director of Services: Jean Brann

Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services: Liadhan Keady

A/Administrative Officer, Corporate Services: Úna Ni Eidhin

Administrative Officer, Corporate Services: Vacant

Rapid Co-ordinator: Kieran Coyne

Arts Officer: Sharon O'Grady (Temporary)

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sports Co-ordinator: | Andrew McBride |
| County Librarian: | Josephine Vahey (Acting) |
| Senior Executive Librarians: | Siobhan Arkins |
| | Una Kelly (Acting) |
| Buildings & Facilities Manager: | Kevin Finn |
| Law Agent: | Robert Meehan |
| Senior Executive Solicitors: | Angela Casey |
| | Anne McCormack |
| Executive Solicitors: | Dermot Caslin |
| | Michael O'Doherty |
| Internal Auditor: | Eibhlin Curran |

FINANCE UNIT

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Head of Finance: | Katie O'Connor |
| Financial Accountant: | Áine Fenton |
| Management Accountant: | Michael McGovern |
| Administrative Officers: | Margaret Jordan |
| | Ita Martyn |

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN RESOURCES & INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Director of Services: | Eileen Ruane |
| Senior Executive Officer, Human Resources: | Niamh Farrell |
| Administrative Officer, Environment: | Maria Flynn |
| Administrative Officer, Human Resources: | Vacant |

Administrative Officer, Human Resources:

Johanna Roche

Head of Information Systems:

Michael Martyn

Senior Executive Engineer, Environment:

Mike Melody

Climate Change Co-Ordinator:

Christina Ryan

County Veterinary Inspector:

Joanne Perry



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe

Galway County Council

www.galway.ie/www.gaillimh.ie * www.twitter.com/galwaycoco * www.facebook.com/galwaycounty
email: customerservices@galwaycoco.ie

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday 9:00am - 4:00pm

OFFICE LOCATION

Headquarters

Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

091 509000

The following offices are located
in Áras an Chontae

| | |
|--|------------|
| Housing Applications | 091 509200 |
| Housing Loans & Grants | 091 509301 |
| Human Resources | 091 509303 |
| Motor Taxation | 091 509099 |
| Planning | 091 509303 |
| Roads, Transportation & Marine | 091 509309 |
| Rates | 091 509171 |
| Register of Electors | 091 509310 |
| Freedom of Information & Access to Information on the Environment | 091 509319 |
| Casual Trading | 091 509327 |
| Local Enterprise Office | 091 509090 |

The following offices are located at
Centrepoin, Liosbaun, Tuam Road
Galway

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Environment | 091 509510 |
| Water Services | 091 509505 |
| Community & Enterprise | 091 509521 |
| Business Response Unit | 091 509521 |
| Arts Office | 091 509521 |
| Social Inclusion | 091 509521 |

The following office is located at
Corporate House, Ballybrit, Galway

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| National Roads Project Office | 091 509594 |
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AREA OFFICES

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Athenry/Oranmore | 091 509088 |
| Ballinsloe | 091 509074 |
| Conamara South | 091 509060 |
| Conamara North | 091 509095 |
| Tuam | 091 509011 |

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|----------------|-------------|
| Gort | 091 509065 |
| Portumna | 090 9741019 |
| Loughrea | 091 509166 |

FIRE BRIGADES

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|---|--------------------------|
| Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden Galway City, Gort, Inis Mór Loughrea, Mountbellew Portumna and Tuam Civil Defence Officer | 999 or 112 091 570940 |
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LIBRARIES

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Headquarters, Galway | 091 509388 |
| Galway City Branch | 091 509594 |
| Ballybane | 091 509244 |
| Westside | 091 509091 |
| An Cheathrú Rua | 091 595733 |
| Athenry | 091 845592 |
| Ballinasloe | 0909 643464 |
| Ballygar | 090 66249199 |
| Clifden | 095 21092 |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Dunmore | 093 38923 |
| Eyrecourt | 090 9675056 |
| Glenamaddy | 094 9659734 |
| Gort | 091 631224 |
| Headford | 093 36406 |
| Inis Meáin | 099 73126 |
| Inis Oírr | 099 75154 |
| Inishbofin | 095 45891 |
| Killimor | 090 9676062 |
| Kilronan | 099 20937 |
| Leenane | 095 42920 |
| Letterfrack | 091 742666 |
| Loughrea | 091 847220 |
| Moylough | 090 9679072 |
| Oranmore | 091 792117 |
| Oughterard | 091 557002 |
| Portumna | 090 9741261 |
| Roundstone | 095 35518 |
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