

## Job creation is main concern for voters

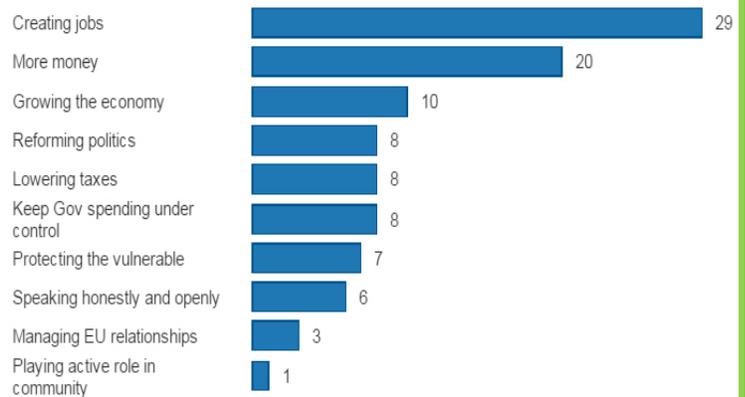


Poll shows that job creation is the most important issue for people ahead of the next election (Irish Times 30<sup>th</sup> March page 2). Creating jobs, putting more money in people's pockets and growing economy are the issues that will decide which party people will vote for at the next election according to latest Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI poll. Job creation easily outstrips all other issues, but the top three relate to the economy. *(Stephen Collins political editor Irish Times)*

For more info visit [www.irishtimes.ie](http://www.irishtimes.ie)

### What are you most concerned about?

I am most concerned about (%) ...



Source: [The Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI](http://The Irish Times/Ipsos MRBI) [Get the data](#)

### CCJ/GMIT/Galway Co. Board/Croke Park Community Development Committee

A meeting to plan the roll out of pilot jobs programme in Co. Galway was held at Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) 23/03/2015



**Back row:** Thomas Farrell (Croke Park Committee), John Hynes (Sec. Galway GAA), Seamus Goggin (CCJ)  
**Front row:** Senan Cooke (Sec. CCJ), Ivan McPhillips (GMIT), Deirdre Lusby (GMIT), Noel Treacy (Chair. Galway

### CCJ Membership Update

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following to the membership of CCJ - **GMIT Galway/Mayo, Waterford City & County Council, Waterford Leader Partnership (WLP), South West Mayo Development Company, Kilmacthomas Community Meitheal Co. Waterford, JH Public Affairs Ltd. Dublin, DCU, Waterford IT, Limerick IT, U-Casadh Ltd. Co Kilkenny** and to groups and organisations who have expressed interest in joining and working with us.

**2015 membership is now due for renewal!**

Interested groups/organisations/businesses or individuals can sign up or renew via PayPal on our website [www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie) or contact Seamus Goggin -CCJ Membership Officer. Phone: (0353) 51-396623/ Email: [ccj@dunhillecopark.com](mailto:ccj@dunhillecopark.com)



# CCJ Editorial



Ireland contains many communities with jobs/enterprise focused projects at various stages of development. There are also many other communities who don't know how/where to start on this enterprise creation journey and as time progresses these areas become significantly less resilient to the many external negative forces which impact on society.

CCJ has developed an action template approach to addressing this issue, complete with a suite of resource-based tools. These will be of benefit to all communities but particularly to those without any active enterprise or job-creating projects. The CCJ tools will assist communities firstly to audit their area and identify unused/underutilised assets (including their people), secondly to harness ideas which exist within their community, and thirdly to link these two by the use of volunteer mentors. In addition CCJ provides a web-based networking platform so that communities at all stages of development and across the island of Ireland can learn from one another. The ultimate goal is job creation, initiated primarily by and through communities themselves with the main objective of creating 10 jobs per community by December 2020.

One role of CCJ is to facilitate (in as-

sociation with the GAA and other organisations), the identification of leaders from within each participating community, who will manage the CCJ process at a micro level. This will be done via a group within the community who have agreed to become members of CCJ, either by setting up a new organisation and adopting the constitution of CCJ, or by setting up a sub-committee of an existing organisation and signing a MoU to adhere to CCJ principles. I am heartened to be able to say that our pilot phase of this work with four chosen communities is on target to be complete by June of this year. (This will be an important milestone for CCJ as it will then be in a position to offer tangible results to all communities on the island). In return they will receive peer support at a macro level in terms of strategic guidance on CCJ processes, participation in a supportive District structure, sign posting, additional networking, contacts, best practice ideas and representation to Government on behalf of community-based enterprise. I am glad to be able to announce the appointment of two of our most distinguished directors, Ciaran Lynch and Senan Cooke, onto the government's Expert Advisory Group on the implementation of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).

CCJ do not endeavour to replicate the work of existing agencies, but rather equip communities with knowledge and with help through an active network which facilitates the development of connections with other communities which have a level of experience/success. This is aimed at using the voluntary resources which exist within communities to develop potential enterprises to a stage where they are agency or investment-ready.

The second role of CCJ is to recruit those organizations and institutions with appropriate resources and know-how and which are committed to the vision of CCJ to join us as special members. What is asked of them is that they are committed to helping communities create jobs. Amongst the organisations which have both provided and offered such practical help are Limerick IT, DCU, Waterford Co Council, the GAA, WDC, Athlone Institute of Technology and Udaras na Gaeltachta.

The third role of CCJ is to provide its activities with legitimacy and credibility by recruiting as patrons notable individuals who support its approach.

(Donal Traynor - CCJ Chairman/Director)  
More info at [www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)

## CCJ Patrons



**Gillian Hussey**

Retired Judge  
Joined 2013



**Steve Redmond**

7 Ocean Swimmer  
Joined 2014



**Sean Kelly MEP**

Joined Sat 4th  
April 2015



[www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)

## Two CCJ directors appointed to key Government Group on Rural Policy



Minister Alan Kelly T.D. and Minister Ann Phelan T.D. announced the establishment of an 'Expert Advisory Group' to assist in the development of rural development policy and in the implementation of the Government's CEDRA report. Ciaran Lynch director and Senan Cooke director and secretary of CCJ representing different policy areas in rural development are members of the Advisory Group.

### Members of the group include:

- Pat Spillane – Chairman Kerry
- Dr Edmund Harty, MD Dairymaster
- Mr Pat McDonagh MD Supermacs
- Mr Chris Marin CEO Musgrave's Group
- Ms Helen Carroll, Journalist 'Ear to the Ground'
- Mr Pat Gallagher County Manager Westmeath Co Council
- Mr Ciaran Lynch, Development Manager Limerick Institute of Technology, Thurles.
- Dr Maura Farrell MA Rural Sustainability NUI Galway
- Dr Senan Cooke, Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd, Co. Waterford.



Ann Phelan



Alan Kelly



Pat Spillane

### The role of the group is as follows:

1. Provide independent oversight, advice and support to the Minister for Environment Community and Local Government and Minister for State for Rural Affairs as required in the context of the Departments work in supporting the implementation of recommendations of the CEDRA report.
2. Provide independent advice, support and specialist expertise as it relates to the priority areas identified in the CEDRA report to the Minister for the Environment Community and local Government and the Minister for State for Rural Affairs
3. Make recommendations as appropriate regarding the work/progress of the CEDRA IDG to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government and the Minister of State for Rural Affairs
4. Provide independent oversight, advice and support to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and/or Minister of State for Rural Affairs.

The Advisory Group has been appointed for 12 months to meet once per month. Its role and relevance will be reviewed at the end of that term. Minister Ann Phelan TD who is responsible for the implementation of the CEDRA report chairs a high-level Interdepartmental Group of senior officials of Government Departments. These include departments whose policy areas have a significant direct or indirect impact on the economic development of rural Ireland and are critical to achieving a co-ordinated delivery of the CEDRA recommendations.

In order to maintain strong links with the people in rural Ireland who are directly involved in or have a strong interest in the economic development of rural areas the 'Expert Advisory Group' has been set up to monitor progress and provide advice in respect of the implementation of the recommendations.

## LEADER Programme Prioritises Enterprise and Jobs (250m)

Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Alan Kelly T.D. stated at the launch of Leader Programme (2014-2020) in Loughmore Cafe, Co. Tipperary on Monday 21st March that the new programme (€250m funding) would focus on the development of local enterprise and the renewal of villages (communities). Minister for State for Rural Affairs Ann Phelan T.D. jointly launched the programme. Her main responsibility is to implement the 34 recommendations of the CEDRA report aimed at the regeneration of communities in rural Ireland.

The Minister stated that the EU programme 2020 will focus on tackling rural isolation, generating employment and stimulating village renewal. Creating new employment opportunities has to be the priority.

The 'Communities Creating Jobs' model has the capacity to contribute to the achievement of this goal. There are so many areas with growth potential with every village / community operating in different contexts, circumstances, resources, needs and opportunities. Many communities/ villages need to provide for childcare, elderly care, retail, hospitality, recreation, tourism, small business development, heritage, environment, transport and other areas. Leader and Co Enterprise Boards have assisted many communities to achieve significant progress since 1991 when they were first established. The 2014-2020 programme is geared to add a new dynamic to village renewal, in particular in those villages experiencing the worst effects of the financial crisis. The next round of funding should help make a real difference to communities/villages countrywide. CCJ hopes that the Leader Partnership companies with their record of successful engagement with communities will continue to be a core part of the delivery of the LEADER programme. Their experience will allow the new funding programme to hit the ground running and build on the progress already made.



Minister for the Environment with Mary Fogarty from Cottage Café in Loughmore village Co. Tipperary

## Dept. of JEI launches 5 year plan to accelerate jobs growth

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has created a €250m fund to be invested over 5yrs to accelerate jobs growth in small towns and villages. The Department is also developing Regional Enterprise Strategies which will reflect the strengths of the different regions.

A key criteria for the success of these strategies will be the requirement for key stakeholders to work collaboratively across the region. These plans and their implementation will be monitored on an ongoing basis. A framework document can be found at <http://www.enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/A-Framework-for-the-development-of-Regional-Enterprise-Strategies.pdf>

The objective of the new initiative is to strengthen and develop job creation in the regions by encouraging local authorities, regional bodies, higher education institutions other public bodies, the private sector and **COMMUNITIES** to come forward with innovative ideas to boost job creation in their area.

The Department of JEI will work with regions in identifying regional strengths, assets and areas of competitive advantage as well as new approaches in order to support businesses to start-up, succeed, expand and export. An Action Plan will then be developed for each region to help achieve in shared ambition and objectives.

# Implementation of JEI Action Plan for Small Towns and Villages

## THE 15-POINT PLAN

to boost business growth and job creation in towns and villages

Published by the Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Introduce grant relief schemes to encourage businesses to take up vacant properties on high streets.</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Consider rate cuts for small, independent businesses in town and city centres.</p> 	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Ease the burden on businesses of upward-only rents.</p> 	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Vary commercial rates to take account of the size and scope of businesses to make them fairer and more flexible.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Enhance public awareness of the Government's trading online voucher scheme, to boost the number of companies doing business via the internet.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Local Enterprise Offices and Chambers of Commerce should provide further training on sales and benefits of social media.</p> 	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Continued engagement between banks and government on charges levied on businesses for banking services.</p> 	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Co-ordinated campaign to encourage businesses to switch energy providers.</p> 	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>Tourism Ireland should strongly market towns and cities as shopping destinations.</p> 	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>Widespread roll out of Town Teams Model, to bring joined up thinking in town centres involving LEOs, Chambers of Commerce and others.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p> <p>Business improvement district model should be more widely adopted in towns.</p> 	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Introduce a High Street Innovation Fund, providing funding to local authorities to carry out improvement and regeneration projects.</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Free parking periods for several hours during a day in town and village centres.</p> 	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Wider use of strategic policing operations in urban and town centres.</p> 	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>Encourage high-visibility policing in town centres and shopping districts.</p>



Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (JEI) published a report on the 30th March 2015 containing a 15 point action plan. The plan is aimed at regenerating small towns and villages badly hit by the recession. The content of the plan results from widespread consultation with a broad range of stakeholders who made submissions at public hearings of the Oireachtas Jobs Committee. (July-September 2014) The implementation of the Action Plan is expected to make a substantial difference to local economies.

## News from the Irish Social Enterprise Network - Bigger, better website



At the Irish Social Enterprise Network we are expanding and improving our website [www.socent.ie](http://www.socent.ie) especially the resources page. This is in response to the very many enquiries and requests for assistance that we receive from people wishing to set up and develop a social enterprise.

The resources page now includes links to a plethora of websites, toolkits, guidance notes and other resources relating to setting up companies and non-profits. Topics include “getting started”, governance, HR, business planning, financial management, procurement, measuring impact, employment, and much more. The aim is to bring together in one place the many resources that are available online but are not always easy to find. Or, indeed, to know what is relevant to social enterprises.

We have published the improved website while it is still a work in progress. We expect to add more links, introductions, text and explanations over time. Your readers are invited to visit and revisit regularly, and to send in their suggestions for additions at [info@socent.ie](mailto:info@socent.ie)

### Social enterprise event



Kyle Dubé

The next event of the Irish Social Enterprise Network will be on 7 May 2015. Our invited guest speaker will be Kyle Dubé from Edmonton Alberta. Kyle manages You Can youth services that works with at risk youth. We have asked him to talk about You Can's social enterprise venture Verto that provides supervised work crews, while providing jobs to young people and helping them get into mainstream employment. In 2014 Verto was expecting to hire 150 young people and to turn over around \$600,000.

The event will be held early evening at a venue in Dublin. See our website, Facebook page and LinkedIn pages for further information and booking details nearer the day. Places are of course limited. ISEN evening events are usually informal. This year we are requesting pre-bookers to contribute a small sum at the door to cover venue and refreshment costs (pizza and beer are our style): €5 for pre-bookers and €10 for turning up unbooked.



[www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)

## Scandinavian students learn about enterprise in Waterford City and County

From March 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> over 40 Norwegian and Swedish students and 4 teachers visited Waterford City and County at the invitation of the Local Enterprise Office's Ciaran Cullen. The students (18-19 years olds) are studying a 3-year entrepreneurship program. This is the students' 3<sup>rd</sup> and last year and the Irish visit is the highlight of their year.

A full and varied itinerary was planned for the group including visits to Dunhill Ecopark, WIT, historical venues such as the Medieval Museum and on Tuesday March 25<sup>th</sup> they attended an historical and business seminar. Held at the Garden Room in the Medieval Museum, the seminar included speeches by Donnchadh O Ceallachain, of Waterford Treasures, Ciaran Cullen from Waterford Local Enterprise Office and the Norwegian Embassy Counsellor, Sølve Steinhovden on Irish/Norwegian trade relations over the 1,100 years that Waterford has been a city.



Marianne Sandvik, Knut Langsjøen, Thomas Hjelm, Ciaran Cullen, LEO Waterford, Maja Junkka

The trip culminated in a dinner in Dooley's Hotel on the Wednesday evening hosted by the Local Enterprise Office. The menu for this dinner was sourced principally from local foods and constituted a 'celebration' of Waterford food production.



Scandinavian students

This is the sixth year Waterford City Enterprise Board and now Local Enterprise Office has hosted a Norwegian student group. Ciaran Cullen emphasized the importance of the visit, "We spent a number of years developing friendships with Norway and hosting student groups. This is the third year Swedish students have also travelled. Our approach to enterprise development is a good example to the students and their enterprise teachers, and we have much to learn from them also."

The group took particular interest and learned much from visiting some of the Enterprise Office's clients. These included a trip to the Kite Studios, Spraoi and Emerald Crystal where they learned how local enterprises start, grow and competed on a national and international stage. The most fun had to be the visit to WIT and TSSG where they partook in a 'start your own business' Pizza game, discovering the pitfalls and various stages of business growth.

The Swedish teacher, Tomas Hjelm described the importance of the visit, "I am delighted we have made this study visit a permanent fixture for our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade entrepreneurship class. Ireland is in many ways similar to our Scandinavian countries. Our students need to learn that ours is a small country on the edge of Europe, and we depend heavily of the rest of Europe and the world. Not many have been to Ireland before, so this will open their eyes to what Ireland has to offer." The group returned home on Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>, tired from a full schedule but having learned much about Ireland and Waterford's entrepreneurial challenges and skills.

C.S. Laird Ltd (Caleb Shera Laird ) built a Jam factory in Drumshanbo in 1935 providing badly needed employment for approx. 20 people at that time . This was not his first enterprise however as he took over his father's grocery business in 1900 at the age of 20. Caleb Laird in 1904 then decided to establish an Electricity Generating station in the village based on the millrace system to supply light to the area. This opened in 1905 and continued for 50 years until the ESB acquired it under the Rural Electrification Scheme of that era. He was also involved in the milling sector having established his own mill in 1908. His entrepreneurial skills also resulted in the setting up of two Creameries, one in Drumshanbo and one in Ballinamore in 1913. In the early 1930's he built a Garage and was an agent for Bedford Trucks and Morris and Austin cars.



However the legacy of the Laird family was the Jam Factory built in 1935. They produced a range of 21 flavours of jams & marmalades under the "Breffini Blossom" label. This Brand continued until the early 1950' when they launched the well known "Bo Peep" brand which became a serious competitor in the sector both on the home and export markets throughout the 70's and 80s. In fact by the end of 1970's Lairds were the largest exporters of jams and marmalades from Ireland. Raymond Laird ( Caleb's son ) took over as Managing Director in the early nineteen fifties and spearheaded the expansion of the jam business on the home and export markets.

This success resulted in the building of a new 32,000 Sq. Ft Factory in 1983 - a brave decision in difficult economic times. In 1988 following approaches from Food Industries Plc the family sold the company, thus ending Lairds' long association with Drumshanbo going back almost three hundred years. Food Industries subsequently sold the business to Kepak Meats in 1992 but they regrettably closed the facility in 1997.

The factory lay idle for almost 6 years and was falling into dereliction due to poor maintenance. At this point Drumshanbo Community Council Ltd - a voluntary body - decided to try and acquire the building. We knew that there was no prospect of one operator taking over such a large space and we decided to get a developer in to buy the factory and adjoining lands and we then signed a long lease on the premises. This was in 2003 and we applied for planning permission to renovate the factory and to convert the space into smaller food grade units.



The Food Hub

Permission was granted in early 2004 and we then applied for funding to implement our plan. We managed to access over time a

total of €1.7m from a multiplicity of funders and we completed the project in late 2006. Thus the Food Hub was born!

We now had nine food grade units and a Community Kitchen ready for small and medium sized food and drink producers. The units vary in size from 500 to 5000 sq. ft. and the conditions laid down by the funders clearly stated that only food and drink manufacturers could be accommodated.

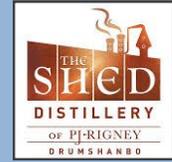
Our first Tenant was Lough Allen Foods who moved in in 2007 producing chilled ready meals for the retail trade. They were taken over in 2014 by Chef in a Box and thankfully still operate from the Food Hub. This venture, together with the Community Kitchen, helped us to keep " our heads above water " during the difficult years that followed.

The kitchen in particular ( area 2500 square feet ) was a huge success, as Fas ( now Solas ) have taken it for 10 months each year since 2008 to train cooks & chefs for the hospitality industry.

It is a matter of great pride to me personally to see the facility fully occupied with food & drink producers. I worked for the Laird Family as Sales & Marketing Manager from 1964 - 1989.

Currently we have the following companies producing their products for the home and ultimately the export markets in the Food Hub;

- ~ McNiffes Bakery / Boxy & bread manufactures
- ~ Chef in a Box /Ready meal producers
- ~ The Cheese Hub
- ~ Bo-Peep Preserves Ltd
- ~ Carrig Brewery / Craft beer producers
- ~ PJ Rigney International Distillers/Spirit producers
- ~ Community Kitchen
- ~ Red Robin Foods / Manufacturing confectionery products for the restaurant trade)



We now have over 50 people working in the Food Hub and we are currently moving into phase 2 development.

In conclusion our experiences have proven the power of local communities coming together to make local business success stories happen. More info at [www.thefoodhub.ie](http://www.thefoodhub.ie)



- (1) First price list & flavours produced in 1936 - (Breffni Blossom)
- (2) Advert in Business & Finance magazine 1977
- (3) Product display new factory 1983
- (4) Official opening of new factory in Sept 1983 by Minister for Industry & Commerce Mr. John Bruton
- (5) Connacht Business Achievers Award Ulster Bank Winners Oct 2014
- (6) The Ulster Bank Business achievers award National Winners Dec 2014



# Business Development in Piltown Co. Kilkenny



Piltown Community Enterprise was founded in 1988 to promote industry and employment in our Parish. Projects promoted by the Board include the development of the Enterprise Centre, Fiddown, completion of The Parish Plan, organising and running information evenings and courses throughout South Kilkenny aimed at equipping individuals with the skills required to develop their businesses.

Piltown GAA in conjunction with prominent members of the business community and local organisations decided in 1988 to organise and launch a Start Your Own Business Competition. This competition helped to create an enterprise culture within the Parish, and was instrumental in the foundation of Piltown Community Enterprise which led to the development of the Enterprise Centre in Fiddown.

The Centre offered space and assistance to a wide variety of start-up businesses. The group helped people in setting up and developing their own businesses. There was such a high demand that an extension was added after two years.



Enterprise Centre Fiddown

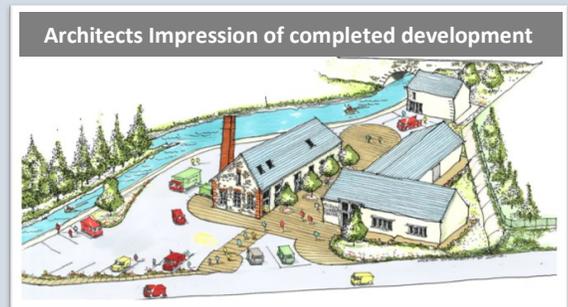


Old Creamery Building

By 2002 job creation was no longer the issue. The Centre's existing tenant, T. Butler Engineering, then occupied two-thirds of the premises. Times were changing and Tom Butler approached the Board of PCEC with a proposal to purchase the Centre. The sale was agreed and this successful, business and the 15 jobs it created were kept in the Piltown area. This centre is still thriving today. It houses two other small businesses as well as T Butler Engineering.

The site of the old creamery in Piltown was then purchased, from the proceeds of sale, with a view to establishing future enterprise units. In the following years many proposals have been put forward and plans discussed but not proceeded with.

Then, in 2011, with job creation again becoming an issue in the community, Piltown Community Enterprise undertook the task of renovating this building and of creating incubating units. Due to its historical and heritage value the tall chimney on the Old Creamery Building and part of the structure had to be maintained which posed additional problems and costs. It was, therefore, decided to tackle this project in two phases. Stage 1 would be the existing old building with the chimney, stage two would be a single storey new build to the front and a two storey building to the rear of site.



Architects Impression of completed development

An application was submitted to Kilkenny LEADER Partnership and funding of €178,000 was approved in early 2014. The Board then started the difficult task of raising the necessary matching funds to complete the project. Our first fundraising event was a Festival of Motorsport held in July 2014 in conjunction with Carrick on Suir Motor Club and South East Radiotherapy Trust. It was supported by the whole community, many of whom got actively involved both beforehand and on the day. The sun shone and the crowds came from all over the country. It was a tremendous success. Since then the Board and volunteers have been active in the staging and organisation of various events from Christmas Craft Fair to coffee morning, from a Family Fun Day to a Clay Pigeon Shoot.

These events together with donations received from individuals and businesses have left PCE in the position of having a current debt of €70,000. There are fundraising events planned for 2015 and 2016 which, it is envisaged, will clear the debt on stage 1. It will then be time to turn our attention to stage 2.



Front View of the Old Creamery

Work commenced on the Old Creamery Building in May 2014 and was completed in mid-March 2015. Today we have eradicated a derelict site, restored a building with considerable heritage value, brought activity back to the centre of the village of Piltown and are providing three units suitable for incubation space for start-up businesses. One unit has already been leased and the tenant will be moving in within the next week. There is considerable interest in the other two units. It is expected that 10 jobs will be created here within a short time. We are hosting an Open Evening for the Community on Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup> to give people the opportunity to view the work that has been done before the units are completely occu-

pied. All are welcome.

For the last four years the Board has been involved with a range of other activities aimed at the creation and development of business in the Piltown area. A Business Directory was compiled and delivered to every house in the parish. Information evenings and courses have been held, ranging from Business Plan Development, to Facebook for Businesses to How the Budget will affect you and your Business. They have been actively involved in an entrepreneur competition which is run in Piltown National School.

They produce a quarterly newsletter which is delivered to every house in the parish by a team of volunteers. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep every person in the community information of PCE's activities.



Front View of the Old Creamery

### **Piltown Community Enterprise Mission Statement:**

**To create, promote and develop a culture of enterprise in our community, by providing support, facilities, infrastructure and the environment to encourage business development and job creation in start-up and small business**

# Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh Co. Ciarraí



Comhchoiste staff at the annual Kerry Community Awards October 2014 (Gaeltacht Award and runner up in the community)

“Tá an-áthas orm....” is a phrase which casts the minds of most Kerry people towards Dublin on a Sunday in late September, but it is a sentiment which also describes my feelings regarding the community development sector in the Iveragh Gaeltacht area of south west Kerry. This Gaeltacht area sits on the

western tip of the largest of the south-western peninsulas, and is nestled between Corrán Tuathail and the Skelligs. The population of this Irish-speaking area is approximately 2,000 people.

In spite of the challenges created by our ageing population structure, we are lucky to have a vibrant community development sector active locally. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on activities within the Gaeltacht area, but it is important to note that our neighbours on the other side of the boundary are equally dedicated to creating developments appropriate to the requirements and circumstances in their own areas.



Healthcare Support students completing a FETAC/QQI Level 5 course supported by Kerry ETB

## Structure

There are five pockets of Gaeltacht in this area, spread across the three parishes of Prior, Dromod and Caherdaniel. Each of these areas has its own development association which in turn has a number of sub committees including community care, festival committees, rowing club, etc. Each coiste pobal has nominated one representative to become a director on the board of Comhchoiste Ghaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh, which operates as an umbrella organisation for the area.

## Comhchoiste Ghaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh

The Comhchoiste was established in 1998 and became incorporated in 2002. The aims of the organisation are three-fold:

1. Promotion of the Irish language
2. Community Development initiatives
3. Provision of essential community services.

With the help and support of Údarás na Gaeltachta, Pobal

and other agencies we have been able to develop and sustain a wide range of services and initiatives which along with improving life for the people of the area has also ensured that about 50 local families have the ability to improve their income through participation on the various employment schemes.

## Current projects

We are at a very exciting cross-roads in relation to the language in all Gaeltacht areas at the moment and we are delighted to be among the first nine communities in the country to have embarked upon a two-year language planning process. By December 2016 we will have a seven-year strategic plan for the language ready for implementation, and we look forward to building upon the positive disposition towards the language that exists in this part of Kerry.



Opening of Bolus Loop Walk - a joint venture between Comhchoiste, SKDP, Fáilte Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta

Cultural tourism is an important niche for this area, and we have developed a number of projects in this regard, including looped walks while Forbairt na Dromoda operates a community hostel in their area. 2015 will be our third summer offering a course for Parents and Children who want to improve their Irish as a family unit under brand of [www.irishlanguageholidays.com](http://www.irishlanguageholidays.com).

We provide fully accessible transportation to elderly and disadvantaged people using two minibuses and fully trained passenger assistants travel with our vulnerable clients. Last year a total of 2,158 passenger journeys were made on our buses. Other elderly services are vitally important to the locality, and are co-ordinated by voluntary community care groups with work hours provided by the various employment schemes.

We are very excited about our new venture – An Siopa Feirme (The Farm Shop) which is due to open in Waterville at the beginning of May. This project aims to showcase and sell local produce and artisan foods made in the locality and we hope that it will be a driver for entrepreneurship in the area for the long term.

“Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid in Uíbh Ráthach!



## Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd. (DREL) Project.

Last summer we (DREL) completed our local DFBA Business Directory Project which turned out to be an overwhelming success. It contains **156 local businesses and 70 local voluntary organisations** along with a list of associate businesses and useful/emergency numbers. We are a parish with four villages **Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand and Annestown** and a population of 2151. Included in the directory is a summary of local economic statistics.

**Dawn International Ltd.** sponsored the project for which we are very grateful. We approached the local business community to place advertisements either full or half page so as we could cover the cost of print and design. We offered voluntary organisations a 50% reduction on the standard rate.

Our next task was to find the best way to distribute it throughout the parish at 3 euro per copy. We were very fortunate to involve the local Na Gaeil Juvenile GAA Club who provided a local student having completed his Leaving Cert. Sean Mc Kinley a stalwart corner back on the minor hurling team agreed to do the job. In mid July Sean took off on his bicycle and cycled around the parish over a three week period (showing no fear of anything or anyone) and in all types of weather. Sean's reward for his hard work was 75 cent per copy from the sales. He amassed **€250 for himself and another €250 for Na Gaeil Juvenile club**. The money earned by himself and club was recently presented to him by Seamus Goggin co-ordinator of the project who is also CCJ Membership Officer.



From left to right: Sean McKinley (degree in Music Meadia & Performance Technology in University of Limerick), Niall Moore (Chairman Na Gaeil Juvenile Club) with his son Ned and Seamus Goggin (CCJ)



The directory received high praise from the agencies and from many groups, voluntary organisations and individuals throughout the country. These include contacts in Co. Antrim and visitors to Dunhill from Michigan USA, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, Bulgaria and Finland. We received tremendous feedback and the directory has become a CCJ enabling tool. It can be replicated in parishes countrywide. DFBA were motivated by Piltown Enterprise in Co Kilkenny who had produced a local directory. Following the launch of the DFBA issue, Tramore have expressed interest in producing their own directory.

Should you require any further information on the above contact either Senan or Seamus (DREL) phone 051-396622 email [senan@dunhillecopark.com](mailto:senan@dunhillecopark.com) or Seamus 051-396623 email [ccj@dunhillecopark.com](mailto:ccj@dunhillecopark.com)

**“There is no limit to what can be achieved by a community working together”**



## Rossinver Organic Centre, Co. Leitrim. (1995-2015) - where inspiration becomes action!



The centre is a community enterprise limited by guarantee with charitable status. It has a voluntary board of directors and one of its key aims is to create employment opportunities for people in North Leitrim area. Hans Wieland has worked and taught at the centre since 1997 and gives a good overview of its development. He highlights the different milestones reached between 1995-2015 which marks its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The work undertaken by countless staff, students and volunteers has become an inspiration for many gardeners and growers and a model for other environmental organisations. To celebrate those achievements several events have been planned throughout the year and many famous chefs, growers and food writers have pledged their support to raise funds for refurbishment and development of the centre. Andy Hallewell, centre manager, states that the 17 acre site has huge potential for further development with just 7 acres currently being used.



There are 20 people engaged in different types of employment at the centre.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Programme Guest Speakers are:

- Trevor Sargent on Potato Day 14<sup>th</sup> March
- Michael Kelly on GIY Afternoon 22<sup>nd</sup> March
- An afternoon with Darina Allen in June
- Neven Maguire and Fiann O'Nuallain at our Garden Party 12<sup>th</sup> July
- John and Sally McKenna at Apple Day and Harvest Festival 27<sup>th</sup> of September



### Milestones in the life of The Organic Centre

- 1995** Purchased the site and developed gardens and facilities
- 1997** First local training initiative with FAS and first 6 weekend courses and probably the first ever *organic* Potato Day
- 1999** First organic school garden in the area leading finally to the establishment of SEED a national network for school gardens in 2009
- 2000** First cross border community garden and schools project funded by PEACE/IFI and continued till 2007
- 2000** Linking with local accommodation providers to develop local tourism
- 2000** September First Organic Fair with 800 visitors
- 2001** New visitors and training centre opens
- 2001** Neighbourhood Scheme developing a small woodland
- 2001** Publication of "A Guide to Home Composting"
- 2002** Study by WDC leads to Greenbox and the start of Eco-Tourism in Ireland
- 2002 – 2005** Green Festival North West, a new concept of ecological festivals
- 2004** First HSE funded **Community Food Project** promoting community gardens and developing a blueprint.



**2006** First FETAC Level 5 training course

**2011** Eurotoques Food Award for outstanding contribution to Irish Food

**2013** More than 100 courses, 4 events, visitor gardens, new food trends course

**2014** New Community Garden at The Organic Centre and first INTREO training course

As part of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme we offer a newly designed **“Food Adventures Tour”** with Hans Wieland:

- The Organic Centre 1995-2015 – very brief history
- Welcoming drink at the pop-up hedgerow bar
- Kitchen garden – play the rotation game
- The importance of seed sovereignty and seed sowing
- Polytunnel wonders
- Get down and dirty in the compost display area - soil fertility
- Unusual vegetables
- Gardeners question time
- Discovery “Weeds to weed and weeds to eat” along the way!



We also offer organic gardening tours and very informative tour on **Wild Foods from Irish Hedgerows**

For courses, seeds and events visit [www.theorganiccentre.ie](http://www.theorganiccentre.ie)

We are open for visitors Tuesdays to Sundays 10am -5pm.

## Michigan MBA Team Complete Study on Dunhill



University of Michigan

Action based learning is a signature, defining element of the University of Michigan Ross MBA program. Students in four- to six-person teams, guided by faculty members, tackle a complex business problem for a company or nonprofit. Students expand their skills and develop their leadership abilities; sponsors get usable recommendations from top minds at minimal expense. At the heart of action-based learning is mutually beneficial collaboration between students, faculty, and sponsor organizations. The program at the University of Michigan is one of the world’s most extensive and intensive partnerships in action-based learning.

The program started in 1992 as a way to foster greater connections between Michigan MBA students and the greater Detroit business community. Today, action based learning is a hallmark of the Ross Full-Time, Evening, Weekend, Global, and Executive MBA programs – involving more than 500 students each year. Since the program’s inception students have completed 1,800 projects in 93 countries with over 800 sponsors. Additionally, the program has a strong presence in Ireland, completing over 80 projects with Irish sponsors.

As part of this program a group of six MBA students are completing a project with Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd. (DREL), where they are helping to create an economic development plan for the Dunhill Eco-park and other DREL assets. These students come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide variety of experience including marketing, finance and business development. They will provide a fresh look at how DREL can continue to spark rural economic development for the Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand and Annestown area.



(Left to Right) Senan Cooke (Dunhill Ecopark), Samantha Richardson (CopperCoast Geopark) with MBA Students - Anubhav Dhawan, Paul Meier, Nir Belsky, Ryan Havanec, Danio O’ Hara and Nydia Cárdenas

## News items from West Cork- Carol Gilbert



West Cork was to the fore in the inaugural Responsible Tourism awards with Jim and Maria Kennedy of Atlantic Sea Kayaking and Wild Atlantic Walks winning the Best Adventure activity for responsible tourism. They then took the well-deserved accolade as overall award winner in the Irish Responsible Tourism Awards. Run by Jim and Maria Kennedy, Atlantic Sea Kayaking aims to highlight the marine habitats of West Cork through kayaking trips and guided walks. It would be hard to find another couple who have worked so hard to promote all that is wonderful about the West Cork region. Jim and Maria run regular kayaking and walking trips in and around West Cork, Cork City and in other regions in Ireland. Visit their website, [www.atlantickayaking.com](http://www.atlantickayaking.com) for further information.

One of their night time kayaking trips provides a magical experience where you will kayak under the stars, surrounded by twinkling bioluminescence. Revel in the silence which will only be broken as you return to shore to enjoy live classical music.

### Whale Watch West Cork



Run by Nic and Wendy Slocum. out of Baltimore, West Cork it took silver in the category Best Tour Operator for Responsible Tourism. Prior to Nic Slocum setting up Whale Watch West Cork approximately ten years ago, there were simply no environmental or animal protection standards for marine wildlife tours in Irish waters. Whale Watch West Cork initiated their own strict code of conduct for whale watching, and this set a standard that puts animal welfare and environmental protection to the fore. They have encouraged other marine wild life tour operators to follow their example which has resulted in the formation of Baltimore Whale and Dolphin Watch which was set up to promote responsible behaviour both on and off the water.

([www.facebook.com/baltimorewhaleanddolphinwatch](https://www.facebook.com/baltimorewhaleanddolphinwatch))

Whale Watch West Cork has been instrumental in bringing business to the local community, by working with local suppliers and with its growing reputation bringing an ever-increasing tourist footfall to the region. The knock - on benefits are huge across the hospitality sector and whale watching from the relative safety of the waters around West Cork is a major attraction, especially to visitors from

land locked countries. It's an opportunity that all ages can enjoy. Visit [www.whalewatchwestcork.com](http://www.whalewatchwestcork.com) for up to date wildlife sightings and further information

### Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-op



Also taking silver in their category, Best Destination for Responsible Tourism was Sheep's Head and Bantry Tourism Co-Operative, West Cork. This new tourism initiative was established in 2013 since when it has taken many awards, including being designated a 'European Destination of Excellence' in recognition of its sustainable tourism. It has successfully joined up all the dots by involving everyone along their route, including Bantry town, the Sheep's Head Peninsula and the surrounding areas. A comprehensive list of all the region has to offer has become an excellent marketing tool showing the beauty, diversity and everything from walking and cycling routes, kayaking, food producers, stone carving courses and everything in between. Visit [www.livingthesheepsheadway.com](http://www.livingthesheepsheadway.com) for more on this dynamic group.

### Mizen Head Signal Station & Visitor Centre



Silver was also awarded for Best Cultural Heritage Attraction to Mizen Head Signal Station & Visitor Centre West Cork. It is one of the busiest attractions in West Cork with a heavy footfall. The award winning Maritime Museum and Heritage Attraction, is an authentic all-weather experience and a must-see with its spectacular location on high cliffs with swirling Atlantic Ocean tides. The Mizen is famous for its wildflowers and sightings of wildlife, dolphins, whales, seals, gannets, kittiwakes, choughs – the bird migration north-south flight path is just a mile off shore. To the South, the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse, Ireland's Teardrop, was the last landfall seen by many emigrants to America and one of Marconi's first telegraph stations. Mizen Signal Station had the first Radio Beacon in Ireland in 1931; the history of Safety at Sea communications is here - Wireless Signals, Racon, GPS and DGPS, displays about the lives of the Irish Lights Keepers who left the Mizen in 1993, The Bridge with full Navigational Aids Simulator, Automatic Weather Station, Maps, Guided Tours. With a mild climate all year and a café and a shop too it is a definite must-see. Visit [www.mizenhead.net](http://www.mizenhead.net) for more info.

## Ecopoint - Energy Saving Solutions



*Ecopoint* leads the way with its cutting edge, sustainable technology solutions for businesses. Our range of super-efficient LED lights provides superior quality lighting with the added benefit of hugely reducing the amount of power used by over 75%. With

over 50,000 hour life expectancy this ensures that **maintenance and replacement costs** are substantially reduced. All our lighting is **free of mercury and UV** and is **fully recyclable**. Our LED lights do not flicker, and they start up immediately, without a warm up period.

There is an *Ecopoint* product for any setting and our lighting range is constantly expanding. Presently, our standard range comprises an array of tubes (including tubes that have been specifically designed for refrigeration), panels,

floodlights, high bays and low bays. *Ecopoint* is also proud to be able to manufacture bespoke products to meet your specific needs. In a recent installation for Wexford Enterprise Centre we achieved the following results:

- **93% reduction** in lighting energy
- Improved Lux rating ( Quality of Light )
- Reduced lighting bill **from €13,900 to €980.00**
- Obtained a 50% grant from SEAI for the project
- A payback period of less than 1 year!

Replacing existing lighting with LED is easy to do but creating an Energy Efficient Solution is something you should leave to *Ecopoint*. From site review to solution and grant application, we will help you achieve the maximum reduction in your current lighting energy bill.

If you are interested in learning how *Ecopoint* could assist you then please contact John Cullen at [john@ecopoint.ie](mailto:john@ecopoint.ie) or Mobile **087-7434468** for a free site review.

## Visitors to Dunhill Ecopark - March 2015



W.I.T 3rd year student group (BSc Applied Biology) on a study tour of Dunhill Ecopark/Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) with Mel Godinho and Nabla Kennedy (Lecturers) Department of Science W.I.T 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015.



Visit of David Balmforth (President of Institute of Civil Engineers Ireland) who visited Dunhill Ecopark (AVP) Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) Project in March along with a number of colleagues and Dr. Rory Harrington.



[www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)