

The Value of Work - by Gillian Hussey



Gillian Hussey

In 2015 it is said that the country is recovering from a recession and is getting “back on it’s feet”. This is somewhat true, but nothing to get excited about.

I have been through several recessions in my lifetime and watched the young emigrate and in so many cases, not return. In some cases where the young have overstayed their visa or welcome in another country, the young person cannot come back to Ireland even when there is tragedy at home, or to visit. Scenes like this are very sad indeed and one can only feel for the families affected.

However, in my working life I came across a different situation. In my youth young people went to school and then they got a job. We felt we had a right to a job. However, in my work I came across young people who went to school sometimes, but the drug scene had developed and the alcohol problem had escalated. I presided over a criminal Court in Dublin for over 17 years. Before that, I thought that life was fairly simple, fair and everyone had a right to a job when they left school. It was a “generational” thing.

My time on the District Court Bench changed my life completely and I saw such devastation, destruction and sadness due mainly to drink and drugs that I have come to realize how very fortunate I have been.

Over the years since I first sat in the criminal Court I now understand more the achievements of those who have been virtually brought to the gutter, through the Courts, the prisons and in many cases, drug treatment centres or support services and finally back in to life as a real person again. Most of these people have such harrowing stories to tell of sadness, no love, no support, little education, fighting, rows that to come through all that to eventually find their way, with the support of others, to join life and a job is nothing short of wonderful. Those who are working in support services, drug addiction centres and caring services are to be highly commended and congratulated on encouraging others back into the workforce.

I have seen many of these people go from the gutter to a job and it never ceases to amaze and encourage me. I suppose from all this I have learned many things, particularly never to take a job for granted.

Another thing that I realize as I grow older is that each generation has its own ideas. There are so many more people qualified in so many different areas of life that did not exist many years ago and these people are so capable in bringing the more needy who require that little bit extra attention and caring to realize their potential.

As someone who is in the autumn of life I am so encouraged by those coming after me who have so many more skills to help those less fortunate than themselves. I feel the less privileged are in safe hands.

New Patrons Join CCJ



Michelle Murphy
Senior Policy Analyst
Social Justice Ireland



Paddy McGuinness
Chairman of the Western
Development Commission

Table of Contents

CCJ Editorial	3
ACDAL - Allenwood Co. Kildare	4
Connect Ireland	5
Memorial to the late Fr. Val Power - Newfoundland Canada.....	6
U-Casadh Limited - “a brighter future”	7
The Carmichael Centre - Dublin	9
Tulsk - “The crossroads of Connacht”	10
Bishop Emeritus Christy Jones of Elphin “sounds a warning”	12
Launch of Community Finance Ireland	13
Clann Credo - Social Finance	14
Ballymacarbry Co. Waterford - “Pride of place”	15
SSCUL Enterprises Ltd. - Bizmentors Galway	16



CCJ Editorial



Communities Creating Jobs welcome clear signs of improvements in the economy. These include a significant increase in exports, tourism numbers, agriculture, food production, foreign direct investments and small business start-ups. The decrease in unemployment to 9.5% is encouraging. There are still a number of major hurdles to be overcome to achieve full employment. The plight of the long term unemployed remains a daunting challenge as it persisted right throughout the Celtic Tiger years. It will take new radical solutions to solve it one of which is the CCJ jobs model.

Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) can play a very positive and proactive role in the solution. CCJ targets 10 jobs per community countrywide through the creation of private, public and social enterprise. It will create the type of jobs in services and manufacturing in local communities that will provide new opportunities for the long term unemployed.

Government departments and agencies should seriously examine the CCJ jobs model and provide it with supports. There is a need to redeploy existing resources and make small changes to the eligibility criteria of agency support programmes to attract and empower communities. The proper co-ordination of state resources, simplification of bureaucratic controls, removal of barriers, provision of incentives which should already be in place in the cost effective management of resources.

A pilot project is currently underway in Co Galway supported by the Galway County Board (CLG), Croke Park GAA, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) and CCJ. The members of the consortium are engaging free of charge. GMIT are providing significant support in personnel, education, training and admin office space. They are working with 6 local communities that indicated interest in engaging in the pilot project.

CCJ are awaiting the outcome of the Galway pilot which will determine the future of the CCJ model. If it is a success it will be rolled out countrywide.

Donal Traynor

CCJ Chairman



Allenwood Enterprise Park Co. Kildare

Allenwood is a parish with a population of 900 located in the Bog of Allen in North Kildare. For a generation, employment opportunities for families was dependent on the local ESB Generating Power Station and Bord Na Mona who supplied the turf for the station. Its best known personality and outstanding gaelic footballer is Johnny Doyle who after many years of magnificent service to the lilywhites (Kildare) retired in 2014.

ACDAL was formed in 1994 following the closure of the ESB Power Generating Station in 1992 with a loss of 130 jobs and a further 200 jobs was lost downstream in Bord Na Mona.

The ESB staff union and local community negotiated hard with ESB on its withdrawal and the impending devastation it would cause to Allenwood and surrounding communities. Included in the agreement was the handover of the power station, along with land banks amounting to 55 acres in total and a development fund of €2.2m. The closure caused consternation in the political arena and was the subject of several Dail debates. Extreme pressure was placed on both semi state companies to maintain employment but in the end it failed to achieve the ongoing operation of the plant. It was within this adversarial industrial relations and community relations context that the land and finances was negotiated.

After several meetings of the community a local enterprise group was formed to examine the options for economic regeneration following the closure. A membership fee of €5 was agreed and was open to everyone in the community. A house to house survey was completed seeking the views of the local community on needs and opportunities. ACDAL is a company limited by guarantee with a voluntary board of 14 directors. Annual public meetings are held at which one third of the board offer to resign and have the option to offer themselves for re-election with others nominated to serve.

All the local agencies involved in economic and education development were mobilised to support the developments agreed. These included Kildare Co Council, Leader Partnership, County Enterprise Board, ESB, FAS, Pobal, Enterprise Ireland, Dept. of Social Protection, Kildare Childcare Committee and others.

The mission of ACDAL is to 'Organise, promote and assist in the

cultural development of the community by creating 'full-time' employment through existing and proposed projects and establish a community development programme. The programme was to act as a catalyst for development in Allenwood and surrounding areas in particular to empower specific disadvantaged groups through participation in personal and social development programmes. A target of 150 jobs was set and many of the unemployed to be helped by providing a range of re-skilling and up-skilling programmes.

The main developments completed are:

1. An enterprise centre with first phase completed in 1999 followed by three other phases in quick succession. Included in the enterprise centre is an education centre which has FETAC accreditation. The community development programme is funded by Pobal and covers the cost of a manager and assistants. It has 4 fully equipped training rooms including a fully equipped and networked computer room with broadband access. It offers a range of education and training programmes for people in particular those who are educationally disadvantaged and needing retraining to return to work. The enterprise centre consists of 23,000 sq feet of unit space and houses 18 small businesses employing 67 people.
2. Charitable status was granted in 2001 and facilitated the construction of a customised state of the art child care centre 'Bright Sparks' which opened in 2004. It currently accommodates 75 children and a staff of 27 including 17 fully qualified childcare assistants. Its maximum capacity of 100 children. The centre cost €2.5m to build and families from the wider area including Naas use the centre. Special rates are offered to disadvantaged families. The centre is open every day from 7.30 a. m to 7 p.m. for 50 weeks of the year. It is an outstanding facility enabling many parents of all categories to return to work. The childcare centre was funded by ACDAL, ESB and the Dept of Justice.



Bright Sparks Community Childcare Centre

3. A community based company Larkwood Ltd was set up in 1998 to manage the planting, maintenance, harvesting, mar-

keting and sale of an annual crop of blueberries on a 20 acre site. The specialist expertise required is in the locality. The management of the crop has thrown up many challenges but most of them have been overcome or are being monitored on an ongoing basis.

4. A horticultural training centre with 3 polytunnels provides training in vegetable and fruit husbandry with research and work experience offerings available to accommodate students and the unemployed.
5. Broadband (wireless) was installed in the area in 2006 to attract and encourage the setting up of small and medium businesses
6. Community Employment Scheme, FAS Jobs Initiative, TUS workers provided to work on blueberry plantation, horticulture training centre, maintenance of enterprise centre and education centre and general landscaping and maintenance

Overall the entire centre and 55 acre site accommodates 107 jobs. Tom Quinn manager has identified a noticeable upturn in enterprise activity over past 12 months which augers well for the future. Tom is confident that the best has yet to come for ACDAL and the achievements to date will spur the community to greater endeavours now that the recovery is beginning to reach down into communities. The achievements can act as a springboard to generate future innovation and development in the area. Current projects are very well designed and the grounds are tastefully landscaped. There is great determination on the board of directors and in the community to continue and progress the development of new projects. ACDAL has done very well and is a positive reflection on the attitude of the people of Allenwood. They are very committed to building an economically self reliant and sustainable community.

Further information to be sourced at www.acdal.ie

Connect Ireland announce new CEO Joanna Murphy

Connect Ireland is delighted to announce the appointment of Joanna Murphy as its new CEO. Connect Ireland is an incentivised referral programme appointed by IDA Ireland to deliver the Government's Succeed in Ireland Initiative.

Joanna has been a key member of Connect Ireland's leadership team since 2013, holding the position of Chief Operating Officer, and will now take over from Michael McLoughlin. Michael has led the company with distinction for three and a half years, bringing the number of successfully established projects to 50, with over 1,500 jobs announced.

Announcing Joanna's appointment, Connect Ireland Chairman Terry Clune said: "Joanna has a strong track record and a passion and enthusiasm for Connect Ireland that is second to none. Her experience for growing new practices and developing relationships has been invaluable. On behalf of Connect Ireland, I warmly welcome Joanna as our new CEO and I look forward to her continuing to drive our success and innovation. I thank Michael for his work to date and wish him well in the future."

Joanna was initially appointed as project manager when she joined ConnectIreland, before quickly rising to the role of COO. Joanna has been responsible for Connect Ireland's brand development and has created and developed strong partnerships with leading global organisations such as Dublin Airport Authority, Aer Lingus and GAA. Reflecting on her appointment, Joanna said: "I am delighted to lead ConnectIreland forward and to step into this role at what is an incredibly exciting time for us. Connect Ireland is a vibrant and exciting place to be and the success of the initiative in just a few short years has been inspiring. Our job numbers and our connector numbers continue to grow at an extraordinary pace.

"Ultimately we owe all our success to our connectors and to the

amazing support we receive from leading organisations, community action groups, business networks, county councils and many others. To be involved in an initiative that has been so warmly embraced by our diaspora and the Irish public has been a pleasure for me and for the Connect Ireland team as a whole."

Joanna has a wealth of entrepreneurial experience and prior to joining Connect Ireland founded and ran two companies in the construction and civil engineering space. "In my role as Chief Executive, I look forward to guiding the project to the next level and continuing to build on our exciting collaborations with connectors and companies. Together with IDA Ireland we will capitalise on the momentum built and continue to help create thousands of jobs across Ireland," added Joanna. "I wish Michael McLoughlin all the best in his new position and thank him for his fantastic commitment and dedication to Connect Ireland to date."



New CEO Joanna Murphy

Phone: [+353 56 7797422](tel:+353567797422)

Email: info@connectireland.com

Web: www.connectireland.com

Commemorating Fr. Val Power - On both Sides of The Pond

Father Power was born on Colinet Island, SMB, NL. on Feb. 26, 1926 to the late David Power and Vivian (Dobbin) Power. After completing his early education there and working for a number of years he went to St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's, NL. to prepare for the priesthood. He went from there to All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland and in 1962 he was ordained to the priesthood. From 1962, until his retirement in 1994, Father Val served in various parishes, including many within his beloved St. Mary's Bay. He proved to be a wonderful priest, lived a modest life, was very humble person, accomplishing much in a quiet manner. He was constantly reaching out to others with tremendous compassion and love, always willing to help and do things for those in need. His sermons in church were always short, to the point, but provided much food for thought. He encouraged people to work together for he stressed that in unity there is strength. He was a gifted man, having tremendous carpentry skills. He was as comfortable helping someone build a house, a boat or other carpentry tasks as he was in celebrating the sacraments of the church. (There is a beautiful Tickets Wheel at our Legion today that was made and donated by Father Val when he heard they needed one.)

News of Father Power's sudden death on Dec. 15, 1996, came as a shock to all. We realized, upon reflection, how much this wonderful man meant to everyone. A small committee in Riverhead, SMB, known as The Father Val Power Centre Committee, had been working on a major project funded by our Federal Government which involved renovating an old run down Community Hall and transforming it into a beautiful Learning Centre. They decided that Father Val should be recognized and remembered. Thus, they decided to name this building -The Father Val Power Centre in his honour.

Since then, our chairperson, Sheila Lee visited South East Ireland on four different occasions for The Festival of The Sea which is a bi-annual event between NL and Ireland. Since our community has such a strong Irish heritage she became especially interested in the development of An Irish Immigrant Trail—the brain child of Senan Cooke. After visiting the Dunhill Enterprise Centre, She was impressed with the efforts being made by him and his committee to create jobs in his rural region and Sheila thought it would be nice for our community to do a twinning project with Dunhill. Thus, when we became aware of plans in Ireland for the Power Clan Gathering, our committee decided it would be a nice gesture to have a bench made and erected on the Anne Valley Walkway and Wildlife Sanctuary in honour of Father Val Power and indeed all the Powers living on this side of the pond. During the closing dinner at the Festival of The Sea in 2012 Sheila presented a \$500 cheque to Senan Cooke to be used for this purpose. On May 31, 2013 a beautiful oak bench and plaque was unveiled in Dunhill. The walkway leads from Dunhill village to Dunhill Castle the ancestral home of the Power Clan. The Powers were a powerful fami-

ly in Dunhill Co. Waterford from 1169. They were major land owners in Waterford and Kilkenny right up to the 19th century. They have descendants all over the world including Newfoundland.



The Fr. Val Power bench and plaque on the Anne Valley Walkway and Wildlife Sanctuary, Dunhill Co. Waterford

Thus, it is appropriate this afternoon, Sept. 20, 2015, to gather with our Irish visitors outside the Father Val Power Centre to unveil another beautiful bench in honour of Father Val Power, The Powers from Colinet Island, The Powers descendants living all over our province and all the Irish descendants who have settled over the years in our province. This bench was made by Father Val's nephew - Edward Power who now resides in Admiral's Beach.

Our Centre continues to thrive, offering educational, environmental, physical fitness, health and wellness and social activities. Our Green Recycling Depot helps to fund our programs. We have developed a Community Garden and a large Green House in recent years which we hope our local people will appreciate and use to the fullest. Presently we have three-part time employees who work hand in hand with our local committee and our Municipal Council. Our most recent project will involve transforming our local church into a small Cultural Centre where Mass can still be said, however, Cultural and Heritage Events will occur there as well. We would also love to have a genealogy site at our centre. Last year we became the first town in Canada to become a member of The Electronic Irish Newsletter - Communities Creating Jobs. We see this as an excellent way to share new ideas and a great way to learn from each other. We sincerely hope that a strong partnership can be established between Rural Communities like Dunhill and Communities on the Southern Avalon such as Riverhead.

As we continue to struggle for the survival of rural Newfoundland may we be forever reminded of the strength, determination, hard work ethic and love of God and neighbour that have been passed down to us from our wonderful ancestors.

U-Casadh Ltd Ferrybank Waterford



U-Casadh Ltd was established in 2008 by former prison officer, Stephen Plunkett. Stephen had become disillusioned with the same people coming through the 'revolving doors' of the prisons in which he worked. He decided to work with people in the community, in order to reduce their chances of returning to prison.

'U-Casadh' is a Celtic term meaning to twist/turn. The rationale of U-Casadh is to support a U-Turn in people's lives away from crisis, chaos and hardship to occupation with purpose. U-Casadh welcomes the most disenfranchised people in society that are turned away from most doors and promotes the belief that 'if you can imagine it, you can be it!'



The ethos of the organisation is based on actively listening to the people we work with and supporting them. In identifying a personal issue of self-worth, esteem and confidence. One crucial gap was voiced – the importance of 'occupation with purpose' and the impact of inadequate skills/education on employment potential. As a marginalised group, those who have offended and especially those who have been incarcerated, are 'labelled' and bias has become a reality and part of their life. U-Casadh breaks that cycle by focusing on solutions, belief in the individual, the wellbeing of the person, their natural abilities and life skills.

U-Casadh is the foundation from which participants navigate their own pathway towards a brighter future. Whilst journeying these pathways with participants, U-Casadh found that each route eventually leads in the same direction - towards employment or occupation with purpose.

During the initial stages of U-Casadh, the project tried to continually adapt and grow to meet the needs of its participants. Nonetheless, its ethos never changed to promote a sense of equality and affect positive integration in local communities for participants and their families. Knowingly in-reach and outreach are the basis for numerous participant initial engagements, however, individuals required more.

In responding to the needs of the U-Casadh clients, the purpose of U-Casadh became clear. After setbacks in mainstream training/education and being unsuccessful in finding empathetic employers, U-Casadh set about securing a dedicated training, education and production building. It began to run skills workshops, acknowledging that training and entrepreneurial ways of thinking would help them out of their stigma, stereotypic difficulties. It is an innovative option for service users and it prepares them for stable lifestyles and for re-entering the workforce.

To this end, workshops were created, and a range of training and education initiatives devised U-Casadh delivers a support and integration service, which moves people in the right directions, encouraging responsibility and ownership of their choices and actions by providing the necessary supports in their recovery to positive lifestyles and community life.

Ambition grew from the early start of these workshops, and U-Casadh set out to create a '3 Phase' program:

Phase 1 – Solas (stabilisation) we have developed an in-house dedicated rolling 12 weeks program to encourage stabilization and healthy lifestyle choices. These 12 weeks has been developed to address many lifestyle areas and issues some of which are - offending behaviour, criminal activity impact - crime awareness, sub-

stance misuse, anger-management and restorative practices.



Phase 2 – The Sheds (training and education) The U-Casadh programmes are learner based and learner paced to encourage continuous

learning and steady improvement. The service users choose their own modules and path with support and guidance which gives ownership and responsibility when defining their own needs. We offer a diverse range of educational and practical programmes to

cater for individual multiple needs.

Phase 3 – Impact Individuals who have progressed through phases 1 and 2 are either assisted to enrol in the further education courses/ third level courses or engage with U-Casadh’s social enterprise centre where they can explore enterprise ideas.

Following stabilization and development processes with people, subsequent needs were identified. A bespoke Progression, Employability assessment and Employment/Enterprise Centre fostering future autonomy in individuals, prepared participants for employment. It also prepared them for self-sustaining employment opportunities via managed, individualised services in a Centre of transformation for progression and enterprise.

U-Casadh responded to this reoccurring need, for ‘occupation with purpose’, by developing a Progression and Enterprise Centre. The holistic approach of the project has grown to acknowledge the participants desire to be employed, or with support and encouragement, explore possibilities within enterprise.



Approach 1: Providing paid

employment

Ex-offenders encounter a myriad of challenges with respect to securing employment. To highlight the need for ‘occupation with purpose’, research reveals obtaining employment is one of the best predictors of the post-release success of ex-prisoners. At U-Casadh, we provide paid employment in a solution-based support environment, where ex-offenders feel they have a proper job, are encouraged to take personal responsibility, work hard, and feel proud to be able to support themselves and their family. Whilst being employed, they acquire the skills adaptable to many work places: responsibility, team-work, communication, professional conduct etc. Hence, we are supporting our participants to break the vicious cycle of incarceration by gaining employment and acquiring the job necessary for their future careers.

Approach 2: Micro Enterprise

At U-Casadh we have the innovation, vision and capacity to deliver an ultra-modern facility that will foster all the necessary conditions needed to facilitate a person on their journey out of chaos, exit cri-



sis and/or to desistence.

A real feature of U-Casadh’s empowering approach is the determination to combat personal barriers/issues for people with real responses that have a clear path to success. It remains a fact that a considerable level of “out of box” thinking is observed repeatedly in the unique social groups we deal with. Our microenterprise programme encourages people to make their own work and we use incubator and accelerator spaces/programmes to provide an open-plan, co-working spatial arrangement to maximise encounter, parallel learning and collaboration

Through entrepreneurial leadership and innovation programmes those we work with feel that they have opportunities which many have never believed in before. Through our microenterprise programme, U-Casadh provides business education, assists in accessing small grants, supporting them to set up their own businesses. Whilst employment can be a new concept to many ex-offenders, Entrepreneurial skills are present amongst many through their involvement in the criminal worlds. Using our Strength-based approach, we encourage these skills to be used for positive impact in enterprise. U-Casadh has been successful in supporting new start-ups to date, such as Bee Suir Honey, with many more currently underway.

This part of the project is, at core, the most exciting and the most resonant with the times we are living in. This Strand involves the incubation and cultivating of new business entities, rather than seeking out jobs within existing ones in a competitive market.

Developing this concept, it became clear this centre for Progression and Enterprise could also be a creative catalyst for community consolidation. It assists breaking down barriers between members of the local community and programme participants, bringing its extensive range of facilities and services to the wider rural hinterland, integrating people from all areas with like-minded needs for employment, occupation, purpose, breaking stigma, forging bonds and creative collaboration.

Carmichael Centre

The Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups is the first and largest shared services centre for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland. Based in two buildings on North Brunswick Street and Coleraine Street in Dublin's north inner city, it provides services and supports to over 40+ resident charities and hundreds of charities and groups throughout Ireland each year. Over 35,000 people access Carmichael Centre annually.

The Centre not only provides services, but also plays an important role in representing the concerns of small voluntary groups on a national and local basis, demonstrating the power of inspired leadership, passion to a cause, and the social change that can result when people are willing to work together.

Carmichael Centre Training and Consultancy Service has also been part of the Carmichael Centre suite of services for many years. We deliver scheduled training in Carmichael House as well as customised training around the country. We specialise in governance training for boards of community and voluntary organisations, but we also provide a range of other courses aimed at management, staff and volunteers.



Students that completed one of the Carmichael Centre's many courses

This year we are involved in a number of exciting training initiatives, including training and information ses-



The Carmichael Centre 4 Brunswick St. Dublin

sions on the governance code for community, voluntary and charitable organisations; training and mentoring for boards and managers of social enterprises, and governance training for boards of community centres. We are also running a series of training events and seminars in Carmichael Centre this autumn on a range of topics including governance, compliance and quality assurance for charities. In October we will also run basic/intermediate IT skills training. See full details on our website:

<http://www.carmichaelcentre.ie/sector-supports/training-and-consultancy/scheduled-training>

We are always happy to talk to community groups about their training needs. We provide advice and resources, including our free online resource for charities and social organisations:

<http://knowledgegenet.carmichaelcentre.ie/>

**For more information please contact Derek O'Reilly
Training Manager Carmichael Centre on**

01-8735702 ext 310 or

derekoreilly@carmichaelcentre.ie

Tulsk, Co Roscommon, The Crossroads of Connacht!

The medieval village of Tulsk in Co. Roscommon is located on the N5 between Dublin and Westport (east-west) and Roscommon and Sligo (north-south) at the crossroads of Connacht. It is also home to the centre that interprets the Iron Age Royal complex of Cruachain at Rathcroghan Visitor Centre. It has two stories to tell: in archaeological terms, the complex consists of 240+



Rathcroghan Burial Mound

archaeological sites, that range in category from ring forts to burial mounds, to the mysterious ritual sanctuary of Rathcroghan Mound, and the entrance to the pagan Otherworld at Oweynagat. In terms of chronology, Rathcroghan has evidence going back as far as the Neolithic Period, or New Stone Age.

Aside from this archaeology, Rathcroghan is also steeped in the mythology and epic literature of Ireland, most notably being the location for the beginning and end of Ireland's national epic, An Táin Bó Cuailnge, as well as being the home of the Warrior Queen Medb of Connacht. All of this ensures that there is a wealth of Mythology, Archaeology, History and Literature waiting for the visitor to discover.

Rathcroghan Royal Complex has been nominated to the tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage Status, which would elevate it to its rightful place of importance alongside Newgrange and Skellig Michael.



Rathcroghan Visitor Centre

Rathcroghan Visitor Centre is the perfect place for travellers and tourists to stop off for a few hours of relaxation and refreshments. The centre houses a themed Rathcroghan Café, gift and specialist bookshop, and newly refurbished exhibition rooms. Since the centre's establishment in 1999 by Tulsk Action Group Ltd. has won

national and international recognition through various awards. The manager Daniel Curley and his dedicated staff will offer you a hearty welcome and unforgettable insight into ancient Connacht. For information visit website www.rathcroghan.ie, call 071 9639268, or send an email to info@rathcroghan.ie



Tulsk is one of largest parishes in Co. Roscommon and is farming country with little industry, it has a population of approx. 2,000 people. Tulsk Action Group was established in 1992 to explore ways and means of regenerating the area using local resources. Tulsk Parish Services was set up in 1994 by a group of women to provide new employment opportunities for women who had reared their families and now wanted to return to part time or full time employment. The committee aimed to provide care and services to the elderly, many of whom were isolated and in need of support. Employment opportunities were created by developing an integrated set of services and facilities.

A very strong meitheal spirit exists in Tulsk. It has led to the development of a unique set of projects that address the needs and opportunities available in the area. Every community across the country has its own set of needs, opportunities and resources.

Tulsk provides social entrepreneurs, educationalists, historians, state agencies, policy makers and politicians with insight and evidence of the power of community and social enterprise to make things happen in local communities if government is prepared to recognise and support it as a mainstream economic driver. To get the best from volunteer community groups government has to provide a co-ordinated set of supports. The return in terms of replacement services, employment, fostering of a culture of entrepreneurship, leadership, self reliance and sustainability is enormous. The capacity for development and sustainability created by volunteers in their communities in the face of the worst economic crisis in the history of the state cannot be exaggerated.

At the time when Tulsk Action Group led by Seamus Conway, local activist and former Chairman of the local GAA club was

established in 1992 the government with the support of EU funds was promoting the 'bottom up approach' and empowering communities to take charge of their development needs. Leader and Partnership Companies and County Enterprise Boards were established to drive the strategy. Many communities across the country responded. Tusk Action Group and Parish Services Committee displayed great vision, commitment and resilience in organising imaginative projects that provided assistance to those in the community most in need.

The Action Group secured Grant Assistance to put together an Integrated Area Action Plan were awarded 75,000 pounds towards the achievement of actions set out in that plan. This led to the construction of a new heritage centre and cafe on the site of an old handball alley in the centre of Tusk village at a project cost of 514,000 pounds with E.R.D.F. Bord Failte Grant assistance. The project involved replacing the old handball alley with a state of the art new building now located beside the Tusk Lord Edwards GAA Park in the village with the assistance of a FAS. C.E. Scheme and National Lottery Funding. This project of heritage centre and handball alley was organised, managed and paid for by a voluntary committee. Significant voluntary contributions and fund raising projects raised the necessary matching funding required to draw down these state agency grants.



Tusk Voluntary Housing

Members of Tusk Parish Services and Tusk Action Group set up a new Community Company called Tusk Voluntary Housing under the Chairmanship of local Parish Priest Fr. Austin McKeon and with the assistance of Local Co. Councillor Sean Beirne were successful in purchasing a 10 acre site adjacent to the GAA Park and Parish Church from Roscommon Co. Council at a nominal cost, then following an application process with the Dept. Of the Environment were successful in gaining Grant assistance towards the construction of six houses suitable for elderly residents and four family units and the provision of a day care centre.

The day care centre has since been converted to St. Eithnes Nursing Home which is a H.I.Q.A. approved ten bed facility, when added to the housing complex it provides comprehensive care for the elderly in the Parish and beyond. St Eithne's has outstanding facilities including sensory garden and the residents receive the most genuine care and attention 24 hours a day, 7 days per week with

full time Nursing care and Carers. The nursing home is maintained in pristine condition and engenders a secure and loving spirit and environment for the residents.

On the same site Tusk Voluntary Housing has provided a site for St. Fidelma's Child Care Centre another social project providing employment and high quality care facilities for Children aged two and a half years to school age and also provides a before and after school service thereby enabling the return to employment by parents, another step in building the economic prosperity of the area.



As an extension to the very successful and necessary Home Care Service, a laundry and dry cleaning service was established creating further employment for an extra five persons. Parish Services has now acquired an adjacent six unit commercial building and the Laundry and Dry Cleaning Service is moving to a larger unit to accommodate an increase in business, thereby creating more employment opportunities. This unit has potential for accommodation enterprise and education space. Pobal C.S.P. funding has been vital in supporting ongoing operations at the Laundry.

Social Finance provided by Clann Credo has been availed of by all of the organisations and was a necessary ingredient because of the unwillingness of main street Banks to lend to Voluntary Organisations without individuals having to provide Personal Guarantees.

Dedicated Staff led by Patricia Brady and Ita Moffitt at the Laundry, Alice Wright at the Nursing Home Caroline Beirne at the Childcare and Daniel Curley at the Visitor Centre ensure that day to day operations run smoothly and they report regularly to their respective Management Committees.

Voluntary Committees have a Long and Proud Tradition in the local area, Fairs and Loading Banks were organised and provided in the thirties and a state of the art Handball Alley was also provided then. Macra na Feirme was formed and was very active in the forties and fifties they were very successful in organising Carnivals and Amateur Dramatics and Stock Judging and Competed at the highest Levels. They also built by Voluntary Labour the local Macra Hall. Group Water Schemes were organised in the sixties and seventies The GAA amalgamated two Junior Clubs in the Parish in the seventies and went on to buy their own field and develop Player

and Spectator Facilities in the eighties while also being successful on the Playing Fields winning County Finals in 1976 and 1984. The Club has also organised many memorable social events over the years. Tidy towns and Cemetery Committees have also strove to ensure that their areas are always neat and tidy. Tusk Action Group and the Cemetery Committee have recently been successful in having a major conservation works carried out on the sixteenth century Dominican Priory located in the heart of Tusk Village. These works were carried out with Grant Assistance from Roscommon Leader Company, Roscommon Co. Council and a substantial local matching contribution.

Tusk is an Interesting case study with Action Group, Parish Services, Nursing Home, Childcare, Voluntary Housing, Tidy Towns, GAA and Cemetery Committee all working for the benefit of the local area with the active support and involvement of Parish Priest Mons. Austin McKeon.

This programme of renewal and regeneration from which many benefits will flow has demonstrated that Tusk development network has shown great initiative and skill in working with the agencies in leveraging supports including funds from FAS, ADM, POBAL, Roscommon Co. Council, HSE, NUIG, Leader and Partnership Companies, Co. Enterprise Board, The Ireland Fund, EU

Social Fund and others have contributed to the renewal programme since 1992. This partnership arrangement provides the best possible result for state and community. Local action, ownership and sustainability will produce the best return on any state investment in Tusk. We suspect that the best has yet to come for a community located close to a unique heritage site and well served by a proud and committed people. As one young visitor to the area was heard to say recently **Tusk is the only place to be!**



Clann Credo and Tusk Action Group Committee

Retired bishop sounds warning over west of Ireland's future

Article from the Irish Times by Marese McDonagh (17/7/2015) **"Frustration expressed"**

A retired west of Ireland bishop on Friday warned that he saw very little hope in his native county. **Retired bishop of Elphin Christy Jones** said he believed towns in the west were more alive socially and economically in the 1940s and 1950s, "a time of mass emigration", than they were today. Bishop Jones was speaking at the **Western Regional Development Conference in Ballaghaderreen**, Co Roscommon, where a call for the creation of a full cabinet post with responsibility for Rural Affairs was backed by the Minister of State with responsibility for this area. **Minister of State Anne Phelan** said she agreed, given the number of people living in rural Ireland and the challenges they faced, that rural affairs deserved a full ministry.

"Little hope"

Bishop Jones, a founder member of the Council for the West, told delegates: "When I look at my own county of Roscommon I see very little hope, genuinely, and I am not being pessimistic." Outlining the problems, he said one "beautifully situated" Roscommon town now did not have even one hotel, "so when tourists come there is no place for them to gather". He added that he had marched with people from another Roscommon town who wanted a jail located there "at a time when every town in the world would have been marching against it". Bishop Jones said this was a measure of how desperate the people of the town were. Having grown up in the 1940s and 1950s, he believed towns in the west were much more "socially and economically alive" then than they are today.

The retired bishop expressed frustration with a lack of development at Ireland West Airport Knock, and asked why is the government "so slow" to support it. He said: "My God, we thought when we had a Taoiseach and so many Ministers" in government (in reference to their west of Ireland origins) that more would be done at the airport. Declan O'Callaghan, chairperson of the Council for the West, called for a full Department of Rural Affairs in order to ensure the survival and future viability of rural Ireland. Mr O'Callaghan warned that as Ireland emerged from the recession, a two-track economic recovery was already a reality "and unless urgently addressed will result in irreversible regional imbalance".

"Benign indifference"

Calling for a fundamental paradigm shift in regional development policy formulation and delivery, Mr O'Callaghan said that for too long the official attitude to this issue had been one of benign indifference. **"Our Constitution allows for the appointment of up to 15 cabinet ministers. Surely the survival and future viability of rural Ireland is one of the 15 most important issues facing the country and so merits a full and dedicated government department in its own right,"** he said. Supporting the call, Ms. Phelan said: "I think to have a full minister at cabinet in the next government would prove that I and my colleagues have done something very beneficial." She told delegates that in every community she visits, "bar none", she is asked, "When are we getting broadband?" The Carlow/Kilkenny TD added that she had no problem with positive discrimination for rural areas. **"I say bring it on."**



Recently appointed Minister for Social Enterprise Ann Phelan TD, formally launched Community Finance (Ireland) the new brand for one of the largest providers of finance to the community and voluntary sector on the island of Ireland for the last 20 years.

Previously known as Ulster Community Investment Trust (Ireland), Community Finance (Ireland) is part of the UCIT Group which has to date, invested more than €70 million in over 400 community and volunteer organisations across a range of sectors and projects, including enterprise and work-space projects, rural development projects, childcare schemes, housing associations, community transport, energy & environmental initiatives and sports and recreation facilities.

Donal Traynor, Associate Director of Community Finance (Ireland) said “Our organisation is a volunteer led organisation which was established in response to the decreasing financial support and the difficulties experienced by community organisations in accessing finance. With over €100 million available in funding, Community Finance (Ireland) is targeting organisations and social enterprises which are delivering an immediate social impact to the community but cannot access finance from traditional lenders like banks or building societies. Community Finance (Ireland) wants to ensure that the services provided by these organisations are not restricted due to a lack of finance.”

“Community Finance (Ireland) is part of an extremely successful track record in Social Impact Investment, with over 400 projects funded on the island of Ireland from Antrim to Kerry, Donegal to Waterford over the last 20 years. Our loan application process is relatively straightforward compared to conventional lending, with less onerous paperwork and due diligence, although, we do view ourselves as a responsible lender, and there is a very low default rate amongst the projects we have funded.” continued Donal Traynor, Associate Director of Community Finance (Ireland).

Minister for Social Enterprise Ann Phelan, TD added “I am delighted to officially launch the new Branding of Communi-

ty Finance (Ireland). This volunteer led organisation has given a great deal to the Community and Voluntary Sector over the last 20 years.”

“In my role, I know first-hand how community and social enterprise can play a pivotal part in the rejuvenation of rural Ireland. Social and Community enterprises provide jobs to those most distant from the Labour market, both spatially and socially. The very nature of social enterprise is to provide services locally and to create jobs in the local communities, which is fundamental tenet of CEDRA, job creation and enterprise development in rural Ireland. At the end of the day, 5-10 jobs in a rural community can make a vast difference.” continued Minister for Social Enterprise Ann Phelan, TD.

Donal Traynor, Associate Director of Community Finance (Ireland) concluded “Borrowing from Community Finance (Ireland) also has the added benefit that it creates a virtuous circle for the community enterprises, as all our profits are retained and recycled for re-investment, which increases the level of available funds for other community organisations.”



The launch of Community Finance (Ireland) was held at the School of Food, in Thomastown, Kilkenny, a custom developed food training and food business support centre, which is part of the community led initiative “Town of Food”. The “Town of Food” project has received significant support from Community Finance (Ireland) in the past year. Also attending the launch were a number other organisations from the region which have received support from Community Finance (Ireland) including, the Irish Food Co-op from Kilkenny, Dungarvan Utd. From Waterford and the South Eastern Mountain Rescue which is based in Tipperary.

For more information visit [Community Finance \(Ireland\)](http://www.ccj.ie)

Community and Voluntary organisations are responding to financial challenges in a variety of different ways. Some have used social finance to help them to expand existing or develop new income streams. Social finance providers are the chief source of loans, investments and seed capital for community businesses and organisations – or “social enterprises” as they are also commonly known. Social finance providers look for all investments to generate a financial as well as a social return. Social finance providers like Clann Credo, have assisted community organisations, charities and social enterprises and any organisations that have social impact in their communities with loan finance.

Clann Credo – the Social Investment Fund is Ireland’s largest provider of social finance. Since 1996, it has grown the availability of loan finance for community & voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises. As a result, today, any group that has both a social return and repayment capacity may now be able to access social finance through Clann Credo. Loans are made available at affordable interest rates to community-based projects and Clann Credo does not ask voluntary board members to give personal guarantees. This finance can be in the form of bridging, term loans, and working capital depending on the needs of the borrowing organisation.

To date Clann Credo has invested almost €75m in over 500 community and voluntary organisations throughout Ireland, which provide a diverse range of services from transport to childcare to community tourism to eldercare. Two examples of organisations which have benefitted from loan finance through Clann Credo are the Virginia Show and U-Casadh.

Social Finance Case Studies:

(1) Show Time



In November 2006, the people of Virginia had an idea that was both simple and ambitious: to develop a multi-purpose, state of the art resource centre that would provide facilities for local enterprise and initiatives and serve as a home for key community events, such as the internationally-renowned Virginia Show.

Recognising the many financial challenges that lay ahead for this project they looked to income diversification. Ensuring the new

centre on completion would generate many income streams. When additional support was required to make the ambitious concept a reality, the project organisers made contact with Clann Credo who provided loan finance. Clann Credo recognised that the Rural Resource Centre would provide Virginia with a critical new amenity and an enormously enhanced capacity to drive development across the community.

The integrated rural resource centre was opened in February 2015 and now has many income sources: from exhibitions and music, to farmers’ markets, sporting occasions, conferences and animal livestock shows. It also generates regular income from sub centres dedicated to; Food and Local Produce, Community Training, Social Services and Local Tourism. 25 local groups and organisations use the new centre on an ongoing basis.

(2) Life Changing

U-Casadh, in the suburbs of Waterford City, is another organisation that has been very successful in the diversification of its income sources through grants, funders, fundraising and social enterprise. The



U-Casadh and Clann Credo

majority of income for the project comes from grant funding but the social enterprise element of the project is now also a welcome source of income. Clann Credo provided loan finance in the form of bridging and term loans to assist this project.

Established in 2008 and located in Ferrybank, the group provides skills training for ex-prisoners. U-Casadh focuses on providing a stable environment for course participants and the opportunity for the former prisoners to attain and develop a wide range of skills, to a high level.

The training offered includes: horticulture, woodwork, metal work, plumbing and electrics.

U-Casadh also produces a number of specialised crafts for sale. On the back of this success there are plans to expand into the production and sale of plaques, pens and decorations.

The programme has enabled former prisoners to, quite literally, turn their lives around.

This unique programme was supported by LEADER grant funding and assisted by loan finance from Clann Credo – the Social Investment Fund.

For more information on Social Finance and Clann Credo. Visit www.clanncredoid.ie or phone 01 4002100.

Ballymacarbry Co. Waterford – A Vibrant, Enterprising Community

About 20 kilometres on the R671 road from Dungarvan to Clonmel and nestling in the heart of the Comeraghs you will pass through Ballymacarbry a beautiful well maintained village which exudes pride in place and people. You will notice immediately how the village is so well maintained. This commitment to community was recognised nationally when it won its category of the national (32 county) 'Pride in Place Competition' in 2011.



Nire Football team Munster Senior Club Runners-up 2015

The community has earned fame in recent times through the outstanding performances of the Nire Senior Football team. They were narrowly beaten by Austin Stacks, Tralee in the Munster Club Senior Football Final in 2015. The Ballymacarbry, Nire, Fourmilewater community is a thriving hub of enterprise, social and sporting innovation today. This is due to the voluntary commitment and unconquerable spirit of over 250 volunteers working in a large number of voluntary organisations in a community of 1,500 people. This spirit is demonstrated by the willingness of people to engage in fund raising, in developing a strong inclusive network and imaginative range of facilities. Ballymacarbry is an ideal place for a short holiday break for those interested in cycling and walking in particular. It has 4 pubs, 2 restaurants, a hostel and a number of guest houses which cater for visitor accommodation and entertainment needs. It is a haven for those needing a break from the pressures of work and urban living.

Ballymacarbry is a community with full employment. The main employers include Pinewood Healthcare, a pharmaceutical company manufacturing medicines/drugs. It currently employs 350 people. It totally contradicts conventional wisdom shared by economists and industrial policy makers that such companies need to be located in urban areas where a greater number of facilities and back up services exist. Pinewood was started up by a local resident with two employees in 1976. They built up the workforce to 80 employees and then sold it in 1987 to Irish Investors who years later in 2006 sold it to investors from India. The workforce mainly comes from the surrounding areas of West Waterford and South Tipperary including many locals. Agriculture, Agri-Services, SMEs, Tourism and Forestry are other employment options with Dungarvan and Clonmel providing professional, state, industrial services and man-

ufacturing employment opportunities.

The strongest and best supported voluntary organisation in Ballymacarbry is the GAA. The Nire Football Club founded in 1929 won 7 senior, 2 intermediate and 1 junior football titles, Fourmilewater Hurling Club founded in 1926 won 2 intermediate and 2 junior titles. Ballymacarbry Ladies Football Club founded in 1970 are a very strong GAA presence in the community. The best known GAA personalities today are Michael Ryan former Waterford hurling coach and currently the Westmeath senior hurling coach and Jamie Barron an outstanding young hurler who has played for Waterford in League and Championship in 2015 at midfield. Michael Ryan can be credited as a pioneering leader in the development of Ladies Football in the county and in the country. He coached Waterford teams to win 5 senior, 1 junior All-Irelands and 5 All Irelands in minor/U16. Under his outstanding leadership Ballymacarbry won 15 senior county championships and 10 club All-Irelands. The Ballymacarbry involvement has inspired many Waterford successes. They are a leading unit in the history of the game having won 25 County Senior Titles. The GAA has produced outstanding footballers in Jim Wall (Railway Cup winner) and Mick Connolly another Munster footballer in the 1970s. Another voluntary group that has done sterling work in the community is the Tidy Towns Committee. It has been successful in recruiting up to 40 volunteers each year to clean, plant and maintain the village area which always look so well every summer for locals and visitors to enjoy.



Ballymacarbry Community Centre

In 2004 the parish committee decided to develop a range of facilities to strengthen the social, economic and recreational fabric of the community. A survey questionnaire was sent to every home. The response was very positive. Following a period of planning and land acquisition subsequent developments included a state of the art Community Centre which accommodates:

- An Astroturf indoor pitch with an area of 100 x 60 feet
- Theatre Hall 60x 35 feet with stage and dressing room

- Gym and Exercise Room
- Library, Kitchen and Meeting Rooms
- Hostel with 24 beds
- Pre – School Facility
- Car parking space for 120 cars
- Landscaped site which is maintained with great care

The entire development cost €1.7m with €760,000 received in grant aid in the main from Waterford Leader Partnership with Sports Capital Programme and Co. Council also contributing. The remainder of the money has had to be raised by volunteers with a sum of over €700,000 raised to date.

A new elderly scheme of 15 homes was opened in 2011 in the village beside the community centre. It is a first class facility in location, housing design and landscaping. A number of supported employment schemes offer work experience and personal development. These include 7 TUS, 2 Community Employment Scheme and 1 Rural Social Scheme person.

Future Developments

The next project to be tackled is to improve dressing room facilities for the 3 GAA clubs. Failte Ireland is in the process of developing

a new brand tourism product the 'Munster Peaks' which includes the Comeraghs. Ballymacarbry is ideally placed to become a tourist service centre in the scheme. The Nire River is reputed to have one of the strongest current in Europe. It is ready made to produce green energy. If its potential is realised in the future it will provide a strong incentive for new enterprise start-ups. The future is bright for Ballymacarbry, a great place and a great hearted people who set no limits on what can be achieved for its community.

For further information visit www.ballymacarbry.com



Houses for the elderly in Ballymacarbry

Bizmentors Programme at Ballybane Enterprise Centre



Bizmentors is open to new and existing businesses to help nurture and further develop local businesses. At times it can be a lonely and isolated road for entrepreneurs and owners of SME's. Bizmentors is a chance for them to access expertise, guidance and business advice through our panel of experienced mentors for free. Small businesses in Ireland are important contributors to the recovery and the future prosperity of the Irish economy. Their survival and growth not only brings investment returns for individual businesses, it also underpins the wider local community and the image of Ireland as a provider of high quality, innovative and sustainable business excellence. Bizmentors is open to all new and existing businesses to help nurture and further develop local businesses.

So, how does it work? Well the beauty about bizmentors is the fact that any business owner from any walk of life can apply for mentoring, from idea stage right through to a fully-fledged business. Applications are taken through the bizmentors.ie website. Once an application is received an advisory board considers which mentor is best suited to meet the needs of the business, or mentee as we call them. From there an induction evening is carried out for all mentees, providing them with the necessary skills to get the most out of their mentoring experience. Both parties then engage in three, hour long, one to one mentoring sessions follow which can be spaced out over a period of up to three months. Once these three mentoring session are complete a mentee is free to reapply for further mentoring in another category if they feel the need to do so. The programme is designed to complement existing programmes

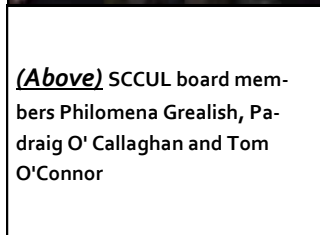
available from Enterprise Ireland, the LEO's and Innovation Centres. Mentoring support is available in the following areas: Business Planning, Finance, HR, General Business Management, IT, Legal, Marketing, PR, Quality, R & D, Sales, Training & Development, and Quality Control. An Advisory Board will oversee the ethical and efficient running of the programme.

Since its establishment in May 2012 bizmentors has aided over 400 businesses in Galway, while the number of mentoring panellists, who offer their time pro-bono, has grown from 8 to over 100. These figures underline the increased interest and reputation of the programme. Currently the programme is being prepped for a potential regional pilot, with a view to having a national agenda.

For more information on this service please visit bizmentors.ie



(Below) Colman Collins (chair of the SCCUL Mentors Advisory board), Barry O'Sullivan (Former RTE Dragon) and Michael Smyth (General Manager of SCCUL Enterprises)



(Above) SCCUL board members Philomena Grealish, Pdraig O' Callaghan and Tom O'Connor

