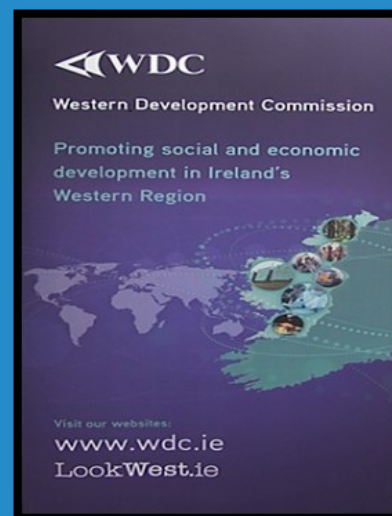


## CCJ Regional Seminar in Claremorris

A regional seminar was held recently at the Connacht GAA Regional Training Centre in Began, Claremorris County Mayo. This seminar was sponsored by the Western Development Commission in association with the GAA. Speakers on the night included Ian Brannigan of the Western Development Commission and Joe McDonagh of the GAA as well as Dr. Senan Cooke, Donal Traynor and Ciaran Lynch of CCJ. The seminar was chaired by Paddy McGuinness, Chairman of the Western Development Commission.

Other contributors on a very foggy night in the West included Ivan McPhillips from GMIT (a very successful promoter of social enterprise in his own community), as well as representatives from Mayo Local Enterprise Office. There was a strong consensus amongst those attending the seminar that the CCJ model and approach were worth pursuing and many offered their support to this end.

At the conclusion of the event it was agreed that another similar event should be held in the West in the Spring.



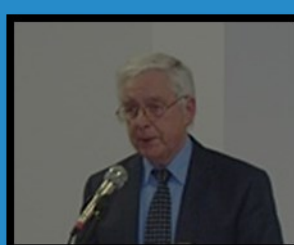
**Main Photo from L – R:** Paddy McGuinness – Chairman WDC, Senan Cooke - Secretary of CCJ, Donal Traynor - Vice Chairman CCJ, Ian Brannigan - CEO of WDC, Caroline Coffey – Administrator WDC, Ciaran Lynch – Limerick IT, Joe McDonagh – Chairman of GAA RDC and Seamus Goggin CCJ Membership Officer



Ivan McPhillips



Joe McDonagh



Paddy McGuinness



Ian Brannigan



# CCJ Editorial



CCJ in partnership with GAA and other voluntary organisations active in communities, offers Government an immediate opportunity to empower local communities for the creation of enterprise and new job opportunities. There is also the possibility of building a national network of micro-economies that will strengthen the national indigenous enterprise base. The implementation process will nurture a new culture of entrepreneurship, self reliance and sustainability countrywide.

It is critical for future solidarity and inclusion to enable communities act to protect themselves from the worst effects of austerity which include increasing taxes/ charges and reduced services on top of high unemployment and involuntary emigration. The CCJ jobs model will help secure the social and economic gains made over the past two decades since the Programme for Economic & Social Progress (1991-1993) launched the Leader Partnership and County Enterprise Boards promoting the bottom up approach to economic regeneration at community level.

There is so much capacity and resources available in communities which are currently lying dormant. The best educated, most business literate, travelled, networked, confident, competent and concerned people in the history of the state live in communities throughout the country. Every community has a unique set of resources and opportunities to manage. They are well capable of organising and achieving the 10 jobs target set by CCJ. A national government jobs programme such as Meitheal 2020 is required to co-ordinate, manage and deploy relevant state resources to accommodate the flow of enterprise initiatives from an empowered community enterprise network.

CCJ are recommending to Government to include its job creation model in the Action Plan for Jobs 2015. It is also recommending that it implement the Forfas Social Enterprise Report July 2013 and the CEDRA report February 2014 which would energise the latent but dormant talents of our people both in their own interest and in support of the national economic recovery programme.

## Connect Ireland reaches 1,000 jobs mark

Irish people, through their connections, introduced 36 companies to Ireland which are planning to create 1,000 jobs.



On Wednesday, December 3 Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Richard Bruton TD applauded the people of Ireland, at home and abroad, for helping to win 36 investments and **1,000 sustainable jobs** across the country within the next 3-5 years. Irish men and women around the globe have answered the call to help their country

Connect Ireland is responsible for delivering the Government's *Succeed in Ireland* initiative, in association with IDA Ireland. In collaboration with people countrywide **36 companies** are committed to creating 1,000 sustainable jobs over the next 3 to 5 years.

Mr Kenny welcomed the announcement by two companies, **Eyefinity Europe** and **Clearplas Ireland Ltd** of their intention to create 39 jobs in Ireland, which brings the total number of jobs being created to this important milestone. There is more information on the two companies on the following page.



### **Eyefinity Europe helps see jobs creation programme reach major milestone**

US company VSP Global will establish operations in Dublin, **Eyefinity Europe**, creating **20 jobs**.

Eyefinity is a developer of innovative e-commerce and practice management solutions, and electronic medical records software for the optical industry. A subsidiary of VSP Global, Eyefinity is the leading practice management software and technology company in the US.

The Eyefinity website links doctors directly to optical labs, frame and lens suppliers, and insurance carriers. Eyefinity will relocate their EMEA HQ from Paris to Dublin as well as establishing a software development operation and innovation and design entity at their base in the DCU innovation campus, Glasnevin, Dublin.

For more on Eyefinity, go to [www.eyefinity.com](http://www.eyefinity.com)



### **Meath Gaeltacht area to benefit from jobs boost as Clearplas establish operations**

A UK-based plastics reprocessing company will establish operations in Meath, creating **19 jobs in the coming year** in the Gaeltacht area.

The jobs being created are with **Clearplas Ireland Ltd**, which will open its first plastic separation, sorting and cleaning facility in Ireland. The facility, which will sort mixed dry plastics for use in manufacturing as well as reprocessing plastic products for Europe and Asia, will be located at Baile Ghib (Gibbstown) near Navan, Meath.

The 19 positions are expected to be created in the Gaeltacht area in the coming year, with more to follow. Recruitment is already under-way for a variety of technical and administrative positions.

For more on Clearplas go to [www.clearplas.com](http://www.clearplas.com)

### **Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd report 8 new jobs in 2014 and predict 11 new jobs in 2015**

One of the highlights of the year reported at the DFBA (Dunhill/Fenor/Boatstrand /Annestown) Community Enterprises Ltd AGM held on Thursday 4th December in Dunhill was the creation of 8 new commercial jobs and 2 additional 12 month Tus contracts in 2014. These included 5 small start-ups:

Anne Valley Angling Complex - 2 jobs

Pure Food Ltd- 2 jobs

Flavourhaus Ltd-2 jobs

Trish's Honey Products – 1 job

Scuba4you -1 job

Tus contracts – 2 placements

Accommodation of 2 additional start-up companies providing 10 jobs in 2015 is nearly complete. The 2 companies are Kiely Meats and Javier Garduno. Another company is considering expansion which would involve one additional job creating 11 jobs in total for 2015. This is the plan in late 2014 and many other opportunities may arise throughout 2015. The launch of a local business directory aimed at promoting local business and encouraging people to join local voluntary organisations was another highlight. Research for the directory identified 159 small businesses, 108 commercial farmers including dairy, beef, sheep, equine, deer and pigs and 59 voluntary organisations in active participation in the parish. Most parishes are the same and the CCJ 10 jobs target is highly possible with that kind enterprise and voluntary activity in play.



## A Tale of Two Small Towns — by John Higgins

**Every town and village** in Ireland needs to develop an awareness of its potential in terms of the tourism assets it has on its doorstep. Artefacts of heritage that are often taken for granted by locals can be of deep interest to a range of tourism interests. Market research has shown that the rich authentic Irish cultural experience is a product recognised by a growing number of international tourists. Communities need to be made aware of the potential of community tourism to become a primary income earner in the national interest. The value-identification process of local attractions can underpin the main Fáilte Ireland attractions and make the tourism experience even more captivating for overseas and home tourists. Community Tourism is founded on a spirit of collaboration and self-help. To achieve the complete welcoming experience requires a new network of relationships between host community and its environs. **Sense** of place drives **pride** of place and is highlighted by the care and attention displayed in maintaining and promoting that which is most attractive and interesting in local communities. The effort of Tidy Towns, heritage, recreation committees and private tourism providers is in itself a form of hospitality and community to which the stranger becomes attached.

Meath Partnership in collaboration with Roscommon LEADER Partnership contracted John Higgins & Associates (JHA) to undertake a pilot project aimed at animating the capacity of the tourism potential of two rural communities. These were **Ballaghaderreen and Oldcastle**. The process involved a series of facilitation and animation sessions to identify unique tourism features to which both Partnership companies had contributed. This research project was carried out over 18 months from late 2012 to mid- 2014. One of the outcomes from the research was the establishment of two strong Community Tourism Action Groups which are now beginning to experience some initial successes for their efforts. Their stories are set out in the following pages.



**Ballaghaderreen** is a busy market town with a population (2011) of 1,822 and 2,768 including the hinterland. The town square is dominated by Dillon House which was the ancestral home of John Blake and John & James Dillon, major figures in Irish political life. This building is headquarters of the Western Development Commission. Next door is headquarters of The Border, Midland and Western Regional Authority. The town is located on the border of Mayo and Sligo and close to Lough Gara. Historically Ballaghaderreen has been the gateway to the West on the main route from Dublin to neighbouring

County Mayo. In recent times the town was bypassed bringing a greater realisation of the need for the town to become a 'hub' of a new type of economic development.

The town has a small number of B&B accommodation units and traditional bars in the general area of the square. The recently constructed Abbeyfield Hotel with leisure centre and swimming pool is closed and local community activists are busy trying to re-open it. There is also a number of coffee shops and a spattering of grocery and clothes and general household hardware shops and pharmacies. Ireland West Airport is less than 20km from the hub and provides ready-made overseas visitor access which can be capitalised upon through a planned programme of community tourism. In 2012, 685,000 passengers used the airport with flights to and from Spain, Canary Islands, Croatia, Italy and Germany. An ambitious marketing drive could attract increased visitor numbers from these destinations.

## A Tale of Two Towns

## Ballaghaderreen Area Tourism Group

All this potential has been lying dormant for years with no effort made to produce any tourist literature on heritage, fishing and local culture including local food, music, song and dance. A co-ordinated action programme has just launched a series of tourist brochures produced by Fáilte Ireland which covers a wide range of local heritage sites and places of interest including pleasant drives to other adjacent tourist attractions within a 20 mile radius of the town.

Ballaghaderreen Area Tourism Group (BATG) is now finalising plans for the launch of its own tourism marketing cooperative. It is planning the employment of 7 trainees in the co-operative. It has employed an intern to work on priority projects which were identified through the capacity-building programme. The Group is also planning to rent more premises as a tourist information point in 2015.



Ballaghaderreen is fortunate to have a number of significant lakes and heritage sites with accompanying local legends which form the core of a new marketing package to attract visitors. BATG has decided to adopt the marketing theme of “Ballaghaderreen: Lough Gara – Lake and Legends”. Research on local folklore and legend is gradually introducing a system of interpretation for the overall theme.

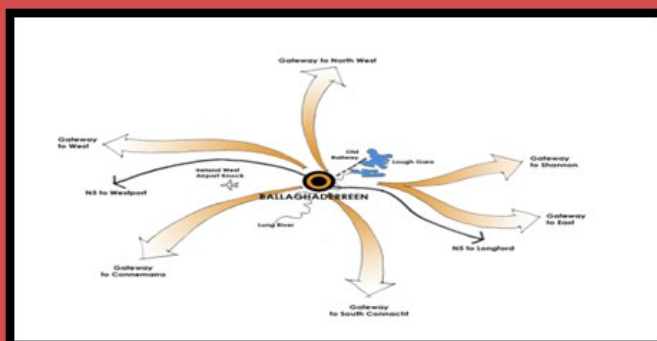
Ballaghaderreen and its outlying areas possesses many features capable of attracting visitors seeking holiday breaks and to which elements of heritage/leisure tourism are suited. The crannógs at Lough Gara provide a significant initial introduction to local heritage. Another example is the hidden treasure of a preserved stone

fort at Kilmovee which is situated just 9km from the town. The best known examples that attract tourists to similar sites are Dun Aéngus on the Aran Islands and Griánán of Aileach in Donegal. Kilmovee can join them.



A third example of a hidden treasure are The Four Altars, a ruin of penal times which is situated about 5km from Ballaghaderreen town centre on the main Sligo Road.

The BATG has now launched its vision for the area which includes further marketing of local heritage and further emphasis on local legends. This vision for Ballaghaderreen will be further developed as captured in this graphic produced courtesy of Brady Shipman Martin.



It is hoped that this vision will continue to stimulate the excellent work which has been taking place in the area for many years into the future.

## A Tale of Two Towns

### Oldcastle

Oldcastle, County Meath is a busy market town with a population of 1,384 (2011) and 2,324 with hinterland included. Oldcastle is situated close to the border of Counties Cavan and Westmeath. The town is situated on the R154 from Kells to the south-east. The town square is dominated by The Market House. The town has a small number of B&Bs and two local hotels are closed currently. There are a number of traditional bars, two coffee shops and a grocery, clothes shops and pharmacies.

The most significant features of visitor interest are



the nearby cairns at Loughcrew (4km). They attract a minimum of 5,000 visitors a year and are located on top of a range of hills known as Sliabh na Cailligh (Mountain of the Hag). Nearby are Loughcrew Gardens (home of the Naper family) which contain the chapel of St. Oliver Plunkett.

When John Higgins went on-line to commence the process of identification of worthwhile tourism assets and features he found no reference to the proximity of the Cairns at Loughcrew. The nearest hotel was identified as being in Virginia in Co Cavan. There was widespread scepticism among local community activists of the potential for significant tourism development. Very little was ever done to capture and pro

mote Loughcrew Cairns (other than Loughcrew Gardens). Neither was there any mention of lake-fishing tourism which was available in the area. The town had never produced a single tourist brochure (other than the Le Chéile Festival programme).

### The Oldcastle Experience

During the pilot programme, Oldcastle Tourism Group (OTG) was established. The Group is currently formulating new ideas and projects as well as developing the projects as identified during the animation and capacity-building period. Plans are in place to acquire premises in the town as a small Visitor Centre for the Loughcrew Cairns. All the people involved up to now in different projects are part of the Oldcastle Tourism Group. These include the Le Chéile Festival; the Gilson Summer School; Loughcrew Gardens and Activity Centre; TC –Oldcastle Cycling Club and others. OTG has developed its own logo for letterheads and literature; a “Visit Oldcastle” video on YouTube; pull-up tourism stands which it has utilised at recent events. Plans are also in place to design and launch a tourism website. The determination of OTG to bring its products to the market-place are best symbolised in the attached poster which is displayed on the new pull-up stand.



## Waterford Institute of Technology joins CCJ

Higher education institutions are called upon to play many roles in the contemporary world, according to **Dr. Richard Hayes of Waterford Institute of Technology**. No longer is it possible for universities to define themselves solely as custodians of knowledge and disseminators of tradition; increasingly, higher education institutions are expected to be engaged in dynamic and collaborative ways with the wider community.



Waterford Institute of Technology is no exception. WIT has always seen its remit as including making a contribution to regional economic develop-

ment and for many years has been an active participant in job creation, evidenced by the many successful spin-out companies that have emerged from the college (in particular from its ArcLabs Innovation Centre) and from its role in attracting multinational investment into Waterford and the wider south-east. The recent acquisition of one of WIT's

spin-out companies, FeedHenry, by a US multinational company represented one of the highest valuations to date placed on a spin-out company emanating from an Irish University or Institute of Technology. FeedHenry, which has its headquarters in Waterford, employs 65 staff with offices also in Dublin, the UK and the US. WIT's support for Communities Creating Jobs derives from its history as a supporter of and contributor to initiatives that have delivered jobs and that have made a difference to the regional economy.

More than this, however, WIT is committed generally to making a contribution to the wider quality of life of citizens in the region and beyond. WIT is committed to the principles of social justice and wishes to see all citizens benefit from wealth creation. To that end, WIT endorses and supports Communities Creating Jobs, where the creation of jobs takes place in a manner that empowers small, local communities. The community-centred approach suggests a sustainable, qualitatively rich model for development, offering an alternative to multinational direct investment which Ireland has identified as strategically important into the future. In the short term, WIT will work with CCJ on research projects to identify skills needs in areas of growth potential—such as artisan food production—with the goal of creating a strong base for community-based industries for the future.

## West Cork Brewing Company



Launched on December 13<sup>th</sup> this is the latest initiative by three West Cork school friends, Dominic Casey, Henry Thornhill and Kevin Waugh, who grew up in Baltimore and Skibbereen. Inspired by the explosion of microbreweries over the past number of years, the three friends felt there was an opening in the market to develop a quality beer product and to produce it in the heart of West Cork.

West Cork has long been associated with the best of quality artisan food so why not develop a quality artisan craft beer to stand alongside its food cousins. The new beers are being developed at Casey's Hotel, Baltimore, and the difference is nota-

ble. A core belief of Dominic, Henry and Kevin is in using the finest natural ingredients. Unlike many other beers, the West Cork beers' main ingredient, water, will be sourced from the natural spring water, which supplies Casey's Hotel. The two beers being launched are Sherkin Lass, a refreshing citrusy hoppy pale ale and Roaring Ruby, a dark ruby ale, with hints of caramel and chocolate. <https://www.facebook.com/westcorkbrewingco> is their facebook page.

# Waterford's Copper Coast Global Geopark

**Samantha Richardson reports that** 2014 has been a momentous year for the Copper Coast Global Geopark. Located along Waterford's stunning and rugged coastline, the Copper Coast is a global geopark under the auspices of UNESCO due to its geological heritage of international significance. There are 111 Global Geoparks in 32 Countries in the world. Waterford's Copper Coast is exceptional in being the smallest in the world and the only one in Europe managed by a team of dedicated local volunteers. While it may be the smallest, however, it prides itself on being the largest in the quality and authenticity of its welcomes.



Four new major new tourism products were launched this year. First is *A guide to the Copper Coast Geopark* which tells the story of the coastal villages and the accessible geological and mining heritage sites between the Comeragh Mountains and the Coast. This includes details of local heritage and activity tourism providers. Second is an innovative map of the geopark highlighting places



of interest from Copper Coast Geopark to the Comeragh's. Third is the Copper Coast Film: *'A Journey Through Time'* exploring the lives of Miners in Bunmahon, made in association with The Art Hand Studios which are located on the coast. *Virtual Tours of Tankardstown* is the fourth product and is a 3-dimensional representation of the entire site, both underground and over-ground. The underground tour highlights spectacular secondary copper mineralisation and is not to be seen anywhere else in Ireland. The over-ground tour shows panoramic scenes of how visitors can explore the site. For further information on any of these products and the Copper Coast in general, go to [www.coppercoastgeopark.com](http://www.coppercoastgeopark.com)



A Local Action Group (LAG) from Popovo, Bulgaria visited Dunhill Ecopark in October. They are pictured here with **Dr Rory Harrington and Ivailo Ivanov, President of The LAG**. They were interested in the application of the leader programme and the integrated construction wetlands which was funded under the Operational Programme "Regional Development 2007-2013".

**Further Information: CCJ Website – [www.ccj.ie](http://www.ccj.ie)  
Membership Officer Seamus Goggin at [ccj@dunhillecopark.com](mailto:ccj@dunhillecopark.com)**

**Desk Telephone 353-51-396223.**



## Loughgiel Community Association – Social Enterprise



Loughgiel Community Association - North Antrim was formed in 1988, **writes Angela O'Hagan**, initially operating from a four bedroom NIHE house and other venues. Its main purpose was to assist in the social, environmental, educational and economic development of Loughgiel. It achieved this through organising activities for older people, a nursery and an after-school facility, a youth club and a computer suite. These services proved very worthwhile as it enabled parents/guardians to return to employment as unemployment was very high in the area at that time. The lack of a central venue was identified as an urgent

need in the area, through a Community Audit in 1996. This Audit led to the development of the Millennium Centre in 2000. This project was managed from start to finish by Loughgiel Community Association and required excellent project management and financial management skills. The Centre cost one million pounds, of which the Association fundraised £50,000 through a Buy a Brick campaign. Not only did this fundraising event successfully succeed in raising the required monies, it also ensured local ownership of the centre, as the local community bought into the building. Over 40 volunteers were recruited and managed to undertake the fundraising campaign. The build was completed on time and within the allocated budget, building the capacity of the group further.

Loughgiel Community Association set up two social enterprise companies in the form of a Telecentre and a Childcare facility. The Telecentre was established to provide various services to the community including computerised training, accounting services and payroll services along with office services including telephone re-directing services & photocopying. The Telecentre enterprise was set up through the help of Audrey Murray from LEDCOM Larne. The Telecentre continues to be successful and provides key services in the area, including the computer training which is currently being funded by TWN Training for Women's Network. This enables us to train socially isolated rural woman who are unemployed or inactive in various training courses to enable them to access jobs and job opportunities.

The childcare facility has grown immensely over the last 10 years and is now seen as one of the main childcare facilities within the Loughgiel and surrounding area offering 16 preschool spaces per day and 150 afterschool spaces per week. After many years of planning and work the childcare can now boast the award of a Centre of Excellence with children now learning basic essential skills through play with the goal of giving children an advantage before starting school.

The childcare staff are fully trained in level 3 childcare and above. The facility has recently undergone a renovation as demand for childcare in the area had increased. The childcare has now separate play zones for different activities such as a water area, construction area, a library and reading area along with two external play areas fully guarded by security fencing for the children's safety. The childcare and afterschool services also have a bus service that will collect children from their own homes or schools at a minimum cost to the parent and is seen as one of the key services that sets us apart from the other childcare services now within the area. We are always looking to develop Loughgiel Community Association further to avail of the next programme or activity that is demanded by the local people and to promote good relations within the community. We envisage that the centre will continue to be thrive with the help of funding being made available and ongoing support from the community as this is what is needed for us to remain successful. For more information visit [www.loughgiel.co.uk](http://www.loughgiel.co.uk)



# Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC)

**Teresa Canavan, CEO, writes that the RDC**, the rural development organisation for Northern Ireland, works to support and encourage integrated rural development actions that recognise and value the contribution of agriculture, rural regeneration, the environment and culture in realising its vision of *'a living, working, sustainable and shared countryside'*.

***RDC has become a member of CCJ.***

Established in 1991, RDC has a track record in rural development spanning 24 years. At the heart of all its activities is the commitment to empowering and improving the quality of life of rural communities by reducing poverty, creating employment opportunities and enriching the lives of those who live there. RDC believes now more than ever that innovative and effective ways of developing our rural economy and supporting the resourcefulness of our rural communities is needed. Rural problems rarely lend themselves to simple solutions. The close and immediate inter-dependence that exists between rural communities, farmers and farm families, rural businesses and the local environment means that actions aimed at addressing rural priorities need to be joined up and carefully designed.

RDC is committed to playing its part in helping to realise the full potential of rural areas and to work in partnership with local and central government, communities, farmers, farm families, rural businesses, dwellers and stakeholders to offer a range of services to meet the needs of rural both now and in the future.

One such example of its work is the RDC managed Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) Programme. The RYE Programme aims to create greater opportunities for self-employment for young people aged 16 to 30 living in rural areas. Since 2010, RYE has welcomed over 1,000 participants in Northern Ireland through its focus on undertaking outreach activities which help engage young people in disadvantaged rural areas in enterprise awareness and entrepreneurship.

Looking to the year ahead, the RDC will continue to build on the success of the RYE Programme with a series of workshops, enterprise master classes, study visits and seminars as well as preparations for a gala awards cere-



mony in early 2016. RDC seeks to ensure that creating employment opportunities in rural areas remains a key element of all its work and will be eagerly seeking opportunities within the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 to make sure this essential component of rural regeneration remains a top priority.

RDC welcomes the opportunity to develop further collaborations with Communities Creating Jobs (CCJ) and how the resources and tools of the RYE programme in particular can be shared for the mutual benefit of our collective visions of working to support rural sustainability and community survival. For more information on RDC please visit [www.rdc.org.uk](http://www.rdc.org.uk)

RYE is funded in Northern Ireland by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development through its Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. It is currently being delivered in Northern Ireland by the RDC in partnership with Advantage (an organisation dedicated to promoting the opportunity of enterprise and employability to young people).

# The Blackstairs - A Hidden Gem

How often have we heard this about the area we love and know to be precious **asks Cornelia McCarthy?** We hear it from the visitor who happens across the gorgeous view or the charming village or the tasty meal in a local pub or the genuine warmth and camaraderie of the locals. Yet, hidden gems have a very restricted value. If you have a tourism business, you can't rely on hidden gems for bed nights, restaurant covers or even a drop at the filling station - fuel or pints! So what needs



to happen to turn the spotlight on the uncovered treasures we know to be there?

Centred in South Carlow and spanning counties Wexford and Kilkenny borders, is a mountain range called The Blackstairs

which includes Mt Leinster with its distinctive TV mast on the summit and in the foothills the valleys of the River Barrow and its towpath. Nestling in the foothills are the charming villages of Borris, St Mullins and Clonegal. Gateway villages to the stunning views of mountains and valleys are Ballon, Graiguenamanagh, Leighlinbridge and Bagenalstown. Bagenalstown, in Spring 2016 will become the address of Walsh Whiskey, currently restoring an C18th estate which will include a distillery using the valuable river Barrow, and whiskey visitor centre just off the M9, less than one hour from The Red Cow/M50.

In Autumn 2013, before this new distillery was announced, there was a huge local reaction against the pylon routes proposed by Eirgrid through the scenic area of The Blackstairs.

Out of this movement, a number of accommodation and adventure/craft/food providers in the southeast are currently joining together to promote and protect the sustainable tourism business in The Blackstairs.

Our simple aim is to 'link' the gems and create a necklace of experiences for the visitor. Each small business needs to be aware and supportive of what is provided by others and daisy chain what we have into a stronger and more visible offering. The 'culturally curious' is our target market - more likely to be independent travellers or small groups who like to go off the

beaten track and seek authentic cultural experiences.

And so...for the 'culturally curious', day trips or short breaks to the Blackstairs could include long or short mountain and river walks, kayaking on the Barrow, the wonderful spirit grocers such as the family-run O'Shea's pub in Borris village, down the road the award winning, and again family-run Stephouse Hotel, with fab food from Chef Alan Foley; the heritage houses of Huntington castle in Clonegal (with its own cellar dedicated to white witches) or popular wedding venue Borris House in its designed landscape (with self-catering farmhouse accommodation); St Mullins monastic site and Norman motte set in a glorious valley on the river Barrow also has a tasty cafe and self-catering accommodation in the Old Grainstore. Regional linkages are also critical and are being developed with Kilkenny city, Copper Coast in Co Waterford and the Saltees off Co Wexford, depending on what experience or adventure suits the traveller.

Our network of tourism providers also includes local walking groups who know the mountains inside out. The wonderful Mary White of Blackstairs Eco-trails offers foraging trips in the wild and then tea in the old rectory. We are also glad to include in our membership the soon-to-be reopened-bunk-house/hostel accommodation for walkers, in the tiny hamlet of Rathanna. Eric Osbourne (an architect who recently returned home from London) is developing the 'Storehouse' accommodation for hill-walkers and his business includes a fabulous country pub which has been in his family for generations.



Set up in summer 2014, the network is currently developing a website to show the beauty of the area. By this time next year, we will have hosted a number of study tours of the area for tourism providers, neighbouring networks, heritage groups, environmental bodies, community groups and stakeholders in the immediate area and in the South-East region. Please contact [info@theblackstairs.com](mailto:info@theblackstairs.com) if you wish to attend a half-day study tour of the area.

The challenge is to make the hidden gems visible, while maintaining their authenticity.

### **Ballyvourney Group and Moate Community Action Group visit Dunhill Ecopark and Integrated Constructed Wetlands.**

Dr Rory Harrington, scientist and ecologist with Seamus Goggin (CCJ Membership Officer) hosted a group from Ballyvourney, West Cork who travelled to Dunhill to study the integrated constructed wetlands and the Dunhill Ecopark site. The team was led by Peadar O Riada.



All involved were delighted with the visit. A CCJ objective is to encourage site visits and share information while encouraging groups to adapt

and replicate what they find is relevant to their own communities.

On Tuesday November 25<sup>th</sup> Moate Community Action Group visited Dunhill to share information on enterprise developments in both communities. Moate

has major plans in train to regenerate the mid-land town over the next few years. Included in the group were Councillor Tom Farrell, Fr Liam Farrell, Peter Dolan, Willie Allen and Sean Keane with Senan Cooke Dunhill



### **Ballyhoura Development Offers Briefing Sessions on Charities Regulation.**

The Charities Regulatory Authority came into effect on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The almost 8,500 registered charities in Ireland will face significant changes in how they are governed and operate on a day-to-day basis as a result.

In response, Ballyhoura Development Ltd (the local development company covering east Limerick and north Cork), in association with CramdenTech, organised a series of information sessions in November in Kilmallock, Caherconlish and Kilbehenny for charitable organisations to help them gain a better understanding of the remit of the Charities Regulator. They were briefed on the type of information required for reporting purposes, how to prepare for charities regulation, implications of freely available information about registered charities, and other future compliance responsibilities.

The sessions also demonstrated a cloud-based support tool aimed at improving governance and management in non-profit organisations developed by CramdenTech ([www.cramdentechsolutions.com](http://www.cramdentechsolutions.com)) which may help



boards, committees, directors and trustees in the new regulatory environment.

The online system provides a suite of practical applications, including an Agenda and Minutes Builder, Risk Register, Compliance Tracker, Document Storage, Board Diary and events calendar, and Management Dashboard as well as the online Board-PASS governance training developed by CramdenTech all bundled into one easy-to-use system. Ballyhoura Development encouraged the use of this system as not only will it prove helpful to boards and committees to track compliance and improve board decision-making but also it provides practical re-

sources for organisation complying with the Charities Regulator's future reporting requirements. It is anticipated that further briefing sessions will be held early 2015 as part of a wider Community Governance Initiative focused on improving community group governance structures, knowledge of committee roles and responsibilities, compliance with regulation and adherence to codes and standards, best practices in finance, fundraising and more effective communications.

## Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) Nominated For Award

As 2014, the year during which UCIT made the provision of its Social Finance available to the entire island, draws to a close there's much to reflect on. At this stage, UCIT investment (€50 million to date) is present in each of the four provinces, with clients now developing communities from Belfast to Cork, and from Dublin to Galway.

What is even more encouraging is that despite the impending lull in terms of the availability of some grants such as the Rural Development Programme, the appetite for term loan finance, outside of such grant related projects continues to increase. This suggests a positive trend in the growth of communities who are striving to do things for themselves, and UCIT are happy to be in the position where assistance can be offered to enable them achieve their goals.

Our assistance has been used to various ends, from Soccer Clubs erecting floodlights, GAA and Athletic clubs purchasing their own lands, Community Centres upgrading facilities for the first time in over 30 years, to other faith based groups acquiring multi-purpose centres for community activities. We also look forward to some pioneering community energy projects in 2015 which we are actively assessing. On the basis of the latter, UCIT have been invited to present to an international delegation of local authority officials in Dublin City Hall in December.

At the time of writing, UCIT are grateful to have been nominated for *The Essence Award* (Charity Company Category). The Essence Award celebrates, appreciates, inspires and encourages people and organisations that have positively impacted communities and enhanced lives selflessly to do more. Though this event is organised by Women of Essence (Esther Group), the award is open to all individuals and organisations. The awards night is also a fundraiser for The Children's Medical & Research Foundation (Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin), so everyone's a winner on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. Whatever the outcome, we are all looking forward to being part of the night.

To follow up on our grassroots approach to assisting communities develop from within, UCIT are currently scheduling almost 30 dates across the island at which our now well-established **Investor Readiness Session** will be

presented. The event is normally well attended by groups who are at least exploring the possibility of accessing finance (€30k - €500k) to develop community based projects. UCIT are pleased to announce the following dates have been confirmed, with more details available from our website ([www.ucitltd.com](http://www.ucitltd.com)) in the New Year.

21 <sup>st</sup> January	Ardee
28 <sup>th</sup> January	Cavan
4 <sup>th</sup> February	Enniscorthy
11 <sup>th</sup> February	Dunhill, Waterford
18 <sup>th</sup> February	Carmichael Centre, Dublin
25 <sup>th</sup> February	Meath
4 <sup>th</sup> March	Carndonagh, Inishowen
11 <sup>th</sup> March	Longford
18 <sup>th</sup> March	Listowel, Kerry
26 <sup>th</sup> March	Galway
15 <sup>th</sup> April	Castleblayney, Monaghan
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Dun Laoghaire

As more dates are confirmed these will be updated to our website ([www.ucitltd.com](http://www.ucitltd.com)). If you wish to keep up with developments within UCIT, please feel free to email [donal@ucitltd.com](mailto:donal@ucitltd.com) at your convenience and we can add your details to our mailing list.

On behalf of all in the UCIT group, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all communities connected with CCJ a Merry Christmas and productive New Year.



# Ferbane Business & Technology Park

**Ferbane is an energetic town with a population of circa 1,500 people writes Kevin P Gavin.** Situated on the river Brosna in West Offaly, it is just 15 minutes from Athlone and within 30 minutes of the other two gateway towns of Tullamore and Mullingar. The town offers the best of both worlds for business and living. Ferbane provides a very proactive business environment for companies and start-ups which want to locate in the town.

## Background

Ireland's first milled-peat fired power station was commissioned by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) at Ferbane in 1957. However, on the station's closure in 2001 and subsequent rationalization as a result of Technological advancement by both Board na Mona and the ESB within the Peat industry, there was a reduction of over 1,000 jobs in the Ferbane catchment area. In order to respond to this scenario and to secure a viable future for the town of Ferbane and its hinterland a Ferbane Town Development Committee was established to draw up a Five Year Town Development Plan.

This 5 year plan which was prepared by the Tipperary Institute (*which is now amalgamated with LIT and is a member of CCJ Ed.*) in consultation with the local community and statutory bodies in the region outlined a vision statement to articulate the type of place people wished Ferbane to become and this continues to strongly influence the type of programmes and projects that are being implemented in the town.

A critical element in facilitating employment generation opportunities in Ferbane was the provision of suitable enterprise space for business start-ups in the area to foster a culture of local enterprise. To this end Ferbane Business & Technology Park Ltd. was established in 2003.

This is a not-for-profit, voluntary group, owned by the Community whose objective is to support the creation of jobs in the Ferbane Catchment Area by providing infrastructure and supports to encourage business start-

ups. Successful discussions with Offaly Co Council in 2003 resulted in the acquisition of 5 acres from a 55-acre site known as "the Cow Park" which the Council had just taken over from the Department of Lands.



By mid-2004, funding was obtained through a combination of local fundraising, bank borrowing and grant aid from Shannon Development and the ESB Sponsored "West Offaly Enterprise Fund" managed by Offaly Council. This enabled Ferbane Enterprise Group to proceed with work on the development of Community Enterprise units in what is now known as "Ferbane Business & Technology Park" in Ferbane. Construction work started in May 2004 and provided for a 1395 sq m Enterprise space which was completed in March 2005 (465 sq m IT Office Centre and 930 sq m of Industrial units), where in excess of 40 additional jobs for Ferbane are now located.

A new Community Creche "Bright Beginnings" funded under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme was also built on the site. This "not for profit" community project which is in operation since 2006 presently has 13 employees (either full or part-time) and provides childcare facilities for approximately 60 children from the area.





Offaly Co Council continued with the development of the remainder of the site for private development and a number of companies are now operating successfully from this location.

### Recent Developments

Although business continues to develop successfully in the Business & Technology Park The Board of Ferbane Business and Technology Park Ltd realised that as a community group they must become more proactive in identifying alternative business for the Park.

To this end a feasibility study was conducted in 2012 to test the potential viability of establishing a food business in Park. This research kindly funded by Offaly Local Development Company identified a Vision and Development Plan for a Ferbane Food Campus to be located in Ferbane Business & Technology Park.

The plan focused on two separate areas within the campus. Phase 1 of this project involved the development of a Time-share Kitchen and Training facility in Ferbane Business and Technology Park. A Time-share Kitchen is a new and innovative concept in food production. Essentially, this means that Ferbane Food Campus provides and maintains a fully equipped, high spec kitchen that is available to start-up and other companies to test their recipes and production methods.

Phase 2 involves the securing of suitable buildings in the Business Park or elsewhere in Ferbane for conversion into Food Incubation Units for potential clients. This phase of the project is currently under development. The Ferbane Food Campus project has the potential to increase existing employment levels from 40 to in excess of 100 people over a two year period as well as providing the local farming community with the opportunity of supplying required raw material to Food Producers setting up operations in the Ferbane Catchment Area.



**Ecotrek Ballybunion** was founded by Danny Houlihan a local historian in Ballybunion County Kerry. Its aim is to establish and promote historical walks and talks on the natural environment in the Ballybunion, Beale and Asdee areas of North Kerry. This work is not Government funded and relies on donations and help from the local community. In 2014 Danny Houlihan received a Silver Award from Ecotourism Ireland. Ecotrek is de-



veloping a 5 year plan connecting rural areas and heritage sites. Danny hopes to have a full product including walking and cycling tours and lectures in line with sustainable practices. He expects that a number of sustainable jobs can be created. Included in the photo above is Danny

Houlihan, piper, entertaining American visitors on one of his eco-tours during the summer. For more visit [www.ecotrekballybunion.com](http://www.ecotrekballybunion.com)

## New Enterprises

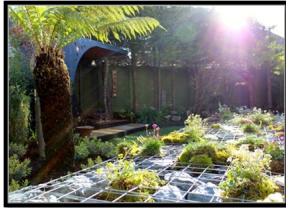


Cian Hawes is a qualified horticulturist from WIT in Waterford.

Pure Food Company is an up and coming artisan food company that started production in 2013. It is based in Dunhill Ecopark Co. Waterford and was established by Cian and fellow horticulturalist Paul Power. The company offers an excellent range of seasonally influenced pesto's, chilli sauces, sweet sauces and preserves.

To learn more about Pure Food company, visit its Website at [www.purefoodcompany.ie](http://www.purefoodcompany.ie). Or ring Mobile 087-1349777 Or Email: [info@purefoodcompany.ie](mailto:info@purefoodcompany.ie)

Cian Hawes, Winner of RTE Super Garden of the Year 2014 and Co-Founder of Pure Food Ltd, Dunhill Ecopark, Ballyphilip, Dunhill, Co. Waterford



### Outstanding Craftsman

John Hayes Fenor Co. Waterford displayed his chain-saw craft skills at the ploughing championships at Ratheniska Co. Laois. John and his Special Branch Carvings business is becoming well known in East Waterford for his creativity with wood carvings .

He was invited by an Italian company Camsaw Ltd. to demonstrate his skills at the ploughing championships. Thousands of people visited his demonstration area and were very complimentary of his work. John is a director of DFBA Community Enterprises Ltd, a member organisation of CCJ.



## Social Enterprise, Entrepreneurship Task Force (SEETF) –

**Brendan Whelan** writes that SEETF was established in 2009 to promote social enterprise and social entrepreneurship as a vibrant and viable part of the Irish economy and society. Its principal areas of work are:

- Developing and refining policy on the general areas of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship
- Building closer links with government on relevant policy issues
- Making a detailed submission to Forfas in the development of the Forfas July 2013 Report.

### **SEETF produced two policy papers:**

- Social Task Group Manifesto 2010 (24/6/2010)
- Unlocking the Potential of Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship: A Submission to Forfas (July 2012)

A number of meetings were held with government promoting the importance of social enterprise and seeking action on its development. There is significant opportunity through social enterprise to create new job opportunities and regenerate urban and rural communities through social, economic and cultural innovations at a time of great need for new job opportunities in communities.

In July 2013 the government launched its report (Forfas, July 2013) with a set of recommendations and it was adopted as the official policy document of government development of social enterprise. In 2013, Sean Sherlock T.D. Minister for State for Research & Innovation was appointed to take charge of social enterprise and the implementation of the recommendations in the Forfas Report (July 2013).

He established an inter-departmental group which held several meetings with SEETF to progress the agenda. In the mid 2014 government reshuffle the minister of state was transferred to the Department of Foreign Affairs. SEETF is now waiting on confirmation on who has been appointed to take charge of social enterprise. At a recent meeting in November the Task Force decided to change the name to **Social Enterprise Task Force (SETF)**.

### **What is the Social Enterprise Task Force?**

SETF comprises a committed group of individuals involved in the social enterprise sector, who share a common interest in developing the sector creating new job opportunities for the unemployed which will be of real benefit to communities throughout Ireland.



### **What is its purpose?**

- Act as a unifying and coherent voice for the social enterprise sector
- Advocate for and promote the interests of the sector
- Drive the development of appropriate and relevant policy and initiatives to support the sector
- Promote research into social enterprise and to act as a conduit for international best practice
- Act as the interface between the sector and national decision-makers.

### **What does it not do?**

It is not a network organisation like The Wheel, nor does it provide services to social enterprises. Rather it confines itself to acting as an advocacy/representative body interfacing with state and other organisations to influence policy on social enterprise.

### **What is its Vision?**

That in ten years' time Ireland will have developed a thriving and significantly larger social enterprise sector.

### Who is currently on the SEETF?

Organisations which represent the following aspects of social enterprise:

- Social finance (currently Clann Credo and Social Finance Foundation).
- Social entrepreneurship (currently Social Entrepreneurs Ireland).
- Social enterprises (currently Speedpak and Partas in Dublin and Dunhill Rural Enterprises Ltd and one other social enterprise from rural Ireland yet to be invited to become a member).
- Networks of relevance (currently Irish Social Enterprise Network and Irish Local Development Network)
- Local Development bodies (currently Ballymun/Whitehall and Ballyhoura Local Development Companies).
- Representative bodies (currently The Wheel and Communities Creating Jobs).
- Third level institutions (DCU and UCC to be invited to become members)
- Members must make a financial contribution (cash or in-kind) to the running of SETF.

### SEETF's objectives for the next three years

The following are SEETF's priorities.

#### *Research*

SEETF will drive the research agenda on social enterprise in Ireland in order to inform the development of best practice and to alert the sector to future trends.

#### *Capacity building*

SEETF will act to change mind-sets at policy level about social enterprise through awareness raising, consultation, provision of evidence and input to policy.

#### *Policy*

SETF will advocate for the implementation of the Forfas recommendations. In particular it will focus on the implementation of recommendations regarding adapting a national policy, capacity building through the LEOs and LDCs, procurement, data about the sector and funding and finance for the sector.

#### *Implementation*

SETF will work to ensure the effective implementation of policy relevant to social enterprise.

#### *Communication*

SETF will act to create coherent policy proposals that all players in the social enterprise sector can support and will communicate these proposals with relevant stakeholders.

### LIT Continues its work for CCJ

LIT is continuing to carry out work for CCJ. The staff of the Development Unit based in Thurles has joined forces with CCJ Board member Pat Fleming to pilot the CCJ model in a number of communities in Tipperary. The intention of this pilot project is to oversee the application of the 10—point CCJ community enterprise development model and to review its effectiveness with the communities involved. This will enable the model to be refined and any difficulties with it to be identified. John Kennedy, Derek Blackweir, Dermot Carroll and Ciaran Lynch have a lot of experience in community development



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AND ENGAGEMENT

and commercial enterprise development. A number of communities which have expressed an interest in social and community enterprise will be contacted before Christmas and work on the implementation and review of the model will commence in earnest in the New Year.

In addition to its work on the implementation of the model LIT continues to host the Board meetings of CCJ and to assist with the development and management of the Governance of the organisation. This work is part of the Institute's commitment to social inclusion and enterprise development as CCJ addresses both issues.

## Creating and Supporting Jobs in the Local Community

**Ivan McPhillips**, a lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Community Development at the GMIT writes about his experiences as a founding director with **SCCUL** (*St. Columba's Credit Union Limited*), Ballybane since its inception in 2002. Ballybane is located on the eastern suburbs 4 miles side of Galway city and is adjacent to the Dublin Road Campus of GMIT.

In 1998 Galway City Council started consultations with the Ballybane community with regard to community revitalisation. Ballybane at that time resembled many disadvantaged communities around Ireland. It was an underdeveloped area, lacking private sector investment and deprived of services. Ballybane had a population of 8,500 and at that time had an unemployment rate of 32% and a youth unemployment rate of 41%. A high percentage of 16-25 year-olds had no leaving certificate qualifications.



St. Columba's Credit Union in Mervue, Galway responded with an innovative proposal for development in Ballybane. Talks with St. Columba's Credit Union, Galway City Council, and the community commenced. In December 2000 **SCCUL** was formed in co-operation with St. Columba's Credit Union and Galway City Council.

The objective of SCCUL Enterprises Ltd is to address unemployment, emigration, social exclusion and poverty through the promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurship in the community.

The Board of SCCUL has seven directors; five elected from among the directors/supervisors of St. Columba's Credit Union; one nominated from the City Council, and one representative from the business community who is myself through my work in enterprise in GMIT. To date SCCUL has developed two major infrastructure projects, the Ballybane Neighbourhood Village and the Ballybane Enterprise Centre.

**The Ballybane Neighbourhood Village**, opened in 2004, was a village concept consisting of:

- An Enterprise Centre of fifteen units of various sizes for entrepreneurs
- A Library for Ballybane which now has 4,500 users
- An ultra-modern Day Hospital for the HSE called An Lá Nua
- Three Retail Shopping Units, a Credit Union office and Garda office
- Ten Duplex Housing units and one two Bedroom house

This project enjoyed tax relief under the Urban Renewal Scheme for commercial, industrial and residential developments. The cost of building Phase 1 was **€8 million** which was borrowed from St. Columba's Credit Union. The SCCUL Board decided to sell the Neighbourhood Village in lots, netting **€14 million**.

The Ballybane Neighbourhood Village was the first ever project from Ireland to receive a nomination for the very prestigious UN Habitat Awards and has been the recipient of two national awards.



With the profits from the sale of Phase 1, an 18,000 square foot Enterprise centre (Phase 2) was built adjacent to Ballybane church. This incorporated 18 independent units including Pod desk space for 16 communal/individual work stations and also has shared office facilities, 5 conference rooms and a holistic suite with 5 psychotherapy rooms. Monthly free seminars on a range of business issues are held for clients of SCCUL. The total cost of Phase 2 was €3 million and the centre was officially opened in October 2007. All the units are full and approximately 150 full time jobs have been created in the enterprise centre.

The centre is based on a social inclusion model. Current tenants of the enterprise centre include Solaris Botanicals, Hurlóg, Waste Management Solutions, Lorg Fine Art Printmakers, HealthSET and the Brothers of Charity who have two of the units.

### SCCUL Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

This was an initiative established in 2010 to support and help foster SME's in the Galway region, city and county. It is harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit of our local people and providing the opportunities to take the next step. Now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year it receives a yearly total prize fund of over €50,000 from SCCUL and advertising/promotional packages for the overall and category winners in association with the Galway Independent, Galway City Council and other sponsors.

John McGuire of ImeeGolf, a company based at the liBC, GMIT, was the overall winner of the €10,000 top prize in the first year of the SCCUL Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2010 and his product GAMEGOLF was recently used by US President Barack Obama. This wearable technology is now available in 55 countries.

**SCCULmentors.ie**  
Giving pro-bono access to business expertise and wisdom

SCCUL Mentors is a mentoring programme launched in May 2012 for small business owners and start-up emerging businesses in Galway city and county. It provides pro-bono access to business expertise and advice for small businesses or those with business ideas that may have difficulty accessing such expertise. A panel of over 90 experienced mentors have supported 300 mentees to date.

### Clarinbridge Sanctuary

In 2013 SCCUL developed a sanctuary in Clarinbridge, County Galway. Its Mission is to allow people in the local community to care for those at a loss

and in need of support and to provide a sanctuary where local people can improve their wellbeing, gain new perspectives and have a respite from the daily challenges that they face. The Sanctuary is used to deliver programmes that are heavily subsidised by SCCUL by Cancer Support, MS Support, Parkinson's Support, Bereavement Support, Carers Support, Mental wellbeing Support, Affected by Suicide Support, Elderly Support, and the Unemployed.



### Conclusion

One of St. Columbas Credit Union's operating principles is "the Concept of Human Development and the Brotherhood of mankind, best expressed through people working together to achieve a better life for themselves and their children". The projects run by SCCUL to date are original and ground-breaking developments with objectives that brought communities together giving much needed facilities and supports. I want to thank the project visionaries who worked with me in bringing these and other projects to fruition. A friend of mine recently quoted the following Chinese proverb about SCCUL's work, which says a lot.

*"One generation plants the trees; the next gets the shade"*

**Ivan McPhillips, SCCUL Director 2002-2014,**  
[Ivan.mcphillips@gmit.ie](mailto:Ivan.mcphillips@gmit.ie) visit [www.sccul.ie](http://www.sccul.ie) or phone  
Ballybane Enterprise Centre at 091 386004

