Dear PPN Members,

This edition of the PPN Newsletter is dedicated to highlighting the tremendous efforts of the people of Galway. We have seen many examples of heroic community spirit and we would like to say a big thank you to all involved, in whatever capacity, in the Community Call.

THANK YOU!

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**Welcome**

Welcome to this the second edition of our Newsletter. Covid-19 has taken over the world and Galway County PPN (Public Participation Network) is no different. We had so many plans to do so many things with you the community organisations throughout the county. All of these plans are on hold at the moment, hopefully the situation will improve as the year goes by.

Galway County PPN is made up of 920 community organisations representing the 3 sectors: the Community & Voluntary Social Inclusion and the Environmental pillar. The PPN is managed by an 11-member executive called the Secretariat and I am the chairperson. My role is to act as a link between the Secretariat and Galway County Council as many of the programs and events are jointly run and promoted for the benefit of you, the community organisations. These include promoting the County Council Community Support Grants and the Cathaoirelach awards which recognise community groups and individuals who have made a significant contribution to their communities.

One of our key roles is to provide you with information and this year has been exceptional in the amount of information we have received on Covid-19 which we have passed on to you. To date in 2020 we have sent over 75,000 emails to you all. This works out at 50 emails to each of our 1500 contacts year to date.

Part of our plans for 2020 is to produce a regular newsletter which will be available on our website [www.galwaycountyppn.ie](http://www.galwaycountyppn.ie). The website contains details of all the groups registered with the PPN and we will be adding more information on a regular basis. We hope to reduce the amount of emails we send and focus on the other media platforms the website, Facebook and Twitter.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without recognising the many groups and individuals who have answered the call to help the vulnerable in our community in so many different ways: by collecting shopping and prescriptions, as well as being a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

Finally, I have to announce that our Resource Worker Niamh Seoige has decided to take up another position with the HSE. Many of you will have had dealings with Niamh in the short time she has been with us and we will miss her enthusiasm and dedication to make the PPN better and more relevant to you.

Charlotte May has recently taken up a position as PPN Support worker and she is bringing a fresh focus to the PPN. Charlotte is there to help you and support the work of the PPN. Rita Cunnane continues in her administrator role to make sure that all relevant emails are sent out promptly and we thank her for her dedication to the task in these trying times.

Pass on the information in this newsletter to anyone in your community you think may need it and remember: joining the PPN is free and easy on our website [www.galwaycountyppn.ie](http://www.galwaycountyppn.ie).

Thank you once again to all our community organisations and volunteers and Galway County Council Covid-19 team and keep safe.

Vincent Lyons,
Chairperson, Galway County PPN Secretariat
What’s Going on in Galway?

Galway County Council Community Call

Galway County Council COVID-19 Community Response Forum

A helpdesk will respond to the needs of vulnerable members of our community. Vulnerable members of the community or those living alone who need deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels or essential transport can call this Confidential Freephone Number and staff will get assistance for you.

Call 1800 92 88 94 (Freephone)
Lines Open 9.00am to 6.00pm (Monday to Sunday)
Email covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie

The Community Response Forum is a collaboration of State Agencies, An Gualadh, HSE, Local Development Groups, MN, Voluntary Groups, Sporting Bodies and Key Services across our County. The new phone line is just one aspect of the Community’s work. We are all contributing to the community-wide effort to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Fórum Freagartha Pobail COVID-19 Chomhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe

Glacfaidh deasc chabhraigh glaoanna ó dháoine leochailleacha sa phobal a bhfíoll riachtainn acu le linn na gásachlíme. Feadfaidh dáine leochailleacha sa phobal rí déo ina gcónaí leo fén a bhlasaíonn uethu teacht ar eanai gróisearta cogas nó breaslaí, go bhfuil an Uimhir Saorighlao faoi Rún seo agus gheobhaidh an fhíonair cúnachm duit i do cheantar féin.

Glaogha 1800 92 88 94 (Saorghla)
Linte Oscaíte 9.00am go 6.00pm (Luan go Domhnach)
Ríomhphost covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie

Fórum i gceantar é Fórum Freagartha. Gníomhaíonn sé as An Gualadh, HSE, Grup Éadan, MN, agus Phobail deartháir. Ó dheas a bhfuil an eolas duine i do cheantar a cheart a bhfuil an eolas i do cheantar a dhéanamh. An bhfuil an eolas i do cheantar a dhéanamh?

Galway County Council Covid 19 Emergency Fund

The COVID-19 Emergency Fund is a grant programme to provide funding to groups that are directly involved in the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Find out more here and here in Irish.

If you have any queries, please contact the Community Development Section at 091 509 390 or covidsupport@galwaycoco.ie
Take Part! Galway Beo Project

The Heritage Office, Galway County Council and the communities of the County of Galway launch a project to celebrate the heritage in Galway.

Our heritage is everywhere around us in old buildings and graveyards, streets and country lanes, rivers and coastlines, hedgerows and gardens, stories and songs. Let’s highlight and share the rich heritage of the County of Galway.

Please send in a photograph, drawing, poem or story to help celebrate the wonderful heritage of the County of Galway. We will upload as much as possible our website: https://galwaycommunityheritage.org/ and Galway Beo Facebook page to share with all.

Email your contribution to: Galwaybeo@gmail.com

Connemara National Park

Competition Time!

Connemara National Park are inviting members of the public to participate in a series of competitions over the coming weeks. The series includes: short story, poetry, art & photography competitions.

Entry details are available on the website here.

Staying Active and Busy

Exercise Booklet

To promote daily physical activity at home among older adults who are currently cocooning due to COVID-19, Healthy Galway City and Healthy County Galway, in partnership with Galway Sports Partnership have adapted an Exercise Leaflet developed by HSE Physio Services in Cork, for use in Galway.

The Booklet attached can be downloaded here.

Hard copies are also available. Please contact: kcodyre@galwaycoco.ie
Staying Connected

GETTING THROUGH COVID-19 TOGETHER - Mental health and wellbeing initiative to support people during COVID-19

The Department of Health and HSE, in collaboration with a range of cross-Government partners, have launched a mental health and wellbeing initiative that offers support and resources to help deal with the stress, anxiety and isolation currently experienced by many in Ireland during COVID-19. 

[Gov.ie/together](Gov.ie/together) is a new online resource that will offer advice to help people cope at home and that will promote the mental health supports and resources available on the HSE’s [YourMentalHealth.ie](YourMentalHealth.ie).

Also, extra support is available in this period on the phone or online.

County of Galway Virtual tidy towns Project

While everyone is staying safe at home and maintaining social distancing many people are still doing things such as cutting the grass (remembering to leave areas uncut for pollinators!), planting bee-friendly flowers in the garden, feeding the birds, preventing, reducing, and segregating their waste, composting, etc. Consider using social media to share with your community what you are doing in your own home and garden for the benefit of your community and the environment.

Likewise if you are out for a short walk near your homes while maintaining social distancing send a photo or picture of any nature and wildlife or heritage features you encounter to your local Tidy Towns group Facebook page to share with others or set up a new virtual tidy towns page for your area.

For tips and suggestions check out the [County of Galway Virtual Tidy Towns Facebook page](County of Galway Virtual Tidy Towns Facebook page) or email Galwayvirtualtt@gmail.com
Poem

Joan Kavanagh, Chair of Galway Older People’s Council has written a wonderful poem based on her experiences of COVID19 and cocooning. Well done Joan this is a really lovely piece.

Galway responds to the Community Call

Athenry Clubs

The Athenry Association Football Club have 14 volunteers in their Covid-19 response volunteer group that support the Galway County Council Community response forum. Working together with the Athenry Community First Responders Group they are providing essential services to individuals in the greater Athenry, Craughwell, Monivea, Kiltullagh area.

To date the volunteers have assisted in getting vital groceries to cocooning members in the community. They have helped provide broadband to a cocooning resident to allow video calls, delivered vital prescriptions, bled a boiler for a cocooning pensioner in an emergency situation. The conversations at distance when doing these tasks provide a vital link for those cocooning to the outside world. Being able to help those in need is a rewarding experience for the volunteers involved.

St Marys GAA also have an active volunteer group and have put up signs showing support for frontline workers around the town.

Athenry Community First Responders Group are doing tremendous work and have responded and delegated over 200 calls to over 30 garda vetted volunteers. The groups in Athenry would particularly like to thank Gearoid Kennedy for his individual patience, diligence, organization and care that has been commendable- A true hero in this difficult time.

The Athenry CFR are working with the Craughwell & Ballymanagh CFR Group, the LCDPM CFR Group and the Turloughmore CFR Group to people that are self-isolating during the Pandemic. These groups offer many free services in the wider Galway area including social phone calls, shopping, posting letters, collecting medicines and fuel, dropping off recycling, to name a few.
Galway Indian Cultural Community

The Galway Indian Cultural Community (GICC) have set up a task force of 19 people in different areas in County Galway. They connected volunteers with those requiring help using social media and arranged a free taxi service to people in need.

The GICC identified that there are lots of international students in Galway that are stranded, far away from home and their families. To help them the GICC sourced around 400 kgs of food items from different suppliers, such as rice, wheat flour, peas, oil, pickles, dal etc. and made up small food kits and delivered these to the students as per their request.

FoodCloud and Oranmore Community Employment Scheme

The Community Employment scheme in Oranmore are busy working as part of the FoodCloud project distributing surplus food countrywide to charities and social enterprises from its hubs in Dublin, Cork and Oranmore, Galway. They have delivery runs servicing an array of charities from Limerick to Mayo and as far east as Athlone from their hub.

Pictured are: Conor Mahon, Pat Cunningham, Martin Macdonald (volunteering from Galway Rural Development) and Sebastian Bratuszewski
Loughrea Youth Club

Loughrea Youth Project staff are facilitating 5 active weekly youth group Zoom meetings, with the main objective being fun and connection between the existing youth membership. The engagement during these sessions has been really encouraging: They have been to space, quizzed, checked in and explored our feelings about the pandemic.

The Loughrea Youth Project are beginning to discuss alternative strategies for their planned projects: Mindout, Music Generation, a Targeted Transition Programme, a new youth group for young people with additional needs and a Youth Council programme for Loughrea.

The project staff report of young people’s resilience in this crazy time, their catching optimism and ability to bring laughter which is an important part of the interaction they are having at the moment.

Rules and Boundaries transcending into the digital Loughrea Youth Project

Munitearas Teo

Staff and helpers in Munitearas Teo are busy preparing hot meals for those in need during COVID-19 and distribute these across the Ceantar na nOileán.
Galway Traveller Movement

The Traveller community in Tuam organised a fundraiser and raised €1000 for medical staff at UHG. This funding was to go towards meals for medical staff. The Traveller community recognised the hard and tremendous efforts that doctors, nurses, and health care staff, are currently doing.

Read more here.

Pictured at the cheque presentation outside UHG, and all keeping a good 2m between them, are Mr John O’Donnell, Consultant in Emergency Medicine; Marie Burns, Director of Nursing; Deirdre O’Brien, Clinical Nurse Manager 3, Emergency Department and Chris Kane General Manager, GUH.

Volunteer Galway


Original source here

So first off I want to give a massive thank you to each and every one of you that has signed up to help us right now. So much of what we are currently exposed to is utterly overwhelming but let me tell you on behalf of all of the team, the response that we have witnessed from the public is utterly overwhelming in the most positive way. I’m deeply grateful to work in the heart of the community and be witness to the heart of the community at this point in a time that feels so fragile.

[...]

We’re being kinder, we’re staying more connected, we’re helping out more, we’re thinking of the most vulnerable more, and we’re offering
more gratitude for all the good stuff we have in our lives – the simple things like going for a walk and listening to the birds, friends and family and laughter and for all the love that we have in our life.

[...]

One thing I often encounter when I meet people who walk through our door down the west is a sense of uncertainty around whether what they can offer is enough. People might ask me “Will my English be enough?”... “Will my experience be enough?”... “Will my time be enough? – And the message I so passionately aim to extend to each of them is Yes- because you are enough, your gift of service is enough, a gift that you offer in your vulnerability and your bravery that not only enriches your life but enriches our community. Thank you.

Right now we are all feeling vulnerable and we are all reaching out to help and be helped.

Thank you!

A Big THANK YOU to All involved in the community call