

IRISH RURAL LINK

Winter Newsletter

December 2019



The Board and Staff of Irish Rural Link would like to wish all our members, partners and supporters a very Happy and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We would like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2019.

Irish Rural Link Information Day

Irish Rural Link held its annual Information Day on Rural Services in Buswells Hotel, Dublin on the 14th November. A number of organisations including Meals on Wheels from Castlebar and Longford, Local Link, Louth Meath Fingal Local Link/Flexibus, Moynalty Mens Shed, Longford Women's Link, African Caribbean Diaspora Centre, Community Wetlands Forum and National Rural Network. Projects IRL are involved - Getting Citizens Online, IT Skills for Farming, Local Public Banking, The Next Chapter and European projects - Rubizmo, DELSA and Sustain it.

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring, TD addressed attendees and spoke with all the groups who were there. Around 50 TD's and Senators dropped into the event throughout the day.



Members of Moynalty Sheds with Michael Ring Minister for Rural and Community, at IRL Information Day.

EU Projects

RUBIZMO - Mid-Term Progress Meeting and Conference



Peadar Casey and Clodagh Barry, Members of the Irish Rubizmo National Stakeholder Panel with Louise Lennon and Seamus Boland, IRL and Andrew Forde, DRCD who presented the Government's new Social Enterprise Strategy at the conference

RUBIZMO partners met in Brussels on the 22nd and 23rd of October for its Mid-Term Progress Meeting. The meeting reviewed the work to date and the next steps.

The first findings of the project were shared at a conference on the 24th October. Over 100 European Stakeholders, from policy makers to representatives of trade associations and cooperatives, working hard to make rural development a reality across Europe attended the event which took place at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels.

As part of the conference an Awards ceremony took place for the most inspiring examples of rural business success among the business cases selected for the project. Awards were presented to one business in each of the three categories of Food, Bio-based value chain and ecosystem services. Dunhill Ecopark in Co. Waterford was nominated in the ecosystem services and came a very close second in the ecosystem services category.

More information about the conference, copies of speakers presentations and videos as well as details of the award winners are available on <https://rubizmo.eu/news/view/3c7e7e32-7ef3-4497-8f91-a4a76f77f266>

You can follow the project on twitter @RUBIZMO and website <https://rubizmo.eu/>



DELSA Partners pictured above at our meeting in Budapest

DELSA

IRL, is lead partner in DELSA - Digital Empowerment for Low Skilled Adults. The consortium have developed modules for the online platform.

These modules were discussed at the Partner meeting that took place in Budapest in October. They are being finalised at present with testing and validating of the modules commencing early in the new year.

More information about the project is available on www.digitaldelsa.eu

SustainIT

The partners in SustainIT have also worked on developing modules for Sustainable Tourism over the past few months. These are currently being finalised and translated into 5 languages. The next partner meeting will take place in Malaga in February to discuss and agree the testing and validating of the modules in each of the partnering countries. The goal of the Project is to reinforce capacities of European workers and professionals in the sustainable tourism sector to enhance their employability while reigniting the sectors' growth and competitiveness.

More details about Sustainit is available on www.sustainit.eu

MICRO

The MICRO project is now complete but the Online Educational Resources are still available for FREE on the project website <http://www.microsmetraining.eu/>



Getting Citizens Online and IT Skills for Farmers



Participants from Claregalway HUB receive their IT Skills for Farmers Computer Course Certificate.

Classes are now coming to a close for 2019, but will be back early in 2020 - so keep an eye on your local community notes and our website www.irishrurallink.ie

These classes run for 5 weeks, 2 hours a week and are FREE to attend. The classes are aimed at any person who has never used a computer before, with the classes teaching participants how to use the internet, online banking, email, pay bill online, Skype etc. The 'IT Skills for Farmers' courses help farmers to register calves and herd movements as well as the basic skills also.

If you know anyone who would be interested in or would benefit from one of these classes, please contact Mary Keyes, Programme Coordinator, on 090 6482744 or Maryk@irishrurallink.ie or you can search the map for a class near you https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1HCmFsxcCTIFj390bjIRZ_urz927YNqhH&ll=53.37084448323444%2C-8.125986099999977&z=8

National Rural Network

New National Rural Network LEADER Newsletter

Every year the National Rural Network (NRN) produce a number of LEADER newsletters, along with their regular quarterly newsletters, to keep everyone updated on all things LEADER. This latest issue contains a number of items including an update on how the LEADER programme

(2014-2020) is progressing so far and importantly, this newsletter also gives a step by step guide on how people can develop their own applications for projects that are eligible for LEADER funding. A number of articles in this latest newsletter point to excellent resources hosted on the NRN website which can help people, communities and businesses to develop their own projects that can avail of LEADER grant aid. These include an Implementing Partner (IP) and Local Action Group (LAG) database to allow people to identify their nearest IP and LAG to help them kick-start and develop their LEADER projects. Other resources include storyboards, case study booklets and a new LEADER video series so that people can get inspiration and see what is possible for their own projects and communities from LEADER funding. This newsletter also details some events, such as the Smart Villages and Rural Towns event that took place on July 4th in Athlone, to provide updates on key developments that have happened over the past few months surrounding LEADER. For the full newsletter please see: <https://www.nationalruralnetwork.ie/news/newsletter/>

Irish Translation of EIP-AGRI Booklet Launch

The NRN team at NUI Galway, Dr Shane Conway and Dr Maura Farrell, have designed and produced an Irish language version of a booklet highlighting and promoting Ireland's 23 EIP-AGRI Operational Group projects funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) under Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020.

This publication was officially launched by Dr Conway and Gráinne Ni Chonghaile of Caomhnú Arann EIP Project at an EIP-AGRI workshop at this year's Burren Winterage School on Thursday the 24th of October 2019 at the Spa Wells Centre, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare. The launch of this booklet coincided with a workshop on the EIP-AGRI initiative at this event entitled 'EIP-AGRI: Lessons Learned Through Shared Experiences'.

A piece about this launch and a link to the booklet can be found on the [NRN website](#).

Policy and Advocacy

IRL made a Submission to DRCD Rural Development Policy 2020, It also attended a number of seminars and stakeholder forums including, the Health Reform Alliance Slaintecare Event. SDG Stakeholder Forum in Dublin Castle in October and December, the Positive Ageing Stakeholder Forum and Social Enterprise Conference.

With our colleagues in the C&V Pillar a number of Bilateral meetings with Government Departments also took place over the past few months including meetings with Department of Health and Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Networks

Community Wetlands Forum



Participants at the workshop for the development of a new training framework for community groups in Clara Bog Visitor Centre

CWF Member & Stakeholder meeting

The last meeting of the 2019 for CWF members and stakeholders took place on Tuesday, 5 November 2019 in the Clara Bog Visitors Centre. On the agenda were the training framework study led by Dr Catherine Farrell on behalf of the CWF, the initial results of a questionnaire to scope an online portal for communities engaging with wetlands, as well the hosting of a series of regional or site specific events to celebrate wetlands & peatlands in the summer of 2020 in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Data Centre. A sincere thank you to the NPWS and staff for accommodating us in the Clara Bog Visitors Centre on various occasions this year.



Marcus Malley & Chris McCarney with Michael Long from Cabragh

Collaborating and sharing knowledge:

The CWF hosted Marcus Malley and Chris McCarney from the Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council on familiarisation visits to CWF member sites - Abbeylax Bog, Cabragh Wetlands, ETHOS Tyrrellspass & Clara Bog Visitors Centre. ABC Borough Council is a partner in the EU Cross-border Interreg CANN-Project.

Training

The CWF completed 3 projects during 2019, all primarily aimed at building capacity amongst members and strengthening collaboration with stakeholders. These projects were made possible through EPA small grants. The first project delivered a document with guidelines for communities managing local wetlands and peatlands, authored by Dr Craig Bullock. CWF hope to publish the document early in the new year. A second project scoped a training framework for CWF members led by Dr Catherine Farrell. Also completed was a scoping study by Vicki O'Donnell to define the structure of a user-friendly information portal for citizens to engage with their wetland habitats. www.communitywetlandsforum.ie



Training framework workshop on 1 October in Clara Bog Visitors Centre

Scooping up the Honours

CWF were nominated in two categories at the recent Spark Change Awards and were the winner in the Connector Award category for its innovative and impactful ways to engage multiple stakeholders or build networks to generate the transformational change needed to make the SDGs a reality. The award ceremony took place in Dublin Castle on the 18th October. Over the past year, dozens of community and voluntary groups have been working on local projects to make Ireland more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The Spark Change Awards highlighted these inspiring stories. Eleven organisations from across Ireland were shortlisted in six categories. The awards were the culmination of [Spark Change](#), a collaborative project of The Wheel and Trinity College Dublin, funded by the EPA.



Vincent Carragher, Spark Change and Gearoid O'Foighill, Schoboy bog, Cloughjordan and CWF member with Chris Uys Development Officer Community Wetlands Forum receiving Spark Change Awards on behalf of the CWF.



Girley Bog Meaitheal members at the Pride of Place Awards Ceremony & Ned Gilligan & Eileen Fahy of Kiltreevan Tidy Towns receiving award from Minister Heather Humphreys

2019 was a good year for various group and individual members of CWF. Kiltreevan Tidy Towns took Second Place in the Tidy Towns Sustainable Development Award, whilst Abbeylax Bog took top honours in the Heritage category of the National Lottery Good Causes Awards. Recently Girley Bog Meaitheal was the winner of Creative Place Initiative category of the Pride of Place Competition. In October Tina Claffey was awarded an Honourable Mention at the International Photography Awards in New York for her book 'Tapestry of Light' on Ireland's bogs and wetlands.

Meals on Wheels



The Meals on Wheels Network attended IRL Information Day in Buswells in November, pictured above Deirdre Waldron (Castlebar Social Services) Minister Michael Ring and Eoin Harrison (Longford Social Services)

Local Public Banking

Irish Rural Link continue to work with Sparkassen Germany on the Local Public Banking and continue to engage with Government and political parties on this.

In The News



New Collaboration - Saolta

Irish Rural Link is one of five partners in a new programme to develop a training programme on the Sustainable Development Goals called 'Saolta'

Saolta is a new Development Education strategic partnership programme for the Adult and Community Education sector in Ireland. Development Perspectives is the lead partner in the consortium, which also includes [AONTAS](#), [Concern Worldwide](#), [Irish Rural Link](#) and the [Adult and Community Education Dept of NUIM](#).

Saolta, an Irish word that translates to 'Worldly Wise' is the perfect title as the programme will explore a variety of global issues with stakeholders from the Adult and Community Education sector along with encouraging action across Irish society. Issues such as poverty, inequality and climate change will feature strongly as areas of engagement.

The programme will target Adult and Community Education workers in a variety of ways including interactive workshops with Further Education Institutions and Public Participation Networks across the country.

Another aspect of 'Saolta' - The [SDG Advocate programme](#) will offer active citizens an opportunity to represent their community, by becoming one of Ireland's positive changemakers. The eight-month training course will allow the advocates to deepen their understanding of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, represent the project internationally and lead transformative change in Ireland. The chosen participants will travel to Vietnam or Tanzania for 2 weeks for a work/study visit that will afford an invaluable chance to experience first-hand perspectives and challenges that people face in a different global context.

Other facets of the programme will involve coaching and mentoring, webinars, networking meetings along with a library of resources which will also be produced over the next 2- 3 years.

The Development Perspectives team is excited at the possibilities this innovative new partnership will present. Bobby McCormack, Co-founder and Director of Development Perspectives, says: "Education needs to be transformative in order to be truly effective - this is what we will offer through Saolta. We believe that informed and engaged citizens are best placed to address complex social, economic and environmental issues and working with a variety of multipliers throughout Irish society is the best way to create these active citizens."

CALLING ALL...

CHANGE MAKERS

ADULT EDUCATORS

COMMUNITY LEADERS

APPLY TODAY TO BECOME AN

SDG ADVOCATE 2020

www.developmentperspectives.ie/advocate.html



PEACE PLUS Stakeholder Engagement Events

PEACE PLUS is a new EU cross-border programme that will contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The programme will achieve this by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to the cross-border economic and territorial development of the region. It will build upon previous **PEACE** and **INTERREG Programmes**.

SEUPB are seeking the input of the public to help shape the content of this programme. The stakeholder engagement process started on **10 December 2019** and will run until **25 February 2020**. All relevant documents and list and dates and venues of Stakeholder Engagement Events are available on <https://www.seupb.eu/peaceplus>

PHOTO GALLERY - Irish Rural Link Information Day, 14 November in Buswells Hotel







Irish Rural Link is core funded by the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development through Pobal.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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