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BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 10 Issue 4: Oct '20 - Nov '20

FREE

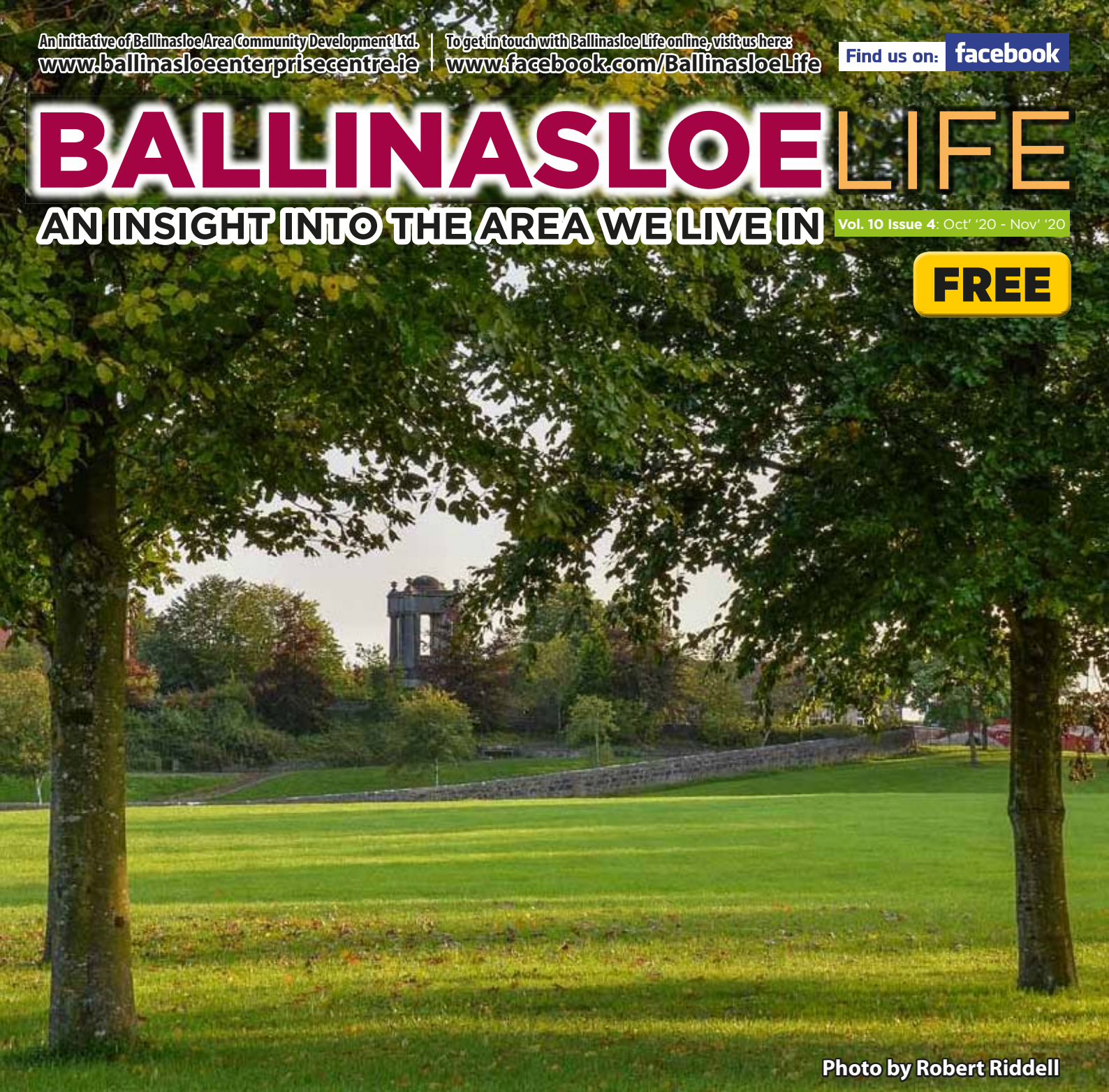


Photo by Robert Riddell

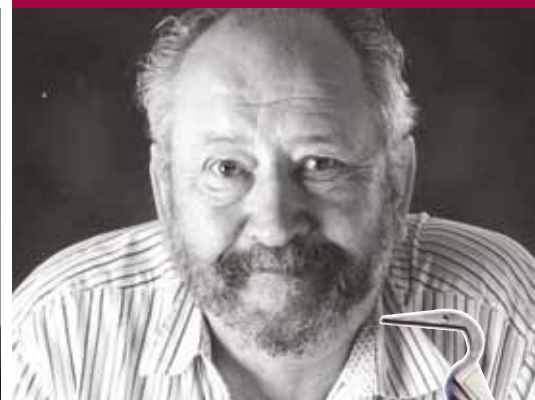
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REAMHRA

Welcome to Volume 10 issue 4

Another few weeks of a Covid infused early Autumn has passed as we try and make sense of living in the Snakes and Ladders world of stages 2,3 and 4 where we move up and down, to the merciless drumbeat of confirmed cases and fatalities.

On the bright side the kids have gone back to school and most of the town centre is drivable for the first time in nearly 26 months. I am reminded by a Dutch saying that "during a storm the meek seek shelter while the opportunistic build windmills".

Congrats to our country GAA Club – Padraig Pearse – who have managed to field two senior teams in small ball and big ball to their County Finals. Their nailbiting success of their hurlers is testament to all elements of their Club pulling together and striving against difficult odds. It is something to celebrate, not in a grudging way because it happens on a different bank of the River, but because it should encourage us all. Huge congrats also to our Golfers who obtained a historic double header – in winning both the Jimmy Bruen and Junior Cup Championships as we go to press. We will have fuller reports on both these achievements in next edition.

The Windmill that is the local Credit Union reached a milestone in investing a massive cumulative €800,000 since a small inoffensive fund was approved by the members at an AGM in 1998 to invest in the Social Enterprise of the Common Bond Area. At an average of €36,000 per annum of grants for some of the most worthwhile community activities in our area, it is magnificent gesture of solidarity.

Articles and Photos Welcome

NEXT ISSUE
Deadline 11th Nov

For submission of articles, please email:
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To advertise your events contact:
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by 6th November

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The first two weekends of October will be different this year given we have no Fair & Festival to look forward to. It just shows us all that we live in a very unpredictable World and with the Technology and ease of travel it has become a very small place, all interlinked.

The now annual Zombie Walk has also been cancelled due to the Pandemic and the ongoing issues with the spread of the virus in crowd gatherings.

We will however have our new Christmas Lights in place on Saturday 21st November, which will have the Town looking amazing and we hope they will encourage everyone in the community to come into town and support our local town centre businesses over the festive period.

At this stage it is great that all schools are open and a limited sports calendar has been managed.

Despite the ongoing limitations and restrictions we have to plan ahead and with that in mind the Company (Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd) have made a detailed submission to Galway County Council which we presented to our local area Councillors for the new 5 year Area Plan. From this we will expand it out with our ambitions and aspirations for the kind of town we will have in 10 years' time and what



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For context - in February of this year Galway County Council's grants in the whole of the new Ballinasloe Municipal Electoral area for Festivals, Arts, Culture and Heritage totalled €24,650! In this edition there is the tale of two firms, one that came to town 40 years ago focused on the domestic market and created sustainable employment for some 55 workers. They invested €6 million of their own funds to build and fit a state of the art factory with minimal support from the various agencies. The other was lured to a customised park and plant paid for by the Irish tax payer and after their 20 years of grant farming production is over they are shipping the machines in crates to parts of the world for cheaper labour.

Foreign Direct Investment has had its uses, perhaps with the new EU harmonisation of tax codes, it has had its run but realistically the debate is practically over in our community as to where the agencies priorities lie. The 20 summers of cutting silage in a 12 acre business park while we congest the roads East and West commuting for work and a family firm is apparently left to its own devices should be evidence enough.

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



we can try and do during that 10 years to make it happen. All submissions are to the plan are visible on the Galway County Council Website.

It is very disappointing to note that in their submission that Failte Ireland have made little or no reference to Ballinasloe and its hinterland in regard to greenways / walks and trails / Cycleways / Monastic settlements / Marina and Suck Valley Way and neither the Aughrim Interpretative Centre or the Great October Fair, which has brought people from all over the World to our district, have not got a mention?

We welcome the appointment of the new Tourism Officer in Galway County Council, Ruth Mulhern and expect to see her spending her time evenly across the whole of the County and addressing the issues and gaps raised above.

Wash your hands regularly, keep your distance and stay safe.

SEAMUS DUFFY,
Chairman Ballinasloe Area Community Development Limited.



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BEC
Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre
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SHOPFRONT AND FACADE SUPPORT SCHEME BY LIAM COSGROVE

A new pilot streetscape enhancement scheme was launched by Galway County Council for Ballinasloe and Athenry. Managed by the Regeneration team in the Council's Community & Enterprise section; the main goal is to reinvigorate the town, increase footfall and reduce vacant units. With Main St., Dunlo St. and Society St., along with the Square included in the scheme, businesses could apply for 50% of costs up to a maximum of €4,000.

Senator Aisling Dolan was delighted to see the uptake "This is a fantastic once in a lifetime opportunity to make our town shine. When visiting businesses to promote the scheme, it was great to see the interest and commitment especially in such challenging times – there is a real pride back in our town" she noted.

This is a competitive process and the next stage is to work with Galway Co Council to fund the maximum amount in the area. The Streetscape Enhancement is to help businesses and premises owners - especially after the material impact of roadworks during

the Street Enhancement works over the past 2 years."I'm also following up in particular on the poor condition vacant sites at Hayden's Hotel and the adjacent shop unit on Dunlo St. with the Environment section at Galway County Council" stated Aisling.

Welcoming the scheme uptake and supports Cllr Evelyn Parsons stated "At a time of unprecedented challenges for local businesses, who need their communities to support them and shop local if they are to weather the pandemic storm. Ensuring services are delivered safely and adjusting lives and livelihoods to navigate the uncertain road ahead will form the core of my commitment."

Meanwhile the Development Company were successful in their application to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme with funding for the shop Ballinasloe – Digital Market Place, Ballinasloe Promotional Signage, Christmas Festival Experience and a Temporary Parklet Cluster Pilot (development of outdoor hospitality and service street pods) – in the region of €40,000.

LEO Galway is available to provide advice assistance mentorship to established and start-up businesses including trading online vouchers, financial supports, COVID 19 supports and Brexit Ready Supports.

OUR CHRISTMAS NOT FOR CANCELLING

Since January of this year The Town Team have been very busy in making sure, irrespective of the stages of COVID we are at, there will be a bright Christmas Glow to the Town Centre this year.

Detailed costings and plans were submitted to GRD over the lockdown and summer months and the group were successful in getting some €86,000 of a new €130,000 illuminations project, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme are pledging some €9,000 towards the capital costs and the local Credit Union allocated some €4,000 from their Social Fund and that leaves a balance of €30,000 between the business subscribers and community.

On average, individual firms and business premises have contributed some €10,000 per annum and the

Zombie Walk and raffles at Town Team events typically cover the shortfall. As there is no Zombie Walk this year the team have come up with a MONSTER Community Christmas Draw with some 10 prizes valued at over €5,000 and tickets at €5 each or 3 for a €10.

Some of the larger firms in the locality have generously donated significant prizes and the tickets will go on sale from mid-October with the draw date on the 19th of Dec. – in time to perhaps help with some Xmas pressies.

The new set of Lights and illuminations will be turned on Saturday, November 21st with COVID compliant details of how we can do so safely closer to the time. Everyone is asked to please purchase at least one ticket towards the costs of our new lights – they can also be bought online on ShopBallinasloe.ie.



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125 NEW HOUSES TO BE BUILT

BY LIAM COSGROVE

78 apartments and houses have been approved for construction in the town. The new residential complex proposed will be located on Dunlo Hill constructed and promoted by private development company, Limehill Esker Ltd. The site is east of Tesco and Aldi stores. It'll be a 3.44ha site with large open areas for the public.

Consisting of 38 apartments in five blocks and 40 detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses, it will be served by 154 parking spaces for inhabitants and be the first mixed Apartment block and mixed house residential complex in the community.

Limehill Esker Ltd had originally hoped to build 88 houses and apartments, but the development was denied by the planners and a subsequent application was revised to 78. Buildings were also reduced in height from three storeys to two storeys. The development will also include a creche and office space. It was approved along with 35 conditions and the Council will have access to some units for social and affordable housing.

The Council opted in favour of public open space and additional footpaths. All electricity, telephone, television, public lighting and other cables associated with the site will be laid underground. The public landscaping, outdoor playgrounds and gym must be agreed on with the county council before any construction commences. Limehill Esker Ltd have to pay a contribution of €392,000 towards the provision of public utilities and other services.

The development will compliment the CLUID 17 unit retired housing complex recently finished behind the Aldi Store. It is believed site works will commence shortly with the homes and apartments going for pre-sale late in 2021 and delivery of first tranche in spring 2022.

On the Roscommon side of the Suck, planning permission has been applied to build a new estate with 47 residential units in Kilgarve. Originally part of a huge wrap around piece of land from the cemetery wall to Roscarl and as far back as the HSE lands – this developer is only using about a third of the site in this phase. During the last few months of the Celtic Tiger era the site was to be developed by

the then owner, O'Malley Construction and had outline planning for over 180 units.

The developers, Carbon Sole Ltd, need to demolish a bungalow on Church Street which lies on the planned construction site and will provide the roadway into the 15 acre site.

The plans include a build of 22 semi-detached two-storey houses, four detached bungalows, 5 terraced bungalows which will vary from two and three bed units and 16 two-storey houses. There'll be a children's playground built along with a large green area. This mix of unit is significant for town in that it reflects Census demographic realities and requirements of the lone suburban dweller, the retiree, the professional couple or indeed the single parent family.

The existing avenue would be replaced by the construction of a new entrance onto the R446 Dublin Road with the establishment of 79 car parking spaces for residents and visitors. 24 bicycle parking spaces will be assembled with two separate stands and mounts to be positioned at the back of each house.

Significant objections were made to the application and the Creagh Community Development Council made a detailed submission to Galway County Council pointing out some of their problem perspectives.

A decision is still to be made on the planning with no confirmation date is set as of yet. All told when sold/ leased these developments could boost the population by as much as 300 persons.



78 houses site location



47 houses site location

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AREA'S NEWEST COUNCILLOR SETTLES INTO ROLE

Dr. Evelyn Parsons, a graduate of NUIG Medicine, a vocationally trained GP, a HSE doctor in Community Medicine of some 25 years experience with a deep commitment to public service, has worked exclusively in the public sector throughout career and was in the midst of the Midlands HSE response to the current COVID Pandemic; finds herself the County Council's newest Councillor.

Deeply embedded with solid bonds and life long roots in Ballinasloe, East Galway, through her mother and her many relatives in Menlough and Moylough. She was reared in An Spidéal, 9th in family of 10 with six sisters and three brothers from a shop business and post office background- well used to serving the public from a young age!

Like many in 1980's, she emigrated to UK - there completed postgraduate GP vocational training and Royal College Membership -overseeing the development of a purpose built thriving GP NHS practice in Europe's largest council estate - Wythenshawe, Manchester.

She now lives in Beechlawn with husband Vincent, and is mother to Jack, Fintan, Sally and Béibhinn - a busy family actively steeped in many of Ballinasloe's fantastic activities and sports, schools and community groups, clubs and facilities over the past 25 years.

Among roles as parent, spouse, doctor, family carer, sports supporter, public sector employee, community environmental activist, supporter of the Arts, and female she is well placed to have experienced a broad range of societal issues which will inform her work as a public representative.

As the only female Councillor on Ballinasloe Municipal District, aware of barriers to women getting elected, she has an

acute responsibility to fulfil the will of the electorate by providing more balanced representation not only for women's voices but also for men, for people of all backgrounds, for people with disabilities, and people with diverse needs.

She was a committed member of Ballinasloe Says No - a community activism group who helped protect the Suck Callows SPA and Poolboy bogs from a waste transfer facility operation.

"I am extremely honoured to be co-opted as an Independent Councillor and I will work closely with local councillors at Municipal District and Galway County level and with national representatives to protect support and positively promote all aspects of living working and visiting Ballinasloe and East Galway. A huge thanks to my family, friends, neighbours and the many people who have contacted me directly to wish me well. I've been overwhelmed by their kind messages of support and encouragement. I'm grateful to Senator Dolan for nominating me and to my fellow councillors, executive and public representatives who have been extremely welcoming and helpful", states Dr. Evelyn Francis Parsons.

Her core priorities are Health, Environment, Investment, promoting Ireland's Hidden Heartlands Tourism Development, advocating to route



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As a committee member of the Regional Health Forum West, she will keep focus on continuing investment and ongoing development of Portiuncula University Hospital, maintaining scrutiny on the quality of health services affecting our community including child adolescent and adult mental health issues arising especially in the context of the current pandemic.

She has had the following undertaking in writing from HSE West - The contract for the enabling works has been awarded to Carey Developments Ltd, They began on the 17th of August 2020 and are scheduled to be completed by mid-2021. The contract also includes for upgrade works to the Radiology department which are due for completion in February 2021, assuming no cessation of works due to Covid 19 issues.

The HSE have also confirmed to her that the intention would be to go to tender for the 50 bed unit to shortlisted contractors around year end with a view to then being in a position to commence works in Q3 2021 subject to approval of contract award in 2021. The new ward block itself is likely to take 15 to 18 months to build.

As a member of the Special Policy Committee on Biodiversity/Climate Action she will maintain vigilance on environmental issues to safeguard against challenges affecting planetary and human health and to embrace opportunities which support biodiversity including supporting sustainability objectives. This will also play into a focus on tourism and active outdoor leisure development as part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Greenway Development and extending regionally across the midlands too through Just Transition initiatives.

"At the September Municipal District meeting I welcomed news of €1.1million to upgrade footways and laneways in the Ballinasloe / East Galway under Active Travel and Climate Action Initiatives

which our engineers and council will access this winter. This will add greatly to the prior enhancement works when completed, attract more footfall and improve accessibility" explains Cllr. Parsons.

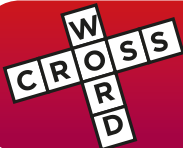
At Municipal District meeting in the wake of the APTAR Closure she called for immediate concentrated governmental focus on providing employment and attracting alternative industries to Ballinasloe.

She is adamant that it's timely to revive our heritage and location to capitalise as the Hosting Town of the Heartlands, hosting town of the Dublin to Galway Greenway, as well as the hosting town of the Beara Breifne Way (indeed the only large town on the BBW). The Grand Canal basin ends here which links Ballinasloe's heritage to Guinness Storehouse - the top tourist attraction nationally. While aware of the Blueway, our marina and importance of the Aughrim Battlefield she feels we need to rethink other elements under our feet.

"Clonfert Cathedral is of cultural international significance in a similar manner to its better known sister site Clonmacnoise, the top tourist attraction in Midlands. Additional ecclesiastical sister sites developed under the O'Kelly patronage are located at Clontuskert and Kilconnell Priors, lending themselves to a pilgrim trail, or an O'Kelly trail with an even wider radius of heritage sites throughout East Galway. Great work also is being carried out by many strong community heritage and geneology groups" enthuses Cllr Parsons.

Scope exists to develop a Saint's and Sinner's Tour or a Saint's and Scholar's Trail or A St Brendan the Navigator immersive experience on land and water. St Brigid's Hospital and grounds has massive potential for development as a major tourist destination venue either as a Museum or Interpretative centre also.

Her contact details are Email efrancisparkers@cllr.galwaycoco.ie, Mobile 0871365793, Website www.galway.ie Cllr Dr Evelyn Francis Parsons, Facebook @CllrEvelynParsons, Instagram cllr_evelynparsons.



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When asked about her office opening in the town, newly-elected Sinn Féin's Claire Kerrane replied "I made a commitment to the people of Ballinasloe in the election that if elected, I would open an office in the town. It was never an option not to have an office to serve the people of Ballinasloe and East Galway. I was always conscious of the fact that I am not from Ballinasloe and so, I was adamant I would have somewhere for people to go if they need help or assistance – my office is there for them and their families, if and when they need it".

She was looking for a premises in the town for some time after the election and of course, Covid made the search even more difficult. As it turned out, local party member and former Councillor and businessman Mícheál Breathnach, decided he would not be continuing with his business on Bridge Street and so, it worked out well for her to take it over.

Unfortunately, the office has taken longer to renovate than she would have liked and Covid had an impact on getting work done. The place had to be stripped out completely, followed by painting and electrics. They put in a partition for privacy for when she is meeting constituents and they also had to put in flooring in part of the office. Everything she could source locally was used. "I also had great help from party members and friends locally and it was a great team effort and I am very proud of it" stated Claire.

Like most constituency offices, there'll be one staff member employed in the office. She intends to be as flexible as possible when it comes to meeting constituents. The Dáil sits every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and plans to spend every Monday in Ballinasloe and every Friday in the Ballaghaderreen office. She will be available to meet constituents all day on Mondays and of course, when the Dáil is in recess, there'll be more availability in both Ballinasloe and also in other parts of East Galway.

Claire Kerrane is the party spokesperson on Social Protection and Rural Development and has launched a campaign on Household Debt and as part of that, an online survey (which people can find a link to on her Facebook page) to get this issue on the agenda. "Since Covid hit, household debt has increased – workers and families are under pressure like never before with rents, mortgage repayments, bills coupled with a loss of income for many. I have also been busy raising the threat to EU Regional funding for the West of Ireland and has produced policy on issues affecting Lone Parents, Carers, Jobseekers and Older People", says Claire.



Claire pictured with Constituency Officer Dan Watters and Cllr Dermot Connolly preparing for the move in

When it comes to the town specifically, she believes the next two months must be about supporting businesses as they re-open while Covid continues as well as supporting organisations and key services in ensuring that as many as possible can keep their doors open. We also need to ensure that Portiuncula Hospital is well resourced as the pressure of Covid continues into the Winter months.

The office can be contacted anytime on 090 964 4901 or by email at claire.kerrane@oireachtas.ie. The office will be open 9am to 5pm for clinics by appointment with her every Monday (and later if needed), 9am to 4pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays and 9am to 1pm on Fridays.

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We would like to thank everyone for all the support this year. It's been challenging for everyone but we in Utopia are taking as much care and caution as possible during these crazy times.

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Retail Excellence and the CSO tell us that the largest period for domestic retail spend is the fourth quarter – covering the Black Friday through Xmas and maybe a little of the New Year Sales.

Given that the lockdown took some 100 plus days out of many businesses, the Big Dig stunted most high street retailers and service providers for the last 24 months with on off disruption and the moves to online shopping. The ShopBallinasloe.ie team are announcing the new Ballinasloe Town Voucher, launching Thursday, 15 October.

The vouchers are just like any other voucher but rather than limit you to one store, you can chose any store in town – a full list of participating retailers will be available on www.shopballinasloe.ie and there is no best before date on the voucher !

These new vouchers are a unique gift alternative which can be used in participating retailers in Ballinasloe and the surrounds and give shoppers a fantastic variety of choice on what to spend their vouchers on while benefiting the town on the whole. The Vouchers can be used in restaurants, cafes, hairdressers, beauty salons, homeware, clothing and even on fuel! Keeping as much as our spending local!

They are a perfect gift idea for Birthdays, Christmas, Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, Retirements etc. A thoughtful and useful gift for all. As we head into the busy gifting season – these vouchers make an ideal bespoke solution for the relative – son, daughter, cousin, grandchild who is overseas and would like their relative to have the comfort of choosing something special from them – either from the comfort of their own home, or at least their own local suppliers.

The idea is simple, asking businesses and consumers in the local area and connected to us - to support the local economy, to attract new business and to help ensure our town prospers.

The Ballinasloe Town Voucher will be commission free and can only be spent locally thus supporting community activity spending and employment.

The money we spend locally is worth up to 5 times that to the local economy as the currency continues to circulate in the same area. This is called the local multiplier effect and is a proven feature of our economy. Retailers and Service Supplies can participate in the scheme by logging online. This initiative is backed by BACD and Ballinasloe Credit Union and encourages shoppers to 'Shop Local – Shop Ballinasloe', keep our community in business and in turn ensuring local activities are supported.

Vouchers can currently be purchased from:

- Salmons Dept. Store, Main Street
- J&S Photos, Society Street
- Dolan's Centra, Creagh
- www.shopballinasloe.ie

Find the project on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for competitions and latest information, just search 'Shop Ballinasloe'.



L-R: Joe Glennon, Honoria Mitchell Black, Lyn Donnelly, Niamh Creaven Connaughton, Marian Brady, Seamus Duffy, Dave Ansley



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APTAR CONFIRM CLOSURE

BY LIAM COSGROVE



Aptar have recently confirmed the loss of 115 jobs in the town by December. They arrived to a warehouse in Poolboy in November 2000. They were the first firm on the new IDA Park in November 2002, occupying 2750 square metres. In 2008, to keep up with worldwide demand, the group expanded the plant to 6100 square metres and moved to 24/7 production. Their focus was on internal parts for perfumery, cosmetics and pharma supply applications.

The decision to cease production after 20 year follows a review of operations due to competitive market conditions that have necessitated strategic cost savings across its operations, and in particular its manufacturing facilities. There was no mention of the state aid schemes coming to an end after 20 years.

In a statement, Aptar says the plant will be closed by December, with machinery to be transferred from the Ballinasloe factory between September and November to it is believed South America.

TD Denis Naughten brought this issue to Tanaiste Leo Varadraker and he assured him that he would bring all parties together to speak on this issue. However, the Western Region Enterprise Committee failed to specifically consider the pending job losses.

Naughten said "I am deeply disappointed that the Western Region Enterprise Committee failed to specifically consider the pending job losses at Aptar in Ballinasloe, despite a specific request to do so

by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. It is unacceptable that the plight of job creation in Ballinasloe has not been discussed by this high-level enterprise committee, particularly when the committee was requested to do so by its line-Minister, An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar".

Sinn Féin TD Claire Kerrane said "The confirmation that Aptar will cease production by December with the loss of 115 jobs comes as a major blow at an already difficult time for everyone. This was the latest reply I had received from Minister Varadkar on Aptar and the need, at that time to secure the jobs, as I had hoped. Following this announcement, I will now go back to the Minister on the specifics as to job creation in town. It is an especially sad time for workers and their families. I have been in touch with the local Social Welfare Office where all supports will be made available".

Senator Eugene Murphy shared his opinion "This is a massive blow to the town of Ballinasloe and wider region and comes at the worst possible time as the economy attempts to deal from the fallout of Covid19. Unfortunately, Ballinasloe has lacked any significant investment for the past ten years and we have witnessed the closure of many factories and companies in recent years in the area. Proper investment for town is an issue which the Government will have to address as the town has been hemorrhaging for many years and it is time to stop the drain".

Local Senator Aisling Dolan is working closely with An Tánaiste Leo Varadkar. "I will ensure that employee supports are in place and that IDA and Enterprise Ireland are actively showcasing available facilities for new investment. The Tánaiste will also shortly appoint a new chairperson to the West Regional Enterprise Plan (West REPS) Steering Committee previously Gerard Kilcommins from Medtronic" stated Aisling. This is one of 9 regional plans developed in 2019 under the Dept of Business & Enterprise working with EI, IDA, LEOs to target employment specifically in the West under Life Sciences & AgTech" states Aisling.

At a recent West REPs meeting, IDA representatives confirmed that they were in ongoing contact with employees and management. Both IDA and Enterprise Ireland confirmed that the Aptar Employee Skills Audit and Plant layout will be used to market new investment potential to Ballinasloe.



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Ballinasloe Area Community Development Company CLG made a very exhaustive and detailed submission to Galway County Council's new Draft Development Plan in the last few weeks and is number 148 of the listed public submissions on the Council's website.

The plan, which was workshopped extensively by various sub committees and the Board of Directors itself, argues for a core three pillars of the community's focus for the next decade which must be: (as based on BACD's emerging 10-year Plan for the town) • Sustainable Living Town (Enterprise and Remote Working prioritised) • Tourism (including Heritage and Genealogy Development) • Healthcare (Becoming the centre of excellence for mental health).

Specifically, the 5 year Statutory Plan needs to prioritise:

1. The fast tracking of the releasing of the final tranche of capital monies transferred to Galway County Council from the UDC for the development of River Park, Walks and Main Street Rear Development, which was first advocated in the Town Development Plan of 1985 and again in all of the 1990s plan.
2. The Plan must set out timescales and milestones in the implementation phases. A cursory read of the last plan 2015 – 2021 in relation to the town shows how little has been achieved.
3. The St. Brigid's Hospital Complex development needs to be agreed upon and implemented with the relevant state agencies.
4. The North Western Regional Assembly RSES Report and its designation of priorities for the town (As one it's 9 Key Towns) must underpin all development objectives.
5. To spatially and sustainably develop the county as a counterbalance to population migration and apparent congested activity of the City – Ballinasloe needs to be earmarked for aggressive population growth.
6. The Plan must create a template for working on resource and infrastructural collaboration between the Eastern – frontier of Galway County, South Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly, who all make up our Eastern and Southern hinterland and under the Just



At the briefing on the Submission by BACD Officers to Municipal District Councillors
Front row: Cllr Evelyn Parsons, Cllr Peter Keaveney, Seamus Duffy (Chair BACD),
Back Row: Cllr Dermot Connolly, Cllr Micheal Connolly, Brian King (Vice-chair BACD)
 Cllr Declan Geraghty

Transition Programme is viewed as the Western envelope of the Government's new programme post Bord na Mona in the Midlands.

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD Ltd), as one of leading stakeholders of the community, reiterated its aim to will assiduously with the Executive and Members of Galway County Council and all Govt. Agencies in realising our ambition for our town.

Evidence and factual research for the submission's outlook was amply provided by many of the points made about the Town's potential and attributes in the envelope of the Ireland 2040 Plan, the CEDRA Report and Teagasc Index of the Economic Strength of Rural Towns 2014, The Just Transition Report 2019, and the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 – 2032. Specifically pages 124 and 125 of the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 – 2032 details what needs to be prioritised and actioned by the local authority as we are located in one of the County's Strategic Corridors and has been designated as one of 9 key towns to deliver its ambitious and forward-looking strategy for the region.

The Submission along with all the other received under the statutory process will be reviewed and woven into the first draft of the Strategy which will again be available for public consultation and input before a final drafting meeting and adoption for approval or amendments followed by approval by a majority vote of the Council. It's also available to view on the Ballinasloe.ie website.

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TOWN'S STATE OF THE ART FACTORY



40,000 square foot premises in Poolboy

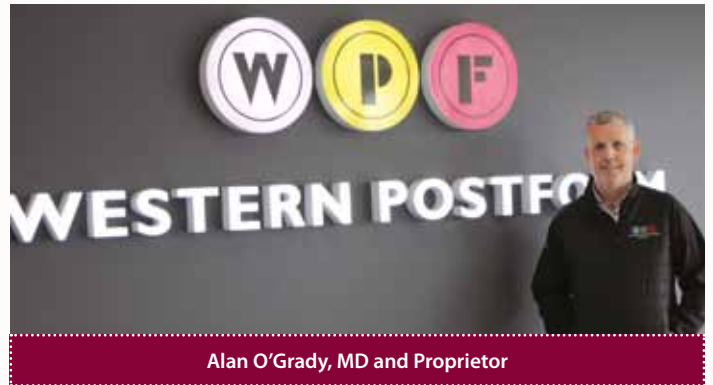
Nine months (excluding the COVID lockdown) from breaking ground, after a Herculean 18-month struggle with planning issues, one of the town's oldest, successful firms moved from its original premises in Brackernagh and a depot in Athlone in mid-summer, to their new home in the Poolboy Industrial Estate.

A total staff of 55 are now enjoying at the 40,000 square foot, €6 million state of the art premises in one of the country's leading bespoke fitted furniture manufacturer.

Alan O'Grady, MD and Proprietor of the firm explains "we took a decision to remain anchored in the town with our new build because we love our staff and for 40 years, I and my family, have really enjoyed doing business in town. If I was a new investor however I would not have had the patience to deal with obstacles and indifference that surrounds the place".

Critically, for him the town is devoid of suitable zoned, accessible land with either huge banks owned by state agencies or worse has bank charges on it – which effectively means potential investors looking at a 36-month delay.

"We can have units and crews to the three fastest expanding building markets on the island in jig time – an hour and 30 minutes to the M50, an hour and 15 to Limerick and 2 hours 30 to Cork – I can't understand why there are not more logistical or supply



Alan O'Grady, MD and Proprietor

companies hubbing out of here but – it's down to the real business obstacles on the ground" states Alan.

The factory shell and site cost in the order of €3.2 million to build and another €2.8 million of machines, plant, offices and presses to fit out. Key to the O'Neill-O'Malley Architect design is the cutting edge use of sustainable energy, features that Fitzgibbons Construction of Ennis built.

"We have BER A3 rating – which is hard to achieve for a private house never mind a factory of this size. We have a very lean carbon footprint and we have all movement sensitive LED light fittings installed and are using an Italian Bio Mass Boiler which extracts the dusty air and maintains the cosy temperatures in the plant" added Alan.

The plant has no oil or gas costs – the Air handling Unit and Bio Mass Boiler cost €260,000 to install but stops their average 5 skips a week of off cuts heading landfill. It is truly a clean sustainable factory of the future and Alan believes that between efficiencies and cost savings the unit will have paid for itself within the decade.

Assuming this is cutting edge technology, there are no brass plaques to the Dept of Environment, or the EU acknowledging the pilot project with a grant. "Don't talk to us about SEI, we signed up to their advanced programme, we went with higher specs on everything and they denied us the grant over a procedural error on their part, even Denis Naughten TD, who was Minister in that area

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and worked very hard on our behalf, could not get them to budge; so there is not one cent of grant or subsidy to the technology”.

Brexit holds no fear for this operation as they have moved all their material sourcing to Belgium and Spain and all their precision engineering comes from Italy. COVID however is the issue –“if Europe or we go into a long lockdown again we can’t delay delivery on the scale of contracts we have in the pipeline so we have to stock pile timber and components up 6-8 months in advance” notes Alan.

It’s one of the reasons that the old plant is being used as a warehouse for Western Postform although Alan and the team have plans for it down the road, which may still involve a bit of leasing.

From doing individual fitted kitchens, wardrobes and then housing schemes the firm is now concentrating its operations on large scale apartment complexes in the bigger cities, student residences, Hotels, Schools and the new co-living apartment blocks; where the fit out the complete accommodation pod.

The technology has come a long way in 4 decades where formica top edging was applied with an iron and plans were sketched and costed on graph paper by hand.

The software behind the automated processes at the plant is NASA like in complexity and precision. Once the client for the 450 kitchens and bedroom, wardrobes and vanity desks signs off on the materials, the design and delivery the production team takes its cue from the “War Room” which is the Production / Design Control suite – like an Air Traffic Control Room in an airport. It sends the instructions to all the main cutting machines which are skillfully operated and the pieces of furniture moved to different parts of the floor for assembly and finishing under the watchful eyes of the Master Craftsmen.

The ambition behind the investment and move is not to ramp up employment numbers but rather increase the scale and volume of jobs that the firm can tender and bid for. “When my father Michael and Seamus Shinnars started 40 years ago, we were lucky to make 7 kitchens a week; now we have to make and install multiples of that and undertake the new fit-out of apartments, schools, hospitals, hotels and washrooms.

The biggest project this year for the firm has been the Rhatigans/ OHL 450 Apartment Public Private Partnership Block in Dublin which is worth in order of €2.5 million. They still do estate build fit outs for new builds but don’t do once off furniture for customers anymore.

The backbone of Western Post Form is however the amazing staff and many of them have been there since the early days, Davey Farnon, Philip Gilesnan and Seamus McEvoy, here since the doors opened and Maura Barret manning the phones and reception for 38 years while Triona Hurley has been keeping an eye on the accounts for 25 years. It’s really like one big family.

When asked about State Support for this huge private investment Alan rolls the eyes, confirming that they have yet to see a grant aid since they are not exporting to the EU - every cent spent here came out of Company funds.

Western Postform have also invested heavily in a New ERP system. We spent a lot of time researching this system during lock down and sourced a Canadian partner called Cienapps to design and develop this for us.

He can’t believe how there appears to be no one in charge or no go-to place to have the interconnected problems solved in the town. “No one darkened the door from any agency or any public representative to see how we were getting on while we were struggling to get it over the line. I can see why it’s hard for new companies to begin in the town” states Alan.

“I must say though that all the business people in the town have been very supportive of us and we have had a great welcome from all the neighbours here. I do believe that Ballinasloe town has a lot to offer and hope to see many new companies set up in the town in the further” he added.

He is planning a post COVID welcome ceremony and 40th Anniversary for family, staff and retired staff.

When not relaxing at home in South Galway with his wife Olivia from Loughrea, son Simon and daughters Saoirse and Madison, Alan and his workforce are very happy in their new surroundings and are looking forward to many years of successful operating.

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Damien McGuire and Faye O'Connor are the founders of DMF SportHorses in Atticorra, Creagh, where they groom horses for competitions and have recently started a new venture in Horse logistics , DMF Equine Transport.

Local man Damien went to college and studied Business and Equine Studies in Gurteen College and AIT. After graduating, he worked for himself for a time and also for another very successful horse producer locally, while he also spent some time in Laois producing young horses before returning to work in Gurteen College as the Equine Yard Manager.

His partner Faye, was born and raised in Dublin, also studied Business and Equine Studies in Gurteen College and AIT. During her time in college, she worked for a top producer of young horses in Dublin and now top coach. After graduating, she also worked for another top producer and trainer in Kilkenny before coming here to find work and begin the long road to building a business.

Damien always wanted to return home and eventually become self-employed again but it was a fine balance between dreams and reality. With partner Faye, they have built up a good business producing and selling horses both nationally and internationally. They pride themselves on honesty while trying their best to stand over and guarantee anything they sell. Although this has been a very strange year for everyone with Covid-19 impacting they have been lucky to keep some really nice horses in the yard and still be able to make sales happen, due to the good relationships they have built up over the years.

Their yard compromises of 11 stables, a feed room, tack room and a spacious grooming box along with a 30x40m floodlit sand arena. They have some very nice horses which compete and produce to a level where they can be sold at the higher end of the market and also keep a few more trade types which can be sold on quicker and keep a little turnover on the go. Over the years, they've built up a really good client base in the UK, Sweden, Germany and Belgium.

They're both firm believers that hard work and honesty does pay off in the long run and have founded an International Equine Transport company whose main customer base will be with other



Faye O'Connor and Damien McGuire

yards like their own that have sold horses abroad and are looking to get them delivered . They also offer a transport service nationally for anyone that is looking for their horses to be transported to shows, sales or new homes.

They felt that they're in a good location for this business "only being one hour and 40 minutes from Dublin port and being in the midlands it gives a great scope to reach most of the country within a good timeframe. It is a great location for our new venture as it is so easily accessible because of the M6 motorway and the surrounding road networks" states Damien. Damien's best advice to any business owners is that "every day is a school day, you can and should learn something new every day".

For Faye's she notes that new entrepreneurs "will need a strong work ethic and be self-motivated in order to have a chance at success, take pride in your work and always be both presentable and approachable".

They are based in Atticorra, Creagh, Co. Galway with varied business hours as they deal with any type of livestock but try to stick to 7:30am – 6pm. For Livery and sales contact 087-2180363. For Transport contact 087-6445272. Make sure to Follow them on Facebook and Instagram 'DMF Sporthorses and DMF Equine Transport'.

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KILMARTIN'S NEW FINANCE PRODUCT

BY LIAM COSGROVE

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However, if you wish your car to have maintenance, you will be covered for annual road tax, roadside assistance and a free replacement vehicle for up to 48 hours in the event of a breakdown attended by the AA, if the vehicle cannot be repaired.

Additional maintenance packages can be added to give a fixed monthly rental such as routine servicing, maintenance and repairs, tyre replacement, exhausts, batteries, NCT & CVRT which is subject to fair Wear and Tear. At the end of the term, you simply return the vehicle to your dealer and choose your next vehicle.

"The Ford Lease is perfect for any individual or business who doesn't want to own their car or commercial vehicle. VAT registered businesses may be able to reclaim all or part of the VAT element of the monthly rental. Some rentals may be tax allowable. It also enables the dealership to offer customers from corporate to sole traders. It is also hassle free for three years which gives customers piece of mind" states Sales Manager Michael Kelly.

In conjunction with the RSA national road safety week October 5-11, Fred Kilmartin Ltd are offering a free tyre safety check, email service@fredkilmartinltd.ie to apply.

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Teresa Kilmartin Dealer Principal and John O'Connor Senior Sales Executive at Kilmartins.

PULSE CLUB TO STAY REMOTE

Following on from the success of the Covid-19 Response and Support Webinars hosted by the Pulse club earlier in year, the steering committee are planning more upcoming similar events.

The webinars will focus on the needs of the local businesses to support, inspire and advise each other as we all navigate through the fallout from Covid-19. As large gatherings are ruled out for the foreseeable future, plans are in place to allow the members to connect and support each other as well as guest speakers and Inspirational stories.

The group are also working to restore an unused shopfront in the town (Old National Irish Bank Window on Main Street) to highlight upcoming

and ongoing events & showcase why Ballinasloe is the ideal location to do business. The shopfront will also include an interactive digital display which will allow members to show case their business & and updates of upcoming events.

The Pulse Club is open to all business minded people in the area. Sign up at www.thepulseclub.com or call 0909646516 Cost is €50 per annum.



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A new Holistic Therapy Practice has opened at the Enterprise and Technology Centre, Creagh managed by Poolboy native Valerie Dolan. She grew up on the family farm and came third in a family of seven. After school, Valerie worked mainly in IT with financial accounting software and was self-taught until she later received a diploma in web design and development and programming. She also worked in retailing and had her own business for seven years.

The new practice is located in the top floor of the Enterprise Centre. It is an integrative health care practice combining therapies with a holistic approach caring for a person's self-regulation and independent well-being which addresses the client's mind, body, emotion and energy/vitality. A plan is created, unique to the client's circumstances and individual needs.

Her interest stemmed from her own experience and struggles overcoming the diagnosis of an autoimmune illness (crohn's disease), related chronic pain and back pain. She has always had an interest in body's own healing ability and always had a hobby studied and experienced self-development.

"My desire to help people who may be experiencing similar personal health challenges or those witnessing or observing a family member, friend or colleague that maybe facing similar

challenges and the emotional mental and physical obstacles that need to be overcome to experience a more fulfilled and wholesome life, has been a huge motivation for me" explains Valerie.

She offers a combination of treatments such as Kinesiology, Body Code, Emotion Code, (EFT) Emotional Freedom Technique, Energy balancing, Personal & Life Coaching which she is qualified to the highest level in all. She is currently completing a degree in psychotherapy.

Clients can expect a clear step by step approach to create a self-care plan. They identify triggers that are having a large impact on the pain and disease that is being manifested in the body and address the stress, anxiety and fears around the diagnosis and use tools and techniques to empower the client to manage, overcome and allow the persons own ability to heal, awaken. The body and mind's intelligence knows then how to release the obstacles to experiencing optimum health and wellbeing.

She offers many combined treatments as one does not fit all. Treatments are based on time and starts at half an hour at €50. Most clients will usually need one and a half hour treatment to begin with which is €120.

For more information, check out her website page: www.valeriedolan.com. You can contact her on 087 645 8979 or by email on vfdolan2@gmail.com.



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Carmel O'Riordan, from Kilconnell, is a qualified Counselling / Psychotherapy facilitator and is the youngest child of the late Tommy and Mary Dooley. She was educated in St. Gabriel's NS Kilconnell and Ardscoil Mhuire. She then went on to work in Square D for a number of years until it closed in 2003 and then trained to be a Special Needs Assistant and was employed in Creagh National School since 2005 as an SNA. She always had a love of books and reading and attributed this for her thirst for learning.



Carmel O'Riordan

She was an active member of the mental health movement 'Grow' for many years and from this programme, became aware of how she was dealing with stress and anxiety in her own life and how isolating this can be. She began core training in holistic counselling/Psychotherapy in 2012 with the ICPPD in Athlone (International College of Personal and Professional Development), where she qualified in 2015 and currently holds a BA Honours degree. She has trained with Applied Suicide Intervention with the HSE (and is currently doing some work with the HSE) and CAMS training with Doctor Eoin Galvin.

Carmel has also done trauma training with Babette Rothschild and with Gerry Grace (US Trauma specialist) Certificate in counselling children and adolescents IICP, certificate in CBT (cognitive behaviour therapy) with PCI, Diploma in Expressive Arts ICPPD.

"I am aware of how easy it is to become overwhelmed and unable to focus, which all of us experience at some point in our lives.

My work is a collaboration of my client and I; it is a journey we will travel together. I work with issues such as grief, loss and trauma and unresolved issues of all kinds" stated Carmel.

"I work in a client centred way i.e. at the client's pace providing a safe confidential, non-judgemental space where clients can explore life experiences/issues/situations/fears anxieties etc. This can enable a client to gain new insights and explore their own potential in a fruitful, growthful way, on their life's journey. That may include behaviours, patterns and belief systems which are outdated and no longer serve you and going forward developing a new support system" explained Carmel.

Her desire for each client is that they will become their best self, finding ways to thrive rather than just survive. Her core belief is that

each person is an expert in their own life. The aim of her work is to enable each person to explore that expertise through collaboration and within the safety of the therapeutic relationship. She values each person and their uniqueness and together, can work towards finding your authentic self. Working to find ways to recognise and tolerate feelings, to understand and communicate their needs and to learn how to relate to each other and be well.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, she moved the business online and worked through zoom. This is a currently an option for clients. She enjoys interactive and experiential workshops and being a participant has inspired her to want to become a facilitator with personal development groups.

Carmel's clinic is located in the Enterprise Centre and can be contacted at 087 612 4356 or oriordancarmel812@gmail.com.

BROOCHES MOST UNDERESTIMATED PIECES



Everyone believes a brooch can only be worn on the lapel of a jacket, which means it is one of the most underestimated items of jewellery, writes Maureen Cahalan.

A brooch can be worn in various ways, top of a blouse, on a polo neck sweater, lower down from the top of a normal sweater just where a pendant would sit or they can also be worn on a hat or a cap. A Bride can wear one in her up style hairdo and/or in her bouquet of flowers. A brooch can sit nicely on a scarf and on a gentleman's cravat.

Brooches can be made to mark an occasion in a club, parish or family. They are also designed to mark an area i.e. The Claddagh Brooch, The Tara Brooch, The map of a Country or a Region. Brooches are very versatile and have been worn on the dancing costumes for many decades

Most popular brooches are The Celtic collection, the floral designs, the cameo collection and of course brooches representing your favourite pets or hobby. Since early 2019 brooches have become very popular again, usually worn on the left lapel of a jacket so as the observer will see them on their right side but this is all a matter of taste.

For the coming years we will see men replace the bow, cravat & tie with a hunting brooch, a horse symbol brooch or a golfing brooch or a brooch or their own choice... watch out as this will be noticed immediately and greatly admired .

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Cahalan
JEWELLERS

M6 Motors are doubling in size as they're adding a new site alongside their current one. The new site will include a new showroom and offices and a new forecourt with space for up to 100 cars on display. This venue will be for sales only and the old building (next door) will be used solely as a service centre, after-sales and valet and prep centre.

Located in Kilgarve, Creagh next to Dolan's Service Station, they bring a combination of unbeatable value and innovative vehicle sourcing to the used car market. They opened their doors in 2011, during some tough years in the industry, with the business growing year on year. They now sell cars to every corner of the country.

The Enterprise was founded by Alan Naughton, after completing a BA in Business Studies at the University of Limerick. The original team of two has now grown to 16 permanent employees and one part time with over 50 years combined experience in the motor industry while also having a full workshop and qualified mechanics for car preparation and after sales service.

The new building has been in the pipeline since 2016, with a growing team and a huge turnover of stock, the new space will fulfill all requirements. It will have five offices and an indoor display area with three cars on display within the showroom

"July and August 2020 were the busiest two months we have experienced in nine years of business with almost 300 cars sold. The used car market is looking very strong for the coming months as customers now see the excellent value in used cars especially in imports" states Alan.

Although, they sell cars to every county in Ireland and have people travel from places like Cork and Kerry on a weekly basis to do business in Ballinasloe, they have been encouraged that more and more people in the town's hinterland are supporting local by keeping their business within the town as they can see the advantage of getting a good deal locally and a good after-sales service on their doorstep.



Eanna Ryan and Alan Naughton

Alan believes that used car sales are at an all-time high as some people look to upgrade their car instead of going travelling or on a foreign holiday for example.

M6 Motors have noticed that their online business model really helped them during the Covid period. Selling online has always been a big part of their business but during the Covid pandemic, the majority of their car sales were via their website www.m6motors.ie. All retail cars come with a warranty and an excellent after-sales service while also offering finance at very competitive rates.

Alan's last piece of advice is "when buying a car, try to always stick to a reputable dealership so you can buy a car in the peace of mind that you are getting a good car at a fair price".

They are open six days a week Monday-Friday 8:30am-6pm and Saturday 8:30am- 4pm. However, viewings outside these times can be made by appointment. Contact Eanna on 085 862 2534 or Alan on 085 236 6247. Emails can be sent to sales@m6motors.ie.

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Alongside our three Hotels, 4 Supermac outlets, 5 ethnic cuisine Restaurants, six fast food/ Pizza restaurants and four café/ restaurants – a new venue for daytime dining has opened up in Dunlo Street, in the past few weeks.



Chris and Tara

Bistro18 opened its doors in the premises that once hosted the famous Toher's Restaurant and then Aonach Gastro Pub, offering a quirky, quaint and relaxing atmosphere in which to enjoy affordable dishes, freshly prepared by their chefs every day.

Chris Spann, head chef and co-owner, grew up in a small

town of Leamington Spa near Coventry, UK. He lives in Portumna and has worked in the catering industry since the age of 13 starting off washing pots and pans. A proud self-taught chef, he has spent some 20 years in the catering industry. He moved to Ireland in April 2012 and began working at the Ferry Inn in Nenagh as a Head Chef for six years. He underwent a small stint in Corrib Oil as their fresh Food Manager before starting his current project.

Having no personal connection to the town, he and girlfriend Tara were charmed by the characteristics of the old Toher's building. They needed to purchase an incubation kitchen area for their outdoor catering business and it was the ideal location. They hadn't originally wanted to open up as a restaurant, but after seeing the beauty of the building and with encouragement from the owners, restored it back into a restaurant.

Open 6 days a week for fresh bakes, breakfasts, lunch and late lunches, they have something for everyone including gluten-free,

vegan and vegetarian options. Polenta cakes are a fan favourite and aren't offered in many establishments. It is a rustic Italian-style cake made with whole grain cornmeal, avocado, spinach and poached eggs.

Their breakfast/brunch menu runs from 8 am-1 pm and a lunch/late lunch menu from 2-5pm Monday-Saturday. Last orders are at five so be sure to call in before then. They aim to close up at 6pm but if diners need a bit longer, they don't kick folks out!

All food options are freshly prepared by the chefs and they're supplied by Pallas, although they're interested in using local suppliers. They don't serve alcohol but hope to apply for a license in the future. They're starting to hold theme night with examples such as a tapas night, next one will focus on American food.

All food is available for takeaway. Local jams, honey, chutneys are for sale and blue moon coffee is available to buy in bags of 500g or 1kg, fresh brown breads sold by the loaf can be pre ordered by phone or online, alongside lots of other bakes and sweet treats.

"I believe there's no good or bad time to open, were starting our catering operations and wish to honour our promises to the owners" explains Chris as to why they opened in a Pandemic!

They operate a walk-in service but it is advisable to ring ahead to book. To get in contact with the Bistro18 crew, ring them on 090 964 4867 or at info@bistro18.ie. You can also receive more updates on their Facebook page or their website www.bistro18.ie.



Back L-R: Chris Spann, Philip Hillier, Tori O'Rourke
Front L-R: Tara Walsh, Aoife Lavin, Annie Nevin

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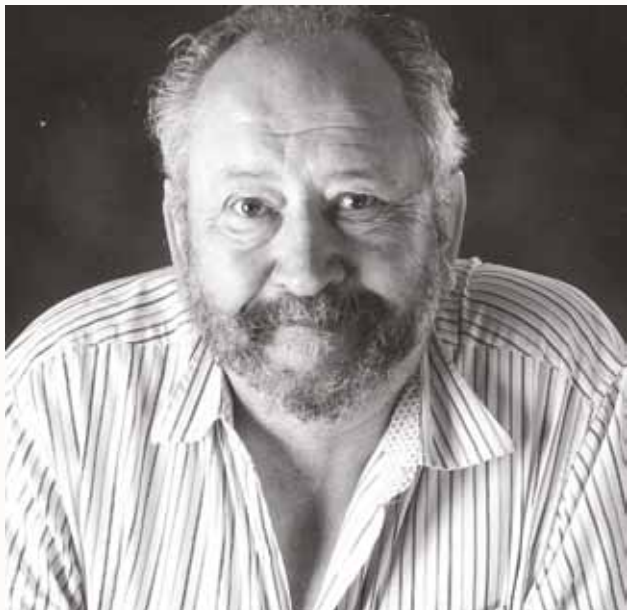
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A LIFETIME THROUGH THE LENS

Liam Jordan, a graduate of Photography from D.I.T. Kevin St, a life-long member of the Irish Professional Photographer's Association, a recipient of many Kodak, Fuji and IPPA Awards over the years, sold his premises on Main St. recently.



Creagh native Liam is a quintessential as the town gets and now that he and his wife Deirdre are free from the hassles of a busy studio and professional life, they are looking forward to enjoying a quieter pace in their secluded cottage on the shores of Lough Corrib in Oughterard, captured so lovingly in a RTE documentary some months ago.

Liam recalls with fondness his childhood growing up alongside his two siblings and his early widowed mother, Sheila, who as well as dress-making and knitting to support her family, took to photography and taught herself to drive in order to get to the weddings where there was no phone in everyone's pocket!

Cousin John Jordan's dad Adrian, was a professional photographer and encouraged his young nephew to assist in the business – which he developed a keen eye for.

"Town was simpler then, Creagh N.S. was a two room, two teacher school – fair days saw huge numbers of livestock in pens on the streets and fairweek was the full week off school" recalls Liam.

Education was important to the Jordans and Liam was duly enrolled in Garbally, where he admits to not liking the books or indeed rugby but "Hoppy" Cassidy encouraged his creative talents and he and Mickey Phelan became budding guitarists.

Summer holidays were spent as a pump attendant in Freds, or the more lucrative Paddy's Lamb, as an Office hand to the late Lily Broderick. Leaving Certificate was completed in the summer of '68 and while the students of Paris rioted and burned the city to a standstill; Liam and his best buddy at the time set their camping and musical desires for The Ring of Kerry on a 13 day epic cycle tour of Munster. Rumour has it that Mal Croffy has never been comfortable on a bike since and Liam gets flashbacks of flooding whenever under canvas.

"We knew how to mind ourselves at a few county Fleadhs. We loved the folk scene and the followers that flocked to it and we were determined to taste the summer season of Kerry and Cork away from the worry that any girl you'd ask to dance wouldn't be known to your mother which was the problem with Roscommon and Galway scenes" says Liam.

Later that summer it was Matric Week in Galway and he managed to obtain a post working for "Smile Photos" shooting and in the dark room as well as popping out to the Oslo Hotel and the Castle Inn to dinner dances, snapping the duos and parties. The gig was run by a few seasoned sharpshooter second year college students. One of my interviewers and the man who signed my first wage cheque of £18 as was – a certain Micheal D. Higgins, who is now our

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state's first citizen" he declares.

To be accepted on the leading course of its day in Dublin, young Liam had to be an apprentice photographer and Gerry Beegan took him on as a part time darkroom assistant and event photographer. "My evening gallops at the time in a full monkey suit; was to walk out from our £4 digs behind the Four Courts to Jurys or the Intercontinental Hotel and snap away at the dress dances – collect the fee and then hop into a taxi with the pockets stuffed with five bob notes and addresses for the couple you had to post the snaps to" recalls Liam.

After qualifying he suffered a year in Mullingar in a partnership before striking out on his own in a premises – studio and dark room at the back of Woods in 1973.

"Back then, you could be doing two weddings a day – the early morning one and the late evening one, Haydens had sometimes 14 weddings a week; you booked Haydens back then after your first kiss and there was plenty of work. It was a privilege and a pleasure to be at some many happy occasions for young couples in Galway and all over the country" he explains.

Shortly after his buddy bought Croffys Shop on lower Main St., where the Bank road to rear of Main Street exists today, Parsons Shoe store on Main Street was put on the market and Liam was encouraged to buy it for £18,000. The year was 1975 and he commenced more studio and individual portrait work.

Times were not always so smooth and he needed a break from the lens work – taking a sabbatical in the early 80s - lecturing in Creative Photography with the Arts Council, working in residence with local Taughmaconnell-native Brendan Flynn of the famous Clifden Arts Festival and even opening a ladies' Shoe Shop!

On the 15th of August 1973 Van Morrison's Gardens Album was on every stereo and he was driving a new Cortina Mark 2. He drove his family out west for spin, they went mooching around Oughterard and fell upon a cottage – lakeside, which was for letting. He fell in love with the spot, the scenery, and over time became a long term tenant, eventually acquiring his "little grey home in the west".

It was not all photography mixed with fishing, shooting and music – like many creatives our Liam was encouraged by Rev.Fr Cassidy and Fr. Ryle to get involved in the fledgling Relays Drama Group and he got a "gra for the boards" that to this day never left him.

"There is something powerful of being a tattering ball of nerves, having to rely on the collective dependency of your actors and crew – live in front of a knowledgeable audience, it's exhilarating and equally frightening" states Liam, who graced many a one-act and three-act plays for a variety of groups locally.

Music is the constant back drop, reminisces are peppered with the genre of the time; it's in his genes– his great-grandfather, Simon Jordan, was leader of the Town Band at the turn of the century and strangely enough the sculptor of the Celtic Cross that stands where St. Ruth fell in Aghrim played in the same outfit- Deirdre Beegan's grandfather – Liam's wife since 2000.

The artistry and creative black arts of tone, shade and exposure – the spine of the lensman's craft, left the business for Liam with the dawn of the digital age. "The sector lost its magic for me, when everything could be instant – when everyone with a device is a photographer and sadly for us all it is all hard drive archive – no albums, no frames, no boxed collections" he sighs.

The Towns future is bright he believes, but not as a huge retail sector, it is a friendly and engaging place and has the small shops sizes on the new streets for a variety of new artisan and imaginative businesses.

Looking back on nearly four decades of getting ordinary folk to relax and pout at the same time he has few regrets. "I had wonderfully loyal customers, I got to meet the most interesting people, I was allowed into very special parts of their lives, I wouldn't have it any other way. Deirdre and I wish to thank all of those who supported us down through the years and we look forward to having many weekend nights in Main St. hostelrys for drinks and craic in the years to come" he concluded.



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ANNA'S HAIRCUT FOR TOMÁS

BY LIAM COSGROVE



John Ward, Marian Ward, Anna Ward and Tomás

Anna, eldest daughter of John and Marian Ward – the duo behind Karibas of Society St., reached out at the end of her summer and cut her hair for a very worthy and special cause !

Anna is 11 years old from Creagh, currently in 6th class in Creagh NS and is looking forward to moving to Ardscoil Mhuire next year. She is an athletic girl and is involved in many clubs across the town such as the swimming and athletics club, a member of the U12 football team and is a member of the In-Step Dancing School.

Tomás is a 10-year-old from Corofin with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. His dad Shane was raised in the Pines, Portnick (was a barman for John in his years in Main St.) and his Grandad is John McLoughlin – a retired Psychiatric Nurse and former Credit Union dedicated Board member. Born 26 weeks early, he and his twin arrived unexpectedly into the world. Sadly, his brother Seán passed away after 30 days.



Anna and Tomás before fundraiser began



Anna and Tomás after Anna cut her hair

Tomás is a bright, chatty boy but has no independent movement. As Tomás will require life-long supports and very costly equipment, his parents, Ann-Marie and Shane began a fundraising group called "Tomorrow for Tomás." Fundraising events from last year were put towards the purchase of a Powered Wheelchair costing €20,000.

"Tomorrow for Tomás" aims to raise funds so that the family home can be adapted for Tomás' living and care needs, as well as ensuring safe and easy access about the house and garden on his new wheels! This requires Disability Access Survey of the house and installing of an accessible washroom and toilet, accessible furniture for meal times installation of specially adapted switch devices, adapting doors and entrances for wheelchair access. The estimated cost of the above is €30,000. As well as practical needs, Tomás requires on-going multi-disciplinary and medical care which is extremely costly.

In late September, Anna had the team at Utopia Hair Salon in Society Street sponsor the cutting of 14 inches off of her hair in aid of raising funds for Tomás. She donated her hair to the Rapunzel Foundation which is for real hair wigs for children in need. Donations can still be made at the restaurant or on www.idonate.ie/annaward. Check out Tomás' Facebook page 'Tomorrow for Tomás' for more information, videos and photos. Anna has raised over €1,800 online already so far and the closing date for donations is October 30.

Job Creation Vital for Ballinasloe



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600 SUBMISSIONS SUPPORTING CYCLEWAY

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The need for a build of the Greenway to come through the town has been well received by locals from the start. Over 120 people attended the first round of public consultation in the Shearwater Hotel, one of five public consultations in Co. Galway.

Community groups, schools, clubs, business associations, advocacy groups including Athlone to Ballinasloe Greenway Group and the Town Team, all made submissions before the deadline of September 7. The submission was to collect views as to why folks believe the Greenway, (safe road/walkway/cycleway, no motor vehicles, available to be used by cyclists, walkers, runners, strollers, wheelchair users, day dreamers and all else), should go through the town.

Senator Aisling Dolan noted "Over 220 people also made the effort to pop into my office on Society St to make a submission and tell the project team why we want to see a Greenway come through Ballinasloe. Thank you to everyone, including our volunteers in the office; making a difference".

The Greenway will reinvigorate the towns and villages with tourism and spin-off benefits. With no public park access in Ballinasloe – there's a need to have a safe place off-road to walk and cycle for families, people with prams, wheelchair users. The Dublin-Galway national Cycleway will transform the town working together with communities in surrounding areas by consensus.

Councillor Evelyn Parsons, as well as seeing health and wellbeing benefits, believes that the Greenway can accelerate development of outdoor park space. "The residents currently have no public park proportionate to the size of population. This was painfully evident during the very restricted pandemic phase, when exercise distances of 2 and 5km were imposed - no accessible parkland

development was available to within those distances in which to walk, exercise, socially distance safely. I favour the development of a Heartland Park with access off the Greenway and accessible from the M6. Working from home will lead to increased need for accessible active outdoor leisure facilities and this is set to increase with development of remote working hubs. It is crucial that we are located on its route as the Hosting and Healing Town of the Heartlands which plays to our heritage, our history both in healthcare and in hospitality" states Evelyn.

The next steps will see project team engagement with landowners and potentially 4-5 routes for consideration from the study area map, scheduled for December or early January.

Geraldine Healy, a member of the Greenway project team based in the new library, noted "the team are heartened by the turn-out at public consultations and numbers of submissions received. We are happy to meet by appointment taking public health guidelines into account. Contact us at info@galwaytoathlonecycleway.com or Tel: (091) 509267".

Fintan O'Meara, Project Engineer Co-ordinator with Galway County Council, is set to occupy the office above the library with staff to plan the investment. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions the office remains closed but he can be contacted by emailing him on fomeara@galwaycoco. To keep up to date with the greenway group, check out their Facebook page.



Pat Groarke and cyclist Margaret Mansfield making a submission



Volunteer Ann Stevens handing over 220 submissions to Geraldine Healy of Greenway Project

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OPENING HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 10am - 6pm. SATURDAY 10am - 5pm.

Edward (Eamon) Conway, originally from Co. Mayo, now living in Creagh, had on his bucket list of places to visit: the mighty "Angkor Wat" temple in Siem Reap in Cambodia. After visiting the vast beautiful country of Cambodia, he wanted to help this country get on its feet once more.

On one such trip, he was introduced to Mr. Sean Samnang - the founder and president of Aspire Training & Education, which is a school and an orphanage for the poor, homeless and orphaned children in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. ASPIRE has 96 students who are learning with the aid of free education, they're providing 24 hours care for 20 children.

He recognised the urgent need to help the many destitute and orphaned children in the country. This situation was brought about because Cambodia's education and health care systems were completely destroyed during the Khmer Rouge Genocide and due to two decades long civil war.

The mission aims to give the children basic education, then later to be transported to the bigger schools for further education. They provide three nutritious meals per day, protection, adequate healthcare and education for orphans or those living in extreme poverty. They receive lessons in Khmer, English, Computer skills, Art and Gardening.

Their ages range between 5-16 years old. It runs for 5 days (25 hours per week), from Monday to Friday, with a morning session from (8:30 am - 10:30 am) and afternoon session from (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm).

Previous to helping build this School, Edward (Eamon) had raised money for numerous Water Wells in the remote areas of Siem Reap, Cambodia as clean water is also a problem in this region.

To gather funds for the build he organised events such as a Table Quiz, which was enhanced by two Brazilian ladies Angie and Josi, who wore their national costume and they certainly brightened up proceedings as "they went down a storm". This was followed by "A Family Fun Run Day" held at the Fellowship Church here. A Coffee/Tea & Cake day, was held at Eamon's house that was very well supported by all the area.

The last event arranged was a star-studded Concert in November 2019 with fabulous guests, such as the Cill Aodian Choir, Christina and John O'Flynn, Ukephoric Ukulele band. Hein Ensemble and the Concannon girls. This event was held in the local Town Hall, sadly a man that helped immensely, sadly passed away, namely Pat McGovern RIP.

As Eamon says "it's not just my pet project, but it's also to many others who have helped in the advertising, donating, selling tickets



and even the sponsorship of events. Lastly supporting the events with their presence".

Other funds came through continued fundraising on Facebook, this proved to be hugely popular in getting the project off the ground. Lastly by private donations from people which were also received.

Mr. Samnang would like to say a huge thank you to Eamon and all other subscribers for the huge amount of money - over €16,000 to build the three classroom School and is aptly named (The Irish School Building) for the children of Aspire in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

If you wish to get involved by volunteering at the School, you can either contact Mr. Sean Samnang directly at: www.aspirecambodia-edu.org or email Eamon at castlebar100@gmail.com

or Eamon Conway, for more details, contact him on his Mobile: 086 8972776.

This need for money is due to the Pandemic, as the School has suffered badly. As no volunteers are going out to the school or to teach there, also to bring money out which is welcomed.

Its vitally important we keep this School open with funds during this time - THANK YOU.







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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

BY LIAM COSGROVE



Lisa Moore PRO East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre



Anna Obara, Administrator at East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is October 2020. It is a month where all women and men (although breast cancer is rare in men, it can still occur), are encouraged to learn how to self-check for any changes in their breasts. A campaign will be run from the centre, encouraging the importance of self-checking and to get all changes checked by your GP, who can refer on to the relative people, should there be a concern.

September 20 marked World Gynaecological Oncology Day 2020 and at the centre, they have a very clear message to "Make This Campaign A Really Great One". The whole aim was to make people aware that cancer does not discriminate and there is a video available on their Facebook page, that was shot at the centre with some of the clients and volunteers.

As most are aware the 16th of March, with a heavy heart, the Centre

team had to drastically change how to provide their services due to the Covid restrictions that were put in place. However, despite these restrictions, they have continued to provide the majority of the services to cancer patients and their families. Having learned to adapt and learn new skills in order to do so, whilst following all official guidelines issued by the HSE.

The following services will be continued to run. Transport to and from patient's radiotherapy sessions in Galway. Social distancing is being adhered to and masks are worn at all times by patients and driver. Support groups have all held their meetings through zoom calls

which has worked very effectively.

The number of counsellors has increased in order to meet the demand for counselling from their clients. Mental health has really been affected by the restrictions. Counselling was being carried out through zoom/telephone calls but now face to face counselling is available whilst adhering to current government guidelines on social distancing etc.

A 24-hour telephone line has been operating throughout the pandemic and will always continue to do so. A sanitising system has been purchased and is being used to sanitize all rooms and the radiotherapy bus. They're positioned at all entrance points to the centre and clients are asked to use them. A computerised contact tracing system has been set up by Seamus Daly. All clients are asked the relevant questions upon arrival to the centre.

To keep up to date with the East Galway Cancer Support Centre, ring them on (090) 964 2088 or check out their Facebook page.



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C R O S S W O R D



Aughrim Active Retirement Group raised €3,000.00 through the sale of Face Masks, made by four volunteers, and presented the money to the Jack and Jill Foundation. Picture shows Cathy Keighrey of the Jack and Jill Foundation accepting the cheque from Helen Mannion, Chairperson of the Group.

At back, l to r, are: Mary Hynes, Teresa Loughrey, Maureen Kenny and Dr. Siobhan Smith, PRO Aughrim Active Retirement Group.

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CLINICS BY APPOINTMENT

Now that their holidays and city breaks are cancelled, their singing group remain silent and their Knitting and Art group are now confined to working at home behind closed doors, the athletic track has now become a place of refuge for the Ballinasloe Active Retirement group.

Research had shown that regular exercise reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and Alzheimers disease. It helps to maintain healthy muscle and bone, improves balance and risk of falls.

Their members are very much in the "vulnerable" category and so to improve physical and mental wellbeing, some members continue to enjoy a daily walk on the track. They observe social distancing by walking in pairs on different lanes (keeping one lane apart). They chat while walking even though they may have to turn up the volume to hear each other.



From left to right: Ann Downey, Elizabeth Campbell, Sue Waters



Julia Lohan (left) and Noelle Rohan (right)

Everyone is welcome who may feel lonely or isolated during this pandemic to join them at 10.30 for your daily walk. Afterwards, they don our masks, sanitise, give their name and contact number to staff and enjoy a friendly cuppa, (seated apart) in Gullane's Hotel.

New members are always welcome. Enquiries to: Mgt. Brennan, Ph.090 964 2061 or Chris O'Flynn (PRO) Ph. 087 649 2466 or visit their website <http://ballinasloeactiveretirement.blogspot.com/>

A montage of pictures reminds us all of what fun and laughter we usually have in a typical year and what we hope we will be allowed to do again.



From left to right: Ml. Colohan, Nancy Carr, Maura Rafter, Laura Naughton



From left to right: Max Fairclough, Fr. Benny Flanagan, Mary Slattery



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Clontuskert's First Holy Communion Class enjoying icecream with Mr. Shane Gohery following their First Penance Ceremony this week
 L-R: Shane Gohery, Peter Culleton, Conor Finneran, Jack Hession, Erin Winters, Niamh Butler, Eden Lyons, Kathryn Lynch, Aisling McDonagh, Oran Curley



Clontuskert Junior Infants 2020 . L-R: Jason Ward, Alexander Ward, Grace Kelly, Leon Naughten, Chloe Cummins, Kerriann O Connor, Seán Lynch, Brian Kelly and Tom Brennan.



Author Patricia Forde chats to some of Clontuskert Junior Infants at the Galway Library Van Front L-R: Brian Kelly, Alexander Ward Middle L-R: Leon Naughten Back Tom Brennan and Grace Kelly

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FIRST GENT STARTS AS ARDSKOIL MHUIRE PRINCIPAL



12 of 17 students who achieved over 500 points in their Leaving Certificate exams:

Front Row (L-R) Gráinne Loughnane, Melanie Markham, Katelyn Keogh, Michaela Keogh, Mei Chen Kennedy, Aoibhín Carty **Back Row:** Ms Lilian Hynes (Deputy Principal), Maria Colohan, Hazel Kenny, Laura Frehill, Leah Clogher, Keri Manning, Sara McGreal, Mr Pauric Hanlon (Principal)

Missing from Photo: Alice Duncan, Rachel Whyte, Aaleen Khalid, Shauna Mulry, Zara Campbell

The third lay Principal to be appointed in Ardscoil Mhuire, succeeding Trisha Kilgallen, also makes history as the school's first male principal, is Longford man Pauric Hanlon.

Born and bred on the scenic shores of Lough Gowna in North Longford, he proudly acknowledges that he is from a small half-parish called Mullinalaghta, famous for their Leinster football victory in 2018. The youngest of three, he was always well minded at home. He had a very happy 'country' childhood with long days outside playing. Through the years, has developed a keen interest in travelling. He enjoys running and completed the Dublin City Marathon last year.

He attended Cloonagh National school, a small two teacher school which to this day, he believes instils great values in all its students. "Needless to say, this was a by-product of the teacher having to teach four class groups simultaneously – no mean feat!" explained Pauric.

From there, he spent six years as a student in Cnoc Mhuire Secondary School in Granard, Co. Longford. Similar to Ardscoil Mhuire, Cnoc Mhuire was established by the Sisters of Mercy to provide education for the people of the area. He proceeded to attend St. Patrick's College, Thurles to complete a BA in Education, Irish and Religious Studies. He was fortunate enough to get a job back in Cnoc Mhuire and spent seven years there. In recent years, he completed a post-graduate diploma in Innovative Teaching and Learning and continued on to complete a Masters in Innovative Learning. Most recently, he worked as Deputy Principal in St Bricin's College in Cavan.

"Growing up, I always wanted to be a teacher and have thoroughly enjoyed every second of my career to date. I was passionate about my subjects but also loved getting involved with initiatives and activities outside of the classroom. I believe that working with young people is a fantastic privilege and I am so grateful that I get to do a job I love each day" states Pauric.

Although considered a blow-in, his connection with the town stretches back spending eight years working with the Keller Family of KelAir Campotel as a member of their operations team in France, Italy and Spain working for Pearse, Sheena and 'The Boss' Liam Keller.

Commencing this role in summer 2020 has presented many challenges that didn't even exist last year. Reopening Ardscoil Mhuire was a team effort involving staff, students, parents and many local businesses.

Teachers returned early from their holidays to get their classrooms ready while the caretaker spent endless hours working to reconfigure the school for a safe reopening along with the administration staff worked hard to ensure everything that was required was in place and ready for reopening.

"Watching the students enter the school over the first week provided us all, but me personally, with a great sense of achievement and pride. The students were delighted to be back in their classes and the teachers were more motivated than ever to deliver an excellent learning experience, regardless of the restrictions" said Pauric.

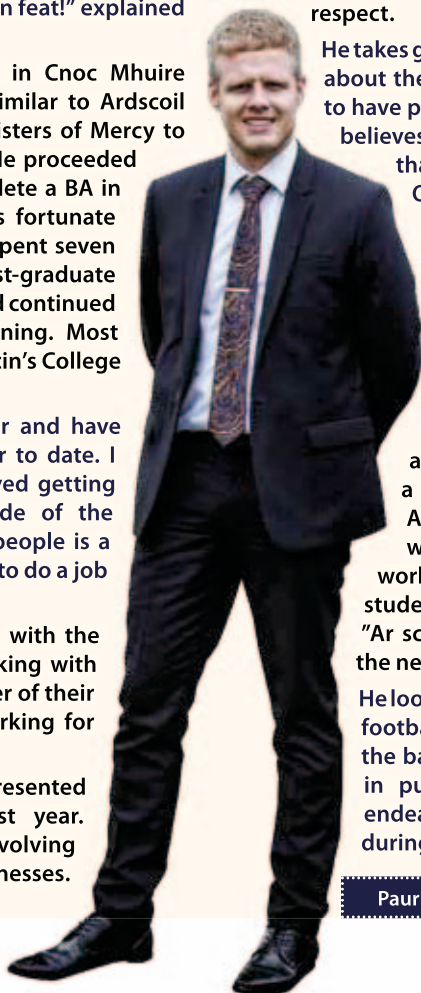
He has a special interest in education for those with additional needs. At the school, they've a dedicated and hardworking team of Special Needs Assistants and teachers. The 7A class, as well as mainstream students who present with additional needs, are all supported to achieve their potential with kindness and respect.

He takes great pride in meeting past students and hearing about their successes since they left the school, hoping to have played some small part in this along the way. He believes teaching is a brilliant career and a profession that shapes the futures of all our young people. Often described as a vocation, he considers it a privilege.

"Within the current climate, we must focus our attention on keeping our students, staff and all their respective families safe. Managing the uncertainty of Covid-19 whilst endeavouring to provide excellent learning opportunities for our students is a priority for all of us. Promoting positive wellbeing is also very important. Students traditionally have a broad and varied extra-curricular offering in Ardscoil Mhuire. How this will work in 2020/2021, we do not know but one thing is certain, we will work in collaboration with parents to support our students throughout the coming weeks and months. "Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine" explains the new principal.

He looks forward to celebrating victories on the rugby/football/camogie pitch, offering encouragement on the basketball/volleyball court, supporting students in public speaking competitions, Art and Music endeavours, as well as celebrating achievements during their Awards Day and graduation ceremonies.

Pauric Hanlon "I wish to sincerely thank Ms





Patricia Kilgallen, who has led this school selflessly for the past 15 years. Her professionalism, passion and exceptional attention to detail has allowed for a very smooth handover. I, as well as the entire school community, wish her many happy and healthy years of retirement. I am very fortunate to have Ms Lilian Hynes working with me as Deputy Principal. She has provided untold support and guidance over the last few months. I am blessed to lead an

excellent team of teachers and support staff who continuously go above and beyond to provide exceptional learning experiences for our students. Lastly, I would like to thank the parents, students and friends of Ardscoil Mhuire who have welcomed me to Ballinasloe. Your kind wishes are much appreciated. To past-pupils, he hopes to welcome you back to your Alma Mater once this pandemic is over" concluded Pauric.

SCOIL CHROI NAOFA BACK TO SCHOOL



Ms.A.Kelly's 5th and 6th class



Ms.Fenton's Senior Infants



Ms O'Connors Junior Infants



Ms Broderick's first class



Ms Broderick's first class

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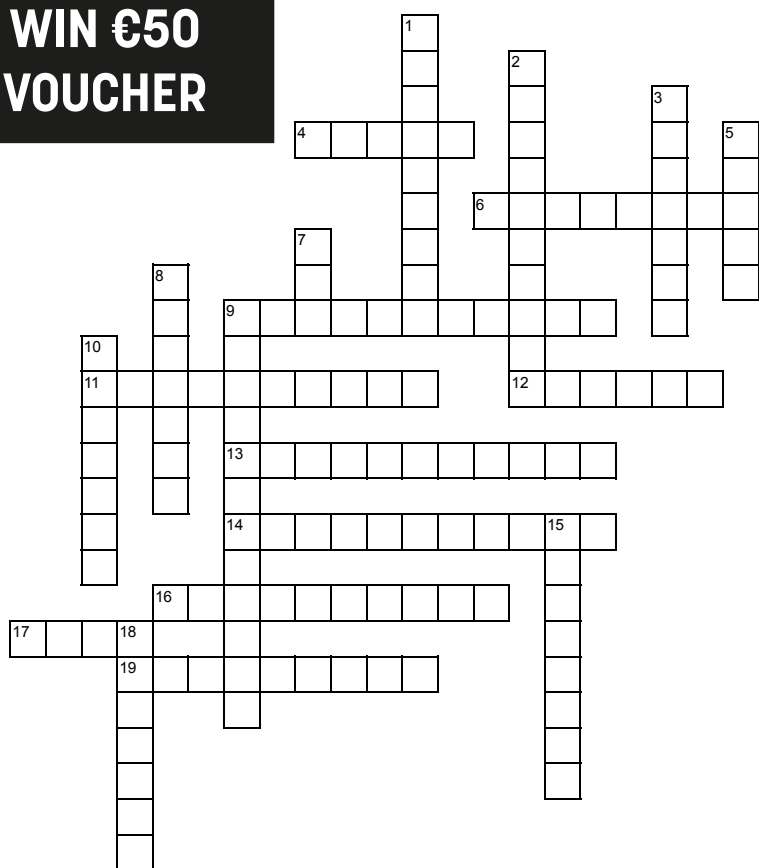
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Across

- 4 Chairman of BACD, Seamus _____ (5)
- 6 Family Hotel in Main St. (8)
- 9 Ballinasloe's longest street _____ (11)
- 11 The Dr. _____ Monument, at top of Harris Rd. (10)
- 12 Former International Heavyweight Boxer, Coleman _____ (6)
- 13 First Band to play in Emerald Ballroom (3, 8)
- 14 Town's last senior rugby international player (4, 7)
- 16 The Parish of Creagh and _____ (10)
- 17 Initials of Nuns who founded Portiuncula (4)
- 19 Former Lord of Garbally (9)

Down

- 1 Patriot who stayed in lodgings in Main St. (5, 4)
- 2 Home of Soccer Club (3, 7)
- 3 Congo Hero who lived in Brackernagh (7)
- 5 The Grand Canal _____ was in Harbour St. (5)
- 7 Dr. _____ English, late St. Brigid's Hospital (3)
- 8 The _____ Cinema (Swanwick's) (7)
- 9 Town's last Elected TD (7, 5)
- 10 Former Supt. in Ballinasloe who became Assistant Comm. Eugene _____ (7)
- 15 Current "Person of the Year" Billy (8)
- 18 _____ Avenue, in Fairgreen (7)

Completed Crossword (or a photocopy) to be returned not later than 31st October 2020, to CROSSWORD, C/o Ballinasloe Life, BACD Office, Creagh, Ballinasloe.

Name..... Mobile:.....

Address.....

Winner will be drawn from correct entries and receive a €50 Voucher from KPW Print, Poolboy, T & C apply.

Answers to Crossword 101: Across: 5-Bunowen, 7-Colm Croffy, 11-KPW, 16-Aisling, 17-East Galway Democrat, 18-Emerald, 20-The Pines. Down: 1-Dolan, 2-Amber, 3-Dubarry, 4-Suck, 6-Clipper Carlton, 8-Haydens, 9-Hostings, 10-Grand, 12-Fairgreen, 13-Kilclooney, 14-Alex Higgins, 15-Georgie Grehan, 19-Rosgloss.

THE FIRST CORRECT ENTRY OPENED WAS MARGARET WALKER, AHASCRAH, BALLINASLOE who is the winner of the €50 Voucher sponsored by KPW Print.

THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER...

BY KEVIN KAVANAGH

DR. EVELYN PARSONS, the newly co-opted Galway Co. Councillor, inadvertently helped many readers of Ballinasloe LIFE solve a tricky poser in its first Crossword competition. She said one of her key aims was to promote Ballinasloe, which derives its name from the "Ford of the Hostings" which was the clue to No. 9 down. Cllr. Parsons from Beechawn, replaces Senator Aisling Dolan on Galway Co. Council as an Independent.

CLONTUSKERT SCHOOL weekly card games have been suspended because of the Covid 19 restrictions. The fund-raising events are expected to resume when they get the "green light." Card games throughout the area have been affected by the pandemic restrictions.

MARY GOODE, a member of the Ballinasloe Golf Club, recorded a hole-in-one at the Par 3, 10th hole. The 112 metre hole was aced by Mary in a recent competition. Mary later won the Connacht Senior Ladies' championship, played at her home club.

WOODLAWN Heritage Group have erected a plaque in memory of the late Michael John Kilgannon at Woodlawn Railway Station. It is erected as a tribute to his tireless work in the community, as an educator, councillor and activist and especially for his efforts to secure the future of the Railway Station.

BALLINASLOE FINE GAEL had to postpone their annual general meeting, scheduled for last month, because of the Covid-19 restrictions. With over fifty members eligible to attend the branch had no alternative, on health and safety grounds.

ROBERT RIDDELL the well known Ballinasloe Landscape Photographer, is exhibiting a selection of his work at the Golden Island Shopping Centre, Athlone as part of the Midlands Photography Club Culture night 2020. The exhibit runs until the end of October. Robert's work includes landscape images from around Ireland and the UK.

OUT AND ABOUT



Mary Goode, Ballinasloe, winner of the ILGUI Connacht Seniors Golf Championship played at Ballinasloe Golf Club.



Best Ladies Team in the Ballinasloe Golf Club "Gala Celebration Event" were l-r Eilish Brennan, Aideen Bergin, Olivia Walsh, Teresa Coughlan with John Hurley, Captain.

Congratulations to the Ballinasloe Golf Club teams on winning two Connacht Titles (The Junior Cup & The Jimmy Bruen Shield). Best of luck to both teams in the All Ireland Finals next month.



Jimmy Flynn, Seniors Captain, Ballinasloe Golf Club presents his Captain's Prize to the overall winner Kevin Cunniffe.



Carol McCarthy presents the Peter McCarthy Cup to Mike Barrett winner of the Ballinasloe Golf Club Seniors Singles Matchplay Competition.



Christy Costello and Miley Jordan discussing World Affairs, sitting on a window sill on Dunlo Street in the 1980's



Ruairi Doherty of Hawthorn, Creagh - A GMIT Engineering student has been shortlisted for this year's national MIDAS Ireland 2020 3rd Level Project Competition with his Remote Robot entry. Ruairi is the son of Fildelma and late and much loved Ciaran Doherty who ran a successful Computer Business in town. He also achieved a First Class Honours Degree in his course!

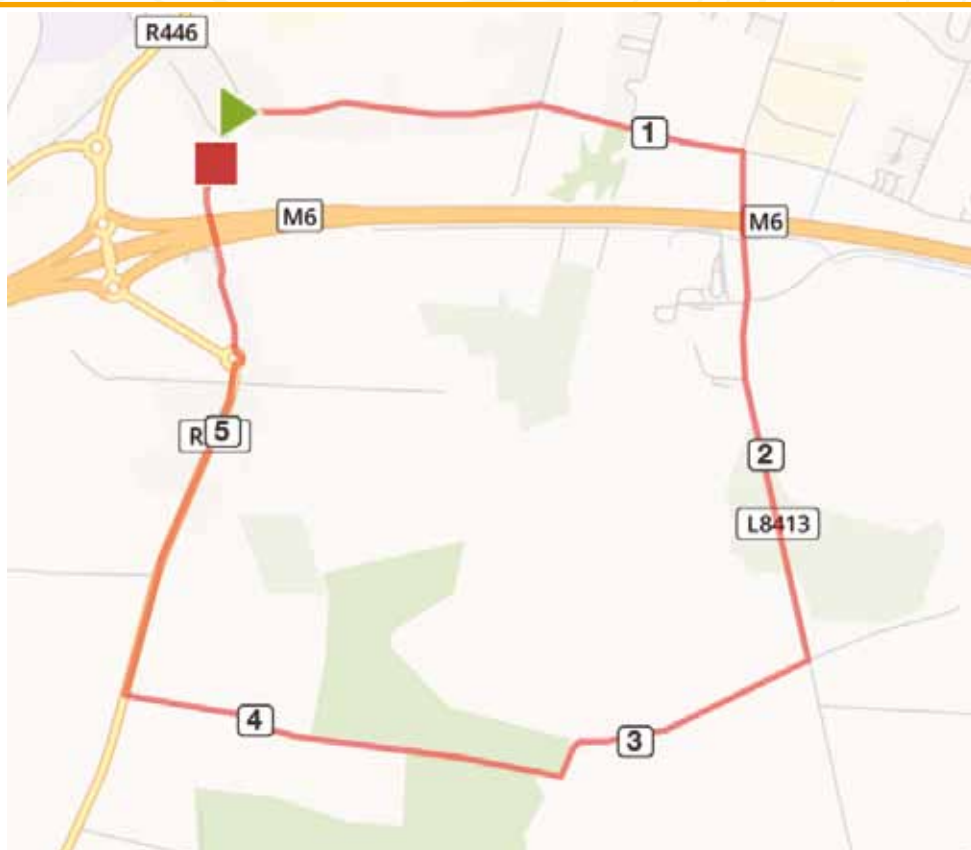


Ben Halpin from Glentaun, Ballinasloe with the new European Commissioner, Mairead McGuinness, on her recent visit to Ballinasloe. He was one of the first to congratulate her on her new appointment. Ben's late grandfather, Jack Halpin, was a neighbour of Commissioner McGuinness in Co. Louth.

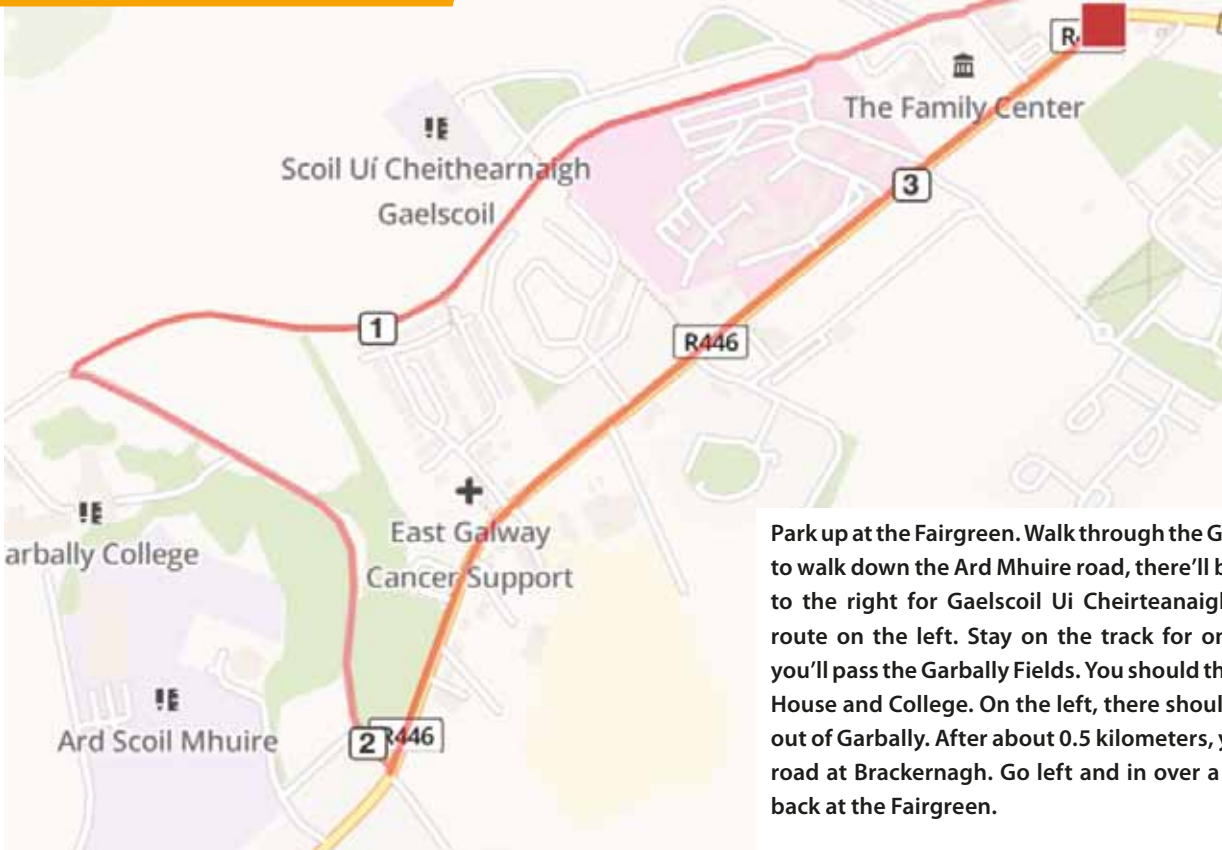
AUTUMN / WINTER TOWN CENTRE WALKS

Beechlawn (6km)

This is an on-road loop. Beginning at Poolboy Industrial Estate, walk straight out over overpass past the recycling center. Take the next right about one kilometer down the road. You will then walk straight through the golf club. You will meet the R355, take the right. When you meet the roundabout, take the second exit and go over the pedestrianised walkway. Take the right to walk the Beechlawn road and stay on this road for two kilometers and you will arrive back at the Industrial Estate.



Garbally (3.3km)



Park up at the Fairgreen. Walk through the Gate Lodge. Continue to walk down the Ard Mhuire road, there'll be a turn on the road to the right for Gaelscoil Ui Cheirteanaigh, take the walking route on the left. Stay on the track for one kilometer, where you'll pass the Garbally Fields. You should then come to Garbally House and College. On the left, there should be the main route out of Garbally. After about 0.5 kilometers, you'll meet the main road at Brackernagh. Go left and in over a kilometer, you'll be back at the Fairgreen.

Keep up-to-date on maps, and video clips of these and more cycles on the Ballinasloe LIFE Video Channell



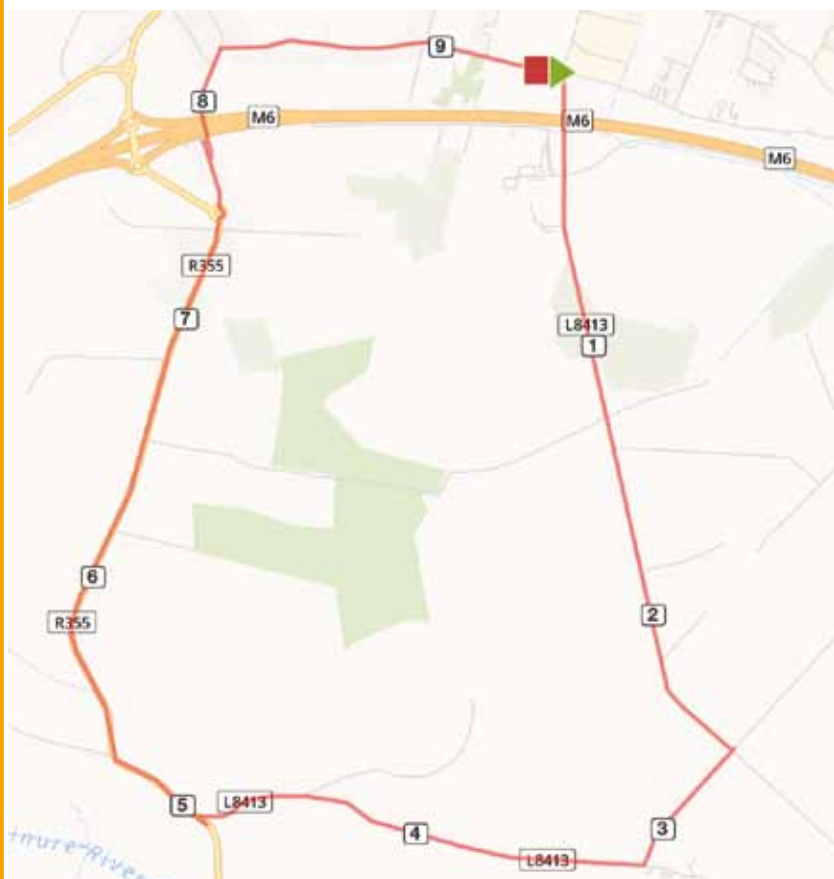
AUTUMN / WINTER TOWN CENTRE WALKS

Cycle (18.45km)



Beginning at Saint Michael's Square, head out towards Creagh on the R446. You'll pass Creagh Church, Dolan's Service Station and M6 motors. Take the third exit for Athlone/Dublin at the Beagh roundabout. Head down the R357 for about one kilometer. Then take the third exit at the Ard Carn roundabout back towards the town. When you pass by Creagh NS, turn left. Head back through the town and out to Derrymullen on the R348. Continue out towards Nutfield Cross, take the right (L3412) towards Ahascragh. About three kilometers out the road, take the first right. You'll continue on this road for a while and you'll get to see Kilclooney Church. Take the right on the R358 at Derrymullen. Finally, at the end of the road turn left back towards town.

Hymany Way (9.4km)



The Hymany Way, Ballinasloe is 9.4km loop which takes you through Kellysgrove and the Portumna road. Starting at Poolboy Industrial Estate, head south on the L8413 and walk over the overpass. Walk past the recycling center and continue on that road for over 2 kilometers. Take the second right and remain on the L8413 for another two kilometers. You'll then meet the main R355 Ballinasloe-Portumna Road. Take the right here towards Ballinasloe. You should pass the rugby club grounds and the golf club. At Moher Roundabout, take the 2nd exit and walk over the overpass. Take the first right and continue walking for a kilometer and you'll arrive back at the Industrial Estate.



ANOTHER €17,000 IN GRANTS FROM



Laurencetown Development Company L-R Aisling Dolan, Mary Nee, Damien Farrell, Shane McNeill, Maura Farrell, Ann Lynch, Paddy Kelly, Caroline Lucas, Tom Cahill.



Ballinasloe Town Team L-R Aisling Dolan, Marian Brady, Seamus Duffy, Grainne Murphy, Lyn Donnelly, James Burke.

In the past year Ballinasloe Credit Union has allocated grants totalling €50,000 from its Social Fund to a number of local organisations in the community. The primary purpose of the social fund is to assist organisations that are primarily involved in community development projects.

The latest round of social funding was distributed recently when eight local groups shared in the €17,000 donation made by the credit union. The Social Fund is available to all groups and organisations in the community. Chairperson of Ballinasloe Credit Union Marian Brady acknowledged that in the current economic climate BCU is still conscious of its social obligation. She spoke of the credit unions social commitment to the community as outlined in its operating principles. Briefly this principle obliges credit unions to be socially responsible by contributing to the development of the local community within its common bond. The credit unions "vision of social justice extends both to the individual members and to the larger community in which they work and reside". It is within this remit that Ballinasloe Credit Union set up the social fund to provide financial support to local organisations. She also thanked the members of Ballinasloe Credit Union who sanctioned the fund at last year's AGM. Since its establishment in

1998 donations to local organisation from the credit union social fund exceed €800,000.

The most recent allocation of €17,000 was disbursed among the following: Ballinasloe Tennis Club €5,000, Ballinasloe Town Team €4,000, Ballinasloe Soccer Club €3,000, Cappataggle community association for sport €3,000, Ballinasloe Training centre €1,000, Bsloe Social Club €500, Bsloe Cancer Support Centre €500, Bsloe Care'n'Repair €500 & Bsloe Social Services €500

Groups that have earlier received grant aid from the BCU social fund include Laurencetown Development company, Duggan Park Development Committee. Aughrim Dev company, Ballinasloe Town band, First responders. During the early days of the Covid Pandemic the Credit union also donated digital tablets to 8 local nursing homes so that residents could WhatsApp relatives/ friends unable to visit them because of visitors' restrictions. A coffee

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St Brendans CNU L-R Bernie O'Donnell, Breda Gavin, Ann Marie Curley, Geraldine Devine, Shane McNeill



Pictured at the presentation of €500 to Ballinasloe Social Club from BCU social fund Marian Brady, Joe Walsh, Joby Kelly & Ciaran Keighrey

machine and bottled water were also donated to the Portiuncula ICU department, bringing the total allocation of funding from the social fund to €50,000 for the year.

Ballinasloe Credit Union has been operating in the community for 53 years. The credit union provides valuable savings and loan services to its 22,500 members. Ballinasloe Credit Union has savings of €110M and assets of €129m and last year provided €14m loans to members. The staff at Ballinasloe Credit Union are always

happy to provide budgeting and savings guidance for new and existing members, as well as information on loan products to suit individual circumstances. To continue to have sustainable Credit Unions in all our communities into the future, members now more than ever need to support their local Credit Union. So, if you are thinking of taking out a loan, let it be for a car, home improvement, garden maintenance, painting of the house, your credit union is open for business and lending



Cappataggle Community Sports Association L-F Sean Stankard, Michael Hannon, Marian Brady, Seamus Garvey.



Ballinasloe Cancer Support L-R John McLoughlin, Imelda Mullen, Marian Brady, Jackie Brien, Maura Fahy McLoughlin, Grainne Murphy.



Ballinasloe Care n Repair L-R Marian Brady, Joe Staunton, Grainne Murphy.

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“THESE DAYS ARE OURS!” – A WORD FROM BISHOP MICHAEL

Last October, I was ordained Bishop of Clonfert. Back then none of us had even heard of the Coronavirus or Covid-19. None of us would have predicted that, come the spring, our world would be gripped by the tragedy of a Pandemic and that life as we had known it would have been turned on its head. As the saying goes “we are where we are” and no matter how surreal it is – these days are ours to live through.

For me moving house from Sligo to Loughrea was in fact moving closer to home. I was born in Athlone. The eldest of a family of six, my home parish bordered the parish of Taughmaconnell, which is in the Diocese of Clonfert. I have many relatives and friends living there. Ballinasloe, with Portiuncula Hospital, was familiar territory too.

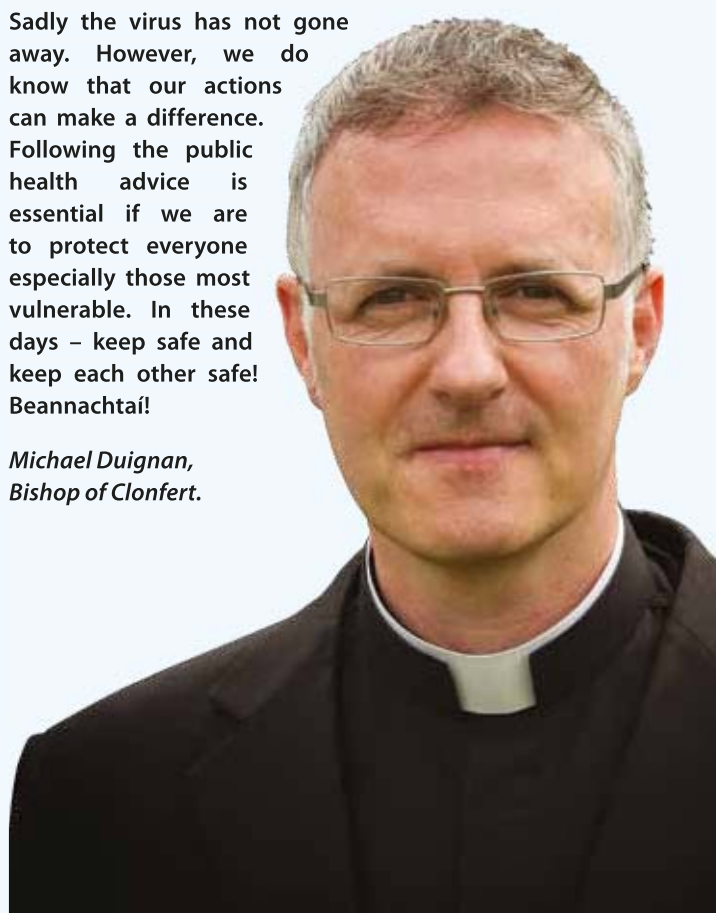
I went to Cloonakilla National School in Bealnamulla and then to St Aloysius College in Athlone. After that I studied for the priesthood in Kiltegan in County Wicklow and then at the Pontifical Irish College in Rome. In 1994, I was ordained a Priest in Saints Peter and Paul’s church in Athlone. Except for some time pursuing post-graduate studies in Rome, I have ministered for most of my life in County Sligo. My last appointment was lecturing in Theology and Religious Education at St Angela’s College. A hardworking staff and fantastic students made it a most enriching experience. I also had responsibilities with the Diocese of Elphin, working in the area of education and the formation of Permanent Deacons and Catechists for ministry in the Church.

One of the good things about studying theology is that you study the history of the Church. It gives you a good insight into the changes that have occurred down through the centuries. Soon you realise that the Church has always faced difficulties and challenges. Some of those challenges make the challenges that we have today seem small indeed. However, we do face challenges and the next few years will bring significant changes to our church communities. Falling numbers participating in the life of our parishes coupled with a lack of finances and resources along with a lack of clergy will not be without consequences. I take solace from a belief that God never abandons his people. On the flip side of every challenge there lies an opportunity. With the help of the Holy Spirit, my hope would be that we, the laity, priests and bishop, together can work out new structures and new ways of doing things that will be more suitable to the situation we find ourselves in. Please God this will allow us to move from spending a lot of our time propping up things that are eventually going to fall down to a situation where the Church, although reduced in number, can better live and share the joy of Christian faith - especially with our young people and those on the margins of the Church and society.

I am conscious of the enormous amount of work done at parish level by so many volunteers. This has become so obvious recently with the massive effort put into safely reopening our churches for public worship. I am also conscious of the leadership of our Priests who are often now carrying an even greater workload than in the past. Such cooperation between priests and people for the common good of our Christian community bodes well for the future. This concerted effort at parish level has also been mirrored in our schools and colleges. We owe a debt of gratitude to their Boards of Management, Principals, Teachers and the whole school community for all the work they have done to get our schools open in a way that keeps all involved safe.

Sadly the virus has not gone away. However, we do know that our actions can make a difference. Following the public health advice is essential if we are to protect everyone especially those most vulnerable. In these days – keep safe and keep each other safe! Beannachtaí!

*Michael Duignan,
Bishop of Clonfert.*



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- 22,500 MEMBERS
- €124 MILLION SAVINGS
- €300,000 DONATED TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS/CLUBS since 2015
- €41 MILLION + IN LOANS TO MEMBERS

A LONG TRACK RECORD OF DELIVERY









For over 50 years Ballinasloe Credit Union has been driven by the core operating principles of meeting members social and economic needs in a manner that adds value to the community, supporting members and the community.

OUR VISION "To enable our members to fulfil their economic and social goals by delivering quality financial services in our community in an effective, ethical and professional manner through personal interaction, supported by the application of innovative technology, available 24/7."

OUR MISSION "Ballinasloe Credit Union's mission is to make a positive difference in our members' lives".

OUR VALUES "We listen to our members. We serve our members. We care about our members...Always".

LOANS ISSUED OCT. 2019 ~ AUG. 2020 €13,514,710.91

	€5,223,620.67	38%		€666,349.68	5%
	€3,288,515.61	25%		€450,372.4	13%
	€2,572,007.19	19%		€270,419.00	2%
	€941,926.35	7%		€101,500.00	1%

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Credit Unions in the Republic of Ireland are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Gerard Devlin, a cancer survivor and member of the East Galway Cancer Centre, is the newly nominated ambassador for the next three-five years for Ballinasloe Community Hearts.

He was chosen from nominations sent out to local organisations and he received the highest amount of approvals. He was selected back in March but owing to Covid-19, he was unable to be officially unveiled until recently. He received his Medallion and a trophy showing the hands of friendship to mark his selection and also received €500 towards his chosen charity.

Gerry, a former AT Cross employee, is known around town for his book writing, craft work and engagement with a variety of local organisations and runs a number of social media sites which reflect on bygone days!

"I'm looking forward to making my own impact for charity and I believe this is the perfect time to do it. There is great kindness

and generosity from the Irish community towards donating and I hope this pattern continues for the future" states Gerry. He intends to continue to run events and help out in any way.

Community Hearts was founded in 2001 by Maureen Cahalan in order to support local charities. She was helped tremendously through different charities in overcoming her husband's death and wanted to give back to them for all the help she received.



Gerry Devlin, with his Medallion and a trophy showing the hands of friendship



Maureen Cahalan with newly nominated ambassador Gerry Devlin

To raise money for these local charities, Maureen has held events such as a Fish and Chips night, Walks, and a Christmas Market to help raise these funds. All money collected is spread out between two or three charities in the town.

They have in the past, run workshops for people who lost their jobs. The attendees were addressed by a guest speaker and then shown how to create a short and informative C.V. on one page. They were also retrained in how to sign up and do a successful interview which was all thanks to Bank of Ireland who gave them a room for three weeks and Tomas Gullane who gave them a room for six weeks.

"I love to take part with all aspects of the charity as I feel I am giving back to the community" states Maureen.

Gerard along with Maureen and treasurer Kathleen Treacy will try their best to help everyone out in the community. If they find an opening for an event or talk to help, they'll do their best to facilitate it. If you have any queries, please contact Maureen at maureen.cahalan@gmail.com.

Garbally View Nursing Home

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McAllister Distillery Ltd., a whiskey making company from Dublin, are converting the unused Old Mill located in Ahascragh, into a Distillery and Visitor Centre. The Mill has been a hallmark of the village since the 1800s and processed grain into flour into the late 50s. However, it has been derelict for decades.

Husband and wife team Gareth and Michelle McAllister, from North County Dublin, set it up in 2018 with the purpose to produce crafted Irish spirits to the highest quality of tasting experience with unique and innovative flavours. Gareth is a qualified chemical engineer, he has spent thirty years in the corporate world and has worked with many high-profile products in Asia and believes that the product will be successful in that market. Having this background, they realised that they have a passion for business and whiskey making and wanted to get into business together.

"We had been searching for a while out west for some place for this project and we found Ahascragh early last year and fell in love with the village. We're actually now planning to move to a house nearby from Portmarnock" States Garry.

Their aim for the distillery is to create a business in the growing food and drink tourism category which is an appropriate addition to the local area. They hope to provide a visitor experience and that its footfall will provide a generous tourist boost to the local area.

The Distillery will produce different styles of Irish whiskey and gin, with the site also including rooms for hospitality events, retail shop and cafe. 15 jobs will be created with a further 60-70 indirect roles for suppliers, farmers, logistics providers and other local and national businesses.

"We have a unique story and a unique experience for the consumer. We want to produce whiskey and gin that will put Ahascragh and Galway firmly on the Irish whiskey tourist trail, while introducing the products we make to a national and international clientele" explains Garry.

However, due to the run-down mill, extensive works costing €6-8 million are set to take place. These consist of alterations and repair, installation of equipment for stills, administration space and function space ancillary to the distillery use. They'll include a museum/interpretative area displaying articles about the mill and whiskey for visitors. A tasting room will be incorporated and the old Mill wheel will be restored, with the complex designed by Scottish firm Organic Architects, which has transformed a number of old buildings into distilleries in Scotland

If planning is approved, production could begin in 2022 with a whiskey sourced from other distillers sold under the brand name by next year.

Irish Whiskey production grew rapidly in the late 18th century. At its height in the mid-19th century 88 licenced distilleries, producing

more than 12m 9-litre cases annually, made Irish Whiskey the largest global spirits category of the time. However a combination of events led to the industry's demise and by the mid-1980s only two Irish whiskey distilleries remained, both owned by Irish Distillers. Scotch, Bourbon, and Canadian whiskey had all surged and left Irish volumes far behind at about 1% of global sales.

The late 1980s marked the beginning of Irish Whiskey's comeback. In 1988, Irish Distillers (IDL) became a member of Group Pernod Ricard, which provided massive distribution opportunities for Jameson, and the other IDL Irish whiskey brands, through its well-established global sales network. In 1987, Cooley Distillery was established and was the first independent distillery to begin distilling Irish Whiskey in over 100 years

However, in 2010, there were still only four distilleries in Ireland in operation producing and selling Irish Whiskey: Cooley Distillery (est. 1987), Kilbeggan Distillery (est. 1757, re-commissioned 2007), New Midleton Distillery (est. 1975), Old Bushmills Distillery (est. 1784). However, by January 2020 the number of operational whiskey distilleries in Ireland had increased to 32, demonstrating the scale of Ireland's Whiskey Renaissance.

EU Climate Change Tips For at Home

Did you know there are simple steps you can take at home that will not only ensure our future, but actually save you money too? Here are our top tips.

Replace incandescent/halogen light bulbs with LEDs saving up to €100 in electricity costs over a 20yr lifetime.

Look for energy efficient appliances: Look for an EU energy label and choose an energy efficient model.

Fill up your washing machine: Don't do a wash if you only have a few items of clothing. Wait until you have a full load. Less washes = less cost!

Don't overheat your water: A boiler at a maximum temperature of 60°C is both the most efficient and hygienic.

Buy rechargeable batteries and don't forget to recycle your batteries once they reach their end of life!



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KILLIMOR MAN SURVIVES BULL ATTACK

BY KEN KELLY

A 72-year-old Killimor farmer miraculously survived after being attacked by a 5-year-old bull, which left him with life-threatening injuries. The 17th November 2019 was a day that Johnny Lyons from Kylecrow believed he was going to die.

That Sunday morning, Johnny had gone to his farm a mile away, to tend to his livestock. A Limousine bull and a cow were in an open shed and as the farmer walked across the yard the bull charged. "It was only ten yards across but I never made it. The bull knocked me down and attacked me on the ground. I curled up in a ball and I thought I was going to be killed. I was stunned and I passed out" he explained.

When he came round, Johnny said the bull was looking at him from the far side of a swinging gate. "I wasn't able to move. I had a serious gash on my head, fractured ribs and two punctured lungs, I learned later. However I managed to crawl to my van and drove the mile back to my home to tell my wife. I then passed out and didn't come to for nine days.

"I was brought by helicopter to UCHG and suffered a heart-attack on the way. I was fifteen days in hospital and when I came home I spent twenty weeks, lying on my back, recuperating. I understand the helicopter arrived in nine minutes to airlift me to hospital, which took only eleven minutes and that probably saved me. I want to thank all the emergency services who came to my assistance, as well as my neighbours, even though I don't remember all that went on as I had passed out" explained Johnny.

The Killimor man is not the only Galway victim of cow and bull attacks over the last twelve months. Now back again, operating his fruit and vegetable markets around the county, Johnny warns of the dangers involved when dealing with livestock. "A cow, a bull or even a ram can suddenly attack you in a split second. You should always have someone with you when you go herding. It could mean the saving of your life. Livestock are unpredictable" said the man that cheated death and miraculously survived.

On St. Patrick's night, Johnny decided he would like a pint in his local. He at last felt well enough to venture out. However he found it



Survivor Johnny Lyons at his market stall

was closed because of Covid-19 "and so I haven't been in a pub since the 10th November last year. Maybe I'll become a pioneer" laughed the jovial Johnny.

However, there was happy ending when the 5-year-old Angus Cross cow, who was with the bull on that memorable day, gave birth to identical triplet calves in March last, which is regarded as One in a 400,000 chance of happening.



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MAISIE REYNOLDS - AN APPRECIATION

After ninety nine summers, another of our Civil War babies – Maisie Reynolds from Birchgrove, went to her Eternal Reward on the 23rd of August, very peacefully in the wonderful care of the staff of a location that she was synonymous with for a great part of her working life, Portiuncula Hospital.

Born in 1921, the second eldest girl of a family of nine Sherlocks in Tiaquinn, Colemanstown, she was christened Mary but from earliest memories was always referred to as Maisie.

After schooling Athenry during the Emergency, Maisie followed her elder sister into a career in nursing, commencing her studies in Wartime London in 1943. She got a student post at the Brooke Hospital, Stokers Hill, Woolich Fever Hospital and commenced a life-long commitment to the care of the sick which only ended formally in 1986, when she stood down as Staff Nurse/Acting Night Sister from Portiuncula Hospital.

She met Jim, a land commission officer, while nursing in Castlebar in the early 50s and they married and moved to Athlone first before building their family home in Birchgrove. With the marriage bar she concentrated on the family until she went back to some private nursing and a refresher course in the early 70s in Merlin Park brought

her to nursing in our local Portiuncula Hospital, where she was greatly respected and admired.

In retirement as through her working life she remained a deeply committed Catholic, a supportive Mother and Grandmother, a gregarious neighbour and a key member until very lately, of all manner of groups but principally the Active Retirement Association and the Retired Nurses Association.

She really was enthused and energised by all the connections she had with her huge array of nursing and medical colleagues. Primarily though for Maisie, aside from faith and caring vocation, her abiding interest was in her family.

Predeceased by her loving husband Jim in 1999 and her baby daughter Edel, she is sadly missed by her daughter Mary, sons Joe & Paul (Boston, USA) and Malachy, son-in-law Paraic, daughters-in-law Catherine, Laura and Sabina, her precious grandchildren James and Maria, brother Michael (Boston, USA), brothers-in-law Liam and Richard, nieces, nephews, relatives, ex nursing colleagues, neighbours and a wide circle of friends; to whom we all extend our deepest condolences.



FRANK DOOLEY - A LIFETIME OF GIVING

There was much sadness among the former and current staff of St. Brigid's and Psychiatric Care Services in HSE East Galway/ Roscommon and golfing circles when news emerged of the passing of a very well-liked and much respected Frank Dooley.

Frank began his nursing career in the mid-sixties as a Psychiatric nurse but later enrolled in Wolverhampton to study and qualify in General Nursing.

On his return to Ashfield Drive, the late Jack Halpin encouraged him to venture into Tutoring and he later succeeded to Jack's Role, as Head Nurse Tutor in 1978.

He was busy between the Ballinasloe Hospital complex and UCHG from the early 70s until his retirement in the late noughties.

He was held in very high esteem by medical and nursing



colleagues alike and ran pioneering courses in the Nurses' Home, accredited by the College of Surgeons.

Frank's dedication to his profession and students was shared with that of his love of family.

For a great many in the community however it was Frank's engagement with Golf and commitment to the Ballinasloe Club that singled him out.

He was never happier than on a green and served as Captain of the Golf Club for the season 2013/2014.

We all extend our deepest condolences to his heartbroken wife Breege, daughters Karen & Claire, brothers Stephen, Tom, Jimmy, Brendan, & Mattie, son-in-law Declan, Claire's partner Brian, his adored and much loved grandchildren Mia and Ryan, sisters in law, brother-in-law Stephen, nieces, nephews, relatives, neighbours and his many friends.

May his kind and gentle soul rest in peace.



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UNEXPECTED DEATH OF SOLICITOR

BY KEN KELLY



Ballinasloe was shocked with the unexpected death of popular Solicitor, Ann Jennings, a native of Society Street, but living in Salthill, Galway for the past twenty years. Ann was the daughter of the late Annie and Andrew Jennings, who ran the long-established Cahill & Co. in the town. Her sister Mary and brothers Michael and Joe and their families are deeply grieving her loss as well as her extended family and wide circle of friends.

Ann went to school in St Joseph's National School and was a boarder in Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway. She kept up with loyal friends from school who met every year without fail, for over forty years, to celebrate each other's birthdays.

She studied Law and Classics at NUI Galway and subsequently qualified as a solicitor. She did her apprenticeship in Ballinasloe, with Patrick Hogan and Co. Solicitors and then worked in Hutchinson Davidson Solicitors for some years. Ann went on to run her own legal practice in Galway, under the name Keaveney/Jennings. She enjoyed success in her chosen career and was a well-liked person by her colleagues in the legal profession. The many tributes from her

colleagues recounted her kindness, helpfulness to them as well as her smile and her laugh.

She never lost her Ballinasloe connections, and kept in touch particularly with her extended family – the Jennings, Hynes and McCullagh clans, as well as the many friends she had in the town. She was devoted to her nieces and nephew, Clareanna, Ruth, Aoife and Ronan and enjoyed having fun with her grandnieces and nephew Clodagh, Michael and Orla, who live now in the UK.

Ann was a warm, sociable person, who loved meeting people whether that was at a family gathering, in the cafés of Galway or when she was out and about on the prom, Salthill. She was a walker and a keen swimmer and would often be seen braving the Atlantic at Blackrock in all weathers.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated by her cousin, Fr Gerry Jennings, PP Salthill, while her eulogy was delivered by her nieces, who conveyed so well her sense of fun and her sense of care for them and all her family. The lovely music and singing was provided by those with family connections, Sean Óg Hurley and Rachel Goode, as well as organist Marie Power, which the family greatly appreciated.

A guard of honour formed outside the church as her cortege was routed through her beloved Society Street on its way to Creagh cemetery, where she was laid to rest near her parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. She is home.

PASSING OF POPULAR SCHOOLTEACHER



Joan Nolan, Ardross, Kilconnell who passed away after a short illness, had been a teacher in different national schools in the Diocese of Clonfert for over sixty years. She was also a renowned actress, being a founder member of Relays Drama Group in Ballinasloe, with her younger sister, Patty, as well as appearing in several Musical Society productions.

One of seven children, born in Poolboy, Ballinasloe, Joan attended the local national and secondary school before embarking on a teaching career. She

trained in Mary Immaculate College in Limerick and her first posting was in Castlesampson NS and then in Taughmaconnell. Later she moved to Creagh NS before being appointed to Kilconnell NS, where she was vice-principal up to her retirement. She was highly respected by all her students and later became organist and choir mistress of the Kilconnell Church choir.

In 1959 she was one of the founders of Relays Drama Group in Ballinasloe, along with her sister Patty, Fr. Kevin Ryle, Dermot Connolly, Margaret Geraghty, Martin Greal, Billy Vaughan, Paddy Corban, Liam Keller, Shay Darcy, Ken Kelly and some others.

The group got the exclusive rights to stage John B. Keane's "Sive" where Joan played the leading role of Mena Glavin while sister Patty had the title role. The blockbuster was a sell-out in the Town

Hall for eight nights and then went on tour, playing in each of the four provinces, in the middle of a petrol strike! There were even invitations for the group to stage the play in both London and New York but that was just not practical.

Joan's outstanding stage performances were witnessed in several more Relays productions, under Fr. Ryle, both locally and at drama festivals before being a big hit in the Musical Society's shows of "Oklahoma," "The Student Prince," "Rose Marie" etc. many of which won her special awards.

The Retired Bishop of Clonfert, John Kirby, in his homily at her funeral Mass said she was a devoted teacher in the diocese whose "main concern was the care of the weaker pupils and as a champion of the underdog. She was keen on Irish traditional music and her party piece was 'The West's Awake.' She was a practical woman with a lively sense of humour. She was resilient and fought her illness as best she could, being not afraid of the outcome" said Bishop Kirby. A testament to her popularity was the large numbers of people who lined the route as her remains were transferred from her home to St. Michael's Church in Cappataggle and on the following day, despite the horrendous weather, formed guards of honour as the cortege passed her house and her last teaching school in Kilconnell, on its way to the New Cemetery.

Predeceased by her infant daughters Anne and Mary as well as her sisters Kathleen, Mary and Betty, Joan Nolan is survived by her husband Luke, son Michael, daughter-in-law Sandra, grandchildren Conal and Dearbhail, her brother John, sisters Patty and Peggy and many more relatives and friends.

TRAGIC DEATH OF AUGHRIM MAN



The tragic death of a 32-year-old Aghrim man, in Ennis, shocked the community of East Galway, where he was well known. Conor Carr from Kilnahown, Aghrim was understood to be returning to his apartment when the fatal accident occurred.

Predeceased by his mother Rita (nee Larkin) two years ago and by his brother Cathal, eight years ago, Conor is survived by his heartbroken father, Tony as well as his grandparents, aunts, uncles and extended members of the Carr and Larkin families. As his remains were brought from the family home

to St. Augustine's Church in Clontuskert, through Tristane, neighbours and residents lined the route to bid a sad farewell. Fr. Michael Finneran celebrated the funeral mass together with Fr. Michael Kilkenny and afterwards members of the Kiltormer GAA Club formed a guard of honour as his remains were brought to the adjoining cemetery where he was laid to rest with his mother and brother.

Cathal was a fine young sportsman. He played both hurling and football with Kiltormer and underage rugby with Ballinasloe. A very popular young man, his passing has been devastating for all who knew him.

CHRISTMAS CARDS TO HELP SPCA

BY LIAM COSGROVE

This year's fundraising Christmas cards for the Galway SPCA have been produced from original artworks by local visual artist Jackie Eastwood. Fundraising to support the local Animal Sanctuary, based in Killimor, has been significantly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, at a time when their animal welfare services are under considerable pressure.

The Christmas cards, a pack of 6 individual designs, will be available from October at a cost of €5.95 with all profits going to support local animal welfare. They will be available in the GSPCA Charity Shops in Galway City and Athenry, as well as other local outlets which will be announced on the GSPCA Facebook page or by contacting Office Administrator, Anita Burgoyne, on 083 811 3391.

Referring to the series of artworks, Jackie Eastwood said "I was delighted to have the opportunity to work on this project during the lockdown and with my love of animals it was a perfect way to help raise funds for this most valuable and worthwhile cause. The GSPCA provides a brilliant animal welfare and rehoming service in the locality which is made possible by volunteers giving up their time to walk the dogs and care for the cats in dedicated facilities within the county."

Some of the original artworks together with other items will be available for sale in the Galway SPCA on-line auction which takes place from 9pm on Thursday, 22nd October to Sunday, 25th October at 9pm. For further information see their Facebook page or contact Anita.



Anita Burgoyne (left) and Jackie Eastwood (right) with the original artworks for this year's Galway SPCA Christmas cards.

BIG THANK YOU FROM TOWN HALL

Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre would like to extend its thanks to all those who supported the project over the last number of months, both financially through the on-going Facebook Fundraiser which has amassed close to €3,000, and those who have been volunteering with the preparations required prior to its re-opening.

Most of the events scheduled for 2020 have been re-scheduled to 2021.

The renovated dressing meeting rooms will shortly be available to facilitate night classes, meetings, trainings and other activities.

Galway 2020 Livefeed, over 3 Saturdays: 21st November, 28th

November and 12th December, are free of charge, and will be advertised in schools and the locality closer to the time.

It's another European Capital of Culture project for young people (aged 13-18), interested in music, aiming to grow youth music and to empower young people towards live performance, audio production, event production and music promotion.

The project also runs COVID compliant workshops in song-writing, branding, audio production, music photography and videography and has developed an engaged and enthusiastic tribe of young musicians and technicians throughout Galway city and county.

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market continues every Friday 9am-1pm with both home baked produce, organic vegetables and craftwork and is well worth a visit.



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Everyone in the Library was disappointed to cancel their inaugural ComicCon which was due to happen in April. Artists, illustrators, animators, a seller's alley, a retro games area, a Cosplay competition, games trucks and food trucks were all good to go for what was hoped would be the best ComicCon in the West. The great news is that they're undefeated and it will now happen in 2021 and are super-excited to announce to be hosting a virtual event 'ComicCon@Home' on November 14 to introduce artists and to give you an idea of what's coming up.

Featured guests are: Barry Fitzgerald – superhero scientist, speaker and author of 'How to build an Iron Man Suit'. Barry has spoken across Europe about science and superheroes and he has seen The Avengers nearly 80 times but keeps his superpower a closely guarded secret.

Wayne O'Connor - storyteller and animator. Wayne is inspired by fantasy, sci fi and Mythology and loves teaching workshops in art and hosting storytelling sessions.

Alan Nolan – illustrator and author of the Sam Hannigan books. Alan is one of Ireland's most loved children's author/illustrator and he is no stranger to Ballinasloe having co-written a short comic with kids from Creagh NS in 2018.

They're holding a 'Design your own Superhero' competition. They want you to design, draw, paint your Superhero, tell them what their Superpower is and email them your entries. Application forms will be delivered to local schools in mid-October or forms can be emailed directly to you.

Closing dates for competition entries is November 7. The winner will be announced on the Library's social media pages on ComicCon@Home day on November 14.

This event is free, all you need is a couch and a screen. Cosplay costume is optional. Email entries to ballinasloe@galwaylibrary.ie or drop them in.



Joey & Diarmuid Nutley twin brothers, 6yrs old

The Library's national delivery system is back running at full capacity so users can request books online from anywhere in Ireland and have them delivered for collection. Due to current guidelines, they do have some restrictions that hopefully will be lifted in time.

Currently they operate a browse and collect service, where up to ten patrons can pop in at one time with a 20-minute limit. There's also two internet PCs with printing facilities for self-use available and an accessible bathroom.

There's also a contact and collect / delivery service for patrons who can't visit the library. Check out their online catalogue to see if there is anything you fancy from their collection or contact them and tell them your favourite types of book. They'll put together a book bag with a bunch of selections for you and make it available for a friend to collect.

They're hoping to roll out a delivery service for the winter so contact them if you would like to be included.

As per government guidelines face coverings are now mandatory in the library. Opening hours for the next while are Tuesday – Saturday 11-1 & 2-5.

Stay tuned to their Facebook and Instagram accounts for competitions, storytimes and flower arranging demos.

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NEW TEACHING MUSIC HUB

BY LIAM COSGROVE

Music Generation Ireland are setting up a new hub in Ballinasloe, making more additional genres of music tuition accessible to young people and to make musical instruments and lessons available at affordable prices.

Music Generation Galway County is part of Music Generation, Ireland's National Music Education Programme which transforms the lives of children and young people through access to high-quality, subsidised performance music education. Established by its parent company Music Network, Music Generation is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds and the Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships.

Ruth Gordon is in charge of setting up the hub here. She is the Music Development Officer and has worked in the Arts for 15 years in Cork and Galway in a variety of organisations and festivals. She coordinates music programmes for young people around the county based on what the need is in any given area of the county in partnership with a wealth of organisations and partners including Galway County Council, Galway Rural Development, Foróige, Youth Work Ireland Galway, Tusla, FORUM Connemara Ealaín na Gaeltachta and others.

Since starting just two years ago, Ruth has rolled out a variety of music programmes for children and young people in a range of genres and settings including primary school programme Lán le Ceol, mixed instrumental programme Symphonic Schools, rock school programme RockPopHipHop, a regional orchestra Symphonic Waves and an Uilleann Pipes programme which is delivered in both Irish and English in different locations.

"I believe the hub will be successful here due to the vibrant, long-running brass band, the Comhaltas branch, Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds and a Musical Society-so hopefully it will become part of the rich musical landscape of Ballinasloe and surrounding areas " states Ruth.

Sessions are 45 minutes long with small group instrumental lessons priced at €8 and larger group music sessions like Samba Drumming, Réalta Vocal Group and Ukulele Orchestra priced at €5 a session. They run their lessons weekly in line with the school calendar.



They have a range of fantastic musicians teaching the different instruments and groups including guitar, ukulele, piano, drumkit, group singing and Samba drumming. The instrumental tuition will have three to four in a group and the larger groups will start with five participants initially and will expand in line with public health advice.

Students are encouraged to bring their own instruments but if they don't have any, the hub will have an instrument bank where students can hire great instruments at very affordable rates.

All musicians have undergone HSA training and will be equipped with facemasks and visors as well as screens where appropriate. There will be no sharing of instruments and hub users will be required to use hand sanitiser before entering the hub and will maintain social distancing throughout.

Classes will commence in the first week of October in various locations centrally depending on what instrument or group activity has been chosen.

To register for classes, email musicgenerationgalway@gretb.ie or call 091 874 557 and they will register your interest and send you a quick online form to submit. Alternatively, they can complete this form with parents/guardians over the phone. The final date for registration was September 30th but there may still be some spaces unallocated.

Contact musicgenerationgalway@gretb.ie / phone 091 874557 or see www.musicgenerationgalwaycounty.ie. Office hours are 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.



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Eimear Noone presents Bandmaster Noel Madden with a baton at the 'Raise the Roof' Launch

The "Raise the Roof" fundraising appeal (to defray the €50,000+ costs of renovating the roof of the Parochial Hall, was successfully launched by Eimear Noone, the first woman composer in history to conduct the Oscar ceremony orchestra.

At a special public band recital in the town square she declared "Noel Madden and his epic band of selfless, decent, kind and community-loving board members have achieved what might have been impossible for others - filling a historic building in Ballinasloe with life and music instead of condemning it to dereliction as is the fate of so many of our buildings in rural Ireland.

"Having bought the building as the first permanent home for the town band for its 50 strong Youth Band members and those in the senior band (many of whom I played with as a kid), they now need to reroof the thing! So, let's all buy a slate for €50 and preserve the heritage of the band for future generation" she continued.

Anyone wishing to support the appeal may purchase 'slates' from Band committee members. Slate purchasers will have their names recorded in the hall for posterity in appreciation of their community spirited generosity. Online purchases (or donations) may be made via the go-fund-me page on the bands revamped website www.ballinasloetownband.ie. Facebook members can follow the progress of the renovations and the appeal by liking the Town Band Facebook page. Enquiries to Martina 087 971 0496

Storm Ellen caused considerable damage to the funded renovations which were already under way. They were left devastated when 20% of the slates were dislodged and removed by the severe gusts of wind on the roof at the rear of the Parochial Hall. The freshly painted interior walls of the main hall will also have to be revisited due to water seepage from the slate loss on the roof. Areas of the recently installed ceilings will also require remedial attention.

Renovations continue at pace in the main hall and large rear annex. The ceilings were replaced and insulated, interior structure repainted, gas heating installed, and the whole building rewired. Two toilets were reinstalled, with one being wheelchair accessible.

They conducted weekly outdoor recitals in the town centre on Saturday afternoons throughout the summer. As the town and country limped out of lockdown, the musical interlude was helpful in lightening the gloom and raising the spirits in the town.

The residents of local and surrounding Nursing Home facilities were also delighted with the arrival of the band to their premises with weekly performances at Garbally View, St. Brendan's CNU, Mill Race, Ballinderry, Aughrim, Ahascragh, Kiltormer and Killimor keeping the band busy.

The Ballinasloe Youth band is now recruiting after a very successful first two years. Children from 2nd class onwards can enroll in the band. They will have the opportunity to learn instruments including flute, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drums and



Eimear Noone meets former music teacher Marie Power



Eimear Noone returns to play with Ballinasloe Town Band and accompanies Lorna Derrane at Ballinderry Nursing

everything in between. The tutors have years of experience as performers and teachers and children will always receive a warm and encouraging welcome. The band is currently monitoring the situation with regards to covid-19 and will arrange start dates in the coming weeks. However, places are always limited so if you'd like more information about the Ballinasloe Youth Band, you can head to www.ballinasloetownband.ie/join where you can register your interest.



Eimear Noone signs a slate for the 'Raise the Roof' Appeal
L-R Keith Kelly, Noel Madden, Eimear Noone, Damien O Neachtain



Eimear Noone returns to play with Ballinasloe Town Band and accompanies Lorna Derrane at Ballinderry Nursing



"10-10-20 - The Land is on Drugs" is a new project from local based comedian Breda Larkin and grassroots farming organisation Talamh Beo that seeks to stimulate debate and challenge prevailing assumptions about farming systems and rural livelihoods and to have a few laughs along the way.

Farming is at a crossroads. What role can it play in creating a more sustainable society and economy in the years to come? What about food security and the value of local food producers? What has the COVID-19 pandemic taught us about our food production systems? What hope and vision are we communicating to young people and the next generation of farmers? Who are the next generation of farmers and how can we inspire them? These and other questions will be posed and hopefully answered in the course of the afternoon on Sat 10th October from 1.30 to 4.30 pm in the Emerald Ballroom.

10-10-20 will be presented as a Fair Day with a difference where Talamh Beo members will set out their stalls and outline their



progressive farming methods to visitors whilst Breda conducts proceedings and facilitates the debate in her own inimitable fusion of original comedy, songs and

social activism. To book your place, search 10-10-20 A Fair Day on Eventbrite.

Participating farms include Manna Organics Farm, Gleann Buí Farm, Crawford Farm, Moyhill Farm, Leaf & Root Farm, with additional presentations from La Via Campesina, Farming for Nature and National Organic Training Skillnet.

Talamh Beo is a grassroots organisation of farmers, growers and land-based workers on the island of Ireland which aims to ensure a living landscape where people and ecosystems thrive together. Founded in Co. Galway, their vision is to farm in ways which benefit and restore natural ecosystems and build soils, leaving the land better than when we started. Talamh Beo are the Irish branch of the international farmers' movement La Via Campesina.

The programme is one of Small Town Big Ideas offerings supported and sponsored by the Galway European City of Culture.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on crowd sizes 10-10-20 will also be creating a film to be screened in Spring 2021 alongside a programme of workshops on these topics. Registration sheets will be available at the 10-10-20 event. Numbers are being kept in line with COVID protocols and interested audience members need to book their FREE time slot on Event Brite.

"The nation that destroys its soil, destroys itself." – Roosevelt.



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EYRECOURT MUSICIAN DIES IN NEW YORK

BY KEN KELLY

Eyrecourt-born Martin Mulhaire has passed away in the USA, where he had been living since 1958. One of the most talented musicians from a family that was steeped in traditional music, Martin was an integral part of the New York Irish-American scene for over fifty years, both in the dancehall era of the 60's and 70's and the traditional Irish music scene over the last thirty years.

Born in 1936, the son of Thomas and Theresa, he grew up in a musical household with his brother Brendan and sisters Moira and Sheila. He started playing the accordion at the age of twelve and won an All-Ireland title when he was seventeen. He then started composing tunes, among them were "The Golden Keyboard" and "Carmel Mahoney Mulhaire's" and many more. As an accordionist his early records were broadcast by Radio Eireann for Gael-Linn.

Martin played with the Aughrim Slopes and Killimor Ceili Bands before joining the famous Tulla Ceili Band for a tour of England in 1957. A year later they were in New York for St. Patrick's Day before playing in the famous Carnegie Hall and releasing their first long playing ceili record titled "Echoes of Erin" featuring Martin on the accordion playing "The Yellow Tinker" and "The Sally Gardens."



He decided to stay in the USA with his Portumna-born wife Carmel Mahoney, residing in Pearl River, where the couple later had five children, Brendan, Theresa (Quinn), Joan (Dever), Laura (McNierney) and Sheila (Colbert), as well as thirteen grandchildren.

Martin then decided to learn the guitar, as a hobby, but wound up playing the guitar and accordion with the top showbands in New York over a period of twenty years.

Two of his daughters, Laura on piano and Sheila on the flute, later joined up with him in making musical albums. In 1993, the Eyrecourt man released a CD titled "Warming Up" which featured seven solos of his own composition.

The former carpenter has seen well over 70 albums feature his tunes since he won an All-Ireland senior button accordion title with his late brother Brendan and father Tommy. He formed the Majestic Showband in New York with Mattie Connolly and had a massive influence on the teaching and playing of Irish traditional music in the Big Apple.

In May 1997, when the Tulla Ceili Band celebrated their golden anniversary they invited former members Martin Mulhaire and Mike Preston to join them at the Irish Folk Festival in Vienna, Vancouver. "It was nice to meet up after all these years and be remembered" remarked the Galway man.

Martin's funeral took place in New York.

POETRY BOOK BY FORMER HYMANY POET

BY LIAM COSGROVE



Robert with wife Rebecca at their home in Ipswich

Robert O'Halloran, originally from Hymany Park, has written a children's poetry book 'The Adventures of Everybody' which is based on real life experiences.

Born in Dublin, his family came to the town in the Summer of 2000. They lived in many areas before eventually settling in Hymany Park. His father, a formal naval officer, died when he was six. His mother, Rosemary, is a child care worker from Meath. He has three brothers, Scott, Shane and

Joe, who grew up in the town and has three nephews Dylan, Ryan and Kian, a niece Kaci and sister in law Leah.

His earliest memory of town was in late September heading with his brothers to get Choco cones in Supermacs and experiencing the Horse Fair for the first time. He acknowledged that the town became "home quickly" and made some great friends like Rory Lynch, Alan Riddel, Alan Parker, David Cunningham and best friend to this day Karl Murphy. He attended the town's national school and after a year moved on to Garbally College.

Garbally was a crazy time in his life filled with lots of great memories. He was the classic class clown and knows a lot of teachers got frustrated with him from time to time. He and teachers described himself as the perfect example of the classic saying "if he applied himself, he'd be a great student". He always admired Mrs Johnston, Mr Lally and Ms Greene, who were especially good to him.

After his time at Garbally, he trained to be an actor but eventually after a lot of soul searching and advice from a great friend Gary

Murphy, he made a career change. He left Ballinasloe and moved to Athlone where he was given the opportunity to work in Florida for a year at a platinum country club to which he described as an "amazing experience".

After his time in Florida, he moved back to Ballinasloe for some time before moving off to Ipswich. He has been writing all through his journeys. He would write about anything and everything like "ninjas in space and cops in purgatory". He has a crazy thirst for fantasy.

Robert's mother would read him and his brothers The Hobbit and old Ladybird books when they were young and was instantly hooked on story telling. He describes his mother as his number one inspiration for writing and insists he got his talent from her. "I know a lot of people in Ballinasloe wouldn't know how good she is at poetry" explains Robert.

He is a 90's child, growing up on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Power Rangers and Pokemon. Inspiration was everywhere. The idea for the book came from reading a children's book that he thought didn't give them the story telling they deserved. Then he thought of The Adventures of Everybody, a book of poetry with real, true and pure stories. He got to writing straight away and after a year of rejection letters, he finally got the opportunity to have them published.

He is now 32 years old and is currently working as a Private Chef in Ipswich, England. He moved abroad one year ago to buy a house with his then girlfriend, now wife Rebecca. She is originally from Richmond, London and they met three years ago in Cork.

The 30 paged, nine poem book is on sale from Amazon from €11 and would make an ideal gift for a youngster!

"I just want to thank Ballinasloe for welcoming me and family with open arms and for the unconditional support to me and the book. To the most amazing friends Gary, Liam, Ray, Eoin, Darragh, Colm, Seanie, Vince, Seano, Karl, Goonie, Chopper, Woodsy, Big D, The Murphys, The Creggs, The Hickeys and O' Neils" states Richard.



Don't forget to enter our new **CROSSWORD** page 30 and **WIN** a **€50 Voucher**

The end of season is approaching for a lot of the GAA teams with most competitions at the final and semi-final stages.

The Ballinasloe under-14 footballers played their Division 3 North Shield Final against Loughrea in recent weeks and after starting off brightly and were in contention at half time. Goals from Cillian McPhillips and Cameron Keighery after the break, put them in the lead but a strong Loughrea side who came back to snatch the victory. The final score was 3-8 to 4-1, a 4-point win for Loughrea. The game was an entertaining and sporting, encounter, with both sides playing some good passages of football. While they were disappointed not to win, the management were immensely proud of the hard-working performance put in by the players on the evening.

They're committed to continuing collective training and organising challenge matches and blitzes for the coming months, Covid-19 allowing, following the fragmented season they have had to date.

The Minor Hurlers season also came to a close when they lost out in their quarter final v Abbeyknockmoy 4-15 to 2-16. A great game and the lads battled well.

Ballinasloe Ladies will continue their hunt for a county title on September 27 where they play Killannin at Annaghdawn GAA

grounds. The ladies have had a great season to date winning all their group games and, in the semi-final, beat Dunmore, 0-10 to 0-1. The ladies who have worked so hard and are capable bring home the silverware.

To keep up to date with the GAA club, check out their Facebook page.



JUNIOR LADIES: *Back Row L-R:* Eabha McCann, Shauna Mitchell, Mia Costello, Roisin Maher, Katie Galvin, Lauren Dooley, Claire Colleran, Niamh Prendergast, Michelle Jennings, Mary Geraghty, Orla Madden, Leah Dolan, Ruth Manning, Alana Cunningham, Lisa O'Neill, Nicole Ward. *Front L-R:* Eilis Kerr, Lisa Naessens, Gemma Ward, Hannah Russell, Roisin Fahy, Orla Reynolds, Niamh Loughnane, Ashling Brannelly, Emma Keane, Natoya Fogarty, Emma Mitchell, Hannah Gullane, Maeve Fahy.



U12 GIRLS: *Back Row L-R:* Aoife Headd, Alysha Manning, Sinéad Greene, Esther Olanrewaju, Lydia Whyte, Ava Whyte, Adelle Finnegan, Katie Gibbons, Sophie Kelly, Evelina Zancanaro, Maia Donnellan. *Front Row L-R:* Fiona Zancanaro, Heidi Comer, Mia Casey, Laoise Caufield, Roisin Cunningham, Aoife Berrigan, Aoibhe Rose McGuinness, Isabelle Ward, Grace Coleman, Deirdre Headd, Orlaith Creaven, Molly Cooney

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The Rugby Club is well and truly back in action for the 20/21 season. Each team including players, coaches and parents underwent a detailed induction presentation to make them aware of their obligations with regard to Covid-19 prevention & control. They were also made aware of the trojan work being done behind the scenes at the club, spearheaded by the Covid Committee.

The return to play protocols are being diligently implemented at the club including clear Covid signage, social distancing, strict hand sanitising procedures, sanitisation of all equipment used, player health declarations, contact tracing measures and more. Every protocol is done in line with HSE, NEPHET and IRFU advice.

The annual Michael Fitzpatrick Memorial golf classic was held in the golf club in early September. Normally held in June but delayed, like everything else, by restrictions in place over the summer. This vital fundraiser helps support the club during the off season and pay for the preparations for the season ahead. With close to 60 teams taking part and generous support from already hard-pressed local businesses, it proved to be one of the best years in the events history.

The following were the prize winners: 1st-Tommy Finnerty, Nigel Moore, Alan Grehan and Mike Malone, with a great score of 101pts. 2nd-Tony Dolphin, Clare Dolphin, Pat Harney & Mike Duane - 94 pts (back 9), 3rd-Mike Glynn, Derek Meliá, Julian Leonard & Frank Donoghue - 93 pts

(back 9) 4th-Aiden Grenham, Shane Grenham, Stephen Grenham & Eoghan Costello - 93 pts. 5th-John Hurley Jnr, Barry O'Keefe, Mike Dowd, & Gerry Fahy - 93 pts. 6th-Andy Fenton, Enda Fenton, Mike McKeigue, & Paddy Cormican - 93 pts. Ladies Prize: Myra Duane, Anne Jordan, Teresa Hogan & Angela Pender. Longest Drive: Brendan Naughton. Nearest to Pin: Tommy Cusack. Longest Drive: Martina Goode.

The 50/50 Half the Pot fundraiser still continues. One jackpot, one winner guaranteed every month. To join the draw please contact any of the coaches or committee.

Recently, the club saw the launch of a new website, www.ballinasloerfc.ie. Commissioned by the club and developed by local web design company Kick Start Web Design, under the guidance of committee members Matt Carey & Pearse Keller. It will be an integral part of their membership and registration system which has changed from a manual, paper-based format to an electronic system in conjunction with Rugby connect, IRFU and Connacht Rugby.

Ann Heneghan has been announced as the new Connacht Rugby President. Ann has held many roles in Connacht Rugby down through the years which she fulfilled admirably as she will in her new role. Her election saw history being made which saw her become the first woman to hold a Presidential role in any of the provinces. Ann is the sister of Mary Carey, Creagh and sister in law to Matt Carey, former club President and current finance guru. To keep up to date with the rugby club, check out their Facebook page or email ballinasloerfcmedia@gmail.com.



New Connacht Rugby President, Ann Heneghan.



The Michael FitzPatrick Memorial Cup



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The local Walks and Trails group is a voluntary run group of friends walking, recently came together in late September for their end of summer gathering in Brodericks, Kilconnell, having enjoyed a new 10km walk in Woodlawn, taking the golden mile where Woodlawn House and additional buildings could be seen along with information signage; thanks to Woodlawn Heritage Group.

Over the last two months, they've enjoyed many new walks with loads of interesting groups in the locality. They also coupled with the Athlone to Ballinasloe Greenway group for a walk in Blackwater, Co Offaly. Lawerencetown Community group also joined them for the Culliagh loop in August. Other walks in 2020 included routes from town to Valerie's in Aughrim, Spinning Wheel in Mullagh, Mother's in Kiltormer, Dubarry to Millars, Ballydangan.

Twenty of their walkers completed a leader's course with Croi Ireland with the support of Galway Sports Partnership who also gave them a loan of some Nordic Poles which they have had the pleasure of spending some evenings out in Poolboy Bog and through Garbally College grounds. Walkers are encouraged to participate in recording data through the biodiversity.ie app where some rare sightings of the marsh fritillary butterfly and bee orchid were registered.

With the support of Ballinasloe Area Community Development, Ballinasloe Tidy Towns and local litter warden, walkers organised three major cleanups in Poolboy bogs where some of the local community came out and gave their time picking rubbish to restore and preserve these areas of beauty. Their walkers continued to occupy these areas in Poolboy various times during the week to discourage illegal dumping.

They have a Facebook page where their regular bi-monthly walks are advertised. They also have a Whatsapp group where spontaneous walks are

posted weekly. Some of these walks are in South Roscommon Area, Poolboy Bog or around the Aughrim Battlefield. They also meet spontaneously to get in some Nordic walking; and as it is a friends group your safety is your own responsibility.

The whatsapp group is also a forum for people to meet companions to go walking so if you or someone you know would benefit from joining this group of happy walkers, please be sure to tell them about the group.

For further details please contact 087 645 8979 or see their Facebook page for regular updates.



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Shiela Gavin, Noleen Mulkerns, Paddy Creavin and Noel Gavi

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Tommie Costelloe's dream of an outdoor training, team and stamina build facility came to reality in early 2013 when Cuckoo Hill Bootcamp was established. Located on the R357, Eircode H53 VN22, within close proximity of Athlone, Roscommon and Ballinasloe, it is an amazing facility centrally located and today is the epicenter for team building and outdoor fitness classes. Having set up a course using the natural features of the beautiful and stunning landscape, it allows for the development of natural fitness.

Tommie, born in Athlone Hospital to parents Danny & Bridie Costello, both of whom hailed from Taughmaconnell. His dad was a well-known figure who passed away a number of years ago and his mum is still alive and known far and wide for her famous clove cake!

He has three boys, Eoin who is entering second year in college in Limerick and twins Shane and Conor who are in fifth year in Garbally, where Tommie himself attended years before. From there, he worked in many establishments around the town such as Haydens Hotel and Dubarry Shoe factory. He spent many years in the bar trade having successfully leased out Killeens Pub and the Countryman.

Fitness and health conditioning was always something he had a passion for, so returned to college at Satanta where he qualified as a strength and conditioning coach and personal trainer.

"Cuckoo Hill provides a fresh and original approach to overall fitness. It raises the heart beat and sees team mates and athletes competing with each other to get the top of our famous hill. Our aim is to promote natural fitness for all age groups and all abilities" enthuses Tommie.

The centre caters for beginners to professional athletes and all sports teams. Their programme is designed for physical, mental, emotional and team bonding. However, athletes do find the Seán Óg hAilpín loop a tough test of stamina.



(L-R)- Eoin, Tommie, twins (Shane and Conor)

Some of the teams that have trained in Cuckoo Hill and found great success and subsequently went on to achieve major wins are the Galway senior ladies' football team, St Thomas' hurlers and Sarsfields senior ladies Camogie team, to name a few.

There are also very popular outdoor circuit classes with the option of moving indoor if the weather is not favorable – into recently renovated facilities. There are beginners' classes also which are proving very popular. New members are welcome and will get all the help they need to improve their fitness from Tommie and encouragement from the fantastic group already there.

Cuckoo Hill also hold outdoor camps for children at Halloween, Easter and Summer and cater for children's birthday parties. Recent months has been exceptionally difficult with Covid preventing Team event and tours business.

"I am however very fortunate to have a very loyal core group who come to my classes and as the focus is now on outdoor fitness, I am installing outdoor lighting to provide a facility for people to train for the winter months. Everyone is welcome and all levels of fitness are catered for" states Tommie.

To find out more, and up to date timetables check on Facebook and on Instagram @cuckoo hill bootcamp or contact Tommie directly on 087 6411530 with any questions you might have.

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GOLF VOLUNTEERS ARE KEPT BUSY

BY MICHAEL KELLY

The Ballinasloe Golf Club "volunteer group" were back in action to remove over 30 trees which were blown down or badly damaged by storm Ellen. Armed with chain saws and protective gear a number of mature trees had blocked fairways and roads forcing the course to close. Thanks to the volunteers the course was back in play two days after the storm.

During the summer the volunteers completed a number of maintenance projects bringing the course to pristine condition. New buggy gates & fences were erected, pathways were tarred and a new corral area to store course materials was completed. Practicing social distancing at all times bunkers were refurbished. New tees were built and seeded/sodded on the 3rd & 13th holes. Exposed trees roots were covered with topsoil & seeded on various parts of the course. Drainage work was carried out on the 7th & 15th fairways.

At a simple ceremony John Hurley, Senior, Club President cut a tape recently to mark the completion of the course upgrade work.

Last year the volunteers built a new office, a meeting room, refurbished the lobby area and the men's locker room. John Hurley,

Jnr, (Mens Captain) said that the club owes the volunteer workers a huge debt of gratitude, without them the club would not be in a financial position to maintain the course in pristine condition.



John Hurley, President Ballinasloe Golf Club (centre) cut the tape and opened one of the new gates to mark the completion of the new course materials compound, fences, gates and course refurbishment watched by John Hurley (Jnr.), Captain on left and William Duthie Club Chairman.



At the opening to mark the completion of refurbishment work on Ballinasloe Golf Course were I-r Mattie Curley (Past Captain) & Mick O'Hehir (Vice Captain) on one of the new course seats.



At the opening to mark the completion of refurbishment work on Ballinasloe Golf Course were I-r club trustees Anne McCullagh & Dermot O'Mahoney with his wife May.

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PADRAIG PEARSES CAPTURES COUNTY

Padraig Pearses senior footballers surrendered their title as Roscommon champions, to St. Brigid's, but their senior hurlers took the Co. Title with a win over Athleague, after extra time. The win made up for the loss of the Football title a week previous. We'll be printing a full momento spread for the Club, their homecoming and celebrations in our next edition.

After a tough start to the year with a break in training and matches due to COVID, the Paul Flynn sponsored senior team took to the field to start their championship by taking on a strong Boyle side on home turf in Woodmount which ended in a draw leaving both teams with one point each, then taking on Michael Glaveys in Hyde Park which ended in Pearses favour.

They then travelled to Tulsk for the second game and although the home side were facing a relegation battle due to how tight the group was, they managed to steal a win by just a single point. A draw and a win meant they earned a place in the quarter-final and were drawn to play Roscommon Gaels in Ballyforan.

They came out of that quarter final with a comfortable win and ready to take on neighbours Clann na Gael in the semi-final, down in Hyde Park. With rivalry at an all-time high, it was a battle and headed into the final minute two points down. They kicked three points to rob Clann of a place in the final, with St. Brigids taking the other spot. Back into another county final, just one year after winning the Fahy Cup for the first time in the club's history, however, the speed and youth of the St. Brigids players carried the day on a scoreline of 0-8 to 1-11.

Meanwhile the senior hurlers, under the guidance of Shane Sweeney and his



SENIOR FOOTBALLERS: Back row L-R: David Murray, Shane Downey, Conor Payne, Emmett Kelly, Eanna Ryan, Eoin McManus, Matthew Feehily, Lorcan Daly, Daniel Farrell, Anthony Butler. Middle row L-R: Aaron Clogher (Chairman), Tom Butler, Pat Flanagan (manager), Aaron Feehily, Shane Mulvey, Thomas Richarson, David Whelan, Conor Daly, Sean Ryan, Niall Daly, Conor Lohan, Gavin Downey, Paul Carey, Hubert Darcy, Aaron Johnston, Aidan Fallon (selector), Mark Richardson, Eoin Curran (Football board), Micheal Grehnam (kit man). Front row L-R: Gerry Kelly (selector), Michael Hogarty (kit man), Sean Fahy, Charles Nevin, Paul Whelan, Niall Carty & Ronan Daly (joint captains), Tomas Dolan, Shane Carty, James Kelly, Jennifer Downey (Physio), Niall Murray (selector).



SENIOR HURLING TEAM: Back row L-R: Aidan Berrigan, Tomas Sweeney, Jamie Donaghue, Jimmy Donaghue, Sean Dunne, David Dolan, Daniel Glynn, Paul Dolan (joint captain), Karl Feehily, Patrick Grehan, Ben Fallon, Padraig Galvin, Matthew Comeford, David Loughnane, Adam Finnerty, Keelan Daly, Derek Frehill (selector), Tom Corbett (selector), Padraig Kelly (strength & conditioning coach). Front row L-R: Shane Sweeney (manager), Michael Donaghue, Eoghan Costello (joint captain), Oisín Kelly (Jnr), Leon Feehily, Luke Corbett, Shane Naughton, Jamie Curley, Padraig Dolan, Conor Rice, Oisín Kelly (Snr), Darragh Finn, James Burke, Mark Naughton, Cathal Kelly, Conor Glynn, Adrian Murphy (selector). Missing: Arron Feehily, Eoghan Cogavin.

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U16 CAMOGIE TEAM: **Back row L-R:** Rosa Monaghan, Aoife Keogh (c), Rebecca Cruise, Kiera Keogh, Katie Mulry, Katie Murray, Chloe Costello, Arlene Cunningham, Abbie Goode, Katie Curley. **Front Row L-R:** Aoife Cruise, Marianne Monaghan, Charlotte Blackweir, Jessica O'Brien, Amy Costello, Orla Mulryan, Aiveen Curley, Ella Greene, Ruth Doyle, Blaitnaid Kelly.

management team had a busy time preparing for the county final against Athleague.

They had to train individually throughout lockdown, which stood to them in their championship games against Oran and St. Dominic's, however Four Roads continued their threat beating them in the early stages. Regardless, the two wins from the Oran and St. Dominic's games were enough for Pearses to secure a place in the semifinal against a strong Tremane team. They really needed to dig deep and similar to the senior football semifinal, it came down to the dying minutes with Pearses coming out on top by just a single point but that was all they needed to secure their spot in the county final. It took extra time to decide the outcome with Pearses winning by 2-22 to 1-18.



U16 GIRLS FOOTBALL: Ella Greene, Eimear Hynes, Aoife Keogh, Aoife Cruise, Emma McGreal, Aiveen Curley, Mia Walsh, Ciara Lohan, Arlene Cunningham, Rosa Monaghan, Amelia Halpin, Charlotte Blackweir, Rebecca Cruise, Blaitnaid Kelly, Ciara Keogh, Chloe Costelloe, Marianne Monaghan, Katie Mulry, Katie Murray, Hannah Kelly, Katie Curley, Ava Mulry, Jennifer Downey, Lorna Cruise.

Late September welcomed the opening of the new clubhouse bar, along with the other wet pubs across Ireland. With incredible work having taken place over the past number of months, they were excited to show off the newly revamped and refurbished facility which has brand new seating, tables etc., completely new bathrooms, a new selection of drinks, a new bar manager and much more.

The U16 girls' footballers won the Division 2B Championship against St. Dominics in early September on a score line of 0-12 to 2-4 along with the U16 camogie team, who beat the same St. Dominics in the U16C final.

The Red Tigers Football Academy has been running every Saturday morning from 10am - 11am. Check out their Facebook Page for more information about the academy or the club.



The newly renovated clubhouse bar



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KARATE BLACK BELTS

BY LIAM COSGROVE

In spite of these difficult pandemic times, Karate in Ballinasloe has kept active. With 'Zoom Karate' during lockdown and back to class at the end of June, Karate is business as usual albeit under the strict 'return to sport guidelines' issued by Government, Sport Ireland and the NGB.

A milestone in a student's karate career is attaining black belt status. Students and instructors who ranked (black belt exam) in December 2019 received their new ranks recently. The official ranks come from Yokohama, Japan and are presented at their national spring tournament in April every year but they were in pandemic lockdown then.

Many Students and Instructors who ranked to their first black belt and instructors who ranked to 2nd & 3rd Dan degree black belt include

For more information on IKKI Karate Ballinasloe, email: leotmulvany@gmail.com and visit the website: www.ikki.ie



1st Dan degree, Mark Daniels, Brian O'Brien, Aoibhin Hodgins, Ciara Burke, Shane Murphy, Alanah Doherty, Saoirse Hodgins (missing from photograph, Niall Sugrue 1st Dan)



Shane Horan (2nd Dan), Marcus Doherty (2nd Dan), Eoin Dolphin (3rd Dan) and Colin O'Connell (3rd Dan). Missing from Photograph, Joe Gunter 3rd Dan

TENNIS CLUB ACTIVITIES CONTINUE

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The Tennis Club are delighted to have received a Social Fund Grant from the local Credit Union. The grant was for €5,000 which will go towards the costs of the club's new development above the running track in Brackernagh.

There have been various unexpected delays with the development that the club are confident have now been resolved and work is expected to start shortly on the first phase, which consists of essential ground works, fencing and gates and two tennis courts with lights.

Tennis activities continue for members with open adult sessions on from 6pm Monday and Friday nights, and junior sessions on Saturday from 11am for ages 7 – 11 and 12 noon for ages 12 upwards. New members are required to pay a nominal membership fee of €20 for adults, €10 for juniors or students and €30 for families.

For further information, check out their Facebook page or email bsloetennis@gmail.com or call: Garry 085 112 4197, Joe 087 252 1424, Louise 087 135 3751 or Sarah 087 680 0598 (Junior and Special Needs queries).



Club members with Credit Union Chairperson Marian Brady at the club temporary home at Ard Scoil Mhuire, Lr Sarah Doherty, Kevin McKeige, Evelyn Larkin, Marion Brady, Garry Zancanaro, Catriona Larkin, and Shane McDermott. Evelyn, Catriona and Shane are keen tennis players and members of the Special Needs Group that have been regularly participating in playing and coaching sessions sponsored by the club for the last 4 years.

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NEW OFFICERS FOR SOCCER CLUB

BY LIAM COSGROVE

The AGM of Ballinasloe Town AFC was held recently at the new Clubhouse fully adhering to all relevant Covid-19 safety guidelines. The Club Chairperson Joby Kelly, in his address, outlined how it had been a very challenging year due to the serious nature of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant impact that this had on curtailing the clubs sporting activity. Recognising the seriousness of the Covid-19 situation, the club had early in the pandemic offered their premises to the HSE. He congratulated the men's B team who won promotion to the first division and the on the field of play of the two adult teams and 15 youth teams throughout the season.

Officers and Committee elected for the coming year are as follows: Chairperson - Joby Kelly, Vice Chairperson/Secretary - Wayne Braithwaite, Assistant Secretary - Brendan Fahy, Treasurer- Ellen Egan, Assistant Treasurer, Club Development Co-ordinator - Johnny Walsh, Youth Secretary - Sonya Coyne, Groundsman - Michael Burke, Assistant Groundsman - Brendan McNally.

COMMITTEE - Barry O'Connor, Mickey Walsh, Michael Riddell, Raj Lyons, Bobby Burke, Darren Fallon, Shane Fallon, Simon Price, Breda Cleary. Club Child Welfare Officer-Simon Price

All team managers are also automatically members of the Club Committee.

The club are recommending sales of their 50/50 draw and strongly urge all members to make a serious effort to sell envelopes for every draw in order to get the club finances into a better position for the coming season. The fortnightly draw is held in the new clubhouse but will still be broadcast on Facebook Live. All money raised will be split 50/50 between the club and the draw winner. Contact anyone listed above about purchasing a ticket for the lotto or message their Facebook page.

The club are currently drawing down the €48,000 Sports Capital Programme Grant for the most recent phase of club development works which consist of the purchase of a new drive on mower to maintain the grass pitches and the upgrading of the club's main grass pitch floodlights to low energy. The mower has already



Presentation of €3,000 to Ballinasloe Town by Ballinasloe Credit Union towards the costs of the current phase of Development works at the Curragh Grounds.

Left to right: Johnny Walsh (Club Development Co Ordinator), Joe B Kelly (Club Chairperson), Marion Brady (CHAIRPERSON of Ballinasloe Credit Union), Brendan McNally (Assistant Groundsman), Simon Price (Club Child Welfare Officer) and Ellen Egan (Club Treasurer).

been purchased and was in use while the upgrading of the grass pitch lights would commence shortly. Later this year the Club will commence work on an additional grant of €27,500 euros to upgrade the Astro turf pitch floodlights and commence works on the upgrading of the perimeter fencing around the pitches.

Club member Heather Payne, former youth team player, returned to the Irish Squad after injury for the UEFA Women's European Championship 2021 Qualifier versus Germany. Heather returns to the squad having missed the wins over Greece and Montenegro. The Irish team are unbeaten thus far in the qualifying campaign which recommences following a postponement. Heather trained with the ladies' senior team recently at the Curragh Grounds where it all started off for her.

Club Chairperson Joby Kelly acknowledged the assistance of the Credit Union. "On behalf of all connected with the Club, I wish to thank the Credit Union for their very generous recent sponsorship of €3,000 to help cover the costs of the current stage of club development works. We wish to publicly acknowledge their members fantastic support now and over the years towards our ongoing development" he stated.

To get in contact with the soccer club, message their Facebook page Ballinasloe Town AFC.



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Ballinasloe Road Runners are hoping to get back to a socially distanced normality this October by hitting local roads for a number of virtual running events.

While club members started training together again in late June when some restrictions were lifted, the events that many look forward to were cancelled, in particular, the Dublin Marathon. Now, a virtual version will ensure BRR members have a goal to aim for in a safe and responsible manner.

"The Dublin Marathon has always been a massive event for the club," said BRR member, Denise Boland. "While we can't all physically be in Dublin this year, we can put our focus into what we are calling, 'Virtual October'. Most people have signed up for virtual events and we plan to run them on local roads over the month with the big finale runs taking place on the Bank Holiday weekend of the 24th to the 26th.

"Not only do we have our brave runners taking on the marathon challenge, we also have lots of others doing 10kms, half-marathons, marathons spread out over the month and many more. There's something for every level of runner" explained Denise.

Brian Dolan, BRR member, adds: "People set goals at the beginning of the year, but COVID-19 disrupted all of that. It's great not only for the body, but also the mind, to get back out again competing while also abiding by the guidelines."

The Ballinasloe locals participating in the Dublin Virtual Marathon include Antoinette Gallagher, Noel Kenny, Martina Keighery, Brian Dolan, Rachel Harney, Inga Venckute, Margaret Connaughton, Eilis



Early Saturday morning training sessions are needed in preparation for Octobers runs. L-R: Gerry Blake, Joan Hopkins, Kitty Tuohy, Billy Reynokds, Breda Arru, Mark Dunner & Denise Boland

Treacy, Tracey Moore and Alan Harney. Those running the Dublin Marathon for the first time are: Ola Dyszewska, Sandra O'Connor, Michal Fiala and Aoife Kelly while those taking on their first Half Marathon include Oliver Coffey, Janet Mulligan and Amy Croffey.

"It was the perfect year to train with no distractions, no holidays, no social events, and I could still run during the lockdown" said Ola Dyszewska. "My training plan started when we got back together as a group, which has been a real boost during the pandemic."

Renowned for their Couch To 5K training every January, the Road Runners are open to the community all year round. Train with them on Tuesday and Thursdays at 7:30pm, and Saturdays at 8am, or see their Facebook page for more information.



First time marathon runners:
L-R: Ola Dyszewska, Aoife Kelly, Sandra O'Connor & Michal Fiala



First time half marathon runners:
L-R: Oliver Coffey, Janet Mulligan & Amy Croffey



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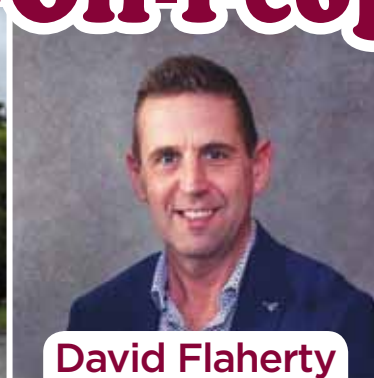
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A VISIT TO CREAGH CEMETERY

"Only the dead exist fully. The lives of the living are fragmentary, doubtful and subject to change; but the lives of the dead are complete, free from the sway of time, the all-but omnipotent lord of the world."

Bertrand Russell

With the approach of the longer nights our thoughts seem naturally to gravitate towards those who have gone before us into "that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveller returns". Ballinasloe's Creagh Cemetery is an intriguing place where the dead probably far outnumber the living citizens of the town. It reflects, moreover, much of our local history. According to John the Evangelist, Jesus said: "In my Father's house are many mansions". The same is true of Creagh. Today I propose to visit all five "mansions" and should esteem it an honour were you to favour me with your company.

Very good. Then let us proceed. As we make our way through the main gate we find ourselves in an avenue flanked by yew trees, an evergreen species invariably found in cemeteries, chosen because of its famed longevity as a symbol of the Christian belief in everlasting life. Besides, its poisonous foliage would have deterred farmers from allowing their livestock to trespass.

A first right takes us from the main avenue into the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian burying ground. Creagh Cemetery largely occupies a slope that rises towards the south. This Protestant section is on a steeper gradient and overlooks the Catholic graveyard across the avenue. Both were laid out in the 1880s, but here the graves are sparser, bearing witness to the decline of a community whose members once dominated the commercial and professional life of the area. During the early 1920s fifty per cent of the local Protestant population re-located to Britain and Northern Ireland, establishing a pattern of contraction that has

continued ever since. Notables interred here include Rev. Dr. James Whigham, one of the town's earliest Presbyterian ministers, who gave his name to the Whigham Hall at the rear of the church in Society Street, used for "hops" in the 1950s, as well as Musical Society rehearsals; Dr. William Rutherford, a popular medical man whose monument stands near the Brackernagh end of the Harris (Burma) Road; and Henry J. McClenaghan, proprietor of "The Western Star" newspaper. Notice the three obelisks over on the left, a monumental style not found elsewhere in Creagh.

We mount a step or two to bring us into the medieval graveyard shared by both Catholics and Protestants. Without disrespect to those reposing here, we can say that the scene confronting us would surely be dear to the heart of the maker of a horror film: scattered at random over the uneven ground, lichen-covered, rounded and shouldered tombstones lean drunkenly under the shadow of a ruined church. In the early 1970s it was rumoured to be the venue of nocturnal Satanic rites comprising, amongst other things, naked cavorting around a grave. Eighteen-century headstones abound, the most elaborate being the Staunton monument featuring the instruments of the Passion of Christ, now sadly overgrown with ivy. Members of the Trench family, later Earls of Clancarty, are buried here, including Power Le Poer Trench (1770 – 1839), Archbishop of Tuam. A railed tomb encloses the remains of the Reeves family of Reeves's Lane (now Davitt's Place) off Dunlo Street. Here, too, are the graves of Primitive Methodists, notably that of John Queale, a tanner. The Church of Ireland was no longer used for worship from 1793 when the predecessor of St. John's was built on Knockadoon (now Church Hill). It served as a chapel of ease up to 1825 and has been in ruins since 1870.

Retracing our steps, we cross into the Catholic cemetery, which presents an aspect in sharp contrast to the medieval one we have just left. Here the funerary monuments stand bolt upright in straight rows like soldiers on parade. Over to the left, just inside the main gate, we see Creagh's most imposing Celtic cross marking the resting place of Matt Harris MP (1826–1890). Born in Roscommon Town, he spent most of his life as a building contractor in Ballinasloe. Though a major influence on the formation of the Irish Land League, at heart he was probably more a separatist than

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an agrarian reformer. In this general area we find also the grave of Eugene Watters (1919–1982), widely regarded as the most versatile creative writer in Irish to come from a non-Gaelteacht background. His achievements await a fitting memorial in his native town. Down near the north-west corner a monument was erected in 1948 at the grave of a man described on the stone as the King of the Travellers. It has since disappeared, possibly removed by a rival claimant to the throne.

Next we visit the north graveyard used for Catholic burials since 1792. In appearance it is much like the medieval burying ground, though somehow the atmosphere strikes one as less sinister. Here we have the ruins of a Penal chapel dating from 1702, as well as the vestigial remains of a larger chapel from 1824. A Brabazon altar stone once stood inside the latter building and had originally been part of the Penal chapel. Its inscription read: "Pray for Mr. Anthony and Mrs. Catherine Brabazon who caused this altar to be erected April 2nd 1756". For some reason it was removed from the cemetery and could be seen resting against the north wall of the 1933 Creagh Church up to at least the mid-1950s. Its present whereabouts are unknown. Buried here is Thomas Costello (1787 – 1831), Bishop of Clonfert, as well as Archdeacon Laurence Dillon who died in 1854 and had initiated the building of St. Michael's Church. Amongst the laity reposing here are soldiers of various British Army regiments quartered up to around the time of the Crimean War (1854 – 1856) at a barracks on the site of the old Convent of Mercy National Schools in Society Street.

East of here we enter an area through a small iron gate in the wall. It resembles nothing so much as a meadow, though in fact it contains the bodies of some 800 Mental Hospital patients unclaimed by their relatives and buried here up to the 1960s. Those boulders and the cross that we see are recent additions. It is probably the most depressing section of Creagh Cemetery and a sad reflection on the attitude to psychiatric illness that was once prevalent. And so our visit ends as we make our way back towards the main gate. See how the rain has graciously held off thus far, and with a modicum of luck we may reach our homes dry-headed.



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RIVER SUCK DROWNING OF 1922

BY KEN KELLY

An inquest into the drowning of a 17-year-old boy in the River Suck, in the summer of 1922, was told that a boatman decided to give priority to leaving two lady passengers off before going to his rescue. His actions were criticised by the inquest jury, with a witness asking "If you had ladies in the boat would you take their modesty into account sooner than save a drowning man?"

On the last Sunday in May, about twenty youths enjoyed the sunshine on the River bank, close to the Red Bridge, near the Railway Station in Ballinasloe. Patrick Dwyer, a native of Ballyhaunis, who was a tailor's assistant at Mrs. Finnegan's "divested himself of his clothing" and got into the water alone. He swam down river but coming back, against a strong current, he got into difficulties and shouted for help.

The inquest was told that one of his friends, Daniel McCarthy, jumped into the water, fully clothed and caught hold of Dwyer. He saw a young man, named Wilson, coming up the river in a boat with two young ladies and urged him to hurry on as there was a man drowning. Wilson, however, rowed the boat to the bank of the river to allow the young ladies to get off, but by the time this was done it was too late, help was futile, for the deceased had gone to the bottom of the water, never to return.

Large crowds gathered following the tragic news but it was some five hours later before the body was recovered. The sad news was conveyed to the victim's parents about three o'clock the next morning after Mrs. Finnegan's manager had motored to Ballyhaunis.

At 12.30 on Monday, the Coroner for East Galway, Mr. J. J. Hoban, sat at the Courthouse to conduct the inquest. The jury of twelve men selected John Kirwan as foreman.

In sworn evidence, Daniel McCarthy said he was in the company of Patrick Dwyer at the time he was drowning. He had gone into the water by himself, without any clothing. There was nobody swimming but himself. A few minutes later he saw he was in trouble and asked "Pat, are you drowning?" He roared "Help" and went under

the water. "I jumped into the water with my clothes on and made towards him. A boat came up the river and Dwyer made an attempt to catch the oar."

McCarthy said

"I held him for three or four minutes, waiting for the boat to come to us. The man who had the boat was leaving off two women on the bank about four or five yards away." He added that the boatman did not stay to assist but went to let the ladies disembark first.

The Foreman replied "That is very bad. I do not care what ladies they were. We all have wives and sisters and if the man in the boat had come to this man's assistance it would be a different story today. A thing like this should not have occurred for the sake of any lady or gentleman."

The boatman, Samuel Wilson, told the inquest he was about 50 or 60 yards down river when people started shouting for help. "When I got level with the deceased I threw an oar towards him. He tried to grasp it but failed. The right oar was then out of the row-locks and the boat drifted into the bank opposite to where the boy was."

Jury foreman Kirwan said "You showed bad oarsmanship and unchristian conduct, no matter whether you had ladies or gentlemen with you. I think between yourself and the ladies you should have assisted a little better than you did. It is a shame in a town like Ballinasloe to have such a thing occur."

The jury brought in the following verdict: "We find the cause of death was accidental, but it is our opinion that Mr. Wilson did not use the necessary judgment that probably would have saved the boy's life. We desire to make special comment on the great bravery displayed by the young man McCarthy, in the gallant attempt he made to save the poor boy's life."



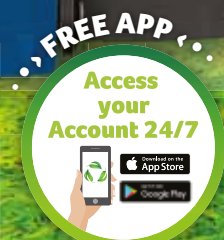
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