



BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 12 Issue 6: Feb '23 - March '23



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REAMHRA

Welcome to Volume 12 issue 6

Hope Springs Eternal, welcome to the Spring edition.

Good news on Grant Aid, with nearly €700,000 investment locally since Christmas. New Cinema about to open, 160 plus new householders to get keys in a few months' time and planning permissions granted for some 60 new homes while awaiting decision on another 260. All this while there are over 4,400 of a workforce in our community and unemployment below 1,000 persons for the first time over 25 years.

It still upsets many of us that fellow human beings are being forced to lie in tents in Clare and those War Refugees who now arrive can just join the queues for food, shelter, free GP service, trolleys - even.

Upsetting more when we recall that just some decade ago the State had a functioning campus on the Eastern edge of our town that could accommodate some 1,500 patients in heated warm dorms and a nurses' accommodation block that could sleep up to 100. The State, our state, had the heat in these radiators and the glass in the windowpanes, with walls free of damp until a few short years ago but NO ONE is to take responsibility or to be blamed.

The same State, that after umpteen Commissions, into the neglect and abuse of the most vulnerable children in our Society, swore that this could never happen again, received an Interim report last month from the Inspector of Mental Health Services Dr Susan Finnerty, which highlighted the catastrophic failures of the STATE to support some of most neediest youngsters, those suffering (in this social media saturated

As we enter 2023, we are one of very few towns of this size that has two cranes on the horizon, one at the Hospital working on the new extension and a second one on the new housing development beside our local Tesco, adjacent to the new Cinema which is near completion.

These are just three of several new construction works ongoing around the town which augers well for the future with housing being the biggest concern in the current economic climate.

The expectation is that interest rates will peak in the first half of the year and inflation will recede quite quickly during the year reducing the chances of any major downturn in our Island economy.

Our experience in the development company is that start up new business continue to grow and the inflow of young families back into the catchment area still has momentum after Covid.

We hope to start renovation work on the property in Society Street in the next few weeks with completion by year end. It is hoped this will facilitate 35/40 new jobs in the Town Centre.



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world) with mental health issues.

Tánaiste Micheál Martin said the findings on CAMHS were "unacceptable" as "no child should be lost in the system. I think it's unacceptable, very, very concerning" he said, "I think we have to look at governance issues again in respect of mental health services".

No Roman Collars or Nuns' habits to blame this mess on but a new congregation of untouchables for modern times, the H.S.E. who are clearly dysfunctional and responsible to no one. But in our 101st year, we muddle on, remember no one is responsible or to be blamed.

Meanwhile the news cycle for 14 days from the frozen beds in Clare to the neglect of betimes suicidal youngsters and their fraught and worried families, the political and chattering classes built a tall scaffold to politically hang a Minister who either messed up or covered up a few hundred euros in some election expense return. Strangely in our Alice in Wonderland World, he was to be blamed and to be made responsible!

Please can our national priorities start to resemble those at ground zero for the rest of the year.

Enjoy the read,

Le Gach De Ghui,
COLM CROFFY,
Editor.



We have made progress on the first two prongs of our 10 year plan namely sustainability and Tourism and our focus in the coming months will be on the third element namely Health. We welcome individuals to come forward who would like to be part of this working group. If you wish to discuss same please contact Lyn / Martina on 090 9646516.

This current magazine represents the 72nd edition – a short 12 years growing. We feel it has brought what is happening in the Community closer to everyone. It is seen as hugely informative and a promotional tool for all that we have to offer to our residents and visitors alike so once again for its continued success we are so dependent on our advertisers so please give them your support. Make sure they are your first call when shopping.

SEAMUS DUFFY,
Chairman Ballinasloe Area Community
Development Limited.



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Along with the release from May onwards of the 165 social and affordable dwellings directly south of Tesco, many more residential schemes have been granted permission since Christmas.

Ballinasloe Municipal Council is finalising start of the part eight process at Dooley's Corner Dunlo Hill and expanding the St. Joseph's estate. Dunlo Hill will be refurbished, consisting of 15 dwellings at the with a mixture of 1 to 2 bedroom units and will be targeted for elderly people. St. Josephs estate is getting eight two-storey terraces with 2 bedroom units each designed for families.

Galway County Council has recently approved plans for 34 new dwellings along Church Road and in Kilgrave, Creagh beside Roscar. These private properties will be double storied ranging from 2 to 3 bed units, and from semi-detached to terrace housing. Included with this development will be road access to the R446, communal green space in the estates centre, bicycle parking areas, footpaths, public lighting, 77 parking spaces, and connections to the town's water facilities.

The original development was to consist of 36 housing but the planners removed two of the dwellings to provide additional communal space. The Council will also receive four of these properties in providing social and affordable housing in accordance to Part V planning law requirements. Additionally the contractors Leadlane LTD will pay €136,123 in development costs to maintain facilities within the area.

Planning was confirmed prior to December for 8 dwellings featured at Bachelor's Walk led by contractors Brian and Brenda Connolly. This development consisted of an infill project which will contribute to and finish the residential scheme on this estate. The eight detached houses will feature six four bedroom units and an additional two larger units.

In Portnick - Moycarn lapsed planning decision of 2014 but reactivated by the developer in 2019 for 16 detached two story dwellings and 10 semi-detached two stories - has less than a year to commence.

34 Houses have had their foundations poured in the Church St Social and first phase Affordable development, with An Bord Pleanála grappling with how many bungalows to allocate in the low density area of housing in Creagh.

Regarding the planning application put forward by Limehill Esker for 165 housing behind Tesco, there has been no official decision made from An Bord Pleanála which was due to be finalized last December. The planning application for this site was made by Limehill Esker which would include 106 apartments and duplexes, 27 three-bed terraced housing and 32-bed semi-detached with two-beds.

This will bring us to a total of 256 housing new units in the pipeline within our town, plus providing an availability for hundreds of people to live in Ballinasloe, with nearly 199 being built.

With a local housing need list in the MDC area of about 800 plus - it appears that nearly 50 % could be accommodated with the 80% of new builds demised being for social and affordable housing.



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REMEDiation OF OLD LANDFILL TO START

Confirmation was provided from Galway County Council that a remediation project at the Poolboy Closed Landfill is starting. This plan foresees the old Municipal Landfill site remediated into an area of recreation for townspeople and visitors, and hopes to promote sustainable practises and environmental sustainability on the site.

Councillor Evelyn Parsons, a key promoter of this project, stated "There is no public park currently in town, a great omission locally for our people and it's clear that more amenities for recreation, children's play and leisure are needed, as well as remediation restoration and safeguarding our natural environment, and it may be an opportunity to also look at Climate Action and potential for community sustainable energy actions at this site."

Public consultation begins soon to explore the potential of this site, along with a draft tender for consultants to explore the feasibility of this scheme. Cllr Evelyn thanked her colleagues at the Ballinasloe Municipal Council and all local county members for their near unanimous support making this possible. "I am extremely keen to see it progress to public consultation and completion over the next few years" she concluded.



Municipal District Council members were fully briefed on new Council housing developments at St. Josephs and Dunlo Street at their recent monthly meeting.

After nearly 20 months of planning and scoping, where even bat colony issues had to be reviewed and considered the Galway County Council Executive have reached the point where they can begin the formal PART 8 planning process in constructing housing at these sites as part of an infill development project and Dunlo Hill Regeneration Project.

In essence the St Josephs construction project will finish out the estate tidily and sympathetically to its original ethos and the Dooleys Corner to the Mount will address a significant area of acute dereliction in the heart of the town.

The St Joseph's Place development will cover a total area of roughly 0.8 acres consisting of eight two-storey terraces, each with two bedroom units suitable for families. An ideal location for infill, although reliefs are in place regarding flooding issues in the area. Director of Services for Housing, Liam Hanrahan mentioned that the land was owned by Galway County Council and discussed how these small properties were to fit with pre-existing developments at the site.

Cllr. Dermot Connolly emphasised that the "ethos of estate" must be maintained and that he hoped to replicate the success featured at Garbally Drive.

Mr. Hanrahan advised that the part 8 for St. Josephs will be brought before the members in early 2023.

The derelict buildings at the 1.8 acre site on Dunlo street, including seven two-storey dwellings, a three-storey over basement premises and another adjacent three storey building



Cllr Dermot Connolly, Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald TD, Galway-Roscommon TD Claire Kerrane, and Sinn Féin Constituency Officer Caoimhin Caulfield - inspecting the Dunlo Hill regeneration site.

consisting of a total 12-15 bedroom units, will be completely revamped.

This housing will likely be prioritized for elderly people with mobility issues on the town's housing waiting list to provide them convenient access to the town centre facilities.

On the insistence of Cllr. Dermot Connolly the external stone structure and architectural character to the building will be maintained and conserved, while the interior will be modified to allow accommodation units to be put in place. Director Liam Hanrahan hopes these refurbishments to the building will provide a more pleasant image for people entering into Ballinasloe West. Consideration was given to communal uses for the ground floor bar and shop but this proved too difficult.

Cllr Dr. Evelyn Parsons was also in favour of a memorial plaque or some other commemorative memorial be installed for Irish Bilingual poet Eoghan Ó Tuairisc at the site, who was a highly influential and internationally recognised author who was born and lived at the third house on the row.

Director Hanrahan advised that staff are waiting for the completion of some surveys and pending their arrival they will move to Part 8 as soon as possible.

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The Technological University of the Shannon has opened a TUS Learning Gate at Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre. After years of government reports and plans seeking to have better third level engagement and opportunity in the town, this new innovative development allows full connect with the various TUS campuses across the island.

This connection builds on the many existing links to colleges to Ballinasloe including the University of Limerick, the University of Galway through Portiuncula Hospital, University College Cork and the National Paramedical College Campus also in the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre.

The official launch took place at Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre before Christmas with many of our local representatives and members of the Ballinasloe Area Community Development in attendance, as well as representatives from TUS.

The event was commemorated with an unveiling of a "TUS Learning Gate" plaque by Chairman of the BACD Seamus Duffy and Dr Michael Tobin, Dean of Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning at TUS.

Lyn Donnelly, Manager of Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre, was delighted to partner with TUS on this project which offers locals

an alternative from travelling to the TUS campus in Athlone. "It also strengthens the ties between the University and the locale, ensuring this service that is available in several towns and villages across the midlands is now available to the Ballinasloe community, which will be of huge benefit" stated Lyn.

The 'TUS Learning Gate' was an idea proposed by Dr Michael Tobin, Dean of Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning, to provide TUS students and staff who participate in online courses a base location to study and learn together. While being able to study from home, the objective of this programme is to provide these students a comfortable meeting location to do their college work and to meet other students studying online.

The local Learning Gate hosts many online programmes provided by the Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning from the TUS Athlone Campus. There are numerous courses available, with 53 courses for anyone seeking a Level 7/6 degree, 58 courses for anyone seeking to do a Level 8 Honours Bachelor degree and 20 courses for anyone hoping to do a Level 9 Masters. For a comprehensive list of courses offered, please see the courses provided by the Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning faculty on the TUS website.



Pictured at the launch at Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre. L-R: Kevin Broderick (BACD) Denise Rocks (West Regional Skills Forum) Senator Aisling Dolan, Eoghan Kenny (BACD) Marina Downey (BACD) Seadna Ryan (TUS) Denis Naughten TD, Liam Horan (Connected Hubs) Seamus Duffy (BACD) Micheal Tobin (TUS) Cllr Evelyn Parsons, Aoife Kelly (TUS) Patricia Tierney (BTFE) Declan Doran (TUS) Noel Madden (BACD) Martina Flanagan (BACD) Lyn Donnelly (BACD) and Joe Lyons (BACD).

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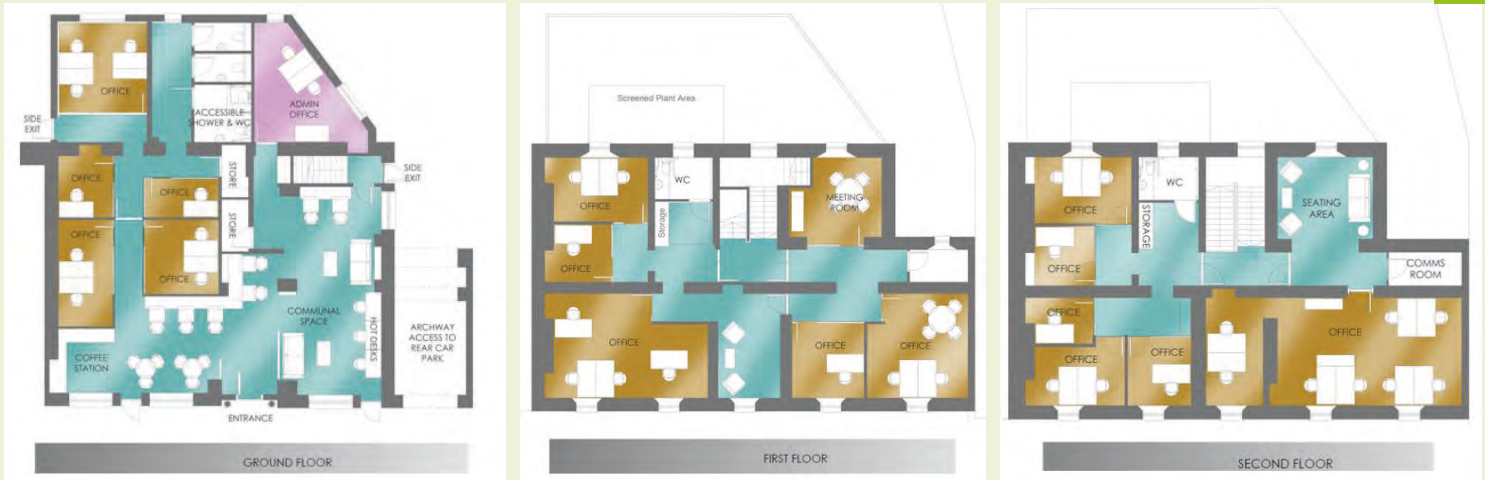
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Plans to transform the old Bank Chambers building on Society Street into a remote working hub was given a massive boost with the announcement of €250,000 from the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

The project is being completed by BACD as an extension to their existing enterprise space in Creagh. Planning permission was granted during the summer and following public procurement guidelines, the project went out to tender via the government procurement website “etenders” in November 2022. Final negotiations with the winning tenderer are currently ongoing with works proposed to commence in the coming weeks.

This announcement is a very timely financial injection for the project. The fund is part of Ireland’s Rural Development Policy and is coordinated through Galway County Council and is in addition to the €490k already secured from the Just Transition Fund.

The project will see the 6,000 sq ft premises converted into a state of the art remote working hub catering for 40 plus

persons, including 6 hotdesks, 16 offices (1-7 Person capacity), 3 meeting spaces, 1 meeting room, canteen and Toilet/Shower Facilities within the 3 story building.

The works will include the installation of energy efficient lighting, heating and ventilation, installation on new internal and external doors and windows, internal partitions, floor and Ceiling finishes, full furniture fit out and high speed broadband installation.

Seamus Duffy, Chairman BACD states “once renovations are complete, it will offer flexible high quality serviced office space for local entrepreneurs to co-work, to meet and to collaborate with each other and will offer remote workers (currently working from home or in other locations) a long-term solution. It will attract people into the town centre which will have a positive spin off for our town centre businesses”.

Seamus also stated there is already huge interest by local businesses, entrepreneurs, and remote workers, whom have formally expressed an interest to being located in this innovative space when it is operational in early 2024, further details available from Lyn in BEC on 0909616516 or lyn@bacd.ie



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Crane at Distillery.

Ahascragh Distillery's three Massive copper pot stills made their way from Forsyths in Scotland to Ahascragh, now sit behind the distillery's large window in the heart of the village.

Installation of the bespoke modern equipment is currently underway, with commissioning beginning in the coming weeks with plans for first distillation in early 2023.

These copper stills will enable founders Gareth and Michelle McAllister to distil some of the first zero-emission spirits in Ireland and change the traditional energy source for Irish whiskey production.

Ahascragh Distillery will be an all-electric distillery using 100% renewable energy, with 70% coming from wind farms and 30% generated on-site through solar panels and hydro wheels in the mill race.

Distillation is a highly energy intensive process, traditionally using fossil fuels or gas to generate the needed thermal loading. No fossil fuels or gas on will be burned on site, but instead will use high temperature heat pumps and an efficient energy storage system to produce their spirits. The technology and design has been validated and supported by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's EXEED programme, aimed at organisations who are planning an

energy efficient investment project.

Cáit Baxter has been introduced as Distillery Manager, coming from the team at Dingle Distillery, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role. She is looking forward to overseeing the commissioning process and leading the first distillation in the coming months.

A new series of short films "Distillery Diaries" explores Ahascragh distillery's journey to making whiskey history in the West of Ireland. The films have highlighted work by local contractors and tradesmen, key milestones, and behind the scenes features. The most recent film is a look back at the past 12 months of construction and progress with founders Gareth and Michelle McAllister.

In the fourth edition of the Distillery Diaries series, Michelle McAllister highlights her interest in restoring the Ahascragh warehouse: "When I first saw the building, I knew it had a story to tell. I knew that there was a lot more it had to give. I think we all rush to build new and forget about our past and forget about the beautiful

structures that we have built in years gone by."

Last year, their whiskey and gin won many international awards including the International Wine and Spirits Competition, World Gin Awards, The Spirit Masters, The Design and Packaging Masters and The Irish Quality Food and Drink Awards. Most notably, their product Clan Colla 20 Pedro Ximénez won a gold medal at the Irish Whiskey Awards, and Xin Gin was named the best in Ireland at The Gin Guide Awards.

The Family Bond releases are available to buy in Carry Out and Grenham's off License in Ballinasloe, and to taste in bars and restaurants across town, Galway and beyond.



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With Job signs up all over town and employers complaining how hard it is to fill posts locally and near, national full employment according to the CSO - it should come as no surprise to learn that the town now has probably more than 1,000 more people having their lunch break today than in the 90s when we had a manufacturing back bone of some 1,000 jobs

The figures are very encouraging and our survey reveals that approximately a 25% increase in jobs in the locale has happened since 2019 – three years ago when we first undertook the exercise.

The largest employer in the town is of course the HSE with about 1,126 across the three zones – Hospital, Health Centre and Mental Healthcare. Add in the other care centres, nursing homes and medical support firms and you have practically 1350 people employed in healthcare – over 30%.

The total 4,400 work force are split with some 400 in construction, another 500 in Hospitality / Food and others dotted about but Manufacturing is down to less than 350 jobs.

Unemployment is rising across Ireland, with Galway recording an increase of nearly 1500 people unemployed since December 2021. Ballinasloe has faced a minor rise in unemployment by 9 people since last year, with 935 currently out of work.

Our survey does not include the town's largest backbone of labour force, our farmers of the hinterland, but we may get to do some analysis on that when the new Census Returns emerge in April.

Employer	Number of employees 2020	Number of employees 2023
Ahascragh Distillery	0	11
An Post	35	57
Bunowen Bakery	3	25
Building Site Work - Houses / Cinema/ Hospitals	20	200
Conneely Construction	50	50
Corrib Service Station	25	35
Chanelle Vetinary	0	25
Creches/Pre Schools	45	65
Creggstone	50	60
Department of Education	285	345
Department of Justice	62	60
Department of Agriculture	10	15
Dolans Service Station	60	65
Dubarry	90	90
ESB/Electric Ireland	24	26
Easy Fix	40	55
Entreprise and Technology Centre	165	180
Financlal Services/Banking	85	75
Galway County Council	26	32
Gullanes Hotel	57	65
HSE Health Centre	55	65
Keller Group	33	64
KPW Print	38	40
Large Multiples	160	190
Liffey Meats	40	40
Motor trade	20	30
Moycarn Hotel	12	42
NCT	20	30
Nursing Homes/Care Centers	75	95
Old Mill Cafe Ahascragh		7
Portiuncula Hospital	796	981
Pubs	32	24
Rackzone	10	12
Retailers-Non Grocery	200	220
Roscommon-Galway Mental Health Services	70	80
Service Providers	320	340
Social Services	18	28
Surmodics	155	165
Takeways/Restaurants	40	60
The Mart	20	15
The Shearwater Hotel	170	180
Truir Construction	40	93
Ward Western Automation	35	40
Western Post Form	60	65
Total	3551	4431

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BCU Directors, Oversight Committee & Management at the 2022 AGM.
Back Row l-r: Kevin Folan, Sean Kelly, Declan Harney, Adrian Ahern, Aidan Cliford, Shane McNeill. Front Row l-r: Mary Coughlan, Carmel Carrick, Sean Madden, Marian Brady, Eileen Reddin, Grainne Murphy.

Newly elected Chair of the local Credit Union is Creagh native Sean Madden. Sean worked with An Post for 42 years up to his retirement in July 2022 from the position of HR Manager for the North West, based in Galway.

He joined the Credit Union in 1983 and served on the Board of Directors in the late eighties/early nineties, but was unable to continue due to family commitments (3 children under the age of 3 at one point).

"I like the fact that the credit union is a community based organisation and I always wanted to return when time permitted, so I volunteered again and was elected to the board of directors in March 2021" states Sean.

Credit Unions are a member focused organisation and the goal of each Credit Union is to assist members with their individual

financial needs at all stages of their lives. "Our service ethos means that everything we do and the decisions we make in relation to how we provide our services are always for the benefit of our members. As a community-based co-operative, we provide strong support through sponsorship of local organisations and committees. Last year we distributed over €70,000 in funding to local groups through our social and sponsorship funds" Sean explains.

One of their biggest challenges is to remain relevant in the lives of all their members and in particular the younger members who are the future of the credit union. They recently introduced a new MYCU Youth current Account and Debit

Card for members aged 12 and over who are just beginning their financial journey. It empowers the youngest members to take responsibility for their own money but also safeguards them with features like reduced daily spending limits and age-related restrictions applied to certain retailers. It aims to provide some independence for them while providing reassurance for parents.

Sean is keen to stress the branch keeping up to date with modern pressures on people – "With the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, we need to remain accessible with affordable financial services to everyone in our community and we would urge those who might have previously relied on a doorstep lender, or those who might be tempted to borrow from unregulated lenders, to come and talk to us first" he urges.

Another way the Credit Union provide access to their members is through the online banking platform. Available on the website, ballinasloecreditunion.ie, or mobile app, members can join, save and borrow from the comfort of home. Whatever way, members choose to interact, they will find friendly, familiar and trusted staff who will always go the extra mile to help.

"People should consider joining the credit union because we are a community based financial co-operative that provides members with a real alternative to the traditional bank. We have been at the heart of Irish communities for over six decades operating under a set of principles that put members first. As well as a suite of loan products which includes mortgages, we also provide a Current Account & Debit Card service to credit union members or those wishing to switch their existing current account" suggests Sean.

The more personal community-based nature of credit unions gives a special role and makes it easy for people to deal with them. It's not a coincidence that credit unions regularly feature at the top of customer experience polls. It reinforces their unique ethos of member focused service, understanding their needs at different stages of their lives and tailoring our service accordingly.

Looking forward to his new role Sean states "It is our firm intention to continue to support our members through the delivery of value for money financial services, member service excellence, and a continued focus on supporting the wider community through our various sponsorships and social fund."



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Revellers in attendance at the Christmas Lights Switch on Ceremony.



Volunteers from the Christmas Switch on Ceremony.

The Town Team - Christmas Lights Committee were delighted this year to be able to hold a switch on ceremony... the first since 2018 and as expected a great crowd showed up on the evening and were entertained by DJ Ben Parker and performances from The Town Band, the Panto Dance troop, students from Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal (Creagh) and Scoil an Chroí Naofa.

Before the arrival of Santa Claus on the Fire Tender, everyone was treated to a fantastic display of flashing Christmas lights and festoons from the Ballinasloe & District Vintage Club tractors. Many other groups including the Ballinasloe Musical Society and other community members helped out on the night with stewarding and providing Mulled Wine & Hot chocolate.

Expenditure on the project this year was kept to a minimum but with increased costs in insurance and electricity, the annual running costs of the lights and festival are currently in the



region of €25k. The committee decided to revert to business contributions which was coordinated by James Burke and generous funding from Ballinasloe Credit Union was a massive boost for the project. However even with these funds there was shortfall of nearly €10k which was able to be financed from the surplus monies raised from the bumper Xmas Draws the previous 2 years.

Town Team Co-ordinator Anita Kileen stated "We'd like to thank all the businesses and members who so generously donated to this years campaign and to all the volunteers who helped out at the turning on festival, it was great to be able to celebrate our towns amazing Christmas lights with the whole community together again. It's a huge undertaking every year with costs increasing, we as a community need new fundraising ideas to ensure we can continue with them every year".

Income

Business Contributions	€11,574.75
Ballinasloe Credit Union	€4,000.00
NYE Ball Surplus	€454.00
Total Income	€15,574.75

Expenditure

Installation & Repairs	€19,831.00
Electricity	€1,833.50
Insurance & Storage	€2,200.00
Festival	€1,410.14
Total Expenditure	€25,274.64

Deficit 2022	€9,699.89
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Surplus Xmas draws 2020/2021	€16,258.33
Balance towards 2023 campaign	€6,558.44

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Members of the Town Band

Thank you to all the local businesses who contributed this year:

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Apache Pizza	Cahalan Jewellers	Eurospar	Height Of Health	Keller Travel	Paddy Keane Auctioneers	The Front Room Beauty Salon
Ballinasloe Opticians	Carolines Hairdressers	First Stop Barbers	Hutchinson & Davidson Solicitors	Kidz Korner	Paddy Power	The Hair Gallery-Tomas Barbers
Bank of Ireland	Campotel	Fusion Restaurant	J&S Photos	KPW Print	Patrick Hogan & Co Solicitors	Top Man
Bar One Racing	Carry Out Off Licence	Galway SPCA	Jack Duncan & Co	Lauren Kildea LK Brows	Ronan McGuckian Emmet House Dental	Tranquillity Health & Beauty Clinic
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Billy King Pharmacy	Cregg Stone	Gills Dry Cleaners & Launderette	Jorena's Health & Gift Shop	Mighty Cabs	Smart Hub	Wags N Tails Pet Shop
Billy's Discount Store	Cunniffe Expert Electrical	Goode Dry Cleaners	Joseph M Jordan Solicitors	Murphy's Total Health Medical Hall	Society Travel	Willie Burke Shoe Repairs
Bistro 18	Daisy May Beauty	Grenhams Off Licence & Bar	Kariba's Restaurant & Coffee House	Niall Hogan Menswear	Study Centre	Wonderland Hair & Beauty
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Jorena's Health & Gift Shop in Society St., have recently expanded to include new therapy rooms accessed upstairs on the premises. Services like Yoga, Reflexology, Counselling, Crystal Healing and much more are all now included.

The shop was originally established in 1994 by Rena and John Kilcommins. Since then, the building has expanded twice and a second store opened in Roscommon town. The shop aimed to provide a safe haven for customers to seek refuge, whether to aid people with wedding presents or to treat client's ailments.

While daughter Mary was cleaning the store rooms upstairs with her husband Paul, she formed the idea for the new therapy service suite. The store conveniently had a room upstairs which had no purpose, and furthermore she had just received full training from kinesiologist Ronnie Turner. Along with acquiring a kinesiology machine to aid customers in picking their supplements, Rena had all the components to develop this facility. Fast forward six months, and people across the country are booking months in advance to avail of this service and indeed other treatments.

As of today, the shop has ten employees working. In addition, the store also has a partnership with many therapists across the country. These associates work independent of the business and many have their own establishments, but regardless, travel to Ballinasloe across the country to offer customers their knowledge and help.

Jorena's key strengths lie in care and nutrition resulting from the continuous training in holistic supplements which the staff undergo. The training is carried out by representatives of an array of nutrition companies to ensure the company understands the properties of the supplements fully, and how it may benefit their clients. The store continues to reinvent itself and explore new products, hoping to be stocked with the highest quality supplements that aid customers in living life with ease.

The therapies and treatments provided are still being finalised

by their department upstairs. Rena appreciates any response from their clients sharing: "customer feedback has been outstanding and we are excited to advertise and introduce these marvellous therapies to our community."

The treatment rooms are accessed separately to the shop by a door on the far left side of the establishment, with a cosy waiting room upstairs while being attended to by the therapists. As of yet, this service does not have an official timetable, with some assistants being only available during shop hours and some after closing, but Jorenas will soon list an official list of times and contacts on their Instagram and Facebook pages.

People can either ring the store at (090) 964 6585 or contact the therapists directly. On a final note Rena, wishes to remind the reader with a quote she finds to be of significance: "you have to nourish, to flourish" says the busy Store co-founder.



Jorena's entrance to Therapy Suites on left hand side of Health Shop door.


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Ballinasloe received an excellent result on the recent Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey, being tied at 13th for cleanest town or city in Ireland and cleanest in County Galway. Six out of the ten sites examined received the highest grade of an A and, more significantly, there were no seriously littered areas.

The R348 Athenry Approach and R357 Roscommon Approach Road were highlighted for having a virtual absence of litter along both routes, although the pavement along the Athenry route was cracked in some areas.

The Famine Remembrance Park was commended for its mature trees, and open grass space but criticized for one bin considered old or damaged. Creagh National School and Kilgarve Gardens were complimented for their appearance and conditions. All these sites gained an A in the IBAL survey.

The La Poer Trench Monument, Ballinasloe Library and the Bring Facility received a B+, being praised for their presentation but marked down for the presence of some litter. The Main Street gained a B which was downgraded due to food and cigarette waste, however being congratulated for its positive condition regarding paving, bollards, markings, street bins and ornamental trees.

The outcome of this National Survey and Adjudicators reports was overall positive encouraging news for the town. An Taisce, the group who conducted these surveys for IBAL, stated that this was "an excellent result for Ballinasloe".

Much of this solid progress can be attributed the volunteers and indeed to Ballinasloe Municipal Council and their workers who have been active in maintaining to the town. Ballinasloe Tidy Towns Chair Tom Madden congratulated all who continue to help make it all happen.

"I wish to sincerely thank all volunteers, individuals who while out and about on walks volunteer with litter picks and report instances of litter blackspots to us. Members of residents' associations deserve great credit as they work tirelessly

keeping their estates and residential areas clean, tidy and well maintained. Galway County Council, Municipal District Area Workers and Support Staff – are to be applauded as well - Ballinasloe Friends of the Environment (a recently formed sub-group) that has hit the ground running last Autumn with a wild flower seed planting initiative in the Poolboy area. Ballinasloe Training for Employment is a local DSP Community Employment project, who in partnership with Ballinasloe Community Service Probation Project continues to provide expertise in ground maintenance and litter control in targeted areas of Ballinasloe and its environs" stated Tom.

The Tidy Towns are considering Monday, February 13th, @ 7pm for their AGM, but has yet to be finally decided. Additionally, the group hopes to organise clean-up Saturdays within the town, for Feb 11th & 25th, March 11th & 25th.

If anyone would like to become involved with the volunteer effort, they can contact Tom at (086) 817 9580.





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East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support Centre has just reviewed a very busy year of operation. They first opened Le Chéile, in Brackernagh a decade ago.

Some 40 trained Volunteers including house staff, complementary therapists, counsellors, support groups facilitators and more, were busy supporting just over 4,500 appointments and engagements to cancer patients and their families in 2022.

At their recent AGM supporters of the centre were informed that on average it costs €17,000 per month to provide the services. Costs are kept as low as possible as the centre does not receive Core funding from the HSE or any other official agency.

These costs are met from the generously donated fundraising, donations, and some grant applications.

All services are given to the clients free of charge which reduces the burden on them and their families. They are offered complementary therapies as well as counselling as they deal with their cancer treatment and beyond.

The current committee/board: Chairperson – Ciara Maples, Secretary – Ellen Egan, Treasurer – Brian Eccles, members Noel Gavin, Kevin Flynn gave a fulsome account for the charitable organisation's activities.

The outgoing Committee Chaired by Brian Eccles included Anna Mitchell, Noel Gavin and Martina Jennings.

The Team outlined their Plans for 2023 including

- Working with Medtronic on a seamless way of co-ordinating our Volunteer register, training, working time and events.
- Planning to raise funds for a new Hydrotherapy Pool.
- Enhancing Children's CLIMB programme (Children Lives Include Moments of Bravery).



L-R: Jacqueline Daly (Director of services), Hector Ó hEochagáin (Irish presenter), Edel Chadwick (Volunteer), Edward and Marian Naughton (Volunteers).



Anne Egan (Volunteer), June McCafferty (Volunteer therapist), Evelyn Fleming (Volunteer therapist)

- Upgrading Client Registration Programme – "Mind the Patient"
- Planning for a Emsalla pelvic floor therapy chair.
- Upgrading bus for Radiotherapy Transport to/from Galway – (currently being purchased from Kilmartin's Ballinasloe).
- Increase sales through our online shop on Thriftify (thriftify.ie).
- HPV Vaccination Research- Europe.
- Continue to be involved in National Awareness Cancer Campaigns..
- Continue growing vegetables and flowers in the polytunnel and sensory garden.

Centre Director Jacqueline Daly outlined some of the new services that they will

be rolling out to the community in the coming months, involving a Post Mastectomy care clinic (bra fitting), Indian Head Massage, Face Reflexology, Meditation and Relaxation outdoors (Tynagh-Lyme Hill), Patient Advocacy-Cancer Patients Europe, European Cancer Organisation and European Association of Urology.

In order to keep this €200,000 plus per year support organisation on the road for the year ahead the Centre will naturally be involved in serious amounts of fundraising activities which will include, Move against cancer, Mack Hanson's fundraiser (Ireland and Connacht Rugby Player), Kayaking, Various Coffee Mornings and a Lough Ree Kayaking challenge by Maya Frost.

Jacqueline, and the Centre Manager Anna Obara, reminded everyone that new Volunteers/People can always help and are always needed for tasks such as Fundraising, Getting involved, Promotion of centre, seeking Corporate Sponsorship, Gardening/general maintenance, Office administration support, Driving the bus to/from Galway for Radiotherapy patients.

They thanked existing volunteers for their time, engagement and dedication.

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After an absence of three years, due to Covid, the streets of the town, on Christmas Eve, were filled with the strains of wonderful carol singing organised by the local Church Folk Choir. The day started with a one hour musical extravaganza by the Town Band before a combination of choirs, singers and others offered a medley of festive entertainment. And thanks to the generosity of the townspeople and surrounding areas €11,000 was collected by volunteers, suitably attired in colourful costumes, who were on the streets from early morning.

The monies have now been divided between the local Town Band and the Social Services and were handed over at a

function in St. Michael's Church. To date, over €90,000 has been collected and donated to local organisations as the local choirs are supported by groups and singers from the surrounding areas on their annual Christmas Eve presentation.

Local artistes Eleanor Shanley, Johnny Johnston, Emma O'Reilly, Iona Kelly (home on holidays from Rome) and many more songsters contributed on the day where the support on the ground of Tomas Gullane and his staff, Dolan's Centra, Corrib Oil, Parkmore Electric and others was much appreciated for providing refreshments on a cold winter's day.

A spokesperson for the Folk Group thanked all involved on making the day such a success and raised such a large amount of money for local groups. "Year in, year out, the people of the town give generously towards our fund and we appreciate it very much."



St. Michael's Folk Choir handing over the proceeds of their recent Christmas Eve Carol Singing, which raised €11,000. Noel Madden (on behalf of Ballinasloe Town Band) receives a cheque from Phil Lenihan while Sr. Mai Moore presents a similar amount to Regina Power and Mary Egan of the Ballinasloe Social Services.

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Zara Little Campbell our new Branch Librarian was born and raised in Brackernagh, hailing from an artistic family, coming from long line of stone sculptors. Both her parents are creative, with mum (Joyce Little) a visual artist, art therapist and art teacher. Her dad (Tom Campbell) used to work in Dubarry and later became interested in photography, wood turning and sculpture. Her brother (Mark) is a chef and her (late) brother (Joshua) was an artist/ animator.

Growing up her parents had an Art Gallery and most summers she helped out with the Art Workshops for Kids, teaching them different skills and techniques for the various arts and crafts on the program. From a young age she was always making and creating, becoming fascinated with a new medium and wouldn't rest until it was perfected. Something she carried into her adult life, always looking for a new challenge.

She is a self-taught soap maker, creating artisan soaps, bath treats and natural skincare. Many of her products, along with her handmade cards, are available at the Ballinasloe Country Market or direct online at www.silkysuds.ie. Her handmade greeting cards are also available in Ganly's Athlone. She and her husband, Dominic Oglesby, regularly exhibit her soaps at craft markets and shows throughout the country.

Ard Scoil Mhuire was her Alma Mater where English and Art were her favourite subjects and she had a few brilliant teachers that encouraged her to explore her creativity. "Dad would often help me with her homework, and when I was stumped with an essay, he would help me come up with funny stories or brainstorm ideas. Her love of writing blossomed from there and I took to writing poetry and short stories" she recalls.



Silky Suds

After the leaving certificate, she moved to Wales to study Creative writing and English at Trinity Saint David's, Carmarthen. Her parents were incredibly supportive ensuring that both a Master in Creative Writing and second Masters in Professional Arts Management were completed. She stayed in Wales for 10 years and then moved back to Ireland in 2014.

As part of her MA Creative Writing, an anthology entitled 'Rewind' was produced, she was co-editor but also had some of her poems. Sigla and Crannóg magazine followed suit and in 2009 she won the Jonathon Swift Award for poetry.

She is valued member and current chairperson for Group 8, a non-profit professional artist collective based in locally. Formed in 2009 with a view to bringing our work to the people and in order to add to the cultural interest of the town. Each year they host an annual exhibition, usually on Culture Night, showcasing work from (now) 13 members.

In April 2022, herself and Tomher Campbell were commissioned by Galway County Council to create the Cathaoirleach awards. The



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awards were made using local bog oak, resin and Ballinasloe limestone.

As to what our newest librarian reads, she confirms that as a teenager “I was drawn to Fantasy and Science Fiction, engrossed with the worlds these writers created and how they wove language together. I particularly enjoyed reading Phillip Pullman’s ‘His Dark Materials’, JK Rowlings ‘Harry Potter’ series and Tolkien’s ‘The Lord of the Rings’ series.”

At the minute she is loving Patrick Rothfuss ‘The Kingkiller Chronicles’ and not-so patiently awaiting the third installment! “I’m also a big fan of audio books, I love how the narrators can bring the text to life. I find it’s a great way to consume literature, especially when you are busy doing hands on things. With your library membership you can login to BorrowBox and have access to loads of free audiobooks and ebooks” she enthuses.

“I love the endless possibilities that Libraries contain. I don’t think you can ever be bored if you can make, create or read. I love that Ballinasloe Library hosts book launches, readings, art exhibitions and talks covering very broad subject matters. I am hoping to use my previous experience of hosting art workshops, and my love of books and writing to foster creativity in our local young people. Ballinasloe is a very talented and creative community, and I’m excited to work with individuals and groups on their upcoming exhibitions and events” encourages Zara. If anyone has ideas for events or things they would like to see, please do pop in and meet her.

Zara remembers the Library it as the old convent and going to confessions/mass in the adjoining church! “The building is now bright, with loads of natural light flooding it and its well-spaced out. The Church Gallery is my favourite part of the building, with its beautiful, vibrant stained-glass windows. It’s a lovely calm space for exhibitions, readings and talks. We also have lovely spaces dotted around the library that are great nooks for reading a newspaper, studying or just chilling out”, she explains.

With your library membership there is a whole host of online resources available to you for free. Including access to eMagazines, eLearning and language classes and online newspapers. You can also come in and use the PCs to research your family tree!

At the moment her free time has been taken up with crafting. However, they are in the planning stage of our new theme for Group 8’s annual exhibition. She hopes to spend more time this year reading and writing.

As to the best kept secret of the library she is clear – “In November 2022 we launched the Open Library allowing patrons access during unstaffed hours. After completing a short induction, patrons will be able to come into the library from 8am – 10pm, 7 days a week. Patrons will be able to check out and return books, use the PCs and printing facilities. I think this is great for those who, our regular hours don’t suit or even those looking for a place to study in the evenings or weekend”, states Zara.



Zara Little-Campbell and Una Kelly Head Librarian.



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A former matron and administrator at Portiuncula Hospital celebrated her 100th birthday in the Franciscan Convent, surrounded by former colleagues, friends and neighbours.

Sr. Bridget Veale, a native of Dunhill, Co. Waterford joined the Franciscan Sisters in 1939, in Guildford, Surrey, where she pursued her studies. Having obtained her nursing qualifications in London, she later returned to Portiuncula, where she was matron from 1952-55. The centenarian nun then worked in Southern Africa, the UK, Singapore and Malaysia before being appointed Administrator of the Ballinasloe Hospital in 1983-a post she held up to 1990.

Bishop John Kirby, Retired Bishop of Clonfert, was chief celebrant of the celebratory Mass in the Franciscan Convent, assisted by Fr. Bernie Costello, Hospital Chaplin; Fr. Pat Kenny, PP of New Inn and Bullaun, and Fr. Benny Flanagan, Creagh. The Bishop congratulated Sr. Bridget on her special birthday and recalled her great contribution to the Hospital and Training College, in a small country town, many years ago.

The Waterford-born nun was the recipient of many congratulatory messages from former nursing colleagues around the world, in reaching her milestone birthday. Following the mass all enjoyed the special reception laid on in the Franciscan Convent.

Sr. Bridget cutting her 100th Birthday Cake



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The local Saint Vincent de Paul branch continues to collect donations for their Christmas appeal to aid local elderly and venerable people. As donations are still coming in for this collection the branch can't finalise on the funds raised. President of the chapter Kevin McMorro would like to extend his gratitude to the community for their generosity and the volunteers who made this campaign possible.

Kevin reported that requests for assistance within the community have been up by 20%, with many elderly people



and a large volume of families seeking aid for increasing electricity and fuel bills. Grant aid is now being provided to support college students with their registration fees, which are reviewed on an individual

basis.

The President and the team are now accepting applications for people over 65 to receive a personal landline for peace of mind surrounding safety concerns. Kevin can be contacted at (086) 856 5754.

The branch also accepts donations which can be sent through their website or provided to them at their shop.

LIONS CLUB APPEAL UP

Ballinasloe Lions Club have been participating with Creagh, St. Michael's and Clontuskert for various Christmas food appeals. Additionally, a collection in Dolan's Centra raised over €2,796 for the many worthy causes that they support and overall revenue received from local contributions and donations increased from last year.

The group are still finalizing how they might invest this money with competing appeals from jersey donations for local clubs, aiding Town Hall renovations, or towards future events.

The local Chapter are hoping to hold an upcoming an Easter Post event for primary schools and a tractor run to raise awareness about the local and National work of Lions.

Meetings are held for the group on the second Wednesday of every month at 8pm in Gullane's Hotel and new members are always welcome. Check out their activities on their facebook page !



Mary Lynch, Kevin Watters, Liam Howley (Ballinasloe President), Patricia Duggan (Portumna President), James O'Loughlin (Vice District Governor)



Fundraising in Dolan's Centra



Teresa Hunt, clinical nurse manager SCBU and Colm Carroll in the photo. Ben Kelly from Creagh & Colm ran this year's 12 pubs and raised €1850. They had amazing support from all the businesses around the town with over 30 prizes donated to the raffle. The feedback from the pubs is that it was the biggest crowd they have ever had for the 12 pubs. Rumours Nightclub and the Ivy Room donated €1000 !!

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Joe Kelly presents his 70th Birthday Fundraising Cheque to Anne Marie Moran of Social Services.

Ballinasloe Social Services received a grant of €80,000 as part of a new Community Centre's Fund founded by Minister Heather Humphreys T.D., a key focus in government strategy to invest in community centres and halls across Galway.

The Social Services hope to use this funding to install new solar panels, windows and doors, an electrical system, a stove, and an

upgrade to their meeting rooms. These improvements will be installed on the premises within the old building and the new extension constructed in 1986.

This exchequer funding will aid the 50 year old organization to reduce heavy utility costs, allowing them to invest in services which aid the elderly and vulnerable.

As the organization only receives partial grant funding by the government, this new allocation will also benefit the ongoing costs for running the services. Additionally, the team hope to upgrade the pre-school garden on the premises, having received a grant of €30,324 from the Late Late Toy Appeal in 2021 to improve the quality and safety of the play area.

Ballinasloe Social Services are a group dedicated to improve the lives of the elderly, physically disabled and people in need within our town and hinterland.

The organization recently celebrated their 50th anniversary and hopes to continue supplying resources to aid their clients.

Volunteers assisting with the charity provide many of the services including regular day care, food deliveries through Meals on Wheels, and assistance for kids via the childcare facility. There has been an increased demand for aid within the town, with many people requiring social needs due to the isolation caused by the pandemic.

The group continues their ongoing fundraising with monthly raffles where participants can enter a draw to win amounts of €100. Critically, the organization received support from the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre with a Christmas Jumper Appeal which raised €400 for Ballinasloe Social Services. Furthermore, the social service can be supported by their donation page at www.ballinasloesocialservices.ie.

Director of Services Teresa Coughlan is very appreciative of the aid provided to the group by our town: "Without the people of Ballinasloe, we wouldn't be here today. They have given so much to us over the years in the form of financial assistance with fundraising and donations, as well as with volunteers".

If you are interest in the services the organization provides or if you would like to join their membership scheme, the group can be contacted at (090) 964 3217.



Some of the Social Services Team.

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Acclaimed writer and poet Dr Rita Kelly has been appointed as the Irish Language Development Officer for Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (Irish Guild of the Church of Ireland). Widely known for her works in both Irish and English, she has also been involved in promoting and developing the Irish language across the country for the last 50 years, making many friends and connections through the celebration of the Irish language.

Locally reared Rita, first married in 1972 to Eugene Watters/ Eoghan Ó Tuairisc (1919-1982), is an accomplished bilingual poet and writer. Since 2015, she has been married to Edel Connolly, a former secondary school principal. A native of Galway and primarily associated with East Galway, she has also lived around Ireland along the River Barrow near Carlow and in Waterford, as well as abroad in Manhattan and Germany.

The former Ballinasloe woman now resides in Birr, County Offaly. This location is an ideal base to work with the Church of Ireland community across the country, North and South, as Development Officer responsible for promoting the Irish language.

Rita is active within the Birr

Group of Parishes. In 2022 she was commissioned as a Lay/ Parish reader and is also a member of the Birr Parish Select Vestry. This position allows Rita to bring together and connect people in speaking Irish, as members of the Church of Ireland do not often have this opportunity to worship in Irish. Rita and Cumann Gaelach both acknowledge the great work done by her predecessor, Caroline Nolan, first appointed in 2011.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise was originally founded in 1914 to promote the rituals of the Celtic Church, to motivate the use of Irish within the congregation, to collect written devotional literature and sources, and to encourage the use of Irish art and music.

The Society organizes and supports regular Church Services throughout the country at various occasions, for example St Brigid's Day, St Patrick's Day and other feasts and festivals. Services are supported in Irish in Christchurch Cathedral, St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin, St Fin Barre's Cathedral Cork, Christchurch Cathedral Waterford. Cumann Gaelach hopes to continue the same support to parishes throughout the country in providing services in Irish.

This position of Development Officer is funded by Foras na Gaeilge. Rita hopes that people will contact her or Cumann Gaelach to support the promotion of the Irish language within the Church of Ireland community.



Dr Rita Kelly & Rev Arthur Minion.



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Aiden Sheridan receives his plaque. Gerry Stronge Photography

Ballinasloe Municipal Council held a civic reception for Aiden Sheridan, a local man who swam the length of the Shannon in support of the Irish Cancer charities. In attendance were local representatives Cllr Dr. Evelyn Parsons, Cllr Dermot Connolly, Cllr Peter Keaveney, Cllr Declan Geraghty, Cllr Michael Connolly, Cllr Timmy Broderick and Mr Liam Hanrahan who awarded Aiden Sheridan with a Galway Irish Crystal Plaque to honour his achievements.

It was the first time since COVID the Councillors were able to honour a citizen's significant achievement in this way.

Last July, Aiden swam the length of the Shannon starting at Dowra, Co Cavan finishing at Curraghbour Boat Club, Limerick - a total distance of 245 kilometres, which took 15 consecutive days to accomplish. Aiden raised over €50,000 for the Irish Cancer Society and East Galway and Midlands Cancer Support. He had previously lost his brother to cancer, and

his sister was diagnosed with breast cancer but has made a full recovery.

Cllr Dr. Evelyn Parsons paid tribute to the athlete, highlighting this enormous success, stating "It's a real achievement, more people have walked on the moon than have swam the length of the Shannon, and Aiden is now the sixth person to have swam Ireland's longest River Course". Additionally, she thanked the public for their great support, emphasizing our town's willingness to support a noble cause. In her remarks she pointed out that Ballinasloe and its wider community are always generous with their giving but seem increasingly so at Christmastime.

Aiden was shocked with his welcome at the civic reception, explaining that he felt "honoured to receive the award today from Ballinasloe and Evelyn, it's a real privilege to get it. Believe me, not many people receive them". Aiden then congratulated everyone who made this task possible: "I would like to thank all the team, all my family and my two kids, and everyone who supported 'Sheridan Swims the Shannon'".

The funds raised by this mammoth undertaking will go directly to providing a bus service for East Galway cancer patients to receive regular treatment appointments in Galway city.



Ruth Cregg, Aiden Sheridan and Gillian Morgan.

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This year's St. Patrick's Day Parade will assemble in the Fair Green at 13:30, March 17, and after some pre-show music the parade will start at 14:00 sharp.

The route will follow Society Street towards Main Street, up Slí na hAbhann, down Dunlo Street and then ending at a viewing stand in St. Michael's Square. This parade, presented by a yet to be selected Grand Marshal, will use the National Feastday as its theme, encouraging participants to celebrate or highlight any subject they wish.

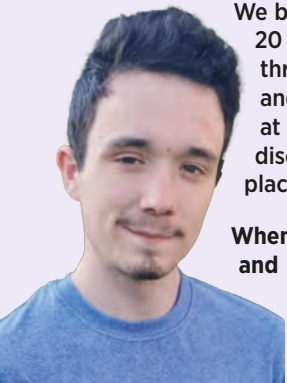


The parade will award cash prizes for the best showcase of five categories in Culture, Education, Voluntary Groups, Sporting and Commercial, and the Tony Colohan Award for the overall winner. Last year it was the town's colourful and growing Indian Community. Ballinasloe's Paddy's Day Parade provides a great showcase of the town, and this year's event will hopefully be another highlight. If you would like

further information about this event, you can contact the organizers at (087) 620 7477 or at (089) 997 3008.

NEW TRAINEE TEAM FOR LIFE

Donegal's Oisín White completed his hugely successful tour of duty around Christmastime, and is now in Belgium on Erasmus. We thank him for all his hard work and wish him well in finishing his studies at U.L.



We bid the newest trainee reporter Liam Timmins, a 20 year old Shannon man, with Galway connections through his grandmother living in Tuam. History and Digital Media are his undergraduate subjects at U.L. and he is very much looking forward to discovering this town and inhabitants on his work placement.

When not badgering errand PROS for photos and captions of the people smiling in them; he is passionate about acoustic guitar playing and learning various Classic Rock tunes.

The Bannerman enjoys "A nice Irish roast, I love some roast Beef with mash and veg", for his favourite meal. As the fourth Clare Trainee to the Reporters Bench we hope his time here will be a happy and enriching experience!

Hugo Rotgé is our 19 years old French Production Assistant Trainee, from the Rugby playing Basque Country near Tarbes. He enjoys several sports like weight training, snowboarding and cycling. He enjoys travelling and has enjoyed Spain, Ireland, and Switzerland. Currently in his second year of business school at Kedge Bayonne and as part of his studies he is doing a 6-month internship here. His favourite food is rice pudding and rugby team is the Stade Toulousain since he was a kid. His favourite music is the encantada de nadau. It is a traditional Occitan music that is sung at every village festival in Occitania. We might get to hear him sing it in some of our Taverns and Pubs over the 6 Nations!!

The Editor.



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Following on from the announcement of Billy Ward's retirement after over thirty years working with Ballinasloe Training for Employment as a Supervisor, the Directors have announced the appointment of Patricia Tierney as the new Supervisor.

Patricia is a Atticorry, Creagh native, with over fifteen years working as assistant supervisor within Ballinasloe Training for Employment. She has strong roots working with many community groups over the years, serving as secretary/treasurer for Ballinasloe Rugby Club as well as managing their under 18 and Inaugural Senior Women's Teams, she is currently a trustee with the club. She served for over seven years on the board of Ballinasloe Credit Union as a voluntary Director as well as being involved in other community groups and activity.

Patricia graduated from AIT Athlone with an honours degree in Business, Social Enterprise, leadership Management and Community Development and is IPass certified and has a Diploma in Training and

Education from NUIG and Training and Development from IITD.

Ballinasloe Training for Employment CLG is a Department of Social Protection scheme that was founded in the 1990's and is run by a voluntary board of directors. Its aim is to help unemployed people re-enter the workforce by offering relevant work experience of their career choice alongside bespoke certified training to help them upskill.

Participants are provided with useful on the job learning in a wide variety of areas including Reception, Administration, Accounts, Cleaning, Maintenance, IT/social media and Community Development, General Trades, Environmental and Pitch development. They typically provide work experience through postings with over sixteen community, not for profit and voluntary groups in the Ballinasloe Area who act as sponsors.

The Scheme aims to provide a welcoming environment to support, facilitate and encourage individuals to develop professionally and personally, through one-on-one person centred career planning.

Participants can identify their goals as well as their learning and training and skills needs. As training is such an integral part of community employment, a dedicated training plan is in place for each participant supported by undertaking job related training.

They strive to give participants the skills and experience they need in order to progress to mainstream employment or further education depending on the overall goal of each participant and their background in life.

The scheme is not just for young school leavers, but in recent years has proved a valuable steppingstone for Mothers re-entering the workforce after some years with small children, other participants mid-career who have since COVID - re-evaluated what they wish to achieve or do next. Those who were laid off or those who may wish to try something very different. People returning to live in the West - who thought their working life was finished but in seeking part time hours locally, often use this scheme as a stepping stone to find a position they find worthwhile.

Ballinasloe Training for Employment are always looking for new participants to join the team. They are also currently advertising to hire an Assistant Supervisor (<https://jobsireland.ie/>)

If you would like to find out more information on Community Employment, please call 090 96 31652.



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DRUMMERS GROUP RETURNS

Ballinasloe Drummers have returned from a hiatus after their Galway 2020 launch was interrupted by the pandemic. The club are offering an eight week drumming course for anyone over 18 years, commencing in the Ballinasloe Band Hall on Monday February 6 at 21:00. The cost to join is €40 and drums are supplied by the group. Additionally the group hopes to march in the St. Patrick's parade, displaying their abilities to the town. New members are welcome to join, and for more details you can contact Seamus Duffy at (087) 250 6431.



COMMUNITY

Portiuncula Hospital has appointed Leanne Norton as the new Bereavement Support Midwife for the hospital in providing support to women facing bereavement issues. Previously focusing on a career in Nursing, Leanne began to develop an interest in counselling with her experience working in St. James Hospital, Dublin. Gradually she evolved her skills as a midwife, working in the Midland Regional Hospital in Mullingar and the Rotunda in Dublin, eventually gaining her position in Portiuncula.

Athlone based Leanne is thrilled with the job, seeing it as a very important role. "I want to be able to provide my patients and their families with the compassionate, individualised and culturally sensitive support they need" explains Leanne.

The staff of Portiuncula embraced Leanne's initiation, with Director of Midwifery Deirdre Naughton and Hospital Manager James Keane welcoming her to the post. Deirdre specifically singled Leanne as: "a very passionate and caring member of staff who will work closely with her colleagues to ensure parents receive care which is clinically skilled, compassionate, consistent, kind and respectful."

Local Deputy Denis Naughten TD recently called on the Taoiseach to personally intervene at Portiuncula Hospital regarding capacity concerns. Currently with just 157 beds and a daily average of 22 patients, Portiuncula has an enormous demand for hospital wards being 40% greater than Limerick

University Hospital this winter.

In 2020, Denis previously wrote to the then Minister for Health highlighting the grave situation locally, and proposing that two separate buildings should be amalgamated to provide greater space for the emergency department at the hospital. Nevertheless the HSE has still not formally announced a decision to rectify issues at the premises within the last two years. A new 50 bed block is currently being built at the site, but Denis Naughten T.D. emphasised greater bed space capacity is still required for the growing demands on the hospital.

Lately the National Ambulance Service have begun to transfer non-urgent patients to Roscommon University Hospital. This protocol will aid Portiuncula and other emergency departments in the region. Denis Naughten, who proposed this idea, welcomed the news stating: "While this won't resolve the crisis in our local emergency departments, it will mean that patients will get access to more timely care which will allow them to be discharged from hospital far quicker".

On an unrelated note, a National Inpatient Experience Survey 2022 was conducted across many hospitals in Ireland, with Portiuncula scoring 82% patient satisfaction across 161 people questioned. Portiuncula was praised in this review for its cleanliness and for the assistance provided by staff, but was criticised for its poor provision of written or printed information. The hospital was higher in the national average in reference to admissions, care at the wards and its response during the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall the assessment of highlighted an overall positive experience for the patients and families concerned.



By Liam Timmins

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Clontuskert N.S. were surprised with a visit from past pupil and camogie star Sarah Lyons along with her teammates Tegan Canning and Katie Manning. The sport stars previously won the All-Ireland Intermediate Cup for Galway camogie, with Sarah being active in the sport throughout the year. Sarah and her teammates provided some inspiring words of advice for the students, many of whom were also wearing Galway GAA jerseys for this occasion to support the former pupils.

Clontuskert NS students received a bursary from Music Education Group as part of the "Journey into the Heart of the Blues" project in association with Global

Lighthouse Studios based in the USA. The school used this grant to purchase many ukuleles for the students to learn and play. The students were having a great time learning how to play this instrument, with Irish tune smith Chris Poland teaching them some numbers.

Clontuskert students with Sarah.



SCOIL AN CHROI NAOFA HELPS WITH NEEDY

The newly elected student council went out to support the Lions Club Food Hamper Appeal in donating food to people in need before the Christmas.

The students were very active with this event, packaging many of the bags for the appeal. There was also a huge response from the school community which resulted in a trailer and car being fully loaded with food for donation. Principal Christine Connor thanked all who donated, and looked forward to supporting this appeal again next year.

After an absence of 3 years the school was delighted to

be able to have their Carol Service in St Michael's Church. It was a very special event where the children performed many heartfelt hymns to an incredibly welcoming audience.

The classes played many songs, including one of their favourites the "Hosanna Rock". It was a great chance for the whole school community to come together in celebrating Christmas for the first time since 2019.



Chroi Naofa student council.

Darren Goode

B.Comm, M.Acc, F.C.A.

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Congratulations to the Ardscoil Mhuire VEX Robotics team and their mentors Mr Elliffe and Ms Hogan who beat stiff opposition to win the inaugural Galway Regional VEX Robotics competition and are now through to the National Finals.



The camogie team at Ard Senior Team were awarded as Connacht champions at the Ballinasloe GAA grounds, beating Clarin College 3-7 to 0-8. Sophie Flynn scored two goals within the first half, with Shauna Mitchell following with a three-pointer. The team have now progressed to the All-Ireland semi-finals. The management team for the camogie players were delighted with the result, praising the great teamwork the team displayed.



TY Garbally student Samuel Godswill reached the BT Young Scientist Competition final in Dublin. At this exhibit, Samuel presented his project titled "Virus Spread, A Model and Simulation". Although Samuel unfortunately did not receive any awards, he impressed many with his showcase, with principal Paul Walsh congratulating him for reaching this stage.

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Throughout 2022, Kilglass National School were active participants in the European Year of Youth initiative. They were fortunate to be successful in their application which focused on inclusion in Sport, carrying the message that sporting opportunities should be available to all pupils regardless of difference.

As part of this campaign, the school arranged an inclusive Summer Sports camp at the school during Autumn, offering a range of fun, physical activities including dance, pilates, drumming and soccer. Additionally, Kiltormer NS visited the camp to join in these activities, along with their pupils from Ukraine. Kilglass NS were glad see pupils from both schools integrating and having great fun on the day, and hopes to engage in similar events in the future.

The School also engaged in a 'Football for All' day to start the new year, using the excellent Astro-turf facilities of Kiltullagh Pioneers. All pupils were encouraged to participate and to enjoy themselves, with students competing in a Mini-Soccer League on the day. Many in attendance were excited to play on the modern facilities and imitate their favourite players after the recent World Cup! This event highly emphasised inclusion and diversity in its basis, as well as encouraging all students to have fun.

"On behalf of Kilglass NS, I want to extend our gratitude

to Léargas, the programme coordinator for the European Year of Youth initiative in Ireland, and to The European Commission and The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in supporting the EYY micro-grant" stated Peter Kane, Teacher.

Through the funding, the EU initiative hopes to recognise the sacrifices made by European youth during the pandemic and to encourage them to look to a brighter future ahead.

The initiative certainly had a positive impact on Kilglass NS. Events such as the Summer Sports camp and 'Football for All' day performed well, meeting the EYY targets which promote opportunities in learning, inclusive education, meeting people and building confidence in youth going forward.

These events certainly brought new opportunities, connections and friendships for the school, whether from the local or international connections they acquired.



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BACD Founding Board Director Noel Madden was presented with a Carol Kelly commissioned Art piece by Current Chair Seamus Duffy in honour of over 25 years of sterling work with the Community Charitable Development Company after recently announcing his retirement.

Noel's commitment to social justice, employment and community self help was reflected in his personal and professional journey in the leadership of the local Credit Union. He was a fearless volunteer champion of the necessity for our town to have a fully functioning independent Community Development Company that could attract investment, support micro enterprise and jobs and manage its own social enterprise in partnership with other stakeholders. We all owe his calm steely quiet determination and integrity a huge debt and wish him well in his retirement making music with the Town Band - *The Editor*.



Pictured centre is Mary Delaney (nee Ganly) of Malahide and Dunlo Hill with her children, Deirdre, Tim, Kevin, Cormac & Ronan with nephew Conor Ganly (Portlaoise). Also pictured is her brother-in-law Msgr. John Delaney, Florida & Mayo, and her friend Gress Kiernan.

Mary celebrated her birthday at the Talbot Lodge Nursing Home in Kinsealy in January. Also present were her grandchildren, Declan, Ciarán from Australia, and Ellie May from Malahide.

Mary is pictured with the All-Ireland Medal won by her father Patrick with Galway in 1925 when he was part of the first team from the county, along with many Ballinasloe players, to win the All-Ireland Gaelic Football Championship. She's looking forward to being around in 2025 to celebrate the centenary of that historic win for Galway. Mary is the sister of the late Mattie and Paddy and the daughter of the late Ellen.



Niamh Creaven-Connaughton and Honoria Mitchell-Black from Araya Business & Marketing Solutions were awarded 'Online Business Solutions Agency of the Year - County Galway' in the 2023 Irish Enterprise Awards. This achievement follows their success in the 2022 Irish Enterprise Awards for 'Best Marketing & Business Support Agency' in County Galway.



Aisling Sheehy, with Kelly family Members Declan, Mary, Billy, Alan, Michael, Rian, Katie & Thea, at a reception held recently in Ballinasloe Credit Union honouring the late Liam Kelly for his contribution to the Credit Union in Ballinasloe since its inception in 1967. A portrait of Liam will be permanently displayed in the Credit Union office to honour his 50 years of unbroken and unrivalled service as a voluntary Director on the Board of BCU.



Rugby Clubs International Players.

To have 3 women and 5 boys selected as international players this season is an extraordinary success for Ballinasloe rugby.

To mark their achievements a special presentation was made to the Ballinasloe R.F.C. players who were all capped Irish Rugby Internationals by Club President Pearse Keller at a function in the clubhouse. Pictured front row l-r Pearse Keller, Meabh Deely, Aoibheann Reilly, Beibhinn Parsons. Back John Devine, Mathew Devine, Oisin McCormack, Colm Reilly and Shane Jennings



The Annual Galway Hospice Coffee Morning held in Gullanes Hotel in aid of Galway Hospice, which raised a total of €1090.00. The event was organised by June Hurley, with the help of Caroline Lawlor and Willie Dolan.

Inaugural New Year's Eve Gala Ball.

The Xmas Lights Committee and the Town Team hosted a Black Tie New Year's Eve ball in Gullane's Hotel.

The idea began as a fundraiser for the Christmas lights, however it was agreed to host a small inaugural event this Year with a well-priced ticket and use the event as a community night out.

On the night almost 100 guests were treated to a fabulous Red Carpet arrival, with complimentary Gin & Whiskey welcome drinks from Ahascragh Distillery before a 4 course meal followed by a Live band and DJ until the early hours of 2023!

"All attendees had amazing feedback for us with many looking to book their tickets for next year's event!! Although only in the early stages of planning the committee are delighted to announce the event will be taking place on New Year's Eve in Gullane's again" stated Anita Killeen, Town Team Co-ordinator.

The event made a small surplus which is going towards the costs of the Christmas Lights. The group plan to expand on the event with details to be released further in the year.



Walsh Furniture Christmas Staff Party

L-R: Daren & Mary Cotton, Sean & Mairead Dillon, Sarah & Jamie McClean, Alan & Laurence Trouilloud, Serena Barnes, Shane & Ciara Walsh. Celebrating in style in Hotel Kilkenny last December.



Tomas and Caroline Gullane attended the Inaugural New Years Eve Gala Ball.



NYE committee L-R: James Burke, Anita Killeen, Mike O'Brien, Julie Sheridan, Carmel Greally, Lyn Donnelly, Seamus Duffy & Aisling Dolan. Missing From Photo: Colm Croffy, Emma Moynihan & Renate Kohlmann.

FEBRUARY 1, WEDNESDAY

French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Active Retirement AGM	3pm	Gullanes Hotel
Ballinasloe Active Ret. Group "Bridge"	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret. Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ardcoil Mhuire TY Musical	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club Hse
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 2, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Bsloe Active Ret. Gp Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Retirement Singing Class	10.30-12.20pm	Town Band Hall
Bsloe & District Vintage Club Meet	9pm	Gullanes Hotel
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Ardcoil Mhuire TY Musical	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

FEBRUARY 3, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Scór na bPáistí	Evening	St. John's Hall, Lecarrow
Music in a Canal Bar - Sean Crehan	Evening	Shearwater Hotel
L. Mannering Friends (M. Collins Band)	8.30-10.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
L. Mannering Friends L. Mannering & Maria	10.30-12.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Ballinasloe Rugby Club Table Quiz	8pm	Ballinasloe Rugby Club
Late Bar with Pat & Susan Murray	12.30am-Late	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Session	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Music - Down The Road	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

FEBRUARY 4, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
L. Mannering & Friends - Glen Flynn	3-5.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
L. Mannering & Friends - Limelite	8.30-10.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
L. Mannering & Friends - Liam & Maria	10.30-5.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Music Night - Oiche Cheol	Evening	Moore Hall
Late Bar with Andy Feery	10.30pm-Late	Shearwater Hotel
Music in a Canal Bar - Paul Dawling	Evening	Shearwater Hotel
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Luker's Bar - Sbridge
Music - Dave Mills	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Music - Steve Reilly	9.30pm	Millars Bar, Ballydangan
Joe Gibbons	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Music - Steve Reilly	9.30pm	Millars Bar, Bdanagan

FEBRUARY 5, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm-2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Sunday Club SDancing - Eamon Jackson	3-5pm	Shearwater Hotel
Sunday Club SDancing - Liam & Maria	5-7.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Country Dancing - Ciaran Rosney	9pm-12	Shearwater Hotel
Music - Paddy Jordan	9pm	Broderick's, Kilconnell
Music - Red Tape	10pm	Brewery Lane
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - Miranda	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
St. Ciaran's Parents Assoc Table Quiz	8pm	Millars Bar, Bdanagan

FEBRUARY 6, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Gp Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30-12.20pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Reti Knitting / Crafts	10.30-12.20pm	Gullanes Hotel
Toontown Character & Comedy Kids Show	3pm	Town Hall Theatre

FEBRUARY 7, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Walking Club	10.30-12.20pm	Running Track, Brnagh
Bsloe Breastfeeding Support Group	10-11.30am	Youthwork Ireland, M. Pt
Comhrá Gaeilge (Irish Lguage Class)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

FEBRUARY 8, WEDNESDAY

Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Book Club	3.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15-12.45pm	Ballinasloe Library
Mother and Toddler Group	11.15-12.45pm	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 9, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12	Gullanes Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield,
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Retirement Singing class	10.30am-12.20pm	Town Band Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House B

FEBRUARY 10, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Ballinasloe Vintage Club Table Quiz	Evening time	Gibbons Lounge
Music in a Canal Bar. Shane Moore	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Sessions	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Traditional Music	9pm	Broderick's, Kilconnell
Music. Robbie And Brian	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

FEBRUARY 11, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Fiona Maguire Big Dig Talk	2.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Music - Na Riadoiri	10pm	An Táin Bar
Music in a Canal Bar - Ken Glennon	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Luker's Bar, Sbridge
Music - Boogiemem	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Live Music	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Music - Michael Regan	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

FEBRUARY 12, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm-2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Social Dancing - Michael Collins	5-7.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Country - Robert Mizzell (Sup: B Heaney)	9pm	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - John F	9.30pm	Joe's Bar

FEBRUARY 13, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30-12.20pm	Emerald Ballroom
Basloe Active Ret Knitting / Crafts	10.30-12.20pm	Gullanes Hotel

FEBRUARY 14, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Ret Walking Club	10.30-12.20pm	Running Track, Brnagh
Comhrá Gaeilge (Irish Lang classes)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

FEBRUARY 15, WEDNESDAY

Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
French Conversational Class-Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Town AFC Com Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 16, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-Noon	Gullanes Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active RetGroup Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Singing class	10.30-12.30pm	Town Band Hall
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

FEBRUARY 17, FRIDAY

Music in a Canal Bar Paul Fogarty	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Sessions	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Live Music	10:00 p.m.	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

FEBRUARY 18, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Sarah Loughnane's Transpire Exhib	Daytime	Ballinasloe Library
Music - Tree Men And A Bass	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Music in a Canal Bar - Amy Brennan	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Live Music	9.30pm	Luker's Bar - Sbridge
Music - Finnegans Fury	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
John Rabbitte	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Shane Moore	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

FEBRUARY 19, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm-2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Dancing Pat McKenna & Glenshane Ctry	5-7.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jimmy Buckley (Sup: Brendan Jermyrn)	9pm	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 20, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30-12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Knitting / Crafts	10.30-12.30	Gullanes Hotel

FEBRUARY 21, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active RetGroup Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Ret Walking Club	10.30-12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Comhrá Gaeilge (Irish Language)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

FEBRUARY 22, WEDNESDAY

Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Retirement Book Club	3.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Town AFC Com Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 23, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12	Gullanes Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Singing class	10.30-12.30	Town Band Hall
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

February 24, Friday

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Natasha Bracken Psychic Medium	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Music Canal Bar - Niall Rutledge	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Sessions	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

FEBRUARY 25, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Music in The Canal Bar - Sean Crehan	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Luker's Bar - Sbridge
Music - Tongue and Groove	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Cruiscín	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Cowboy Roadshow	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

FEBRUARY 26, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm-2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Social Dancing - John Molloy	5-7.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Olivia Douglas & New Band (Sup G. Gribben)	9pm	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar

FEBRUARY 27, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30-12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Knitting / Crafts	10.30-12.30	Gullanes Hotel

FEBRUARY 28, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Walking Club	10.30-12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Comhrá Gaeilge (Irish Language)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

MARCH 1, WEDNESDAY

French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Ret Monthly Meeting	3pm	Gullanes Hotel
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

MARCH 2, THURSDAY

Bsloe Active Retirement Singing class	10.30 - 12.20	Town Band Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7- 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12pm	Gullane's Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Ret Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Unislim sessions	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

MARCH 3, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am -1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Music in Canal Bar - Paul Dowling	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Session	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Traditional Music	9pm	Broderick's, Kilconnell
Music. Rob And Brian	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 4, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Music in a Canal Bar - Sean Crehan	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Music - Three Men And A Bass	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Music. Ollie Rocks	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
High Reel	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Music	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

MARCH 5, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm - 2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe & District Vintage - Tynagh Track Day	Daytime	Tynagh Track
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - Ken Solo	9pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 6, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30 - 12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Knitting / Crafts	10.30 - 12.30	Gullane's Hotel

MARCH 7, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30 pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Walking Club	10.30 - 12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Bsloe Breastfeeding Support Group	10am-11.30	Youthwork Ire, M. Point
Comara Gaeilge (Irish Lang classes)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

MARCH 8, WEDNESDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Mother and Toddler Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Retirement Book Club	3.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

MARCH 9, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12	Gullanes Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

MARCH 10, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Ballinasloe Cycling Club Open Night	7pm	Gullanes Hotel
Music in a Canal Bar - Shane Moore	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Session	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Music - Down The Road	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 11, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Music in The Canal Bar - Ken Glennon	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Music - Red Tape	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Music - Boogie-men	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Joe Gibbons	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Night Owls	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

MARCH 12, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Ses (Experienced Players)	12pm - 2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - John F	9.30pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 13, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30 - 12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Retir Knitting / Crafts	10.30 - 12.30	Gullanes Hotel

MARCH 14, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30 pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retir Walking Club	10.30-12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Comara Gaeilge (Irish Langclasses)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

MARCH 15, WEDNESDAY

French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Ret Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

MARCH 16, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Ret Group Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

MARCH 17, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am -1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Saint Patrick's Day Parade	2pm	Town Centre
Music in a Canal Bar. Paul Fogarty	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Dance - Gerry Guthrie	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Sessions	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Traditional Music	9pm	Broderick's Kilconnell
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Traditional Music	5pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
St Patrick's Day Special - Boogie-men	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Alan O'Neill	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

MARCH 18, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Music Canal Bar - Amy Brennan	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
TradMusic (Main bar). Free entry	9pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Le Boom, Chasing Abbey, The Rosecaps	7pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Music - Beggars Velvet	10pm	Brewery Lane
Music - Na Riadoiri	10pm	An Táin Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Music - Dave Mills	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Adrian Rabbitte	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Alex Roe	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

MARCH 19, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Sessions (Exper Players)	12pm - 2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - Miranda	9.30pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 20, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30 - 12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Retir Knitting / Crafts	10.30 - 12.30	Gullane's Hotel

MARCH 21, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	7-8 pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30 pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retir Walking Club	10.30 - 12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Comara Gaeilge (Irish Lang classes)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

MARCH 22, WEDNESDAY

French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullane's Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Book Club	3.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Musical "The Sound Of Music"	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

MARCH 23, THURSDAY

Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12	Gullane's Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Bsloe Musical "The Sound Of Music"	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Cards	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House

MARCH 24, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
Music in a Canal Bar - Niall Rutledge	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Sessions	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Bsloe Musical "The Sound Of Music"	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Music - Keith & Liam	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 25, SATURDAY

Tennis Sessions (Juniors)	11am-1pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Music in a Canal Bar. Sean Crehan	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Bsloe Musical "The Sound Of Music"	8pm	Town Hall Theatre
Matinee	2.30pm	Town Hall Theatre
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Fallon's Bar, Sbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers Bar - Sbridge
Music - Tongue and Groove	9.30pm	Joe's Bar
Kevin & Fiona	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House
Sabrina Fallon	9.30pm	Millars, Ballydangan

MARCH 26, SUNDAY

Open Club Sessions (Beginners)	11am-12pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Open Club Sessions (Exper Players)	12pm - 2pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Cycling Club. Couch to 50km	Daytime	Bsloe Cycling Club
Traditional Music	6pm	An Táin Bar
Music - Finnegan's Fury	9.30pm	Joe's Bar

MARCH 27, MONDAY

Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	10.30-12.30	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Retir Knitting / Crafts	10.30 - 12.30	Gullane's Hotel

MARCH 28, TUESDAY

Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	7-8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30 pm	Bridge rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retir Walking Club	10.30 - 12.30	Running Track, Brnagh
Comara Gaeilge (Irish Lang classes)	8.30pm	Moore Hall
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

MARCH 29, WEDNESDAY

French Conversational Class - Lizzie	11am-12pm	Gullane's Hotel
Knitting and Crochet Group	11.15 - 12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	11am-1pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bsloe Town AFC Community Bingo	8pm	Shearwater Hotel
Jiving Classes	8.30pm	Pearses GAA Club
Traditional Music	9pm	An Táin Bar

MARCH 30, THURSDAY

Bsloe Active Retirement Bowling	7-9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Irish Conversation Class With Padraig	11am-12	Gullane's Hotel
Women's Group Meeting	11.15-12.45	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Active Retir Aqua Aerobics	2-3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rms, Sarsfield Rd
Bsloe Active Retirement Singing class	10.30 - 12.30	Town Band Hall
Unislim Session	6.30-7.30pm	Moore Hall
Line Dancing	8pm	Moore Hall
Traditional Music	9.30pm	Fallons Bar, Sbridge

MARCH 31, FRIDAY

Ballinasloe Indoor Country Market	9am-1.30pm	Bsloe Social Centre
All-Ireland Jiving Cships (31.03-02.04)	Daytime	Shearwater Hotel
Robert Mizzell (SupStacey Green)	9pm	Shearwater Hotel
Happy Bar Stars	Evening time	Shearwater Hotel
Traditional Music Session	9.30pm	Emerald Bar
Live Music	10pm	Brewery Lane
Texas Holdem Poker	9pm	Joe's Bar

To Advertise Your Events here please contact
ballinasloelifereporter@gmail.com or call 09096 45831 and leave a
 voice message. We will be back to confirm by 8th March



Credit Union Art Competition Winners Under 5 Category



Credit Union Art Competition Winners Under 6 Category



Credit Union Art Competition Winners Under 7 Category



Credit Union Art Competition Winners Aged 8-10



Credit Union Art Competition Winners Aged 11-13



Credit Union December Prize Draw Winner, Padraig Murray receives his cheque from Grainne Murphy, Ballinasloe Credit Union.



Left to Right - Mary Noone, Eamonn Noone, Ballinderry Nursing Home, David Ansley, Shuul Gifts, Mícheal O'Neill.



The Pulse Club had their first Enterprise Networking Coffee morning in Gullanes Hotel recently, their first event post the Pandemic, attended by over 35 entrepreneurs. Pictured Left to Right are Martina Flanagan BACD, Honoria Mitchell Black, Araya Business Solutions, Niamh Creaven Connaughton, Araya Business Solutions, Eoghan Kenny, The Compliance Team, Clare Glynn Ahascragh Distillery, Lyn Donnelly BACD Manager.



Greetings to all our Customers and Friends and our warmest wishes to you all for 2023.

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That begins soon with Valentine's day on February 14th, a time to show those closest to you, just how much they mean to you. Cahalan Jewellers offer a wide range of gifts from beautifully presented mementos to fine gold and silver jewellery. And when that affection turns to love, we can offer you one of the finest ranges of Diamond Engagement Rings in the West of Ireland. When the big day arrives, Wedding Rings for both the Bride and Groom are a speciality, together with gifts for the Bridesmaids, Groomsmen, etc.

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It's not hard to remember March 17th but Mothering Sunday is early in 2023, coming just two days later on Sunday 19th March. So please call to see us in early March to browse our range of Eternity Rings, Brooches, Pendants etc. as you're sure to find something for your Mother or Wife, to show her just how special she is to you.

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PUBLIC MEETING LEARNS OF DUGGAN PARK POTENTIAL

 **By Colm Croffy**

Joe Kelly Senior, a passionate GAA Tribesman and local supporter all his life, ran the GAA Supporters Shop in the Pre All-Ireland build up in Greenes' old shop in Society St. - raising significant sums for the County Football Board.

Joe set about highlighting the true potential of the Duggan Park

in a Winter Campaign, culminating in an open public meeting in Gullane's Hotel in early January attended by over 60 people, TDs, Senators and Councillors.

Chaired by Pdraig Lyons and briefed on the Heritage of the ground by Cllr. Declan Kelly (cousin of Joe), the meeting heard a summary outline of the type of development that the ground could accommodate if the stakeholders and key interests agreed on such a Masterplan.

Joe's Highlighting campaign drew heavily for support from a lot of players and officials of GAA past and present and indeed a great many ex pats who were involved in playing or coaching down through the years. Retired businessman Billy O Carroll and even Colm McLoughlin, Chair of the Duty Free in Dubai, among others wrote in support of Joe's future vision for the Duggan Park.

Following a whirlwind of media interviews and a statement from the Duggan Park Committee confirming that there "is a multiple staged plan in place for the development with full planning permission and €500,000 has been spent thus far on the early phases, done to an excellent standard by local contractors with the support of the previous Town Council for grants and sports capital grants. The work carried out is future proofing Duggan Park and is done on a budget". The County Board had some communications with Joe on foot of the meeting and outlined their views on how best they would proceed with the advancing of the plans over time for the Duggan.

Joe, after some 50 years of campaigning, decided that this project was his very last one as he is now fully confident that the Duggan Park will be developed over the next 3 years with the best County board he has have ever seen. "I will now be supporting their efforts with fundraising and encourage everyone who engaged with me to do the same" stated Joe.



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Following on from the launch of the Ballinasloe Area Tourism Network in April last year in conjunction with Hidden Heartlands, Waterways Ireland, The Western Development Commission, Galway Rural Development and Galway County Council Tourism Dept. – a steering group of local tourism and hospitality interests have been busy pursuing next steps.

Key to the Feasibility Plan is the strategic positioning of the town and the network from Ballyforan Bridge to Meelick Weir and from Aughrim Battlefield to Shannonbridge – as a touchstone town on the twin pillars of the Beara Breffni Way and the Shannon Erne Waterway.

With over €59 million of Tourism Investment coming to the Hidden Heartlands via the Just Transition Fund, the fledgling Grouping under the auspices of BACD are confident that with success and support – the town and its hinterland tourism network can position itself as an off grid slow tourism gem of the Hidden Heartlands.

Already becoming a “Bundoran of the Midlands” with last January’s Mike Denver Dancing Weekend having every available room booked out in town for two nights – along with rooms in Loughrea and indeed Athlone – the town is gearing up for several busy attraction

weekends anchored around hotel based events with a huge weekend promised again in the Shearwater for the last weekend in March – first of April with the National Living Championships.

Attempting to build on the huge heritage and amenity work done by a variety of community and voluntary interests the group are with the active support of Hidden Heartlands, going to host an early season FAMM event for key personnel in the service and hospitality trade in an effort to grow an Ambassador Circle for East Galway and South Roscommon.

This will build out to a Taster Opening Season Weekend – scheduled for late May that will offer some key pillars of activity and theming to locals and visitors alike to grow awareness of all the opportunities that really do exist locally for people to be engaged with on a break.

If you are about to launch a service (Glamping, Trekking, Art Camps, Farm visits etc) or product that could be of interest to visitors and were not engaged with the project last Spring you should make contact with the group quickly.

Further information on the Tourism Collective can be had from Lyn Donnelly BEC Manager at Lyn@bacd.ie



Lawrencetown Scooped its first ever event Pride of Place award in the category ‘Village with a Population of 300-1000’. After stiff competition, Lawrencetown beat out its rivals which included Narraghmore in Kildare and Kilmovee in Mayo. The group received a small cash prize and a trophy the event, presented in front of 400 community volunteers in attendance. The Pride of Place awards are held every year and seek to honour the many volunteers who improve their local communities and make them a safe place to live.

Pictured at the awards ceremony were: Dr Christopher Moran (Cooperation Ireland), George Jones (IPB insurance), L-R: Mary McGann (Community Development GCC), Colette Breheny, Jacinta Coulihan, Brian Kenny, Sharon McManus, Tom Cahill (Lawrencetown Community Development Group, Andrew McBride (Liaison Office GCC), Marty Whelan MC.

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The government have approved an additional increase of €5,000 for income threshold for people living in social housing in County Galway from €30,000 to €35,000. Senator Aisling Dolan welcomed this saying it's "good news for people living in Ballinasloe and across the county".

Individuals who receive/ earn an income up to the latest €35,000 figure are now eligible for State support.

Senator Dolan stated this will "be a huge benefit to people who are working and earning an income up to €35,000 and could be eligible for State support for housing. I know of young mothers and fathers working flexible hours in all types of sectors including catering, retail, healthcare to support their families and struggling with the rising cost of living."

These social housing thresholds are based upon net income for a single person. There is an increased 5% to the €35,000 limit for every adult living in the social housing to a maximum of two additional members, and an increase of 2.5% for every child within the premises.

The Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme helps people on low to moderate incomes buy homes at reduced prices. The local authority takes a percentage stake in your home that covers the reduction in price. So, if you buy the home at a 20% discount the local authority will have a 20% stake in your home. If you want, you can buy back the local authority's stake at any time, but you don't have to. This scheme is aimed at first-time buyers, but there are some exceptions to this.

With over 30% of 300 new builds coming on stream to town in the next 24 months – deemed Affordable workers and families should be assessing their options.

To be eligible your income must be within the stated threshold, you must not have previously owned a residence unless the dwelling was lost due to bankruptcy, and furthermore the Council will assess your need for this housing within 12 weeks of the application.

To qualify for the scheme:

Your income must be below a certain level. This is calculated by multiplying your gross annual income by 3.5. This figure is known as your 'purchasing power' and it must then be less than 85.5% of the market value of the affordable home.

OR

You must have proof from a bank or financial institution that you cannot get a mortgage for 85.5% of the market value of the home

If are interested in purchasing an affordable home, you can search for any available properties on the Galway County Council website or within local housing listings online. To register, you can request an application form to the Council which can be filled out and send back along with photo identification, a proof of address and a proof of income.

Additionally, if you are renting a property registered under PRTB, you can now apply for a €500 Rent Tax Credit for 2022 and 2023 to a total of €1000, which can be requested on revenue.ie.

For further information about these schemes and eligibility for support, you can contact Aisling Dolan at (086) 369 0719.



Limehill Eskers proposed new 166 Unit Residential Development behind Tesco - currently awaiting decision from Board Pleanala.

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The Ballinasloe Says No committee welcomed news from Galway County Council that permission has lapsed for the Poolboy Waste Facility, along with no further petition or extension requested by the applicant. Originally validated by Galway County Council, approval for development on the site by way of licence has now been deactivated.

Ballinasloe Says No is a community group who have challenged the granting of permits to operate a station at an inappropriate location in Poolboy. The activists, along with the public in Ballinasloe, have submitted over 2000 objections due to safety and environmental concerns regarding this facility polluting the town.

Chairperson of the committee Dr. Vincent Parsons welcomed the news and congratulated the group on their achievement. "Major health hazards would result from these types of major waste facilities such as noxious gases, dust, insects and vermin as well as pollution of waterways and environment. As part of Ballinasloe Says No we have fought against this inappropriate location and we have taken this to the High Court and won" he stated.

President of the group, Eamon O'Donoghue, was pleased with the confirmation saying: "This is wonderful news for the residents of town. We have highlighted the health and environmental challenges of a waste transfer station in this location as well as the road hazards of large waste trucks coming through the streets of our locality".

Senator Aisling Dolan, who is the Co-Founder, Secretary and PRO for the committee, stressed the significant action taken by the activists in preventing the development of this waste transfer station: "We have a great group with a huge commitment who have campaigned and fundraised over the



Group protesting

past 5 years. Together with Chairperson Vincent Parsons and Eamon O'Donoghue, we have won three times in the High Court challenging permits for the waste transfer station. We would like to thank the legal team of solicitors and barristers as well as people who became part of our legal group and put their names on the line for Ballinasloe now and in 1999."

Councillor Evelyn Parsons emphasised that proposed development at the Poolboy Waste Transfer Station was against the current Ballinasloe Local Area Plan, and was delighted that her proposal for a remediation strategy at the facility will be included with the draft County Development Plan.

Cllr Parsons is a staunch environmentalist and member of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategic Policy Committee (SPC), having raised ecological concerns on various occasions. "Throughout the CDP process I've championed the guiding principle of environmental justice for fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens to enable communities such as ours equitable opportunities to prosper within the county in terms of environment, quality of life, health and future economic growth opportunities including attracting investment and sustainable tourism" she stated.

It remains to be seen if the appellant will pursue other avenues to achieve his stated commercial objectives but the group are remaining vehement and vigilant.

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David Maguire, an aspiring country musician born in Birchgrove, Ballinasloe, has found great success with his newest album *"From the Cradle"* which went straight to Number 1 on the iTunes Irish Country Charts.

Featuring with this release were many singles including *"They were Lord, I Hope This Day is Good"*, *"The Town of Kilkee"* and a cover of Dire Straits *"Walk of Life"*, now has thousands of people listening on platforms such as Spotify and YouTube.

David Maguire grew up in Birchgrove/Creagh and was a student at Garbally College. During his secondary years he joined various gigs including musicals and the school's folk group. Additionally, he was also part of the school choir directed by Fr. Colm Allman. David's musical inspirations include many traditional country icons including Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley, as well as modern guitarists like Mark Knopfler.

Following his

secondary education, David moved to the UK and studied at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, obtaining a degree in Agricultural Science. Whilst David was being educated in the Aberystwyth, he often played music in local clubs and student bars.

Following his graduation David wrote and released his debut single *"Close to My Heart"*, being an instant radio hit throughout Ireland. While in the UK, the musician also met and worked with famous producer Marcus Cliffe, who performed with various popstars such as Mark Knopfler and Rod Stewart.

Through various gigs and touring David gained ties to people in the music industry from the USA. He was eventually invited to Nashville in 2007 and 2008 and eventually begun touring the country. David found himself especially welcomed by the Americans and hopes to return late this year.

David remains close to his local routes, having toured all around Ireland – North, South, East and West. He plans in future to do a nationwide tour, and will make sure to return to include Ballinasloe in this line-up.

Along with his day job as QA Validation Consultant at Regeneron in Limerick, David is currently working hard on new album in London, which he hopes to have released by Autumn next year.

In the meantime, make sure to stay alert on any new singles released by him on iTunes, Spotify or YouTube.



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Ballinasloe Musical Society are bringing the beloved production of *"The Sound of Music"* to the stage of the Town Hall Theatre, for a limited run of five shows, from March 22 until March 25.

This is the first production for the theatre group since 2019, with this show being especially significant seeing as they are commemorating 100 years since the foundation of their society in 1923. This show will be a grand celebration, bringing their dynamic performances and drama to the community of Ballinasloe.

"The Sound of Music" is based on a true story, sharing the experiences of the Trapp Family Singers and their governess, Maria, who were forced to flee from their home in Salzburg on the eve of Nazi occupation. The musical features the iconic music of composer duo Rogers and Hammerstein, with fantastic live music being played throughout the production, bringing everyone back to the warm glow of Christmas Film traditions and the wonderful singing of Judy Garland against the Swiss Alps and Salzburg background.

The full cast include the show's stars Emer Kelly as Maria and Padraic McDonagh as Captain von Trapp, with Izzy Tuohy as Liesl, Sarah Corcoran as Mother Abbess, Harry Greaney as Friedrich, Eva Bergin as Louisa, Ronan Harney as Kurt, Teagan Farrell as Brigitta, Eve McCourt as Marta, Anna Morrissey as Gretl, Seamus Feerick as Max, Megan Lohan as Elsa, David O'Grady as Rolf, Lisa Whyte as Sister Berthe, Mary Rose Finlan as Sister Margarette, Fiona Sceri as Sister Sophia, Gretel Sullivan as Frau Schmitt, Patrick Hanrahan as Franz, Rachel Walker as Ursula, Brian Derrane as Herr Zeller, Gerry Sweeney as Admiral Schreiber, Mike O'Reilly as Baron Elberfeld and Eimear Breen as Young Postulant.

Directed by Declan Kelly-his first to direct a BMS Show-with Aoife McClafferty as Choreographer and Shane Farrell as Musical Director, this centenary performance promises to be a memorable experience for audiences of all ages.

Between Copyright fees, Sets, Costumes, Professional Artistic Fees, Musicians and the other production costs the Amateur

Society will have no change out of €60,000 – box office sales alone never can cover the costs and there are no Grants available for keeping audiences and artistry alive in the Amateur world !

Chairperson Lisa Whyte states "We would like thank each of the clubs' patrons and sponsors whose ongoing support allows these productions to take place. We are still looking for backers for this year's show and encourage anyone hoping to contribute to email ballinasloems@gmail.com. Patrons and Sponsors support is crucial in keeping alive 10 decades of enjoyable live musical tradition in our community." Tickets will go on sale online at www.ballinasloetownhalltheatre.com from February 23, and for more information check Ballinasloe Musical Society's social media pages or call Frances at (087) 222 0282 or Lisa at (086) 878 2529.

Curtain up nightly at 8.00pm from Wed to Saturday, with a matinee on Saturday at 2.30pm.



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The AGM took place for Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre, highlighting the many achievements over the past year. The new committee were elected to serve were Máire Hughes, Frances Leahy, Aoife Vaughan, Alan Harney, Elaine O'Hanlon, Mary Barber, Ben Parker, Noel Lohan and Alison Greene.

Gerry Sweeney, who has been a member of the Committee and Director of the Company to the Building since its formation, stepped down. He was the last serving original member of the original group that acquired the lease from the Church Authorities which has 23 years left to run.

Chair noted his experience and expertise will be greatly missed. His wealth of knowledge on the history of the Hall is second to none, and all congratulated him on his service.

Máire Hughes detailed all of the incredible work undertaken by the Committee over the course of the year: 17 official meetings were held, fundraising events took place, grant aid was secured, much was achieved within the Hall. The Theatre was host to many productions, dance classes, cinema screenings, recordings and various rehearsals throughout the year, culminating with the very successful PANTO "Cinderella" production last December.

Much work went into the clearing and refurbishment of office



Back row (L to R): Ben Parker, Noel Lohan & Alan Harney.

Front row (L to R): Frances Leahy, Elaine O'Hanlon, Máire Hughes, Aoife Vaughan & Mary Barber.

spaces to the front of the

building with particular gratitude being paid to Gerry Maloney and members of the CE Scheme for their involvement. This reorganisation allowed the group to rent office space from July to December. There are still several rooms available for short- and medium-term rental and anyone interested can contact Michael McCullagh at (090) 964 9939.

Accountant James Coyle gave a detailed overview of the Theatre's finances, detailing all income and expenditure. He highlighted that the figures shared covered the accounting year March 2021 to March 2022, resulting in a net surplus of over €9k which was up from a deficit of €4k for the previous 12 months. He emphasised the finances were in a good position showing income at €50,249 and Expenses at €38,909 considering that the Theatre was restricted with the pandemic.

The Community Centres Investment Fund application was successful just before Christmas, and the Theatre is to be awarded a total of €251,900 in funding. Earmarked to replace all existing windows with double glazed sash windows, replace the doors and repair a portion of the stonework. In addition a portion of this grant will be used to update the Theatre's lighting system to modern LEDs. The Committee confirmed that a Project Manager would be engaged to oversee this huge investment in the future fabric of the building – as it is the largest successful grant ever awarded to the ongoing development.

As part of a matched funding element to this grant, they will be launching their "Buy a Pane of Glass" campaign in the coming weeks to raise the necessary finances. - keep an eye out for this and consider donating.

Sympathies were expressed at the meeting to the families of the late Clare Curley and Eugene Ward – who were stalwart supporters of the Theatre.

"We'd like to thanks the townspeople who continue to support us, Linda Cummins and Tus, Patricia Kelly and Karyn Gavin in GRD, Mary McGann and indeed Sharon Duffy, Arts Officer at Galway County Council, as well all of our wonderful hard working volunteers" concluded Máire.

If you would like to become involved with the Theatre, they can be contacted via the Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre Facebook and Instagram accounts, or by emailing info@ballinasloetownhall.com.

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Peter Cleary is a returned local artist, living in Bridge Street, who is working solidly in his art studio.

Raised in Cleaghmore, with a brother Brian (Dubai), Katie (Dublin), Eimear (Belfast) by parents John and Anne, who now reside in Beechlawn, he was inspired by the drawings and work of his art teacher Sandra Madden as a Garbally student. The mentoring saw him choose Limerick School of Art and Design (LSAD) as his third level calling.

Peter had a unique and fulfilling experience attending LSAD, with the work provided at the school being a good fit for him. The course provided him an early opportunity to toil with a diverse pallet of materials including copper, stone and wood, stimulating his creativity and inspired his later work with printmaking. Peter praised the Limerick school, saying it was “an environment that both encouraged the student and also ably assisted in their development as emerging artists.”

Peter has travelled Europe to develop this skill, featuring his pieces in many exhibits around the world and winning numerous awards for his work – as well as being profiled recently by the Sunday Independent.

The Art student travelled the world, experiencing the nature and landscapes of California, Dresden and Bergen which now manifest in his work. Peter undertook a Master’s Degree in the Bergen Academy of Art and Design, Norway, with the culture of the country and the paintings created by

his former professor having a significant impact on his creative imagination. During his travels he met his partner Lisa-Marie from Hamburg, Germany, with the pair marrying last year in Copenhagen.

Now back in town, in his bespoke studio which provides him flexibility of creating his projects at his own working pattern. For his pieces, Peter returns to the idyllic places he visited in his travels, painting all the details he remembered from these trips. Additionally, the artist takes great influence from his locality in his creations: “the River Suck, the expansive boglands and the woods in Garbally are places that formed my early encounters with Irish Landscape” he explains for context and backdrop for his work.

Peter is now preparing s a solo show which will display the many paintings he produced. He hopes to display his work in Hillsboro Fine Arts Dublin, an acclaimed contemporary gallery which is recognised internationally.

Two paintings of the artist were exhibited this year in the gallery, with both receiving excellent feedback and were sold to art collectors.

Peter continues to participate in art showcases and events, turning down of late opportunities that would require him to leave Ireland.

Peter recommends that young aspiring artists should: “visit museums and art galleries to gain inspiration and awareness so that they can broaden their knowledge.”

The young man intends to have a website running soon to display his work, but in the meantime you can see his paintings at www.instagram.com/peter______cleary.



Birches and Water.



The Ballinasloe Town Band held a successful Christmas Fair Fundraiser in the Band Hall, with many local artisans selling Christmas crafts, goods and home baking.

The stall holders and attendees were treated to an extensive mix of live musical entertainment. Featuring at this music-fest were the Ballymacward Classical Quartet, a performance of swing-style carols from senior band members, and lively, harmonious carol singing from Marie Power and Ballinasloe Active Retirement Group.

The Junior Band members were also in attendance, having earlier treated the residents of Whyte's Nursing Home to a selection of their festive favourites.

The Town Band had a packed month, being busy with various festive gigs at this time. The band were honoured to once again fulfil the invitation to play during the turning on the Christmas Lights event at the Tuam Babies Memorial Park. They also played at a gig on Dunlo Street to entertain the large crowd who had gathered to witness Santa turn on the town's Christmas tree lights and decorative Street Lights Display. Later the Band entertained the attendees at the Aughrim Craft Fair, and on the following Sunday morning performed at a very touching carol service with Rev. John Godfrey and his



Town Band entertain Christmas Eve Shoppers with seasonal favourites.

congregation in St John's Church. Soon after the band made their way to Athenry to join the town's youth orchestra to play their Christmas Concert. At a later time, the Band visited the residents of St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit in Creagh to spread some festive joy.

They were delighted to be named as one of the two beneficiaries of the Christmas Eve Carol Singing Fundraiser in the town centre. The band appreciates the proceeds received, which will go a long way in helping to cover operational costs and band development. The Town Band Hall mortgage was cleared during December. The Band has expended €250,000 on the restoration of the old Parochial Hall and it is now being used for Band practice, Music Matters (strings), BARA singers, percussion and traditional classes and dancing lessons – thus returning the hall to its former uses.

The Town Band drew the curtain on their 2022 activities

Active Retirement Singers Serenade Town Band Christmas Fayre Shoppers and Stall Holders.



when they rang in the New Year at the Christmas Tree, to the delight of the New Year's Eve celebrators from local hostellers. "As we approach the spring, connected with the group wish to thank everyone for their wonderful support of the Town Band, and to wish everyone a peaceful, productive and fulfilling year in 2023" stated conductor Noel Madden.

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A follow-up archeology talk hosted by Fiona Maguire will be presented at the Library this February, with Fiona highlighting discoveries found during the "Big Dig" in town.



Abbie McGowan and Fiona Maguire.

After the success of the first "Big Dig" talk, local archeologist of Atlantic Archaeology Fiona will return to reveal more insights in various artefacts found in Ballinasloe over the years. The "Big Dig" project, a major town enhancement project carried out in the principle streets of the town revealed many of these artefacts, including most notably the discovery of a rare set of rosary beads estimated to be around 500 years old. Additionally, the discoveries found in the great fort of Dún Leo, a medieval well and two cemeteries found just below street level have provided the content and inspiration for this presentation.

Now for the second round of this seminar, Fiona will take another look at these discoveries and elaborate on the artefacts found, which will also provide an opportunity for library visitors to view the artefacts from this and first seminar. The talk will take place on Saturday February 11 at 14:30, the event is free of charge and no bookings are required.

The Library will also feature various other events throughout February, local artist Sarah Loughnane will be displaying her newest art collection, with each piece highlighting a moment in her life.

The exhibition will feature numerous abstract and beautiful acrylic paintings, each using unique painting methods and styles. The collection will involve new, previously unreleased artworks and all are welcome to visit. The exhibit will start on February 2 and will end on February 28, and Sarah herself will be present at the exhibit on February 18. If you would like to see more of Sarah's art, she uploads many of her pieces on her Facebook and Instagram @sloughartistry.

Lately at the Library, another art exhibition was staged "We See You, We Hear You" by COPE Galway, spreading awareness surrounding domestic violence against women. Featuring seven podiums, six displaying plaster heads made by artist

Maura Finnegan with each depicting women of diverse ages and ethnicities. Included with the sculptures were QR codes which featured audio recordings of anonymous women sharing their experiences of domestic abuse. One podium was left empty, representing women who lost their lives to this violence.

COPE Galway Domestic Abuse Service provides support to women and children who are either experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. First opened in 1981, the organisation has helped over 12,000 women and children through their one-to-one and group supports, their 24-hour helpline, refuge accommodation, their outreach service across the county and their training services. They are currently based in Modh Eile House and if you want to contact the group, their helpline is (091) 565 985.

For full details on the All Library Event and Services – please see their facebook page Europe Direct Ballinasloe.



Sarah Loughnane, Artist.



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In sport it often happens that the offspring of gifted athletes go on and do sometimes even better than the previous generation as it appears with Gort's Cliona Darcy - Ireland's First World Youth Heavyweight Title Holder.

Her Dad-Poolboy's Ritchie Darcy, was a gifted all round athlete in his youth-Community Games, hurling, football, rugby but especially in boxing-he made his mark.

Growing up with parents Betty and Paddy, he remembers the new boxing club arriving to town after the Polish Pontiff's visit and the long evenings in the top floor of the Emerald. "I was only 9 when I started and we had some wonderfully committed coaches-the late Tom Watters, Buddy Donnellan and of course Frankie Walsh" he recalls.

They might have been influential but they had material to work with-the 57kg youngster won 3 consecutive Connacht and National Titles in the mid-80s.

Ritchie left Garbally after his formal education, went to the UK for a few years and came back some 30 years ago to purchase and operate a bar-Dicey Reillys in the neighbouring town of Gort in 1993. He brought his wife Dawn with him and they reared a family of three-Cian 29, Darragh 25 and of course Cliona 17.

The former champ threw himself into the business and rearing his kids but in 2004 James Fahey of Peterswell and a few others in the South Galway hinterland came together and founded the Tobair Pheadair Boxing Club.

He became a volunteer, mentor and then coach and got his two eldest lads interested in the sport. Within a few short seasons he was ferrying them along with other members to different tournaments and sparing events with a newfound toddler baby sister in tow.

"I grew up in the back of the car or around a boxing ring or gyms, following Dad, Cian and Darragh all around the West and Mid West" laughs the current World Youth Champion Cliona.

The two lads were nearing the end of national school or starting secondary and before they knew it Darragh had won County and Connacht Titles and an Irish Championship.

While Ritchie might have taken a break from the sport for over 20 years, some of the tricks he was taught in the Emerald in the 80s came in handy as Cliona had no formal training, sparing or coaching for most of the two years of COVID. During the lockdowns it was just her and her Dad as coach, mentor and



Parents Dawn and Ritchie with Cliona at School Welcoming Reception Gort

sparring partner.

Early days were Pure Mule she recalls. "There was just me and Sophie Burke-two girls out of 50 lads, 3 club night training sessions a week, all the running, sprints and sparing,with the boys and of course our coach Ronan Kelly."

To put her achievements in context there are just four boxing clubs in Galway county and there are very few female boxers, Cliona regularly has to go to Castlebar for sparing sessions. She also was invited to the Irish International Boxing Camp in Edenderry under the tutorship of Liam Brereton.

She has like her Dad, dabbled in other sports in the Gort Community School where she is a popular leaving cert, including team sports Camogie-where she excelled as a full back and especially Basketball-which she really enjoys as a forward.

"I'd encourage every young girl to try every sport once, the individual and the team, if you are interested in a particular one just go with your guts" she urges.

For Cliona-she is fairly cool about her pre-tournament build up "lots of running, gym and a very strict diet regime are what give me the focus on the way into a bout" she notes.

She is coy about what puts her in the zone prior to getting into the ring but she does admit that she listens to a lot of Dubliner Luke Kelly's upbeat music in her cans before the fights.

Even with 7 National Youth titles under her belt and the historic first Irish World at her grade she is committed to defence of her title as she is still under age next year and she is not neglecting he books, with her eye firmly on an educational career post leaving cert.

Cliona definitely has a long career and bright future ahead of her, but she says she's taking it step-by-step. "For now, I want to stay amateur. I'm taking one step at a time. The Olympics would be a big goal but baby steps first" she cautions.

While the Irish Athletics Boxing Association have been very good to Cliona - in sponsoring all her travel and attendance to Training and High-Performance Camps as well as the International Tournaments she still has to have a few loyal sponsors in her corner.

Luckily for her Whyte Security, Casey's Sports Bar Birmingham and Murray and Co. Birmingham have been very supportive of her journey so far.

Final word to Ritchie however "Will you let readers know we are looking for a new premises here in Gort for the Club !"



Cliona Winning her International Youth Title.



Cliona and Dad Ritchie Darcy, at their famous Dicey Reillys in Gort



The East Galway Hunt Pony Club are resuming with rallies in the showgrounds every Friday at 19:00. The Club hosts many activities regarding equestrianism including show jumping, horse trials and tetrathlons.

The East Galway branch are part of the Irish Pony Club which aims to encourage young people to ride and learn the sport, to take care of their animals, and to show sportsmanship and courtesy.

Recently the Ballinasloe club held an evening at Gullane's Hotel to celebrate former instructor Liz Scott's retirement. Liz had been involved with the club for over 40 years and has trained many of her students to become successful riders with many now competing at European and Olympic levels. At this event, she was presented with a crystal vase and a tribute by Michael Essame, Chairman of the Irish Pony Club Executive. Liz praised her current and former students over the years, and emphasised the importance of young riders in the future of equestrianism.

Memberships for 2023 will be opening shortly-boys and girls up to 21 years of age with activities to suit all levels. Membership is €100 each and €80 for any additional family members, with



insurance and administration costs included. As well as having a horse to ride, members are expected to perform at a moderately capable level before participating in any competitions.

You can keep up to date with the club's activities and events on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/IrishPonyClub. If you have any queries, you can contact the group at (087) 274 1869 or (086) 826 7540.

CYCLERS WELCOME



Some of the Riders, after their rasher in Gullanes Hotel - who took part in Ballinasloe Cycling Club's Christmas Breakfast cycle which raised €462 for St Theresa's Children's ward in Portiuncula.

The Ballinasloe Cycling Club are now preparing for the much awaited return of the "Tours de Shams" which historically featured the athletes travelling a distance of 50kms, or 100kms for those looking for a greater challenge.

For any new members interested in joining, the group will be holding an open night at Gullane's Hotel on March 10 at 19:00, and a coaching programme starting on March 26 for beginners.

The club can be contacted at (089) 267 8097.

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John Devine



Rugby Supporters, former Officers, players enjoying the post match celebrations at the Sean O'Flynn Cup on Stephen's Day were L to R: Noel Gavin, Tom Horkan, Stephen O'Reilly, Mike Devine, Kevin O'Flynn, (son of Sean for whom the Cup is played) and Mike Goode (Match Referee).

There was a large turnout on St. Stephen's Day for the annual renewal of Ballinasloe Rugby Club's O' Flynn Cup between the current senior team and The Exiles, a squad comprising former players and club graduates.

The game, refereed by Mike Goode, was highly entertaining and closely contested which resulted in a 14 to 12 victory for the senior team. Teammate Robert Wakefield was honoured to receive the cup from Mrs Chris O'Flynn, who presented the trophy in memory of her late husband Sean O'Flynn. Additionally a trophy memorializing former player Tommy Dolan was granted to John Hayes by his daughter Siofra, along with a tag rugby game played in his honour.

Supporters, families and members all repair to the clubhouse to celebrate the day, with Ahascragh Distillery on hand providing samples of their excellent whiskey and gin.

Club President Pearse Keller made a formal presentation, acknowledging the extraordinary recent success of the next generation of players and the achievement of its coaches in nurturing underage talent.

Pearse praised all eight graduated Ballinasloe players who have capped at international levels with Youth, U20, and Senior grades, and are continuing their careers with Connacht and Ireland. Women's players Meabh Deely, Aoibheann Reilly and Beibhinn Parsons were also presented with their former

commemorative team jerseys from when they played with the club.

Former Men's players Colm Reilly, Oisín McCormack, Shane Jennings, and brothers Mathew and John Devine were also honoured also. Recently John Devine was selected for the Irish U20s 6 Nation Squad, who received the news after a training session with Galway Corinthians RFC. Pearse Keller congratulated John on his appointment, wishing him the best of luck within the upcoming Six Nations.

Ballinasloe Rugby Club is open for players to join from six years old, offering coaching for juveniles and seniors and womens. The organisation's teams are already back with regular training, social activities and competitions. The group can be contacted at ballinasloerfcmedia@gmail.com for anyone interested in joining.



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Ballinasloe and District Tennis Club held their annual in-house Christmas Tournament organised by club member Emily Riddell. Hosted on a cold, dry day, and played on the new courts (which were completed last August), the players enjoyed some successful exercise after Christmas.

The club also held their Tennis Ball party recently at Gullane's Hotel to celebrate the success in recent years. It was a great night of music, disco and dancing for the club, with finger food for the guests.

Works are ongoing at the courts, with installation of floodlights on site to be installed imminently. Soon afterwards, the club hopes to connect their water supply to the temporary clubhouse for kitchen facilities and toilets. When completed the club will be able to offer a very high standard of facilities to the ever-growing membership of the club, locally and beyond.

In the meantime, the group continue their open club sessions every Sunday from 11:00 to 12:00 for beginners, and 12:00 until 14:00 for experienced players. Open sessions on Tuesday and Friday nights will resume when the floodlights are installed. Junior Sessions are held every Saturday from 11:00 until 13:00, with Junior caching also available. The club offers six month period memberships - Adults cost €30, families €50, and juniors €20.

The club also have their tennis courts available to book for sessions, with club members paying no charge for their use. For more information on club memberships, court bookings and other services, see their website at www.ti.clubspark.com/bsloetennisclub.

New members of all levels are welcome to join and attend an introductory club session. The club can be contacted at 0872521424 or bsloetennis@gmail.com for more information.



L to R: Ronan Flanagan, David O'Brien, Emily Riddell, Finola Riddell, Catherine Burke, Brendan Payne, Gary Zancanaro, Ben Feehily, Ellie Finn, Michael Bleahene, Bertha Forrestal, Enda Staunton, Paul Waters, Igor Popov, Jack Finn, Joe Staunton, Brid O'Brien, Robert Riddell.

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The Ballinasloe and District Athletics Club are back to training for the upcoming season, with children eagerly coming to sessions every week. The runners are making great use of the facilities at the Dunlo Running Track and continue to practise for upcoming tournaments. The club will be participating in the Galway Indoor Competition hoping to give some encouraging displays.

The group practises every Tuesday and Thursdays from 6pm until 7pm. Although members are free to attend one day a week if they are only available for that session, Club Secretary Yvonne Fehily encourages people to attend both periods to become a better athlete. The annual fee to join the organisation is €70 for one child, €130 for two, and €180 for three. Children from 8 years old are allowed to join, and can be contacted at (087) 138 7117 if you want your child to become a member.

At a recent AGM, the club elected a new committee for the year ahead. The recently appointed officers

for the group include John Donnelly as Chairman and Coach, Dawn Slevin as PRO, Yvonne Fehily acting as Secretary and Coach, Sarah Loughnane as Child Welfare Officer and Rhona Jennings as Treasurer and Coach.

The club are also looking for new coaches to assist the crew in training the young competitors. The only trait the group are looking for in trainers is an interest in the sport, with athletic experience not being fully required. Coaches will be expected to instruct both juveniles and adults, providing a valuable experience which will carry onto other jobs. The club pays for these training sessions, providing an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in teaching these sports.

PRO Dawn Slevin spoke highly of the current group members and encouraged more to join saying: "without our fantastic coaches and helpers our organisation wouldn't be the amazing club it is, and we are always looking for people to come and join in on the coaching experience with us, so if you are looking for something new and fun to do this year why not become a coach with our club. Get in touch today to proballinasloeathletics@gmail.com."



Lillie Browne and Alice Moloney.

BEIBHINN PARSONS-BRAND AMBASSADOR



Coral Leisure, Ireland's leading Leisure Management Company, and Coral Leisure Ballinasloe are delighted to announce the signing of one of Ireland's brightest international female athletes, Beibhinn Parsons, as their Brand Ambassador for 2023 and beyond.

Coral Leisure and Coral Leisure Ballinasloe hope to support Beibhinn, on her journey through the upcoming 6 Nations and onto World Cup qualification in 2025 in England, as well as on her ongoing 7s experience with the World Rugby 7s Series and hopefully onto Olympic glory in Paris in 2024.

Throughout her time as Coral Brand Ambassador, Beibhinn will visit all 9 Coral Leisure centres nationwide, including Coral Leisure Ballinasloe, giving hundreds of children in those communities, the opportunity to be coached by one of the superstars of Irish Rugby, and will hopefully inspire many of them to go on to become the best they can be themselves.

According to Managing Director, Siobhan Tighe "Coral Leisure is deeply embedded in the communities in which we operate, and with Beibhinn herself having learned to swim in her local Coral Leisure centre in Ballinasloe and having trained in our gym there, she is ideally placed to demonstrate the value of the local Coral Leisure centre to the wellbeing and success of any young person."



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Ballinasloe's GAA club reviewed a very busy year at their AGM held recently in Gullane's Hotel.

Chairman Paul Madden thanked all volunteers who helped during the year and issued an open invitation for more people to become further involved in the club. The club's Bingo Committee were singled out for thanks and praise who have been running for the last decade, with the increasing importance of this income to the club finances.

Paul also welcomed the new incoming officers, Treasurer Garry Coone and Registrar Francis Healy, and paid tribute to all outgoing officers. Chairman Paul also thanked Mark Ward who stood down as Treasurer after 5 years in the role. In addition to undertaking a number of other roles, Mark diligently managed the club's finances during a difficult few years for the club.

Special thanks and appreciation was expressed to outgoing Children's Officer Janice O'Grady, who set a high standard and has been recognised widely for her work.

Members were given a detailed Income and Expenditure Account for the year under review showing how expensive it is to run a busy Club – Income was in the order of €90,789 with expenses at €95,332 – showing a small deficit of some €4,548. Good news for the Club is that they have concluded all their current capital commitments for their facilities and grounds.

Other Officers appointed were Jim Lally as President, Paul Madden as Chairperson, Stephen Kerr as Secretary and Gerry Seale as Assistant Secretary, Garry Coone as Treasurer and Mark Ward as Assistant Treasurer, and Francis Healy as Registrar.

Starting 2023, Galway's Junior Hurling Development Squad won the Connacht League Final, defeating Roscommon 01.25 to 01.19 in Began GAA Centre of Excellence. Ballinasloe players Jack Mitchell, Michael Fogarty, Evan Haves and Cathal O hAnnuain were part of the panel and were crucial to this win, along with Club Coach Brendan Hayes as part of the Galway management team. It was a fantastic achievement for

the lads to be playing at this level.

Gary Harte made One on the Galway U17 football panel, Gary plays in goal and was warmly congratulated.

The club hopes to improve existing facilities during 2023, such as implementing new ball stop netting for the main pitch and the provision of toilets at the ball-wall facility. This year will also see the addition of advertising signage around the fence perimeter of the main pitch, being a great boost to the club's finances as well as providing a good marketing opportunity for local business. If your business is interested in advertising on these posts, contact Mark Ward at (086) 301 5746 for further details.

Bingo continues every Tuesday at 8pm in the Emerald Ballroom, with over €3000 in prize money to be won each night.

All age groups are expected to be back to training by the end of February. Further information with contacts will be available shortly and will be posted on the Ballinasloe GAA website and social media.

Membership for the coming year, Adult €60, Family membership €120, Player/Student €40 Gaelic.



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The Ballinasloe Town A. F. C. Under 18 team secured the Roscommon and District Youth Soccer league Title with a 3/2 home victory over Cloonfad United.

The 'Town' just needed a draw to clinch the League Title and secured the game with goals from Conor Dowd, Josh Mc Carthy and John Ward. Management team of Petie Keighrey, Sonya Dowd and Séamas McCarthy who all put in a great effort over the Season are to be congratulated.



BIG PLANS BY SOCCER CLUB



By Liam Timmins

Senior Soccer Squad



Final Plans have been approved by the Club Committee of Ballinasloe Town AFC for a new state of the art Astro-turf pitch facility at the Clubs Curragh Grounds, with major works due to commence in coming weeks.

A brand-new Astro-turf Pitch surface, added goalposts, fencing and gates, a storage area, ball retention netting, and advanced LED energy saving and environmentally friendly floodlights will all be installed.

The pitch surface area will be extended in length and width, allowing for greater youth games to be played on the facility and to also provide more options for club teams training sessions. The new facility will be open to the general public on a weekly basis to use the upgraded Astro turf. The club also intend to install training Floodlights at the Youth Grass playing pitch.

Club Development Co-ordinator Johnny Walsh said "Ballinasloe Town AFC has played a leading role in providing top class sporting facilities in our town for the past 40 years, and intends to continue development works into the future, hoping to enhance more of the current sports facilities. We wish to thank the Department of Sport through the Sports Capital Programme, the Football Association of Ireland, the former Ballinasloe Town Council and the local Ballinasloe Credit Union for their financial grant assistance to the club for development works over the past few years."

The club will also have significant borrowings to repay to meet the balance of development costs and are urging club members and the general public to consider supporting the club financially on a weekly basis by purchasing envelopes for the club's 50/50 draw.

Club Chairperson Joe Kelly urged folks to get behind the project: "I hope the community will support the 50/50

draw and additionally the club's weekly Wednesday Community Bingo night held in the Shearwater Hotel, our primary sponsor, to help bring this exciting venture to success" he stated.

Meanwhile in club news, the Ballinasloe Town AFC Senior soccer team have advanced to the next round of the Connacht Junior cup after the latest victory over Real Tubber in McSharry Park, Sligo. The seniors came out 3/2 winners on the day, contributing to the teams history of victories in recent years. Goals from Josh McCarthy, Ryan Burke and an own-goal from Real Tubber put the town ahead at 3/1, with Real Tubber being granted a consolation goal in the 90th minute.

Both clubs under 13 and under 14 teams have advanced to the last 32 of the National Cup Competition. The under 13s will play against the victor of the Leixlip United, Cherry Orchard and Ardmore Rovers group, while the under 14s will play at home to the winners of Stamullen FC and Ratoath Harps.

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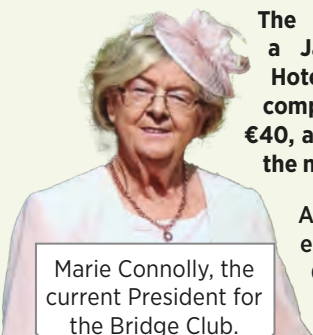


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The Ballinasloe Bridge Club have returned back to playing at the Bridge Club Rooms over Cregg Stone, at Barretts-Chadwicks store on Sarsfield Road, after a long pandemic absence.

The club are back already with their regular meet-ups on Tuesday and Thursday nights at 7.30 pm and Wednesday 11.00 am mornings, although they have dropped the Monday morning sessions for the moment.



Marie Connolly, the current President for the Bridge Club.

The club's most recent fun occasion was a January Christmas Dinner at Gullanes Hotel, and are regularly active with various competitions. The annual fee for the club is €40, and for more information you can contact the number at (086) 262 3768.

At their AGM held in January the officers elected for 2022/2023 term include Marie Connolly as President, Willie Dolan as Vice-

president and PRO, Rosaleen Cahill as Treasurer, Gary Connolly as Secretary, and Meta Cunningham, Martin Loughnane and Tom McLoughlin as Trustees. Mary Howley, Eileen Morrisroe, Leo Flynn, Mary Davis, Patricia Eames, Ann Murphy and Patricia Dunne were also elected to serve as committee members.

The President's Prize event made a welcome return before Christmas with longstanding members Catherine Croffy & Esther Tiernan winning the then Club

President Patricia Dunne's prize - surprising even themselves !!



Pictured Catherine Croffy, Patricia Dunne (then Bridge Club President) and Esther Tiernan - winners of the Annual President's Prize!

KARATE CLUB, BLACK BELT GRADING

Itosu-Kai Karatedo Ireland (IKKI), located at the Emerald Ballroom, held their annual Black Belt Grading recently, being the second black belt grading since the Pandemic.

Students typically train for many years before they are eligible for this test. The grading day is a comprehensive examination of all the karate technique they have learned through their syllabus. Chief instructor, Leo Mulvany says it's a tough and long road to black belt and beyond. Students did themselves proud on the day and are a credit to their clubs and families.

Classes have begun again, being taught every Monday and Wednesday from 19:00 until 21:00. If you are interested in starting with the club, you can contact Sensei Leo on 08741598 or visit their website at www.ikki.ie.



Rear l-r: Leona Donelan, Philip Costello, Sean Keighery, Aoife O'Grady, Pamela Nee, Niamh Costello, Una Flynn, Ava Shanley and David Feury.

Middle row (grading panel): Kevin Casey, Tony Dolphin, Leo Mulvany, Marie Dolphin, John Dolphin and Donal Monahan.

Kneeling l-r: Siofra Naughton, Laura Costello, Mia Shanley and Conor Naughton.

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Padraig Pearses GAA Club recently held a massive fundraiser, with many locals buying tickets for a draw to potentially win a Tesla Model 3.

The event was held at the group's clubhouse in Woodmount, with over €100,000 proceeds collected. The lucky winner of the Ultra-modern Tesla Electrical Car was Tom Brennan from Athlone, additional cash prizes of €250 were won by Aidan Colleran, Paddy Harrington, Aidan Brady and Bridie Colleran.

The Management hope to use the money raised by this fundraiser to purchase a piece of land adjacent to the club grounds. The purpose of expanding their facilities is to accommodate the clubs ever-growing membership, with the organisation having an increase of players over the last three years - to almost 400 players in all codes and ages. Additionally, the committee hopes to upgrade the roof of their clubhouse with added insulation to reduce heavy utility costs.

The organisation recently appointed Aidan Fallon as the Club's Secretary with other members listed on the committee including Mike Feehily as Chairperson, Hubert Darcy as Vice-

chairman, Ciaran McGreal as Treasurer and Sarah Dolan as PRO.

The association covers 35 underage and senior teams located in the parishes of Moore, Taughmaconnell and Creagh playing Gaelic football, camogie, and hurling.

Many of these groups are proceeding with their regular activities and training sessions lately. The group has no upcoming tournaments planned but continue regular social gatherings.

The club also host weekly lotto games as part of their fundraising, with upwards of €13,500 to be won by draw supporters. Furthermore, the clubhouse's bar is open seven days a week by manager Trish Berrigan to members and a function room is available for the public to rent, both having been recently renovated for use.

If you would like to become a member of the organization, their registration plan can be found at www.padraigpearses.ie. If you would like to find out more information about the services provided by the club, they can be contacted at (086) 010 6304 or by email at pro.padraigpearses.roscommon@gaa.ie.



Diarmuid, Enda, Michael, Daniel, John and Jack and Mr. Joseph Cogavin.

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Members attending the Captains and Presidents Drive-In

The 2023 golfing year commenced with the Captains' and President's Drive-In at the Rosgloss Golf Course. Members gathered to see the officers display their golfing skills with the ceremonial starting shot down the first fairway, with them all later wishing well for the coming golfing year.

Many members of the club committee were in attendance including President Angela Lyons, Lady Captain Rita Staunton, Men's Captain John Donnellan and Senior Men's Captain Andy Fenton.

The Festive Gathering Scramble proved to be quite popular and saw 28 teams compete. The winners of category 1 included the team of Conor Murphy, Robert Nolan, Derek Frehill and Sam Murphy; the category 2 winners included the team of Alan Grehan, Alan Glynn, Nigel Moore and Noel Grehan and the category 3 winners featured the team of Stephen Ruane, Marion Ruane, John Kelly and Noreen Kelly. The Ladies Team prize was won by Jackie Cunningham, Geraldine Minton, Maureen Dolphin and Helen Carrig. Alan McGuire scored the men's nearest the pin and Louise Killeen the lady's nearest the pin.

The Nollaig na mBan scramble also saw a great turnout from the lady members of the Golf Club. The team of Sue Kinsella, Ann Jordan, Josephine McManus won this scramble; the team of Rita Staunton, Teresa Kelly, Mary Davis came in second, and in third the team of Martha Callanan, Clare Curley, Margaret Creaven.

Ahascragh Distillery were the sponsors of many of the prizes for the competitions.

Society bookings for the coming year prove to be busy again, and all organizers are encouraged to book early to secure their preferred dates. The committee awaits news from Golf Ireland regarding Inter-Club competitions, with the club looking forward to their lady, junior and men's teams developing new skills and practising against opponents in various competitions.

The Golf Club are delighted to see many new and returning members this year, and are looking forward to brighter evenings and another successful year. If you are interested in joining the golf club, please phone the office - (090) 964 2126 or email ballinasloegolfclub@hotmail.com to discuss options.



Captains and Presidents for 2023 - Andy Fenton, Angela Lyons, Rita Staunton, and John Donnellan.

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From the 1950's to the 90's the FCA were a familiar sight around Ballinasloe, attending several outdoor events, splendidly attired in their green uniforms and shiny boots. The FCA (Forsa Cosanta Aitiuil) had succeeded the LDF (Local Defence Force) which was set up by the Government in the 1940's because of an ever increasing threat to its neutrality.



The headquarters of the 'B' Coy 16 Btn FCA (Ballinasloe) was in the Old Railway Hotel on Sarsfield Road. It had been leased by the Dept. of Defence, having previously been based in the Garda Barracks in Main St. (1940-42), and the Military Hut in Kilconnell (1955-59). The area of 'B' Company membership extended from Kilconnell to Newbridge in the West, to Lawrencetown and Shannonbridge in the East.

The late Michael Kitt of Caltra, who was later to become a TD, was the first of the FCA officers to

be commissioned in 1946. He was succeeded by Ambrose Gannon, who served up to 1959 and was followed by Commndt Peter Cummins (1959-63), Commndt Thomas Quinn (1963-1970), Commndt Oliver O'Grady (1970-1977), Capt Michael McCullagh (1981-89), Commndt Dermot O'Dowd (1990-94) and Commndt John Diskin (1994-96).

The Coy had yearly training camps in Finner (Donegal) and the Curragh (Kildare) during the 60's and 70's as well as many other. The FCA had taken part in numerous activities over the years, including An Toastal in 1954, the visit of the Rosary Priest, Fr. Peyton to Loughrea; the Pope's visit to Knock, the annual St. Patrick Day's parade and had performed Guards of Honour for important dignitaries when they visited the town. The also attended events in surrounding villages and brightened up many a function as they marched in a very dignified and colourful unit.

When the Cuban Crisis arose in 1963 the Ballinasloe unit was posted to Shannonbridge and set out locations in the battlements to monitor what weapons were issued and a full inventory of all trucks, drivers' names and addresses, and to place the Emerald Ballroom under its command, on the instructions of the Dept. of Defence.

A branch of the FCA was formed in Garbally College on 1st September 1952, which encouraged many students to enlist. Among those who joined up was 678833 S.S., John Kirby, on 10th October 1954 and was in Finner Camp in 1955 and Dun Ui Mhaoiliosa in 1956. The now retired Bishop of Clonfert left the FCA on 23rd August 1956 to enter the seminary and join the priesthood.

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From Left: C/S Ml Finnerty, Cpt Tom Quinn, Pat McDonnell, Ml Moclair, Sean Kenny, Joe Donnelly, Sean Tully, Richie Greene, Mikie Dolan, Raymond Black, Paraic Clarke, Paraic Finnerty, Mikey Darcy, Eugene Curley, Peter Mulryan, Lt Michael McCullagh (1961).

'B' Coy trained their members in the use of weaponry including .22s, .303s, Brengun, Gustaf, Ving and 81mm Mortar etc. Attendances would average 70/80 per week at the outdoor practises. Under the supervision of highly trained personnel,

the young members found being able to use live ammunition was a very serious and responsible matter. It also gave the recruits their first form of discipline.

In 1961, the first 16th Btn Dinner Dance was held in the Hodson Bay in Athlone. The CO called it an opportunity to give "wives and sweethearts a chance to come out of the woodwork." Over the years the FCA enlisted many young men from a very wide area, resulting in life-long friendship. No longer do we see the marching men in green around but we applaud the service that the FCA has given for almost half a century.

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Our Newest Galway All-Star - Golfer, Tom Cafferky with a Galway Sports Star Award for Golf 2022 with Senior Club Officers. From left: Mick O'Hehir (Captain 2022), John Hurley Snr (President 2021/22) and John Hurley Jnr (Captain 2021) at the Galway Bay Hotel.



BALLINASLOE FCA PRESENTATION DINNER 1981

Front row, l to r: Oliver O'Grady, John Diskin, Barry Quinn, Comdt. Quilty, Pat Smith, Michael Kitt.

Back row, l to r: John Carty, Martin Duffy, John Naughton, P.J. Guinnessy, Kevin Duffy, Oliver Donnellan, Pat Joe McLoughlin, Ray Quinn, Gerry Kelly, Brendan Donnellan, Seamus Guider, Joe Moclair, Joe Burke.



BALLINASLOE FCA IN CASTLEBAR CAMP 1989

Front row, l to r: Pat Smith, Michael McCullagh, John Diskin, Martin Duffey.

Second row, l to r: James Gaffey, Pat Joe McLoughlin, Oliver Donnellan.

Back row, l to r: Peter Mulryan, John Carty, Barry Quinn, Aidan Donnellan, Michael Stevens.

The local River Suck has enjoyed an increase of 55% or 439 lock passages visiting the Marina in 2022, with 1229 boats being recorded in 2022 compared to 790 in 2021. The increase in visitors has positive effects on local tourism post COVID.

Within the last three years, tourism along the Shannon river has been developing. Since 2019, domestic bookings have risen by 40% and there has been a large increase in registered boats along the river, with 9,000 being reported two years ago to just over 9,500 this year. Waterways Ireland recorded over 14,000 boat journeys through the river Shannon in the six months to June of 2022, which is higher than in the same time period in 2021.

Half of the 439 passages through the lock in Poolboy would come from private cruisers, with the other half being hired cruises. A portion of these passages can be attributed to local boat owners, but the significant portion of hired cruises

highlights the many tourists travelling into Ballinasloe.

"This goes to show that promoting the wonderful waterway and facilities on offer can make a huge difference in attracting more visitors and tourists. Roll on the 2023 season and looking forward to seeing you all out on the river in the year ahead" stated Graham Bartlett Chairperson of the local Branch.

Faite Ireland hopes to continue to revitalize tourism on the river during the decade to encourage people to visit the towns and ports along the waterway. The agency will focus on upgrading Ireland's old, relatively inefficient fleet and growing cruise business. Modern, larger boats have the ability to cater for groups and families. In 2018 boat rental companies sold about 4,000 "rental weeks" to more than 17,000 tourists, indicating the strength of this strategy in providing for large groups of individuals. Additionally, this strategy lent itself well to people looking for 'staycations' during the pandemic.

The River Suck Branch is the 25th and newest Branch within the IWAI network. The River Suck is ideal for anyone travelling the river for a daytrip, and the marina featured conveniently in the centre of Ballinasloe allows visitors to explore our town. This tourism will also benefit our local economy, allowing greater marketing opportunities for our town.

"Well done to IWAI River Suck branch - increase of 55% more boats with more people coming to visit and enjoy Ballinasloe and surrounding areas! Onwards and upwards in 2023!" exclaimed Senator Aisling Dolan.

For further information about IWAI River Suck Branch call 086 4097 017 or see [iwairiversuckbranch](https://www.facebook.com/iwairiversuckbranch) facebook page.



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The archaeological finds uncovered in Society Street during the course of monitoring of works for Ballinasloe Water Services Upgrade and Town Enhancement Scheme were the subject of a fascinating talk by Creagh native Fiona Maguire, Member of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland, before a capacity audience in Ballinasloe Library last November.

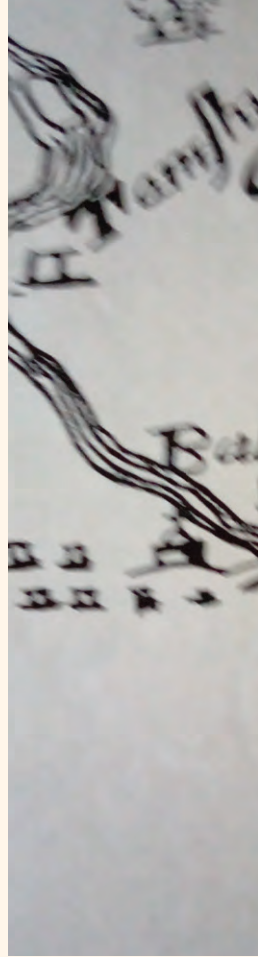
As part of the team from Atlantic Archaeology, a Sligo-based company, Fiona had been working on the project since July 2018, when in May 2020 portion of a Late Medieval/Post-Medieval cemetery was uncovered at the foot of Church Hill, under the pavement and roadway outside Supermac's and McGorisk's Pharmacy. This discovery cannot have been altogether surprising, for in 1968 a human skeleton was found at the same location during the erection of an ESB public lighting standard. Duly noted by Professor Rynne of UCG, the remains had been

left in situ.

A total of 10 articulated bodies and a large quantity of disarticulated bones were discovered, approximately 12 centimetres down from the pavement and road surface, amounting to 18 burials of individuals all under 45 years of age at the time of death. Interments had taken place between the years 1477 and 1638. There was no evidence of the use of coffins, which would not have been unusual during the period in question. To judge by the arrangement of the limbs, the bodies had been wrapped in winding sheets. A curious feature

of some of the burials is that light-coloured stones had been placed where supposedly the individual had a pain or injury while alive, a mortuary practice reflective of the belief that in this way the body could be healed of its afflictions after death. Of special interest were 65 barrel-shaped beads, probably animal bone, discovered about the feet of a female aged between 35 and 44 years. When strung together they formed a six-decade rosary.

Also recorded was a circular drystone well constructed from angular limestone blocks built in courses. It had been backfilled with layers of post-medieval building material. A well in a cemetery seems counterintuitive. It may, however, have existed prior to the graveyard, and afterwards functioned in a ritual context, not as a source of potable water. At present its location is marked by an arrangement of contrasting paving stones on the



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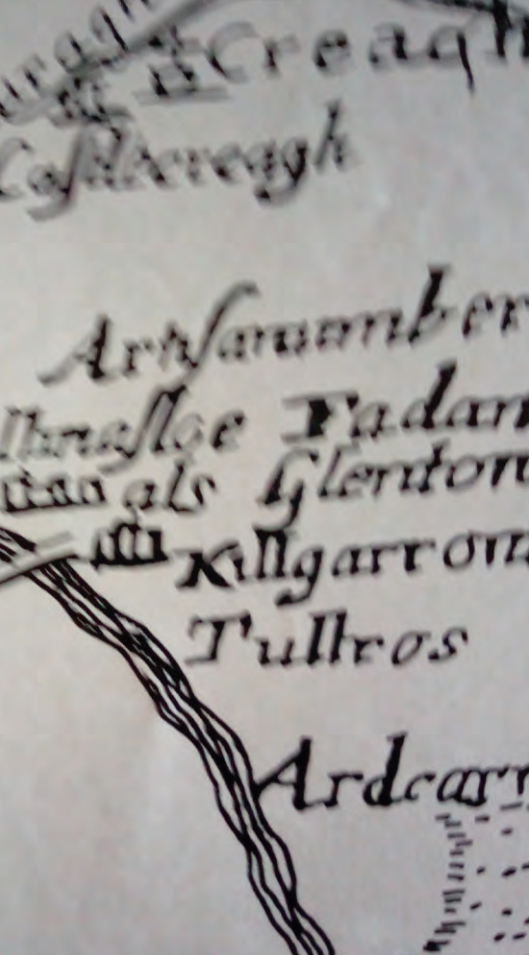
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Society Street, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Ireland.





new footpath.

The real significance of the Society Street excavations consists in the corroborative evidence they offer of the development of the town west of the Suck earlier than the 18th century. Petty's Atlas of 1683 shows a church on a hill near a street of houses. Surely this must be what we now know as Church Hill, once the location of a possible Bronze Age hillfort. (Whether this or the structure that occupied the site of St. Michael's Church was the

Augustine once owned the site of the Society Street graveyard, and in pre-Reformation times the Canons, who were secular priests, not monks, served the parish of Kilclooney from the Priory of St. Mary in Clontuskert. It would hardly be too fanciful to suggest that the foregoing points to the existence of a pre-Reformation church on the summit of the hill associated and contemporaneous with the Society Street cemetery.

Fiona's talk was followed by a question-and-answer session, after which she was presented with a framed replica of the rosary beads referred to in her lecture.

legendary Dún Leodha remains a matter of speculation.) The 1837 Ordnance Survey map shows the 1818 St. John's Church of Ireland surrounded by a ditch or bank which has since disappeared from the grounds of the present building, though a segment of it can be seen extending across the upper end of the grassy, enclosed area at the back of the Town Hall. An old name for Church Hill was Knockadoon (Cnoc an Duin: Fort Hill), while later it became known as Cnoc an Teampaill, translated as Temple or Churchyard Hill. The Canons Regular of St.

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The third volume of “The History of Moore and Creagh in the Half Barony of Moycarn” by Sandra and Padraic Kilduff was launched recently in Moore Hall by Dr. Christy Cuniffe.

Seven years research and writing, interviewing and digitalising old photographs culminated in three volumes and almost 1500 pages about the survival of landowners and tenants rich and poor from the 6th century until the 1920's.

This dedicated pair have now finished a gargantuan project with the launch of Volume three just within one year of the other two companion books. The duo received sponsorship from Roscommon Co. Council, the Moore History Group, and dedicated local history lovers, allowing this passion project to be finalized.

Sandra and Padraic were born in Ballinasloe, both having achieved Masters in History, now living in Moore. They both feel the books are not just written for academics, but for the ordinary casual reader. Their highly researched and referenced work is aimed at students and youth to foster a love of the

history of Ireland, and of their own area in South Roscommon and East Galway.

The couple launched the initial two volumes in December 2021 to a limited crowd due to Covid restrictions, but was streamed worldwide to many spectators. Sandra and Padraic thanked all their supporters who provided photographs and information for the book at this event, and Dr. Christy Cuniffe congratulated both authors on their achievement with the seminal volumes release.

The volumes feature tales regarding the lives of the different landlords and indeed land owning families with their personal, economic and social lives being explored. Volume three particularly highlights the lives of people in Moore and Creagh who strived to gain ownership of their lands against the Royal Irish Constabulary during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

These landowners had a profound impact on our local history and abroad. Readers from Ballinasloe can use these book to reflect on the struggles of their ancestors in holding their lands for future generations.



Mary Kelly, Gretta Dolan, Carmel Scott, Maura Kelly, Kathleen Feehily with Sandra and Padraic Kilduff.

Moore History Group was founded in 2014 by Marie Costello Monaghan, Padraic Kilduff and Maureen Duffy for anyone interested in the history, genealogy and archaeology of the Moore Parish area. The group have regular meetings in Moore Hall, and organize walking tours, read together, and record and share any information they find. You can contact the group on (086) 160 8451.

All three books are available from the authors and Salmons Department Store Main Street, Ballinasloe at 090 9642120, while stocks last.



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A Key Town businessman and one of Clifden's proudest sons passed away at his residence in Kilgarve on the 3rd of January. One of eight children, Jim was born to master tailors in 1932. Like many of the time, at 17 he left home to find work, joining his father in London, to support the family back home.

He found more than work though, meeting the love of his life, Margaret, at a dancehall in 1954, before quickly tying the knot on 16th April 1955. They settled into married life in Manchester, having 6 kids in 7 years before answering the call to return home to Ireland.

Talented entrepreneurs, they opened Re-New-It Dry Cleaners on Dunlo St in 1969 and spent the next few decades establishing it as one of the most reliable and professional services in town and themselves as respected pillars of the community.

Never without his signature full suit and tie, Jim loved betting horses and winding down with a pint or 4 of Guinness in his corner of Declan Eagan's Pub (previously Oliver's and later Brewery Lane), regaling friends and visitors with his tall, often unbelievable tales, and if you were really lucky, a song or two – The Forty Shades of Green and Galway Shawl being his go-to favourites.

He and his beloved Margaret retired in the early 1990s and dedicated the rest of their years to travel, especially to California where 4 of their 6 children and their families now live. Trips around Europe, to Mexico, Las Vegas, New York, Alaska, Washington D.C., and of course to San Francisco filled their years with so much laughter, incredible friends, and immense amounts of love.

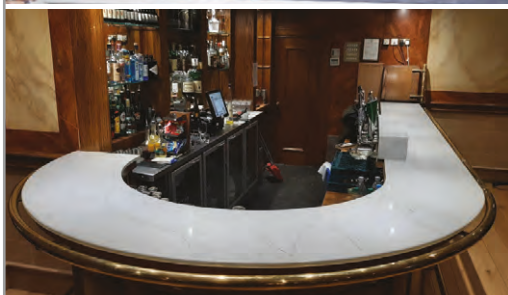
They loved their months in the sunshine and spending countless hours getting to know their Yankee grandkids. Jim could often be found soaking up the sun in the back yard before heading down to his "abroad local" Fiddlers Green in Millbrae, CA, where he had his very own corner and a pint or 4 of Coors Light, his holiday drink of choice.

Genial Jim Burke was larger than life –he never met a stranger, walked like he owned every street in whatever country he was in – his marble-topped cane adding even more gravitas to his already impressive silhouette – and met many world leaders, including US Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California Governor Gavin Newsom, and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar to name a few, he loved their parties where often he knew more the guests than they did !



Jim lived life to the fullest and so perfectly embodied his personal catchphrase, "When you're out, you're out." Though he will be greatly missed, the knowledge of Jim reuniting with his beloved Margaret brings much comfort to his family and friends.

To his sister Teda in Manchester, his children and their partners in Ballinasloe & California, Reita, Frances, Catherine, James, Caroline, and John, his 11 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren, and countless beloved nieces, nephews, and friends we offer our sympathies.



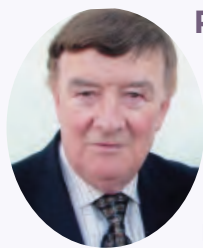
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P.J. Hill, who passed away in his 90th year, at his home in Derrymullen, Ballinasloe, was one of four brothers who learned to be cobblers and shoemakers in Society St. It was their late father, Pat Hill from Kilconnell, set up the business in the early 1950's and trained his sons in the footwear business.

Born in Menlough, P.J. later moved to Kilconnell and attended the local National School, where he was often prevailed on to act as telegram boy or postman, while still in school. Afterwards he worked as a barman in different locations before joining his late brothers Bobby, Jimmy and Liam in the Society Street workshop, learning the shoe trade from his late father.

Over sixty years ago, P.J. decided to branch out and set up his own business in Bride St., Loughrea. His brothers, Jimmy had done likewise in Galway while Bobby moved to Roscommon, leaving Liam in charge of the Ballinasloe premises, with his late father. His youngest brother, Kevin, had moved to Dublin to work for Custom and Excise.

P.J. married Eileen Donovan from Brackernagh in the fifties and they had three children, Mary (Connaughton), Robert and Paul. Robert, went on to work in Dubarry for several years before joining his dad in the Loughrea business. They became one of the most industrious and popular outfits in the lakeside town before the dreaded Covid brought an end to their business a few years ago.

Coming from a musical family, P.J. was a versatile accordion player, as was his brother Liam and they often joined their brother Jimmy, who had a part-time band. A former secretary of the local athletic club, PJ loved cycling the roads in the locality and further afield, and in the evenings enjoyed his membership of the Bridge Club.

Possessed of strong religious beliefs, PJ was very committed to his work as a Steward at Knock Shrine, his involvement in the House of Emmanuel Providence, Clonfert and his dedication to a number of local charitable organisations, over very many years.

The late P.J. Hill is survived by daughter Mary, sons Robert and Paul, sister Noreen and many more relatives and friends.

A FRIENDLY AND OBLIGING NEIGHBOUR



Down through the years, **Tommie Aherne** from Cleaghmore was often described as "The Good Samaritan" helping out neighbours, friends and accident victims, at all hours. He was always charitable in his deeds and believed in the motto of "never seeing anybody stuck" and refusing to accept payments for his assistance. These little acts were done with love and joy, and were part of the "muscular christianity" of Tommie's faith.

The fourth eldest of a family of eight children born to Michael (Mick) and Mary Aherne, Tommie was born in 1927 and lived out his life on the family farm. He was a farmer, husband, father, lifelong Pioneer and self-taught accordion player, who also sang in the Church choir. His capacity for work was never diminished. He expanded his interests, delivered milk in the town as well as supplying building sand and later, with his good friend, the late Paddy Kenny, started manufacturing concrete blocks.

In the 1950's, Tommie bought a Morris Minor car and started supplying milk to the town's householders, twice a day. He married Maureen Cunningham, from Kilcastle, Ballydangan, in 1962 and sold his cement mixer to fund a brief honeymoon. They were blessed with seven children but Maureen unfortunately passed away in 2017 after 55

years of marriage.

In their later years, the couple travelled on holidays abroad, particularly to Medjugorje and The Holy Land as well as visiting families overseas. A man of deep religious faith and a caring family man, Tommie, with others was instrumental in having the unnamed dead burial grounds in Cleaghmore suitably commemorated and having a grotto and Crucifix erected. It was later named the Famine Memorial Park by the local committee. He also joined his sisters in the Church choir, allowing him to combine his love of family with his joy in singing.

The late Tommie Aherne is survived by two sons, five daughters, nine grandchildren, three sisters and many other relatives and friends.

AN EMERGING AREA EVENTS CALENDAR 2023

St Patrick's Day Parade	17 March 2023, 1.30pm
Dinny Delaney Festival	May Bank Holiday 2023
A Taste of Ballinasloe Weekend	May 26- 28th 2023
Eyrecourt Vintage Rally	17 June – 23 June 2023
Livestock Music and Art Festival	01July – 02 July 2023
Battle of Aughrim Remembrance	12 July 2023
Feile Cheoil Larry Reynolds	7 September - 10 September 2023

Ballinasloe Agricultural Show	29 September 2023
Ballinasloe Horse Fair and Festival	01 October – 08 October 2023
Ballinasloe Vintage and Heritage	08 October 2023
Zombie Walk	27 September - 29 September 2023
Comic Con	3 November – 5 November 2023
New Year's Blacktie Bal	31 December 2023

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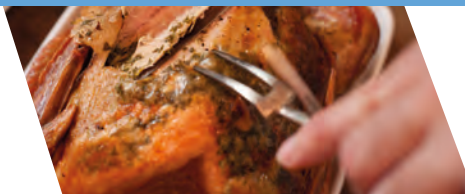


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