

## Annual Report 2024

### Longford Community Development Committee

The LCDC is a committee of Longford County Council which brings together local authority members and officials, State agencies and people actively working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming.

#### Meetings

Seven meetings were held in 2024. The committee's main tasks are to develop and implement the Local Economic and Community plan for the county and coordinate, plan and oversee local and community development funding.

#### Membership

In December 2024 there were 18 Members on the LCDC with 1 vacant seat from the PPN Social Inclusion section, it is envisaged that this seat will be filled in early 2025.

Public - Statutory Interests 9		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
<b>Local Authority Elected Members</b> – min 2 on min 3 on 19 person LCDC,	Cllr. Seamus Butler	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Paraic Brady	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Martin Skelly	Longford County Council
	Cllr. Niall Gannon	Longford County Council
<b>Local Authority Officials</b> – Minimum 2	Paddy Mahon	Longford County Council ( <i>Chief Executive or Nominee</i> )
	Michael Nevin	Longford County Council ( <i>Head of Local Enterprise Office</i> )
<b>State Agencies</b> – Minimum 2	Veronica Brennan	Health Services Executive
	Aine Bohan	Dept. Social Protection
	Caroline Cornally	Longford Westmeath Education & Training Board
Private - Non Statutory Interests 10		
Sector	Members Name	Organisation
<b>Local &amp; Community Development</b> –	Adrian Greene	Longford Community Resources Clg.
<b>Social Inclusion</b> –	Tara Farrell	(PPN)
	<b>Vacant</b>	(PPN)
<b>Community &amp; Voluntary</b> –	Patrick Mc Givney	(PPN)
	Eileen Finan	(PPN)
<b>Environmental Interests</b>	Enda McManus	(PPN)
<b>Other civic society or local community interests</b> –	Fulton Grant	Business/Employers sector
	Emmett Duffy (IFA)	Farming/Agriculture sector
	Deidre Orme	County Longford Tourism
	Eamon Reilly	Ballymahon Traders Association
<b>Total No. of Members</b>	<b>18 of 19</b>	

## Programme Oversight and Management Activities

### **Pathways to Funding Information Sessions**

In collaboration with the LCDC and PPN, Longford County Council organised Pathways to Funding Community Grant Information Sessions early in 2024. These information sessions were hosted in the libraries of each of the Municipal Districts. Presentations, providing information and advice, were provided on a wide range of available funding streams. People were able to meet those who administer the schemes and explore opportunities to support projects in their area.

The presentation from Ballymahon was also live streamed on Social Media and the information is available of the Council's website.

### **Rural Development Programme (LEADER)- 2023-2027**

LEADER is a community-led approach to development delivering EU funding to rural businesses and communities through Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2023-2027. County Longford was allocated €5.8m under the Programme to support sustainable development. The programme promotes social inclusion, poverty reduction, economic development and addressing the challenges posed by climate change in rural areas. It does this through targeted supports that focus on themes and priorities identified in the Longford Local Development Strategy – a community-led action plan for Longford. Implementing Partners (IP) are responsible for delivering actions on behalf of the LAG and are a point of contact for enquiries and applications.

In Longford, [Longford Local Community Development Committee \(LCDC\)](#) is the LAG (Local Action Group), [Longford Community Resources Clg](#) is the IP (Implementing Partner) and Longford County Council is the financial partner of the LEADER programme.

A large number of Expressions of Interest have been received since the commencement of the new LEADER programme and funding of €28,291 was approved for the first two projects at the October 2024 LAG meeting.

### **Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**

The Longford Local Economic and Community Plan sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of County Longford. LECPs are the main tool for delivering actions from national and regional strategies at the local level. The LECP is designed to centralise actions and initiatives related to economic and community development in Longford into one strategy.

1. The LECP has been adopted and is available online or in of the libraries throughout the County. [county-longford-lecp-2023-2029.pdf](#)
2. The implementation plan is also available to read here: [local-economic-and-community-plan/lecp-implementation-plan-2024-2025.pdf](#)

It details the actions planned for the two-year period from 2024 to 2025, a second implementation plan will be created for 2026-2027 and a third for 2028-2029. This flexible approach ensures alignment with the LECP's overall vision and goals, allowing for adjustments based on changing circumstances.

### **Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)**

The Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) provides funding to tackle poverty and social inclusion at local level through engagement and partnerships between new arrivals, disadvantaged groups, individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. Following a request for tender in 2023, the LCDC awarded Longford Community Resources Clg. (LCRL) the contract to implement the programme in County Longford for the period 2024-2028. In 2024, the overall SICAP budget allocated was €746,017, which includes a core SICAP budget of €643,044 and a “New Arrivals” allocation of €102,973.

LCRL will use this funding for staffing and activities to work with community groups and individuals throughout County Longford to deliver the two goals of the programme which are

- Goal 1, Contribute to Building more Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities and
- Goal 2, Empower Disadvantaged People to Improve the Quality of their Lives.

### **Community Development Programme**

This is a pilot programme delivered by Longford Community Resources clg. under the guidance of the Department of Rural and Community Development and the LCDC. The aim of the programme is to develop an autonomous community development project managed and run by members of the Roma community supporting them to engage directly with decision making structures and work in partnership with service providers. In 2024 the Department of Rural and Community Development allocated an annual budget of €125,000. On the 3 November, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development Joe O’Brien TD announced the extension of the seven Community Development Pilot Programmes nationally, this included Longford Roma and New Communities project for 2025 and 2026.

### **Empowering Communities Programme**

This is a pilot programme targeted at smaller areas experiencing challenges. Longford Community Resources clg. deliver the programme in an area in Longford town under the guidance of the Department of Rural and Community Development and the LCDC. In early 2024, €81,000 was allocated to Longford Community Resources Clg. who employ two Community Workers to take a community development approach in supporting the local community.

### **Local Enhancement Programme 2024**

The 2024 Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) was launched by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, in May 2024 with funding of €6m available which included €1m in funding ring-fenced specifically to support Women’s Groups. The funding provided capital supports essential for the many small community groups and organisations, particularly those who serve disadvantaged areas in rural and urban areas. There was a particular focus on small capital works/improvements, and the purchase of equipment for community use. The funding could be used but not limited to; improved access for persons with a disability; enhancing community participation for disadvantaged and marginalised groups and improving energy efficiency of community facilities to reduce ongoing costs. The scheme was administered by Longford Local Community Development Committee, 66 projects received funding of €112,762.52 and a further 13 Women’s Groups received €15,360.79.

### Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

Funding of €75,000 was secured for the ongoing delivery of the Sláintecare Healthy Communities programme. This third year of the programme, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the people living in Longford Town, continued to develop projects such as the 'Community Houses' initiative, Targeted Homework clubs and social exercises initiative. Sláintecare Healthy Communities works alongside Longford Community Safety Partnership to oversee the Community Houses based in Ardnacassa and MacEoin Park. Engagement with local communities is progressing well in both areas. The consultation for a needs assessment for a Family Resource Centre in Longford Town has been completed and work is ongoing to support any future application that may be made. A large part of the work of Sláintecare Healthy Communities is building relationships and trust with some of the more disadvantaged groups in our society and now three years into this programme these relationships are getting stronger. Following the success of the initial three years of Sláintecare Healthy Communities the Department of Health has extended the programme for an additional five years.



### Healthy Longford

Healthy Ireland aims to create a country where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health, and wellbeing to their full potential; and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

In 2024 funding of €75,000 was secured for the ongoing delivery of Healthy Longford through the Healthy Ireland Fund overseen by POBAL. Healthy Longford through consultation set the following outcomes for period of Healthy Ireland 2023-2025

- Increase in % of adults & children meeting physical activity guidelines.
- Increase in individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index

Under these outcomes projects that received funding in 2024 were Lus Na Greine Family Resource Centre, Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, Longford Traveller Health Care Project of Longford Community ResourcesClg, Longford Women's Link, Longford Sports Partnership, Longford Libraries, Cuidiu Longford/Roscommon, Longford Westmeath Down Syndrome Branch, Aurora Hall Development Association, Rath Mhuire & Dolmen Community Services, EDI Centre Longford, Drumlish/Ballinamuck Men's Shed, Lough Ree Access for All and Mental Health Longford.



### Period Dignity Initiative

The Department of Health provided funding of €8,000 for the Period Dignity Initiative in 2024. This funding allowed Longford County Council to provide free period products and install dispensers in community facilities that now require them. Services who work with disadvantaged and vulnerable people were identified. A programme of Menstrual Health workshops took place with 4 secondary schools and the Foroige Leap Youth Justice Project. It is hoped in 2025 to roll out these workshops further linking with more youth projects and targeting young adolescent girls.

### We're Breastfeeding Friendly Longford & Longford Breastfeeding Project

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Longford is a Healthy Longford initiative led by an interagency group made up of representatives from HSE, Cuidiu Longford/Roscommon, Longford County Council, Slaintecare Healthy Communities, Healthy Longford, Longford Libraries, Longford Community Resource Centre, TUS Midland Midwest, Longford County Childcare Committee, Longford Westmeath Child & Young Person Service Committee (CYPSC), Longford Westmeath Community Families, Longford Women's Link, Foroige -Leap Youth Diversion Project, Bridgeways Family Resource Centre and Lus Na Greine Family Resource Centre.

The group aims to build awareness of the role of breastfeeding, along with other forms of feeding, to support parents. It also aims to normalise breastfeeding and work with local businesses and organisations so that they can become better able to help breastfeeding mothers. This work includes creating more comfortable environments and greater accessibility for mothers who need to breastfeed when out and about. This includes ongoing work with Longford Shopping Centre and all County Longford libraries.

Longford Breastfeeding Project also focuses on education, linking in with communities across Longford to raise awareness of the support available for breastfeeding mothers.

We're Breastfeeding Friendly Launch took place during National Breastfeeding Week 2024 in which the theme was "From Bump to Baby and Beyond". The event took place in Edgeworthstown Library, 10 October 2024 with great engagement from Parents, Families, Services who support Communities and Families, HSE reps and Longford County Council.



### Men's Health Fair

Men's Health Fair took place on 11 June 2024 in Longford Athletics Centre. The event was run and facilitated by Healthy Longford, Slaintecare Healthy Communities working with our community food and nutrition worker. The event involved speakers covering topics such as farming life, loneliness and isolation and the supports the IFA has for farmers. The pharmacist spoke about health concerns and by how accessing support early on most of these problems can be reversed. Citizen's Information Centre provided information on the services they have for members of the public and our Physical Activity for Health Officer spoke about the importance of aerobic, strength and mobility as we age. There were information stands from a variety of agencies and topics and there was also a stop smoking clinic, blood pressure checks and free haircuts available for attendees.



### Community Safety & Wellbeing Expo 2025

Healthy Longford worked with the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme and the Longford Community Safety Partnership, assisted by LCDC support staff to host a Community Safety and Wellbeing Expo on 15 November, in St Mary's Edgeworthstown. The purpose of the event was to showcase the initiatives of the three programmes but also to highlight all of the services available to communities in Longford and in doing so, help improve a sense of community safety, health, and wellbeing.

There were over 50 exhibitors including:

- Civil Defence
- Longford Fire Services
- A Garda Síochána
- Music Generation Longford
- Longford County Council Road Safety Team
- Comhairle Na Nog
- Longford Sports Partnership
- Longford MABS
- Bridgeways Family Resource Centre
- Merchants Quay Longford
- Longford Women's Link
- Longford Community Resource

There were interactive taster sessions including try an instrument with Music Generation, tai chi, athletics and balance bikes with Longford Sports Partnership, CPR demonstration with Civil Défence and Longford Fire Service gave a demonstration on the day.

Dr Katriona O Sullivan (author of Poor) was the keynote speaker on the day in which she spoke about her struggles growing up in poverty and how she worked hard to overcome adversity. Dr Katriona's story was motivational and inspiring to the audience with her story of resilience - providing lessons learnt along her journey, and ideas on how we can all be a support to one another.

It also gave the 450 attendees some tips and tools to support mental resilience.

Transition Year students from 5 secondary schools & 3 national schools in the county were in attendance on the day.

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**Adopted by LCDC members at meeting on 20 March 2025.**