

BALLINAMORE AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL LTD

Chairperson: Máirín Martin, Kiltymoodan, Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim

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NEWSLETTER 2019

In 1975 a Community Council was elected covering Aughawillan, Aughnasheelin, Ballinamore, Corraleehan, Drumreilly and Fenagh. The aims of the Council are the social, cultural and economic welfare of the whole community. We represent the community in dealing with statutory bodies and others agencies in seeking technical or other assistance. We also assist, where feasible, the Local Authority in the exercise of it's office in the locality. We are a Limited Company with Charitable Status.

Development was the top priority and sifting through many projects lined up in the area, we decided **Poll an Easa Waterfall** had great potential as an Amenity Area. We borrowed money in the Credit Union to purchase four acres around it. Through the years with the support of LCC and schemes such as FÁS & TUS, many improvements have been carried out around the waterfall. The restoration of the stone shed, the barbeque and picnic benches and the solar lighting, all add to it as a Tourist Attraction. A Community Facilities Grant of €500 was drawn down in 2017.

The Enterprise Units, Golf Links Road, were built, which created much needed employment and encouraged new business start-ups. These have been a great success and are still being rented out at minimal cost to new entrepreneurs. Upgrade works and painting was carried out this year and we hope in the near future to be able to insulate and upgrade lighting to make them more environmentally friendly. To sustain these Units for over 40 years is a major achievement for us.

The Sports Complex was built in 1999, to provide Sports and Exercise Facilities for the Community. Last year we secured €10,000 under the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment & Development (RAPID) Grant. This was an Energy Efficient Project where we upgraded the complete lighting system and external doors, to reduce heat loss and electricity usage. Again this has been very successful and we have decreased our energy bills considerably as well as our Carbon Footprint.

The Community Den, was built adjacent to the Complex. This is the base for the First Leitrim Scouts but is also used by all community groups. This was built with the assistance of a Rural Development LEADER Grant of €180,000 and a Clann Credo Loan.

In 2018, a Grant of €740 was secured under the Community Enhancement Programme, (CEP), to purchase a Laptop which is used by the Chairperson for Community Council matters. In 2019, also under the CEP, we secured a Grant of €2000 to insulate, rewire, paint etc., an office in The Den.

Community Development: In 2015 the Board nominated Máirín Martin to the Board of the County Leitrim Enterprise Fund and also as the Community Representative on the LCDC. In 2017 under the Town & Village Rural Renewal Scheme we secured funding of €100,000 to carry out works on the St. Felim's Site, in collaboration with LCC.

In 2018 a series of Public Workshops were facilitated by Liam & Margaret Scollan, to create a vision, strategy and plan for the wider area and to identify key priorities. This was made possible with funding from LCC and resulted in the formation of the **Steering Group** and publication of the **Ballinamore Area Strategy Plan**. The Steering Group is made up of representatives from most of the committees in the area and is formed under the umbrella of our Community Council. Working closely with LCC, an application for €3.1m has been submitted under the **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund**, (RRDF) and we anxiously await the results which will be announced in November this year.

Earlier this year, we successfully secured a grant of €134,720 from **The International Fund for Ireland, Peace Impact Programme**, for an eighteen-month period which commenced on 1st July 2019 until 31st December 2020. We are very proud of this achievement as it created two jobs. This “Better Together – Níos Fearr Le Chéile” Project is based in the office in the Den. Under the IFI Funding we have secured money for **Community Capacity Building**, which will be advertised shortly. It will be open to all members of all committees in the catchment area who are registered with the PPN.

We lobby on issues such as the Children’s Playground, Fire Station, the employment of a County Librarian, the Greenway, Pedestrian Crossings, Rural Transport, Bus Shelters etc. and worked with our Area Engineer and the BOM of the National School to get two extra lights on the footpath coming down from the Old Tech. We engaged in a Walkability Survey of the town with the Area Engineer and a partially sighted individual and improvements have since been made to footpaths and crossings and are ongoing. A new County Librarian was recently appointed in Ballinamore and we welcome Pauline Brennan and wish her every success in her new position.

We also assist other groups in drawing down funding by completing applications on their behalf: In 2017 we were granted €500 under the CEP, for Wooden Benches & Planters and again in 2018 we secured €5,757 for the same Estate, to purchase a Ride on Lawnmower. In 2019 we secured €520 towards the running costs of the St. Patrick’s Day Parade and €280 for the BIG HELLO and ran a John McGahern Event, under Community Enhancement. This year we applied for a LEADER grant for New Lighting and Lighting Desk for Drama Festival and were awarded €5,264 under Collective Festivals Funding. We also secured €520 for a computer for Tourism Office under the CEP and €1,700 under the Tourism Support Scheme for Marketing & a Best Practice Angling Trip. We also assisted the National School with a Grant Application under Clár where they secured €50,000 for a Multiple Use Games Area.

We have participated in ‘**Love Where You Live**’ for the past two years and last year we organised a Showcase of Ballinamore, in the **Bank of Ireland Enterprising Town Awards**. It was an amazing day where the entire community, both business and voluntary, showed the Judges all we had to offer. The Judges were very impressed.

We have also held a number of workshops and are at the early stages of setting Ballinamore up as a **Sustainable Energy Community**. Next meeting will be announced soon.

We hold Elections to the Board every year on a rotating basis. This year it is the turn of Drumreilly and Fenagh. **Nominations forms** will soon be available and we are looking for two nominations from both areas.

Many, many people have been involved in the Community Council since its formation and it is always a dangerous thing to single out people. However, without the foresight and commitment of Padraig Griffin and Michael Dolan, this Community Council would not have survived for 44 years!!! A massive thank you to them both and to everybody who has served on the Board. New ideas from all six areas are always welcome.

Our overheads are very high, especially our Insurance Costs which are €4000 per annum. We would also like to thank all those groups who rent our facilities and support us. We are a completely voluntary Board and nobody receives a salary. We have one RSS worker who acts as Caretaker for our buildings and lawns.

Our Annual Church Gate Collection will be taken up outside all churches in the area on weekend of 5th/6th October, 2019. These funds collected go towards defraying the costs of insurance etc. Our Accounts are Audited annually.

Bookings for Complex and Den are taken by Damien O’Brien **Tel: 087 2529144**