

Vol. 1 • Issue 1
Front Cover
April / May 2011



Vol. 2 • Issue 4
St. Brendan's Residents
October / November 2012



Vol. 7 • Issue 1
Garbally Rugby
April / May 2017



Vol. 8 • Issue 1
Garbally 46th Connacht Title
October / November 2018



Vol. 3 • Issue 1
GAA 2013 All-Ireland
April / May 2013



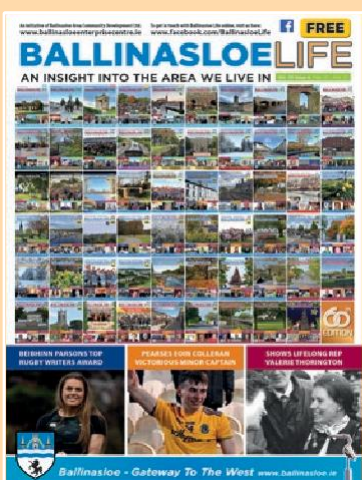
Vol. 5 • Issue 1
Garbally Rugby
April / May 2015



Vol. 9 • Issue 5
People of the Year Award
December 2017 / January 2018



Vol. 9 • Issue 6
Drummers
February / March 2020



Vol. 10 • Issue 1
Current 60th Cover
February / March 2020

Celebrating our 60th Anniversary Edition with 6 pages of a look back which will happen with different elements of the next few Editions we have just included our first and current Covers here with those special times that local groups made the front cover. So many of our covers tend to be landscape or building or event in aspect; when we get a worthy moment to celebrate - it must be noteworthy. These are some of our stand out covers in the past decade.

Special thanks to our local Creative Designer / Photographer Robert Riddell for providing over 95% of our covers

THE GENESIS OF A COMMUNITY LIFE

It was the winter of 2010 the austerity years post the banking collapse were taking its toll. We had as a community a short 12 months before lived through the most devastating of floods; there was a genuine sense of despondency in the air.

The Printing family MD (Brendan Kelly)– lifelong supporters of so many voluntary organisations in town, our development Company founding Secretary (Colm Croffy) and BACD Chairman (Seamus Duffy) had a few chats over the festive season.

No one in the community could see at a glance outside of the Patrick's Day Parade and the Fair that there was huge voluntary, sporting, charitable, educational work happening allied to a shook but loyal business community and a rich farming hinterland under our feet.

We were only looking at a quarterly newsletter 8 pages, dropped into the home via An Post. One of the key drivers to the BACD company - Noel Madden mentioned at an AGM that the wider community of town would never understand what BACD was trying to do unless it took its message outside the old gates of St Enda's and into people's minds and homes.

I started researching other communities, Gort had its Guaire, Tuam had its historical Annual but we had nothing. I had been previously engaged with the Connacht Tribune for a decade since Dermot Connolly (Ex NT, RIP) passed as the local correspondent and that paper like so many others was changing from Broadsheet to tabloid and staff reporters who could cover topics in depth were being let go. With the bones of an idea we approached a few of the pillar firms in town – would they back the idea of a simple 32 page colour magazine – every 8 weeks, with their advertising budget to become not a "MAGILL" or a "Village" type publication for our community but more like a "Cara" the inflight magazine of Aer Lingus.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, we needed the Mother Ship of Development Company to be the nursery for the project. Resources to compile, research, coordinate the magazine would have to be found. Third level Trainees was the only route as the cost recovery project could not pay out any professional fees to contributors.

My projects office would be the engine room for content and creativity and my 20 years of communications across print, multi-media and events would be put to use. The BACD manager's office was the accounts and advertising office.

Seamus went with a trio of a team to the Board, it was backed enthusiastically from the start. The wily Board however added a fourth person to the Volunteers & Manager – Director Paul Hargadon. So it was four volunteers – who sold the ads, (Seamus was the Master Hustler !) got the subscribers, the then Manager Helen Kelly who did the billing and accounts chasing and mise, who co – ordinated content and contributors.

Distribution into all the letter boxes inside the old Urban area was always done with voluntary drivers – Directors and members of the



Pictured at the launch in February 2011 were
Back (L-R): Brendan Kelly (KPW Print), Seamus Duffy, Pat O'Sullivan, Paul Hargadon, Kevin Whyte (RIP). Front (L-R): Ruairi Moore (Asst. Editor), Martine Schmidt (AOIFE), Nicola Hampson, Colm Croffy (Editor).

BACD Company and young second level students which in the last 10 years has predominately been Garbally TY Classes. Ken delivers to all the National Schools and key village stores to all our villages within our Common Bond radius and sometimes as far as Kildare. We know from families and the post office that over 500 copies are posted to family overseas and around the country !

We were very lucky early on to secure the engagement and support of notable writers and historians of the locality who have given of their time and energy freely – Ken Kelly, Barry Lally, Pat Johnston, Sean Tully, Wille Tully, Damien McCullagh, Gerry Devlin, Evelyn Donellan to name a few and scores of other PROS and correspondents.

We have grown in reach and content from 32 pages and 3,000 copies to 64 pages and 6,500 copies every two months and have a valuable platform in showcasing all the many positive attributes of our town, hinterland and community. Advertising Manger Lyn has grown our supporters list from 13 to over 165.

We have produced over 600 community videos that illuminate our town on the World wide web – last year alone clips were viewed a massive 210,000 times. Any video/report we make gets viewed by an average of 3,500 people. We have over 6,600 facebook fans, we are tweeting and instagramming and finding ways to tell our positive story through social media, which in time will develop into a full information channel of its own. Sinead Colleran has revamped our Website -ballinasloe.ie – to where it automatically ranks second highest in all Google searches !

Over the next few editions we will offer all of the main sports & cultural and community groups, starting with soccer, to undertake a decade lookback on their developments and we will script some review pieces on the town and aspects within.

We would welcome any personal reflections or reminisces from our readers as well. Floods, Recessions, Elections, Tragedies and Pandemic Lockdowns have not stopped us printing our editions – lack of business support and community indifference might, but thankfully to date there is not much evidence of that.

Here's hoping to the next decade of growth.

BY COLM CROFFY

WEBSITE GROWS EXPONENTIALLY

Thanks to our Website Editor, Sinead Colleran, who approached the Company (which had been offered the old Town Council domain name to manage) as part of a third level project - we have had an explosion of on line visitor growth since its relaunch in 2015.

All the videos content, all Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts signpost the domain name www.ballinasloe.ie.

2016 – 8,000 visits per annum, rising in 2019 to 32,000 visits and then in 2020 we were topping an average of 4,000 visits a month - which is about 48,000 average, unique visitor was with the Top referrer - Google.

Ballinasloe.ie is SECOND in google when you search Ballinasloe and this was something that was achieved organically – with no paid SEO etc which is quite an achievement! The only one in front of us is the Wikipedia Ballinasloe entry!

There are over 3,000 pages on the website – mostly news items from Ballinasloe Life but also:

Shops, A to Z Directory, Links to sister Ballinasloe sites such as shopballinasloe.ie and exploreballinasloe.ie, various special projects ie: People of the Year, Zombie Walk, Christmas Window Display, Sports Hub. Fully mobile responsive with quick dial, quick email and quick links all enabled.

On a quarterly average the top five areas visited on the site are:

1. Ballinasloe.ie/news
2. Ballinasloe.ie/shops.html
3. Ballinasloe.ie/a-to-z.html
4. Ballinasloe.ie/parish-pastoral-council.html
5. Ballinasloe.ie/churches.html

A DECADE ON, 60 EDITIONS LATER SERVICING LOCAL BUSINESS



6,500 copies every 2 months and over 5,000 readers on line with an additional online facebook community in the larger hinterland and overseas of over 50,000, positions LIFE well for business.

Audit Bureau figures nationally indicate that a magazine copy is read by at least 3.5 people so our readership is about 21,000 every two months with the online tribe from 5,000 upwards!

LIFE is the only practical local regular publication – every 8 weeks that records our achievements, successes, passings, coming, news and features as well as a comprehensive “What’s On” guide.

The economic model which once sustained publications and newspapers is broken. Newspaper sales have declined significantly in the past ten years by up to 50%.

“Revenues from print advertising for national titles has dropped from a high of €367m in 2007 to €87m in 2019. The forecast for 2020 is around €60m, a decline of over 30% compared to last year. The decline in print advertising has not been replaced by digital advertising, which is being hoovered up by giant digital corporations such as Google & Facebook, who secured €425m in ad revenues from this market in 2019, compared to €26m for national news publishers” stated Vincent Connolly, Chair of Newsbrands Ireland in his Dail Committee statement of the 16 Dec 2020.

LIFE Magazine has bucked that trend growing from 3,000 copies of a 40 page pilot in Spring of 2011, moving to 4,500 copies of 48 pages within two editions and by Volume 2 - 58 pages, Volume 8 to 64 pages at 6,500 copies per edition where it now remains with a ratio of display adverts to articles and photos about 3 to 1.

In the decade to date the Magazine has retained the advertising and marketing spend of approximately €529,500 in the local community through the generous investment of some 165 plus business advertisers and community focused firms.

Over the 60 editions we wrote about 94 new businesses and people starting out –employing some 270 plus people – primarily in the services sector and reported on a labour force in the winter prior to the pandemic of some 3,600 local jobs!

Sadly we had to report on some firms closing with recession, retirement, 2 firms leaving the Enterprise Centre for Oranmore and Loughrea with the loss of over 120 jobs, Aptar very recently with the loss of 120 posts and of course the iconic Hayden’s Hotel in October 2016 with the loss of 35 jobs.

Other firms that closed included Scannell’s Financial Services, Broderick’s Pharmacy, Chris Daly Shoes, Sarah Parkers, Image, Harney Dry Cleaners, Harney’s Office Supplies, Liam Jordan Photography, Oat Gallery Bookstore, FBD Insurances, Crumbs and Cream, Pat Finn Auctioneers, Mannion Sportswear, Premier Proteins, Parkmore Switchgear, Jean’s High Society, Butchers Mal Croffy and Kevin Reynolds, Pubs Egan’s Bar and The Duck Inn and Stepping Stones.

Glancing back we reported on the last ever Chamber of Commerce dinner dance in the Shearwater in January 2012, the arrival of the Business Alliance Town Centre Business group, the year before and for every edition from Town Council Mayor at the time Pat Sullivan’s opening message till edition 58 – the Big Dig, parking and disruption have constantly been between our covers !! Mayor Pat in his opening interview was confident that the Big Dig would be done by 2015!!

We also celebrated milestone events for business commencing with Dubarry’s 75th, Salmon’s 50th and Kilmartin’s 50th in 2012, Beechlawn Organic Farms 10 years in Vol 2 Issue 5, Garbally View’s 20 years and Broderick’s Pharmacy 20th and Connelly’s Builders all in 2013. In 2014 we reported on Dalata taking over the management of the Shearwater Hotel. In 2015 we again saluted Valerie’s of Aghrim 10th Birthday, Weilys Nursey 25th Anniversary, 40 Years of Cahalan’s Jewellers, the 5th Successful year of M6 Motors, 22 Years of Gerry Croffy Machinery and 6 Decades of Grenham’s Funeral Directors.

2017 saw us salute 10 years of Gannet’s Fishmongers, Our Credit Union’s 50 years of lending and successful business, 40 years of Hogarty’s Home Furnishings and Floor Coverings, Willie Burke’s 25 years on Main St and a four decade birthday for his Main St. neighbour - Michael Ward Menswear.

2018 readers celebrated 21st Anniversary of Tony Carrolls Butchers, 60 Years of the Pillar House and the Gibbons Family involvement. 60 years of Kellers in Main St. 30 years of Tony Dolphin’s Stoneworks, 55 years of Fletchers, 20 years of Byron’s Shoes and two decades of Ballindereen Nursing Home. The winter editions of that year saw us report on Tomas and Caroline Gullane’s 75 years on Main St., Val Collieran’s UTAH’s 10 years in town centre, and 40 years of Pat and Una McDonagh in their empire founding original Main St. premises. The last edition included Geraldine Dolan’s 20 years in business with Society

Travel, the Flaherty family enjoying 25 years with Garbally Oil and Jennifer

Sheridan’s Tiny Tots Creche marking 20 years. July of 2018 saw the Comer Group purchase outright and plan a huge investment in the Shearwater Hotel.

In January 2019 we reported after the mid-decade demise of both Chamber of Commerce and Business Alliance the formation of young progressive organisation of risk taking entrepreneurs – The Pulse Club.

That same year saw the 70th Anniversary of KPW Print, 20 Years of the Development Company, 50 years of Dolans’ Kilgarave, 64 Years of Divillys of Dunlo St. In 2020 we saluted 40 years of Gerry Bruen – with Bruens Insurance Brokerage and in Autumn - 20 years of Magee’s Deli Store.

The LIFE team collated and published two subscription paid for Town Team Shop Local Flyers and published and distributed two Black Friday Special. An Post Distributed Supplements for FREE to local business during the disruption to the town centre.

For the first two Lockdown editions of April/ May and June/ July no businesses were charged for their adverts and the Board covered the costs of the online and prepay subscription magazine.

LIFE Magazine is continually used to promote the Town for Inward Investment with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Just Transition Commission, Hidden Heartlands – it continually PROVES how vibrant an place we are and what a nice, facility rich location, to move to or raise a family.

Over 150 business people and firms have been videoed and promoted on the Facebook page and in the years 2014 to 2017 the LIFE team provided Social Media Training and support to get as many firms using the web for marketing and sales.

For house/leaflet drops LIFE is some 65% cheaper than having to organise your own publicity flyer through An POST. For typical weekly print media our cost per impressions is about 60% less. Our rates have not increased in seven years!

An Post and Rates book tell us there are some 300 business in our locality to have enjoyed the continual support from over 55% of them in our first decade of publishing has been phenomenal.

We hope that the business community continue to support the publication and online project into its next decade.

We acknowledge the founding Advertisers and also salute the firms-13 in all-who have never missed supporting an Edition.

166 Advertiser / Subscribers			
	Founding	Additional	Total
Volume 1	29	6	35
Volume 2	38	18	56
Volume 3	43	23	66
Volume 4	50	22	72
Volume 5	58	12	70
Volume 6	54	14	68
Volume 7	55	19	74
Volume 8	63	13	76
Volume 9	65	13	78
Volume 10	64	9	73

ORIGINAL SUBSCRIBERS

- » Allied Irish Bank
- » Ballinasloe Credit Union
- » Barna Waste
- » Broderick’s Pharmacy
- » Carlton Shearwater Hotel
- » Concannon’s Spar
- » Delaney’s - House
- » Dillons Tyres & Dillons
- » Auctioneers
- » Dolans Service Station
- » Dubarry
- » Duffy Discount
- » Dunne’s Supervalu
- » East Nightclub
- » Fair & Murtagh Solicitors
- » Fred Kilmartin Ltd.
- » Garbally Oil
- » George M. Coyle - Accountants & Auditors
- » Gullane’s Hotel
- » Hutchinson & Davidson
- » Keller Travel
- » KPW Print
- » Dr. Mary Rothwell & Dr. Aidan McGrath Dentists
- » Millrace Nursing Home
- » New Ireland Assurance
- » Noonan & Cuddy Solicitors
- » Ollie Colohan & Sons - Hardware & DIY
- » Parkmore Switchgear
- » Premier Proteins
- » RAPID
- » Scannell Financial Services
- » Stanley Clarke & Sons
- » Supermacs.

SUBSCRIBERS SINCE THE START - WHO HAVE CONTINUALLY ADVERTISED

- » Ballinasloe Credit Union
- » Dolans Service Station
- » Dubarry
- » Fred Kilmartin
- » Gearoid Geraghty
- » Coyle & Co Accountants
- » Gullanes Hotel & Conference Centre
- » Keller Travel
- » KPW Print
- » Noonan & Cuddy Solicitors
- » Shearwater Hotel
- » Supermacs

BY COLM CROFFY

60th EDITION

60 EDITIONS MOST COMMON PIECES

General Features	120
Cultural Awards	97
New Business Opening Features	94
Obituaries	85
Festivals/Events	69
Community Fundraisers (Non – Sport)	66
GAA Coverage	65
Council News	64
Barry Lally Heritage	58
Other Sport Coverage	52
Rugby Coverage	43
History/Heritage	42
New Facilities	41
Memory Lane	40
Business Anniversaries	37
Soccer Coverage	36
Athletics Coverage	35
Concerts/Shows Previewed	34
Artist/Band Profiles	32
Tourism/Genealogy	28
Golf Coverage	23
Swimming Coverage	19
Sports Related Fundraisers	17
Tennis Coverage	14
Cycling	13



Back (L-R): Brendan Kelly, Tom Lucas (Ballinasloe Credit Union), Marian Brady (BCU), Seamus Duffy, John Power (BCU). Front: Sean O'Hagan (BCU), Noel Madden (Manager BCU).



Back (L-R): Cllr. Cathal Concannon, Cllr. Aidan McGrath, Mayor Pat O'Sullivan, Seamus Duffy, Paul Hargadon. Front (L-R): Cllr. Johnny Walsh, Cllr. Carmel Grealy, Cllr. Lucy Llyod-Keighery, County Cllr. Dermot Connolly.

PIONEERING REPORTERS

Each Edition and Volume had a number of Trainee undergraduate or Co-operative Education Students from University of Limerick, GMIT or NUIG supporting the Editor as Chief Reporters, Online Content Creators and Videographers.

Allied to these young people working for 6 and 9 months stints were a host of other Campus Followers from Ireland, Spain, Italy and France on various mobility training support schemes.

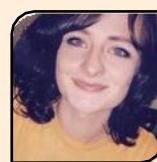
Their work with Social Media content and Video was huge - chief of whom were Darragh Lynch, Tommy Wall, Florian Bec, Kevin Sionneau, Steve Tynan, Samatha Berry. All of whom were trained by our Project Creative Director - Kerry's Will Nolan.

Below is the Rogues Gallery of past reporters and where they are in their career now. Many of them have sent messages of goodwill and congrats to the Magazine and we will publish these and other look back shots in the Fbook Page over the February Month !!



VOLUME 1

Ruairi Moore
Writer for video game company, Lairon



VOLUME 1

Caitriona Ni Chathain
Freelance media, tv/short film



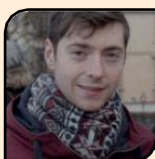
VOLUME 2

Barry Ó Crofagh
Deputy Head AML Compliance Risk Management



VOLUME 2

Siofra Mannion
Regional Sales Manager, Splunk



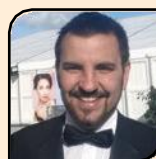
VOLUME 3

Owen Dunne
Online editor, LIT



VOLUME 3

Pamela Ryan
Manager, Content Creator, Digital Marketing



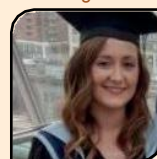
VOLUME 4

Kevin O'Connor
Marketing Coordinator Treaty Brewery



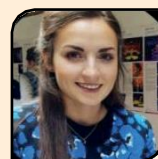
VOLUME 4

Conor Finnerty
Parliamentary Asst. to Michael Fitzmaurice TD



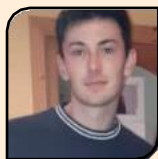
VOLUME 5

Zara Hill
English teacher at Crescent College Comp.



VOLUME 5

Ciara Beresford
UI/UX Designer at CORE HR



VOLUME 6

Brian Ciepierski
Office Administrator South Doc Killarney



VOLUME 6

Laura Sheehan
Marketing and Communications Officer, London Irish Centre



VOLUME 7

Kevin Kavanagh
Digital Marketing Manager 3D Design Bureau



VOLUME 7

Stephen Coleman
Sales Assistant Techstar Limerick



VOLUME 8

Ian O'Boyle
Fibre Optic Scheduling Administrator TLI Group



VOLUME 9

Donagh Moore
Third Level Student



VOLUME 9

Je Je Bergaui
Digital Marketing Educator for Shaw Academy



VOLUME 10

Liam Cosgrove
Third level Student



VOLUME 10

Jack Treacy
Third level Student

SOME WELL-KNOWN GENTS OF BALLINASLOE

60th EDITION

Courtesy of Liam Jordan Photography



Joe Hayes



Georgie Grehan



Sheamie Dodd



Joe Murray



Alfie Mitchell



Gerry Kelly



Jim Burke



Willie Sinclair



Jackie Holmes



Liam Keller



Buddy Donlon



Donal Scannell



Joseph Murray



Vince Walsh



Patrick Cronin



P.J. Guinnessy



John Joe Killeen



John Waters



Kevin Hill



Rory Kilduff



Doc Caulfield



Mal Croffy



Tony Colohan



Mike Martin



Micheal Breathnach



Jimmy Conway