

BALLINASLOE LIFE

An insight into the area we live in

Vol. 16 Issue 3: Aug./Sept. 2026

FREE



Photo by John Finnerty

DR. EVELYN PARSONS NEW CHAIR



KAY RETIRES FROM LIFETIME OF MEALS



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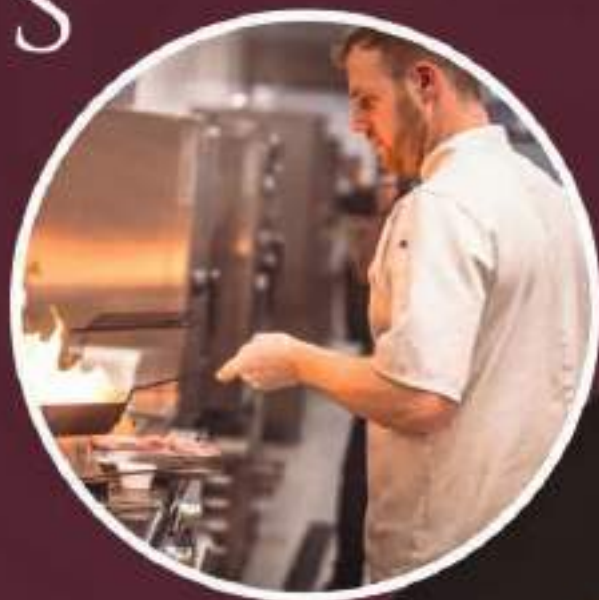
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BallinasloeLIFEMagazine 7

REAMHRA

I am young enough to remember the scenes in September 1980 at Creagh Church when Joe Connolly, his best friend Liam Mc Carthy and the squad were transferred onto a Whyte's Lorry for the cavalcade to the top of the square. There were Gardai, stewards but I still can't believe no one was killed or injured!

I was around in the UDC, GAA, County Board and Gardai "Bermuda Triangle" of the Football Homecomings in 1998 and 2001 – where everyone was in control, no one wanted to pay but everyone wanted to be on the stage.

I recall more recent years where rows thundered over where different teams from different codes were stopping and being feted – win lose or draw.

The County Reception for the town and East Galway supporters – organised by Galway County Council, County Board, Gardai, supported by the local GAA and Duggan park crews – was one of the safest and professionally polished homecomings this town has witnessed in recent memory. Well done all.

The template is set, the protocol is confirmed, the fans know how to make their way here and assemble safely – it was a lovely atmosphere for people to show their appreciation to a squad who gave of their all in the past 12 months and gave us a thrilling summer. We wish the Ladies Footballers and Camogie players all the best as they soldier on.

The launch of the Towns New Centre First Action Plan as detailed in this edition follows on from the Industry Task Force Plan of the 1999/ 2000 period, the Town Team Action Plan 2015 the 10 year action plan, the Tourism Development Plan of 2023.

Having read the full version – we need to commend the

For the big day supporter winning is everything but for the participant there is great satisfaction in the journey to get there. This is the case is all walks of life and huge credit is due to the group of people, be they managers, coaches, officials or players who put the hard work in to achieve success.

It was great to see huge numbers of supporters out in Ballinasloe to welcome home a great group of young Hurlers who have given up a huge amount over the course of the last 12 months to have the success they have had. Hopefully you will all be back on the streets over the coming weeks acknowledging even more success in Croke Park.

Likewise we have had the best result ever in the tidy towns competition and this again is down to a group of volunteers who are out on weekly clean-ups.

You get out of something what you put into it and once again we have a call out in the magazine for ideas and people to help in lighting up our town in December (I don't want to mention the "C" word yet in July / August).

It is several years since 90% of premises gave their town

Welcome to Ballinasloe Life Volume 16 Issue 3

community citizens who gave voluntarily and honestly of their time and intellect to act as sounding board to the plan.

Official Departmental figures tell us 52 towns of the 740 odd are participating in this Town Centre First Plan process at a cost on average of €137,000 per plan. We are indeed fortunate to be in on the first wave.

Oddly the plan fails to identify which of the pillars need to be prioritised, there are no costings for any element, there are no deliverables for any aspect, no timelines. Is it an officer of the WDC (who funded the plan) or (the County Council (who commissioned it) responsible for delivering aspects, or all of it? There is still ORIS. Thrive, and Town Renewal programmes and may be still some Just Transition money available to invest in the plan, and the exciting news the over €5 million is to be invested over 13 SIOL towns in year one with applications to be in from local authorities by end of August – means there ought to be loads on the menu for the plan's drivers to put forward.

Sadly, the plan was commissioned before the Greenway debacle but what is being done to bring the greenway to Ballinasloe, where there is rail links etc rather than finishing in County Offaly / Roscommon, we need it coming into Galway! We will feature an update on this, in our next Edition.

Enjoy the Read, and the Races!

Colm Croffy, Editor.



centre buildings a facelift and it is now great to see Business owners following this up with a new lick of paint during the last few weeks. This is work that needs to be ongoing to have our Town looking well.

On top of this there are several very positive developments in the planning stage for both commercial and residential properties which I hope will come to fruition in the short term.

The spell of good weather has lifted spirits and hopefully we will see a few more weeks of same.

As always I ask you to support local businesses during these times as the good weather tends to have a negative impact on consumer spending so it is more vital than ever to "Think Local, Shop Local".

Seamus Duffy,
Chairman,
Ballinasloe Area Community Clg



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Evelyn Parsons New Municipal District Cathaoirleach *By Eamon Chin*

Independent Councillor Evelyn Parsons was unanimously elected as the new Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District for the 2026–2027 term following the district's Annual General Meeting recently.

The Beechlawn resident takes over from outgoing chair Cllr Peter Keaveney (FG). Cllr Parsons previously served as Cathaoirleach from 2022 to 2023, becoming the first woman elected to the role in the history of the district. She later served as Leas-Chathaoirleach of Galway County Council from 2023 to 2024 and most recently as Leas-Chathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District.

Speaking following her election, Cllr Parsons said: "To serve as Cathaoirleach of the Ballinasloe Municipal District is both a great honour and a significant responsibility... I take up this role with a strong sense of purpose — focused on working collaboratively, supporting our communities and ensuring every voice is heard."

She outlined her priorities for the year, saying she will be focussed on: "practical improvements in people's daily lives...giving people a voice is, and will remain, my first priority". Areas of focus for her will include: healthcare, community development, economic growth, tourism, recreation and accessibility, investment in local infrastructure, and the use of St Brigid's campus.

Among the projects she highlighted were upgrades to the public toilets, due for completion by November 2026, the continued development of the town's first public park, the Ballinasloe Linear Park, the council's proposed purchase of the former St Brigid's Nurses' Home for use as a domestic violence shelter, and forming relationships with councillors in Roscommon, and across the wider Just Transition region.

Fine Gael Councillor Alan Harney was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.

Councillors welcomed the presentation on the Town First Action Plan and discussed a range of issues affecting the town centre, including vacancy, footfall and opportunities to support local



Evelyn Parsons Cathaoirleach photo: (L-R): Cllr Alan Harney, Leas-Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District; Cllr Michael Connolly; Cllr Evelyn Parsons, Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District; Cllr Dermot Connolly; Damien Mitchell, Director of Services at Galway County Council, and Cllr Dermot Geraghty.

businesses. Cllr Harney highlighted ongoing work towards establishing a Joint Retail Taskforce.

In her remarks, Cllr Parsons also highlighted community safety as a key priority, pointing to the importance of tackling anti-social behaviour, expanding CCTV coverage and ensuring people feel safe in the town centre and surrounding communities. She further reiterated her commitment to restoring full maternity services at Portiuncula Hospital and to a domestic violence shelter, issues which continue to receive strong support from councillors across the chamber, reflecting a united front on matters of importance to the wider community. She added that the sale and redevelopment of the lands on the St Brigid's campus represented a "significant opportunity" for the town.

Concluding Cllr Parsons said: "Our Municipal District has enormous potential: exceptional people, dedicated volunteers, vibrant sporting and community organisations, valuable natural assets and a rich heritage. I am committed to working with council staff, colleagues and communities to deliver a better quality of life for everyone."

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Minister Kevin Moran Updates On Flood Relief

By Colm Croffy

Minister for State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works - Kevin "Boxer" Moran visited town recently at the invitation of Cllr Alan Harney to update councillors on progress with the Flood Relief Scheme and to meet with the Ballinasloe Flood Action Group.

Speaking after the visit Cllr Harney said: "It was very useful to have Minister Moran visit and see first-hand the status of the flood relief scheme. The long talked about scheme is so needed and it is crucial that we get progress without delay in order to ensure that homes and businesses are protected."

"The scheme is currently due to go for planning early next year with construction due to start in 2028. I and colleagues have asked the Minister if there are ways by which this can be sped up to ensure relief works can be delivered without further delay."

"I have asked the Minister and the Office of Public Works to look at temporary measures which could be delivered before 2028 to provide some relief for homeowners and business owners in the most at risk areas."

Cllr Harney continued: "Flood insurance also continues to be a major issue and we need to see a solution delivered to provide cover for homes and businesses in areas where flood relief works have been completed."

Cllr Harney concluded: "I will continue to work with the Minister and the Office of Public Works and community stakeholders to ensure we keep a focus on this scheme in the time ahead."

The Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme will see extensive flood prevention work undertaken around the town, including construction of new flood defence walls and culverts, the upgrade of an existing culvert, construction of lock gates across the canal, maintenance of existing defences, and work on the riverbed upstream and downstream of the town.



Alan Harney with Minister Kevin "Boxer" Moran on his recent visit to the town.

Suck River Bridge Restored

By Eamon Chin

Significant progress has been made on the restoration and conservation of the historic Suck East Bridge, with works already delivering visible improvements to one of the town's most iconic landmarks.

The project, which is being undertaken by local company Triur Construction Ltd on behalf of Galway County Council, involves the careful rehabilitation of the historic four-arch limestone bridge, including extensive stonework repairs, repointing, vegetation removal and the rebuilding of damaged sections.

In recent weeks, the bridge has also benefited from the repair and restoration of its traditional lighting, further enhancing the appearance of the structure.

Cllr Alan Harney welcomed the improvements -

"I am delighted to see the excellent progress being made on the East Bridge restoration project, which I have been pushing for over a long period of time. This bridge is one of Ballinasloe's most important landmarks and a vital piece of our local heritage."

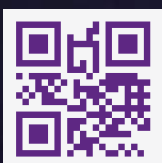
The Suck East Bridge, which dates from 1887, is a protected four-span masonry arch bridge carrying the R446 over the River Suck. Cllr Harney concluded: "The works form part of Galway County Council's commitment to preserving important historic infrastructure...I look forward to seeing the finished project in the coming weeks."

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Radiology Needs To Expand At PUH

By Maria Connolly

Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District and Regional Health Authority West -Northwest member, Cllr Evelyn Parsons, has called on the HSE to expand interventional radiology services at Portiuncula University Hospital (PUH) from the current three-day service to a five-day service. The expansion of services would require the appointment of a second Consultant Interventional Radiologist. Raising the issue with HSE West and North West through the Regional Health Forum, Cllr Parsons highlighted the critical role interventional radiology plays in contemporary healthcare.

In response, the HSE confirmed that there are currently no defined plans to expand interventional radiology services at Portiuncula University Hospital. However, it acknowledged an identified need for a seventh Radiologist post and confirmed that a Regional Clinical Director for Radiology is currently being appointed. The HSE also stated that a regional strategy for interventional radiology will be developed in line with the recently published National Model of Care for Interventional Radiology.

Commenting following the response, Cllr Parsons said:

"Interventional radiology is no longer an optional service - it is a fundamental component of modern healthcare. It supports emergency

medicine, trauma, cancer treatment, vascular care, surgery and maternity services, often providing minimally invasive procedures that improve outcomes, reduce hospital stays and avoid more invasive surgery, said Cllr Parsons.

"Portiuncula must not be overlooked. As a busy Model 3 hospital serving a large rural catchment across East Galway and surrounding counties, it is essential that investment in interventional radiology at PUH forms part of future regional planning," said Cllr Dr Evelyn Parsons.

"This presents an important opportunity to strengthen services at Portiuncula University Hospital and ensure patients have equitable access to advanced diagnostic and therapeutic care closer to home, in keeping with the principles of Sláintecare. Equitable access to the full range of modern healthcare services, regardless of where people live, is something I will continue to advocate for.

She added that strengthening interventional radiology capacity would also support regional healthcare objectives, improve patient flow, enhance resilience across the hospital network and underpin the long-term sustainability of key services at PUH.

Permanent Investment In Breast Cancer Services

By Maria Connolly

Regional Health Authority West member Cllr Evelyn Parsons has called for permanent investment in breast cancer services across the West, following confirmation from the HSE that improvements in waiting times have been achieved through temporary insourcing. Cllr Parsons sought detailed information on waiting times from urgent GP referral to first specialist assessment for patients with suspected breast cancer in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

In response, the HSE confirmed that urgent referrals should be offered an appointment within ten working days. In May 2026, the compliance rate was 90%, with performance expected to reach 100% for June. However, the response also confirmed that this improvement is due to temporary insourcing. Compliance with the same target stood at just 26% during 2025.

Reacting to the figures, Cllr Parsons said: "No one should face the added anxiety of waiting for assessment...Early diagnosis is [a key factor] in achieving the best possible outcomes."

"If services can reach 90 to 100 per cent compliance when additional resources are made available, then the focus must now be on ensuring that this level of access becomes the standard, rather than something that depends on short-term initiatives," she added.



Cllr. Dr. Evelyn Parsons,
Chair MDC



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New Applegreen Service Station Green Light

By Maria Connolly

An application for a new Applegreen service station was recently approved by Galway County Council. The new service station will be located just off Junction 15 of the M6, east of the Garbally roundabout. It will be one of the largest service station developments in the west of Ireland.

The new station will be located to the north-east of an existing station at Mackney, on the side of the R446. The shop at the Mackney site will remain in situ, but all the fuel-related elements, including the pumps, canopy, sign, and underground storage tanks, will be demolished. (The car wash facility will also cease.) A large, modern petrol station will then be built to the north-east.

The development is substantial, and the new station will offer additional retail space along with two food outlets, one with a drive-thru hatch, a coffee dock, seating area, toilets, and an outdoor play and seating area. There will be parking space for 83 cars, including accessible spaces, and 13 HGV/bus parking spaces, as well as designated parking for motorbikes and cyclists. A new car wash station will be built.

As befits a modern development, the service station will also offer electric vehicle charging points for 36 vehicles, including four HGV charging spaces, making it one of the largest and most advanced charging facilities in the country to service some of the 25,000 vehicles moving east and west each day. A canopy built above the electric charging point will be covered in solar panels. There will also be pumps for existing petro-fuels.

An entrance will be built off the Garbally roundabout to facilitate access. The planning application mentions that the new junction "will also facilitate future access to lands to the north" of the planned site, allowing for the possibility of expansion in the future.

In addition to these developments and supporting infrastructure, new footpaths and a dedicated "active travel" route will be built running along the northern boundary of the site. There will also be outdoor exercise areas.

The developers Petrogas Group Limited state that the proposed development: "provides an opportunity to deliver a modern, well-designed and high-quality roadside facility at a strategic location on the M6 motorway network."



An image from the planning application showing a computer-generated illustration of what the new service station will look like.

"It will replace the existing outdated filling station on the R446 with a purpose-built development that offers a safe, accessible and attractive environment for motorists, professional drivers and the local community."

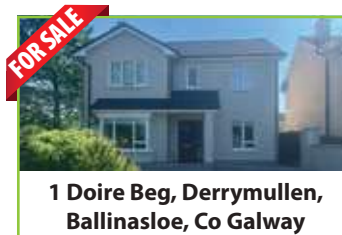
The application was granted subject to 15 conditions, including that the developers: employ an archaeologist to monitor construction; commission a road safety audit prior to development and again when the work is completed; submit a Traffic Management Plan to the council, and limit the hours of construction for road safety reasons and for the peace of nearby residents.



A map showing the location and extent of the development.



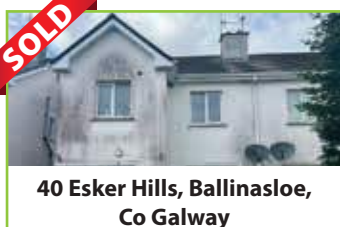
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Launch of Ballinasloe Town Centre First Plan

By Colm Croffy

Galway County Council launched the Ballinasloe Town Centre First Plan recently in the Enterprise Hub on Society Street. The event marked an important milestone in the ongoing regeneration of the town centre and brought together local representatives, community stakeholders and project partners involved in shaping the plan.

The plan has been developed through the Government's Town Centre First Policy. It is funded by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly through the European Regional Development Fund under the THRIVE programme. (THRIVE, the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme, supports locally developed plans that take a strategic approach to town centre regeneration). Anyone interested in viewing the plan can contact lyn@bacd.ie to get a full copy.

The plan provides a community-led framework for revitalising the town centre, supporting economic and social development, addressing vacancy and dereliction, and strengthening Ballinasloe's role as a key urban centre in east County Galway.

The Town Centre First Policy is a national regeneration framework designed to tackle long-term decline in town centres across Ireland and reposition towns. Locally, the plan builds on the town's existing strengths while identifying practical opportunities to support renewal, enhance public spaces, promote active travel, celebrate local heritage and culture, and bring renewed focus to the heart of the town.

The plan is a non-statutory framework, the purpose of which



L-R Front Row Martina Flanagan (TT), Cllr Michael Connolly, Cllr Andrew Reddington, Cllr Dr Evelyn Parsons, Patricia Tierney (TT), Middle Row – L-R Laura Buschman (Hogarth & Co), Sean Kelly (TT), Liam Conneally (CEO Galway Co Co) Back Row – L-R Graham Bartlett (TT), Conor Johnston (TT), Liam Hanrahan (DOS GCC), David Finnerty (TT), Sean Fletcher (TT), Stephen Kerr (TT), MISSING FROM TOWN TEAM, Lyn Donnelly, Joseph Burke & Joe Staunton

is to help prioritise and sequence the delivery of town centre objectives in a coordinated and phased manner, creating a strong pipeline of regeneration projects that can be progressed through appropriate funding opportunities. It was developed in partnership between Galway County Council's Town Regeneration Officer and Regeneration Team, the Ballinasloe Town Team, consultants The Paul Hogarth Company, elected members of the Ballinasloe Municipal District, and the wider local community. Public engagement formed a central part of the process and helped shape the projects and priorities identified in the final plan.

The plan identifies seven key projects focused on the future of the town centre. These projects include the Fair Green Masterplan; River Suck Linear Park; redesign of The Square; development of a Ballinasloe Stories Centre; measures to address vacant and derelict buildings; Healthy Streets walking and cycling strategies; and a coordinated Town Centre Neighbourhood and Backlands Masterplan approach.

Speaking at the launch, Mr Liam Conneally, Chief Executive of Galway County Council, said: "The Ballinasloe Town Centre First Plan provides a clear and practical framework for supporting



L-R DOS Galway County Council Liam Hanrahan, Town Regeneration Officer Hazel Fox, Yvette Keating North West Regional Assembly, Cllr Andrew Reddington, CEO of Galway County Council Liam Conneally, Martina Flanagan and Patrick Devine, North West Regional Assembly

the long-term regeneration of the town centre. It reflects the ambition of the local community and sets out a strong pipeline of projects that can help attract investment, enhance public spaces and strengthen Ballinasloe as a vibrant place to live, work and visit."

Martina Flanagan, Ballinasloe Town Team member, added: "The Town Team welcomes the launch of the Town Centre First Plan and the opportunities it creates to progress projects that reflect local priorities. Community input has been central to the development of the plan, and we look forward to working with partners to bring its vision forward."

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Salmon's Launches New Coffee Spot

By Maria Connolly

Visitors to Salmon's recently will have noticed a change to the front of the store, where a Bewley's coffee machine has been installed, with an attractive space for people to sit and linger over a cup.

The machine can also provide tea and hot chocolate, and sweet treats are available for those who want to indulge. It's the latest innovation for a store that keeps redeveloping. "We thought we had the space, why not try and make better use of it?" says Dermot Salmon, owner of the store.



Salmon's hasn't stood still since Tom and Peggy first opened it in 1962. The couple took over Connolly's newsagent and ran it successfully, before buying the pub next door, Hubie Hardimans, in the early seventies, and extending into it. A further extension followed in 1991, when the store became a supermarket. Following a fire in 2017 that caused extensive damage, the front of the shop was modernised.

Today, as well as the original newsagents and stationery, the shop sells gifts, toys, books, wine, household goods, and essentials. They also have a popular video feature online, "3 things you didn't know we sell at Salmon's" to show the breadth and range of goods they stock. The latest video included items as diverse as car charging cables and stamps.

Dermot, who has been working at Salmon's for over three decades, and managing the store since his father passed away in 2009, relishes the opportunity to change. He says the best thing about running the store is: "the freedom to make decisions, roll the dice [and] take chances."

They chose Bewley's coffee for the store as: "it's one of the best-

known and best-loved Irish coffee brands. We thought it would be a great fit for Salmon's." The machine offers popular coffee drinks like lattes and cappuccinos.

In conjunction with the new coffee spot, Dermot has recently started a book group, which meets once a month. Unlike most book groups, there isn't a set book to read, so people can just turn up and discuss what they have enjoyed reading recently. "It's all about the love of reading," adds Dermot. Members get a 10% discount off tea and coffees as well as books purchased on the day. Anyone interested in joining can email salmonsstore@gmail.com. They are also considering hosting a knitting group if there is sufficient interest. If you would like them to start a group, please email.

The book group joins their already established community activities. For children, there is a Pokémon Play event every week on Saturdays from 1pm, which has proven to be a big hit. They also hold art classes for children every Saturday, 11am - 12.30 pm. For more information, ring the tutor, Michaela on (089) 484 5232. You can also find her on Instagram @michaelamccarrollart. (Please note, children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)

Salmon's is open from 9am - 6pm Monday - Friday and 10am - 6pm on Saturdays. Their website is: <https://salmonsonlinestore.com>. They are on Instagram as @salmonsstore, Facebook as SalmonDepartmentStore, and TikTok as salmonsstoreballinasloe.



Some of the staff at Salmon's enjoying a well-deserved cup of coffee. L-R: Bernie Burke, Heather Rafter, Dermot Salmon, and Carol Hogan.

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BACD Represented At National Development Forum *By Colm Croffy*

Ballinasloe Area Community Development (BACD) was proudly represented at the Dargan Forum 2026 in Dún Laoghaire by Lyn Donnelly and Martina Flanagan.



Regional Development Panel on Regenerating town centres: John Murphy, CE Speedpack Group, Finbarr Daly CE Enterprising Monaghan, Lyn Donnelly, BACD, Trevor Connolly CE Drogheda Bid, Sean Tobin.ie

Lyn was invited to participate as a panellist on the "Playbook for Regional Development - Revitalising Town Centres" discussion, joining leading practitioners from across Ireland to share Ballinasloe's experience of community-led regeneration.

Drawing on initiatives such as the Ballinasloe Enterprise Hub, Town Team projects and collaborative partnerships, Lyn highlighted the practical approaches helping to revitalise Ballinasloe and strengthen the local economy.

Martina attended the event alongside Lyn, meeting with representatives from local authorities, enterprise organisations and community groups from across Ireland while showcasing the innovative work being undertaken in Ballinasloe.

BACD's participation at the national forum reflects the organisation's growing reputation as a leader in regional and community development, with Ballinasloe increasingly recognised as an example of best practice in town regeneration and collaborative local development.

Building on this recognition, Ballinasloe has once again been selected to host the National Hubs Summit on 22 October, following the success of last year's event, welcoming hub managers and stakeholders from across Ireland to the town.



Lyn Donnelly (BACD) Leah Fairman (Connected Hubs) and Martina Flanagan (BACD) attending Day two of the Dargan Forum, which included keynote speakers Olympian Annalise Murphy and Founder of Gourmet Food Parlour Lorraine Heskin

Christmas Lights Funding Challenge

By Maria Connolly

There is a real risk that some areas of Ballinasloe may not be lit to the same extent as previous years due to the limited funding currently available for the 2026 Christmas Lights Campaign.

The voluntary Christmas Lights Sub Committee is now developing a number of fundraising initiatives, including public collection days, draws and the expansion of Forever 80s Galway Radio into a year-round fundraising platform.

The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and currently attracts approximately 8,000 to 9,000 listeners each month. Businesses will be offered a range of annual advertising and programme sponsorship packages, with every euro raised going directly towards the Christmas lights. Packages will begin at €300, providing businesses with valuable

promotional exposure while supporting an important community project. To listen, ask your smart speaker to play forever 80s Galway radio, online at forever80sradio.ie or on your favourite radio app.

The committee hopes these initiatives will help create a more sustainable funding model, as the cost of installing, maintaining, insuring and repairing the lights can no longer be met through the traditional business contribution campaign alone.

Support from local businesses, community groups and the wider public will be essential to ensure that as much of the town as possible can be lit this Christmas. Anyone with fundraising ideas, or who would like to get involved, is encouraged to contact lyn@bacd.ie.

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Baby Massage Classes To Begin

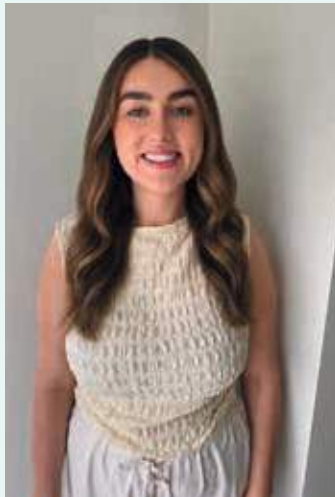
By Maria Connolly

Emily Grehan, an experienced midwife and certified infant massage instructor, is bringing her expertise to the area by offering group infant massage classes and one-to-one sessions. Classes will be running in Moore in September and the waiting list is now open.

Emily, who is originally from Taughmaconnell, and went to school in Ard Scoil Mhuire, studied Midwifery at NUIG, and has worked as a midwife in both Ireland and Australia with most of her experience in postnatal care. "Looking after mums and babies during those precious early days and weeks is something I've always been passionate about," she says. "When I moved home from Australia a few months ago, I knew I wanted to bring something meaningful to my local community for mums and babies. When I discovered infant massage, I knew it was exactly what I had been looking for."

Emily describes baby massage as "a simple practice that combines ancient tradition with modern knowledge with so many positive effects for mothers and babies". She notes that research shows infant massage supports neurological development and it can strengthen a baby's immune system. "It can also help with common problems such as digestion, constipation, trapped wind and colic, while promoting relaxation and better sleep." Emily adds that other benefits include "empowering parents to become more confident in recognising and responding to their baby's cues and handling their babies, and it can strengthen the bond between parent and baby, promoting a secure attachment."

Baby massage classes also offer benefits for parents, too. While working in Australia, Emily noticed how many opportunities there were for mothers to connect while on maternity leave, and how challenging the maternity leave period can be for



mothers here. "Many parents live away from their families, partners are often back at work Monday to Friday, and not everyone has friends with children of a similar age." The classes offer an opportunity for parents to connect with others who are experiencing the same stage of life.

Emily ensures that as well as teaching baby massage, the classes offer time for parents to discuss what they're experiencing. "These conversations encourage parents to share their experiences, support one another, and build friendships. It's also a wonderful opportunity to slow down, switch off from the busyness of everyday life, and enjoy quality one-to-one time with your baby," Emily adds.

Emily is qualified through the International Association of Infant Massage and is a member of Baby Massage Ireland. The latter membership means that those with private health insurance can claim up to €100 back for the classes.

She currently runs group classes in Moore Community Centre and Craughwell Hall. She adds that Moore Community Hall is "a beautiful, newly renovated space, and everyone involved there has been so welcoming and supportive."

As well as group classes, Emily offers one-to-one sessions in the comfort of the family's own home. "This is a lovely option for parents who would like their partner to be involved, or perhaps a grandparent or another family member who wants to learn the techniques too," she says.

If you would like to find out more about the classes or to book a place, you can contact Emily by email: lastingtouchbabymassage@gmail.com or through Instagram: @lastingtouch_babymassage. She regularly posts updates about upcoming classes.



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New Coffee Shop To Open On Society St

By Maria Connolly

Good news for all coffee aficionados: Local musician, Ultan Conlon, is opening a new coffee shop, on Society St in August. The new store "Wagtail", located in the former Bruen Insurance Office, will focus on hand roasted coffees and specialist hot drinks such as matcha and cacao.



Ultan is originally from Loughrea, but he has strong links to Ballinasloe. "I have cousins and family [in the town] and used to spend time here in the summer when I was a boy," he says. His uncle, Raymond, ran the The Corner House on the square, while another uncle, Michael, worked for Mighty Cabs. Another two uncles were nurses in St Brigid's, while his mother also worked there for a short time as a receptionist. "I have always been very fond of the town and its people," Ultan adds.

Ultan is best known as a musician and music was a passion for him from a young age. "I started writing songs as a teenager... and it just so happened to follow me throughout my life. I still perform, write, record and release original music, and love it as much as ever." He adds that when Wagtail opens, he plans to showcase original music "on a semi-regular basis, perhaps monthly."

He did a Post-Leaving Certificate in Music but says that "experience and graft and making my own way" were the most important routes into the industry for him. Highlights of his career include playing in LA with the legendary Jackson Browne, and having renowned folk artists such as Mary Coughlan and John Martyn record his songs. He's also enjoying playing in a show with Eleanor Shanley and Jimmy Higgins, which focuses on the work of Percy French.

One of the aspects of music that he most enjoys is the "sense of community" that comes from playing with friends. "I do believe we need more community in this country in general ...I would like to bring that sense of community to Wagtail and make it a hub for people to swing by and gather for chats in the middle of town."

Ultan already has experience in the coffee industry, having started a coffee trailer with his friend in Castleblakeney two years ago. He says that he loves "the routine and social interactions. Also it is more constant than a career in music so I like the safety of that and the predictability." He adds that he gets many of the ideas for his songs from "people and stories so I'm sure there'll be more than a song or two coming out of my time at Wagtail."



Ultan making coffee in his first coffee business, a coffee truck in Castleblakeney

Coffee will be supplied by David Hynes from Coffeeforty7, who hand roasts in small batches. "Anyone who has tried his coffee can attest to just how good it tastes," Ultan adds. There will be a focus on consistency and ensuring that the quality is high in every cup. There will also be both indoor and outdoor seating.

Ultan ultimately hopes to "create a satisfied customer base and a little hub for people to come and hang out and, most of all, to create a sense of community."

Opening hours are yet to be confirmed, but they will open at 7am Monday - Friday, and will be open at weekends, too. Keep an eye out on social media for further updates.



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Little Still Space Launches

By Maria Connolly

Michele Jennings, originally from Ballinasloe, is bringing her passion for children's wellbeing back to her hometown through the launch of Little Still Space, an online platform designed to help children and families build calm, confidence, and emotional awareness.

Michele began her teaching career locally, teaching in Portumna before later teaching in Creagh National School, and eventually moving overseas to work in Dubai and Australia. Through years of experience working with children across different education systems, Michele began to notice a pattern. Regardless of where she taught, there was very little readily available that parents could easily access and use to support children with emotional wellbeing and regulation.

"As a teacher, I kept seeing the same gap - so many parents wanted to help their children manage big emotions but didn't know where to start," says Michele. "Little Still Space came from wanting to put those tools directly into families' hands, in a way that's simple and doesn't feel overwhelming."

Alongside her teaching career, Michele's own wellbeing journey led her to discover nervous system regulation practices and breathwork. Inspired by the impact these tools had on her own life, she trained as a breathwork facilitator and began exploring how these skills could be taught in simple, child-friendly ways.



Michele Jennings, founder of Little Still Space

"Breathwork and nervous system regulation changed things for me personally, and I couldn't stop thinking about how much earlier children could learn these skills if they were just taught in a way that made sense to them. That's really what Little Still Space is, bringing those tools home to families."

Little Still Space offers calming meditations, breathing practices, and practical tools children can use in everyday life, all available through the Little Still Space app. The app can be accessed via www.littlestillspace.com (it's not available through the Apple Store or the Google Play store.)

Still in its infancy, the platform is already receiving positive feedback from teachers and parents who have begun using it. Michele says: "It's still early

days, but the feedback has been so encouraging. Parents are telling me their children feel calmer using the app, and honestly, a lot of parents say they feel calmer too. That's exactly what I hoped for, tools that support the whole family, not just the children."

Michele recently hosted a series of local wellbeing workshops in Ballinasloe, with more online workshops planned in the future. Updates on upcoming workshops and the app are shared via her Instagram @the.little.still.space.

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Croí Pilates Opens On Main St

By Maria Connolly

Pilates has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years, particularly reformer Pilates, in which people perform exercises on specially designed machines that support the user throughout their practice. The community now has its own reformer Pilates studio in Croí Pilates, which opened recently in the premises vacated by Talking Heads hairdressers.

The studio is owned by Isobel Murray, who is from Moystown, close to Shannonbridge. Her route to becoming a Pilates instructor and studio owner wasn't straightforward: she studied Law and Tax in Limerick before working for an accountancy firm in Dublin and then Limerick. "I soon decided that working in an office wasn't the career for me," she says. While in college she had started training in the gym as a way to de-stress and, "after training in the gym for numerous years, 5 days a week and then working a 9-5 job I felt as though I was living week on week on repeat. So I began reformer Pilates, which I fell in love with instantly."

She trained as a Mat and Reformer Pilates and Barre instructor at Reformation in Dublin, one of the country's leading Pilates and yoga studios. "I wanted to make sure I picked a course that best aligned with my values and gave me a solid foundation... there are so many weekend courses out there [but] it was about investing in my career and clients."

She started teaching at Evolution in Mullingar, and then moved to Evolution in Athlone for a short period. The studio is owned by Natasha Fox and Isobel says: "I will always be grateful for all the knowledge Natasha shared with me when I started teaching and while setting up my own studio."

Isobel chose to open her studio in Ballinasloe as she felt that the town had potential and there was a gap in the market for a Pilates studio. "I wanted to offer something new to the town. When I first viewed the space I immediately knew it was the right fit," Isobel adds.

Pilates has been shown to have numerous benefits including building strength, as well as improving posture, balance, coordination and flexibility. However, Isobel says the mental side of the practice is an equal draw. "As I say to all my clients it's 50 minutes where you can't think of anything else; for anyone who has tried reformer Pilates there's a lot to concentrate on."

"All levels, experience or no experience, are welcome at Croí Pilates," she says. "If you are new to reformer, we have numerous level 1 classes on throughout the week and for anyone with reformer experience there are mixed level classes." She will be adding pre- and post- natal classes to the schedule in the next couple of weeks. Exercises can be tailored to the individual so are suitable for all fitness levels.

Isobel says that the feedback she has received so far from the town has been extremely positive. "Everyone is enjoying the classes and it's great to see people coming back week after week. Everyone has been so welcoming and supportive."

To book a class, download the Mindbody app, or book online at www.pilatescroi.com. Classes are available throughout the week in the early mornings, mid-morning, and evening, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings.



Isobel Murray, founder of Croí Pilates



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Annual Clontuskert Fun Day In August

By Colm Croffy

The Croí Clontuskert Community Development team are looking forward to welcoming everyone to the Clontuskert Fun Day on Sunday 23 August. Running from 2pm - 5pm, the event offers great value with admission just €5 per adult (children go free).

A highlight of the day will be a performance by Seamus Moore and there will be plenty of other live music throughout the afternoon. There will be lots to keep all ages entertained, with a fantastic selection of local sports clubs showcasing their activities and giving visitors the opportunity to have a go. Clubs attending include: Clontuskert rounders, Kiltormer GAA and Camogie clubs, Ballinasloe volleyball club, Kilconnell cricket club, and Ballinasloe badminton club.

For those with a competitive streak, there will be children's races



(L-R): Michael Stapleton, Noel Frehill, Maurice Muldoon, Mairtin O Fatharta, and Teresa Lyons at the 2024 Clontuskert Fun Day.

and a 5-a-side soccer tournament, while younger visitors can also enjoy face painting, an arts and crafts area, and the Hang Tough challenge.

Visitors will also have the chance to learn more about the area's rich history with the Clontuskert Heritage Group while there will be a cake sale, with coffee/tea, ice cream and burgers on sale too.

The Croí Clontuskert Summer Raffle draw will also take place on the day. Raffle tickets are available in advance through iDonate or from any committee member. Funds raised will go towards the refurbishment of the community building at Clontuskert Pitch.

The day promises to be a wonderful community event. Everyone is welcome, so come along and support your community.

St Brigid's For Sale In Autumn

By Colm Croffy

Land and buildings on the former St Brigid's Mental Hospital site deemed surplus to requirements by the HSE are expected to go to market in the autumn. Work is underway to determine what land and buildings will be retained for use by the HSE; the remainder will be put up for sale.

At a recent meeting of The Regional Health Forum West, Fine Gael Councillor, Alan Harney, reiterated his call for a map to be provided outlining the areas that are to be sold. "I can't figure out how those maps could be regarded as commercially sensitive,"

said Cllr Harney. He believes that access to the maps is important for community stakeholders to allow them sufficient time to plan for what they can do with those lands.

The HSE has earmarked parts of the campus to develop an ambulance base and enhanced primary care hub for Ballinasloe. Assistant National Director for Capital and Estates at HSE, Niall, Colleary said that it is a priority project and will be progressed soon.



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Harry Lloyd Wins Gold At The Special Olympics

By Maria Connolly

Family, friends and the wider community rejoiced in the sporting success for a Ballinasloe-based athlete, Harry Lloyd who recently won his first gold at the Irish Special Olympics in his first time at the swimming competition. He has also previously won medals at provincial level.

Harry is from Gortmore in Aughrim, and is the son of Henry and Vanessa Lloyd. He has two sisters, Tiegan and Emily Mae and two brothers, Joshua and Adam. He went to national school in St Catherine's in Aughrim, and then to Garbally College.

He started swimming when he was five. "I love the water and I have made great friends there," Harry says. He joined Special Olympics soon after and trains every Saturday with the Ballinasloe Eagles Special Olympics Club. "Cormac Jennings, Mary Teresa McGrath and Peter Lyons are my coaches", he adds. The team are also supported by Coral Leisure staff.



Harry Lloyd with his mother, Vanessa, at the Special Olympics.

there and lots of dancers and singers and we got to get up and dance" he says. The organisers arranged entertainment for the athletes each night, with one night being a Mama Mia movie evening, while there was a disco on Saturday night.

On his gold medal success, Harry said: "This was the best part of the week. My family were there to see me and so proud of me and my coaches were so delighted. I was so excited, everyone was texting all day to congratulate me. It was the best day of my life."



Harry Lloyd, gold-winning Special Olympian, with extended members of the Hickey family (family on his mother's side).

Harry's neighbours and family organised a large homecoming for him to celebrate his success. "When we arrived home off the motorway, there was a convoy of people, family, friends and neighbours waiting off exit 15 with flags and banners. We drove around the town and out Creagh beeping the car horns in celebration. Many people stood outside their houses waving and cheering. When we arrived to St. Brendan's, there was a bonfire and about 100 people with banners and flags waiting to congratulate me." Following his win, Harry would like to thank his family, coaches, and friends, "and especially my Nanna Maura for bringing me to swimming every week."

When he's not swimming, Harry goes to the Training Options and Personal Education (TOPE) Centre in Ballinasloe, which provides pre-vocational education for those with learning difficulties. "We do lots of educational courses and have lots of fun along the way," he says. He will also be a familiar face to anyone who attends the Ballinasloe Social Services Centre in Brackernagh, where he volunteers. "I love my day in Social Services helping the people there to enjoy their day." In his spare time, Harry also plays basketball with the Special Olympics, and enjoys going out for meals and going to discos and the cinema.



Harry Lloyd with extended members of the Lloyd family.

Harry greatly enjoyed the Special Olympics experience. He particularly liked the opening ceremony in Tallaght stadium. "All of our families were in Tallaght waiting for us with flags and banners. There were over 1,200 athletes taking part, from all over Ireland and we had a great time. The President of Ireland was

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Second Multicultural Festival Enjoys Sunny Success

By Colm Croffy

The Ballinasloe Mid-Summer Multicultural Festival once again proved to be a wonderful celebration of diversity, inclusion and community spirit, with hundreds of people enjoying an afternoon of culture, music, sport and family fun in glorious sunshine.

Hosted across the Emerald Ballroom and Fair Green, the festival featured multicultural cuisine, live music and dance performances, interactive sports and games, emergency services displays, community information and activities for all ages. The event highlighted and showcased Ballinasloe's Multicultural & Sporting communities while bringing people together in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

The organising committee would like to thank everyone who helped make the festival such a success, including SICAP Galway Rural Development, BACD CLG, Gateway Credit Union, Ballinasloe Lions Club, Galway County Council, Galway Sports Partnership, Ballinasloe Tidy Towns, An Garda Síochána, Civil Defence, Fr. Garvey and the Parish Administrators, all participating schools, sports clubs, community organisations, performers, cuisine hosts, volunteers and our MCs, Darren and Brian.

The festival continues to grow each year thanks to the collaboration and commitment of so many organisations and volunteers.

Save the Date: The Ballinasloe Mid-Summer Multicultural Festival will return on Saturday, 19th June 2027, with organisers looking forward to welcoming even more groups and visitors for another fantastic celebration.



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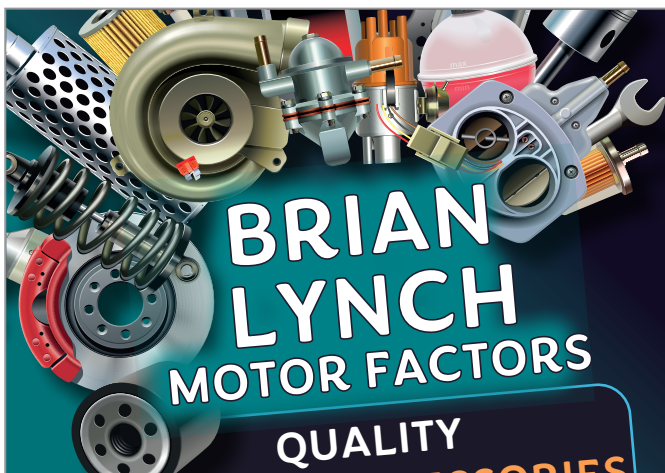
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Town To Benefit From New SIOL Program

By Colm Croffy

Ballinasloe has become one of only two towns in the West along with Ballina and Galway city to be earmarked for priority investment by Government under a new SIOL programme announced this summer.

It delivers on the Programme for Government commitment to establish a new scheme similar in style to the previous RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) programme, where all state agencies work together to implement community development and town-centre rejuvenation.

The new SIOL programme for just 15 towns and cities has been designed based on statistical information available through both the Central Statistics Office and Pobal's deprivation indices outlining levels of deprivation in urban areas. Other analysis conducted by ESRI is also taken into consideration.

A full review of disadvantaged areas has formed part of the analysis that will underpin the new programme to ensure that the funding is targeted at the most disadvantaged areas within the designated towns and cities.

The new programme will be known as SIOL, which translates to "Seed" in English. SIOL stands for Scéim Infheistíochta ag Obair Le Chéile, which is "Working Together Investment Scheme" in English.



Minister for State at the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht Jerry Buttimer TD, Cllr Alan Harney and some members of the Ahascragh Community Development Council at a site visit to Ahascragh Village in spring.

The SIOL programme aims to deliver supports to the urban areas with the highest concentration of disadvantage. Capital funding of €31.5 million has been secured up to 2030 in the National Development Plan to support the scheme and funding of €5m will be available in 2026.

Cllr Alan Harney has welcomed the announcement "This is a very positive announcement and recognition of the need for continued investment in our community. The inclusion of [the town] in the new SIOL Programme presents a significant opportunity to secure funding for projects that can make a real difference to local people."

Cllr Harney added: "Ballinasloe has strong community organisations, dedicated volunteers and local leaders who work tirelessly to improve our communities. This funding programme can help build on that work."

Applications for funding will be accepted from Local Authorities with responsibility for SIOL areas only and the following types of projects will be considered eligible for funding:

- ▶ Community Safety Projects
- ▶ Public Realm works/Built Environment Projects
- ▶ Projects that support health and wellbeing initiatives for communities
- ▶ Funding for projects that support access to education and training in community settings

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Inaugural Brendan McNally Corlann Cup

By Maria Connolly

The first edition of the Brendan McNally Corlann Cup was held recently amid sunshine and showers on the astro turf at Shearwater Hotel Park.

(Corlann was formerly known as the Brothers of Charity). A and B teams from Corlann services in Ballinasloe, Roscommon/Athlone and Loughrea took part in an inclusive - but still very competitive - event, with high levels of skill on display.

The tournament was organised by Aifric Furey, Social Care Worker with Corlann in Ballinasloe. She explained how the event grew out of the very successful soccer programme that Corlann run in the town, which has been going for five years. Last year, they decided to do a pilot tournament, and it went so well that they ran a larger competition this year.

The cup was named after Ballinasloe Town AFC stalwart Brendan McNally, who has formed close relationship with the Corlann players from the locale in recent years. They requested that the tournament be named after him. Brendan, who has been involved with the soccer club in various roles since he first joined at Senior Team Manager in 1980, was moved to be honoured. "Men do shed a tear now and again, and I did. It was an honour and a privilege to be asked", he stated.

At the end of the tournament, the winner of The Brendan McNally Corlann Cup was Roscommon/Athlone A team with joint runners up Ballinasloe A and Loughrea. The winner of the B Team Corlann Cup was Athlone B and runner up was Ballinasloe B team.

Corlann are very appreciative of their main sponsor, Joby Kelly of Joe's Bar for refereeing the tournament.



Brendan McNally, after whom the Corlann tournament is named, at the request of the Ballinasloe teams.



The Ballinasloe A team who participated in the recent inaugural Brendan McNally Corlann Cup. Back row (L-R): Nathan Hall, Henry McGloughlin, Anthony Mullen, and John Loughanne. Front row (L-R): Nathan Murray, Derek Kelly, Patrick McDermot and John Joseph

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Ann Farrell Retires From Creagh NS

By Maria Connolly

Staff, family and friends recently gathered to mark the retirement of Ann Farrell, a Special Education Needs teacher whose 27 years at the school have left a mark on hundreds of children, on the practice of all her colleagues, and given her a reputation that long ago travelled well beyond the walls of Creagh National School.

Ann is the youngest of four from the parish of Mullagh, a daughter of the late MaryJo and James Farrell. She was educated at Coolagh National School, Kilcooley National School and St. Brigid's College, Loughrea. She graduated from St. Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, in 1985.

After a year of substitute posts, Ann settled at St. Joseph's, Lower Illies National School, on the Inishowen peninsula. Thirteen years in Donegal shaped her and colleagues in Ballinasloe would come to recognise the Donegal in her teaching: unfussy, resourceful, and utterly child-centred. She came to Creagh in 1999, at a moment when special education in Ireland was still finding its shape. Ann did not wait for it to settle but kept studying, and acquired numerous qualifications throughout the years.

Ann's achievements have had a tangible impact on Creagh National School. She became the longest-serving Reading Recovery Teacher in the school, and one of the longest-serving anywhere in the region. She was instrumental in establishing both the Literacy Lift Off and Ready Set Maths programmes, initiatives that have since become part of the fabric of the school day. As a member of the In-School Management Team she reshaped the school's assessment practices, insisting that data serve the child rather than the file. Her teaching methods as a Reading Recovery Teacher were very early on recognised as best practice and shared on the PDST/Oide teaching platform — a rare distinction,



Acting Principal Áine Bleahene presents flowers to Ann Farrell at her retirement.



L-R: School Secretary, Ann Haynes, Ann Farrell, and Principal Stephanie Keating (currently on secondment).

and one she mentioned to almost nobody. When teaching, her approach was research-informed and endlessly, patiently refined. Above all, she had a gift for reaching the child in front of her, and teaching through whatever the child already loved: obstacle courses, doll's houses, Lego, trains, or dinosaurs. Nothing was treated as insoluble. Where one strategy did not work she tried another. More than once the solution she arrived at was one that nobody had found before.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Ann's skill became known well beyond Creagh. Teachers from other schools sought her advice. Newly qualified colleagues arrived at her door with a problem and left with a plan. Over 27 years she mentored a generation of teachers, many of them now leading learning-support teams of their own.

Ask the staffroom about Ann and the same words return: organised, passionate, committed, fair, wise, reliable, and generous. For pupils, the effect was simpler and more profound. Children who had decided they could not read discovered, in that small room, that they could. Hundreds of them. Some of those children are now parents themselves, sending their own into Creagh.

Beyond the school gates she is a horsewoman, a skier, a musician of no small ability, and a woman with a considerable and well-hidden sense of mischief.

On her retirement day, Ann said a few words. She spoke of the privilege of the work, of the children who had taught her more than she taught them, and of a profession she would recommend to anyone with the patience for it.

Creagh National School will keep the programmes she built and the practices she embedded. Ann will be greatly missed by staff, pupils and parents alike, who wish her every happiness in a retirement she has earned many times over.

Toastmasters Visitor from Princeton

By Maria Connolly

The local Toastmasters group is going from strength to strength as they continue their meetings on the second and fourth Thursdays from 7pm – 9pm every month in the Enterprise Hub on Society Street.

Each meeting gives members the opportunity to develop and grow their confidence, their public-speaking abilities and their leadership skills. Each meeting is one where "first times" are experienced and celebrated. At a recent meeting, Trevor Wood became Meeting Toastmaster for the first time, Eileen Reddan had an inspiring ice-breaker speech, while Brendan Harding entertained on the tin whistle in Creative Corner for the first time.

A significant highlight was the two recent visits by Championship of Public Speaking Semi-finalist, Viv Tyndall, to Ballinasloe Toastmasters. He is a prominent member of Princeton Toastmasters in the United States. He used the meetings to test-deliver speeches and was thankful for the feedback at both events.



Toastmasters: Viv Tyndall, a visitor from Princeton Toastmasters, with members of the Ballinasloe Toastmasters group. (L-R): Brendan Harding, Chris Collins, Viv Tyndall, Trevor Woods, Siobhan Keenan Fitzgerald, and Therese Kinahan.



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Fohenagh Walking Football

By Maria Connolly

FKK Utd Walking Football club was launched in Fohenagh earlier this year by local sports enthusiasts Gerry Greaney and Eamon Touhy, and is already proving popular with numbers growing each week. Everyone over 50, both male and female, are welcome, and the club are particularly keen to stress to women that they can also join in the fun!

Walking Football is one of the fastest-growing sports for older adults. The game is played at a walking pace, making it safer and more accessible while still providing all the enjoyment, teamwork and excitement of football.

Sessions take place every Tuesday evening 7pm – 8pm at Fohenagh Community Pitch, and are open to all, regardless of experience or ability. The message from organisers is simple: just turn up and join in. Whether you played football for years, have not kicked a ball in decades, or have never played before, there is a place for you.

All sessions are free, and no equipment is needed – even football boots are optional. Players can attend whenever it suits them. The sessions include a warm-up before play and a warm-down afterwards, helping players to stay active safely and without injury.

The benefits of walking football extend beyond the pitch. Regular participation helps improve fitness, mobility, balance and overall physical health. Equally important are the positive effects on mental health and wellbeing. Being part of a team, meeting friends, sharing a laugh and staying socially connected can make a real difference to people's lives.

Those involved with the club hope the initiative will bring people together from across the community, creating new friendships while promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

So if you're over 50 and looking for a great way to stay active, meet people and have some fun, head to Fohenagh Community Pitch, H53 C8P4. You can find the club on Facebook as FKK United.



Some of the competitors at Fohenagh Walking Football.



Pictured are some of the players at Fohenagh Walking Football.

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Fifth Out Of 40 Towns In Anti-Litter League

By Colm Croffy

Ballinasloe scored an "excellent" result on its return to the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) Anti-Litter League. The results of it were released recently. Overall, the town was judged to be "cleaner than European norms", with all sites assessed scoring either a Grade A or grade B, and there were no heavily littered sites. It was the highest-ranked location in Galway, and joint fifth out of the 40 towns visited in 2026.

The Anti-Litter League, which is run in partnership with the environmental group An Taisce, sees independent inspectors from An Taisce visit towns and cities across Ireland and grade them according to international standards. The results are then presented in league format.

The Anti-Litter League is credited with drastically reducing litter in towns and cities since its inception in 2002. That year, the inaugural survey showed less than 10% of towns were categorised as "clean to European norms". This year, over 75% of towns met the designation. Ballinasloe was absent from the survey for four years, but returned to it in 2026.

Within Ballinasloe, 10 sites were surveyed. Six received an A grade, two were graded as B+, and two were graded as B. The A grade sites were: The R348 Approach road; The Ballinasloe Harbour/Marina; The Deposit Return Scheme at Lidl; Ballinasloe Horse Fair Monument and Environs; The R38 Approach, and Willow Park.

The Harbour/Marina site received particular praise for "a complete absence of litter" and all aspects of the harbour – seating, signage, and facilities – being "in excellent condition". The Horse Fair Monument and Environs were described as: "striking" and "very well presented and maintained." Meanwhile,



Pictured are volunteers from Tidy Towns who are preparing to pick litter.

the R348 Approach Rd was rated as "a fresh and welcoming approach" to the town.

The two sites which received the B+ grade were the R446 approach and the Lidl Shopping Centre. The first displayed litter from plastic bags and sweet papers, while the second had "too many small items for the top litter grade."

The two sites rated B were the Recycle Bank, near the Marina, and Main St. Main St was praised for its street elements, which were "freshly

presented", but again, there was too much litter for it to receive a higher grade. There were discarded bags and some broken glass near the recycling bank at the marina.

Reacting to the results, Cllr Evelyn Parsons, Chair of the MDC congratulated everyone involved in the Ballinasloe Tidy Towns association, businesses and community volunteers on the "very encouraging results". She added: "The [IBAL] Litter survey 2026 shows urban areas are continuing to clean up. It's great to see ongoing improvements and to note areas for continued focus. Minding the environment is everyone's business and responsibility."



Tidy Towns volunteers on a sunny morning preparing for litter-picking duty.



A volunteer clears litter from the landscaped areas outside Tesco and Costa Coffee.

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Emma O'Reilly Returns With New Group

By Maria Connolly

Ballinasloe's own Emma O'Reilly has a busy summer ahead, with the release of a new EP, *Sailing Home*, and a tour with her new group, The Céadaoin Collective, on the cards. An acclaimed singer-songwriter and performer, this will be Emma's first tour around the country in ten years.

Emma's upbringing in Ballinasloe meant she was engaged in the arts from a young age. Her time at Gaelscoil Uí Cheithearnaigh through to her secondary education at Ardscoil Mhuire provided regular opportunities to perform. Beechlawn resident Emma also studied piano with Marie Power, as well as performing with the Ballinasloe Musical Society. She went on to study Music at Trinity College Dublin, before releasing her first EP in 2009.

Over the following years, Emma released two further records as an independent artist. Following the release of *SHAKE* (2017) - and with her landlord in Dublin increasing the rent by 52% - Emma relocated to Norwich and started working as a busker. She also launched a Patreon page and began experimenting with live-streaming.

Since that time, Emma has been preparing her most recent releases - *Maris*, *Stella* (2025), and the forthcoming EP, *Sailing Home*. *Maris*, *Stella* came out last year as a suite of artworks - a song, a music video, and an interactive online exhibition. Emma wanted to create a digital experience where fans could explore the world of a single song. *Sailing Home* is set for digital



Emma O'Reilly. Credit: Andi Sapey.

release on Friday 14 August. The EP delves much more into folk than Emma's previous releases, inspired by her own heritage and the more experimental approaches of contemporary artists like Bon Iver.

This sound inspired Emma to seek a new approach for performance, and The Céadaoin Collective was created. The group deals in Irish traditional/contemporary folk and includes: Robert Harvey, a champion flautist and Irish traditional music royalty; Carmel Whelan, a highly sought-after vocalist, composer, and choral director; Andrew Kin Yip Yau, an accomplished performer and orchestral musician, and Niall Mannion, a widely respected violinist and

pianist. Each member of the group is a multi-instrumentalist.

Their tour around Ireland has dates in Dublin, Sligo, Moate, and a very special evening in Ballinasloe. On Friday 28 August, the group will perform at Brewery Lane, with a programme that features the first full performance of Emma's new EP in arrangements exclusive to the group. It will also feature new music from Whelan, traditional selections from Harvey, and new arrangements of folk tunes by Andrew Kin Yip Yau. You can buy tickets for the Brewery Lane gig here: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/brewerylane/2305772>

To see more about the tour, make sure to follow Emma and the group on social media: @ceadaoincollective, or see their official website: <https://ceadaoincollective.my.canva.site/>



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Three Generations, One Peak

By Maria Connolly

Ballinasloe resident Liam Roche recently conquered Carrauntoohil at the age of 76. This marked his 15th successful ascent of Ireland's highest peak.

This wonderful achievement was made even more special because he was accompanied by his son Steve, grandson Kegan and future daughter-in-law Rochelle. Liam also brought some friends, ranging in age from 12 to 76, along for the ride. A most memorable and special day was enjoyed by all.

Liam's wife, Judith, was in Killarney to support the hikers and celebrate the great feat. Both Liam and Judith are members of Rosway walking club and have led many hikes and weekends away in Ireland over the years.

Liam insists that he has now 'peaked' and will stick to flatter ground from now on. Those who know this inspirational man also know that he's unlikely to be that sensible. To quote Liam: "We're not here for a long time, make sure you have a good time and endeavour that every day is a day well spent."



(L-R): Stephen Roche, Rochelle Trappe, Liam's grandson Kegan, and Liam Roche on the climb to Carrauntoohil.

Caltra Fitness Classes A Success For Corlann

By Maria Connolly

Caro Day Service, part of Corlann (formerly the Brothers of Charity) has offered its annual fitness programme at Caltra Community Centre. The 6-week programme was a huge success, and was attended by 33 participants across two sessions.

The classes began in 2016 to fill a gap in local sports as there were limited opportunities for people with additional needs to join clubs and groups. They have grown every year since. The programme offers tailored exercise and movement specifically designed for people with additional needs. Sessions modify GAA, basketball, and athletics drills, beginning with a musical warm-up and ending with popular parachute games.

The programme concludes with two major memorial trophies honouring original 2016 participants who have sadly passed away. This year's winner of The Mary B. Dillon Award for individual merit is Declan Briscoe. Oakglen won The Mary Lennon Award for best group.



The overall winners of the Mary Lennon group award, from Oakglen. (L-R): Damian Clarke, Corlann staff member, Gerard Lyons, Niall Bannerton, John Joseph, Margaret Slattery, Adam Clogher, and James Murphy, Corlann staff member.

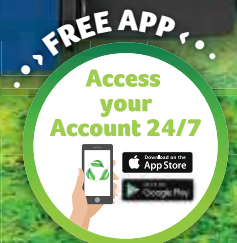
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SUAS Services Host Open Day

By Maria Connolly

On a day of blazing sunshine, Corlann's SUAS Services opened its doors to show Ballinasloe the facilities they have developed in their new location in the last remaining original building of the old Workhouse - behind Mr. Price.

SUAS, which stands for Support, Upskill, Advocate, Socialise, is a service for adults with intellectual disabilities located in the town and run by Corlann (formerly the Brothers of Charity). They moved to their new building, which is centrally located, in July 2024. Their previous building in the town was no longer fit for purpose, says Geoff Quinlan, SUAS Services Manager and Social Work Team Leader.

There was substantial work to do on the new buildings, too, when they received the lease. "You could see from one end of the [main] building to the other," Geoff says. SUAS, which is fully funded by the HSE, set about turning the space into a truly comprehensive and person-centred facility.

There is a large meeting room used for training and regular activities such as the Monday singing group, supplemented by two calming therapy rooms that host smaller group training sessions and one-to-one therapy sessions. A large kitchen with two cookers allows for cooking and meal preparation classes. The space is decorated throughout with artwork from people supported. Upstairs provides space for offices, a staff kitchen, and a second, smaller meeting room.

A second building, formerly used as staff toilets and changing rooms when it was Crazy Prices/Tesco, has been transformed into a recreation room. It includes a large TV, a pool table that can be flipped to become an air hockey table, and an Xbox. Meanwhile, the old trolley bay has been repurposed into a workshop and art space that has been creatively redecorated by the people supported.

SUAS have made a huge effort to ensure that the service is as inclusive as possible, and that the people supported are at the heart of everything they do. "All of our best ideas [for activities]



Pictured in the recreation room are some of the staff at SUAS. Pictured L-R are: Sarah Reynolds, Verona McGivern, Carmel O'Neill, Niall Woods.

come from the people we support," says Geoff. They hold an annual AGM for people supported and their families, and those who use the service are asked to contribute their ideas on what they would like to achieve. These can range from one-off visits to a chocolate factory or the Oireachtas to suggestions for regular activities, like the singing group previously mentioned. Users of the service can also take part in schemes like EmployAbility.

The people supported are all enthusiastic about the services SUAS provides. One said: "I like coming to SUAS because I meet up with my keyworker and have a chat with her. I like to go to the sing along classes, the jewellery making, the basketball class, bocce class, gaming group, the baking group and the Friday sessions and meet new people." Another adds: "It is good to try out new opportunities that we may not get to try out in our community." A third person added that they enjoyed: "Making new friends, going on outings/nights away that we may have never went to before, like Mondello Park".

SUAS services are open to anyone with a diagnosis of an intellectual disability living in the Ballinasloe region. For more information, please contact SUAS Services on 090 964 6400 or call in to see them. The service is located directly behind Mr Price on Sarsfield Rd, H53 A2X9.

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Moore National School Class of '95 Support Friend *By Maria Connolly*

The graduating class of 1995 from St Ciaran's National School, Moore came together recently with the wider community to show solidarity with their classmate Eoin Egan, who is living with Motor Neurone Disease (MND). A 5km walk took place at the Moore United grounds, with people asked to bring a torch or battery candle to help "Shine a light for Eoin".

Eoin, who now lives in London with his wife, Jenny, and their two young children, was diagnosed in 2020. He had been enjoying a hugely successful career in architecture and property consultancy when he started to notice some twitching in his legs. Following tests, Eoin was given the news that he had the rapidly progressing disease, which has no cure. He was also told that he had approximately two years to live.



Eoin with his siblings, Emmet and Ethel

Eoin was distraught. "I was thinking how am I going to manage my wife through this? And the kids? Liam was two and a half and Róisín was only nine months old. I guess our true greatness is how we respond in times of great adversity. My sole focus became preparing and setting up my family for a future without me," Eoin said.

As Eoin's disease progressed, he lost the ability to speak. However, amazing advances have been made in technology in recent years. He had recorded a sample of his voice previously and "last autumn, a new artificial intelligence technology became available that could be used to generate a new voice clone from a small sample of my voice," he said. "It is indistinguishable from my original voice that I lost."

Eoin also has a Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) from Elon Musk's Neuralink company implanted in his brain. This allows him to communicate with external devices such as computers through thought alone. The technology means that he can continue to run his commercial property business as he can easily communicate through email.



Eoin with his wife Jenny, and children Roisin and Liam

Eoin has also been involved in developing pioneering, life-changing technology that allows him to move his wheelchair through thought alone. He and his wife Jenny built a rough prototype at home, and then German technology company Homebrace came on board to build bespoke software that could work with his BCI laptop. The technology is now being presented at conferences, and it's hoped that it will be able to aid others in the future.

Following the walk, Eoin said: "I am incredibly lucky to have such a kind-hearted and fabulous group in my class at St Ciaran's NS, Moore. This event says more about you than anything I ever could. I could never have dreamed that anything like this would happen. I certainly don't feel alone or forgotten, quite the opposite. Thank you all for this expression of solidarity and love, it really means the world to me."

The event raised just over €2,900 but is just the start of the community's support for Eoin. The class of '95 have now set up a fundraising page where people can donate to support Eoin and his family, with 100% of the proceeds raised going to them. You can donate here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/shine-a-light-for-eoin>

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Former St Teresa's Principal Honoured

By Maria Connolly

The former Principal of St Teresa's Special School, Anita O'Reilly, along with the former Chairperson and some former board members, was honoured at a recent appreciation evening held by the acclaimed school.

Anita was the founding Principal of the school and led it from 2008 – 2024. The school originally had 11 children spread across three different sites (one in Portumna and two in Ballinasloe).

Anita was indefatigable in her search for one suitable building for the school. "If there was a building with a door, she knocked on it," said Breda Kearns, the current Chairperson of the St Teresa's Board of Management. After her extensive search, she found space in Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre.

During Anita's time in charge, the numbers of children enrolled grew from 11 to 47 pupils. She not only managed the school,

but taught classes at the same time for many years. She campaigned tirelessly for more resources and classrooms for the pupils and was able to secure the school's current modern and bright modular facilities.

Anita was able to handle assorted crises, such as the one in 2019 when the school's insurance bill jumped to €26,000.

Anita and the then-Chairperson, Gerry Haslam, fought "tooth and nail" to have the bill reduced.

Breda finished by thanking Anita for "her vision, her grit, her humour, and her unstoppable determination... We wish you a retirement full of health, happiness, and – of course – a wee bit of devilment."

The school also honoured their former Chairperson, Gerry Haslam, an experienced nurse. He has also worked for Ability West and currently works with Communicare Health Care, meaning that "his knowledge of intellectual disability services is unmatched". He was absolutely committed to the role, and "[brought] fairness and balance to even the toughest situations."

The school also thanked former Board members, Ken Campbell, Gerry Blake, Bernadette O'Halloran, Pdraig Lawless, Noel Madden, and Geraldine Clarke, as well as Parent Representative, Shirley Larkin, who was stepping down from the board at the end of term.

Breda thanked them for their ceaseless efforts for the school, and for their expertise.



Retired Principal Anita O'Reilly & current Principal Kieran Stenson



Chair of St. Teresa's Board of Management Breda Kearns, Retired Principal Anita O'Reilly, current Principal Kieran Stenson



Chair of St. Teresa's Board of Management Breda Kearns, Retired Chairperson Gerry Haslam, current Principal Kieran Stenson



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Seaimpíní Chonnachta Arís!

By Maria Connolly

Some of the pupils from Rang a 5 and Rang a 6 in Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh recently headed back west to take part in the Féile Peile Geal Linn in Leitir Móir. The children competed in the two-day event against teams from other Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools in Connacht. While there, the children got to soak up the atmosphere of the Gaeltacht as they attended a céilí, listened to some trad music, took part in a table quiz and stayed overnight with two local families. This experience offered the children an opportunity to speak and celebrate the Irish language outside of the classroom.

On the pitch they showed wonderful team spirit and played with great energy in spite of the heatwave. They won all four matches, which secured them a place in the final against Scoil Iognáid. Under the great leadership of Múinteoir Nioclás and Jodi, Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh triumphed in the final, which meant they retained their Connacht title for the second year in a row.

The school is so proud of all the children who represented Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh at the event and they look forward to taking part in more fantastic events run by Gael Linn in the future.



Pupils from Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh who recently won their Connacht title at a football blitz for Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools in Connacht.



Pupils from Rang a 2 in Scoil Uí Cheithearnaigh who celebrated their First Holy Communion recently.

Ballinasloe Community Creche

By Maria Connolly

The children were all smiles as the outdoor area was specially decorated for the day with bunting, balloons, Chinese lanterns and banners, and each child was given a book of their work to take home. Following the graduation ceremony – complete with red carpet – there was dancing for all.

The crèche provides quality and affordable childcare in the town. It is currently oversubscribed and has an extensive waiting list, but they are hoping to build three additional rooms by Christmas. The additional rooms will increase the crèche capacity by 50%, bringing the total number of children supported to 120.



Staff Ellen Ward, Agnieszka Kubecka and Laura Coughlan with the pre-school graduating class from Ballinasloe Community Creche.



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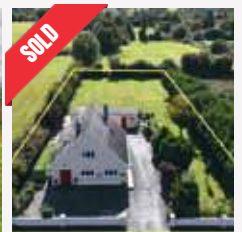
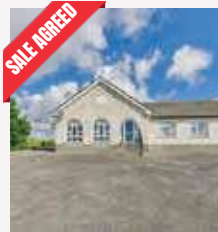
At Sheehy Meares Team McCullagh, we are proud to continue supporting property owners across Ballinasloe and the wider region with professional residential, commercial and land sales together with valuations and property advice.

Our experienced team combines strong local market knowledge with modern marketing strategies including aerial photography, virtual tour technology and extensive online exposure to help our clients achieve the best possible results.

With offices and support teams across Ballinasloe, Roscommon, Athlone, Galway and Dublin, we offer both local expertise and wider market reach while maintaining a personal and professional approach throughout every transaction.

Whether you are considering selling, require a valuation, or simply want confidential advice regarding your property in **2026**, our team is always happy to have a conversation.

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- ✓ Investment properties



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Corlann's Rainbow Services (formerly the Brothers of Charity) held an Ice Cream Fun Day fundraiser in aid of Down Syndrome Ireland, raising €404.16. (L-R) Mary Dillon, Helen Kelly, Lesley Kelly, Harry Lloyd, John Finnerty, and Marina Coughlan.



The former first couple - Michael D. Higgins and wife Sabina dined in the Bianconi Restaurant in Gullanes Hotel on Saturday evening this summer - much to the delight of Tomas, Graeme and staff!



CLr Alan Harney at the opening of Pembroke House. The new 358m2 house is a residential unit for four adults, providing specialised support for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and associated co-morbidities.



Birthday boy and popular Ballinasloe man, Mike Coughlan was joined by his family and friends at a party in the golf club to celebrate his milestone birthday event.



Local Chanteuse Rachel Goode pictured on the night she was selected as "Soprano/Classical entertainer of the year" at this year's Irish Entertainment Awards at a Gala evening in Donegal in late June.



Staff at Creagh National School at the retirement of Ann Farrell after 27 years at the school.



Athlone Triathlon Club who completed the European Multisport Championships. (L-R) Lynette Costello, Tom Dully, Éilis Treacy, Diarmuid Cannon, Aoife Mulry, Niamh Murphy, Noel O'Regan, Maevé O'Reilly, Colette Finneran, Rachel Gillivan, Pat Fox, Andy McNamara. Éilis Treacy, Aoife Mulry, and Colette Finneran all have Ballinasloe connections.



Coral Leisure Ballinasloe chose Jack and Jill Foundation as their charity partner for 2026, and as one of the many fundraising events taking place this year they recently threw an Epic Summer Party Night in the Shearwater hotel. There were prizes for best fancy dress, many games and raffle prizes. Overall, the event raised €920 for the charity.





Carol McCarthy pictured presenting the Peter McCarthy Memorial Cup to Michael Lynch winner of the Ballinasloe Golf Club Seniors Matchplay Competition.



Pictured at the Senior Hurling Squad Homecoming on the fair green - Stalwart Galway Supporter Joe Kelly and Galway Bay FM's Sports Head - Cllr. Ollie Turner !!



Liz Keane, County and City Librarian and Jo Vahey, Senior Executive Librarian at the launch of "This Matters to Me", an exhibition celebrating the creative voice of babies and young children in Ballinasloe Library.



(L-R): Karen Been, Damien Clarke, Staff member with Corlann, President Catherine Connolly, Patrick McDermott, and Shane McDermott.



Group photo of Cuimsiú Musicians joined by President Catherine Connolly on Bodhrán



Back row (L-R): Jeff Smith, Chairperson of Connacht Cricket Union; Steve Wood, Secretary of Connacht Cricket Union; John O'Dea from Connacht Cricket Union; Abhishek Nair from Shamrock Cricket Club, and Kevin O'Brien.
Front row (L-R): Anu Mohandas Nair, Kilconnell Cricket Club; Danish Khan, Athlone Town Cricket Club; Alhaj Safi of Shamrock Cricket Club; Prince Yadav, Shamrock Cricket Club, and Khpalwak Mamood of Athlone Town Cricket Club.



Kieran Larkin from Creagh, has created this striking planter for Corlann (formerly the Brothers of Charity) where he works. With a Diploma in Gardening and Garden Design, he enjoys turning simple or recycled materials into attractive and functional garden features. The flower box and bird feeder featured were created as part of an ongoing effort by Corlann to develop a sensory garden where the people supported can relax, connect with nature, and enjoy the changing seasons. Kieran adds that: "For me, gardening is about much more than plants—it's about creating environments that promote calm, wellbeing, and enjoyment for everyone."



Andreea Popescu, who took part in the Community Games Art Competition and won first place for Ballinasloe in the U14 category for girls. She also won 2nd place in the Community Games Art Competition County Finals. She will now go on to the National Art Finals on 5 September.



Catherine Celebrates 103rd Birthday. Mayo native Catherine now living in Ballinasloe for many years, grand mother and mother of 3. (sadly her eldest son died in 2024). Born 19th July 1923. "The state only recognised it on the 25th that's when she was registered". When her husband passed away, Catherine volunteered at the Ballinasloe Social Services, cycling all the way there and back again Catherine's people originally came from Partry in Co. Mayo, she is related to the late Monsignor Horan - the man who made the impossible dream possible by building an airport in Knock.

AUGUST EVENTS GUIDE

August 1, Saturday

Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
DJ Colm	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Live Music	10pm	Joes Bar

August 2, Sunday

Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live in the Marquee: Nathan Carter	8pm	JJ Killeens
Red Tape	10pm	Brewery Lane
High Reel	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
John Finnerty	10pm	Joes Bar

August 3, Monday

Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 4, Tuesday

Breastfeeding Support Group	10am - 11.30am	Youth Work, Marina Point
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 5, Wednesday

Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Monthly Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens

August 6, Thursday

Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar

August 7, Friday

Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Down the Road	10pm	Brewery Lane

August 8, Saturday

Local Musicians Festival	5pm	Bsloe Fusion Restaurant
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Meet the Fawkers	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Kevin Barrett	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Double Bill	10pm	Joes Bar

August 9, Sunday

Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Pa Shiel	6pm - 8pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Noel Solo	7pm	Joes Bar
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live DJ	8pm - 11pm	Brewery Lane

August 10, Monday

Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 11, Tuesday

Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 12, Wednesday

Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens

August 13, Thursday

Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Agri Kids	11am - 4.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar

August 14, Friday

Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Jukebox John	10pm	Brewery Lane

August 15, Saturday

Irish history podcast launch	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
A History of the Irish Harp	2.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
3 Men & a Bass	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Some Craic	10pm	Joes Bar

August 16, Sunday

Bttlefield at Aughrim Guided Tour	11am	Bttle.of Aughrm Vstrir Centr
Heritage Week Event	5pm	Clontuskart Comm Hub
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Pa Shiel	6pm - 8pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Split the G	7pm	Joes Bar
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live DJ	8pm - 11pm	Brewery Lane

August 17, Monday

Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 18, Tuesday

Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
GCC Architec Conservation Officer	2:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 19, Wednesday

Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens

August 20, Thursday

Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
A Talk on the Curlew	5:00pm	Ballinasloe Library
Workshop: Exp the curlew thru art	6pm	Ballinasloe Library
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar

August 21, Friday

Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge

Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
The Flynns	10pm	Brewery Lane

August 22, Saturday

Live in the Marquee: Derek Ryan	8pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Beggars Velvet	10pm	Brewery Lane
Katie Henshaw and Mike Flynn	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Boogie Men	10pm	Joes Bar

August 23, Sunday

Wlk Thru Bsloe's Histry & Heritage	1pm - 2.30pm	Ballinasloe Library
Clontuskurt Fun Day 2026	2pm - 5pm	Clontuskurt Pitch
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Pa Shiel	6pm - 8pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Adrian Hiney	7pm	Joes Bar
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live DJ	8pm - 11pm	Brewery Lane

August 24, Monday

Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 25, Tuesday

Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom

August 26, Wednesday

Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens

August 27, Thursday

Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar

August 28, Friday

Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Céadaoin Collective	7.30pm - 11.30pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Adam & Sean	10pm	Brewery Lane

August 29, Saturday

Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Meet the Fawkers	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Blue Orchid	10pm	Joes Bar

August 30, Sunday

Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Pa Shiel	6pm - 8pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Dave Mills	7pm	Joes Bar
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live DJ	8pm - 11pm	Brewery Lane

August 31, Monday

Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom

SEPTEMBER EVENTS GUIDE

September 1, Tuesday		
Breastfeeding Support Group	10am - 11.30am	Youth Work, Marina Point
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 2, Wed		
Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Monthly Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens
September 3, Thurs		
Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
September 4, Friday		
Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
All Folk'd Up	9pm	Bsloe Fusion Restaurant
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Beggars Velvet	10pm	Brewery Lane
September 5, Saturday		
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Tongue and Groove	10pm	Joes Bar
September 6, Sunday		
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Landslide	7pm	Joes Bar
Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds	10pm	Brewery Lane
September 7, Monday		
Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 8, Tuesday		
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 9, Wed		
Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens
September 10, Thurs		
Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Shear Country Concert	Doors 7:00pm/ Show 7.30pm	Shearwater Hotel
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
September 11, Friday		
Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens

Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Jukebox John	10pm	Brewery Lane
September 12, Saturday		
Indie Authors Ireland Event	10am - 4pm	Shearwater Hotel
1925 All-Ire. Champs Com Plaque	3.30pm	Entrance to Duggan Park
Invibles.Steve Dolan bklet launch	6pm	Gullanes Hotel
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
3 Men & a Bass	10pm	Brewery Lane
Rhythm'n Keys	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Joe Flynn	10pm	Joes Bar
September 13, Sunday		
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Pa Shiel	6pm - 8pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Dave Mills	7pm	Joes Bar
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Live DJ	8pm - 11pm	Brewery Lane
September 14, Monday		
Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 15, Tuesday		
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 16, Wed		
Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens
September 17, Thurs		
Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
September 18, Friday		
Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Robbie	10pm	Brewery Lane
September 19, Saturday		
Gavin James Live at the Big Top	7pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Beggars Velvet	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Shea'd	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Live Music	10pm	Joes Bar
September 20, Sunday		
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Boogie Men	7pm	Joes Bar
September 21, Monday		
Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 22, Tuesday		
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library

Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 23, Wed		
Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
Live Traditional and Folk Music	9pm	An Táin
Live Music	9.30pm	JJ Killeens
September 24, Thurs		
Yoga with Ju	10am - 11am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Ciorcal Comhrá	11am - 12pm	Gullanes Hotel
Stpmother.Shea Bugler bk launch	3pm	Salmons Department Store
Board Game Evening	7pm	Ballinasloe Library
Beginners Tennis	7pm - 8pm	Ballinasloe Tennis Club
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	7pm - 9pm	Emerald Ballroom
Folk & Trad Session	9pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
September 25, Friday		
Yoga with Ju	7.30am - 8.30am	Upstairs at Jorena's Shop
Indoor Country Market	9am - 1pm	Social Centre
Lego Drop-In Session	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Ballinasloe Library
Live Music	9pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Find the Joker	10pm	An Táin
Down the Road	10pm	Brewery Lane
September 26, Saturday		
Bsloe Horse & Agricultural Show	All Day	Ballinasloe Showgrounds
Wolfhound	9pm	Bsloe Fusion Restaurant
Live Music	9.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Meet the Fawkers	10pm	Brewery Lane
Live Music	10pm	JJ Killeens
Live Music	10pm	Gibbons Pillar House Bar
Live Music	10pm	Millars Bar
Live Music	10pm	Fallons Bar
Blue Orchid	10pm	Joes Bar
September 27, Sunday		
Bsloe Horse & Agricultural Show	All Day	Ballinasloe Showgrounds
Live Traditional and Folk Music	6pm	An Táin
Live Music	6.30pm	Lukers, Shbridge
Live Music	7pm	JJ Killeens
Split the G	7pm	Joes Bar
September 28, Monday		
Men's Shed Meeting	10am - 2pm	Cullens Yard, Main Street
Bsloe Act.Retire. Knitting session	10.30am - 12.30pm	Gullane's Hotel
Bsloe Act.Retire. Bowling	10.30am - 12.30pm	Emerald Ballroom
Bsloe Active Ret Aerobics	2pm - 3pm	Coral Leisure Centre
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 29, Tuesday		
Learn English with Fáilte Isteach	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Aerobics	7pm - 8pm	Coral Leisure Centre
Bridge Club	7.30pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfields
Ballinasloe GAA Bingo	8pm	Emerald Ballroom
September 30, Wed		
Free Duplo Play Morning	11am	Ballinasloe Library
Social Bridge	11am - 1pm	Bridge Rooms, Sarsfield
Crafty Girls Craft Group	11.15am	Ballinasloe Library
Baby Rhyme Time	11.30am	Ballinasloe Library
Bsloe Act.Retire. Meeting	3.00pm	Gullanes Hotel
IKKI Karate	7pm - 8pm	Emerald Ballroom
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TOWN AND SURROUNDS SALUTE OUR HURLING STARS



Award-Winning TV Producer

By Maria Connolly

Caoimhe Louise Willimoies, a Danish-born TV producer with local connections, has recently received prestigious awards for two different documentaries she produced.

Although Danish by birth, Caoimhe has roots in Creagh. Caoimhe's grandmother, Maureen Casey, lives in Portnick and is still active in the town although now in her eighties. Her father, Kevin Casey, went to Creagh N.S. followed by Garbally College. He is now a journalist based in Brussels. Her great-grandfather, Gus Hynes, worked in St Brigid's hospital and was involved in setting up the town's credit union.

Caoimhe spent many of her summers and Christmases in with her relatives and she says the town "has a special place in my heart... growing up, my Dad and I would make short films on his handheld camera in my Granny's backyard in Portnick. Little did I know what that would one day lead to!"

The town was also important to her professionally. "One of my first documentaries was shot in part in Ballinasloe mart and Poolboy bog" she explains. "We spoke with farmers about their experiences, a fun and colourful experience. The other story was about hydropower vs turf. Galway has an ambitious plan about using hydrogen power in the future; meanwhile, we were also looking into the other side of the coin, which was about turf's role in Irish culture, how it is being outfaced and how this 'black gold' brings a lot of memories for people working in the bogs."

While a Producer with TRT World, Caoimhe worked on the multi-award-winning production, "Beyond Borders". The documentary

series looks in detail at headlines from across the world, offering a first-person perspective on current affairs.

Caoimhe and her colleagues won two silver awards for a Beyond Borders production at The Telly Awards, a celebrated US-based awards that receive over 13,000 entries globally from all six continents. Their winning documentary, 'Death Row USA', examines the death penalty in Ohio. Caoimhe was also part of the team that won the bronze award at the New York Festival TV and Film Awards for a documentary about the indigenous Sami people in Norway titled 'Land, language and loss'.

Caoimhe says that recognition: "means the world to me, because telling stories is my passion and powerful storytelling can make an impact for the better... the most important thing is to recognise the people who opened up to us. This was only possible because of the people who allowed us to tell their stories, whether it's an innocent man who had been on death row for 20 years, or a Norwegian spy who was imprisoned in Russia."



Award-winning Producer, Caoimhe Louise Willimoies

Currently a Freelance Producer for two international TV companies, including Britain's ITV, Caoimhe has just returned from shooting a new project in Greenland.

Her aunt, Marie Ryan, who lives in Ballinasloe is full of praise for Caoimhe, saying: "her hard work, and dedication have taken her to award-winning heights. Not only are her parents Cecilie and Kevin proud of her, but her Irish family from Ballinasloe and beyond are delighted to know of and celebrate her well-deserved success."

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Rare Irish Orchids Thriving In Pollboy

By Una Ní Bhroin

Rare Irish native wild spotted, white and pink orchids were found growing at Pollboy crossroads across from the Western Postform factory three years ago by wildflower enthusiast Úna Ní Bhroin.

The land where the orchids are growing is managed by the council and after contacting Councillor Dr. Evelyn Parsons, Úna was informed that they would be protected and not mowed. The orchids are back in profusion this year and Úna is keen to spread awareness of these beautiful plants.

"My interest in Irish wildflowers just came about in the last few years," Úna says, "I love spotting and identifying them. They are so important in the circle of life and pollinating insects depend on them and they are unfortunately endangered too. The joy they bring to us each summer is wonderful, I don't have time to campaign for their protection but raising awareness is what I can do."

Ireland is home to over thirty native orchid species and they thrive in the meadows, roadsides, and limestone grasslands of County Galway. However, many of our native orchids are classified as "vulnerable", meaning that their prevalence has declined by as much as 49% in areas where they used to commonly grow. Consequently, all wild orchids in Ireland are strictly protected and it is illegal to pick, uproot, or damage them. The protection covers both the plants and the soil they grow in. Further information on the laws protecting them can be found on the National Parks & Wildlife Service website: www.npws.ie.

Orchids have a very special manner of reproduction that means they are very hard to grow in a new area. They are dependent on pollinators such as bees and butterflies to spread seeds like other flowers, but according to wildflower experts, they also need a mycorrhizal fungi (fungi that grow in plant roots) to enable them to take nutrients from the soil. "If you just sowed the seed it wouldn't have its associated fungi" says Úna. These fungi can also overwhelm the orchid seeds if they are not

immediately successful in absorbing the nutrients within the fungus and continuing on to produce underground tubers.

Their unique method of reproducing ensures that orchids can take a long time to produce leaves, let alone flower. The slowest is the Lady's Slipper Orchid, now sadly extremely rare, which takes from fourteen to eighteen years from seed to flower. Some seeds may also rest in a seedbank in the soil waiting for more favourable conditions before producing shoots and leaves. As a result, the orchids that do grow are precious.

To learn more about our Irish orchids, Una recommends "a really superb book on the subject, 'Ireland's Wild Orchids - a field guide'". This book is published by Collins Ireland. Each orchid in the book is illustrated by the gifted botanical artist, Susan Sex, with text from the National Botanic Gardens orchid specialist, Brendan Sayers. Úna also recommends a helpful website: <https://www.wildflowersofireland.net>, which provides lots of detail about how to identify orchids.

At the time of going to press, the orchids were still in bloom and some may bloom into August. If you are out and spot any orchids growing, once identified, you can report the sighting to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.



Pictured is Úna's ni Bhrion's neighbour, Medina Vovk with some of the orchids at Pollboy. The photo was taken by Lesia Vovk, Medina's mother.

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Meals On Wheels Coordinator Retires

By Maria Connolly

For more than four decades, Kay Cunningham has been the heart and soul of Meals on Wheels in Ballinasloe. Her journey began in 1985 after spotting a simple appeal for volunteers placed in the parish newsletter by Sister John. Without hesitation, Kay answered the call. At a time when she didn't even own a car, she delivered hot meals throughout the town on her bicycle, serving those in need for almost five years before she was eventually able to deliver by car.

When a full-time position became available in 1991, Kay welcomed the opportunity with the same dedication she had shown as a volunteer. Her mornings were spent ensuring Meals on Wheels ran smoothly before supervising the school meals service each afternoon. Alongside Sister John, Sister Dymphna and later, Sister Helena, she became a familiar face in the kitchen, helping to prepare thousands of meals while quietly building a service that would become a lifeline for so many people across the community.

In July 1999, following the retirement of Sister Helena, Kay was appointed

Meals on Wheels Coordinator. Armed with little more than the keys to the kitchen, a cooker and the goodwill of those around her, she set about transforming the service. When the school meals programme came to an end, Kay devoted all of her energy to expanding Meals on Wheels. A new industrial cooker, funded



through local fundraising efforts, marked the beginning of an exciting period of growth and development.

Under Kay's leadership, Meals on Wheels evolved from a modest local service into one of the region's most respected community supports. She expanded delivery routes well beyond Ballinasloe, recruited and inspired generations of volunteers (including her own grandchildren!), secured funding and resources, and built a service that now delivers

thousands of hot meals each year to older and vulnerable members of the community.

"Those who know Kay will tell you that her greatest achievement has never been measured by the number of meals served, but by the kindness and friendship she has brought to every doorstep. She understood that every delivery was more than a meal, it was a friendly face, a conversation, a reassurance and often the highlight of someone's day. She never forgot those who had no one around them at holiday time, often going out of her way to deliver dinners personally on Christmas Day for countless years," stated Michael Lally, Chair of the Ballinasloe Social Services Board.



From cycling around town with dinners balanced on her bicycle to leading one of the community's most valued services, Kay's story is one of quiet determination, unwavering compassion and extraordinary commitment. Her legacy is not only the service she helped build, but the countless lives she has touched over more than 40 years of selfless dedication.

As she begins her well-earned retirement, the people of Ballinasloe owe Kay Cunningham a tremendous debt of gratitude. Her compassion, leadership and tireless work have left an enduring mark on the community, and her legacy will continue to flourish for generations to come.



Proactive Planning On Age-Friendly Housing

By Maria Connolly

Cathaoirleach of Ballinasloe Municipal District, Cllr Evelyn Parsons, has welcomed unanimous support for her motion calling for a report on age-friendly housing opportunities.

The motion seeks to explore rightsizing and downsizing options, retirement villages, adaptable housing models and age-friendly developments that support older people to remain independent in their own communities.

Cllr Parsons said the urgency is clear from the latest data: "Galway's population is ageing rapidly... In towns like Ballinasloe, we are already

seeing this shift. Census data shows that almost one in five residents - over 18% - are aged over 65."

Cllr Parsons added that the Census also indicated around one in five people are currently living with a disability, and that the proportion of disabled people increases with age, with implications for housing, healthcare, transport and community infrastructure.

Cllr Parsons referenced the former St Brigid's Hospital campus in Ballinasloe as an unmissable opportunity for Galway County Council to lead on developing age-friendly housing.



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Ballinasloe Native Wins Prestigious Award

By Maria Connolly

Talented Ballinasloe-born Director and Film-maker, Gar O'Rourke, has won the Grand Prix in the Creative Strategy category at the 2026 Cannes Lions Awards for his short film, 'The Pub That Refused to Die'.

This award comes quickly on the heels of two cinematography awards for his new documentary, The Siege of Paradise, which received its Irish premiere at the recent Galway Film Fleadh.

Gar is the son of Betty and Tony O'Rourke, who live in Beechlawn. He attended Creagh National School, and then Athlone Community College. He initially trained as a landscape architect in London, "before I realised that my heart was in film-making all along." He currently lives in Lisbon, but still "frequently" makes it home to see his parents, and his sister, who lives in Oranmore (other siblings live abroad).

'The Pub That Refused To Die' tells the story of locals in Kiltelly, Co. Limerick, who joined forces to ensure that their local pub, didn't close. The Cannes Lions Awards are the most prestigious advertising and creative marketing awards worldwide. In addition to its Grand Prix win, the film received Bronze Lions for four other categories: Public Relations, Direct Marketing, Business-to-business, and Entertainment.

Speaking of his win, Gar said: "Winning at Cannes was a genuine

thrill. It's essentially the Oscars for creative advertising work, so to see an Irish story about a small rural pub and its community resonate with international juries meant a huge amount."



Filmmaker Gar O'Rourke (left) with one of the campaign producers, Andrew Freedman, at Cannes festival where their campaign, 'The Pub That Refused to Die', won multiple Cannes Lion awards.

Gar's first full-length documentary, Sanatorium, was the Irish nomination for International Feature Film for the 2026 Oscars. His most recent film, The Siege of Paradise, is currently touring the festival circuit, having premiered at the world-renowned Tribeca Film Festival where it won a Special Jury Mention for cinematographer Lukas Gut. It also won an award for "Best Cinematography in an Irish Film" at the Galway Film Fleadh.

The Siege of Paradise explores mass tourism, focussing on the area of Cinque Terre, a collection of five fishing villages on the Italian Riviera that have become overwhelmingly popular with tourists. Gar said of the film: "Cinque Terre is one of the most beautiful and

most visited places on earth... The film follows the locals and the visitors through one chaotic season, and it's funny and sad in equal measure." The film will go on theatrical release in the autumn and will be broadcast on BBC Storyville next year.

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Una Watters' Art Donated To National Gallery

By Colm Croffy

Una Watters, a Dublin-based artist with strong Ballinasloe connections, was unknown for many years following her untimely death in 1966 at 47. Recently, however, there has been a revival of interest in her work, beginning with a major retrospective at the Dublin Arts Club in 2022. The National Gallery has now received a donation of three of her paintings from a local donor, two of which were inspired by Ballinasloe and its people.



Una Watters

The works that have been donated to the gallery are all oil paintings: Isabella (1956), Harvest (1965) and The Red Bridge (1956). Isabella and The Red Bridge are now on display in room 15 of the National Gallery; Harvest is not currently available to view. Mary Morrissey, an aficionado of her work and one of the women who helped to bring Watters back to prominence says the newly-donated paintings show Watters: "at the height of her painterly powers. They also demonstrate her versatility of form."

Born in 1918, Watters was a mid-century painter, designer and librarian with a varied body of work, which as critic Katy Hessel says: "ranged from rural landscapes to portraits and everyday street scenes. She also experimented confidently with Cubism."

Although she grew up and lived in Dublin, Watters developed an attachment to Ballinasloe, which, according to Morrissey, was "a home away from home" for her. Her husband, Eugene Watters (a poet and writer known as Eoghan Ó Tuairisc), was from the area, and the couple spent over 25 years holidaying in the region. "The town and its environs were a constant source of artistic inspiration for her" says Morrissey.

Of the recent donations, Isabella is a portrait of Eugene's sister, Isa, who was from the town. The Red Bridge features the River Suck. It's a Cubist work that doesn't directly reflect reality but is inspired by it.



Isabella, a portrait of Una's sister-in-law



The Red Bridge, inspired by the River Suck.

In 1965, Watters died suddenly, just as she was on the verge of greater recognition. She had designed the official symbol for the 50th Anniversary of the Easter Rising and it was actually unveiled in Ard Scoil Mhuire in Ballinasloe. The first solo exhibition of her work also took place in Ballinasloe, shortly after her death. It was curated by her husband, who chose six works to commemorate the anniversary of the Rising. The paintings hung in Cullen's shop on Society St.

Her husband also organised a Dublin-based retrospective of her paintings in 1966. Shortly after, he gave the paintings away to family and friends. "He wanted people who knew her and loved her to have pieces of her work," says Morrissey. However, it meant that her work was never shown in art galleries or exhibitions, and her name was forgotten until the 2022 retrospective organised by Morrissey and Watters' niece, Sheila Smith. Hessel says: "Watters' story is a reminder of how easily the work of artists can be lost and how thrilling it is to bring them back into the light."

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Junior Band Recruiting For New Members

By Maria Connolly

The Ballinasloe Town Band opened the second annual Mid-Summer Multicultural Festival recently to great acclaim. They are now looking forward to playing at the Clontuskert Family Day on Sunday 23 August.

Planned events in the autumn include: the unveiling of a plaque at Duggan Park on Saturday 12 September; playing at the October Fair, and a Movies and Musicals collaboration with Ballinasloe Musical Society in early November.

The Junior band recently gave a recital for parents under the baton of Pdraig Burke from the Army Band in Athlone. The current members of the Junior band were recruited in September 2024 and a new round of recruitment will begin in September for children in 5th or 6th class in primary schools. Junior band members receive group lessons in trumpet, trombone, saxophone and clarinet given by members of the band of the Western Command, who are based in Athlone.

Junior Band members are expected to attend rehearsals on Wednesday evenings in the Band Hall on Dunlo Hill and to practice their instruments



Junior Band Recital under baton of Pdraig Burke

at home between rehearsals. Prior knowledge of reading music is not essential, but commitment and enthusiasm are required.

The Army Band will perform for 5th and 6th class primary school students this September on a date to be decided. After this an information meeting will be held for parents and children in September. If you wish to register your interest now, please contact Damien on (087) 418 6536 or Frank on (087) 990 4651.

The Magic Of Percy French In St John's Church

By Maria Connolly

Prepare to be swept away by the enchanting melodies, poignant poetry, and the timeless humour of Percy French in "Sweep Down to the Sea", a spectacular celebration of one of Ireland's most beloved cultural icons in St John's Church, Ballinasloe on Saturday 15 August.

This unmissable show brings together three extraordinary artists: Ultan Conlon, Eleanor Shanley, and Jimmy Higgins, each with a legacy of performing alongside legends.

"Sweep Down to the Sea" is a heartfelt journey through the life and works of Percy French. From his humorous classics like "Are Ye Right There Michael" to the wistful beauty of "The Mountains of Mourne," this show captures the wit, charm, and soul of his artistry.

Eleanor Shanley is one of Ireland's most cherished vocalists. Eleanor's career has seen her collaborate with legendary acts like Ronnie Drew and De Dannan. Her exquisite interpretations of Irish music and her connection to Percy French's poignant lyrics will leave you spellbound.

Ultan Conlon is a masterful singer-songwriter whose unique voice and evocative performances have captivated audiences far and wide. Having shared the stage with iconic artists like Mary Coughlan and the legendary John Martyn, Ultan brings an unparalleled depth to Percy French's timeless songs.

Jimmy Higgins is a dynamic and versatile musician who has performed with some of Ireland's greatest acts. The concert will start at 8pm, with tickets @ €30 available on the door or online from:

<https://willwego.com/tickets/ultan-conlon/24>



L-R: Jimmy Higgins, Ultan Conlon and Eleanor Shanley, who will perform the songs of Percy French on Saturday 15 August in St John's Church.

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Heritage Week Talk For Battle Of Aughrim

By Colm Croffy

The Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre looks forward to hosting its annual Heritage Day event on Saturday 22 August commencing at 11am. Hosted in collaboration with The Cath Eachroma Community group, this event will provide visitors with a wonderful and unique opportunity to learn of the journey of that day in 1691 and convey to attendees the importance of understanding our past, to be able to understand our present.

Booking is advisable for this free event, which has become very popular in recent years. To register your interest, please telephone (090) 967 3939 or (087) 684 4253. You can also email battleofaughrim@galwaycoco.ie.

The centre has already hosted a number of talks this season much to the delight of visitors. The first talk was all about Celebrating a Lasting Legacy in Our Built Heritage. Padraic Kilduff, gave a wonderful lecture celebrating one of our greatest County Surveyors: James Forth Kempster. Both Kempster and his sons left behind a remarkable architectural legacy, shaping not only Ballinasloe but communities across the country. This talk underpinned the necessity to



Attendees at a talk on The Heraldry of Irish Families.

continue to value, protect, and celebrate these historic Kempster structures, ensuring that the stories, skills, and heritage they represent are preserved for future generations.

The second talk saw Donal Burke taking to the podium to speak on The Heraldry of Irish Families, a fascinating exploration of signs, symbols and shields that flourished in Ireland in the late 1600s and thrived during the 1700s.

There are gaps in the national heraldry records, owing to the Battle of Aughrim and the defeat of the Jacobites at the time.

On Friday 18 September, 1.15pm – 2.15pm, Pat Johnston will give a talk entitled, "Sure, that's women for you". This last of the Summer Series 2026 lectures will look at the histories of women who shaped independent Ireland and whose stories are only now coming to light. To book, visit: www.battleofaughrim.info/contact.

All events are free to the public and Galway County Council looks forward to warmly welcoming you on the day.

Former Mount Owners – Great Supporters Of Ballinasloe Town

By Colm Croffy

The one-time owners of Cuil na Greine, on Dunlo Hill, had a huge interest in the commercial life of a town they came to visit and like and subsequently took a huge interest in the development of the Ballinasloe Great October Fair in the 60s and 70s.

Harry Pearson met his wife Mary (a Murphy from the Brackernagh area) in Birmingham. Harry Snr. had a big industrial scrap business in the UK Midlands dealing a lot with the Motor Industry, back in the 50's and 60's when the British Motor Industry was huge. Mary was a lifelong friend of the Rankin family in Brackernagh and her brother married into the Rankin family. Carmel Rankin married Eoin Gannon and settled in Brackernagh and when Harry bought Cuil na Greine (renaming it The Mount) he gave the job of managing it to Eoin and Carmel. Carmel and her daughter Ursula still reside here in Ballinasloe. With the Mount overlooking the Fair Green their

interest in the October Fair increased. They would have known Paul Dooley from his pub on the top of Dunlo Street. Paul, as Chairman of the Fair and Festival, was not long in involving them as significant sponsors of the different Equestrian Competitions and the Pearson's became the main sponsors of the Fair for several years. Their generosity towards the biggest event in Ballinasloe and in other areas of the town brought them here several times during the year.

All that remember Harry attest to him being a lovely, friendly gentleman and Mary was a quiet, gentle lady. They were generous in spirit and did a lot of business in the town also supporting the local Boxing Club without seeking any publicity. Some of Mary's relatives, the Loughnane family, also still reside here. Tragically Harry Junior, their son, died suddenly on a cruise ship in the Carabean on the 22nd November '25. Before his body was returned to the UK his father Harry

Snr. died on January 11th 2026. Then on the 20th of April 2026 Mary passed away. So, in a few short months, three of the Pearson family died. They are survived by daughter Audrey and youngest son Philip.

The Pearsons had a great love of the town and used to visit Ballinasloe several times each year whilst they had their health.

Ballinasloe Fair & Festival extend their sincere sympathy to the Pearson family, the Loughnane family and the Gannon family.

May they rest in peace.



Harry and Mary Pearson with Paul Dooley, Chair of the Fair and Festival in the early 70s



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Library Celebrates Heritage Week

By Maria Connolly

Ballinasloe Library is delighted to announce a series of engaging events to celebrate Heritage Week this August, showcasing local history, music, architecture, and biodiversity.

The programme begins on Saturday, August 15 at 11:30am with the launch of the new Irish history podcast "Inniú agus Inné," created and presented by historian Abbie McGowan. The series explores the evolution of the Ballinasloe Library building from its origins in religious and institutional life to its role today as a modern library.

At 2:30pm, renowned harpist Úna Ní Fhlannagáin will present "Echoes of the Past, Sounds of Today: A History of the Irish Harp." Performing on her unique wire-strung harp, Úna blends early Gaelic and modern traditions. Musicians are warmly invited to bring their instruments and join an informal session at the end. An cúpla focal is also very welcome.

On Tuesday, August 18 at 2:15pm, visitors will have the opportunity to meet Galway County Council's Architectural Conservation Officer. This informal session offers a chance to learn more about the role of conservation in protecting our built heritage, and to ask questions about preserving historic buildings.

On Thursday, August 20 at 5:00pm, the Breeding Waders EIP will present a talk on the curlew, one of Ireland's most iconic and endangered wetland birds. Attendees will learn about the challenges facing

this beautiful species and the efforts being made to protect it.

Following this, at 6:00pm, artist Róisín Doherty will lead a special workshop exploring the curlew through art. This creative session will focus on how artistic expression can help raise awareness and preserve the image of this threatened bird. This workshop is a booking-only event aimed at adults and young adults. To reserve a place, please contact Ballinasloe Library in advance.

The summer holidays are in full swing and there are lots of activities on for children, including Friday storytime, Duplo and Lego freeplay sessions and craft activities that can be booked. Children can also sign up to our Summer Stars programme, which encourages them to read and have fun in the library. It's free and a great way to entertain the kids.

The staff are particularly excited that the Agrikids Van is coming to Ballinasloe Library on Thursday, August 13, for a full day of fun, learning, and family-friendly activities. Children will learn all about life on the farm through interactive games and hands-on activities. There's going to be lots on that day, with giant Connect Four in the courtyard and musical instruments for you to play with. The staff are also hoping kids will get creative by decorating their own bookmarks and going wild with chalk in the outside area.



Harpist Úna Ní Fhlannagáin, who will perform in the library on Saturday August 15 at 2.30pm as part of Heritage Week.

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"This Matters To Me" Exhibition

By Maria Connolly

A recent exhibition in Ballinasloe Library celebrated the creative voices of babies, toddlers and young children from Early Learning and School Age Childcare services in Ballinasloe. GRETB, Creative Youth Partnership and Galway Childcare Committee worked with Early Learning and School Age Childcare services to visualise and voice children's work. The effort is underpinned by Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the National Child Participation Framework.

Children designed and produced all of the artwork in the exhibition, which includes several books of drawings and text as well as posters and a book, "A is for Axolotl", specifically about the fate of the amphibians.

This project was developed with the GRETB Creative Youth Partnership funded by the Department of Education and Youth and Creative Ireland through the Creative Youth Plan. The participating childcare services were: Fiona's Breakfast and Afterschool Club; Headstart Montessori School; Kiltormer Breakfast and Afterschool Club; Little Smarties Preschool and Afterschool, and Tiny Tots Creche and Educational Preschool.



(L-R): Donal Cormican, Ted Feerick, Betty Feerick, Cliona Cormican, and Mattie Cormican at the launch of the 'This Matters To Me' exhibition in Ballinasloe Library. Ted and Cliona wrote a book, "A is for Axolotls", which was on display.



Kenneth Nally, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Department of Education and Youth; David Leahy Chief Executive Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) and Jen Hesnan, GRETB Creative Youth Coordinator.



Jen Hesnan, GRETB Creative Youth Coordinator; Liz Keane Galway County and City Librarian; Orla Henihan, Engagement Producer, Branar Theatre Company; Kenneth Nally, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Department of Education and Youth; Brenda Ivers, Adult Education Officer at GRETB; Stacey Forde, Manager, Galway Childcare Committee; Geraldine Doran, Development Officer, Galway Childcare Committee, and Caitriona Ryan, Development Officer, Galway Childcare Committee.

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Ballinasloe GAA Key To Team Success

By Colm Croffy

The Galway Senior Ladies Football team has reached the All-Ireland final, which takes place on Sunday 2 August. It will be a proud occasion for everyone in Ballinasloe GAA as the club is well represented on the Galway team and backroom setup.

Emma Mitchell is on the panel with Daniel Moynihan (Manager), Nicholas McDonnacha (Coach) and Jodi Frehill (backroom).

To have four members of the club playing such an important role with the Galway Senior Ladies is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the dedication, hard work, and commitment they have shown over the years.

Other members of the club have represented Galway at underage level recently. Caoimhe Flanagan was a member of the Galway Under-16 team who reached the All-Ireland semi-final before being defeated by Cavan on a 2-16 to 2-09 scoreline. Meanwhile, Oscar McKeon was part of the Under-14 panel who played against Sligo and Roscommon at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence, while Lee Nolan played for the Under-14's in a recent match against Clare at Loughgeorge.



The Under-15 hurling team who reached the C Cup Final.

and the Men's football team won the Division 4 Shield Final. Congratulations to both teams.



The Minor Ladies who won the Division 2 Shield.

The Under 15 hurlers had a very successful run in the C Cup final, before losing to a strong Salthill/Knocknacarra team in the final. It was a very high scoring game, with a final scoreline of Ballinasloe 4-7, Salthill/Knocknacarra 5-19.

The summer has been filled with blitzes and Go Games for the club's youngest players with teams from Under-7 to Under-10 involved and attending matches hosted by the club, or other local GAA clubs. The highlight

for Ballinasloe GAA was hosting a large Under-11 Football blitz, welcoming over 140 Under-11 boys on the day. Teams came from Kilmacud Crokes and Templeogue Synge Street in Dublin, Skryne from Meath, and Salthill Knocknacarra in Galway.

The aim of the day was to play plenty of football and have lots of fun.



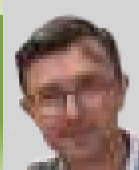
The Men's Football team who won the Division 4 Shield.

There were superb skills on show all day and the matches were all played in great spirit. All the coaches, parents, referees, and volunteers in the club were thanked - without them this would not be at all possible to pull off, such team work made it such a special day, hopefully the first of many to come.

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Second Ever Female President For Rugby Club

By Maria Connolly

At the Rugby Club Annual General Meeting, they marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the club, with Jacinta Divilly elected as the club's second-ever female President.

Jacinta takes over at the helm alongside a board and committee with a fantastic representation of women in key roles. It's a reflection of the hard work, passion and commitment of so many people who give their time both on and off the pitch to keep the club thriving.

The 2026/27 Board Members are: Chairperson: Pearse Keller; President: Jacinta Divilly; Honorary Treasurer: Orla Dolan; Honorary Secretary: Claire Quinn; Director of Rugby: Noel Mannion, and Director of Capital Projects: Steve Goode. The club wish their new board and committee members every success for the season ahead.



Player at one of the rugby club's recent Tag rugby matches.

From late June, Friday nights were once again a hive of activity with the return of the ever-popular Tag Rugby series. Running over six weeks, it was fantastic to

see so many people getting involved. With both a competitive league for those looking for a challenge, and a casual league for beginners, social teams or anyone simply looking for a bit of fun, there really was something for everyone.

Whether playing or spectating, the club enjoyed a great atmosphere each Friday evening. The clubhouse bar was open, there was plenty of entertaining rugby on display and it was a pleasure to see people grabbing a drink from the bar and soaking up the summer sun.

Thinking about giving rugby a go? Before the new season kicks off, the club will be hosting their Give It A Try sessions on the



The 2026/27 Board of Ballinasloe Rugby Club. L-R: Gerry Kelly, Trustee; Steve Goode, Director of Capital Projects; Claire Quinn, Honorary Secretary; Orla Donlon, Honorary Treasurer; Jacinta Divilly, President; Pearse Keller, Chairperson, and Noel Mannion, Director of Rugby.

Fair Green. These sessions are all about making rugby accessible to everyone. If you've ever been curious about the game but weren't quite sure where to start, this is the perfect opportunity to come along, meet some friendly faces and give it a try with no pressure. Keep an eye on the club's social media for dates and all the details. Follow them on Instagram at @rfc_ballinasloe or find Ballinasloe Rugby Club on Facebook.

The 2026/27 season gets underway in late August or early September, and the Club would love to welcome some new faces to the club. Whether you're interested in playing, volunteering or simply becoming part of the Ballinasloe Rugby Club community, there's a place for everyone. Get in touch at any time and club members will be delighted to help you get started.

They hope to see you around the club over the coming weeks, whether it's at a Give It A Try session, or cheering them on throughout the new season.



A recent Tag rugby match held by the rugby club.

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Local Karate Club Completes At Irish Open

By Maria Connolly

IKKI Karate Ballinasloe recently competed at the World Union of Karate Federations (WUKF) Irish Open. The competition was held in the South-East Technological University (SETU) in Waterford. From start to finish the event was very well organised by WUKF Ireland. The SETU complex is a wonderful arena and college accommodation was available.

As usual, there was lots of training leading up to the competition. Everyone performed to the top of their ability on the day and no more can be asked. Congratulations were extended to all who participated, and to their coaches.

There were various events open to competitors: individual kata; family kata (parent and child, siblings etc); individual kumite (sparring); Kobudo (weaponry), and other events.

Many of the IKKI Karate competitors won medals, particularly in kumite and family kata. Winners include: Katarzyna Olejnik, silver in kumite; Alex Rice, gold in kumite; Cathal Duane, gold in kata, silver in Kobudo and bronze in family kata; Michael Duane, silver in kata and bronze in family kata; Aimal Najib, silver in

Kobudo; Oran O'Connell, gold in kata; Colin and Oran O'Connell, silver in family kata; Arianna Kamtauskaite, bronze in kumite; and Sadhbh Finnegan and Alex Noone, silver in kumite.

IKKI also completed at the WUKF World Championships in Cluj, Romania recently, but results were not available at the time of going to press. The club are hosting are holding a weekend of kata and Kobudo seminars in August to mark the 50th anniversary of IKKI karate in Ballinasloe. For more information, see www.ikki.ie



Leo Mulvaney, Founder of IKKI karate, with competitors at the WUKF Irish Open Championships.

Galway Summer Rally Returns To Ballinasloe

By Maria Connolly

Galway Motorclub recently hosted its annual Grass Surface Autocross. This year, the event moved to the Kiltormer area with the kind permission of Frank Canavan, who provided a field for it. 30 competitors took part with a great variety of machinery on show. Two local competitors took part, father and son, David and Blake Manning from Aughrim. David finished 3rd in Class 12 in his Kawasaki Special Buggy, and Blake finished 5th in Class 12 in his Kawasaki Special Buggy. After a two-year hiatus, the 2026 Galway Summer Rally will return to the Ballinasloe area on Sunday 23 August. The Shearwater Hotel will provide the headquarters for the event, with the mart providing the service area. On Saturday 22 August, the competing cars will undergo scrutiny in Domac Plant and Tool Hire in Poolboy.

Three stages will be run three times in areas surrounding Ballinasloe, and householders among the route have been informed. This event counts towards several national competitions. For further information, please keep an eye on social media over the coming weeks.

A rally programme will be available locally prior to the event.

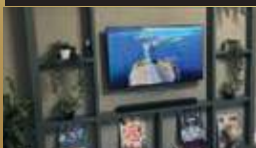


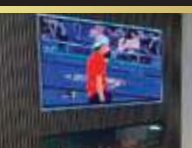
Winners of the 2024 Galway Summer Rally, Josh Moffett and Keith Moriarty. Credit: Eye to Eye Photography.



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Pearses' Players Roscommon Success

By Maria Connolly

Pearses' players continue to enjoy success with Roscommon teams, with nine players and a coach representing the club with Roscommon LGFA teams in All-Ireland.

Isabella Downey, Katie Canning and Grace Barron were part of the under-16 team who recently won the All-Ireland Under-16 Championship, defeating Laois in the final in Kinnegad recently. Congratulations to them.

Meanwhile, Grainne Lohan and her teammates are preparing for the LGFA Intermediate final in Croke Park on Sunday 2 August, and club coach Thomas Carty, as well as players Laura Glennon, Esmae Halpin, Chloe Mulryan, Sarah Kate Goode, and Lily Finneran are part of the Roscommon under-18 setup contesting the Minor Championship Final against Cork in Tullamore. Best of luck to them all.

Roscommon teams have also had great success at provincial level this year, and Padraig Pearses players were available to visit local national schools with the five Connacht Championship trophies won by Roscommon GAA and Roscommon LGFA in 2026. Players visited Castlesampson, Taughmaconnell, Newtown, Creagh, Camcloon, and Moore National Schools. Padraic Mitchell and Ollie Lennon from Roscommon GAA brought the trophies along. The Club also expressed its thanks to all the club players who made themselves available to attend. They are a fantastic source of pride and inspiration for the next generation of stars!

The Club Championships in many codes will start soon. The Senior Hurling team have already taken part in their first round match, unfortunately suffering a four-point loss to Oran. They have upcoming games against Athleague on 9 August and Tremane at home on 23 August at Woodmount. The Senior Footballers' campaign starts at home to Roscommon Gaels, followed by Boyle in Strokestown on Friday 14 August and Clann in Johnstown on Friday 28 August, both at 8pm.

There has been plenty of action at underage level with the youngest squads in all codes taking part in Go-Games blitzes

and tournaments over recent weeks. There is an emphasis on participation and fun for all involved in all the Go Games. Padraig Pearses Committee are hugely thankful to the organisers of all the blitzes, and especially to those within the club who helped prepare the pitches, coach teams, serve tea, coffee and refreshments, and assist in the clean-up.

As in recent years, August sees the launch of Pearses' main club fundraising initiative, and tickets will soon be circulating for all members and supporters to assist with maintaining and developing facilities, and support the club's 40 teams' across four codes. The hard-working fundraising committee are making preparations for sales event at matches, marts and markets – keep an eye out for them they are sure to be coming to a location near you over the next six weeks! The top prize will again be a premium heifer with an increased number of other excellent prizes also up for grabs. Keep an eye on the Padraig Pearses social media pages for all the details when the draw is launched!



The All-Ireland LGFA Under-16 Champions. Three Padraig Pearses members are on the panel: Isabella Downey, Katie Canning, and Grace Barron.

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Soccer Season Comes To An End

By Maria Connolly

The 2025/26 season was a very busy and successful year for the club. The Men's Senior squad finished in tremendous style by winning both cups. In the Shield Final they beat Dysart/Cam Celtic F.C., while they beat Cloonfad United F.C in the First Division Cup Final. The Club's Senior Ladies reached the semi-final of the Galway F.A Championship Cup and finished mid-table in the league, a strong performance given that this was their first season competing in the Galway League.

The club's under-21's had a good season, finishing in third in the league and reaching the semi-final of the Divisional Cup. At under-18 level, the squad secured the Division 2 League title, winning all league games throughout this season. The team also reached the semi-final of the Divisional Cup.

The boys' under-16 squad showed significant improvement over the season. The Club had one team at under-15 level this season; they retained their place in the Galway Championship.

The under-14A squad finished the season in sixth place in their league while the under-14B's secured promotion to Galway League Division 2 after an impressive campaign. The under-14C squad earned promotion from the Galway League Division 6 on the final day of the season.

The under-13B squad secured the Galway Division 3 League title and promotion, losing only one game over the entire season. The under-13C's had a fantastic season in their first year together and finished as runners up in their league.

At under-12B level, the squad secured promotion when they finished the season as League runners up. They also reached the Semi-Final of the Galway League Divisional Cup, while the under-12 girls' squad were unfortunate not to win any silverware this season. The club's under-11's had an excellent season and reached the final of the Kevin Power Premier Cup.

Unfortunately, a number of teams were relegated, including the under-17 squad, the girls' under-16 squad, the boys' under-13 A squad, and the under-12 A squad. Commiserations to them all.

Under-10's don't play competitively, but the teams did well in their respective fun leagues. The under-10A and under-9 teams both competed in the Tempo Cup tournament in Limerick, where the under-10's finished in the top 4 out of twenty-four teams nationwide.



Ballinasloe Town AFC under 11 girls team who won the Plate Final at the Moyne Villa FC Summer Tournament. Team managers were Warren Coyne and Bjorn Manning.

Several former club players have also had success in the the Galway and Athlone Leagues. Former player Josh Bulman, Goalkeeper, was part of the victorious

Galway League Junior squad that won the Oscar Traynor Cup for the first time in 55 years. Several of the club's former academy players were also involved in under-14 and under-15 action with Athlone Town and Galway United. They include: Alan Novicki, Samuel Akinde, Ty Finnerty and Aaron Mannion.

Club players Einin Donnelly Meehan and Emily Mae Lloyd were also part of the Galway League squad that won the All-Ireland U-12 Inter League Final when they beat the Sligo/Leitrim League. Emily Mae was also named Player of the Match.

A number of club players were also involved in the under-13 and under-12 action with the Galway League or Athlone Town academy. These include: Alea Doherty, Senan Green, Marey Kinsella, Nathan Kelly, Tiernan Hogan, Jack Duffy and Aaron Connaughton, Igor Sadiecki, Freddie Browne, Kye Mongan and Leighton Keighery.

The club's AGM was held recently in the Shearwater Hotel and the officers elected were as follows: Chairperson: Bjorn Manning; Secretary: Sonya Coyne; Treasurer: Ellen Egan; Assistant Treasurer/PRO Print media: Johnny Walsh; Social Media PRO's: Joe Kelly and Bjorn Manning; Child Welfare Officers: Demelza Dooley and Sylvia O'Hara; Club Archivist: Mike Riddell; Assistant Club Archivist: Joey Walsh; and Honorary Life Committee Member: Pat Campbell.

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Youth European Powerlifting Champion

By Maria Connolly

Logan Fallon is following in the footsteps of our National and International sporting ambassadors. The talented young man recently won his first international powerlifting competition, the European Championships. It was only his fourth competition overall. He has also qualified for the World Championships in Manchester this September.

Logan, son of Dale Fallon from Hymany Park, has lived in the town all his life. His mother sadly died nine years ago. He has four siblings, two older brothers and two younger sisters. He is currently attending Clonfert College and will go into fifth year in September.

Powerlifting and weightlifting, and as Logan explains, are two different sports. "Powerlifting consists of the squat, bench press and deadlift, while Olympic weightlifting consists of the snatch and the clean and jerk. In both sports, competitors have three attempts at each lift to achieve their best result," Logan says.



Logan with his European Championships medal at Divilly's Carryout his workplace.

He was first encouraged to try powerlifting by Tristan McDonagh at Coral Leisure. "He became my first coach and is now my training partner," Logan says. He then entered the Ballinasloe Novice Powerlifting Meet at Coral Leisure. "And I loved every moment of it," Logan adds. "The competition pushed me beyond

what I thought I was capable of and gave me the motivation to keep improving. I later signed up for the Irish Powerlifting Organisation (IPO) National Championships, where I began



Logan with Sharon Williamson, his current Coach.

working with my current coach, Sharon Williamson, the gym manager at Coral Leisure and strongwoman. Her guidance has helped me achieve everything I have accomplished so far." He placed second at the IPO National Championships, the result which qualified him for the European Championships.

Logan was delighted to win the 16-17 U75kg European Championship title. He says that winning: "meant far more than just earning a title. It showed me that all the hard work, training and dedication had paid off. For me, it was only the beginning."



Logan at the European Championships ceremony in Limerick recently.

He was also excited to qualify for the Amateur World Powerlifting Congress for the first time and is thrilled to have the opportunity to represent Ireland on the world stage. "My aim is not only to compete well but to improve on my previous performances, make the people who have supported me proud, and inspire others to follow their own passions."

Logan's father Dale is proud of his success. "Watching Logan over the last two-three years progress in his journey in powerlifting and fitness has been great. And watching him bring home a European powerlifting title was just unreal. Logan has had a hard start to life, losing his mother at a very young age...but the change I've seen in him over the past few years...he's a lot more confident and outgoing and his dedication to it is unbelievable... Whatever happens in Manchester, I just want you to know, son, you're a champ in my eyes."

Logan is also looking beyond the Manchester competition to the future. "I want to defend my titles, break IPO National records and continue developing as a lifter. In the future, I would also like to coach or guide others who want to improve themselves or compete in powerlifting." Post-school, he's considering a career in either the fitness industry or the Defence Forces.

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Golf Cup Hosts Captain's Prize Competitions

By Maria Connolly

It's the time of year when the golf club Captains host their prize competitions. First up was Lady Captain, Breeda Conneely's Captain's Prize day. Ann Jordan took first place, with Mary Davis second and Rosaleen Cunningham third. The Junior first prize went to Aisling Blaine and the second Junior prize went to Cailin Naughton. John Raftery and Lily Spellman won the mixed team first prize, with the mixed team second prize going to Jimmy Flynn and Pauline Flynn.

The Men's Captain, Stephen Ruane, hosts his Captain's Prize from Friday 31 July- Sunday 2 August. Following this, Senior Captain Mattie Curley hosts his Captain's Prize on Wednesday 12 August.



Lady Captain Breeda Conneely with members of her extended family at her recent Captain's Prize competition.

The popular men's midweek open will be running on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday throughout the summer. It's an 18 hole singles stableford competition. Members pay €5, while visitors pay €20. Come and experience one of the midlands' finest parkland courses, renowned for its superb greens and warm welcome. You can book online via www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie.



Anne Jordan (right), the overall winner of the Ballinasloe Golf Club's Lady Captain's Prize Competition pictured with Breeda Conneely, Lady Captain.

Finally, congratulations to the golf club Mixed Foursomes team who have reached the Connacht semi-finals of the Irish Mixed Foursomes Competition. They beat Castlerea in the quarter-finals. The club looks forward to welcoming members and visitors to the club over the summer.



Aidan Grenham wins Irish Open title.

Aidan Grenham, Ballinasloe winner of the ISPS Handa Irish Open for Golfers with a Disability at Roganstown Golf and Country Club to claim his first national title.

A week later, Aidan followed up his victory with a superb round of 7 under par (65 gross) to win the Ballinasloe Golf Club Senior Scratch Cup Competition.



Mattie Curley Seniors Captain, Ballinasloe Golf Club (right) pictured presenting the Tommy Larkin Memorial Salver to Bernard Donnellan overall winner of the Tommy Larkin V-Par Competition

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Under 14 Rounders Team Runners Up

By Maria Connolly

It has been a busy and enjoyable period for Clontuskert Rounders Club since the club started training in February, with plenty of activity both on and off the pitch.



Under-14 players and coaches with Paula Doherty, GAA Rounders President, following medal presentation at the under-14 Championship

Their Under 14 team were crowned Runners-Up of the Championship Shield after a lot of hard work and tough matches. The tournament took place in Clann na nGael pitch recently. The players showed tremendous commitment, skill, and teamwork throughout

the competition, and they should all be very proud of their achievement. The coaches, parents, and supporters who encouraged the team every step of the way, were warmly thanked by the Committee.



Coaches and players at Ballinasloe Midsummer Multicultural Festival in the Fair Green

The club's younger members enjoyed a fantastic Go Games Blitz recently. The blitz invited other GAA clubs to come along and have an opportunity to give rounders a go! It was wonderful to see such enthusiasm and sportsmanship from all the children who took part.

The club was also delighted to participate in the Ballinasloe Midsummer Multicultural Festival, where they had the opportunity to introduce rounders to members of the local community. It was a fantastic day of sport, fun and community, with many people trying rounders for the first time.

Training continues at Clontuskert Rounders Club. Adults (16+) train on Friday evenings 7-8pm, while Juveniles (those born 2011 to 2019) train on Sunday mornings 11am-12pm. The venue is Clontuskert pitch (H53 D602). New members are always welcome. Contact Darina at (087) 770 3880 for more information.

Kevin O'Brien Visits Kilconnell Cricket Club

By Maria Connolly

The renowned cricket player, Kevin O'Brien, recently visited the club and provided three fantastic community training sessions. It was part of an initiative by the Connacht Cricket Union to provide high-quality, free training and development for all ages and skill levels. Kevin played with Ireland's national team for 15 years (2006-21) and is currently a coach. Everyone at Kilconnell Cricket Club was thrilled to see Kevin so generously sharing his knowledge and experience with players from Kilconnell and other clubs in the region.

For his part, Kevin was very complementary about the facilities available at the ground.

The club is competing regularly in matches, and they have provisionally set a date for the Gateway Credit Union Cup as Sunday 23 August; keep an eye on their Facebook for updates. They are on the site and on Instagram as Kilconnellcricketclub. The club team thanked the Ballinasloe Credit Union for their support during the past two years.

All at the club would encourage people to call to their grounds in Kilconnell Community Park, enjoy a game, and take a walk around the beautiful park.



Renowned cricketeer Kevin O'Brien: (L-R): Evelyn Maxfield, Pathways and Participation Chairperson for Connacht; Sarah Barry, Community Sports Hub Coordinator for Connacht; Kevin O'Brien; Jeff Smith, Chairperson of Connacht Cricket Union, and Brendan Hogan, Chairperson of Kilconnell Cricket Club.



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A huge thank you to all of our employees at Surmodics for their incredible efforts in raising vital funding for Galway Hospice by taking on the Croagh Patrick climb on **June 20th**. The Croagh Patrick Climb for Galway Hospice is about so much more than reaching the summit. Alongside raising essential funds for hospice care, it provides a meaningful opportunity for people to come together to remember and honour much-missed family members, friends and colleagues.

Galway Hospice does tremendous work in our community. Through compassion, dignity and excellence, they help improve the quality of life of patients facing life-limiting illnesses while providing invaluable support to their families.

We are incredibly grateful for the work they do and are proud to support such a wonderful organisation. Thank you again to everyone who took part and helped make a real difference.

If you would like to find out more about Surmodics, check out our website www.surmodics.com



Swimmer Qualifies For National Championships

By Maria Connolly

Local girl Caoimhe Lohan from Ballinasloe Swimming Club qualified for the National Championships, which took place in Dublin in July. Qualifying was a great achievement for Caoimhe and everyone at Ballinasloe Swimming Club is so proud of her. The dedication and commitment she has shown have paid off.

In further success for the club, a number of teams and individuals qualified for the Community Games All Ireland Finals in Kilkenny. The Girls' Under-12 Freestyle Relay team and the Boys' Under-12 Freestyle Relay team both advanced, as did individual finalists Jack Connaughton, Maeve Campbell, Sophia Doerflinger and Kayleigh Doerflinger.

The final meet before the end of the season was Connacht Swimming Festival hosted by Longford Swimming Club. There was plenty of fun, great swimming, medals and ice cream. Congratulations from the Committee were offered to all medal winners, particularly Maeve Campbell who won gold in the 50m fly.

The swimming club has now finished for a well-deserved summer break. They will be taking on new members for the upcoming season starting on Monday 7 September. For enquiries email the club Secretary: secretaryballinasloesc@gmail.com



Caoimhe Lohan, who qualified recently for the National Championships in Dublin.



Maeve Campbell who won gold in the 50m Butterfly event at the Connacht Summer Festival recently.



Club members Abigail Monaghan and Jack Connaughton who won medals at the recent Connacht Swimming Festival in Longford.

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Cycling Club Members Enjoying The Summer

By Maria Connolly

The club is currently running an eight-week youth cycling programme on the Fair Green, which will continue until mid-August. Attendance has been high so far, with 25 – 40 juniors turning up. Some of the youth members have also attended races organised by the Western Lake Cycling Club.

The club runs two regular Sunday morning cycling groups for adults. The 8.30am group have taken in varied routes across Galway, Roscommon and Westmeath recently, clocking up to 90km on their journeys. Recent routes include a trip to Athlone, Hodson Bay, and home via Curragboy; and a ride down to Portumna and Loughrea. Meanwhile, the 9am group have stayed closer to home, exploring the gravel routes, beautiful bogland trails, and back roads around the town.

A club stalwart has been even more adventurous: Noel Slevin has completed his third Mizen to Malin cycle. While most people take three days to complete the route, Noel was more ambitious

on this occasion and finished it in two days. He rode solo, but his wife, Carol, was there to ensure he was fuelled up. She also provided the odd surprise along the way.

Finally, the club had a stall at the recent Ballinasloe Midsummer Multicultural Festival, with an assault bike available for people to try out. The club acknowledged Coral Leisure Ballinasloe for their use of the bike, John Donnelly for setting up the gazebo, and Barry's cycles for the use of their turbo trainer.



Members of the cycling club on one of their regular jaunts around the town.



Some of the club out by Hudson Bay on one of their regular weekend trips.

First Community Sports Day For Athletics

By Maria Connolly

Ballinasloe & District Athletics Club recently held its first community sports day at the running track in Dunlo, and the event proved to be a great success. It was fantastic to see so many new faces taking part, with children from six to fourteen years of age competing in a range of events. The programme included 80-metre and 100-metre sprints, along with throwing events like turbo javelin and long jump.

There was a brilliant atmosphere throughout the day, with plenty of encouragement from parents, coaches and supporters. Many of the children won medals, but most importantly, everyone had the opportunity to take part, try different athletics events and enjoy a fun day at the track.

The club is currently taking a short break from training and will return at the end of August, in line with the new school term.

New members are always welcome. Anyone interested in joining the club can contact them through their website at www.ballinasloeathletics.ie.



Relay competitors at the start of the Community Sports Day.



Medal winners of a relay event at the Ballinasloe & District Athletics Club Community Sports Day.





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Galway 1925 Football Champions New Plaque

By Colm Croffy

Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael/GAA President Jarlath Burns will officially unveil a permanent commemorative plaque honouring Galway's 1925 All-Ireland Senior Football Champions at Duggan Park, Ballinasloe, on Saturday, 12 September 2026, at 3.30 p.m.

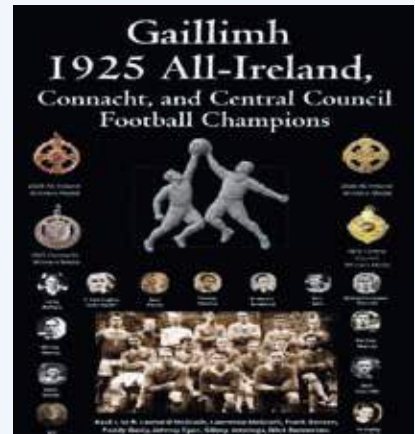
The unveiling marks the 100th anniversary of Galway's first All-Ireland Senior Football Championship victory, one of the most significant milestones in the county's sporting history.

To commemorate this historic achievement and ensure the legacy of this remarkable team endures for future generations, the Galway 1925 Centenary Committee has commissioned a permanent black granite plaque measuring 1 metre wide by 1.7 metres high. The plaque will be situated at the entrance to Duggan Park.

This lasting tribute will honour the players whose achievement in 1925 secured Galway's first All-Ireland Senior Football title and will serve as a permanent reminder of their contribution to Galway's proud GAA heritage.

Following the unveiling ceremony, everyone is warmly invited to

Gullane's Hotel at 6.00 p.m., where local sports historian Steve Dolan will launch his new commemorative booklet celebrating Ballinasloe's legendary 'Invincibles' the remarkable football team that won a record-equalling seven consecutive Galway Senior Football Championships between 1913 and 1919. Everyone is welcome to attend this special event and join us in celebrating another proud chapter in Ballinasloe's rich sporting heritage.



The Prototype of the Plaque to be unveiled

2026 Ballinasloe October Horse Fair And Festival

The Fair and Festival Committee continue their work behind the scenes to organise another fair and festival for 2026.

The historic Horse Fair and Sales will take place on Sunday 4, Monday 5, and Saturday 10 October. The main festival weekend will run from Friday 9 to Sunday 11 October, while the funfair will operate from Thursday 1 to Sunday, 11 October. The opening on Sunday 4 October will place a strong emphasis on the town's equine heritage, with the Horse of the Fair and Pony of the Fair competitions. The festival soundstage and street stalls will also add to the busy atmosphere.

The main festival weekend will begin the following Friday, with family entertainment and live music, followed by the popular fireworks display at Ballinasloe Marina. Saturday will feature the final Horse Fair and Sales date, together with the Mare and Foal Classes and Sheep Fair. There will also be live entertainment and family activities. Sunday will feature a full day of festival entertainment, including the Dog Show, Craft Market, vintage displays, children's activities and more. The motorbike stunt show will also return, providing an

exciting display for visitors of all ages.

The Fair and Festival Committee consists of local volunteers who give their time to provide an enjoyable and welcoming festival that celebrates the town's heritage and brings the community together. They would like to thank all sponsors, local businesses, Galway County Council, community organisations, clubs, volunteers and supporters for their continued assistance. The full 2026 programme will be published soon. For the latest information, visit www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com or follow Ballinasloe Fair and Festival on social media.



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13th Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds

By Colm Croffy

It's coming up to that time of year again when visitors from across Ireland and beyond, celebrate the rich legacy of East Galway's traditional Irish music, composers, song, dance, heritage and culture, in our locality.

Every September, the town is transformed by the sound of traditional music, song and dance, creating a vibrant atmosphere across streets, pubs and public spaces. Now in its 13th year, Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds has firmly established itself as one of Ireland's leading destination festivals for traditional Irish music, celebrating the legacy of Larry Reynolds alongside the music, heritage and community spirit that define Ballinasloe.

From Wednesday 3 to Sunday 6 September, the town once again takes on a rhythm of its own. Sessions spill from pubs into the streets, visitors become part of the community, and East Galway's living musical tradition is celebrated at every turn with most events free to the public.

What began in 2014 as a tribute to the legendary fiddler Larry Reynolds has grown into one of Ireland's most respected traditional music festivals. Today, the Féile is known for its high-quality programme, its welcoming atmosphere, and its deep connection to the music, composers, song, dance, language and culture of East Galway.

A Town Alive with Music

Across the weekend, Ballinasloe becomes a stage in itself. Workshops, concerts and late-night sessions bring together established musicians and emerging talent from across Ireland and beyond.

The festival extends far beyond performance. The streets will be lined with traditional craft makers, while heritage walks and East Galway presentations explore the stories behind the music. Pop-up fiddle shops offer a rare opportunity to meet instrument makers and view handcrafted instruments up close.

The programme includes: the Open All-Ireland Fiddle Competition, Comórtas Labhairt na Gaeilge, CD launches, Singers' Circle, Céilí, Busking Competition, Photo and Shop Window Competitions, and the Cuimsiú Sessions, which places participation and accessibility at the heart of the festival.

Some of the most memorable moments are often unplanned - a tune shared in a quiet pub corner; a spontaneous song; a step on a table top, or the spark of inspiration as a young musician watches a master at work.

A Festival Built by Volunteers and the Community

At the heart of the Féile is a team of nine passionate volunteers who dedicate countless hours throughout the year to planning, fundraising and delivering the festival.

Their work has helped establish Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds as a key event on the traditional music calendar while strengthening the town's reputation as a cultural destination in East Galway.

Keeping the Music Playing

Delivering the Féile now costs in the region of €30,000 each year, making ongoing support essential to its future.

While sponsorship, grants and local backing are greatly valued, the committee face financial challenges every year.

This year's fundraising includes an online iDonate campaign, helping to bridge the gap between costs and income. Every contribution supports musicians, workshops and events, ensuring the Féile can continue to grow while remaining rooted in community spirit.



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Clontuskert Heritage Orchard Mapping

By Maria Connolly

Ancient apple trees are a living connection to the past and our heritage. However, for a variety of reasons trees are vulnerable and can die from old age, storms, or human activities, and their varieties can be lost to us.

Clontuskert Heritage Group set up the "Clontuskert Orchard Mapping Project" in spring 2026 to locate, map, document and graft ancient samples of apple trees from the oldest surviving nineteenth century orchards in Clontuskert and its surrounding region. Young grafted trees will then contribute to the creation of a community conservation orchard, which will preserve the varieties for the future. The project will also celebrate local varieties, their history, and stories.

The project was founded for a range of reasons. In many cases, the trees are the last living connection to families who may have emigrated, and often the knowledge and history of those trees have been lost to time. We are also at a turning point where these trees are still surviving, and it's a collective responsibility to locate them, preserve and propagate them for future generations so they can live another 150 years.

The Group contacted Heritage apple conservationist Cillian Boyd to initiate the orchard mapping project. Cillian surveyed Ordinance Survey of Ireland maps from the 1840's and compared them against later maps and satellite imagery to locate surviving orchards and trees. He then pinned a selection of places on Google maps and shared the locations with the group so that they could inquire in advance of Cillian visiting.



Quite a number of places had trees. Other places were located by the group through their local contacts. It has been a successful collaboration because the Heritage Group has done a huge amount of research and possesses local knowledge, allowing them to connect with locals who hold "intangible cultural heritage" - knowledge that is not written down but shared through conversation.

One of the most fascinating discoveries made by the heritage group was of a gardening diary dated from the 1860's of Bernard McLoughlin, the Head Gardener at Somerset House, Clontuskert. The diary recorded details of daily gardening activities, local workers, and the jobs they undertook. Bernard's home place was nearby in Coolbeg.

Cillian recounts: "I visited Coolbeg and met his great grand-daughter Sheila. There were about five trees at Coolbeg. The trees were some of the oldest I've ever seen, easily over 120 years old, and free from disease. We visited a selection of ancient orchards, collected scion (cuttings) and grafted 30 trees or so from the locality".

If you would like to know more and take part in the project, the group are holding a Heritage Week event on Sunday 16 August at 5pm in Clontuskert Community Hub, Crossconnell. Samples of apples from original trees will be on show to taste and identify, along with a bud grafting demo. Details are available on the Heritage Week website, www.heritageweek.ie and Eventbrite, www.eventbrite.com. Visitors are encouraged to bring along samples of apples they would like identified



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District Heritage Society New Limestone Exhibition *By Colm Croffy*

The Ballinasloe and District Heritage Society has had a busy summer, and also looks ahead to a major exhibition in the Autumn.

Society member Padraic Kilduff delivered a fantastic lecture on June 12th in the Aughrim Interpretative Centre. At a very well attended event, Padraic gave a fascinating study of the work of James Forth Kempster, the architect responsible for many of our public buildings in Ballinasloe and houses across East Galway.

Padraic's talk kicked off the Aughrim Summer Series 2026. Another society member, Patricia Johnston, will deliver a lecture here on September 18th, entitled 'Sure that's Women for you'. This event is free of charge.

ATU Mountbellew Agricultural College hosted the Aleen Cust Symposium on Friday, 4 July, with over 200 attendees celebrating her legacy as Ireland and the UK's first female veterinary surgeon in the early 1900s. The Heritage Society had a strong visible presence at the event, which was attended by Uachtarán na hÉireann, Catherine Connolly.



Members of the Freeman Boating Club and some from the District Heritage Society at the start of their heritage tour and walk of the town last month from the Marina.

For Heritage Week 2026, Ballinasloe Stories - A Walk Through Ballinasloe's History & Heritage, will take place on Sunday, August 23rd from 1pm to 2.30 pm. Join the Society for a guided walk through Ballinasloe's historic town centre, detailing aspects of its beautiful architecture and rich social history. The tour will take in key locations and people in the story of this important area, an ancient crossing point to the thriving market town of today.

The Society also put a call out for town centre businesses to display some historical Ballinasloe photographs in their shop windows. A number of businesses are looking to participate.

Work is continuing ahead of the Limestone Legacy Exhibition later in the autumn, part of which will be a 2-episode podcast series, produced and narrated by well-known radio and media personality, Fergal D'Arcy, native of Beagh in Creagh. Fergal is the son of the late Tony D'Arcy, a historian and writer. A Photography competition is also being run on our Facebook and Instagram pages via @BallinasloeHeritageSociety, where people are invited to send in something relating to Ballinasloe's past as a world-renowned centre for limestone building, quarrying and craft. It can be anything from a building to a cut stone, memorial or a stonemason's tools. Winner will receive €200 among other prizes.

Work is underway on "Hostings", Volume 3 and the society was delighted to announce that Damian Mac Con Uladh will return as editor for the 3rd year running. The first two volumes have been very well received with high sales locally, nationally and internationally.



Attending the Ballinasloe and District Heritage Display and Stand at Mountbellew Campus for the Coost Seminar were members - Conor Johnson, Cllr Michael Connolly, Dr. Evelyn Parsons, Chair MDC. Pat Johnson, Andrew Reddington, Chair Galway Co Co, Evelyn Donnellan, Oliver Donnellan

June 29th saw the Heritage Society welcome its friends from the Freeman Cruisers for the second year, for a historical wander around the town, with the new heritage trail map.

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A Century Of Fianna Fáil In Town

By Damian Mac Con Uladh

As Fianna Fáil marks its centenary, it is worth reflecting on the party's long and colourful history in town, where its roots stretch back almost to the party's foundation.

Fianna Fáil was established by Éamon de Valera on 16 May 1926 at Dublin's La Scala Theatre. Just six weeks later, the new "organisation", as the party refers to itself, had reached Ballinasloe, when de Valera addressed a meeting in the Town Hall attended by more than 30 delegates representing 15 parishes.

The gathering appointed an organising committee for County Galway. Local committee members included Dr Ada English, a Ballinasloe Mental Hospital psychiatrist who was elected a Sinn Féin TD in 1921, and Paddy Beegan of Cappataggle, who was a party TD from 1932 to 1958.

Early Ballinasloe members included solicitor James A. Russell, a Tipperary-born solicitor and Fianna Fáil's first representative on Ballinasloe Urban District Council; Patrick Flanagan, owner of the Society St sawmills; PJ Parker NT of Clontuskert; Dr JJ Delaney, Ballinasloe Mental Hospital; and Michael Connolly.

The town soon had its own cumann, or branch, which went through several name changes over the decades. Initially, it was the Jim Keogh Cumann, before becoming the Barney Mellows Cumann in the early 1940s and the Paddy Beegan Cumann in the late 1950s.

The most remarkable of Ballinasloe's Fianna Fáil branches, however, was the Ada English Cumann. Named after the Ballinasloe Mental Hospital doctor and revolutionary who was elected a Sinn Féin TD in 1921, it was one of the few all-women's branches in the party.

The cumann was founded around 1953 as it held its 25th annual general meeting in 1978. It first mentioned in local newspapers in 1956, when it organised a dance in the Town Hall, but its origins almost certainly lay in the women who had previously been active in Cumann na mBan, the IRA's auxiliary for women.



Paddy Beegan first FF TD elected in 1932 and serving till his death in 1958.

Among its founding members were Roberta Flanagan (mother of the aforementioned Patrick Flanagan), whose River Street home reportedly sheltered IRA volunteers during the War of Independence and who was remembered as a friend of de Valera; Mary Naughton of Mackney; and the Shanley sisters, Mary and Dorinda, of the Market Square (and aunts of the late Patsy Geraghty, himself a party activist and councillor), whose family had also played a prominent role in the revolutionary period.

The Ada English Cumann quickly became one of the most active organisations in the constituency. Its annual dinner dances in Hayden's Hotel attracted hundreds of guests, while excursions to destinations such as Kilkee and Dublin became fixtures on the social calendar. Its 1966 AGM was attended by 62 women, eight of them freshly enrolled. Naturally, the cumann branch also played a significant role in election campaigns and constituency organisation, with long-serving officers including Bridie Lynch, Cllr Maura Croffy, Margaret O'Donoghue, Siddie Du Prât, Eileen Kelly, Betty and Ethel McGuinness, Ann Divilly and Nora Geraghty.



Indeed, when Du Prât (her father was Italian) died in 1982, her obituary noted: "She always saw to it that the Fianna Fáil workers ... were kept well supplied with tea and sandwiches and there was always a bit of 'Siddy's cake' for the one with the sweet tooth." The cumann remained active into the 1990s, with its final newspaper references appearing in 1994.

As Fianna Fáil celebrates 100 years, the story of its Ballinasloe organisation illustrates how national politics was sustained by committed local volunteers. The Ada English Cumann, in particular, stands as a significant chapter in the town's political history.

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Our business community, together with the wider communities of the town and Taughmaconell, were deeply saddened by the passing, following an illness bravely fought, of one of the town's most respected and cherished businesswomen, Geraldine Dolan, Managing Director of Society Travel.

Geraldine devoted her working life to the travel and holiday business. She spent the earlier part of her career with Kellers Travel on Main Street before establishing her own independent business, Society Travel, in 1998.

Over the following 28 years, Geraldine successfully guided the business through recessions, ash clouds, the Covid-19 pandemic and many other challenges. Alongside her loyal and dedicated staff, she provided generations of customers with a personal, knowledgeable and bespoke service. For Geraldine, travel was never simply about making a booking. It was about helping people experience the world, celebrate important occasions and create lasting memories.

Geraldine was deeply loyal to and supportive of her staff. She was also exceptionally generous to the many causes, charities, clubs and community organisations she partnered with, regularly finding practical ways to assist their fundraising efforts and programmes of activity.



She was a fearless advocate for women in business and for independent retailers and service providers receiving a fair opportunity to succeed. Geraldine understood the importance of local businesses in keeping provincial and rural Ireland alive, and she was never absent when important meetings, initiatives or campaigns for community development required her voice and support.

Above all else, Geraldine cherished her family, and particularly her devoted son Brian, himself now a successful businessman in the town. Behind her strength and determination was a woman of great warmth, kindness and loyalty, whose contribution extended far beyond the doors of Society Travel.

To Brian, his girlfriend Leda, Geraldine's brothers Bernard, Gerard, Pat and Vincent, her sister Rita, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews, extended family, neighbours, many friends, the staff of

Society Travel and her neighbours on Society Street, we offer our deepest condolences.

Geraldine leaves behind a lasting legacy of courage, service, generosity and commitment to her community. Ar Dheis Dé go raimh a hanam.

Gerry Devlin – Local Historian

Gerry Devlin was a proud Ballinasloe man whose lifelong passion for the town's history left an enduring legacy. Through his popular Facebook page, Ballinasloe, Don't Ya Know, he shared hundreds of historic photographs, encouraging people to reconnect with their community's past and inspiring many to contribute their own memories and family stories.

His dedication culminated in the publication of Ballinasloe Did Ya Know? in 2017, a collection of fascinating local historical stories and photographs. Gerry was also an active member of the Ballinasloe WWI History Group, contributing to a publication commemorating the town's experience during the First World War. His interest in this period was deeply personal, influenced by the lasting impact the war had on his granduncle.

Like many of his generation, Gerry spent most of his working life at AT Cross, where he took great pride in being part of a skilled local workforce producing quality writing instruments. Outside work, he was involved in sporting and cultural organisations while raising his family.

Retirement allowed Gerry to fully devote himself to preserving Ballinasloe's heritage. Using his IT skills, he encouraged people to share treasured family photographs, carefully scanning and preserving them before making them accessible online. His



generosity ensured that local history belonged to everyone, giving families confidence to celebrate and preserve their own stories.

Gerry's enthusiasm extended to talks, guided walks, exhibitions and community events. He played a vital role in the 2015 First World War Heritage Project launch and, in 2022, generously supplied rare photographs that formed the centrepiece of the Ballinasloe Heritage Group's Pop-Up History Display following significant archaeological discoveries in the town.

A talented artist and craftsperson, and a devoted Galway GAA supporter, Gerry embraced community life in every way. He was a huge contributor and support of the Community Market. His warmth, humour and generosity made him a cherished friend to many. Above all, he helped create today's thriving heritage community in Ballinasloe. His love for his town, its people and its history ensured that its stories would continue to be remembered and celebrated

for generations to come. Members of the local Heritage Society and other historic clubs and organisations formed an honour guard for his cortege.

Our deepest sympathy to his wife Betty, his daughter Lorraine, his sons Gary and Robert, and the wider Devlin family.

Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann!

Not Only An Art Teacher

The passing of Eileen Quinn brought profound sadness to the locality and to the many students, colleagues, neighbours and friends whose lives she enriched. More than an art teacher, Eileen was a gifted mentor, creative force and steadfast supporter of the arts whose influence extended far beyond the classroom.

At a time when Art and Music were not universally valued in schools, Eileen ensured every student experienced creativity, imagination and self-expression. Whether teaching painting, sculpture, printmaking or drawing, she approached each pupil with patience, encouragement and deep expertise. Even those who showed little initial interest discovered confidence through her calm guidance and belief in their potential. She never dismissed reluctant students but sought out the smallest spark of ability and nurtured it into something lasting.

Her lessons left an enduring impression. Many former students still recall her teachings whenever they visit galleries, museums or simply appreciate art in everyday life. She inspired not only artistic skills but a lifelong curiosity and appreciation



for creativity.

Eileen's passion extended well beyond visual art. She was devoted to literature, theatre and music, sharing with her late husband, Jack, a deep love of culture and performance. She played a pivotal role in reviving drama and musical productions in Garbally College during the early 1980s, producing shows, designing sets and encouraging generations of students to perform with confidence and pride. Her commitment to artistic excellence never wavered, and she gave generously of her time to local amateur drama groups throughout her life.

Even in retirement, Eileen continued painting, supporting the arts and welcoming friends into her home. Describing her simply as an "Art Teacher" barely captures the breadth of her generosity, talent and influence. She shaped not only artists but countless

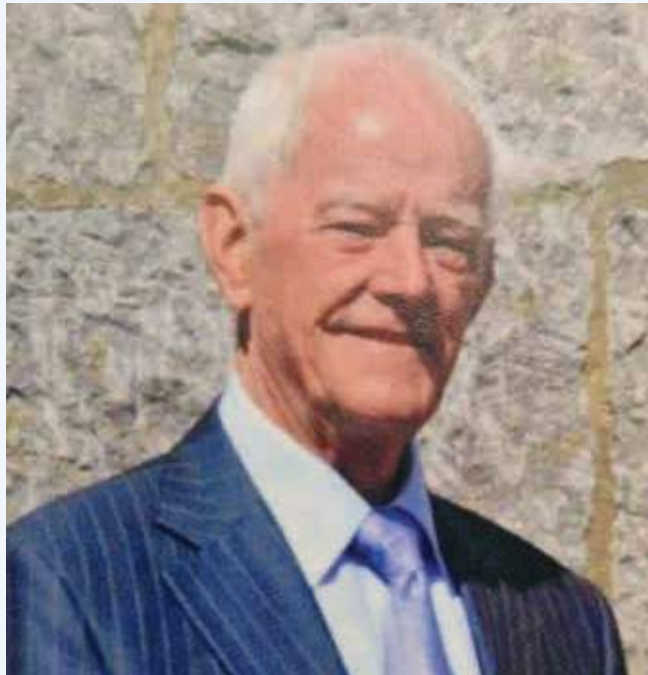
lives through compassion, creativity and encouragement. To her family, neighbours and friends we extend our deepest sympathies, while remembering with gratitude a remarkable woman whose legacy will continue to inspire for generations.

Thomas Hardiman – Quiet Builder

Builder Tommie Hardiman a quiet unassuming gentleman passed away on July 9th. He was quite a reserved man who never looked for attention and would probably be a little uncomfortable with the mourners and the chat associated with his funeral.

Tommie worked as a builder for many years. It was hard work, often involving long days, and he approached it with commitment and a strong work ethic. He was well known for being somewhat particular about the right way to build and took real satisfaction in a job well done.

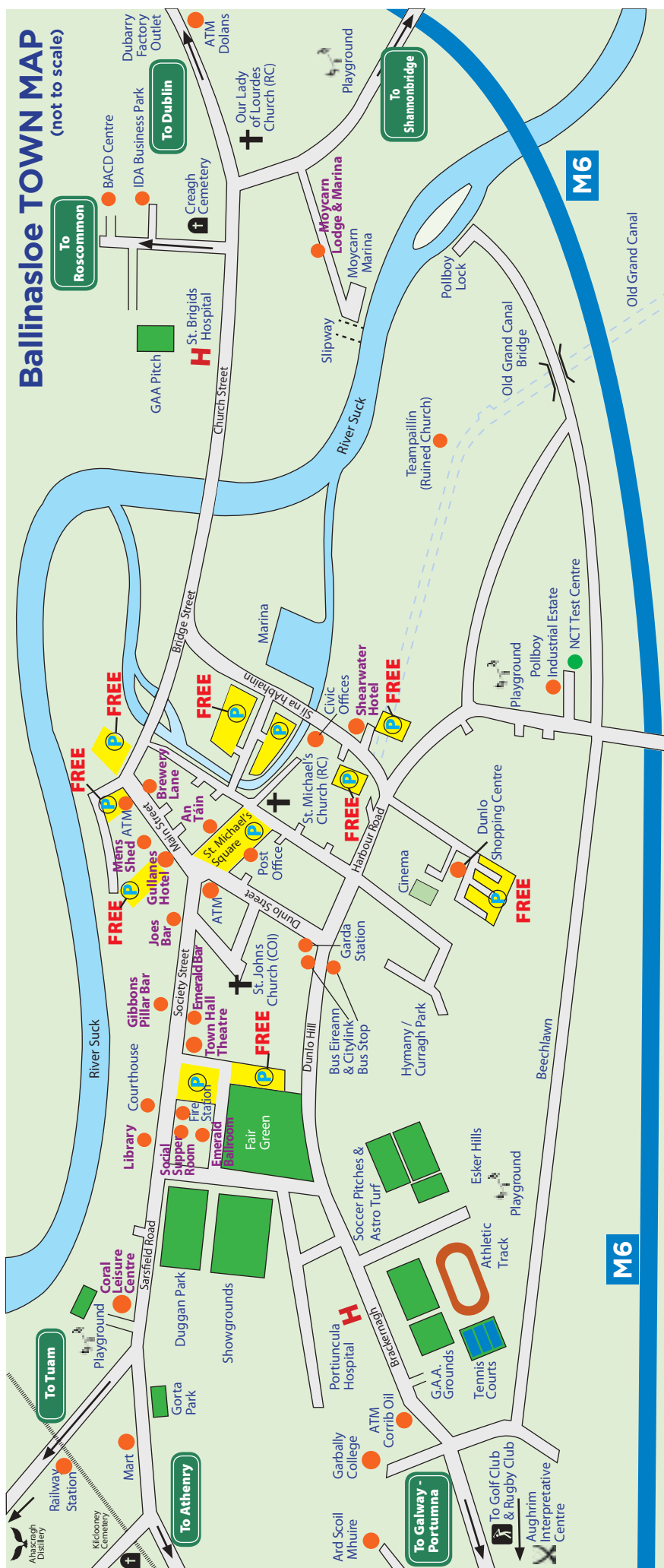
One of his greatest pleasures was traditional Irish music. He loved playing the accordion and spent many happy years playing with the Aughrim Slopes Ceili band, forming friendships that lasted over many years -they even had the memorable experience of performing on the Late Late Show. Some of his happiest times were spent playing music with family and friends as it brought him great joy, and through his music he brought enjoyment to so many others.



He and his wife Marita shared many years together, raising a family and building a lifetime of memories.

His family were hugely appreciative of the wonderful care he received in latter months from the doctors, nurses and medical team in the Orchard Ward at Portiuncula hospital. They also expressed heartfelt thanks to the wonderful staff at the Creagh Nursing Unit, who cared for him over the past seven months. They treated him with such dignity, patience and genuine kindness, and their care extended not only to Tommie but also to his wife and wider family. Tommie's place of rest was to Killoran Cemetery.

Our sympathies to his devoted wife Marita, his six children Kevin, Deirdre, Tomás, David, Sinead and Cathal, their partners and nine adored grandchildren. sister Mai Murphy, nieces, nephews, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, extended family, friends and neighbours.



Ballinasloe History Walk

1 – Start at the statue known as The Man with the Horse, where Main Street joins St. Michael's Square. From the crossing near the statue, continue by turning right onto Main Street. The prosperity of Ballinasloe in Georgian times can be seen in the scale and classical style of the buildings here. A fine group of four frontages stand across from the statue of The Man with the Horse. With shops and pubs on the ground floor for the most part, these Main Street premises have several floors above.

2 – Walking along Main Street, lift your eyes above the shop frontages for one of the town's characteristic sights. There are the Diocletian windows that grace several facades. They are from the years after 1805 when the 2nd Earl was in charge. A window of this sort is formed under a semi-circular arch with two upright divisions so that the whole opening is divided into three parts.

3 – As you stand at the meeting point of Bridge Street and Main Street, you will see the Victorian frontage of a commercial premises, originally the Masonic Hall. Next to it stands a classical looking, beautifully-crafted, early 19th century stone house, currently a guest house. Beside these is a tall, fine stone-fronted classical mansion, which is now the Bank of Ireland. It was originally the town mansion of the Lord of all of Ballinasloe, the Earl of Clancarty. A friend of king George IV, the Earl was one of the architects of the resistance to the emperor Napoleon. It could be said that he was the person to whom most credit is due for the layout, growth and architectural character of Ballinasloe as we see it today.

4 – At the end of Main Street, head along Bridge Street, then turn to the right to the pathway which runs to the riverscape where you can see channels flowing through the several arches of the long stone bridge over the river Suck, one of the town's most precious monuments. The Bridge has been in continuous use since the 16th century and its extension in 1754 prepared it structurally to carry even the heaviest juggernauts of today.

5 – Walk through to the far end of the park; you will approach St Michael's Church (1852-58) that stands in a commanding position over the Square. Its architect was J.J. McCarthy, a follower of Augustus Pugin (famed for other Neo-Gothic churches in Ireland) – and the design is said to have been revised by Pugin himself. Inside are many fine stained glass window. Of particular quality are those of St. Patrick and St. Rose of Lima, of 1925, by the renowned Dublin Stained glass artist, Harry Clarke and The Raising of the daughter of Jairus by Patrick Pollen, inserted in 1958.

6 – From St. Michael's Church now walk up St. Michael's Square back towards the Man with the Horse Statue. Take a left into Dunlo Street, an important street in the history of the town, which contains, together with other buildings of about the same date, the late-Georgian Garda Station. The Station is towards the far end of the street, on the right hand side. Also on this street, over Dolan's Electrical Shop, you can see another fine example of Diocletian windows.

7 – Halfway up Dunlo Street, turn right up Duggan Street, which will take you to St. John's Church (Church of Ireland, 1843). It dominates the vast Fair Green which becomes a hive of activity during one week every year when up to 100,000 people throng to the October fair. Look out over the Fair Green and admire one of the grandest freestanding classical monuments in the region. Dedicated to Charles Le Poer Trench, it was designed in the Neo-Greek style by the English architect George Papworth (1781-1855). A mile past this monument on the Main Galway road, South West of the town, the Earl of Clancarty's former country house is situated, where imposing gates mark the entrance to Garbally Court. It has been a school since 1923.

Walk down Church Hill onto Society Street and turn left, arriving at the Courthouse on the right. Society Street, like Main Street, was the 19th century location for the professional classes. As well as The Courthouse, it contains the former Bridewell (or gaol) from the 1840s. Further along this street, Ballinasloe Railway Station is a must. Constructed in 1851, it is a Neo-Gothic limestone tour-de-force and a fine example of the quality of rural Irish railway architecture in the mid-19th century.

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