

7<sup>th</sup> October, 2015

**To the Cathaoirleach & Each Member of Carlow County Council**

**Re: Community Section  
Progress Report for January to September 2015**

I set out, hereunder, for consideration by the members, progress report for period January to September 2015 in respect of the following areas of responsibility under Community:

1. Carlow Local Community Development Committee
2. Community Initiatives
3. Carlow Public Participation Network
4. Other Initiatives / Areas of Responsibility
5. County Carlow Sports Partnership

**1. Carlow Local Community Development Committee:**

In 2012, the policy document “Putting People First “ was published and this sets out reforms to improve the delivery of services for the citizen, deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness and gives local government a more central role in the oversight and planning of local and community development programming. Arising from these commitments the Local Government Reform Act 2014 was passed into legislation on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

As a consequence of this Reform, Local Authorities, in each of their areas, were charged with setting up a Local Community Development Committee in place of the County Development Board.

**Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

The Guiding Principles of the LCDC are;

- A developmental “ bottom up” approach
- A clear focus on social inclusion

- Promotion of enterprise and employment development
- Voluntary activity and active citizenship
- Harnessing of existing community infrastructure
- Achieving value for money
- Best use of available resources

#### Purpose:

- Primary responsibility for co-ordination, planning and oversight of local development spend
- Develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development in County Carlow. It will do this by bringing together local authority members and officials, state agencies and people actively working with local development, community development, and economic, cultural and environmental organisations to implement a joined-up, cross-sectoral approach to local and community development programming. LCDCs will, therefore, draw on the expertise and experience of public and private actors within the Council area to provide effective and efficient services to citizens and communities of County Carlow, in particular those most in need of those services.
- Meaningful citizen and community engagement
- Efficient administration of local programmes
- Pursue opportunities for additional funding resources

#### Functions of the LCDC are:

- To prepare, adopt, implement, monitor and review the community elements of a 6 -year Local Economic and Community Plan
- To consider and adopt a statement of the Community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan
- To improve the co-ordination of publicly funded programmes including the Local Community Development Programme Rural Development Programme (LEADER) and Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- Oversight of local and community development programmes
- Avoidance of duplication
- To prepare an annual report on the performance of its functions.

#### **Establishment of the Carlow LCDC**

Carlow County Council at its meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 statutorily established the Carlow Local Community Development Committee in accordance with Section 36 49A(1) Chapter 2 of Part 13 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 for the purposes of developing,

coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development

The LCDC comprises of seventeen members both statutory and non statutory including four elected members. The LCDC is a committee of the Council but independent in the performance of its functions.

### Carlow LCDC Members are:

<b>Statutory Interests</b>		
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Members Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Local Government</b>	Michael Doran Charlie Murphy Jennifer Murnane O'Connor William Quinn Seamus O'Connor Kieran Comerford	Members of Carlow County Council  Chief Executives Nominee Head of L.E.O.
	<b>State Agencies</b>	Noel Barry Cynthia Deane Dept of Social Protection Kilkenny/Carlow Education & Training Board
<b>Non Statutory Interests</b>		
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Members Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Local &amp; Community Development</b>	Thomas Kelly	Drumphaea Cemetery Committee (C&V REP)
	Mary Doyle	Hacketstown Community Group (C&V REP)
	Ann Shortall	Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre(Social Inclusion)
	Andrea Dalton	St Catherine's Community Services Centre(Social Inclusion)
<b>Social Economic and Community Interests</b>	Mary Walsh	Carlow County Development Board Partnership
	Eamonn Moore	Environmental Pillar
	John Brophy	Carlow Chamber (Business Employer)
	John Nolan Fr. Caoimhín O'Neill	Agricultural / Farming Civic Society

The LCDC held its first statutory meeting on 30th July 2014 and continues to meet on a regular basis.

### Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP process originates from the 'Vision for Local Government: Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government'

whereby 'Local Government will be the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services and representing citizen and local communities effectively and accountably.'

The purpose of the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) for County Carlow, shall be to identify and implement actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community development dimensions of the local authority area over the next six year period and in a manner that both reflects and supports the implementation of the existing Carlow County Development Plan, Joint Spatial Plan for Carlow and the Draft Guidelines and proposed Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs), to be prepared by the Regional Assembly and the new National Planning Framework which will replace the National Spatial Strategy. The LECP may be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). In preparing the LECP, it is necessary also to consider the proposed Rural Development Strategy for County Carlow 2014 to 2020, the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and Government's Action Plan for Jobs.

The Plan aims to improve the well-being of the people and economy of Carlow through enhanced strategic planning, better targeting of resources and more meaningful impacts for local communities and this is achieved through social dialogue between agencies and the community. It will provide the strategic framework for all publicly funded economic, local and community development programmes in the County and the *objective of maximizing the social, cultural, sporting and economic development of Carlow on a regional level*. The Plan will include measures to tackle poverty and exclusion and to develop opportunities for enterprise and employment, training and education, community wellbeing, rural and community development, local infrastructure and services, tourism, cultural services, innovation/R&D, natural resources, agriculture, and the promotion of Carlow.

The Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) for County Carlow will deliver clear, concise, and innovative and evidence based measures aimed at accelerating the economic and social transformation, revitalisation and sustainable development of the county. The LECP will provide an ambitious, yet achievable Economic and Social Vision for County Carlow, with living and workable Actions and ongoing Monitoring and Appraisal.

An advisory steering group has been established as part of the preparation of the LECP with representatives from the County Council, LCDC and other Stakeholders i.e. Carlow College, IT Carlow, KCETB and CCDP Ltd. The LCDC will adopt the community elements of the plan.

The process for development of the LECP is the task of Carlow County Council and the Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), and consists of four broad phases:

- a) Preparation / Information Base;
- b) Public Consultation;
- c) Development of Objectives and Actions and finalisation of the LECP and;
- d) Adoption / Publication. Following adoption, the Council, LCDC and Advisory Steering Committee will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Plan

The Draft Plan will be reviewed and considered by the Regional Assembly, LECP Advisory Steering Group, Municipal Districts, Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Planning prior to publication for consultation.

Adoption of the LECP is a reserved function of Carlow County Council and the process is to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

Local Authority performance of the Economic development and Community Development Functions will be subject to examination and report by the newly established National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC).

*Progress to Date:*

- Workshops were held on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre and Seven Oaks Hotel respectively.
- Closing date for written submissions was 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015.
- Workshops were held for Stakeholders including Senior Staff in Carlow County Council in early July (8<sup>th</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> July) and a follow up one in early August. Facilitated by Slí Nua.
- Staff of Community Section and LEO prepared the draft over the summer based on written submissions and workshops.
- Next steps – draft circulated / to be circulated to Regional Assembly, Management Team, LECP Advisory Steering Group,

LCDC, Municipal Districts, during October for consideration and review.

- The draft plan is scheduled to go on public display for the period of 2<sup>nd</sup> of November to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
- Adoption of plan by Members of Carlow County Council at the December Meeting of Council.

### **Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014-2020**

The acronym 'LEADER' derives from the French words 'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale' "which means, 'Links between the rural economy and development actions'.

The LEADER approach is associated with local empowerment through local development strategy development and resource allocation. The main tool for the application of the LEADER approach to area development and involving local representatives in decision-making is the Local Action Group (LAG) which in Carlow's case is the LCDC.

- Carlow was allocated LEADER funding of €6,416,803.43.
  - Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd is the lead Implementing Partner for the LEADER Programme 2015-2021
  - LEADER is broken down into the following Themes
1. Rural Economic Development/Enterprise Development and Job Creation
    - Rural Tourism
    - Enterprise Development
    - Broadband
    - Rural Towns
  2. Social Inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation
    - Basic services for hard to reach communities
    - Rural Youth
    - Community Development
  3. Rural Environment
    - Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources
    - Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity
    - Development of Renewable Energy
  4. Support for Food Producers

A Local Development Strategy has to be prepared and will involve consultation with Stakeholders i.e. Agencies, Elected Representatives, Carlow County Council, Focus Groups etc in accordance with the Principles of Community Led Local Development. This process will take place during October/November. Following evaluation of all submissions received, a draft strategy/action plan will be developed by the Carlow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in accordance with guidelines set out by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in order to drawdown €6.4m public funding for County Carlow under the forthcoming LEADER Rural Development Programme.

It is anticipated that the LCDC will approve the LDS towards the end of November and same will then be submitted to the Department in December. It is expected that the LEADER programme strategy will progress the stated objectives of the Local Economic Community Plan. Carlow Local Community Development Committee is working in partnership with Carlow County Development Partnership in order to secure the implementation of this project.

### **SICAP**

After an extensive tender process and evaluation, an agreement between the Carlow LCDC, Carlow County Council and the Carlow County Development Partnership was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> March to implement the Carlow SICAP Programme. The value of the SICAP programme for County Carlow is €402,321 for covering the period of 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. The aim of the programme is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment through community development approaches, targeted supports and interagency collaboration where the values of equality and inclusion are promoted and human rights are respected. The groups that the programme must work with are as follows;

- Long term Unemployed
- Families living in Disadvantaged areas;
- Traveller Community;
- Roma Community;
- Young Unemployed People from Disadvantaged areas;
- New Communities (including Asylum Seekers);
- Lone Parents

### Progress to Date

- The LCDC at their 17<sup>th</sup> June meeting approved the Annual Plan and the setting up of a LCDC SICAP subgroup to monitor and

support the role of the SICAP programme by Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd.

- In September the SICAP mid-term review was successfully carried out where Karl Duffy the Social Inclusion Manager of CCDP met with the LCDC SICAP subgroup on 4<sup>th</sup> September to present the progress of the SICAP actions which were then presented to the full LCDC at their meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September where it was approved. Final funding monies were drawn down and paid to CCDP which has been recorded onto the IRIS, IT programme.

## **2. Community Initiatives:**

### **Carlow's Pride of Place 2015**

Applications were invited Carlow's Pride of Place in May and attracted 187 entries which includes schools, community, residents groups and burial grounds. Judging commenced in June and continued to the end of August. Preparation for the 2015 Awards Ceremony is underway, the event will take place in the Lord Bagenal Hotel, Leighlinbridge on Thursday October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm.

County Carlow experiences great benefits as a result of the strong community spirit that is present throughout our towns and villages

### **Co-Operation Ireland Pride of Place**

Tinryland was chosen to represent County Carlow in this year's Co-Operation Ireland Pride of Place Competition. Judging took place on the morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2015. A Recognition Night to celebrate and acknowledge the work and commitment shown by the Tinryland Community in representing the County in the competition was held on October 1<sup>st</sup>. A certificate of recognition was presented by the Cathaoirleach, Councillor Charlie Murphy and A/Chief Executive Dan McInerney to Tom Moore and Trudi Shannon of the Tinryland community.

Winners will be announced at a Gala Awards Ceremony on November 14<sup>th</sup> in the West County Tracey's Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare. Irish TV attended on judging day the programme can be viewed on the following link - <http://www.irishtv.ie/carlow-matters-57>

### **Ireland's Best Kept towns**

Leighlinbridge Improvement Group was supported in their preparation for Ireland's Best Kept Town Competition earlier in the year. They were awarded the overall title of Ireland's Best Kept Town and won the top prize in the Best Kept Small Town category of the awards. The awards were announced on June 16<sup>th</sup> at a ceremony in Farmleigh House. Ann

Phelan T.D. Minister of State at the Dept of Agriculture, Food, Marine & Transport, Tourism & Sport presented members of Leighlinbridge Improvement Group with the award. The competition is organized by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government and the Northern Ireland Amenity Council.

### **Tidy Towns**

County Carlow made headlines once again when Clonegal won the Tidiest Village in Ireland for the second year running. Leighlinbridge were runners up in their category 1 point behind the winners. Carlow Town, Leighlinbridge and Clonegal maintained their gold medals status which is a significant achievement with all gaining points. Fenagh took the Endeavour award this year with an increase of 8 points on last year's result, in fact all of County Carlow's entrants increased their points. (For full breakdown of results, please see attached appendix).

The National Tidy Towns awards which were announced on Monday 28th September, by Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, Mr. Alan Kelly and Mr. Martin Kelleher, Managing Director of Supervalu, the competition's sponsor.

Tidy Towns Groups throughout the county are supported by personnel in the Community Section. This year the Section organised a number of workshops for groups including Protection of Wildlife Habitats & Natural Amenities with IPCC and Tidy Towns Application Form – Practical Tips with members of Kilkenny Tidy Towns and Carlow County Council's Environmental Awareness Officer.

It is important to acknowledge the work of our colleagues in the Environment & Roads Department and the significant contribution made by those who work on the many schemes: Gateway, Carlow Town & County Amenity Trust, Community Employment under the management of Dept of Social Protection, the Delta Force, Probation & Welfare and TUS workers under the management of Carlow County Development Partnership Ltd. By working collectively we can and do make a difference.

### **Environmental / Amenity Grant Scheme 2015**

A total of 165 grants were awarded to Community Groups/Residents Associations (149 grants) and schools (16 grants) throughout the county. Qualifying works included landscaping and development of open-spaces; amenity development on river/stream banks; provision of picnic facilities; painting; provision of litterbins/anti-litter initiatives, improvements in burial grounds and general enhancement of areas. Grant funding of €44,050

was awarded and is in the process of being administered to Community Groups in 2015.

### **Community Grant Scheme 2015**

A total of 39 grants were given to Community Groups throughout the County under this scheme. The aim of the scheme is to support community and voluntary groups in County Carlow who undertake projects that will:

- Carry out a service or activity that makes a contribution to the quality of life in their local community.
- Increase voluntary activity.
- Target the social excluded and increase their opportunities for participation.
- Support the valuable contribution of community and voluntary organisations in County Carlow.

Grant funding of €17,000 was awarded and was awarded and is in the process of being administered to Community Groups in 2015.

### **Streetscape Paint Scheme 2015**

A total of 5 applications have been approved. The aim of this grant scheme is to facilitate the enhancement of the streetscapes and presentation of the public realm of our towns and villages. The scheme applies to key town and village streets. The scheme offered a grant of 50% of the cost of works to a maximum of €500 whichever was the lesser amount. €4,000 was allocated to this scheme in 2015.

### **Shop Front Improvement Scheme 2015**

A total of 3 applications have been improved. The scheme was promoted in recognition of the important role that the design and quality of shop fronts play in the experience of a town/village centre environment. It is important that the Shop front should not compromise the local character, scale and architectural quality of the host building. Traditional shop fronts in Ireland are often of painted softwood with decorative consoles or pilasters in timber and fascia advertisements consisting of applied plasterwork lettering in distinctive fonts. Many date to the early twentieth century, with either restrained or exuberant styles. The scheme offered a grant of 50% of the cost of the shop front or a maximum of €1,700. €10,000 was allocated to this scheme in 2015.

### **Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund**

The Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund, which has operated since 1997, promotes sustainable development by assisting small-scale environmental projects at local level. These projects involve partnership arrangements between Carlow County Council and various

local groups including community groups, schools and environmental NGOs.

The Fund encourages involvement of local communities in local action and decision-making and assists them in working towards the goal of sustainable development. The value of the scheme is enhanced by the voluntary effort that it facilitates.

Through funding from the Dept. of Environment, Community and Local Government, and match funding from Carlow County Council, a total of €15,270 for 2014/15 was allocated to 15 community groups in County Carlow. These groups have undertaken projects that contributed to increasing local levels of environmental awareness or which promoted building greener, more sustainable communities.

### **Community News**

- Quarterly News Bulletins are e-mailed to Tidy Towns Groups, Community Groups and Residents Associations updating groups on Carlow County Council, Community Initiatives.

### **3. Carlow Public Participation Network**

The Working Group on Citizen Engagement with local government was set up in September 2013 under the chairmanship of Fr. Sean Healy. The role of the Group was to make recommendations on more extensive and diverse input by citizens into the decision making at local government level. The Report of the Working Group was published in February 2014.

Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides the legislative basis which gives effect to the Framework for Public Participation.

Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were to be set up in all local authority areas at County level and was established in County Carlow in early October 2014. It will be the main link through which Carlow County Council will connect with community/voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors.

The aim of these structures is to **facilitate and enable** public organisations operating within the wider community to articulate and give voice to a **diverse** range of views, issues and interests within the local government system.

**The role of the PPN is;**

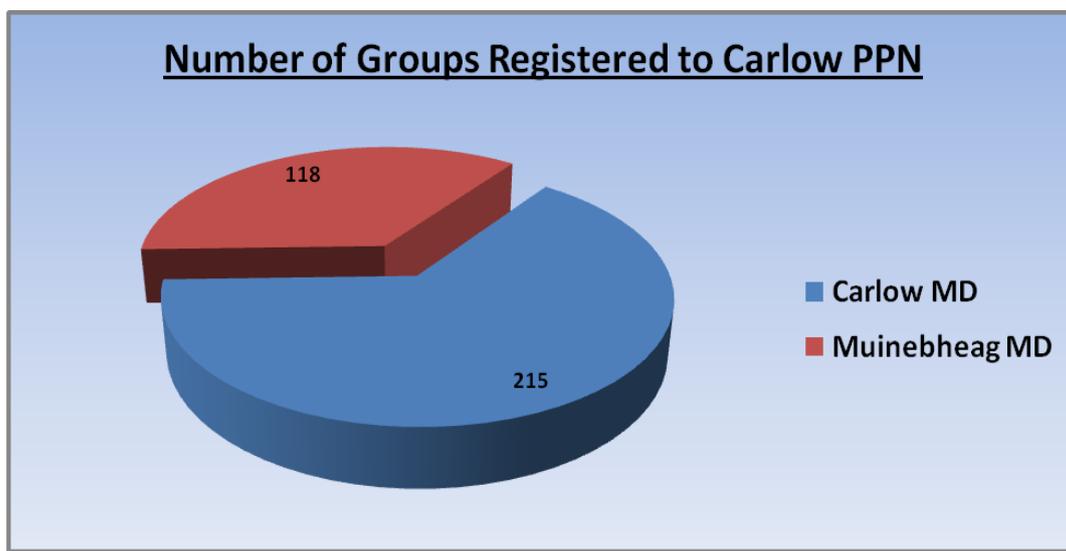
- To identify issues of collective concern and work to influence policy locally;
- To actively support socially excluded groups;
- To encourage and enable public participation in local decision making and planning of services;
- To serve as the nominating structure for community interests (Social Inclusion, Community/Voluntary and Environmental) on Local Government committee structures including the LCDC.

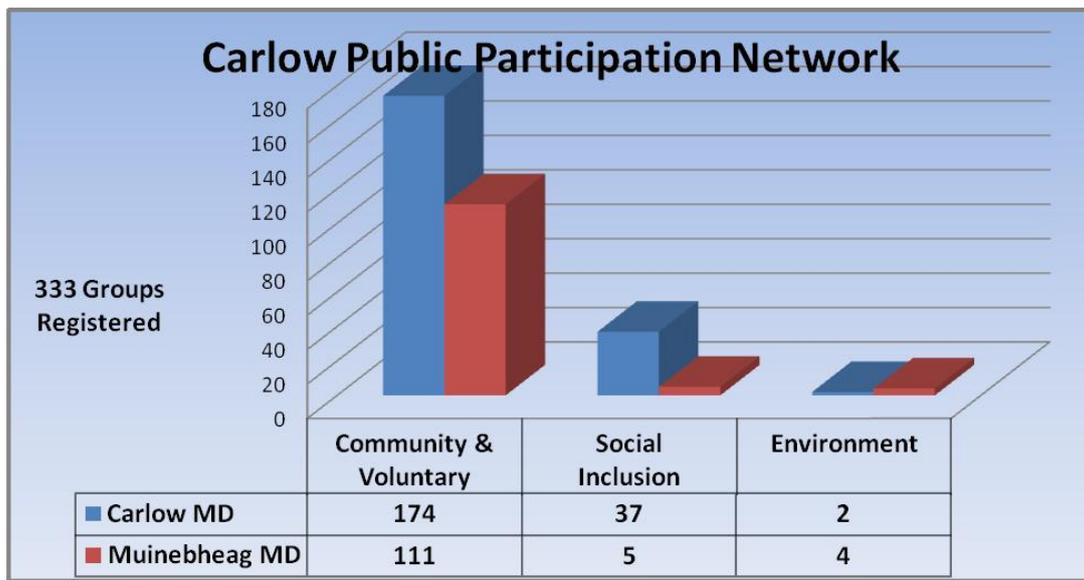
### The Structure of the PPNs

- A **County Plenary** at County level which deals with County level issues. The plenary will bring together all the PPN groups to give feedback, highlight issues and present the results of their work.
- A **Municipal District Plenary** in each Municipal District (MD) which deals with issues at a municipal level.
- **Linkage Groups** will form to deal with specific issues and support nominees in their role; they will form part of the accountability and feedback mechanism for the community (task groups).
- A **secretariat at County** level that acts as a coordinator, facilitation, administration, and communication mechanism for the PPN.

Community groups and organisations register under three different pillars of Community/Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental.

- The number of registered groups registered to date is 333 registered groups





### **PPN Secretariat**

The following are elected reps of the Secretariat;

- **MD of Carlow** *Mary Doyle*
- **MD of Muinebheag** *Paddy Gardiner*
- **Environmental** *Eamonn Moore and Alan Price*
- **Social Inclusion** *Joanne Donohoe and Oscar Traynor*
- **Community and Voluntary** *Thomas Kelly and Regina Duane*

### **LCDC Reps**

Elected onto the Carlow LCDC are the following;

- **Environmental** *Eamonn Moore*
- **Social Inclusion** *Andrea Dalton and Ann Shortall*
- **Community and Voluntary** *Mary Doyle and Thomas Kelly*

### **SPC Reps**

The following are the elected reps of the SPCs;

- **Community, Housing and Amenity SPC**
  - Community: *Lorraine Hynes*
  - Housing: *To be filled*
  - Amenity: *Thomas Kelly*
- **Transport, Environment and Infrastructure SPC**
  - Transport: *Mary Doyle*
  - Environment: *To be filled*
  - Infrastructure: *Paddy Gardiner*

- **Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Planning SPC**
  - Economic Development: *Paul Maher*
  - Enterprise Support: *Cornelia McCarthy*
  - Planning: *Alan Price*
- **Cultural, Health and Agricultural SPC**
  - Cultural: *To be filled*
  - Health: *Eileen Doyle*
  - Agricultural: *Jim Browne*

Tasks carried out by the Carlow PPN from Jan to Sept 2015 is

- A Plenary took place in 28<sup>th</sup> June 2015 where the elections for SPCs, LCDC, JPC, Carlow Tourism, SERA Drugs Task Force took place.
- The PPN Worker, Gráinne O'Neill was employed from 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- Monthly meetings with Secretariat have taken place
- Monthly E-Bulletins are sent out to all registered groups.
- Capacity building of the Secretariat took place in April and May
- Training and capacity-building for the members of the 15 Linkage Groups took place on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept which was facilitated by Sara Bourke of Social Justice Ireland.
- Awareness raising training facilitated by Fr. Sean Healy and Sara Bourke of Social Justice Ireland on the PPN to Carlow County Council Staff of all levels took place on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept and 1<sup>st</sup> October.
- It is proposed that the PPN Secretariat will address Council at its November Meeting.

#### **4. Other Initiatives and Areas of Responsibility:**

##### **Comhairle na nÓg**

Comhairlí na nÓg/Youth Councils were established in response to the 10 year National Children Strategy launched in 2001 by the Department of Health and Children and was set up in 34 City and County Development Boards around the Country. Under the auspices of these City/County Development Boards Comhairle na nÓg is the responsibility of the local authority in each area. In Co Carlow, Comhairle na nÓg is managed by Carlow Regional Youth Services in conjunction with the Community and Enterprise Section of Carlow County Council. It is a forum for structured input into decision making

by children and young people in the development of local services and policies that impact on young people's lives.

- Comhairle na nÓg – reviewed 2014 action plan and prepared 2015 Plan which secured €20,000 from the Department of Children and Families.
- As part of their 2015 annual plan Carlow Comhairle na nÓg members held a Happiness Roadshow, promoting positive mental health and the work of Comhairle. They visited 6 schools in Carlow, Bagenalstown and Hacketstown meeting with 1,400 students. Students were asked to complete a survey on their understanding of mental wellbeing and about what supports they knew were available to young people. The outcome of the Roadshow was that the young people had been given more information on mental wellbeing and on how to support each other when they need it.
- Another action from their Annual Plan 2015 Carlow Comhairle na nÓg members ran a very successful Happy Café in Deighton Hall during the Carlow Arts Festival from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and received many visitors and positive feedback. Again this was very successful in raising awareness about mental health issues and the Comhairle Programme.
- The Comhairle Interagency Steering Committee met a few times in this first period of the year to support and help the young members to carry out these actions. Also for the National Annual Information, Networking and Training event for Comhairle na nÓg Organisers' on 28th April 2015 in Dublin the Carlow Comhairle Interagency Steering Committee was asked to participate in the making of a video of best practise examples of an Interagency Steering Committee along with Donegal and Roscommon. At the National Event where the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs, representatives of these 3 committees formed a panel to answer questions about best practise arising from the showing of the video.

### **County Carlow Children and Young People's Services Committee**

The Inter-agency Committee will be responsible for improving the lives of children and families at local and community level through integrated planning, working and service delivery and will ensure that professionals and agencies work together so that children and families receive better and more accessible services.

- A lot of work of the Children and Young People's Service Committee of the first period of 2015 was around trying to establish a good working relationship between the 2 Counties of Carlow and Kilkenny and trying to produce a 4 year Plan for the 2 Counties. It

became really evident as the year progressed that due to staff shortages and scarce time resources that having a 2 County structure with meetings held alternatively in each County was not working as attendance was dropping drastically. As a result it was decided in September that after discussion with both County Committee Members, both Local Authorities Chief Executives, other joint-county CYPSCs who also were experiencing the same issues and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs that each County would have their own committee sharing the same Co-ordinator, Mairead Maddock and draw up separate County, 4 year Plans and this is to commence immediately.

### **Age Friendly County**

The Carlow Age Friendly Subgroup continued to meet regularly throughout the year in order to implement the Carlow Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan and some highlights would be as follows;

- Launch of Carlow Town Age Friendly Action Plan in January and the Plan was presented to Management Team and Municipal District of Carlow.
- The Carlow Older Persons Forum was successfully launched in the Askea Parish Centre on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May. This Forum will be the representative voice of the older people in County Carlow.
- Carlow Age Friendly Business subgroup met for the first time on 10<sup>th</sup> June. The Carlow Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June was launched on where information workshops will be run on how to become an age friendly business.
- A number of Age friendly spaces have been provided in Carlow town, coloured oatmeal with signage erected.

### **Carlow Volunteer Centre**

Carlow Volunteer Centre had a very busy year, surpassing of main targets that were set and engaging in a range of activities that have effectively promoted and supported volunteering across the County of Carlow, activities such as the vital placement service, Volunteer Management Training, Garda Vetting, working with community and local development groups.

- Due to consistent significant cuts in budget over the last few years Carlow Volunteer Centre remained in accommodation provided by Carlow Local Authorities.
- Personnel in Community continued to support the Volunteer Centre.

To give a flavour of their core work which is the Placement Services, their work with the Volunteer include the following;

- Information on volunteering options
- Support and advice for those with extra support needs
- Placement & brokerage
- Recognition and appreciation events
- Text-message alerts
- Media profiles/Awareness raising
- Social media
- Schools Transition Year Volunteering
- 3rd Level Outreach Volunteering
- I.T. Carlow Volunteering Award
- Corporate volunteering team days
- Presentations on specific volunteering themes – i.e. environmental, disability, unemployment

Their work with the Voluntary Organisations includes the following;

- Advertising volunteer vacancies
- Advice and support
- Documentation templates – e.g. volunteer policies, role descriptions etc.
- Consultancy on specific issues
- Volunteer Management Training
- Garda Vetting access
- Seminars on relevant topics
- Recruitment events - Volunteer Expo, Carlow IT Volunteering Fair
- “Once-off/Event Volunteers” list
- Regular email updates
- Access to national volunteer recognition

### **Carlow Traveller Interagency Group (CTIG)**

The Community Section provides ongoing support and leadership to the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group. Earlier this year the group reviewed the Carlow Traveller Interagency Strategy and agreed and prioritized actions for the period 2015-2017. The group monitors the implementation of the actions contained in the Strategy through four Thematic Groups: Accommodation & Relationships; Education & Community Development and Arts; Employment, Training and Business Opportunities; Health & Lifestyle, which were established to oversee the implementation of the actions. Funding applications are made to the DJE&LR each year with match funding coming from the agencies represented on the Traveller Interagency Group.

- Carlow Traveller Interagency Group continued to work on the implementation of actions as outlined in their Strategy.
- The Traveller Policy Division, Dept. of Justice, Equality & Law Reform has responsibility for supporting and coordination of the ongoing policy development in relation to Travellers in Irish society. The Department take a keen interest and closely monitor the work of the Traveller Interagency Groups.
- Members of the Travelling Community are represented on a number of working groups / committees e.g. Carlow Integration Forum, LTACC etc.

### **Taste of Carlow**

Co-ordination and promotion of a successful Taste of Carlow which was held on Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2015, in the Potato Market. The event was organised in partnership with Carlow Tourism, Carlow Farmers Market and Carlow Chamber of Commerce. 45 Artisan Craft and food producers participated in the event this year.

Carlow Farmers Market donated produce for the food demonstrations and vouchers for prizes. Staff from the Roadhouse Café, Lennons and Bella Vita Restaurants, Oonagh Barrett and young people from Carlow Regional Youth Services gave a rich variety of food demonstrations. Fionnghuala Ryan, Environmental Awareness Officer gave a talk on food waste and Dee Sewell from Greenside Up gave a talk on growing herbs.

Young local musicians and the Marie Cashin Dance Troupe entertained in the marquee, other family entertainment included a bouncy slide, Rancho Reilly Pet Farm, Make & Do workshops and face painting. Organised with a view to promoting and profiling the indigenous craft and artisan food producers within the county, the event was once again a huge success with capacity crowds in attendance. Irish TV Carlow Matters were there and highlights of the day can be viewed on <http://www.irishtv.ie/carlow-matters-64>.

### **Latvian Community**

Support to the Leinster Latvian Community with the official opening ceremony of the Courland days in Ireland 2015 which was held in the Town Hall on September 17<sup>th</sup>. They were also supported in hosting the Round table discussions on Work and Migration and Education today & tomorrow –Diaspora education in Ireland which were held the following day in the Town Hall.

### **New Oak Community Centre**

Community staff continues to provide support for New Oak Community Centre Steering Committee.

## **The Plots Community Garden & Allotments**

Community staff continues to support the Plots Community Gardens & Allotments Project. The project is meeting the main objectives which are:

- Provide a space for individuals and groups to grow their own vegetables.
- Act as a training facility for people not in employment, education or training providing a combination of horticultural training with literacy, numeracy, personal development and job preparation modules while supporting participants to address their barriers to progression
- Promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles through the growing of fresh food and availing of daily exercise
- Promote community development, integration and pride through co-operative working with different sections of the local community
- Enhance the local environment

## **Other Work**

The Community Section assists other bodies with the following:

- Funding and assistance for Carlow Tourism Ltd. / Carlow Garden Trail
- Support to CRISP (Carlow Rural Information Services Project – Carlow, Ballon, Borris, Hacketstown & Tullow)
- Carlow Town & County Amenity Trust: Management and operation of Scheme. The FÁS Job Initiative Scheme (JIS) is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year of operation. This initiative relates to enhancing and protecting the environment in Carlow Town and County - 19 Employees – Budget €0.55 million

## **5. County Carlow Local Sports Partnership**

Below is a brief summary of key projects completed by County Carlow Sports Partnership in 2015. Further information and details are available on request. The LSP acts as a catalyst pulling together resources to maximise effectiveness. All projects are linked to local clubs, coaches and volunteers to create a pathway for progression and continued participation. Projects are listed under the following target groups: Youth, Older, Women, Men, Disability, Community, Schools & Clubs.

### **LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIP**

#### **PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY PROGRAMME**

Target & Age Range: 4 years – 60 years approx. According to the CSO 2011 there are 7,482 people with a disability in the County.

Orgs/Services Involved: IWA; Carlow Regional Youth Services; St. Dymphnas Hosp Occupational Therapy; HSE Mental Health Unit; BEAM

Services; Rehabcare; Cairdeas Centre; Skillsbase NLN: Delta Centre; Carlow Autism Group; Special Olympics; Carlow Down Syndrome Group; NCBI; Visual Impairment Group; etc. The table below provides a summary of disability programmes delivered between January and July 2015. The current programme has now concluded and LSP Committee is in the process of carrying out a review of outcomes and impacts.

ACTIVITY	TOTAL NUMBER ATTENDED	MALE	FEMALE	DISABILITY TYPE
1. Wheelchair Basketball	14	7	7	11 Physical disability 3 siblings, friends & family members
2. St Dymphnas Mental health group	11	9	2	11 Mental ill health
3. Inclusive Camps	44 (20 with a disability)	13	7	18 Intellectual disability 2 Physical disability
4. IT Sports Programme	32	18	14	32 Intellectual disability
5. Sports Hall athletics	120			120 Intellectual disability mild/moderate
6. Cycling Programme	11	6	5	6 disability-Intellectual 5 siblings and friends
7. Health & wellbeing social group	17	13	4	11 young people had a disability 3 with a physical disability 8 with an intellectual disability 6 young people were friends or siblings
8. Horse Riding	11	10	1	10 Intellectual disability/Emotional Disability 1 physical disability
9. FAI Pan Disability Programme	17	13	4	1 visual impairment 16 intellectual disability
10. Athletics	12	8	4	3 Intellectual disability 9 physical disability

## WOMEN IN SPORT PROGRAMME

**A.** Delivering in partnership with County Carlow Women's Network offering sustainable low cost physical activity programmes. Projects have been developed in partnership with local sports club including swimming lessons, 'cardio-tennis' and fitness classes. Approximately 60 participants.

**B.** Supporting the 'Buggy Buddies' physical activity group which provides fitness classes for new mothers in the Town Park. Due to popular demand we are adding a second weekly session.

**C.** Planning a Cycling Heritage Tour of the Town targeting female cyclists to promote usage of the cycle lanes around the Town Centre.

## **OLDER ADULT PROGRAMME**

**A.** Go for Life Games Club - Organised weekly activity session for older adults in St. Laurence O'Tooles AC for 6 weeks which commenced on May 11<sup>th</sup>. This initiative is part of the National Go for Life Games Programme and linked to Age Friendly Carlow and the Carlow Older Peoples Network. Total of 16 people took part with 12 people travelling to Dublin to represent Carlow in the Go for Life Games national event. Our very own Joan Barron won a 'spirit of the games' award. Go for Life Games adapted by Go for Life involve three sports that can be played in Singles, Pairs and Teams. Activities include: Lobbers- adaption of Petanque and Boules; Flisk- adaption of Frisbee and Horseshoe Pitching; and Scidil-adaption of Ten-Pin Bowling and Skittles.

**B.** Organised Zumba Gold for older adults to take place in St. Laurence O'Tooles AC for 6 weeks - started on Sept 9<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 12pm. An average number of 35 people have been attending. This initiative is linked to Age Friendly Carlow and the Carlow Older Peoples Network. The long-term plan is to work with St. Laurence O'Tooles to create an activity hub for older adults at that venue with regular programmes managed by the LSP. The activities will be based on the preferences of the target group.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAMME**

**A.** Organised the annual Operation Transformation Walk which took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> January in Rathwood, Co Carlow. Attendance of over 300 people of all ages. As a follow-on to this event the LSP offered two free 8 week 'bootcamps' – one in Tullow and one in Carlow Town – with approx 50 participants in each.

**B.** Family Treasure Hunt & Teddy Bear Picnic Event – Sunday August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 12 noon – 6 p.m. as part of the Carlow Garden Festival. County Carlow Sports Partnership organised a programme for all the family to enjoy featuring a Teddy Bear Picnic & Geocache Treasure Hunt. LSP also organised face painting, bouncy castle, archery, traditional games, music and a family geocache treasure hunt. The Treasure Hunt was a huge success and was designed and delivered by Una Halpin of Wildways Adventures. The Treasure Hunt aspect is funded by the HSE. Over 300 people completed the treasure hunt including 210 young people. We have 107 filled in evaluations which Una Halpin collated and have been distributed to LSP Committee Members. The LSP received a letter of thanks from the Carlow Tourism Board of Management following

the event. We are now planning the 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of 4 family geocache treasure hunt events in partnership with the HSE and Wildways Adventures.

**C.** Examining feasibility developing a Community Watersports Hub Programme for Carlow Town to support existing clubs such as the Rowing Club and to support the development of new clubs such as the Dragon Boat Club, Rafting and Canoeing. Local stakeholders will be involved from the outset to ensure engagement and 'buy-in'.

**D.** European Week of Sport 2015 (7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September). Carlow LSP organized a number of events to coincide with the EWS including a one day learners and improvers cycling camp; Bike For Life training; zumba for older adults and activities for people with a disability.

**E.** FREE Tennis Lessons @ Carlow Tennis Club: Days: Thursdays 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> Sept. Time: 10.30am – 1pm (approx 45min per session) Brian Farrell Director Tennis & Coach at Carlow Tennis Club provided fun doubles/singles group coaching where he gave the basics of scoring tactics and positioning etc.

**F.** Couch to 5km Programme in Carlow Town, Bagenalstown & Tullow. The couch to 5K programme is an 8 week programme to encourage and motivate people to take them from the 'couch' to a 5K in 8 weeks. The programme will cater for beginners to jogging/running and is also open to those that are currently walking but perhaps would like to build up to jogging/running. Organised by County Carlow Local Sports Partnership participants will work with a qualified and professional coach once week for the 8 weeks while also being encourage to do extra themselves during the week.

**G.** Participated in a planning session along with other members of the CoCo Community Dept, facilitated by Sli Nua Consultants, to discuss the development of actions in respect of LECP on the 25<sup>th</sup> August. The draft LSP strategic plan has been included under the strategic heading Safety, Health & Wellbeing. The LSP strategic plan will be finalized now that there is clarity around the structure and role of the LSP within the LECP framework. The consultants advised also that local plans, where possible, should tie in with the LECP timescale of 2016 – 2021 for reporting purposes and to maximize potential for collaboration.

## **YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMME**

**A.** Submitted an application to the Department of Children & Youth Affairs, (under the Youth Capital Grant Scheme), to fund a leadership programme for young people. **Grant funding of €8,000 recieved.** Using watersports as a method of engagement, in partnership with Carlow Regional Youth Services and local sports clubs.

**B.** Collaborating with Visual to explore possibility of delivering a youth dance project, in partnership with Carlow Regional Youth Services. The target group is 'youth at risk'.

## **SCHOOLS PROGRAMME**

- A.** Supported a number of local primary schools to run their 'Active School Week' events. This is a national initiative - April 27<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup> 2015.
- B.** 2 schools and 220 students took part in the First Tee Golf Primary Schools Programme.
- C.** Organised Intro to Tennis Programme for Tinryland NS using local community tennis court and linking in with Carlow Tennis Club.
- D.** Disability Inclusion Training Organised training for all staff in Bishop Foley National School on the 24<sup>th</sup> September and the 1<sup>st</sup> October. This is a theory and practical course that covers terminology, barriers to participation, legislation and guidance and an introduction to disability sports and ways of adapting activities to make them inclusive.

## **NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

- A.** Meetings held with Badminton Ireland representatives to discuss plans for the Carlow area and possible collaboration, development of junior league and new club in Ballon.
- B.** Strategic planning with reps from Confederation of Golf Ireland regarding participation programmes for Carlow community groups and schools in 2015. Mount Wolseley Hotel are hosting a PGA Challenge Golf Tournament from the 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> of October. The Federation of Golf in Ireland have offered places to people from Co. Carlow a chance to get golf lessons from a PGA professional. The Sports Partnership have organised St. Columbus N.S., Tullow Boys N.S., The Cairdeas Centre and the Tullow Scouts to attend subsidising 50% of bus cost for the schools.

## **CLUB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

- A.** Tullow Tae Kwon Do Club – allocated funding and were supported during their weekly martial arts group for kids with autism and heir siblings
- B.** County Athletics – **€3,000 funding secured** from Irish Sports Council to purchase equipment that will available from the LSP to local athletics groups running 5/10km races (e.g. timing clock and race road signs).
- C.** Cricket Camp: Supporting Carlow Cricket Club to plan and deliver a two day Cricket Camp to take place in IT Carlow during Easter 2015.
- D.** Supporting Carlow Dragon Boat Club to secure a storage facility for the boats which will enable this popular new club to facilitate new members and increase use of the River Barrow.
- E.** Supporting the set-up and development of Tinnahinch Harriers AC.
- F.** Supporting establishment of a Youth Darts Club in Tullow.
- G.** Special Olympics - met regional reps to offer LSP support.

H. Community Games – met officers of County Board to discuss funding opportunities available.

### **SPORTS COACH & LEADER TRAINING PROGRAMME**

A. Working with Carlow Volunteer Centre to collaborate on a programme to support sports leaders.

B. Child Welfare Awareness 30<sup>th</sup> March – 14 participants.

C. REC Level 3 with AED - 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> March – 9 participants.

D. Facilitated Sports First Aid training for local clubs which took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> April with 12 participants.

E. Sports Coach/Leader Training: 9 participants took part in Safeguarding Children Training organized by the LSP in IT Carlow on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August.

### **CYCLING PROGRAMME**

A. **Secured €5,000** from the Dept Tourism Transport & Sport to run Bike Week. Bike Week 2015 took place from the 13<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2015. Events included a Family Cycle Festival; Barrow Family Cycle; Mountain Bike Beginner Spins; Bike Maintenance Checks; School Cycle Activities; Community Group Cycle Activities; etc. Collating information from funded groups in order to prepare a full report on activities.

B. Cycle Lessons for Young People - **Twenty children from the ages of 3 to 11yrs attended the first week which was very successful with 4 of the children removing the stabilizers on the first session. Due to popularity this programme will be extended to November.** This programme is inclusive and can be adapted to young people based on their abilities. Teaching is geared to your child's learning ability with fully qualified instructors.

C. This programme is perfect for anyone who wants to get back into cycling in a social environment. Bike for Life is a beginners cycling programme, bringing cyclists through the various skills and techniques over a 6-8 week period. The focus of the programme is on learning and meeting new people with the group cycle a prominent feature. **We are now taking names and expressions of interest for registration. Dates and times to be confirmed. This programme is funded through the HSE Get Ireland Active initiative.**

### **FUNDING SOUGHT / SECURED**

A. Sports Capital Grant Scheme – Dept Tourism, Transport & Sport. Supported and assisted 8 local clubs and schools with applications to the Sports Capital Grant Scheme. Also submitted an application on behalf of the County Council for sports equipment to run a sports taster programme aimed at teenagers.

B. HSE Funding Application – Submitted application to HSE for €8,500 for sports disability programmes.

**C.** Met with Mary Walsh (CEO) and Karl Duffy (Social Inclusion Manager) from County Carlow Development Partnership to discuss possible support for the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme. CCDP has agreed in principal to allocate funding of €4,000 to the SID Programme 2016 subject to approval of LCDC and compliance with reporting requirements as set

**D.** Dormant Accounts Funding - Jobseekers Programme – Carlow LSP & IT Carlow were successful in joint application with the allocation of **€16,000** to run a Community Coaching Programme. This programme will be advertised in October and take place over a 14 week period in IT Carlow from Nov 2015 to Jan 2016.

[Michael Brennan](#)

**Michael Brennan  
Senior Executive Officer  
Community Section**

## APPENDIX

### Tidy Towns Adjudication

Assessment of participating towns is carried out by an independent panel of adjudicators appointed by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and takes place during the months of June, July and August each year. This assessment is conducted in secret and on unspecified dates. Each entrant is assessed under eight criteria with a total of 450 marks available as follows: -

- Community Involvement & Planning (60 marks)
- Built Environment & Streetscape (50 marks)
- Landscaping & Open Spaces (50 marks)
- Wildlife, Habitats & Natural Amenities (50 marks)
- Tidiness & Litter Control (90 marks)
- Sustainable Waste & Resource Management (50 marks)
- Residential Streets & Housing Areas (50 marks)
- Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes (50 marks).

These criteria are applied to the physical environment of the area having regard to materials furnished by the entrant, which can, among other things, include a map, plans and photographs etc.

All main prizes are based on the scores achieved by entrants in the Competition as follows: -

- **Endeavour Awards** for the biggest improvement by an entrant in each county from the previous year.
- **County Awards** for the top three entrants in each county.
- **Regional Awards** for the top-scoring entrant in each region.
- **Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals** for entrants with scores that fall within a set range from that year's winning score.
- **Category Awards** for the highest scoring entrants in the Village, Small Town, Large Town and Large Urban Centre categories.
- **Ireland's Tidiest Town Award** for the highest scoring entrant in the whole competition.
- There are also separate awards sections for **Island** entrants and **Gaeltacht** entrants.

## NATIONAL TIDY TOWNS RESULTS

**2014 MARKS** ( max marks 450 )

**CATEGORY A ( POP under 200)**

ARDATTIN	291	(+2)
CLONMORE	295	(+6)
NURNEY	268	
KILDAVIN	251	(+9)
RATHANNA	288	(+7)
ST. MULLINS	294	(+8)
HARROW CROSS	238	

**CATEGORY B (POP 201-1,000)**

BALLINABRANNA	251	(+11)
BALLON	289	(+15)
CLONEGAL	319	(+7)
FENAGH	254	(+9)
MYSHALL	290	(+1)
OLD LEIGHLIN	239	(+5)
RATHVILLY	290	
TINRYLAND	260	(+7)

**CATEGORY C (POP1001-2,500 )**

LEIGHLINBRIDGE	314	(+4)
BORRIS	281	(+6)
HACKETSTOWN	245	

**CATEGORY D (POP 2501-5,000)**

BAGENALSTOWN	281	(+8)
TULLOW	295	(+5)

**CATEGORY G (15,001-25,000)**

CARLOW	302	(+4)
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**2015 MARKS** ( max marks 450 )

**CATEGORY A**

ARDATTIN	294	(+3)
BALLYMURPHY	279	
CLONMORE	300	(+5)
NURNEY	275	(+7)
KILDAVIN	255	(+4)
RATHANNA	295	(+7)
ST. MULLINS	300	(+6)

**CATEGORY B**

BALLINABRANNA	258	(+7)
BALLON	295	(+6)
CLONEGAL	322	(+3)
FENAGH	262	(+8)
MYSHALL	293	(+3)
OLD LEIGHLIN	242	(+3)
RATHVILLY	292	(+2)
TINRYLAND	267	(+7)

**CATEGORY C**

LEIGHLINBRIDGE	321	(+7)
BORRIS	283	(+2)
HACKETSTOWN	247	(+2)

**CATEGORY D**

BAGENALSTOWN	286	(+5)
TULLOW	300	(+5)

**CATEGORY G**

CARLOW	306	(+4)
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**NATIONAL OVERALL WINNER**

**Kilkenny 320**

**2014 NATIONAL OVERALL WINNER 2015**

**Letterkenny 323**

**COUNTY CARLOW MEDAL WINNERS**

**GOLD MEDALS**

**2014**  
 Clonegal 319  
 Leighlinbridge 314  
 Carlow 302

**2015**  
 Clonegal 322  
 Leighlinbridge 321  
 Carlow 306

**ENDEAVOUR AWARD**

**Ballon (+15)**

**Fenagh (+8)**

