

**FREE**

# MAYO NORTH EAST COMMUNITY JOURNAL



Supporting Community Development, Enterprise and Access to Training and Employment Vol. 2 • Issue 1 • February 2019

## What's Inside?

**Inaugural Mayo History Conference**



**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**  
What would you do?



**Focus on FOXFORD SPORT & LEISURE CENTRE**



At the official launch of Mayo North East Community Journal in Ballina Men's Shed are staff and volunteers of the numerous community groups in the area. Pictures by Chris Sweeney

## Community Journal officially launched

MAYO North East Community Journal was officially launched on Thursday, February 14, in the very impressive Ballina Men's Shed on Teeling Street. The launch was held in conjunction with the February meeting of the Ballina Community Network group

Speaking at the launch Martin Corcoran, TÚS Supervisor with Mayo North East, said the aim of the Community Journal was to promote action and participation and to foster the sharing of ideas, experience and information in the Mayo North East catchment area for a better community.

The newsletter aims to create and build relationships within the community.



Pictured at the launch were some members of the Community Journal working group – from left: Vicki Tomlinson, Martin Corcoran TÚS Supervisor, Susan Regan, Laura Lynch and Rita Hopkins, SICAP co-ordinator Mayo North East.



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020



## RETAIL SELLING COURSE

Mayo North East Leader Partnership have organised a FREE Retail Selling Course (QQI LEVEL 5) in Ballina for Jobseekers or people in part-time employment.

Aim: To equip the learner with the knowledge, skill and competence to operate effectively in a range of retail selling environments.

On completion of this course participants will have acquired the skills to:

- Have the confidence to open and close retail selling opportunities
- Understand different buying signals
- Know the rights and responsibilities under current legislation.
- Understand the terminologies used in the retail industry.
- Identify a number of payment methods.
- Deal with difficult customers and situations.
- Appreciate the importance of good presentation and interpersonal skills.
- Understand various different in-house procedures including customer service policy, returns policy and customer complaints procedures.

**Dates:** The course is run over 6 days

**Week 1:** Tuesday 12th, Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th March.

**Week 2:** Tuesday 19th, Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st March.

**Time:** 9.30am – 4pm

**Location:** The Newman Institute, Ballina.

For further information or to arrange course registration contact Niamh Charlton, Mayo North East Leader Partnership on 087 6662340 or email [niamhcharlton@mayonortheast](mailto:niamhcharlton@mayonortheast)

This event has been organised by Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Company under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 which is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014- 2020



## First Curator of the Michael Davitt Museum

IT IS first time since the opening of the Michael Davitt Museum that a Minister has committed ongoing funding for a full-time professional Curator. The Minister for Rural and Community Development Michael Ring congratulated Yvonne Corcoran Loftus on her appointment as Curator of the Museum. Minister Ring said this is a great example of cultural animation being used as a tool to initiate community development. Speaking at the Michael Davitt Museum in Straide on Friday, January 11, the Minister lauded Mayo North East, Michael Davitt Committee, Mayo County Council and OPW for a new collaborative approach for both the Museum and the village of Straide. At the meeting the Minister officially announced funding of €40k for the development of the Michael Davitt Museum in addition to Leader funding of



Yvonne Corcoran Loftus, newly appointed Curator of the Michael Davitt Museum and Justin Sammon, C.E.O. of MNELP.

£15,000.

The funding will support plans to develop the museum as a Centre of Excellence. The museum has attained Accreditation in the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland. Minister Ring states

Michael Davitt was the first to understand social inclusion. Were he here today he would no doubt endorse the aims and objectives of the SICAP programmes, whose aims are to include the marginalised and bring social justice to

individuals and communities. "The centre helps us to remember the great work completed in the past, it helps to remember our culture, and these type of initiatives bring immense benefits to the local area from a social inclusion perspective" Mayo North East LEADER Partnership (MNELP) will be responsible for managing the development of the Museum in line with the aims and objectives of the Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan.

Justin Sammon, CEO of MNELP, welcomed the funding, stating: "We want to thank the minister for supporting the centre in this way. There is great symbolism in supporting social inclusion measures by funding a centre that remembers the life and work of an outstanding person that happened to have a disability and became a Global Reformer.

## COMMUNITY CATERING *provided by* Knockmore Rathduff Resource Centre

- Deliciously nutritious home cooked meals prepared and delivered daily.
- Delivered piping hot to your door from 12 noon.
- Also available for pick up at Knockmore Rathduff Resource Centre.
- Two Course meals delivered to your door for €7.00 from Monday to Friday.
- Please send in your order request by 10.am on the day of delivery.



Contact: (094) 9258016 | or email [knockmorerc@gmail.com](mailto:knockmorerc@gmail.com)





# Domestic violence

## What would you do?

By  
**Susan McCabe**

BOTH men and women can be, and are, victims of domestic violence. One study found that 40% of domestic violence victims are men. Of course, the picture is a bit more complicated: While some groups have used this figure to argue that women are just as violent as men, most domestic violence directed at men is in the form of slaps and other low-level violence. Men are significantly more likely to resort to extreme violence.

So while domestic violence against men does occur and is a serious problem, women remain the primary victims. But for this reason, men who have faced abuse often find themselves stigmatised and ridiculed. If someone you love says they've been the victim of domestic violence, you should believe and support them, since no gender is safe, and no amount of physical strength or emotional fortitude protects against abuse.

It's not just male domestic-violence survivors who find their stories disregarded. Myths about domestic violence are common, particularly among those most likely to abuse their partners.

For instance, it's common to hear some people say that, if hit, they will hit back, and so women who slap their partners should expect whatever violence the partners dish back out. These thoughts support a culture of abuse and victim-blaming.

The term 'domestic violence' goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others including children; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone.

Domestic violence is more common than most people realise and is often unreported and misunderstood. Research suggests that in the region of 213,000 women and 88,000 men in Ireland have been severely abused by a partner at some point in their lives.

It occurs in all social classes, all ethnic groups and among people of every educational background.

It can be described as the use of physical or emotional force or the threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships.

Domestic violence profoundly affects the physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing of individuals and families. It is perpetrated against a person by that person's spouse, intimate partner, ex-partner, other family members and/or another person at home. Domestic violence is pattern of repeated abusive and controlling behaviours that occurs within an intimate or family relationship and may even continue after

the relationship has ended.

Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence have recently emerged as an increasingly important topic in the public debate both in Ireland and in the international community. While, in the past, discussion has been framed principally with respect to violence against women, men can also be victims of violence in the home and in relationships. Some figures suggest that women and men experience similar levels of domestic abuse.

Everyone has the right to live free from violence and abuse. If you are experiencing abuse, you are not alone. There is support available to you.

They know that taking that first step, like picking up the phone can be daunting and scary. But, staff in domestic violence services is highly trained and experienced. They are there to listen and respond to your needs. They will not pressure you to make any decisions.

### MAYO WOMEN'S SUPPORT SERVICES IS HERE TO HELP

Mayo Women's Support Services is the lead agency in Mayo providing a range of supports for women and children living with domestic violence. They believe that domestic violence is a crime and an abuse of human rights. They endeavour to be non-judgemental and non-discriminatory at all times. They offer a confidential service while recognising their obligation to prioritise the safety and welfare of women and children. They believe that for women to provide effective protection for their children, they themselves need to be protected and supported.

They operate from a gender analysis of domestic violence and they believe that structural inequalities of power between



Both men and women can be victims



women and men in economic, social and cultural spheres are the broader context in which violence against women occurs and needs to be understood.

### CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

At MWSS centre in Castlebar there are four family units and one single unit of crisis accommodation.

Workers are available to women Monday-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm; Saturday and Sunday 11am-3pm

As MWSS does not have full 24 hour cover there is a comprehensive security system in place.

### CHILD SUPPORT

They have a range of supports for children who have experienced domestic violence.

### OUTREACH

MWSS provides a comprehensive outreach service in 12 locations throughout the county. Mayo is a large rural county and many women often face difficulties in attending appointments at the centre due to lack of transport etc.

### ADVOCACY

They provide accompaniment and advocacy with many agencies in the county, for example, Legal Aid, Court, County Council, Tusla, Intreo etc. MWSS is represented on various relevant fora at local, regional and national level.

### AMEN

A confidential helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. The helpline is often the first point of contact for men, their concerned family members or friends.

Confidential Support Line: 046 9023718  
General Office Enquiries: 046 9009109

Their mission is to provide best-in-class support and practical assistance to male victims of domestic abuse in Ireland, to promote increased awareness and understanding among the wider public of the issues surrounding domestic abuse; and to collaborate with statutory and non-statutory bodies to advance our aims and the needs of their clients. At Amen they believe that every man has the right to an abuse free relationship. They believe that domestic abuse against men is a crime, which is continuously overlooked

**Mayo Women's Support Services**  
Tel: 094 90 25409  
Mob: 087 656 9672  
Email: mwss@eircom.net

- ✓ We believe that domestic violence is a crime and an abuse of human rights.
- ✓ We endeavour to be non-judgemental and non discriminatory at all times.
- ✓ We offer a confidential service while recognising our obligation to prioritise the safety and welfare of women and children.
- ✓ We believe that for women to provide effective protection for their children, they themselves need to be protected and supported.
- ✓ We operate from a gender analysis of domestic violence and we believe that structural inequalities of power between women and men in economical, social and cultural spheres are the broader context in which violence against women occurs and needs to be understood.

and ignored in our society. This causes victims to feel isolated, ashamed and uncared for, which can cause them to blame themselves for the abuse they are receiving. They provide information and support to men or their friends or family that seek it. They believe that anyone can be a victim regardless of class, race, sexual orientation or physical ability. Our vision: they aim to break the stigma around domestic abuse towards men. They want men across the country to come forward about their abuse and for them to be treated equally to women with this issue. Amen Support Services was founded in December 1997 as a non-profit organisation established to provide information and support service for male victims of domestic abuse and their families. Amen has confidence in men's ability to take back control over their lives

and offers men the support they need to do this. Amen believes that victims / survivors of spousal abuse have the right to: Feel safe and secure in their own home.

An Outreach clinic is available in Dolphin House, Family Law Courts, East Essex Street, Dublin 2, on a weekly basis. This clinic supports men in preparation for court as well as emotional support and legal information to those who cannot attend the office in Navan. The clinic is facilitated by their Court Accompanier / AMEN Support Worker and is by prior appointment only. A number of other clinics are also being held in a variety of locations throughout the country. Please contact Amen on 046 9023718 for further information on details of the clinics or to make an appointment.





## Mayo Job Club introduce three weeks training courses for 2019

THE Mayo Job Club is managed by Mayo North East under contract from the Department of Social Protection, and is designed to equip jobseekers with the tools they need to search and apply for jobs,

The Job Club operates a three-week training course in venues around the county. Approximately 11 clubs are held each year. It facilitates learning of essential job seeking skills by encouraging members to work together as a group and share experiences with each other.

The Mayo Job Club is a free service available to anyone who is not employed and is looking for work.

### Three Week Training

The three week training provides essential job seeking skills, empowering attendees and improving their employability. All attendees gain a professional CV.

### Interview Workshops

Mayo Job Club, in collaboration with the SICAP programme, run by Mayo North East, delivers this very popular short support for job seekers who want to improve their interview skills.

**The Jobs Club (three week training) moves from town to town**

**10am - 1pm Monday to Friday**

**NEXT JOB CLUB IN YOUR AREA**

**Aras Inis Gluair, Belmullet**

**Monday, 11th March – Friday, 29th March, 2019**

**Town Hall Theatre, Westport**

**Monday, 8th April – Friday, 26th April, 2019**



This involves a workshop, a digitally recorded interview with a panel of interviewers followed by a feedback session given by the Job Club Leader.

### One to One Appointments

Mayo Job Club also offers job seekers (whether they have attended a Job Club or not) the opportunity to meet face to face with the Job Club Leader to assist and guide the job seeker through the

sometimes challenging, steps to gaining employment.

Appointments can be arranged at a time and place that is convenient to the job seeker. Please note, this is a FREE and confidential service.

**Text: 087-6506708**  
**or email info@mayonortheast.com**

## Mayo Job Club dates and venues for 2019

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ● <b>January:</b> FRC, Abbey St, Ballina     | ● <b>July:</b> FRC, Abbey St Ballina           |
| ● <b>February:</b> Mosaic Centre, Castlebar  | ● <b>August:</b> FRC, The Friary, Ballyhaunis  |
| ● <b>March:</b> Aras Inis Gluaire, Belmullet | ● <b>September:</b> Curam FRC Claremorris      |
| ● <b>April:</b> Town Hall Theatre, Westport  | ● <b>October:</b> Knockmore Resource Centre    |
| ● <b>May:</b> TACU FRC, Ballinrobe           | ● <b>November:</b> Town Hall Theatre, Westport |
| ● <b>June:</b> Cultural Centre, Swinford     | ● <b>December:</b> Mosaic Centre, Castlebar    |



**Participants on the three week training course receive €60 expenses on completion**



## TOUCH TYPING COURSE



**Learn better typing techniques and improve your productivity and computer skills**

Mayo North East Leader Partnership have organised a FREE 6 week (only 2 hours per week) touch typing course in conjunction with Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB. This course will teach you the basic touch-typing techniques using Mavis Beacon software. You will learn the keys from the keyboard and then practice the use of these keys with word drills, paragraph drills and typing games. This course is aimed at Jobseekers, low income workers or those on CE, CSP, TUS or RSS schemes.. Bring your own laptop or pcs are available.

**DATE: To be confirmed**  
**VENUE: Ballina**

**Early registration is advised as places are limited.**

**For further information or to arrange course registration Contact Niamh Charlton, Mayo North East Leader Partnership on 087 6662340 or email niamhcharlton@mayonortheast**

"The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020



[www.mayonortheast.com](http://www.mayonortheast.com)



[www.facebook.com/MayoNorthEast](https://www.facebook.com/MayoNorthEast)



[twitter/MayoNorthEast](https://twitter.com/MayoNorthEast)





## Focus on Moy Valley CSP Over 55 Club

Words and pictures by  
**Susan McCabe**

THE Moy Valley CSP Over 55 club has been in operation on Cathedral Road, Ballina since April 2008. It is open to the general public Monday–Friday, where it provides a unique service in a cosy, intimate setting. People can drop in at any time during the day to have a chat and a cup of tea. Everybody is welcome.

The Over 55 Club was set up in response to an identified local need to provide a social space for people over the age of 55 in Ballina and the surrounding area. The Club was originally founded by the Directors of Moy Valley Resources and has since operated as a stand-alone limited company.

The Club provides recreational, social and physical activities, which include bingo, bus trips, art classes, card games and an annual card drive, computer classes, bocchia, tea-dances, coffee/music mornings, guest speakers and information talks.

The Over 55 Club project is supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Pobal through the Community Services Programme.

The staff and management training has been supported by Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). Additional staffing is provided by a number of the community employment schemes including the Community Employment Scheme (CE), TUS and the Rural Social Scheme.

Mayo Volunteer Centre sources volunteers for certain activities and Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board has provided grant funding for group activities. Without these vital supports the service could not operate.

Speaking with the manager Louise Gilmartin I learned that Ballina Over 55 club has increased diversification of



Louise Gilmartin ( Club Manager); Cathriona Lynn (Club Supervisor); Fidelma Gaughan (Events Co-Ordinator); Hilary Muldoon (Club assistant); Joan Corcoran ( Club Assistant. Absent from photo: Mary Enright (Club assistant); Mary Jo Caden ( Club assistant); Charlene Cawley (Club assistant), and Kevin O'Boyle (bus driver)

### WEEKLY TIMETABLE

	MORNING	AFTERNOON
<b>Monday</b> Open 9am - 1pm	Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games	Closed
<b>Tuesday</b> Open 9am - 5pm	Bus to Fr. Peyton Centre Knitters & crochet (11am - 1pm) Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games	Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games
<b>Wednesday</b> Open 9am - 5pm	Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games	Bingo 2pm - 4pm Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games
<b>Thursday</b> Open 9am - 5pm	Bocchia (11am - 1pm) Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games	Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games
<b>Friday</b> Open 9am - 1pm	Shopping bus every second Friday to and from Ballina Drop in for tea/coffee Assistance with computers Card/board games	Closed



activities with a focus on continued collaboration with other social and community groups. Due to additional volunteers and schemes the staff at the Over 55 Club has the capacity to provide additional supports to those suffering from disability to participate in the Club activities. The Over 55 club is definitely one of its kind and there is a great buzz about the place.

I had the pleasure of meeting some of the staff there –

**Hilary** (Rural Social Scheme who started six years ago) " I really enjoy meeting the members and the staff are lovely and a pleasure to work with."

**Joan** is on her fourth week with the Club, "I love meeting and getting to know the members and staff.

**Fidelma** is with the Club for the last nine years (Pobal CSP), and **Catherina** (CSP) – "I love working here and find every day interesting".

I also met some of the members and posed the question:

*What does the Over 55 club mean to you?*

**Sharon** - "I like it because of the company, I like a good chat and the craic"

**Ann** - "I enjoy the excuse to get dressed-up and meet people. I like a challenge and at present I am trying to learn the art of crochet."

The Over 55 club appreciate that fellow members all have different interest and lifestyles. They are like a family in the way they look out for each other, you get a sense of community and this can have a huge influence on a persons wellbeing and quality of life. Members and staff get to create long lasting friendships and memories.

The Over 55 club run at least four tea-dances a year. They invite groups from around Mayo to come and join them. The Over 55 Club provide music and refreshments plus a raffle and spot prizes. Their tea-dance extravaganza is held in July to tie in with the annual Salmon Festival.

Looking towards the future Moy Valley Over 55 Club plans to introduce new activities to entice new members. The club has a Community Bus service which is paramount to its success and ensure the members continue to enjoy the facilities and services.

For further information contact Louise Gilmartin at 087 2785365 or email [community@moyvalley.ie](mailto:community@moyvalley.ie)







# Mayo History Conference

The Inaugural Mayo History Conference is to be held in the Gateway Hotel, Swinford, on Saturday, 2 March, as part of the town's 250 plus celebrations.

This bustling east Mayo town was established in the second half of the eighteenth century by the Brabazon family, who received land in the area under the Cromwellian Settlement 1652-53. Members of the Brabazon family will be attending the conference. It is planned that the Mayo History Conference will become an annual event in the county's calendar and held in different locations over the years.

The weekend will commence on Friday evening, March 1, at 8pm with the official opening by Charles Bourke, Earl of Mayo, a man who can trace his ancestry back before William the Conqueror in France. The official opening will be followed by 'Swinford History', a dvd presentation by filmmaker Breege Rowley, followed by a lecture by local historian, Michael Comer. The Friday evening session is free of charge.

The Mayo History Conference will commence on Saturday morning at 9am with registration (€30 for the day including lunch, tea/coffee). The main theme is Mayo Peoples through the Ages, with constant new arrivals and how they integrated with the native culture and assimilated in it. The first of four sessions at 9.30am is a lecture on 'Archaeological and Historical Settlement in County Mayo' by Bernard O'Hara, author of Exploring Mayo, followed by 'Irish Rock Art from Cork to Mayo' by Finola Finlay and Robert Harris, Irish Rock Art researchers. The second session deals with 'Seventeenth Century Land Settlements in County Mayo' by Dr John Cunningham, Queen's University Belfast, and 'The Brownes of Westport' by Anne Chambers, historical biographer. The third session at 2pm covers 'Ulster Migration 1795/6 to County Mayo' by Michael Brabazon, Mayo historian, followed by 'The Peoples of Mayo Through the Ages-An Overview' by Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle, a leading Irish scholar and historian. The final session of the conference at 4pm is a Hedge School Open Forum with wide audience participation, chaired by Tommy Graham, editor of History Ireland. There is a walking tour of Swinford on Sunday morning at 11pm, led by Michael Comer and Micheál Murphy, followed by a visit to Hennigan's Heritage Centre at 2pm.

Booking and full particulars can be obtained from swinford250@swinford.ie (087-6412785 or 087-2424579)



## Chinese Tourism Welcome Training Programme recipients



Justin Sammon

The Davitt Museum initiated "China Ready" training for management and staff so as to present a welcoming and culturally emphatic experience for Chinese tourists visiting the centre. Pictured are the museum staff receiving their awards from Minister Ring.

Pictures by Ray Brogan



Yvonne Corcoran-Loftus



John Reid



Maria Regan



Bernard O'Reilly



Mary McNicholas



Therese Hosey-Hughes



Mary Melody



Sean Moran



Paddy Flynn



John Campbell





## Presentation of benches



Mayo North East staff presenting a bench to Muredachs College for their community garden which was handcrafted by trainees on a Woodcraft course funded under the Social Inclusion Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022  
 L to R: Luke Langdon, Pearse McNamara, Elizabeth Fair, Martin Corcoran, Leo Golden Principal, Niamh Charlton and Kevin Padden



Mayo North East staff presenting a bench to the autism unit of Rehins NS – back: Niamh Charlton, Justin Sammon CEO Mayo North East; Declan Kyne Principal Rehins NS, Martin Corcoran, Maria Regan, Elizabeth Fair, Mary Ryder (Deputy Principal). Front: l-r: Hannah Breslin, Carla Norton, Jack Brown, Thiago Alves.



Mayo North East staff presenting a bench to Moyne College as a thank you for the use of their facilities. Back: Mayo North East staff: Niamh Charlton, Justin Sammon CEO, Martin Corcoran, Maria Regan and Elizabeth Fair. Seated: Sinead Langan, Carmel Ferguson and Brian O'Malley of Moyne College



## MAYO NORTH EAST LEADER PARTNERSHIP COMPANY HAVE ORGANISED A FURNITURE RESTORATION COURSE IN BALLINA

**DATE:** Tuesday March, 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th  
**TIME:** 12pm to 2pm  
**VENUE:** Workshop at rear of Dolmen Clubhouse, Bohernasup, Ballina, Co Mayo  
 Free on-street parking available

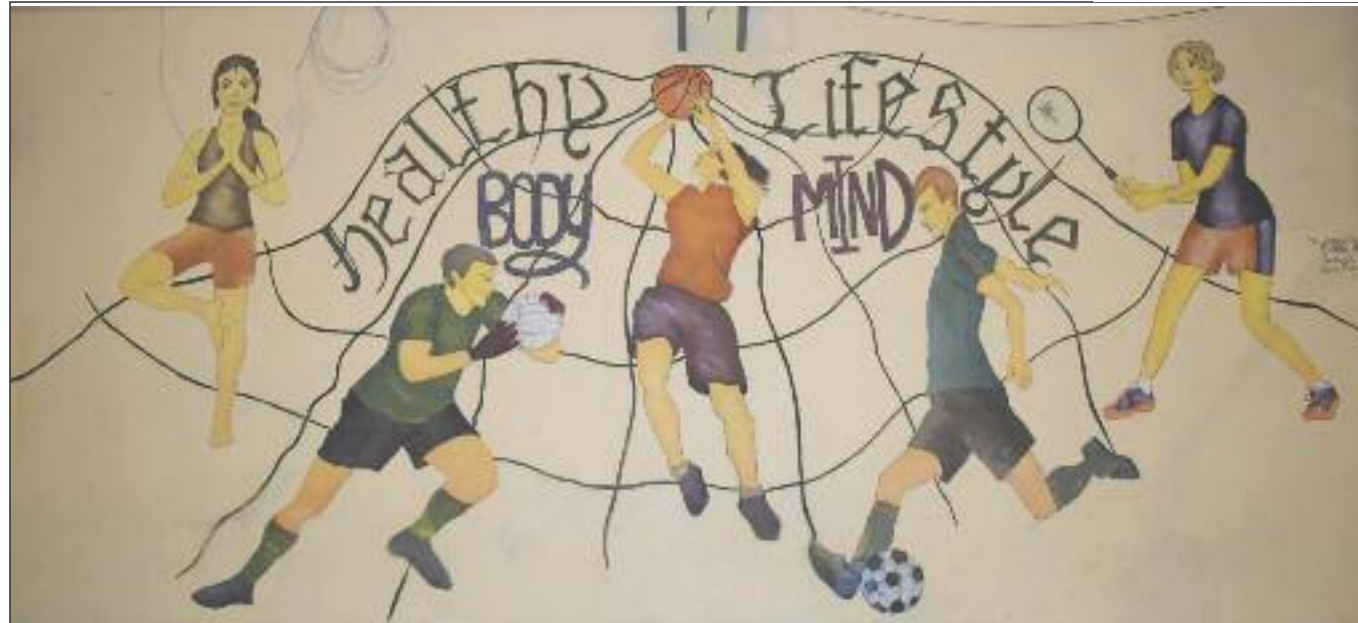
**BOOKING IS REQUIRED. (SICAP eligibility criteria applies):**  
 Places are limited. You must register in advance to attend this course.

**CONTACT RITA HOPKINS: Tel:** 087 0507049  
**Email:** ritahopkins@mayonortheast.com

This event has been organised by Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Company under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 which is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014- 2020







## Foxford Sports and Leisure Centre

– a central hub for the community

FOXFORD Sports and Leisure Centre building was constructed in the 1990s under the guidance of a local group made up of representatives from local sporting organisations. This group formed the company, established a Board of Directors and acquired the land from the Diocese on a long-term lease. For a while, the project remained incomplete when funding ran out, but the Capital Sports Grant funding and local fundraising helped to complete the project in early 2000. The initial aim of the centre came from the need to provide recreational facilities for the local schools and gradually evolved to include the community at large, providing a range of sporting, social and leisure services.

Foxford Sports and Leisure Centre provide a gym and exercise classes for the community. They also provide classrooms and sporting facilities for the adjoining secondary school catering for up to four hundred students per day. Their aim is to cater for as many diverse groups as possible including mothers and toddlers, sporting organisations, Western Care, Foxford Scouts, Irish Red Cross, Active Retirement Group, the Travelling Community, social dancing, Fleadh Cheoil, craft fair, and fundraising groups.



They have a dedicated safe space for Foxford Youth Group. Footfall to the centre for 2017 was over 100,000 including students, weekly bingo users, special events, fitness and other activities.

The centre provides employment for five full-time staff plus a manager. This is primarily funded through the Pobal

Community Services Program and is topped up with traded income raised by the organisation. The roles include administration, cleaning and maintenance and gym instruction. The large busy centre requires staff to be capable of sharing duties. For example, providing supervision at kids' camps, birthday

**Manager:** Brendan Sherry  
**Address:** Green Road, Foxford, Co. Mayo  
**Phone No:** 094 9257684  
**Email:** managerfoxfordleisurecentre@gmail.com  
**Web:** www.facebook.com/foxfordsportsandleisure/



The Foxford Sports & Leisure Centre has a state-of-the-art gym with cardiovascular machines such as treadmills, rowing machines, etc.

parties and car boot sales could require assistance from all staff.

### Challenges

Unfortunately, in the downturn funding streams eroded over time. The centre lost training and maintenance grants and the payroll grant has remained static while employment minimum wage costs and overheads continued to rise. While the centre is very grateful to be funded by Pobal they find that the community and social ethic is being constantly challenged by the requirement to reach difficult financial targets relating to 30% traded income. The centre is very versatile and would have accommodated the newly formed Foxford Mens' Shed, but the poor financial return coming from a community organisation like The Mens' Shed could not match the commercial alternative and so reluctantly the centre had to decline their request for space and focus on the need to raise income.

With regard to additional supports for social enterprises, small grants from other organisations have been of benefit. Foxford Sports and Leisure Centre have the support and advice of Mayo North East Leader Partnership who have been extremely helpful and have guided them through various training seminars, human resource supports, recruitment and grant applications. The staff in Pobal have provided advice and guidance in relation to annual returns preparation, support and guidance.

Foxford Sports and Leisure Centre is a central hub for the community, centrally placed they provide easy to access, free parking and have a building that is capable of hosting large and small events. Facilities include a large sports



One of the many large events hosted at the Foxford Sport and Leisure centre include the annual craft fair.

hall and a number of smaller rooms – forty different organisations have used the facility in the past year. Bingo, provided as a social outing, takes place for 51 weeks a year with up to 250 people arriving from all parts of the county. Large events hosted at the centre include the annual Craft Fair (which attracts thousands), fundraisers for sports clubs and the centre was transformed for a night to host the school re-union, which amazed past-students.

In measuring success, it is difficult to look at it in financial terms because to do so would steer an organisation to seek out commercial enterprises and events only, and show no regard to the individuals and groups within the community. It is better to evaluate it on its sustainability because it is a measure of prudent management of resources balanced with the provision of affordable services. A number of commercial events and room rentals has allowed the centre to maintain affordability for charitable and not-for-profit organisations and for individuals.

The growth in footfall suggests that the message of our utility is spreading. The development of social media has helped in creating awareness of the centre.

Repairs and upgrades are constant. In the last year alone, substantial investment was put into a new heating system and upgrade of the lighting to the more cost-efficient LED. This is funded through borrowings. Painting is continuous for a building of this size. A lot of the organisations and individuals that are supported do not have the resources themselves to pay close to commercial rates for the services that are provided.

### Future plans

A revamp of the centre is planned for 2019 to utilise the internal space more efficiently.

In terms of development of services the management would like to increase awareness of the offerings of the centre and make better use of social media and marketing.



# Be part of your

# MAYO NORTH EAST COMMUNITY JOURNAL

**W**ELCOME to the first edition of your 2019 Community Journal newsletter. The newsletter will be published every second month, both in print and digitally. The Community Journal aims to promote action and participation and to foster the sharing of ideas, experience and information in the Mayo North East catchment area for a better community.

The newsletter also aims to strengthen the relationships between employees and employers of Mayo North East Partnership Company, as well as creating and building relationships within the community.

In the following editions of the Community Journal we will publish a community noticeboard, which will include a diary of community news, events, education and training courses,



In addition to providing a forum to advertise your upcoming events, the Community Journal is looking for good story ideas, articles, photographs, poems, graphic artwork, etc. and welcomes outside contributions.

**You can contact the  
Community Journal  
by emailing:**

**[info@mayocommunityjournal.com](mailto:info@mayocommunityjournal.com)**

**See our new webpage  
[www.mayocommunityjournal.com](http://www.mayocommunityjournal.com)**

Find us on facebook



***Your contribution will enrich the newsletter and make it more attractive***