



# Annual Report 2020

## ABOUT LEITIRM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

Leitrim Integrated Development Company CLG is a community led Local Development Company and a registered charity. We seek to promote, support, assist and engage in social and enterprise development to facilitate rural and urban regeneration while developing communities to benefit and promote from within.

### VISION

We envisage, resource and plan for the development of the Leitrim area as a progressive and vibrant region of inclusive and engaged communities, where guided by the principle of sustainability, its social, cultural, natural and economic assets are harnessed to achieve an improved quality of life for all.

### MISSION

We strive to stimulate social, local, economic and rural development throughout Co. Leitrim, for the benefit of all, particularly the marginalised, empowering them to engage with development opportunities that respond to their needs.

### VALUES

**Partnership, Innovation and Integrity** are embedded as core values and principles and inform all aspects in the planning, development and delivery of progressive and innovative supports to the benefit of individuals, communities and enterprises in the region.

# Leitrim Development Company

Administrative Details for the financial year ended  
31st of December 2020

## Board Members

Damian Brennan (Chairperson)  
Philip Rooney  
Mary McKiernan  
Shane Kilraine  
Damien Hamill  
Peadar Flynn  
Teresa O'Callaghan  
Kevin Comiskey  
Mary Taylor  
Michele Gannon  
Martin Dolan  
Seamus O'Donnell

## Company Registered Number

451100

## Charity Registered Number

CHY Number 20070700

## Company Registered Office

Church Street, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim N41 RF24

## Chief Executive Officer

Donal Fox

## Company Secretary

Paddy Beirne

## Independent Auditors

Moran & McNamara

## Bankers

Bank of Ireland, Drumshanbo, Leitrim

## Solicitors

Home and Farm Conveyancing Solicitors

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## 1.0 CEO'S Address

For over two decades, Leitrim Development Company has been at the centre of the community in our county. We have a leading role in ensuring the delivery of programmes and services which are designed to enhance social inclusion, promote rural development and provide a range of opportunities for the people of the county, particularly those most in need. This is a proud tradition that is being carried on by the current Board and staff of the Company.

This comprehensive Annual Report clearly demonstrates the extent of the work carried out on behalf of the community. Even a quick glance will reveal that the Company penetrates every town, village and parish in Leitrim. Despite Covid-19 restrictions so much good work carried on, with particular emphasis on what extra could be done in the peak of the pandemic.

The two main programmes, which the Company implements on behalf of the Leitrim Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and the Rural Development Programme/LEADER have been instrumental in ensuring that individuals, businesses and communities have been given the assistance and opportunity to achieve their potential. It is important to emphasise that while grant assistance for projects is obviously important, the on-going support and expertise of our dedicated staff is crucial to both communities and individuals reaching their goals.

The pages of this report also show the work that is being done in every corner of the county through the Rural Social Scheme, Tús and our Community Employment Schemes. Without their efforts, Leitrim would be much the poorer.

The work being carried out on behalf of older people through our HSE-funded Older Persons' Services Programme is a growing area of work and one which we are proud to be part of.

Travellers are the group in Irish society who are the most marginalised and again this report shows the work we do with the community in terms of health, development, education and childcare.



The Walks Scheme, with our Rural Recreation Officer extended areas in which to enjoy the countryside and put more money into farmers' pockets, a win-win for all. Training and education for adults through our ETB-funded Local Training Initiatives have had a significant impact on people's lives, with people securing employment as a result. Our Job Club can also boast of helping many people finding work. While our employment specialists have worked diligently with people with disabilities in finding employment that meets their needs. Leitrim Development Company is proud of the fact that we hold a national contact to deliver the Social Farming programme, and the details of the programme across the country makes very interesting reading.

Work with children and young people in Carrick-on-Shannon and Mohill is also key to what we do to counteract social exclusion. Our doors are open and our staff are both willing and able to help.

**Donal Fox (Chief Executive Officer)**

## 1.1 Directors Annual Report

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*For the Financial Year Ended 31 December 2020*

The directors present their report and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.

The Directors confirm that the annual report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charity's governing document and the provisions of accounting and reporting by charities: statement of recommended practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Effective 1st January 2015).

### **Principal Activity and Review of the Organisation**

Leitrim Development Company's main activity is to promote the community, rural, social and enterprise development of Co Leitrim, primarily through the implementation of a range of state supported programmes. These programmes are designed to enhance social inclusion and improve the quality of life, particularly for those most disadvantaged. Among these programmes are the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Rural Development Programme/LEADER, Rural Social Scheme (RSS), Older Persons' Services, Traveller Development Programme, the Tús Initiative, Social Farming and educational and training programmes.

The Company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

There has been no significant change in these activities during the financial year ended 31 December 2020.

# 1.1 Employment Programmes



Preparation of The Food Cloud parcels

Leitrim Development Company managed its first Employment Programme in 1997 with 11 Participants and one Supervisor. Twenty three years on, there are now 5 Schemes, 289 Participants, 13 Supervisors and over 230 Community Groups and Childcare Facilities.

Leitrim Development Company managed the first Community Employment Programme in Ireland, which was subsequently rolled out nationally due to its success in Leitrim. Given Leitrim's rural population and the decline in income in agriculture the Employment Programme provides opportunities to increase the level of income in farm households and others.

## Tús Community Work Placement Scheme

The Tús activation initiative provides short-term working **opportunities for unemployed** people. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations in Leitrim.

In 2020 there were **97 active Participants**. When lockdown began referrals ceased, with many of the Participants redeployed to provide essential services such as; assisting in Older People's Services Day Care Centres and working with Meal on Wheels, sterilising kitchens and preparing food.

Leitrim piloted the Rural Social Scheme in 2004. The RSS is active throughout Leitrim and provides invaluable supports to communities throughout the county. In 2020 and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many RSS Participants worked to provide **vital services to the community**, for example in Drumsna Community Resource Centre Participants prepared and distributed over 300 meals per week.

*"I find it great to be out meeting other people, I live in an isolated area where I wouldn't see anyone from one end of the day to the other. Being out on the scheme means a lot to me for my mental health"*

## 2020 Summary

 **61 Community Groups**

 **97 Participants**

 **47%**

**47% Progression rate into employment or education**



RSS & Tús Participants supporting Drumsna Meals on Wheels during Covid-19

## Rural Social Scheme (RSS)

The Rural Social Scheme provides a **supplementary income** for low-income farmers and fishermen or women living in rural Ireland and provides community-based work on a part-time basis.

Participants experience opportunities to improve existing, or develop new skills. The RSS provides additional resources to maintain and improve local amenities and facilities in rural communities.

In North Leitrim, **Participants assisted** the "TACT" – Tullaghan Area Covid-19 Team by shopping and delivering groceries, collecting medication among other things.

In the height of the pandemic Participants helped to collect 400kg of food from The FOOD CLOUD each week. This food, together with contributions from local shops and producers was distributed to families in need. While in Cloone, Participants delivered parish leaflets and newsletters to people cocooning.

# 1.1 Employment Programmes

Although not a labour market scheme, the RSS progressed some **6 Participants into full-time** employment in 2020, which is a positive during a challenging year with lockdown.

All of the Tús and RSS clients that were interviewed and subsequently not placed were **referred to the SICAP Programme** for further intervention. Those not in a position to accept a Tús placement were referred back to the Department of Social Protection.

## 2020 Summary

 **110 Community Groups**

 **133 Participants**



**97% of Work Plans Completed in 2020**

## Community Employment Scheme (CE)

The Community Employment (CE) programme is designed to help **people who are long-term unemployed** (or otherwise disadvantaged) to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities.

Childcare CE learners are placed in community owned childcare facilities for their practical training. Whilst Childcare facilities were closed for the majority of 2020, **16 learners successfully completed** their Early Childhood Care & Education Level 5 Major Award and Early Childhood Care & Education Level 6 Major Award training online each week with the ETB Tutors.

A total of **51 QQI Minor modules, 4 Major Modules and 18 supporting** courses were completed.

While most Community Enhancement Participants (North Leitrim) were unable to attend their designated work locations, administration staff continued to work from home. A number of Participants were **actively involved in Volunteer** work delivering Meals to the Elderly, Befriending, Grocery shopping, Collecting pensions and DSP Payments.

## Training/upskilling

A number of Online Courses were completed including; ECDL Version 6, Applied Psychology Level 5, & Food Hygiene/Safety Level 4. As the restrictions eased in June/July the Environmental Workers returned on a phased basis. In the third quarter of the year Indoor staff returned on reduced hours for a number of weeks until it was deemed safe to return on a full time basis.

*"It's a great scheme, gets you out of the house, gives me time to spend time with my 10 year old daughter on my week off, you also get to chat to older people on the different estates."*

## Environmental Maintenance

The Estate Management Participants deliver vital maintenance services to **32 Local Authority housing estates in Leitrim**, including; Drumshanbo, Carrick, Mohill, Manorhamilton, Carrigallen, Glenfarne and Aghnasheelin.

As Participants returned to work in the summer, **Covid-19 protocols** were in place which meant there were designated work stations in each area where Participants could access hand sanitisers, antiseptic wipes, water and hand towels.

## 2020 Summary

 **64 Community Groups**

 **59 Participants**



**55% Progression rate into employment or education**

## 1.2 The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 tackles **poverty and social exclusion** at a local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. SICAP is a social inclusion programme which assists both individuals and groups through a two-pronged approach: **supporting communities and supporting individuals**.

SICAP aims to address high and persistent levels of deprivation through targeted and innovative, locally-led approaches. It targets and supports those who are disadvantaged in Irish society and less likely to use mainstream services.



*Delivery of COVID-19 Response Newsletter to the community*

### The SICAP Vision

The vision for the SICAP programme is to **improve the life chances and opportunities** of those who are marginalised in society, living in poverty or in unemployment.

From the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, the **needs of SICAP target groups** and communities changed dramatically and SICAP staff adapted their ways of working to respond to these needs. A total of **54 Local Community Groups and 255 individuals** were supported. The key achievements of the Programme in 2020 under the Programme actions are as follows:

### *Promote community engagement and stronger communities*

A total of **27 groups** were supported and the following was achieved:

- Local community groups (LCGS) in Kiltyclogher, Killaruge, Mohill and Drumreilly were **assisted to produce newsletters**, capturing essential information
- Local community support plans were developed with socially excluded groups
- Newsletter on supports for older people printed and distributed
- Fáilte Isteach English conversation classes were established in Ballinamore library to support residents in new Direct Accommodation Centre. Classes were held via Zoom for three months
- Disability groups were supported through the establishment of a Leitrim Disability Persons' Organisation

### *Build capacity of LCGs*

A total of **29 local community groups** were supported.

- Eleven community groups were allocated grants to implement social inclusion projects and to respond to COVID-19
- Twenty groups were assisted to draw down funding from other agencies including Pobal stability fund, CLAR, Community Enhancement programme, Leitrim County Council estate maintenance grants
- Traveller representative groups were assisted to develop projects focusing on physical and mental health
- New communities support groups were assisted to support the **integration of asylum seekers** and other migrants through the provision of online classes and distribution of materials through COVID-19 funding
- A capacity building programme was delivered to the online community platform to assist groups to prepare for return to operations when restrictions were eased in July

### *Support participation in decision-making structures*

- An **online community platform** was established and meetings were convened fortnightly to provide support to over 30 local community groups through the crisis
- Resource starter packs were provided to 40 community groups to **assist them to open up safely** after the initial lockdown
- In conjunction with Leitrim Co Council and Leitrim Public Participation Network (PPN), an online map of Covid-19 community supports was developed

## 1.2 The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

- Social inclusion Awareness Week was organised in October with events held online including a workshop on supporting older people and a training workshop on disability equality awareness.

### *Promote collaborative engagement*

- An official launch of Leitrim Disabled Persons' Organisation took place in December with over 60 people in attendance online
- Service providers and community groups collaborated to organise World Mental Health Week in October, with five workshops delivered online on mindfulness
- SICAP Community Workers assisted the development of the new Volunteer Centre for Leitrim and delivered the Leitrim Volunteering Information Service.

### *Support Social Enterprises(SE's) which contribute to SICAP outcomes*

Social Enterprises faced major challenges during 2020. A total of 20 Social Enterprises received SICAP supports including :

- Provision of one-to-one support and guidance to projects.
- Provision of training to assist groups to re-open through Pobal funded, 'Elevating Social Enterprise' in Leitrim project which was delivered online
- Procurement of a trainer and mentor panel for the delivery of on-line training and mentoring for Social Enterprises
- Delivery of online training and mentoring in financial and strategic planning
- Organising a Charities Governance Code workshop for groups
- Promoted personal development and wellbeing
- During the pandemic, SICAP staff worked remotely to build personal capacity, self-confidence and well-being amongst vulnerable individuals
- A FOOD CLOUD response programme was developed in mid and North Leitrim during the pandemic providing food to approx. 60 families. This support was hugely successful in taking pressure off individuals who have been directly impacted by Covid-19
- Educational activity packs were provided to young children from low income households

### *Provide lifelong learning opportunities*

- 24 Lifelong Learning Grants were provided **totaling €10,723**
- Hospitality Operation QQI Level 5 commenced in October. SICAP was involved in the recruitment of participants, processing of funding applications to MSLETB & DEASP for the running of the course and SICAP also funded the transport for Asylum Seekers living in Direct Provision in Ballinamore to access the course
- Seeds 4 Self Growth (Personal Development and Well-being Course) commenced in November. Topics included; sleep, nutrition, self-esteem/confidence, physical wellness, resilience and mental health/wellbeing.
- Social Farming Programme took place over a 6-week period, 3 individuals participated
- Provision of information on a variety of courses locally including LTI's, VTOS, PLC's, BTEI, CTC, Youthreach, etc.

### *Provide preventative supports for children and young people*

A total of 176 children were supported under this action. The following preventative supports were provided during the pandemic:

- The **development of UBU Your Place Your Space programme** for young people at risk in Mohill and Carrick on Shannon Travellers project
- A Toy bank was established for children and young people living in Direct Provision Centre in Ballinamore. Mohill Family Support Centre took the lead on the initiative and SICAP supported the purchase of the equipment along with Tusla
- Children and Families from the Traveller community received on-going support from our Traveller Development Worker as well as running pre-school and afterschool services

### *Prepare people for employment and to remain in work*

A total of 70 people were supported under this action. The following supports were provided:

- Providing one to one support and guidance by phone, e-mail and online
- Processing **individual grant applications**
- Supporting our LTI projects as they changed to remote working/learning.

### Promote better quality and sustainable employment

A total of 21 individuals were supported under this action. Many people had temporarily lost their jobs or were working reduced hours. The following supports were provided:

- Circulating of information on the range of Government and Agency supports and services available
- Provision of **one to one support** and guidance by phone, e-mail and online
- Supporting employers and advising them on new Covid 19 related Government supports

### Provide a pathway to self-employment/social entrepreneurship

The pandemic necessitated a change from helping people to start a small business to ensuring that those already operational could survive. The following supports were provided:

- One-to-one mentoring, personal progression, business planning and **development with over 80 clients**
- 19 clients were assisted to start their own business
- Start Your Own Business Workshops were delivered and attended by 12 clients

### 2020 Summary

 **54 Community Groups**

 **255 Individuals**

 **Total Grants dispensed: €17,131**

### Hospitality Operations

The purpose of this course is to enable the learner to **develop knowledge, skills and competence in the art of hospitality**, and to work independently under supervision in a range of key areas in a hospitality enterprise.

The 2020 Hospitality Operations programme was very successful despite the impacts of Covid-19. The learners were in the middle of their work experience placements when on March 12th the government announced the full lockdown. This presented many challenges and placed new demands on both the learners and tutors to complete the programme.

**It is to the learners' credit** that even though it was a difficult transition for some, they embraced their new online learning platform.

Practical exams were carried out according to socially distanced guidelines and online assessments were also carried out in each module. The level of engagement was a tribute to each and every learner and meant that the course was **completed successfully by all participants**. We were also delighted to welcome a number of learners from the Direct Provision Centre in Ballinamore.

### 2020 Summary

 **12 Individuals**

 **46%**

**46% Progression rate from this course into Employment**

### Mohill Afterschool

At Mohill Community Youth Project, we provide **out-of-school supports** to young people in their local communities to enable them to overcome adversities and reach their full potential by improving their personal and social skills.

We support young people in making the transition from childhood to adulthood by **listening to their views and opinions**, and respecting their rights. Young people participate in a wide range of activities which address inequality, celebrate diversity and promote inclusion and engage in community based projects that are empowering, fun, stimulating and challenging.

In 2020 we had a total of **35 young people** actively engaged in the project. In April with the service closed, we prepared resource packs for each child which included; educational books, footballs, skipping ropes and arts and crafts materials.



## 1.2 The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

In September there was a lot of preparations made for the safe reopening of the service. Whilst in attendance, **Children remained in the pods** they were aligned to within school hours.

Between September and December we delivered a **Friends For Life** project with each group which included creative activities which included Christmas decorations.

### The Horticulture Programme

The Horticulture training programme started in 2016 to meet a **demand for locally based training** in the horticultural sector. The programme is a Local Training Initiative (LTI) managed by Leitrim Development Company and **funded by MSLETB**.

An LTI programme is a **community-based training programme** targeted at learners who are economically, socially, geographically or educationally disadvantaged. Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) provide a range of learner-centred training and related services to assist individuals to help them find work and to **address the training needs** of people and groups experiencing exclusion and disadvantage.

The course is located in the **Lough Allen Education Centre**, Drumshanbo. There are 7 polytunnels, 3 garden sheds and 3 substantial outdoor growing areas in the grounds of the centre.



The programme runs for 50 weeks from March to February. To facilitate progression for learners we offer **alternating level 4 and level 5 major awards** in Horticulture. The maximum number of learners accepted on to the course each year is 14.

The main **aim of the project** is to provide educational qualifications and a range of skills for employment, further training and education and to provide learners with the skills to work in Horticultural environments.

The Covid-19 restrictions presented us with various challenges as only half of learners could be on-site at any one time. This resulted in all lessons having to be delivered twice each week. With reduced learner participation on-site, **staff maintained the gardens**, tunnels and growing areas while continuing to deliver course material and support to learners.

In 2020 **11 learners completed** the programme with full level 4 major awards in Horticulture. All learners who started the programme achieved some minor awards for completed modules. Some learners left the programme early to take up employment.

### Examples of Modules delivered:

- Plant protection & Plant Science
- Ornamental Horticulture
- Soil Science and Growing Media
- Fruit and Vegetable Production
- Landscape Construction and Maintenance

### 2020 Summary



14 Participants

87%

**87% Participant Progression Rate from this course to either Employment or Training**

## 1.3 Leitrim Traveller Project

Leitrim Travellers Project commenced in 1999 as two onsite projects; one in Mohill and one in Carrick on Shannon. The Childcare and Development programmes were initiated to address matters cited in Neil Haran's report through Education, Accommodation and Health.

Following from the All Ireland Traveller Health Study in 2006 the Primary Healthcare programme was established, training and employing Traveller Community Healthcare workers to engage their community in active healthcare.

In 2009 our purpose-built Community Centre in Carrick on Shannon opened its doors providing a permanent base for the Leitrim Travellers Project with Mohill and the rest of the county as outreach.



*Preparation of resource packs for the children who would have attended the Early Years' Service*

### Early Years' Service

At the start of 2020 the **Early Years' service** was operating with 16 children. In March all services were closed. Between March and June, a **new remote service** was put in place as it was term time. The team recorded stories, songs and messages for the children so they could stay connected and familiar with staff. Activity packs were also put together and collected at allocated times by the parents.

Parents were also sent links for interesting YouTube videos to engage the children as well as links to free apps to **encourage the children** to recognise letters and numbers. These are symbols they would ordinarily be introduced to within the service.

### Afterschool

Shannonside School Age Childcare Service was open **5 days per week** offering homework support and recreational activities to young people. In March due to COVID 19 lockdown, the School Age Team adapted their way of working and continued to support the young people and their families accessing education throughout lockdown.

The School Age Childcare (SAC) manager collected the young people's books from the local primary school and delivered them to their homes. Communication was set up between teaching staff and students to **ensure that learning could continue** at home. Every Monday the SAC Manager compiled print outs and photocopies of school work and delivered them to the

children for the week ahead. The SAC Manager checked in with families regularly **to ascertain any additional supports** they needed and liaising with the appropriate authorities.

SAC staff who were working from home, set up WhatsApp support groups specifically for school work support, and were available daily to each family to provide any help they needed. **Activity packs were developed by SAC** to provide activities for the young people when they were at home. These additional resources were welcomed with great joy by the young people.

The Centre reopened at the end of June and delivered on-site/outdoor activities for the young people for the month of July. These activities provided opportunities for children to get out of their homes, have fun, **meet with their peers in group pods**, and engage with staff in a safe Covid-19 compliant environment.

When the young people returned to school in September, they returned to the After School service, where staff continued to **provide homework support** and recreational activities.

### Face mask project

During lockdown it became evident that face masks were going to become mandatory. In conjunction with the Shannonside Traveller Women's Group, we obtained materials to commence a 'Face Mask' making project.

## 1.3 Leitrim Traveller Project

The Traveller Development worker along with Shannonside Women's Group made and dispatched the masks following Covid safety guidelines. Masks were divided into packages and delivered to each family in the Traveller Community in Leitrim.



*Mask making as part of the Face Mask Project*

They provided important information to families about doctor's appointments and the introduction about new ways of attending these.

HSE Halting site reports were completed and provided to the HSE weekly to ensure that the national figures for Travellers with Covid were reflected accurately.

### Information videos

Our Traveller Development worker developed short videos informing the community of the latest safety advice from the National Public Health Emergency Team (NEPHET). These videos were Traveller specific, delivering up to date messaging and key updates. The messages were shared throughout the Traveller community in Leitrim through What's App.

### Primary Healthcare

Throughout the pandemic the Primary Health Care (PHC) Team ensured that the community was informed and kept up to date with the HSE guidelines and restrictions. They shared Traveller specific resources with the community and remained linked in with families by phone when face to face interactions were deemed unsafe.

The team were in constant contact with the PHC coordinator, who provided them with HSE guidelines. The team informed the community of the correct sources to get their information from. They also provided an important link to families who needed extra support if a family member was isolating with Covid.

The team liaised with individual families seeking support and information. Through the coordinator they linked in with mental health supports and services and were regularly in contact with the PHN(Public Health Nurse). They then shared this information with their networks.

Mental health among the community has deteriorated over the last 18 months and the PHC team provide a much-needed ear to many of the families that they work with. They also have provided a link and referral system for some through PHN.

## 1.4 Social Farming

Social farming focuses on people's potential rather than limitations. Social Farming offers people who are socially, physically, mentally or intellectually disadvantaged the opportunity to spend time on a family farm in a healthy, supportive and inclusive environment.

A person may choose to spend a fixed amount of time on the farm participating in activities they may be interested in such as gardening, animal care or indoor activities such as baking bread or jam making.

Social farming activity takes place in a safe and supportive environment taking into account an individual's abilities, desires and interests. Focus remains on encouraging participants to socialise, gain confidence and build relationships.



*Participant attending a placement, pre pandemic*

2020 commenced with the planned training sessions for new social farmers, the introduction of **Standards for Practice** and two new Regional Officers taking up roles in the South West region with West Limerick Resources and with South West Mayo Development Company in the West Region.

All Social farms ceased activity during the first lockdown, interrupting placements scheduled for spring. Support for existing farmers continued throughout lockdown.

The administration team engaged with farmers and conducted a full file review on more than **110 farms across the country**. This proved to be a valuable piece of work and ensured that farmers remained connected within the network.

A tender for the renewal of the **Network contract worth €400,000** was submitted in April and contracts were agreed and signed in Autumn.

The **sub-contracts were signed** with fellow development Companies in Waterford Leader Partnership, West Limerick Resources and South West Mayo Development Company with work plans and targets agreed.

'**Return to Social Farming**' protocols were developed in June. These were implemented from July with the first social farms re-opening in the Boarder Midlands region on the 30th June. By December almost 70% of social farms nationally had adapted these protocols and were either practicing or ready to accept participants.

### Development of Social Farming CRM

The LDC staff developed and implemented a new Client Relationship Management system by the end of 2020. Embedding a centralised IT system enabled the team to increase operational efficiencies across the programme management framework.

### Social Farming and Healthy Ireland

This report was published in August and launched by Minister Frank Feighan who has responsibility for the Healthy Ireland Programme. At the national launch event, participant groups and farmers who hosted placements made contributions.

Between 2017 and 2019, **112 people in eight different counties** received support from social farmers to enhance their lives and health outcomes in placements commissioned through funding or co-funding from Healthy Ireland.

This report demonstrates how Social Farming contributes to the achievement of Healthy Ireland goals, which aim to improve health and wellbeing. The Report was distributed to Healthy Ireland Co-Ordinator's and to the HSE, Health and Wellbeing leads, Local Development Companies and County Local Development Companies (LDCs).

### Cost Benefit Analysis of Social Farming;

A key piece of work undertaken was the COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS (CBA) of Social Farming.

## 1.4 Social Farming

This analysis provides a national 360 degree analysis of what public investment in Social Farming is delivering for participants, farmers, services and the wider public good and the costs associated with this activity from every perspective. The elements which have been completed to date include:

- Design, distribution and preliminary analysis of on-line surveys with services who have accessed social farming funding/supports on behalf of the people they work with.
- Design, distribution and preliminary analysis of a second survey for farmers, this time focusing largely on their experience of interacting with Social Farming Ireland.
- The substantial body of primary research conducted with a wide range of participants in social farming since 2017 will also be used to inform the CBA and is expected to deliver significant reports and policy documents which will be disseminated through online events, etc. (as Covid-19 restrictions allow) during 2021. Planning for these events took place through the Autumn.

### Other significant activities undertaken in the period includes:

The Policy Officer Dr. Ashling Moroney was '**Keynote Speaker**' at an International Seminar on Social Farming held in the Ministry of Agriculture, Prague, Czech Republic in late 2019 and the successful Erasmus project was built on the connections from that event.

**Open days were held across all regions on farms** and many other events (online and virtual) including Teagasc Options events, IFA, Hill Farmers, Organic Farmers events and meetings.

Leitrim Development Company featured both locally and **nationally in media coverage** in 2020 with the highlight being the piece involving three young adults from Carrigallen Vocational school on Heslin's farm in Gortletteragh, broadcast on RTE in December 2020.

An individual case-study on a secondary school student from a dedicated Autism Unit who was attending social

farming with school and family supports been completed. This case-study remains for internal use at this stage.

**Publicity materials were developed** with a poster on Social Farming for Participants and public production of an easy-read poster aimed at potential participants in social farming who access various services. This has been widely distributed via our Social Farming Network and is part of our Regional officer's toolkit.

**Feedback from The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)** indicated that they are very happy with the delivery on this contract even considering the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions during 2020.

### 2020 Summary



170 Participants



88 Farms & 55 Organisations



1400 Participant Placement Days on farms

## 1.5 Leitrim Job Club



Leitrim Development Company has been the main sponsor for Job Club for over 20 years delivering an employment support service to jobseekers throughout County Leitrim.

The aim of the Job Club is to assist and support unemployed people to find realistic and sustainable work opportunities. Job Seekers have the option of meeting with a Job Club Leader on a one to one basis or participate in a 4-week job seeking skills formal training programme. Both options were provided remotely during the pandemic.

The **Job Club** caseload consists of direct referrals from the local Intreo Office and self-referral clients. Job Clubs work with those short-term unemployed but also has the flexibility to work with all of the other target groups. During 2020, Job Club staff **supported 167 clients**.

**Sustaining and building** relationships has always been a priority for Job Club. Strong links have been established locally with employers in the area which helps facilitate successful job placement.

The LDCO team developed a dedicated **CRM system** for Job Club, enabling the more effective and efficient management of work flow, with many processes **streamlined and automated**.

*"I recommend the Job Club as I started working again after being out of work for the past 9 years. The team taught me how to update my CV which was completely outdated. If you want to learn, the opportunity is there for you"*

The Job Club **Jobs Bulletin** was launched in November, which is a weekly publication highlighting local and regional job vacancies.

The bulletin is available through Leitrim Development Company's website page and social media platforms. Since its introduction the Jobs Facebook page followers have **increased by almost 30%** with more and more employers engaging with us on a monthly basis.

### 2020 Summary



	No. of Participants
Formal Training	44
One to One	82
CV Prep	41

 **167 Participants**

#### Formal Training



**75% of Target progressed to Employment**

#### One to One



**73% of Target progressed to Employment**

## 1.6 Recreation Programme

The Recreation Programme for Leitrim Development Company saw significant development in 2020. After many years of campaigning and promoting the Leitrim Way and other recreation projects the company strengthened its recreation programme and activities with a dedicated Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) approved by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

A contract was signed with Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to deliver the Walks Scheme on the Leitrim Way and recruitment was carried out with Bryan Fennell taking up the role of Rural Recreation Officer in August.



*Bryan Fennell,  
Rural Recreation Officer*

**Landowners** in Leitrim along the 'Leitrim Way' route **receive annual payments** for maintaining this walking trail. Work under the scheme by participants includes vegetation/water management, litter control and signage maintenance. A **total of 120 places** are allocated for The Leitrim Way, and the RRO began the work to bring the first group of landowners onto the scheme in 2020.

**Fáilte Ireland** agreed a contract with Leitrim Development Company and are providing resources to enable the promotion of walking and recreation activities in Leitrim. This work is resulting in **increased numbers of visitors** and tourists to Leitrim's walking trails, recreational attractions and activities.

The RRO has identified a number of walking trails in the county that will benefit from their inclusion to the **Sport Ireland Outdoors trails register**, and engaged with the relevant trail management committees to develop a roadmap to reach the national trail standards. One good example of this in 2020 was where LDC staff, including the RRO, spent a significant amount of time supporting the community in **Newtownmanor** to review the issues at O'Rourke's Table and walking trail and helped to establish/support a management committee which is now progressing major developments and much needed improvements to this iconic attraction.

The company continued to convene and provide administration for the **Leitrim Recreation Forum**. This was vital to allow the work of the forum to continue through the Covid restrictions and lockdowns in 2020. The Forum oversees the implementation of the **Leitrim Recreation Strategy** which provides a roadmap for the future development of **recreation in Leitrim**.

An example of this in 2020 was a **successful funding application** through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS 2020) which allowed Leitrim Development Company through its partnership with Leave No Trace Ireland (LNT) to support their national public awareness campaign "**Love this Place Leave no Trace**"

[\*\*https://www.leavenotraceireland.org/love-this-place-leave-no-trace/about/\*\*](https://www.leavenotraceireland.org/love-this-place-leave-no-trace/about/) during 2021.

## 1.7 Older People's Services

Leitrim Development Company operate a wide range of social supports to older people, our aim is to aid independent living and provide opportunities for improved mental and physical wellbeing. The Volunteer Befriending Project is a social support for Older People living in South Leitrim, who feel lonely and isolated and would benefit from some company and social contact.

The Feel Good Clubs & Active Age Groups are social gatherings for people aged 55 and over, who want to remain active and involved into their retirement.



*Mummers Project, visiting the elderly and isolated during Christmas 2020*

The Older Peoples Services Programmes includes: **four Community Day Care Services**, in Carrigallen, Ballinamore, Ballinaglera and Drumkeeran; offering a social outlet, a meal, assisted showering, occupational activities, laundry service, transport, meals on wheels and outings.

We support a network of **32 social groups** for over 55's, including assistance with governance, sourcing and applying for funding and dissemination of information.

The programmes also facilitates:

- The Leitrim **Older Peoples Council**, as part of Age Friendly Ireland, giving older people a voice in the decision making process
- Advocacy, signposting and sharing information on relevant projects and services
- Working collaboratively with other organisations to provide a **holistic service** to older people.

***"When my mum was at home, we had the wonderful befriending service, a volunteer called once a week and I truly understand it's importance"***

During Covid-19 restrictions, all our face-to face services were closed and the vast majority of our older people were unable or unwilling to go online to access supports.

We approached this in the following ways:

- Increase of meals on wheels provision
- Outreach **laundry service** to older people without washing facilities
- Befriending visits were replaced with friendly phone calls, where possible
- All our usual meetings took place over telephone conferencing
- We offered **Zoom training** to our Older Peoples Council members, 10 took part in the training
- Our Day Centre staff undertook extensive mandatory training to upskill in infection prevention, use of PPE and specific Covid-19 protocols
- Developed a project with **Creative Ireland and Edwina Guckian**, called 'Modern Day Mummers' bringing music and dance to older people living alone, performing outside their doors, we reached 150 homes across Leitrim.

## 1.8 LEADER Programme



LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement d'Économie Rurale) is part of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) EU funded Rural Development Programme to support activities and improve the quality of life in rural areas. LEADER has made a significant contribution to the development of rural areas throughout Europe since 1991 by providing supports to community groups, innovative small businesses and farmers. The LEADER Programme is based on a bottom up approach to rural development whereby rural communities and people identify their own needs and propose solutions.

The 2014-2020 Programme has now been fully allocated in the County and practically all projects have been completed.

### LEADER in County Leitrim

Leitrim is predominately a rural county with a long history of declining population. The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (LEADER) Strategy was based on the ethos that **rural communities** are themselves best placed to identify their needs and propose solutions.

The Leitrim Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the **Local Action Group** with ultimate responsibility for the delivery, implementation and finances of the LEADER programme. LCDCs were established in all **Local Authority areas** and are part of Local Government Reform. The LCDC comprises of representatives of the Local Authority, other state agencies, community and voluntary sector and social partners.

The LEADER elements of RDP 2014-2020 provided just under **€6 million over the lifetime of the programme** to support the sustainable development of County Leitrim. Leitrim Development Company, a partner on the LCDC was the Implementing Partner with responsibility for implementing actions in the county on behalf of the Local Action Group, the LCDC. Leitrim County Council were the lead Financial Partner with overall responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the programme.

### The Strategy

In the context of LEADER, the **Local Development Strategy** was a plan developed by the LAG through consultation with rural communities. The Vision for County Leitrim was "Through a coherent strategy, we

strive towards a **vibrant, healthy rural economy** in County Leitrim delivering actions which will transform rural communities into stable, thriving **socio economic hubs** of inclusive community spirit, environmental best practice and superior quality of life."

Leitrim Development Company as lead Implementing Partner undertook the consultation for the development of the strategy in County Leitrim. People had an opportunity to have their say about the priorities for the programme through the consultation process.

### The Programme Themes

The three programme themes were:

#### 1. Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation

This theme focused on the areas of Rural Tourism, Enterprise Development, Rural Towns and Broadband

#### 2. Social Inclusion

This theme focused on the area of Basic Services targeted at hard to reach communities

#### 3. Rural Environment

This theme focused on the areas of Local Biodiversity and Renewable Energy

## 1.8 LEADER Programme

### The Programme Sub Themes

**Rural Tourism** – This focused on developing existing and supporting new tourism assets and infrastructure which in turn increased opportunities for local people and visitors to explore and enjoy County Leitrim. In total **32 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€1,310,885.19**.

**Enterprise Development** – This focused on building a thriving, expanding economy with an emphasis on the creation of sustainable employment opportunities through the development of new innovative products and services. In total **25 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€1,024,474.49**.

**Rural Towns** - This focused on the enhancement of our towns and villages to create attractive, welcoming, accessible and vibrant towns and villages. Upgrading and development of community spaces as focal points for social interaction to be enjoyed by all residents, traders, shoppers and visitors. In total **12 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€602,744.08**.

**Broadband** - This focused on supporting the engagement with ICT technologies and broadband services. In total **7 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€35,456.11**.

**Basic Services** - This focused on the provision of capital supports for hard to reach communities to enable them to fully participate in their local community. In total **24 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€1,637,669.41**.

**Local Biodiversity** - This focused on nurturing our unspoilt natural environment, managing native species and counteracting any adverse actions which have contributed to the destruction of the county's flora and fauna. In total **3 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€25,051.35**.

**Renewable Energy** – This focused on the stimulation of the Renewable Energy Sector with a direct focus on economically sustainable development leading to potential job creation. In total **17 projects** were funded with a total in grant awarded of **€287,237.50**.

The programme was also successful in the development of four Co-operation projects to

the value of **€184,772.34** and three LEADER Food Initiative Projects to the value of €140,037.50.

In total €5,257,976.98 was allocated through the programme specifically for projects with a cost of administration of **just over €1.5M**.

### Case Studies

#### Theme 1 Example – The Old Rectory Events Venue.

This project involved the purchase of a specialised marquee with tables and chairs for events at The Old Rectory. Since the increase in their accommodation base with the development of the courtyard apartments, they have experienced an increase in groups staying.



To continue to attract these groups particularly in the shoulder season they needed to expand and provide visitors with reasons to come and stay. The promoter obtained a **grant of €27,576.20**, which was 50% of the total project cost of €55,152.40.

**Theme 2 Example - Family Carers Research Project for North Leitrim.** 24/7 Family Carers were aware that there was inadequate information on the totality of family carers and their situations in North Leitrim.



## 1.8 LEADER Programme

Consequently, the group wanted to undertake research to find out 'who are the carers in North Leitrim, and also to determine what the barriers they face in having a good quality of life. The promoter organisation obtained a **grant of €8,878.53**, which was 90% of the total project cost of €9,865.10.

**Theme 3 Example - The Organic Centre, Growing Green Energy.** This project involved the installation of a 4kW Ground Mounted Solar PV Array on site at the Organic Centre. This not only reduced the fossil fuel energy consumption but also complimented the green architecture of the existing building and the pellet boiler already in place.



The installation forms part of the tour of the gardens as a demonstration of other methods of growing green. The promoter organisation obtained a **grant of €5,698.89**, which was 75% of the total project cost of €7,598.52.

### **The Transition Period**

Currently there is a transition programme in operation in the County with a bursary for projects of €920,221. There is also an EU Recovery Instrument funding package available with a **total bursary for projects of €408,986**. The next Programme is due to commence in the beginning of 2023.

## 1.9 Effective Organisation

Leitrim Integrated Development Company CLG trading as Leitrim Development Company, is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity (CRO: 451100 / Charity Registration 20070700). Leitrim Development Company is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors with members drawn from local community groups, statutory organisations and other public bodies.

The responsibilities of a Board are founded upon the overarching principles of good governance of which there are five. Specifically, the Board of Directors is expected to: provide leadership to the organisation; exercise control; be transparent in its dealings; and, be accountable to its members and funders. Directors are also expected to work effectively with each other and to behave with integrity.

Quality and effective management is recognised through implementation of the following:

- The Charities Regulator Authority (CRA) Governance Code
- The Statement of Recommended Practice for preparation and presentation of the Financial Statements

### Focus for 2021

During 2021, Leitrim Development Company will continue to focus on our core objectives to improve the quality of life in Leitrim through the continued implementation of our core programmes; SICAP, RDP/LEADER, Rural Social Scheme, Tús, Community Employment, Travellers' Development, Older Persons' Services, Local Training Initiatives, Social Farming, Job Club and youth services in an integrated manner for the benefit of the people and communities.

### Key areas of work in 2021 will include:

- The securing of the Regional Employment Service to give greater impetus to our work with unemployed people
- The continued development of the Social Farming programme, both locally and nationally.
- Successfully securing the forthcoming tender to deliver the SICAP programme for the next five-year term.
- The strengthening of our Governance procedures and compliance with the Charities Governance code
- Improve GDPR compliance to ensure the protection of personal data to the highest standards possible
- Embed CRM in the Company and continue to improve our IT infrastructure

## 1.9 Effective Organisation

### 1.1 For the financial year ended 31 December 2020

#### Income and Expenditure Account for the financial year ended 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
	€	€
Income	3,861,693	3,942,345
Expenditure	(3,555,691)	(3,885,972)
Surplus / (Deficit) before tax	306,002	56,373
Tax on Surplus / (Deficit)	-	-
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the financial year</b>	<b>306,002</b>	<b>56,373</b>

# 1.9 Effective Organisation

## 1.2 For the financial year ended 31 December 2020

### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Intangible Assets	33,408	-
Tangible Assets	635,800	640,213
	<u>669,208</u>	<u>640,213</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	214,396	218,854
Cash & cash Equivalents	1,180,837	849,873
	<u>1,395,233</u>	<u>1,068,727</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(764,483)</b>	<b>(724,167)</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>630,750</b>	<b>344,560</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,299,958</b>	<b>984,773</b>
Amounts falling due after more than one year	(581,061)	(571,878)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b><u>718,897</u></b>	<b><u>412,895</u></b>
<b>Reserves</b>		
Capital reserves and funds	47,662	47,662
Income and expenditure account	671,235	365,233
<b>Equity attributable to owners of the company</b>	<b><u>718,897</u></b>	<b><u>412,895</u></b>