



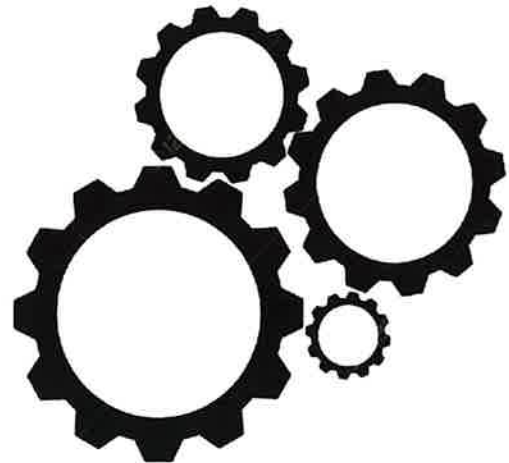
Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil Lú
Louth Local Community Development
Committee

Annual Report 2023

**Ms. Alison Quail, Chairperson, Louth Local Community Development
Committee**

**Mr. Joe McGuinness, Chief Officer, Louth Local Community Development
Committee**

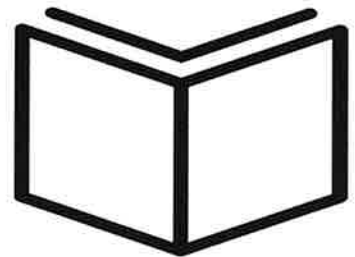
**LOUTH LCDC
2023
HIGHLIGHTS**



**€1,433,389 PAID IN CLAIMS TO
LEADER PROJECTS**



**116 COMMUNITY &
VOLUNTARY GROUPS
RECEIVED GRANTS
UNDER COMMUNITY
SUPPORT FUND**



**1,326 INDIVIDUALS
SUPPORTED
THROUGH LIFELONG
LEARNING**



**84 COMMUNITY
GROUPS RECEIVED
DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORTS**



**Healthy Louth 'Mental
Health Matters' Project
shortlisted for 'Best Mental
Health' initiative at 2023
LAMA Awards**



**€323,952 AWARDED
UNDER COMMUNITY
SUPPORT FUND**



Membership of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in 2023

Public Sector	
Louth County Council	Cllr. Liam Reilly
Louth County Council	Cllr. Kevin Meenan
Louth County Council	Cllr. Eileen Tully
Louth County Council	Cllr. Dolores Minogue
Louth County Council Official	Joan Martin
Louth County Council Official	Niamh Dennehy replaced Riona McCoy ratified by LCC October 2023
Louth Meath ETB	Sadie Ward McDermott
DSP	Sharon Curran replaced Anne Keeley ratified by LCC July 2023
HSE	Bridie Pepper
Private Sector	
Louth Leader Partnership	Ciarán Reid
Community & Voluntary Interests	Alison Quail
Community & Voluntary Interests	Jasmine Mathew replaced Joanne Finnegan ratified by LCC June 2023
Louth Volunteer Centre	Olivia Conlon replaced Kayleigh Mulligan ratified by LCC December 2023
Social Inclusion	Bernardine Quinn
Social Inclusion	Carol Murphy
Environment	Lisa Doyle
Farming	John Carroll
Chamber of Commerce Dundalk	Una McGoey
Chamber of Commerce Drogheda	Steven Rice

A Message from the Chairperson



Welcome to the 2023 Annual Report of the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The LCDC is required to prepare and submit a report to the Local Authority on its activities during the last year. The LCDC provides strategic leadership at a local level and is responsible for the planning and oversight of community funds for local development. The LCDC is also responsible for the delivery of the Local Economic Community Plan using a collaborative approach across the membership.

I would like to thank all the LCDC members both statutory and non-statutory for their significant time commitment in attending the LCDC meetings both online and in person and for the valuable role they play in progressing the social and economic development of our county.

In 2023 the Local Economic & Community Plan (2024-2029), Local Development Strategy 2023-2027 and PEACEPLUS were developed. LCDCs serve as a platform for local community engagement and decision-making in matters relating to community development and local services. Public Consultations for the three plans were held throughout Co. Louth and were an integral part of their formulation.

The promotion of funding programmes is a central motivational factor for the LCDC such as SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme), LEADER funding and the Community Support Fund.

Promotion of health and well-being in Louth is also an important key function for the LCDC. Louth LCDC began its fourth round of Healthy Ireland. The main emphasis for

this round is to support Positive Mental Health and increased Physical Activity amongst certain target groups.

This year saw the final year of the implementation of SICAP (2018–2023). SICAP facilitates communities to work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders using a broad range of supports and interventions. Louth Local Development CLG has continued to support disadvantaged communities and individuals throughout the county through targeted programmes focusing on individuals and groups.

Input from the Public Participation Network (PPN), through the five PPN representatives on the LCDC committee and the link they make to the PPN is invaluable. This link is vital to the relevance of the LCDC for our communities and the valuable and positive contribution they make to civic life in County Louth.

The success and relevance of the LCDC is heavily dependent on the commitment and expertise of the Community Section staff. I would like to highly commend the Director of Services and Chief Officer, Joe McGuinness and all the staff for their work in developing and enhancing structures in the LCDC and partnerships with communities, government agencies, the business community and stakeholder groups.

In 2024 the new Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 will begin and will be at the center of all the LCDC activities for the next six years. The new LEADER, SICAP and PEACEPLUS programmes will also begin and Healthy Ireland Round 4 Programmes will continue.

I look forward to working with the LCDC members and support staff to continue the support it gives to community in Louth over the coming year.

Alison Quail, Chairperson Louth LCDC

Introduction

Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's) are required, under the provisions of Section 128B of the Local Government Act 2001, to prepare, adopt and submit an annual report to the local authority, no later than the 31st March each year, in respect of the performance of its functions in the previous calendar year. The annual report should be coordinated with the preparation of the local authority's annual report and include an outline of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) activities in the relevant period. At a minimum the report should cover each of the LCDC functions, as outlined in the Act, but also other areas of activity such as development, review or implementation of community elements of the plan and contributing to the economic objectives of the Plan, both in its development and implementation.

Meetings Held in 2023

Louth LCDC meetings were held on the following dates during 2023:-

- 16th January 2023
- 20th February 2023
- 20th March 2023
- 17th April 2023
- 15th May 2023
- 19th June 2023
- 10th July 2023*
- 17th July 2023
- 16th October 2023
- 18th December 2023

* Special Meeting to approve, in principle, the Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy

In consultation with the members all meetings in 2023 were held via correspondence utilising Zoom video conferencing, with the exception of the 10th July special meeting and December meeting which were held in person.

Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 - Community Goals

Louth County Council are in the final process of adopting the new LECP 2024-2029. The primary aim of the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions needed to support the economic and community development of the county for the next 6-year period. The LECP is an important way to set out how Government, local authorities and other stakeholders can

work together to ensure that their initiatives , programmes, and projects support an improved quality of life for people living and working in Co Louth.

Following a comprehensive public consultation , all information and data gathered from surveys, observations and comments from the public consultations was collated and used to inform the draft LECP framework , high level goals, objectives and actions and Socio-Economic Statement.

A series of consultations followed with key stakeholders regarding the preparation of a Two-Year Implementation Plan, this process which has been running in tandem with the preparation of the new LECP.

The final plan reflecting Stakeholder, Municipal District and Regional Authority input was approved by the LCDC on 15th January 2024 and the Economic SPC on 23 January 2024.

It is anticipated the final draft will be presented to full council at the meeting scheduled for Monday 19th February 2024 and adopted.



Attendees at LECP Public Consultations in Ardee Parish Centre, Ardee



Participants at LECP Public Consultations The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda

Community Activities Fund under the Community Enhancement Programme

The LCDC at its meeting on the 20th March 2023 approved funding, under the CSF, in the amount of €323,952. The **Community Support Fund** supported groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas:

- With their non-pay running costs for example energy costs (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs for example rental/lease costs, insurance bills.
- Groups were also able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities, purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, and training equipment etc.

€3,240 of the Fund was Ring fenced funding and application form for Women's Sheds

The fund was advertised in local newspapers, social media and through the PPN resulting in 141 applications an increase of 56 from the previous year. The fund also saw a big increase in groups applying for funding under the Community Enhancement Programme for the first time.

Funding was allocated across each Municipal District Area. The Dundalk District received €143,767; Drogheda District received funding of €110,590 and Ardee District receiving €66,355.

The table below sets out a summary of how the total CSF fund of €323,952 was allocated throughout the county:

Area	No of Successful Applications	Allocation
Dundalk	58	€143,767
Drogheda	37	€110,590
Ardee	21	€66,355
Funding Ring-Fenced for Women's Sheds		€3,240
Total	116	€323,952

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 - 2022



2023 SICAP Programme Overview:

- In 2023, SICAP supported 84 local community groups and registered 1326 individuals
- 84 community groups received developmental, technical, and capacity building supports
- 24 Local Community Groups received grants with 2 Local Community Groups receiving funding for 2 grant aid activities. In total 26 Grants were administered.
- 1326 individuals engaged in lifelong learning and labour market supports
- 21 individuals were supported into employment
- 100 individuals were referred by Department of Social Protection were supported to establish their own business through the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme
- 151 individuals received education/training grants
- 23 individuals received enterprise grants
- 7 Social Enterprises received a social enterprise grant.



2023 Pathways Graduates



Launch of the Equality for Women in County Louth Report

SICAP 2023 Case Study:

The Case Study submitted for 2023 was in video format and was titled: ***SICAP and Dundalk Institute of Technology – Back to Education Access.***



Link to SICAP 2023 Case Study :

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RpO4sGBCdqw_qW7LLz-hMRwQmLqar82Y/view?usp=drivesdk

LEADER



LEADER

The LEADER Programme 2014-2020 was launched in Co. Louth in February 2017 with a project budget of €4.5million to be allocated to projects under the following three measures:

- Economic and Enterprise Development and Job Creation
- Social Inclusion
- Rural Environment

In 2021, Minister Heather Humphreys announced a Transitional LEADER Programme which resulted in an allocation of €1.8 million for County Louth. This funding was to deliver support for rural development projects, initiated at local level, in order to revitalise rural areas and create jobs.

As these programmes drew to a close in 2023, the DRCD gave approval for the re-allocation of funding from a number of project de-committals in the County. These de-committals were mainly the result of project underspends. There was also funding allocated for LEADER Food Projects across the country and Louth LCDC were eligible to apply. One project was successful in receiving approval from the DRCD to apply for this special funding under the LEADER Food Initiative.

Notable Achievements in 2023 included:

- Four Projects received letters of offer in 2023.
- One project was allocated funding from the National Call for Food Projects. The project was Dunany Flour and was allocated funding of €57,599.00 in December 2023.
- The LCDC awarded funding to three other projects in 2023, which were Merci Beaucoup Cakes, Wakely Engineering and Irish Sustainable Communities.

Louth Local Development are the Implementing Partner for the LEADER Programme and they received 19 Expressions of Interest for Funding in 2023. Louth County Council is the Lead Financial Partner for the Programme in Co. Louth and they carry out the Article 48 checks on all projects and claims.

LEADER Programme

	TOTAL
Expressions of Interest (EOI) Received	19
EOI eligible for Funding	19
Ineligible for Funding	0
Contracts Issued	4
Food Contracts Issued	1
Claims Processed	45
Claims Paid	€1,433,389
LAG funding approval 2023	€120,184.00

Redeemer Family Resource Centre

Funding of €56,322.00 was allocated to the Redeemer Centre in Dundalk, for the upgrade and refurbishment of the MUGA Pitch in Cox’s Demesne. Minister Heather Humphreys officially opened the pitch in November 2023.



Official Opening by Minister Heather Humphreys in November 2023

Tullyallen Men’s Shed

Tullyallen Men’s Shed received €29,821.00 under the LEADER Programme towards the upgrade and refurbishment of their premises at the Glen Emmets Car Park in Tullyallen, Co Louth.



Tullyallen Men's Shed

Innovating Communities

This project was a Co-Operation project between Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth. Innovating Communities is a training and mentoring project in the area of Design Thinking. The project was designed to empower local people to work together and address challenges facing their areas. It equipped them with the tools needed to further enhance their communities across these six counties.

In March 2023, the six counties presented a sample of their achievements on the Innovating Communities Project. This Learning Showcase was held in Castleblayney before an audience of over 200 and was attended by Minister Heather Humphreys.



Minister Heather Humphreys with members of the Louth Innovating Communities team

LEADER 2023-2027

As part of the process to develop a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Louth an extensive public consultation was undertaken across the county, which employed three key methodologies for data collection. These consisted of:

- An online survey which was available for four weeks which was open to individuals, community groups, businesses and organisations to complete.
- Four public consultation meetings held across the county.
- Two online focus group sessions which were created for Elected Members, members of the Louth LCDC as well as members of the various SPC's.

The LEADER themes and sub-themes are as follows:

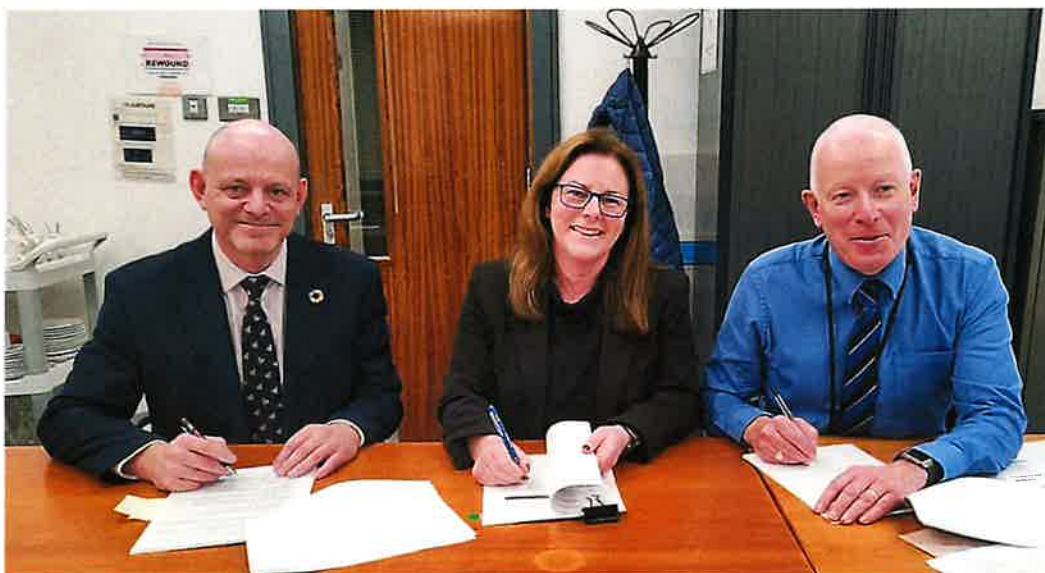
- **Economic Development and Job Creation**
 - The Green Economy
 - Agricultural Diversification
 - Rural Tourism & Recreation
 - Enterprise Development
 - Rural Food Production
 - Social, Community & Cooperative Enterprises
- **Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion**
 - Rural Infrastructure
 - Accessible Services
 - Optimising Digital Connectivity
 - Rural Youth
- **Sustainable Development and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption**
 - Sustainable Development of Rural Environment
 - Climate Change Capacity Building
 - Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Louth LCDC completed their Louth Local Development Strategy (LDS) in July 2023 which was then submitted to the Department of Rural & Community Development for approval. An independent panel assessed the Strategy on behalf of the DRCD and Louth received confirmation of approval on 28th November. It was also confirmed that Louth LCDC, with its Implementing Partner Louth Local Development CLG and Lead Financial Partner Louth County Council, was approved as the Local Action Group to deliver the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme for Co Louth.

The LDS will form the backbone for the delivery of the next LEADER programme in County Louth.



Public Consultation in Dundalk in May 2023



Alison Quail, Chairperson of the Louth Local Community Development Committee (centre) with Ciaran Reid, CEO of Louth Local Development (L) and Joe McGuinness, Director of Services and Chief Officer of Louth Local Community Development Committee (R) at the signing of the LEADER Rural Development Programme for 2023-2027.

The European & Cross Border Office



Northern Ireland - Ireland

European Regional Development Fund



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Skemes Boadúe

The Peace Committee, which is a sub-committee of the LCDC oversees both The Peace IV and PEACEPLUS Programmes.

PEACE IV PROGRAMME:

Peace IV projects have been supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB) and supported locally by Louth County Council and Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). Match-funding has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

Completion of Construction work on Muirhevnamor Community Centre Extension.

A successful opening event was held at Muirhevnamor Community Centre on 1st June. This opening event was attended by LCC Cathaoirleach Conor Keelan, Chief Executive Joan Martin and members of the PEACE IV Partnership Committee. Entertainment was provided by the Top Theatre School, Dundalk. Following this, the plaque was unveiled by Cathaoirleach Conor Keelan. Light refreshments were provided as part of a gathering in the new extension and shared space.



Opening Ceremony at Completed Muirhevnamor Community Centre Extension



The Opening Event at Peters Hill Drogheda

Completion of Peters Hill Shared Space.

A successful opening event was held at Peters Hill Drogheda on 8th May which was attended by the LCC Cathaoirleach Conor Keelan, Mayor of Drogheda, Michelle Hall, Chief Executive Joan Martin, representative of SEPUB, members of the Peace IV partnership Committee and local Protestant and Catholic clergy. Following a speech, the plaque was unveiled by Cathaoirleach Conor Keelan. This was followed by performances from the living life choir and local dance troupe Kidkast. The opening event was followed by light refreshments in the nearby St Peters Church of Ireland parish Hall.



M.A.D. Youth Theatre perform as part of the Celebration Event for PEACE IV

Celebration event for all PEACE IV projects.

A celebration event for all PEACE IV projects was held on the 14th June at Muirhevnamor Community Centre. This event was to acknowledge the work and outcomes of all 16 projects approved covering the three themes of PEACE IV. Speakers included LCC Cathaoirleach Conor Keelan, Chief Executive Joan Martin, a representative from SEUBP and programme managers from some of the projects. There was also a video message from Minister Heather Humphreys and the launch of a brochure which catalogued all the projects that were part of the PEACE IV Programme. Musical entertainment was provided by Music Generation Louth with a harp performance while M.A.D. Youth Theatre provided a performance of An Táin.



PEACEPLUS
 Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government

PEACEPLUS ACTION PLAN:

PEACEPLUS is a new European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. The design reflects the importance of peace-building activity, but also the importance of actions that will contribute positively to the economy, building prosperity and adjusting to the new environment and challenges we face.

Louth County Council is working to develop an Action Plan to be submitted under PEACE PLUS Investment Area 1.1. The three themes under this investment area are.

1. Local community regeneration and transformation
2. Thriving and peaceful communities
3. Celebrating cultures and diversity

€4.6 million has been indicatively allocated to County Louth under these three themes.

Public Consultation and Co Design of Co Louth Peace Plus Action Plan



PEACEPLUS Round Table Consultation, Muirhevnamor, 20th September 2023

Four PEACEPLUS partnership committee meetings were held in 2023 which reviewed and sifted the proposals received in the public consultation meetings held in November to December 2022 at which more than 281 participants attended. In addition, another 239 submissions were received from the PEACEPLUS survey held in January 2023. A round table public consultation of key stakeholders was held on 20th September

2023 to further sift and refine the proposals received. The deadline for the submission of all PEACEPLUS Action plans was extended by SEUPB from 14th December 2023 to 28th March 2024.

Healthy Louth

Healthy Ireland Fund 2023-2025

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. Healthy Ireland takes a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach to deliver on 4 key goals:

1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

The design of HIF Round 4 has been informed by consultations with various Healthy Ireland stakeholders at both national and local level. HIF 2023-2025 represents a more evidenced-based outcomes led approach, with a longer 3-year timeframe and gives Local Authorities more discretion to make changes to both the work being undertaken and how the budget is being spent.

Healthy Louth – Vision

Healthy Louth launched in 2017 and forms part of the Healthy Cities and Counties Network within the Healthy Ireland framework. The vision of a Healthy Louth is

County Louth is a county where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

Healthy Ireland Fund Round 4

In Louth the fund has been very much welcomed and following an extensive public consultation to identify the key priority areas and the 'at risk' groups the fund was allocated to initiatives that support both Positive Mental Health and increase levels of physical activity across the target groups.

The funds supported initiatives targeted at all age groups, with a particularly focus on Adolescents & Young People, Disadvantaged Families including One Parent Families, people affected by homelessness or people at risk of homelessness and people with Mental Health Issues. In addition, the Healthy County Coordinator with the support of key partners delivered a number of health promotion awareness campaigns that targeted the wider General Population.

Healthy Louth recognise that locally led initiatives are key to enhancing wellbeing among the population. Louth LCDC provides an important role for promoting health and wellbeing in the county. Since its establishment in 2014, 19 key stakeholders have worked in partnership to promote and support economic, local and community development through greater integration in the planning and delivery of local and community development services and interventions.

This funding continues a long-standing partnership that Louth County Council have with Healthy Ireland and will enable Louth County Council to continue to build on the great work we are already doing to support the physical, mental and social wellbeing of everyone in Louth.

Louth LCDC Health & Wellbeing Sub-committee

The newly formed Louth LCDC Health & Wellbeing Sub-committee had their first official meeting on Tuesday 20th June 2023 at County Hall, Dundalk.

The purpose of the group is to oversee the coordination and monitor the implementation of the Healthy Ireland programme in County Louth. It also provides a platform to inform and expand to include other future health related funding under the remit of Louth LCDC. In 2023 the committee agreed the Healthy Ireland Fund Year 1 Implementation Plan for Louth.

Healthy Louth Newsletter

The Healthy Louth Newsletter was launched this year to signpost various health and wellbeing information programmes and events happening across Louth. The newsletter will be sent out via the Friday communiqué. The Healthy Louth Coordinator will also utilise the council's social media platforms including @louthcoco twitter, PPN and Louth Local Sports Partnership (LLSP) Facebook pages in order to extend the reach. In addition, the Healthy Louth Newsletter will also be sent out via a direct e-mail to all staff for both personal use and were relevant within the remit of their role to signpost customers.

Healthy Louth Brand on Social Media

Healthy Louth has been working hard to grow the Healthy Louth Brand. Please support us by following us on:

 [@HealthyLouth](#)  [@HealthyLouth](#)  [@healthylouthcoco](#)

A snapshot of some of the projects delivered under the Healthy Louth Programme of work throughout 2023.

'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth'

Louth County Council, in conjunction with the HSE, launched the 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' campaign. The launch of the campaign took place during National Breastfeeding Week (1st-7th October 2023) and was supported by the Healthy Ireland Fund.

Healthy Louth adopted a 'test and learn' approach and kick started the campaign with a pilot in Dunleer with the intention to roll out countywide throughout the current Healthy Ireland Funding period 2023-2025.



'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' launch in Dunleer

The campaign aims to help improve the health and wellbeing of breastfeeding mothers, babies and their families through the development and promotion of breastfeeding friendly businesses, organisations and communities in County Louth.

Healthy Louth invited the business, community and voluntary sector across the county to sign up and make 'We're Breastfeeding Friendly Louth' a success for everyone.

The Red Door Project – Boxing Clever brought to you by 'The Healthy Ireland Fund supported by the Department of Health'

Boxing Clever was a twenty-week integrated educational, substance use recovery and fitness programme that aims to support participants to develop more resilient identities, while encouraging educational achievement, physical wellness and reduction in harmful or risky behaviours.

Based in The Red Door Project, the programme is run in partnership with BYAP and LMETB.

Educational study for two QQI (Further Education and Training) minor awards in Health-Related Fitness (Level 3) and Community Addiction Studies (Level 5) is coupled with physical training, boxing skills and tailored fitness training.

The design and delivery of the programme is underpinned by community development values that include empowerment, participation, adult education and equality. Boxing Clever emphasises adult education, sports education and addiction education.



'Boxing Clever' at the Reddoor Project in Drogheda

Healthy Louth 'Mental Health Matters' delivered in partnership with Louth Local Development Company (LLDC)

Our ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative was set up to reduce structural barriers that reduce discrimination and inequalities among marginalised communities and at-risk clients which LLDC serve. The Healthy Ireland Fund 2023-2025 Local Strategy for Louth highlights a lack of knowledge among marginalised communities and at-risk groups that LLDC serves. Our ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative addresses this information deficit.

Our ***Mental health Matters*** initiative was set up to promote social inclusion and build individual and community capacity. Our ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative facilitated LLDC with an opportunity to build this much needed community and individual capacity. Our range of focused workshops and specialised interventions continue to promote social inclusion, build capacity, add value, trigger real change and improve the health and well-being of the people of Louth.

At the time of writing, twenty community-based organisations have participated in our ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative. One hundred and seventy-eight attendees participated in one hundred and ten workshops.



'Mental Health Matters' at Tullyallen Men's Shed

Signed: _____
Chief Officer

Date: 19/2/24