



SE-NEWS

A Newsletter for Social Enterprises in Ireland

Autumn 2023

Welcome to the Autumn edition of **SE-NEWS**, the newsletter for social enterprises in Ireland brought to you by the **Department of Rural and Community Development**. Our aim is to share information and news of interest to social enterprises throughout Ireland, to help build and strengthen the social enterprise community and to share case studies and examples of good practice.

Included in this edition, we bring you news of the launch of a second round of the **DAF Hybrid Lending Scheme for Social Enterprise**, a report from the **Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards 2023**, and news from the **Chambers Ireland Sustainable Business Impact Awards 2023**.

We put the spotlight on **Co. Wexford** as their Local Development Company gives us a rundown of some of the social enterprises operating in the county.

Our 'Focus on SE' feature provides regular case studies highlighting the many ways social enterprises are making a difference in our communities. This edition we focus on **Connections Arts Centre** in Dublin. If you want your social enterprise to feature in an upcoming edition or to suggest news to be included in the next edition then please email us at senews@drccd.gov.ie.

Finally, work is continuing on developing a new **Social Enterprise Policy**. As with the first policy, we have adopted a partnership approach to its development. Ongoing communications, engagement and consultations with all stakeholders has been a key principle, and following earlier public consultation events, we are currently engaging with other Departments to ensure maximum cross Government support for the sector. The OECD report on social enterprise policy implementation is nearing completion which along with *Social Enterprise in Ireland: A Baseline Data Collection Exercise*, will also feed into the new policy. We expect to publish the new policy early in 2024.

The Editor

NOTICE BOARD

DRCD is maintaining a list of supports for social enterprise. The list includes sources of funding, training or advice.

[Supports for Social Enterprise](#)

If you know of any supports available for social enterprise that are not on the list then let us know.

If you are organising any **events or training** in the near future that you think others in the social enterprise community would be interested in, send details to us at senews@drccd.gov.ie.

Social Enterprise in Ireland: A Baseline Data Collection Exercise

Click [HERE](#) to see the full report

Date for your Diary

The **National Social Enterprise Conference** will take place on Thursday 16 November 2023

Energy Efficiency Grant for Small Business

The latest support to aid small businesses on their sustainability journey was announced in May by Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The aim of the grant is to reduce the impact of enterprises on the environment thereby increasing the agility and resilience of these businesses.

Please see the link [HERE](#) for more details.

Join our Mailing List to receive every issue of SE News directly to your inbox.

Send your email address to senews@DRCD.gov.ie

SIX DUBLIN CITY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES RECEIVE AWARDS

September 14th saw the Dublin City Social Enterprise Awards 2023 ceremony take place in the Mansion House in Dublin. The Awards, now in their 9th year, are

organised by Inner City Enterprise, Dublin City Council, and Dublin City Local Enterprise Office.



Pictured at the Awards:

Nessa Doran O'Reilly from Rediscover Furniture, Pearse O'Reilly from Mugshot, Minister Joe O'Brien TD, Erica Pena from Dublin Simon, Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste, Philip Larragy from New Creation Cleaning Service, Rachel Duff from Mellow Spring Childcare, and Eileen McHugh, Hair Together.

Minister Joe O'Brien TD, Minister with Responsibility for Community Development and Charities said, "Each of these social enterprises is actively working to address important issues in Dublin. The work they deliver is important to so many communities. They are tangibly helping to address many of the key issues affecting society while providing employment, opportunities and positive impact. It is inspiring to see the new, up-and-coming social enterprises getting awarded and it shows the diversity and vibrancy of the sector."

The awardees are as follows: [PACE – The Mugshot](#), [Dublin Simon Community Charity Shops](#), [Mellow Spring Childcare Development Centre](#), [New Creations Cleaning Service](#), [Hair Together](#), and [Rediscover Furniture](#).

The six winning businesses work across a wide spectrum of community issues, including sustainability, unemployment, low educational attainment, mental health, homelessness and ex-offender reintegration. The groups also provide practical help to people who are disadvantaged, distanced from the labour market or distanced from inclusion in their local communities. The awardees also received a bespoke award trophy which was handmade by The Yard at Solas Project, itself a previous awardee of the scheme.

The event brochure can be found [HERE](#), and a videos of the awardees can be found [HERE](#).

DAF HYBRID SOCIAL FINANCE LOAN SCHEME OPENS FOR ROUND TWO



The Dormant Accounts Funded Hybrid Social Finance Loan Scheme has reopened for Applications. This unique new financial instrument will provide a combination of a repayable loan, a non-repayable loan (grant) and business support for up to 20 social enterprises in total.

The aim of this scheme is to support social enterprises, who have never borrowed before, to develop a borrowing track record, thereby ending their total reliance on grant funding for financing. Before this scheme, there was a lack of investment readiness among social enterprises and there was no tailored financial instrument that fits the needs of the growing social enterprise market.

Each Award will include a total loan of between €20,000 and €100,000 which includes:

- A **repayable loan between €10,000 and €50,000** provided by Community Finance Ireland **which can be financed over five years** at a competitive rate.
- A **non-repayable loan (grant) for up to the same amount** provided by Rethink Ireland upon delivery of agreed milestones. It will be paid in two instalments, over a period of one year, at the start and end of the six-month capacity-building programme.
- Capacity building supports for the amount of €10,000 provided by Rethink Ireland which includes **tailored Business support and a place on a six-month Rethink Ireland Accelerator Programme.**

The Department of Rural and Community Development has committed €890,000 for this scheme which is being administered by Rethink Ireland. In addition, Community Finance Ireland will provide approximately €500,000 in repayable loans.

Further details can be found at Rethink Ireland's website [HERE](#)

You can apply for the Hybrid Social Finance Loan [HERE](#) until 8 December 2023

MAKING AN IMPACT AT SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS IMPACT AWARDS

On 14th September, the Chambers Ireland Sustainable Business Impact Awards took place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, in Santry, Dublin.

These Awards showcase best practice in sustainable development and social responsibility undertaken by companies of all sizes across Ireland. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are at the heart of these Awards, celebrating sustainable business practices and championing Chambers Ireland's alignment with the Goals. DRCD sponsor the 'Partnering with a Social Enterprise' category at the awards.



This year, the winner of that award was DPD for the Lough Ree Access for All 'Resilience' Boat Initiative.

Pictured left: Ian Talbot, CEO Chambers Ireland, Ann Marie Lennon, Quality Assurance Manager DPD, Dorothy Coyle from Lough Ree Access for All, John Ryan, DRCD.

The Judges this year also decided to award a special prize to the Irish Prison Service for their support of the social enterprises Eco Mattress and Bounceback Recycling.

Pictured Right: Eleanor McMahon, Irish Prison Service, Siobhán Cafferty, Pobal, and Shane Devine, Irish Prison Service.



The other four organisations who were nominated for the work they do to support social enterprise were Canada Life & Vytal – 'Use me Baby One More Time' Project, IRD Duhallow Relove Paint Project, Momentum Educate + Innovate for their support of Cill Ulta Social Enterprise, and SERI and CBRE for their Buy Corporate Social Challenge.



Congratulations to Northwest Donegal's social enterprise Cill Ulta who won the sustainable impact by a medium business for their sustainable community horticulture projects, and social enterprise Gorm Media, who were shortlisted for the sustainable impact by a small business award.

Pictured above: Eithne Nic Lochlainn and Mairéad Nic an Iomaire from the social enterprise Cill Ulta

SPOTLIGHT ON WEXFORD

Wexford Local Development (WLD) is one of **49 Local Development Companies** in Ireland. It delivers a range of interlinked programmes on behalf of local and national Government to *enable specific individuals and communities to achieve a better social and economic quality of life by improving their opportunities for employment and by addressing inequality.*



WLD has developed three successful social enterprises to deliver on this aim:

The Little Jobs Service makes a positive contribution to older and vulnerable people's lives by providing opportunities for them to feel connected and have access to services that support them to live independently at home for longer. The Little Jobs Service carries out bi-monthly maintenance, repairs and gardening jobs in the homes



of over 370 older and vulnerable people in Co. Wexford each year. It also facilitates the training and upskilling of 26 staff who are engaged through

the employment activation programmes CE and TÚS. For more information see: www.wld/little-jobs-service/.ie

The Cornmarket Project within WLD was established to reduce substance misuse,



criminality and social exclusion in County Wexford by providing a range of best practice evidence based programmes. Social Enterprises EPIC and Kafe Konnect were established by The Cornmarket Project to support their clients to upskill and access employment which can be difficult for those with a prior criminal conviction or those who are in recovery from addiction. These opportunities allow for sustainable change in their lives.



For more information see:

<http://www.wld.ie/the-cornmarket-project/>



EPIC provides training and work experience in the design and manufacture of

printed promotional products to the Cornmarket Project clients. All profits are reinvested into the social enterprise with the objective of helping people to rebuild their lives. For more information see: www.epicsales.ie



DRCD Staff with T-Shirts and Bags produced by EPIC for the OECD Rural Development Conference in 2022



Kafe Konekt provides training and work experience in a range of hospitality related roles including chefs, cooks, pastry chefs, baristas, wait staff, cashiers, kitchen support staff and café management. This

social enterprise has had great success in progressing trainees into employment in the areas of hospitality, tourism and catering.

Kafe Konekt is located on the grounds of WLD in Spawell Road Wexford and it is open to the public weekdays from 8.30am to 4pm. It offers a range of meals and snacks using seasonal and locally sourced fresh food. For more information see: www.kafekonekt.ie



If you need assistance with your Co. Wexford based social enterprise please contact **Helena Dempsey**, Social Enterprise Development Officer, WLD at hdempsey@wld.ie or call 087 1737502.

GALWAY'S LIVING BOG

Galway's Living Bog, Carrownagappul Bog SAC, located in the rural hinterland of the market town of Mountbellew in County Galway, is one of the biggest Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and one of the largest examples of remaining, restorable active raised bog in Ireland.



Measuring 850 acres, Galway's Living Bog contains fine examples of raised bog habitat and species. Active Raised Bogs are Ireland's oldest, near-natural eco-systems, with an ecological history dating back 10,000 years. They are rich in rare flora and fauna which survive only on bogs. They are a natural carbon sink in the same way as rainforests are. Bogs cover 3% of the earth's surface but store twice as much carbon as Earth's forests.



With increased worry about climate change, people are more appreciative of the importance of bogs. This social enterprise runs year round educational and walking tours. For more information and queries contact at gtcomountbellew@gmail.com. You can keep up to date with us by giving us a follow on *Instagram @ Galway's Living Bog* or *Facebook @ Galway's Living Bog*

NOW GROUP LAUNCHES FIVE YEAR GROWTH PLAN IN IRELAND

THE social enterprise behind the well-regarded [JAM Card](#), the NOW Group, has just announced its five-year Strategic Growth Plan, outlining the Organisation's expansion of services in Ireland, which includes new jobs and employment academies for people with intellectual disabilities, autism or neurodiversity conditions, and expanding the footprint of the Loaf Catering brand.

Operating across Northern Ireland for over 20 years, the group celebrated the opening of the first Loaf Café in the Old Chocolate Factory, Kilmainham, Dublin last year. The Organisation is now committed to future growth in Ireland.

More details can be found [HERE](#).

Focus on SE



**Connections
Arts Centre**

Connections Arts Centre is a great example of a business that works primarily to improve the lives of people. Their mission is to change the perception and visibility of people with disabilities in the community.

Connections Arts Centre is based in Rathgar Co.Dublin. They provide accessible arts, lifestyle training and mentoring programmes that are inclusive, and that assist the disability community to overcome the barriers they encounter every day. They employ one person full-time, three on a part-time basis and can have up to 20 volunteers working alongside them, depending on the project.

Connections Arts Centre are also attracting skilled based volunteering, for example they are currently work with an organisation called *Sogeti* to improve the efficiency of their operations through the assistance of technology.



One in five of people in Ireland live with a disability. 43% of those people aged over 15 report some sort of depression. As a group, they are more likely to experience lower socio-economic status, unemployment/underemployment, and social and geographic isolation.

Recent initiatives are ensuring that those with disabilities are moving from onsite campuses back into the community, where they belong, however that can have its problems; Everyday members of the Disability Community face barriers accessing community opportunities, due to access, facilities, and a lack of inclusive programmes designed to suit their needs.

Connections Arts Centre has three core pillars to address these barriers: Creativity, Community and Change.

Creativity: The Connecting Artist Program (CA) is an annual program that brings artists with Intellectual Disabilities and mentors together online to develop their creative practice and

take the next steps towards exhibiting and selling their work. This year their annual exhibition of work was held in the Royal College of Surgeons.

Community: They are fortunate to have a fantastic space in Rathgar that is being developed into an accessible community arts centre.

Change: Their mission is to change the perception & visibility of the disability community in our communities. Their Connecting Artist (CA) and Transition Year (TY) programmes, Creative TY Connections (CTYC) are all good examples of this.



The services they provide include:

- Creative Transition Year Connections (CTYC): A peer led training programme that brings members of the disability community and TY students together to upskill. This multi-modular programme (Money Management, Everyday IT, Upskilling for Employment) uses creative techniques to stimulate an engaging learning environment, and is supported by accessible online learning.
- Rathgar: Public Arts and lifestyle programmes.
- Collaboration with and design programmes for individual organisations to suit their needs. To date, they have worked with organisations such as Rehab Care, Enable Ireland, and more.
- Online gift shop: Individuals and corporate gifts, including original pieces or art from the Connecting Artist programme.

Further information about the work of the Connections Arts Centre can be found here:

Featured on RTE's Nationwide [HERE](#)
Creative TY Connections (Transition Year) [HERE](#)
Connecting Artists 2023 [HERE](#)
Connecting Artists 2022 [HERE](#)
Inclusion Week 2022 [HERE](#)

CONTACT DETAILS

Connections Arts Centre,
Christ Church Rathgar, Rathgar Road.,
Dublin 6, D06 CF63

Telephone: 086 6478452
Email: admin@connectionsartscentre.ie
Website: www.connectionsartscentre.ie

If you would like your social enterprise to feature in an upcoming edition of SE-News, then send an email requesting an application form to senews@drccd.gov.ie