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CWELL Magazine

Community Wellness Empowerment Leadership & Lifeskills

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**Front cover: Impression of completed garden at the Hunt Museum*

THE WELLBEING WAY - GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

By Eileen Hoffler

The Wellbeing Way, a CWELL Community Wellness Book was launched in May 2021 by then Mayor of Limerick, Michael Collins. The book and accompanying wellness sensory pack have been very well received by local communities. So much so that a reprint of the book was needed. The Wellbeing Way project had its beginning in early December 2020, when the CWELL second year class undertook socially distanced community conversations in the Southill area of Limerick city. Students, with help from Tess Walsh and Lindsey Liston, met with staff and volunteers from the Southill After-Schools Club.

The conversation was very rich and highlighted several areas of concern, chief among them however was the loneliness and isolation caused by the Corona virus pandemic and the effect it was having on people's mental health. As a group the students asked how they may be able to help alleviate isolation and to encourage people to mind their mental health during these difficult times. Their answer was "The Wellbeing Way. A CWELL Community Wellness Book." The book was packed with original poetry and artwork and plenty of hints, tips and activities to help people pass the time and stay well.



Catherine Kinnane, at the Limerick Milk Market

The book was accompanied by a wellbeing sensory pack which encouraged those receiving it to be aware of all of their senses; touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight, and to explore how the senses can be used to enhance wellbeing. In total 14,00 CWELL Wellbeing packs were distributed.



As well as the official launch and the distribution of the packs, the students also held a number of supporting events. On Saturday May 26th the students ran a very successful community day in the Limerick Milk Market where students were on hand to distribute packs and to chat to people about the project in general.

Students undertook several print and radio interviews to promote the book and its underlying message of minding your mental health. The project was very much impacted by Covid and the restrictions it brought. Plans had to be changed and alternative scenarios had to be considered a number of times during the project. The students had hoped to deliver an in-person workshop to highlight some of the activities in the book but Covid restrictions prevented this. The CWELL students adapted quickly and instead delivered an on line workshop as part of the Limerick Life Long Learning Festival. This workshop was well attended, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.



The Wellbeing Way project was also recognized by the Irish Universities Association as an excellent example of a Community/University collaboration and a cameraman was sent to Limerick over the Summer to record a video detailing the project. CWELL would like to thank Jimmy Prior, Manager of the Southill Family Resource Centre, and the Southill Women's Group who participated in the making of the video. Special thanks to Southill FRC volunteer and CWELL graduate Geraldine Minogue whose contribution formed the main part of the video.



The Wellbeing Way project continues to grow and develop with students currently working on The Wellbeing Way, A CWELL Wellness Book for Children. This book will share the ethos of the adult version and will follow a similar format. Students plan to distribute the book through community crèches and local primary schools in early September.

Tell us a little about yourself

I am 30 years old, and mother to a beautiful boy. I believe in empowerment in the community to create positive change, validation and corrective action.

I am a voluntary community worker in Garryowen where we have been involved in community safety maintenance and measures during Covid. Though our resources and volunteer numbers were challenged by the pandemic, we continued to carry out our work including community clean up and care of The Shrine, The Well, The Patrick Sarsfield Statue and The Clubhouse.

I stand for the necessity of equality in our communities, particularly gender equality and justice.

I advocate for the 17 SDGs (17 Sustainable Development Goals) to the community highlighting awareness of sustainable practices. Ideally, I would like to see Garryowen being recognized by potential investors as a potential eco-village where a cooperative community environment would capture the necessary resources to provide for community.

How did you hear about CWELL?

I was involved with Limerick Island Community Partners' Bee Keeping Project and was recommended The CWELL course by Mary Quane of SICAP (The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme)

Why are you doing CWELL?

Going forward, I am contributing to my professional Portfolio development with the support of all the team involved in delivery of The CWELL Course.



Helena Kelly, second year CWELL student

Would you recommend the CWELL programme to others?

Most definitely I would recommend the course to those wanting to learn new skills, take charge and create change in their lives and those with pride and love for their communities to achieve common goals. I have achieved so much. Some highlights for me have been learning life skills such as personal development, time management, and learning about elections and the correct format to vote. I am delighted that we were able to continue classes on-line during the pandemic.

I feel that personally doing this course has been the best decision that I have ever made. I have new energy and have made lifelong friends.

I am excited to start the new semester as a second year in September. CWELL so far has taught me to have the patience and gratitude to nourish the thoughts and moments in life, accept the past and strive towards a better future every day.

WORKING LOCAL! THINKING GLOBAL! GARRYOWEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

By Jackie Condon

Second year student Helena Kelly is a very busy lady! As we see from her profile she is an active community worker alongside the members, residents and volunteers of Garryowen Residents Association. Not alone this, Helena is a member of Human Diversity Climate change groups and the PPN (Public Participation Network) with Limerick County Council.

Helena is concerned with Global environmental issues and advocates inclusion of these principles in the community. She says; “At the Garryowen Residents’ Association we are firm believers in the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and believe that these goals should be at the heart of sustainable communities and community development.”

“We share a vision that proposes to provide adequate facilities to empower those in our community to overcome the barriers they sometimes meet in their lives and society, bringing equality and justice to all.”

At present we feel that the community of Garryowen is without essential amenities. We are dedicated to establishing a permanent community space inclusive of provision for adult education, mental health facilities, a sports and youth arena, and a community forest garden as a social hub in the area.



Helena Kelly, 2nd year CWELL Student

"What the residents' association achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic is heart-warming, with recent events and developments keeping everyone busy!"

Community Conversations held in the area referred to the importance of community spirit, wellness and nature. It was highlighted that adequate facilities are crucial to allow community difficulties and challenges to be tackled head on at a local level with the involvement of community activists and volunteers. This would give a sense of collective accomplishment, participation and pride and enable the community to achieve common goals. According to Helena; "What the residents' association achieved during the COVID-19 Pandemic is heart-warming with recent events and developments keeping everyone busy!"

As part of the recent celebration of "The International Wild Geese Festival", the Garryowen Residents' Association was invited to attend a presentation by the French Ambassador at the Church of St. John (1190) at St. John's Square, where he unveiled a commemorative plaque to recognise the work of the Women of Limerick during the times of Cromwell. Going forward The Community is delighted to announce their intention to participate in this years Going for Gold competition. The association believes that their involvement will be hugely beneficial to their efforts to enhance their community and are already looking forward to residents becoming involved in this venture.

Last but certainly not least, the resident's association is about to facilitate the setting up of both a men's and women's shed which will be independent of each other but of course offer each other mutual support. So! busy times ahead for this vibrant community.

Helena says: "If you could contribute to our collective mission and enable us to fulfil our dream for our community in providing necessary facilities, supports and funding please contact garryowenresidentsassociation@gmail.com for further details."

Follow us on Facebook for our latest updates - Garryowen Residents Association



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THE HUNT "MUSEUM IN A GARDEN"

BY THE COMMUNITY ~ FOR THE COMMUNITY

By Jackie Condon

Sean Moran was a builder who loved the River and devoted many years to restoring some of Limerick's oldest buildings....His son John Moran is on The Hunt Museum board and the family supported the development of the community garden in his memory.

The Hunt Museum exhibits one of Ireland's greatest private collections of Art and Antiquities has recently created an exciting new public space for Limerick. "Museum in a Garden" takes The Hunt Museum outside its walls to create a public urban garden where the concept is to break down barriers to culture and art and encourage greater engagement with the community. As well as promoting Biodiversity in the new space, the Hunt Museum is committed to re-connecting people to nature and promoting a civic space that

that enables community togetherness and access to culture for all. The new space is intended to benefit everyone's mental health, well-being, and inclusion. Last year, in the Christmas edition of CWELL magazine, we looked at how The Hunt Museum led the way in promoting biodiversity and community inclusion in Limerick, by hosting a public consultation on the future use of the garden's felled trees. The trees had to be removed due to disease which posed a



health and safety risk. In the consultation, the public voted to have the remains of the diseased Trees turned into a series of wooden crafted sculptures which will feature in the garden with the intention of reflecting objects in The Museum. Following on from this, a cash prize competition has been launched inviting artists to submit their ideas and compete for the prize of creating the finished piece.





All images courtesy of The Hunt Museum

“The Sean Moran Community Garden,” in the north-east section of the garden, is where vegetables and flowers will continue to be tended by community volunteers with several wheelchair access planters and a sensory garden.

Several community groups- including St Mary’s Parish Men’s Shed, Doon Men’s Shed, Southill Men’s Shed as well as Limerick Mental Health Association, Le Cheile Men’s Group, Southill Women’s Group and local schools - were involved in its delivery and will continue to maintain it.

By being involved from the start, volunteers have come to see the garden as their own. They have developed a vested interest in it and sense of pride in the project, all the while acquiring new skills and becoming more connected with the museum.

Speaking on behalf of the groups involved in the development and maintenance of the Sean Moran Community Garden, Martina Shanahan, Limerick Mental Health Association (LMHA), said; "The LMHA Men’s shed were delighted to be invited to maintain the garden; it allows us a safe place to meet and work outdoors in a beautiful setting.”

Jim Prior, Southill Family Resource Centre, said, “We are excited and delighted to be part of this project. The community garden will provide a space where the 15 plus men’s sheds across the City and County can come to contribute to its upkeep and maintenance and allow opportunities for networking between the shed’s projects as well as getting to know new people and The Hunt Museum.”





Former Mayor of the City and County Councillor Michael Collins and Damien Brady, Limerick City and County Librarian

LIMERICK LIBRARIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN

By Jackie Condon

A new development plan has been launched for the 16 Limerick Libraries. The Central Library, formerly at the Granary, is moving across the road to Barrow House at the corner of Ellen Street and Michael Street shortly as part of the Opera Site development.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the importance of the Library service to the people of Limerick. Library teams from the various branches embraced digital channels to continue to provide services even though the physical doors were closed to borrowers and other customers.

The Limerick Libraries development plan sets out a strong vision and clear direction for the sustainable development of Limerick's public library service between now and 2025, for the next five years.

The vision is that Limerick Libraries will offer attractive and welcoming spaces where all members of the community can access knowledge, ideas and information and where people can reflect, connect and learn.

Its mission is to promote community wellbeing by providing equal access to high-quality information, educations, recreation and cultural services.

This Library Development Plan prioritises the fundamental focus, which is the social impact of the public library on the wider community and society in general. In launching the plan, Mayor of the City and County of Limerick Cllr Michael Collins said: "The public library is a trusted and valued community asset that enables users to participate effectively in society."

We saw how important the service was to communities right across Limerick during the pandemic lockdowns."

"Libraries are more than just books, they are places of learning, community spaces that can be used for arts and culture, education as well as fueling your imagination by reading, promoting

wellbeing, participation and positively impacting economic welfare in the community."

Damien Brady, Limerick City and County Librarian added: "Limerick Libraries' mission is to promote wellbeing

and inclusion by providing equal access to information, education, recreation and cultural services. The library service reinforces Limerick City and County Council's core values of social inclusion, collaboration and citizen engagement."

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT IN LIMERICK REGENERATION AREAS

By Jackie Condon

Limerick City and County Council has launched a new jobs initiative focusing on people living in the regeneration areas of the city. Pathways to Employment will support people from Moyross, Ballinacurra Weston, Southill and St. Mary's Park, who are seeking work to prepare for employment.

It is being run in conjunction with "Innovate Limerick" which has employed a Jobs Coordinator to link those seeking employment with training providers and employers. The initial phase will focus on employment in the construction sector in Limerick, but this will expand to other sectors over time.

In a bid to create new employment opportunities, Limerick City and County Council is including a "social clause" in capital projects, which requires that 20 percent of new job opportunities are available to local people.

Under the social clause, local people are categorized as "persons from Limerick City and County."

The delivery of the jobs initiative has the support of Limerick and Clare Education and Training board, Limerick City Build and Moyross Youth Academy.

The partners are offering a construction skills course based on employer and industry requirements, which will ensure participants are ready when employment opportunities arise. Pathways to Employment will also target other industries with a similar approach, identifying employment opportunities and providing training to give participants the skills to take up employment.

For more information email: jobsinitiative@limerick.ie or phone Regeneration offices in Watch House Cross 061 221914 or Roxboro 061 458884.





If you would like to find out more about the **CWELL Diploma**
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Visit the website: www.ul.ie/engage/node/5951

*"Politicians and diapers have one thing in common. They should both be
changed regularly, and for the same reason."*

José Maria de Eça de Queirós