



BALLYHOURA
DEVELOPMENT CLG

“A PRACTICAL
GUIDE FOR
COMMUNITY
GROUPS”

THE BALLYHOURA COMMUNITY INCLUSION TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS TO INCREASE
VOLUNTEERISM, PROMOTE EQUALITY AND SUPPORT LONG TERM WELL BEING

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On behalf of the Board of Ballyhoura Development CLG, we warmly welcome the production of the Community Inclusion Toolkit. We are aware of the challenges faced by community groups across the area regarding retaining and finding volunteers, increasing engagement in community activity and the challenges of succession and legacy for voluntary groups. We wish to acknowledge the commitment of the 3 pilot communities of Castleconnell, Kilmallock & Mitchelstown who shared their thoughts, put actions in place and supported the development of this guide so that all community groups can benefit.

CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

The Board express their gratitude to the staff who have co facilitated these sessions and who will support others to implement good practice for their communities. We hope that each community group will find the Community Inclusion Toolkit useful and we look forward to continuing to support groups into the future.

Aidan Gleeson
Chairperson- Ballyhoura Development CLG



AIDAN GLEESON

This Community Inclusion Toolkit is presented as a practical aid to community groups in the Ballyhoura area. Its purpose is to help groups to include in their activities and structures as many people as possible, drawn from the widest possible range of backgrounds and circumstances.

The development of the toolkit has been a joint undertaking by Ballyhoura Development and three local community organisations: ACM, Castleconnell; Kilmallock and District Community Council; and Mitchelstown Community Council. The process was initiated and developed by Ballyhoura Development, the Local Development Company which covers the Ballyhoura area of North County Cork and East County Limerick. The mission of Ballyhoura Development is to work in partnership with community, voluntary and public sector bodies to develop empowered and inclusive communities, and to drive positive, sustainable and equitable social and economic change.

INTRODUCTION

The toolkit has been developed through a series of meetings with the three participating community groups. In these facilitated sessions, participants have described and reflected on how they currently promote involvement in their activities, and they have also suggested and considered possible new approaches to deepening community involvement. This document reflects the content of the meetings. The 'Community Inclusion Charter' was agreed by the three groups and Ballyhoura Development. This is a commitment to implement key guiding principles for community inclusion: it is hoped that all local community organisations will adopt the charter, and implement it to the best of their ability. Guidelines on how to maximise community inclusion advises on how a community organisation can go about including people in its

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TOOLKIT PURPOSES

Ballyhoura Development commenced the toolkit project as a means of supporting inclusion through the sharing, spreading and strengthening of existing good practice in the area, and through learning from elsewhere. The company and the three participating community organisations believe that the toolkit will enhance community inclusion in several ways:

- by helping community groups to increase the numbers of people taking part in their activities and availing of services that they may provide;
- by promoting equality of access to community services, facilities and decision-making, with particular emphasis on increasing the involvement of people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past;
- by supporting the long-term well-being of community groups, through suggestions for improving communication to and from the community, and for steps to help in recruiting, retaining and supporting volunteers, whether for specific tasks or the overall work of the groups.

Community inclusion is about giving people equal opportunity and encouragement to be involved in community activities. There are several ways in which people may be involved, from attending an event or making use of a service provided, through helping out on the day of a particular activity, to planning, organising and taking responsibility for the overall work of a community organisation.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION CHARTER

We, _____

believe that the more people who take part in our activities in any way, and the more diverse are their circumstances and backgrounds, the better we will be able to respond to the differing experiences and needs of different groups in the community.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson


Therefore, we affirm our commitment, and strive, to

- ☒ respect and welcome the involvement in our activities, in any way, of all people who live locally
- ☒ be fair to all, and encourage the participation of individuals and groups of people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past
- ☒ act as a resource for the whole community and foster and support the development of new groups in our area
- ☒ co-operate with other organisations working for the good of our community, especially with those which share our commitment to community inclusion.

This section contains recommendations for how a community group can include more people in its activities. These should help any organisation to increase not only the total numbers of people involved, but also the participation of individuals and groups who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past.

The recommendations are set out below under a number of headings:

GUIDELINES ON HOW TO MAXIMISE COMMUNITY INCLUSION

-  **1** KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED
-  **2** GETTING PEOPLE'S VIEWS
-  **3** HELPING PEOPLE TO BE MORE INVOLVED
-  **4** RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS
-  **5** MEASURING SUCCESS

NOTE

Most of these recommendations are based on experience of what works for the three participating groups. The exceptions are suggestions which emerged from discussions during the toolkit development process: they are the recommendations on how to measure success, and a very small number of those under other headings.

NOTES

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If you want to include as many people as possible in what you do, then it is vital that you let the community know what you are doing and what is going on locally.



KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED

What do you need to let people know?

- Who you are – the organisation and key individuals
- What you do – your activities, events, or services
- New initiatives by your group
- That you welcome all offers of help
- How to volunteer to help
- That getting involved can give people the chance to act on their own ideas
- About the vitality and energy of what you are doing
- About the activities of other organisations, and about local events and issues
- That the activities and services of the group are for all in the community



Tip

Newsletters

A regular newsletter can be just about the organisation, or it can be to let people know what's going on in the area generally, with information from all of the community, voluntary and business organisations active locally.

- Include contact addresses for more news/information to be submitted
- Display and distribute it through shops, churches and other premises open to the public
- If schools support you, get a copy into every schoolbag
- Up-load the newsletter onto social media, with young people as the main target audience
- If there's a local second level school, see if it will organise for Transition Year students to help
- Use as many photographs of community members as possible

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How to do it?

Word-of-mouth: face-to-face conversation is by far the best way to keep people informed. But you can't talk to everyone, so you have to use as many other methods as you can to spread accurate information.

These are the ones that the participating groups find useful.

- Texts
- E-mails
- Social media, like Facebook, What's App, Snapchat
- Website
- Noticeboards: at your own premises and wherever else is available
- Schools
- Publicity at your own events: talk to people and give out flyers
- Parish newsletters (and their equivalents)
- Local radio
- Local newspapers
- Your own newsletter
- Public meetings, 'town meetings', and open nights/days

2

For community members to feel truly included in the work of a group, they need to believe that their views are important and in some way influence what the group does. It is worthwhile for the group to routinely seek information and opinions from as many people as possible, and from as diverse a range of individuals and groups as it can reach.

2 GETTING PEOPLE'S VIEWS

What kind of things should you ask people?

- What issues do community members want addressed, what needs to be done about them, and how should progress be measured?
- What kinds of activities and events would people like to see organised?
- What is good about what you're doing, and about your community?
- How can you improve what you are doing?
- What skills do people have that they would be willing to use for the benefit of the community?

What should you do?

- Actively seek committee members from a broad spectrum of the community, for example, with regard to background, interests, social class and geographical location; this way, the committee itself will represent the different views that exist locally
- Ask people informally for their views when they are gathered together
- Perform questionnaire surveys through social media, combined with boxes in shops for people to submit their views and/or an on-the-street survey and/or going through 'Survey Monkey' questions on-line with people at public events.

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Tip

Public Meetings

Public meetings, 'town meetings'* and open nights/days can be used to ...

- 'showcase' everything positive that is happening locally
- get people's views
- involve people in planning responses to local issues, for example, through
 - SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
 - prioritisation of issues
 - selection of sub-groups to address them

* ***Meetings to which representatives of areas and interest groups are invited***

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- Use 'suggestion boxes'
- Organise public meetings, open days/nights or 'town meetings'
- Spend time talking to individuals to get their views
- Seek the opinions of other local organisations
- Put group-related videos aimed at young people up on social media, and then ask young people for their views
- Try to accept criticism and to learn from it.

Benefits: these methods will...

- Provide you with guidance from the wider community
- Give you more information
- Increase local awareness of your group
- Generate interest in your activities
- Send the message that you are open to what people have to say
- Increase the community's sense of ownership over what is happening

Every group wants to see the greatest number of people benefitting from its activities, events or services. Over and above involvement at this level, an organisation should try to get as many individuals as possible actually contributing to its work.

3

3 HELPING PEOPLE TO BE MORE INVOLVED

Benefits:

- spread the work-load
- be able to replace the current group members in the future
- have diversity in the group, to help it represent the variety of experiences and opinions in the local area
- keep the group vibrant
- get fresh ideas for things to do in the community from new people
- expand the skill-set of the group
- pass on the group's work as a legacy for the community.

The pool of individuals who may contribute actively becomes bigger as the group comes in contact with more people, whether through

spreading information on itself, seeking people's views, or providing activities, events and services that benefit community members.

Promoting attendance at events and activities, and the use of services

- Ask individuals who already take part in activities or use services to encourage and support others to do so
- If you can, organise activities in buildings or outdoor spaces that are in the physical centre of your community: these tend to draw more people in
- Pay great attention to the social side of your activities, and give people loads of opportunities to chat over tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes

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— “ —

The most important thing was involving the people. It's important that people feel they're involved

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

- Try to organise some activities that all age groups can take part in, to increase both mixing between generations and overall participation
- Use cultural or food-based events hosted jointly by different ethnic communities to bring people from diverse backgrounds together
- Organise activities for young children which target children from the settled & Traveller communities, to encourage mixing of the two groups

- You have to actually ask individuals to help out!
That's the only way you will be able to recruit those who are willing to help but reluctant to make the first move, and those who aren't aware that their skills and experience could be of use
- Start by asking individuals to help with one-off events
- Organise a 'Volunteer Night'
- Try to give people the 'right' amount of work to do: not so little that it doesn't feel worthwhile, and not so much that it feels overwhelming
- To spread the work-load, trust people to take on tasks

- ### Succession: actively renewing your group

To thrive in the long-term, a group or committee needs to constantly renew itself by bringing in new members. Success is more likely if the group is widely seen as welcoming and open.

- To ensure on-going recruitment of committee members with the necessary commitment and skills:
 - Develop a plan for how to pass on skills
 - Introduce 'Membership' as a new standing agenda item at committee meetings
- When looking for new committee members, use mainly one-to-one, personal approaches to individuals. BUT remember that this method risks creating a group drawn only from people who know each other already. To be open and inclusive, you have to use other means too, like

- area-based elections
- general local advertising
- For community councils, it can be useful to help people to set up residents' committees in particular areas. These can then feed into the community council
- When seeking new members, you will need individuals with certain skills and also those who are prepared to 'just muck in'
- If somebody indicates that they might be willing to join your committee in the future, arrange for them to 'shadow' a current member for a while: this is especially useful if someone feels they might not have the skills or the time to match what existing members do
- Welcome newcomers when they join the group, and designate someone to meet them before and after each of their first few meetings
- When somebody is joining a committee to replace an existing member, the latter should support and 'mentor' them
- To avoid the problem of someone 'not wanting to let go', you can have a rule that no individual can hold the same position of responsibility on a committee for more than three consecutive years
- Appoint 'deputies' for every office-holder on a committee, or create joint positions

- Decide if you want the constitution of your group to exclude individuals who are involved in electoral politics. Their exclusion can promote an image of openness and impartiality, while their inclusion may result in them making important contributions
- Some minority ethnic communities organise activities for themselves. Representatives of the organisers can be invited to join committees or sub-groups
- A committee needs to be aware of the requirements of individual members for support in performing their roles

The benefits of sub-groups

Sub-groups allow people to get involved in initiatives that interest them. They help to harness the energy and skills of people who may not want to get involved with every aspect of the organisation's work.



Tip

Organising a 'Volunteer Night'

- Bring together all of the local organisations which are looking for volunteers
- Showcase what all of the different community, voluntary and business organisations do
- Combine the session with another event or activity which will attract people
- Invite everyone in the community to attend
- Try to get community members to volunteer to each do ten hours' volunteering annually with organisations of their choice

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- If someone approaches your group with a worthwhile idea, or if they want to take an issue further, welcome and encourage them. A good way to do that is to set up a sub-group, and to give the initiator the key role in driving it
- Try to keep very close and supportive relations between any sub-groups and the main committee. This can be done by:
 - provision of mentoring, induction and training to sub-group members
 - reports to and from sub-groups
 - ensuring that each sub-group has at least one member from the main committee
 - regular financial reporting from the sub-group to the committee
 - organising insurance for the activities of the sub-group
- Agree the exact relationship between the sub-group and the committee from the start

Running group meetings and public meetings

- Arrange seating in a circle or a semi-circle (if a 'top table' is needed for documents). This promotes greater dialogue between participants
- Try to keep meetings short
- Get a representative of the group to welcome each person who arrives at a public or general meeting
- In publicity material for AGMs, stress that people who go along will not have to join a committee!
- Combine public meetings with activities that will attract people, e.g. a family day or a raffle
- Consider having a guest speaker, but remember that people don't usually come to meetings to be 'talked at' for a long time
- Ensure that there is time for people to talk to each other before the meeting starts
- When someone puts forward a new idea, encourage them to feel that it's reasonable and welcome, so that everyone present will feel comfortable about contributing

Co-operation between groups can bring gains both for the community in general and for the groups concerned. The experience of the participating groups suggests the following.

4

4 RELATIONSHIPS & CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

In general...

- The important thing is to create an atmosphere of working together
- 'Empire-building' has to be avoided
- Having an individual who is on the board/committee of two organisations can facilitate communication between them
- An umbrella body for local organisations can co-ordinate communication between all of the organisations and the community
- 'Community planning' offers a way to collaborate with other groups, and facilitates agreement on which organisations should take the lead on which actions

Supporting group development

- Foster new groups
- If one of your sub-groups becomes an independent organisation, try to maintain a close relationship with it
- Provide venues for other groups' activities
- If other groups lack experience and/or legal status, help them to prepare funding applications and/or submit them on their behalf
- Ensure funding applications made through your organisation by another group are approved by your committee
- Try to make sure that any group or sub-group working under the auspices of your organisation follows your ethos
- Operate fair and inclusive procedures for giving access to your premises. In particular, welcome use by Traveller groups and foreign ethnic communities

— “ —
Some people are not aware of what they have to offer as volunteers
 Kilmallock and District Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

NOTES

5

It is important for every group to take time to reflect on what they have done. It boosts the group to see what has been accomplished, and members can also identify what can be done better. In order to do this, success has to be measured. A straightforward approach is to complete the following statement when starting out on any task, 'We'll know we're succeeding if....'.

5 MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring the success of actions in general

- Record:
 - numbers of people coming to events
 - numbers of people taking part in activities
 - numbers of people using services
 - the 'hit-rate' on social media entries
 - To get people's views on the quality of their experience at events and activities, use the following methods on the day:
 - recording of quotes from those attending
 - recording of quotes from the organisers
 - visual evaluation approaches, like the ticking of 'smiley' faces or an 'evaluation wheel'
 - Document how much coverage events get in the local media
- Use e-mail surveys which can be completed in 3-5 minutes
 - Take the negative points from a public Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) analysis at a town or public meeting and, at a later similar event, ask for opinions on what the group has achieved in relation to them
 - Repeat on-street and other questionnaire-based surveys to see how responses change over time, and to gauge local satisfaction with what the group is doing
 - Hold open day events such as coffee mornings to hear the views of community members in relaxed, informal settings

— “ —

**We're open to ideas.
We listen to people**
ACM Committee Members

— ” —

NOTES

Measuring success in community inclusion

- Record
 - numbers of people coming to events
 - numbers taking part in activities
 - numbers using services
 - the composition of the group
 - new members joining the group each year
 - new members joining sub-groups each year
 - numbers helping out at events and activities
 - new people getting involved in helping out at events and activities
- Use questionnaires and open community consultations to get people's views on how well the group engages with them

For any of these measurements, current values need to be recorded. It is against these 'base levels' that future measurements will be judged.

Measuring the success of the toolkit

Document:

- how many groups adopt the Community Inclusion Charter
- how often groups consult the toolkit
- to what extent, if any, community inclusion increases for groups using the toolkit (based on the indicators in preceding sub-section)

LEARNING FROM ELSEWHERE

CASE STUDIES

How to get young people meaningfully involved in community activities and decision-making structures

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ORGANISATION OF ACTIVITIES

The representatives of youth services who were contacted stated that young people respond better to informal group settings, and when they are given the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way. Their view was that young people prefer to become involved in organising activities, rather than to participate in management committees and other formal decision-making structures. They recommended that the following actions be taken at the beginning of any initiative to involve young people in this way.

- Inform the young people of the level of commitment required, including the duration of the process and the amount of time that they would have to give over to it
- Explain the purpose of the organising group/committee clearly to the young people
- Spend time planning the meetings so that the experience is enjoyable for the participants
- Inform young people of the level of 'power' vested in the group; failure to do this can result in frustration and a breakdown in trust between young people and adults
- Agree a group contract, which will allow for issues which may arise to be dealt with constructively

A

— “ —

**We suddenly realised that, you know,
there's only so much you can do -
you have to get help**

ACM Committee

— ” —

NOTES

[illegible]

Conditions & steps for success in involving young people in decision-making structures

- Before inviting young people to get involved in decision-making structures, an organisation should be clear about why it wants to do so
- The organisation's leadership needs to be committed to the young people's participation
- Young people from different backgrounds, including from various class and ethnic backgrounds, should be invited to take part
- Young people should be encouraged to participate in an induction process prior to attending their first meeting
- The organisation should set time and resources aside for building relationships between young people and adults who are participating together in a particular committee. This activity should be valued by the organisation
- The involvement of young people should be an intrinsic part of the organisation's development and should be worked on continuously
- In order for young people to respond best, meetings need to be:
 - interactive rather than formal; techniques such as brainstorming can be used;
 - facilitative rather than rigidly chaired;
 - timed to take account of people's other commitments, such as studying for exams (*Youth on Board 2018*)

HOW TO INVOLVE PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

- Be proactive in making contact with individuals from different ethnic groups
 - As a first step, identify where people from different ethnic groups come together, for example, at schools or childcare centres
 - Once appropriate locations are identified, representatives of community organisations should speak to members of ethnic communities at those places
 - Hold a social event specifically for members of the ethnic community and the people involved in the community organisation to get to know each other
 - Prepare a culturally-sensitive information pack and give it by hand to members of the ethnic group. Try to identify the issues and needs of ethnic communities. Once these are identified, areas in which the community organisation could work with the ethnic communities should be decided
 - Be aware that social events are effective at breaking down barriers and building trust between different ethnic groups
- (BEMIS, Scotland 2016)*

HOW TO ORGANISE SUCCESSION IN COMMUNITY GROUPS, SO THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS NEW RECRUITS TO REPLACE LONG-TERM ACTIVISTS: GOOD PRACTICE AND LEARNING FROM ELSEWHERE

Example: Sunshine House Conference of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

The committee, known as the ‘Conference’, runs a series of week-long holidays for children from Dublin each year. About 20 adult volunteers, many of them young people, help on each week. A total of approximately 200 individuals volunteer annually; about 100 of them are first-time volunteers with the conference.

At the end of their week helping on the holidays, each volunteer is asked to complete a form to indicate if they would be interested in helping out in other ways. The form includes a list of possible activities to take part in, with ‘tick boxes’ beside them.

Individuals who do more than the average volunteer, and show more interest, are identified by the committee, and are asked to help a bit more. Some who get more involved in this way are later invited to join the committee. About three-quarters of those who are asked agree to join.

In general, the individuals invited to join the committee are judged to be motivated and well-organised, and likely to build up good working

relationships with the rest of the committee. The conference’s current approach is to try to ensure that every committee member has a particular role to play. An individual may be asked to join and then have a role identified for them, or the need for a particular role to be filled may lead the committee to approach someone with relevant skills and experience. For example, somebody working in the field of child protection was recruited to the committee to take responsibility for that issue, while a volunteer involved in health and safety at work took on a similar role in the conference.

For about 20 years, the committee had 16 to 17 members. It currently has nine. It is becoming harder to attract members, partly because of increased administration duties and feelings of responsibility. Committee members stay about five years on average, so the committee ‘turns over’ completely in about that time.

Many ex-committee members still help with the activities of the conference, and ex-volunteers sometimes get involved in other St Vincent de Paul conferences (where the work and time commitment are less intense) when they are older.

— “ —
**People really talk if you put a cup of tea
 in front of them. Reflection should be
 an important part of the toolkit**

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

NOTES

Factors underlying success in the constant renewal of the committee

- There is a large and constantly replenished pool of volunteers to recruit from
- There is on-going identification of potential new members by the existing committee, in an informal but well-worked-out and quite systematic way
- Working on the holiday is intense and many volunteers are young, so that they often build up friendships through shared experience
For many years, there was a strong social side to involvement, although this has lessened in recent years
- The initial commitment of a week's volunteering is quite attractive: many people find working with the children very enjoyable, and the involvement is time-limited
- Some volunteers become very committed
- The committee members gain something from their participation: enjoyment; sometimes developing unexpected skills; a sense of achievement; and (more so in the past) the social element of involvement
- Support and advice are available from ex-committee members who are still involved

Some good practice in relation to succession in general

In general, the more an organisation achieves and the more awareness there is of its activities, the more people will take part in its activities, make use of its services, and help out 'on the day' of events, thus creating a bigger pool of potentially interested people to recruit onto the committee. (Witherden, 2012)

The following are some recommendations in relation to successful renewal of committee membership, drawn from the practice and research of organisations in a number of countries.

- **Develop a plan for on-going recruitment to the committee**
- **Set up a sub-group to implement the plan and report regularly to the committee**
- **Prepare a skills and experience audit of the existing committee/group to identify gaps to be filled by recruitment**
- **Identify and approach potential new committee members, BUT**
- **Also use open methods to recruit –**
 - advertising
 - networking with other organisations
 - elections
- **Use committee member ‘role descriptions’ which show what members are expected to do**

- Avoid 'irreplaceable' or 'immoveable' leaders
- Get around the 'succession taboo', which is a serious reluctance on the part of many people to discuss potential leadership succession problems which may be difficult or painful to deal with (*Pontypool: Community Projects Centre 2008*)
- Have an induction process for new members
- If new members have little previous experience of decision-making and responsibility, foster their capacity to participate: the chairperson and other members should seek to build their confidence by
 - providing induction training
 - keeping them informed
 - seeking their opinions actively, and listening to their responses
- Rotate committee positions and membership by setting time limits
- Set up real 'deputy' positions, e.g. deputy chairperson, deputy secretary, so that individuals are ready to step in if an office-holder is temporarily absent or leaves the committee
- If you have an equality policy, consider applying it to recruitment to the committee, in order to increase diversity within the membership
- Have written procedures and 'operations manuals', whenever possible, so that knowledge of how to do things is not stored only 'in the heads' of one or two individuals (*Hofheimer 2018*), (*Copeland 2013*)

OTHER RESOURCES TO HELP PROMOTE COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Outlined below are several approaches from other places which the facilitators believe that groups may find particularly useful in the future when seeking to involve the community in their activities. Also mentioned a very limited number of publications which provide further ideas and information on methods to promote community participation.

Participatory Appraisal

Participatory Appraisal is an approach to analysis and planning based on a deep commitment to participation and an assumption that local people, rather than outsiders, are the 'experts'. It involves people jointly creating and analysing visual presentations, such as maps, models and ranking lists, of their lives and environment.

See: Chambers, R. (1997) Whose reality counts: putting the first last (London: Intermediate Technology Publications)

— “ —
Everybody is welcome to come here.
'Here we are - come and join us!'
 Mitchelstown Audio

— ” —

The book, ‘*Communities Count!*’, outlines the experience of groups in Britain who were trying to make their localities more ‘sustainable’, and who asked their communities right at the start of their efforts to agree how they should measure success. The idea behind this approach is that, by asking as many people as possible to agree such ‘community indicators’, groups increase the likelihood that community members will want to stay involved in the process. The groups also end up with realistic targets for their activities.

New Economics Foundation (1998) *Communities count! A step by step guide to community sustainability indicators* (London: New Economics Foundation) http://library.uniteddiversity.coop/Measuring_Progress_and_Eco_Footprinting/Communities%20Count.PDF

A 'cafe' workshop gets its name because it is set up like a café, with small groups of people talking together around tables in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Every so often during a session, participants move between tables, forming new conversation groups. It works best when the organisers are trying to stimulate a genuine conversation among participants, with a diversity

See: www.theworldcafe.com

This book describes 21 techniques that have been used successfully in Britain and elsewhere to involve people in decision-making. Some of the techniques, like Planning for Real and Participatory Appraisal are now quite well-known in Ireland, but others, like Citizens' Juries, 'Imagine' and 'Choices', are not.

New Economics Foundation (1998)

Participation works! 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st Century (London: New Economics Foundation) <https://neweconomics.org/1998/06/participation-works>

This publication provides practical suggestions to deepen community participation. Developed for use in Dublin's city centre, much of the content is relevant anywhere in the country. The guide includes a check-list for meeting organisers and

information on the ‘evaluation wheel’.

Community Participation Project (2008)

Good practice guide to community participation
(Dublin: Inner City Organisations Network/North
West Inner City Network).

www.iconnetwork.ie/download/pdf/1130586_report.pdf; http://www.iconnetwork.ie/download/pdf/developing_a_good_practice_guide_to_community_participation_pdf.pdf

Volunteer Ireland

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development agency and a support body for all local Volunteer Centres and Volunteering Information Services in the State. Volunteer Ireland has produced a series of guides for organisations to help them recruit and support volunteers.

<https://www.volunteer.ie/resources/factsheets-and-guides/#organisations>

See, for example, their *Volunteer Management Health Check Guide*

www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/VM_Health_Check_Guide.pdf.

— “ —
**When you are welcomed so warmly,
you just can’t sit back and do nothing**
Mitchelstown Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

NOTES

1. TYPES OF LEGAL STRUCTURES

There are several legal structures to choose from. Groups should choose the structure which most suits their present needs and the needs they can envisage for the future. There are advantages and disadvantages to each structure and these should be considered carefully. In some cases one aspect of the structure is an advantage to one group, yet the same aspect may be seen as a disadvantage by another group. *(Copeland 2013)*

POSSIBLE LEGAL STRUCTURES FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Association

This is the most common form of ‘unincorporated’ structure for voluntary and community organisations and tends to be selected by new and small groups. The association exists where a group of people come together to carry out an agreed object (other than for profit) and where it is intended that there should be some provision for continuing membership and the future existence of the group.

The association is usually governed by a constitution. This is a legal document which sets down the objects of the association, its membership and structure, and the powers it gives itself to carry out its objects. It forms a contract

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**Numbers are not enough,
because the quality of the
experience is what matters**

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

Continued on Page 28

NOTES

Continued from Page 27

between the members and establishes the rights and duties they have to each other. The association is composed of members who delegate their power to a management committee to carry out the association's activities. The management committee is elected by, and accountable to, the members.

Advantages of an association

- **Flexibility** – the constitution of the association can be tailored to fit the varying types of association. The association is free from the statutory controls which govern a company or industrial and provident society
- **Cost** – an unincorporated association is cheap to set up and run

Disadvantages of an association

- No separate legal identity - an association has no separate legal existence apart from the members of which it is comprised. This means that the association cannot enter into contracts in its own name or own property
- Personal liability – if anything goes wrong, members of the association and of the management committee may incur personal liability. This usually makes the structure inappropriate for important functions such as employing staff
- Difficulties in obtaining funding – it can be hard, or impossible, for an association to secure finance from some Government and private sources

Trust

A trust is an arrangement whereby a number of people, known as ‘trustees’, are appointed under a legal document known as a deed of trust, normally for the purpose of holding funds or property on behalf of another person or persons..

Advantages of a trust

- Cost – they are cheap to set up to run
- Low levels of bureaucracy – unlike companies and industrial and provident societies, they do not have to comply with the statutory requirements of Companies Act (2014) or the Industrial Provident Acts (1893 and 2014)

Disadvantages of a trust

- Personal liability – if anything goes wrong, trustees may incur personal liability
- Lack of accountability – trustees are not accountable to anyone else in the organisations for their actions

Company Limited by Guarantee

A company limited by guarantee is the most common type of incorporated body used by groups in the voluntary and community sector. The organisation's 'Memorandum' and 'Articles of Association' are the legal documents which set out what the company can do and the rules for its operation; collectively, these documents are referred to as the company's 'constitution'. The most recent legislation governing the structures and operation of companies is the Companies Act 2014.

Advantages of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

- Corporate identity – the company is a legal entity, or 'person' capable of owning property, or taking or defending actions in court. This makes tasks like employing staff, renting property or accepting funding much more straightforward than for an unincorporated body

Disadvantages of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

- Cost – the cost of setting up a company is higher than the cost of setting up an unincorporated body
- Bureaucracy – companies must comply with the statutory requirements of the Companies Act 2014 which sets out detailed rules for the

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A community project can offer an open way for people to contribute

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

Continued on Page 30

NOTES

Continued from Page 29

Advantages of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

- **Limited liability** – as a separate legal entity, the company's debts and contracts belong to the company itself and not to its members. A member or officer of a company is not personally liable if the company is sued or owes money (unless they are personally guilty of some form of misconduct)
- **Involvement of members** – the company is a democratic structure where members have ultimate control over those managing the company. Directors are answerable to the members for the conduct of the company's affairs and are capable of being removed from office by a resolution of the company.
- **Continuity** – until it is wound up, a company has 'perpetual succession', i.e. it continues to exist, even though its members may change, die or cease to be involved in the activities of the company

Disadvantages of a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

administration of a company. The need to comply with company law could be a burdensome responsibility on members of a voluntary management committee

Industrial and Provident Society

First established in the 19th century, Industrial and Provident Societies were originally set up to meet the needs of the co-operative movement. They are organisations that are owned by the members for their own benefit. The 1893 Act which gave these bodies legal form provides for a society to be registered to engage in any industry, business or trade authorised by its rules. Registration under the Act renders a society a 'body corporate' with limited liability. In Ireland, Industrial and Provident Societies are often referred to as 'co-operatives' and the biggest and best-known are in the agriculture and food areas. A

general lack of awareness of the potential of the Industrial and Provident Society structure (Forfas, 2007) has probably contributed to the relatively low numbers of community groups which have adopted it.

Advantages of an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS)

- Incorporation – an IPS is an incorporated body with the same advantages as the company structure mentioned above, i.e. corporate identity, limited liability, continuity and involvement of members
- Distribution – allows distribution of a proportion of financial surplus to members.
- Affinity – Research has indicated that communities, particularly rural ones, tend to trust industrial Provident Societies (Doyle 2017)

Disadvantages of an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS)

- Limiting legislation – the legislation has been insufficiently updated since the 19th century, and can limit the adoption of the structure. For example, seven members are needed to form an IPS, while companies can be formed with as few as one or three
- Cost and bureaucracy – these are similar to those associated with companies limited by guarantee; in addition, returns to the Registrar currently cannot be made on-line
- Ideological bias – Research indicates that some policy-makers and state agency officials can be biased against IPS's (Doyle 2019)

REGISTERING AS A CHARITY

In addition to selecting a legal structure, a community organisation may wish to consider registering as a charity. Before considering the advantages of doing this, it must be noted that *“[a]ny organisation which is a charity, refers to itself as a charity or creates the impression in the public mind that it is a charity, is legally required to be registered”* with the Charities Regulator .

There are two practical benefits to being registered as a charity in the Republic of Ireland.

Continued on Page 32

— “ —
**A lot of the activities and events are
 a pretext for people to meet**
 Joint Meeting

— ” —

NOTES

Continued from Page 31

1. A registered charity can apply for a 'Charitable Tax Exemption' from the Revenue Commissioners, and so may be exempt from paying certain taxes, such as corporation tax and income tax
(*Revenue 2017*)
2. Fund-raising opportunities are enhanced, because members of the public are often more inclined to donate to organisations which are officially recognised as charities, donors to the organisation who give more than €200 in any one year are entitled to tax relief on their donations, and some sources of private funding are only available to registered charities

In addition, registration as a charity may bring increased credibility among the community at large and with other organisations.

A group can register as a charity without being a company or an IPS, but it will need to satisfy the Charities Regulator that its structures and procedures meet certain requirements . As well as the benefits listed above, registration as a charity brings particular responsibilities to the “trustees” of the organisation. The trustees are “the people who exercise control over and are legally responsible for the management of the

charity”, (*Charities Regulator 2017*) and their identity depends on the organisation’s legal structure: for example, in an association they are the management committee (or equivalent), in a company limited by guarantee they are the directors and other officers of the company, in a trust they are the trustees, and in an industrial and provident society they are the committee of management or the board of directors. The duties of trustees are explained in a publication of the Charities Regulator.

Applications to register as a charity are made through the Charities Regulator (www.charitiesregulatoryauthority.ie/; info@charitiesregulator.ie; 01-6331500).

A group which registers as a charity should consider adopting “The Governance Code”, which is a code of practice for the good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations in the Republic of Ireland, to which organisations may sign up voluntarily.

The checklist could ask group to answer questions like the following, using yes/no answers or rating themselves on a scale of 1 to 5 each time. The questions are intended to promote discussion within the group.

HEALTH CHECK-LIST FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS



- Does your group have 'Communication to and from the community' as an agenda item at every regular meeting? If so, do you spend sufficient/significant time on it at each meeting?
- DATE: _____
- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- RATE (Please tick box)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 wks
- REVIEWED (Please tick box)
- DATE: _____

- Have you a plan for on-going recruitment to the committee/group?
- DATE: _____
- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- RATE (Please tick box)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 wks
- REVIEWED (Please tick box)
- DATE: _____

- Is there a sub-group responsible for implementing the plan and reporting regularly to the committee /group?
- DATE: _____
- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- RATE (Please tick box)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 wks
- REVIEWED (Please tick box)
- DATE: _____

- Do you have rules on the rotation of positions in your group? If so, to what extent do you implement them?
- DATE: _____
- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
- RATE (Please tick box)
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 wks
- REVIEWED (Please tick box)
- DATE: _____

Continued on Page 34

— “ —

If you don't have a project to work on, there's no point in people sitting in the room

Mitchelstown Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

Continued from Page 33

- How often does your group take time to review and reflect on its work overall?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- How often does your group seek the views of the wider community when making important decisions?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- How well do you try to get the views of all groups in your community?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- To what extent do members of the community not on your committee get an opportunity to influence what the indicators of success are for your different initiatives?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- How well will certain groups [to be named by the organisation] who are living in your community be attracted to become members?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- Do you discuss how you would fill the gap if your chairperson left the organisation?

DATE:

1 2 3 4 5

RATE (Please tick box)

4 wks 12 wks 26 wks 52 w

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

- Do you discuss leadership succession issues as a regular part of organisational reviews?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

- Do you have a vice-chair with clear duties?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

- Is there a maximum term of office for the Chair?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

- Do you provide training to equip future post holders for the job?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

- Do you have arrangements for training up staff to deputise for more senior employees?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

- What percentage of your group/committee have joined in the last twelve months?

DATE: _____
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
 RATE (Please tick box)
☐ 4 wks ☐ 12 wks ☐ 26 wks ☐ 52 wks
 REVIEWED (Please tick box)
 DATE: _____

Continued on Page 36

“
 A danger to be aware of in head-hunting
 would be that the Community Council
 could become exclusive
 Mitchelstown Community Council
 ”

NOTES

■ Is membership of your group/committee skewed towards a particular age range? If so, is this because most of your work is aimed at people in that age range, or is it due to something about the recruitment process?

DATE:

12345

RATE (Please tick box)

4 wks12 wks26 wks52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

■ Have you in some way circulated information on who you are and what you do to all or most of the local community once or more than once in the last twelve months?

DATE:

12345

RATE (Please tick box)

4 wks12 wks26 wks52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

■ Is there a forum where you can exchange information and ideas with other groups which are active locally? Do you use this forum once /more than once a year?

DATE:

12345

RATE (Please tick box)

4 wks12 wks26 wks52 wks

REVIEWED (Please tick box)

DATE:

Some of the questions above are taken directly, or derived from;
(Witherden 2012),
(Pontypool: Community Projects Centre 2008).

Organisation's Name

INCLUSION STRATEGY AND POLICY FORCENTRE

INCLUSION STRATEGY AND POLICY EXAMPLE FOR A COMMUNITY FACILITY

D

Statement of Intent

At we actively promote socially inclusive practices in order to best meet the needs of our service users, their families, and the staff at all our facilities. recognises that high quality community facilities such as our Centre contribute to improving quality of life and help to develop a sense of community for all users, regardless of ability, need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances.

Through inclusive practice, we aim to reflect our ethos in the wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and differences in each other. Therefore, we are committed to making these facilities available to local community groups and organisations and members of the public and we will actively engage with them to promote the facility in order to achieve this.

— “ —

We are also prepared to do new things.

We've tried everything.

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

NOTES

The following points, although not exhaustive, will underpin the

..... Centre
Inclusion Policy

- Development of strong partnerships between service users and staff is important in creating a supportive environment where the client's best interests are met. Communication, involving daily interaction and shared decision-making, provides the foundation of strong partnerships
- The physical environment will be a welcoming place for service users, families and staff. The environment will convey the message that everyone is welcome and that difference and diversity are valued
- Getting to know each service user individually is the starting point for programme planning. Each service user comes with their own unique experiences, strengths, skills and needs. When these are identified, individual plans can be designed

**Objectives to promote the Organisation's
Name Centre**

- To have a current and effective Accessibility Plan which shows how, over time, access for service users will be increased
- To create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all users and staff at all times
- To use appropriate informational signage and documentation about the facility and accepted usage, and to ensure written information is available in a format accessible to all
- To use promotional literature and photographs in the local press, social media and through flyers and posters clearly outlining the nature of the facilities and how they can be accessed
- To have regular interaction with local community groups and services such as community councils and other community fora, primary and second level schools, Local Development Companies, the Health Services Executive, and sporting bodies, to source relevant information and programmes which will be beneficial to facility users and encourage new users

PROCEDURES

Admissions and bookings

In order to provide an open and accessible service for groups other than clients, service users and their families, admissions and bookings will accepted on a 'first come, first served' basis in line with terms and conditions outlined on our Facility Booking Form. and the staff of Centre will be made aware of a facility user with additional needs before they use the Centre. Staff will coordinate to plan and implement strategies to achieve the best possible outcomes for the facility user concerned.

Accessibility and flexibility

- An induction process will be carried out for all service users and families new to the facility. This involves registration, information sharing about both the service user and the facility and the exploration of policies and procedures of the service and facility
- Facility Users other than clients and service users of will also be given an overview of facility policies, procedures and terms of acceptable usage

Staffing and Facility Management

- This inclusion policy also forms an important aspect of the recruitment of staff within the facility. Applicants will not be excluded from being considered for a position based specifically on their need, background, culture, religion, gender or economic circumstances (as pertaining to the Equality Act 2004). Positions will be offered based on competency, qualification and enthusiasm for any positions arising
- Upon commencement of employment, staff will be given a period of induction to the service. All staff will be made aware of inclusive practice within our service and its importance
- When possible, staff will attend training pertaining to inclusion, for example behaviour management, equality and diversity, language development or special needs
- Staff will actively discourage stereotyping of gender, culture, background or ability by facilitating non-stereotypical play, and through the use of non-stereotypical resources and images

— “ —
**All she needed was a home for the idea,
 a structure to put it in place**

Mitchelstown Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

Date Adopted:	
At Meeting of:	The Board/Management Committee of
Signed:	<div>.....</div> <div>ChairpersonCEO / Manager</div>
Reviewed:	

Community inclusion and social exclusion

In the Community Inclusion Charter, the three participating groups and Ballyhoura Development affirm their commitment to encouraging the participation of individuals and groups of people who have tended not to take part in community activities and decision-making in the past. Among such groups are the categories of people whom the State has defined as experiencing poverty and social exclusion (see below for definitions) and has made the focus of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP):

DEFINITIONS OF TARGET GROUPS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- disadvantaged children and families
- people living in disadvantaged communities
- disadvantaged young people (aged 15 to 24)
- people with disabilities
- disadvantaged women
- Roma / Travellers
- lone parents
- the disengaged from the labour market (economically inactive)
- low income workers/households
- the unemployed
- new communities

(SICAP, 2017)

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— “ —

**Personal contact with people is
by far the best way to increase
community participation**

Mitchelstown Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

In addition, the experience of the three community groups involved in drawing up this toolkit has shown that there are other groups who tend not to be involved:

- young people in general;
- people living in rural isolation, especially those without their own transport;
- people in or around the 30- to 40-year age range, particularly those who are busy rearing small children

In preparing the toolkit, the participating groups and Ballyhoura Development have been constantly mindful of the need to make special efforts to include all of these groups in activities, and actions specifically relevant to some of them are recommended in Section 3. In order not to single out particular groups, such recommendations are included under the appropriate topic headings, rather than separating them out by category of person. An exception to this approach is found in Section A, where methods of involving young people and people from minority ethnic communities are treated separately; this is because the inclusion of these groups was among three issues which were identified early in the process as being of special relevance locally.

What are 'poverty' and 'social exclusion'?

There are many definitions and understandings of 'poverty' and 'social exclusion'. The Irish Government uses the following definitions:

“Deprivation is defined as unmet basic human needs;

Poverty is deprivation due to a lack of resources, both material and non-material, e.g. income, housing, health, education, knowledge and culture. It requires a threshold to measure it; Social exclusion is being unable to participate in society because of a lack of resources that are normally available to the general population. It can refer to both individuals, and communities in a broader framework, with linked problems such as low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments and family problems” (DESP, 2012)

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE GROUPS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS



KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED

- Plan how to use social media in particular, so that things aren't 'hit and miss'.
- Appoint a 'Communications Officer'
- Use schools' newsletters to publicise the organisation's work
- Group representatives can visit sporting and cultural organisations, e.g. GAA clubs, musical societies, to ask them to pass on information on activities and events to their members
- Group representatives to visit parents at schools and crèches, hand out flyers/newsletters and speak to them
- Hold a 'volunteer night' to showcase what all of the different local organisations do
- Produce a directory of services
- Read the newsletter aloud to young people
- Sometimes people from particular countries or regions tend to work in certain jobs, to socialise in

specific places, to attend certain religious services or to take part in particular leisure activities. So you can try to meet them where they work, socialise, worship or take their leisure, to tell them about your activities and to get their views

- When meeting people from other countries, try to bring information leaflets that target them specifically, preferably written in their own languages
- Visit English language and other adult education classes which people from other countries tend to attend, e.g. run by the Education and Training Boards
- Committee members can approach neighbours from other countries as one way of trying to build up contacts with wider communities from those countries



**There is no substitute
for talking to people**

Mitchelstown Community Council



Continued on Page 44

NOTES

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- Seek support from Ballyhoura Development to translate newsletter content into a number of languages
- Distribute newsletters through Travellers' Groups, to particularly make sure that Travellers receive it.
- Put videos of the activities of the group and organisations using its premises up on Facebook and other social media to show young people what is going on

GETTING PEOPLE'S VIEWS

- Make contact with other organisations operating locally to get their views on issues and, in some cases, to seek the views of people who come into contact with those organisations (e.g. the adults who come to classes run by the Cork Education and Training Board)
- Use a suggestion box to get the views of people who are using the group's premises.
- Group members should spend time talking to individuals to get their views
- Group members could administer surveys using 'Survey Monkey' at public meetings
- Put videos of the activities of the group and organisations using its premises up on Facebook and other social media platforms, in order to show

young people what is going on. Then members of the group should speak to the young people

HELPING PEOPLE TO BE MORE INVOLVED

Promoting attendance at events and activities, and the use of services

- Directly approach people who do not participate in the organisation's activities and do not seem to be aware of its existence, to encourage them to take part in activities and programmes. Meeting people and talking to them is the best way to get them involved
- Consider setting up a 'buddy' system, to get individuals who already participate in activities or use services to encourage and support others to do so too
- Organise a number of events to get people involved in the community, e.g. social events like family days, regular town clean-ups
- A heritage project can offer anyone the chance to get involved, by telling a story. There are such projects nearby, for example the 'Belonging' project, and Ballyhoura Rural Services' 'Reminiscences' befriending project
- When lobbying TDs, Councillors and relevant

State bodies for better services, involve community members through a petition and by seeking letters of support from other local organisations

- To help newcomers to integrate when they come to live in a town or village, produce a 'welcome pack', with information on services available locally and on what is happening in the area, set up a 'welcoming committee' to meet them, and organise for County Council officials to meet new council tenants and give them the welcome pack
- Adopt a systematic approach to involving members of minority ethnic communities
- Seek ideas from Transition Year Co-ordinators in post-primary schools on how to involve young people in activities
- Remember that events which cater for children, teenagers or several generations help to increase overall involvement: parents and grandparents are attracted because they are looking for things for their children to do; in the very long-term, children and teenagers may be more likely to help out in community activities when they are adults, because of their positive experiences of childhood community events

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS IN GENERAL

- Ask people attending future public and town meetings to volunteer for various activities
- With some adult support and advice, a youth club can be run largely by a committee of young people elected by the membership. This could be a good way to get young people involved in a broader committee: it sets up a hierarchy within the youth club, so that some of the young people become used to acting as spokespersons

RENEWING YOUR GROUP

- More community councils could switch from using electoral areas as the constituencies for the election of area representatives to using Stations', because people tend to identify more with the latter
- Some places on community councils could be reserved for groups such as service users and people originally from other countries
- As part of an induction process new members, it would be good to pass on some of the group's history to them, showing them the passion that has gone into the organisation so far, in the hope of increasing the newcomers' enthusiasm

— “ —

While we're good at catering to the mainstream, we often forget that there's small pockets of people out there who maybe aren't being reached

ACM Committee

— ” —

NOTES

[illegible]

Continued from Page 45

- Organise celebratory events with minority ethnic communities, with the intention of gaining representation on your group from those communities
- Identify and make contact with individuals from ethnic minority communities and see if they would be interested in using the group's premises to run activities. Once relationships with those communities are established, seek representation from them on the group or its sub-groups

MAKING USE OF SUB-GROUPS

- If sub-committees are set up to organise certain events or activities, having representatives on them from a range of other organisations should mean that helpers from those other organisations can be drawn on to assist in the actual running of the event or activity
- One possibility would be for any event sub-committee to have one member of the parent group and one from each of a few other organisations. This should lead to the event coming to be seen as belonging to the whole community rather than just the group that initiated it

ACM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY LIMITED.

ACM was founded 20 years ago this year and stands for Ahane, Castleconnell and Montpelier as we want inclusion for all the community in our endeavours.

ACM purchased 2 derelict cottages on Castle Street, Castleconnell at start up and has refurbished and extended several times over the years since. A second, larger premises in the village is currently undergoing re-development to expand the services, due to growing demand.

THE PARTICIPATING GROUPS

ACM is a registered Charity and is also a Co-Operative Society which is an excellent format for community projects.

Directors are elected each year at a public AGM – current directors are: Breda Casey (Chairperson), Mary Kennedy (Vice Chair), Deirdre McMahon (Secretary), John Mac Namara (Treasurer), Mary Golden (Assistant Treasurer), Chris Casey (Maintenance Manager), Phylla Lynch, Eamonn McQuade, Betty Carmody, Mary Ryan, Bernie Murnane, Jennifer Murphy and Ena Walshe. Directors are unpaid volunteers who are happy to help out in their community. In addition to the Board members, ACM employs 7 people and is owned by approx. 500 community shareholders.

— “ —

**It gave people a sense
of ownership**

ACM Committee Members

— ” —



ACM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY LIMITED.

— “ —

**It's given people the freedom to
come and make suggestions**

ACM Committee Members

— ” —

What Does ACM Do?

We provide community services to people from all over our parish - it is a long list but here goes...

- Typing and secretarial services
- Meeting rooms
- Community Childcare (ACM Kidz – Breakfast Club, 2 free Pre-School years and After School)
- Active Social Group (100+ members)
- Evergreens (a monthly night out for singing and storytelling)
- Sewing & Knitting Club (every Monday morning)
- Yoga Classes (every Tuesday night)
- Art Classes (every Wednesday night)
- Cards (every Thursday night)
- Youth Service (3 evenings per week)
- Children's Birthday Parties
- Office facilities for the Community Employment Scheme
- Numerous day and evening courses like healthcare, computer skills, etc
- Guest speakers on topics of interest

In total, between 700 – 800 people use the Community Centre every month so it's a busy place!

ACM is also the founder of the Castleconnell Historical Society, Castleconnell Heritage Centre, the Village Singers and the Drama Group. It also runs several community events including the St. Patrick's Day Parade (circa 1000 attendees), Children's Santa Party (100+ children), Halloween Fright Fest (1500+ visitors) and Heritage Week events.

KILMALLOCK & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Kilmallock & District Community Council currently consists of 15 voluntary members from the local area and is structured into 3 key sub-committees (finance, hall and fundraising). Some of our members have been actively involved with the Community Council for ten years or more.

Our members regularly attend a number of local and county level networking meetings, including Limerick PPN, Ballyhoura Development District Forum, Kilmallock Partnership and Kilmallock Tourism Development. Our committee members have a wide range of experience and work professionally in sectors such as legal, banking, construction, fire services, medical and ICT.

Kilmallock & District Community Council runs the People's Hall in Kilmallock on behalf of its Trustees and this community facility provides an important venue for many clubs and societies in the area. The building, which was constructed in 1916 and is a Protected Structure, is in need of refurbishment and this is a key focus of our work plan through 2018, 2019 and beyond. Our vision is to make the Peoples' Hall a place which promotes physical health and social cohesion and inclusion for all sectors of our community and visitor to the area. It is our intention to provide these facilities to be enjoyed and accessed by the public and cater for basic needs of our community.

Annual events organised by the Community Council include coordinating and running the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and participating in the Irish Walled Towns Network Day. We are actively fundraising and have hosted a number of fun events including a duck race, "25K Fun Cycle", "The Hop", a Family Fun Day and a "5K Family Fun Run". In 2018, we have started Bingo in the hall as a social outlet for local people and a way to generate match funding for building renovation grants.

In 2018 we also engaged with Ballyhoura Development in the piloting of the Community Inclusion Toolkit to help us a group to be more open and representative of the people in our locality so that others might

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KILMALLOCK & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

— “ —
**People are often happier to spend two
 hours doing something like a clean-up
 than to come to a meeting**

Kilmallock and District Community Council

— ” —

NOTES

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follow. In association with other voluntary groups in our community, we also commenced a community socio-economic planning process in the autumn of 2018 and look forward to a plan which the people of Kilmallock can unite behind to improve the quality of life for all.

MITCHELSTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Mitchelstown Community Council was founded in 1986 as the voluntary body elected by the people to represent the interests of the town and the parish of Mitchelstown. We gained charitable and limited company status circa 2004.

Mitchelstown Community Council has been involved in all interaction with local authorities and agencies (e.g. Ballyhoura) in order to make the town more attractive to locals, visitors and industry.

The community council has 19 members and 2 co options. Within that we have subcommittees namely - Playground, Allotment, Defibrillator, Fundraising, Elections, Projects, Tourism and Forrest Hall committees - all the subcommittees submit a brief report at our monthly meeting.

Forrest Hall project - in late 2012 Sean Finn chairman of Mitchelstown Community Council had a vision - tired of looking at a disused building falling into further disrepair in the square of Mitchelstown. Enquiries were made to Cork County Council and after many meetings and negotiations with Cork County Council - a 15 year lease on the building was signed. Planning was approved, loan in place and grants applied for, a local contractor commenced the job in November 2015 and in December 2016 the doors were open for business.

At present we have links with many community organisations - Cork ETB are anchor tenants and the facility is used regularly by a variety of groups for meetings and training days and classes e.g. Ballyhoura, Kilshanna Music Studiio, TUSLA, Lithuanian group, North Cork Travellers, Art Classes, Mitchelstown GAA, Social Hub.



MITCHELSTOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

— “ —
**It's important that the Council
 encourage someone that
 their idea isn't daft**
 Mitchelstown Community Council

— ” —

To work in partnership to develop empowered and inclusive communities that inspire and embrace new opportunities, drive positive sustainable social, environmental and economic change, and reduce inequalities, thereby making the Ballyhoura area an attractive location in which to live, do business, and visit.

Cappamore

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Ballyhoura Development CLG,
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Deebert, Kilmallock, Co.
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T: 025 85213



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— “ —
**It gave people a sense
 of ownership**
 ACM Committee Members
 — ” —

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