

# Meath Laterlife Network Newsletter

## Autumn / Winter 2013

The Laterlife Network Committee is looking forward to a busy Autumn and Winter schedule of meetings and events around the county.

Committee members have been working on your behalf attending meetings of the Age Friendly Regional Alliance in Dundalk and we have decided to strengthen the links between older people's groups across Meath, Louth, Cavan and Monaghan through regular meetings of the chairpersons of the individual forums and networks.

With plans in place for Trim to become Meath's first Age Friendly Town we'll be ensuring that your voice is heard as this exciting new development in the County rolls out. Our two representatives from the Trim Electoral area will sit on the Steering Group which oversees implementation of the plan.

We've also been working hard to highlight the issues that you have been raising at meetings and bringing them to the table at meetings of the Age Friendly Alliance where your views and opinions are heard.

The Network's AGM will be held on the 21st November in the Ardboyne Hotel from 11am to 1pm. It's open to everyone over the age of 55 living in Meath, but places are limited. If you would like to attend, please get in touch with Kay O'Connor on 046 9280790.

*Mary Calt,  
Chairperson, Later Life Network*

*Working together to make County Meath  
a great place in which to grow old!*



## Laterlife Network Executive Committee



*Pictured at a recent meeting in the Newgrange Hotel, Navan are some of the members of the Laterlife Network Executive Committee who represent the different electoral areas in County Meath. Left to right: Richard Lee, (Navan); Jim Matthews (Slane); Sue Russell (Facilitator); Marie Cassidy & Mairead McGrath (Kells); Lucy Flynn Grillet (Nursing Homes); Rosario Wall (Slane); Sean Quinn (Trim); Mary Calt (Chairperson, Navan)*

## Spotlight on Community Section, Meath County Council

**The Age-Friendly Alliance is made up of a number of organisations all working together to make Meath a great place in which to grow old. In each edition of this Newsletter we will take a closer look at some of these organisations - starting this time with the Community Section of Meath County Council.**

As part of the Age-Friendly County Strategy, the Laterlife Network works very closely with the Community Section of Meath County Council which develops and promotes a wide range of programmes and services empowering people to participate in and build confident sustainable communities.

They have responsibility for:

- Meath County Development Board
- Community & Enterprise Development
- Pride of Place Initiatives
- Community Grants Scheme for community, recreation, leisure and amenity facilities

Under the banner of 'Community Development' some of the initiatives they are responsible for include:

**The Community & Voluntary Forum** which gives a voice to people working in their local communities. Recently they have worked with the County Library Service to provide Community Groups with Portable PA systems, speaker stands, showboards and folding display stands which can be used for public meetings. There are now Area Fora in the five divisional areas of Meath.

**The Social Inclusion Measures Group** operates as a networking and information sharing forum for interagency and local development groups in the County.

**The Social Inclusion Unit** coordinates events organised during Social Inclusion Week normally held in October. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government has again funded the provision of Smoke Alarms for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and ordinary Smoke Alarms which are circulated to vulnerable households, mostly through Community Alert Committees.

**Meath Traveller Employment Initiative** provides one to one support to members of Travelling Community to assist them to achieve employment.

**Cultur** works with migrants across the county with funding from the Department of Justice & Equality - Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration.

**Pride of Place Initiatives** involve over 200 projects among community and voluntary groups and schools with town and village enhancement schemes, provision and maintenance of recreational spaces, biodiversity projects, recycling and recovery schemes, sustainable planting, community composting and the development in many schools of sustainable gardens with food production by primary school children. Communities are also encouraged to be involved in county wide Co-operation Ireland Awards.

If you would like to know more about this important section of your County Council, contact Assumpta Kelly, Meath County Council (046) 90970000.

## Trim - 'age friendly' Town

Trim has been selected to be Meath's first Age Friendly Town and steps are already underway to make this a reality with the appointment of Seamus Furlong from the Ageing Well Network. Seamus is a planner who will facilitate the process which is led by Meath County Council exploring issues under eight key themes as set out by the World Health Organisation.

Becoming 'age friendly' benefits people of all ages. Accessible buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of both younger and older people with disabilities. The whole community benefits from the participation of older people in volunteering or paid work and activities. By working together to make our towns, villages and counties age friendly, we can address the needs of not just older citizens but of all age groups.

A Steering Committee has been formed and their inaugural meeting was held in September in Trim Town Council Offices. The Committee consists of representatives from local stakeholders including the Town Council, Gardai, HSE, Family Resource Centre, Library Services, Active Retirement Group, Age Action and other local voluntary organizations as well as two members from the Laterlife Network Executive Committee.



Trim - Meath's first Age Friendly Town. Photo: Jared Fein

The second stage involved undertaking a Walkability Audit within the town by older members of the community and the Steering Committee. The audit aimed to highlight daily issues facing older people within the built environment and public realm of the town. The findings will form the basis of an action plan for the town which shall set out key objectives in order to make Trim a great Town to grow up and grow older in. It will make a big difference to how the town plans for its current and future older generations. Further information from Assumpta Kelly, Community Department, Meath County Council – 046 9097400

## Visiting Age Friendly Ardee



Photo : [www.loutholidays.com](http://www.loutholidays.com)

Mary Calt, Chairperson of Meath Laterlife Network recently met up with some of our regional counterparts in Ardee - a town in which a number of very welcome changes have been made to make it 'age friendly'.

Following a presentation by Ann Ward, Chair of Louth Older Peoples Forum on the work of the Forum, Engineer Sean Reilly addressed

the meeting and reported on the changes which had taken place in order to make the town more age friendly for both young and old.

The group were then taken on a walkabout of the town and saw the newly lit pedestrian crossing at the Church and a further 5 crossings on the main street where

footpath levels have been adjusted for ease of buggies, wheelchairs, etc.

Special barriers have been created at junctions so that users are corralled into using the intended crossings and seating is provided along the pavements. A children's playground is also located close to an adult physical exercise equipment area.

## Crime Prevention Ambassadors

Training of 21 Volunteers to act as Crime Prevention Ambassadors in the Meath Area is now underway and once Garda vetting has taken place the volunteers will be making visits to isolated older people.

The aim of this new scheme is to assist the Gardai in tackling crime against older people and to address any fears about crime and security that people may have.

To find out more contact Assumpta Kelly at Meath County Council on (046) 90970000.

# Cultural Companions

Staying active, getting out and about and keeping in touch with friends and community are all essential parts of good health and well-being at any age. So we were delighted to come across a new initiative in Meath based at the Solstice Arts Centre which aims to increase participation of over 55s in the arts.

Many of us would probably go to a lot more plays, films, shows, concerts, exhibitions, or other events if we had someone to go with. There's a thriving social and arts scene out there to be enjoyed if only we had someone with the know-how, the transport or the shared interest to get us going. That's where Cultural Companions comes in.

Cultural Companions is creating local networks of people interested in arts and culture that will accompany each other to events – like minded people that meet up regularly to go out together either with one other person or as part of a small group. Its aim is to provide increased opportunities for older people to engage with Ireland's vibrant cultural and arts scene.

## How it works...

When it comes to Cultural Companions, the emphasis is on peer support, independence and choice. Members can use the network at two different levels, depending on your needs at a particular point in time:

- Be part of the larger network by attending regular, organised Cultural Companions events (weekly)
- Network independently, using the Membership Directory

## Become a Member

If you would like to join, contact Emma Loughney at the Solstice Arts Centre on 046 9092300 or email her at [emma@solsticeartscentre.ie](mailto:emma@solsticeartscentre.ie).



*Cultural Companions at a recent 'Meet & Greet' at the Solstice Arts Centre, Navan. Photo: Alan Russell, Navan*



## Become a Cultural Companions Champion

Cultural Companions is a Bealtaine Festival initiative, developed by Age & Opportunity. With a strong network established in Dublin, Meath is the second county to develop such an initiative. The vision is for local champions to take the concept and develop the model. So if you would like to see Cultural Companions thrive in your area then please get in touch.

For more information contact: **Emma on 046 9092300 or [emma@solsticeartscentre.ie](mailto:emma@solsticeartscentre.ie)**

*"It's been great being part of something like Cultural Companions. I can't believe it hasn't been done before... For me, it's just great now knowing what's going on from month to month. When I think of all the shows that I've missed over the years because I didn't know they were on. I've met some really nice people over the past few months and there is a small group of us who now phone each other all the time and go to various shows together or even meet up for a coffee sometimes. What I wanted to get from Cultural Companions was to meet new people and get out more. It's that simple for me."*

Marie Ryan,  
Cultural Companions member



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