

# Meath Laterlife Network Newsletter

## Spring 2014

The Age Friendly County initiative has progressed significantly since it was launched in September, 2011. It seeks to engage older people and all citizens in making their communities better, healthier and safer places for older people to live and thrive. As part of that Initiative the Age Friendly Alliance was formed. This Alliance is composed of agencies and organisations with responsibility and expertise to improve the quality of life of older people. In this issue of the Laterlife Newsletter we bring you an update on progress to date on the task of making Meath age-friendly.

We're also delighted to be announcing a new training programme 'Get Engaged!'. These courses aim to give older people the skills to be active citizens and leaders in their community and are due to start in April.

Also in this issue is a report on our visit to the Netwell Centre and the Great Northern Haven in Dundalk where we saw for ourselves how advances in technology can be used to help older people live safely in their own homes for much longer.

There are a range of events on for Meath Positive Mental Health Week - so get your diaries out and see what's happening near you.

We would like to meet as many of you as possible so if your group would like a speaker from the Laterlife Network to attend a meeting, 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!*



# Making Meath Age Friendly

The Age Friendly Alliance launched the Meath Age Friendly Strategy in 2011. This document covers 8 specific themes to benefit older people. The Strategy identifies actions to create a framework to plan and complete works required. As part of this on-going work, three Working Groups have been established to work on specific areas of the plan:

## Transportation Working Group

Meath Rural Transport Programme (Flexibus) are the lead Agency on this Group. With the assistance of NUI Maynooth a survey of transport needs has been carried out. The IT Department of Meath County Council is completing the mapping of all transport services within Meath. The information gathered will assist decision makers in all Agencies with future planning of transport services for the County.

## Housing & Security Working Group (Crime Prevention Ambassadors Programme)

Twenty two older volunteers (who have been Garda vetted) have received training by An Garda Síochána. This Pilot scheme in Meath, progressed across the County with visits to older people by the Ambassadors, sharing information on how to keep safe in the home and to provide support and friendship. This Pilot programme was also being rolled out in Cavan and Monaghan and is supported by An Garda Síochána's Older People Strategy. Due to the success of the Programme, An Garda Síochána are now considering rolling the Programme out nationally.

## Communication & Information Working Group

A national website for Age Friendly Counties is being developed where all Agencies will share local and national information. Meath Age Friendly Alliance Members will feed information to the website and it is hoped work will commence on the website in the coming weeks.

In addition to these working groups Meath County Councils Economic Development Unit are working with the Kells Chamber of Commerce on the **Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme**. Businesses are receiving training on the Terms of Reference to progress to receiving the Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme.

Planning for Trim, Meath's first Age Friendly town is well underway and you'll find more information on



*Des Foley, Trim Town & Area Manager, Fiona Skehan, Trim Town Clerk, Councillor Gerry Reilly, Leas Cathaoirleach, Trim Town Council, Michael Finnegan, Chair, Meath Age Friendly Alliance and Seamus Furlong, Regional Planner, Age Friendly Initiative.*

## Members of the Age Friendly Alliance

- Michael Finnegan, Chairperson
- Jackie Maguire, County Manager
- Kevin Stewart, Director of Service, Meath County Council
- Councillor John Farrelly, An Cathaoirleach
- Mary O'Hare, Area Co-Ordinator, Services for Older People, HSE NE
- Michael Ludlow, CEO, Meath Partnership
- John Byrne, Director, Mid East Regional Authority
- Hugh O'Connor, Ageing Well Network
- Aine Brady, CEO, Third Age Foundation
- Dr. Philip Nolan, President, NUI Maynooth
- Miriam McKenna, Manager, Flexibus
- Aiden Glacken, Chief Superintendent, An Garda Síochána
- Rodd Bond, Director, Netwell Centre, Dundalk
- Mary Calt, Chairperson, Meath Laterlife Network

## Dates for Your Diary:

### Meath Positive Mental Health Week

**SafeTALK Training;** Suicide Alertness training; Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April; 10am-1pm; Stamullen GAA Centre

**'Positive Living' Workshop;** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April; 10am-12.30pm; Trim Parish Centre

**'The Science of Survivors' Seminar** with leading psychologist Shane Martin; Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April; 10am-12.30p.m; The Newgrange Hotel, Navan

**'How to Manage Stress' Workshop;** Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April; 10am- 12.30pm; Dunshaughlin Community Centre

**All County 5k Fun Run/Walk;** Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April, Navan  
Contact Kay from Meath Partnership on 046 9280 790 extension 206 for more information or to book your place.

# The Netwell Centre - an age-friendly world leader

The Netwell Centre in Dundalk develops new ideas that enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people and those who care for them. It is based in the Dundalk Institute of Technology and was recently named as a leading age-friendly example for the world to follow by the World Health Organisation. The Executive Committee of the Laterlife Network decided to go on a 'study trip' to see for themselves some of the cutting edge research and developments that are taking place just over the border.

Rodd Bond, Director of the Netwell Centre, gave a fascinating presentation on the work of the Centre much of which revolves around the idea of 'ageing in place' by integrating community oriented services, creating sustainable homes and using more age-friendly technologies. Their ultimate aim is to make it possible for older people to live at home and in the heart of their own communities, to stay active, productive and engaged in society and to enjoy a higher quality of life for longer.

But the Netwell Centre is not just about laboratory research behind closed doors. They are tackling real problems that older people face every day. Take for instance the issue of trying to find your way through the maze of different services offered by the various local authorities, health services and voluntary organisations. It can often be confusing and difficult to find what you need, when you need it.

Through their 'Nestling Project' and working with Louth County Council and the HSE and discussing the problems directly with older people, they have introduced the idea of the 'Cúltaca' – an Irish word meaning 'backup'. The Cúltaca acts as a liaison between the services and the older person thereby ensuring that the wants and needs of the older people take priority over standard service delivery.

We also took the opportunity to visit the Great Northern Haven – 16 apartments specially built to enhance the quality of life of older people. Equipped with all the latest technology – each apartment has over 100 sensors, touch screens to operate heating, lighting, windows and specially connected TVs. They are located in the heart of the town close to all amenities, allowing the residents to keep in touch and feel part of their community. The information gathered is being used to improve the design of housing which will enable all of us to live safely and in our own homes in the future.

There is plenty more information about the Netwell Centre or CASALA (Centre for Affective Solutions for Ambient Living Awareness) on their website: [www.netwellcentre.org](http://www.netwellcentre.org), or you can call them on (042) 9370497

*'Our recent visit to the Netwell Centre and to the CASALA 'smart aware apartments' at the Great Northern Haven was very informative. The whole complex is well constructed with all of the items that an older person might require within easy reach. The technical expertise on show was to be complemented with all of the systems being easily manipulated to suit the various needs of their clients.*

*Where I see the potential of the centre is in the knowledge and experience being gained in their ongoing research and the application of this in a person's own home. The idea of monitoring the habits of when somebody gets up in the morning or goes to bed and initiating an alert if there is deviation from the pattern has enormous potential in allowing people to live longer in their own homes.'*

Jim Matthews,  
Laterlife Network



Top Left: A lively discussion at the Netwell Centre; Above right: Carl Flynn from Casala showing us around the Great Northern Haven; Above: Executive Committee Members at the Netwell Centre.

# Get Engaged!

Get Engaged! is the title of a new series of training programmes being introduced in County Meath by Age & Opportunity, Meath County Council and Meath Partnership. The plan is to deliver training that builds capacity in active citizenship and leadership skills as well as training on ageing issues to Local Authority staff and service providers.

'We want to increase the numbers of older people in County Meath who have the skills to play leadership roles in their communities through the Laterlife Network and other local structures'.

Helen Campbell,  
Director of Education &  
Training  
Age & Opportunity.

Initially three levels of training are available:

**Level 1: Civic Engagement:** Training at this level will focus on personal development where you will explore the changes you are experiencing at a personal level, look at what is available to support you in your community as you age, build an acknowledgment of control within your own life and develop assertiveness.

**Level 2: The Community Effect:** You will build a vision of the future of your communities, develop your skills and understanding of team-working, collective action and social analysis and responding to change.

**Level 3: Leading Together:** You will learn to work in different types of teams, explore styles and methods of leadership, learn to plan projects and monitor progress.

The training courses will begin in April and are open to anyone over the age of 55 living in County Meath. However places are limited so if you would like more information contact Kay O'Connor, Meath Partnership on 046 928 0790

## Contact Details:

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*Getting engaged and involved at Meath Laterlife Network events!*

## Trim Town Plan

The Steering Committee for Trim Age Friendly town recently reviewed the Plan for making the town more age-friendly. It includes the physical environment as well as transport, security, social inclusion, employment and civic participation. It sets out short, medium and long term objectives as well as identifying the key organisations who will need to be involved in implementing the Plan. The Plan is based on consultation with older people in the town as well as on internationally recognised standards for Age Friendly Towns and Cities. Some elements of the plan include:

**Physical environment:** make the town more pedestrian friendly for all users, make the Post Office more accessible and to increase the provision of seating throughout.

**Transport:** Pilot a reduced taxi rate for those with free travel pass, trial a town bus service, promote a neighbourly car scheme.

**Information:** Introduce an 'over 65s' day at the Citizens Information Centre,

**Community Support & Health:** Identify issues faced by older people on a daily basis, provide simple key information on health options for older people

**Social Participation:** More opportunities for interaction between different generations

