



Louth Volunteer Centre

Annual Report 2021



**Louth
Volunteer Centre**
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Lú

Company Number: 404719

Charity Number: 17034

Charities Regulator Number: 20062644

Registered Office

Bolton Street
Drogheda
Co. Louth
A92 DKRO

About Us

This report outlines the work and highlights the achievements of Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) in 2021. Louth Volunteer Centre was initially established as Drogheda Volunteer Centre by Drogheda Community Forum in 2003 through funding received through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. We registered as a company limited by guarantee with a Board of Directors in 2005, in the same year the organisation was officially launched by President Mary McAleese.

Louth Volunteer Centre is one of 29 Volunteer Centres nationwide and is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland. As per our constitution the principle activity of the company is to promote the benefits of volunteering to the inhabitants of Louth and the surrounding area by association with statutory and voluntary authorities in a common aim to advance education and provide facilities in the interest of Social Welfare and other charitable purposes of benefit to the Community of Louth and its surrounding areas; and to provide support, training and advice which enhances the effectiveness of organisations involving volunteers to promote charitable activities on behalf of the Community of Louth and its environs.

To that end we offer support and guidance to individuals and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to reach their individual and collective goals while making a significant contribution to their local community and society; and advocate on behalf of volunteers and volunteering in County Louth at local and national level.

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Laurence Street
Drogheda
Co. Louth
A92 E921

Auditor

McEvoy Craig
10 Dublin Road
Drogheda
Co. Louth
A92 K6FA

OUR VISION

“

*Our community is enriched by
the benefits of volunteering*

”



OUR PURPOSE

“

*We advance the practice,
processes and benefits of
volunteering*

”



OUR VALUES

- We foster the inherent connectivity of volunteering
- We celebrate volunteering
- We value volunteering
- We value diversity
- We value partnership
- We value our people

THROUGH OUR WORK

- Volunteering is enriching
- Volunteering is valued
- Volunteering is celebrated
- Volunteering is diverse
- Volunteering creates connections

Our People

Louth Volunteer Centre has a core staff team of 2 full time and 1 part time staff member, funded through the Department of Rural & Community Development's grant to Strengthen and Support Volunteering.

In 2021 two part time staff were employed on specific purpose contracts associated with project delivery relating to the Good Relations Initiatives funded by PEACE IV.

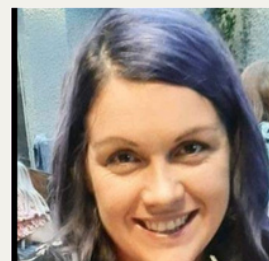
This staff team is strengthened by the support of a team of volunteers and interns.

In addition to those pictured to the right:

Charlene Mathieson
Fergal Purcell
Seán Reilly
Lorraine Duff
Kevin Meenan



Grainne Berrill



Kayleigh Mulligan



Karen Donlon



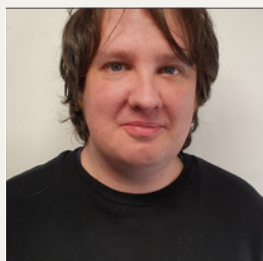
Tracy Rooney



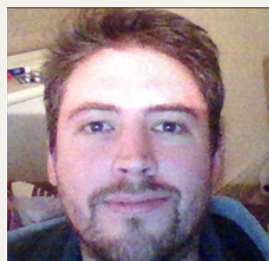
Marisa McHugh



Aleksander Matriciekz



Enda McBride



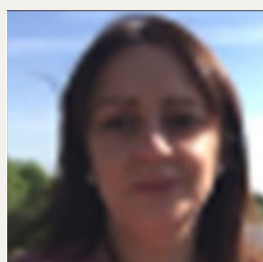
Eamonn McDermott



Stephen Culligan



Robin Barnes



Mairead Hearty

Our Thanks

We would like to thank the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) for their continued support of Louth Volunteer Centre and their investment in volunteering and volunteerism in Ireland.

Our thanks also to Louth County Council, Louth Local Community Development Committee and Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) for awarding us with the contract to deliver the PEACE IV funded Good Relations Initiative in late 2019 and which we have been delivering throughout 2020 & 2021.

We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals whose support and / or time has contributed to our success in 2021:

Louth Public Participation Network

Louth Leader Partnership

Louth County Libraries

Carmichael Ireland

Volunteer Ireland

Our colleagues in the Volunteer Centre Network

Rural Health Partnership

Connect Family Resource Centre

New Leaf Project, Dee Hub

Boomerang Youth Café

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the following media outlets for their consistent support of our work throughout 2021:

Dundalk FM

Drogheda Life

Dundalk Leader

LMFM

The Drogheda Independent

We would also like to thank the following media outlets for their coverage of our activities in 2021:

Drogheda Leader

Dundalk Democrat

Mid Louth Independent

The Argus

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) has had yet another excellent year against a backdrop of pandemics, rising case numbers and a difficult economic landscape. As a board we are grateful for the exceptional work of the staff and volunteers over the course of a difficult year. The achievements of 2021 can be credited to not only an innovative approach to our working approach but the passion and commitment of the team. The year began with the introduction of a period of level 5 restrictions announced for the first three months, which naturally impacted on LVCs ability to deliver a workplan in very uncertain times. As a result of this, LVC planned for a year of 'two halves', with most of the activity in the first half of the year taking place in an online environment with some return to traditional activity in the second half of the year.

While the start of 2021 certainly proved challenging, LVC strived to develop new and innovative ways of working, using experience from 2020 to enhance our practices while allowing us to identify emergent opportunities within an ever-changing volunteer landscape both locally and nationally. LVC has proven to be agile and responsive during this period while also delivering on its core objectives and aims. Several key strategic and operational achievements were delivered in 2021 and the team are to be commended for their commitment to these priorities.



The County Louth Volunteering Framework, the first of it's kind in Ireland, was led by LVC and launched by Minister of State with responsibility for Charities, Joe O'Brien on behalf of the Louth Community Development Committee in May.

Our Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was completed and presented at our AGM in June. The external environment has changed considerably since the development of our last strategic plan, not least in the context of the COVID crisis. The volunteering environment has also been significantly altered and this document was developed with an awareness of reference to the National Volunteering Strategy 2020-2025 and the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020-2023. This strategy shaped our work greatly in 2021 and it has been embedded into our planning and reporting frameworks.

Another key achievement for 2021 was the successful conclusion of the Good Relations Initiative. This was by far the most ambitious project undertaken by LVC to date.

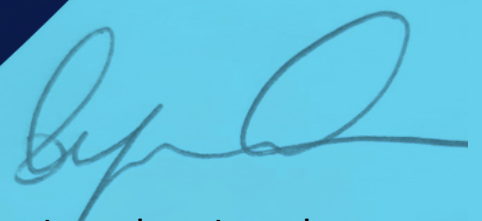
The project successfully concluded in December 2021, following several re-structures and extensions due to the pandemic however the team should be commended for their astounding ability to adapt and complete this project against a backdrop of a pandemic which by its nature fundamentally affected the smooth running of the project.

Due to the variable nature of the year a number of planned deliverables were not achieved in 2021, namely the production of a Communication Strategy and a Funding Strategy to complement the strategic plan. The aim is to complete these strategies over the course of 2022 by the board. While it was thought that 2021 would see a return to volunteering, particularly in the second half of the year, the reality was that volunteer involving organisations and volunteers were slow to return to volunteer engagement. This is a trend that is repeated throughout the country as many organisations struggle to reengage volunteers for a multitude of reasons. However, it might be noted that in late 2021, we did see an improvement and we look forward to working on strengthening the return to volunteering in 2022.

Looking forward, LVC is set to enter a period of transition in 2022 as our manager of 6 years takes a career break to coordinate a vital governmental project on behalf of Louth Meath Education & Training board which is expected to have a significant positive impact for the people of Drogheda. We as a board are happy to support the LVC manager in this endeavour and we are fully committed to assisting a newly appointed replacement manager and their team during this period of change.

The adoption of a new board succession policy to strengthen the board of LVC was also a positive development for future-proofing our governance. There are indications of major changes in board membership in the first half of the year, recruitment of new members as well as the end of the Chair's term, and this, coupled with the change in staffing will need to be managed carefully to ensure successful delivery of strategic objectives in 2022 and into the future.

As a board we are delighted with the overall performance of LVC in 2021. Notwithstanding the strategic achievements of the year, we continue to excel at our day to day service delivery, generally working above target and going the extra mile for our service users. I would like to thank the board, staff and volunteers, past and present for their commitment, contribution and continued support to the centre's work.



Jonathan Lynch,
Louth Volunteer Centre Chairperson

2021 Key Figures

Volunteers


4,814 Volunteers
Registered in Louth


28% not originally
from Ireland


28% under 22 years

↓ 
557 New Volunteers

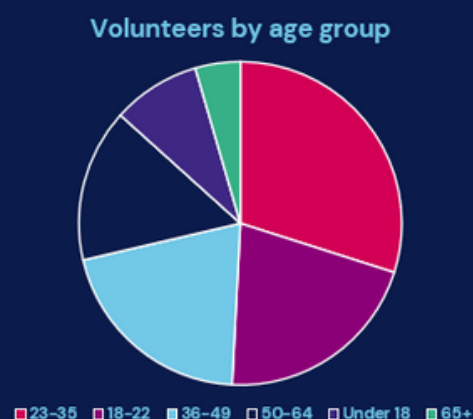
↓ 
414 Volunteer
Placements

↓ 
19 Volunteer
Outreach Sessions

↓ 
1017 total volunteers
engaged

↓ 
16,360 Volunteer
hours

€ 
€409,000 Value to
the local community



Volunteer Involving Organisations

→ 
6 VIO Learning
Events

↑ 
278 Volunteer
Roles Published

↑ 
40 VIO Needs
Assessments

↑ 
32 Garda Vetting
Officers Trained over
4 sessions

Communications

↑ 
287 calls to VIOs

↓ 
6 VIO Newsletters

↓ 
22 Mass SMS to
volunteers

→ 
12 Volunteer
Newsletters

↑ 
4,167 Calls to
Volunteers



Increase from 2020



Decrease from 2020



No change from 2020

Impact Report

The impact on volunteering from the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen in our key volunteer figures. While our communications with volunteers increase, the return to volunteering has been slow and this is reflected in reductions in not only the new volunteers registering on I-VOL but the overall numbers of volunteer placements and hours being recorded.

Several key strategic and operational achievements were delivered in 2021 and the team are to be commended for their commitment to the delivery of these priorities. The County Louth Volunteering Framework, the first of its kind in Ireland, was led by Louth Volunteer Centre and launched by Minister of State with responsibility for Charities, Joe O'Brien on behalf of the Louth Community Development Committee in May. Louth Volunteer Centre will continue to work on the delivery of the County Louth Volunteering Framework as a member of the secretariat for the implementation group for the strategy. Work on formation of the implementation group will commence in 2022.

Our Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was completed and presented at our AGM in June.

Our PEACE IV funded Good Relations Initiative came to a very successful conclusion in December 2021, despite many extensions and reprofiles due to the ongoing pandemic.

Finally, while we achieved compliance with the Charities Governance Code in 2020, this was fully evidenced and submitted to the Charities Regulatory Authority in 2021, marking a significant milestone in our Good Governance Journey.

2021 Key Achievements

- Launch of Louth Volunteer Centre Strategic Plan
- Launch of County Louth Volunteering Framework
- Peace IV Good Relations Initiative completion
- Charities Governance Code evidenced

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1 PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

We will promote, advocate for, and showcase the benefits of volunteering for the volunteer, those organising the volunteers, the recipients of voluntary activity and society as a whole

2 ADVANCE LOUTH VOLUNTEER CENTRE AS A FACILITATOR OF VOLUNTEERING

We will promote Louth Volunteer Centre as an access point, advocate for and facilitator of volunteering to the public, statutory agencies, local government, the business sector, community & voluntary sector and any other stakeholders.

3 INCREASE QUALITY IN VOLUNTEERING

We will facilitate, support and develop best practice in the volunteering environment so that volunteers will have a positive experience of and re-engage with volunteering and our community will be enriched by the benefits of volunteering.

4 ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY IN AND ACCESS TO VOLUNTEERING

We will support increased participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovations; advocating on behalf of a broad spectrum of our community and engaging with diverse populations to empower those who wish to volunteer to have the opportunity to do so.

5 STRENGTHEN OUR COMPETENCE, CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

We commit to the development of our people and organisation; governance best practice; strategic decision making and financial stability so that Louth Volunteer Centre's capacity to serve our purpose within our community is sustained long term.

Strategic Objective One

Promote Awareness of the Benefits of Volunteering

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective One:

- We inspire, motivate and stimulate interest in volunteering
- Volunteers are aware of the benefits of volunteering and make informed decisions on their volunteering journey
- Volunteering is recognised as a practical and powerful mechanism to support the delivery of community objectives

We entered 2021 with an awareness that the changed volunteering landscape would make this strategic objective difficult to achieve. Louth Volunteer Centre typically have a lot of outreach activity, being present in the community to stimulate interest in volunteering so with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and a full scale lockdown in January we had to once again adapt our service.

Outreach Activity

Despite long spells of public health measures meaning that our team could not have the same level of outreach into the community in Louth, we delivered 19 outreach events, such as this Work Matters at the Library event that was held via Zoom.

Louth Volunteer Centre host seminar for Heritage Week



By Reporter

11 Aug 2021

SHARE

volunteering
Work Matters at the Library
(/register)

National Heritage Week takes place this year from the 14th to the 22nd August and is about getting as many people as possible to enjoy our local heritage.

To mitigate the impact of the lack of face to face activity again in 2021, we also began running monthly online sessions with volunteers called Exploring Volunteering. The sessions were aimed at new and returning volunteers and covered learning such as the wellbeing and professional benefits of volunteering, how to access volunteer roles and an overview of currently available roles.

- 34% of attendees were not already registered with Louth Volunteer Centre and 53% of attendees had never volunteered before.
- 100% of attendees felt that the sessions were useful to attend.

Volunteering – a Stepping Stone to Employment

- Volunteering is good for you and good for our community.
- However, did you know it can also boost your job prospects?
- Find out more at this online workshop delivered by the Louth Volunteer Centre team as part of the WorkMatters at the Library series

Wednesday 23rd June

11.00 – 12.00

Bookings through

libraryhelpdesk@louthcoco.ie



Strategic Objective One

Promote Awareness of the Benefits of Volunteering

National Volunteering Week

National Volunteering Week 2021 took place remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time. Despite this, Louth Volunteer Centre ran a number of successful events.

The theme for National Volunteering Week was "Small Actions, Big Impact" and aimed to highlight the simple acts of volunteering that can be done to create impact. A full schedule of wellbeing events were held across Ireland that could be accessed by volunteers.

Here in Louth we ran a series of events including:

- Volunteer Leader's Network
- Corporate Volunteering Session with Wuxi Biologics
- Fundamentals of Volunteer Engagement Training
- Garda Vetting Training
- Official Launch of the Louth Volunteering Framework
- Exploring Volunteering Session
- Online Volunteering Stories series



Our work in promoting the benefits of volunteering would not be possible without the support of our local media outlets in Co. Louth. We continued our monthly volunteering slot on Dundalk FM in 2021 as well as having a number of interviews with LMFM. We are grateful for this support, as well as the coverage we have been able to secure in our local print and online newspapers.



Strategic Objective One

Promote Awareness of the Benefits of Volunteering

Social Media

With lower levels of volunteering, increased emphasis had to be placed on communications with volunteers and potential volunteers.

We increased the number of volunteer roles we were sharing to try to generate more interest and create an awareness of the return to more in-person volunteering in the second half of 2021 with our new #FridayFeatures posts and later our Friday Feature emails.

We increased our social media posting by 30%, however, our total reach declined slightly by 0.03% compared to 2020.



Promoting Volunteering to Student's at DkIT

Key Outputs

- 16 radio features
- 22 newspaper features
- 2 Volunteer Videos
- 1 Youth Volunteering video
- 1 VIO video
- 1 tips and tricks video
- 8 volunteer stories
- 557 new volunteer registrations
- 19 Outreach events
- 5 showcasing volunteering activities
- Microvolunteering Day; National Volunteering Week; 2 Social Inclusion Week events; Postive Aging Week event
- 452 Facebook & Instagram posts with a total reach of 168,879



Strategic Objective Two

Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a Facilitator of Volunteering

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Two:

- Louth Volunteer Centre is positioned as the local agency for volunteering
- Access to volunteering and opportunities to volunteer are enhanced through partnership and strategic alliances

The importance of partnership working was thrown into the spotlight again during 2021 as the COVID-19 pandemic continued. Louth Volunteer Centre continued as an active member of the Community Call Forum until it was stood down in the second half of 2021. As a member of this forum we were at the fore of identifying emerging needs in the community and could quickly respond to them by activating volunteers to be available to respond to those needs. For example, we recruited and trained six communications volunteers to disseminate information to hard to reach communities. Another initiative that we created for the Community Call Forum was the Louth Community Bubble Buddies programme.

This programme was designed for especially vulnerable people in the community when a period of level five COVID-19 public health measures were announced in January of 2021. It was aimed to be a short-term role based on the recipients support bubble having to isolate due to COVID. The Buddy and/or their family commit to restricting their social interactions for the period of the match. We fully screened and Garda Vetted the volunteers as well as providing a comprehensive training to volunteers.

“

I felt delighted to have the volunteer on board. To be honest I dread when the time comes for the Bubble Buddies to end. She was brilliant, so friendly, generous and fun. She understood so well what my daughter needed and had a hugely positive impact. My daughter relaxed so much in her company and looked forward to their time together. . Lockdown was hard but having someone like Volunteer on your side made things easier

– Bubble Buddy recipient

”

“

The benefits of the Bubble Buddy were immediate on the mood and relationships in the family. She (the volunteer) had an instinctive understanding of the family's needs and responded accordingly. She had a warm and generous personality and a mature sense of how to help in a meaningful way. She enhanced this family's quality of life at a very challenging time. The Bubble Buddy initiative is a wonderful way to connect people to themselves and their Community

– Bubble Buddy referring agency

”



Louth Community
Bubble Buddies

Strategic Objective Two

Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a Facilitator of Volunteering

Louth Volunteer Centre remained the voice of volunteering on the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Public Participation Network (PPN) secretariat in 2021, as well as sitting on the Rural Development Programme subgroup of the LCDC and the Strategic Policy Committee on Community, Creativity and Quality of Life.

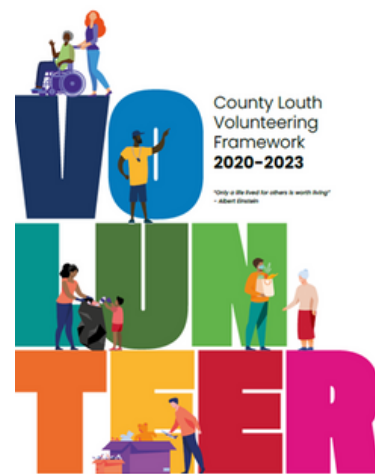
Louth Volunteer Centre worked closely with Louth County Council, Louth PPN and Louth Leader Partnership in 2021 to advance collaborative working between the four agencies. This interagency group now meets quarterly and will act as the secretariat for the implementation of the newly launched County Louth Volunteering Framework.

County Louth Volunteering Framework

On Friday 21st May 2021 Minister Joe O'Brien of the Department of Rural and Community Development launched the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020 – 2023.

The delivery of the Framework will be overseen by an Implementation Group appointed by Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

The Framework was informed by an in-depth consultation process involving over 350 people across Louth. Louth Volunteer Centre secured funding from the LEADER Rural Development Programme to appoint BluZebra as consultants to undertake this process.



“

“If nothing else the past year has proven the value of volunteers and volunteering to our communities. Here in Louth we have a vibrant volunteering community, as seen in the response to the COVID 19 crisis, however we also recognise that this is something that needs to be nurtured and supported. As the Chair of Louth Local Community Development Committee and Chief Executive of Louth County Council I am proud that we are the first County to deliver a Volunteering Framework and to recognise the value of volunteering at County level in this way.”

”

– Joan Martin, Chair of Louth LCDC

Key Outputs

- 2 Presentations to SICAP team
- 8 x LCDC meetings
- 3 RDP Subgroup meetings
- 4 Community SPC meetings
- 6 PPN secretariat meetings
- 3 Community Call Forum Meetings
- 5 Interagency meetings
- 3 correspondences with 34 elected reps
- 11 elected reps attended LVC events

Strategic Objective Three

Increase Quality in Volunteering

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Three:

- The volunteering environment is facilitated and supported
- The quality of the volunteering experience is enhanced for all stakeholders

This Strategic Objective not only encompasses the work we do in promoting quality within the work of the organisations we support, but our own internal quality. We reported having maintained the Volunteer Centre Quality Standard following a review in 2020, but we have also been working on a number of quality improvement actions in 2021 and beyond in order to ensure that Louth Volunteer Centre operates at the highest possible standard in quality. We progressed and achieved a number of quality improvement actions in 2021, including a number of actions relating to the make-up of the board, it's code of conduct and creating a compliance schedule for regulatory, financial and legal requirements. A key priority in 2022 will be to progress a number of HR related quality improvement items and this has been delayed to the second half of the year due to the sudden retirement of our Board-Staff Liaison in early 2022. These items remain an urgent priority for achievement by our HR subgroup in 2022.

Louth Volunteer Leader Awards

The awardees of the second Louth Volunteer Leader Awards were announced on Friday 5th November at a Community Networking Event held in Castlebellingham to celebrate International Volunteer Manager's Day 2021. 76 nominations were received which was a 112% increase on 2020.

The Awardees were:

Drogheda & South Louth

Clíodhna Cunningham, Connect FRC

Ardee & Mid Louth

Barney Carrie, St. Mary's GFC

Dundalk & South Louth

Uta Bean Uí Almhain, Oriel Traditional Orchestra

COVID-19 Category

Liz Doyle, Order of Malta

Leading Young Volunteers

Roisin Curtis. St. Mary's Diocesan School

Uta Bean Uí Almhain went on to be nominated and win in the Arts Culture and Festivals category in the 2021 Volunteer Ireland awards.



Strategic Objective Three

Increase Quality in Volunteering

Empowering You, Empowering Our Community

A report launched on the 23rd March 2021 by Joe O'Brien, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development showed that one of the biggest challenges for Not for Profit organisations nationally is a lack of volunteers putting themselves forward to become board members. With over 400 not for profit organisations in County Louth, many of whom are essential to our local communities, this is also a local challenge. In response to this challenge Louth Volunteer Centre, through their PEACE IV funded Good Relations Initiative, have developed a new training programme for prospective board members.

The six week programme was run twice in 2021, with a specific focus on recruiting participants from underrepresented communities for example, young people and ethnic minorities.

The programme was designed around the six principles of the Charities Governance Code and was completed by a total of thirty-two people.

Volunteer Friendly

The Volunteer Friendly Award is a user-friendly quality standard to support, recognise and reward groups and organisations that demonstrate good practice in volunteer management. Volunteer Ireland and five volunteer centres participated in this pilot programme and were supported by Volunteer Scotland, who created the standard. Louth Volunteer Centre joined the pilot programme with four Volunteer Involving Organisations hoping to achieve the standard in 2022 as part of the pilot programme. One organisation was unable to continue the process, but three Louth organisations will be among the first 15 organisations in Ireland to achieve the Volunteer Friendly Award.

Volunteer Friendly offers three different options to achieving the standard as the requirements are set at an achievable level for each volunteer programme depending on whether they are informal volunteer led groups, registered charities with no staff or registered charities with staff.



Strategic Objective Three

Increase Quality in Volunteering

National Training Team

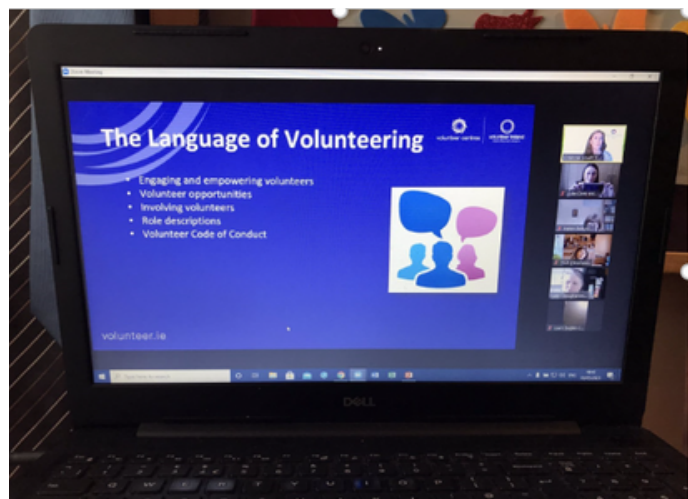
Another national pilot programme in 2021 was the creation of a national training team. The pilot was created on the basis of a successful shift to online training delivery. Three Louth Volunteer Centre trainers participated in the national training team; Gráinne Berrill, Karen Donlon and Kayleigh Mulligan.

The training team comprised of seventeen members and focussed on creating a regular calendar of Volunteer Leadership Training, delivered for free and on a regular basis. Louth Volunteer Centre partnered with colleagues in Cork Volunteer Centre and delivered the Fundamentals of Volunteer Engagement Training twice in 2021, with a third scheduled in early 2022.

As well as the national training, Fundamentals of Volunteer Engagement, Louth Volunteer Centre delivered a number of Lunch and Learn training sessions. These included an introduction to Microvolunteering and a session on promoting your work which was facilitated by local journalist Alison Comyn. Louth Volunteer Centre also delivered quarterly Garda Vetting trainings to 32 Garda Vetting Officers.



Lunch & Learn



Key Outputs

- 32 Participants completed Empowering You Empowering Our Community Programme
- 50% of participants were under 40, 49% from new communities
- 4 Garda Vetting Training sessions, 32 Garda Vetting Officers trained
- 595 Garda Vetting Forms processed
- 2 Fundamentals of Volunteer Engagement training sessions delivered
- 6 Volunteer Involving Organisation learning events

Strategic Objective Four

Advocate for Diversity in and Access to Volunteering

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Four:

- The volunteering base is widened and diversified
- Our community is enriched by enhanced access to volunteering opportunities

Louth
Community
Volunteers

Louth Community Volunteers

Building on lessons learned from COVID-19 and consultation with key stakeholders, the Government proposed the establishment of a national Community Volunteers programme (originally referred to as the Volunteer Reserves.) The aim of this programme is that Ireland is better placed to respond quickly, effectively, and professionally in times of local and national need, through the creation of a diverse, trained, and flexible Community Volunteers programme.

“

An amazing way to spend Christmas morning. great organisation in the Volunteer centre and great communication beforehand and on the day.

”

– Festive Friends Volunteer

Community Volunteers are recruited, skill & interest assessed, interviewed, ID checked and trained, and ready to be deployed to provide urgent community support – be it in response to a national crisis such as COVID-19, a local disruption such as a weather event or water shortage, or simply a local need that could be met by volunteers acting quickly. These volunteers will stay connected and engaged with their communities by also providing support for community events.

The programme was officially launched in September 2021 by Minister Joe O'Brien and recruitment began shortly after. By the end of 2021, 175 people had expressed interest in joining Louth Community Volunteers, with 16 completing all aspects of training and screening.

Festive Friends

In December 2021, Louth Community Volunteers took part in their first volunteer role, visiting isolated older people in the community that had been identified as not having a dinner or a visit on Christmas Day. 40 meals were delivered across County Louth.



Strategic Objective Four

Advocate for Diversity in and Access to Volunteering

Youth Volunteering

A key output from the Good Relations initiative was a video on youth volunteering created by Droichead Youth Theatre participants and facilitated through additional funding granted by SEUPB. The latter will have significant impact in the promotion of volunteering to young people across County Louth. The video can be viewed [here](#).

It was shown to groups of young people across 2021 and was the centrepiece of an online schools volunteering showcase in October which was attended by schools and 250+ students from all across County Louth.



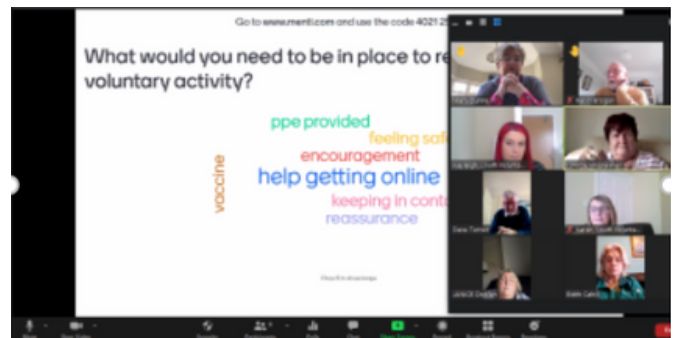
Louth Migrant Volunteer Network

Louth Volunteer Centre, in partnership with Louth County Council and Louth LEADER Partnership established Louth Migrant Network to give individual volunteers in the community the opportunity to share their experiences and help to improve services for others. Our first meeting was held on 28th June. 100% of attendees said they enjoyed the session, would come again and suggested getting more people involved.

Older people

Many older people are huge contributors to their communities bringing a wealth of life and professional experience to their roles. The COVID19 crisis has had multiple negative impacts on our communities, one of which has been the reduction in access to opportunities to make a difference in our community; especially for people in 'older' age brackets, told to cocoon from the outset of the crisis. Our communities have been the poorer for this loss and we were keen to hear what the experience had been for the individual.

We held a focus group in March to find out what support was needed to support older people to get back to volunteering.



'Your Experience Counts' Older Volunteers' Focus Group 25/03/2021

Key Outputs

- 2 projects completed with volunteers from RAPID areas
- Community Volunteers Programme
 - 175 Volunteers expressed interest on I-VOL
 - 27% not originally from Ireland
 - 74% aged 18-49 (No under 18s - national decision)
- Creation of Migrant Volunteer Network
- 3 meetings, 100% said it was useful to attend
- 4 youth programmes
- 1 older person's focus group

Strategic Objective Five

Strengthen our Competence, Capacity and Sustainability

High Level Outcomes for Strategic Objective Five:

- Louth Volunteer Centre meets the highest standards of Governance and Accountability
- Our team have the competency and capacity to deliver our strategic goals
- Our work is future proofed so we can continue to fulfil our vision and mission for our community

Louth Volunteer Centre Strategic Plan 2021-2025

In 2013 Louth Volunteer Centre embarked upon a strategic planning process which resulted in the publication of our 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. The external environment has changed considerably since the development of that plan, not least in the context of the COVID crisis in 2020-2021.

The volunteering environment has also been significantly altered and this document has been developed with an awareness of reference to the National Volunteering Strategy 2020-2025 and the County Louth Volunteering Framework 2020-2023. In relation to the latter Louth Volunteer Centre commissioned and was very involved in the research for the Framework and so we could draw on the very rich data and learning from this in the development of our own strategic plan.

The Strategic Planning Process

In developing this Strategic Plan we undertook a three phase process that has grassroots community development methodologies at its heart.

IDENTITY: Consultative input gathering was utilised to empower stakeholders to respond to the following questions and co-create our organisational vision, purpose and values

- Why does Louth Volunteer Centre exist?
- Who do we serve?
- What do we do for those we serve?

OPPORTUNITY: This phase involved consultative testing of assumptions and outputs from the identity phase. Key external stakeholders from both community and statutory agencies were involved in this phase

PLANNING: This phase involved the Louth Volunteer Centre team generating new strategic objectives informed by outputs in stages one and two and co-designing the structure, resources and plan to achieve these objectives.

Full details on the process are available in the plan [here](#).

Strategic Objective Five

Strengthen our Competence, Capacity and Sustainability

Good Governance Awards

Louth Volunteer Centre's annual report was shortlisted for a Carmichael Ireland Good Governance Award for the second year in a row in 2021. While we did not win the category, this has been a hugely positive step for us in improving our overall reporting and transparency in Good Governance journey. Entering the Good Governance for the past two years has offered Louth Volunteer Centre invaluable feedback on how to provide better information to our stakeholders and funders.



Carmichael are delighted to announce the shortlisted organisations for category 2 in the Good Governance Awards 2021. The ceremony will take place on November 18.

Embrace FARM, Parentline RCN 20025410, Louth Volunteer Centre, Sharing Point and Canoeing Ireland

Carmichael would like to thank our the partner organisations of the Good Governance Awards 2021: Ecclesiastical Ireland, The Community Foundation for Ireland, Mazars in Ireland, Mason Hayes & Curran LLP, Chartered ... See more



Network of Volunteer Centres

Louth Volunteer Centre is a member of a collaborative and innovative network of Volunteer Centres that are affiliated to Volunteer Ireland. A key part of our goal of sustainability is playing an active part in this network and participating in strategically and operationally important groupings within that network. In 2021 Louth Volunteer Centre team members continued to be active members of the network and sat on the following groups:

- Community Volunteers Steering Group
- Network re-branding group
- Joint Volunteer Centres Volunteer Ireland Executive Group
- Volunteer Centres Managers Network
- Placement and Outreach Forum
- I-VOL Regional representative group
- Quality Committee
- National Volunteering Strategy Working Group
- National Training Team
- Volunteer Friendly Steering Group

Key Outputs

- Constitution updated and ratified at AGM
- Annual Report shortlisted for a Good Governance Award
- Audited accounts published on website
- Strategic Plan 2021-2025 published
- Quality Improvement Plan developed
- Companies Registration Office & Funder returns completed
- 9 board meetings and 17 team meetings
- Successful completion of the Good Relations Initiative
- LVC team members participated in 5 strategically important National working groups

Good Relations Initiative

The Good Relations Initiative was built around the delivery of a series of bespoke programmes and activities to 100 participants which would foster community connections. The programme initially called for 13 programmes and events to be delivered however, due to a number of changes related to delivery throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional programmes were facilitated with 18 programmes and events completed through the course of the project.



These programmes were:

Capacity Building Training

Develop capacity building training to assist individuals and community groups to connect with others, recognise the value of diverse communities, and step up to leadership roles within their own community settings.

Conflict Resolution Training

A bespoke Peace Building training programme was developed to meet the needs of this project. The programme was developed to build the skills knowledge and attitudes of the adult and youth groups as they progress through the process. Conflict resolution was a fundamental element of the project introducing key learning objectives such as understanding Conflict, Racism and Discrimination and giving participants the opportunity to reflect on their own experience and behaviours and how they might have the power to influence positive community engagement

Community Networking Events

A series of community networking events to build knowledge and community connections. These had to be significantly adapted to reflect the COVID environment and brought together participants from across the County and on a cross border basis

Local Celebration Events

Celebration events to celebrate the diversity of community groups in county Louth. These events highlighted the work of participants and also highlighted the breadth of activities within their communities. These events were held on a cross border basis

Life Skills Training

The Life Skills Training Programme provided a youth work intervention to develop personal effectiveness, confidence, communication, peace building and volunteering skills.

From the outset the goal of the Good Relations Initiative was to build positive community connections, to empower participants to become leaders in their own communities, leading the way through volunteerism to promote inclusiveness and reduce inequalities, creating more peaceful, cohesive societies. As well as individual community members that signed up directly to programmes, participants in this project came from:

- Moneymore Connect Group
- Cooley Connect Well
- South Armagh Women's Group
- New Leaf Programme, Dee Hub
- Boomerang Youth Café
- Droichead Youth Theatre
- Newry Mourne Education Authority

Good Relations Initiative



International Women's Day Event



Lifeskills Programme Drogheda



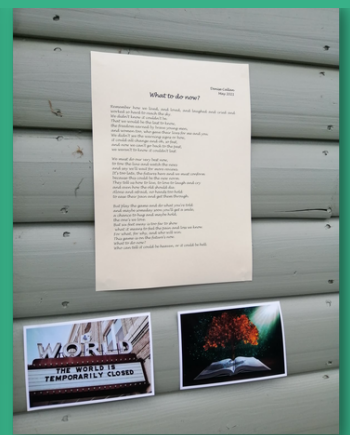
Cross Border Networking Event



Clodagh McGreehan of Cooley Connect Well receiving a certificate from Dundalk Chamber President, Michael Gaynor



Patchwork quilt created by the cross border women's group



Poetry written by women's group on display

Our Plans for the Future

Louth Volunteer Centre entered 2022 with some major personnel changes and this will understandably have some impact on our work during the year. As noted in the chairperson's report, the manager of almost 6 years has taken a sabbatical of two years from Louth Volunteer Centre to pursue another project. Our long-term staff member Kayleigh Mulligan will step into the role and we have recruited a full-time volunteer development officer to fill her role.

2022 is also going to be an important year in securing the stability of the Louth Volunteer Centre board. We will be implementing our newly adopted board succession plan early in the year with a view to securing a number of new board members in the first half of the year, in particular, a new chairperson as the current chairperson will retire from the board after the AGM in June.

As noted in our 2020 annual report, following the publication of our Strategic Plan mid 2021 a key priority would be to produce complementary funding and communications strategies. Neither of these strategies were completed and will now be delivered in 2022.

Operationally, our key priorities for 2022 include developing the Louth Community Volunteers into an active and diverse programme in year 2 of the pilot programme, creating an implementation group for the County Louth Volunteering Framework and delivering on some of the key actions in the document.

Inclusion was at the heart of our operational workplan for 2022 and we are delighted to have received funding from Mental Health Ireland to deliver a project that aims to reach more marginalised groupings such as young men, people with intellectual disabilities and people in recovery to access wellbeing benefits of volunteering and make new connections within their communities.

The government has reactivated the Community Response Fora in response to the war in Ukraine and the influx of Ukrainian people seeking temporary protection here in Ireland. Louth Volunteer Centre are once again on this forum and have the relationships and networks in place to work effectively but it remains to be seen what impact this might have on plans for service delivery.

Director's Report to the Financial Statements for the Year End 31/12/2021

The Directors present their annual report and the audited financial statements of Louth Volunteer Centre for the financial year ended 31 December 2021. The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) along with additional information required by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

Who We Are

Louth Volunteer Centre is an independent company which is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland. It is a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital, registered in Louth, Ireland. Its registered Charity Number is CHY 17034 and its company registration Number is 404719. Louth Volunteer Centre was originally established in 2003 as Drogheda Volunteer Centre by Drogheda Community Forum becoming an independent charity in 2005 and expanding to encompass the whole of Louth in 2010.

The board comprises of a minimum of 3 and maximum of 12 non-executive directors from various professional and community-based backgrounds. Appointments to the board are based on its requirement for expertise such as Finance, HR and Legal. Directors are expected to serve a term of 5 years with officers of the board serving a term of 3 years in their respective role. Directors are unpaid and details of any related party transactions are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

During 2021 the board met 9 times with an average attendance rate of 86%, this is lower than that in 2020, which was 96%, but exceeded our target of 80%.

The Directors of the company serving during the year were as follows:

- Jonathan Lynch* (Chair)
- Siobhan Molloy* (Secretary)
- Mary Cleary* (Treasurer)
- Kevin Light
- Geraldine McStravick
- Ejiro Ohare Stratton
- Qing Cao

2021 the Volunteer Centre Team consisted of 6 paid staff (2 F/T; 4 P/T)

- Grainne Berrill, Manager, staff member since April 2016
- Kayleigh Mulligan, Volunteer Liaison/Garda Vetting Liaison Support Person, staff member since January 2013
- Karen Donlon, Organisation Support Officer, staff member since May 2009
- Mairéad Hearty, Good Relations Initiative Coordinator, staff member since January 2020
- Tracy Rooney, Good Relations Initiative Programme Administrator, staff member since January 2020
- Lorraine Treanor, Good Relations Initiative Training Officer, staff member since March 2020

All staff members have significant qualifications and experience in areas such as community development; training development and delivery; administration and marketing.

Director's Report to the Financial Statements for the Year End 31/12/2021 Continued

This staff team is strengthened by the support of a team of volunteers and interns. Across the course of 2021 ten volunteers and interns enhanced our service contributing to all aspects of our work including placement, project supports, graphic design and social media. The challenges of the COVID19 environment continued to impact our ability to involve as many volunteers or interns as usual. It is therefore even more important that we recognize the contribution of those who continued to support us over the past year. We thank each one of those individuals for enriching Louth Volunteer Centre with their time, energy and experience. We would not have been able to deliver a quality service to the community of County Louth without their support.

Eamonn McDermott, Enda McBride, Fergal Purcell, Marisa McHugh, Robin Barnes, Stephen Culligan, Kevin Meenan, Charlene Mathieson, Aleksander Matrascek.

Principal Activities

The principle activity of the organisation is to strengthen and support volunteering in County Louth. We work with Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to offer a free volunteer placement and referral service, provide guidance and support in developing volunteer roles, guidance and support on policy issues and developing new projects involving volunteers. We provide training, guidance and support around best practice issues when involving volunteers. We also provide a Garda Vetting Service to organisations who do not have access to their own Liaison Person. We also advocate on behalf of and promote volunteerism in key policy and decision-making fora such as the Local Community Development Community, the Rural Development Programmes subgroup of that committee, the local authority Community, Quality of Life and Creativity Strategic Policy Committee.

We work with Volunteers discussing volunteering opportunities that best suit them, provide information on the how, why and where of volunteering, provide information on the volunteers' rights and obligations and best practice in volunteering and also provide ongoing support for the volunteer through regular contact. We identify and target groups who are under-represented in or may encounter barriers to volunteering such as young people, people from new communities, people with disabilities and support them to find a volunteer role that suits their circumstances. As per our constitution:

The principal activity of the company is to promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Louth and the surrounding areas, by association with Statutory and Voluntary authorities in a common aim to advance education and provide facilities in the interest of Social Welfare and other charitable purposes of benefit to the Community of Louth and its surrounding areas and to provide support, training and advice which enhances the effectiveness of organisations involving volunteers to promote charitable activities on behalf of the Community of Louth and its environs.

Achievements/Performance/Results

Each year an operational plan is developed by the Louth Volunteer Centre team in consultation with and approved by our board. This plan is developed by reviewing previous years' activity; local knowledge and feedback from key stakeholders such as volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Our 2021 plan was presented to the Louth Volunteer Centre board in November 2020, updated on foot of that meeting and ratified at our first meeting of the year in January 2021.

Key priorities, aligned to our strategic objectives and Key Performance Indicators, measuring both outcomes and impacts were outlined in the plan. Unfortunately the COVID Crisis had a very significant impact on our ability to deliver the key priorities outlined in our original plan and we had to adjust and adapt this through the year to respond to the environment and best serve our community. This challenge alerted us to the limitations of identifying key priorities year to year that are very action focused. Considerable detail on our outputs, outcomes and achievements despite the challenges of COVID19 are outlined in our annual report.

Strategic Objective	Priority	Outcome
SO1 Promote awareness of the benefits of volunteering	Publication of County Louth Volunteering Framework and the establishment of Implementation Group for same	Enhanced partnership and funding opportunities for Louth Volunteer Centre
SO2 Advance Louth Volunteer Centre as a facilitator of volunteering	Develop 2 x partnership projects which further volunteering county wide	- 6 x collaborative projects to further volunteering (Ardee Direct Provision; Drogheda Older Person's Services; Migrant Network; innovating communities; Social Inclusion Week; 16 Days Womens Violence project)
SO3 Increase quality in volunteering	Develop and deliver a 'being an effective volunteer board member' training programme	Delivered in April & September. 32 participants completed the programme
SO4 Advocate for diversity in and access to volunteering	Establishment of Louth County Volunteer Corps	Established and re-branded as Louth Community Volunteers. Louth Volunteer Centre team members sat on steering group.
SO5 Strengthen our competence, capacity and sustainability	Publish Louth Volunteer Centre Strategic Plan Compliance with Charities Regulator Governance Code	Published in May 2021 Evidenced in October 2021

Financial Results

Income:

Overall income for 2021 (€207,672) A marginal decrease from 2020 rate (€208,896), which was slightly above what had been budgeted.

Louth VolunteerCentre's core grant from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) remained static €121,000 and as projected.

A significant proportion of the income in 2021 (25%) related to the extended PEACE IV funded Good Relations initiative, which was extended multiple times due to COVID-19 ended in December 2021.

Funding was also provided in 2021 from DRCD to develop the Louth Community Volunteers programme. The total received in 2021 was €14,489. Due to the delay in the launch of the programme, we were permitted to carry a portion of this funding into 2022 to facilitate Community Volunteer activity in 2022. A total of €4,890 is carried forward to 2022 and there is a projected increase in this funding in 2022 to €18,200 plus a rate per volunteer. This funding will pay for a staff member 2/5 FTE as our Community Volunteers officer, as well as funding the activity of the volunteer programme.

We reported in 2020 that the delay in publishing the LEADER funded County Louth Volunteering Strategy / Framework ad resulted in a deficit in projected income. This was published in May 2021 and funding of €5,601 was received with regard to this.

Garda Vetting income (€2,905) was almost 10% higher than 2020 (€2,623) yet still 29% lower than 2019 (€4,045). We had predicted that this would remain largely unchanged, however we would hope to see an increase in this amount for 2022 as we see a return to volunteering activities.

We received a grant from Amazon Web Services (€5,000) in 2020 to respond to the COVID19 crisis at local level. The unrestricted nature of these funds afforded us flexibility in targeting the funds to areas where we felt it would have most impact and €2,831 of this income was carried into 2021. This income has not yet been fully spent and we will carry €2,256 further into 2022. This spend on this budget line in 2021 was on an event in a RAPID area in Drogheda and on our Festive Friends initiative in December.

Additional income was received for providing 'Buddy' supports to Cavan VC (€7,800); a grant from DRCD to run the Louth Volunteer Leader Awards (€1,429); Louth County Council €5,309. We received donations from Councillors Tully and Corrigan (€300) for which we thank them.

Expenditure:

Overall expenditure for 2021 (€196,438) was largely as expected. Salaries (€149,179) were 9% lower than 2020 due to the additional hours worked in 2020 to deal with the demands of COVID-19 and the loss of a member of the PEACE team due to long term illness which lasted to the end of her contract.

Salaries represent 76% of overall expenditure, which is 6% of lower than in 2020.

Our overall core grant expenditure in 2021 was in line with budget projections. Expenditure on rent (€4,000) stayed static and will remain at this level for 2022 with thanks to our landlord, Louth County Council.

Expenditure on the GRI PEACE project was €53,766 which was a slight overspend on the funds received which amounted to €52,901 (12% below budgeted income).

Travel and subsistence (€976) was again significantly below budget projections (65%). Auditing, Accountancy & Professional Fees was 202% of the projected figure due to a decision to prepay for a risk management and employee assistance programme from BrightPrime for 5 years. This prepayment is reflected in the balance sheet.

Marketing and PR (€6,596) was significantly above budget (99%) as the figure reflects the design and print costs for the County Louth Volunteering Framework and there was also an investment made into apparel for team members. Volunteer & intern expenses (€381) were 52% above projections, however, board expenses were only 13% of projections due to the continuation of remote meetings. Expenditure on telephones (€2,449) was slightly below budget; as were bank fees (€327).

Insurance costs were lower than expected at 66% of projections (€1,614), this was due to an anticipated rise in costs that didn't surface. We compare prices every year but our current provider, BHP, are by far the cheapest and provide an excellent service in terms of their understanding of the role of the Volunteer Centre. BHP had issued a warning for 2022 that they are currently in a hard market and we had some concerns that we are going to see a significant premium hike in our Director's liability insurance in 2022, however, this has turned out not to be the case. Audit fees remained static as McEvoy Craig had been appointed for two years, new auditors will be appointed at our 2022 AGM so we anticipate an increase in 2022.

Training costs (€675) were below budget by 77%, however, with two full time staff in new roles in 2022 (Kayleigh Mulligan stepping into the Manager role and a new full-time development officer), we expect training costs to be higher in 2022 and have budgeted for this. Equipment costs (€1,375) were 69% of budget projections.

Reserves:

Louth Volunteer Centre's policy is to maintain reserves at a level which ensures the stability and long term viability of the organisation, to ensure protection from fluctuations in income, and to allow immediate and efficient response to urgent needs which may arise subject to the Centre's objectives. Having solid reserves and cash flow capacity in place was instrumental in our securing of PEACEIV funding at the end of 2020 and this has proven beneficial to us in 2021 as we had to provide cashflow to the project beyond our initial projections due to COVID19 impacting service delivery.

We are working towards having sufficient funds to maintain operations for 6 months as per best practice recommendations. Since 2016, LVC has worked hard to increase its cash reserves having increased its cash at bank from €28,419 in 2016, €44,719 in 2017, €63,230 in 2018, to €73,528 at the end of 2020, €86,654 in 2021 and €113,159 in 2022. The reserves balance at year end 2021 represents 6 month's expenditure which was the initial goal of the reserves policy. It is the intention of the Louth Volunteer Centre board to review and produce a new reserve policy in alongside a new funding strategy. This reserve policy review will also need to reflect the changing HR landscape and will be coupled with a review of our HR policies.

Operational Risk Management

The company operates solely in the Republic of Ireland, therefore it is not subject to significant currency risks. The company does not rely on significant borrowings and has a minimal exposure to interest rate risk. As part of our commitment to good Governance, and our journey towards compliance with the incoming Charities Regulator Governance Code, Louth Volunteer Centre undertook a comprehensive risk assessment in 2018 resulting in a comprehensive risk register and Contingency Plan being completed in 2020. These are reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently if required. The Risk Register identifies potential risks in the following categories; Finance, Health and Safety, Governance, Technology, Reputation and Legal. We completed an additional risk assessment specifically for the PEACE IV Good Relations Initiative.

The unprecedented COVID-19 international health crisis struck created, and continues to create, significant uncertainties for all organisations within our sector and beyond. We sought to mitigate some of this uncertainty through regular risk reviews, adaptation of service delivery and close communication with funders. We also continue to draw on and contribute to the very active network of Volunteer Centres, Volunteer Information Services and Volunteer Ireland to advocate for our work and funding into the future.

Looking at financial risk in the longer term we have identified the challenges of restricted income, short term project funding and the ability to retain a surplus as a risk to our organisation, particularly if the fiscal environment changes nationally as a result of the COVID19 crisis and now the war in Ukraine. These external factors need to be considered in our risk and contingency planning.

Plans for the Future

Core funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) has been confirmed as remaining at €121,000. As part of the National Volunteering Strategy, DRCD has engaged 3 Solutions to write a report "A Review of the Volunteer Centre Funding Model". This report may result in an increase in this baseline funding which is to be welcomed.

DRCD will continue to fund Volunteer Centres to deliver Community Volunteers programme into 2022 and 2023. We will be continuing to provide supports to Cavan VC for at least the first half of 2022 as they recruit a new board and team.

As we move into 2022, volunteering in Ireland continues to be very well supported, with delivery of the National Volunteering Strategy a key priority. The publication of the County Louth Volunteering Framework and our own strategic plan provide us with a framework for identifying appropriate revenue opportunities at a local level as these are implemented in 2022 and beyond. The publication of the County Louth Volunteering Framework will result in some restricted revenue for the organisation. While we didn't achieve our new funding and communications strategies in 2021 as planned, we intend to do so in 2022. Our team will need to spend some time in 2022 identifying and applying for potential funding streams for 2022 onwards that enable us to return to a more diversified income, however we need to be mindful that applying for small amounts of project funding, whilst enabling us to further our charitable aims, without proper resourcing and staffing these projects result in additional work for the current team and in the ongoing changing volunteering and wider external landscape and pressurised labour market this could lead to significant risk to the organisation.

Relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors McEvoy Craig have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

This report was approved by the board of directors on 02/06/2022 and signed on behalf of the board

By:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Lynch', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jonathan Lynch
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Cleary', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Mary Cleary
Treasurer

Louth Volunteer Centre CLG
(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Directors responsibilities statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the directors report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the profit or loss of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and directors report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG (the 'company') for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the profit and loss account, statement of income and retained earnings, balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2021 and of its profit for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IMSA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG (the 'company') for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the profit and loss account, statement of income and retained earnings, balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 3. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31 December 2021 and of its profit for the financial year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IMSA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG (continued)

Other Information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion there on.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Louth Volunteer Centre CLG (continued)

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

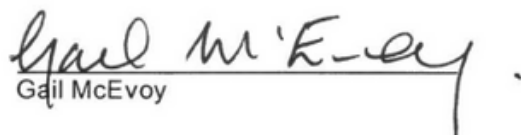
Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf This description forms part of our auditor's report.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Gail McEvoy

For and on behalf of
Mc Evoy Craig Accountants
Registered Auditor and Certified Public Accountant

10 Dublin Road
Drogheda
Co. Louth

02/06/2022

Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Income and Expenditure Account Financial year ended 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 €	2020 €
Income	5	207,672	208,896
		<u>207,672</u>	<u>208,896</u>
Staff costs	6	(149,179)	(164,864)
Other operating expenses		(47,259)	(35,750)
Surplus		<u>11,234</u>	<u>8,282</u>
Surplus before taxation		<u>11,234</u>	<u>8,282</u>
Tax		-	-
Surplus for the financial year		<u><u>11,234</u></u>	<u><u>8,282</u></u>

The company has no other recognised items of income and expenses other than the results for the financial year as set out above.

Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Statement of income and retained earnings

Financial year ended 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
	€	€
Surplus for the financial year	11,234	8,282
Retained earnings at the start of the financial year	90,842	82,560
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	<u>102,076</u>	<u>90,842</u>

Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Balance sheet As at 31 December 2021

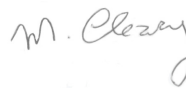
	Note	2021 €	€	2020 €	€
Current assets					
Debtors	9	11,565		10,705	
Cash at bank and in hand		113,159		86,654	
		<u>124,724</u>		<u>97,359</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>(22,648)</u>		<u>(6,517)</u>	
Net current assets		102,076		90,842	
Total assets <u>less</u> current liabilities		<u>102,076</u>		<u>90,842</u>	
Net assets		<u><u>102,076</u></u>		<u><u>90,842</u></u>	
Capital and reserves					
Retained surplus		102,076		90,842	
Total Reserves		<u><u>102,076</u></u>		<u><u>90,842</u></u>	

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with Section 1A of FRS 102 Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

These financial statements were approved by the board of directors on 02/06/2022 and signed on behalf of the board by:



Jonathan Lynch
Chairperson



Mary Cleary
Treasurer

Louth Volunteer Centre CLG

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Share Capital)

Statement of Financial Activity for the financial year ended 31 December 2021

		Continuing operations		Total	Total
		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds		
		2021	2021	2021	2020
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Income	5	11,833	195,839	207,672	208,896
Expenditure		(599)	(195,839)	(196,438)	(200,614)
Net Income		11,234	-	11,234	8,282
Tax					
Net Movement in Funds				11,234	8,282

On behalf of the board



Jonathan Lynch
Chairperson



Mary Cleary
Treasurer

Notes to the financial statements Financial year ended 31 December 2021

1.General information

The company is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Ireland. The address of the registered office is Louth Volunteer Centre CLG, Old Motor Tax Office Building, Bolton Street, Drogheda, Louth.

2.Statement of compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102 Section 1A, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'

3.Accounting policies and measurement bases Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis. Income and expenditure has been recognised on an accruals basis.

Income

Income is recognised when the company has entitlement to the funds and any performance conditions attached to the income have been satisfied. Income that has not met the requirements but has been received is recognised as deferred income until the criteria is met.

Government grants

Government grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable. Grants are not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the company will comply with the conditions attaching to them and the grants will be received.

Government grants are recognised using the accrual model and the performance model.

Under the accrual model, government grants relating to revenue are recognised on a systematic basis over the periods in which the company recognises the related costs for which the grant is intended to compensate. Grants that are receivable as compensation for expenses or losses already incurred or for the purpose of giving immediate financial support to the entity with no future related costs are recognised in income in the period in which it becomes receivable.

Grants relating to assets are recognised in income on a systematic basis over the expected useful life of the asset. Where part of a grant relating to an asset is deferred, it is recognised as deferred income and not deducted from the carrying amount of the asset.

Under the performance model, where the grant does not impose specified future performance-related conditions on the recipient, it is recognised in income when the grant proceeds are received or receivable. Where the grant does impose specified future performance-related conditions on the recipient, it is recognised in income only when the performance-related conditions have been met. Where grants received are prior to satisfying the revenue recognition criteria, they are recognised as a liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued) Financial year ended 31 December 2021

Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the transaction price, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost. Other financial instruments are recognised at fair value with any changes recognised in profit or loss.

4. Limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital.

5. Income

The total income of the company for the financial year has been derived from its principal activity wholly undertaken in Ireland.

	Year Ending 31/12/21 €	Year Ending 31/12/20 €
<u>Unrestricted Income</u>		
Garda Vetting	2,905	2,623
Donations	875	2,619
Other Income	8,053	4,452
	<u>11,833</u>	<u>9,694</u>
<u>Restricted Income</u>		
Grant Funding - Department of Rural and Community Development	121,000	121,000
Grant Funding - Louth Co Council Peace IV	52,901	65,665
Grant Funding - Central Government COVID 19 Emergency Fund	-	9,240
Community Volunteers	9,598	-
LEADER Programme	5,602	-
Other Income	1,428	1,133
Louth County Council Project Funding	5,310	2,164
	<u>195,839</u>	<u>199,202</u>
Total Income	<u>207,672</u>	<u>208,896</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Financial year ended 31 December 2021

6. Staff costs

The average number of persons employed by the company during the financial year, including the directors was 5 (2020: 6).

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the financial year were:

	2021	2020
	€	€
Wages and salaries	134,895	149,165
Social insurance costs	14,284	15,699
	<u>149,179</u>	<u>164,864</u>

7. Directors remuneration

The directors aggregate remuneration was as follows:

	2021	2020
	€	€
Emoluments in respect of qualifying services	<u>-</u>	<u>34,831</u>

8. Appropriations of accumulated surplus

	2021	2020
	€	€
At the start of the financial year	90,842	82,560
Surplus for the financial year	11,234	8,282
At the end of the financial year	<u><u>102,076</u></u>	<u><u>90,842</u></u>

9. Debtors

	2021	2020
	€	€
Trade debtors	9,155	405
Other debtors	-	10,300
Prepayments	2,410	-
	<u><u>11,565</u></u>	<u><u>10,705</u></u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)
Financial year ended 31 December 2021

10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	€	€
Amounts owed to credit institutions	-	780
Trade creditors	5,585	938
Other creditors including tax and social insurance	7,948	-
Accruals	1,968	1,968
Deferred income	7,147	2,831
	<u>22,648</u>	<u>6,517</u>

11. Government grants

	2021	2020
	€	€
Grants received or receivable	<u>173,901</u>	<u>195,905</u>

The amounts recognised in the financial statements for government grants are as follows:

	2021	2020
	€	€
Recognised in other operating income:		
Government grants released to profit and loss	<u>173,901</u>	<u>195,905</u>

12. Approval of financial statements

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on 02/06/2022.

The following pages do not form part of the statutory accounts

**Detailed income and expenditure account
financial year ended 31 December 2021**

	2021	2020
	€	€
Income		
Garda Vetting	2,905	2,623
LCC project	5,310	2,164
Volunteer Ireland Projects	9,229	-
Community Volunteers	9,598	-
County Councilor Donations	300	300
Private Donations	575	2,319
Services	-	5,585
Leader Income	5,602	
Other income	252	-
Government Grant Income	173,901	195,905
	207,672	208,896
	207,672	208,896
 Expenditure		
Wages and salaries	(134,895)	(114,334)
<u>Directors</u> remuneration	-	(34,831)
Employer's PRSI contributions	(14,284)	(15,699)
Training & Development	(675)	(1,266)
Board expenses	(13)	-
Project activities and event expenses	(23,550)	(11,492)
Volunteer & intern expenses	(381)	(263)
Rent payable	(4,000)	(4,000)
Insurance	(1,614)	(1,401)
Website Hosting	(240)	(317)
Repairs and maintenance	(347)	(314)
Equipment	(1,375)	(4,800)
Office Supplies	(1,599)	(1,824)
Marketing & PR	(6,596)	(1,744)
Telephone/Communications	(2,449)	(2,472)
IT/Server Support & Maintenance	(1,019)	(1,127)
Travelling and Subsistence	(976)	(1,634)
Auditing, Accountancy & Professional Fees	-	(2,458)
<u>Auditors</u> remuneration	(1,968)	-
Bank charges	(327)	(211)
Bad debts	5	(428)
General expenses	(1)	1
Subscriptions	(134)	-
	(196,438)	(200,614)
Surplus	11,234	8,282

□

Board Report

The Louth Volunteer Centre Board of Directors is committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance and has taken action to ensure that the organisation is fully compliant with the principles outlined in the Charities Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator of Ireland.

The Board completed a full review of the Charities Governance Code in late 2021 and has evidenced compliance.

The Louth Volunteer Centre Board meets every 6 weeks, a total of nine times per year with the dates and workplan scheduled in the previous year. Board meetings follow a standard agenda, as follows;

1. Risk
2. Financial Report
3. Operational Report
4. Project Reports
5. Policy and Governance
6. Quality
7. Correspondence

In addition to a standard agenda, the board meeting schedule outlines key work priorities for the year, scheduled in advance. In 2021 these were;

January

2020 Expenditure
2021 Budget
2020 Operational Report
2021 Workplan
Board Self Assessment

March

2021 Quality Plan
Strategic Plan
Constitution review

April

Funding Strategy
Risk Register Review

May

Annual Report
Audited Accounts
Governance Code Principles 1-3

June - AGM

July

Team presentations to board

September

Review Succession Planning
Governance Code Principles 3-6

October

Sign off Governance Code

December

Agree 2022 Key Priorities
Agree 2022 Budget
2021 Workplan Review

2021 Board Members

Jonathan Lynch, Chairperson

Mary Cleary, Treasurer

Julie Devitt, Treasurer (retired July 2021)

Siobhan Molloy, Secretary

Kevin Light

Geraldine McStravick

Ejiro Ohare Stratton

Qing Cao

Board Report Continued...

Board Self-Assessment

The board of Louth Volunteer Centre completed its first annual self assessment to review its own performance in the areas of governance, conduct and how the board operates.

This review highlighted a number of areas for improvement, some of which would be remedied by the publication of the strategic plan as well as some new priorities. These included the development of a communications plan, a training plan for board members and a review of the board reporting process. The communications plan will be developed in 2022, and all other actions were completed in 2021.

Subgroups of the Louth Volunteer Centre Board

Governance

Jonathan Lynch
Siobhán Molloy
Mary Cleary

Finance

Mary Cleary
Jonathan Lynch
Qing Cao

Risk

Jonathan Lynch
Siobhán Molloy
Mary Cleary

HR

Geradline Mc Stravick
Siobhán Molloy
Ejiro Ohare Stratton

Board Succession

The development of a succession planning policy and procedures for board members was a key priority in the Louth Volunteer Centre's workplan for 2021.

The Charities Regulator emphasises the importance of good succession planning under Principle 5 of the Governance Code. Good succession planning is also an essential component of organisational risk management and sustainability.

With the current chairperson due to retire at the 2022 AGM and a number of key losses to the board over the past few years, the board decision to develop a more structured approach to board recruitment will hopefully pay dividends to the stability of the board in the years to come.

It empowers the board to be prepared for changes in membership, have a clear picture of current skillsets and identify/bridge gaps to ensure effective oversight and delivery of organisational strategic objectives.

2021 Board Meeting Attendance

