



## **Louth Volunteer Centre CLG Annual Report 2019**



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development

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|                   |                                                                |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Company Number    | 404719                                                         |
| Charity Number    | 17034                                                          |
| Registered Office | Old Motor Tax Office<br>Bolton Street<br>Drogheda<br>Co. Louth |
| Auditor           | Callan Stringer<br>66 West Street<br>Drogheda<br>Co. Louth     |
| Bankers           | Bank of Ireland<br>Laurence Street<br>Drogheda<br>Co. Louth    |

## 1. About Us

This report outlines the work and highlights the achievements of Louth Volunteer Centre (LVC) in 2019. 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 22 Volunteer Centres and 7 Volunteer Information Services 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.



### 1.1 Our Vision

Our vision is to make volunteering part of the way of life in Louth.

### 1.2 Our Mission

To help individuals find meaningful opportunities to volunteer and to support not-for-profit organisations to involve volunteers in their work.

### 1.3 Our Values

Our key values are:

- **Equality.** We believe all people should be valued and respected equally. We are also committed to removing barriers that exclude vulnerable groups from participating fully in society.
- **Sense of Community.** Volunteering is ultimately about people helping others and feeling connected with their community
- **Professionalism.** We work in an environment where honesty and integrity is paramount and where people are encouraged to bring their ideas to life while remaining accountable to ourselves and others.

### 1.4 Our Strategic Aims

We have four strategic aims:

- Promote awareness of Louth Volunteer Centre and benefits of volunteering
- Increase access to volunteering
- Increase quality in volunteering
- Ensure Louth Volunteer Centre's effectiveness and sustainability to deliver

### 1.5 Our Governance

Louth Volunteer Centre is a registered charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. The organisation is overseen by a board of up to 12 voluntary Directors. Board members serve a term of up to 5 years and officers of the board up to 3 years. Louth Volunteer Centre board members are appointed on the basis of geographically representing the population of Louth County and having the sufficient qualifications, contacts and experience to deliver the objectives of the Volunteer Centre. The board have responsibility for ensuring that the organisation fulfils its legal obligations and is properly financially managed; they are also responsible for the strategic development of the Centre and ensuring that it operates effectively and efficiently.



We achieved compliance with the Voluntary Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in 2018. During 2019 we worked through the Charities Governance Code toolkit and expect to be compliant with the code in 2020 as per Charities Regulator Expectations. We also achieved the national Quality Standard Award in 2018. We conducted a review of these quality standards in 2019, developing a Quality Improvement Plan from this

process. As a result, we expect to be fully compliant with an anticipated external review of the quality standards in 2020 and to retain our award in that process.

## 1.6 Our Board

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

Joan Hardy\* (Chairperson)

Joan has 20+ years of experience successfully leading large multi-functional teams and small high impact groups in the private sector. Prior to joining the Louth Volunteer Centre board she volunteered for a number of years with the Citizens Information Service and continues to do so.

Julie Devitt\* (Treasurer)

Julie is a CIMA qualified management accountant and has over 12 years' experience in senior roles within the FMCG industry as well as 6 years previous experience in the Financial Services sector.

Jonathan Lynch\* (Vice Chair)

Jonathan has held a number of roles in the Irish Higher Education sector, managing student welfare and student engagement functions across a number of Dublin Universities before joining the Ambulance service in 2018. Jonathan holds a BBS. (Hons) in Business Management from the National University of Ireland, an MSc in International Management from DIT and a PG Diploma in Education from the National College of Ireland. Jonathan has extensive experience in the volunteer sector with particular emphasis on community festivals and first responder schemes representing both on a national scale.

Amaka Okonwko (Retired 05/04/2019)

Amaka is the founder of eDundalk, a social enterprise promoting employability, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, development education, integration and tourism amongst the African diaspora in Ireland.

Maeve Yore (Retired 18/11/2019)

Maeve is a founder of Special Needs Active Parents (SNAP) and has served as a public representative and independent councillor for Dundalk South on Louth County Council since 2014, topping the poll in her municipal district in 2020. Maeve is a prolific volunteer who believes passionately in the power of active citizenship in effecting change for the better in her town and County.

Ide Lenihan (Member – Formally Retired 05/04/2019)

Ide was one of the founding members of Louth Volunteer Centre, over the past 20 years she has been at the centre of many community Development projects in Drogheda.

Michael Walsh\* (Appointed date, 05/04/2019)

Michael holds a BSc. in Psychology from DCU and a MPsychSc. in Psychological Science from UCD. Michael is passionate about the Irish not-for-profit sector, previously volunteering with SOSAD Ireland for 5 years. Michael is a member of the Recruitment Team in 2into3, a company which seeks to transform not-for-profits through consulting, recruitment and research.

Jubilee Osawa\* (Appointed date, 05/04/2019)

#### \*Board sub-committees

|         |                                          |
|---------|------------------------------------------|
| Risk    | Jonathan Lynch, Joan Hardy, Julie Devitt |
| Finance | Julie Devitt, Joan Hardy, Jubilee Osawa  |
| HR      | Michael Walsh, Joan Hardy, Julie Devitt  |

### 1.7 Our Team



In 2019 Louth Volunteer Centre had three paid staff. All three core staff members have significant qualifications and experience in areas such as community development; training development and delivery; and marketing.

- **Gráinne Berrill**, Louth Volunteer Centre Manager.

Gráinne joined Louth Volunteer Centre in April 2016. Gráinne is responsible for the operational management of the organisation including financial and staff resourcing and the delivery of our operational plan. Gráinne works closely with the Board of Directors to ensure organisational compliance with regulatory requirements and quality assurance. In 2019 Gráinne provided support to the board on their journey towards compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code. Gráinne also fulfills the role of Company Secretary for the board. Gráinne seeks to identify emerging needs in the community served by Louth Volunteer Centre in relation to volunteering and develops appropriate service responses to these needs.

Gráinne is based mainly in our Drogheda office and as such has responsibility for the running of that office and the day to day delivery of our service in South Louth. She assumed lead responsibility for the development and delivery of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Droichead Átha volunteer programme in 2018 and 2019 including the

recruitment, training, scheduling and supports to the many hundreds of volunteers who gave their time to that event.

Gráinne represents Louth Volunteer Centre and advocates on behalf of volunteers and volunteerism in a number of fora, including the Local Community Development Committee and Public Participation Network.

- **Kayleigh Mulligan**, Volunteer Liaison/Garda Vetting Liaison Support Person

Kayleigh joined the Louth Volunteer Centre team in January 2013. Kayleigh has responsibility for quality management in our placement service; volunteer communications and the design and development of our website.

Kayleigh looks after North Louth, running our Dundalk office and providing outreach in Omeath on a monthly basis. Her role involves developing Louth Volunteer Centre's North Louth service - supporting organisations and volunteers in the area, assisting in identifying and filling volunteering roles within organisations and helping volunteers to find suitable, fulfilling volunteering opportunities. She represents Louth Volunteer Centre in the Dundalk Education and Training Network and promotes volunteering in a monthly slot on Dundalk FM. Kayleigh is our liaison person for Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT), providing advice, guidance and administrative support to their Volunteering Society.

Kayleigh is also the centre's Garda Vetting Liaison Person, providing access to Garda Vetting services for small organisations that cannot access a Garda Vetting Liaison Person through their own organisational structures. In this role she supports our Garda Vetting Clerks, trains Garda Vetting officers in local community and voluntary organisations and provides advice and support in relation to Garda Vetting to the wider community.

- **Karen Donlon**, Organisation Support Officer. Staff member since May 2009.

Karen joined the Louth Volunteer Centre in May 2009. Central to her work is the aim to provide a free, high quality volunteer placement service to not-for-profit organisations in County Louth in a friendly and professional manner. Karen offers professional support and advice to organisations around their volunteering needs so that they can achieve best practice principles in volunteer management.

Karen is an experienced trainer and facilitates the nationally recognised Volunteer Leadership Training to local volunteer leaders. She has responsibility for overseeing quality in our engagement with organisations.

Karen also looks after service delivery in the Mid Louth area, offering a bi-monthly outreach service in Ardee library and seeking to develop our engagement with volunteers and VIOs in the mid-Louth area. True to her role Karen celebrated her 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Louth Volunteer Centre at a Volunteer Fair in Ardee library in May 2019.



This staff team is strengthened by the support of a team of volunteers and interns. Across the course of 2019 fifteen volunteers and interns enhanced our service contributing to all aspects of our work including placement, project supports, graphic design and social media. We thank each one of those individuals for enriching Louth Volunteer Centre with their time, energies and experience. We would not have been able to deliver a quality service to the community of County Louth without their support.

- Alan Conlon; Placement Support and Garda Vetting Clerk
- Aisling McGuinness; Placement Support
- Bradley Hutchinson; Placement Support, Garda Vetting Clerk, and Marketing & Events
- Enda McBride; Placement Support
- Fanny Sih Kelle; Placement Support, Garda Vetting Clerk and Volunteer Communications
- Gavin Winters; Graphic Design
- Joanne Russell; Fleadh Cheoil Team Lead
- Karen Coyle Cunningham; Placement Support & Marketing
- Lisa Brannigan; Placement Support
- Margaret Judge; Placement Support and Administration
- Martin Boyle; IT Development
- Mary Thornton; Placement Support and Administration
- Niamh McNally; Administration Support
- Robin Barnes; Social Media and Photography
- Tracy Rooney; Fleadh Cheoil Team Lead; Finance and HR

## 1.8 Our Services

### Our Services

#### Volunteers

The opportunity to meet with a member of staff to discuss volunteering opportunities.

Access to a database of volunteering opportunities so that the volunteer can choose the opportunity that best suits them.

Information on the how, why and where of volunteering

The volunteers rights and obligations and best practice in volunteering.

On-going support for the volunteer through regular contact.

#### VIOs

We offer a free volunteer placement and referral service.

Guidance and support in developing volunteer roles.

Guidance and support on policy issues.

Guidance and support developing new projects involving volunteers.

Training, guidance and support around best practice issues when involving volunteers

Garda Vetting Service to organisations who do not have access to their own Liaison Person.

### Advocacy & the Promotion of Volunteering

Represent volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and volunteerism on local decision making bodies.

Promotion of the societal and individual benefits of volunteering and volunteerism

Host events and coordinate awareness campaigns that celebrate, publicise and showcase volunteers and volunteerism

## 1.9 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 backing of volunteering and volunteerism in Ireland. We particularly welcome the increase of funding to the centre which brings our core funding up to the minimum recommended level for a Volunteer Centre in Ireland.

We would also like to thank the **Fleadh Cheoil Droichead Átha Executive Committee** for placing their trust in us and believing that we would deliver the best possible volunteer programme for the largest festival of traditional Irish culture in the world. It was our honour to work alongside such a passionate and committed group of people and to have had the opportunity to connect hundreds of people with a quality volunteering experience.

Our thanks also to **Louth County Council**, in particular in relation to their allocation of funding to Louth Volunteer Centre through the Communities Enhancement Programme enabling us to continue to invest in IT so that we achieve best practice in regulatory compliance in areas such as GDPR.

*We would like to thank the following organisations and individuals whose support and / or time has contributed to our success in 2019:*

Louth Public Participation Network  
Louth Leader Partnership  
Louth County Libraries  
Carmichael Ireland  
Volunteer Ireland  
Our colleagues in the Volunteer Centre Network

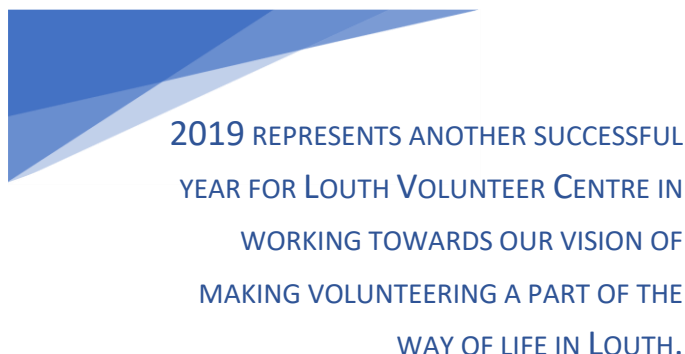
*We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the following media outlets for their consistent support of our work throughout 2019*

Dundalk FM  
The Drogheda Independent  
Drogheda Life

*We would also like to thank the following media outlets for their coverage of our activities in 2019*

LMFM  
Drogheda Leader  
Dundalk Democrat  
Dundalk Leader  
Mid Louth Independent  
The Argus

## 2. Chairperson's Statement



In addition to delivering our core services of connecting individuals with volunteering and supporting organisations who involve volunteers in their work, we were successful in delivering the second year of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Volunteer Programme; tendering for a PEACEIV funded project, the Good Relations Initiative, which is focused on Building Community Connections and will be delivered in 2020; and securing LEADER funding to deliver the first County Volunteering Strategy in Ireland.

Over the course of one week in August 2019, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann brought over 600,000 people to the streets of Drogheda. This was a hugely important event for the community of Louth and for the second year running, the Fleadh Volunteer Programme was exclusively managed by Louth Volunteer Centre. Delivering this project was a key priority for us in both 2018 and 2019. It is the largest volunteer delivered event in Ireland and offered us an opportunity to enhance the organisations' profile; our credibility in sharing best practice in volunteer management with other organisations; and for the people we serve – the residents of County Louth. In addition, the Fleadh project represented 10% of overall income in 2019, and 44% of non-core grant income, a not insignificant proportion

and important in the continued stabilisation of income for the organisation.

Whilst delivery of the Fleadh Volunteer Programme took place over the course of 11 days in August the workload spanned two years and although a huge level of work, we are very proud of the success we have had with it and we look forward to working with our counterparts in Mullingar to assist in bringing their volunteer programme to fruition. It must be noted that our achievement with the Fleadh is due in no small part to the efforts of the Louth Volunteer Centre team who have gone the extra mile over the past two years to engage as broad a population as possible with the programme and ensure that everyone who engaged with it had a positive experience.

Increasing quality in volunteering is an important strategic aim of LVC and a central element of our mission to support not for profit groups to involve volunteers in their work. We continued to invest energy and resources in the provision of training and support to voluntary organisations over 2019. We are delighted to have achieved a 20% increase in attendance at our Volunteer Leaders' Network sessions. Partnering with Carmichael enabled us to deliver three sets of training in good governance and best practice for volunteer boards. We believe such collaborative partnerships boost our effectiveness and sustainability while complementing the core services we already provide to registered organisations. Louth Volunteer Centre aims to strengthen and grow our connections with such agencies over the course of 2020.

As a board we are delighted with the overall performance of Louth Volunteer Centre in 2019. Notwithstanding the achievement of the Fleadh, we continue to excel at our day to day service delivery, generally working above target and going the extra mile for our service users. Our placement rate<sup>1</sup> of 52% remains among the highest in the country, and considerably higher than the national rate of 36%; we exceeded our key priority of 35% placement rate amongst people not originally from Ireland, actually achieving a rate of 38%; and between 2017 and 2019 we have grown the proportion of our volunteers who were under 18 by 80%, which runs counter to national trends. The latter two achievements are due in no small part to the successful conversion of Fleadh volunteers and it may be a challenge for the team to continue to achieve such high targets without such a high-profile volunteering project. The team had developed an exciting new community events volunteer support programme for 2020 to build on our Fleadh experience and sustain volunteer engagement and placement rates however all events programming has ceased with the onset of COVID-19.

Louth Volunteer Centre continues to operate in a challenging environment in relation to resourcing and funding. We noted in our 2018 report that we were receiving core funding below the minimum recommended amount for any Volunteer Centre, notwithstanding the fact that Louth is one of the busiest volunteer centres in the country, leaving our resources constantly stretched. Indeed, with the increased regulatory and legislative challenges facing the community and voluntary sector the demands on Louth Volunteer Centre resources continues to grow. In mid-2019 and into 2020 our core grant was increased to the minimum

recommended level for Volunteer Centres, which we greatly welcome. However, these additional funds are sourced from the Dormant Account fund so do not have the level of stability that we need as a busy and growing volunteer centre. As a result of this instability, we have been growing our reserve over the past number of years through additional project work to allow a buffer for any future financial challenges. Such projects include the Fleadh and expected PEACEIV Funding in 2020 and 2021. We continue to actively identify funding streams that will enable us to further our goals. One key challenge with this is many funding streams within the sector require short turnaround times both from a tendering and delivery perspective which can place additional strain on an already busy workload.

Looking to the future COVID-19 is, of course, the great challenge worldwide and some of the targets set in the Louth Volunteer Centre 2020 workplan are unlikely to be achieved. As noted above one of our key priorities for 2019 was the development of a Community Event Volunteer Support Programme which was expected to build on our reputation and expertise from Fleadh Cheoil and facilitate the provision of opportunities to volunteer for groups with fewer opportunities for engagement with volunteering such as young people, or people with poor spoken English – this will be particularly effected by the evolution of the COVID crisis. We anticipate that even our core priority of maintaining our placement rate will be extremely challenging in this environment.

There is likely also to be an impact on projected income in areas such as Garda Vetting, however it is possible that there will be other income opportunities as the importance of

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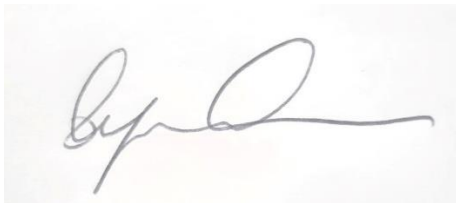
<sup>1</sup> **Placement Rate:** This is measured by the number of unique volunteers applying for roles divided by the number of unique volunteers placed in a role

volunteering and volunteerism comes to the fore. The delivery of a County Volunteering Strategy will be of particular significance to the Centre, as will the expected publication of a National Volunteering Strategy – to which the Louth Volunteer Centre team are contributing as members of the Volunteer Centre’s Network National Volunteering Strategy working group.

In 2020 we plan to deliver on some particularly significant projects including the delivery of the PEACE IV funded ‘Good Relations Initiative’; the first ever County Volunteering Strategy in Ireland; development and delivery

of our own strategic plan; and compliance with the new Charities Regulator Governance Code. While we welcome and look forward to this growth we must continue to be mindful of fatigue among the team and ensure from a long term perspective Louth Volunteer Centre remains poised and prepared for what the future might hold while also serving the people of Louth on a day to day basis.

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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Lynch', is written on a light-colored background.

Jonathan Lynch, Chair, Louth Volunteer Centre

### 3. Our Environment

Our core funding is allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development to **Strengthen and Support Volunteering** in County Louth. We therefore need to know our local landscape – demographics; community and voluntary sector; statutory agencies – very well.

#### 3.1 Demographics

Louth is the second most densely populated county in Ireland, with a population density of 155.4 (1,000 per sq km). The two main towns in the county, Drogheda and Dundalk, topped the table of 'most populated towns' in Ireland in the 2011 census. There are also a number of substantial towns and villages such as Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. The fastest growing areas in the county are amongst these dispersed smaller towns and villages – Collon, Carlingford and Termonfeckin. Isolated rural areas with low levels of access to public transport are also represented in the county, for example the Cooley Peninsula.

The 2011 Census shows that Louth's population structure has a younger profile than that of the state at 27.1% aged 17 or under as opposed to the state figure of 25.1%.

The HASSE Deprivation index lists Louth as being the ninth most disadvantaged LCC area nationally, with significant disadvantage and low educational attainment to be found in the urban areas of Drogheda and Dundalk. Louth also has a higher than average proportion of unskilled workers, young people not in education, training or employment (NEETs), and people living in disadvantaged communities (IRIS Data 2017)

#### 3.2 Area Strengths

Louth has a vibrant community and voluntary sector, this is evidenced by the fact that Louth Volunteer Centre currently has over 400 organisations registered on our database, 275 of whom actively engaged with our supports and services over the past year.

At policy level volunteerism is recognised as an important element in creating a vibrant and inclusive society – the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) references this with a number of key actions relating to volunteering listed under its Community Objectives and Actions. This was due, in no small part, to the engagement of Louth Volunteer Centre with the drafting of the LECP plan.

There is a positive history of collaborative and cross-sectoral working in Louth. Louth Volunteer Centre is a member of a number of localised and county-wide groups such as Dundalk/Drogheda Education & Training Networks; the Rural Development Plan oversight group and local advisory groups such as Dee Hub Interagency Group which bring together a broad spectrum of local stakeholders. Louth Volunteer Centre also has a seat on the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Centre Manager a member of Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) Secretariat.

### 3.3 Area Challenges

Although Louth is the smallest County in Ireland there are very strong regional divides within it (across North, Mid and South Louth; between the urban centres of Drogheda and Dundalk and between particular rural areas such as the Cooley Peninsula and the wider Ardee region) and differences of engagement are required for locations that, while being geographically close, are very different in culture and demographics. To be able to facilitate good quality volunteering opportunities and a throughput of volunteers to fill these opportunities across the whole county Louth Volunteer Centre therefore needs to maintain some form of physical presence (permanent office and/or regular outreach) in each area. There are considerable resourcing implications for this in terms of staffing, travel and potential rental costs.

While Louth has a vibrant and active community sector the main towns within the county are within the commuter belt with the resultant 'dormitory' activity amongst significant numbers of the population – impacting community engagement amongst the younger population in the region.

The recent upswing in the economy has had a positive impact on the unemployment rate in the County. From June 2011 to 2014 Louth had an incrementally better unemployment rates than the state, with a reduction to 12.6% for Louth as opposed to 11.7% for the state. This has had a knock on effect for the community and voluntary sector, particularly in terms of their ability to recruit through schemes such as TUS and Community Employment. The Community & Voluntary sector locally have become reliant on these schemes to fulfil their resourcing requirements and are somewhat reluctant to recognise the potential impact volunteers could have in these vital roles. To confound this issue there is a reduction in people interested in 'developmental' roles such as these and there is a sense amongst the C&V sector locally that it is becoming 'harder' to recruit volunteers.



## 4. Our Activities & Achievements

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. Workplan activities are mapped to four core objectives which are aligned with our strategic aims. Six key priorities were identified to be focused on for the year.

### 4.1 Core Objective One – Increase access

**Increase Access to Volunteering by offering a Support Service to the Public and Volunteering Involving Organisations** Key

**Priority:** *Achieve 35% placement rate<sup>2</sup> amongst people not originally from Ireland*

The national placement rate for new communities in 2018 was 33%, whereas in 2018 we only achieved a 27% placement rate for this demographic in Louth Volunteer Centre; yet with new registrations from 64 nationalities in 2018 a substantial proportion of our volunteers were not originally from Ireland.

Volunteering is a significant tool for inclusion, it can enable people to feel empowered; to feel a sense of belonging their community; and to develop skills and experience in a local context. We sought, therefore, to address this deficit in 2019.

#### Achievement:

We exceeded our target for this priority<sup>3</sup>. This was achieved through a combination of actions:

- inviting volunteers to meet with team members in our office so as to overcome language barriers
- identifying and promoting roles that were accessible to individuals with basic English
- identifying appropriate roles/organisations for individual volunteers
- advocating on behalf of individual volunteers to local voluntary organisations
- increasing interactions with people from new communities.

**38% Placement Rate**

The Fleadh Cheoil<sup>4</sup> was a significant factor in the achievement of this outcome as we actively recruited volunteers from new communities to participate in the event, including giving talks in churches attended by migrant communities; speaking to people living in direct provision and presenting to English as a Second or Other Language students.

<sup>2</sup> The volunteering placement rate is measured by the unique number of volunteers placed in a role. It is a standard metric used by the national network of volunteer centres.

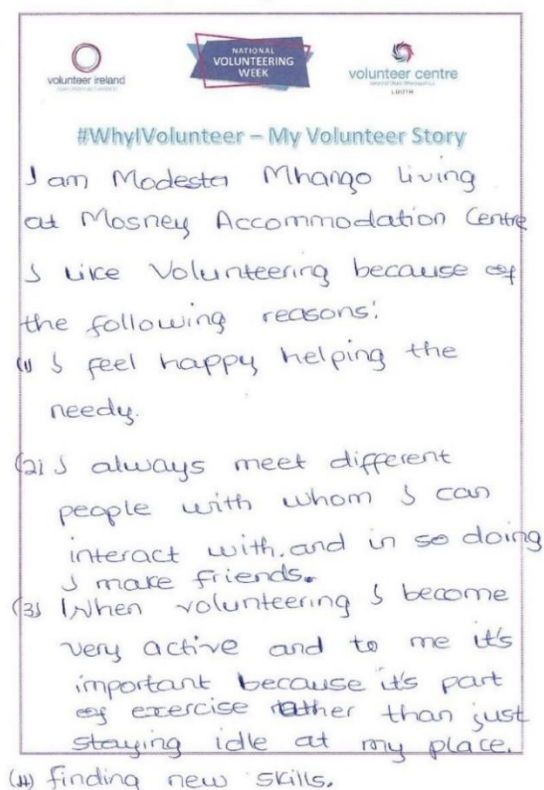
<sup>3</sup> The national placement rate for people not originally from Ireland also increased, however only by 1% compared to 11% in Louth Volunteer Centre

<sup>4</sup> Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the largest festival of Irish traditional music and culture in the world. It is also the biggest volunteer delivered event in Ireland. Louth Volunteer Centre managed the Fleadh Cheoil Volunteer Programme in 2018 & 2019

The inclusion of a more diverse volunteer corps at this most 'Irish' of events was very powerful. See case study in Section 4.3

Going into 2020 we will have to be mindful of how we can sustain this placement rate without a large vehicle for inclusive volunteering such as the Fleadh. In late 2019 we commenced development of a 'Community Event Volunteer Support Programme' to support best practice in volunteer engagement, including creating a diverse and inclusive volunteering event. This programme was to be launched in Spring 2020

#### Case Study: *#WhyIVolunteer – Modesta Mhango*



#### Key Priority: *Retain volunteer placement rate of 50%*

Our volunteer placement rate is intrinsically connected to many of the KPIs related to the provision of a support service to the public and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs). These include contacting volunteers within 48 hours of registration; offering volunteers the opportunity to meet with a member of our team; having a wide variety of volunteer roles available; ensuring our service is accessible to the public and VIOs; providing best practice supports to VIOs so that they can engage positively with volunteers. Stabilising this placement rate therefore requires considerable inputs from the Louth Volunteer Centre team and was a key priority in and of itself.

#### Achievement:

## 52% Placement Rate

#### Outputs

|                             |                                                      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>99% (1% increase)*</b>   | • Volunteers contacted within 2 days of registration |
| <b>657 (4% increase)</b>    | • Face to Face Meetings with volunteers              |
| <b>8,314 (54% increase)</b> | • Engagements with volunteers                        |
| <b>314 (22% increase)</b>   | • Volunteer Opportunities available                  |

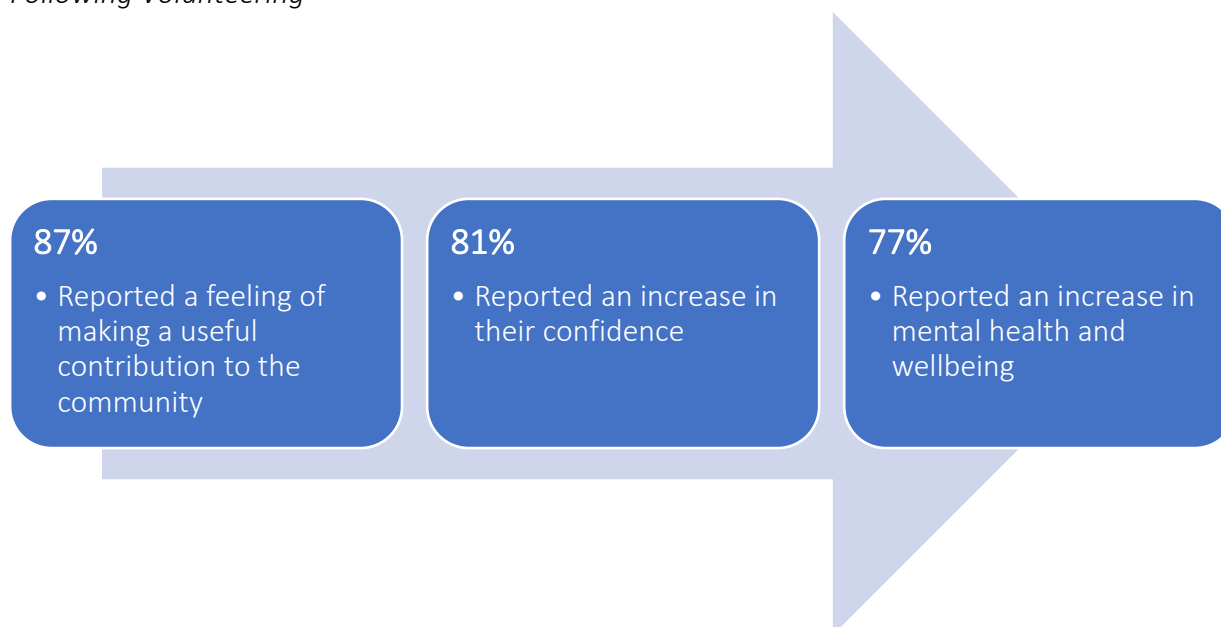
\*increases are year on year 2018 to 2019

## Outcomes

|                             |                                                      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>100% (Target 85%)</b>    | • Stated were followed up in a reasonable time       |
| <b>96% (Target 85%)</b>     | • Stated services were easy to access                |
| <b>46,706 (9% increase)</b> | • Hours contributed by volunteers to their community |

## Impacts

### *Following Volunteering*



## 4.2 Core Objective Two – Increase quality

### Increase the quality of volunteering in County Louth

#### **Key Priority:** *Move beyond placement supports*

An essential part of our role is the management of IVOL, the national volunteering database, at local level. We adhere to strict, externally evaluated quality standards in our management of IVOL and our core funding is dependent on our maintenance of these standards. This is what we refer to when we speak about ‘placement’ it is the placing of volunteers in, quality checked, roles on IVOL.

However, we also understand that supports to organisations who involve volunteers in their work are required to ensure quality volunteering roles are available – both on IVOL and independent to that database. To that end we seek to provide additional supports to not for profit organisations in County Louth to enhance their ability to involve volunteers, the quality of volunteer experiences and the variety of volunteer roles available in the community.

In 2019 we delivered a wide variety of beyond placement supports to volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) including:

- **Needs Assessments:** We carry out a needs assessment with all new organisations when they register with us and also offer needs assessments on a regular basis to registered organisations. The information gathered here facilitates our provision of individualised supports to groups and also our training and group supports provision
- **Volunteer Leaders’ Networks (VLN):** We established our first VLN in November 2017. These are peer and shared learning sessions built around specific topics that participants have identified would benefit their volunteer leadership practice. In 2019 we made the decision to actively promote our VLNs, particularly in the Ardee and Dundalk areas where numbers of attendance had been lower
- **Volunteer Fairs:** We had not run a volunteer fair in Louth in a number of years but had heard from our colleagues in other Volunteer Centres how beneficial they are not only in terms of promoting awareness of volunteering but also in terms of encouraging VIOs to look beyond the ‘normal’ sources of volunteers.
- **Partnerships:** We partnered with the Carmichael Centre to run a series of Good Governance training events across County Louth as groups had identified that this was an area their voluntary boards would like support

Building on our learning in delivering the Fleadh Cheoil Volunteer Programme and the response from volunteers to the County Louth Volunteering Strategy survey (see section for discussions on both) at the end of 2019 we commenced the development of a [Community Events Support Programme](#) to support best practice in the management of event volunteers – which can include anything from on street bucket collections to community festivals. We were due to launch this programme in Spring 2020, anticipating take up commencing March 2020 as St. Patrick’s Day is historically the ‘kick off’ for

‘once off volunteering’. Unfortunately, the COVID crisis, as with many other things has negatively impacted our ability to deliver this programme, and indeed its’ usefulness to the local community

Achievements:

**20% increase**

- Attendance at Volunteer Leader Networks

**3 Volunteer Fairs**

- 2 x rural areas (Ardee & Omeath); 1 x third level college (Dundalk IT)



*Attendees at Volunteer Fair held in Ardee Library during National Volunteering Week 2019*

Outcomes

|                           |                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>314 (22% increase)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Opportunities available</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>98% (target 80%)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stating their needs were assessed</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>93% (target 75%)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stating they were provided with appropriate support and guidance</li> </ul> |

Impacts:

*Because of their engagement with Louth Volunteer Centre*

|            |                                                                                                                                        |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>83%</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stated their knowledge of volunteering has increased</li> </ul>                          |
| <b>73%</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stated their ability to develop a volunteer programme has increased</li> </ul>           |
| <b>71%</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stated that their skills to lead, manage and support volunteers has increased</li> </ul> |
| <b>67%</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VIOs stated their ability to attract new volunteers has increased</li> </ul>                  |

**Case study – Yvonne Carr, Dundalk Simon Community**

*“We had been recruiting volunteers through Louth Volunteer Centre for a number of years but only began attending their Volunteer Leaders’ Network this year (2019). The first session we attended was focused on volunteer recruitment and retention. It was an opportunity for us to share challenges we were experiencing in volunteer retention. We got lots of tips from others attending the session. Kayleigh from the Volunteer Centre also shared their volunteer code of conduct with us and gave some advice around setting boundaries from the outset with volunteers. We implemented this learning and immediately reaped the rewards as volunteer retention in our shop increased and interaction with new volunteers was greatly enhanced. We really enjoy attending the network meetings and come away with something new every time.”*





*Local volunteer leaders at our Dundalk Volunteer Leaders Network meeting, November 2019, including Yvonne*

**Key Priority:** *Increase inclusivity of roles – 40% of new volunteer opportunities involve people with additional support needs*

One of our core values is equality and the removal of barriers that exclude vulnerable groups from participating fully in society. In Louth Volunteer Centre we recognise that volunteer can be very empowering to the individual and can enhance their sense of their own value. In 2019 85% of our volunteers reported that their feeling of making a useful contribution to their community increased after volunteering. This is particularly powerful for people with support needs. Nationally Volunteer Centres recognise it can be a challenge to ensure there are roles available on IVOL which are available to people with additional support needs. We employ a variety of methods to ensure we have opportunities that include those with support needs available including questioning (and challenging!) organisations as to whether they have considered involving people with support needs; supporting organisations to identify appropriate roles; and providing training and other supports to organisations who have concerns about involving people with support needs.

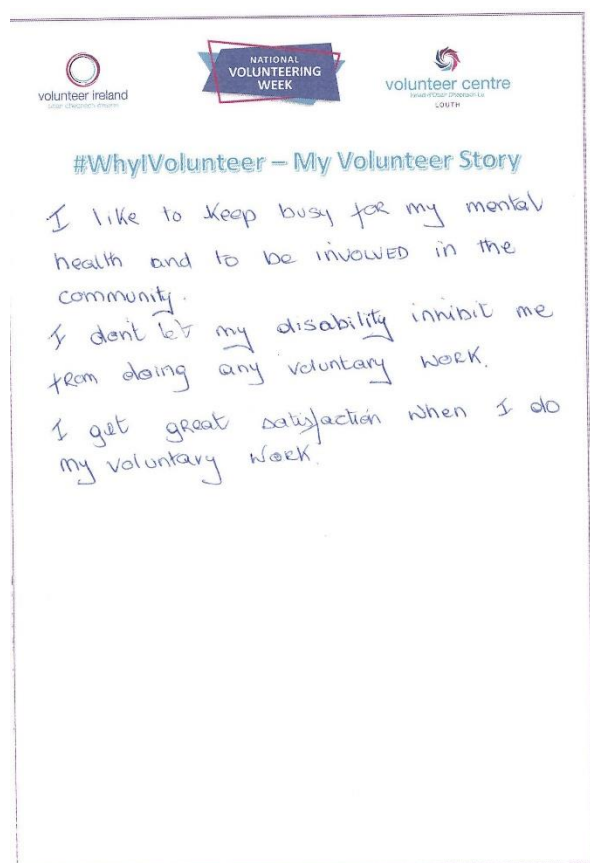
**Achievement:**

**44% new roles involve people with additional support needs**

## Impacts

### Case Study: *David Walsh*

David has been registered with Louth Volunteer Centre since 2016 and regularly volunteers for a wide variety of charities in his local town, Drogheda. David accesses multiple 'once off' volunteer roles through Louth Volunteer Centre as the IVOL alerts he receives allow him to pick and choose when and where he volunteers depending on his circumstances that week. The Louth Volunteer Centre team often communicate details of particular volunteer roles directly to David and his carers and work together with them to ensure the activity suits David's individual situation. David regards himself as a professional volunteer and is a highly respected and valued volunteer amongst the local not for profit community; he is a familiar sight around town fundraising on behalf of local charities and can sweet talk anyone into giving a donation! What is more important, of course, is how important volunteering is for David – which he says in his own words:



### Case Study: *Praxis volunteers and the Fleadh*

We recognise that if we are to encourage organisations that are registered with us to involve people with additional support needs that we must practice what we preach and offer opportunities to a wide variety of volunteers within the programmes we manage ourselves.

In 2018 and 2019 we managed the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and sought to make our volunteer programme as inclusive as possible, directly targeting younger volunteers; older volunteers and



people from migrant communities to participate in this huge celebration of Irish culture. In addition, we reached out to local disability services to invite their service users to participate as volunteers.

One of these services was **Praxis Care's Hub** in Drogheda. The Hub is a day service catering for adults with a diagnosis of autism, intellectual disability and/or complex needs. Their service users are young people in their late teens and early 20s. When we approached the Hub they were very enthusiastic about these young people having the opportunity to participate as many had seen family members attend the event the year before. However, they also identified that given the specific traits and

challenges faced by individual service users it might be challenging to do so. One key challenge to participation that all their service users faced was the level of noise and crowds at the Fleadh which would be distressing to them.

The Volunteer Centre team worked with the Praxis team to identify potential roles that would be of value and would be enjoyable to their service users. They proposed that the young people could assist with the assembly of packs that were being put together for visitors taking part in local heritage tours, this was a

task that could be carried out in the Volunteer Hub. Both teams also identified that Praxis volunteers, with an interest in doing so, could participate in the 'Green Fleadh' – our environmental team – as they could take part in litter picks early in the morning before crowds arrived into the town.

In the end four Praxis service users and their support workers assembled over 300 visitor packs on our behalf, no small feat, and four other service users became members of our Green Team. Majella, Hub Coordinator noted *"Our service users really enjoyed helping out. It was so important for them to feel part of the team and being provided with volunteer t-shirts gave them that sense of being the same as everyone else. They all PARTICULARLY loved their lanyards with their own names on them. Your team were so helpful too, thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of it"*

#### 4.3 Core Objective Three – Increase awareness

**Increase awareness of volunteering by marketing and promoting volunteering**

Key

**Priority:** *Deliver a significant volunteering event that raises the public profile of Louth Volunteer Centre*

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the largest volunteer led and delivered event in Ireland. In 2017 Louth Volunteer Centre were awarded the contract to manage the volunteer programme for Fleadh Cheoil

Droichead Átha (Drogheda) 2018 and 2019. After a successful first year in 2018 we implemented a number of changes in our recruitment, training and scheduling of volunteers. Our volunteer programme was greatly expanded in 2019 with volunteers engaged over a 9 day programme as compared to 7 days in 2018 and our team took on the direct management of a number of key roles that were not under our remit the previous year such as Venue Managers.

Event volunteering can often be an excellent ‘access point’ to volunteering and can help drive inclusive volunteering. It was very important to us that we made our programme as diverse as possible and in year two focused our energies in particular on reaching out to a wide variety of demographics – but in particular people living locally. It was an also an opportunity for us to showcase our knowledge and expertise in terms of delivering a quality volunteer programme. This was achieved through a comprehensive training programme and supports to volunteers throughout the week of the Fleadh.





### Achievements

**90%** (target 80%)

- Volunteer registrations from local area

**30%** (50% increase - Target 20%)

- Volunteers under the age of 18

**100%** (Target 90%)

- Volunteer Satisfaction

### Outputs & Outcomes

**630** (43% increase)

- Attendees at training

**1,990** (42% increase)

- Completed Volunteer shifts

**12,000** (60% increase)

- Volunteer Hours contributed

**4.7/5** (increase from 4.3)

- How well volunteers felt LVC's training/induction prepared them for volunteering



## Impacts

# 4.4/5

- How likely volunteers are to **volunteer at future events**

# 4.2/5

- How likely volunteers are to **continue volunteering in general**

The greatest impact of any volunteer programme is the difference it makes to those who participate in it.

### Feedback from volunteers

Hi Grainne, had a great time volunteering at the Fleadh this year, it really helped me along and I plan to keep up volunteering. Everybody was so helpful and friendly word not have a bad word to say,  
Thanks  
Sincerely  
Darren



### Feedback from volunteers

Best fleadh ever. Privileged to be volunteer...  
drogheda was just great.. big jack...



### Feedback from volunteers

I just wanted to say thank you for all the hard work you did. I had a great experience and met loads of wonderful people, both volunteers and public. You must be exhausted, but congratulations on a job well done.  
Anne Parks



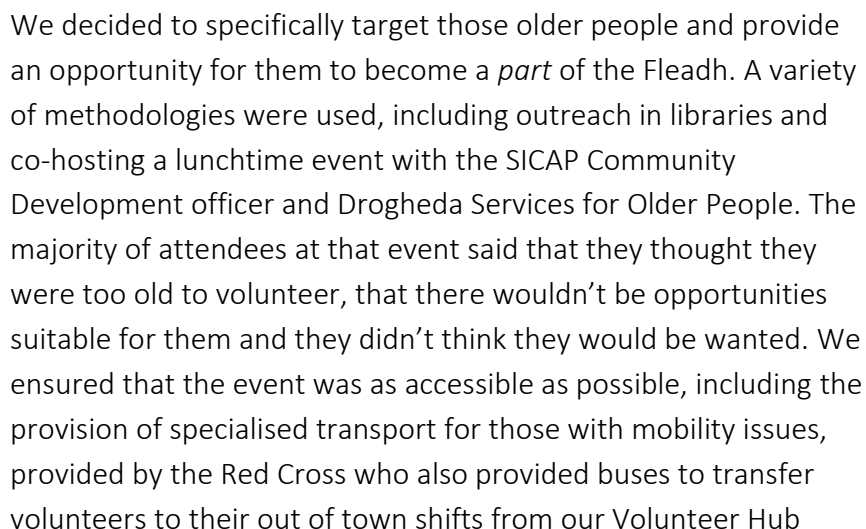
### Feedback from volunteers

Good Morning,  
I just wanted to express my thanks for giving me the chance to volunteer for the Fleadh this year! It was an amazing experience!  
Kind Regards,  
Dina



## Case Study: *Partnership with Louth Leader Partnership SICAP Programme – Older People*

Louth Volunteer Centre partnered with Louth Leader Partnership's (LLP) SICAP team to identify, reach out to and support under-represented groups to become part of the Fleadh Volunteer team. In early 2019 LLP's SICAP development officer hosted a Drogheda Older Person's Services planning event. It emerged at that event that many older people felt intimidated by and disconnected from



Case Study: *Partnership with Louth Leader Partnership SICAP Programme – Young People*

We gave a presentation to youth workers from a number of projects for ‘hard to reach’ young people around Drogheda. They were equipped with information to share with the young people they were supporting and we put in place a number of processes and supports to both encourage and increase the possibility of their participation in the Fleadh Volunteer Programme, for example a slightly adjusted registration process to take account of the fact that family members may have literacy or other access issues when giving consent and support workers attending training alongside participants. While the number of young people who ended up volunteering at the Fleadh through this initiative was low, the impacts were extremely high.

*“This was one of the first time these young people were involved in something which the whole community did, and they really enjoyed it. Three of those four young people have progressed to further education or employment, and the fourth is going to go back to 6<sup>th</sup> year so he is also doing*

*well. I think the Fleadh volunteering gave them something that even they didn't realise at the time and I would encourage everyone when they can to volunteer at some point or many points in their lives."*

### **Case Study: *Emmanuelle Ntemuse's Story***

Emmanuel Ntemuse heard about Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann after the Louth Volunteer Centre team had given a presentation at his local church on volunteering and mentioned that they were recruiting volunteers for the event. Emmanuel had developed an enthusiasm for Gaeilge through Irish debates in secondary school and developed his skill in the language through reading as many materials written in Irish as he could and trying to expand his vocabulary. However, without connections to the traditional Irish speaking networks he did not have many opportunities to speak the language. He was delighted to hear about the Seachtain na Gaeilge programme at the Fleadh and signed up to help out in any way he could.



Emmanuel volunteered throughout the week, including being a representative of the Irish speaking volunteers at the Seachtain na Gaeilge launch event. From Emmanuel's perspective he was thrilled to have the opportunity to speak a language he loved and to connect with other 'Gaeilgeors' living in his own area. He subsequently applied through Louth Volunteer Centre to become a volunteer youth

leader with Ógra's, the Conradh na Gaeilge youth club programme, so that he could share his dedication and passion for Irish with other young people.

Emmanuel stated: *"The preservation and promotion of the Irish language has long been an issue very close to my heart and I am always looking for new ways to use the language in my everyday life and to hopefully encourage others to do the same. Volunteering gives me the opportunity to do this"*

From the perspective of visitors to the Fleadh the sight of Emmanuel and other young African Irish volunteers speaking fluent Irish and demonstrating their love of Irish culture had a profound effect, with many Gaeilgeorí and festival attendees commenting on the diversity of Fleadh volunteers and their confidence in the future of Irish culture and heritage as a result of this diversity.

### Key Priority: *Develop a County Volunteering Strategy*

Our vision is to make volunteering part of the way of life in Louth and the development of a Volunteering Strategy for County Louth has long been our aim in furthering that vision. We had been successful in lobbying for the inclusion of this action in the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)<sup>5</sup> adopted on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016. Louth LECP Community Goal 1, Objective 2 Action 2.2 identifies the need to develop a volunteer strategy for Louth to address the barriers to volunteering, whilst promoting and supporting the value of volunteering to the individual and its positive impact on local communities. In late 2018 our board identified that the LECP would be halfway through it's lifespan in 2019 (2016 – 2022) and therefore the development of the strategy should be a key priority for Louth Volunteer Centre, an achievement which would further solidify our role of strengthening and supporting volunteering in our community.

### Achievement:

In June 2019 we secured LEADER funding to commission a Volunteering Strategy for County Louth, a process which took approximately 6 months.

**Secured LEADER funding**

Following an open tender process BluZebra were commissioned to deliver the report. A co-design working group was established to oversee and support this process including representatives of Louth PPN, Louth County Council Community Section, Louth Leader Partnership and other key stakeholders and led by Louth Volunteer Centre. Our original project plan was a 6-month process with delivery of the strategy by December 2019. We were not successful in achieving this goal due to the challenge of juggling a large, very significant project that was Fleadh Cheoil and maintaining quality in our day to day work. However, as 'Fleadh volunteers' were a particularly engaged group we were able to elicit a good response with rich data from this group of volunteers and scheduling the research phase of the project after the Fleadh proved to be a good decision.

After an initial literature review conducted by BluZebra we commenced the research phase in September/October 2019:

- Initial survey completed by
  - 156 volunteers
  - 100 organisations who involve volunteers
- 3 x public consultations held in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee
- Statutory agencies focus group with 9 agencies represented
- Round table co-design workshop attended by 30 representatives of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations

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<sup>5</sup> The LECP is a statutory document promoting the local and community development for the County  
CRO Company No 404719 : Reg Charity No 17034



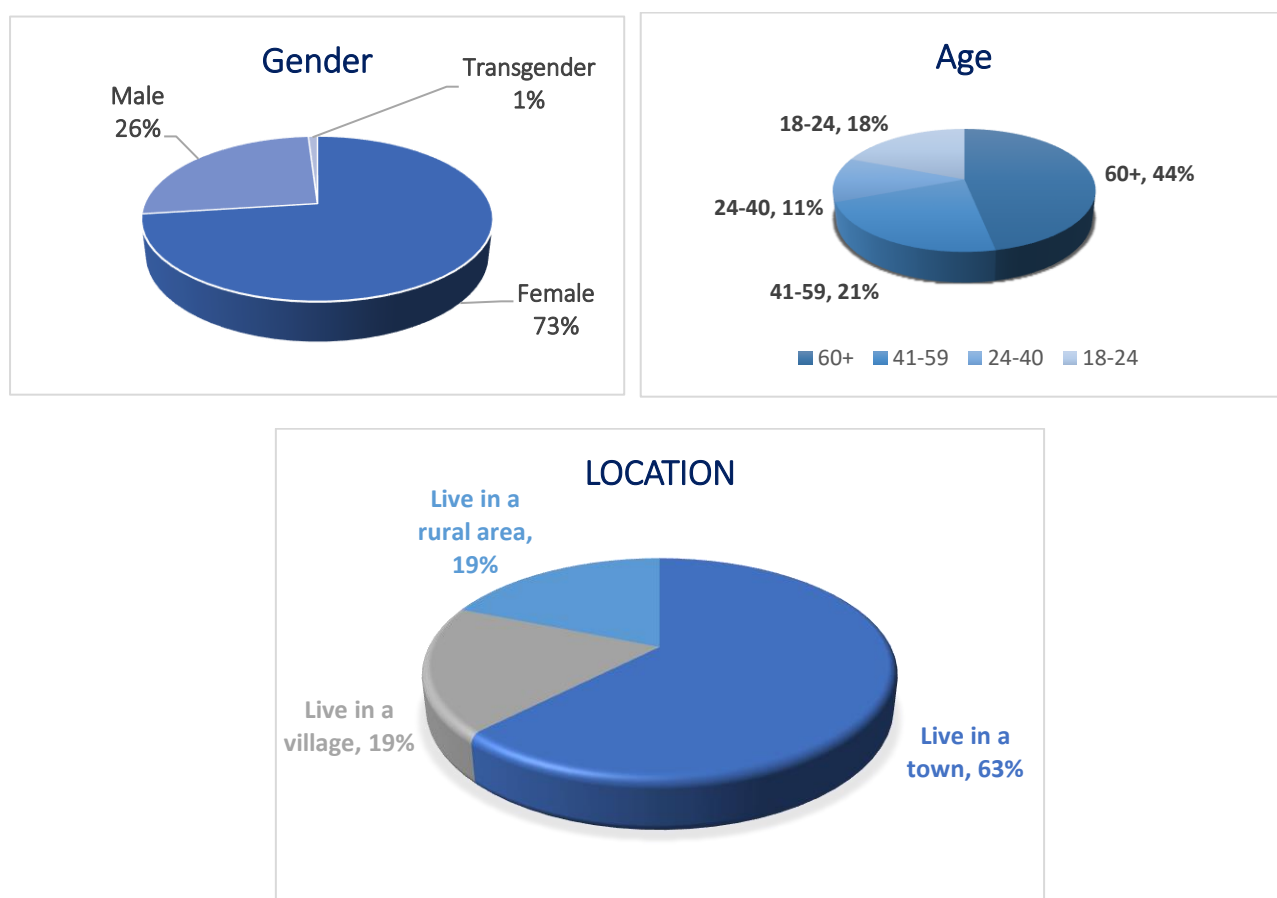
## Survey Responses

Respondents were informed that in addition to informing the development of a County Louth Volunteering Strategy Louth Volunteer Centre may also use the data to inform and improve their own service. This information will help us in future service planning and provision.

### Volunteer Survey

17% of respondents were not associated with Louth Volunteer Centre at all, while 39% were registered with Louth Volunteer Centre through IVOL and 59% through the Fleadh volunteer programme (there may be overlap).

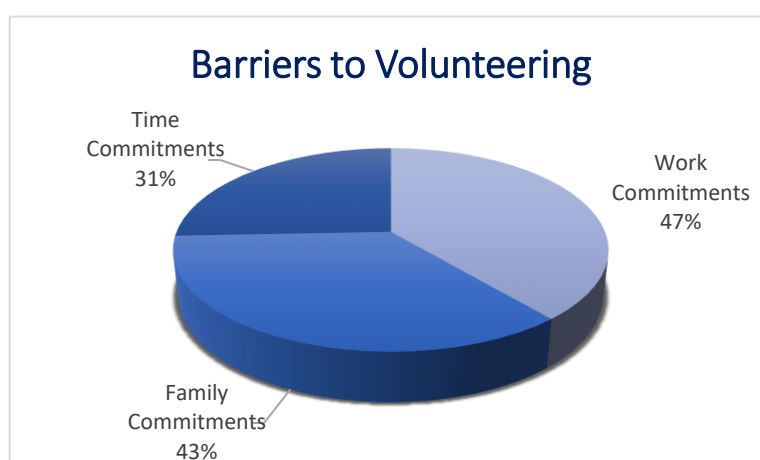
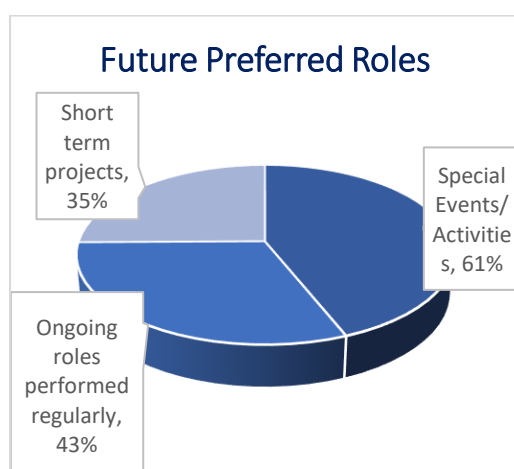
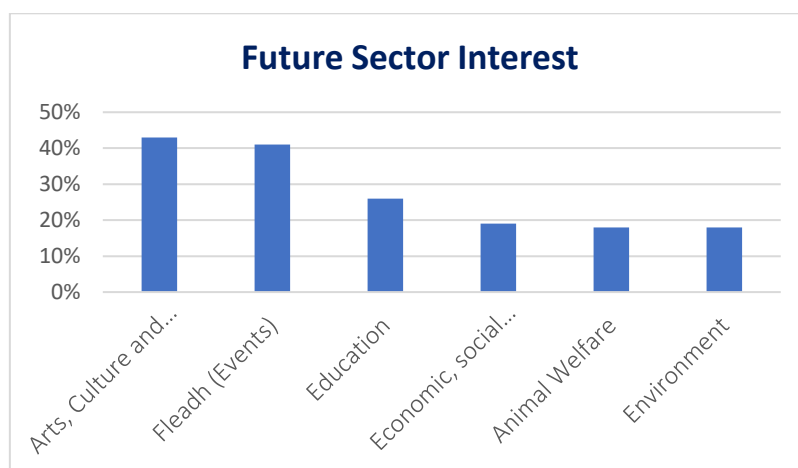
### Demographics



We were disappointed with the lack of response from young people under the age of 18, particularly when we have year on year growth in registrations from that demographic group since 2017. As a result we specifically targeted young people to attend our round table workshop and had 8 attendees in the 15-17 year old age group participate. It is also our intention to utilise our PEACE IV Good Relations Initiative to reach young people as there is a youth strand to the project.

The ratio of female to male responses (73:26) is higher than that of our database (66:31 in terms of new volunteer registrations in 2019)

### Future Voluntary Activity



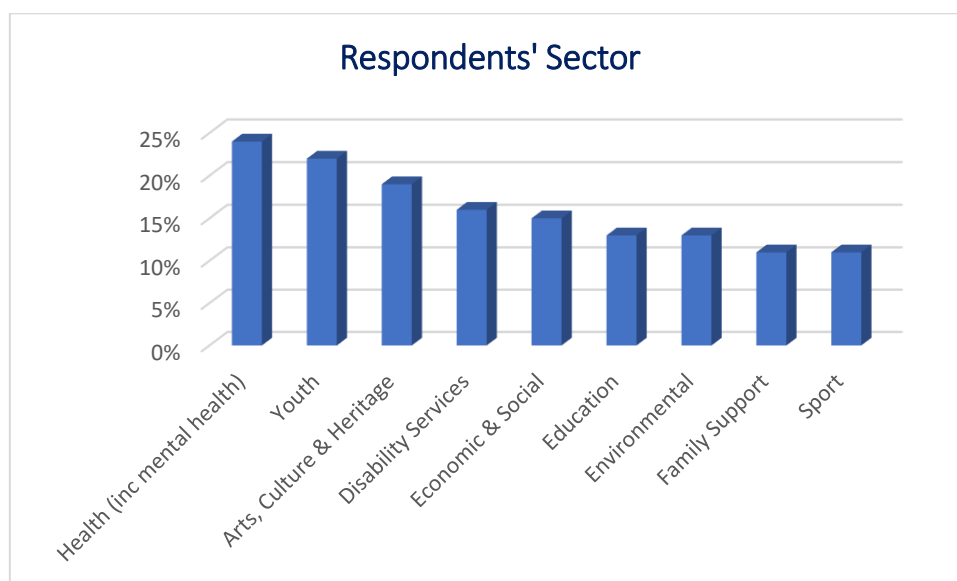
Whilst the data may be skewed by the proportion of respondents who had volunteered during Fleadh Cheoil nonetheless the responses correspond with local and national volunteering trends towards short term, events based volunteering which are very accessible to people and do not conflict with the commitments outlined by respondents as barriers to volunteering.

This data coupled with our experience of delivering the Fleadh Cheoil programme led to us creating a support package for local not for profits in managing event volunteers (See section 4.2 for more).

### Volunteer Involving Organisations' Survey

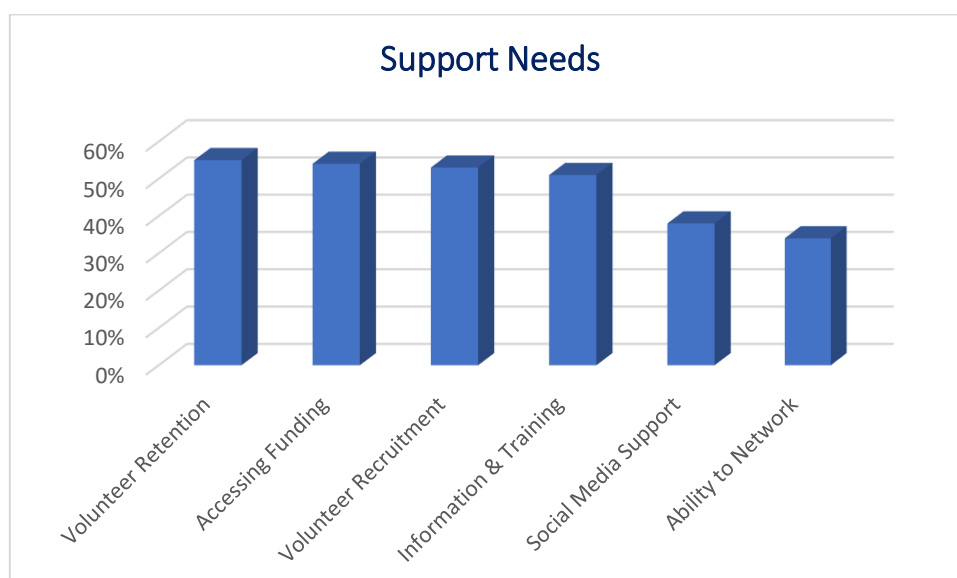
20% of respondents were not associated with Louth Volunteer Centre. 61% identified that their organisation was registered with us.

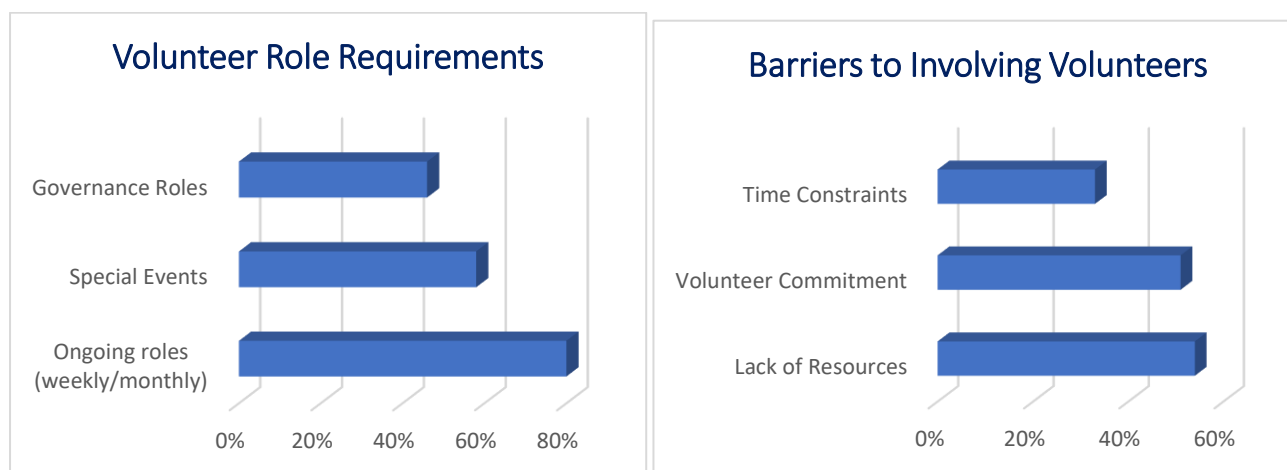
### Organisational Information



We were happy to have received responses from a broad spectrum of sectors however noted that only 11% of responses came from the sporting sector. This is reflective of the low level of engagement of sporting bodies with the broader field of volunteering outside of their own code, yet sport represents a significant proportion of voluntary activity in Ireland (in 2018 Sport Ireland identified that 10.8% of the population regularly volunteer in sport). In response we invited Louth Sports Partnership to attend our statutory agencies focus group and a member of their team to join our co-design working group. We are exploring some shared opportunities for 2020 as a result.

### Future Needs





We hope to develop a suite of new training options in 2020 informed by this data. The data has also been particularly useful to us in both planning and validating our service provision; as noted earlier (Section 4.2) we led a Volunteer Leaders' Network focused on volunteer retention which participants found particularly useful. We also provide a lot of one to one guidance, support and resources in this area.

It is interesting to note that the majority of projected volunteer requirements amongst organisations who involve volunteers are the traditional 'regular' volunteering roles, which is at odds with volunteer desire for short term roles. This contradiction is further evidenced in the fact that VIOs state that volunteer commitment is a significant barrier. As a team we are working to come up with innovative strategies to help VIOs and Volunteers bridge this gap in needs and wants.

### Next Steps

By December 2019 a draft document was completed with vision, mission, values and strategic priorities. It is our goal that it will not belong to Louth Volunteer Centre but rather the wider community and will be influential in policy development relating to volunteering in Louth. To that end it was agreed that the document should sit under the remit of the Local Community Development Committee and that Louth Public Participation Network would be the lead agent in a number of implementation actions identified within the strategy.

A consultation session was organised for January 2020 to enable Louth Public Participation Network secretariat members and other key stakeholders such as the CEO of Louth Leader Partnership to review the document and give feedback. While we will be giving further feedback on this in our 2020 Annual Report it is worth noting that this point that this consultation session was hugely valuable. A subsequent co-design working group meeting in early March to analyse the response at that consultation meeting resulted in a request that BluZebra reframe the document (whilst retaining the core of the initial mission, vision and values) into a Framework for volunteering rather than a strategy. The upshot of this is that a redrafting was required, just as the COVID crisis hit, a crisis which has completely redrawn the volunteering landscape across Ireland. It has been opportune therefore that we did not publish in December 2019 as the delay is going to allow us to capture this changed environment and incorporate learning into the framework. We are confident that the new Framework for Volunteering in County Louth will be published in 2020.

#### 4.4 Core Objective Four – Sustainability

Ensure the organisation is sustainable through good governance and management

**Key Priority:** *Implement new IT and database systems to best practice guidelines*

When we were awarded the Fleadh Cheoil Volunteer Programme contract in September 2017, which was our largest project to date in scale until we were awarded PEACE IV funding in August 2019, we were conscious that to effectively deliver we would need to enhance our IT capacity. We were also aware that adherence to the incoming General Data Protection Regulations may place a strain on our IT resources. To prepare for this in December 2017 we commissioned a professional ICT assessment carried out by Sync IT which we funded through ringfenced local County Councillor allocations.

Sync IT proposed a three-phase process:

- 1. IT stabilisation (New hardware requirements; Procurement and deployment of a structured firewall)
- 2. IT Optimisation (Migrate users to Microsoft 365)
- 3. IT Utilisation (Enhance organisation productivity through building an internal cloud-based portal)

Thanks to funding secured from Louth County Council through the Communities Enhancement Programme in 2018 we were able to implement phases 1 and 2 in 2018. It became clear as that year closed that it would be imperative to complete phase 3 in 2019 so as to enhance our efficiencies and also to ensure that we adhered to best practice in security and data protection requirements.

Further, in 2018 we had developed our own Salesforce database to facilitate the management of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann volunteers. Whilst this worked relatively well we encountered issues with the system in the area of communications in particular and it was clear that these would need to be enhanced in 2019 particularly given we anticipated a considerable increase in activity as the volunteer programme expanded. Finally, we were aware that whilst our systems for managing Garda Vetting, a core service which we deliver as part of our Department of Rural and Community Development contract, were satisfactory they could be considerably improved particularly if the processing of vetting could be integrated into our Salesforce system. Therefore, and as flagged in our 2018 annual report, a key priority for 2019 was the implementation of all these systems.

#### Achievements

Microsoft Sharepoint is now used by all team members from the chair of the board to individual volunteers as a cloud-based portal

## Implementation of MS Sharepoint

for storing documents and collaborative working. It has facilitated enhanced data protection and

document storage measures as we have set up a series of 'Sites' for different groupings of team members— a Board site; a Garda Vetting site; a general Team site; a Finance site, and so on. All team members receive an @volunteerlouth profile and email which allows us to tightly manage access and profile settings.

## Implementation of SMS 360

In addition to other improvements made to our Salesforce system in advance of Fleadh 2019 we implemented a new automated texting system, SMS 360. This allowed us to

schedule reminder texts to volunteers in advance of training and shifts. The implementation required back-end development work as it is not a 'native' app for the Salesforce system. It also required financial investment, particularly given the volume of shift reminders being issued, however this was deemed to be a necessary improvement based on team and volunteer feedback from 2018.

VC VET is a Salesforce app developed by South County Dublin Volunteer Centre's Comm-IT service to streamline Garda Vetting processing for both the affiliate organisation and the Volunteer Centre and

## Implementation of VC VET

reduce the possibility of human error in terms of data breaches. The implementation of this system took a considerable amount of time, we placed our order in February 2019 and completion of the implementation project was in October 2019. Implementation also required an overhaul of our Garda Vetting processes. Serendipitously we undertook this process just as the National Vetting Bureau's compliance section began to ramp up their activities resulting in some required changes in the handling of vetting applications by Registered Organisations<sup>6</sup>. Our Garda Vetting Liaison Person attended the National Vetting Bureau's conference in Croke Park. On foot of this and feedback from the NVB she developed and implemented a regular audit system which all affiliate organisations must sign up to if they wish to access our vetting service and which is tracked through our Salesforce database – which VCVET is integrated into. Our Manager also undertook training to become a Vetting Liaison Person in June 2019 to ensure we could provide continuity of service.

### Impacts

With the exception of the implementation of SMS 360 the real impacts of this activity only revealed themselves in early 2020.

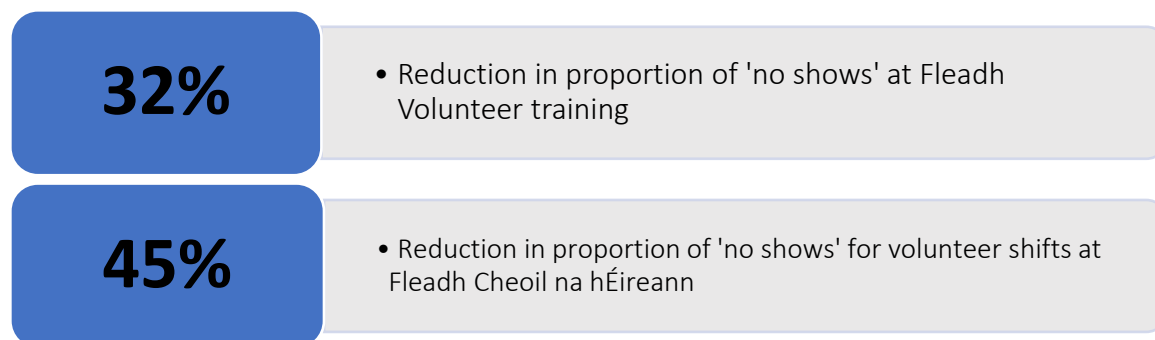
- Ease of integration of PEACE IV team
- Ease of migration to home working due to the COVID-19 crisis

<sup>6</sup> Louth Volunteer Centre is a **Registered Organisation** with the National Vetting Bureau. We process vetting on behalf of local not for profit organisations who do not have access to a vetting officer who are our **affiliates**. We provide this service at a loss (charging only a nominal fee of €5 per volunteer) so as to remove barriers to volunteering in Louth



- Ease of Garda Vetting processing resulted in ALONE asking us to process additional vetting forms to assist them to cope with the influx of new volunteers as a result of COVID-19
- Ease of induction of new team members (including board members) while working remotely. This was due in no small part to the creation of 'wiki' pages as learning environments within Sharepoint

### *SMS 360 implementation*



Improvements in communications to volunteers had the unintended consequence of having *too many* volunteers available to us at some stages during the Fleadh as when predicting volunteer requirements for specific shifts we had factored in no shows and cancellations which are the norm in any volunteer programme. An unusual, but quite pleasant, challenge to face!

Very sincere thanks to **Martin Boyle**, volunteer and subsequently intern with Louth Volunteer Centre from September 2018 to January 2020 for his incredible work in both setting up our Sharepoint portal and migrating all of Louth Volunteer Centre's documentation to it. This was a mammoth task and would have taken a considerably longer time to complete without his expertise and diligence. Martin was also responsible for the setting up of our 'wiki' learning environments and resolving issues that we had with Salesforce in the management of Fleadh Volunteers, particularly in relation to SMS 360. Martin has progressed to full time employment but remains a good friend of Louth Volunteer Centre and an intermittent volunteer with our team.

### *Board Priorities*

In addition to the key priorities identified in the organisation annual workplan our board identify key priorities for themselves each year. Three priorities were identified by the Louth Volunteer Centre board for 2019.

- The development of contingency plans for the organisation
- The development of a County and organisational strategic plan
- Succession Planning

## Contingency/Disaster Plan

As with other Volunteer Centres nationwide Louth Volunteer Centre underwent an external quality standard review in 2016-2017 through which a quality improvement plan was developed which included key actions crucial to the sustainability of the organisation such as the development of a risk register.

The board invested considerable time in 2018 developing a comprehensive risk register for the organisation which is now reviewed on an annual basis. In undertaking this process they identified



### Louth Volunteer Centre Contingency Planning Document

|               |            |                |                       |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Doc. No.      | 8          | Version No.    | 1                     |
| Last Reviewed | 08/07/2019 | Approved By    | Board                 |
| Next Review   | 11/07/2022 | Responsibility | Board, Manager, Staff |

the requirement to review what constitutes 'disaster' for the organisation, the mapping of mitigating actions in the risk register into a contingency plan and the development of practical policy and guidance for the Louth Volunteer Centre team. This was identified as a priority action for 2019 for our board and was completed in July 2019. As with the implementation of improved IT systems it proved fortuitous that we had undertaken this process in 2019 as actions taken (such as verifying team members had

adequate broadband to work from home in emergency situations) meant a relatively painless move to home working in March 2020 when the COVID-19 crisis hit.

It is also worth noting at this point that a review carried out in September 2019 of the Quality Improvement Plan emergent from our external evaluation indicated that all QIP actions had been completed by the Louth Volunteer Centre team and board. We will be undertaking a new external evaluation of our Quality Standards compliance in 2020 so the LVC team reviewed the quality standards in full in December 2019 to pick up on any issues or identify new areas for improvement which will be incorporated into our 2020 governance plan.

## Strategic Plans

The Louth Volunteer Centre board identified supporting the development of a County Volunteering Strategy and a new organisational strategic plan as a key priority for 2019. Both of these documents were to be developed in the context of the imminent delivery of a National Volunteering Strategy – for which consultation by the Department of Rural and Community Development commenced in early 2019. This strategy has not as yet been delivered and is being completely reviewed by DRCD in the light of COVID-19.

Further detail in relation to the delivery of a volunteering strategy is available in section 4.3. As the delivery of this project is LEADER funded and LEADER finishes on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 we cannot go past that point in its completion and launch.

As an organisation we are currently operating under our 2015-2019 strategic plan. We review this on an annual basis and check our activities against strategic objectives. The Louth Volunteer Centre board had aimed to complete a new strategic plan in 2019 however with the delivery of a large scale project (the Fleadh); maintenance of quality standards; and commencement of a County Strategy, in addition to normal governance activities of the board it was decided to continue operating under our current strategic plan and commence a comprehensive planning process for a new strategy in 2020. We are delighted to have recruited a new board member in early 2020 with considerable skills and expertise in this field and are looking forward to embarking on our strategic planning journey.

### **Succession Planning**



In 2018 the board identified succession planning as a key area to be addressed. We anticipated some attrition of membership in that three long standing members completed their term of service in 2019. Our Treasurer also completed their term of office in July 2019. We recruited two new board members in April 2019 in anticipation of these departures and met with a number of other prospective candidates during the year. These two new members were identified as having specific skillsets that would greatly add to the board – particularly in the areas identified (finance and board recruitment).

Unfortunately, one of these new recruits and our incoming Treasurer commenced postgraduate education in September 2019 and found it too difficult to juggle board commitments with this. They have expressed a desire to return to our board as soon as time is available to them. This temporary departure resulted in our outgoing Treasurer having to assume responsibilities for this role while we sought to recruit another suitable candidate, which did not happen until February 2020. This is the fourth new member to find it a challenge to balance personal commitments with their commitment to Louth Volunteer Centre.

As an organisation that supports others in the voluntary and not for profit sector we are aware that board succession is a challenge for many. At the close of 2019 we drew on the expertise of our new board member who works for 2into3 a not for profit recruitment consultancy to adapt our strategies for attracting new board members and overhauled our board induction process to assist in member retention. Once again, the Louth Volunteer Centre board have highlighted succession planning and board recruitment as a priority in their 2020 workplan

In 2019 we also did not achieve our target of an 80% attendance rate, despite having a lower number of board meetings than previous years – this is another area set as a priority for 2020 and is incorporated into our new recruitment and induction processes.

## Board Self-Assessment

The Louth Volunteer Centre board conduct regular formal and informal assessment and evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of their processes and activity. A formal review was carried out in July 2019 by members.

|                             | Role on Board     |                      | Leadership of Board  |                                                       | Board Meetings |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Specific Area of Evaluation | Induction Process | Role as Board Member | Providing Leadership | Understanding & Performing Roles and Responsibilities | Board Meetings | Chair in smooth running of meetings |
| Effectiveness Score         | 3.5 / 5 =         | 4 / 5^               | 3.8 / 5^             | 3.8 / 5^v                                             | 4 / 5^         | 4 / 5^                              |

Overall board members self-evaluated improvements in knowledge and effectiveness in a number of areas, including in terms of providing leadership to the organisation and the running of board meetings, however there was a small decrease in relation to understanding and performing roles and responsibilities – in late 2019 a review of Terms of References of board structures such as subgroups was carried out to assist with this.

## 5. Director's Report and the Financial Statements

### *for the financial year ended 31 December 2019*

#### 5.1 Directors' Report

##### Income

Louth Volunteer Centre's core grant from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) increased by 6% in 2019 to €121,000 (€114,100 in 2018) versus a budget of €120,000. Overall income for 2019 increased by 14% to €155,912 (€137,067 in 2018) versus a projected income budget of €142,000.

Our largest project delivered in 2019 was the second year of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Volunteer Programme. We received a small decrease in funding from €15,828 to €15,573 (versus a budget of €15,000) which was mainly due to a reduction in real costs incurred in the delivery of the programme.

We had a 10% decrease in income from Garda Vetting from €4,518 in 2018 to €4,045 in 2019 (against a budget of €3,500), which is due to a 'plateauing' of need for garda vetting services in the community. This decrease in income is compounded by the investment of €1,600 in an upgraded system for processing Garda vetting. However, the National Vetting Bureau have indicated that they are soon to bring re-vetting on stream which it is anticipated will result in an increase in the volume of vetting applications and therefore revenue increasing in 2020-2021.

Additional income was received from LEADER (€3,623) and through a National Lottery Project delivered in partnership with Volunteer Ireland and Meath Volunteer Centre (€1,266 of Services income). We also secured funding from Louth County Council through the Communities Enhancement Programme of €4,577 as against a budget of €3,500. The majority of these funding streams are offset by expenditure as they are funded to 90% (LEADER) or are for capital costs (Communities Enhancement).

##### Expenditure

Our overall core grant expenditure in 2019 was €119,472, a slight shortfall in spending of the €121,000 budget due to an unanticipated reduction in salary expenditure due to a core team member being on sick leave for an extended period (€97,946 in 2019 as against €99,312 in 2018). Project or other expenditure in the same period was €9,878. The reduction in proportion of expenditure coming from project or other funds is indicative of the fact that Louth Volunteer Centre historically resourced core funding costs such as training from project or other income sources and had budgeted accordingly coming into 2019. The 6% increase in DRCD funding allowed us to move such costs back to core expenditure.

Some core costs such as Rent (€4,000), Printing, Post and Stationery (€1,425) and Marketing (€827) stayed largely the same as 2018 and in line with budgeted figures. Expenditure on salary costs reduced slightly in 2019. We had a slight reduction in IT costs in 2019 (€4,027 in 2019 compared to €4,649 in 2018). However, €1,073 of our increased expenditure in Printing, postage and stationery (€2,498 in 2019 as against €1,405 in 2018) related to the purchase of printing equipment. Having invested heavily in IT hardware in 2018 we increased investment in IT software in 2019, including the aforementioned investment in an upgraded Garda Vetting processing system (VCVET).

We had a reduction in spending on Professional Fees (€1,250 in 2019 compared with €1,691 in 2018) which was as a result in an investment in HR handbooks in 2018; it is worth noting that our audit fees have remained static since 2017. Expenditure on bank fees has also remained almost static (€223 in 2019 versus €228 in 2018)

Expenditure increased across a number of budget lines. Telephone & Communications increased from €2,902 in 2018 to €3,437 in 2019 (versus a budget of €2,950). 38% of expenditure in this budget line came from project funding. This was due to projected additional spend required to manage the Fleadh Cheoil Volunteer Programme and included investment in mobile phones and SMS technology to manage communication with volunteers. Staff training increased from €666 in 2018 to €1,115 in 2019 against a budget of €1,300. Project

expenses were €5,027 in 2018 and €7,641 in 2019 due to costs incurred for the LEADER and Fleadh projects. Volunteer Expenses were €553 in 2018 and €1,282 in 2019 as we were able to give volunteers and interns the opportunity to participate in more events such as our volunteer fairs resulting in travel and other costs being incurred. The increase in our core funding allowed us to address General Maintenance issues and expenditure in this budget line increased from €797 in 2018 to €1,232 in 2019 (versus a budget of €800) which related to investment required at our Dundalk office, this expenditure coming from our core funding budget. A specific bad debt amounting to €13,000 was written off in 2019. This relates to funding promised and invoiced for in 2017 which has proved to be uncollectable.

## **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. 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 2019. The reserve balance at year end 2019 represents 4.5 month's expenditure.

## **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 2019. These will be 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 PEACE IV funding.

In 2019 our principal risk was identified as being an over dependence on DRCD funding which represented 78% of overall income. This proportion is an improvement from 2018 when DRCD funding was 83% of overall income but was still identified as a significant risk, particularly in light of not having a 'headline' project such as the delivery of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Volunteer Programme, which represented 12% of 2018 income and 10% of 2019 income. This risk was mitigated by applying for a variety of funding streams and securing PEACE IV funding for our Good Relations Initiative in November 2019 for project delivery in 2020.

In early 2020 the unprecedented COVID-19 international health crisis struck which has created significant uncertainties for all organisations within our sector and beyond. It has had immediate impact on some income streams such as Garda Vetting and to targets set for 2020 across core and project funding. We seek to mitigate some of this uncertainty through regular risk reviews, adaptation of service delivery and close communication with funders. We also 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.

The Directors have conducted a mid-year review of finances, adapting income and expenditure to reflect the new environment and conclude that the crisis should not adversely impact 2020 projections but caution that protection of income for 2021 is a risk and needs to be prioritised in 2020.

## **Plans for the future**

Core funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) has been confirmed as remaining at €121,000.

Louth Volunteer Centre has also secured funding of €115,343 up to March 2021 from the Special European Union Programmes Body/Louth County Council to deliver a PEACE IV project, the Good Relations Initiative,



under the Building Positive Relations Objective. This represents the most significant additional income stream secured by Louth Volunteer Centre, representing 44% of 2020 forecasted income. 65% of this income is allocated to staff salaries, whilst the remaining 35% will be spent on programme delivery.

The organisation will continue to pursue other revenue streams to continue to diversify funding, manage risks and deliver on our strategic objectives. 2020 will see the production of a new strategic plan for the organisation and identification of appropriate revenue opportunities will be guided by this process. Additional income is projected through Garda Vetting, Training partnerships, and LEADER funding for the delivery of a County Volunteering Strategy. In relation to LEADER funding that income will be offset by expenditure as projects are funded on a 90% basis by the funder.

### **Accounting records**

The measures taken by the directors to secure compliance with the requirements of sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of the company are located at the registered office.

### **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.

This report was approved by the board of directors on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and signed on behalf of the board by:



Jonathan Lynch  
Director



Julie Devitt  
Director

**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 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 2019 which comprise the profit and loss account, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity 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 2019 and of its loss 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 (IAASA), 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***

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which ISAs (Ireland) require us to report to you where:

- the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the directors have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

#### ***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 thereon.

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.

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.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

### ***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.

Tom Stringer FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of  
Callan Stringer & Co.  
Certified Accountants & Statutory Auditors  
66 West Street  
Drogheda  
Co. Louth

4 August 2020

## 5.2 Profit &amp; Loss Account

## Financial year ended 31 December 2019

|                                      | Note | 2019<br>€   | 2018<br>€   |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Turnover</b>                      |      | 155,912     | 137,067     |
|                                      |      | <hr/>       | <hr/>       |
| <b>Gross profit</b>                  |      | 155,912     | 137,067     |
| Administrative expenses              |      | (142,350)   | (125,606)   |
|                                      |      | <hr/>       | <hr/>       |
| <b>Operating profit</b>              |      | 13,562      | 11,461      |
|                                      |      | <hr/>       | <hr/>       |
| <b>Loss before taxation</b>          |      | 13,562      | 11,461      |
| Tax on loss                          |      | -           | -           |
|                                      |      | <hr/>       | <hr/>       |
| <b>Profit for the financial year</b> |      | 13,562      | 11,461      |
|                                      |      | <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> |

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



## 5.3 Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2019

|                                                       |      | 2019          |   | 2018          |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------|---|---------------|---|
|                                                       | Note | €             | € | €             | € |
| <b>Current assets</b>                                 |      |               |   |               |   |
| Debtors                                               | 7    | 10,718        |   | 13,735        |   |
| Cash at bank and in hand                              |      | 73,528        |   | 63,230        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u>84,246</u> |   | <u>76,965</u> |   |
| <b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b> |      |               |   |               |   |
|                                                       | 8    | (1,686)       |   | (7,967)       |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |
| <b>Net current assets</b>                             |      | 82,560        |   | 68,998        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |
| <b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>          |      | 82,560        |   | 68,998        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |
| <b>Net assets</b>                                     |      | 82,560        |   | 68,998        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |
| <b>Capital and reserves</b>                           |      |               |   |               |   |
| Profit and loss account                               |      | 82,560        |   | 68,998        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |
| <b>Members funds</b>                                  |      | 82,560        |   | 68,998        |   |
|                                                       |      | <u></u>       |   | <u></u>       |   |

## 5.4 Statement of Changes in Equity

## Financial Year Ended 31 December 2019

|                                                          | Profit and loss account<br>€ | Total<br>€           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>At 1 January 2018</b>                                 | 57,537                       | 57,537               |
| Profit for the financial year                            | 11,461                       | 11,461               |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the financial year</b> | <u>11,461</u>                | <u>11,461</u>        |
| <b>At 31 December 2018 and 1 January 2019</b>            | 68,998                       | 68,998               |
| Profit for the financial year                            | 13,562                       | 13,562               |
| <b>Total comprehensive income for the financial year</b> | <u>13,562</u>                | <u>13,562</u>        |
| <b>At 31 December 2019</b>                               | <u><u>82,560</u></u>         | <u><u>82,560</u></u> |

## 5.5 Cash Flow Statement

## Financial Year Ended 31 December 2019

|                                                    | 2019<br>€     | 2018<br>€     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Cashflow From Operating Activities</b>          |               |               |
| Increase/(Decrease) in Funds                       | 13,562        | 11,461        |
| Add Depreciation                                   | -             | -             |
| Decrease/(Increase) in Debtors                     | 3,017         | 6,717         |
| (Decrease)/Increase in Creditors                   | - 6,281       | 333           |
| <b>Net Cashflow from Operating Activities</b>      | 10,298        | 18,511        |
| <b>Net Increase in Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b> | 10,298        | 18,511        |
| Cash & Cash Equivalents at beginning of year       | 63,230        | 44,719        |
| Cash & Cash Equivalents at end of year             | <b>73,528</b> | <b>63,230</b> |

## 5.6 Statement of Financial Activities

Financial Year Ended 31 December 2019

| Income From:                | Note | Unrestricted | Restricted   | Total         |               |
|-----------------------------|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
|                             |      | Funds        | Funds        | 2019          | 2018          |
|                             |      | €            | €            | €             | €             |
| Public/State Funding (DRCD) |      |              | 121,000      | 121,000       | 114,100       |
| Donations                   |      | 550          |              | 550           | 1,500         |
| Earned Income               |      | 4,045        |              | 4,045         | 4,518         |
| Project Income              |      |              | 30,317       | 30,317        | 16,949        |
| <b>Total Income</b>         | 9    | 4,595        | 151,317      | 155,912       | 137,067       |
| <b>Expenditure On:</b>      |      |              |              |               |               |
| Charitable Activities       | 10   | -            | 142,350      | 142,350       | 125,606       |
| Raising Funds               |      | -            | -            | -             | -             |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>    |      | -            | 142,350      | 142,350       | 125,606       |
| <b>Net Resources</b>        |      | <b>4,595</b> | <b>8,967</b> | <b>13,562</b> | <b>11,461</b> |

## 5.7 Notes to the Financial Statements

Financial Year Ended 31 December 2019

### 1. General information

The company is a private company limited by guarantee, registered in Ireland. The address of the registered office is Old Motor Tax Office Building, Bolton Street, Drogheda, Co. 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'. The Triennial review 2017 amendments to the standard have been early adopted.

### 3. Accounting policies and measurement bases

#### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through profit or loss.

The financial statements are prepared in Euro, which is the functional currency of the entity.

#### Turnover

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for goods supplied and services rendered, net of discounts and Value Added Tax.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the significant risks and rewards of ownership have transferred to the buyer, usually on despatch of the goods; the amount of revenue can be measured reliably; it is probable that the associated economic benefits will flow to the entity and the costs incurred or to be incurred in respect of the transactions can be measured reliably.

#### Operating leases

Lease payments are recognised as an expense over the lease term on a straight-line basis. The aggregate benefit of lease incentives is recognised as a reduction to expense over the lease term, on a straight-line basis.

#### 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.

#### **Notes to the financial statements (continued)**

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Where investments in non-convertible preference shares and non-puttable ordinary shares or preference shares are publicly traded or their fair value can otherwise be measured reliably, the investment is subsequently measured at fair value with changes in fair value recognised in profit or loss. All other such investments are subsequently measured at cost less impairment.

Other financial instruments, including derivatives, are initially recognised at fair value, unless payment for an asset is deferred beyond normal business terms or financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate, in which case the asset is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Other financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, with any changes recognised in profit or loss, with the exception of hedging instruments in a designated hedging relationship. Financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost are reviewed for objective evidence of impairment at the end of each reporting date. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss immediately.

For all equity instruments regardless of significance, and other financial assets that are individually significant, these are assessed individually for impairment. Other financial assets are either assessed individually or grouped on the basis of similar credit risk characteristics.

Any reversals of impairment are recognised in profit or loss immediately, to the extent that the reversal does not result in a carrying amount of the financial asset that exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised.

#### **4. Limited by guarantee**

The company is one limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The liability of each member in the event of the company being wound up is limited to €2.

**Notes to the financial statements (continued)****5. Staff costs**

The average number of persons employed by the company during the financial year, including the directors was 3 (2018: 3).

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the financial year were:

|                    | <b>2019</b>       | 2018              |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                    | <b>€</b>          | <b>€</b>          |
| Wages and salaries | 97,946            | 99,312            |
|                    | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |

**6. Appropriations of profit and loss account**

|                                         | <b>2019</b>       | 2018              |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                         | <b>€</b>          | <b>€</b>          |
| At the start of the financial year      | 68,998            | 57,537            |
| Profit for the financial year           | 13,562            | 11,461            |
|                                         | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |
| <b>At the end of the financial year</b> | <b>82,560</b>     | <b>68,998</b>     |
|                                         | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |

**7. Debtors**

|               | <b>2019</b>       | 2018              |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|               | <b>€</b>          | <b>€</b>          |
| Trade debtors | 10,718            | 13,735            |
|               | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |

**8. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

|          | <b>2019</b>       | 2018              |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
|          | <b>€</b>          | <b>€</b>          |
| Accruals | 1,686             | 7,967             |
|          | <u>          </u> | <u>          </u> |



**9. Income**

|                                               | <b>2019</b>    | <b>2018</b>    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Department of Rural and Community Development | 121,000        | 114,100        |
| Garda Vetting                                 | 4,045          | 4,518          |
| LCC Projects                                  | 9,577          | -              |
| County Councillor Donations                   | 450            | 750            |
| Private Donations                             | 100            | 750            |
| Services                                      | 1,644          | 1,121          |
| LEADER Income                                 | 3,623          | -              |
| Fleadh Income                                 | 15,473         | 15,828         |
| <b>Total Income</b>                           | <b>155,912</b> | <b>137,067</b> |

**10. Expenditure**

|                          | Charitable<br>Activities | Raising<br>Funds | Total          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Salaries                 | 97,946                   | -                | 97,946         |
| Project Costs            | 22,645                   | -                | 22,645         |
| Other Expenditure        | 21,759                   | -                | 21,759         |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b> | <b>142,350</b>           | <b>-</b>         | <b>142,350</b> |
| Amount Restricted        | 142,350                  | -                | 142,350        |
| Amount Unrestricted      | -                        | -                | -              |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>142,350</b>           | <b>-</b>         | <b>142,350</b> |

**11. Controlling party**

The company's ultimate controlling party is its directors.

**12. Bad Debt Written Off**

A specific bad debt amounting to €13,000 was written off in 2019. This relates to funding which was invoiced for in 2017 which has proved to be uncollectable.

**13. Approval of financial statements**

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on 9 September 2020

## 5.8 Detailed Profit and Loss Account

## Financial year ended 31 December 2019

|                                               | 2019<br>€            | 2018<br>€            |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Turnover</b>                               |                      |                      |
| Department of Rural and Community Development | 121,000              | 114,100              |
| Garda Vetting                                 | 4,045                | 4,518                |
| LCC Projects                                  | 9,577                | 15,828               |
| County Councillor Donations                   | 450                  | 750                  |
| Private Donations                             | 100                  | 750                  |
| Services                                      | 1,644                | 1,121                |
| LEADER Income                                 | 3,623                | -                    |
| Fleadh Income                                 | 15,473               | -                    |
|                                               | <u>155,912</u>       | <u>137,067</u>       |
| <b>Gross profit</b>                           | <u>155,912</u>       | <u>137,067</u>       |
| <b>Overheads</b>                              |                      |                      |
| <b>Administrative expenses</b>                |                      |                      |
| Wages and salaries                            | (97,946)             | (99,312)             |
| Staff training                                | (1,115)              | (666)                |
| Rent payable                                  | (4,000)              | (4,000)              |
| Insurance                                     | (1,053)              | (1,008)              |
| Repairs and maintenance                       | (1,232)              | -                    |
| Printing, postage and stationery              | (2,498)              | (1,405)              |
| PR and marketing                              | (827)                | (839)                |
| Telephone                                     | (3,437)              | (2,902)              |
| I.T. costs                                    | (4,027)              | (4,649)              |
| Travel & subsistence                          | (2,719)              | (2,529)              |
| Volunteer expenses                            | (1,282)              | (553)                |
| Other project expenses                        | (7,641)              | (5,027)              |
| Board Expenses                                | (100)                | -                    |
| Audit, accounting and professional fees       | (1,230)              | (1,691)              |
| Bank charges                                  | (223)                | (228)                |
| Bad debts                                     | (13,000)             | -                    |
| General expenses                              | (20)                 | (797)                |
|                                               | <u>(142,350)</u>     | <u>(125,606)</u>     |
| <b>Operating profit</b>                       | <u>13,562</u>        | <u>11,461</u>        |
| <b>Loss before taxation</b>                   | <u><u>13,562</u></u> | <u><u>11,461</u></u> |



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Lú

LOUTH

CRO Company No. 404710 : Reg Charity No. 17034

Old Motor Tax Office  
Bolton St,  
Drogheda  
Co Louth

Ferdia Suite,  
Millennium Centre,  
Dundalk  
Co Louth