

JUNE 2024

# SLIGO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK



## HALF YEARLY REPORT JANUARY TO JUNE 2024

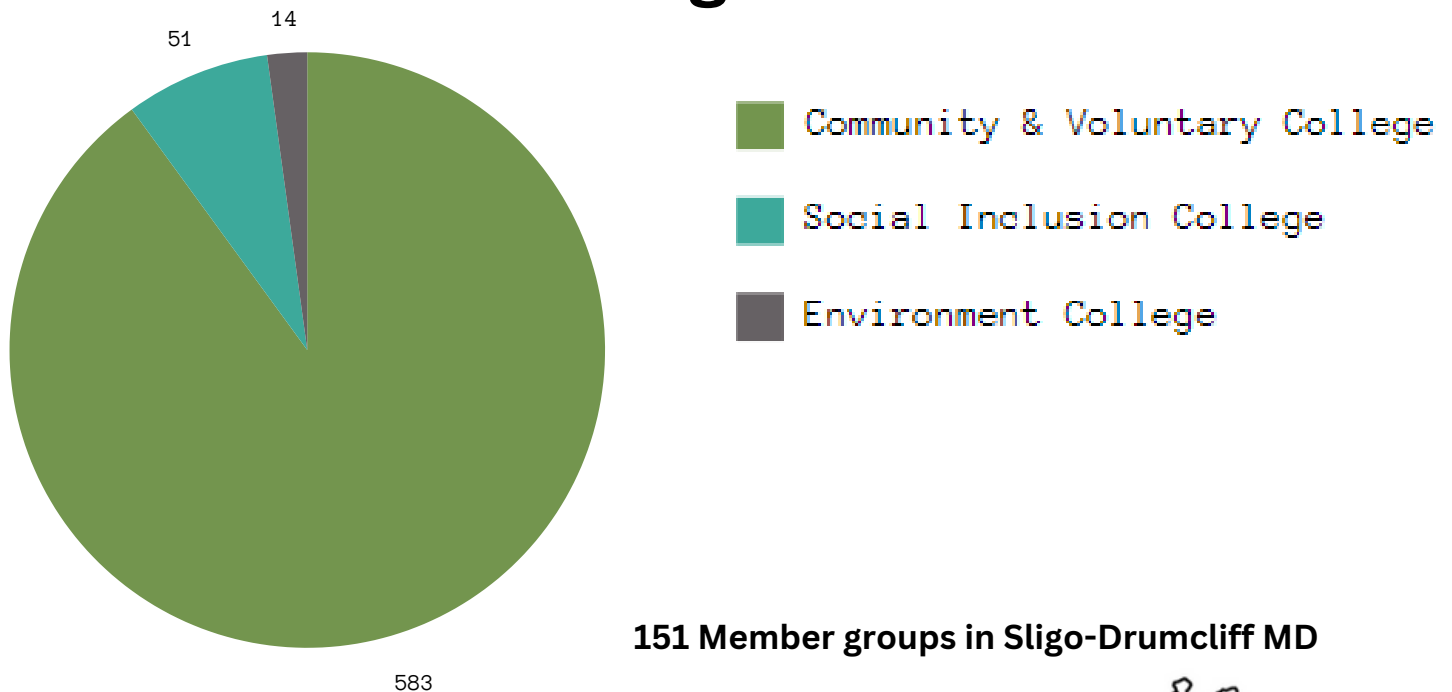
Read all about our latest representatives news, projects, updates upcoming opportunities to have the voice of your community represented.



Public  
Participation  
Network  
Sligo

# The Current Make Up of Sligo PPN

There are currently 648 member groups in Sligo PPN



151 Member groups in Sligo-Drumcliff MD

223 Member groups in Sligo-Strandhill MD



274 Member groups in Ballymote-Tubbercurry MD

Sligo PPN is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Sligo County Council.

## 10 Year Anniversary of PPNs

2024 marks the 10 year anniversary of the establishment of PPNs. In that time the PPN network has grown to over 19,000 community groups.

In Sligo as of June 2024 we have 647 member groups.

Individual PPNs around the country are launching a media campaign on the week of 17th June to highlight the importance of PPNs and their members.

The official celebration for all stakeholders will form part of the PPN national conference in Limerick in October.



## Sligo PPN Staff & Secretariat

There are currently 7 members of the Sligo PPN Secretariat - the Secretariat manage the day to day operation of the PPN. The Secretariat meet regularly and lead on a range of projects under the network.

The Sligo PPN Secretariat are supported in the day to day operation of the PPN by 2 staff members. 1 Part Time Coordinator and 1 Full Time Support Worker

# PPN Representatives

A number of representative calls went out in the first 6 months of 2024;

**Sligo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Environment Seat - Seat Not Filled**

**Sligo Independent Evaluation Committee - 2 Seats filled**

**Sligo Biodiversity Working Group - 1 seat filled**



Gregory O'Brien,  
Enniscrone Men's Shed



Dr John Williams,  
Sligo Sub Aqua Club



Michael Bell,  
Birdwatch Sligo Branch

## Current Vacancies

- Sligo PPN Secretariat - 2 seats: Community & Voluntary Seat, Sligo-Drumcliff MD
- Sligo LCDC Environment Seat

## Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

Following the local elections, all SPCs in Sligo will be reformed and Sligo PPN will be seeking a number of community representatives to take up roles across the 4 SPCs in Sligo. A call will go out to all members over the summer and is expected the first committee meetings will begin late September/early October. Sligo PPN will be hosting reps from across the North West region for a training and induction session in early October.

Sligo PPN will be seeking 10 representatives in total across 4 committees : 4 from the Environment College, 4 from the Community & Voluntary College and 2 from the Social Inclusion College.



Sligo PPN would welcome any civic minded people who want to make positive change in their local community to get in touch and find out more about becoming a PPN representative. Contact [ppn@sligococo.ie](mailto:ppn@sligococo.ie) or 071 91 14430

Our current reps bring such passion to the network and are fierce advocates for community need.



Sligo PPN @SligoPPN · 7 Jun



Listen back to hear from Sligo PPN representative Joan Swift talking all things active travel and highlighting the issues raised by PPN members.

Part of the podcast series 'Ours to Protect'



Sligo PPN @SligoPPN · 31 May



Great to see @SligoPPN Social Inclusion rep Pippa Black at the forum.

Pippa works tirelessly to promote equality and inclusion in Sligo and is a huge asset to the PPN Network.



Department of Social Protection @welfare\_ie · 30 May

Minister of State @joefingalgreen hosts the Department of Social Protection's annual Social Inclusion Forum

The Forum focuses on the delivery of the Government's Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025....

[Show more](#)





# PROJECT UPDATES



Sligo PPN works on behalf of, and in partnership with, our members. It is critical that the work of Sligo PPN reflects the needs of the Sligo community and offers solutions for positive change.

Our Plenary in November 2023 was in the form of a participatory planning and budgeting session - meaning that our members got to create and set the budget for the 2024 workplan. The updates detailed in this report reflect the actions developed in direct response to the plenary session.

You can see all the ideas and issues raised at;  
<https://www.sligoppn.com/plenary/>





## FEBRUARY

### ELECTIONS 2024 : USE YOUR VOTE

Sligo PPN partnered with Sligo Family Resource Centre and EU direct to host an event profiling the 2024 elections.

The aim of the event was to highlight how important it is for all sectors of the community to take part in these democratic processes and to

encourage people to register to vote and ensure they use their voice.

As well as fantastic speeches from key speakers including Senator Eileen Flynn, Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi and Valéria Aquino the event also demonstrated the process for registering to vote and supported people to start the process at the event.

### THE DREAM OF FÓDHLA

Model Niland, 20th February

A group of community workers, artists, activists, poets and writers came together over four weekends to explore an artistic vision for a Sustainable and Inclusive Sligo.

The result is The Dream of Fódhla – a visually stunning and evocative piece that reminds us of the history and magic of county Sligo and the duty we all have to protect it for future generations.

### THE DREAM OF FÓDHLA



[Substack review of the launch event](#)

The video saw its first screening in The Model Niland centre on the 20th of February, 2024. The screening was followed by an interactive workshop exploring the aspects of County Sligo. It highlights the importance of working together to preserve and protect our environment for future generations.

For more information and to view full gallery go to: <https://www.sligoppn.com/the-dream-of-fodhla-towards-a-sustainable-and-inclusive-sligo/>



## AUTISM FRIENDLY SLIGO

The Autism Friendly AGM took place on February 28th.

The initiative also received the Community Engagement Award, which celebrates intersectionality, at the annual ASIam Awards.

A 3 year draft strategy has been developed for the initiative and recent champions to come on board include Sligo Rovers. The initiative supported the development of the Radisson sensory trail which also received an atism-Friendly awareness award from ASIam. The initiative is working closely with Sligo Gardaí and Sligo University Hospital to supoprt them to become Autism Friendly.

The committee will be holding a drop-in later in the summer to talk to business owners and community organisations about becoming Champions.

## MARCH

### LAUNCHING SLIGO TREE TRAIL

Sligo Town, 7th March

The Sligo Tree Trail is developed in collaboration with the Sligo Sports Recreation Partnership.

The trail is a 2.6 km loop around Sligo town and includes trees at locations such as Sligo County Library, City Hall, Sligo Cathedral, Sligo Abbey, and along the banks of the Garavogue.



There are 15 points on the trail and we want to develop information sheets for each point. The information sheets will have content on the species of the tree, interesting points about biodiversity related to the tree, tree folklore, and uses of the tree.

We also want to include social stories on the information sheets and invite submissions for consideration. For example, was there a point on the trail that marks an important memory such as a gathering point for friends or family.





## SLIGO FAIR SEAS

Sligo Park, 14th March

On 14th March Sligo PPN hosted the Fair Seas Sligo event, a celebration of the local marine environment. The event was attended by over 120 people and key speakers included Michael Bell, Birdwatch Sligo, Sophie Bresnihan from the Irish Whales and Dolphins Group and Rosalind Skillen, Policy and Advocacy officer with Birdwatch Ireland.

The event also featured one of the first viewings of the film: Fair Seas : The Atlantic Northwest Short Film

You can view the film and access all the presentations and content from the evening at; <https://www.sligoppn.com/fair-seas-sligo/>

**Sligo Public Participation Network**  
invite you to  
**A Celebration of our Marine Environment**  
and to learn about the **Fair Seas Campaign**

**Fair Seas: Building a Movement of Ocean Stewardship**  
Rosalind Skillen, Marine Policy & Advocacy Officer,  
BirdWatch Ireland

**Seabirds of Donegal Bay**  
Michael Bell, Sligo Branch BirdWatch Ireland

**Sligo Whale & Dolphin Report**  
Sophie Bresnihan, Sligo Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

Where: **Sligo Park Hotel**  
When: **7 pm, Thursday, 14th March**

## APRIL

### RADISSON BLU SENSORY TRAIL

Radisson Blu Hotel, 30th April

Sligo PPN were delighted to work with Autism Friendly Sligo to offer advice and input into the new Sensory Trail developed at the Radisson Hotel in Rosses Point.

While a fantastic asset for hotel guests, the new trail is available for the entire community to use and offers a fantastic sensory experience.

Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa Sligo launch Wellness & Sensory Trail

Friday, May 03, 2024, 4:00pm





## MAY

### CELEBRATING OUR WATERS

Garavogue, 4th May

A Celebration of our Waters was inspired by Medb's Dragon Warriors and aimed to highlight the beauty and significance of our waterways.

The themes of the event included (i) Blue Health for Mental Health: Exploring the benefits of waterways for mental well-being (ii) Good Water Habits: Promoting responsible practices around water usage and (iii) The Code of Conduct on Our Waterways: Guidelines for respectful and sustainable use of waterways.

Information displays and leaflets were kindly provided by Clean Coasts, Birdwatch, Water Safety Ireland, the Marine Institute, Maritime Safety, Sligo Bay Catchment Rivers Trust, LAWPRO, and ATU research projects Pro-Coast and Sustainable Shared Spaces.



## JUNE

### SLIGO RIVERS TRUST

Sligo Park Hotel, 7th June

Members of the Sligo Rivers Trust held a stakeholder meeting for the Ballisodare Catchment Area.

The event was an opportunity to raise concerns about local water quality, to share ideas for solutions and to strengthen discussion around the importance of local waterways to the local community and efforts that need to be made to ensure protection and preservation into the future.







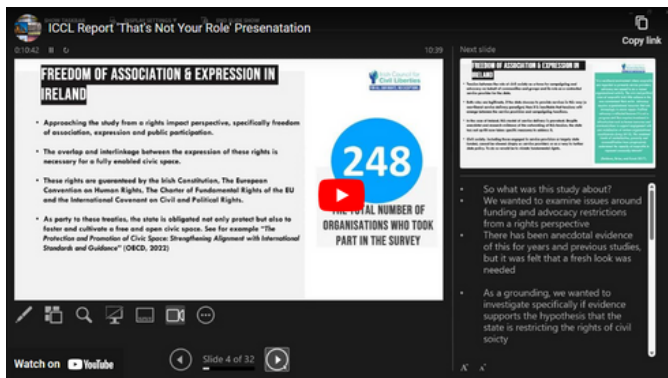
## INFORMATION SESSION WITH IRISH COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) recently released a report named “That’s Not Your Role”. This study seeks to examine the funding, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement environment which exists for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland.

The headline findings of the survey paint a worrying picture of the state of freedoms of expression and association, and the right to unfettered public participation for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland. The findings also point to an inherent tension between the roles of the community and voluntary sector as service providers and as advocates for causes and communities.

Given the implications for Public Participation Networks, Sligo PPN extended an invitation to the [ICCL](https://www.iccl.ie/) to deliver an information session to the national network and our own members highlighting the key findings and implications from the report.


Read the report and watch the information session at : <https://www.sligoppn.com/thats-not-your-role-state-funding-and-advocacy-in-the-irish-community-and-non-profit-sector/>



**74%**  
**THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE MISSED THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN A RELEVANT STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT BECAUSE THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT IT TOO LATE**

## SUPPORT TO ONLINE COMMUNITY GRANTS PROCESS

The C&V grants went fully online in 2024 and Sligo PPN worked with Sligo Co Co to produce a guide to support groups to complete the process. This guide was circulated to all PPN members.

 **Sligo PPN @SligoPPN** · 5 Apr  
PPN members, this year includes a 1st phase online registration process to set up an account profile. Check your emails for our step by step guide.

Also, find your PPN number for applications at [sligoppn.com/members-direct...](https://sligoppn.com/members-direct...)

 **Sligo County Council @sligococo** · 4 Apr  
Online Applications are now invited from Community and Voluntary Groups under the **Community and Voluntary Grant Scheme 2024**  
Full details available at [sligococo.ie/grants](https://sligococo.ie/grants)  
Closing date: 4pm Friday 19th April  
#Grant #Community #Voluntary





If you run a community facility or have available space that could potentially be used for a community purpose then please get in touch

## COMMUNITY SPACE INVENTORY

One of the main issues that was raised at our 2023 plenary was around the lack of available community/public space in Sligo for community groups to utilise for their activities. Sligo PPN have undertaken a mapping exercise to try and find out just what is available. This project has a number of steps;

- 1) Initial call out to for community facilities and public spaces to detail what space they have and how it can be used.
- 2) Engagement of facilitator to work with all registered facilities to conduct site visits to each and create a detailed profile of each centre, including to identify additional supports that centres need.
- 3) The creation of an online map and brochure detailing public space in Sligo and a list of recommendation for how these spaces can be better supported to promote and use their centres more efficiently and to maximise community usage.
- 4) Work with ATU under the Power to Change Programme to put in place a tailored support programme for the community facilities network. This programme will be co-designed with any interested facilities in the county.

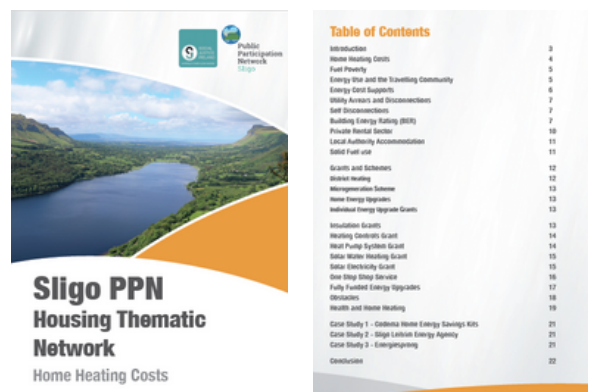
## Sligo Disabled Persons Organisation

Sligo PPN are delighted to work in partnership with Sligo DPO across a range of initiatives in the county.

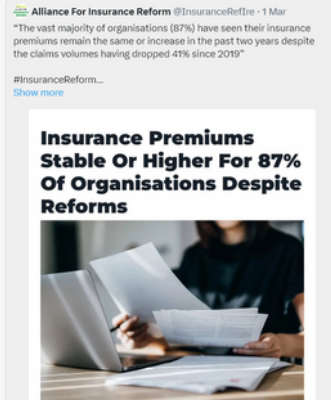


## THEMATIC HOUSING GROUP

This thematic group under the broader PPN structure has produced 5 key papers around housing need in the community. The 5 papers cover the themes of Home Heating, Traveller Accommodation, Vacant Homes, Right-sizing and Removing Barriers to Participation. The papers are currently under final review and the aim is to launch these in Q3 2024.



the community is invaluable and for every rise in premium, that's a service that has to be compromised.



## INSURANCE REFORM

Sligo PPN are members of the Alliance for Insurance reform and work with the network to raise evidence and conduct research regarding the impact of escalating premiums on the community sector.

## COMMUNITY TRAINING INITIATIVE

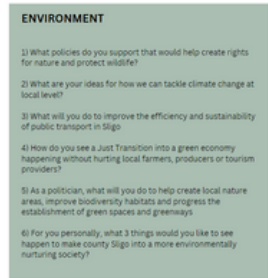
In January 2024 Sligo PPN partnered with the Carmichael Centre to pilot a new way to deliver community training to PPN members. Sligo PPN secured, at a subsidised rate, a number of places across all of the Carmichael training programme. These places were then offered to all our members to sign up directly free of charge. In the first tranche all slots were snapped up within a few week and the network purchased an additional number which are currently open to booking. There are a broad range of topics covered and you can see these at:

<https://www.carmichaelireland.ie/courses/>



As the cost of insurance continues to negatively impact the community and voluntary sector, this may be one potential issue you could discuss with election candidates.

To give you some facts, here is a summary from @InsuranceRefr



## ELECTION QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Sligo PPN compiled the key issues that have been raised with us from community members and translated these into potential questions that people could ask local election candidates when they called to the door. These questions reflect the key priorities that community would like to see addressed. The questions were themed under the 3 PPN colleges. This document was put in public libraries, shared on social media and was sent directly to every PPN member group.

## NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sligo PPN Coordinator sits on the National Advisory Group for PPNs - this is the national coordinating body for the network and is chaired by the Principle Officer from the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Sligo PPN are currently part of the national working group for the Barriers To PPN Participation initiative exploring any barriers that might exist that prevent members of the community from engaging with the PPN network.

In April the Sligo PPN staff attended the national staff conference in Trim to share good practice, concerns and project ideas. PPN staff continue to meet nationally every 6 weeks as well as working as part of the North West Regional network.

Joan Swift is the Sligo PPN representative on the National Secretariat Network.

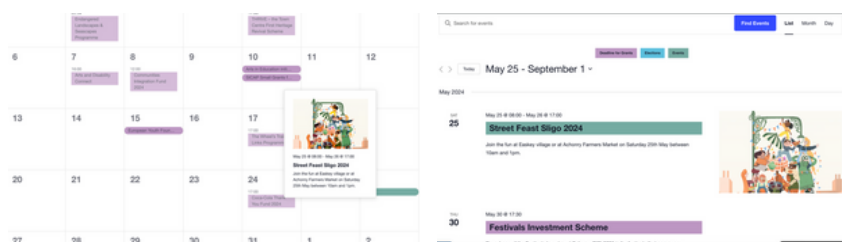
# WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sligo PPN have been working to upgrade and update the website. We hope you like the new look and would encourage everyone to take a look to find out more about your community network <https://www.sligoppn.com/>

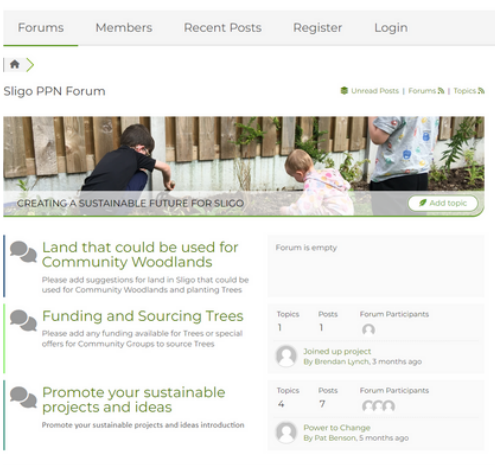
Two elements we are currently working on are;

**1) Community Events Calendar** which will pull together in one place our PPN member activities, PPN initiatives and funding opportunities. This will allow groups to directly promote their events and activities on our site and will enable the PPN to better promote the work of our members.

We aim to launch the calendar in September and will be hosting an information session in September to show groups how to interact with it and the benefits it will have. The calendar will also feature all available funding streams that we are aware of including opening and closing dates.



**2) Community Mapping** - we are creating a map within our website which plots the location of all our member groups. The aim of this is to support people to connect with groups in their geographical area. People will be able to search for groups by location, main cause and PPN college and pop up details will show how to make contact. This map will also feature the community facilities from our Community Space Inventory so that people can use local public spaces.



The website also includes an **Online Community forum** to encourage members to begin their own discussions around community issues, to share ideas and to ask each other for help.



## A bit of our story

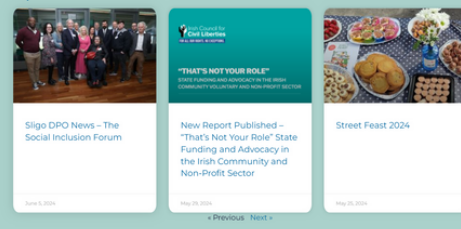
The purpose of the PPN is to bring together community & voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups in an independent structure.

Through the PPN, these groups have opportunities for networking, communication and sharing of information which leads to participation in local decision-making and collective action.

About Us



## Updates



## Hub



Forum  
Funding  
Newsletters  
Events  
Resources  
Updates  
Gallery

## Benefits of Membership

# PPN Social Media

You can keep up to date with Sligo PPN activities by following us on Facebook and X @sligoppn

## CONTACT

EMAIL: PPN@SLIGOCOCO.IE

PHONE: 0719114430

## ADDRESS

SLIGO PPN  
CITY HALL  
QUAY STREET  
SLIGO  
F91 PP44



# POWER TO CHANGE



**POWER TO CHANGE IS UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SLIGO PPN AND ATLANTIC TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY.**

led by Atlantic Technological University in partnership with the Sligo Public Participation Network is funded under the Community Climate Action Programme.

The project will facilitate connection/reconnection with nature and build capacity within community groups to lead on change

You can receive all the up to date information on the initiative at;

<https://www.sligoppn.com/the-power-to-change/>

but the below gives a flavour of just some of the amazing work that has been happening under the initiative.



A key focus of the project is to engage with groups that have been under-represented in the Climate Conversations and will be guided by the principles of universal design for research to ensure inclusivity and accessibility. A repository of case studies, good practice guides, and a virtual learning environment will be developed to aid capacity building within community groups, and ultimately establish lasting connections and networks.

The initiative has 3 key strands

## The Strands of Power to Change



**Community Group Training and Mentoring Programme**

This initiative will provide communities with training, mentoring and guidance to create, implement and maintain operational climate change mitigation and adaptation plans.

Four community groups have been engaging in the project since May 2023 participating in workshops on woodland creation, composting, sensory gardens, and raingardens.

Four additional groups will join the programme between March-May 2024.



**Establish an Education for Sustainability Network**

This initiative aims to establish Climate Education Clubs by developing links between schools and communities and assisting in the co-design of projects related to climate action and sustainability.

The Climate Education Clubs are currently co-creating a nature-based workbook on the Sustainable Development Goals with schoolchildren and schoolteachers in Co. Sligo. The clubs are also working in collaboration with Sligo County Council to establish the Sligo Youth Assembly on Climate Action.



**Develop a Living and Learning Native Woodland Environment**

This initiative aims to develop an existing woodland resource and establish a living and learning environment, thereby raising awareness on the role of trees and woodlands in combating climate change and supporting biodiversity.

The Atlantic Technological University in Connemara is developing the Community Native Woodland that was established in 2013. The importance of the woodland from ecological, climate and economic perspectives is shared with local communities.

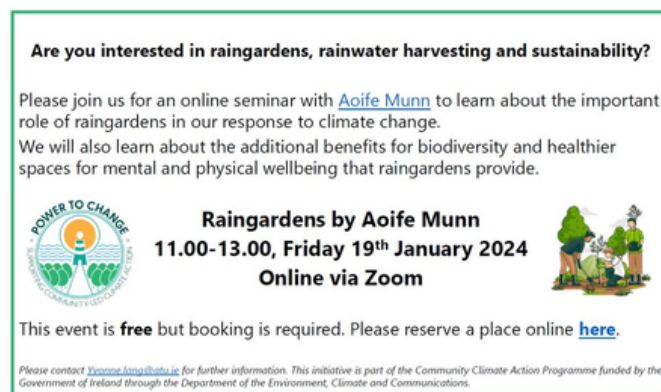
## COMMUNITY GROUP MENTORING



**Biodiversity on our Doorstep**

12th April 2024 | 11.00-4.00 | Grange, Sligo

This event was an introductory workshop for 14-17 years old exploring biodiversity in school grounds and sports grounds.



**Are you interested in raingardens, rainwater harvesting and sustainability?**

Please join us for an online seminar with [Aoife Munn](#) to learn about the important role of raingardens in our response to climate change. We will also learn about the additional benefits for biodiversity and healthier spaces for mental and physical wellbeing that raingardens provide.

**Raingardens by Aoife Munn**  
11.00-13.00, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Online via Zoom

This event is **free** but booking is required. Please reserve a place online [here](#).

Please contact [community@power-to-change.ie](mailto:community@power-to-change.ie) for further information. This initiative is part of the Community Climate Action Programme funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.




**Community Native Woodland Tree Planting Day**

19th March 2024 | ATU Connemara

ATU staff and students and members of local schools and community groups enjoyed a wonderful day of understanding, appreciating, and developing the Community Native Woodland in Connemara National Park.



Community Group Training and Mentoring Initiative

**The Do's and Don'ts of Good Food Waste Management**

Join us for an informal session with Sligo County Council Environmental Awareness Officer Aine O'Loughlin on good practices for food waste management.

**National Food Waste Recycling Week**  
2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**When and where**  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 6.30-7.30 pm  
North Sligo Sports Centre, Grange, F91 YX25

Free food caddy starter kits provided at the event



**Power to Change Community Woodland Day hosted at Cloonamahon Native Woodland, Sligo**

Nov 14, 2023



# EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

## Co-Creation of Nature Based Workbook on the Sustainable Development Goals

The Climate Education Clubs are co-creating a nature-based workbook on the Sustainable Development Goals with schoolchildren and schoolteachers in Co. Sligo.

This project commenced in February 2024 with a launch day at St. John's National School, Temple Street, Sligo.

Scoil Naomh Eanna, Carraroe, St. Aiden's NS, Monasteraden, and St. Joseph's NS, Templeboy are also taking part in the co-creation of workbook.

The revised workbook will be released in September 2024 and made available to all schools in a digital format.

## Sligo Youth Assembly on Climate Action

The Climate Education Clubs are also working in collaboration with Sligo County Council to establish the Sligo Youth Assembly on Climate Action.

The Assembly encourages post-primary school students to engagement in the Climate Conversations and voice their opinions.

Sligo Grammar School and Summerhill College participated in the pilot Sligo Youth Assembly during the 2023/2024 school year.



Power to Change Climate Education Clubs – Sligo Youth Assembly on Climate Action meet Sligo Co. Co. SPC 4 Climate Change to discuss the Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

## Community-based Collaborations

The Climate Education Clubs also aim to facilitate engagement between ATU staff and students and community groups to work together on community-based and community-related projects.


During 2023/2024 ATU students were given opportunities to engage with Sligo PPN community groups on a number of community-based projects.

**Project 1 - Sustainable Water Management**



Carraroe and District Regeneration Association (CADRA) invited students to assist them in the design of a rainwater harvesting system and a group logo.

Students will submit concept designs in April 2024.

An award sponsored by CADRA and LAWPRO will be presented to the best concept design submitted.



where we are.



**Project 2 - Sustainable Tourism**

The Tourism and Event Management students at ATU Sligo are conducting research on Heritage Tourism Development through Community Participation in Sligo.

The students sought assistance from Sligo PPN community groups to provide insights on this topic through completion of short survey.

Students presented a report of their findings to members of the Sligo PPN secretariat in April 2024 titled **Community Participation for Heritage Tourism Development in Sligo**.


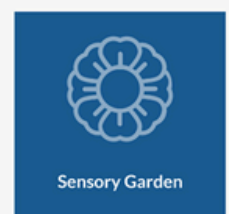
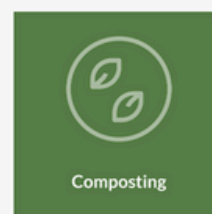
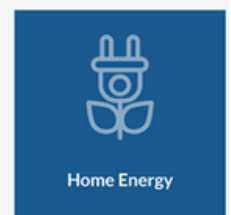


Image: Tourism and Event Management students from ATU Sligo with lecturer Dr. Domhnall Melly attending the Fair Seas Event on 14th March 2024 to engage with and listen to concerns of community groups.

## Community Group Learning Resources

Please click on the icons below to learn more about each topic and access relevant resources.



To read more about the Power to Change Programme and to access the community group resources go to; <https://www.sligoppn.com/the-power-to-change/>

## Whats Next

Some upcoming projects for you to keep an eye out for;

- As soon as we are officially notified by Sligo County Council, the call will go out for SPC representatives to come forward for nomination. We hope to have our reps secured by the end of September and on the 8th October Sligo PPN has arranged a North West region training day for all new SPC reps delivered by Brian Harvey. This session will give reps all the information they need to hit the ground running in their representative roles.
- Sligo DPO Equality Training: Sligo DPO will be working with Peter Kearns from ILMI to develop a tailored training programme from the lived experience of people in the Sligo Disability Community. Members of the DPO will themselves be trained up to be able to deliver this training to interested groups and organisations across Sligo. If your organisations wants to ensure real access and inclusion then this is the training for you.
- On 12th October Sligo PPN will be partnering with Power to Change, Sligo County Council and Sligo PEACEPLUS programme to host a Repair Cafe Expo. This event will take place on ATU campus and will focus on showcasing the circular economy. The long term aim of the expo is to connect people with opportunities under the PEACE programme to establish these ventures in Sligo. The event will include demos such as textile and bike repairs, food preservation and a clothes and toy swop.
- On 13th September we will have a relaunch of the Power to Change programme giving a run down of all the achievements the programme has made to date. The event will take place in ATU and will also give the first glimpse of our exciting Adaptation Game concept.
- The Secretariat are currently considering the format of our Winter Plenary. One idea being considered is to combine this with our 10 year anniversary and, once the formalities are covered, to host a celebration event for all our members to commemorate the growth of the network over the last decade. If you have any ideas for our annual meeting please let us know at [ppn@sligococo.ie](mailto:ppn@sligococo.ie).