



**Galway City**

**Local Community Development  
Committee (LCDC)**

**Annual Report 2024**



Claddagh boats – Photo by Chaosheng Zhang

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## Statement by the Chief Officer, Galway City LCDC

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is required to prepare and submit a report to the Local Authority on its activities in the previous year. This report outlines progress in respect of the various LCDC functions in 2024, including a review of progress generally, details of meetings held, implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 - 2029 and details of the oversight, management, and collaboration in relation to public-funded programmes under the LCDC's remit.

Since the submission of the last report, Galway City LCDC and its sub-committees continued to meet and deliver on the Community element of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) throughout 2024. The LCDC continued to provide the basis for a coherent, streamlined, and co-ordinated approach to local and community development programmes.

Highlights of the year include commencement of actions under the LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 and ongoing funding opportunities arising to support a range of activities across the city.

I wish to acknowledge the co-operation and ongoing commitment of all members and partners of Galway City LCDC which has seen benefits of real partnership arising from the existence of the valuable structures and programmes of the LCDC. I would like to acknowledge the work of staff in the Community section who have been supportive to the LCDC and for their support in responding to community needs in 2024.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the commitment of former Cllr Martina O'Connor Chairperson Galway City LCDC until June 2024 and to Cllr Helen Ogbu who was elected Chair for a 3 year period in July. I look forward to working with and supporting the LCDC in 2025 in carrying out its functions and building on achievements to date.

I set out below the draft report for 2024 for consideration and approval of the members of the Galway City LCDC.



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Dermot Mahon  
Chief Officer, Galway City LCDC

# 1. Introduction and Background

This document constitutes the Annual Report for the Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for the year ended 31 December 2024 prepared in accordance with S.128B (1)(i) Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which states that one of the functions of a Local Community Development Committee is *“not later than 31 March in each year, to prepare, adopt and submit to the local authority a report in relation to the performance of its functions during the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is submitted”*.

The Galway City LCDC was formally established by resolution in June 2014 for the purpose of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The Committee is made up of representatives from the local government and local development sectors, public bodies and representatives of social, economic, environmental and community interests.

## 1.1 Role and Functions of Galway City LCDC

In accordance with the functions detailed in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the LCDC has primary responsibility for co-ordination, planning and oversight of local development spend, whether that spend is delivered by local authorities, or on behalf of the State or by other local development agencies and structures.

LCDCs are charged with bringing a more coherent approach to the implementation of local and community development programmes and interventions, seeking to ensure an integrated approach to the local community and local development services between providers and delivery structures. It is important that LCDCs drive meaningful citizen and community engagement in the scoping, planning, delivery and evaluation of local and community development programmes. The functions of the LCDC are specified in the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 include:

- To prepare and adopt the community elements of a 6 year Local Economic and Community Plan.
- To implement or arrange for the implementation of the community elements of the Plan.

- To monitor and review on an on-going basis the implementation of the community elements of the Plan and, if appropriate, to revise the actions and strategies set to achieve the objectives of the Plan.
- To co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community development programmes that have been approved either by the relevant local authority or by agreement between the LCDC and a relevant public authority (e.g. Government Department, State Agency)
- To seek to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoidance of duplication between publicly funded local and community development programmes, in addition to pursuing co-ordination generally of all local and community development programmes within the functional area of the Committee.
- To prepare an annual report on the performance of its functions.

## 1.2 LCDC Membership and Meetings

The Galway City LCDC comprises 15 members including representatives from the statutory (public) and non-statutory (private) sectors drawn from the Galway City administrative area. The membership brings together the skills of people actively working in local development and community development with local authority members, officials and state agencies to implement a joined up approach to local and community development in Galway City.

The Membership of the LCDC was as follows on 31 December 2024.

<b>Statutory Interests (7)</b>		
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Local Authority Elected Members</b>	Councillor Helen Ogbu (Chair)	Galway City Council
	Councillor Josie Forde (Vice Chair)	Galway City Council
	Derek Pender	Galway City Council

<b>Local Authority Officials</b>	Caroline McDonagh	Local Enterprise Office
<b>State Agencies</b>	Laurence Gaughan	Health Service Executive
	Sinead Morgan	Galway Roscommon Education & Training Board
	Regina Higgins	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
<b>Non-Statutory Interests (8)</b>		
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Community, Social Inclusion, Environment	Charlotte May	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
	Joanne Laffey	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
	Tommy Flaherty	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
	Fiona McDonagh-Delaney	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
	Lorraine Lally	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
Trade Union	Elaine Harvey (Chairperson)	Galway Council of Trade Unions
Social Enterprise	Vacant	
Local Development	Linda Sice Brogan	Galway City Partnership

There were 6 changes in membership in 2024 with the following members resigning; Ms. Patricia Philbin, Local Authority; Ms. Valerie Kelly, Local Authority Official / LEO; Cllr. Martina O Connor, Local Authority Elected Member; Cllr. Alan Curran, Local Authority Elected Member; Ms. Adrienne Lynam, HSE; Ms. Anne Marie Stokes, GCCN / PPN.

Replacements from each organisation were sought and the following became members of the LCDC in 2024: Mr. Derek Pender, Local Authority; Ms. Caroline McDonagh, Local Authority / LEO; Cllr. Helen Ogbu, Local Authority Elected Member; Cllr. Josie Forde, Local

Authority Elected Member; Mr. Laurence Gaughan HSE and Mr Tommy Flaherty, GCCN/PPN.

Galway City LCDC held four meetings in 2024 on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 24<sup>th</sup> July and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The scheduled September and December meetings were cancelled as the attendance quorum was not reached. As set out in the Standing Orders, the quorum for meetings of Galway City LCDC is 9 members.

The work of the LCDC is underpinned by the commitment of its members to sitting on subgroups to consider matters in greater detail and prepare reports and recommendations for consideration at LCDC meetings. Subgroups of the LCDC met as required in 2024 including SICAP Subgroup, Grants Subgroup and Healthy Galway City Steering Committee.

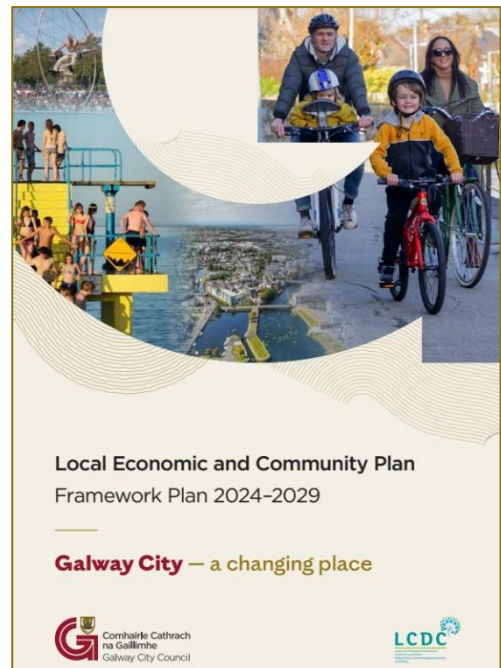
Mr. Dermot Mahon served as Chief Officer for the LCDC during 2024. The Chief Officer's role is to support the establishment and development of the LCDC in line with national policy requirements and support the Committee in the implementation of its role and functions. Meeting supports are provided to Galway City LCDC by the Community Section in Galway City Council. Agendas and minutes of the LCDC meetings are available on the Community section of the Council's website [here](#) .



## 2. Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The primary aim of the LECP is to set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Galway City both by Galway City Council directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

As the framework for the economic development and community development of Galway City, the LECP will be the primary mechanism at local level to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies that have a local remit.



The community element of the LECP was agreed by the Galway City LCDC in December 2023. Implementation Plans will be developed every two years, based on the High-Level Objectives outlined in the LECP Framework 2024 – 2029. The first Implementation Plan is from 2024 – 2025.

Five High Level Goals were agreed to help achieve the overall LECP vision:

1. a world class creative city region
2. an innovative city
3. an equal and inclusive city
4. a sustainable and resilient city
5. a city that promotes health and wellbeing

The LECP Framework 2024 – 2029 details 5 High-Level Goals and 17 Sustainable Community and Economic Objectives as well as consideration of outcomes and high-level indicators for the 6-year LECP period. 63 actions are contained in the Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025 as well as relevant key outcomes to facilitate evaluation. c.75% of the actions will be delivered directly by Galway City Council while 25% will be delivered in partnership with other agencies / directly by other agencies.

The elected members of Galway City Council adopted the LECP Framework Plan 2024 – 2029 and LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 at their January 2024 meeting following the comprehensive process undertaken in line with national guidelines and legislation and subject to the satisfactory completion of all necessary assessments, consents, and approvals.

An end of year review of the first year of the LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 was completed and presented to the LCDC in December 2024. The review outlines progress on each of the actions monitored by the LCDC. A final review of the Plan will take place towards the end of 2025, with a new Implementation Plan for 2026 – 2027 to be drafted in 2025.

### 3. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028 is the successor programme to SICAP 2018-2023 and was a key initiative for the LCDC in 2024 with regular updates and progress evaluations being considered at LCDC meetings. Galway City LCDC is the contracting authority, and its role is to manage and administer the programme, which is delivered by Galway City Partnership.

#### 3.1 Progress under SICAP

The SICAP Annual Plan 2024 was approved at the LCDC meeting on 28 February 2024 along with the SICAP 2023 Annual Progress Report. The SICAP Subgroup of the LCDC met twice to conduct reviews of the 2023 SICAP Annual Performance review, the 2024 Annual Plan and 2024 mid-year review.

The budget for 2024 was €772,258 with additional Ukrainian funding of €331,451. Galway City Partnership once again exceeded the targets set for the programme in 2024. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 1 target was exceeded by 39% with 82 local community groups assisted under SICAP, against a target set of 59. KPI 2 target for 2024 was also exceeded by 6.5%, with a total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged on a one-to-one basis at 515 against the target set of 483.

#### KPI 2 Local Priority Targets Achieved in 2024

Galway City (26-1)/2024					
Target group	Number	Percentage of KPI 2 target 2024	2026 LP target (%)	2028 LP target (%)	Overall LP target (%)
International Protection Applicants	180	37%	4%	6%	32%
People living in communities impacted by disadvantage	27	6%	19%	20%	
People living in households that are jobless or low-paid and/or precariously employed	406	84%	5%	6%	

## 3.2 Key Achievements of SICAP 2024 GCP

2024 saw a significant increase in individuals seeking International Protection and many of these individuals are currently residing in Galway City. This resulted in unprecedented demand for SICAP supports across the programme, which necessitated innovation and flexibility in its delivery. Supports provided included assistance with asylum applications, family reunification, ESOL supports and SICAP employment supports.

**Children and Families** – DEIS primary and post-primary schools in Galway City continue to receive SICAP support, including the Incredible Years Dina in the Classroom programme, wellbeing initiatives and study assistance to help students stay in school and complete state exams. Children and young people newly arrived have been supported with school and extracurricular activities such as referrals to Music Generation, youth projects, and summer camps.

**New Arrivals** – Galway City experienced a significant increase in the numbers of IPAs (especially ‘newly arrived families’) and BOTPs. These new arrivals are engaging and receiving SICAP supports across the programme. The New Arrivals team continue to deliver bespoke and targeted supports to this group and in addition new employability, self-employment and educational supports have been added.

### **Projects piloted during 2024:**

**‘From Arrival to Belonging’** – GCP hosted an event which showcased the work carried out across the SICAP programme, including input from local schools, beneficiaries, and community groups. It was attended by various bodies and agencies that collaborated with GCP throughout 2024.

**‘Heart to Heart’ Parent Attachment Programme** – this programme was rolled out in response to a need identified through GCP work in DEIS schools for supports to address issues of child-parent bonding within infant classes.

**Resilience and Wellbeing Workshop** – In collaboration with the Galway Rape Crisis Centre a workshop was delivered to help those New Arrivals in direct responses to issues identified. The workshop focused on helping attendees to navigate and negotiate the difficulties which they experience living in shared accommodation.



**Be Energy Smart** – A video co-designed in collaboration with DEIS primary schools as an educational/informational resource to encourage children to be aware of the environmental and cost consequences of behavioural choices.

**Financial Assistance Grant** – A support piloted in 2024 which allows beneficiaries to self-identify learning and training opportunities and remove barriers to facilitate their access to such opportunities.

This collage illustrates just some of the work undertaken and delivered to support SICAP beneficiaries across the programme in 2024.



**Mental Health** - The importance of social connection was identified as paramount in 2024 and feedback highlighted the benefits of involvement in community groups with improved mental health. The numbers of men engaging previously had been quite poor. The need to engage with more men in the community was identified as being key and the formation of 4 new Men's Groups and also a very successful pilot workshop with CROÍ focusing on men's heart health on International Men's Day.

A wellbeing network was also established in 2024 which culminated in the production of a beautiful calendar produced by 4 community art groups highlighting key wellbeing supports available across the City. 4 new walking groups were started and the GCP team also collaborated with Healthy Galway City to provide Social Dancing classes for older people.

**Eastside Arts Festival** – GCP supported the establishment of the Eastside Arts Festival in collaboration with a host of organisations. The event was held in October and run over 2

days. GCP also continues to support the running of the Westside Arts Festival, a week long celebration of creativity in the community held in July.

**Disability Awareness –** GCP partnered with Access for All to deliver Awareness Raising sessions, including the national 'Make Way Day' event, to highlight the challenges faced by people with disabilities in the community. These events reached a wide, varied audience which allowed for open conversations on disability and increased awareness among business owners, educators, local authority staff and the wider public.



**Community Response to Domestic Abuse Western Region Network –** GCP continues to be a key member of this network. The Network produced a Steps to Safety leaflet which was translated into 9 languages. A Zero Tolerance workshop with Cuan and SafeIreland was also organised exploring and identifying key opportunities for collaboration. The Network carried out awareness raising workshops across the region during the 16 Days of Action Opposing Domestic Abuse. GCP hosted 3 workshops in the city in collaboration with COPE Domestic Abuse Services.

**Social Enterprises** - Social Enterprises in Galway reported feeling isolated and lacking opportunities for peer learning and information sharing, prompting the Social Enterprise Development Officer to establish a Social Enterprise Network. This network allows SEs to share information, explore new opportunities, and collaborate with industries for financial support and procurement. GCP also organized events and courses, such as impact measurement and reporting and "Start Your Own Social Enterprise," in collaboration with SCCUL Enterprises to further support SEs, with plans for continued networking and capacity-building throughout 2025.

**Anti – Racism Supports** – With the support of Galway Communities Against Racism and Discrimination, Galway City Partnership established community-based responses to far right demonstrations and racist rhetoric. The Westside Welcomes All Group was established in February and the Eastside Welcomes All Group was established in April. Both groups are made up of local community people as well as people working in locally based organisations and local community groups.

**Funding Assistance** – GCP leveraged additional resources from various organisations to expand its reach into key targeted communities across the city. Funding was obtained from Safefood Community Food Initiative, HSE Health Promotion, TASC, and HSE National Lottery to support community food events, health programs, financial resilience training, and targeted groups such as men's and women's health. GCP also assisted community organizations in applying for grants from a number of organisations with the key funder being Galway City Council.

### 3.3 SICAP 2024 Case Study GCP

The SICAP 2024 case study video was titled '*I can speak for myself*'. An illustrative study of the demand for and delivery of English Language Classes at Galway City Partnership.

This case study focused on the crucial role of SICAP English Language Supports in promoting migrant inclusion and integration. By building their own capabilities, beneficiaries gained the skills and confidence necessary to engage with civic society independently, without relying on intermediaries. This empowered them to enhance their relational skills and deepened their sense of belonging. They were able to “speak for themselves.”

The internal partnerships highlighted in the study underscored the value of offering classes within local development organisations. This arrangement maximized opportunities for beneficiaries while encouraging the development of expertise within the organization itself. SICAP's role was evident in helping individuals access additional resources and support within a trusted institution.

Participation in a multicultural, collaborative classroom significantly enhanced language acquisition. Students felt safe to take risks with language, became empowered to interact with peers, and celebrated both their personal achievements and those of others. Learning took place in a supportive, emotionally safe environment, where the invitation to learn was always welcoming. The case study was presented by Galway City Partnership at the November 2024 LCDC Meeting. [Watch Youtube Video here.](#)

### 3.4 SICAP Audit 2023

In line with the Internal Audit Plan of Galway City Council, Crowley's DFK conducted a SICAP audit on Galway City Partnership for the financial year 2023. The audit report was issued in Q1 2025. Their assessment indicated that assurance can be placed on the sufficiency and operation of Galway City Partnership's financial controls to mitigate key inherent risks to which SICAP activities are exposed is reasonable. The audit concluded that based on the samples tested, files related to the beneficiaries of the 2023 SICAP programme have been properly maintained by Galway City Partnership in accordance with the standards prescribed in the SICAP Service Level Agreement.

### 3.5 Annual Planning for SICAP 2025

The allocated SICAP budget for 2025 is €1,027,796, made up of the Lot Budget €796,584 and a ringfenced New Arrivals Budget €231,212. KPI targets for 2025 are outlined below.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicator (KPI)</b>	<b>Target 2025</b>
1.	Number of local community groups engaged under SICAP	59
2.	Number of Individuals (aged 15 years upwards) assisted under SICAP on a one-to-one basis	483



## 4. Humanitarian Response and Integration

### 4.1 Local Authority Integration Team

The Galway City Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) was established in Q1 2024 comprising a Co-ordinator and two Support Workers. Integration means helping people who have moved to a new country to have a sense of belonging, while also preserving their own identity and culture. This includes access to various welfare entitlements, language development, cultural orientation, entering employment, education and training.

The LAIT works with people who are: International Protection applicants (IPAS); Refugee, Subsidiary Protection, or Permission to Remain status holders; Programme Refugees selected to come to Ireland and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. The LAIT guide people to services they require to integrate into the community. The team are connected with relevant services across the city and visit IPAS Accommodation Centres to identify supports needed by residents. This includes conducting group information sessions, as well as confidential clinics with individuals to understand their specific support needs. The LAIT aims to support people to integrate into Ireland by providing signposting to relevant services, information Sessions and confidential clinics with centre residents.

The Offer a Home Scheme was launched nationally in November 2022 and focuses on vacant properties suitable for non-shared accommodation for Displaced Ukrainians. 105 displaced Ukrainians have been accommodated in 28 OAH properties to date. Further information on the Galway City LAIT [here](#)



## 4.2 Galway City Partnership Ukrainian Response Team

The Ukrainian Response team continued to liaise with accommodation providers and key stakeholders to provide support, information sharing, translation, signposting and coordination of services on an ongoing basis for the Ukrainian community. This team coordinated with the Local Authority Integration Team in Galway City Council, the SICAP remit for New Arrivals and the BRIDGE Project working with IPAs at Galway City Partnership as the services for both IPAs and BOTPs began to merge more cohesively in the past year following the changes in legislation in March 2024.

The Ukrainian Response Team supported accommodation centre managers by facilitating communication and offering assistance. This included providing advice, arranging translation services, connecting with relevant agencies where extra support was required, sharing information for residents, and engaging with new arrivals at the centres. The team also provided support to residents who have been moved from the accommodation centres. The team continues to assist former residents by helping them access services, connecting them with relevant agencies, and providing information on securing additional accommodation.

The GCP Ukrainian Response Team maintains working relationships with a wide range of stakeholder agencies across the city. These relationships involve inter-agency coordination and communication on different issues or cases that come up, information sharing, referrals, translation, attending meetings, ongoing support and learning from the experiences of different organisations and actors.

The team remains in constant consultation with the Ukrainian community to ensure that their work reflects and adapts to the needs of the community. A Telegram channel of 1000 participants allows the team to share information to the community on an ongoing basis. Further, the team works and supports Ukrainian community groups such as Harmony, Kalyna, UA Mriya and UHUG.

In addition, the team linked BOTPs to English classes and broader support for children and families while also running CV workshops, employability support initiatives, and training programmes such as Barista, Safe Pass, Manual Handling. The GCP Ukraine Response Team also supported BOTPs who have been allocated a property under the Offer a Home scheme, delivering several support initiatives including information workshops, and providing clinics including running a household and paying bills in Ireland.

## 5. Healthy Galway City



Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. Healthy Galway City (HGC) is an initiative of Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) which seeks to create a city where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. The Healthy Ireland Fund 2022-2025 Grant Agreement included €78,348.57 for 2024 to allow delivery of priority health and wellbeing initiatives.

Projects contributed to the following outcomes, which were selected following stakeholder identification to identify the health priorities and areas of need in Galway City under the HIF Local Strategy for Galway City 2023 – 2025.

- Percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines;
- Increase in individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index (EVI).

The selected target groups for prioritisation under Round 4 are: people living in disadvantaged communities; the Traveller community: older adults and people with disabilities. In 2024, the Healthy Galway City Coordinator and Steering Committee, a sub-committee of the LCDC, continued to partner with key stakeholders in the implementation of actions under Round 4 of the HIF. HIF Round 4 2023 progress and financial reports were submitted to Pobal approved in June 2024.

The HGC Coordinator continued to represent the HI City and County (HICC) Coordinators of the norther Western Regional Assembly Area at the National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network (HCCIN). In September 2024, HICC Coordinators submitted a motion on behalf of Healthy Ireland Local Government Staff advocating for permanent embedding of the Healthy Ireland programme and its future iterations and Coordinator position within local government to ensure its long-term sustainability and effectiveness in promoting health and wellbeing across Ireland.

## 5.1 Outcome Indicators

### Percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines

Healthy Galway City and Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) collaborated to deliver programmes to increase the percentage of adults and children meeting national physical activity guidelines. In particular, HGC funded activities targeted people with disabilities, older adults and people living in disadvantaged communities.

HGC and GSP partnered with the Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce (WRDATF) to continue the delivery of the Recovery Fitness Group for people recovering from addiction. Participants enjoyed boxing class, strength training and tai chi as part of a programme of activities to promote a healthy body and mind without the need for using drugs and alcohol.

Funded through the Healthy Galway City Fund 2024, GSP offered Good2Go training in Galway City in April and May. This five-week training was designed for members of Active Retirement groups, Men's Sheds, Women's Sheds, disability workers, community workers, and anyone who engages with older adults. This training series covered numerous types of physical activities for older adults, including functional fitness, simple dances, social games, activator poles and seated exercises. By the end of the five weeks, participants feel confident to return to their groups and lead physical fitness and exercise sessions.

HGC and GSP continued to support local community walking groups in Ballybane and



Ballinfoile Castlegar Walking Group celebrate BeActive Week

Westside in 2024. The newly established 'Ballinfoile Castlegar' walking group met weekly from July. Walking groups are an inclusive, accessible and cost-effective way to promote lifelong physical activity. Community members can be supported to train as 'Walk Leaders', to promote sustainability and empower people to activate their community at a local level.

As in previous years, HGC continued to fund the delivery of the 'Nature for Health' programme with the Local Sports Partnership. This is a 10-week walking programme based in local woodlands that supports participant to enjoy gentle exercise, mindfulness, biodiversity, local history and therapeutic art. This programme ran throughout the year in Merlin Woods, and targets people living in disadvantaged communities and people with mental health issues. Nature for Health ran in spring, summer and autumn with approx 20 participants engaging in each course.

HGC and GSP targeted men that do not engage in regular exercise through the 'Men on the Move' (MOTM) programme. MOTM is a physical activity programme that is aimed at adult men to increase physical activity, have fun and improve fitness levels. The programmes were delivered in Westside and Ballybane in autumn and winter.

A boxing fitness programme targeting traveller men was delivered in Ballinfoile and was very well received by the participants, with the group planning to continue their activities and introduce strength and conditioning training in 2025. Walking Football for Over-55s in Ballinfoile was also hugely successful. Partnering with Galway City Partnership (GCP) for these programmes, Croi Heart Health Checks was included as an optional add on and many men experienced their first ever heart health check-up and blood pressure monitoring.



Croi Heart Health Checks with the Ballinfoile Traveller Men's Group



Ballinfoile Traveller Men's Group

HGC and GSP continued to collaborate on events and activities promoting physical activity, sports and exercise across a broad spectrum of the community. These included:



- University of Galway Paediatric Society 'Healthy Heroes' event 2024
- Two 'Come and Try' and Grant Information events for Older Adults
- 'Go for Life' Games for Older Adults, as part of Galway City Active Age Programme and the National 'Go for Life' Games
- Installation of 8 BOXUP systems throughout the city as part of the provision of Active Play Hubs under the Active Cities Galway project
- Community Paddlers taster sessions introducing paddle sports to migrants, asylum seekers and IPAS applicants
- HER Outdoors Week encouraging women to get outside and enjoy the benefits of outdoor physical activity
- Bike Week 2024 and the annual city centre cycle

HGC was funded through the Galway City Creative Communities Grant to coordinate the 'Social Steps' Dance pilot. Working in partnership, the GCP Development Team and HGC delivered six weeks of social dance workshops in three areas of Galway City (Ballybane, Shantalla / Westside, Ballinifoile / Castlegar). An average of 80 participants attended the three community-based workshops on a weekly basis, and the pilot was so successful that a year-long programme is in development for 2025.



The Ballinifoile Castlegar 'Social Steps' class

## **Increase in individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index (EVI)**

Galway City Partnership (GCP) and Galway Traveller Movement (GTM) were selected as implementing partners under HIF Round 4 2022 – 2025 to deliver initiatives under the outcome 'Increase in individual's level of positive mental health as per Energy and Vitality Index'. HGC allocated €23,000 to GCP for the delivery of mental, social and physical wellbeing programmes to people living in disadvantaged communities in Galway City.

GCP engaged closely with community members and stakeholders to identify initiatives that would promote positive mental health and wellbeing amongst members of the most economically deprived communities, including Westside, Ballinfoile and Ballybane.

Three Community Singing groups are now strongly established in these locations, and act as open and inclusive spaces for all members of the community. The groups meet on a weekly basis throughout the year and each group has performed publicly at events in the city to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.



2024 HGC and GCP Christmas Lunch event for older adults experiencing social isolation and loneliness

HGC funding also supported the activities of the GCP Social Prescribing Service and the Ballinfoile Youth Activity project in 2024. Highlights of the health and wellbeing promoting activities delivered in partnership with GCP include:

- Six – week 'Thoughtful Tuesday'; programme for adults experiencing loneliness or social isolation
- 'New Habits' self-development workshop for women managing social anxiety
- Seven- week Mosaic Art programme

- 'Active August' programme incorporating light exercise and social groups
- Launch of the 'Community Wellbeing' Calendar, a one-off event to showcase the work of city art groups and to raise awareness of available supports and services
- Social Pickle ball for Men; six week programme
- 22 structured and instructor-led postnatal group exercise classes
- Tennis, music, circus and outdoor adventure workshops for children living in Ballinfoile

HGC allocated €20,348.57 to GTM for the delivery of a 'GTM Health and Wellbeing' programme in 2024. Programmes were designed to increase levels of positive mental health amongst the Traveller community in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner and were overseen and supported by GTM peer-led education workers.

Young members of the Galway Community College Diversity Hub participated in a six week equine therapy programme, and students learned how to recognise, understand and communicate emotions and feelings better.

GTM Community Health Workers and external tutors led exercise classes for Traveller men and women to develop positive physical and mental health and lifestyle changes. A nutritionist also worked with some of the young traveller women, leading interactive cookery demonstrations focused on making affordable, nutritious meal and snack choices.

GTM hosted a six week confidence-building and body image programme for Traveller women, exploring themes of self-esteem, social media, resilience and health relationships through group discussions, reflection and interactive exercises.

Throughout 2024, GTM partnered with Helplink Mental Health on the delivery of culturally appropriate alternative therapies via the TORIE Counselling Service. These therapies included bereavement, art and play, and addiction therapies. GTM identified the urgent need for increased 1:1 therapies in the wake of a number of community tragedies in 2024.

In addition to programmes and 1:1 supports, GTM also planned a number of community events to promote positive mental health and wellbeing within the Traveller community in Galway City. Traveller Mental Health Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October was celebrated with a group trip to an annual mass in Knock.





Participants in the Galway Traveller Movement Equine Therapy programme

GTM acknowledges that through the HGC fund in 2024, a key achievement has been the high levels of participation from the Traveller community across Galway City in a wide variety of actions, allowing the delivery of important messages of positive mental health and wellbeing and engagement with some of the most marginalised in society.

## 5.2 Projects Delivered

Healthy Galway City collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders, including the HSE, Local Authority, charities, NGOs, interagency and community groups to provide programmes and opportunities to enhance both physical and mental health and wellbeing in Galway City. Initiatives delivered in 2024 included:

- Funding support for the continuation of Cosáin Community Wellness, a peer-led mental health recovery group
- Wellbeing initiatives including mindfulness and song-writing classes for people with mental health issues, Merlin Woods Training Centre
- ‘Healthy Men, Happy Tribes’ Men’s Health events
- ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ event for new communities, as part of Mental Health Awareness Month in October

- International Women’s Day Information and Wellbeing event with GCP
- ‘Celebrating and Connecting Men’ event with ATU Galway for International Men’s Day 2024
- Yoga wellness programmes for adults engaging in mental health services

**Heartsafe North-West Europe (NWE) Project** - The Heartsafe North-West Europe (NWE) project launched in Galway in October 2024. This innovative initiative seeks to improve survival rates in Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) cases by piloting a world-leading, community-based, first responder system, modelled after the successful Dutch approach. Croí, the Heart & Stroke Charity, partnered with Healthy Galway City on this project, which is funded through the EU Interreg North-West Europe Programme.

Galway is one of three pilot sites for this project, alongside Leuven (Belgium) and the Health Region Cologne-Bonn (Germany), with the Dutch Heart Foundation in the role of lead partner, managing and coordinating all of the sites.

**Period Dignity Project in Local Authorities** - Galway City Council were allocated €15,000 by Department of Health under the Period Dignity Project to provide free period products in locations managed by the LA. The additional €5,000 funding in year 2 of the Period Dignity Project allowed Galway City Council to expand this project to an increased number of venues, including community and family resource centres, sports halls, public toilets and changing rooms, youth services and community and voluntary organisations.

The funding also provided the opportunity to disseminate more accessible and sustainable options such as menstrual cups, reusable period underwear and reusable pads. This ensured that the project was able to reach a broad spectrum of individuals including those with disabilities, and people with limited financial resources.

## 6. Age Friendly Programme

### 6.1 Age Friendly Homes Programme



Sláintecare.



The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme is a unique cross-government collaboration between the Department of Health, HSE, and Local Government through Age Friendly Ireland. It provides an important, rounded model of care which supports older people to remain in their own homes where possible, to avoid hospital admission through the provision of care in the community, and to ultimately avoid early or unnecessary admission to residential care.

Participants are referred into the programme by family members, friends, healthcare providers, social prescribers, members of the community or can self-refer. Participants will receive a home visit from a Local Coordinator who is based in their local authority and has good links into statutory and non-statutory services in the community. The Local Coordinator will carry out an assessment of their needs across housing, health, technology, community, finance, and climate and energy.

Local Coordinators then design a personalised action plan under each of these areas to support the older person to live healthily and independently in their own home for as long as possible. Examples of interventions include access to primary care, public health nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, meals on wheels, befriending services, local community supports, housing adaptation grants, home energy retrofits, and assistive technologies such as wearable devices, pendants and fall detectors.

Following a successful pilot programme in 9 counties the Healthy Age Friendly Homes programme was allocated funding for national rollout to ensure all older people have the opportunity to age in place and have access to the supports provided by the programme. The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Co-Ordinator for Galway City has been appointed and is currently taking referrals. More information on the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Initiative can be found [here](#).

## 6.2 Age Friendly Programme Initiatives



**Library Age-Friendly Space** Ms. Katie Fahy, Age-Friendly Officer with Galway City Council, and Ms. Joan Kavanagh from the Older Persons Council, met with Executive Librarian Ms. Caroline Rowan at Galway City Library in November to check out the library's new Age-Friendly Space, which was funded by the Galway City Age Friendly Programme.

This warm, welcoming, and easily accessible space is the most recent Age-Friendly change which has taken place at the City Library. In 2022, the library installed Dementia-Friendly wayfinding signage. The new space has higher seating, to make sitting down easier for those with mobility or other physical issues. It faces the large-print books which make reading easier for people with lower vision or who need glasses.

**Positive Ageing Week** is an opportunity every year to emphasise the positive aspects of aging and celebrate the invaluable contributions of older individuals in our communities. The theme of Positive Ageing Week 2024 was Challenging Ageism- Reframing How We Think, Feel and Act towards aging and older persons.

Positive Ageing Week took place in October. Galway shone a light on people who are wonderful examples of the positive aspects of ageing and the vast and varied contributions of older people who quietly improve our lives, neighbourhoods and communities all year round.

The flagship event is the Local Heroes Exhibition which was launched in Galway City Museum in October and which subsequently featured in various libraries across the city showcasing these amazing people who epitomise positive, healthy and active ageing. They represent the many older people who enrich our lives in so many ways.





**National Age Friendly Achievement Awards 2024** The Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards, organised by the Age Friendly Ireland programme, celebrate initiatives and projects that make a positive difference in communities by ensuring older people can live active, healthy, and independent lives.

Being shortlisted under the Housing category for these awards reflects Galway City Council's commitment to designing and delivering housing that caters to the needs of older adults while promoting intergenerational inclusivity. More information [here](#).

An Cliathán is a purpose-built development that integrates modern design with principles of accessibility and sustainability, ensuring that residents enjoy high-quality living spaces that support aging in place. The development includes features such as barrier-free entrances, accessible transport links, communal spaces, and a focus on green areas—all of which promote active lifestyles and community engagement.



The development was designed with input from both the local authority and the community, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of its residents. In addition to its focus on accessibility, An Cliathán is also a sustainable, energy-efficient development that aligns with Galway City's broader goals of creating resilient, climate-smart communities for the future.



Event attendees included Leonard Cleary CE, Deputy Mayor Neil McNelis, Eavan Schmidt Bleek (Member of the Galway City Older Persons Council), Sinead Johnstone (Housing), Frank Meehan (Housing) and Eilis O'Donnell, Project Architect, O'Briain Beary Architects.

## 7. Community Funding Schemes

### 7.1 Community Recognition Fund 2023 / 2024

The Community Recognition Fund aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. A range of projects was completed in 2024 for each of Galway city's three Electoral Areas



Each area benefited from the provision and enhancement of sporting, recreational and cultural facilities including accessibility and community safety. The projects are spread across the city to achieve maximum benefit and impact. In May 2023, Galway City Council received funding of €1,911,918 from the Department of Rural and Community Development with €1,816,322 of this in respect of 16 projects submitted. An update on progress was presented to the LCDC.

€1,644,752 is available for allocation under the Community Recognition Fund 2024. The Fund focuses on projects located in cities, towns, and villages that are hosting Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection or International Protection Applicants, including those towns selected for the rapid-build housing program.

Galway City CRF 2023 is now complete with 16 projects delivered under the programme. Key initiatives included upgrades to Leisureland, the installation of power supply infrastructure to support community events, accessibility improvements for local businesses, lighting enhancements, and upgrades to community facilities such as changing rooms and multi-use games pitches.

CRF 2024 is underway with 13 projects approved so far. The Window 3 application is currently being assessed with the closing date for applications to be submitted to the DRCD in January 2025. Further information on the Community Recognition Fund at the following link. [Community Recognition Fund 2024 | Galway City Council](#)





## 7.2 Local Enhancement Programme 2024 / 2025



The Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2024 was announced in December 2023 by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by Galway City LCDC in 2024. A ring-fenced amount of capital funding for Women's Groups was also included under the scheme.

€127,606.49 was awarded to 67 local community and voluntary groups / organisations under the fund. This funding helped to support groups particularly in disadvantaged areas, with minor capital works and improvements to their facilities, and the purchase of equipment for community use. Such capital works to include carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, improved access for persons with a disability, improving energy efficiency of community facilities, or to purchase equipment for community use. All the projects that received funding relate to one or more of the key



priority areas as identified in the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan and the delivery of these projects in 2024 was of great benefit to local communities.

The Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2025 was announced in November 2024 by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

## Local Enhancement Programme 2025

### Supporting Community Groups and Clubs

Funding available for...

- Repairs
- Improvements to facilities
- Equipment. For example, tables, chairs, tools, signage, laptops and more.
- Running Costs such as energy costs like electricity and refuse
- Operating Costs such as rental costs and insurance bills



**Apply before 4pm Friday 31 January**

**Capital Funding** - Apply at [www.GalwayCity.ie/LEPCapital](http://www.GalwayCity.ie/LEPCapital)

**Current Funding** - Apply at [www.GalwayCity.ie/LEPCurrent](http://www.GalwayCity.ie/LEPCurrent)



This funding will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their facilities and to purchase equipment. As well as with their non-pay running costs, for example, energy costs or other non-pay operating costs for example rental/lease costs, insurance bills.

The allocation under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025 to Galway City LCDC is €141,688 comprising of €121,447 capital funding & €20,241 current funding. Galway City LCDC will administer this funding in early 2025.

## 7.3 Local Community Festivals

€15,000 was approved by Galway City Council in 2024 to support a range of community led festivals and events in recognition of the positive contribution that festivals and events can make to communities, giving the local community the opportunity to tailor festivals and events to the needs of their community, reaching more people. 21 community groups received funding which helped develop community cohesion, promote a sense of belonging, a sense of pride, encourage community participation through a sense of ownership and promote good relations.

## 7.4 Africa Day

Africa Day celebrates the richness of African cultures and the contribution of people of African descent to Irish life. Africa Day celebrations are organised by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs in partnership with African embassies in Ireland and local authorities around the country.



This year's events featured a grand gala at the Salthill Hotel, showcasing a range of performances, keynote speeches, and activities that highlighted cultural diversity and sustainability. Other events included a celebration of African heritage in Salthill Park, an African Youth and Multicultural Day at the Clybaun Hotel, an intercultural bridge conference connecting Irish, African, and Ukrainian communities, an indoor music festival, and an Afro Rhythms celebration.

## 7.5 Galway City Street Feast



Street Feast took place across the country on Saturday May 25th and Sunday May 26<sup>th</sup> 2024. In 2024 Street Feasts were held over two days instead of one for the first time. Street Feast is Ireland's weekend of community celebrations and neighborhood lunches. Street Feast aims to promote social inclusion and integration, tackle loneliness and build supportive and resilient neighborhoods in new and older communities across Ireland. 35 street feasts took place across Galway City in 2024. For 2025, Street Feast is on the weekend 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> 2025. More information on Street Feast is available [here](#) .

## 8. Community Development Programme

AMACH! LGBT+ strives to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and wellbeing for LGBTI+ people enabling them to participate fully in Ireland's social, economic, cultural, and political life. They respond to the needs as identified by the LGBT+ community and their families, with a particular focus on those that experience multiple forms of discrimination and associated marginalisation and those in rural, isolated areas.

The Community Development Programme (CDP) aims to trial community led interventions that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality and promote human rights. In 2023, AMACH! LGBT+ Galway through Galway City LCDC was successful in securing funding under this programme for three years from 2023-2025. This significant funding stream has enabled the AMACH LGBT+ organisation to get the Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre open and operational. In May 2024, the organisation had a soft open of the Centre with the return of community-led social groups.



Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre: No 1 Courthouse Square

The CDP funding secured by AMACH LGBT+ also aided the roll out of community surveys to ascertain what social groups or events the community would like to see in the space as well as volunteer to co-run. These surveys led the organisation to set up various groups and clubs such as the book club, writing club and film club who regularly meet in the resource centre. In addition, the organisation ran a series of health and wellbeing workshops and talks during the year.



Milestone events run by AMACH during 2024 included the highly successful LGBTI+ community days, the collaborative weeklong programme of events for Galway Pride Week including the LGBTI+ Community Hub, our intergenerational Community Mural launching the Galway Gulls LGBTI+ Softball team (the first ever LGBTI+ softball team in Connacht).



**Creative Ireland Programme Creative Communities Grant** – Through the Creative Communities Grant 2024, AMACH! and shout! LGBT+ Youth Project, Youth Work Ireland Galway, ran an 18+ intergenerational mural painting workshop series over the summer as well as a 2-day under18's planter painting workshop. There was 19 participants in the over



18's intergenerational mural project over 5 weeks and 8 participants in the under 18's youth planter painting workshops over 2 days. The mural project was unveiled on the first Saturday of Galway Pride Week, 10<sup>th</sup> August, where over 50 visitors came to see the new rear garden space including the wall murals and planters, as well as to hear about the project itself.

The aim of the project was to activate and empower a marginalised community to creatively contribute to the new Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre, a new space in Galway city. Through this the LGBT+ community was supported to create meaningful relationships, to strengthen social cohesion and to foster a strong sense of belonging and community ownership of Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre.



For further information on supports and services available please contact AMACH! LGBTI+ Galway on [info@amachlgbt.com](mailto:info@amachlgbt.com)

## 9. Galway City Community Network (GCCN / PPN)

Galway City Community Network (GCCN) is the Public Participation Network in Galway City, with over 180 member groups and organisations drawn from the community / voluntary, social inclusion and environmental sectors in the city. The GCCN vision for Galway City is “Galway, a creative and inclusive city that respects and values its people and communities, their wellbeing and quality of life, that will develop a vibrant, sustainable, economy and environment and participative and transparent governance.”



Galway City Community Network  
Líonra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe



Members celebrating 10 years of GCCN in 2024

2024 marked the 10-year anniversary since the establishment of Galway City Community Network as the Public Participation Network (PPN) in Galway City. The event was celebrated with all members at the 2024 Annual General Meeting and Summer GCCN Plenary. National celebrations were held across the country by all other PPNs as well, with an official recognition at the [6th National Public Participation Network Conference](#) on October 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> 2024.

The role of Galway City Community Network is to:

- **Facilitate representation** of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on relevant local government, local development bodies and any local, regional, national, or international structures deemed appropriate by GCCN.

- Act as a platform for the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to **develop policy and positions** on issues of common concern and to advocate for these policies and positions to be implemented.
- **Strengthen capacity** of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors, including to represent GCCN on all relevant structures.
- **Provide information** relevant to the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors and act as a hub around which information is received and disseminated.

GCCN continued to offer support and provide training and capacity building opportunities to the GCCN representatives and the wider membership. Three [Induction Sessions](#) for new and potential GCCN members were held throughout the year. These highlighted the work of GCCN, how it is connected to Galway City Council and how groups can get involved in participatory decision-making processes in our city.

GCCN organised several training sessions for members including Disability Awareness Training with Disability Federation Ireland, Understanding Hate and Extremism and Narrative Building with the Hope and Courage Collective and Parable and Media Training for Community Activists with journalist William Hederman. The latter was designed to equip community activists with practical tools for interacting with the media, covering topics like press release writing and broadcast interview skills.

Other training sessions co-hosted by GCCN, included a number of Volunteering Trainings with the Galway Volunteer Centre and Strengthening Irish and Palestinian NGO Partnerships with The Sumud Network and the Galway Volunteer Centre. A number of informal events entitled GCCN Coffee Mornings were organised to celebrate with the community important dates such as the International Mother Tongue Day, World Environmental Day and World Peace Day. These were well attended and offered stimulating networking opportunities.



Members in attendance at GCCN Induction and Coffee Mornings in 2024



GCCN facilitates representation on to a wide variety of policy and decision-making structures in Galway City, including the Local Community Development Committee, Strategic Policy Committees and others. In 2024, the Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) in Galway City underwent significant restructuring, increasing from five to six committees with redefined focus areas. This change directly impacted the work of GCCN, as its Linkage Groups had previously been aligned with the former five SPCs. In line with the new council elected in June 2024, GCCN held elections for community representatives on the six new Strategic Policy Committees at the Autumn Plenary 2024.

A series of training sessions for the new GCCN Representatives were hosted in late 2024. The new structure of the SPCs required GCCN to reevaluate and adapt its approach to ensure effective alignment with the new six SPCs. A workshop on Effective Representation was facilitated by Elaine Harvey. After this a session was held with representatives to brainstorm how we would reorganise our operations to engage effectively with the new SPC structures.

With 2024 being an election year, GCCN drove a campaign to put community issues at the top of the election agenda. GCCN collaborated on [the #LE24 Campaign](#) with Galway City Partnership, Galway Traveller Movement, Amach LGBTI+, Shining Light Galway, United Women Galway, Universities of Sanctuary and Galway Communities Against Racism and Discrimination.



As part of the *#LE24 Campaign*, GCCN hosted three Meet the Candidates events designed to provide a platform for communities to raise issues of concern and hold conversations with their Galway City candidates from the [Central](#), [East](#), and [West wards](#). GCCN members had an opportunity to meet the candidates, hear their vision for future work and discuss pressing topics such as housing, accessibility, social inclusion, transport, and planning.





Attendees at Meet the Candidates – East Ward event in May 2024

In line with its work around public participation and engaging marginalised groups in public consultations, GCCN continues to support its linkage groups and members to produce policy submissions on matters of relevance to them. In 2024, these included submissions on the Heritage Plan 2024-2029, Kingston Park and Millers Lane, the Pedestrian and Cycling Crossings at Browne Roundabout, the Strategic Policy Committee Standing Orders and the Galway City Council Corporate Plan.

GCCN also made two submissions on the new Draft Strategic Policy Committee Scheme, one of which was a joint submission with the Galway Council of Trade Unions. Further joint submissions were made on the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029 with Galway Traveller Movement and on the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy with Amach! LGBT+. Collaboration and partnership underpin GCCN's work. In 2024, GCCN continued to work with Galway City Partnership on the Intercultural Strategy and to attend the Community Integration Forum.



GCCN members in attendance at GCCN Spring Plenary 2024

GCCN continued to support the work of Access for All and attended Steering Group Meetings throughout the year. GCCN, Access for All and Galway City Partnership began collaborating on the filming of a short education film which started in November 2024. With

a focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the film follows the day in the life of several disabled people and the barriers they encounter in Galway City. Local councillors were invited to participate in the filming to experience first-hand the access issues highlighted throughout the film.

Building on the work done in 2023 around establishing and consolidating Galway Communities Against Racism and Discrimination, in 2024 GCCN participated in collaborative workshops and helped secure further funding for this network under the National Action Plan against Racism. A highlight for the year was the March to the Arch solidarity walk to the Spanish Arch held on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.



#### 2024 March to the Arch

In 2024 GCCN also continued its engagement with NASC and the University of Sanctuary through the Education Pathways programme regarding community sponsorship for two students seeking refuge in Ireland, studying at the University of Galway.

The GCCN engagement with the LCDC continued in 2024, with five representatives sitting on this committee. GCCN worked closely with the LCDC, Galway City Partnership and the HSE in the implementation of the Healthy Galway Strategy and in the development of a framework for the Healthy Ireland funding which aims to resource projects and initiatives that promote health and wellbeing in Galway City. Throughout 2024, GCCN continued to support the Healthy Galway Steering Committee.

GCCN together with LECP Action partners, Galway Traveller Movement, Access for All, Galway City Partnership and Amach! LGBT+ worked on re-establishing the Civil Society Panel in 2023 as part of the Pobal Pilot Project through the LCDC. GCCN will work with Galway City Council in 2025 to identify new policies and plans being developed that the Civil Society Panel could engage with.

## 10. Galway Volunteer Centre

**Online Volunteer Recruitment** - Galway Volunteer Centre continued to assist charities and community groups to find volunteers for individual volunteer roles advertised with at <https://www.i-vol.ie/>, the national volunteering database. When a role is registered, GVC promote it to those registered with them seeking volunteer work and the public. In 2024, 965 people living in Galway City registered to use the GVC service for the first time to find volunteer work. 2,802 applications were made for volunteer roles by volunteers living in the city. 191 volunteer opportunities taking place in Galway City were organised for volunteer involving organisations.



**Volunteer Fair** - On February 18<sup>th</sup>, GVC held a Volunteer Recruitment Fair in Leisureland, Salthill which was attended by over 1,000 members of the public, where they were able to visit and speak to 40 volunteer organisations about volunteering options. GVC also received significant national media coverage for the event.

**Garda Vetting** - GVC provides a vetting service to charities and community organisations that cannot access the Garda vetting service directly to vet volunteers or CE participants. In 2024, GVC vetted 900 individuals for 77 organisations.

**Support Training for Community Groups** - GVC has day to day contact with local groups to provide advice and support on volunteer management. Monthly Connect and Chat network meetings are also facilitated for volunteer managers.

In November and December 2024, with support from Galway City LCDC, the GVC organised 10 online workshops on topics such as Communication Skills, Time Management and Delegation Skills. The training was attended by 106 people from 56 organisations.



**Galway Community Volunteers** - Galway Community Volunteers are an in-house team of 200 volunteers who are on-call to assist at once-off community events across the city such as Culture Night, the Mayors Awards, Galway Music Residency concerts and CÚIRT International Literary Festival. In 2024 164 volunteers assisted at 40 separate events.



**Galway Street Ambassadors** - In 2024, GVC began recruiting volunteers for their new Galway Street Ambassadors programme, for its pilot year of activities, which was funded by Galway Culture Company and supported by Fáilte Ireland. Over the summer months, a team of 30 highly dedicated volunteers were available and assisting 1,500+ visitors to the city with information and directions.



**Integration Supports** - Since 2022, GVC have been providing Integration Supports to the community, initially focusing on Ukrainians but expanding to all new communities. Apart from assisting community members to volunteers and other organisations to find volunteers, GVC engaged in the following actions during 2024:

- Breakthrough English Language Classes –2 classes per week to individuals in the Ukrainian community with very limited English to improve their language skills.
- Morning Conversation Circles –13 conversation circles during the year, held in the Hardiman Hotel.
- LIFT leadership workshops –5 groups engaged in personal leadership development sessions (8 weekly sessions per group) based on the LIFT leadership model.
- 15 workshops held on topics such as Cross Cultural Dialogues in collaboration with Domestic Violence Response and charity organisations of Galway which were open to for the public to attend. A further 5 workshops were held by Ukrainian volunteers on topics such as computer literacy, psychological support services in Ireland, empathy in conflict resolution that helped volunteers to show their competence and help others.
- In partnership with Conradh na Gaeilge, GVC held a series of classes to offer introductory lessons in Irish to members of new communities in Galway.







For further information regarding Galway City LCDC and what it does, please contact:

Dermot Mahon

Katie Fahy

LCDC Chief Officer

LCDC Support

Galway City Council

Galway City Council

City Hall, College Road

City Hall, College Road

Galway

Galway

[dermot.mahon@galwaycity.ie](mailto:dermot.mahon@galwaycity.ie)

[katie.fahy@galwaycity.ie](mailto:katie.fahy@galwaycity.ie)



Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil  
Chathair na Gaillimhe  
Galway City Local Community Development  
Committee



