



Muintir na Tíre

Spring 2013

# THE MISSING LINK



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## OPINION

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**2012 was a special year for Muintir na Tíre when it celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Since 1937 The Organisation has continued to develop the ideals of our founder Canon Hayes, based on the core principles of neighbourliness, self-help and self-reliance. Those ideals are as important today as when Muintir na Tíre set about bringing communities together in a spirit of cooperation from 1937.**

Communities today are facing many challenges with the selective closures of both Rural and Urban Garda stations, Banks, Post Offices, cuts in health services, increasing crime rates, high unemployment, negative equity, emigration etc. There is now a greater need for community than at any other time that I can remember. We must have a greater awareness of the needs and difficulties of others in what is a vastly changed economic climate. I believe that how we respond to these challenges and to the

needs and difficulties of others will define us as a people.

In assessing the implications of economic and social change, Muintir na Tíre will continue to support local communities to organise and develop their capacity to effectively respond to their problems and needs. In response to the increasing rates in rural crime, Muintir na Tíre in partnership with An Garda Síochána have developed a Crime Prevention Model "Community Alert Text Alert"; this proactive model aims to reduce crime rates and the promotion of a safer environment.

Muintir na Tíre also proposes to put in place **An Outpatient Preventative Healthcare Model**. This unique and innovative model gives older people and those facing mobility problems and other difficulties the opportunity to continue to live in safety in their homes by providing practical help with repairs, improvements and household maintenance. It will also reduce the burden on the Local Health Services and Local Authority by reducing the demand for high cost service provision.

Muintir na Tíre will continue to articulate the voice of Rural Ireland and tackle the social and economic issues facing communities in Rural Ireland. However, in order to do so, Muintir na Tíre is reliant on government funding and the income streams provided by community groups affiliations

and various fundraising mechanisms. In the past twelve months, Muintir na Tíre has seen its core funding cut by more than 25%. This has placed our organisation in a difficult position as we are faced with increased demands. It is vitally important that all groups continue to pay their affiliations and support the fundraising measures, so that Muintir na Tíre can meet both the increasing demands of our communities and the core costs incurred by the organisation.

**John Hogan**

President of Muintir na Tíre

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## SAORVIEW

**Muintir na Tíre assisted in the National Digital Switchover. Below is a quote from the Director of the Digital Switchover Mary Curtis outlining the role that Muintir na Tíre played.**



**Launch of Saorview**

Community Alert Development Officer Mr Bernard Kearney and Minister Pat Rabbitte

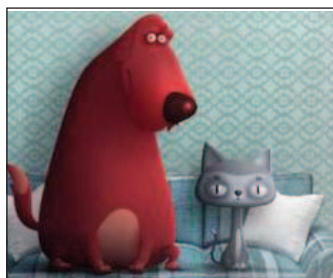
*"I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the Muintir na Tíre members who have played such an active role in helping the country switch to digital. The SAORVIEW campaign has been almost two years in duration and we have had many supporters along the way. From the outset SAORVIEW realised the importance of engagement with the voluntary and community sector and we met with a very wide range of organisations including SVP, Age Action, Age Concern and the ICA.*

*Muintir na Tíre has an extensive regional footprint, a well resourced and committed volunteer network and is held in high esteem across the country. SAORVIEW have been delighted to have had Muintir na Tíre as one of our official outreach partners and feel very confident that Muintir na Tíre made the digital switchover a much less intimidating prospect for local communities.*

*I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the volunteer members who have responded with generosity and enthusiasm and I am extremely impressed by the work that has been done. You have undoubtedly made the transition to digital television so much easier for many people who might otherwise have found it more stressful.*

*Between the outreach work being done by Muintir na Tíre and the willingness of friends and family across the country to lend a hand, I have every confidence that there is plenty of assistance available to anyone who needs it".*

**Mary Curtis,  
Director of  
Digital Switchover**



## GROUP CHARITABLE STATUS

Use of Muintir na Tíre's charitable status by any group which is not currently affiliated is illegal and may lead to groups funding being withdrawn. If you have any queries please contact Muintir na Tíre Head Office or your local Community Alert Development Officer. The Revenue Commissioners, who bestowed Charitable Tax Exemption on Muintir na Tíre in 1987, has placed the responsibility for "policing" the use of the exemption (Charitable Tax Exemption Number) on the organisation itself. Any group found using the exemption illegally will affect their "good standing" status with the Revenue Commissioners and other Government Departments in addition to other consequences.

As with all Community Organisations, groups availing of the services of a parent organisation are required to pay a nominal Affiliation Fee. The Annual Affiliation Fee for Community Alert Groups is €50.00 and €150.00 for Community Councils. This entitles the group to use Muintir na Tíre's Charitable Exemption Number and access to Muintir na Tíre's Insurance Scheme. All community groups must have adequate public liability insurance to cover their activities. The charitable status can also be used when applying for funding, as a charitable status number is now a requirement if a group wishes to access funding from Government or Statutory Agency Funding Groups.

It would be appreciated if all groups would avail of the Direct Debit facility to renew their affiliation from now on and also that an email address of a committee member be included in the application form.

## CLOSED GARDA STATIONS ARE BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITIES

The minister for Justice Mr. Alan Shatter TD announced at the launch of the Community Crime Prevention programmes on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 that many of the Garda Stations which were being closed would be made available to community groups who could utilise these buildings for meetings, retirement facilities, and training courses. This was recently reiterated by Mr. Brian Hayes TD, who is responsible for the Office of Public Works, who said that if the station buildings could not be used by other state bodies they would be sold or given over to community use. *"The last thing we want to see is former Garda stations in a derelict condition, that's why I am announcing a new policy today."*

Muintir na Tíre believes that this is an ideal opportunity for Communities to acquire buildings for Community use, especially in areas that currently do not have Community Buildings.





## NEWS IN BRIEF

### CUTBACKS ON ALARMS FOR THE ELDERLY



Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



As you are already aware, the Seniors Alert programme of support for communities to provide small scale security devices such as socially monitored pendant alarms and monitored smoke alarms were subject to a drastic cut in the 2012 budget. Muintir na Tíre immediately made representations to the Minister concerned Mr. Phil Hogan and subsequently met with the Minister on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013. Following discussions, the Minister agreed to reverse the cuts.

The resultant media coverage has increased the numbers of applications being submitted for these security devices. An essential first step for groups who wish to provide small scale security devices for the Older and Vulnerable members of their communities is to immediately register their interest with the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs in Tubbercurry Co. Sligo.

### ACTIVE RECYCLING PROGRAMME OF SOCIALLY MONITORED PENDANT ALARMS



Muintir na Tíre actively encourages all community Alert groups to initiate an active recycling programme of Socially Monitored Pendant Alarms if not already doing so. This simple recycling initiative will

ensure that your group will always have at least one working unit available for re connection at all times.

### SCHOOL GARDEN COMPETITION

The aim of the 'Pride in Our Community Schools Competition' is to support pupils, teachers in County Cork to bring nature, wildlife, plants and colour into their school garden/grounds, to promote horticulture and biodiversity and to give students a chance to interact with the environment and nature in a positive way.

Studies have shown that school gardens promote positive environmental attitudes and provide an excellent opportunity to develop more positive attitudes towards science at an early age. The competition is open to all primary schools in County Cork who have a school garden or are in the process of developing one. The school decides on the participants for the competition, this will consist of pupils and adults. The pupils can be members of one class or representatives from a few classes. The adults may be teachers, school gardener or parents. The entry must be approved by the school principal. The judges will include a horticulturist, an Environmental Awareness Officer and a member of Cork County Federation Muintir na Tíre.



#### For Further Information:

**Contact:** Cork County Federation Muintir na Tíre

**Email:** [admin@muintircork.com](mailto:admin@muintircork.com) **Website:** [www.muintircork.com](http://www.muintircork.com)

**Tel:** (021) 45005688 **Mobile:** (087) 2034876

## PHILANTHROPY IRELAND

Civil Society – charities, community groups, and not least Muintir Na Tíre, play a hugely important part in Irish life and provide a whole range of vital services that help to make Ireland a good place to live. Almost all of these organisations are under pressure from Government cutbacks and reductions in fund-raised income. They also employ more than 100,000 people in Ireland. The National Giving Campaign is designed to increase the amount of money that we all invest in this sector to help these who are in need and to make Ireland a better place to live.

There are very few families in Ireland who have not experienced an income drop over the last number of years but our research shows that even though the Irish people are feeling the impact of the recession, they are willing to give and to give more to good causes. The National Giving Campaign will set out to show people the value delivered by charities and community groups and encourage them to give more. It is a great opportunity for the members of Muintir Na Tíre to fundraise either for their own activities, or indeed for local community projects. The campaign will be launched in April and we would encourage groups now to begin planning for fundraising next year. Our research shows that people want to give to causes that are local, to which they have an emotional connection and which demonstrate real impact. Next year will be a good time to ask.

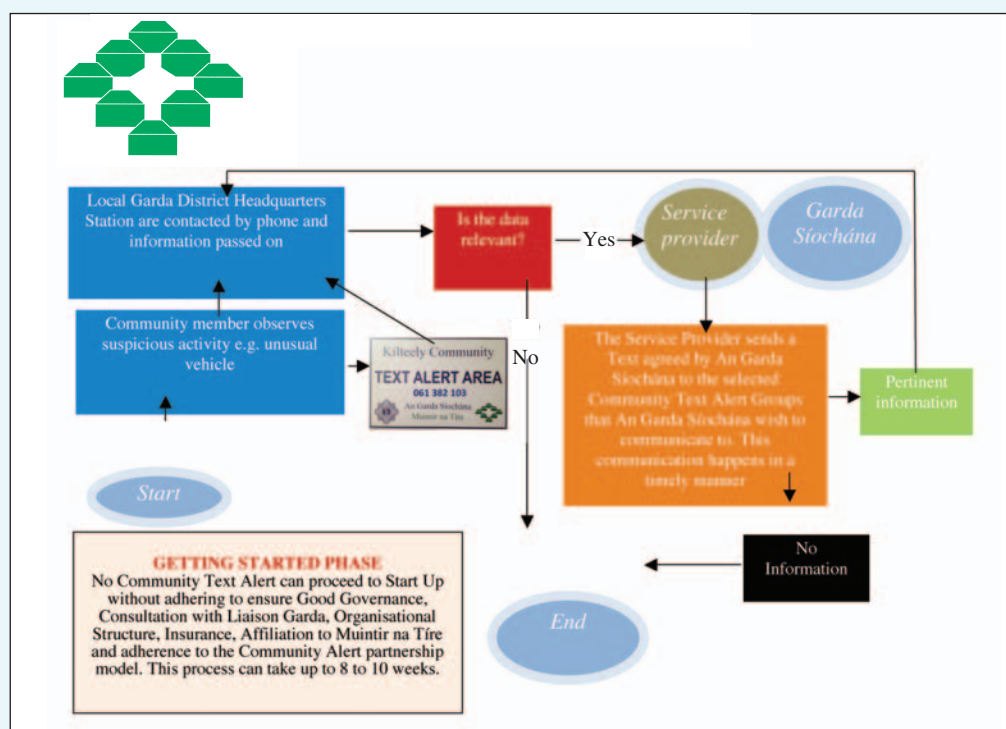
Seamus Mulconry  
Executive Director of Philanthropy Ireland  
[smulconry@philanthropy.ie](mailto:smulconry@philanthropy.ie)



## CRIME PREVENTION

### Community Alert Text Alert

With the backdrop of rising rural crime rates and the impending closure of rural Garda stations, communities need to empower themselves to protect and safeguard their way of life. In response to the increasing rates in rural crime, Muintir na Tíre in partnership with An Garda Síochána have developed a crime prevention programme. The diagram below outlines the Community Alert Text Alert Model:



#### The benefits of this programme are:

- Enhanced crime prevention status for Community Alert with improved community/Garda participation and joint practical activities
- Reduction in crime
- Community feels safer
- Increased communication amongst local residents via the text system
- Increased communication between An Garda Síochána and the community
- Better relations between An Garda Síochána and the community
- Gardaí are now able to get information to the community instantly
- Gardaí can canvass hundreds of subscribers in an instant should they require information

#### Community Alert Text Alert Training

Muintir na Tíre are now ready to take bookings for a member or members of Community Alert Groups who wish to participate in a 1 day training course as to the correct way they can set up a Community Text Alert System in their own area.

The course will take place in our new Training Centre in Tipperary Town and other nationwide venues. It will cost €50 per participant. Classes are restricted to 20 participants.

On completion of this course, each participant will receive a training manual which they can bring back to their own community and will be a unique resource into the future.

The course will take each participant through the various correct stages of the Community Text Alert System, covering areas such as **INSURANCE, AFFILIATION, SIGNAGE, ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY, LIAISON GARDA, GOOD GOVERNANCE, BENEFITS OF TEXT ALERT, SERVICE PROVIDER, GRANTS AVAILABLE, HOW TO FUND SCHEME. ETC**

Muintir na Tíre would encourage all Community Groups who intend setting up a Community Text Alert System to attend this course as it will result in communities establishing the correct protocols from the outset.

**TO BOOK YOUR PLACE ON THE TRAINING PROGRAMME: Email: [TRAINING@MUINTIR.IE](mailto:TRAINING@MUINTIR.IE) Tel: HEAD OFFICE ON (062) 51163**

## CRIME PREVENTION

### COMMUNITY ALERT ROAD SIGNS

It appears that there is a proliferation in the number of Community Alert Signs appearing on roads all over the country and a number of Local Authorities are expressing concern regarding the increase. The following is an extract of a reply received by a community group in recent days from a local authority "All signs should be standard community alert signs. The council are concerned about the number of signs planned for such a scenic area and the PRECEDENT that would be set if EVERY community alert group wished to put up 12 signs".



Permission from the Local Authority must be sought before signs may be erected. As rules applied by each local authority vary, it is necessary to contact the local Area Engineer to discuss the erection of signs, their maintenance and insurance. The Local Authorities liability will not extend to signs erected privately by Groups. The current directive from Department of Environment covers the specification and size of signs as outlined below.

#### Designated Community Alert Signs are made to the following specifications:

- Community Alert Signs consist of 12g Aluminium panel measuring 600mm by 400 mm with a non-slip bracket to affix to a 75mm diameter pole.
- The text for the sign should read "Community Alert Area" or "Pobal ar Aire".
- Signs should be on a White Reflective background with blue lettering.
- Signs will include both the Garda Síochána and Muintir na Tíre logos.

### MUINTIR NA TÍRE GARDA VETTING POLICY



Muintir na Tíre is a provider of the Garda Vetting service for its affiliated voluntary and community groups throughout Ireland. Muintir na Tíre



recommends that all its affiliated groups carry out Garda vetting for all their paid staff and volunteers. This will greatly reduce the risks to organisations, the responsible board members of that organisation, other staff and most importantly, the clients and members of that organisation. It may also reduce legal exposure.

Any Community Group that receives funding from the HSE should also bear in mind that Garda Vetting has become more important in the context of Service Level Agreements and Grant Aid Agreements. The decision to engage in Garda Vetting for existing (members / staff / employees) and as part of the recruitment and selection process is a voluntary one. However, this practice is in line with the best safeguards available to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults within your organisation. All members with access to children and vulnerable adults, either in a supervisory role or in a management role, will be required to partake of the vetting process. There will be a requirement to be re-vetted on any change of position or after 5 years (whichever is sooner). The vetting process will take approximately 6 weeks, dependant upon the prompt return of application forms. This must be taken into account when recruiting staff.

The Garda Vetting Unit only identifies if someone has convictions or prosecutions on record, it does not provide clearance for people to work with children and vulnerable adults. It is the responsibility of this organisation to decide the suitability of candidates based on a range of relevant criteria including the results of Garda vetting.

#### To arrange Garda Vetting for your Staff and or Volunteers:

- Your organisation must appoint a Vetting Liaison Officer – And have him/her registered with Muintir na Tíre
- The Appointed Person will act as liaison between Muintir na Tíre's Authorised Signatory and your organisation.
- The Appointed Person will be responsible for distribution of all vetting application forms, submissions to and information received from Muintir na Tíre.
- The Appointed Person will be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information received from both the individual and from Muintir na Tíre.

Further information is available from the Authorised signatory who can be contacted by e-mail at

**gardavetting@muintir.ie or**

**Telephone (062) 51163 or by post to:**

**Liam Kelly,  
Muintir na Tíre,  
National Headquarters,  
Canon Hayes House,  
Tipperary.**



## FOCUS ON HEALTH

### MUINTIR NA TÍRE'S HOME CARE SAFETY AUDIT PROGRAMME

Muintir na Tíre proposes to put in place **An Outpatient Preventative Healthcare Model** which has at its centre, community volunteers who will be trained in each parish, to carry out a Home Care safety Audit. Whilst the latest census information reveals that over 11.82% of the population is aged 65 or older, that percentage figure in the very rural areas can increase to be as high as 22%. This places even more pressure on the health care system and the exchequer; this programme would reduce these pressures.

#### The purpose of the Home Care Safety Audit is:

- To carry out a Home Safety Audit for Older and Vulnerable People (Prevention of trips and falls). Older people will be offered a Home Care Safety Audit to identify any potential hazards or necessary repairs.
- Give older people and those facing mobility problems and other difficulties the opportunity to continue to live in safety in their homes by providing practical help with repairs, improvements and household maintenance.
- Help reduce accidents and increase safety and security within their home.

#### Economic Benefits

Muintir na Tíre's approach is innovative and also unique as it will be able to reach out to every community in Rural Ireland to provide the services envisaged. It will also reduce the burden on the Local Health Services, Local Authority by reducing the demand for high cost service provision.

#### Participants

2 volunteers from each parish will attend this 3 day accredited course and will then return to their own communities and begin the process of carrying out the audit. The pilot programme will target all older people over the age of 65 and also those deemed to be vulnerable.

On completion of the audit it is hoped that the identified actions requiring attention could be carried out by the Partnership organisation located nationally, possibly based on the TUS programme.

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## FUNDRAISING

### FUNDRAISING IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

**Due to budgetary measures owing to the current economic climate, many voluntary organisations including Muintir na Tíre are under pressure to maintain their current level of services.**

The Board of Directors of Muintir na Tíre are firmly committed to ensuring that Muintir na Tíre continues to provide invaluable support to communities throughout Ireland. However, in order to address funding shortfalls, the Directors of Muintir na Tíre have been forced to undertake a national Fundraising programme of Church Gate Collections. The Board of Directors are conscious that this is an added workload. Regrettably, Muintir na Tíre finds itself in the position that if this initiative is not successful, Muintir na Tíre may have to look at a series of job losses, resulting in reduced services to our Community Development and Community Alert groups.

For this Fundraising initiative to be successful, Muintir na Tíre are dependent on our volunteers nationally to carry out the collections on our behalf. Each group will be contacted by your local development Officer to provide collectors to carry out the

Church gate Collections in their respective areas. Collectors will be provided with information leaflets for distribution to Mass goers which will be of particular benefit to the older and more vulnerable members of their communities.

#### Community Fundraising Initiatives

In this difficult economic climate, communities are attempting to find more novel and innovative ways to try and raise badly needed finances to improve their communities social, educational and economic environment. Below is a description of the various fundraising initiatives being implemented by Muintir na Tíre Community groups nationwide.

#### KNOCKMEALDOWN ACTIVE SPLIT THE POT

"This is a weekly draw, it means providing an envelope with space to write a name and address. You simply pop €2 in the envelope, stick your name and address or phone number on the front. These envelopes are made available in all the local shops/businesses and we provided a box, with a slit and a padlock. We collect the envelopes, get the businesses to sign as to how many were in the box, just count the number of envelopes e.g. if there are 150 in it means there is €300 in the pot, €150 goes to our organisation and we give €20 each to second and third and €110 to the winner."

#### GORESBRIDGE

"This idea was about promoting the village and raising badly needed finances. We asked for local people to submit photographs of a person, place or thing around Goresbridge. We got a photographer to choose the best photos for each month of the calendar. We had each month sponsored by a business which paid for the printing of it. We sold them at €10 each. This has been an enormous success, the calendars have been sent to all corners of the world, this year will be our third year doing it.."



**SPLIT THE POT**  
in aid of  
**ST. THERESA'S HOSPITAL  
CLOGHEEN**

**Knockmealdown  
Active**

**€2.00**

Name:  
Address:  
Tel No:



## FUNDRAISING

### FUNDRAISING IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

#### FRESHFORD COMMUNITY HALL

"The Community Hall was becoming a derelict building so the first step in developing the project was to organize fundraising with a difference.

A brain storming meeting was held and out of this it was decided to approach local business for a loan of €1,000.00 to help re-roof the building. The committee linked with the young people of the area to come along and paint the building and be part of a fundraising subcommittee.

At the time there were 87 small businesses including farmers in the area. The sub-committee mainly young people with a member of the hall committee delivered by hand letters to each business. The response was great, some gave a loan of €1000.00 but others gave non refundable donations of €250/€300. This raised a large amount of money.

The committee also approached Kilkenny County Council for a grant to enable work to start on the roof; the county council was very supportive of the idea. The committee then decided to buy some cattle and approach farmers in the area to rear them for the community hall to enable us to pay back the €1000.00 given by the local businesses.

When farmers were approached, they offered to rear one and also give another free to the hall. At the moment the hall has 20 cattle being reared by local farmers which we hope to sell at the end of this year to help in the further development that will be taking place in phase 3 of the project."



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### MUINTIR NA TÍRE - THE MISSING LINK



Notwithstanding the economic benefits to rural areas of the national economic growth of the past decade, there is a noticeable failure in social development. This is evident from the declining voluntarism in local communities and weakness in the capacity for mutual benefit and community development associations, as well as continuing social exclusion, and failure to provide the level of local services and amenities needed to contribute to a better quality of life.

The Mid Term Evaluation of the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013) found that while awareness and knowledge of the schemes within the programme was high among beneficiary groups, it was not always the case that beneficiaries were aware of the RDP generally. The report stated that *"Awareness levels among the general (non-beneficiary) population may also be an issue requiring attention if the wider benefits of the programme are to be successfully communicated and promoted"* and that *"challenges remain in relation to promoting awareness of the RDP more generally among the wider (nonprimary audience / population)"*

Muintir na Tíre believe that the forthcoming Rural Development Programme should implement mechanisms which will enable vibrant sustainable communities, with a quality of life that will make them attractive places in which to work and live. An effective communication plan should also be developed to ensure the

primary audience is aware of the programme and its contribution, that they understand the programmes' measures and objectives, and to ensure action where applicable.

[In its submission to the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020,](#)

**Muintir na Tíre has recommended the following be considered:**

- Muintir na Tíre could assist in the development of local strategies by analysing the development needs and potential of communities through Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis and informing communities of the objectives, targets and outputs outlined in the local strategy.
- Muintir na Tíre through collaboration with statutory agencies/bodies can ensure that communities will be informed about grants and information related to energy efficiency which will result in increasing energy efficiency and lowering the county's carbon footprint.
- Muintir na Tíre can act as an intermediary between community and organisations/agencies, by providing essential animation for the local situation ensuring that through access to advice and information of existing funding mechanisms, groups can be supported and initiatives developed.



### CELTIC COMMUNITY LINK



*Celtic Community Link is a Rural Development Initiative based in South Tipperary & Waterford in Ireland (**Muintir na Tíre**), and Carmarthenshire in Wales (**Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services**). The project seeks to provide access to information and mobilising rural communities' own expertise and resources to help stimulate social and economic development. Some of the projects developed during the initiative are outlined in the preceding paragraphs.*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### BenefIT

In conjunction with Fastrack to Information Technology (FIT), IT training was provided to in excess of 200 people with no prior IT training, aged 55 or over, unemployed and disadvantaged in Waterford and South Tipperary. The training comprised of 3 two hour training sessions. 4 of the 6 hours of training involved setting up an email account, sending emails with attachments, using search engines and booking tickets online. The other 2 hours provided training in relation to online banking, social networking and digital photography.



### DIGITAL RECOLLECTIONS PROJECT



In 1937-1938, the National Schools Irish Folklore Study was conducted. This involved national school children documenting the heritage, culture and traditions of local areas by interviewing the elderly in their locality.

Muintir na Tíre in association with South Tipperary Development Company are replicating the Folklore study, incorporating 12 national schools in South Tipperary to document the narratives of the elderly in their locality using digital equipment, thus preserving local traditions and culture.

The project is socially inclusive as national school children will be learning the heritage of their areas from their peers while both the school children and the elderly are familiarizing themselves with modern technology.

The footage recorded by national schools will be edited and uploaded onto a website. It is envisioned that the documented material could be used in the development of local heritage tourism.



### KNOCKMEALDOWNS RECREATIONAL STRATEGY

Celtic Community Link Project Officers have worked closely with Waterford Co. Council, Waterford LEADER Partnership, the County Waterford Community Forum, South Tipperary Development Company along with support from Fáilte Ireland and farming representative bodies to implement recreational strategies for the Knockmealdowns region.

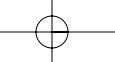
The aim of the project is to work as a group to maximise the tourism potential of the Knockmealdowns. The intention is to develop a coordinated approach to the provision and enhancement of the services, attractions and infrastructure used by tourists in the Knockmealdowns.

Communities in the Knockmealdowns catchment area are working together to:

- Co-ordinate all tourism activities and services in the area as a one stop shop for visitors.
- Enhance the tourism experience for visitors to the area.
- Increase economic activity and support job creation in the tourism sector.
- Ensure the sustainable development of the Knockmealdowns.
- Create a destination catering for all holiday needs.







## Muintir na Tíre

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