



# **kwetb**

Kildare and Wicklow  
Education and Training Board

## **Community Education Service**

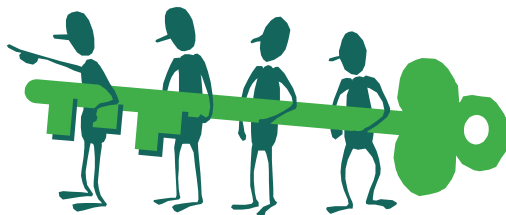
### **Kildare & Wicklow**

# **CONNECTING COMMUNITIES**

## **1st Edition – Autumn 2015**

**Would you like to ...**

- **Learn a new skill?**
- **Meet new people?**
- **Get involved in your Community?**



### **Kildare**

**Further Education & Training Centre  
Jigginstown, Naas,  
Co. Kildare**

### **Wicklow**

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Chill Dara agus Chill Mountain  
Kildare and Wicklow  
Education and Training Board**

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of the combined newsletter from the Community Education Services in Kildare and Wicklow. This edition gives an overview of some of the work undertaken by both services in their respective counties during the period from January to June 2015. We hope this publication will give you an insight into how we work with groups to identify their priority needs and to implement an activity or programme to meet those needs. Sometimes what is needed is a series of workshops to strengthen the group itself. We hope this newsletter sparks your interest and we would appreciate hearing your feedback. We look forward to working with you during the remainder of 2015.

Brenda Delaney, Co. Wicklow & Susan Cullinane, Co. Kildare,  
Community Education Facilitators

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## CO. KILDARE & WICKLOW STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT

Number of Groups . . . . .	89
Number of Courses . . . . .	137
Number of Learners . . . . .	1349
QQI Accredited Portfolios . . . . .	47

# Sustaining Communities

## Growing a 'Community' through Community Gardening

*'In community gardening courses we grow a few vegetables and a lot of community'*

**says Suzie Cahn, Community Gardening Facilitator.**

KWETB's Community Education Service has a number of projects promoting general skills and knowledge in the areas of organic growing, healthy food production and nature friendly gardening. In addition, these projects can become a catalyst for community engagement in urban and rural communities for people from all walks of life and all ages.

Courses usually take place outside the traditional classroom setting and provide a non-threatening neutral place where community members can meet each other through a common interest. The active nature of the learning, along with the opportunity to share diverse skills, can break down barriers which creates wider accessibility for participants with low levels of confidence, literacy or English language.

***"Courses have helped support the development of a network of***



***community gardens throughout Wicklow building social cohesion and connections across distinct sectors that can traditionally find it hard to cross-fertilise or collaborate.”*** Suzie Cahn

Along with developing gardening skills, a community garden team also learn how to establish group ground rules, manage budgets, encourage participation, establish good communication systems among members and with the public and media, resolve conflicts and challenges. In this way, community gardening can develop the capacity of local people to create change and sustainability in their communities.

## **Greystones Community Gardening Project**

One such course began in 2013 in Greystones Family Resource Centre. Suzie initially taught a group how to grow food. The Greystones project benefited from having a dedicated space in the centre that was transformed from “a dull and lifeless back yard into a vibrant community gardening space” (Caoimhe Kearns, Greystones Family Resource Centre’s manager). Having acquired skills in producing food and designing a garden in one centre, the group moved on to create a garden from scratch in Burnaby Lawns, and also became involved in a garden in Kenmare Heights another estate in Greystones. As Caoimhe says ***“Using the skills and knowledge they gained, the group has involved more people locally and have developed colourful diverse gardens, growing a wide range of vegetables and fruits and with fully functioning compost systems. From one course, three community gardens”.***

A number of factors contributed to the success of this particular project: the availability of a suitable space, accessible to the community; the interest and willingness of individuals to become part of a dedicated core team of volunteers; the support of the community centre staff; the skills and experience of Suzie Cahn, both as a gardening tutor and as a community development facilitator.

## **Naas Men’s Shed “grows” with gardening polytunnel**

Fourteen members undertook an 8 week Horticultural course with tutor Ros Longwill covering seed production, transplanting, potting and gardening skills.

The polytunnel will enable the group to cultivate garden produce all year round. Certificates of participation were awarded and Cllr Seamie Moore, Chairperson of the Naas Men's Shed said ***"This project demonstrated undeniable links between the shed concept, further education, social integration, therapeutic adaptation, teamwork, personal achievement and a "desire for a lifestyle balance".***

Other gardening projects supported by KWETB's Community Education Service include: Laragh, Blessington, Tinahely, Arklow Tunnel project, Newbridge Family Resource Centre and Monasterevin Residents Group.

## Social Enterprise, Kildare & Wicklow

Following on from our successful Introduction to Social Enterprise workshops earlier this year, the Community Education Service will be offering a structured programme to meet the needs of communities and learners as they explore ways of enhancing and regenerating their communities. Social Enterprise is becoming a recognised and valued way for communities to address their concerns. It also offers the possibility of generating employment. However individuals and communities may need varying levels of support as they take the first steps to explore this concept. Thus the Community Education Service will offer a programme with 3 core elements.

- 1. Social Enterprise Information Event.** This event will showcase examples of social enterprise activity and encourage community groups and learners to network informally, promote discussion, share their ideas and interests and make new contacts. This will take place in the autumn at a date and venue to be confirmed.
- 2. 'Community Start-Up'**, two skills focused workshops which will aim to develop key skills relevant to all groups contemplating social enterprise. The programme will be flexible but can cover areas like developing your vision, set up, finance and grant application skills. Learner groups will be invited to send approximately 3 of their members to these workshops where they will be joined by representatives of up to five other groups. The format will encourage interaction between the groups and the participants will be expected to bring the information back to their groups.

**3. Social Enterprise Capacity Building** is the third part of the programme and this will involve a tutor working with one group for up to 5 sessions where they will facilitate the group to develop their social enterprise ideas and plans.

In the future our hope is to offer an accredited module in this area which would run over a 6-7 month period and be strongly project focused.

*Conor O'Leary – Tutor*

## Developing our Community Art Approach

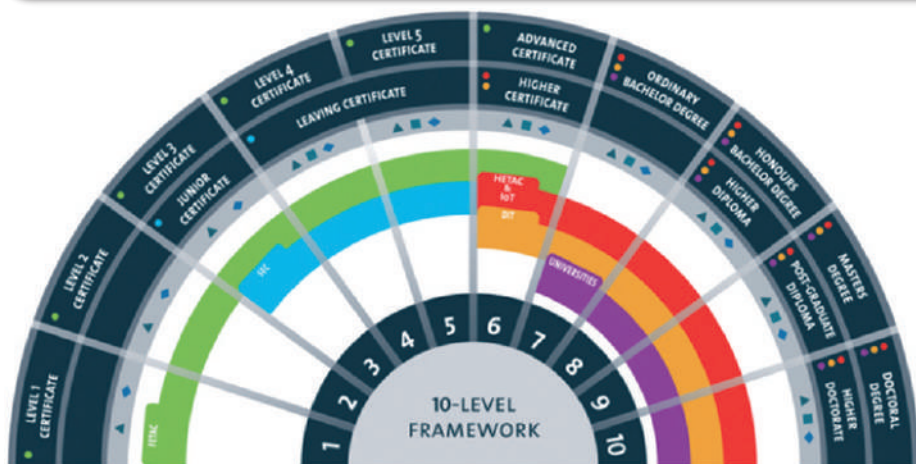
A workshop for Community Art Tutors was delivered by Peter Hussey on the 8th of May in Croi Anu – Creative Centre, Moone, Co. Kildare. It was a day of exploration and connection for participants which included tutors and group leaders. Each participant of the workshop brought with them their own story of how they work alongside and within the Community Groups they encounter in order to respond to the needs of the group to develop their creativity but also where possible to strengthen links with the local community. With the guidance of Peter, we were encouraged to explore our own sense of self through innovative movement exercises and observe how this view point can impact on our practice as facilitators. This workshop not only opened my eyes to my own role as a Community Arts Facilitator and how to develop my Community Art approach, but also instilled a new found awareness as to the importance of connection, dialogue and to nurture my own creative practice.

*Aishling Hennessy – Tutor*





# Developing Accredited Learning Programmes



Fiona Hartley, Director of Further Education and Training in SOLAS, recently referred to the importance of Community Education as ***“a way for people to actually engage in education”***. She flagged how non-accredited provision can begin a process that can eventually lead to accredited learning and further skills development.

Although KWETB’s Community Education service is mainly focused on non-accredited learning in line with Department of Education Operational Guidelines, sometimes projects need to deliver accredited learning to complement their core goals, provide opportunities for learners to attain qualifications and also meet their funding criteria. The Community Education Service can work with these projects to develop relevant accredited programmes. Two examples are outlined below.

## Tiglin Rehabilitation Project, Arklow

### (QQI Level 4 – Personal Effectiveness)

The Tiglin Rehabilitation project works with people in recovery from substance misuse, building resilience so that people can eventually re-engage with society. Initially, Community Education developed a non-accredited programme to

build the group's capacity to commit and to participate. Two projects, Digital Photography with tutor David Stephenson and Healthy Eating with tutor Aisling Kirwan, complemented the project's core goals by supporting people around having a healthy diet, learning how to work as a team, and increasing confidence and self-esteem.



Building on this, a QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Level 4 component in Personal Effectiveness was delivered by tutor Eileen Cannon. Again, this complemented the one-to-one personal work taking place in the project; learners reflected on behaviours and strategies that promoted or undermined their personal effectiveness to-date and documented changes they could make. With the support of their tutor Eileen the group achieved good results.

## Signal Community Arts Project, Bray

### (QQI Level 6 – Work Experience & Arts and the Community)

Signal Community Arts project in Bray is another example where a QQI level 6 accredited programme has been developed to complement the core goals of a Community Employment scheme. Similar to Tiglin, consultative meetings took place to ensure the quality and relevance of the programme, entitled Developing Community Arts Practice. The first strand of the programme was delivered in the autumn of 2014 by tutor Alice Bennet. The two modules (Work Experience and Arts and the Community) closely complemented the core goal of Signal Arts, to train community artists to work in community settings.



The second strand of the programme began in June 2015 and is focused on developing marketing and promotional skills for the arts sector. Participants will have the opportunity to progress to a full level 6 award in the autumn.



Some quotations from the evaluation feedback with the group:

- **“Brilliant tutor, conscientious, clear and thorough. Creatively delivered. I definitely learnt loads”**
- **“I was stimulated and opened up to looking at different ways of working with, and developing groups. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the course and found it educational and inspiring”**
- **“Fabulous learning experience... a fabulous learning curve”**
- **“As a community artist, it was invaluable”**

## Does Social Justice Matter Today? Naas

### (QQI Level 5 – Social Justice Principles)

Are you interested in promoting a just society and in valuing diversity? Do you agree that all people share a common humanity and have a right to equitable treatment and access to a fair share of community resources? Are you working with a group to achieve this? Do you know what this really means?

This QQI Level 5 module will explore social justice issues and principles, globalisation, how politics, economics and technology have resulted in inequality and your role in facilitating change in addressing a social justice issue.

This course is an excellent start in understanding social justice issues and assisting you to develop your skills in acting against injustice. It promises to be interesting, engaging and an interactive experience!

The tutor Claire Hopkins has worked in community and higher education for over a decade. Claire has worked with adults returning to education on a range of programmes from Social Studies, Personal Effectiveness to Training and Development. She has worked with teenagers and adults with disabilities as a job coach and community facilitator. She is passionate about creating a constructive, supportive and challenging learning environment where learners develop relevant skills and knowledge in collaboration with each other.

This course will run in partnership with Network Kildare between October and May on Tuesday nights in Naas.

**Claire Hopkins – Tutor**



# Strengthening Groups

Strengthening Groups workshops are tailored to the specific needs of the group. They help the group to look at how they are working, to focus on their strengths and to identify areas posing challenges or difficulties.

So far in 2015 tutors have worked with a variety of groups: Men's Sheds, Active Retirement Groups, Community Art Groups and Community Enterprise Groups. In each case the needs of the group were varied and included work on the role of the group or committee, on training needs, on sustainability and how to attract new membership. This work can also help groups to identify areas for follow-on courses. If you think your group would benefit from a Group Health Check please contact us.

## Some Examples of Group Health Check Work

**Example 1:** A Wicklow Town based group was interested in learning more about how to work together more effectively as a committee for the benefit of their members. During the evaluation, the group described how they moved through the sessions from confusion at the start, to challenging discussion to gelling more effectively as a group. The group liked the fact that the sessions were spaced out to one a month because it allowed them to bring up topics and issues that had arisen between the sessions – ***“we made the course as***



*it went along, it wasn't set".* Participants felt that the sessions had given them confidence around how to do the following things; start a meeting, communicate more effectively with each other and with other stakeholders, chair a meeting. It has increased their understanding about being on a committee and the sessions have opened up some different ways of looking at issues.

**Example 2:** A group based in Blessington had four facilitated sessions. The group focused on increasing and maintaining members, promoting the group, group roles and responsibility, activities and programmes, annual budgeting, and day to day organisation. Feedback from the group indicated that the course generated a lot of ideas; it was ***'very encouraging', 'improves communication among members'***.

## ShareRing Skills

### Spreading the message of Inclusion through Community Art, Celbridge

The ShareRing Skills Group was first set up in 2014 to provide an opportunity for people in the community of Celbridge and the wider area to access affordable creative and artistic activities. Some of the activities include still life sketching, watercolour landscapes, making happiness jars and origami. The group meets in Celbridge Community Library and welcomes all participants. Members of the group are local and international, young and mature and those with disabilities and other health challenges. Participants remark on the sharing, support and friendships that have flourished.

This voluntary group is led by a small number of committed individuals. As the group has grown they have identified development needs including the need to upskill in new craft areas and in how to pass these skills on to others. The first of these has been addressed by the group completing a felting course which included an exhibition and in the Autumn will undertake group work



training so they can pass on the skills they have learned. Respond Housing Association shared their community space to facilitate the KWETB training and the skills and relationships are thriving! The group expresses a sincere thanks to Susan Cullinane and Conor O'Leary of Community Education Service for their enthusiasm and support.

***Niamh Nolan – Steering Group Member***

## **The Hub, Kiltegan**

An accredited course in food safety and hygiene was delivered over a 4 week period to a group of eight volunteers from the community shop and café, **'The Hub' Kiltegan**. The need for the course was identified through a needs assessment. Participants found the course to be **'relevant', 'comprehensive', 'should be completed by all food handlers', and 'informative'**. Run by volunteers with support from the CE Scheme, other features of The Hub include a Book Swap, free Wi-Fi, a children's play kitchen, a community notice board, and a newspaper donation point for a local animal sanctuary. The Hub opens from Monday to Saturday, 9a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Further updates about the Hub are available on their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/thehubkiltegan](http://www.facebook.com/thehubkiltegan).

## **FREE Workshops to Strengthen Your Group**

### **Would your Group like new Members?**

Avail of a free workshop to explore how you can engage with those living in your local community and make it easy for them to join.

### **What does the Good Governance Code mean for your group?**

Governance refers to how a group is run. Good governance means a group will put procedures in place to make sure the group works well.

### **Health and Safety for Groups**

Are you concerned whether your group is a safe place for your members? Would you like advice on how to protect your members while participating in activities?

**If your group would like to host one of the above workshops please contact us.**

# Coming Up Autumn 2015

## Reflecting on and Refocusing Your Work Life, Naas

This new course, first run in Spring 2015, is for people who are considering making a career change, re-entering the work force or becoming involved in volunteering.

There was great diversity in the group, both men and women ranging in age from their late twenties to sixties. There were those who were working and seeking a career change; those who were seeking to return to work after an absence due to ill health or raising a family; those who were seeking to make a further contribution to their communities while retired or semi-retired.

The taster workshop was a ***“getting to know each other”*** session with a welcome from Nora O’Hanlon, the course organiser and the tutor, Deirdre Gallagher. A broad outline of the course was shared with a strong emphasis on the message that the content would be greatly influenced by the interests expressed by the group as we journeyed together through the following eight weeks.

We began with reflecting on and exploring together our values and personal traits, our career skills and interests. We progressed onto how to re-energize ourselves by harnessing our motivation for change. We explored strategies, such as self care and stress management, for overcoming obstacles that life throws in our way.

We packed a lot into the eight week course! The feedback from the learners was overall very positive while also reflecting the challenge of such a course in trying to address the diverse interests and needs of the individual learners over an eight week period. As the tutor, I want to thank the group as I thoroughly enjoyed working with them in such a positive participative way exploring how we all can flourish in our lives!

This course will be offered again in Naas on Wednesday evenings this Autumn.

***Deirdre Gallagher – Tutor***

## Barista Skills & Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points (HACCP), Naas

This one day course will give you the skills and knowledge to decide if you want to pursue a world recognised career as a Barista. You will also leave with a clear understanding of HACCP as a system which is the minimum knowledge required to work in any food handling business.

This course takes place on Tue 13th October 2015 from 9.am to 5pm at Leinster Mills, Naas.



## Women's Studies through Quilt Making, Newbridge

Abbey Regional Addiction Services has identified that the group of women they work with wish to explore education as a tool to maintaining the changes they have made in their lives.

Simone de Beauvoir once said, ***“One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.”***

This will be done by introducing Women's Studies in a creative way using quilt making. Working on a joint project, participants will learn the skills necessary to create a basic patchwork quilt. During the course, using informal discussion, we will also examine issues relevant to participants and challenge negative stereotypes of women. Possible topics include how gender



is constructed, women and work, care for children, sexuality, women and resistance, modern definitions of family life and gender roles, and the values, traditions, practices and perspectives that are often considered distinctly female. Using quilt making as an example, we will discuss how women have

created their own power—and even subversion—within their roles as women.

***Berni Smyth – Tutor***



## **Art Portfolio, Wicklow Town**

This course will support you to prepare a portfolio for Higher Education. It is a part-time course, delivered by tutor Conor Wickham over two mornings per week from mid-September 2015 to the end of March 2016. Participants will need to work independently outside these sessions. As well as support in preparation of a portfolio, the course will involve two QQI-accredited components at level 5, Drawing and Painting.

## **DIY, Dunlavin**

Learn basic DIY skills in a relaxed friendly environment. The course will include basic electrics and plumbing and will take place over 5 weeks on Tuesday mornings from mid-September

## **Planning your Spring Garden, Blessington**

Tutor, Audrey Wilson, will show you how to prepare the soil, plan your planting layout, propagate cuttings and seeds and compost effectively. Also, you will have a chance of sharing your skills and knowledge and find solutions to your own gardening problems

## **New Community Art group to start in Kilcoole!**

An opportunity to learn new skills, express your creativity and meet new people and work together on a common project

**If your group would like more information on any of these projects or to include a piece in our next newsletter please contact us using the details on the back page.**



# kwetb

Kildare and Wicklow  
Education and Training Board

## Contact Us

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For more details see

**[www.kwetb.ie](http://www.kwetb.ie)**

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