

## Press Release

# Get involved initiative delivers €10k to champion community projects

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017:** Four community projects from Counties Limerick, Cork, Leitrim and Longford were the recipients of €10,000 in funding following the presentation of awards in the Local Ireland, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) sponsored 4<sup>th</sup> annual Get Involved Community Initiative awards ceremony in Dublin today.

Broadford and Ashford Walking Trails, St. Patrick's Boys National School, Skibbereen Sensory Garden and North Leitrim Sustainable Energy Committee were each awarded bursaries of €3,000, while Longford Revamp was awarded €1,000.

The projects spanned a wide cross-section of community activities ranging from the provision of beautiful walking trails in Limerick, a magnificent sensory garden in a boys national school in Skibbereen to an amazing energy project in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim which, when completed, will result in the town and environs greatly reducing its carbon emissions. The Longford revamp project restores old furniture and provides valuable local employment.

Now in its 4th year, the Local Ireland Get Involved Sustainable Communities awards initiative is promoted by 51 weekly paid for newspapers. 32 projects from the 26 counties entered the 2016 competition. The projects span the essential areas necessary to build sustainable communities, clean energy, water conservation, local food production, eco-tourism and developing sustainable local community employment.

In his address, Jim Gannon, Chief Executive SEAI commended the project finalists and said that the current vision for SEAI is to identify and assist communities to help themselves. "In 10 years from now I expect that Ireland will have hundreds of communities that will be pursuing sustainable activities. At that time our role will be to assist these communities in the key areas of education and technical support."

David Burke, President of Local Ireland and Managing Editor of the Tuam Herald in his welcoming address said that all the projects presented were all about community, the most important thing we have. "Member titles of Local Ireland highlight the key issues that are necessary for these communities to survive and thrive. Our titles have a gross readership of 1.5m people outside Dublin and Cork cities. We get Involved, we inform, give leadership and support to all that is good in our communities. We have been around for over 150 years, and in the case of the Tuam Herald for 180 years and have invested for the future with our multi-platform news delivery systems", he said.

Duncan Stewart, award winning architect, broadcaster and environmentalist and chairman of the judging panel commended all participants for the quality of the projects presented and for their unstinting commitment to making their communities more sustainable for the future. "I can see this initiative being in every community in Ireland over the next ten years. If it's not, then those communities will die because they are facing massive challenges. The impacts of climate change are coming upon us very quickly. I think the

only solution is going to be a bottom up movement and you are the pioneers of this movement. It is only through local collaboration that we can turn it around and capitalise on these opportunities.

Declan Meally head of Emerging Sectors with SEAI said; “The energy we see from people getting involved is absolutely massive. The biggest community project in the world is hitting us now with climate change. Looking at the projects we have seen here, that is the only way we are going to tackle this; thinking big but starting small”

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