

# ACC'S NEWS

ISSUE 2 • DECEMBER 2020



**SCHOOLS -  
NEW VIRTUAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

**IN THIS ISSUE**

ACC'S One Day Virtual Conference  
Online Parent Teacher Meetings  
SciFest National Finals  
Junk Kouture



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools  
Cumann na Scoilcanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha

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# Welcome

This has been the most remarkable of first terms in schools. The efforts to ensure schools opened safely and have remained open is a testament to the work and dedication of school leadership teams, school staffs and students across the country. The skills acquisition of teachers and willingness to engage in innovative practices to ensure programmes offered to students are meaningful and engaging is acknowledged widely. Education has always been valued in Irish society providing opportunities to become leaders in their own communities and communities across the globe.

In ACCS, we want to acknowledge the engagement of schools in our Continuous Professional Development Programme, which, by necessity has migrated to online this year. It has been great to see the large numbers actively engaging in the many events addressing issues from blended learning strategies to meeting the needs of students with additional educational needs in these very changed times. It has been wonderful to meet Board members at our Governance presentations over the last number of months. We acknowledge the contributions of our partners the Financial Support Services Unit, FSSU, and the State Claims Agency, SCA, who addressed the areas of financial governance and managing health and safety in schools as part of this series.

The Department of Education has been supportive of the efforts of schools in ensuring the safe reopening of schools. The significant investment and provision of guidance with the assistance of public health experts has been invaluable. The evidence produced by public health continues to reaffirm the work in schools providing a safe environment for learners and staff. We appreciate the weekly engagement with public health representatives to not only update education stakeholders but also to engage in conversations to assess the effectiveness of their guidance.

The Office of the Clinical Director of Public Health Protection published 'Education

facilities mid-term review – a focus on primary and post primary schools'. Among the main recommendations were that the measures are working and schools should remain open. However, there is no room for complacency and all recommendations for risk mitigation and infection prevention and control should continue. Particular reference was made in the areas of transport to and from schools, school breaks and staffrooms. Following the review, enhancement in procedures and the public health support teams for schools were introduced. Schools have provided very positive feedback on the effectiveness of these enhancements.

During our In-School Management Conference, we have had the opportunity to engage with Professor Luke O'Neill and Jim Steele. Luke O'Neill provided such a positive message on the work of science in developing vaccines that will accelerate bringing this current pandemic under control while also stressed the resourcefulness and resilience of people in battling adversity. One of the great outcomes of this current challenging time is the development of community in addressing the challenges faced. Jim Steele's presentation, titled 'Unashamedly Superhuman', captured the qualities evident in school communities up and down the country in their response to the challenges faced.

As we approach the Christmas break, we look forward to enjoying a period with our families. While it may well be a different Christmas, I am sure it will be no less a special Christmas. From all of us in ACCS who have the privilege in supporting your work leading your school communities, every best wish for Christmas and we look forward to 2021 with renewed energy and focus as we engage in this most significant of tasks, providing a meaningful education for all the learners in our school communities.

**John Irwin**

General Secretary,  
ACCS

## Beannachtaí na Nollag

ACCS wishes all our schools a Happy Christmas. In keeping with the spirit of Christmas, ACCS will make a donation to the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland instead of sending Christmas Cards.



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools  
Cúnamh na Scoilanna Pobail agus Cúimhsitheacha



THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND



Paul Fiorentini

# ACCS In-School Management

## One Day Virtual Conference 2020

**T**he ACCS In-School Management Conference was held as a one-day virtual event on the 26th November 2020 and the main sponsors were Microsoft Ireland and PCI. The event which was opened by ACCS President, Paul Fiorentini, was planned with school leaders' wellbeing in mind as a celebration of what they do and as a timely opportunity for school teams to reflect on their work as leaders in complex and challenging times.

The ACCS In-School Management Task Group chaired by Denis Ring, organised an agenda for this year's Conference which included

engaging presentations from Professor Luke O'Neill, School of Biochemistry and Immunology at Trinity College Dublin and Mr. Jim Steele, International Motivational Speaker and Leadership Coach.

Participant numbers were high as the senior management and leadership teams took the opportunity to take some time out of busy schedules to replenish, relax and recharge the energy levels. While the event marked the retirement of many colleagues this year and Joe Sweeney spoke eloquently on their behalf, all agreed that the traditional ACCS lamp will be presented at a separate function

when current Public Health restrictions are lifted and ACCS has the opportunity to host an evening to mark the occasion properly later in the school year.

ACCS acknowledges the support of its many sponsors and in particular, the work of the 3rd Year students of Limerick Institute of Technology BSc (Hons) Creative Broadcasting & Film Production who hosted and produced this event in partnership with ACCS. Special thanks to FESU Director, Catherine O'Sullivan who liaised closely with course director/lecturer, Nora Ní Fhlathárta in the organisation of the event.



Joe Sweeney



Denis Ring

# ACCS In-School Management Sponsors

ACCS would like to acknowledge the generous support of its many sponsors and in particular its main sponsors Microsoft Ireland and PCI. Sponsor advertisements which were shown during conference are also available to view on the ACCS website [www.accs.ie](http://www.accs.ie). We hope that you will take the opportunity to revisit their products and services advertised.



Company	Web link
Athena Analytics Ltd	<a href="http://www.athena.ie">www.athena.ie</a>
Compass	<a href="http://www.compass.education/">www.compass.education/</a>
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ICDL	<a href="http://www.icdl.ie/schools/">www.icdl.ie/schools/</a>
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The Maths Tutor	<a href="http://www.themathstutor.ie">www.themathstutor.ie</a>
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# ACCS In-School Management

## Keynote Speakers

**Luke O’Neill** is Professor of Biochemistry in the School of Biochemistry and Immunology at Trinity College Dublin. Raised in Bray, Co Wicklow, Professor O’Neill was educated at TCD, where he was awarded an undergraduate degree in natural sciences (biochemistry) in 1985. He completed his postgraduate study at the University of London where he was awarded a PhD in pharmacology.

Professor O’Neill was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2016 and was named one of the world’s most influential scientists by Clarivate Analytics in 2017. He is a co-founder of two Spin-out companies — Opsona Therapeutics and Inflazome Ltd, which are developing new treatments for inflammatory diseases. He has written three books, *Humanology: A Scientist’s Guide to Our Amazing Existence*, a children’s book, *The Great Irish Science Book* and his latest publication which seeks to deconstruct the science to make complex questions accessible, *Never Mind the B#!l\*cks, Here’s the Science*.

Professor  
Luke O’Neill  
and Jim Steele



**Jim Steele** is an internationally respected speaker and business adviser who has inspired people within some of the world’s leading companies to perform at their highest level and maintain their resilience no matter what challenges come their way.

Spanning a 25-year career, Jim has continued his quest to discover the differences between good and world-class performance. He has obsessively focused on those at the top of their game, whether from the corporate sector or the highly competitive world of professional sport, understanding what sets them apart from the rest, modelling performance excellence and distilling it into actionable strategies.

Jim is now the master of delivering his unique take on peak performance and the formula for success to audiences all over the world in a way that is both deeply inspiring and entertaining. His boundless energy, razor-sharp insight, down-to-earth disposition and brilliant use of humour make him, without doubt, one of the most memorable speakers on the business world-stage today.

His infectious and transformational approach has enabled Jim to address over a million people globally. Jim has taught cutting-edge performance strategies and how to achieve better results by creating a stronger, more resilient team.

## The ACCS Continuous Professional Development Programme 2020/2021 Goes Online

Since lockdown in March 2020, ACCS has migrated its CPD Programme online using the Microsoft and the ZOOM platforms to host its many webinars and meetings. While this has been a steep learning curve for the organisation, ACCS is delighted with the high levels of engagement of our Board of Management members and schools over the past three months. ACCS has used the opportunity to make recordings of many of the webinars which have been edited and are available on the ACCS website for members.

Since June 2020 and throughout Term 1 of 2020/2021 a series of ACCS Webinars have been hosted on the following topics:

- ACCS Supporting Student/ Learner Voice in School and in the Classroom hosted with NCCA
- Re-opening of Schools/Return to Work
- Leadership in Pandemic Times hosted by ACCS and facilitated by Dr. Joe O’Connell
- Blended Learning Clinics hosted by H2Learning (three one-hour clinics + follow-up workshop)
- ACCS Area Meetings 2020 (five separate regional webinars)
- Leadership and Management Webinar: Post of Responsibility Appointments
- The Middle Leadership Team in Challenging Times - Building Sustainable Capacity in School Webinar
- Induction of New Principals and Deputy Principals - (two-day event + four follow-up webinars - Autumn 2020)
- ACCS Governance in Schools Board of Management Training (four monthly webinars - Autumn 2020)
- ACCS Special Education Needs Webinar
- ACCS DEIS Webinar
- ACCS In School Management One Day Conference

*Planning and scheduling of the CPD Programme for Term 2 including the ACCS Annual Convention is underway currently and an agreed schedule will be issued to schools in mid-December 2020.*

# Online Parent Teacher Meetings

## in Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine, Kenmare

**W**e held our 2nd Year and Leaving Cert Parent Teacher meetings online via Teams over the last two weeks. After much debate, we had decided that this would be the best option for the parents and students, giving a similar experience to the traditional meeting. The concept was simple, teachers would make a video call to the student's MS Teams account which the parents would answer, thus solving any GDPR issues.

We started with 100 Second Years and did the scheduling old-style, on paper: the students got a sheet with a list of their teachers and as they went to their classes, they got appointment times from their respective teachers making sure that they did not duplicate the times.

So, on the day, teachers found a room, laptops and lists were ready and off they went. We set our bell to ring every 5 minutes so once the bell started ringing, they had to finish up the call with the parent and get ready to make the next call. This ensured that parents were free to take the next call. The bell rang at 4:04pm,

4:09pm etc, a signal to be ready for the 4:05, 4:10 appointment etc.

Overall, it went very well, and surveys of staff and parents confirmed this with some good suggestions for improvements. Some issues did arise: teachers who had large classes or two or more classes in that year group had to prioritise the students they gave appointments to or in practice gave appointments on a first come first served basis, which was not ideal. No breaks had been factored in, so the pace was hectic with all appointments being pushed to the beginning of the meeting, in order to finish as early as possible.

For our next Parent Teacher meeting, Leaving Certs and LCA2, we used the online scheduling website, Parent Teacher Meeting Organiser, which has been around a long time for scheduling the traditional face-to-face meetings. This allows parents to prioritise the teachers they wished to meet on-line. This programme then scheduled the appointments for the parents and teachers. A much easier process than the sheets of paper although

there is a bit of set-up, checking classes and teachers are correct etc. A ten-minute break was also built in for all teachers.

The feedback again was extremely positive with a lot of parents suggesting online meetings were better, more private, no queuing etc. plus suggestions for longer times and shorter times!

Overall, this worked very well and gave parents the chance to talk to teachers which we felt was essential in these very strange times. Despite the worry that the technology would let us down or that it would be too intense, the overwhelming feedback was very positive. Using the online scheduling made it fairer and easier to run. Would we think Teams will replace the face-to-face meeting in the future? Probably not but a great leap forward took place in everyone's knowledge of Teams etc., it just took a crisis to get it done!

**Dermot Healy**  
School Principal,  
Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Some comments from Parents:

*"Thought it was great, fast, no queuing for 2 hours, very efficient, well done to all."*

*"Four minutes was perfect for Second Years, I'd prefer longer if she was in an exam class, especially Leaving Cert."*

*"Would prefer this for every Parent Teacher meeting in the future. It was engaging, more relaxing. I enjoyed the experience."*

Some comments from Teachers:

*"Overall, I felt it went very well. Bell ringing every 5 minutes was of paramount importance."*

*"It was extremely efficient. The very specific timeframe ensured that both parents and I kept on task and focussed solely on the student - An incredible feat!!! 24 of my 25 parents indicated to me that they were very happy with this method of communication. There wasn't any issue with sound, video or connectivity."*

# Old Bawn Community School Going Online

## Parent Teacher Meetings During Covid Times



As a Microsoft school, and with 1-1 devices in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year, Old Bawn Community School uses technology as an aid for Teaching and Learning. Our staff are trained in using the Microsoft Office Suite, with Teams and One Note used every day in the classroom. We have had many parent information evenings using ZOOM which have been really well attended so when we had to make a decision about our parent/student/teacher meetings we knew that our parents and our teachers were well prepared to try them online.

We sourced a scheduling package that enabled our parents to indicate the teachers that they wanted to see. This produced a schedule for the parents whereby they had appointments for the teachers. Deputy Principal, Ms. Jennifer Gray set this up for our parents. This meant

that parents were not logging on and sitting for long periods of time in waiting rooms, with no knowledge of the number of people waiting.

We asked the teachers to schedule their own meetings and they used a shared document to record their Meeting ID and Password. We used ZOOM as our parents were very familiar with this already. The document was given to the students using Teams and we used our school app to communicate with the parents.

Many teachers reported back on how successful it was. There were a few issues with parents not being able to log in but the SLT helped any parent who contacted the school looking for help during the meeting. Feedback from parents was extremely positive. They enjoyed not having to leave their homes and

still meet with teachers. Some teachers felt the five minutes was a little short for the meeting but with classes of thirty it is very hard to allocate longer times within the time allocated.

At our next meeting we asked all teachers to use a common password for their meetings. This meant that parents had only one number to type so there was less chance of an error.

As we navigate through the year, our mantra in Old Bawn is “try and do the things we usually do but using the technology we have access to”. We have challenged ourselves to think differently!

It was a great success and with teamwork anything is possible.

*Feedback from parents was extremely positive. They enjoyed not having to leave their homes and still meet with teachers.*



# SciFest 2020 National Finalists



## About the SciFest 2020 National Final

In SciFest, second-level students showcase STEM projects at a series of one-day STEM fairs traditionally held locally in schools (SciFest@School) and regionally in 16 venues in the Institutes of Technology, TU Dublin, DCU and St. Mary's College, Derry (SciFest@College). This year SciFest@College took place online to a resounding success.

The following Community and Comprehensive Schools were Regional Finalists in SciFest 2020.



## Carrick-on-Shannon Community School

Two Carrick-on-Shannon Community School students, Erica McTiernan and Hannah Stenson represented the county at the SciFest National Final. Earlier in the year Hannah and Erica claimed the Jack Restan Displays Award in the special awards category for their project "*The lasting effects of Arigna coal mine on the environment*" while the work was also highly commended at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition.

Erica explains, "The title of our project is *The lasting effects of the Arigna coal mine on the environment*. The aim of our project was to investigate the long-term water pollution from a closed mine by studying acid mine drainage and Benthic Macroinvertebrates as bioindicators. During the process of this project we hoped to investigate the lasting effects of the Arigna coal mine on the environment, particularly focusing on the water pollution.

To obtain results we tested the PH and conductivity of the water samples we collected using a pH and conductivity meter. We also used the benthic macroinvertebrates as bioindicators of the water quality. We took all these samples above the mine (upstream) and below the mine (downstream) to compare them and see any changes regarding pollution."

Hannah further explains, "We obtained these samples using the kick sampling method. Using a brush and gloves we searched the contents of the net for macroinvertebrates. When we found an invertebrate, we placed it in a glass jar and covered it in ethanol.

Upstream was very diverse with many species such as mayflies, freshwater shrimps, caddis fly etc. There was also plenty of plant litter upstream but much less downstream. Our downstream sample was not diverse as we only had bloodworms which are tolerant to pollution. We gathered a few rocks that were orange brown in colour possibly indicating acid mine drainage."

"Overall, from this project we know that the difference in our upstream and downstream samples are concerning and mines can have long term effects on the environment. The poor quality may not just be from the mines but also other influences like nearby farming and the road above the stream. We must take all these factors into consideration," concluded Erica.





## Castlereagh Community School

Our Project is titled *Our Farmers - "Deaf as Doornails?"*

The idea for our project sprouted when one of the group members noticed that her grandad was becoming noticeably deaf. He had used farm machinery for most of his life and she often heard him complaining about the noise emitted from the machinery he used on his farm. However, like many other farmers he did not wear any form of ear protection. After some brainstorming we felt that his hearing loss could largely be connected to the non-use of ear protection throughout his farm life and we were fascinated to find out if the noise of farm machinery had actually affected his hearing.

Following intense research on this topic we discovered that Noise Levels over 85 decibels (dB) affects hearing. We assumed that many of our local farmers' tractors and other machinery would emit noise above this level. We needed to carry out extensive testing on this machinery to prove this, carry out a survey on our local farmers and depending on research and survey results embark on our awareness campaign.

The aim of our project was to make farmers in our local community aware of the damage that the noise of farm machinery has on their hearing over a long period of time. We tested different makes of tractors and other machinery - a Muck Spreader towed by a Tractor and a Chainsaw, to establish if the noise emitted from them was over 85dB. We collected and analysed our results and realised some tractors were louder than 85dB while others were not. After analysing the test results, we found that the older the tractor the louder the noise emitted from it. However, there were some exceptions depending on the type of cab on the tractor.

We compiled a survey for our farmers which we brought to our local Mart. We got a very positive response from them - they were very eager to complete these surveys. This survey enabled us to assess the farmers knowledge, awareness, attitude and practices towards the use of farm machinery and ear protection. The survey results indicated that the majority of farmers knew that the noise from farm machinery affected their hearing, but they did not wear ear protection and did not take any precautions to alleviate the damage caused by exposure to high levels of sound.

We felt we needed to educate the farmers on this topic so we created an eye catching and informative brochure. Armed with the brochures we revisited our local mart and held an Information Day for the farmers. We were very pleased with the reaction from farmers on the Information Day. They were very interested to read our brochures and commented how interesting and informative the brochure was.

**Molly Cunnane and Katie Hannelly**



## Heywood Community School

Órla McCorry's project is entitled "*The relationship between trees and different raised bog habitats*".

Órla's objective was to investigate the relationship between trees and the quality of different bog habitats at Abbeylegg bog. The condition of the bog in relation to its vegetation and trees can tell us if the bog is probably storing carbon or emitting it.

During her investigation she worked in three main habitats:

- Cutover bog
- Bog margin
- The central area

She surveyed five quadrats in each habitat. She studied the number and sizes of all the trees in each quadrat. She also carried out a vegetation survey and did some environmental analysis and measured pH and bog water conductivity. Her results show that the cutover bog was dry, had low Sphagnum moss cover, and had large pine and birch trees. The central part of the raised bog was wetter, Sphagnum moss cover was higher. Trees were less frequent and much smaller. The driest parts of the bog had the most trees. Órla's results are typical of raised bogs around Ireland. While trees are good for carbon storage, they are not welcome on raised bog habitats. Trees can indicate the bog is dry. When peat is dry it oxidises and emits carbon. It is preferable to have wet peat and high Sphagnum cover so that the bog makes peat and stores carbon.

The school would like to congratulate Órla on her recent success at the Scifest@College 2020 online regional STEM Fair. Receiving the Science Foundation Ireland Best Project Award in IT Carlow is an amazing achievement. As the competition went online this year, due to the Covid-19 situation in May, the judges had a lot more time and were able to scrutinise the projects even more than they usually do. When you consider this scrutiny it clearly indicates the commitment Órla applied to her work and the high quality of the project. Órla is one of those organised and enthusiastic students who makes a plan and goes for it. Her teachers are delighted that she has received such strong recognition for her work. We are all very proud of Órla's achievement in Heywood and wish her well in the National Finals.



## Kinsale Community School

In this year's SciFest National Final Anna Peare and Sarah Fitzgerald will be representing Kinsale Community School. The girls qualified by winning the overall prize in the regional competition which was held in Cork Institute of Technology.

The project title is "*A Statistical and Experimental Analysis of the Link Between Reading for Pleasure and Problem-Solving Skills*".

Both girls have a huge passion for reading and take part in numerous literacy events. They are also dedicated to the promotion of reading for pleasure and promoting its positive impacts on academic performance focusing on problem solving skills. The results of their project demonstrated that reading for pleasure does improve your problem-solving skills and that those who read science fiction scored the best in problem-solving. They also demonstrated that those who read more are more likely to flourish in the new Junior Cycle subjects.

Anna and Sarah have put huge effort into their project, used a large sample of students and obtained results that were statistically significant.



## Moate Community School

Moate Community School TY students awarded for their projects at SciFest, including Runner-Up Best Project

Judging and awarding of the SciFest Regional Final was done virtually this year due to Covid restrictions. The event usually takes place in the Athlone Institute of Technology. Five groups of TY students submitted their projects and made videos of their main findings for the panel of judges.

With their project '*Dispel the Smell of Goat's Milk*', Emily Ray and Sharon Seery won the Runner-up Best Project Award. In November, the students participated in the National Final of SciFest.

Rachel McCann and Niamh Collins were given a Merit award for their project "*Sitka vs Broadleaf: The Impact of Ireland's Forestry Plan on Biodiversity*".

Emma Keenan and Hannah Malone received an Environmental Award for their project "*Does Seaweed contain the Solution to Ireland's Fertiliser Run-off Problem?*". Cliona McCormack and Emily Korzeniewski also received an Environmental Award for their project "*Effects of Dredging on the River Shannon*".

Aoife Murray and Megan Clinton were awarded a Chemistry Prize for investigating "*Can Biochars Derived from Farm Waste Reduce Greenhouse Emissions from Irish Soils?*" As a result of this achievement, Moate Community School was awarded the RSC School Chemistry Award.

Congratulations to all the students involved and their supporting teachers Ms. Mairead Cusack and Ms. Margaret Mandal.

## Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Congratulations to Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine student, Conor Casey, who is competing in the SciFest National Final. Conor's project is titled "*AMSIMP: Using Machine Learning to Improve Numerical Weather Prediction*" and he won the Science Foundation Ireland best project award at SciFest @IT Tralee. For the project, Conor created a computer program and trained it on past weather data. This allows the programme to see patterns in weather and thus potentially increase the accuracy of weather predictions. Conor has had a lot of science success during his school career. He won the CSO Best Use of Open Data Award at BTYSTE 2019 for his project on light pollution. This led to him winning the "Rising Star" Award from the International Dark Skies Association. He has won awards in the Vex Robotics Competition and has also qualified to compete in BTYSTE 2021.



We wish Conor every success in his continued scientific endeavours.



## Loreto Community School

Loreto Community School in Milford was incredibly proud to be awarded five awards from their regional SciFest competition this year. Students initially competed at an in-school event and the winners progressed to the regional final, which is usually held in the Letterkenny Institute of Technology. However, due to the restrictions, the competition was moved online, and students were faced with the challenge of virtually presenting their projects. The judges were clearly impressed by their efforts and the following prizes were awarded:

### Esero Discover Space Award (Intermediate) - Oisín Farrell and Thomas Cannon

This project aimed to effectively measure the amount of skyglow (light pollution) in the skies around both rural and urban Donegal with an aim to discover areas of potential astro tourism. Taking photos in several areas, the students converted the pollution images to values and compared them to a control value with 0% pollution. Their findings were that the further away from urban areas the pollution values decreased and they identified several locations that could easily be perfect spots to develop this exciting new tourism.

### Intel Best Technology Award - Ryan King, Connor Allison and Conal Boyle

This project was based on the field of facial recognition, especially in the sense of being able to use the Python programming language to execute this. The students built a script in Python that they were able to use for algorithms and computer science to detect facial features in faces and also to detect the position of the face by programming a box to appear around it. The students also looked at real-world applications for their technology in the area of biometrics. This refers to measurements in relation to the human body for example using face ID on new smart phones.

### Institute of Physics Award - Anne Caulfield, Jessica Hone and Sinéad O'Doherty and Esero Discover Space Award (Senior) - Anne Caulfield, Jessica Hone and Sinéad O'Doherty.

This project looked at the different theories in relation to the fate of our universe. Using the Friedmann models introduced by Dr. Stephen Hawkings, the students investigated the possibility of each of the different fates of our universe. Taking into account dark energy and NASA's measurements of CMBR fluctuations, the girls concluded that the universe is, on the most part, flat in shape. This would make it highly unlikely for a Big Crunch to occur and that it is most likely that the universe will continue to expand until the end of time.

All winning students were presented with a certificate, a One4all voucher and a beautiful crystal trophy. As a result of the mentoring and coaching of the students in the Esero Discover Space categories, Ms. Roisin Coyle was awarded the Esero Discover Space Teacher Award and was presented with an Esero School Atlas.

## Scoil Mhuire Community School

### SciFest Success at Scoil Mhuire Community School

Scoil Mhuire Community School 6<sup>th</sup> Year student, Adam McNulty has been doing his school proud with his scientific investigations for numerous science competitions. In August of this year, Adam won the Runner-up Best Project Award at the SciFest@College 2020 online regional STEM Fair for his project looking at improving designs around Integrated Constructed Wetlands.

#### What the project involves:

Adam's project entitled "A Systematic Review of Constructed Wetlands to Optimise Their Design" examines the current design methods in Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICWs) used in Ireland.

#### What is an Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW)?

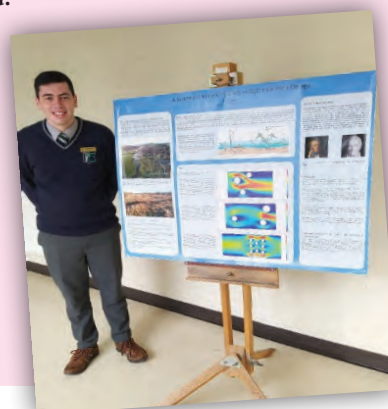
An ICW is an artificial wetland used to treat wastewater and greywater found in sewage, surface run off and industrial effluent from factories and small domestic areas. The treatment process mimics what would occur in natural wetlands in terms of treating the runoff.

In his first project exhibited at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition, Adam investigated plant selection in ICWs to attract pollinators. This year his project extends to looking into the design of these ICWs and through testing, he is investigating if different shapes & sizes of ponds affect water quality at different points within the pond

and can pond sizes then be optimised to reduce the area required to implement an ICW.

Most ICW ponds operate in sequential form with single inlets and outlets. Adam is researching the idea that multiple inlets & outlets improve or disrupt pond operation. Treatment of effluents within ICWs reduces the volume of water requiring further treatment or can reduce the amount of pollutants entering Irish rivers and waterways. As an added bonus, wetlands can act as carbon sequestration. Through testing and design, Adam hopes to present an improved solution to implementing ICWs in other industries and semi urban areas.

To date, Adam has been awarded the Runner Up Best Project award as well as winning the **Institute of Physics Award** and the **Maths in Science Award**.



**SciFest 2020 Virtual National Final**

At the National Final qualifying award winners from the 16 regional SciFest@College STEM Fairs compete for a range of valuable prizes including the opportunity to participate in a number of international STEM events. The National Final also included special competitions for selected winners of the Boston Scientific Medical Devices Award and of

the Specsavers Making a Difference Award at the Regional Fairs. The winner(s) of the SciFest National Final 2020 received a trophy and €3,000 and will go on to represent Ireland at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) 2021 in the United States.



*Congratulations to Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine and Castlerea Community School on their success at the National Finals on 21st November 2020.*



# Retirements

## and New Appointments

### Retired/Departing Principals and Deputy Principals

ACCS offers its thanks and best wishes to those retiring or moving to pastures new.

#### Ardee C.S.

Deputy Principal: Tony Corcoran

#### Ashbourne C.S.

Acting Principal: Susan Duffy

#### Blakestown C.S.

Deputy Principal: Bernadette Carroll

#### Boyne C.S.

Principal: Elizabeth Cahill

#### Carndonagh C.S.

Principal: Paul Fiorentini

#### Coláiste Chiaráin

Principal: Joseph Sweeney

#### Crescent Comprehensive School

Principal: Karin Fleming

#### Hartstown C.S.

Deputy Principal: Ann Kelly

#### Holy Family C.S.

Principal: Brenda Kelly

Deputy Principal: Christy Morrin

#### Newpark Comprehensive

Deputy Principal: Mark Cookman

#### Pobalscoil Iosolde

Principal: Lorraine O'Toole

#### Pobalscoil na Tríonóide

Deputy Principal: Bernie Heffernan

#### St. Brendan's C.S.

Principal: Ming Loughnane

#### St. Columba's Comprehensive School

Deputy Principal: Dominic Gallagher

#### St. Louis C.S.

Principal: Cahil Doherty

Deputy Principal: Finola Lyons

#### St. Tiernan's C.S.

Principal: Declan Hughes

#### St. Wolstan's C.S.

Deputy Principal: Agnes Holmes

### New Principals and Deputy Principals

Congratulations to all recently appointed Principals and Deputy Principals.

#### Ardee C.S.

Deputy Principal: Marcella Greenan

Deputy Principal: Liam Reilly

#### Ashbourne C.S.

Acting Principal: Ciarán Stewart

Deputy Principal: Gillian Casey

Acting Deputy Principal: Niamh Kelly

#### Ballymakenny C.S.

Deputy Principal: Mike Lyons

#### Beara C.S.

Acting Deputy Principal: Noel O'Sullivan

#### Blakestown C.S.

Deputy Principal: David McGuinness

#### Boyne C.S.

Principal: Jean Ryan

Deputy Principal: To be confirmed

#### Carndonagh C.S.

Principal: John McGuinness

Deputy Principal: To be confirmed

#### Castlecomer C.S.

Acting Principal: Pat Murphy

Acting Deputy Principal: Peter Donovan

#### Castlereagh C.S.

Acting Principal: Jarlath Burke

Acting Deputy Principal: James Reidy

#### Coláiste Chiaráin

Principal: Mark Neville

#### Crescent Comprehensive School

Principal: Diarmuid Mullins

Deputy Principal: Hugh Flavin

#### Hartstown C.S.

Deputy Principal: Natalie Clinec

Acting Deputy Principal: Jenny Costello

#### Holy Family C.S.

Principal: Ingrid Fallon

Deputy Principal: Derek Maher

Deputy Principal: Liam Ferguson

#### John the Baptist C.S.

Deputy Principal: Elaine O'Donnell

#### Mayfield C.S.

Acting Principal: Kathleen Daly

Acting Deputy Principal: James McMurtry

#### Newpark Comprehensive

Deputy Principal: Lynn Anderson

#### Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola

Acting Deputy Principal: Claire Sharkey

#### Pobalscoil Iosolde

Principal: Geraldine Delaney

Deputy Principal: Ann Marie Eviston

#### Pobalscoil na Tríonóide

Deputy Principal: Louise Phelan

Acting Deputy Principal: Elma Kent

#### Portumna C.S.

Deputy Principal: Elaine Shanahan Dunne

#### St. Brendan's C.S.

Principal: John Kennedy

#### St. Caimin's C.S.

Acting Deputy Principal: Tom Quealy

#### St. Columba's Comprehensive School

Deputy Principal: Brendan O'Mahony

#### St. Louis C.S.

Principal: Regina Anderson

Deputy Principal: Grahame Cleary

#### St. Tiernan's C.S.

Principal: Kevin Martin

Deputy Principal: Siobhain McCann

#### St. Wolstan's C.S.

Deputy Principal: Francis Carolan

#### Tallaght C.S.

Acting Deputy Principal: Aisling Reigh

#### Tullow C.S.

Deputy Principal: Noel Murphy

# Loreto Community School, Milford

# Covid Times

## Doing Things Differently

**C**ovid restrictions have made us all seek to do things differently. There are things worse than Covid restrictions when your school is situated in rural Donegal and to do things differently means that you get to explore and appreciate all that is in your local surrounding area that you have never explored.

Buses are normally the mode of transport for activities but this year the school hired a set of 24 bicycles that see various groups of students cycle to Mulroy Bay to kayak, visit the local village of Kerrykeel and cycle the 10k Golan pad. A team of TY and LCA students are on hand to provide cycling lessons and bicycle maintenance.

Situated on 14 acres of land our school site has also meant that we have opportunities to have classes outside and recent features such as our outdoor classroom, polytunnel and 1km walk has meant students can socially distance and get a welcome break from masks.



# Reopening School

## An Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar visits Hartstown Community School

September 2020

**O**n Friday 4th of September, we welcomed an Tánaiste Leo Varadkar to Hartstown Community School, Dublin 15. It was a great joy to show him the work we had carried out during the summer on our school gym and our new flag display which represents the diverse and inclusive nature of our school community.

On arrival Leo was greeted by the chairperson of the Board of Management and the senior leadership team. We brought him to the school library where he met with our Student Council representatives. They discussed topics such as blended learning, our new learning hub, how they coped during lockdown and some of the things they miss from everyday life. One of our Student Council representatives expressed the

sense of community and kindness shown by others was heightened during lockdown. He noted that not all students had access to or felt comfortable with remote learning. I spoke with an Tánaiste about our 'Learning Hubs' where roughly 150 of our students go during class time on a rotational basis due to small classroom sizes. We discussed the use of technology as a fantastic tool for pedagogy during these times but how it cannot replace the basic need of human relationships which students and teachers rely upon.

An Tánaiste visited a First Year technology class and a science class where he asked students how they felt being back in school and if they found the transition difficult. He participated in one of the classes where students were

learning about chemical symbols drawing on his own medical background and giving real world examples.

We were very appreciative of an Tánaiste's visit as it gave us a chance to discuss challenges faced by schools in reopening and to highlight the positive culture and ethos of a Community School. We were excited to share how local businesses and community centres offered their support to the school and how proud we are to be at the heart of the community.

### Senior Leadership Team

Lucia Ryan, Graham Fleming, Natalie Clince and Jenny Costello



# JCT Subject CPD Online Cluster Days

## What you need to know?

**S**chools and teachers are familiar with the face-to-face cluster day model of continuing professional development (CPD) used by Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) to support schools in implementing the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015). Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the face-to-face model of subject CPD provision based in schools is not possible for this academic year.

We have devised a new **ONLINE CLUSTER MODEL** which entails schools in a number of geographical regions closing to students on the same day so as to ensure that all of the teachers in each of these schools can come together online for the purpose of attending Junior Cycle subject CPD.

The subject CPD workshops will be delivered on the **Zoom platform**. Many teachers are familiar with its ease of use and accessibility across a range of devices. Each subject workshop will follow the same timetable. Teachers are asked to log on at least 10 minutes before the start of the morning workshop.

Session 1: 9.30 a.m.

Tea/coffee break: 11.00 a.m.

Session 2: 11.20 a.m.

Lunch break: 1.00 p.m.

Session 3: 2.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Within the three sessions outlined, subject teams will use the allotted time differently and teachers will experience a variety of activities across the day, which may include: facilitator-led input, stimulus for discussion, opportunities for collaboration, opportunities for creativity, break-out group activities/discussion, reflection moments, reading/writing offline, engaging with audio or video on main screen, or on a separate device. The

workshop material used in the online CPD will be downloadable.

Schools can access the date for their subject CPD day now on [www.jctregistration.ie](http://www.jctregistration.ie). The Principal (or their nominee) assigns teachers for their subject CPD workshops on our teacher registration portal in advance of the CPD day.

JCT staff have been in contact with the teacher(s) with Junior Cycle Management Resource Hours in each school. They have gathered school email addresses for all teachers for the express use of enabling a Zoom workshop link to be sent to them directly by email. Teachers should ensure that they can access their school email account in advance of their online cluster day. The Zoom link will be specific for each teacher's specific subject workshop and they will need to retain the link to access the workshop to which they have been assigned. Only school email addresses can be used for the purposes of JCT online subject CPD days.

All teachers will receive an email with detailed instructions on how to log on to Zoom and access the CPD workshop. At the start of the workshop, the facilitating JCT Advisor will also demonstrate the Zoom features that will be used as part of the day's professional learning activities.

Each teacher will need access to a desktop computer or a laptop or a tablet-type device with an in-built or added webcam and mic. Teachers will also need to decide in advance whether to access the subject workshop material online, on another device (e.g., tablet or phone), or by downloading and printing in advance. Pen and paper may also be required. If other materials are required, for example, in the context of practical subjects, teachers will be advised in advance.

School leadership will advise whether teachers access the online cluster workshops from school or otherwise. This decision will consider the above requirements, along with broadband connectivity and a suitable environment in which to engage in online CPD.

School leaders are welcome to attend any of the subject workshops in an online cluster day but will need to register in advance to be assigned a link to the online workshop. The same applies in the case of the Professional Master's in Education (PME) students, who may be registered using their school or 3rd level college email address.

### Teachers require the following resources to engage in the CPD:

- Desktop computer, laptop, or tablet-type device, with webcam and mic.
- It is optional to have a second device (e.g., smart phone or tablet) with fully charged battery and charger (for the purpose of viewing relevant documents while online if a teacher opts not to print out material)
- Downloadable workshop booklet/ material
- Pen & paper
- Other materials for a particular subject, as advised in advance
- Good quality broadband
- Suitable environment







# Data Gathered for Contact Tracing Purposes

It is important that you know how to navigate your data protection obligations so as to protect the personal data of visitors to your school:

- Minimise the amount of data you collect – Only collect the details that you need to provide for contact tracing or compliance purposes, e.g. name, contact number, time and date of attendance.
- Be transparent with visitors about why you are collecting this data – You and your staff members should be able to explain clearly the purpose for collecting personal data.
- Store this information carefully - You do not necessarily need to use technology to store this information but if you do decide to keep it electronically, ensure that the system you use is secure and delete the information at regular intervals when it is no longer required. Contact tracing details should not be kept in such a way that they are visible to other visitors and you must ensure that this information is kept securely and confidentially.
- Limit this data to the purpose for which it was collected - In particular, do not use this data to make contact with visitors for any reason. Do not disclose this data to any third parties except the public health authorities who will request it for contact tracing purposes if necessary.
- Ensure you delete contact details when you are no longer required to keep them for contact tracing or compliance purposes - The current public health requirement is for a retention period of one month. Schedule deletion and destruction regularly and ensure the data is disposed of safely, shredding any manually held data if you choose to store it in this way. Remember to delete from your recycle bin and delete any cloud based back up files if storing electronically.

**Hilary Treacy**  
ACCS Data Protection Advisor.



Over 1 Million Steps completed by the School Community Since August on the **Employee Assistance Service Wellbeing App!**

The Spectrum.Life Wellbeing Together Employee Assistance Service (EAS) provides 24/7 access to accredited, qualified and highly experienced counsellors and psychotherapists. The EAS offers short term counselling (where appropriate) plus information, guidance, screening and interventions that are tailored to care for your specific wellbeing needs.

The service includes an innovative EAS wellbeing portal and app. This platform offers you access to mental wellbeing supports, exercise, step counters and recipes, calorie counters, guided meditation and more.

You can also access the EAS via the portal via live chat and a 'request a call back' function.

Go to: [wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life](https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life) and use the unique organisation code, **y1V1IU17** to sign up.



**Whatever is on your mind, contact Spectrum.Life free and confidentially:**

**Freephone:** 1800 411057

**Email:** [eap@spectrum.life](mailto:eap@spectrum.life)

**WhatsApp & SMS: Text 'Hi' to:**  
087 369 0010

**Download the app, by searching Spectrum.Life on the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store.**



# Self-Financing Adult Education programme delivery during Covid-19

Adult Education, Scoil Mhuire, Clane, Co. Kildare

**F**ollowing the announcement of Level 5 restrictions starting late October, we have moved to online classes where possible. In anticipation of this, we carried out a survey of our tutors in July and received a very positive response, when asked if they were happy to go online if conditions deteriorated.

Based on this feedback, we advertised all our courses as Blended Learning classes. Classes which were not suitable to be taught online, such as DIY or Traditional Upholstery for example, will resume face to face classes in early December when we emerge from Level 5. Some of the courses transferred online include Sign Language, Practical Interior Design, Bookkeeping, Healthcare, Childcare, Start and Grow Your Own Business, Certificate in Special Needs, Payroll, Digital Marketing, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Creative Photography and Techniques, Information and Administration, Maynooth University Certificate in Psychology, AutoCAD, Autumn in the Garden, Spanish for Beginners and Practical First Aid.

**Seamus Scully,**  
Director of Adult Education,  
Scoil Mhuire.

## National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors (NACED)

Since our return in September, Adult Education in our schools has changed considerably. Operating in an environment that has seen Level 2, 3 and 5 restrictions over a period of a small number of weeks, our schools have had to adapt to these ever-changing circumstances. For schools who haven't cancelled their Adult Education programme, we are now all operating in a blended or fully online learning environment. ACCS support and guidance has been invaluable to us as we made this difficult transition. The move provided huge challenges for our Directors, many of whom are running significantly fewer classes but working harder in order to adapt to the varying and continually changing conditions on the ground. Online learning has provided our schools with an ability to reach a new student base, although this has been countered by a huge drop-off in our regular adult cohort attending classes. We will continue to work and develop our capacity for online learning through the rewriting of many of our subject syllabi and constant engagement with our tutors to deliver new and innovative ways of teaching.

The next few months are looking uncertain and we are facing difficult decisions in the weeks ahead as we plan for January - decisions that have financial and educational implications for our schools.

The support of Principals and Boards of Managements is crucial if Adult Education is to survive in our schools. The lack of onsite classes has highlighted to us the importance of adult and community education in our schools. In regular times, our classes provided a valuable social outlet for many members of our community. It brought adults from the community into our buildings and showcased the best of what our schools have to offer for students of all ages. It placed the community school at the heart of the community. It offered, and continues to offer a place of lifelong learning, where students of all ages, all abilities and with varying interests can come together, socialise, learn and develop as people and students. Without Adult Education in our schools, there would be a serious gap in the learning environment of our communities.

**Gene Cahill,**  
Chairperson NACED,  
Director of Adult Education,  
Carrigaline Community School

The following comments are feedback from our tutors who are teaching online at present.

*"So far I am enjoying the experience of working online. It's lovely to be able to see the faces of the learners, interactions have increased and everybody is much more relaxed. This week I did a class on child development which would normally include small group activities in class. I wasn't sure at all how it would work online. The feedback from the learners at the end of the class was very positive with everybody enjoying the activities that were completed at home and then discussed online. Without a doubt online learning is so much better than being in classrooms, spaced out and wearing masks".*

**Imelda Dillon,**  
Tutor: Certificate in Special Needs.

*"Adapting the course material for a virtual presentation through Google Classroom has had positive feedback from the class. They are thankful that that the class is still going ahead as usual and it gives them something to look forward to during the uncertainty of lockdown due to Covid-19. Getting the right balance of slideshow material and class participation throughout the class has been key to keeping the class engaged. I have also found that it is important to take into consideration the varied levels of IT expertise within the group and to check in with each student individually to see if they have any concerns or issues with this style of teaching".*

**Lisa Crowe,**  
Tutor: Practical Interior Design.

*"The online classes have given us motivation and allowed for continuity of education during these challenging times. The interaction among attendees improves as we conquer the IT challenges".*

**Margaret Podger,**  
Tutor: Autumn in the Garden

*"I am now teaching online Conversational Irish on Zoom via Google Classroom. Everyone has adapted very well, with continued and even increased engagement from learners. One of the first observations from learners was that it's great that we can see every person's face without the masks we were wearing in the classroom!"*

**Kate Scully,**  
Tutor: Conversational Irish.



Seamus Scully



Gene Cahill



Aisling Kirby

### New Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards at Levels 5, 6, 7 and 8

In November 2019, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) published a Professional Award Type Descriptor (PATD), detailing standards for new Early Learning and Care (ELC) awards at levels 5, 6, 7 and 8. The awards at levels 5 & 6 must now be developed into programmes that will replace the existing QQI Early Childhood Care and Education awards, which will shortly be deactivated.

Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) is leading out on a pilot project on shared curriculum and programme development for ELC programmes for ETBs and partner providers at levels 5 & 6. This collaborative model of

programme development commenced in September 2020. A team of ELC curriculum experts from across the ETB sector have been seconded from their teaching duties to develop these programmes.

DDLETB is convening a Programme Board comprising representatives of key stakeholders in the ELC sector to ensure that the programmes developed meet relevant industry, legislative and regulatory requirements and standards.

The Programme Board will act in an advisory capacity throughout the development of these new programmes, for which the expected completion date is Summer 2021. The Programme Board will provide feedback

on curriculum structure and the programme learning outcomes to the programme development group and advise to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of all stakeholders.

**Ms. Aisling Kirby, BA, MEd.** will represent Community and Comprehensive Schools and Voluntary Secondary Schools on the ELC Programme Board. Aisling holds a BA in Early Childhood Care & Education and a Master's Degree in Education from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. She has worked as an ECCE tutor in the Further Education and Training sector since 2007. Aisling is a member of the QQI Subject Expert Panel and is an active External Authenticator on the ETBI National Directory of External Authenticators.

## NAPD President Elect: Rachel O'Connor

**A**CCS congratulates Rachel O'Connor, Principal of Ramsgrange Community School, on her recent nomination as Vice President of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). Rachel has been Principal since 2013 and continues to be actively involved with the PDST Leadership Team as an Associate and supports the work of the Centre for School Leadership (CSL) as a mentor. Rachel has shared her experience of leading and managing Ramsgrange Community School's response to Covid-19 at recent NAPD meetings. She has also shared her learning from the visit of Inspectors to the school and this has been very

well received and appreciated by colleagues in a number of NAPD regional meetings.

NAPD is your professional association and represents the views of all school leaders, Deputy Principals and Principals, across all the education sectors. All NAPD members can download the NAPD app by going to the app store. NAPD's app allows you to have a wealth of updated current information at your fingertips.

ACCS wishes Rachel every success in her role as Vice President with NAPD in the coming year.



# Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

CIRCULAR NO.	SUMMARY
CL 77/20	Grant Scheme for ICT Infrastructure – 2021/2021 School Year
CL 76/20	Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2020-21
CL 75/20	Provisional results of calculated grades for Leaving Certificate Applied Year 1 2020
CL 74/20	Arrangements for schools to have in place appropriate contingency measures to ensure that schools are prepared to continue to support teaching and learning in the event of a partial or full closure of schools arising from Public Health advice
CL 73/20	Updated guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in primary and post-primary schools
CL 70/20	Curriculum and assessment related developments at Senior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the postponement of implementation of revised specifications
CL 69/20	New arrangements and procedures for Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 effective from 12 November onwards
CL 68/20	Emergency Works Grant Scheme: migration to on-line applications and minor revisions of scheme
CL 67/20	Advice on the use of assessment instruments/tests for guidance or for additional and special educational needs (SEN) in post-primary school
CL 65/20	Revision of salaries of school secretaries and school maintenance staff in Community & Comprehensive Schools with effect from 1 October 2020
CL 64/20	Revision of salaries of Clerical Officers under the 1978 Scheme with effect from 1 October 2020
CL 62/20	Revision of salaries of all staff paid directly by a recognised school or ETB with effect from 1 October 2020
CL 61/20	Revision of salaries for Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) with effect from 1 October 2020
CL 60/20	Revision of teacher salaries with effect from 1 October 2020

## Old Bawn Community School COLLEGE AWARENESS WEEK 2020

Old Bawn Community School is built on the firm foundation of student-centred learning. The Guidance department, Blanaid Dwyer and Joanne Kelly, motivate young adults to achieve their maximum potential in life by engaging with learning in the present moment as best they can. We believe that “*your future is created by what you do today not tomorrow*”.

It is our experience that learning today will create a successful tomorrow as it opens endless possibilities. With this in mind, this year, the College Awareness Week theme in Old Bawn Community School is “*learning gives you wings to fly*”.



# SEAI ENERGY UPDATES

## Winter 2020

The Monitoring and Reporting deadline is 16 April 2021

**F**rom 5 January 2021, schools can login to SEAI's online system to report annual energy consumption and related data for 2020. The deadline for submitting energy usage and related data is 16 April 2021. Free online training workshops will be available during February and March 2021. **For more information visit <https://www.seai.ie/schoolsmandr/>**

**Monitoring and Reporting helpdesk:**  
[mandr@seai.ie](mailto:mandr@seai.ie) or 01-8082012

### Interested in taking climate action and reducing your school's energy costs?

The Energy in Education programme offers a range of supports developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in partnership with the Department of

Education and Skills designed to help schools to improve energy management practices, reduce school operating costs and protect the environment. **For more information or to register your interest in attending an online energy management course in Spring 2021 go to: [http://www.energyineducation.ie/Energy\\_In\\_Education/Information\\_for\\_Schools/Energy\\_Management\\_Courses/index.html](http://www.energyineducation.ie/Energy_In_Education/Information_for_Schools/Energy_Management_Courses/index.html)**

### TOP ENERGY TIPS

Did you know between 50-70% of the energy use in schools is for space heating? There are plenty of ways to save money whilst reducing heating energy use and maintaining comfort. Check out the factsheet for more tips on how to save money and energy.

#### And remember to switch off for the Christmas holidays!

- For more tips on how to save your school energy and money visit [www.energyineducation.ie](http://www.energyineducation.ie)
- For teaching resources and workshops for pupils visit <https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/schools/>
- Sign up to SEAI's schools ezine on [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie) and keep up to date on new resources and supports for teaching energy and sustainability in school



## NCCA Chief Executive Officer



John Hammond



Arlene Forster

**T**he ACCS wishes to congratulate John Hammond on his retirement from his position as CEO of the NCCA. John has led the NCCA for the past number of years with great passion, insight, care and integrity and his wisdom will be sorely missed. We wish him all the health and happiness as he commences this new chapter.

We take this opportunity to welcome Arlene Forster to the position of CEO. Arlene brings a wealth of experience to the position and we wish her every success and look forward to working with her in her new role.



# School Chaplains' Association

## Christmas Message

**A**s we find ourselves looking forward to the most beautiful time of the year we inevitably look back on what has been the most indescribable of times. However, we look forward with hope. Hope in brighter, blessing filled days ahead. Christmas is synonymous with presents. Presents given and received with love and cheer. It is also important we realise the blessings and hope we possess in the present. This Christmas it is my prayer we take care of ourselves and each other and **Reach Out with Care and Kindness...** it is upon this **ROCK** that our school communities and communities in society are built. This Christmas let us ask the Child Jesus to bless and inspire us to make this a beautiful, joyful and safe Christmas for all those we love and care for.

*God grant you peace at Christmas  
and fill your hearts with cheer,  
God grant you health and happiness  
throughout the coming year,  
God guide you with his wisdom  
and keep you in his care  
This is my special wish for you,  
my fervent Christmas prayer.*

*May the blessing of the Holy Family be yours  
this Christmas and New Year.*

---

**Tony Nolan**

Chairperson, School Chaplains' Association

# News from Portumna Community School Newsroom

## Portumna Community School students awarded Excellence Scholarship from NUI Galway

We would like to extend our warmest congratulations to Marian Duffy and Jack Kelly (both from Killimor) Leaving Cert. class of 2020, who were awarded an Entrance Scholarship to NUI Galway for academic excellence in recognition of the high points they achieved in Leaving Certificate 2020. The Excellence Scholarships are designed to recognise and reward Leaving Certificate success for the highest-achieving students and encourage their ongoing commitment to academic excellence during their time at NUI Galway. Marian is currently studying Biomedical Science and Jack is studying Biopharmaceutical Chemistry with the University and we would like to wish them both every success as they progress through NUIG.

## Portumna Community School: a JumpAgrade Pilot School

We are delighted to announce that Portumna Community School has been chosen as a pilot school for the JumpAgrade programme in partnership with Galway Rural Development. JumpAgrade is an online service for second-level students preparing for exams. JumpAgrade helps students improve their grades and build confidence in their exam subjects. A group of fifteen 6th Year students have qualified for the programme and are currently engaging in a twelve-week programme. They follow a schedule of online classes and complete weekly assignments. The assignments are tailored to their level and they receive personalised video feedback from their teacher. On average, students obtain a 12.6% grade increase in just 12 weeks. Thanks to Ms. Murtagh (6th Year, Head of Year) for coordinating the programme and to Galway Rural Development for supporting this very worthwhile project.

## Generations Apart, Alike at Heart

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, Portumna Community School students were delighted to engage with An Post's initiative "Community Focus" and set about writing letters to local residents in both Portumna and Killimor Nursing Homes. This is a wonderful opportunity for the younger generation to communicate and connect with the older generation during this difficult time. We hope the old-fashioned joy of receiving a handwritten letter brightens someone's day as much as it did in sending it! Remember - it is the little things that count! Thanks to Ms. Madden for organising and well done to all students who got involved.

## Visual Art

Well done to all Junior Cycle students on their vibrant colourful artworks.

## Student Voice

We believe that all pupils will be successful in an environment which is caring, optimistic and encouraging. Portumna Community School is a happy school which provides an atmosphere which supports pupils and enables their success, their development of character and wellbeing. The promotion of wellbeing, care for each other and resilience lies at the core of our school. The pupils know they have a voice that is listened to by teachers and fellow pupils, initiatives such as the Student Council, Prefect System, Cairde Mentoring System and Class Captains are centre stage in school life. Within structures such as these our pupils find their voice and develop leadership skills that will last a lifetime.

In November the Student Council participated in leadership training delivered by the ISSU (Irish Second-Level Students Union). The ISSU is run for students, by students. They aim to empower student voices at all levels of education. Our Student Council has a number

of key areas they want to address at the moment such as surveying our student body on current school issues, organising a Jersey Day with proceeds going towards Student Services and representing PCS at the upcoming County Galway Comhairle na nÓg Annual General Meeting where the topic being presented is "Mental Health & Wellbeing".

## Science Week at Portumna Community School

In November our talented Science Department; Ms. Kenny, Mr. Smith, Mr. Enright, Ms. Keena and Ms. Donoghue along with our energetic student body ran a very successful Science Week at Portumna Community School. Science Week provides people across the country with the opportunity to ask questions, explore the science behind everyday lives, and consider the future we want and the role science can play in helping us create and understand our shared future.

This year the theme for Science Week is "Choosing Our Future", focusing on how science can improve our lives today and for decades to come. Science Week was an opportunity for students to engage with the science all around them and we had a variety of events on offer at Portumna Community School.

A sample of the Science Week events that took place at PCS included the following, table quizzes, daily science puzzles, 'Reduce our Carbon Footprint' recipes, art displays of nebulae and planets, subject demos promoting LC Sciences, *Guess the Breed* Competition and the *Water Bottle Rocket* Competition to name a few. Overall, it was a massive success and great fun for all involved.

## PCS Newsroom Team

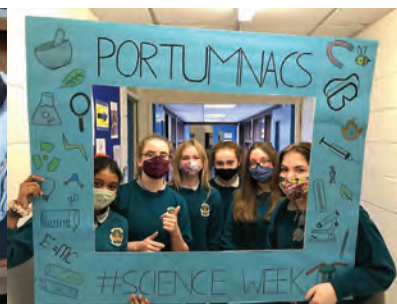
Caoimhe Keane, Alex Quinn and Kinga Wolna



3rd Year Students from Portumna Community School getting ready to post their letters to residents of Killimor Nursing Home. From L to R; Alisha Doerflinger Duffy, Maria Porter, Treacy Scott, Maria Eduarda and Cora Clarke.



Junior Cycle Visual Art display in Portumna Community School.



Kaeyshantie Raj-Khanna, Sheena Claffey, Alannah Young, Martha Jane Fahy, Ruby Aldous and Abbie McDonnell enjoying celebrating Science Week.



Gavin Head promoting Science Week at Portumna Community School.



Left to Right: Ms. Anne Bradshaw (HSE Disability Officer), Heather Barnett, Conor Hassett, Ms. Catriona Ryan (YSI Co-Ordinator CCS), Ms. Maria Neavyn (TY Co-Ordinator CCS), David Spearman, Mr. John Gallagher (Principal CCS), Jasmine McCabe, Colin Harding and Bobby Coleman.

# Cashel Community School Young Social Innovators of the Year 2020

Last Tuesday was an historic day for Cashel Community School (CCS) as it claimed the title of National Young Social Innovators of the Year. Four hundred schools participated nationally in this year's programme with over six thousand young people showcasing ideas. The winning team's project was called "Step Up For Accessibility". The team was angered by the misuse of accessible car spaces locally and nationally and wanted to create a solution to this issue.

The students worked closely with the HSE Disability Officer, Anne Bradshaw and together a plan was put in action. The students took the vision of a deterrent device to combat the ongoing issue and turned the idea into a reality by designing a prototype, which triggers an alarm if the driver cannot display a valid parking permit. They were assisted by the Engineering Department in CCS and were then able to showcase their prototype to a panel of judges in March at the annual Speak Out event in Kilkenny where students presented their project idea after many hours of practice in school. The students also researched the types of excuses drivers use when they misuse spaces and animated these in their presentation to show their outrage.

The students impressed the judges on that day, picking up an award for best onstage props, and in late August they learned they had won their overall category. They were delighted with the news as it was a big

achievement being selected as one of the nine finalist schools in the country. The award was sponsored by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

At the start of the school year the students learned that the final award ceremony would have to be a virtual event. The team submitted a video presentation so the next round of thirty judges could decide on the overall finalists. Colin Harding, one of the 18 member team displayed tremendous leadership skills here as he produced a very professional video showcasing the project's aims. Heather Barnett, Jasmine McCabe, Connor Hassett, David Spearman and Colin Harding represented their classmates in the video and displayed great tenacity under the guidance of their YSI guide.

The team watched the live final with great excitement; Minister for Education, Norma Foley was a guest of honour and praised the students for their commitment to social innovation.

There were soon shrieks of joy as Zara King (Virgin Media) announced the overall winning team and the CCS students realised they were the winners of the overall Gold Award and prize fund of €2,000 which they plan to use to develop their prototype further. Their ultimate dream would be to see the deterrent prototype being piloted in Tipperary. Dayl Cronin, former CCS student

and YSI representative, presented the beautiful John Rocha gold award much to the students delight.

The team's teacher and YSI guide, Caitriona Ryan has guided previous teams to victory including a Bronze Award and two Silver Awards. This was her tenth year guiding teams so winning the All-Ireland title was extra special.

President of Ireland and Patron of Young Social Innovators, Michael D Higgins sent a message to all the finalists on the day saying "I believe passionately that young people can be catalysts for social change when given the opportunity and support to create change. Active, creative citizens will lead the transformation of Ireland".

The students have been busy with requests for interviews and photographs, their interview for Tipp FM aired in October and an article for the *Irish Times* and local press followed in November. Social Innovation learning builds wellbeing amongst young people and communities and helps build a more inclusive, empathetic, fair society. It puts young people in the driving seat and challenges them to take ideas and put them into action, learning by doing.


The students are indebted to management and staff in CCS who always support the YSI initiative in the school every year.



*Michael took great pride  
in his teaching and in  
the achievements of  
his students.*

## Michael McGrath

# A Gentleman and a Scholar



**O**ur dear friend and colleague, Michael McGrath died on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. This tribute is being written on his 'Month's Mind'; All Souls Day. Michael was a very good soul.

He joined us in Cashel Community School in 2007 and he taught Science, Biology and Physics until ill health took its toll. Michael took great pride in his teaching and in the achievements of his students. He loved being part of the school community. We have been greatly comforted by the messages of sympathy and appreciation received from so many of his students, past and present.

He was a gregarious, kind and profoundly intelligent man whose range of interests and expertise extended well beyond the classroom. The kindness and compassion which characterised his life were reflected in his wish that, in lieu of flowers donations be made to Dogs Trust Ireland or the Irish Cancer Society.

Mourners at his Requiem Mass heard him described as a 'polymath' such was the depth of his knowledge and learning.

Antiques were one of his many interests. So much so that he returned to Postgraduate Study to pursue a master's degree in this area; his specific topic - Microscopes!

Michael was blessed with a very discerning eye; latterly he was particularly drawn to the Art Deco style. Sitting with him and discussing 'Grand Designs', 'Room to Improve' or 'The Great House Revival' was always a thoroughly enjoyable interlude and one inevitably gleaned a better insight or perspective into the rationale for the decisions taken by those involved.

Quizzes were another passion; indeed, he often tried to cajole friends to enter the BBC programme, 'Pointless'. Sadly, that is just one of the many plans that won't come to fruition.

While mourning his loss we take comfort in knowing that he is at rest. We are profoundly grateful to have had such a cherished colleague and friend.



Winning the Young Social Innovators Overall Award in 2016

# Portmarnock Community School celebrates a “High Impact Award” from Young Social Innovators

at the recent YSI online Awards Ceremony acknowledging the school’s innovative Development Education Programme

Since the inception of this particular Development Education Programme at Portmarnock Community School in 2006, almost 600 students have visited South Africa and more recently Lesotho as part of the Programme. This experience has influenced the participating students in so many different ways from career choices to personal choices and all participants have described the experience as life changing.

The Programme inspired a significant number of students to pursue careers in medicine, nursing, planning, IT and teaching. Others were inspired to pursue research and development projects which featured in Young Social Innovators competitions, BT Young Scientist & Technology competitions and the SAGE World Cup international competition (Students for the Advancement of Global Enterprise).

## YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATORS

In 2016, students from Portmarnock Community School won the overall Young Social Innovators Award, a national competition

where over 500 entries competed for this coveted prize. Their project was titled “Global Citizens Mapping the Future”. Using the open source software, Open Street Map (OSM), this project generated a digital map of Lesotho which included in excess of 27 million edits or pieces of information, creating the best and most comprehensively mapped country on the continent of Africa. (This work can be viewed in #MapLesotho).

Not satisfied with this achievement, the students went on to create two online applications (APPS); one for tourism and one for emergency call out services in Lesotho. A prototype was designed and tested in Ireland and in India that proved to be a success. Dublin Fire Brigade, IBM Ireland, Action Ireland Trust and Fingal County Council were key partners and supporters of the students’ work. Other studies included a study on soil erosion in Lesotho, land use efficiency and the provision of “The Golden Hour” protocols for trauma incidents in Lesotho. The land use study was entitled “Enterprise Wise” and allowed the Lesotho Government at

national and local level to assess how land was being used in a particular locality and if it was being used in a sustainable and viable manner. Students in the following two years, 2017 and 2018, went on to represent the school in the BT Young Scientist and Technology competition where their work was highly commended and won a number of awards.

## THE SAGE WORLD CUP

In 2017 the students represented Ireland in Ukraine where they took the top international award with their project “Global Citizens Mapping the Future”.

Over a period of four years, an extensive street view mapping project was undertaken in Lesotho using “Mapillary”, a software that can be downloaded to your phone. The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship in Lesotho along with local planners committed to adopting this software. Students from Portmarnock Community School supported this work during the school’s annual February visit to the Kingdom in the Sky in Southern Africa.



Portmarnock Students in Lesotho

The BT Young Scientist Team, 2019

Representing Ireland at the Sage World Cup 2017 held in Ukraine

*Behind all this incredible achievement by the students in Portmarnock Community School are two inspirational teachers, Niall FitzGerald and Colette Cronin.*

They completed this work using 360-degree cameras and smart phones over a two-week period and over a four-year timeframe. This support encouraged local planners to be committed to the project with the objective of creating “A National Spatial Strategy” NSS. The Lesotho Government has now committed to this national strategy which is a significant development and warranted students from Portmarnock Community School receiving the YSI “High Impact Award” at its recent online awards ceremony. Four of our former students Colin McAndrew, Ravikanth Gollapalli, Luke Peyton and Ahmed Jouda were acknowledged for championing this project but they wanted the work of hundreds of other Portmarnock Community School students over a five-year period to be acknowledged too.

### **Ford Mobility Challenge at the Enactus World Cup/ Silicon Valley**

In 2019, two past students from Portmarnock Community School, Tom Finucane (Dublin City University) and Colm MacAndrew

(Maynooth University of Ireland) went on to present the “Global Citizens Mapping the Future” project at the Enactus World Cup, representing Universities of Ireland and won second place.

### **BT Young Scientist and Scholarship to Yale University**

In 2019, Aaron Cullen who won an award at the BT Young Scientist & Technology competition, subsequently won a scholarship to Yale University where his application included his work from the digital mapping of the project #MapLesotho.

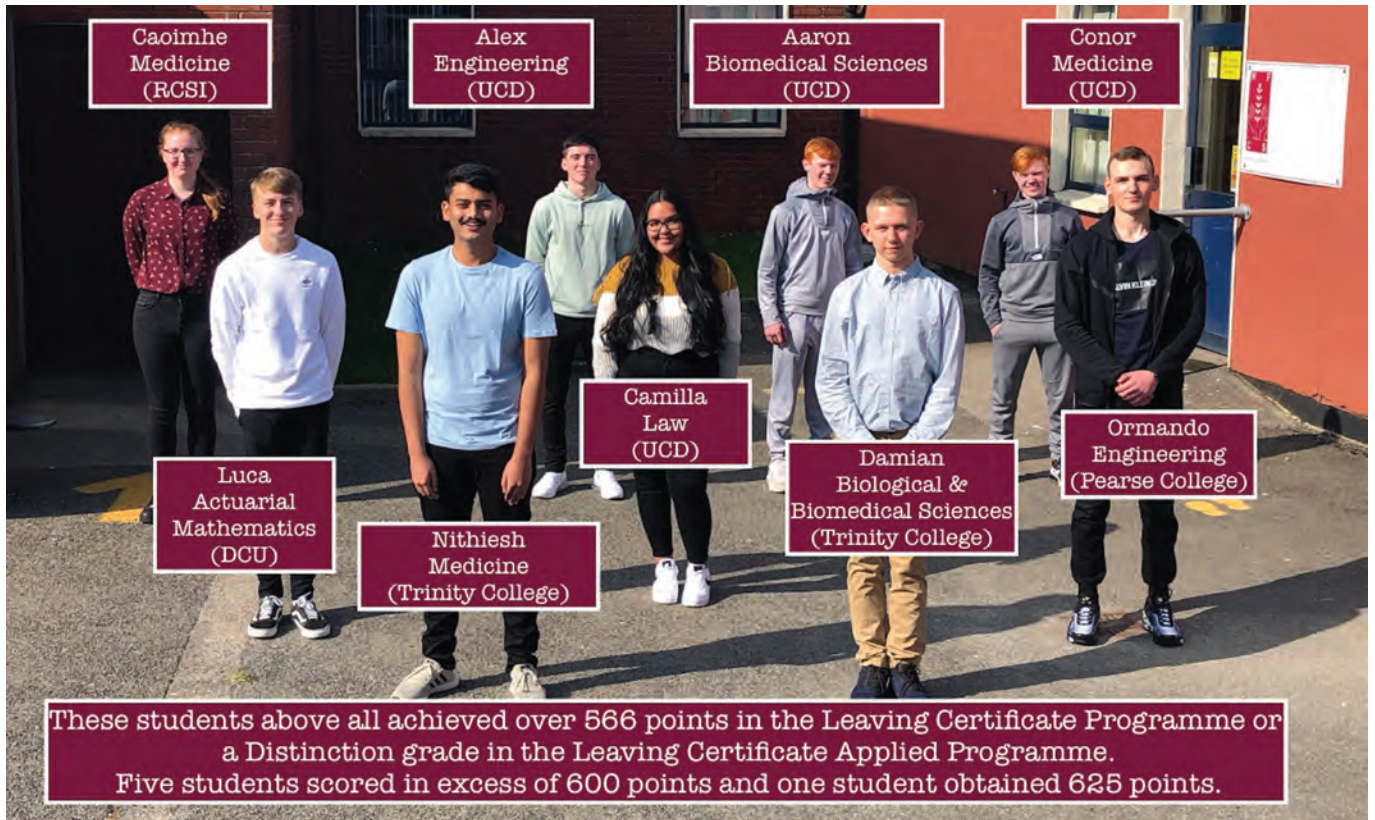
These are but a few examples of the impact that the school’s Development Education Programme has had on students in Portmarnock Community School. The Programme has allowed students to tackle real global problems with innovative solutions. It is also a good example of how the use of technology is a key resource for tackling issues in developing countries, further highlighting the importance

of data and how data can solve challenging problems. “When a nation counts, it solves problems”. This is a perfectly good example of what 21st century education should deliver - team building, problem solving, good research, effective collaboration and active learning.

Behind all this incredible achievement by the students in Portmarnock Community School are two inspirational teachers, Niall FitzGerald and Colette Cronin. Rachel Collier, CEO of Young Social Innovators, offered particular congratulations to Niall and Colette at the recent ceremony. She especially acknowledged the legacy of their tremendous generosity, innovation and teamwork, inspiring young people to carry on with their projects beyond secondary school, confident in the belief that they can make a difference in the world. “It is so true that behind every great YSI Team is a fantastic group of educators”. A fitting tribute indeed.

# Holy Family Community School High Achievers 2020

Leaving Certificate students from the Holy Family Community School class of 2020 visited the school on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2020. We are so proud of them and their wonderful results. We wish them every success as they begin the next phase of their academic journey in various universities in a variety of different fields, such as medicine, law, science and engineering.



## The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School Pen Pals

There has been a fantastic reaction to a new pen pal initiative that is pairing young letter writers with Nursing Home residents. Big hearted Transition Year students from The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School in Raphoe, Co. Donegal, reached out a hand of friendship to residents of Brentwood Manor Nursing Home.

Teacher, Orlaith Trearty originally came up with the idea when she heard about the new An Post initiative which was providing free postage to care homes and Nursing Homes throughout Ireland. "When I first heard of the initiative, I thought it would be a great idea to get some of our students on board and I thought Transition Years would be the perfect fit". Ms. Trearty reached out to John Kelly of Brentwood Manor Nursing Home and he was more than happy to get involved. Ms. Trearty explained "Each Transition Year student was given a resident based on similar interests they both may have had. This was done in order to make the letters more personal for the

residents." It doesn't involve any exchange of data as such and the identity of both the residents and students remains protected at all times. She said it was great to see the students reaching out to a different generation. "It's a win, win and the feedback has been great from the students," Ms. Trearty said. Jodie Pearson a Transition Year student loved taking part in this pen pal project. "It was nice to be able to bring a smile to someone of the older generation who will not have seen any family for quite some time now". Millie McArthur said "This was great as I was paired with someone who enjoyed farming just like I do. I found it easy and enjoyable to write to someone when we share things in common".

A total of 53 Halloween letters were sent to the Nursing Home and it is hoped that the students will get the opportunity to visit the home and meet their new pen pals face to face in Spring time if Covid subsides and government rules allow.



# St. Patrick's Comprehensive School

## Comp-Pix Photography Club

Our Comp-Pix Photography Club was formed in November 2019 after a simple conversation between one student and a teacher. On our first meeting the club had 28 members and it has since gone from strength to strength with the current membership standing at 50 students. Our students were initially surveyed using Microsoft Forms to accommodate and plan for all that the students wanted to learn. The aim has always been for it to be a community of learning where we all learn and grow together with the help and encouragement of others.

Our weekly meetings were made up of taking photos of props, the school, the local park and the estuary. A Team was set up on Microsoft Teams to allow students to regularly share their photos and this quickly became an encouraging and motivating community for students to express their passion for photography. We also used the school laptop trolley to work on editing photos and creating graphics. Before the school closure we invited a past pupil and local photographer to do a workshop for students. We had hoped to do a series of workshops, but

this will now be a future project for the club. Our students were very eager to do some fundraising for the club and a decision was made to look at raising money to buy camera equipment and a screen for the school canteen. It was decided to put together some of the photos taken in the local area to make a magnetic postcard that would be sold within the local area. Although the postcards were produced, and our work featured in local papers we are holding off on their sale for now. One of our main goals when setting up the club was to produce an exhibition of some of our photographs and hold an auction. Again, this was not to be but instead of giving in to our disappointment, in true #CompStyle we readjusted and rethought. It was here that our online exhibition 'Home Sweet Home' came to life. Our students took photos over lockdown of their local area and submitted them via our online platform. Our exhibition ran for two weeks and raised over €800. It featured in several local publications and was promoted by Shannon Airport on their Twitter and Instagram pages. We raised enough to buy a camera and a screen

that has since been installed in our canteen. Not only does this screen feature the photos from the club but it also lets us celebrate the achievements of all our students and staff. One of our photographers featured on our new school postcard. This postcard is sent out to celebrate our students and staff and keep in touch with our school community.

Although completely virtual so far this year, photos continue to be submitted and shared by our Comp-Pix students. We are presently running a November competition for our students to submit photos based around their current experiences. We are also very excited to be one of the groups leading a new initiative in the school called **COMPANIONSHIP**. This initiative will see videos and photos uploaded to a new school website that has been created to bring some happiness and joy to the elderly in our area. We are in the process of making videos of local walks and activities that can be viewed and enjoyed online. We hope that our club continues to develop as time moves on.



## Leaving Certificate Physical Education in St. Patrick's Comprehensive School

### Class of 2020

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School was delighted to announce that we were chosen to be one of two Co. Clare schools to take part in the first phase of the new Physical Education for Senior Cycle programme in February 2018. 369 schools applied to teach this programme nationwide and we were one of the 80 schools chosen. The class of 2020 were the first cohort to graduate from this course.

We were very proud to receive a Certificate of Recognition from PEAI for being one of the leading schools in Ireland. It tops off what has been a very varied and enjoyable course for all involved. Our LCPE class have had many highlights and opportunities throughout their course. Our classes worked closely with

the University of Limerick throughout their studies.

The LCPE students attended UL *Science of an Athlete* interactive presentations. They were lucky enough to receive a tour from Marcus Horan, former Ireland, and Munster player.

In addition, the group attended a Munster senior rugby squad training session and a series of sports science talks including one from senior head coach Johann van Graan at UL. Their course also facilitated them being hosted by the PESS Department in UL. They attended four workshops covering various aspects of their LCPE course and a talk on refereeing from IRFU professional referee, Johnny Lacey.

Our LCPE class competed in the annual PE-XPO Ireland competition in DCU last year and presented to many people on the day. Throughout the course students used I pads and filmed various parts of the course. Many of our students from the first graduating class have continued to pursue sport and physical education courses at third level.



Pobalscoil  
Chorca Dhuibhne

# Junk Kouture

**A**nuraidh chuir Covid 19 casadh sa chosán do na hiomaitheoirí a bhí ag trial ar an mbabhta ceannais do Junk Kouture. Bhí Michael Holden ó Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne tar éis áit a bhaint amach le Arthur's Legacy ach ní fhéadfadh an comórtas dul ar aghaidh. Anois, áfach, tá sé i gceist an babhta ceannais a thairfeadh agus a chur amach ar sheinnteoir RTÉ i mí na Nollag. Samhlaíonn an feisteas seo an domhan sa bhliain 3000, am go bhfuil an domhan scriosta ag an gcine daonna trí chogadh, truailliú agus tubaistí ceimiceacha. Spreagtha ag scéal Rí Arthur, ina ndeirtear go bhfilléann an Rí ar ais in am an ghéatair,

tugann an feisteas seo cosaint i gcoinne contúirtí an domhain seo atá scriosta ag díchiail an chine daonna.

Cuireadh le chéile an píosa couture seo 'Arthur's Legacy' le píosa spáráilte leathair agus le mialt ó sheanríomhairí. Foinní inspioráide ab ea na cultacha armúrtha meánaoiseacha don saothar seo chomh maith le hinspioráid ón dearthóir faisín Clare Garvey, ó Freddie Mercury agus fiú amháin an Holy Grail le Monty Python! Go n-éirí go geal le Michael agus píosa iontach ealaíne atá cruthaithe aige agus an múinteoir Brenda Ní Fhrighil atá ag tacú leis.



## Junk Kouture 2020

Moate Community School Regional Finalist

**T**he Grand Final of Junk Kouture 2020 is finally scheduled to take place on RTÉ Player in December 2020. The Regional finalists in each province are scheduled to be filmed in different locations over the coming weeks. The three teams from Moate Community School travelled to Gloster House, Birr, Co. Offaly where the filming for the Western Region of Junk Kouture took place.

Guided by their experienced teacher, Ms. Pamela Keogh, "**Blinded by Perfection**" (Caoimhe Lowry – Model, Gráinne Geoghegan and Erin Hickey), "**Burden of Privilege**" (Claire Conlon – Model and Hazel Kelly) and "**Just My Impression**" (Cara Greville) will take to the catwalk, to showcase their beautiful dresses and amazing talents. Moate Community School has achieved many successes in Junk Kouture and we hope that this year is no exception. Best of luck, girls!



*The scholarship is valued at €20,000 over the four years of college and was established in 2008 to promote study in the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines.*

## Scoil Mhuire Community School Clane Student Ellie Fitzpatrick is **2020 Naughton Scholarship Winner**

**H**uge congratulations to Ellie Fitzpatrick, student of Scoil Mhuire Community School, Clane who is the 2020 Kildare Recipient of the Naughton Scholarship. Ellie who achieved the maximum 625 points in Leaving Certificate 2020 is studying Engineering in Trinity College Dublin.

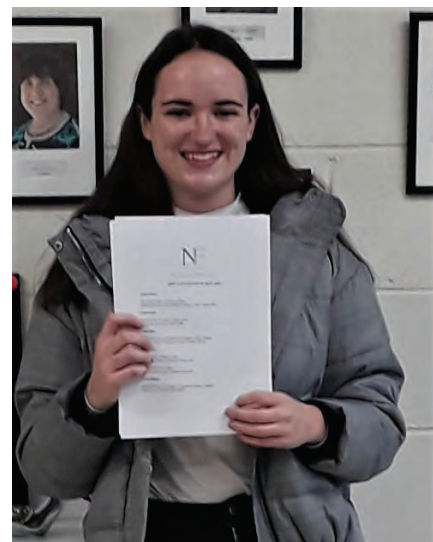
The scholarship is valued at €20,000 over the four years of college and was established in 2008 to promote study in the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines.

The Naughton Foundation was established by Martin and Carmel Naughton. It is a private family foundation, and its goal is to

support worthwhile causes in the arts and education. Each year a number of exceptional students are awarded scholarships to study at undergraduate level at Irish publicly funded third level institutions.

There is one winner from each county in the Republic and the award is intended as an encouragement to exceptional students in the STEM areas. The group of scholars join a community of very bright students who will become leaders in their fields in the future, be it in research or in industry.

The staff and students in Scoil Mhuire are very proud of Ellie and wish her every success in her studies.



### **TO ALL OUR SCHOOLS**

*Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of ACCS News – This is your newsletter where we share and showcase achievements and school community events. Any school that wishes to be included in future editions, please email Áine at [aosullivan@accs.ie](mailto:aosullivan@accs.ie) attaching your news story and good quality photographs. Your school, the ACCS community!*



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools  
*Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha*

## Contact us

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# ACCS Convention 2021

The 39<sup>th</sup> ACCS Convention will take place  
on the **10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2021** in  
**THE GALMONT HOTEL & SPA,**  
**LOUGH ATALIA ROAD, GALWAY**

*While it is the preference to have an in-person Convention this is clearly subject to change during these Pandemic times.  
At all times ACCS will operate within Government Guidelines and Restrictions.*

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>10<sup>th</sup> December, 2020</b> | Nominations for Presidency and motions for Convention to be submitted.  |
| <b>10<sup>th</sup> January, 2021</b>  | Draft agenda of business and nominations for Presidency and motions to be issued to Member Boards and Executive Members. Member Boards will be invited to submit amendments to the motions. |
| <b>10<sup>th</sup> February, 2021</b> | Latest date for receipt of amendments to the motions.   |
| <b>24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021</b> | A final agenda will be issued to Member Boards.   |