



# volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Corcaigh

CORK

## Annual Report 2019

(1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019)



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

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# 1

## Background

Cork Volunteer Bureau (as it was then known) began their initial recruitment and placement service in 2003 which was run by volunteers. In 2005, funding was secured from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs which allowed for two-part time workers. In November 2005 Cork Volunteer Centre registered as a company limited by guarantee with a board of Directors. Cork Volunteer Centre is one of 21 volunteer centres nationwide. It is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Currently located at 13 North Main Street, Cork Volunteer Centre is staffed by a dedicated team of employees and volunteers. When a member of the public enters the building, the first person they encounter is one of our dedicated team of reception volunteers. We feel that the best way to first learn about the benefits of volunteering is from someone engaged in this process themselves. Our reception volunteers explain how I-Vol works; provide assistance with registration; and offer and schedule face to face appointments with our Placement Officers.

Cork Volunteer Centre was set up to promote the benefits of volunteering the inhabitants of the Cork City and Cork County Area. This aim is achieved in association with relevant statutory and voluntary authorities. Furthermore, Cork Volunteer Centre was established to provide support, training and advice which advances the effectiveness of organisations involving volunteers to promote charitable activities on behalf of the communities across Cork City and County.



# Chairpersons Statement



On behalf of myself and the Board of Management of Cork Volunteer Centre, I am delighted to present our 2019 Annual Report.

Cork Volunteer Centre offers support and guidance to individuals and volunteer involving organisations to attain their individual goals, while also contributing to their local community and indeed, wider society.

We support some 600 non-profit organisations, as well as thousands of volunteers each year, and 2019 was no exception. Cork Volunteer Centre began to further develop its ties in the community, with the establishment of our Outreach Programme which helped to provide our services across a far greater geographical area, with pop up Volunteer Centres offered now in towns such as Mallow, Youghal and Bantry. 2019 also heralded the first ever Cork Volunteer Awards, helping to recognise the continuing, tireless efforts of the volunteers of Cork with a gala celebration night in The Kingsley Hotel attended by volunteers and sponsors from across the county.

Wanting to continue our strong ties with our community, 2019 witnessed partnerships with Indie Cork, Cork Film Festival and also Cork Pride, as well as the rolling out of a series of Summer Lectures which invited the sharing of skills from several subject matter experts. Cork Volunteer Centre also hosted a series of Volunteer Coffee Mornings to help bring together and thank those same people who keep so many services running in Cork.

A special thank you must also be paid to our former Chairperson, Chris O'Leary, for his outstanding service to date, Chris was and continues to be an asset to our organisation and as a founding member, has helped build Cork Volunteer Centre into what it is today.

Cork Volunteer Centre has always placed its emphasis on the contributions of volunteers in many organisations but of course, for us, it starts in our own office. A very special thank you is extended to the volunteers of Cork Volunteer Centre, your gift of time and skills helps to make us what we are, we remain eternally grateful for your input.

The Board of Management extends deep gratitude to the staff of Cork Volunteer Centre for their efforts and hard work throughout 2019, we know that with staff like ours, the future is bright for us.

**Christopher O'Brien**  
Chairperson





2019 represented my first full year as Manager of Cork Volunteer Centre and what a busy year. We commenced the year with a surplus of funding accrued in 2018 due to a gap in recruitment. Both roles are now filled and the surplus was utilised in 2019. Moving into 2020, we have a reserve and are in a healthy financial position going forward.

The year began with consultations across the City and County on the Governments call for input to the first Draft National Strategy on Volunteering. We were also able to prepare and submit a pre-budget submission to Government as a means to enhance our advocacy role for the sector in Cork.

The year witnessed the retirement of Marie and the recruitment of Karen and Gosia. With the assistance of corporate volunteers from Dell we were able to upgrade our website. We also received significant marketing advice and support from the team at Otterbox. Staff and volunteers undertook training in First Aid; Children First E-Learning; Fire Safety; Manual Handling; Health and Safety Representative; Greener Living; Digital Advocacy; Achieving Compliance with GDPR; Digital Communications; Excel; Positive Leadership; and Traveller Culture Awareness. We installed a server and upgraded our financial systems and procedures.

Our team volunteered for Cork University Hospital, Cork Pride, the Gay Project and Young Social Innovators. We hosted both Indie Cork and Cork Film Festivals volunteers and volunteer coordinators. We delivered Volunteer Leadership Training in March, June and October.

We hosted a vibrant programme of events for National Volunteer Week. On a personal note, the highlight of my year was the inaugural Cork Volunteer Awards. It really brought home to me the amazing, often unrecognised work that volunteers across Cork do week in, week out. I would like to extend a huge thanks to the awards winners and their guests – we wouldn't be here without all the time and hard work you put in. This night was for you and we sincerely hope you enjoyed it.

It was not all plain sailing however. Through our consultations for the National Strategy we heard the very real concerns and fears of volunteers and organisations around ever increasing regulation and governance requirements. Our pilot Outreach programme highlighted the need for additional staff and resources if we are to meet the needs of a geographical area the size of Cork.

None of the activities listed above would be possible without the support of our charity trustees, reception volunteers, corporate sponsors, corporate volunteers, partners and funders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the excellent team of employees at the Volunteer Centre. Your commitment and drive is what allows us to deliver an excellent service to all the volunteers and organisations across Cork who are registered with us.

**Julie Connelly**  
Manager

# 4

# Structure, Governance and Management

## a. Legal Structure

Cork Volunteer Centre is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. We are governed by a volunteer board of directors/charity trustees. The Board comprises of six representatives. Currently, additional members are being sought to increase diversity in skills and expertise. Our charity trustees oversee the work Cork Volunteer Centre. They provide checks and balances; approve expenditure; budget for the year; and the operational plan for the year. The trustees met 6 times in 2019. The AGM was held in October where new office holders were elected. The year began with consultations across the City and County on the Governments call for input to the first Draft National Strategy on Volunteering. We were also able to prepare and submit a pre-budget submission to Government as a means to enhance our advocacy role for the sector in Cork.

## b. Charity Trustees

### Chairperson: Christopher O'Brien



Christopher O'Brien has 10 years' experience in the voluntary sector in people management and training roles at multiple levels. He brings to the board expertise in recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers, with background in organisational psychology, specialising in engagement, well-being and coaching.

### Vice Chairperson: Sinead Conroy



Sinéad Conroy has worked with SECAD, a local development company, since 2007 and has 22 years' experience working in the community development sector. She works primarily with community and voluntary groups as well as individuals on low incomes looking to enter employment or explore self-employment.

### Secretary: Gwen Healy (joined January 2019)



Gwen Healy is employed as Community Employment (CE) Childcare Training and Recruitment Supervisor with Mahon Community Development Project since November 2015. She supervises a group of over 60 participants across Cork City and County providing support in recruitment, Garda vetting, QQI training, coaching, mentoring and progression plans.

### Treasurer: Jim O'Donovan



Jim O'Donovan has retired as Director of Services at Cork City Council, where he worked for 43 years, in the areas of environment, recreation, planning, community, arts and general administration. He brings to the board skills and expertise of local government, business strategy, sustainability, strategic planning and change management.



**Director: Aileen O' Driscoll**

Specialising in building team effectiveness, team leadership and creative group decision making, Aileen has developed and delivered leadership training to major pharmaceutical & medical device multinationals, community workers and unemployed job seekers.

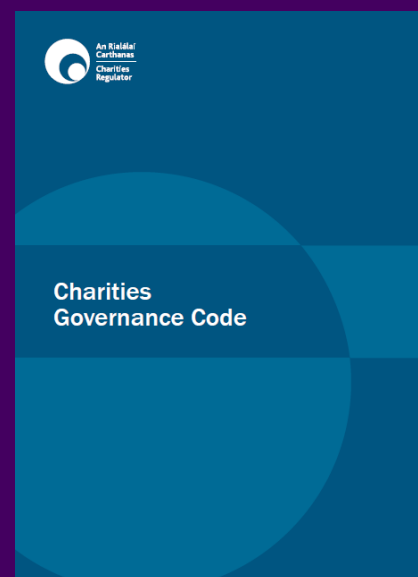


**Director: Chris O'Leary**

Chris O'Leary has over 30 years of experience as a volunteer activist and has been involved in community affairs across Cork, addressing issues of anti-poverty and community development.

## **c. Governance Standards**

Cork Volunteer Centre commenced our compliance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code in 2019. As 2019 was regarded as a year of learning, the first step was to provide funding for the Manager of the Centre to attend the Certificate in Charity Law, Trusteeship and Governance. This course was jointly delivered by the Law Society of Ireland and The Wheel. Part of the course requirements were that attendees undertake a written report on their organisations as is compliance with the Governance Code and identify where additional work was required. A first draft of the charities governance code compliance record form was also completed at this time. Both of these documents served as a road map for compliance for Cork Volunteer Centre. Trustees held a meeting in November to discuss Principle 1 of the Code. A plan to deal with the other 5 Principles of the Code was set out for 2020. It was also recognised that bringing our Employment Policies and Procedures up to date forms a large part of compliance with the Governance Code. To this end tenders for work on our employee handbook were sought and in late 2019 a contract was awarded for work to commence on this in 2020.



## d. Volunteers and Employees

### i. Cork Volunteer Centre Reception Volunteers

As mentioned in the introduction of this report, Cork Volunteer Centre directly engages a number of volunteers for reception duties at the centre. This role involves answering the phone, dealing with members of the public and some light administrative duties as required. Volunteers use their time with us to gain work experience in an office; to improve their English; to meet new people; to get out of the house while their children are at school; and, to gain confidence and self-esteem. We see the volunteer role as a development one. Initial training is provided to all our volunteers on their reception duties. Our volunteers are invited to attend any in house training they are interested in (for example Traveller Culture Awareness Training, introduction to Excel). Our volunteers are also invited to attend our team building activities such as our team volunteer day or our Christmas Party. We were delighted to have some of our own volunteers attend Cork Volunteer Awards in October. Additional duties are given to volunteers who indicate a preference for more/different responsibilities. In 2019 our volunteers assisted us with outreach and information stands across the county. We also engage volunteers for once off activities such as photography and marketing in advance of National Volunteer Week, or wellness workshops for our volunteer wellness day in May.

We also engaged a UCC student (Stuart) on work placement with us for 12 weeks. As a mature student from the Department of Government the goal was to obtain experience in policy and administration. During his time with us, Stuart became an invaluable member of the team. Under the supervision of the Manager, he assisted with drafting the Annual Report 2018, our pre-budget submission to the Department of Finance and undertook logistical duties to do with the organisation of Cork Volunteer Awards. Stuart also volunteered with us later in the year to assist with the information stand for UCC Volunteer Day.



We advertise our volunteer roles on I-Vol. Like many organisations our volunteers stay with us for differing amounts of time. For example, Margaret has been volunteering with us on a Friday for 7 years. However, other leave us when they are successful obtaining work or for the summer holidays to care for their children. We are always sad to see someone go, but happy to provide glowing references for work or visa/citizenship applications as requested.

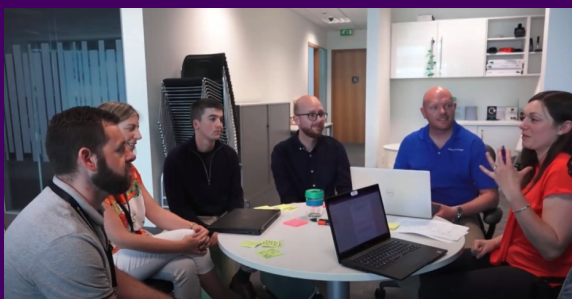
Gosia, a member of our placement team, acts as volunteer coordinator for Cork Volunteer Centre volunteers. She provides training and induction; support and supervision; and communicates about Centre activities with our volunteers. Directly engaging volunteers in the Centre gives our team first-hand experience of putting into practice the principles of good volunteer management.

## ii. Corporate Volunteers

### New Website

Cork Volunteer Centre was the lucky recipient of support from the corporate sector in 2019. Employees in Dell utilised many of their CSR hours to update our website. We really appreciate the work they put in to deliver a professional looking website for free to us. The new website is easier for volunteers and organisations to navigate. It also features a new contact us form that links directly to our email system. It is mobile responsive and was designed in such a way that we would maintain and easily update new content ourselves.

The process of updating the website gave us direct experience of how practical support from the private sector can be successfully utilised by non-profit groups. It also gave the team at Dell a unique experience of using their professional skills to volunteer.



"We all had a great time volunteering and it's great to see the benefit to the charity too"

Stacey -Dell



The process of updating the website gave us direct experience of how practical support from the private sector can be successfully utilised by non-profit groups. It also gave the team at Dell a unique experience of using their professional skills to volunteer.

Since applying Google Analytics to our website on October 16th, we have had 4828 visitors to our website and 11,350 page views..

### Marketing Support and Advice

Furthermore, we received marketing support from the team in Otterbox through their CSR programme. This support involved design work for Cork Volunteers Awards marketing pitch and logo design. Assistance was also provided on social media. Finally, the team also assisted us with editing spotlight videos of the awards winners on the night. Without this support and the experience of Martina, Claire and Linda, we would not have been able to successfully obtain the corporate sponsorship we did for the awards. The impact of this experience and advice will be utilised for many years to come.





### iii. Employees



#### **Julie Connelly**

2019 was a year full of changes for Cork Volunteer Centre. As outlined in 2018 Annual Report, a new manager, Julie Connelly, was engaged in October. Julie oversees the day to day management of Cork Volunteer Centre resources and staff. Julie works closely with the trustees of Cork Volunteer Centre to insure the delivery of our operational plan. She provides support in relation to implementation of Charities Regulator Governance Code. Julie acts as Garda Vetting Liaison Officer and delivers a range of training and information sessions to students, corporates and relevant volunteer involving organisations. Julie ensures Cork Volunteer Centres continued compliance and active engagement with our social inclusion remit. She represents the Centre at relevant local and national networks. Julie took the lead in coordinating and planning the inaugural Cork Volunteer Awards. She engages with local media on a regular basis. Julie utilises her experience gained in both Citizens Information and UCC to prepare pre-budget and policy submissions to national and local government and oversee research projects relevant to the centre.



#### **Karen O'Connor**

One of Julies first duties was to recruit a professional book keeper to deal with Cork Volunteer Centres accounts. Karen O'Connor commenced employment with Cork Volunteer Centre in February 2019. Karen's initial duties were to set up cloud accounting and online banking systems for the Centre and to professionalise our financial systems and procedures. Karen also performs Garda vetting clerk duties and arranged the Christmas party. Karen is also our Data Protection Champion and one of our first aid officers. Karen has previous experience working in private industry both in Ireland and abroad.



#### **Marie O'Mahomy**

2019 also saw the retirement of Marie O'Mahomy. Marie had been employed as a Placement Officer with Cork Volunteer Centre since the early days. Her knowledge and experience with the Community and Voluntary sector across Cork will be sorely missed and we wish her well for the future. Catherine Kang also finished up her Community Employment scheme in 2019.



#### **Gosia Waldowska**

As part of Cork Volunteer Centres commitment to deliver services more consistently to rural areas of Cork County, Gosia Waldowska was recruited as a Placement Officer with specific focus on outreach activities in June 2019. Following a period of training and induction, Gosia commenced research and planning a pilot outreach programme for the centre which was delivered from September to December. This work formed the basis of the outreach plan for 2020. Gosia has previous experience delivering outreach with Cork Sexual Health Centre. She also assists with the delivery of Volunteer Leadership Training (VLT), coordinates our volunteers and takes the lead on the volunteer discount card scheme. Gosia is our other first aid officer.



### **David Fradgley**

David Fradgley changed roles with us from Tus Placement to Community Employment Scheme. David provides IT support in the form of website maintenance and assistance. Along with Adam, he was instrumental in setting up new secure systems for delivering Garda Vetting. David performs Garda Vetting Clerk duties for the Centre. David also acts as Health and Safety Representative and supports reception volunteers.



### **Adam Lacey**

Adam Lacey has been with Cork Volunteer Centre since 2016. His role is Placement Officer with responsibility for organisations in Cork City. Adam also undertook increased responsibilities in 2019 and acts as a Garda Vetting Liaison Person for Cork Volunteer Centre. As well as supporting volunteers and organisations, Adam maintains our social media accounts and takes the lead on coordinating activities for Volunteer Week. Adam was pivotal (with support from our colleagues in Tipperary VC) in our move to utilising salesforce for Garda Vetting. Adam also liaised with the team in Dell to update our website and continues to maintain and update our website with David's assistance. Adam assists with the delivery of training on Garda Vetting and Volunteer Leadership. He also acts as Fire Warden and Child Protection Officer for the Centre.

## **iv. Further Recruitment**

2019 ended with Cork Volunteer Centre being in a position to advertise for a further Placement Officer on a fixed term contract for 2020. The goal is to utilise this post to enhance and expand our outreach and placement services.



### a. Volunteers

We offer volunteers the following services;

- The opportunity to meet a member of staff to discuss volunteering opportunities that are meaningful for them.
- Access to an extensive database of volunteering opportunities available across Cork City and County.
- Information on the how, why and where of volunteering.
- Ongoing support and information through regular contact.

*"I feel very grateful for VC as I feel it's opened up a lot of work opportunities for me. I'm very glad I decided to help out in my spare time as it's made things more meaningful. Since getting involved in st. Finn barrs hospital activity centre last year..."*

**[Naomi - March 2019]**

*'Cork Volunteer Centre means a great deal to me. I have a better understanding of what it means to be a great volunteer. Working with you Gosia, Julie and Adam, I feel I am part of a family. Your warm welcome and support at all times has been me a great back up. I have learnt a great deal from the workshops you have provided for us volunteers'*

**[Theresa, Clonakilty Community Resource Centre]**

### b. Organisations

We offer Volunteer Involving Organisations the following services;

- A free volunteer referral service.
- Guidance and support in developing volunteer roles
- The ability to advertise volunteer opportunities on our database
- Access to an extensive pool of volunteers across Cork City and County and nationwide through I-Vol.
- Training, guidance and support on all aspects of best practice in volunteer recruitment, retention, support and management.
- Networking opportunities for volunteer managers
- Advice and support on volunteer policy
- Garda vetting services

According to our registered Volunteers and Volunteer-Involving Organisations our work has a significant impact on them and the community and it is very important that they have the support we offer.

82%

of Volunteers stated they are satisfied or very satisfied with Cork Volunteer Centre's services.

94%

of volunteers would recommend Cork Volunteer Centre to others.

85%

of organisations stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with our service.

89%

of volunteers stated that Cork Volunteer Centre staff are welcoming and professional.

95%

of organisations stated that Cork Volunteer Centre followed up with them in reasonable time.

85%

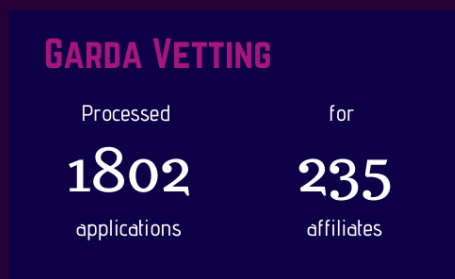
Stated that their engagement with Cork Volunteer Centre increased or significantly increased their ability to retain volunteers.

# 6

# Objectives, Achievements and Performance

2019 was a busy year for Cork Volunteer Centre. We met or exceeded many of our targets.

## 2019 IN NUMBERS





**The following sections of this report address some key achievements under each of the four core objectives in our Operational Plan for 2019.**

## **a Increase Access to Volunteering by offering a Support Service to the Public and Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIOs).**

Under core objective one, Cork Volunteer Centre aimed to increase access to volunteering by offering a support service to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations through our outreach programme and improvements to our Garda vetting systems.

### **i. Outreach Pilot Programme**

As outlined above Gosia Waldowska commenced her placement officer duties in June. Gosia was hired to focus on outreach activities. After initial training on placement duties, she began by researching, planning and booking venues to deliver an Autumn outreach programme.

Outreach activities for the Centre are divided between the City and County local authority geographical areas. The main objectives for starting CVC outreach activities in the county were to increase access to volunteering by;

- Spreading awareness about volunteering and Cork Volunteer Centre
- Supporting volunteers with registration and searching for local volunteer roles
- Supporting non-profit organisations with information and advice on recruiting volunteers

From September to December 2019 at least one pop up Volunteer Centre a week was delivered across 23 different locations (some locations were visited more than once). The first Pop Up Volunteer Centre was hosted in Youghal Library on 6th September. We also visited Mallow, Mitchelstown and Bantry libraries, and would like to extend our thanks to the welcome we received from the library staff in each of those locations.



*'Many thanks Gosia, for coming to Coppeen and for facilitating these introductions'*

**[Colum, Coppeen Archaeological, Historical and Cultural Society]**

We were hosted by Coppeen Bar, Clonakilty Community Resource Centre and Insomnia Café in Charleville. We attended North Cork Health Network meetings in Mallow, Mitchelstown and Fermoy and collaborated with Avondu Blackwater. Promotional materials such as leaflets and posters were distributed at all outreach locations.

This four month pilot programme of outreach allowed us to develop relationships with many local groups and volunteers. However, there were also many challenges. The library service allowed us to deliver outreach on a budget. However, some volunteers felt uncomfortable having face to face meetings in a public space. Cork is the largest county in Ireland and it was a challenge for one person to be everywhere. We hope this issue will be somewhat resolved by upcoming recruitment. Budget constraints are also an issue. Travel and subsistence costs form a large part of the outreach budget. We also working on having a weekly presence in the county going forward. There are other challenges in relation to rural volunteering such as lack of reliable public transport, which not unique to Cork. Our contribution to funding the UCC research piece on comparing and contrasting the needs of rural and urban organisations across Munster will inform the delivery of our outreach programme for years to come.

*"It was extremely beneficial to meet the Placement Officer in person in the local community. The service was very understanding and supportive of our needs; we found the experience to be very efficient, prompt, concise and hugely beneficial to us".*

**[Mary, Fermoy Multiple Sclerosis Society]**



## ii. Garda Vetting Service Improvements

A vital support service we provide is Garda vetting. As outlined in the above infographic we processed 1802 vetting applications for 235 affiliated organisations. We also delivered training to 141 vetting officers. Cork Volunteer Centre implemented a number of changes to how we conduct Garda Vetting services.



From April 2019 the following systems were implemented:

- A new secure (password protected) link on our website is used to submit vetting applications. This page now has a drop down menu for affiliates which allows us control who can or cannot submit vetting applications.
- Once submitted, vetting applications are automatically sent to a secure salesforce account dedicated solely to Garda Vetting.
- Applications are submitted to the vetting portal via the salesforce.
- When disclosures are made available, they are downloaded to a secure, pin protected, folder on our server.
- Paper disclosures are no longer posted, they are securely transferred to the relevant designated Garda Vetting Officer via WeTransfer. These files are encrypted password protected. All affiliates have been issued an individual unique code. Once sent, disclosures are permanently deleted from our server.
- If disclosures are not accessed by a vetting officer within 4 weeks, they are automatically deleted and cannot be retrieved. WeTransfer also gives the ability to delete transferred files in the event of any errors.
- Vetting applications that are six months old are deleted permanently from salesforce.

These procedural changes have resulted in a professional Garda vetting service that is GDPR compliant and operates to the highest standards. We would like to extend our thanks to our colleagues in Tipperary Volunteer Centre for the assistance with setting up the Salesforce aspect of this service.

### i. Submission to Call for Input on National Strategy on Volunteering

Cork Volunteer Centre welcomed the announcement by the Department of Rural and Community Development to develop a National Strategy on Volunteering. In order to increase the quality of volunteering both locally and nationally, Cork Volunteer Centre documented the needs of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in Cork.

In direct response to the call for input into the Volunteering Strategy, Cork Volunteer Centre undertook the following actions;

Collaborated with other **Volunteer Centres in Munster** to engage with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across the region to have their say (the main findings of these focus groups are represented in the infographic on page 17).

- Cork Volunteer Centre hosted **6 focus groups** across the city and county (Cork City x 2, Clonakilty, Mallow, Mitchelstown and Youghal) to obtain the views of the volunteers and volunteer involving organisations we represent. Almost, **60 people** representing Clonakilty Community Care, Clonakilty Resource Centre, Right of Place Cork, Hour TimeBank GLG, Bantry Historical Society, Clonakilty Wellbeing, Cork ETB, Dunmanway Access Group, the RNLI, Foroige, Cork Simon Community, Good Sheperd Cork, the Irish Wheelchair Association, Cork Film Festival, Cork City Partnership, The Next Step, the Special Olympics, Cork Cycling Festival, Irish Platform for Patients' Organisations, Kinsale Harbour Festival, Friends of Saint Finbarr's Hospital, Cork Community Art Link, Lombardstown Community Council, University College Cork, Mallow Community Council, Cork Environmental Forum, Citizens Information, Cork County PPN, Avondhu Blackwater Partnership, Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services, Youghal Credit Union, Cork Gay Project, Youghal Health Project, Waterford VIS, Cork County Library, Mitchelstown Credit Union, Mitchelstown Community Council, Mitchelstown Heritage Society, Mitchelstown Community Games, Girl Guides, attended these events. Evidently, representatives were from local, county and national organisations. In addition, the note takers and facilitators at these events were mainly volunteers themselves.
- A **survey** was circulated nationally by Volunteer Ireland to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations on I-Vol. **353 representatives from Volunteer Involving Organisations** completed this survey, along with **534 volunteers**.
- Cork Volunteer Centre has **4 staff members, 1 Community Employment Scheme, 1 Tus Scheme** and approximately **10 volunteers**. In addition, Cork Volunteer Centre has **8 volunteers on its board of management**.
- Furthermore, on specific questions Cork Volunteer Centre consulted representatives from **Cork City PPN, Cork County PPN and Cork City and County Council**.
- Cork Volunteer Centre staff members attended the **Volunteer Centres Managers Network** annual conference on 5th and 6th February 2017 held in response to this call for input.

A copy of this submission is available on our website under the publications tab.



# Munster Volunteer Centres

## Call for Input Summary

### WHAT WE HEARD?



- Fear of Governance & Regulation
- Urban and Rural challenges differ
- Volunteers do not feel valued
- Volunteer burn out and wellbeing is a real issue
- Lack of funding is limiting service provision
- Restricted access to locally delivered support and information
- Frustration with Garda Vetting
- Limited Volunteer Management Capacity across the province



### WHERE WE HEARD IT?



- **31** Focus Groups across Munster
- Attended by **321** people
- **224** responses to the national survey (33% of the total)

### HOW WE HEARD IT?



- Structured and formalised approach to regional workshops
- Support documentation for facilitators
- Province wide plan
- Joint Social Media campaign
- Dedicated website

### WHAT SHOULD THE STRATEGY INCLUDE?



- A robust volunteering infrastructure
- A national volunteering awareness campaign
- Assistance to small organisations
- Proportionate governance and legislative requirements for C&V groups
- Fairness across the urban / rural divide
- Opportunity for feedback into the implementation of the strategy



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

Supported by The Department of Rural and Community Development

  
volunteer centre  
Súil d'Oscar Deorach an Chéir  
CLARE

  
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CORK

  
volunteer centre  
Súil d'Oscar Deorach an Chéir  
KERRY

  
volunteer centre  
Súil d'Oscar Deorach an Chéir  
LIMERICK

  
volunteer centre  
Súil d'Oscar Deorach an Chéir  
TIPPERARY



## ii. Pre-Budget Submission 2020

To continue to develop and enhance our advocacy role, Cork Volunteer Centre submitted our first pre-budget submission to government in May 2019. The recommendations of our Pre-Budget 2020 submission sought to enhance the quality of volunteering locally and nationally with the following key recommendations;

1. A Robust Volunteering Infrastructure
2. Promotion of Volunteering through a National Campaign.
3. Assistance to Small Organisations
  - a. Training
  - b. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers
  - c. Finance
4. A National Strategy on Volunteering that recognises the Regulatory and Governance burden on smaller volunteer involving organisations.
5. National Strategy on Volunteering that is representative of the needs of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations in both urban and rural areas.
6. Opportunities for feedback into the implementation of the strategy.
7. Record levels of volunteering on the census.
8. Encourage and incentivise employers to allow employees take paid time off to volunteer.
9. Celebrate Volunteering Locally.

A copy of this submission is available on our website under the publications tab. We hope that some of our recommendations are incorporated into the National Strategy on Volunteering when it is launched in 2020.

## iii. Increase the capacity of VIOs to engage volunteers and enhance their services

Another aspect of our work under core objective two is to increase the capacity of volunteer involving organisations to engage and enhance their services. In Cork Volunteer Centre, we achieved this through our Summer Lecture Series and the delivery of Volunteer Leadership and Social Media for Non-Profits training.

## iv. Summer Lecture Series

The summer lecture series was a networking and learning opportunity for volunteer managers and coordinators to hear about best practice in the field from their peers, Cork Volunteer Centre staff and trustees. The events were free and occurred on a Friday. Please see detailed poster below for the range of topics discussed.

The events were also live streamed on Facebook. Physical attendance at the events was relatively poor. However, at the time of writing this report the videos have been viewed approximately 2,000 time online. This demonstrates the appetite for online offerings of this sort. It also confirms that Friday may not be the best day to delivery networking opportunities such as this. The lessons learned from this experience have been applied to our 2020 Operational Plan.



The poster for the Cork Volunteer Centre Summer Lecture Series features a yellow background with a subtle pattern of orange and blue swirls. At the top, the Cork Volunteer Centre logo is displayed above the title 'CORK VOLUNTEER CENTRE SUMMER LECTURE SERIES'. Below the title, a subtitle reads: 'A NETWORKING AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITY FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS AND COORDINATORS TO HEAR ABOUT BEST PRACTICE IN THEIR FIELD.' The event times are listed as '11AM - 12PM.' The main content is organized into a table with two columns: the date of the event and the speaker/topic. The dates range from May 3rd to June 28th. The speakers and topics include Jim O'Donovan, Dr. Eileen Hogan and Una Feely, Adam Lacey, Milly Farrell, Kieran O'Connell, David O'Brien, Dr. Margaret Scanlon & Prof. Fred Powell, Chris O'Leary, Paul Collins, Dr. Anna Kingston, and Dr. Julie Connelly. At the bottom, a line of text provides the website for more information: 'FOR MORE INFORMATION : VOLUNTEERCORK.IE/EVENTS'.

DATE	SPEAKER/TOPIC
MAY 3RD	JIM O'DONOVAN - CORK CITY MARATHON DR. EILEEN HOGAN AND UNA FEELY - INDIE CORK FILM FESTIVAL
MAY 10TH	ADAM LACEY - SOCIAL MEDIA FOR NON-PROFITS
MAY 24TH	MILLY FARRELL - MANAGING VOLUNTEERS: COPE FOUNDATION
MAY 31ST	KIERAN O'CONNELL - ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS: BALLYPHEHANE 1916-2016 DAVID O'BRIEN - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK.
JUNE 7TH	DR. MARGARET SCANLON & PROF. FRED POWELL - STUDENT VOLUNTEERING: PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND BUILDING A FUTURE VOLUNTEER BASE
JUNE 14TH	CHRIS O'LEARY - COMMUNITY MAPPING
JUNE 21ST	PAUL COLLINS - MIGRANT PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS VOLUNTEERING. DR. ANNA KINGSTON - CARL (COMMUNITY-ACADEMIC RESEARCH LINKS) - UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK
JUNE 28TH	DR. JULIE CONNELLY - THE IMPORTANCE OF POLICY ADVOCACY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION : VOLUNTEERCORK.IE/EVENTS



"Very interesting talk. It's fantastic to be able to tune in online" - Carol

## v. Volunteer Leadership Training

In 2019 we delivered Volunteer Leadership Training in March, June and October to 28 participants from 15 different organisations. The training was delivered by Julie, Marie, Gosia and Adam. Julie and Gosia attended a VLT train the trainer session hosted by VI during the summer months.

"Enjoyed the discussion around the topics and use of real world materials"  
[Module 2: October]



CORK VOLUNTEER CENTRE

# VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP TRAINING

JUNE  
17TH & 18TH  
2019

Email [info@volunteercork.ie](mailto:info@volunteercork.ie) if interested.

"Enjoyed the group discussions around dealing with difficult situations involving volunteers case studies"  
[Module 4: March]

As a result of our training programme, we have partnered with Cork Sports Partnership to deliver training around involving sports volunteers early in 2020. We have also decided to deliver VLT in three county locations (Clonakilty, Youghal and Mallow) in 2020 as part of our outreach programme.

"Very informative and thought provoking"  
[Module 3: March]

"Very interactive, put examples into context, peer led group, lots of discussions, good range of activities"  
[Module 1: June]



## vi. Social Media Workshop

In 2019 we delivered a Social Media for non-profits lecture as part of our summer lecture series programme. This was in response to the many requests we had received for support in this area.

Due to the popularity and success of this lecture, Adam held a special Social Media Workshop in September for Cork based organisations offering them tips and tricks on how to best utilise their Social Media platforms.

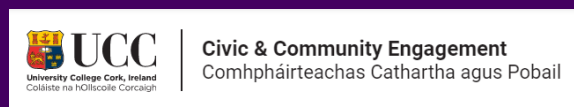
We plan to offer more of these Social Media workshops in 2020.



## vii. Reduce barriers to volunteering

Finally, under core objective two, Cork Volunteer Centre sought to reduce the barriers to volunteering by seeking to investigate what the barriers are. In collaboration with UCC and the other Volunteer Centres in Munster, we made an application for Irish Research Council New Foundations funding. Unfortunately, this application proved unsuccessful. However, collectively we recognised the importance and necessity of a piece of research comparing the needs of urban and rural volunteer involving organisation. The piece was collectively funded and commence in Autumn 2019. We are looking forward to reviewing the results of the research and utilising them for the delivery of our operational and strategic plans going forward.

Cork Volunteer Centre also actively engaged with the CARL project in UCC and hopes to have a number of research projects on marginalised groups and volunteering delivered by UCC students throughout the course of 2020. We have not been deterred in relation to New Foundations funding and hope to apply again with UCC as our research partners for the 2020 call for applications.



This section outlines the activities we undertook to increase public awareness of volunteering and the activities of the volunteer centre.

## i. Updated Promotional Materials

The team at Cork Volunteer Centre engaged in an extensive amount of activities under core objective three. A complete review was undertaken of our promotional materials and extensive time was spent with a graphic designer updating our promotional materials. To reflect our use of the library network to deliver outreach, we developed bookmarks as part of our promotional materials. Promotional materials were distributed to all outreach locations in 2019.

The new promotional materials reflected our outreach programmes and our renewed engagement with the volunteer discount card scheme across the City and County. The materials all now include our registered charity number as per Charity Regulator guidelines.

New volunteer discount cards as well as window stickers for participating businesses were also developed. Six new businesses across Cork participated in the volunteer discount card scheme. Businesses located at each outreach location were encouraged to participate in the scheme. The relevant section of our website was updated to reflect an emphasis on volunteers and businesses located in the city and county areas.



# INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

In order to promote the activities of Cork Volunteer Centre and increase awareness of the public of volunteering generally,

## INFORMATION STANDS

We hosted information stands the following events;

Cork County Council – Staff Wellness Day  
Spring into Action – Intreo Office Hanover Street  
Lifelong Learning Festival  
The National Ploughing Championships  
UCC Student Volunteer Fair  
Charity Volunteer Fair- Cork College of Commerce



## MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

Life FM  
Cork Independent  
C103



## VOLUNTEER COFFEE MORNINGS

Once a month where volunteers were given the opportunity to meet Placement Officers in an informal setting to find out about volunteering.



## PRESENTATIONS TO RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

On the benefits of volunteering to their service users;  
Carrigaline Branch Office DEASP  
HSE Community Work Department – Cork  
Mental Health Service Group – Bandon  
DEASP Cork County Branch Managers  
DEASP Case Officers



## PRESENTATIONS TO EMPLOYERS

On the benefits of volunteering;  
Dell, Brookfield Renewable.



## PRESENTATIONS TO RETIRED PEOPLE

St Mary's Campus  
Seniors Group Castletownroche

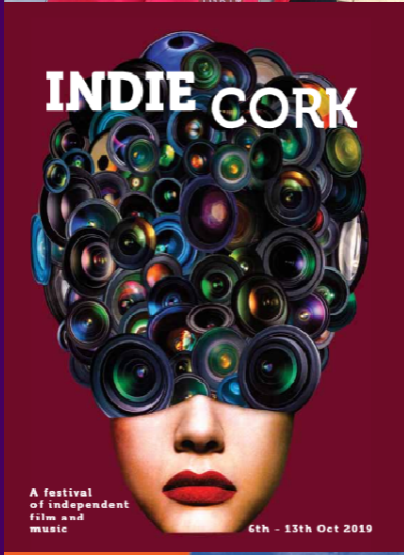
## PRESENTATIONS & TALKS TO STUDENTS

St Angela's Particks Hill, St Lukes NS Douglas,  
UCC Social Work Students, Undergraduate and  
Postgraduate students from the Department of  
Government UCC.

## PRESENTATIONS TO MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

Better Together (Women Seeking Asylum)





### iii. Festival Partnerships

Use of our building as festival hub for volunteers for Cork International Film Festival, Indie Cork Film Festival and our partnership with Cork Pride.

#### Cork Pride

Cork Pride is a week long festival that took place from July 27th - August 4th. In 2019, Cork Volunteer Centre became official partners to the festival, helping with the recruitment of volunteers, providing support, and assisting volunteer training. Members of our staff also supported the festival by volunteering at the various events. Adam also liaised with the festival's volunteer co-ordinators in the creation of rotas and assigning volunteers to shifts. Cork Pride offered free advertising in their Pride magazine, as well as space to write an article. Cork Volunteer Centre placed 43 volunteers with Cork Pride.

**Indie Cork** is a small not-for-profit music and film festival which takes place in October each year. An eight-person management team of volunteers coordinates the festival each year. We partnered with the festival to allow their volunteer coordinator utilise our office space in the lead up to and during the festival. The volunteer coordinator utilised our building to delivery volunteer training and inductions. To highlight our partnership, IndieCork put Cork Volunteer Centres logo on all of their publications – 10,000 copies of their printed brochure which is distributed widely Cork City and county.

The logo also appeared on the trailer for the festival, which screens before every film at the Festival at the Gate Cinema, and at Dali, our music venue. We were the only volunteer recruitment method utilised for the festival. The festival normally utilises 12-15 volunteers per year. Cork Volunteer Centre placed 7 new volunteers with the festival this year (many of their volunteers return year after year due to their positive experience with the festival coordinating team).

**Cork International Film Festival** takes place in November each year. Engaging with Cork Film Festival raised awareness of Cork Volunteer Centre to a wide audience. There were over 20,000 admissions to the Festival over 11 days. 140 local Volunteers supported the Festival operation. The partnership between CFF and Cork Volunteer Centre enabled CFF to have a dedicated volunteer venue where inductions and meetings could be held within a convenient distance from two of their main venues: The Gate Cinema, on North Main Street and The Triskel Arts Centre, a short distance away on Tobin Street. 45 CFF volunteers were referred via the Volunteer Centre Cork website, which accounts for 32% of total volunteers during the festival. Volunteers had access to a hang out space including complimentary tea and coffee making facilities within the Volunteer Centre and access to information on additional volunteering opportunities in Cork City.

Our logo was displayed on the dedicated Sponsors and Partners page of the Official Festival Brochure. The Volunteer Centre logo featured in on-screen ident prior to all CFF screenings. Our logo featured in the Festival Trailer, screened for four weeks prior to and during the Festival before all screenings in The Gate Cinemas. The festival trailer also featured on website and social media. The Volunteer Centre logo featured in dedicated Funders and Partners slides presented at Awards Ceremony and Industry Days.



# NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEEK

Cork Volunteer Centre, alongside Volunteer Ireland and the network of volunteer centres participated in the annual campaign of "National Volunteer Week" in May 2019.

In an effort to celebrate Volunteers in Cork City and County, we hosted four coffee mornings in Clonakilty, Youghal, Mallow and Cork City. As National Volunteer Week coincided with LGBT Awareness Week we hosted a special LGBT+ coffee morning in Cork Volunteer Centre on May 13th.

To demonstrate our appreciation for the volunteer work being carried out in Cork, we also hosted a Wellness Day for Volunteers on May 16th. This day offered volunteers an opportunity to attend free workshops in meditation, yoga, wellness and resilience and singing.

The staff and volunteers of Cork Volunteer Centre also used one of our allocated Volunteer Days to support Cork University Hospital's Art Committee in creating a mural for their Garden Area."





## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEEK

“ I volunteer because I think working with people makes me feel good, and I like interacting with people. Volunteering is all about offering yourself, your time, without expecting anything in return. It helps with physical health, mental health and makes you feel good because you are interacting with different kinds of people from different backgrounds. ”

- Smiley



Munster  
Volunteer  
Centres



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEEK

“ I volunteer because the contact with other people makes me better and helps me to develop new skills, including my English speech and listening. ”

Volunteering is much more than giving your time to help someone. It is sharing in experiences and making others feel important.

- Allysson



Munster  
Volunteer  
Centres



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEEK

“ I like volunteering because it gives me a structure to my day. It helps me to meet people from all different countries and nationalities. Also, I like interacting with people, because volunteering is good for your mental health. You don't concentrate on yourself. It's all about the other people that you're helping. ”

- Louise



Munster  
Volunteer  
Centres



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Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING WEEK

“ I volunteer next to my full-time job supporting two LGBT organisations. These positions mean a lot to me. I get to engage myself in a local community, applying the knowledge I have while learning a great deal more. ”

At a practical level, there is experience and the growth of one's network to gain. While at a personal level, there are great friendships and eventful spare time activities to get involved in.

- Thomas



Munster  
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Centres



LGBT  
IRELAND



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



## CORK VOLUNTEER AWARDS

2019

The idea to host an awards ceremony for Corks volunteers came about directly as a result of our consultations with volunteers and groups as part of the call for input to the National Strategy on Volunteering. The feedback was that Cork people wanted to be celebrated and recognised locally and not in Dublin. The awards categories themselves were designed to emphasise the unique sense of place the people of Cork identify with and five of the categories were based on geography. With the generous support of the Kingsley Hotel and C103 in particular we set about achieving an evening that would shine a light on the volunteers of Cork.

On Friday 11th October, Cork Volunteer Centre and C103 co-hosted the inaugural Cork Volunteer Awards at the Kingsley Hotel. These awards aimed to celebrate and recognise the thousands of remarkable people across Cork who selflessly give their time and talent to benefit their local communities. Winners in ten categories were presented with trophies on the night and the overall Cork Volunteer of the Year was announced by Patricia Messenger, host of C103's Cork Today. Sharon Mullins was the winner of the South City category and the overall Cork Volunteer of the Year due to time and commitment at Feed Cork where she typically volunteers 25 hours or more a week. These awards could not have been delivered without the generous support of our corporate sponsors and media partners C103 and Cork Independent newspaper. We received 111 nominations for the awards. A 'Thank You for Volunteering' card was posted to each individual nominee.



**Múireann Cronin**  
**CanTalk**

Youth Award 2019

Sponsored by: OtterboxCares



**Neville McGrath**  
**Farranree Community Assoc.**

North City Award 2019

Sponsored by: AIB Blackpool & AIB North Main St.



**Konrad Im**  
**Gay Project**

Student Award 2019

Sponsored by: UCC  
Community Week



**Sinead Crowley**  
**Irish Heart Foundation**

West Cork Award Award 2019

Sponsored by: Cramer's Court  
Nursing Home

Nominations were open to non-profit organisations registered with us for Garda vetting and volunteer placement services. The judging panel consisted of representatives from our sponsors, media partners and our own trustees. The team felt very humbled and thankful to have the opportunity to deliver this event. Promotion of this event resulted in increased registrations of volunteers and new organisations with us. It showcased the work that we do in the community and it raised awareness of volunteering in the City and County generally. It also allowed us to develop lasting relationships with corporate donors that have resulted in sponsorship for 2020 awards. Many local businesses also donated spot prizes to the event. We hope to continue to build upon these relationships.



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**Fred Lottie**  
**Blarney Street Responders**  
Lifetime Achievement Award

Sponsored By: First South  
Credit Union



**Jacqueline Jefferies**  
**CanTalk**  
North Cork Award

Anonymous Sponsor

“

*'I was extremely shocked and surprised and utterly delighted to have received the call on Monday morning to say that I had won the award. I was surprised the award had been given to me, because we are a small organisation and I feel really privileged to be given the opportunity to represent CanTalk. It is all about Teamwork.'*

**[Jacqueline Jefferies (CanTalk)**  
**North Cork Volunteer of The Year 2019 ]**

The organisations that participated in the awards also had their profile raised locally. Indeed, First South Credit Union made a large donation to Feed Cork at Christmas and purchased equipment for Cork City First Responders. These relationships were forged through meeting at the awards.

We look forward to delivering our showcase events for National Volunteer Week and Cork Volunteer Awards again in 2020.



**Elizabeth Scully**  
**Foróige**

East Cork Award

Sponsored By: FJ Forde & Co.



**Kieran Buckley**  
**Mallow Daycare Centre**

Board Member Award

Sponsored By: Kingsley Hotel



**Homeless Help & Support Cork**

Group Award

Sponsored By: Cork City PPN



**Sharon Mullins**  
**Feed Cork**

South City Award &  
C103 Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored By: Douglas Control & Automation & C103

Meeting core objective four is necessary to ensure the delivery of the preceding three core objectives. A substantial amount of work was completed under this objective during 2019. Sections above have discussed changes implemented to our Garda vetting service, governance code compliance and the update of our website. In 2019 we strived to ensure that effective and efficient operational systems were implemented that incorporate best practice principles and guidelines.

### **i. Updated Financial Systems**

As mentioned earlier in this report, 2019 commenced with the recruitment of a paid employee to engage in book keeping duties for Cork Volunteer Centre. Prior to this, financial records and invoicing responsibilities were maintained by a volunteer who was with us one day a week. Financial records were completed on multiple excel sheets.

An accounts package named Big Red Cloud was installed to be used by our employee. This allows immediate access by our accountant to our systems. It allows all information to be streamlined and retained in the one system. From February 2019, we were able to put in place controls and procedures with the new system. Sales invoices were created on a monthly basis rather than a quarterly. The feedback from organisations availing of our services is positive in that it allows for better financial management on their part. Organisations were receiving invoices on a timely bases and if any questions arose, it was easier to look back to where content derived from. Another benefit of having a paid employee is all the accounts are entered in to the system in a timely manner and any account question that arises can be answered with in a certain time frame.



Cork Volunteer Centre also moved away from issuing cheques for payments to supplies to utilising online business banking systems. This allowed for flexibility in payments of wages (standing orders no longer needed to be readjusted when staff tax credits changed) and prompt payment to suppliers as relevant trustees could approve payments remotely. A company purchase card was also introduced so that staff would not accrue personal expenses unnecessarily. The above measures have increased our income and resulted in the delivery of a more professional service.

## ii. Server Installation

In 2019, Cork Volunteer Centre had all PCs networked to a new server. This extensive work now means that we can ensure compliance with GDPR for storage of all our data. The server management system installed is very user friendly, allowing the centre manager to add/delete users with ease. It also allows access to be limited immediately when an employee/volunteer departs from the centre.

Overall, the installation of a server allows us to achieve core objective four on the following ways. It has resulted in a substantial **increase in reliability** for the organisation. For example, on our previous system, if one PC failed (on basis of any motherboard, hard disk or power supply faults) on the interlinked network, the entire system would go down. A server, on the other hand is an effective solution to such a serious issue. In such cases, the failure of one device doesn't guarantee the failure of the entire system. The server continues to operate fully even after the failure of one or multiple devices.



A server provides the organisation with **enhanced network security**. By creating distinguished group and individual accounts, individual rights can be assigned to users based on their role. This removes unauthorized data access. For example, the placement team cannot access data from the accounts or HR despite the data being present on the same server. Furthermore, reception volunteers and students on placement with us can be provided with access in a limited way.

A server provides **centralised back up facility**. Data losses occur commonly in workplaces for several reasons ranging from machine failures to carelessness. The server allows us to back up all data to a centralised storage on the server and reduce all the headache created from data loss. A server aids in good **virus management**. The server allows the system administrator to deploy the anti-virus software from a single PC to each workstation PC connected on the network, run a network wide scan as a whole (including the devices connected on the WiFi network) and remove all sorts of viruses if any.

A server allows Cork Volunteer Centre to set up **remote accessibility**. Staff engaged in the delivery of outreach services will become remote users on the network. Staff will then be able to work remotely and access files on the server whenever they want wherever they are.

# Our Finances

Annual Report - Period Ending	31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2018
<b>INCOME</b>		
Department of Rural & Community Development	123,800	123,800
Cork City Council (hosting PPN Employment)*	64,887	55,390
Fundraising for Awards	7,100	-
Room Hire	2,450	5,674
Garda Vetting	19,429	18,162
Training	2,600	400
Other	-	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>220,267</b>	<b>203,426</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Wages and Salaries **	158,684	128,814
Social Welfare Costs	17,271	13,563
Consumables	-	159
Rent	10,000	10,000
Light, Heat and Insurance	4,857	3,101
Repairs and Maintenance	3,404	2,537
Waste Disposal	480	229
Stationary, Printing and Office Supplies	3,427	2,019
Promotional Activities	2,446	570
Telephone	2,356	1,488
Travel and Subsistence	4,388	1,713
Audit Fees	2,486	2,240
Bank Charges	163	176
Sundry Expenses	1,188	963
Staff Training	5,779	2,843
Subscriptions	-	500
Rates	(245)	-
Cleaning/Consumables	2,705	-
Computer Costs	1,489	-
Awards	7,103	-
Net Research Expense	3,971	-
Legal and Professional	605	492
Accountancy	1,520	830
General Expenses	(1)	(1)
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	2,062	919
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>236,138</b>	<b>173,155</b>

\*Cork Volunteer Centre receives payment for salaries, Employers PRSI and a hosting fee for the employment of Cork City PPN employees.

\*\* During 2019, Cork City PPN recruited a new Coordinator and Support Worker.