

Community centres to benefit under investment fund

A number of Community Centres across Co. Wicklow are to receive funding under the new Community Centre Investment Fund.



Steven Matthews TD at Rathdrum Cancer Support Centre

The new Community Centre Investment Fund forms part of a range of measures being undertaken by the Department of Rural and Community Development to support the community and voluntary sector, and to empower thriving, sustainable communities across Ireland.

The funding is not strictly limited to community centres but also includes Family Resource Centres, Parish Halls, Scouts Clubs, Sports Complexes and Youth Hubs.

In Co. Wicklow, funding will go to Newcastle Community Centre CLG (€60,561); Rathdrum Cancer Support Group (€100,000); Stratford/

Grangecon Local Development Company Limited By Guarantee (€74,825); Purple House Cancer Support Centre Company Limited By Guarantee (€67,669); Newtownmountkennedy Community Centre (€85,172); Wolfe Tone Community Centre (€74,624); An Tairseach Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthafochta (€69,616); Imaal Hall (€148,067); and Tinahely Courthouse (€285,000).

Green Party TD Steven Matthews who recently met with Rathdrum Cancer Support Group, and has been advocating for grant funding on their behalf in recent months has welcomed the news.

Discussing the news,

Deputy Matthews said "I had the opportunity to meet with the group in their existing premises in Rathdrum recently and I got to see first-hand the extraordinary work that they do to offer support to those suffering with cancer and their families.

"One of the key issues raised with me was that the group had outgrown their current premises and their service would benefit hugely from a new, central location in Rathdrum to cater to their clients.

"I know this funding is going towards upgrading, retrofitting and adapting a new building to fit the needs of the group and the services they provide which is excellent news for the people

who use this incredible service and for their friends and families.

"The incredible voluntary service they offer in terms of information sessions on supports for families, putting on social evenings for patients undergoing cancer treatment, offering lifts to hospitals for people without access to other transport options amongst other vital supports.

"This service provides a genuine support network for people in Rathdrum and the wider area and I hope this funding will help the group continue to flourish in the community. To see this funding come to fruition is a wonderful development and is a reflection of the years of hard work put in by all those involved with RCSG and this must be acknowledged.

"I look forward to continuing my work with both Rathdrum Cancer Support, Wicklow County Council and the Department of Community Development to ensure that this funding is allocated as quickly as possible so that they can get this project moving," concluded Deputy Matthews.

Stephen Stokes, Independent Greystones councillor, said, "Community centres are often at the heart of communities, and provide an invaluable resource." Welcoming in particular the €60,500 for the Newcastle Community Centre in his own Municipal District, he added, "I would like to pay special tribute

to everyone who is involved in the Newcastle Community Centre. It is an excellent facility, and this funding will boost their efforts further."

Some of the work includes energy retrofitting, extensions to current facilities, upgrades to fire safety, provision of meeting rooms, upgrading disability access, and more.

Cllr Stephen Stokes concluded: "This is one of the largest ever capital investments in community centres. I will continue to push for more funding for community based facilities. These are urgently needed in the Greystones Municipal District. I am particularly pleased to see disability access improvements and energy retrofitting in the funding announced.



Cllr Stokes at Newcastle Community Centre which is to benefit under the investment fund

More than €1m in Marine Funding for Wicklow

Minister Simon Harris has welcomed the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine's approval of the second tranche of the Brexit Adjustment: Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme (BALAMI) 2022-2023. This decision has resulted in County Wicklow receiving over €1 million for eight projects across the County.

Minister Harris said, "I welcome this massive investment into Wicklow's maritime sector, which will help those in the industry to adapt to the challenges and impacts brought about as a result of Brexit.

"I greatly support the decision to increase the funding rate of the Brexit Adjustment: Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme, to the maximum rate of 95% of the total cost for eligible projects. This capital injection will provide vital benefits for

Wicklow's coastal communities, especially in the current economic environment.

"The remaining 5% of funding must come from local authorities. However now that the funding for these projects have been approved, I would encourage Wicklow County Council to ensure the completion of the eight projects included under this scheme."

The BALAMI Scheme arose as a result of a recommendation from the Seafood Taskforce cre-

ated in 2021. This taskforce examined the impacts of Brexit specifically on the fishing sector and coastal communities.

"The rejuvenation of Ireland's coastal and marine infrastructure will be vital in order to offset the implications of Brexit on the Irish fishing industry. Wicklow's history has been long connected to fishing industries and I believe it essential that these industries are preserved and encouraged," Minister Harris concluded.



Owen Carton, Larry O'Loughlin, Ella McSweeney, Pat Dunne, Faith Wilson, Brian Dunne, Julia Aglinoby, Declan Byrne and Davy McCaracken are pictured at the SUAS Project Conference in the Glenview Hotel. The packed event programme explored the key findings of the five-year project with a host of guest speakers, panel discussions and a guided field trip to see the innovative work currently being undertaken across the Wicklow and Dublin Uplands. Launched in 2018 by Wicklow Uplands Council, the ambitious project was established to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to the environmental and economic challenges facing hill-farmers in the Wicklow and Dublin uplands.