



National Updates



Merry Christmas from Age Friendly Ireland!

A message from Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer, Age Friendly Ireland



2023 has been an exceptionally busy and successful year for the Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service. Our team continues to grow and thrive, and our local programmes are strengthening and producing meaningful outcomes for our ageing population with the implementation of their strategies. Some key highlights this year include the wonderful Convention we held in Kerry. Under the theme of Failte Arais! We had the opportunity to discuss current policy challenges, visit sites and models of good practice so that learnings could be shared, hear from an array of panellists with wonderful insights and most importantly take advantage of the time to network and socialise with our peers across the country. We thank our colleagues in Kerry County Council Maura and Siobhan, Chief Executive Moira Murrell and all those involved, for making it such a positive experience. In addition our National Awards Ceremony was another major milestone. Our judging panel had a very tough task in shortlisting from the plethora of submissions and then had the pleasure of visiting the shortlisted projects to select the winners. The night itself was highly successful and we thank all of our sponsors, the judges and every project that made a submission as well as all of those that attended on the night. Minister for Older People Mary Butler, in the Department of Health, who has given, and continues to give, her stellar support to the shared service, enjoyed the night immensely and I know she had the opportunity to meet with many of our OPC members and hear of all the great work that is progressing across the country. Our sincere thanks to Minister Butler and her team in the Department for their ongoing support to the shared service. I would also like to particularly thank Chief Executive Tom Enright in Wexford County Council for hosting the awards and Programme Manager Niamh Bolger for being such a pleasure to work with so closely.

Nine Local Programme Strategies were launched this year and the local programmes have continued to implement the actions in their strategies aligning them to policy objectives and working towards An Age Friendly Ireland as set out in Programme for Government. I thank all our Programme Managers for their trojan work and efforts. We are delighted also that our new National Technical Manager will take up post in January 2024 working with the 31 Technical Advisors across our local authorities supporting the delivery of age friendly housing and public realm in the built environment initiatives. Our Technical Advisors are committed to making their counties and cities age friendly and scaling up and replicating our age friendly firsts has been a priority. In November Minister Kieran O'Donnell in Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage launched our Housing Case Studies publication which is a blueprint of age friendly developments and models to inspire all those in Ireland who are working to provide more age friendly housing, rightsizing opportunities for older people and greater access to independent living for all of us as we age. We thank Minister O'Donnell and all the team in DHLGH for their ongoing support. This year seen the complete roll out of the Age Friendly Libraries Programme which we plan to officially launch in 2024, more age friendly firsts progressing including the first Age Friendly Beach, Racecourse, the scaling up of the Age Friendly Hospital and Train Stations and the growth in delivery of the Housing & Public Realm Training. Our Age Friendly Business Programme is reaching more and more business across the country leading to a better shopping experience for older people. We have worked closely with Climate Action on the delivery of training for members of our OPC's and aligning our policy objectives. Internationally we have been collaborating with global partners which has included a number of site visits to New York, South Korea and most recently Paris for our World Health Organisation Global Affiliates meeting.

Notably 2023 has been the year that we have seen the national scale up of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes programme within the shared service. Anchored in a partnership between SláinteCare in the Department of Health, the HSE and the local government sector through the Shared Service we will directly support 10,500 older people across Ireland. We thank everyone for their support particularly our funders and colleagues who have helped us progress this ambitious programme.

Another milestone this year was the election of our new National Chairperson Ita Healy from Meath Older Peoples Council taking the reins from Kitty Hughes in Longford Older Peoples Council. I want to thank Ita who has been, and continues to be, a fantastic Chairperson and has taken the role with gusto. We extend our thanks to Kitty for her commitment in her term as Chair and who represented us so exceptionally nationally and internationally. Thank you to every Older Peoples Councils Chairpersons and your members for providing your voice and your energy into the Age Friendly Ireland shared service.

Finally 2023 was the year we saw the retirement of Meath County Councils Chief Executive Jackie Maguire. We were delighted that we had the opportunity to thank Jackie for all her work at the Convention in Kerry and acknowledge the contribution she made to ageing in Ireland by hosting the shared service in Meath County Council from 2017. We have welcomed our new Chief Executive Kieran Kehoe to Meath County Council in December. Kieran attended our awards ceremony and had the opportunity to meet with many of you and hear of the fabulous work that is progressing. He is looking forward to leading and progressing the vision of the shared service. I would also like to thank Fiona Lawless for her support to the shared service in the interim period. Of course none of this would be possible without the trojan work of the core Shared Service team, I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to you for your dedication and hard work in ensuring we achieve our goals.

It is difficult to thank everyone who is working collegiately with us, so I want to acknowledge each and everyone one of you who are contributing to making Ireland a great place to age and grow old by working with us and we progress.

Wishing you and your families a very Happy Christmas and our best wishes for the New Year!

Catherine

A message from Ita Healy, Chairperson of National Network of Older People's Councils



Christmas is a wonderful time for reflection, spending time with family and enjoying some down time. However, we are also conscious that there are many who will be without family and loved ones this Christmas and for them the festive season can be a lonely time so it's important that we lend support to those who may need it over the holiday season.

We have very positive support in Age Friendly Ireland. Yet another very successful year for the shared service, as it continues to grow and develop further each year.

Since this time last year, some fantastic work has been done by Older People Councils. There have been a lot of Expos, information days and AGMs taking place around the country. And people are beginning to come on board again. It is so important to spread the word about the Age friendly programme. It is such a brilliant opportunity to raise our voices and have them heard in the corridors of power. The voice of older people is heard and heeded. Being older is slowly being recognised as being able, venerable, a valuable contributor to family and community life. I feel that our goal must be to spread the word to as many older people as possible.

The Age Friendly programme does sterling work. Thank you to Catherine and staff at Age Friendly Ireland for leading us with vision and empathy, listening to different perspectives and saying yes to challenging opportunities so Ireland will be a better place in which to grow old.

May you have a joyful Christmas among family and friends, and may the New Year bring good health and new opportunities to make life better for all of us.

When I light the candle in the window on Christmas Eve, I will remember all of you.

Ita Healy

Chairperson of National Network of Older People's Councils



Healthy Age Friendly Homes

A Great Day Out!

ACORN Age Friendly Tablet Training Day, Longford Town



A great day out was had by all at a recent ACORN Age Friendly Tablet training day in Longford Library, Longford Town. The training day was hosted by Mary Carey, Local Coordinator for the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme in Longford. The training was held for our programme participants who have received an ACORN Age Friendly Tablet as part of our package of supports. The ACORN Age Friendly Tablets were provided to some of our programme participants as part of a telecare package which included an ACORN Tablet and a PanPan Watch. This telecare package was distributed to over 300 people across the country as part of a pilot initiative and was kindly funded by the Sláintecare Social Integration Fund via Healthy Ireland.



Photo 1 (L-R): Grainne Gilsean, Clerical Officer, Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme; Laura Corbett, Operations Director, Origin Care Group; Mary Carey, Local Coordinator, Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme; Aoife McGrath, Regional Programme Manager; Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme; Peter Clerkin, Clerical Officer, Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme.

As part of our follow-up support, staff from Age Friendly Ireland and Origin Care Group hosted a free 2-hour workshop. The workshop helped demonstrate the features of the ACORN Age Friendly Tablet and how to use it to its full potential. It was a relaxed, informal day and provided an excellent opportunity to learn new things and to meet new people. A thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.

A special note of thanks to Longford Library branch staff for their hospitality and assistance.

Thanks also to Laura Corbett and Alison O'Sullivan from Origin Care Group for facilitating the training. Equally, a note of thanks to Longford County Council staff and the Age Friendly Programme Manager, Martina Needham. Additionally, a special note of thanks to Laura McHugh, Healthy Longford Coordinator who attended the event.

We hope to run a second workshop in the New Year, so watch this space!

- If you would like to find out more about Age Friendly Ireland's, Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme, please visit: Introduction – Main (agefriendlyireland.ie)
- If you would like to find out more about the ACORN Age Friendly Tablet, please visit: Social-Acorn - Origin Care Group
- If you would like to find out more about Healthy Ireland and the supports available from your Healthy Ireland Coordinator, please visit Healthy Longford - LongfordCoCo



Photo 2: ACORN Age Friendly Tablet Training, Longford Library, Longford Town- workshop participants.

If you would like more information on the Healthy Age Friendly Programme you can visit <https://agefriendlyireland.ie/category/healthy-age-friendly-homes-programme/introduction/> or phone our national office at **046 9248899**



Age Friendly Ireland: A Year in Review 2023



- Series of 7 Climate Action Workshops and Site Visits for Older People
- Age Friendly Firsts progressed including Train Station, Beach, Racecourse, Avondale House.
- Local Programme Information Roadshows, expos, OPC AGMs in all areas
- Age Friendly Business - local and national roll out, Train the Trainer (14 people). Approx 90 new businesses trained and 4 educational/informational webinars delivered to a total of 300 participants.
- Housing and Public Realm Training circa 3,035 trained in total since it commenced.
- Age Friendly Libraries – all 330 plus libraries including mobile libraries participating
- Research Unit outputs including study on fuel poverty in the midlands and active collaborations with Trinity, UCD and Maynooth University



- Walkability audits – Avondale House, Aughrim, Kilcormac, Donegal Airport, Ballyshannon Hospital, Monaghan Hospital, Laytown, Foxrock, Narin Beach, nursing homes for TCD research
- New strategies were done in DLR, Kildare, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow, Galway, Cavan, Meath, and Sligo.
- Digital information sessions delivered at Older People's events – promoting available technical supports.



Older People's Conference, Co.Kerry



Age Friendly Recognition & Achievement Awards 2023



Thank you to all our collaborators and partners for the continued support for the Age Friendly programme. From everyone in Age Friendly Ireland and Healthy Age Friendly Homes we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New year.





An Roinn Tírbhóichta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Five ways to stay fire safe this festive season from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM)



The National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) has begun a new campaign to create awareness of the increased risks of fire over the festive period and to advise the public of fire safety practices to prevent fires in the home. Statistically, the highest number of fire fatalities occur in the winter months, particularly in the month of December.

With increased socialising and celebrating in the home, more use of candles and a greater number of electronic devices in use, the NDFEM advises people to have a fire safety routine before going to bed. This should include extinguishing all candles and fires, turning off electrical appliances and closing all doors in your house to stop the spread of fire if it does break out.

NDFEM has issued the following top 5 tips to keep you fire safe this festive period:
Click [HERE](#)



Christmas Payment Dates and Bonus 2023

Christmas and New Year payment dates, if you get a social welfare payment, the date which you receive your payment may change during the Christmas and New Year period. Details of all payment arrangements for this period are provided below.

Click [Here](#) for a full list of Payments and Dates



An Roinn Coimircé Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection

Local Updates



Bunclody Library



Bunclody Library Knitting Group – Every Thursday 10.30am to 12.00pm
New members welcome. **No booking required!**

Classic Christmas Film for Adults – Fri 22nd Dec 11.00am to 1.00pm

This month, library staff will select the perfect festive movie to take you back in time to the golden age of Hollywood. **Booking required**, please telephone 053 9375466 or book online at wexfordcoco.libcal.com.

Home Energy Saving Kits

Home Energy Saving Kits are now available to borrow from Bunclody Library. The kits contains a range of tools/exercises to help householders make sense of the energy they consume on a daily basis and to identify possible problem areas. Please contact the library at 053 9375466 or email bunclodylib@wexfordcoco.ie for further details.



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Digital Radon Monitors

Do you want to test your home for radon? Digital radon monitors are available to borrow for a period of 4 weeks from Bunclody Library, all you need is your library card!.

For more information please contact the library.

Sensory Friendly Hour

Every Saturday from 4.00 – 5.00pm, Sensory Friendly Hour will be observed in Bunclody Library.

We encourage you to come along and relax in the calm environment of the library. No booking required. All welcome!



Community Innovation Award

Leitrim were delighted to bring home the Community Innovation Award.



We held an event at Áras an Chontae, Carrick on Shannon to recognise the achievements of all those who contributed to the Sweeter the Tune project, please find attached a few photos.



Roscommon OPN Harvest Festival

A wonderful day was had by all at the Roscommon OPN Harvest Festival held at the Enterprise Hub, Castlerea on the 12th of October with our very own CE Shane Tiernan welcoming everyone to the event. Approximately 300 participants enjoyed the day's festivities. The event was organised by Roscommon Older Persons Network Committee in association with Roscommon County Councils Age Friendly Office and Roscommon Leader Partnership.

Highlights of the daylong event included presentations on Community Alert and the Message in a Bottle awareness campaign by An Garda Síochána, blood pressure testing by nurses with CROI, a display of traditional threshing and social dancing.

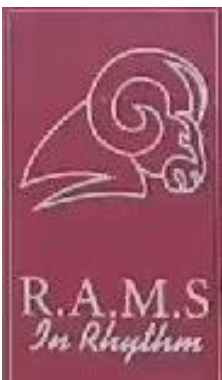


A number of supporting networks came together to provide information and advice on the day also. The day finished off with well-known sean-nos dancer Kevin Cunniffe from Ballinasloe stepping the hornpipe out and also a great performance of line dancing by the many attendees. A great day was had by all.

Herd of RAMS



The Retired Active Men's Social celebrated their last activity day of 2023, with a super bumper raffle, and some very special treats for all of our members. With 35 members attending the morning social activity, the raffle was a highlight of the morning.



RAMS are so grateful to those who donated gifts and items for the raffle
Many thanks to:

- Mc Loughlins Butchers Mill centre Clondalkin
- Brady's Butchers Newcastle
- Mc Cabe Chemist Newcastle
- Lloyds Chemist Mill Centre Clondalkin
- Spar Supermarket Newcastle
- A&G Hairdressers Newcastle
- Betsy's cakes Clondalkin

- Avoca Rathcoole
- Lucan Garden Centre
- Supervalu Newcastle

We were so pleased to have a prize for each member present, and no one was disappointed. So happy RAMS.

Our very own Secretary, Matt Dowling made his special recipe Christmas Puddings, which always goes down a treat with the members.

The members were served a festive plate of mince pies, sherry trifle, and more plum pudding with Chantilly cream.

Our acting Chairman, Mr Jim Nolan, wished all the members A very Happy Christmas, and reflected on the year past, with our educational outings, pool competitions, and looking forward to our now annually Christmas function.

Jim also remembered our deceased members, and those who had passed away in 2023. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

With the return of members since Covid-19, it was time to have a photo shoot, for our own remembrance, and with 34 members in attendance, we were so pleased to have Evan Lee Dowling to do the honours for us. Smiles all round, and a great rendition of "Let it Snow" from our own Musical Director, Liam O'Donnell.

The RAMS in Rhythm were also complimented on the tremendous amount of money donated to various charities, during 2023. Liam O'Donnell reiterated that in excess of €60,000 will be donated to our various charities by the end of the year. Although the RAMS will be in recess until 2024, the RAMS in Rhythm have many more engagements up until the 23rd December.

The RAMS also attended their annual Christmas function in the Springfield Hotel Leixlip, to another wonderful evening of food, beverages, and a sing along by all of our members. Not indulging in too much beverages, as the RAMS in Rhythm were singing and fundraising at the GPO O'Connell Street, Dublin city, the next day. What a wonderful reception the RAMS received in the city centre, and to the joy of all the shoppers, visitors, and day trippers. Another turn out by the RAMS singers and fundraising for the Capuchin Day Centre annually Christmas appeal. Our carol singing for the residence and staff of Peamount Healthcare will take place on Friday 22nd December from 11 am.



RAMS in Rhythm received a very special request for the Simon Community, for the singers to Carol sing in Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, for their Christmas Appeal. The RAMS in Rhythm give of their time so generously fundraising for any needy cause, and we are so pleased to Carol sing on the 23rd December in the Liffey Valley shopping centre from 12 noon to 2 pm. So, we wish all our members a very Happy Christmas, and a healthy prosperous New Year

Radio Star



Former Chair of Cork County Liz Downes is delighted to shared with us that she now has a new radio show on www.irishradio.org

It start this thursday from 3pm till 5pm, so please tune in as it is going out to five countries.

We would like to wish Liz all the very best in her new adventure.

Mayo OPC new Chairperson



Mayo OPC welcomes Jacqueline Kilcullen as new Chairperson. Marie Flanagan (outgoing Chair – absent from photo) was also thanked for her commitment and dedication throughout her time as Chair over the past 6 years.

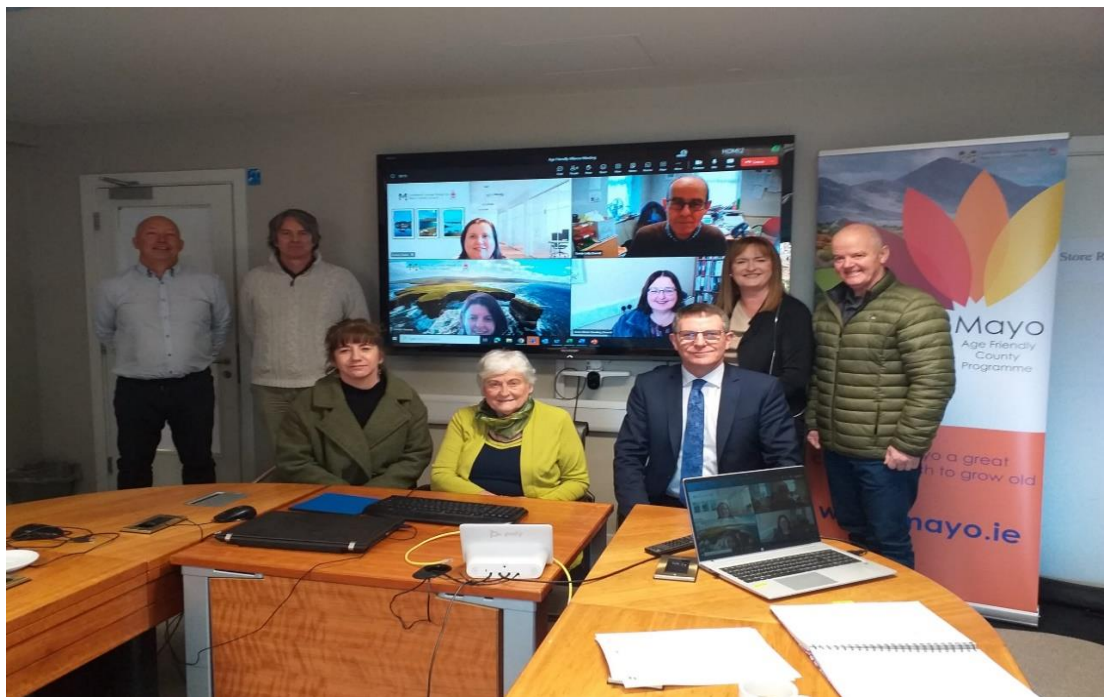
At last meetings of 2023 both the OPC Executive and Age Friendly Alliance agreed and look forward to delivering new actions and initiatives under the Age Friendly Programme for Q1 2024.



Mayo's OPC Executive

The OPC executive and Alliance will continue to run blended meetings in 2024.

Mayo's Age Friendly Alliance



Your Voice



We've heard about so much good work going on all around the country, please let us know what's happening in your area so we can share those innovative ideas with everyone.

Please **email us** your news to us at agefriendlyireland@meathcoco.ie before 1pm Thursday for inclusion in our weekly newsletter.

Don't forget, we are on **social media** so why not follow us for all the up to date information on all things Age Friendly happening around the country 😊

Twitter: [@agefriendlyirl](https://twitter.com/agefriendlyirl)

Facebook: Age Friendly Ireland

Instagram: agefriendlyireland



International Updates



International Federation on Ageing

IFA Global Café | In Conversation with Dr. Jane Barratt

The International Federation on Ageing held a Global Cafe event this morning called: In conversation with Dr. Jane Barratt on "Working on the edge: pushing boundaries and challenging the status quo."



Dr Jane Barratt
Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing, Canada

ifa Global Café
in conversation with experts

"WORKING ON THE EDGE: PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO"



DECEMBER 15TH 2023



07:00 AM EST

a contribution to the
Decade of healthy ageing



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



A recording of this event will be available on the Federation's website
<https://ifa.ngo/ifa-global-cafe/> and
<https://drbarometer.com/community/resource-library>

Useful Contacts and Info

Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service Office Telephone: **046 9032170**

Or Email: agefriendlyireland@meathcoco.ie

Twitter: [@agefriendlyirl](https://twitter.com/agefriendlyirl)

Facebook: [Age Friendly Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/AgeFriendlyIreland)

Website: www.agefriendlyireland.ie / www.agefriendlyhomes.ie

HSE Advice Line: Call save 1850 24 1850

Call from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday