

# Laois Volunteer Centre News

Connecting People with their Community Through Volunteering



## Welcome

Welcome to our first issue of Laois Volunteer Centre News. We are a 'one-stop-shop' for all your volunteering needs in County Laois. Established in 2021, Laois Volunteer Centre (LVC) is part of a national network of volunteer centres funded by the Department of Community and Rural Development.

Volunteer Centres are at the hearts of communities across Ireland working to support, promote and celebrate volunteering. We are like a matching service. We help people, who want to volunteer, to find suitable roles and we also assist organisations in need of volunteers to find suitable people to fill those roles. We also provide support and advice to both volunteers and organisations. We deliver training and we run a range of other projects to enhance volunteerism in County Laois.

As manager of Laois Volunteer Centre, I have responsibility for the overall successful operation of the service. There are two other team members. Our development officer, supports volunteers to ensure their skills, talents and experiences lead to a gainful volunteering experience. Our outreach worker, supports non-for-profit organisations and helps them develop suitable volunteer opportunities.

Our Mission Statement is to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in County Laois. We look forward to hearing from any of you who wish to engage in our enriching world of volunteerism.

Sincerely

*Caitriona Ryan*

Caitriona Ryan,  
Manager, Laois Volunteer Centre



Pictured at County Hall, Portlaoise to announce details of the Laois Community & Voluntary Awards 2023, were: Carol Murphy (People First Credit Union), Anne Marie Kirrane (Laois County Council), Cllr. Thomasina Connell (Cathaoirleach), Dan Bergin (Laois PPN) and Conor Ganly (Chairperson, Laois Volunteer Centre). Photo: Michael Scully.

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## Don't Miss the Next Issue:

Interview with Laois Junior Volunteer of the Year 2023.

## REGISTER WITH LAOIS VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Using the Laois Volunteer Centre website, [www.volunteerlaois.ie](http://www.volunteerlaois.ie), it is a simple process to register your interest in volunteering either as an individual keen to find a volunteer role or as an organisation seeking volunteers.

### Volunteers - How to Register

Anybody keen to volunteer can register their interest on our website and there is a broad range of opportunities to suit your skills or interests. Roles registered to date vary hugely and include volunteers required to help with charity shops, tidy towns groups, visiting prisoners, befriending older people and people with disabilities, assisting with English conversation classes, acting as supports within suicide and bereavement groups and many more.

**Register to Volunteer**

### Volunteers Organisations - How to Register

Non-for-profit or charitable organisations are invited to register as a Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO). These include charities, community groups, co-operatives and statutory organisations such as nursing homes, schools, hospitals. We currently have a diverse range of organisations registered including tidy towns groups, youth groups, sports groups, care support groups, community gardens, Laois festivals, residents associations and many more.

**Register Your Organisation**



Junior Volunteer of the Year 2022, Bridget Reidy Dundon being presented the award by Clive Davis, representing People's First Credit Union. The award was sponsored by Laois Volunteer Centre.

### Volunteer Opportunities - How to Register

Volunteer opportunities are listed on the website by the registered organisations. They cover a wide range of areas and there is an opportunity for everyone interested in volunteering. There are remote roles as well as hands-on volunteering. Registrations at present include organisations seeking management volunteers, social media administrators, website designers, support workers, fundraisers, festival stewards, gardeners, horticulturalists, charity shop assistants and many other skilled and unskilled roles.

**Register Your Interest**

### Other Services and Training

Laois Volunteer Centre offer advice and support to both volunteers and non-profit organisations through a range of services including group presentations and provision of information through personal or online consultation. We also provide in-person or online training on a range of topics including the role of the volunteer, volunteer management, the six principles of good governance, garda vetting and how to develop a volunteer management policy. Please let us know your training requirement and we will endeavor to assist you.



## Recent Events

### National Volunteering Week

To celebrate National Volunteering Week commencing May 15<sup>th</sup> 2023, Laois Volunteer Centre organised a successful networking event in the Midlands Park Hotel in Portlaoise where over 30 registered organisations came together to discuss their volunteering opportunities and to meet member of the public who were interested in seeking volunteer roles.



### Revamp of garden at Sue Ryder Residential Care Home

In June 2023, Laois Volunteer Centre carried out a pilot project with the Sue Ryder Residential Care Home in Ballyroan. The large garden at the facility had become quite overgrown and inaccessible to the residents. Through consultation with the manager in Sue Ryder, we project managed a complete revamp of the garden. This included the involvement of the 39 volunteers who worked tirelessly over 6 days. Donations were sought from local businesses and equipment; plants and tools were provided for the project. Broken garden furniture was repaired or replaced. The residents can now grow plants in a new polytunnel and they receive regular gardening classes from one of the volunteers. The project was a great success and, as a result, we have now been approached by other not-for-profit organisations seeking to carry out similar type projects.



Volunteers, Mary Young and Fiona Murphy working hard transforming the Sue Ryder garden.

## Community Volunteers

New!

Community Volunteers is a new pilot programme to support local needs in our communities and volunteers have the opportunity to support local events and festivals along with more urgent, one off needs which require an immediate community response.

Laois Volunteer Centre is currently setting up a panel of community volunteers who will be available to assist when called upon for short-term volunteer requirements.



### Migrant Support Officer

Laois Volunteer Centre is committed to supporting integration and inclusion through volunteering. We have collaborated with many organisations who support new communities/migrants e.g. Laois Integration Network, Laois Africa Support Group, Ukrainian Laois Support Association, Labras and various Ukrainian Support groups.

Laois Volunteer Centre is currently recruiting a Migrant Support Officer. This position will focus on promoting volunteering and civic participation across migrant/new communities in Co. Laois.

Assisting migrants to identify and secure suitable volunteering roles in the county is the primary focus of this position.

**For more information, please email**  
[info@volunteerlaois.ie](mailto:info@volunteerlaois.ie)

## Upcoming Events

### SEPTEMBER

19th to 21st inclusive, **National Ploughing Championships** [Link](#) Come and visit the Laois Volunteer Centre stand in the Laois tent.

25th, **Befriending Information Evening**  
Parish Centre, 6-8pm Befriending organisations including the Muiriosa Foundation, ALONE, Parents First and Living Links will be in attendance to discuss their befriending services and existing and potential volunteers are invited to attend. Email [LVC](#) for more details.

### NOVEMBER

3rd, **Community and Voluntary Awards**  
Laois Volunteer Centre is sponsoring the Junior Volunteer of the Year Award at the Laois Community and Voluntary Awards which is run by Laois County Council in partnership with Laois PPN. [Link](#)

16th, **Carmichael Good Governance Awards 2023** [Link](#) Following our shortlisting in last year's National Good Governance Awards, we have applied again this year and keeping our fingers crossed that we will be successful.

30th, **National Age Friendly Recognition Awards** [Link](#) Laois Volunteer Centre has entered for these awards.

### DECEMBER

**National Volunteer Awards** [Link](#)  
Please let us know if you wish to nominate a volunteer.



## Corporate Volunteering

Our corporate volunteering programme encourages businesses to offer volunteer experiences to their employees. Caitriona Ryan, LVC manager, recently gave a presentation to a well-attended Laois Chamber Alliance breakfast meeting outlining the benefits to organisations of promoting volunteerism amongst their staff. She said "corporate volunteering is a great way for companies to raise their profile, give back to their communities and boost employee morale. It is also great fun and provides a strong sense of community spirit."

If you are interested in learning more about corporate volunteering, please contact us.



[Annual Report 2022](#)



[Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#)

## Laois Volunteer Centre

<https://volunteerlaois.ie/>

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