

## Diploma in Community Development Practice Graduation 21/22

In November we celebrated 21 students graduating with a Diploma in Community Development Practice from Galway University. Most of the students travelled to Galway for graduation and were delighted to receive their Diplomas. Some of the students from the Galway graduation are pictured. Congratulations to all of them for their hard work and sterling efforts, balancing work, volunteering, and home life. Studying is not easy! Thanks to their groups, families and friends who supported them on this learning journey.



Students came from the western region of NI and were a combination of staff and volunteers who wanted to develop their skills and knowledge in the sector. Over 32 weeks they attended the course learning about policy, best practice, government and governance structures, and undertaking social analysis.

Over the past 2 years RCN, along with our partners in Holywell Trust and Fermanagh Trust have engaged in this program of learning and training for practitioners which aims to support and strengthen community development practice and leadership in the western region of NI. Funded through the National Lottery Community Fund, the project continues for the coming 2 years and will include a new Diploma course next September 2023 and opportunities for individuals to attend training. We currently are running the course in Ballymoney.



If you would like anything included in Rural Brief, please forward to: [info@ruralcommunitynetwork.org](mailto:info@ruralcommunitynetwork.org) or if you would like information on membership or RCN's work visit [www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org) for further information. Phone: 028 8676 6670.

## Beyond Belfast Residential

RCN hosted a Beyond Belfast Forum residential in partnership with The Corrymeela Community in late November.

The residential was for community organisation and practitioners working in Community Relations and Peacebuilding across the region.

In addition to gaining some much-needed time out for respite, reflection and wellbeing - practitioners also took time to explore the needs of the sector and the communities we work with, and how we can collectively support sharing and reconciliation in rural areas. This residential marks the beginning of a reflection and strategic planning process for Beyond Belfast as we start a journey of focusing on and developing on what we can achieve together.

We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress throughout the months ahead.



## Christmas Closure

The Staff and Board at RCN would like to wish its members a very happy and safe Christmas. The office will be closed from the 23 December 2022 and will reopen on the 3 of January 2023.

We thank you for your continued support throughout the year, and wish you all the best in the New Year.



## Rural Christmas Traditions

Join us online for an evening of reminiscing on how rural communities once celebrated the Christmas period.

We have 3 guests including Jim Ledwith, The Mummings Foundation, Sinead Rice McAlevey, Storyteller, and members of the Loup Women's Group.

This is a free event hosted by RCN and National Lottery Heritage Fund on the **15<sup>th</sup> December from 7 – 8pm**. For those interested, please register [here](#).



## Rural Residents Forum

RCN recently hosted a Christmas dinner for the Rural Residents Forum members (some of whom are pictured above). After 2 years of zoom and hybrid meetings it was lovely to meet face to face. Over the past ten years this group have worked with RCN to raise issues of rural social housing provision, rural housing needs testing, barriers to social housing development and issues impacting on rural residents.

Many of this group have also been working front line in their local communities responding to the Covid crisis and cost of living crisis. Our thanks to them for the work they do both at a local level and as regional reps on the RRF.



If you would like anything included in Rural Brief, please forward to: [info@ruralcommunitynetwork.org](mailto:info@ruralcommunitynetwork.org) or if you would like information on membership or RCN's work visit [www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org](http://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org) for further information. Phone: 028 8676 6670.

## Social Value Engine

Join us on Thursday 15th December at 10am as our partners demonstrate how the Social Value Engine can work for your group.

Conor from RCN will also be in attendance to explain how groups, funders & Government Departments have used the Engine in NI to date. To register, click the link [here](#).



To find out more, contact Conor on 028 8676 6670 or [conor@ruralcommunitynetwork.org](mailto:conor@ruralcommunitynetwork.org)

## NICVA Finance Tutorials

NICVA has developed a series of tutorial videos to help Treasurers and Trustees of small to medium sized voluntary led organisations understand the basics of financial record keeping and good financial governance.

These videos have also been developed to be accessible to those Trustees whose first language is not English. They are available with Irish and British sign language interpretation. English subtitles can be translated into other languages.

For more information please follow the link [here](#).

## UKSPF Investment Plan for NI

In April 2022 the UK government published the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) prospectus.

This Investment Plan details how Northern Ireland's overall allocation will be spent and the impact that we expect it to have.

To find out more about the Investment plan for Northern Ireland please follow the link [here](#).