



GOOD NEWS

FOR A CHANGE!

November 2020

First, a Covid-19 Operational Update



Ireland has entered a period of extreme restriction to movement. To comply with these restrictions, Clann Credo has suspended all face-to-face meetings with customers.

Our regional Social Finance Executives continue working remotely and can be contacted via email or their mobile phones. Their contact details are [HERE](#).

Our friends at The Wheel have a lot of practical advice for community groups and organisations [HERE](#).

Please stay safe and protect others.

New Approaches to Customer Support - Online Events from Clann Credo

Has any moment of social and economic change been as abrupt as what followed the announcement from An Taoiseach in Washington on March 12th? Our world changed utterly and changed overnight.

Clann Credo's immediate priority was to support community groups whose projects were trading one day and closed the next. Community halls and sports facilities lost regular income from their activities, community tourism and cultural projects lost their visitors and the groups providing services to vulnerable residents in their community had to come up with new ways to reach people in their homes and, in many instances, provide new services.

Once again, community groups across the nation proved what a resilient, 'can do' sector we are! Shopping and meals were delivered to doorsteps, activity packs for children devised and delivered – it was wonderful to see imagination and determination flourish.

But, many facilities and services remained closed because at the heart of community activities is the act of getting people together. Clann Credo felt we had to do something more than talk with groups about restructuring loans. Online events were organised in the hope that groups would want to share their community's Covid-19 experiences with us and with each other – and you did! We held three events in May and June with nearly 100 people attending. The issues people said were most important for their group were:

- Fundraising (especially online)
- Grant aid
- How to re-open safely
- Adapting business models
- Financial management
- Insurance
- Volunteer strategies

Another key message coming through was the need to create spaces for organisations engaged in the same type of activities, so that shared experiences were valuable to everyone attending. So, in July and August Clann Credo hosted three themed events:

- [Community Centres; Information and Manual for Covid-19 Reopening](#)
- [Community Childcare; Discussing challenges facing providers in the face of Covid-19 guidelines](#)
- [Local sports organisations; restarting activities in the new normal](#)

Again, the events were a great success with over 175 people attending – you will find presentations from each event if you follow the links above.

The consistent issue across all three of the themed events was how to re-open safely. Great progress has been made in many local sports clubs and community childcare services, although some community centres found reopening a challenge.

Now that staycation season is a distant memory and we are under high level restrictions again, we are planning to host more online discussions and events.

We need to know what you want to talk about, so we would be very grateful if you could take two minutes to give us your suggestions in our online survey [HERE](#).

Opportunities in the “New Normal”

Online Meetings, Events and Training for Community Organisations

Everything has moved online! This doesn't suit everyone, and it won't be forever, but for the moment, online is the only way groups can host events or access training and supports for their board and volunteers. For most groups even their committee meetings must be held online.

If you have board members and volunteers who find it hard to join online meetings, events or training, there may be solutions you haven't considered.

Look within your community for technology savvy volunteers – this can be a great way of getting some new volunteers to help you with your projects, or you can limit their contribution to just helping people who find technology intimidating.

Once people have made the move to online meetings, events and training, the range of opportunities is truly amazing. Irish organisations like [The Wheel](#), [Volunteer Ireland](#), and [Carmichael](#) are providing lots of online courses and many of them are free. [Community Exchange](#) is also a great place to look for information about online courses and events.

There is also exciting new online training for the community sector from An Cosán and The Wheel that launched on September 15th.

The SCOPE training programme is free to use, interactive and open to all not-for-profit organisations. It covers five modules, including:

- Governance
- Fundraising
- Financial Management
- Communications
- Risk Management

The beauty of SCOPE is it is online, freely available to all and can be completed at a time and pace that suits you. You can register and get going right now, just follow this link: <https://scope-skills.eu/en-ie/>

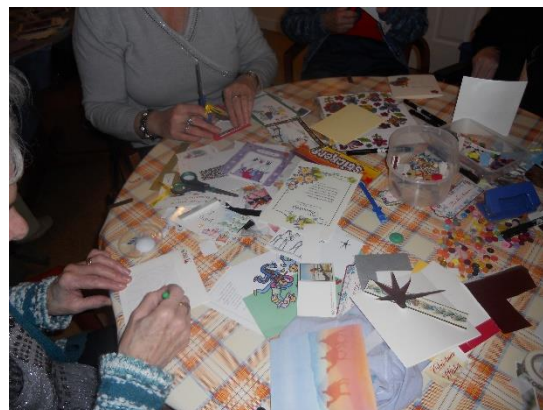
Many other organisations are offering free training programmes online and there is no need to limit yourself to Irish providers – that’s the beauty of being a global online learner!

Local Heroes: Claregalway Day Care Centre & Sheltered Housing

As services across rural Ireland retreat to the larger population centres, older residents are particularly vulnerable to being isolated from the wider community.

And the older the age profile of an area, the higher the risk.

Recognising and responding to such a need within their own community saw local groups establish the Claregalway & District Day Care Centre, in 2011. Studies and surveys had shown there were some 4,500 people aged over 65 living within a 10km radius of the north Galway district.



Working closely with local active retirement organisations the establishment of the day care centre was prioritised, with the centre acting as a hub for provision of services and support to the older population and a focal point for social activities.

Card games and bingo sessions were held in the centre, while dinners and a laundry service were also available to those who attended. The centre also provided a bus service for those with transport difficulties.

The centre proved a major success and helped ensure that many older people could continue to live independently, while also providing invaluable respite for carers and families.



However, it became clear that some older residents also had accommodation needs that could not be met through existing local structures and plans were drawn up to develop 14 dedicated social housing units, on a site donated by a local farmer.

The new development would also include an entirely new day care centre with state-of-the-art facilities.

In partnership with the Western Alzheimer’s Association, the aim was to provide both day care and accommodation services for dozens of older people with a range of needs, in the Claregalway area and beyond. The project was supported by Clann Credo, given the strong social dividend and local impact that it delivered. On making the project’s final repayments, Manager, Geraldine Carr sent us these wonderful words of encouragement: “Without the assistance of Clann Credo we wouldn't be where we are now and we are extremely fortunate to be in this position debt free!!” Thank-you Geraldine!

Farewell Edel and Welcome Laura!

We are very sorry to say that Edel Desmond, our wonderful Loan Administrator has left Clann Credo. She joined us in 2018 and immediately became a vital part of the team. Working tirelessly behind the scenes, Edel ensured that our customers got their loans on time, even when the time available was very limited! She was always calm under pressure and kept a positive attitude that was infectious throughout the team. Edel made several important improvements to the loan drawdown process and has, as a result, impacted positively on her colleagues and our customers!



We wish Edel the very best of everything in her new role. We are going to miss her very much. Stay in touch Edel!

We also welcome Laura Ronan into the Clann Credo team as our new Loans Administrator. Her background is in financial services, but she has also recently worked for an approved housing body and brings a wealth of relevant experience to the role. Welcome Laura, we are really looking forward to working with you!

For interesting news about the sector and information about grant aid opportunities, follow Clann Credo on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#).



Clann Credo Company Limited by Guarantee is a self-financing, not-for-profit organisation serving the community, voluntary and charity sectors. All its capital comes from private sources; religious charities and the retail banking sector through the Social Finance Foundation. The interest paid on its socially directed investments covers its operational costs.

CRO No: 253147 CHY No: 13308 Registered Charity Number: 20041076
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