



December 2021

## Still traversing challenging times!

During the autumn we were celebrating the return of many community activities that had been suspended due to Covid-19. Activities like bingo, amateur drama and youth clubs started happening again in community centres that had been idle for over a year.

We at Clann Credo were experiencing a steady increase in enquiries and loan applications from both new and existing clients. The pandemic seemed to be receding.

Now, as we head into Christmas and another New Year, we are seeing some new safety measures being recommended. The community and voluntary sector will, once again, maximise safety while at the same time reaching out to the most vulnerable to try and ensure that they are supported through the dark days of winter. The resilience and creativity of the sector has been proven again and again throughout the pandemic, demonstrating the commitment of volunteers to overcome some of the most difficult challenges. We are very proud and often humbled to be part of the sector and we are keen to be more supportive than ever in these stop/start times.

Over the past 18 months, we have held several very successful online events to assist community organisations through Covid-19 restrictions, and we will continue to host these in 2022. Last year, we focused on helping community centres, sports clubs, and community childcare centres to survive closure and reopen safely. This year we invited communities to find out about adapting facilities for remote workers as well as encouraging remote workers to take part in community actions. We have all had to adapt and learn how to turn challenges into opportunities in unforeseen times!

One of the most important ways we can help is to support UNICEF Ireland's Christmas Covid-19 Vaccine Appeal and the continuation of their Get a Vaccine, Give a Vaccine:

<https://www.unicef.ie/donate/get-a-vaccine-give-a-vaccine/>

- an appeal that Clann Credo staff proudly supported this year. A tiny proportion of people living in low-income countries have received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine. UNICEF will deliver 3 billion vaccines to the most vulnerable

families, health workers and high-risk people on our planet, however they need your continued support to do this. This Christmas, if you haven't already, we invite you to support the UNICEF mission to 'Give Covid the Jab – because it's not over for anyone, 'til it's over for everyone'.



We wish you and yours the very best for a happy and safe Christmas and all the best for the year ahead.

## Project Spotlight – Sligo Business Improvement District (BID)

At Clann Credo we work with all categories of community groups. Many are involved in developing facilities like community centres and sports grounds. Many others are providing essential social services to the community, like meals on wheels, childcare, youth programmes and support for people with disabilities.

We also see positive social impacts delivered by not-for-profit organisations that work to support the economic vibrancy of an area. Many county towns and market towns across Ireland struggle to maintain the level of footfall required to keep businesses viable. So, we were delighted when Sligo Business Improvement District, or BID, came to us with great ideas for events, festivals, seasonal decorations, and activities that would animate and boost businesses in the town.

The Sligo BID is an initiative designed to increase business in the town, to attract more businesses and to secure a long-term sustainable model for the management of the town. Sligo BID represents 758 businesses in the urban area and membership is designed to benefit all businesses.

The organisation was established in accordance with Section 129C of [the Local Government \(Business Improvement Districts\) Act 2006](#) and was voted in by more than 80% of local businesses.

Since its establishment, Sligo BID has undertaken many varied projects including:

- The provision of new coach parking spaces in Sligo
- Managing St Patrick's Day Parade
- Management of the scheme of Christmas lights for the city
- Further development of tourism promotion of County Sligo including attendance at trade fairs and production of marketing and promotional material
- Working to develop the 'Meet in Sligo' project to promote, market and sell Sligo as a destination for meetings, conferences and events.

Sligo BID maintains a core focus of working with local businesses, tourism bodies and the County Council. Gail McGibbon, CEO, stated that the support and assistance from Clann Credo has a positive impact on local projects "Working with Clann Credo helps us move at a faster pace in completing projects and perhaps allows us to aim a little higher in ambition".

In these uncertain times, their traditional Christmas light project bring important familiarity, hope and comfort to all.



## Community Action Against Climate Change – How Can Clann Credo Help?

We all want to play our part in the global effort to reduce climate change and our carbon footprint, but it can be hard to know what to do. We're already making changes in our homes, from small actions like recycling and increasing biodiversity in our gardens, to larger actions like insulating and installing solar panels that generate electricity. But what can we do at community level? Many of the same actions apply, for example, biodiversity projects in our Tidy Towns plans, insulating community buildings and installing PV panels on their roofs. But we want to look at other ideas that community and voluntary groups have and help to share them.



Clann Credo is already working with many community groups, local sports clubs, charities and social enterprises that are implementing actions that will reduce carbon emissions, increase biodiversity, reduce landfill waste and generate sustainable energy. Some of their actions mean changing the way they do their work, while other projects offer the whole community ways to play their part in tackling climate change. A Clann Credo customer doing great work with renewable energy, Claremorris Energy Coop, a group that has embarked on a very ambitious initiative to create a new district heating system for the town and its environs based on renewable energy sources. You can find out more on our website:

[www.clanncredo.ie/community-loan-success-story-claremorris-energy-co-op](http://www.clanncredo.ie/community-loan-success-story-claremorris-energy-co-op)

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We're delighted to be working with such an ambitious and progressive group, but we also want to support groups that wish to start with smaller projects that will hopefully lead to bigger ones in the future. Retrofitting the community hall with top quality insulation may not make headlines, but it can have a huge impact in more ways than one!

Next year, Clann Credo will be hosting a climate change conference so that community groups, sports clubs, charities and social enterprises can learn about the ways they can contribute to our national effort and share information on the ways they are already making a difference.

Watch out for our next newsletter for more information!

## Reminder! Upcoming Sports Capital & Equipment Programme

Every year, Clann Credo works with many community groups and local sports clubs that are making applications to the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. It is an extremely important source of funding for community owned sports and activity facilities.

This year, Clann Credo supported over 130 applicants by providing loan approvals that showed they had their match funding requirement. It is essential that each application clearly demonstrates there is enough finance to complete the proposed project.

While we don't know exactly when the Sports Capital & Equipment Programme will announce the final grants from this year's round of applications, or re-open for new applications, we do know that it is never too early to get in touch with us if your group or club is thinking about investing in sports facilities. Our Social Finance Executives have lots of experience working with clubs and groups who have big plans, but not quite enough finance! The first step is to contact your local Social Finance Executive for a discussion about your project. You can find their contact details here: [www.clanncredo.ie/contactus](http://www.clanncredo.ie/contactus).

## COVID-19 Operational Update



The community and voluntary sector has shown huge resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are proud to support many who have gone above and beyond the call of duty responding to needs in their community.

At this time, caution is still required. Clann Credo offices are not yet open to the public and we continue to work remotely.

We hope a gradual return to in-person meetings and events will be possible next year.

Our regional Social Finance Executives are available to discuss your community project's financial needs - you can find contact details on our website [www.clanncredo.ie/contactus](http://www.clanncredo.ie/contactus).

Please stay safe and protect others.

## Follow Clann Credo – Community Loan Finance on Social Media

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



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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.

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