
GCCF News & Events Summer 2014



New look City Council	1
Westside Arts Festival	1
Public Participation Networks	2
<i>Living in Limbo</i> : raising awareness of direct provision in Galway	3
Galway Woman named African Woman of the Year	5
Positive Mental Health Foundation.....	5

Remember – if you have information that you would like circulated please forward it to
info@galwaycityforum.ie

Keep in touch

GCCF News & Events Summer 2014

New look City Council

The local election 2014 took place in May. Below is the list of new Galway City Councillors. Galway City Forum looks forward to working with the new Council.

ClIr Donal Lyons was elected as Mayor.



Ward	Name	Party	Ward	Name	Party
Galway City Central	Mike Cubbard	Ind	Galway City East	Mairead Farrell	SF
Galway City Central	Ollie Crowe	FF	Galway City East	Noel Larkin	Ind
Galway City Central	Billy Cameron	Lab	Galway City East	John Walsh	FG
Galway City Central	Frank Fahy	FG	Galway City West	Donal Lyons	Ind
Galway City Central	Anna Marley	SF	Galway City West	Catherine Connolly	Ind
Galway City Central	Padraig Conneely	FG	Galway City West	Niall McNelis	Lab
Galway City East	Terry O'Flaherty	Ind	Galway City West	Pearce Flannery	FG
Galway City East	Declan McDonnell	Ind	Galway City West	Cathal O'Conchuir	SF
Galway City East	Michael Crowe	FF	Galway City West	Peter Keane	FF

Westside Arts Festival



Come & enjoy the fun July 9th -12th

The Westside Arts Festival is a community based event which aims to promote and celebrate the spirit and people of Westside through the arts. It aims to bring local people together by showcasing art and a range of educational activities in local community spaces. The Festival has always had a very strong community focus and this year our central theme is 'Art in Action'. The Westside Arts Festival committee would like to thank all of those individuals and organisations who have helped to make the festival possible. The committee would like to give special thanks to our wonderful community volunteers. All the details are available on the GCCF website -

<http://galwaycityforum.ie/featured/1739>

Public Participation Networks

As those of you who have been following the reform of Local Government Act 2014 will know, a Public Participation Network (PPN) is to be established in each local authority area. The role of the PPN is to enable the public to take an active formal role in the policy making and oversight activities of the Local Authority's areas of responsibility. The PPN will be the main link through which the local authority connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors without prejudice to other consultation processes

The Public Participation Network (PPN) will be organised:

- At County/City level
- At Municipal District level

Each PPN will have:

- A County/City Plenary at County/City level which deals with county/city level issues
- A Municipal District Plenary in each Municipal District which deals with issues at a municipal level
- Linkage Groups which deal with specific issues
- A secretariat at county/City level that is a facilitation and communication mechanism.

Member Organisations when joining the PPN at a county level must opt to be a part of one of three electoral colleges within the PPN:

- Environment
- Social Inclusion
- Voluntary

To join the environment Electoral College an organisation's primary objectives and activities must be environmental (i.e. ecological) protection and/or environmental sustainability. Membership of this Electoral College will be validated by the Environmental Pillar at a national level.

To join the Social Inclusion Electoral College an organisation's primary objectives and activities must focus on social inclusion / social justice / equality.

Organisations whose primary objectives are other than those listed above will be members of the Voluntary Electoral College.

Galway City Community Forum is currently discussing the best way of establishing the PPN in Galway City with Galway City Council and we hope to have further updates soon.

Living in Limbo: raising awareness of direct provision in Galway

Galway City Community Forum was one of the lead organisers of the recent *Living in Limbo: raising awareness of direct provision in Galway* event. To say that we and the other organisers were overwhelmed at the reaction to the event is an understatement! Over 150 people - asylum seekers, local and national politicians and Irish people expressing their disgust at the policy – attended the event which was chaired by Anastasia Crickley vice president of United Nations CERD. Commenting on the event Ms Crickley stated. ‘It was very important to use the event in Galway to focus attention nationally on the issue of direct provision. At the same time, in the short term agencies, services and organisations need to be doing much more to make the lives of those in direct provision more bearable.’



The wonderful Bisola Akanni presentign the cake she made representign galway to the then Mayor, Cllr Padriag Conneely

Sue Conlan, CEO of The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) said it is seriously concerned about the welfare of three young people from asylum seeking families in direct provision hostels who are presenting with thoughts of suicide because of their living conditions. She called on new Minister for Justice Francis Fitzgerald to meet the parents of the three children, aged between 11 and 17, as a “priority”. ‘The three children — one boy and two girls — are from three separate families, living in two direct provision hostels, one of which is in Galway’, Ms Conlan said.

A number of adults spoke about the harsh reality of their lives as asylum seekers living in direct provision. A group of children living in one of the hostels were filmed the evening before so their voices could also be heard.

Ann Irwin, Co-ordinator of Galway City Community Forum, one of the organising partners, said that it was a very moving event, ‘The testimonials of the women, men and particularly children and young people, were powerful. Not one of the people in that room remained unmoved by the reality of the inhumane policy that is direct provision. The reality that was outlined including enforced idleness, inability to work, and inability to access education was powerful.’

She continued, ‘Even more powerful were the pleas of the children to allow them to live like all their peers and friends. One young girls about to sit her Leaving Cert broke down in tears. She wants to attend university to study nursing but knows that her parents would never be able to afford the fees required as the children of asylum seekers are not eligible for grants and have to pay fees at the oversea student rate.’

Joe O’Neill, deputy Galway City Manager said that a city cannot declare itself successful unless it is inclusive. He supported the call to end direct provision but also said that in the short term organisations and agencies need to be supporting those living in the system.

Commenting on the event, Siphathisiwe Moyo, a resident of the Eglinton hostel and one of the event organisers stated, 'This was a very important event for my community but we need to view it as starting point'.

Ray Storan of the Friends of Asylum Seekers group called on the City Council to bring together a high level group to address the issues identified. He said, 'We know that it is not within the gift of local politicians or Galway City Council to end the inhumane policy that is direct provision. However, we welcome the comments made by Joe O'Neill deputy City Manager (deputising for the City Manager who was ill) and we call on him to work with the Galway Integration Consortium to bring together a group of CEOs and Directors of agencies and organisations in Galway city to put together a strategy to address the issues identified today. We can no longer say that we don't know, that we are not aware. We need to act.'



Anastasia Crickley vice president of United Nations CERD.

A letter of congratulations to the new Minister for Justice Mrs Frances Fitzgerald was circulated during the event and signed by most of the participants, The letter called on the Minister to draw a line under Direct Provision, which "creates an institutionalised way of living, breaks the human spirit, leads to deep depression, lowers self-confidence, prohibits work and creates a system of imposed idleness, it segregates people, deprives families of privacy and normal family life. Shamefully it leaves people waiting in a limbo situation for three, four, five, six and up to twelve years in some cases to get their legal status sorted". The Minister was asked "to consider 'an amnesty type solution" for those who have waited so long and endured direct provision, with all its challenges, for more than four to five years". The letter also called on the Minister not to use direct provision as a "pull back factor", in other words, a deterrent for those who might now or in the future seek asylum in Ireland.

The event featured a short excerpt from the work of artist Ceara Conway. Using voice, song and performance, her project, Making Visible, highlights and "makes visible" aspects of the lives of women living within Direct Provision in Galway City. Commenting on the event she stated. " Socially engaged art has the capacity to draw people's attention to issues such as the Direct Provision. Through a communal ritual/gathering such as Making Visible, the public is invited to witness, to be moved and motivated. We now need to build on this'

The Mayor of Galway, Councillor Padraig Conneely accepted a cake symbolising Galway made by Bisola Akanni, a talented cake designer and an asylum seeker living in Galway in direct provision for the past six years.



Galway Woman named African Woman of the Year

Siphathisiwe Moyo, a resident of the Eglinton hostel in Galway, was recently named African Woman of the Year at the Africa Day awards held in Dublin. The award was in recognition of the work that Siphathisiwe does to highlight the issue of direct provision and for being a leader of her community.

Siphathisiwe speaking at the *Living in Limbo* event

Positive Mental Health Foundation

ANNIE'S SUMMER BBQ July 26th @7.30pm

Positive Mental Health is holding its big annual Annie's Summer Barbeque, this year on the 26th July in the Clybaun Hotel. It is an event enjoyed by all as it combines tasty food with good music and the excitement of major and minor prizes in the Auction and Raffle. This year, there will be an Art and Design Silent Bidding Table for delicious hats, bags and pieces of art.

Kicking off at 7.30 p.m., the BBQ will this year incorporate a great evening of Rock 'n' Roll, by live band 'Streetwise'. Our annual tradition of an exciting Auction will be upheld, and there will be a Silent Art and Design Bidding Table, as well as a Raffle.

All of the proceeds on the evening will support our ongoing mission of preventing mental health problems and emotional disruptions among young people. The Foundation fosters psychological wellbeing, a strong support system and encourage young people to gravitate towards persons, places and things that are good for their morale.

For tickets or more information about the BBQ or our work, please phone 091-592179 or 086-3661074, email info@positivementalhealth.ie or enquire at The Galleon Restaurant, Salthill.