



Kerry Social Farming Newsletter

Welcome

to our Newsletter. As 2022 comes to a close, it's time to catch up on what's been happening in social farming over the past few months.

We've gone from long summer days to short dark evenings. Nature is hibernating and life is slowing down. We hope that you'll all have a chance to have a good break over the coming Christmas season and enjoy some leisure time with family and friends.

NEW HOST FARMS

John & Catherine Fleming, Muckross

John and Catherine have opened up their dairy farm in the beautiful location of Muckross, Killarney to social farming. Vincent Keogh who has been waiting for an opportunity to engage in social farming is delighted to have this opportunity. Vincent engages in feeding the cattle in the shed and helping John to move the cows back to the fields/shed after milking. Vincent will also play a role in bucket feeding calves in the Spring time. Vincent is supported by Batt Brosnan, an experienced support worker from the St John of God service.



The three wise men, just in time for Christmas!

Mary & Robbie Griffin, Dingle

Mary and Robbie Griffin are based just outside Dingle town and began social farming in October. Mary has three participants visiting their sheep and suckler farms from Saint John of Gods services in Dingle. Tommy Kennedy, Anne Marie Russell and Tara Moran all visit with their support worker and are settling in well.



Noranne Tyther, Castlemaine

Welcome also to Noranne Tyther from Castlemaine. Noranne and her husband Mike run a beef suckler and horse farm just outside Castlemaine.

They have a fabulous Equestrian setup along with chickens, goats, pet rabbits and guinea pigs so as you can imagine there is lots of jobs each week. Noranne has two young men from Inspired attending each week. Inspired are a new Service Providers who have just started with Kerry Social Farming, a great new start for everyone.



Cody and Kyle with Noranne and Stephanie Dinham (Inspired)



Social Farming in Currow with Rodger McCarthy



Rodger has been busy farming over the past while with Seamus & Nora Howard in Currow. They've done a great variety of tasks over the summer and autumn including picking stones and of course, a day in the bog.

Social Farming in Moyvane with Daniel Cronin



Host farmer Joan McEnery



Daniel is settling well in Tubbertureen, Moyvane with host farmer Joan McEnery. Here he is with Rosie the dog and helping tidy up the orchard area.

A special message from host farmer Irene Brune

After several years of loyal help in my garden I had to say goodbye to David Cronin. Though, I am delighted for him to have been able to move on to North Kerry and make new friends. David enjoys doing work with the wheelbarrow and so he moved stones, manure, soil, and compost around the garden.

But *'Don't forget your shovel if you want to go to work'* isn't happening to David. He's well able to manoeuvre the shovel very skilled. But not only the shovel also the pike. Regularly in spring after the calving we were welcomed to manure by my neighbours, so, off we went with the trailer and pike for collection. Once on the road David familiarised me with different types of tractors as he knows most of them by looking at them. And if anything needs to be assembled, dismantled, or maintained, he's the right man for that as well.

So, thank you David for all your support over the last years and I wish you all the best for a new chapter in your life. And hopefully we'll meet soon, and you can tell my all about how you're getting on.

Best wishes, Irene.



David busy with woodwork and with the shovel

Social Farming with Siobhan, Vanessa and Ciara, with Tommy and Cormac at Maura's Cottage Flowers, Tralee

Our first picture shows Siobhan, Vanessa and Ciara after weeding the flower beds and then spreading seaweed over the beds at Maura's Cottage Flowers, helping to fertilize the ground over the winter and to help keep the weeds down.



Vanessa, Ciara and Siobhan, with Cormac and Tommy, have been busy lately fencing in an area put aside for Social farming at Maura's, which the ladies are maintaining and coming up with ideas on how it will look and function. The picture shows us David making an archway which we are going to plant and also can be seen flowers which we grew and the lads brought home to their families and brought some for our building here in Tralee which everybody admired. Further work will include painting the fences, putting up bird house, install a bench and table for having picnic lunches and tea breaks in the Spring and keeping our raised flower bed weeded, fertilized and planted with seasonal flowers. They have been planting bulbs for the Spring time and also putting up archways with Tommy and planting climbing roses.

Social farming with Patrick O’Sullivan in Aughatubrid

Hello,

I have been going to Mary Daly’s farm most weeks. I have been very busy pulling weeds, checking the cows and picking potatoes. I went to my first Social Farming event this year. We made lovely bird houses.

From
Patrick O Sullivan



New participant JP at Sandy Feet Farm, Camp with support worker Kathy, both come from RehabCare service.



2022 IMRO AWARD WINNERS!

Huge Congratulations to our social farming participants and farmers who took part on the Saturday Supplement Show for Radio Kerry on May 21st. The Show won a bronze award at the 2022 IMRO National Awards on Friday 7th October.

Well done to all involved and thanks to facilitators Rena Blake & Evelyn O’Connell who supported the week of training that went into making the show. Thanks also to Joe McGill, Connie Broderick and Fiona Stack of Radio Kerry for their support.

The podcast of the show is available here [SPEAK UP | KERRY SOCIAL FARMING - May 21st, 2022 | RadioKerry.ie](https://www.radio Kerry.ie/podcast/speak-up-kerry-social-farming-may-21st-2022)

Biodiversity training and host farmer meeting

Thanks to Bernie and John Curran for hosting a training session and farmers meeting on September 12th. Here our group of farmers, participants and support workers are learning about the art of building and repairing stone walls from Mike O'Sé, host farmer from Dromid.



There was also training in putting together the bird boxes with Luke Myers for Kerry Eco-Social Farming project. This proved very enjoyable and no doubt those boxes are now safely in place across our host farms.

BEAUFORT THRESHING FOR CANCER EVENT – SEPTEMBER 18TH

We had a stand at the ‘Threshing for Cancer’ fundraising event in Beaufort. Many local people from all over Kerry were in attendance – this gave a great opportunity to reach out to local farmers and people in this community. Several host farmers joined us on the day to help spread the message of social farming. Thanks to all who came to visit us, we really enjoyed being part of the day.



Host farmer Irene Brune and Cathal Moriarty at our stand in Beaufort.

SOCIAL FARMING AWARENESS WEEK OCTOBER 3rd to 7th



Joseph McCrohan (SKDP) attending the launch of Social Farming Awareness Week by Minister Charlie McConalogue at the National Ploughing Championships in September.

We had a number of events to mark the first ever national Social Farming Awareness Week. On Thursday 6th October we had a social farming open day (11am to 2pm) at The Kerry Creamery Experience Listry, one of our newest host farms (<http://www.thekerrycreameryexperience.ie/>). It was a highly successful event with farmers, participants and their families, service providers and guests enjoying the many amenities at the Creamery.

Our host Annette Garland welcomed the group and commended social farming with James O'Brien as a great addition to their lives and something that could be achieved, even within the context of their business. SKDP CEO Noel Spillane spoke, and introduced participants, Pat O'Connor (Glenflesk), Vincent Lache (Killarney), Breda O'Sullivan (Killorglin) who shared their experiences on their farms. Facilitator Evelyn O'Connell and farmers Rena Blake and George Kelly also spoke.



Paul Garland gave us a tour and shared the fascinating history of creameries and their key role in the rural economy. Later there was time for participants and farmers to show their skills at making bird and bat boxes for Kerry Eco Social Farming project. We were treated to great hospitality with tea, coffee on arrival and light lunch for all.

Over 50 people attended, included a number of potential new host farmers. Sari Houlihan (Radio Kerry) recorded interviews for Agritime programme [Agritime - October 13th, 2022 | RadioKerry.ie](https://www.radiokerry.ie/agritime) is the link to that show from 13th October, our interviews begin at 25 minutes on the podcast.

The Kerryman and Kerrys Eye gave us plenty of coverage. Host farmer Mike O'Sé (Dromid) was interviewed on 'An Saol O' Dheas' on Raidió na Gaeltachta on previous Tuesday morning to promote the event.

Thank you to Paul & Annette for your wonderful hospitality. The Kerry Creamery experience is well worth a visit.

On Friday 7th October, Kerry Social Farming teamed up with Transition Kerry on the festival 'From The Ground Up.' This was the final event to part their two yearlong Biodiversity and Community Leadership Training Programme. We put up a small covered tent in the Aras an Phobail car park, Tralee along with other organisations. Along with members from the Tralee Men's Shed we engaged the public in apple pressing and showed people how to assemble bird and bat boxes. We had a super turn out of host farmers, participants, schools and the general public. It was a really positive and uplifting event.

Teagasc Farm Walk, Lispole

KSF were invited to present at this joint Teagasc and Kerry Agribusiness farm walk on October 13th, focused on dairy farms in Kerry. Claire McAuliffe, the NEWKD representative on the KSF working group is a Teagasc dairy adviser and had arranged this which KSF is very grateful for. The Teagasc advisors presenting on the day enabled KSF staff and host farmers to speak about social farming at the beginning of the event and the advisers continually linked back to social farming at many times throughout the day which helped to reiterate the idea of dairy farms and social farming working well together. We were able to chat to farmers individually and gained two potential host farmers in the Dingle peninsula, as well as linking up with another farmer who plans to introduce KSF and social farming to a young dairy farmers group in their area.

FARM ELDER

Farm visits

As part of Farm Elder, we carried out 3 Case Studies on social farming projects. Julie Brosnan (KSF Administrator) did the research visits during the summer. The Case Studies featured are,

- Breeda O’Sullivan, Glencar, Co. Kerry.
- Denise McClure, Taobh Linn, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.
- An Tobar Wellness centre, Silverbridge, Co. Armagh.

Thanks to Breeda for sharing her story about being involved with KSF since 2017. It was very interesting to learn about how she came to be involved and how much social farming has meant to her and the family over the past 5 years. Breeda, Pat and of course participant Breda who comes each week to the O’Sullivan farm, have been stalwarts for us, attending events and promoting social farming at every opportunity.



Summer skies over Glencar

Denise McClure lives and works in beautiful Kenmare having spent many years farming near Sneem. Denise is

bringing her knowledge and enthusiasm to the development of the polytunnel and raised beds at the rear of Taobh Linn complex.



The garden was in full bloom when we visited in June. With the assistance of Kenmare RSS workers and local support groups, young and old will soon be working side by side in developing a community garden space for growing and nurturing vegetables, plants and flowers.

An Tobar is a unique farm and wellness centre in South Armagh developed by the Finnegan family on the site of what was for many years their garden centre. It has native woodlands, polytunnels, poetry trails, chickens, pigs, beef cattle, and wildflower meadows to name but a few features. Participants come social farming 4 days a week and help out with the busy work schedule. Rural Support (NI) and the Southern Health Trust are in a supporting role. An Tobar was recently nominated for the UK National Lottery Good Causes - Project of the Year 2022.



The wildflower meadow at An Tobar

All Case Studies have been submitted for translation and will be published on the website www.farmelder.eu in due course.

Trip to Germany

As part of the Farm Elder Eamon Horgan, Host Farmer and Chairman of the Kerry Social Farming Working Group and Joseph McCrohan SKDP travelled to Southern Germany along with all other project partners from Slovenia, Germany, Portugal, Ireland and Belgium for a two-day meeting, on 6th & 7th October 2022.



The group visited a 60-cow dairy farm in Bavaria which provides social farming for people experiencing Alzheimer's.

We look forward to welcoming all our Farm Elder colleagues to South Kerry in May 2023.

KERRY ECO-SOCIAL FARMING

Winter is here on our host farms! Many of our host farmers, who are members of our European Innovation Partnership project, have already received their nature monitoring kits! These kits contain books, posters and tools to help host farmers, social farming participant and the host families to notice the nature on their farms. We hope that all the participating host farms enjoy these packs! If you haven't gotten your pack yet, don't worry it's on its way!

If you see any wildlife on the farm, please do take a picture and sent it to Luke, the Project Biodiversity Officer. If you'd like to get together to discuss farming and nature, we also have a WhatsApp group so they we can continue meitheals and sharing pictures of what we find into 2023.

Just some of the nature 'swatch books' which are making their way onto a number of our host farms! Don't they look amazing? We've 10 trail cameras available for all host farmers of Kerry Social Farming to borrow. Trail cameras are battery powered waterproof cameras which can be installed outside to look for nature. They can operate in the dark and can capture some great pictures!

If you'd like to join our trail camera borrowing scheme, please get in touch with Luke, the Project Biodiversity Officer.

John O'Connor, Bronagh Enright and Rena Blake setting up a trail camera on their farm to see what wildlife moves around the place when they're not around!

Kenmare & Cahirsiveen Marts

Thanks to the Mart committees for welcoming us as we shared the message about Kerry Social Farming.

UCC course news from Eleanor McSherry, Course Co-ordinator

Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming – ACE at UCC

The course, a NFQ Level 6 Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming is critical to the empowerment of the host farmer in several areas; communication, understanding disability, the models of disability, disability law, the role they play within social farming for social inclusion, also understanding the role of the farm and environment for well-being. This knowledge not only benefits the farmer but the person they will be supporting and their wider community.

As an overview, the learning outcomes from the programme highlight the need for such education for host farmers and for the sustainable long-term viability of social farming initiatives. Peer-to-peer learning and the sharing of practice has also been a critical aspect of the outcomes for the students who have completed the course to date. Feeling empowered and having the skills required to facilitate meaningful and practical activities in the natural setting of the farm to help the person with a disability to achieve their personal goals



(Bragg and Atkins, 2016) is central to the outcomes of the course as well as being transformative for the host farmer students themselves. The course has guest lecturers from Kerry Social Farming and Social Farming Ireland.

The current cohort have had a fabulous year:

- **European Green for Care Summer School** - Some of the students, attended a seminar hosted by UCD in March 2022 on the EU Green care/entrepreneurship initiative presented by Colm O' Driscoll. Following on from the seminar, one of the students, Licia applied for the programme's summer school with her business idea and was selected; only twenty-five students are chosen from across Europe and only one of the five is set aside for external applicants, which Licia would be. It makes her achievement remarkable. She attended the Summer school in June 2022, where she gained some fantastic contacts and a huge amount of information.
- **Class Trip to Brussels** – The class were invited to Brussels in October by MEP Sean Kelly. This trip involved a visit to Brussels (the European Parliament, Dinner with Sean Kelly), Ghent, Bruges and Ypres, all subsidised by the European Parliament. It was an amazing trip that the students really enjoyed.

Message from MEP Sean Kelly

Thank you very much for your kind email Eleanor. I can say that it was a genuine pleasure to have you and the group over here in Brussels from our side, and we welcome you back anytime.

A particularly memorable part of meeting the group was hearing you and your students speak so passionately about social farming – an initiative that I fully support and look forward to see progress.

Applications are the Course are open for January 2023. Any further details contact Programme Coordinator Eleanor McSherry: eleanor.mcsherry@ucc.ie or ring: 083 4031093.

Antoinette O'Sullivan- Radio Days

'Following a week's long training with Kerry social farming back in April. I had huge interest in this type of course as I learned so much in a week of training and I really enjoyed it too. I wanted to learn more about radio then I found out that Kerry colleges were offering an 8-week induction to journalism, podcasting, and radio.

I signed myself up for it then I was waiting for an email for a long time until the 9th of September (my birthday)

I got the place offer on the course which I was over the moon what a fantastic birthday Suprise.

On the 26 of September, I had my 1st day of college. I was really excited to be heading off early on a Monday morning and I am now on week 5 on the course. I have learned so much in the last 4 weeks learning all about podcasting, editing, radio, recording and so much more. I am so busy preparing for my upcoming exams and some assignments to do also but I am really loving it so much it is a lot of work, but I love learning'. We're delighted to say that following her graduation, Antoinette has now secured a place on the 52 week course 'Digital Journalism, Podcasting & Radio' that is due to start in the coming weeks. Congratulations to Antoinette on this wonderful achievement.



Social farming activities in Cloghane Caharn and Kimego



Rebecca O'Brien delivering a vegetable box to the Cliffords in Cahersiveen and Aoife Murphy helping to prepare a Christmas cake!

Annual meeting 2023

Our Annual Meeting will be taking place at the end of January. We'll be sending out details as soon as they are finalised. Hopefully as many of you as possible will be able to attend on the night and hear about what has happened over the past year in Kerry Social Farming.

Don't forget to follow us on social media, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KerrySocialFarming> or Twitter @KerrySocialfarm.

Also check our website www.kerrysocialfarming.ie, where you can link to our YouTube channel, featuring lots of social farming videos.

We wish you and your families the very best for a safe and peaceful Christmas and all the very best for 2023.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

