



December 2018

Dear Chief Executive,

National Community Weekend - May 2019

I refer to the announcement last September by the Minister for Rural and Community Development Michael Ring T.D. of a National Community Day. The proposed event has now been further developed and is to be a weekend of community hosted events, held over the May bank holiday weekend in 2019. This letter sets out the background to the event, the arrangements for providing funding for local events via Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and the plans currently in train for communications and media in relation to the event.

The aim of the project is to motivate and encourage people to get to know their neighbour, by hosting a local event on National Community weekend in May 2019. It is being undertaken in the context of many people not knowing their neighbours in Ireland, and some being isolated as a result. We want to see neighbours reconnect within their communities and have a celebration together which is open and inclusive for all at a very local level.

A small working group has been active within the Department since last Summer to explore the idea, its viability and the potential design of such a proposal. Various stakeholders - including the CCMA - were contacted by the group for suggestions and observations. Following very positive submissions and observations, an expanded Working Group was then established to consider the design of the event. This Working Group includes two LCDC Chief Officers and two representatives of Public Participation Networks. It also includes a number of representatives of organisations that expressed an interest in involvement in the event, namely representatives from Volunteer Ireland, Young Social Innovators, Macra na Feirme, An tOireachtas, The Wheel, Street Feast and Change X.

Arising from discussions within the Group, a strong preference emerged for a “bottom up” approach to the event, with community-based, grassroots projects being to the fore. In this context, it was recommended that the events at county level be coordinated by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), given their extensive knowledge of their local communities. It was also recommended that small grants be made available for organising local events, funding for which would be channelled via the LCDCs.

It was considered vital that a comprehensive marketing campaign, including branding and promotional material, would assist with the promotion of the National Community Weekend. At present officials from the Department of Rural and Community Development are in contact with the Office of Government Procurement with regard to a request for tender to be made within their PR and Communications Framework.



One of the requirements of the tender is that all campaign materials be made available in the Irish language as well as in English. Funding will be made available by the Department for the marketing and promotional campaign.

Funding

The Minister has approved funding of €10,000 for each of the 31 Local Community Development Committees in relation to the proposed events. The funding is to be provided to each LCDC via the relevant local authority. This will then be allocated by the LCDC in the form of small grants to support local events.

In general, it would be a matter for LCDCs as to how to best utilise the funding in their own communities. However, it is expected that local authorities and LCDCs will build on existing relationships with community groups, resident's associations, arts groups, sports organisations, youth groups and older people's councils. In particular, where grassroots events such as Street Feast have been funded in previous years, they should be considered as part of the National Community event in 2019. LCDCs are also strongly encouraged to consider funding community events held through the medium of Irish. Further guidance in relation to the projects to be funded will issue in the New Year.

It is intended that payments to all Local Authorities will be made during the week ending Friday 14 December. It should be noted that this payment is subject to the provisions of Circular 13/2014 - Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. I would be grateful if you could confirm that you are in a position to comply with the Circular and that this funding will be utilised in relation to the National Community Weekend 2019.

Please contact Kevin Power kevin.power@drcd.gov.ie, of the Community & Voluntary Supports & Programmes Unit of this Department should you have any further queries in relation to this funding.

Yours sincerely,

Bairbre Nic Aongusa

Runaí Cúnta, Forbairt Pobail

Assistant Secretary, Community Development

cc Chief Officer, Local Community Development Committee