



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys welcomes return of The National Ploughing Championships

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today (Friday 16th September) welcomed the return next week of the National Ploughing Championships after a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's event takes place in Ratheniska, Co. Laois from Tuesday September 20th to Thursday September 22nd. The Department of Rural and Community Development will be based in the '*Our Rural Future - Supporting Communities*' exhibit in the Government of Ireland Village.

Visitors will be able to meet staff and find out about the wide range of rural and community funding supports available. There will also be information on Connected Hubs and the exciting opportunities afforded by remote working, the services provided by our Libraries network, Water Safety and much more.

The '*Our Rural Future - Supporting Communities*' exhibit at the championships will be conveniently located near the National Ploughing Association headquarters, and will be shared with the Department of Social Protection, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Revenue Commissioners.

Visitors to the Government of Ireland village will be able to engage with officials directly and get tailored information on the issues which concern them.

The '*Our Rural Future - Supporting Communities*' marquee will host daily talks and information sessions addressing the issues and outlining the supports which will assist communities across the country.

Welcoming the return of the National Ploughing Championships, Minister Humphreys said:

"I, like so many people the length and breadth of the country, am really looking forward to attending The National Ploughing Championships in County Laois. The Ploughing is not just a wonderful sporting and commercial event, it is a fundamental and deeply beloved part of the social fabric of rural Ireland.

"The absence of the championships over the last few years means that this year's event is more anticipated than ever before.

"As Minister for Rural and Community Development, I encourage as many people as possible to visit the Government of Ireland village and in particular my own Department's exhibition, entitled 'Our Rural Future - Supporting Communities.

"The championships afford me and my Department a fantastic opportunity to showcase the excellent work being delivered through the Government's ambitious rural development policy – 'Our Rural Future' - and the range of funding supports we have available to underpin this work, which assist communities in Rural Ireland to continue to grow and thrive.

"It will also be great to see the superb work that is being done by the community and voluntary sector showcased at the Department's exhibition at this year's National Ploughing Championships.

"The staff of my Department and I are very much looking forward to meeting everyone at the championships and to discussing the issues which matter most to communities and rural areas."

The Exhibit can be found in the Government of Ireland Village at **Block 3, Row 19, Stand 309**. For further information visit gov.ie/ploughing

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Full List of Exhibitors in the 'Our Rural Future Supporting Communities'

exhibition:

- Connected Hubs
- (Rural Schemes) Town and Village Renewal Scheme; Outdoor Recreation; CLÁR; Local Improvement Scheme (LIS); RRDF, Walks Scheme and LEADER
- Rural Digital Development
- Tidy Towns
- Community Services Programme
- Water Safety Ireland
- Seniors Alert Scheme
- Public Participation Networks
- PEACE (Programme for Peace and Reconciliation)
- Libraries Ireland
- Volunteer Ireland
- The Department of Finance and Revenue
- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment – Workplace Relation Committee and SOLVIT
- Department of Social Protection

Our exhibit is divided into a number of areas:

Connected Hubs is your one-stop-shop for hubs throughout Ireland. It is designed to simplify and standardise the process of sourcing and booking spaces, desks, offices and events in co-working and enterprise hubs.

[ConnectedHubs.ie](https://connectedhubs.ie) is operated by the Western Development Commission (WDC) on behalf of DRCD and is a Government of Ireland initiative.

Our Rural Future represents the Government's blueprint for the development of rural Ireland, with a particular focus on the next 5 years. It is supported by a range of rural funding schemes and initiatives including; Broadband Connection Points (BCPs), Town and Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR, Local Improvement Scheme, Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and LEADER.

TidyTowns - Running since 1958 and now well into its seventh decade, the competition continues to attract new entrants and to grow. It is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and sponsored by SuperValu.

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities – The community and voluntary sector in Ireland delivers a wide range of services across many sectors. The sector is supported by the Department through programmes such as; Public Participation Networks, Volunteering, Community Centres Investment Fund, Seniors Alert Scheme, Water Safety and the Community Services Programme.