



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council

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Monaghan County Council

Spring/Summer Newsletter



Live, Work, Visit

Monaghan

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Biodiversity

Biodiversity Week 16-25th May

Biodiversity Week 2025 got off to a great start in Monaghan on Friday 16th with the much-anticipated launch of the **Flora of Monaghan** book at the Four Seasons Hotel. Authored by botanist and ecologist Alexis FitzGerald, the book is the culmination of nearly a decade of meticulous research and fieldwork, cataloguing over 1,200 plant species native to the region. Having walked more lanes, byways, bogs and woods than most of us will in a lifetime, Alexis's presentation was a fascinating insight into the plants that call Monaghan home. This book marks a significant milestone in the county's natural heritage documentation. A packed room of attendees included local residents, nature enthusiasts, and members of the scientific community, all celebrating this comprehensive record of Monaghan's botanical landscape. The publication not only serves as an invaluable resource for researchers and conservationists but also fosters greater public appreciation for the county's rich biodiversity.



Join us for Book Launch
Flora of County Monaghan
Q&A with Author Alexis FitzGerald



Four Seasons Hotel, Monaghan
H18 Y220
Friday 16th May
7-9pm
Refreshments provided
*** ALL WELCOME ***

 For further info contact biodiversity@monaghancoco.ie or call 047 73722



COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND

A total of seventeen groups in the county are funded as part of the community climate action fund. This fund is for community groups with projects and initiatives which address the challenge of climate change. The overall objective of the Community Climate Action Programme is to support and empower communities, in partnership with Monaghan County Council, to shape and build low carbon and sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

In June the third drawdown claim of €64,601 under the fund was made by Monaghan County Council to the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment. Works completed by the groups for this period include:

- Installation of solar panels and battery storage
- Installation of energy efficient LED sports lights
- Biodiversity projects - planting of pollinator gardens, traditional trees and hedging, native wildflowers, fruit orchards and edible nut trees.
- Install of a 6 station Bike Rack



COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION FUND



Solar PV System (Killeevan Sarsfields GAA Club)



Installation of energy efficient LED sports lights (Killeevan Sarsfields GAA Club)

Community

Tidy Towns Insurance Scheme Rollout

A number of Tidy Towns Groups along with the council executive and elected members gathered in the Council Chamber to mark the rollout of the new Tidy Towns insurance initiative which was rolled out to 30 eligible Tidy Towns Groups in Monaghan on 1st April 2025.

The scheme is funded by the local authority with no charge to the Tidy Town Committee.



Age Friendly Intergenerational Project

The Monaghan Age Friendly Intergenerational Project in conjunction with Beech Hill College is going from strength to strength. Under the guidance of our Age Friendly Ambassador Seamus McDermott the project will now continue to run through the summer months when the students of Beech Hill are on leave as new adult volunteer readers have been selected and will continue this important project during that time.



Pic. Age Friendly Ambassador Seamus McDermott and Age Friendly Administrator Linda Lennon with Ms. Sheerin Beechill College and students participating in the Age Friendly initiative.

Autism Awareness Month

April was World Autism Awareness month and Monaghan County Libraries took the opportunity to highlight the autism-friendly services and supports we provide to our communities throughout the year.

Recommended reading: we curated a selection of book recommendations for autistic people, their parents or caregivers, or simply anyone who would like to expand their understanding of autism.

Online workshop: we also hosted a free online learning workshop with early intervention specialist, Sylvia Angel. The workshop 'Teaching reading to teach language for autistic children' help participants to understand the reading profile of autistic children, prepare children to become a reader and gave practical tips and strategies to introduce early literacy skills successfully.

Autism Friendly County champion: we pledged support for the new county-wide initiative for Monaghan to become an autism-friendly county, building on the previous certification of library branches as autism-friendly spaces.



Castleblayney Library



Clones Library



Monaghan Library



Ballybay Library



Carrickmacross Library



Launch of EU21 photographic exhibition celebrating the 21st anniversary of the 2004 enlargement of the EU.

On Friday, May 2, at the Peace Campus in Monaghan Town, Cathaoirleach of Monaghan County Council, Cllr. Paul Gibbons launched a new photographic exhibition celebrating the 21st anniversary of the 2004 enlargement of the European Union. More than 50 people attended the launch in support of Polish-born, Monaghan-based photographer, Barbara Golec Regiec, who created a portrait exhibition that explores the human dimension of European integration. Through portraits and personal testimonies, the exhibition highlights the diverse experiences of individuals who chose to build new lives in Ireland.

The exhibition was open to the public at the EUROPE DIRECT Clones centre in Clones Library for the month of May. From there, it travelled to Johnston Library, Cavan town in July and it will be in Dundalk Library in September. This tour of public libraries covers the region served by the EUROPE DIRECT centre in Clones. An online version of the exhibition is also available on the Digital Repository of Ireland. See: www.dri.ie

The exhibition was supported by Monaghan County Libraries, through EUROPE DIRECT Clones, and Creative Monaghan. It is funded by the European Commission through EUROPE DIRECT Clones.



Monaghan Town Library celebrates one year in the Peace Campus

On 13 May, Monaghan Town Library celebrated their first anniversary at their new library in the Peace Campus. In that time, we welcome more than 180,000 people to the community; a 127% increase on 2023/2024. We hosted 908 events, which we attended by more than 20,000 people. We welcome more than 6,000 students to the library with 176 school visits. We want to thank our amazing community of library members and we look forward to many more years of delivering reading, literacy and cultural opportunities for all at the Peace Campus Monaghan Town.



National Youth Libraries Conference hosted in Monaghan

Monaghan County Libraries were proud to host the Library Association of Ireland's Youth libraries Group conference at the Peace Campus, Monaghan on 26 March. Over 60 librarians from across Monaghan, Louth, Meath, Cavan, Donegal, Longford, Mayo and Northern Ireland spent the day learning from expert speakers and colleagues covering topics such as bibliotherapy for children, neonatal reading with tiny little libraries and how books can be used to promote empathy in children and young people. The keynote speaker was Allison Keating, the Practical Psychologist.



Cultural Companions

Monaghan County Libraries and Creative Monaghan are exploring possibilities for setting up a 'Cultural Companions' network, to connect people who would like to join others to attend exhibitions, performances and cultural events in the county and beyond. So far, we have had more than 40 expressions of interest and we are working on scheduling the first outing.



The Debs Dress pop-up shop project will also be entered for the Awards – further information below.

Debs Dress Pop-Up Shop

Monaghan County Council hosted its inaugural Debs Dress Pop up shop in the Gate Lodge Castleblayney from 9th – 12th April, 2025. The project was an initiative to promote the circular economy and give an opportunity to re-use little-worn items. The Gate Lodge was temporarily equipped as a dress shop, complete with changing rooms. Dresses for sale were received from Counties Monaghan, Armagh, Cavan, Louth and Meath. In all, the shop received 102 dresses and turned away many more as we were unable to keep up with the demand.

The pop-up shop opened from 10:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Wednesday to Saturday. Over the course of 4 days the ‘shop’ was visited by students from schools from all over the county and beyond and representation from schools both north and south of the border. It was also heartening to see how members of Monaghan County Council staff supported the event by attending with family members and selling items belonging to their daughters. Negotiations were conducted privately between buyers and sellers, but initial indications are that approximately 20% of dresses were sold, with further negotiations ongoing.

The initiative received good interest and publicity, reaching almost 58,000 views on Monaghan County Council’s Facebook page, and was picked up by the Irish Independent on Monday April, 7th 2025; <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/monaghan/news/debs-pop-up-shop-to-open-in-castleblayney-as-monaghan-council-attempt-to-boost-circular-economy/a948657508.html>.

RTE Radio 1 is also planning to do a piece on the event during the upcoming deb’s season, where we plan to feature some of the young ladies who bought dresses and follow their deb’s experience.



Fire & Civil Protection

Personal & Community Resilience Booklet:

Every household and premises in County Monaghan have now received an Irish & English version of their Personal & Community Resilience booklet in May. The aim of the booklet is to promote a safe, sustainable, and resilient community, through practical planning guidance. The Booklet was a collaborative project involving HSE, AGS and various Voluntary Groups, with the aim to provide the public with advice, contact details and practical tips on how to be prepared in the event of an emergency.



Community Resilience Booklet May 2025

Heritage

Heritage at the Heart podcast

Four episodes of the heritage at the heart podcast have now been recorded on site in various locations across the county. First up we met Pat McKenna and his dexter cows up on the slopes of Sliabh Beagh to talk about farming for nature.



Next we were off to Rauser near Doohamlet to talk to John Doran about the field names project that we have been running and we spoke to Bernie Duffy about the wedge tomb on her land. For our third recording we visited Peter Cassidy the blacksmith at his workshop where he demonstrated his authentic and uniquely Irish smithing skills.



The fourth podcast was at Lisdoonan national school where we caught up with John Keenan of the Lisdoonan Vintage and Heritage Club. John talked to us about the vast array of old household objects the group has collected over the years and about their work in showcasing some of the everyday chores that people used to do such as butter churning and bread making. One more podcast is yet to be recorded for this series.



Housing

Monaghan Area Based Retrofit Initiative (MABRI)

Leas Cathaoirleach of Monaghan County Council Cllr. Peter Conlon in partnership with SSE Airtricity Energy Services launched a new area-based retrofit initiative in Monaghan Town called the Monaghan Area Based Retrofit Initiative (MABRI) on Friday 16th May.

The MABRI pilot aims to boost the uptake of energy efficiency upgrades across public, private, and commercial buildings, supporting Monaghan's climate action goals as part of its designated Decarbonisation Zone. MABRI provides access to expert advice on the most cost-effective energy upgrades for homes, offering better value as part of the regional retrofit project rather than individual upgrades projects. The pilot is delivered with the support of key partners, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and Activ8 Solar Energies.

MABRI works will commence with energy upgrades to 53 council-owned homes in Killygoan, bringing them from BER ratings as low as D3 up to a minimum B2 funded by Monaghan County Council, under the Department of Housing's Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP).

Expressions of interest are also invited from private homeowners to avail of energy upgrades to their homes, made possible by SEAI Community Grant. A Residents Information and Recruitment Evening will be held on 5 June at 7:00pm in Monaghan Peace Campus for this element of the initiative.

SEE Airtricity will also be holding information meetings with local businesses in the coming weeks.



Local Enterprise Office

AI Innovation from Monaghan Takes Top Prize at National Enterprise Awards

SPRYT, a digital healthcare company from Monaghan Town, represented County Monaghan at the **2025 National Enterprise Awards**. Founded by Daragh Donohue and Neill Dunwoody, SPRYT created an AI-powered virtual receptionist that helps healthcare providers improve patient engagement and reduce missed appointments via WhatsApp, SMS, and RCS.

At the Monaghan County Enterprise Awards, SPRYT won Overall Winner and Best Product Innovation & Use of Technology.

The National Enterprise Awards ceremony were held on May 22, 2025, at the Mansion House, Dublin, recognizing 31 finalists across categories like Start-Up, Innovation, Export, and Sustainability. SPRYT won the top prize at the Awards.



Upcoming Courses

- **Self-Assessment for the Sole Trader' on Tuesday 16th & 23rd September -**

This course provides a clear understanding of the responsibilities of a self-employed person and how their business fits into the self-assessment tax system. They will also gain an understanding of how Income Taxes are calculated on their business profits with tips and advice to ensure they pay less tax. The course is delivered online, costs €10 and will run from 9.30am-12.30pm over two mornings.

- **'Make Reels Like a Pro (Using Capcut)' on Wednesday 24th September -**

This training workshop is a comprehensive step by step demonstration how to effectively use Capcut to create high quality Reel's, Tiktoks and other video story content. The course is delivered online, costs €10, and will run from 10am-1pm.

Transportation

N2 CLONTIBRET TO BORDER SCHEME

Landowner meetings finished on the 17th of April 2025, and details of the outcome of those meetings are now available.

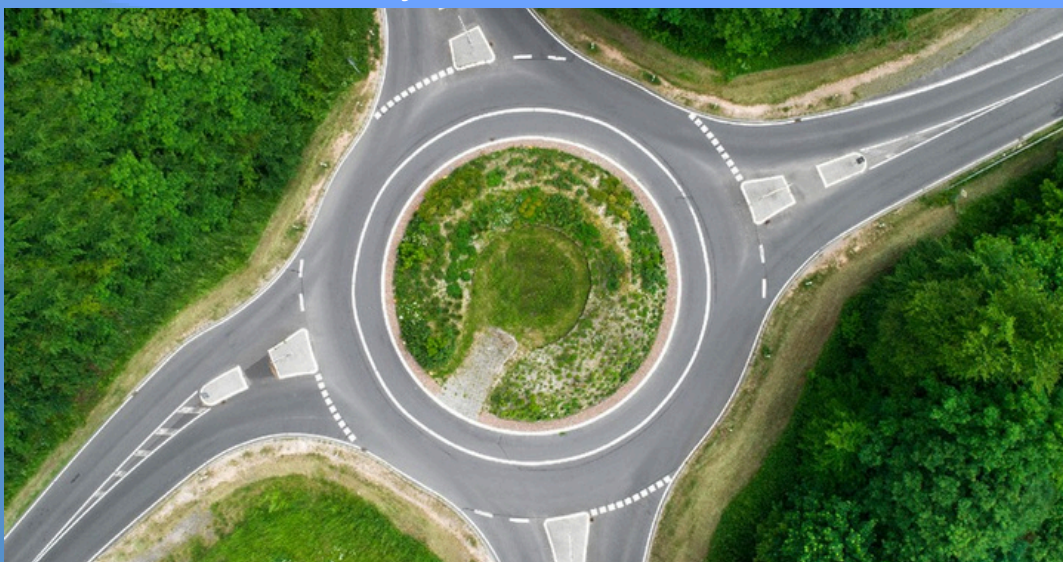
Letters were issued to approximately 260 registered landowners along the route of the road and proposed active travel infrastructure. A total of 150 separate meetings took place over the course of three weeks - some of the meetings involved several related/adjoining land holdings, so more than 1 landowner/landholding was represented/discussed at them. During the three weeks of meetings, the project team made additional efforts to contact landowners and encourage them to attend. Letter drops/door knocks were undertaken in targeted areas on two separate occasions, and phone calls were made where contact information was available.

Details of the initial road design have now been published for the public, landowners and all stakeholders to view on an interactive map on the [project website www.N2MonaghanLouth.ie](http://www.N2MonaghanLouth.ie). The design shows the 'initial design', which will be subject to change following feedback from landowners and stakeholders.

Over the coming months the N2 Project Team will consider feedback received from landowners and other stakeholders and will then make changes and updates to the 'initial' design before a design is finalised. Issues raised to date include severance and community connectivity, land and property impacts, environmental concerns, the location and size of attenuation ponds, and proposed access arrangements.

Although the scheduled meeting dates have now passed, the Jacobs project team are still available to engage with landowners.

The Project Team can be contacted by email ClontibretBorder@N2MonaghanLouth.ie or via the N2 Project Phonenumber 087 340 3786.



Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031

Material Alterations to draft County Development Plan were placed on public consultation in March along with the associated amended Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment for a period of four weeks. Consultation also took place with the prescribed bodies and other stakeholders inviting submissions / observations on the proposed amendments. A total of 36 submissions / observations were received by the deadline of 10th April. These submissions, which were made by a variety of stakeholders from individuals to government organisations, were summarised and responded to in a Chief Executive's Report which will be issued to the elected members in May. Meetings with the elected members to discuss the submissions also took place in April.

Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

Four submissions were received by the planning authority requesting rezoning of lands in respect of the Final RZLT Map 2025 by the deadline of 1st April. Acknowledgement letters were issued to those who made submissions by 30th April which will allow the landowners to claim an exemption from any tax liability in relation to properties on the Final Map 2025 that would be payable to the Revenue Commissioners by 23rd May 2025.

Three submissions were received seeking exclusion of lands from the Annual Draft Map for 2026 before the deadline on 1st April. These submissions were acknowledged in April and determinations are currently being made in respect of each.

Town Regeneration

Ballybay Town Centre First Plan Launched: A Vision for a Vibrant and Sustainable Future

Monaghan County Council, in partnership with the Ballybay Town Team, and the Paul Hogarth Company are pleased to introduce the Ballybay Town Centre First Plan, a key milestone in shaping a more vibrant and sustainable future for the town.

Developed through extensive community engagement, the plan reflects the ideas, needs, and aspirations of the people of Ballybay. It provides a clear Vision, supported by strategic Aims and Projects, to guide the town's regeneration and long-term growth.

Rooted in Ballybay's existing strengths, the plan identifies key priorities that emerged from public consultation and outlines how future developments can align with a shared local ambition.

For more information, or to view the full plan, please contact the Town Regeneration Office at tcf@monaghancoco.ie



Tourism



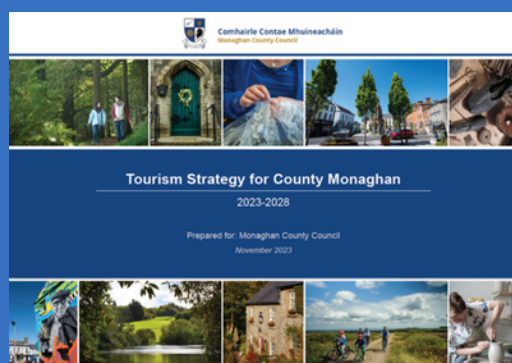
The Tourism Unit recently launched our annual C'mon to Monaghan summer video series – a vibrant and informative campaign that captures the true spirit of our County during the sunny season. This year's series celebrates Monaghan through the eyes of those who know it best, featuring real stories, local voices, and unforgettable experiences.

From guided town tours to unique attractions, the videos shine a spotlight on what makes Monaghan special. Highlights include the Vintage Flea & Craft Market at the Ulster Canal Stores, Carrickmacross Walking Tours, Clones Town Tours, and the historic Clan McKenna Gathering. You'll also get a glimpse of Live Lagom Sauna and Yoga, artisan producers at Old Carrick Mill, Mullan Lighting, and Tails and Tunes Laragh. Outdoor lovers will enjoy the Rossmore Forest Park Guided Tour, showcasing one of our most loved natural spaces.

This engaging series is now live across social media platforms, designed to inform, inspire, and encourage both locals and visitors to explore all that Monaghan has to offer this summer.

One Year of Tourism & Recreation Forum

The Monaghan Tourism & Recreation Forum, established in April 2024, saw the formation of a multi-stakeholder forum for integrated tourism and outdoor recreation development in the county – a key action of the Tourism Strategy for County Monaghan 2023-2028. This dedicated Forum, guided by independent chairperson Matt Mohan, works collaboratively with the Tourism Unit within Monaghan County Council to deliver on the ambitions of the five-year tourism strategy. The Forum has been in existence now for just over one year, and speaking at its June meeting, Matt Mohan said; 'I commend the commitment shown by the forum members who have worked collaboratively to help deliver and progress actions within the county's Tourism Strategy. Our first year has been a busy one with a lot of quality projects delivered. In year two, we look forward to building on this momentum to alter the trajectory of Monaghan's tourism economy'. Key actions delivered this year include: -Revitalisation of Church Square – Extension to Rossmore Forest Playpark – Recreational Enhancements at Dartrey Forest – County Outdoor Recreation Plan developed – Shared Island funding secured for Sliabh Beagh



Tourism

Festivals & Events Funding

Monaghan Tourism advertised Festival Funding Schemes in March 2025, and the following festivals will be supported with grant aid. This funding is part-supported by Fáilte Ireland & the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Agri-Food Tourism Scheme).

- Clan Mc Kenna Event
- 25 Years of Community & Tourism - Knockatallon
- Muckno Mania
- Clones Dev. Society (Jazz Event, Flea Market)
- Tales & Tunes Laragh
- Open Air Event at Hilton Park
- Castleblayney Agricultural Show
- Muckno Santa Experience
- “The Gathering” Event at Brehon Brewhouse
- Big Tom Memorial Weekend
- Carrickmacross Street Festival
- Monaghan Town Street Food Festival & Long-Table Dining Event
- Monaghan Town Christmas Street Food Festival



Scenic Sessions

Scenic Sessions is a brand-new initiative launching in Summer 2025, aimed at promoting both the cultural and scenic richness of County Monaghan. This video series, in collaboration with Creative Monaghan, will showcase performances by local musicians and singers, filmed in a range of stunning locations across the county – from lakesides and forests to hidden rural backdrops. The project brings together the talents of Monaghan’s vibrant music community with the breathtaking landscapes that make the county so special.

Part-funded by Fáilte Ireland, the Scenic Sessions form part of a broader drive to boost cultural tourism in the county. The initiative is designed to attract new audiences by telling a strong visual and musical story of Monaghan – celebrating the people, places, and sounds that define the county. As part of the project, a dedicated photography campaign will also be carried out to complement the video content. High-quality images captured during each session will be used to promote both the featured artists and the filming locations, providing valuable visual content for tourism promotion across digital platforms, social media, and press materials.

The videos are set to go live this summer, each one capturing a different facet of Monaghan’s atmosphere and identity. This is not only an opportunity to support local talent, but also to position Monaghan as a creative and inspiring destination for visitors near and far.

Monaghan County Museum

Victoria Cross on display in the Bordering Realities exhibition at Monaghan County Museum

Private Thomas Hughes from Coravoo, near Castleblayney, earned the Victoria Cross for his extraordinary bravery during the Battle of the Somme in World War I. Despite severe injuries at Guillemont, France, he single-handedly captured an enemy machine gun post, saving his company.

Awarded the medal by King George V in 1917, Hughes returned to a changed Ireland and later died in 1942, buried in Old Broomfield Cemetery. The medal, sold during family hardship, is now on loan from the National Army Museum, London, and back in Monaghan for the first time.

The Victoria Cross medal is on display at Monaghan County Museum's Bordering Realities exhibition, marking a proud moment for the county, which boasts four known Victoria Cross recipients.



**MONAGHAN COUNTY
MUSEUM**
Músaem Chontae Mhuineacháin

*'Bordering Realities -
Monaghan People
and Stories'*

Free Admission

Monday to Friday 11am - 5pm
Saturday 12- 5pm



Located at:
Monaghan County Museum,
Monaghan Peace Campus,
Monaghan Town,
H18 RP20

www.monaghan.ie/museum



Campas Síochána
Mhuineacháin



Monaghan
Peace Campus

Monaghan Municipal District

Monaghan Shines in IBAL Anti-Litter League – Top 5 in Ireland

Monaghan has reaffirmed its standing as one of Ireland’s cleanest towns, securing 5th place out of 40 towns and cities in the first Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey of 2025 – one of its strongest results to date.

Rated “Cleaner than European Norms” in the official report, Monaghan earned eight Grade A ratings across ten surveyed locations, marking another proud achievement for the town.

“This is another excellent result for Monaghan,” said Robert Burns, CEO of Monaghan County Council. “It reflects the dedication of volunteers, our staff, and the pride we all share in our community.”

Standout Locations

The IBAL report singled out several top-performing sites, including:

- Monaghan Leisure Complex
- Peter’s Lake and Park (and its adjoining recycling facility)
- Monaghan County Museum, Library, and Council Offices, praised as “exceptionally freshly presented and maintained with a complete absence of litter.”

A Community-Wide Effort

This success is credited to the Municipal District operational staff, the Environmental Patrol Warden, and the tireless Monaghan Tidy Towns volunteers, whose combined efforts keep the town looking its best.

About IBAL

Founded in 2002, the Irish Business Against Litter league commissions An Taisce to carry out independent litter surveys nationwide. Results are benchmarked against international standards and published in a national league table.



Monaghan Municipal District

Monaghan Projects Shine at RIAI Architecture Awards 2025

Monaghan Peace Campus and Church Square projects were honoured at the prestigious Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Architecture Awards 2025, which celebrate architectural excellence across the country.

In Monaghan town, Church Square took home the Urban Design Award, with Henry J Lyons Architects recognised for their outstanding work.

The Monaghan Peace Campus was a double winner, securing awards for both Universal Design and Public Buildings. The Universal Design award, supported by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) at the National Disability Authority, highlights the project's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity. Designed by Hall Black Douglas Architects, the Peace Campus has been celebrated as a model for functional, welcoming, and inspiring public spaces.

These accolades not only honour the visionary architects behind each project but also reflect Monaghan County Council's dedication to investing in high-quality, attractive, and accessible public buildings and spaces. A heartfelt thank you goes to the architects, designers, contractors, and our dedicated Council staff who brought these landmark projects to life.



Ballybay Clones Municipal District

Monaghan County Council welcomes the investment of €8.4 million towards the RESTART project under Investment Area 4.2 - Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion - of the PEACEPLUS programme.

The project, aptly named RESTART, an acronym for Rural Economic & Social Transformation And Resilience Transition Together, will see significant strategic investment in the towns of Newtownbutler, Clones and Belturbet. The project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). It has been designed collaboratively to enable these rural communities to thrive and reach their full economic, social and environmental potential.

PEACEPLUS has supported young people, health initiatives, environmental programmes, job creation in the past and cross border initiatives.

The EU Commission programme has run for the last 25 years and has helped to copper fasten the peace process through funding for cross-community and cross-border co-operation.

In Clones, it is proposed that further works will be undertaken at the Canal Stores site to include the redevelopment of the former Canal workers cottage to extend the meals on wheels service, and provision of additional multipurpose meeting and community space that can also be used to provide services for the soon to be developed Marina adjacent to the site.

A complementary suite of programmes have also been developed to promote wellbeing across this border region and animate programmes to encourage shared learning and build relationships throughout this border region.



Carrickmacross Castleblayney Municipal District

10-Year Master Plan for Lough Muckno Underway

Monaghan County Council has begun work on a 10-year Master Plan for Lough Muckno and its surroundings in Castleblayney, with a strong emphasis on public participation.

The plan aims to balance the area's role as a valued local amenity with its potential as a major tourism attraction, enhancing both community life and the town's economic vitality.

Planning consultancy Cunnane Stratton Reynolds has been appointed to lead the project, working with a multi-disciplinary team through three phases: information gathering and analysis, development of emerging concepts, and the creation of a draft master plan, expected in early 2026.

Public engagement will take place at each stage, giving the community opportunities to shape the future of this important local resource.

