

Ballyhaunis Family &
Community Resource Centre

2024
ANNUAL
REPORT



Together
for Change

Empowering
Individuals & Families
in Ballyhaunis



Map of 121 Family Resource Centres in Ireland

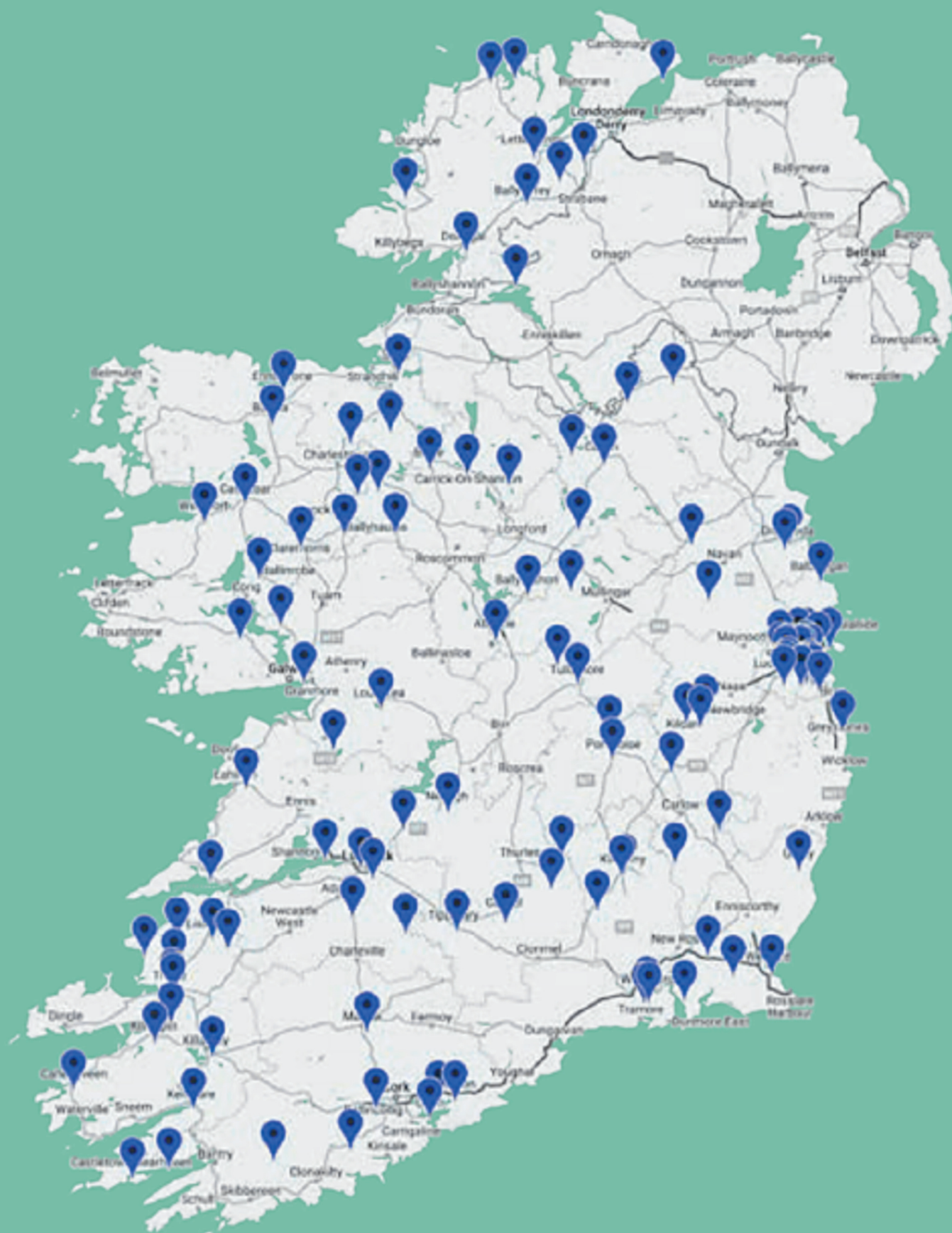


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Foreword

Welcome to the 2024 Annual Report of Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre.

It is impossible to look back over 2024 in the Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre (FCRC) without paying tribute to Stephen Grogan, who passed away suddenly on the 17th of August. For twenty years, Stephen served as Coordinator of the FCRC, from the beginning in 2004. Along with a talented dedicated voluntary Board of Directors (Mary Morrissey, Marie Jordan, Manar Cherbatji, and Seamus Grogan), he shepherded the Centre's growth from two staff (Tracey McDermott was recruited within 2 years as Administrator) to the current staff level of 14. Stephen oversaw the building and staffing of the Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School, and the Greater Tomorrow Crèche and served individuals, families and community groups who sought assistance and were often in need of support. The open-door daily policy of the FCRC always invites those seeking help and Stephen was always dedicated in this regard.

The vision of the Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre is of a strong, resilient, inclusive and empowered community informed by participation, social justice and collective wellbeing.

With this in mind, the Board underwent an extensive audit from our major funder, TUSLA. The areas in which improvements were recommended continue to be addressed during 2024. In line with our vision and under the leadership of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Tzyy Wang, we undertook to evaluate our current practices, policies, procedures, organisational design, job descriptions, consistency with national standards and how we are meeting our mission statement.

This evaluation was overseen by an external consultant and the report illuminated recommendations which will help guide the FCRC throughout 2025 and beyond.

The Family and Community Resource Centre continues to be a busy place and 2024 was no different. One of the success stories this year, and of which Stephen Grogan was very proud, was the Adult Literacy for Life Programme under Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB). In partnership with Home School Liaison Officers from Scoil Íosa and Ballyhaunis Community School, the FCRC engaged parents of school children in Conversational English and arts/crafts classes, providing a pathway for adult learners in disadvantaged and isolated sections of the community. The FCRC was awarded an AONTAS Star award for providing adult learning initiatives that support social inclusion.

The FCRC has responsibility for the Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School located next door to the Friary building. The pre-school is a source of tremendous pride to everyone associated with the FCRC. It operates two different three hours sessions in the morning and afternoon for pre-schoolers from our community. The first steps in the development of a new pre-school building have been undertaken by the Board

and it's hoped further progress will be made in 2025. The Greater Tomorrow Crèche, located on the grounds of the Old Convent, is also an essential childcare facility operated by the FCRC.

In the lead up to the local elections, there was a voter registration drive championed by Board member Merrilyn Finn designed to communicate in several languages, the importance for members of our international community to participate in casting their vote. Also, the FCRC in conjunction with the Abbey Partnership continues to offer a base for local community groups such as the Crochet Group, St. Vincent de Paul and Annagh Magazine, to meet.

One such group, Le Cairde, organised this year's successful Cruinniu na nÓg 2024 on June 15th. The FCRC hosted the event for children in activities such as wand making, stone painting and song writing.

The Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre operates from the principles of community development and family support; using a community development approach, to provide supports and services that meet the needs of individuals, families and the community in a way that is participatory, empowering and collective. The Centre is fortunate in having a dedicated Family Support Worker, Geraldine Glacken, who serves the needs of families in our community. The Common Sense Parenting course organised each year continues to bring a high uptake of parents who wish to improve their parenting skills in an engaging atmosphere. Play therapy and counselling are some of the additional services offered at the FCRC. We strengthened our collaboration with Mayo Sports Partnership by continuing to host Tracy Cunnane as the Ballyhaunis Sports Hub Coordinator.

Ballyhaunis is one of two sports hubs in Mayo (the other is in Ballina) so we are privileged to have Tracy in town. She works tirelessly organising fitness and wellbeing activities for clubs and groups to ensure as many ages and abilities as possible live a more active lifestyle.

We continue to support groups in the community with their activities. The Men's Shed, Le Cairde, the Community Garden, the Sustainable Energy Community Network and the Abbey Pattern Committee to name a few. Community and social services such as MABS, the money advice service, AA, and Mayo Women Support Services are just a handful of groups who anchor their services in the FCRC.

2024 saw the appointment of Grahame Cleary, Muhammad Usman Sarwar and Keith Jones as Board Members and the departure of long serving Board Members Marie Jordan, Manar Cherbatji, Jillian Mulvaney and Mairéad Murphy-Damron. We really appreciate the time that they volunteered for the good of the community.

As you can see, 2024 has been a busy, if at times difficult year, for everyone associated with the Family and Community Resource Centre. We will, however, continue to work for the good of the families and our community into the future.



Tzyy Wang
Chairperson

About Us

Established in 2004 Neart h-Amhnais Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta trading as Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre is one of the 121 Family Resource Centres nationally, funded by Tusla under the Family Resource Centre National Programme. The organisation is a company limited by guarantee and is managed by a Voluntary Board of Directors.

Our vision is of a strong, resilient, inclusive and empowered community informed by participation, social justice and collective wellbeing.

Our mission is to respond to the key issues and needs of families and communities in the Ballyhaunis area. We achieve this by creating a welcoming, friendly and enjoyable environment where people can develop their knowledge and confidence & feel part of the community.

Our aim is to develop opportunities and support children and families within our diverse community, especially those designed to improve the functioning of the family and overcome isolation and exclusion.

Our Centre provides practical support, information, and opportunities to all families and individuals in our community. We work in partnership with local groups, organisations, and state agencies to improve the quality and range of services available to individuals and families in the Ballyhaunis area.

We offer a broad spectrum of supports, services, and activities that meet the needs of individuals, families, and the wider community. These include:

- Information, advice, and referral.
- Practical assistance to individuals and community groups, such as access to IT and office facilities.
- A family access and child contact centre.
- One-to-one family support through our Family Support Service.
- Parenting programmes that equip parents with practical tools and guidance.
- Participation in the Meitheal process, which brings together services and supports for children and families.
- Interagency networking on issues such as addiction, domestic violence, social inclusion, parenting, and integration of minority groups.

- Training and education programmes for targeted groups.
- Establishing and supporting new community groups to meet local needs.
- Counselling, play therapy, and group support services.
- Personal and group development initiatives.
- A range of sporting and physical activities delivered through Ballyhaunis Sports Hub.
- Two childcare services: Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School at St Mary's Abbey and Greater Tomorrow Childcare Service at the Old Convent Asylum Accommodation Centre.
- Administration of the Senior Alert Scheme, helping older people to live safely and independently in their homes.



Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre



Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School

WHAT WE DO



What We Do

INTRODUCTION

During 2024 Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre continued to deliver a wide variety of supports, programmes, and activities that strengthen families, nurture children, and connect our community.

Each service is designed to respond to real needs, whether that means providing direct support to families, creating opportunities for personal growth, or building stronger community links. Our work spans several key areas:

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Our Family Support Service works in partnership with parents and families who are experiencing stress, crisis, or difficulties at home. We provide individualised programmes to strengthen parenting skills, improve communication, and create safe and nurturing environments for children.

Support is offered through an intensive in-home model or a drop-in information and support service.

The work is needs-led, outcome-focused, and free and confidential. Where appropriate, we collaborate with other agencies to ensure families receive the full range of supports they need. This service is free and confidential. Geraldine Glacken is our Family Support Worker (FSW).

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

We deliver evidence-based parenting programmes in the Ballyhaunis area, facilitated by our FSW, Geraldine Glacken. These include:

- Common Sense Parenting
- Parenting When Separated
- Circle of Security
- Baby Massage

These programmes are offered regularly and provide parents with practical tools to support their children's development and family wellbeing.

MEITHEAL PROGRAMME

Our Centre actively supports the Meitheal Programme, a community-based approach to helping children and families.

Our FSW is trained for all roles within the Meitheal process and participates regularly in local meetings. We also provide a venue for Meitheal meetings, ensuring families and professionals have a safe, neutral space to collaborate. The process helps families identify their strengths and needs, develop support plans, and access services in a coordinated way.

COUNSELLING

We provide a safe, confidential environment where individuals can meet with trained counsellors by appointment. This service supports people experiencing personal difficulties and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

What We Do

PLAY THERAPY

Our Centre offers one-to-one play therapy sessions for children aged 3–13. Delivered by a qualified play therapist, play therapy uses play and creative arts to help children express themselves, work through challenges, and build resilience in a natural and supportive way.

BALLYHAUNIS COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL & GREATER TOMORROW CHILDCARE SERVICES

We operate two early years services. Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School, located at St. Mary's Abbey funded through the Department of Children, Disability and Equality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme administered by Pobal. It offers two sessional pre-school services during the school year for children aged 3 and over which is free of charge and offered to each child for two years. The Community Pre-School is open during the school year with the first session running from 9am until 12 noon. The second session starts at 12.30pm and runs until 3.30pm.

Greater Tomorrow Childcare Service, based in the Old Convent Asylum Accommodation Centre, is funded by Tusla and provides high-quality care and education.

Both services employ local childcare staff and focus on giving children the best start in life.

LEARNING & EDUCATIONAL COURSES

Throughout the year we provide a range of non-accredited courses for adults, such as art and crafts, cookery, flower arranging, introduction to tablets, and farmers' accounts. These opportunities encourage lifelong learning, skills development, and social interaction.

HOBBY & LEISURE GROUPS FOR ADULTS

We host and support groups that bring people together through creativity and friendship. Regular groups include Le Cairde Art & Music, a Crochet Group and Men's Shed. We also work with community members to start new groups and to help secure funding for their activities.

GROUPS FOR CHILDREN

Children and young people benefit from seasonal camps and activities organised at the Centre during Summer, Halloween, and Christmas. These events promote fun, active learning, and the development of new skills and interests and social integration.

BALLYHAUNIS SPORTS HUB

The Ballyhaunis Sports Hub is part of the national Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs (CSH) initiative, supported by Mayo Sports Partnership. Its purpose is to bring local sports clubs, schools, and community organizations together to increase opportunities for people of all ages to be active.

The Hub acts as a central point where the community can access information, advice, and support to get involved in sport and physical activity.

What We Do

A particular focus is placed on encouraging young people and those living in disadvantaged areas to participate, making sport more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Activities developed through the Hub are centred on community participation. This includes creating links between local sports clubs, supporting new physical activity groups, and ensuring that barriers to participation are reduced.

By working collaboratively, the Ballyhaunis Sports Hub helps to strengthen the role of sport in community life. It promotes healthier lifestyles, builds confidence among young people, and fosters a sense of belonging through shared activity.

In conjunction with support from Mayo Sports Partnership, Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre host the Ballyhaunis Sports Hub. Tracy Cunnane is our Sports Hub Coordinator.

SUPPORTING GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY

Our Centre provides a meeting place and practical support for local groups. We host organisations such as St. Vincent de Paul, Alcoholics Anonymous, Abbey Partnership, Abbey Trust, Ballyhaunis Soccer Club, and Ballyhaunis Scout Group, and we help new or developing groups to plan projects and access funding.

PROVIDING INFORMATION & ADVICE

We offer families and individuals information and practical support on a wide range of issues. This includes form filling, referrals, and signposting to other services. Over time we have built strong working relationships with state agencies, voluntary organisations, and NGOs across Mayo and beyond.

ADMIN SERVICES & RESOURCES

At the Centre we provide a range of Administration Services including Printing, Photocopying, Laminating. In addition, we provide administrative resources to individuals and groups including assistance with form filling and funding applications.

SENIOR ALERT SCHEME

We administer the Seniors Alert Scheme, which provides older people with personal monitored alarms so they can continue living independently and safely at home. Applications are processed through the Centre, with staff available to assist as needed.

FOOD CLOUD

It provides access to food donated by local supermarkets and to support our local St. Vincent de Paul organisation who operate a food bank. Food Packs containing dry and non-perishable goods are available to those in need through the Centre. Food packs can be collected on a weekly basis.

ROOM HIRE

We offer affordable room rental for external agencies and groups with equipment available on request:

- Projector and screen.
- Flipcharts.
- Wi-Fi.

We also facilitate child and family access visits.



OVERVIEW OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2024

2024 Activities

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

During 2024, our Family Support Worker (FSW) provided an intensive in-home support programme to eleven families in the Ballyhaunis area. 44 families used the drop-in service at our Centre benefitting 44 adults and 89 children through the delivery of 78 one to one meetings.


PARENTING PROGRAMMES

In conjunction with Sheena Flanagan, Home School Liaison Officer with Scoil Íosa primary school in Ballyhaunis, our FSW delivered two 6-week *Common Sense Parenting* (CSP) courses.

CSP is a skills-based programme designed to equip parents with techniques for building positive relationships, encouraging good behaviour, and managing challenging situations with children. It emphasizes practical strategies for communication, discipline, and problem-solving, aiming to create a supportive and effective parenting environment.

The first CSP course took place at our Centre from the 17th of April to the 22nd of May with seven parents completing it and the second one from the 6th of November to the 11th of December with eight parents completing it. A total of 33 children benefited from the training provided to the parents on the courses.





Common Sense Parenting Programme

WHO FOR- Parents/ Guardians/ Grandparents of children **aged 6-16**
WHEN- Wednesday 6th Nov. 2024
HOW LONG- 6 weeks 10am-12noon
WHERE- Ballyhaunis FRC

Are you interested in doing a practical, down to earth parenting course?



Common Sense Parenting® is a skills-based parenting programme for parents, guardians or grandparents who want to build on their existing parenting skills or want to learn new ways to deal with their children's behaviour such as:

- How to encourage children's positive behaviour
- How to prevent and correct misbehaviour
- How to teach instead of punish
- How to teach social skills to help their children succeed
- How to stay calm

BOOK NOW

Places are limited so if you are interested in attending the course please call or text

Geraldine on 086-0470587 or
Sheena on 087-6261531



Quotes from parent's feedback forms who took part in the courses.

I loved that the teachers were so normal and not at all judgemental.

I feel like I have my power back as a parent.

Everyone in the house is getting on better.

I realised that sometimes I was making the problem worse, when I stay calm the situation stays calmer.

I will miss it when it's over.

I wish it went on for longer, I really enjoyed it.

2024 Activities

During April, our FSW co-facilitated a six-week *Parent's Plus Parenting When Separated* course with Rione Kilcullen, FSW in Ballina Family Resource Centre.

This is a practical and positive evidence-based course for parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation or divorce. Four parents completed this course.

BABY MASSAGE

During January & February our FSW who is a trained baby massage therapist provided classes to six mammy's and babies from county Mayo.



MEITHEAL PROGRAMME

During 2024 our FSW took part in Meitheal's for three families attending six meetings.

SUPPORT TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

Our FSW also provided during 2024 support to local schools to promote positive relationships between teachers/school management and teenagers. Geraldine helped to ensure the voice of the teenager was being heard and helped the schools to find ways to meet the needs they were voicing. This was particularly helpful in instances where the relationship between home and school had become fractured or had broken down, or where there was a mismatch between what the parents expected the school to be able to provide to their child who had additional needs and what the school had the resources to provide.

Having an intermediary as part of the discussion made it easier to find a middle ground. Meetings most often included the Deputy Principal, Home School Liaison Officer, Autism Support Teacher and Special Education Teacher Coordinator.

COUNSELLING

During 2024 our Counsellor provided a safe and confidential place in our Centre for three clients providing 59 one to one sessions.

PLAY THERAPY

The Play Therapy service has grown over the year into a regular and on-going element of our work. During 2024, we supported two children who received 43 one to one sessions of play therapy support.

The Play Therapist also provided three other children with play therapy support in our Centre with a total of 58 one to one sessions.

2024 Activities



CHILDCARE SERVICES

2024 was a very busy year for our two childcare services: Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School and Greater Tomorrow.

Greater Tomorrow is a Tusla-registered Crèche at the Old Convent in Ballyhaunis. The Crèche caters for up to 20 children aged 18 months to 3 years for 4 days a week providing a morning and afternoon session each day with up to 10 places at each session. During 2024 it delivered young children with a play-based, active learning curriculum.

2024 was a lively and memorable one at Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School, filled with fun, creativity, and learning. The children engaged in a wide variety of play-based activities that helped them grow in confidence, develop new skills, and build friendships. Their weekly themes introduced the children to nature, community, and cultural celebrations, sparking their curiosity and imagination.

Outdoor play remained a highlight of each day. The children enjoyed exploring the play area, tending to the small garden, and learning about the changing seasons. They had nature walks in the local area where the children collected leaves, flowers, and other natural treasures to bring back and use in classroom projects. Physical play, from obstacle courses to free play with balls and climbing equipment, also supported their development and brought lots of laughter.



2024 Activities



STORYTELLING

Storytelling and circle time further enriched these experiences, fostering language skills and encouraging the children to share their own stories.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

A strong emphasis was placed on community and cultural awareness. The pre-school celebrated a variety of festivals and traditions throughout the year, including St. Brigid's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Eid, Halloween, and Christmas. Families were invited to join for special events, strengthening the bond between home and school.

CREATIVE ARTS

Creative arts were a big focus this year, with the children taking part in painting, crafting, and music sessions. Seasonal art projects filled the pre-school walls with colour, from spring flowers to festive winter decorations. The music and movement sessions were a favourite too, giving the children a chance to sing, dance, and express themselves freely.



2024 Activities

EASTER CRAFT FUN

The pre-schoolers welcomed the spring season with creative Easter-themed activities. They made adorable bunny crafts, showcasing hands-on, festive engagement.



COMMUNITY GARDEN VISIT

Ballyhaunis Community Garden invited the pre-school children to plant and decorate the garden for May Day 2024. Both morning and afternoon pre-school sessions attended the event.



PUPPET SHOW

On June 12th the children were delighted to welcome a puppet show to the pre-school.



2024 Activities

GRADUATION DAY

A Graduation Day celebration marked the end of the school year in June 2024 providing a special moment for the children (and their families) to commemorate their pre-school milestones.



SCIENCE WEEK EXPERIMENT

In November two Transition Year students, Emma and Gwen from Ballyhaunis Community School, visited and conducted a science experiment with the pre-schoolers bringing a playful, educational spin to their day within the context of Science Week.



SANTA’S VISIT

As the year closed, Ballyhaunis Community Pre-School was proud to see the children’s growth in independence, social skills, and creativity. The smiles, energy, and joy they brought to each activity made 2024 a truly special year for everyone involved.

2024 Activities

LEARNING & EDUCATIONAL COURSES

Another successful programme we delivered in 2024 at the Centre was the Ballyhaunis Learning Together Project. This was funded under the Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB) Adult Literacy for Life Programme (ALL). ALL is a 10-year national plan developed by SOLAS the aim of which is to help all adults develop their reading, writing, math's and digital skills, so they can fully take part in society; and ensure services are easy to use for people who may need help with literacy.

In partnership with Home School Liaison Officers from Scoil Íosa and Ballyhaunis Community School, Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre adult literacy for life project successfully engaged over 46 parents from diverse backgrounds, including nearly all migrant communities and other parents with literacy needs in the Ballyhaunis area.

Through a tailored programme identified during engagement focus groups, participants developed essential skills in conversational English, numeracy, arts and crafts, and digital literacy. The Parent Conversational English Programme integrated real-life scenarios to enhance practical language learning. The curriculum was designed around common daily situations, including communicating with schools, shopping, attending doctor appointments and managing household tasks like cooking. This practical approach ensured that parents gained language skills directly applicable to their lives.

The project provided parents with a meaningful learning opportunity - one that was both engaging and responsive to their needs. It played a vital role in equipping parents with unmet literacy needs to take a more active role in their children's education. It also created pathways for them to engage with the community and access additional supports.



2024 Activities

Technology also played a central role, equipping participants with essential digital skills. They engaged in online banking, navigating PAYE Anytime, and accessing MyGov.ie. Additionally, the Family & Community Resource Centre staff provided one-on-one support to help parents apply for medical cards and driving licences online, ensuring they could confidently navigate digital services.

Beyond traditional classroom learning, the project incorporated hands-on experiences to reinforce knowledge. A standout initiative was a visit to a local farm, where participants explored shared experiences in farming practices, rural culture, and traditional music. This interactive approach fostered real-world learning, cultural exchange, and a deeper sense of community.

By collaborating with our local National and Community School and their Home School Liaison Officers, we successfully engaged with a new cohort of parents from diverse backgrounds. Through parent consultations - organized by nationality (Syrian, Pakistani, Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian) - we identified key areas of interest, including Conversational English, Craft and Art classes and skills.



2024 Activities

Ballyhaunis Learning Together Project



This partnership, with its strong focus on addressing parents' needs, has received highly positive feedback. Parents felt heard and valued, knowing that the programmes were designed around their specific requirements. Our ability to respond quickly to these needs strengthened trust between all stakeholders - encouraging deeper collaboration and continued engagement.

Our Centre played a key role by providing the venue, recruiting tutors, and managing administration.

We were awarded an AONTAS Star award for providing adult learning initiatives that supported social inclusion.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES:

I have been attending English lessons for more than a year. I am very satisfied with my teachers who are dedicated to all of us. My English has improved a lot. I hope that the lessons will continue.

I like to attend English course because thanks to my teacher I have improved my English. Thomas is a very good teacher. I hope the course will start again soon.

I attended English lessons in Ballyhaunis and I am waiting for them to start again because my English has improved. Thomas and Brendan are good teachers.

2024 Activities

HOBBY & LEISURE GROUPS FOR ADULTS & YOUNG PEOPLE

Le Cairde is a local community group that meets weekly to socialize, learn new skills, share interests, and make friends. It's a space where diverse community members come together and connect through mutual interests and activities.

In 2024, Le Cairde played a central role in fostering creativity, cultural expression, and community engagement in Ballyhaunis and delivered a programme of activities at our Family & Community Resource Centre. This programme comprised of a structured series of workshops, performances, and exhibitions designed to encourage artistic participation across all age groups.



Key activities during 2024 included:

- **Art Workshops** - Weekly art workshops were held on Monday afternoons at our Centre. Open to participants of all ages, these sessions promoted creativity, inclusion, and self-expression, with support from the Creative Ireland Programme.
- **Instrumental Music Masterclasses**- A series of instrumental masterclasses took place on Saturdays during the summer months. These classes provided aspiring musicians with opportunities to develop their technical skills, explore new instruments, and enhance their musical knowledge.
- **Art Exhibitions and Community Showcases** An exhibition of member artwork was curated and displayed at both our Centre and Ballyhaunis Library. This initiative celebrated local creativity and amplified community voices, supported by the Creative Ireland Programme.



2024 Activities

- **Summer Activities** Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre was alive with creativity as Le Cairde hosted a vibrant Cruinniú na nÓg celebration on June 15th. The event welcomed around 50 young people who took part in a range of engaging art and music workshops, including wand making, stone painting, songwriting, youth music group sessions, and a music showcase. A highlight of the day was a successful Jam Band session, where participants came together to create and perform music, finishing with the composition of an original song.



2024 Activities

Summer activities also included a community project in the Ballyhaunis Community Garden, where the art group undertook a large-scale mural painting, adding colour and creativity to the shared space.



- **Community Outreach** - In April 2024, an Information Evening was held at the Old Convent, specifically engaging residents in direct provision. The event introduced attendees to local creative initiatives and promoted participation through inclusive and welcoming dialogue. Through these initiatives, Le Cairde has contributed significantly to the artistic and cultural life of Ballyhaunis, while strengthening social inclusion and community cohesion.



2024 Activities

SUMMER ACTIVITIES CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre organized a range of exciting summer activities for children and young people in 2024. Planning meetings with Home School Liaison Officers, Olive Lyons (Ballyhaunis Community School) and Sheena Flanagan (Scoil Íosa National School), helped shape a programme that met the needs of the local community.

Scoil Íosa National School ran two DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) summer camps, each hosting 36 children, offering structured and enriching activities for participants.

In collaboration with Foroige, a variety of engaging workshops were offered throughout the summer including Dance, Drama, Music, Cookery and Wellness providing opportunities for fun, learning, and social connection over multiple sessions.

Our Sports Hub Coordinator Tracy Cunnane delivered a variety of sporting activities for young people over the summer. During May and June, *Tots for Fun* sessions were held in the Community Hall. In August, *Her Outdoors* volleyball sessions for teen girls took place in Hazelhill over four consecutive Wednesdays. Additionally, on August 9th and 10th, children's multi-sports sessions were held in the Friary grounds for two groups each day: 8–11-year-olds and 11+ year-olds.

These summer initiatives highlight the Centre's commitment to providing enjoyable, inclusive, and meaningful activities for children and young people in the community.

BALLYHAUNIS SPORTS HUB

Ballyhaunis Sports Hub continued to provide inclusive and engaging physical activity programmes throughout 2024, supporting the health, wellbeing, and social connections of the Ballyhaunis community.

Our Sport Hub Coordinator, Tracy Cunnane, delivered a wide range of sporting and recreational activities for children, young people, and adults throughout 2024, promoting inclusive, engaging, and healthy community participation physical activities.

Youth and Children's Activities:

- *Tots for Fun*: Sessions for pre-school children were held in the Community Hall during May and June.
- *Her Outdoors*: Teen girls enjoyed four consecutive weekly volleyball sessions in Hazelhill during August.



2024 Activities

- *Children's Multi-Sports:* On August 9th and 10th, multi-sports sessions were delivered in the Friary Grounds, catering for 8-11-year-olds and 11+ year-olds.
- *Mini Sports Camp:* A summer camp for 8-12-year-olds provided an opportunity for skill development and fun activities.
- *Children's Fun Fitness Programme:* Engaged 16 children in fun fitness activities alongside *Tots for Fun* sessions.

Adult & Community Programmes:

- *Men's Health Week Table Tennis:* Delivered from June 14th for four weeks, two hours per session, including free participation for men from the Direct Provision Centre (5 attendees).
- *Family Fun Day:* Organized a penalty shoot-out activity on June 3rd during the Ballyhaunis Family Fun Day.
- *Seniorgise Programmes:* Two programmes delivered, engaging 18 participants.
- *Zumba Programmes:* Two programmes delivered, with 15 participants in total.
- *Aqua Aerobics & Exercise to Music Classes:* Continued engagement for adult participants.
- *Cycle Training Programme:* Delivered for 16 youth and 3 adults.
- *Activator Poles Walking.* Delivered on Thursdays in Clare Court.



Ballyhaunis Activator Poles

Thursday 1045am

Clare court

Tracy Cunnane 0860618126 for informatio



Mayo Sports Partnership



Cordalyhaunioch Spóirt Mhaigh Eo

2024 Activities

Community Engagement & Support

- The planning for the 2024 Abbey Pattern was completed but was postponed due to the death of Stephen Grogan on the 17th of August.
- Community Sports Forum / Network: Attended an online meeting in Q1 2024 and participated in club and group meetings in Q4.
- Ongoing Support: Assisted local basketball and community games clubs to promote participation and skill development.

These activities demonstrate the Sport Hub's dedication to providing accessible, meaningful, and enjoyable opportunities for all members of the Ballyhaunis community.

During 2024, 189 adults and 485 children took part in 19 activities organised by the Ballyhaunis Sport Hub.



FAMILY ACCESS VISITS

40 Family access visits (enabling parents to meet with their children who are in foster care in the Ballyhaunis area) took place in the Centre during 2024.

SPACE FOR MEETINGS

During 2024, 12 external organisations used the centre for a total of 138 meetings. Organisations included MABS, Mayo Women's Support Service/Safe Ireland, Tusla Family Support, Probation Service, Restorative Justice Service and Employability Mayo.

INFORMATION PROVISION & REFERRAL

118 families accessed information, advice and advocacy support while 13 adults were referred to a range of different services for support by Centre Staff in 2024.

ADMIN SERVICES & SUPPORTS

During 2024, 96 individuals and 8 groups availed of the range of Administration Services and Supports we provide.

FOOD CLOUD

Our food bank service was accessed 48 times and supported 10 adults and 20 children during 2024.

SENIOR ALERT SCHEME

Our Project Administrator supported 28 applicants whose senior alert pedants were supplied and fitted during 2024.



CASE STUDIES

Case Study

Ballyhaunis Men's Shed – A Space Revitalised

In 2024, Ballyhaunis Men's Shed Association celebrated the completion of significant enhancement works at St Mary's Abbey, also known locally as the Friary. The improvements included clearing and resurfacing the entrance path and roadway, as well as laying a new surface directly outside the Shed. These works have not only provided safer access but also created a proper yard for the group and easier routes to the Abbey's back fields. Funding for the project was secured through support from Mayo County Council, the Irish Men's Shed Association, and South West Mayo Development Company. The official opening was performed by Cllr. John Cribbin, who retired in 2024 after decades of service. He congratulated the group on their achievement and reflected on his long-standing support, which dates back to a €100 contribution when the Shed first started in 2013.

The Shed's journey is a story of transformation. From its beginnings in a small, rented building off Main Street, the group moved in 2015 to their current home behind the Community Pre-School at the Friary car park. Thanks to the Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust and Abbey Partnership, what were once derelict farm buildings of the Augustinian Friars have become a welcoming and functional workspace.

Over the years, members have carried out extensive renovations: installing new doors and windows, cleaning, repairing, and creating a space where people can come together. Today, the Men's Shed is more than a workshop. It is a place where men of all ages gather to share skills, enjoy company, and take positive action to improve their health and wellbeing. Through this work, Ballyhaunis Men's Shed was revitalised with new men coming on board, contributing their time, labour and willingness to work together. In doing so, they created not just a Shed, but a community.

During 2024, Ballyhaunis Men's Shed was open every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon and continued to play an important role in community life.



L to R: Seamus Freeman, Jim Goulding, Cllr. John Cribbin, John Webb, Tracey McDermott (BFCRC), Con Boyle and Stephen Grogan (BFCRC).

Case Study

Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre Crochet Group

Our crochet group was established back in 2010, and the group was started from a retired nurse attending our Centre to take part in a beginner's computer course for an eight-week period. When the computer course finished the retired nurse explained how much she had enjoyed the course and would miss the social outing once a week and making new friends.

As the Project Administrator for the Centre I enquired with the lady had she any skills that she could share and one of her skills was crochet, so we decided to start a crochet group and agreed a time and day and started the following Friday.

The group all helped one another along the way, the cup of tea and biscuits and the chat are important and the social connection of making friends, sharing stories, laughter and a few tears.

The group has no tutor so therefore have no costs involved and each of the women help one another. When the group started, we had two women that could not crochet, and it transpires that they had a talent for it making some wonderful creations. Sadly, one of those women died and she is greatly missed.



Ballyhaunis crochet group meets every Friday from 10am to 12 noon. The group is open to all in the community and all you have to do is show up with your crochet hook & wool. Lately we have had women join who also like to knit and that is also great and welcomed.



Throughout the last fourteen years there has been many projects completed. We received community funding from the Mayo, Sligo, and Leitrim Education & Training Board (MSLETB) and there was a piece of artwork created using crochet, fabrics and knitting. This artwork was framed, and it takes pride of place in the board room in our Family & Community Resource Centre.

The group have made muffles for people with dementia in Brookvale Nursing Home in Ballyhaunis. During 2024 all of the crochet group members visited Brookvale Nursing Home, and we spent a morning having a coffee and a chat with the residents.

Crocheted blankets were also made and donated to Marion House Respite Home in Ballindine, Co. Mayo and for the Mayo, Roscommon Hospice.

Crochet and knitted blankets were donated to Ava Maria Nursing Home in Tooreen, Ballyhaunis earlier this year some of these blankets were made from a donation of wool from a local woman, for which we were very thankful to receive.



Tracey McDermott, Project Administrator BFCRC with Care Staff from Ava Maria Nursing Home, Tooreen.

Our group made lots of crochet and knitted items which include puppets, dolls, gloves, handbags, and numerous other bits for the 2024 Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal which helps vulnerable children overseas.

When the group have a break in the summer we go out for lunch, it is the social connection that is so important, and lovely friendships have been made down through the years.

Case Study

Ballyhaunis Sports Hub *Exercise to Music* 2024

Project Overview

Exercise to Music was introduced to engage parents and women of all communities and ethnicities in Ballyhaunis. The programme aimed to provide a fun, social environment, deliver physical and mental health benefits, and foster community integration while giving women an opportunity to meet new people.

Target Group and Partnerships

The target group was identified by the Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre, the local Friends of the Old Convent group, Ballyhaunis community members and the Home School Liaison Officers from the national and community schools. Partnerships were formed with the local schools to identify parents who could benefit from the programme.

Programme Delivery

- Venue: Ballyhaunis Community Hall.
- Frequency: Weekly, Thursdays at 9:30 am, 1-hour sessions.
- Duration: Two 6-week cycles.
- Resources: Existing exercise mats, coordinator's stereo, Community Hall facilities.
- Coordinator: Tracy Cunnane, Ballyhaunis Sports Hub Coordinator.

Programme Impact

- Provided a fun and social physical activity outlet for parents and women.
- Delivered health benefits through regular exercise.
- Encouraged participants to join additional sessions on Tuesdays.
- Some members also joined the *Ireland Lights Up* walking programme with Ballyhaunis GAA Club at the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence.

Participant Feedback

I am really enjoying the group classes. I am 77 and feel great to be able to exercise with girls at least half my age. I went in to support the class not thinking I would be able for it. It has upped my walking game as I walk a lot and my family in America are happy to see me getting on okay since my son died. It has helped me with my grief. – Merrilyn.

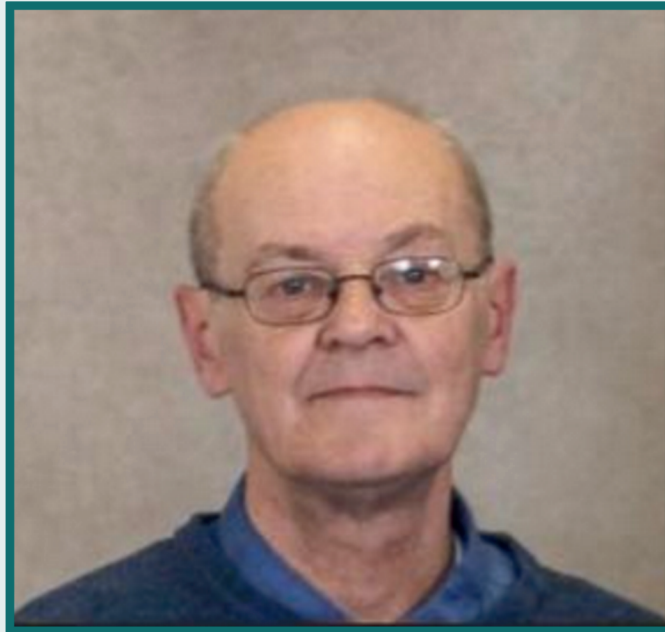


Future Plans

Exercise to Music will continue in 2025, providing an inclusive and enjoyable physical activity programme for the Ballyhaunis community.



In Memoriam Stephen Grogan



In Memoriam: Stephen Grogan (d. 17th August 2024)

It is with deep sadness that Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre marks the unexpected death of our former Coordinator, Stephen Grogan, on 17th August 2024. Stephen was a dedicated community leader whose work and vision left an indelible mark on Ballyhaunis and beyond.

Stephen's commitment to community and social justice was evident throughout his life. He began his journey in student politics, serving as President of Galway Regional Technical College Students' Union in 1986/87, followed by roles with AMLÉ in Dublin, the International Union of Students in Prague, and the European Students' Union in Vienna. He also served as Secretary General of the European Youth Forum in Brussels.

Returning to Ireland in 1998, Stephen worked with the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed in Dublin and then Kiltimagh IRD, in Mayo delivering programmes to support social inclusion. Ultimately, he brought his energy, knowledge, and passion back home to Mayo, where he led Ballyhaunis Family and Community Resource Centre.

Stephen was highly regarded for his dedication, generosity, and expertise. He actively supported numerous local community initiatives, providing guidance, securing funding, and sharing his extensive knowledge to benefit others. His meticulous attention to detail, research skills, and commitment to the development of Ballyhaunis made a lasting impact on the community. Stephen's leadership and contributions were felt across the many groups and committees he served, leaving a legacy that will continue to inspire those who knew him.

Stephen is fondly remembered by his family, friends, colleagues, and the wider Ballyhaunis community. He is deeply missed, and his legacy of service, commitment, and leadership will continue to inspire us all.



Board Structure & Staffing

Board Structure

Neart h-Amhnais Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta trading as Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. During 2024, the Board met nine times. The Board was supported in its work by a Finance Sub-Committee and Staff Liaison Sub-Committee.

The role of Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre (BFCRC) Board of Directors is to:

- Ensure that the organisation has an appropriate legal structure and is representative and inclusive of people from all parts of the community.
- Develop the overall vision, aims and objectives of the organisation.
- Make policy decisions and/or changes and develop internal policies, procedures and appropriate codes of practice.
- Ensure that all members of the Staff, the Board and Volunteers abide by the policies and procedures of BFCRC.
- Ensure that BFCRC fulfils its legal obligations.
- Take on the role as employers, ensure that BFCRC follows good employment practice and delegates responsibility for Staff support and supervision to a Staff Liaison Sub-Committee.
- Ensure accountability for all finances and delegate the management of that to a Finance Sub-Committee and the Coordinator/Project Administrator.
- Contribute to the development of BFCRC Strategic Plans and ensure ongoing review and planning takes place.
- Ensure that the voluntary Board of Directors of BFCRC have appropriate training to carry out their role.
- Positively represent the organisation to outside groups and media etc.
- Ensure that BFCRC is in touch with the needs of the community and be open to feedback and consultation.
- Assess Risk and ensure it is managed and be accountable to all stakeholders.

Meeting Attendance 2024

The Board of Directors met nine times during 2024. They held their AGM on the 16th of July 2024. The table below outlines the Board member attendance at Board meetings during 2024:

NAMES	NO OF MEETINGS	BOARD MEETINGS ATTENDED	APOLOGIES
Manar Cherbatji (Resigned 15/10/2024)	9	3	4
Marie Jordan (Resigned 16/07/2024)	9	3	1
Mairead Murphy Damron (Resigned 16/07/2024)	9	3	1
Merrilyn Anne Finn Winter	9	9	0
Tzyy Pyng Wang	9	9	0
Muhammad Usman Sarwar (Appointed 19/03/2024)	9	6	3
Grahame Cleary (Appointed 19/03/2024)	9	8	1
Keith Samuel Jones (Appointed 19/03/2024)	9	8	1
Jillian Mulvaney (Resigned 30/01/2024)	9	1	0
Seamus Grogan (Resigned 23/01/2024)	9	0	0

Staffing 2024

Staffing - 2024

Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre Staff

- Stephen Grogan, Project Coordinator (until 17th of August 2024)
- Tracey McDermott, Project Administrator
- Geraldine Glacken, Family Support Worker
- Tracy Cunnane, Sports Hub Coordinator

Ballyhaunis Preschool Staff

- Hina Rehman, Childcare Manager
- Saima Amjad, Senior Childcare Practitioner
- Annette Regan, Senior Childcare Practitioner
- Caroline Greally, Childcare Practitioner
- Linda Regan, Childcare Practitioner
- Roseleen Conneally, Childcare Practitioner - Aim Support
- Rebecca Morley, Childcare Practitioner - Aim Support
- Nicola Weir, Childcare Practitioner
- Chantelle Maughan, Childcare Scheme Worker

Greater Tomorrow Staff

- Helen Kiely, Childcare Leader
- Nicola Ryan, Childcare Practitioner



Networking & Representation

Networking & Representation

During 2024, Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre (BFCRC) actively engaged in networking and collaborative initiatives at local, regional, and national levels. The Centre maintained participation in a variety of forums, committees, and working groups, including:

- The Western Regional Forum of FRCs.
- Mayo FRC Coordinators Network.
- The Family Resource Centre National Forum.
- Children & Young People Service Committees (CYPSC) and associated sub-groups.
- Networking with other organizations and agencies across county, regional, and national levels.
- FRC Employers Collective Action Group.
- Mayo County Council sponsored Town Centre First Working Group.
- East Mayo Child & Family Support Network (CFSN) quarterly meetings.
- Peer support groups for Decider Skills and Non-Violent Resistance programmes.

FRC Western Regional Forum

Staff and Board members attended meetings of the Western Regional Forum.

Collaborative initiatives in 2024 included:

- Working with FRCs in Oughterard (Galway), Castlerea (Roscommon), and Ballina (Mayo) to organize a Coordinators Implementation Event covering charity obligations, audit requirements, and governance best practices.
- Planning a Regional Induction Event for Board members via Zoom.
- Participation in ongoing FRC Employers Collective Action Group initiatives, in cooperation with SIPTU, addressing longer-term employment issues following the previous year's industrial dispute and wage increase.

Local & Regional Engagement

Ballyhaunis FCRC is the Mayo representative on the Regional Literacy Coalition (shared with Sligo FRC), with the Coordinator attending the spring meeting in Swinford, Co. Mayo.

Town Centre First Initiative

Ballyhaunis FCRC participated in the Mayo County Council sponsored Town Centre First process, which aims to develop a community-based plan to promote the social and economic revival of towns. Five meetings took place during 2024.

Key achievements include:

- Understanding the Town Centre First process and the role of the Town Team.
- Gathering existing planning and community documentation, including LAP/CDP, Community Futures strategies, zoning, feasibility studies, protected structures, and heritage objectives.
- Conducting a preliminary SCOT analysis (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats).
- Mapping the town centre and developing a long list of potential projects.
- Identifying main linguistic groupings in Ballyhaunis.
- Listing relevant organizations for consultation across four categories.

The next step is to appoint an external consultant, supported by a €30,000 allocation from Mayo County Council. The Community Pre-School project has been promoted at all meetings and will be included in future planning.

National Engagement

In November 2024, Tracey McDermott, Project Administrator, Manar Cherbatji and Merrilyn Finn Winter, Board Member attended the Family Resource Centre National Forum Conference on *Inclusive Communities and Intercultural Practice* in Athlone.





Public Profile & Community Engagement

Public Profile & Community Engagement

Throughout 2024, Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre leveraged traditional media and digital platforms to publicise news and activities related to the centre.

The Western People regularly acknowledged the work of the Centre during the year. In March, the paper reported on the appointment of three new voluntary board members - Grahame Cleary, Muhammad Usman Sarwar, and Keith Jones - emphasising the strength and breadth of leadership within the organisation. Later that month, the Centre was again featured for its contribution to highlighting deficiencies in local healthcare provision, with the Centre Coordinator articulating the urgent need for enhanced services in Ballyhaunis.

In April, the newspaper drew attention to the launch of a parenting programme delivered at the Centre, as well as our support for children's participation in the Community Games. A significant milestone was reached in May, when the Western People carried the announcement of an increase in our annual core funding to €160,000, a development that will provide a secure basis for the continuation and expansion of our services. Later in the year, the publication recorded the death of our colleague and Coordinator, Stephen Grogan, acknowledging his longstanding and valued contribution to both the Centre and the wider community.

Complementing this traditional media coverage are the presence of the Family & Community Resource Centre, Ballyhaunis Pre-school and Ballyhaunis Sports Hub Facebook pages which played an important role in public engagement throughout 2024. Social media was used to promote our 2024 Community Education courses, Arts & Craft courses, Parenting Programmes, Family Supports, Pre-School and Sport Hub activities. These posts provided timely updates, encouraged participation, and reinforced our commitment to inclusivity, lifelong learning, health and wellbeing and supports and services for individuals and families in Ballyhaunis.

Traditional media and digital platforms remain important channels to convey news and information related to the centre and the sector. This is an area the Board will work to develop more fully in the coming year.



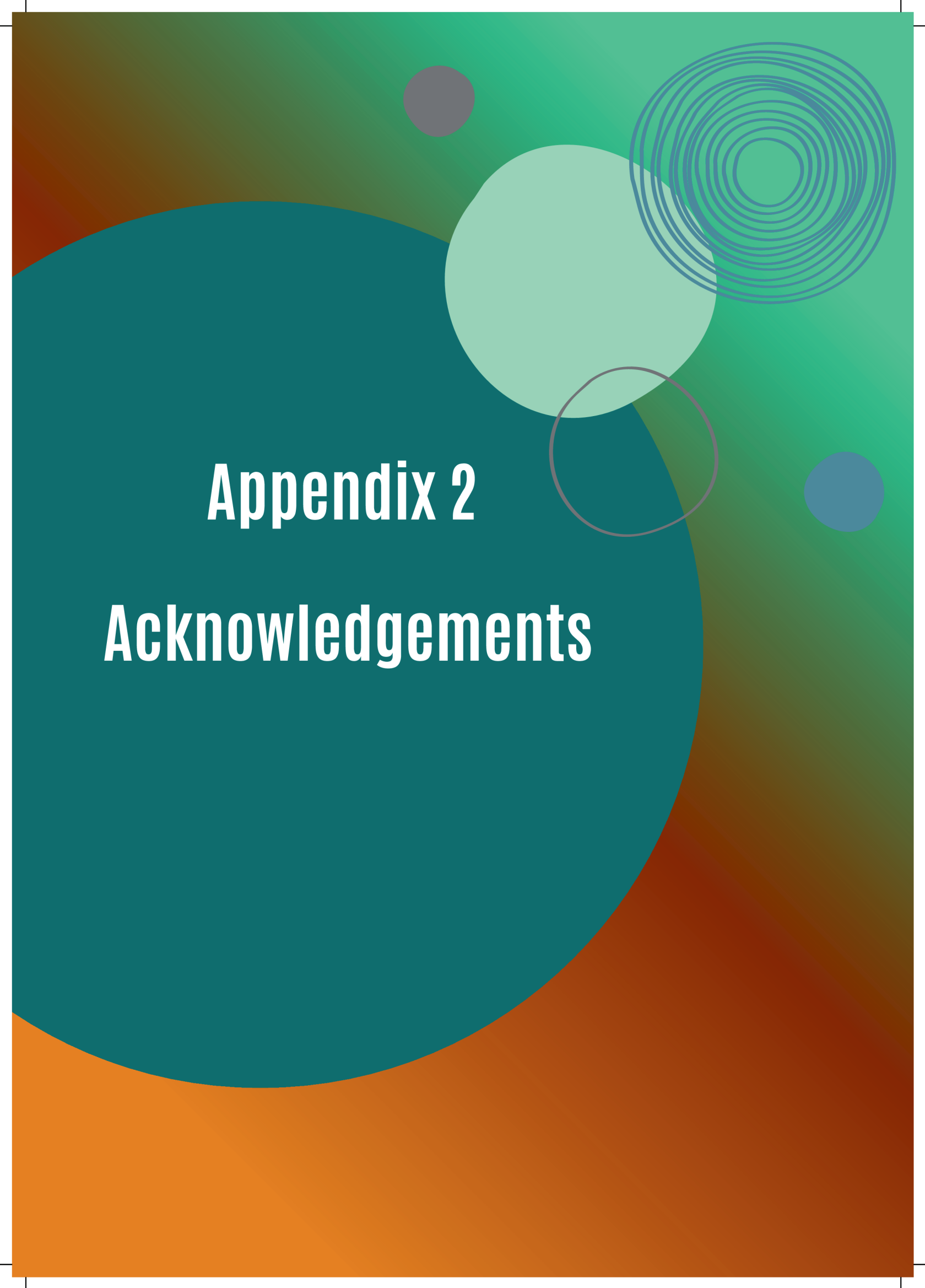
Appendix 1

Financial Report

Appendix 1

Summary extract of Income & Expenditure from 2024 Audited Financial Statements

	2024		2023	
	€	€	€	€
Income				
Tusla		288,994		232,592
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth (DCEDIY)		7,000		3,000
Solas		13,296		5,584
Pobal Ballyhaunis Community Pre School - (ECCE)		134,122		139,419
Pobal Ballyhaunis Community Pre School - (AIM)		14,088		16,320
Pobal Ballyhaunis Community Pre School - (NCS Programme)		3,857		3,144
Pobal - (Energy Support Scheme)		-		2,298
Pobal - SAS Organisation Administration Payments (Pendant Alarms)		390		340
Mayo Sports Partnership Grant		6,917		14,584
Family Support Host Costs		3,753		3,432
Ballyhaunis Community Pre School Light & Heat		3,570		3,666
Greater Tomorrow Host Costs		2,529		-
HSE Lottery Funding		3,000		-
Alcoholics Anonymous		700		500
MABS – Money Advice & Budgeting Service		-		200
Other Funding		-		301
Mayo County Council		615		-
Restorative Justice Funding		80		-
		482,911		425,380
Administrative Expenses				
Ballyhaunis Community Pre School Payments	131,418		131,724	
Greater Tomorrow Creche Payments	53,166		42,028	
Family Support Worker Payments	68,307		70,121	
Sports Partnership Payments	14,892		13,937	
Wages (Coordinator and Administrator)	84,011		96,812	
Employer's PRSI (Coordinator & Administrator)	9,212		10,698	
DCEDIY Project Payments	5,583		-	
Resilience Funding Repaid	-		3,679	
Dormant Account Project Payments	2,300		22,117	
Solas Project Payments	11,845		5,050	
Team Building	426		-	
Josephine Lally - FRC Review	2,600		-	
Rent	5,165		5,165	
Insurance	1,486		1,486	
Electricity	8,925		9,656	
Heating Oil	3,473		3,721	
Office Supplies	791		844	
Postage	-		24	
Telephone	904		1,029	
Computer Costs	105		778	
Recruitment Costs	447		-	
Travel & Subsistence	100		1,138	
Audit Fees	2,177		2,177	
Bank Charges	212		208	
General Services-Waste Bins	811		832	
Supervalu/Londis	330		485	
Senior Alert	62		62	
Depreciation on Creche Facility & Equipment	8,611		8,553	
Depreciation on FF & Equipment	4,604		5,676	
		421,963		438,000
Surplus/(Deficit)		60,948		(12,620)



Appendix 2

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

Ballyhaunis Family & Community Resource Centre would like to thank all the Funders who supported the delivery of our work during 2024.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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