



19th Edition July 2023

Kerry Social Farming Newsletter

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. It's been a while but we're delighted to be back with all the news from social farming across Kerry. We hope that you're enjoying your summer and having a break from work and routine. There are lots of places and activity to enjoy in the county and we hope the weather will be kind over the coming weeks!

NEW HOST FARMS

Sean Kennedy, Dingle and Thomas Ryan, Camphill

My name is Thomas Ryan and I started Social Farming in March 2023 with Sean Kennedy my neighbour who is a Social Farming Host Farmer and I just love it. I really look forward to every Friday morning when I go down to Sean's farm and help him. I knew Sean before I started working with him which helped but he has been great to work alongside and both Sean and his family have been very welcoming to me. Sean really takes time to explain things to me and show me how to do things on the farm and we get stuck into the tasks together as a team.



I helped a lot when the cows had their calves and were still in the shed, feeding and bedding them. I really enjoyed this and me and Sean work well together. Now Sean and I do lots of different jobs together on the farm, counting and feeding the calves, checking the cows in the field, ensuring they have clean water, fixing and moving fences, cleaning out pens out and so much more.

I really enjoy working on the farm with Sean and I would recommend social farming to anyone who is thinking of doing it. *Thomas Ryan, Supported by Staff of Camphill Community Dingle.*

Lisa O’Sullivan Killorglin – welcome to Lisa who began as a host farmer in early 2023. Three participants, Robert McCarron, Seamus O’Connor and now Pat Tangney are social farming with Lisa, supported by St John of God services in Killorglin.



Thomas & Nora Greaney, Annascaul – Thomas heard about social farming at a Teagasc Farm Walk in Lispole during 2022. Participant Liam Purcell began coming to the farm earlier this year and is now well established, with support from Inspired Tralee. There’s plenty of work to do as we can see in the photo above.

William Dennehy, Currow – The Dennehy dairy farm in Currow is host farm for Andrew Gardiner who comes from Kerry Parents and Friends service. Social farming began here earlier in the summer.

Browne’s Agri, Castleisland – This is the first Agri-Store to act as hosts for social farming, with Dennis O’Connor taking the lead. Michael Cronin began social farming, supported by National Learning Network Tralee.

Social Farming in Glencar with Breeda O’Sullivan

I have had a very busy year so far and have enjoyed every minute of it. We had a very busy time in Glencar the week of the Farm Elder Project from Germany. We had a filming crew on Breeda’s farm and I helped with the whole event.

This was me trying out my skills using a scythe! Breeda has shown me how to feed the cattle when they are housed over the winter. They love silage and hay. Here I am with my host farmer Breeda from Glencar. She presented me with a One 4 All voucher and cert for participating in all the training day with social farming. I bought the new Kerry jersey out of my One 4 All voucher! The weather was beautiful and ideal for farming.



A special message for Bronagh Enright



Bronagh Enright has been a social farming participant with The Barna Way, Ballybunion for the last 5 years. This month she is moving to the midlands so will no longer be with St John of God's Listowel and social farming. Bronagh will be missed a lot by Rena, Lisa, Antoinette, John, Kate, Ginger the cat and Kerry the dog. She is a very special person and brought so much laughter and fun to the farm every Friday. She was involved in every project for the last 5 years including the KSF biodiversity EIP, farm walks, making bird boxes, planting flowers, minding the animals and making apple tarts. Bronagh also loved taking part in the Radio Kerry Media Training. We wish Bronagh all the best in her new life adventure.

News from Rebecca, Daniel and Gerald with Irene Brune in Iveragh

What skills do you always need on a farm? Maintenance skills!

To be able to use tools safely, we approached Tech Amergin, Waterville, if we could get some tool safety training. And so, we did! We got two sets of Community Education hours.



We started learning to mark timber, for either cutting or drilling. Once we had marked the place for the hole, we used the hammer and puncher to make a small indentation. This is to avoid the drill bit slipping out of position when starting drilling with the cordless drill or the pillar drill. The hammering was fun and helped us with developing hand-eye coordination. For the cutting we learned to use the chop saw which demanded to keep two hands on the trigger and lever, which makes it a safe job.



In the first set we came up with the idea of creating a



seed library, where people could bring their spare seeds in exchange for others. Another group in the centre wanted to join and made a design. While we made the boxes, they built the shelving system in the shape of a tree trunk. The boxes were then labelled with pictures for the different plant categories, so you wouldn't need to read when looking for example for carrot seeds. At the



end of May the seed library was launched.



In the second set of community education hours, we designed products which would benefit the social farming. Rebecca got a tailor made step, to make access to work surfaces and machines more comfortable. It is portable and she can bring it in the car where ever she goes. Then we made a sawing horse for cutting firwood for all the trees Daniel likes to dig up or pull out! A big thank you to the brilliant woodwork teacher Susanne McCarthy from all of us, Rebecca, Gerald and Daniel.

Social Farming in Ardfert with Cian Begley



Since Christmas for the first part of the year Cian was very busy keeping the stables, cleaning and helping to keep the sheep fed as it was lambing season. Since around March as the weather improved Cian has been out and about in the fields helping to rebuild fences and pens for the Sheep as they are being prepared for sale and butcher. Cian in the last few weeks has helped to pen the sheep in and weigh them this has been all outdoors in the fields and Cian has been a great help. Cian has also been helping Peter with Chickens as Peter recently had chicken coups built close to his house. With the good weather Cian has been helping Peter's neighbour Pat to do some gardening and helping him clean up after hedge cutting and composting. Cian has been doing really well and has been responding very positively to the changes in activities on the farm and has taken on board everything.

Welcome to Leah & Emily!

Congratulations to KSF Facilitator Evelyn O'Connell and her husband John on the safe arrival of Leah & Emily in March 2023.



FarmElder visit to Kerry

FarmElder European project group visited us from 9th - 12th of May. FarmElder (www.farmelder.eu) which is funded by Erasmus+, has partners in Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia and Germany. The group were based in Kenmare and enjoyed local hospitality and amenities during their stay.



KSF host farmers at the O'Sullivan farm, Glencar (l-r) Pat O'Sullivan host, Joseph McCrohan (SKDP), Anni and Josef Hindelang (social farmers from Bavaria), Christy McDonnell (Foilmore), Eamon Horgan (Kilgarvan) and John O'Shea (Blackwater).

On Wednesday 10th, the group visited Breeda & Pat O'Sullivan's sheep and suckler farm in the Bridia Valley, Glencar, which has been a host farm since 2017. Breeda O'Sullivan, supported by St John of God Services Killorglin, comes to the farm and helps with feeding cattle and sheep and at lambing time. Farmer Breeda was interviewed by FarmElder team and gave her insights into her own continued involvement in social farming and her enthusiasm for the project. Eight KSF host farmers and participant Tara O'Sullivan (Killarney) came along also. Anni & Josef Hindelang, host farmers from Bavaria, talked about their experiences of hosting groups of people with dementia and their carers on their farm since 2020. Sari Houlihan (Radio Kerry) carried out interviews which were broadcast on Agritime on Thursday 11th May. link to podcast here - <https://www.radiokerry.ie/podcasts/agritime/agritime-april-11th-2023-330622>



The FarmElder group with Joseph McCrohan (left) and Eamon Horgan(right) from Kerry Social Farming and Sam Maguire

On Thursday there was an open event on the farm of Michael Joe & Brid Murphy in Slaheny, Kilgarvan. Farmers, social farming participants, service providers, social farming projects from across Ireland, support services such as Rockmount Day Centre Kilgarvan, and local representatives were among the large attendance, who heard from a range of speakers about how social farming in Kerry is operating and its potential to expand to assist older people and those living with dementia.

Speakers included Claire McAuliffe (Teagasc Advisor) and member of KSF Working Group, Dr Brendan O'Keeffe (O'Keeffe Research) and the Hindelang family. Thanks to Michael Joe & Brid Murphy and their family for their great hospitality on the day.



The group travelled on to Kenmare Community Garden, which is being developed as an inclusive space for young and old. The Garden is a Case Study for FarmElder, focusing on the part played by in its development by local resident Denise McClure. Manager of Taobh Linn Centre, Tanya O'Sullivan and Patricia Holbein (SKDP Board/ Kenmare Community Garden Committee member) explained how the site has progressed from vacant waste ground to what is now a haven of activity with a polytunnel, a large number of raised beds and recently planted native trees and fruit trees. Work is ongoing to develop the garden as a space for local school

students to learn about nature and how to grow their own fruit and vegetables. This work is being done with the assistance of SKDP Rural Social Scheme members and supervisor Donal McCarthy. Goran Milošević from Mosaic (Slovenia) spoke of a similar project in Slovenia. Thanks to all who helped make the visit a success and we look forward to future FarmElder events over the coming years.

Kerry Eco-Social Farming EIP



The final training and Meitheals of the EIP took place over the Spring with a closing event at Sandy Feet Farm, Camp on March 29th. The final report can be seen on the Kerry Social Farming website at this link <https://www.southkerry.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/End-of-Project-Report-KESF-EIP-Ref-LLOC5032.pdf>

We are hoping to have printed copies of the report available soon. Thanks to Luke Myers, KESF Biodiversity Officer for all his work over the 15 months of the EIP. He has raised our knowledge and awareness of what we can all do for nature on our farms and in our communities. Through this

unique and inclusive project, he has also helped raise the profile of social farming, while collaborating with new sectors of society and education. Thanks to all host farmers, participants and support staff who assisted in making sure that everyone could attend as many events as possible.

Well done to Martin Murphy (Cordal) who designed the beautiful logo above for Kerry Eco-Social Farming. Martin attends on Joan Brosnan's farm.

Photos show Kevin O'Sullivan, Chairperson of KESF Operational Group addressing the group at the KESF celebration event in Sandy Feet Farm & training at Gortbrack farm in March.



UCC Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming

Well done to all the students who completed this course during 2022 and had their Graduation as part of ACE Conferings at UCC on 28th March 2023. Congratulations to Bernie Curran (Cahirsiveen), Mary Fleming (Kilcummin), Alan Lawlor (Listowel), Margaret Thornton Lawlor (Listowel), Marlena Jones (Ballyduff) and Luke Myers (Kerry Eco-Social Farming) who completed the course, with funding support from Kerry ETB.

Applications are now open for September 2023 - see this link <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-cpsf/> for more details contact Programme Coordinator Helena O'Connor h.oconnor@ucc.ie



Graduating in March were (l-r) Bernie Curran, Luke Myers, Mary Fleming and Edel Burke (Co. Clare).

Teagasc Farm Walks

Our Facilitators continue to speak at Teagasc events. Most recently Rena Blake attended Dairy Farm Walk at Casey Farm, Causeway and John Lynch spoke at a farmer meeting organised by Teagasc Advisor Kevin Stagg in Kilcummin, Killarney. Mary Fleming (Host Farmer) also spoke at this gathering regarding her own experiences with social farming. Facilitators report a high level of awareness about Kerry Social Farming among the farming community and are hopeful that new farmers will emerge from these events. We'd encourage you all to share your social farming stories whenever you can, it might make the difference for someone whose thinking about getting involved, as a host farmer or participant. Thanks to Claire McAuliffe & all Teagasc advisors for their assistance.

Annual meeting 2023

KSF held its Annual Meeting at Rose Hotel, Tralee on January 27th. Over 70 people attended. It was a great opportunity for all involved with social farming to meet and chat in a relaxed atmosphere. Chairman of KSF Working Group Éamon Horgan welcomed everyone and noted how the project is now entering its 10th year. The meeting heard that social farming activity had bounced back after two disrupted years, with over 850 social farming days provided in the first six months of 2022.

Host farmers Jan & Karen Tetteroo shared how becoming host farmers has changed life on their small holding in Glenflesk. Mohammed and Tracey have become part of the family and have shared social occasions with them, as well as coming on their social farming days. Both participants have shown great creativity and skill in their work on the farm. Tim Heffernan (Listowel) said he has been part of social farming since the beginning and is now enjoying his days with Billy Jo O'Connor in Ballyduff. Stephen Brosnan (Killarney), Anthony O'Connor (Tralee) and Earl Leahy (Valentia) also shared their stories about being part of social farming.

Guest speaker Michael Moynihan TD, Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters, described Kerry Social Farming as 'a pro-active group' and called for this model of social farming to be replicated throughout the country. At the moment, he noted, it only operates in Kerry and North West Cork, through IRD Duhallow. He noted the huge benefits for participants and the great sense of self-purpose that farming life brings. He echoed the call for more farmers to become involved as he believes everyone can have a meaningful role on a farm. Divisions between people with physical and intellectual disabilities and mainstream society have been broken down, but there is a lot more work to do to promote real inclusion on the ground. Social farming is an ideal way to do this. He called for more sustainable funding for social farming so that long term plans can be made, rather than working from year to year.



KSF Facilitators Evelyn O'Connell & Rena Blake at the Annual Meeting.

Researcher Dr Brendan O’Keeffe explained that he was carrying out an Evaluation of Kerry Social Farming. While it is clear that the project is working, with the help of all stakeholders, he will help us identify ways it can be improved. He noted that a previous Evaluation report in 2017 provided a framework for progress in Kerry Social Farming, helping to bring it to its current strength.

Dermot Carroll (TUS formerly LIT Thurles) also addressed the meeting, as part of FarmElder Erasmus + research project. He noted that SKDP/KSF has been part of research into social farming on a European level and what is being done in Kerry has resonated with other social farming providers.

FarmElder is currently looking at the role social farming can play with older people, which is vital given the ageing demographic across Europe.

Noel Spillane (SKDP CEO) noted the success of the project over the last decade and paid tribute to all farmers, participants, families and service agencies who have been part of the project since its inception. He noted core funding is from Department of Agriculture and recent welcome sponsorship from Kerry Agri Business. He advised that more longer-term funding is needed in order for the project to grow, as we are at the limit of what can be achieved on the current budget. He advised that KSF remains on target to reach 50 host farms supporting 100 participants by 2024, as outlined in KSF Five-Year strategy which was presented in 2019.

Thanks to all who helped arrange the Annual Meeting and to all those who attended on the night.



Congratulations

Every good wish to our project partners **Kerry Parents and Friends Association** as they mark their 50th anniversary. They continue to work with and support many people with disabilities and their families across Kerry. Kerry Parents and Friends Association have been partners in Kerry Social Farming since its inception. We salute all participants and staff from the service who have contributed so much to social farming over the years.

Kerry Agri Business

Kerry Social Farming featured in Kerry Agri Business March Newsletter, with focus on the Howard farm in Currow. This is a link to their article [KERRYAGRINEWSMAR2023.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)

Field of Dreams Cork



A number of Kerry social farming participants, host farmer Tom Sears (Tralee) and KSF facilitator Rena Blake visited Field of Dreams at Curraheen, Cork on May 30th at the invitation of Down Syndrome Cork. Students attending the centre provided a guided tour and hospitality. Field of Dreams is also funded by DAFM social farming funding. Thanks to Debbie Kelleher and her team for the kind invitation.

A new addition at KSF

John Lynch joined us earlier this year to cover Evelyn's leave and is based at SKDP office, in High St, Killarney. Welcome John and we hope that you're well settled into your new role now! Don't forget to follow us on social media, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KerrySocialFarming> or Twitter @KerrySocialfarm. Also check our website www.kerrysocialfarming.ie, where you can link to our You Tube channel, featuring lots of social farming videos. If you would like to send in news for our next Newsletter, feel free to contact us by email renablake@newkd.ie, jlynch@skdp.net or jbrosnan@skdp.net



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