



# Kerry Social Farming Newsletter

Issue 3 - July 2020

Welcome to our July Newsletter packed with features and news from our social farmers, participants and service providers. We have news from Ellen who visits Christy and Mary's farm in Kells, Cahirsiveen while Cormac Galvin (St John of God, Tralee) writes about his role as a support worker with Ciara, Vanessa and Siobhan at Maura's Cottage Flowers, Tralee. Damien O'Neill from Studio 3 service tells us about their services and about supporting James at John O'Shea's farm in Blackwater in the beautiful Black Valley. One of our newest farmers Tom Sears tells us how he and Tim have been getting on in Ballyard, Tralee. Host farmer Irene Brune writes about an everyday plant with an interesting history.

Many of our host farmers completed the **UCC Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming** during 2019. They were due to graduate from UCC in April but sadly the ceremony had to be postponed due to the public health emergency. In this edition Dr Joan Cronin of UCC shares some news with us on how this course will run in 2020-2021.



## Memories!

A throwback to 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 when we enjoyed a Farm Walk at Dessie Cronin's in Ballinskelligs. We hope to do more farm walks when it's safe to do so.

(Photo by Alan Landers).

Don't forget we're online at [www.kerrysocialfarming.ie](http://www.kerrysocialfarming.ie), on Twitter at @KerrySocialFarm and on Facebook on <https://www.facebook.com/KerrySocialFarming/>

We've also got a feature in the Kerryman of July 1st in the Summer Farming supplement, we hope you saw it! You can also contact our facilitators Rena, [renablake@newkd.ie](mailto:renablake@newkd.ie) Evelyn, [eoconnell@skdp.net](mailto:eoconnell@skdp.net) and Julie our administrator [jbroshnan@skdp.net](mailto:jbroshnan@skdp.net) if you want to contribute to our newsletter or have any questions or queries for us.

## News from Ellen in Kells, Cahirsiveen



### **Ellen with host farmer Christy and David inspecting the vegetables in the polytunnel in Kells.**

Many farmers work hard, typically I go one day a week to Mary and Christy.

I enjoy it and I believe Christy and Mary do too.

I love real work on the farm.

I help Mary cleaning the house and working in the greenhouse.

The real hard work is splitting logs with Christy in the shed!

They have cows and calves but no sheep.

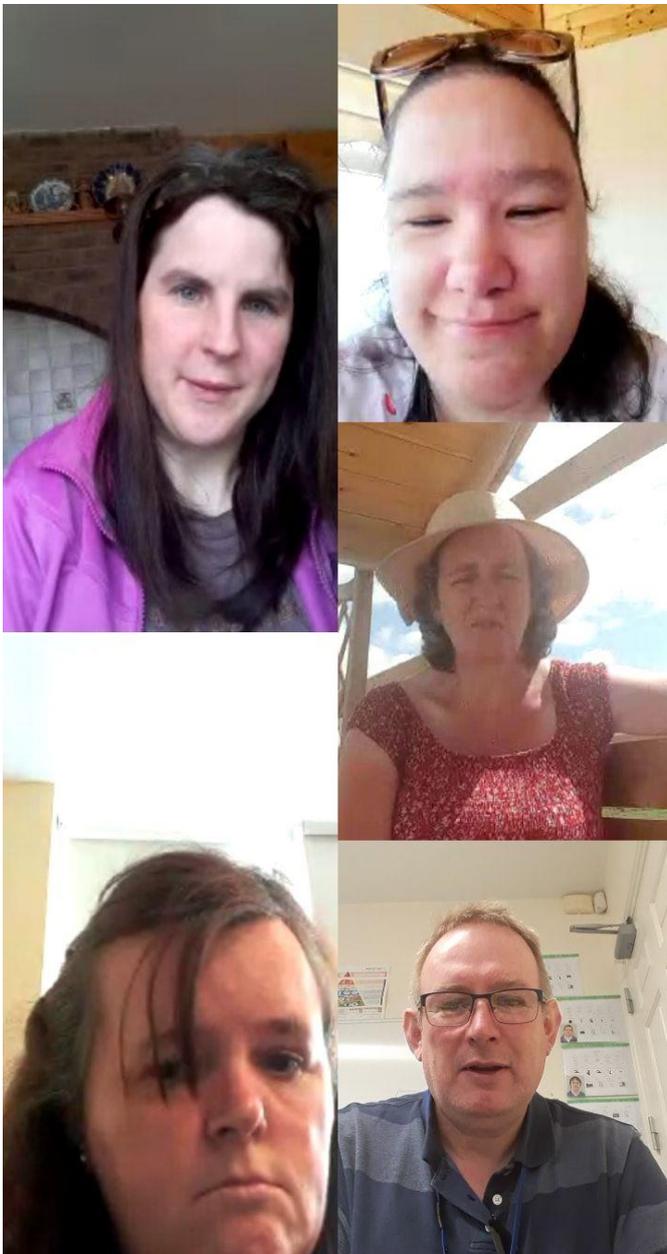
I like to rub the cats and dogs. The dogs are Rosie, Jessie and Lassie.

I have great fun at Mary and Christy's and I feel like a real farmer.

**Ellen.**

## Checking in with Cormac

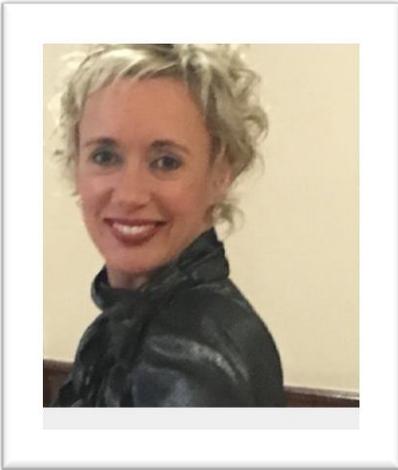
My name is Cormac Galvin and I am an Instructor with St. John of God Kerry Services. I have been involved in Social Farming for a number of years and currently support 3 service users, Vanessa Meehan, Ciara Corridon and Siobhan Quirke to attend Maura's Cottage Flowers for over two years now. Going to Maura's has proven most popular with the participants and they have often told me it is their favourite part of the week. We have been made feel so welcome by Maura, Tommy and family and thoroughly enjoy learning new skills like preparing, making up and delivering the flower vases to local restaurants and being involved in the collection of older vases and placing the newer ones on tables. It is always a great opportunity to meet locals and feel a great sense of satisfaction and belonging in the community. We have carried out many tasks like planting tulips, flower seeds, vegetables and trees and Tommy has been great sending us pictures during the Covid crises on the plants progress.



We have been involved in making compost, fertilizing the ground with seaweed, digging and turning drills, maintain the footpaths, preparation of flowers (or conditioning the flowers as we have learnt it is called 😊) and received many sessions learning how to make seasonal floral presentations with Maura being a natural teacher bringing out the best in our group (me included!).

Without a doubt a big part of our visits has been the growing friendship with Maura and Tommy and the chat over the cup of tea and scone. We have been delighted to extend our friendship by having Christmas lunch together the last couple of years and meeting up for coffee in town and visiting book shops and visiting garden centres and inviting Maura to our group and extending an invitation to Ciara's birthday party. The ladies have missed Maura and Tommy during the Covid crises but we have kept in touch over WhatsApp group calls and are all eagerly awaiting returning again with work being carried out presently in the background to resume as soon as possible and we have an outstanding night out planned with Maura and Tommy which we are really looking forward to soon.

Cormac



## Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming

I have the pleasure of coordinating this unique and meaningful course on behalf of **Adult Continuing Education, for University College Cork.**

The Certificate in Practice Support in Social Farming offers an inter and multi-disciplinary approach, informed by scholarship from law, social policy, environment and mental health studies, communication and disability studies. The course is designed to introduce students to the practice of social farming which are founded on the principles of equality, social inclusion, community and collaboration through the exploration of the history of social farming, the challenges and perceptions of marginalised groups, the role of social farming for physical and mental wellbeing and its function as an initiative for social inclusion within society.

The course is directed at people involved or interested in social farming either on farms or in the community as part of social inclusion initiatives, people with an existing qualification in support work who are seeking to broaden their knowledge of social farming practice, those pursuing a career in support work, or those working in the disability sector.

Together with our experienced teaching team we look forward to working with you on developing practical, academic and life skills, including self-confidence and awareness, independent self-management, team work and critical thinking. If you're interested in finding out more about the course or you know someone who may be, feel free to contact me at the number below or send me an email.

**Dr. Joan Cronin, Programme Coordinator for UCC Phone 021 4904700**

Email [joancronin@ucc.ie](mailto:joancronin@ucc.ie)

See further information on UCC website

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace-cpsf/>



### Scotia Glen Organic Farm Clahane, Ballyard, Tralee.

Here in Scotia Glen Organic Farm we are very new in the Kerry Social Farming scene. We had just started with our first participant, Timmy Heffernan when Covid – 19 made itself known and his visits came to a sudden halt. Timmy was settling in very well and is a great help, he is skilled in many fields and he full of energy for each job. We hope to welcome him back in the near future as we have many tasks to attend to.

We are in existence a little over 2 years and our goal at the farm is to develop a social, horticulture and biodiversity nature centre for people with special needs. It will take some time before this will be achieved but with the help of our hard-working volunteers, James O'Connor, Iarlaith Ó Siochrú, Tim Coakley, Michael Moynihan and Timmy Heffernan, to name but a few, anything is possible!

So far, we have built our shed and are currently erecting a polytunnel. This will be a huge advantage to us as it will allow us to grow more produce for the garden. At present we are digging our new potatoes, these are available in Claire and Thomas O'Connor's Manna Organic Store, Tralee. We are extremely lucky to have the support of Claire and Thomas not only for marketing our produce but also for sharing their vast experience and knowledge in all matters organic with us. The fruit in the orchard is developing nicely as are the vegetables so hopefully we will have a good harvest.

We are also very grateful to Rena Blake and her team in NEWKD for their advice and support in helping us get involved with the Kerry Social Farming Programme. It has given us the opportunity and privilege to welcome Timmy to our Farm he is and will be an integral part of our team, not alone in welcoming additional participants to our farm but also in helping us in our quest to develop a centre that we can all share and enjoy. Hoping everyone is keeping well and staying safe. Slán tamall agus tabhair aire,

Ciaran and Tom Sears.



Ciaran Sears pictured above

Top left; Tim Coakley and Iarlaith Ó Siochrú

Left; Two other volunteers at Scotia Glen, Michael Moynihan and James O'Connor

Studio 3 originated in the UK in the late 80's and was founded by Professor Andy McDonnell. Studio 3 Kerry provide service provision, assessments and family/individual supports.

Professor Andy McDonnell a Clinical Psychologist coined the phrase 'low arousal' to describe person centred approaches to challenging behaviour. Low arousal approaches emphasized the importance of proper assessments, developing positive relationships with challenging people, when appropriate giving lots of support to carers and non-aversive approaches in managing challenging behaviour.

At Studio 3 Kerry, we design bespoke services for people with autism and ID, no two support structures are the same, we design individual schemes around the person and we use the community as our base. The level of supports range from independent living support, respite, day services and outreach support. Further information can be found at [www.studio3.org](http://www.studio3.org)



James Cullinane pictured here with host farmer John O Shea engages in social farming with support from Studio 3. James enjoys being outdoors, doing different activities and social farming provides the ideal opportunity for this.

## Some thoughts from the garden from Irene Brune

During the lockdown I spent a lot of time outside and had time to observe plants.

One plant I like to watch growing is the fern. It produces fiddleheads that uncoil and expand into large, divided leaves, the fronds. On the picture you can see the fiddleheads of the silver fern which you only find in New Zealand. To the Maori, the native population of New Zealand, the elegant shape of the fronds stood for strength, stubborn resistance, and enduring power. Ferns appear in the fossil record about 360 million years ago during the Middle Devonian Age. During that time



also the first fishes in inland lakes developed lungs, and the ability to crawl out of the water and onto the land for short periods of time. Only 130 million years later the dinosaurs appeared.



Ferns are also good at maths!!! The British mathematician, Michael Barnsley, explains that ferns follows mathematical formulas to create identically patterned leaflets and fronds in smaller and larger scales, as can be

seen on the last picture.

*Irene Brune*



*We at Kerry Social Farming wish you and your families all the best.*

*We are delighted to be able to support social farming to resume on some farms and we hope that as we continue to progress and the impact of the Covid-19 virus becomes less and less in our community and country that we will all be able to resume more of our normal and farming activities.*

*Slán go foil*