



# SHEP

Capacity for Personal  
& Social Transformation

THE OLD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ARDFOYLE AVENUE  
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## Nuacht

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SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION PROJECT CLG (SHEP) NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends of SHEP,

Spring is here and we are all looking forward with hope for the year ahead! On behalf of all of us on the Management Committee, I want to extend my thanks – firstly to everyone involved in the Project working hard to respond to a wide range of community needs. There has never been a greater need for the work we do, and everyone's contribution to that, no matter how small, is extremely important and impactful. As always, we want to thank the HSE, as our core funder, for their on-going support.

All of us at SHEP are excited about our new collaboration with Ag Eisteacht Foundation. We are honoured to be involved in the next chapter of 'Relationships in Practice' which we believe will fit very well alongside and complement the SHEP training programme. This new collaboration will be a very effective and dynamic way to continue to support practitioners working in health, education and other settings with quality, evidence-informed relational training. This is something that has always been important to SHEP.

As you know we are so grateful to have the continuing support of Perry and Sandy Massie. Their foundation has kindly and very generously agreed to donate US\$75,000 (just over €65,000) to us for



2022 to help us progress our modernisation plan. This is significant for us and will benefit SHEP long into the future.

As we enter a new phase in the pandemic, we are working hard to adjust our plans to keep our momentum and keep people engaged. It will be a challenging few months ahead, but we are confident that we will be able to continue to respond openly and creatively as we have done over the last two years. It has proven to be a big effort – a huge team effort - which has by and large worked well.

And finally, as the world faces up to the challenge of climate breakdown and environmental justice, we must restate our commitment as an organisation not just to doing our bit, but to being an example to others. The time for greater and more concerted action is here. So, as a Project, we are looking at ways in which we can become more carbon-neutral and lighter in terms of a footprint on our delicate world.

Carrie Whitty  
Chairperson – SHEP



The three day 'ABLE' training course is the key course in the Relationships in Practice programme. 'ABLE' stands for 'Adopt a relational approach; Build; Listen & Empower.' The first course for 2022 will take place in person, at the Wisdom Centre in Dublin in March.

## IMPORTANT UPDATES

### COVID measures/Spring

As you can imagine, the Omicron Surge has caused a great deal of disruption. Our plans to commence in person training with some groups in January and February had to be revisited. We consulted with our group facilitators and participants and navigated the disruption as best we could. We also put considerable effort into working out how we move forward given the significant changes in public health guidance. We are also putting a good deal of thought into how to transition to the next phase of course delivery. We are not proposing immediate radical change. Rather, we are proposing going at the pace appropriate to prioritising the maintenance of relationships, connection and learning. We are following a 'leave no-one behind' approach as the overall thrust of our intention. We are looking at innovative ways to do this, including supporting some groups to offer participants the opportunity, if needed, to join in remotely.

The newsletter for participants, service users, group facilitators, counsellors, advocates, committee members, staff & friends of SHEP  
Training & Development | SHEP Earth Aware | Advocacy | Counselling & Outreach | International Partnership



## Relationships in Practice

A key focus of our work in 2022 will be to support the work of the Relationships in Practice programme, particularly given the transition to new governance arrangements under SHEP. The Spring programme is well under-way and includes the delivery of two ABLE courses, follow-up sessions with previously trained groups, and work with teachers. A new round of reflective spaces ('Reflect & Re-engage') in collaboration with PSYCHED has been agreed. Plans are also well progressed for the annual Reconnecting with the Heart of Frontline Practice Conference on May 24<sup>th</sup>. The website has recently been refreshed, has a new domain name ([www.relationshipsinpractice.ie](http://www.relationshipsinpractice.ie)) and is linked to the SHEP website

## Coiscéim Counselling Service

As our society struggles with the deep losses and increased sense of anxiety due to Covid, our Coiscéim Counselling Service would like to acknowledge the kind generosity of its counsellors who, despite their own personal challenges, rose to the task of the increased demand on our service. Over the past year or so, the request for counselling has been increasing in all areas – Adults, Young Adults and Children. This invaluable support provided timely and vital care to those battling the dark days of the pandemic. It also allowed for the increased support that Coiscéim could offer other voluntary and community organisations in Cork who reached out to us during this time. A big thanks to all... it is a privilege for us to work with such wonderful people and we are truly indebted!



A Dingle Selfie! Anita O'Shea, Dinny Keogh, Jim Sheehan, Abigail Joffe, Sandy Massie and Perry Massie in Dingle in November 2021. The Perry & Sandy Massie Foundation has been supporting our work in the Mid-West for more than two years and the foundation agreed in late 2021 to support SHEP in our strategic efforts to modernise, innovate and respond to educational needs in the community.

## Putting Environmental Sustainability at the Heart of all we do

As you know, as part of our strategic planning process last year, we agreed that a key goal from now on would be 'putting environmental sustainability at the heart of all we do'. We have been working hard to look at what we can do – and a number of practical initiatives have been agreed. These include continuing to offer on-line and blended training opportunities (to reduce carbon footprint); encouraging car-pooling where possible; supporting staff where appropriate to adopt a hybrid way of working; continuing to find ways to weave an environmental awareness theme into all our courses; and green procurement.



## Interesting Programme Stats - 2021

- 125 courses started, including...
- 23 Cork ETB-funded courses
- 3 Kerry ETB-funded courses
- 7 Healthy Ireland funded courses in Clare
- 14 Healthy Ireland courses in Limerick
- 4 Healthy Ireland courses in Tipperary
- 761 new participants in 2021, joining many others who already had a prior connection with SHEP.

## Additional HSE funding

We are very appreciative of the HSE, our core funders (Section 39) who have granted us €80,000 in extra, once-off funding for 2022 to contribute to the costs of the additional work which SHEP is now supporting.

## Important developments in the South East

The collaboration with our partners in the South East is deepening. We have started a 50 hour training with new Health Promotion staff, and we have recently concluded our first Seasons for Growth - Grief Loss and Change course for HSE staff in South East. This training went very well.

## SHEP Ardfoyle - we feel at home!

We love being in Ardfoyle – it has been a great move for us. We really appreciate the welcome the OLA Sisters and community have given us. As the next phase of the pandemic unfolds, and we have more freedom, we hope we will have greater opportunities to connect with the OLA community.

## SHEP team – transitioning work arrangements

As you know the staff team have mostly been working remotely for the last two years and have done a remarkable job to keep the show on the road and to respond to community needs in the way we have. In the Autumn of last year we were navigating our way towards a more blended style of work- but Omicron meant we needed to revert to remote working most of the time. As we move forward a key theme for us is balancing presence in the office/training centre with remote working. Over the next few months the team will be gently moving towards a blended way of work which hopefully will be supportive both to the work of the Project and to staff members.

## The SHEP team is expanding

Even though our financial situation continues to be challenging the SHEP team is increasing. We are currently recruiting a Programme Manager for the Relationships in Practice Programme (applications now closed). We also have two new part-time, temporary vacancies – one in administration (which is internally advertised) and one in finance (advertised publically) - as there is considerable extra programme work to be supported. See our website for details

## SHEP Tutor Training - Caring for our Well-being

We are delighted that our first Tutor Training in a number of years has now started with 16 participants. The course is 'Caring for Our Well-being' and includes people new to tutor training as well as those who have completed a previous SHEP Tutor Training. This is our first blended Tutor Training.

## SHEP Ardfoyle Energy Audit – now completed

It is clear that the OLA Sisters have done a lot of work over the years to insulate the building. The SHEP Management Committee agreed that it would be useful to have an energy audit undertaken. The energy audit has now been completed and provides a number of recommendations regarding insulation, energy conservation (especially changing light bulbs to LED), and looking at alternative heating systems (such as heat pumps). We also have a first quote to put some PV solar panels on the roof. An important issue for us is that we play our part by modelling for others what can be done with a proactive attitude. Over the next few months we intend to do some more research and to liaise closely with the OLA Sisters, from who we rent the building, to see what scope there might be to implement further energy conservation measures.



## Introducing our new Swedish Partner - IM

We are very excited that we will be working in partnership with Swedish Development Partner – IM, in a three way partnership with Sakakarmi in Nepal. This is an organisation with a presence in Nepal that has already been supporting Sahakarmi. They have a very interesting origin – connected with the Nazi invasion of Prague in 1938 – and have a philosophy very resonant with SHEP's. If you have a chance do look at their website: <https://www.imsweden.org/> We are working together at the moment to prepare a new application to Irish Aid. In the previous programme (2018-2021) the third partner was DF Norway.

## SHEP now Erasmus+ Accredited

We have been successful in our application to become an accredited organisation with Erasmus Plus. Our accreditation period is 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to 31 December 2027. Accreditation will allow us to more easily access Erasmus Plus funding. In our application we gave a commitment to include learners in Erasmus Plus KA21 activities, which will be a significant development for us. Up to now we have only sent staff, trainers and tutors on training initiatives abroad.



## Reflective Practice Training – nearing completion

We have been working hard over the last two years – during the pandemic – to offer on-line reflective practice training in association with a consortium of ten community and voluntary groups and with co-funding from The Wheel and Bon Secours Health System. The last of the five training groups is finishing shortly – and the programme was very successful.

‘Letting go gives us freedom, and freedom is the only condition for happiness. If, in our heart, we still cling to anything – anger, anxiety, or possessions – we cannot be free.’

**Thich Nhat Hanh** RIP (1926- 2022)



# | WHAT WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT

## Getting back more fully to In-person training & Events

It has been a very difficult two years – and we are very excited that finally we should be able to start arranging in-person training. We already organised three in-person short courses in Ardfoy in the Autumn – and these went very well. In planning for a return to in-person we need to take into account what will support participants – and this is likely to include larger venues to give more space; mask wearing for the moment at least, and continued attention to the usual public health guidance around ventilation, sanitation, hygiene etc..

## Organising a Cork In-Person Presentation of Certificates Event

We are really keen to organise an in-person event this year, particularly as so many have had to do so much of their group-work on-line. We have pencilled in a date – Wednesday, June 8th. More details at a later stage!

## Limerick Presentation of Certificates Event

We are also planning an in-person event this year, for Limerick, sometime in mid-late June – and we hope that Perry and Sandy Massie will be able to be there as our special guests. More details at a later stage.

## Learning about what has influenced us over the Years

As you know we have a ‘generative dialogue’ process established in the Project which, over the last three years, has supported a number of important pieces including the development of a new vision and mission statement, and the documentation of our facilitation approach in SHEP. Currently, the group is looking at some of the key influences on the Project over the decades. It is really exciting to hear how the Project has been influenced by a large number of movements and philosophies, including the human potential movement; progressive catholic social teaching; experiential learning; human rights based advocacy; community development; and international development. Over the coming months we intend to broaden out this conversation to include the wider SHEP community, particularly as we move towards the time when we will start planning to celebrate, in 2024, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of SHEP.

## Introduction to Advocacy 2022 - now started

This popular SHEP course began on 18<sup>th</sup> January with 19 participants from many different walks of life coming together to develop their advocacy skills. 2022 will hopefully see the 2015 Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act which will replace the 1871 Lunacy Act becoming fully operational. As part of the course, this group will be learning about this significant moment in our history.

## AMARIS – an innovative support for asylum seekers and refugees

Lib Counselling & Outreach is excited to continue the development of Amaris (‘Child of the Moon’ in Irish) which is a 12-hour group-based programme for asylum seekers and refugees. Amaris promotes resilience and being well through the exploration of coping skills and practical self-regulation exercises and games. We are very proud to see the continued development of this important initiative of LIB Outreach.

## SHEP Community Choir

The SHEP Community Choir has survived the pandemic! This is good news. As we gradually move from Zoom singing, we are looking forward to the choir growing in voice and song. We support the ‘Natural Voice’ movement, a movement that reflects many SHEP values. [www.naturalvoice.net](http://www.naturalvoice.net) says ‘Natural Voice is about celebrating the voice you were born with, rather than trying to train it to an ideal of perfection.



## New UCC Diploma Group has started on-campus sessions

The new group – which started in September 2021 - have had to do all their sessions on-line up to recently. We are thrilled that the group are finally getting to meet on campus, in person. Not all the group are able to be in person at present – so a number of the group join in remotely for sessions– this is what we are calling a ‘hybrid session’. It takes quite a bit of attention and work to try to ensure everyone is as included as possible. Our experience so far is that while it works, those actually present have a greater sense of connection to what is going on, and to others.



Fintan Murphy, Mark Holland, Celine Griffin (Course Tutor), Mary Keane and Sherifat Babalola at the UCC Conferring in November 2021 – the first on-campus event for this SHEP/UCC diploma group in over 18 months. All 15 students graduated.

## Inter-Generational Climate Justice Conference (October 202)

For the last two years in a row SHEP Earth Aware has collaborated with the SMA, School Teachers, Elders for Earth, and Cork City Council to host a full day-long conference in support of climate justice issues. The conference is inter-generational and involves workshops, guest speaker presentations and debates in a programme that is co-designed by young people. In 2021 this conference was brought right into classrooms live in a number of schools and we were able to facilitate workshops with representatives from the African continent and Europe. Another of these conferences is now being planned for October 2022.

## Outdoor Learning Area for Ardfoyle



We are really excited about our collaboration with the Bessboro Horticulture Training Project which is our neighbour at Ardfoyle. Over the next few months the derelict space at the rear of the building will be transformed into a **multi-purpose outdoor learning area**. The initiative will actively involve the students on their Level 4 Horticultural Studies course. This project is one of the initiatives made possible by the kind support of the Perry & Sandy Massie Foundation.



# COMING UP

## Fridays for Earth

Fridays for Earth continues on **Friday February 18th at 7pm** with a webinar titled: How do we educate children to live in harmony with the earth? Localising & Democratising Education, West Cork Sudbury School & Vermont Futures. We are delighted to have two excellent guests who will share their experiences and work to localise and democratise education: Jessica Mason from the West Cork Sudbury School a place for self-directed learning; and Kathleen Kesson who is Professor Emerita of Teaching, Learning and Leadership in the School of Education at the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University. Book here <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/how-do-we-educate-children-to-live-in-harmony-with-the-earth-tickets-264297189007>

## ‘Greening our City#

The GREENING OUR CITY Series continues on **February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2.30pm** with guest speaker Siobhan Clancy Community Arts Officer, Cork City Council presenting on the wonderful KinShip Project at Tramore Valley Park. To book register at <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/kinship-a-durational-public-art-work-in-tramore-valley-park-tickets-265215876827>

## Continuing PD – places still available!

The closing date for this course has been extended to **Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022** as a number of places are still available. We are offering an in-person option (Cork - Wednesdays) and on-line option (Tuesday evening). A third course (Limerick – in person) is also being organised and has places available. This is a really good opportunity and significant bursaries are being made available. See the SHEP website for more details. It is interesting that there is roughly equal demand for the in-person and fully on-line options.



The SHEP Mural at Ardfoy– painted in 2021 by Spark Deeley as part of a community art project involving the staff team. We are finding the mural to be a great source of inspiration as we consider how to make sense of our own story and how we navigate our way into the new normal.





Liam McCarthy, Eilish O'Hanlon, Carmel Savage, Justyna Jegier, Robert O'Herlihy and Jim Sheehan on a visit to the new Marina Park, beside Páirc Ui Chaoimh, near the Ardfoyle Office on the day of the SHEP Staff Christmas Gathering in December 2021.

## PEOPLE NEWS

Congratulations to **Noírn Breen** who has been appointed Deputy Chairperson, and to **Dolores McCashin**, who has kindly taken on the role of Company Secretary.

Congratulations to **Deirdre O'Sullivan** who has been appointed Senior Training & Development Officer and **Geraldine Flanagan** who has been appointed Training & Development Officer.

A big welcome to **Sabrina Moris** who joins the team to continue working on the Relationships in Practice Programme.

A big welcome also to the Relationships in Practice Trainers: **Una King**, **Bernadette Rogers**, **Clíodhna O'Mahony**, **Leon Ledwidge**, and **Maeve Hurley**. **Rose Crowley** and **Patsy Hannon** are also on the team and are already known to many as SHEP facilitators.

Congratulations to **Lenka Blaskova**, who completed the SHEP UCC Diploma in 2011 and who has recently completed her PhD at

Cambridge. She has now taken up a lecturership at Exeter University.

Welcome to **Jennifer Barnes**, **Sharon Galvin** and **Elaine Winters**, three facilitators who are joining the current 'Introduction to Advocacy' course facilitation team (which also includes Jessie Bowen, Niamh Kelleher and Deirdre Lillis). They are bringing a wealth and breadth of experience that will build capacity for the SHEP Advocacy Project and Advocacy Training.

Finally, it appears we have Coisceim mermaids in our mist! With a passion for daily sea dips, both **Nuala Burke** and **Sheila Kelleher** (our referral officers) take on the cold to immerse themselves in the joy of living. Although spending time in the water has always been associated with increased well-being, there are studies now underway to explore if the physiological reaction (shock) to cold water can, after a brief period, condition the body to become less reactive to stress. Isn't that interesting? It may not be too long before Nuala and Sheila find themselves sharing the beach with some of us. Perhaps, in the Summer, we could start the SHEP Sea Swimmers Group?





Gita, Kamala, Abi and Sosa at Kohalpur during the SHEP monitoring visit to Sahakarmi in Nepal in November 2021.

## COLLABORATIONS – some examples

### CESCA

SHEP is a proud member of CESCA. CESCA has recently agreed to be one of the member organisations of the coalition of civil society organisations supporting STAD, Standing Together Against Direct Provision. [www.stad.ie](http://www.stad.ie)

### Greening Our City

With our collaborators (*Cork Healthy Cities, the Environmental Research Institute, Cork Environmental Forum, and Green Spaces for Health*) we continue with our very popular monthly Greening Our City webinar. This series began as a response to the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028 and has attracted a large audience largely because of the caliber of its international guest speakers chosen to talk about a topic related to greening issues in Cork City. The webinars are a successful response to the restrictions of Covid 19 and replace SHEP Earth Aware's previous live public lectures.

### International Solidarity Garden

We will continue to support the Solidarity Garden at Ardfoy in Cork. SHEP Earth Aware set up this garden with the Migrant Centre at Nano Nagle Place, Green Spaces for Health and the Cork Food Policy Council. Ten families from direct provision centres in Cork now have a garden in which to grow food. We assist by helping to support the needs of the families when they arrive on-site to garden.

### Continued Collaboration and Community Outreach with Kerry ETB

We continue to work very collaboratively with Kerry ETB. This spring a number of community education courses are being offered including 'Supporting Parents; Building Resilience'; and 'Supporting Separated Parents'. Kerry ETB has been very supportive of SHEP training during the pandemic and has funded two facilitators for each on-line course to ensure a strong holding for participants.

'It is my conviction that there is no road to peace – peace is the way.'

**Thich Nhat Hanh** RIP (1926- 2022)




# SHEP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

## Important Erasmus Plus Training Abroad Opportunities

We are now inviting expressions of interest from any SHEP practitioner who would be interested in participating in relevant training in Europe (including the UK) in 2022. SHEP has funding available to support a significant number of 'training mobilities' (minimum two days' duration). If you have a course in mind contact [Jim.sheehan@socialandhealth](mailto:Jim.sheehan@socialandhealth) or [justyna.jegier@socialandhealth.com](mailto:justyna.jegier@socialandhealth.com) before 16 March for further information.

## ABLE Training for SHEP Staff Team

We are very excited that a large number of the SHEP Team will participate in the three day ABLE training in May. This will be an in-person course. We intend to offer the three day training to SHEP personnel early next year all going well.



### 'INSIGHT for Connection & Being'

*Inquiring into our direct experience  
Supporting each other  
Integrating our learning to support ourselves and others  
Generating personal awareness and creativity  
Holding the space for each other  
Taking time to be and to be real with each other*

**Facilitator:** Pat McCarthy

**Format:** Fully in-person

**Venue:** SHEP Ardfoyle, Ballintemple

**Group size:** 10-12 persons

**Sessions:** One Saturday morning per month (excluding holiday months)

**Time:** Saturday: 10am-1pm

**Round 1:**  
March 5th; April 9th; May 7th; June 11th; September 3rd;  
October 15th; November 12th; December 10th


'The intention is to provide an opportunity for a small group of SHEP practitioners to come together on an experiential journey of curiosity and inquiry to being more fully in oneself and in the world.

The process will be facilitated, loosely structured, organic, and responsive to the group.'

**Open to anyone involved in delivering SHEP's programmes –**  
Advocates, Counsellors, Tutors, Trainers, Facilitators, Staff & Volunteers.

**Cost: €50** (This piece is subsidised by SHEP)

**To apply:** email Geraldine Flanagan by **Feb 21st**  
[Geraldine.Flanagan@socialandhealth.com](mailto:Geraldine.Flanagan@socialandhealth.com)



'Insight for Connection and Being':  
Because of the level of interest we have agreed a second group (a Saturday Afternoon 'Group B': 2pm-5pm) – dates below.

Both groups are now full – and waiting list started. If you are interested in being added to the waiting list contact [Geraldine.flanagan@socialandhealth.com](mailto:Geraldine.flanagan@socialandhealth.com)

Group B: Saturdays (2-5pm) April 9<sup>th</sup>; May 7<sup>th</sup>; June 11<sup>th</sup>; September 3<sup>rd</sup>; October 15<sup>th</sup>; November 12<sup>th</sup>; November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>.



## OTHER NEWS



Jessie Bowen, Deirdre O'Halloran and Sarah Harrington at the SHEP Christmas (outdoor!) lunch on 17th December 2021. This was only the second gathering of most of the staff team in the second half of 2021.

### Our supports to Parents of Children with Autism

We have been doing some important work with parents of children with Autism over the last while, on a pilot basis. Rose Crowley and Karen Corcoran have been working on this initiative. We are committed to continuing this work and we will be exploring over the coming months how best to support this kind of work into the future.

### Reflective Practice – new research completed

A big thank you and congratulations to Biddy O'Neill who has recently completed a piece of qualitative research based on the SHEP Critical Reflection Programme which documents the positive impact of the programme on practitioners personally and professionally.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



Twenty Years Ago! Members of the SHEP Management Committee - in 2002 - making a presentation to Ann O'Sullivan on her retirement as SHEP Chairperson.

