

SHEP Nuacht

EDITION 60 | **SUMMER 2025**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS, SERVICE-USERS, GROUP FACILITATORS, COUNSELLORS, ADVOCATES, VOLUNTEERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STAFF AND FRIENDS OF SHEP.



Marge Lysaght (Programme Co-Coordinator), Paula O'Shea, Pamela Connolly, Elbha O'Sullivan, Lisa Calnan, Patricia O'Mahony and Niamh Kelleher (Programme Co-Coordinator) at an induction event for new Volunteer Advocacy Service Providers to join the Advocacy Programme.

Dear SHEP Friends,

Welcome to our Summer 2025 newsletter! We are in a very busy time of year at the moment with lots of activity across all five areas of the Project. We are filled with gratitude for the huge support we receive from so many for our work – and we want to acknowledge the HSE South West in particular who are our core-funders. The Horticulture Training Initiative is doing fantastic work again this year and is settling in well to its new home in SHEP. We want to thank Cork ETB and the OLA Sisters for their support to SHEP to take over the management of the LTI and integrate the training programme into SHEP. Our big news in recent weeks is securing a new three-year grant from Irish Aid for our work with Sahakarmi in Nepal – and we are delighted with this. Finally, we have lots to look forward to over the coming weeks, including three Presentation of Certificate Events and a visit from our friends and benefactors Perry and Sandy Massie to SHEP in Cork in June. From the entire SHEP Team, thank you all again for your support and wishing you a very enjoyable Summer.

Jim Sheehan, SHEP Director.

IN THIS EDITION

- A New Nepal Funding
- B New Staffing
- C SHEP CHOIR
- D CORK BIODIVERSITY HUB
- E UPCOMING EVENTS

| IMPORTANT NEWS

New Irish Aid Funding

We are delighted to have recently secured a new round of funding for Saharkarmi from Irish Aid. SHEP has been awarded a further three years funding from the Autumn to late 2028 with a slight increase €110,000 per year. This is the sixth Irish Aid funded three-year programme and brings the total committed by Irish Aid to over €1.9 million – which is a very significant achievement. Importantly, for the next round there will be no match funding requirement, which will make the project easier to manage. Irish Aid visited the Sahakarmi in Nepal recently and they were pleased with the Project. They also provided some good feedback and recommendations that will guide the next three-year programme. SHEP is very proud of our partnership with Sahakarmi and what has been achieved together since 2007.

New SHEP Training & Development Officer – Michelle Demougeot

As you may know, Eilish O'Hanlon, who has been working on the SHEP Training and Development Team for nine years will be retiring in June. We will miss Eilish greatly, for many reasons, not least her commitment to the work, her capacity to support the many people involved in our personal development training, and her warm heart. She has been a great colleague and champion of the work we do. We will have an opportunity to acknowledge her work with and her contribution to SHEP at the Cork Presentation of Certificates Ceremony planned for **Wednesday, 11th June**. Connected with this we are pleased to let you know that following a recent recruitment process Michelle Demougeot (née Michelle Fitzgerald) has been appointed by the SHEP Management Committee to the staff team as Training and Development Officer (Personal Development) to take over from Eilish and work alongside Geraldine Flanagan with particular responsibility for the SHEP Foundation Part 1 (Personal Development) programme. Many of you will know Michelle as she has been involved with SHEP for over seventeen years and her journey over that time has included training as a SHEP tutor, and subsequently training as a psychotherapist. She has very valuable experience also as a Senior Youth Worker with Foróige to bring to the role. As Michelle is based in Kerry we are exploring how Michelle might also be involved in supporting the SHEP Community Education programme in Kerry.

TUSLA funding extended for three more years

We are pleased that TUSLA have agreed to extend their co-funding of our Counselling work with children. They will provide €20,000 again per year for the next three years. This small, but important, grant from TUSLA allows us support particularly vulnerable children with counselling supports. Our hope is that this funding will eventually be made permanent.

| SHEP Community of Practice

INVITATION

2025 SHEP Facilitators' Gathering **Friday, 9th May (in-person)**

The next in-person SHEP **Facilitators' Gathering** (areas Cork, Kerry, Mid-West, South East) takes place on Friday, 9th May 2025, 6.30pm to 9.30pm at the Meditation Centre, Bessboro, Blackrock, Cork. It is still possible to register your intention to attend or send an apology by clicking the link - <https://forms.office.com/e/114QKvhGpG>. We will begin with sharing a meal from 6.30pm onwards to around 7.30pm as an opportunity to meet, chat and connect. Later from around 7.30 we will reflect on and celebrate the work of the Project and the value it has been to both our own lives and the lives of the people we work with in the groups. This event will also give us the opportunity to honour the contribution that **Rosarie Coleman**, who is retiring, has made to the work and life of the Project over so many years.



Members of the SHEP Staff Team making a presentation to Norma Roche in April. Norma worked with SHEP since 2023 on the training team. Norma brought tremendous passion, energy and capacity to her work with SHEP during that time and she will be very much missed. Norma will continue to be involved with SHEP in her role as SHEP Tutor and Group Facilitator.

SHEP CHOIR

The SHEP Community Choir has continued to meet together and sing on Thursday evenings over the past five months. For those reading who may be new to SHEP and the choir, we work to the principles of 'Natural Voice' and the values of SHEP. We sing for our own and each other's well-being, and for all that we care about in the wider world. In keeping with the Natural Voice approach, we learn by ear rather than with sheet music. Members join whichever harmony line they feel their voice is best suited to. The vision for our members is that they find their own voice - that they may also find their voice at a deeper level in the sense of having the courage to speak out and be heard. Most of all, we sing because we love to sing and we love to bring the joy of song to others too. We're delighted to be celebrating Africa Day and the rich heritage of African music with a programme of South African songs and African American spirituals in Cork City Library on **Saturday May 17th at 11am**. Earlier this year, we were invited by the Tracton Community group to participate in the launch of their booklet on local biodiversity with songs celebrating nature and community connection. Last December, we marked SHEP's 50th anniversary with a beautiful evening of poetry and music. Every year since our foundation, we've sung at SHEP Certs Nights, at carol concerts, and at other choral events at the Cork School of Music and in the Cork Choral Festival. We're looking forward to organising another 'Sing for Water' event in Cobh, bringing a number of choirs to sing together raising funds for a water project in Rwanda. We invite new members in September and January. No audition, no requirement to read music, just the wish to sing alongside others who share a love of singing and a commitment to SHEP's values. If you would like to find out more about joining the choir, please email Jessie.Bowen@socialandhealth.com.



Participants at the 'Cork Life-Long Learning Programme' Event organised by the Ardfoyle Horticulture LTI on April 4th.

OTHER NEWS

Spring Training Programme

The Spring SHEP Training programme has been going very well. The new Tutor Training (Women's Well-being) has started – with Dolores McCashin and Rose Crowley co-facilitating. The 2025 Facilitation Course has also started and is full. A large number of courses is being rolled across Cork City and County with the help of Cork ETB and across Kerry with the support of Kerry ETB. A number of short courses is being rolled out across Limerick with the support of Healthy Ireland and local partners such as West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development.

UCC –Diploma – now open for applications

The Diploma in **Social and Psychological Health Studies** will commence again in September in the Main Campus at UCC and is now open for applications. Applications are made directly to UCC. <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ace/> Those wishing to apply need to complete the application and upload all the required documents by Sunday, **29th June 2025**. This important collaboration between SHEP and UCC has run every two years since 2001.

Front of House - challenges and some changes

We are very grateful to have the on-going support of the Department of Social Protection funded Community Employment (CE) Scheme. We have relied hugely on the CE scheme for many years to have a 'Front of House' team in place. At the moment our Front of House arrangements are under significant pressure again because vacancies and also sick leave and an upcoming Maternity Leave. For the moment, we have decided not to have the Ardfoyle open for phone calls (or public drop-ins) on Fridays. We will review the situation in a few months. People have kindly offered to volunteer to help in the past but our sense is that front of house is not a role that fits easily with volunteering.

Ocean to City – Fundraising for Coiscéim (Rebecca O'Mahony)

This May 31st, I'll be taking to the water as part of the **Ocean to City (O2C)** race-rowing in a Curragh with three others from Crosshaven into the heart of the city. It's a physical challenge, but also a personal one that speaks deeply to the journey of healing and resilience. I'm dedicating this effort to raise funds for **Coiscéim Low-Cost Counselling**, a service close to my heart. Coiscéim offers accessible, affordable therapy to people who might not otherwise be able to reach out for support. For many, it's the first step in a lifelong journey of change and recovery. As someone shaped by the SHEP model and community, I know the value of being met with compassion, deep listening, and presence. This fundraiser is one way I hope to give back - and to ripple that support out to others who need it most. If you feel moved to contribute or share, you'll find the link to donate here: <https://gofund.me/6ff6b257>

Here's hoping this gathers momentum and raises as much funds as possible for Coisceim. Warmest regards, Rebecca O'Mahony



Some of the participants at a recent Cork Community Health Network meeting – held at Newbury House. The CCHN is a network supported by SHEP, Let's Grow Together, NICHE and Newbury House.



Shine A Light Suicide and Mental Health Awareness

Shine A Light Suicide and Mental Health Awareness started in 2009 as a community response to a wave of suicides that occurred in the Northside of Cork City. Going from strength to strength as a committed and dedicated group over the following years, Shine A Light approached Coisceim Counselling in 2012 and thus a friendly, supportive and long-lasting collaboration began with Coisceim Counselling providing much-needed low-cost counselling support over the past 13 years. Recently, Shine A Light succeeded in gaining its charitable status as an organisation and so it was with much joy that Coisceim joined the celebrations for the launch of Shine A Light's first new office in Ballyvolane on the 12th April, 2025.

Carmel Savage
SHEP Coisceim Coordinator

Up-coming AGM and Board Changes

Our next Annual General Meeting takes place on June 22nd. Our Chairperson, Carrie Shanahan, will have completed her second term as SHEP Chairperson then so the Management Committee will appoint a new Chairperson. Recent chairpersons of SHEP have included Ann O'Sullivan, Paula Delaney, Mary Cunningham, Siobhan O'Connor and Angela Murphy. A number of new people will also join the Management Committee. SHEP has been very fortunate with this level of voluntary commitment to the Project.

Impact Study

It is important that we continue to gather evidence of the impact of our work – this is especially important for our reporting to funders. We are starting a new series of 'Impact Studies' with the intention to focus each year, going forward, on one area of our work. This year we are focused on capturing evidence of the long-term impact of participation in the SHEP facilitation training programme.

Supporting Organisations

As you can see from the piece about SHINE A LIGHT above, we continue to support a number of organisations on an on-going basis and others on specific projects. We are very pleased to be involved in new HSE South West supported collaboration to work with Traveller Health Workers and Traveller Community Development Workers in Cork and Kerry on an experiential training programme to explore trauma-informed approaches. Over the years SHEP has supported a wide range of organisations and networks and will continue to do so in so far as resourcing allows.

[Training & Development](#) | [SHEP Earth Aware](#) | [Advocacy](#) | [Counselling & Outreach](#) | [International Partnership](#)



Some of the participants of the SHEP Horticulture LTI at one of their volunteer outreach projects – in this case working last month to support Douglas Street Residents.

CORK BIODIVERSITY HUB

The Biodiversity Hub is an initiative of Green Spaces for Health (which is a collaborative project which include Cork Healthy Cities, the Lantern Project, Cork Environmental Forum and SHEP). SHEP has been involved in this collaboration now for two years and our contribution includes employing the Project Coordinator, Maria Young, and overseeing Project Administration.

CORK BIODIVERSITY HUB

Upcoming talks in May

Thursday, May 8 - 7.30pm: Planting a forest on your land. A talk by forestry consultant Pdraig O'Thuama

Thursday, May 22 - 7.30pm: Regenerative Farming, Steps for Farmers. A presentation by Donal Chambers, senior lecturer on the Horticultural Course at Kinsale College

To book a place for any of them just email corkbiodiversityhub@gmail.com



Pdraic Fogarty, giving a talk on 'Rewilding Ireland' at Cork Biodiversity Hub in April. There was a great deal of interest in the talk which was very well attended.

BOOK LAUNCH & INVITATION

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE – A NEW LENS

BRENDAN O'BRIEN

The Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Dan Boyle, will launch Brendan's book "Understanding Suicide - A New Lens" in Devere Hall, UCC on Tuesday 13th May at 6pm. Some of those touched by suicide in their own family will speak at the launch. There is an open invitation to attend.

Brendan's book responds to the need to explore new ways of dealing with suicide and suicidal ideation. It presents insights gained from working with upwards of 200 individuals and families touched by suicide over a ten-year period.

Brendan and Eileen O'Brien have been involved with SHEP for over forty years. They both worked as Trainers and Facilitators in Cork, Limerick and Kerry. Over this time they both have been great and generous champions of the SHEP work. They also worked on the Degree Course in Counselling and Psychotherapy in MTU.

For more than ten years Brendan and Eileen have been offering free-of-charge Family Constellations Workshops to families touched by suicide. With the families they have been exploring new ways of working with suicide and suicidal ideation. SHEP has been involved in offering a back-up counselling service through Coiscéim if it was needed.

Brendan's book is available to pre-order here: <https://www.buythebook.ie/product/understanding-suicide-a-new-lens/>

All of us in the SHEP community wish to extend our sincere congratulations to Brendan and Eileen on this new and very significant contribution to the conversation on suicide. We all wish them both very well as they continue their important Family Constellations work with families touched by suicide.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SHEP Presentation of Certificates Ceremony: Kerry – **Thursday, June 5th**

SHEP Presentation of Certificates Ceremony: Cork – **Wednesday, June 11th**

SHEP Presentation of Certificates Ceremony: Limerick - **Tuesday, June 17th**

Book Launch

Tuesday, 13th May
6:00 pm
Devere Hall, UCC

by Lord Mayor of Cork,
Cllr Dan Boyle
hosted by Áras na Mac Léinn

Understanding Suicide A New Lens

Some people bereaved by suicide will share their stories and experience of Family Constellations at the event.

All Welcome - Fáilte Romhaimh

Scan the QR code to pre-order your signed copy

www.familyconstellationsireland.com



Some of the SHEP Team at a recent Gathering at Ardfoyle.

SHEP ERASMUS PLUS



Erasmus Visitors to SHEP in April - outside UCC following a session with the UCC Diploma Class. The group, from Slovakia, came to Cork with a particular interest in exchanging learning about 'Learning Cities'.

Erasmus Exchanges

We are very pleased to be an 'Accredited Organisation' for the purposes of Erasmus Plus. This means that we have guaranteed access each year to Erasmus Plus funding to support a number of different types of training and development mobilities. We also use this funding to support the development of partnerships with like-minded organisations in Europe. Currently, we have three particular partnerships (with Projects in Slovenia, Slovakia and Spain). In the coming weeks we will have three staff members from LUR, Slovenia, visit us. Two of the Slovak Teachers Group we work with will visit us in July. We hope to organise a second Learner Exchange with our Spanish Partner in 2027. We are very proud to be involved in Erasmus Plus and have benefited greatly from our involvement in this important EU programme. SHEP's 2023 programme has just been shortlisted for the European Innovative Teaching Award 2025 – which showcases outstanding teaching practices carried out as part of Erasmus+ projects.

THE OLD PRIMARY SCHOOL, ARDFOYLE AVENUE
BALLINTEMPLE, CO. CORK | T12Y304
(021) 4666180 | www.socialandhealth.com

