

SHEP Nuacht

EDITION 61 | AUTUMN 2025

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



SHEP Facilitator Gathering in May.

Dear SHEP Friends,

Welcome to our Autumn 2025 SHEP Newsletter. I hope you have had a good summer. As we start the new learning year I'm deeply grateful to all those who are involved with the Project in different ways and all those who support our important work. It is hard to believe that we are now more than six years in Ardfoyle – and we are very much appreciating the wonderful setting here and the kindness of the OLA community. Our core funders – the HSE – continue to support us financially to do our Training, counselling and Advocacy work across Cork and Kerry. In this newsletter you will read that we have a new chairperson, that we have had some good news regarding TUSLA and Irish Aid funding, and you will see that there continues to be changes to the staff team. We have said goodbye to one of our longest serving trainers who has retired. We include a selection of photographs from the last few months which give a flavour of the work that has been happening. Finally, we are asking for your help to spread the word about some of our training programmes – particularly the SHEP Foundation Part 1 (PD) programme and the full-time year long, Level 4 Horticulture LTI programme. Thank you for your support.

Jim Sheehan, SHEP Director.

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NEWS FROM OUR AGM

After four years at the helm, Carrie Shanahan, completed her term and Dolores McCashin has been appointed the new Chairperson of the SHEP Management Committee. Carrie joined the Management Committee more than six years ago and led the management committee through a very significant period in the Project's history, including the COVID pandemic and the 50th Anniversary celebrations. Carrie has written a message which we include overleaf. Previous chairpersons of SHEP include Carmel Brosnan, Paula Delaney, Mary Cunningham, Siobhan O'Connor, Angela Murphy and Ann O'Sullivan. Dolores will be ably assisted by Francis Cooley (Deputy Chairperson), Colm Walsh (Company Secretary) and Gearoid Condon (Treasurer). Pat Sheehan Corbett and Anita Murphy will also be company Directors. SHEP has been very fortunate with this level of voluntary commitment to the Project. The Audited Accounts for 2024 were approved by the Members and have been published on our website.



Dolores McCashin (newly appointed SHEP Chairperson) with Carrie Shanahan, who completed four years as SHEP Chairperson in June. Carrie joined the SHEP Management Committee in 2019 as an External Appointee.

To the Staff and Management Committee at SHEP,
Let me begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to YOU—the incredible staff of SHEP. Your dedication, diligence, creativity, and passion never cease to amaze me. You’ve each taught me so much, and I’m truly grateful for every one of you. To my fellow directors—Dolores, Gearóid, and Anita—thank you for your unwavering support and commitment over the past year. And a warm welcome to our new directors—Pat, Colm, and Francis. It’s a pleasure to have your expertise and energy joining the team. I’m confident that SHEP’s future is in excellent hands. To our outstanding Project Director, Jim—your passion, collaborative spirit, drive, empathy, and leadership have made my role as Chairperson not only easier but deeply fulfilling. Thank you for being such a steady and inspiring presence. the Management Committee—thank you for your continued dedication and care. Your voluntary contributions are the backbone of this organisation, and your commitment has been vital to our shared success.

To the entire SHEP community—thank you for being my extended family. SHEP will always hold a special place in my heart and mind. I’m deeply grateful for your support, your presence, and the incredible work you do every day.

It has been a true privilege to serve as Chairperson over the past four years. Since joining the Management Committee in 2018, I’ve had the honour of witnessing SHEP grow into a remarkable project—one that continues to meet community needs with compassion, resilience, and unwavering purpose. Even in the face of challenges, SHEP has remained steadfast in its mission, always showing up and making a meaningful impact.

I carry with me many cherished memories—from our time in Ballincollig, the transition to Ardfoyle, navigating the complexities of COVID, tough budget decisions, and of course, the joy of celebrating SHEP’s 50th anniversary. Watching the SHEP Choir blossom into the incredible troupe they are today has been a particular highlight. But most of all, I treasure the opportunity to get to know each of you and witness the incredible work you do. I am immensely proud of where SHEP stands today. This is a testament to our exceptional staff, dedicated volunteers, generous contributors, and the wide network of experts who support our work in Counselling, Advocacy, Environmental initiatives, and International Partnerships. Your collective efforts have shaped SHEP into the vibrant, impactful organisation it is today.

With my warmest wishes, Carrie.

IMPORTANT NEWS

TUSLA funding to SHEP – increased and made permanent

As you know, most of our counselling work is done through Coisceim and is funded by the HSE South West. We increased our counselling supports to children and young people over the last four years with a small annual grant from TUSLA. The project has gone very well and demand for the service is high and continues to grow. Following a good deal of advocating from our side, we are delighted that TUSLA has now confirmed permanent funding of €30,000 to sustain this project in SHEP. This is very good news and reduces the number of projects we are supporting which are not permanently funded. Big congratulations to Carmel, Nuala, Sheila, Mary and Zilma who do wonderful work on our counselling programmes.

New SHEP Advocacy Initiative

The SHEP Advocacy Service continues provide very important supports to marginalised people and is committed to collaborating widely. We are very pleased that SHEP will now partner with Horizons on a unique and innovative advocacy model to provide a dedicated SHEP Independent Advocacy Service to people supported by Horizons who live in Cork. The intention is to deliver a high quality, accessible and meaningful independent advocacy service to people with disabilities who will shortly be entering into a de-congregation process. This is a very important initiative and we bring very considerable advocacy expertise and experience to it.



Rosarie Coleman, being presented with some gifts to mark her retirement from SHEP after over three decades with SHEP. Also included are Terry Coleman, Dolores McCashin, Francis Cooley and Liam McCarthy.

STAFF CHANGES



Dolores McCashin, SHEP Chairperson, making a presentation from the Management Committee to Eilish O'Hanlon to mark her retirement from the SHEP staff team after almost ten years of work on the Training and Development Programme. Eilish's role has now passed to Michelle Demougeot.

New SHEP Vacancy – IT & Communications Officer

We are sad too that Robert O'Herlihy has finishing up with SHEP after almost five years involvement. He made a huge contribution to SHEP particularly in terms of helping to modernise our systems. We will miss him greatly. We intend to advertise this vacancy in mid-September.

Front of House

Joanie Adeshina joined the SHEP Front of House Team for a short time. Wishing her well in her Master's degree.

UPCOMING COURSES : Please help us by spreading the word!

SHEP Foundation Part 1 (Personal Development)

There is strong interest again this year in our Foundation Programme and there is still the opportunity for people to join in the Part 1 (Personal Development) courses planned for Cork, Kerry and Limerick. Applications very welcome. We know in SHEP that word-of-mouth is by far the best way to support people to take the step on a new learning journey. A word of encouragement or some gentle sign-posting can have an enormous impact. We need groups to be full to proceed. All the information is on the SHEP Website: <https://socialandhealth.com/training/shep-certificate-personal-development/> or call 021-4666180.

Horticulture (QQ1 Level 4 Major Award)

This full-time course, offered by SHEP in association with Bishopstown Campus (Cork College of FET) at SHEP Ardfoyle, provides a very supportive learning environment for those interested in horticulture. It's a 48 weeks' programme and will commence September 15th. There are no fees and a training allowance is available. You may know someone who might be eligible and for whom this might be a good next step. To find out more visit the SHEP website: <https://socialandhealth.com/horticulture-lti/> and contact the Course Coordinator, Larry Lynch (087) 1409189 or email larlynch@gmail.com.



SHEP CHOIR

The SHEP Choir is now open for new applications. The Autumn sessions will begin on Thursday 18th September from 7pm to 9pm and every Thursday thereafter until 11th December with a break for mid-term. The sessions will be held in The Ursulines Secondary School in Blackrock. The cost is €108. For further information see: <https://socialandhealth.com/shep-choir-2/>

SHEP SINGERS

Recruiting new voices.

No auditions necessary!

The Ursulines, Blackrock

THURSDAYS 7PM - 9PM

021 4666180

for more info www.socialandhealth.com/shep-choir/

IMPORTANT MILESTONES

Horticulture LTI – Our first group of full time students all graduate.

The 2024-2025 LTI students were SHEP's first ever group of full-time students. We are delighted that all of the students successfully completed their Level 4 programme – huge thanks to Larry, Nollaig and Andrew. The External Authenticator was very happy with the assessments. This important training initiative is fully funded by Cork Education and Training Board.



Our friends and guests, Perry and Sandy Massie, with graduating LTI students and some SHEP staff at a Barbeque in the Gathering Garden in SHEP in June following the First Presentation of LTI Certificates Events (as part of the partnership with SHEP). Certificates were presented by Cork Education and Training Board personnel.

New Irish Aid Funding for Sahakarmi

The current three-year 'Shakti' programme has gone very well and will be completed at the end of October. We are delighted that Irish Aid will continue to fund this important programme for another three years to October 2028. This is a huge achievement and a testimony to the wonderful work done by Sahakarmi Samaj with marginalised communities in South-West Nepal.



Tatenda Zira and Abigail Joffe (SHEP) with Ammar and senior staff of the Sahakarmi Shakti Team at the event during a monitoring visit in May to sign a New Memorandum of Agreement between SHEP and Sahakarmi. The two organisations have been collaborating for 18 years now.

CONDOLENCES

Margaret Reid RIP

Deepest condolences to Larry and all Margaret's family and friends from the Social and Health Education Project (SHEP). Margaret was deeply involved with SHEP for many years and loved the work. She was much loved and much admired by her many friends and colleagues in the Project as well as the many learners whose lives she touched. She cared deeply about people and supported many in different ways. Claire Barry, who worked with Margaret in SHEP for many years and who was a friend says: 'Margaret and I began our journey with SHEP over 30 years ago. Through that journey we travelled many roads, facilitating Groups throughout Cork, Kerry and Limerick. My recollection of those times is filled with fun, laughter, support and friendship. Margaret was a true friend and I miss the wisdom and energy she brought to every situation that she encountered. She loved engaging with people, and the people she treasure most were her wonderful family. I have been privileged to get to know that family throughout our friendship. I would like to extend my love to Larry, Jane, Mary & Ellen & her lovely grandchildren who lit up her life. Margaret I will hold you fondly in my heart. Thank you for the precious memories.'



From the Archive: Long-time friends and colleagues in SHEP, Claire Barry, Rosarie and Margaret Reid, RIP, at the tenth anniversary of the SHEP Mid-West Programme in Limerick in 2019.



Freda Creedon RIP

We were all saddened to hear of the passing of Freda Creedon. May she rest in peace.

'Freda was a valued and cherished friend to everyone who knew her. She was always reliable, supportive unassuming and sooo much more. It is very difficult to put into words all the positive characteristics she held. She was an outstanding mother to her wonderful children and grandchildren. She loved her native Dunmanway and she was always a very loyal and dedicated member of the community. She was a person of many talents. She was a nurse, yoga teacher, a community development worker, a psychotherapist. She made many lasting friendships and deep connections through her caring work. She was a valued member of the SHEP team for many years. Being a native of Dunmanway, I was privileged to have Freda as my friend.' Margaret Maher

NEW SHEP 'TOUCHSTONE' Workshops

We are very pleased to relaunch our online CPD workshops for SHEP Practitioners commencing this September. The aim of this piece, which we are calling our 'Touchstone' series, is to create a supportive space for those working with groups to come together to connect, to share their experience and to explore a relevant, contemporary topic with the support of a guest facilitator/presenter. These online workshops are open to all those working with groups in different parts of the SHEP Project: Training & Development, Environment, Advocacy and Counselling Outreach. The mix of backgrounds, settings and geographic regions will be an important dimension of the workshops. Each workshop will be a stand-alone workshop and will be fully funded by SHEP. You are most welcome to join in.

SHEP Community of Practice

'TOUCHSTONE' ONLINE CPD WORKSHOP SERIES

Safe & Supportive Space | Guest Presenter Input | Breakout rooms | Facilitated Group Discussion | Linking Theory to Practice

Workshop #1:

Group Participatory Reflective Practice for SHEP Educators

A two-hour, on-line, interactive workshop for SHEP Group Facilitators

With **Kaye Mullaney**

Hosted by Jim Sheehan

Monday, 22nd September 2025

7pm-9pm Via Zoom

Invitation and Details to follow

SHEP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



Some of the SHEP Foundation Programme Part 1 (Personal Development) programme facilitators in Ardfoy in June at a SHEP gathering, with staff members Eilish O'Hanlon (who has since retired) and Fern Higgins Atkinson. Michelle Demougeot has taken over from Eilish on the staff team.



Members of the SHEP staff team – at Torc Waterfall in Killarney in June. Also included are former staff members Alexandra Rogulska, Deirdre O’Sullivan and Eilish O’Hanlon.



Some of the SHEP staff team at the Cork Biodiversity Hub, at Ballincollig Regional Park. The Cork Biodiversity Hub is one of the Projects of Green Spaces for Health, a collaborative project in Cork City which includes SHEP. Also included are Kristina Kutuzova who was supporting the SHEP Advocacy Project during recent months, as well as Nika Pengal who was one of the Erasmus visitors from Slovenia.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY**SHEP Facilitators Gathering****Friday, 14th November 2025**

7pm-9.30pm Via Zoom

Invitation and Details to follow



Participants on a 'Minding your Well-being' course organised for SHEP Tutors with the support of two of our visiting Erasmus teachers from Slovakia. This is part of SHEP's ongoing Erasmus-supported initiative to work with a small group of teachers & educators in Slovakia – now entering its third year. The aim of this initiative to explore ways to use experiential learning to support better mental health in school settings.

CLIMATE ACTION & BIODIVERSITY

We were delighted to have been granted funding from Cork City Council's Climate Action Grant 2024-2025. We have now completed our works: with the permission of the OLA Community we have replaced all the ceiling lights in Ardfoyle with much more energy efficient LED lights. We have also installed timers on the hot water immersions. We have just completed the replacement of the windows in the corridor with triple glazed windows to improve heat conservation. Over the coming weeks we will be completing the final element – putting up the educational/awareness raising signage around the building in Ardfoyle. We are very grateful to be able to have done this and it is a very practical demonstration of our commitment to climate action.

SHEP LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2026

We intend to run this SHEP programme, fully in person, in 2026. The course will be advertised in the coming weeks and the closing date will be 31st October. Further details are on our website:

<https://socialandhealth.com/leadership-course/>

PRESENTATION OF CERTS EVENTS



Janet O' Donoghue, receiving her SHEP Certificate from Kevin Fay, Kerry Education and Training Board (who co-sponsored the course) at the SHEP Presentation of Certificates Event in Kerry in June. Janet says: 'I would like to say thank you to the staff who organised this course and the people who helped us. I learned a lot about myself and it really helped with my confidence. I met a lot of people that I knew and people I didn't but that I can now call friends. Thank You.'



Michelle Demougeot, Geraldine Flanagan and Breda Power at the Cork Presentation of Certs Event at the SMA Centre in Wilton in June. The event was very attended. There was huge praise for the SHEP Choir which opened the event with a number of special songs.



SHEP Facilitators at the Mid-West SHEP Presentation of Certificates Event in June, with Anita O'Shea (Mid-West Drug & Alcohol Forum). The MWDAF provides financial and local support to SHEP each year to offer SHEP Foundation Part 1 (Personal Development).



You don't need to do everything. Do what calls your heart; effective action comes from love.
It is unstoppable, and it is enough.
Joanna Macy, who died recently. May she rest in peace.



Our Erasmus visitors from Slovenia helping with the tidying up at the Kerry Certificates Event in June, at the Meadowlands Hotel in Tralee.

SHEP-UCC Diploma Collaboration

Thirteenth two-year Programme about to start

A wonderful group of students all successfully completed their two year programme in UCC and the graduation will take place in November. A big thank you to Brendan O'Brien and Aine Finn who are retiring from the teaching team – Sheila Kelleher and Norma O'Brien will take over the Family and Parenting aspect of Year 1. Congratulations to Brid Gould who will be taking over from Celine Griffin as Course Co-Tutor. There has been strong interest again in the Diploma and all going well a new group will commence the Level 7 programme on September 17th. Next year marks the 25th anniversary of the commencement of this collaboration between SHEP and UCC.



Some of the group 2023-2025 UCC Diploma Group as they approached the end of Year 2 before the Summer.

SHEP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Frank Dorr, Colm Walsh, Dolores McCashin (newly appointed Chairperson), Mary O'Leary, Francis Cooley, Carrie Shanahan, Tian Herbert, Carmel O'Leary, Gearoid Condon, Pat Sheehan Corbet and Anita Murphy – members of the SHEP Management Committee. Also included are Jim Sheehan and Tatenda Zira.

OTHER NEWS

CESCA TRAINING

SHEP is a proud member of the CESCA – Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance. <https://www.cesca.ie/> SHEP is the host organisation for CESCA, employing and hosting the coordinator, Sarah Harrington, and does all the administration work. CESCA's Annual Equality Seminar will take place in December.



Participants at a CESCA Media Literacy Workshop held at the Community Centre in Blackpool. The workshop was organised by CESCA Coordinator, Sarah Harrington, and delivered by Eddie and Emma from the Cork Media Hub.



Janet O'Connor Healthy Ireland Coordinator (Cork City Council) with Jim Sheehan, Niamh Findley, Maria Young, Denise Cahill and Karina Healy at a recent meeting of the Green Spaces for Health Project at The Lantern Project. The Lantern Project, Cork Healthy Cities, Cork Environmental Forum and SHEP are all partners in this important City-wide, community-based project.



Our three Erasmus visitors from LUR (the People's University of Radovljica), Slovenia, with Deirdre Lillis and Niamh Findley at Fota Gardens where they were looked at initiatives there to conserve the native Irish bee population. The LUR Project has a particular interests in Bees and runs a Bee-keeping Project. While Ireland has 100 native species of bees, including bumble bees, we have only one species of native honey bee. It is an important priority to protect it.

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