



Learning Limerick

Together for a brighter future

Newsletter

ISSUE FEBRUARY 2025

Chairperson's Reflection

As Chairperson of the Learning Limerick Steering Group, I would like you to welcome you to our February Newsletter. This time of year is busy as we approach our 15th annual Lifelong Learning Festival. The theme of literacy for our festival this year is very timely and celebrates all the literacies that we need to embrace throughout our lives. It also considers the current context regarding our local employers' skills needs around key literacies, including digital, financial, health literacies etc. We are also reflecting on the work of our group of the last year and the importance of connection and our membership of regional, national and international fora promoting lifelong learning. We are very proud of our membership of the UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) and the Irish Network of Learning Cities (INLC) and value the sharing of best practice ideas and supporting other cities as we all continue our good work.

Learning Limerick remains committed to supporting, promoting, and improving lifelong learning across the city and county. Overall, 2024 was a fulfilling, successful and busy year for Learning Limerick, while also providing us with some clear directions for our ongoing future work in 2025. We also look forward to commencing the process of drafting our new Strategic Plan for our group later in 2025.



Eimear Brophy

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and Chair of Learning Limerick

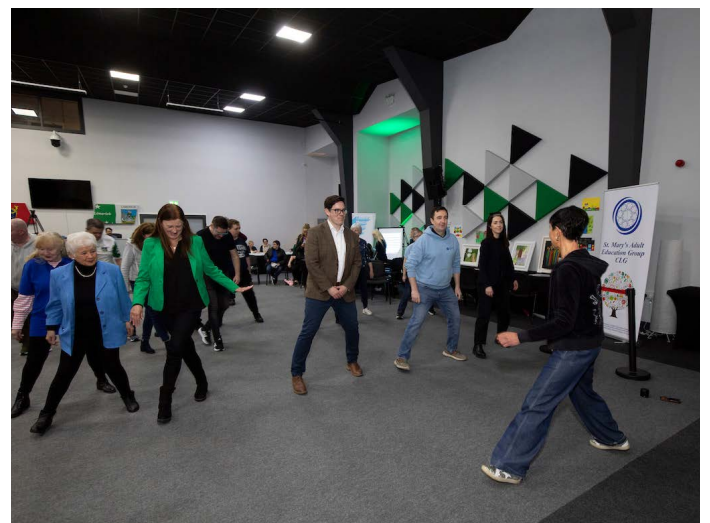
Introducing Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2025

Preparations for the next Limerick Learning Lifelong Festival are well in place; this will be the 15th annual festival and runs from Monday 7th April to Sunday 13th April. The festival will be launched at an official event in Newcastle West Library.

The festival theme this year is 'Literacies for Life' and this theme was brainstormed with event hosts at our recent Learning Limerick networking meeting in January. There will also be a key seminar titled 'All Literacies Change Lives' held during the festival week, on April 10th. This seminar event is a collaboration between Learning Limerick, the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Office and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

Feedback on Our Festival Last Year

The Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2024 took place from Monday 15th April to Sunday 21st April 2024 and was a great success. The festival's theme was 'Learn, Grow, Explore in 2024'. There were over 150 free events to choose from featuring activities such as community arts, wellbeing, guided tours, open days, education pathways, professional and personal development, language tasters, technology, cookery classes, business and enterprise. The festival was launched at a special event held at the College of Further Education and Training, Mulgrave Street Campus, on the 22nd of March. There was also a festival flagship event called 'Creativity for Wellbeing – A celebration of Lifelong Learning' that was held at the Abundant Life Centre on April 18th.



Feedback on the festival from event organizers included positive feedback on the new social media templates introduced in 2024. Highlights mentioned were the festival launch and flagship events. The importance and unique relevance of the twice-yearly networking meetings was also highlighted.

Some recommendations for this year's workplan included the need to expand the membership of the Learning Limerick Steering Group, to hold the festival launch event in the County this year, and to always keep the festival relevant! Feedback on the festival from event hosts included positive feedback on the new social media templates introduced in 2024; and other highlights mentioned were the festival launch and flagship events. The importance and unique relevance of the twice-yearly networking meetings was also highlighted. Some recommendations for this year's workplan included the need to expand the membership of the Learning Limerick Steering Group, to hold the festival launch event in the County this year, and to always keep the festival fresh!

Learning Limerick Networking Meetings

Networking Meeting Held in October 2024



A successful 'Wellness Learning Journey' event we had last October 9th, 2024, at Moyross Community Enterprise Centre Ltd. The guest speaker psychotherapist Caroline Crotty; shared some tips on self-care and mental health. This event was hosted by Learning Limerick in collaboration with Limerick Mental Health Association as part of Limerick Mental Health Week. A number of topics that the speaker Caroline Crotty covered were Finding Balance in Learning, Living with Mindfulness, The Comparison Trap, Incorporating Downtime, and The Role of Community and Connection.

Learning Limerick Information and Networking Event – January 2025

A productive Learning Limerick Information and Networking meeting was held on Friday 31st January in Castletroy Park Hotel hosted by the Festival Organizing Committee. Tom Kent, Regional Literacy Coordinator, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, was the keynote speaker, explaining this year's festival theme based on literacy. Tom also shared some information on the seminar taking place during the festival week entitled "All Literacies Change Lives".



The Learning Limerick Chairperson, Eimear Brophy, Limerick and Clare ETB gave an insightful address on the importance of lifelong learning in a global context, the need to decipher fake news and propaganda and the importance of upskilling on key literacies.

Jim Prior, Limerick Community Education Network, facilitated the event in collaboration with Helen Brown, University of Limerick.

Thanks to Dave Duffy, St. Mary's Adult Education Centre and Martina Shanahan, PAUL Partnership, for sharing their experiences of coordinating festival events.

LCEN 30 Year Celebration and Launch of Impact Review – 23rd October 2024

Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) marked 30 years of the network at a special celebratory event held on 23rd October 2024. This event was combined with the launch of its Impact Review and marked a commitment from all partners to the support and provision of education in communities across Limerick City. LCEN, a key community partner of Learning Limerick, is a city-wide network of community and voluntary groups, and statutory agencies involved in the organization and delivery of community education in Limerick.



Recommendations arising from the Impact Review found that LCEN has key strengths but there are also areas for further growth development. It outlined enhanced communication, secure funding, and strengthening of partnerships as some areas for further growth. With these changes, and by working together with its partners, LCEN can continue making a positive impact on Limerick.

Irish Network of Learning Cities and UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

The Irish Network of Learning Cities had a busy year, continuing with biweekly meetings for the coordinators, as a vital support mechanism, to share best practice and ideas. For Irish Learning Cities Day on 26th September, there was a collaborative video created with the six mayors of all six cities speaking about the benefits of being part of the network. Learning Limerick's Lifelong Learning Facilitator also travelled to Cork for Irish Learning Cities Day, for a workshop on Learning Neighborhoods and attended the launch of the Cork Celebrates Lifelong Learning Awards. There was a workshop meeting facilitated by Dublin Learning City on December 11th, where the six cities coordinated collaborative plans and actions for the year ahead.



The sixth International UNESCO Learning Cities Conference was held in Jubail, Saudi Arabia from 3rd – 5th December. In preparation for this conference, UNESCO facilitated an online webinar meeting for the European and North American Network of Learning Cities on October 9th. Yvonne Lane, Learning Limerick Coordinator, presented the work of the Irish Network of Learning Cities.

A group from Learning Limerick met with Katja Roemer from the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning in Cork last year. This was part of a shared island event; and the Limerick Mental Health Association representative Ian Hackett presented on their 'Buddy Bench' project at the international seminar.



TUS Midwest Access Service & Flexible Learning Dept Nominated for AONTAS Star Awards

The Certificate in Transition to Higher Education in TUS Midwest has been shortlisted for the AONTAS Star awards this year under the Third Level Access and Engagement category. Congratulations to TUS and wishing this project every success for the Awards in March. Learning Limerick Ambassador, Dave Doherty, completed this programme in 2022, and Dave is now in second year in a Degree in Social Care at TUS. Dave is currently on his work placement with St. Augustine's School, and we wish him continued success with both his work experience and his studies.



If anyone is interested in learning more about the Certificate in Transition to Higher Education programme, please contact Anna Murphy, Programme Leader at Anna.murphy@tus.ie or 061293130 or email flexible.midwest@tus.ie.



Many thanks to all our partners in Learning Limerick:

- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
- Limerick City and County Council
- PAUL Partnership
- University of Limerick
- Mary Immaculate College
- Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
- West Limerick Resources
- Ballyhoura Development
- Limerick Childcare Committee
- Limerick Community Education Network
- National Learning Network
- Limerick Mental Health Association
- Youth Work Limerick
- Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Limerick Local Enterprise Office
- Mid-West Regional Skills Forum
- Department of Social Protection
- Learning Ambassadors Sub-group