



**Waterford
Volunteer Centre**
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Port Lairge

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted to the Department of Rural &
Community Development
June 2024



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Waterford Volunteer Centre CLG
4C Manor House, Manor Village,
Cork Road, Waterford,
X91 HH9P

Registered Charity Number
(RCN): 20205996
Charity Number (CHY): 22885
Companies Registration Number
(CRO): 676571

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Company Details

Name of Charity:

Waterford Volunteer Centre CLG

CHY Number:

22885

Registered Charity Number:

20205996

Company Registration Number:

676571

Registered Office:

4C Manor House
Manor Village
Cork Road
Waterford
X91 HH9P

Website:

www.volunteerwaterford.ie

Directors 2023

Catherine Power

Deirdre Power

Pat Power

May Doyle

John Hawkes

Karen McGrath

John Power

Donna Ferris-joined Board January 2023

Anne O'Brien- joined Board January 2023

Conor Mc Guinness – joined Board January 2023

Auditors

Park Chambers Chartered

Accountants & Registered Auditors,

96 Lower Yellow Road,

Waterford, X91HH27.

Bank

AIB The Quay, Waterford

Structure, Governance & Management

Waterford Volunteer Centre (WVC) is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Our governing document is our Constitution. The company was incorporated on August 27th, 2020. Prior to this there was a part-time Volunteer Information Service hosted by Waterford Area Partnership.

WVC is an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland, the national support structure for volunteering. It is part of the national network of 29 volunteer centres, at least one in each county.

We have a voluntary board of directors made up of 10 members who guide Waterford Volunteer Centre in our objectives. The board of directors place an emphasis on ensuring that we are open, transparent and follow the highest standards of governance. Our aim for 2023 was to increase our compliance with the Charities Governance Code.

The Board of Waterford Volunteer Centre met 7 times, including the AGM, in 2023. In addition to the board, there are also a number of committees to support and report back to the board:

- Finance Committee
- HR Committee
- Marketing Committee
- Governance Committee

Main objective of Waterford Volunteer Centre

To strengthen and support volunteering in Waterford City & County.

Funders

Department of Rural & Community Development

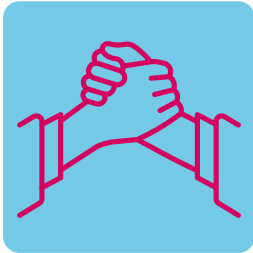
Our Mission & Vision

To actively promote and provide opportunities which engage people in volunteering, and to support voluntary organisations with a quality-based service that is person-centered, for the benefit of Waterford City and County Communities.



Volunteering opportunities in Waterford are fulfilling, engaging and contribute to the development of our community with volunteers respected for their individual contributions and voluntary organisations providing robust, appropriate opportunities.

Our Core Objectives



Objective 1

Increase access to volunteering by offering a support service to the public and to Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's).



Objective 2

Increase the quality of volunteering



Objective 3

Increase awareness of volunteering by marketing and promoting volunteering.



Objective 4

Ensure the organisation is sustainable through good governance and management.

Our Team

Sharon Higgins - Centre Manager



Sharon has been Centre Manager since the establishment of Waterford Volunteer Centre in January 2021. She is responsible for the day to day operations of Waterford Volunteer Centre and the management of its resources and staff. Sharon works closely with the Board trustees and sub-committees of Waterford Volunteer Centre to ensure the delivery of the annual work plan. She provides support in relation to the implementation of the Charities Regulator Governance Code. Sharon acts as Garda Vetting Liaison Officer and delivers a range of training and information sessions to students, corporates, and relevant volunteer-involving organisations. She represents the Centre on relevant local and national networks and is part of the Community Response Forum. She engages with local media on behalf of Waterford Volunteer Centre. Sharon has responsibility for the health and safety of all staff and volunteers of WVC. Sharon left our team in December 2023 and we thank her for her contribution in the setting up and development of WVC. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

Paul Deegan - Placement & Development Officer

Paul has been WVC Placement & Development Officer since January 18th, 2021. His role involves volunteer referral and organisational development support. Paul meets with volunteers and organisation representatives to discuss all aspects of volunteer recruitment and development. He acts as the broker between the individual wanting to volunteer and the organisation that engages the volunteers. This approach aims to ensure that volunteers are engaged in roles that are rewarding and enjoyable. He hosts our outreach sessions which aim to increase awareness of volunteering across the county. Paul also acts as a Garda Vetting Liaison Officer for Waterford Volunteer Centre. As well as supporting volunteers and organisations, Paul also maintains our website .



Vicky Wall- Support Coordinator

Vicky joined Waterford Volunteer Centre in July 2023. She provides administrative support to the Manager & Placement Officer as required. She is also responsible for creating social media content and maintaining the social media scheduling. Despite working just ten hours per week, having Vicky on board has made a huge difference to our operations. She also helps organise our networking events and coordinate the Welcome Ambassadors Programme.



Anna Kachanivska - Ukrainian Volunteer Outreach Worker

Anna joined the WVC team in March 2023 following a recruitment process. Thanks to additional funding made available from DRCD to support the Ukraine Crisis, she was employed on a full-time, fixed term contract to the end of 2023. Her tasks include meeting Ukrainians to explain and promote volunteering and how it can be beneficial for integration into their new communities. Anna brings a renewed interest and capacity for involvement of members from the Ukrainian community along with other non-nationals in Art and Craft workshops and Star Weaving Initiative.



Our Numbers

As in 2022, we were delighted to achieve and surpass the targets for most of our actions in 2023. Organisation registrations were almost on track and for 2024 we will look at how we can engage more fully with volunteer involving organisations to support them in the challenges they face from recruitment, governance and retention of board and committee members

Volunteer Registrations



Target 350 – Actual 543 (155%)

VIO Registrations



Target 50 – Actual 45 (90%)

New Opportunities



Target 120 – Actual 132 (110%)

Registered Volunteers



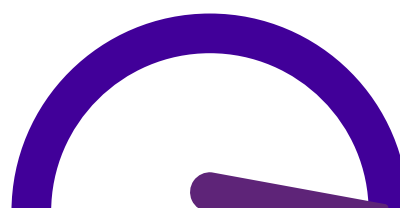
Target 300 – Actual 368 (122%)

Repeat Callers



Target 150 – Actual 170 (113%)

Volunteer Hours



Target 10.000 – Actual 12.429 (124%)



Our Thanks

First and foremost, we would like to thank DRCD for their continued commitment to funding Waterford Volunteer Centre. Funding received allows us to strengthen, support and promote volunteering across the county. Their additional funding in 2023 to support the Ukraine Crisis allowed us to reach those that were new in our communities and to give them an opportunity to become involved in local groups and activities.

Volunteer Ireland and the network of Volunteer Centres are a huge support in reinforcing the work we do. Ideas and resources are shared which increases our capacity to reach more people and organisations.

We have also been supported by local organisations and the media and this has helped to promote the service being offered by Waterford Volunteer Centre.

Waterford City & County Council
Waterford PPN
Waterford Area Partnership
Waterford Sports Partnership
WLR FM

Beat 102 103 FM
Waterford News & Star
Waterford Today
Dungarvan Observer
Dungarvan Leader

Finally, we would also like to extend a very special thank you to the members of the public who volunteered in their community in 2023 and to the many non-profit organisations who worked throughout this year and every year to make Waterford the best place to live.

Chairpersons Message



As Chairperson I wish to acknowledge the ongoing support each member of the Board gave over the past 12 months and for the work and time you contributed in the past year.

In 2023 we achieved so much through our annual planning and actions delivered including the ongoing response and support to Ukrainians and those who sought refuge from the war here in Waterford and Ireland. Our staff have been to the forefront in responding to local needs of volunteers and volunteer involved organisations and have engaged in regional and national forums to advocate on emerging issues and inform government policy. On behalf of the Board, I wish to acknowledge and thank them all for their unfailing commitment and enthusiasm.

Key achievements I wish to highlight:

- Our 2023 Annual Report highlighted our success in meeting our outcomes including targets.
- While our work may be measured through performance indicators our approach is 100% person centred led by the Board and by the staff in their day-to-day work,
- The Board's commitment to good governance as we work to achieve compliance with the Charities Governance Code
- Maintaining our funding and requirements of the programme for the Department of Rural and Community Development and working with Volunteer Ireland on national policies
- Continued promotion of WVC and services across Waterford City & County by Board and staff
- Programmes such as Waterford Welcome Ambassadors, Star Weaving with Ukrainians and supports to volunteer led organisations are very proactive and show leadership in the service we provide

Our collaborative work with our partners and other events has strengthened our role within Waterford as an invaluable resource for all aspects of volunteering.

On behalf of all of us in Waterford Volunteer Centre I thank you for reading our Annual Report 2023 which reflects all the work we achieved. We look forward to continuing and strengthening our supports to all in Waterford.

Catherine Power 18th June 2023

Our Progress: Objectives, Achievements & Performance

Increase access to volunteering by offering a support service to the public and Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's)

2023 saw a continuance in building awareness of WVC and the supports it offers. It was wonderful to be able to hold weekly drop-ins on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11am and 3pm to allow volunteers and organisations to call to the Centre and learn more about volunteering and how we can support them.

A large pink circle containing the number 543 in white text.

543

New
Volunteers

A large light blue circle containing the number 12.429 in pink text.

12.429

Volunteer Hours

We were delighted to surpass our targets for volunteer registrations, new opportunities listed and the number of volunteers that applied for registrations. However, we fell short of the mark when it came to new organisations registering.

A large light blue circle containing the number 45 in white text.

45

New
Organisations

A large purple circle containing the number 132 in white text.

132

New
Opportunities

In 2023 WVC hosted many sessions for volunteers and organisations supporting and celebrating their achievements.

One of the supports we offer is a Garda vetting service for organisations that don't have their own authorised signatory. Training is provided for new affiliates to ensure they are aware of and follow proper guidelines for vetting individuals.



Increase the quality of volunteering

We endeavour to increase the quality of volunteering in a number of ways, including monitoring volunteer opportunities to ensure they are relevant and engaging and will inform prospective volunteers what the role entails. We also meet or chat to volunteers to understand what their expectations are and how we can help to make the experience rewarding.

It is also of benefit to our VIO's to have opportunities to meet and receive training for board/committee roles and for governance. Our Placement and Development officer Paul has designed simplified access for online applications for volunteering roles. He has also supported many VIO's in developing volunteering opportunities. He has provided assessment and delivery of training to registered organisations, with regard to volunteer recruitment, volunteer management and retention, and Garda Vetting, in order to build capacity within volunteer-involving organisations.

In 2023 a diverse group of VIO's received support and volunteer placements from WVC. These groups represented the Arts community with Spraoi, Waterford Walls, Imagine Arts Festival and Waterford Treasures museums engaging many new volunteers. Community festivals also involved many volunteers with Spraoi, Harvest, Vitamin Sea and Winterval. The Welcome Ambassador programme was reinvigorated this year.

Waterford Volunteer Centre participated in many outreach and information sessions this year particularly in the city. It is hoped to expand outreach to the broader county area next year.

- **Increase awareness of volunteering by marketing and promoting volunteering**

Increasing awareness of WVC and volunteering was an important aspect of our work plan for 2023. The staff continued to build on the progress made in 2022. The position of a Support Coordinator enabled WVC to introduce a Reward card scheme for Volunteers. This project required a major time input by Sharon and Vicky.



Social media will continue to be an integral part of our plan for 2024, and we will continue to develop our followers. Social media is a cost effective method of reaching a large relevant audience. It is especially important as a means of communicating with younger people as technology plays a large role in their lives. We will be exploring engaging volunteers to help us with our social media campaigns.

National Volunteering Week

National Volunteering Week is a week-long celebration of volunteering across the country and is an opportunity to promote and recognise volunteers and organisations in Waterford. We encouraged organisations to thank their volunteers and we held one of our Volunteer Leader networking events.



Our events for NVW were well attended, and overall, the week was a great success.

- On Monday, we held a Volunteer Information Session at the Centre. This was attended mainly by Ukrainians, and Anna gave a presentation on how to get involved and the benefits of volunteering.
- Tuesday evening, we held an Introductory meeting for the Welcome Ambassadors where new and experienced volunteers got to meet and chat about the Programme.
- Wednesday was our Volunteer Leaders Networking Lunch, and we had a great turnout with eight different organisations represented.
- Thursday evening, Paul facilitated a drop-in session for volunteers and organisations interested in committee/board roles. This also had good attendance and highlighted again the need for people to get involved at committee level.
- On Friday, we held a Community Information Event in City Square with a number of supporting bodies (PPN, Healthy Waterford, SICAP, HSE, Sports Partnership). This event gathered much attention and was a great way to create awareness of the VC.



Throughout the week, we showcased volunteer stories on our social media platforms. These received huge engagement from volunteers and readers of our website and social media pages.

Community & Voluntary Awards 2023

Once again, Waterford Volunteer Centre collaborated with Waterford PPN to promote and host the 2023 Community & Voluntary Awards. We were fortunate to receive a bursary from DRCD allowing us to increase the number of awards we could sponsor. We decided to focus on Volunteer of the Year and we had a Junior, Age-Friendly and Board/Committee category.

We were blown away by the response, with 34 nominations across the three categories. 17 for the Board/Community volunteers, 14 for Age friendly, and 3 for the Junior. These were anonymised then adjudicated by Kilkenny, Offaly and Laois Volunteer Centres.

A gala event was held in The Park Hotel, Dungarvan to which all nominees were invited and where the winners of all categories were announced.

The Winners

Board/Committee Volunteer of the Year:

Vivienne Burns, Helping Hands Waterford

<https://youtu.be/vjIvELISaAY>



Junior Volunteer of the Year:

Sean Murphy, Roanmore GAA

<https://youtu.be/gP9rnGvGyyo>

Age Friendly Volunteer of the Year:

Eileen O'Toole, Waterford Marine Search & Rescue

https://youtu.be/ZZMnx_XTUbO



Welcome Ambassadors Programme

This year WVC involved Fiona Gerrighty on work placement for a tourism course run by Dunhill Education Centre. She helped to create a framework/toolkit we can refer to each year for the W.A. programme.



The Welcome Ambassadors provide a warm welcome and local knowledge to visitors to Tramore and Waterford City over the summer months. The W.A. programme also links into the Waterford Cruise ship experience for travellers who are enjoying a visit to Dunmore East and the wider community area as well as the city. The visitors are welcomed off the ship in Dunmore and given maps and information about the area. The season runs from May to September.



**153 hours
welcomed**

In the city centre, the Welcome Ambassador programme runs from June to the end of August over the weekends. Many interesting conversations have been reported by the W.A.s engaging with visitors from all over the world. Unfortunately, the unseasonal weather in the summer did not allow for much interaction. We hope the summer of 2024 will be much brighter with less rain.

The program was a success in Tramore with new volunteers participating.

• Ensure the organisation is sustainable through good governance & management

Any organisation's sustainability, especially Charities, depends on good governance and management. The Board of Waterford Volunteer Centre are actively involved in ensuring all Companies Registration Office and Charities Regulator guidelines are followed. WVC board members along with the manager spent many hours working with an expert on governance throughout 2023. We are pleased that we have a good working Compliance record for the Charities Regulator which will be updated annually. The board decided to adopt the additional standards, for complex organisations, as we meet many of those objectives.

Regrettably, WVC had two resignations from the board in 2022 but gained three new trustees in January 2023. These new trustees come from diverse areas of working and living experience and a broad volunteering knowledge. We do not think any other VC has a trustee who volunteers as a train driver. These new members of the Board contributed and offered new ideas and insights into many areas of discussion over the board meetings of 2023.

Meeting Dates 2022	18/01	22/02	04/04	24/05	13/06	19/09	24/10	12/12	%
Catherine Power	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	87%
Deirdre Power	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Pat Power	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	75%
May Doyle	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	87%
John Hawkes	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	75%
Karen McGrath	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	37%
John Power	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	75%
Donna Ferris	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	62%
Anne O'Brien	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	87%
Conor mc Guinness	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	87%

Board Meeting Attendance Record 2023

Attendance at Board meetings throughout the year was excellent and is evidence of the trustees commitment to Waterford Volunteer Centre.

Challenges 2023

While many of the challenges we faced in 2022 were due to the arrival of displaced Ukrainians to Waterford city and county these numbers continued to increase in 2023. There has also been an increase in International Protection applicants which have added to the workload of the VC.

WVC continued to support the Ukraine Response by recruiting volunteers for partner organisations, processing Garda vetting invitations and helping Ukrainians set up activities. DRCD made funding available specifically for the Ukraine Crisis for 2022 and continued with funding for 2023. From this funding we recruited a Ukrainian Volunteer Outreach Worker and while Alina left us to take up a similar role in the Community Sector Anna has replaced her and continued to do incredible work, promoting volunteering and highlighting the way it helps people to integrate into new communities.



In 2023 WVC became involved in the One Million Starts project and this has become a major integration project for many members of migrant/ displaced people in Waterford. The language barrier still remains.

Full Report on Ukraine Response

Double click on the report to navigate the pages.



https://volunteerwaterford.ie/wp-content/uploads/Ukraine-Response-Report-2023_c.pdf

Future Plans

Our plans for 2024 will be to continue to promote WVC and to increase awareness of the benefits of volunteering. We will also endeavour to reach those in rural and isolated areas whose access to volunteering activities might be limited. Adapting to the changing landscape of volunteering will also be a priority as we explore how best to support the needs of volunteers and organisations.

Implementing the actions of the National Volunteering Strategy will play a key role in determining our activities, one of these will be to further explore the Community Volunteers Programme in Waterford. With rising costs we will need to budget carefully to ensure we provide a comprehensive range of services across the county. Outreach will continue but with greater focus on how it can be more impactful. We will also consider new ways of engaging organisations, as this was an area we had little success with for 2022. Measuring the impact of volunteering will also be a key element of our 2023 plans.

Our work with Ukrainian and migrant communities will hopefully continue to grow and we will look at initiatives to showcase the positive effects of volunteering for those who are new to our communities.



Develop our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan



Increase the reach of WVC in rural locations



Develop our Communication and outreach strategy



Continue to promote volunteering as a means of integration for migrants.



Waterford Volunteer Centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Port Lairge