



June & July 2019

# LUTON IRISH FORUM

*Providing social opportunities and welfare advice to everyone*

## Thank our volunteers and vote for the Board at AGM

All members are invited to our AGM on Saturday 22nd June, 10am-12noon.

The AGM is where LIF Members vote on nominations to the Board of Trustees and find out more about our work over the last 12 months. It's also the launch of our Annual Review publication.

In addition this year, we'll be celebrating the contribution of our volunteers. Lord McKenzie has kindly agreed to thank our volunteers and present certificates on our behalf.

Our volunteers in total give more than 300 hours of their time each month. They are vital in just about every service we provide and help in all sorts of ways. Just some of what LIF volunteers do includes running social clubs, preparing and serving refreshments, answering the phone,

supporting the passport witnessing service, visiting socially isolated people, keeping financial records and being involved in all stages of Luton St Patrick's Festival and other events.

"We're very lucky to have so many volunteers with many different talents who willing to do so much for LIF and for everyone who uses our services," says Janet Brennan, Volunteer Officer. "Officially thanking our volunteers at the AGM is just a token of how much their valuable contribution is appreciated."

To join our volunteer team, please apply at <http://lutonirishforum.org/support-us/volunteer-today/> or speak with Janet in the office.



## Engaging across the generations

Generation Irish is a research and community engagement project LIF has been commissioned to do with the aim of defining the emerging needs of the Irish community.

The project will produce guidance to assist LIF and other Irish organisations in the UK to meet the diverse and evolving needs of younger Irish emigrants and second and third generation Irish. The guidance should make it easier for younger people to celebrate, maintain and strengthen their links with Ireland and Irish culture, and to foster a more vibrant sense of community and of Irish identity.



*Youngsters finding out about Irish culture.*

*Cont'd overleaf ...*

*Pictured is our own St Patrick and some of the youngsters who enjoyed a play day discovering Irish culture during the Easter half term.*



## Engaging across the generations *...Cont'd*

For several years we have identified a generational gap in people using our services. Currently we provide welfare support, social and cultural services and activities – predominantly to an aging community of first-generation Irish, most of whom were part of the wave of Irish migrants to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. The other generational group we serve primarily are via our Baby and Toddler Group, mostly made up of mothers in their mid-20s to late 30s with children up to school entry age.

We know the persons using our services least are working age people from 20-60yrs and young people aged 6-19yrs. However, these groups do engage with us through our annual Luton St Patrick's Festival and women's afternoon tea events and during the year generally via social media.

Part of the Generation Irish project was to find out how different generations see their Irish identity, its importance, whether they feel there are opportunities for second and third generations to learn about Irish culture, and what type of events and/or activities are or would be most successful.

More than 200 people, fairly evenly spread across the different age ranges, responded to our survey. Of these, 44% are second generation, 37% first generation and 19% third generation. Some 52% described their nationality as Irish and a further 26% as Irish-British or British-Irish. Almost 9 in 10 (87%) 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that Irishness is an important part of their identity.

The full report will be downloadable from our website very soon.

## Prize draw winners

Thank you to everyone who has completed feedback on events and answered survey questions in our recent Generation Irish surveys. Your responses will be used to plan future events and in shaping the work we do involving more second and third generation Irish people locally. Congratulations to the winners – enjoy spending your vouchers!

### **Luton St Patrick's feedback**

Rebecca Charman: £50 The Pines voucher.

### **Generation Irish Survey**

Lisa McNamee: £50 The Mall voucher.

### **Generation Irish survey (under 30s)**

Zoe McCarthy: £50 The Mall voucher.

# Groups have great days out – meeting animals & at the seaside



Our Baby & Toddler group had a fun packed day at Woodside Animal Farm and a coachload of LIF Members enjoyed a day trip to Clacton last month (May).

The Baby & Toddler group were able to meet animals including llamas, goats, sheep, cows, chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs as well as spending time in both the indoor and outdoor play areas.

“It was a wonderful experience for the children, they all loved the different things to do and particularly enjoyed the trailer rides and pedal go-karts. The children had a fantastic time, as did the parents and grandparents too – we can’t wait to go again!” said Kathleen, one of the Volunteer Co-ordinators of the Baby & Toddler group.

Thanks to Kathleen and Roisin, Volunteer Co-ordinators, who organised the trip.

**The Baby & Toddler Group runs Fridays (term time only) 09.30-11.30am. All under 5s and parents/carers welcome.**



More than 50 LIF members and friends went to Clacton in the middle of May on a warm and sunny morning. After a smooth coach journey they had time to explore local attractions and to relax on the beach.

“It was a lovely day. Fish and chips always taste better by the sea and we found a great Italian restaurant that served not only a very tasty meal but gave generous portions too,” said long-time LIF member Patricia Mullins.



**Our next coach trip is on Saturday 15th June. We’re off to Southend, cost is only £13 for adults and £5 for children.** Please book in reception. See Diary on our back page, What’s On and notices in LIF building or contact us for details of forthcoming trips.

# LIF Befrienders

Our Volunteer Befrienders are now out and about visiting (in pairs) people at home.

The befriending project was developed to relieve the social isolation that people at home on their own often feel. LIF Befrienders have helped by simply being a friendly face, sitting and chatting over a cup of tea and fetching milk from the local shop. They've also been walking up and down garden paths and around the block with clients who have been injured/had an operation and are still a 'bit wobbly', or have lost confidence to go out walking by themselves.

One of our Volunteer Befrienders said: "It's lovely that someone is so pleased to see me when I visit them. We just sit and chat, sometimes have a short walk if it's a warm day. It's not much but I know the difference it makes to someone who feels a bit isolated at home. Befriending is a very rewarding thing to do."

If you would like to apply to become a befriender, please complete the online form at <http://lutonirishforum.org/support-us/volunteer-today/> or contact Janet in the office. If you know anyone who would like a befriender, please get in touch.



Jim Carway with his Award.

## Diary dates

### Events held at LIF unless specified.

Tuesday 11th June 2019, 4.00-6.00pm

#### Trustees Meeting

Friday 14th June 2019, 10.30-11.30am, Free

#### Music Workshop - All abilities welcome

Friday 14th June 2019, 2.00-4.00pm

#### Safe Home Ireland - Information and advice

for anyone who may be considering returning or moving to Ireland. Please book online or in reception.

Saturday 15th June 2019

#### Coach trip to Southend £13 adult, £5 child

Please book in reception.

Saturday 22nd June, 2019 10.00am-12noon

#### Annual General Meeting

- All members welcome

Tuesday 2nd July 2019, 1.30-2.30pm

#### Social Clubs meet - club leaders and/or club representatives

Thursday 18th July 2019

#### Coach trip to Great Yarmouth £13

Please book in reception.

## A valuable contributor to Irish Country Music

Congratulations to Jim Carway on winning the Galway Crystal Award for his 'Outstanding Contribution to Irish Country Music'. The presentation was made during the Hot Country TV Awards held at the Slieve Russell Golf and Country Club Co. Cavan on 29th April.

Jim has presented the popular Luton Irish Live show on Diverse FM for the last 10 years and was a presenter on Chiltern FM for 20+ years before that. Members will also know Jim as MC at Luton St Patrick's Festival over many years.

## LUTON IRISH FORUM

Kathleen Connolly House, 102 Hitchin Road, Luton, LU2 0ES T. 01582 720447

[info@lutonirishforum.org](mailto:info@lutonirishforum.org) [www.lutonirishforum.org](http://www.lutonirishforum.org) F Luton-Irish-Forum T @IrishinLuton