



# Clare Volunteer Centre 2016

Evaluation Report  
2016



## executive summary

In June 2015, the Clare Volunteer Centre was asked by Micheál Ó Riabhnaigh, Cathaoirleach of the Fleadh Executive Committee to develop and design a Volunteer Management Programme for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2016.

It was agreed that the programme would focus on enabling people of all ages and abilities to take the opportunity to be part of this unique event by running an inclusive and countywide recruitment initiative.

The Clare Volunteer Centre team Sharon Meaney & Dolores O Halloran set up a working group involving members of the Clare Volunteer Centre Board and volunteers with experience in training, marketing and PR.

This report evaluates the outcome of the event and includes feedback received. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the event and consider key learning's for future events.

*Thank you for an unforgettable experience. Well done to you all, you were our backbone for the week, we were only a small cog in a large wheel steered by 3 able ladies. Thank you. Mary B McMahon – Team Leader*

The Clare Volunteer Centre would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the Clare Volunteer Centre Working Group, Fleadh Executive Committee, Clare County Council & Clare Fire Service in providing financial assistance, expertise & enthusiasm to the event.

Over 1500 individual volunteers were registered with the project. Volunteer roles included Venue Assistants, Street Ambassadors, Green Ambassadors, Venue Managers, PR & Social Media and Stewarding.

The Clare Volunteer Centre has a proven track record in the recruitment & management of volunteers through its own database. A further breakdown of the value in involving volunteers is provided further on in the report.



## how did it all work?

The Fleadh Volunteer recruitment drive was launched in November 2015. Volunteers were recruited through flyers, local libraries, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Clare Volunteer Centre database, Fleadh Cheoil website, Clare Volunteer Centre website and outreaches in Coonagh, Ennis, Miltown Malbay, Kilrush and Ennistymon.

Presentations were made to Active Retirement Groups, Community Organisations, Local Training Initiatives, TÚS & RSS and the Clare GAA.

Volunteers were registered on the Clare Volunteer Centre database, which uses a CRM tool 'Salesforce'. All volunteers with a valid email address were kept updated through email and those with no email addresses were contacted by mail and phone.

1247 volunteers were registered on the database up until 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016. During the period 15<sup>th</sup> August – 22<sup>nd</sup> August, due to increased publicity locally (Clare FM) and targeted recruitment for specific roles, 273 volunteers registered directly with the Clare Volunteer Centre in Chapel Lane, Ennis.

Training was developed by the Clare Volunteer Centre with support & contribution by Comhaltas, Clare Civil Defence, Clare Fire Service, Accessibility Sub Committee, Green Fleadh, An Garda Síochána & Clare Tourism. 10 training sessions were scheduled with 724 people attending the sessions.

Volunteers were asked to select in order of preference their preferred role:

- Street Ambassador
- Green Fleadh Ambassador
- Venue Assistant
- Car Park Steward
- Traffic Steward
- Street Steward
- Catering
- Concert Stewards
- Audio/Visual
- Photographer
- No Preference

Volunteers were also asked to indicate their availability and whether they would be able to volunteer at short notice.

Volunteers were contacted by phone & email to schedule their volunteer duty by the Clare Volunteer Centre Team and volunteers.

The Clare Volunteer Centre relocated to the Chapel Lane community centre which was both central and accessible, although a request had to be made to Ennis Mental Health Association for access to their accessible toilet.

***Your team and work was greatly appreciated by visitors and much admired by competitors and people visiting the Banner for the first time. Gurbh raibh maith agat.***

***Regards  
Donal Mackey  
Nenagh***

## Volunteer Discount Card

- Shanahans Gems
- Seoidin
- Pat McCarthy Shoes
- MH Young Interiors
- The Belleek Shop
- Club Dangan
- CD2 Menswear
- Ennis Outlet Store
- Pynes
- Cornucopia
- Caution Clothing
- Breda's Boutique
- Boutique Bibi
- Carraig Donn
- Ozone Health
- The Cloister
- Asian Street Food
- YOLO
- Bagel Factory
- The Snack Shack
- Relish
- Trump Hotels
- Inn at Dromoland
- Coffeys Take Away
- Golden Pizza
- Enzo's Take Awa
- Health Connection
- Aisling Lillis Graphics
- The Wine Buff
- Ruths Hairdressers
- Peter Marks
- Cassidys Pharmacy
- O Loughlins Pharmacy
- Hollys Chemist
- Normoyles Chemist



## accommodation

Volunteers were recruited through the Clare Volunteer Centre in March 2016 to survey properties registered on the Fleadh Accommodation database. 17 volunteers attended training which took place in April 2016. Some of the volunteers were responsible for viewing up to 50 properties at their own expense with a geographical spread across the county.

## training

39 Team Leaders were trained in March & June 2016. The role of the Team Leader was to work with the Volunteer Management Team to support and supervise volunteers.

724 volunteers attended the Face of the Fleadh Training which took place over 10 sessions in July / August 2016. Contributors to the training included:

- Comhaltas
- Clare Civil Defence
- Green Fleadh
- Accessibility Sub Committee
- An Garda Síochána
- Clare Fire Service
- Clare Tourism

***Well done to you all for doing such a fantastic job of co-ordinating over 1,500 volunteers for the Fleadh this month. You really put so much of your boundless energy as well I am sure plenty of blood, sweat and tears in making this landmark Fleadh a wonderful experience not just for the musicians and members of the public but also for the many volunteers who participated.***  
***Maired Mannion – Team Leader***

## media

Local media including Clare FM, Clare Champion and the Clare People were used at various stages during the recruitment phase of the Volunteer Management Programme. An initiative using the Clare GAA proved to be very successful in raising awareness of the volunteer drive locally. Local media during the Fleadh were very supportive, interviewing volunteers and volunteer managers on 5 separate occasions. Acknowledgement was made of Anne Jones & the PR Sub Committee in supporting the volunteer recruitment drive. A Clare Fleadh Volunteer Facebook was set up for the Fleadh and managed during the week by a volunteer with all posts as Gaeilge.

## volunteer recognition

Volunteers were provided with t-shirts and refreshments during the week 14<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> August. A volunteer party was held in Treacys West County Hotel on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, with over 560 people attending. Volunteers were presented with a limited edition Volunteer Recognition Card valid until the 30<sup>th</sup> September. Spot prizes, food and drinks were provided on the night to all volunteers.

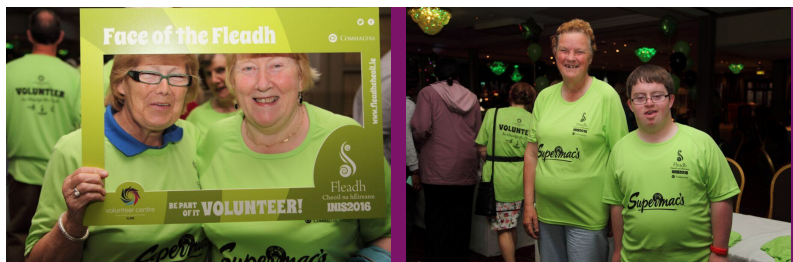


# the volunteers

Over 1500 volunteers were involved in the project from November 2015 to August 2016.

The Clare Volunteer Centre would like to say a huge thank you to the volunteers who carried out a variety of roles including:

- Graphic Design
- Social Media
- Marketing
- Distribution of flyers
- Registration Team
- PR & Marketing
- Street Ambassadors
- Photographers
- Green Fleadh Ambassadors
- Venue Managers
- Venue Assistants
- Car Park Stewards
- Event Management
- Traffic Management
- Campsites



## who was volunteering?

**10% of our volunteers were under the age of 18**

Volunteers represented a diverse cultural background including volunteers from the Polish community, Nigerian community and volunteers who travelled from the Netherlands, UK, Italy, America and France to volunteer from Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2016

We had volunteers of varying abilities, some who volunteered with their support workers or family members and others who volunteered independently as part of the wider Inis Fleadh Team



*"Thoroughly enjoyed the volunteer experience, particularly at the Grupa Cheoil and Senior Ceili Band Competition, even if it was a bit mad at times. Great working with Nicola. Thank you for the food as well. Fleadh Cheoil is alive and well – see you next year! Sheila Phillips Byrne (Dublin)*



# the learnings.....

## communication

Disconnect in communication between the FEC,  
Fleadh Sub Committee Chairs and Clare Volunteer Centre.

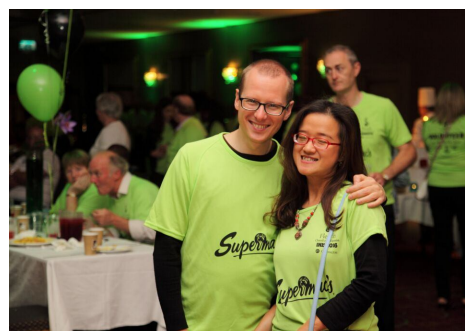
Resulted in serious communication issues including:

- \* No clear communication that Fleadh Cheoil contains a number of separate elements: Opening Event / Scoil Eigse / Competitions / Concerts etc. These elements required different levels of volunteer engagement & management
- \* Lack of clarity re: role of Chief Steward (ref: Event Licence Application)
- \* Need for earlier and more substantive engagement with Sub Chairs. There was a lack of clarity and shared understanding of the volunteer roles
- \* Incomplete role profiles leading to unrealistic expectations of volunteers across the board.
- \* A need for greater focus on support and supervision of volunteers based in venues



## training

- \* A full programme of events needs to be finalised before training commences to facilitate a more customised & targeted training programme
- \* 2016 Training was too general. Requirement for more specific training to include:
  - o Location of venues
  - o Bus schedules
  - o Role of Fleadh Information Centre(s)
  - o Competition timetables etc
- \* Greater involvement of Team Leaders, with clarity on areas that require a leadership role.
- \* Venue Management (more substantive role profile with venue specific customised training)
- \* Street Ambassadors/Stewards (to consider amalgamated roles with much improved quality of information materials to equip volunteers better deal with visitor queries)



# Clare Volunteer Centre

## acknowledgements

The Fleadh Volunteer Management Programme was coordinated by Sharon Meaney & Dolores O Halloran of the Clare Volunteer Centre. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have joined us on our journey.



# the feedback information session....

A feedback session was held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October in the Civic Room, Waterpark House, Ennis. All volunteers registered as a Fleadh Volunteer were invited, through email and for those with no email address, a postal invitation was sent. In excess of 80 people attended the session, which was facilitated by 10 facilitators and 10 note-takers. The attendees were asked the following four questions:

1. Thinking about your involvement with Fleadh 2016 – what went well?
2. What specific areas should be covered in training and preparation for 2017?
3. To improve your volunteer experience what support would you require from the Clare Volunteer Centre?
4. What comments in general would you have about Fleadh 2016 and how could it be improved for 2017?

The following is the main feedback received...

## ✦ Thinking about your involvement – what went well?

- Positive Atmosphere
- Plenty of food
- Social interaction
- Location of the volunteer centre

## ✦ What specific areas should be covered in training and preparation for 2017?

- Earlier scheduling
- Competition details for venues
- Town specific training
- Schedule of events
- Information on transport / bus timetables / taxis etc
- Venue specific training

## ✦ To improve your volunteer experience what support would you require from the Clare Volunteer Centre?

- More involvement of the Team Leaders
- Earlier scheduling
- Lunch at venues and teas/ coffees for volunteers
- Support & Respect from Comhaltas volunteers in venues
- Clear simple maps
- Clear simple bus schedules and locations of bus stops
- Co-ordinated opening / closing time of official Fleadh office, Fleadh info centre, Visit Clare & Tourist Office.
- Clipboards and pens

## ✦ What comments in general would you have about Fleadh 2016 and how could it be improved for 2017?

- Needs to be more support on car parks – to relieve volunteers for toilet & refreshment breaks
- Disconnect between Comhaltas volunteers and Fleadh volunteers – this needs to be addressed?
- Fleadh info centre closed too early
- More Street Ambassadors on streets on Friday / Saturday and Sunday after 8pm
- Clearer role profiles for Fleadh volunteers and Comhaltas volunteers
- 'Quiet Please' signs needed for all venues
- Maps were unusable
- Traffic management at Captain Macs cross caused mayhem for both locals and visitors
- Restrict parking on Kilrush Road and Drumbiggle Rd, families with pushchairs were forced onto the road



# the feedback online survey....

A number of volunteers contacted the volunteer centre who were unable to attend the feedback session on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October in the Civic Room, Waterpark House, Ennis. An online survey asking the same questions listed below was sent to those that had requested this option. The response rate was 67%.

1. Thinking about your involvement with Fleadh 2016 – what went well?
2. What specific areas should be covered in training and preparation for 2017?
3. To improve your volunteer experience what support would you require from the Clare Volunteer Centre?
4. What comments in general would you have about Fleadh 2016 and how could it be improved for 2017?

The following is the main feedback received...

## ✘ Thinking about your involvement – what went well?

- Working as part of a team
- Name bands for children
- Help & Support of the Volunteer Centre Team
- Meeting new people

## ✘ What specific areas should be covered in training and preparation for 2017?

- Earlier scheduling
- Better signage in venues
- Improved quality of maps
- Improved visibility of the marching bands competition

## ✘ To improve your volunteer experience what support would you require from the Clare Volunteer Centre?

- Text message to remind volunteers of their shift duty
- More volunteer parking
- Support from the Team Leaders
- Handout detailing daily events for all volunteers
- Clear simple maps
- Specific geographical locations for volunteers to be stationed as street ambassadors

## ✘ What comments in general would you have about Fleadh 2016 and how could it be improved for 2017?

- More Stewards and barriers at opening parade finish
- Less outside food vendors
- Encourage locals to come into town during the Fleadh
- Large signs at the Club Bridge directing people to the venues
- Supermacs branding too prominent on the Volunteer T-Shirts, a number of volunteers were mistaken for Supermacs employees

# contact US

## Clare Volunteer Centre Team

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