



Strategic Plan 2025-2028



**Clare
Volunteer Centre**

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach an Chláir





1 / Introduction	1
2 / Impact Statement	3
3 / Vision, Mission and Values	4
4 / Sustainable Development Goals	5
5 / Planning Process	6
6 / Strategic Priorities	7
Strategic Goal 1	8
Strategic Goal 2	10
Strategic Goal 3	12
Strategic Goal 4	14
Strategic Goal 5	16
Strategic Goal 6	18



1 | Introduction

Clare Volunteer Centre is part of the national network of volunteer centres, supported by Volunteer Ireland. The Centre first opened its doors on 1st September 2008. It operates as a non-profit company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity governed by a voluntary board of trustees.

Trustees

Michael Foley (Chairperson)
Fionnuala Moran (Secretary)
Gerard Kennedy
Brian McInerney
Denis Bates
Catriona Lavelle
Verena Tarpey

Based in Ennis, Clare Volunteer Centre supports communities across County Clare. From helping individuals find volunteering opportunities, to supporting volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) to build their volunteer management capacities, Clare Volunteer Centre has established a strong track record in supporting volunteerism over the last 17 years. As of 2025, an extensive range of services is being provided by the staff team to over 300 VIOs and over 2700 registered volunteers.

Clare Volunteer Centre: Strengthening Volunteerism

Established in 2008, Clare Volunteer Centre is part of a national network of 29 Volunteer Centres, including one in each county and four in Dublin. This expansion aligns with the National Volunteering Strategy 2021–2025, reinforcing Ireland’s volunteer infrastructure. As an affiliate of Volunteer Ireland, the national development agency for volunteering, we play a key role in connecting volunteers with organisations and fostering community engagement.

Our team has grown from a single part-time manager to a dedicated staff of four (two full-time and two part-time) supported by a voluntary board that provides strategic direction and governance.

Clare Volunteer Centre is committed to strengthening and expanding local volunteering infrastructure, increasing participation across all sectors, and supporting volunteer-led initiatives. With expertise in volunteer recruitment, management, and capacity building, we actively contribute to large-scale events and interagency collaborations, including the Community Response Forum.

Working closely with the Volunteer Centre network and Volunteer Ireland, we champion resilience and engagement in our communities. Backed by the Department of Rural and Community Development, we remain committed to shaping and supporting the future of volunteering in Ireland.





Staff Team Member	Position
Sharon Meaney	Manager
Dolores O'Halloran	Placement Officer
Marguerita Heffernan	Garda Vetting and Finance
Olena Bondar	Social Media Executive

Services and supports are designed to respond to the needs of a diverse range of community and voluntary organisations.



Board & Staff of Clare Volunteer Centre – Michael Foley, Olena Bondar, Verena Tarpey, Denis Bates, Fionnuala Moran, Catriona Lavelle, Gerard Kennedy
Dolores O'Halloran, Sharon Meaney, Marguerita Heffernan [Missing from photo – Brian McInerney]



2 | Impact Statement

Health and Wellbeing Impacts

We positively impact community and voluntary organisations, whose work contributes to improved health and wellbeing outcomes in County Clare; and we enable volunteers to realise the personal benefits of volunteering.

Social and Cultural Impacts

We facilitate volunteering opportunities that enhance the social and cultural fabric of communities in County Clare; and further social inclusivity among marginalised and hard to reach communities.

Capacity Building Impacts

We enable volunteer involving organisations to build their current and future volunteer management processes, skills and governance capacities; supporting them as they contribute to more sustainable and vibrant communities.

3 | Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision

That every person who wishes to volunteer is provided with information, support and advice offering a diverse range of volunteer roles to suit all ages and abilities.

Our mission

To promote the personal, community and societal value of volunteering; increase the range and quality of volunteer roles and volunteering supports in Co. Clare and raise awareness of the importance of people being able to connect with and feel part of their communities.

Values



Inclusion: We are an inclusive and accessible organisation providing support to people of all ages and abilities.



Partnership: We work in partnership with people and organisations who share our vision.



Person Centred: We provide 1:1 support to people who are interested in volunteering through face to face, phone and email.



Trust: We adhere to the principles of transparency and good governance.



Respect: The values of respect and acknowledgement of individual's talents strengthen our work and workplace



Excellence: We are committed to excellence and continuous improvement. We adhere to the Volunteer Ireland Quality Standards Framework and we are in compliance with the Charities Governance Code.

4 | Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a call to action to create a more sustainable future for all countries. All organisations have an increasingly important role to play in helping Ireland to meet the Sustainable Development Goals as a country. Four Sustainable Development Goals inform the strategic priorities of Clare Volunteer Centre.

Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing



SDG 4 – Quality Education



SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities



SDG 13 – Climate Action





5 | Strategic Plan Consultation Process

Consultation

- ➔ Internal with members of the Clare Volunteer Centre board and Clare Volunteer Centre staff members
- ➔ External with key stakeholders – one to one interviews
 - ✚ **Clare County Council**
 - ✚ **Clare Local Development Company**
 - ✚ **Clare Sports Partnership**
 - ✚ **Clare Women's Collective**
 - ✚ **Clare Youth Service**
 - ✚ **Department of Rural and Community Development**
 - ✚ **Employability Clare**
 - ✚ **Tipperary Volunteer Centre**
 - ✚ **Volunteer Ireland**
- ➔ 235 registered volunteers via online survey
- ➔ 43 registered community and voluntary organisations via online survey
- ➔ 2 group facilitated meetings with 7 community and voluntary organisations and 10 volunteers.

Clare Volunteer Centre is deeply appreciative of all those who gave their time and insights to help shape our strategic plan.

6 | Strategic Priorities

Clare Volunteer Centre is fully committed to playing its part to help achieve the National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025. This strategy sets out key objectives at national level concerning:

- + **Participation and diversity in volunteering.**
- + **Embracing new trends and innovation.**
- + **Contributing to vibrant and sustainable communities.**
- + **Recognising the contribution and impact of volunteering.**
- + **Enhancing Global Citizenship.**
- + **Improving volunteering policy coherence.**

Clare Volunteer Centre will support the ongoing achievement of the National Volunteering Strategy in County Clare by pursuing six strategic goals.

Clare Volunteer Centre's Six Strategic Goals 2025 – 2028

Goal 1	Advance the cause of social inclusion in Clare through facilitating meaningful volunteering opportunities.
Goal 2	Increase Clare Volunteer Centre's social impact through enhancing the organisational capacity of VIOs.
Goal 3	Engage with strategic partners to advance volunteering supports and policymaking at both local, national and international levels.
Goal 4	Build recognition of the role that Clare Volunteer Centre plays in advancing social inclusivity throughout the county.
Goal 5	Futureproof the financial and organisational capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to respond to opportunities and challenges.
Goal 6	Build the learning and development capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to enable it to remain agile and responsive to future needs and opportunities.





Strategic Goal 1:

Advance the cause of social inclusion in Clare through facilitating meaningful volunteering opportunities.

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Foster positivity towards volunteering.
- ✓ Increase the range of socially inclusive volunteering opportunities advertised across Clare.
- ✓ Enable people to participate in volunteering activity that reflects their interests and abilities.

Objective 1.1. Build a sense of community among volunteers registered with Clare Volunteer Centre.

Outcome by 2028: Increased levels of repeat volunteering by registered volunteers.

Priority Actions

- ✚ Feature volunteer experiences in marketing campaigns.
- ✚ Encourage Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to cultivate opportunities for social engagement within their volunteering roles.
- ✚ Host in-person meetups to help volunteers remain socially connected to Clare Volunteer Centre.

Objective 1.2. Increase the variety of volunteering opportunities advertised through Clare Volunteer Centre.

Outcome by 2028: Increased number of volunteers registered with Clare Volunteer Centre.

Priority Actions

- ✚ Encourage community and voluntary organisations to participate in scheduled promotional roadshows.
- ✚ Survey community and voluntary organisations annually to assess their volunteering needs.
- ✚ Encourage VIOs to consider diversity, flexibility and variety when planning volunteering roles.

Strategic Goal 1:

Advance the cause of social inclusion in Clare through facilitating meaningful volunteering opportunities.

Objective 1.3. Increase opportunities to support hard to reach, socially excluded and marginalised people who wish to access volunteering roles.

Outcome by 2028: Increased participation in volunteering among people from marginalised communities.

Priority Actions

- ✚ Work with support agencies and programme managers to identify volunteering opportunities for hard to reach, socially excluded and marginalised people.
- ✚ Engage with career guidance counsellors and transition year co-ordinators to encourage the promotion of volunteering.
- ✚ Promote initiatives to support Youth Engagement.





Strategic Goal 2:

Increase Clare Volunteer Centre's social impact through enhancing the organisational capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs).

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Increase the number of VIOs accessing capacity building support.
- ✓ Increase staffing levels in line with service provision demands.
- ✓ Communicate the range of Clare Volunteer Centre supports available to VIOs at each stage of their organisational development.

Objective 2.1. Position Clare Volunteer Centre as a one-stop-shop of volunteer recruitment and volunteer management support for VIOs throughout County Clare.

Outcome by 2028: Increased number of VIOs engaging with and accessing support from Clare Volunteer Centre.

Priority Actions

- + Implement a VIOs annual engagement strategy.
- + Position Clare Volunteer Centre as a wraparound support service for VIOs as they develop and change over time.
- + Schedule group capacity building supports for VIOs on an outreach basis.
- + Hold one-to-one VIOs support clinics on a scheduled and periodic basis to embed Clare Volunteer Centre supports in local communities.
- + Cultivate opportunities to exhibit at community organised events to raise the profile of Clare Volunteer Centre.



Strategic Goal 2:

Increase Clare Volunteer Centre's social impact through enhancing the organisational capacity of VIOs.

Objective 2.2. Configure services provision annually to remain responsive to VIOs capacity building needs.

Outcome by 2028: Increased capacity of VIOs to manage volunteers.

Priority Actions

- Conduct satisfaction surveys and focus group meetings with VIOs annually to identify capacity building supports and subject matter expertise requirements.
- Scan developments and policymaking locally and nationally to identify potential VIOs capacity building trends.

Strategic Goal 3:

Engage with strategic partners to advance volunteering supports and policymaking at both local, national and international levels.

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Proactively engage with stakeholders to build sustainable strategic partnerships.
- ✓ Seek opportunities to engage with international networks and steering groups dedicated to volunteerism.
- ✓ Work with peers and policymakers to advance the cause of volunteerism in Ireland and within County Clare.

Objective 3.1. Collaborate with strategic partners to deliver awareness raising initiatives to volunteers and VIOs across County Clare.

Outcome by 2028: Increased numbers of VIOs registered with, and receiving support, from Clare Volunteer Centre.

Priority Actions

- + Continue to work proactively and support the Community Response Forum.
- + Embed volunteering in supports and initiatives rolled out to VIOs by strategic partners across the county.
- + Work with strategic partners in the county on fully resourced joint awareness raising initiatives.
- + Work with strategic partners to deliver funded pilot schemes designed to build organisational capacity among VIOs.



Strategic Goal 3:

Engage with strategic partners to advance volunteering supports and policymaking at both local, national and international levels.

Objective 3.2. Participate in regional, national and international networks and fora that promote volunteering initiatives, volunteering best practices and policymaking.

Outcome by 2028: Increased profile of Clare Volunteer Centre.

Priority Actions

- + Position Clare Volunteer Centre as the recognised primary voice for volunteerism in Clare regionally, nationally and internationally.
 - + Proactively engage with the network of Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Ireland, and the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD).
 - + Develop policy positions on matters relating to volunteering within the county and nationally.
 - + Dedicate resources to enabling staff to contribute to one regional or national conference or forum every two years to promote policy positions and volunteerism and to showcase the work of Clare Volunteer Centre.
 - + Through the network of Volunteer Centres, contribute to policymaking on matters concerning volunteerism.
-

Objective 3.2. Cultivate opportunities to participate in EU funded initiatives and peer learning networks.

Outcome by 2028: Increased opportunities to embed innovation in the supports provided to VIOs.

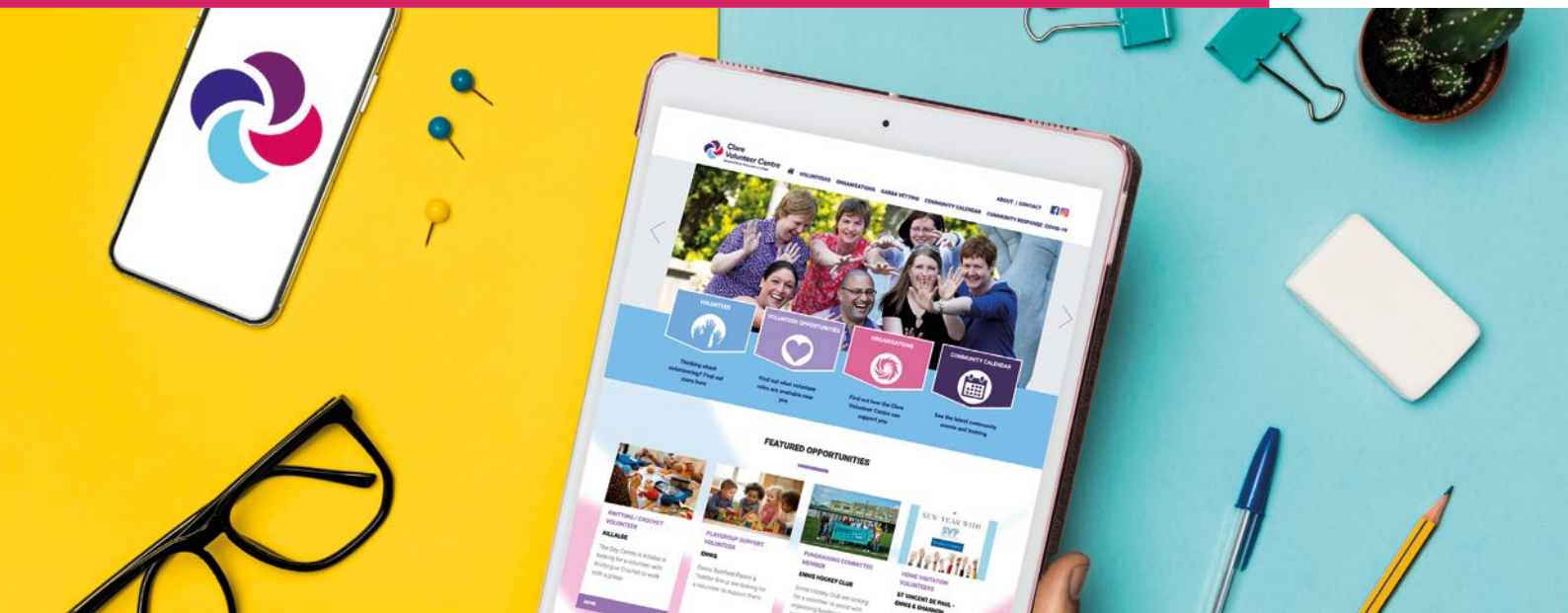
Priority Actions

- + Access educational funding support to enable staff to participate in EU funded initiatives on themes related to volunteerism development.
- + Enable staff to participate in one EU conference by end 2026 for the purpose of building connections with potential partners in EU countries.
- + Foster opportunities to collaborate with third level researchers on peer reviewed research papers.



Strategic Goal 4:

Build recognition of the role that Clare Volunteer Centre plays in advancing social inclusivity throughout the county.



Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Build awareness of the Clare Volunteer Centre as the primary point of contact for volunteers, VIOs, and stakeholders charged with promoting volunteerism in County Clare.
- ✓ Improve the visibility of Clare Volunteer Centre across the county.

Objective 4.1. Increase public awareness and knowledge of Clare Volunteer Centre as the primary point of contact for volunteering support in County Clare.

Outcome by 2028: Increased recognition of the Clare Volunteer Centre brand across the county.

Priority Actions

- + Implement a branding and promotional strategy for the pop-up promotional roadshows hosted in municipal districts annually.
- + Rollout targeted marketing and communications plans annually.
- + Exhibit at community events to build awareness of the services and supports offered to volunteers and VIOs.



Strategic Goal 4:

Build recognition of the role that Clare Volunteer Centre plays in advancing social inclusivity throughout the county.

Objective 4.2. Increase the profile of Clare Volunteer Centre through promoting national volunteer initiatives that focus on diversity and the benefits of volunteering within the county.

Outcome by 2028: Greater public recognition of the role volunteering plays in supporting under-represented groups and communities throughout the county.

Priority Actions

- + Promote volunteering as a diverse and accessible activity for all people.
 - + Implement targeted communication campaigns to support national volunteer initiatives including national Week of Volunteering, Volunteer Ireland Awards and local volunteer recognition events.
-

Objective 4.3. Optimise coverage of the work and impact made by Clare Volunteer Centre via digital media channels, local radio and local print media.

Outcome by 2028: Greater recognition among the media of the impact of volunteerism.

Priority Actions

- + Implement social media content strategies to support marketing and communications campaigns.
- + Pitch news items and viewpoints to programme producers and presenters on local talk radio shows.
- + Implement a content strategy for the Clare Volunteer Centre newsletter.
- + Raise awareness of the impact of volunteering to both the volunteer and the communities / groups they volunteer with.



Strategic Goal 5:

Futureproof the financial and organisational capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to respond to opportunities and challenges.

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Increase total income received on an annual basis in line with service development needs.
- ✓ Increase human resources in line with operational needs.
- ✓ Maintain high standards of corporate governance and trustee decision-making capacity.
- ✓ Remain vigilant to the implications of policymaking and funding priorities at local, national and EU levels.

Objective 5.1. Identify opportunities to diversify revenue and funding streams.

Outcome by 2028: Clare Volunteer Centre has the funding it requires to achieve its strategic goals.

Priority Actions

- ⊕ Develop multi-annual funding plans that capitalise on opportunities to diversify funding streams.
- ⊕ Identify opportunities to access future funding streams that enable increased numbers of people who are hard to reach, socially excluded or in marginalised communities to access volunteering roles.
- ⊕ Monitor the external environment to identify opportunities to develop corporate funding partnerships.
- ⊕ Explore opportunities to agree a funding Memorandum of Understanding with Clare County Council to secure core funding to rollout additional capacity building supports to volunteers and VIOs in communities throughout County Clare.
- ⊕ Work with the network of Volunteer Centres to advocate for increased core funding to be allocated to Volunteer Centres serving geographically large and rurally based populations to reflect the additional operational costs associated with supporting dispersed volunteer populations.



Strategic Goal 5:

Futureproof the financial and organisational capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to respond to opportunities and challenges.

Objective 5.2. Expand the staff team employed by Clare Volunteer Centre.

Outcome by 2028: Increased capacity to respond to the needs of volunteers and VIOs.

Priority Actions

- + Secure additional core funding to increase staff numbers to five.
 - + Foster an organisational culture that provides staff with a supportive, inclusive, dignified and enjoyable place to work.
 - + Uphold organisational values that attract and retain highly skilled and self-motivated staff.
 - + Build capacity within the staff team through training, peer to peer support, mentoring and coaching.
-

Objective 5.3. Maintain robust governance processes and procedures.

Outcome by 2028: Clare Volunteer Centre maintains full compliance with the Charities Governance Code and its legal and regulatory obligations.

Priority Actions

- + Adhere to the standards set out in the Charities Governance Code.
- + Implement board succession plans.
- + Maintain full financial transparency.
- + Maintain financial reserves to the equivalent of three months operating expenditure.



Strategic Goal 6:

Build the learning and development capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to enable it to remain agile and responsive to future needs and opportunities.

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Increase human resources capacity in line with service provision demands.
- ✓ Increase the depth of knowledge and breadth of skillsets available to Clare Volunteer Centre.
- ✓ Ringfence funding to support staff training and development initiatives.

Objective 6.1. Build knowledge and skills in line with operational needs.

Outcome by 2028: Clare Volunteer Centre remains responsive to the needs of volunteers and VIOs.

Priority Actions

- + Scan the external environment to stay informed about developments affecting volunteerism.
- + Implement individual staff training plans.
- + Enable staff to access training and development opportunities in line with staff training plans.
- + Enable board members to access training opportunities to support them in their corporate governance roles.

Strategic Goal 6:

Build the learning and development capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to enable it to remain agile and responsive to future needs and opportunities.

Objective 6.2. Increase the capacity of Clare Volunteer Centre to respond to the needs of volunteers and VIOs.

Outcome by 2028: Clare Volunteer Centre has adequate human resources to achieve its strategic goals.

Priority Actions

Expand staff capacity to include:

- + 1 additional full-time Outreach and Organisational Support Development Officer.
- + 1 full-time Social Media Executive.
- + Develop internship opportunities with Clare Volunteer Centre to support the implementation of short-term projects and work assignments.
- + Explore opportunities for third level researchers to work with Clare Volunteer Centre to develop volunteer management best practices.
- + Facilitate staff participation in communities of practice that may arise from work undertaken by the network of Volunteer Centres.

Objective 6.3. Measure social impact to enable Clare Volunteer Centre to target resources and capacity building supports to best effect.

Outcome by 2028: Clare Volunteer Centre can evidence its social impact.

Priority Actions

- + Track Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in line with funder requirements.
- + Utilise quantitative and qualitative data to measure the impact of Clare Volunteer Centre supports on volunteers and VIOs.
- + Embed targets for each key performance indicator (KPI) in annual operating plans.
- + Provide a KPI Dashboard to board members in Management Reports.



Monitoring and Evaluation

The Clare Volunteer Centre Board is committed to regularly reviewing and evaluating the Clare Volunteer Centre Strategic Plan to ensure it effectively meets its expected outcomes, targets, and key performance indicators (KPIs). Through ongoing assessment and feedback, the Board will monitor progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments to enhance the impact and sustainability of the Centre's initiatives.

"There is a volunteer centre in every county in Ireland, we are all reporting an increase in the number of people registering to volunteer and an increase in demand from organisations who rely on volunteers to lead or support on frontline services.

In a world that often moves at a relentless pace, it is volunteers who provide the anchor, the steady force that reminds us of the power of community and the importance of reaching out to those in need. In the quiet landscapes and close-knit communities that define rural life, the impact of volunteerism resonates in ways that are both profound and meaningful. It fosters a sense of shared responsibility and pride in the community's well-being. Through collaborative efforts, volunteers not only address immediate needs but also build a foundation for long-term resilience and sustainability.

The impact of volunteering however extends way beyond the immediate community. It creates a ripple effect that contributes to the overall well-being of our society. The interconnectedness of rural communities makes volunteering a shared journey, where the efforts of one can inspire many and create a network of support that goes far beyond parish boundaries.

Your commitment, time, and effort have not gone unnoticed, and the positive impact you make cannot be measured. To those volunteers who just give a helping hand to those who hold out a hand of friendship – thank you for making a difference!"

Sharon Meaney – Manager of Clare Volunteer Centre



Contact Us

Clare Volunteer Centre

c/o Clare Education Centre
Government Buildings
Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
V95 F782

P: 065 68 455 17

E: info@volunteerclare.ie

W: www.volunteerclare.ie



www.facebook.com/clarevolunteercentre



www.instagram.com/clarevolunteercentre



**Clare
Volunteer Centre**

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach an Chláir



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