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Youthink members occupy Ossory Youth for 24 hours

Introduction

Ossory Youth is a voluntary, non-profit youth work organisation working with and for young people within the Diocese of Ossory, covering Kilkenny and parts of Laois and Offaly.

Ossory Youth is committed to providing a quality service to young people it works with by employing principles of best practice in its work.

The work of Ossory Youth is greatly dependent on and enhanced by volunteers at local level. This voluntary effort cannot be overstated and the Board of Ossory Youth wishes to thank all those who contributed to the success of the organisation in 2012.

The Board also wish to acknowledge and thank all the organisations both statutory and non statutory who supported the work of Ossory Youth both financially and in kind.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Padraig Fleming". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid orange horizontal line.

**Padraig Fleming (Chairperson Ossory Youth)
Ossory Youth Board of Directors**

Board of Directors Report:

The Board of Directors of Ossory Youth continued to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan. This plan focused on providing more opportunities for young people to participate in quality youth work programmes. This is achieved through developing strong and positive partnerships with other service providers and funders to ensure an effective and coordinated approach to service delivery as well as building a strong organisation that has the capacity to deliver innovation and excellence in its provision, services and opportunities to young people in the region.

In 2012 the Board finalised and launched its 5 year strategic plan 2013- 2017. The board were keenly aware of the challenging years ahead and the plan aims to secure a sustainable youth service, which is working with young people through a strong and committed staff team and volunteer base.

The board are working hard to ensure that the organisation remains true to its core philosophy, ethos and purpose. They are keenly aware of the pressure currently being placed on all state funded programmes/projects to demonstrate value for money as well as

ensuring that the work is delivering outcomes set out in government policy. In 2012, the board invested significantly in training staff around planning, and measuring its work within the logic model framework and it is envisaged that this will further enhance the organisations ability to deliver a focused, deliberate and needs-driven service for young people in Kilkenny. As a result of this, we can now clearly articulate outcomes for our work with young people in both rural & urban settings:

- Young people have enhanced personal attributes such as confidence, increased awareness both personally and socially and increased self esteem.
- Young people have increased empathy, greater awareness and understanding of race, gender, sexuality, disability and other ways in which people are discriminated against.
- Improved communications and relationships have been developed between young people and adults within communities; opportunities for practical intergenerational cooperation are maximised at local level.
- Young people have increased knowledge and understanding of health & wellbeing issues and have the confidence, ability and support to access specialist services when needed.
- Young people have an increased ability to use information to make informed decisions.
- Young people are actively demonstrating new practical skills (decision making, team work, organisational skills, communication, group work, negotiation, presentation).
- Young people have a stronger connection and belonging to community evidenced through participation in mainstream community activities e.g. tidy towns.
- Young people are actively demonstrating increased positive and pro-social behaviour and diminishing negative and anti-social behaviour.

Voluntary Board Members and CEO of Ossory Youth



Snap Shot of what happened under our strategic aims in 2012

Strategic Aim 1: To widen opportunities for young people to participate in a manner that positively contributes to their lives and well being.

COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO OSSORY YOUTH'S WORK

Ossory Youth combines all of its resources to deliver on its strategic plan. We believe that the most sustainable way to deliver quality youth work interventions throughout the Diocese is through strong collaboration with communities, other agencies, volunteers and young people. Youth workers role as we see it, is to facilitate interaction, dialogue that engages and encourages young people to come forward and participate as equal and active citizens in their communities.

SAFE SPACES & PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth Clubs

Ossory Youth provides a service to communities who would like to develop activities for young people in their local areas. The initial step is a needs analysis to find out what the community needs. Working with the community we recruit, register and train volunteers and explore opportunities for youth work in the area. A series of meetings follows in order to take this initiative to the next level. We liaise with and support community volunteers at every step along the way and ensure that all programmes are delivered within our Child Protection guidelines and best practice in youth work. We promote and encourage participation in the club programme. The next step is to design and develop programmes which the volunteers and young people feel would benefit their club members most.

The purpose of a local youth club is to provide a safe and comfortable place where young people from the area can meet and socialise together in a supervised and supportive manner. As well as providing a meeting place, the club may also serve other needs of young people. These include:

- Accessing sport
- Learning new skills
- Engaging in their wider community in a positive way
- To belong and feel part of something
- To mix and make friends
- To have a place where they can safely discuss issues and topics which interest them
- A place where they can have fun
- A break from home/family life
- The need to participate and be involved in decision making
- The need to have positive adult role models outside of home and school

Youth clubs generally operate one night a week for two hours. The venue is usually the community hall/centre and a team of local people, who volunteer their time, staffs the club. Young people attend on a voluntary basis. The club programme is varied and includes sport, performances, personal development, arts, training, outings, talks, skill development, discussion groups, community projects and involvement in the wider youth service programme. In 2012 there were 12 youth clubs affiliated to Ossory Youth.



Borris-in-Ossory Youth Club
 Freshford Youth Club
 Funstar
 GB Juniors
 Goresbridge Youth Club
 Hugginstown Youth Club
 Johnswell Junior Youth Club
 Johnswell Youth Club
 Kilmacow Youth Club
 Moneenroe Gems
 Mooncon Yoth Club
 Slieverue Outreach
 Slieverue Youth Club
 PALS Youth Club
 The Swan Youth Club

SPOT LIGHT ON YOUTH CLUBS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

Hugginstown Youth Club
 “ Hugginstown Youth Club was set up in 2006. We have our club night every Friday for two hours in the local community hall. At present we have 17 members. Our group is smaller this year so it gave us the opportunity to try some new ventures. We have had a very busy year, lots of laughs and good times, with great pictures to remind us. It was a year of firsts for us in Hugginstown, resulting in a lot of new experiences and amazing memories. In September the boys decided to give something back to their community. They made a beautiful oak table and seat to present to the local village. This was a fantastic project that brought out the creative side in our members. The finished product is something we are very proud of. The club has never taken on a project like this before; it was a great experience to see it from start to finish.



Community members take a seat thanks to Hugginstown Youth Club

October saw everyone busy getting ready for our first Mini Tops competition. It was a hectic few weeks but well worth the hard work. We had entries in dance, solo singing, group singing, trad group and banner - no mean feat- as it was first time on stage for most. In December we had a youth club trip, ice skating, a great day out was had!



Borris-in-Ossory Youth Club
 “ Borris-in-Ossory Youth Club is a very busy and active club. In 2012 we participated in the Ossory Youth Programme, fundraised, applied for grants, got stuck in with our local community and had fun throughout the year. Below is some of the fun we got up to:

At a Club meeting in March we were presented with 2 sets of jerseys for boys and girls by Ronan Kelly (Kelly Machine Spares). We are very grateful to Ronan for this sponsorship and the jerseys will be put to good use in the months and years ahead.

The Ossory Games took place in the Watershed Sport and Leisure Facility at Scanlon Park, Kilkenny on Sunday 4th March. Our U15 Boys team were defeated in the final by Freshford. The Girls U15 team had a great victory over Freshford and went on to win their final, defeating Johnswell.

Our U15 Girls Indoor Soccer team travelled to University of Limerick on Saturday 30th June to compete in the All Ireland Finals. We suffered defeats to Kilfenora, Annauscaul, Oylegate and Fanad and so failed to progress any further. The opposition on the day proved to be much stronger, but it was great to get so far.

Borris-In-Ossory Youth Club completed a 5km Fun Run/Walk at Kilkenny Castle as part of the club programme.



Borris-in-Ossory youth get active at the 5K Fun Run

An application form in relation to a grant from Youth Bank Kilkenny re: cleaning up and planting one of the local flower beds was filled and was successful.

Our Summer Tour took place on Sunday 15th July to Zipit Forest Adventure, Lough Key, Boyle, County Roscommon. Zipit is Ireland's first high-wire aerial forest adventure. Platforms on trees at various heights (ranging from 1 metre to 20 metres off the ground) are connected. A range of activities saw our members move from one tree to another. This was a fantastic day out and all who travelled had a wonderful time.

A very successful Barbeque was held at Rosie O Grady's in August. Music was supplied by local Artists and Friends. It was a great social evening enjoyed by young and not so young and also brought in some much needed revenue.

We competed in the Ossory Youth Mini Tops competition at St Michael's Theatre in New Ross in December. It turned out to be a fantastic day. We had entered three different categories, Solo performance, Comedy Sketch and Music Song and Dance. All our acts performed brilliantly, we had 2 victories, a highly commended runner-up and our presenter also was successful.

This was our first year to enter Mini Tops since our reformation and while we had doubts earlier in the year it proved to be the correct decision.

We ran a very successful and entertaining Variety Concert on Saturday 22nd December in Killesmeestia Hall which brought a long, busy and enjoyable year to a close.



Finalists of the Desart Hall pool tournament

DESART HALL

The vision for Desart Hall started with Lady Desart “it was not to be merely a lounge of refuge from boredom for the youth of the town. It was to educate them in citizenship to teach them responsibility towards each other, not merely as individuals, but as a corporate body, to awaken in them a sense of independence of knowledge and dignity”. This vision was kept alive by the Boards of Ossory Youth since 1985 and there has been renewed vigour since. The Board, Young People, Staff & Volunteers have worked to create Desart Hall as a warm, welcoming, safe space, where young people and adults are travelling on the same journey. A tier three Youth Cafe in government speak!

HQ (Headquarters) Club

The HQ club meets in Desart Hall every Tuesday from 4pm-5:30pm for all those who are 12 years old. In 2012, we had 18 youth members attending every week. This was the third year HQ was in operation. If you are aged 12 and would like somewhere to go to hangout with other young people your age, then HQ is for you.

Throughout the year, the members were busy taking part in the Ossory Youth Club programme including the 5K Fun Run in April. They also took part in pool tournaments, table tennis competitions, movie nights, art projects, Wii and PS3 game challenges and group activities. The group did try out canoeing on one of the coldest days of the year in Birrrrh! It was freezing, not everybody liked the actual experience. However the reflection on the activity got slightly more positive on the third cup of hot tea and by McDonalds everybody was ready for round two! The highlight for the group was a trip to Fota Wildlife Park in Cork during the summer.

Sapphire Club

The Sapphire Club meets in Desart Hall every Tuesday from 6.00-8.00pm for all young people aged 13 years old. Sapphire was established in 2012 to cater for the members of HQ from 2011 who wanted to stay on with Ossory Youth and be part of a new group. The group members took part in the Ossory Youth Club programme activities during the year including the Master Chef Competition and the 5K Fun

Run in April. They also participated in Health & Beauty Workshops and regularly cooked up a storm in the kitchen for the group and leaders. Movie nights, discussions, team challenges all featured on their busy schedule throughout the year.

Lunch Time Drop In

The lunchtime drop-in is very popular and continues to grow as a result. Between September and December 2012 there were 75 teenage boys and girls who engaged at some point with up to 40 of these engaging on a regular basis. In 2012 we saw a rise in the amount of girls engaging which is a change from other years. Activities undertaken in the drop-in include pool, computer games, table tennis.

Desart Hall Youth Cafe (Friday)

The youth café is run in Desart Hall from 7-9pm every Friday night for young people to gather and socialise in a warm, safe and youth friendly environment.

Feibhar creates a relaxing atmosphere in the Youth Cafe



This year saw the number of young people coming to the café double from approximately 15 young people to in excess of 30. We attribute some of increase to the continued development of the space. In 2012 the café section was opened for the first time offering a full café menu to young people at reasonable prices. We also have an excellent team of people behind the running of Friday nights and we don't just mean Declan, Marthe, Derek, Joseph and Marie! Most of the young people that attend (that we like to call our 'regulars') have helped create a fun and friendly environment and a special thanks goes to Leanne, Lizzie and Mairead for helping us out.

Whilst this year cemented some of the things that happen on Friday night, it was also the year when we began to look at creating opportunities for Friday nights to grow into a space where different needs can be met at the same time under the same roof. The first step was the rap workshops that were funded by Kilkenny VEC. Some young people enjoyed taking part and that provided us with an impetus to look at what other activities young people would be interested in and what talents or abilities are there but maybe hidden. But that's for

2013. Unfortunately, some of the lads were too shy to perform at the Mini-Tops but Tom Hoey entered the solo competition with his own rap song and was highly commended by the judges. Bernie Cawley won Ossory Youth's pool tournament with Paddy O'Reilly as runner-up.



HQ girls enjoying the fresh air at the 5K Fun Run

Desart Hall Youth Cafe (Saturday)

The CEO of Ossory Youth (better known as Mary) floated the notion of a Youth Cafe to the Youthink Group. The Cafe would not only provide a safe comfortable place for young people to meet and socialise but it would also create viable employment opportunities for young people as well as introducing the concept of philanthropy to the group. Youthink took up the challenge and set to work. Market research was carried out and correlated by the group and after months of work, a business plan was presented to the Board of Ossory Youth by the group. The Board backed the business plan and Desart Hall Youth café opened its doors for business in Nov 2012.

The café developed and managed by the Youthink youth group affords young people in Kilkenny city a dedicated youth space with good food, live music and free wifi on Saturday afternoons. The youth café, run and staffed by young people for young people, offers a fun yet valuable youth employability and work experience opportunity to young people who voluntarily staff the café and are involved in all aspects of managing this youth space.

Massive profits are still elusive, but the space is buzzing!



Fun and fancy dress for a creative calendar for the Moneenroe Gems

PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY OSSORY YOUTH IN 2012

Youth Club Programme

The Club programme is designed to support youth clubs to provide opportunities for their members to participate and engage in a range of social, economic, educational and recreational opportunities, designed to encourage social inclusion and life-long learning. The club programme aims to

- Encourage young people’s involvement in their community.
- Provide access to and participation in positive activities.
- Provide an opportunity for young people to practice, demonstrate and showcase their talents and skills locally and nationally.
- Develop leadership skills and qualities.

J10 Kieran Scanlon enjoys camping with some of the gang



Masterchef Competition

In 2012 the club programme included for the first time ever the Master Chef Competition. This competition involved working in pairs and creating two dishes; a main course and a starter or dessert. We were far from disappointed with the young chefs, who created tasty and unique dishes giving the judges a very difficult task in choosing a winning team. As there was only one entry from each club or group a number of Master Chef heats were held culminating in a final of culinary delights that would have silenced Gordon Ramsey. Kilmacow took the Gold Ossory Michelin Star with Johnswell snapping up second place.

Mini Tops Competition

The Mini Tops is a firm favourite with youth clubs and groups attracting over 200 young people annually. The Mini Tops is all about practice, teamwork, confidence and participation. It is about getting on the stage and giving it a go. It takes a lot of hard work, loads of practice, loads of support from leaders and loads of work behind the scenes by the Youth Club Advisory Group, but the end result is worth it. There is music, song, dance, drama, art, comedy and trad. There were highs there were lows, there was applause and appreciation. So well done to the nine groups Kilmacow, Mooncoin, Castlecomer, Moneenroe, Hugginstown, Borris-in-Ossory, Friday Night, Freshford and Goresbridge who participated and a big thank you to all those who made the event a success.

Ossory Games

The Ossory Youth Games is one of Ossory Youth’s core programmes. It provides successful teams with an opportunity to represent Ossory Youth at National Level. Each year young people throughout

FACES OF 2012



"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress."

Barack Obama





"Life is like a torch.
You fuel it as best
you can, then pass
it on."
George Bernard Shaw





"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are."
E. E. Cummings





"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."
John Quincy Adams



the diocese pit their will, strength and skill against one another as they represent their youth club in their efforts to win an award in their chosen activity. The Games were held in the Watershed Gym Kilkenny. All youth clubs and groups within Ossory Youth are invited and encouraged to attend. In Ossory Youth, there is great competition with the 5-a-side soccer competition, both male and female. Panels of eight enter the tournament which is ran over one day in either the U15 or U18 category.

Camp Ossory on the Move

Camp Ossory on the Move is an outreach programme which supports communities to run summer camps for young people between the ages of 4-12yrs, by designing, planning and assisting with the delivery of an exciting and varied programme of activities. The camp consists of games, activities, art and craft, cookery, sports and dance. Programmes are designed to utilize the resources in the local communities; therefore activities may include special excursions to places of interest locally.

Community involvement is key to the success of the camps, with local young people and adults becoming thoroughly involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the camps. Training is provided locally to enable adult volunteers and teenagers to take on a leadership role and deliver the programmes within the guidelines of our policies and best youth work practices.

In 2012 Camp Ossory on the Move worked alongside three communities to ensure over 130 young people enjoyed a fun packed week long summer camp in their own communities. Moneenroe and Goresbridge experienced true community spirit as over 16 volunteers gave up their time to plan and deliver high quality camps. A special needs camp also took place in Kilkenny City which targeted young people with special needs and their siblings. 20 teenage volunteers brought their energy and enthusiasm to the camps and assisted the leaders throughout the week.

PERSONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Each Year Ossory Youth Offers its clubs and groups an opportunity for a number of young people to participate in programmes which promote personal & social development. These programmes are once off events and are targeted at young people who would benefit from the experience.

The Big Challenge Residential

The Big Challenge took place in the February mid-term. Young people aged 14-16 come from youth clubs, groups or schools. The Big Challenge is about giving young people the opportunity to experience being part of a team. The programme allows a young person to explore and reflect on how they contribute to and participate within a team. The Big Challenge tackles both physical and mental challenges. It focuses on working as part of a team, recognizing and utilizing individual strengths to complete a task.

In 2012 the group, made up of 12 young people from Goresbridge, Compass, Moneenroe and Johnswell went to Eco-adventure in Enniskerry where they undertook a fun and challenging programme of activities. The gang had great fun doing obstacle courses, archery, night hikes, mountain biking, team games, and lots more. They also put on their own version of "take me out" which was very entertaining. It is hoped that those who participate in the programme develop social

skills, increase their capacity to participate as part of a team, gain a deeper sense of self and an understanding of their strengths and capacity as individuals, as well as making new friends and having fun!

Aidan takes a leap of faith at the Big Challenge Residential



Team Worx Challenge

The Team Worx Challenge aims to provide individual young people with an opportunity to get a stronger sense of self, as well as gaining a personal insight of their strengths and weaknesses and to explore how these strengths contribute to their participation in the completion of a number of group tasks. The programme is aimed at young people aged 12-14.

The team challenges are delivered in a creative and fun way in order to engage young people in the whole process. Young people participate in team building exercises which enable the group to get together and work as a team while bringing out the best in everyone.

In 2012, the Team Worx programme involved a day trip to Wicklow. The group had to break out of jail!! This involved working as a team to solve problems, crack codes, find and figure out what clues meant in order to break out of Wicklow Jail. And that's not all... they also took on the paparazzi challenge, enjoyed bowling and pizza.

HEALTH & WELLBEING PROGRAMMES

Goresbridge Girls Group

The group met on a weekly basis in their local community and have done so since they first set up in 2007. 2012 however saw the group coming to a natural close as a lot were moving on to third level education. So as a final project the GB GALS engaged in a year long programme which saw them explore all aspects of their health in a bid to improve their attitudes and increase their knowledge of healthier lifestyles. The programme encompassed healthy eating, physical activity, sexual health and mental health.

The group began the experience by taking on the challenge of different walking/ running routes in Kilkenny and progressively built up the distance and speed. They found this a challenging but rewarding activity and lots of the mothers got involved in these weekly running/ walking challenges. One challenge they really enjoyed was the mini Triathlon. Although it was tough it was such a great sense of achievement to finish. They partook in swimming sessions which helped them improve their techniques. Each individual in the group was tested to take on a

healthier lifestyle and engaged in learning experiences that showed them a healthier lifestyle in a safe, fun and positive environment. The mental health aspect of the programme looked at the different pressures in a teenagers life and how to manage these without feeling stressed. It also looked at how to deal with stress. This aspect of the programme taught them coping mechanisms and allowed them to see that usually they are not alone in feeling the pressure. They also learned how to cook tasty and healthy meals. Through these sessions they discovered different foods and dishes, tasted new fruit and vegetables and learned the skills of how easy cooking healthy can be. They also cooked a mothers day dinner for their mothers to say a huge thank you for all they do.



GB gals have a wheel of a time glamping in Leitrim

The GB Gals completed the health programme with a glamping experience which brought them to Leitrim. There they camped in Yurts in an isolated rural area close to Bundoran town. While there, the group hiked mountains, cycled, surfed and engaged in yoga classes. There were constant challenges which made for a very busy and exciting trip. It was a once in a life time experience that they will never forget. The girls have been a fantastic group to work with throughout the years.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION & ADVOCACY PROGRAMMES

Peer Education Programmes

Peer education is a methodology that builds social capital through the development of young people's skills. The methodology involves targeting a number of young people from a particular environment (e.g. school group, youth group, peer group of unattached young people) and providing them with the skills, knowledge and capacity to provide accurate information and messages to their peers on any number of topics. These can include drinking, drugs or sexual health issues, bullying, etc. These are delivered in a variety of settings and circumstances on the premise that most young people feel more comfortable learning from their peers rather than adults. Peer Education Programmes have the capacity to have a wide reach in relation to information provision particular amongst hard to reach groups.

In 2012 Ossory Youth deliver drug peer education programmes in 4 schools, St. Brigid's Callan, CBS Callan, Castlecomer Community School and Colaiste Mhuire Johnstown. Peer Education programmes were also delivered through youth groups in Mooncoin and Castlecomer. A leading example of some of the positive work done through peer

Mooncoin Outreach enjoy a well earned break



education was Mooncoin Outreach Group where young women from the area developed skills around healthy eating, self defence & fitness and beauty therapy. Alongside their personal developed the group ran a number of community events including a hugely successful Easter Egg Hunt day for local children, summer family fun day and a Christmas memorial event. So well done to Jessica, Rachael, PJ, Emma, Kate, Chloe, Ciara, Catriona Abby, Craig and Marie who helped them along the way.

A different approach was taken in Castlecomer. The end product was a magazine on drug education which was distributed throughout the school. This decision was taken because the group thought the information would reach more people than if they targeted the 1st years specifically.

The drug peer education programmes are delivered jointly by the Community Based Drug Initiatives, The Special Projects for Youth and Youth Information.

KPEG – Kilkenny peer Education Guerrillas

KPEG is a group of young people who are interested in creating awareness specifically in the areas of mental health, sexual health and substance misuse to a number of targeted populations in Kilkenny.

KPEG go bannanasi



The group firstly educates itself on these issues and then identify what messages it wants to deliver, to whom and how. They call themselves 'Guerrillas' because you never know when they are going to launch information or awareness campaigns and you never know what that campaign is going to look like. Flash mob, performance art and street art are just some of the methodologies they use.

In 2012 we said goodbye to a few original members as 6th yr pressures mounted, but it was another successful year for KPEG, with campaigns for Suicide Prevention Day, Kilkenny Drug Awareness Week and World Aids Day to name a few. Films were made, banana suits were worn and laughs were had.

Youth Bank

Youth Bank is a national and international programme. Its purpose is to develop leadership opportunities, build capacity among the young grant makers and to create opportunities for grant-aided youth-led groups to engage in self help and community action. Youth Bank Kilkenny is based in Callan. The work of the group includes setting themes, creating application procedures, and criteria, raising additional funding, interviewing groups, applying for funding, report writing and carrying out evaluations.

In 2012 the group, funded a 10km fun run in Gowran, a teen flower-bed Project in Borris, a start up grant for Templeorum Drug Awareness Group and the Moneenroe Gems to make beanbags for their community centre. The group also got to travel to Belfast to meet two NI Youthbank groups, where they won the fund-raising challenge.

Music Competition

The Irish Youth Music Awards is a unique music competition that is run by Youth Work Ireland in association with music promotion company Garageland. The programme provides young people with the opportunity to perform, as well as providing a practical and valuable insight into how the music business works.

The IYMA's was a huge success again in 2012. We had 7 acts enter the Kilkenny selection event with a large crowd of spectators attending on the day. The winners of the Kilkenny event were a band named Indigo Eye with the members originating from Ballyragget and Castlecomer. Our representative's did a brilliant job in Dublin at the national final coming in the top 3 acts from 28 competing.



Indigo Eye performing at Kilkenny IYMA's selection event

Scooch Media Group

Scooch is a group of young people who are interested in all aspects of the media, print, television, radio and social media. The group share in Lady Desart's vision but needed "an iMac, Adobe software" so they inspired and convinced Jane (youth worker) to make an application to the Ireland Foundation which was successful. As well as the application the group have been reviewing uncorrected bound proofs (supplied by the Kilkenny Book Centre) and the group has also turned its hand at creative writing. So be prepared to be blinded and astounded by the technology, quality, messages and story lines being produced by this group in 2013.

Youthink Youth Group

Youthink is a youth group of 20 young people that meet every Saturday evening in Desart Hall Youth Centre. The members examine issues that are relevant to them and have a positive role to play in the life of Kilkenny city and environs. A key aim of the group is that all planned projects involve Youthink members mobilising and involving a much greater number of young people.

In a very busy year, the single most notable project was 'Occupy Ossory Youth'. The Occupy movement that has been sweeping the globe came to Kilkenny with a difference on Sunday April 1st as 50 young people 'occupied' Ossory Youth for 24 hours. The event built around an afternoon of debate and discussion involving a number of invited guests. These guests, in looking at local, national or international issues had not just thought or talked about their concerns and convictions but actually acted upon them attempted to make a real difference. The rationale for the event was that the 50 young people present might gain a sense of empowerment to tackle issues that they feel strongly about after hearing the personal motivations and convictions of, and debating with the guests. These included Michael Canney, environmental campaigner, John Paul Phelan TD, Jim Kavanagh, Chernobyl activist and Martin Bridgeman, KCLR presenter.

Other projects in 2012 involved a large scale environmental hoarding painting project in partnership with 'Keep Kilkenny Beautiful' in Walkin Street, Kilkenny, a summer youth led Saturday clean-up campaign in Kieran Street and months of planning to set up Desart Hall Youth café which opened in November.

In addition throughout 2012, Youthink organised regular youth parties in Desart Hall Youth Centre with hundreds of young people enjoying themselves.

Youth Democracy Group

With the aim of promoting young people's participation in civic life, Youth Democracy projects, funded under the EU Youth in Action programme, promote the development of activities between groups of young people, decision makers or those with experience of policy within the youth field. The Italian youth democracy project, which is a first for Ossory Youth, involves Kilkenny Local Authorities and Ossory Youth and the Comune Di Formigine and Associazione Twelve Stars youth organisation in a town called Formigine in Italy.

In Kilkenny, the formal mechanism through which young people participate and have a voice in the local democratic structures is through Comhairle Na nOg, Kilkenny's youth forum. Comhairle Na nOg is a statutory structure in each county in Ireland. The absence of a youth forum of any type in an Italian town called Formigine provided the



From Kilkenny to Formigine



rationale for the establishment of the youth democracy project with the young people in Kilkenny acting as mentors and advisors to their Italian counterparts in the process of establishing a youth forum in Formigine.

The project involves 14 young people from Kilkenny city, Castlecomer, Callan and Kilmoganny and 16 from Formigine. The 18 month project commenced in April 2012 and involved the young people from Kilkenny travelling to Formigine for five days in June 2012 and again in June 2013. Meanwhile the group from Formigine spent five days in Kilkenny in early November 2012. This project will conclude in summer 2013.

Bridge Boys

In Goresbridge a small group of boys took on a project that would see them giving something back to their community. With the EcoUnesco award as their goal, and a summer BBQ as a celebration of their achievements, the boys have been busy in 2012.

Jay, Evan, Aidan and David began their journey in October 2011 where they first came up with the idea behind the renovation project. The community has outdoor picnic tables that had been vandalized by young people in the area on a number of occasions and community flower pots that had been overturned. The project involved renovating the public tables, sanding and varnishing them. The Bridge Boys also used the community gardens to plant and grow flowers. The group then replanted these flowers in the community flower pots. They also built 3 freestanding bird boxes for the public areas.

The group renovated all picnic tables but chose one old picnic table in the public park to be a youth space. They created a board game on this picnic table that can be played by anyone that sits there. This is a space in the community for the young people. The games table which allows you to play snakes and ladders and ludo is really fabulous and is all hand painted.

After renovating and cleaning the community gardens they began planting vegetables and flowers. They sowed the seeds and watched them develop. They were very energetic, keen to get stuck in and full of questions. When the boys were asked what they wanted to sow, they were drawn to the unusual, what else but cosmic purple carrots! They also picked lettuce, basil, courgettes, peas, tomatoes, beetroot and lettuce from the seed tin. Outside in the community garden they cleaned up an old bed, sowed wildlife friendly plants – sunflowers, cosmos, night scented stocks, calendula and aubrietta. The rest of the plants were put in all the flower pots, public gardens and along the river front; the location of their summer shindig.

Comhairle na nOg colour in the Ossory Bridge
‘Don’t waste your time growing up’



Bridge Boys give a little magic back

Gardener, Dee Sewell, had lots of praise for the Bridge Boys “What really blew me away with this project wasn’t the vegetable and flower planting that I’d been involved with, though I was impressed by their enthusiasm and hard work. It was seeing the boys handiwork building a youth bench.” “They cleaned and tidied all the benches by the river but creating the games bench took weeks of measuring, cutting, sanding, drawing and painting. When they’d finished they then went on to make three bird tables.”

The outdoor games table has spinners that act as the dice and surrounding the games table is multicoloured fish stones which act as the counters for the board game. Now when the local youths hang out down by the river with their friends they have something to do. The boys have a sense of pride and achievement in their accomplishment. The boys reached the final of the EcoUnesco Awards but were unlucky not to receive an award. However this did not dent their enthusiasm and we at Ossory Youth are very proud of what they have achieved. Well done lads!

Pals Summer Camp

Pals held its annual summer camp again in 2012. It was a huge success with 30 participants aged 5-12 attending each Friday night from 7-9pm for nine weeks. There were also five junior leaders who helped out throughout the camp. The group participated in a wide range of activities during the camp, these included art and crafts, sports, drama, swimming, bowling and a tour of the fire station in Castlecomer.

Comer Lads Group

This is a well established group of young men and has been operating for two years now. There are 16 participants in the group and they are aged between 15 and 19 years. These young men are engaged on the basis of being at risk. The group had a very busy 2012 which began with a 7 week self defence course with Dragons Lair martial arts centre. As well as this they did weeks of boxing, an 8 week graffiti art programme as well as operating a snooker drop in each Wednesday evening for two hours. Some of the boys in the group were smokers so a Quit 4 Youth programme was also run with the group.

Leaving Cert Applied Group

On the request of the Leaving cert applied co-ordinator in Castlecomer Community School work was again carried out with the LCA 5th years. There are 12 members in this group, 3 girls and nine boys. This group are deemed to be at risk of early school leaving and identified as

having poor communication and teamwork skills. At the end of 2012 there was a 6 week programme undertaken with the group that sought to develop each individuals communication skills as well as fostering a sense of unity amongst the group as a whole.

TARGETTED WORK

Compass Garda Youth Diversion Project

Compass GYDP exists to provide assistance to the Gardai in reducing the level of youth crime in Kilkenny by providing extra supports to young people aged 12-18year olds identified as 'at risk' of committing crime or getting involved in anti-social behaviour. We took on an additional 12 referrals in the year, bringing the total to 37 for 2012.

We were delighted to witness a significant decrease in the levels of detected youth crime in our catchment area in 2012. In particular, we are genuinely proud of the efforts made by most of the participants to improve their own circumstances, with and without our support. Seven young people took part in the pre-employment training course in July and went on to complete an additional three days of advanced training in first aid. Eleven young people were placed in part-time work placements and the majority of employers were very happy with the level of ability and commitment of the participants. We know that a number of young people were able to access further employment opportunities with help from their previous employer references.

Friday night soccer received a boost with the introduction of Evergreen FC's coaches coming on board to help train the players. Garda Aidan Fitzpatrick's commitment to playing with the boys every Friday has also meant that young people's participation has both widened and deepened and we know that many of the lads have gone on to play with Kilkenny league teams.

Some of the lads training in first aid



Four young people took part in Camp Diversion, a three-day camping team event that takes place with other projects and this year saw it being run in Kippur. Apart from the midges eating us alive, the young people participated extremely well and although we didn't

win, everyone enjoyed it. Again, thanks to Garda Aidan Fitzpatrick and Garda Kieran Scanlon and volunteer mentor Derek Butler for joining the team and making the experience extremely beneficial for the young people.

Compass GYDP was involved in the delivery of the Strengthening Families Programme in Newpark Family Resource Centre. With a total of nine families involved, the 14-week programme ran very well and proved what we think to be a very worthwhile experience for teens and parents.

Congratulations to a number of young people who completed their junior and leaving certificates, went onto further training or accessed employment. In particular congratulations to Brian for gaining entry into the Navy.

Finally, it's important to acknowledge the valuable support and assistance of Garda Agnes Reddy and Kieran Scanlon, the Community Policing Unit, Inspector Liam Connolly and Superintendent Pdraig Dunne in helping steer the project in 2012 and the number of organisations and agencies who we worked closely with to achieve better outcomes for young people.

Compass GYDP is funded by the Irish Youth Justice Service and the European Social Fund.

Kilkenny Recovery Support Group

The Kilkenny Recovery Support group was formed, with the aid of three skilled and dedicated volunteers, to fill a gap in services for young people recovering from drug addiction in Kilkenny. The group meets once a week for group work and social interaction. They identify and organise social activities in a safe and drug free environment when the opportunity arises.

Research has clearly shown the benefits of sporting activities to people in recovery from drug addiction. Work It Out! is a joint initiative between Ossory Youth and the Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership. It is a pilot project exploring how young people, in recovery from drug addiction in Kilkenny, can be encouraged and facilitated to participate in sporting activities and healthier lifestyles.

SCHOOL BASED WORK

Cairdeas

The Cairdeas programme involves Ossory Youth working in partnership with secondary schools to facilitate young people in 5th year to mentor and support 1st years as they make the transition to secondary school. In 2012 this peer mentoring programme was delivered in the CBS and Colaiste Pobail Osrai, Kilkenny.

4-2-1 Schools

The traditional 4-2-1 was delivered in Loreto secondary schools and CBS Kilkenny. 30 young people took part in the four day programme, which covered drugs information, facilitation skills, session planning and personal reflection.

SERVICES OFFERED BY OSSORY YOUTH

Information Provision

This service provides free, confidential information, in a relevant and understandable format to all young people and those who work with

them. Subjects covered include travel, health, education, work, sports and leisure, European opportunities, rights and entitlements and many, many more.

Due to the redevelopment of Desart Hall, the youth information centre was not open on a regular basis in 2012. However, through scheduled appoints, we delivered support to new SUSI applicants, young people writing their CVs and career guidance referrals. Outreach work increased as the City VEC school received anti-bullying workshops, as did Johnswell youth club, plus a session on body image.

Career Guidance Service.

Fifteen young people availed of the one to one career guidance service, getting expert advice and support on career paths, course options and subject choices.

Mentoring Programme

This year was our first year to run the Mentoring Programme for young people. The programme was initiated by Ossory Youth in response to a need articulated by agencies and parents for the availability of one-to-one support for young people. The uniqueness of the programme is the built-in flexibility for young people to determine in what shape or form they want support; some enjoy talking, others like activity-based meetings.

Five volunteer adult mentors were trained to provide that safe and friendly environment for individual young people to spend time with them in a non-judgemental relationship. Three young people were matched with one of our mentors, who are Valerie O’Shea, Marthe Koop, Marie Power, Derek Butler and Declan Wall. The young person determines the length in which they remain involved in the programme and are also gently encouraged to participate in other groups or activities running in the centre. The programme is still in its infancy but has already proven to be an important option for parents and young people to avail of when required.

COMMUNITY BASED DRUG INITIATIVE ONE TO ONE SUPPORT SERVICE

Last year saw Kilkenny Rural Drug Initiative provide support to an increasing number of people as it further developed its services in line with the National Drug Rehabilitation Framework. In 2012 Kilkenny Rural Drug Initiative worked with 43 people comprising of individuals, families and concerned persons who had been affected by substance misuse. The Kilkenny City Drug Initiative worked with 9 individuals who had been affected by substance misuse. Each case presented varying needs requiring different levels of support and different styles of interventions. Some of the supports provided include:

- Assessing the needs of those directly/indirectly affected by drugs
- Key working & care planning with substance misusers and their families through Motivational Interviewing, Solution Focused Brief Interventions and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Outreaching to those in need of help
- Drug education and early intervention for people at risk of substance misuse
- Signposting to local, voluntary and state services based on individual needs
- Advocating on behalf of those affected by drugs
- Assistance in accessing jobs
- Group work



Teen Between

This is a listening service offered to young people whose parents are separating, or divorced, created by Relationships Ireland and the training is delivered in collaboration with Youth Work Ireland. There are six members of the team, made up of volunteers and full or part-time staff, who are available to travel to deliver the service on an outreach basis, supported by in-house supervision. www.teenbetween.ie

Volunteer Support Services

Ossory Youth provides supports to registered volunteers who are working with both affiliated youth clubs/groups and also volunteers working with associate members groups. The supports offered include the following:

- Volunteer Recruitment process which includes Garda Vetting and two local references are required.
- Volunteer Foundation Level Training (9hrs)
- Child Protection Training (3hrs)
- Regular contact through mail outs, phone calls and drop in.
- Club visits
- Craft Workshops
- Access to resources
- Information and support on insurance, programme activity, funding.

Craft workshops were a new and successful service to volunteers working with young people in a community setting. The craft workshops focus on training club leaders and junior leaders in a specific craft. Once the leaders have been trained in the craft, Ossory Youth can source the craft pack for the youth club so the leaders can deliver the training to the young people themselves. This is a good opportunity to learn a new skill and include another element in your activity planner for the year. In 2012 Mooncoin Youth Club received craft workshop in jewellery making, Moneenroe Gems in wet felting handbags and flowers.

Strategic Aim 2: To promote, develop and maintain effective working partnerships as a means of ensuring quality youth work provision in the region.

In 2012 Ossory Youth worked in partnership with An Garda Síochána, The HSE, The Diocese of Ossory, Kilkenny County Council, The South East Regional Task Force, The VEC, The Department of Justice Equality & Law Reform, Youthreach, Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the Kilkenny Recreational Sports Partnership, ESF, The Department of Children & Youth Affairs and Youth Work Ireland.

Ongoing Partnerships

Ossory Youth is committed to working with organisations and groups in order to ensure a quality youth work provision in the region. Over the past five years we have learnt that the best partnerships are the ones where there is robust, challenging and honest discussions around how we approach the work with young people. As an organisation we are firmly committed to the youth work process and are moving towards a clarity of the purpose of our work with young people. We recognise that our partners have similar clarity around their purpose and sometimes there maybe tension, the partnership and the quality of the work is strengthened by recognising the tension, being open to change and agreeing on what is achievable by the partnership. This approach has been copper fastened by the work with progression routes, the compass trial site and the changing economic environment.

Comhairle Na Nog

Comhairle ná nóg are local youth councils that give children and young people the opportunity and space to be involved in the development of local services and policies. The emphasis is on decision makers to recognise and acknowledge young people's ideas before making decisions on issues that affect them. There are 34 Comhairle ná nóg around the country.

Kilkenny Comhairle ná nóg is made up of representatives from 5 electoral areas; Callan, Thomastown, Ballyragget, Kilkenny City and Piltown. The group meets twice a month to discuss issues and try to establish a way to resolve them. Elections of Comhairle take place every year and each member serves two years on the Comhairle. Any young person between the ages of 11-18 years can put their name forward and be elected as a member of the Comhairle at the AGM which is held annually in October.



Kilkenny Comhairle Na Nog attending the National Showcase

In 2012, The Kilkenny Comhairle ná nóg completed painting a graffiti mural underneath Ossory Bridge as part of the Linear Park in Kilkenny. This project was in association with SCP5, and Keep Kilkenny Beautiful, it also involved removing the litter around the area.

They engaged the services of professional graffiti artist Mick Minogue, who is originally from Kilkenny and therefore, has childhood memories about the Ossory Bridge. The mural depicts a child with coloured crayons and they added the words " Mol an óige agus tíocaidh siad" which means "praise the youth and they shall succeed".

The group continues to actively lobby in 2012 for the development of a Skate-Park in Kilkenny City. They hosted their annual AGM on October 12th in Hotel Kilkenny and had 70 young people attend on the day. It was facilitated by the members themselves. Elections took place on the day and 11 new members were elected. They also took part in the first ever National Showcase Event for the 34 Comhairle ná nóg across the country. This event took place in Croke Park on November 9th with over 600 young people attending on the day. The members got the opportunity to network with all the other Comhairle members and showcase the graffiti project, discuss the Roadshow report and swap stories and ideas along the way.

Life-Line

Lifeline is a county wide Suicide Prevention Initiative established under the auspices of Ossory Youth in 2004. The initiative brings together a number of organisations who have a specific role or remit in the area of mental health or suicide prevention. These include Samaritans, Grow, Shine, Kilkenny Rape Crises Centre, Kilkenny Bereavement Support and others. Ossory Youth employs one part-time development worker to progress the work of the initiative. This post is funded by Pobal to the end of 2012.

In 2012 life-line successfully secured funding from Kilkenny Leader Partnership to develop a Kilkenny Action Plan for suicide prevention 2014. Life-line took a very consultative approach in developing this plan which included community and agency consultation. The plan will be launched in 2013.

Life-line coordinated a ten week Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) course 'Building Community Capacity through Mental Health Promotion. 15 participants took part in this accredited course and were awarded Certificates from WIT.

Lifeline developed a low cost counselling service after consultation with Money Advice & Budgeting Services. The service is provided to people who are impacted by financial stress. The service funded by HSE South will be piloted in 2013 and evaluated in 2013.

The project has been involved in the development of two counselling support services within the county over the past year. Lifeline, Loughboy Area Resource Centre (LARC) and Good Shepherd Centre Kilkenny have in 2012 built upon an initiative started earlier in the year with the support of ESB Electric AID to provide low/no cost counselling to people at risk of suicide with a particular emphasis on people from ethnic minorities (including Travellers), people who are homeless and other vulnerable groups.

The Annual Lifeline Seminar 2012 was very well attended and was deemed a successful event; bringing together professionals, public representatives, NGO's and the wider community. Participants included Dan Neville TD, Dr Barbra Dooley, Director of Research at Headstrong and Sean McCarthy of the HSE Suicide Resource Office. The seminar is now firmly established and is a useful networking and awareness raising tool; it received significant publicity in local print and broadcast media. Plans for the 2013 Seminar will be centred on the launch of the County Suicide Prevention Plan.

Other developments have included the upgrade and improvement of web based and social media materials and content, initiation of a 'Friends of Lifeline' initiative with mixed success and implementation of the recommendations of the New Ground Report into Lifeline Structures. For 2013 it is essential that capacity be built within the group to facilitate the implementation of the County Suicide Prevention Plan. A strong active chairperson is seen as key to the success of this work.

John Paul II Awards

The Pope John Paul II Award is dedicated to the memory of the late Pope John Paul II whose love of young people was so profound. The Award was launched by the Papal Nuncio to Ireland His Excellency Most Rev Dr Giuseppe Lazzarotto on 7th November 2006 in the Diocese of Derry, Ireland. The John Paul II awards are targeted at young people



The award enables young people to become actively involved in the life of the parish and community. The JP2 award is run by the Diocese of Ossory coordinated by Fr William Purcell in conjunction with the secondary schools, and supported by Ossory Youth.

Young people from around the Diocese of Ossory were presented with their John Paul II Awards by the Papal Nuncio to Ireland Archbishop Charles Browne at a ceremony in St. Mary's Cathedral. It was a proud moment for families, teachers and friends as 88 young people received Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Young people played an active part in the ceremony through the liturgy and singing. This was also an opportunity for schools to join forces to form the huge choir which filled the cathedral with music and song. The evening finished on a high as families and young people mingled with invited guests and dignitaries over a cup of tea in the newly open Chapter House.

Strategic Aim 3: To build an organisation of staff, volunteers, and young people that work together in a manner that is flexible, innovative, and committed to the highest standards of youth work practice.

National Quality Standards Framework

In 2012 Ossory Youth continued to implement the recommendations made by the National Quality Standard Framework. The main piece of work centred on an Ossory Youth approach to planning and evaluating its work. The organisation invested significantly in training its staff to ensure that our work was planned and evidenced based. The training was delivered by Siobhan McGrory and some financial assistance was provided by Kilkenny VEC.

Volunteers

Volunteers are involved at local and national levels of the organisation through their work on Ossory Youth and Youth Work Ireland's Board of Directors and Advisory Groups. The organisation has always partnered with volunteers in local areas and supported them to deliver a network of Youth Clubs and Groups across the diocese. Volunteers also support staff in the delivery of programmes such as International Youth Exchanges, 421 Peer Education and Summer Camps.

Ossory Youth and Youth Work Ireland values and recognises their enormous contribution to youth work in Kilkenny City and County and

South Laois. All volunteers are subject to Ossory Youth’s recruitment process and work within the guidelines of Ossory Youth policies and best youth work practice.

In 2012 there was an increase in volunteers available to the organisation we now have volunteers working with projects and programmes. Project volunteers are managed by the project co-ordinator and are working directly with groups and have increased our capacity to deliver programmes in communities.

Launch of the Strategic Plan 2013-2017

In 2012 Ossory Youth Launched it new five year plan 2013-2017. The plan is written in a manner to see us through a very difficult period. It is pragmatic and real but does not lose sight of, or compromise, the organisations vision. Minister Frances Fitzgerald came to launch the plan. Louise McKenna and Pdraig Fleming played a blinder as they set out the plan to the Minister Frances Fitzgerald, Minister Phil Hogan, Ann Phelan TD, John McGuinness TD, John Paul Phelan TD, Mayor Sean O Hargain. Desart Hall was buzzing with young people volunteers and staff. There was evidence of friendship, warmth and really good quality all around which did not go unnoticed by the Minister. She noted that “This is such a lovely, warm and energetic place. You very quickly get the atmosphere of the place and its great energy. I’ve been shown the plans for the new building and I know your local representatives will help support the development you want here,” She also noted that Ossory Youth was one of the best examples of youth work she had seen and this affirmation of the organisation (young people, volunteers, the board and staff) was great to hear. So a big thank you to all for making the evening a success. We must also thank the Board, Martina, Paul, Mary and John Cleere from Red Lemonade for their creativity and courage in the creative production of the strategic plan.

Mark shows Minister Frances Fitzgerald how to break!



Desart Hall

In 2012 the Board continued to develop Desart Hall into a vibrant youth space. The space is now open 4 nights a week and caters for 150 young people on average on a weekly basis.

Ossory Youth Structure

Ossory Youth is a voluntary youth work organisation. It is a company limited by guarantee and has charitable status. It is governed by a voluntary board of Directors.

OSSORY YOUTH SERVICES

(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2011

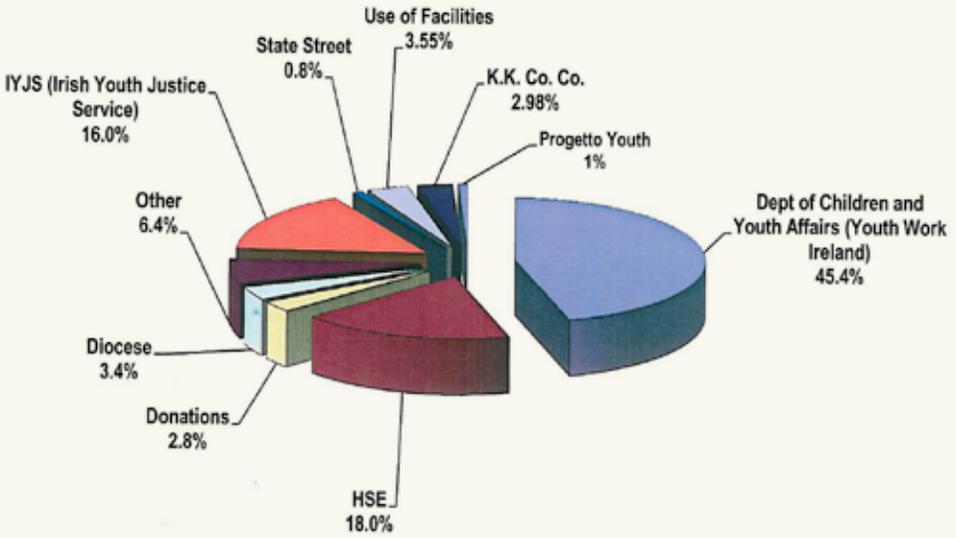
	31ST DEC.2012	31ST DEC. 2011
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	€299,518	€309,013
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	€31,536	€30,917
Cash at bank	€172,278	€216,247
	<u>€247,160</u>	<u>€276,619</u>
CREDITORS		
Amounts Falling Due		
Within One Year	<u>(€48,582)</u>	<u>(€73,165)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>€155,232</u>	<u>€173,995</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES	€454,750	€483,008
CREDITORS (Falling due after 1 yr)	(€111,230)	(€124,569)
NET ASSETS	<u><u>€343,520</u></u>	<u><u>€358,439</u></u>
RESERVES		
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	<u>€343,520</u>	<u>€358,439</u>
	<u><u>€343,520</u></u>	<u><u>€358,439</u></u>

On Behalf of the Board

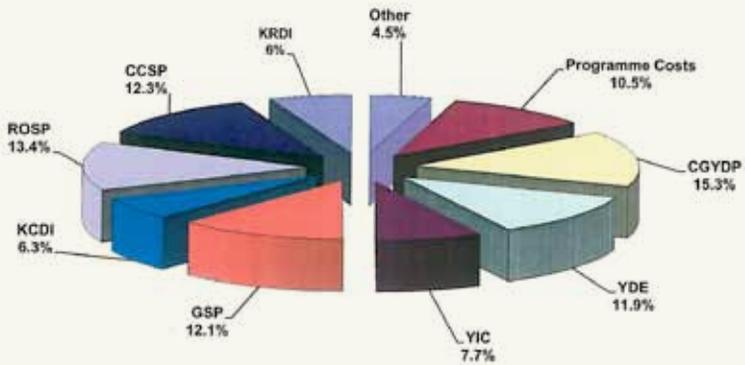
Eamonn Daly
Ian Coulter
Padraig Fleming (Chairman)
Liz Dermody
Louise McKenna

Date: 24th April 2013

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



- ROSP: Rural Outreach Spy Project
- CCSP: Callan/Castlecomer Spy Project
- GSP: Gateway Spy Project
- YIC: Youth Information Centre
- YDE: Youth Development Expenditure

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Declan Wall

Maintaining balance in the midst of chaos





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