

**ossory youth**



Youth Work Ireland



**Annual Report  
2015**

## Contents

- 03 Introduction
- 04 Overview of 2015
- 06 Highlights of 2015
- 08 What our members have to say
- 12 Desert Hall - What's happening at a glance
- 20 Youth Service Programme
- 26 School Work
- 28 Summer Programmes
- 34 Compass GYDP
- 36 Kilkenny Drugs Initiative
- 39 Stories of interest
- 45 The Five National Outcomes
- 46 Accounts
- 48 Ossory Youth Staff

# I NTRODUCTION

Considering the exceptional growth in our economy this year, it may appear strange that in some respects, 2015 proved to be a more difficult year for Ossory Youth, with additional challenges emerging for young people, staff and volunteers.

There has been some exceptional UK and European based studies published on the effects of the recent recession on young people, including mental health issues and strain on familial relationships. As a consequence, we have noticed a considerable increase in the number of individual young people and parents seeking support through our Mentoring Programme. The question of gender identity is also an emerging concern for a significant number of young people (and their parents) and we can only guess that the Equality Referendum has given some confidence for young people to openly question their sexuality in a supportive environment.

Whilst volunteerism is alive and well, there is a growing number of youth club volunteers on the verge of 'burnout'; volunteers who have spearheaded their youth club over the past 5-10 years and feel they can give no more. Some of our most committed volunteers have expressed the strain of carrying the responsibility of running their youth club over the years and our challenge in the immediate future is to invigorate communities to help keep their club alive.

There has been some new funding opportunities in 2015 but the reality is that we are a long way from returning to pre-2008 levels. It creates an anomaly of rising expectations with stagnant funding streams, a mismatch that can prove frustrating and demotivating for staff, especially when the need for our service continues to outgrow what we can afford to provide.

However, whilst 2015 has been challenging, it has also been exceptionally rewarding, which again highlights the resilience and energy of the youth work sector as a whole. We were pleased to see Dylan Colclough being awarded the "Five Nations Youth of the Year Award" in Buckingham Palace by HRH Princess Anne. The 'OpenDoor' gay/straight alliance group went from strength to strength and the summer period was a hive of activity with journalism, music, fitness and outdoor adventure. The mentoring programme has just about met the huge demand for its service, thanks in no small way to the dedicated panel of volunteer mentors. In addition, Desert Hall got a much needed upgrade and we successfully participated in the National Quality Standards Framework. I would also like to congratulate Graignamanagh community and all involved on the opening of their youth space in the community hall.

So I am extremely pleased that 2015, whilst presenting with additional challenges not uncommon to most youth services, has also proven that with energy, flexibility and enthusiasm there is no end to what can be achieved. With that, I would like to thank our Board, staff, volunteers and young people for continuing to make Ossory Youth a success in 2015.

**Mary Mescal,**

CEO

# O VERVIEW OF 2015

It may have slipped by in the shadow of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, but Ossory Youth as an entity was 30 years old on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015. As I read through the records of the early Board of Management meetings, I can see that the sense of purpose and overarching ethos of the organisation hasn't weakened in any shape or form. It is interesting to observe that the fundamental belief in young people and the value placed on volunteers remain central to what we do. We speak a lot about journeying with young people and sharing the experience and this value still holds true.

But some things have changed. Since 1985, the organisation has grown from employing 1 worker to having 19 people directly employed to run the service. I could have hardly envisaged that in 30 years, Ossory Youth would engage directly with approximately 1860 young people with the support of 161 volunteers on an annual basis. By and large, developments in youth work as a profession have been very positive. There is a better understanding of the psychology of adolescence, improved practice on the ground, improved collaboration with other services and better outcomes for young people.

*"So, 2015, whilst presenting with additional challenges not uncommon to most youth services, has also proven that with energy, flexibility and enthusiasm, there is no end to what can be achieved."*

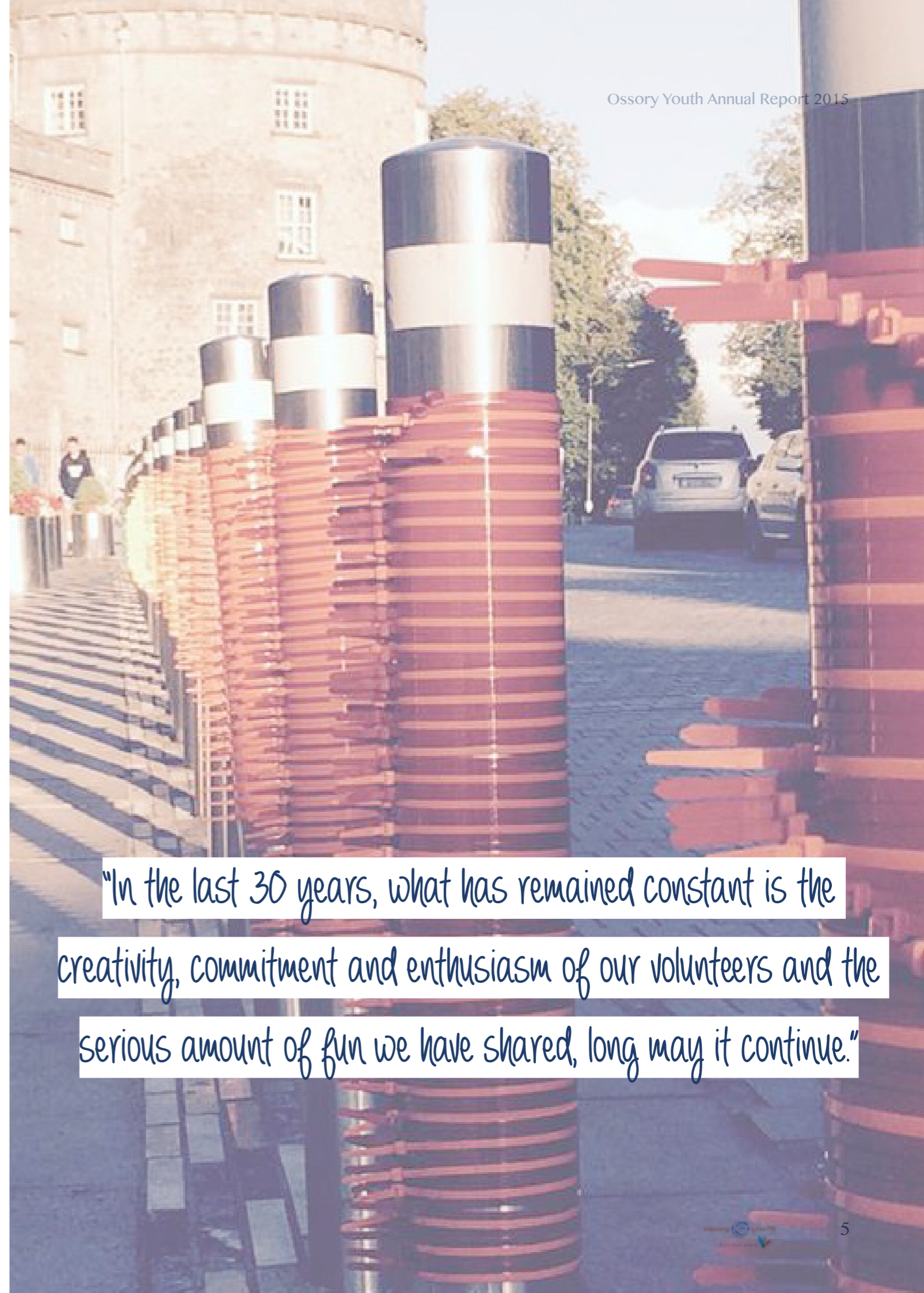
Youth clubs and groups have finished and more have started over the 30 years. What remains constant is the creativity, commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers and the serious amount of fun we have shared over the years – long may it continue.

As a Board, we strive to maintain the principles and integrity of youth work whilst meeting, dare I say, occasional whimsical demands of funders and Government departments. However, that is part of the work and an unfortunate outcome of accountability and we will continue to comply with what is required of us. I must thank previous and current Board members for skilfully guiding the organisation through good and bad.

Finally, I would like to thank our community; the young people, volunteers, Board and staff and in-

deed all other organisations and services who have made 2015 a productive and rewarding year.

**Padraig Fleming**  
Chairperson of Ossory Youth



*"In the last 30 years, what has remained constant is the creativity, commitment and enthusiasm of our volunteers and the serious amount of fun we have shared, long may it continue."*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015



## 10 young people completed an intense youth leadership for life training

such as drugs & alcohol, sexual health, stress management and mental health.

- We were represented well in the National Games with 5 participants competing in table tennis and 3 teams partaking in the 5-a-side soccer. Well done all.
- The Young Music Makers Project was ran over 10 weeks with 12 young people learning some fantastic new skills and creating amazing sounds.
- Paul, Dillon and Padraig transformed our canteen on a DIY project, Its now super comfortable, thanks guys.
- 7 young people cycled 150km for the Cycle Against Suicide; an amazing journey.
- 5 young travellers generously gave their time to participate in a focus group to feed into a new traveller action programme nationwide.
- We ran a Random Act of Kindness social media campaign where we encouraged people to do something nice for others. It was a great success and really fun!
- Our Active Teen Bootcamp which ran this summer focused on healthy eating, healthy minds, getting physically active and enjoying it.
- 11 young people from 6 clubs took part in the Programme Promoters residential training in Kippure. The leaders of tomorrow!

- Our very own Dylan Colclough made us very proud when he was selected to be the Irish representative at the "Youth of the Year Awards" in Buckingham Palace.
- The very first Futsal League was run in 2015 with teams from Kilkenny and Laois taking part to "show racism the red card".
- 53 new volunteers received training in 2015 to work with our young people.
- Our media and journalism group created an amazing movie of Kilkenny peoples biggest fears "Fearocious".
- Hugginstown youth club learned all about foraging for a feast!
- Kilkenny City Vocational School and Ossory Youth ran a summer camp with 10 young people.
- Graiguenamanagh Youth Café opened in September 2015, when it was officially launched to much fanfare on 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2015 by Minister Ann Phelan.
- 15 young people vied for the accolade of Masterchef in a tasty competition in May.
- 45 young people comprising Youthink and Open Door members and friends spent a fun filled 24 hours 'locked into' Desart Hall in March discussing topics



"I'm really glad I did the Work to Learn, it is a highly valued experience, I would recommend it to anyone thinking about doing it. The money aint too bad either!!"

Aaron, Age 18

"The art project over the summer gave me an opportunity to be involved in something that was really amazing and made an impact." Aishling, Age 15



"The Youth of the Year Award in Buckingham Palace was amazing. It was the honour of being nominated and then winning the award, going to Buckingham palace and having dinner with Princess Anne. It showed me there are loads of other young people who go through something bad, yet manage to turn their lives around." Dylan, Age 18

"I really loved taking part in the Masterchef Competition, we didn't win, but it was great fun and we'll do it again!"

Finley, Age 14



WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY



"I had an amazing experience on the Programme Promoters residential. I learned a lot about being a junior leader and the other participants were very friendly." Ben, Age 16

"I'm so glad I did the Cycle Against Suicide. It was an amazing experience and it really made me feel like I had accomplished something. I enjoyed every second of it and even though it was tough, I'd definitely do it again."

Lucy, Age 17



"I have been attending the Graiguenamanagh youth café since it opened in September. It's brilliant to have somewhere to go with my friends in the cold weather. The facilities are amazing here with a pool table, Ps4, board games, iPads and most importantly comfy chairs and free food." Dwayne, age 16

"Open door has created a safe place for LGBT+ young people and their friends to have fun and make a difference in the world around them. The group is very special and holds a special place in the hearts of any of its members, past or present." Muireann, Age 16



"Every Thursday I attend the beginners active group. We go for runs through the town along paths and walkways. We are building up our running better and better each week. We encourage each other to run better and faster, without being competitive. It is great fun and I enjoy attending every week, I would most definitely recommend it to my friends." Liam, Age 15

### Friday Night Café

Friday Night Café opens in Desart Hall each Friday night between 7pm and 9pm. A safe and fun space where young people can relax and socialise with friends. Playing pool and table tennis are again high on the agenda on Friday nights with the competitiveness culminating each year in the battle to be tournament champion and get a picture on the wall of fame.

As well as these activities young people have the chance to come up with programmes and activities they'd like to participate in i.e. driver education preparation, hair and beauty, crafts etc.

Dylan is still slaving away in the kitchen providing very tasty food!



*"I come to Ossory Youth at lunchtime each day because it gives me something to do. My favourite thing is playing pool, I play every day and will try very hard to win the tournament this year." John, Age 13*

### Lunchtime Drop In

A time for secondary school students to switch off from school during their lunch break and socialise in a safe and fun environment. It is open each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1-2pm during the school year. It's a space where we can relax and socialise with friends during a school day. There is a range of recreational activities such as pool, table-tennis and free WIFI.

We also get the opportunity to participate in a range of other activities and programmes such as representing Ossory Youth in the National Games which 5 of the lads did to great aplomb this year.

### Saturday Café

Desart Hall Youth Café operates weekly during the school year. The café is staffed each week by a number of young people but predominantly by two dedicated young people in Rhiannon and Dylan.

We see the café as a dedicated youth space with good food, live music and free wifi on Saturday afternoons. The youth café, run by young people for young people is a great place to spend Saturday afternoon.

## Youthink

2015 was a year of change for Youthink with many 'old' members reaching their Leaving Cert year and saying a sorrowful goodbye to the group and a large number of enthusiastic vibrant new members joining from September onwards.

A first for Ossory Youth and Desart Hall occurred in May when Kilkenny city students aged 18 or older were given the opportunity to put their names on the national electoral register in time for the Marriage Equality referendum and local by-election. The registration event instigated and organised by Youthink was inspired by a newspaper headline that said one in three young people aged 18-25 years were not registered to vote. This prompted Youthink, led in particular by group member Amy, to take action.

Earlier in March, Youthink organised an event entitled 'Life Hacks' where 45 young people comprising Youthink and Open Door members and friends spent, believe it or not, a fun filled 24 hour period 'locked into' Desart Hall in March discussing topics such as drugs & alcohol, sexual health, stress management and mental health.

The predominantly new Youthink members were not found wanting in the autumn when the Syrian refugee crisis reverberated across the planet. The group members contributed dozens of man-hours to assisting with the Kilkenny clothes appeal and then surpassed themselves by organising a 'Busking for Syria' weekend on the streets of Kilkenny fundraising approximately €500 for the charity GOAL in the process.

## Open Door

Open Door has gone from strength to strength in 2015 supporting members along their personal journeys, taking part in a range of projects, campaigning in the historic Marriage Equality referendum and having great fun along the way. In excess of 25 young people have attended meetings throughout the year with the average weekly attendance over the past six months being approximately 15 young people. The establishment of Open Door has confirmed the extent and depth of the demand for a LGBT focused youth group in Kilkenny. As the group has become established, the geographical spread of young people attending has also grown.

A snapshot of the work of the group includes raising over €1300 in a sponsored sleep-out in the Town Hall to benefit Focus Ireland, recording a video highlighting the need for reform of the Employment Equality act in relation to LGBT people and hosting a number of parties in Desart Hall for members and their friends. The highlight of the year was the role played by Open Door members in taking an active role in the Yes Equality campaign in the lead up to the Marriage Equality referendum. This included making a video in association with Yes Equality Kilkenny that was viewed over 1400 times.

*"The establishment of Open Door has confirmed the extent and depth of the demand for a LGBT focused youth group in Kilkenny"*



### 6<sup>th</sup> Class Group

We started in November and meet every Tuesday evening in Desart Hall. Our group consists of 6<sup>th</sup> class students from a number of schools in Kilkenny. There is a great mix of young people, resulting in a very energetic and enthusiastic group. Every week is different and so far we have tried stop motion animation, ice skating and selected an entry to the Mini Tops competition. It's a space for young people to try new things, gain confidence and have fun.

### HQ & The Minions

Both groups met on Tuesday evenings and there was never much time to sit around, there was so much to be done! We competed in Masterchef and did a brilliant job. It's not surprising as we did a lot of cooking this year. We also worked hard in progressing the teen garden and have the blisters to prove it! The year ended with really fun trips to Dunmore Adventure Centre and Tramore. That's when it was time to say goodbye to youth worker John, who did a great job in covering for Elis on Maternity Leave. Thanks John, we wish you the very best of luck in the future!



### 1st -3rd Year Group

Our group meets every Tuesday from 6:30-8:00pm in Desart Hall. We engage in a programme of activities designed by the group, which means plenty of exciting and creative projects! We want to be challenged and have fun while learning new things, relaxing and being creative! Starting each week with a yummy hot chocolate and lots of chats, it's a fun way to spend a tuesday evening and make new friends

Spooky night walks, quirky decorations, crazy challenges, unusual candles and questionable baking are just some of our adventures so far!

*"As a teacher, I have always had a passion for giving teenagers a chance to experience something different. This is my first year volunteering with Ossory Youth and not only do i find it rewarding but also thoroughly enjoyable! The gang are always happy to be there and eager to get involved. Yes I'm tired after a long week and yes I could find something else to do with my two hours, but i never leave there feeling sorry I went."*



**Comhairle na nOg**

Ossory Youth, together with our partners, Kilkenny County Council, Foroige, KLP, HSE, DCYA, Kilkenny VEC and Gardaí, have ensured Kilkenny Comhairle na nOg had a very busy and active year.

In February 2015, 18 Comhairle members visited the Daíl and gained an interesting insight into Irish history and politics, the Dail procedures and international arrangements.

34 young people from across Kilkenny engaged in a process of drawing up a Master Plan for the long-term redevelopment of the Smithwick's Brewery lands in Kilkenny City centre.

Our "Let's Go Mental Event" was held in June to highlight mental health and wellbeing. 7 local youth bands participated and there was tremendous support from the local business community who donated spot prizes and general good will. It was an amazing day and for a great cause!



**Beginners Get Active Group**

The Beginners Get Active Group meet every Thursday from 4:30pm-5:30pm in Ossory Youth. In line with the national guidelines on physical activity for Ireland, we participate in running, toning and core exercises. We really wanted to do this in a fun way, it is essential to us that the young people involved have an enjoyable experience of physical activity and place a positive value on it, so as to encourage us to integrate it into our weekly routine. This year we provided free Zumba classes, we had so much fun being happy and healthy!

The Beginners Get Active Group is for teenagers from 1st year-6th year. Whether a true beginner or looking to improve, we have something for everyone. We want to help young people get fit and toned in a fun and supportive way! With a mixture of running, exercise classes and toning along with a tasty and healthy snack, our Thursday workout is just what is needed to feel great inside and out!

In educating young people we are enabling them to make a lifestyle choice, not a quick fix solution. It needs to be maintainable and long term and this is a consistent aspect of the programme.



# YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAMME

## Ossory Games

The Ossory Games saw 8 different youth groups come together in the Watershed Kilkenny to battle it out on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February for a coveted opportunity to represent in the National Games. 5-a-side soccer was the chosen sport, with both male and female teams sweating out their best soccer skills in a bid to take home the gold.

Competition is a part of what the Ossory Games are about, but the Games are about so much more than that. It builds self confidence, social interaction, participation, self esteem, having fun and laughter. It creates the opportunity for young people, staff and volunteers to come together to support young people as they develop their skills and self-assurance to find their place in the world.

It was the first year we ran an U12 tournament and it was well received. All who took part really enjoyed it. With our U12 teams being mixed, it was a great way to include all our junior members.



The National Finals took place in Athlone IT and we were well represented with entries in table tennis and soccer. A fantastic day was had by all involved and we even managed to take home some gold!

## Masterchef

The Masterchef competition brings the best chefs from each club together for a cook-off. They cook in pairs meaning teamwork, communication and preparation are key. The bidding chefs work in teams of two and cook a main course and a choice between a starter and dessert, in a bid to earn the Ossory Michelin star!

15 young budding chefs put their spatulas and mixers to the test in May. With some delicious sweet and savoury culinary delights produced, our judges were wowed by the creativity, presentation and flavours. The Mill youth club were the junior winners with Windgap taking home the gold Michelin star in the senior competition. A fantastic, fun and tasty day, well done to all who took part!



## Community Awards

Taking a walk through Desart Hall on June 23<sup>rd</sup> you couldn't help but get excited with the buzz of achievement and pride, as youth club members together with their youth leaders, family and friends were starting to gather. The occasion was Ossory Youths Community Awards which showcased projects from Mooncoin, The Swan, The Mill, Windgap and Hugginstown. The presentations from all groups clearly demonstrated that young people have the ability and desire to positively contribute to the life and wellbeing of their local communities. All they need is encouragement support and affirmation.

The Community Awards is about seeing this work by young people in our youth clubs and giving them recognition for it through an award. It is about encouraging young people to be more involved in their area and engage in projects that have a positive impact on their neighbours, friends and family.

Bishop Freeman thoroughly enjoyed his conversations with young people about the work they had undertaken. "It is fantastic to see young people step up and deliver on some amazing projects that really benefit their community. Their passion and commitment is clear. It took a lot of hard work but they rolled up their sleeves and the fruits of their labour is clear in cleaner villages, fantastic garden projects, fundraisers for charities and fitness programmes."

It is important that young people receive recognition for their work and we are very proud of what has been achieved by our clubs. We like to encourage our clubs to get involved and engage in active citizenship. We believe it helps to foster a sense of belonging and ownership.



### Cycle Against Suicide

As last years Cycle Against Suicide was such a positive experience, we decided that in 2015 we would partake again, but this time we would build on the 40km we cycled in 2014 and tackle 150km of the 2015 route. The aim of this annual cycle is to break the stigma associated with depression and other mental health issues. The message that was promoted throughout the journey is "it's okay not to feel okay; and it's absolutely okay to ask for help."

Members of Hugginstown youth club and the Beginners Get Active group signed up for the challenge. Our group of 4 boys and 4 girls began training in February and built up our endurance and distance. Training was tough but we enjoyed it and knew it was necessary if we were to finish what we started!

On the 9<sup>th</sup> May we began our journey on our first leg from Tullamore to Mullingar where we stayed overnight. With sore legs and bums, we left early Sunday morning, cycling Mullingar to Enfield and on to finish at the RTE Studios in Dublin. It was a long day of cycling but what an atmosphere! Everyone was so cheerful and encouraging and it was fantastic to see so many people out supporting! It was definitely an experience to remember.



### Irish Youth Music Awards

In 2015 Ossory Youth again took part in the national Irish Youth Music Awards. The selection gig in Desart Hall in March saw a huge audience suitably impressed by 5 Kilkenny acts comprising young solo artists and bands alike, all aged 12 to 18 years.

Having competed astonishingly well in the Selection Gig, Kilkenny's own IYMA's champion Eve Tuohy headed off to the Aviva Stadium in Dublin on April 18<sup>th</sup> with a small group of the IYMA's Kilkenny team to compete in the grand finale of the event.

For all involved it was an amazing experience to be part of and yet another successful youth led venture for Ossory Youth.



### Programme Promoters

The programme promoters enables youth clubs to give more ownership and responsibility to young people. The participants are more active in decision making and the running of their youth club.

The purpose of the programme promoters is to ensure more awareness and promotion of programmes; it also ensures young people are more involved in the planning and delivery of events. The training involves communication, planning, motivating, teamwork, reporting and evaluating. Their role requires teamwork with their partner and youth club leaders and taking on the role of young leader in their club.

The programme promoters is a perfect example of how Ossory Youth will continue to support and positively influence the new generation of young people that we work with. We believe that young people are capable of achieving and affecting significant change with the right support structure. For us, it's not just about enabling young people to express their views; it's about ensuring the wider society value their inclusion and opinion.

*"We are very proud of the work and commitment shown by our volunteers... their dedication and effort has really paid off and we can stand over the quality of youth work in our clubs".*



**National Quality Standards Framework**

All of our youth clubs have completed their first year of the NQSF process. Known as the NQSFVLYG (National Quality Standards Framework for Volunteer Led Youth Groups), this is a set of national standards for local volunteer-led youth groups and clubs. The Standards present an opportunity for youth groups to demonstrate their commitment to good practice and to the delivery of quality programmes and activities, which meet the needs and expectations of its members. As well as being a benchmark for progress, the NQSFVLYG provides a fundamental building block upon which practice can be developed on an ongoing basis. These Quality Standards are a "living document" which will evolve and be reviewed and informed by the process, as the Standards are implemented in clubs and groups.

We are very proud of the work and commitment shown by our volunteers in our youth clubs, We know the time commitment is huge and sometimes it is hard to find time to prioritise the paperwork. However their dedication and effort has really paid off and we can stand over the quality of youth work in our clubs as a result.





# School work

## School Based Work

2015 was another busy year for our Schools Based Work. A selection of programmes were delivered by staff and volunteers in a number of secondary schools throughout Kilkenny City & County including Colaiste Mhuire Johnstown, Colaiste Pobail Osrai, Our Lady of Lourdes Rosbercon, St Kieran's College, CBS Secondary Kilkenny, Scoil Aireagail Ballyhale and Gowran NS.

711 young people took part in programmes delivered in the schools on a needs basis, covering a variety of topics including peer education, building resilience & coping strategies, mental health, team building, peer mentoring, faith based workshops, bullying and drug awareness. Young people ranging in age from 12-18 years old, gained valuable life skills from these programmes. All programmes delivered enhance the work being carried out in the schools under the CSPE and SPHE curriculum.

## Evolution Peer Education Schools Programme

Evolution is a comprehensive holistic peer education programme, designed to empower young people to become peer educators and raise awareness in their school community, throughout the school year. Transition/5<sup>th</sup> year students are trained over 4 days on topics of mental health, sexual health, drug awareness and campaign planning. They go on to deliver campaigns with their schools/communities to highlight issues relevant to young people.

21 Transition Years students from Colaiste Pobail Osrai completed their Evolution Training throughout November 2015 and showed significant personal development having received their training. 23 Transition Year students from Scoil Aireagail Ballyhale also completed their training and were the first group in their school to take part in this training. We look forward to seeing the benefits of their training through creative school campaigns in 2016.

Students from Carlow IT took part in a peer education workshop in December where they had hands on experience of how the Evolution Programme works in schools.

## Youth Information

During 2015, Youth Information provided a variety of services to young people and their parents covering topics such as CAO & grant applications, CV preparation, mock interviews and career guidance. Youth Information provided an information stand at the Annual Careers School Fair in October in the Kilkenny Ormonde Hotel, where over 1000 second level students visited throughout the day. Support was given to many young people in relation to college courses, work experience, driver theory tests. Students from Youthreach in Kilkenny enjoyed some meditation and yoga in Desart Hall and 12 students from Kilkenny City Vocational School participated in our Driver Education Programme.



# Summer programmes



## Healthy Lifestyles Bootcamp

This summer a group of young people from Kilkenny began their journey on a week long intensive bootcamp that saw them take on various challenges in a bid to be a happier, healthier person. The sun was shining on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August as Ossory Youth began our first ever "Teenage Healthy Lifestyles Bootcamp".

With a focus on healthy eating, physical challenges, energising workouts and relaxation we were physically challenged and motivated in a fun and exciting way. Each day started at 9am with a different style of exercise class, followed by a nutritious breakfast. This was followed by a local hike, walk or cycle in glorious sunshine!

Throughout the week the group reached the summit of Slieve na mBan, enjoyed the scenic route of the Bennetsbridge walk, the pretty and picturesque river view along the St Mullins walk and took on a challenging 40km cycle! It was a fantastic way of discovering local places of beauty and a first for many of the group.

The evenings were filled with interesting and delicious cookery demonstrations and nutritionist advice. This along with the tasty and healthy lunch and dinner freshly prepared each day, meant we were educated and gained a lot of knowledge on making healthier choices.

We finished each day with a relaxing yoga session, which really stretched out those sore muscles and left us feeling refreshed and motivated. A fantastic week of fitness, fresh food, adventure and fun.

A huge thank you to our volunteers, Miriam and Evan and to Kilkenny Leader Partnership and Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership for their support in making this bootcamp possible.

## Youth Leadership for Life

We ran a week long Leadership for Life training programme over the October mid-term break. This exciting programme enables young people to develop the skills and qualities of good leadership and challenges them to use these skills to improve society.

It was developed as a way of exploring vision and passion, and to enable young people to develop skills such as planning, decision making, critical thinking, goal setting and problem solving. Learning, listening, dreaming and working together, we aimed to unleash the potential of people's time, talent and treasure for the common good.

We also incorporated yoga with Moya Millie, Kilkenny and Ireland's youngest yoga instructor, mindfulness, first aid certified training, manual handling and fire safety certified training also. We finished the week off with an incredibly scary night out in Shankhill Castle at the Scarefest-not for the faint hearted!



*"I really enjoy the experience of being a young leader. I like helping out and doing various activities with the members. It's fun, but it's weird being a leader after being a member for years. I'm glad I took this opportunity" Sinead, Age 17*

## Young Music Makers Project

This summer, Desart Hall reverberated to the sounds of young musicians participating in the first ever "Young Music Makers Project". This was a ten week music performance and production programme with a three hour intensive workshop each week. 14 young people took part and it was facilitated by Kilkenny's own Jeremy Hickey, a.k.a R.S.A.G, who is a multi-instrumentalist and producer.

If the Beatles had Abbey Road studio, then our musicians had the Drawing Room in Desart Hall which became a pop-up music studio for one afternoon each week, as everything from drum kits to laptops almost magically materialised from Jeremy's Volkswagen Golf to create our very own studio.

Everyone arrived each day with their own instruments and they wrote, performed, recorded and produced their own original song. They also took a classic song from 1970, Sweet Jane by The Velvet Underground, and recorded and produced their own unique version. Over the ten weeks, every person contributed to the inspiring collaboration, and along the way gained a unique insight into the amazing world of music production, where every second of a final product has been refined along the way.



**Ossory Youth present the Futsal challenge**

The very first Futsal league in Kilkenny & Laois saw the final match being played on 22nd march 2015. With four teams from Castlecomer, Kilkenny City, Borris-in-Ossory and The Mill participating in the league that began in November 2014.

With the focus on fun, participation and competition, there were 4 rounds, each being hosted by one of the teams involved. Not only did the young people involved enjoy closely fought matches and re-matches, they also focused on the awareness campaign behind the Futsal League, "Show Racism the Red Card".



A fantastic event for a fantastic cause. Shane Burke, a volunteer with The Mill youth club, ensured the event ran smoothly. Here is what Shane had to say after the last round played in March 2015:

"So there we have it league champions are crowned! The Mill finished out a great first year of competition in the county's inaugural Futsal league, with a 7-4 victory in a winner takes all clash with Kilkenny City. The standard of football and sportsmanship was something to behold from both teams drawing great praise from both the FAI and spectators present.

A massive thank you to everyone involved from players to the coaches in the organising and running, as this league was run on a purely voluntary basis and each and everyone of you is a credit to your club. Also a special mention to the FAI development worker Darren Murray for his help and assistance."

*"As a member of the Castlecomer lads group, in 2015 the main programme I participated in was the futsal league. At the end there was a Kilkenny team selected to play a number of games against teams from other counties. The training for this was brilliant and it was great to play for a Kilkenny team." Dan, Age 18*

**Journalism & Media Group**

This summer we ran a very successful Journalism and media course at Ossory Youth. It comprised of 10 free weeks of media/journalism workshops where we delved into specific areas of interest in more detail i.e. two full weeks of animation & storyboarding with Cartoon Saloon.

We completed a mixture of medias. For the filming project we filmed 'Fearocious' - a vox pop on the streets of Kilkenny asking people about their biggest fears!. We learned how to record interviews in KCLR and we also made audio trailers for our film. Cartoon Saloon were amazing and we all animated balls bouncing and we got to see the amount of work that goes into every two seconds of animation. The Kilkenny People were on board giving us a full two page spread to write about issues that we wanted to discuss and teaching us some of the skills it takes to report. We showcased everything that was learned at the end to family and friends and received our certificates of completion.







*"The youth space has been particularly good for my eldest daughter who is quiet and shy. It gets her out of the house and she feels safe and comfortable there. It is a fabulous safe space to hang out, make friends, develop and grow"*

### RAK Week 2015

For Ossory Youth's Inaugural Random Acts of Kindness Week, which took place from April 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> to coincide with "Youth Work Ireland Week", a smile was certainly worth a thousand words! Elmo travelled all the way from Sesame Street to delight the public in the Castle Park and on High Street giving out hugs and lollipops and chatting to everyone and even posing for a few selfies. Elmo even got a group hug from a group of Spanish Students visiting the castle and he even managed to get a free hair cut courtesy of Marble City Barbers. All our youth club members, volunteers and staff joined in the fun of RAK week from buying coffee and buns for people to giving free hugs, flowers and chocolates. Life can be so busy for people so it was nice to spread a little happiness around the city and county.

We inspired and encouraged many others to get involved and we had RAK's happening all over Kilkenny in schools, workplaces, coffee shops and streets. The words spread and we even had some friends of Ossory Youth doing random acts of kindness in different corners of the world which made us smile, along with others.



Minnie Mouse, Mickey Mouse and Elmo made a very special visit to the children's ward of St Luke's Hospital during RAK week to say hello to all the children and staff there. I think Elmo was a big hit with the all the nurses!

Our first RAK week was a huge success thanks to all involved behind the scenes and to those who made huge efforts to do something special for someone. Here's to an even bigger RAK week in 2016.



### Mentoring Programme

The mentoring programme is where a young person gets one to one support. In 2012 we were finding that more and more young people were looking for an individual and supportive space to work things out. As an organisation, we felt we should provide another individual support that is different to the traditional counselling route for young people.

Individual mentoring as an approach has been widely used in youth organisations across the globe to give young people a chance to develop a relationship with an adult, separate from parents and teachers, who is simply just there to listen and offer friendly and supportive advice. Later that year following a process of research and consultation, the "Volunteer Mentoring Programme" was established. Since then, our decision to develop the programme has been vilified. Ossory Youth's mentoring programme has provided much needed support and guidance to thirty young people on a one to one basis. It has been successful due to the skill base and dedication of the current mentors.

*"As a mentor, I can have a positive impact on the life of a young person. It can really help someone transition through a period in their life when having someone to just talk to and have a laugh is vital. It might be something simple, like a game of pool ,or getting a hot chocolate, but we both decide what we want to do, which gives the young person a sense of control, something they might not have in everyday life."*



**COMPASS Garda Youth Diversion Project**

What another busy year for the project. It started with Paul, Dylan and Padraig getting stuck into the old staff canteen and library. They ripped out the old kitchen, the floor boards and were knee deep in paint for a few weeks. Thanks to Eugene Tallis, they got a 'hands on' experience in fitting a new kitchen and some plumbing and tiling and the end result is there for everyone to see. Fair play to you lads.

Along with the Friday youth café and a couple of youth clubs, we participated in a FAI 'Show Racism the Red Card' Futsol tournament over a few months and the participation of the lads was truly exceptional, under the captaincy of Paddy. We teamed up with Kilkenny City Vocational School over the summer to run a summer programme for 10 students and that was a huge success (and serious fun!). Thanks to John Cullinan for his help.

The 'Work to Learn' Programme continued this year where we managed to place 10 young people in part-time employment and most of them did extremely well. In total, we worked directly with over 50 young people and we managed this with the help of JLO Kieran Scanlon and Garda Aidan Fitzpatrick and our Project Committee. Thanks to everyone.

The year ended on a high when Dylan was nominated as Ireland's "Youth of the Year" by Youth Work Ireland. He was honoured with a private reception in Buckingham Palace with HRH Princess Anne. Very posh indeed! It was a huge honour for Dylan and Ossory Youth so well done to everyone involved and thanks to Patrick and the team in Youth Work Ireland for the opportunity. Finally, many young people took strides in improving their own circumstances, too numerous to mention here but you know who you are. Well done.



### Kilkenny Drugs Initiative & Functional Family Therapy

In 2015 the project worked with 82 individuals who are engaging in, or at risk of substance misuse and other related risky behaviour. This work was delivered through one to one support, Functional Family Therapy and group work depending on the needs of the clients concerned. Many of the KDI service users benefited from other supports available in Ossory Youth i.e. mentoring programme, the youth leadership course, 1st- 3rd year youth groups and Friday night youth cafe to name a few.

A brief analysis of the work of KDI is as follows:

- \* 72% of service users (incl principle service users in families) were male
- \* 62 % of service users (incl principle service users in families) were aged 18 or under
- \* The project worked with 20 families through functional family, up from 15 families in 2014
- \* In the majority of referrals alcohol was a factor in 60% of cases, cannabis/marijuana 50% and benzodiazepine 30%
- \* Group programmes were run on healthy lifestyle choices, archery and shooting and MMA

KDI also carried out awareness work with 5 schools (three secondary and two primary) in 2015 as well as running two community based awareness events.

### Connection Programme

Connection: Noun.person who aids another in achieving a goal. We currently have a lot of individual support programmes and group support. The Connection Programme means that once someone accesses our service or is referred, we can meet with them and the young person can avail of whichever programme is most suitable for them.



We would like to mention the sad passing of Mairead Moran, one of the sweetest fun-filled girls we were fortunate enough to encounter. We appreciate her parents Margo and Pete's thoughtful contribution towards the refurbishment of our library room, which was dedicated to the memory of Mairead. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

1997 - 2011



### Volunteer Training

In 2015, we trained 53 new volunteers.

The training calendar in 2015 included the following:

- Youth Club Volunteer Training
- Volunteer Assistant Training
- Mentoring Training
- First Aid Training
- Challenging Behaviour

We trained and certified 10 young people as part of the “Youth Leadership for Life” training in first aid, manual handling & fire safety & fire extinguisher training.



### Programme Promoters

Each youth club was invited to select two young people to take part in a training residential to be their clubs young leaders and programme promoters. It was important that those selected were energetic, enthusiastic and would motivate other youth club members. 11 young people set off on Wednesday 28th October at 9am to Kippure Adventure Centre, Wicklow.

The role of a programme promoter is to be a leader and a role model in their club. They will be members of the committee and sit in on planning and evaluation sessions. They will represent the views of their members, promote activities and encourage other members to get involved. They will also link in with their mentor in their club and Ossory Youth, to keep updated on what their club are doing and planning.



Upon arriving in Kippure we got settled into our accommodation, got some lunch and got stuck in, heading straight for the climbing and abseiling tower! If that wasn't enough to unsettle the recently devoured lasagne, then the leap of faith; a tall wobbly platform 30ft in the air with a giant leap to a suspended trapeze bar would do the trick! Things got really competitive then with the challenging low ropes course and archery. (There wasn't exactly a Robin Hood amongst us)

After dinner we started our first workshop, where we learned about team work and communication. We also worked on devising project/ activity ideas, planning and evaluating. The group used their new skills to work on ideas for their community

project. We all got wrapped up warm and headed on a night hike where we were told spooky ghost stories and explored the grounds of Kippure, all very scary at night!

The next morning after breakfast we began our second workshop. After more team challenges we learned about all the activities and projects that youth clubs can get involved with through Ossory Youth. Each club gave a presentation on their ideas for community projects. We were so impressed with the ideas, which were well thought out and would be fantastic additions to their community. We looked at what the programme promoters would need from their youth clubs to make their job easier and wrote articles about what each club was doing and planning.

After the evaluation was completed a very tired but happy group set off home to Ossory Youth.



### Diocese Support

We are grateful to the Diocese of Ossory and Bishop Freeman for the continued support through the provision of Desart Hall and part-funding. This support significantly contributes to the development and growth of our service to support young people to belong, to participate, to grow, reflect and to learn. In providing this service we promote in everything we do the values of respect for one-self and others.

# The Five National Outcomes



Better Outcomes Brighter Futures is the National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 to 2020.

Within this document the State identifies Five National Outcomes, which it, together with children, young people, family, community and services (statutory & voluntary) aspires to meet these outcomes for every child and young person in the country. So it is clear that everybody has a role and responsibility around this aspiration, and it is clear that in order to achieve we must work together accepting each others offer, expertise, strengths and limitations.

We have identified four organisational outcomes which insures Ossory Youth is contributing to the delivery of the Five National Outcomes for Children.

**Belonging:** Young people feel they belonged and have been a part of something greater than themselves. By addressing these needs young people feel safe and protected and have learned the transferable skills to continue to feel connected and respected throughout their lives.

**Esteem:** Young people feel they have a stronger sense of self as a result of their engagement. Through the development of these skills young people can continually progress their physical and emotional wellbeing throughout their lives.

**Cognitive:** Young people feel they have had the opportunity to learn and develop skills to use and apply knowledge. Through the development of these skills young people can achieve their full potential in all areas of their learning and development.

**Self-actualisation skills:** Young people feel they are better able to achieve what they want to achieve as a result of their engagement. Throughout the development of these skills young people can become equal participants in their society and contribute positively to their world.

We believe that these outcomes contribute significantly towards achieving the 5 National Outcomes, as well as complementing and supporting the work of other agencies & services.

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2015

OSSORY YOUTH SERVICE LIMITED

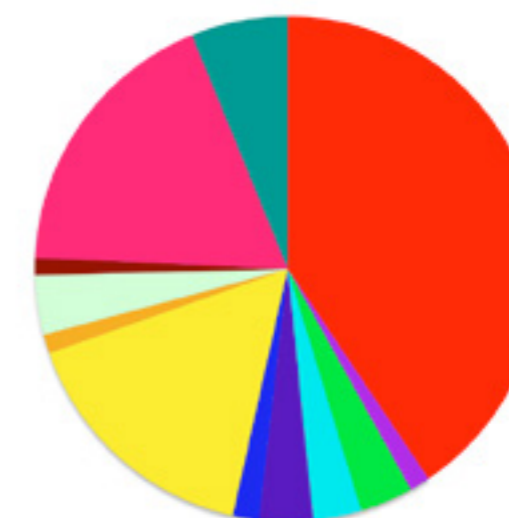
[A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING SHARE CAPITAL]

### ASSETS EMPLOYED

	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2015	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible Assets	€371,177	€325,894
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	€17,083	€9,741
Cash at Bank	€134,238	€153,224
	€151,321	€162,965
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
(Amounts Falling Due Within 1 Year)	(€78,798)	(€45,617)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>€72,523</b>	<b>€117,348</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>€443,700</b>	<b>€443,242</b>
<b>CAPITAL GRANTS DEFERRED</b>	<b>(€87,313)</b>	<b>(€57,052)</b>
<b>CREDITORS</b> (Amounts Falling Due After 1 Year)	<b>(€66,833)</b>	<b>(€82,483)</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>€289,504</b>	<b>€306,161</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED SURPLUS</b>	<b>€289,504</b>	<b>€306,161</b>
	€289,504	€306,161

On behalf of the Board **Ian Coulter** Director  
**Elizabeth Dermody** Director  
 Date: 25/05/2016

## INCOME



■ Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs 40.6%  
■ Programmes Income 1.3%  
■ Other 3.4%  
■ Management/ Admin Fees 3.1%  
■ Use of Facilities 3.4%  
■ State Street 1.7%  
■ Dept. of Justice, Equality, Law Reform 16.1%  
■ Kilkenny County Council 1.2%  
■ Diocese 3.8%  
■ Donations 1.1%  
■ Dept. of Health 18.1%  
■ Youth Service Grant 6.2%

## EXPENDITURE



■ Programme Costs 9.6%  
■ CCYPD 15.9%  
■ Youth Service Core Costs 20.6%  
■ YIC 5.8%  
■ GSP 10.0%  
■ KCCI 14.4%  
■ ROSP 10.6%  
■ CCSP 10.6%  
■ Other 2.5%



## OSSORY YOUTH STAFF

### Mary Mescal

Chief Executive Officer  
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### Phil Hennessy

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### Eilis Walklett

Youth Worker  
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## Sessional Workers

### Marie Power

### Mick Greene

### Shane Burke

### Mairead Coady

### Declan Wall

### Rebecca Carbery

## OSSORY YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

### DIRECTORS

- Padraig Fleming (Chairperson)
- Liz Dermody (Vice Chairperson)
- Ian Coulter (Treasurer)
- Louise McKenna
- Seamus Morrissey
- Brenda Whitely
- Treasa Forristal
- Ellen Lynch
- Fr. William Purcell



## FUNDERS 2015

- Department Of Children & Youth Affairs
- Irish Youth Justice Service (Inclusive Of ESF Funding)
- HSE
- Diocese of Ossory
- Statestreet
- ESB
- South East Regional Drugs Task Force
- Kilkenny Borough Council
- Kilkenny County Council
- KLP
- Kilkenny ETB





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