



**Welcome!**

Welcome to the first edition of the Westmeath Sports Partnership newsletter. The newsletter will be published on a twice-yearly basis as a means of keeping the community informed about sporting and physical activities in Westmeath.

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**WESTMEATH SPORTS PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER**

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**Background to Westmeath Sports Partnership**

Westmeath Sport Partnership is core funded by the Irish Sports Council and we work in conjunction with our local partner agencies in meeting our goals. The local partner agencies reflect the broad sports spectrum within the county. These agencies include: Westmeath County Council, Westmeath County Development Board, Westmeath VEC, HSE- Midland Area, Athlone Institute of Technology, Westmeath Community and Voluntary Forum, Disability Sector, Older People, Schools, Minority Sports, Water Sports, Soccer, Rugby, GAA, Community Games. Westmeath Sports Partnership is dedicated to the promotion and development of sports in County Westmeath. Our mission is to provide equal opportunity and access to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity in Westmeath.

**Our three main functions are:**

- Information** - To become a 'One Stop Shop' for information on sport in Westmeath.
- Education** - To provide quality opportunities for education and training at local level.
- Implementation** - To develop a strategic plan for sport in Westmeath.

**New website & Social Networking Sites**

Our newly updated website is now online and can be accessed at <http://www.westmeathsports.ie>.

Don't forget to register to receive our newsletters in Ezine format via email on our new website.

You can also join us on our Twitter and Facebook pages, both of these pages are updated regularly with information, courses and partnership events, links to both of these can be accessed on our website.

**Club Contact details**

To ensure our club contact database is up to date please check if your club contact details are correct on our website.

Any updates can be forwarded to [info@westmeathsports.ie](mailto:info@westmeathsports.ie).



**WESTMEATH SPORTS PARTNERSHIP**

Westmeath Sports Partnership has 3 full time staff which include:



**David Scally**  
Acting Cordinator



**Mary Duignan**  
Sports Inclusion  
Disability Officer



**Aoife McCormack**  
Administrator

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### National Bike Week – 14th June to 21st June 2009

Ireland's first National Bike Week was marked in Westmeath by a number of successful events. Through excellent cooperation from all members of the organising committee the week was a resounding success and culminated in the Town Centre Criterium. This event was made possible due to the cooperation and assistance of Westmeath County Council, Mullingar Town Council, Westmeath Tourism, Bord Failte, Mullingar Gardai, Civil Defence, Chamber of Commerce, Lakeside Wheelers and Westmeath Sports Partnership. We hope to build on the success of this event next year and Westmeath Sports Partnership would like to take this opportunity to thank all who helped in making the week long events possible.



### Bike Week Events

Other successful events held in Westmeath on National Bike Week included:

- Free Bike Checks available all week from Bike Shops throughout the county.
- Family Fun Cycle along the canal towpath on Sunday 14th June
- Underage Fun Cycle at Tudenham, Lough Ennell on Monday 15th June
- Bike to work day / Bike to school day
- Cyclesafe Roadshow in Kibeggan town square

### Cyclesafe

The Cyclesafe Programme sets out to teach primary school kids the skills of bike handling and road safety. The programme is rolled out to schools across the County and is aimed at 5th & 6th class students. Robbie Kenny as the Cyclesafe Instructor delivers the programme in the selected schools. The programme consists of four one-hour sessions over a four-week period. There are two hours of schoolyard based handling skills and two hours of on road safety skills. Bicycles and safety equipment are provided to all students without bikes, but those having their own bikes are encouraged to bring them along.

Since the programmes inception in May 2006, an average of 300 students receive training each year.



### Feet First

It is a new initiative of Westmeath Sports Partnership to get primary school children active and healthy. The basic motto is to put your Feet First and get active.

Some information on the programme:

- The programme is aimed at 4th to 6th class pupils.
- Children must nominate a parent/guardian to partake in daily physical activity with them.
- The programme promotes activity for children and shows the importance of parents in children's activities.
- The programme runs for 4 weeks, twenty stickers are available and if the child receives 15 or more they will get a t-shirt, each child will receive a certificate upon completion.



- The activity doesn't have to be in one 60/30 minute block and can be accumulated over the day.
- There are no set activities and the activity can be performed in school, the yard, at home, with parents etc.



### Discover Mullingar "The Sports Zone" Sunday 27th September

As part of the 'Discover Mullingar' event, Westmeath Sports Partnership are involved in the "Sports Zone". The event will be located at Loretto College grounds, Harbour Street. The "Sports Zone" will provide you with a fun-filled opportunity to see the variety of sporting activities available in the Mullingar Area, including: Karate, Basketball, Hockey, Volleyball, Boxing, Cycling, Cricket, Tennis, Badminton, GAA, Soccer, Rugby and more... Come along to Loretto College on Discover Mullingar Day and see the various sports in action, find out more about them from representatives that will be in attendance and maybe take the chance to try some of them out on the day. Guaranteed to be a fun-filled afternoon and perhaps a stepping-stone for some to sporting greatness – So don't miss it!! The "Sports Zone" will be open from 2pm and 5pm and will have various scheduled events throughout the afternoon.



### Sportshall Athletics

Through funding granted by NPAR, Westmeath Sports Partnership are introducing "Sportshall Athletics" to Westmeath. Initially the programme will be piloted in two schools and will subsequently be rolled out to primary schools, secondary schools and youth clubs across the County. George Bunner created Sportshall Athletics in the United Kingdom in 1976 to introduce young people to the joy of athletics. He recognised that training on dark winter nights was unappealing and often meant that many youngsters left athletics clubs over the winter and didn't return in the summer! However, he encouraged them to come back with inventions such as the Reversaboard which enabled athletes to strike and turn in the same movement and run in the opposite direction. Soon most athletic events were made possible within a sports hall environment. Sportshall Athletics emphasises the importance of team competition, fair play and the fact that taking part and trying your hardest is more important than winning.



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## Meet & Train

The 'Meet & Train' programme is up and running in Westmeath. The Mullingar group are meeting regularly and plans are in place for Kinnegad and Castlepollard. The Athlone group has been in existence since 2008 and is about to start again this September.

The aim of the Meet & Train programme is to encourage an improved fitness for all involved, incorporating this into a social environment. Any level of fitness is welcome as we separate into groups depending on the abilities present. So if you're a walker, you join the walking group, likewise if you are a runner, there will be a running group for you. We will try to tailor the groups for all those present, so no matter how fit or unfit you think you are there will be a group there for you!

Check out our website for further information on Meet & Train groups in your area.

## Buntús

Buntús is an initiative of the Irish Sports Council which is delivered and supported by the Local Sports Partnership network. Buntús Programmes are developed to support teachers and childcare practitioners in introducing young people to sport and physical activity.

All Buntús programmes offer:

- A large resource pack of equipment.
- Resource cards that offer a range of skill developmental and fun activities.
- Training to assist teachers (Buntús Play, Sport & Sports Specific) and childcare practitioners (Buntús Start) implement the programme.

The three key components of the programme are designed to provide easy to understand, and accessible support to give children a fun, but high quality, introduction to sport and physical activity.

**Buntús Start** is a comprehensive child centred physical activity programme for children aged 2-5 years old. It has been designed for use in pre-school settings to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for young children to develop their fundamental motor skills, manipulative skills, co-ordination, balancing skills and develop a positive attitude to physical activity.

**Buntús Play and Sport** complement the games strand of the Physical Education curriculum in primary schools and is offered to all primary schools and special needs schools. Buntús Play and Sport are designed to give children a fun, but high quality, introduction to sport and physical activity. The programmes help develop fundamental skills such as sending, receiving and travelling with a ball to engage in game like situations which include running, dodging, chasing and exploiting space.

The Irish Sports Council has linked with the FAI, IRFU, Badminton Ireland, Junior Golf Ireland and Basketball Ireland to deliver the Buntús Sports Specific Programmes to primary and special needs schools. The training is provided by the Regional Development Officers from the National Governing Bodies and specially trained Buntús tutors.



## Sports Inclusion Disability Programme

The Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) Mary Duignan works towards increasing participation by people with a disability in sport and active recreation through working in partnership with all stakeholders. This aim is achieved by:

- Establishing new and sustainable clubs
- Linking with local disability organisations around the assessment of needs and provision of opportunities for people with disabilities
- Promoting the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity
- Communicating with all relevant disability sports organisations to enhance participation at local, regional and national level
- Creating effective working partnerships with sport bodies to encourage greater opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in physical activity



## Midlands United Power Soccer Club

Having just been established in February of this year, Midlands United Power Soccer Club has already made its stamp on the Irish sporting scene by becoming the National Champions of Power Soccer. The club was founded this year under the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme which is implemented by the Sports Partnerships and funded by Dormant Accounts. The club is a joint initiative of Westmeath and Offaly Sports Inclusion Disability Officers, Mary Duignan (Westmeath) and Claire Grehan (Offaly). The club consists of players from Westmeath and Offaly. There is no age restriction on players and as power soccer is unisex by design, male and female participants are often on the same team as well as opposing sides. While there isn't actually a home venue as such for the club, due to players being drawn from both Westmeath and Offaly, the club rotates the venue for training to be fair to all players. The three venues used for training are Rahan Community Hall, Tullamore, Moate Community Hall, Moate and The Downs GAA in Mullingar. The club trains every Thursday from 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

### The Players and the Coaches

Vincent Devery, Mary Duignan and Claire Grehan manage the team. The team includes Stephen Devery (captain); Dani Weldon (vice-captain); Emmett Daly; Aisling McElligott; Stephen Seery and Jon McGovern.

### Reception to Celebrate Leinster & National Success

There was a tremendous turnout for the reception held at The Downs GAA Clubhouse for Midlands United Power Soccer Club to celebrate their success in winning both Leinster and National titles in Power Soccer. Family, friends and well wishers gathered to celebrate the national success of a club, which has only recently come into existence.

On the night players were presented with a photographic memento of their achievement presented to them by various Sports Partnership Staff and Board. Both the players and the Sports Partnership would like to extend their gratitude to those who turned up on the night to lend their support and goodwill.

## Boccia

The Boccia Programme is open to all centre's who cater for people with disabilities in Westmeath. The programme is delivered within each centre and involves staff been trained in the new activity. The programme provides service users with the opportunity to participate in a new sport at recreational and competitive level. Each service provider must commit to having a minimum of two staff trained in the activity and also has to appoint a Boccia Co-ordinator. On completion of the programme each centre receives a grant to put towards the purchase of a Boccia Set. The set has to be used on a weekly basis, and included in the timetable of the centre.



A Boccia League was developed for National Learning Network/Rehab Care Centres in Westmeath and Offaly and implemented by the Sports Inclusion Disability Officers of Westmeath/Offaly Sports Partnership. This provided each centre with the opportunity to compete against other teams within Westmeath and Offaly. The league is run on a round robin system, allowing each team to accumulate points and hopefully make it to the finals. Over 100 participants participated in the league. Due to the success of the league last year, the Boccia League will run again this year. National Learning Network/Rehab Care Centres in Westmeath and Offaly have resumed training for the Boccia League, as the first round of the league is due to commence in October.

## Football for All

The Football for All Programme was set up to introduce and develop soccer skills for people with intellectual disabilities in Westmeath. Twenty-five service users from Mullingar Resource Centre participated in the programme. The programme was rolled out over the summer in Mullingar Town Pitch. Sessions were held every Wednesday from 2.30pm to 4pm. The programme was delivered by the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer with the support of the Westmeath FAI Development Officer. Westmeath Sports Partnership would like to take this opportunity to thank Mullingar Town Club for use of the pitch and also Mullingar Resource Centre service providers and service users for their commitment to the programme.



## Tandem Cycling

Through the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme implemented by the Sports Partnership, Tandem Cycling sessions for people with visual impairments commenced in July with the support of NCBI. Sessions are held every Tuesday in Tudenham, Mullingar from 7pm to 8.30pm. Participants are given the opportunity to experience cycling/tandem cycling. Tandem cycling is a great way for people of different abilities to cycle together. Westmeath Sports Partnership would like to thank NCBI and all the volunteers for their continued support to the programme and their help in making sessions as fun and enjoyable for all involved.



If you require further information on any programme implemented by the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, or would like to get involved either as a participant or volunteer, please contact: Mary Duignan on 044 939 4018 or [mary@westmeathsports.ie](mailto:mary@westmeathsports.ie).

## COURSES AVAILABLE

### Code of Ethics - Child Welfare & Protection in Sport Awareness Training

Westmeath Sports Partnership offers a four hour basic awareness course to all those over the age of 18 years. 'The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport' in Ireland is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in sport. It is a practical set of guidelines for those involved in sport for young people. This course highlights the main principles of the Code and looks at measures that clubs can take to create and maintain the safest possible environment for young people. As well as undertaking child protection training, all clubs and organisations are encouraged to adopt child protection policies and procedures as outlined in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

### Code of Ethics - Club Children's Officer Training

The Club Children's Officer Workshop is a follow on from the 'Child Welfare & Protection in Sport Awareness Training'. It is six hours in duration and participants must have completed the above Awareness Training six months prior to attending this workshop. The Irish Sports Council recommends that every club involved with children and young people should appoint a Children's Officer. Only one club member needs to train as a Children's Officer, or in clubs with boys and girls it is suggested that one male and one female become Children's Officers. The Children's Officer should be child centered in focus and should have as their primary aim the establishment of a child centered ethos within the club. They are the link between the children and the adults in the club and also take responsibility for monitoring and reporting to the Club Management Committee on how club policy etc. impacts on children and their Sports Leaders.

### Defibrillator Training

Anybody who wishes to learn how to operate an Automated External Defibrillator(AED) and how to perform CPR can attend this training course. Prior first aid training is not necessary. Candidates learn how to recognise the signs and symptoms of Cardiac Arrest and Choking. Upon course completion candidates will be fully competent in the operation of an AED, Adult CPR, and the treatment of a choking patient. The course is delivered over four hours.

### Sports First Aid

This course aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement an effective sports injury prevention programme and give competent first aid to the ill or injured until medical aid arrives in a sporting environment.

### Slí na Sláinte Walker Leader Training

Leader training is aimed at people wishing to promote walking in their community or work place. The course covers all aspects of motivating people to take up walking as well as planning and leading safe, enjoyable, health enhancing walking sessions for small groups. The Irish Heart Foundation is subsidising the Walking Leader training weekends and there is a nominal cost of €80. This cost covers two nights shared accommodation as well as breakfast, lunch and coffee breaks. It will also cover tutor costs and course materials.

### Committee Skills Workshop

This practical workshop is designed for new and existing committee volunteers who want to achieve a successful outcome and a positive working relationship on the committees they engage in. The course covers items such as: what contributes to an effective and efficient committee meeting, the different roles on a committee including the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, the legal implications of serving on a voluntary committee including 'reasonableness', recordkeeping and financial accounts, understanding group dynamics and managing conflict to achieve a constructive conclusion to discussions.

### Funding Workshop

The purpose of this workshop is to assist local sports clubs and community groups in putting together effective applications for various funding streams. It will also look at ways and means to run fundraising events.