

**PRESS RELEASE 30th October 2023**

**Minister Heather Humphreys salutes Enniscorthy Community at launch of new Geodesic Dome Training Centre and Sensory Garden**

Minister Heather Humphreys, of the Department of Rural and Community Development, attended the launch of Enniscorthy Community Allotment’s Geodesic Training Dome and Sensory Gardenon Thursday 26th October.

This event was part of the Community Recognition Fund and Sláintecare Healthy Communities programmes; delivered by Wexford County Council and funded by the Departments of Rural and Community Development, and the Department of Health, supporting local communities in County Wexford.

The design of the Geodesic Dome and Sensory Garden are spaces for the local community to train and learn about new horticultural methods; the future of sustainability, healthy food products and growing a sense of increased mental health and green communities, through the environment.

The Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Cllr. John Fleming, thanked Chairman Michael Devereux, the Enniscorthy Community Allotments Committee, the shareholders, workers, volunteers and the local community, for the hard work in achieving such an extraordinary and unique project for Enniscorthy.

Cllr. John Flemingnoted, “The Enniscorthy Community Allotments are a model for sustainability and connecting with nature; for encouraging growth and wellbeing, in both the natural world and within ourselves. Looking out at the wonderful horticultural allotments, I am sure the Minister is delighted to see and taste the literal fruits of the funding, here this morning.”.

Speaking while in Enniscorthy, Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD said:

“I want to pay tribute to the Enniscorthy Community Allotments for working closely with the local authority in delivering this wonderful project.

The dome will serve as a training centre and green community and will become a growing space for learning about food production.

This is fantastic as we all aim to become more sustainable and more environmentally conscious.”

The Minister continued:

“Projects like this one here in Enniscorthy, and the thousands of others funded by my Department of Rural and Community Development, are empowering rural towns and villages to be better places in which to live and work and raise a family.

This funding is also making them more inviting places for both domestic and international tourists to enjoy.”

Michael Devereux said "the ECA goes beyond being a community garden by creating an inclusive environment that welcomes individuals of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities. We as adults must lay the foundations for the next generation and remove the burdens of life's anxieties. To plant a garden is to believe in a tomorrow".

Laura Cassin, of SETU and Kildalton Agricultural College noted the involvement of students from Kildalton College who were responsible for the design of the sensory garden. She welcomed the initiative saying “'this was a fantastic opportunity for students to learn from and engage with a community project which I would hope to see more of in future.”

**ENDS**

**Notes for the Editor:**

1. **Sláintecare Healthy Communities**

Launched nationally in October 2021, the Sláintecare Healthy Communities €13M fund is a cross-government initiative to deliver increased health and wellbeing services to 19 community areas across Ireland. While funded nationally by the Department of Health and managed locally by Wexford County Council and the HSE, there are many other community partners actively involved, drawn from state and voluntary agencies, as well as local community groups, family resource centres, sports organisations, schools, Arts and cultural bodies.

The Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme seeks to support members of these communities to address their wellbeing through individual and groups supports, as well as engaging with the community to enhance the environment and other social factors. This can be done through community-wide involvement in health and wellbeing promotion - from individuals making positive lifestyle choices and projects run by community and local groups, to local and national policies integrating a health and wellbeing approach at all levels.

The Sensory Garden at the Enniscorthy Community Allotments is a great example of one such initiative and was developed in consultation with members of the community allotment.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/slaintecare-healthy-communities/>

<https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/community/healthy-wexford>

1. **The Community Recognition Fund**

The Geodesic Dome Training Centre was supported by The Community Recognition Fund 2023, through the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The fund aims to support the development of new infrastructure and facilities, in recognition of the local contribution being made by communities, across the country, in welcoming and hosting new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries, in a spirit of inclusion and integration. The funding has been specifically targeted at projects like The Enniscorthy Community Allotments that will be used by all members of the community.

€50 million was made available nationally under the Fund, with approximately €1.5M allocated to 27no. projects across County Wexford; with 5no. community projects being supported in the Enniscorthy Municipal District alone.

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