

# Funding Announcement to coincide with International Day of Older Persons

**Media Release Embargo:** 6am, Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2021

## **Age Friendly Ireland, Creative Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development launch a new initiative to combat isolation and preserve the social history of small communities throughout Ireland.**

To mark the UN International Day of the Older Person, Age Friendly Ireland in partnership with Creative Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development will launch The National Community Time Machine.

This age-friendly cross-generational community building project will be delivered by Neighbourhood Network and is designed to connect young people with their older neighbours through a series of facilitated interviews, art projects and photography.

Working together, the two generations will create a picture of what their communities looked like in the past and how they have changed. From these engagements an exhibition website will be created to house the conversations had and pictures from each project of their participants.

The interviews and pictures will also be added to a community time capsule and sealed for 10 years so that an important archive of social change will be preserved for generations to come.

The project was successfully piloted last year in Wicklow, during the height of the pandemic, and became a vehicle to combat isolation and create social cohesion within communities. It is currently being delivered in Meath, Monaghan, Clare and Westmeath.

To date the response has been wonderful. Early findings indicate that small Irish communities have proved to be surprisingly resilient in the face of the global health crisis. Stories of communities working together to protect and sustain their vulnerable older people have emerged along with an abiding love for home.

This year with additional support from Age Friendly Ireland, Creative Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development, Neighbourhood Network will be able to roll out The Community Time Machine to more communities around the country. Some of the areas looking forward to participating are DunLaoghaire | Rathdown, Cavan, Donegal and Kilkenny.

In each participating Local Authority area, 5 communities will be engaged to take part. Over a four month period a voluntary community organiser will oversee and facilitate 5 young people being paired with 5 older people in their community to work on this project together and develop community connections and help to build sustainable relationships.

Louise Curran, a Community Organiser in the Wicklow Time Machine, spoke of her experience on the project "It has been a delight to see this project evolve – the connections strengthened between generations with the wonderful stories being told. I am also grateful to the project for giving me another way of offering senior members of a community a means to show their significance in society. My lockdown experience has been deeply enriched by these kind and loving souls."

Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media said, 'The Creative Ireland Programme is proud to support the work of Neighbourhood Network in developing this project that empowers communities, offers support and friendship to our older people and turns residents into citizen researchers with a creative way'.

The Community Time Machine project is an excellent and Covid-safe way to engage with older people. It is particularly timely that it is planned to start in the autumn, as it will bring a sense of joy and foster community connections during the darker months of the year. Speaking about the project, Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer of Age Friendly Ireland said "Age Friendly Ireland are delighted to collaborate with our colleagues in Department of Rural & Community Development, Creative Ireland and Neighbourhood Network to deliver this wonderful project across a number of participating local authority led age friendly programme areas with our Older Peoples Councils. Such initiatives are enabling us to realise the vision of an Age Friendly Ireland as set out in this Government's Programme for Government | Our Shared Future"

Welcoming the initiative, Joe O'Brien, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development with special responsibility for Community Development and Charities said "this project helps to connect generations in a safe environment. We have seen the importance of community engagement over the past 18 months particularly in tackling social isolation. As we recover and reopen from COVID19, initiatives like the Community Time Machine encourage social inclusion across generations, bringing communities closer together and supporting well-being for all".

As of today, Friday 1st October, The National Time Machine Project has officially launched online, and the Wicklow gallery is available to view at [timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie](http://timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie).

Ends.

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For more information on the project and how to get involved in your county, visit [timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie](http://timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie)

**Note to Editor**

Neighbourhood Network is an Irish not-for-profit organisation which aims to promote social inclusion, tackle loneliness and build supportive and resilient neighbourhoods around Ireland. Our work creates communities of empowered people, with a strong sense of local identity, and builds empathy and understanding between neighbours. We are the people behind Street Feast, the national day of community celebrations. We've been in operation for over 10 years, running creative campaigns and

projects that help to build community. President Michael D Higgins is our patron.

<https://neighbourhoodnetwork.ie/>

Media:

10 minute documentary piece about the Time Machine featured on Lyric FM

<https://www.rte.ie/culture/2021/0628/1231811-inside-the-community-time-machine-golden-opportunities/>

Press quality photos (All photos by photographer Madeline Mulqueen unless stated otherwise):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16mwNMDrikFz0CycntCoDsFeR2nNmrK2F>



Dorothy Hutson, Bray Co. Wicklow by Madeline Mulqueen



Mary Lionain and Méabh Ní Dubhlaing, Arklow Co. Wicklow, by Madeline Mulqueen



Sheila Cleary and Hannah Gerlitz, Bray Co. Wicklow by Madeline Mulqueen



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