

our shared plate

community newsletter

a neighbourhood network initiative

old ardnacassa



On *Sunday the 26th of May* [Our Shared Plate](#) hosted a 'Street Feast' or street party with food sharing in Old Ardnacassa estate in Longford town. This was the first OSP community engagement event in this estate, and it was quite a success. The event took place on a relatively large green space on Ardnacassa Lawns in the estate. We shared food and stories, gathered information for research on the food landscape, and got feedback about the kinds of projects residents were interested in. Although the weather was less than ideal, with heavy rain showers throughout the day, the turn-out was quite

high, with around 50 people in attendance throughout the day, including adults and children.



The resident's association set up a large tent at the front of the green, with a few tables full of food both inside and outside of the tent. There was a large circle of chairs outside the tent. Between showers, there was a planting workshop and sharing of aloe vera plants, a community mapping table, and opportunities for residents to provide feedback in postcards and posters, and volunteer for participating in the Food Diaries project.



community mapping

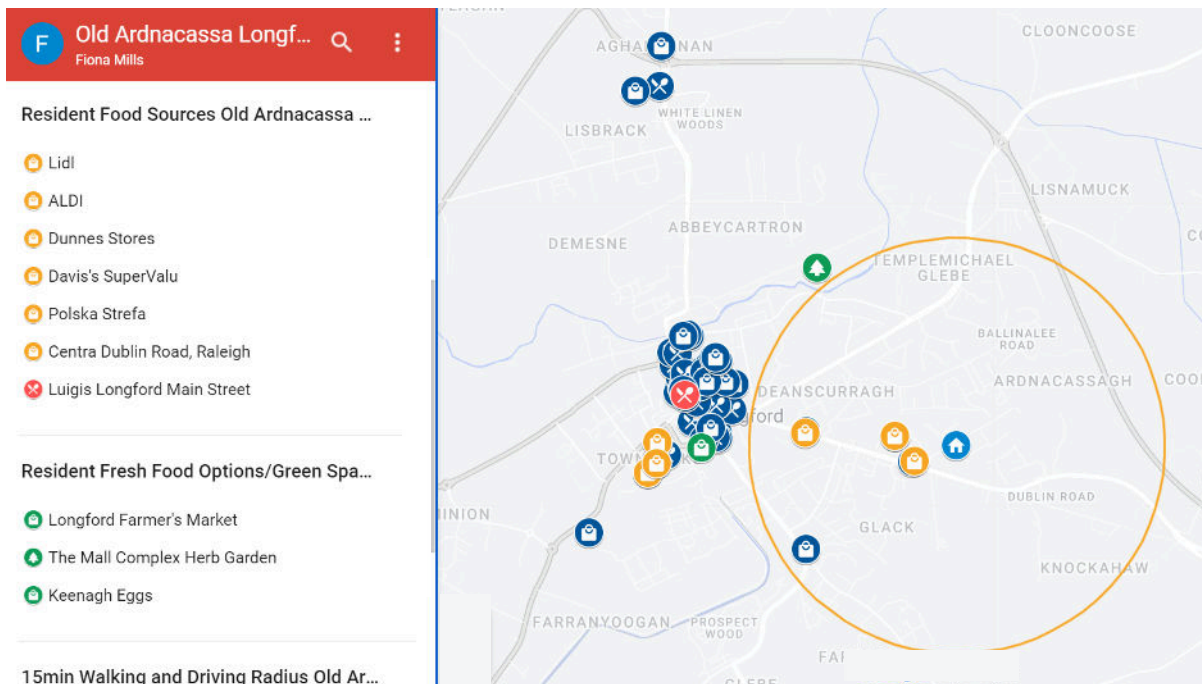
The research team from Maynooth University Department of Geography were there to gather some information about food access and sustainability in the estate. The team set up a table with a map of Longford town, so that people could mark in the different places and shops where they get their food (mostly Dunnes, Lidl, and Aldi), as well as any food resources that might be unknown to google maps.



The community mapping worked quite well, and we got a good amount of information about local sustainable initiatives, green spaces and shops. The overall food landscape was varied, and the majority of people seemed happy with their selection of food sources.

You can view the map on Google using the URL:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=19rSCnbNf3b8Lfu_NSL2auLe9Vvenk-4&ll=53.728791478319096%2C-7.795181890381244&z=14 (map by MA Geography student Lucy Dunne, updated by BA Geography student Fiona Mills).



Old Ardnacassa food audit map

Showing Old Ardnacassa residents' food options within a 1 km/15 min walking distance:

- Blue home = Neighbourhood Location
- Green = Resident Fresh Food Options/Green spaces
- Orange = Resident Food shops
- Red = Resident Restaurants and Takeaways
- Dark blue = Food sources not noted by residents

Residents also shared local knowledge about sustainable initiatives and places to get fresh fruit and vegetables were discussed. Some examples included:

fresh food options:

Farmer's Market

Takes place in Longford town every Friday morning. Stalls are mainly farmers selling local fruit and veg, as well as fresh fish. It was mentioned by a few that prices are reasonable and it can be cheaper than supermarkets.

Keenagh Eggs

A local farm that sells free range eggs, using an honesty box system. They sell produce at the Friday farmer's market also. The farm is a 10-minute drive from the neighbourhood, located between Keenagh and Ballymahon.

Herb Garden at the Mall Complex

This is a community herb garden in the town which is run by two local secondary schools.

The Polish Shop

Fresh fruit and vegetables are sold here, often with less packaging than big supermarkets.

suggestions



The community had a lot of different ideas for the types of events and projects around growing, sharing and eating food. The Our Shared Plate team set up a posterboard where residents could use stickers to vote for different ideas. The most popular ended up being an edible hedge, fruit trees, and raised beds and growing plan. These suggestions for growing food locally were supported by the community mapping event as well, in which residents indicated that overall, there are few communal growing spaces nearby.



We also got several additional **suggestions from the community**, both in conversation and from the postcard questionnaires, including:

- Edible hedge
- Herb garden
- Planting day
- International food day
- Cooking workshops
- Raised beds
- Fruit trees
- Poly tunnels
- Sharing gardening skills
- Bug hotel
- Bird feeder
- Small group workshops could be held in someone's house
- Sharing leftover food with neighbours

food diaries

The Maynooth Geography research team also asked for volunteers to contribute to an online diary about everyday food practices. Anyone taking part records what their household eats in a week, where they go shopping, and what happens to the waste. It is completely anonymous, and residents taking part do not have to record every single day meticulously. People can upload photographs of their meals or grocery receipts, and/or respond to some quick questions online. At the event in Old Ardnacassa, people volunteering for the food diary went through an intake form with a series of questions about food shopping, cooking, eating and waste.

A good few people signed up, but we'd love more volunteers! If you are interested in participating, let Michelle at Our Shared Plate know by emailing her at: michelle@neighbourhoodnetwork.ie.

Together with the community, we can study the food landscape in the estate and support some of the initiatives suggested. There was a lot to be learnt, and hopefully through future events, along with the food diaries, we will gain a greater insight into how we can work together to make Old Ardnacassa a more sustainable community.

planning with Dee

On *11 June*, Our Shared Plate team members met with horticulturist, Dee Sewell, to consider community suggestions and evaluate what is possible in the different spaces in the estate. Some practical issues were raised by the community about the quality of the ground for certain types of growing projects. The biggest green space in the estate has severe drainage issues, and much of the green is very marshy. Despite it being a popular option, it was noted that fruit trees might be susceptible to their roots rotting because of the wet soil. Dee noted that planting other trees that like wet environments (such as willow, alder and birch) to soak up moisture might make fruit trees possible in the future however! For the OSP project, other options, like an edible hedge or raised beds, depending on where they are placed, could also work well in this neighbourhood. Residents will be consulted about any growing plans for the neighbourhood before these are finalised.





planting with Aoife

On June 18th, on the green on Ardnacassa Lawns, a children's planting workshop took place. It was run by horticulturist Aoife Munn, who taught children how to make small plant pots out of newspaper and how to plant seeds in them.



At this event, there was also a clay-making workshop, where children made their own schoolbag key chains.



This event was a great opportunity to meet with residents and discuss plans for growing and sharing food in the community.



supporting neighbourhoods to **grow**, **cook** and **eat** together.

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