

# The Skerries Community Association

## Annual Pre-AGM Flyer: Our Year in Review

The Skerries Community Association CLG,  
c/o Skerries Community Centre, Dublin  
Road, Skerries K34K377  
Affiliated to Muintir na Tíre,  
which is a registered charity CHY 6865  
**SKERRIESCA.COM**  
**info@skerriesca.com**



June 2024

### The SCA - Many Parts, One Association by Jane Landy, Chair



Welcome to the 2024 SCA Flyer! We are sending this out just before our **Annual General Meeting on Thursday 13 June, 8 pm, in the Little Theatre**, to which you all are invited.

For those who may not be aware of it, the **Skerries Community Association (SCA)** is a not-for-profit company, consisting of nine groups (eight committees and a board of directors) who all work together for Skerries. Our common goal is to make Skerries – already a wonderful place – even better.

The association has two core values: **sustainability** and **inclusion**. Our work covers a wide range of activities and projects, which gives us many opportunities to embrace these values.

There are about 100 volunteers involved in the running of the association through its nine core groups (its committees and its Board of Directors). And that doesn't even include the many others who help out on work parties, at events and so on, nor the Community Centre staff.

That is a lot of people, a lot meetings, minutes, emails, time and energy. And when you read this flyer, you will get an idea of the results of all of this effort and commitment.

Over the next few years, we want to develop our sense of being one commu-

nity association as well as a collection of groups with their own remits. Two examples of where our groups currently combine effort include:

- SAFT (Skerries Autism Friendly Town) and the Community Centre work together to organise monthly **autism-friendly events** for children and an annual Family Day in July.
- Sustainable Skerries is planning the second **Skerries Eco Festival** in September, with the involvement of Skerries Tidy Towns, the Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative, Skerries Cycling Initiative, the Community Centre and the Board of Directors.



#### The SCA board of directors

The company as a whole is overseen by our board of directors. (A full list is on p.2.) We are delighted to welcome Paul Walsh who has recently joined us. This brings us to a total of 15 board members. We wish to recruit a **director of communications** so please get in touch if you might be interested.

#### Skerries Community Association Annual General Meeting 2024:

See who we are & what we have done! **Thursday 13 June 2024, 8 p.m., Little Theatre, Skerries Community Centre**

The official Notification for AGM 2024 and the audited accounts for 2023 are available on the SCA website at **skerriesca.com/category/news**  
No need to register, just come along!

The board's duties include setting strategic direction, ensuring good governance, supporting our committees, liaising with public bodies, eg Fingal County Council (FCC), and protecting the assets of the company. Two directors regularly attend FCC's Skerries Community Liaison Committee to lobby for local works, amenities and services. We also carry out our own projects at board level, such as our current accessibility survey of town centre premises.


#### Upgrades and renewals

In 2023, we invested in our assets to the tune of over €200k. Next time you are at the Community Centre, you can see the new modular building at the side of the Old School and the solar panels on the roof of the Centre.



# The Skerries Community Association










Step inside the Centre and admire the redecorated reception area and main corridor. Also notice the newly refurbished **All Weather Pitch**, owned by Fingal County Council, who funded the upgrade. Next on the list of upgrades will be the tennis courts. A full refurbishment, including installing energy saving LED lights, is planned for the autumn.

### Congratulations!

A special word of congratulations to **Skerries Town Twinning** who are celebrating **30 years** of twinning with Guichen in France! A visit from our French friends with a programme of events is planned for Heritage Week at the end of August.

We have just heard that Fingal County Council has nominated **Sustainable Skerries** in the Climate Action and Biodiversity Category for the 2024 **Pride of Place Awards**. This is a very prestigious all-island competition that acknowledges and celebrates the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland. Well done and best of luck, Sustainable Skerries!

### Get involved

If you would consider joining us as a communications director or if you would like to get involved in any of our activities, please email us:

[info@skerriesca.com](mailto:info@skerriesca.com)

At a minimum please

**join as a member of the association**  
(open to all Skerries residents over 18)

and **sign up for the near-daily community newsflash email**  
(no charge for either).

See [skerriesca.com](http://skerriesca.com)  
for details on both.

### Thank you!

A huge thanks to all my co-directors, especially to our company secretary Aoife Malone and to our treasurer Mary Conway.

To all of our committee members, staff of the Community Centre and the other volunteers who help us (Máire Jones for the website and accessibility survey, Sabine McKenna for the layout of this flyer, and Dee Langton for the newsflash) – a huge and heartfelt thank you!

Hoping to see you at our AGM,



Jane Landy, Chair, SCA

## The current SCA Directors

*Officers first, then in alphabetical order by first name:*

- **Jane Landy (Chair):** SCA Finance Working Group; Skerries Community Liaison Cttee (SCLC) Rep
- **Aoife Malone (Company Secretary):** Governance Policy Review
- **Mary Conway (Treasurer):** Skerries Tidy Towns; Skerries Age Friendly Town; SCA Finance WG; Online Banking Admin
- **Breda Shankey** (Deputy Chair, Minutes Secretary): SCLC Rep
- **Brendan Friel**, Skerries Town Twinning; SCA Finance WG
- **Brendan Sherlock**, Age Friendly Skerries; Fingal Public Participation Network
- **Bríd Grimes** (Deputy Treasurer): SCA Communications WG; SCA Finance Working Group
- **Eithne O'Connell**, Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative
- **Eric Byrne**, Skerries Community Centre Board of Management
- **Ger O'Mahony**, Skerries Autism Friendly Town
- **Helen Scullion**, Sustainable Skerries; SCA Communications WG
- **John Coleman**, Town Twinning
- **Michael McKenna** (SCA Finance Working Group & Online Banking Admin); Skerries Cycling Initiative
- **Paul Walsh** (co-opted 2024), Governance Policy Review
- **Shay Fanning**, Chair of the Skerries Community Centre Board of Management



## The Skerries Community Liaison Committee (SCLC)

Two reps from the SCA Board of Directors attend the quarterly meetings of the **SCLC**. This consists of other groups (Tidy Towns, Prosper Fingal, Skerries Business Association, Skerries Tourism, Loughshinny Community Association), local councillors and staff from the Fingal County Council Operations department.

This opportunity to meet face to face has been invaluable over the years for our SCA groups. We learn about plans for Skerries and can give our input, which is often taken on board, for example the recent installation of **lights in the Mills carpark**.

We represent our **sea swimmers**, seeking improvement to facilities and have got an increase in the frequency of power cleaning of the Captains and Springers and new composite seating in the Captains (see picture above). With the support of FCC, we have applied for ORIS (Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme) funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development for more big ticket upgrades to these areas.

- SCA SCLC Representatives: Breda Shankey, Jane Landy



**Age Friendly Skerries** is part of Fingal Older Peoples Council which feeds into Fingal Age Friendly Alliance. In turn, all of the above feed into Age Friendly Ireland. Age Friendly comes under the WHO (World Health Organization). You can learn more about Age Friendly Ireland on [agefriendlyireland.ie](http://agefriendlyireland.ie).

- Age Friendly Skerries contact: Brendan Sherlock
- [info@skerriesca.com](mailto:info@skerriesca.com)

## We are online

- [SkerriesCA.com](http://SkerriesCA.com)
- [SkerriesCommunityCentre.ie](http://SkerriesCommunityCentre.ie)
- [SkerriesTwinning.ie](http://SkerriesTwinning.ie)
- [SustainableSkerries.com](http://SustainableSkerries.com)
- [SkerriesAutismFriendly.ie](http://SkerriesAutismFriendly.ie)

### Follow us on Social Media!

- Skerries Autism Friendly Town 
- Skerries Community Association 
- Skerries Community Centre 
- Skerries Cycling Initiative 
- Skerries Tidy Towns 
- Skerries Town Twinning 
- Skerries Sust. Energy Community 
- Sustainable Skerries   



### Skerries Community Centre Ionad Pobail na Sceirí

The **Skerries Community Centre** is finally getting over the effects of covid and back in full swing. The Centre is almost at full capacity with over 50 groups. We are happy to welcome back all our long-time groups, and new users where time slots are available. Here are some of our accomplishments during the year:

- New solar panels and heat pumps on the main building, which helps with environment and finances.
- A purpose-built modular building has replaced the old prefab. It houses a Montessori and afterschool. Plans are in progress for evening use.
- Extensive work was carried out on the all-weather pitch, financed by Fingal County Council and the AWP pitch sinking fund: Raising of the ground, new carpet and upgrading of the flood flights.
- The refurbishment of the reception area and corridor in the main building is a work in progress and so far has been well received.



#### Future Plans

- Getting the old school roof completely overhauled and insulated.
- Replacing the antiquated heating system with a more environmentally friendly system.
- Upgrading of the surface of the tennis courts and lights.

Shay Fanning, Chairperson,  
BoM Skerries Community Centre



**Skerries Autism Friendly Town** (SAFT) is a community-based committee whose purpose is to make the town of Skerries a more inclusive environment for Autistic children and their families.

2023 was another exceptionally busy and rewarding year for our committee. We managed to deliver and enhance several activities for children and young adults which have been up and running for several years now. These activities include events such as ‘Skerries Sailing for All’ in partnership with Skerries Sailing Club and ‘Sensory Santa’ in partnership with Skerries Mills.



In January 2023 we received the **Community Engagement & Inclusivity Award** from AsIAM, Ireland's Autism Charity. This is a powerful validation of the work of the committee and was a massive endorsement of the wonderful community spirit in Skerries. Another partnership event took place in July: The **Skerries Community Centre** kindly hosted a **fun day** for children and their families. This was a wonderful event with magicians, bouncy castles and loads of ice cream.

In August, we had a fantastic **inclusive summer camp** as part of the **Skerries Sailing Initiative**. Over 40 children aged between 7 and 17 attended these

sessions. Importantly, the camp catered to a wide spectrum of children with additional needs, including wheelchair users. - Also in August, we held a successful and enjoyable **All Inclusive Soccer Camp** for children with Skerries Town FC.



The **Floraville Sensory Garden** project, which is being completed in partnership with Skerries Business Association, made great progress through the design and funding phases in 2023. We expect the garden to be completed this summer - a specifically designed and purpose-built quiet space in the middle of Skerries for people with sensory needs to enjoy.

- Ger O’Mahony, chair, SAFT
- Contact us on Facebook or Instagram



As part of Bike Week 2023, **Skerries Cycling Initiative**, with support from Fingal County Council’s Cycling Officers, organised a **Fun Cycle** around Skerries. We also participated in the **Eco Festival** in September with a practical talk on “Pedal Power: Tips on Bike Repairs, Safety, and All-weather cycling,” as well as operating a pop-up bike repair workshop. We had been hoping to run more such workshops, but have run into difficulties regarding insurance cover, a situation which we are currently trying to resolve.



We engaged the Irish Centre for Cycling to provide a **five-lesson course for adult cyclists** - made possible through funding from Fingal County Council. The course was held during December 2023 and January 2024. This showed that even on winter evenings you can be out and about on your bike! We were delighted that several international protection applicants were able to successfully participate in the course.



We are currently working to arrange a cycling summer camp for children, as well as an event for the 2024 Skerries Eco Festival this coming September.

**Active Travel Plans Update:** The County Council hopes to appoint an active travel integrated design team later this year. They will be embarking on further data collection to inform the process of establishing a number of projects that can be progressed over the coming years for Skerries, subject to funding and statutory approvals.

- Michael McKenna, Secretary
- SCI Chair: Conor Kegan
- skerriescycling@gmail.com

## SSECI

Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative



SSECI, **Skerries Sustainable Energy Community Initiative**, was set up in 2020 as a committee of the Skerries Community Association. Its primary aim is to build better energy awareness and resilience within the town.

In 2022, SSECI commissioned an SEAI-funded Skerries Energy Master Plan (EMP). This included a Register of Opportunities, and we are currently addressing some of them.

For example, in 2023, we explored the scope for funding for a **feasibility study** into the production of 5% of our **energy supply in Skerries from renewables**.

The committee also worked on various fronts to raise public awareness of the need for **better insulated homes and businesses**, and the opportunities offered by energy-saving techniques and new, more efficient technologies. To this end, SSECI participated in the **Skerries Eco Festival**, organising speakers on Electric Vehicles (EVs) and home insulation grants and hosting an information stand.



We also published articles in **Skerries News** on monitoring efficient domestic energy use and the latest energy upgrades at the Community Centre, among others. In videos on YouTube and on our Facebook page, we showed how to access data on household electricity usage with a smart electricity metre, as well as advice on purchasing an EV and switching to night-time electricity tariffs.

In 2024, we are looking at the scope for increased use of **PV roof arrays** on domestic and community buildings in Skerries and hope to organise grant and technical **information events** in the town to support locals considering solar PV energy.

SSECI is a very small group so prospective **new members** with a particular interest and/or expertise in sustainable energy are **very welcome**.

- Chair Michael Mullan Jensen
- skerries-seci@gmail.com



## SKERRIES TIDY TOWNS



**Skerries Tidy Towns** had another successful year, gaining 13 extra marks in the national competition, making County second and winning another Gold Medal. We were Highly Commended in the Circular Economy Award as well as in the All Ireland Pollinator Award, with thanks to Charlie and Marion Heasman. **Once again, we would like to thank all our volunteers, our Adopt-a-Patchers and the residents of the Red Bank for their help in keeping our town litter free and looking so well.**

The **Skerries Tidy Towns work parties are back out every Monday**, meeting at the old fire station Quay St. at 1.50 pm. **If you're available, and over 16, come along and join us!**

We have done the annual clean up at the railway station, and continue to maintain the perimeter as a wildlife friendly area. We also cleaned the bike shelters and removed graffiti, and have maintained the old tank area at the rear of Supervalu car park with pollinator friendly plants. All street furniture, bollards and public railings are maintained and painted. We would like to again thank the **Men's Shed** for their help with this work.

Over the last number of years STT, with Sustainable Skerries, has developed a **Biodiversity Corridor**, linking all areas of the town in order to assist the safe passage of insect / wildlife from one area to another and to expand habitats (see picture below). The Rope Walk, behind the tennis courts, is being allowed to rewild. It is a three year project and will be kept litter free but otherwise left to nature. Photos are taken every three months to document how it evolves.



We encourage residents to participate in **NO MOW MAY**, to allow a small patch of garden to go uncut until autumn, to wait for temperatures to rise above 10 degrees before clearing dead leaves and to plant their grass verges with wild flowers.

In April, we joined in the **Annual National Spring Clean**, and together with members of our local walking club, and other volunteers, had a very successful morning, covering both beaches, our town parks and pathways.



The **Stream Huggers** are an offshoot of STT and have received Local Area Water Programme (LAWPRO) funding for a study of the lowest stretch of the Mill Stream, between the town park and the sea. They continue to work on clearing rubbish from this stream and carry out monthly tests for nitrate and phosphate levels and are evaluating how to tackle invasive species in the area. They have also planted native tree whips in St Patricks Close and near the Mill pond and stream, 148 so far.

We had our **annual awards night** on 29th Nov '23, a great night with awards going to local residents and businesses. This year's Best Presented Business was Crilly and McNally Opticians. Best Floral Display on a Business went to the Brick House, and Greg Reddin's received an award for Best Visual Display. There were also awards for best presented house in, and not in, an estate, **best presented estate, sponsored by the SCA and awarded to Barnageeragh Cove** (see picture), and best accessible business. This year we hope to add an additional award for The Best Presented Laneway.



We have set up a new adoption scheme with the residents and businesses in **Church St** to take responsibility for weeding (without pesticides) the section of kerb in front of their residence or premises.

Our town-wide **Adopt A Patch initiative** continues and we are so grateful to those who maintain their patches and welcome anyone who would like to join in. **Contact Stephanie Hynes**, 087 9582342, or **Breda Shankey**, 087 7575350, for further information.

We continue to promote the use of **re-usable keep cups** and the To Go cup scheme.



None of our work would be possible without the help of our volunteers, Fingal County Council and donations to our iDonate.ie page, which you can access through our Facebook page. Alternatively, you can give your donation to any member of the committee, or leave an envelope, addressed to us, in the Community Centre.

We thank everyone in Skerries for their continued support.

- Maeve McGann, Chair
- Tidytowns@skerriesca.com



**Sustainable Skerries is 15 years this summer!**

And the past year has been another very busy one. We particularly enjoy working together with other groups on larger projects like the **Eco Festival**, the **Open Orchards Project**, the implementation of the **pollinator action plan** or the new **water project**. Through our email newsletter, our Facebook and Instagram posts as well as regular blogposts on our website,

SustainableSkerries.com, we try make it easy to keep in touch with our work.



Over the last year, we've continued our work providing habitat and food for **Pollinators** as part of our **Biodiversity Action Plan**. Our focus is the Large Carder Bee, which is endangered in Ireland but doing relatively well in Skerries. This included creating a corridor from the wildflower meadow at the Educate Together school to Skerries Mills. We've led walks around the Ballast Pit and other parts of Skerries, with adults and school kids.



The next walk is planned for **Fri 7 June, 7 pm, at the Ballast Pit. Join us!** We recently had two very well-received talks on biodiversity: *Tiny Worlds, Big Impact: Leo Carroll on Insects and Biodiversity* and *Gardening for Pollinators with Charlie Heasman*. You can watch them on **our YouTube channel**.

We've just begun a **Water project** in Skerries, thanks to funding from LAWPRO, the Local Authorities Water Programme. With the help of water-management expert Féidhlim Harty, we'll identify nature-based solutions to run-off from hard surfaces like pavements and roads after heavy rain. These help reduce localised flooding, and at the same time remove pollution from this water before it gets to our stream or bathing waters. Since the solutions are nature-based, they also increase biodiversity. So it's win-win-win!



The inspiration for that project came from our first **Skerries Eco Festival** last autumn. We held an action packed weekend of fun and informative walks, talks, workshops and events in conjunction with lots of other SCA committees and Skerries groups.



Plans are well underway for this year's festival on **27-29 September**, which will include an update on the Water Project as well as lots of events including comedy, more bird & bee walks, expert guest speakers and a much expanded Eco Fair in the big hall of the Community Centre.



The 12 **Mini Open Orchards** we've planted across Skerries over the last few years are now home to some 150 apple, pear, plum and hazelnut trees for all to enjoy. Our picture shows the Townpark crew. **If there's a local spot where you'd like an orchard next year, get in touch!**



In November, we organised a "**Welcome to Skerries walk**" as part of Fingal's Inclusion Week. Together with other SCA Committees, we and newcomers to Skerries took a stroll around town, and finished with lovely conversations over a cuppa.

Our first **Urban Forest School summer camp** will give children aged six to nine a chance to have a forest school experience within one of the green areas in the town. Activities will include bug hunts, a tour of the Ballast pit, outdoor games

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and nature crafts. Details will be available soon.

A large and important part of our work is making **submissions** to local and national plans relating to sustainability and climate change, such as both Fingal's and the National Climate Action Plan. Details are on the website.

We also took part in a Global Action Plan's **Climate Heroes Community Climate Challenge**. A great way to become more aware of the impact of various actions on our carbon footprint, and choices we can make to reduce it.

We'd like to **thank everyone** for their support throughout the year, including those businesses and individuals who supported our recent table quiz. Much-needed funds were raised for our work! We are also grateful for the support we continue to enjoy from Fingal County Council, as well as the SCA and our fellow committees and the many other groups who are participating in our events (like the Ukulele Strummers at the Eco Festival).



We are delighted that Fingal County Council have nominated Sustainable Skerries for the national Pride of Place competition as their **Climate Action and Biodiversity** entry. Judging will take place on the afternoon of Mon 2 September, and we look forward to working with lots of the other SCA committees and groups in the town to showcase all the great work happening in Skerries.

- Helen Scullion
- chair: Sabine McKenna
- sustskerries@gmail.com



## Skerries Neighbourhoods Network

Are you in a local WhatsApp or Facebook group? Then make sure your group is part of the Skerries Community Association's network of neighbourhoods / resident's associations and street groups, for information sharing and consultation at a truly local level. *Would you like to set up a neighbourhood group or residents' association? Then look at our web page to get some ideas on how to get started.*

Either way, go to: **SkerriesCA.com/Neighbour**



**Skerries Town Twinning:** Ten people from Skerries enjoyed a **five-day trip** to our twin in Brittany (Canton de Guichen) from 29 June to 3 July 2023. One person said that it was hard to put into words how it feels to discover a community in France that is so profoundly connected to Skerries and described the experience as an amazing intangible asset created by Skerries Town Twinning.

Both our annual dinner in the Golf Club in January, and our Table Quiz in April in Skerries Harps Clubhouse, were very enjoyable and well supported. *Merci bien!*

In August 2024, Skerries hopes to welcome some 30 visitors from Brittany and Srem in Poland (Srem is twinned with Guichen). The visit will mark the **30th anniversary of the official twinning of Skerries with the Canton of Guichen**. It will also coincide with Heritage Week 2024. As part of the celebrations we plan to mount outdoors a joint Photographic Exhibition between Skerries, the Canton of Guichen and Srem. The exhibition juxtaposes aspects of the heritage of the three locations.

We continue to build relationships through our language buddy scheme, secondary school links as well as individual and group exchanges. At the core of twinning is mutual hospitality, opening homes to each other and extending the hand of friendship.

- Brendan Friel, Chair
- skerriestwinning@gmail.com