



Comhpháirtíocht Leader Waterford Leader  
Phort Láirge Partnership

# **Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG**

## **Annual Report 2016**

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## Executive Summary

Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG. (WLP) was formed in 1991 as one of the four rural-based Partnership companies under the national Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). WLP offers economic, social and cultural services to small businesses, community groups and individuals. The Board of WLP is made up of voluntary members from community and voluntary sector, social partners, environmental interests, local government and state bodies.

## Vision

Our vision is to help create Communities that are economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable in which all people can reach their full potential.

## Objectives

- The development of infrastructure necessary for employment and sustainable living in Rural Waterford.
- To .promote Business and Tourism through investment.
- To establish viable enterprises that utilize both the natural resources of the area and or embrace new technology that are wealth and job creating;
- To promote and source funding towards Culture/Language, Heritage, and Training that promotes local talent and new thinking to deal with contract working.
- To work contractually with Statutory and other investors to establish a variety of investment sources;

## Goals

- *To identify and compete for sources of funding which help to achieve the company objectives.*
- *To develop a solid linkage with the Credit Union movement and other potential lenders in terms of matched finance and investment in sustainable projects.*
- *Vibrant Villages: A programme to facilitate the growth of 15 sustainable villages within the county*
- *Engines of Growth: The development of a focused strategy for the economic development of selected areas (e.g. Blackwater Valley) where communities and local business work together on an integrated plan to create new wealth, making the rural area a more attractive place to visit or live in.*

- ***Sectoral initiatives: Through Community Training, Facilitation and Scenario Planning, Set up county wide organisations /structures that are ready and willing to work quickly at community level with national programmes so that the communities have action ready strategies ready to avail of State and EU Funding opportunities as they arise.***

## **Contracts**

WLP is contracted in the main by the Departments of State to operate and implement programmes on their behalf. We have also received Philanthropic Support from the Tomar Trust.

The main funders are:

- Dept. Arts, Heritage, the Gealtacht and Rural Affairs
- Dept. of Social Protection
- Dept. of Agriculture
- SOFAB
- Tomar Trust
- Waterford City & County Council

WLP operates the following programmes on contract;

- The LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020
- The Local Employment Service
- Tus
- Rural Social Scheme
- Social Farming

**E.U. Programme Development** W.L.P. in preparing its Vision, Objectives and Goals set as one of its principal goals the identification, competing for and sourcing of both E.U., and Philanthropic funds to underpin the company's primary objectives to action activities to sustain rural Waterford.

WLP has created the Position of E.U. Development Officer, and the Officer has become involved in a number of E.U. Applications both for the Local Councils, and also for WLP.. This officer will work on contract for Local Authorities, LDC's and indeed private organisations if the opportunity arises.

## **Ancillary Activities**

WLP is also involved in contract work for Waterford City & County Council, Wexford Council, and Wicklow Council in preparing an Ireland Wales Interreg Application. WLP also supports Community Organisations in the development of community led actions. Two current examples is the support given the St. Declan's Way Committee, and to Villierstown Education & Culture Project in the development of very significant walks, with St. Declan's Way involving Tipperary as well as Waterford.

## **Governance**

The Board of WLP has undertaken training in the past through The Wheel, Board Match, ICOS, and Mr. Brian Walker B.L. In 2014, the Board decided to undertake the Governance Code Journey. They completed this journey in March 2017, and the company is now fully compliant with the Governance Code.

## **Chairman's Report**

Waterford Leader Partnership C L G operates in Rural County Waterford with its Head office (John Barry House) based in Lismore. The seeds of the Company were sown over twenty years ago and it has seen many challenges over the years. In 2016 the voluntary Board embraced significant change as the New R D P 2014-2020 was rolled out. Waterford City and County Council and the L C D C are now the new R D P Contract holders, with W L P CLG being the implementing partner.

The 2014-2020 R D P Budget was cut resulting in a Company staff reduction of 1.6 Project Officers in 2016. This necessitated the Company looking at other worthwhile Programmes that would positively support the needs of the County such as Interreg, Horizon 2020 etc. to make up the shortfall in investment in the County, as without funding it is hard to make progress. So the Company had to look at other means of funding worthwhile Projects, e.g. Social Farming (by Philanthropic Funds- TOMAR) and Credit Unions. Social Farming is an initiative that is well established in Europe and WLP and other Stake holders (Leitrim Development/SOFAB/Dept. of Agriculture) looked at this initiative and decided to take it head on. To date this is gaining momentum and will grow with the inclusion of surrounding Counties.

WLP's other successful Programmes include: TUS, LES and RSS.

For the Company (WLP) going forward, quality programmes that are fit for purpose and address the needs of the County are now a must. As we all know up skilling is now the buzz word and the Board took on 'The Governance Code Journey' which will be completed in April 2017. The present Board members have a lot of knowledge built up over the years and Corporate Memory should be recognised and retained.

My term as Chairman was very challenging and very rewarding at the same time. I look back with pride in all the help provided by WLP to Rural County Waterford. I seriously think the Company needs a solid foundation to grow and to be an independent Company that stands on its own and builds up an asset base to use to leverage other funds to grow and now is that time.

At this point I wish to say thanks to: the C E O, Mr Jimmy Taaffe, the WLP Staff and the Board of Directors for all their help and support over the years in making W L P what it is today.

In addition I also wish to thank: All Departments nationally, Waterford City County Council, Funders and Philanthropic Supporters and Waterford PPN.

My sincere thanks to all of you,

Regards

Michael Jeremiah Walsh,

Chairman,

Waterford Leader Partnership C L G.

## C.E.O.'s Report

2016 has proved to be a challenging year, within WLP, both at Board and Staff level having to adapt to the era of Commissioning, Sub Contracting and Competing actively for funding streams, while simultaneously developing a Strategy for WLP that was separate from but supportive to programmes that fund Rural Development Activities.

For WLP's clients, and its reason for being, 2016 has seen an upturn in job opportunities. However Rural Villages continue to decline and quality Rural Jobs are few and far between with many graduates moving to Cork/Dublin and further afield to source opportunities commensurate with their training and life aspirations.

The Board have taken the decision that their focus would be on Rural Development. The Board also reviewed and revised policies & procedures in order to gain full compliance with the Governance Code.

While a focus on Strategy and Governance may appear to be a luxury, in times of serious flux it better to stand back, think matters through, develop a plan and then act. In terms of planning, the company has had to restructure, and while this was painful for both the Staff and the Board, the need for change was recognised, and was accepted and implemented.

WLP led developments such as St. Declan's Way, Villierstown Walk, Mt. Melleray, and with the help of Tomar became a regional subcontractor to the SOFAB Social Farming initiative.

The LEADER Programme commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016. WLP is no longer the LAG, and is now an Implementing Partner for Waterford Local Community Development Committee.

To summarise, WLP through its Board and Staff have embraced change, with the collective outlook is that ***"Life is an adventure to be lived, not a problem to be solved."***

## PROGRAMMES

### LEADER

Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LDCD) is the LAG for the new LEADER Programme and have engaged WLP as the Implementing Partner. Waterford City & County Council are the Financial Partner for the Programme.

#### The Programme

The Local Development Strategy (LDS) which covers all of rural Co. Waterford, but excludes the area covered by the original Waterford City boundary is available to view on WLP's website.

#### Implementation to date

Advertisements were placed in the 5 local papers in mid-October 2016 in advance of opening the official call for expressions of interest for a number of targeted calls. The adverts ran over two weeks, were both in English and Irish, and notified the public of 5 public meetings as follows: The Majestic Hotel on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Nov 2016; 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, the Community Centre, Ballymacarbry; 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2016, the Rainbow Hall, Kilmacthomas; 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2016, the Red Hall, Lismore, and the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, the Park Hotel, Dungarvan. Approximately 280 people attended. Sign in sheets were maintained.

Following review and approval of the 81 EOIs by the LCDC, 2 training workshops were planned for Tramore on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 and in Dungarvan on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 for the successful EOIs. Attendance at these workshops is compulsory for any promoter that intends to submit an application.

WLP has also commenced developing two potential Co-operation Projects with Northern Ireland. Applications for technical assistance will be submitted early in 2017.

To date the LEADER Programme implementation has run smoothly, due to;

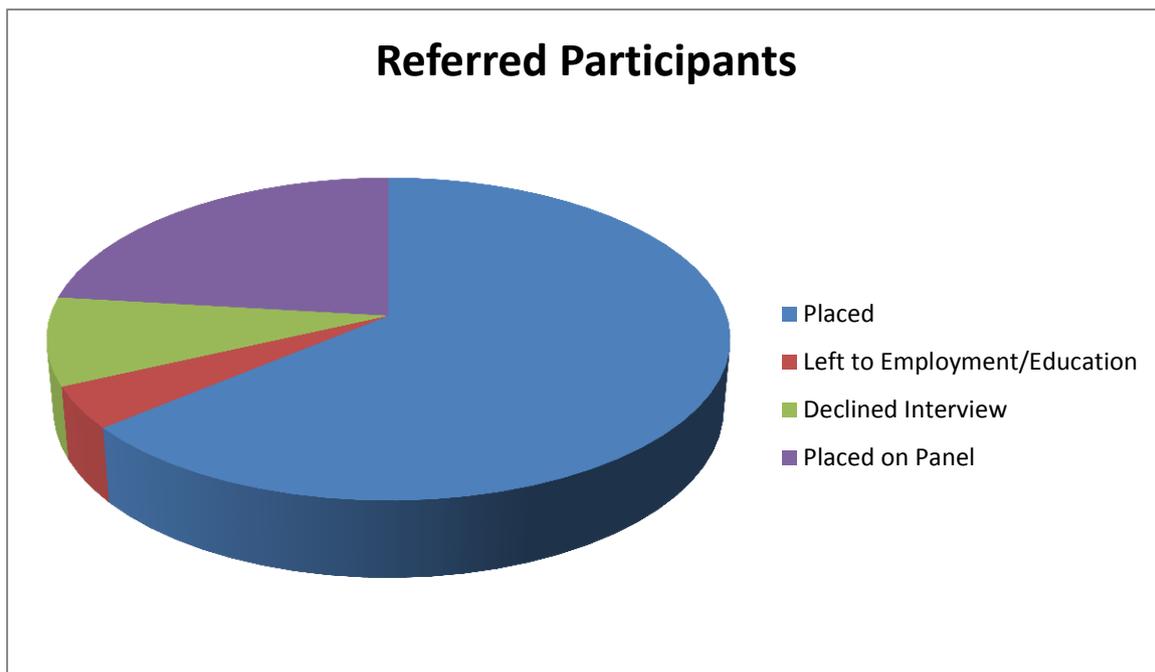
- A good working relationship between the Waterford LCDC, WC&CC, and WLP.
- All parties have been careful in the steps taken to restart the programme, and promote it to the wider public in County Waterford.
- The strategic linkage between the parties is real, and hence the actions taken are based on a sound foundation.

### Tus

Tús is operated in County Waterford on behalf of the Department of Social Protection by WLP. WLP currently have an allocation of 140 placements on the scheme. These are to afford those who are currently long-term unemployed the opportunity to gain suitable work experience. It also enables community organisations the opportunity to avail of skills and expertise to assist them in the delivery of their services at a local level.

## Participant Activity 2016

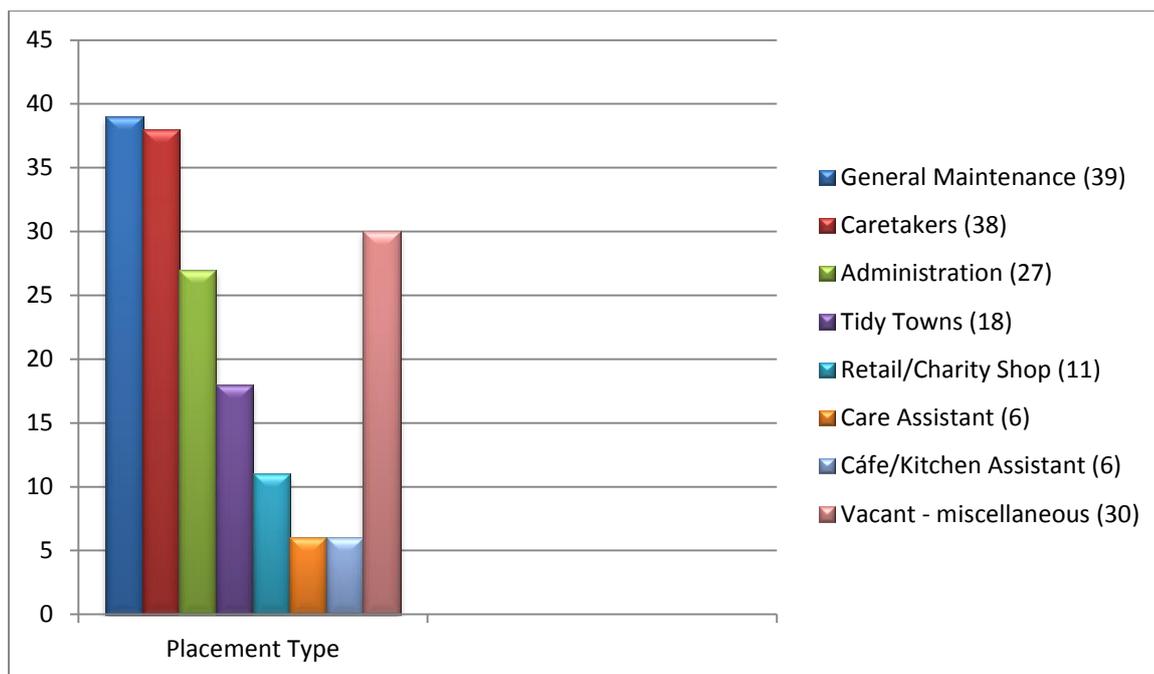
A total of 242 new clients were referred by DSP in 2016, a large number of these were afforded the opportunity to avail of positions on the scheme, along with those from the previous year's panel. The remainder were placed on the panel to fill vacancies as they will arise. Of the 242 referred, 21 declined to be interviewed for various reasons. A total of 152 contracts were issued during the year with 10 participants leaving the scheme to take up employment or to return to Education.



(Fig.2 – Participant Activity 2016)

## Placement Providers

WLP currently facilitates 84 Placement Providers with a further 30 vacancies which cannot be filled currently due to lack of suitable participants in their respective areas. Roles vary as can be seen in (Fig.3) below. All Placement Providers were afforded the opportunity to avail of Health & Safety Workshops delivered throughout the county during 2016. A total of 75 organisations availed of this training offer. There was a total of €6,000 spent on the purchase of materials and equipment for Placement Providers throughout the year.



(Fig.3 – Placement Types)

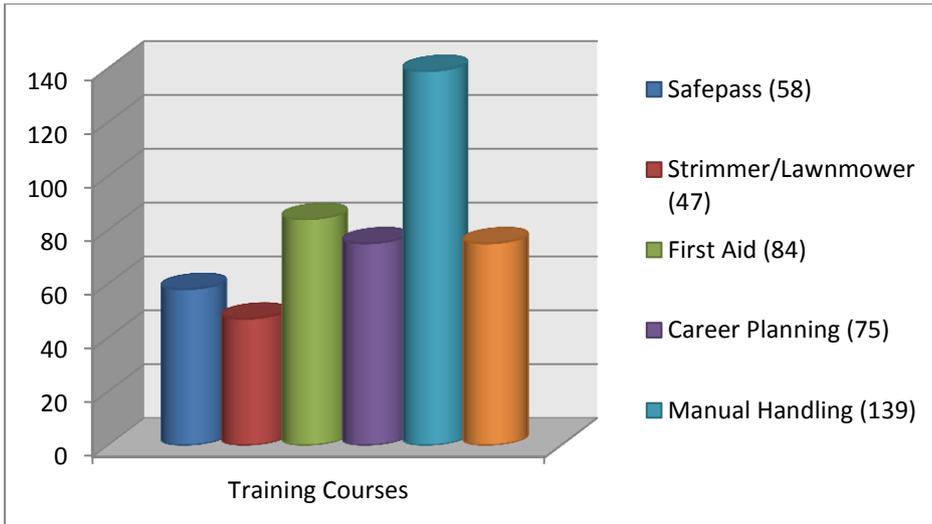
## Training Courses 2016

### Participant Training:

Alongside meaningful work experience WLP continues to deliver excellent training opportunities for those who participate on the Tús Programme. Training is offered with respect to the specific needs of the various roles within the scheme. A total 478 training spaces were availed of during 2016 at a cost of €20,000 as detailed in (Fig.6) below. This training included Safepass, Strimmer/Lawnmower Courses, First Aid, Career Planning, Manual Handling and Community Health & Safety Workshops.

### Supervisors Training:

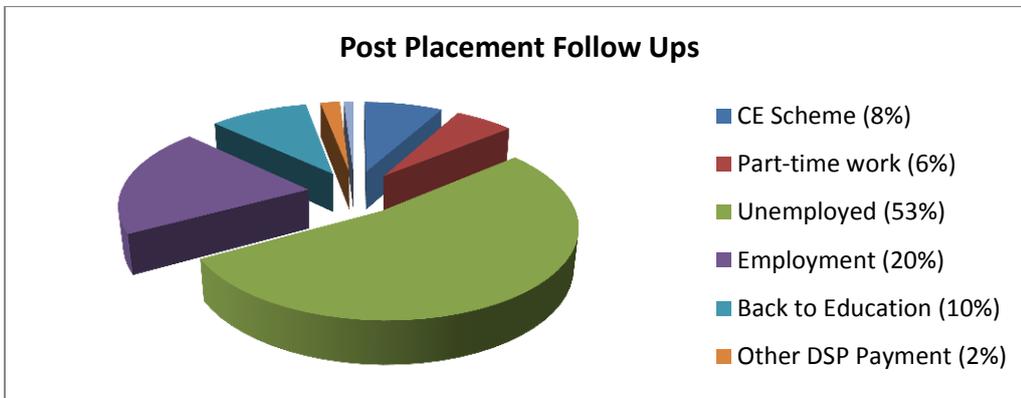
During 2016 five of the seven Tús Supervisors graduated from University College Cork with a Certificate in Career Needs Assessment, Planning and Support for Work. Training was also delivered in Time Management and Occupational First Aid.



(Fig.7 – Under 25's)

### Post Placement Follow- Ups

WLP conduct post placement follow-ups with those who have participated on the Tús Programme, these follow-ups take place six months and twelve months after their placement has ceased. Below (Fig.8) details the outcome of these follow-ups from June '15 – August '16



(Fig.8 – Post Placement Follow-Ups)

## County Waterford Local Employment Service (LES)

The County Waterford LES is operated by WLP CLG, under contract to the Department of Social Protection (annual contract)

The LES, with its small team, of 4 full-time and 1 part-time staff, has always been willing to adapt to the requirements of its funders whilst providing a comprehensive, professional and tailor-made service to jobseekers (evidenced through the numbers visiting the offices and progressions, employment and training, achieved)

The LES is based in three locations, Lismore, covering West Waterford, Dungarvan covering mid Waterford, and Carrick on Suir covering North Waterford.

The LES operates the DSP Activation model of case management and acts as a gateway to the full range of opportunities that are available to assist a long term unemployed person re-enter the labour market. The LES provides practical supports to Jobseekers (Professional CV's; access to job vacancies; interview coaching; referral to ETB Training programmes; access to training grant; referral to CE and TUS Employment Programmes; self-employment supports). In 2016, 5,269 visits to the County Waterford LES offices were recorded and the LES section of the WLP CLG website now records traffic to its Job Adverts page in excess of 3,500 hits per month.

DSP regularly monitors the performance of the LES to ensure compliance with the LES Operating Guidelines (Operational Monitoring Visits). Financial Audits are also conducted and Financial Returns are submitted on a monthly basis. Under the terms of the DSP Contract, the LES must maintain an accredited, recognised quality system through which we can design; maintain and improve our service so that we can provide quality services continuously and respond effectively to changing or uncertain conditions. The LES attained the Q-Mark in 2006, and has retained this Quality Mark, and is subject to regular Quality Audits.

The LES strives to continually improve its service and receives regular Customer feedback. Initiatives, such as the publication of weekly Jobs bulletins, have been commended by DSP and Quality Auditors and have been replicated by other LES. Feedback provided by clients of the LES during 2016 included the following comments:

"Very good service, Job lists weekly very helpful. Staff very helpful and willing to find info & job lists "
"I have used this service on numerous occasions and find it great. The staff are very approachable and very accommodating at all times."
"Staff very friendly and welcoming"
"Extremely helpful everytime I pop in for information"
"Wonderful people"
"Staff could not have been more helpful and friendly"
"Excellent service"
"I have been very impressed since I started coming here. I found staff to be very helpful, gives great advice and is really interested in helping me with my job prospects and putting me in the

right direction"
"Great service"
"Very helpful friendly service"
"Excellent service"
"Keep up the good work"

In 2016, the LES commenced the year with a Caseload of just under 1,000 job-seeking clients and, as per the terms of the 2016 LES Contract, the LES's skilled staff worked to reduce the numbers on their Caseloads and secured a 27% placement rate with Pathways to Work / DSP referred clients (clients progressed into Employment).

Jobseekers are now primarily referred to the LES by DSP and, as a consequence of DSP's Activation Policy, only a small number of new clients were referred to the LES in 2016 but new referrals will commence again in Quarter 2, 2017.

The figures provided in the following Tables above are those provided by DSP, via its Caseload Management System. Office records highlight some discrepancies with the data, in particular, data on the number of "Other Client Groups" / "Walk-in Clients" recorded. These are being corrected, where possible.

In addition to the figures from the DSP Activation Case Management system, in 2016 the LES progressed **158 Clients into QQI Learning Programmes; 15 Clients into Self-Employment** and supported **134 clients with Mediator Funding for Industry-Specific Training** (eg. Safepass). **115 Clients were progressed onto Labour Market Programmes (CE and TUS).**

### 2016 Outcomes

<b>DSP Activation Clients - Pathways To Work</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>2016 DSP Contract Target</b>	<b>2016 Actual</b>	<b>2016 Actual %</b>
New Registrations	N/A	153	
Placement Progression	30%	242	27%
Throughput		910	
Current Caseload @ 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2016 (Capacity = 132 X 2 Mediators)	264	137	

<b>Other Client Groups / Walk-in Clients</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>2016 DSP Contract Target</b>	<b>2016 Actual Achieved</b>	<b>2016 Actual %</b>
New Registrations	160	22	
Placement Progression	30%	29	28
Throughput		104	
Current Caseload @ 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2016	N/A	13	

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The LES attained the Q-Mark in 2015, and it retains this Quality Mark.

## Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme in County Waterford is small in comparison to those in the West of Ireland. WLP had 12 places available on the RSS scheme in 2016 & all of those places were filled.

The focus of the scheme is focused on farmers or fishermen who are on Farm or Fish Assist, and who wish to contribute to their local community. It also gives the participant an opportunity to participate in the local community, as both these occupations involve a fair degree of social isolation.

The scheme is linked to Community Sponsors who take the participants in to work on the project the Community is implementing at that time. The projects vary from Community to Community, and the participants are matched to activities that they themselves would enjoy doing.

Currently the placements are located in the following areas:

Placement	Location	Type of Work
Waterford & Suir Valley Railway	Kilmeaden	Track Maintenance
Coastguard Station Tramore	Tramore	Facility Maintenance
Stradbally GAA	Stradbally	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Cappoquin Rowing Club	Cappoquin	Facility Maintenance
Ballymacarbry Tidy Towns	Ballymacarbry	Village Maintenance
Ballysaggart Community Development	Ballysaggart	Hall & Village Maintenance
Respond Childcare	Clashmore	Childcare
Ballyduff Upper GAA	Ballyduff Upper	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Cappoquin Community Development Co.	Cappoquin	Hall Maintenance & Bookings
Church of Ireland	Lismore	Grounds Maintenance
Ardmore Tidy Towns	Ardmore	Village Maintenance
Lismore Golf Club	Lismore	Grounds Maintenance

## Social Farming

WLP has secured a contract with Leitrim Development Company (LDC) to develop a Social Farming Network & run a Social Farming Programme in the South East which will commence in 2017. Social Farming is the practice of offering activity on family farms as a form of social support service. In Social Farming the farm remains a working farm at its core but invites people to participate in the day to day activities of the farm.

Social Farming provides people who use services with the opportunity for improved social inclusion, increased self-esteem and improved health and well-being.

From the Farmers perspective, it provides an opportunity for income diversification and multi functionality on the farm. It also creates the opportunity to reconnect farmers with their local

communities through the opening up of their farms as part of the social support system of the community.

The farm is not a specialised treatment farm; rather it remains a typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from participation in farm activities in a non- clinical environment.

We aim to support the development of Social Farming in the South East of Ireland including the areas of Carlow, East Cork, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and South Tipperary.

This programme will be financed by funding from LDC and the TOMAR Trust.

## Finances

WLP employs a fully qualified accountant as Financial Controller. The Audited Accounts are posted on the Company's Website, [www.wlp.ie](http://www.wlp.ie) under the Governance section of the site, once they have been approved by the Board.

WLP has engaged independent auditors JBW Consultants to prepare and audit the financial statements, and prepare & file the annual company's return for the CRO.

WLP's income is classified under two headings in the financial statements;

- Restricted Funding, which is funds provided to WLP that are designated for specific purposes & cannot be allocated for any other use. Ex. RDP project funds can only be used to pay claims received from promoters for specific projects.
- Unrestricted Funding, amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the directors in furtherance of the objectives of WLP. Ex. Rental income received.

WLP has an active Audit Committee who met three times during 2016. Their main objectives in 2016 were;

- To review the annual financial statements, with the auditors and make a recommendation to the Board for their approval.
- To oversee all aspects of financial planning, management, assess internal financial controls and monitor risk management.
- To review quotes from potential auditors & award the contract for the preparation of 2016 & 2017 financial statements and the audit of same.