

Laptop For Loan Initiative

We are delighted to bring news of a new Laptop for Loan Initiative that allows us to offer up to 900 laptops to help bridge the digital divide for fifth year students in Meath. The initiative, which is funded by Facebook, aims to address the digital divide compounded by the coronavirus outbreak which has caused disproportionate hardship on those students who are disadvantaged or marginalised. The 'Laptop for Loan' initiative has two phases. Phase 1 is aimed at students in Meath post-primary schools with 5th year students to be treated as a first priority. Phase 2 will see a laptop loan scheme rolled out to partner organisations, through the library service and to community groups for training purposes. Meath County Council Library Service will provide the logistical support, procuring the laptops and delivering them directly to schools who will distribute them to those most affected by social and educational disadvantage. The laptops will be loaned to students who need them for the duration of the crisis. Students with no access to



broadband in their home will be able to borrow a wifi dongle. On return, the hard drives will be securely wiped and reset. Pictured at Beaufort College in early June were (L-R): Meath County Council Chief Executive Jackie Maguire, Senior Executive Librarian Maedhbh Rogan McGann, Beaufort College Principal Angela Crowcock, Facebook Community Engagement Development Manager Aoife Flynn, Meath Cathaoirleach Cllr Wayne Harding and County Librarian Ciaran Mangan.

Writer In Residence

Author Nicola Cassidy has been appointed as Meath County Library Writer in Residence for 2020. The residency runs from June-December. Nicola writes historical fiction and has published three novels. She is also a script writer, blogger and spoken word poet. Her first novel *December Girl*, set in Meath's Boyne Valley was published in 2017 by Bombshell Books. Her second novel *The Nanny at Number 43*, published by Poolbeg Press, was set in Drogheda and featured scenery and characters from Meath. Her third novel *Adele*, is a bio-fictional account of stage star Adele Astaire. Her fourth novel is due for publication in November. Nicola will focus on researching and writing it over the summer months. She has also been granted a week's residential stay in the Tyrone Guthrie Centre as part of the residency. In the autumn, Nicola will work with book clubs, schools and emerging writers. She will also host a series of workshops on blogging, podcasting and YouTubing .



Kells Cocooners Deliveries

Kells library provided a book delivery service to those cocooning during the lockdown. Books and audio visual stock were delivered to many library users by staff. Staff contacted over 30 cocooners and took requests for books in the genres readers preferred. Psychological thrillers topped the list, followed by family sagas. We were very pleased to find that several cocooning members had downloaded BorrowBox and were accessing books online. Others were happy to take a delivery of up to 12 items delivered by Library Driver, Tony McHugh, directly to their front door. Plastic boxes were used and the items inside were untouched for 3 days to comply with health guidelines. Pictured is Tony McHugh making a delivery in Kells.



Our 3D Printer at Work

We were delighted to play our part in supplying personal protective equipment to the HSE during the COVID 19 crisis. Mark from Ashbourne library set up our 3D printer in his home and had it running day and night. He printed 260 frames for protection visors. This initiative, in conjunction with Engineers Ireland, involved over 300 printers and a total of 52,023 masks were printed.



Online Festivals

Our annual Cruinniú na nÓg and Bealtaine festivals took place online this year. We had nineteen online events for our Cruinniú na nÓg festival. Meath's Youth Theatre ACT OUT premiered their new short film based on the theme #WeAreAllInThisTogether. Local filmmakers Mark Smyth and Jonathan Farrelly hosted screenings of two of their award-winning short films and followed these with a live Q&A session. Award-winning illustrator Tarsila Krüse hosted online drawing workshops; there was a floral headdress workshop with Saraden Designs and a Creative Writing workshop with Oisín McGann. Our popular Bealtaine Big Book Quiz was also held online. We had lots of entries and the winners were Helena Glynn, Lynn Carberry and Jacinta Martyn, who all received book vouchers. During lockdown we also posted a number of videos for children on our Facebook and Twitter pages. We had arts& crafts, STEAM experiments, and storytelling. We also held a virtual Easter Egg Hunt. Pictured is the cast of ACT OUT.



Summer Fun From The Library

All of our summer events for children are being broadcast on our YouTube channel this year. We have had some great events in July and we have plenty more to come in August. We have Covid Conjuring from Master Magician Billy Bubbles, illustration workshops with RTE's Tina Mation, as well as storytelling & yoga with Deirdre from YoYo Yoga, and Irish myths & legends with Candlelit Tales. The Rediscovery Centre is teaching children about marine litter and how to get creative with waste. Anyone4Science are performing experiments that children can repeat at home and our resident beekeeper Helen has been introducing children to the world of beekeeping. All our videos are available to watch online until the end of August. There is still time to join our annual and very popular Summer Stars Reading Adventure and be in with a chance to win a Kindle Fire tablet.

