



# Communities working together to save energy



# Working together to help better our communities





**Communities across Ireland** are coming together to carry out energy upgrade projects in their local areas. These pioneering communities are taking climate action into their own hands while greatly improving the comfort of their shared buildings, businesses and homes and ultimately increasing their energy savings.

SEAI supports innovative approaches to achieving high quality improvements in energy efficiency within Irish communities.

This booklet showcases some of the remarkable community energy projects SEAI has supported over the last few years.

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## SEAI's Community Impact

Since 2019, SEAI has supported:



**1,447**

**community buildings**

including 1,130 households experiencing fuel poverty

**2,371**

**homes**



**€102 million**

in grant aid



Saving the equivalent  
of powering

**23,542 homes**

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## Introduction

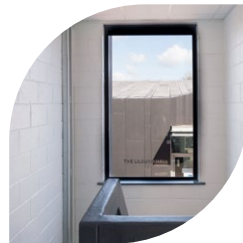
SEAI's community energy grants deliver several of the objectives outlined in Ireland's Climate Action Plan. To achieve our target of net-zero emissions by 2050, we must ensure sustainable construction for new builds and also prioritise the retrofitting of Ireland's existing built stock.

SEAI community grants deliver comprehensive energy upgrades in the community within several key industries including education, heritage, sports, not-for-profit, state, and commercial. Funding is essential in ensuring that these projects can happen, especially for organisations that don't operate for profit.

SEAI has encouraged pioneering partnerships between several key industries. We have seen a diverse selection of organisations working together, such as sports facilities, local authorities, retail outlets, factories, community centres, charities, hotels, public sector facilities and schools. By bringing together groups of buildings, community-wide energy improvements can be achieved more efficiently and cost effectively than might otherwise be possible. Additionally, people living within these communities directly benefit, as each project is required to include a minimum of ten homes.

SEAI provides a range of additional community supports including free mentoring, technical supports and funding. In addition to grant funding, projects are able to apply for energy credits. Contact [BEC@seai.ie](mailto:BEC@seai.ie) if you have any queries on energy credits and how to apply.

There are opportunities for all of us to take action towards mitigating climate change. No one organisation, policy or individual can address the problem in isolation – it needs urgent action across our society. Given the scale of change required, the next phase of our energy transition can only happen with citizens and communities taking the lead. We hope you can take insight from these energy projects while gaining inspiration in defining your own community's sustainable energy future and making it a reality.



# Field of Dreams – Down Syndrome Cork

Middle Ring, Co. Cork



**€16,276**

Project cost

SEAI funded 50% as a not-for-profit – €8,138



**€543**

Electrical energy savings

**€734**

Renewable energy savings



**2,666 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings



**Down Syndrome Cork's 'Field of Dreams'** project was built in 2017 to provide development opportunities for adults with Down Syndrome for ongoing learning and skills growth.

Set on a three acre, horticultural site in Curraheen, Cork, it promotes learning through meaningful and productive tasks in social settings. Participants grow chemical free produce for their local community, while also selling plants and gardening equipment at their farm shop.

They conducted an energy audit and formulated a plan of action, ultimately deciding to install solar PV panels for electricity generation. The project co-ordinator, SE Systems, submitted the grant application which made the process as easy as possible, and they secured a corporate donation to fund the remainder of the project.

They already had two heat pumps installed on site along with a solar powered electric fence. As part of the project, they got heating controls for their heat pump which allowed for increased control

and cost savings. They also upgraded the insulation for several doors. They installed occupancy sensors for their light controls and a monitoring and targeting system to provide greater oversight of consumption trends.

As a result of these upgrades, they have experienced reduced energy bills, which has been a tremendous help given that it's a not-for-profit organisation.

It has been very useful for the students to understand energy. Coordinators have been showing students

energy consumption trends on the recently installed monitor. It has also helped in terms of fund-raising as it demonstrates their continued commitment to sustainability. The project has delivered great peace of mind that the organisation

is more environmentally conscious and doing their bit to help conserve energy by using renewable resources.

**Project coordinated by:**  
SE Systems

**"It's a huge environmental benefit and a significant cost saving measure for our charity. This has the potential to reduce our energy overheads significantly."**

**Debbie Kelleher, Care Co-ordinator**



# Boyne Fishermens Rescue and Recovery Service

Drogheda, Co. Louth



**€22,680<sup>1</sup>**

Project cost

SEAI funded 50% as a not-for-profit – €11,340



**€2,561**

Thermal energy savings



**5,369 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings

**Boyne Fishermens Rescue and Recovery Service** is a voluntary community rescue service based on the River Boyne in Drogheda with a unit located in Kiltimagh, County Mayo.

The organisation was developed by fishermen who were contacted by the Guards to search for missing persons on the River Boyne. They can respond to any incident reported within

the 32 counties and, where possible, will stay until a loved one is found.

Before receiving the energy upgrades, the boathouse was cold and damp, which was causing issues such as equipment being unable to dry out properly resulting in high energy bills. They contacted SEAI for advice and the first step was assessing the building through a Building Energy



<sup>1</sup> These costs are solely representative of the heat pump that was installed during their 2022 project, all other costs for previous measures not factored in.





Rating assessment and formulating a plan of action. Boyne Fishermens Rescue has received a grant for a number of measures over the last few years including:

- LED lighting throughout the entire building. The quality of the new lighting is far superior, much clearer and energy bills have reduced.
- Solar PV panels for electricity generation.
- An air source heat pump which supplies heating to the building and hot water for the showers. The issues they had with mould have decreased

**“One thing is for real though – we cannot function as a Rescue and Recovery Service if we can’t afford to put fuel in the boats. It’s really that simple. Reducing our bills allows us to keep responding when the calls come in and this is our end goal.”**

**Eamonn Murphy, Volunteer**

considerably as a result of the heat pump.

- Time and temperature zone controls for the heat pump meaning the heating can be turned on and off anytime of the day or night through an app.

**Project coordinated by:**

REIL (Retrofit Energy Ireland Ltd)

# Sandford Park School

Ranelagh, Dublin



**€286,050**

Project cost

SEAI funded 30% as an educational project – €85,815

"A warmer and more comfortable school environment has truly made all the difference in our day-to-day life in the school community. It's not just about saving money but creating a space that fosters better learning and teaching. The commitment to sustainability reflects positively on the school's values. I am proud to be part of a school that prioritises both our present comfort and a sustainable future."

**Deirdre Potts, Bursar and Facilities Manager**



**€1,938**

Electrical energy savings

**€4,610**

Thermal energy savings

**€1,879**

Renewable energy savings

**Sandford Park** is a private co-educational secondary school based in Ranelagh in Dublin. Before the retrofit, the school was very cold, particularly in the winter months and they had very high energy bills. They installed roof and cavity wall insulation, lighting upgrades, windows and doors improvements, a heat pump to replace their old gas fired boilers and a 30kWp PV panel.

Since the retrofit, the students and staff of Sandford Park

School have experienced an improvement in comfort, with a more consistent temperature and pleasant indoor environment. Improved lighting has resulted in a better learning and working environment.

The substantial cost savings have been reinvested into educational initiatives, providing enhanced resources and opportunities for students and staff.

The school would now like to upgrade the original school building which was built in 1894. They want to improve efficiency while also preserving its unique character.

**Project coordinated by:**  
KRA Renewables



**21,220 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings



# Dublin City University, Helix Theatre

Glasnevin, Dublin



**Dublin City University's Helix Theatre** is a multi-purpose venue located in Glasnevin, Dublin. The stage is one of the largest in the country, allowing the Helix to host everything from theatre to musicals and even ice shows.

The Dublin City University Energy Team manages energy across all campuses and are aiming to improve energy performance throughout all facilities by 50% by 2030.

As part of their commitment to sustainability they decided to replace the Helix Theatre's old inefficient air-cooled chiller with a modern high efficiency inverter driven unit.

DCU supports local charities with the savings that have resulted from their energy reduction measures. In recent years, they have supported local fuel poor housing in Glasnevin, St Michaels House, and Barretstown, which is all done through their SEAI partner REIL.

**Project coordinated by:**  
REIL (Retrofit Energy Ireland Ltd)

*"We have seen energy, carbon and cost savings, and a positive return on the capital investment. Our environmentally friendly chiller, has lower carbon emissions, has less maintenance requirements, and helps provide a more comfortable environment within the theatre. A win win win for DCU, SEAI, and the environment!"*

**Richard Kelly, Estates Manager**



**€195,000**

Project cost

SEAI funded 30% as an educational project – €66,398



**€13,402**

Electrical energy savings



**27,725 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings

# St. Mary's Church

Julianstown, Co. Meath



**€28,944**

Project cost

SEAI funded 50% as a not-for-profit project – €14,472



**€953**

Thermal energy savings



**3,907 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings

**St. Mary's Church** has been serving the parish of Julianstown for the last 40 years. There are four masses in the week plus funerals, weddings and baptisms. The church was built in 1982 replacing an earlier church, which was completed in 1837.

Prior to getting the work done, the church's windows were in very poor

condition and a lot of the heat was escaping. They conducted an energy audit which recommended the installation of destratification fans, along with upgrading several of the doors and windows throughout the building.

The measures improved the amount and quality of the heat while also bringing down the bills which was an amazing achievement. When the fans are on, they bring an airiness to the building and the damp smells have completely vanished.

**Project coordinated by:**  
SE Systems

"The Church is better for the parishioners that use it. The process was easy, the advice was excellent, and the execution was seamless and it has made the church more user friendly and warmer for less costs. We were very lucky with all the tradesman, they were top class which made the job very easy."

**Father Brendan**

# Ray MacSharry Park

Cranmore, Co. Sligo

**Ray MacSharry Park** was founded in the 1930's with the aim of fostering and promoting football at every level from U17 boys and girls to amateur women and men's teams. As of 2023, it is home to 37 different football teams with adults and young people benefiting from the pitches.

Prior to carrying out works, the park experienced very high running costs due to inefficient lighting systems. They received advice and the grant from SEAI and also received a grant from Sligo County Council.

They decided to install new LED lighting that illuminate half the pitch, and a dimming system which has increased safety, comfort and visibility.



“The introduction of the LED lights are a brilliant addition to the already fine facility at MacSharry Park. The lights are on a completely different level to what was used before proving much more popular with our players while also enhancing the viewing experience for spectators on a game night. It’s also great to know how much less these lights cost to run while at the same time making a contribution to the environment.”

**Ronan Moriarty, Secretary of Cartron United**

Several clubs have made the park their home fixture grounds and local charities are using the grounds more regularly. The park's energy usage costs dropped by approximately 40% with their carbon footprint being cut in half as a result of the works.

**Project coordinated by:**  
LeeTherm



**€42,120**  
Project cost

SEAI funded 50% as a not-for-profit project –  
€24,051



**€7,779**  
Electrical energy savings



**3,907 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**  
Carbon savings

# Kerry Parents and Friends Association

Killarney, Co. Kerry



**€50,023**

Project cost

SEAI funded 30% as a community project – €15,007



**€1,393**

Thermal energy savings



**3,361 kgCO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon savings



## **Kerry Parents and Friends Association (KPFA)**

is a registered charity providing services to adults with intellectual disabilities within the community. The first house opened in Tralee in 1978 and the charity now provides day, residential, respite, home support and outreach services in 30 centres throughout Kerry.

KPFA installed external insulation to two homes. Prior to works, there was mould growth on the walls within one of the properties. The homes were cold and they had high heating bills.

A considerable proportion of KPFA housing stock was constructed in the 1970's and 1980's and needs significant works to improve the energy performance of the buildings. They plan to review all housing stock and reduce heat loss. Longer term plans include reviewing more efficient heating systems.

### **Project coordinated by:**

REIL (Retrofit Energy Ireland Ltd)

*“Since the external insulation has been installed the house is much warmer and there is no evidence of dampness. The homes also look really nice with the new wrap. Service users and staff are happy with the work and the results.”*

**Staff at Hawthorn House, Kilcummin, Killarney**





**Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland**

3 Park Place  
Hatch Street Upper  
Dublin 2  
Ireland  
D02 FX65

e [info@seai.ie](mailto:info@seai.ie)  
w [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie)  
t +353 1 808 2100



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland