



Údarás na Gaeltachta



Message from Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh

On behalf of the City of Boston, it is my pleasure to welcome you to South Boston for this initiative to celebrate and strengthen the ties between Ireland's Gaeltacht and Boston.

I am proud to share my own family's roots to Ros Muc, a village in the heart of the Connemara Gaeltacht.

We are a nation of immigrants, and it has been a goal since my first day as Mayor of Boston to make our City a haven for those seeking safety, equality, and opportunity. Boston is the haven our brothers and sisters from Ireland sought 150 years ago, and it is the haven those from across the globe continue to look to every day.

Today and everyday we are proud to celebrate the rich culture and diversity of experience from our Irish neighbors that have been a boon to our City and our nation. Best wishes for an enjoyable afternoon and thank you to all gathered today in celebration of culture and friendship.

Martin J. Walsh 54th Mayor of Boston

Mayor Martin J. Walsh's strong family links with the Connemara Gaeltacht have been well documented since his election as Mayor in 2014. His father, John Walsh, was born in Carna and his mother Mary hails from Rosmuc, two nearby Gaeltacht areas with an extremely strong bond with the United States, and especially with South Boston.

The welcome shown by the people of Connemara to Mayor Walsh on his return to his parents' home county following his election as Mayor of Boston illustrates the close bond, not just between Connemara and the Walsh family, but between Connemara and the city of Boston.

Údarás na Gaeltachta is particularly grateful to Mayor Walsh for his ongoing support of Ireland's Gaeltacht region, and his support for our work as the agency tasked with preserving the culture and language of this special region of Ireland.





MESSAGE FROM JOHN C. BEATTY

In November of last year I first came to Lettermore in the Connemara Gaeltacht, where Dudley Beatty, my grandfather grew up in the late 1800s. I never knew him, but my Dad, John Francis “Doc” Beatty, referenced him occasionally and how he and his brothers grew up at 45 Story Street, played ball in the lot across the street. Today, I live doors away from that lot and from Dudley’s former home. We are still so very close to that generation of young men and women who made the courageous and bold journey to America.

My grandfather, along with his brothers Thomas, Patrick and Martin left Lettermore at various stages in the early 1900’s. They would never set foot in Ireland again. It’s hard to envision the circumstances that these men faced and reasons they never returned, but I like to think that this past November, I was able to complete the missions for them – to close the loop – and reconnect our family, when I was welcomed home by my grandfather’s nephew Colm in Lettermore.

I am certainly blessed and so very proud to be an American, but there is no doubt that I and many others owe so much to those men and women from Connemara, who charted a new course for their families. My sincerest thanks to Údarás na Gaeltachta for preserving our culture, our language and encouraging growth and prosperity in Ireland.

JOHN C. BEATTY - CHIEF MARSHALL OF THE 2019 ST. PATRICK’S/EVACUATION DAY PARADE

A native of South Boston, John Beatty has just recently reconnected with his relatives on the island of Lettermore in the Connemara Gaeltacht. John’s grandfather along with three of his brothers emigrated from Lettermore to the United States in the early 1900’s. The brothers settled in South Boston, where they raised their respective families.

John is a proud American and, during his 23 years of military service, led a range of diverse organizations, commanding units in Germany and Kosovo and deploying twice to the Middle East. In June 2016, Gov. Charlie Baker named Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Beatty as the Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force Executive Director.

John is equally proud of his newly-discovered found Gaeltacht roots, and has even decided to learn a *cúpla focal*, or a few words, of Gaelic for his next trip home to Lettermore!



Courtesy Ionad Chultúrtha an Phiarsaigh



MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL HEANEY, CEO ÚDARAS NA GAELTACHTA

I am delighted as CEO of Údarás na Gaeltachta to be part of this recognition and celebration of the very close ties that exist between Connemara/Galway and Boston. These ties are long standing and deep and we look forward to consolidating and further developing these ties for mutual benefit in the future. We are grateful to the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council, South Boston Public Library, and Boston City Council for their interest and support in relation to this. I am also very grateful to our broad Gaeltacht diaspora here in the Boston area for their interest and support. I am especially grateful to Parade Chief Marshall John C. Beatty and Mayor Marty Walsh.

Ní neart go cur le chéile agus tá mé fíor bhuíoch as ucht an suim agus an tacaíocht atá á fháil againn ónar gcairde i mBoston. Táimid ag súil le tógáil ar seo don todhchaí agus an nasc láidir ata idir an Ghaeltacht agus Boston a chothú agus a láidriú.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA

The Chief Executive of Údarás na Gaeltachta, Michael Heaney knows better than most the connection between the Gaeltacht and Boston. He has a first-hand knowledge of the link between the Gaeltacht and the path that forced hundreds of thousands to leave their native land and seek a better life abroad from themselves and their families – his own parents emigrated from the Connemara Gaeltacht and settled in South Boston, where he and his three brothers were born. He attended the St Peter's and Gate of Heaven School in South Boston until he and his family returned to the Connemara Gaeltacht when he was 10 years old.

Michael has spent a lifetime working in community, cultural and economic development in local and national administration, as well as in various sections of the organization that he now heads.





AN GHAELTACHT

The regions in which the Irish language is spoken to this day as a community language are collectively called the Gaeltacht. These areas dot the western seaboard of Ireland, right along the Wild Atlantic Way coastline, along with other pockets in counties Meath, Cork and Waterford.

While the Irish language was pretty much wiped out across Ireland by a concerted effort by the English to eliminate it as a community language, Gaelic, or *Gaeilge*, survived in these Gaeltacht areas, mostly by virtue of their isolation. Today, that isolation stands to them and Gaeltacht areas are among the most visually beautiful and culturally vibrant on the island of Ireland.

Close to 100,000 people live in these areas and on the offshore islands in which Irish is the spoken language.

In all probability, the Irish language was spoken on the island 2,500 years ago and was even adopted by the Anglo Normans after they conquered large parts of the country in the last third of the 12th century. English, however, was made necessary for administrative and legal affairs.

The Irish-speaking community never achieved political independence and under English Rule, the language was forbidden in schools. Irish was in danger of extinction after the Great Famine and was not recognised in the education system until the end of the 19th Century.

Even with the arrival of the Irish Free State and the recognition of the language as the official language of Ireland, the number of Irish speakers continues to decline despite government support in schools and in the community.

The good news is that the revival and the interest in the Irish language is stronger today than it has been for a long time, notably outside of the Gaeltacht areas. Most towns in Ireland have primary schools where the curriculum is taught entirely through Irish, and the option to continue with post primary education in *Gaeilge* is also available.

Despite this, the importance of the Gaeltacht as the area where the Irish language survives to this day as the language of the community, spoken day-to-day language, can never be undervalued or underestimated.

ÚDARÁS NA GAELTACHTA

Údarás na Gaeltachta (known as Gaeltarra Éireann until 1979) is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to ensure that the Irish language remains the main community language of the Gaeltacht and is passed on to future generations.

The authority endeavours to achieve that objective by funding and fostering a wide range of enterprise development and job creation initiatives and by supporting strategic language, cultural and community based activities.

Economic mission

Údarás encourages investment in the Gaeltacht through a range of generous financial and non-financial incentives for new and existing enterprises.

The organisation supports businesses in developing new markets, technologies, products and strategic alliances through research and development. Gaeltacht companies span a range of commercial sectors, including life sciences, ICT, tourism, fish processing and aquaculture, renewable energy, food, niche manufacturing, audio visual and digital media, arts and crafts.

Over 7,000 people are currently employed full



time in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies. These companies have a significant economic impact and make a substantial contribution to the Irish economy.

Cultural mission

All of the organisation's activities have the aim of preserving and promoting the Irish language at their core. Údarás funds a range of strategic language and cultural initiatives as well as supporting the language through its own practices.

These include:

- Language Services Centres
- Irish Language Pre-schools
- Irish in Business
- Language Learning Incentives

Social Mission

The people of the Gaeltacht play an active role in the economic, social and cultural development of their communities, largely through well-established groups such as community cooperatives and community development companies.

Údarás provides funding for these and provides the advice, assistance and financial support that help these community groups become strong and proactive structures, which can deliver local services, promote local development initiatives, and in many instances manage and administer community or state assets such as enterprise centres.

GAELTACHT IMMIGRANTS

Regardless of where in the US they settled, Gaeltacht immigrants and their offspring have played a leading part in all areas of American society for over 150 years - commerce, law, politics, sport, the arts, education, the labor movement etc.

Their influence has been strongest in the 11 States of the Northeast Region. Both parents of current Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh, were born in Connemara and he himself has used their native language, Irish on radio and TV while in Ireland.

The parents of another Mayor and former Governor of Massachusetts, James Michael Curley, were born nearby in the same Gaeltacht region. The grandparents of Denis McDonough, White House Chief of Staff during President Obama's second term also emigrated from Connemara.

The parents of Olympic medallist James Brendan Connolly (Athens, 1896 & Paris, 1900) came from the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway, and in more recent time Seán Mannion, the US light middleweight champion in 1982 who fought Mike McCallum for the WBA light middleweight title in Madison Square Garden in 1984, was born and reared in Ros Muc, the home place of Mayor Walsh's mother.

Baseball legend Steve O' Neill, who won a World Series as a player and a manager with the Cleveland Indians was born to a couple who had brought two toddlers with them to Minooka Pennsylvania from Joyce Country in the north of the Connemara Gaeltacht, and the father of Hollywood legend, John Forde, came from Spiddal. The list goes on!



THE MODERN GAELTACHT

The Gaeltacht of today differs greatly from the one left behind by the parents and grandparents that left to play such a prominent part in American society. Their generations survived on subsistent farming and fishing from small boats hulled in canvas and animal hides.

Today's Gaeltacht is very much part of the global, interconnected world, while yet retaining its cultural uniqueness. Industry and tourism are the main sources of income, but its heritage and past are fostered and cherished to this day.

Ireland's newest tourist route, The Wild Atlantic Way, from Donegal to Galway, Kerry to West Cork, passes through the Gaeltacht. This means that the visitor can get a taste of the country's culture and music as well as enjoying the hospitality and magnificent scenery.

Along the way you can avail of interpretive centres such as the one beside the cottage of Irish patriot Pádraic Pearse in Ros Muc, visit the newly opened immigrant centre in nearby Carna, visit the Aran Islands, take a mountain walk on the Twelve Bens, stop in any of the local villages, or swim Galway Bay, its beauty immortalized in every medium from song to Instagram!

Along the way you will see business parks set up through the efforts of Údarás na Gaeltachta where thousands of people are employed in a wide range of industries.

The setting up of the Irish language TV Station, TG4, in 1996 has seen Údarás na Gaeltachta encourage and nurture one of Europe's strongest audio-visual sectors, with the work of TV production companies such as Telegael, based in Spiddal, earning Emmy Awards among many other awards.



GTEIC – Gaeltacht Digital Network

The gTeic Gaeltacht Digital Network plays an important role in Údarás na Gaeltachta's strategy for 2018 – 2020 and will provide 30 innovation units with highspeed broadband connectivity, giving new technology companies an opportunity to establish or locate themselves in the rural areas which encompass the Gaeltacht.

These developments will give the Gaeltacht community an opportunity to return to or live in their home area by providing remote working opportunities at hot desks, co-working spaces or offices in these hubs. It will facilitate people who wish to develop a business concept and will provide access to mentoring and support also.

There are currently four digital hubs opened or in development in the Connemara Gaeltacht, with more to come onstream:

Gteic @ An Cheathrú Rua (Carraroe)

Gteic @ Carna

Gteic @ An Spidéal (Spiddal)

Gteic @ Na Forbacha (Furbo)



IONAD CUIMHNEACHÁIN NA N-IMIRCEACH CARNA

EMIGRANTS COMMEMORATIVE CENTRE CARNA

The Emigrants Commemorative Centre was officially opened on the 12th of May 2018 by the Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh, alongside the Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the Irish Government, Joe McHugh, T.D.

Carna and Cill Chiaráin (Kilkieran) are on the far west coast of Connemara in the West of Ireland. These two areas comprise the peninsula of Iorras Aithneach – ‘The Windy Peninsula’.

‘The Windy Peninsula’ is renowned for its rich traditions of music, ‘sean-nós’ singing, ‘sean-nós’ dancing, folklore and storytelling. It is a community steeped in seafaring and fishing over the centuries and it has an illustrious tradition of boat building – Galway hookers and sailing boats included. However, it was a tough place to live; both the land and the infrastructure were poor, and there was little means of achieving a regular income. Emigration was the only option for very many people. The Emigrants Centre gives visitors an indication of the role and impact of this emigration on the west coast.



PERKINS SQUARE, SOUTH BOSTON

Where West and East Broadway meet Dorchester Street, you will find Perkins Square.

What you might not know is that the heroic World War I soldier whom this square is dedicated to, Michael J. Perkins, was the South Boston-born son of immigrants from the Connemara Gaeltacht. Michael actually spent a summer in the Gaeltacht with his parent’s families before enlisting in the United States Army.

The heroic act for which he posthumously received his Medal of Honor saw Private First Class Michael J. Perkins single-handedly kill or wound several of the occupants of a German pillbox and capture about 25 prisoners while at the same time silencing 7 machine-guns. Unfortunately, Michael would pass away later that same day from injuries sustained from a bombing during his transport to the field hospital.

The memory of Michael J. Perkins lives on in South Boston. Along with Perkins Square you will also find, Michael J. Perkins Elementary School on Burke Street and Michael J. Perkins American Legion Post #67 is located on the southeast corner of O and Fourth Streets.



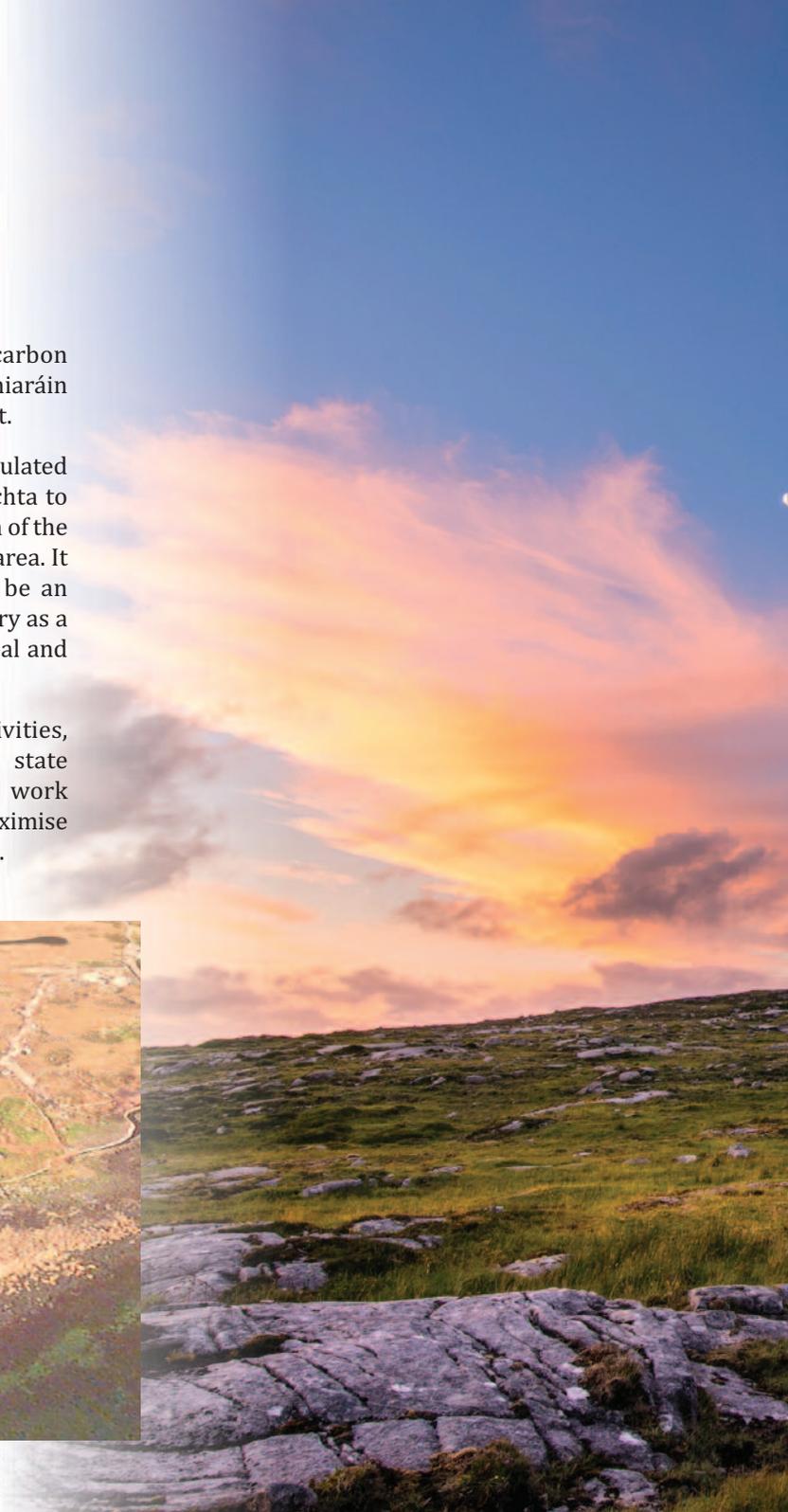
Páirc na Mara

MARINE INNOVATION PARK

Páirc na Mara will be developed as a state of the art, low carbon marine innovation park, located on a greenfield site in Cill Chiaráin (Kilkieran) on the southern edge of the Connemara Gaeltacht.

In consultation with key strategic partners plans will be formulated on a collaborative basis that will enable Údarás na Gaeltachta to develop a modern marine innovation park to drive the growth of the sector and enable economic and employment growth in the area. It is envisaged that the development of Páirc na Mara will be an important enabler for the development of the marine industry as a whole, not only in the Connemara Gaeltacht but on a regional and national level also.

The facility will encompass a variety of marine related activities, where productive sector enterprises, public bodies, state development agencies and the research community will work together to add value to their products and services and to maximise the development potential of the marine sector in the region.







Courtesy Catholic Memorial



CATHOLIC MEMORIAL SCHOOL, WEST ROXBURY

The Catholic Memorial School in West Roxbury is unique in its connection to the Connemara Gaeltacht.

Not only are some staff members and students of Gaeltacht descent, students have a direct opportunity to learn the Irish language under the tutelage of their Boston-born Irish teacher, Mary Concannon.

Mary, along with the school's President, Dr Peter Folan and principal Mr Thomas Beatty, is of Connemara descent. Thomas Beatty is actually a second cousin of this year's parade Chief Marshall, John C. Beatty. The connection with the Connemara Gaeltacht was highlighted in an article recently published in the regional Irish newspaper, The Connacht Tribune, highlighting the close Connemara and Aran credentials of the school.

A strong sporting school, appearing at the time in the Division One Massachusetts Super Bowl final at the Gillette Stadium, they are also building on sporting connections with the Gaeltacht.

The students are keen practitioners of the ancient Irish sport, hurling, the fastest field sport in the world, hurlers and recently enjoyed a visit to their school from Galway Gaeltacht hurling legend, Joe Connolly.

As part of their Irish language course, the students have visited Connemara to immerse themselves in the Irish language and in Gaeltacht culture. On their most recent visit, the school were guests of Údarás na Gaeltachta's educational subsidiary, Muintearas.

Údarás na Gaeltachta hopes to maintain this special connection with the school and build on the unique relationship Catholic Memorial have with the Connemara Gaeltacht.

IONAD CHULTÚRTHA AN PHIARSAIGH PEARSE'S CULTURAL CENTRE

This new visitor centre in Ros Muc in the heart of the Connemara Gaeltacht tells the story of one of Ireland's most renowned revolutionaries, Patrick Pearse, who was a key organizer in the 1916 Uprising that led to the War of Independence that secured Ireland her independence from Britain, and brings visitors on a journey of discovery through the language, culture and landscape of this stunning part of South Connemara.

Visit *Teach an Phiarsaigh*, the cottage where Patrick Pearse, writer, educator and leader of the 1916 Rising spent his summers, and take in an interactive exhibition in the new visitor centre which brings to life the unique landscape, language and culture of south Connemara that inspired Pearse's work. Learn about contemporary life in Connemara, and how the Irish language, Gaelic sports and traditional music are part of everyday life.

Údarás na Gaeltachta is proud of its lead role in the advancement and development of this project, in conjunction with the community of Ros Muc and the wider Connemara community. The Centre celebrates the Irish language, the cultural wealth of the Gaeltacht, local heritage and the beautiful landscape of Connemara.



Photo Seán Ó Mainnín
www.seanomainnin.com

ARAN ISLAND'S VISITOR CENTRE

Thirty miles off the mainland coast of the Connemara Gaeltacht, you will find the beautifully unspoilt Aran Islands. Each of the three islands, Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr, have their own distinctive charm and character. The islands are home to various historical forts, churches and monuments, along with flora and fauna distinct to each island. They are a living, breathing step back into the past.

Funding has recently been approved for a new visitor centre on Inis Mór - the largest of the three islands. The centre will feature an interactive exhibition featuring the broad history and traditions of the Aran Islands. There will be a smaller section featuring modern life on the islands, with a small café offering authentic food with locally sourced ingredients and produce.

CÓSTA GAELACH CHONAMARA & ÁRANN

A non-profit organisation promoting Connemara and the Aran Islands as a tourism destination, Cóstá Gaelach Chonamara agus Árann has been set up by local tourism industry stakeholders, in conjunction with Údarás na Gaeltachta. It has recently published a tourism map and created the connemara.ie website, which was officially launched by Mayor Martin. J Walsh in November of 2018. Their mission is to promote the region as a unique cultural and experiential destination. As a newly established business, Cóstá Gaelach Chonamara agus Árann have big plans for the future including implementing a marketing plan to boost the online presence of the tourism industry in the region as much as possible.

CONNEMARA'S ARCHIPELAGO VISITOR CENTRE

Connemara's Archipelago is a group of islands connected to the mainland by bridges in the Connemara Gaeltacht. An area rich in heritage and culture, Connemara's Archipelago is an Irish-speaking district with about 2,000 inhabitants. Located on the western seaboard, the land is poor and historically, the local people were dependant on the sea as a means of survival.

The Connemara's Archipelago Visitor Centre features the impressive heritage collection of local historian John Bhaba Jack and an interpretive display which will give the visitor an opportunity to learn more about the Archipelago core themes of the key renewable source of seaweed, the interconnecting bridges linking the archipelago islands to each other and the mainland, ancient sailing and rowing crafts, trade, the traditional and contemporary way of life on the islands with the Irish language always to the fore.



A selection of Gaeltacht companies

Media



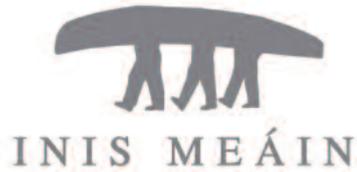
Scientific



Marine



Other



Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge





Photo: Solas na Gréine
www.SolasNaGreine.com

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