



## PERNET CLG



# REPORT 2022 - 2023

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# **PERNET CLG**

## **Pernet CLG**

### **Annual Activity Report**

**1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023**

#### **Vision Statement**

We believe in the value and dignity of each individual. We seek justice for all whose opportunity for a full life is denied. We seek our own personal growth, and the growth of others around us- our families, communities and the wider society.

92 Corrach Buí, Ragoon, Galway.  
Charity Registration Number 20082895  
Charity number CHY 20817  
Company number 527335  
[www.pernet.ie](http://www.pernet.ie)

Pernet CLG is governed by a Board of voluntary directors who do not receive any remuneration or compensation. The Board meets regularly and we take very seriously our obligation to ensure that all income is used effectively in support of our mission.

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# **PERNET**

The main object for which Pernet CLG is established is to advance and promote education, relieve poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in Galway City and other affiliated communities through the provision of facilities for youth work, adult education, networking, mentoring, life skills, spirituality and counselling services to those in need and to work with families, individuals and other community and charitable groups.

### **Theme of Friendship, Community & Celebration**

The theme of the year was friendship, community and celebration. It was in 2022/23 that society started to open up again fully and people began to interact and socialise again without restrictions. The value of connection, meeting and sharing our experiences is a fundamental need we all have and this year Pernet had a mix of in-person and zoom events that reached across a wide spectrum of society.

Examples of friendship, community and celebration are to be found in all of our activities, you will see that activities of the Redwood Spirituality group - 'Sessions on Creation', 'Trellis for the Soul', celebrating St Brigid's Day in Liscannor, following in St. Declan's footsteps or simply an outing to Knock, show that although our spiritual journey is individual we have company if we wish.

As always our education activities focus on individual and community development, whether it is empowering people with the skills to be active in community groups through Training for Transformation, or individuals coping with changes experienced through grief and loss.

We have experienced the joy of meeting freely again in 2023 and our celebratory group has been busy, please read about their activities.

In conclusion we hope that you enjoy reading this report and it encourages you to join us in our activities in 2023-24 yet again.

## Justice Group - Birch Tree

**Aim:** We believe in the value and dignity of each individual and we seek justice for all whose opportunity for a full life is denied.

## Slide Show with Bride on Mission work in Brazil.

On the 10th February 2023 some of Pernet's volunteers and friends met in the Westside Resource Centre to attend a power-point presentation by Sr. Bride Counihan on her mission work in Brazil. Bride described her experience and displayed many pictures of the work that was carried out and the impact it had on the community. In her previous visits she noted there was no water pump for cooking and farming/agriculture.

However, during 2022 a large pump was installed (due to the money raised) and this was such a joy to see as evidenced by the pictures she presented.

Moreover, strides had also been made in Health and Education which are two fundamental factors that are required for a community to break the poverty trap. It was wonderful to hear Sr. Bride highlight the positive effect these intervention programs had on the immediate environment and the ripple effect this will have for future generations. Bride's work and tenacity planted the seeds for growth and change in Brazil: she has also shared her gifts with communities in other nations including Madagascar. After the presentation the group shared some pizza while thinking about and giving thanks to Bride for her inspiring mission.



*Sr Bride Counihan in Brazil*

## Donation to Turkey & Syria

On the 6th February 2023, a terrible Earthquake hit both Turkey and Syria, resulting in the loss of many lives. We were dismayed and sad at the tragic event. Pernet had a small collection after Sr.Bride's presentation for the victims and their families. A total of €180.00 was collected and sent to Goal for Turkey & Syria Earthquake Fund, working in Homs, Al-Kafroum, Damascus and Aleppo. This was not pre-planned but the group present took it upon themselves with their generosity to help those less fortunate.



*Back left to Right: Helen McGreal, Kay O'Riordan, Connie Ryan, Mary Caulfield, Anne Costello, Peter Costello, John O'Dowd, Jean McSorley, Victoria Doyon, Front Row: Left to right: Bernie Morris, Nellie Casserly, Sr. Bride Counihan, Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan, Brendan Kelly, Maire Kelly, Missing from Photo: Frank Colohan and Kieran Burke*

## Redwood Tree – Spirituality Group

**Aim:** By walking in the footsteps of Jesus in guided meditation we discover Jesus' spirituality. He sided with the marginalized people of his time. The call is for us to Journey with Jesus in our lives.

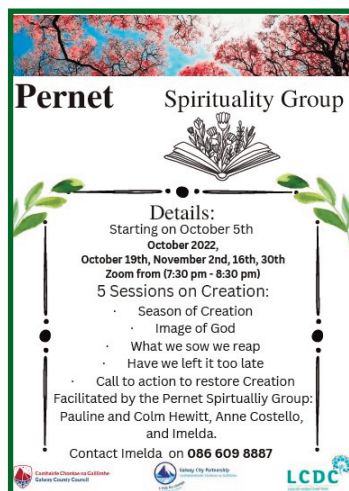


### Sessions on Creation

A five-session spirituality course took place on Zoom from October 5th - November 30th 2022, each evening session was 1 hour in duration and took place every 2 weeks. 12 people signed up to do the course. Participants lived both locally and nationally. The course was loosely based on the pamphlets that were created by Br. Declan Power, a member of the LSA Committee for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

Each week had a theme, Week 1 - The Season of Creation - Week 2: Made in the Image of God. Week 3: What we sow we reap. Week 4: Have we left it too late, Week 5: Week 5 Reflection: A call to Action.

The attendees became more acutely aware of the key elements of creation and the impact that it has on a local, national and global scale. Some of the core themes and reflections that were highlighted during the course included reverence, appreciation and awe.



### Week 1: The Season of Creation.

The beauty and wonder of nature were evident immediately and also the awareness that nature is a gift that needs to be treasured. Nature has a natural order, there is a time for planting, there is a time for reaping and the intelligence of nature is awe inspiring. We take a step back and appreciate it completely.



## Week 2: Made in the Image of God

The beauty that surrounds us in animals, plants and insects are symbolic of God's image. They are fundamental in keeping the ecosystem of our planet sustainable. If humans act as custodians for the planet it will survive. In a similar fashion to a human being, if plants and animals are surrounded by what they need, love and compassion, they will achieve their potential. It was mentioned that it is important that older people can act as mentors to younger generations on the necessity of treating our planet with the respect it requires.



## Week 3: What we sow we reap

This was a thought-provoking session as it focused on personal responsibility in the context of the environment and how the daily actions we choose can have either a positive or negative impact on the planet. The theme of custodianship was highlighted again as we are really only borrowing the planet for a period of time. One of the attendees asked a very interesting question, Has society become so used to convenience that the wider impact this could have long-term on the world is barely considered, is it the case that convenience beats sustainability?



**Week 4: Have we left it too late?**

The focus on this session was on whether we can still make changes to improve the negative repercussions climate change is having on the planet or is it too late. The importance of Pope Francis' comments on the role of contemplation regarding climate change was also discussed. The unequal burden that developing nations have been left with due to the actions of developed nations was highlighted. As the class finished each attendee was asked to pick a word, image or colour that came to them when they think of nature. The main message from the 4th session was that the importance of keeping our planet healthy cannot be overstated.

**Week 5: Reflection a call to action**

This session was different from previous nights as it focused strongly on our inner experience via the five senses, sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing and how we use these to enhance our experience of nature that is embedded in our daily lives.

Christmas was the theme that was used to explore these senses. Unfortunately, consumerism has taken a driving seat in many homes to the detriment of what Christmas is really about - taking the time to give thanks. The call to action was for people not to get caught up in small insignificant events and instead to take time to step back and tune into what really matters.

**Liscannor Trip – 1st February 2023**

This year Pernet CLG visited Liscannor in Co. Clare to celebrate St. Brigid's Day on 1st February 2023.



## Reflections:

*“On Imbolc twelve Pernet volunteers attended a beautiful ceremony to honour our Celtic Goddess St. Brigid, in the church in Liscannor, Co. Clare. It was presided over by Fr. Crosby who conducted a beautiful service marrying Christian and Celtic traditions. The children and parents in the area had made beautiful Celtic crosses and effigies of Brigid that were spectacular and adorned the altar and walls of the church.*



*Afterwards, we went to St. Brigid's Well which was as equally intriguing. Statues with years of beads and relics lined the walkway to the Well, looking almost Arabic in nature. We had a tea break in Doolin and a good old sing song on the bus home to finish off the day.*

*A well celebrated coming together in the spirit of the Celtic tradition, to plant new seeds, for our shared future and a healthy Mother Earth” Jean MacSorley*



*Back row: left to right: John O'Dowd, Mary O'Connor, Mike Philbin, Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan, Bernadette Cummins, Claire Traynor, Nellie Casserly*

*Front left to right: Bernie Morris, Grace Massah, Connie Ryan, Jean MacSorley, Peggy Mulvoy*

*Missing John Murphy. – Photo taken by Noel Ryan.*

**PLANT Report 2023**

*Sr Imelda our neighbour invited us to a trip to Liscannor to celebrate St. Bridgid's Day. We left Galway on a bus with people we did not know and we got to St. Bridgid's Church in Liscannor to celebrate Mass. It was one of the loveliest Masses I was ever at. The priest was lovely, humorous. St Brigid's crosses were all around the altar and we were shown how to make them also.*



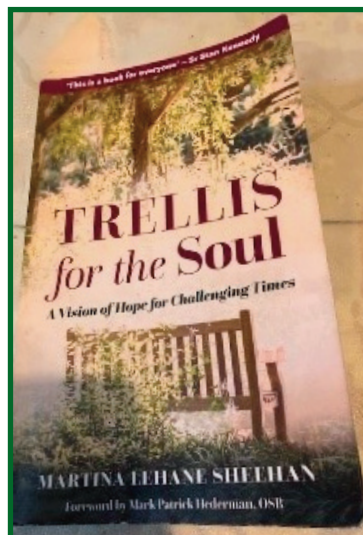
*Next stop was to the Holy Well which was fabulous and we said prayers for our intentions. On the way home we visited the Cliffs of Moher & Doolin. We stopped for our lunch and a walk about. On the way home we had great craic and a sing song on the bus with some lovely singers. By the end of it we had a lot of new friends, a great day was had. Looking forward to the trip again next year, Claire & Mike, Corrach Buí.*



## **Spirituality / Trellis Soul Care Group**

Our Soul Care group consists of 5 members: Sr. Imelda, Anne Costello, Jean MacSorley, Moira Byrne and Anne Harrington. We are reading and reflecting on Martina Lehan Sheehan's book "Trellis for the Soul" – A Vision of Hope for Challenging Times. We meet fortnightly on Zoom to reflect upon and share our findings, insights and experiences as we continue to explore this valuable book and strive to create our own personal soul support framework...our own soul trellis. Here are some sharings

*Sheehan has been a rich and nourishing experience for me and one for which I am very grateful. During these lovely from the group.*



*“Coming together to share our thoughts on different chapters of ‘Trellis for the Soul’ by Martina summer days we are surrounded by the abundance of nature. I find myself reflecting on various ideas from the book. The rose needed rich soil to grow and a trellis to support its branches laden with blooms. This reminds me to seek support in my life through quiet time to reflect and to read books that nourish me such as this one. When I find myself impatient with life and want answers and quick solutions, I think of nature and how it unfolds all in its own time, it cannot be rushed. I look forward to continuing this journey with my fellow travellers.” Anne Harrington*

*“To live a happy, awakened, fulfilled life is without doubt the heart’s greatest desire. Working with Martina’s book in the company of soulful companions is helping me to recognise, uncover and dismantle some of the blocks, patterns and conditioning that keep me ‘stuck’. In this way Martina’s guidance and wisdom is helping me to create a support system, a trellis which will sustain me on the journey. Here I embrace the invitation to ‘let go’ of the old ways and patterns that no longer serve me and instead choose the way of the heart. I’m finding the practices of mindfulness, lovingkindness and choosing to spend time in solitude very enriching. Looking forward to reconnecting in the Autumn.” Anne Costello*

*“Our reflections on Zoom have helped me to become aware of how old scripts can block my progress in taking creative small actions to live life more fully. Anything that gets repressed gets stored in the body where it can continue to subtly drain life’s energy. Martina states that there are four main ways in which we dissociate from uncomfortable inner feelings:- numbing out, distraction, excessive thinking and self-sabotage behaviours. If I create the right trellis (support) it will remind me to step back and choose what is important for my growth. It will also support me in making the best choices in line with my values. We all need to find an inner anchor, a place where we can feel at home, an inner place which will support and sustain us through all the ups and downs of life.” Imelda O’Sullivan*



## St Declan's Way

On 1st - 4th April 2023 Seven Pernet Volunteers and Friends went on a trip following in the footsteps of the 5th Century bishop St. Declan who started to bring Christianity to Ireland. He is the patron saint of the Déise. Legend has it that he left Wales and travelled to what is now known as Waterford to share his message. We walked some of pilgrim route which spans 115km from Cashel to Ardmore in Co. Waterford. It is incredible that over 1500 years later people can still follow in Declan's footsteps. He is buried in Ardmore and his teachings have left a lasting legacy.



*Nellie Casserly, Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan, Carmel King, John O'Dowd,  
Connie Ryan, John Murphy.  
Photo taken by Maura Gow*



**Saint  
Declan's  
Way**

**Ancient Pilgrim Path**  
Ardmore - Aglish - Lismore - Cappoquin  
Goatenbridge - Ardfinnan - Cahir - Cashel

Below is an account of the trip by John Murphy who took part in the pilgrimage:

*"After a smooth journey down, we stopped to visit the Rock of Cashel. We were greeted by the sun beating down on the limestone and wild heather. The old monastery towering above the landscape was a wonderful sight, after hours on the mini-bus. After a relaxing lunch we walked up the steep winding hill that leads to the Church. There was a 360-degree view for over 20 miles on all sides.*



*We then took part in an OPW tour and were given an up-close look at the inner older church and the carvings that have been there for centuries. An old sarcophagus or 'man eater' lay at one end with carved reliefs and mural nearer the ceiling of the church. These are some of the finest examples to be found in Europe. The oldest chapel was small and one could imagine the monks praying and singing in that room as part of their worship. We then left the old chapel and headed to the entrance of the new church, still many hundreds of years old. It was a vast open, almost gothic-styled cathedral. Having no roof, added a certain stoic majesty and spiralling awe to its appeal. We spent quite a bit of time just walking around and soaking up the atmosphere before going for a walk around the whole site. Not only a stunning reminder of our history but also our forgotten master craftsmen. We then drove a few miles to do a river walk between Cahir and Ardfinnan."*





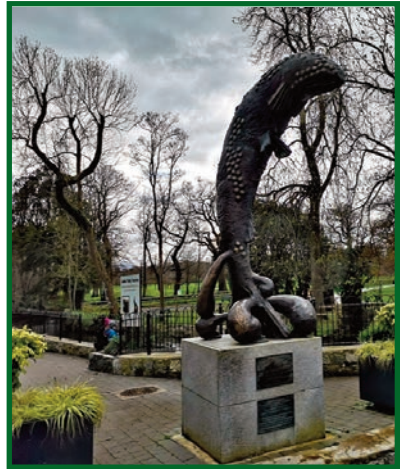
Old trees and rampant laurel were on one side and a large open green space on the other. The views of both sprawling woodland and manicured park were a wonderful contrast. The large flowing river only added to the magic of the place. All found it to be a lovely way to relax and wind down after the day travelling and sightseeing. All enjoyed seeing trees that were allowed to express their full potential. After this, we departed for Mount Melleray.



The drive was through some quite scenic areas of the country, lots of mountain hills, boggy streams, and rivers, punctuated by idyllic houses. Although the road was steep and windy at times, our driver John got us to Mount Melleray safely. It is a grand 1000-acre estate that once boasted over 150 monks actively working and practising on its grounds. We met our guest master, Br. Seamus who was very accommodating and did his best to address our enthusiasm and questions. Our rooms were lovely. The nature of our visit was to experience the lifestyle and atmosphere of the monks. Our first experience of this was vespers later that evening. We ended the first day with a two hour ramble around some of the immediate grounds. As well as being a working farm there was also evidence of what it was like in its heyday.



The grounds were littered with the remnants of the efforts of hundreds of monks toward a self-sufficient lifestyle that supported cloistered living. There were sheds full of farming equipment, bee hives, and ornate woodwork. The grounds were covered with intimate pathways leading to many open spaces, gardens, and orchards. There is even a huge quarter-acre pond surrounded by two-storey walkways. The majesty of the place, when it was in full working order, must be left to the imagination.



Breakfast each morning was carefully prepared by some of the monks and a great way to start our adventure. Mass on Palm Sunday morning began outside with a short sermon attended by all the monks. The weather was warm and bright which contributed further to the atmosphere. We spent about an hour with the monks before heading off to walk around a section of the Blackwater River near Lismore which is also part of St. Declan's Way. The river was swollen with recent rain and served as a reminder of the power and grandeur of nature. It took about two hours for the group to finish the route. We then had a picnic, enjoying the sandwiches and food the monastery had provided. We then took our time getting back to Mount Melleray for supper.

The highlight of the trip was a visit to Ardmore and to St Declan's Well and Stone. Ardmore was a stunning venue to end the journey. We parked near St Declan's Church and assembled for a walk along miles of sandy beach. The weather again was kind to us. We then walked up a short distance to see St Declan's Stone which has a long history in the local area. This was also the beginning of the walk up the cliffs to see Declan's Well and his original house, just on the edge of the cliffs. We then took a glorious five kilometre walk up the cliffs around Ardmore culminating at the site of an historic watch tower. We spend our last hour in a church dedicated to St Declan just off the beachfront. The condensed history of the area would fill many books and museums.



*We then headed to our final destination, Clancy's B & B. The accommodation and service there were as outstanding as it was comfortable. Once the bags were in the rooms, we headed out for a lovely meal at a local restaurant. They even let us bring in a few bottles of wine for our table. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the last day of our trip. A special thanks to Imelda and Noel for organizing the journey and to John our driver for his care and attention." John Murphy.*

## **Visit to Knock November 2022**

On 27th November 2022 Some Pernet volunteers, friends, and refugees took a Day Trip to Knock in Co. Mayo.

*"We set off to Knock on November 27th 2022, the first time since 2019, due to Covid. Previous visits were on August 22nd (Pernet Feast Day). My role on the bus was to collect the money for the petrol, (everyone paid a €5 contribution). I was also there to help anyone who needed assistance regarding their mobility.*

*It was a great day for us all and we got some time for some quiet reflection. Everyone also got the opportunity to attend confession. After that we had some lunch in one of the communal rooms, St. John's Care Centre. We then took a walk around the shrine and it was just as well we did because as soon as the group returned to the mini-bus there was a downpour." Connie Ryan*

*"I was delighted when Pernet invited me to come on their trip to Knock. We had a pleasant journey and a lovely time of prayers and reflection. I was anointed and it was a very pleasant experience for me. Then we had time for food in the St John's building. The food as usual was delicious and nourishing. I have to say a great day was had by all, there was a lovely sing song on the bus home. Well done to Imelda, Connie and Noel. Looking forward to next time." Bernie Morris*

*"We had a wonderful day in Knock on the 27th November 2022. Knock holds a special place in my heart as I went there every year as a child.*

*We arrived in good time and attended 12 noon Mass in the Basilica. Later we spent some quiet time in the Apparition Chapel. We had lunch together and took a stroll around the beautiful grounds.*

*I returned to Galway that afternoon with my soul nourished and my mind calmer. Heartfelt thanks to Noel, Connie and Imelda for organising this trip". Carmel King*

## Pine Tree - Family Group

**Aim:** To unite families with their community. [Parenting]

Some of Pernet CLG Volunteers are Parents and Grandparents and they were encouraged to share their experiences of this in 2023. One parent has a child who has additional needs (Autism) and it is also useful to read about the similarities and differences in being a parent and a grandparent.



### Being a mother to a child with Autism.

I first noticed signs of a developmental delay in my son at around 18 months old. I thought it was just a speech delay so I started speech therapy with him. At his 2 years check up with the public health nurse he couldn't fulfil any of the tasks and this is where Autism was first mentioned. I knew nothing about Autism at that time, but figured out very quickly the importance of early intervention. Unfortunately, the public system offers little to no help and in my opinion cannot be classed as a functioning service, so we took to the private sector for everything. It was (private) early intervention that helped my son tremendously, he was pretty much nonverbal until he was 4, but is now a very chatty 6-year-old. We still have a lot of work to do but he has come so far. I found speech therapy, occupational therapy and psychology to be the most helpful for us. We were also very lucky to find a preschool that specialised in language development. As a family we played a very active role in helping him to meet his therapy goals. We continued everything that was done in sessions and preschool at home, such as choice boards, visuals, visual routines and reward charts, these were extremely helpful in setting and reaching goals.

In parenting a child with Autism, I have learned a lot and learned how to be more patient. Understanding the importance of routine and setting clear boundaries is extremely important, teaching your child self-regulation techniques and knowing his triggers are also very important. I have also learned that what works for one child may not work for another. I had to throw away everything I thought I knew about parenting and discipline and start again, I also had to adjust my expectations of what I thought parenthood

would be like. We are on a very different journey compared to what social media tells you is the norm, but it's our journey and it has been a beautiful one. I have had the privilege of watching my child grow in confidence and begin to discover the world around him at his own pace, I've watched him become a big brother and am experiencing a totally different parenting experience with his younger brother, who is neurotypical, so I have had to adjust everything all over again because they both need totally different parenting styles. We have worked hard to help him reach age-appropriate milestones. As a first time parent you just assume your child will talk and do all the things you see other children doing, but when a therapist tells you they will do all they can but they can't guarantee your child will ever talk, that is a feeling that unless you have experienced it, you can never understand, from then every small step in the right direction becomes a huge win, for example when he pointed to something he wanted, when he began to gesture for things, when he learned how to communicate non verbally through choice boards and some sign language we celebrated this as a huge milestone for him and continued to support him and be grateful for every small gain until the day he finally called me Mama and then we pushed him harder. All the precursors to speech that just happen naturally with a neurotypical child, as I have experienced with my youngest son, I had to teach and go through every single step with my neuro divergent child or at least that was my experience, hours and hours spent working on everything and researching the best way to do things until eventually we started to hear his little voice. When my son was diagnosed, I was so scared of what the future would hold, Autism terrified me, I had no idea what I was doing or how to navigate any of it, but I did it. I understand him and his autism a lot more now and am no longer intimidated by it. I am a proud ASD mother .

If there are any parents reading this who are at the beginning of their journey and would like my advice, it would be to get an early intervention programme in place as soon as possible, the earlier the better. Make sure your therapist is focused on what your child specifically needs and is not just using the same approach for every child.

Remember that although you may have them in an early intervention programme you have to follow on at home with whatever the therapists



suggest, an hour once or twice a week is not enough, you need to have all care givers on the same page, following the same routine and the same rules. If you have any concerns about your child please do not “wait and see”; reach out to your GP or public health nurse and they can guide you in the right direction.

Be kind to yourself during the assessment process and if you receive a diagnosis for your child, it’s ok to feel whatever emotions you’re feeling, it doesn’t make you a bad parent if wish your child was “normal” (whatever that is) or yearn for a typical childhood experience like going to Santa, but you will learn how to embrace all of those experiences in a new way and enjoy them with your child.

Ask for help when you need it and take a break when you can. If you don’t have a support system in place or even if you do, but would like to have other people to talk to, there are some great support groups, such as Galway Autism Partnership or AslAm, join them. Talking to people who have similar experiences is invaluable to your journey, especially on the really tough days, there are also online forums.

Do not be afraid to speak up if you’re not happy, no one else is going to advocate for your child, you have to be the one to do it.

It’s not going to be easy, but it will be worth it. - Erica

### **Grandmother**

“I feel blessed to be a grandparent. We have a 4-year-old grandson and 9-month-old granddaughter in London. We also have an 18-month-old granddaughter and another on the way here in Galway.

It is a privilege to observe our own two sons as parents themselves, showing such love and care to their own children. In some ways it feels like passing on the baton of love down through to the next generation and also being there in the background to offer our own love and support.

It is a different world with different challenges to the world in which we raised our children. The wisdom of our years helps us to be more aware of the bigger picture in which love is still the most important value to follow.

We try to spend as much time as is practically possible with our grandchildren, we are able to care for our granddaughter in Galway regularly. Spending time together helps build our relationship with each other and helps them to feel loved and cherished. We also learn to sometimes step back a little as benign observers - to respect our own children's main role in deciding how to raise their children.

Being a grandparent is an opportunity for adventure and growth!" Moria Byrne

## Grandparents

"If we knew grandchildren were such fun, we would have had them first". This is a saying I have heard often but of course it's not possible – we must be parents first. When we have reared our children and if we are willing and able to have time with our grandchildren, it is a great gift. With the pressures of modern life, parents are often short of time and this is something retirees are blessed with and happy to share with their grandchildren.

The post war generation had great skills such as DIY, gardening, crafts and cooking which they passed on to us. It would be a shame if these skills were lost, thus another important role for grandparents. History is so much part of us and with the world changing at such speed it important to share our stories with our grandchildren. We can even cover multiple generations because we can tell our own grandparents' stories – it covers many years of history! These are just a few thoughts on the wonderful privilege of grandparenting so do take time to be with them and enjoy!" Anne Costello

## Celebratory Group - Maple Tree

**Aim:** To organise gatherings of families, friends and associates of the LSA to strengthen the bonds between us and to grow in solidarity. It is open to all who wish to participate and share in the spirituality.



## Social Gathering at Galway Rowing Club

Christmas – Santa Claus – Mince Pies

On the 20th December Noel and Imelda visited the houses of some Pernet Volunteers and friends to distribute mince pies and to bring good cheer and joy to the Christmas experience. Santa was very well received and it was so nice to see people with joy in their eyes laughing and smiling.



*Maíre & Brendan Kelly  
with Santa Claus*



*Kay & Brendan O'Riordan  
with Santa Claus*

**PERNET Report 2023****Imelda's 80th Birthday.**

Helen knew that Imelda did not want a big party for her 80th birthday and so she arranged a gathering with some directors and friends. Helen prepared a delightful meal with her sister and even accommodated vegetarians. A special birthday cake was also made for Imelda and it was enjoyed by all. It was a great evening to connect and celebrate with Imelda and to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the positive impact she has had in our lives. On the night Imelda expressed how blessed she felt being 80 and being surrounded with so much love and friendship.



## The Social Gathering on 28th May 2023

Our Annual Social Gathering took place in Galway Rowing Club on 28th May 2023. It provided an opportunity for the Pernet Community to come together and enjoy a night of entertainment and connect with each other especially since the restrictions around Covid-19 had been lifted.

Dancing the night away.

"The best night I have had in years,"

"A great chance to mix and mingle",

"A golden opportunity to get out and enjoy ourselves after Covid-19."

These were some of the very positive comments from the large crowd who attended

Pernet's social evening at the Galway Rowing Club recently. Hats off to organisers Sr Imelda O' Sullivan, and Noel Ryan, Pernet's event co-ordinator, for the event being such a resounding success.

It began with the screening of a film tracing the history of the Little Sisters of the Assumption and the significant contribution they made to society by caring for the sick, needy, and disenfranchised and for their sterling work in creating a better tomorrow for communities through education, training, and personal empowerment. A few familiar faces appeared on screen, including a number of well-known and highly regarded Sisters such as Imelda O' Sullivan, as well as local women Nellie Casserly, and Bernie Morris. Mary Walsh, Helen and the late Peter Dorai Raj and other people from Le Cheile's past.

An 80s disco was one of the highlights of the evening. DJ Will Softly took us back to the halcyon days of Freddie Mercury, Michael Jackson, and Cyndi Lauper. The latter's classic hit "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" summed up the mood of not just the women on the night - who never left the dance floor - but also the men who were encouraged to shake a leg, too. Moira Byrne looked every inch a style queen in a stunning shimmery outfit. She went on to outshine everyone with her moves on the dance floor, too, winning a much-deserved prize for tripping the light fantastic. Delicious hot and cold refreshments were provided to ensure the revellers remained in dancing form and the event concluded with a raffle. There were excellent prizes and people headed for home, energised, uplifted, and keen to find out when the next such event would take place." Mary O'Connor



*Márie Kelly, Ann Small,  
Pauline McLaughlin*



*Carmel King and Betty Staunton*



## PERNET Report 2023



*Srs. Mary Costello and Mary Kenny*



*DJ Will Softly*



*Mary Quinn, Mary Fahy, Mary Walsh,  
Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan,*



*Mary Quinn and Mary Fahy*



*Mary Ward, Richie Byrne, Seamus Cahalan and Deirdre Cahalan*



*Richie & Moira Byrne*



*John O Dowd & Pratik & Harshalla Kadam*



*John & Una O'Connell  
and Martin O'Brien*



*Nellie Casserly, Mary O'Connor,  
Bernie Morris*



*Pauline & Gerard Mcloughlin*



*Teresa McNamara, Noel Ryan,  
Connie Ryan*

## Education Group - Willow Tree

**Aim:** To give people hope and support through information and education – thereby encouraging empowerment.



### Training for Transformation (TFT)

The Training for Transformation Course with trainer Martin Kennedy took place on Zoom from 15th September 22 until 17th November 22 (9 weeks), with classes every Thursday from 7.30p.m. to 9.30 p.m. In total 20 people enrolled in the course from a wide range of nationalities and age groups including some Ukrainian refugees and those staying in the direct provision centre. Other attendees who participated in the course were from Galway and Dublin and heavily involved in community groups.



### Some feedback included:

*“Overall, a very valuable, interesting, and practical course in life-skills and reflection, showed how important it is to try new things and open one’s mind to think about and explore important personal and life issues in a structured, safe, and educational supportive environment.”*

*“I found the assertiveness week to be particularly helpful in developing my assertiveness skills, while also recognizing that everyone has needs and that win-win solutions are often better than win-lose outcomes.”*



### Some of the practical skills the participants learnt included:

“Listening skills. Being responsible in all situations.”

“The planning and organisational skills were very useful,”

“Facilitation skills.” “Communication and better understanding other people.”

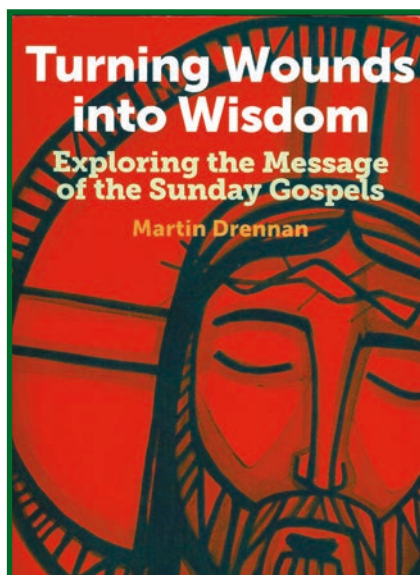
“Negotiating, working as a team, working towards a shared goal, sharing our collective experience and wisdom.”

“Learning to become more self-aware in conflict situations was really a helpful tool for me, and I hope it saves me lots of trouble in the future.”

### Coping with Life situations of Loss and Grief

A two-hour workshop on Coping with Life Situations of Loss and Grief took place on February 25th 2023 in St. Pio's Room in the Sacred Heart Church on Seamus Quirke Rd.

The workshop facilitator was Jacinta Murphy who is a psychotherapist and a bereaved parent herself. It provided an opportunity for those experiencing grief in a safe comfortable space to share their authentic experience with others who are also on this challenging journey. An excerpt from the late Bishop Martin Drennan's book *Turning Wounds into Wisdom* was read aloud,



## PERNET Report 2023

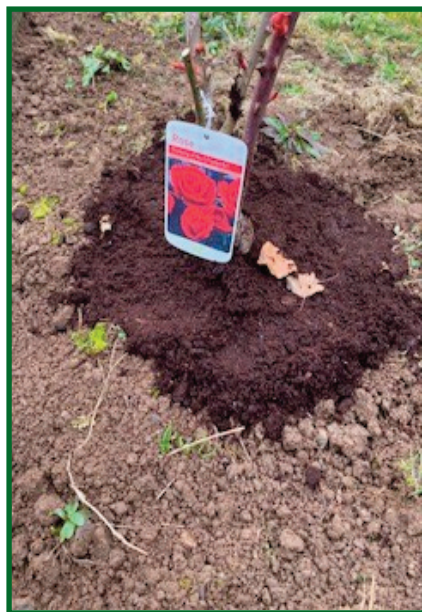
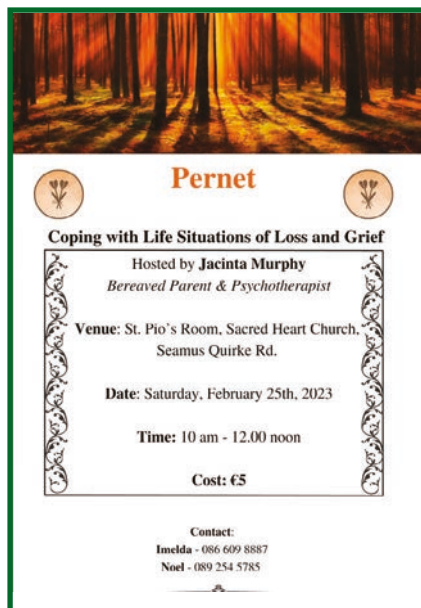
“According to Abraham Heschel there are three moments in grief- tears, silence and song. The death of a loved one leaves a gaping hole in our lives. It leaves a space that no other person can fill. Only God can effectively fill it. The deep sense of loss and separation brings tears. On the positive side death can serve as a sharp reminder- and most of us seem to need that reminder – that all is gift” Turning Wounds into Wisdom p.10

Everyone was presented with a candle to light at the end of the workshop to take home to honour their loved one. Each person was also presented with a copy of the poems “Tis a fearful thing” and “Be Comforted” (both of which were read during the workshop) to take home with them.

A participant from the workshop has said “It was lovely to gather together in a ‘soulful’ way and be present, for a little while, in each other’s journey.”

Other feedback included, “Everyone attending shared their thoughts, emotions and authentic experiences and this sharing I feel helped us all in our grief.”

Those present wrote a little message to the person who had died and these were collected by Jacinta to be buried in her garden under the rose bush that was bought for the occasion, this acted as a symbolic gesture to honour their loved one.





## Cookery Classes and Demonstration

Pernet CLG had four Cookery classes this year on 20th, 27th February and 6th, 13th March 2023. They took place in the Westside Youth Centre and volunteer chefs shared their wisdom and knowledge with the participants on healthy and nutritional foods. There was also an international element to the course as dishes from around the world were prepared and sampled. The dishes presented and enjoyed were, Broccoli Cheese Soup, Chicken Chasseur, Roasted Vegetables, Cheese Potatoes, Crepes Suzette, Stir Fry Mix vegetables, Tiramisu, Potato Gnocchi with Chicken and Spinach in a creamy sauce, Wali Coconut Chicken, Easy Bundt Cake and Spelt Bread.



*Mary-Ann Mullin*



*Marguerite O'Neill*



*Petra Holomková*

## PERNET Report | 2023

Here is some feedback from John one of the attendees at the workshop:

*"This year saw a wonderful rendition of Pernet's annual cookery classes. It seems that the secret ingredients to its success are wonderful hosts and enthusiastic attendees. We had over ten people regularly show up for our classes which featured many different international dishes. Many of these delicacies and treats were healthy and wholesome. Our volunteer chefs were careful to stress the importance of fresh vegetables and spices. Meals were prepared from scratch using a range of culinary techniques and styles. We also had much debate over the best places to get the various supplies for the meal. I can safely say that the local Asian grocery has never had such vocal ambassadors as some of our group. In all, we had distinct dishes from Africa, the Czech Republic, Italy, France, China, and Spelt Bread showcasing Irish cookery.*

*A special thanks to Isabel and Lana who hosted the group for the four sessions, and our gratitude to our voluntary chefs, Marguerite O' Nell , our Czech guest Petra Holomková and our Kenyan friend Mary- Ann Mullin. John Murphy.*



Left to right: Jean MacSorley, Nellie Casserly, Mary Caufield, Marie Palcic, Connie Ryan, Bernie Morris, Petra Holomková, Mary-Ann Mullin, John Murphy.

## Mahogany Tree - Fundraising Group

**Aim:** Pernet CLG has been set up and it has been granted charitable status and is registered with the Charities Regulator. It will engage in fundraising to support the running of the company and to provide bursaries for attendance at workshops and courses.



### Ideas night

On 8th November 2022, Pernet CLG had an ideas night in Imelda's house as different ways to fundraise for the organisation were discussed. Noel Ryan facilitated and a list of ideas was written down. Some have already been implemented, such as a sponsored swim and social gathering night.



*Left to right: Billy Coyne, John Murphy, Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan, Connie Ryan, Daragh Bogan, Mary Cunningham, Moira Byrne.  
[Photo taken by Noel Ryan]*

### Connie's Swim

On the 9th of December 2022 Connie Ryan took part in a sponsored swim to raise funds for Pernet activities. The event took place in the NRG Health and Fitness Centre. She swam for 1 mile and some Pernet Volunteers and friends were there to support her. After the event we had a small reception in the Bohermore Community Centre, The funds Connie raised are towards funding a Sign Language workshop to be organised by Noel.





## PERNET Report 2023



Left to right: Noel Ryan, Sr. Imelda O'Sullivan, Connie Ryan, Mary Cunningham, John Murphy,  
{Photo taken by Kieran Burke}

### Social Gathering in Galway Rowing Club

The Annual Social Gathering took place on 28th May in the Galway Rowing Club. Over 70 people attended the function and danced the night away. It was wonderful to see everyone connecting, chatting and enjoying themselves. The social gathering was also a fundraiser for Pernet activities. The ticket cost €10 which included a DJ who played music from the 1980s and some finger food. A raffle also took place with prizes to be won. Overall this evening was a big contributor to our annual budget.



## Joshua Tree – Youth Group

**Aim:** To help the youth to find a spirituality, to create a safe space where “individual differences” are respected and to create an environment that fosters talents.



### Horticulture:

We have been planning and liaising for a Horticulture project later in 2023. The idea is to offer 10 Transition Year students who are finding the school system is not meeting their needs an opportunity to engage in a practical course. Pernet are offering five sessions in horticulture as a way to open new life skills for them.



## Apple Tree – Hospitality Group

**Aim:** The main objective of this house (92 Corrach Bui, Ragoon, Galway) is that it would act as a focal point for the coordination of Pernet's Activities.



## Befriending Sessions:

People who attended the Workshop on Coping with Life Situations of Loss and Grief but needed more guidance were offered one-on-one befriending. Helen Dorai Raj was available to help those who needed some extra support.

This year saw new developments take place within Pernet. The house opened its doors to the volunteers to come and enjoy the ambiance of a comfortable setting, to take a welcome break from the pressures of life. Directors and volunteers meet while sharing a meal in Imelda's house.

The values of Pernet CLG have been enhanced and enlashed in the openness that is created by the volunteers. The cataloguing of Pernet books took place this year and now these can be used for study in education and spirituality. Noel has played a big part in this development to offer valuable service to Pernet outreach. He has used his expert knowledge on Zoom to provide training in this area for Pernet volunteers.

92 Corrach Bui is the centre of operations for many events and fundraising activities. It is also where the Board of Directors regularly meet.



*Helen Dorai Raj*

## Directors' Meetings:

The Directors met 8 times during July 2022 to June 2023. The AGM was on the 26th September 2022. An EGM took place on 8th October 2022. An ideas night took place on November 8th 2022.

The remaining five meetings were ordinary Directors' meetings.



*Lena Deevy*

## Ash Tree - Enterprise Group:

**Aim:** Networking, Mentoring/ Support, Career Development.

### Noel's experience of being volunteer /coordinator.



*"I started as a Pernet volunteer in 2021 and became project co-ordinator with Pernet CLG in August 2022 as work experience under Galway City Partnership. My role and experience with this organisation has been a fruitful endeavour for me as I have obtained new knowledge and skills about the inner workings of a voluntary organisation. I never fully appreciated how many areas are involved in operating and co-ordinating Pernet CLG. I have found that my organisation and communication skills have dramatically increased thanks to Imelda's assistance.*

*One of first tasks was recruiting participants for Training for Transformation. Watching the participants gain confidence as the course progressed was wonderful to see. The management and co-ordinating aspects brought me into areas such as interacting with the Charities Regulator and the Galway Volunteer Centre. I have enjoyed seeing a project evolve from a simple idea to full completion. I conducted a Zoom in course May 2023 and it was great seeing attendees gain new knowledge and skills.*

*This experience has really cemented the important role that friendship and fundraising play in keeping the organisation functioning. The many volunteers and friends of Pernet are so deeply valued and cherished as without them the various events would simply not take place. The trips both locally and nationally have further solidified the vital role community has in our society, enabling many people to gather and help each other and then connect. This role of community is even more necessary especially since Covid cut off those vital links.*

*I have been impressed with and appreciate immensely the expertise and knowledge that more senior and experienced members and directors of Pernet have shared with me when I was stuck or needed some clarification on certain issues. Help was available with a simple email. I am also grateful to Helen McGreal for acting as a mentor to me and giving me pointers about career development. I am now better prepared to take on co-ordinating future events and projects with more ease. I have also found that there are more resources available to voluntary organisations that I had previously thought."*-Noel

## National Volunteer Management Conference: 26 April 2023

John Murphy attended this conference on behalf of Pernet.

*Firstly, thanks to Pernet for sponsoring me to go to the event. It was held at the Institute for Lifecourse and Society, part of the UG campus. The primary reason for my attending was to represent Pernet at a national celebration of volunteering. There were hundreds of people representing many charities from around the country. Networking was the event's primary aim, but most people just enjoyed talking to like-minded people. I was fascinated to hear about people teaching languages to refugees or rescuing huskies. Everyone had a personal connection to the charity they were representing. Listening to some of the guest speakers was also refreshing. Probably the one thing that I will take with me is a lesson from one of these talks. It is that charities should instil a sense of 'Wonder and Awe' in those that volunteer with them. Placing just as much emphasis on the volunteers as the overall goals of the charity is interesting to me. It can be easy at times to get lost in the doing and not the being of a project. There's a nice harmony to it. Also referenced was the changing style of youth volunteering and emergent areas, such as 'micro volunteering'. I really enjoyed the talk about engaging and attracting volunteers with disabilities. Charities were encouraged to proactively seek out disabled people who may want to contribute their efforts. This event was enjoyable, immersive, and definitely worth attending."* John Murphy



## LSA Family Pernet Connection Group - Mustard Tree

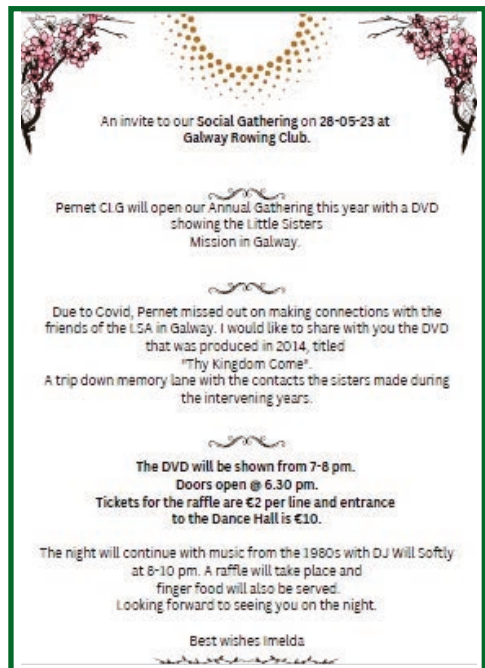
**Aim:** We hold in common our actions with Little Sisters of the Assumption and recognise in them a kindred spirituality. We support their mission of service to the family and to the wider community.



In May 2023, Pernet CLG hosted four informal sessions by listening to a CD on the history of the Little Sisters of the Assumption at 92 Corrach Bui. The discussion focused on the Mission of Etienne Pernet and Antoinette Fage in preparation for visiting Paris next year.

*"Etienne Pernet was a humble man who understood the needs of the most vulnerable people, he would listen to their needs and concerns with empathy and compassion. Having only briefly looked/studied Etienne, I feel the following comment is apt "There are people who rise up, free themselves and commit as servants of the community feeling that they are included and inclusive, - leaders who speak out and take initiatives and who in turn discover the meaning of life". Thy Kingdom Come – Pernet Spirituality for Lay People p27 – Connie Ryan*

*"As I understand it Pernet Spirituality is about seeing the world through the eyes of Jesus and to recognize that everyone we meet is part of the body of Christ. In a concrete way it means taking Jesus out of the tabernacle and seeing him in everyone we meet. It means being open to supporting, encouraging, accepting and engaging with people we come across in our day to day lives. It can be as basic as giving a listening ear to anyone we meet*



*who is struggling with some aspect of their life.” Helen Dorai-Raj*

*“Recently I was very happy to join a small group of like-minded people to discuss the LSA spirituality where I have been inspired by the human virtues of the LSA Founders Etienne Pernet and Antoinette Fage. At one of the gatherings in Sr. Imelda's home there was some debate on the non dualist system. I found this session so empowering. The non dualist mind knows that we are all inter connected and that if I make a small change it can affect others in a very positive way. The non dualist mind always says "Is there enough for all"*

*I found our meetings so encouraging and empowering that I hope we will be able to continue our meetings in the Autumn. I thoroughly enjoyed the cup of tea and Sr. Imelda's gorgeous scones afterwards too!” Carmel King*





## AGM 2022

Back row Left to right – Noel Ryan, David Keane, Sr. Imelda O’Sullivan, Billy Coyne, John O’Dowd, Isabel Daly, Daragh Bogan.

Front: Left to right Connie Ryan, Mary Cunningham, John Murphy, Kay O’Riordan, [Missing Nellie Casserly] Photo taken by Kieran Burke.

## PERNET Report 2023



### Website: [www.pernet.ie](http://www.pernet.ie)

Our website allows us to keep our community up to date on our activities. It also publicises our mission statement and the work of the Little Sisters of the Assumption. Thanks to Phil Knudsen-Thomas who designed it and Daragh Bogan/David Keane who keep it up to date.

We are on Youtube : Pernet Plant Galway  
Publications include Thy Kingdom Come: Pernet Spirituality for Lay People by Marian and Honora Meade. Hard copy or download from our website.

### Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Pernet CLG was held on Monday 26th September 2022 in the Westside Resource Centre from 7-8 pm.

Present were: Noel Ryan, David Keane, Imelda O'Sullivan, Billy Coyne, John O'Dowd, Isabel Daly, Daragh Bogan, Connie Ryan, Mary Cunningham, John Murphy, Kay O'Riordan, Nellie Casserly, Kieran Burke.

Sr Imelda O'Sullivan, Billy Coyne, Mary Cunningham, John Murphy, Daragh Bogan, Moira Bryne, Connie Ryan, Noel Ryan, Kieran Burke, Kay O'Riordan  
We have two new directors, Peter Costello (Chairperson) Carmel King (Secretary).  
Stephen O'Neill and Daragh Bogan have resigned.

## *Thank you*

Thanks to all the directors for their excellent support to Pernet: Peter Costello, Carmel King, Billy Coyne, Mary Cunningham, John Murphy, Moira Byrne, Imelda O'Sullivan, Daragh Bogan, Stephen O'Neill,  
Thanks to our excellent tutors/providers, Martin Kennedy, Helen McGreal, Pauline & Colm Hewitt, Anne Costello, Jacinta Murphy, Marguerite O'Neill, Petra Holomokova, Mary Ann Mullin, Noel Ryan. Helen Dorai-Raj.

## PERNET Report | 2023

Thanks to our volunteers, David Keane, Connie Ryan, Teresa McNamara, Honora Meade, Kay O'Dwyer, Noel Ryan.

Pernet is grateful for the backing of Declan Varley and Mary O'Connor of the Galway Advertiser and Keith Finnegan and Yvonne Kelly Lloyd of Galway Bay FM to promote our activities.

Thanks to Sharon Togher and Louis Donnellan and staff of I Supply, Caroline Diviney of Bohermore Community Project and Donnacha Foley, Helen, and Sean of Volunteer Galway for their supportive services.

Thanks to John Murphy for his work in designing posters and engaging in publicity.

Thanks to Isabel Daly of Youth Work Ireland Galway.

Thanks to Ciara Coy, Siobhan Mc Andrew, & Sean Lynch. of Galway City Partnership for their support throughout the year.

Thanks to Galway City Council in particular Emma Johnston, Liam Kitterick, Tiarnan McCusker, Cliona Clancy, & Brian Barrett for their financial support with the following grants: Community Activities Fund, Social Inclusion Grant, Community Support Fund.

Thanks to Paddy Collins of Elwood Office Supplies and Ronan Tomas of Zenotec for their printing and IT support.

Anne Keady & Trish Turke and the support office staff at the Eglinton Refugee Centre Salthill.

Thanks to Eugene Hayes who prepares our financial accounts.

Thanks to Bernard O'Halloran of the Galway Rowing Club.

Thanks to DJ Will Softly for the providing the music for the Social Gathering.

Thanks to John O'Dowd for being the minibus driver for the many trips throughout the year.

Thanks to Fr. Kevin Keenan & Bernie Scally of Sacred Heart Church. Thanks to Una Casburn and colleagues at the Westside Resource Centre

Thanks to Pat Piggot (AIB), Louise Shields (Credit Union) Purcell Construction,

Thanks to Joe Healy & Sean Leyden and other subscribers for their support.

Thanks to NRG Health and Fitness Bohermore for the use of the pool.





## Pernet ACCOUNTS

***Income & Expenditure for the year ended 30th June 2023*****INCOME**

Grants	2,219.00
Donations	1,280.00
Tax Refund	757.88
TFT	800.40
Subscriptions	1,010.00
Classes	90.00
Swim	850.00
St. Declans Way Walk	1,310.00
Social	1,410.00
Transport	60.00
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>€9,787.28</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

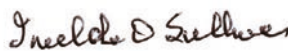
Tutor Fees	1,675.09
St. Declans Way	1,268.31
Vouchers	254.00
Rent	469.00
Accountancy Fees	389.00
Zoom	137.66
Insurance	407.74
iSupply	661.45
Stationery	397.40
An Post	175.00
Website	173.64
Catering & Demos	618.09
Office equipment	710.26
Transport	55.00
Bank fees	95.01
Entertainment Social	250.00
Sundry	35.39
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>€7,772.04</b>

**Bank reconciliation**

01.07.22 Opening bank balance	€2,119.97
Add surplus for year	€2,015.24
30.06.23 Closing bank balance	€4,135.21



Secretary: Carmel King



Director: Imelda O'Sullivan





## **Pernet Missionary Prayer**

[www.assomption-psa.org](http://www.assomption-psa.org)

God of love  
and of life in abundance,  
we come to you as we are,  
diverse in our time of life  
and in our cultures.  
Companions in hope,  
we move forward leaning on each other,  
attentive to your presence.

May your Spirit guide us  
on this journey through life  
and enkindles in us, trust,  
compassion, and availability.

Help us to cultivate the interiority  
that enables us  
to go out to meet others,  
seeking life,  
even in the midst of confusion  
and uncertainty.

Strengthen us in the daily practice  
of mutual care  
and in the mission of caring for creation.

Give us the courage to cross  
the boundaries of our differences,  
and to build bridges of communion.  
May no life be a stranger to us,  
and no pain leave us indifferent.

Lead us, like Ruth and Naomi,  
towards a future of blessing  
and fruitfulness,  
where we can offer ourselves  
as mediators of a more fraternal  
and just world,  
as you envision it.

Amen