

# THE SVP BULLETIN

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

SUMMER 2025

The Voice of Social Justice in Ireland



**TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE  
DOING SOMETHING YOU LOVE**

**CHOOSING – A TASK AND AN OFFICE**

**PILGRIMS OF HOPE**



Principal founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Frederic Ozanam

## THE SVP BULLETIN

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St. Vincent de Paul Ireland

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"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others."

– Nelson Mandela

## Rose McGowan

### Time flies when you are doing something you love

Doesn't time fly is an expression you hear frequently in conversations in Ireland.

As I approach the final months of my tenure as your National President thinking about time flying is very appropriate. It has been five years, but sometimes feels like five months, since I first had the honour of being elected your National President.

It has been a tumultuous period for the Society with battling the fallout from Covid-19 which included inhibiting our key work of visitation and the loss of so many members; dealing with an increasing level of governance placing demands on Trustees. Together we celebrated our 180th anniversary demonstrating the resilience of the Society and a new strategy was introduced which is a guiding framework that helps us adapt to the evolving needs of those we serve.

The key highlight over the past five years for me was the opportunity the role of National President gave me to travel the country meeting so many exceptional people who have given so much in the service of others. From Cork to Belfast, Donegal to Wexford and many places in between I had the privilege to meet and hear about the stories and work of our members, volunteers and staff. It has been uplifting and confirmed to me that their work will continue to keep the Society of Saint de Paul at the forefront in Ireland of providing help to those in need.





In Ireland today with all the talk of economic boom and surpluses it might appear that people struggling on a week to week basis are a small minority. But the reality is that about 20% of people are at risk of poverty, living on a week to week basis. Some are unemployed, others are in poorly paid work or are ill or disabled or new to Ireland.

A huge swath of people are single parents and have children unable to access third level education not because of a lack of ability but because of the financial hardship suffered by their family. It has been a source of great pride to see so many Conferences actively promoting and using the SVP Further Education and Training Bursary Fund that is there to help such young people. The fund can help with grants for books, materials, travel, course fees and the other expenses which can push learning out of reach for students struggling to access further education.

Of course there have been challenges as you would expect in such a large and diverse organisation with around 13,000 members, volunteers and staff and one which receives almost 250,000 calls for help in a year. There have been some difficult decisions made but they have always been taken in the best interest of the Society and in accordance with the governance and legal conditions under which, like all other charities, we operate.

Helping those who are living in poverty or struggling is the Vincentian Way inspired by our founders including Blessed Frederick Ozanam and Saint Vincent de Paul. It's characterised by a strong commitment to serving the poor and marginalised, combined with a deep faith and spiritual life.

I have seen that SVP members, volunteers and staff have the resilience, compassion, and shared purpose to continue their work with a sense of hope and dedication to improve the lives of those they serve. I have also seen at first hand the generosity of the Irish public for our work and the esteem in which the Society is held by peers, elected officials and others with whom we interact.

I wish my successor in this role every good wish. I have no doubt that they will receive the high level of support which I received from the National Management Council, members, volunteers and staff. Change is now a natural part of life. But with every change comes new opportunities.



**Rose McGowan**  
National President,  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul







## SSVP expresses its profound sorrow over the passing of Pope Francis and welcomes Pope Leo XIV

The Council General International of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) joined the universal Church in mourning the passing of Pope Francis, which occurred on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 7:35 a.m. in his residence at Casa Santa Marta, at the age of 88.

Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, was a tireless defender of the most vulnerable and marginalised. His life and pontificate were marked by a deep commitment to the service of the poor, social justice, and mercy. Since his election in 2013, he inspired millions with his call for a *“Church which goes forth,”* dedicated to those who suffer and open to constant renewal.

The SSVP recalled with deep gratitude the closeness and unwavering support Pope Francis always showed toward SSVP. During his time as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he maintained a close bond with the Society, personally accompanying members on home visits to families living in poverty – an experience that deepened his affection for and closeness to the Vincentian charism. As Pope, he publicly recognized the work of the SSVP on numerous occasions, describing it as “an extraordinary force for good in the service of the poor.”

On several occasions, Pope Francis received international representatives of the SSVP in private audience, consistently encouraging the Society to persevere in the cause for canonisation of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and to remain steadfast in its daily commitment to those most in need.

Following the death of Pope Francis almost three weeks later, on May 8, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected as the new Pope, assuming the name Leo XIV. Born in Chicago in 1955, he becomes the first American pontiff in the history of the Church. His election has been warmly welcomed in Latin America, where he spent much of his pastoral life.

A member of the Order of Saint Augustine, Prevost was ordained a priest in 1982 and began his missionary work in Peru a few years later. He lived there for over three decades, becoming deeply integrated into the country’s ecclesial and social life. He obtained Peruvian citizenship and became a prominent figure within the local Catholic community. In 2014, Pope Francis appointed him bishop of the Diocese of Chiclayo.

In Rome, he has held high-level responsibilities, including Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. With a pastoral approach marked by closeness, simplicity and dialogue, he is seen as a continuation of Pope Francis’s global and reformist vision.

In his first address as Leo XIV, he reaffirmed his commitment to social justice, welcoming migrants, including marginalised communities, and combating climate change.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul joins the joy of the entire Church and prays that the new Pope may have a fruitful pontificate in the face of the great challenges the world is currently facing.





# Choosing – a Task and an Office

by **Paschal Scallion CM**  
SVP Spiritual Advisor



In 2005, when Cardinal Josef Ratzinger was elected Pope, taking the name Benedict XVI, his first words to the crowds in St Peter's Square were,

*"The Cardinals have chosen me, a poor labourer in the vineyard..."*

People were surprised at his choice of words. Who chose him? The Cardinals? What about the Holy Spirit?

Pope Benedict's words were deliberate, though, because he knew the truth of the historical maxim at work in the Church from the beginning, Christ chose the Apostles but the Apostles chose their successors.

The world at large, and our world closer to home has been in the throes of making choices lately. As I write, the process of choosing a new Pope has concluded and closer to home the Society in Ireland is choosing a new National President.

To be in discipleship with Jesus Christ means being willing to deliberate, to anguish even, over important choices because often so much can be at stake. As disciples we rely on our God given aptitude and on the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The relationship reflects not only our faith in God but the Lord's faith in us.

In other words, nothing just happens. The work of the Society is the result of deliberate choices carefully weighed and followed through on with purpose. Our decisions to leave the house and go to our conference meetings and on our visits are more than routine.

*The point is, the work of the Society lives and breathes with the members.*

The Society makes its decisions based on the actual witness and judgment of members and has done so since it's foundation.

In faith we profess that the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit has enabled us to see needs others don't. In hope we decide to act and in love we do, confident that, in the words of the Psalm, the Lord will give success to the work of our hands.

Our choosing is a Task and an Office. We are more than we may often imagine. We are the Body of Christ, his breath and strength, his compassion and help, his divinity in our humanity.



## 2025 Circular Letter

The International President General of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul has published the 2025 Circular Letter, a document outlining the guidelines and reflections for this year. In this epistle, emphasis is placed on the importance of Vincentian friendship, service to the most in need, and personal transformation as pillars of social commitment.

This year is particularly significant as it has been declared a Jubilee Year by Pope Francis under the theme

*"Pilgrims of Hope", reinforcing the call for spiritual renewal and commitment to social justice."*

The letter also highlights the Society's progress in training, youth engagement, governance, and international solidarity projects, with a special focus on the fight against poverty and the impact of climate change. Rooted in the Vincentian spirit of friendship and charity, the letter invites members to embrace transformation through a new formation program, Growing Together in Faith, which fosters deeper spiritual reflection and action.

The President also honors deceased Vincentians, expresses gratitude to outgoing and incoming members, and thanks families for their sacrifices. He closes with a blessing for the Vincentian Family, reaffirming their shared mission to bring hope and love to those in need.





# Looking Ahead: Shaping Ireland’s Next Social Inclusion Strategy

by **Issy Petrie**  
Research and Policy Officer



‘After years of ad hoc payments and temporary supports, we need to move towards permanently poverty-proofing our social welfare system’

We are halfway through what has so far been an eventful decade, and we begin the second half with a new Government in place. As 2025 progresses, Ireland’s current social inclusion strategy is also coming to an end.

Developed during a time of unprecedented global and national challenges, the Roadmap for Social Inclusion has spanned the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and Ireland’s humanitarian response, and a cost of living crisis driven by inflation and rising energy costs. While there have been some notable achievements, the strategy has ultimately fallen short of its most ambitious goal: reducing consistent poverty to 2%.

At the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP), we are keenly aware that for many people the last few years have brought serious hardship, and for many people prices are just too high to access the basics. Research and data from the beginning of this year shows that for significant numbers of people the ‘crisis’ caused by the rising cost of living is not over – it is ongoing, and so our responses must support people to truly recover and adjust to higher prices.

## Too many people are still struggling to access essentials

At St Vincent de Paul, we recorded around 248,000 requests for assistance in 2024. The fact that we continue to see this level of need perhaps mirrors findings from the ESRI in their new report *‘The Response of Low-Income Households to the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Ireland’* published in April of this year. This research drew on an in-depth survey of low income households and found that significant numbers of people had to undertake ‘risky responses’ with impacts that could have a long lasting legacy, such as taking on debt, falling into arrears, or using up savings. The report warns that this could continue to impact households into the future, limiting financial resilience and the capacity for households to invest in things like education and healthcare.

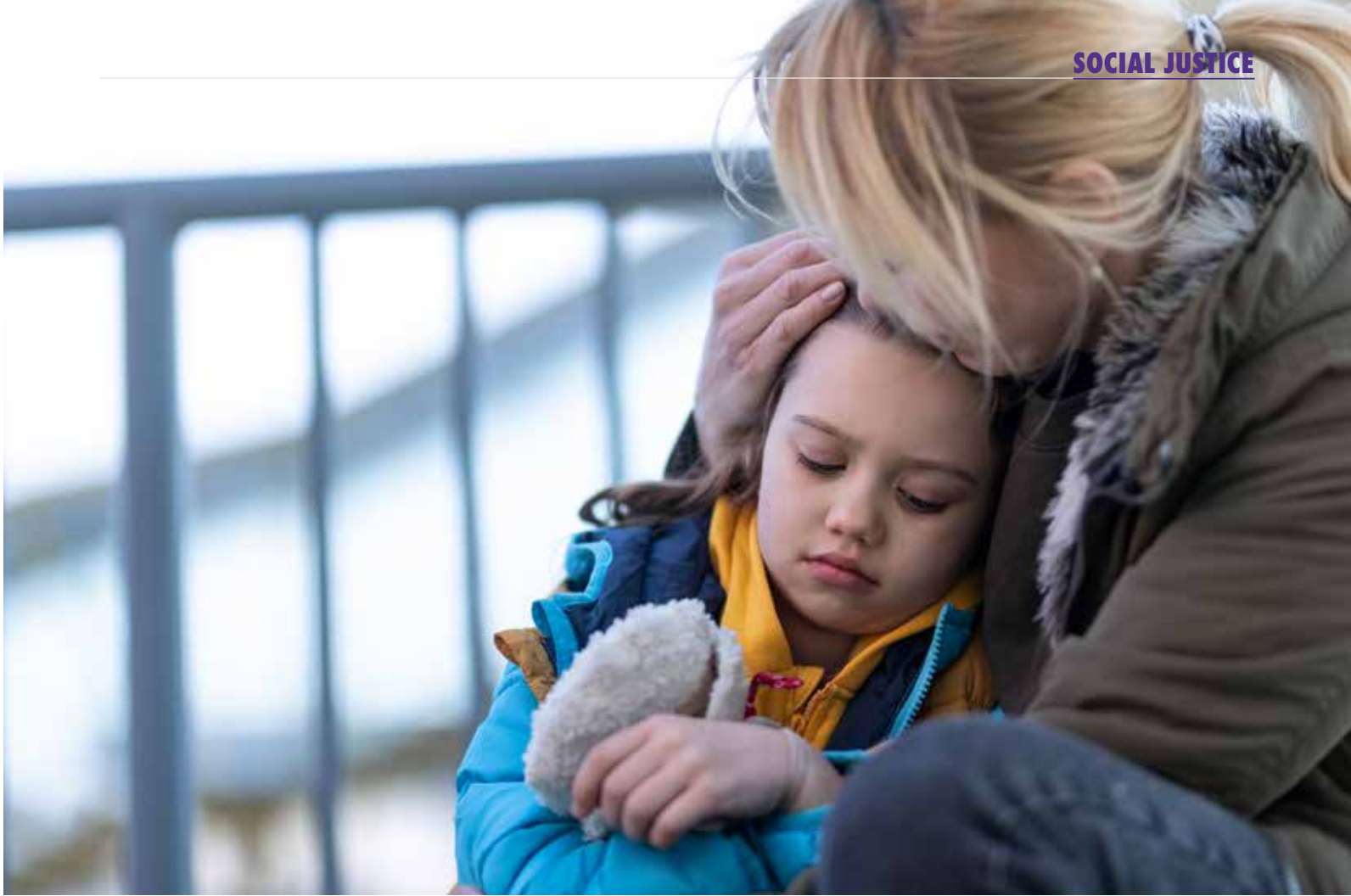
The most recent national poverty statistics also contain a number of red flags, clearly demonstrating there must be a continued focus on improving low income households’ incomes and access to essentials. The overall rate of income poverty increased slightly to 11.7% and the consistent poverty measure also increased – rising to 5% from 3.6% the previous year. This was driven by higher numbers of people who are living below the poverty line going with basics (ie. living in deprivation): the rate of deprivation amongst those below the poverty line rose from 33.8% in 2023 to 43.1% in 2024. Children are disproportionately affected and alarmingly, 8.5% of children are now living in consistent poverty. A deeper dive into the data reveals stark inequalities: the rate is 6% for children in two-parent families, but this rises to a shocking 11% for children in one-parent families.

## What should a new strategy include?

These figures underscore the urgent need for a new, more effective strategy – one that tackles poverty head-on and addresses the root causes of inequality. At SVP we are committed to playing a central role in shaping this next phase and we are working closely with the Department of Social Protection to help design the new strategy.

We are preparing a detailed submission that outlines our priorities and offers practical, evidence-based solutions. A key focus of our recommendations will be reorienting the social protection system towards evidence-based annual increases:

- There must be a strategic focus on moving the social protection system away from ad hoc increases in some years and freezes the next. This is not a sound basis on which to reduce poverty or deprivation.
- Instead, payments, thresholds and disregards should be benchmarked against what it costs to live in Ireland according to a Minimum Essential Standard of Living and the process should be distanced from the annual Budgetary cycle – ensuring that supports are adequate, stable, and based on need rather than political negotiation.



- The presumption each year should be that payments, thresholds and disregards are index-linked to keep up with changing costs.

On 8 May, SVP took part in the Social Inclusion Forum hosted by the Department of Social Protection at Croke Park. We were proud to facilitate the Families and Children workshop, where we heard directly from people with lived experience of poverty, as well as community organisations and service providers. These insights will be vital in shaping a strategy that is grounded in reality and focused on impact.

During the last strategy, SVP played a key role in its implementation. We contributed to the Roadmap for Social Inclusion working group, the technical advisory group, and the food poverty working group. We look forward to continuing this level of involvement and ensuring that the voices of those we serve are heard and reflected in national policy.

## The next five years

The next five-year strategy must be bold, inclusive, and transformative and we urge this new government to be

ambitious. It must address the structural barriers that keep families in poverty and ensure that no child is left behind. We will submit our detailed recommendations to the government, built on the experience of our Membership, in the coming months.

Together, with a shared commitment to justice and compassion, we can build a more inclusive Ireland – one where everyone can thrive.

## Look out for our new Social Justice team newsletter

Members may have seen our new Social Justice team newsletter which is sent out at the end of each month. This is a great way for us to share what policy, research, and advocacy work we have been up to during the previous month. This includes newly published submissions or reports, links to events we speak at or recordings of media appearances, and a glimpse ‘Behind the scenes’ at some of the work we do day-to-day. Look out for the next edition heading your way soon!

1. Programme for Government lacks specifics to reduce poverty, says SVP as calls for help hit almost a quarter of a million last year - Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
2. The response of low-income households to the cost-of-living crisis in Ireland | ESRI  
3. Poverty Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2024 - Central Statistics Office

# Do SVP Charity shops have a role to play in reducing carbon emissions?

by **Dermot Gilloway**  
National Retail Development Manager SVP



## PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT



As we honour the legacy of the late Pope Francis, we recall his deep commitment to fighting environmental destruction as well as poverty, inequality, and social division. Pope Francis reminds us that damage caused to our planet has far reaching implications for society as well as the environment and disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable communities. The teachings of Pope Francis are a timely reminder for us as Ireland struggles to meet legally binding carbon emission targets for 2030 and 2050.

### Paris Climate Accord

The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015 but implemented from 2016 was a landmark international treaty under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to combat climate change by securing a more sustainable low carbon future.

Signatories including Ireland and the UK have committed to working towards “net zero” by 2050. As part of this commitment, any emissions produced would be cancelled out

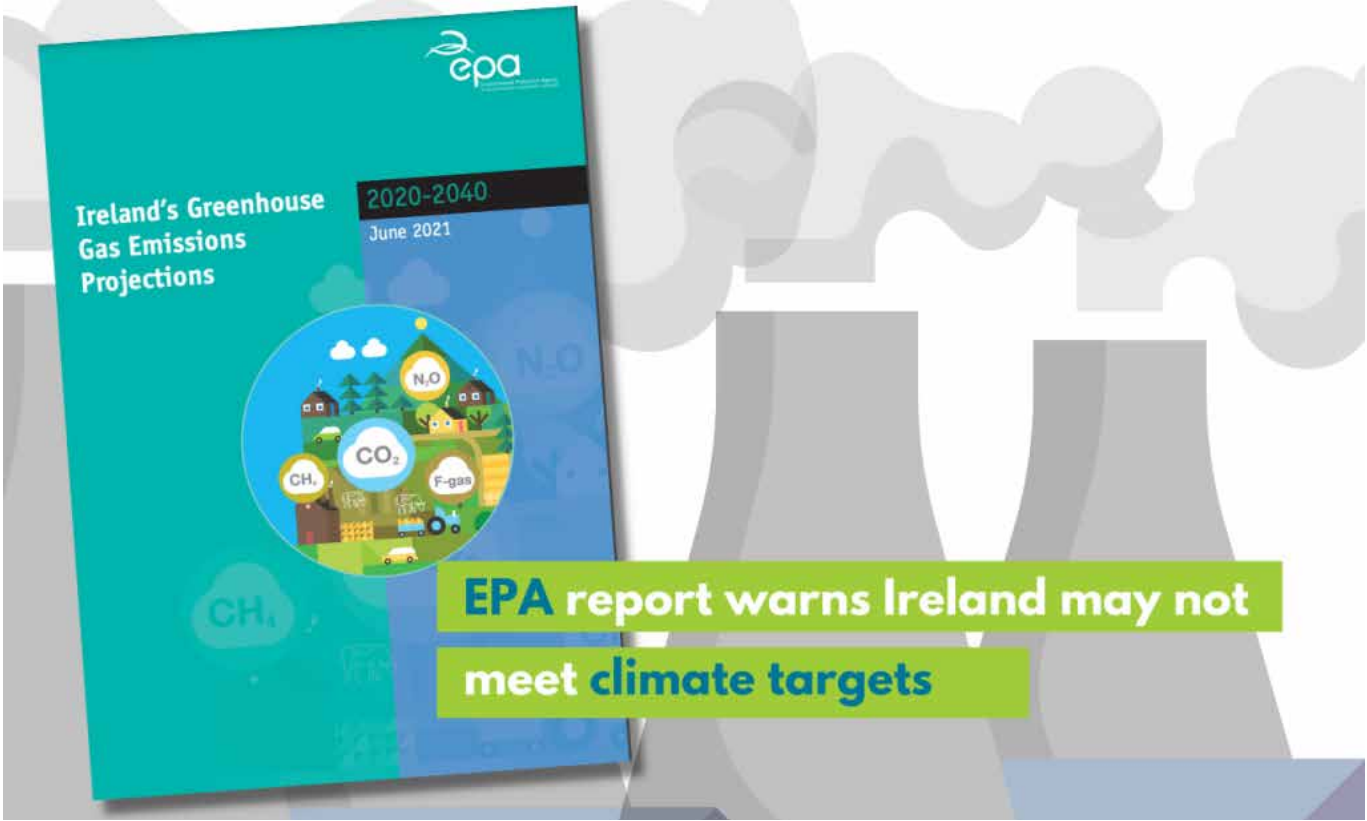
by emissions removed and would ensure that global average temperatures would be kept well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius.

### A Climate Action Plan for Ireland

The Irish Government has launched Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25), a roadmap developed as part of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 to meet these climate targets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050 as agreed in Paris. CAP25 is the final plan of the first carbon budget before the second carbon budget period of 2026-2030, marking the midway action plan in what has been dubbed “the decade of climate action” by the United Nations.

### Ireland is set to miss it’s Carbon Emission Targets

The Environmental Protection Agency is forecasting that reduction in carbon emissions will not reach the requisite 51%



by 2030 and is predicting a reduction of just 29% unless efforts are ramped up across all sectors. Emissions have reduced by 6.7% between 2023 and 2024 but EPA predicts an annual reduction of just 4% between now and 2030. Failure to meet these statutory targets will have a massive financial cost for the country in addition to the obvious socio – environmental cost. In 2023 the Department of Environment Climate and Communications (DECC) estimating that fines could amount to €8.1 billion whilst the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council in 2024 calculated a potential €20 billion price for non-compliance.

EPA Director General, Laura Burke stated

“The EPA’s projections show that full delivery of all climate action plans and policies could deliver a 29 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is well short of both our European and National emission reduction targets and highlights the scale of effort required to achieve the required reductions across all sectors of our economy.”

So, if all sectors of our economy have a role to play in reducing or avoiding carbon emissions, what role should SVP play?





How can SVP play our part?

To reduce carbon emissions across all sectors, we are being asked to decarbonise our economy and make our buildings and vehicles more energy efficient whilst reducing what we consume and what we throw away. This applies to what we eat but also what we wear.

The Fashion Industry is the 4th largest polluter on the planet, an unenviable record fuelled by our habit of buying more than we need and wearing it for a shorter period. The average EU citizen bought 19 kilograms (kg) of clothing, footwear and household textiles in 2022 – up from 17 kg in 2019, which is enough to fill a large suitcase per person each year according to the EEA briefing 'Circularity of the EU textiles value chain in numbers'. However, at the launch of “Reverse the trend” campaign in October 2024, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication, Ossian Symth stated *“Ireland has one of the highest rates of new textiles consumption in the EU, at 53 kg per person every year,” Minister Smyth added. “[We need to think] about what we really need, whether we can re wear, share or repair in our collective efforts to reverse the trend.”*



Reducing our Carbon footprint

With 220 charity shops across the island of Ireland, we estimate that we receive approximately 17,500 tonnes of donated textiles per year which would otherwise have been destined for landfill. When we add in the additional benefit of the consumer buying a second-hand garment instead of a new one, we begin to realise the true environmental value of buying and selling preloved clothing. WRAP UK estimate that for every five pre-loved items bought, the purchase of three new garments has been avoided, indicating a displacement rate of 64.6%. In addition, our shops receive thousands of tonnes of furniture, books, toys and other preloved donations. It is estimated that for every tonne of clothing and other textiles that are reused, that a saving of 3.6 tonnes of co2e is achieved although the actual range of saving is much broader, from 3 to 20 tonnes of co2e, depending on the textile type and ultimate destination of the garment.



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Even using this conservative estimate, our shops across Ireland will deliver a carbon emissions saving of 63,000 tonnes per year, offsetting any of the following activities:

**13,000 Irish Cars Off the Road for a Year** – Equivalent to the annual emissions from 13,000 petrol or diesel vehicles in Ireland (4.7 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e each), based on average driving distances.

**CO<sub>2</sub> Absorbed by 2.5 million Trees Over 10 Years** – One mature tree absorbs 25 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. Over a decade, 2.5 million trees can offset around 63,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

**14,000 One-Way Flights from Dublin to New York** – Each passenger flight emits 4.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e when including the high-altitude climate impact (radiative forcing).

**Carbon Footprint of twenty-five million New T-Shirts** – Making a single cotton t-shirt emits 2.5 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Reusing textiles instead avoids the emissions tied to manufacturing millions of new garments.

Can we strike the balance between being affordable and sustainable?

The Cost-of-living crisis has dampened consumer spending in many communities across Ireland with customers seeking out more affordable options particularly when it comes to clothing, but we have also seen a rise in demand for more sustainable product ranges as society navigates its way past the twin challenges of the climate crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. To assist customers making more ethical choices, Vincent's will now advise customers of the carbon emissions saving when top selling products are purchased in any of our 220 charity shops.

SSVP is committed to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the retail team is very conscious of the damage that the over consumption and over production of Fast fashion is doing to our environment and has developed a more circular business model using a national network of



Order Fulfilment Centres and Epos technology to promote reuse. The obvious next step is to look at the impact of this work on carbon emissions so it's very encouraging to see that even using our conservative estimates, the Vincent's textile management programme is contributing to the avoidance of more than 64,000 tonnes of Co2e, which is 0.1% of the national annual total.





### Students reimagine sustainability and style in a celebration of creativity

The Young St Vincent de Paul (Young SVP), West Region and Vincent's shops are proud to announce the success of the 'Under The Sea' Fast Fashion Competition, which brought together secondary school students from across the West Region in an extraordinary showcase of creativity, innovation, and sustainability.

Over the past several months, students embraced the challenge of designing full outfits entirely from discarded materials, drawing inspiration from the depths of the ocean while confronting the damaging impact of fast fashion on marine life. The competition culminated in a Fashion Show at the West Region youth day in the TF Royal, Castlebar. Participants presented their intricate, environmentally conscious designs and storyboards, they also walked the runway in their creation to an enthusiastic audience

*"This competition was a brilliant way to raise awareness about fast fashion and empowering young people to make a difference,"* said Helen Ralph, Regional Youth Development Officer at SVP.

*"The students didn't just design clothes, they researched and told powerful stories about our oceans, our planet, and the change we need to see."*

Highlights from the event included a dramatic jellyfish-inspired gown made from recycled netting and a sea turtle-themed outfit using old denim, showcasing the impact of ocean plastic pollution.

All participants attended a special online workshop earlier in the year, gaining insight into the real-world effects of textile waste and unsustainable fashion production. The students were educated in the work of the Vincents Shops. These lessons were clearly reflected in the depth and thoughtfulness of their final presentations.

The competition also strengthened connections between students and their local Vincent's charity shops, where many sourced the materials for their designs. The initiative reinforced the value of reuse and responsible fashion choices in everyday life. Judging consisted of audience votes and a judging panel and St Nathys College, Ballaghderreen won on the day.



'The team at Vincent's were delighted to be involved in The Future Fashion competition, which was a very uplifting experience! It was very clear from the standard of entry that the students were very well informed on sustainable fashion and highly creative with their designs and mood boards. I'd like to congratulate and thank all entrants and organisers for their efforts' said Dermot Galloway, National Retail Manage. Dermot explained 'Recent statistics suggest that the average Irish citizen now consumes a staggering 56 kgs of new textiles per year. That figure is one of the highest in Europe and is unsustainable. It is critically importance that we change our attitude to buying textiles and start reusing clothes for longer. The joy of Future Fashion was that the students found so many incredible ways to reuse preloved clothing whilst making them look really stylish'

Young SVP and Vincent's shops extend their deepest thanks to all participating schools, students, mentors, and supporters. The success of this initiative has laid a strong foundation for future youth-led sustainability projects in the region.







## MID WEST

Student representatives on stage after speaking about the wonderful projects and Young SVP activities they completed in their schools and communities. Left to right: Max Ryan Edmund Rice Secondary School Carrick On Suir, Nicole Forde Ardscoil Mhuire Limerick, Claire Harty Salesian College Pallaskenry Co. Limerick, Lucas Burke Tracey Coláiste Choilm Tullamore, Róisín Galvin St. Mary's Secondary School Newport, Clodagh Lenihan SVP Youth Development Officer Mid-West Region, James Kiely and Malak Ahmed Castletroy College, Conor Neylon and Hannah Downes St. Joseph's Secondary School Spanish Point Co. Clare.

Students busy at work with Bag Design during the activity hunt section of Youth Day



the work achieved by the students and most importantly to thank them for all their hard work in terms of raising vital funds for SVP. It was also an opportunity for learning where the students could learn more about the charity from the various speakers on the day. Niamh Brennan our YOUNG SVP Colleges Support Officer spoke about the huge difference that third-level students make through their direct contact and outreach services that support those who are homeless. She also spoke about fundraising initiatives and social justice projects at third-level which caught the

attention of everyone in the room. Ian Deering a Vincent's Shop Manager in Tullamore educated the students on the valuable role the Vincent's shop play in the society and how they generate funds to help those in need. Eimear Purcell the SVP Drop In Centre Manager in Limerick City provided a video message explaining about all the different services we provide to help those who are experiencing homelessness. Lastly our Regional President Teresa Ryan gave a heart warming closing speech thanking the students and teachers for their involvement and efforts. Everyone agreed it was a super fun day with games, interactive activities, fabulous musical performances and a game of Boogie Bingo to top it all off to end the day. It was an uplifting day to see such enthusiasm, good will and creative ideas from the students and I look forward to working with these schools again next year.

**Clodagh Lenihan**  
Youth Development Officer  
for the Mid West Region



St. Caimin's Community School Young SVP Conference



Students enjoying themselves during the Boogie Bingo Activity

## Mid West Young SVP youth day!

The Mid-West Young SVP Youth Day took place on the 10th of April in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Limerick. On the day almost 240 students from across the four counties of Limerick, Clare, Tipperary and Offaly attended the event. Six Limerick schools attended the day namely Castletroy College, Villiers School, Coláiste Nano Nagle, Ardscoil Mhuire, Thomand Community College and Salesian Secondary College, Pallaskenry. The Banner County were well represented by St. Caimin's Community School Shannon, St. Joseph's Secondary School Spanish Point, St. Flannan's College Ennis and Kiltrush Community School. Four schools from County Tipperary also attended

the event; St. Mary's Secondary School Newport, Loreto Secondary School Clonmel, Nenagh College and Edmund Rice Secondary School Carrick on Suir. We were also delighted to have the following two schools from County Offaly in attendance; St. Brendan's Community School Birr and Coláiste Choilm Tullamore. SVP staff and volunteers were also present. At the event the schools involved in the Young SVP Programme showcased all the wonderful work they completed during the year in terms of fundraising for SVP, donation drives and other community-based projects. Representatives from each school spoke passionately and eloquently about the various direct aid, be-friending, education and awareness projects they were involved in. It was a day of fun activities, celebration of



Malak Ahmed and James Kiely, Castletroy College, Limerick



Students from St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, Co. Tipperary with their certificate



### Young SVP Celebrating Compassion and Connection:

The North East & Midlands Young SVP programme was proud to host its annual Youth Day at Causey Farm last April, (28th) welcoming students and teachers from 18 schools across the region for an unforgettable day of learning, connection, and celebration.

With over 270 students and 25 teachers in attendance, this vibrant event brought together young people from counties Cavan, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Westmeath. It was a day designed not only to be fun and interactive but also deeply rooted in the values of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) – service, dignity, compassion, and solidarity.

The day's activities were expertly facilitated by the fantastic team at Causey Farm, with each session tailored to reflect one of SVP's core values:

- Ceili Dancing – Fostering inclusion and a shared sense of community.
- Bread Making – Highlighting service and the importance of providing for others.
- Bodhrán Workshop – Encouraging teamwork and active engagement.
- Animal Farm (featuring newborn lambs!) – Teaching responsibility, care, and compassion.
- Tractor Trail & Bog-Jumping – Challenging students to step out of their comfort zones and build resilience.
- Mineshaft Tunnels – Representing the perseverance required to overcome life's challenges.
- Mural Painting – Allowing creative expression linked to SVP's mission of social justice.



St Patricks College Co.Cavan



Animal Farm

More than just a day out, this event serves as a living expression of the Young SVP journey – one where young people explore real-life social issues, develop leadership skills, and reflect on the impact they can have in their communities.

In the lead-up to Youth Day, participating schools had been working on SVP projects throughout the year, exploring themes such as poverty, social exclusion, and human dignity. Through workshops, school campaigns, and community actions, students tackled issues like homelessness, food poverty, mental health, and inclusion – all while building empathy and awareness of the world around them.

During the Youth Day some of this outstanding student work was on display and teachers and students were especially moved by a talk from Hannah Clarke, North East & Midlands Regional President. Her stories about the powerful, non-judgmental work of SVP volunteers provided a meaningful and eye-opening insight into the reality of life for many in our communities. Her words brought the mission of SVP to life in a way that left a lasting impact on both teachers and students.



Students across all of the schools

#### Participating schools included:

- Meath – Beaufort College Navan, St. Peter's College Dunboyne, Coláiste Ríoga Dunshaughlin, Enfield Community College, Franciscan College Gormanston, Coláiste na Mí Navan.
- Louth – Ardee Community School, St. Vincent's Dundalk
- Monaghan – Inver College, Ballybay Community College
- Cavan – St. Patrick's Cullies Cavan, Bailieborough Community School, Coláiste Dún an Rí Kingscourt
- Longford – Meán Scoil Mhuire, Cnoc Mhuire, Moyne Community School
- Westmeath – Castlepollard Community College

(Along with 11 other schools who have taken part in the Young SVP Schools Programme throughout the year.)

Thanks to the incredible support of teachers and the enthusiasm of students, Young SVP continues to thrive, encouraging a new generation to engage with their communities, champion justice and fairness, and carry the spirit of SVP forward into their future schools, colleges, and lives.

To learn more about the Young SVP programme or to find a Youth Development Officer for your region, visit [www.youngsvp.ie](http://www.youngsvp.ie).



Bailibough TY students



Students - Bog Jumping



Enfield Students

### NORTH EAST & MIDLANDS



Hannah lighting the candles for the three pillars



Having fun with others



Beaufort College



## SVP – Pilgrims of Hope



Eabha Delargy, student at St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena.

Where there is anguish pain and sorrow in our world, we should all strive to be pilgrims of hope following the example of organisations such as SVP, who work for the good of everyone in our community. In a world where society is self-centred, frugal and focused on wealth, this organisation can help Christians across the world to cast their mind back to the times of the early church when everyone shared, wealth was not a commodity that was desired, and resources were given to those who needed them, not those who wanted or could afford them. SVP reminds us of our Christian principles of caring for the needy and the poor and being selfless towards others. They give us hope that out Christian society has not lost its way in striving for Christian perfection.

In Biblical times a Jubilee year was one of forgiveness, reconciliation and hope. Hope for those that were poor that they could find a better life, hope for communities who had fallen apart, and hope for everyone of what the future would bring after a resting period. Leviticus tells us more specifically that debts were cancelled, slaves were set

free and those who were poor or needy were given a fresh start. As a Christian society SVP strives to do the same, not just on Jubilee years but every single day. Whilst they may not have the power to cancel debts, they ease the growing burden of payments, with financial support and support in the form of foodbanks and community shops, which give those who are less fortunate a chance to experience the same lifestyle that most people do. As well as this, although they don't physically liberate people from slavery, they do have the power to help liberate them from poverty and deprivation and in doing so they give everyone a fresh start, to live the same equal life that all Christians deserve to live.

SVP was founded in Paris in 1844 by Frédéric Ozanam to foster inclusive, compassionate connections. Inspired by Christ's message to love thy neighbour, SVP supports people in need with hope, dignity, and a strong commitment to equality in communities worldwide. Whilst some groups focus on improving certain aspects of life, SVP strives to improve all aspects of everyone's life, specifically those in need, by giving back. It is a beautiful way to spread hope because, although it may not seem this way, it involves our whole community as Christians. Donating to SVP—whether through church collections, fundraisers, or charity shops – helps give someone a better life. It offers dignity, fairness, and access to essentials. SVP is not just for its members, but for the whole community.

It is a common perception that SVP exists only in the form of charity shops and church collections, but they have a much bigger part to play behind the scenes. Firstly, SVP strongly believes in person-to-person contact, rather than remote help. Whilst one of their core tasks is to assess the needs of others through visiting, they also place a particular emphasis on befriending.

This ranges from simply offering friendship and support to providing things like financial assistance and basic commodities such as clothing and food, the group befriends around 80,000 people every year. SVP also holds significance in working with the youth. They are many groups for children and young people of all ages to be part of, which help to spread the ethos of SVP—to seek and find those in need, to help them in a spirit of justice and to tackle the causes of poverty where we can—in schools and clubs, building up the society of the future, SVP also take on many young people to work in their charity shops and other organisations. They also place particular focus on helping migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, following the inspiration of Pope Francis who has spoken many times about the importance of helping such people, the SVP uses its position financially, and within the community, to help contribute to campaigns which support this group of people. They provide both frontline support directly to people like migrants and refugees but also fundraise for causes concerning these people further afield. Similarly to this they also provide general support for those who need it overseas through 'twinning' in which societies in the UK are paired with groups in places such as India, Grenada and Romania.

While we often focus on what SVP does for the community, we must also recognise what it offers us as Christians. Supporting groups like SVP helps us reconnect with God and others, echoing the spirit of restoration found in the Biblical Jubilee.

In our ever-growing world, it can sometimes be hard for us to continue to think of others and promote the values of reconciliation, forgiveness, hope, love and charity. But as Christians we should all remember Pope Francis' plea to be '*Pilgrims of Hope*'.

## SOUTH WEST



## South-West Region Youth Day 2025

This year's annual Youth Day Exhibition finished out the year with a bang! This year the event was held in the Rochestown Park hotel, Cork with over 250 in attendance.

Amazingly we had 30 schools engage with the programme this year and each school contributed a huge amount of support and work for SVP and their communities. The programme itself gives students the opportunity to learn and develop in relation to their understanding of social justice issues within the South-West and raises empathy in them to want to help. The Youth Day give them opportunity to exhibit their amazing projects and meet other students from around their region. It also gave them the opportunity and confidence to share their ideas, hard work and creativity with one another while also connection and sharing their individual community identities. Once again, they focused on the ethos of SVP in correlation with this year's theme of 'Community' and what community means to them. Their projects showcased their connection to social justice themes they identified throughout the year focusing on issues directly and indirectly related to poverty 'Direct Aid Projects' exhibited ranged from our Annual SVP food appeal to a Young SVP Decathlon. Their 'Education Projects' focused on education their first years on social justice issues within their local communities as well as the work of SVP. 'Awareness Projects' displayed showed their interest in not only sharing the work of SVP by also identifying the need for support for those in need within their communities, creating the link between loneliness and poor mental

health. Awareness led them to focus on 'Befriending' Projects' and the need to reconnect with their communities more. This encouraged them to go out into their communities and provide support where it was needed and volunteer their time and talents where they could. Amazing projects were presented from all schools within the region. Students made care packages and donated them to their local hospitals, they visited their local nursing homes, care/day and community centres, bringing joy through singing and entertainment as well as baked goods. Overall schools engaged in this programme, especially those who attended on the day showed a strong sense of commitment to SVP and their communities and delivered the valued message of SVP through their hard work and commitment.

### Schools in attendance on the day:

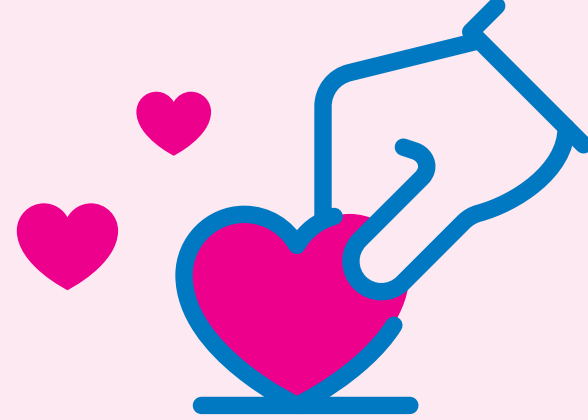
- Pobalscoil na Tríonoide, Youghal, Co. Cork.
- Coláiste Muire an Réalt, Crosshaven, Co. Cork.
- Carrignafay Community College, Cobh, Co. Cork.
- St. Mary's Catholic School, Mallow, Co. Cork.
- St. Mary's Secondary School, Charleville, Co. Cork.
- Mt. Mercy College, Model Farm Road, Co. Cork.
- Millstreet Community College, Co. Cork.
- Boherbue Comprehensive School, Boherbue, Co. Cork.
- Scoil Phobail an Luchara, Co. Kerry.

Students busy at work with Bag Design during the activity hunt section of Youth Day



# Fundraising Update

by **Elizabeth Smyth**  
Head of Fundraising



Since the last bulletin the fundraising department, has been working hard with our Spring Newsletter, Education Bursary Appeal, An Post Campaign **'Making Better Happen'** and lots more exciting activities, while starting our Summer Newsletter and to think of this year's Annual Appeal!

As you read our Education Bursary Appeal will have been sent to our supporters and you may see some advertising on our social media platforms. Last academic year the Society's Education Bursary assisted over 1,300 students with an average bursary of €1,900 which is approximately €3million spent. This programme is a representation of the amazing work the Society is doing in trying to break the cycle of poverty.



We are also very grateful to be working with An Post on their latest campaign **'Making Better Happen'**. The campaign is about the work An Post does in communities, helping to make better happen. They wanted to work with a charity that works in communities, helping to make better happen and thought of us here in SVP. An Post have donated €50,000 to

the Society and hope to raise more through their Post Offices, where their customers can support SVP, by tapping to donate at the cash desks, all monies raised in each County will be used locally. An Post also have invited Conferences to use their Post Offices to set up a stand to promote membership to the Society. If your conference is interested in taking up this invitation locally, please contact [fundraising@svp.ie](mailto:fundraising@svp.ie).

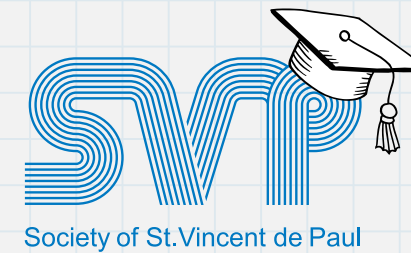


This year's Summer Newsletter will feature a piece about our outgoing Rose McGowan. The article is about Rose's time in the Society, talking about how she got involved during her school days right up to becoming National President. How the Society has changed and evolved and her hopes for the future of the Society and the people it helps. This heartwarming article is one not to be missed.

Lastly, we will be sending out CHY tax forms to our donors and conferences, in order to increase the value their donations – at no extra cost to the Society.

Did you know that if you or your conference donors have donated €250 or more in any calendar year – whether as a single donation or through multiple smaller donations – it could help us claim up to an additional 44.9% from Revenue.

Under Revenue's Charity Donation Scheme, charities can claim a refund of up to €112 for every €250 donated. By getting donors to simply complete and return an Enduring Certificate, donations can go even further in providing vital assistance to individuals and families facing hardship.



# Empower Ireland's Future

**Break the cycle of poverty  
– one student at a time.**

In 2024, over 262,700 children experienced enforced deprivation, and 190,108 children lived in poverty. For many, the cost of continuing education is simply too high.\*

**SVP received over 4,000 requests for help with university and college costs** – including rent, food, laptops, and exam fees. Nearly half of students who needed a laptop also asked for help with food.

**\* More than 200 students reached out to SVP for the first time in 2024.**

For more information, please scan the QR code



*Poverty should not be  
a barrier to education.*

**Help us support students  
who are working hard  
for a better future.**

**Donate today**  
at [www.svp.ie/svp-education-appeal/](http://www.svp.ie/svp-education-appeal/)



# Adapting the Assessment of Need Process for 2025

by **John Lupton**  
National Vice-President for Membership



The purpose and potential of the Society’s Assessment of Need Process became clear to viewers of a recent online briefing where a speaker said “Our generosity was informed by the clarity that Assessment of Need gave us”.

The clarity SVP members often seek is that their assistance has made a difference. In an increasing complex world with increasing costs of living, we encounter the often multiple challenges facing households, energy or food, paying rent or paying for a child’s needs.

The Assessment of Need process brings clarity to our Conferences. In an easy-to-use way, it helps us understand the real cost of living facing households (costs that face each and every one of us), it prompts us to take stock of the holistic income scenario and to assess our assistance on a person’s individual circumstances as opposed to a generic ‘we always do this’ response. That move from a generic response to informed assessment (and indeed generosity) is the cornerstone of the Assessment of Need process.

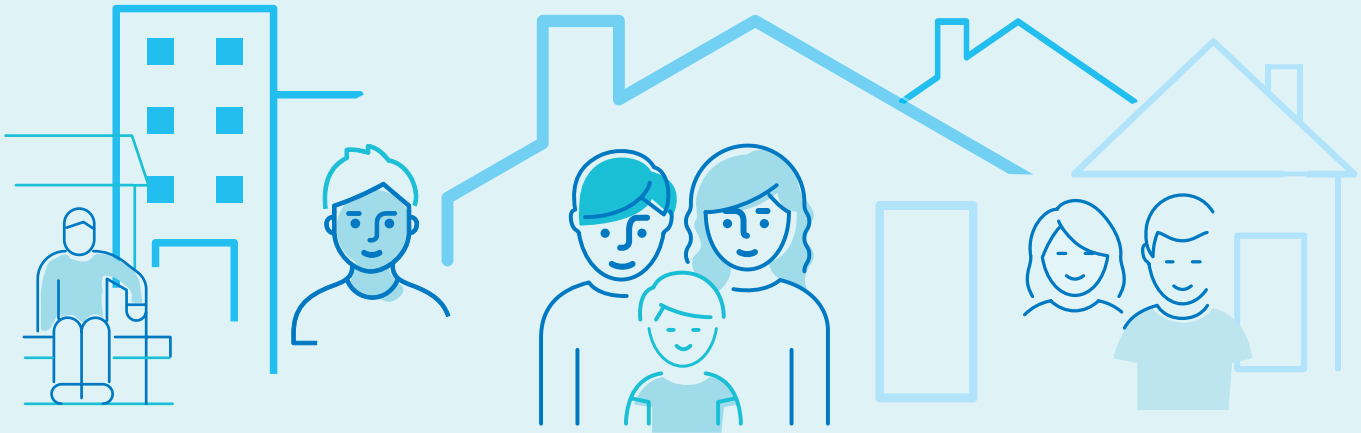
Our new Assessment of Need form has been updated, taking in members feedback to previous iterations, and indeed changes

in Irish Society. For example, the new form acknowledges that there may be costs and income associated with adult children living in the home, a very real circumstance in Irish Society today. Members also asked for more space for note taking, and also to leave space for actions that a household may take themselves, thus contributing to the sense of self-sufficiency envisaged in our mission.

As members have requested, the Society’s CRM portal is being adapted to align with the Assessment of Need Process, making it easier to fill in information from visitation.

Please see the SVP Members’ Website for video guidance and examples of Assessment of Need Process. The accompanying forms can be requested rom Regional offices.

In the example overleaf, you can see the process in action and how a Conference responded to the needs of one household.





Society of St Vincent de Paul

### Quality Home Visitation

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

[For SVP Conference use only]

Visitation Checklist

- Visit at a pre-arranged time and in pairs
- Share how visitation works and assistance concludes
- Establish household expenses and income
- Use the AON process to assess need and response
- Listen to the person's needs and consider referral pathways.



Conference: **St. Martha's**

Client Number: **12345**

March 2025

Visitation – ASSESSMENT OF NEED

1. STANDARD LIVING EXPENSES

(Calculate Standard Living Expenses using Table opposite)

€ 305

2. WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

Rent/Mortgage (Net Weekly Payment) € 40

Loan Repayments €

Maintenance Payments €

Childcare Costs €

Other (extra costs/arrears/savings) € 25

Subtotal € 65

TOTAL LIVING EXPENSES

(Standard Living Expenses + Weekly Household Expenses) € 370

3. WEEKLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

(Excl. Children's Allowance)

Adult 1 Income (Earnings/Social Welfare) € 244

Other Adult Income(s) (Earnings/Social Welfare) €

Qualified Child Increase\*\*/Maintenance € 50

Working Family Payment €

Caring / Carer's Payments €

Other Benefits (e.g. Fuel Allowance) €

Total Weekly Income € 294

SHORTFALL OR SURPLUS

(Living Expenses vs Weekly Income) € -76

4. CONFERENCE ASSISTANCE

Immediate Needs € 100



Future Actions by SVP: Contact Energy Supplier

Action by Household: Give consent to supplier

5. EDUCATION & TRAINING GRANTS:

€

\*\* Please note: receipt of Child Benefit has already been calculated in the living expenses of a child.

Table of Reasonable Living Expenses *				
Household Composition:				
Adult(s):	1	Children: 1	Age(s): 9	Year of Birth: 2016
WEEKLY FIGURES				
Household Type	 No Car	 Car	Insert Applicable Living Expenses	
Adults' Standard Costs				
	Single Adult No Children	€250	€300	€
	Couple No Children	€405	€440	€
	Single Adult With Children**	€245	€315	€ 245
	Couple With Children**	€350	€390	€
Childrens' Standard Costs – Include as Appropriate				
	Infant	€50	€50	€
	Pre-School	€15	€15	€
	Primary School	€60	€55	€ 60
	Secondary School	€105	€100	€
	Adult Child In Home	€130	€180	€
STANDARD LIVING EXPENSES:			TOTAL	€ 305
* Reasonable Living Expenses are used by the Insolvency Service of Ireland and are based on Vincentian Minimum Essential Standard of Living Research at SVP. MESL identifies the cost of what is required to enable a life with dignity, at a minimum but acceptable level.				
The MESL 'basket' includes: Food / Clothing / Health / Personal Care / Household Goods / Home Energy / Communications / Education / Transport / Social Inclusion / Personal Costs / Insurance / Household Services / Savings / Housing / Childcare. Please see <a href="http://www.budgeting.ie">www.budgeting.ie</a>				

REFERRAL/OTHER AGENCIES

Please ensure household fills in consent form if required.

Budget / Debt Advice: MABS

Health Services

Community Welfare Office

Utilities Supplier

Citizens Information Service

SVP Social Justice

Housing Advice

SVP Education Bursaries

Community Supports / Family Resource Centre

SVP Area / Regional Level

CONFERENCE NOTES:

What other ways can SVP assist the household?

(Advice, Advocacy, Information, Friendship)

Has expressed interest in returning to education once child goes to 4th class.

NEXT STEPS:

Bring adult education brochure to next visit.

Next Meeting: 01/05/2025

Conference Case Review Date: 30/06/2025

Completed by: CXX

Date: 30/03/2025

Issued by SVP National Office

Contact: info@svp.ie / 01 884 8200



# The Success of the Darndale Foodbank: A Story of Dedication and Community

Maria shares her experience of the success of the Darndale Foodbank.



I would like to tell you all about the Darndale Foodbank – a shining example of what a group of dedicated volunteers can achieve when they put their hearts and minds together. What started as a daunting challenge has now grown into a well-run, vital community resource that serves as a testament to teamwork, perseverance, and the power of local action.

The Darndale Foodbank was originally run by Crosscare, a charitable organization that operated it successfully from 2016. However, in April 2023, Crosscare made the difficult decision to withdraw from the foodbank to focus on their Hub services. This decision left a significant gap in our community. At the time, the foodbank was supporting between 90 to 100 families from six local conferences every week. For a group of us who had witnessed firsthand the difference it made in people's lives, letting it go was simply not an option.

Determined to keep the service going, we came together and decided to manage the foodbank ourselves. For six weeks, we worked alongside Crosscare, learning the ropes and preparing to take the reins. Then, on April 14th, with a mix of hope and anxiety, we reopened the foodbank under our own management.

Those first few weeks were nothing short of overwhelming. Mistakes were made – as they are in any new venture – but we stuck together, supported one another, and slowly found our footing. Every Thursday, our deliveries arrive and we roll up our sleeves to sort, lug, lift, and pack. It's better than any workout, believe me! As a team largely made up of retirees, we're often exhausted by the end of the day – but still, we return early Friday morning, ready to open our doors from 8:30 to noon and serve our community.

With time, our confidence and experience grew. Today, the foodbank proudly supports around 150 local families every week. While we still face the occasional challenge, our spirit never falters. We lift each other up, share plenty of laughs, and tackle every obstacle as a united team.

The foodbank has become more than just a place to receive food – it's a place of friendship, fun, and support. For many in our community, it is a lifeline. We receive generous donations from ESI, FoodCloud, and Country Crest, with each food basket valued at around €100. We've also built strong relationships with local businesses who now contribute treats and extras that help brighten our clients' days.

Fundraising has also become an important part of what we do. Thanks to the creativity and determination of our volunteers, we've held successful fundraising events that allowed us to buy a small Christmas gift for every client – a gesture that brought joy to many during the festive season.

I can honestly say that I am so proud to be a part of the Darndale Foodbank. It's a place where hard work meets heart, where community spirit thrives, and where every volunteer plays a crucial role. Our team of around 20 volunteers is simply extraordinary. I thank them all – not only for their dedication and hard work, but also for the friendships, the laughter, and the unwavering support they bring every week.

Together, we've proven that when people come together for a common cause, there's nothing they can't achieve.







# A Wonderful Example of Christian Fellowship

A submission on the wonderful example of Christian Fellowship.

“

**Date: 17 Feb. 25**

We have all heard the term ‘holy fool’. We know vaguely what it means. We could probably find some examples in history or literature if we looked around. St Francis of Assisi perhaps. Prince Myshkin etc.

Reading about such a person in history or literature is all very well, but have you ever met one?

Well, I did recently.

I was staggered by what he did.

And so was my daughter, who does not believe in the Christian faith.

I had got to know Peter slightly down through the years. Enough to say hello after mass. But nothing too personal. You see Peter was patently rather an odd bod. He wears a big wooden crucifix suspended from a set of rosary beads round his neck. He joins in when the choir is singing at mass, out of time, and in a dry, raspy voice that is painful to listen to. He interrupts you at the wrong time in a conversation.

Last week I saw Peter talking to a homeless man who I also know slightly. So, I went up to say hello to them both. The homeless man was agitated and struggling. He needed his bus fare to get to his hostel. So, I began to fish out some change to give to him.

But Peter, as is his wont, started talking at the wrong time. I needed to concentrate and Peter was putting his oar in.

*“That’s good, that’s good”, Peter was saying.*

It’s only a couple of Euro I think to myself. It’s no big deal. Peter continues to rabbit on.

*“I don’t have any money. I gave it away.”*

I was a bit surprised. But what exactly did he mean.

Peter is often not that coherent. So, I asked a little sceptically.

*“What do you mean you have no money, Peter?”*

*“I gave it away. All. All my money. To the poor. This morning. All of it.”*

By this stage my jaw had started to drop open.

*“You mean you have NO money? What are you going to live on?”*

*“It is no problem. I don’t need it. I bought a big bag of groceries this morning. A big bag. The fridge is full. Enough for a week. I have my own house. Mammy and daddy gave it to me. The pension will come again next week. So, I gave it all away. I do it all the time. I give it away.”*

*“My God.”* I said to myself.

I was no longer surprised.

I was staggered.

This man has a commitment to charity which is wonderful. The moral courage he shows by this giving is enormous.

He is an example to me.

He is an example to my daughter.

I think he is an example to us all.

”



EAST REGION

A Fond Farewell to the SVP Allenwood Daycare Centre  
Celebrating 35 Years of Care, Community, and Commitment.

After 35 wonderful years, the time has come to say goodbye – but not without immense gratitude and celebration for what has been an extraordinary chapter in our community.

The SVP Allenwood Daycare Centre was more than just a place. It was a lifeline, a gathering point, a warm and welcoming home away from home for the elderly in our community. It stood as a shining example of what can be achieved when compassion, vision, and community spirit come together.

Long before senior care became a national conversation, the local volunteers of the St. Vincent de Paul in Allenwood had the foresight and heart to create something truly special. They saw the value in our older generation –

their stories, their laughter, their wisdom – and built a space where all of that could thrive.

Names like Chris Dowling, Pat Ivers, Joan Talbot, Kay Herbert, Nora Herbert, Sheila O'Brien, Paula Guilfoyle, Ray Lenihan, James Harris, Eithne Herbert, and many more will forever be remembered as the beating heart of this centre. These volunteers gave their time freely – collecting members from their homes, preparing meals, sharing chats and laughter, and ensuring everyone returned home safely and smiling.

For 35 years, they showed up. Day in and day out, week after week, year after year. They fundraised, drove minibuses, bought equipment, and expanded services to include meals on wheels.

Three venues over the years served as the backdrop to countless memories. Every moment, every cup of tea, every story was made possible through their tireless dedication – supported always by a generous and grateful community.

As we close the doors on the SVP Allenwood Daycare Centre, we do so with full hearts and deep appreciation. The legacy of love and service created here will not be forgotten.

We salute each and every one of you – past and present – for your incredible contribution. You made a difference. And for that, we say thank you.



The SVP Team in the Holy Family S. S Newbridge connecting with Newbridge Day Care Centre.

Holy Family's Saint Vincent de Paul team began our work at the start of 2024. Our school has always been committed to supporting the community and helping those less fortunate. Throughout the year, we organise various fundraisers for different charities, such as civvies days and school events.

This year, we joined the SVP Youth Programme to place an even stronger focus on charity work within our school community. One of our highlights was a collaborative cake sale with Newbridge College, held at lunchtime to raise funds for the Newbridge Day Care Centre. We raised over €1000 for the Centre.

As a thank you for our support, the Day Care Centre invited our team to join

them on a trip to K Bowl in Newbridge, alongside a few of their members. On the 3rd of April, we spent the day bowling, and it was fantastic! We had all been looking forward to a break from studying, and it didn't disappoint.

The day gave us an incredible opportunity to connect with members of our community whom we wouldn't usually get to meet. For some of them, it was their first time bowling, which made the experience even more special. We discovered that despite the age gap, we had much more in common than we expected. We all love having fun, sharing laughs, and meeting new people.

It's a day we girls won't forget any time soon.





Fanagan Undertakers proposed hosting a Christmas concert at our local church last September.

Fanagan Undertakers approached our Conference (Mary our Queen, Kilmacud/Stillorgan) last September about hosting a concert in our local church for Christmas. There was to be no admission cost but any donations received were being given to our Conference.

Fintan Cooney of Fanagans organized a wonderful line up of talent. Our compere for the night was the delightful Shane Byrne of RTE who added his own magic to the night with his warm and easy personality. The music and singing was gorgeous and the congregation joined in for many of the carols. When the Palestrina Choir under Blanaid Murphy sang O HOLY NIGHT it was a very moving moment.

Our Conference decided to hold a raffle as well as selling Christmas Cards. It was decided by the members of our Conference that each member would donate one prize to the value of at least €100. Either this prize was to be sponsored or to be given by the members themselves. A four ball at Powerscourt and Stackstown Golf Clubs to dinner for two at

the Goat Grill to a gift voucher at Kilkenny design were part of the fabulous prizes we had.

The night was a tremendous success. The SVDP raised almost €7,000. It was also great to be part of the event in our own community.

Many thanks to Fintan Cooney of Fanagans for organizing it and including the SVDP.

**Marian White**  
Mary Our Queen,  
Kilmacud/Stillorgan



SOUTH WEST REGION

Holy Cross, Mahon Conference of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Mahon Tidy Towns is dedicated to enhancing the local community through environmental initiatives and charitable efforts. The volunteers came together and raised €200 for the local Conference, reflecting their commitment to fostering both a cleaner and more compassionate neighbourhood.

Members of the local Conference were delighted to attend an intimate function hosted by the Mahon Tidy Towns Committee on Saturday the 5th of April at the Community Centre in Mahon when the Committee presented the Conference with a cheque for €200. Conference President Ed O'Leary thanked the Committee for the donation. He also thanked the Committee for recognising the

Society as a suitable beneficiary of its fundraising. He went on to express his appreciation for the manner in which the Tidy Towns Committee reached out to the Conference and acknowledged the importance of the organisations having contact with each other – as two community organisations with a shared interest in helping in the local area. The event provided an opportunity for the members of each of the organisations over a cup of tea to describe for the other the work they do and how they go about it. Ed was accompanied at the function by Ursula Corcoran a long-standing member of the Conference.



Mahon Tidy Towns



MID WEST REGION

Extreme Networks staff volunteered at our Limerick centre, supporting the food bank and welcoming service users.

Staff from Extreme Networks, a Shannon based Company, engaged in Corporate Volunteering at the Drop-In Centre in Limerick. Mary, Laura, Darragh, Ivor and Barry were a great help with our food bank. They packed food parcels, prepared fruit smoothies, sandwiches, tea & coffee and provided a friendly welcome to the people using the service.





## Clonoulty Rossmore St Vincent de Paul Conference

Members gathered on Thursday June 25th to acknowledge and honour retired member Teresa Ryan's service and commitment of 35 years to the community and our Conference. Teresa embodied the spirit of compassion, generosity, and care that defines the SVP spirit. Teresa's empathy and invaluable contribution made a difference and brought hope to many in our Parish. If you feel inspired by the commitment of Teresa, consider joining the team of SVP volunteers.

Visit [www.svp.ie](http://www.svp.ie) to learn more and take the first step to making a difference.



Barry Ryan presenting certificate to Teresa Ryan

## SVP received €3,063.45 from students this year, raised through their club and Christmas Market efforts.

€1558.45 handed over to SVP today from the students that raised money during the year from our SVP Club. In total with the Christmas Market bucket collection the boys have raised in total €3063.45. We are so proud of all the efforts during the year.



Students of CBS High School, Clonmel, with Mary Stafford, SVP member.



## NORTH EAST & MIDLANDS REGION

### Commemorating 100 Years of St. Vincent de Paul in Trim

Last year, the Trim community celebrated the centenary of St. Patrick's Conference, part of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP). For 100 years, the Conference has provided unwavering support to those in need, leaving a legacy of compassion, service and community spirit.

#### A Brief History

St. Patrick's Conference was founded in December 1924, in response to the significant poverty and hardship experienced in Trim. The town was much smaller then, and life was tough, especially after a wet summer and autumn that led to poor harvests and scarce farm work.

Trim, like much of Ireland, was also reeling from the lasting effects of the First World War. Many returning soldiers bore physical and mental scars, with little support. Local businesses, once key employers, had also been devastated during the Black and Tans' reprisals in 1920.

Amid these challenges, the Conference's first members – led by President, Francis Kelly, Secretary G.P. Hoey, and Treasurer John Brogan – came together to support those in need, laying the foundation for a century of care and service.

#### 100 Years On

A century later, St. Patrick's Conference continues to thrive and serve the people of Trim, adapting to the changing needs of the community. Today, the Conference's work spans three key areas:

- Visitation
- Social Housing
- Vincent's Shop

#### Marking the centenary in 2024

A number of special events and activities were organised throughout

2024 to commemorate this remarkable milestone.

In August, a **Special Parchment** was commissioned to honour deceased Conference members and shop volunteers. It also recognises past, living and current volunteers, and is now permanently displayed at **Vincent's** on Loman Street.

On **Sunday, 6th October**, a **Special Celebration of Holy Mass** was held to mark the centenary. Regional President, **Hannah Clarke**, area President, **Les Higgins**, and around 90 members from neighbouring Conferences joined past and present members of the Trim Conference and shop volunteers.

Following the Mass, a **commemorative tree** was planted in the church grounds as a lasting tribute to this historic occasion.

The celebrations continued at the **Castle Arch Hotel**, where attendees enjoyed light refreshments and the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. The event highlighted the strong sense of community that has always been at the heart of St. Patrick's Conference.

#### A Glimpse into the past

A special exhibition of historic, **non-confidential papers dating back to 1933** was displayed in the local parish church for four weeks, offering a fascinating insight into the Conference's history and evolution.

A touching moment during the 6th October gathering saw **Ann Murtagh** present a **photograph from the 1974 Golden Jubilee to Sr. Kathleen Lynam**, the Conference's longest-serving member with over 60 years of dedicated service.

### A Legacy of Compassion

As St. Patrick's Conference celebrates its centenary, Trim can take pride in its lasting impact on the community. What began in 1924 as a small group of compassionate individuals has grown into a vital and enduring part of Trim's community fabric.

While the challenges faced by society have evolved over the past hundred years, the spirit of **compassion, solidarity and service** at the heart of St. Patrick's Conference remains unchanged. Here's to the next hundred years of helping those in need in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.



Sr. Kathleen Lynam, Conference President, Jimmy Fegan and Ann Murtagh as the 50-year-old photo is presented



Pictured at the handover of the parchment; L to R Louise Bridges, Magda Zac, Michael Murran, Jimmy Fegan, Michael Mc Hugh and Allison Walton.



Breaking Barriers: Moate Business College and Moate SVP support those in financial difficulty

Moate Community School was established on the 1st of September 1996 as a result of an amalgamation between Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Carmelite College and Moate Vocational School. At present the school has an enrolment of 820 secondary students, 430 PLC students and 130 staff.

Educational research in the field of school effectiveness and school improvement suggests that the capacity of school to attain these objectives is largely dependent on the environment or culture that prevails therein. Furthermore, research suggests that the most effective schools are those which work at building a sense of community for all pupils. This sense of community is fostered through providing care, developing relationships, creating common purpose and fostering a sense of attachment among young people to something greater than themselves.

Access to quality education is a fundamental right, yet financial barriers often prevent individuals from pursuing their academic and career aspirations. At Moate Business College, we are committed to breaking these

barriers and providing opportunities for lower-income students to gain skills, qualifications, and confidence for a brighter future. Through a range of financial aid programs, career support services, and inclusive learning initiatives, we strive to make education accessible to all. This is very much supported by our local St Patrick's and St Manchans Conference SVP, Moate who have given financial assistance to some of our students that have faced financial hardship. In turn, the Community Development class in Moate Business College organised a fundraising initiative for our local SVP. This fundraiser was our way of giving back and expressing our gratitude for the vital work they do.

To make this initiative impactful, the class collectively donated and contributed to assembling the main prize which was a shopping trolley filled with a generous selection of food, treats and essential items worth over €250. Thanks to the incredible generosity and support of our college community, we successfully raised an impressive €730 through ticket sales sold only on college grounds.

This achievement not only exceeded our expectations but also reinforced our collective commitment to supporting those in need. The presentation of the cheque to St. Vincent de Paul was a proud and reflective moment for our class, as we recognised the tangible impact of our efforts in helping to address poverty and promote social inclusion. We are honoured to have played a part and will strive to continue to support SVP's mission and we sincerely appreciate their work in our community.

At Moate Business College we believe that no one should be denied an education due to financial constraints. Through these initiatives, we are creating a supportive, inclusive, and opportunity-rich environment where students from all backgrounds can thrive. If you or someone you know is looking for affordable education with strong career prospects, we are here to help.

For more information on our courses, visit [www.moatebusinesscollege.com](http://www.moatebusinesscollege.com) or telephone 0906481178

*Written by Olive Costello, Director, Moate Business College.*

Photo to the left: Left to right: John Scally, Oluwayemis Okegbenro (Students), Val Connaughton (Treasurer and John Galvin (A. Treasurer).



WEST REGION

West Region Celebrate their Regional Members Day on Sunday 6th April in the McWilliam Park Hotel, Claremorris.

We were joined by Fr. Aidan Galvin from Knock who celebrated mass with the members in the morning. We had over 80 people attend including some Regional Staff, the day was a great success. We had Minister for Social Protection Dara Calleary join us on the day to speak. We also had our Youth Development Officer Helen Ralph along with 6 TY Students to tell the members about their projects that they were involved in throughout the year.



Minister



Youth



## NORTH REGION

### Annual Members Retreat



Members of The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) from across the Northern Region gathered on the weekend before Easter for their special Annual Retreat hosted by Spiritual Advisor for the Northern Region Fr Perry.

The Retreat offered a welcome opportunity for reflection, renewal and spiritual connection.

Held in the peaceful setting of Drumalis, and away from the pace of daily life, the Retreat brought together Vincents from a range of local Conferences to pause, pray, reflect and reconnect with the core values of their service: compassion, humility, and solidarity with those in need.

The day offered reflections, quiet contemplation, and group discussions on the Vincentian mission, encouraging members to explore the meaning of their volunteer work and share its challenges and rewards.

Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, said: "Fr Perry set the tone for recentring ourselves and giving consideration into the spiritual dimensions of the Society and of service, while prayer provided a calm and restorative atmosphere to the Retreat. Informal conversations gave members an opportunity to strengthen friendships within the Vincentian family and build on the bond experienced in our different SVP Conferences.

*"We left the Retreat reminded that sometimes, to keep giving to others, we have to take a moment to be nourished ourselves and the heart of our work is not just in providing practical help, but in a personal encounter rooted in love, respect and faith through home visitation."*

### Area Gatherings



A number of Area Gatherings have taken place in 2025 across the Region. Area Gatherings took place for SVP members in West Belfast, South and East Belfast, Derry and Newry.

The Area Gathering brings members and community partners together for discussions, updates, guest speakers, and reflection – honouring SVP's ethos



of faith and compassion. A highlight was an insightful presentation by the Consumer Council.

Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, said: *"Area Gatherings are a vital opportunity for the Society to provide a platform for our members, to celebrate their incredible dedication, and understand the challenges they face on the ground. We know that poverty takes many forms, financial difficulties, social isolation, homelessness, food insecurity, fuel poverty and no two communities are the same. These meetings allow us to reflect together and find practical ways to respond with dignity and hope."*

*"We're witnessing continued rising demand for our services, from food support and fuel assistance and we know that during the summer holidays, families will be in desperation as they try to afford the cost of school uniforms and everyday essentials. These Area Gatherings provide us with an opportunity to reaffirm our shared mission, engage with our members at a local level and reenergise our commitment to those we serve."*

*"Our conferences are built on the incredible generosity of local people. Whether it's offering time, skills, or a listening ear, every volunteer plays a part in creating a compassionate network of support. We would love to see new faces joining SVP, people who want to help, who care about their neighbours, and who believe in the power of community."*

### Member Milestones



Congratulations to Isobel Gallagher who was presented with her certificate for 40+ years service to St Michaels Conference, West Belfast, by Conference President Pat McGarrigle on her 88th birthday!



Finola Coyne

Congratulations to Finola Coyne who has been an invaluable SVP Ballyholme and Donaghadee member for over 28 years.

### Mayor Recognises Lisburn SVP



Members of Lisburn SVP Conference are pictured at their Conference meeting with the Mayor's Community Awards 2025 certificate.

The Conference received the certificate to recognise the ongoing commitment



of SVP to community work in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City council area.

Speaking at The Mayor's Community Awards, The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Councillor Kurtis Dickson, expressed heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers and organisations that devote their time and energy to improving the lives of others. The event was attended by members of the community, civic leaders and local heroes to honour their dedication, hard work and positive impact.

### Welcome Donation

George McGrath, South and East Belfast Area President, met with Head Boy Eoin and Head Girl Fiona at St Joseph's College. They joined Miss L'Estrange, Vice Principal; Mr McDaid, Vice Principal; and Mrs Whyte, Head of Religious Studies; to present a very welcome donation to SVP.

### Social Justice Stormont Meeting

Mary Waide, SVP Regional President for the Northern Region, and Pauline Brown, SVP Regional Manager, recently met with Junior Ministers Aisling Reilly and

Pam Cameron to present the ethos of The Society and discuss the work that SVP members are involved in across the Region.





## Retail Campaign Encouraging Shoppers to Share the Love

The public is being encouraged to 'Share the Love' sustainably at Vincent's!

The initiative is running in all shops in the Northern Region which are a vital community resource, offering affordable new and pre-loved clothing, giftware, household items, toys and accessories while supporting The Society of St Vincent de Paul.

'Share the Love' at Vincent's encourages people to donate clean, wearable and undamaged garments and items, meaning shoppers can be assured that they can continue to purchase quality items that they have come to expect and love from their local Vincent's.

Anne McLarnon, SVP board member and Chair of the Northern Region Retail Committee, said: "We launched our 'Share the Love' campaign during February as we believe that we have a responsibility to those who love donating to our shops and our shoppers who love treating themselves in our Vincent's shops."

Vincent's promotes sustainability thanks to generous donors who 'Share the Love' with pre-loved items – supporting local communities, recycling, and reducing waste.

Anne added: "Our staff and volunteers love receiving pre-loved items but we would appeal to anyone considering their donations to take a moment before filling their 'charity shop donation bag' to respect the time and effort of our dedicated volunteers and staff involved in sorting unwanted items, by donating only those items which they used to love themselves and which are clean, in good, reusable condition, and safe for use. We love receiving quality items that we know will be loved by their new owner."

"Unfortunately, we are unable to accept items that are unwearable or



broken. Additionally, for safety reasons, we cannot accept electrical goods or personal safety items such as car seats and helmets. When people dispose of unsuitable items places an unnecessary financial burden on our charity - resources that could otherwise go toward helping those who need our help the most.

"By donating responsibly, the public is helping us to continue our vital work while sending a powerful message of care - for us, our volunteers and staff, the local community and the environment."

Vincent's shops are open for donations on various days. As opening times may vary from store to store, donors are requested to check in advance when donations are accepted at their local

Vincent's shop either by phone, visiting the SVP website or by calling in and speaking to Vincent's staff.



## NORTH WEST REGION

### Ozanam House Residential Unit Bundoran

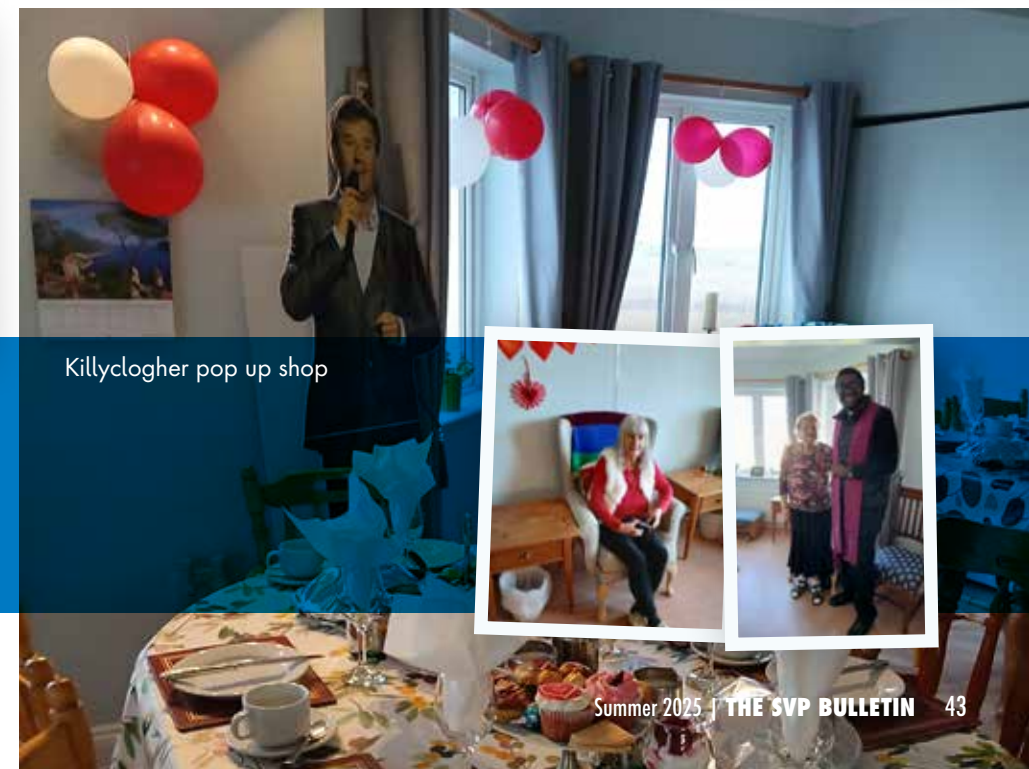
Ozanam House Bundoran is Assisted Living for older people who want to keep their independence yet be supported in a safe and secure environment.

We are ideally located in the Heart of the Community, just a short walk to everything. There are 15 ensuite bedrooms and full board accommodation is provided. Experienced chefs prepare a variety of tasty dishes daily tailored to meet residents' needs. Staff are available throughout the day and night, prioritising independence but available to assist if required.

Ozanam House Bundoran is warm and comfortable with breath taking views of Bundoran's coastline. We aim to create a warm, supportive, and homely environment for each resident to enjoy their retirement with good friends and company. Included are some recent photos of our residents enjoying various occasions.



Should anyone wish to contact Ozanam House call 0861530338, email [ozanam.bundoran@svp.ie](mailto:ozanam.bundoran@svp.ie) or come for a visit and see for yourself.



Killyclogher pop up shop



## Mr. Danny Breslin, former Bundoran SVP President, recently celebrated his 100th birthday and received a Centenarian cheque from President Higgins.

Mr. Danny Breslin, former businessman of West End, Bundoran who recently celebrated his 100th Birthday party in the Community Hospital, Ballyshannon was a life time member of The Saint Vincent De Paul and the President of the Bundoran Conference in former years.

Danny, who was an old style Shopkeeper and Butcher and also ran a travelling shop was very familiar with the issues of individuals and families in the Community who were in need of the services of St. Vincent De Paul.

We congratulate Danny on receiving his cheque from President Higgins on becoming an Centenarian and wish him all the best for the future.



## Errigal SVP raised €530 at a quiz and raffle in Ballerin to support local families in need.

Errigal SVP recently held a fundraising quiz and raffle in Ballerin Community Hub. A fantastic total of €530 was raised which will really help us to continue to support families in need in the community.

Errigal SVP are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of the event including our quizmaster who volunteered his services and local businesses who very kindly donated prizes for the raffle.

Names of Errigal SVP members from left to right: Anne Canning, Treasurer, Kate Mullan, President, Joanne Black, Secretary Anthony McCloskey, Vice President. Missing from photograph, our other member, Ita McNicholl, who was unavailable on the night but was involved in all of the planning for the event.



A youngster watches on as the traditional musicians belt out a tune



## St. Connell's Conference, Kilclooney, Co Donegal.

Last summer one of our members Tony Finnerty, began traditional Irish music sessions over the months of July and August.

Tony, who is a keen traditional music advocate, put notices up in local shops and contacted Comhaltas groups advertising his Monday evening sessions to be held in the Dolmen Centre, Kilclooney.

The sessions were described as SVP fundraisers, with donations voluntary.

Another of our members Sarah Ruddy supplied cakes and buns for the evenings.

To Tony's surprise the first evening gathered a crowd of 20 musicians young and old. As the summer progressed and word got about in the traditional music circles the number increased, with local and visiting musician taking part.

On one of the evenings the session was moved to the Church of Ireland community hall in Portnool and a great evening was had with many holidaymakers coming along to enjoy the ceol agus craic.

At the end of the summer of fun and friendship, a total of €1200 was raised for our small conference.

Tony hopes to repeat the event this summer, so Sarah will be busy baking!

Well done to Tony, Sarah, musicians and music lovers who took part.

*Written by Peter McLoughlin - President of St. Connell's Conference.*



## Advance/Refresher Training in the North West Region

5 SVP Advance/Refresher Training for Home Visitation Members took place in March and April 2025. The North West Training Team delivered the sessions to SVP members from the Convoy, Inishowen, Leitrim, and Sligo areas. It provided both new insights and updated methodologies, equipping participants with advanced skills to assess the needs of those they visit, manage complex situations, and offer tailored support. A key emphasis of the training was the importance of visiting in pairs, effectively assessing needs, attending conference meetings, and understanding safeguarding protocols, including identifying designated liaison persons

within the region. The training also reinforced best practices, ethical standards, and the significance of maintaining boundaries while fostering a compassionate and professional relationship with clients. Additionally, it offered members an invaluable opportunity to share and learn from one another's experiences, further strengthening the collective expertise within the SVP network. By staying informed about updates in policies, services, and community resources, members are able to continue delivering support with confidence and competence.



## Joey Lafferty - Celebrating 90 Years

Joey has been a member of St Vincent de Paul in his hometown of Carndonagh for 48 years. He was always an enthusiastic and hard working member from day one.

He took up the church collections, visited many people in need in their homes, in hospital and in nursing homes over the years, and was always a kind and caring person who listened to and helped many people in need.

He was a skilled builder, and he built 10 SVP housing units and remained active until very recently, the most knowledgeable person when it came to maintenance and repairs. He kept the properties in good order and up to date for many years.

He rarely misses conference meetings and continues to be a very valued member of the Carndonagh Conference.



## Milford-Dunfanaghy Area Gathering and Appreciation Evening

The Milford-Dunfanaghy Area hosted a meaningful and well-attended gathering and appreciation evening on 9th April 2025 at the Downings Bay Hotel in County Donegal.

This special event brought together members from across the area to reflect on their shared mission, deepen their understanding of available support services, and recognise the outstanding contributions of long-serving volunteers. The evening began with a thought-provoking presentation by Elaine Bonner, Service and Delivery Manager at MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service). Elaine delivered an engaging and informative PowerPoint presentation outlining the range of services MABS provides to individuals and families facing financial difficulty. Her overview included practical insights on how MABS can support those SVP members assist through home visitation, and she highlighted potential pathways to financial stability for those in need.

The presentation was followed by a lively and interactive Q&A session. Attendees took the opportunity to ask questions and discuss real-life scenarios, gaining clarity on how to best guide individuals. Following the Q&A, members took part in group discussions, creating a collaborative space where they could reflect on their roles and the challenges encountered during home visitations. These discussions allowed for the sharing



of best practices, local insights, and peer support, reinforcing the solidarity and strength of the SVP community. Topics included volunteer engagement, evolving community needs, and the ongoing importance of compassion and dignity in service delivery.



The evening concluded with a moving medal presentation ceremony, led by Mairead McGurran, North West Regional President. In her remarks, Mairead acknowledged the immense value of long-term volunteerism and the vital role each member plays in carrying out the Society's mission. She honoured those marking significant milestones of 25 and 50 years of dedicated service, presenting them with commemorative medals as a token of appreciation, acknowledging their exceptional commitment to the Society's mission and work.





## South Donegal, Ardara and Dungloe Area Gathering and Appreciation Evening

The South Donegal, Ardara, and Dungloe Areas convened an area gathering and appreciation evening on 10th April 2025 at the Highland Hotel in Glenties, County Donegal. This well-attended event provided an important opportunity for connection, reflection, and recognition among SVP members from across the region. The evening began with a compelling and informative presentation delivered by Martina McElwaine and Sharon McGinty, both Community Welfare Officers with the Community Welfare Service. Their insightful session was met with great interest from attendees. Participants appreciated the chance to engage directly with the speakers during an interactive Q&A session, where they were able to seek clarification on a range of issues, real-life examples, and case-based scenarios that commonly arise in their volunteer work.

Following the presentation, attendees broke into smaller groups to participate in facilitated discussions, where they addressed relevant and pressing issues arising in their local areas. These sessions offered a space for constructive dialogue, enabling members to share their individual experiences, highlight common challenges, and exchange effective strategies for addressing complex needs in the community. The open and supportive atmosphere encouraged deeper engagement and provided reassurance that these shared experiences are part of a collective effort rooted in empathy, solidarity, and the values of SVP. Members left the discussion feeling more connected, informed, and equipped to continue their vital work in home visitation and community support.



The evening concluded with a heartfelt medal presentation ceremony, led by Mairead McGurran, North-West Regional President. In her address, she acknowledged the exceptional service and commitment of members who have dedicated much of their lives to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Medals were formally awarded to individuals marking 25 and 50 years of service, a moving tribute to their dedication, compassion, and the lasting impact they have made on the lives of countless individuals and families in need. The ceremony served as a reminder of the strength of community, the value of long-term commitment, and the deep sense of purpose that continues to inspire SVP volunteers across the region.



## To deceased members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

### Dominic Neville St. Colemans Conference SVP Cloyne, Co. Cork.

Dominic passed away on Nov. 29th 2024. He was one of the founder members of our conference. A devoted volunteer whose unwavering commitment to supporting those in need spanned many decades. He touched so many lives with extraordinary compassion, care, and generosity of his time. A man of great faith, a true gentleman. An inspiration to us all with his wisdom and good humoured approach to life. He has left a lasting impact not only on those we serve but on all those privileged to have volunteered alongside him. He was more than just a volunteer. He was a guiding light, a source of strength and a friend to many. Though Dominic is no longer with us, his spirit will live on as we continue our Vincentian work in the Parish of Cloyne.

RIP Dominic

### Gemma O Malley St. Anne's Family Support Conference, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Gemma passed away on June 2nd 2024, after a very short illness at the age of 68. She was our dear friend and long-time SVP Member in Ballina.

Gemma joined SVP Ballina in her early 20's and was a member for 46 years. She was awarded the Bene Merenti Medal in 2019. Her father, Billy Mongey, had been a member of SVP Castlebar and this had inspired Gemma to join SVP. Gemma didn't just do family visitation, she organised all sorts of practical support for families. Gemma had the gift of a phenomenal memory for names and details. She would have interacted with hundreds of families and could always be relied upon to recall necessary information, in the pre-CRM days, when required. Her voluntary work continued up until April 2024.

Gemma was instrumental in acquiring our own premises in the mid 1990's. She did trojan work in supervising the renovations and fit out of the Shop and Resource Centre. 10 Years ago she again worked to help secure a second retail premises, adjacent to the first. Under Gemma's guidance, SVP Ballina was one of the first to engage with the Food Cloud and FEAD programmes as well as with the local supermarkets. Our large Foodbank has provided assistance for hundreds of families.

Thanks to Gemma's efforts we now have two Shops, a Resource Centre and a Foodbank. Gemma was always at the centre of organising the development of activities and fundraising.

Gemma was very involved in starting up our Third Level education programme. Over 1,000 students in North Mayo have been assisted over the course of the past 20 years. Almost 25 years ago Gemma set up one of the first Lone Parent programmes and 20 years ago started the provision of computer classes. Also around that time Gemma contacted numerous retired teachers and set up an after-school tuition programme for clients who couldn't afford grinds.

Through her contacts, Gemma initiated the formation of a Network Group of voluntary and statutory organisations involved in caring and support in North Mayo. This group has been run by SVP Ballina for over 20 years and provides much needed information and support for SVP clients.

We remember Gemma at our weekly meetings. She is deeply missed by her family and all in SVP Ballina.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis



To deceased members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

In Tribute

To Deceased colleagues from the Vincent’s Retail Team.

We honour the memory of Anne Collins, Jennifer Tuffrey, and Pat Lonergan, three highly valued and much-loved members of staff, whose dedication, kindness and service left a lasting impact on all who had the privilege to work with them.

Anne Collins (nee Kearney)  
Shop Manager, Mitchel Street,  
Nenagh, County Tipperary.

Wednesday 15th January 2025 was indeed a very sad day in the lives of all who knew Anne Collins Ballycrinode, Ballinacclough, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, as they learned of her passing at Milford Care Centre. Limerick.

It was with great sadness that all in Vincent’s Mitchel Street Nenagh learned of her passing. Anne started her work in Vincent’s Nenagh on a Community Employment scheme. When the position of full-time manager came up in the shop Anne was successful in getting the position. As manager the shop grew from strength to strength all due to her dedication. Her dedication was to the shop conference, the shop volunteers and to the customers.

Anne worked tirelessly for the shop and gave it her 100%. Anne became ill around two years before her death. She loved visits from the shop volunteers and during these visits she always enquired about the shop and its customers. She will be missed by her many customers and colleagues in Vincent’s Nenagh.

We offer our sincere sympathy to her devoted husband Denis and her daughters Denise and Marie, her sister and brothers and her grandchildren.

Ní bheidh do leithéid arís ann.

Patrick (Pat) Lonergan  
OFC, Cork.

It is with great sadness that we remember Patrick (Pat) Lonergan. The hardest part of losing someone isn’t having to say goodbye but rather learning to live without them. Thank you for the joy you brought into our lives. You will be dearly missed . We’re grateful for the wonderful memories you shared with us in OFC Cork.

Jennifer Tuffrey (nee Kearney)  
OFC, Cork.

It is with great sadness that we remember Jennifer Tuffrey (nee Kearney). Her kindness and strength will always be remembered. We are so thankful for the time we had with you. We cherish the love and laughter you brought to SVP Cobh and OFC Cork. Thank you for everything. May your spirit find peace. We are eternally grateful for the impact you had on our lives.



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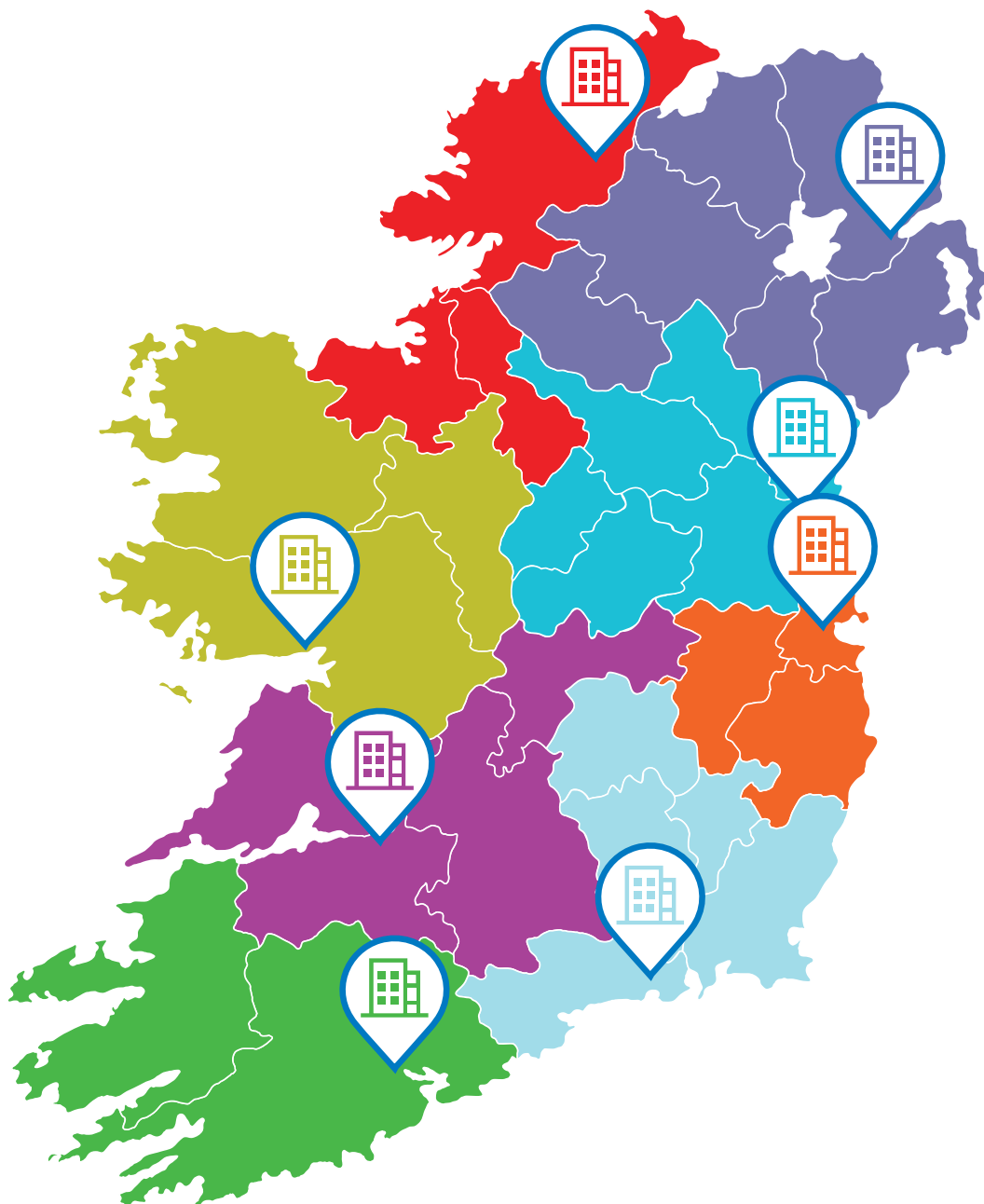
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