



The fourth Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, which will run from **Monday 7th to Sunday 13th April 2014**, is a celebration of Learning across the region. The festival promotes and celebrates learning in all its forms and for all ages, and provides a tremendous opportunity to promote Limerick City and County as a Region of Learning.

In 2013, the Festival featured over 150 events and activities – all of which were free and open to all. The activities taking place ranged from laughter yoga and flash mobs to making mosaics, internet for the terrified and introductions to sewing and ballet! The festival also had a large showcase event held in Thomond Park with over 25 event activities or festival highlights, all involving the learner in a fun and interactive way!

2014 will be the fourth Lifelong Learning Festival for Limerick and we are looking forward to building on the success of the last three years. Our newly expanded 'Limerick Learning Region Steering Group' (including Limerick County) is overseeing the organisation of the festival in 2014.

Festival Theme

The theme for the LLL Festival in 2014 will directly link with Limerick as the National City of Culture for 2014. This theme '**Your Learning - Your Culture**' is very relevant and reflects our passion for culture in the Limerick region. Why not get involved and immerse yourself in a Festival of learning and culture activities!

Submission of Event Details (Looking for ideas for Events?)

The closing date for event details is Friday, 14th February; email ylane@paulpartnership.ie or gcarroll@paulpartnership.ie for your form, or call Yvonne at 061-419388.

Examples of events include performances, debates, taster sessions, tours, displays, demonstrations and workshops. They can take place right across Limerick in a variety of indoor and outdoor venues; shopping centres, libraries, museums, resource and community centres, parks, sports grounds as well as on the street. Events should be free, creative, and open to all! For information on last year's Festival and events, check out limerick.ie/lovelearning



Evaluation of Lifelong Learning Festival 2013

An evaluation of the 2013 Lifelong Learning Festival was conducted last May 2013. There was a huge amount of learning and reflection arising from this quantitative and qualitative study enabling us to build on the success of the first three festivals.

In summary the evaluation found:

- There were a large number of events - over 150 week-long events & 25 participating groups in the Thomond Park Showcase.
- Attendance at events was 1449 participants at 77 events (those we received feedback from).
- Media & PR were strong at the time of the festival - but it's also important to sustain the "Learning Limerick" brand all year-round.
- Local PR & radio works best! – Particularly for the County.
- Thomond Park Showcase very successful aspect of 2013's festival - according to participating event hosts – a snapshot of what the festival week offers
- iMix online radio coverage was very effective in promoting the festival.

Recommendations

There is always room for improvement! Here are some of the key points that emerged as being important for future success:

- Working with individual event organisers around their PR – important to help organisers with their strategies to promote their individual events.
- Working with networks/sectors around engagement with the festival.
- Important that we link with Limerick's City of Culture 2014 Workplan and Agenda.
- New partnerships need to be encouraged – with the business sector – highlighting the link between learning & work; also with post-primary sector.

Limerick Learning Region's Participation at Hong Kong conference

John Buttery from the Learning Limerick Steering Group attended a conference in Hong Kong, **Cities Learning Together** in November 2013. Key points emerging from the Conference included:

- Structured and hierarchical models of learning are wasteful and won't survive.
- Models of learning need to be flexible and adaptable to local needs and to changing environments.
- A Learning City is a pre-requisite to achieving change in other areas of development: addressing economic challenges, quality of life, effective services and citizen engagement.
- 3rd Level Institutions need to change from being experts focused on teaching and research to adopting a 3rd mission of engaging with communities to be co-producers of local knowledge.





Lifelong Learning Event Organisers Network Meeting

A workshop for festival event organisers was held in the South Court Hotel on Thursday 30th January 2014. This meeting was attended by 30 representatives from a wide variety of groups interested in running events for the festival next April. There was a presentation and media handouts provided to help groups promote their own events locally and to support the overall PR campaign. The members also were split up into four separate groups in order to brainstorm this year's theme for the Festival (which was agreed as **"Your Learning - Your Culture"**!).

Cork Lifelong Learning Festival – Our Festival Friends!

Last year Cork's Lifelong Learning Festival celebrated its 10th birthday. The festival encourages people from all backgrounds, cultures, abilities, to be involved. It has played a role in breaking down barriers between different groups – no more so than through its partnership since 2010 with Féile an Phobail (the Festival of the People) in West Belfast.

Why the Cork festival is involved in EcCoWell

As we've established many cross-sector links over the last decade, it was easy to bring representatives from Healthy Cities, Cork Environmental Forum, the Economic Development Unit at Cork City Council, and the education sector together, to be introduced to EcCoWell by George Osborne from Hume Global Learning Village in Melbourne, our guest during the 2012 festival.

EcCoWell is about integrating strategies across the areas of ecology, economy (**Ec**), community, culture (**Co**), well-being, lifelong learning (**Well**).

During our 10th festival, Peter Kearns of PASCAL International Exchanges (PIE) introduced EcCoWell to Cork at a seminar called **Cities of the Future**, which over 80 attended. This was part of the lead up to one of Cork City's Flagship Gathering events **EcCoWell: Cities for the Future: learning from the global to the local**. It took place in September over two days at City Hall, and included site visits. This international event had over 250 people attending from overseas and from all over Ireland; including a number of representative from the Limerick Learning Region Steering Group!

(See: www.eccowellcork.com for more details.)



Learning Cities

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Lorraine Kingston and Tina Neylon Festival Co-ordinator, as guests of UNESCO, were invited to contribute to its first International Conference on Learning Cities in Beijing, China last October.

Currently we are putting together our programme for our 11th Cork festival. We are delighted that Limerick's festival continues to grow, and look forward to continuing to develop links between us.

Tina Neylon, Festival Co-ordinator, Cork Lifelong Learning Festival



love learning

