

## POWERING MINDS AND SUPPORTING EDUCATION

Five students from the area surrounding Meenadreen, County Donegal, have received grants totaling almost €40,000 over the next three years to support them in third-level education. The student bursary scheme is run in partnership with the **Energia Meenadreen Windfarm Community Benefit Fund** in south Donegal.

The five local students are enrolled in colleges across Ireland including Dublin City University, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, NUIG and Ulster University.

**Jamie Crawford**, one of the five students, said: "Being selected to receive a scholarship from the Meenadreen Community Benefit Fund has been a huge help to me and has relieved some of the financial strain that attending university can bring.

"I applied for the fund because I have witnessed, first-hand, the benefits that Energia has had on my community, including providing funding for a new playground and an extension to the local community centre.

"With a personal interest in renewable energy, I am now studying a BA in Education, with a special focus on climate change education and sustainability in the classroom and I hope to bring this passion to students in the future."

The student bursary scheme was introduced following a workshop for local community groups, which was organised by the Community Foundation for Ireland, who administer the wind farm fund on behalf of Energia.

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said **Jamie Crawford**, one of the five students.



## BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Wind energy community benefit report 2020



## WINDFALL OF SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES

Wind farm communities across the Republic of Ireland received funding of just over €4 million in 2020. Using figures compiled from its members Wind Energy Ireland confirmed that residents living close to wind projects received millions of euro to support education, energy efficiency, local projects, clubs, schools, sports clubs and active retirement programmes. As well as lots of Covid related initiatives and supports.

Putting a figure on the amount of money donated in a given year shows the significant support green energy is giving to Ireland's rural communities. Without this support, many fantastic local projects would struggle to find alternative funding.

Wind energy is Ireland's most valuable tool in the fight against climate change – already it is providing more than a third of our electricity each year. The more clean energy we can generate for our homes, farms, schools and businesses the less we rely on fossil fuels.

In addition to the €4 million donated in Community Benefit Funds in 2020, wind farms also pay nearly €50 million each year to local county councils – funding roads, libraries and services across rural Ireland.

## LOCKDOWN LOCALS WALK, RUN, AND CYCLE

With Covid travel restrictions in place for much of 2020 the 45,000 people who visited Mountlucas wind farm last year managed to cover the distance from Malin Head to Mizen Head an amazing 926 times.

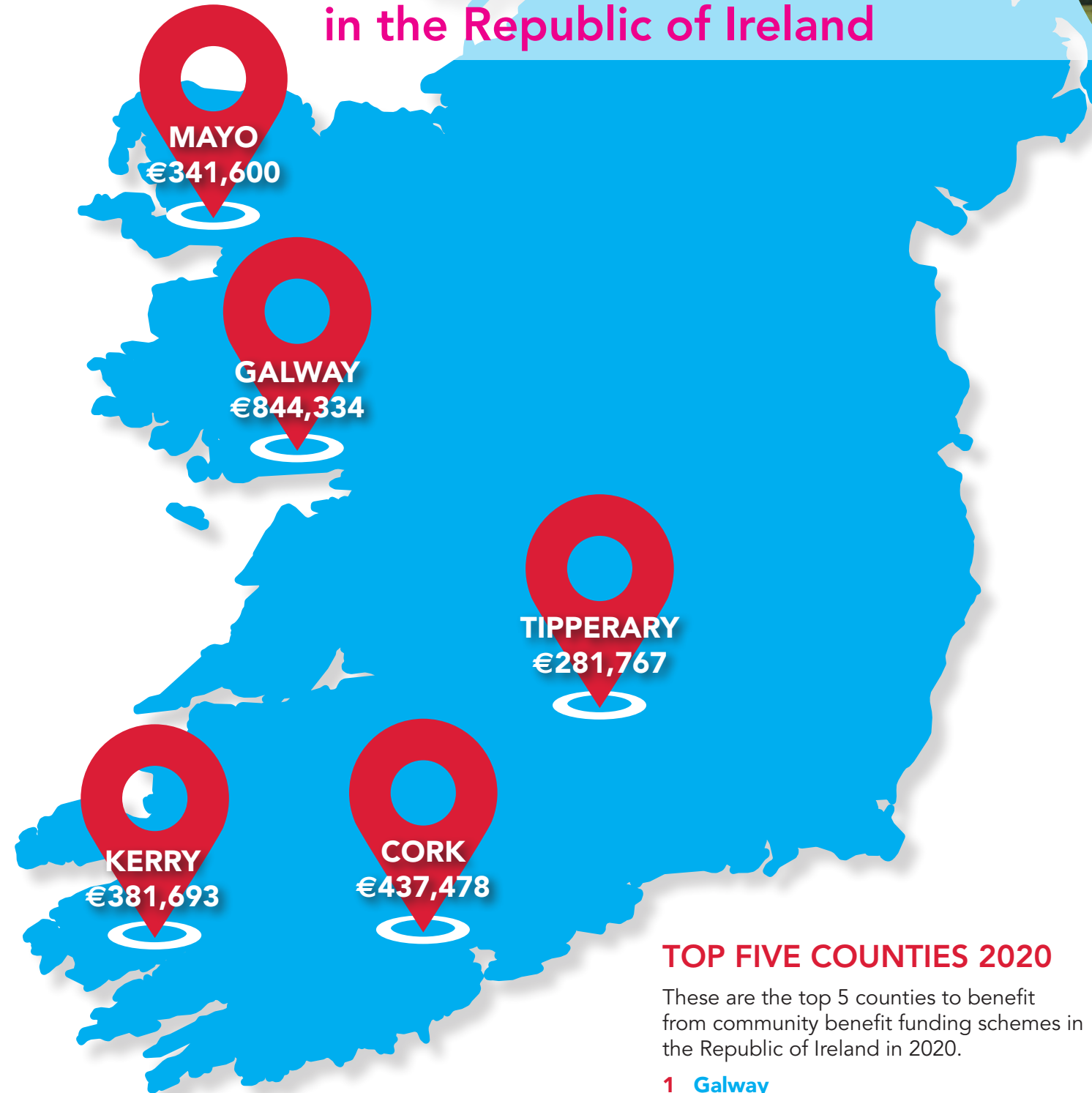
The wind farm has 10km of multi-use track through the surrounding peatland where families were able to walk, run, cycle and exercise safely during the very worst time of the pandemic. The 450,000km they clocked up between them is nearly a thousand times the length of the country and demonstrates how central Mountlucas is to the local community.

The biggest increase in visitor numbers to Bord na Móna Moutlucas Wind Farm was in March, the beginning of the lockdown when the most stringent restrictions were implemented. That month, visitor numbers to the site were up 78 per cent on the same month in 2019.

"The trails through our peatland allow people to exercise and enjoy nature in a place with plenty of space, no traffic and lots of plants, birds and animals to see," said **Catherine Swaine Visitor Care Manager** at the Moutlucas wind farm. "People have found it a great resource during the difficult times of 2020 and one woman told me she would have been lost without it."

PHONE BOX LIBRARY FUNDED  
NEW DEFIBRILLATORS FOR KERRY  
WALKING TRAIL IN THE INISHOWEN PENINSULA  
DISCOUNT ELECTRICITY FROM WIND FARM  
HOMES RETROFITTED  
EQUIPMENT FUNDED  
EXERCISE  
CORK  
BROADBAND FOR  
MEALS-ON-WHEELS POWERED BY WIND

€4,012,000  
MILLION IN FUNDING IN 2020  
in the Republic of Ireland



### TOP FIVE COUNTIES 2020

These are the top 5 counties to benefit from community benefit funding schemes in the Republic of Ireland in 2020.

- 1 Galway
- 2 Cork
- 3 Kerry
- 4 Mayo
- 5 Tipperary



## SUPPORTING RETURN TO CLASSROOMS

In August 2020 SSE Renewables launched a Schools Coronavirus Response Fund to support local schools around the Bindoo, Gartnaneane and Corneen Wind Farms in County Cavan and Mullananalt Wind Farm in County Monaghan.

"Children have missed out on so much both educationally and socially, so supporting them on their return to the classroom is so important for us," said **Diane Murphy**, Principal, Scoil Éanna, Ballybay.

Through the funding from SSE Renewables we were able to put in place the key safety measures required so the children could return to as normal an environment as possible.

A total of 17 schools were awarded funding for coronavirus measures totalling €42,458. The measures included foggers, sanitisers and dispensers and cleaning products. The funding also supported additional social distance requirements, providing extra tables and chairs, plastic storage boxes and signage.

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## DELIVERING CARE AND HOME COMFORTS DURING COVID

Seán MacCumhail's GAA club in Co Donegal became a community hub during the 2020 pandemic. They quickly mobilised and provided much needed services such as meals-on-wheels, medical deliveries and care calls to the elderly. SSE Renewables helped the club to do this by funding PPE, sanitiser and food supplies.

Thanks to the hard work of club volunteers they were able to deliver much needed resources to the local people who needed help and showed true community spirit.

"We as a club and community are so grateful to SSE Renewables for their continued support which was even more appreciated this year," said **Damien Devaney**, Manager, Seán MacCumhail's GAA.

Seán MacCumhail's GAA, were awarded €9,150 awarded in September 2020 from the Meentycat Community Fund, Co Donegal.

