

Meath County Council install Communication Boards in Meath Playgrounds

10 June 2021

Meath County Council in partnership with Facebook's Clonee Data Centre has begun the installation of communication boards in 26 playgrounds across the county.



Pictured L-R - Aoife Flynn, Community Development Manager Facebook, Mark Hunter, Data Centre Site Manager Facebook, Des Foley, DoS Meath County Council and Cllr. Ronan Moore, Cathaoirleach Trim MD

The boards are primarily a communications support, with particular benefit to children or adults who are either pre-verbal or non-verbal and/or have communication difficulties. Communication Boards, which include picture representations of day to day core words, as well as images that are specifically tailored for its environment and the location for which it is proposed, help bridge this communication gap for everyone.

The idea for the communication board was born from the 'One Good Idea' initiative ran last summer by Cllr. Ronan Moore. Cllr. Moore invited members of the community to suggest initiatives and projects for him to commit to for the year ahead, "Marion Ryan from Trim was in touch with an idea focused on inclusion and while that specific scheme was not feasible, it did lead to me contacting InterAcT in Trinity College Dublin and Inclusion Ireland. From this came the idea of the communication boards, a form of alternative communication".

"I began working with Meath County Council on this issue and have had strong support from the senior leaders and the county chamber, where my motion to introduce Communication Boards throughout the county was unanimously backed by all Councillors. The only challenge left was

funding and I'm delighted that Facebook Data Centre in Clonee came on board to fully fund the production and installation of these boards throughout the playgrounds of County Meath".

Meath County Council Chief Executive Jackie Maguire added, "These communication boards were first installed in Wexford in Min Ryan Park, which I understand helped inspire the initial idea. These boards have since gone on to receive an award for inclusivity in disability service provision. With this announcement, I am delighted that Meath will become one of the first counties in the country to introduce these award-winning communication supports across the whole of the county".

Commenting on the funding, Aoife Flynn, Community Development Manager at Facebook said: "We are thrilled to support Meath County Council with their inclusive communications board project. The boards represent and offer a unique opportunity for the community to communicate and connect with each other in a new way. We're grateful to be part of an initiative that aligns so closely with our mission to build community."

A collaborative community led approach was taken to developing the board, with input gratefully received from the HSE, from Inclusion Ireland and from the InterAcT initiative at Trinity College.

Installation of all boards will take place over the upcoming months across the County.