

NEWKD CRAFT CIRCLE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025



NEWKD Craft Circle is a welcoming community where groups come together once a week to explore a diverse range of arts and crafts. More than just a creative outlet, it fosters mental well-being, social inclusion, meaningful connections, and a strong sense of community. Whether you're a seasoned artist or a beginner, the NEWKD Craft Circle provides a supportive and inspiring space to unwind, express creativity, and build lasting friendships. This is a social, creative, and informal group where to work on your own or new projects in the company of other crafters.

The NEWKD Craft Circle's are the gifts that keep on giving, meaning the skills, talents and generosity of all the groups know no bounds. Each group has added value to their communities, by making blankets for End of Life patients, donating many of their crafts for charities and collaborating with Inspired Kerry. More importantly though they have become a friendly welcoming space for people in their communities. As a SICAP community development worker, it's a great privilege to witness the wonderful work of the NEWKD Craft Circles and to see the friendships and sense of community in the various groups.

To date we have nine NEWKD Craft Circles that meet every week, each group is hosted by volunteer facilitators. This coming year, 2026 we will be working with members of the groups who want to develop their crafts to the next level, ie. creating a craft business, both online or developing a collective of crafts cooperatives. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and new year, looking forward to what these groups will weave in the new year. Dee Keogh



Dee proudly showing off blanket made by Jutta

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By doing what you love, you inspire and awaken the hearts of others. Anon





What began as a simple wish — a longing for connection, creativity, and a place for people to come together — has grown into a truly fantastic community project that keeps developing, blossoming, and giving back in ways we never imagined. These two and a half years have absolutely flown by since I started the very first group in Tralee. And now... we're already at 9 groups!!

This has been possible with support and encouragement from Dee of the SICAP team at NEWKD, who believed in this project from day one, along with the wider SICAP team and their manager, Robert. Most importantly, our nine groups exist because of the dedicated, talented, and wonderfully generous facilitators who have stepped into the role of volunteer group leaders and facilitators. Their creativity, kindness, and commitment are at the heart of everything we do. This year for our groups was rich with creativity, celebration, and community connection. Across all groups, we explored a wide variety of crafts, with clay and fairy-themed projects remaining especially popular.

We had many wonderful milestones to celebrate together — babies being born, an engagement and other personal moments that brought warmth and joy to the community. Marking these milestones helped strengthen the bonds between participants and created a sense of shared support.

Special themed days added extra fun and inspiration to the calendar. We proudly celebrated World Craft Day, World Origami Day, and Knit in Public Day, giving everyone the chance to learn new skills and shine a spotlight on our creative work.

On a personal level, I truly feel that I've found or more accurately, created — my own tribe. After 20 years in Tralee, I feel more rooted and connected than ever before. This community has given me a deep sense of belonging, and along the way I've met so many wonderful, creative, and kind people who continue to inspire me. This year alone, I've tried and learned more new crafts, skills, techniques, and experiences than any year before — and I've also had the joy of teaching and sharing new crafts with others. It has been a year of growing, giving, and learning together, and I couldn't be more grateful. I wish to thank **everyone** for supporting NEWKD Craft Circles, for acknowledging my work and I am looking forward to a very creative new year. Kristine Sasko





In September NEWKD Craft Circle happily welcomed 2 more new groups, in Shanakill - Tralee and in Castleisland

SHANAKILL - TRALEE CRAFT CIRCLE



Setting up a craft circle in Shanakill Family Resource Centre has been a mix of planning, patience, and creativity. We were very lucky to have great support from Kristine from NEWKD; along the way she has been a guiding hand. Once the group space was organised, we advertised widely. The group started to form slowly and now runs very successfully each week. It has become a warm and meaningful gathering that brings friends and families together, strengthens community ties, and creates a safe space for creativity and connection. It is a very relaxed group with every member being valued for their creativity. We use this creative space to unwind, connect, and make something lovely, have good chats and some fun.

We welcome all new members with open arms, whether you're a seasoned crafter or just curious to try something new, everyone is welcome. Drop in to enjoy simple, fun projects, share ideas, and meet other families in a warm, friendly atmosphere.

Shielagh and Gillian, Group Facilitators



CASTLEISLAND CRAFT CIRCLE

Castleisland Craft Circle first met in Castleisland in September this year. It was started by Sinead and Rose with a help from Dee S and Kristine. We have 10-15 members who come every week. Every week we have a group who are very interested in knitting and crochet and another group who love crafting. Both groups are very talented and willing to share ideas and skills. We meet on Monday evenings, 7pm-9pm at Kerry Flyer, The Cragreens, V92 W967. We are looking forward to growing our Craft Circle in 2026.

Sinead and Rose, Group Facilitators



LISTOWEL CRAFT CIRCLE CELEBRATES 1 YEAR

Listowel Craft Circle celebrated its first birthday in October. Over the past year, the group has enjoyed a wonderful journey of creativity and friendship. Members spent the year crafting beautiful handmade pieces, attending a local craft fair together, and raising funds for local charities. It has been a year full of community, connection, and creativity — with many more to come! Valerie, Group Facilitator



well
done!



Blanket made
for raffle



OUR FIRST CRAFT MARKET



At the end of November, the very first NEWKD Craft Circle Craft Market took place in Tralee. Craft makers from most of the 9 groups attended, showcasing their wonderful handmade creations just in time for the Christmas season. The variety and quality of crafts on display was truly spectacular—beautiful Christmas decorations, handcrafted cards, book centrepieces, decorated gift boxes, knitted and crocheted toys, jewellery, diamond art pieces, handsewn toys, memory bears, memory pillows, button art, quilling art, paintings, photographs, woven witches, imps & enchanted charm bottles, clay decorations, suncatchers, candles, flower wreaths, table centrepieces, flower bouquets, handmade origami christmas baubles, crochet baubles and decorations, handmade herbal dolls, knitted socks, hats, scarves, felting, fairies, and delicious home baking.

We would like to thank everyone who attended.



CULTURE NIGHT WITH TRALEE CRAFT CIRCLE

The NEWKD Craft Circle Tralee group was delighted to take part in Culture Night 2025 for the second year running – and what a wonderful evening it was! A true celebration of creativity, connection, and community, the event brought people together to enjoy and showcase the power of arts and crafts.

The exhibition featured an impressive and diverse collection of handmade creations by our talented members, including crochet, painting, colouring, diamond art, knitting, quilling, clay art, quilting, stained glass, cross-stitch, embroidery, book folding, punch needle, stone art, button art, and so much more.

Visitors were also invited to get hands-on by creating their own mandala art or experimenting with scratch art, adding to the fun and creative atmosphere of the night.

A very big **THANK YOU** goes out to our wonderful group members, friends, visitors, NEWKD, SICAP, Kerry County Arts Office - for funding towards the event, The Arts Council, and of course the photographers who helped capture the magic of the evening.



OUR POSITIVE IMPACT IN COMMUNITY

NEWKD Craft Circle members have continued to be wonderfully generous this year— sharing not only their time, talents, and creativity, but also their hearts. Their passion for craft and creativity is beautifully matched by a strong spirit of kindness and community support.

This year, they've made a meaningful impact by contributing to several initiatives:

- ▶ **Bon Secours Hospital Tralee - handmade blankets for palliative care patients, also joined by Fenit Craft Group**
- ▶ **BUMBLEance Children's Ambulance Service – donations of handmade toys and blankets**
- ▶ **Kerry Cancer Support Group – Square to Share Project – crochet squares and monetary donation**
- ▶ **Kerry Cancer Support Group - blankets for cancer bus patients**
- ▶ **One Million Stars Ireland—promoting hope and solidarity through weaving more than 1000 stars**
- ▶ **Angel baby gowns**
- ▶ **Donation of plastic materials to INSPIRED group**
- ▶ **Attending and helping INSPIRED group with their crafts**
- ▶ **Craftivism for Palestine – donation of crochet squares for the blanket**
- ▶ **The Big Knit - Innocent Drinks Ireland – donation of handmade 500+ little hats**
- ▶ **Knitted Baby Gowns for Children in Africa**
- ▶ **Glasses Collection for Africa**
- ▶ **Kerry Hospice – fundraising and 225€ donation**
- ▶ **Christmas cards for NEWKD Home Visitation Service clients**
- ▶ **Various handmade crafts for Kerry Women's Centre conference goodie bags**



NEWKD CRAFT CIRCLE AND INSPIRED GROUP COLLABORATION

The collaboration between participants and staff at Inspired's Scotia Village and NEWKD's Craft Circle has grown into a wonderfully supportive and community-driven partnership. Members of the NEWKD Craft Circle have played a vital role by collecting waste plastic for our participants, who transform these materials into unique jewellery pieces as part of our sustainability-focused craft workshops. This practical support has strengthened the environmental impact of the programme and provided participants with a steady supply of creative resources.

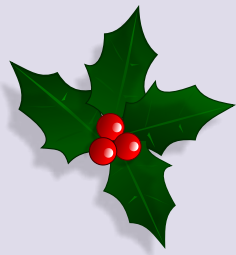
We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the ladies who have been volunteering with us, Ann, Ger, Marion, whose time, encouragement, and friendship have brought immense value to the workshops. Their presence has helped create a warm, inclusive atmosphere where participants feel supported, inspired, and connected. We also offer sincere thanks to Edel for gathering and delivering the plastic, ensuring the continuity of our jewellery-making activities. A special word of gratitude goes to Kristine for embracing this collaboration so openly and for her willingness to work alongside us, her enthusiasm and commitment have been deeply appreciated.

This partnership has not only strengthened environmental and creative outcomes but has also demonstrated the power of community engagement. Seeing members of the wider community working side by side with people with intellectual disabilities has been very uplifting. Thank you all for helping us to build a more inclusive, creative, and environmentally conscious community. Keep up the good work ladies! Liz Maher, Inspired





VARIETY OF OUR TALENTS



All artwork and crafts made by
NEWKD Craft Circle group members



8 In crafting, there are no mistakes,
only new discoveries and unique creations.

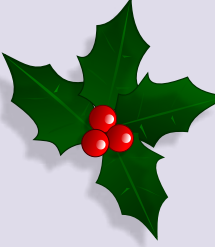


The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020





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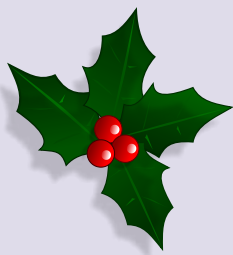
9 You can't use up creativity. The more you use,
the more you have. Maya Angelou



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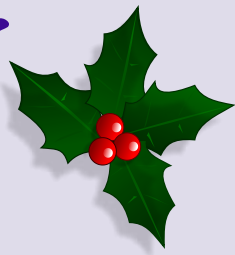
11 Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy craft supplies which is kind of the same thing.



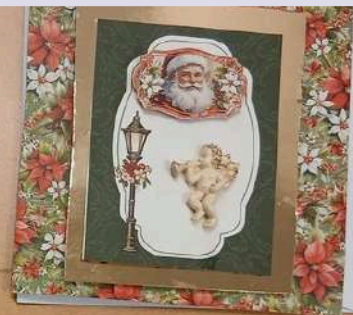
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KERRY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FEST 4TH – 11TH OCTOBER 2025

The NEWKD Craft Circle were delighted to take part in the Kerry Mental Health and Wellbeing Fest, which ran from the 4th to the 11th of October 2025. Nine NEWKD Craft Circles from Tralee, Listowel, Ballybunion, Ballyheigue, Ballyduff, Castleisland, Lyreacrompane and Dingle came together to highlight the importance of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, with a special focus on the most vital element – connection.

Throughout the festival, each group created beautiful affirmation stones and mini canvas paintings, resulting in a vibrant collection of designs. These colourful creations not only celebrated the collective talents of each group but also reflected the sense of community and shared purpose at the heart of every craft circle.

The project truly showcased the power of creativity, connection, and community in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing. Materials for these events were funded by SICAP - NEWKD and were very much appreciated by all groups. Tara O'Dowd, NEWKD



BON SECOURS HOSPITAL BLANKETS FOR END OF LIFE PATIENTS

Staff at the hospital gathered a large supply of wool and they approached the Tralee Craft Circle with a request for blankets. Members from the Tralee Craft Circle, Shanakill Craft Circle, and Fenit Craft Group came together to create warm, vibrant, and unique blankets.

Palliative Care CNM2 at the Bon Secours Majella O'Sullivan and Assistant Director of Nursing Breda Moriarty attended Craft Market on Saturday to receive 14 handmade, crocheted and knitted blankets for their End of Life patients.

We were so so delighted last Saturday to attend your Craft Market and be presented with handmade blankets. We received 14 unique, individual and perfectly crafted pieces.

These blankets will be for patients of the Bon Secours Hospital who are at the End of their Life. They will be used to add warmth and colour to the patient and their environment. Once the patient has departed this world, the family then have the blanket to keep and cherish in memory of their loved one. We are so grateful to each person that has been involved in this project.

Look forward to seeing you again soon, Kind Regards, Majella O'Sullivan

Anyone who would like to contribute towards this initiative, please contact Kristine.



Palliative Care Nurse Specialist at the Bon Secours Majella O'Sullivan and Breda Moriarty, Assistant Director of Nursing at the Bon Secours, with NEWKD Craft Circle members Esther Truslove, Kristine Sasko, Angela Walsh, Koren O'Brien and Jutta Raschke at the NEWKD Craft Circle Craft Fair at Aras an Phobail on Saturday afternoon, where a presentation of blankets was made for Palliative Care patients at the hospital. Photo by Dermot Crean



FIND US ON FACEBOOK

If you have an interest in arts, crafts, and community creativity, join and follow our **NEWKD Craft Circle** Facebook page! Stay up to date with latest group activities, and all the inspiring things happening across our 9 Craft Circles. Just click the link below to join our growing creative community!



[https://
www.facebook.com
/newkdcraftcircle](https://www.facebook.com/newkdcraftcircle)

We welcome and are very grateful for any art & craft materials or tool donations to any of our groups. If you would like to support us, please contact us. We would like to acknowledge all kind people who have already given, gifted and donated materials to our groups.



This publication is put together by Kristine Sasko,
NEWKD Craft Circle Founder & Facilitator
kristinesasko@newkd.ie

NEWKD CRAFT CIRCLE AND KERRY WOMEN'S CENTRE COLLABORATION

At the end of November, Kerry Women's Centre, in conjunction with NEWKD, organised the 16 Days of Action – Stop Violence Against Women and Children Conference in The Rose Hotel, Tralee.

For the second year, the NEWKD Craft Circle groups and individual crafters generously contributed their time, creativity, and skill to support the event. Their wonderful handcrafted donations helped fill the conference goodie bags, which included 130 handmade good luck dolls, all-occasion cards, origami stars and birds, and bracelets.

These contributions highlight not only the talent of local crafters but also the power of community collaboration. When groups, organisations, and community members come together with a shared purpose, their collective impact becomes even stronger. Initiatives like this demonstrate how vital it is for communities to support one another—by combining efforts, sharing resources, and standing together, we can create meaningful change and foster a safer, more connected environment for everyone.





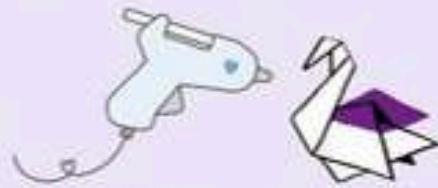
NEWKD Craft Circle

Friendly, relaxed and creative social space
in 9 locations across North Kerry!

- Exchange ideas & inspiration
- Try new techniques & materials
- Be part of a supportive community
- Discover hidden talents
- Share laughter and stories
- Celebrate achievements together
- Learn & share new skills
- Work on your own creative projects
- Improve your mental wellness
- Meet new people & socialise
- Enjoy time for yourself
- Boost your creativity
- Gain confidence in your abilities



Weekly Groups



Tralee – Mondays, 7–9pm
Áras an Phobail, Craighobail,
Dean's Lane, V92 CRW8

Fully Booked

Ballyduff – Mondays, 7–9pm
Benmore, Ballyduff, V92 A2VC

Castleisland – Mondays, 7–9pm
Kerry Flyer, The Cragreens, V92 W967

Ballyheigue – Tuesdays, 7–9pm
Ballyheigue Family Resource Centre,
Sraid Thaidhg, V92 N22

Listowel – Wednesdays, 7–9pm
NEWKD Office, 20 William Street,
V31 TR68

Dingle – Wednesdays, 7–9pm
Dingle, V92 VW74

Fully Booked

Ballybunion – Thursdays, 10am–12noon
Ballybunion Community Centre, V31 TV25

Tralee - Shanakill - Thursdays, 7–9pm
Shanakill Family Resource Centre,
Monavalley, V92 PF30

Lyreacrompane – Thursdays, 7–9pm
Lyreacrompane Resource Centre,
V31 DA36

For more info, contact
Dee – 087 635 6353
Kristine – 086 660 2147