



Local and European Elections 2024 – Friday, June 7th



Election candidates hear what the women of the county have to say



Vicci Tallis, Castleplunkett; Tetiana Vysotska, Castlereagh; Ruth Wallace, Castlereagh, and Jan Fellows, Kilmurry, at an event for women in advance of the local elections organised by Roscommon Women's Network and Roscommon County Council.



Local election candidates at an event for women in advance of the local elections organised by Roscommon Women's Network and Roscommon County Council. Pictures: Gerard O'Loughlin

Issues relating to roads, footpaths, local transport, housing, play-ground equipment for children with additional needs, a refuge for women, integration issues, childcare issues, and environmental issues were all under the microscope at a recent engagement with local election candidates organised by Roscommon Women's Network and Roscommon County Council.

Held in the Abbey Hotel, Roscommon, the event geared at women in advance of the local elections on June 7th heard from several of the candidates seeking election. The event, which was chaired by Roscommon Herald editor Christina McHugh, covered a broad range of topics important to women in the community.

Communications officer with Roscommon County Council Darragh Kelly outlined the different municipal districts and the number of council seats available in the county. Nora Fahy, manager of the Roscommon Women's Network (RWN), and development worker Aine Treanor set out the issues which had come up in discussion groups with women.

One of the issues raised on the night was the need for a refuge/safe house in the county for women experiencing domestic violence. Roscommon Safe Link is actively engaging with Cuan and other relevant stakeholders to achieve a positive outcome for survivors of domestic violence/abuse within the county. It is

hoped that a safe house/refuge co-ordinator will be appointed to progress this project in a timely manner.

Nora Fahy explained that the women had all come together at the local election hustings to engage in meaningful dialogue, to challenge candidates, to champion the issues that mattered most to them, and to give the candidates the opportunity to set out their stall.

"As we embark on this journey of empowerment and advocacy, let us remember the strength in our unity, and the impact of our collective action," she said.

She told the gathering that RWN had many examples of the power of women to make change and find solutions to issues through collective action. One of the most recent examples of this is CycleUp Textiles.

"Our CycleUp Textiles was conceived, as many brilliant ideas are, through conversation among women who gathered together, like here tonight, talking about issues affecting them. For the women who gathered together and conceived CycleUp Textiles it was a lack of flexible paid employment in a rural county and the desire to learn more about what they could do locally to protect the environment that motivated them.

"Six years on from those initial conversations, CycleUp Textiles is now a thriving social environmental enterprise, employing eight women and still recruiting, with many women in training to become textile upcyclers and sales and marketing personnel. We now have a fully operational production studio in Athleague and a new



Tetiina Kolodii, Susana Komokife and Angela Silviat at the event in the Abbey Hotel.

pop-up shop in Harrison Court.

"The success of CycleUp is a result of women coming together in collective action to develop their local solution to issues affecting and concerning them. With the support of RWN and many other collaborators including Roscommon County Council over the

last six years this group of women has achieved its two aims, ie, created flexible employment opportunities for themselves and other women while also addressing and raising awareness of textile waste and climate change. By our elected representatives listening, understanding, advocating, and supporting



Denise Pullum, Lorraine Campbell, Maria Harris, Florence Finan and Nataly O'Neill at an event for women in advance of the local elections organised by Roscommon Women's Network and Roscommon County Council.

grassroots initiatives, communities can develop tailored strategies that consider local needs, resources, and cultural practices," said Nora.

"This bottom-up approach fosters collective action, innovation, collaboration, and long-term sustainability. This is why we are here tonight to start more con-

versations and let our local government and local representatives and new candidates know what we want and how we are willing to work together to achieve it," she said.

"Let us raise our voices and pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive sustainable tomorrow," said Nora.



MC Christina McHugh, Roscommon Herald editor; Darragh Kelly, communications officer Roscommon County Council; Nora Fahy, manager Roscommon Women's Network, and Aine Treanor, development worker Roscommon Women's Network.



Luminita Ciobanu, Daria Mirt, Josif Ciobanu and Andreea Mirt, Boyle, at an event for women in advance of the local elections organised by Roscommon Women's Network and Roscommon County Council.