



Gurteen Gazette

November 2022

Principals Welcome

Another busy term at Gurteen with plenty of excitement and good news to share. Term started with a celebration of our 75th anniversary- students who studied at Gurteen between 1947 and 1956 (the first ten years of our history) were the first to plant trees in our new Diamond Grove - a new area of woodland which we hope will develop into an outdoor classroom and place for quiet contemplation. If you would like to be involved in planting a tree to symbolise your class group at Gurteen do get in touch.

Gurteen has welcomed a very wide range of visitors to our campus during this term, we have hosted the Arrabawn representative committee, the Irish Farm Buildings Association, the Irish Agro Forestry forum and a group of teachers from French Agricultural schools to name a few; each of these groups commented about the passion and enthusiasm they feel from the staff and students at Gurteen. My simple response is always "we are blessed to work and study at Gurteen" a place where two very exciting sectors - agriculture and education - coincide, here at Gurteen we experience the best of both these worlds.

The joy of working in a college is the opportunity to witness first-hand the development of unique and amazing individuals as our students grow in confidence and start the next stage of their own journey.

Agriculture is an amazing industry - every farm has unique conditions but across Ireland every day we consistently produce high quality food that is the envy of the world. At Gurteen we are committed to maintaining a profitable and sustainable mixed farm, our suckler beef herd, sheep flock, dairy herd and tillage land will always be key enterprises on our farm. Our current challenge is to ensure we do this whilst actively reducing our greenhouse gas emissions

I hope you enjoy reading the Gazette, please do share it with friends and neighbours - better still encourage them to share their contact details with us, so we can email them a copy going forward.

-Principal Jon Parry



Donal McCormick (centre), one of our founding students from 1947 planting the first tree of the diamond grove.



Autumn Calves from the Suckler beef herd, all growing nicely!

Want more frequent updates? Follow us on all our social media pages!

@GurteenCollege





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Proposed future developments

Current classrooms at Gurteen can best be described as 'tired' and classroom space will become tight as additional courses are developed and launched. Today, in 2022, one of our main teaching rooms is McKinney Hall - an original college building dating back to the 1940's; it's high ceiling, wooden floor and long narrow shape will be familiar to all our readers, as will the very poor acoustics and high windows! Our ambition is to ensure future developments at the Gurteen campus provide modern student facilities that will complement the superb yard and workshops. The clear ambition is to provide our students with the very best 21st century College experience.

New teaching accommodation is the most pressing need at Gurteen, as nearly all the 434 m² of currently available /used teaching space is not suitable and very outdated. The architects have developed designs for a new teaching block that includes 410m² of bespoke modern teaching space. The drawings provide a strong impression of what the building may look like and how it would 'sit' within the existing campus. The design aims to offer a clear modern approach to college buildings whilst complementing our existing campus. The positioning of the building purposefully builds upon the established link between theory teaching and practical demonstration by creating a direct thoroughfare from the main building to the teaching block and onto the archway.



A computer-generated 3D image of what the newly proposed teaching block would look like on campus- we think it looks smart, don't you?



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Internally the building offers a double height lobby and atrium, first floor access via stairs and lift, circulation areas and toilets, on both floors. Each floor includes two 30 seat classrooms and one 60 seat room. Final use and exact layout of rooms can be flexible and may include bespoke laboratory and IT rooms.

And so, the journey begins! As a college community we are excited to be embarking on this ambitious development project however we understand there will be challenges along the way. Our initial step will be to seek planning permission from Tipperary County Council and to focus thereafter on raising funds to cover the build cost. We have some money set aside but this will by no means be enough to get us to completion. Our Governors and Trustees have brought together a small team to guide the fundraising process and we hope that through the generosity of friends and partners of Gurteen we will manage to make this project a reality. In our history our College community bravely and successfully faced similar challenges to make Gurteen the wonderful place it is today. Now it's time to see how we can contribute and secure the next 75 years of Gurteen- delivering 'education for a sustainable future.'



A 2D plan of the internal structure of the proposed building- highlighting the two new 30 seat classrooms, and 60 seat classroom.



A 2D campus plan of Gurteen College- showcasing the proposed layout changes to the roads, and the new teaching block.



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Apply now for September 2023!

Are you interested in a career in agriculture? You can apply to start on our full-time Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture course right now!

This course is aimed at leaving-cert students who are ready to do hands-on, practical learning on the farm. To find out all the details about this course, visit our website today or contact us directly! We'd love to chat and discuss why Gurteen is the college for you.

Ready to apply now? You can do so via the Teagasc website! Visit our website to find the application link, plus you can find a 'How to apply guide' too! Or, if you're having trouble finding it, why not contact us and we'll talk you through the process.

Call (067)21282 Email: info@gurteencollege.ie

Website: www.gurteencollege.ie

As part of our day talking about the importance of mental health, we invited all staff and students to join together for a mile walk through the farm.



Level 5 students Clive Moffit (L) and Rosie O'Brien (R) planting the 2023 tree within the newly created Diamond Grove



Ex-Student Bill Gleeson talking to our students about his experiences with Mental Health, as a part of #AgMentalHealthWeek

#AgMentalHealthWeek

On October 13th, as part of #AgMentalHealth week we invited all staff and students to take time out of their day to join together for a mile-walk through nature. Its purpose was to emphasise the importance of taking time for ourselves, as well as time to simply enjoy one another's company and talk about whatever may be on our minds.

As well as our walk, we invited ex-student Bill Gleeson onsite to chat to our students about his own journey with mental health, the importance of talking to others and seeking help when needed. A huge thank you to Bill, and the team over at @makethemoove.ie for their input on these extremely important topics.



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Course Updates

The academic year always presents the opportunity for a fresh start. Compared with September 2021, we have had very little conversation about Covid-19. This is the first September induction since 2019 where we have been operating "business as usual" to the immense relief of staff and students.

Level 5 Certificate in Agriculture

The first week of the Level 5 course is filled with induction. Students are introduced to the staff and the academic expectations are outlined. The college student handbook is brought to their attention, the timetable is explained, and each student does a tractor driving practical to establish the baseline and identify who might need additional support. Students also do health and safety training where they cover basic cattle handling skills, manual handling and zoonotic disease and hand hygiene.



Level 5 students assisting with ploughing over at our other farm-Trench farm. Hands-on practical learning in action!



Level 6 Advanced Dairy Herd Management students on a recent trip to the Arrabawn factory in Nenagh

Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture

The last 8 weeks has seen our Level 6 students take the opportunity to do an AI course with Dovea genetics, attend farm visits and do analysis on their home farms through the Farm Business and Planning Module. High on the agenda for our Level 6 cohort is figuring out their next steps-whether that be progression to higher and further education courses or getting a job in the industry. We've dedicated time to helping them fill out application forms, prepare for interviews and generally prepare for life after Gurteen College.

Part- Time and Distance Courses

The Part Time and Distance education programmes are vital for those hoping to gain a Certificate in Farming even though they have other life commitments. We are committed to helping these learners on their journey through Agricultural education. There are currently three Part-Time courses at various stages of completion. Two of the Part Time courses are run two evenings per week. The third Part Time course is being run in conjunction with Bord na Mona and Laois/Offaly ETB. This course runs on a Tuesday and Thursday from 1pm-9pm. There are three Distance courses being run, all of which are at various stages of completion. Two of these courses have students on site once per month on a Friday, and the third course has students on site on a Saturday.



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Student Sports and Dancing!

Outside of classes we're always delighted to see our students enjoying themselves in extra-curricular activities! This year we've seen a great turn out for our hurling teams and Gaelic football teams; as well as a trophy or two!

In September our 7 aside hurling team were victorious at the Teagasc College Cup, beating Kildalton 2-12 to 2-7! A special shout out to James Cuddy, one of our Level 5 students, for winning man of the match! A huge congratulations to the hurling team- we're proud to have you representing us.

As well as sports, this year we've been ecstatic to see several students take up the dance classes on offer on Monday nights. We've loved hearing the music and seeing some amazing dance moves!



Level 5 student James Cuddy receiving his Man of the Match award!



Team Captain Brian Kealy with Coach Kevin Ward holding the Teagasc College Cup!



Our winning 7-aside Hurling team who won the Teagasc College Cup!

October Open Day Turnout

In October we welcomed a great crowd of prospective students to Gurteen College! Getting to know them, and show them every aspect of our College, from our multi-enterprise farm to our state-of-the-art teaching facilities ;we were delighted to see so many enthusiastic faces!

Couldn't make it to the Open Day? No worries; our next scheduled open day is **Thursday March 9th 2023**. Keep an eye on our social medias to see all the details about it. We can't wait to see you there!

Great to meet so many potential students at the Open Day- we hope to see you guys with us next September!





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Level 6 Advanced Drystock Management students visiting the Teagasc Sheep Research Centre in Athenry

Farm Update

Winter has set in and after our dry summer we are now experiencing a wet winter, nature will generally balance things out and now these wet couple of months will bring us back to our annual average rainfall. Most livestock are in the sheds, and we are busy feeding and bedding, the dairy team has started drying off cows for the winter and our minds are turning to planning for Spring. Preparing calving sheds and calf houses, preparing fertiliser and reseeding plans for the spring. Input costs remain high but the exceptional price for milk is doing much to offset it. With good grain prices too, it puts the farm in a good position entering 2023. The early lambing ewes are expected to start lambing on the 1st of January, which always feels like a great start to the new year and the restarting of the growing cycle.

We have sowed 100 meters of white thorn hedges close to the farmyard with plans for more to be sown around the farm, we continue to promote sustainability and biodiversity. There are many challenges to running a productive profitable farm while being sustainable and increasing biodiversity, but the rewards are definitely there. The butterfly survey conducted by TUS is now completed and the results are being compiled, but the initial picture is looking good for biodiversity on the farm, and we look forward to seeing the final report. Work continues with the carbon tower supplied and run by Johnstown Castle, they are building a good picture of the soil carbon content in shallow peat land.

-Ken Flynn, Farm Manager



Our dairy herd enjoying some autumn sunshine before being dried off and housed for winter.

YOUR LOCAL LAND EXPERTS
WITH A NATIONAL NETWORK THAT ARE WITH YOU
EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Sherry FitzGerald
Talbot

WITH MORE THAN **500 AGENTS** AND OVER **100 OFFICES** NATIONWIDE, WE HAVE THE IRISH COUNTRYSIDE COVERED

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75th Anniversary Celebration

As we all know, this academic year of 2022/23 marks Gurteen College's 75th anniversary! And, on September 3rd we were so excited to welcome back ex-students from some of our earliest years- including from the founding year of 1947.

We want to take a moment to thank everyone who attended and made the celebration truly something to remember. We loved catching up, and hearing so many fantastic tales of what Gurteen was like in previous years- and looking through photos and relics we're still lucky to have!

A huge thank you also to Ivan Yates for his speech, which was extremely entertaining, and not likely to be forgotten soon! We also must thank all our friends who kindly lent us their vintage tractors and farm machinery, allowing a wonderful window into the past. Thank you to FBD Farm Insurance for sponsoring the event, and APB for providing some truly scrumptious food!

As much as we love reminiscing, here at Gurteen were also looking forward to the next celebration. As part of this first event, we asked students from the first 10 years to plant trees- one for each year. We're now looking for students from the late 50's and 60's who want to come and represent their years by planting a tree. If you, or someone you know, would be interested- please call us! (067)21282



*A fantastic turnout to the 75th anniversary event!
-Photos from Tom Ryan Casey Photography*



Gurteen Alumni Ivan Yates recalling his fond times while at Gurteen College- Photo from Tom Ryan Casey Photography



First Year degree students on a recent visit to Cooleeny Cheeses!

Gurteen College and TUS Degree Course

The first group of students on our new Agricultural Science and Sustainability degree programme started on 26th September.

The first years have spent Semester 1 based on the TUS Thurles campus with staff from Gurteen travelling to the campus to deliver key agricultural modules. They will spend Semester 2 and 3 at Gurteen doing core agriculture modules in husbandry, soil science and forestry and a number of other relevant modules. We can't wait to welcome them onsite in January!