

NEWSLETTER

January – June 2026

It has been a busy six months across all four Carlow County Council libraries with a diverse range of activities taking place. We hope you enjoy the Newsletter. We're already working on our next edition for July to December 2026!



Inside this issue - Healthy Ireland - Skills for Life - Right to Read
Carlow Heritage Famine Potato Project - Pan Celtic Festival - Library Events
BookFace Fridays - Staff Recommendations - Jan to Jun in numbers

Healthy Ireland

Hello Carlow How Are You

The *Hello How Are You* wellness campaign took place in May. Staff participated by wearing shirts helping to highlight the campaign and distributed information booklets to library members.



Bagenalstown Library Staff



Singing for Wellbeing

Funded by Healthy Carlow and Creative Ireland, an 8-week series with renowned singer/soprano Regina Hanley took place in Carlow, Tullow and Bagenalstown libraries.



Regina Hanley conducting the choir



National No Smoking Day

The HSE Health Promotion and Improvement team attended Carlow library with info about supports available to help quit smoking. A lung sculpture created by the CRYS Community Based Drugs Initiative team in partnership with Comhairle na nÓg was displayed.



Workshops for Wellbeing

A Decluttering Workshop and Wardrobe Edit for Wellbeing workshop took place in May at Carlow library with psychotherapist Fiona Hall.



Fiona Hall

Skills For Life

Digital Skills

Free Basic Digital Skills for Beginners courses in partnership with KCETB Community Education ran in Carlow, Tullow and Bagenalstown libraries.

Age Friendly AI

Age-Friendly AI visited Carlow library in June to deliver a free workshop to more than 40 older adults. Attendees learned about Artificial Intelligence in our daily lives and the benefits and risks of it. They also had an opportunity to try out some AI demos for themselves.

Seed Library

In collaboration with the Carlow County Council Environment section Carlow library launched the county's first pilot seed library, bringing local growers, community groups, and educators together to strengthen community resilience, reduce waste, and support climate action.



Basic Digital Skills class in Bagenalstown library



Age Friendly A.I. talk Carlow library



Seed Library project Carlow library



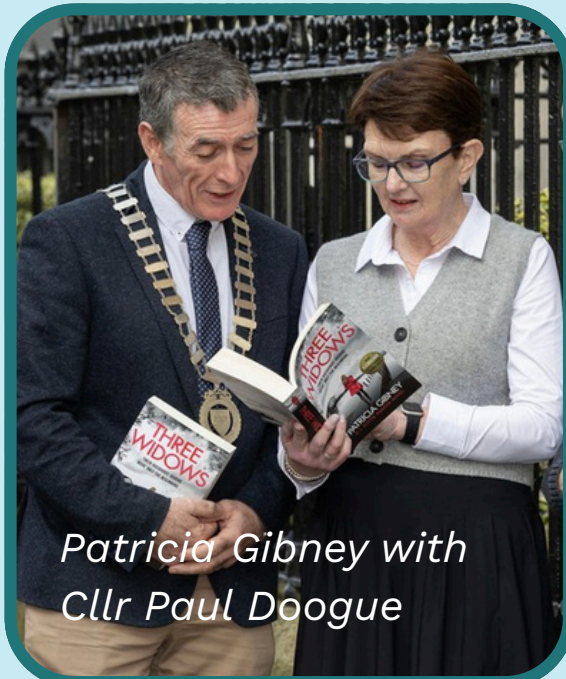
Grow the skills you need at your local library

Right To Read

 **Right to Read**
at your Library

Ireland Reads Day

Crime author Patricia Gibney visited Carlow Library for Ireland Reads Day 2026. Meanwhile children's author Vonnie Bolton visited Bagenalstown library.



Patricia Gibney with
Cllr Paul Doogue



Vonnice Bolton in
Bagenalstown library

Monster sticker competition

A very special competition ran across all four Carlow County Council libraries for Spring into Storytime in April. Primary school students designed their very own book monsters. The winning designs for each branch were then printed into stickers. The stickers were handed out to participating children in the Summer Stars reading programme who collected one each time they visited their local library during the summer.

Tullow Monster Sticker winner Larissa Bertollotti Costo with Annemirthe



Annemirthe Slikkerveer moved to Carlow from the Netherlands for four months to work with us. A valued member of our team, she contributed significantly to a variety of library activities most notably the monster sticker competition.

Writer in residence

In association with Carlow Carlow County Council Arts Office, Writer in residence **Caroline Busher** mentored the resident Carlow library creative writing group in the writing of a brand new play entitled *The Campaign*. Carlow Little Theatre did a table read of the play in VISUAL in February. The group continues to meet with Caroline each week in Carlow library.

Caroline Busher



Carlow Heritage

Famine Potato Project



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport

This project aimed to raise awareness of our living history and heritage focusing on the Great Famine. For the project led by Christopher Power, senior library assistant, potatoes were planted at Carlow and Borris libraries, providing a hands-on and practical way for children taking part in the project to learn more about our past, and to appreciate the significance of potatoes in Irish history and culture.

Contemporary potatoes were planted alongside 19th century heritage potatoes. Both were planted in lazy beds, a traditional 19th century Irish way of potato planting. The project was part of the 2026

Commemorations Programme supported by the Carlow County Council Commemoration Committee and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport.



Senior Library Assistant Christopher Power and students turning the sod at Carlow library

Links
to →
Videos



Video 1



Video 2



Video 3

Follow the progress of this project and many more on our Carlow Libraries YouTube channel.

Local History



Bealtaine Festival

Carlow library hosted a local history talk on the newly released 1926 Census of Ireland with genealogist Bernie Walsh as part of the Bealtaine Festival

Pan Celtic Festival 2026

As part of the International Pan Celtic Festival, a number of events were held in Carlow library. Barrow Valley Art Group held an exhibition of their paintings titled “Ómós Áite/Sense of Place”. The Carlow Storytellers once again dropped by for a rambling night of stories, recitations, yarns and poems and songs with a celtic twist. Furthermore there were Family Storytelling events in the Junior library with storytellers coming from Antrim, Brittany and Wales. County Librarian John Shortall and Carlow County Council Writer in residence Caroline Busher also featured on Ireland AM live from the Town Hall, Carlow.



John and Caroline meet Ireland AM



Caroline Busher talking to Ireland AM



Storyteller Liz Weir

Library Events & Initiatives

Cathaoirleach's Postgraduate Bursary

This bursary administered by the library service supports postgraduate students living in County Carlow as they pursue Masters or PhD studies



*Cllr. Ken Murnane with
Bursary winners*



*Leighlinbridge
NS*



Clonegal NS

Cruinniu
na nOg



Puppet Portal

This unique drop-in experience encouraged participants in Carlow and Bagenalstown libraries to utilise open-ended materials and loose parts to design and build their very own puppets and characters. A Virtual Portal streamed live footage between the two libraries for a connected interactive experience.



Puppet Portal in Carlow library



*Puppet Portal Screen in
Bagenalstown library*



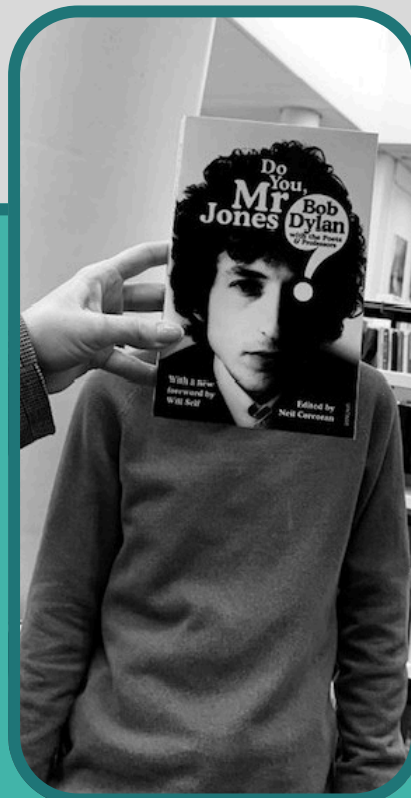
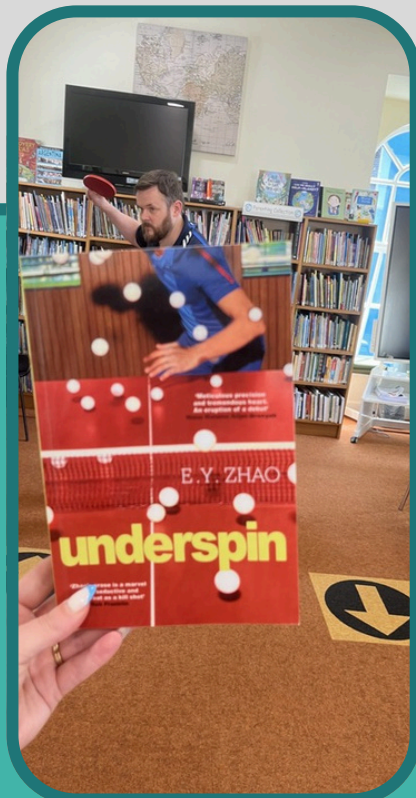
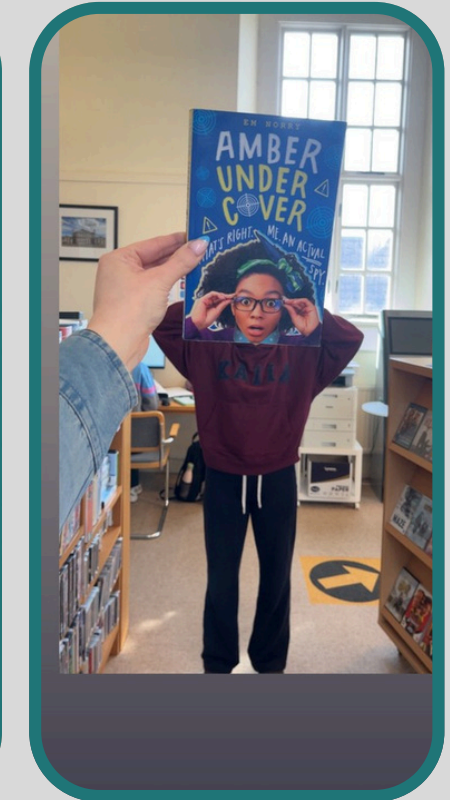
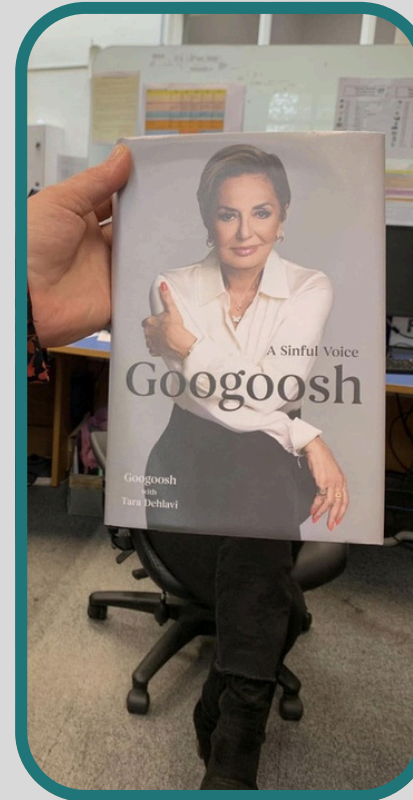
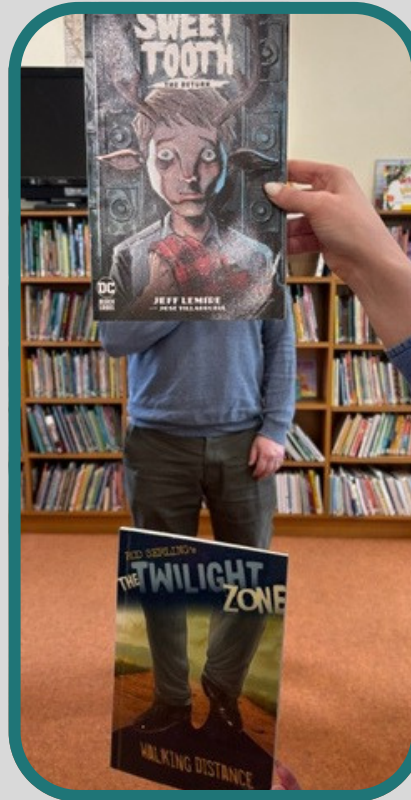
Music Generation Carlow



Music Generation

In May, Music Generation Carlow held an exhibition in the Shaw Room to commemorate 13 years in Carlow. As part of the celebrations there were lunchtime music performances from primary schools, traditional music performances by groups such as Reelóg, ReelNua and Reelig as well as a contemporary rock and pop performance on the main library floor. Each Saturday the library hosted Come and Try sessions which gave members of the public the opportunity to try their hand at playing a musical instrument

Bookface Fridays 🤗 😄 🌟 📚 📖 💚 ❤️ 🟡 📖

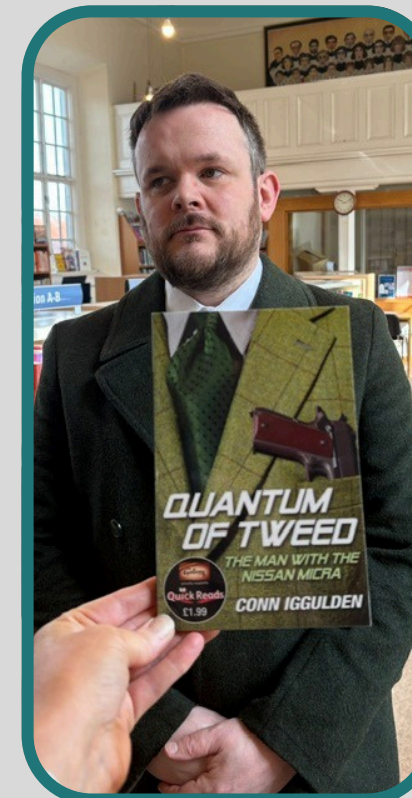


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**Bookface
stats:**

571 reactions
13 comments
20 shares



Staff Recommendations

All Them Dogs By Djamel White

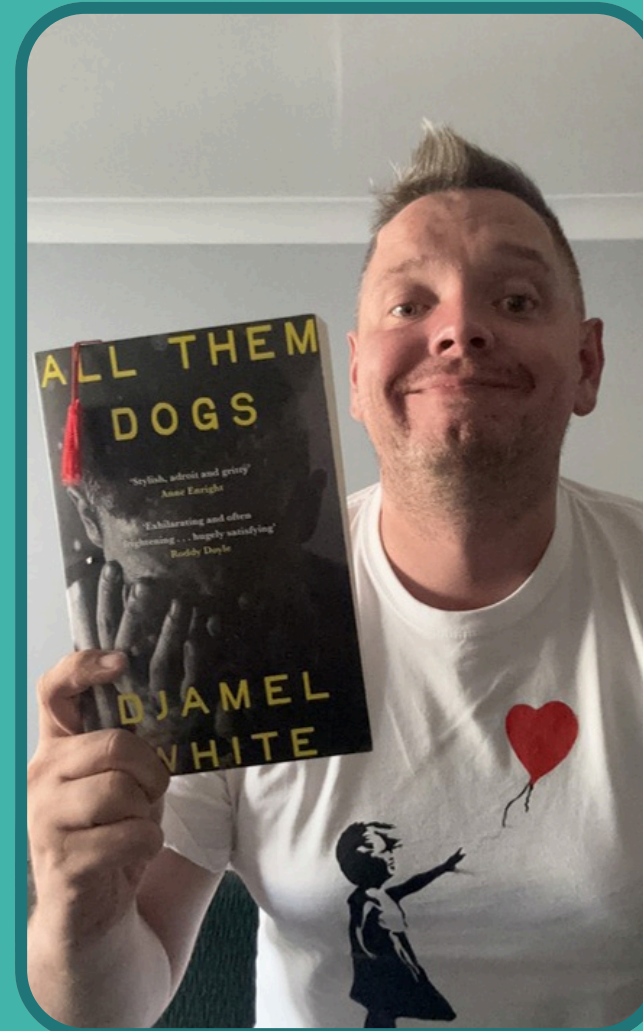
Pure chaos but in the absolute best way. Think Love/Hate, but so many different overtones make this utterly relentless.

Tony slips straight back into the world of organised crime after being exiled and comes across old faces and new, while showcasing the unpredictable nature and brutality of gangland Ireland. There is also a romantic angle that completely throws this on it's head. Tony's love interest is the definition of stoic, and secrets that come to light that completely threaten this match. It is never boring.

The side characters are all fleshed out, and all have their motives and ambitions. I desperately wanted all to prosper, but no spoiler that ending absolutely ripped me apart. For some, it was the right ending.

Hard, gritty, it is not for the faint of heart, but I absolutely loved it. I may have looked away in horror at certain points, but it did not take me out of the story. As it's been longlisted, let's hope Djamel White gets his roses, and this gets Booker shortlisted.

• James @ Carlow library



The Secret by Rhonda Byrne (Audiobook)

The book focuses on the Law of Attraction; which is the simple idea that focusing on positive energy and gratitude brings good things into your life.

Why you will love it: It's ideal if you like setting positive intentions or need a quiet reminder to believe in yourself and give yourself a boost of motivation.

Rating: 4 out of 5 stars - a lovely heart-warming listen on your daily walk or commute!

• Ciara @ Carlow library



Tullow Library



Muinebheag Library



Borris Library



Carlow Library



COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

Seirbhís Leabharlainne | Library Service

Library

Visits – 86,400
Issues – 42,505
New members – 3,197

Local Studies

In person visits - 119
Enquiries - 624

Technology

EServices Issues

eBooks – 5,181
eAudioBooks – 11,609
eNewspapers
& eMags – 57,046

Public PC Sessions – 5,042
Public WiFi Sessions – 4,159

Community

Class visits - 188
Book club meetings - 12
Borris meeting room
Events - 157

Social Media

Facebook

Posts – 291
Followers – 5,920
Reactions – 1,932
Comments - 90

Instagram

Followers - 1,719

January to June 2026 in numbers

Newsletter
team:
Lisa Benson,
Carlow library
Nikita Gahan
and Pat
Waldron,
Bagenalstown
library
Zoe Dermody,
Tullow library.