

# LOUGH GUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY

LOUGH GUR DEVELOPMENT





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# Chairperson's Message

Lough Gur Development (LGD) celebrated 50 years in existence in 2019. At this time we would like to invite you the community and interested individuals to become involved with helping to improve what is on offer to residents and all visitors. As a voluntary **not-for-profit group** the benefit that we receive is the joy of working together to make our local environment a better place to live and work.

Many people visit Lough Gur each year to enjoy the tranquil lake shore setting. Visitors include local residents, school groups taking part in educational workshops and international tourists. A number of others visit Lough Gur to enjoy the Christmas experience and special events held throughout the year. The latest project to be unveiled in 2020 for the enjoyment of all people, is the Lough Gur Solstice Park playground.

As a community group LGD depends on involvement from the people who live here. To have your say on what happens in your community I would like to **invite you to a community morning on February 8th 2020 at 11 am in Lough Gur Heritage Centre** to meet staff and committee members. At this time we would like to hear your views on how to improve what is on offer to residents and visitors.



**ÁINE BARRY**  
CHAIRPERSON





# In the Beginning

**1969-2019**

As far as records show, Lough Gur Development was originally founded in 1969 by Thomas Ryan, Tom Mc Namara and Michael Quinlan. May they rest in peace. Pat Hickey, Johnny Coffey, George Finch and John Hedderman were all actively involved at the early stages and many other community members helped to progress initiatives over 50 years.

At the time of foundation, there was a focus on developing Lough Gur for all visitors and residents without damaging its unique qualities. This ethos remains unchanged.

LGD became a social enterprise in 2011 when the group took over the management of Lough Gur Heritage Centre. The organisation now voluntarily oversees management of the Heritage Centre and the Honey Fitz Theatre with 13 part-time and full-time staff. Considerable change has occurred in the lifetime of LGD.

***"We would like to thank everyone for their contribution to improve the area over 50 years."***

Projects completed by the founding members and associated committees included setting up of the Lough Gur tour guides, amenity area & heritage centre development and valuable research that has informed future decisions. We thank all who have gone before us for their contribution.



# LOUGH GUR DEVELOPMENT 2020

Lough Gur Development is committed to delivering improved services for all visitors and community members. What may seem to be obvious solutions to improve Lough Gur, are not readily acted upon as Lough Gur is in the heart of a residential area and is an environmentally sensitive location.

Lough Gur is in the ownership of Limerick City and County Council and monuments are under the control and care of the the OPW. Therefore as leaseholders of the Heritage Centre only, LGD works within the boundaries of what a voluntary community group can achieve.

Lough Gur amenity area spans over 20 acres. As a community group we are not owners of the Heritage Centre and parkland area but act as advocates to generate support to improve Lough Gur for visitors and community.

To have your say on what you believe are achievable measures to improve the area of Lough Gur **join us for a community meeting on February 8th at 11 am in the lakeside Heritage Centre** to meet staff members and voice your views.

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We are mindful that Lough Gur Heritage Centre, surrounding park and amenity area are owned by Limerick City and County Council and that many of the sites in the area are managed by the OPW. To access the lake front and sites, visitors must pass private rural residential houses, therefore the goal that we are working towards is:

***“In association  
with the relevant statutory bodies, we strive to  
promote, preserve and protect Lough Gur  
as an exceptional visitor and community experience”.***

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# PROJECT

## Insights

In 2011 the voluntary committee of Lough Gur Development sought to take over the lease of Lough Gur Heritage Centre from Shannon Heritage who had operated the facility since it was built in 1981. The building is owned by Limerick City & County Council. This request was approved and since 2011 LGD as a not-for-profit community group open the Heritage Centre 12 months of the year to welcome all visitors and community members.

An application for funding to Ballyhoura Development and the J.P. Mc Manus Foundation ensured that refurbishment to the building and upgrade of the exhibition was possible. Since opening in 2013 visitor numbers have increased significantly.

In 2020 an options study will be carried out on visitor facilities to identify ways to improve what is on offer in the area without impacting adversely on the local environment and community.

## ***"Full exhibition and building refurbishment completed in 2013 for residents and visitors"***

Although tourism can in places generate income, LGD does not prioritise income generating activities over community welfare. Lough Gur is without doubt an area of international significance in terms of archaeology, history and environment. It is also the home place of our local community who value Lough Gur for its extreme beauty, safety and tranquility.

A balanced approach, as operators of a social enterprise, forms the foundation of our work. Visitors, including community members have informed us that they would like to see additional café services and outdoor seating at the Heritage Centre. LGD is actively working with Limerick City and County Council, as the site owners, to deliver improved services.



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## KEY INITIATIVES

Resources for project work is fundraised for by members of the committee. All members offer their time on a voluntary basis. Since Lough Gur Development was founded in 1969, voluntary members have worked to improve what is on offer. Innumerable projects and initiatives were led voluntarily over 50 years. One such recent initiative included the community alert scheme. Examples of other initiatives include but are not limited to the following:

### 1. RESTORATION OF THE HONEY FITZ THEATRE

Since 1969, the Honey Fitz Theatre has been refurbished four times. Most recently in 2019, meeting room facilities were updated and a disability wc was included. This project was funded by LEADER and match funded by LGD. New seating was put in place, kindly paid for by the Lough Gur Dramatic Society. LGD is grateful for their generous contribution. It is now a comfortable theatre space and is available to book by emailing [info@loughgur.com](mailto:info@loughgur.com) or phone 061 385186.

### 2. REFURBISHMENT OF LOUGH GUR HERITAGE CENTRE

LGD was instrumental in working to ensure that Lough Gur Heritage Centre was built in 1981 and fully refurbished in 2013. This was achieved by working with Limerick City and County Council as owners of the facility and site. In 2020 we will explore options to improve what is on offer to all visitors.

### 3. SHARED ROADSPACE FROM HOLYCROSS TO LOUGH GUR

In 2019 the road from Holycross to Lough Gur was resurfaced and includes marked sections to signal a shared road space for cyclists, pedestrians and cars. Additional work that can not be readily seen includes extensive repair work to drains, ditches and gullies. The speed limit was also reduced. Funding for the project was secured under the Outdoor Recreation Programme and from Limerick City and County Council who completed the work.

### 4. EVENTS

The Lough Gur Christmas experience has been a sell out event each year. The event is run by local volunteers as a fundraiser for Lough Gur Development. All proceeds are reinvested to improve what is on offer in the area. Additional events include the Lough Gur Fairy Day, Science, Space and Engineering Week events. Parent and toddler and active retired meetings are held throughout the year. Support from volunteers is required to run all events. We welcome your involvement to ensure that events continue throughout the year.

### 5. SOLSTICE PARK PLAYGROUND

The Solstice Park playground, adjacent to Lough Gur Heritage Centre, will open in 2020. The project is funded by Limerick City & County Council, LEADER and the J.P Mc Manus Foundation. Due to adverse weather conditions the ground remains unsuitable for visitors at present. The opening date will depend on improved weather conditions expected in 2020. Updates will be announced on Lough Gur social media pages. Overall the playground will be a welcome addition to the area.



## HONEY FITZ THEATRE

The Honey Fitz Theatre is available for meeting room, hall and performance space rental. Located 2km from the lakefront of Lough Gur, the facility offers a newly refurbished conference area, upgraded and tiered seating along with ample floor space. Lough Gur Development secured funding on four occasions to refurbish the old school house building that was officially opened by JFK's sister Jean Kennedy Smith in recognition of their family connection to the Lough Gur area.

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***An intimate theatre space that is often sold out for plays starring Jon Kenny, Mary McEvoy and shows crafted by the Lough Gur Dramatic Society.***

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The Honey Fitz Theatre is used for training purposes, including defibrillator training. The next session will run in 2020. To book your place email [info@loughgur.com](mailto:info@loughgur.com). Activities held in the Honey Fitz include: Dancing (Monday nights), Co Limerick Youth Theatre (Tuesday and Wednesday nights), Art classes with Bobby Ryan (Wednesday morning), Sewing classes (Friday night) and Ballet (Saturday morning). The local rambling house meet on the first Thursday night of each month and all are welcome. The Honey Fitz also serves as home to Lough Gur Drama Society, Lough Gur Historical Society and provides a venue for the Christmas concerts for the local school.

The Honey Fitz Theatre is named after Thomas Fitzgerald, great grandfather of JFK. He was called "Honey Fitz" due to his sweet singing voice.



# SOLSTICE PARK PLAYGROUND

## Opening in 2020

The majority of visitors to Lough Gur and community members asked for the installation of a playground for many years. Due to the sensitive nature of the site, securing planning permission was an arduous task that took several years. In 2018 planning was secured based on an environmentally sensitive design that embraces educational play as a space inspired play area.

It was hoped that the playground would open in 2019. Due to adverse weather conditions resulting in water logging onsite, a delay was experienced. To reach completion stage we require only fine weather. Once weather improves and the site is deemed safe to access, the park will open. Access to the playground is via the front entrance gate of Lough Gur Heritage Centre. Updates on the Solstice Park and other projects can be found on the Lough Gur website and social media pages.





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# Lough Gur Membership

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEMBERSHIP OFFERS

### FRIEND

- Free access to Lough Gur Heritage Centre Exhibition in 2020
- Lough Gur Membership Card
- Early notification of upcoming information & access to special offers
- 10% off merchandise
- 2 Free guest passes
- 10% off books

**50th Anniversary Special Price: €50 by direct debit each year**



### FAMILY

- Lough Gur Membership Cards
- 4 free guest passes
- Free Solstice Park Space Inspired Activity Booklets
- Early notice of family events
- 10% off summer and Easter camp bookings
- Free Access Lough Gur Heritage Centre Exhibition in 2020 for:
  - 3 children under 16 and 2 Adults

**50th Anniversary Special Price: €110.00**

*Terms and conditions for all memberships: Lough Gur Heritage Centre is closed on occasions for special events. Access to the exhibition area will not be permitted at these times. Opening times and advance notice of special events is published in advance on the Lough Gur Website and Facebook page.*

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EMAIL: [INFO@LOUGHGUR.COM](mailto:INFO@LOUGHGUR.COM) TO SUBSCRIBE

# CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, Lough Gur Development will issue FIVE corporate membership packages for the first time in history. This offer is available at a discounted rate on a first come first served basis. The corporate package priced at €2,500 includes:

- Free admission to Lough Gur Heritage Centre for up to 30 employees for one year.
- Inclusion on the Lough Gur website under a new Corporate Members section.
- Addition of your logo on Lough Gur newsletters.
- Placement of your company name and logo in the Heritage Centre.

Corporate Membership provides the following benefits to Lough Gur Development:

- Resources to improve events & projects.
- Supporting a community not-for-profit organisation with a proven track record of operating effectively and in line with best practice governance.
- Contributing to a cause that works to promote, protect and preserve a site of international significance.
- Linking with a group of committed community members and professionals working to improve the appeal of Limerick overall as a destination for business and leisure.

Email: [kate@loughgur.com](mailto:kate@loughgur.com) for corporate membership enquiries



*Support a community working to promote, protect and preserve a site of international significance.*





# SEASONAL WORK EXPERIENCE VACANCIES

## **Lough Gur Seasonal Work Experience Vacancies**

From June to August 2020 Lough Gur Heritage Centre will offer part-time vacancies. The ideal candidate will be outgoing and work well as part of a team.

Successful applicants will acquire the following skills:

- Retail experience
- Tour guide training
- Administration experience
- Customer service training.

To apply: Send a CV and cover letter to [info@loughgur.com](mailto:info@loughgur.com) by May 5th 2020.

Applicants must be at least 16 years of age by June 2020.

Enquiries to: [info@loughgur.com](mailto:info@loughgur.com)

*Lough Gur Development*

# INVITATION

Lough Gur Development has over 100 shareholders. These members form part of our community group. Shares cost just €10 and give you as a community member direct access to information issued from Lough Gur Development.

In order to continue working to improve Lough Gur for residents, community members and all visitors we need your support.

Many individuals have remained on the Lough Gur Development committee for over 20 years and some members have just joined. We are always looking for new insights and help to develop events, programmes and initiative to connect our community.

If you have some time to offer and link in with Lough Gur Development please contact our community officer, Gemma O' Mahony on 087 2852022 or email [gemma@loughgur.com](mailto:gemma@loughgur.com). Gemma will also be in the Honey Fitz Theatre on Tuesdays from January 6th between 10am and 12pm for community members who would like to call in and enquire about what is involved.

***"The community of Lough Gur is vibrant. They are passionate about the area that they live in. LGD works to promote, protect and preserve unique qualities that make Lough Gur exceptional."***

There are many ways to become involved in your community with Lough Gur Development. This includes joining for €10 as a shareholder, offering time voluntarily to assisting at events or in the Heritage Centre. As a not-for-profit community group we are also extremely interested to hear what you have to say about community matters.

As we look to 2020, it is the intention of LGD to work more closely with community members. We are asking at this time for your involvement and input into what happens in your community. If you share a belief, as we all do, that Lough Gur is an exceptional and unique place, we **invite you to join us in Lough Gur Heritage Centre on February 8th 2020 at 11 am** to have your say and to help us promote, preserve and protect all that Lough Gur has to offer.





**Patrons:**

Rose Cleary, George Clancy, Jon Kenny, Nóirín Ní Riain and Al Worden

*Remembering dearly departed patron Michael Quinlan (RIP)*

**Committee members:**

Chairperson Áine Barry, Vice Chairperson Seamus Murnane, Secretary Trevor Daly and Treasurer Mike Murnane, Tom Lynch, Helen Hartigan, Siobhan Kirby, Máiread Ryan, Deirdre Marrinan, Brenda O'Mahony, Marie Coleman and Lelia Beechinor.

In 2019 an **advisory group** was established. This comprised of members of the LGD committee, manager, local business people, and key personnel from Ballyhoura Development and Limerick City & County Council. We would like to thank this group for their help and support. Members include: Barry Lunn, Eamon Boland, Hugh O'Donnell, Carmel Fox, Mike O'Brien, Tom Tierney, Paul Ryan, Philip O'Regan, Gordon Daly and Pdraig Casey.

**Staff members:**

Heritage Centre & Park Manager: Kate Harrold

Operations Supervisor: Gemma O' Mahony

Maintenance: Pat Bourke

Administrators/Customer Service: Eileen Ryan, Philip O' Connell, Fionola Fitzgerald, Bridget Flavin, Pierpaolo Pisapia, Holly Duce, Aine Dinn, Aine Nichol, Maeve Barry, Kyle O' Connell and Cathal O' Mhaoinigh.

**Heritage Centre Volunteers:** Francis Finch, Siobhan Kirby, Noreen Flynn and Sharon Mallory

# MANAGER'S NOTE

In 2020 Lough Gur Development looks forward to improving what is on offer at the lakefront heritage centre and amenity area. Continued support from Limerick City and County Council, as owners of the site, ensures that Lough Gur is cared for in partnership with the local community.

As a site of international significance that is attractive for many reasons, including archaeology, environment and recreation, Lough Gur Heritage Centre offers all visitors tailor made visitor experiences according to their interests. As a Science Foundation Ireland accredited centre and a Fáilte Ireland Information point, Lough Gur Heritage Centre operates 12 months of the year to welcome local, national and international guests.

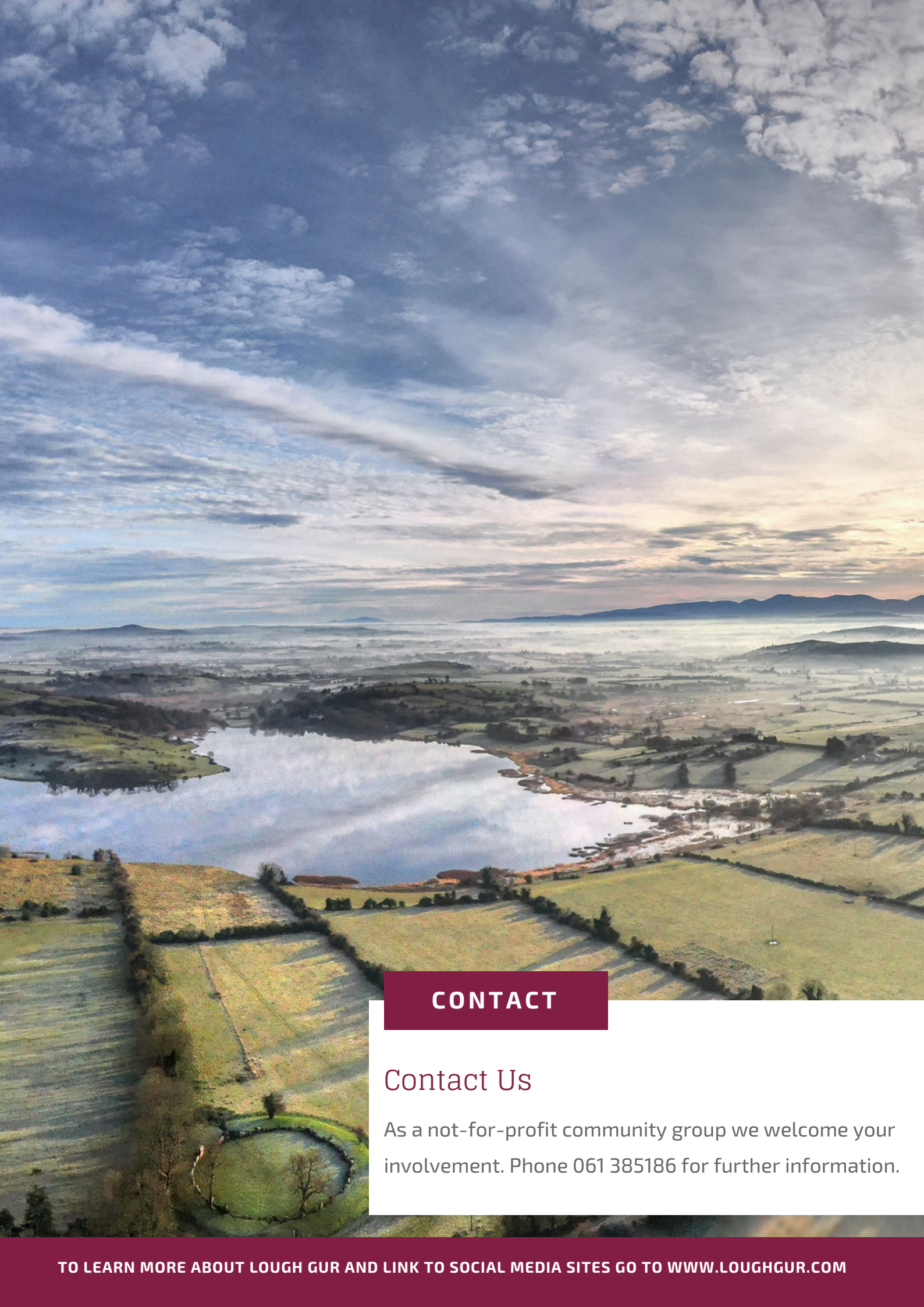
Staff, committee and volunteers all work to showcase Lough Gur. Their exceptional commitment and hard work is acknowledge here.



**KATE HARROLD**  
MANAGER







## CONTACT

### Contact Us

As a not-for-profit community group we welcome your involvement. Phone 061 385186 for further information.