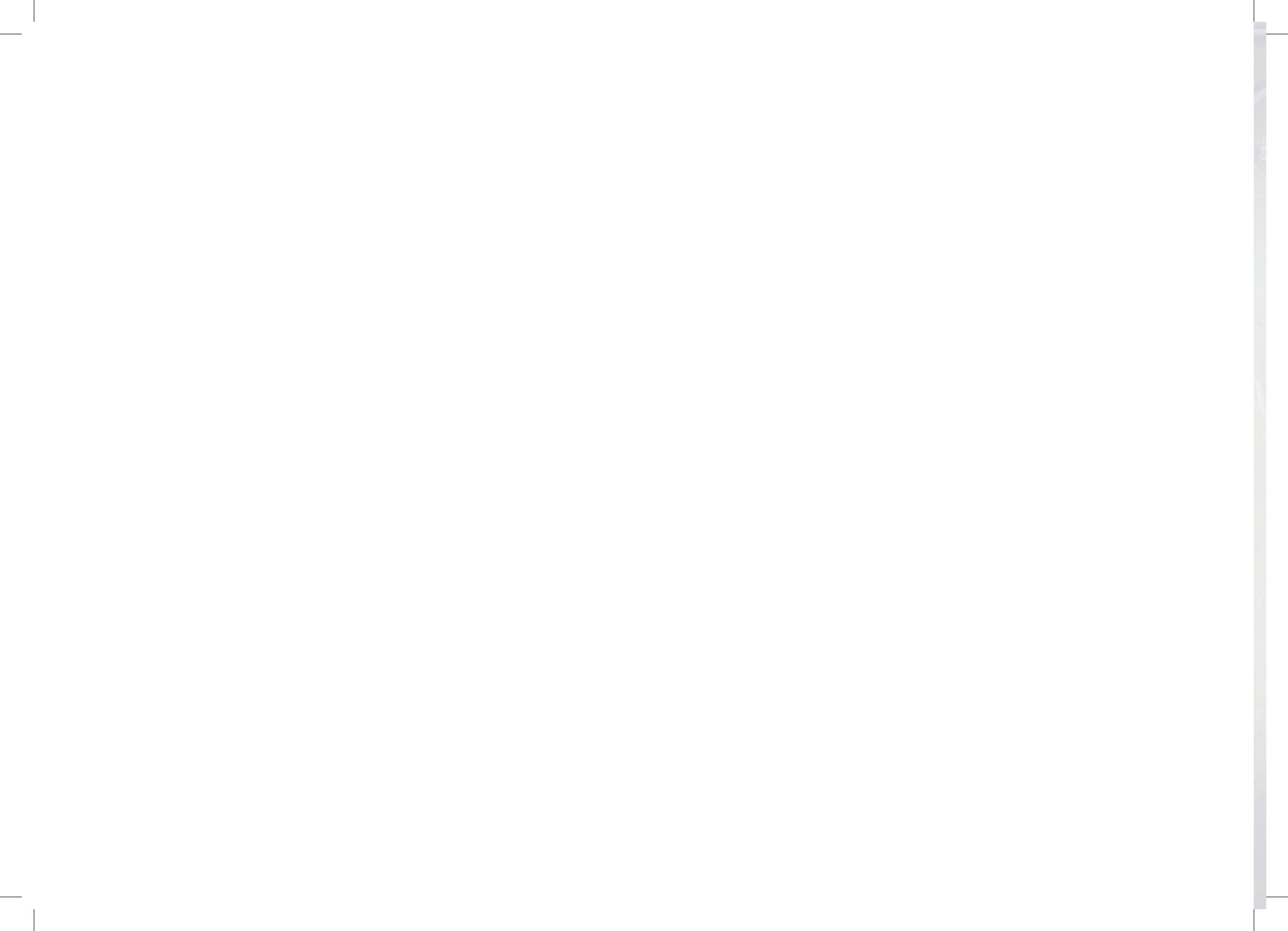




Darndale Belcamp Initiative 1996 - 2021

A Short Story of a Big Gain for the Darndale and Belcamp Community
January 2023



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Introduction

Darndale Belcamp Initiative CLG (DBI) was established in 1996. Its primary goal was to encourage, promote, co-ordinate, participate and assist in the economic and cultural development and education of the people of Darndale and Belcamp with a view to improving the employment prospects of the local community.

DBI was essentially a Sponsoring Committee for Community Employment - it operated two programmes, Community Employment and Job Initiative. The programmes have been a great resource to Darndale and Belcamp down through the years, not alone in providing education and training to its participants but also in providing valuable services to the local community. The company was very proud of the progression to employment and further education of its participants. This would not have been possible without the essential funding and support from the Department of Social Protection.

The Board of DBI decided in July 2019 to transfer the two programmes to its partner company, Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG - the CE Programme in November 2019 and the Job Initiative Scheme in July 2020. This merger made eminent sense for a variety of reasons.

Of course, all this great work would not have been possible but for the original founders and Directors of the company and successive Directors since then. All the Directors gave their commitment, time and support on a totally voluntary basis. This strong and excellent commitment was complemented by the Sub-Sponsor organisations and the DBI Chief Executive/Project Co-Ordinators, Management Team, Supervisors, staff and volunteers. There is a rich tapestry of testimonials from those who participated in the programmes in the booklet.

This booklet is a small memento acknowledging the positive impact of Darndale Belcamp Initiative, a not-for-profit organisation, and its quarter of a century of dedicated service to the local communities. Finally, I wish to thank Nicko Murphy and Ann Hayden in compiling this historical record.

Adrian Charles
Chairperson, DBI
(2019 - 2021)

History of Darndale and Belcamp

The first family took up residency in Darndale in 1975. Much planning over a two year period took place before the first residents arrived to ensure they had all facilities in place required for young families. The Darndale Social Club- 'The Hall' as it was then called was built before the houses, a lesson learned from the Ballymun housing project. The Ballymun project had failed to provide facilities for families moving to the area creating huge problems for them. Families moving into Darndale, in contrast were delighted with the hall. This was where both children and adults came to socialise. Parents came to have a drink and listen to music and children took part in basketball and football activities. It was also a place for various community groups to hold meetings and events. This Hall was really at the heart of the community.



In the mid 1980's there was a huge disruption to Darndale. The community saw the heart ripped out of it as a 'Surrender Grant' to leave the community and buy your own home bereft this young community of its community leaders and left vacant houses idle and vandalised. Unemployment levels were already high during the 80's due to the recession. The new tenants arriving into Darndale were mainly single parents and long-term unemployed people which really increased the already high levels of unemployment.



The resilient people of Darndale fought back and formed the Unemployment Action Group. This group was formed by local people giving a voice to those who were unemployed and stigmatized. The group was strongly involved with the Combat Poverty Agency and attended many marches. People then spoke about feeling powerless and isolated because of unemployment and this created a great strain on families.

*Above right: Aerial view of Darndale (1998)
Left: DBI Landscaping Team (2000)*

Darndale Belcamp Initiative (DBI): The Beginning

'The secret of happiness is having something meaningful to do, seeking purpose' (John Burroughs- American Essayist)

Having purpose can guide life decisions and offer a sense of direction. This is what people living in Darndale and Belcamp needed at this time of hardship. The Job Initiative Programme provided this sense of direction to people who were struggling, not only financially, but on a deeper personal level. One man said: *'When you lose your job you just shut the door and say goodbye to society'*. (Darndale a Living History, 2005).

The Job Initiative Programme was launched by FÁS in 1996. The aim of the Programme was to assist those in long term unemployment to gain new skills or upskill with the intention that they would be prepared for any opportunities that may arise in the employment market. This was done through the provision of training, work experience and development opportunities.

This Programme provided full-time employment for people aged 35 and over who had been unemployed for 5 years or more. Those in receipt of an appropriate social welfare payment such as Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance or One Parent Family Payment were eligible to apply to take up employment on the Programme. This was similar to the Community Employment (CE) Programme with the exception of the hours worked. CE is a part-time programme.

Darndale Belcamp Initiative (DBI) was incorporated on 8th August 1996 for the purpose of supporting job creation and enterprise development for the community of Darndale and Belcamp. DBI became an acting sponsor for the FÁS Community Employment and Job Initiative Programmes in 1996 which supported the social and environmental regeneration of Darndale and Belcamp. Activities carried out by the DBI employees included, reception/administration/clerical, grounds maintenance, outreach, work-

ing closely with the elderly, security, gardening, caretaking, youth work, childcare, secretarial services and assisting in the administration and upkeep of 17 local organisations. DBI began its journey in a prefabricated building behind Our Lady Immaculate National School. The inception of the DBI was equated to the birth of a new baby and the joy that event brought to a family. The birth of DBI brought joy and hope to those in the community who had been so long unemployed and were beginning to lose hope.

DBI gave hope and purpose to those who felt there was no reason to rise in the morning. The training and education provided by DBI gave opportunities for progression into full-time permanent employment both inside and outside the community.

According to its constitution the main object for which the organisation was established was: *'To encourage, promote, co-ordinate, participate and assist in the economic and cultural development and education of the people of Darndale and Belcamp with a view to improving the employment prospects of the local community'*.

**DBI Certificate of Incorporation
(1996)**



One of the subsidiary objects to this main object, as stated in the constitution was to: *'Provide and encourage the provision of courses, lectures and conferences for the general public in connection with employment issues.'*

DBI was also tasked with applying for funding and seeking donations that would promote the main object on improving the employment prospects of the local community.

Objectives of Darndale Belcamp Initiative:

- To ensure the provision of employment/enterprise support services for the community of Darndale/Belcamp.
- To manage the various training/employment projects in the community and to provide career progression possibilities for the project workers.
- To ensure that the option of re-entering the labour market through progression from projects is available to people who are currently unemployed.
- To support local community organisations that have benefited in the past from the work of Community Employment and Jobs Initiative employees.
- To assist in the development of a co-ordinated integrated response to deprivation and social exclusion experienced by the community.

FÁS was the original funding source for DBI. It provided funding for remuneration, training and education. In January 2016, the Department of Social Protection (DSP) became the primary funder of DBI. All income was derived from State funding provided by FÁS, Local Employment Service Network and the Department of Social Protection. From the period of 1996 - 2020, Darndale Belcamp Initiative received a total of €19,389,955 in funding.

Who was Involved?

The Management make-up of DBI consisted of a voluntary Board of Directors, a Project Co-ordinator, JI Supervisor and CE Supervisors. The Board of Directors consisted of representatives from key organisations and agencies, local residents and those with expert knowledge and skills in certain fields. There was a strong commitment to implement the work of the organisation with the support and the skills of management and the Board.

The early Project Co-ordinator of the JI Programme was Enda Fynes and Marie Salmon, a local resident, was the CE Supervisor. At the time of wind up, the Management Team included, Linda Hayden (CEO), Breda Fitzpatrick (JI Supervisor), Natalie McKeever and Suzanne Tackaberry (CE Supervisors).



Above: Local resident Bill Malone, Former DBI CE Supervisor Marie Salmon and former DBI Director Bridget Sheridan

Directors serving on the Board of DBI from 1996 - 2021

Director's Name	Term Served
Bridget Sheridan	1998 - 2001
Fr William Fitzpatrick	1998 - 2003
Fr Brian Maher	1998 - 2003
Brendan Kernan	1998 - 2006
Patrick Dolan	1998
Sean Murphy	1998
Stephen Quinn	1998 - 2000
Desmond Cray	2000 - 2016
Paul Healy	2000 - 2003
Frank Maguire	2000 - 2012
Thomas Senior	2001 - 2007
Fr Terence Murray	2004 - 2009
Noel Kelly	2008 - 2009
Sinead Griffin	2008 - 2009
Catherine O'Meara	2009 - 2019
Antoinette Flynn	2009 - 2014
Liam Barry	2009 - 2014
John Egan	2009
Vanessa Carey	2009 - 2019

Director's Name	Term Served
Dermot Reynolds	2009 - 2011
Carmel Keaveny	2009
Alan Wyley	2009 - 2014
Cepta Dowling	2010 - 2018
Aidan Fitzsimons	2010 - 2018
Fr Leo Philimon	2010 - 2019
Nessan Vaughan	2010 - 2018
Brian Ingarfield	2010 - 2014
Kelly Webster	2010 - 2012
Deirdre Kiely	2010 - 2012
Mary Brady	2010 - 2019
Adrian Charles	2014 - 2021
Pamela Meates	2016 - 2021
Carol Flynn	2016 - 2021
Julie Norris	2016 - 2021
Emma-Jane O'Reilly	2016 - 2021
Dermot McCrudden	2017 - 2018
Arthur O'Donnell	2018 - 2021
Robert Gillanders	2018 - 2021

Darndale Belcamp Initiative Moves to a New Home

As part of the European Union Urban Programme, the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre was constructed and completed in 2001. Darndale was selected for support because of its extremely high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. The Village Centre is a multi-purpose integrated community services complex.

In 2001, a new company Darndale Belcamp Village Centre Limited was established. This organisation was tasked with the management of the Village Centre complex. DBI found a new home in this centre and continued to operate from there until its winding up in July 2021. The Village Centre benefitted hugely from the allocation of DBI staff to support its work.

In 2021, Darndale Belcamp Village Centre Limited now called Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG took over the management of the Job Initiative and Community Employment Programmes.



Above: Former DBI JI Coordinator Enda Fynes, CE Supervisor Marie Salmon and former DBI Chairperson Frank Maguire (2007)



Above: Pupils from Our Lady Immaculate National School during the building of the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre (2000)

Darndale Belcamp Initiative Enterprise Centre

While also managing employment programmes, from May 2001, DBI also provided enterprise services and offered local start-up businesses incubation space. These spaces were available to rent and consisted of two 40 square meter offices and two 50 square meter factory/workshop units.

The purpose of providing such spaces was to promote an enterprise culture in Darndale and Belcamp. An application process was established and applications, made in the form of a business plan, were assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Policy to employ locally, incorporating inclusion of long term unemployed and those in danger of becoming unemployed.
- Provides a local product or service.
- Staff development and training incorporated into planning.
- The business plan reflects that the start-up has a strategy for post incubation location.
- Evidence that the particular idea/business would have difficulties at the incubation stage without access to incubation facilities.

DBI set up a selection committee for assessing applications and making decisions on which start-up businesses were chosen for the incubation space. It was expected that businesses would need 6 months to 2 years periods for incubation.

The General Manager at the time was Paul Healy; he was responsible for presenting applications to the members of the Selection Committee and recommending suitable businesses.

The members of the first Selection Committee were:

- Brendan Kernan
- Fr. Willie Fitzpatrick
- Frank Maguire
- Dessie Cray

The first meeting of the Selection Committee took place in May 2001.



Official opening of the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre (2001)

Darndale Belcamp Initiative - A Success Story

Local groups providing services for the community played a key role in the development of Darndale and Belcamp and would have been unable to undertake such pivotal work without the support of JI and CE workers. The New Life Centre, TravAct, Sphere 17, Darndale Belcamp Village Centre, Jigsaw Childcare Centre and Golden Years Senior Centre, are just some of the local groups who benefitted from those working on the programmes. JI and CE workers know their community benefits from their work and this creates a sense of pride for them while also increasing their skills.

All these services from childcare, youth programmes to eldercare, are success stories in Darndale Belcamp. These organisations could not provide necessary services to the community without the contribution made from people working on JI and CE programmes managed by DBI.

Since the inception of DBI in 1996, approximately 659 CE workers passed through its doors.



Above: Official opening of the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre (2001)



Above: Official opening of the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre showing several of the organisations involved in the development. (2001)

A Few Words from the Workers:

Eileen Ward's Story from TravAct

TravAct is a Traveller support group supported by DBI through the JI Programme. TravAct is an organisation located in the Family Resource Centre in Clonshaugh, Priorswood. It started in 1988 as a small group of people from both the Travelling and Settled communities. It now incorporates six different projects funded by the HSE, CDYSB, the Department of Justice, Department of Social Protection and DBI through the JI Programme. Some of the services provided by TravAct include: Drugs Outreach, Education, CE Programme, Housing and Health Projects.

One of the valued JI workers at TravAct is Eileen Ward. Eileen works in the area of education at TravAct. Eileen spoke about her experience starting off as a JI worker and the positive experiences she has gained through her work at TravAct.

Eileen began her JI experience 24 years ago in November 1999 working in the laundry service of TravAct. She also assisted Enda Fynes, who was the Project Coordinator at the time. Eileen then moved on to assist Marian McKenna in the area of education of young people in the Travelling community. Eileen was passionate about education for these young people and then became an education worker at TravAct. This involved working with the schools, attending meetings all over the country and trying to support those who were not doing so well in their education. She also spoke about how TravAct support parents of children who sometimes stop attending school. This is an issue Eileen points out is very prevalent in the Travelling community. However, she saw positive change over the years with some young adults moving on to third level education. She makes the point that while the levels are low, she is positive for higher levels of attainment, but it will only happen if the supports are kept in place.

Eileen expressed concerns about funding being cut after the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to what happened in 2010 during the recession then. Eileen's experience on JI brought her to places such as Brussels, speaking to politicians about the importance of education for young people in the Travelling community. She acknowledged the positive experiences and training she has received and the friendships she has made through her work. '*JI has given me a great start and only for it I wouldn't be working now.*' she says. The JI Programme has not only been a huge benefit to Eileen, but through her experience, the young people of the Travelling community have been given a voice. She is a genuine advocate for their future through education.



Above: DBI Staff pictured outside the original premises (1996)

Rosanna Kelly's Story from Darndale Belcamp Village Centre

Rosanna began her JI experience in 2003. Rosanna has had various positions in the community, with various organisations and has gained a lot of work experience and has made many friends along the way. Rosanna's journey with JI began in an administration role at Our Lady Immaculate JNS in Darndale along with her Job Initiative colleague Bernie Baker, where she stayed for 4 years.

From there, she moved on to the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre Bell Building as a receptionist. Rosanna spoke about her encounters with many different people every day as they came through the building. She would have been the first person people met as they came through the building and through her daily interactions, she got to know some people personally and friendships were formed. Also, Rosanna has been complimented on her excellent telephone skills and how her warmth and helpful personality made such a positive impact on people when they called the Centre.

The next port of call for Rosanna was the New Life Centre, where she carried out her role in administration once again, but she also assisted with cooking for the children in the crèche. She then moved on to the Parents Training Together Programme. This was a programme funded by the Department of Social Protection and FÁS with support provided from the HSE and involved preparing breakfast and lunch for the children in the local schools and also providing a Meals on Wheels Service to older people. In 2011, Rosanna moved to the Accounts Department in the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre Bell Building.

Rosanna says she has made a lot of friends through the years on the JI Programme and has gained a lot of new skills, which she would not have otherwise. She has settled into her role in Accounts and she expressed her disappointment at the phasing out of the programme because of its social and economic benefits to the people of the community.

Sharon Holland's Story from The New Life Centre

Sharon's JI experience started in the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre (DBVC). She lives in Darndale and finds working in the community hugely beneficial. She was working in the Accounts Department of DBVC. Sharon spoke so passionately about the close relationships she has made through the years on JI. She also spoke about the sense of solidarity between Management and staff. She described Enda Fynes, the Manager at the time, as *'someone who would do anything she could to assist the staff in whatever issues they may have been facing'*. Sharon talked about the amazing community spirit both in the workplace and in the community.

Sharon moved to Elsa Security after 4 years in the role of administrator doing accounts and wages. However, working in an office on her own wasn't for Sharon and so, she moved to the busy New Life Centre where she currently works as a receptionist. Sharon, just like previous employees, spoke about how her skillset has expanded through the years through the training provided by the JI Programme.

Lorraine Moran's Story from The New Life Centre

Lorraine is also a resident of Darndale. Lorraine, just like Sharon, began her journey on JI at the Bell Building in the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre. Lorraine started as a receptionist in 2002 and she says she loved it. She also spoke about the wonderful community spirit in the work environment and the great solidarity amongst the employees and the Management.

Lorraine moved over to the New Life Centre in 2004, working as a receptionist. She now works as the Parish Secretary at Our Lady of Immaculate Church in Darndale . This role includes taking bookings for church events such as christenings and weddings. She also works on the local parish newsletter, a job she really enjoys. Lorraine also spoke about the great training opportunities she had from the JI Programme, opportunities she says would not have been easily accessible to her without the support from JI.

Paddy Daly's Story from Darndale Belcamp Village Centre

Paddy began his Darndale Belcamp Initiative experience in 2004. He has had two positions within the Job Initiative programme, being seconded to Elsa Community Services. In 2009, Paddy was assigned to Darndale Belcamp Village Centre to work on the security of the building, firstly, on the night shift and eventually, onto the day shift. Paddy has enjoyed working as a security guard and getting to know the people in the local community.

Paddy said he was delighted to get the position in Darndale Belcamp Initiative back in 2004 and is very happy that he is still working on the programme and over the years had made some good friends who worked on the Job Initiative programme or within the Village Centre. Paddy said he has a great relationship with the Managers and co-workers in Elsa Community Services and Darndale Village Centre CLG and with all staff and clients who work and visit the building.

Testimonial from Darndale Belcamp Initiative Sub-Sponsors:

Joan McDonald - New Life Centre

The New Life Centre has been using the JI and CE Programmes for as long as I can remember. We have had 3 JI Workers at any one time [4 in total] over that time and they have assisted with the service provided to the Darndale community by the many facilities that the Centre delivers.

Ji staff have provided catering, cleaning and administrative roles over the years and CE staff have provided a wider range of childcare, catering, cleaning, administration, supervision and educational support functions to the operation of the New Life Centre.

Over the years that we operated with the DBI we would have run a Creche as well as our Afterschool Programme employing and training many childcare workers over the years. Our catering staff, assisting our chef, were all HACCP trained and helped to provide breakfasts, lunches, teas, coffees, sandwiches and scones to all the Centre service users and to the Darndale community at large. The provision of training, as well as working, is a vital part of the CE placement, in order to make the most of the opportunities available. It is always sad to see some of our CE workers leave us, but as many of these CE workers have gone on to full time employment and used the skills learned here to gain a proper foothold in the jobs market, it is good to know that we helped them to reach their goals!



Above: The New Life Centre provides a range of services to the local community including an afterschool programme (above right).

Christine Callaghan - Darndale Belcamp Recreation Centre

Community Employment and Job Initiative have played a vital role in the Development of the Darndale Belcamp Recreation Centre, I myself started on a Community Employment Scheme 27 years ago and gained full time employment within Dublin City Council, alongside five of my colleagues.

We would have a very successful employment role starting off with CE Schemes, their training and management and then further education to develop their needs to gain successful employment upon completion. The Centre itself would rely on the scheme, to work and engage with the local community for events and organisations that would frequent the centre. A lot of the CE/JI staff would be local and therefore have the knowledge of the community and the wider efforts that are put in to the area.



Above: Darndale Belcamp Recreation Centre comprises a large sports hall (above right), Community Gym and Darndale Boxing Club.

Winding Up of Darndale Belcamp Initiative CLG

In 2019, after careful consideration and consultation with funders, the Board of DBI made a decision to voluntarily wind up the company. This decision was made due to DBI and Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG having nearly identical Boards of Directors and Management Teams and the duplication of work that came from managing two distinct companies.

By winding up DBI, the level of compliance, regulation and reporting was reduced for the Boards and Management Teams, as in some instances there was double reporting to the Companies Registration's Office and Charities Regulator for both companies.

The voluntary wind up of DBI resulted in the transfer of the contracts for the existing CE and JI programmes and associated funding to Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG along with the staff employed on these programmes. This aspect of the wind up was approved by the Board after consultations with the Department of Social Protection and trade unions to ensure all staff contracts and terms of employment would also transfer to the new company. Once these re-assurances were provided, all staff were issued with a letter of undertaking to inform them of the voluntary wind up of DBI.

Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG engaged a specialist company to handle all aspects of the voluntary wind up to ensure that all procedures were carried out correctly, with regular updates and progress reports being provided to the Board and CEO. The outcome resulted in DBI being wound up and struck off.

The Board of Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG became the sponsoring committee for the CE and JI Programmes and Linda Hayden, CEO is responsible for the overall management of the CE and JI programmes.

The benefits of the CE and JI programme to the community of Darndale and Belcamp over many decades remains to this day. The legacy of the DBI and the wonderful people who worked and volunteered tirelessly on its behalf will not be forgotten. Darndale Belcamp Village Centre CLG will hold the torch and continue the DBI vision and objectives into the future.

The DBI Board remained in place until 2021 in order to oversee the formal transfer and winding up of the company.

Darndale Belcamp Initiative CLG In Numbers



**Successfully
Delivering
JI & CE Programmes**



**38 Voluntary
Directors Served
from 1996 - 2021**



**€19.3 Million
in Funding
1996 - 2021**



**Approx. 659 CE Workers
Passed Through the
Programme from 1996 - 2021**



**Managed 4 Enterprise
Incubation Spaces
from 2001 - 2009**



**Supported 17
Local Organisations
from 1996 - 2021**



Notes:



