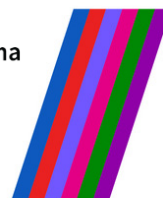




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Issue 1, August 2025

Shannonside Recreational Campus Newsletter



We're delighted to bring you the first edition of the Shannonside Recreational Campus (SRC) newsletter — the start of a regular update to keep you informed on the progress of this exciting, once-in-a-generation project for our region.

In this first update, we look at the story of the SRC so far — from its beginnings over a decade ago through years of planning and community advocacy, to the securing of major funding that is making our vision a reality. We have an update about the recent awarding of the design tender which marks a major step towards construction. We also look back on the official launch of the Shannonside Peace Arena earlier this year — a landmark moment that secured major PEACEPLUS funding and set the stage for the next phase of the SRC.

The Story So Far:

Why We Need the SRC and How We Got Here

For decades, the people of the Shannonside region have had to make do without the kind of sports and recreational facilities that many other parts of Ireland take for granted. It's a gap that has affected everyone — from children taking their first steps in sport, to elite athletes striving for national and international success, to community groups seeking a welcoming space for social and wellness activities.

Poor pitch conditions in wet weather, the absence of an athletics track, and the lack of any substantial indoor recreational space have long been a frustration for clubs, schools, and individuals. Athletes have had to train on roads or in car parks, while community groups often struggle to find suitable indoor venues. In an area blessed with passion and talent but lacking infrastructure, it was clear something had to change. That change began back in 2013.



2013

A delegation of local sports and well-being enthusiasts embark on a **fact finding mission** to the **Mid Ulster Sports Arena** in **Cookstown, Co. Tyrone**, as part of a **Leitrim Sports Partnership** initiative to explore state-of-the-art facilities. This visit inspires the vision for the SRC.



2014

The first official meeting of interested parties is held, leading to the establishment of a **Steering Committee** for the project.



2015

A **Feasibility Study** is commissioned with funding from local business and the **Local Enterprise Office**. This involves extensive research, including forums, meetings and surveys conducted with multiple clubs across the region.



2015–2018

Three committees are formed: Design & Build, Finance, and Communications. During this period they deliver:

- Campus Design
- Planning Submission
- Tender Documents
- Company Formation
- Confirmation of Support from Regional Sporting Clubs
- Business Plan Initiation
- Mission Statement
- Campus Name & Tagline
- Website, Brochure & Social Media



2019

A **site**, strategically located just off the N4 in Carrick-on-Shannon is identified and purchased for sport & recreational development.



2021

Following the preparation and submission of **detailed drawings and plans**, planning permission for the SRC is granted.



2022

Fully costed build plan and business plan are produced with the assistance of grant aid from the **Leitrim Development Company** and financial support from local businesses.



2023

In May **€1 million in funding is secured** under the **Community Recognition Fund**, enabling Phase 1 groundworks to commence in September

2025



On 13 February 2025, the **Shannonside Peace Arena** was **officially launched** at Carrick-on-Shannon Business Campus, marking a historic milestone for the region. Supported by €15.3 million in **PEACEPLUS** funding, managed by SEUPB, and led by **Leitrim County Council** with the SRC committee, this state-of-the-art facility will transform sports and recreation locally.

The Peace Arena will provide a shared, inclusive space where people of all ages and abilities can play, train, and connect.

Official Launch of the Shannonside Peace Arena Project



Cathaoirleach of Leitrim County Council Cllr Paddy O'Rourke with members of the SRC Committee, staff of LCC, representatives from the Special EU Programmes Body, Dept of Rural & Community Development & the Gaeltacht, Dept of Communities N. Ireland on the SRC site

On 13th February 2025, funders, partners, and community representatives gathered in Carrick-on-Shannon to officially launch the Shannonside Peace Arena Project — a cornerstone of the wider Shannonside Recreational Campus (SRC).

The Peace Arena has been made possible through €15,342,366 in funding from the PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) in partnership with Leitrim County Council, with match funding provided by the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland and Ireland's Department of Rural and Community Development. This major investment will deliver a state-of-the-art shared space including a multi-sports pavilion, full-size athletics track, high-performance gym, and inclusive facilities for clubs, schools, and community groups across the Shannonside region.

The PEACEPLUS Programme, funded by the European Union and the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, is designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. One of its core aims is to create shared spaces that bring people together, foster inclusion, and help break down barriers between communities. The Peace Arena embodies this ethos — a neutral, welcoming facility that will serve people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Minister Dara Calleary TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, praised the project as *"an outstanding example of collaboration that will deliver long-term benefits, embedding peace and reconciliation through shared spaces. The Peace Arena will not only transform access to sport and recreation but also provide opportunities for social connection and inclusion that will enrich the lives of people right across the region."*

Minister Gordon Lyons MLA, Department for Communities, called the Peace Arena *"a fabulous new shared facility that will promote active participation in sport and community life while strengthening relationships across society. The Peace Arena demonstrates what can be achieved when we invest in projects that bring people together and create lasting benefits for future generations."*

Gina McIntyre, CEO of SEUPB, highlighted the importance of the project, saying it is *"hugely significant in building peace and prosperity through inclusive shared spaces, creating safe and welcoming environments for people of all backgrounds. We have seen from previous PEACE programmes how shared civic facilities can act as beacons of hope within communities, and the Peace Arena will stand proudly in that tradition."*

Cathaoirleach of Leitrim County Council, Cllr Paddy O'Rourke, described the Peace Arena as *"a transformative development for Leitrim and the entire region, bringing together communities through sport, health, wellbeing, and cultural activity. It addresses a long-recognised lack of sporting and recreational facilities in our county, and I want to thank SEUPB, our project partners, and the dedicated SRC committee who have worked tirelessly for over a decade to bring us to this point. Their persistence has been extraordinary, and this funding marks a huge step forward in making the vision a reality."*



Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke, Cathaoirleach, Leitrim Co Co



Brendan Lowe, Chairperson, SRC Committee

Brendan Lowe, Chairperson of the SRC Committee, said the Peace Arena represents *"the aims of PEACEPLUS and the ethos of the SRC perfectly matched – to create an all-inclusive recreational and sports campus where everyone can participate. The Peace Arena represents the culmination of years of commitment from volunteers and supporters who have believed in the project from day one. It will ensure that people of all ages and abilities have a place to come together, to play, to train, and to connect, leaving a legacy that will benefit countless families and communities for generations to come."*

Located just outside Carrick-on-Shannon, the Peace Arena will be easily accessible by public transport and active travel routes, ensuring that it serves not only local residents but communities from across the wider Shannonside region. As a flagship component of the SRC, it is designed to be far more than a sports hall: it will be a centre for recreation, wellbeing, and social connection, welcoming schools, clubs, community groups, and families alike.

The facility will provide a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages and abilities can come together – whether to train, compete, take part in wellness programmes, or simply enjoy being active as part of a community. By combining world-class facilities with a strong ethos of inclusion, the Peace Arena will stand as a symbol of what collaboration and vision can achieve. It is a lasting investment in the health, vitality, and future of Leitrim and the Shannonside region, and a legacy that will benefit generations to come.



Representatives of the voluntary Shannonside Recreational Campus Committee

Behind the Scenes: McAdam Appointed Design Lead

While the site may seem quiet currently, behind the scenes it's a hive of activity. The vision is clear, the funding path is taking shape, and the next critical step is creating detailed, build-ready plans.

Following a public tender, McAdam have been appointed lead consultants for the design project. Established in 1963, they employ over 150 staff across Architecture, Civil & Structural Engineering, Project Management, and Principal Designer services, and are one of the largest independent multi-disciplinary consultancies on the island of Ireland, with offices in Belfast and Cork.

With over £170 million worth of leisure projects delivered in the last decade, McAdam's experience spans Sport & Leisure, Education, Community & Tourism, and more. They are currently working with multiple county councils, including Leitrim, on major sports and recreational projects. Their track record in enhancing communities, improving health through leisure, and creating high-quality shared spaces makes them the perfect partner for the SRC.



From the layout of the pitches and athletics track to the design of the indoor arena and pavilion, McAdam will ensure the Shannonside Recreational Campus is functional, accessible, and inspiring for all who use it.

LEFT: Cathaoirleach of Leitrim County Council Cllr Paddy O'Rourke with members of the SRC Committee, staff of LCC & McAdam Design at the contract signing for Design Services



Stay Connected

"This campus is not for any one sport, club, or community – it is for the benefit of everyone." –Brendan Lowe, Chairperson, SRC Committee

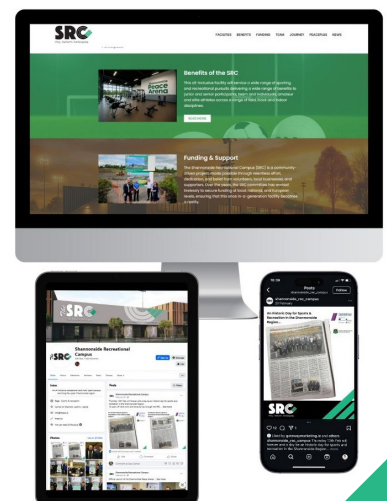
Whether you're a player, coach, parent, volunteer, or someone who values accessible recreational opportunities, your support is important to us. By following, sharing and supporting, you help build momentum for a facility that will transform the sporting and recreational landscape of the Shannonside region!

Stay up to date – follow us at:

www.theSRC.ie

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The **Shannonside Peace Arena** project
is supported by **PEACEPLUS**,
a programme managed by the
Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



The SRC project is also supported in partnership with **Leitrim County Council**



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