

Did you get a new smartphone, tablet or computer for Christmas? Free classes are available across to help you learn how to use your new device.

Do you know: One in Six Adults in Ireland has still never used the Internet!

St Catherine's has secured additional funding for 500 free places under the Digital Skills for Citizens Grant Scheme 2018.

In December 2016, The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Denis Naughten, T.D., awarded €2.2m to 15 community and not-for-profit organisations to provide basic digital skills training to people under his Department's new **Digital Skills for Citizens Grant Scheme**. St Catherine's along with training partners Forward Steps Tullow, Carlow Enterprise Centre, Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre, Ballon Business and Training Services and Beam Services, Bagenalstown were delighted to be allocated 1,000 free spaces under this programme for County Carlow. Over 750 people were trained in County Carlow in 2017. An additional 500 spaces have now been allocated to County Carlow and surrounding counties for 2018.

Minister Naughten said: "For those already online, the benefits of the internet are clear. A few simple steps and a digital world opens before you – one where old friends can catch up, businesses and customers can find each other and access to information is easy.

In a 'connected' society, digital skills for everyone are absolutely essential if we're going to realise the full social and economic potential of this digital world.

But many people have never had a chance to learn these skills. Helping these individuals, communities and businesses acquire them is a significant policy priority for me.

That is the idea behind my Department's Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme. It aims to give people the confidence, motivation and skills to take their first steps online, so that they can play their part in an increasingly digital world.

Working in partnership with the 15 community and not-for-profit organisations that have been awarded grant funding, we are actively supporting people to move online and enjoy all that the internet offers."

He added "I would also encourage all those who attend the training classes to share at least one skill they've learned with a friend or colleague, and help make these skills an integral part of everyday life in Ireland. It's one more way we can help more people benefit from this national initiative."

The Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme is a key part of the Government's National Digital Strategy which recognises the importance of enabling all citizens to realise the full social and economic potential of the digital world. Digital skills can empower and enrich the lives of people, giving them better access to information, culture, entertainment, social networking, eGovernment services, as well as online goods and services.

Training in basic internet skills will be delivered free of charge to more than 26,000 people during 2017. A full geographic spread of classes, engaging deeply with communities across every county.

Notes to the Editors:

Almost one in six adults living in Ireland has never used the internet. The Digital Skills for Citizens Scheme is designed to provide citizens who have never used the internet with the confidence, motivation and skills to reap the benefits of participating in today's digital world.

Under the Scheme, citizens who have never used the internet will be provided with 10 hours of classroom training, free of charge. Lessons are structured to cover the basics skills, and also allow flexibility to address the particular needs and preferences identified by the trainees in attendance.

Course Provision

- St Catherine's and its partners have free courses on offer all the time. Just need to contact your nearest centre for dates and times.
- Courses can be completed on PC or Tablet/Smartphone
- St Catherine's also have 12 tablets and can travel to groups to provide courses in your local area. We have offered this service to local nursing homes and active retirement associations. All we need is a room with wifi and we can provide the rest.
- To date over 750 people have availed of the training in County Carlow.
- We would love to ensure we use the all of the remaining 500 places we have been allocated.
- We can travel to neighbouring counties if there are groups there interested either.

The following topics are covered:

- Introduction to the internet
- Internet safety & security
- Email
- Search engines and websites
- Online government services
- Conducting everyday transactions
- Online voice and video calls
- Use of Apps
- Social Media
- Playing Video, TV and Radio
- Shopping online
- Instructional videos on YouTube
- Online banking, including the process and security safeguards

For more information please contact Andrea Dalton on (059) 9138706