

# **IRISH WATER SAFETY PHOTOCALL / MEDIA NOTICE**

## **Twenty-eight lives saved in dramatic near-drowning rescues Irish Water Safety to honour remarkable rescuers The Print Works Conference Centre, Dublin Castle Tues 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 3 – 5pm**

Forty-two rescuers from twenty-four dramatic near-death incidents will receive recognition at Irish Water Safety's National Annual Awards Ceremony at The Print Works Conference Centre, Dublin Castle on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015, from 3pm to 5pm. Twenty-eight lives were saved from drowning through the brave actions of these rescuers.

Mr Alan Kelly, Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government will present the "SEIKO Just in Time Rescue Award" to rescuers in appreciation for saving so many lives.

"Tragically an average of 135 drownings occur in Ireland every year," commented Minister Kelly, "and although that's 135 too many, the figure would be even higher but for the dramatic efforts of these individuals who saved others from drowning and the ongoing work of volunteers teaching swimming and rescue skills."

In 2014, the 114 drownings in Ireland were nine fewer than in 2013, and 21 fewer than the annual average, reason enough to highlight today the work of Irish Water Safety Volunteers and their partners in the public and private sector in educating more people on how best to enjoy our wonderful aquatic facilities more safely. Complacency around aquatic environments is simply not an option", he remarked, adding "Six children aged fourteen and under drowned in 2014, reflecting the importance of constant uninterrupted child supervision."

"I appeal to all adults to make themselves more aware of the dangers in, on and around water", continued Minister Kelly. "It only takes seconds for tragedy to strike and this can so easily be avoided if people take responsibility for their own safety by learning about the hazards. I ask that people encourage friends and family to read Irish Water Safety's guidelines at [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie) so that they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to avoid becoming a drowning statistic. It is very important that people take training before pursuing aquatic activities."

"Drownings often happen quickly and silently with an average of 80% of drownings occurring close to the victim's home and 62% occurring inland. The range of aquatic activities is extremely varied yet what is tragically constant each year is the gender most at risk - males – accounting for 79% of drownings (90) in 2014. 53% of drownings were aged 30-59 clearly demonstrating that regardless of age, one is never too old to learn how to stay safe around water."

Long-Service Awards will also be presented, recognising 1,535 years of personal service of 84 Irish Water Safety volunteers from around the country for teaching swimming, rescue and water survival skills.

Interviews and photographs are available with Award recipients on the day at Dublin Castle from 2pm onwards.

Post event images are available from the official photographer David Branigan [dave@oceansport.ie](mailto:dave@oceansport.ie).

Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway; LoCall 1890-420.202 [www.iws.ie](http://www.iws.ie); Tel: 091-564400 Fax: 091-564700 (John Leech: 087-6789600; Roger Sweeney: 087-6789601)

# **SEIKO Just In Time Awards & Rescue Appreciation Recipients:**

**Presented to those who came to the assistance of person(s) in difficulty in water and in danger of drowning. (Seiko Awards numbered)**

**A.**

- 1. Garda John Power**
- 2. Garda John foote**

*Tipperary*

On the 19th of February 2014, a call was received at Clonmel Garda station regarding a person that had fallen into the River Suir. Garda Power and Garda Foote attended the scene. Without hesitation Garda Power entered the water. With the aid of a ringbuoy both Gardai brought the person to safety where an ambulance crew were waiting. The person made a fully recovery.

**B.**

- 3. Garda Kevin Gaynor**
- 4. Garda Cormac McGill**

*Dublin*

On the 7th March 2014, at approximately 5am, Garda Gaynor and McGill received a call that a man had fallen into the sea at Clontarf Road. When they arrived at the scene, the person was conscious and calling out for help. It became evident that this person's life was in danger so, without hesitation, and with the aid of a ringbuoy, both Gardai entered the water. They secured the man onto the ringbuoy and brought him safely to shore. The man made a full recovery.

**C.**

- 5. Mr Nick Facer**
- 6. Mr Kevin Carter**

*Sligo*

On Sunday 26th October 2014, at Lackanarra, Co. Sligo, Torrance California Fire-fighters Nick Facer and Kevin Carter noticed two people in the water having difficulties in the weather conditions. It became apparent that, without assistance, the two individuals would not make it back to shore. Without hesitation, both men entered the water after instructing others to call for help. Kevin Carter took the first surfer to shore as he seemed to be exhausted and Nick Facer continued to search for the other surfer in extremely rough sea conditions. Upon reaching the man he gave one end of his leash to him and began the long swim towards the shore with the surfer in tow. They were assisted by many other surfers upon reaching the shore. Both surfers were treated at the scene and taken to hospital where they made a full recovery.

**D.**

- 7. Mr Diarmuid McInerney**

*Donegal*

On the 16th May 2015, Diarmuid was working on a golf course in Bundoran when he heard a cry for help. Upon sighting two people having difficulty in the water he advised the Coastguard and went to the aid of the swimmers. Diarmuid was passed a ringbuoy by a member of the public and without hesitation he entered the water. He instructed the two swimmers to thread water. Conditions were rough but Diarmuid managed to pull the nearest person to him to safety onto nearby rocks. The Bundoran lifeboat arrived but was unable to approach the swimmers due to the heavy swell surging onto the rocks. After four attempts of throwing the ringbuoy, the

casualty finally grabbed hold of the buoyancy aid and was brought to safety. The rescuer used his IWS lifesaving skills to carry out an effective and safe rescue. Both swimmers made a full recovery.

**E.**

**8. Garda Shaun Durkan**

**9. Garda Gerard Carroll**

*Galway*

On the evening of the 24th June 2015, D/Garda Durkan received a call regarding a woman in difficulty in the river at the Claddagh basin. Garda Durkan immediately went to the scene and observed that the female was being carried out to sea by the strong current. Without hesitation he entered the water with a ringbuoy and swam towards the casualty. She took hold of the ringbuoy. D/Garda Gerry Carroll arrived at the scene and also entered the water to assist D/Garda Durkan in bringing the female to safety. The person made a full recovery.

**F.**

**10. Mr Stephen Andrews**

**11. Mr Brendan Connolly**

**12. Mr Thomas O'Brien**

**Mr Martin Mullen – Rescue Appreciation Award**

*Dublin*

On the 31st July 2011, Martin Mullen entered the water in an attempt to rescue a man in distress in the river Liffey. He then got into difficulty. Stephen Andrews entered the water and with the help of Brendan Connolly & Thomas O'Brien brought Martin Mullen to safety.

**G.**

**13. Garda Thomas Hennessey**

**14. Garda Donal Lawlor**

*Carlow*

On the night of the 14th January 2015, Gardai Tom Hennessey and Donal Lawlor bravely entered the water alongside Carlow Rowing Club to assist a man in distress in the water. They both swam in the icy waters and brought the man to safety. He made a full recovery.

**H.**

**15. Garda Emlyn Mulligan**

*Longford*

On the 2nd August 2013, Garda Mulligan received a report regarding a female in difficulty in the water at the river Camlin in Longford town. Upon arrival to the scene, Garda Mulligan assessed the situation and without hesitation entered the water and swam out to the woman. He brought her to safety and she made a full recovery.

**I.**

**16. Mr Danny Gillespie**

**17. Mr Eamonn Gillespie**

**18. Mr Connie Gillespie**

**19. Mr Tadhg Diver**

*Donegal*

On the 13th of September 2014 at approximately 8pm at Bunbeg pier, Donegal, Danny, Eamonn, Connie Gillespie along with Tadhg Diver heard a loud noise and immediately went to investigate. Eamonn immediately went for help and called emergency services. Without hesitation Mr Gillespie steered his boat to where the van was located and with the assistance of Connie and Tadhg managed to attach a rope to the rear of the van and towed it to the harbour slipway. Eamonn, who was waiting at the pier, secured the rope and assisted by the fact that they were in shallow water, Danny managed to get the door open to get the person to safety. The person was subsequently taken to hospital and made a full recovery.

**J.**

**20. Detective Garda Jo Ann Holahan**

**21. Garda Frank Howlin**

*Dublin*

On the 23rd April 2015 at approximately 6.45pm D/Garda Jo Ann Holahan & her colleague Garda Frank Howlin received a call regarding two people in distress in the sea at Salthill. Upon arrival to the scene they assessed the situation and without hesitation D/Garda Holahan grabbed a ringbuoy and swam out to sea towards the unconscious woman and her distressed cousin. Garda Howlin having established the situation - requested further Garda assistance and the services of the RNLi and Coastguard. Using a ringbuoy, both Gardai brought the women to safety to nearby rocks at the bottom of the cliff. They successfully administered CPR on the unconscious woman. Both women were treated for Hypothermia and made a fully recovery.

**K.**

**22. Garda Joe O'Connor**

**Garda Barry Moran – Rescue Appreciation Award**

*Dublin*

On the 19th of July, at Aston Quay, Gardai Joseph O Connor and Barry Moran (RES Appreciation) were on a uniform beat patrol when they came upon a female in distress in the water, Garda Moran lowered a life buoy to the lady but she was unable to reach it and was slowly going under water. Without hesitation Garda O Connor entered the water and upon reaching the woman, managed to keep her afloat. Meanwhile a person in a RIB motor boat manoeuvred her boat over the Garda O Connor, and they both managed to lift the distressed woman onto the boat. Both Garda O Connor and the casualty were taken to safety. The woman made a fully recovery. . The quick response and actions for both Gardai in this instance undoubtedly prevented the loss of a life.

## **L.**

**23. Garda Aidan Monahan**

**24. Garda Niall Kenny**

*Kilkenny & Dublin*

First rescue: On the 23rd of July 2010, at the River Nore, Kilkenny - Garda Monahan (Off Duty) came to the rescue of a woman in distress in the water and with the aid of two life buoys that were thrown to him during the rescue he managed to bring the casualty and himself to safety.

Second Rescue - On the 4th of May of 2012 at approximately 4am, Garda Monahan was on patrol and received a call regarding a man in distress at the River Liffey. Upon reaching the scene, Garda Monahan requested the assistance of the Dublin Fire Brigade; he then retrieved a ringbuoy and without hesitation entered the water. He brought the casualty to the side of the river, where Garda Niall Kenny helped to bring the casualty to safety.

## **M.**

**25. Garda Carroll Walsh**

**26. Garda Carrie O'Connor**

*Dublin*

On the 18th August 2012, at approximately 2.30am, Garda Walsh responded to a call for assistance on Aaron Quay. Upon arrival he saw a woman in distress in the water. Without hesitation Garda Walsh entered the water and with the assistance of Garda Carrie O Connor pulled her to safety, where he began to perform CPR by administering back slaps. The casualty made a full recovery.

## **N.**

**27. Garda Brendan Flannery**

**28. Garda John Teehan**

**29. Garda Cathal Mulvihill**

**30. Garda David Turner**

*Westmeath*

On the 29th of March, Gardai Teehan, Flannery, Mulvihill and Turner rushed to the scene of a young man in distress, attempting to jump into the Shannon. The Gardai spoke to the person at great length in an effort to talk him down off the bridge. Garda Teehan climbed over the bridge and was suspended by his colleagues from the top of the bridge in an attempt to reach the person. He managed to grab hold of the person and pull him over the ledge to safety.

## **O.**

**31. Mr Fergal Swaine**

*Dublin*

On the 7th May 2014, Fergal was cycling to work when he came upon a person in distress in the water at the Canal at Cross Guns Bridge, Phibsboro. Without hesitation he grabbed a ringbuoy and entered the water. Upon reaching the man, he grabbed hold of his jacket and managed to swim to the bank where a number of people helped to pull him to safety. Fergal administered CPR and the casualty was taken to hospital.

**P.**

**32. Mr Seamus McCarthy**

**33. Ms Fionnuala Quigley**

**Garda Brian O'Donnell – Community & Social Responsibility Award**

*Inish Mor, Aran islands*

On the 8th of April, Apu Gupta, an Indian tourist was swept off a rocky ledge by a wave on Inis Mór, Galway. The accident was witnessed by tourist and advanced paramedic Seamus McCarthy and his girlfriend Fionnuala Quigley. Seamus phoned 999 but there was no reception, so Fionnuala ran to the nearest house to call for help. Meanwhile, Seamus put together a makeshift rescue rope using a jacket and backpack and lowered it to the casualty. She tightened the backpack around her waist and Seamus and another person began to pull her slowly up the cliff face. They successfully pulled her to safety and Seamus managed to stabilise her until the rescue helicopter arrived then took her to the hospital. The person made a full recovery.

Garda Brian O'Donnell helped to raise public awareness about the dangers of being too close to the edges of the Atlantic ocean coastline by sending the video of the incident to Irish Water Safety which became a feature on the RTE news and quickly went viral online with hits to date in excess of 1.2 million. Brian also ensured that the rescued girl and her family were accommodated by the relevant authorities while the 21 year old visitor made a full recovery in hospital. Irish Water Safety's public awareness campaigns rely on the input of people like Brian to bring stories to the public and for this we are deeply grateful.

**Q.**

**34. Ms Alexis-Elizabeth Vaganova**

*Kildare*

On the 18th June 2014, Alexis was swimming with her friends at Salmon Leap. They had jumped into the water, when she noticed that one of her friends had not surfaced. Without hesitation Alexis swam underwater towards her friend, grabbed her and brought her up to the surface. She reassured her friend and instructed her to kick her legs. She managed to take her safely to shore.

**R.**

**35. Mr Niall Clarke**

*Carlow*

On the 12th February of this year, Niall Clarke came upon a car parked haphazardly at a barrier on the river bank at the River Barrow at Leighlinbridge Village. He then noticed a person face down in the water. Without hesitation he entered the water and swam towards the casualty. He brought the person to safety and successfully performed CPR on them. He placed the casualty into the recovery position and went to a nearby shop and told them to call emergency services.

**S.**

**36. Mr Martin Gavaghan**

**Garda John O'Brien – Rescue Appreciation**

**Garda Kevin Fitzpatrick – Rescue Appreciation**

*Arklow*

On the 23rd of December 2014, at a Swimming pool in Arklow, Deirbhile aged 8, alerted her father Martin Gavaghan that a boy wasn't moving and was lying on the pool floor. Without hesitation Martin swam down to the boy and lifted his lifeless body to the pool side. Two Leisure assistants began CPR on the child and called emergency services. Garda John O'Brien & Garda Kevin Fitzpatrick (Rescue Appreciations) arrived at the scene and took over the CPR. They continued to work on him for over ten minutes and eventually got a pulse. The Ambulance crew took over and the boy is currently recovering very well.

**T.**

**37. Mr David McCarthy**

**38. Mr Martin Dennehy**

*Cork*

On the 12th of September 2015, Fisheries officers Martin Dennehy & David McCarthy were on patrol at Lough Bofinne when they heard cries for help. Being experienced officers, they did a risk assessment and confidently instructed the casualty and managed to get him to turn on his back and start kicking to propel him back to shore. Both officers waded out to the lake and threw a rope towards the casualty, who managed to grab hold of it. They proceeded to pull the casualty towards the shore. They took him to hospital where he made a full recovery.

**U.**

**39. Mr John Clancy**

*Galway*

On the evening of the 27th October 2015, John was walking along the Claddagh quay when he noticed a person in the water. He called out but there was no response. John called out to two people nearby to call emergency services and without hesitation entered the water and swam towards the casualty. At this stage the casualty had began to submerge and John had lost sight of this person. He successfully retrieved the casualty and pulled the person to safety.

**V.**

**40. Ms Erika McCarthy**

*Cork*

On Tuesday the 25th August 2015, Erika was training at Inchydoney beach, and swimming back to shore with her team members when she heard a faint cry for help in the distance. She turned back and came upon a male and female in difficulty. Erika managed to calm the male and encourage him to swim towards the shore, while, at the same time she carried the woman. As Erika was swimming closer to shore, she came upon a fellow colleague and directed him to take the female back on his board while she continued to encourage the male swimmer. Both swimmers were brought safely to shore.

**W.**

**41. Mr Eric Nolan**

**42. Mr John Dimond**

*Wexford*

On the 5th of August 2013, both Erik Nolan and John Dimond noticed a person enter the river from O Hanrahan Bridge at New Ross and without hesitation they readied and launched a RIB. They approached the person in water and persuaded him to be helped aboard the RIB. They calmed the person and returned to the boat house and waited with him until emergency services arrived.