



**County:** Laois

**Nominee:** Gillie Walsh Kemmis

Gillie a fresh water biologist by profession with 3 great loves Family Community Games and Travel. She incorporated her love of travel and community games by following Rob Heffernan (a past community games participant) to Moscow. She followed Rob, with the tricolour, for 3 hours around the course and saw him win gold but collapsed from dehydration before the medal ceremony. She spent 2 days in a Moscow Hospital recuperating before the flight home.

She was introduced to Community Games by Sheila Deegan another lifelong volunteer to community games. In Sheila's words "the ethos of Community Games is to promote participation while developing young people's talents and developing their potential to the fullest". Gillie was hooked from day one seeing the excitement on children's faces at area, county and national finals.

Our area incorporates the town lands of Vicarstown, Stradbally, Timahoe and part of Ratheniska. In 2000 as part of the millennium celebrations Gillie was very much involved in the publication of a commemorative book the brainchild of then Chairperson Mary Lalor Ramsbottom. Sonia O'Sullivan another past participant in community games wrote the foreword (Gillie also supported her in Helsinki, Atlanta and more). It is still a valued memorabilia for the area and a credit to all committee members at the time, too many to mention and all deserving of awards.

Gillie served our local area for 30 years, county as chairperson, secretary, treasurer etc for 26 years and volunteered at national and provincial finals for numerous years. She was proud to see the Stradbally senior football team win the county championship this year as all were past competitors and some are following Gillie's footsteps as volunteers for community games.

She has done so much for community games it is hard to highlight one thing. Most people will know our area for the Electric Picnic. Before this we had Gillie walking the same grounds in her "Wellies". For 25+ years she marked out the grounds for track and field for our area athletics finals. She also went on to organise for County, the athletic finals, Cross Country finals, Art Cycling etc., all so that the children in our county from 6-16 could participate in Community Games. So we ask people to cast a "Vote for Gillie" in appreciation for all her years of work for Community Games.