

# MAYO MAN REACHES NEW HEIGHTS WITH UNIQUE ECO-POWERED DEFIBS

**There are now two defibrillators on Croagh Patrick, each stored within their own eco-powered cabinets, due to the foresight of Mayo engineer Darren Forde, a Community First Responder in his native Hollymount, after he identified the need for AEDs on the 'Reek' which attracts tens of thousands of climbers and pilgrims every year.**

**W**hile climbing Croagh Patrick with his family during a short break in Westport last summer, Darren Forde noticed the absence of defibrillators on the mountain itself. He realised that the predominant barrier was the extreme weather and temperature ranges on the mountain, which could not sustain an AED or lifesaving medication such as Aspirin or Epi-Pens.

The roads engineer with Mayo County Council, who is a community first responder in his local area of Hollymount, identified an urgent need for the defibrillators on the mountain itself. Within a matter of weeks, thanks to the generosity of local sponsors, he received the €8,000 to purchase two machines (each with their own solar-powered cabinet) one of which will

be located halfway up the mountain with the other one at the chapel on the summit.

He quickly set about designing two defibrillators, each of which has their own cabinet. The necessary funding was provided by James Murray (CEO of Murray Ambulances), Anne Corcoran (owner of Westport Hotel Group), Dave Greville (Managing Director of Heart Safety Solutions), and a local family who donated the existing defibrillator at the base of the mountain.

With the help of Adrian Peyton from Peyton Electrical in Hollymount, Darren supervised the installation of the lifesaving units on the Reek in June 2022. The unique defibrillators, made locally, are connected to the emergency services, so that they know the location during a cardiac event.

The machines are solar powered, which will allow them to be charged without electricity in the summer months, and Darren is now looking at ways to power them during the winter.

"There were three cardiac arrests on the Reek in the last five years and two of them sadly passed away. The third was defibrillated because it was Reek Sunday, but there wouldn't have been a defibrillator there otherwise, and it saved their life," Darren said. "It's so important to have a defibrillator when a cardiac event happens. Good CPR and a defibrillator in place will save someone's life," he added.



Darren Forde on a mission as he climbs Croagh Patrick with CFR colleagues Odetta Duignan and Eimear Morrin.



Darren Forde with his wife Fiona and daughters Emma and Lauren after he received the 'Mayo Person of the Year for 2022', which was presented at the Mayo Association Dublin's Business Lunch on February 3 in the Intercontinental Hotel in Ballsbridge. (Pic: Paul Sherwood)

**'MAYO PERSON OF THE YEAR'**

The co-ordinator of the Hollymount Community First Responders (CFR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Group, Darren also came up with the idea of an eco-solar wind powered insulated outdoor heated cabinet with a place to securely store lifesaving medication (and more) without the need of main power.

He was recently named the 'Mayo Person of the Year for 2022' in recognition of his lifesaving initiative. The annual award was presented to Darren at the Mayo Association Business Lunch on February 3 in Dublin. The Mayo County Council engineer succeeded Martina Jennings, Chief Executive of Mayo Roscommon Hospice Foundation and fellow South Mayo resident, who won the award in 2020.

He was a worthy successor of the 'Virginia Gallagher Mayo Person of the Year Award' for 2022, as many nominators testified in their submissions to the independent adjudicating panel.

"Darren is a committed volunteer who pours his heart and soul into projects that will serve and benefit the local community. He is driven by a passion for saving lives."

"When he noticed the AED at one of the local churches needed a new battery and pads, he set about fundraising for and co-ordinating the maintenance of all seven AEDs in the parish, and organised local training sessions in CPR and the use of defibrillators.

"These sessions were a great success and saw 58 people learn these lifesaving skills. He took things one step further by establishing the Hollymount CFR Group in April 2022. Between April and September 2022, this group of five nurses and one EMT (Darren) responded to over 30 calls.

"They responded to 93% of calls within 17 minutes and were pivotal in many of the positive outcomes achieved. As if Darren hadn't achieved enough on a local level in 2022, he combined his fervour for saving lives with his engineering background to solve a long-standing problem in the provision of AEDs in remote areas.

"Darren set to work, and within three weeks he had fundraised €8,000, had two AEDs installed on the mountain and started work on a solar/wind-powered storage cabinet that could regulate its own temperature in the absence of a mains power supply. Using his unique combination of skills, he came up with a prototype, patented it himself, and is in the process of having it produced."

The Air Corps has also come on board and recently lifted the eco-powered cabinets onto Croagh Patrick, thereby ensuring access to this lifesaving equipment all-year round.

Darren has employed local businesses and firms in the production, assembly, and promotion of his revolutionary cabinets despite numerous offers from overseas. "Darren is always alert to ways he can improve the provision of emergency care to local communities," said one of his nominees.

"He identifies an issue, comes up with a solution, and inspires people to get involved in making it work. He thrives on teamwork, positivity, and overcoming obstacles, and works tirelessly to improve the lives of those around them," they added.



Darren pictured with James Murray from Murray's Ambulance Service, one of the local businesses who sponsored the defibrillators on Croagh Patrick. (Pic: Conor McKeown)

**ECO-POWERED CABINETS**  
According to Darren, there's no electric power on the mountain, nor on greenways, mountains, hills, black ski runs, beaches, or even the spire in Dublin. "Maintained at the required temperature, the unique heated and cooled secure cabinet can be used to securely store defibrillators, lifesaving medication like aspirin and the Epi Pen, trauma dressings/foil blanket, pedestrian counters, hot/cold drinks, even incubation for nesting birds etc, in one of the individual compartments without a main power supply.

"I combined my 24 years of engineering design and



The Irish, European and international patent for the process, design and trademark of the eco-powered cabinet was devised by Darren Forde, BSc (Hons) EMT, CFR.

40 years of medical passion, to invent, design and manufacture a lightweight, multifunctional eco cabinet with 18 unique features. This temperature-controlled cabinet is fitted with interior secured individual sections and stand, capable of holding the cabinet in locations where there are no structures present such as beaches, greenways, mountains etc.”

All parts of this unit are weatherproof against all conditions, allowing this unique cabinet to be installed in any part of the world, he claimed.



The first AED was already in place in the car park at the base of the mountain, and all three machines are now connected to the emergency services.

“If a person has a cardiac chest pain or an allergic reaction, they only have minutes to take this lifesaving medicine. It could take hours to receive the medication in a remote location, and with my invention it could be administered in minutes – it’s the same medication used for cardiac chest pain or allergic reactions required worldwide.”



Darren Forde also received the ‘Geoff King Award’ for his lifesaving initiative at the National First Responders Conference (RESPOND) in Mullingar in September 2022.



The CEO and founder of Eco-Powered Cabinets Limited received a €15,000 bursary on the Late Late Show, who is pictured with presenter Ryan Tubridy after showcasing his new product during the show on 4 November 2022.

“All cabinets must be registered with the relevant ambulance service. When an individual calls 999/112 the emergency call taker will be able to direct the caller to the nearest cabinet. At this point they will also receive the code to access the internal medical unit. The emergency call taker will instruct how to administrate the drugs.

“The lifesaving drugs can be replaced by the relevant health service or Public Access Defibrators (PADs) scheme co-ordinator. Approval was given by HSE Ambulance Control to register the three cabinets on Croagh Patrick, one at the base, the second half-way up the mountain and the third at the chapel on the summit. Since there is no Eircode or power supply on the mountain, a series of co-ordinates are used for the locations.”

CABINET TO REVOLUTIONISE AED PROVISION  
Darren Forde maintains that his eco-powered cabinet is now set to revolutionise the provision of AEDs and other emergency medical treatments in remote areas around the globe. “With the global defibrillator market size anticipated to reach €6.5bn by 2030 and expected to expand 9.3% from 2022 to 2030, the European market is predicted to expand to €5.1bn by 2027, before the addition of this eco solar/turbine cabinet.”

In terms of the future for his company Eco Powered Cabinets, the CEO and founder said: “Sponsors can support the purchasing of this Eco Powered Cabinet in return for their company’s name displayed on this product. This

unique cabinet with sponsors’ details will be in locations where normally no advertising signs are permitted, therefore, offsetting the cost against advertising.”

Over the next few weeks, he expects to be in contact with existing cabinet manufacturers and distributors. “This is the best and quickest way to make this new lifesaving eco-powered cabinet and medication secure storage box available.”

For further details visit <https://ecopoweredcabinets.com/>

