

# 2025

# Annual REPORT

*Our Story in Motion*

**MANY TRIBES, ONE TEAM.**



## **Mardyke Arena**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

**REPORTING PERIOD:  
OCTOBER 2024 – SEPTEMBER 2025**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the reporting period, Mardyke Arena UCC delivered a strong year of participation, engagement, and strategic investment, reinforcing its position as a core contributor to health, wellbeing, sport, and community life at University College Cork (UCC) and across the wider Cork region.

Engagement across Mardyke Arena UCC continued to grow, underpinned by sustained student participation, strong membership retention, and increased overall utilisation of facilities and programmes. Targeted investment in people, programmes, infrastructure, and sustainability supported the consistent delivery of inclusive, high-quality experiences aligned with UCC priorities and community need.

The year also marked continued progress in leadership capability, organisational culture, and strategic partnerships, alongside measurable advances in energy efficiency and environmental performance. Capital investment focused on facility upgrades and long-term asset resilience, ensuring Mardyke Arena UCC remains fit for purpose, adaptable, and responsive within a high-demand, multi-user environment.

## CEO Looking Ahead: Priorities 2026

Looking ahead to the next year, Mardyke Arena UCC will focus on deepening its impact as a strategic UCC asset and a shared civic resource. Priorities will include enhancing the student experience through high-quality, accessible, and inclusive services; strengthening staff and community wellbeing through structured, preventative programmes; and continuing targeted investment in facilities, digital capability, and sustainability to support long-term resilience.

Mardyke Arena UCC will further develop its role as a delivery partner within UCC's health, wellbeing, and civic engagement frameworks, supported by strong governance, data-led decision-making, and a continued emphasis on people, culture, and leadership.



# CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This Annual Report reflects a year of important progress in the governance and strategic positioning of the organisation. As Chair, my focus — and that of the Board — has been on stewardship: ensuring that the organisation is well governed, strategically aligned with University College Cork, and positioned to deliver sustainable value over the long term.

2025 marked a period of transition in executive leadership and strategic consolidation. During this time, the Board worked closely with the Chief Executive Officer to provide clarity of mandate, support effective decision-making, and maintain continuity of purpose. This approach has enabled the organisation to operate with stability while strengthening the foundations required for future development.

The Board's oversight throughout the year has been centred on four key areas: strategic alignment with UCC, financial sustainability, organisational capability, and risk and compliance. We are satisfied that the organisation has operated within an appropriate risk framework, maintained financial discipline, and invested prudently in areas that support long-term resilience, including people, systems, and infrastructure.

A particular focus for the Board has been ensuring that governance structures and practices remain appropriate for a subsidiary operating within the university sector. Progress in strengthening policies, management systems, and organisational controls provides assurance that the organisation is evolving in line with its scale, complexity, and responsibilities.

The Board also recognises the strategic importance of access, inclusion, and student experience within the university context. Strengthening institutional relationships, including with UCC's Access and Disability Services, supports our responsibility to ensure that facilities and services enable equitable participation and reflect the values of the University.

Looking ahead, the Board is confident that the strategic direction being advanced is coherent, well-governed, and aligned with UCC's long-term objectives. The organisation is increasingly positioned to make a distinctive contribution to the University's mission in sport, wellbeing, and performance, while operating within a robust governance framework.

Finally, the Board and Management wish to acknowledge the considerable contribution of the previous Chair, the late John Mullins. His passing was unexpected, and on behalf of the Board and Management, I wish to record our deep gratitude for his contribution over many years and to express our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

***The Board's focus has been on stewardship — ensuring the organisation is well governed, strategically aligned with UCC, and positioned to deliver sustainable value over the long term.***



**David Merriman**  
**Chairperson**  
**Mardyke Arena UCC**



# CEO'S FOREWORD

Mardyke Arena UCC exists to enable performance, wellbeing, and inclusion in a way that reflects the values and ambitions of University College Cork. Our core commitment is clear: to be the number one student facility in the university sector, while delivering consistently high standards for our members and acting as a positive contributor to the wider community we serve.

2025 was a year of strategic consolidation and purposeful progress. In my first year as Chief Executive Officer, the focus was on listening carefully, strengthening alignment with UCC, and ensuring our direction is grounded in UCC's mission and values. Alongside this, the organisation delivered strong operational performance, with turnover increasing by 9% year on year, reflecting growing engagement, effective delivery, and continued trust from students, staff, members, and partners.

Investment in people and culture was central to our progress. We strengthened leadership capability, professional development, and organisational culture, recognising that excellence in service begins with a supported and engaged workforce. The co-creation of our organisational values was a defining milestone, providing a shared framework that now guides decision-making, behaviours, and accountability across Mardyke Arena UCC.

We also strengthened the foundations required for long-term sustainability and good governance. Enhanced systems, clearer processes, and targeted capital investment have improved transparency, resilience, and operational effectiveness within a complex university environment. A €2.5 million investment in sustainability initiatives reinforced our responsibility as stewards of shared University resources, embedding environmental performance and asset resilience into how we plan and operate.

Students remain at the centre of our strategy. Progress during the year included the development of a more integrated partnership with UCC's Access and Disability Services, supporting our ambition to deliver a genuinely student-led facility that is inclusive by design and responsive to the diverse needs of the University community.

Alongside this student focus, we remain committed to delivering a high-quality, member-focused experience and to fulfilling our role as a shared civic asset for the wider Cork community. As we approach our 25th year in 2026, our focus is not simply on growth, but on leadership — in student experience, service quality, sustainability, and our contribution to University and community life.

***We are building a values-led, inclusive organisation — aligned with UCC and focused on delivering long-term impact for students, our people, and the wider community.***

*Christine Moloney*

**Christine Moloney**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Mardyke Arena UCC**





**Mardyke Arena**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

# MARDYKE ARENA UCC AT A GLANCE

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

# 60%

*Student-led facility*

### STUDENT-LED GROWTH

## +8.9%

*YoY growth in student usage*

### STUDENT VALUE DELIVERED

## €7.2M

*€735k Additional Access  
Provision to UCC Community*

### OVERALL GROWTH

## +5.4%

*Includes Members*

## INVESTMENT & FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

### €1.6M Capital Investment

### €719k Debt Serviced

## Additional €175,000 in CapEx Projects

*Indicates Strong Liquidity and Disciplined Financial Management*



## STRATEGIC CAPACITY SIGNAL

*Demand outpacing infrastructure  
Continued investment required*



**Mardyke Arena**  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

# OUR VALUES

*Mardyke Arena UCC is guided by a shared set of values that shape organisational culture, service delivery, and engagement across the campus and beyond.*



## **Vibrancy: Energy • Passion • Positivity**

Vibrancy underpins how Mardyke Arena UCC engages with its community. Energy, passion, and positivity are embedded across facilities, programmes, and interactions, supporting participation, motivation, and connection. A vibrant environment encourages people to move, grow, and engage at every stage of their wellbeing journey.



## **Teamwork: Shared Purpose • Inclusivity • Support**

Teamwork is central to how Mardyke Arena UCC operates. Many Tribes, One Team reflects a culture where diverse roles and perspectives are united by a shared purpose. Collaboration, respect, and inclusivity enable strong partnerships across UCC and the wider community, supporting positive wellbeing outcomes.



## **Consistency: Professionalism • Trust • Progress**

Consistency underpins the delivery of high-quality experiences. Professional standards, reliability, and continuous improvement are reflected in daily practice, building trust with students, members, partners, and colleagues. Every interaction contributes to a welcoming and dependable environment.

# PEOPLE & CULTURE HIGHLIGHTS

Key workforce, wellbeing, and culture outcomes

## AT A GLANCE



108 Staff  
Across  
Diverse  
Roles



Leadership &  
Professional  
Development  
Investment



Employee  
Assistance  
Programme  
Introduced



First Annual  
Gender Pay  
Report  
Published

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



### Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

- Inclusive recruitment practices
- Transparent pay and progression
- Ongoing EDI dialogue and governance alignment

**Impact: Fair, accountable, and values-led workplace**



### Capability & Leadership

- Leadership development programmes
- Professional and role-specific training
- Culture and values-led development

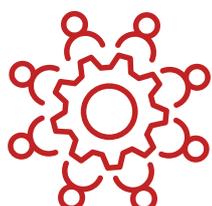
**Impact: Stronger performance and service delivery**



### Staff Wellbeing

- Employee Assistance Programme
- Targeted wellbeing initiatives

**Impact: Sustainable workforce and improved resilience**



### Culture & Governance

- “Many Tribes, One Team” culture
- Alignment with UCC People & Culture priorities
- Clear accountability and reporting

**Impact: Cohesive, high-performing organisation**

# PEOPLE AND CULTURE

People and Culture is a strategic priority at Mardyke Arena UCC and a key enabler of service quality, organisational performance, and long-term sustainability. Our approach is closely aligned with the principles and priorities of UCC People and Culture, with a strong emphasis on equity, inclusion, accountability, and staff wellbeing.

Mardyke Arena UCC is supported by a dedicated workforce of 108 staff across full-time, part-time, and seasonal roles. This diverse team plays a critical role in delivering a safe, inclusive, and high-quality environment for students, members, and the wider community. Continued investment in leadership development, professional training, organisational culture, and EDI has strengthened individual capability while enhancing collective effectiveness across the organisation.

Staff wellbeing remained a key focus throughout the year. The introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme, alongside a range of wellbeing initiatives, reflects Mardyke Arena UCC's commitment to supporting a positive, healthy, and sustainable working environment—recognising staff wellbeing as fundamental to service excellence and long-term organisational resilience.

Mardyke Arena UCC's workforce reflects a **"Many Tribes, One Team"** culture, bringing together a wide range of roles, skills, and backgrounds united by a shared commitment to service, wellbeing, and performance. Ongoing priorities include maintaining inclusive recruitment practices, ensuring transparent pay and progression processes, engaging constructively in EDI dialogue, and continuing annual gender pay reporting. Together, these measures underpin strong governance, accountability, and collaboration, and reinforce our role as a responsible employer within the UCC community.



**Kid's Activities Team 2025**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Health & Wellbeing | Access & Inclusion | Early Engagement | Partnership | Civic Responsibility

At the heart of Mardyke Arena UCC is a commitment to people, participation, and community connection. Every day, the Mardyke Arena UCC brings together students, families, schools, clubs, and local partners through inclusive programmes that make physical activity accessible, welcoming, and meaningful.

From early engagement initiatives that inspire lifelong habits to partnership-led projects that support health, confidence, and social inclusion, Mardyke Arena UCC extends the University's civic mission beyond campus boundaries.

These initiatives are not simply activities — they are pathways to wellbeing, belonging, and long-term participation, delivering measurable social impact across the communities we serve.

## Some activities held during 2025



**Wheel Chair Basketball Tournament in conjunction with PESSA, School of Education UCC**



**Parkinson's Disease (PD) Warriors Class**



**Our Team's Excitement for Hurling All Ireland 2025**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL IMPACT

Mardyke Arena UCC delivers social impact through purposeful partnerships, inclusive access to physical activity, and early engagement initiatives that support health, wellbeing, and long-term participation. These actions align with UCC's civic mission and contribute measurable value across key societal impact indicators.

Access to physical activity, and early engagement initiatives that support health, wellbeing, and long-term participation. These actions align with UCC's civic mission and contribute measurable value across key societal impact indicators.

## Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

Through continued collaboration with healthcare and UCC support services, Mardyke Arena UCC contributed to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for diverse user groups. Partnership with South Infirmary Hospital supported the delivery of structured pain management programmes, while the Liam Mc Cancer Trial concluded following two years of on-site delivery. Ongoing engagement with UCC Health and Disability Support Services further strengthened access to appropriate, supported physical activity within a safe and professionally managed environment.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

Improving access to participation remains a core social impact objective. During the reporting period, Mardyke Arena UCC delivered a range of inclusive and participation-led initiatives, including programmes for people living with Parkinson's disease, autism-friendly (ASD) exercise classes, and a wheelchair basketball event. These initiatives reduce barriers to participation and support equitable access to health-enhancing activity across the community.

## Partnership and Institutional Contribution

Mardyke Arena UCC continues to act as a collaborative delivery partner within UCC's wellbeing and support ecosystem. Representation on UCC Student Peer Support and UCC PESSA governance groups ensures alignment with student support, academic engagement, and best practice in sport and physical activity delivery.

## Early Engagement and Educational Impact

Early exposure to sport and movement plays a critical role in long-term health outcomes and educational aspiration. During May and June, Mardyke Arena UCC welcomed **89 primary schools**, providing approximately **4,000 children with access to UCC facilities** and their first experience of sport and physical activity within a university setting. This initiative supports early engagement, inclusion, and sustained connection with UCC and the wider education ecosystem.

## Civic Contribution and Social Responsibility

In parallel with programme delivery, Mardyke Arena UCC's employees hosted and facilitated fundraising and awareness-led events in support of charitable causes. These activities reinforce our role as a socially responsible institution and a shared civic asset for UCC and the wider community.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## New Partnerships in 2025

### UCC id+futures



The UCC id+futures initiative was thrilled to partner last summer with the Mardyke Arena who facilitated a 12-week paid placement for our Certificate in Disability-Inclusive Practice student, Melissa Collins. Melissa worked as part of the Children's Activity Team and supported 8 weeks of multi-activity summer camps for primary school children aged between 4 and 12. Tracey Feehan, the Children's Activity Coordinator, was Melissa's amazing mentor and she and the team went above and beyond to ensure that Melissa felt included and valued as part of the team from the outset. Melissa was given loads of hands-on experience which really helped her build up transferable skills and confidence in working with children in a professional setting. In fact, the placement in the Mardyke Arena has given Melissa the self-confidence and motivation to pursue a professional qualification in the area of early years education, which is a testament to the transformative power of being given a genuine opportunity to showcase talent, reach one's potential and pursue career ambitions.

Melissa also carried out a disability and accessibility audit of the Mardyke for the last few weeks of her placement. This was very timely as it fed into a larger accessibility and inclusion review process being led by Christine Moloney, Mardyke Arena CEO, and her team. The Mardyke's motto is "Many Tribes, One Team" which speaks to an inclusive, and community-focused ethos, representing a diverse, united team of staff, students, and athletes working together in a culture of sportsmanship, respect and ambition. We are so proud to partner with the Mardyke Arena who have inclusivity in their DNA and, who not only talk the talk, but, importantly, walk the walk.



Melissa and Her Mentor, Tracey Feehan

- Carol Veiga

**id+futures Work Placement & Employment Pathways Coordinator**

### Access UCC



We would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank the Mardyke Arena UCC for its continued openness to outreach and collaboration with the Access UCC PLUS Programme. Through its support of the Professor Fluffy initiative, the Arena plays a key role in engaging 5th Class students from Cork City DEIS primary schools, introducing the idea of university in a fun, inclusive and inspiring way. This valued partnership reflects a shared commitment across UCC to widening participation and encouraging young learners to see higher education as part of their future.

- Maeve Minihane

**Schools Outreach Co-ordinator, Access UCC**



# STUDENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED: Access | Participation | Utilisation | Value Delivered

## AT A GLANCE



**24,000**  
Students  
Supported



**60%**  
Student  
Participation



**+8.9%**  
Student-Led  
Growth

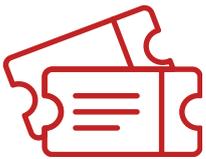


**5.4%**  
Overall  
Growth



**€7.2M**  
Student Value  
Delivered

## STUDENT VALUE BEYOND ACCESS



### €735k Additional Value Added

Fitness classes, club access, and performance environments delivered beyond membership access.

**Impact: Deliberate institutional investment removing financial barriers to participation.**



### 4,732 Student Class Attendances

High uptake across inclusive, wellbeing-focused, and performance-based programming.

**Impact: Strengthened access, affordability, and student wellbeing at scale.**



### 350+ High-Performance Athletes Supported

Access to strength & conditioning coaching and high-performance environments.

**Impact: Bridging mass participation and elite performance pathways within UCC.**



### Wellbeing, Inclusion & Access

Sustained participation aligned with UCC's wellbeing and inclusion priorities.

# STUDENT IMPACT: UNLOCKING VALUE THROUGH ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

## Overview

Mardyke Arena UCC plays a central role in supporting the student experience by prioritising access, participation, and wellbeing over commercialisation. During the reporting period, the Arena supported **24,000** UCC students, with students accounting for 60% of total facility usage, confirming its position as a core component of the University's wellbeing and campus life infrastructure.

## Value Delivered to Students

When benchmarked against the discounted UCC staff commercial membership rate, the equivalent annual value of student usage exceeds **€7.2 million** per year. This demonstrates that students access high-quality sport, fitness, and wellbeing facilities at a fraction of market cost.

From a financial sustainability perspective, student capitation funding invested in Mardyke Arena UCC delivers strong financial and social returns. Even when modelling a significantly reduced student rate, the gap between commercial value and student contribution remains limited, indicating that student funding is closely aligned with actual value delivered.

## Additional Free Provision and Institutional Investment

In addition to core access, the Arena delivered **€735,004** in non-membership value through fitness classes, club access, and supported performance environments. This provision represents deliberate institutional investment rather than forgone revenue.

During the reporting period:

- **4,732** student attendances were delivered through fitness classes
- Over **11,800** students and members participated in structured class programming
- This removed financial barriers to participation and supported inclusion, wellbeing, and sustained engagement throughout the academic year.



**Student Pickleball Session**

# STUDENT IMPACT: UNLOCKING VALUE THROUGH ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

## Value to Clubs, Teaching, and University Sport

The Mardyke Arena UCC provided **7,246 hours** of facility usage free of charge to UCC clubs and intervarsity teams, including access to sports halls, studios, the climbing wall, swimming pool, and Squad Gym. At conservative commercial rates, this equates to a notional value of **€620,423** delivered to University sport.

In parallel, Mardyke Arena UCC supported academic delivery and performance development by providing essential facility access to:

- UCC PE Studies teaching staff
- UCC Sport staff and club coaches
- Blue Demons College basketball teams

In total, **113** individuals were supported through this access, representing an estimated annual value of **€56,000** at conservative commercial rates.

## High-Performance Pathway

Over **350** high-performance and representative athletes benefited from access to specialist environments such as the High Performance Gym. This provision includes embedded strength and conditioning support, valued at approximately **€144,960**, delivered within standard access models.

This approach bridges the gap between mass participation and elite performance pathways, ensuring that high-performance support is accessible without transferring costs to individual athletes or teams.

## Balanced Commercial Contribution

Alongside significant free provision, the Mardyke Arena UCC generated **€34,921** in targeted paid revenue through education programmes, examinations, and limited club hydro use. This balanced model enables essential income generation while protecting core student access and supporting long-term financial sustainability.

## Strategic Takeaways

Usage trends confirm that Mardyke Arena UCC is increasingly operating as a high-volume, student-led facility, with particularly strong growth in gym usage. While this aligns closely with UCC's student engagement and wellbeing objectives, it also places increasing pressure on operational resources.

These dynamics reinforce the need for continued collaboration between stakeholders to ensure that funding models, service agreements, and capital planning remain equitable, sustainable, and aligned with the long-term goal of delivering high-quality facilities for the entire UCC community.

## Summary

Student capitation funding continues to make a valuable contribution to enabling broad student access to Mardyke Arena UCC and supporting the UCC's wider wellbeing objectives. Strong growth in student participation reflects the value students place on the facilities, while rising operating costs highlight the importance of maintaining sustainable and responsive funding and service models.

# UCC STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

For the first time in over 20 years, Mardyke Arena UCC established a direct presence at key student-facing events, including UCC Open Days, Clubs and Societies engagements, and student information initiatives. This marked a step-change in how Mardyke Arena UCC engages with students, strengthening awareness of services and connection with campus life.

This progress has been embedded through a regular on-campus presence each academic year, supporting continued visibility, accessibility, and direct engagement with the student body.

To improve clarity and ease of access to information, a dedicated UCC student webpage was introduced, providing a centralised, student-focused resource covering membership, facilities, programmes, and key supports, with particular value for new and incoming students.

The reporting period also saw the appointment of the first-ever Mardyke Arena UCC Student Ambassador. Acting as a peer representative, the Student Ambassador became the face of student-focused digital content, producing a series of videos showcasing Mardyke Arena UCC and supporting stronger connection and relatability among students.

[Here is a video testimonial from UCC students of what Mardyke Arena UCC means to their university experience](#)



UCC Clubs Day Stand



S&C Training: UCC Athlete



Student Ambassador

# SUPPORTING UCC STAFF WELLBEING

## AT A GLANCE



**Strategic  
Partnership with  
People & Culture**



**Staff-Focused  
Fitness &  
Movement  
Programmes**



**Family-Friendly  
& Inclusive  
Activities**



**Participation-Led  
Social &  
Recreational  
Sessions**



**Discounted  
Memberships  
for UCC Staff**

UCC staff represent a key strategic focus for Mardyke Arena UCC, with staff health, wellbeing, and work-life balance forming an increasingly important component of our service and partnership model. Our approach is aligned with UCC's People & Culture priorities and is focused on accessibility, inclusion, preventative health, and sustained engagement.

Throughout the reporting period, Mardyke Arena UCC worked in close collaboration with the UCC People and Culture Department to support staff wellbeing initiatives that align with UCC objectives and contribute positively to workplace culture. This partnership ensures Arena-led programmes complement broader institutional wellbeing frameworks rather than operating in isolation.

A key highlight of the year was Mardyke Arena UCC's active contribution to UCC Staff Wellbeing Week, during which a programme of movement-based activities, wellbeing sessions, and talks was delivered on campus. These initiatives were designed to promote participation, connection, and positive health behaviours in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Mardyke Arena UCC also expanded its range of participation-led and socially focused activities for staff, including accessible recreational options such as pickleball. Alongside discounted memberships, tailored fitness classes, and family-friendly activities, these initiatives support engagement across diverse staff cohorts and life stages.

## Looking Ahead: Staff Wellbeing

### Building a More Integrated Wellbeing Model

Mardyke Arena UCC will continue to strengthen its role as a delivery partner within a more structured, campus-wide staff wellbeing framework.

This will include:

- Closer alignment with People & Culture strategy and policy.
- Greater emphasis on preventative health and early engagement.
- Improved use of data and feedback to support evidence-informed wellbeing planning.
- Development of initiatives that support long-term staff wellbeing outcomes.

This future-focused approach recognises staff wellbeing as a strategic enabler of engagement, retention, and positive workplace culture across UCC.

**[Here is an overview video highlighting the range of benefits and wellbeing supports available to UCC staff at Mardyke Arena UCC.](#)**

# DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

## AT A GLANCE



**Record Growth  
Across Social &  
Digital Channels**



**Students Identified  
as Most Engaged  
Audience Segment**



**Instagram Primary  
Engagement  
Platform**



**< 15-Minute  
Average Weekday  
Response Time**



**Email Marketing  
Introduced as a  
New Direct  
Channel**

Digital platforms played a strategically important role in supporting the student experience, strengthening service delivery, and enhancing organisational responsiveness during the reporting period. Growth across social and digital channels increased awareness of Mardyke Arena UCC services while enabling more timely, two-way engagement with students, staff, and the wider community.

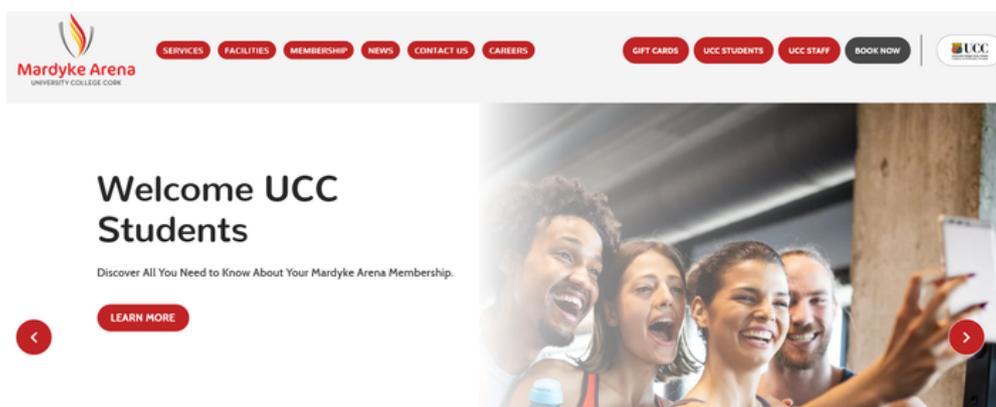
Instagram continued to perform as Mardyke Arena UCC's primary engagement platform, with UCC students identified as the most active and responsive audience. This reinforces our role as a core campus service and a key point of connection within the wider student experience.

During the year, Mardyke Arena UCC also launched its LinkedIn presence, establishing a professional channel to support organisational visibility, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with UCC communications. Early growth and engagement on the platform strengthened our ability to communicate strategic developments, partnerships, and service updates to staff, institutional stakeholders, and the wider professional community.

Performance across other digital platforms also strengthened, improving access to service information, operational updates, and programme promotion. Together, these channels now form an integral part of how Mardyke Arena UCC supports service visibility, manages demand, and communicates consistently across a diverse user base.

To strengthen trust, accountability, and service quality, a structured Online Reputation Management framework was implemented. This delivered an average weekday response time of under 15 minutes, supporting prompt issue resolution, improved user confidence, and clearer performance oversight.

During the reporting period, email marketing was introduced for the first time, establishing a direct, controlled communication channel. This enhances governance and service delivery by enabling timely, accurate updates and improved engagement with key audiences as part of a coordinated digital communications approach.



**Website Banner Snapshot**

# SUSTAINABILITY & INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

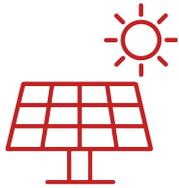
Reinvesting to protect quality, resilience, and long-term value



## €1.6m Strategic Sustainability Investment

Targeted investment in sustainable infrastructure, energy efficiency, and long-term asset resilience.

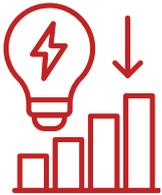
**Impact: Strengthened operational resilience, reduced environmental risk, and protected service quality.**



## 156-Panel Rooftop Solar Array Installed

Largest renewable energy installation on the UCC campus, delivering on-site clean energy generation.

**Impact: Significant reduction in grid dependency and long-term energy costs.**



## 42% Reduction in Energy Consumption

Measured reduction in total energy usage since 2018 through efficiency upgrades and systems optimisation.

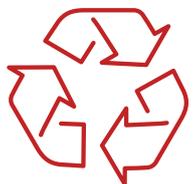
**Impact: Lower operational emissions and improved environmental performance at scale.**



## 21% Reduction in Carbon Emissions

Sustained progress against UCC climate objectives through renewable energy and efficiency initiatives.

**Impact: Direct contribution to UCC climate action and sustainability targets.**



## Waste & Resource Efficiency Improvements

Reduced printing and paper usage alongside improved waste management practices.

**Impact: More efficient resource use and reduced environmental footprint across operations.**

# SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

Sustainability is fully embedded across planning, capital investment, and operational practice at Mardyke Arena UCC. Our approach aligns closely with UCC's strategic priorities in health, wellbeing, and environmental responsibility, ensuring that sustainability informs decision-making at every level of the organisation.

During the reporting period, Mardyke Arena UCC invested €1.6 million in targeted infrastructure, systems, and efficiency initiatives. This investment supports long-term asset performance, reduces environmental impact, and strengthens our capacity to deliver safe, inclusive, and high-quality services within a high-demand, multi-user university environment.

In recognition of this work, the Mardyke Arena Green Team was honoured with the UCC Campus Companies Staff Recognition Award, acknowledging its outstanding contribution to a strategic University sustainability initiative. This recognition provides independent validation of the Arena's governance-led sustainability approach and reflects the leadership, innovation, and sustained commitment of staff in advancing environmental stewardship across the organisation.

A key milestone achieved during the year was the installation of a 156-panel rooftop solar array, the largest solar installation on the UCC campus. Since 2018, Mardyke Arena UCC has delivered a 42% reduction in total energy consumption and a 21% reduction in carbon emissions, alongside continued improvements in waste management, reduced paper usage, and enhanced resource efficiency.

Sustainability at Mardyke Arena UCC is embedded as a core organisational value. These actions directly support UCC's 2030 climate targets and contribute to the development of a healthier, more sustainable campus for students, staff, and members.



**UCC Campus Companies Staff Recognition Award for Mardyke Arena's contribution to a Strategic University Initiative**

# LOOKING AHEAD: STEWARDSHIP, SUSTAINABILITY, AND SERVICE

As Mardyke Arena UCC reflects on the reporting period, the year highlights the strength of a model grounded in access, inclusion, and long-term value for the UCC community. Strong growth in student participation, continued delivery of high-quality services, and disciplined investment across people, facilities, and sustainability reinforce our role as a trusted UCC asset and shared civic resource.

The year also underscored the importance of stewardship. Operating as a high-volume, student-led facility within a complex university environment requires careful governance, evidence-informed decision-making, and continued collaboration with UCC partners. Mardyke Arena UCC's focus on financial resilience, environmental responsibility, and organisational capability ensures services remain affordable, inclusive, and fit for purpose over the long term.

Looking ahead, Mardyke Arena UCC will continue to prioritise:

- Student experience and wellbeing, through accessible, inclusive, and high-quality facilities and programmes
- Sustainable operations, aligned with UCC's climate and environmental commitments
- People and culture, recognising staff as the foundation of service excellence
- Partnership and civic contribution, supporting the wider UCC and Cork community

As Mardyke Arena UCC approaches 25 years of service in 2026, the focus remains on leadership rather than scale — ensuring that growth in demand is met with responsible planning, strong governance, and continued investment in the systems, spaces, and people that support participation and performance.

This Annual Report reflects not only the impact delivered during the year, but a clear commitment to sustaining that impact for students, staff, members, and the wider UCC community in the years ahead.

*Supporting health, wellbeing, performance, and participation across University College Cork and the wider Cork community.*



**Mardyke Arena**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

**#ManyTribesOneTeam**