

Communities Creating Jobs



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CCJ Editorial

At a meeting in Croke Park on Friday 31st Coiste Bainisti expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes of the Galway pilot job creation project which involved the CCJ job creation audit. It was agreed to run a second pilot programme with Waterford, Westmeath and Louth and then review the outcomes. The programme consortium of GAA, CCJ and Third Level Education will co-ordinate the pilot and monitor progress and outcomes.

A research study on social enterprise in Waterford, Cavan and Ballyhoura is currently in progress. The outcomes will inform a submission by the Social Finance Foundation to government on the recognition and support for social enterprise in the future.

Developing social enterprise offers government and departments an opportunity to engage with voluntary project promoters in the regeneration of communities. This work will facilitate the development of a better understanding and increase in respect between people and voluntary organisations in communities and the institutions of the state and political system. It will help build social, economic and political stability.

All voluntary and social enterprise project teams welcomed the review by Leader Partnership Companies and their decision to return to the 75% grant funding for voluntary community based projects.

Senan Cooke

Chairman



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Darndale: Dublin

Introduction

The Darndale-Belcamp evolving network of social and economic supports that has operated since the Darndale estate has become a successful model of urban community development in the 21st century. It has survived traumatic experiences and is now contemplating a bright future for those living in the area in 2016. The new Darndale estate was built in the early 1970s to accommodate people living in city tenements and in high rise flats in Ballymun. It consisted of 900 housing units. Parish priest Fr Jim Butler was appointed in 1972 to prepare for the advent of a new community which welcomed its first resident family in 1975. Fr Jim worked closely with Dublin Corporation in providing adequate educational, social and church facilities for the families. A primary school, social centre and church were built to support the families which was very much appreciated by the parents.

Susan French a leading voluntary community activist of 40 years in the area witnessed the many ups and downs and how the worst problems were overcome and a new vibrant spirit has been instilled which now guarantees the brightest future for the people of Darndale-Belcamp communities.

In the Beginning

Darndale is a townland in the parish of Coolock in North Dublin close to Dublin Airport. It lies adjacent to Belcamp where the Order of Mary Immaculate (Oblates) purchased Belcamp Hall which dates back to 1734. The building with 98 acres was purchased in 1884 by the Order as a house of studies for students exiled from France. It was sold in 1888 and repurchased in 1893 with a college opening there on 26th October 1893. The college remained open until 2005 it first being a boy's boarding school. In 1970 a day school was built following the college's entry into the free post-primary scheme. It became a co-education school in 1997.

The barony of Coolock was divided into 20 civil parishes of which one was Coolock. Two of 16 townlands of the parish of Coolock are Darndale and Belcamp. A chapel was built in 1903. Stained glass windows by Harry Clarke were added between 1921 and 1926. Twelve Irish saints was the theme chosen for the chapel windows. In recent years some local residents choose to be married there.

One of the longest running community co-operative groups in Darndale is THREAD which was set up in 1977. It is a forum where local voluntary and professional workers meet to discuss issues and events affecting the area. Members include representatives from Schools, Gardaí, Parish Team, Dublin Corporation, Eastern Health Board, Social Workers, Resource Centre and all the Local Groups of the area. Meetings take place on a monthly basis with sub groups and officers committees meeting within the month. Back in the early 1980s the ladies requested a place to use for social and family affair meetings and sessions. The 'Mustard Seed' was set up to accommodate them.

Today

It remains in place to this day. The current Darndale-Belcamp URBAN INITIATIVE in 2016 involves 6 measures to which many interest groups belong:

- Employment and Enterprise
- Training and Education
- Community Infrastructure
- Children and Youth
- Environment
- Community



Disaster Strikes

In the mid 1980s a major disaster befell the area when Dublin Corporation offered a £5,000 grant plus a first time buyers grant of £2,000 plus a long term tenancy bonus of £3,000 to purchase homes in Dublin. It resulted in a mass departure from the area with 400 children leaving the local school in an 18 month period. Much of the social capital that underpinned the social and economic fabric of the community was destroyed. The vacant houses were re-occupied by unemployed people and single parents from a wide variety of locations in the city. The new population were left without a direction and a resource that would help them reform the locality into an inclusive and cohesive living structure. The Social Club where the previous community and its subgroups held meetings and social events closed. The one central focal point that could have accommodated the establishment of a new regenerative effort was gone. The new reality facing those living in the area was in stark contrast to the well laid plans prepared to establish the new Darndale in the 1973-1976 period. The preliminary work done by Fr Jim Butler and his team in 1972 was obliterated.

In the early 1980s a predominantly new population of 6,000 with a majority under 25 years of age, with 2,500 of them under 14 years and 72% unemployed presented a crisis of major proportions. In 1982 the Darndale Tenant and Residents Association was set up with a mandate and was affiliated to the National Association of Tenants Organisations (NATO). In 1984 the Unemployment Action Group was established to represent the unemployed and worked in partnership with Combat Poverty Agency to fight against unemployment which was at a new height in the 1980s.

The Image Changers

In 1985 a group of 9 young unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 19 from the Job Seekers Club came together to consider action on Darndale's image. They called themselves the 'Image Changers'. They completed a survey on what was wrong, what was needed to be done and how it should be done. The information collated led to the regeneration of Darndale. Their project became known as the Darndale Redesign Project. The study won prestigious Dublin and international awards for its vision and the commitment involved in the implementation process. The regeneration of Darndale began in 1987 and was completed over a ten year period. The first area on completion of the other 4 areas required a second restructuring with those involved having learned so much throughout the entire regeneration programme.

The survey offered the following information

1. Make Darndale a cleaner place
2. Change the outside appearances of the houses
3. Instil a better lighting system
4. Landscape certain areas
5. Create better security for cars
6. Get the community more involved in improving the environment



The group met with the agencies and interested individuals and groups on the estate. They wanted to talk to them to find out what they considered was needed to be done. An effort was made to enlist the full support of the community to win sufficient support from the agencies and statutory bodies to turn the estate around. They also wanted to explain to all others that

- Young people are concerned
- Young people can take action regarding their own community
- People can achieve much more working as a group
- Tackling the area's image is possible
- There are resources available within the community
- People can tackle community issues if they are prepared to take action

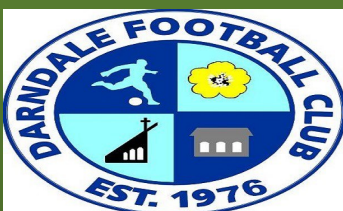


The estate was sub divided into 5 estates named Primrose, Buttercup, Marigold, Tulip and Snowdrop. Each one was taken on as a separate unit in the regeneration process. The benefits in working together throughout the process helped build a strong community spirit. So many of the residents took a special pride in the improvement programme. ***‘ People are most likely to support what they have helped to create’***. Ever since the project was completed there has been a continuous commitment from the people supported by the agencies to overcome major problems of anti-social behaviour, traveller issues, drugs and crime issues, unemployment, health issues and property development issues which resulted from the 2008 financial crash and its NAMA aftermath. The Belcamp College and grounds is now in the hands of NAMA. There is a preservation order to retain the front of the building. The land is expected to accommodate homes for the homeless and social housing for those on the Council's housing list.

The Best has yet to Come!

Over 120 people are working in community employment schemes dealing with a range of social, sporting, housing, health, education sub groups that are making inroads into the remaining problems of the estate. Meetings with Dublin City Council are held on a monthly basis to review progress and problems. A range of projects support the continuing regeneration with new plans in the pipeline receiving widespread support. For Darndale the best has yet to come but there is in place a framework with a capacity to achieve whatever the people want to enhance their lives in the future.

There are 45 active societies operating in the estate. Today, to its residents Darndale is a warm friendly place to live in with a strong community spirit and a centre that offers an amazing variety of social clubs and events. There is a great determination in the area to remove the remaining barriers that hide the real Darndale from public view. For Darndale residents the best has yet to come. There is now a list of improvement plans in place to be implemented. There are still many problems to be overcome but there is a strong sense of united purpose in place linking community to state services and private employment opportunities.



Building a new Community of Interest

Darndale has a very strong soccer club with twelve teams of which their U12 team has won the premier league in 2015/2016. A strong boxing club that produced several national boxers is in place. The Darndale –Belcamp Resource Centre provides positive support to so many individuals, groups and clubs in catering for so many of the social, health and recreational interests in the area. The Fishing Club and the Horse Project are operating successfully. Two local national schools share access to a library of 4,000 books and a range of educational initiatives that provide a strong educational experience for all the children of the area. The Bird Cage which accommodates the City Council estate office opened in 1991 and provides information to the residents on welfare, social, cultural and economic areas of concern. The Active Age Group is very strong and is engaged on a weekly basis in many events and social sessions.



The New Life Centre based at Our Lady Immaculate Church is a haven of peace and tranquillity and provides courses in Mosaics, Sign Language, Sewing and Design, Angel Therapy, Yoga, Massage and Relaxation, One –to-one counselling, Lifestyle Improvement and Bereavement Counselling. The popular ‘New Life Singers’ choir are trained by Sister Angela are based in the Centre. The new

parkland under development is still waiting for a perimeter fence but the play park area and other parts of it are top class and much appreciated by families. There are 5 primary schools involved in the ‘Breakfast Club’ which also presently caters for 2000 children twice a day providing breakfasts and lunches. There are 84 parents participating in preparing the meals.



The Childcare Centre is one of the largest in the country and is a real state of the art building providing quality facilities and programmes for the children while allowing parents to return to work and make a success of their careers and lives. The children having received a top class education in the local primary schools have progressed to secondary and some to third level

gaining outstanding results and despite the Darndale address have moved into skilled and professional employment opportunities. There are still many problems to be overcome but there is a general view shared that Darndale is on its way to becoming a place that many people would choose to live in, work in, visit and in time invest in. Darndale once surrounded by Artane, Malahide and Coolock has come of age as a community that is proud to welcome visitors and tell the world of its many achievements.

In 1998, the Northside Partnership accessed EU funding under the ROUND (URBAN) programme, the Partnership, with the City Council, DIT, and other partners hired in support to develop a social enterprise strategy. The consultants recommended the establishment of a number of new social enterprises: -

-That new Bell Building be operated as Social Enterprise.

-That security for this complex and the Hall Complex be provided by a new social enterprise involving local people ‘most distanced from the labour market’. This led to ELSA Security being established as social enterprise, which is currently funded by CSP Programme. It employs over 30 people mainly men who had been long term unemployed. Susan is a director of the company. The provision of local security was a key feature in stabilising the local community. It allowed for other projects to be established such as the establishment of a Traveller Enterprise (still running), and a Landscaping Project (since closed).

Darndale – Belcamp Village Centre was opened in 2000 and has become a focal point accommodating many local services. It cost £4.9m to build and includes:

Discovery Centre Training Workshops
Darndale – Belcamp Initiative
Enterprise and Employment Centre



MIC Project - Music based service including full time day course and pro-

gramme of evening classes. 85% of full time students go into further education and employment. A Darndale-Belcamp Stage School for Children was established and an international the launch of SUITCASE a pan European art exchange project has opened up partnerships with organisations in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Turkey.

CAM Project- It is a sister programme of MIC set up in 2003. It is a community based arts project providing training in graphic design, web design and multimedia. CAM runs evening classes in Adobe Photoshop and co run many events such as EXPO and the new EU Project SUITCASE
Dublin City Council Offices
Resource Centre
HSE Integrated Childcare Services
Doctor, Nurse, Baby Nurse. Community Welfare Offices
Supermarket, Hairdresser, Cafe and Chipper

A Statement of Purpose

The Village Centre provides the area with a focus and a sense of place. It is a welcoming complex of engagement and interaction located in the heart of the community surrounded by private industry and state services with a community straining at the leash to improve every aspect of its infrastructure and social integration. The Village Centre is a visionary statement on the future of Darndale – Belcamp, its plans and prospects. The community deserves its hard earned success. It has fought the good fight and has provided so many opportunities for those wanting the best for themselves and their community. The legacy at this time of financial austerity is strong, bold and brave offering a range of options for future builders to consider and develop. Darndale –Belcamp is a community with an exciting future, worth fighting for, developing and sustaining. The people of the area are highly committed and proud of their own place.

New Executive for Community Finance Ireland



Barry Symes, has taken up an Executive role with Community Finance Ireland which provides finance to local community organisations, social enterprises, sports clubs and charities.

Community Finance Ireland is one of the largest providers of finance to the community and voluntary sector on the island of Ireland over the last 20 years and has up to €100 million available in funding. Community Finance Ireland works with community organisations and social enterprises that are delivering an immediate social impact to their community or area but who are struggling to get finance from traditional bank lenders.

Barry who is Gorey based is a former senior Ulster Bank Official with over 15 years' senior management experience in banking and finance. Barry is hugely immersed in community and voluntary activity and has been active in the Gorey area with groups such as the local Courtown Golf Club, Gorey Rugby Club, Gorey Hockey Club and Leskinfere Community to name a few.

According to Barry Symes, "Community Finance Ireland continues to grow in order to meet the needs of the thousands of community and voluntary groups throughout Ireland who are seeking to raise finance for their worthy projects. Community Finance Ireland recently approved a number of new investments in South Leinster, including New Ross Community Hospital, South East Mountain Rescue Association, JFK Trust and Kilkenny based, South East Food Trade Desk. We are keen to build on this work and many other investments in Leinster and elsewhere over the coming years."

To date, Community Finance Ireland, as part of the wider community based UCIT Group, has funded over 400 community and volunteer organisations on the island of Ireland across a range of sectors and projects, including enterprise and workspace projects, rural development projects, childcare schemes, housing associations, community transport, energy & environmental initiatives and sports and recreation facilities.

Local organisations wishing to receive information about Community Finance Ireland visit
www.communityfinance.ie



Waterford Institute of Technology
INSTITIÚID TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA PHORT LÁIRGE

WIT Students Study Integrated Constructed Wetlands at Dunhill Ecopark

For the past number of years, 3rd year Applied Biology students from Waterford Institute of Technology have visited the Integrated Constructed Wetlands site at Dunhill Ecopark in Co. Waterford. As part of a module entitled “Microbial Ecology and Bioremediation”, the students are learning about the role of microbes such as bacteria in treating wastewater. The Integrated Constructed Wetlands at Dunhill were designed by Dr. Rory Harrington, former Senior Engineer with Waterford County Council, who kindly agrees to speak to the students about the project if he is available. The students tour the site and learn about how the novel design of the ICW ponds allows wastewater from the Ecopark site to be treated in a sustainable, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly manner. Then the class takes water and sediment samples from the ponds, and brings them back to WIT to analyse in the laboratory. The microbes present in the ponds are studied using several different microbiology techniques, starting with standard culturing in petri dishes, and moving on to extracting DNA and analysing particular sequences from it to determine the types and amounts of microbes present. We have discovered that each of the ponds harbours its own unique bacterial community, which indicates the different stages of water treatment occurring in each one.

The trip to the ICW allows the students to see bioremediation first-hand, and to understand key concepts in ecology. As many of the students are from the area, they also enjoy the chance to see how well the CCJ serves Dunhill and the Waterford region. We are very grateful to the team at CCJ Dunhill, especially Séamus Goggin and Dr. Senan Cooke, who are always so welcoming and willing to speak to the students about the Ecopark. We look forward to many more years of fruitful collaboration! More information on the Applied Biology programme at WIT can be found at: http://www.wit.ie/courses/school/science/departments/department_of_chemical_life_sciences/bsc_in_applied_biology.

Dr. Nabla Kennedy, (on extreme right) Lecturer in Microbiology, Waterford Institute of Technology



Third-year students and lecturers from the Applied Biology programme at WIT touring the Ecopark Integrated Constructed Wetlands ponds and taking samples for laboratory analysis.

Irish Community Air Ambulance



The Irish Community Air Ambulance EC135 Helicopter.

Irish Community Air Ambulance is promoting the introduction of its Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS), a vital life-saving air support service to Munster and south Leinster, which takes off later this year.

The HEMS helicopter is a mobile intensive care unit staffed by a team of highly qualified and specially trained trauma doctors who can be on site in the fastest time possible providing life saving treatment at the incident site. It is an undisputed fact that in the aftermath of a major incident or accident timing is key and that outcomes are greatest when treatment can begin within the first hour, the "golden hour."



The Irish Community Air Ambulance service, which will be based out of Cork Airport, will mirror successful models across the United Kingdom and other countries in Europe where geographically challenging terrain warrants an air ambulance. It is hoped that more than €1million can be raised to launch the service in 2017. Irish Community Air Ambulance will complement the existing emergency services and the current Athlone based Emergency Aeromedical Service operated by the National Ambulance Service in partnership with the Irish Air Corps.

It has been proven that early access to world class critical care and pre hospital emergency medicine administered by trained, experienced and equipped medical personnel can save lives. The air ambulance service will offer gold standard care commencing at the roadside and continuing while en route to definitive care in hospital.

Speaking of the service, John Kearney, co-founder of Irish Community Air Ambulance said "People are dying unnecessarily due to the time it takes to receive critical care. This new service will be built on the already successful model of Irish Community Rapid Response ("ICRR") which has been in existence since 2009 and uses volunteer doctors for pre-hospital emergencies. There are currently five Level 4 clinicians and over 100 GPs with Irish Community Rapid Response who have saved countless lives and improved care in its nine years in operation. The launch of a community air ambulance service is the next step bringing better response times with permanent on-duty doctors who will have the ability to bring advanced skills to acutely ill and injured people throughout its catchment area".

He continued, "It will offer a mobile intensive care unit by air which will allow us to safely transport patients faster to a major hospital, saving time and lives. This is a service for the Munster and south Leinster, and we need the support of the people to donate, fundraise or volunteer for us. We need to raise €1 million to take off and €2 million every year thereafter which is a huge ask but in our view is achievable. Communities around the country have sustained our land based Irish Community Rapid Response doctors and now we're calling on the people in Ireland to support this initiative. We can be successful by raising just €2 per person per year!



Labour Party leader Brendan Howlin and local politicians and councillors with ICAA group at the Wexford event

"This is a much needed and necessary service that will impact all those of us who live, work and travel in the coverage areas but it can only succeed with the support of every member of the community. This can be done by visiting our website (<http://communityairambulance.ie/>) and donating anything you can or by holding an event such as a coffee morning, a car wash or even a concert. We have a wide range of fundraising ideas and are happy to support them".

John adds, "If you'd like to help us lift off please text FLIGHT to 50300 to donate €4 to the Irish Community Air Ambulance".

The Irish Community Air Ambulance team is traveling to every county in Munster and south Leinster over the next ten days to raise awareness of this much needed life saving service and will visit every town in the over the next six months in a bid to raise much needed funds.



Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin examining the EC135 Helicopter at the Irish Community Air Ambulance publicity event.

Enterprising Monaghan



Enterprising Monaghan is a not for profit organisation which was established in 1988 under the [International Fund for Ireland](#) (IFI). Enterprising Monaghan has evolved over the last 25 years to suit the changing needs of the county's many entrepreneurs and businesses. It is essentially a community based company.

Its 13 person Board is widely representative of business, industrial, professional, farming and local community personnel. Board Directors work on a voluntary unpaid basis.

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the Fund helped many businesses get off the ground and expand by way of grant and loan provision. In recent years Enterprising Monaghan decided to place the provision of quality workspaces high on its agenda. As a result the Fund diversified and focussed on the provision of workspace, such as enterprise units and industrial units throughout the county.

The mission of Enterprising Monaghan is to “create an environment where enterprise thrives”. At its core are:

- .People-assisting & supporting SMEs in job creation throughout the County
- .Place-encouraging & assisting development of community driven economic projects
- .Prosperity-creating workspace for small & medium enterprises

Enterprising Monaghan has acted as a catalyst and hub of innovation for enterprise development in the county, and is constantly seeking to stimulate rural business, provide services and facilities for the development of commerce in County Monaghan.

[County Monaghan has a particularly entrepreneurial population with a tradition of self-employment and a high level of new business start-ups.](#)



It has developed the following enterprise centres:

M:TEK Building – Monaghan Town
M:TEK II Building – Monaghan Town
Clones Business Technology Park - Clones
Ballybay Enterprise Park - Ballybay
Emyvale Enterprise Centre - Emyvale
C:TEK Building – Carrickmacross

Enterprising Monaghan' buildings provide a variety of workspace options ie offices, meeting rooms, computer training suites, hot desk facilities, all with high speed broadband. Ballybay Enterprise Park has a dedicated food incubation hub.



Enterprising Monaghan's newest building C:TEK – Carrickmacross Technology Education and Knowledge Building was officially opened on 15th April 2016 by Minister Damien English, Minister for Skills, Research & Innovation.

Enterprising Monaghan has a strong reputation for supporting local organisations. Some of the groups that have been supported are:

- Inniskeen Development Group
- Castleblayney Community Enterprise
- Clones Development Society
- Clones Chamber of Commerce
- Tydavnet Community Development
- Clones Lace Guild
- Farney Women's Group
- Truagh Development Association
- Donaghmoyne Community Development
- Sliabh Beagh Development Group
- Carrickmacross Local Development Group
- Clones Task Force
- Killanny Community Development Association
- Lisdoonan Recreation & Development
- Ballybay Wetlands



Waterford One World Centre

The SUSY Project (funded by the EU), which aims at promoting social enterprise and the social economy, is represented in Ireland by the Waterford One World Centre, one of 24-nations involved in this pan-European project. SUSY recently held two very successful events in the Waterford area.



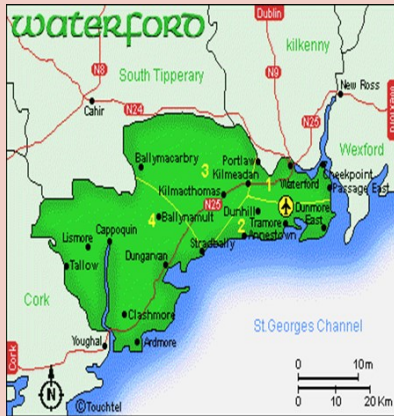
Promoting the Social Economy, in partnership with the Waterford Social Enterprise Network, took place on the 30th of January and featured David Cullinane, TD, Chris Gordon of the Dublin-based Irish Social Enterprise Network and Senan Cooke of the Dunhill Ecopark. Speakers focused on the climate in Ireland for social enterprise and the necessary steps that need to be taken to make this climate the most welcoming for new social enterprises.



Building Community Resilience took place on the 5th of March and included speakers from India, Nicaragua and Palestine who shared their experiences on how Fair Trade and Cooperatives can strengthen communities whether it is in the face of economic hardship, natural disasters or conflict.

Both events were a huge success with a full house on both nights.

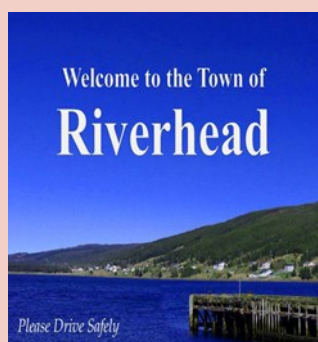
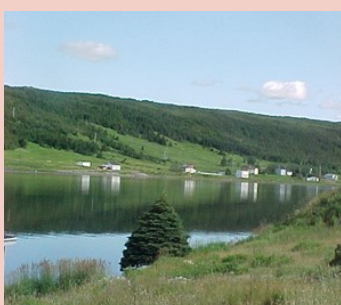
Riverhead, Newfoundland.



This September, Fifty-one people from a number of small communities in St. Mary's Bay located along **The Irish Loop**, will be going to Ireland on a ten day vacation. All of these people are of Irish descent. When you hear many of them speak you would swear they were from some part of South east Ireland.

The trip has been organized by our parish priest-Father Steve Courtney. Most of these people have never been to Ireland. We will be visiting a number of places and no doubt it will be a fantastic trip. I have had the pleasure of visiting South East Ireland on five occasions over the past twelve years with the Irish NL Connections. I feel it is one of the best places in the world. The work being done in Dunhill especially through the Enterprise Center continues to impress me and I want our group to experience it firsthand.

After my first trip, my community, Riverhead, SMB, NL and Dunhill, County Waterford has been working together for the past twelve years to learn from each other and look for ideas that can grow our respective communities. Our communities have so much in common. We are both rural, have hard working people, have so much potential, especially in Tourism and we need to create more employment possibilities. Thus, I lobbied to include a visit to Dunhill as part of our trip. I want them to experience firsthand what this rural county has to offer. We hope to visit the Enterprise Centre where, over lunch, we will learn all about this area. After lunch we hope to walk the Ann Valley Trail, have our picture taken around the beautiful Father Val Power Bench and see the ruins of the Powers Castle. If time permits we hope to visit the local pub and later in the evening have some of the amazing performers from Dunhill join us back at the hotel in Waterford for a kitchen party.



My community of Riverhead, SMB, is but one of the many small rural communities along the Irish Loop. Our small community with 155 full time residents and 55 part time ones is fighting hard to survive and grow. Our Father Val Power Centre, our Green Depot, our Municipal Building and our Legion employ 5 part time workers. We have a private home care agency that employs up to 80 people from all over the region, our Personal Care Home employs 4 full time people and the local backhoe/truck operator has 2 employees. Some people travel daily to work seasonally on fish plants or do 3 week turnarounds in places like Alberta. Our biggest challenge is our aging population. Most people are facing retirement and very few young people choose to remain. If we are to continue to exist we have to create good work opportunities and a good quality of life that will encourage young families to make our community their home.

We are presently working on some Projects:

Branch 62: Our Legion is having extensive renovations done that will make them more energy efficient. They have enhanced their Military Museum and are also enhancing a pull of area across from the legion where visitors have a picnic, enjoy the magnificent view and read the ten interesting story boards that was done in 2016 in honor of the 100 Anniversary of Beaumont Hamel.



A dynamic young couple from Riverhead has opened a restaurant/pub called The Celtic Knot just a few miles down the road from Riverhead. They are opened daily during the summer months and on weekends during the off season. It is a very nice place to have lunch. Their fish and chips are to die for. They have created some much needed seasonal work for the local people and they hope to grow their business, especially in the shoulder seasons.

The Beautiful Claddagh Inn is located just a few miles down the road in St. Mary's as well. It has five star accommodations and fine dining available to guests. It was originally a convent that has been converted into an amazing place which employ locals. People from all over the world stay there.



Our Large Pastureland: It would be great if we could attract investor/investors who would consider sheep farming on a large scale and grow soilage on this huge body of land. This could create a lot of employment and be a way to grow our population through emigration. Irish sheep farmers would be a great fit for us.

Our Community Garden/Green House: We could do so much more with vegetable growing if we had a heated greenhouse. We are presently exploring the possibility of a heated Greenhouse through the use of Alternate energies.

Hiking: We are also about to officially open an amazing 9km trail. It will bring hikers into a natural area where they can learn much through our story boards, enjoy a picnic and even tent overnight. Here one can also go trout fishing in the local ponds or berry picking on the marshes. Picnic lunches can be prepared in our local community for the hikers and we hope to have guides to enhance the experience.



A Cultural Centre: Our most exciting project is having half of our local church converted into a Coffee Shop, a gift shop, a tourism information centre with washrooms and internet availability. The other half could continue to be used for masses but could also be used for concerts, plays, exhibitions, etc. This project is now in the planning stages; however we hope to have it completed for 2018 Tourism season.

Chase The Ace: In 2016 five local groups in our community joined forces to run a lottery called "Chase the Ace." It ran for 47 weeks and, as the pot grew, people came from all over the Avalon Peninsula and beyond. It gave our community great exposure and helped net over \$250,000. These monies were used for community projects.

In conclusion, let me say that we are delighted to be a subscriber to your Newsletter. It is great to read about so many exciting things happening in your region. Direct flights from Ireland to NL will make it easy for both regions to come and experience the place, the people and the culture. It will be a trip of a life time!

Article By Sheila Lee

Mayor of Riverhead, Newfoundland.

