

Granard Municipal District PPN Plenary Meeting Minutes

Date: 25.10.16

Venue: Granard Library



Welcome and Introduction

Siobhán Cronogue (PPN Development Officer) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and acknowledging the huge turnout. She then outlined the meeting schedule.

Recap on PPN's

The PPN Development Officer gave a quick recap on how PPN's came about and what their aim and functions were. She stated that in Sept 2013 the Department set up a working group to investigate how to get greater citizen engagement at Local Government Level. Fr. Seán Healy, Social Justice Ireland chaired this group. At the end of the allocated time period they produced a report that recommended the establishment of PPN's in every County. It became part of the Local Government Reform Act 2014. There is now a legal requirement on Local Authorities to have community representatives on all of their committees and these representatives must be sourced through the PPN. She explained the main aim of the PPN is to act as the link between Community, Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental Interest groups and the Local Authority. The three main functions of the PPN are :

- Participation and Representation
- Capacity Building
- Information Sharing

Following this she introduced the elected PPN representative for the Granard Municipal District Tess Murphy.

Granard Municipal District PPN Representative

Tess Murphy thanked everyone for attending and gave a brief background on her work to date in the Community. She spoke of the importance of community groups working together on common issues and sharing information. She referred to the monthly eBulletin issued by the PPN. She stated that based on feedback from the Municipal District she had chosen two topics to cover at the first Granard MD meeting of the PPN:

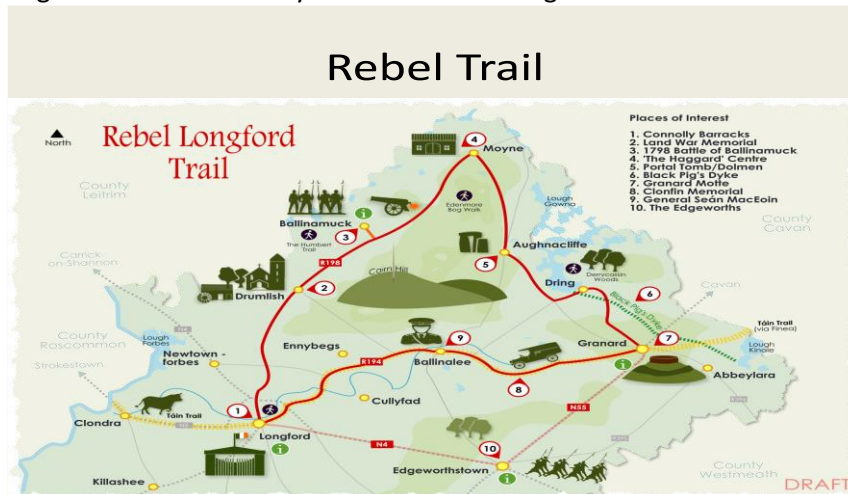
- Tourism Plan for North Longford
- Regeneration Plan for Granard

Guest Speakers

Siobhán Cronogue thanked Tess Murphy and introduced the first of the guest speakers, Donal Mac An Beatha to discuss the Tourism Plan for North Longford.

Tourism Plan for North Longford

Donal Mac An Beatha spoke about the great tourist potential of the north Longford area and the historical events that made it such an interesting region. He gave an insight in to Gaelic, Viking and Norman Ireland along with the Gaelic Revival, English Invaders, Cromwell, 1798 Battle of Ballinamuck, Famine time, Black and Tans, the fight for Irish freedom and Ancient Irish DNA Signature groups. He also spoke of the Black Pigs Dike, An Táin, Granard Motte and the new development of the visitors centre, Granard Harp Festival and the romance of Michael Collins and Kitty Kiernan. His presentation visually captured The Battle of Ballinamuck, Ballinalee, Clonfin and the Land League Memorial in Drumlish. He showed detailed maps of the Rebel Trail, Edgeworthstown Literary Trail and South Longford Trail.



Siobhán Cronogue thanked Donal for such an interesting and insightful presentation and after some questions from those in attendance introduced the second speaker of the night Lorraine O' Connor , Regeneration Team, Longford County Council.

Regeneration Plan

Lorraine explained that the Regeneration initiative had 3 pillars

- Economic
- Social
- Physical

She said that a wide range of research was carried out in the initial set-up and scoping out of the project and that a fully resourced team was now in place with expertise in planning, engineering, technical and administrative support. While explaining the current work being carried out she listed and gave information on the following projects:

- Connolly Barracks/Longford Northern Quarter
- EU URBACT MAPS Project
- Stalled Spaces Initiative
- Ardnacassa / Palace Crescent
- Unfinished Estates / Taking in Charge
- Upgrade of Industrial Estates
- Review of Longford Town Plan
- Supporting key Tourism Initiatives
- Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- Pedestrian Bridge over River Camlin

She visually presented work completed to date with before and after pictures of the community space in Great Water Street and Palace Crescent:

Pic A: Community Garden Before....



Pic B. Community Garden After



Pic A: Palace Crescent Before:



Pic B: Palace Crescent After:



Lorraine then informed all in attendance that the Longford Town plan was now formally adopted with eight specific sites identified within the plan with a particular focus as being regeneration catalysts

- Connolly Barracks/Northern Quarter
- Market Square
- Ballymahon Street
- Shopping Centre (Tesco)
- Little Water Street
- Ballyminion Neighbourhood Centre
- Athlone Road/Industrial /Commercial Areas
- Mall / Camlin Village

In summary she said that Regeneration was a long-term project which was critical for the future of the town and county. Their work would include identifying funding streams which were key to its success, pooling limited resources and maximising their potential while building on and creating greater inter-departmental and agency co-operation at local & national level.



Pic A: Tess Murphy



Pic B: Donal Mac An Beatha



Pic C: Lorraine O' Connor

Lorraine closed her presentation by saying how important it was for community groups to have a say in what work was being carried out and that the Regeneration team could be contacted anytime.

Siobhan Cronogue thanked Lorraine and after some questions from the floor introduced the next item on the agenda.

Round Table Discussions

Please see below the two community questions asked of community groups and a list of their answers. This will be reviewed by the PPN Secretariat and will feed into the Granard MD PPN Health & Well-being statement and also the PPN workplan 2017.

Question 1: What do you like about your community?

Summary of answers:

- People in it & community spirit
- Natural Amenities
- Lakes / Bogs
- Location – 3 province county/ cross county initiatives
- Access to facilities : library, community centres, GAA Structures, schools
- History/ Heritage
- Access to transport/ rural link
- Tubberpatrick, Penal Mass Rock
- Latin School / Old National Schools
- Improvements/ progress over the last 5/6 years all due to the community
- Community supportive of all enhancement initiatives
- Willingness to support in myriad ways
- Enthusiasm, spirit, pride of place, passion
- Text Alert service, HSE services, St. Christopher's Respite House, Schools, Church
- Active participation in community activities and clubs

- GAA Pitch, Leebeen Park
- Huge amount of voluntary work done
- Motte, Black Pigs Dyke, Butter Market
- Link with Ardagh, St. Mels, 1798 Ballinamuck, Finnea, Ballinalack and Streete
- Personalities: Michael Gaffney Vice President for Clinton, Eddie Macken etc.
- Because people are so open and inviting a lot of people who have moved in to the area have stayed
- Lus Na Greine
- Rathmhuire Dolmen Centre
- Amenities in Higginstown
- Tidy Towns
- Age Active Groups
- Community Park
- Co-operation

Question 2: What could be improved?

Summary of answers:

- Cross County Initiatives
- Broadband
- A network of small community groups
- Developing access to our waterways and lakes/cycle tracks /walking routes
- Lake trails
- Bio-diversity
- Increase promotion and buying into these ideas with local people
- The connectivity between all community groups
- Input from local primary school
- Lack of Secondary school in Drumlish – reaching youth – local teachers at the primary school – no input = a major disconnect
- Development of organisations
- Check with social diary for community groups and not overlap
- Traffic Management
- Speed control through villages, use of speed ramps, footpaths needed in village an on entrance roads (Colmcille)
- Access to significant finance
- Involvement and integration of youth who are keen, confident and skilled .Receive full ownership, praise and rewards for their work
- Physical regeneration of some areas
- Proper youth facilities
- A voice for young, disabled, vulnerable and marginalised
- A new modern Family Resource Centre and Community Centre
- Develop Granard Motte Community Enterprise
- Links to Mostrim, Ardagh, Ballymahon and Longford.
- Communication within the County
- Town Centre

- Greville Arms
- Integration
- Car Parking
- Register of local skills made available to the public
- More co-operation among all the groups and stakeholders in Granard town would bring the town to the next level i.e. enhance our community to be more inclusive and attract more people to visit
- Defibrillators needed in Granard town and surrounding area

Close

Tess Murphy thanked everyone for attending and announced the prizes for the raffle.

Winners were: 1st prize €200 – Granard Men’s Shed, 2nd prize €150 –Drumlish Tidy Towns, 3rd prize €50 – Granard Christmas Lights

Siobhán Cronogue thanked Mary Reynolds for the use of the library meeting room, Rosemary and Ray for all their help setting up and Roisin for the catering.

Groups then enjoyed some refreshments and networking

Close.