



Mount
Congreve
Gardens

Funding Approval Proposal



REDEVELOPMENT WORKS – BEFORE



SARA DOLAN –
Commercial Director
Mount Congreve Gardens

REDEVELOPMENT WORKS

- 2 years delayed
- OFFICIAL OPENING – 1st Mar 2023
- State-of-the-art visitor centre

REDEVELOPMENT WORKS – AFTER



FOYER OF HOUSE – BEFORE



FOYER OF HOUSE – AFTER



TACK ROOM – BEFORE



TACK ROOM – AFTER



ECO WOODLAND PLAYGROUND IN THE WOODLANDS



Mount
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Gardens



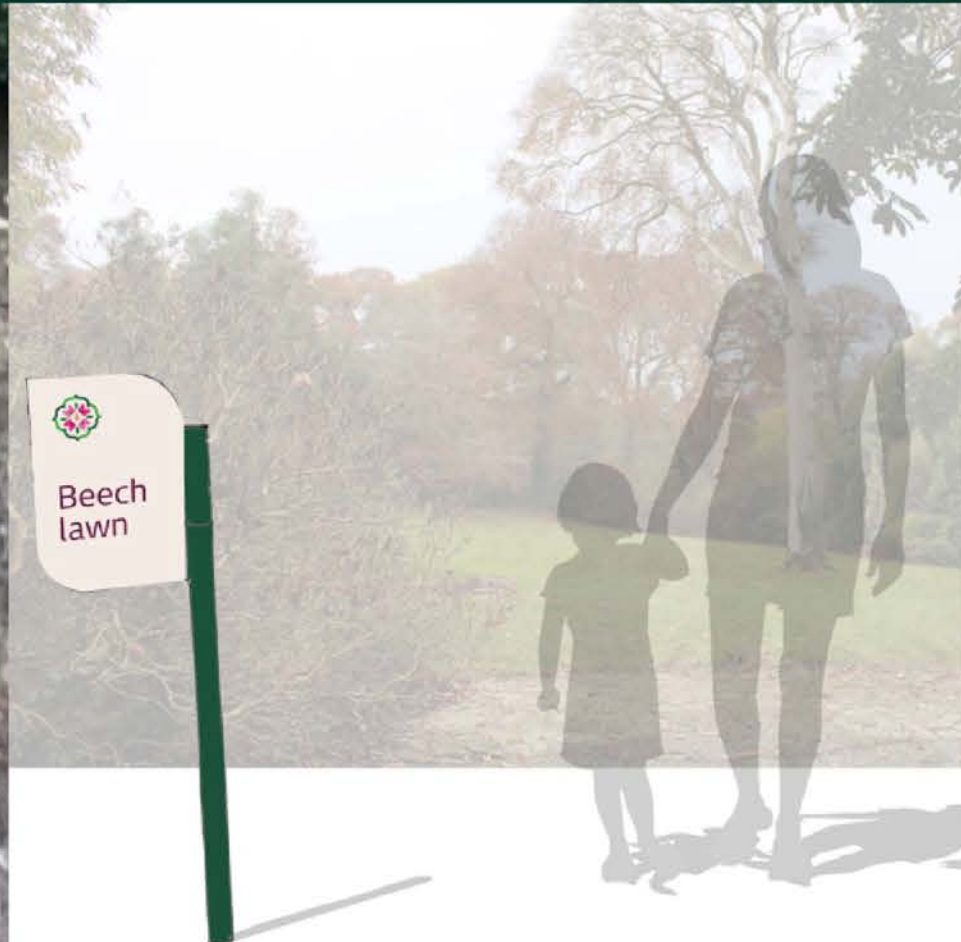
MAIN CARPARK- BEFORE



MAIN CARPARK-AFTER



INTERPRETATION AND ORIENTATION



VISITOR CENTRE – BEFORE



STABLES CAFÉ – BEFORE



- We now employ **28 FTE** in the peak season.

- The new visitor centre has now become a **destination** in its own right & is a huge driver of footfall into the gardens.

-New Café operators

VISITOR CENTRE – AFTER



STABLES CAFÉ – AFTER



2023 International Garden Tourism Awards

-
A Garden of the World Worth Travelling For in 2024

ONGOING REDEVELOPMENTS



GEORGIAN GLASSHOUSE - 1844



NEW AVENUE CARPARK - 70 SPACES INC UNIVERSAL PARKING AND EV CHARGE POINTS



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65,000 paying visitors to the gardens since March

Estimated **85,000** non-paying visitors (visited cafe and shop only) yielding **€430,687** in garden admissions.

Total economic impact of **€6.3** million for Waterford

Projected to double our pre-covid visitor numbers

High proportion of domestic visitors but have also welcomed, **UK, US, EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, CHINA & RUSSIA**

TICKET SALES

53% Adult

30% Senior

7% Child

4% Family

4% Group Adult

2% Student

GOVERNANCE



DES WHELAN,
Managing Director of WLRFM –
Chairperson & Trustee



MICHAEL WALSH,
CEO WCC –
Board member & Trustee



GARY GRAHAM,
Garden Expert –
Board member & Trustee

- New Governance structure
- Strong commercial background
- Supported by Gardening Sub-committee



ROBERT FINNEGAN
CEO Three UK & Ireland –
Board member



LOUISE GRUBB
Founder & CEO of Trivium Vet –
Board member



COLIN JEPHSON
Owner & Director at Ardkeen
Quality Food Store –
Board member



EAMONN MCENEANEY
Museum Director of Waterford
Treasures (Retired) –
Board member

FUTURE PROOFING THE BUSINESS

Three-year business plan

The purpose of this three-year business plan is to address the current challenges the business faces & leverage opportunities to improve financial performance & enhance the overall visitor experience.

WE HAVE FOCUSED IMPROVEMENTS INTO FOUR CATEGORIES

1. Increase business levels through targeted sales & marketing approach
2. Raise the standards of the gardens & wider estate
3. Introduce leisure accommodation
4. Further enhancements





FAILTE IRELAND -
AUTHORITY MEETING IN MOUNT CONGREVE GARDENS



VISIT WATERFORD AUTUMN CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



INCREASE BUSINESS LEVELS THROUGH TARGETED SALES & MARKETING APPROACH

- Very successful media campaign to date
- Received a lot of PRESS coverage
- Continue to build on this strong start
- Secure key coach tour operator business



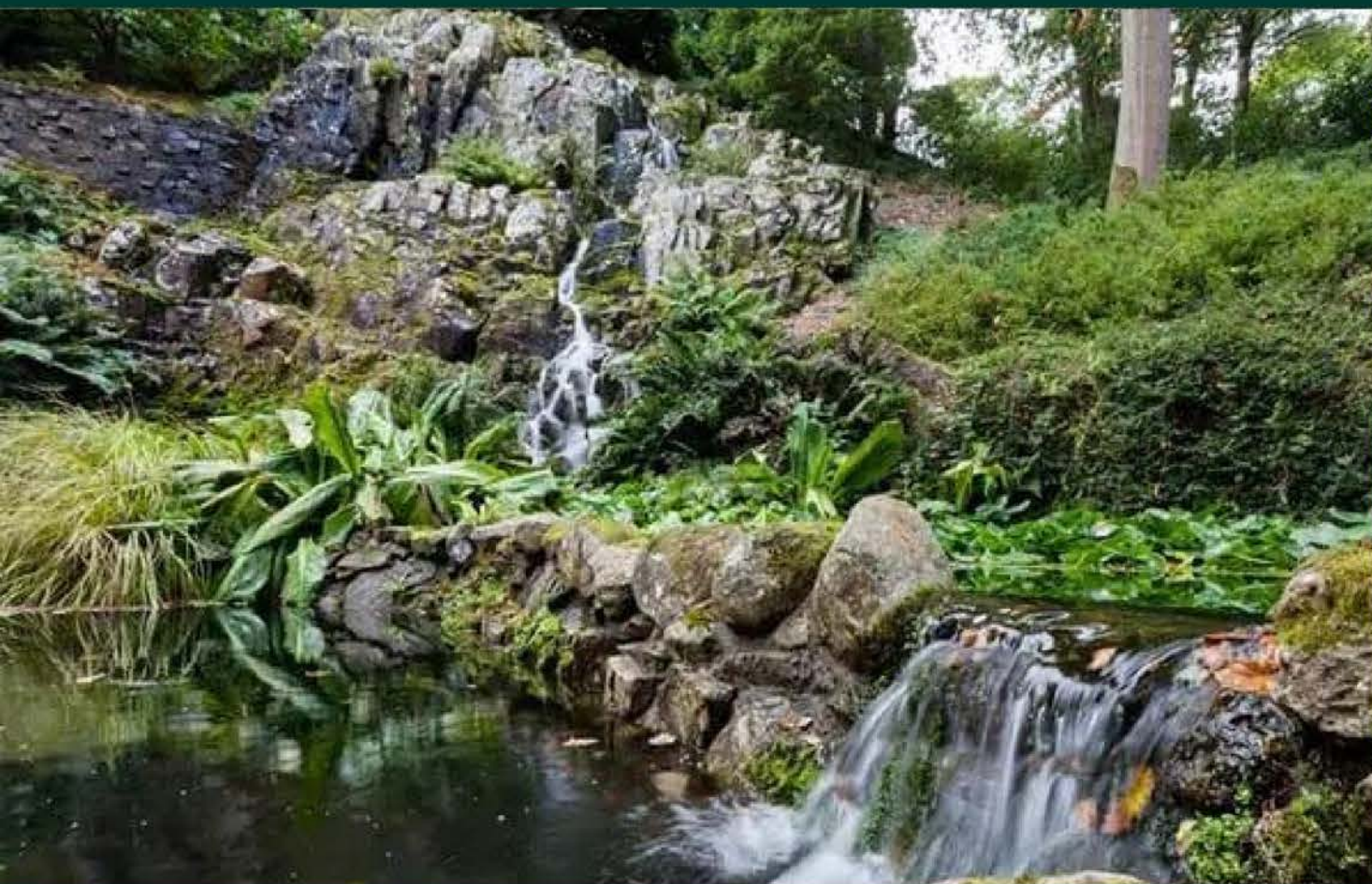
TOURISM IRELAND -
GB COACH TOUR OPERATOR FAM



TOURISM IRELAND -
CELTIC CONNECTIONS SALES EVENT



HORTICULTURAL STUDENTS RESTORING THE WALLED GARDENS



RESTORATION OF ROCK WATERFALL



RESTORATION OF CHINESE PAGODA



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RAISE THE STANDARDS OF THE GARDENS & WIDER ESTATE

- To increase footfall, it is crucial to elevate the standards and offerings of Mount Congreve Gardens.
- We need to bring the gardens back to a world-class standard.
- Progress has already been made with our education programme.



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LEISURE ACCOMMODATION

Already a very successful start with the main gate lodge and we are seeking to expand our leisure accommodation offering.

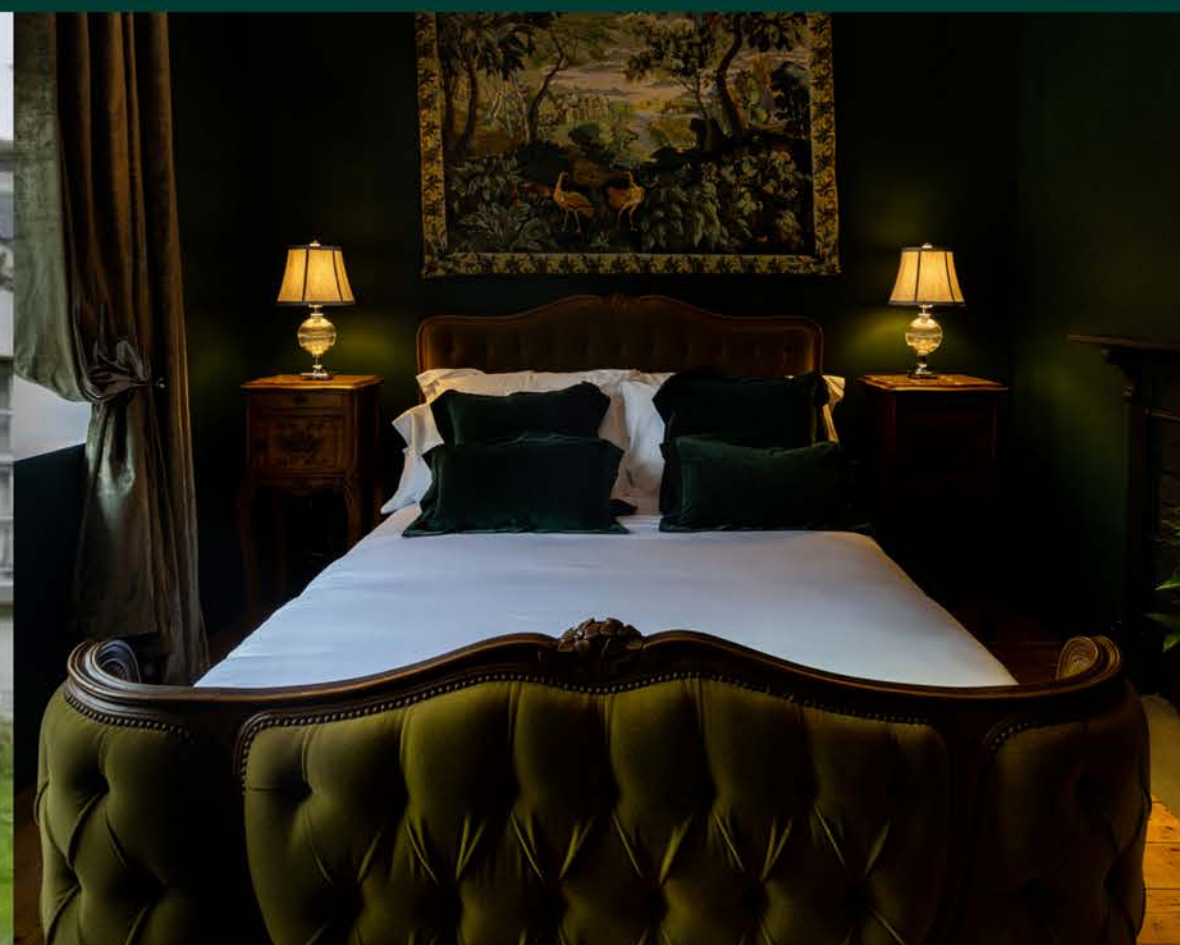
- Renovate the remaining two gate lodges
- Purchase of five forest eco-cabins



ECO FOREST CABINS



MIDDLE LODGE



RENOVATED MAIN LODGE



CURATE MARJORIE CONGREVE AND HERMAN DOOL EXHIBITIONS



PURCHASE BUGGY TRAIN FOR GREATER ACCESSIBILITY TO THE GARDENS



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FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

There are also a number of smaller projects that need attention

- Improve the Mount Congreve Gardens Greenway offering – see next slide
- Improve pathways and repairs to the Pagoda
- Restoration of the old nursery
- Curate two exhibitions
- Introduce a visual art program
- New Event Space with Mobile Kitchen & Accommodation
- Addition of a buggy train for individuals with reduced mobility.
- Upgrading the Heating System in Mount Congreve House
- Convert the old farm yard
- Restoration of the canal path
- Attain gold standard certification under Sustainable Travel Ireland



CONVERT THE OLD FARM YARD INTO FLEXIBLE EVENT SPACE



IMPROVE CONNECTION TO THE GREENWAY



COFFEE DOCK WITH OUTDOOR SEATING



INCREASED SIGNAGE & BIKE PARKING



IMPROVE CONNECTION TO WATERFORD GREENWAY

- Full access to and from the Greenway will be restored
- Introduce additional signage from Waterford Greenway to Mount Congreve
- Reduced ticket price for Greenway visitors
- Mobile coffee dock with outdoor seating
- Bike parking

ACCOMMODATION



KITCHEN



LIVING ROOM



SUPPER ROOM



MASTER BEDROOM



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LEISURE ACCOMMODATION

- To date the main gate lodge has enjoyed **99% occupancy** and an average nightly rate of **233 euro**.

Total sales projected for April - Dec €39,638
 Total sales for 2024 €56,014



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- The eco-forest cabins are of a high standard and will blend seamlessly into the landscape of the estate.
- Residents will enjoy access to the gardens, Waterford Greenway and the wider Waterford tourism offering.



P & L

Year	1	2	3	4
	2024	2025	2026	2027
Total Visitor Numbers	91,081	105,744	113,270	115,535
Total Sales	1,938,622	2,214,205	2,349,263	2,396,249
Total Cost of Goods Sold	337,387	373,511	349,253	356,238
Gross Profit	1,601,235	1,840,694	2,000,010	2,040,011
Total Payroll Costs	1,099,496	1,105,642	1,120,311	1,142,717
Total Direct Costs	149,478	147,378	146,978	149,918
Total Overheads	478,188	425,026	396,554	404,485
Net Profit / (Loss)	-125,927	162,649	336,168	342,891
Cashflow - Cashflow Requirement	-52,818	235,757	409,276	416,000

With this proposed investment within one year we will move from **net loss of €125,927** in 2024 to **net profit of €162,649** by 2025



CAPITAL EXPEDITURE

CAPITAL EXPEDITURE	
ACCOMMODATION	€719,499.00
Lodges	
Rental Apartments	
Cabins	
GARDEN ENHANCEMENTS	€109,000.00
Pagoda repairs	
Peach house refurbishment	
Restoration of Nursery	
Other garden improvements	
ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS	€59,500.00
Large golf buggy - reduced mobility guests	
Repair pathways and other improvements	
DEVELOP EVENT SPACES	€60,000.00
Convert office to dining space	
Marjorie Congreve Exhibition	
Herman Dool Garden Museum	
TOTAL	€947,999.00

FUTURE BENEFITS

- To date total economic impact of €6.3 million for Waterford
- Increase in visitor numbers from 70,000 – 113,000 in three years
- Broaden international appeal
- Add over 20 new beds in Waterford
- Increase employment to 40
- Further the development of Mount Congreve Gardens to become a centre of excellence for horticulture

WORKSHOP QUERIES

- **WHAT IS UNIQUE/WORLD CLASS ABOUT THE GARDENS?**
 - The sheer scale of the collection – home to over 58% of plant species in Ireland.
 - It is very rare to see mass plantings like this, 600 or 700 of one variety to create a wall of colour.
 - Important and rare plants seen in their natural form.
 - Also, due to proper regulations now being in place it would be almost impossible to recreate a garden like this due to plant regulations, plant passports, soil movement etc
- **FURTHER COLLABORATION WITH OTHER GARDENS TO ATTRACT VISITORS**
 - As members of the Waterford Garden Trail, we constantly promote other gardens on guided tours and meet several times a year. We refer business to each other where possible and wish to work towards a garden festival with the support of Failte Ireland.
- **INTRODUCTION OF ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS**
 - We will explore the options for improving the facility and include the option of faster chargers

WORKSHOP QUERIES

- **OPPORTUNITY FOR A BOAT PONTOON AT MOUNT CONGREVE GARDENS**
 - The pontoon would only be able to be used in high tide but is one of the better ones along the river, and it is in good condition. The addition of a floating pontoon was previously explored and was only curtailed due to costs. It would be an enormous addition to both the gardens and the greenway.
- **GENERATION OF SOLAR POWER ON SITE**
 - The introduction of solar panels is possible on the main roof and the western roof. Both roofs are in need of upgrade works.

THE ASK

- We are asking Waterford City and Council for a grant of 1 million euros
 - €800,000 accommodation
 - €200,000 other works
- To support cashflow requirement, we are requesting a loan of €300,000 – which would be repaid after 5 years