

DO: GACH BALL DE CHEANTAR BARDASACH DHÚN GARBHÁN/LEASA MHÓIR  
TO: EACH MEMBER OF THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF DUNGARVAN/LISMORE

### Economic Development Report March 2024

## 1. Trails

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2023.

**River Blackwater Outdoor Recreation:** Procurement to engage design team for preliminary design, planning and statutory consents for water access/trailhead at Ballyduff Upper underway. Design team to be engaged before end March 2024.

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2022.

The following ORIS 2022 projects in progress currently:

- Mocollop Walks, Ballyduff (Measure 1) – Installation of new Trail signage in collaboration with Coillte and local community: Measure 1. Complete.
- Cappoquin Railway Loop Walk (Measure 3): Planning permission granted by An Bord Pleanála on 4<sup>th</sup> September with 11 conditions. Design team for detailed design and tender management has been appointed. It is envisaged that tender for construction work will be published in Q2 2024.
- Villierstown Access to River Blackwater (Project Development Measure) – Feasibility study and design of enhanced amenities and access to the water for recreation at Villierstown Quay and environs: Project Development Measure. Tender to appoint design team has is underway and Design team to be engaged before end March 2024.

### Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020:

#### Progress: Measure 3 project:

- Ballinacourty Greenway Spur:
  - Widening of the path and Ballinclamper crossing currently in progress.
  - Procurement of contractor underway for upgraded beach access at Ballinclamper.

### Expansion of Walks Scheme

The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced the largest ever expansion of Ireland's National Walks Scheme on 28th February with 62 new trails announced across 17 counties. 12 of these walking trails are located in Co. Waterford (6 in Dungarvan/Lismore MD) and include:

- The Boolas Loop Walk, Rathgormack
- **Mount Melleray Pilgrim Paths (5 trails)**
- Nire Valley Walks (4 trails)
- Dunmore East Coastal Walk
- **Ardmore Cliff Walk**

The Walks scheme is administered locally by Waterford Leader Partnership's Rural Recreation Officer.

The Minister has also opened a new EOI process from LDC's for new trails and substantial extensions to existing trails. The closing date for EOIs is 11th October 2024.

### **Dungarvan to Mallow Greenway Feasibility Study**

- Awaiting outcome of TII review of the current phase of the process.
- Date of publication of the refined Emerging Preferred Route (EPR) will depend on the approval timeline mentioned above.

### **Waterford Trails**

- Continuing to engage with Sport Ireland Outdoors and local trail development groups around Waterford with regard to ongoing monitoring, maintenance, development and promotion of Waterford's existing recreational trail network. [www.visitwaterfordtrails.com](http://www.visitwaterfordtrails.com)

## **2. Tourism**

### **Waterford Rural Tourism Network Event**

The third Waterford Rural Tourism Network Event took place in The Park Hotel Dungarvan on Wednesday, February 28th.

Yet again there was brilliant interest and engagement from the almost 50 tourism businesses that attended, to learn more about building the capabilities of their individual business as well as enhancing the overall tourism offering in Waterford. The Waterford Rural Tourism Network is made up of five cluster areas (Copper Coast, Blackwater Valley, Comeragh Uplands, Gaeltacht, and Waterford Estuary) and all areas were well represented on the day. There was great excitement in the room as businesses talked, connected, and planned how they might work together to create better visitor experiences across Waterford. Fáilte Ireland, Waterford City and County Council and Waterford Local Enterprise Office provided updates and highlighted the supports available for the Waterford Rural Tourism Network to develop.

This event which centred around the *Business of Tourism* workshop is the first in a suite of supports that Waterford City & County Council in partnership with Fáilte Ireland will provide to the Waterford Rural Tourism Network over the next two years (2024 -2025). Other supports this year will include, facilitated in-person cluster meetings to agree, set and achieve individual and collective goals, learning journeys across the network, Waterford Champions Programme, Sales Ready Programmes and another network wide event at the end of the year.

### **Visit Waterford Update**

- **Membership increased to 53:** Following consistent efforts from Visit Waterford membership is growing steadily and there are now 53 members.
- **Irish Examiner Feature:** Maeve Lee's article on Waterford, who Visit Waterford hosted in 2023, appeared in the Irish Examiner on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. She was a big fan of the Waterford Greenway and highlighted many points of interest along the route as well as writing about the culinary delights she experienced in Dungarvan and Waterford City. The historic City landmarks and a visit to Waterford Crystal were also included in the feature. <https://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/travel/arid-41323507.html>

#### **Water Activity Centre:**

- **Ardmore**

Failte Ireland awarded grant assistance of €1.7m for the design, construction and fit out of **two** Water Activity Centres one to be located in Ardmore.

#### **Progress is as follows in Ardmore:**

Part 8 process is now complete and confirmed, the design team are currently implementing the recommended amendments as per the CE Report. Separately, an RRDF funding application has been made for the relief road/car park/public realm improvements and other ancillary works.

### **3. Rural Economic Development**

#### **Town Centre First**

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, Wednesday, 7th February 2024 announced a €4.5 million package to support rural towns and villages. As part of a suite of measures, a new Town Team Support Fund will be established to build and develop a network of Town Teams nationwide. Additionally, the Minister announced a Project Development Measure, this measure will assist local authorities to contribute to a pipeline of significant, well-developed projects by providing funding of €50,000 each to support two projects. These supports will specifically target rural towns with a population of under 10,000 people. This support will be delivered under the umbrella of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Waterford City & County Council are currently seeking expressions of interest from towns and village committees; completed expression of interest forms are to be returned by email to [tcf@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:tcf@waterfordcouncil.ie) before **5.00pm Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024**.

#### **Town Village Renewal Scheme**



Waterford City & County Council will administer the 2024 Town & Village Renewal Scheme funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development. The objectives of the 2024 Town and Village Renewal Scheme are focused to align with the commitments within Our Rural Future and the Town Centre First policy documents. The focus of the Town & Village Renewal Scheme is on ensuring the development of Waterford's rural towns and villages and making them more attractive places to live and work and increase their economic potential. Waterford City & County Council now seeks expressions of interest from towns and villages, for funding of suitable projects under this initiative. Expression of interest form and details of the Scheme's outline can be obtained by e-mailing [townvillagerenewal@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:townvillagerenewal@waterfordcouncil.ie) and completed expression of interest forms are to be returned before **5.00pm Friday 19th April 2024**.

Rural team continue to work with the local community promoters delivering the 2022 approved Town Village Renewal Scheme projects. Project locations as follows:

- Tramore
- Passage East
- Cappoquin

- Dunhill
- Clonea Power

Completion date for the five projects is August 2024.