

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

### **Economic Development Report April 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.

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

The following ORIS 2022 projects in progress currently:

- 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. Currently engaging with stakeholders locally. 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. Awaiting approval from DRCD.

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

###### **Progress: Measure 3 project:**

- Ballinacourty Greenway Spur:
  - Upgraded spur has opened to the public. Works sue to be completed in coming weeks.
  - Procurement of contractor underway for upgraded beach access at Ballinclamper.

##### **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**

- Ardmore Cliff Walk was inspected by Sport Ireland Outdoors in February with only some minor way marking works recommended. Report complimented the quality and maintenance of the trail including the role played by Ardmore Tidy Towns.
- 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 Learning Journey to Blackwater Valley

Tourism businesses and agencies from across Waterford were invited to Dungarvan on Wednesday March 20th to embark on a Learning Journey around the Blackwater Valley area of Waterford. The Learning Journey to the Blackwater Valley, funded and supported by Waterford City and County Council and Fáilte Ireland, is part of the Waterford Rural Tourism Network development programme.

This was the first in a series of five Learning Journeys scheduled to take place over the next two years, across all five cluster areas: Blackwater Valley, Comeragh Uplands, Copper Coast, Gaeltacht na nDéise, and Waterford Estuary.

The Learning Journey gave local businesses the opportunity to learn about tourism experiences and products located in the Blackwater Valley; connect, collaborate, gain personal learnings to help their business, cluster and the overall Waterford destination.



#### Visit Waterford Update

- **Membership increased to 55:** Following consistent efforts from Visit Waterford and the establishment of a membership sub-committee member numbers are growing steadily.
- **Increased online visibility and engagement:** in a recent report on 2023 activity VW highlighted that Engagement across all Visit Waterford online platforms increased significantly:
  - Website traffic increased by over 35% resulting in over 100,000 users
  - Facebook Followers: 31,000 (+7%)
  - Instagram Followers: 8,410 (+17%)
- **New York Times Article:** VW commissioned the creation of a video showcasing the recent awards and accolades, including Waterford featuring in the New York Times Top 52 places to go in 2024, won by the county. This video was sent to all VW members for them to use and issued to the media with a press release promoting the Best of Waterford experience. As a result, VW was featured in Hospitality News, Dining in Dublin and by Pól O Conghalie on The Today Show.

The video and Best of Waterford itinerary can be seen in this paid article in the Irish Independent: <https://m.independent.ie/storyplus/explore-waterford-plan-the-ultimate-trip-to-irelands-ancient-east-this-summer/a1243940839.html>

## Explore Waterford: Plan the ultimate trip to Ireland's Ancient East this Summer

Discover the best of Waterford, as seen in The New York Times.



- **Portia Jones-Travel Goals Podcast**

VW worked with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to welcome Portia Jones to Waterford, Portia visited a number of VW members during her visit including, Waterford Treasures, Sólás na Mara, Waterford Distillery and Mount Congreve Gardens. She produced a 2 part podcast as a result of her visit.

<https://podfollow.com/1492482231/episode/e4a37137a0edd6cb17556a56a4dfcb1b050f763c/view>

**Water Activity Centre:**

- **Ardmore**

Faite 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 Village Renewal Scheme 2022 – Marketing Measure**



Marketing Measure project description was to develop and deliver a cohesive, integrated marketing campaign for Waterford, which would target remote workers and mobile talent.

Delivered by the Councils Communications Team, the “Think Waterford First” campaign was hugely successful in increasing brand awareness and reach.

- o The campaign reached around 7.2 Million unique users.
- o The promotional video recorded over 1.8 Million views

The project was supported by a grant under the 2022 Town Village Renewal Scheme, monies claimed March 2024.