

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

Economic Development Report July 2024

1. Mount Congreve

Since last reporting progress on the various elements of the project has been as follows:

Avenue Car Park & Universal Access Improvements:

- The final surface dressing of the access road, public lighting, access control barrier and EV charging point have been installed and the car park is now fully operational, some minor items relating to the public lighting controls remain to be resolved.

Glass House Restoration:

- All works on the central section of the Glass House are now complete, internal scaffolding has now been removed and works continuing on the '2m bays' to either side, works are scheduled to be fully completed by the end of July.

2024 Works:

- Part 8 Planning has been approved for the refurbishment of the Gate Lodges and the installation of the Eco Pods.
- Enabling works for the Eco Pods, consisting of service installation (Electricity, water, wastewater comms etc) have commenced. It is currently envisaged that the Pods will be available for use in Q3 2024 following by the 2 x Gate Lodges in early Q4.
- Works are continuing all other elements of the 2024 investments plan and scheduled to be completed by end of Q4 2024

2. Trails

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2023 – Project Development Measure:

Waterford City and County Council have appointed [Outscape](#) to develop the Comeragh Mountains Outdoor Recreation Strategy and Action Plan. This project is being funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) under the ORIS 2023 – Project Development Measure.

The project output includes:

- 10-year vision and roadmap, including
- High-level action plan, with more detailed actions for years 1 to 3.
- This will comprise a short strategy document targeted at a non-technical audience / local residents, and a supplementary internal document with additional outputs including summary of public consultation.

Progress to date includes:

- Formation of project Steering Group of key stakeholder organisations.
- Appraisal of the current baseline and context for outdoor recreation, visitor experiences and amenity development in the Comeragh Uplands.

- Desk top study of current national, local and regional plans and policies and previous reports, plans and policies specifically with regard to the study area.
- Formulation of Draft Vision and Strategic Priorities, in collaboration with the project steering group

The project will progress as follows:

- Engagement and consultation with elected members, landowners, user groups, communities, and members of the public – July to September 2024.
- Agree vision and strategic priorities, and draft actions and overall plan with Steering Group – September to October 2024
- Screening assessment for AA/SEA - Q4 2024/Q1 2025
- Strategy launch - April 2025

ORIS 2023 Funding allocations for the Comeragh district were announced as follows between April and June 2024 under Measures 1 and 2:

- Tower Hill Woods Walking Trails Development, Portlaw (Measure 1): €15,885
- Comeragh Mountain Trails Upgrades works to: East Munster Way, Nire Valley Walks, Rathgormack Walks (Measure 1): €15,840
- Crough Wood Walk embankment stabilization project (Measure 2): €175,505
- Benvoy Beach Access upgrade works (Measure 2): €143,010

ORIS 2022:

- Measure 2: Anne Valley Walk – Phase III. Re-surfacing works of trail between main trailhead car park, Dunhill to Dunhill Castle Car Park substantially complete.
- Project Development Measure: Feasibility study of potential Knockaderry Reservoir walk currently being undertaken in collaboration with the local community. Trail survey and assessment has been carried out with order of magnitude costings. Ecological assessments and bird surveys ongoing. Further community and stakeholder consultation to take place Q3 2024.

ORIS 2021:

- Measure 3: Mahon Bridge/Crough Wood trailhead and improved car parking area. Project progressing well. Outstanding works include landscaping, development of playground, amenity seating, trailhead signage, bicycle parking etc.
- Project Development Measure: Proposed Copper Coast Walking Trails - Waterford City & County Council proposes submitted a Section 177AE planning application to An Bord Pleanála in December 2023 for the development a series of walking trails and ancillary works along the Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark between Stradbally and Bunmahon, Co. Waterford:
 - Trail 1 Stradbally to Killelton (4.5km)
 - Trail 2 Ballydowane Beach (1.1km)
 - Trail 3 Cooneennacartan to Trá na mBó (2.0km)

Submissions and observations were invited up until 16th February. A decision by ABP is anticipated in 2024.

Waterford Greenway to Suir Blueway Connection:

- Feasibility study ongoing with a range of route options being considered in advance of further public, stakeholder, and landowner engagement.

County Outdoor Recreation Plan

- WCCC working as part of recently formed project team in collaboration with WSP, WLP and other key stakeholders in preparing a new County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) as part of a pilot project as one of 6 counties nationally. The process has also seen the appointment of a new Outdoor Recreation Officer (ORO) by WSP. Stakeholder and public consultation to take place as part of the preparation of the CORP in late 2024/early2025.

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

3. Rural Economic Development

Town Centre First

Measure 1 Town Team Support Fund

Waterford successful in accessing funding of €10,000.00 for Kill. Funding will be used to support the establishment and/or development of town teams and to better understand the unique features of towns. The projects will be managed by the DRCD-funded Town Regeneration Officer in Waterford.



Town Village Renewal Scheme 2023

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, announced funding of over €20 million to benefit rural towns and villages the length and breadth of the country on Monday, 29 April, 2024. Waterford received funding for three projects, total grant assistance €707,671.00:

WATERFORD	Project / Location	Description	Allocation
Waterford	Kill	Development of an integrated community park with integrated seating, play and musical equipment, performance area and ancillary works within the grounds of the Kill Community Centre.	€243,471
Waterford	Lemybrien	Development of an interconnected village centre with urban green spaces as health promoting environments.	€214,200
Waterford	Lismore	The regeneration of a derelict shed within the Lismore Union Workhouse complex into a community facility for Lios Mór Morchuda Men's Shed.	€250,000
3			€707,671

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.

- The campaign reached around 7.2 Million unique users.
- 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.