

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

**Economic Development Report June 2025**

**1. Mount Congreve**

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

2025 Works

- Eco Pods – some minor site improvements work such as landscaping and pathways remain outstanding and are dependent on the available budget.
- Works on both Gate lodges continuing to first fix and are being undertaken by ABS Construction Ltd
- The decision to defer the completion of the Upper lodge beyond what ABS Construction Ltd were contracted to carry out was reversed and now both lodges will be brought to completion by ABS
- A programme of works has been submitted with the middle lodge completing mid to late June and the upper lodge (2 no. apartments) completing in early July.
- Works are continuing and all other elements of 2023 investments plan are scheduled to be complete by end of Q2/ early Q3 2025.

**2. Trails**

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

- Comeragh Mountains Outdoor Recreation Strategy - draft plan in place. Currently going through Strategic Environmental Assessment process.
- Second meeting of Comeragh Mountains Outdoor Recreation Strategy subgroup was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May to look at the following agenda items:
  - Comeragh Upland Path Survey Report – presentation from consultants who carried out the survey in late summer 2024 with a focus on walks in the Comeraghs that are being adversely impacted by outdoor recreation/visitor numbers.

**ORIS 2023 Measures 1 and 2:**

- Tower Hill Woods Walking Trails Development, Portlaw (Measure 1): €15,885 – progressing. Trailhead information board and arrow discs were installed before the end of May. Working with Portlaw Community Enhancement Group and Coillte on finalizing the project before the trail network is formally launched.
- Comeragh Mountain Trails Upgrades works to: East Munster Way, Nire Valley Walks, Rathgormack Walks (Measure 1): €15,840 – now in progress. Working with Coillte in way marking re-route of East Munster Way at Cannon Hill.
- Crough Wood Walk embankment stabilization project (Measure 2): €175,505 – Project is making good progress and should be substantially complete in the coming weeks with further landscaping, planting etc. required.
- Benvoy Beach Access upgrade works (Measure 2): €143,010. Project well underway – being implemented by Comeragh MD, Roads Dept.

## **Waterford Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Work is well underway on the preparation of the Waterford Outdoor Recreation Plan. It is an objective of 'Embracing Ireland's Outdoors – The National Outdoor Recreation Strategy' that each county prepares an Outdoor Recreation Plan and forms a stakeholder grouping the County Outdoor Recreation Committee. Project team due to approve plan and carry out SEA/AA screening in June.

## **Comeraghs Wild Festival**

The Comeraghs Wild Festival makes a vibrant return this summer, running from July 10th to 13th, 2025, with a dynamic celebration of culture, nature, music and adventure across the spectacular Comeragh Mountains in County Waterford. The 2025 festival was officially launched on week beginning 2<sup>nd</sup> June:

<https://waterfordcouncil.ie/comeraghs-wild-festival-2025-announces-full-programme-of-events/>



## **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)

### 3. Tourism

#### Waterford Rural Tourism Network



Work with the Waterford Rural Tourism Network (WRTN) continues to grow and develop, together with Fáilte Ireland and Runda Hospitality & Tourism Solutions.

The most recent in person cluster meetings took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> May for the Blackwater Valley & Gaeltacht na nDéise clusters.

The Network also completed its fourth learning journey. This saw the members travel along the Waterford Estuary. It was a day full of insightful stories, unique activities and delicious food all set against the stunning backdrop of the Estuary. The group were welcomed into each community along the estuary, and it was a very successful day of learning.

#### Media:

In the month of May, Visit Waterford delivered a series of paid & organic ads across different media forms including print, digital & radio. This included a native campaign that featured in the Independent, a piece in Irish Central targeting US visitors, ads featured on BEAT & Today fm.

The first press release of the Month was on May 1st, Visit Waterford officially launched the *Dig Into Waterford* campaign, celebrating 1,111 years since the foundation of Waterford. This campaign shines a spotlight on the many attractions, activities, and experiences to be enjoyed throughout the city and county. As part of the campaign, Visit Waterford created six themed itineraries to encourage visitors to truly 'dig into' Waterford's rich offering. These itineraries highlight the outstanding tourism experiences provided by our members right across the region.

To support the campaign, a dedicated video was produced and is now available on YouTube, alongside a brand new podcast series featuring local experts in folklore, history, and archaeology.

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B\\_-YHGQgnhs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_-YHGQgnhs)

Podcast: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0lDlckDEjtXlBsr1kuqGk7>

### **Visit Waterford**

Visit Waterford were awarded Bronze in the *Best Media Campaign – Niche* category at the Irish Media Awards on May 8th for our 2024 *Dive Into Waterford* campaign — a fantastic recognition of the region's growing visibility and appeal. A press release was published on the 9<sup>th</sup> May to highlight the win.

Visit Waterford met with Tourism Ireland Spain in May. The *Dig In* campaign also featured on the Tourism Ireland website.

In May, there was also a media visit from V.I.P magazine, which has 147,000 readers, and a series of National media competitions, this featured on Today FM, Lyric FM & in the RTE guide.

### Membership

Visit Waterford now has a total of 71 members.

### Cruise Tourism

Visit Waterford continues to work with key stakeholders in the Cruise Tourism working group. The view of this group is to co-ordinate the arrival of Cruise ships. The first ship will now dock in Waterford on the 1<sup>st</sup> July.