

Kells Municipal District

Vision for Community Wellbeing 2020

&

Workshop Input Report



KELLS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

VISION FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Kells Municipal District is a rich, diverse community where people are supported to live well in an attractive place that is steeped in history and heritage. We cherish, protect and share our natural world. There is a thriving sustainable economy that supports everyone and all of us play an active role in the decisions that affect us. Our diverse community enjoys coming together to join in a wide variety of activities through which we all have opportunities to socialise together.

Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

Our Local Authority recognises that its role is to work in the interest of all its citizens with integrity and honesty. A variety of forms of communication allow all groups and voices to find out easily what is going on locally and to engage with the Local Authority, which actively shares information on its work and listens to its citizens. We are consulted in plenty of time about Local Authority plans and enabled to actively engage. It is clear that the Local Authority's decisions take account of the community's inputs and those of the Public Participation Network. It reports back on its actions and spending and is fully responsible for its decisions. As a community we understand the importance of using our vote, how our democracy works, and we have access to the full and unbiased information we need to make informed decisions. We recognise and value the contribution of our community groups and their volunteers, who are supported through provision of shared community space.

Environment and Sustainability

In Kells MD we protect, enhance and enjoy our rich natural environment and local heritage. Our community is GMO* Free and we grow local food sustainably. Proactive leadership from our government ensures we are all well informed and supported. As a result, our behaviour does not damage our natural world. We use sustainable forms of energy and transport and act to safeguard our natural resources.

- We have a range of food production systems including community allotments, community agriculture and organic farming.
- We use our knowledge to minimise and manage our waste in line with best practice.
- We work with nature to reduce environmental damage and put our resources to the wisest possible use.
- Our community, including community and voluntary organisations, leads the way in affordable renewable energy schemes.

** Genetically Modified Organism*

Social and Community Development

Our community is friendly, inclusive and safe. We are aware of people's varied needs and use a range of ways to share information and to work together and help each other. All of us have opportunities to be involved in local social and recreational activities. We encourage integration across all members of the community whilst valuing and providing for individual group needs. Community activities are supported through well-resourced and funded community groups. We have a variety of suitable local indoor and

outdoor community spaces, housing options and education facilities, sufficient to meet the needs of our community.

Health (Physical and Mental)

Our communities are well planned with connected and accessible facilities to support our physical and mental health and our wellbeing. This includes provision of medical services, education, community spaces and recreation. We have flexible health services that meet our needs and are affordable. There are a wide range of treatment options (conventional and complementary) and supports for recovery available locally to us all. We are an active community with great access to recreation and leisure facilities, both indoors and outdoors, and everyone has opportunities to enjoy our healthy natural environment. We have excellent information and education to enable us to look after ourselves. We are a caring community where all of us look after one another, have opportunities for all ages to socialise together, and no-one is lonely.

Work, Economy and Resources

In Kells MD we have a sustainable, green economy with strong food and tourism sectors. Development and support initiatives encourage new and existing businesses and social enterprises to thrive and provide good jobs locally. We have an excellent integrated public transport system, communications infrastructure and childcare that support workers and businesses. Kells MD is an attractive environment where people have a healthy work-life balance and we have access to a wide range of local education and training that is delivered flexibly.

- Work carried out by community groups and volunteers is recognised and supported.

Values, Culture and Meaning

In Kells MD we are proud of how all members of our community enrich one another's lives. We come together as a diverse community in shared spaces. We celebrate and share our different cultures and respect one another and our religious beliefs. We value and promote our Irish heritage; language, music, traditions, etc. and pass this on to future generations. We collect, share and celebrate our history. Our natural and cultural heritage is protected, restored and widely enjoyed. We value our well-resourced community groups and have good access to a range of facilities where we can all connect and that support our varied activities.

WORKSHOP INPUT REPORT – KELLS MUNICIPAL DISTRICT

Workshop held 4th October 2019

The inputs collected in this report were transcribed directly from the written contributions of workshop participants. Any factual errors which may have arisen should be considered in the context of the creative and spontaneous process of the workshop to generate ideas for use in shaping the vision statement

PARTICIPATION, DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:

What is necessary to ensure that our local government structures support the wellbeing of our community for this and future generations? What is necessary to ensure that we have a voice in the decisions that affect us and that all voices are being heard?

Communication and Engagement Practices

- Better communication and participatory approaches
- Creative ways to engage local people
- Use technology; virtual meetings, social media, etc.
- Consult seldom heard voices
- Young people need to be engaged and organised
- A voice, an opinion, absolute knowledge.

Meaningful Consultation and Participation

- More meaningful consultation
- People are consulted but views not incorporated – less tick box exercises
- Agree local plan priorities
- Local people need to know discussion/ plans before hearing the “fait accompli” [decision] that councillors are “delighted” about; more communication and consultation
- Better local and community input in local and national politics for ideas coming from communities

Local Government

- Local government to be more responsive to public input
- That the community would have better input into decision-making with stronger representative local governance.
- Bottom up proposals rather than dictated from central government.
- Council support for community organisations
- Stronger local government
- Local government to report on its actions and spending
- Influence national policy.
- Too much red tape, try to make things simple. Reward those who are trying to make their community better

Local Government at Municipal District Level

- Local “town hall” forum, solutions only, positive
- One Stop Shop in each municipal district
- Local policy workshop; [we are] experts by experience
- Municipal district committees responsible to local community

PPN Vision and PPN

- [PPN] Vision to be reflected in all local government structures
- PPN [to] hold public services to account

Participation in Democracy

- Voter education and registration

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- Shared NGO space
- Change the NGOs executive governing bodies on a regular basis

HEALTH (PHYSICAL AND MENTAL):

How can all members of our community enjoy the best possible physical and mental health? What about people with special needs, older people, and carers?

Medical Facilities and Services

- Access to out-of-hours services
- Extended Community Care – more home care hours and support structures to support people at home as long as possible.
- More health centres
- Drop-in clinics free; information hub on medical issues
- Awareness of and access to available facilities, support and education
- Medical care for over 70s free
- Health care facilities for children and free health care up to 18 years of age
- Complementary therapies accepted under medical card
- Homeopathic medicine should be included on medical cards and made more affordable
- Supplements should not be subject to VAT (Value Added Tax)
- Encourage doctors to do greening of medical card and prescription to include non-chemical/ natural/ homoeopathic medicines.
- Parking should be free to attend doctor in primary healthcare centre
- Health centre provision for all towns over 1000 people
- Free Drop in – one stop shop for all medically related activities -OAP, Parkinsons, Third Age (think these were 2 points originally so have put them as such)
- More community physical and mental health service locations in the community

Mental Health Services

- Better access to mental health services at local level
- Out of hours mental health care
- Mental health experience exchange (meet marginal groups), social inclusion, street parties, multi-cultural event.
- Mental health services linked with recreational options

Recreation

- Park Lloyd should be open more
- Tower of Lloyd lighthouse should be used, promoted and extended more for walking and wellbeing
- Footpaths should be safe and accessible
- Safe cycle paths and outside gyms for communities of 500 people +
- Social therapeutic and community horticulture/ Grow it Yourself (GIY)/ Thrive available at community level
- Extend the walkways especially Kells Heritage Park
- All footpaths upgraded for those with limited mobility or wheelchairs
- Swimming pools accessible for all in communities of 3000 plus people.rge towns and more accessibility for all – so bigger facilities with access for under 3 and special needs
- An example was Kells fitness club for the older generation providing blood pressure test and other health checks on site, supported as part of healthcare packages
- More biking and walking trails. Nice walking trail around Loughcrew, Lough Bawn, lake in Moylagh

Planning for Accessibility and Supported Living

- Not enough wheelchair accessibility around town (Kells)
- Accessibility for all communities to services; ability to get to, enter and use public buildings
- Supported living environment planned for as part of plans

Schools

- Requirement for Special Needs School in Kells'
- Require DEIS school (Kells)
- Facilities within our area for inclusivity in all schools
- 1 stop shop access and egress for schools (primary and secondary to be sited near each other) to be planned for to make drop off safer and easier

Community Health Initiatives

- Healthy Community Day (like Earth Day); a day each year where access is provided to information and services on health
- Outreach to the community
- Health promoting activities (mental and physical); affordable, accessible, supported
- Help people deal with/ prepare for climate change (address anxiety) mentally and physically

Community Supports

- Community reassurance and prepared to look after everyone
- Inclusivity for all of our community.
- Older people outreach; encourage youth to visit elderly at home (a programme)
- Facilitating' inclusion – preventing isolation and looking after everyone in the community
- To have somebody to talk too, someone they can be comfortable around, to know that its okay, its a bad day not a bad life and you are not alone.

Space for Community Activities

- Ideally a hub for care of our community (pop-up)
- Networking in your community; provide a space, community hall (no expense)
- Free community space

Energy

- Ban smoky/ carbon fuels in rural areas (high particulate matter)
- Smokeless fuel should be across the board

Minding Nature

- Focus on biodiversity as social and ecological are intricately linked

Transport

- Transport linked between towns

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY:

How do we value our natural environment and man-made heritage? What can be done to conserve, protect and restore these? How can we interact with the environment in a sustainable way, and hand it on to the next generation in a better state?

Minding Nature

- Encourage wildlife
- Best practice [for] biodiversity
- Implement and support pollinator plan actions
- Stop spraying / using chemicals
- Habitat enhancement measures; bat box schemes, bird box schemes, barn owl boxes, etc.
- Better support of peatland restoration at Girley Bog.
- Funding/ resourcing/ support for BAPs (Biodiversity Action Plans)
- More support for Tidy Towns / Pride of Place to do biodiversity actions

Food Production and Consumption

- Natural organic farming and ways of maintaining lands
- Community supported agriculture
- Allotments community owned
- Growing food sustainably
- GMO Free Town (Genetically Modified Organisms)

Climate Action

- Plant more trees
- Kells and Meath as peat-free towns; be a county first in Ireland (bogs store carbon so we shouldn't dig them up)

Information, Awareness and Education

- Awareness of grant schemes available
- Education and awareness of environment, lands, animals
- Continued reinforcement of wildlife and conservation of environment and primary and secondary schools
- Educate young children; nature walks, nature talks, seed planting, etc.
- Talks and guided walks by ecologies and other specialist about wildlife friendly actions
- More education about benefits of peatlands
- Education on recycling
- Teach more about the three R's – reduce, reuse and recycle. We have our own world, why shouldn't we care more about saving it?

Transport

- Alternative transport to minimise car use; car sharing, better public transport
- Energy friendly public transport, gas or electric “lead by example”

Resource use and Management

- Community water harvesting
- Use natural barriers (trees, hedges) along contour lines to reduce soil erosion and flooding. Plant trees along rivers.
- Solar fields and forests.
- More renewable energy .street lights worked by solar panels .
- More water harvesting from buildings.
- More charger points in rural community
- Better connections to rural community for buses & trains

Waste

- Recycling; more options, promotion and education

Heritage

- Maintain and preserve local historical heritage buildings
- Make heritage sites more accessible to visitors which in turn will support upkeep

Energy

- More renewable energy use
- Community energy schemes (as in Germany); solar panels on every roof, at Lloyd, in the business park
- Economically accessible renewable energy especially for Community Groups

Government and Leadership

- “lead by example” not by word; transparency from government

Designation and Protection

- Designate Dark Sky areas

Not agreed:

Use natural waterways and walkways for transport alternative for goods and people –
burden on the natural waterways and walkways already

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: How can we be an inclusive community where we support each other and ensure no one is left out? What are the important social services and facilities we need to live well from childhood to old age?

Community Supports

- Supportive social opportunities
- Older people are lonely – set up a roster by volunteers
- Book hubs; boxes where people swap books
- Connectivity; supporting and connecting people, groups, linking services
- Use of existing buildings; cake sales, teas, etc.
- Vibrant community groups/ clubs available to individuals in Athboy
- Have it in your community so we do t have to travel half hour or more to join an group
- People need to realize this is one world, how much better would it be if everyone understood this and agreed together to make it better.
- Community-led development
- More sports grounds.
- Community hall for all .
- Play ground in all rural areas

Support for Community Groups

- Insurance – grant paid by government
- Support and funding for the Resource Centre and its many programmes
- Community groups network to apply for grants
- Community groups should come together as one voice

Accommodation

- Sheltered accommodation; with 5/6 older people together
- “shared housing” and long-term accommodation for a lifetime
- Free student accommodation integrated with senior citizen homes in return for set hours

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Autism friendly communities; shops, restaurant, hairdresser (2 hours/ week)
- Improved school facilities for those with special needs
- Walkways, footpaths that are accessible for people with disabilities, traffic lights, zebra crossings, safety.

Information

- Notice boards
- Newsletter
- Website (Meath PPN)

Meeting Spaces, esp. for the Young

- Informal meeting areas; picnic benches (long ones to force people to share), willow huts for kids
- Spaces for teenagers; picnic benches (with wifi?)
- Include teenagers in outdoor activities
- Kells community centre

Transport

- Bicycle lanes

Family Supports

- Wrap around services for families; it takes a village to rear a child

Safety and Security

- Garda Liaison Officer to give talks to local groups
- Community Watch

History and Heritage

- Story telling

VALUES, CULTURE AND MEANING: What is needed to ensure that everyone both feels, and actually is, included and valued, and that our different values and cultures are respected and nurtured? What are the important parts of our culture that we want to hand on to future generations?

Support for Communities

- Community and voluntary efforts are appreciated and properly funded
- Community needs analysis; ask people what they need/ want
- Local community centres (Kells has no dedicated centre)
- €200 grant is not enough for community groups
- Play grounds in all rural area

Cultural Diversity

- More intercultural festivals
- Opportunities and events to celebrate culture and diversity
- Sharing cooking skills of all cultures
- Opportunities to learn and grow Irish language, community connectedness, Irish culture, other cultures
- Peace, honesty and understanding. Everyone is different but in their own way, people need to understand this.

Irish Culture

- That future governments would respect and be proud of our Irish heritage, history and culture
- Promote and publicise Irish language Gaeltacht areas
- Our Irish culture coming through in our community.

History

- History clubs
- To group our local history together
- Folk programme collecting old stories from older generation and record them
- Story telling and poetry i.e. library open evening, book reading, etc.

Heritage Protection

- Natural and cultural heritage is protected, restored, communicated and sustained
- Find innovative ways to attract new people to heritage by use of video games, etc.
- Better communication to preserve heritage sites; create heritage trails, conservation of heritage sites

Participation

- Encourage participation of youth, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender), older people, disabled people, Travellers
- A forum where all community groups in Kells can meet, discuss, share ideas (like in Athboy)
- A better way to connect and communicate local services
- Take care of your community, promote all culture things, music, language, games, young people are having a bit of pride in culture these days. Support festivals

Music

- Cup of Tea; one night a month bring and play music group
- Traditional music and dance in Kells

Religion and Respect

- Respect for religious belief

WORK, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES:

How can our communities thrive economically, with good jobs, and supports for enterprise, business and for people not in work? What resources do we have and are they used effectively and sustainably without causing harm to social and environmental sustainability?

Business and Employment Development Initiatives

- Develop and promote technology hubs, hot desks, etc.
- Investment in community groups to fund jobs
- Promotional film showcasing Kells for investment in tourism, community, heritage
- Local employment Expo
- Enterprise supports; more jobs, local enterprise, large scale investments
- Invest in business for longevity and quality products

Infrastructure

- More broadband for people to work from home

Food Sector

- Access venues for “community growers” enterprise
- Food businesses
- County markets

Tourism

- Develop tourism
- Promote tourism in north Meath In to Westmeath and south Cavan.

Work-Life Balance

- More local employment
- More family and leisure time for employees
- 4-day week
- Shorter travelling to and from work .

Childcare

- Community affordable childcare
- Community volunteers at affordable prices to care for children of two working parents

Green Economy

- Community-owned green energy schemes, wind or solar (Lloyd People’s Park)
- More job development and support in the green economy, retrofitting houses, etc.

Transport

- Train to Kells
- Parking facilities – pay for 1 hour and get an hour free, ‘free’ times e.g. 8-9am
- Remove the toll at Kells
- Better public transport (accessibility, economic, environmental reasons)

- Better services for transportation with buses & trains connecting with the local rural community

Education and Training

- Provide information e.g. on-line education (universities, etc.) so that people can study from home
- More education courses and accessibility for all
- Training opportunities for local people to seek jobs locally
- Knowledge needed for a better, fair and balanced world, improve the economy and do better in everyday life.

Attractive Work Environment

- More natural landscape at the industrial unit

Support for Community Initiatives

- Linking CE/ TÚS schemes with community groups