

MARCH 2021

# LEADER NEWS

Updates on the implementation of the LEADER Programme in Co. Kildare.

## COMPLETION OF 2014-2020 PROGRAMME

After an extension into the first three months of 2021, the 2014-2020 LEADER Programme came to a close at the end of March. Funding from the 2014-2020 programme is now fully committed. The following three projects were approved for funding at the last meeting of the LAG on 31st March.

### The Old Hardware

The Old Hardware is a community-run shop, tearoom and community exhibition and activity space in the heart of Narraghmore village. It is run by the Narraghmore Development Company as a social enterprise and has been trading since July 2020.

Narraghmore Development Company have a well-established link with the LEADER programme, having taken part in the Social Enterprise training initiative that ran in 2018.

The group were approved for funding that will help them to improve their current offering of baked goods, particularly to expand the volume of sourdough that they can produce and sell.

With the approved funding, they will purchase an additional baking oven, a specific bread oven, a refrigerated cake display, a specialised dough retarder and mixer, as well as other kitchen equipment.

There is also a marketing element to this project to promote The Old Hardware brand. This involves getting custom cotton shopping bags and paper carrier bags printed with The Old Hardware logo, as well printing glossy stickers to affix to their cake boxes.



## Kildare Youth Services



Between 1996 and 2016, Co. Kildare experienced a 64.8% population increase - the second highest rate in the state.

This corresponds with Kildare having the highest proportion of young people in the state, with 36.6% of the population of the county under 24 years old. This, combined with the size and significance of Kildare's existing population cohorts under 18, shows that the county's population has yet to peak.\* These demographics indicate that there will likely be an increased demand for services for young people in the coming years.

Despite the booming youth population, the KYS building at Canal Stores, Basin Street is the only facility in Naas that is dedicated solely to the needs of young people. This makes it a strategically important building that is particularly worthy of capital investment.

The building accommodates:

- A community-based youth project that serves approximately 130 targeted disadvantaged young people in the locality.
- The Youth Information Service that serves all young people across Co. Kildare.
- Other groups that support young people, children, and families across Naas and surrounding communities, as well as partner statutory agencies and community & voluntary organisations that serve the broader community of Naas.

The building is currently very inefficient in terms of energy use, with poor insulation, substandard glazing, an outdated heating system, and a roof that leaks in heavy rain.

Funding was approved at the March meeting of the LAG to address all of these issues through an extensive retrofit.

This includes:

- Replacing the roof
- Installing new windows and doors
- Upgrading the insulation
- Replacing the heating system

The renovation of the building will allow Kildare Youth Services to better serve the needs of young people in the area in a more comfortable building. The renovation will also increase the attractiveness of the area along the canal which is used for recreation and exercise.

\*Kildare County Council and LCDC, *Kildare Census 2016 Profile - Demographics*.

## St. Kevin's GAA Club



St. Kevin's GAA Club is located in Staplestown, Donadea. It is a rural area and it is dangerous to walk along the roads as footpaths are insufficient.

People in the community have been using the perimeter of the club's pitch as a place to walk safely. However, as there is no proper path or surfacing, the weather impacts how much it can be used.

Club members, as well as local schools and residents, approached the club about developing a surfaced lit path as an amenity for the community,

St. Kevin's GAA Club approach the LEADER programme and were approved for funding to build a 1km walkway with low level lighting around the perimeter of their grounds. This will provide a year-round option for people from the community to walk safely and on a proper surface. The walkway will be accessible from 8am to 10pm daily and will be lit from dusk until closing time. The lights will use LED technology to minimise energy consumption.



## Launch of 'Our Rural Future' 2021-2025



The LEADER team was pleased to participate in the remote launch of the 'Our Rural Future' Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 on 29th March.

We particularly welcome the remarks by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, about the important role that Local Development Companies and Public Participation Networks have in leading local bottom-up development.

The Minister's comments on needing to be brave, bold, and ambitious in shaping the future of rural areas resonated with the us and our vision for bringing forward projects for funding under the Transitional Programme in 2021 and 2022..

The policy makes particular reference to the role of Local Development Companies, such as County Kildare LEADER Partnership, in the delivery of measures that relate to six of the Sustainable Development goals.

These include, but are not limited to:

1. Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreational tourism.
2. Expand the Walks Scheme to achieve a target of at least 80 trails, doubling the number from 2018.
3. Support the development of Smart Towns and Villages which use innovative solutions to improve resilience, build on local strengths and maximise opportunities to create desirable places for people to live and work.
4. Provide additional supports to assist community and voluntary groups to develop projects and access available funds – including by streamlining of grant applications.
5. Support rural communities to develop long-term cohesive Master Plans for their areas, to support an integrated place-based approach to rural development (aligned with the RSEs, County Development Plans, Local Development Plans and relevant national, regional and local policy objectives).

