

FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY WELLBEING CONSULTATION

ATHY MUNICIPAL DISTRICT



Findings from the consultation held Thursday 20th July 2023

Location: The Irish Wheelchair Association - Athy

MD area: Athy

Number of members in attendance: 16

Health Physical and Mental: Being healthy is more than not being sick, it's about being safe and secure, it's about being able to have good clean food, to be able to get out and about. Now that the evenings are lengthening, look at all the people out jogging and walking and cycling and doing their thing on the roads and the tracks around sports fields and the parks and trails. We know that all of this also helps our mental health, as does having people you can talk to and a place you belong, and space to relax and be calm. But our health can't always be perfect, and sometimes we do need to be able to get professional help. We can't have a hospital at every crossroads, so what makes sense to build a healthy community? What would it look like?

Environment and Sustainability: If you live in a poor environment, everything else suffers. Environment is not just nature and wildlife and waterways (though they are very important too), it's also our buildings and streets, towns and our housing. It's about how we manage our natural resources, so that we leave enough for the generations to come. We hear a lot about climate change, and how it is the cause of a lot of the extreme weather we have had. The fact is that we are going to have to change the way we live, moving to renewable energy, making less waste and using less resources. How do we plan for this in a way that sustains the communities?

Values, Culture and Meaning: This is one which seem less obvious – but it's about what makes us who we are? What identifies us as a community? Our heritage and our history, our past and our present. What brings us together? What do we do when we gather; sport, music, drama, arts and crafts, spirituality, cards, dance, food, etc. The cup of tea and the chat, the sociable pint, the theatre and drama, the music and song, the neighbourliness that happens when there is a crisis. What is it about our communities that emigrants will get tearful about in the pubs of New York or Sydney? How will this look in the years to come? How would we want it to look?

Economy and Resources: Money makes the world go around – and people need enough income to live. We know that work is changing, and lots of the jobs that were there 20 years ago are gone, and lots of the jobs that people do now were not even imagined then. What are the main sources of work in this area, are they secure, what new opportunities are out there?

Technology gives us some real opportunities for rural areas. There is a small town in Scotland, where they have set up a working hub and there are about 60 people employed – working for a university in Boston! That's real jobs and quality jobs, bringing income into an area – and where distance is no object.

We also need to look at people who are not in paid work for whatever reason, maybe they are retired, or unemployed, or caring or have a disability. Are there programmes to help

them to maintain their skills and learn new ones? To get involved in the community, along with their families?

For the economy to thrive we need good services and infrastructure; Transport, Broadband, Education for all ages, Shops, support for new businesses and old? What local resources and skills do we have and how can they be managed sustainably?

Social and Community Development: Everyone talks about the economy, but we don't live in an economy, we live in a community. A good community is probably one where people feel safe and secure, that has facilities to bring people together and they have things to do. What about people with disabilities, or new people or people from different cultures? Men and women? How do we develop a place where people can live without fear, and have places to go, and things to do? A place to be proud of and to belong to. It's also where we look at equality, how do we include everyone, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation, or culture, or ethnic group or age etc. Communities that work well also have good services and infrastructure – transport, broadband, social services etc. But the most important thing is people!

Participation, Democracy and Good Governance: This is tricky – the easy start is participation, volunteering, getting involved, “doing your bit” and encouraging others to do the same. And around you, do you have a voice or a say in the decisions that affect you locally, as well as voting every 5 years? Are the views of all the different communities of Kildare heard and considered, and not just the ones that shout loudest or are in a so called “golden circle”. You can't please all of the people all of the time, but can we trust the way decisions are taken? The decisions on how money is spent? and how fair it is? Good Governance would mean that we can – all the way from the Dail to the Council to our own group that runs a lotto, or a Churchgate collection or a table quiz. But does this accountability mean that we are drowning in paperwork and people are put off getting involved in committees? What do we need to restore trust in our charities and voluntary organisations, and keep them vibrant?

Disclaimer: The findings in this report were gathered directly from individuals and member organisations of Kildare PPN. It represents their opinions and comments. Every effort has been made not to distort data; however, some grammatical and non-related edits have been made.

Themes	Asset mapping (What we have)	Vision for the future (What we would like)
Health Physical & Mental		GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS
	<p>Suncroft GAA Athletic clubs Walking groups Indoor bowls Fit sticks group St Laurence's GAA Cuan Mhuire addiction centre New health centre St Vincent's Hospital Swimming Pool Spa Slainte care health centre Peoples Park Irish Wheelchair Association Paediatric centre Gym Blueway canal Mens shed Women's Shed Wednesday walking Athy Tri Athy Kilkee Castle Heads Up Mental health services In Sync Sports hub Break out arts group KARE Free gym equipment Youth café Clover lodge nursing home Care for the elderly</p>	<p><u>Accessibility</u> Disability parking spaces Universal access to buildings for people with additional needs</p> <p><u>Communication</u> Directory of all services in the area Newsletter covering local events and services in both digital and print format</p> <p><u>Public Amenities & Facilities</u> More public space for all More cycle friendly spaces Better paths More parking spaces More changing places for people with additional needs More public bins Public toilets Funded local accessible public transport or shuttle bus to leisure facilities</p> <p><u>Health facilities and supports</u> Supports for prescribed activities for people with mental health & special needs More social prescribing link workers (with local knowledge) Support for people on the autism spectrum (Adults) including back to work, education etc. Supports for teens with eating disorders Streamline referral pathways Outreach programmes for rural areas More GPs Localised healthcare facilities</p>

		<p>Community GP in the primary healthcare centre</p> <p>Residential facility for people with additional needs</p> <p>More psychologists</p> <p>Bus drivers for organisations such as the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA)</p> <p>Additional funding & staffing in IWA</p> <p>Designated liaison person for people living alone</p> <p>Other</p> <p>More supports for independent living</p> <p>Utilise the library for more for information about grants or assistance</p> <p>Resources need to be more localised and less central to Athy</p>
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GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION

Maybe it's now that the education of the nurses should go back to learning on the job like years ago. Often nurses train for years to find out after a few months working that this wasn't for them. Better follow up care with mental health patients. Quicker waiting lists for appointments for patients with cancer, hip replacements, etc.

Target those with low mobility to be able to attend accessible sports facilities, k leisure and all sports groups have accessible facilities and have an ethos for participation of those with low mobility and disabilities.

Economy & Resources		GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS
	<p>Primary schools</p> <p>Secondary schools</p> <p>Crookstown filling station</p> <p>Post offices</p> <p>Grocery shops</p> <p>Shackleton Museum</p> <p>Shaws</p> <p>Hotels</p> <p>Etex</p> <p>American fruits industry</p> <p>Post office</p> <p>Canal</p> <p>National Learning Network</p> <p>Kilkea Castle</p>	<p>Grants/Funding</p> <p>More grants for businesses to make places accessible – Entrance, bathrooms etc.</p> <p>Simplify grants system for older adults and people with additional needs</p> <p>Employment</p> <p>Obair needs more staff with better training to deal with the unemployed</p> <p>Greater emphasis on business and focus on specific industries</p>

	<p>Minch Norton Ind Cafes & Pubs Great business people County Kildare LEADRER Partnership (CKLP) Kildangan stud Athy town promoters The Old Hardware, Narraghmore (local arts) Craft workshops Quaker village youth theatre</p>	<p><u>Maintenance</u> Train station needs to be upgraded Better system for access support to the train station Train station bridge needs to be accessible Public paths need to be safe and accessible</p> <p><u>Services/Amenities</u> Well-staffed citizen information centre Local Enterprise Office (LEO) More post offices in rural areas Better parking Clinics for older persons to support Technology and give advice</p> <p><u>Education</u> Apprenticeship school</p> <p><u>Housing</u> Housing to attract professional staff More affordable housing and appropriate for the people KCC need to do a stock take of houses in the county Houses for individuals retired Social class balance – ref: housing in all areas of the MD not just big towns</p> <p><u>Transport - Traffic</u> More frequent & reliable buses to and from Athy Reduce traffic in town More charging stations for EV in all towns EV charging maps should be made available in Library's Consider one way system in all towns</p>
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	<p>Other Better run chamber of commerce More collaboration between community groups</p>
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GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION

Fair pay for workers and allow working from home. Carers should have better pay and more money for traveling to clients taking in mind insurance, wear and tear on their vehicles. More employment in our town to reduce commuting, first broadband for all, e-desks hubs and a program to encourage and assist working at or near home. Level of pay not minimum but a living wage, more housing to attract talent into the area.

Social & Community Development	GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS
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Social & Community Development	<p>Card nights in St Laurance's Library Athy Arts centre Boxing club Driving range Karate club Music in the library Men's shed Women's shed Kilkea Castle KARE Community Arts Centre Dara project Schools Small tight knit communities Family Resource centre Athy alternative programme Steiner school</p>	<p><u>Facilities/Amenities</u> Accessible transport and bus stops More shops Arts centre More facilities for people with disabilities</p> <p><u>Community services</u> Chamber of commerce needed Better supports for small businesses Integration strategy for Athy More Gardaí at night Citizen's advice needs to re-open Town newsletter All services need to be inclusive</p> <p><u>Education</u> Identify training where animals can support people More school places</p> <p><u>Maintenance</u> Footpaths need to be better Regenerate empty shop/fronts Ring road completed ASAP</p> <p><u>Industry</u> Attract better industry into the towns Social farming Better broadband</p>
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		<p>Other Central location for music & recording</p>
GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION		
<p>Good childcare to support working families. Good after school facilities. Accessible after study for teenagers. Have youth groups and youth cafe in all towns. Families to send children to preference schools in their area. Fair pay for teachers with good class size teacher to student ratio. Good healthcare facilities for all, accessible doctors and hospital appointment timetable to be realistic. Fair pay for nurses and doctors - fair working hours. Fair pay for PAYE workers. Have good community services, back to education for those who have young families, unemployed so they have a better looking future. Look after the people with disabilities and have enough carers. Public transport should be accessible to all. Better grants for windows, doors, and solar panels. Have training specific for retrofitting. Have more carers to allow older people to stay in their homes. Have good community services for the older people in our areas.</p> <p>Invisible physical access to all facilities, target older and disabled to become part of the community</p>		

Participation, Democracy & Good Governance		GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS
	<p>Youth at the heart of participation Politicians' clinic IWA (To ensure we have a voice) County Council Development Associations Access groups Kildare Public Participation Network</p>	<p><u>Electoral Registration process</u> More people need to be encouraged to register to vote</p> <p><u>Engagement</u> We need youth/young people involved at all levels locally Target young people re: volunteering and its benefits PPN to get involved in schools Re: volunteering</p> <p><u>Governance</u> Proper oversight / accountability for decision making at local level & national Government Oversight of all charities to be improved Council meetings should be broadcast</p> <p><u>Funding</u> Properly funded section 39 organisations</p>

	<p>Other Over reliance on volunteers needs to be addressed LAP – better planned county wide rather than MD area based on development & growth Return to local council</p>
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GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION

Housing is a big issue these days. Even with two wages coming in some families can't get a mortgage. There are older people living in homes that were built for families, if you could put a package together to rehouse one or two people properties and this would free up family housing.

Live stream of all MD meetings, encourage assist new members of the community to vote.
Work on awareness of hidden disabilities, dementia friendly community.

<p>Values, Culture & Meaning</p>	<p>GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS</p>
	<p>Kilkea castle Bluegrass festival Greenfields festival National Ploughing Championships Shackleton Museum Library Athy Triathlon Castlefarm Larry's on the move Burtown House Moate (of Ardsclull) Fitzgerald graveyard Scouts Good community spirit Brigid 1500 Macra Irish speakers Athy Music society O.N.E Made of Athy Gordon Bennet route Market town (Athy) Creative place art Churches & places of worship</p> <p><u>Accessibility</u> More public space to rent so people can have access to community centres outside Athy</p> <p><u>Services, supports & Amenities</u> Supports for isolation & loneliness Post covid supports are still needed Better transport to and from towns</p> <p><u>Local</u> Community spaces for teas & coffee Monitor / contain discrimination (minority can make it hard for new people) More intergenerational spaces</p> <p><u>Events</u> An awards night for volunteers – token of acknowledgement Weekly dances Greater integration and celebrations of all traditions More festival of traditional music and dance</p> <p><u>Education/sport</u> Introduce skills at early ages</p>

GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION

Have more community inclusion. Encourage integration.
Appreciation of all cultures in the community

Environment & Sustainability	GATHERED FROM IN PERSON CONSULTATIONS
<p>Buzzards Kildare wildlife The bogs/peatlands Swift boxes EV charging Athy train station Remote working hub Moone High Cross Mullaghreelan woods Town link Organic Veg (Market) Blueway & Barrow River Green flag schools Tidy Towns Associations Residence Associations TFI Heritage sites</p>	<p><u>Transport</u> Bicycle rental services Make buses and bus stops accessible More EV charging points through the MD at accessible parking points Increase support for walking and cycling to school – Increase pedestrian crossings</p> <p><u>Services & Attractions</u> Promote & further develop the Blueway (more coffee shops & services) Support for the creation of a community garden for shared food</p> <p><u>Environment & Sustainability</u> Waste management should be returned to Local Authorities but retain private providers Protect & restore the bogs Support businesses that reuse or recycle or repurpose materials Offer hens to families to produce eggs and reduce food waste/fertilize gardens Ensure waste from building sites/construction is put to use Promote diversity of food production at farming level & industry More community gardens Encourage clubs to have a wildlife area, support biodiversity</p> <p><u>Education</u> Apprenticeships for sustainable work Education programmes in schools Incentives & training for farm diversification</p>

		<p>Advice clinics for people who want to be sustainable but don't know how to start</p> <p><u>Housing</u> Information of providers for insulation & solar panels Insulation of houses (incentives, easily accessible funds) Eliminate fees Make it easier to restore old buildings</p> <p><u>Funded events</u> Eliminate disposables and waste from publicly funded events (Make funding contingent on it)</p>
GATHERED FROM ONLINE CONSULTATION		
N/A		