



Kilfenora Meitheal

**Kilfenora-Inchovea
Community Development
Plan (2019 – 2021)**

Prepared on behalf of the Community by a Voluntary Community
Planning Group

February 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document comprises a Community Development Plan for the community of Kilfenora in County Clare and its immediate environs. Titled *Kilfenora Meitheal*, it has been developed through a year-long, facilitated, consultative process in which the actions proposed have been informed by the needs, interests and concerns of those living in the area.

The process of developing the plan was led by a group of local volunteers who worked closely with a facilitator whose role was to guide and mentor the planning process. The members of the planning group were as follows:

- Frances Connole
- Franny Nagle
- Trisha Kelly
- Andy Lambert
- Cara O' Donaghue
- Stephen Hegarty
- Orla Vaughan
- John Howard
- Bernie O' Connor

It is also important to note the contribution of Austin Kelly who also participated for a period on the Planning Group.

The planning process was enabled by the Clare LEADER Programme under the management of Clare Local Development Company.



2. KILFENORA

Kilfenora-Inchovea is a parish situated in north County Clare. The parish is encompassed within the Local Electoral Division of Kilfenora, with the village of Kilfenora at its heart.

Kilfenora is a rural community. Nearest towns and villages include Ennistymon to the southwest (8km), Lisdoonvara to the northwest (8.5km) and Corofin to the southeast (13km). Travelling to Ennis, Clare's County Town (27km), takes in the region of 30 minutes.

Kilfenora has many strengths. Residents suggest that Kilfenora is a friendly place with a good community spirit. It is reasonably well served by community and commercial facilities and is located in an area of great natural beauty and historical significance. Nestled in the heart of the Burren, Kilfenora is a very picturesque. It is also endowed with many historical sites, including Kilfenora Cathedral. The musical heritage of the parish is known widely, particularly because of the exploits of the Kilfenora Céilí Band. It is therefore a popular area for visitors.

On the other hand, residents also point to what they perceive as:

- an inadequate number of community-focused activities (for example for men, older people, youth);
- insufficient use of existing community facilities alongside the need for additional facilities;
- the need to improve the physical appearance of the community;
- considerable depopulation among particular age cohorts in the community alongside a desire to increase tourism and employment in the area; and
- poor public transport and concerns about road safety.

This plan therefore recognises that Kilfenora is both a community of local residents and a destination that attracts visitors to the area during the year. Activities within the plan seek to prioritise the needs of those living in the area while also ensuring the best possible experience for those who visit the community.

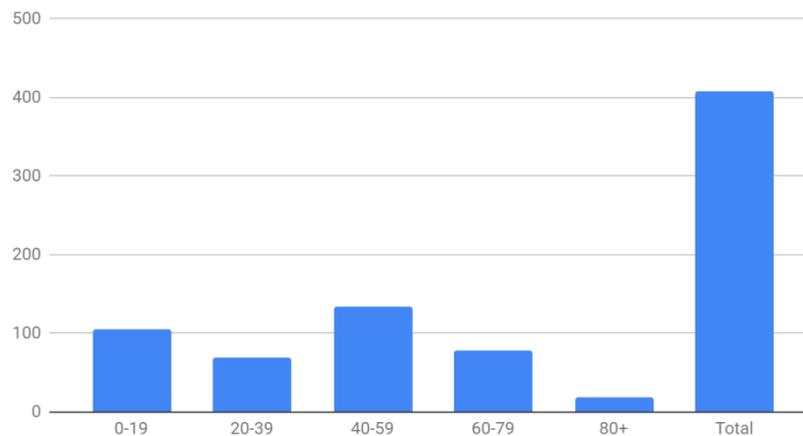
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Census 2016 indicates that:

- The overall population of Kilfenora is 408: 192 males and 216 females. The population of Kilfenora is relatively evenly spread across age the groups, though people aged 80+ years account for less than 5% of the population. See Figure 1 below:
- There is little cultural or ethnic diversity among residents of Kilfenora, with the population identifying itself as predominantly white Irish, with less than 10% identifying differently.



Figure 1: Kilfenora Population by Age 2016

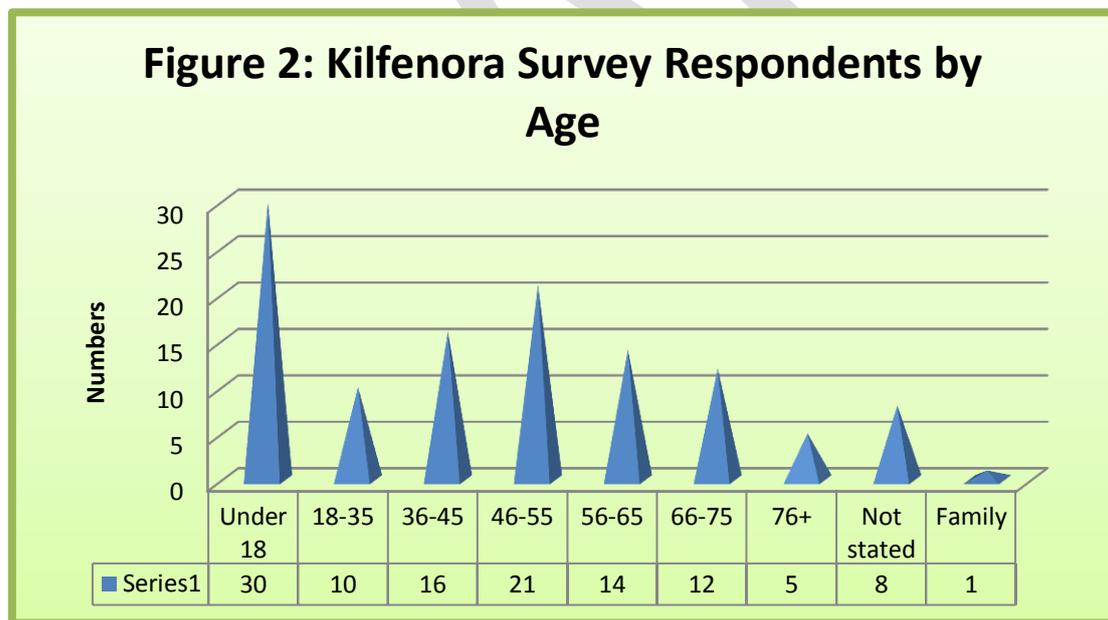


- A total of 325 individuals are living in families in the area, with a total of 98 families recorded in the Census, 34% of which are two person families.
- 39% of households in Kilfenora are one person households. Lone parent households comprise 12% of households in the community.
- 52% of households in Kilfenora are owner occupied, while 17% of properties are rented in the community. There is a substantial amount of vacant properties in Kilfenora, comprising 15% of the properties in the area. Census 2016 suggests that unoccupied holiday homes constitute 6% of all permanent dwellings in Kilfenora.
- From a total of 323 individuals in Kilfenora eligible to work, 49.2% are in employment. 19.8% are retired while less than 10% are unemployed; 10.7% are looking after the home/family, while a further 3.7% is unable to work because of illness or disability.
- Census 2016 reveals that residents of Kilfenora generally commute locally to school/work with heavy reliance on private cars for transport. 45% of households reported ownership of one car and 28% with two cars in Census 2016.
- The residents of Kilfenora report that they are largely healthy with less than 1% describing themselves as having bad health in Census 2016. Less than 3% is described as having a disability.
- Three out of every five households in Kilfenora have a computer, while 57% of the population reports access to broadband.

3. KILFENORA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Following an initial Expression of Interest by The Burren Centre and Kilfenora Timeline to the Clare LEADER programme, a four-phase process was undertaken in the preparation of this Community Plan as follows:

- 1) *An Orientation Phase:* This phase involved the establishment of the aforementioned planning group to lead and project-manage the planning process in Kilfenora. Orientation was provided on how to effectively conduct an evidence-informed planning process while materials and information were also provided to the planning group to support its stewardship of the process.
- 2) *An Information Gathering Phase:* The planning group implemented a broad-based consultation process during Phase 2 to enable community residents - full and part-time - to identify strengths, needs, interests and concerns from their respective experiences of Kilfenora, and to identify priority projects that should be addressed in the emerging community plan. A total of 117 individuals from across the life cycle responded to the survey as outlined in Figure 2 below:



- 3) *Analysis of Information and Action Planning Phase:* Phase 3 comprised the planning group and wider community of Kilfenora examining a summary of the information gathered through the community consultation, identifying priority needs and selecting priority actions for inclusion in the Kilfenora Community Plan – as well as identifying resources and supports needed to facilitate implementation.



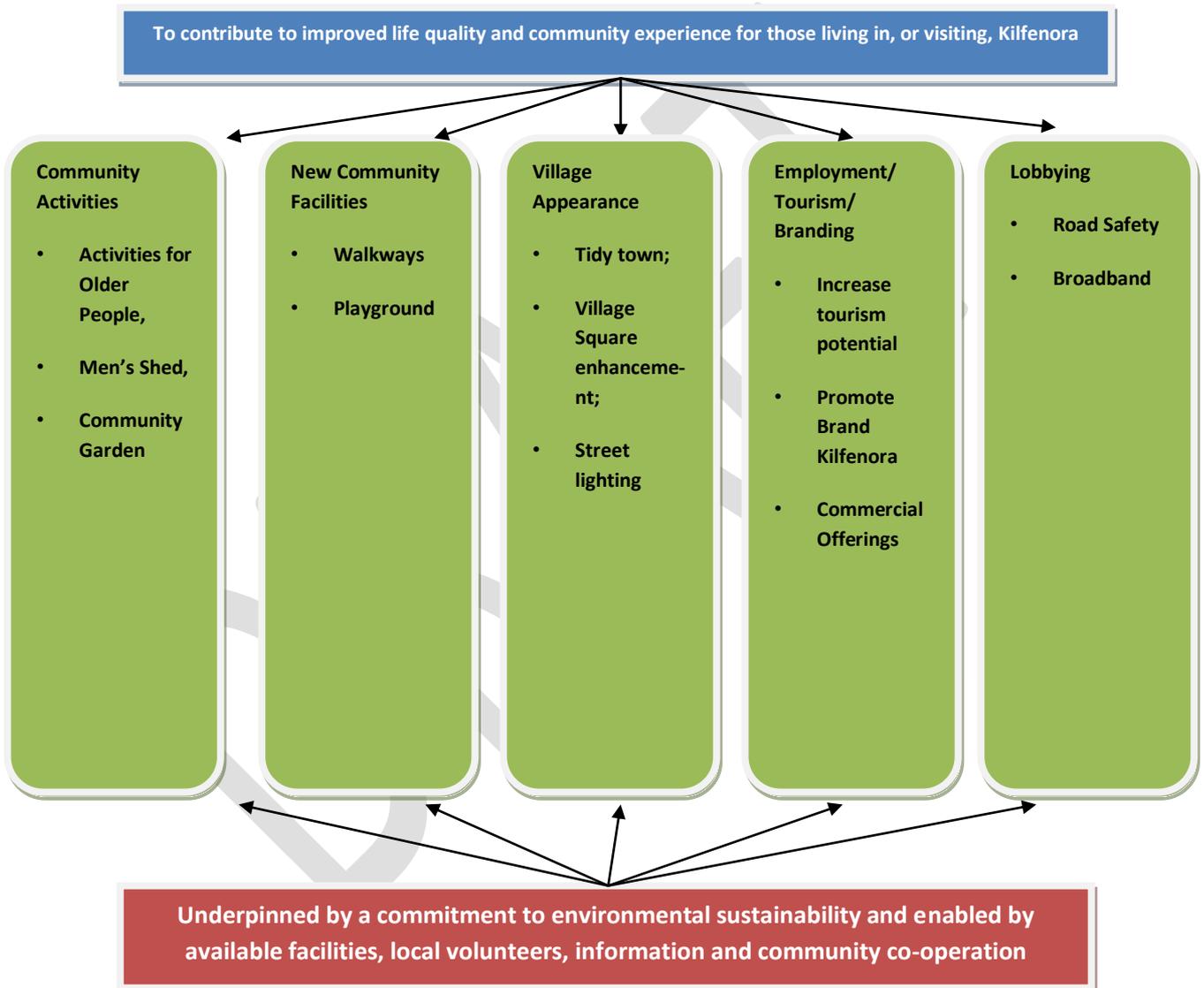
- 4) *Writing Phase:* Phase 4 involved the preparation, agreement and finalisation of this document as the core output of the planning process: the Kilfenora Community Development Plan.

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4. FRAMEWORK FOR KILFENORA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Figure 3 below presents a diagrammatic overview of the core elements of the Kilfenora Community Development Plan. All actions within the plan are designed to contribute to *improved life quality and community experience for those living in, or visiting, Kilfenora.*

Figure 3: Plan Framework





5. STRUCTURE

The implementation of the Kilfenora Parish Community Development Plan will be enabled through the establishment of an Oversight Group and a range of Implementation Groups.

OVERSIGHT GROUP

Kilfenora Meitheal will be overseen by an Oversight Group which will be established specifically for the purposes of governing the implementation of this plan. Core responsibilities will be as follows:

- governing and overseeing delivery of the plan;
- liaising with the community;
- accessing funds for Kilfenora Meitheal projects; and
- administering funding on behalf of the community.

The Oversight Group will also set about establishing a new organisation, *Kilfenora Meitheal*, which will assume responsibility for the delivery of the plan thereafter. A small Board of Directors will be convened to establish the entity, progress implementation of the Community Plan and seek out funding for core actions.

Prior to establishing the proposed company, the members of the Planning Group will meet with representatives from each of the local groups and associations in Kilfenora to:

- seek out backing for the plan and the proposed structure for its delivery; and
- seek out participation of local groups/associations in the oversight and implementation structures to ensure full representation across the community.

The groups to be consulted in this regard will be: Kilfenora Timeline; The Burren Centre; The Deanery; The Hall Committee; The GAA; St. Patrick's Day Parade; The Old Folks Club; Comhaltas; Sonas Kindergarten; The Board of Management of the Primary School; The Parish Council; The Choir; The Gun Club. Final decisions on oversight structure will be taken after this consultative meeting.

The Oversight Group will also prioritise getting project implementation up and running within the community and work towards being in a position to hire a part-time manager to lead and coordinate projects on behalf of the community into the future.

IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS

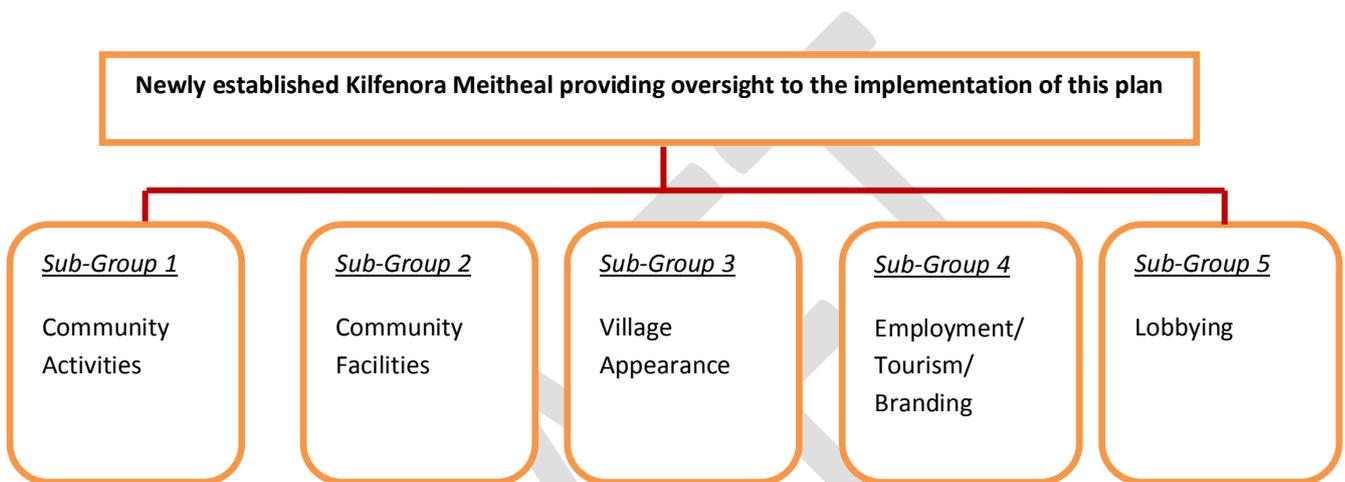
Implementation groups will also be created for each of the strands contained in the Kilfenora plan. These groups will comprise community residents that have volunteered, following a community call



for volunteers, to participate in the implementation of specific projects. The groups will be convened in the near future to plan and begin action on their respective projects. Membership of the sub-groups will be open to any individual in the community interested in contributing to the delivery of any of the named projects.

This structure is illustrated below in Figure 4:

Figure 4: Operational Structure for oversight and delivery of Kilfenora Parish Community Development Plan





6. STRANDS AND ACTIONS

STRAND 1: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Core Actions: To examine the potential of establishing Activities for Older People, a Men's Shed and a Community Garden and progressing actions accordingly

Key Steps to be implemented

- Establish an Implementation Sub-Group
- Scope demand for activities locally
- Identify specific nature of activities sought
- Identify and seek out facilities and locations for delivery within the community
- Develop action plans and agree responsibilities and timelines for delivery
- Identify resource requirements and seek out resources as required
- Establish and deliver activities

STRAND 2: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Core Actions: Develop new Community Facilities for Kilfenora, including new walkways and a children's playground

Key Steps to be implemented:

- Establish an Implementation Sub-Group
- Visit and research similar projects
- Review various local sites for walkways and play space
- Review ownership of lands and access issues
- Establish site plans
- SWOT analysis of the different sites
- Key Planning Considerations
- Consider Operational Costs, including facility creation, maintenance, insurance and other, publicity, etc
- Consider sources of income
- Examination of legal and funding obstacles
- Agree timelines for implementation



STRAND 3: ENHANCE THE APPEARANCE OF KILFENORA VILLAGE

Core Actions: Develop a Tidy Towns initiative for Kilfenora, enhance the appearance of the village square and upgrade street lighting

- Establish an Implementation Sub-Group
- Put in place a plan for village and parish clean up
- Publicise and create a community clean up event
- Use this event as a vehicle for further village enhancement activities
- Identify available resources and additional resources required
- Put action plan in place
- Implement

STRAND 4: IMPROVE BRANDING, TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL OF KILFENORA

Core Actions: Increase tourism potential, promote Brand Kilfenora and increase the range of commercial offerings to attract greater tourism

- Establish an Implementation Sub-Group with a particular focus on inviting local business participation
- Scope new opportunities for business in Kilfenora, with particular reference to establishing Kilfenora as a year round tourist destination drawing on the community's proximity to the Burren, Cliffs of Moher and its historical and musical heritage
- Build a consistent Brand/Logo for Kilfenora that is used by all businesses in their marketing and publicity
- Consideration to be given to the development of *high profile events* to attract visitors to Kilfenora throughout the year and not simply during summer months
- Local artists and producers to be facilitated to profile, showcase and sell their produce in local facilities
- External resources to be sourced as required

STRAND 5: LOBBYING

Core Actions: Develop a lobby for improvements in Road Safety and Broadband

Kilfenora Meitheal to negotiate with Clare Local Development Company/Clare LEADER Programme re the establishment and support of a regional lobbying platform that links communities in northwest Clare (particularly those supported through Community Development Planning process) on issues of mutual interest: Road Safety, Broadband.



Kilfenora Meitheal to nominate volunteers from the community to participate in this regional platform.

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7. CONCLUSION

It is important to note this document as a framework plan that outlines broad priority actions to be implemented throughout Kilfenora over the next three years to improve *life quality and community experience for those living in, or visiting, Kilfenora.*

The plan reflects the priority needs, interests and concerns of the community as identified by a significant community survey undertaken in Summer 2018. It is now important that the plan moves to full implementation.

The Planning Group which has led this planning process wants to advance the development of the proposals in this document, but *nothing can happen without community volunteers willing to lead and support particular activities.* This plan, therefore, is not simply a list of projected activities; it is also a call to action.

**Ends/
February 2019**

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