

Kilkishen Framework Community Development Plan (2020)



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

June 2020



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscald Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020
Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union

Funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development



1. SUMMARY

Having undertaken a consultative planning process, the community of Kilkishen aspires in the coming years to complete a series of eleven cross-community, collaborative projects that will result in:

- a) the development of a comprehensive *community-information platform* for Kilkishen;
- b) the re-establishment of a *youth club and youth space* for young people aged 12-18 years;
- c) increased *community-based supports for older people*;
- d) the *promotion of local history initiatives*;
- e) monthly *coffee mornings as social gatherings* for the whole community;
- f) the maintenance and development of *existing outdoor facilities* that benefit the community;
- g) the optimisation of local lake and canal facilities and development of new *water-based activity opportunities*;
- h) the development of *additional marked walking trails around Kilkishen village*, with a particular emphasis on walking trail around the circumference of Kilkishen and connecting with Cullaun lake;
- i) the possible development of a *community café and ongoing community gatherings* that cut across all age groups in the community¹;
- j) the establishment of a new *cemetery* for Kilkishen; and
- k) ongoing lobbying in respect of *road-safety measures* in Kilkishen village.

Implementation of these actions will begin at a point when normal community functioning can be restored following the restrictions placed on movement and social gathering as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A critical starting point in the implementation process will involve identifying who² will lead on specific projects as well as identifying indicative actions to enable the delivery of each project. It has not been possible to do this to date because of the Covid-19 restrictions. Similarly, it will be important that consideration be given to the operation of an oversight group that will be responsible for:

- representing the interests of the community and continually reaching out and communicating with residents on all aspects of the plan's implementation;
- accessing and administering funding to resource the implementation of the plan;

¹ Mindful that these will need to be considered in the context of public health directives.

² i.e. individuals or community associations.



- retaining decision-making authority on all aspects of the plan on behalf of the Kilkishen community;
- ensuring that all activities within the Kilkishen Community Development Plan remain part of a cohesive plan and not be viewed simply as individual projects.

2. INTRODUCTION

This document acts as a *framework* Community Development Plan for the community of Kilkishen in County Clare. It has been developed through a consultative process in which the actions proposed have been informed by the expressed needs, interests and concerns of those living in the area.

The planning process was supported by the Clare LEADER Programme under the management of Clare Local Development Company (CLDC). CLDC provided a planning facilitator to the community to assist in the development of the plan.

It is important to highlight that the entire process of developing the framework plan for Kilkishen was led by a planning group of volunteers from across local groups and associations, all of whom worked closely with the aforementioned facilitator. The role of the facilitator was to support and mentor the planning process.

The term *framework* Community Development Plan is used as opposed to Community Development Plan. The planning process, which at the time was nearing completion, was interrupted during the spring of 2020 by the public health restrictions on movement and community-gathering placed upon the public by government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, this document presents a framework of the priority actions to be addressed by Kilkishen once a return to normal community functioning can be achieved. Unfortunately it has not been possible to provide more detail on how priority actions will be implemented and by whom they will be led. Therefore, the plan remains somewhat incomplete.



As a community, Kilkishen has many strengths. Among others, residents highlight that Kilkishen⁴:

- experiences high levels of friendliness, cooperation and community spirit, and a wide variety of local, community-focused activity;
- is well served by a variety of cultural, commercial and community facilities including:
 - the local cultural centre,
 - the community playground,
 - outdoor facilities such as the 12 O' Clock Hills and Bog Walk,
 - the GAA facilities,
 - primary school,
 - local shops and petrol station,
 - post office,
 - church, etc;
- experiences the benefits of being a quiet, rural, safe and peaceful community while also being situated in an area of unspoiled natural beauty;
- is located within easy access of urban communities such as Shannon, Ennis and Limerick and is within easy access of the second level school in Tulla.

On the other hand, residents also point to what they observe as a number of significant issues that undermine the potential of Kilkishen. Among others, residents note:

- the absence of certain social and commercial services in Kilkishen such as a café, chemist and/or medical centre, crèche;
- the lack of provision for youth aged between 12 and 18 years, especially those not involved in sporting activity;
- concerns regarding social isolation in the community with particular concerns for new residents and older people living alone;
- the inadequacy of public transport provision in such a rural community;
- a lack of cohesion among the various community associations in the area;
- significant road safety concerns;
- a desire for more diverse community-based activities and facilities;
- increased dilapidation in Kilkishen village.

⁴ Statements drawn from a Community Survey undertaken as part of the planning process (November 2019).



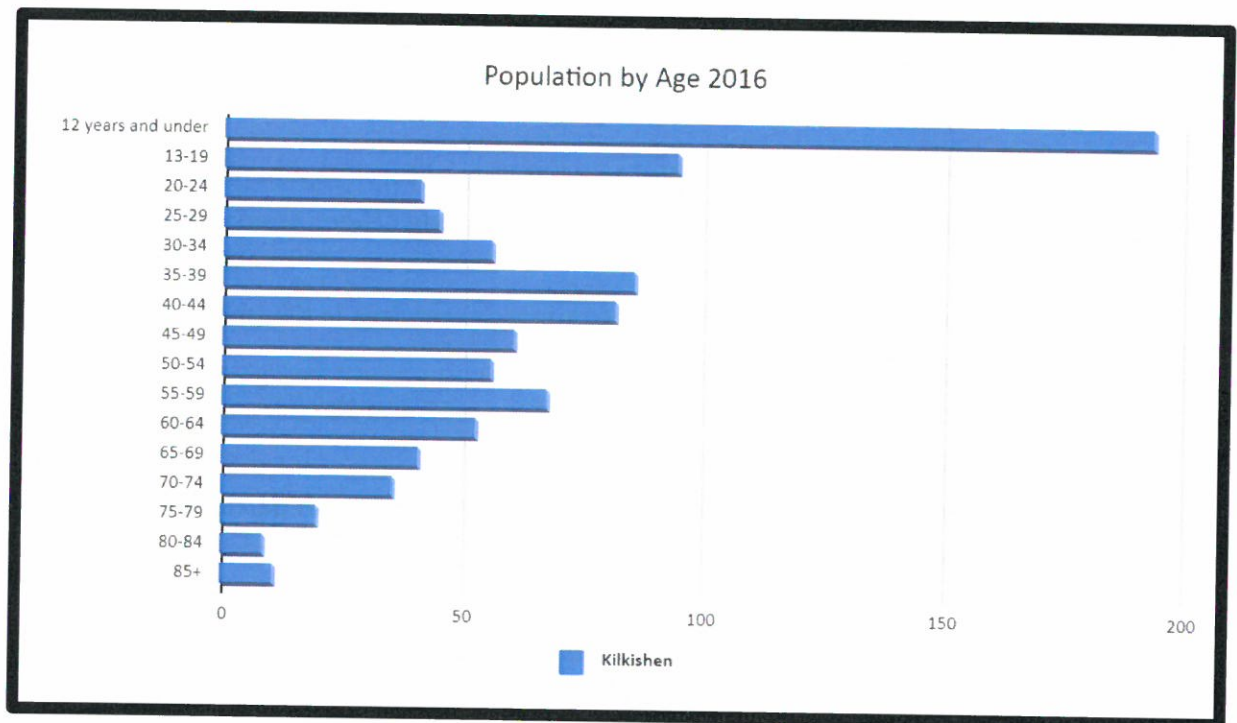
This plan therefore recognises that Kilkishen is, first and foremost, a community of local residents and secondly, a destination that attracts⁵ visitors to the area – particularly through the 12 O’ Clock Hills. Activities within the framework plan seek to prioritise the needs of those living in the area while also ensuring the best possible experience for those who visit – or may visit – into the future.

POPULATION HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE⁶

Census 2016 indicates that:

- The population of Kilkishen as per Census 2016 is 954 individuals. This represents a 1% increase in population since the 2011 Census. The population of Kilkishen has grown by 24.7% in the 20-year period 1996 – 2016. Figure 1 below presents a breakdown of the population by age-group.

Figure 1



⁵ And that has the potential to attract more visitors.

⁶ Please note that the population statistics outlined in this section concern the Electoral Division of Kilkishen. The boundaries of the Electoral Division differ somewhat from the boundaries identified for the community plan, as illustrated in the earlier map. Therefore, the information outlined above is a general representation of the community and not specific to the actual community boundary prioritised in the plan.



- The vast majority of the population in Kilkishen is both Irish born and Irish national (91.6%). There is also little cultural or ethnic diversity among residents of Kilkishen, with 90% of the population identifying itself as white Irish.
- Married couples with children comprise 55% of all individuals living in private households as per Census 2016. Cohabiting couples with children comprise another 7.6% of residents. Lone parent households – which tend to be one of the most marginalised groups in Ireland – comprise just under 10% of the population in Kilkishen (fathers and children = 3.1% and mothers and children = 6.54%), equivalent to national figures.
- As per Census 2016, 83% of Kilkishen’s population is living in owner occupied accommodation (either with or without a mortgage). 16% lives in rented accommodation. Just under 7% of the population is living in accommodation rented from the Local Authority
- 549 permanent dwellings were identified across Kilkishen in Census 2016. 87% of dwellings were in use while 52 dwellings (13%) were vacant or unoccupied on Census Night.
- From a total of 731 individuals in Kilkishen eligible to work, 54% are in employment. The number of unemployed people in the parish reduced by 31% (n=26 individuals) in the five year period between 2011 and 2016⁷.
- Of the working population in Kilkishen, 22% is involved in Manufacturing while a further 22% is involved in Professional Services (accounting, legal, medical and other such services provided by a formally certified member of a professional body). Commerce and Trade account for 14% of the work aged population.
- A total of 110 individuals across Kilkishen are identified as living with a disability, accounting for 12% of the overall population of the community. There are 44 individuals in the community involved in full time care-giving.

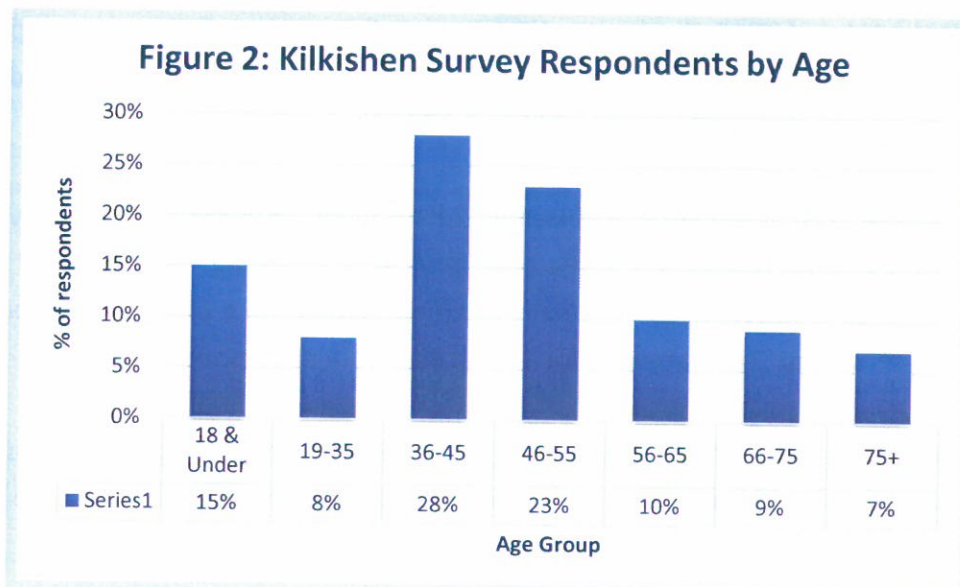
⁷ These figures are likely to change as a result of the economic impact of Covid-19 on the workforce.



4. KILKISHEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Following an initial Expression of Interest by Kilkishen Development Association to the Clare LEADER programme on behalf of Kilkishen, a four-phase process was put in place to facilitate the preparation of this Community Plan. As noted above, because of Covid-19, it was not possible to implement this four-phase process exactly as envisaged. The phases were as follows:

- 1) *An Orientation Phase:* This phase involved the establishment of the aforementioned planning group of community volunteers to lead and project-manage the planning process. Orientation was provided on how to effectively conduct a consultative planning process and a set of planning activities was agreed.
- 2) *An Information Gathering Phase:* The planning group implemented a broad-based consultation process during Phase 2. This enabled community residents to identify strengths, needs, interests and concerns from their experiences of living in Kilkishen, and to identify priority projects that should be addressed in the community plan. A total of 125 individuals from across the life cycle responded to the consultation survey with the age breakdown of respondents outlined in Figure 2 below.



- 3) *Analysis of Information and Action Planning Phase:* Phase 3 comprised the planning group examining a summary of the information gathered through the community consultation, identifying priority needs and selecting priority projects for inclusion in



the Kilkishen Community Plan. It had been intended to meet with the wider community during Phase 3 to share the results of the Phase 2 community survey and explore how priorities identified by the planning group might be taken forward with the agreement of the community as a whole. A feedback and consultation event planned for March 2020 was however cancelled as a result of Covid-19.

- 4) *Writing Phase:* It was initially expected that, following feedback from the wider community, the Kilkishen planning group would proceed to finalising the Community Plan, identifying project leads for each of the prioritised projects and putting in place a number of actions to facilitate implementation of those projects. Phase 4 was therefore envisaged as the phase for finalising and writing the Kilkishen Community Development Plan. With the gradual easing of restrictions by government in May 2020, discussions within the planning group suggested that a framework plan would be produced at this point, highlighting the critical actions to be addressed by the community once normal community functioning could be restored in full. This document acts as that framework plan.

5. FRAMEWORK FOR KILKISHEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Kilkishen is a community with a vibrant community spirit, embodied by a number of extremely committed and active associations in the area. It is also a community fortunate to have a variety of high-quality community facilities that resource and accommodate that range of community-based activities, most notably the Cultural Centre and the GAA hall. It has some magnificent outdoor facilities at its disposal.

One of the most significant concerns identified through the community planning process was that, though there is a considerable amount of community-based activity taking place in the community, there are significant gaps in people's awareness of those activities.

The consultation with community highlighted a number of critical areas for community action and it is proposed that three activity pillars would underpin the core actions of this development plan, namely actions to:

- enable and increase community-based activity;
- enhance and develop community infrastructure and facilities, including outdoor facilities; and
- lobby to improve road safety in the community.

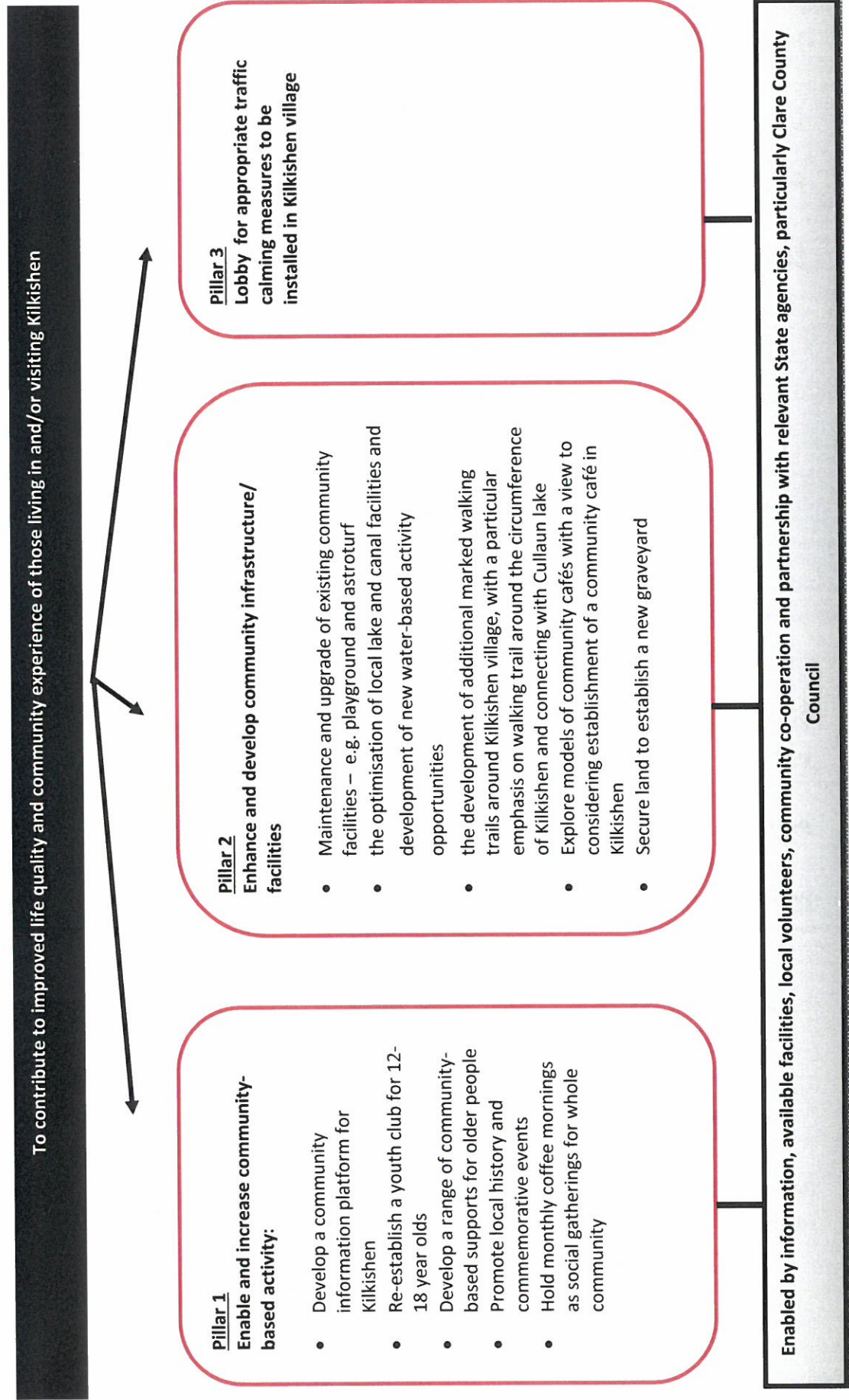


The planning group which has led this planning process recognises the importance of creating a plan that can be delivered and so has chosen nine priority projects under the three activity pillars above.

The planning group also recognises that the actions prioritised in the plan require the community as a whole to row in behind their delivery and calls upon individuals and community associations to play their part in delivering this plan. Planning group members also acknowledge the importance of working in close partnership with Clare County Council and other state bodies to realise the objectives of this plan and note their interest in establishing an ongoing positive working relationship with these partners.

The diagram overleaf presents an overview of the core elements of the Kilkishen 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, Kilkishen*. All actions should be viewed as inter-related with success in one likely to impact on other action priorities of the plan.

Figure 3: Plan Framework



6. PROJECTS

PILLAR 1: ENABLE AND INCREASE COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITY

Project 1: Develop a community information platform for Kilkishen

Priorities under Project 1

- Build awareness of:
 - existing and new activities
 - community groups
 - local services
- Establish a common forum to be used by all groups and services
- Explore different communication channels to ensure all residents have the opportunity to access relevant information - notice board, text alert, Kilkishen Development Association website
- Community organisations in Kilkishen committ to submitting information to one central point, including information on how people can get involved

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.

Project 2: Re-establish a Youth Club for 12-18 year olds in Kilkishen

Priorities under Project 2

- Seek out volunteers to re-establish a youth club for 12-18 year olds in Kilkishen
- Club to consider provision of a youth space and relevant activities:
 - 12- 15s activity-based
 - 16-18s – more a space to hang out and play music
- Recognise the need for activities for young people not involved in sport

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.



Project 3: Develop a range of community-based supports for older people

Priorities under Project 3

- Re-establish the annual Senior Citizens Party in Kilkishen
- Create opportunities for Older people to get together and meet up
- Establish a Kilkishen senior citizens committee that empowers older people to make decisions in relation to the needs of older people
- Develop a project to help older people complete important forms online.

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.

Project 4: Promote local history and commemorative events

Priorities under Project 4

- Recognise that Kilkishen has a wealth of local history highlights
- Explore opportunities for promotion of local history
- Develop a series of commemorative events in community

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.

Project 5: Monthly Coffee Mornings

Priorities under Project 5

Prior to the onset of Covid-19, monthly community coffee mornings had been established in the Cultural Centre as community events for all age groups. It is proposed under this plan that these events be continued into future, mindful of the need to observe public health directives following Covid-19.

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.



PILLAR 2: ENHANCE AND DEVELOP COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES

Project 6: Maintain and upgrade existing facilities

Priorities under Project 6

- Implement existing works focused on the maintenance of the community playground and lighting of Kilkishen astroturf

Project to be led by Kilkishen Development Association.

Project 7: Develop New Water-based Activities and Amenities

Priorities under Project 7

As noted at the outset of this document, Kilkishen is nestled between a range of lakes and local canals. These facilities not only add to the beauty of the area, they also provide new opportunities for the development of Kilkishen as a venue for water-based activities (e.g. kayaking, sailing, swimming, angling and so on). It is proposed that, to begin this process, a feasibility study will be conducted to examine new opportunities for the development of water-based activities and amenities in Kilkishen, focused on identifying possibilities, required developments and investment.

Project 8: Develop New Water-based Activities and Amenities

Priorities under Project 8

The community in Kilkishen has developed a number of excellent walking opportunities in recent years: The Bog Walk and the highly acclaimed 12 O' Clock Hills. Project 8 of this plan proposes further development of walking trails, with a particular focus on developing a marked walking trail around the circumference of Kilkishen village that ultimately connects with Cullaun lake.

Indicative actions required to advance this action will include:

- Liaise with Clare County Council
- Map rights-of-way around the village that can form part of a marked trail



- Identify and negotiate with relevant local land owners
- Identify resource requirements and apply for funding as required
- Initiate trail development

Project 9: Explore possibility of establishing a Community Café

Priorities under Project 9

- Review other community café models around the country – how they operate; required facilities, potential obstacles, etc, with a view to considering potential for a similar establishment in Kilkishen.
- Kilkishen Cultural Centre to be made available to offer tea/coffee/scones to walking groups on the 12 O' Clock Hills on the understanding that advance notice would be provided by groups.

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.

Project 10: Secure land and establish a new cemetery for Kilkishen

Priorities under Project 10

- Identify suitable location
- Fundraise and purchase land
- Establish new community graveyard

Project lead and project partners to be identified once full community functioning is restored.



PILLAR 3: ROAD SAFETY MEASURES

Project 11: Lobby for appropriate traffic-calming measures in Kilkishen Village

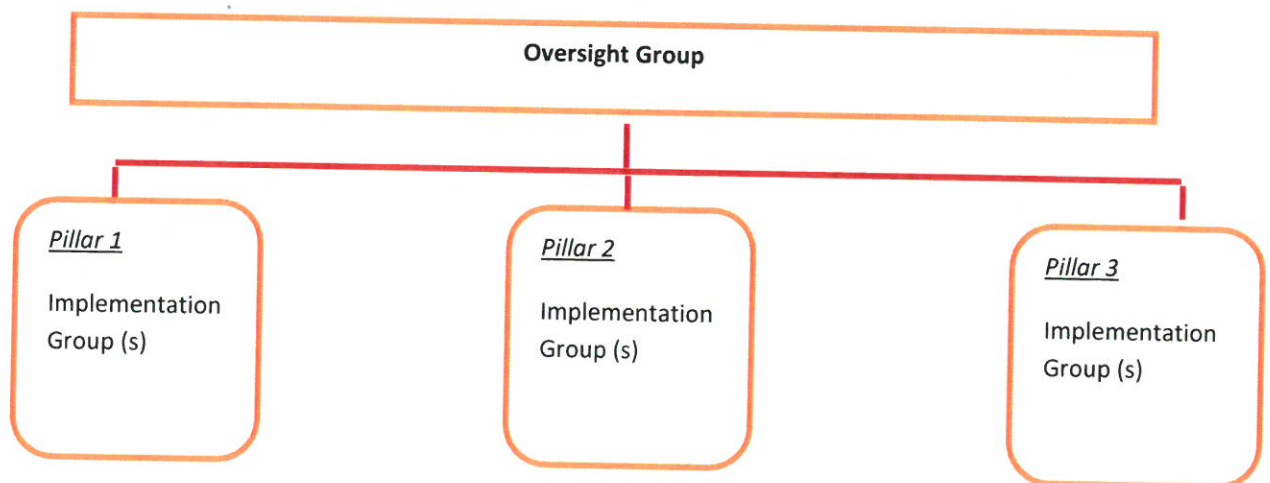
Priorities under Project 11

Continue work initiated by Kilkishen Development Association to lobby for appropriate traffic calming measures in the village.

7. STRUCTURE

The implementation of the Kilkishen Parish Community Development Plan will be enabled and monitored through the establishment of an Oversight Group working alongside the various bodies implementing actions under each of the three activity pillars. This structure is illustrated below in Figure 4:

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



OVERSIGHT GROUP

The Kilkishen Parish Community Development Plan will be overseen by an agreed Oversight Group operating to the following purpose:

- Representing the interests of the community and continually reaching out and communicating with residents on all aspects of the plan's implementation.



- Accessing and administering funding to resource the implementation of the plan.
- Retaining decision-making authority on all aspects of the plan on behalf of the Kilkishen community.
- Ensuring that all activities within the Kilkishen Community Development Plan remain part of a cohesive plan and not be viewed simply as individual projects.

It is proposed that members of the existing planning group would transition into the Oversight Group and/or invite representation from other community groups/associations to join this structure.

8. CONCLUSION

It is important to note this document as a framework plan that outlines broad priority actions to be implemented throughout Kilkishen in the coming years to improve *life quality and community experience for those living in, or visiting, Kilkishen*. Implementation will be influenced by public health directives and this will, in turn, inform what will and what will not be possible within the Kilkishen plan.

The plan reflects ambitious, yet realistic, priority needs, interests and concerns of the community as identified by a significant community survey undertaken towards the end of 2019. It is now important that the plan moves to full implementation when it is possible to do so.

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 is not simply a list of projected activities therefore, it is also a call to action.

Ends/

November 2020

