

**Oram**

**Community Plan 2018-2028**

**DRAFT**

November 2018



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## Foreword

Co. Monaghan communities have a long and proud tradition of community development. A strong community takes a special sense of pride in the area, reaches out to those that are vulnerable, cares for those most in need, celebrates together when times are good, and gathers around to support one another in the sad times.

People get involved in their communities because they love where they live, and they want to look after their area. They also want to protect it and ensure it prospers in the future.

Monaghan County Council is committed to supporting communities to be the best places to live, work and visit in Ireland. As part of our drive to support communities, we are helping communities to prepare Community Plans. Through a process of consultation with the people living and working in your community, Council staff have drafted a Vision of the Future for Oram and compiled a set of Priorities which will help the community to develop towards this Vision over the next ten years.

This document is a Draft Plan, which is a first try at gathering up everyone's thoughts on the way forward. We'd like you to take a look and let us know what you think. It's not too late to add new ideas, take some things out, or even go back to the drawing board, if necessary!

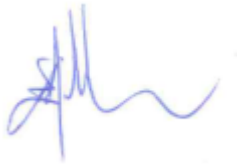
If someone asked you what kind of community would you like to live in, what would you say to them?

- What would make Oram a great place to live?
- Have the right priorities been identified in this Plan?
- If everything in this Plan was achieved, would life in Oram be better?

At the back of this Plan, you will find a short questionnaire, which you can tear out and send back to us with your thoughts. We'll use those to make any necessary changes and additions to the document, before finalising the Community Plan.

Monaghan County Council is committed to supporting the communities of Co. Monaghan to become the best they can be. We hope to play a significant role in many of the projects outlined in the Plan and view the drafting of this document together with you, the community, as the first step in a long and fruitful partnership.

Thank you for your investment in Co. Monaghan.



**Eamonn O Sullivan**

**Chief Executive**

**Monaghan County Council**



**At the back of this document, you will find a short survey, which is provided for you to give us your thoughts. Please detach and return to either of the following:**

Community Dept  
Monaghan County Council  
The Glen  
Monaghan

Box provided in  
Oram Community Centre

You can also fill out the survey online by following this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HLZCMQZ>

**Please return your submission by the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**

We hope to publish the final Plan by the end of February. If you would like a copy of the final Plan, please make sure to supply your contact details with the survey form.

## 1. Introduction

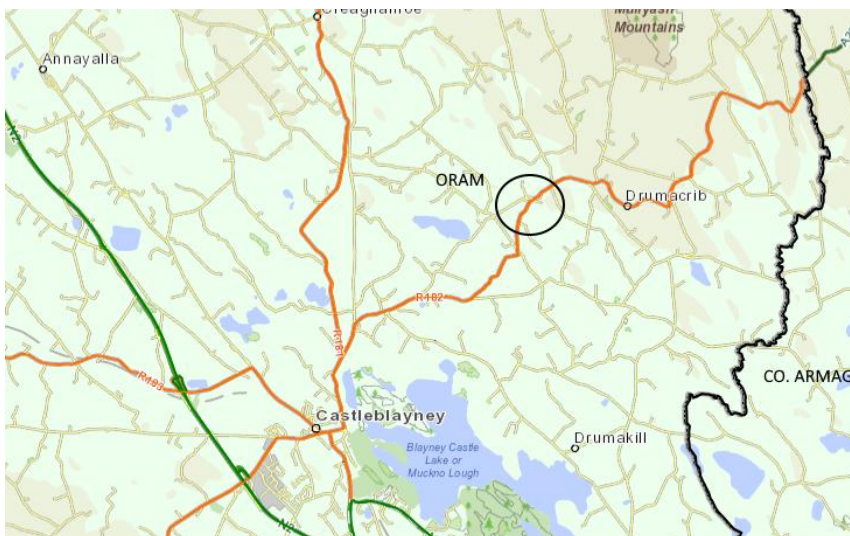
Monaghan County Council and the community of Oram have a long history of collaboration, covering many areas, including sport, heritage and the arts. In 2017, the Council secured funding for Oram under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme and organised a public meeting in November 2017 to give control of how this funding was to be spent over to the community. At that meeting, the various groups and residents present agreed that a Development Plan was needed. A follow up meeting in February 2018 identified many key needs in the area. An online needs survey was then carried out, to give those not present at that meeting an opportunity to have their say.

This draft Community Plan considers the comments submitted throughout the various meetings, emails, and online submissions. It will be circulated to the community for discussion, before being further developed to take into account any comments received during the consultation period. It will then become the final Plan for the community.

## 2. Community Profile

### Location

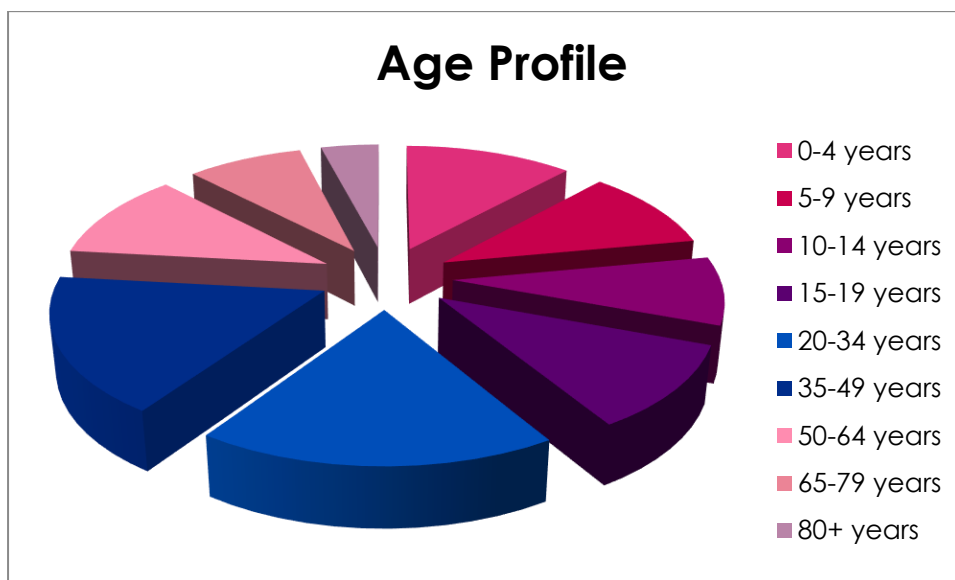
Oram is a small village in rural Co. Monaghan, located close to the border with Armagh. The nearest town to Oram is Castleblayney, which is 5km away. The village sits at the edge of Mullyash Mountain, an upland area which is known for its scenic beauty and pristine water. The area is rural in nature and is characterised by narrow country roads and high whitethorn hedges.





## Population

The population of the Small Area in 2016 was 245. This has remained almost static over the ten years since 2006, seeing only a 0.17% increase over this period. However, between 2002 and 2006, the area experienced almost a 10% increase in population (9.7%). This has resulted in an increase in the number of children in the village.



There are 29 children under the age of 4 years, and 75 children under 14 living in the village – this represents 11.8% and 30.6% of the population of the village respectively. Another 10.6% of the village's population are between the ages of fifteen and nineteen, meaning that in all, 41.2% of the population of the village is aged under twenty. There are 56 families with children in the village. The Lone Parent ratio is 36%. This compares to a county average of 17.8%. Between the high ratio of children and the number of lone parent households, the indicators are that family support activities would be welcome in Oram.

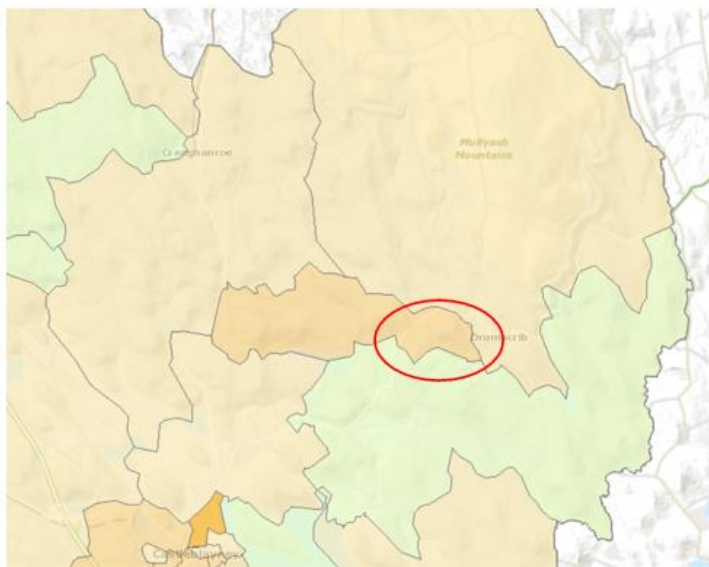
30 people were over the age of 65 in 2016. This equates to 12.2% of the population. This age cohort will have very different needs and concerns to those with young families and must also be catered for.

There are 87 households in the village. 21 of these, or 24%, are one-person households, for whom isolation may be an issue.

## Disadvantage

The relative deprivation rate in the Small Area in which Oram village is located was -12.13 in 2016. This was a slight disimprovement from -12.10 in 2011 and -10.7 in 2006. The area is rated as 'Disadvantaged' and is considered to be one of the county's disadvantaged rural hotspots.

Comparing the deprivation trend in Oram to that of the county: The relative deprivation score of Co. Monaghan in 2016 was -3.23.



**Deprivation Index map:** The HP Index takes a number of pieces of information collected in the Census which are thought to be 'reliable indicators' of poverty/ disadvantage, and combines them, then averages them out. The Index then comes up with an Average Score for the country and sets this as Zero. Every Small Area and Electoral Division is then compared to this, and given a Relative Score, so it will be either below or above the national average and will either have a – or a + score. The map is coloured accordingly. Areas coloured green and blue are on the affluent side of Zero; the bluer it is, the richer the area is. Areas coloured yellow

are disadvantaged; pale yellow are marginally below average, with deep yellow/ orange being very disadvantaged. Oram is classified as 'disadvantaged', which is the second worst band on the Index, the worst being 'very disadvantaged'.

## Housing

43.6% of the housing stock was constructed between 2001 and 2010, giving homes to 47.6% of the population.

Almost 44% of the houses are rented (25 houses from the Council, and 13 privately). 114 people count on rented accommodation for their homes.

## Nationality & Religion

The majority of people living in the village are Irish nationals. Whilst the number of non-native English speakers in the village would appear to be low, isolation through language is still an issue for some in the community. Of those for whom English is not the first language, 4 stated they could not speak English well, and 1 said they could not speak English at all.

Population by religion		Location	Birthplace	Nationality
Religion	Persons	Ireland	195	223
Catholic	208	UK	36	7
Other stated religion	17	Poland	5	4
No religion	13	Lithuania	2	1
Not stated	7	Other EU 28	1	2
Total	245	Rest of World	5	1
		Not stated	0	6
		Total	244	244

## Education & Employment

19.3% of the workforce has progressed no further than primary education within the formal education sector. A further 20.9% ceased their formal education at lower secondary level (i.e. Junior or Intermediate Certificate). 65% of males progressed no

further in education than Upper Secondary. 47.8% of females ceased education at this level.

The unemployment rate in the village in 2016 was 33.33% amongst males, and 20.93% amongst females. This is likely to have improved since 2016, with the general improvement of the economy.

Socio-economic group of reference person	Households
A Employers and managers	7
B Higher professional	4
C Lower professional	5
D Non-manual	15
E Manual skilled	6
F Semi-skilled	2
G Unskilled	5
H Own account workers	4
I Farmers	6
J Agricultural workers	0
Z All others gainfully occupied and unknown	33
Total	87

## Culture & Heritage

Oram is Big Tom Country. It is where Big Tom, legend of the Irish country music scene, made his home up until his death in 2018. The tin hall where Big Tom played his first 'gig' back in 1966 still stands. The community has erected a monument to him beside the community centre, which is built on land made available by Big Tom.

Big Tom played a very active role in the community, participating in the St Patrick's Day parade each year on his beloved vintage tractors, and the community 'waked' him in the community centre, serving tea to thousands of mourners.



**The Tin Hall, where Big Tom & the Mainliners played their first concert, still stands**



## Social & Community

### Buildings & Facilities:

#### *St Patrick's Church*

Catholic Church, located in the village. Surrounded by graveyard. Dates from the mid 1800's.

#### *Art Mooney Childcare*

Located in the village centre, this newly constructed facility offers full daycare preschool and afterschool services for children from 2 to 12 years of age. There are plans to extend the facility.

#### *Scoil Naomh Padraig*

The national school has an enrolment of approx. 80 pupils.

#### *Oram Community Centre*

Constructed on land sold to the community for a nominal amount by Big Tom, this building plays host to the community in times of celebration and mourning alike. It consists primarily of a large hall with kitchen facilities and toilets/ changing rooms on the ground floor, and a meeting room upstairs.

The building is located beside the Oram Sarsfields GAA grounds, so also serves as a club house to the football club.

#### *Playground*

There is a small playground in the village. It is maintained by the Local Authority. The site is small, and is alongside the road, so may be restricted somewhat in terms of future development. The equipment is geared towards younger children, whereas the Census data shows that the need in the village is now for amenities for the pre-teen and teen age groups.

### Groups:

#### *Mullyash Oram Text Alert*

This group sends out alerts of suspicious activity to approximately sixty subscribers in the Mullyash Oram area.

#### *Oram Sarsfields GFC*

The Sarsfields field teams from juvenile to senior level in men's football. Girls are only catered for at Under 10 level, where they can play on a combined team with boys.

#### *Oram Development Group*

Oram Development Group have been in existence for some years. In recent times, group activity has revolved around the purchase of a mobile stage, to be available for all indoor and outdoor events in the community. This project has taken a little longer than planned to get over the line, and subsequently activity in the group has declined. However, the group has been successful in securing funding from the

Community Enhancement Programme 2018 for the stage, and will shortly be able to take stock and relaunch the Development Group.

## Activities

### *Oram Players*

There is a strong interest in drama in the community, and the local drama group has over the years punched well above its weight on the amateur dramatic scene. The Development Group has been fundraising for the past few years towards the cost of the mobile stage referred to above.

## Human Resources

There are two CE workers allocated to the area, managed by Muckno Donaghmoyne Community Services. One worker is allocated to the GAA, and the other looks after the Church and cemetery. There are three workers allocated to the Creche through the TÚS scheme. There are no local participants on the Rural Social Scheme, which is designed to provide employment to farmers and their spouses who are on low incomes.

## Attractions

### *Big Tom Tribute*

Located in the car park beside the community centre & GAA grounds. The tribute is a little lost in the scale of the car park, which is not helped by its positioning towards the rear, set into part of a larger wall. It has become a focal point for fans since the passing of the legendary singer in April 2018.

Perhaps this tribute could be moved to a more prominent location, and enhanced to include a biography and a link to a recording of Big Tom's voice?

### *Big Tom's Grave*

Since his passing in April 2018, there has been a steady stream of visitors to the village, as people come to pay their respects to the King of the Irish country music scene. The recent unveiling of a memorial to the iconic King of Irish Country Music in the neighbouring town of Castleblayney will act as a signpost, encouraging visitors to journey out to Oram.

Big Tom played a very active role in this community, and it is right that this is fittingly honoured. Monaghan County Council will work with the community and the McBride family to ensure that this is done.

### *Monaghan Way*

The Monaghan Way, a long distance walking route which runs from Inniskeen to Clontibret, passes through Oram. It is intended to extend the Monaghan Way from Clontibret to meet Phase II of the Ulster Canal Greenway at the Monaghan Armagh border. It is hoped that the Monaghan Way will be upgraded over time, and that the amount of footfall using the route will significantly increase.



**Big Tom tribute beside community centre**

## Festivals

### *St Patrick's Day Parade*

The Oram parade holds the World record for the world's shortest St Patrick's Day parade. It is a well supported community event and lasts approximately four minutes before adjourning to the community centre for craic, ceol and refreshments.



## Environment

The landscape of the area is typified by rolling drumlins, offering spectacular views across the hills, with pockets of wetlands and small lakes laced in between. The area is very rural, and agriculture – mainly dairy and beef farming – is the predominant feature. Fields are typically bordered by whitethorn hedges, and these are the typical boundary along the roads through the area, including on the approaches to Oram.

## Transport

Travel in Co. Monaghan is by road network, and thus there is a heavy reliance on the private motor car.

There is one weekly rural bus service, provided by Cavan Monaghan Rural Transport Coordination Unit (CMTCU). Route CM516W operates on Friday mornings, leaving Mulliyash at 9.50, and passing through Oram on its way to Castleblayney. It returns at 12.50.

According to the 2016 Census, 15 households have no motor car, while a further 39 households have one car, which may mean that family members may be stranded in the home for long periods while the main income provider is away all day with the car.

This data suggests that transport is likely to be an issue of primary concern for the people of Oram.

### 3. Area Character Assessment

Oram is nestled in a very rural part of Co. Monaghan and is surrounded by small fields and high whitethorn hedges. The roads are narrow, and the vista is ever-changing, as the land rises towards the summit of Mullyash mountain. Beyond the mountain lies Co. Armagh, and there is a sense of remoteness to the area, which was cut off from its northern hinterland during the Troubles by border road closures.

Oram village is a recent construct; until the recent property development boom, the village consisted of little more than a Church, the community centre, a shop and a single row of houses. Over the past ten to fifteen years, a nucleus of a proper village has begun to take shape. However, the buildings are clustered in individual developments clusters, and the village has yet to develop an overall identity.

Usually, the centre of a 'planned' village is easily recognisable by its main street or the village green around which the majority of buildings are arranged. However, Oram has grown organically as land became available, and there is no obvious village centre. Aesthetically, the village suffers from the lack of a hub. To the visitor, the village doesn't 'make sense'; you are through it while you are still looking for it!

There is an 'unfinished' air about Oram. Boundary fences to some developments have been left incomplete. Pavements lead to nowhere. There are no defined start or end points to the village. The surfacing in some places has been left without the final tarmac dressing.



**The 'open' space around the boundaries to some properties lends an unfinished feel to the village**

This lack of a narrative to the village may also be contributing to issues like speeding through the village, as it is hard to convince traffic to slow down through an area when it feels like they should still be allowed to drive at the higher speed limit.

A village enhancement plan is needed, which considers all the elements of the village, how they relate to one another, and how people move around between them. The plan can make sense of the physical infrastructure which is required, such as boundary hedges and footpaths, and can also suggest what materials should be used to give a 'look' which enhances the overall appearance of the village rather

than breaks it up even more visually. This Plan should have elements which can be delivered by:

- the local community through Tidy Towns,
- private householders and premises owners
- Monaghan County Council

## 4. SWOT Analysis

Every community, and every place, has things which give it an advantage over its neighbours, and maybe a few things that are still a work in progress. Arranging the key attributes of an area under the headings of '*strength, weakness, opportunity, threat*' can help a community to decide how to harness the assets and tools it has at its disposal, and to get the best from them.

We have prepared a draft SWOT analysis for Oram. This will be further developed at the public consultation workshop at which this draft document will be presented.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- picturesque rural location</li> <li>- growing population</li> <li>- cultural heritage:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Big Tom, Dance Hall</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Active GAA club with own grounds</li> <li>- Community centre in place</li> <li>- Active community alert group</li> <li>- Purpose-built creche</li> <li>- St Patrick's Day Parade – 'World's Shortest Parade' brings the whole community together to pull it off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New housing developments brought many new residents into the area</li> <li>- Lots of children and young people in the village at present – how to harness their energy?</li> <li>- Create a fitting tribute to Big Tom's legacy</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'unplanned' village with no centre or street, lending to gaps between developments and an 'incomplete' air</li> <li>- Inactive area development group</li> <li>- Limited rural transport</li> <li>- Limited access to training locally</li> <li>- Limited activities for young people</li> <li>- Limited range of activities running from the community centre – particularly non-sporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A disrespect for the community by some needs to be addressed:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Illegal dumping</li> <li>o Speeding through the village</li> <li>o Bullet holes in the welcome signs</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Younger people not given opportunity to develop leadership skills and build capacity to give back to community</li> <li>- Is the community centre becoming 'too associated' with the GAA club? Originally built with Peace funding as a neutral venue</li> </ul>



## 5. Community Views

We invited the people of Oram to give their views through a Community Survey in April/May 2018. This helped us to see the area through your eyes, both the good and the bad, and to understand what your needs and wishes are for the future development of the area.

In summary, you told us:

Living in Oram is good but could be better. You gave it a five out of ten, which is a little lower than we would like to see. What you like most about Oram is the sense of community. Things that are impinging on your enjoyment of the area are illegal dumping, the lack of activities, and that there can be little to do for a youngster who is not interested in the GAA.

Less than 30% of people feel connected to community life in Oram. The same amount feel totally disconnected, while 45% feel only 'a little connected'. This is low for a county which has a strong sense of community spirit. There may be a number of factors contributing to this, which we will explore further in the next section.

Here are some of the things you told us lowered your enjoyment of life in Oram:


"Village itself looks dirty, unloved"  
 "There are lots of children and teens in Oram, we need somewhere to be able to hang out."  
 "A lot of rubbish dumped on roads"  
 "Travelling outside the village for almost all activities is a nuisance at times"  
 "Speeding through the village"

We asked you what could be done to improve life in Oram. You said:

"More community-based events would get people out of their houses to meet people & get to know each other & make new friends"  
 "Include young people on committees"  
 "Organise more events that involve all ages and backgrounds"  
 "We need a facilitator to chair meetings, so everyone is not pulling for their own interests"

There are two facilities in the village which need to take feedback on board:

**The playpark** (Monaghan County Council) is frustrating young people:

[In answer to 'are there any facilities you avoid using'] "Park. It only caters towards toddlers"  
 [In answer to 'what facilities do you use most'] "The park mostly even though a sign outside the park says we're not allowed to 

There is some food for thought for **the GAA club** also. Some people in the community avoid the club. Despite the **community centre** having been built with Peace funding and therefore having a requirement to be independent of the GAA, the perception

of the community is that it is run by the GAA club, for the GAA club, and that very little other activity takes place in the building other than GAA events and fundraisers.

We asked you for your ideas on how to improve the village:

"The playground could do with an upgrade"  
 "Community notice board to show all events"  
 "Classes run locally for teenagers e.g. karate, cookery, pilates"  
 "Easy access to mental health services."  
 "A youth centre or proper community centre."  
 "Gym"  
 "Bus service"  
 "bus shelter for school kids"  
 "Broadband and things to do for children and teenagers"  
 "Parent & toddler Book clubs "  
 "Knit & natter, Movie nights Non-alcohol related events in the club"  
 "Try and get a building for youth meetings and other community groups"  
 "A place for all people to go and just have the chats and communicate"  
 "We could acknowledge Big Tom in some way"

It is clear from the above that people are in the main happy with the infrastructure; **what they want most are services and activities.** There is a clear need for the groups in the area to step up and plan activities. This will not only meet the clear need, but also provide a fundraising opportunity for the groups. It's a win-win situation!

You said that the following would make you feel more part of community life:

"Community gatherings"  
 "Better activities for the younger people"  
 "More activities to bring the kids together would result in bringing the adults together! "  
 "Instead of working together to implement ideas the focus is always put on the GAA club. Not everyone is interested in GAA."  
 "More choice "  
 "Better advertisement-some events come & go & nobody knew they were on"  
 "Maybe events that weren't always asking for money... "

Projects that were identified as having potential included:

"I would love to turn 1 of the unused buildings into a youth centre."  
 "A good project would be a youth house for the teens in the area"  
 "A park / Astro turf"  
 "Extension to facilities at Art Mooney Childcare"  
 "Set up a group that would be involved in making Oram cleaner and greener would be nice"  
 "Would love to see the old school or the tin hall up and running"

There is a strong need for both a facility and activities for young people, who appear to have been overlooked in community life. They have no say on committees. They have no youth club. They have no space to call their own. There are no activities for

them outside of GAA. There is little leadership in the community to show them how to build something positive which gives back to the area and strengthens everyone in it.

This is a missed opportunity to equip young people with leadership and resilience skills that they will find useful in both their personal and professional lives, and to show them the meaning and value of being part of a community, so that wherever they end up in life, they will know how to go about creating the kind of support network around themselves that will provide themselves and their loved ones with the safety and support that will nurture them and help them to be the best they can be.

## **Turning Views into a Vision**

The people of Oram have spoken. You have said what you like about your community and about the area. You have spoken about what you think is missing, and what would make Oram an even better place to live. So, let's try and bring as much of this to life as we can.

The next section of this document puts forward a Vision for what Oram might become if we all put our shoulder to the wheel and worked together to make it a place which is welcoming and supportive. It includes a number of projects which we think will help to get us there. Some of these can be done by people in the community; some will need a little help from the County Council to get across the line. By working together, we'll get there.

Our Community Plan for Oram focuses on building opportunities for the community to come together as often as possible, so that the people of the area can strengthen their connection to each other. Because there will be tough times ahead, when we will need to pull together to get through. Big Tom showed us how to do it with grace; it's now up to the people of Oram to live up to his legacy.

## 6. Our Vision of the Future

A 'vision' is a picture that the community creates in its head of the end result of its efforts. It describes what Oram will look like at a specified time in the future –say in ten years' time - after all the hard work has paid off, and the various initiatives have been put in place to create the 'Ideal Oram'.

### Our Vision for Oram in 2028:

*"Oram has a warm welcome for everyone, young and old, and everyone has a part to play in community life. There is always something going on, and nobody is left out.*

*The village is well kept, and has its heritage proudly on display. The community spaces are well used by all in the community, and are hubs of community life, where people from the area regularly come together for organised social gatherings, as well as for informal drop-ins, training events and to access a range of services.*

*The community supports one another. There are regular social gatherings, which helps to keep this community closely connected, and ensures that the needs of the people are identified, thereby ensuring this community will remain strong and successful for many years to come."*

There are four key elements to this Vision:

1. The **physical appearance** of the area
2. The **activities & amenities** which are built up within the area
3. The **connections** which are made and maintained by the people of the area
4. **Building community spirit**, so that everyone feels equally welcome and knows how they can contribute best to their community. The idea of giving back to community should be automatic to everyone in a strong community.

## **7. Main Strategies & Priorities**

### **Addressing the Physical Appearance of the Area**

It is proposed to create welcome features for the area and install these at entrance points and at the centre of Oram. The features will draw from the heritage of the area, e.g. Big Tom. One way of developing the theme for these features would be to run a local competition, with the winner to be selected by public consultation. This would ensure that the winning theme is the one which has the most widespread support. It would also enable the process of developing a theme to be used as a way to get the community animated and communicating with one another about what they want for their area, which is fundamental to building community spirit and getting more people involved in the work.

### **Improving Community Amenities & Activities**

#### **Upgrading Existing Facilities at Community Centre**

Feedback from the community survey suggests that the standard of facilities at the community centre could do with some updating to improve comfort levels and create atmosphere.

While the surface of the car park does need attention, it is advised to give priority to ensuring that the building is catering for the needs of the community. If more meeting rooms are required, how might these be provided? Are some current uses incompatible with the needs of the community as a whole?

Other community centres have found it beneficial to set up two committees: one to focus on the building and its development/ improvement, and the other to focus on the activities that go on inside the building, and making sure that:

- every target group is being catered for
- every time slot is filled
- the key needs of the community are being covered by the programme
- the programme prioritises the objectives of the Community Centre (the purpose for which it was established, the things it set out to achieve etc)

#### **Provision of Bus Shelter**

A shelter is needed to facilitate secondary school children travelling to town. It can also serve as a pick-up point for the rural transport service when it is established.



## Enhancing Services and Activities

### *Rural Transport*

15 households have no motor car. A further 39 households are dependent on one car, meaning that while one person is away with the car – perhaps away at work all day – everyone else in the house may be stuck at home for long periods of time. This equates to 62% of households in Oram having potential transportation problems on a regular basis. Being able to get about easily and therefore being able to access services, socialise, etc has a huge impact on a person's quality of life and on their wellbeing, and therefore it is a priority in our Community Plan.

We will flag this issue up with Cavan Monaghan Transport Co-Ordination Unit and ask them to pilot a daily Local Link service to connect the people of Oram to Castleblayney and Monaghan town.

### *Community Alert*

Property Marking events to be carried out in the community, availing of Monaghan County Council's free property marking scheme. We recommend also that the community alert group signs up to Monaghan County Council's county-wide Text Alert service when it is launched in early 2019.

### *Tidy Towns*

The Tidy Towns group in the village to be revived. A three-year plan to be devised to assist the group in their work, and a recruitment drive to be carried out to help get more people involved in the work. Use to be made of the 'Ten Minutes a Month' volunteering initiative to get small tasks completed. Link up with the school to start a 'junior tidy towns' and start a community garden.

### *Come & Try It*

Many commented in the 'Community Survey' that they wished to see 'more to do' in Oram. We recommend that the Community Centre sets up an Activities Committee, and that they get a feel for what will work in Oram by starting off with a 'Come & try It' series of activities.

The idea is to set aside a set number of weeks and run different activities on the same night of the week each week. So, say on a Tuesday night at 7pm for 8 weeks. Each night would offer a completely different activity, the idea being that it gives you a taster of what the activity is like, without you having to commit to signing up to anything longer. People are more likely to go along and give yoga a try, for example, if they're not worried that they'll not be insulting anyone or letting anyone down if they decide it's not for them and don't want to go back.

The concept can work well for the individuals, as they can discover new hobbies, make new friends, etc. But it also works well for the venue, as they can poll those who attend and see which activities would attract interest if they were to run them on a regular basis. This reduces the financial risk for the centre.

The Centre can survey those who participate to find out which activities people would like to see become a regular feature, and also to look for suggestions for the next 'come and try it' events.

### **Youth Facilities**

Local community buildings to be audited to identify if any has a suitable room which could be set aside for the dedicated use of young people as a 'hang-out zone'. Once a suitable location has been identified, consultation with young people to take place on the design of the facility and the services to be offered. Funding to be sought based on the outcome of the consultation.

### **Playground Enhancement**

Some car parking and signage to be added to the playground, to clarify that it is an all-community facility. Additional equipment to be added to extend the amenity. More equipment to be added for older children and teens.

### **Community Park**

The village has no central area, such as a Main St, or village green. There is no public park or similar amenity, and anyone wishing to exercise must take to the roads – a dangerous proposition on a dark winter's evening. The village could benefit from the creation of a Community Park in the centre of the village. This would help to consolidate the village around the church/ community centre/ school area and give better physical definition to the village. The Park could also include such amenities as walking paths, an all-weather surfaced Multi-use Games Area (MUGA), outdoor gym equipment an outdoor performance area, picnic area, and a biodiversity-friendly planting scheme.

## **Improving Community Connectivity**

### **Community Council**

In order to aid communication between all the various committees in the village, and to provide a mechanism for running events which involve all the groups together, we suggest that a Community Council be formed.

Each group active in the community will be given one seat on the Community Council (CC). The CC's first task will be to agree the Community Plan and set the Priorities from the Plan. Thereafter, it will arrange to meet with Monaghan County Council to discuss progress on the Plan and plan the next steps.

The CC would also be ideally placed to pull together initiatives which will take the co-operation of all groups to achieve, such as running the Community Noticeboards and the 'Ten Minutes a Month' initiative.

### **Collective Fundraising**

To assist the community overall, and give it control of its own destiny, we suggest that it starts to fundraise for the future development of the village. A couple of high profile

fundraising initiatives should be undertaken on a collaborative basis, and the proceeds then distributed on an agreed basis, as per how the community votes at an annual event. Every year, the community should decide what the priorities will be for next year, and what funds should be allocated to each project.

### Community Noticeboards



A network of digital noticeboards, linked and managed via the internet, would be a great investment. They would promote events and activities and encourage people to come along.



They could also be used to reach those who do not step inside the community buildings, helping to connect with those who are not currently engaging in community life. They also provide an invaluable way of putting across a sense of the community's character, and creating a sense of togetherness,

by posting messages of support, congratulations, condolence etc. As the software allows for screens to display multiple images and text simultaneously, they can be customised to enable local advertising and sponsorship, and thus can become self-sustaining.

We suggest that a screen is required internally at the community centre and also externally, on the street to the front of the building, in order to advertise what is happening inside to those who may not be regular users of the centre.

## Building Community Spirit

### Community Festivals

Strong communities come together often, and we need to create those opportunities. We recommend that the community start an event such as a family day, with a bit of craic, food and music, and which may even raise a bit of money towards the next community project. We are suggesting that two such events are run during the year, and that they become part of a regular pattern of activity for the voluntary sector, whereby they use the events both to update the community on progress on projects, and to touch base with the community to see what issues, needs and problems are emerging which may need to be addressed. The events also will act as reward mechanisms for the volunteers who have been putting their '10 minutes a month' into their community, and as a way of showcasing what is going on and recruiting new people.

One event should take place in the summer, and should focus on touching base with the community to get their opinion on how things are going, what needs to be done, what could be improved etc.

The second event should take place near Christmas and should focus on celebrating being part of the community and thanking those who helped out during the year. A fun 'awards' ceremony, drawing on incidents and highlights from throughout the year, might add to the occasion, as well as act as an incentive to volunteers!

### **Oram.net**

A simple website, built on Wordpress and linked to Facebook, can act as a one-stop-shop for all things Oram. Each club/ group can be given 'contributor' username and passwords so that they can add content, and posts added to the website will automatically issue to the Facebook page.

An events calendar can be added to the site. Bookings can be made through google, making it easier to see when the Community Centre is free.

The only way a website will be kept up to date is if it is very quick and easy to do so, so the format will enable contributors to upload content from their phones by the click of a button, ensuring that content is always up to the minute.

It will enable clubs and committees to be contactable much more easily, and quickly, also, and thus significantly improve one of the biggest barriers to participation in local activities which was expressed in the community survey last spring.

### **Pulling Together**

We heard from many sources during the consultation phase of this project, 'it's all left to a few people to do'. Sometimes, people simply don't realise that their help is needed, and would be more than willing to give a few hours if asked.

We suggest that everyone in the community be asked, as part of the process of committing to this Development Plan, to sign a Pledge of Support stating that they are committing to playing their part to making Oram the best it can be.

This should be followed up with a list of groups looking for help and a list of activities which need help to get organised.

A 'Give your Community 10-minutes a Month' notice board should be started in the Community Centre where groups needing a particular task done can post it up and ask for support from a member of the community. This initiative should also be run through social media channels. A link-up with Monaghan Volunteer Centre will assist in getting this initiative started.

### **Improving Communication**

A Community Noticeboard should be considered. This should take both a physical form, eg a place in the village where people can check for news, and a digital form, such as a community website, with all local organisations contributing to the one site to ensure regular and current content.

Consideration should also be given to investing in a community newsletter which is distributed around the houses, and to joining Monaghan County Council's new county-wide Community Alert scheme, which will enable communities to send free texts to subscribers.

## **The Main Objectives Behind the Priority Themes**

### **Addressing Isolation**

The research has shown that for many reasons, there are many people in the community who are at risk of becoming isolated, be it because they live alone, or they are newly arrived to the area, or they have small children and can't get out much, or they are disabled, or they have no transport or no internet access.

Councils and community groups working together can be very good at addressing causes of isolation, through the provision of services, the development of amenities, and the running of activities such as fun days, evening classes etc.

A number of actions are proposed for Oram, including the creation of a Community Park, where people can come together, and the creation of an annual family festival, to enable people to celebrate together and strengthen community connections.

Involvement in community activities can be difficult when you don't know many people; it can be intimidating to step into a gathering where you're the only person who seems to not know everyone there. Clubs need to be mindful of this and find innovative ways of providing a less 'closed' face to those who may not have the confidence to approach them. Could you introduce a 'newbies' day into your calendar of events, for example?

### **Promotion of Community Spirit & Pride**

Giving the community – young and old, newly arrived and lifelong residents alike – a Community Plan to get behind, to sign up to, and to play an active role in delivering, gives everyone a chance to be a part of a fresh start for Oram. Everyone will be asked to identify what part they play, and what gifts they bring to the community, and to pledge '10 Minutes a Month', where they put something back into their community.

Two Reward Events will be introduced, to motivate and thank those who volunteer in whatever capacity throughout the community. One event will happen during the summer and will double as a family fun day and 'how are we doing' consultation event. The other will happen at Christmas, where the theme will be celebration and thanksgiving.



## Sensitive Development & Promotion of Local Heritage

The community is situated in an ancient pocket of the county and has much heritage to be explored. The Plan includes actions which will promote the area's heritage and make it more accessible for visitors. This will also help to generate local pride in the area.

With the recent passing of Big Tom, there is a need to honour his memory appropriately. There has been a steady stream to Oram throughout the summer of visitors wishing to pay their respects to the King of country music. Big Tom played a very active part in community life, including making land available for the development of the community centre, and it is fitting that the community records for posterity what Tom McBride meant to Oram, and preserves the aspects of his legacy which are important in a fitting way.

## 8. The Actions & Actors

The table below outlines the wider suite of projects and activities which have been suggested by you, each of which will play a place in achieving the Vision we've set out for Oram.

We find that unless a task is assigned to someone, it doesn't get done, and unless you give that task a deadline, it never moves forward. So, against each Action, we have listed the organisation/s which need to take the initiative to make that project happen, and an indicative cost and timescale for delivering the action where possible.

These Actions, Costs and Timeframes are for guidance only. Plans work best when they stay flexible, and respond as local circumstances change. This is why we recommend that the community comes together once a year to review how things are going and see if it's priorities remain the same.

When prioritising projects, as a community, we recommend that the following criteria be used, in determining how one project is given priority over another on the list:

- **their potential to impact on a large number of people**
- **their potential to have far-reaching impact through facilitating people accessing personal development opportunities**
- **their potential to improve the quality of life for people in the community through improved services, access to opportunities etc**

**Only the people of Oram will know the right balance of projects to meet their needs.**

Project Detail	Who	How
Enhance the playground, to include play equipment for older children	Monaghan County Council	Consult with children to design the new play features. Source funding. Implement.
Start a youth club in the community	Oram Development, to start off. Then a separate youth club to be set up	Invite Foroige or Youthwork Ireland Monaghan to a meeting in the village. Invite all interested parents & young people to attend.
Provide young people with a dedicated 'drop in' space in the community	Oram Development, to start off. If the youth club is strong enough to take on the project on its own, then let it. It will be good for them	Identify suitable premises/ rooms. Have a condition report done & costings to find out how much it will take to bring the building into usable condition.  Discuss with young people what equipment, furniture etc would be needed in order to fit it out  Agree opening hours, rules of conduct etc  Source funding
Complete the car park surfacing & lining at the community centre	Oram Sarsfields GFC	Source funding Award contract
Create a fitting memorial to Big Tom & Lobby for the dance hall to be accorded protected status in the County Development Plan	New Committee	Form a new committee Approach Carrickmacross/ Castleblayney MD for support Consult with the community and the McBride family Shortlist ideas Display the ideas in community centre for public comment & vote Source funding to proceed with the winning idea

Provide welcome features, enhanced paving, fencing and lighting, to help distinguish Oram village from the surrounding countryside	Monaghan County Council	Engage a landscape architect to design a village streetscape concept for Oram Display the concept drawings for public comment Source funding Implement elements of the plan as funding becomes available
Provide a bus shelter	Monaghan County Council	Source funding Carry out road safety assessment Install shelter
Revive the Tidy Towns group so as to continue on the work started by the Council & landscape architect	New Committee	Call a meeting of the old committee, invite the rest of the community to come along Draw up a new Action Plan Apply to Monaghan County Council's Community & Environment Fund for annual funding towards cost of implementing annual plan
Create a community park	Monaghan County Council & Oram Development	Identify & purchase suitable land Commission a landscape architect to design a park Consult with the community re the amenities to be housed in the new park Source funding Implement plan
Provide more opportunities in Oram for people to get out and socialise, while trying new things	New 'Activities Committee' in Community Centre. To focus on programming activities in the Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- By target group (targeting those who are not engaging, eg older men, working mothers)</li> <li>- Ensuring that every age and ability is catered for</li> <li>- That there is something to appeal to families, boys, girls, older people, people on their own, etc</li> </ul>	Start with a 'come and try it' series of events, which enables the centre to put on a range of activities over consecutive weeks, and see what goes down best. These can then be repeated.  Kids summer activity camps and Saturday art clubs can also work well. Engage a tutor for a set period of weeks. Get funding to offset some of the cost  Discuss with Cavan Monaghan ETB the possibility of hosting Adult evening learning sessions for things like

		'how to use your smartphone' 'photoshop', 'skype', etc are available on an outreach basis in Oram
Improve transport links to Castleblayney and Monaghan	Cavan Monaghan Transport Co-Ordination Unit	Invite Cavan Monaghan TCU to enhance the Local Link rural bus service through Oram, so that people can avail of services in Blayney and Monaghan
Create an umbrella body to help co-ordinate development in the village: Oram Community Council	Monaghan County Council will help to set this up initially	Each local group to have 1 seat on the new community council. CC to meet once a year, to look at progress on THIS document, agree priorities, and talk to Monaghan County Council officers about work going forward.
Improve communication in the village	Oram Community Council	Erect digital community noticeboard outside the community centre Link noticeboard to an online page – all groups to use the page to post their news & events
Increase the amount of engagement in the community	Oram Community Council	Start a 'Ten Minutes a Month' campaign, asking people to give 10 minutes of their time each month to some local group or cause. Groups to list jobs that need doing on the digital noticeboard. People can pick job, do it, remove it from board. <b>IDEA: Person who does most jobs in a year could become Mayor of Oram ??</b>
Initiate 2 annual Festivals – Summer Showcase - Christmas Celebration Groups all to pull together to showcase what is good about living in Oram, and being an active member of the community. These events are about creating a sense of community, of pride and an opportunity to bond. They also provide an opportunity to check in with people and get their thoughts on how things are going, get new ideas	New Oram Community Council	Both days should be about community and family-oriented. All groups should be present, and should showcase their work.  The Christmas event should NOT have any element of fundraising. It should be about giving back to those who have volunteered and given their time to the community all year.

for activities and events etc. And finally, they provide an important opportunity to say thanks.		Source funding from Monaghan County Council's Community & Environment Fund in March/April each year for these events.
Extend lighting and footpath past shop to Formil lane	Monaghan County Council	Carry out design & road safety audit Purchase land Source funding Implement
Conserve the Old Dance Hall, to ensure its survival for another 100 years	Oram Tidy Towns/ Oram Development Group	Commission a building condition survey Price the work recommended by the survey Run consultation with the community re suitability of the building for various uses Put a project proposal together combining the physical work to the building and the use the building is to be put to once renovated. Source funding for the work – possibly heritage council as it is a protected structure



## 9. Making it Happen

To transform any Community Plan from a document into a reality needs three key ingredients:

### **1: Commitment from the Community**

### **2: A Process/ Structure which enables everyone to play their part**

### **3: Resources**

We would like to energise the whole community behind this Plan and use it to get people who are not yet active in community life to come out and find out more about the benefits that being more closely connected to the community brings.

We propose to use the adoption of this Plan as an opportunity to ask people for a formal commitment to their community. This presents everyone with an opportunity for a fresh start and to travel forward together in building the Oram they wish to share.

To help give this new approach the shape and structure it will need, we propose a new Community Council be put in place, facilitate communication between the many groups in the area. The Community Council will work to co-ordinate the efforts of all, for the overall benefit of the area. It will also seek to address gaps, get new activities going etc if there is an agreed need. It will also meet with the County Council to review progress and address any barriers.

It is advised that the Community Council work towards developing an independent source of funds, so that it can be financially sustainable, and can plan accordingly. A community which has an annual source of income can begin to plan to take on projects each year, employ staff, etc. Funds raised by the group can also be used as 'own funds' to leverage in grant aid. For example, a sum of €10,000 raised by a community effectively becomes €40,000 when used as match funding to draw down a grant at a 75% funding rate.

We propose the following simple steps to ensuring there is follow-through on this Plan:

#### **1. A Community Launch for this Plan**

At the launch, the concept of every person signing up to playing their part in community life will be launched, and the '10 minutes a Month' volunteer campaign launched. Also, on offer will be volunteering opportunities with existing and new organisations in the community.

Opportunities will include;

- To create and maintain an all-community Oram web presence
- To plan and promote the 'come and try it' activities
- To get the '10 Minutes a Month' volunteering scheme off the ground
- To plan the first Community Reward Night

#### **2. First meeting of Community Council**

The business of the meeting will be:

- to agree a Terms of Reference
- to lay out a Workplan for Year 1
- to set up a Fundraising system

### **3. Meet with Monaghan County Council**

This meeting will take first place six months after the Community Council is formed, then annually after this. The purpose of the meeting will be to review progress on the Plan, and discuss how the Council can assist the community.

### **4. Agree when the first Community Feedback Event will be**

There are two Feedback Events designed into the Plan – a summer one and a winter one. As well as being designed as opportunities to celebrate together as a community and build community links and raise local morale, they provide an opportunity to update everyone on progress, which is critical to maintaining public support.

Monaghan County Council will cover the cost of a Facilitator to organise the first twelve months' set up of the implementation phase of the Plan, to help get the process off to a smooth start.

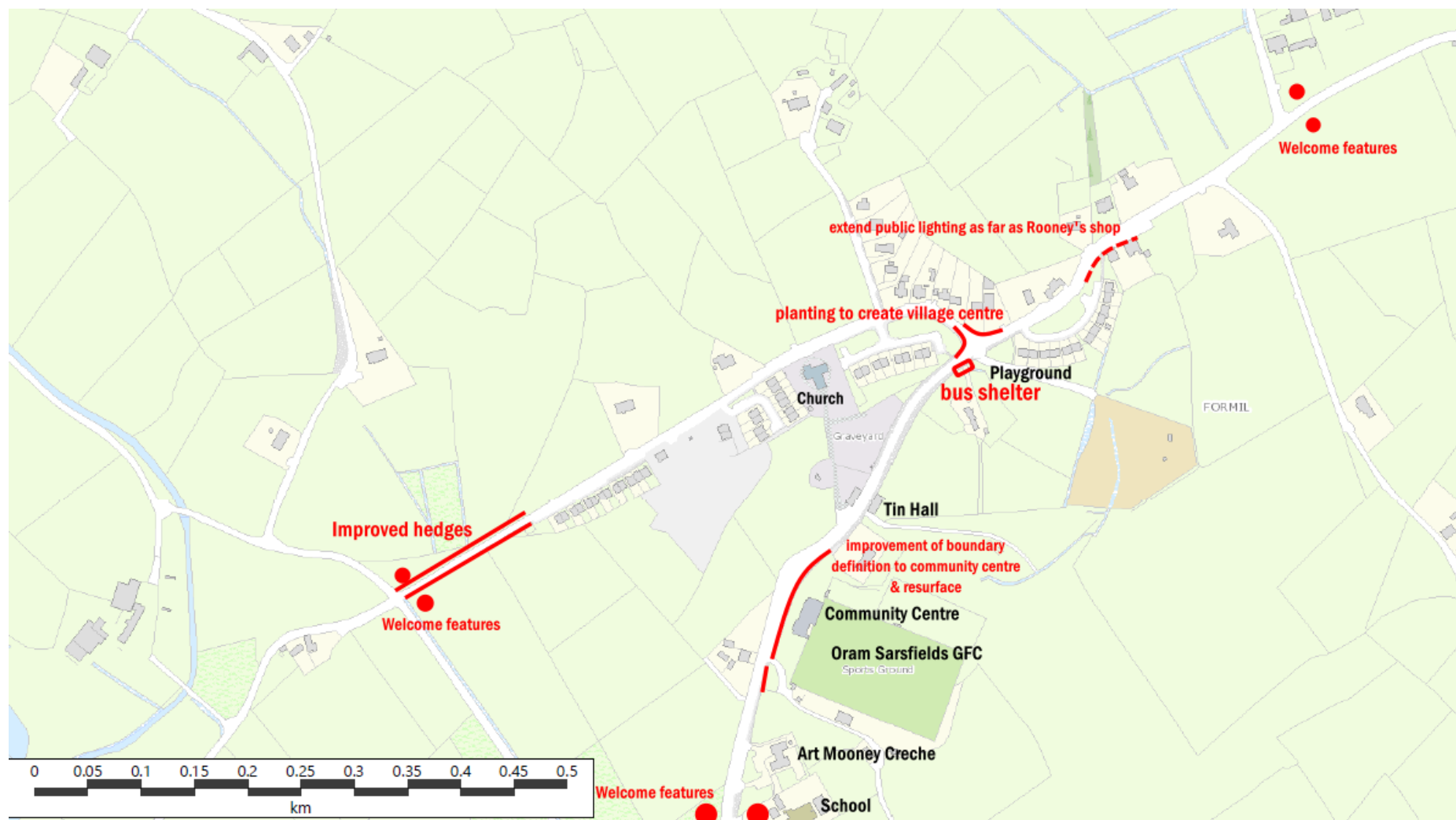
### **5. Review progress and adjust the Plan**

As with everything in life, not everything will work out exactly as planned, but the odds are better with a plan than without one, and so we plan! And because we know things will change along we way, we build into the Plan a review, so that we come together again on a regular basis to look at progress, learn from what is going well – and what isn't – and adjust the Plan accordingly.

This is a vital part of making sure things happen. If nobody is going to be asking you for your homework, is there any need to do it at all....? Monaghan County Council will meet with Oram Community Council to review progress on this Community Plan every three years.

Following each review meeting, we will release a short newsletter to the community to give you an update of how the Plan is progressing, who is doing what, where the hold-ups are and what is being done about them.

## Appendix A: Map of Oram



## **Appendix B: List of Protected Structures**

Structures listed in Monaghan County Development Plan as Protected, with Regional Importance are:

NONE

Structures recorded as being of Local Importance and given Protected status under the Plan:

St Patrick's Catholic Church

## **Appendix C: Draft Plan Feedback Form**



## PUBLIC FEEDBACK SECTION

## Oram

## COMMUNITY PLAN

DRAFT PLAN – November 2018

Thank you for taking the time to review this document. We hope that you found much to like in it. Please let us know how the Plan can be further improved upon, by filling out the form below and returning it **before Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019** to either of the following:

Community Dept  
Monaghan County Council  
The Glen  
Monaghan

Box provided in  
Oram  
Community Centre

You can also fill out the survey online by following this link:

**Q1. Have we got the best projects/ actions in the Plan? Please tell us about any that should be added or taken out, in your opinion**



**Q2. Do you have any other ideas which you wish to see included in the Plan?**

**Q3. Do you support the idea of developing a theme or brand for the area?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

If you wish to propose an idea for the theme, please give details here:

**Q4. What are your thoughts on the following ideas which are proposed in the Plan?**

(please tick one box for each project)

	Don't like it	No opinion	In favour of it
Upgrade playground			
Start a youth club			
A dedicated youth space			
Car park re-surfacing at community centre			
Bigger memorial to Big Tom			
Welcome features on approach roads			
Bus shelter			
Develop a 'brand' for Oram			
Revive the Tidy Towns group			
Create a community park			
Run more social activities			
Improve rural transport links			
Create a Community Council			

Set up electronic noticeboard			
'Ten Minutes a Month' volunteering initiative			
Two community events per year to support community spirit			
Extend lighting and footpath to shop			
Conserve Tin Hall			
Annual meeting with Council staff			
3-yearly review of Plan, supported by Council staff			

**Q5. Which project(s) should be prioritised?**

**Q6. If you have anything else you would like to say, here's your chance:**

**If you would like a copy of the final version of the Community Plan, when it is available, please supply your contact details here:**

For a hard (paper) copy, supply your name & postal address:

For a pdf (digital) copy, supply your email address:

Your information will only be used to send out the Plan to you and will not be stored.

**Thank you for helping to make Oram a fantastic place to live.**

