

**Your
Feedback
Needed**

Ballinode Community Plan First Draft



Written by the Community Department of Monaghan County Council, November 2021, for the consideration of the community groups of Ballinode

Please give your feedback on the Plan and indicate if you are willing to sign up to participate in the delivery of the Plan

The Final Plan will be presented as YOUR Document, so please be sure you are happy with all aspects of the Plan.

In particular, please identify:

- - any action(s) that your group is willing to take responsibility for leading
- - any action(s) you believe should be removed from the Plan. Please explain why
- - any actions you would like added to the Plan. Please explain why

A Feedback Form is provided to assist you at the end of this document

Contents

Welcome

	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Ballinode - Who we are	8
3. Ballinode - What you said	14
4. SWOT	18
5. Audit of Local Groups	19
6. Audit of Local Amenities	23
7. Community Needs	26
8. Action Plan	31
9. Spotlight on Key Actions	39
10. Making it Happen	46
11. Feedback Survey	48

Welcome

Patricia Monahan,
Director of Services,
Transportation Community & Rural Development



It gives me great pleasure to present this draft Plan to the people of Ballinode. It has been prepared by staff from my Community Department, with input from members of the Ballinode community.

It presents a blueprint for strengthening the community and making Ballinode a better place to live by acting together across a number of areas.

The Plan has had a somewhat unconventional development path, having been interrupted by a global pandemic which prevented us from having as much face-to-face contact as we would have liked while working through the stages of preparing the plan. But we're back on track now.

Thanks to the efforts of the local community, the lack of the usual face-to-face engagement was more than made up for by high numbers of people participating in the surveys we distributed during the planning process. This enabled our team to get a very complete picture of the community's needs and your hopes for the future of Ballinode, and we thank you for your input.

We hope that you will like what we have put together for you. Our team identified a number of areas where improvements could be made, and have made suggestions for how these could be approached. You will find these listed as 'Actions' in the action plan in the back of the document.

The final piece of work which now needs to be done is for you, as representatives of the community, to review what our team has proposed, and let us know how close the Plan is to being the best possible plan for developing Ballinode into a fantastic place to live, to bring children up in, and to grow old in. We still need your views to get this Plan right. Please have a read, discuss it with family and friends, and then let us you if your group is willing to sign up to the Plan by completing and returning the short survey at the end of the Plan.

Thank you very much for helping to make Ballinode a great place to be.

Patricia

Introduction

This journey started in December 2018 with a public meeting. At that meeting, staff from Monaghan County Council shared information about the benefits of having a community plan with the people of Ballinode, and the those attending the meeting agreed that Ballinode would benefit from having a Community Plan prepared for it and committed to working with the Council to work through the various stages needed to prepare the Plan.

Shortly afterwards, a Community Needs Survey was circulated around the community, and received a very high return rate, which was very helpful in identifying what people liked and didn't like about living in Ballinode, and what they thought would improve the village.

Work came to a halt on the Plan with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, as lockdown restrictions made it impossible to hold focus group sessions, or meet with the various groups which are active in the community. However, work continued where it could, with the Council accessing funding for upgrades to the community park, and Ballinode Community Projects commencing work on identifying the landowners along the route for a possible off-road walking link between the village and the Kilmore training pitch.

The Council also produced an analysis of the Census data of the village, and used this data as the basis of a survey of the local groups, to get their thoughts on the future development of the village.

We now present to you a summary of all the information collected to date, along with the Council's thoughts on what the information might mean for the future development of Ballinode.

At this stage, we would normally present this data to a public meeting and the community would spend a lively evening discussing its merits before identifying the way forward which you feel best fits Ballinode.

Unfortunately, not everyone is comfortable with coming out to a face-to-face meeting at the moment, so instead we are going to try something a little different.

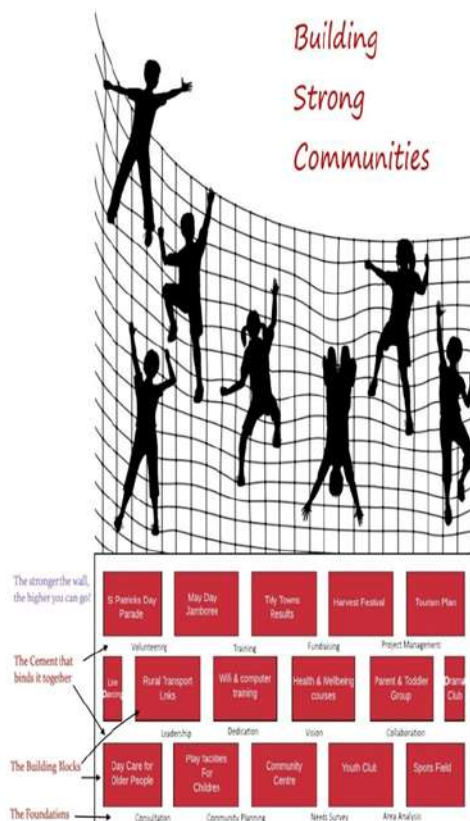
In this document, we are going to present to you the information that we have collected to date, along with what we think it means for Ballinode, and our thoughts on what you should do about it and how we (and others) can help.

At the end of the document, you will find a pull-out section. This is for you to fill in and send back to us, and is a way for you to tell us what we've got right, what we've got wrong, and what we've completely left out. You can drop this back in to any Council office or library, or to the village shop, where there is a box marked 'Community Plan'.

Thank you for taking the time to go through this document and for giving us your feedback. The community planning process really does make a difference - you will see how well spent this time has been in the months and years ahead, as the changes to the village that you suggested begin to happen.

Carol Lambie

Community Development Officer
Monaghan County Council



A strong community enables its members to SHINE!

How to build a strong community

1. Start with strong foundations:
 - A strong identity
 - Shared values
 - A sense of pride and belonging
 - Knowing that people are more important than things
2. Build amenities:
 - To bring services to those who need them
 - To provide social and recreational facilities
3. Come together often:
 - Celebrate
 - Remember
 - Support one another
4. Build People
 - Lead by example
 - Create relationships
 - Pass the spirit of caring on
 - Raise the next generation of leaders

Why The Council is Investing in Community Plans

If someone were to ask you **'how do you build a community?'**, how would you answer?

We believe the answer starts with a different question:

WHY do you build a community?

We believe it's because being part of a strong community helps individuals to reach their full potential. Communities are a supportive environment where the young are safe to explore and learn, the youth are supported to challenge themselves and find what they shine at, parents find that their family is embraced and supported by the entire community, and the older members of the community still feel they have something to contribute and feel secure in their homes. The vulnerable are looked after, and everyone is included.

A strong community develops a set of values, lives by these values and passes them on to the next generation. These values include caring for people; knowing the value of spending time with those we love; learning from life's set-backs and picking ourselves up and trying again; not having to do everything alone, but learning to share both the burdens and the joys of life. These are the kind of 'life lessons' that people pick up as they bounce off other people. There is much wisdom in the old saying, "it takes a village to raise a child"!

A community needs strong, resilient people, who can work together, support each other in hard times, bounce back from life's set-backs and cheer each other on to success. Resilient people know that life will not always be smooth sailing, and they develop the ability to dust themselves off and go again whenever they encounter difficulty. Some people are born knowing how to be resilient, but it is a skill that can be learned, and communities are good places to pass it on.

A community thrives when the people who live and work in it know each other well and come together often. They learn from one another, and they help one another to grow. They also look out for each other. As a person passes through life, there will be times when they will need a lot of care, and other times when they have the capacity to give care to others.

There will be times in their life when things are going well, and other times when they will need the support of others to get through. There will be people in the community who will have skills that they can use to help give something back; others will be vulnerable and need the community's protection. A strong community finds a place for all, and everyone finds their place.

Building communities is about investing in people. We put amenities in place in order to provide people with somewhere to go to avail of training, pursue a personal interest or hobby, meet friends, develop social skills, grow in confidence and raise their sense of self worth. They get an understanding not just of themselves, but of how they connect with others, and how they contribute to the wellbeing of other people and to the community as a whole.

Think of those amenities and events as building blocks, each one helping to build something worthwhile. The blocks are held together with things like community plans, leadership, fundraising – the glue which binds the blocks into something greater than the individual pieces. Directing the construction are the community groups, who hold the “Vision” for their community. The bigger the vision, the higher the people within their community can climb! So, it all starts with Community Planning. And what we are ultimately trying to arrive at is a strong, tight-knit, resilient community which can cope with whatever life brings, both on an individual level and on a community level, and both today and in twenty years – *because part of being a strong community is raising children to know the value of community and want to nurture it for their children, too.*

Monaghan County Council has a part to play in creating the conditions which help the people of the county to flourish individually, as well as together. We provide amenities such as playgrounds, public spaces and leisure facilities, and we support local communities to provide all kinds of facilities and services in every corner of the county.

Another way we can help is by lending communities our expertise to prepare plans, and then help them to implement the actions contained in the plans. We can be a supportive partner to communities as they seek to develop their area and make their ambitions a reality.

The people best placed to know what is needed, and how best to go about solving the problem, is the community itself. If you are willing to put your shoulder to the wheel, you will find Monaghan County Council more than ready to step up alongside you and help to shoulder the burden. Challenge us.

And so we come to the work at hand.

Monaghan County Council committed to preparing local community development plans as an Action of the Local Economic & Community Plan, a key strategic document which guides all local development in the county. As part of this commitment, we carried out an exercise where we mapped funding coming into the county, to identify those communities which were availing of the many opportunities currently available, and those who appeared to be missing out. We then selected four priority communities to work with in 2019/2020, with the intention of bringing them through the process of agreeing a development plan for their communities. One of those priority communities is Ballinode.

Monaghan County Council attended a public meeting in Ballinode in December 2018, and outlined our vision for creating sustainable, resilient communities throughout the county. The people of Ballinode wanted that for their community too and agreed to enter into partnership with the Council to devise and deliver a Community Plan.

This document is the result of that commitment.

It marks the end of an opening phase of collaboration between the local community and the Council, where agreement has been reached on the issues facing the community and the solutions which are to be taken.

Over the next five years, Monaghan County Council will work with the local groups to progress the Actions as identified in the Plan. We will meet with the groups to review progress, and we will assist with expertise and resources.

We hope that having access to our team of engineers, community development staff, tourism, heritage and other expertise will assist the various groups in the village to advance their projects, individually and collectively, and we look forward to seeing Ballinode and its people grow and thrive in the years ahead.

2.

Ballinode - Who We Are

In the last Census (2016):



470 people lived in the village
in 184 households



50 people lived alone
(27% of all households)



50 people had a disability
(over 10% of all people)

The number of people living alone is quite high. It suggests that there may be potential for these to become isolated more easily from the community. They may also be users of services such as ready meals for one, as people who live alone are less likely to cook just for themselves every day. They may also feel more vulnerable to crime.

The large number of people with a disability in the village makes accessibility of buildings, footpaths, parks etc very important. If people can't get around the village easily, they will be trapped in their own home.



15% of villagers are over 65



26% of villagers are under 20

The age profile data suggests that there may actually be two communities living in Ballinode:

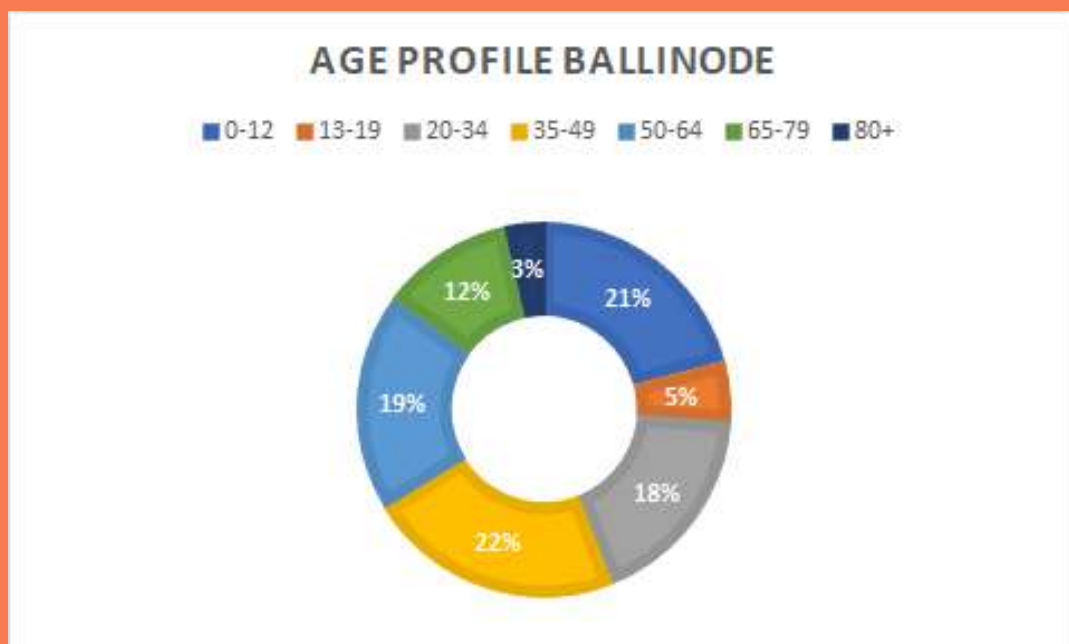
- -Those who belong to the 'older' village, and are now in the upper age profile. 15% of the village's residents are over the age of 65.
- -Those who moved to the village with the housing boom in the 2000's. Many of these were purchasing a home for the first time, and are now rearing families. Consequently, there is a bubble of children under 12 years of age living in the village.

The needs of retired people are likely to be very different to the needs of families with small children. This should be taken into account when planning facilities and activities.

For example, if planning a bus service from Ballinode to Monaghan town:

- -What days and times would older people wish to travel?
- -When would parents with small children wish to travel?
- -When would teenagers wish to travel?

The needs of these three groups are likely to be very different, and therefore knowing your community's needs is crucial to providing the right service in the right place, at the right time.



Housing:



There are 184 Houses in the village

74.5% are owner occupied



55.5% of those are mortgage free

109 people are renting, from either private landlords or the local authority



51% of all housing stock was
built before 1990 - it's likely to
be energy inefficient



83% of all homes rely on
oil for heating

Connectivity:



15 homes (8%) have no
motor car



75% of homes have a computer



83% of homes have broadband

Deprivation

	2006	2016
<u>Cappog SA</u>	2.00	-1.33
<u>Quiglough SA</u>	-0.8	-0.96
County	-3.06	-3.23



According to Pobal's map of relative disadvantage, which shows every small area's level of disadvantage relative to the national average, Ballinacorney is better off than the county average, but marginally behind the national average. It has maintained or slightly improved on its score over the ten year period between 2006-2016. Co. Monaghan slightly disimproved overall over this period. So, a strong showing, but not spectacular.

Note: The DED's coloured yellow on the map are classified as 'marginally below the national average' on the Haase Deprivation Index, which takes into account a range of CSO data which are likely to be indicators of poverty in an area. The green areas are classified as 'marginally above the national average'

Family Life Cycle

10		Pre-family
19		Pre-school
12		Early school
20		Pre-adolescent
12		Adolescent
17		Empty Nest
25		Adult
15		Retired

The above table classifies the families in Ballinacorney by the stage of the family lifecycle they are currently going through

Looking at the stage of family life cycle can help to plan the services and amenities that the village may need. Families which are preoccupied with very small children will want places which are safe to take them outdoors for walks and to play, and will be concerned with safety. They will also be interested in activities such as parent and toddler groups.

Families with older children will be looking for more activities for their children to participate in. A busy community centre which offers a range of activities, and a youth club is ideal for this family's needs. Broadband is also popular.

For retired residents, who have more free time, they may be interested in taking up hobbies. Vulnerable older people may need services such as sheltered housing or meals on wheels.

New Communities:



21 people say they don't speak English well, or 'not at all'

Ballinode is home to a growing number of non-Irish nationals, many of whom are working in local businesses and contributing to the local economy. However, the extent to which they and their families are integrating into community life might be questioned.

Language certainly would appear to be a barrier for many, and there are no local services being run in the community which would help to break down this barrier.

As we will see in the community surveys which were returned, there seems to be a divide developing in the village between those who have lived in Ballinode all their lives, and those who have moved to the area with the construction of new housing developments, with the newcomers reporting that they sometimes feel at a remove from local groups and local decisions.

Communities usually grow their own organic network of communicating, which can be difficult for newcomers to navigate without the help of someone from 'the inside'.

Think about it: if you didn't know the opening times of the community hall, that anyone is free to join the activities which are organised in the hall each evening, or that anyone in the community can book the hall and organise their own activities, how would you go about finding out about what happens in the community hall?

The unintentional impact of this is that new people don't know where to find information about what is on in the local area, or don't know what groups are active in the area and how to get involved, and therefore are left on the outside unable to participate, when oftentimes the local groups would have been only too delighted to have seen new faces coming through the door!

A Note of Caution on the Data

We all know that statistical data has limitations, and that it should be used always as an indicator rather than relied upon exclusively for evidence.

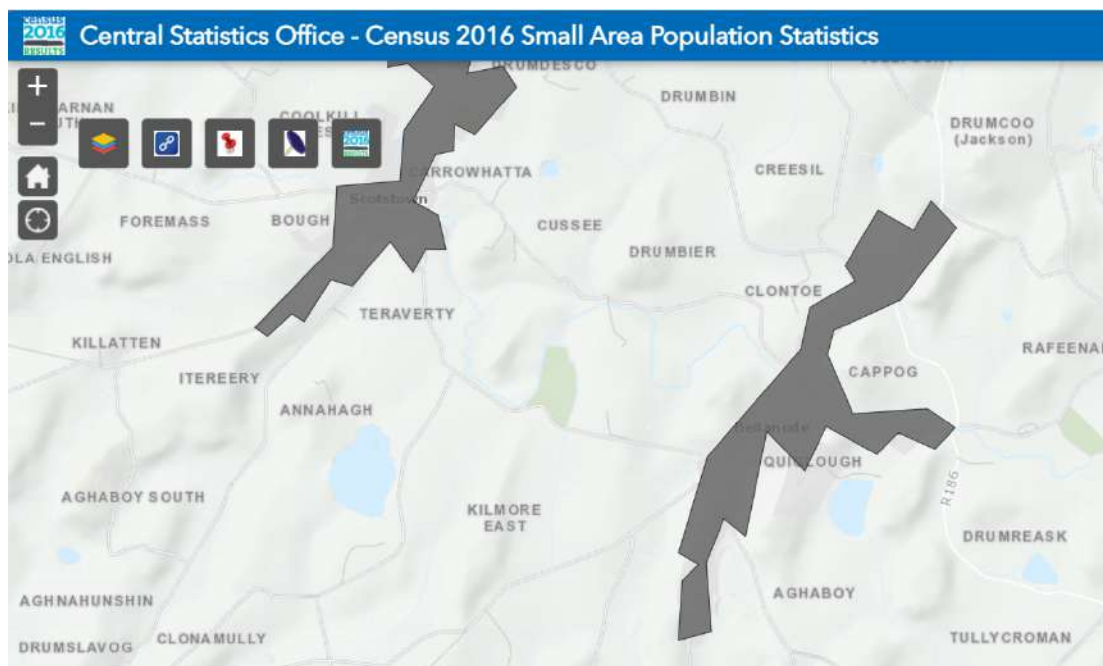
There is also a concern that the Census data we are working with is six years old, the 2021 Census having been cancelled due to the Covid crisis. Data relating to age profiles in particular will be out of date.

However, we can get a general sense of the issues in Ballinode from the data, and when combined with the opinions of local people which we have gathered through direct surveys, we can form a fuller, more reliable picture of the position as it is today..

We recommend that when local data from the next Census is available, the community should download the Small Area Population Statistics from the SAPMAP tool on the CSO website, and compare the new Census figures with the 2016 data.

Particular note should be made of any notable changes, since the last Census. The data should be compared to both national and county trends, and note taken of where Ballinode's trends differ from the norm. The community should consider the reasons for these differences, and should consider if action is needed to resolve any negative trends.

The Action Plan should then be updated accordingly.



Statistics for the 'Settlement' of Ballinode are available on the CSO's SAPMAP tool

3.

Ballinode - What You Said

A needs survey was distributed to the general public throughout the village. 91 responses were received. The age profile of respondents was:

	UNDER 14 YEARS	14 - 19 YEARS	20 - 34 YEARS	35 - 49 YEARS	50 - 64 YEARS	65 + YEARS	TOTAL
Your age range	0.00% 0	3.49% 3	16.28% 14	32.56% 28	24.42% 21	23.26% 20	86

We Asked You:

If you were to give life in Ballinode a score out of 10 (with 1 star being the minimum and 10 stars being the maximum you could award), what would you give it?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 2

7.9★

average rating



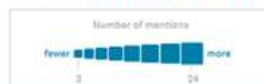
You like living in Ballinode - an 8/10 rating is strong

Quiet friendly pitch Close Beautiful village new shop Good town
proximity town community spirit shop Lovely community
village river Quiet playpark people amenities
Friendly Good community spirit peaceful Tidy Towns Nice
Pretty village neighbours beautiful area proximity monaghan town great local



This is what you liked best - the bigger the text, the more often you mentioned it

service TOILETS live street lighting parking Nothing areas place
Dog fouling traffic fast cars community road facilities
Lack better village speed need Traffic footpaths
safe walking shop Dogs Lighting enough people lot walk local shop
community centre



Here are the things you said you didn't enjoy about life in Ballinode

When we talked about the village in general, people commented on it being peaceful, well kept, with friendly people and a strong community spirit.

These attributes are being spoiled by fast traffic through the village, poor road safety due to inadequate lighting and footpaths, dog fouling, and the lack of some basic amenities, such as toilets, shop and community centre (the latter two are being resolved).

We moved on to ask people how they felt about the local community spirit. 70% felt it was strong. When asked how it could be further improved, people pointed to various activities and events. The need for a good community centre was very clearly articulated.



In order to see what was truly important to people, we asked them what they would hate to lose. Again, the community centre was important to people, as were the playground and football pitch. The new shop featured strongly, as did the new bus service to Monaghan town.



When asked what amenities they would love to see in the village, people's needs centred on a safe walking route, and somewhere/ occasions to meet up socially.

What facilities/ amenities would you love to have in the village?

Cafe WALK KILMORE young group Local facilities Better nature walk club
digital notice board Safe new village road footpath
Connolly Corner shop lighting walk music weekend pub
Coffee shop walkway area tea community centre music
bus stop walking track park amenity river

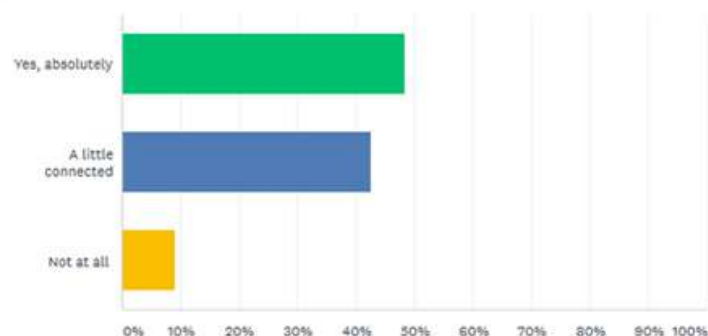
Are there any MISSING services/ facilities, or local assets which offer an opportunity to create something special for the people of Ballinode to enjoy?

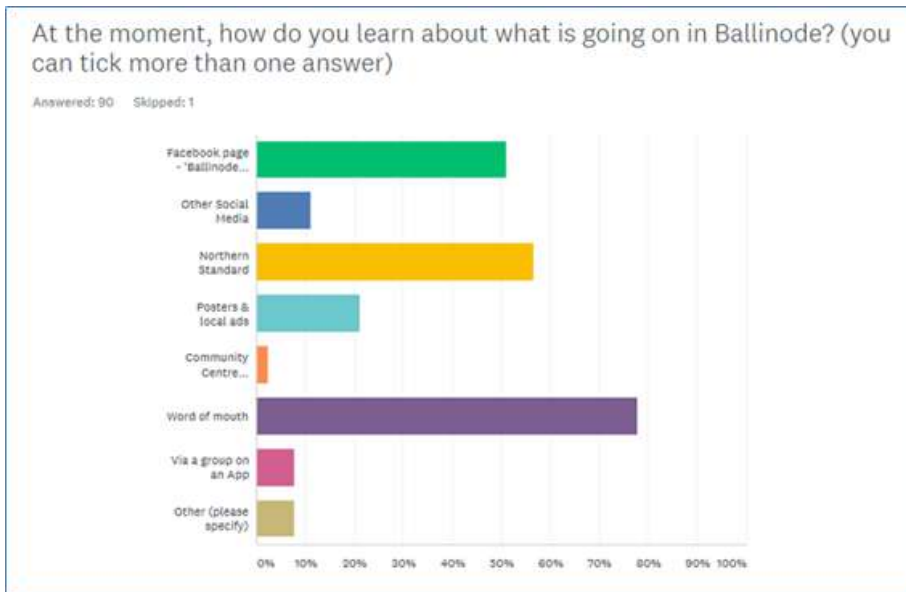
things bus place good nature walk walkway safe around ring
village Post office walk think people back shop Bingo week
meeting Bingo service ballinode

We asked people if they felt connected to community life. While almost 50% replied that they did, over 40% felt only a little connected, and almost 10% didn't feel connected at all. There's room for improvement! Are local groups failing to connect with newcomers to the village? Would offering a wider range of activities in the community centre help to connect people to the area? Would developing a calendar of events and festivals to bring people out of their homes and onto the street give people the opportunity to mix and get to know their neighbours in a social setting?

Do you feel connected to local community life?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 2





It's quite likely that newcomers are missing out on what's happening around the village, as most people are receiving their news by word of mouth or the Facebook page. If you're not 'in the know', you simply won't know what's going on! Something for all groups to consider when promoting their activities.

It's not a big surprise, then, that when we asked people to identify services needed in the village, a digital notice board makes an appearance!



A Quick Summary of Findings:

Older people, families and families with children appear to be happy with what Ballinode has to offer. Young people are less happy. People living alone are also less content. People do not agree that there is lots to do in the village. They are also not happy with the broadband service, or the other services in the village. Some people also have trouble getting to school/work.

These all could be areas for action.

4.

SWOT

With the help of local groups, we have identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats presented by the community.

- Knowing the community's strengths can identify areas which we can build upon;
- Identifying the weaknesses shows us where we may need to take action;
- The 'opportunities' box can identify resources we are not using to their fullest
- The 'threats' box looks at areas which have the potential to de-rail any progress we make unless we take the time to address them.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to the county town • Strong local employers • Picturesque village centre • Strong local groups • Hollywood lake • St Dymphna's Church • Walking track at Kilmore • A new community centre is being constructed in the village • The village competes in Tidy Towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing population • New community centre being constructed • Many well-educated people with skills to share • Older housing stock presents opportunity for community energy initiative to address the energy efficiency of the building stock and their reliance on oil fired central heating systems
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of integration of newcomers to the village into community life • Poor public lighting from Connolly's cross to village • Vacant dwellings in village • Poor public access to local lakes, which could be great amenities • No local festivals • 51% of housing stock likely to be energy inefficient • Over 80% of housing stock reliant on oil for heating needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast moving traffic through village centre • A lot of HGV traffic through village, making pedestrians feel unsafe on the narrow paths • Climate change: more extreme weather incidents leading to high water levels and flooding in the village • Flood plain in centre of village, associated with the river

Would you agree with all of these? Are there any others you would add?

Audit of Local Groups

The groups listed below participated in an in-depth survey, looking at their work in the village, the resources they currently have and the plans they have for future development.

Ballinode Community Projects

Foroige

Cross Border Wood Turners

Shed a Load in Ballinode

Scotstown GAA - Kilmore training grounds

St Dymphna's Church Select Vestry

Tydavnet Historical Society

Ballinode Bridge Club

Ballinode Lunch Club

Monaghan U3A

Ballinode Tidy Towns

Ballinode ICA

Monaghan Joggnernauts

Hollywood Lake Committee

With the exceptions of Ballinode Community Projects , St Dymphna's Church, Hollywood Lake Committee and Scotstown GAA, none of the other groups have their own facilities, and are reliant on the facilities in Ballinode community centre for their needs.

This means that the quality of the facilities in the new centre, and how easy they are to access, will play a big part in how active and successful community activity is in the years ahead.

Projects in the pipeline

We asked groups to tell us of any projects they were working on, or intended to undertake in the near future, so that we could get a fuller picture of what is going on in the village, and where there might be gaps which need to be addressed.

Activities planned include:

Group	Project
Ballinode Community Projects	Focusing on getting the new Community Centre finished
Ballinode ICA	We would like to start a cycling group, but the roads aren't safe
Ballinode Lunch Club	We would like to continue providing the meals on wheels service that we started during Covid
Ballinode Tidy Towns	We would like to do more biodiversity work, including develop a nature garden, possibly behind Cappog.
Foroige	We plan to get our members more involved in the local community
Hollywood Lake Cttee	Developing the amenities along the shore, including changing facilities, upgraded walks
St Dymphna's Church Select Vestry	We wish to improve access to the grounds from the Scotstown road & restore the boundary wall. We'd also like to restore the church clock, which is a very rare type dating from 1880
Scotstown GAA - Kilmore Training Grounds	Developing pedestrian access to the training grounds from Ballinode and Scotstown
Tydavnet Historical Society	Projects on Gola House & the listed buildings in the parish

Barriers to Progress

Groups were asked to identify issues that were making it difficult for them to make progress on their plans. The most commonly cited barriers¹ to progress were:

- For young people, lack of access to nearby facilities was the biggest obstacle to organising more activities, getting together more often etc
- For groups with a focus on organising activities with a focus on wellbeing, the lack of safe places to exercise in the village was an issue
- Groups which focus on indoor activities are struggling at the moment to find a suitable venue, with the community centre being out of commission
- Access to funding was an issue for some groups
- Groups such as Tidy Towns and the Lunch Club would welcome more volunteers

The Groups as Community Resources

The groups did more than tell us what they needed, however. They also told us what they had to offer the community, in addition to the activities they already are known for running. They would like to remind everyone that they are available:

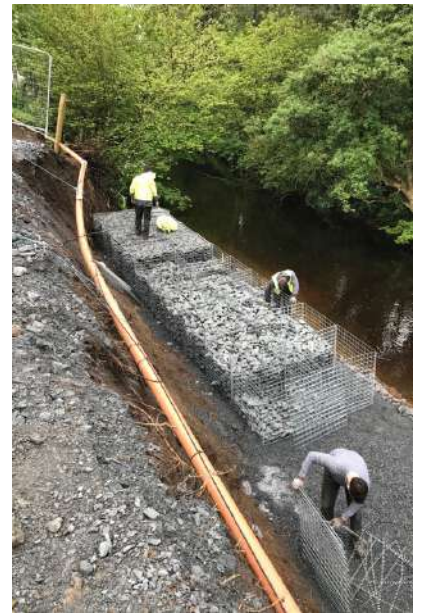
- Foroige's members are available to help during community events
- Cross Border Wood Turners are always delighted to teach new members a new skill
- Shed a Load in Ballinode love to see new people come along and take a positive step towards looking after their wellbeing
- St Dymphna's Select Vestry would like to remind people that their hall is available for community use, and that they are very interested in running events which involve the whole community
- Ballinode Bridge Club is interested in starting a beginners bridge session in the afternoons for older people
- Ballinode ICA is open to any suggestions for talks or training courses it might organise



The new Community Centre



Despite the difficulties presented by Brexit, Covid and the recent shortage of building materials, progress continues on the new Community Centre. The building is designed to fit in with the rural aesthetic of the village, with the 'wagon' style roof mimicing the vernacular shape of the hay sheds of the area, as well as echoing the rolling drumlin landscape. The hall section will be the exact same size as the old hall up at McAree's. The lowest block will contain kitchen and toilets, while the two storey block to the left of the picture will have room for additional meeting space, etc. The river bank to the rear of the site has been squared off and reinforced, which has enlarged the site to the rear. This will be developed into an outside seating area, which will no doubt give many hours of pleasure to us all. The foundations are now laid, and construction will begin shortly on the main building shell.



Audit of Local Amenities

The amenities and facilities of a community provide the spaces in which the people which make up that community come together. The more often people get together, the more connections they form with each other. It is these connections which help hold a community together through the tough times, and which ensure that support is there for the most vulnerable members of the community when they need it.

Community doesn't happen without places to meet. Some of these will be social, some will be related to sport, religion or education, and some will be recreational. Some will be indoors; some outdoors. Some will provide opportunities for formal interaction, while others will provide quick, casual contacts such as whilst queuing to be served in the village shop.

All community interaction is important, as it helps us to build a sense of belonging, and helps to connect us to our community.

Some of the important meeting points in Ballinode are:

Facility/ Amenity	Details
Hollywood Park	One of 5 designated bathing areas in Co. Monaghan. Includes walk, play area, changing facilities. Due to be upgraded in 2022
St Dymphna's Church	Church at top of village, Church of Ireland. Hall available for meetings & events
Quig Lough angling	20 pegs along lakeside maintained by Rossmore Anglers
Quig Lough Picnic area	Dedicated to the memory of Vincie & Tessie McAree
Ballinode Playground	Constructed by the community, insured and maintained by Monaghan County Council

Facility/ Amenity	Details
Multi-use games area (MUGA)	Community-owned pitch, suitable for 5-a-side football, basketball
Riverside Park	Small park in village centre along the river front, overlooking reconstruction of mill wheel
Village Shop & post office	There is one convenience store in the village. This reopened recently after having been closed for a time, leaving villagers with a journey to Scotstown or Monaghan for a litre of milk or to collect their pension.
Scotstown GAA's training grounds at Kilmore	The facility is used by many in the community, especially the new walking track

The village is unusual in that it is only one village in a larger parish; it does not host either the local Catholic Church nor the GAA club grounds.

These can be strong focal points for a community's sense of identity, and the large number of events which are organised around these two organisations' activities assist in bringing the community together regularly, which provides the basis for establishing community connections. Without these two organisations being active in the village, the community has to make a conscious effort to create and maintain the sense of identity and belonging that is needed for a community to thrive.



One of the angling pegs at Quiglough developed & maintained by Rossmore Anglers

Gaps in Local Amenities & Facilities

The village does not have any educational facilities within the community.

This means that the children of Ballinode, from a very early age, leave the village each morning and may be heading in many directions for their day care and educational needs.

They may not be attending the same facilities as other children in their neighbourhood, and their best friends from school may not live in Ballinode.

This presents a special challenge to the community; if we wish our children to feel a sense of belonging to the village, and to know their neighbours as well as we knew the kids living near us as we were growing up, we will need to find ways and reasons for the children of Ballinode to come together outside of the formal educational setting, so that they are given the chance to find out what it means to be from Ballinode.

The Need for a new Community Centre

The community is very fortunate to have a community-minded local business in McAree Engineering, which when approached twenty years ago with a proposal by the community around moving the community centre down to the centre of the village, facilitated the project by purchasing the site of the former creamery at a time that the community was not in a position to act.

Today, McAree Engineering is facilitating the community's ambitions to provide the village with a modern, well-appointed community centre by undertaking the construction of the new centre on the creamery site, and forgoing the construction of new offices for the company in favour of transferring its office accommodations into the old community centre, which sits in front of its existing premises.

The move of the community centre from the outlying edge of the village into the heart of the village will be a tremendous bonus to community life. The new building will be finished to a very high standard, offering significantly superior levels of comfort over the old building. Additionally, extra space inside will facilitate more activities, and off street parking will improve the safety of patrons compared to the busy roadside parking at the old centre.

The new building will have enough space to facilitate people to come in to hang out socially, which will bring huge benefits for social interactions, and will enable services such as wifi, community library, and citizens information to be provided, bringing untold benefits to the people of Ballinode on a personal and community level.

7.

Community Needs

We asked groups to help us to build a picture of the community's needs under three key headings, and to help to identify how these might be addressed. Here is the shape which has been put on the work so far:

Social Needs	Facilities/ Amenities	Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities for children with special needs, eg ASD or poor communication due to overuse of technology Need for social contact outside the home for those who are living alone Fear of Crime – a need to feel safer in the home, and on the streets Need for better communication channels than 'word of mouth', so that those who are less linked-in to the community do not get left behind Need for us all to live more sustainably and to respond to the challenge of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Netball/ basketball court Badminton/ table tennis facilities A safe looped walking route around the village Walking/ cycling links to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kilmore training grounds - Hollywood park - Monaghan town A community park & Allotments Somewhere for young people to hang out Upgraded facilities at Hollywood park Improved public lighting, footpath and spaces Claim back the street for the village rather than fast-moving through-traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited local services for older people living in the village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meals - drop-in social centre - health services Need for support in wellbeing: eating well, stress & mental health, family support Need for integration support for foreign nationals living in Ballinode, eg english language classes Need for improved local transport links to Monaghan town Need for faster, more reliable broadband & public access to a broadband hub Need for a welcome/ befriending service for newcomers to the village, to help them to find their feet and join in with community life

How groups suggested these needs might be addressed:

- Awareness training for leaders of existing groups, so that children with special needs can be accommodated

- Awareness training for children attending activities so they can sensitively deal with children who are having difficulty during an activity

- Re-activate Community Alert.

- Build a list of vulnerable households and develop a rota to ensure all on the list are visited or phoned regularly to ensure they are ok

- Carry out projects aimed at helping people to feel safer, eg locks & bolts initiative, smoke alarms, crime prevention advice, property marking

- Creation of a 'drop in' culture in the new community centre, where people feel welcome to come in and pass time having a coffee and meeting friends, even if they're not attending an activity that evening**

- Provision of a space in the new community centre to facilitate people to hang out, relax, meet friends, have coffee and passively build a tighter connection to their community**

- Contact details for all local groups on display in lobby of community centre and in newsletter**

- Calendar of activities published seasonally, and 'how to book' information for each activity and for the centre and St Dymphna's Hall listed**

- A 'Welcome to Ballinode' committee to be put in place, and welcome pack to be delivered to new arrivals

- Digital community noticeboard in the village centre, so that all may find out what is happening without having to have any local knowledge

- Community newsletter, distributed door-to-door

- Start a community café in the community centre,

- Serve lunches at subsidised rates on certain days

- Host coffee mornings, along with book club, bridge, heritage club and other activities, to encourage people living alone to get out of the house

- Visiting service to people living alone

- Community-led energy saving projects

- Weekly social club during the afternoon in the community centre for older people

- Monthly social dancing for all ages,
 - with older people teaching younger people how to dance
 - and an opportunity for newcomers to the village to get to know neighbours

- Develop outdoor sports facilities adjacent to the new community centre

- Develop a community park and allotments in the village

- Young people should be made welcome in public spaces, and encouraged to come inside and hang out. Can a dedicated space be found for a youth area in the new Centre?

- Run family events, festivals etc to get everyone out on the street

Priorities

We asked groups what should be prioritised in this Community Plan.

By far the most popular answer was **improvements to the footpaths and street lighting around the village.**

We are interpreting this as a desire to see an overall upgrade of the village's 'public realm' spaces, to enhance the appearance of the village, while at the same time improving road safety and making the village a more pleasant place to live.

In Monaghan County Council's experience, the best way to approach this type of work is to begin by commissioning a "Public Realm Plan", which looks at all the spaces which are in the public realm, including the approaches to the village, the streets, any parks or parklets, etc. The plan considers whether these spaces make sense as they are, or are they disjointed? Perhaps they look very different from each other. It then lays out a design for the place, and a plan for each street/ estate etc to transform them all to follow the new vision for the area. The ideal is when a place has a strong identity or brand, which is stated at the boundaries and echoed throughout the area in various ways. A palette of materials and colours is selected and used repeatedly throughout the area to bring a sense of 'flow' and connectedness to the area. How each corner of the area is used by the community is considered, and each is enhanced to make each space even more suited to its use, or even create new uses not imagined before.

A public realm plan can be a very powerful tool, as it can pull in a lot of funding behind it through schemes such as the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, to carry out the works set out in the plan.



The Big Tom Memorial Garden in Oram, which opened in summer 2021, started life as an idea which came out of Oram's community planning process..

Funding of over €60,000 was secured from the Town & Village Fund to turn the idea into a wonderful tribute to Oram's most famous son.

The next priority which is evident from the comments submitted by groups is the need for the new **community centre** to be completed as soon as possible.

To some extent, the inability of groups to meet during the Covid crisis has lessened the impact of the building not being completed, but it is clear from the needs shown earlier in this document that a place to meet is crucial in ensuring that essential services are available locally, and in providing opportunities for strengthening community bonds.

As we have had cause to be thankful for in recent times, strong community bonds are something that Irish communities are good at. However, we have seen in our survey that there is a danger in Ballinode that the bonds of community could start to slip, with so many people not feeling connected to the community. It is therefore crucial that this is addressed immediately.

The opening of a new community centre provides an opportunity for a fresh beginning for everyone. As the building will be new to everyone, those who are new to the village will not feel so much 'outside' when they set foot inside for the first time. But care must be taken by all to provide a warm welcome to everyone, and to provide many opportunities to participate at all levels.

One suggestion would be to leave a coffee dock in the reception area and encourage people to drop in for a chat and to meet friends in this area. This can be a great way of encouraging those who are not members of any club to dip their toes in the water and begin to become more closely involved in community activities. As they get to know what is going on in the Centre, they may become encouraged to join a class, or to lend a hand in setting up tables for the whist, and so barriers begin to come down.....

In expressing their wishes for what might be possible in the new community centre, people have hoped for:

- safe off-road parking, so that vulnerable members of the community can attend activities in safety
- a dedicated space for young people, so they can drop in and hang out at any time without disturbing any organised activities
- a broadband connection with free wifi (Monaghan County Council can provide this through a national scheme)
- a consulting room, so that services such as counselling, farm advice, health clinics can be held locally
- a kitchen up to commercial standard, so that food can be prepared for serving to the public
- comfortable seating and a high standard of comfort throughout
- consideration should be given to having a bar for functions, as this would help to pay the bills

The most popular outdoor amenities which were requested were **a link to the walking track at the Kilmore training grounds** and a **community garden**.

Some initial work has been done to investigate the feasibility of developing an off-road route from the village to Kilmore. What is needed next is detailed design drawings, which will enable accurate costings to be drawn up.

Monaghan County Council is committed to finding a way to advance this project to design stage before the end of 2022.

Once design drawings have been completed, a planning application must be submitted. Land acquisition is usually the next stage, followed by construction. Funding will need to be secured to cover these stages.

There is a water course to be crossed just before the Kilmore grounds. This may add significantly to the cost of the project.

The village of Ballinode has very little public space available where the community can gather outdoors, or where a person can go for a little relaxation. Many villages are built around a 'green', or have a community park. The only area available like this in Ballinode is the park along the river, which while lovely, is small and is somewhat encroached upon by the noise of the passing traffic. For a rural village, there is little opportunity for residents to enjoy the rural idyll.

People indicated that they would like to see more recreational amenities in the village. This could take the form of a community park or garden, in which different areas could be managed differently to provide an array of amenities, such as a wildlife area, a quiet area for reflection, a kickabout area, an area for barbecues and even an outdoor theatre complete with a pavillion.

Scotshouse's Community Park started life as a derelict building site. The need for a community space was identified in the Community Plan, and two years and over €200,000 later, the village now has a biodiversity park, complete with pond and performance area



Action Plan

In this section, we lay out the actions we will take together as a community to make Ballinode a fantastic place to live. To start, we will imagine how Ballinode will look and feel once we have completed our work. This 'vision' is important, as it gives us a picture of what we're working towards:

Vision

Ballinode is a picturesque village with a strong sense of community. There is lots to do for people of all ages, and the amenities, which are of the highest quality, support people to live well and sustainably. You will always find a warm welcome in Ballinode.

The vision breaks down into the following themes:

1. **Village Appearance** - the creation of a 'brand' for the village and the enhancement of the public realm are actions under this theme.
2. **Community Spirit** - ensuring everyone feels a sense of connection to the community, and building community spirit are the focus here
3. **Things to do** - a programme of activities and events will be the focus of this theme
4. **Quality Amenities** - the development of new amenities and enhancement of existing amenities falls into this theme
5. **Living Well and Sustainably** - actions under this theme address issues such as health and wellbeing, and also climate action
6. **Belonging in Ballinode** - the focus of the actions under this theme are on ensuring everyone is included in community life, from the youngest to the oldest, being sensitive to issues such as levels of ability, length of residence, religious belief, nationality and gender identity.
7. **Organising the Work** - the actions under this theme focus on providing a structure for everyone to work within and ensuring that progress is made. This theme happens in the background, and doesn't appear in the vision statement.

Theme 1: Village Appearance

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
1.1	Commission a Public Realm Plan for the village	Monaghan Co Co - Monaghan MD Office	Funding to engage consultants required
1.2	Develop an identity/brand for the village	Monaghan MD Office & Ballinode Community	Funding to engage consultants required
1.3	Create welcome features at entry points to make strong statement	Monaghan Co Co - Monaghan MD Office	Funding either as solo project, or as part of larger village enhancement scheme
1.4	Upgrade footpaths and lighting throughout the village	Monaghan Co Co - Monaghan MD Office	Funding for a village enhancement scheme
1.5	Redefine roadway to reduce speed through village	Monaghan Co Co - Monaghan MD Office	Funding for a village enhancement scheme
1.6	Carry out an audit of derelict properties	Monaghan Co Co - Economic Dev Section	Staff resources
1.7	Identify any available areas to transform into 'pocket gardens'	Ballinode Tidy Towns	Access to land registry maps via Monaghan Co Co
1.8	Soften the hard landscaping throughout Ballinode by 'greening' the village	Ballinode Tidy Towns	Co-operation of property owners required to replace walls with hedges etc
1.9	Enhance Christmas/occasion lighting throughout the village	Ballinode Tidy Towns, in co-operation with property owners	Funding may be available for ambitious scheme through Town & Village Scheme

Theme 2: Community Spirit

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
2.1	Ensure information on local events & activities includes messages of encouragement to newcomers & contact information	All parties organising activities and events	None - just to remember that what may seem simple to some people may be a giant step for others
2.2	Revive the 'On the Road in Ballinode' festival	Festival Committee to be set up for the purpose	Funding, insurance. Both can be addressed with forward planning
2.3	Run a Summer Community Barbecue	St Dymphna's Select Vestry	St Dymphna's have recently received funding to purchase BBQ equipment
2.4	Continue to run outdoor Christmas carol recital tradition in village centre	Ballinode Tidy Towns	
2.5	Start a 'Ten Minutes a Month' volunteering campaign, with tasks posted on a special board in the community centre	Ballinode Community Projects	Groups needing help compose their 'job adverts' & post on the board, asking for help with filling forms, painting walls, supervising summer camp etc
2.6	Run a 'Celebrate our Achievements' end of year event, make it a fun review of the year's highlights	Ballinode Community Projects	Awards - some serious, some fun, music, refreshments
2.7	Erect a digital Community Notice Board in village & in community centre	Ballinode Community Projects, Monaghan PPN	Funding

Theme 3: Things to Do

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
3.1	Run a series of 'Come & Try It' taster events in the Community Hall	Hall Committee	Funding for tutors, equipment etc.
3.2	Run two events annually which are designed to bring the community together 1: Connect with your Community (spring) 2: Community Celebrates (winter)	Community Council (see details in next section)	Volunteers to organise, some facilitation to get the best ideas from people at the 'Connects' event, some prizes and awards to give out at the 'Celebrates' event
3.3	Start a monthly social dance in the community hall. Each dance to start with an hour's tuition	Hall Committee	Funding for dance tutor, music. This can be addressed with forward planning
3.4	Run a Children's Camp in the village during school holidays, to enable local children to get to know each other better	Hall Committee, Foroige	Funding, volunteers
3.5	Provide a dedicated, safe space for young people to hang out	Ballinode Community Projects, Foroige	Funding, volunteers
3.6	Put together a 'We are Ballinode' project.	Heritage group	Funding, volunteers
3.7	Research & publish a heritage guide to the village	Heritage Group, Tidy Towns	Funding, volunteers
3.8	Organise english conversation classes to support new employees of local businesses	Community Centre	Local people to volunteer time to chat with people who need to practice their english

Theme 4: Quality Amenities

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
4.1	Complete the construction of the new Community Centre on the site of the old Creamery	Ballinode Community Projects, McAree Engineering	Funding to complete the internal fit out of parts of the building
4.2	Provide a community park in the village	Ballinode Tidy Towns, Monaghan County Council	Site required, design for park, funding
4.3	Provide allotments, linked to 'grow your own' classes in the community park	Ballinode Tidy Towns, Monaghan County Council	Site required, funding to lay out allotment plots, funding to organise training
4.4	Upgrade the amenities at Hollywood Lake	Hollywood Park Committee, Monaghan County Council	Funding has been secured from Rural Recreation Fund
4.5	Provide a cycle track linking Ballinode to Monaghan town	Monaghan County Council	Funding from the Active Travel programme
4.6	Provide free public wifi hub in the new community centre	Monaghan County Council	National Rural Broadband Plan/ Wifi4U
4.7	Connect the village to Kilmore walking track - provide a safe walking link	Monaghan County Council, Ballinode Community Projects, Scotstown GAA	Co-operation of landowners required, funding for design, funding for construction
4.8	Restore the historic clock in St Dymphna's Church	St Dymphna's Select Vestry, Ballinode Heritage Cttee	Funding - investigate historic structures fund through Monaghan Co Co

Theme 5: Living Well & Sustainably

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
5.1	Continue to support people to maintain healthy lifestyles through the 'Shed a Load' programme	'Shed a Load' committee	Access to facilities such as the community hall, Kilmore walking track etc
5.2	Include some mindfulness messages in the riverside park to support mental wellbeing	Ballinode Tidy Towns	Some meaningful quotations, an artist, a little funding
5.3	Extend Lunch Club to provide additional social services to older people living alone	Lunch Club Committee	Volunteers
5.4	Plan for future flooding events due to climate change	Monaghan County Council	Funding to engage consultants
5.5	Develop links to the Healthy Monaghan & Age Friendly Monaghan and to Monaghan Sports Partnership	New Ballinode Community Council, so that all groups may benefit from the new links	Volunteers
5.6	Start a Sustainable Energy Community group in Ballinode	Ballinode Tidy Towns, with support from county Energy Action Group	Volunteers
5.7	Deliver projects to assist homeowners to upgrade energy inefficient homes, and reduce their reliance on oil for central heating	New Sustainable Energy Community Group	SEAI has a programme which will mentor and fund the community through the journey

Theme 6: Belonging in Ballinode

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
6.1	Develop a 'drop in' culture in the community centre, by providing a reception space where people can meet up, hang out, make coffee, independently of organised activities	Community Centre Committee	A suitable space, comfortable seating, coffee dock, volunteers to manage the area
6.2	Develop a 'Welcome to Ballinode' pack, containing information about local services and activities, and contact details for local groups. Distribute to all homes. Keep in reception of Community Centre for newcomers	Ballinode Community Projects, with input from each group	Funding for design & publishing
6.3	Focus on finding ways to connect children of all ages outside of school, to give them an opportunity to build a sense of community, to make up for a lack of contact within school	All groups, led by Foroige	Youth Engagement Plan to be developed, in consultation with the children and young people of the village
6.4	Develop a seasonal calendar of events, aimed at creating reasons for bringing the community together to socialise	Community Centre Committee, with input from all groups	Seasonal decorations, volunteers, imagination
6.5	Publish a spring & autumn newsletter & drop to every home	Ballinode Community Projects, with articles from all groups	Funding for publishing, volunteers to write & edit

Theme 7: Organising the Work

No.	Action	Who will do it?	Resources needed?
7.1	Encourage people to sign up to the Ballinode Alerts group on Monaghan Community Alerts & use the service to push information out	One person in each group to be given admin rights to Ballinode Alerts so they can post messages	Commitment from groups to use the service. Groups need to push people to join it.
7.2	Set up a Community Council, with a seat awarded to each group which is active in the village, plus Monaghan County Council. Council to meet twice a year to review progress on the Plan and agree priorities going forward	Monaghan County Council will call the first meeting	buy-in from the local groups
7.3	Organise training courses in committee skills, writing funding applications, charities regulator etc, to help groups grow their capacity	new Community Centre, Monaghan PPN	suitable room, internet connection, training equipment
7.4	Provide access to mentoring to groups for the first two years of the Plan to ensure progress is made on actions	Monaghan County Council	Participation of the groups
7.5	Put together an 'Information Team', to gather info for use in newsletter, social media, notice boards etc	Community Council	Skills in copywriting, social media and photography an advantage
7.6	Revive Ballinode Community Alert	Community Council	volunteers

Spotlight on Key Actions

Action 2.5 Start a '10 Minutes a Month' Volunteering Campaign

This action involves setting up a notice board in the reception area of the community centre dedicated entirely to 'volunteers wanted'. Groups will post up any tasks they need help with, stating where and when the help is needed. Some tasks will be one-off, eg 'help to set up the hall before the Christmas party', while others might be more regular in nature, eg 'come join us on the village litter pick, meet at Maggies every Saturday at 10am'.

The community is low on volunteers and leaders. This is limiting the amount of services that can be provided and the number of activities that can be run.

For example, activities involving children may need two adults just to be present, to comply with child protection guidelines. Perhaps you could do your knitting in a comfy seat in a corner of a room in the community centre for a couple of hours a week?

Maybe the centre could do with a hand to set out chairs and tables for the whist after yoga finishes?

There are a lot of tasks which help groups immensely that don't involve being there in person, or even a huge commitment of time. For example, most groups could do with a hand when it comes to completing funding applications. Another area that groups would really appreciate support in is generating publicity for their activities. This can be done from your desk, at a time that suits you - perhaps during a tea break.

The point is that everyone has some skill that the community can use. It can be as simple as you being present, or being willing to learn how to set up the PA equipment so that inexperienced people don't blow out the speakers.

Playing a part in your community not only helps the community, but it will give you a sense of belonging. It feels good to help out, too.

So get into the habit of checking for 'jobs' on the community notice board, and get involved. You'll be glad you did, and so will everyone else.

Actions 2.3, 3.2 and 3.8 Three new Annual Events for Ballinode

The community of Ballinode doesn't have enough occasions to get together socially. Coming together in happy times is important, as it helps to create the bonds that can get us through the not-so-good times.

We would like the community to set up two annual events that everyone will know will happen, that they can plan for, and that they can look forward to going to.

One should happen in late spring, and should be focused on getting people together to talk about what they would like to see happen in the community this year. It will be called **'Connect with your Community'**

- What activities would they like to see in the Community Centre?
- What would they like to see planned for children over the summer holidays?
- Are there any issues which have come up recently that need to be taken on board? Does anyone have any suggestions for how they might be addressed?

This will help all the local groups to plan their activities for the year, to allocate their resources and to adjust their priorities.

It will also help to build a sense of 'we're in this together', and 'we all have a stake in this community', which will help to build community spirit.

The second event should take place towards the end of the year. There should be more of a celebratory feel about this event. It should be about reviewing all that has been achieved during the year, congratulating those who have brought success to the village, and thanking everyone for their efforts to make Ballinode better. This event will be themed **'The Community Celebrates'**.

We suggest that there should be a concert and awards ceremony. The concert will provide local people with a chance to showcase their talents and have some fun, whilst the awards should also be kept light hearted, while marking significant events and efforts during the year. For example, an award for the child who came out most often on the Tidy Towns litter picks during the year might be followed by an award for the person who managed to get the wettest at the community picnic (if it was a washout). The goal should be to encourage people to come out and get involved again next year.

A third event should mark the summer; St Dymphna's Church would like to host a community picnic and have recently availed of funding to purchase BBQ equipment and tables with this in mind. The Church is an important part of the village's heritage, and such an event would make a great intercultural activity which can only serve to bring the community closer together. This event will be a **Community Picnic**.

Action 3.1 'Come & Try It' Taster Activities

Getting things up and going in the new Community Centre will take a lot of work. To take some of the financial risk out of putting on new activities which might not find an audience, we suggest running a series of one-off taster sessions instead. It can take the risk out of signing up to something you won't like for the participant too, as the activity changes each week.

The concept is very simple: the person signs up for a course of 6 or 8 weeks. Each night they arrive, a different activity is on offer; perhaps line dancing one week, zumba another, bowling the following week, etc.

This format gives people the opportunity to try out a number of activities that they would otherwise not have come across. At the end of the course, participants are asked to complete a short survey to say which classes they enjoyed the most, and which they would be interested in seeing being offered regularly in the Centre.

The most popular courses can then be offered on an ongoing basis.

Further taster sessions can be organised by the centre, perhaps focusing on activities for particular age groups, or activities which are suitable to fill a certain time slot or to take place in a particular room within the building.

A suggestion board might be erected in the reception area to invite ideas from the community for the next taster sessions. Members of the community with particular skills or knowledge might even offer their time to fill a slot.

One possible way of including local input on the activities rota might be to reserve a particular night once a month for 'community open mike/ lucky dip' and invite members of the community to fill this space with their own ideas - people who have photos to show from amazing places they've been, or who are very knowledgeable about a certain topic and would like to share their passion with others. The speakers and their topics could be promoted around the community in the days leading up to the event.

Local promotion can be done by way of:

- the digital community notice board
- the notice board in the reception area of the community centre
- via Ballinode Community Alerts on the Komeer app

Action 3.5 'We are Ballinode' project

One of the issues which emerged from the survey which was circulated last year was that over half the people who live in Ballinode either feel only a little connected to the community, or don't feel connected at all. We think this feeling of disconnectedness is being fueled by two things:

1. the fact that people have to leave the village for some of the activities which are central to their lives, such as church services, school and GAA
2. there are many new houses in the village, and people living in rented accommodation. These residents' connection to the area is young and the relatively low level of activities in the village has given them few opportunities to get involved.

This situation will not change unless we take action. What we are proposing is a project which will take a snapshot of everyone living in Ballinode at a moment in time. The idea is to take photos of each household outside their home. In addition to the photo, the names of each person, and some information about them - where they're originally from (if they're new to the area) and how they came to be living in Ballinode, what they're passionate about, what they love about living in Ballinode, and their hopes for the future - will be recorded.

The information will be used in a number of ways:

- Firstly, it will form a 'folk history' of the area, which will be submitted to Monaghan County Museum for safekeeping.
- An exhibition will be developed and displayed in the new Community Centre. This will give everyone in the community a presence in the Centre and help to boost a sense of ownership of the new building, and enhance the spirit of belonging at every event held there.
- A book and website for the project could also be developed

By promoting the heading 'We are Ballinode', we will be reminding everyone daily that it takes all of us to make a community, and that we all have a responsibility to put in the effort if we wish to get out the reward.

Suggested layout for Community Snapshot Project



Carol Lambe
Community Development Officer
with Monaghan County Council

"I've lived in the Father Ted house all my life. I spend most of my time shouting 'Fek off' out the window at tourists. They love it.

My other great passion in life is horses. Not many people know that it was I who actually trained Vallegro for Charlotte Dujardin to ride at the London Olympics. It would have been Ireland's first gold in dressage if I had ridden him, but I couldn't get the day off work."

Action 5.6 Start a Sustainable Energy Community Group

Remember the data we gave you at the start of the plan about the age of the housing stock in Ballinode, and the high reliance on oil for heating our homes? The impact of this data is that our homes are energy inefficient, and expensive to heat.

There is a real focus on Climate Action at international and national level, and we must all play our part in taking steps to reduce our energy consumption where we can. In the case of improving the energy performance of our houses, taking action can vastly improve the comfort of our homes as well as reduce the heating costs dramatically.

There are a range of subsidies and grants available to individual homeowners from the SEAI (sustainable energy association of Ireland) to assist people to upgrade their homes. For some, facing undertaking a renovation project on their own can be a daunting task, so we are proposing to go a different route, by approaching this on a community-wide basis, so that we can all learn about the process of home upgrades together, and get support through the process from start to finish.

Usually, community projects qualify for a higher rate of grant than private projects, which on its own is a very good reason for the community to collaborate .

The Sustainable Energy Communities process starts with registering your community as an SEC. A mentor is then appointed to the group to guide you along the process of auditing your community's current energy consumption and identifying where potential savings can be made. Then the group puts together projects aimed at addressing the areas where savings are to be found, and sets about securing funding for each project and then delivering the projects in their community.

Small projects might include:

- carrying out energy audits on each home and business
- fitting heating controls to all domestic boilers

Larger projects might typically include:

- carrying out cavity wall insulation to older housing stock in the village
- installing electric car charging points in the village

Keeping Everyone Connected: Actions 2.7, 6.1, 7.1 & 7.5

A critical factor in determining whether this Plan will succeed or fail in enhancing the sense of community spirit in Ballinode, and in generating more activity, will be information. Can we create channels of communication which manage to get information out to every home quickly and reliably, so that everyone knows what is going on, and feels welcome and invited to come along and get involved.

No one communication mode will reach everyone, and so we have built a few different methods of getting information out into the Plan.

6.1 We recommend that a comfortable, welcoming reception space be provided in the new Community Centre, and that people be encouraged to use it as a drop-in space to pop in regularly and see what is going on, meet friends, have a coffee, etc.

A community notice board should be erected in this area. It should carry notices about any activity happening in the community. A separate notice board should be provided for activities in the Community Centre, so that people can easily differentiate between the two.

A third board for volunteering tasks should also be provided, to normalise asking for help and make it easy for people to offer their skills to the community.

Other types of information, such as citizens information and youth information might also be provided on stands in the reception area, if volunteers can be found to organise and take care of the stands.

Another project which might be run from the reception area is a community library, where people bring along books, toys, clothes etc that they are finished with, and other members of the community take what they need.

7.5 All the groups and individuals offering activities and services in the community need to have one central place to send that information to. From there, it can be posted to notice boards, used in the Welcome pack, featured in the community newsletters and posted to social media, to keep everyone informed of what is going on and encourage them to join in or to give a hand where it is needed.

- Some of this information will be fairly static, in that it does not change often, eg the contact details for a club, or the arrangements for when and where a group meets.
- For other information, eg an event, the information will be relevant for a short time, and then will need to be taken down.

- Other information might include public notices reminding people of a national campaign, such as Fire Safety Week, or looking for information about a missing pet.

2.7 A digital community notice board can feature multiple messages on different sections of the same screen, include full colour images, provide areas for permanent features such as promotional items from sponsors, and can rotate messages on a timed basis to show multiple screens. The content can be changed remotely from a pc, and individual notice boards can display different content.

By locating one out in the village, a person can find out what is happening in the community without having to go into the community centre, or receive a newsletter to their home. It can be a great way to remind everyone of an event which is on tonight, or to alert them of a danger in the village right now.



A digital notice board in Newtown, Wales

7.1 Monaghan Joint Policing Committee initiated an all-county community alert messaging service in 2019. The Gardai send messages out through this service, but it is also available to communities to send messages out to the service subscribers in their area.

To receive messages from this service, you will need a smartphone. Download the app called Komeer to your phone. Open the app and enter your contact details to sign up. Then search for 'Monaghan Community Alerts' and click 'Apply to join'. This will join you up to the all county Garda messaging service. Now search for 'Community Alerts Ballinode' and apply to join this group too. This is the group to which community notices will be posted.

10. Making it Happen

To transform any Community Plan from a document into 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.

To help give this new approach the shape and structure it will need, a new Community Council is being put in place to 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 rather than the good of any one organisation. It will also seek to address gaps, get new activities going, etc, where there is an agreed need. It will meet regularly with the County Council to review progress and address any barriers.

The following simple steps will help to ensure there is follow-through on this Plan:

1.A Community Launch for this Plan

At the launch, we will promote the concept of every person signing up to playing their part in community life. On offer will be volunteering opportunities with existing and new organisations in the community.

2.First meeting of Community Council

A date for the first Community Council meeting will be set for three months following the launch date. The business of the meeting will be:

- -to agree a Terms of Reference for the Council
- -to lay out a Workplan for Year 1
- -to formalize the membership

3. Agree when the first Community Feedback Event will be

An annual community feedback event has been designed into the Plan. As well as being an opportunity to celebrate together as a community and build community links and raise local morale, the annual event provides an opportunity to update everyone on progress, which is critical to maintaining public support, and to test the waters to see what level of support various potential project ideas under consideration by the Community Council might have amongst the wider community.

4. Hold Review Meetings with Monaghan County Council

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

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. The Facilitator will help the community to set up the Community Council, and to run the first review meeting.

Monaghan County Council's Community Development Department will continue to provide the community of Ballinode with development support and advice as you move from planning into making your plans a reality.

We will also help you to access the help you need from other Council sections, such as the Municipal District Office, as you need it, and from other agencies and funding bodies, if required.

We are in your corner.

You can reach us at:

community@monaghancoco.ie

047 30500

Feedback Survey

What do you think of the Plan?

How can it be improved?

What else needs to be added?

Ok, you're up!

It's your turn to talk.

Tell us what we got right. And just as importantly, what we got wrong!

What has been left out of the Plan?

What won't work, and why?

What needs to be changed, and how?

You can write your ideas down here, pull it out and either drop it in to any Council office or to us at the address below, or you can complete an online version of the form at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X9DRDV3>

If Covid restrictions allow, we hope to run a public meeting to allow the community to discuss the Plan with the Council and each other. However, at the time of completing the Plan, infection numbers are once again on the increase, so this may not be possible.

We therefore ask that you make every effort to return your thoughts on the plan by way of this Feedback Survey, in case it's not possible to come together to discuss it.

We will gather all the information we receive and use it to make this plan better. Your information will be treated in confidence, and will only be used for the purposes of putting this plan together, so please speak freely.

Once we review all your responses, a final Plan will be produced in Spring 2022. The final document will be printed so that you can deliver a copy to every home in the village. The Foreword will be in the form of a joint statement by you, the groups which sign up to deliver the Plan, and the names of each group will be printed underneath the statement.

The final Plan will be written in the language of 'we' and will take the form of a promise from you, the community groups, to the people of Ballinode. So read the document carefully, and make sure you're happy with it. You can contact me to discuss at clambe@monaghancoco.ie or 086 8386905.



Ballinode Community Plan Feedback Survey

1 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

2 Are there any other Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats which should be added to the SWOT on p18 ? How might they affect the community?

Ballinode Community Plan Feedback Survey

3 Do you support the idea of developing an identity or brand for Ballinode?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Have you any ideas for what this might be?

If you wish to propose an idea for the identity or brand, please add it here:

4 If you could only choose FIVE actions from the Plan, which actions would you prioritise? (just print their numbers below, eg 5.2, or add a new action of your own)

Ballinode Community Plan Feedback Survey

- 5 Which action(s) from the Plan do you think would make the biggest impact on the community?**

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

Ballinode Community Plan Feedback Survey

- 7** If you are reviewing the Plan on behalf of a group, please give details of the group below, and please indicate if your response is the official response of the group, or your own personal response



- 8** If your group was given responsibility for any Action in the Plan, please indicate if you are happy to accept the role. Please give details of any changes you wish to make to any action you have been assigned, or any any action you wish to be included on.



- 9** Is your group happy to add its support to this Development Plan, to participate in the Community Council and to be a Signatory to the Foreword on the final version of the Plan?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Ballinode Community Plan Feedback Survey

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

(If you want a paper copy, supply your postal address. If a digital copy is fine, just 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 Ballinode a fantastic place to live.

Your Name: _____

Your Postal Address (If you want a hard copy of the Plan):

Your email (If you want a pdf copy of the Plan):

All Done. Thanks a million for your help!

Please return this survey to any Monaghan County Council Office, or to
Community Dept,
Monaghan County Council
MTEK II, Knockaconny,
Armagh Road, Monaghan
H18 YH59

