

Oram

Community Plan

2019-2024



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Foreword

This is our Plan. It is the result of the various groups which work for the development of the village coming together to share ideas and discuss what is best for the future of the area. It is also the result of consultation with the people of Oram, who were given opportunities to feed into the planning process at the early stages and again when the Draft Plan was produced.

We believe that we have identified a set of Actions that will improve the village, and the lives of the people who live here, and we are committing each to delivering our part of the Plan.

We acknowledge that it will take a partnership approach in order to make real progress, and we ask that every person in the village thinks about how they can contribute to making Oram a better place to live. Can you give some time to help in one of the clubs? Or perhaps start a new activity in the Social Centre, so that young people have something to do in the evenings? If everyone did something small in the community, then the change would be HUGE!

Since starting work on this Plan, we have already begun to see the benefits start to come to Oram;

- In 2018, Monaghan Co Co secured €25,000 for the village under Town & Village renewal, and the community asked for it to be spent on a bus shelter, welcome signs and a footpath to Rooney's shop
- The Council also secured €10,000 to upgrade the playground, which was completed in early 2019
- We now have two Tús workers helping to keep the village tidy, which makes a huge difference to the appearance of the village
- The Development Group secured €6,000 funding for a mobile stage
- a new Tidy Towns group has been set up and Oram entered the national competition for the first time in 2019
- €50,000 was secured through the CLAR programme in 2019 to improve the footpath connecting the social centre and the childcare facility and to provide a better surface to the car park at the social centre.
- In November 2019, funding of €60,246 to create a memorial garden for Big Tom was secured by Monaghan Co Co from the Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

All these works were actions identified by the community, and the speed by which they were achieved demonstrates both the capacity of the people of Oram to make

great things happen and the commitment of us to our village, of which we are very proud.

One of the priorities for us is to nurture that community spirit and ensure that it is passed on to the next generation. We intend to create occasions when the whole village can come together, as we believe there are benefits to this which promote a sense of well-being at the personal level, as well as bringing great benefits to the community as a whole. If you're interested in becoming involved, we'd be delighted to welcome new volunteers and try out new ideas.

There are many new people living in our village today, and we would like to say welcome to you. This is your home too. Please get involved in helping to look after and improve it.

A new **Community Council** is being set up to help all the groups in the village to keep in touch and drive progress on this development plan. If you are involved in a group which would like a seat on the Council, please don't hesitate to come forward. All are welcome.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the making of this Development Plan. Thank you for your time, your energy and your ideas. Thank you also to Monaghan County Council for facilitating the local meetings and helping to put the Plan on paper. Thank you also to them for committing to continuing to meet with the new Community Council on an ongoing basis to help ensure that the actions don't grind to a halt.

This Plan represents a new way of doing things for our community. We ask that everyone gets involved and throws their energy behind it, so that it will succeed, and bring benefits to the people of Oram.

Beir bua

Oram Sarsfields GFC

Oram Development Association

Mullyash Oram Community Alerts

Oram Tidy Towns

Oram St Patrick's Day Committee

Art Mooney Community Childcare Ltd.

Mullyash Community Day Care Centre

Scoil Naoimh Padraig Parents Association

Yew Tree Players

Part I: Background Information Which Helped to Inform the Plan

1. Background to the Making of the Plan

1.1 How the Plan came about

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.

1.2 Methodology for preparing the Plan

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.

The feedback from the needs survey, along with data from the CSO and an asset survey of the community, were published as a Draft Community Plan in November 2018, and the community was asked to take a look and comment on whether it was the best plan for ensuring that Oram develops into a thriving community over the next five to ten years. A final public meeting was held in May 2019 to feed back the result of the public consultation to the community and to agree any necessary changes to the draft document. The final Community Plan was signed off on by the community at that meeting.

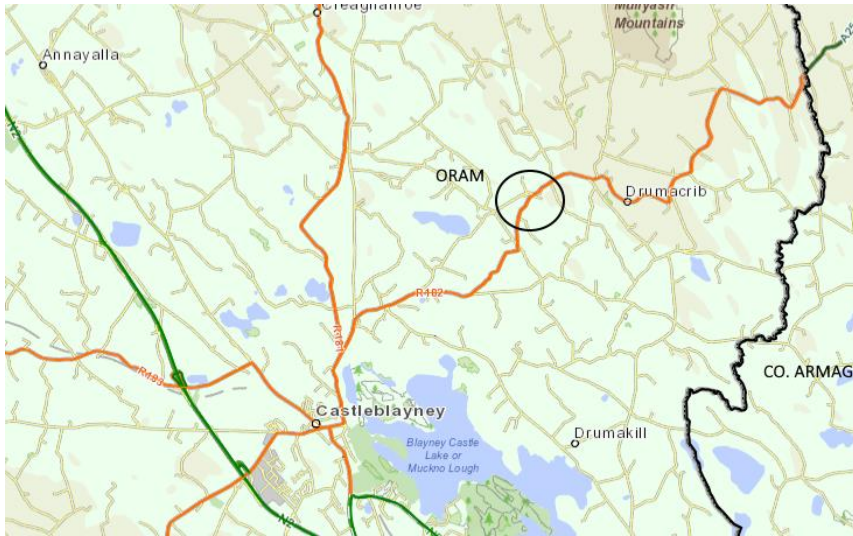
The Plan was finalised by the Council in October 2019 and a meeting was held with the community groups which were interested in becoming signatories to the Plan. They reviewed and signed off on the final document. At that meeting, the Community Council was set up and a terms of reference and draft workplan agreed, to ensure that a structure was in place to continue the work once the Plan was launched.

2. A Quick Overview of the Data Which Informs the Plan

2.1 Situational Analysis

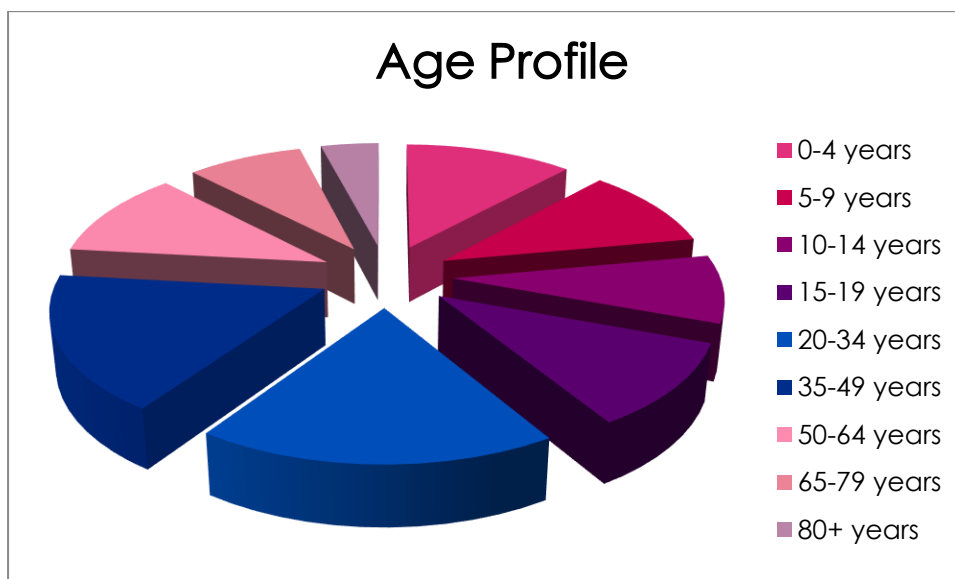
Location

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.

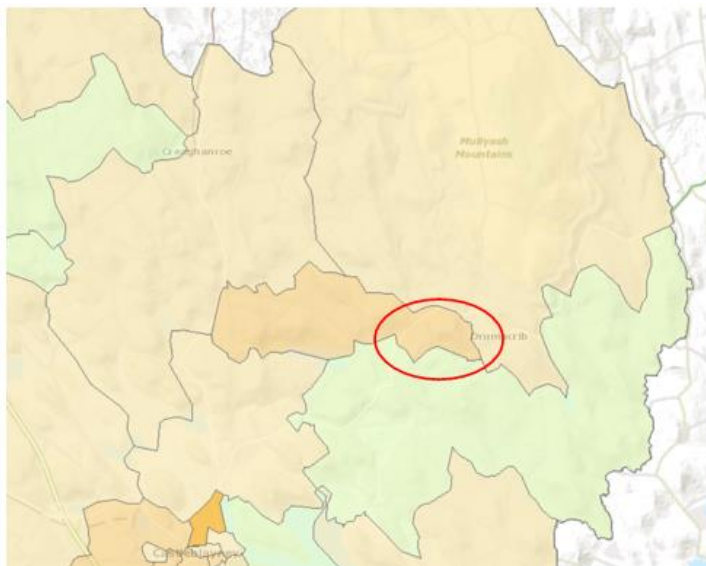
30 people were over the age of 65 in 2016. This equates to 12.2% of the population. This age cohort will have very different needs and concerns to those with young families and must also be catered for.

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 rely 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.

2.2 Assets Overview

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
Art Mooney Childcare
Scoil Naomh Padraig
Oram Social Centre
Playground

Groups:

Mullyash Oram Text Alert
Oram Sarsfields GFC
Oram Development Group

Activities

Oram Players Drama Group

Human Resources

There are two CE workers allocated to the area, managed by Muckno Donaghmoynce 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.

Attractions

Big Tom Tribute
Big Tom's Grave

Monaghan Way

Festivals

St Patrick's Day Parade

The Oram parade holds the World record for the world's shortest St Patrick's Day parade.

Big Tom Anniversary Weekend.

Back to Castleblayney Weekend - Oram GFC, Yew Tree Productions, Big Tom Productions together with Castleblayney Regeneration Committee amalgamation.

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. The unspoilt rural landscape is an asset which has many benefits and offers opportunities for development, particularly in the leisure and tourism sectors.



Big Tom tribute beside community centre



Services

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 Mullash 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.

Childcare

The village benefits from a newly built childcare facility; Art Mooney childcare provides a non-profit service which open to parents and families with children aged between 5 months and 12 years living in Oram and the surrounding areas and is registered with Tusla. They provide full day care, half day care, sessional preschool and after-school care. There are plans to extend the facility.

Broadband

Oram is covered by fibre broadband



From www.fibrerollout.ie

Services for Older People

A daycare service for older people is provided in neighbouring Mullyash.

2.3 Gaps in Community Infrastructure

There are certain amenities and services which are commonly seen in rural communities, and which are absent in Oram. These include:

Youth Club

The statistics show that the village has a high number of young people, yet there are no activities for them, nor do they have any place where they can hang out. This is an issue which came up many times during the community needs survey, with young people feeling excluded from the community 'unless you are good at football'.

Tidy Towns

The lack of a group whose sole focus is on enhancing the physical appearance of the area is felt, as there is a disjointed feel to parts of the village at times.

As a result of this community planning process, a new Tidy Towns group has started in the village, and two Tús workers have been allocated by the Muckno Parishes CE scheme to support their work. They have made a noticeable difference to the appearance of the village in a few short months, and it has been much commented on and appreciated by many local residents.

Other services

There is no suitable facility available, such as a small meeting room, which could be used by service providers such as agricultural advisers, public health nurses, counsellors, etc, to come to the area and deliver a clinic locally rather than require people to travel.

There is a shop in the village which opens 6 days per week - Monday to Saturday. There is no post office or ATM in the village.

Activities

The present climate around rising insurance costs is making it difficult for local groups to put on activities for the general community. This is a national issue, but co-operation between local groups could go some way to minimising insurance costs and maximising the range of activities that can be provided by the groups which are active in the area.

2.4 Challenges to be Overcome

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 has grown in size over the past ten to fifteen years, with both private and local authority housing being added to the village. However, the buildings are clustered in individual developments clusters, and the village has yet to develop an overall identity.

The village is stretched out somewhat and lacks a central 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.

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.

Creating a sense of identity for the village and translating that into a physical 'look' will help those who live here to take pride in their community.



Part II Interpreting the Data & Identifying the Needs for Oram

3. 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.

A SWOT analysis for Oram was prepared as part of the planning process:

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

4. Community Views

A Needs Survey was distributed around the community and online, asking people's opinions of the village and the amenities, as well as asking them what they would like to see developed in the area. The information gathered by the survey was then considered as part of the issues to be addressed. It also helped to identify projects which were being undertaken which needed to be included as Actions in the Plan.

The feedback from the community was presented in the Draft Plan in early 2019, and further comment was invited on the recommended actions which were being advised to meet the needs which emerged from the needs survey.

Twenty submissions were received from the community on the Draft Plan. To help refine the Action Plan and ensure the actions contained in the Plan were reflective of the needs of the entire community, a public meeting was held, at which the Council presented a summary of the feedback received and made a number of recommendations which were discussed by the community before final agreement was reached.

5. Key Issues to be Addressed

Once the SWOT and the data from the area overview were reviewed, the following issues emerged as being the most important to be addressed:

- The appearance of the village
- The need for activities and a space for young people
- The continued improvement of facilities and activities at the community centre
- The creation of spaces for the community to use, mix and meet
- The creation of events and activities to bring the community together more often
- Improvement of rural transport
- Honouring Big Tom and his legacy

Within these issues, several projects were identified, and ways forward were suggested. Some of these have already been acted upon, and are already in progress, which is wonderful to see. Others will take a little longer to achieve.

The most critical element of all, however, to progressing the Plan, is animation of the community itself. It is vital that everybody contributes to the community in whatever way they can. Your community needs you to GET INVOLVED. So, ask yourself how can you help, and get stuck in!

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 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, and on building the social infrastructure that provides the support which enables this to happen. This is reflected strongly in the Vision:

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

7.1 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.

7.2 Improving Community Amenities & Activities

Revival of Oram Development Group

As a matter of priority, Oram Development Group is to be revived. The group should focus on the needs of the community, and strive to make an impact on meeting those needs in whatever way they can, be that by taking on a capital build project, or delivering a training programme, or running a fun family event to bring the community together.

The Development Group's main purpose is to inspire and to lead. This needs to be done in a spirit of openness and inclusivity, always thinking 'what is best for the people of Oram' in every situation.

Upgrading Existing Facilities at the Social 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.

The management committee of the Social Centre are keen to see the car park outside the facility finished off with a proper bound surface. This would greatly enhance the appearance of the village, and it is intended to prepare a village enhancement funding application to assist the community to realise their ambition.

At present there is one meeting room upstairs which is trying to be all things to all people, including a gym to the GAA teams, a meeting room to the community, and a venue for courses etc. It is difficult to manage such a room, as the demands are so different – the space needs to be left bare for gym use, but could do with being made more comfortable and welcoming for a use such as a parent and toddler session.

It would appear that there is a need for at least one more medium-sized room, to facilitate local meetings and courses. This would take the pressure off the present

room, which could be converted into a full time gym. The village would also benefit from allocating a room to young people, for their exclusive use.

Of course, there is no need for a building if there is nothing happening in it. The Centre is the main social hub of the area, and hosts regular social nights. Insurance restrictions have made it difficult to run classes such as keep fit and dancing in the past. However, these greatly add to the social cohesion of the community, creating opportunities for people to get out of the house and even providing a lifeline for those who may be isolated in their homes. It may be possible to link into programmes being run by organisations such as Monaghan Sports Partnership, Cavan Monaghan Education & Training Board and Monaghan Integrated Development, whose insurance may cover the provision of a range of training courses.

Provision of Bus Shelter

The needs survey revealed that a bus shelter was needed to facilitate secondary school children travelling to town, and to serve as a pick-up point for the rural transport service. This has now been provided.

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.

Tidy Towns

The Tidy Towns group in the village has been revived. A three-year plan will 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.

'More To Do'

Many commented in the 'Community Survey' that they wished to see 'more to do' in Oram. The Development Group will consult with the various groups each spring and autumn and prepare and publish a 'what's on' calendar of activities. In consulting with the groups the Dev Group will encourage groups to plan activities for all ages,

abilities and interests, and will also endeavour to ensure that there is a good spread across the year, and across days of the week and times of the day, so that all may have an opportunity to participate.

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.

This project will depend on a suitable site becoming available to the community.

Honouring Big Tom

Big Tom and the McBride family are a huge part of this community, and throughout the planning process, it was clear that the community wished to preserve and honour Big Tom's memory in a fitting way. While there is a commemorative plaque beside the social centre already, the community feels that more is needed to pay proper homage to what Tom means to the people of Oram, and also to mark his place in Ireland's cultural heritage as the father of Irish Country music.

It is intended to investigate the feasibility of establishing a performance venue/ heritage centre in the village dedicated to the memory of Big Tom, where up and coming country singers might be given their first break, just as Tom first played in the tin hall all those years ago.

7.3 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 a large festival.

7.4 Building Community Spirit

Community Festivals

Strong communities come together often, and we need to create those opportunities. It is intended to start getting into the habit of coming together twice a year for a bit of craic, food and music, and perhaps to raise a bit of money towards the next community project. The events will become part of a regular pattern of activity for the community, one in the summer, and one near Christmas. They will be celebration events, at which we will update the community on progress on projects, and 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.

Oram.net

A simple website is to be set up, with links to each of the local groups' existing social media platforms, to make it easier to keep abreast of what is going on in the community. It will act as a one-stop-shop for all things Oram. Each club/ group will be given 'contributor' username and passwords so that they can add content. The site will also feature an events calendar.

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.

Pulling Together

Sometimes, people simply don't realise that their help is needed, and would be more than willing to give a few hours if asked.

A 'Give your Community 10-minutes a Month' notice board is to be started in the Community Centre where groups needing a particular task done can post it up and ask for support from the community. This initiative should also be run through social media channels.

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 the community website, with all local organisations contributing to the one site to ensure regular and current content.

Residents will be encouraged to join the 'Oram & Mullyash Text Alerts' sub-group within the Monaghan County Council- funded initiative 'Monaghan Community Alerts'. This scheme enables the community to send messages out to all local subscribers, and is a great way of keeping in touch about local events, etc. as well as for receiving new from An Garda Síochána about crime.

KOMEER
The next generation in communications, events and payments

MONAGHAN
JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

Welcome to Monaghan Community Alerts,
a new county-wide service providing Garda alerts to the community. The service replaces previous local text alert schemes around the county, and is supported by **Monaghan County Council and An Garda Síochána**. The service is open to everyone living in Co. Monaghan, and is totally **FREE** to join.

Please download and install the **FREE** Komeer App now!

Available on the **App Store** | Available on the **Play Store**

No Smartphone? No Problem!
To sign up to receive TEXT ALERTS pick up a form at your nearest Library or Garda Station or from:

Alerts

Suspicious Nissan Van
An Garda Síochána

Dear Paul

Gardai are asking people to be on the alert for a suspicious white Nissan van with a picture of a dagger on the side in the Ardaghay area visiting local farm lands.

Please report any sightings to your local Garda station.

Thank you.
An Garda Síochána

Electronics and Jewellery Theft
Dear Paul, 2 hours in your area

To subscribe download the Komeer app and search for 'Monaghan Community Alerts', and 'Oram Mullyash Community Alerts'

7.5 The Main Objectives Behind the Priority Themes

- *the 'why' behind the Plan*

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.

Part III: The Actions – What is going to be done, and who will do it

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

8. Action Plan for Oram

Project Detail	Who	Supported by	How
1. Address the physical appearance of the village			
1.1 Complete the car park surfacing & lining at the community centre	Oram Sarsfields GFC		Source funding Award contract
1.2 Provide welcome features, enhanced paving, fencing and lighting, to help distinguish Oram village from the surrounding countryside	Oram Tidy Towns	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
1.3 Revive the Tidy Towns group so as to continue on the work started by the Council & engage a landscape architect to assist in preparing a 3 year plan	New Committee	Monaghan County Council	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
1.4 Conserve the Tin Hall and lobby for it to be accorded protected status in the County Development Plan, on account of its association with Big Tom	Oram Development Group		Survey the existing building & prepare a conservation plan Source funding Carry out the work Make a written submission to Monaghan County Council's planning dept when the next County Development Plan is being prepared
1.5 Extend lighting and footpath past shop to Formil lane	Monaghan County Council		Carry out design & road safety audit Purchase land Source funding Implement

2. Enhancement of Activities, Services and Amenities			
2.1 Create a fitting memorial to Big Tom	New Committee	Oram Development	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
2.2 Investigate the feasibility of developing the Tin Hall into a Country Music Venue/ Community Resource Centre	Oram Development		Develop concept for venue to showcase new and emerging country singers, in the venue where Big Tom gave his first performance Engage with owners of Hall and adjoining lands Engage architects to design the building – retaining the old hall, but adding more spaces, including toilets. Develop business plan for the project Run annual country festival in the village to raise funds towards the project Source funding to cover the rest of the capital cost
2.3 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.
2.4 Start a youth club	Oram Development, to start off. Then a separate youth club to be set up	Youthwork Ireland Cavan Monaghan	Invite Foroige or Youthwork Ireland Monaghan to a meeting in the village. Invite all interested parents & young people to attend.

2.5 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		<p>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.</p> <p>Discuss with young people what equipment, furniture etc would be needed in order to fit it out</p> <p>Agree opening hours, rules of conduct etc</p> <p>Source funding</p>
2.6 Provide a bus shelter	Monaghan County Council		<p>Source funding</p> <p>Carry out road safety assessment</p> <p>Install shelter</p>
2.7 Create a community park	Oram Development	Monaghan County Council	<p>Identify & purchase suitable land</p> <p>Commission a landscape architect to design a park</p> <p>Consult with the community re the amenities to be housed in the new park</p> <p>Source funding</p> <p>Implement plan</p>
2.8 Provide more opportunities in Oram for people to get out and socialise, while trying new things	<p>New 'Activities Committee' in Community Centre. To focus on programming activities in the Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By target group (targeting those who are not engaging, eg older men, 	Community Centre	<p>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.</p> <p>Kids summer activity camps and Saturday art clubs can also work well.</p> <p>Engage a tutor for a set period of weeks. Get funding to offset some of the cost</p> <p>Discuss with Cavan Monaghan ETB the possibility of hosting Adult evening learning sessions for things like 'how to use</p>

	<p>working mothers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that every age and ability is catered for <p>That there is something to appeal to families, boys, girls, older people, people on their own, etc</p>		your smartphone' 'photoshop', 'skype', etc are available on an outreach basis in Oram
2.9 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
2.10 Further extend the capacity at Art Mooney Childcare	Art Mooney community childcare service		Source funding
2.11 Improve road safety through the village, especially near the play park	Monaghan County Council		Carry out speed audit to identify where people are speeding & design solutions Source funding & implement the solutions recommended by the audit
2.12 Continue to promote community safety initiatives in Oram & encourage the uptake of property marking and community text alert schemes	Mullyash Oram Text Alert	Monaghan Co Co	Local groups to be encouraged to organise property marking days, and local people to encouraged to download the Komeer app and subscribe to 'Monaghan Community Alerts'
2.13 Review our local heritage with a view to having significant buildings added to the 'Protected Structures' list in the County Development Plan	Oram Development	Heritage interests in the area	Buildings of architectural, heritage and cultural significance to the area to be identified, and a letter submitted to Monaghan County Council requested that it consider adding them to the Record of Protected Structures for Co. Monaghan

2.14 Develop a walking track around the Sarsfields grounds	Oram Sarsfields GFC		Commission drawings Acquire planning permission Secure funding
3. Build Community Spirit			
3.1 Develop a Summer Family Festival	Oram Development	Monaghan County Council	Summer event to bring back memories of the old 'sports day'. Also to be used as a way to check 'how are we doing and what needs doing next?' and to create an occasion for people to get together. Encourage people to bring food/ eat together.
3.2 Organise a winter celebration event	Oram Development	Monaghan County Council	Christmas event to celebrate achievements and give thanks to volunteers for their efforts. Christmas event to include a fun awards ceremony. All groups to play some part at each event
3.2 Increase the amount of engagement in the community	Oram Community Council	All groups	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. IDEA: Person who does most jobs in a year could become Mayor of Oram ??
3.3 Build Social Capital in the community & increase the capacity of the leaders in the community to carry out projects that bring about real change & improvement. - Nurture future community leaders & give talent an opportunity to contribute & grow from their experience	Community Council	Monaghan PPN	Source funding to organise training events. Invite the ETB to deliver training locally. Make a policy to encourage new talent forward into positions of responsibility on committees. Provide mentoring support to new committee members through a shadowing scheme. Structured training programme in place. Deliberate policy of bringing new people onto committees and providing them with the opportunity to try new ideas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the recently established youth club & facilitate it to grow - Organise training to local groups in committee skills, fund raising, event planning, and accessing funding - provide a volunteering space on the Community Noticeboard in the Community Centre, to encourage individuals to donate their time and skills to the community 			<p>Youthwork Ireland have recently set up in the village. Support this newly formed group & ensure it thrives</p> <p>Carry out training needs survey with the local groups. PPN, ETB, MID and other agencies to be brought in to provide training. All local groups to avail of the training</p> <p>Contact Volunteer Centre; get volunteer locally to co-ordinate requests from groups for assistance. Post up the requests on community centre notice board and on social media. Publicise the work. Celebrate the successes</p>
4. Co-Ordination & Implementation			
4.1 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.
4.2 Improve communication in the village	Oram Community Council		<p>Erect digital community noticeboard outside the community centre</p> <p>Link noticeboard to an online page – all groups to use the page to post their news & events</p> <p>Create a website, to which all local group pages to be linked. Everyone to post to this central site, to make it easy to find out what's going on in Oram</p>

<p>4.3 Investigate the feasibility of a Shared Fundraiser</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where all groups share in the funds raised <p>Where the fundraising goes on continually at a moderate level, meeting all the needs of all the groups, without creating a drain on the community, or overburdening any one group</p>	Community Council		<p>Discuss the idea</p> <p>Identify each group's funding needs to meet normal running costs</p> <p>Identify each group's projected needs for special projects for the next five years</p> <p>Calculate the total amount of funding needed by the community for all.</p> <p>Calculate how much per month is required</p> <p>Investigate fundraising ideas which provide a yield above the monthly amount required.</p> <p>Examine the risk involved, the manpower involved, the setup costs, overheads etc.</p> <p>Agree on a fundraiser, how & when to divide the funds raised, what to do if it under/ overperforms</p>
Review the Community Plan & Update as needs evolve & actions are achieved	Community Council	Monaghan Co Co	<p>As the years go by, some actions will be achieved, and will need to be replaced with new ones. Others may stall, and the reasons need to be explored and decisions taken around what to do about it.</p> <p>Community Council to meet every four months</p> <p>Community Council to meet with County Council once a year</p>

9. Implementation

Unless a task is assigned to someone, it doesn't get done, and unless the task has a deadline, it never moves forward. So, against each Action, an organisation(s) is listed who will take the initiative to make that project happen.

To make sure that the Plan is progressed, we have built an Implementation process into the Plan. Every group in Oram is a Stakeholder in making the community the best it can be, so every group will be invited to sit on a new Community Council. This body will be tasked with making sure that the Community Plan is put into action. They will be responsible for a number of actions themselves, and as they bed into their role, they no doubt will take on more responsibility and identify more actions that they wish to take on.

The Community Council will meet every three months to drive progress locally, and will meet once a year with Monaghan County Council to go over the Community Plan, and discuss progress on each action. They will look particularly at:

- actions which have gone well

- what lessons can we learn from them?
- can we replicate the success in other areas?
- if the action is now complete, does it need to be replaced with a follow-up action?

- actions that have stalled

- reason for lack of progress – can it be rectified
- decision on what to do – amend the action/ remove the action/ replace the action

- changes in the community

- are there emerging needs that we have to respond to?
- are there some needs which are in the Plan but which are no longer a priority?

Based on the outcome of the above discussion, the Community Council and County Council will prepare a Project List, with projects sorted into Short, Medium and Long Term priorities. This will help to form the basis of any funding applications that the Council makes on Oram's behalf.

When prioritising projects, the following criteria will 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 village through improved services, access to opportunities etc**

Plans work best when they stay flexible and respond as local circumstances change.

This Plan is a Working Document, which means that it is designed to change over time;

- as we achieve one action, we cross it off, then replace it with whatever needs to follow it.
- If one thing isn't working, we review it and find out why. Then we either remove the blockage and get it back on track, or remove the action and replace it with something that will work
- Sometimes needs change; technological advances could make broadband obsolete, and we might find ourselves removing it as an Action from the Plan and replacing it with something else

There are three important steps to ensuring the Plan is the **right plan, and that it happens:**

- Agreement at the outset – the whole community is consulted and buys in to the set of actions which are proposed
- A structure is put in place to facilitate everyone's involvement in implementing the Plan, so everyone is invested in making it happen – the Community Council
- We review progress regularly, talk about what's working/ not working, and identify anything that needs to be changed in the Plan

10. Making it Happen

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

1: Commitment from the Community

- From groups, from families and from individuals
- And also from Monaghan County Council and other agencies, who will support you in your work to make your community better

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

- This agreed Plan, with the improved channels of communication for keeping in touch with what's going on in the community – the Facebook page and the Komeer app - is your process
- The Community Council and volunteering noticeboard is your structure

3: Resources

- You, the people of Oram are the most important resource that your community has. As you proved with the playground, there's little you can't achieve together when united behind a cause!

- With projects identified in this Plan, and worked up with design drawings and costings, Monaghan County Council will help the community to identify funding opportunities to take project proposals forward to apply for the resources necessary to get projects completed.

We would like to energise the whole community to get 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, the new 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 if there is an agreed need. It will also meet with the County Council to review progress and address any barriers.

Commitment is also required at an individual level from every person living in Oram. Your time and skills are needed, and you are urged to play your part. Get into the habit of dropping into the Community Centre and looking for something you can help with. The Community Notice Board will be a good place to start.

Together, we will ensure that Oram remains a vibrant community that people are proud to live in and love to call home.

11. A Partnership Process

The making of this Community Plan was a partnership process between the people of Oram and Monaghan County Council. The realisation of the Plan will also be achieved through community/ Council partnership.

The journey towards achieving our goals can sometimes be the most important part of what we do, and this is never more true than in community work, where the process makes all the difference to where the journey ultimately ends.

For this journey to end in a strong, sustainable Oram, where people of all ages are thriving, we need more people in the Oram of today to step up into leadership roles, and to be willing to say 'I'll give that a go'.

So, what are you going to do for your community today?

Part IV: Afterword

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.

Communities need to be nurtured in order to grow; they need a mix of physical resources such as meeting facilities, and activities and services which encourage and support all members of the community, from the youngest to the oldest. They also need leaders, who know that the process of bringing people together can often be as important as the event itself, as it can help to foster a sense of achievement, belonging, and pride in their community.

Monaghan County Council is committed to supporting communities to be the best version of themselves. As part of our drive to support communities, we are helping communities to prepare Community Plans.

This document is the product of a year-long process of consultation and planning which was facilitated by the Community Dept of Monaghan County Council. It gathers together the opinions, plans and aspirations of the people of Oram for their community.

Over the next few years, you will hopefully see the months of planning and consultation bear fruit as projects are delivered in Oram for the benefit of the community. Already, funding has been secured to upgrade the playground and carry out village improvements throughout the village, both actions identified in the Plan.

Monaghan County Council hopes to play a significant role in many of the projects outlined in the Plan and views 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 your community, and in helping to make Co. Monaghan the best county to live in Ireland.



Eamonn O Sullivan

Chief Executive

Monaghan County Council



Explaining Monaghan County Council's Ethos Behind Supporting Community Development:

Building Strong Communities = Building Resilient People

Why is supporting communities so important? 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.

Without the support of a strong, nurturing community, structures and supports break down, and it gets harder to succeed in life. The odds begin to stack against you; people fall through the cracks; the most vulnerable are lost, and as we all become hardened in order to survive, we all lose the best qualities of ourselves and our communities; compassion, empathy, caring, hope, love. This is not the kind of community that Monaghan County Council wants for the people of Monaghan.

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; sometimes emotionally, sometimes physically, sometimes even financially. 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.

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.

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 as building blocks, each one helping to build something worthwhile. The blocks are held together with things like volunteering, leadership, fundraising – the cement which binds the blocks into something greater than the individual pieces. How we know which blocks are needed, and what mix of cement will give the best result is by getting the foundations right – doing surveys, needs analysis, community planning, etc.

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! But only so long as the groups nurture the foundations, the blocks and the cement equally!

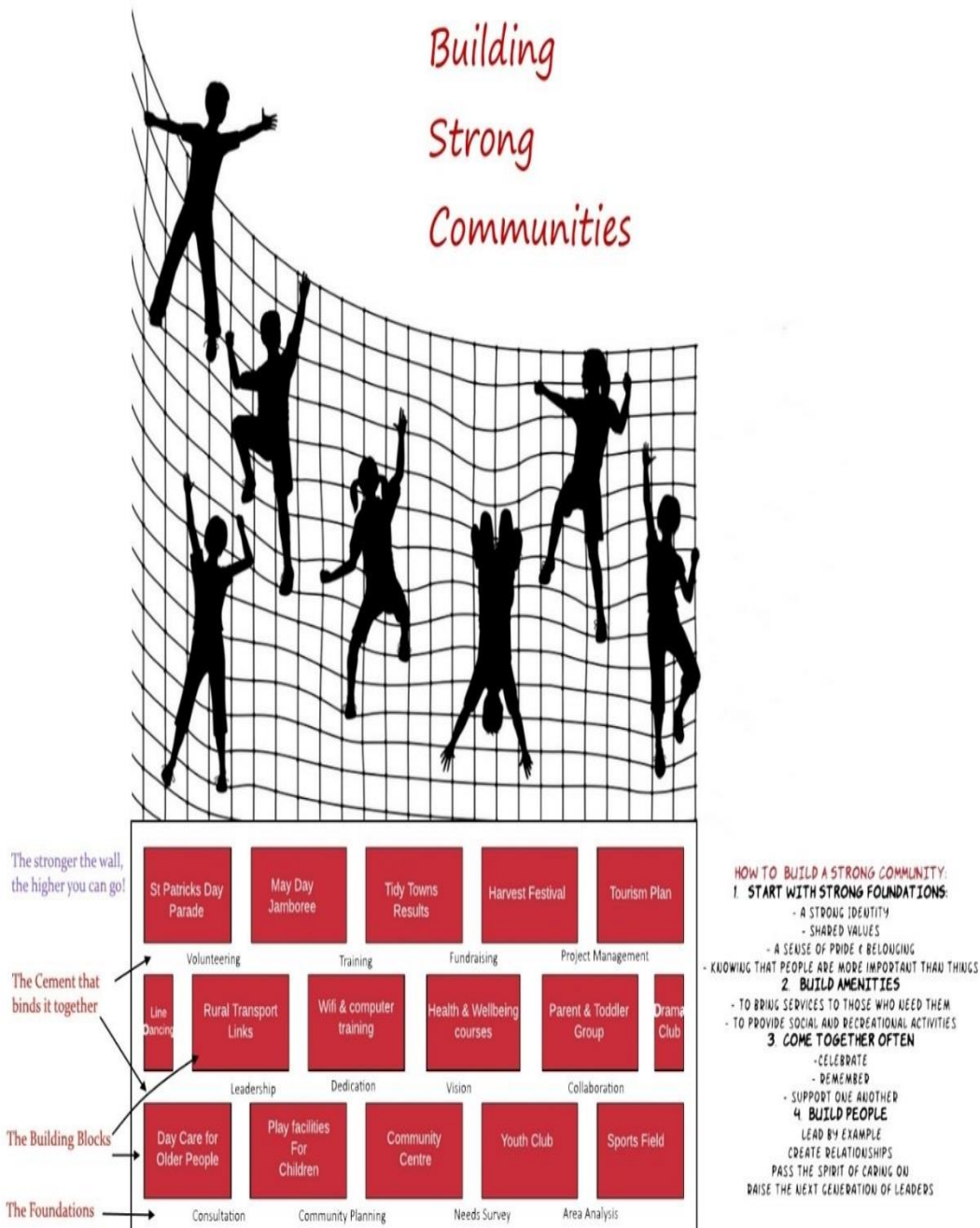
So, it all starts with Community Planning. And what we are ultimately trying to arrive at is a strong, tight-knit, resilient community which can cope with whatever life brings, both on an individual level and on a community level, both today and in twenty years – because part of being a strong community is raising children to know the value of community and who will want to nurture it for their children, too.

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 2018/9, with the intention of bringing them through the process of agreeing a development plan for their communities. One of those priority communities is Oram.

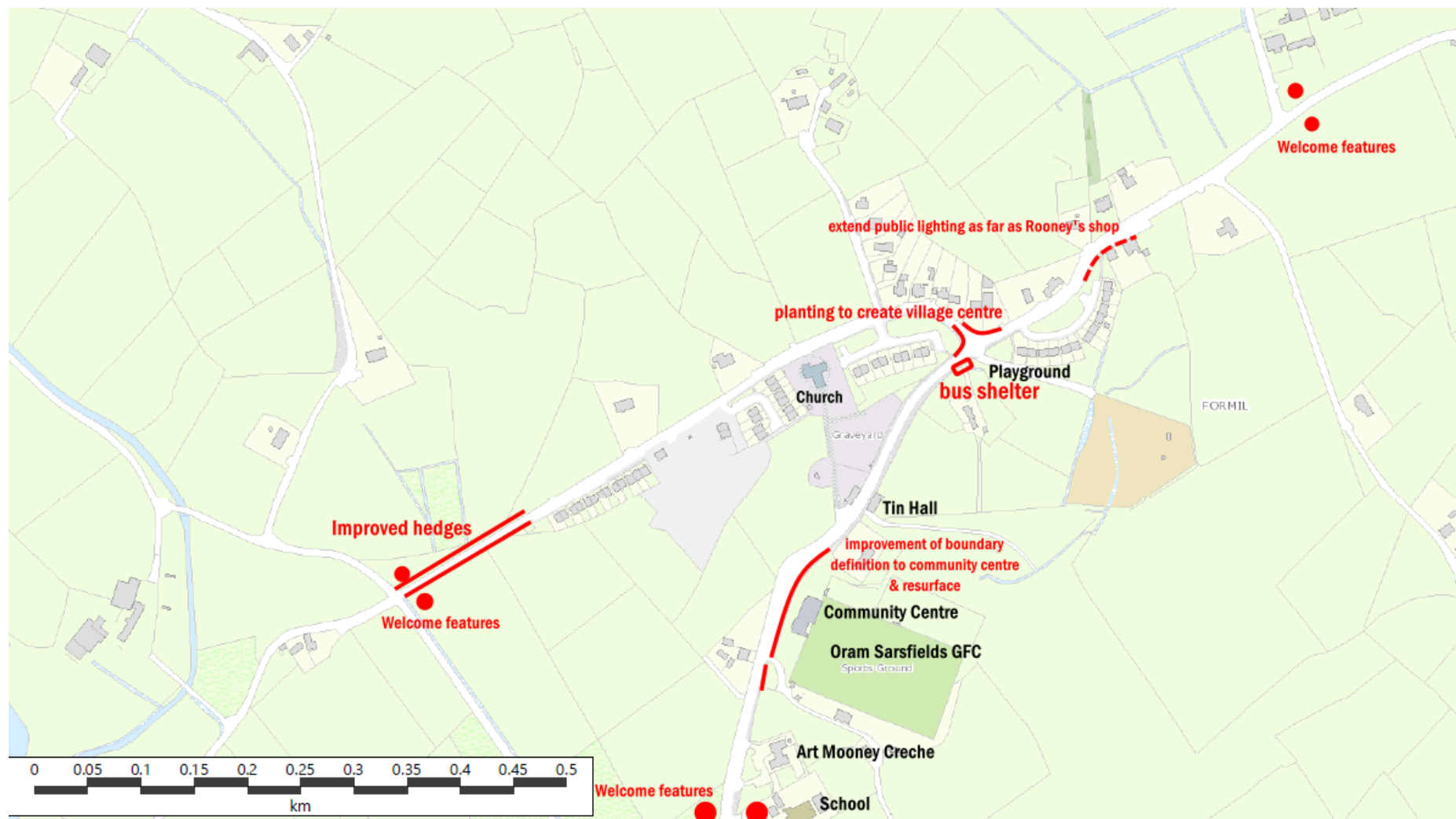
Monaghan County Council attended a public meeting in Oram in November 2017, and outlined our vision for creating sustainable, resilient communities throughout the county. The people of Oram wanted that for their community too and agreed to enter into partnership with the Council to devise and deliver 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 Oram grow and thrive in the years ahead.



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

[There is a generally held belief that the old school and the tin hall are protected structures. They are not actually accorded Protected Status under the County Development Plan. The process for having a structure protected is straightforward: the Elected Members of the Council have the power to give a structure protected status. This can be done outside of the making of the County Development Plan by adopting a Variation to the County Development Plan. A community group might write to the Council to request that a building be considered for protected status, and if the Council agrees to grant protected status, it would pass a motion to adopt a Variation to the County Development Plan to add the building to the list of protected structures]