

# Community Planning for Sustainability

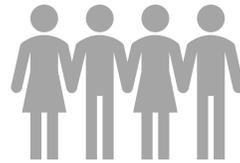
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Monaghan County Council



# Local Community Development Committees



A central point where all stakeholders in local development come together to agree priorities



And through which funding aimed at developing local communities can be channelled



Set up purposely to mirror the structure required by the EU of a Local Action Group

So, the structures and plans are in place at county level. Great things are going to happen. Right?



# 2017 mapping exercise

- €3,229,259.01 in funding into the county
- A pattern was clear:
  - The strong communities were benefiting from multiple funding streams, often when their need was quite modest
  - Some communities, often ones we would consider to be more disadvantaged, were not managing to secure much funding at all
  - Decided to reach out to those communities and offer our support



Identify & address the reasons why the community is not performing as well as others

Identify projects which might be worked up into funding applications

Build local capacity, so that the knowledge of how to deliver projects, and the people willing to lead, are left behind in the community when the Plan is complete

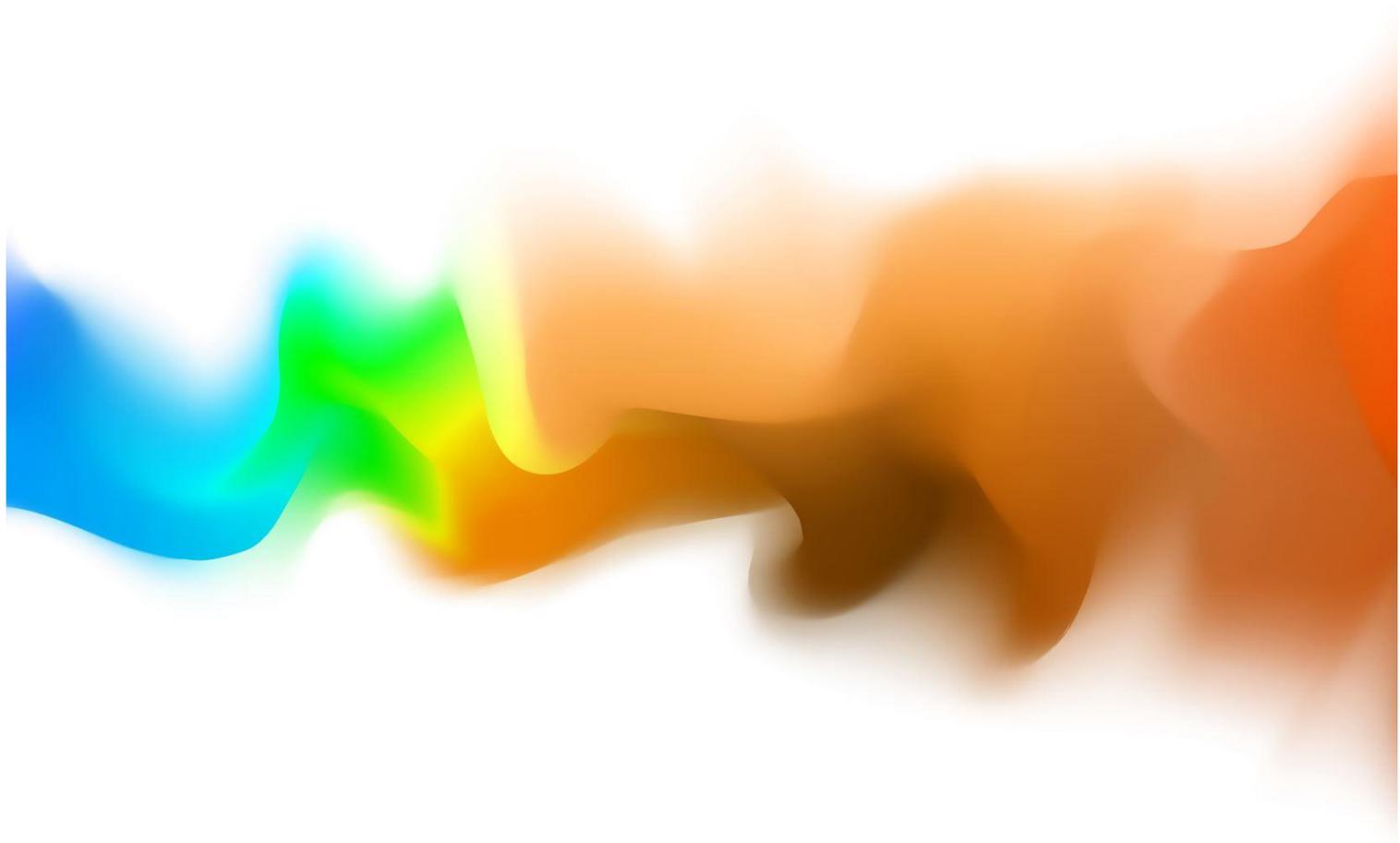
Provide the community with a roadmap to follow, a structure to ensure everyone continues to work together, and a mechanism to link with the Council and continue to receive ongoing support as needed

Community Planning Process – from Council's perspective



# The Community Planning Process- the Community's journey

- Initial community meeting – put the proposal to the community, get everyone on board
- Community Research – who are we?
- Needs Survey – having a say
- Bringing the information together: what does it mean?
  - SWOT
- Looking Forward: Where do we want to go?
  - What projects are groups trying to put in place?
  - Where are the gaps?
  - What will address the needs identified in our survey?
- Draft Plan:
  - Vision, Aims, Objectives, Actions
  - How it will be achieved: Structures, partnerships, monitoring of progress
- Consultation
- Final Plan - a community celebration



The PROCESS  
is more  
important  
than the  
PLAN





# Building a relationship with the community

- We do the work in-house, using Council staff
- The Municipal District Co-Ordinators attend the community meetings
- We bring along other specialist staff, sometimes from other agencies, where their input is needed, eg childcare
- We:
  - Facilitate
  - Advise
  - Inform
  - Help to develop ideas, negotiate with landowners, problem solve, bring in partners, work up applications
  - Whatever it takes to move things forward for the community

# Uncovering the reasons why those communities were not accessing funding

8 Community Plans completed so far

In all cases, we discovered reasons why the community was not accessing funding

Reasons:

- No Development Group looking at the overall development of the area
- Warring parties
- Areas with lots of new housing, groups not adapting
- Lack of capacity within the groups
  - Don't know where to seek funding
  - Don't know how to leverage their small kitty through the power of match funding
  - Don't know that there is support there for them

# Change of Approach

- Originally intended to parachute in, work through the planning process quickly, with the objective of assisting communities to have projects ready to take advantage of funding opportunities in a quick turn around
- Quickly realised that this would be a band-aid solution
- What was needed for the long term sustainability of community development in these communities was capacity building
- Adjusted our approach to walk them through the planning process, step by step, explaining what we were doing, and why, at every step
- Invested in building the capacity of the community, and animating everyone to get involved in their community, selling them the benefits and championing the volunteers



# Case study: Scotshouse

Rural village near Clones

New housing built during the boom in 2000's

Some areas in centre of village left undeveloped when boom collapsed

Basic community hall built with Peace I funding

Primary school declining in enrolment

The smallest GAA club in Ulster

Monaghan County Council



Invites the people of Scotshouse to a meeting to:

1. Finalise the projects to be included in Scotshouse's Community Plan
2. Agree the works to be included in an application to the Town & Village Renewal Scheme  
(funding of between €20,000 and €200,000 is available – we need your help to prioritise which projects from the Community Plan should be included in this funding application)

**Date: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm**

Venue: Scotshouse Community Centre

ALL WELCOME



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Research & needs surveys revealed:

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**Lots of young families in the new housing**

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Need for a childcare service

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Supports for parents, including social supports, eg parent & baby

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No playground in the village

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**Older people had different needs:**

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Poor energy performance of older housing stock

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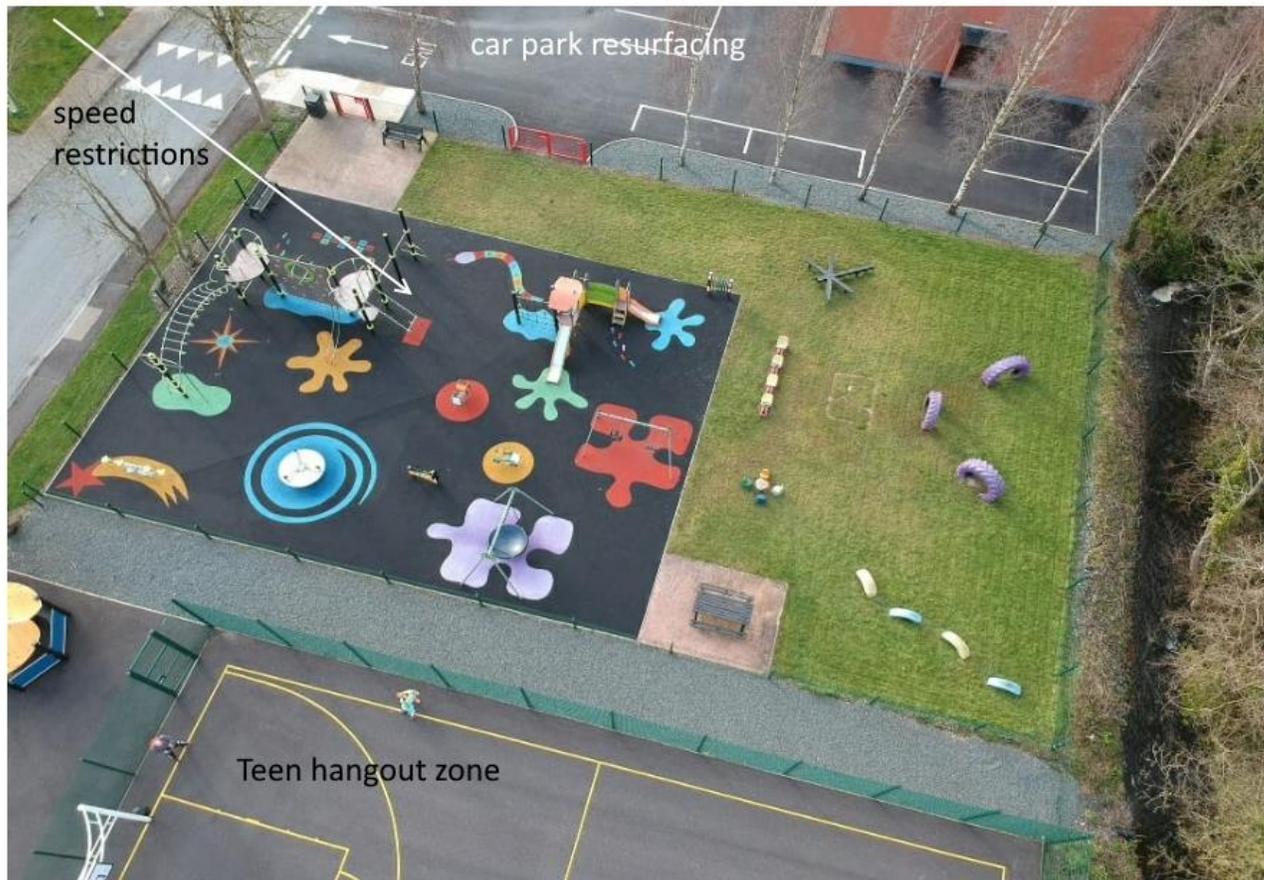
Fear of crime in isolated border community

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Need for a social outlet - no way to get to the pub since you can't drive home



Childrens Playground - the project that started it all



## Infrastructure delivered:

Playground  
€60,000

Teen Hangout Zone  
€100,000

Community Park  
€120,000

Upgrade of Parish Field  
€50,000

Road Safety measures near School:  
€50,000

Car Parking & paving at Community Centre  
€50,000



# New Groups & Services

## Community Alert

- Part of County-wide Monaghan Community Alerts garda messaging service

## Childcare Service

- Started with afterschools 1 year ago
- Already stepping up to full day care
- Enrolment has increased in the primary school

## Youth group

- Started by 14 year old, who has won national awards for his leadership
- Have taken over a room in the community centre

## Tidy Towns

- New residents committees for the new estates



- Pilot Local Link night-time local route to facilitate pub-goers
- Daily Cavan-Monaghan route altered to take in villages including Scotshouse

## Scotshouse Weekend Evening Bus Service

Friday / Saturday / Sunday - Starts 29th June

For more information Locall 1850 211 923



# New Groups & Services



# Reaping the Rewards

- Runners up IPB Pride of Place 2019

# Sustaining the Momentum

Community Council

One seat per active group

Attended by MD Co-Ordinator

Meet every 6 months

Review the Actions in the Community Plan

- What's working?
- What isn't & Why?
- Where are the blockages & what needs to be done about them?
- What are the priorities for the next 6 months?
- What funding opportunities are expected & what needs to be done to prepare

Council funded facilitator to direct the first year's meetings

- In case of teething problems, like committee skills, terms of reference etc

# Crucial tools

## Building

Building linkages was a crucial element in our communities' journey to becoming more sustainable

- Where an issue lay outside the remit of the Council, we were able to put them in touch with organisations who could assist them

## Learning

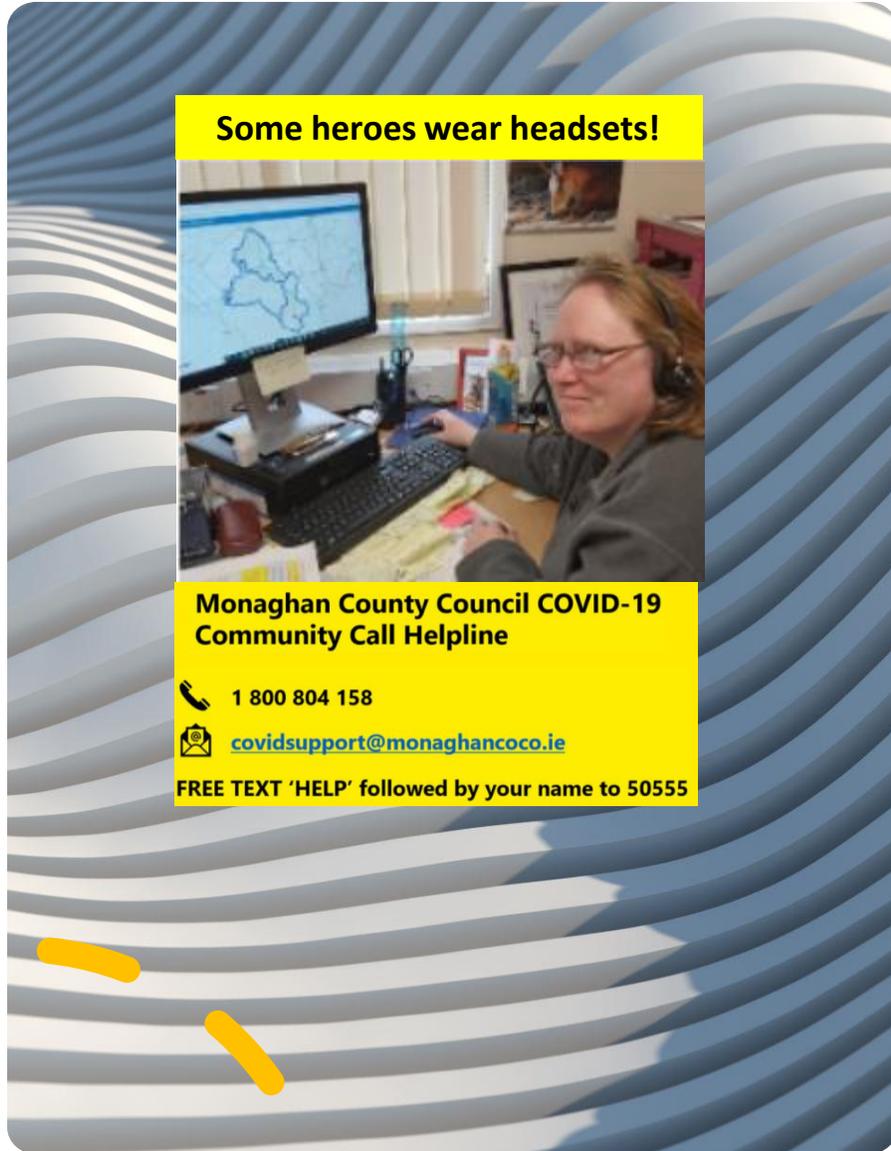
Through spending time with the communities, we told them a lot about:

- what the Council can do for them
- what funding programmes were available to them
- How other communities were approaching issues
- Where national and EU policy was heading in areas such as climate change

## Training

Training & information on community development & the role of volunteers is vital

- Community groups are now viewed as charities and must be registered
- Committee members have responsibilities
- We helped them navigate their way through what is required of them



# Final words

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The environment communities operate in has become more complex

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But never has your work been more important

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Demonstrated clearly during the Covid pandemic, when the country was kept moving by an army of volunteers, performing a litany of tasks in every community across the land

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Co-ordinated by Council-led Community Call helplines putting those in need in touch with those who could help

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Illustrating how when Council and Community work together, there's nothing we cannot overcome



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Thank you for listening

Keep up the good work

It matters SO much!