

Clough Community Vision Group clg

This submission has been prepared by Clough Community Vision Group clg (CCVG) in response to the invitation from Laois Co. Co. seeking inputs into the preparation of the new Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027. The content of this submission relates to SCDA's views of the proper planning and sustainable development of Clough.

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1. Clough: Context

Clough/Ballacolla is set in south east County Laois. Clough Village has seen significant growth and development over the past five years according to the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 (p73). A new residential area of 28 houses and a related wastewater treatment plant has been developed. The local school currently has an enrolment of 84 children.

The Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 is noteworthy, as a key written objective of the local authority is to seek to identify and develop active and passive recreational facilities in Clough. This is consistent with the objectives of the Laois Health Plan 2018-2020 (see section 2.4).

The adjoining village of Ballacolla is attractive and rural in character. In contrast, the village has not had any significant growth.

The map below (Figure 1) identifies four electoral divisions within the catchment area. The combined population of these areas is 1,321 (CSO, 2016). See also Table 1 for the population breakdown.

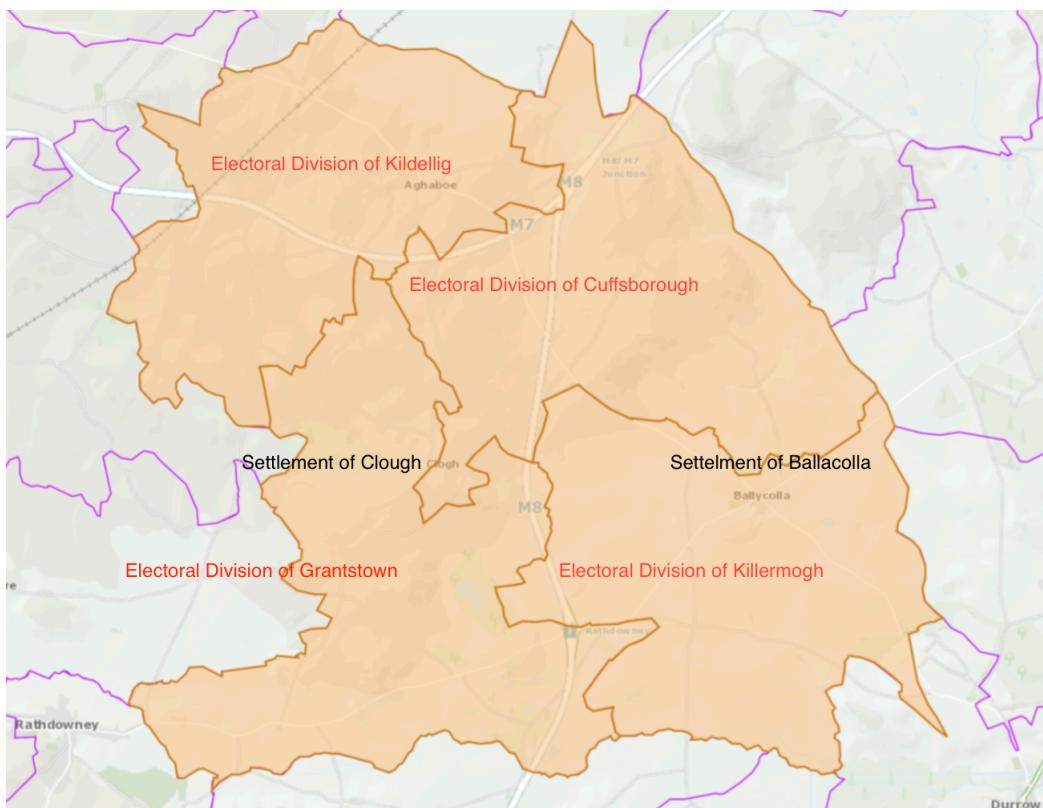


Figure 1: Location of Clough & Ballacolla Villages and related Electoral Divisions

Electoral Division	Population at 2016 Census
Killdellig	280
Cuffesborough	332
Killermogh	341
Granstown	368
Total	1,321

Table 1: Total Population of Electoral Divisions

2. Background to Clough Community Vision Group

The Clough Community Vision Committee is a recently formed company limited by guarantee (clg) whose current membership of nine is drawn from representatives of local business and community leaders.

During the period 2018-2019, the group investigated the acquisition or development of a new fully functioning multi purpose space. A decision was quickly arrived at to focus on the development of a new build facility on a centrally located donated site in the village of Clough. The key advantage of the site is its proximity to the local national school.

The availability of clean title and appropriate zoning for the site coupled with it's central location were the main reasons for its selection as the priority site for investment.

3. The Need for a New Community Facility

The consultation process for the forthcoming Clough Ballacolla Sustainable Community Plan 2020-2024 identified a number of needs as follow:

- A meeting, rehearsal and recreational facility for all community groups in Clough
- Requirement for a playground in Clough
- Development of Grantstown as an amenity
- Further development of the Aghaboe Abbey to enhance the visitor experience
- Recreational walking route for Clough
- Upgrade of the Sports Hall in Ballacolla
- Additional playing fields for Ballacolla GAA Club

The need for a Community facility in Clough in particular was deemed the top priority project. Many groups reported that they required access to facilities and activities as they had limited or no access to appropriate community facilities. While Clough village has an existing community facility, it serves a very important function as a childcare facility and therefore there are very limited access opportunities coupled with it unsuitability for an extension due to the graveyard surrounding the building.

Through the consultation process, the lack of community arts and recreational amenities in the area has become very apparent over the past two decades. It has become obvious that a number of previously active community groups have ceased and many parents for example are transporting young people long distances to neighbouring towns to take part in music, drama and other cultural activities.

4. The Design

Significant research was carried out by the group to ascertain the most appropriate building that would be fit for purpose and appropriate to meet the needs of the population to be served. The study included site visits to three existing facilities in County Laois namely Camross Community Centre, Abbeyleix National School and Ballacolla Sports Hall. A full comparative analysis was carried out to maximise the possible available uses within the site boundary of the proposed facility and the design has been phased so as to maximise the leverage of local, regional and national funds.

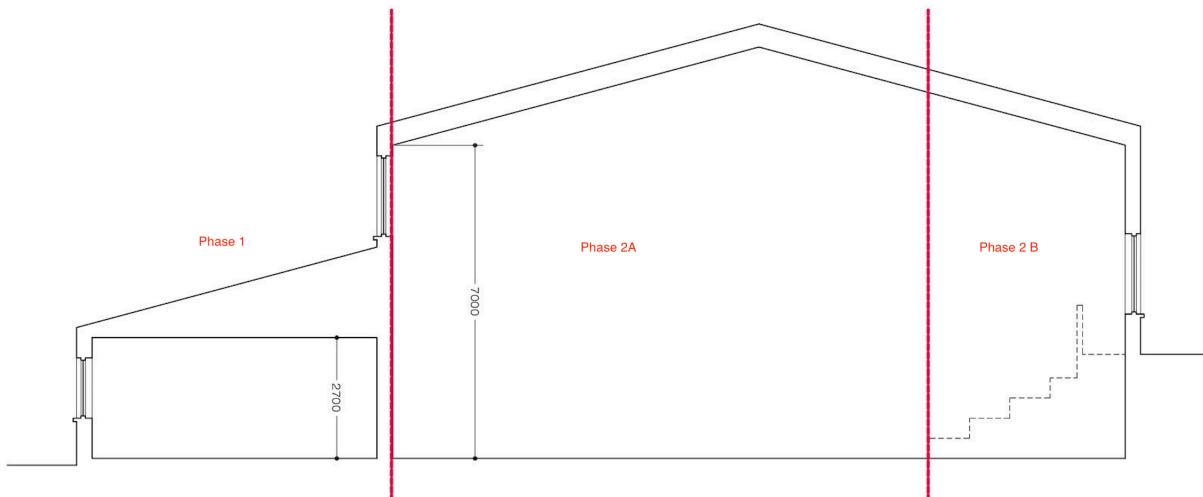
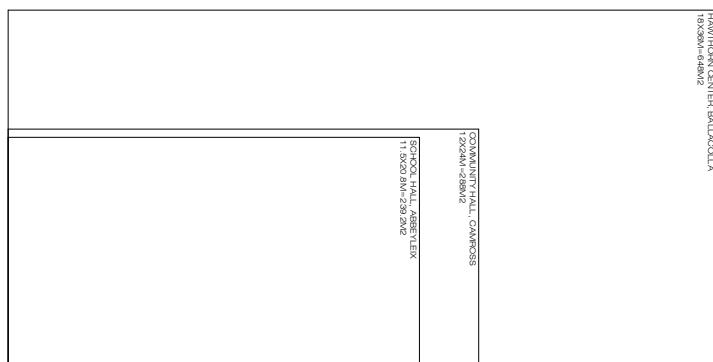


Figure 3: Cross Section of Project Proposal. (Fintan Dunne Architect)



Comparative study of existing hall spaces in Co. Laois



Proposed hall Clough

Figure 4: Comparative Study and Footprint of Proposal

The facility will be a contemporary community facility on an infill site which is being donated to the group. The key functional spaces will include a main multi functional open space for recreational activities and other larger function and events. There will be a dedicated meeting/workshop room equipped with projection equipment. Support facilities such as kitchen, disability toilets and energy

efficient central heating will be provided. The kitchen has been specifically designed to cater for small meetings if the need arises.

The proposed design will have an in-built flexibility to allow for the most advantageous use of the physical attributes of the site. It is proposed to organise these spaces in a linear fashion perpendicular to the street, accessed from a circulation spine and served by adequate sanitary convenience and service spaces.

5. Project Aim

The aim of this project is to develop a Community Centre to aid the development of community arts, promote recreational activity and local development activity in the area.

While work is progressing on the design of the building and site, Clough Community Vision Group will undertake preplanning work on the management and operation of the new facility.

Clough Community Facility will be a cultural, social and communal resource for Clough and South East Laois.

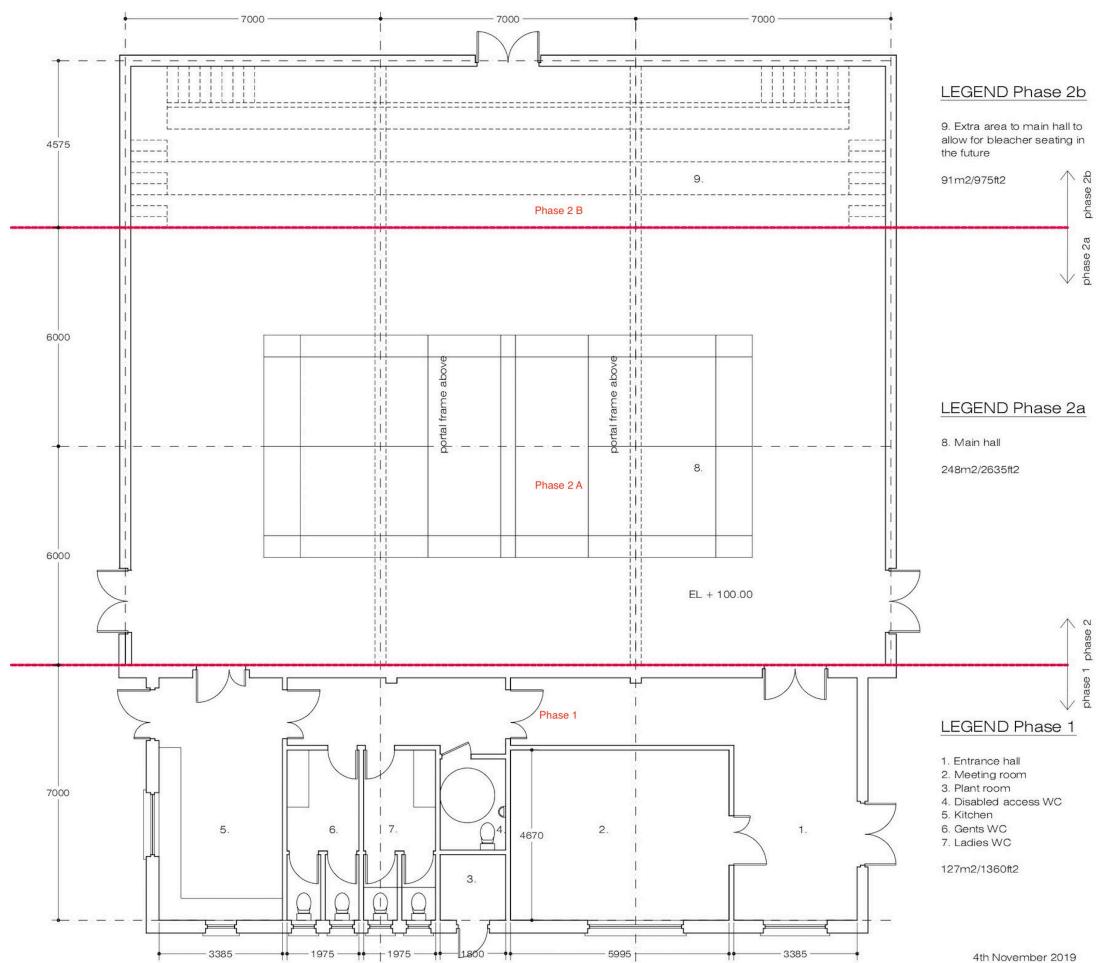


Figure 5: Floor Plan (Fintan Dunne Architect)

6. Operation of the Community Centre

Clough Community Vision Group clg has corporate status as a company limited by guarantee and is registered with the Companies Registration Office (CRO).

It will be constituted as a non-profit making organisation, with a Board of Directors selected using the partnership model.

The company will seek to attain charitable status (Revenue Commissioners).

Clough Community Centre will occupy a highly visible, high-traffic public communal presence in the heart of the village, which in itself will serve to promote the identity and profile of the Centre.

Full planning permission is expected to be submitted in Q1 2020 followed by a full procurement competition.

7. Requirement of the Group

CCVG have progressed this key project with the support of external technical expertise and have held preplanning discussion with staff of Laois Co. Co. Planning Department. Community consultation meetings were further held to give locals an opportunity to view the draft designs.

For other proposed projects, in order to avoid an uncoordinated and unplanned approach to the delivery of enhancement projects, experienced third party consultants will need to be engaged.

CCVG will require a combination of funding, community commitment and technical expertise such as Landscape Architects, Planners and Architects to design and implement the above mentioned high quality regeneration projects.

8. Conclusion

Each planned initiative listed above are in response to the community consultation and several follow up committee and interagency meetings. It must be recognised that a number of the actions can be delivered by the development association, however extensive collaboration with partner entities will be required to make progress on others.

There are other planned activities that will be the responsibility of statutory and non-statutory agencies to implement. However the members of the new umbrella group have a vital role to play by participating in county decision making structures and in partnership with elected representatives, to advocate for resources and supports so as to ensure the proper planning and development of Clough/Ballacolla.

The whole community approach is undoubtedly the best way forward for Clough/Ballacolla. Social Inclusion, social enterprise and business development are all essential ingredients for renewal.