

# Castletown

## Smart Community Plan.

Part 2 of 4

Environment & Sustainability



A Plan by the Community  
for the Community



# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the **Castletown Smart Environment and Sustainability Plan** June 2019. This plan has been compiled by the **Castletown** community for the **Castletown** community. The plan comes at the end of a twelve month process of working to strengthen the community management capabilities in **Castletown**.

## Benefits of a Local Plan

- ✓ Better local collaboration
- ✓ Encourages greater volunteerism
- ✓ Provides direction to local development
- ✓ Creates a unified voice and action team
- ✓ Helps identify & understand problems
- ✓ Improves access to outside supports



Clare Local Development Company

**The Wider Project:** The project has been funded by Clare Local Development Company and facilitated by a company called eTownz. The project is part of a wider project in Clare where forty communities across the county have been undertaking similar exercises. As many nearby communities are undertaking similar projects and developing local action teams, it creates collaboration opportunities for neighbouring communities.

**The Four-Part Plan:** This document is one of four parts of a community plan for **Castletown**. These represent four top tiers of community planning: Economy, Wellbeing, Environment and Management.



**Castletown** may wish to develop more detailed plans for specific areas within one of the four parts, such as a specific Tourism plan under the Economy heading, or a specific Energy plan under the Environment heading.

**Town Teams:** The importance to local development of collaboration between local people, clubs, businesses and service providers cannot be understated. eTownz suggests **Castletown** creates teams for each of the four top tiers: **Economy, Wellbeing, Environment and Management**.



## > How Did We Get Here?

The Castletown Smart Environment and Sustainability Plan has been compiled over 12 months from community feedback. eTownz liaised with a small group of dedicated local volunteers to organise and gather the information in this report.



## > Plan Structure

This is a 'smart' community plan. It draws on information from different sources and can be updated at any time through the eTownz online dashboard- [Click Here](#) . This allows different sections of the community to engage with an ongoing planning process

The plan was compiled by creating a 'model' of **Castletown**. The information is logged to a database as 'Record Logs'.

Each record log is assigned both a "Log Type" and a "Log Theme". This provides the framework for the community plan. This modular plan is compiled using the eTownz Dashboard, allowing the plan to be easily updated by the **Castletown** team in the future, adding new project ideas and challenges.

**Your Community Idea Card**

1) Type: (circle as appropriate)

a) Asset  
b) Project (Past / Present / Ideal)  
c) Stakeholder (Clubs / Groups etc.)  
d) Goal

2) Community Development Theme: (circle as appropriate)

a) Health, Recreation & Quality of Life  
b) Environment & Sustainability  
c) Business & Employment  
d) Community Management & Planning

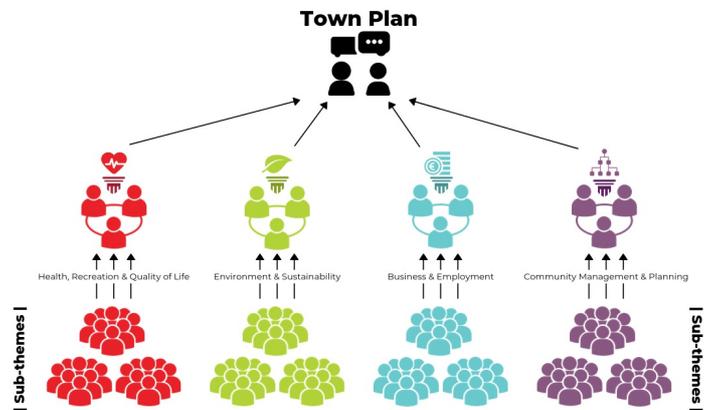
3) Title: Local GAA Club

4) Summary:

The local club is...

## > What Next?

The plan hopes to assist **Castletown** locals with creating a series of community development teams. Each team will cover one of the four top tiers; **Economy, Wellbeing, Environment or Management**. Teams should be composed of representatives from local clubs, businesses and service providers, as well as interested people from **Castletown** . Teams will set their own agendas for how often they would like to meet, what projects to undertake and so on.



## > So What Can You Do?

If you have an interest in local issues in Castletown , there are a number of ways you can get involved:

- **Share:** Read and share this report with others
- **Survey:** Complete the surveys or register your club/organisation
- **Contribute:** Contribute your ideas on any record by clicking on the log record title or visiting the eTownz dashboard
- **Join a team:** Register for a team online or attend a meeting to get involved in the **Castletown** plan.



## 2. Executive Summary

This document represents a local environmental plan for Castletown. The plan is the results of a year-long planning process where people from across the community were invited to contribute their ideas. There are a number of opportunities available in the environmental areas surrounding Castletown. For regions with an emphasis on tourism, and promoting the natural environment, recognising and enhancing these opportunities will be key driver of developing a deliberative, sustainable environmental framework for the longer term development of the community and region. This project was facilitated by eTownz and the key recommendations we would identify were Recognising the impact that the built and natural environment can have on wider community development goals. The opportunities available to recognise the interdependent nature of sustainable environmental policy, the local economy, general wellbeing and coordinated community management allow for greater planning and enhancement of the role that the local environment can play in sustainable community development.

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future, 1987

Environment, Habitats and Sustainability Town Team

The first step in developing environment initiatives in the community is to create & support a team of relevant people and organisations that can help coordinate activities and facilitate change. The team can be small or large and decide its own format. The team may take on its own projects or simply meet occasionally to help coordinate groups with common interests. The team could be comprised of local residents, businesses, club or public service representatives. The team structure can be simple to start with and decide how often they should meet as they see fit. The team can seek to gain a greater understanding of local barriers and opportunities to formulate a plan for future activities. There are also a wide variety of supports available and well-prepared team can help the community can take advantage of these. Building a local environment team helps coordinate cross-community initiatives, helps liaising with service providers, and helps the community understand & address local environmental challenges.

### Local Energy Efficiency Plan

There are a range of supports to assist communities in working together to improve local energy efficiency & reduce carbon footprint. The town environment team may wish to appoint people from the community as "champions" to lead the community in adopting the Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) program from Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI). This program can provide access to grants to upgrade facilities and improve awareness.

### Further Develop Waste Reduce & Reuse Initiatives

There are a wide variety of waste streams which are produced in a community. The environment team may wish to perform a study of local resource use and waste generation. This would allow setting of short and long-term targets on becoming a resource efficient community. The team may not only look at waste reduction but the economic opportunities of waste reuse in a circular economy. Ultimately the team might look at aiming to be a zero waste community (An example program of this can be seen at <https://www.zerowastecashel.ie/>).

### **3. Summary of Community Stats**

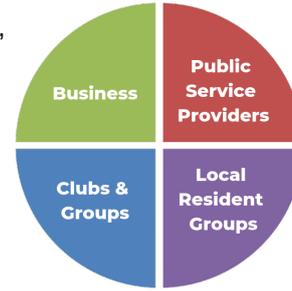
In this section we provide a summary of key statistics related to the community based primarily on 2016 Census data. In the appendices we provide further detail via charts and below this table are direct links to the data visualisations.

## 4. Stakeholders

Good local plans should strive to help all stakeholders within a community, especially the most vulnerable.

Sometimes, plans tend to focus on the most obvious stakeholders, such as local hotels, but forget about the small business owner working from home; they acknowledge the local football team, but ignore the local bridge club.

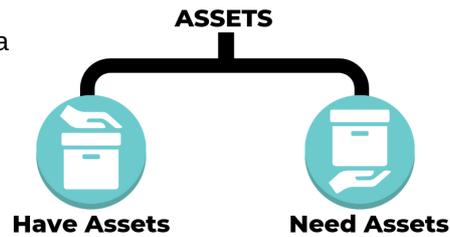
By building a register of the various local stakeholders, we aim for the Castletown Smart Community Plan to be inclusive and relevant to the needs of people and organisations throughout Castletown. The image across provides a breakdown of relevant stakeholder types.



TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">Sand and gravel - 8614</a>	A & R Poole Sand & Gravel 057 8735938 <b>T2:</b> Local Enterprises <b>T3:</b> Construction / Trades	Business	0	0
<a href="#">Castletown Tidy Towns - 8649</a>	<b>T2:</b> Streetscape , Planning & Management, Participation & Volunteering <b>T3:</b> Liveable & Tidy Towns, Built Environment & Landscape	Group/Club	0	0
<a href="#">Green Schools - 8596</a>	The local schools because of their commitment to sustainability and the environment are important stakeholders, in the sustainable development of the town and its hinterland. <b>T2:</b> Energy & Climate Change <b>T3:</b> Community Energy Generation	Public Service	0	0
<a href="#">Inland Fisheries Service - 8597</a>	Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland waterways including the river Nore. <b>T2:</b> Habitats & Environment <b>T3:</b> Habitats & Biodiversity	Public Service	0	0
<a href="#">Laois Partnership Company - 5971</a>	The Rural Development Programme; Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme ( SICAP) DSP Job Club; Community Employment Schemes; Tus Programme; Rural Social Scheme; Services to the Elderly Programme(LSTEP); National Childcare Schemes; Back to Education initiative. The Company's catchment area is the whole of Laois <b>T2:</b> Employment <b>T3:</b> Job Seekers	Public Service	0	0
<a href="#">Laois Environmental Awareness Office - 6147</a>	This supports local people who want to become more aware of their environment. <b>T2:</b> Waste & Resource Efficiency, Habitats & Environment <b>T3:</b> Habitats & Biodiversity, Sustainable Local Living	Public Service	0	0

## 5. Assets

Identifying, understanding and appreciating the assets within a community is an important part of any community plan. This plan takes elements from a popular approach to community planning called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD works on the premise that positive and effective community plans are built by leveraging existing assets within a community. Therefore, it is important to properly log all relevant assets in this category.



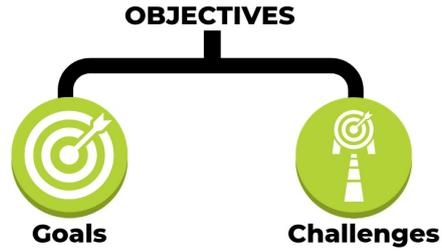
TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">River Nore/ habit and environment - 8562</a>	The River Nore and its banks is a beautiful area and is an important habitat. It plays a very important role in the maintaining the biodiversity of the area. <b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i> <b>T3:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</i>	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Community Orchard - 8569</a>	An orchard that is maintained by the townspeople and enhances the environment. It is located near the river bank. <b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i> <b>T3:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Biodiversity, Sustainable Local Living</i>	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Streetscape - 5943</a>	Castletown has many attractive features such as murals, painted lamp posts and a stone bridge.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Old Mill - 5944</a>	A historic mill- which is in a relativley good state of repair <b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i>	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Green spaces - 5947</a>	There are a number of well-kept green spaces in and around Castletown which are planted with flowers.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">River and river banks - 5948</a>	The river and its bank offers locals and visitors a change to engage in swimming , water sports and other recreational activities.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Compost bin - 5951</a>	There is a compost bin in the school to promote sustainable use of resources and to reduce waste.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Community vegetable garden - 5952</a>	This is a vegetable garden in the vicinity of the school. This is not only an educational resource but the vegetables are distributed around the communiy, which is very sustainable.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Green Flag - 5953</a>	The community is participating in several environmental projects. Some examples included 750kg of clothes recycled, 24 pairs of glasses for Sightsavers, and an Electrical Recycling drive.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Riverside Nature Trail - 5955</a>	This is a trail by the river, that allows visitors and locals to experience great scenery and flora and fauna. It is well signed and maintained.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Located near Ancient East - 6096</a>	Castletown is located near many heritage sites. Under the Ireland's Ancient East Programme, signage has been installed at the following sites: Emo Court, the Rock of Dunamaise, Heywood Gardens, Timahoe Round Tower and Abbeyleix Heritage House. It is the aim of Laois County Council to facilitate and encourage signage atfurther sites of importance including Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum, Aghaboe Abbey, Killeshin Romanesque Church and others.	Have	0	0

TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">Zone of archaeological potential - 6100</a>	Zones of Archaeological Potential. There is believed to be areas of archaeological in the town and these could be used to boost tourism in the area.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Green Infrastructure - 6101</a>	Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens.	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Glass Recycling Bank - 6152</a>	There is a glass recycling bank just off Main Street	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Village Green - 7791</a>	This is a green space in the village which is very well-maintained. There are some lovely mature trees here. <b>T2: Physical &amp; Mental Wellbeing, Habitats &amp; Environment</b>	Have	0	0
<a href="#">Sewage System - 5977</a>	The sewage system is inadequate and during periods of heavy rain, sewage had been seen in the street. Laois County Council have no plans to repair this key piece of infrastructure. This is having a negative impact on development in the town.	Need	0	0
<a href="#">Signage - 6153</a>	The village needs better signage for tourists to point out places of interest <b>T2: Communications</b>	Need	0	0

## 6. Objectives

Defining local goals and challenges can often be the most difficult component of a community plan, but it is vital nonetheless.

Of course, different stakeholders within the community may wish to prioritise different goals. As such, defining clear goals is a necessary step in selecting projects and preparing a tailored action plan.



The table below provides a themed breakdown of local objectives, which are divided Goals & Challenges.

TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">Sustainable community - 6093</a>	The strengthening of rural communities can only be achieved in the long term through making settlements more attractive places to live and providing employment opportunities. To this end the Planning Authority will favour appropriate development within the designated villages and settlements over urban generated rural housing.	Goal	0	0
<a href="#">Win Tidy Town Competition again - 6149</a>	Having won the overall award for Tidiest town in Ireland, Castletown aim to win the award again <b>Related Organisation:</b> <i>Castletown Tidy Towns Committee</i> <b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i> <b>T3:</b> <i>Sustainable Local Living</i>	Goal	0	0

## 7. Projects

Projects are the actions that stakeholders take to improve their community. Local projects can range from things like coaching a youth team to building a hall or organising a clean-up. While sometimes overlooked, it's important to appreciate the projects that have recently been undertaken or that are currently underway in the area, as this helps place the capabilities for future projects in context.



TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">Renweable energy project - 8585</a>	<p>A study to determine the feasibility of introducing more renewable energy sources into the community. This would allow Castletown to become a sustainable community. The study could determine if solar lighting could be used for streetlights etc.</p> <p><b>T2:</b> <i>Waste &amp; Resource Efficiency, Energy &amp; Climate Change</i>  <b>T3:</b> <i>Community Energy Generation</i></p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Expand Riverside Nature Trail - 8594</a>	<p>A study to consider how to develop and enhance the riverside trail. This could increase the number of visitors to the area.</p> <p><b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i>  <b>T3:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</i></p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Collaboration on renovation of old mill - 8595</a>	<p>A project that would help the current owners of the mill to renovate the building. Local stakeholders could support the golfclub and provide ideas on the best way forward.</p> <p><b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i>  <b>T3:</b> <i>Sustainable Local Living</i></p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Manage Biodiversity area - 4962</a>	<p>Manage Biodiversity area along River path. There is a wealth of flora and fauna in the area and this needs to be preserved and protected. This could boost eco-tourism and help to protect the local environment.</p> <p><b>T2:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Environment</i>  <b>T3:</b> <i>Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</i></p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Riverbank jetty - 4964</a>	<p>To prevent erosion and this would allow more people to use the river for sports etc.</p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Litter in river - 4967</a>	<p>Litter in the river. This means that the river is not attractive to visitors and potentially impacting on the tourism sector. It is also very bad for the environment. The river needs regular clean-ups.</p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Old Mill renovations - 5966</a>	<p>The old mill could be renovated and even potentially used to encourage more visitors to visit the town.</p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Protecting Natural environment and heritage - 6095</a>	<p>According to the Laois Development PlanFacilitating the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of cultural and natural heritage of communities, environmental upgrading and general actions to enhance the environmental, amenity and physical attributes of communities.</p>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Castletown Mountrath Trail - 6098</a>	<p>Castletown Mountrath Trail. A cycle route that connects the town to Mountrath.</p>	Idea	0	0

TITLE	SUMMARY	TYPE	Number Follows	Number Comments
<a href="#">Preserve scenic views from Castletown - 6102</a>	County Laois contains a number of valuable views and prospects which offer a very attractive cross-sectional view and overall impression of differing landscapes as one traverses the county. The protection of these views and prospects will be done on a case by case basis through the development management process when considering individual planning applications. Development that would seriously hinder or obstruct such views and prospects will not be allowed.	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Clear leaves from village Green - 6151</a>	We need to organise a group of people to clear fallen leaves from village green as to not disrupt the roads or community as a whole.	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Improve Environment Awareness among all - 6157</a>	Get pupils and staff more environmentally aware through waste management and recycling <b>T2: Habitats &amp; Environment, Energy &amp; Climate Change</b> <b>T3: Sustainable Local Living</b>	Idea	0	0
<a href="#">Clean up Laois Week - 5954</a>	The town participates in the clean up Laois Week presenting a more welcoming community to anyone who visits.	Past / Present	0	0
<a href="#">Castletown Community Planning Workshop - 5958</a>	Groups working together at a workshop to further collaboration and develop a community plan. <b>T2: Planning &amp; Management</b> <b>T3: Planning, Management &amp; Governance</b>	Past / Present	0	0
<a href="#">Residential developments - 6092</a>	The local council is committed to building in the centre of towns and villages in the Laois area. This will help to develop the town.	Past / Present	0	0
<a href="#">Plan for derelict properties - 6094</a>	Encourage developers of privately owned estates, where there are high levels of vacancy, to consider releasing units under the Social Leasing Programme;	Past / Present	0	0
<a href="#">LaoisWalking and Cycling Strategy - 6097</a>	LaoisWalking and Cycling Strategy. This is a series of initiatives to encourage more walking and cycling. This could help to make Castletown <b>T2: Social Wellbeing, Physical &amp; Mental Wellbeing, Habitats &amp; Environment</b>	Past / Present	0	0
<a href="#">Tidy Towns 2019 - 8319</a>	The community plan on entering the Tidy Towns competition in 2019 and would encourage all residents, business and clubs to assist where they can <b>T2: Streetscape , Habitats &amp; Environment</b> <b>T3: Liveable &amp; Tidy Towns</b>	Planned	0	0