

**O'Gonnelloe
Community Development
Plan
(2021 – 2023)**

**Prepared on behalf of the community by a voluntary
Community Planning Group**

June 2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document comprises a Community Development Plan for the community of O’Gonnelloe in Co Clare and its immediate environment. It has been developed through a facilitated, consultative process in which the actions proposed have been informed by the needs, interests and concerns of those living - and accessing services - in the area.

The process of developing the plan was led by a group of local volunteers working closely with a facilitator whose role was to guide and mentor the planning process. The members of the planning group were as follows:

- Fred Hannaford
- Anna McElhinney
- Elaine Mulcahy
- Michèle Coleman
- Jim O’Brien
- Peadar Casey
- Ger O’Brien
- Donal Molloy
- Eugene Hogan
- Donal O’Connor
- Reggie Hart
- Helen Reilly
- Michael McNamara

It is also important to note the contribution of other community members who participated for a period on the Planning Group and still more who participated in different planning meetings.

The process was enabled by the Clare LEADER Programme under the management of Clare Local Development Company. This consultative process ran from October 2019 to April 2020 and consisted of an open community meeting, workshops, a survey distributed to all households, the results of which formed the basis for the Three-Year Community Plan.

The implementation of the plan is organised in six strands, each with a range of proposed actions based on the needs, interests and concerns of those living, and accessing services in O’Gonnelloe and each with designated leaders. The actions in each strand have been aligned with the relevant goals in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified by the United Nations and outlined in a chart attached as Appendix 1 (see <https://sdgs.un.org>. UN General Assembly, Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 21st October 2015).

A draft of the plan became available in April 2020. Due to restrictions associated with Covid-19 the finalising of the document, a process planned to include an open community meeting, was delayed until spring and summer 2021. At that point the draft plan was made available to the community in O’Gonnelloe by email and in print. People were invited to respond to the document and make suggestions. The responses and suggestions relevant to the document were incorporated into the text, while those concerned with implementation were referred to the relevant strand leaders.



The Planning Group who worked together to create this plan, see it as a flexible document and something that is evolving and not fixed. This planning stage is now at an end and so the work of the Planning Group is now finished. It is important that more people in the community engage with the plan. To this end a launch is being planned with the aim of informing and engaging the community as much as possible, encouraging participation and bringing new people into the implementation of this exciting plan.



2. O'CONNELLOE

O'Connellloe is picturesquely situated on the shores of Lough Derg between Killaloe and Scarriff and for the most part, it lies in a valley overlooked by the Slieve Bernagh hills.

With a population that is largely rural and dispersed, the civil parish of O'Connellloe is mainly in the O'Connellloe and Carrowbawn Electoral Divisions.

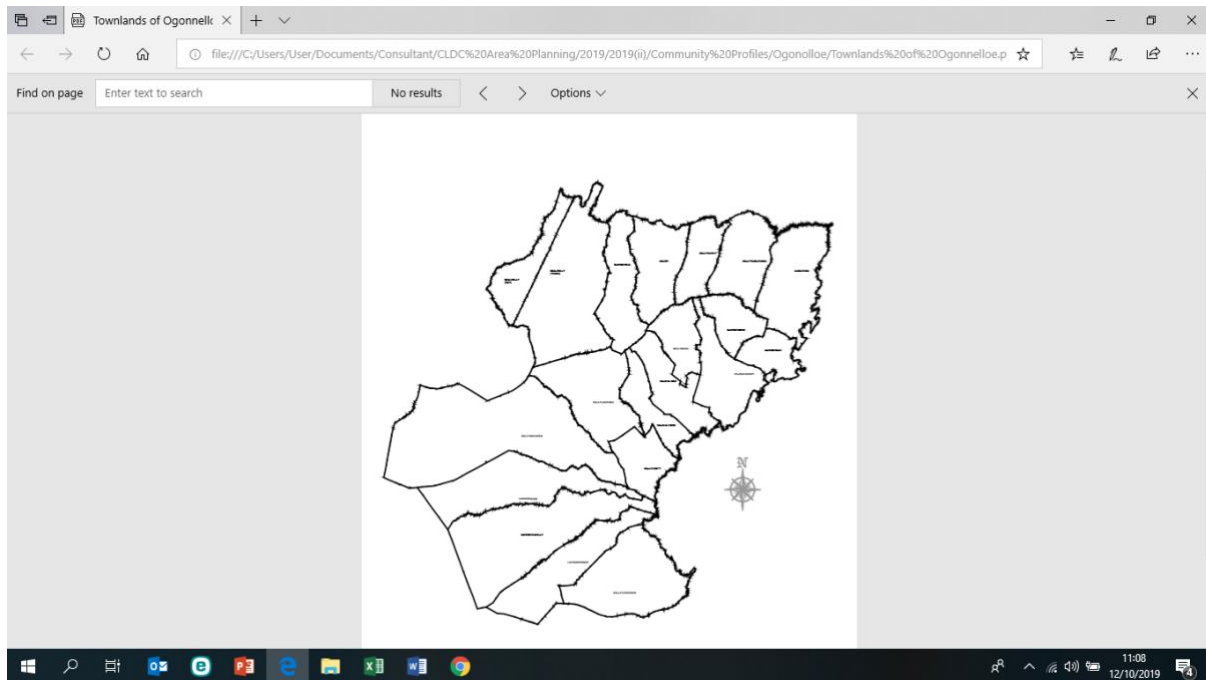
O'Connellloe has many strengths. Residents describe it as a great place to raise a family suggesting there is a good quality of life and community spirit in the area with a nice mix of locals and new arrivals. People in O'Connellloe are very conscious of the beauty of their surroundings comprised of a wonderful landscape nestled beautifully beside Lough Derg. The area is reasonably well served by local community and commercial facilities such as the local primary school, sporting associations and nice walks.

On the other hand, residents also identify inadequacies such as a lack of a social hub, a village centre with a shop, shared workspace and meeting place. Other issues of concern include road safety, an inadequate benefit from tourism, poor public transport and some challenges for those integrating into the community.

This plan therefore recognises that O'Connellloe is both a community of local residents and a destination that attracts visitors to the area. Activities within the plan seek to prioritise the needs of those living in the area, while also ensuring the best possible experience for those who visit year-round.

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

A brief demographic analysis of O’Gonnelloe delivered some key findings. O’Gonnelloe comprises 20 townlands as outlined in the following image:



The information presented below is drawn from Census Statistics collected in 2016, the most recent Census undertaken in Ireland. While census data are collected at individual household level they are then presented according to small areas (approximately of 100 households) and regions known as Electoral Divisions (EDs).

The majority of townlands – and therefore the majority of O’Gonnelloe’s population – falls within the Electoral Division of O’Gonnelloe. The outstanding townlands, namely Carrowbaun, Carrownakilly, Lackabranner and Ballycuggaran, all fall within the Electoral Division of Carrowbawn.

The townlands of Coumnagun and Carrownagowan also fall within the Carrowbawn ED but are not part of O’Gonnelloe. However, it is not possible to isolate these townlands from the Census data relating to the other townlands in the ED¹.

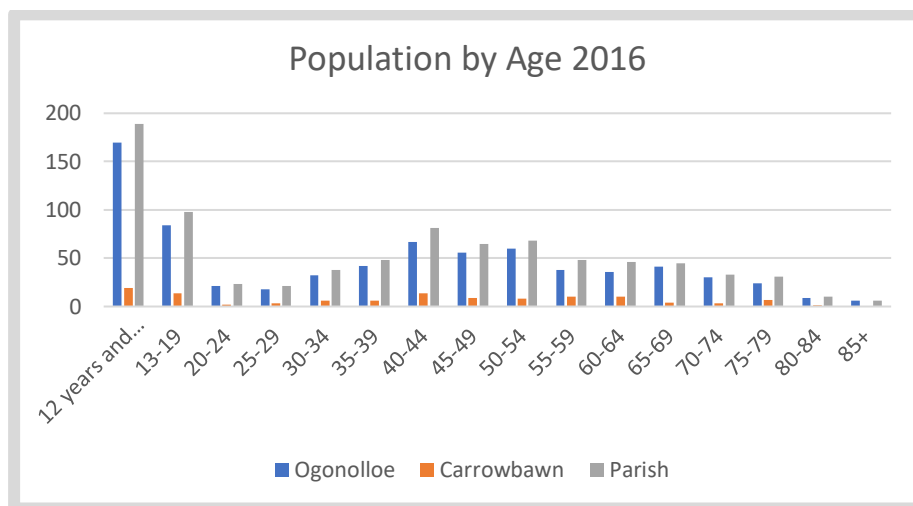
¹ I have tried to isolate Coumnagun and Carrownagowan from the other townlands by focusing on the next area of measurement down - Small Area (which covers areas of approximately 100 households). However the Small Area recorded is exactly the same as the Carrowbawn Electoral Division, mainly because we are talking about a population of 116 and a housing stock of 87.



Therefore, this demographic profile presents census statistics on the EDs of O’Gonnelloe and Carrowbawn, incorporating all the townlands of O’Gonnelloe and two additional townlands, namely Coumnagun and Carrownagowan. It is important to point out that the impact of including Coumnagun and Carrownagowan in the profile is negligible and will not impact substantially on the accuracy of the profile presented.

Census 2016 indicates that:

- The overall population of O’Gonnelloe and Carrowbawn Electoral Division is 850 individuals: 426 males and 424 females. The population of O’Gonnelloe is fairly even spread between the ages of 15 and 65 but it shows a high percentage of young people under 14 at over 26% and those over 65 are 15%. Details are shown in the chart below.



- There is little cultural or ethnic diversity among residents of O’Gonnelloe with the population identifying itself as predominantly white Irish, at 86%.
- Private households by type showed a high percentage of married couples with children comprising 55% of all individuals living in private households as per Census 2016. Cohabiting couples with children comprise another 3% of residents.
- 43% of families are two-person families.
- 7% of households in O’Gonnelloe are one-person households. Lone parent households comprise 8% of households in the community.



- Out of 414 permanent dwellings in O’Gonnelloe 72 % are owner occupied, 13% constituted unoccupied holiday homes, while a further (14%) are vacant dwellings.
- A total of 627 individuals in O’Gonnelloe are eligible to work, of which 341, or 54.3%, are in employment. 110 are retired representing 17.5% of the population, while less than 7.1% are unemployed. A total of 8.1% are looking after the home/family, while a further 2.7% are unable to work because of illness or disability.
- Census 2016 reveals that residents of O’Gonnelloe generally commute locally to school/work with heavy reliance on private cars for transport. Forty per cent of residents take under 15 minutes to commute, with 22.8% taking under 45 minutes.
- 80 residents or 9.4% of the population of O’Gonnelloe are described as having a disability.

Regarding the HP Deprivation Index O’Gonnelloe is Marginally Above Average, explained below.

HP Deprivation Index 2016

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index is the main index used in Ireland to identify levels of disadvantage and deprivation as well as identifying areas with the highest concentrations of disadvantage. It classifies areas according to levels of advantage or disadvantage on a scale of;

Extremely disadvantaged
Very disadvantaged;
Disadvantaged;
Marginally below average;
Marginally above average;
Affluent;
Very affluent
Extremely affluent.

Based on Census 2016 data, the HP Deprivation Index for this Community is

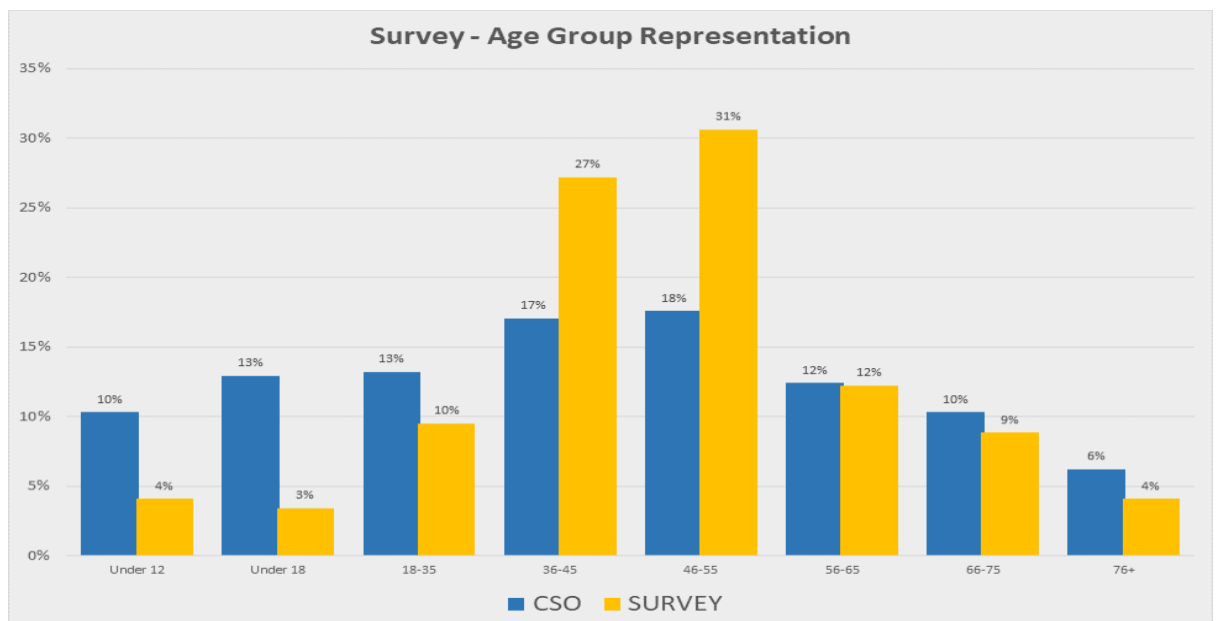
Marginally Above Average

4. O'CONNELLOE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Following an initial Expression of Interest by Donal O'Connor and Michael McNamara to the Clare LEADER programme on behalf of O'Gonnelloe, a four-phase process was undertaken in the preparation of this Community Plan as follows:

Phase 1 - Orientation: This involved the establishment of a planning group to lead and project-manage the planning process. Basic training on how to conduct an evidence-informed planning process was provided, while materials and information were also provided to the planning group to support its stewardship of the process.

Phase 2 - Information Gathering: The planning group implemented a broad-based consultation process during this phase. This was designed to enable community residents (full and part-time) and local users of services to identify strengths, needs, interests and concerns from their respective experiences of O'Gonnelloe - and to identify priority projects that should be addressed in the emerging community plan. A total of 146 individuals from across the life cycle responded to the survey as outlined in Figure 2 below:



Phase 3 - Analysis of Information and Action Planning: During this phase the planning group and wider community of O'Gonnelloe analysed a summary of the information gathered through the community consultation, identified priority needs and selected priority actions for inclusion in the O'Gonnelloe Community Plan. Resources and supports needed to facilitate implementation of the plan were also identified during this phase.

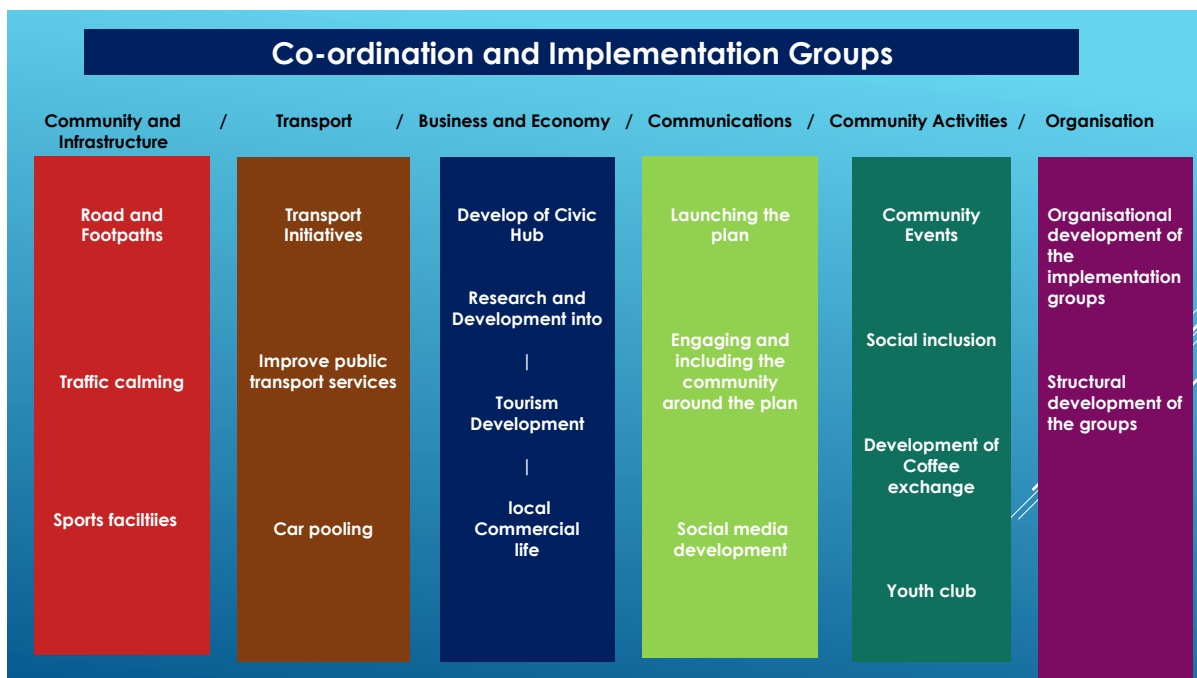
Phase 4 - Writing: Phase 4 involved the preparation, agreement and finalisation of this document as the core output of the planning process: the O'Gonnelloe Community Development Plan.



5. FRAMEWORK FOR O'CONNELLOE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Figure 3 below presents a diagrammatic overview of the core elements of the O'Connellloe Community Development Plan, divided into 6 Strands. All actions within the plan are designed to contribute to the improvement of life quality and community experience for those living in, or visiting, O'Connellloe. The actions in each Strand have been aligned with the relevant goals among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified by the United Nations and outlined in a chart attached as Appendix 1 (see <https://sdgs.un.org>. UN General Assembly, Transforming Our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 21st October 2015).

Figure 3: Plan Framework



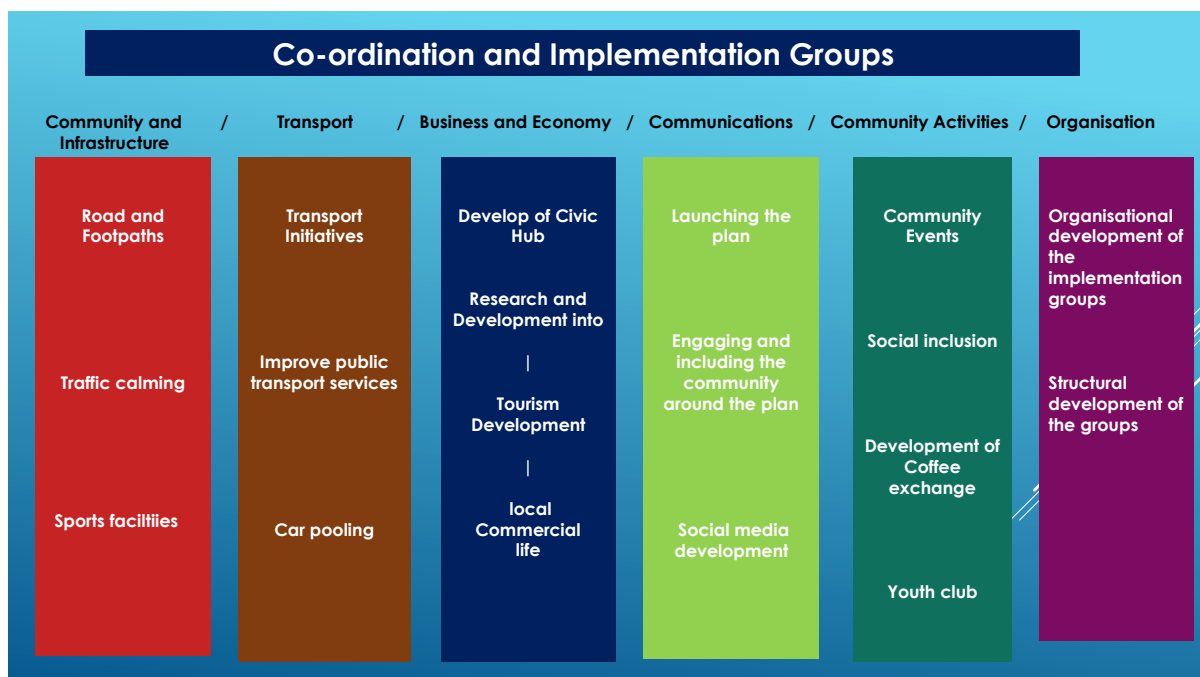
Enabled by available facilities, local volunteers and community co-operation

6. STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

The implementation of the O’Gonnelloe Community Development Plan will be enabled through:

The establishment of Co-ordination and Implementation Groups for each strand. How each of these individual groups will operate and the structure, roles and responsibilities will be agreed. The Organisation Strand will explore and create an agreed structure and a balanced approach ensuring an equitable sharing of responsibility. A leader for each group has been chosen and actions plans agreed upon.

Figure 4: Operational Structure for the delivery of the § O’Gonnelloe Community Development Plan



7. CO-ORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS

Co-ordination and Implementation groups will comprise community residents that have volunteered, following a community call for volunteers, to participate in the implementation of specific projects. These groups will be convened immediately to begin to action their respective projects. Membership of the groups is open to any individual in the community interested in contributing to the delivery of any of the named projects.



8. STRANDS AND ACTIONS

STRAND 1: COMMUNITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This strand is to be led by Donal O'Connor

Objective: To improve community and public infrastructure in O'Gonnelloe.

Action1: Roads & footpaths:

- Liaise with Clare County Council and work directly on:
 - Traffic calming, lighting and signage;
 - Footpath - surface condition, safety of walkers, biodiversity and vegetation control;
 - General maintenance of footpath.

Action 2: Indoor sports facilities:

- Liaise with OHC in relation to supporting and accessing proposed indoor facilities.

Key Steps to be considered re implementation:

- Establish Implementation Sub-Group to implement all actions under this strand;
- Consider sources of income and operational costs;
- Work as closely as possible with the Co. Council to build strong relationship.

Establishment of priorities and identification of actions over the next three years:

Timeframe	Priorities	Actions
Year 1	Footpath surface condition	Maintain new surface by cleaning, removing leaves, cutting back briars, etc.
Year 2	Indoor sports facilities	Work with O'Gonnelloe Hurling Club to support their proposed project.
Year 3	Traffic calming	Work with Clare Co. Council on proposed traffic calming scheme.

Actions under this strand are aligned with the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

- *SDG No.3 - Good Health and Well-being* - the footpath will be used for walking, running etc to improve fitness and well-being;
- *SDG No.9 - Industry, innovation & Infrastructure* - the footpath represents resilient infrastructure and is used for connecting people;
- *SDG No.11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities* - the footpath helps make Ogonnellloe more inclusive, safe and sustainable;
- *SDG No.13 - Climate Action* - the footpath allows people to walk instead of using the car, thus reducing carbon emissions.



STRAND 2: TRANSPORT

This strand is to be led by Anna McElhinney and Michèle Coleman

Objective: To improve transport options in O’Gonnelloe.

Action: Local Transport

- Liaise with ‘Local Link Limerick Clare’ (this is a not for profit rural transport company that has replaced the East Clare Accessible Transport service) in relation to bus timetables, pricing, the services available and co-ordination of services with Bus Eireann or other public transport services from Killaloe, Scarriff and Ennis;
- Liaise with Bus Éireann regarding physical bus stops in O’Gonnelloe;
- Contact community groups in the neighbouring villages of Scarriff, Tuamgraney and Killaloe to discuss common interests in transport issues;
- Make information available to the community in O’Gonnelloe on local transport services through printed and digital media in coordination with the Communications Group (Strand 4);
- Conduct an active transport audit of O’Gonnelloe to review current facilities for walking and cycling;
- On the basis of the audit consider improvements that could be made and coordinate relevant actions with Strand 1 (Community and Infrastructure);
- Promote walking and cycling and cycling activities in co-ordination with the Community Activities Group (Strand 5)

Establishment of priorities and identification of actions over the next three years:

Timeframe	Priorities	Actions
Year 1	Gather information on public transport: choice, availability, cost and benefits. Contact community groups in neighbouring villages. Conduct active transport audit.	Disseminate this information to the community. Identify common goals regarding local transport. Identify improvements needed.
Year 2	Review community uptake of public transport and identify gaps.	Lobby for additional transport needs where identified.
Year 3	Investigate possibility of organised community lift sharing / car-pooling / helping people with transport where needed.	Subject to public health advice these activities may be researched and introduced on a trial basis.

These actions are in line with the following United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG No.3 - Good Health and Well-being, SDG No.11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG No.13 - Climate Action.



STRAND 3: BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Led by Peadar Casey

Objective: To develop the day-time usage of O’Gonnelloe Exchange to help the economic viability of the facility, meet the economic and social needs of the local community, support local businesses and tourism.

Actions:

- Develop O’Gonnelloe Exchange as a ‘civic hub’ to host/facilitate researchers-in-residence linked with 3rd level education institutions working on rural-related research projects;
- Use the ‘civic hub’ to interact with and support local businesses and the local economy.

Key Steps to be implemented:

- Pilot projects are planned for with some researchers, to include the following sectors sustainable tourism, agri-technology, civic innovation;
- These projects will provide valuable information on the adequacy of the accommodation and local services provided in O’Gonnelloe. These projects will also engage with local citizens and regional organisations interested in the areas of research;
- As part of these pilots, local residents in O’Gonnelloe will be encouraged to engage with the projects, give their opinions and to help develop their own entrepreneurial ambitions;
- Feedback generated from the pilots will allow us plan relevant economic structures which can be accommodated through O’Gonnelloe Exchange and its network of members;
- The pilots will also provide answers to questions around about the need for a co-working space, the needs of the tourism sector, natural resources and any other sectors that may be of interests to local residents and their respective entrepreneurial ambition;
- Based on the outputs from research we will have engagement with Leader, the Local Enterprise Office, Clare County Council and other relevant agencies, in order to help local residents to develop their own businesses and as a result we will develop the local economy;
- The system will be refined and communicated on a digital platform at the end of 2021.

Establishment of priorities and identification of actions over the next twelve months:

Timeframe	Priorities	Actions
Year 1	Early development of Civic Hub	Run pilot projects and assess results

Actions under this strand are aligned with the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

- *SDG No. 8 - Decent work and Economic Growth - O’Gonnelloe Exchange Hub will promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth;*
- *SDG No.9 - Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure - O’Gonnelloe Exchange Hub will foster innovation.*



STRAND 4: COMMUNICATIONS

Led by Eugene Hogan & Jim O'Brien

Objective: To develop and implement a communication strategy as part of the overall Community Development Plan.

Action 1: Communications Team

Develop a communications team comprising Eugene Hogan, Jim O'Brien, Donal O'Connor, Michael McNamara and include a person in their late teens, a person in their twenties and a recently arrived member of the community.

- The communications team will develop a communication strategy as part of the overall plan.
- The strategy will be designed to encourage a wide participation by the community in the work of the various strands, especially among younger people.
- It will seek to foster ownership of the plan across the community

Action 2: Launching the Plan

On finalisation of the plan, the communications team will be responsible for its launch and for raising awareness of the plan in the community. This will include:

- A public event at O'Gonnelloe Exchange; *
- Publicising the plan and its launch through traditional print and broadcast media;
- Publicising the plan and its launch on social media such as
 - Twitter,
 - Facebook,
 - LinkedIn,
 - Instagram,
 - WhatsApp;
- Distribution of the plan by email and print;
- Publication of a leaflet or brochure synopsising the plan;
- Additional launch activities might include
 - House-to-house presentations,
 - Presentations over a series of meetings in 'townland' pods at the O'Gonnelloe Exchange,
 - Presentation at weekend Masses,
 - Individual presentation to community and sporting organisations in O'Gonnelloe.

**All events will be dependent on public health requirements and will happen in accordance with public health guidelines.*



Action 3: Ongoing Communications

The communications team will handle ongoing communications in relation to the implementation of the plan. This will include:

- o Providing a consistent flow of information on the progress of the plan through traditional and social media;
- o Capturing key milestones/developments in print, images, sound and video;
- o Sourcing and developing relevant content for traditional and social media.

These actions are in line with the following United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG No.3 - Good Health and Well-being, SDG No.4 - Quality Education, SDG No.10 - Reduced Inequalities – this strand is concerned with sharing knowledge and information with the community, which has the potential to enhance communal and personal lives. This strand will also provide equal access to information to all sections of the community.



STRAND 5: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Led by Helen Reilly

Objective: To develop of a broad range of community activities to engage all sections of the community.

Actions:

- Development of a broader range of community events;
- Activities to encourage social inclusion;
- Continuation and development of the Coffee Exchange;
- The organisation of activities and promoting greater use of the public walking and water-based facilities;
- Creating opportunities for young people to gather – Youth Club;
- Development of a health and well-being initiative;
- Establish a cinema club.

Key Steps to be implemented:

- Establish an implementation sub-group;
- Scope demand for activities locally;
- Identify specific nature of activities sought;
- Identify and seek out facilities and locations for delivery within the community;
- Develop action plans and agree responsibilities and timelines for delivery;
- Identify resource requirements and seek out resources as required;
- Establish and deliver activity.

Actions in this strand are in line with the following United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): No.3- Good Health and Well-being), No.10 - Reducing Inequality, No.11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities) and No.13 - Climate Action.



STRAND 6: ORGANISATION

Led by Eleanor Skelly

Objective:

This strand will explore the type of structure best suited to the implementation of the plan. It has been included as an opportunity to look at what type of structure is best suited to the implementation of this overall plan.

Actions:

The role of the lead for this strand is to facilitate and develop an agreed structure and identify what type of supports are needed for those who are co-ordinating and implementing their projects be it training, sharing between projects around learnings and challenges within various roles, and aspects of implementation.

Key Steps to be implemented:

- Facilitate a workshop on organisational structures and individual responsibility (useful resource (“Reinventing Organisations” by Frederic Laloux) to bring about an agreed structure that best suits this community plan;
- Identify learnings up to now in implementing projects in the community;
- Utilise the learnings for planning ahead;
- Look at how each group organises itself to progress the planned activities in terms of roles, responsibilities and a plan of action;
- The assigning of tasks to various sub-groups – (the structure of these groups needs to be thought about);
- Communication, information sharing, and ways to encourage and develop individual’s initiative and to give them the opportunities and support to be creative.

Actions in this strand are in line with the following United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): No.17 - Partnerships for the Goals.

This is a short term action plan that aims to have an agreed organisational structure within the next 6 months.



9. CONCLUSION

It is important to note this document is a framework plan that outlines broad priority actions to be implemented throughout O’Gonnelloe over the next three years to improve life quality and community experience for those living in, or visiting, O’Gonnelloe.

The plan reflects the realistic priorities, needs, interests and concerns of the community as identified by a significant community survey undertaken in October/ November 2019. It is now important that the plan moves to full implementation.

This plan is not simply a list of projected activities, it is also a call to action. It can only happen with the ongoing engagement of community volunteers who are willing to get involved and support the activities.

You are invited to read yourself into this plan and get involved. Please put your name forward to the leaders of the particular strands where you feel you could make a contribution. These leaders are listed below:

Strand 1	Community & Infrastructure	Donal O’Connor	087 2315114
Strand 2	Transport	Anna McElhinney Michèle Coleman	087 2287543 087 2927739
Strand 3	Business & Economy	Peadar Casey	086 1742536
Strand 4	Communications	Jim O’Brien Eugene Hogan	086 8240104 087 2497290
Strand 5	Community Activities	Helen Reilly	087 7767449
Strand 6	Organisation	Eleanor Skelly	087 1265762

Covid-19

It is important to note that due to Covid-19 the plans, so far, have been curtailed. It is acknowledged that the community actions planned within this document are likely to be impacted by Covid-19 although the extent of the impact is difficult to predict at this point.



Appendix I



Web reference - <https://sdgs.un.org>.