

Recreation and Amenity Progress Report October, 2015

Ducketts Grove Castle and Walled Gardens

Ducketts Grove remains a popular venue for recreational use. Along with the Irish Cancer Foundation's "Relay for Life", the Christmas Fair and other events including the Carlow Tourism Fair and Vintage Club Rally, it is estimated that over 70,000 people approximately visit Ducketts Grove annually.

Carlow County Development Partnership is operating the workshops, canteen and exhibition areas. The main buildings remain of keen interest to National and International Paranormal Science Groups. A complete renewal of the herbaceous/floral Garden element was undertaken in December and further works have been carried out to the Gardens in 2015. We are encouraging groups to avail of the free use of Ducketts Grove's supernatural dimension during the Halloween Season. Already up to 20 National and International paranormal groups are regularly using the facility. We are inviting them all back for Halloween 2015 – members of the public will be free to join in on the investigations. Congratulations to Carlow Tourism for organising so many successful events during 2015 – (best wishes to Eileen and young Jeremiah).

Oak Park Forest Park

Oak Park Forest Park, on the outskirts of Carlow Town, remains very popular for quiet walks in a beautiful setting. The new attractions – universally accessible playground, cleared/replanted forest and exercise areas are of increasing attraction to everybody.

Extensive works have been completed to the surface of the paths to enhance the walkways and to protect the wooden structure from the elements. Damage to many trees and fencing in the Park required works to ensure safety for all users. Drainage issues were identified which reduced the incidents of mosquito attacks this Summer.

Tullow Town Park

At Tullow, the first Skateboard Park is now very popular. Great credit is due to the Members from the Tullow electoral area for their initiative in this proposal – and to the Develop Tullow Association for their great work in maintaining Tullow Town Park. Further proposals will enhance the Park's ecological diversity.

Muinebheag

The Trustees of McGrath Park are to be commended for such a marvellous facility used by hurling, football, soccer, pitch & putt, tennis, athletics and cricket clubs. Bagenalstown Improvement Group under the

leadership of Paddy Gardiner is to be congratulated for their marvellous work throughout Bagenalstown, including the Town Park.

River Barrow

Carlow Local Authorities with Carlow Tourism and Carlow County Development Partnership will continue to source funding for the priorities of the Barrow Corridor Study. The benefit from the amenities and the facilities recently constructed by Waterways Ireland at Clashganny were highlighted. The improvement of access and parking facilities are now urgent priorities to be considered. Carlow County Council pursued the upgrading of tidal boating facility at St. Mullins in conjunction with Waterways Ireland. The navigation channel of the Barrow has become a matter of serious concern to boaters and fishing interests and those concerned with future flooding due to silting and overgrowth. It is impossible to progress any initiative at the Barrow without some remedial action in this respect, which will need help and understanding from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

SEAI Better Energy Communities 2014

Carlow County Council is rewarded for many years of successful Community Energy Projects – nominated for a further National award in 2015. Our Community/Energy Projects are shortlisted (top 3) for the Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards to be determined in November - congratulations to Lilly Slye, Paddy Phelan and their teams. In 2015, Carlow County Council submitted 27 projects for funding which were approved by SEAI. A number of these project were in conjunction with Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency. The 27 projects were as follows:

1.	Askamore Muintir Na Tire Community Council Ltd.
2.	Ballon Rathoe Childcare Facility Ltd.
3.	Brian Dowley, Tullow, Co. Carlow.
4.	Brothers of Charity, Ferrybank, Kilkenny.
5.	Callon Co-op, Kilkenny.
6.	New Oak Estate, Carlow County Council.
7.	Carlow County Council – Gateway County & City Council SEI.
8.	Castlecomer Demesne Company Ltd.
9.	Courtown Water World Ltd.
10.	D&D Farms Ltd., Tybroughney, Tipperary.
11.	Galmoy GAA Club.
12.	Highway Safety Development Ltd.
13.	Kilkenny County Council – County Hall.
14.	Kilkenny Local Authority Leisure Complex Ltd.
15.	Lismard Developments - Mount Wolseley.
16.	Newbrook Nursing Home Ltd., Westmeath.

17.	Nicholas Mosse Pottery Ltd., Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny.
18.	O'Connell Brothers, Knockanore, Thomastown, Kilkenny.
19.	O'Shea Farms, Ardclone, Pilltown, Kilkenny.
20.	Ossory Youth Services Ltd., New Street, Kilkenny.
21.	Respond – Clogh, Bagenalstown.
22.	Rhinecourt Ltd., Coolnaleen, Camolin, Wexford.
23.	Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Waterford.
24.	St. Canices Community Action Ltd., Kilkenny.
25.	St. Patrick's Parish, Bohernatounish Road, Loughboy.
26.	Tintean, Carlow.
27.	Urlingford on the Move Ltd., Urlingford, Kilkenny.

Projects have been completed at Carlow Library, Civic Offices, Carlow Fire Station, New Oak Community Centre, Visual Centre for Contemporary Arts, Public Lighting at Various Locations, Carrigduff Swimming Pool, and C.Y.M.A. Works amounting to over €1 million are currently in hand at 55 houses in New Oak Estate. Carrickduff Swimming Pool is to be congratulated for their particular initiatives in identifying recommended improvement works for grant aid.

It is disappointing that several communities in the County did not participate in spite of considerable funding being available and a high level of support forthcoming from Carlow County Council. Carlow County Council is currently preparing a schedule of projects for examination and submission for possible grant aid in 2016.

Carlow County Council completed energy upgrades on over 300 houses in 2015. This included upgrading of the heating system, ventilation, windows and doors, lighting and high efficiency stoves. To date over 1,300 houses have received energy upgrades in County Carlow. Remaining Local Authority houses (200 approximately) will be completed by the end of 2016. These works have been very well received by householders – whose energy bills have more than halved and with much greater living quality.

Seamus O'Connor,
Director of Services.