

Per Cent for Arts Commission

M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy PPP Scheme

Artists Brief: Supplementary Information

County Wexford is located in the southeast corner of Ireland. The County has four main towns - Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross - with an overall population of 149,722 (CSO population figures 2016). County Wexford enjoys a rare mix of mountains, valleys, rivers, slob lands, flora, fauna and breath-taking beaches along its 270km of coastline.

The county is bounded by the sea on two sides – on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and on the east by St. George’s Channel and the Irish Sea. The River Barrow forms its western boundary and the river Slaney which rises in the Wicklow mountains runs south through Enniscorthy town before entering the Irish Sea at the estuary in Wexford town. The Blackstairs Mountains form part of the boundary to the north, as do the southern edges of the Wicklow Mountains. The adjoining counties are Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow and Wicklow.

The Local Authority for the county is Wexford County Council (Comhairle Contae Loch Garman) which has 34 elected members and is divided into the four municipal districts of Gorey, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Wexford Borough. The Council is responsible for a range of services including housing and community, roads and transportation, planning and development, arts amenity culture and environment

The M11 Gorey – Enniscorthy PPP Scheme passes primarily through Enniscorthy and Gorey Municipal Districts which including many rural town lands and villages as well as the bigger towns of Enniscorthy, Ferns and Camolin.

History

An age-old gateway into Ireland, County Wexford is steeped in history dating back to the Stone Age over 6,000 years ago. Known as the ‘Cornerstone of Ireland’s Ancient East’, it boasts 800 years of light-keeping at the oldest operational lighthouse in the world, Hook Lighthouse. Bannow in South Wexford was also the first point of landing for the Normans in 1169, invited at by the king of Leinster Diarmuid Mac Murrough.

A recent Tourism initiative has been developed to promote one aspect of the County's diverse history and heritage; The Norman Way, which is a heritage trail that runs along the south coast of County Wexford. Along this trail are authentic medieval sites documenting the Norman way of life including significant castles in Enniscorthy and Ferns. 2019 will be the 850th anniversary of the Normans arrival in Wexford and will be the catalyst for a series of projects culminating in a county wide programme of events.

South Wexford saw one of the heaviest concentrations of medieval English settlements in Ireland in the Middle Ages. This area was once known as the 'Wexford Pale'. An old dialect of English, known as Yola, was spoken uniquely in Wexford up until the 19th century. The north of the county remained Gaelic Irish in character, predominantly under the control of the MacMurrough Kavanagh clan.

County Wexford saw the heaviest fighting of 1798 rebellion with significant battles at Enniscorthy (Vinegar Hill) and Oulart Hill and New Ross and numerous 1798 memorials are scattered throughout the county and festivals commemorating the events including annual battle re-enactments. The public art memorial 'Tulach a' tSolais' in Oulart was commissioned in 1999 to commemorate the bicentenary of this rebellion and is the product of dynamic collaboration between the sculptor Michael Warren and architects Scott Tallon Walker.

During the 1916 Rising Enniscorthy town was taken over by about 600 armed Volunteers who made the Athenaeum Theatre their headquarters. In 2016 The Athenaeum Theatre was renovated to its former glory where it is a permanent museum hosting a walk through 1916 exhibition covering the local history of the Rising.

The Artistic South East

Wexford County enjoys a rich artistic and cultural legacy passed down over the generations which manifests itself today in a vibrant arts eco system.

Wexford is also the home county of writers Colm Toibin, John Banville, Billy Roche, Eoin Colfer and hosts two new annual writers festivals in Enniscorthy town and Kilmore Quay Wexford town hosts the National Opera House and the world renowned Wexford Festival Opera- recently voted the best international Opera Festival in the World. Music is particularly strong throughout the county, with community and professional orchestras, numerous choirs, brass bands, light opera societies as well as the Amateur Dramatic circuit. Visual arts is strong in the county with a wide variety of galleries, public and private and pop up spaces, new studio spaces opening up. Carlow IT Fine Art Degree is based in Wexford town and Gorey School of Arts runs feeder programmes to IADT and NCAD Fine art degree as well as documentary film making courses.

The county houses high quality art venues including Wexford Art Centre, the National Opera House, Presentation Art Centre (Enniscorthy), St Michael's Theatre in New Ross and Gorey School of Arts which hosts art exhibitions, workshops and a cinema space year round. Enniscorthy is the birth place of one of the most important and influential designers and architects of the early 20th century Eileen Gray (1879-1976) who was born at Brownswood House in Enniscorthy town, and who moved to and settled in Paris in the 1920's and 30's. Design and craft is strong in the county with Wexford Craft Trail promoting the work countywide.

Numerous arts, heritage and culture themed festivals take place throughout the county and (see list at end) Wexford County Council Arts Office supports this vibrant arts eco system

and recently launched its new five year arts plan 'Advancing the Arts' – County Wexford Arts Plan 2018 – 2022 www.wexfordcoco.ie/arts-and-culture/current-programmes-plans-and-events/advancing-the-arts

Natural landscapes / biodiversity

Wexford is a county rich in biodiversity with a rare mix of mountains, valleys, rivers, slob lands, flora, fauna and breath-taking beaches along its 270km of coastline, making it a popular holiday destination for Irish people.

Wexford's extensive diverse coastline supports a wide range of coastal habitats such as lagoons, dune systems, lakes and reefs of national and international conservation interest. The county also includes woodlands, peatlands, grasslands, rivers, wetlands that support a wide variety of plant and animal life. Its marine habitats are regarded as internationally important strongholds for breeding seabird colonies and wildfowl.

Wexford county council has been very proactive in implementing the 'All Ireland Pollinator Plan' in order to protect natural habitats of bees who also act as free pollinators fruit and vegetables produced in the county e.g. strawberries, tomatoes, apples and berry crops. Under the Wexford County Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018 the council has already put into action projects such as the 'Life Lives on the Edge' biodiversity initiative along national roads in the county.

Economy

County Wexford's traditional economy is driven by low wage labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture, fishing and manufacturing. Agriculture remains an important part of the local economy, and Tourism also contributes significantly to the local economy. Manufacturing has had to adjust to the globalised economy and the high numbers of micro enterprises highlight the entrepreneurial nature of the business sector, with the recent Hatch Labs (Gorey) and 'The Cube' in Wexford town are supporting the development of start-ups and micro enterprises. Gorey is a growing town and becoming a commuter belt with Dublin city being just over an hour's drive and many workers commute daily.

Community / Urban / Rural context

Wexford is the 12th most populated local authority in Ireland the total population now residing in county Wexford is 149,722 according to the 2016 census. Within the county's growing population there has been a significant increase in the number of older people with Wexford boasting a higher than national average of people over 65 years. County Wexford is also becoming more culturally diverse, with significant Polish, Russian and Roma communities along with a higher than average Traveller population. Recent arrivals include members of The Syrian community have been settled in Enniscorthy, Wexford Town and New Ross, as part of the Irish government's Refugee Resettlement Programme. Wexford has a large and growing population of young people. Early school leaving is higher than the state average and low educational attainment is still impacting on the workforce, which is relatively low skilled compared to the state average.

The main urban centres in the county are Wexford town, Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey and many live in rural towns lands and villages. There is a rich community spirit throughout the county in urban and rural contexts expressed through the abundance of community festivals, sports activities and initiatives such as Tidy Towns.

Some people particular in rural contexts may experience social isolation through lack of transport or those who are ill and housebound for various reasons. Another aspect to consider in terms of community are the daily commuters as well as those who because of work and personal circumstance may live in a community but have very little opportunity to interact and participate in it. Wexford Public participation network (WPPN) is an active network that represents over 300 community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups throughout the county and is a good resource for connecting to communities. <http://wexfordppn.ie>

Places/People of Interest on M11 Gorey – Enniscorthy PPP Scheme:

Enniscorthy Castle

Enniscorthy Castle, in the heart of Enniscorthy town, was originally built in the 13th century, and has been 'home' to Norman knights, English armies, Irish rebels and prisoners, and local merchant families. From the Castle battlements one has amazing views of Vinegar Hill Battlefield, Enniscorthy town, and the sights, flora and fauna of the surrounding countryside. <http://enniscorthycastle.ie/>

Vinegar Hill

Vinegar Hill (*Cnoc Fhiodh na gCaor* in Irish which translates as 'hill of the berry-tree'), a pudding-shaped hill overlooking the town, was the largest camp and headquarters of the rebels of 1798 who controlled County Wexford for thirty days against vastly superior forces, before their defeat on 21 June. There is an annual re-enactment of the Battle of Vinegar Hill in Enniscorthy annually on this date

Eileen Gray

Eileen Gray Eileen Gray (1879-1976) was born at Brownswood House, near Enniscorthy, but settled in Paris to become a renowned Designer and Architect. In the early 1920's, she flew on the first airmail service in America from New Mexico to Acapulco. She is now regarded as one of the most important Furniture Designers and Architects of the early 20th century and the most influential woman in those fields. Brownswood House become a nursing home and is now 'Meanscoil Gharman' – a secondary Gaelscoil / secondary school.

<http://enniscorthytourism.com/directory-listing/eileen-gray/>

Athenaeum Enniscorthy

The Athenaeum is a nineteenth-century architectural gem tucked away on a traditional terraced street in Enniscorthy. The Grand Old Lady of Castle Street is a theatre and town hall built in 1892 at the behest of the Roman Catholic Administrator of St Aidan's parish, Reverend William Fortune. It was recently renovated to commemorate the 1916 centenary celebrations and houses County Wexford's 1916 archive collection and is run by a team of local volunteers. <http://enniscorthyathenaeum.com/>

Ferns

Ferns Castle can be dated on architectural grounds to c1220 indicating that it was built during the period of the Norman Marshall family control of Ferns. The Castle remained the 'caput of the major' until 1360 when it was lost back to local Chieftains, the Kavanaghs, who in turn held it until about 1540 after which it was staffed by a succession of English Governors. It is open to the public with guided tours.

Ferns Village recently underwent a village design consultation process and is working on developing the village's tourism potential through developing arts, cultural, heritage, initiatives and walks and trails www.fernsvillage.ie

The Norman Way

The Norman Way is a heritage trail that runs along the south coast of County Wexford. Along this Wexford Trail you will discover authentic medieval sites which will help you to understand the Norman way of life. These hidden gems of the Norman Way are waiting to be explored by you down quiet country lanes, in beautiful seaside villages and alongside stunning beaches. <http://thenormanway.com/>

Ireland's Ancient East

From ancient high kings to modern day poets, saints and scholars to ramblers and fishermen, Ireland's Ancient East pulsates with legendary tales. With the maps as your guide and the itineraries as your inspiration, you're about to prepare for a real life journey through this mystical place. <https://www.irelandsancienteast.com/>

Other points of Interest on route:

Fr. Murphy Centre, Boolavogue <http://enniscorthytourism.com/directory-listing/fr-murphy-centre/>

Oulart Hill - <http://oularthill.ie/>

Festivals in the Municipal Areas

Enniscorthy District

Rockin' Food Festival - A growing festival consisting of a weekend of food, open- air markets and swingin' music held the August Bank Holiday weekend. An additional Arts Trail element has been added in 2018 with support from Arts office and Enniscorthy Municipal District www.rockinfoodfestival.ie

Blackstairs Blues Festival - For one weekend every September, the medieval town of Enniscorthy transforms into one of Ireland's longest running and most respected blues festivals – www.blackstairblues.ie

The Streams of Bunclody Festival - The recent festival celebrates the treasure that is local art, street art and parades, exhibitions while also hosting a weekend of live entertainment, food and drink and fun for all the family.

Wexford Strawberry Festival - Wexford Strawberry Festival celebrates the strawberry. Events include the crowning of the Strawberry Queen, The Strawberry Ball, All Ireland Farmers Market Competition, food demonstrations, music and sporting events.

Gorey District

GAP Arts Festival - The Gap Arts Festival brings a weekend of theatre, film, music and art to Ballythomas, a townland in the hills of north Wexford in Late July.

Gorey Market House Festival - August Bank Holiday Weekend - a great line up of events, top bands live music, pub vibe competition, play day in the town park

Festival of Choirs - The second Festival of Choirs ran three days with 20 choirs consisting of singers ranging in ages from four to 80 performing in four different venues.

Gorey Polska Eire Festival - The Polska Éire Festival is part of a nationwide celebration of Irish-Polish friendship and culture. Gorey has a very vibrant Polish community.

Byrne Perry Festival and Summer School – Running for 24 years in June this event focuses on both local and national history and continues to attract speakers of repute.

Overview of the Scheme M11 Gorey – Enniscorthy PPP Scheme:

The scheme comprises of the construction of three new sections of road:

1. M11/N11 Mainline 27.2km
2. N80 Link Road 4.2km
3. N30 Mainline 8.2km

1. M11/N11 Mainline:

- Will connect the existing N11 in Clogh at the North to the existing N11 in Scurloksbush at the south.

Townlands that the M11/N11 Mainline will pass through:

Ballinclay, Ballygullen, Balloughter, Tullabeg, Ballyeden, Medophall, Knockrobin Lower and Upper, Ballymore, Rockspring, Quarry, Mountgeorge, Ballycarrigeen Lower, Carrigeen, Knockavocka, Effernoge, Myaugh, Tinnacross, Tomsallagh, Oulartard, Crane, Toom, Ballydawmore, Corbally, Tomnafunshoge, Drumgold, Clooladine, Ballycourcy More, Knockrathkyle, Ballybanoge, Monroe, Craanroe, Glenteige, Riverview, Roperstown, Scurlocks bush

2. N80 Link Road

- Will connect the existing N11 and existing N80 in Ballynahallin at its eastern end and to the M11 Mainline in Ballydawmore to the west.

Townlands that the N80 Link Road will pass through:

Ballynahallin, Kilcannon, Ballynabarny, Ballydawmore

3. N30 Mainline

- Will connect the existing N11 and existing N80 in Clavass to the north to the existing N30 in Templescoby to the South

Townlands that the N30 Mainline will pass through:

Clavass, Coolnahorna, Ballyorril, Moyne Middle, Killalligan North, Askunshin, Milehouse, Monart East, Bessmount, Templescoby, Dunsinane

For More Information:

AIRO Report: <https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/planning/other-reports-and-resources/socio-economic-profiles--airo-2018>

M11 Gorey – Enniscorthy PPP Scheme

<https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/roads-travel-and-parking/national-roads-projects/m11-gorey-to-enniscorthy>

<http://www.m11gtoe.ie/>

Environmental Impact Statement:

http://www.wexford.ie/largefiles/M11_Gorey_EIS/M11%20G2E%20EIS%20Volume%20%20Main%20Text.pdf

Wexford Tourism:

<https://www.visitwexford.ie/>

Community Groups that are part of Wexford PPN: http://wexfordppn.ie/?page_id=318

Wexford County Councils Arts Plan:

<https://www.wexfordcoco.ie/arts-and-culture/current-programmes-plans-and-events/advancing-the-arts>



