

Comments by Clonmel Tidy Towns on the Clonmel Local Plan 2024-2030

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this Draft Plan for Clonmel. We appreciate the work that has gone into this document and are pleased that so much has been commented on. We have some thoughts ourselves which we would like to share with you.

Draft Clonmel Area and Environs Local Area Plan 2024-2030

Page 26 3.1 Town Centre First

Missing from the list of Town Centre 2030 Transformation Regeneration is Charles Bianconi. In fact, the name Bianconi seems to be missing from the entire report. To have a site, Hearn's Hotel, with such historic significance and not mention it is astounding. We have a tatty plaque on the site of his first office. There is the house in Silversprings where he lived for a while. All could be included in some kind of historic tour. If we are looking to attract visitors to our built heritage, then surely having the site of the first regular public transport system in Ireland is something to be celebrated and promoted. While it may be disappointing that the premises are only a two start hotel, surely work could be undertaken with the owners under the Historic Towns Initiative.

Page 41: 4.3 Tourism Strategy

We are surprised by the limited nature of section 4.3.

'... seeking to harness the potential of important historic, industrial, recreational and ecological aspects of Clonmel as part of the tourism and recreational product of the town...'

██████████ and so dependent on funding. We have been hearing about Dowds Lane for some time now and no further along. Pity.

4.3.2 Active Town Centre Streets

'Fáilte Ireland has identified Clonmel as a Destination Town in their Castles and Conquests Visitor Experience Development Plan within Ireland's Ancient East tourism proposition.'

We could build on this but in terms of tourism we think Clonmel is missing a trick. There is another aspect of tourism that would require less in the way of grants and funding. It could possibly be met with advertising budgets already in existence.

We could live up to our name, Cluain Meala, the Vale of Honey, and be the biodiversity capital we should be. We have the orchards for springs blossom walks and autumn harvests, local food producers, an ever-increasing acceptance of wildflowers, even if they are managed. We are on the Blueway, surrounded by wonderful hill walking sites. There is a range of tourists who may not be interested in our built heritage but would love to experience our named heritage. New efforts should be made to attract or encourage bike rental owners to establish themselves in town.

The last substantial tourism funding was for the museum, we think. It was well spent and provides for a wonderful experience. Perhaps it's time to look at other kinds of tourists. One that would enjoy what is described in section 5.3.

'Objective 5B.

Provide opportunities for Clonmel residents to engage in food production through allotments, community gardens and the provision of food foraging areas in new parks and green Infrastructure proposals, where appropriate.'

As a community group we love this idea. However, we would strongly recommend that whatever funding is acquired for the development of new allotments or community gardens, part of that funding is retained for continued development and maintenance of the sites.

Page 73: 7.2.1 Built Heritage and Record of Protected structures.

'There are a number of iconic structures in Clonmel that define the character of the town including...'

This list fails to include The Merchants House on the Quay, an important medieval structure, or the number of historic graveyards in town.

This inclusion on page 75 (7.2.3 Archaeology) may refer to St Nicholas Church on the Old Bridge and Toberhenna may refer to St Stephens graveyard on St

Stephans Grove but it's not clear to us. Each of these sites has a contribution to make to the history of the town.

'19 (Town, including Burgagery-Lands West and Oldbridge) 20 (Church and Graveyard, Glebe) 31 (Church and Graveyard, Toberaheena)'

Page 73 7.1.4 Trees

We have already submitted our thoughts on reimagining the planting of trees in the town center for the Rejuvenation Plan for Clonmel Town Centre.

Page 77 7.2 Policy and Objectives

'4. Require new development proposals to incorporate the provision of trees, in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.7 of the Development Management standards of the TCDP.'

We would request that the provision of trees be Native Irish Trees that are relevant to the locality. We feel that this would impart the importance of native trees in our town.

This would also apply to any hedging used on new sites.

Appendix 1: Serviced Land Assessment

The Lack of Cycle lanes on Table 1 hopefully shows the importance of the reintroduction of the Town Bus Service.

Appendix 2: Local Transport Plan

Pg 38: Responses to the Active Travel Theme: Section 2.12

'Irishtown – segregated cycle lanes that connect Presentation Campus to the Gaelscoil to encourage active travel to school, make the road one way with space given to cyclists, improve pedestrian access from car parks to schools.'

While a suggestion is to make the road one way, as we submitted in the previous regeneration plan for Clonmel, the removal of parking on one side of Irishtown would allow for the inclusion of a dedicated cycle lane and if taken from Joyces lane to the top of Irishtown, would also allow access to St Mary's C.B.S.

Page 53: section 6.2

We fully support the proposal to include secure bicycle parking in key locations. While bicycle racks have been included in the Plaza development, areas such as Mick Delahunty Square on Kickham St. have many public buildings and a large carpark yet lacks a single bicycle rack.

Page 54: the map clearly shows how disjointed cycle lanes are in Clonmel and we are delighted to see potential plans to change this.

Section 6:2:1 **Safe Routes to school**

Our concern would be that this may happen as an isolated project, doing nothing to relieve the issues on Albert St or on Irishtown.

All amazing if it does happen.

Section 6:2:6 Page 83

Option AT 101 (including Option AT 100)

Is this possible? Through Private grounds that are closed after six and on weekends?

Section 6:3 Page 89

While we fully accept that Railway services are not within the remit of Tipperary County Council, we do suggest that the visible appearance of the train station and the cleanliness of its environs do fall under the councils remit and would request, in line with the overall plan to create a more tourist friendly town that the issues are dealt with.

'Schools Figure 6-25 illustrates the 5, 10 and 15-minute catchment area to schools within Clonmel. In total, approximately 7,620 people will live within a 10-minute walk of their nearest school under the proposed LTP network. This is an increase of around 6% when compared to the existing network. Approximately 11,000 people will be within a 15-minute walk of their nearest school under the proposed network with all the town within a 10-minute cycle...'

While this may be true, we would question whether this considers the type of school and the fact that teenage boys have only two options and many of them would not live within the fifteen min walking radius. All the girls' secondary schools are on the south side of town too so talking about the nearest school probably wasn't the way to go.

Page 100. Fabulous graph which clearly shows that the use of secondary school and primary school data should not have been intermingled and the term nearest school is a bit meaningless.

Appendix 3: Schedule of Regeneration Sites.

1. Irishtown, St. Mary's Place, Albert St. Gravel Walk

Is this up to date? [REDACTED]

8. Abbey Street/Old Quay

Might also need updating as at least one house on Old Quay is being refurbished.

It is amazing to see how much unused land there actually is in Clonmel and what could be done about it.

Appendix 4: SEA Environmental Report

Page 58 Figure 4.15

A pity the sites have not been named or at least links to where that information can be accessed.

Page 61 Table 7.1

'To preserve, protect, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species

Ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, with regard to its qualifying interests, associated conservation status, structure and function

Safeguard national, regional and local designated sites and supporting features which function as steppingstones for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species

Enhance biodiversity in line with the National Biodiversity Action Plan and its targets

To protect, maintain and conserve the County's natural capital'

As a community group we concur with all these objectives and would encourage the Council, both Borough and County to do what they can to promote these objectives. The more information the public have the more they may understand the need for a change in our attitude to ecological matters.

An interesting if long read. We can't wait to see what makes it to the formal plan.

We have long recognised that our town is slowly declining. There have been some exciting improvements such as the rejuvenation of the laneways, the development of the Plaza, the extension of wildflowers along the bypass but while we wait, we do believe there are things that could be done to enhance our town.

We need people to come to Clonmel and stay, not just pop in to visit the Main Guard, have lunch in [REDACTED] and get back on the bus. We need to find reasons for them to stay for a day or a weekend.

We are the Vale of Honey and seasonally we could have Spring Blossom Walks or Autumnal Apple Walks.

The continued extension of the Wilding of Clonmel could create its own walks with biodiversity and historical features promoted. These walks could be guided or on apps and seasonal in nature.

Food producers in town should be enticed to become part of a food trail to be explored by visitors as they traverse the town. A new type of tourist who is willing to walk or bike around town if they can stop for good coffee along the way.

From the Cahir roundabout to St Patrick's Well, through Marlfield, down to Toberhenna, St. Stephens Graveyard and onto Grenane. And that is just one part of town all walked or liked with the history of the town available on an app.

As a group we are currently devising a survey to gather data pertaining to the improved biodiversity in the town. The best ambassadors for the town are the locals so it is important to get their views and bring them along with us. The survey will, as with all the things we do, concentrate on the positive. We hope to enquire as to where people would like to see more wildflowers; where they can see improvements made; their favorite areas in town. We shall share the results once we correlate them.

Till then

Regards

Deirdre Murray

Chairperson Clonmel Tidy Towns