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What area does your submission relate to?
Community Development

Your comments

Please find attached our submission from the Community Pool for West Wicklow campaign in 7 parts due to large file size. Thank you.

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[Community Pool for West Wicklow County Development Plan Submission Jan 2020 Part 1 of 7.pdf](#)

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Community Pool for West Wicklow
Wicklow County Development Plan
Submission
January 2020



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1. Introduction

West Wicklow is in the Baltinglass Municipal District and is the only district in Wicklow without a public swimming pool. There are County Council owned pools or leisure centres in the four other Municipal Districts in Wicklow: Bray, Greystones, Wicklow Town and Arklow. According to the 2016 CSO Census, Baltinglass Municipal District had a population of 26,167. As can be seen in the table below this is of a similar population size to the other Municipal Districts in Wicklow. With West Wicklow becoming a popular area to settle for commuters and an increase in housing development throughout the District this population has greatly increased in the years since this data was collected.

Population (Number) by Municipal Districts and Census Year

	2016
Arklow, Wicklow	26,185
Baltinglass, Wicklow	26,167
Bray, Wicklow	35,531
Greystones, Wicklow	26,323
Wicklow, Wicklow	28,219

Table 1 Source CSO.ie

As of 2018 there are no swimming facilities, private or public, located in the Baltinglass Municipal District. Residents of West Wicklow and schools within the district must travel outside of Wicklow to Naas, Tallaght, Athy, Carlow, and as far as Wexford to go swimming. At present the average travel time West Wicklow residents must travel to access swimming facilities in other counties is 30 minutes. The closest Wicklow County Council operated swimming pool to the majority of West Wicklow residents is in Bray and has a minimum travel time of 45 minutes with no public transport.

As per the Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022, Chapter 8, Community Development, Section 8.2, Community Facilities Hierarchy Model, a swimming pool is recognised as a necessary part of the infrastructure for a level 2 settlement with a population range of between 7,000 - 15,000 people and with an acceptable rural catchment time of 15 minutes by car. According to the 2016 CSO Census Blessington had a population of 5,500. Taking into account the populations of the local villages of Vallemount, Lacken, Hollywood, Dunlavin, Donard and the fact that there are plans for a sizable residential development in Blessington in the immediate future the area now meets the criteria of a

level 2 settlement. If you extend the rural catchment time to include Baltinglass with its population of 2,137 (2016 CSO Census CSO.ie) the population requirement for a level 2 settlement is more than met.

LEVEL 2 – SETTLEMENTS WITH POPULATION RANGE 7,000 – 15,000	
Multi-purpose Community Resource Centre	Outdoor Multi-Use Games Areas – Synthetic/
Sport & Recreation Centre	Hardcourt
Swimming Pool/Leisure Centre	Playground(s)
Youth Resource Centre	Playing Pitches
Local Multi-Purpose Community Space/Meeting Rooms	Alternative/Minority Sports Facilities
Outdoor Water Sports Facilities (where applicable)	Open Space/Urban Woodlands/Nature Areas
Neighbourhood and Local Parks	Library
Acceptable rural catchment time by car: 15 mins	

Table 2 Source Wicklow Development Plan 2016-2022

<https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Planning/Development-Plans-Strategies/National-Regional-County-Plans/Wicklow%20County%20Development%20Plan/Wicklow-County-Development-Plan-2016-2022/Chapter 8 - Community Development.pdf>

We have identified five key areas which explain best why there is an urgent need for the inclusion of a swimming pool in the Wicklow County Development Plan and the development of a swimming pool in the Baltinglass Municipal District. These key areas are;

1. **Education**
2. **Sport**
3. **Health**
4. **Local Economy**
5. **Safety**

2. Why does West Wicklow need a Swimming Pool?

2.1 EDUCATION

- Drowning is the second leading cause of death in children in Ireland. A recent study showed that the introduction of formal swimming education for all children aged 4 and over could greatly reduce the number of drowning fatalities in the Irish paediatric population. (Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.)
- Swimming is now part of the national curriculum in schools but Principals in West Wicklow are finding it increasingly more difficult to incorporate it into their school day.
- Blessington school children currently travel to Naas and Tallaght to access swimming facilities. Primary school children in Donard have to travel as far as Athy or Carlow to go swimming.
- Schools from across the border with Kildare in Ballymore Eustace and Eadestown have joined the campaign for a pool for West Wicklow as they are having to compete for swim slots in over-subscribed swimming pools in Naas and Newbridge. They feel that this is a direct result of the lack of swimming facilities in West Wicklow. They have further stated that if a swimming pool were to open in West Wicklow they would prefer to travel there for lessons rather than Naas or Newbridge.
- A 40 minute swim lesson can take up to as much as three hours out of the school day due to long travel times. This is potential teaching time which is being taken away from other subjects.
- Seán Ó Cearnaigh, Príomhoide at Gaelscoil na Lochanna has gone so far as to say that *"We are really failing the children at present."*
- For a generation who are growing up more aware of the environmental impact that our actions have than any previous generation, long travel times in cars and buses to access swimming facilities are simply unacceptable and unnecessary.

2.2 SPORT

- West Wicklow has an abundance of local sports clubs from GAA to soccer to fencing, rugby, kayaking and basketball. All of these clubs would benefit from the use of local swimming facilities to help improve the strength and fitness of their members.

- Not everyone is comfortable playing team sports but should still have the opportunity to be involved and develop their skills at their chosen sport. Swimming is an inclusive sport which people of all ages and abilities can take part in.
- Studies have shown that girls are more likely to stop engaging and participating in sport as they grow up than their male counterparts. In a society with a growing obesity problem we need to ensure that young women stay engaged with sport and exercise throughout their formative years and carry this passion on for the rest of their lives. Women tend to swim more than men, especially as young adults (ESRI 2013) so the development and provision of local swimming pools could greatly aid this.
- No local swimming pool in West Wicklow means no local swim club representing the area and the 26,167 people who call it home. Sport is about getting involved, being active and having a sense of pride about representing yourself, your Team, your Town, your County and your Country. This opportunity is currently being denied the people of West Wicklow through the lack of provision of local swimming facilities.

2.3 HEALTH

- The health benefits of swimming are boundless. It has been proven to aid good mental health, help in the recovery of heart patients and the rehabilitation of patients with limited or weakened mobility.
- Swimming is a low impact sport which all members of the community regardless of age, sex, mental or physical capability can take part in.
- Currently four out of five Irish children are not meeting the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per a day (HSE 2019). With obesity levels rising, inclusive sports like swimming should be encouraged and swimming facilities should be readily available.
- *"A swimming pool in Blessington would be a huge asset to the community from a health promotion and rehabilitation point of view. As Chartered Physiotherapists we recommend all types of physical activity but for some groups and conditions water based exercise is the only type of exercise manageable such as with patients post operatively or with severe Arthritis or chronic pain. With certain conditions weight bearing exercises are not possible and the only way forward is to rehab in the water. In general swimming is a fantastic way to keep fit for everyone and teach children to keep*



active in a world fighting a major obesity crisis.” Aoife Murphy
MISCP, BSc, MSc, Method Physiotherapy Blessington

2.4 LOCAL ECONOMY

- In August 2018 the Community Pool for West Wicklow campaign carried out an online survey to investigate the swimming habits of the people of West Wicklow. Of the 363 survey respondents 41% went swimming once a week. The average drive time for people to access swimming facilities was 48 minutes.
- 55% of respondents use swimming pools in Naas while 19% go to Tallaght and others travelled as far away as Wexford to go for a swim.
- The average spend on pool visits per a year by survey respondents was €341.40. 47% of respondents were paying for swimming lessons and their average spend on them per a year was €398. This is all money leaving the local Wicklow economy.
- Local businesses and retailers in West Wicklow recognise that all this travel out of the local area is having a knock on effect on their businesses and they are losing out. Over 100 local businesses have supported the campaign for a pool for West Wicklow to date with more joining on a daily basis.
- 97% of survey respondents said that they would use a swimming pool if there was one in West Wicklow.

Community Pool for West Wicklow Pool Usage Survey August 2018

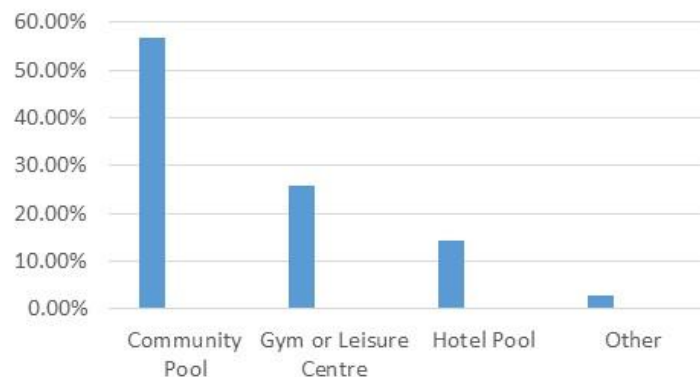
€341.40
approx.
average
spend on
pool visits
annually

Average drive time to go
swimming is

48 mins!



Types of Pools Used by Respondents



41%

of respondents go
swimming once a
week

16%

go more than once a
week!

55% visit pools in Naas

19% go to Tallaght

Others visit Greystones, Bray, Athy,
Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford,
Newbridge & Arklow

47% are paying for swimming lessons

€398 average spend on swimming
lessons annually



* 373 responses were received between
25/07/2018 & 02/09/2018

363

respondents
(97%) said they would use
a Community swimming
pool if there was one in
West Wicklow

Respondents live in
Blessington, Baltinglass,
Dunlavin, Hollywood,
Donard, Valleymount,
Manor Kilbride, Lacken,
Kiltegan, Ballyknockan,
Glen of Imaal, Stratford-
on-Slaney, Rathdangan,
Carnew, Crosschapel &
Surrounding Areas!

2.5 SAFETY

- *"...if kids don't know how to swim they might drown and die."*
Stiofan Corrin, Age 7, St Mary's JNS Blessington
- On average, over the past 10 years there have been 130 drownings per year in Ireland. (WSI 2019)
- 62% of drowning fatalities occur inland - on rivers and lakes. This is approximately 81 people per a year. (WSI 2019)
- Between 2010 and 2015, HSE figures reveal 22 children died in drowning incidents.
- The authors of a study looking into instances of paediatric drowning in Ireland - Dr Martin Davey, Dr Sean Callinan and Dr Leona Nertney - said a specific set of gold-standard guidelines for parents and caregivers has yet to be established in Ireland to prevent drowning episodes among children.
- Researchers studying the causes of paediatric drownings in Ireland have recommended that a national training scheme in all water safety, including the prevention of drowning in high-risk groups such as the paediatric population. (Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.)
- In general, males are at higher risk of drowning across all age groups with peak incidence seen in boys aged one to four, with deaths occurring predominantly in swimming pools and adolescent males predominantly in freshwater. Lack of swimming ability and substance misuse in adolescents also poses an increased risk. (Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.)
- Blessington Lake is the biggest Fresh Water Lake closest to the largest population centre in the country.
- Water Safety Ireland (WSI) is the statutory body charged with the provision of water safety advice and swimming, water safety and lifesaving training in Ireland. Their work through the Primary Aquatics Water Safety programme in schools was praised in a recent study. (Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.)
- On a National level over 50,000 people receive water safety training from WSI annually.



- At a local level WSI provides swimming, water safety and lifesaving training on a voluntary basis to over 200 people on a weekly basis in Kildare and West Wicklow.
- WSI winter program is pool based. WSI currently operate in pools in Naas, Celbridge and on the Curragh.
- During the summer months WSI provide outdoor water safety & surf lifesaving sports training twice weekly at Blessington Lakes.
- WSI are currently operating on a site leased & licenced from the ESB at Baltyboys, adjacent to the Blessington Sailing Club.
- There are currently dedicated lifesaving training centres in Ireland – all on the coast – in Waterford, Clare and Donegal.
- These centres are dedicated to the training of lifeguards and rescuers however they cannot provide training in all the skills required to operate successfully in lakes and rivers.
- There is no such dedicated inland rescue training centre in Ireland. West Wicklow is an ideal location for the development of such a training centre.
- WSI have been fundraising for several years in an effort to develop such a centre and are willing to divert their efforts to support the development of a co-located pool and outdoor training facility at Blessington.
- WSI fully support the campaign for a pool for West Wicklow and strongly suggest the development of a co-located (Pool and Lakeside) facility at Blessington.
- A co-located facility would have direct access to both Lake based training and pool based training.
- The benefits of a co-located centre is that water safety swimming and lifesaving training can continue during the winter months.
- A co-located facility enables the provision of fully integrated training for Pool, and Inland (River and Lake) lifeguards.



- A co-located centre also allows for practical based outdoor water safety awareness for members of the public and local interest groups such as Scouts, schools, kayaking clubs and adult groups.
- The promotion of water safety and instilling a basic knowledge of how to be safe in the water from a young age are paramount to lowering the national average of 130 drowning fatalities per a year in Ireland. This can only be achieved when people can access local swimming facilities all year round.



3. History of Swimming Pool Campaign in West Wicklow

The people of West Wicklow have been campaigning for a swimming pool for over 50 years. Provision for a swimming pool on land donated from a private individual was included in the 1970 Wicklow County Development Plan. It is unclear why this project did not go ahead and the swimming pool was not mentioned in subsequent Wicklow County Development Plans from 1989 onwards. The site proposed for the swimming pool in the 1970 Wicklow County Development Plan still stands undeveloped to this day.

13. Provision of swimming pool on field containing one acre 2 roods and 6 perches bounded on south east by Blessington-Baltinglass main road and situated approximately 700 feet south of the junction of that road and the Blessington-Mhas road.

Figure 1 Source 1970 Wicklow County Development Plan
[https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Planning/Development-Plans-Strategies/National-Regional-County-Plans/Wicklow%20County%20Development%20Plan/Wicklow-County-Development-Plan-1970/County Development Plan 1970.pdf](https://www.wicklow.ie/Portals/0/Documents/Planning/Development-Plans-Strategies/National-Regional-County-Plans/Wicklow%20County%20Development%20Plan/Wicklow-County-Development-Plan-1970/County%20Development%20Plan%201970.pdf)

The current campaign for a swimming pool started in July 2018 in response to the lack of swimming facilities in West Wicklow. An online petition in support of a swimming pool in West Wicklow received over 1,000 signatures in its first 24 hours. At the time it was submitted to Wicklow County Council in late 2018 it had received over 2,600 signatures from online and hard copy signature collections. This is approximately 10% of the population of West Wicklow.

The campaign for a pool for West Wicklow has received support from local Councillors, TDs and regularly features in local media such as East Coast FM, The Wicklow People, The Wicklow News, The Kildare Post and The Leinster Leader.

In December 2018 Wicklow County Council commissioned a feasibility study to examine the possibility of a swimming pool in West Wicklow. The results of this study were presented in April 2019 to the Baltinglass MD meeting by the Holohan Group. The study recommended the development



of a 25m swimming pool with a 10m children's pool, health suite, fitness gym, changing village and group changing facilities. The estimated cost of the pool was €10 million. Based on this study Wicklow County Council applied for Stream 1 Funding under the Large Scale Sports and Infrastructure Fund in April 2019. At the time of this submission, January 2020, no decisions had been announced by the Department of Sport on these grants.

In May 2019 Water Safety Ireland (WSI) Kildare/West Wicklow branch approached the Community Pool for West Wicklow committee with the suggestion of partnering up to campaign for a pool for West Wicklow. WSI currently carry out lifesaving training on the Blessington Lakes during the summer months. They are eager for the development of a community swimming pool in the West Wicklow area, near the lakes, which may be used by them for lifesaving training during the winter months and with the further hope to develop the first inland lifesaving training centre in Ireland at that site.

The Community Pool for West Wicklow Campaign is currently represented on the Blessington Town & District Forum, the Blessington Town Team and the Baltinglass District Forum.

In August 2019 the campaign for a swimming pool for West Wicklow formally launched a fundraising programme with the aim of raising €1 million towards the swimming pool. Over €15,000 has been raised in the first four months of this campaign.

The Community Pool for West Wicklow campaign committee continue to work together with Wicklow County Council, local representatives, schools, community groups and sports clubs to ensure the provision of a swimming pool in West Wicklow.



4. Public Support

Public support for a swimming pool in West Wicklow has been very strong since the current campaign started in July 2018. Approximately 10% of the population of West Wicklow signed a petition in favour of the provision of a swimming pool in the area, 1,000 of these signatures were collected in the first 24 hours. The campaign has a very busy social media presence with over 1,500 followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Local schools have been particularly supportive of the campaign with over 59 Playschools, Montessori, Primary and Secondary schools taking part in a West Wicklow Non-Uniform School Day in November 2019 to raise funds for the swimming pool. Schools across the district from Manor Kilbride to Carnew and across the Wicklow/Kildare border in Ballymore Eustace and Eadestown supported this fundraising event. Teachers, parents and students understand how beneficial a local swimming pool will be to all schools and children in West Wicklow.

Sports clubs and community groups in the area have thrown their support behind the campaign for a swimming pool. Swimming is an all-inclusive sport which anyone can take part in regardless of physical or mental ability, age or gender. Swimming is also complimentary to other sports and can help with the rehabilitation of sports and other injuries. Our local sports teams and clubs recognise how their players and members will benefit from having access to local swimming facilities.

Businesses in West Wicklow recognise that their customers are currently travelling outside of Wicklow to access swimming facilities. In turn money is leaving our local economy and other counties are profiting from the lack of swimming amenities in West Wicklow.

Below are a number of emails and letters of support from West Wicklow residents, businesses, schools, sports clubs and communities as well as public representatives and Water Safety Ireland.



4.1 Letters of Support

Glending Community Development Group

06/01/2020

Attention: Wicklow County Council

I am writing to you on behalf of the Glending Community Development group and the residents of Glending housing Blessington to plead with the council for the inclusion of a community pool in the County Development plan for West Wicklow. A Community pool for West Wicklow would be a great investment for communities for many reasons. Community pools serve as an encouragement to community health and increase the social cohesiveness of an area.

With a strong focus on promoting positive mental health in areas of our county what better way than increasing the social capital of individuals. A community pool increases the bond between community members. Community pools achieve this by bringing people from the community into close contact with other members of the community that may otherwise have never met. This fun environment can create friendships, which will encourage more and more community members to visit and interact with each other.

As you are already aware the inequality in service provision in West Wicklow is obvious and this would be one way of ensuring equality of delivery.

We look forward to the inclusion of the pool in the County Development plan but also the delivery of the pool in West Wicklow

Is Mise le Meas,

Carmel Cashin

Glending Community Development Group



Hi there,

Firstly, thanks very much for your work on this campaign. I have only just discovered it in the last few days and have been reading up your work on it.

I am moving to west Wicklow from Naas in the next few months. I swim regularly (3 times per week) in the Osprey pool in Naas. When we bought the house in West Wicklow, it was my assumption that there was a local swimming pool and I was gutted to see that the closest swimming pool would be the Osprey, 25-30 minutes away!

I am 6 months pregnant and have found swimming to be excellent for dealing with back pain and bringing overall comfort for myself during my pregnancy. All doctors and midwives say that swimming is one of the best forms of exercise for pregnant women as it's a low intensity movement and great for growing babies. I am hoping for more children and would love to have the access to a local swimming pool for both my future pregnancies and indeed my children. Swimming is one of the best exercises for growing kids also. I grew up swimming every week and it brought great skills including lifesaving courses which are invaluable. It would be great to have my children and other children of West Wicklow to have access to a local pool to enjoy for fun as family time or to develop skilled swimmers and life savers.

Thanks

Karen

Future Donard resident.



To whom it may concern,

I am a parent of 3 children whom all enjoy swimming. Adam who is now 15 and has completed almost all of his life saving lessons in a pool in Tallaght, Dublin 24. Lauren who is now 7 has been doing swimming lessons for almost a year in a private pool in Manor Kilbride and to say they are turning children away is an understatement, she was on the list for a long time before a space became available as people/ parents like myself don't want to have to travel for lessons. My youngest son Clark is now 4, he has Down Syndrome and for anyone who doesn't know people with DS have a very low muscle tone therefore in early development they need lots of physio to strengthen their muscles. Clark did lots of physio in the pool to help him and we still do it, we had to travel to either Naas or Tallaght for this and I just wished there was a pool on our own doorstep to help with this, rather than going once a week or we could have gone three times.

My family all love to swim and would be absolutely thrilled if a pool were to be opened locally.

PLEASE PLEASE help the West Wicklow area get their own pool.

Many Thanks,

Karen Dunne,

Blessington, Co. Wicklow

To whom it may concern

We at Blessington Scout group have approx 100 members comprising of adults and children. Children range in age from 6 to 19 years.

We in scouts regularly use swimming pools for our various badge and skills work. For example Irish Water Safety run a program for lifesaving for scouts. We use pools for exercise and for fun.

As as we live beside a lake it is important to learn the skill of swimming and for water safety awareness, we use the lake for sailing and rowing.

Unfortunately there is no swimming allowed on the lake, so we have to use swimming pools to practice this safety and awareness.

A locally based pool would be a fantastic facility for all our community young and old.

Kindest regards

Aoibheann Mc Guire

Group Leader for 8th Wicklow Blessington Group.



Attention: Wicklow County Council

As a family with young children who live in Blessington I would urge Wicklow County Council to promise to proceed with the development of a Community Swimming Pool in West Wicklow.

Obviously there are many benefits to having such a facility but for our family it extends to a necessity. Our son Eli, who is one of a twin, was born and diagnosed with Down Syndrome.

Eli has to work twice as hard as his peers in order to achieve the developmental goals that are a given for most typically developing children, such as rolling over, sitting up, walking, running or anything active.

He has received physiotherapy in the form of hydrotherapy and by his own hard work has begun to achieve his milestones.

A pool in our community would mean that we could continue his therapy without the need for travelling to another county.

A pool for our family would also have such an impact on his siblings that have seen his struggle and through no fault of their own felt distant as they could not participate with him.

Swimming is an integral part of Eli's development, not only for his core muscles but also his confidence and his relationship with his siblings.

We urge you to please make this happen.

The Nagle Family



For the attention of Wicklow County Council

I write with regard to and in support of the need for a community pool in the Blessington area.

As parents of 3 young children (aged 2, 3 and 7 respectively) that live on a piece of land which bounds the Blessington lake we are very much aware of the risk that water brings.

We constantly witness and see first-hand the efforts of the rescue services as the helicopters search and circle the lake both rising and falling over our farm, an ever present reminder of its dangers.

When we first moved to Blessington the Avon Ri pool was open and a facility that was very much utilised by parents, children and people of all ages alike for the purposes of health, fitness and swimming lessons.

It's subsequent closure left a very large void in the community with most parents/ people forced to travel to Naas, Tallaght or the surrounding areas to avail of swimming lessons and pool facilities.

At a time when water safety, mental health and fitness/ weight management is key and as the Blessington community grows both in strength and number, the need for a local swimming pool has never been greater.

I ask you to support the Blessington community and its people in providing same,

Many Thanks

Melissa Vaughan



Just a little note to say congratulations on all you have achieved so far. It's sad that you have to work so hard for something that in most other countries would be a given.

We are in the process of moving home from France. My husband is from New Zealand, our son was born in France and the nature of our jobs means we travel a lot. We work on boats so water safety is a huge part of what we do. We take our confidence in water for granted and we always hoped our children would have that same enjoyment and confidence. We swim wherever we go but when we come home we always struggle to keep up that particular past time. Living in Donard do we really have to travel to Naas every time we want a swim? And now that we are home we do wonder where our little ones will learn to swim?!

All the best,

Nicola

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am an ex competitive swimmer who thinks a swimming pool in West Wicklow would be a fantastic contribution to the area. It should be particularly useful in the Blessington area.

I am a psychiatric nurse and physical exercise is fantastic in promoting good mental health. Also swimming is a fantastic form of exercise, as it has no impact on people's joints which is particularly useful for the more senior members of the community. Swimming also is great for overall general fitness and great for improving muscle tone.

Regards,

Keith Farrington



To whom it may concern,

I am writing as the principal of the Ruth Shine School of Dance to extend our emphatic support for a pool in West Wicklow. It would be a huge asset for the 200+ students in our school and their families which live in Blessington and the surrounding area.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Shine ARAD RTS, ISTD

To whom it may concern,

I strongly believe Blessington needs a swimming pool.

The town's population is expanding all the time, with a lot of young families. The town badly lack leisure facilities.

A new swimming pool would be a positive addition to our town. It would encourage fitness to all ages and would be a focal point to the community. It would generate enterprise and employment in the area.

I have a 3 year old son and I would love him to learn to swim.

Please consider a pool for Blessington.

Regards
Louise
Deerpark Court Blessington

To whom it concerns

I am in total agreement that West Wicklow needs a swimming pool. In my opinion this much needed amenity should be located in Baltinglass.

Sincerely

Miriam Sweeney



Hi

We definitely need pool in west Wicklow, living not so far from Donard and twice a week spending more than 1 hour on a road to pool in Naas/Athy. For my small daughter it's too long journey even for me these pools located so far and we I have no choice here.

It will be very handy to have a pool in our region

Kind regards

Olga Chekina

Dear Sir/Madam

I would appreciate if you would give serious consideration to building a swimming pool in Blessington.

Blessington is a growing town with a huge young population and a swimming pool is a basic requirement for our town .

I sincerely hope you will adhere to the people's requests and provide a swimming pool for the people of West Wicklow.

Thanking you

Claire Magee.



To whom it concerns,

My name is Andra Johnston, I am Admin of the Blessington Parents Autism Support Group and also am a disability representative on Blessington Town and District Forum. I am writing this submission in support of having a Swimming Pool in West Wicklow.

As a parent of a child with a disability it would be of great benefit to families with children or adults with special needs to have access to a pool within their locality as transport can often be an issue with these groups and being able to get to their nearest facility.

Swimming is of particular benefit to those with a disability as it is a low impact sport and one that can improve muscle tone and take weight off joints. It is also of sensory benefit and can be particularly calming for those struggling with their environment and can greatly improve behaviour.

It is also very important for those with a disability to learn how to swim as many children or adults with Autism can be a flight risk and tend to gravitate towards water, sadly there have been fatalities as a result of these people not being able to swim so it would be imperative that swimming lessons would be provided within their area.

Blessington is rapidly growing as are most towns in West Wicklow as we are in the commuter belt for Dublin and we need proper leisure facilities for this growing population so a pool would be a necessity rather than a luxury.

Kind regards

Andra Johnston



Attention to Wicklow CC,

My husband, two girls (ages 3 and 8 years old) and I would like to have a swimming pool in West Wicklow.

Swimming is more than a hobby, is a vital skill that adults and kids should have.

Thank you.

Elena

I hope that Blessington will be considered for a swimming pool.

Currently there is very limited facilities like a swimming pool in Blessington and in West Wicklow in general.

This would be a great addition to the ever growing town.

Donal O'Brien



██████████
Baltinglass
Co Wicklow
██████████

8th of January 2020

Re-Request for the development of a swimming pool for the West Wicklow area to be included in the Wicklow County Development Plan

Dear Sir/Mdm,

Writing to you to request that the Wicklow County Development Plan includes the development of a swimming pool for the West Wicklow area.

The benefits of swimming as an activity for children have long been established. The lack of a swimming pool in the West Wicklow area greatly discourages children from West Wicklow from becoming involved in swimming.

I have been an active swimmer for over 30 years, I don't swim competitively but I do swim to keep fit, normally swimming 80 to 100 lengths in a session. Over the years I have found swimming to be an excellent exercise, it has the benefits of cardiovascular workouts, muscle toning while at the same time being a low impact exercise which does not unduly affect the joints.

I'm a member of Poulaphouca Paddles Kayak club which is based in the Blessington area which has a large number of juvenile members. The club has to travel to Clondalkin swimming pool to conduct indoor skills and safety training. Similarly, Baltinglass kayak club travel to K-leisure, Athy for indoor skills and safety training.

I moved to Baltinglass from Dublin in 2013. One of the negative considerations about moving to West Wicklow was that there was no swimming pool or gym in the immediate area.

The nearest public swimming pool to me is in Carlow. Like most people in the area, I don't normally have a reason to go to Carlow so swimming requires a specific hour-long round-trip to go swimming which greatly discourages swimming as an activity.

I would greatly encourage you to include the development of a swimming pool/gym facility in the Wicklow County development plan as it would be a tremendous benefit to those living in the area and greatly enhance West Wicklow as a place to live.

Regards

Gerard Keane



To whom it concerns,

As a family, we have spent a number of years commuting to locations in both Kildare and Dublin, to enable us learn how to swim and enjoy other water based activities. Our family strongly supports both the submission and development of a swimming pool in West Wicklow.

From the pools and other facilities our family has attended over a number of years, we have been impressed with how these facilities have positively benefited both individuals and their communities, by creating social centres promoting physical fitness and mental well-being and such a facility in West Wicklow is long overdue.

Gratefully yours,

The O' Neill Family

To whom it may concern

My family and myself really need a swimming pool in Blessington. My family is very energetic and go swimming regularly. We have a Down Sydrome boy which needs to go swimming to strengthen up his muscles& posture. At the moment i drive to naas every week for him to do so. It would mean alot to my family and myself when we get one.

Yours sincerely

The O'Connell Family



Downshire Park Residents Association

To Wicklow County Council

8th January 2020

To whom it concerns,

On behalf of the above I feel it is of the utmost urgency that a Swimming Pool for West Wicklow is necessary.

With an increasing young population living in close proximity to Blessington Lakes, the need for Children and adults to know how to swim is vital.

I am appealing to you today to put this at the top of your agenda and pass the motion to get this started.

Yours truly,

Dominic Cronin

Dominic Cronin.

Chairman Downshire Residence Association.



Lakeshore Striders Running Club
23 Kilmalum Drive
Blessington
Co. Wicklow

6th January 2020

Wicklow County Council
Planning Department
County Buildings
Whitegates
Wicklow Town
Co. Wicklow

RE: Submission to Wicklow County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

To whom it may concern,

I would like to make a submission to the Wicklow County Development Plan on behalf of Lakeshore Striders Running Club, Blessington regarding a request for Wicklow County Council to make the necessary zonings, objectives and provisions for a community multi-use sports facility that would incorporate a running track, swimming pool and other ancillary facilities.

Lakeshore Striders A.C Blessington was established in 2007 as Senior Running club and has a membership over 100 members serving locals from many of the villages around the Blessington lake. The club has no club house or toilet facilities. It currently has a short-term agreement with the KWETB for use of lands at the back of the Blessington Community College for which a temporary gravel aggregate running track is in place. The track is unsuitable for athletics as it does not meet the correct specifications for a track as it is not the correct size, shape or surface. Despite substantial investment by the club in the development of an aggregate track surface it remains unstable and can be hazardous after inclement weather as well the use of bikes and studded footwear despite it not being intended for such use. We have been therefore unable to hold official athletics events or full athletics training at the track. It has also prohibited the establishment of a Juvenile section to the club as we do not have the proper facilities in place to cater for same. Our nearest international standard track in Wicklow is in Greystones.

The provision of a multi-use community sports facility would bring local clubs together and provide a beacon for sport and recreation for both young and old in the community. The provision of such a facility would support Lakeshore Striders in providing athletics training not only to a juvenile population of Blessington but also those living in our community with disabilities who are currently



not catered for in terms of athletics. Communities need to be supported to make healthy lifestyle choices and engage in physical activity by the provision of supportive environments to promote positive behaviour change. Lack of access to amenities and supportive environments to position physical activity as a norm is becoming a public health issue that is leading to an increase in the rates of obesity in Ireland. Blessington aims to be one of the first 'Healthy Towns' in County Wicklow and to act as a best practice model throughout the county for towns to follow suit. The provision of a multi-use community sports facility will assist Blessington in bringing all those in the pursuit of community wellbeing together and provide an amenity that is so long overdue for West Wicklow.

We would kindly ask that Wicklow County Council consider the provision of this facility.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Edel Byrne'.

Edel Byrne
Chairperson
Lakeshore Striders Running Club



For The Attention Of: Wicklow County Council.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of 8th Wicklow Blessington Scout Group to request that you make provision for a Community Swimming Pool in West Wicklow.

A local pool benefits the community hugely in relation to health, safety (everyone should know how to swim, especially living beside the lakes), and the social aspect of every age group in our community. It also benefits the community financially as we will not have to travel to either Naas or Tallaght to go swimming, and our National Schools would not have to spend money on transport travelling to pools in Dublin and Kildare to fulfill the swimming requirement in the curriculum.

From a Scouting perspective a swimming pool would help as we have 3 water based Adventure Skills, Paddling, Rowing and Sailing. But before any child can tackle any of those they must first be able to swim and be confident of their ability in the water.

The age group of our Scouts range from 6 – 17. Our oldest group, Ventures (15 – 17 y.o.), has grown in the last two years over 300%. We currently are a “denless” scout group, and rent 3 different properties in our community over 3 different evenings to cover all our Sections. We would request that, if possible, provision could be made for a Scout Den in the building of the Community Pool.

The ethos of Scouting is hugely beneficial to children of all ages. In every Section, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts & Ventures, we enable our Scouts to work on their own initiative, work as part of a team, express their creativity, get involved in the outdoors, give them a sense of accomplishment, the opportunity to test themselves and to build friendships that last a lifetime. If we had a Den we could open up Scouting to more youth members.

I, personally, would be more than willing to work with any other community group to achieve a multi-disciplinary facility to benefit the welfare of the community as a whole.

Yours truly,

Niamh Larkin

Venture Leader

Scout Section Leader

Group Trainer

8th Wicklow Blessington Scout Group.



14 Deerpark Drive, Blessington, Co. Wicklow.



Crosschapel,
Co. Wicklow

Attention: Wicklow County Council

We are writing to you on behalf of the members of Blessington Soccer Club to request that you make a provision for a Community Swimming Pool in West Wicklow. Blessington AFC is the largest Soccer club in West Wicklow with over 350 playing members ranging from five years old to our senior team and we are united in believing this service is badly needed for both the local community and surrounding areas.

The benefits of a Community Swimming pool to our area are numerous (Social, Health, Economic etc.) and no doubt already outlined in detail by the excellent "Pool For West Wicklow" Campaign. However, we know through our membership that large numbers of local children and adults travel daily from Blessington to Tallaght, Naas, Tempelogue or further afield to swim; either for lessons, general exercise or competitively as part of a swim team. All the local primary schools travel with their classes to swimming lessons, incurring extra expense to already stretched parents in weekly bus hire.

With the growing Global Climate Emergency; the accumulated Carbon Footprint of this transportation to and from distant Swimming pools alone presents a prominent argument for a local Community Pool to be built for the people of West Wicklow.

A large Reservoir adjacent to Blessington, as well as local quarries, brings inherent dangers and has placed an emphasis on Parents in Blessington for their Children to be proficient swimmers. There are currently more people from Blessington (Seven at present) on the Tallaght Swim Team than from any other area, including Tallaght itself. This can only be improved with better local facilities.

With the planned expansion of Blessington and the surrounding Townlands, we need to provide for our youth of today, and the future; to ensure they have proper facilities to enable them to lead a healthy and active life.

Yours faithfully

Blessington AFC Committee



Blessington & District Forum

Corner House, Main Street,
Blessington, Co. Wicklow.
086 2443640

6th January 2020

Re: Pool for West Wicklow

A Chara,

I am writing to you as a representative of Blessington & District Forum in relation to the campaign for a public pool in West Wicklow.

We would wish to record Blessington & District Forum full and complete support for the development of a community swimming pool in West Wicklow, and urge you to ensure its inclusion in the next county development plan.

A community pool in the area would allow access for all to learn the important skill of swimming, currently all schools in the area have to travel into Dublin or Kildare to available of swimming facilities, this is both costly and time consuming. In addition a pool would have a health benefit for all members of the community.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

Yours Sincerely,

Jason Mulhall
Secretary, Blessington District Forum

info@blessington.ie
www.blessington.ie



9 January 2020

To whom it may concern

I am writing on behalf of Blessington GAA to express our full support for the provision of a swimming pool in West Wicklow. The teams from Academy to Senior, both Ladies and Men will benefit directly by having a swimming pool in close proximity. The benefits of swimming are well documented.

It is vital that plans for a swimming pool within the Baltinglass Municipal District, which spans from Manor Kilbride to Carnew, are included in Wicklow County Council's upcoming County Development Plan. At present there are no swimming facilities, public or private, available to the 26,000 residents of West Wicklow. School children are having to take over 3 hours out of their school day in order to travel to swimming pools in neighbouring counties such as Dublin, Kildare, Wexford and Carlow.

As well as being a skill which could one day save your life the health benefits of swimming are undeniable. Swimming is an all-inclusive sport which anyone can take part in regardless of age, gender, mental or physical fitness or ability. Every member of our community, young and old will benefit from having a swimming pool in West Wicklow. It is therefore our opinion that the planning and provision of a swimming pool in the Baltinglass Municipal District is key to the development of Wicklow as a whole over the next few years.

We strongly encourage Wicklow County Council to include plans for the development of a swimming pool in West Wicklow in the new Wicklow County Development Plan.

Is mise le meas

Noreen Keegan Kavanagh
Secretary

Blessington GAA, Blessington, Co Wicklow.
0872858375



John **Brady** TD

*1st Floor, 27 Main Street, Bray. Tel: **01 276 2623**

*Accessibility needs accommodated by request

18a Upper Main Street, Arklow. Tel: **0402 41853**

Email: john.brady@oireachtas.ie Leinster House Tel: **01 618 3365**



Sinn Féin

Wicklow County Council
County Buildings
Whitegates
Wicklow Town
Co Wicklow

7th January 2020

Re: Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027

I am writing in support the provision of a swimming pool in West Wicklow. I believe the provision of a swimming pool in the Baltinglass Municipal District should be outlined as an objective in the 2021-2027 County Development Plan.

Unfortunately, West Wicklow has been forgotten about as it's the only district in Wicklow that has no swimming pool; it has essentially been discriminated against. The campaign group have put forward all the reasons why we need a pool in West Wicklow and they have my full support along with that of the community in the west.

In the Development Plan I also think that council owned land in District should be identified and the necessary zoning applied. I believe a possible suitable site would be in Blessington on the council owned land adjacent to the Avon Hotel.

The council should be ambitious and have vision when it is providing amenities in West Wicklow. A first-class 25m swimming pool should be provided along with other amenities such a community gym. Shoreline in Bray and Greystones are both fantastic public facilities and provide a good template for what should be provided in West Wicklow. These could also be expanded on to also include an athletic track, so a suitably sized site to allow for expansion would be preferable.

Getting a Community Pool in West Wicklow has my full support and if I can be of any assistance to the council in pushing this forward at a national level please don't hesitate in contacting me.

Mise le meas,

John Brady TD



Let's Sing
Rachel Drew
35 Mountain view,
Blessington,
Co. Wicklow

8th January 2020

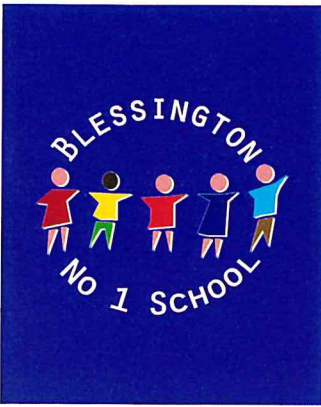
Attention: Wicklow county council

Re: Community pool for West Wicklow

I am writing to you in support of the campaign for a new community swimming pool for West Wicklow. This is a facility which is very much required in the area. Let's Sing provides children's singing and music classes in Blessington, these classes have an emphasis on social development for children. Similarly to singing and music, physical activities such as swimming, not only provide fun and recreation, they can contribute to the physical and social development of children. It is very unfair that parents must travel with their children from Blessington to the other side of Wicklow or Dublin or Kildare to use a swimming pool. The provision of a community swimming pool is imperative for children and population of the area.

Yours Sincerely

Rachel Drew
Let's Sing



BLESSINGTON DEMESNE, BLESSINGTON, CO. WICKLOW
Tel: 045 900 879 **Email:** blessington1ns@gmail.com **Roll No.:** 06176U
Principal: Lilian Murphy

8TH January 2019

To Whom It May Concern

Blessington No. 1 School would certainly benefit hugely from a local swimming pool.

We feel a swimming pool would be an enormous asset to our community, as it stands all local people have long distances to travel to access the nearest swimming pool.

Swimming is part of the school curriculum and currently our classes have to travel to Templeogue College for lessons. This obviously involves bus hire costs and timetable issues as children miss out on class time because of the extended travelling.

As our town is located adjacent to the wonderful amenity of the Blessington Lakes we feel that in the interest of our community's safety, all children should have the opportunity to learn to swim. Obviously a local swimming pool would facilitate this, as not all families have the means to travel outside of our community for swimming lessons.

Blessington No. 1 School fully supports the Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee and all of their endeavours to provide a Swimming Pool in our area.

We wish the committee every success with this campaign!

Kindest Regards

Lilian Murphy

Principal

Stephen Donnelly TD

WICKLOW AND EAST CARLOW



To whom it may concern,

I wish to add my support to the campaign for a **Community Swimming Pool for West Wickow.**

This area which contains approximately 26 thousand residents also boasts a vibrant and growing young population. As parents, many of us know how important it is to encourage our children to partake in physical activity and engage in a healthy lifestyle and I believe that a new public pool in this location would do just that.

At the moment people in West Wicklow are forced to travel as far as Naas in Kildare and Tallaght in South County Dublin if they want to go for a swim. That's simply not good enough. It instantly discriminates against those who don't have the luxury of private transport. And for those who can drive, the closest pool in Wicklow is still located a full hour's journey away in the town of Bray.

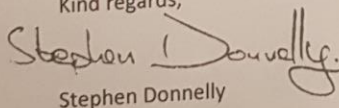
There is of course also a safety aspect to this issue. The average number of drownings each year in Ireland is 124. There is no doubt that this number could be greatly reduced with water safety classes starting from a young age. Pairing the pool with Irish Water Safety appears in this instance to make perfect sense and indeed seems like the perfect partnership.

It's a pleasure to support the team who're working so hard to bring a community pool to West Wicklow and I would like to offer my continued assistance with this project as it progresses in the coming months.

I would like to leave you with one final thought: When pupils from sixth class in Blessington No. 1 school came to visit me in Leinster House recently I asked for their biggest concerns. Every single student told me they wished there was a nearby swimming pool.

Many thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Kind regards,



Stephen Donnelly



Aislinn Nugent Reid
Baltyboys Upper
Valleymount
Co. Wicklow

Attention: Wicklow County Council

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Valleymount GAA Club to demand that you make provision for a Community Swimming Pool in West Wicklow. This omission of such a vital service to the residents of West Wicklow is unheard of in any other community in Ireland.

There is no need for me to highlight the health, social and life saving benefits of a Community Swimming pool as they go without saying. However, may I highlight the many child drownings that occurred in the Lake that our Village is built on. You need go no further than Lacken Church where the dual Holy Waterfronts are dedicated to the first people who drowned in the lake, two Local Children. Its beggar's belief that no pool has been provided for our children to learn how to swim and water safety in a controlled environment. The first drownings took place in the 1940's, the last century. Unfortunately, over the decades we have had many drownings, the worst single event was in 1992 when Four young people drowned. Very rarely a year goes by without an accidental drowning. The provision of a Community Swimming Pool is vital and necessary for the protection of the youth of Valleymount.

Is Mise le Meas,

Aislinn Nugent

Runai

Valleymount GAA



Blessington Community College:



Naas Road, Blessington, Co. Wicklow

Web: www.blessingtoncc.ie
Email: blessingtoncc@kwetb.ie

Phone: 045 865170
Fax: 045 865375

23/10/2018

To whom it concerns,

I write in support of our community's efforts to secure funding for a Community Swimming pool in West Wicklow. Our young students must travel to Naas, Athy or Carlow to avail of swimming lessons at great expense in terms of time lost from class and cost to parents. There is a great need and a significant number of potential users for a Swimming Pool in West Wicklow and I support the community in their efforts in promoting this project.

Blessington sits in the heart of West Wicklow and its lakes attract local and outside water sports enthusiasts, it is therefore the ideal location to build a Swimming pool. Our school community of over 550 persons would welcome and use this amenity in our area.

I fully support the campaign and trust that it will come to fruition with the help of the community representatives and other interested partners.

Yours Sincerely,

Kieran Burke
Principal



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliuna Chill Dara agus Chill Mhantain
Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board

Lacken National School
Lacken
Blessington
Co. Wicklow
W91 CY82



Scoil Náisiúnta Leacain
Leacain
Baile Coimín
Co. Chill Mhantáin
W91 CY82

Tel: 045 865 086

Guthán: 045 865 086

Community Pool
for West Wicklow
Committee

1st March 2019

Benefits of Swimming Pool in local area for children with particular needs

Hi Sue,

Living beside quite a treacherous unsafe lake though a beauty spot in itself, prompts the need for all to acquire the ability to swim.

It would be of huge benefit to the community have a local pool which would provide the facility to acquire fundamental skills attitudes, respect and understanding, for the water.

Children with special needs generally speaking enjoy the sensory benefits of the water, coupled with a certain independence that they may acquire from swimming. Familiarity and consistency are key for the children to be successful in achieving these skills so a local pool would create a certain amount of certainty for them, when being encouraged to attend swimming lessons.

A pool that's boasts additional sensory adaptations for the children particularly those on the spectrum would be of huge benefit.

Dimmable and changing lights can create a calmness within for them, so the experience is less challenging.

Currently we have 3 classes of children with ASD in our school it always causes us considerable concern when trying to find a suitable pool, each academic year, which caters for their needs. A purpose built "state of the art" local, new build would certainly enhance the aquatic strand of the curricular for all our local schools, and in particular for all those children with additional needs who live within the community.

Sincerely,

Caroline Bn Uí Fhionnáin
Principal

ST. KEVIN'S
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Striving Together for Excellence

Principal: Catherine Burke

Deputy Principal: Brian Doran

3rd September, 2018

To whom it concerns,

St. Kevin's Community College Board of Management, students and staff fully support the campaign for a community swimming pool in West Wicklow. We have over six hundred students in our school and I can assure you that this facility would be most welcome for them and their families.

We constantly encourage an active lifestyle among our students and a swimming pool would be a fantastic amenity for all our young people to use all year around. We would also be in a position to incorporate this facility into Transition Year, Leaving Cert Applied and Physical Education programmes, if this amenity was in our area.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the committee for their work in highlighting the need for this community swimming pool and assure them of our full support,

Kind regards,

Catherine Burke

Catherine Burke
Principal



Dunlavin

Co. Wicklow

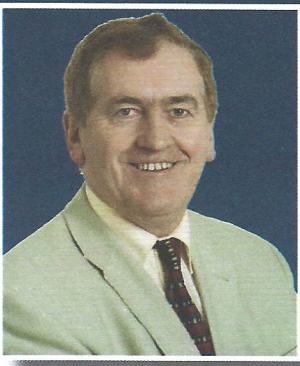
ph: 045 406000

fax: 045 406004

email: stkevinscc@kwetb.ie

website: www.stkevinsdunlavin.com





Cllr. Jim Ruttle

INDEPENDENT

Manor Kilbride, Blessington, Co. Wicklow

t: 087 249 0607 e: jruttle@wicklowcoco.ie w: www.jimruttle.com

Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee

I wish to support the submission made by the Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee. The Baltinglass Municipal District is the only Municipal District in Wicklow which does not have a public pool. This issue needs to be addressed and the committee is making a very professional approach to achieving this worthy objective.

Presently anyone wishing to avail of swimming facilities has to avail of services in counties Kildare or Dublin. This involves travel issues and cost issues so I wholeheartedly support this submission to have a swimming pool locally.

Another significant issue in the Blessington area is the presence of Blessington lake where there have been many drownings over the years. A swimming pool at Blessington would alleviate the dangers of random swimming in the lake which is very hazardous and will ultimately save lives.

I have no hesitation in supporting this excellent submission from the swimming pool committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Ruttle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Cllr. Jim Ruttle

Baltinglass Municipal District



Lacken Community Development Association

Lacken

Blessington

Co. Wicklow.

Attention: Wicklow County Council

I am writing to you on behalf of Lacken Community Development Association (LCDA) to seek that you make provision for a Community Swimming Pool in West Wicklow.

This is a much needed facility for the people of West Wicklow. Currently the people of West Wicklow have to travel to Carlow, Kildare or South Dublin to access a public swimming pool.

The National school in Lacken has in excess of 100 pupils and this is just one small village in West Wicklow. The children have the right to be able to have access to this basic facility on their doorstep.

In an era that promotes health and well-being both physical and mental, it is vital that a pool be provided so that all of the people of West Wicklow could avail of this essential amenity.

Yours Sincerely

Diana Gallagher

Chairperson

Lacken Community Development Association

Grangecon
Dunlavin
County Wicklow

31st October 2018

To: Whom it may concern

Re: West Wicklow Swimming Pool

I am writing in support of the Community Pool for West Wicklow Group.

This voluntary group are looking to secure a Community Pool for this part of County Wicklow. Currently children and adults must travel to neighbouring counties to go Swimming. This is the only district in the County without a Pool. It is also a district which is expanding. And significant further expansion is envisaged.

We need to provide more facilities in our area to reduce the need for people to travel elsewhere which is ultimately a loss to the area in terms of community development, business and education.

Edward Timmins

MCC

County Wicklow

087 2357914



St. Mary's Senior National School

20th November 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

As you are aware water safety and aquatics are an integral part of the Primary School Curriculum. Unfortunately, here in St. Mary's SNS, we are unable to successfully deliver this element of the Curriculum to our pupils due to the fact that we do not have access to a pool in the Blessington area.

We fully support the current campaign for a public pool in the area as this would finally allow us an opportunity to teach the basic life-saving skills around water safety. In an area like Blessington where there is such easy access for children to the lakes it is vitally important that our children should be taught how to swim etc. The provision of a pool in the area would immediately allow us to do this with our pupils.

Should you wish to discuss this with me further please do not hesitate to contact me at the no. below.

Yours sincerely,

Principal.



Scoil Mhuire Ballymore Eustace

<http://www.bmesch.ie>
@BallymoreEusNS

office@bmesch.ie
Tel: (045)864085

20/11/2019

RE: A pool for West Wicklow

To whom it may concern,

Scoil Mhuire NS is located in Ballymore Eustace in County Kildare on the Kildare/Wicklow border.

We believe a pool for West Wicklow is necessary to support the growing population of the area and to allow schools to effectively access the aquatics strand of the primary school curriculum. As it stands, people from the Blessington area and beyond have to travel great distances to access a swimming pool. Our schools have to fight for space in pools that have more than reached capacity in Naas, Tallaght and beyond.

We are more than happy to lend our voice and our support to the campaign to build a swimming pool for the community of West Wicklow.

Kind regards,

Peter Roche
Principal, Scoil Mhuire



Gaelscoil na Lochanna

Cill Moloma

Fón: 045 900525 / Faics: 045 900585

Baile Coimín

Fón Póca: 087 9388651

Co. Chill Mhantáin

Vimhir Rolla: 202430

re: Wicklow Development Plan and Swimming Pool

18.11.19

Is mian le pobal Gaelscoil na Lochanna tacú le feachtas Linn Shnámhna a lonnú i gceantar Iar Chill Mhantáin.

The community of Gaelscoil na Lochanna, Blessington, Co. Wicklow strongly support the Campaign to include a Swimming Pool in the Wicklow Development Plan.

We have witnessed many improvements in our area of the years and we thank the Wicklow County Council for all their work here.

A swimming pool is another vital piece of the Jigsaw that will help create and sustain a healthy and active population.

We are a school of over 200 children and are struggling to provide swimming instruction as per the National Curriculum for children in our school.

Currently there is a huge cost to the Board of Management and to parents to travel to Naas to use the pool and we can only send children in one class for 5 weeks in a year.

The journey to the lessons and back takes up 3 hours of the school day. All this is entirely unsatisfactory.

The life skill of swimming is seen by us as vital especially in an area of many lakes where our children often spend time with family.

We strongly urge all to consider locating a swimming pool in Blessington as part of the development plan.

As Gaelscoil na Lochanna is currently seeking a permanent site, we also strongly urge the eventual placement of the swimming pool close to our school.

The model of having schools next to amenities such as a swimming pool is very clear from visits to other European towns and will ensure the maximum use of the facility and uptake of this vital life skill.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh as ucht bhur dtuiscint,
Thank you for your consideration,

Le dea-ghuí,

Seán Ó Cearnaigh,
Príomhoide



METHOD PHYSIO

MAIN STREET, BLESSINGTON, CO. WICKLOW

T: 045 857444 E: info@methodphysiotherapy.ie
www.methodphysiotherapy.ie

21/02/2019

To whom it may concern,

As a Chartered Physiotherapist and mother of young children I fully support the campaign for a community swimming pool in West Wicklow. Swimming has been well researched and has shown to be beneficial and suitable for people with many joint and muscle problems from back pain to rehabilitation after surgery.

With our present problem of increasing obesity levels and an increase in sedentary lifestyles a swimming pool would be a great addition to the community to help both children and adults increase their activity levels. A pool is a great way for families to exercise together while having a fun day out.

If I can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Aoife Murphy



THE OFFICE SHOP

MAIN STREET
BLESSINGTON
CO. WICKLOW
045 865878

VAT NO. IE
63878301



20TH February 2019

Ms Susan Rossiter
Community Pool for West Wicklow Committee
9 Deerpark View
Blessington
Co Wicklow

To Whom it May Concern

RE: COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL

With regard to the above we would like to add our support to your campaign for a Community Swimming Pool in Blessington. We feel it would be a tremendous asset to the town and to the people of Blessington and District.

We wish you all well in your endeavours.

Kind regards

Bernadette Hennessy
The Office Shop

**HENNESSY HARDWARE LIMITED
MAIN STREET
BLESSINGTON
CO WICKLOW
045 865136**

To Whom it may concern

20/2/2019

COMMUNITY POOL FOR WEST WICKLOW

We fully support the Community pool committee Feasibility study for the provision of a Swimming Pool for West Wicklow

Yours faithfully

MARTIN HENNESSY
DIRECTOR

Winetavern

Stratford On Slaney

Co. Wicklow

Phone: 086 3447649

Email: cbnpreschool@gmail.com



21st February 2019

To Whom it may concern,

I would like to offer my support towards a swimming pool for West Wicklow. This is a growing area and would be a wonderful addition to the West Wicklow area. This kind of a facility would make a huge difference to the area in terms of health and well-being for all age groups. We play a major role in promoting children's Health and Well-Being as part of our Early Childhood Curriculum framework Aistear and feel having this facility in the area would be hugely beneficial in promoting this. Physical well-being is important for learning and development as this enables children to explore, to investigate, and to challenge themselves in the environment. The Theme of Well-Being is about children being confident, happy and healthy which the swimming pool could play a major role in.

The introduction of a swimming pool to West Wicklow would improve the lives of all in the area and I would hope there will be a positive outcome and I look forward to continuing to supporting this campaign.

Kind Regards

Michelle

Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa
Cillín Chaoimhín
Co. Chill Mhantáin

Tel: 045 864014
Fácr: 045 864014



Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa
Hollywood
Co. Wicklow

Tel: 045 864014
Fax: 045 864014

20th February 2019

Dear Sue,

We support your petition for a swimming pool for West Wicklow and welcome the news of a feasibility study being conducted shortly. A pool in West Wicklow would have great benefits for our school and the Hollywood community as a whole.

Is mise le meas,

SÉAMAS Ó BRIAIN
Príomhoide



Stratford Lodge N.S.
Balinglass
Co. Wicklow
Tel: 059 6481919
Roll No: 193390


Email: stratfordlodge@gmail.com

11th October 2018

To whom it may concern:

We fully support the campaign for a community swimming pool in West Wicklow. As swimming is part of the curricula each year, the pupils are taken to Naas swimming pool which means transport has to be hired and time taken out of the school day to get there and back. A local swimming pool would be a great advantage to Stratford Lodge.

Yours truly,


Janet Ross
Principal

Lacken National School
Lacken
Blessington
Co. Wicklow
W91 CY82



Scoil Náisiúnta Leacain
Leacain
Baile Coimín
Co. Chill Mhantáin
W91 CY82

Tel: 045 865 086

Guthán: 045 865 086

Community Pool
for West Wicklow
Committee

15th October 2018

Dear Committee,

Water safety and swimming lessons is an important part of our P.E. programme in school. It gives the children the opportunity to learn specific skills in relation to swimming, which can be practised by them for the rest of their lives. It also gives the children the awareness of safety issues around the pool/sea usage as well as developing respect for the water.

It is regrettable that this activity which is so important for the children must be done outside the community which is a huge cost factor for the children/school but also it doesn't provide a continuance for the children when the lessons cease.

It is imperative that a pool be provided in the immediate area to facilitate this for the children in community which will provide a huge social focus in the area for all.

Sincerely,

Caroline Bn Uí Fhionnáin
Principal



Water Safety Ireland Kildare
Leo Mahon
C/O Kilcullen. Co Kildare.

09 Jan 2020

To whom it may concern,

Re: Wicklow Development Plan

Water Safety Ireland (WSI) is the statutory body charged with the provision of water safety advice and swimming, water safety and lifesaving training in Ireland.

On a National Level over 50,000 people receive water safety training annually.

At a local level WSI provides swimming, water safety & lifesaving training on a voluntary basis to over 300 people on a weekly basis in Kildare and West Wicklow.

On average, over the past 10 years there has been 130 drownings per year in Ireland.
62% of drowning fatalities occur inland - on rivers and lakes.

Blessington Lake is the largest open water body closet to the largest population centre in the country.

Swimming and lifesaving training benefits in the community;

- Swimming is an exercise
- Social interaction
- Relaxation
- Stress relief
- Opportunity to participate in aerobic, yet low-impact exercise
- Recovery (operations/treatment)
- Competition and camaraderie with other groups in competition
- Swimming is part of the primary school curriculum
- Personal development- Gaisce awards, Volunteering
- Opportunities for other sports
- Provides career paths, swim teaching , lifeguards
- Swimming is a lifesaving skill
- Reduces drowning through education and skills learned
-

Therefore, Water Safety Ireland Kildare supports the provision of a swimming pool in Blessington, Co Wiclow, as this will further support the delivery of water safety and lifesaving training in West Wicklow.

Yours faithfully

Leo Mahon, Chairperson WSI Kildare

5. Conclusion

The benefits of swimming are undeniable be it from a health, fitness, safety or educational point of view. The statistics regarding drownings and in particular child drownings are alarming. At present the residents of West Wicklow are being denied access to swimming facilities and the ability to educate themselves in the basic life skill of swimming.

The Royal College of Surgeons 2019 study looking into risk factors surrounding fatal drowning incidents in children identified a lack of ability to swim among children and a lack of basic water safety knowledge among adults as key factors in child drowning incidents. (Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.) Researchers found that a knowledge and access to swimming lessons greatly reduced the risk of drowning in children. One of the recommendations in their study was the introduction of government funded or subsidised swimming lessons for all children in Ireland in order to improve safety outcomes across all socioeconomic groups. Children and parents in West Wicklow do not currently even have the option to access privately funded swimming lessons. The over 26,000 residents of West Wicklow are being failed by the lack of swimming facilities in the area.

The development of a swimming pool in West Wicklow would not only benefit the residents of the Baltinglass Municipal District but the county of Wicklow as a whole. By working with Water Safety Ireland, Wicklow could be home to Ireland's first inland lifesaving training centre and lead the way in greatly improving the safety of swimmers in lakes and rivers across the country.

We strongly recommend the inclusion of a public swimming pool in West Wicklow in the upcoming and all subsequent County Development Plans for Wicklow. The health, safety, educational, social and economical benefits of the development of a swimming pool in West Wicklow would greatly improve the quality of life of the 26,000 local residents.

6. Appendix

Identifying Risk Factors Associated with Fatal Drowning Accidents in the Paediatric Population: A Review of International Evidence.

Davey M, et al. Cureus. 2019.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pubmed/31890403/?fbclid=IwAR1x0RMaRtdJ4FeTq5zuKDTUQVRmIwAx-htLclRkMWSpTbrBAuZaw34dtX0#fft>

Calls for state-funded swimming lessons as drowning now second biggest cause of accidental death in children in Ireland

Lynne Kelleher

Sunday Independent January 5 2020

Drowning is the second biggest cause of accidental death in children in Ireland, according to a new study.

Researchers said evidence from Ireland's Childhood Mortality Register shows drowning occurs more commonly in adolescent males engaged in summer water-based activities and in children aged one to four years.

The Royal College of Surgeons study says state-funded swimming lessons would improve safety. The researchers say a "significant lack of guidelines exists to reduce drowning accidents in these at-risk populations".

"In Ireland, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental paediatric death in the post-neonatal period, and an important cause of childhood fatalities globally," said the authors.

Drowning is the second biggest cause of accidental paediatric death after road traffic accidents.

The authors said formal swimming education in those aged over four years, training of supervising adults in safe rescue, installation of isolation barriers, enforcing water safety guidelines and regulations are all key international recommendations.

The study, which examined research on risk factors associated with fatal paediatric drownings, found inadequate surveillance was the most common reason for infant and toddler drownings.

Supervising adults should be within touching distance of children at all times to reduce the risk of drowning.

The study found there is an increased risk of death from drowning in cases of poor response to the incident such as resuscitation from bystanders or life-guard support.



The study, Identifying Risk Factors Associated with Fatal Drowning Accidents in the Paediatric Population, was published in the Cureus Journal of Medical Science.

It found children with certain clinical diagnoses such as developmental delay and seizure disorders were also more at risk of drowning.

In general, they found males are at higher risk of drowning across all age groups with peak incidence seen in boys aged one to four, with deaths occurring predominantly in swimming pools and adolescent males predominantly in freshwater.

Lack of swimming ability and substance misuse in adolescents also poses an increased risk.

Between 2010 and 2015, HSE figures reveal 81 children were killed on the road while 22 children died in drowning incidents. Eleven children died in falls and 10 children died from burns or scalds.

The authors of the study - Dr Martin Davey, Dr Sean Callinan and Dr Leona Nertney - said a specific set of gold-standard guidelines for parents and caregivers has yet to be established in Ireland to prevent drowning episodes among children.

"Swimming lessons in Ireland at present are privately-funded, and in order to improve safety outcomes across all socioeconomic groups, would need to be government-funded or subsidised," said the study.

"Swimming programmes could be instituted not only as a means of improving safety outcomes but also to increase fitness levels of children.

"Parent supervision must be strongly emphasised at all times.

"In addition to this, parents and guardians should be encouraged to receive training for dealing with emergency situations and the performance of cardiopulmonary resuscitation." The doctors said a national training scheme in all water safety, including the prevention of drowning in high-risk groups such as the paediatric population, should be recommended.

Dr Davey emphasised the great work carried out by the Irish Water Safety through the Primary Aquatics Water Safety programme in schools.

He said: "Our paper suggests that swimming lessons for all children from junior infants upwards, aged over four years, may potentially reduce the risk of potential paediatric drowning in Ireland."

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my support for the proposed community swimming pool for the Blessington/West Wicklow area.

As our populations grow in size, it is important that community facilities such as these become standard across our county. The ability to swim is a life lesson that all children and adults should be able to participate in. I strongly believe that this principle should be recognised in our County Development Plan.

regards, Cllr. Jennifer Whitmore

Main Street,
Blessington
Co. Wicklow.

Tel: 045-857730

Email info@blessingtonbookstore.ie
www.blessingtonbookstore.ie



To whom it may concern

West Wicklow is a strip of land sandwiched between the Wicklow mountains and the arable lands of Kildare. For families without cars there is no access to a swimming pool, nowhere that children can walk or cycle to, where they can engage in one of the healthiest sports there is. Swimming is one of the best sports for mental and physical well being, from bonding Mother and Baby mornings, swimming clubs for restless young people and gentle water aerobics for the older locals.

As a society we need to invest money in capital projects that significantly improve life for all of the community - a community pool for Blessington would be a wonderful example of proactive thinking by the county council.

You can tell a lot about a community from the retail outlets it supports. Here in Blessington we have had a bookshop for close to 15 years, and a health shop for almost 20. This is testament to the engagement and support of the entire community, a community that deserves to be listened to, a community that deserves (and needs) to be invested in.

Janet Hawkins

On behalf of The Blessington Bookstore Ltd.



The Blessington Bookstore Ltd.
Directors: J. Hawkins, C. Smeele, M. Smeele, P. Smeele
VAT no. IE 642581 1L



SIMON HARRIS TD

Minister for Health

Wicklow & East Carlow Constituency

North Wicklow Office:
Office Unit 4, Market Court,
Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

West Wicklow & East Carlow Office:
Suite 4, The Civic Building,
Blessington, Co. Wicklow.

Tel: 01 281 3727

E Mail: simon.harris@oir.ie

Web: www.simonharris.ie

8th Jan 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I wish to support the proposal to develop a swimming pool in West Wicklow.

There is a clear need for this facility for people in West Wicklow. In fact, West Wicklow is the only Municipal District in County Wicklow which does not have a public swimming pool. This needs to be rectified.

An incredible community group has come together and has worked so hard to drive this project forward. They need and deserve the full support of the local authority to make their plan a reality.

An important way of showing this support is ensuring the inclusion of this project in the County Development Plan.

There are so many benefits to swimming for people of all ages, including significant health benefits.

I very much welcome the fact that the feasibility study for a pool for West Wicklow indicates this is indeed a viable proposal.

For my part, I will work with the community and with the County Council to help deliver this major public amenity for the people of West Wicklow.

I respectfully urge you to include it in the County Development Plan.

Kind regards,

Minister Simon Harris TD