



Arklow Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	
Name:	Cllr Peir Leonard
Email Address:	[REDACTED]
Reference:	ARKLAP-152957
Submission Made	April 2, 2024 4:00 PM

Topic

Other topics for you to have your say on! - Environmental Assessment - Plan Implementation -Plan Delivery

Submission

Hi ,

Please find attached my submission for the draft plan . Thanks and apologies for the length of it.

Cllr Peir Leonard

File

Cllr Peir Leonard Submission to draft Arklow LAP.docx, 0.42MB

Submission to Draft Arklow Local Area Plan

Cllr Peir Leonard, Arklow Municipal District

Date: 01.04.2024

HERITAGE - BIODIVERSITY - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE - CLIMATE ACTION – ENERGY

> How do we continue to develop the area while protecting and enhancing its natural heritage and biodiversity?

Develop and build on the existing derelict and vacant sites in the centre of Arklow town instead of green field sites. Also the Harbour area has a large portion of land sitting vacant or unused. It is imperative that the priority needs to be given to regeneration before any expansion of town and should only be facilitated if new land is needed for recreation/education/employment purposes.

Arklow has a lot of green space but there is a lack of a core professional group to advise on how to improve the biodiversity. Arklow needs a shared accessible biodiversity action plan .

Support for the Glenart & Ballyduff biodiversity plan carried out by Faith Wilson for Arklow Town Team in 2023 needs to be incorporated in the LAP.

Support for East Wicklow Rivers Trust - A Vision for the Avoca

> Are there any additional buildings, places, trees, views etc worthy of protection in the area?

1. Arklow Marsh PNHA.
2. Yes **the view** of Howards Mausoleum (Arklow Pyramid) from the M11 but mostly from Arklow Town and the South Quay Area. With new green field developments on the horizon in this area this view needs to be preserved.
3. The Arklow Pottery Packing yard which forms part of the substantial Arklow Pottery site on South Quay.
4. The heritage buildings beside Arklow Harbour Office and in the curtilage of this area. There are old stone buildings behind which need to be conserved and restored.
5. Glenart Castle & Tower & Walled Garden.

6. Water hydrants need to be mapped and preserved.
7. The Warrens - House on Arklow Golf Links.
8. The De Wadden sailing ship and old coastguard carriages held in ownership of Arklow Shipping need to be accommodated and displayed for the public and for tourism purposes in conjunction with Arklow Maritime Museum.
9. Roadstone Quarry Headland.
10. Our beaches and coastline - Ennereilly Beach , Porters Rock Beach, South Beach, The Cove Beach, Nuns Beach.

> Are there any 'green corridors' you would like to see enhanced?

Glenart Ancient Oak Forest could be extended. Parts of the woodland was sold off and zoned residential. Existing forest zoned residential should be reverted to non residential and protected.

Shelton Woods - The north western side of the river on the Marsh Oak forest could also be extended from Shelton Woods Millenium forest .

Scotts Pine at Kynock Lodge (in ownership of Arklow Bay Hotel) and Kynock Park (in ownership of WCC) .

All residential green spaces to include Harbour Court, Woodlands, Summerfield, Abbeyville, Churchview, Fernhill, Mountain Bay.

> When it comes to land use, what are the key actions we can take to reduce the impacts of climate change?

Less hard surfaces , more trees, hedges and pollinators. Stop building in flood plains . A better and more strategic drainage management system. Record the knowledge of past employees re urban drainage infrastructure.

> How can the Plan address flood risk and build resilience to better cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events?

A flood team needs to be funded by WCC with the relevant professionals on it. Nature based solutions needs to be at the heart of mitigation and sufficient resources allocated for services related to flood prevention and drainage maintenance. A localised mapping system of problem areas needs to be created and combined with a schedule of drainage maintenance . This should be carried out in all Municipal Districts.

REGENERATION OF COMMUNITIES & PLACES - HEALTHY PLACEMAKING - URBAN DESIGN – OPPORTUNITY SITES -

> How can we revitalise / regenerate the following areas -

○ **Arklow Town Centre**

Arklow needs a masterplan to help it realise its potential. The town is full of historical significance which isn't placemarked or used to promote the town. WCC heritage team does a fantastic job but needs to be given more funding and resources. Our local heritage both built and natural need to be at the core creating a branded identity and place making for the town. Stricter guidelines on signage and shopfronts policy is imperative. Public Realm projects need to be of high quality materials. Examples of towns and colourscales such as Kinsale should be considered.

Capitalise on Arklow's unique natural & built heritage offering which includes Arklow Bank & Coastline, Arklow Town Marsh, Glenart Forest and the Avoca River Catchment, Arklow Pyramid, Arklow Rock, Glenart Castle & Shelton Abbey with a view to utilising them for eco educational/heritage tourism.

Encourage the repurposing of vacant sites and buildings to provide opportunities for social entrepreneurs with a focus on education, innovation, design and apprenticeships in alignment with the sustainable development goals.

Recognise Arklow's intrinsic link to the Avoca River Catchment and Arklow Harbour and develop opportunities for marine recreation/eco educational and maritime sectors including off-shore wind, aquaculture, fisheries and other marine food sectors. Development of a National Maritime Centre of Excellence and recognise and support the development of Arklow Maritime Museum as an important national heritage & educational resource.

Support key projects including Arklow Quays Integrated Urban Renewal Plan, Arklow Pottery Museum, Historic Town Centre Project, Harbour to Headwaters river tourism project and Medieval Arklow walking trail project. Support the development of an Eco Art/Design hub at The Goods Store, Arklow Railway Station as a gateway for eco tourism via rail and bus linking Dublin to South Wicklow. Support the development of infrastructure to support sustainable movement in the town centre and surrounding towns and villages via walking, cycling/e-biking & kayaking.

Support an active travel route from Arklow Railway Station to key locations:

South of the River: Glenart Forest & Castle, Ballyraine Campus, The Alps, Arklow Castle, Abbey Lane, The Riverwalk, South Quay, The Harbour, Arklow South Beach/The Cove/Nuns Beach, Arklow Rock Walk.

North of the River :

Bridgewater Shopping Centre , The Duck Pond/Seaview Ave area, Arklow Bay Hotel, Howards Mausoleum.

Recognise and support the key role of musicians, artists and designers in the regeneration of Arklow and provide and support opportunities and support any new initiatives that will provide event spaces for them to create and perform .

Recognise and support the role of local food producers in the regeneration of Arklow Main Street and support the development of an indoor farmers market.

Castlepark Avenue needs a reassessment with the removal of carparking to create empty space which has no designation anymore this area should be considered to give the space to the local school or create mini parks . Plastic pencils not directly in front of the school gate could be replaced with trees and planters, pollinators and cycle lanes. The area in front of the polish shop could be reimaged.

Riverwalk - area under Arklow Castle.

Connect the Parade ground to the riverwalk with some stone steps and create a recreational space below this area of heritage. Installation of CCTV and the greenway will counter antisocial behaviour in the coming years. This area will form part of the Arklow to Shillelagh greenway too and the river will be active with boats once the sewage treatment plant is commenced so places for people to sit

○ **The Port and Harbour**

The Harbour site needs to be considered for the most appropriate zoning with an emphasis on zoning it to tourism/education/employment/recreation . There is a prime opportunity to re-imagine the port and extend the existing fish dock as no foreshore license would be needed. The potential of our maritime areas has never been realised . Reinstatement of WCCs Maritime Development Committee is imperative or at the very least one for Arklow Harbour with representatives from every stakeholder group on it.

○ **The Quayside / Riverside**

The Avoca River

WCC needs to prioritise the remediation of The Avoca Mines. The East Wicklow Rivers Trust document 'A vision for the Avoca' needs to form part of the town plan. While the sewage treatment plant will improve the water quality of the Avoca the leaching from the mines needs to be tackled so that the future generations can know what it's like to live in an unpolluted town. The polluted river has a massive effect on the townspeople and needs a remediation plan.

St. Marys Park & Mains Street adjoining The Avoca River

A new design is needed for the Riverwalk / St. Marys Park/ Main St. Car Park. All of these spaces need reimaging and the river needs accessible infrastructure for leisure on both sides of the river. The future removal of green infrastructure along the riverwalk by the Arklow Flood Relief Scheme will have a negative impact on nature. One solution would be to reduce the only remaining 2 way system on South Quay to a oneway system and increase the green corridors and introduce a cycle lane to connect the Town Centre to the Harbour area via active travel.

> What urban design standards should apply in Arklow Town?

Placemark and redesign our Arklow Railway Station opening up pedestrian links to the Navvie Bridge & Tesco car park. Support its enhancement as it is the towns most central location and utilise the area as a main point of tourism information hub which will link to all the cultural and natural and built heritage assets in the town.

Support the creation of more areas of beauty & spaces for nature in our town centre. More window baskets and planters around our Main Street and Ferrybank areas. Better choice of plants in urban planters. Blackrock is a nice example of the urban realm.



Main St. Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

High quality infrastructure designed by Architects and created by local craftspeople from local materials. No more imported granite from China please. As stated above Arklow's placemaking and identity needs to be intrinsically linked to its rich heritage and artistic community..

> What are the unique features of Arklow Town's urban environment that should inform future policy?

Our natural and built heritage. Glenart woods 1650s ancient oak forest. Glenart Castle and walled garden reviewed by An Taisce Glenart Castle, located outside Arklow Co Wicklow with its associated walled garden, grounds, buildings, arboretum and surrounding woodland landscape is a heritage asset of national importance. It has the potential to be a major local recreational amenity for the Arklow area as well as a creating a desirable tourism and visitor focus for Southeast Wicklow which is currently lacking, and compliment the Arklow to Shillelagh Greenway initiative. The restoration of the now internationally recognized "Lost Gardens of Heligan" in Cornwall provides the inspiration for what could be achieved at Glenart.

Placemaking and protection of The Brook, Old Chapel Ground and The Fishery . With much of the communal spaces being clogged up with cars or fenced and taken in by private owners all these small spaces are important and hold a lot of the towns history . They need to be assessed, protected and a plan put in place.

More public art to linked to our local heritage is needed.

> Where do you see potential to enhance the public realm in Arklow Town?

The Bridge Street entrance into Arklow needs investment and a makeover. Buildings are tired and dated and in need of shopfront enhancements. Support from WCC for schemes to enhance the Main Street are welcome. They would need enough time allocated to allow the landlords to achieve planning permission and to commence and complete works.

Arklow Main Street footpaths need upgrading and general cleanliness of Arklow Main Street needs to be improved. Commercial rates need to be shown to fund these much needed works.

> Are there any areas/ vacant buildings you would like to see redeveloped / regenerated? What uses and design would you like to see?

The site where Morgan Doyles is down to the building formerly called the 56/Kittys. An additional boutique hotel in this location would put the heart back into the town and service the needs of Wicklow Tourism accommodation as it is in a crisis with the lack of beds available. In the interim Morgan Doyles could be used as a market place for local produce /farmers market & art/ craft studios, music practice rooms, new business incubators/ casual trading/ coffee vans etc. similar to The Kings Way initiative in Birmingham . Other initiatives are www.workshouseunion.com in Kilkenny and The Stove Network in Scotland.

As part of any new development, re designing the 56 building to overlook St. Marys Park as well as Main Street would be good and incorporating more buildings leading down to the Riverwalk facing easterly would enhance this area. The potential of St. Marys Park needs to be examined including the car park. There is potential for this area to host a flea market and music event monthly if car parking is removed one day per month as a pilot to bring footfall to Arklow Main St.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY – TOURISM - SHOPS & SERVICES - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

> What can be done to increase the amount of jobs within the settlement?

Shorter term rental initiatives/working hubs in vacant units on the Main Street could possibly be run by a social enterprise who would manage it as most auctioneers are not interested in managing short term lettings.

Allocating casual trading spaces for the Riverwalk, Abbey Lane, Parade Ground and Arklow South Beach/ The Cove Beach.

Non displacement of existing businesses especially in the Maritime Sector . There are some great businesses showing initiative by branching into the marine education / training sector these need to be supported and care needs to be taken not to displace them through replication through council initiatives elsewhere.

> Are all of the tourism assets (e.g the Maritime Museum, Emoclew Slí, Howard Mausoleum Pyramid, Arklow Beaches) in the settlement fully exploited?

No - More funding invested in the great work of our local community archeologist and heritage officer would bring the towns tales alive. Arklow Maritime Museum is such a fantastic asset to the town and should have core funding to support it. Consideration to incorporating the Maritime & Heritage Museum & Arklow Pottery Museum at Arklow Harbour should be seriously considered as part of a regeneration plan for the area. The old pottery packaging yard which still stands needs to be protected and zoned for tourism.

> What new education, community, sport and recreation facilities are needed and where should they be located?

The recent recreational assessment for Arklow MD is incomplete and not reflective of the vast amount of community groups which call Arklow their home. I would like this report to be published and a second call of registration be facilitated to capture the true picture of what exists and therefore what facilities are needed.

Many sports groups have outgrown their current needs and need larger space to build new clubhouse and pitches.

An investment plan for Arklow Running Track needs to be supported by Arklow MD and WCC. It is a well used facility but in its current condition not fit for purpose.

Support for the installation of a bicycle 'pump park' at Coral Leisure Centre could be a valuable addition to the area. An overall plan was to be created for the area but is still outstanding. The sports groups who use the area are disillusioned that any investment is forthcoming in the near future. This needs to be addressed and a plan put in place.

> What is needed to improve Arklow Town Centre?

Small term goals should be to liaise with the owners of vacant units and assess their needs to bring the units into use. As stated above a vacant unit manager could be a solution and incentives for landlords to upgrade their shopfronts and interiors and for the LEO office to market their incentives better.

A street enhancement programme would benefit the town or funding like Historic Towns funding or Town and Village to make an overall plan to map all the cultural assets starting from Arklow Railway Station and create heritage signage to tie it all together.

Car parking in Castlepark is an issue especially on Fridays where there is practically no spaces available. Loss of trading as a result.

INFRASTRUCTURE - SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT – TRANSPORTATION

> What are the key transport and movement issues affecting residents, workers and visitors?

The town has one town centre bridge, The Nineteen Arches. There are numerous reasons which add to the town's traffic congestion. School locations are a factor as many people have to cross the bridge to bring their kids to school where historically many of the children would have attended the school nearest to their home residence. A school bus might help or staggering school times for junior and senior students in the mornings and afternoons. Connecting and facilitating safe pedestrian and cycle paths would be of benefit in particular through areas like 'The Ditch' laneway & through Arklow Railway Station other potential access points. More pedestrian crossings need to be installed at Bridge Street and Yellow Lane (Mr. Price). Dangerous crossing such as the one on Middle Main Street near Victorian Tea Times need to be reassessed and reviewed as it is a health and safety hazard.

A cycle lane and or pedestrian path on the western side of the bridge linked in with cycle lanes on the Riverwalk and Ferrybank could promote active travel and would definitely be a safer option than cycling on the constantly congested bridge.

> What are the issues to overcome in moving from the private car to public transport or walking and cycling?

Public transport hop on hop off bus doesn't exist. Cycling is too dangerous and weather is an issue. Better promotion of purchasing wet gear might help but I doubt it. I think the promotion of smaller cars for town centre movement is key to unclogging the congestion. Removal of HGVs has to happen also so the port road needs to be prioritised.

> Are there any services infrastructure issues in the area?

ESB station needs to be moved outside the town or away from residential areas.

OTHER TOPICS FOR YOU TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON!

- Any Other Issue

Public consultation could take place in Bridgewater Shopping Centre as the footfall and engagement can be quite good over there.

Discretionary funds from LPT - Arklow MD homeowners are paying local property tax but are not seeing where it is being spent in their local community. They are working and paying taxes but every year something new is added to their list of extras. Basic services are in need of investment and extra human resources to ensure that a quality of life for local residents is maintained.

WCC should support a public participatory budget so that people can get involved and have a say on where their hard earned money is spent.

The government needs to create funding streams which council can access without being loaded with administrative burdens and short timelines to apply and complete the projects. The regeneration of our towns and villages depend on more investment from the government and better use of funding at county level. Investing in town centre projects will bring added value and connect communities.

> Do you have any other issues you wish to be taken into consideration in the drafting of the local area plan?

An audit of existing public land including existing public buildings and land and who they are long term leased to including details of rents etc.

An up to date Health Check on small local businesses.

Create an online map of heritage and cultural assets for the local community including the wider MD area including towns and villages in Arklow MD.

