



Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Group
Name:	Delgany Community Council
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Reference:	GDKLAP-143111
Submission Made	January 30, 2024 2:51 PM

Topic

Compact Growth - Housing - Population Growth

Submission

Delgany Community Council proposal for the former HSE Centre Building

The need for a Community Health and Wellbeing Centre in Delgany is well established, given the large increase in population in the area over the last two to three years. The Greystones, Delgany & Kilcoole Municipal District has increased in population by 16.2% to 27854 since the 2016 census.

This proposed Community Health and Wellbeing Centre project will be managed and developed for the health and wellbeing of all who live or work in the wider Delgany area.

Delgany Community Council (DCC) is an all volunteer group of residents and businesses who work together to promote business, tourism and community life in Delgany. The group works closely with Delgany Tidy Towns to develop projects, apply for funding and improve the locality. Some of the aims of the community council are as follows:

- Preserve and protect the sites of historical interest in the Delgany area and environs
- Improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to the village and surrounding area.
- Foster a sense of inclusion, belonging and participation amongst all the residents of Delgany.

All residents of Delgany are welcome to join the DCC

National Health Policy

We are conscious of the aims of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025 and have referred to it in drafting this proposal.

We will work towards:

Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life: This will be achieved by ensuring that the Community centre offers health related opportunities for all age groups.

Goal 2- Reduce health inequalities: We will work to target groups who are at risk of disadvantage including carers, those with disabilities, older people, newcomers to Ireland.

We also note Theme 2 in the document which recognises the important role played by local authorities in Health Promotion.

Theme 3 really captures exactly what we propose to do in this centre. The document states:

“The impact of positive social interaction cannot be underestimated. Social interaction and supporting social connectedness and involvement in community life are a keystone to empowering people at the individual level and building strong communities for health and wellbeing.”

The HSE Building

The building itself is a protected structure in the middle of the Architectural Conservation Area of Delgany village. The building features prominently on entry into Delgany Village, and as such provides a great central focal point for local groups to meet and to host events aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all. Given the location of the HSE building it means that our centre will also be in the heart of the community where it can best serve the needs of local people. It will play a vital role in bringing people together and reducing isolation, as it will encourage people to take part in Health and Wellbeing activities. The social bonds that people will create in this centre will give a sense of belonging and help build a much more inclusive community. By providing the chance to get involved locally this will improve residents' mental and physical health and general well-being.

This building is currently unused and in public ownership and should remain so. There is no appreciable, material gain to the community of the nation by selling it. There is however a huge missed opportunity for the local community by not retaining it.

In setting out our plan for this centre we were inspired by the Sustainable development Goals. This proposal aligns well with Goal 3 of the SDGs through the provision of Good Health and Well-being by means of information on local walking, immersion (forest bathing) and heritage trails and providing classes which strengthen and underpin and mental health health initiatives.

Rationale:

As we emerge from Covid the need for local focal points such as this has never been greater. Local residents are seeking to connect with others and to be part of their community. Delgany has seen a rapid rate of expansion in recent years with more development to come. We urgently need to address the deficit in terms of places where people can gather for a range of health related activities.

Target Audience:

We hope to provide a service to all who live, work or socialise in close proximity to Delgany village. We will aim to target groups which are marginalised and at risk of social isolation: Older adults, those recovering from mental health difficulties, those who are carers, who are out of work as well as our younger residents who have no suitable local meeting point.

Partnerships with existing support groups:

We list below some support groups with whom we hope to work in the future. These include:

- Greystones Cancer support
- Wicklow Dementia support
- Down Syndrome Wicklow
- Triple A Alliance autism support group
- Dyspraxia Ireland
- Co. Wicklow CYPSC (Children and Young Peoples Services Committee)
- Local Breast-feeding support groups (La Leche and Cuidiú)
- Wicklow Local Sports Partnership: The centre could provide a useful starting point for local activities aimed at promoting physical activity.
- Cystic Fibrosis Ireland
- Epilepsy Ireland
- Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
- Newcastle Psychiatric Hospital (Out-patients)

We will continue to forge links with other groups in addition to those listed above.

Some of the other activities that we would hope to support include (and are not limited to) the following:

- First Aid courses
 - Courses on healthy eating in conjunction with organisations like Bray Area Partnership
 - Creative writing workshops and Art workshops to maintain and promote good mental health: We envisage looking at the McAuley place model in Naas, Co Kildare. An artist/writer might be able to avail of space to work in the centre in exchange for delivering some community workshops.
 - Mind your Mental Health events
 - Meeting room for local parent and baby/toddler groups, mature citizens hub, yoga/pilates, art classes, meditation classes, youth clubs, etc. This fulfils Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- We will work with KWETB to source tutors and facilitators for programmes related to both mental and physical health.

File

Delgany Community Council Proposals on new LAP 2024.docx, 8.17MB

Delgany Community Council proposal for the former HSE Centre Building.docx, 0.07MB

Delgany Community Council's Proposals for the New Local Area Plan (LAP) - 2024

Vision

The creation of a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community in Delgany where all generations have local access to social, community and recreational facilities, and parks and green spaces, to suit their needs. We, in Delgany Community Council (DCC), would like to see the creation of sustainable, healthy, and a socially inclusive neighbourhood in Delgany and to see these cross-cutting objectives included in the next LAP. In our Public Realm Plan the Vision also includes the following:

“To strengthen its special sense of place between the Wicklow Mountains and the Irish Sea, Delgany Village is to be celebrated through its rich landscape setting, an appreciation of its vibrant community, and the area’s diverse built and natural heritage. As a recognition of its people, location and its history, these aspirations reflect a vibrant and engaged community, while respecting Delgany as a truly distinct place to live in, to work at, and to visit. This vision presents an exciting direction for Delgany, its people and its future.”

- A quality public realm, access to a zoned park, open spaces, sports and recreational facilities are crucial elements of quality places and are central to the health and wellbeing of residents. In addition, essential services such as healthcare, childcare and education (e.g. sufficient places for toddlers, young children and teenagers) along with culture and the arts (e.g. Arts Centre in Greystones), all have a significant role to play in the quality of life in Delgany/Greystones and Kilcoole. The majority of these services and facilities should ideally be located close to or in the centre of Delgany to provide easy access and optimise the opportunity for residents and visitors to walk or cycle to them. We would kindly request that policies and objectives in the next LAP will work to achieve this cross-themed goal.
community solar and wind generation on all WCC and other public buildings
- Community infrastructure, for the purposes of the next LAP, we would request that it include specific zoning for a community centre and hall (e.g. Carmelite Church and Villa); libraries and cultural facilities (e.g. HSE building as a cultural and heritage/biodiversity building, or HSE well-being hub for the community – please see attached strategy for this building which was drafted by DCC); places of worship and burial grounds (e.g. significant heritage value of Burial Ground, Stylebawn, Honeybrook Cottage, Kindlestown House to be “preserved and protected”); educational, healthcare and childcare facilities; and play, sports and recreational facilities. Public open space to include a village park (e.g. Blackberry Lane site owned by the Council) and other local parks behind St Lawrence’s School (land bequeathed by the Ryan Family) and easily publicly accessible green spaces.
- Quality play spaces for children should be prioritised and provided in Delgany, there is no playground in Delgany even though it has seen substantial increase in the number of young families in the last 5 years with further increase in the pipeline resulting from current planning permissions. There are opportunities and sites where

adventure playground could be provided as well as a more traditional playground e.g. lands to the rear of St Laurence's School, council lands on Blackberry lane, Kindlestown Wood (requiring cooperation with Coillte). This would be in line with National Objective 1 of the Children and Young Peoples Services Committee's with a goal of ensuring that children "Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing We would ask the Council to provide, where it is within its remit, community infrastructure that meets the social and recreational requirements of Delgany's residents. Where provision is the responsibility of developers, government departments or other agencies (e.g. HSE, Department of Education and Coillte), we would ask that the Council to work closely with these stakeholders to facilitate and support the provision of much needed community infrastructure in Delgany. We would also request that the Council seek to ensure that community facilities are physically integrated close to Delgany and residential and employment areas to optimise access, function and use; and to ensure that they are designed to incorporate universal accessibility insofar as possible, to cater for all ages and abilities.

- The provision of good quality social and community facilities in Delgany is a key element in building good placemaking and in the creation of a sustainable and socially cohesive community. Social/community infrastructure is a vital part of any neighbourhood as is badly needed in Delgany and will contribute greatly to the social fabric and quality of life.
- Community facilities, such as the much needed Community Centre, will serve as a focal point for our neighbourhood to serve and provide opportunities for interaction through local community, sporting, cultural, the arts, educational and social events. These activities help to increase personal well-being and add to our sense of place and local identity in Delgany. **In summary, we need good quality indoor and outdoor community facilities to also boost the attractiveness of Delgany for those of us who live, work or invest here.**

- **Green Infrastructure** - for the purposes of the next LAP, we would request that specific objectives, zoning and planning for the following green infrastructure (for climate action, biodiversity action, and community wellbeing) are included:
 - nature restoration and native woodland habitat development of the Coolagad / Kindlestown to Glen of the Downs area. This should include removing the plan for R001 link road from Greystones North through Coolagad to N11 and zoning the area for nature (Greenbelt or Open Space / Biodiversity)
 - a comprehensive map of the local streams and the (CDP) set-back buffer zone of 25m each side (to inform zoning and development). Explicitly zone these as Open Space
 - a comprehensive assessment and mapping of the ponds and wetlands (as an extension of the streams map) and develop ponds / wetlands at The Glebe bridge, Delgany and other community locations. A strategy for protecting waterways by supporting householders who are on septic tanks to change to mains water and sewer.
 - complete the assessment of the already proposed trees for tree protection orders
 - plan for community energy solutions including community solar and wind generation on all WCC and other public buildings
 - plan for a community composting centre and community mechanical and electrical repair centre
 - map the active travel infrastructure (cycle and walking routes) for the area and assess where further development is needed

LAP Implementation and Monitoring

Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that the manager shall, not later than two years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the plan.

We request that the appropriate Key Performance Indicators to measure Local Area progress on Climate and Biodiversity Action be planned and baselined for regular progress reporting.

In relation to specific points:

1. **At Saturation Point with Housing in Delgany** – we now urgently need amenities to match the 4,000 increase in population between CSO’s Census 2016 and Census 2022 (15% growth in population is the highest growth rate in Wicklow). We have with existing permissions already reached the 2028 population targets. Over 2,000 new residential units, occupied largely by young families, have been built in this period and the majority of them are very close to Delgany. There’s now a need to “pause to catch-up” in terms of amenities, services and facilities.
2. **Need to Incorporate and Support Planning for Community Amenities** and close the “Deficit gap” that has emerged due to the large population increase noted above

(e.g. indoor community centre/space for elderly, parents and toddlers, youth, etc. outdoor park also needed for the same cohorts). Need for planned creches and medical, health and other services to remain zoned for these exclusively, and in a way that will reduce costs for providers, and not permit developers to request switch to residential units. If indoor community spaces are renegeged upon by developers, we request that the cost of provision of these community spaces/buildings are provided to WCC and ringfenced for community use in the Delgany area.

3. Public Realm Proposed Plans:

5.1 Schedule of Proposals

A	Sit With Me in Delgany	Delivering site specific outdoor seating areas adjacent to local businesses, offering comfortable and safe spaces for every generation to meet, linger and enjoy Delgany village centre.
B	Definitely Delgany	Consolidating a recognisable colour and material palette plus signage guidelines. Unique and adaptable street furniture , offering a unique style and approach for Delgany. A tool for engagement with developers.
C	I Am Delgany	Seeking community involvement to augment and preserve a unique archival catalogue of local stories, photographs, histories, maps, tales and people.
D	BioDiverse Delgany	Seeking to improve and strengthen the variety of opportunities to protect and enhance the village centre's rich ecological and biodiverse offering.
E	Destination Delgany	Detailing a public realm master plan for Convent Road, taking into consideration the recently developed carriageway options as potential strategies and approaches.
F	Discovering Delgany	Cultivating the existing local trail into a show stopping story-telling and immersive experience : unique to Delgany before expanding into further trails linking into the region's celebrated pedestrian network.
G	Delgany Delve Right In	Developing a recognisable identity for Delgany, to be simplified for ease of sharing across a variety of platforms, media, communications and services.
H	Let's Go, Delgany!	Extending active travel connections : providing bike stands and segregated infrastructure to encourage safe local travel and exploration: increasing footfall, and improving well-being.
I	A Playful Delgany	Providing local spaces for play and forest-based woodland activities for users of all ages to re-engage with the wild environment themselves and nurture a respect for nature.
J	Brighten & Lighten Delgany	Recognising a strong vreative energy, proposing the development of community-led floral, planted, illuminated and colourful interventions across pocket spaces to further enliven the village.
K	The Delgany Ticket	Curating an inclusive events programme centering on an annual Village Festival, with family-friendly performance such as Viking re-enactment events and the Battle of Delgany.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61eeb2187e07f10c5444d8fd/t/655299c2d2751e452b3aa7a2/1699912165900/Delgany+PublicRealm+Plan.pdf> - 10/12 projects, preserve Honeybrook Cottage, Stylebawn House and grounds, Burial ground,).



Protecting and enhancing the unique and special character of Delgany Village and its surrounding landscape has remained central to the development of the public realm plan. Central to this has been recognising and celebrating those particular elements, assets and details that set Delgany Village apart from its close urban neighbour of Greystones Town:



- Need to have Heritage Spaces Designated and Protected in the Plan similar to ACA protections in the UK** (e.g. HSE building) and remains of built and natural heritage “preserved and protected” (e.g. Burial Ground, Stylebawn, Honeybrook Cottage, Glen of the Downs and Golf Club and area around Kindlestown House – “treasure trove” of flora, fauna and all elements of biodiversity (Letter submitted by DCC on recent Further Information supplied by the Applicant). Éamon de Buitlear said Delgany was a “hotbed of flora and fauna”. In addition, there is a rich social history left by the La Touche Family from the Bellevue Estate in terms of the buildings and history of the village. Paul Hogarth has proposed the following project which could be housed in the vacant HSE building.

“I am Delgany”

Collating Delgany's diverse social histories into community-led contributions to an existing and exciting **archival catalogue** of stories, photographs, maps and characters - to be continuously updated through the *Our Wicklow Heritage* archive from the local Heritage Office.

Envisaged as an expansion of the online catalogue of archival documentation that relates to the rich heritage of Delgany, this project has the potential to expand to become a local interpretive and visitor centre that allows for both locals and visitors to continue to learn these local important stories.

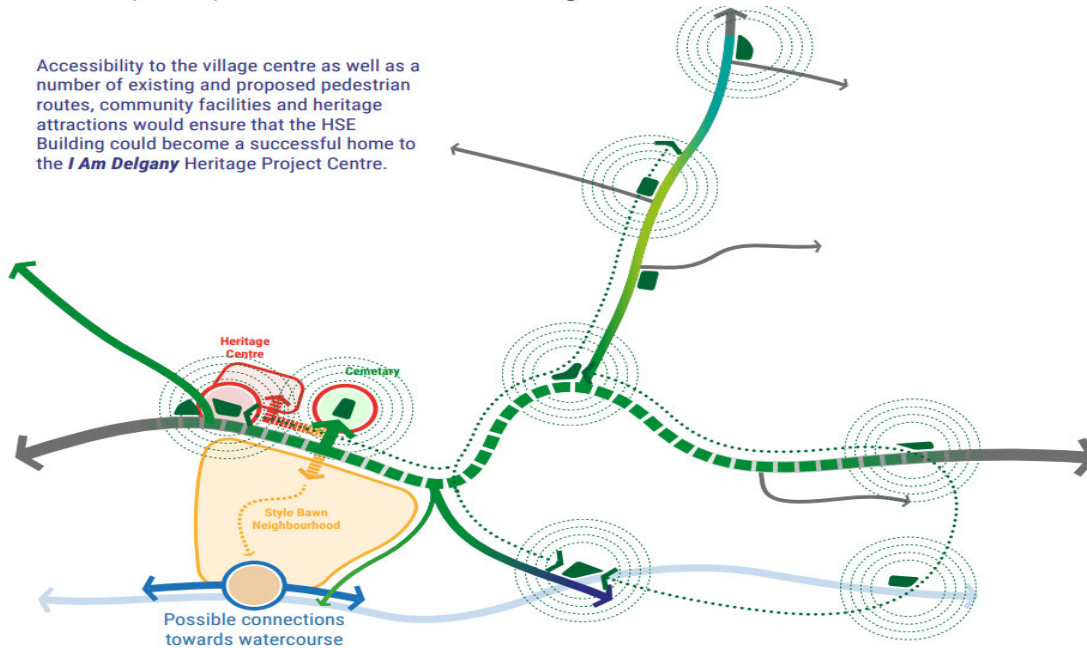


*It is envisaged that the **I Am Delgany** project could, depending on the resources and funding opportunities available through the community group's efforts, develop from it's current online environment to ultimately become a physical space, through the longer term development of a heritage centre, perhaps at the old HSE Building.*



Community Centre
Drumshallon, Louth

Accessibility to the village centre as well as a number of existing and proposed pedestrian routes, community facilities and heritage attractions would ensure that the HSE Building could become a successful home to the **I Am Delgany** Heritage Project Centre.



“Biodiverse Delgany” (Extract from Paul Hogarth Plan)

BioDiverse Delgany Adaptations across the village centre can cater for a number of improvements to the ecological conditions and environmental functions of the wider area, alongside infrastructural upgrades to transport networks, utility systems and other built works. When considered from the early stages of a project, these green (plants, vegetation) and blue (watercourses) systems can contribute to a more biodiverse place for a variety of plants and animals, as well as proven benefits for residents and businesses across the urban centre. Considering these streetscape upgrades can provide greater space for people-focused activities, while limiting the village's loud motor traffic.



Climate resilience through management of water and ecological corridors
Hammersmith and Fulham, United Kingdom

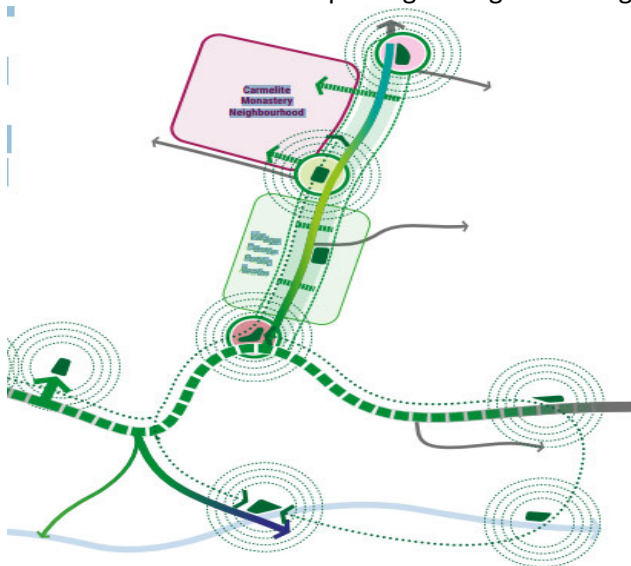
On-street planting areas as buffers
Westport Town, County Mayo



“Destination Delgany” - Public Realm Enhancement Plan by Paul Hogarth Company - Vision:

We have a vision for a People-focused Village Centre like Clonakilty, County Cork
Comfortable Courtyard Space Katz Orange Cafe, Berlin Carmelite Monastery Neighbourhood
Village Centre Public Realm.

In a detailed public realm and street design plan for Delgany, we would consider a number of other adjacent strategies including “Sit With Me” in Delgany (outdoor dining and seating areas) and “Definitely Delgany” (a cohesive furniture palette) - tying it into a spatial plan with technical and geometric considerations around building access, connections (to proposed greenway routes, for example), parking and transport, public utilities access, lighting, seating and universally accessible areas for people to enjoy, while reducing the dominance of cars passing through the village.



A People-focused Village Centre
Clonakilty, County Cork



Multi-functional and adaptable on-street furniture configurations, aiming to provide greater public seating and facilities while also reducing the dominance of the private motor vehicle in sensitive town centre environments
Brackbury Village, United Kingdom

Seating Opportunity Mapping
Delgany Village



Seasonal street adaptations
Philadelphia, United States



Delivering site-specific outdoor seating areas adjacent to businesses and homes, offering comfortable and safe spaces for people of every generation to meet in the village centre.



Robust and user-friendly design
NeoBarcino Street Furniture



Incorporating old and new stone setts at local access points



A very strong interest emerged from the community (from the Paul Hogarth surveys) in infrastructure that is robust, attractive and well-designed. This includes street furniture, paving, signage and lighting. Additional to this, the “Definitely Delgany” project would consider how these can visually and formally tie together through a repeated motif, colour, logo or form (shape). This project would aim to procure a palette of materials that offers a unified appearance across various places within Delgany, while retaining the unique qualities of each place.

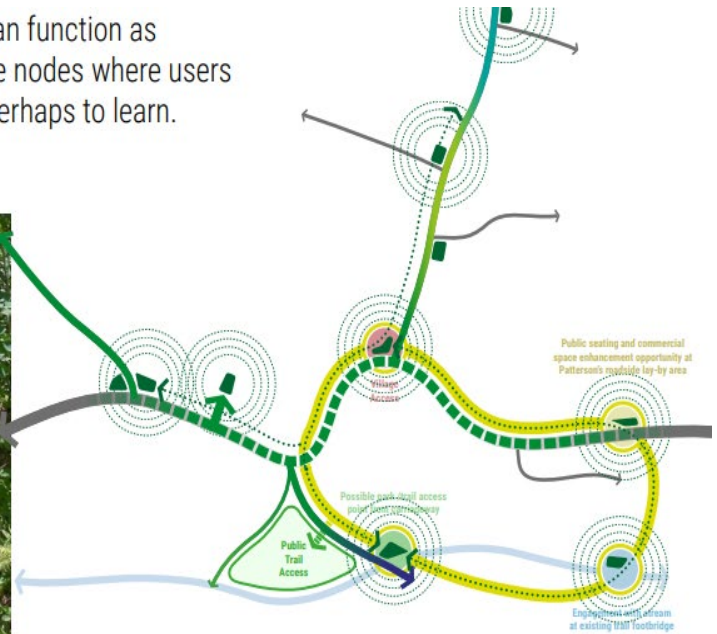
“Discovering Delgany”

Augmenting the village’s existing local trails into a memorable story-telling experience: to be expanded over time to link with wider trails linking into the region’s celebrated network. Delgany has stories to tell, and some great places to tell them. A number of outdoor areas can function as recreational, informational and interpretive nodes where users can find a moment to meet, to relax and perhaps to learn.

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QR Codes such as those adopted into the trail network at Tsútsweec Provincial Park in British Columbia would allow visitors to explore further layers of history hosted on the Wicklow Heritage website (as developed in 'Am Delgany - project C).



Engaging Story-telling and Interpretation
Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Newry



“Delgany - Delve Right In!”

It is recognised that visual communications can be a simple and strong tool to develop a bespoke language and identity for a village or area. DCC has a vision to augment Delgany’s unique presence within the wider Wicklow region using a consolidated visual appearance across a number of physical and virtual media. We could achieve this with a dedicated typeface, colour or graphic motif. The visual identity for Delgany could be linked with the recently developed County Wicklow Tourist Passport, allowing for a recognisable appearance to connect visitors with the wider region, and ensuring that Delgany remains visually distinct.



Above Simplified geometry of visually unique points or features of the town are celebrated in bold design
Lismore Heritage Town, County Waterford

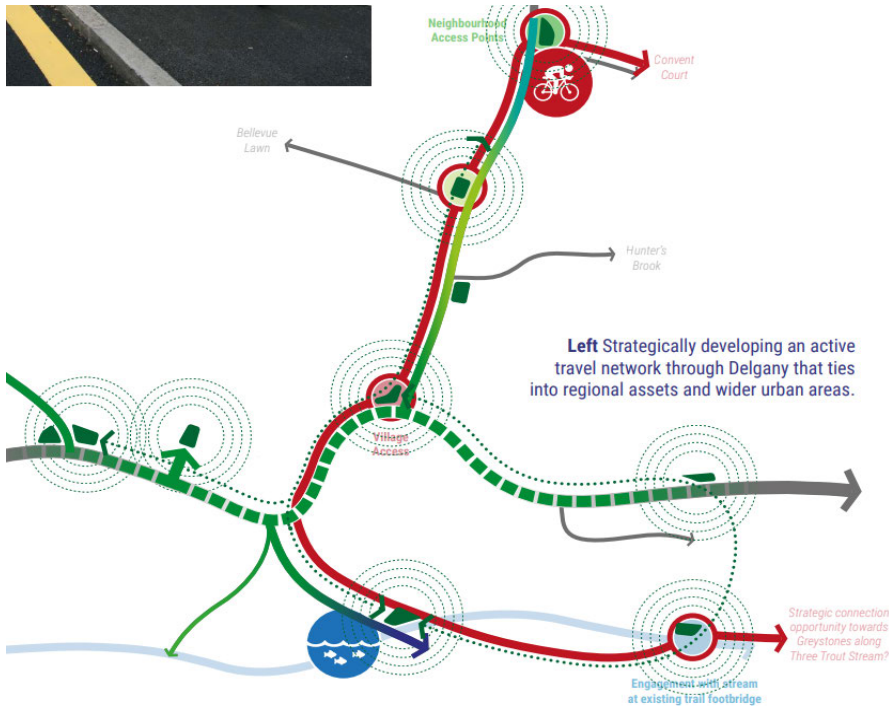
“Let’s Go Delgany!”

Through the course of public consultations, it was determined that a strong local interest exists in improving and expanding the local active travel networks into and through Delgany. This project would examine the expansion of dedicated and safe cycling infrastructure to include lanes and parking stand areas, with safe and standardised connections towards regional attractions and connections including Greystones Train Station and Glen of the Downs Nature Trail. Village centre upgrades would enable for greater commercial operations and seating:

Right Existing cycle infrastructure into and through Delgany Village is sporadic, outdated and unsafe for local journeys - including those to and from local schools.



Left A re-imagined village street in Ireland with dedicated safe space and accessible infrastructure for cyclists, pedestrians and motor users; this configuration has allowed for increased outdoor commercial space for local vendors alongside public seating space and localised pockets of vegetation. *Blackrock Village, County Dublin*



“Brighten and Lighten Delgany”

New pockets of vegetation present an opportunity to promote the importance of biodiversity and pollinator-friendly species. We envisage these as being either a protective infrastructure capacity, or as a school project that enables involvement from the wider village - becoming an active educational resource.



Above Left On-street screening adapted with a vegetated buffer
Malahide Town, County Dublin

Above Adaptable overhead canopies with a playful and colourful twist using colourful umbrellas
Apple Market Lane, Waterford City

Left Community mural development involving local students as part of an "Art Bomb Brigade" project
City of Akron, Ohio, United States

Summary

It is understood that Delgany is home to an **actively engaged** and enthusiastic community: residents enjoy the provision of local **amenities and services**, including in particular the **shops** and **cafes** across the wider area of Delgany.

A particularly strong interest exists in the village's special character and unique heritage, while improvements in **safe movement** and greater **access to open space** is desired.

- Road Closure Chapel Road to create Safe and Open Space for Community Get Togethers** (e.g. farmers' markets, Christmas Carols, Community BBQs, musical events, etc). While we understand that this is largely an engineering/transport issue, we feel that there are important implications in a planning sense for the realisation of a nice public realm and placemaking space. The summary from the Hogarth Report shows that people are looking for safe movement and access to open space.

"The Delgany Ticket"

Curating an inclusive events programme which would centre on an annual Festival, with family friendly performance such as Viking re-enactments of the Battle of Delgany, or the early Christian era of Delgany's development.

It is over a thousand years since the Battle of Delgany, yet there's a strong focus on the community's celebration of local history, lore, and culture. The "Delgany Ticket" would establish a programme of events to include music, performance, as well as active involvement from local restaurants and cafes.



Left A family-friendly mix of food stalls, fruit and vegetable stands, book shops and local performance
 Marley Park Markets, County Dublin



Left Flexible street space that safely allows for dynamic uses such as on-street conversation, presentation, debate and public engagement
 NLA Project, London, United Kingdom

6. **Need for Good-sized Playground similar to Flagship Project of Rossmore Forest Park** in Monaghan in **Kindlestown Woods** (DCC letter sent to CEO WCC in January 2024 proposing this project) (<https://monaghantourism.com/listing/rossmore-playpark-and-giants/> designed by Paul Hogarth). Rossmore Forest Park playground, designed by Paul Hogarth, has been a great success for both Monaghan County Council and Coillte. While we realise that this proposal is outside the scope of the LAP, it would provide a fantastic amenity for both young and old alike, and the Forest Park in Monaghan since the inclusion of the playground has become a bit tourist attraction in and of itself.

“A Playful Delgany”

Active engagement with the surrounding woodlands emerged as a unique and particular local interest of many consultation respondents. Working with forestry specialists, as well as those who have previously worked to develop the successful Delgany Heritage Trail, a network of woodland play attractions could be developed as part of a woodland recreation strategy. A Playful Delgany aims to offer Delgany with a unique and engaging network of spaces for all ages.

Rossmore Forest Park Playground, Co.Monaghan



7. **Primary and Secondary School Projections Need to be Assessed when Granting Planning Permissions.** Local primary and secondary schools could provide real-time data to WCC Planning Department. In recent years, Delgany has suffered from

insufficient spaces being available to local children, despite Census numbers indicating the need to increase capacity well in advance of the shortages emerging (e.g. 0-9 year cohort in CSO's 2016 Census).

8. **Need for Safe Bike Parking and E-Biking scheme from Dart** to encourage active travel on new cycle paths and reduced carbon emissions.
9. **Electric Bus Town service linking the three areas of Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole** -this is needed for the elderly, people with mobility issues, parents and children, teenagers, commuters, etc. These services will mean less carbon emissions and elderly people will be able to access medical help in a timely manner before they have a number of ailments which often require hospitalisation.
10. **Need to Increase Employment Ratio** (Greystones has one of the lowest ratios in Ireland) by providing for **more local employment to reduce number of residents commuting and carbon emissions**. For example, use of zoned land for enterprises should provide jobs that match the skill sets of local residents in Delgany, Greystones and Kilcoole, and office hubs like "The Hive" in Carrick-on-Shannon ([The Hive Leitrim \(the-hive.ie\)](http://the-hive.ie)) might be considered. Given the large windfarms to be built off Bray/Greystones, an R and D/Technical Centre for renewable energies, and potentially a second university campus from UCD, TCD, DCU, TUD, etc might be considered for Greystones/Fassaroe. In terms of greater diversity in employment in the County, more anti-cyclical businesses such as Pharma, Medical Sciences, parts of software engineering need to be attracted to this and other areas of the county.

DCC would like to partner with WCC on any of the suggestions made above, or any other initiatives that fit with our Vision.

Best regards,

Paul Armstong

Chairperson - Delgany Community Council

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- Foster a sense of inclusion, belonging and participation amongst all the residents of Delgany.

All residents of Delgany are welcome to join the DCC

National Health Policy

We are conscious of the aims of the **Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025** and have referred to it in drafting this proposal.

We will work towards:

Goal 1: Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life: This will be achieved by ensuring that the Community centre offers health related opportunities for all age groups.

Goal 2- Reduce health inequalities: We will work to target groups who are at risk of disadvantage including carers, those with disabilities, older people, newcomers to Ireland.

We also note **Theme 2** in the document which recognises the important role played by local authorities in **Health Promotion**.

Theme 3 really captures exactly what we propose to do in this centre. The document states:

“The impact of positive social interaction cannot be underestimated. Social interaction and supporting social connectedness and involvement in community life are a keystone to empowering people at the individual level and building strong communities for health and wellbeing.”

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The building itself is a protected structure in the middle of the Architectural Conservation Area of Delgany village. The building features prominently on entry into Delgany Village, and as such provides a great central focal point for local groups to meet and to host events aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all. Given the location of the HSE building it means that our centre will also be in the heart of the community where it can best serve the needs of local people. It will play a vital role in bringing people together and reducing isolation, as it will encourage people to take part in **Health and Wellbeing** activities. The social bonds that people will create in this centre will give a sense of belonging and help build a much more inclusive community. By providing the chance to get involved locally this will improve residents’ mental and physical health and general well-being.

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As we emerge from Covid the need for local focal points such as this has never been greater. Local residents are seeking to connect with others and to be part of their community. Delgany has seen a rapid rate of expansion in recent years with more development to come. We urgently need to address the deficit in terms of places where people can gather for a range of health related activities.

Target Audience:

We hope to provide a service to all who live, work or socialise in close proximity to Delgany village. We will aim to target groups which are marginalised and at risk of social isolation: Older adults, those recovering from mental health difficulties, those who are carers, who are out of work as well as our younger residents who have no suitable local meeting point.

Partnerships with existing support groups:

We have had initial contact with several support groups with whom we hope to work in the future. These include:

- Greystones Cancer support
- Wicklow Dementia support
- Down Syndrome Wicklow
- Triple A Alliance autism support group
- Dyspraxia Ireland
- Co. Wicklow CYPSC (Children and Young Peoples Services Committee)
- Local Breast-feeding support groups (La Leche and Cuidiú)
- Wicklow Local Sports Partnership: The centre could provide a useful starting point for local activities aimed at promoting physical activity.
- Cystic Fibrosis Ireland
- Epilepsy Ireland
- Acquired Brain Injury Ireland
- Newcastle Psychiatric Hospital (Out-patients)

We will continue to forge links with other groups in addition to those listed above.

Some of the other activities that we would hope to support include (and are not limited to) the following:

- First Aid courses
- Courses on healthy eating in conjunction with organisations like Bray Area Partnership
- Creative writing workshops and Art workshops to maintain and promote good mental health: We envisage looking at the McAuley place model in Naas, Co Kildare. An artist/writer might be able to avail of space to work in the centre in exchange for delivering some community workshops.

- Mind your Mental Health events
- Meeting room for local parent and baby/toddler groups, mature citizens hub, yoga/pilates, art classes, meditation classes, youth clubs, etc. This fulfils Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will work with KWETB to source tutors and facilitators for programmes related to both mental and physical health.

HSE and Environmental Protection Agency project:

One of the aims of the Centre (to be called after Éamon and Laillí de Buitléar) is to provide a range of holistic activities to promote and enhance Personal Health and wellbeing.



We note the recommendations of the NEAR Health team (based in NUI Galway) which was funded jointly by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Health Service Executive (HSE) to investigate how Nature and Environment can help society attain and restore health. The research combined environmental, health, social innovation, and medical fields to build capacity, develop and transform knowledge for communities, policy-makers and practitioners. The project investigated:

- (1) how people value and experience, nature, health and wellbeing,
- (2) the barriers and bridges to nature connection
- (3) what people want from their healthy future environment
- (4) nature-based activities to benefit people's health and wellbeing. The project outlined how all stakeholders can "implement inclusive nature-based solutions to promote and restore health and wellbeing and help us to value and care for a healthy environment."

It also states that:

"Spending time, or doing activities, in nature can help us to feel better, to be more connected to each other and to care more for the environment. There are many ways to do this. This toolkit, based on the NEAR Health research (which deals with nature connections and health and wellbeing benefits), aims to help people to find ways to engage with nature and improve their health and wellbeing."

We see the proposed centre in Delgany as a project that seeks to address the recommendations of the report and to bring them to life in our Community in Delgany. The proposed **Community Health and Wellbeing centre** will support, protect and enhance **the Health and Wellbeing** of our Community by exploring opportunities linked with biodiversity and landscapes around Delgany.

<https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/environment--health/JS---NEAR-Toolkit-FINAL-V1.6-1Oct20.pdf>



Working with and for our local environment:

We recognize the important role that our environment plays in supporting and enhancing our mental health as well as our physical health.

We will place particular emphasis on appreciation of the wonderful natural environment in Delgany through developing the following activities:

- Providing information re local walking trails
- Hosting Forest Bathing information sessions: The centre will focus on the use of local forests for health and well-being (e.g. guided forest bathing tours and meditation groups is fully aligned with Goal 3 of the SDGs). There is also an increasing body of empirical research that shows the positive impact that forests, nature trails and walking in the countryside provide for mental health and well-being, in terms of reducing stress and anxiety.

We will aim to provide locals with the tools to engage pro-actively with climate action initiatives instead of becoming paralysed by Eco-Anxiety.

Local Need

The recent Community and Social audit of the Greystones Municipal District underlines just how under-resourced this area is – the survey showed that Delgany has 20% of the Municipal District population, but a mere 3% of the facilities. It is also very clear from the results of the two recent surveys of residents, conducted for DCC by Paul Hogarth Consultants, that residents clearly want to see the heritage and character of Delgany preserved and protected and new community amenities. In this regard, we see the HSE building as a unique opportunity to preserve and protect the heritage and character of the village while also providing a new much needed **Community Health and Wellbeing Centre**.

Inclusion:

The building would be designed to be fully accessible. Text, captions and all communications would use Universal Design principles (from DPER and NDA) and would be in plain text in line with National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) to promote to use of plain English.

A sensory space would also be planned to ensure that those who need access to such a facility can also have their needs met.

Conclusion:

As a Community Council we understand the important role of connection and community plays in our Health and Wellbeing.

This project will bring a vacant and derelict building (the HSE primary care centre which has been vacant for over 11 years) back into use as a multi-purpose Community Health and Wellbeing Centre, which is very much aligned with the objectives of “Our Rural Future – Ireland’s Rural Development Policy 2021-2025”. As this building is a Protected Structure, the recommended approach is to keep it in active and sustainable use. This can be achieved if the community is permitted to develop the building as a **Community Health and Wellbeing centre**.

Local Support:

We know that our community needs a **Community Health and Wellbeing Centre**. We have undertaken a Public Realm Consultation plan recently with The Hogarth Group and the results of that have informed this proposal.

We have been assured of the support of all of our local and National elected representatives in realising this important plan for our village. Their advocacy will be the key to ensuring that we have the funds to finance the repurposing of this building as well as operational costs.

We would like to thank the HSE in advance and acknowledge their role in transferring this building to Wicklow County Council for use as a multi-purpose **Community Health and Wellbeing Centre** and look forward to the benefit that it will bring to Delgany village.

This project will have a substantial positive effect on placemaking and will put Delgany on the map as an important Wellbeing and biodiversity destination. It will enhance the health and wellbeing of those who use it as well as encouraging local residents to spend more time in the centre of the village by attending classes, meetings and other activities in the centre.

From a community perspective, it will be supported across local resident, volunteer and business organizations to drive incremental value to the community at large. We believe that it will allow us to realise **Theme 3 from the Healthy Ireland Framework** in a very real way:

“The impact of positive social interaction cannot be underestimated. Social interaction and supporting social connectedness and involvement in community life are a keystone to empowering people at the individual level and building strong communities for health and wellbeing.”