

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON TOWN HALL
RIVER SHANNON INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE,
COMMUNITY SPACE & COMMUNITY GARDEN

ADDENDUM 01:

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

MAY 2025



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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an Aontas Eorpach
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An Tuaiscirt & An Iarthair
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Regional Assembly



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council

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CIVIL DEFENCE
COSAINT SHIBHIALTA



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Allies and Morrison



Introduction and purpose of this report

This short report acts as an update to the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan (Integrated Urban Strategy, IUS) and should be read in conjunction with the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan dated June 2023. The Town Centre First Plan / IUS, prepared directly in the context of the National Town Centre First policy, outlines a clear and ambitious vision for improvement across all aspects of the town centre – its environmental qualities, its community facilities and its local economic performance. The Town Centre First Plan / IUS is framed by 4 policy themes with specific objectives under each theme. In this context, 3 ‘Big Ideas’ are outlined under which a range of project opportunities are presented. It is these Big Ideas which establish the framework around which the Town Centre First Plan / IUS is formed.

The local community in Carrick-on-Shannon together with the Town Team, have had long-standing ambitions to bring the Town Hall building in Carrick-on-Shannon back into a sustainable, beneficial use, both to preserve this important heritage structure but also to allow it to be used for the

benefit of the whole community.

The adaptive reuse of this important historic structure has the potential to bring new life into the commercial heart of Carrick-on-Shannon and write a new and exciting chapter in the history of this important heritage asset.

With the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan / IUS already in place, this report outlines how the opportunities to bring the Town Hall building back into a new community-facing use should be fully incorporated into the Town Centre First Plan / IUS as a new project. Community feedback on the potential delivery of this project has been overwhelmingly positive.

Delivery of this high-profile project, to the highest standards of environmental sustainability, will help to secure a viable and successful future for this beautiful historic building in the heart of the town centre. The project will contribute positively to the Town Centre First Plan / IUS’s aims and objectives together with those of the wider New European Bauhaus.



Background to THRIVE

THRIVE – the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme – supports locally developed plans that take an integrated strategic approach to the regeneration of our towns and locally selected projects that assist in creating town centres that function as viable, vibrant, and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit while also functioning as the business, service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

New European Bauhaus

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) sets a vital framework for the THRIVE funding programme. The Bauhaus is underpinned by three main pillars, “Sustainable, Beautiful and Together” which are defined as follows, each with three ambitions which reflect fundamental values of NEB. The following quotes are taken from the ‘New European Bauhaus Compass, 2022’.

THREE VALUES

Aesthetics (“Beautiful”)

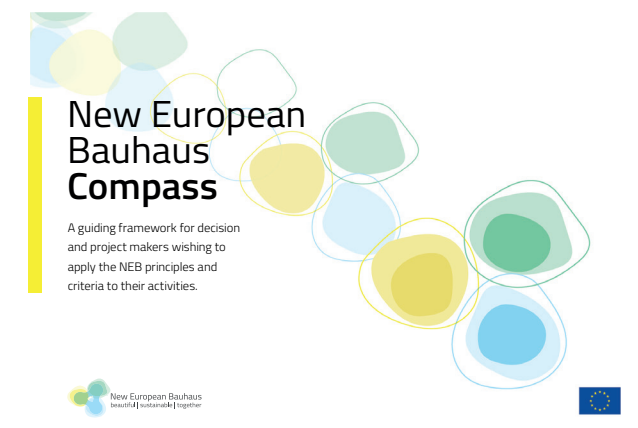
Aesthetics refers to the overall quality of experience and style, beyond functionality:

- **To activate:** *“A beautiful project improves the physical and mental well-being of individuals by considering their senses and emotions, on top of their needs. It activates the cultural, social, and natural qualities of a place to create unique and positive experiences. The project fosters awareness of place and heritage in all its diversity, while embracing its own aesthetic.”*

- **To connect:** *“A beautiful project enhances opportunities for meaningful social interactions and collective experiences. It reinforces a sense of belonging and enriches lives by connecting different places and people. The new attachments that emerge through the project foster openness and mutual care.”*
- **To integrate:** *“A beautiful project enables creation, and the collective re-invention of the places, lifestyles, and communities we identify with. It integrates new cultural and social values, notably through the meaningful experience of a broader ‘us’ (including the non-human world). In doing so, it aspires to anticipate future transformations, and may generate a long-lasting movement”*

Sustainability

Sustainability encompasses a wide spectrum of topics ranging from climate goals, to circularity, zero pollution, and biodiversity:



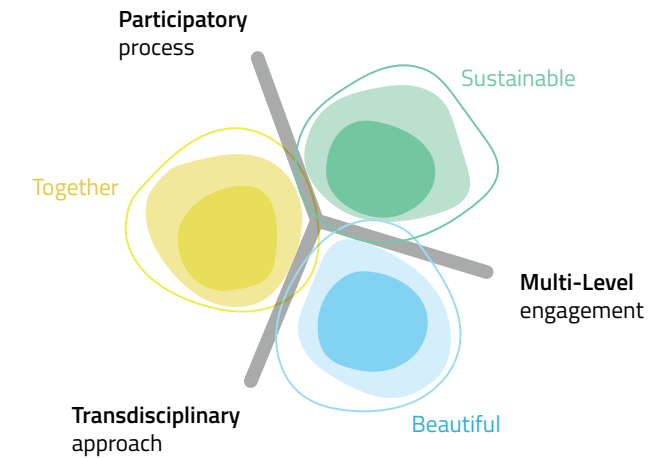
*“The **New European Bauhaus** (NEB) initiative is an enabler for the green transition of our societies and economy. It calls on all Europeans to imagine and build together a sustainable and inclusive future that is beautiful for our eyes, minds, and souls. It aims at transforming different sectors of economy, especially the built environment, making them contribute to our climate goals and to an improvement of the quality of life of all citizens.”*

- **To repurpose:** *“A sustainable project aims to repurpose in order to avoid and reduce environmental impacts and favours durability, adaptability, recyclability. It aims at rethinking services, products and places to reduce pollution and carbon impacts and have minimum use of resources, materials and energy. It looks at the scale of a products’ lifecycle. Projects that repurpose are aware of the impact their initiative has on the environment and have the ambition to reduce their environmental footprint.”*
- **To close the loop:** *“A sustainable project aims to close the loop, reduce linear processes or transform them into circular processes to aim at zero pollution. It looks at the scale of an (industrial) system. Projects that close the loop actively involve all other actors in the cycle of the design, production, use and discarding phase of their initiative.”*
- **To regenerate:** *“A sustainable project aims to give back more than it takes, enhancing rather than depleting biodiversity, incentivising the restoration and expansion of nature. Regenerative sustainability also considers how contexts and environments influence worldviews, paradigms, and behaviours. It looks at the scale of an ecosystem. Initiatives in this dimension are aware of the complete ecosystem they act in and their project’s impact over time and space on biodiversity and natural resources.”*

Inclusion (“Together”)

Inclusion encourages valuing diversity and equality for all, and securing accessibility and affordability:

- **To include:** *“An inclusive project grants accessibility (physical, cognitive, psychological, etc.) and affordability for all, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, ability, age or sexual orientation. Equality of treatment and opportunities is essential but cannot be taken for granted, so it is important to prioritise less-represented individuals, groups and communities.”*
- **To consolidate:** *“An inclusive project fosters and equalises relations between users and/or communities, safeguarding the principle of equal treatment and social justice over time. Inclusion and open access to services are secured by formal, structural mechanisms such as funding instruments, business models, planning, policies, regulations and other institutionalisation processes.”*
- **To transform:** *“Inclusion inspires new ways of living together, building on solidarity and cooperation, raising awareness of discrimination and injustice. An inclusive project becomes exemplary and replicable, and has the potential to break obsolete social models, create value and bring transformative benefits on a societal level, influencing worldviews, paradigms and social behaviours.”*



THREE WORKING PRINCIPLES

Projects are encouraged to embrace three working principles: a participatory process, multi-level engagement and a trans-disciplinary approach. Working across these principles is intended to achieve the highest level of ambitions in the three values.

Participatory process

This relates to the involvement of communities in the design, decision-making and implementation process:

- **To consult:** *“A participatory project features already-established communication channels and stakeholder participation. At this first ambition level, participation ranges from information-sharing about the project to consultation feeding into decision-making. The information flow is static and mostly one sided: the information flows from the project owner to its audience and then back.”*
- **To co-develop:** *“A participatory project engages stakeholders as key partners and advisers in defining and/or co-creating the rules and objectives of the project. The emerging ideas are developed collaboratively by the project and its stakeholders. The information flow is dynamic, exchanges are on an equal foot and information becomes co-designed.”*

- **To self-govern:** *“A participatory project aims to enable stakeholders to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with power-holders, at all stages of the project’s lifecycle (design, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and empowers the community to make decisions and govern the project.”*

Multi-level engagement

Multi-level engagement encourages consideration of effects across different scales (e.g. local / global), fields (e.g. policy / activities) and times (e.g. short / long term):

- **To work locally:** *“A multi-level NEB project connects horizontally informal networks (e.g. groups of individuals, neighbourhoods...), and/or formal institutions (e.g. sectoral departments, political groups...) and/or and engages with them to influence the local living environment with a placed-based approach.”*
- **To work across levels:** *“A multi-level NEB project connects vertically informal networks (e.g. groups of individuals, neighbourhoods...) and/or formal institutions (e.g. government, administrations...) across various scales (e.g. single municipalities with regional authorities, local studies with international research programs), and engages with them to push single-scale initiatives beyond their own dimension (e.g. local, regional, national...).”*



3 NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

- **To work globally:** *“A multi-level NEB project that works at global level reaches for a wider, transformational impact beyond its initial, local scale of application and it connects networks and/or (inter)governmental institutions that, across various levels, share similar purposes looking at the future of the entire ecosystem.”*

fields with members of the public to explore possibilities and realise new narratives. By drawing on both local and traditional knowledge and cultural norms and values, it aims to supplement and transform scientific insights for the benefit of society.”

Transdisciplinary approach

This refers to a desire to integrate knowledge and expertise from different disciplines to encourage more nuanced solutions:

- **To be multidisciplinary:** *“A multidisciplinary NEB project aims to address a common problem within one field of knowledge. Working in a multidisciplinary way means working independently alongside other disciplines that engage in similar topics.”*
- **To be interdisciplinary:** *“An interdisciplinary NEB project aims to address a common problem or issue involving two or more academic disciplines or fields of knowledge. Working in an interdisciplinary way means collaborating with other disciplines towards a shared goal.”*
- **To be beyond-disciplinary:** *“A beyond-disciplinary NEB project aims to integrate both formal and non-formal knowledge to achieve a common goal. It aims to bring together people from political, social and economic*

Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan / Integrated Urban Strategy

The Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan / IUS was published in 2023 following widespread stakeholder engagement. The Plan is framed by 4 policy themes which are cast in direct response to National Town Centre First policy. These are:

1. Supporting the town centre vitality
2. Improving environmental quality
3. Improving access and movement
4. Strengthening community, identity, heritage & culture

Specific objectives under each theme are outlined as shown on page 11 which maps these themes and objectives directly against National Town Centre First Policy themes.

Building on these themes, and in response to engagement and discussions with key stakeholders, three 'Big Ideas' emerged around which the Town Centre First Plan / IUS is framed. These are captured in the graphic on page 11.

The Town Centre First Plan / IUS essentially comprises a series of project/actions, each of which contribute to the delivery of the three 'Big Ideas'. Two projects in particular were relevant to the then emerging idea of the Strand 2





4 INTEGRATED URBAN STRATEGY / TOWN PLAN

T O W N C E N T R E F I R S T P O L I C Y T H E M E S									
CARRICK-ON-SHANNON TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN REF THEMES & OBJECTIVES	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & NEW WAYS OF WORKING & LIVING	DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE & HOUSING CHOICE	EXPERIENCE-LED RETAIL	REGENERATION OF PUBLIC SPACE	SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	REALISING THE EXISTING CULTURAL & HERITAGE ASSETS OF PLACE	TOWN CENTRE VITALITY & IMAGE	EMPOWERED, INCLUSIVE & ENGAGED COMMUNITIES
1 SUPPORTING TOWN CENTRE VITALITY									
TCV1 Support a full and diverse programme of events in the town centre									
TCV2 Tackle retail and other vacancy									
TCV3 Promote town centre living utilising existing vacant properties and new infill development									
TCV4 Encourage a vibrant mix of uses, including those which make it a more successful destination									
TCV5 Continue to support the evening and visitor economy									
2 IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY									
EQ1 Improve the river front - making it more accessible for people									
EQ2 Create a green walking and cycling loop through and around the town centre									
EQ3 Create more attractive, accessible and flexible town centre spaces, designed for people									
EQ4 Improve the Leitrim Road approach corridor									
EQ5 Make the town more resilient to climate change									
3 IMPROVING ACCESS AND MOVEMENT									
AM1 Support the delivery of the Carrick-on-Shannon bypass									
AM2 Continue to promote active and sustainable travel									
AM3 Reimagine the post bypass N4 corridor									
AM4 Improve the quality of the town centre car park									
AM5 Improve Carrick-on-Shannon's historic laneways									
4 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, HERITAGE AND CULTURE									
CIHC1 Promote Carrick-on-Shannon as a destination									
CIHC2 Promote the town as a gateway for local arts, culture and produce									
CIHC3 Promote and maintain Carrick-on-Shannon's historic assets									
CIHC4 Provide dedicated space for community and cultural activities									

funding application – the renovation and adaptive reuse of a vacant or derelict heritage building in public control or ownership.

Two particular projects/actions were identified in the plan which this report provides an update on, namely:

- **Project 5. Provision of a water-based leisure activities and information centre:** A potential option put forward included an interpretative centre focussing on the story of the strong heritage and linkage of the town to the Shannon waterways to include community facilities. Early discussion with Waterways Ireland as the custodians of the Shannon navigation indicate their support for such an initiative which would be of regional significance.
- **Project 18. Provision of a dedicated flexible community space:** A new purpose built or prominent refurbishment project to deliver a landmark [library and] flexible community facility for the town centre. The building would be a high-quality design in a prominent location in the heart of the centre. NB A replacement Carrick-on-Shannon Library is being progressed as a separate project opportunity.

3 BIG IDEAS

1 Improving the connection to the river

Rejuvenating the relationship with the Shannon to establish better connections, and create new spaces to enliven the town...

2 Improving arrival gateways

Creating a stronger experience of arrival through the provision of new, rich parkland areas, formal planting and green connections to the town centre...

3 Promoting town centre vitality and activity

Sowing the seeds of a successful and vibrant town centre with safe, attractive streets and spaces and opportunities for a diverse range of market, business and community spaces...



In addition to these two core Town Centre First Plan / IUS projects, the opportunities presented by the adaptive re-use and refurbishment of the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall and its rear yard space will deliver other complementary direct benefits.

A number of themes and objectives were outlined in the original Integrated Urban Strategy for Carrick-on-Shannon. Four themes were identified against which individual project opportunities were appraised to understand and assess the contribution they might make to these overarching themes and objectives.

The four themes were as follows:

1. Supporting town centre vitality;
2. Improving environmental quality;
3. Improving access and movement; and
4. Strengthening community, identity, heritage and culture.

Four or five objectives under each theme were outlined in the IUS. When projects - existing or new - are appraised and assessed, their potential contribution to or alignment with these IUS objectives can be made.

This update to the Town Centre First Plan / IUS introduces a new project to the IUS - the establishment of a River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community space and garden at the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall building and rear yard. This project opportunity and its potential contribution to and alignment with these themes and objectives is outlined towards the end of this report (see pg 29).

5. Water-based leisure activities and information centre



A potential Shannon Waterside Centre could support a range of facilities. Such a centre would potentially provide information on the regions varied waterways, to which Carrick-on-Shannon acts as a gateway. The 'centre' could improve access to the water and support more water-based leisure activities for families and young people and help support the local tourism offer.

- Attractions: water activities (no family activities currently)
- Develop and support watersports and hiring facilities.
- Need information centre on the waterways
- Encouraging active leisure activities such as walking, cycling and watersports

Project context

Stakeholder feedback lent support for the provision of more water-based leisure activities and information. A potential Shannon Waterside Centre could support a range of facilities.

Project components:

- A small built facility with flexible accommodation on a prominent waterside location
- This could support small scale commercial water-based attractions such as kayaking
- Accessibility would be key to ensure benefits would be felt across the centre as a whole - to support linked trips to other town centre attractions, services and facilities

Key considerations and next steps:

- Improved facilities of this nature would support the objectives of Waterways Ireland's Shannon Tourism Masterplan
- Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and other related agencies and stakeholders should be consulted
- Opportunities for any such investment to be made in junction with the Carrick-on-Shannon Rowing Club should be considered as these might be scope for shared and mutual benefits
- Locations within easy reach of the Marina Car Park would provide easy and family friendly direct access to the water



Leao Rowing Club, Leao Rowing sits on the River Leao which has a fleet of fine and recreational boats of all sizes, a well-equipped gym, and regularly hosts events in the Boathouse. There is also a cafe next door, and clubhouse which is hired as an event space for weddings and parties.

18. Dedicated flexible community space / new library



A new purpose built or prominent refurbishment project to deliver a landmark library and flexible community facility for the town centre. The building would be a high-quality design in a prominent location in the heart of the centre.

- A new library development that can accommodate and facilitate events, activities, exhibitions, workshops etc which is part of a larger community amenity/space in the town centre.
- Indoor community areas badly needed for youth, elderly and other groups
- There needs to be a community centre in Carrick, where groups of all ages can meet.

Project context

The Town Team and the local community have been clear that there is a need for more dedicated community space within the town centre. The Library's temporary relocation to a former pharmacy store on Bridge Street has been a success, but a larger facility is required.

Project components:

- A new purpose-built high-quality library which would replace the current temporary facility on Bridge Street
- The project should also prioritise the delivery of new flexible community spaces which would support a wide range of local stakeholder and community events and activities
- The project could deliver a landmark new built facility or conversion of an existing building

Key considerations and next steps:

- The brief for the facility will need to be prepared collaboratively, with input from key local community groups
- The existing library should remain open during construction of any replacement facility

You said one of the **top things you wanted to improve was...**



Access to a community space

58% of respondents ranked improving town centre vitality as the top priority for Carrick-on-Shannon



Renovation of former school into new library, Kinnegad WCC received Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) to restore, refurbish and extend a former national school located on the Main Street in Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath for use as a new Community Library, Education and Training Centre, as part of a larger rural regeneration and development strategy.

Emergence of Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall project

The Town Team identified the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall as the most appropriate building for the THRIVE 2 funding bid. The principal reasons for this were as follows:

- **Location** – in view of the key themes identified in the Town Centre First Plan / IUS including the importance of better connecting the town with the River Shannon, the Town Hall is considered to offer the greatest potential benefits in this regard given its proximity to the riverfront.
- **Historical importance** – the Town Hall building has played an important role in the town since its construction in the 1830s. THRIVE funding provides the opportunity to return this landmark building to a community-facing use in the heart of the commercial centre. The Post Office is on the Record of Protected Structures but not considered to be of quite the same level of historical importance as the Town Hall. The Technical School building is not on the Record of Protected Structures.
- **Existing use** – the Town Hall is currently in use as temporary office space for Council staff. Relocation of these uses would not be complicated to arrange. The Post Office is an active post office serving the local resident and business community. Relocation of these key use would be a complex and lengthy process. The Technical School is also a well-used existing community education use which would need to be relocated. Existing uses in the Town Hall present the fewest constraints in terms of its potential adaptive reuse.

Emergence of Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall project – NEB alignment

With Project 5 and Project 18 already an integral part of the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Centre First Plan / IUS and with the opportunities presented by THRIVE Strand 2 funding, a single and more focussed project opportunity has emerged following discussions with the Town Team.

The Town Hall building occupies a prominent position in the heart of the town centre. It is a high profile community asset with a long history of public-facing uses. The building has played an active role in the community life of the town since its construction in the 1830s. Leitrim County Council, with the support of the Town Team, set about making their application for THRIVE 2 funding to deliver the investment needed to write a new chapter in the building's history of community uses through the refurbishment and adaptive reuse of both the building and its rear yard.


There was clear alignment with the three principal themes of the New European Bauhaus:

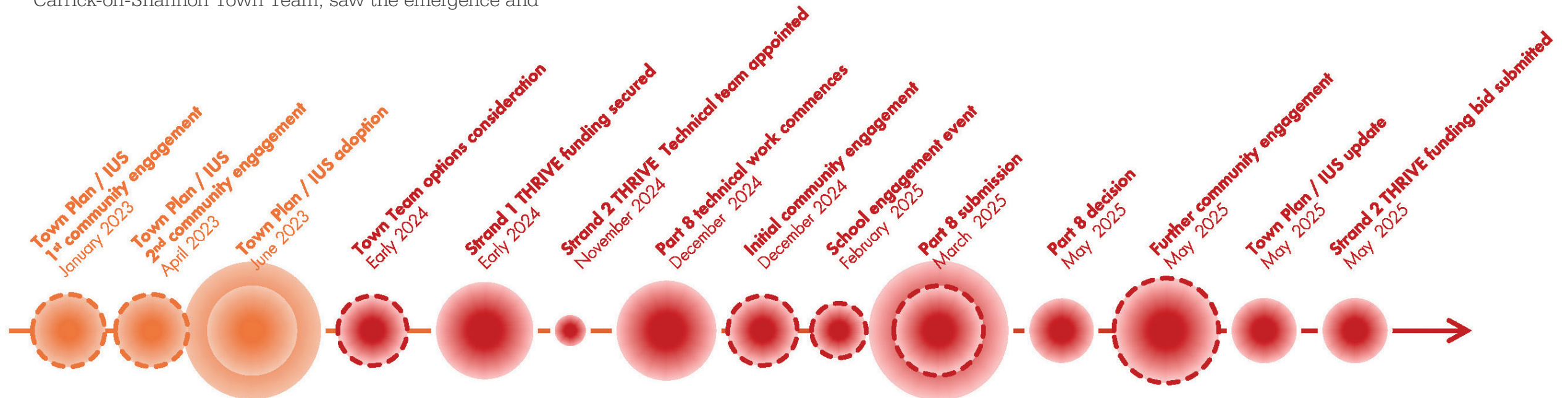
- **Beauty** - the Town Hall building is a beautiful structure of historic significance.
- **Sustainability** - the building has already proven itself a durable and robust part of the social and architectural history of Carrick-on-Shannon. Investment in the condition of the building will improve its environmental performance and the rear yard presents opportunities to generate sustainable energy for the initiative.
- **Inclusion** - this is the people's building. It is a community asset which has had a varied history of supporting a wide range of community activities and uses. The opportunity to directly engage with the local community and discuss with them their aspirations for this landmark heritage asset and to secure its long term community use has helped bring the community together in giving clear and unanimous support for the project.

Process overview

The process overview below shows the genesis of the initiative. The Town Centre First Plan / IUS for Carrick-on-Shannon was adopted in June 2023 and identified the importance of better connecting the town centre with the River Shannon. Building on the themes identified in the IUS for Carrick-on-Shannon, discussions, led by the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Team, saw the emergence and

development of the River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community space and garden concept. This concept was developed through the preparation of the Part 8 application and publicised at the May community engagement event. The local community gave their overwhelming community support for the concept.

-  Carrick-on-Shannon Integrated Urban Strategy / Town Plan milestone
-  River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community garden milestone
-  Public and community engagement milestone



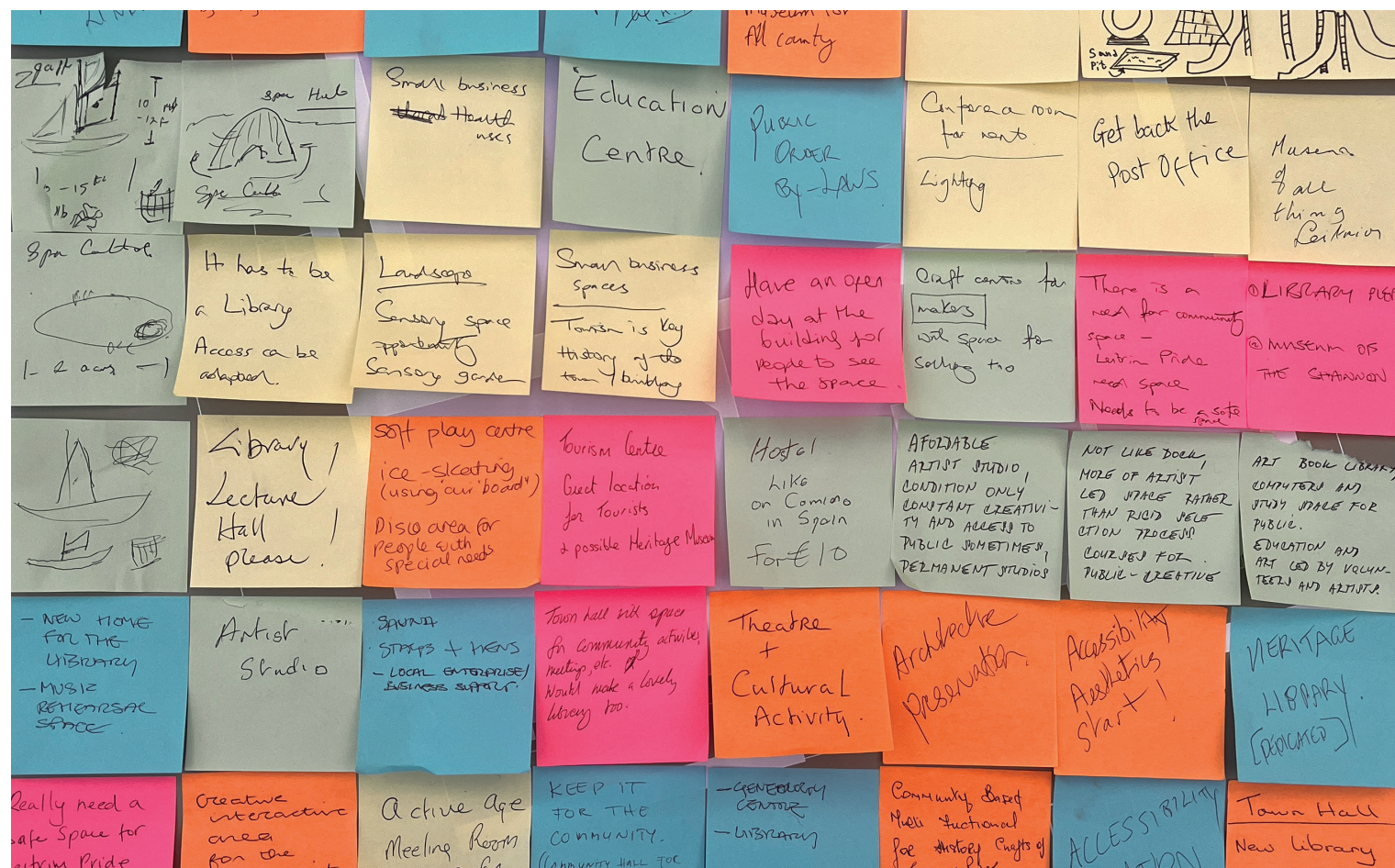
Stakeholder and community engagement

In line with NEB principles, the Town Centre First Plan / IUS update and THRIVE bid have been developed through and informed by an inclusive and accessible comprehensive programme of community and stakeholder engagement and dialogue. The events have targeted a broad range of local people and organisations. Two market stall pop-up events attracted hundreds of engagements ranging from informal conversations, in-depth discussions, the sharing of written comments, and completed survey questionnaires. A session with local school children provided direct and dedicated input from the town's youth. Alongside these information engagements, more structured liaisons took place with key stakeholders including Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland who are considered to be the two potential delivery partners for the River Shannon Interpretative Centre concept.

A range of engagement events took place throughout the overall programme, as follows:

ENGAGEMENT EVENT NO.1 – LISTENING, MARKET YARD EVENT (19 DECEMBER 2024)

At this initial stage, with the Town Team having already committed to focussing the THRIVE bid on the adaptive



6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

reuse of the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall building, the purpose of the engagement was to try and identify potential future community-oriented uses for the building.

The Project Team facilitated an event with the local community and stakeholders on Thursday 19th December at the Farmer's Market held in the Market Yard. At this session, the background to THRIVE was explained. The public were made aware that the Town Hall was the building selected for a funding bid. An interactive physical model of the Town Hall building and its surroundings, including Bridge Street and the entrance to the People's Park, was displayed at the consultation.

Key work undertaken in support of this event included:

- Social media postings giving notice of the forthcoming event and the opportunity to meet with the team and share thoughts and ideas on how the building might be used.
- Leaflet distribution to all Carrick-on-Shannon residents and businesses (via An Post).
- Press release which then attracted press-covering helping to promote the event.
- Market stall pop-up event held as part of Carrick-on-Shannon's weekly Farmers' Market. A market stall-style event was hosted with members of the consultant's team and Council staff attending to speak with local people and invite them to share views on how the building might be best used for community uses in the future.

- The event used large scale printing for table-top display show-casing images and plans of the potential improvements to the building.
- Post-it notes were placed on the table-top plans by members of the public with their ideas for how the building might be used.
- A physical model with pull-out floor plates was available to help bring the building to life at the event.
- Leaflets with a link to the on-line survey were distributed throughout the session.
- The on-line survey sought community feedback across a number of questions around the potential future use of the building – both inside the building and for the community garden space to the rear.
- The survey remained open into the new year to allow people to reflect, share the survey with family and friends and increase the reach of the survey.
- The day before the event, in addition to all local residents receiving prior notification leaflets of the event, a personal visit was made to all immediate neighbours of the building – both commercial premises and residential homes. Individual conversations were had with all immediate neighbours. A background to the initiative was outlined, question answered, and an invite made to come along to the market stall event the following day.

The feedback received on the day was overwhelmingly positive. There was unanimous support from the local



6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

community to bring the building back into a public-facing community use. There was strong support for community uses including a library, performing arts venue, a visitor centre associated with the River Shannon, a flexible community centre and teaching and learning spaces. People commented that the building could help to attract young people into the town.

Support and interest were also expressed on the opportunities presented by the rear yard. Attracting nature into the site, supporting local biodiversity and providing a versatile outdoor activity space were all supported in principle.

Whilst many views were shared and discussions held, people were encouraged to complete the on-line form to formally register their views.

ENGAGEMENT EVENT NO.2 (19TH DECEMBER 2024 – 10TH JANUARY 2025) – ONLINE SURVEY

All local people in and around the town received an An Post leaflet inviting them to the 19 December event but also providing a link to an on-line survey. In this survey, people were asked which uses they believe might be incorporated into the renovated Town Hall. A total of 94 completed surveys were returned with the survey website recording 619 individual views of the survey questionnaire.

As well as seeking views on the potential future use of the building, people were also asked for their own stories about

their memories of this historic building in the town, their relationship to Carrick-on-Shannon, whether the building's spaces should be altered.

- The Town Hall is fondly remembered by the public as a versatile space for community events, education, recreation and local government offices. It has also hosted activities such as badminton, Irish dancing, scouting, concerts and has served as a bookmakers, library and school.
- Most of those who completed the survey were local residents, though a small portion lived elsewhere and worked in the town, and some were part of community/ interest groups.
- Most believed the internal spaces should remain the same, with the larger hall space remaining on the upper floor.
- Many would like to see the building used as either a flexible space with many uses, a community centre, a heritage and history hub, an arts and culture space, a place for tourism, a centre for health and wellbeing, and to a lesser extent a town centre enterprise or a leisure centre.
- The idea of converting the rear car parking space into a mix of hard and soft landscaping was very popular.

Overall, the survey results can be summarised as follows:



6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

1. Overwhelming support for bringing the building back in to use
2. The economic health of the town is paramount
3. Investment to bring the Town Hall building back into community use will support town centre vitality
4. Emphatic support for new community uses in the building
5. Heritage, tourism, education and culture are all important themes
6. The rear yard is critical to the building's success – as a more natural space

The overwhelming preference was for a multi-functional community hub that serves diverse needs – education, heritage, arts, youth engagement, and community activities – while fostering inclusivity and accessibility.

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS NO.3 (2PM – 3.30PM, 18 DECEMBER 2024 & 11AM TO 1PM , 5TH FEBRUARY 2025) – TOWN TEAM WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Two workshop sessions with the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Team have taken place during the work associated with the Part 8 application production and the Strand 2 THRIVE Funding Application. The Town Team are the key stakeholder group in the town and represent business, tourism and local community interests. These sessions were held firstly on 18 December immediately in advance of the market stall event. The second session was held on

5 February 2025 where the results of the engagement were reviewed and discussed.

In line with the Town Centre First Plan / IUS, considerable support was given in both sessions for securing the future community-orientated use of the Town Hall building and the positive contribution it could and should make to the economic health and tourism offer of the town.

ENGAGEMENT EVENT NO.4 (2.40 – 4PM, 5TH FEBRUARY 2025) – WORKSHOP WITH SOCIETY & POLITICS CLASS AND STUDENT COUNCIL IN CARRICK-ON-SHANNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A dedicated workshop session was organised with a group of Society and Politics students at the Carrick-on-Shannon Community School. Final year students were invited to design future uses of the building on blank floorplans. A range of fascinating ideas emerged from these creative and engaged young people.

Ideas included:

- Using the building for mindful spaces to support local communities;
- Playspaces and facilities for the town's younger people;
- Facilities which celebrated local culture and heritage;
- Theatre spaces to be used by local performing arts groups; and
- Education, conferencing and interpretation uses.



ENGAGEMENT EVENT NO.5 – STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP WITH Fáilte Ireland AND WATERWAYS IRELAND (ONLINE, 10AM, FRIDAY 21 MARCH 2025)

With the concept of some form of River Shannon Interpretative Centre emerging, a workshop session was held with the following attendees:

- Brian Treacy – Waterways Ireland
- Grainne Cornally – Fáilte Ireland
- Sarah McCarthy – Fáilte Ireland
- Johanna Daly – Leitrim County Council
- Louise McGowan – Leitrim County Council
- Anthony Benson – Allies and Morrison
- Luis Pedro – A2 Architects
- Brian O’Connell – Indecon (business case consultants)

ENGAGEMENT EVENT 6 – STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION WITH LOUGH REE ACCESS FOR ALL BOAT TRIPS

Lough Ree Access For All boat trips specialise in providing access to the unique environment of the River Shannon to those with accessibility issues. Seeking to ensure any new use of the Town Hall building is accessible to all is fundamental to the THRIVE bid in view of New European Bauhaus initiative priorities. The manager of the Lough Ree Access For All boat trips, has written to Leitrim County Council as part of this THRIVE bid process to confirm their

support for the potential River Shannon Interpretative Centre use at the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall.

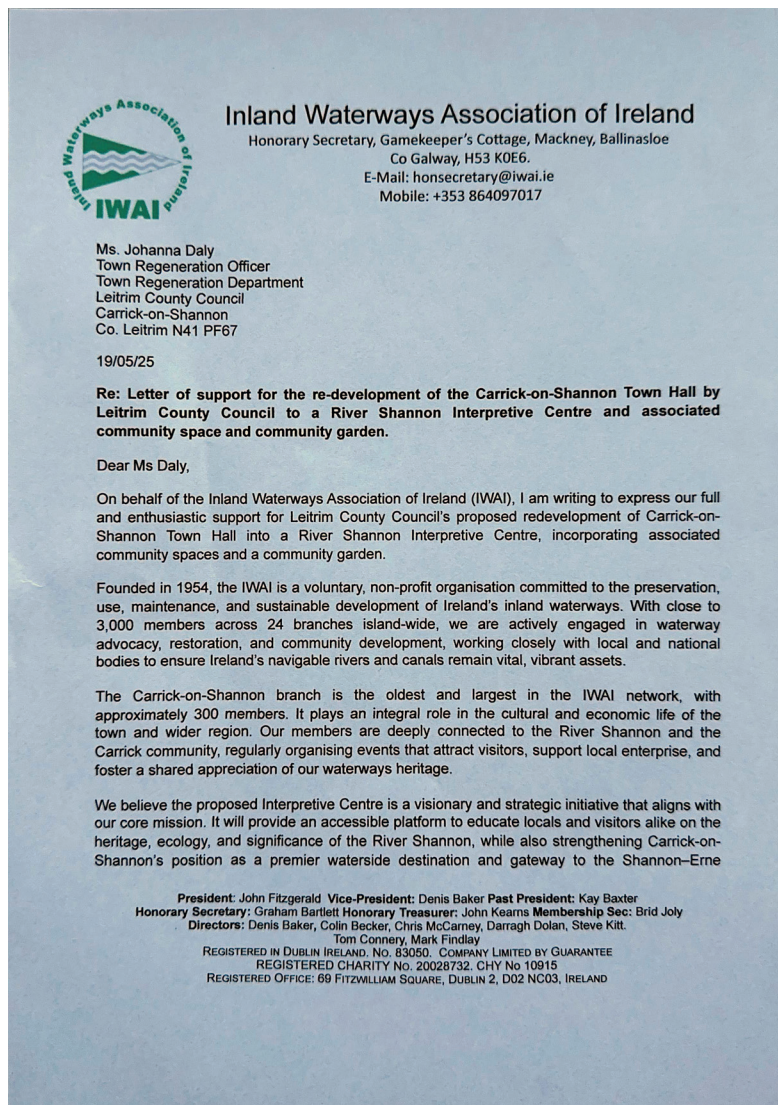
ENGAGEMENT EVENT 7 – MARKET YARD EVENT (15 MAY 2025)

A second community pop-up event was held at the Carrick-on-Shannon Market Yard on Thursday 15 May 2025. Following a similar format to previous events, notice of the session was given through the publication of an advert in the local newspaper and promoted through local social media channels. The event was fully accessible to all members of the local community.

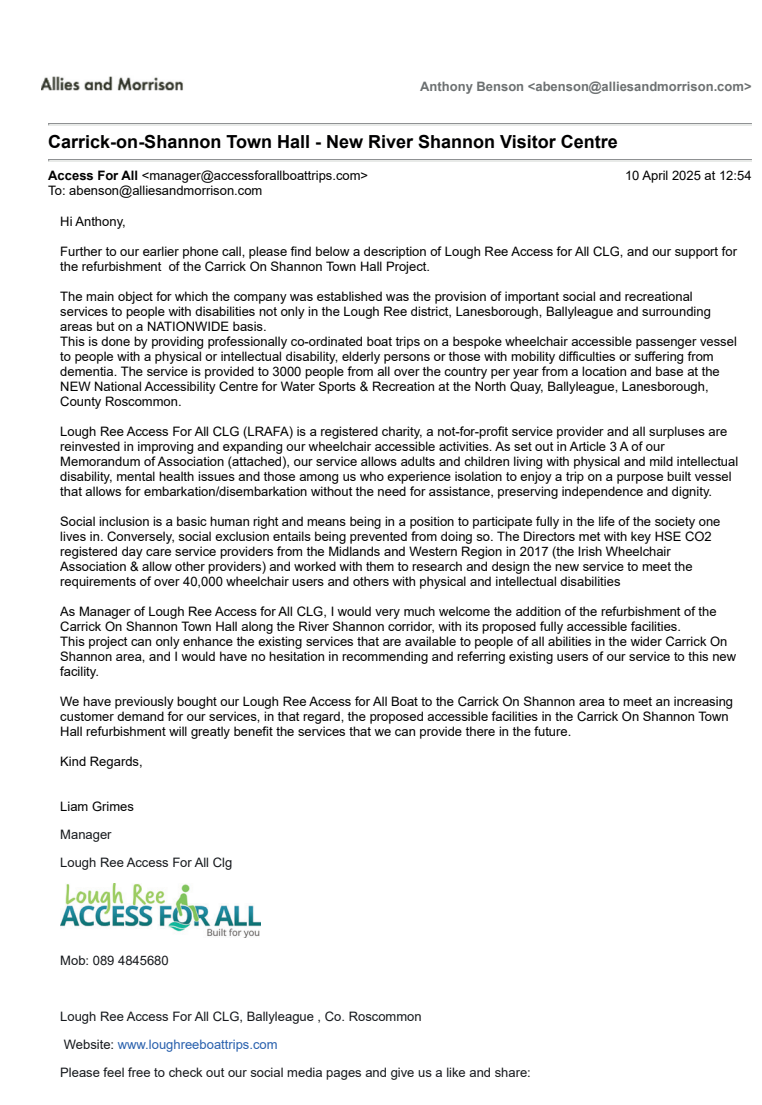
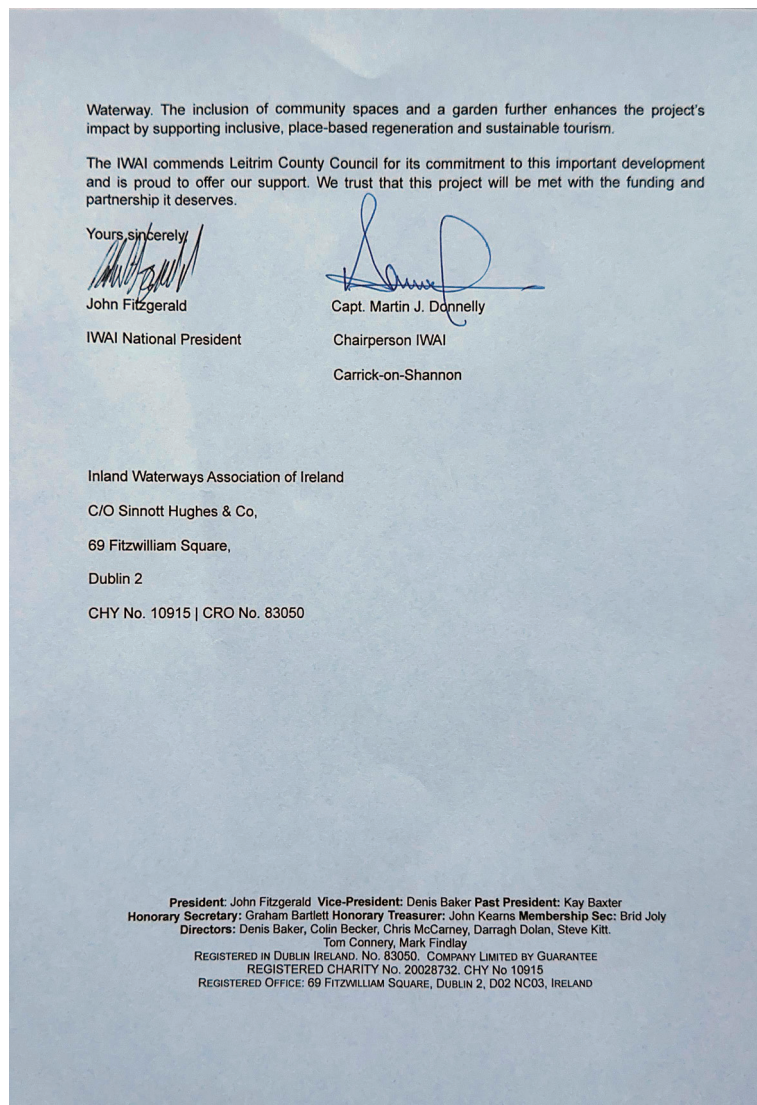
During the event the Chairperson of the Carrick-on-Shannon branch of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) attended the session. Members of the County Council team facilitating the event spent some time with the Chairperson explaining the thinking behind the developed concept and the opportunities it might present in the context of the IWAI’s remit and operations.

As their letter of support clearly outlines (see below), the IWAI see the establishment of the River Shannon Interpretative Centre at Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall as a visionary and strategic initiative that aligns with their core mission, strengthening the town’s position as a premier waterside destination and gateway to the Shannon-Erne Waterway.





Letter of support from Inland Waterways Association of Ireland



Letter of support from Access for All



26th May 2025

Re: Carrick on Shannon – River Centre

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express Waterways Ireland's support in principle of Leitrim County Council's application for funding to develop a new River Shannon Interpretation Centre through the refurbishment of the Carrick on Shannon Town Hall.

As the statutory Navigation and Recreation Authority for Ireland's inland waterways (including the Shannon & Shannon Erne navigations) Waterways Ireland actively encourages and seeks to facilitate greater experiences for both the local communities and tourism sectors within the towns and villages along our navigations.

Waterways Ireland has a rich catalogue of historical information pertaining to our navigations across the island of Ireland. We would be willing to share relevant information including historical navigation components, to help illuminate some of the potential future interpretations that could be displayed as part of a River Shannon Interpretation Centre.

This proposed project aligns with several of the key strategic initiatives outlined in the Shannon Tourism Masterplan such as Enhancing Waterside Visitor Experiences and Shannon Towns and Villages.

In summary Waterways Ireland, supports the efforts of Leitrim County Council on this application, should you require any further information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Treacy
Western Regional Manager
Waterways Ireland

2 Bóthar Shligigh
Inis Ceithleann
Contae Fhear Manach
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W: www.waterwaysireland.org

ENGAGEMENT EVENT 8 – ONLINE SURVEY (15TH - 22ND MAY 2025)

The May 2025 pop-up community engagement event held at the Carrick-on-Shannon Market Yard was supported by an on-line survey. All members of the local community were encouraged to completed this short survey. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the level of community support for the River Shannon Interpretative Centre, community space and community garden developed concept.

With 80 written responses received, unanimous community support was expressed from the vast majority of people who attended the event and who took the time to complete the short on-line survey. Paper copies of the survey questions were also made available on the day and a significant number of hard copy surveys were completed at the event itself.

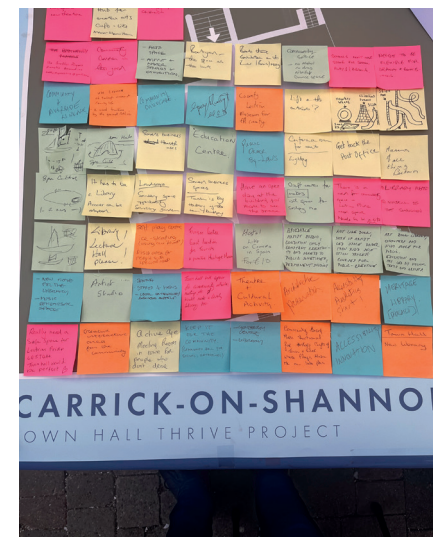
Highlights from this engagement can be summarised as:

- Overwhelming support for the River Shannon Interpretive Centre concept
- 100% support for using the building in the evening
- Overwhelming support for the creative use of the rear courtyard space
- Strongest themes for the future use of the building are:
 1. Community uses
 2. Heritage
 3. River Shannon
 4. Tourism



Table top artwork from the 2nd pop-up event

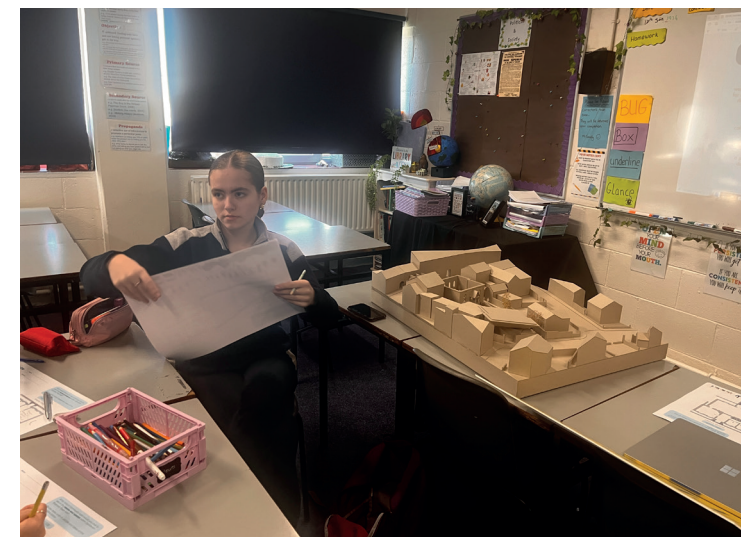
6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS





Initial community pop-up engagement event,
19th December 2024, Carrick-on-Shannon Market Yard

6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS



6 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS



2nd community pop-up engagement event,
15 May 2025, Carrick-on-Shannon Market Yard









1 Improving the connection to the river

Rejuvenating the relationship with the Shannon to establish better connections, and create new spaces to enliven the town...

1. Reimagine Quay Road West car park
2. Reimagine Quay Road East car park
3. Reimagine the N4 corridor
4. Improvements to the Town Park (People's Park)
5. Water-based leisure activities and information centre
6. Green Loop around the town for walking and cycling

23. Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall River Shannon Interpretative Centre and community space and garden

KEY

-  Proposed walking and cycling loop
-  Aspiration for walking and cycling loop
-  Indicative preferred Blueway route
-  Improved walking and cycling route into town centre
-  Enhanced routes for pedestrians - public realm, greening, activity
-  Enhanced public realm to accommodate activity and programme of events



Ref	Action / Project	Term	Priority	Significance	Lead	Partners	Funding
1	Reimagine Quay Road West car park	M/L	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT	2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
2	Reimagine Quay Road East car park	M/L	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT	2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
3	Reimagining the N4 corridor	L	☆☆☆	Nat	LCC	TII, NTA, CoSTT	5, 6, 13
4	Improvements to the Town Park (People's Park)	M	☆☆	Loc	LCC	CoSTT	2, 4, 6, 8
5	Water-based leisure activities and information centre	M/L	☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, WI, Fáilte	12, 13
6	Green Loop around the town for walking and cycling	M	☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, NTA, TII	2, 4, 5, 8, 13
23	River Shannon Interpretive Centre & Community Space and Garden	S/M	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, WI, Fáilte	4, 12, 13

BIG IDEA 2 - Improving arrival gateways

7	New wetland ecology park	L	☆☆☆	Nat	LCC	CoSTT, Private	2, 4, 6, 8
8	Leitrim Road corridor improvements	M	☆☆	C/R	LCC	NTA, TII, CoSTT	5, 8, 13
9	Carrick-on-Shannon to Battlebridge Blueway & Trailhead	M	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, Private, WI, Fáilte	5, 11, 12, 13
10	Explore potential for gateway car park	S/M	☆☆	Loc	LCC	NTA	5, 13
11	Cycle hire scheme and wider cycle infrastructure	M	☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, NTA, TII, Bike Co.	5, 8, 13
12	Improved mooring and overnight stay facilities	M/L	☆☆	C/R	Private	LCC, CoSTT, WI, Fáilte	11, 12
13	Northern town threshold gateway improvements	M	☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, Private, COC	2, 4, 6
14	Eastern town threshold gateway improvements	M	☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, COC, TII, NTA	5, 6, 8, 13

BIG IDEA 3 - Promoting town centre vitality and activity

15	Town centre development opportunities and Destination Centre	M	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT, Private, LCDC, COC	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14
16	Living above the shop	S	☆☆	Loc	Private	LCC, CoSTT, COC	3, 7, 8
17	Shopfront improvements	S	☆☆	Loc	Private	LCC, CoSTT, COC	10
18	Dedicated flexible community space / new library	M	☆☆☆	C/R	LCC	CoSTT	2, 6, 15
19	Enhanced activities and events programme	S	☆☆	C/R	CoSTT	LCC, COC	9
20	Carrick-on-Shannon Laneways	S/M	☆☆	Loc	LCC	Private, CoSTT	2, 6, 7
21	Environmental improvements to town centre car parks	S	☆☆	Loc	LCC	CoSTT	5, 6, 8, 13
22	Improved children's playspace and facilities for younger people	S	☆☆	Loc	LCC	CoSTT, LSP	6, 16, 17

Priority

☆☆ Lower priority - desirable but not critical

☆☆☆ Medium priority - an important local project for Carrick-on-Shannon

☆☆☆ High priority - a project of strategic importance to the town and wider region

Term

S Short term: 0 - 3 years

M Medium term: 3 - 5 years

L Long term: 5+ years

Significance

Loc: Local - primarily for the benefit of Carrick-on-Shannon

C/R: County / regional - of wider county or regional significance

Nat: National - addressing an issue of national importance or significance

Agency

CoSTT Carrick-on-Shannon Town Team

LCC Leitrim County Council

Private Private landowners and developers

Funding options

1 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

2 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

3 Housing For All Programme - Croí Conaite (Towns) Fund

4 European Regional Development Fund

5 Active Travel Grants

6 Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS)

7 Historic Towns Initiative

8 Climate Adaption / Retrofitting Initiatives

9 Arts, Tourism and Festival Schemes

10 TVRS Streetscape Enhancement Scheme

11 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

12 Fáilte Ireland Schemes

13 Local Authority Resources

14 Local Enterprise Office

15 Libraries Capital Programme

16 Play and Recreation Capital Funding Scheme

17 Leitrim Sports Partnership

Other funding opportunities

Built Heritage Investment Scheme

Historic Structures Fund

Community Monuments Fund

Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme

Local Biodiversity Action Fund

Waterways Ireland Heritage in Community Grant Scheme

Community Water Development Fund

Repair and Leasing Scheme, Buy and Renew Scheme

Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme

Community Support Fund

Community Centre Investment Fund

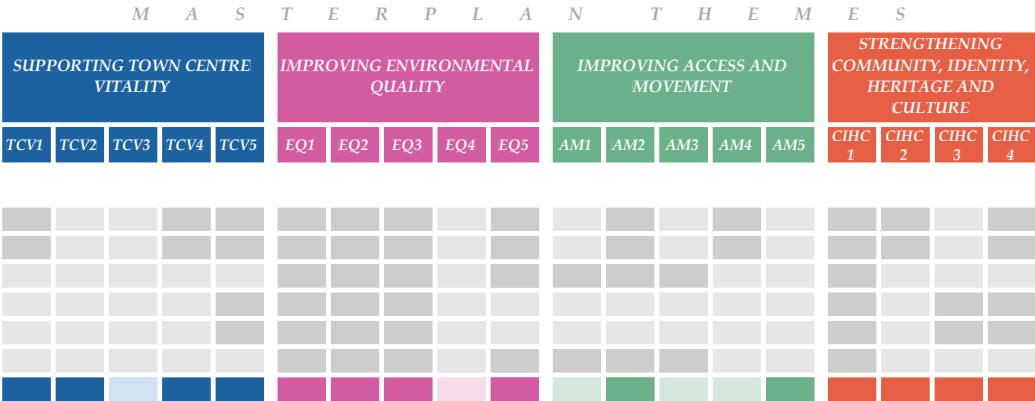
Heart of the Community Fund

PEACE Plus

LEADER

CLÁR

Dormant Accounts Fund



#23 River Shannon Interpretive Centre: Alignment with IUS themes and objectives

TCV1	Support town centre events	AM2	Promote active and sustainable travel
TCV2	Tackle retail and other vacancy	AM5	Improve Carrick-on-Shannon's historic laneways
TCV4	Vibrant mix of uses	CIHC1	Promote Carrick-on-Shannon as a destination
TCV5	Support evening / visitor economy	CIHC2	Promote local arts, culture and produce
EQ1	Improve river front	CIHC3	Promote and maintain historic assets
EQ2	Create a green walking and cycling loop	CIHC4	Dedicated community and cultural space
EQ3	Attractive and accessible town centre spaces		
EQ5	Make town more resilient to climate change		

23. Carrick-on-Shannon - River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community space and garden



Conversion and reuse of the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall and its rear community space and garden presents an opportunity to breathe new life into Bridge Street and complement existing visitor attractions in the town. This important heritage asset in the heart of Carrick-on-Shannon is perfectly placed to better connect the commercial core with the town's magnificent river front with a new River Shannon Interpretive Centre potentially offering a wide range of permanent and temporary indoor and outdoor exhibitions and events through the historically sensitive and environmentally sustainable adaptive reuse of this currently neglected community landmark building.

Project context

The Town Team have continued to meet on a regular basis since the production of the Town Centre First Plan / IUS for Carrick-on-Shannon.

Securing a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable future for Carrick-on-Shannon's Town Hall building has been a long-standing concern for all key town stakeholders. The Town Centre First Plan / IUS helped to crystallise the issues and opportunities around this opportunity and this project consolidates a number of relevant project opportunities included in the original Town Centre First Plan / IUS under the 'Improving connection with the river' theme.

The opportunities to secure THRIVE funding to deliver the building's conversion into a River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community space and garden has triggered a comprehensive and wide-ranging number of workstreams, all of which are key links in the delivery chain for the initiative. Early open-ended engagement sessions confirmed the importance of the building to the local community.

Supported by detailed technical work, Part 8 consent has now been secured and overwhelming community support to the River Shannon Interpretive Centre concept has been received across a range of community and stakeholder events.

Project components:

- Adaptive reuse of this landmark heritage structure in the heart of the town centre.
- New River Shannon Interpretive Centre and community space and garden with a managed internal and external programme of events and activities.
- The facility will be accessible to all, both internally and externally.
- Interior spaces will be transformed to create a mix of large and small new community spaces and gardens.
- New community space and garden to the rear will deliver ecologically diverse natural features alongside hard landscape areas - creating a flexible community space and garden.
- Creating a new east-west public laneway between Bridge Street and Quay Road.
- The building will be adapted for new uses to the highest standards of environmental sustainability.

Key considerations and next steps:

- THRIVE 2 funding bid prepared and submitted.
- Relocate existing Leitrim County Council office to alternative appropriate accommodation.
- Continued liaison and collaborative working with key stakeholders including Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland.



Currently used as an informal car park and hard-standing, the yard space to the rear of the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall presents exciting opportunities to create a new community garden



Appendix 1

Initial pop-up community engagement
survey results (Dec - Jan '25)

Appendix 2

Follow-up pop-up community
engagement survey results (May 2025)



Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall

SURVEY ON POTENTIAL FUTURE USE

19 December 2024 - 10 January 2025



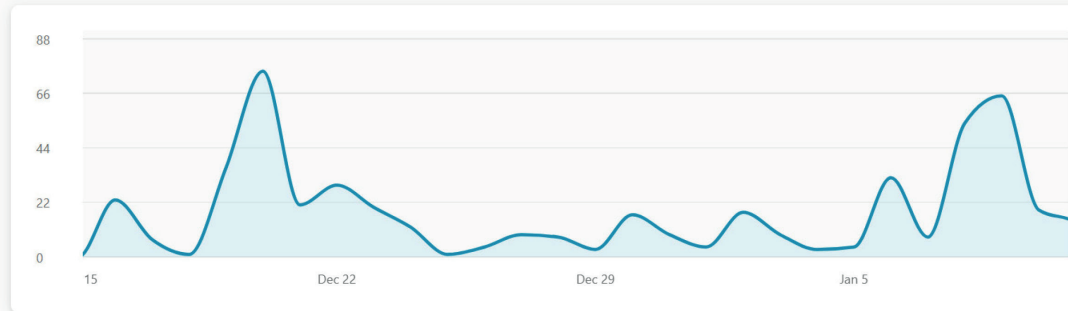
- Advance press notice
- Social media promotion
- Staffed Market Stall event
- Physical model & worksheets

views starts submissions completion rate time to complete survey questions

619 **219** **94** **42.9%** **11:19** **14**

Trends

Views ▾



Q1 What would be the best type of use for this historic building?

The responses emphasize **community-centred and multi-functional uses** for the building, with several key themes emerging:

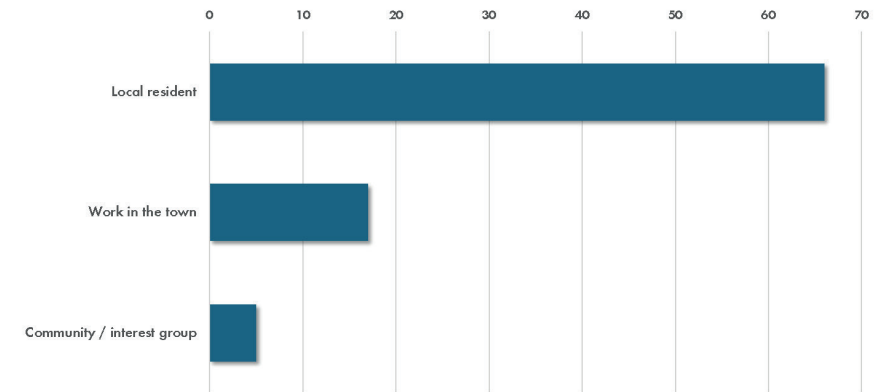
- **Community and Cultural Hub:** Many respondents suggested the building serve as a community centre, hosting events, workshops, and activities for all age groups, including youth clubs and community meetings.
- **Educational Spaces:** A strong focus on educational use was noted, including libraries, training centres, learning hubs for courses (e.g., Irish language), and third-level evening classes.
- **Heritage and Tourism:** Several respondents proposed the building as a museum, interpretive centre, or heritage hub, highlighting the River Shannon, local history, and biodiversity.
- **Arts and Entertainment:** Ideas included an art gallery, exhibition space, theatre, concert hall, and a venue for local performances and crafts.
- **Mixed-Use Facilities:** Many favoured multi-purpose spaces combining community meeting rooms, a library, tourist information, and areas for exhibitions, coffee shops, or rental space.
- **Youth and Family-Focused:** Suggestions included youth centres, soft play areas for children, and spaces for teens and kids' education.

The overwhelming preference is for a **multi-functional community hub** that serves diverse needs – **education, heritage, arts, youth engagement, and community activities** – while fostering inclusivity and accessibility.

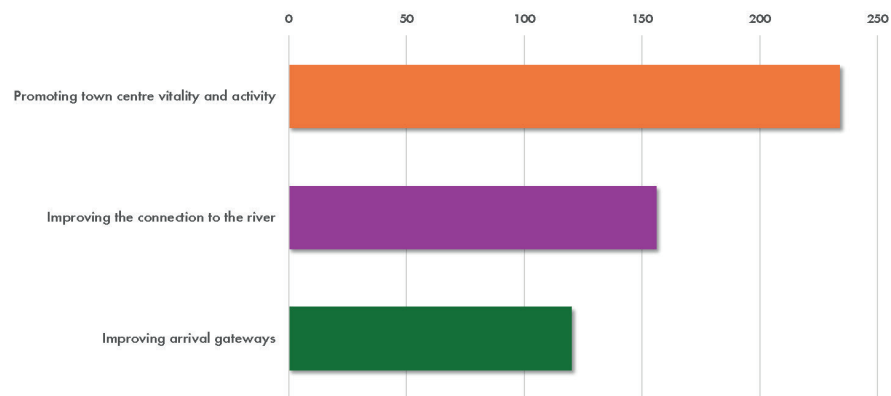
Q2 Stories about the history of the building...

The Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall is fondly remembered as a **versatile space for community events, education, recreation, and local government offices**. It hosted activities like **badminton, Irish dancing, scouting, concerts**, and served as a **betting shop, library and school**.

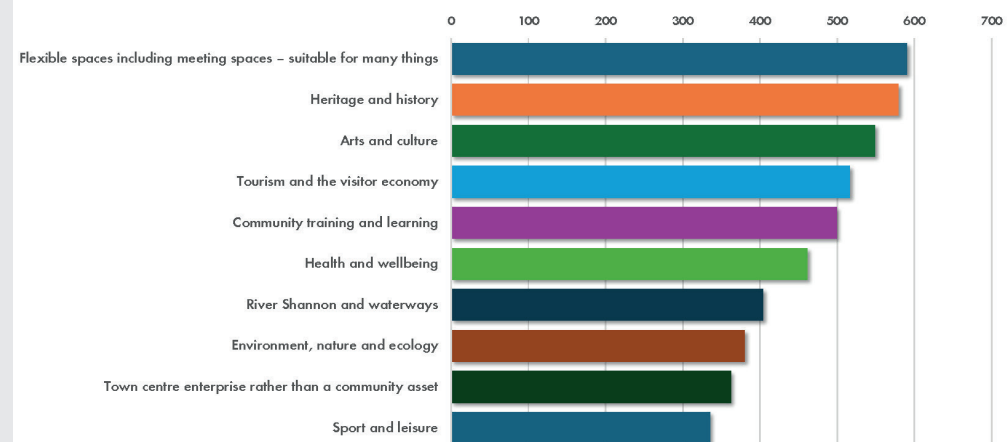
Q3 What is your relationship with the town?

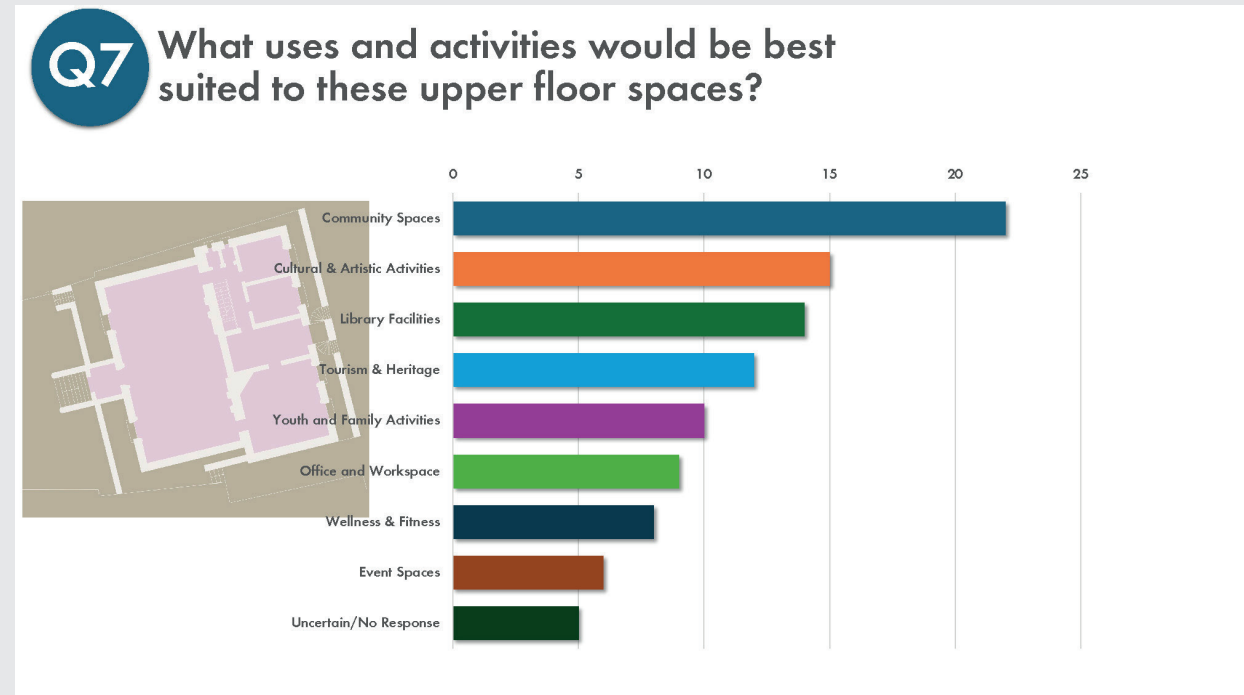
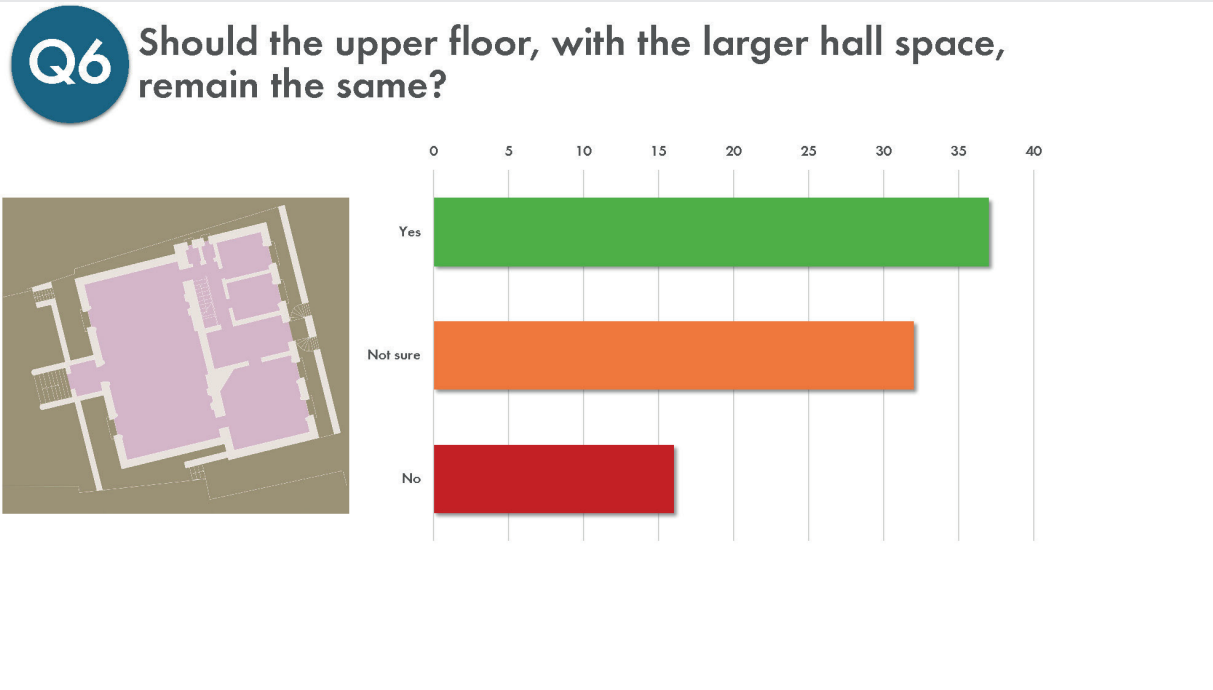


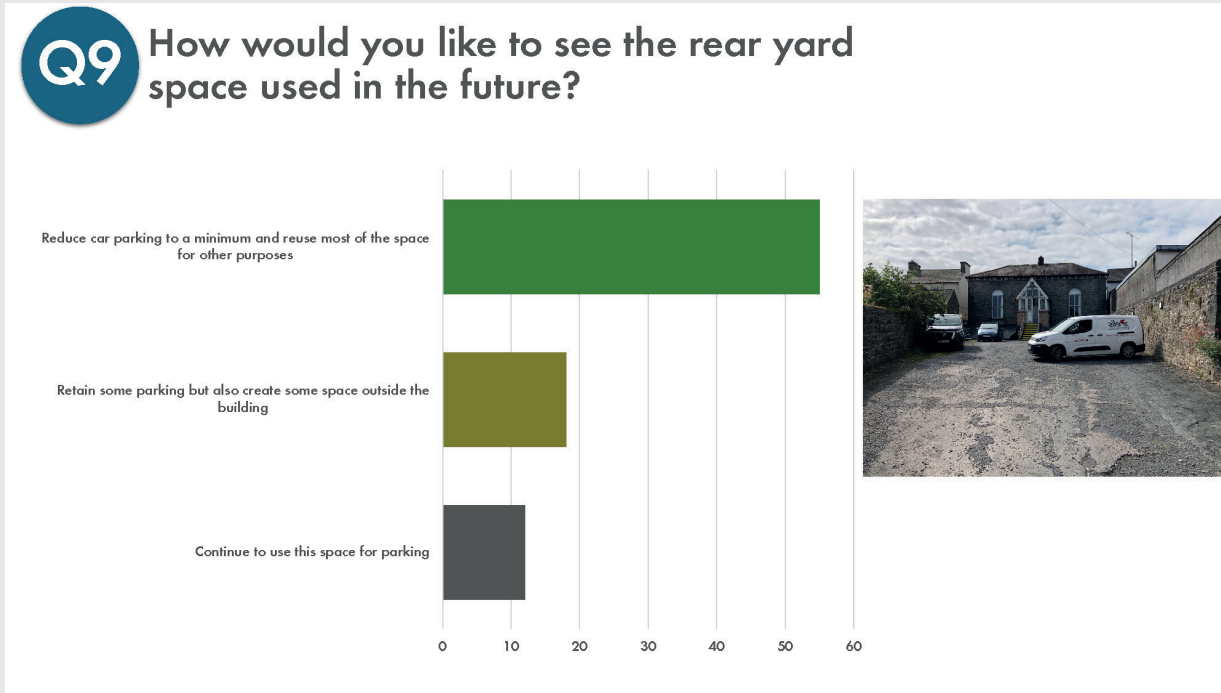
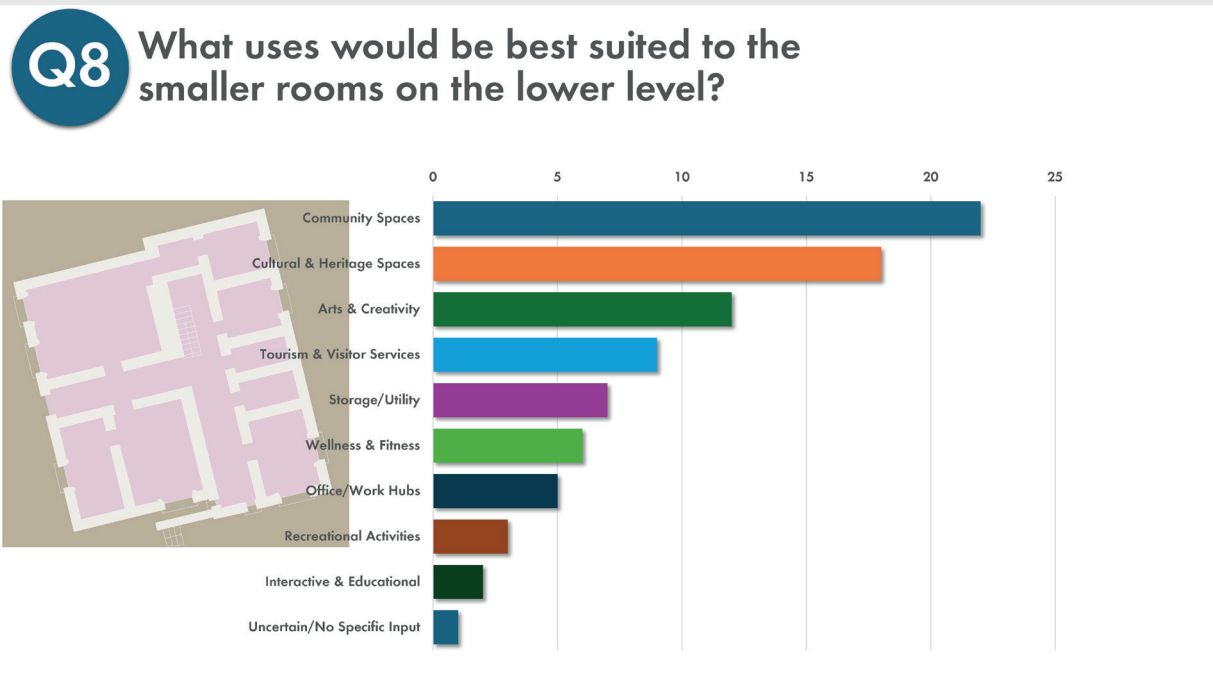
Q4 Thinking about the future of the buildings, what is the most relevant Town Plan theme?

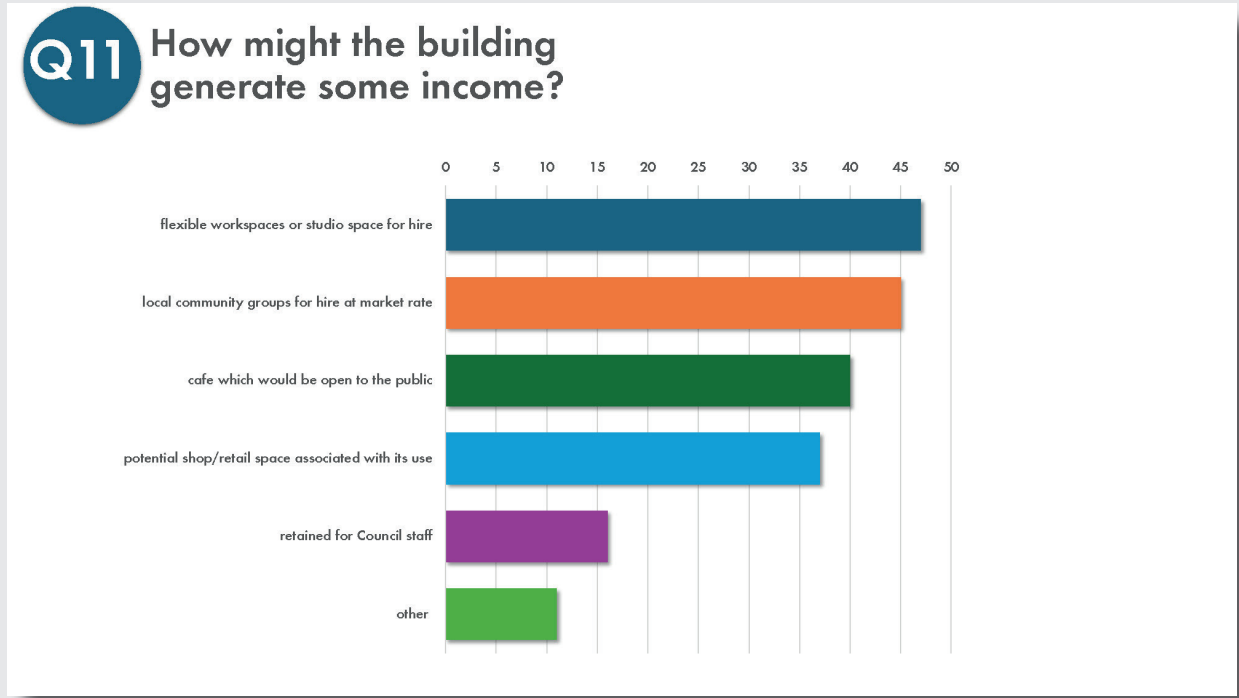
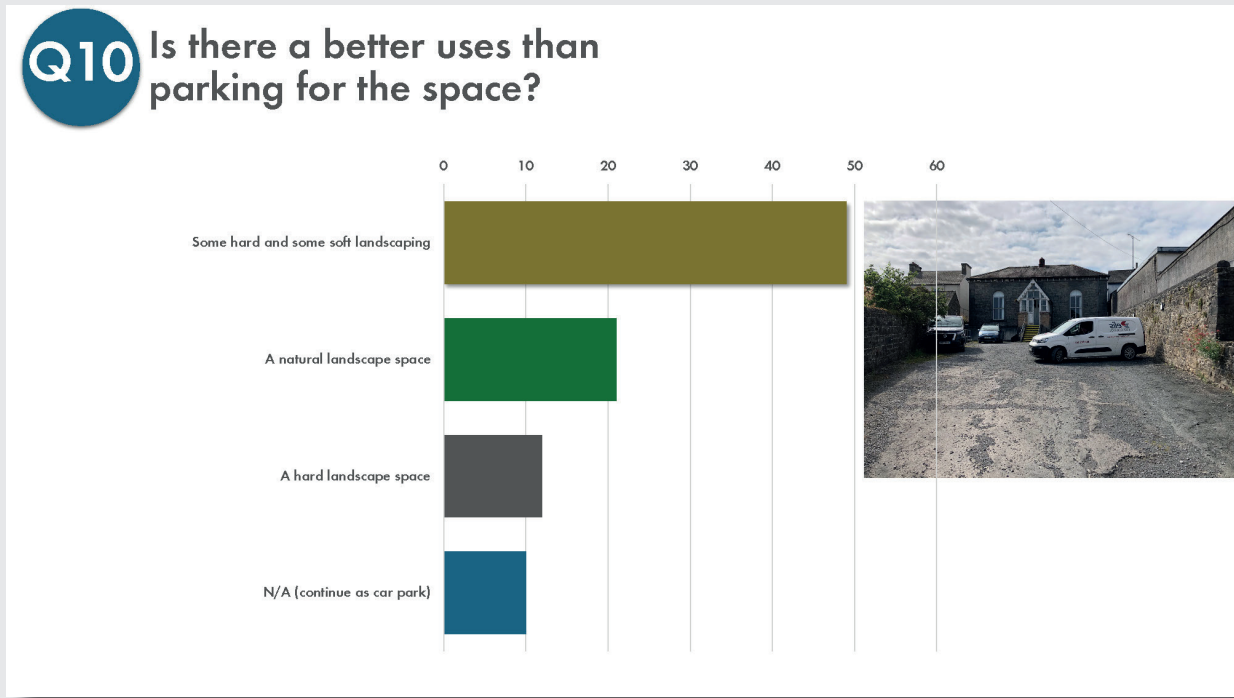


Q5 What activities would be most appropriate for the building?

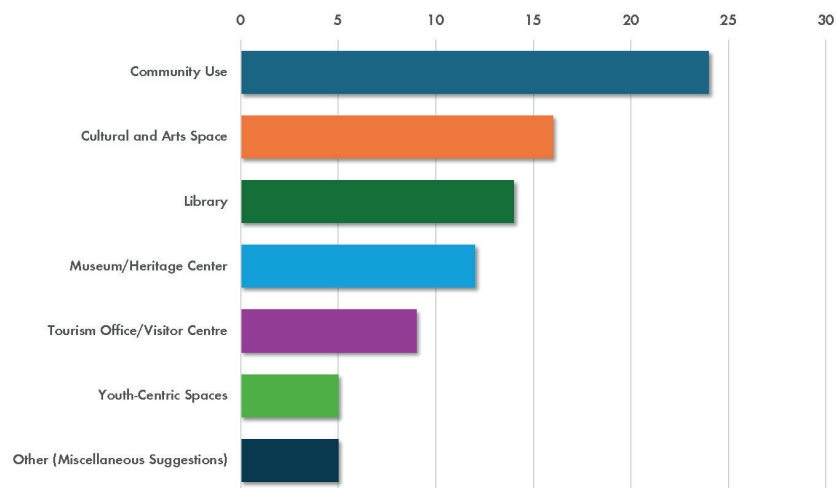






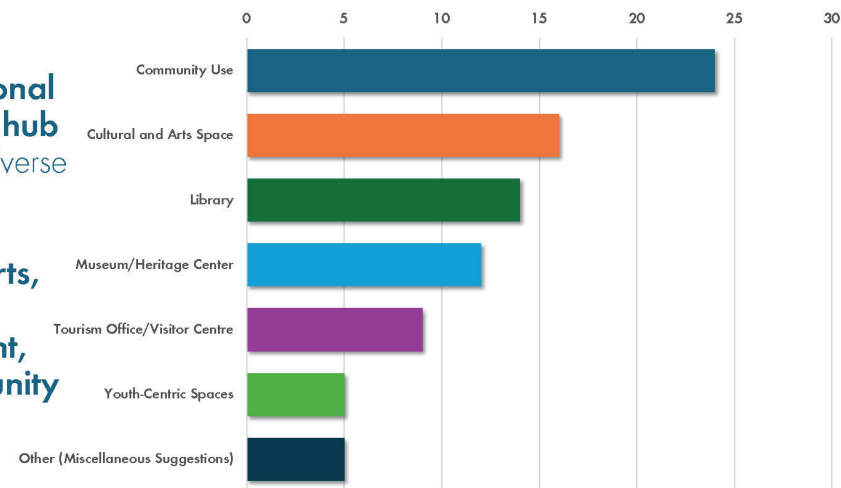


Q12 Again, please briefly summarise how you would like to see the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall building be used?



Q12 Again, please briefly summarise how you would like to see the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall building be used?

**multi-functional
community hub**
that serves diverse
needs –
**education,
heritage, arts,
youth
engagement,
and community
activities**



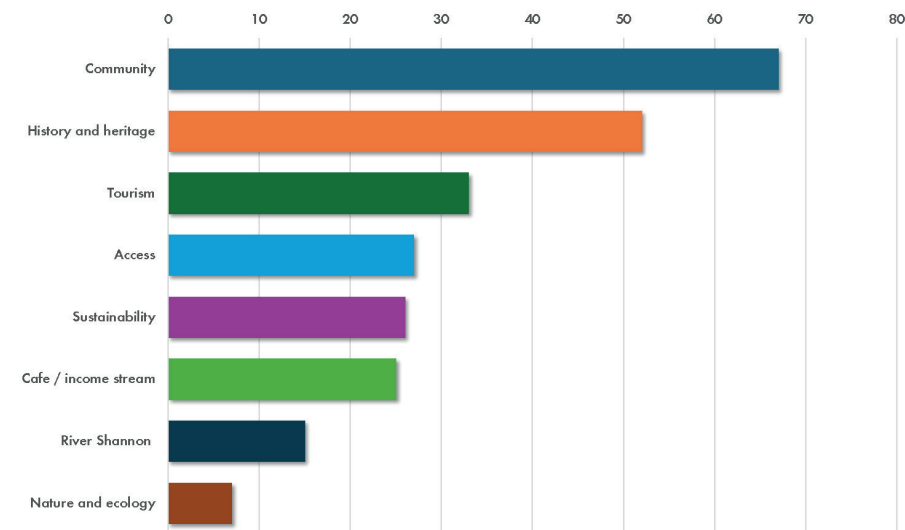
Q13 Examples of relevant precedents

1. **The Dock** (Carrick-on-Shannon) - 12 mentions
2. **King House** (Boyle) - 5 mentions
3. **Strokestown House & Famine Museum** (Strokestown) - 4 mentions
4. **St. George's Heritage Centre** (Carrick-on-Shannon) - 4 mentions
5. **Ballymahon Library** - 3 mentions
6. **The Market Yard** (Carrick-on-Shannon) - 2 mentions
7. **The Junction** (Ballinamore) - 2 mentions

Other Locations (1 mention each):

- Richmond Barracks (Inchicore) - 1 mention
- Templemore Town Hall (Co. Tipperary) - 1 mention
- Douglas Hyde Centre
- Monaghan County Museum
- Tate Modern (London)
- Museum of Country Life (Mayo)
- Creamery Café (Croghan)
- Tuam
- Mallow
- Drumshanbo Methodist Church
- Sirius Arts Centre (Cobh)
- Royal Hotel (Boyle)

Q14 Again, please briefly summarise how you would like to see the Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall building be used?





What do these results tell us about next steps?

RESULTS OVERVIEW

1. Overwhelming support for bringing the building back in to use
2. The economic health of the town is paramount
3. Investment to bring the Town Hall building back into community use will support town centre vitality
4. Emphatic support for a new community use in the building
5. Heritage, tourism, education and culture all important themes
6. The rear yard is critical to the building's success – as a more natural space



Carrick-on-Shannon Town Hall

2nd PUBLIC SURVEY ON DEVELOPED CONCEPT

15 May 2025 - 22 May 2025

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON TOWN HALL THRIVE PROJECT



HAVE YOUR SAY!

We want to bring the Town Hall building in Carrick-on-Shannon back into its sustainable, beneficial use, both to preserve this important heritage structure but also to allow it to be used for the benefit of the whole community. We want to hear from the community through widespread consultation to determine an agreed need and use for the Town Hall (subject to funding).

How to get involved:

- Come to a public meeting at the Farmers' Market or Market hall on Thursday 19th November - 10am - 2pm
- From IPD Dec complete an online survey by scanning the QR code or find it at: <https://www.yourvoice.com/>
- Downloaded
- You can find out and get involved in future events by signing up to our monthly e-newsletter info@carrikkonshannon.ie

Please contact us again by Friday 28th November or by 1st December 2023 to ensure we have received your views. Views could be shared with local media. Could be making it difficult to make.

- **Advance press notice**
- **Social media promotion**
- **Staffed Market Stall event**
- **Physical model & worksheets**

[illegible]



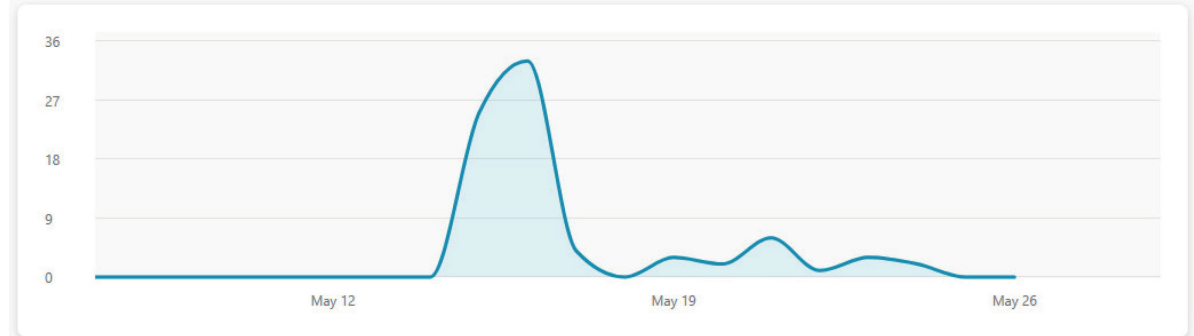
8.2 APPENDIX 2 - RESULTS FROM 2ND SURVEY (MAY 2025)



views	starts	submissions	completion rate	time to complete	survey questions
248	98	80	81.6%	02.47	8

Trends

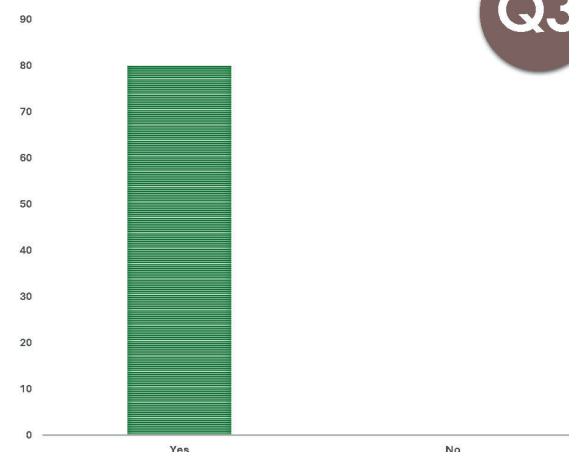
Submissions ▾



A bar chart with a vertical axis labeled from 0 to 70 in increments of 10. The horizontal axis has five categories: 'Support very strongly', 'Support very strongly', 'Not sure', 'Don't support', and 'Strong don't support'. The bars are green. The first bar, labeled 'Support very strongly', reaches a value of 66. The second bar, also labeled 'Support very strongly', reaches a value of 7. The third bar, labeled 'Not sure', reaches a value of 2. The fourth bar, labeled 'Don't support', is at 0. The fifth bar, labeled 'Strong don't support', reaches a value of 1.

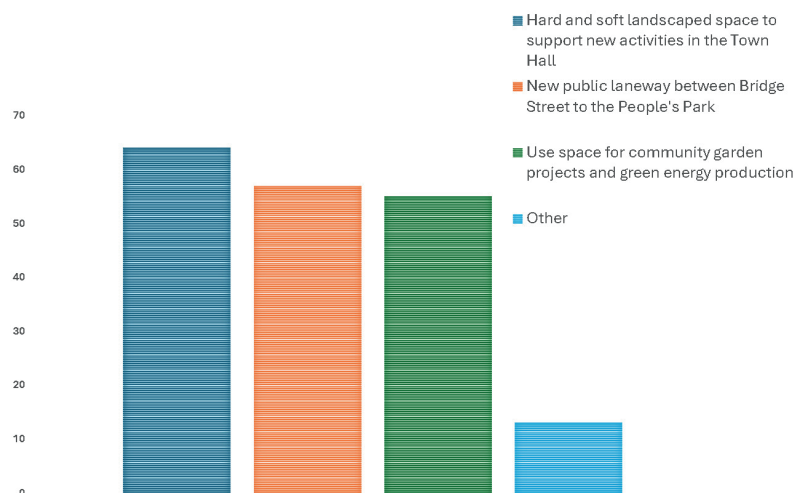
Response	Percentage
Support very strongly	66
Support very strongly	7
Not sure	2
Don't support	0
Strong don't support	1

Q3 Please explain why...





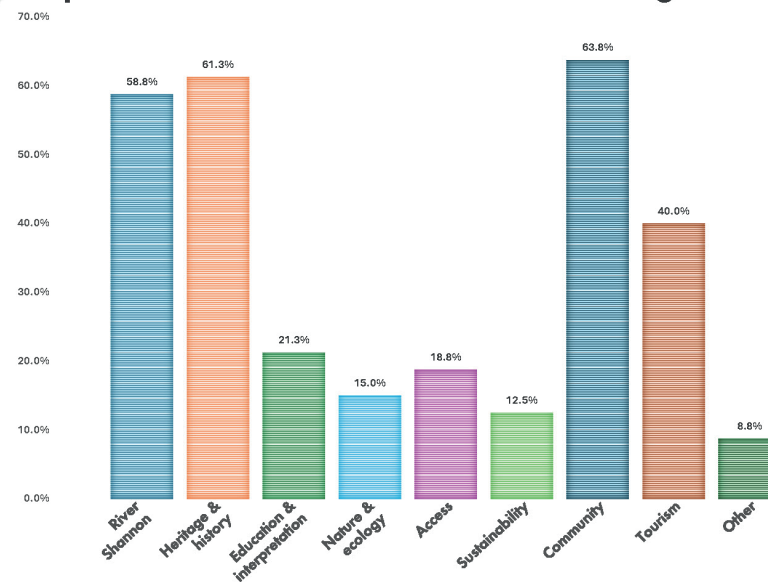
Q4 What opportunities do you think a newly designed rear garden space present?



SUMMARY OF 'OTHER' COMMENTS

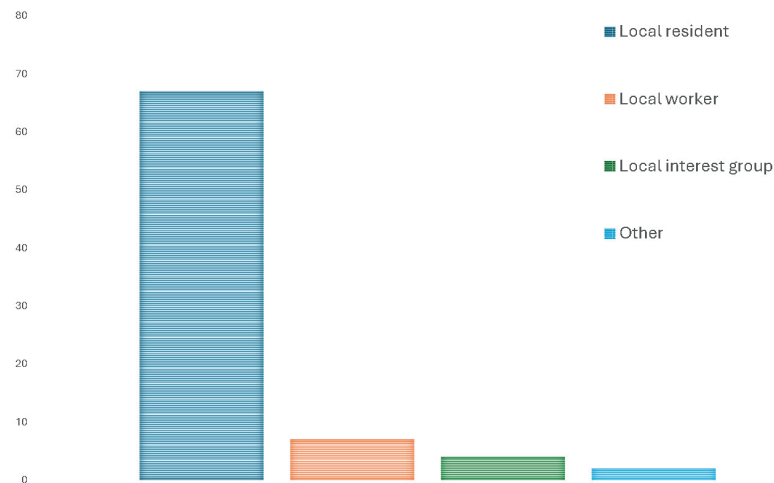
- 1. Accessibility and Parking**
 - Need for more accessible parking, especially for disabled users.
 - Current parking is insufficient, particularly during bad weather.
 - Accessible design is a priority for improving inclusivity.
- 2. Safety and Security**
 - Multiple requests to close the access gate at night, especially the one connecting Bridge Street to Quay Road, to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- 3. Social and Inclusive Spaces**
 - Desire for the space to be open to all ages—a welcoming, inclusive environment.
 - Suggestions for sheltered areas and places to sit and relax.
 - Support for social and sensory spaces, especially outdoors.
- 4. Cultural and Historical Visibility**
 - Emphasis on preserving and showcasing the historical character of the building.
 - Suggestions that it could be an extension of the People's Park or used for community events.

Q5 What three words or phrases would you say are most important to the future of the building?

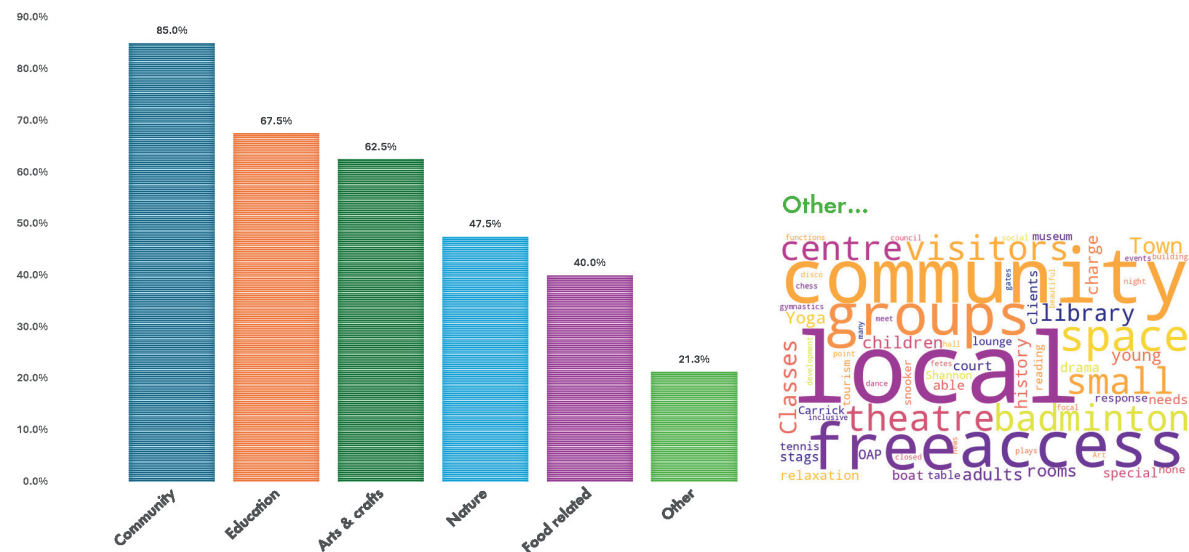




Q6 Who are you?



Q7 What types of complementary activities would you like to see alongside the River Shannon Interpretive Centre?





What do these results tell us about next steps?

RESULTS OVERVIEW

1. Overwhelming support for the River Shannon Interpretive Centre concept
2. 100% support for using the building in the evening
3. Overwhelming support for the creative use of the rear courtyard space
4. Strongest themes for the future use of the building are:
 - A. Community uses
 - B. Heritage
 - C. River Shannon
 - D. Tourism

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