

Subject area: Community development

Project title: Cappoquin Community Development Company

County: Waterford

Date of project: 1993 – 2010

Purpose:

The voluntary group, Cappoquin Community Development Company Ltd. (CCDCL), was first established in May, 1993. It is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status from revenue commissioners. The objective of CCDCL is to improve Cappoquin and its environs, physically, socially and economically.

Inspiration:

Prior to the establishment of CCDCL the economy of Cappoquin had changed considerably; businesses and institutions were facing closure leaving many properties vacant and locals being forced to leave the community in search of work.

Cappoquin Community Development Co. Ltd (CCDCL) believed there were many opportunities available to the town which offered the potential to preserve jobs and create a positive, vibrant, active community which would bring prosperity and visitors to the town. The challenges presented by the deteriorating buildings provided an opportunity to prepare an ambitious, but realistic plan for the redevelopment and refurbishment of the town.

A group of local business people came together with the shared interest of improving their community. Their first step was to take part in the FAS Community Enterprise Educational Modules which lead to the establishment of Cappoquin Community Development Co Ltd.

Each person in the company brought a different expertise and background – from running their own businesses to accountancy, or management acumen, the group believe their success is based on this diversity. Their common ground was a desire to see Cappoquin and the surrounding areas become a better place to live.

Extent of the initiative:

The Development Company's biggest project to date has been the construction of a multi purpose community centre at a cost of 3.2 million. This centre is the largest in the county and includes a sports hall, stage, gym, cookery demonstration kitchen, computer room, educational centre and childcare facility.

Smaller initiatives include - publication of the first detailed history of the town of Cappoquin; participation in an anti-litter scheme; participation in the Tidy Towns Competition; renovation of derelict buildings in the town, establishing an enterprise centre; town twinning with Chananat-la-Mouteyre; , and renovation and refurbishment of town square.

The committee is currently in the preparation stages of developing other major projects which including a HSE Primary Care Ancillary Service building, a swimming pool complex and sheltered housing for the elderly.

Community Centre Facilities:

Education Centre:

The Education Centre provides those living in the West Waterford area with life-long learning opportunities to explore new interests, acquire new skills and update existing skills.

In recent times the centre has been particularly useful in providing training and up-skilling for many local people who were made redundant.

The computer room which has 15 workstations, allows people to gain essential skills needed in business today. Two additional classrooms are used for skill training, music lessons, and all academic courses.

In this centre Waterford Institute of Technology offers a Higher certificate in Business Studies Course. Tipperary Institute offers a digital photography course and Waterford's VEC use the facilities to teach basic computers and provide Irish language training. The centre is a recognised ECDL facility with two testers and a coordinator.

Childcare facilities.

This is a comprehensive modern childcare facility to support families in the West Waterford area. This consists of a pre-school, five days per week from 9.00am to noon and also a crèche facility from 8.00am to 6.00pm five days per week. There's also an afterschool homework club. Many of the children attend the homework club, who first attended the facilities as toddlers, so they enjoy returning to familiar surroundings after school. Each child is served a hot snack on arrival and qualified staff assists with homework and computers. The children are bussed to the crèche from their school each day.

The crèche employs five full-time staff and five part-time staff and caters for up to 70 children, 55 of them being full-time.

Cookery kitchen:

Waterford Leader Partnership Ltd, County Waterford VEC and Failte Ireland use this kitchen to provide professional courses – such as a professional bar tenders cert, basic and advanced cookery courses are provided to community members who wish to gain catering and/or hospitality skills.

The gym:

This is open six days per week from 8-30am until 10pm and has a membership of 120 people. This is a state of the art gym with modern equipment.

Sports hall and theatre:

The sports hall accommodates indoor soccer, indoor hurling, badminton, volleyball and tennis. This hall has adjoining dressing and shower areas . The hall has a seating capacity of 750 people.

The sports hall, which has a permanent large stage, converts into a theatre. It showcases local talent and stage productions. Recently the All Ireland Macra Drama finals, a two day event which brought many visitors from all over the country and consequently benefited the economy of the town.

Other popular national entertainers are regularly booked such as Christy Moore, Pat Short and Brendan Grace. Entertainers of this calibre would usually not perform in small towns

because of lack of a suitable venue. however, the Centre has a capacity for one thousand people standing and seven hundred and fifty people seated.



Cappoquin Community Centre and enterprise units.

Enterprise Units/Park:

Cappoquin Enterprise Park is situated in the industrial estate at Carrigeen, one mile from the town, and covers 80,000 square feet. The centre comprises of a number of units which accommodate established industries and newly created business start-ups.

Calmark Ireland Ltd, a sheet-metal fabrication company in the park, was set to leave the town and relocate in Clonmel, CCDCL came on-board and bought the building which allowed that Calmark to remain in the town. This saved many local jobs and prevented people from leaving the area. This building is now part of the enterprise park.

The revenue generated from these assets is paying the manager's salary.

Achievements of CCDCL to date:

- 1993** Purchase and renovation of run-down premises in Main Street, Cappoquin for use as company office.
- 1995** Publication of Cappoquin Development Plan 1.
- 1996** Purchase of four acres of land to make sites available for private housing within the town.
- 1996** Town Twinning project with Chanat-La-Mouteyre, France – a similar size town in the centre of France.
- 1997** Purchase of the former Calmark Factory premises 12,000sq ft at Lefanta and conversion into two Enterprise Units.
- 1998** Provision of car park and landscaping at Twig Bog.
- 1999** Commissioned and published ‘Cappoquin – A Walk Through History’, the only comprehensive history of Cappoquin from earliest times to the millennium. This book is still in print and continuing to generate profits.
- 2000** Construction of six additional Enterprise Units of 1,000sq ft each at Lefanta, Cappoquin. These units helped start up businesses establish and also created an income for CCDCL.
- 2001** Planning Permission received for Cappoquin Community Centre, former Mill site leased from Waterford County Council.
- 2003** Construction commences on the Community Centre
- 2007** Community Centre opened officially by Mr. John O’Donoghue, Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism.

2008 National All Ireland Pride of Place Awards held in Cappoquin Community Centre presented by President Mary McAleese.

Five hundred people representing Communities from all over Ireland attended and in addition to receiving their awards, they were served a five course meal prepared in the Centre's state of the art kitchen by renowned Co Waterford chefs Paul Flynn of the Tannery Restaurant, and Eunice Power of Powersfield House.

2009 Preparation of a Town Design Statement.
Theatre lighting installed in stage area of Community Centre.

2010 All Ireland Macra Drama finals held in Cappoquin Community Centre.
Application to the HSE to provide Primary Care Services.
Developing plans to build a sheltered housing for the elderly and vulnerable.

Coverage:

This initiative is local but with wider regional catchment area taking in all of West Waterford and when hosting national events it extends its reach nationally.

Initiators:

CCDCL.

Supporters:

- CLAR and Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
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- County Waterford Enterprise Board
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- CLAR and Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
- Waterford Leader Partnership Ltd
- Waterford County Council
- Dept of Rural, Community & Gaeltacht Affairs

– Company Members:

<i>Governing Body of the Cappoquin Community Development Company Ltd.</i>
Deputy Ollie Wilkinson Chairman/Director
Dr. Ben Murphy Vice Chairman/Director
Denis McCarthy Director/Company Secretary
Tom Feerick Treasurer/Director
Anthony Prendergast Vice Treasurer
Joe White Minute Secretary
Cathy McGrath Company Office Manager
Sr. de Lourdes Committee Member
David Keane Committee Member
Marion Looby Committee Member
Tom Kelleher Committee Member
Orla Nicholson Committee Member
John Flynn Committee Member
Aidan Walsh Committee Member
John McGrath Committee Member



Board Members

Organisation: The Cappoquin Community Development Co Ltd (CCDCL) is a company limited by guarantee and has been granted charitable trust status by the revenue commissioners. It is a run by local volunteers.

Partners:

Waterford LEADER Partnership.

CLAR.

Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

County Waterford Enterprise Board

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Waterford County Council

Waterford Institute of Technology

Enterprise Ireland

VEC

Failte Ireland

The local community

Main beneficiaries:

The principle beneficiaries are the local community. The facilities in the Community Centre are fully available to all local groups, organisations and clubs. The centre has become the focal point in the locality where people of all ages can meet, chat, have fun, exercise, access internet, receive further education, upgrade skills and attend sporting, cultural and artistic events. The local economy is a significant benefactor with additional coming to the centre to avail of its services, but particularly from the large numbers who attend the musical and theatrical events. A further benefit is that the centre replaced an old mill building which was a poor state of repair and unsightly and effectively derelict.

I can see more of a community spirit. The community Centre and The Development Company are the hub of the town, people ring here to look for advice on everything from educational opportunities to grants, if they have suggestions they also ring, they spend their leisure time here, attend shows and spend their money locally. It's bringing people into the town who would otherwise have no business here - like the Macra drama finals -

people came from all over the country and stayed overnight, so this brought money into the town.”

- Cathy McGrath, Manager, The Community Centre and board member of CCDCL

Relationship to wider objectives of The Rural Development Programme:

The project is directly related to the objectives of the Rural Development Programme in that it supports the local economy and has generated 5 full time jobs, 10 part-time jobs, this directly and indirectly led to sustaining the local jobs.

Replication:

The concept can be replicated in any community. However it requires a team of local dedicated and committed people who are willing to devote many voluntary hours to the task and are willing to take some risks in the process.

Funding from Central Government is also a requirement.

Sustainability

An annual costing and operating structure has been prepared by the governing body to ensure future sustainability of the centre, but this will be dependant on continued support, particularly in current economic climate.

Problems encountered:

Many problems were encountered during construction but these were resolved in weekly meetings with the architect and builder.

The most significant problem encountered was lack of cash flow and this occupied the minds of our members at practically all meetings. This was overcome primarily by developing a relationship with our bankers and giving them confidence in our ability to raise the necessary funding.

Lessons to pass on:

It is essential to have a committed number of people with various skills and expertise who are willing to devote many hours to the project and be prepared to take some risk. CCDCL

Governing Body has a constant membership of 15 people and its group meet every two weeks for 1996 to present time.

This level of commitment was necessary to achieve our goal—but there is tremendous pride amongst our members on their achievements.

It was also necessary for the company to handpick or select persons in the community with appropriate skills to sit on the Governing Body. It is essential that the company members are totally united to set out with a vision and believe it can be achieved.

Background information on Cappoquin:

Cappoquin is situated in the heart of West Waterford, nestled at the foot of the Knockmealdown Mountains in the Blackwater valley where agriculture is the predominant land use. According to the census its population of the town is just about 1000 people but the surrounding areas would increase the population to about 4,000.

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This case study was compiled with the generous co-operation and assistance of Caroline O'Brien, Project Officer, Waterford LEADER Partnership and Cathy McGrath, Manager, Cappoquin Community Centre. (April 2010)