



Climate Change and Historic Towns: Adapting to Change



Historic
Trail

Path to
Sustainability

Introduction

Climate change is the largest threat to the built, natural and intangible heritage of Ireland's towns. Change is coming and the challenge is huge. The government recently published its Action Plan for Climate Change but what can communities themselves do to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the emerging environmental and economic trends? Thankfully, the answer is a lot!

By coming together, residents of towns and villages can implement positive changes of far greater impact than would be possible by individuals acting alone. There are successful projects all over Ireland that show it is possible for communities to reduce their carbon footprint, enhance climate robustness and take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. At a conference in June 2019 by the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network and its partners, leaders of twelve such projects told their stories.

What principally follows are the graphic recordings (i.e. summaries) of the presentations delivered. Topics covered include: eco-tourism, waste management, transport, remote work, recycling homes and energy. We couldn't address every relevant area but we hope that the presentations in this document inspire you and your community to develop successful projects that will help your town adapt.

Taped Recordings

All twelve presentations are available to watch on the Heritage Council's Youtube Channel (www.youtube.com/user/TheHeritageCouncil). The individual YouTube link for each talk appears on the corresponding graphic recording. If you want to learn more about a particular presentation just scan the QR code to watch the full talk.

Heritage helps us fight climate change



Roughly one third of Irish people live in towns. Almost all of these places were laid out before cars were invented. Although this has caused many towns to be hollowed out as car use transformed patterns of life, it now makes them particularly suited to facilitating sustainable living. This is because:



The most environmentally sustainable building is the one that already exists.

Most of Ireland's historic building stock is robust, highly adaptable and with regular maintenance, will continue to endure. e.g. Skibbereen's Ludgate Digital Hub was once a bakery and cinema.



Trees in urban areas:

- absorb carbon dioxide
- help increase air quality
- enhance a sense of well-being
- reduce noise



Riverbanks, parks, graveyards and gardens all provide opportunities to manage for wildlife.

Natural peatlands and marshes in and around towns are significant carbon sinks. They also act as sponges and slow down the release of water into rivers which might otherwise cause damaging floods.

Towns provide enough people to make a farmer's market more viable. This in turn supports local producers, encourages the use of organic farming methods, promotes genetic diversity of plants and animals and reduces food miles.

Historic town centres were built for walkers not cars. They are also great for cycling but only if bicycles are given priority over cars.

Emissions from transport are significantly reduced by concentrating employment, community activities and housing in and around the town core.



Vincent Carragher, Research Fellow, The Wheel / Trinity College Dublin



Cillian Murphy, Co-founder, Loop Head Tourism



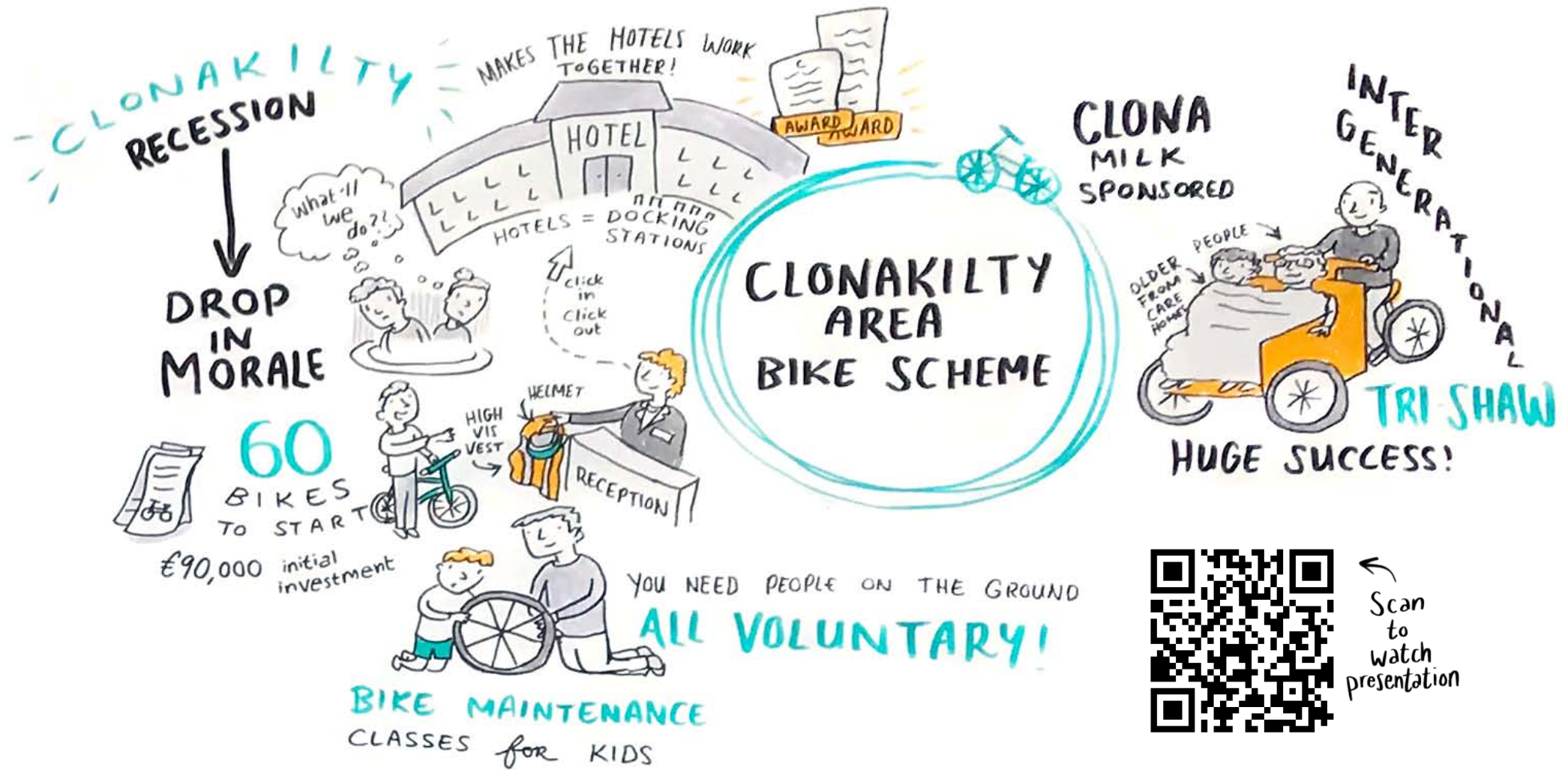
Scan to watch presentation



Ben O'Sullivan, Co-owner, Deebert Hotel



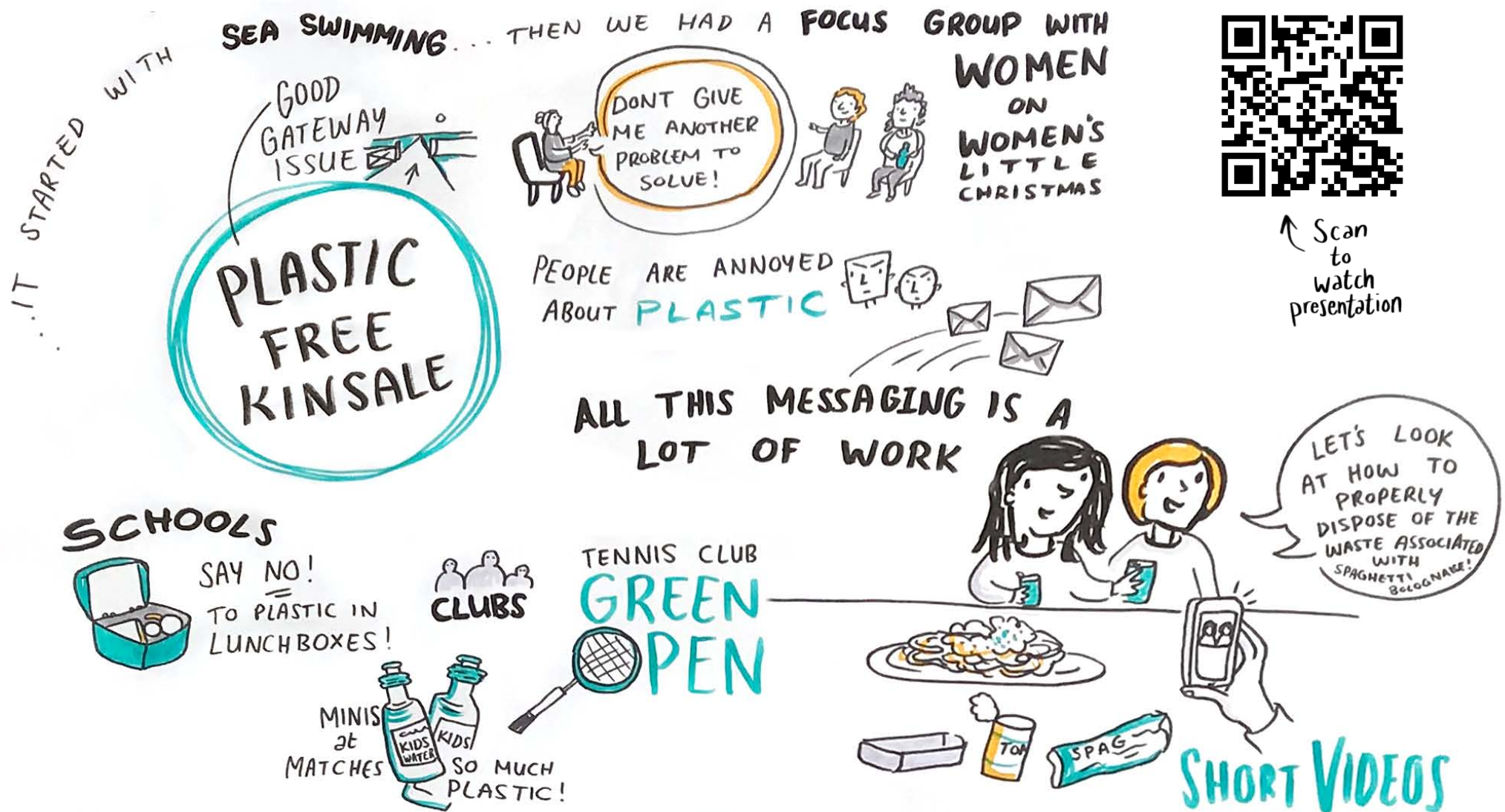
Tom O'Donovan, Owner, O'Donovan's Hotel



Sarah McCutcheon, Executive Archaeologist, Limerick City and County Council



Madeleine Murray, Director, Change by Degrees



David Andrews, Director, The Laughing Oyster Seaweed Company



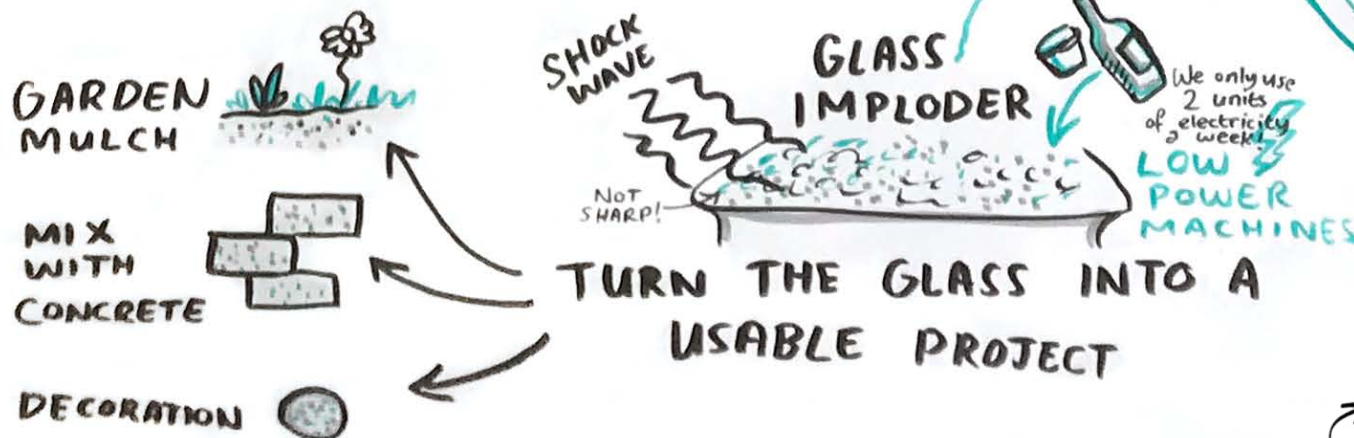
If anyone knows of
a use for soiled
nappies let me
know!



WE'RE TRYING TO **REUSE!**
RECYCLE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE!
TAKING THE POWER BACK...

COMMUNITY
GLASS
WASTE
MANAGEMENT

BERE
ISLAND



Scan to watch presentation

Avril Ní Shearcaigh, Manager, Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Arainn/
Aran Islands Energy Group

MAKING THE
ARAN ISLANDS
CARBON
NEUTRAL

RETRO-FITTING
CHALLENGING?
OLD HOUSES

50%
ARE
NOW
RETROFITTED

€
SEAI SCHEMES

ELECTRIFICATION
of
ENERGY
& HEAT
IN BUILDINGS

HEAT
PUMP

BIODIESEL?
ELECTRIC
FERRIES?
HYDROGEN?
We're in the early stages of
installing a wind
turbine

25 YEAR OLD
ELECTRICITY CABLE FROM MAINLAND
50% of ELECTRICITY IS LOST ALONG THE WAY
IF THIS BREAKS PEOPLE HAVE TO USE
EXPENSIVE, DIRTY DIESEL GENERATORS

FAR FROM SHORE



ENERGY
CO-OP

NON-PROFIT ✓

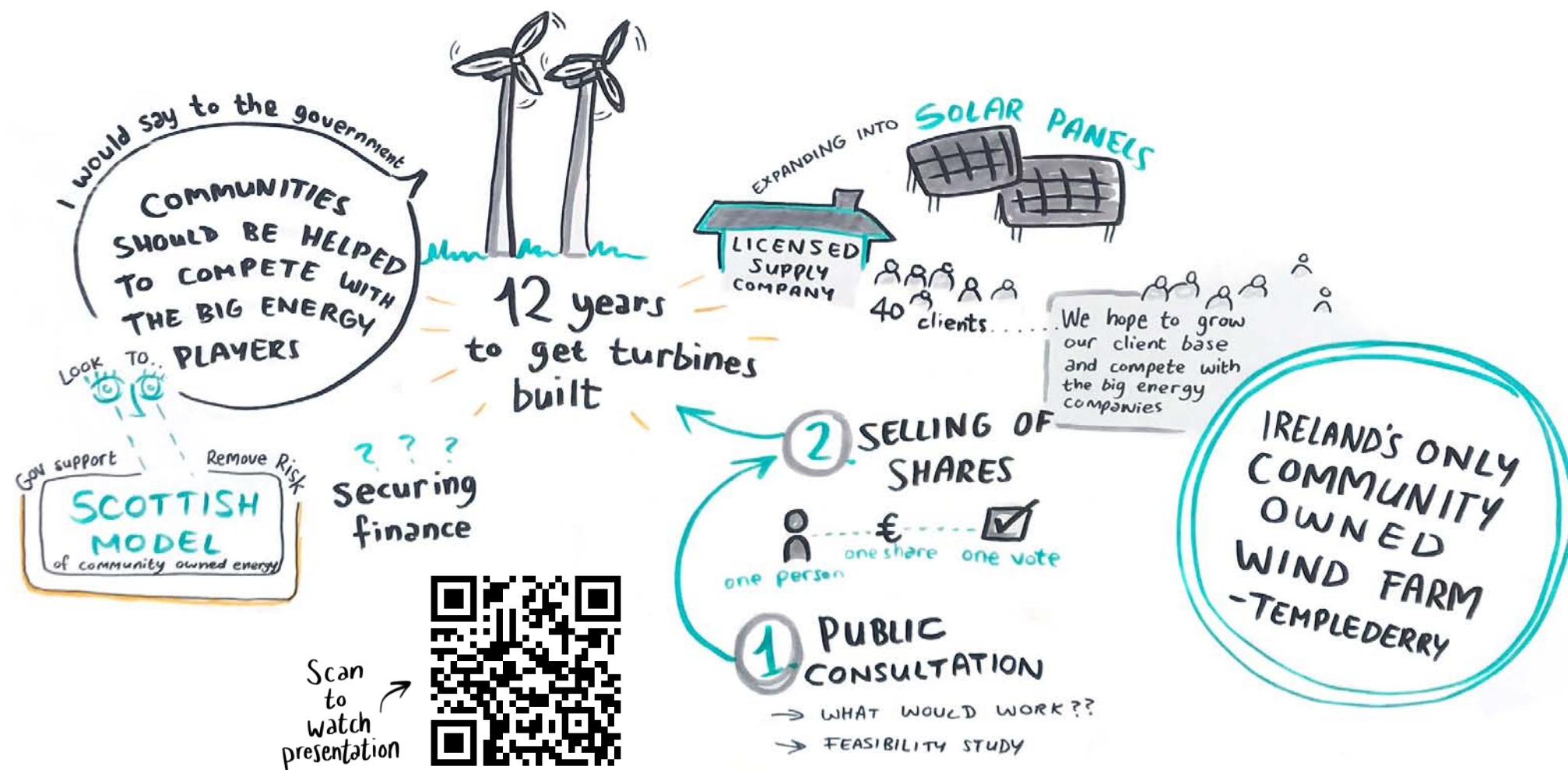
MEMBER-OWNED ✓

YOU NEED AN ADDRESS ON THE
ISLAND TO JOIN...



Scan to watch presentation

Gregg Allen, Project Manager, Community Renewable Energy Supply



Fergal McGirl, Director, Fergal McGirl Architects

REDUCING HEATING COSTS IN PRE-WWII HOMES



ARCHITECTS WERE LOOKING FOR THINGS TO DO AFTER THE CRASH...



DUBLIN

LOOKING at the ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF OLD BUILDINGS

NOT TOO BAD! ACTUALLY



Improved **BER** Rating ↑

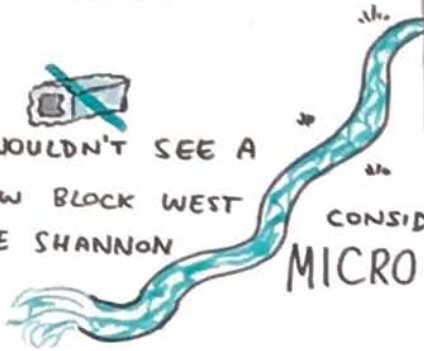
Reduced ENERGY Bills for low-hanging fruit such as boiler & insulation ↓

80% of the failures of BUILDINGS ARE TO DO WITH MOISTURE



REMOVING SINGLE GLAZED WINDOWS MEANS LOSING HISTORIC GLASS

YOU WOULDN'T SEE A HOLLOW BLOCK WEST OF THE SHANNON



CONSIDER CLIMATES MICRO-CLIMATES

Something will come along

DISTRICT HEATING?

THE TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING QUICKLY!

DON'T CHANGE THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING

HERITAGE conservation



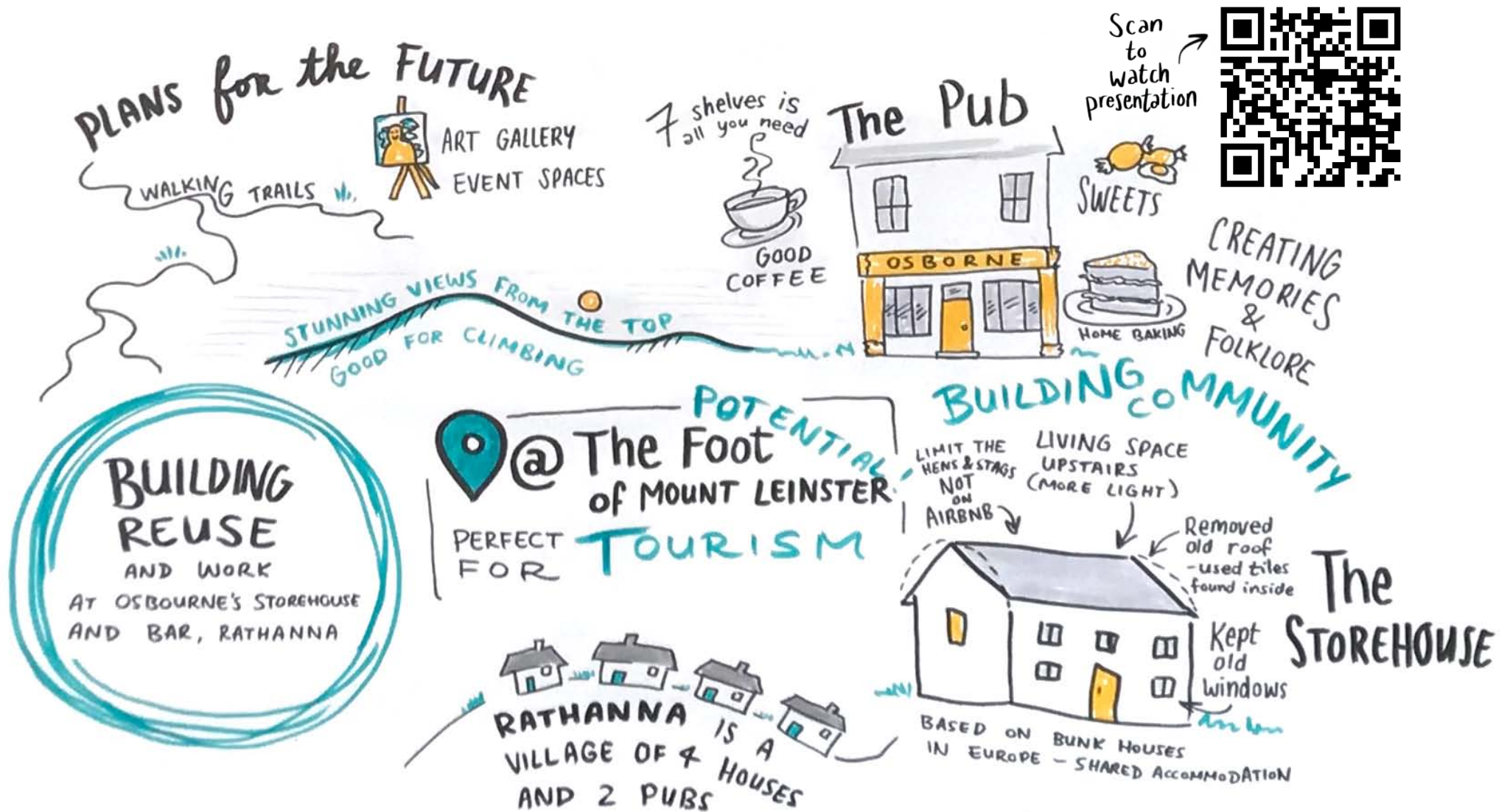
VS. energy conservation

It is possible to strike a BALANCE.

Scan to watch presentation



Eric Osborne, Architect, Publican and Farmer



Tracy Keogh, Co-organiser, Grow Remote

YOU CAN WORK REMOTELY!



This project started as a WHATS APP group that got out of hand! 99

The companies of the future don't want to force workers into the



Scan to watch presentation

BUT HOW DO YOU FIND THESE JOBS?



BEWARE of SCAMS

www.remoteworkireland.com

DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE

260,000

REMOTE WORKERS IN IRELAND

AND MASSIVE POTENTIAL FOR MORE

HIYA!
OVER HERE!



CULTURAL GAP

LOCAL AREA

Should move to Dublin?
I can't find a job!



REMOTE WORK IN RURAL IRELAND

-1

0

+1

+2

JOBS ARE NO LONGER IN LOCATIONS, THEY ARE IN TIME ZONES

Further Reading and Support

On heritagecouncil.ie we have created a set of helpful publications, presentations and links that will help inform adapting your town for climate change. The resources are part of a broader set of supports focusing on urban regeneration. www.heritagecouncil.ie/advice-and-guidance/renewing-your-historic-town-or-village

On the Heritage Council's YouTube Channel there is a specific playlist dedicated to helping towns adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity. www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIKz_D-MJSUlatZY0cE9liRPc2_8VIRzL

For more detailed information on supporting pollinators.ie. Another website sparkchange.ie, provides resources on how you can make your community more sustainable. It also has a list of inspirational projects from across Ireland.

Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by Liam Mannix, Project Manager, Irish Walled Towns Network and illustrator Hazel Hurley. The infographics are based upon talks given by:

- ★ Vincent Carragher, Research Fellow, The Wheel / Trinity College Dublin
- ★ Cillian Murphy, Co-founder, Loop Head Tourism
- ★ Ben O'Sullivan, Co-owner, Deebert Hotel
- ★ Tom O'Donovan, Owner, O'Donovan's Hotel
- ★ Sarah McCutcheon, Executive Archaeologist, Limerick City and County Council
- ★ Madeleine Murray, Director, Change by Degrees
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- ★ Avril Ní Shearcaigh, Manager, Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Arainn / Aran Islands Energy Group
- ★ Gregg Allen, Project Manager, Community Renewable Energy Supply
- ★ Fergal McGirl, Director, Fergal McGirl Architects
- ★ Eric Osborne, Architect, Publican and Farmer
- ★ Tracy Keogh, Co-organiser, Grow Remote

With the exception of Sarah McCutcheon's talk, all the presentations took place at a conference titled 'Climate change and historic towns: adapting to change', held May 31st 2019 at the Deebert Hotel, Kilmallock. The event was run by the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network in partnership with Limerick City and County Council and in association with Munster Vales, Ballyhoura Development CLG, The Wheel and Trinity College Dublin. Support for the conference was also provided by Creative Ireland. Sarah McCutcheon's talk occurred at the Historic Towns Initiative Seminar in January 2019, in the Heritage Council, Kilkenny. On May 31st, as part of the conference, Sarah led a walking tour in Kilmallock focusing on the same topic as her January talk.

This document was reviewed by Ian Doyle, Head of Conservation with the Heritage Council and Sarah McCutcheon, Executive Archaeologist, Limerick City and County Council. Further assistance was provided by Lorcán Scott, Wildlife Officer with the Heritage Council.



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022



BALLYHOURA
DEVELOPMENT CLG

the wheel

Stronger Charities.
Stronger Communities.



Trinity
College
Dublin