HISTORIC TOWNS INITIATIVE
PILOT PROGRAMME 2013-14
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**OVERVIEW**

The Historic Towns Initiative was established in 2012 to undertake a pilot programme of heritage-led regeneration in three selected towns: Listowel, County Kerry, Youghal, County Cork and Westport, County Mayo. It was a joint undertaking of the then Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Fáilte Ireland and the Heritage Council. A steering group was set up including representatives of the three partner bodies and each of the three pilot towns. A framework document was drawn up by the steering group to guide the towns in the steps required for a successful heritage-led regeneration programme.

The pilot ran from February 2013 to June 2014. A total funding for capital works of €360,000 was provided by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht over the two years and a further €90,000 by Fáilte Ireland for non-capital tourism-related projects in 2013. The latter included the funding of a baseline survey of the attitudes of residents, visitors and businesses in the towns towards their heritage. The funding for capital works acted as a catalyst for an enhanced programme of works with further investment by the town councils and local property owners. Matching capital funding of €512,896 was provided locally bringing the total investment in the three towns from the pilot to €962,896.

A number of high quality projects were successfully completed in the towns including the Peter Street public realm and sculpture, Westport – which went on to be the winner of the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland’s public award; a scheme of façade enhancement in Listowel; and extensive public realm enhancement works and branding of a new ‘Raleigh Quarter’ in Youghal. Where local government took the lead by investing in flagship schemes and public realm works, this gave confidence to the private sector to make their own investments in the town centres.

Important lessons were learned from the pilot which will inform any future national roll-out of the Historic Towns Initiative:

- The results of a survey of visitors, residents and local businesses by Behaviour & Attitudes found that there was a high overall satisfaction rate with historic presentation, preservation and interpretation of heritage as prominent drivers.
- Towns, such as Youghal, which had a clear vision for their town, together with a well-considered action plan, were best placed to use funding for greatest benefit and were better prepared to accept extra allocations when available.
- Local authorities need to take a strong leadership role in driving the initiative at a local level while encouraging active engagement from local community groups, the business sector and private landowners, all of whom will be the final beneficiaries under this initiative.
- Central oversight is also needed for the development of a national HTI programme and branding either through central government or through a state agency.
- The future success of the HTI will be dependent on on-going support from central government in the form of funding and/or fiscal incentives to encourage the conservation and reuse of historic buildings in the towns.
CONTEXT TO THE HISTORIC TOWNS INITIATIVE

Ireland’s historic towns make an important contribution to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of their regions. For centuries, they have been the focus of civic and commercial life throughout the country playing such diverse roles as centres of local governance, the administration of justice, commercial activity and cultural life. In recent years, many towns have experienced a reversal of fortune particularly at the historic core. In some cases, much of the commercial life has moved out of the town centre to modern out-of-town developments leaving behind vacant shop units. Many residents too may have moved to suburban and rural locations leaving empty the upper floors of buildings in the town centre which traditionally housed shop owners and their families.

Historic Towns Initiative Framework for the Pilot Phase, 2012

Ireland’s towns

Ireland’s towns contain a wealth of architectural, archaeological and social heritage. All Irish towns can be described as ‘historic’ in one way or another. Many were founded as walled towns by the Anglo-Normans in the medieval period while others evolved from pre-Norman monastic settlements; later settlements of eighteen or nineteenth century origin were planned towns laid out by local landowners or developed around industrial sites such as mills. Towns formed a network across Ireland. Larger towns became the centres of commerce and administration containing landmark civic buildings such as market houses, town halls, courthouses and the like. Other towns developed to provide a commercial and social focus for their regions.

The history of a town and its people is embodied in its physical fabric. A town with a well-maintained historic built environment provides a distinct sense of place for the townspeople and makes it an attractive destination for visitors and for potential investors alike. It also provides a sense of identity and belonging to the inhabitants of a wider geographical area who look to the town as the cultural focus of their region.

Heritage Towns Programme

In 1991, Bord Fáilte proposed a Heritage Town Programme to transform some of Ireland’s finest historic towns into tourist attractions in their own right. A funding programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund, private source and the public sector was made available.

A total of 34 towns were designated as heritage towns under the programme. However, by 2010, only 15 towns were continuing to market themselves under the brand of ‘heritage town’. Fáilte Ireland is no longer involved in the designation and there is no funding stream available to these towns.
Issues facing small towns

Recent years have seen many historic towns in Ireland undergo a reversal of fortune due to a variety of economic and social factors. There has been a decline in the customer base for so-called ‘bricks and mortar’ shops and there are perceived difficulties in adapting and reusing historic buildings within the town centres for modern use.

There has also been a population shift away from the centre of towns towards suburban and rural areas combined with a corresponding shift of commercial life to larger urban areas and out-of-town locations. Between 1991 and 2011, the overall share of the national population living in towns fell from 12% to 9% driven partly by a perception of more affordable housing and a higher quality of life in the countryside. Research undertaken by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) also shows that rural towns were more acutely impacted upon by the recession than urban areas, with unemployment increasing by 192% in rural areas and 114% in urban areas with the effects of this felt more acutely in small and medium-sized towns.

These towns need help to tackle the challenges that threaten their quality, character and identity.

Heritage-led Regeneration

Heritage-led regeneration is a recognised policy across Europe. Projects undertaken in recent years throughout a number of countries have shown that heritage is key to successful urban regeneration and have demonstrated that private sector investment in the commercial life of a town is encouraged by public sector investment in heritage. The restoration of one or more historic buildings or the enhancement of a public space can act as a catalyst for the regeneration of a significantly wider area. The repair and renovation of historic buildings creates a need for specialist skills whilst restored historic buildings have been shown to provide ideal locations for creative businesses, attracting skilled workers, businesses, visitors and tourists.

The cultural heritage of a town provides a sense of specialness and an associated pride in the locality that marks it as a desirable place to be. Placing heritage at the forefront of the regeneration of our towns ensures that the local distinctiveness, community spirit, values and traditions are retained and enhanced while allowing new interventions to take place. Townspeople are an essential component of what makes the place special and their participation in the process of regeneration is critical to its success.

Planning for the regeneration of a historic town needs an integrated approach that balances the protection of the built heritage and the sustainable development of historic urban areas with the needs of modern living and takes account of the concerns and aspirations of the community and key stakeholders. This requires the coordination and management of sometimes conflicting demands and interests of different stakeholders. However, the development of a common vision for the town, supported by a coordinated and integrated series of objectives and
a programme of realistic, achievable actions, will balance the conservation of the heritage with the needs of those who live in and use the historic town. Bringing unused or underused spaces within our towns back into use has many advantages. In addition to reviving the economic value of an urban area, it also removes abandoned and derelict sites, and reduces the pressure to build on greenfield sites, on valuable agricultural land.

Fáilte Ireland has identified Ireland’s historic cities, towns and villages as a cultural heritage asset with significant tourism potential. Cultural tourism forms a central plank of the Irish tourism industry and a very significant generator of foreign exchange earnings. The so-called ‘culturally curious’ tourist tends to stay in the country longer and spends more (Fáilte Ireland Historic Towns in Ireland).

Local distinctiveness is key to each town having a unique selling point. Its heritage, the history of the place and why it is how it is today provides that uniqueness. The character and distinctiveness of the historic built environment are central to the future success of Irish towns.

Decorative stuccowork of Pat McAuliffe, Listowel
**Historic Towns Initiative**

The Historic Towns Initiative represented a joint undertaking by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Heritage Council and Fáilte Ireland based on a renewal of the existing Heritage Towns designation to promote the heritage-led regeneration of Ireland’s historic towns, many of which have seen a reversal of fortune over the past few years.

In July 2012, three towns were invited to participate in a workshop in Kilkenny, hosted by the Heritage Council, and, having agreed to take part in the pilot, were subsequently invited to nominate a representative to the HTI Steering Group. The towns were Listowel, Co. Kerry, Westport, Co. Mayo and Youghal, Co. Cork. All three had formerly been designated ‘heritage towns’ and were chosen as a sample of rural towns that varied geographically and economically and heritage content but had the combined goal of reinvigorating the historic cores of the town. Each town brought strong local authority support.

Meetings were held in each of the towns during November 2012. These involved meetings between the HTI steering group and town council officials, a walking tour of the town visiting significant locations followed by meetings with stakeholders and community representatives to introduce the HTI and the pilot programme for the town.

As a preliminary action, the steering group compiled a document entitled *Framework for the Pilot Phase* which was launched on 21st February 2013 by Minister Jimmy Deenihan T.D. in the Custom House, Dublin. This outlined a recommended 6-step process for undertaking a heritage-led regeneration strategy in a town. The steps were:

1. Understanding the town and its heritage
2. Assembling support
3. Assessing the issues facing the town
4. Defining a vision and setting goals
5. Implementation
6. Monitoring and reviewing

The intention of the HTI is to encourage the regeneration of towns by capitalising on their heritage to provide a sense of uniqueness to each town in order to succeed. It draws on the European experience of a number of projects in heritage-led regeneration. It aimed to establish partnerships at local level between communities, businesses and local government to preserve and enhance the character of the historic town centres by repairing the historic building fabric; bringing vacant uppers floors in buildings back into use – preferably residential use; encouraging the adaptive reuse of buildings and facilitating high quality public realm works. The HTI relies on the strength and vision of local communities to regenerate their town, aided and assisted by local and national government and other support agencies committed to the improvement of quality of life for those living in the towns.
The HTI pilot providing funding to enable local government and voluntary groups to undertake projects to enhance the heritage of the town and to encourage private owners and/or occupiers to invest in improvements and repairs to their buildings and to bring vacant floor area in historic buildings back into use. The removal of dereliction, improved maintenance and general improvements to the public realm of the historic towns encourages investment from other sources and provides an attractive destination for visitors and benefits the local community.

*Branding of the Raleigh Quarter, Youghal*
**Historic Towns Initiative Pilot Programme**

A fund of €360,000 for capital works was made available from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht over the course of the pilot under the HTI Fund to be divided equally between the three towns. The towns were expected to make an additional contribution in the form of cash or contribution-in-kind and were responsible for identifying suitable projects for consideration by the national steering group. The proposed projects had to be in line with each town’s HTI Management Plan, be supported by local government and be achievable within the allocated fund.

![Westport ‘Edible Landscape’ Project ©Westport Town Council](image)

The HTI fund was administered by the town councils which advertised, where necessary, for suitable projects under approved schemes, assessed the applications submitted, approved projects eligible for funding and was responsible for paying the grants to the owners or occupiers of structures approved for funding on completion of works or, where applicable, to contractors engaged by the town council itself to carry out works. The local government body was also eligible to use the HTI fund to support its own projects providing these were approved by the HTI steering group.

Further funding of €30,000 per town for tourism-related projects was made available from Fáilte Ireland under the HTI. Of this, a sum of €10,000 was set aside by each town to fund a baseline survey of the town. Towns were encouraged to focus the use of this current funding together with the capital funding from HTI fund on the same projects, or on projects in a similar geographical location, in order to maximise the impact of the pilot phase.
The local government bodies were required to ensure that the works were devised, specified and overseen, where appropriate, by suitably qualified conservation professionals. The works were required to be carried out to a high standard using appropriate materials and techniques.

Works that qualified for capital funding under the HTI included:

- Building repair works, particularly repairs to the exterior of a historic building or to its main structural elements. In exceptional circumstances, internal works may be considered eligible but generally only where there is public access to the building;
- Works to bring vacant space back into use (whether residential, commercial or both) within historic buildings particularly within upper floors. The buildings should be in good repair or should be made so as part of the works. New works to allow for conversion of the building to a new use may be considered eligible providing the character and special interest of the building are respected;
- Reinstatement of architectural features where appropriately detailed and specified, such as sash windows, shopfronts, railings and similar. This should only be where the reinstatement is essential to the design and character of the historic building or street. It should not include works of conjectural restoration i.e. work for which there is no firm physical or documentary evidence of the earlier state of the structure;
- Street enhancement works such as maintenance schemes and redecoration schemes for multiple buildings, for example façade-painting schemes;
- Public realm works particularly where using traditional or local materials;
- The costs associated with archaeological work may qualify for funding providing the work is in line with the requirements of the National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Works that did not qualify for HTI grant aid included:

- Works that had commenced before the local authority had carried out an inspection of any building for which works were proposed;
- The construction of new buildings;
- Demolition or the removal of any part or element of a protected structure except where it involved careful dismantling prior to reinstatement or the removal of later work which altered or obscured the original design of the building and where careful dismantling was carried out as part of an agreed scheme of reinstatement.
Clockgate, Youghal
Youghal, County Cork

Youghal is located on the western shore of Youghal Bay at the mouth of the River Blackwater. It adjoins fine beaches to the south and is close to the largest freshwater coastal marshes in County Cork - Ballyvergan Marsh, home to important plant and bird species. The town lies close to the country boundary with County Waterford and has a population of 7,794 (CSO 2011).

Youghal was established as an Anglo-Norman medieval walled port although there is evidence of earlier Viking settlement in the area. The town received its first charter in 1202 and quickly developed into a significant commercial centre. Consequently, Youghal has a rich built heritage from the medieval period including the Town Walls, St Mary’s Collegiate Church and Tynte’s Castle. It boasts many other important structures including the Clockgate Tower and Myrtle Grove - the former residence of Sir Walter Raleigh, the renowned sixteenth-century English adventurer and writer. Later the town expanded out from its medieval walls and became a major seaside destination. This is reflected in a later heritage of nineteenth and early twentieth century building stock.

Once an important manufacturing town, Youghal experienced a sharp economic decline in the past twenty years with the closure of the railway and the loss of several industries. Youghal is the only one of the three pilot towns to be designated as a disadvantaged town under the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investing and Development (RAPID) programme. Some years ago, Youghal had identified heritage-led regeneration as a tool to revitalise the town following years of economic depression and high levels of unemployment. Tourism is now the main industry supporting the town. A heritage-led regeneration strategy was published by the town council in 2005 with support from the Heritage Council and many projects on the action plan had already been successfully completed.

There are 252 structures in the record of protected structures in the town development plan 2009-2015. There are two architectural conservation areas designated – one comprising the town core and another including a number of houses along Front Strand.

For the HTI pilot programme, Youghal concentrated on the historic core area of the Raleigh Quarter and continuing the redevelopment of the quays areas. The funding assisted the completion of the installation of ‘tulip’ umbrellas on Nealon’s Quay car park. These allow the area to be for markets and other public events. Substantial public realm works were undertaken including paving the historic area with limestone and the introduction of signage, seating and flowerbeds. A painting scheme was undertaken of shop front façades and buildings in the historic core. Youghal Town Council contributed considerable funding from its own resources towards the HTI pilot projects and also received support from SECAD (South and East Cork Area Development).
Listowel Castle

Façade enhancement projects, Listowel ©Listowel Town Council
Listowel, County Kerry

Listowel is an inland town located on a bend on the River Feale. The 2011 census results showed that there were 4,832 people living within the town boundaries with a further 627 people living within its environs.

Listowel has a rich architectural, archaeological, cultural and natural heritage. The town gets its name from the rath ‘Lios Tuathail’, located to the east of the town centre. Listowel Castle was built by Maurice Fitzmaurice in the late-thirteenth century and the town developed around it. The castle, as it now exists, dates from the fifteenth century and was taken into state care in 1923. The heart of the town is the fine nineteenth-century Square with the former St John’s Church of Ireland church (now an arts centre) at its centre. Listowel is also renowned for the Celtic Revival stuccowork of local craftsman, Pat McAuliffe, on façades throughout the town.

The main industries supporting the town are food processing, agricultural and SMEs. Whilst tourism is a core industry for the town, it is generally felt that tourism numbers are not being maximised. Although the population in the town has increased 11.4% since the previous census, Listowel has been affected by emigration in recent years, particularly in the younger generation. Listowel Castle, a National Monument in state ownership, is seen as the main heritage attraction for the town. The Seanchaí Centre located adjacent to the castle serves as a heritage centre to the town. Listowel Writers’ Week, together with Listowel Races, account for the largest visitor numbers to the town.

There are 97 structures in the record of protected structures in the Listowel Development Plan 2009-2015 and the plan designates a large part of the historic town centre as an architectural conservation area. There are a number of other smaller ACAs throughout the town.

Listowel hoped to use the HTI pilot to enhance the town by improving the vitality and viability of the town centre and to make the most of its natural and built heritage assets. The availability of HTI funding was widely advertised by the town council through the local newspapers and by distributing leaflets to business and individual owners. A large number of applications were received for the façade improvement scheme.

The initial project proposals submitted by Listowel Town Council to the HTI steering group for capital funding were focused on development of a heritage trail by installing a pedestrian bridge; the reinstatement of architectural features in the town; a façade painting scheme; using vacant shops to showcase historical elements of Listowel; and other public realm works. Unfortunately due to inclement weather conditions and flooding along the river, the proposed pedestrian bridge did not proceed. Instead, the HTI funding was used to provide additional signage for the heritage trail throughout the town, consolidation of footpaths along the heritage trail and signage to tourist attractions erected on entering the town.
Westport House

Bridge House, The Mall
Westport, County Mayo

Westport is a planned town laid out during the eighteenth century. It is located on the Carrowbeg River. Westport Quay is an adjunct to the town, situated to the west at the edge of Clew Bay. At its peak in the mid-nineteenth century, the population of Westport had reached 8,000. The Great Famine greatly affected the town as did the decline of its main industry – the linen industry. The population declined to a low of 3,000 people in 1971 but has since risen to 6,063 (CSOI 2011).

The original village was located adjacent to the O’Malley castle to the west of the present town. This settlement was relocated to its present site by the Browne family as part of the redevelopment of their lands and the creation of the Westport demesne. The town is laid out with two main squares connected by streets lined with a variety of fine eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings. Particularly attractive is the tree-lined promenade of The Mall built on either side of a canalised section of the Carrowbeg River. Westport House is the primary heritage attraction in the town, built by the first Earl of Altamont to the designs of Richard Castle with later alterations by James Wyatt. The house and demesne have recently been reconnect ed to the town by a newly constructed gateway.

Westport is a thriving town with employment centred on the pharmaceutical sector, tourism and SMEs. It is a popular tourist destination and was voted the Best Place to Live in Ireland in a competition run by the Irish Times in 2012. Westport is located on the Wild Atlantic Way and serves as a base for those visiting the nearby pilgrimage site of Croagh Patrick.

The Westport Town and Environs Development Plan 2010-16 included 146 structures in its record of protected structures. It was an objective of the plan to designate an architectural conservation area that would include the historic core of the town. The current success of the town is attributed to the non-statutory document Westport 2000 – an integrated action plan for Westport which was published in 1997 by the planning authority (then Westport Urban District Council). This identified a planning strategy and framework to integrate a number of diverse factors including: the consolidation and preservation of the historic core; the conservation and regeneration of the Westport House and demesne and its integration with the community at large; the control of peripheral development; the rationalisation of tourism, industrial, residential and commercial development within the town structure; and the development of a physical connection with Clew Bay.

For the HTI pilot, Westport proposed a number of projects throughout the town, at Westport Quay and Westport House demesne including the planting of a linear orchard; conservation and repair projects at a variety of buildings including Westport House, Bridge House on The Mall; the Clew Bay Heritage Museum and others. Non-capital projects included the development of an interactive heritage interpretation for the summer months entitled ‘Westport Story’ and a conference on Westport House, jointly hosted with the Irish Georgian Society.
### Overall Assessment: Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Strengths</th>
<th>Key Development Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Westport  | • Amenities & Services  
• Restaurants/Cafes  
• Pubs/Bars  
• Cleanliness of streets  
• Squares and open spaces | • Public Transport  
• Parking spaces |
| Youghal   | • Restaurants/Cafes  
• Sense of safety and security | • Day time entertainment  
• Shopping facilities  
• Quality of footpaths/paving  
• Presentation of shops/houses |
| Listowel  | • Squares and open spaces  
• Presentation of historic buildings and monuments  
• Green open spaces  
• Presentation of shops | • Day time entertainment  
• Cost of car parking |

### Overall Assessment: Visitors & Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Strengths</th>
<th>Key Development Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Westport  | Presentation of squares and open spaces  
Amenities & Services  
Quality of restaurants and pubs  
Exploring by Town foot | Access & Transport: Management of traffic around the town  
Overhead wires |
| Youghal   | Access & Transport  
Visual presentation of buildings and monuments | Range of shopping facilities  
Maintenance and presentation of shops |
| Listowel  | Visual presentation of buildings and monuments | Raising awareness of history & heritage  
Shopping including artisan facilities |
Baseline Survey

As part of the pilot, the three towns were asked to set aside a portion of the monies allocated by Fáilte Ireland to fund a research project to develop baseline metrics for historic towns. The Framework for the HTI pilot recommended that a baseline survey be undertaken as part of the assessment of the town ‘to gauge the view of the townspeople, the local business community and visitors to the towns and the issues they see facing it. This survey should ideally be undertaken by a professional surveying company.’ This survey would allow for more effective monitoring of the success of the Initiative by providing a comparison when reviewing progress at a later stage.

Questionnaires were designed by Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The survey brief was to collect information on the views of tourists, the local residents and the business community in the town. Three separate surveys took place.

The aim of the survey of tourists was ‘to determine the motivations, experiences and satisfaction levels of leisure visitors to the towns with particular reference to the towns’ heritage.’ The survey of residents was intended to determine their sentiment towards the town including ‘opinions of the town as a place to live, work and socialise; opinions with regard to public realm within the town; and awareness of the heritage of the towns and its importance to them.’ The survey of businesses operating in the towns questioned them on their confidence, the significance of the history and heritage of the town to their businesses, and other issues including traffic management, the availability of amenities and services, cleanliness and security within the town.

The tender for the surveys was won by Behaviour & Attitudes. The surveys of visitors and residents were carried out in summer 2013, while the survey of the businesses took place in January 2014. A detailed presentation of the findings was made to a steering group meeting in March 2014.

The conclusions of the surveys confirmed the value of the Historic Towns Initiative: historic presentation, preservation and interpretation were seen as prominent drivers of high overall satisfaction with visitors to the towns. The general presentation of the towns, visitor attractions and friendliness of locals were the top three spontaneous positives given by visitors, very few negatives emerged on a spontaneous basis. Three quarters of residents surveyed considered preservation of heritage to be extremely important. Among the businesses surveyed, engagement with the history and culture of their local areas and the desire to develop it further was evident across each town in the survey.
The existing site  

The 'Sentinel’ being winched into place  

The completed project ©Westport Town Council
Case Study 1
Peter Street, Westport

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Funding from HTI:</th>
<th>€20,250</th>
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<tr>
<td>Local Authority:</td>
<td>€5,062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenditure:</td>
<td>€25,312</td>
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The site is located within the historic core of Westport, at the junction of Peter Street and Quay Street (N59). It was originally occupied by three houses that were a continuation of the Peter Street terrace. These had been demolished leaving a triangular space dominated by the gable wall of the end house of the terrace. The site is located on rising ground and is highly visible from the Octagon, the primary public place of Westport. Previous efforts had been made to enhance the site with a tree planted to conceal the gable of the Peter Street house and steps and seating provided. However, the space was obstructed by street lighting, road signs and an electricity pole.

In the B&A survey of visitors, Westport scored highly on most aspects. However, one of the lowest scores was in relation to the intrusiveness of overhead wires. This was frustrating for a local authority which had undertaken a scheme of relocating cabling underground, the one outstanding area being at Peter Street.

To celebrate Westport winning the Irish Times ‘Best Place to Live in Ireland’ competition in 2012, the town council had held a national sculpture competition. This was won by Ronan Halpin with a sculpture called ‘The Sentinel’ a large bronze depicting a stylised horse and rider. It was decided to erect the sculpture at this difficult, but very visible, junction in a new public space designed by Simon Wall, town architect. The public realm works, which were grant-aided by the Historic Towns Initiative, included the re-routing of overhead cabling, removal of services poles, the installation of new stone steps, paving, seating and decorative lighting.

The completed project won the Public Choice Award at the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland Irish Architecture Awards in June 2016.
Public realm works, Youghal
CASE STUDY 2
Public Realm Works, Youghal

| Funding from Historic Towns Initiative: | €102,000 |
| Funding from local authority:          | €513,000 |
| Total expenditure:                    | €615,000 |

The Youghal public realm strategy of 2008 had analysed the historic core of the town in terms of the streetscape, the views and aspects within it, how the spaces were used, accessed and presented. From this a number of objectives were devised to improve the town space and make it more attractive to visit. Youghal had identified the development of the waterfront and improvement of Market Square as flagship projects for investment. It was intended that the waterfront area should be used to create an attractive promenade and seating area but should offer encouragement to visitors into the Main Street.

The lack of diversity in shops was a criticism raised of the town centre and the local authority hoped to improve this by creating a covered area for outdoor markets to take place. This was achieved by the erection of large ‘tulip’ umbrellas at Nealon’s Quay car park with new limestone paving, public lighting, seating, flower beds, signage and litter bins. The works also included the completion of two sea walls.

Further public realm works were carried out around the Courthouse and in Barry’s Lane. In addition to limestone paving, public lighting and seating, four large flowerbeds were refurbished to match those in Market Square.

Other public realm works were carried out in Emmet Place and O’Rahilly Street.
Façade enhancement projects, Listowel
CASE STUDY 3
Façade enhancement scheme, Listowel

| Funding from Historic Towns Initiative: | €67,000 |
| Local funding (local authority and private sector) | €19,000 |
| Total expenditure: | €86,000 |

In 2013, Listowel Town Council ran the Building Façade Enhancement Scheme which was 75% funded by HTI, with 25% contribution from the owners or occupiers of the buildings and the town council. The scheme included grants towards façade painting, repair of sash windows, replacement of rainwater goods with cast-iron guttering and downpipes and repair works to protected structures or structures of historical importance. The scheme was advertised by the town council through local newspapers and by distributing leaflets to business and individual owners. A large number of applications were received. Projects were selected that were complimentary to the actions of the Public Realm Plan and local Development Plan and would sit within the HTI Framework. In some cases, where premises were under the control of a receiver and were unwilling or unable to contribute, then the town council funded the local contribution.

A total of fourteen privately-owned buildings within the historic town core availed of the scheme in 2013. In 2014, the emphasis was shifted to public buildings and five buildings were funded including:

- Seancháí Literary Centre, The Square
- The Courthouse, Charles Street
- Carnegie Library, Upper Church Street
- The church tower, Upper Church Street
- ‘The Emporium’, No.15 Church Street

The scheme resulted in the reintroduction of timber sash windows and cast iron guttering into prominent historic buildings in the town while halting the deterioration of others. It also allowed for the repair and enhancement of examples of the Celtic Revival plasterwork by Pat McAuliffe, for which Listowel is renowned, including the Lion and Harp and The Emporium.
APPENDIX 1: HTI pilot Projects

Westport

- Creation of linear orchard ‘Edible Landscape Project’
- Clew Bay Heritage Museum conservation works
- Wyatt window and sliding sash repair project
- Bridge House, structural repairs
- Shopfront Conservation scheme
- Façade painting scheme
- Westport House entrance gate conservation works
- Westport Study Day
- Locomotive shed structural assessment
- Holy Trinity Church murals conservation assessment
- Chinese wallpaper conservation, Westport House
- Stone wall repairs and demonstration project
- Interactive heritage interpretation ‘West Port Story’
Youghal

- Historic core painting scheme
- Nealon’s Quay public realm works and completion of sea wall
- Courthouse/Market Square public realm works
- Public realm works at O’Rahilly Street, Emmet Place, Barry’s Lane
- ‘Tulip’ umbrella area
- Works to Courthouse
- Filming of works at St Mary’s Collegiate Church
- Exhibition of archaeological findings at St Mary’s Collegiate Church
- Access improvements to College Garden
- Advertising of Youghal app
- Maritime History signage
- St Mary’s Collegiate Church, internal trail
- Raleigh Quarter branding

‘Tulip’ umbrellas, Youghal
Listowel

- Façade enhancement scheme
- Heritage trail upgrading
- Lartigue Monorail signage
- Production of Z-card and leaflet
- St Michael’s Church Tower conservation works
- Display units and signage at Seanchaí Centre
- Storyboard at Listowel ringfort and archaeological programme
- McAuliffe plasterwork conservation at Church Street
- Writers’ Week and Heritage Week tours
- Conservation plan for town

*The Lartigue Monorail, Listowel*
APPENDIX 2

HTI Partners

Martin Colreavy Principal Advisor, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Michael Starrett CEO, Heritage Council
Shaun Quinn CEO, Fáilte Ireland

HTI Steering Committee Members

Jacqui Donnelly (Chair) Architectural Conservation Advisor, Built Heritage & Architectural Policy, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG)
Rónán Whelan Assistant Principal Officer, Built Heritage & Architectural Policy, DAHG (replaced by Joan Maher and Suzanne Nally from January 2013)
Catherine Desmond Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, DAHG
Ian Doyle Head of Conservation, Heritage Council
Kevin Kidney Head of Destination Development, Fáilte Ireland (Replaced by Paddy Matthews from February 2014)
Liam Ryan Town Clerk, Youghal Town Council (replaced by Helen Mulcahy from October 2013)
Simon Wall Town Architect, Westport Town Council
David O’Brien Town Clerk, Listowel Town Council
APPENDIX 3: TIMELINE OF PILOT PROGRAMME

2012

13th June  First steering group meeting
23rd July  Workshop in Heritage Council, Kilkenny
November  Visits to towns Westport 6/11; Listowel 12/11 & Youghal 16/11

2013

21st February  Launch of pilot framework by Minister Jimmy Deenihan TD
17th May  Deadline for towns to submit final project proposals
June  Behaviour & Attitudes survey of visitors and residents

2014

January  Behaviour & Attitudes survey of businesses
5th March  Presentation of B&A report to steering group
30th May  End of pilot, some projects continued to year end
12th June  Workshop in Heritage Council, Kilkenny ‘Making HTI town plans and looking beyond the pilot’
June/July  Visits to towns Youghal 30/6; Westport 9/7; Listowel 15/7
December  Conclusion of pilot projects

2015-16

Internal review of pilot project