

YOUR TOWN CENTRE NEEDS YOU!



**A joint event by the Heritage Council's
CTCHC Programme, Tipperary Town
Revitalisation Task Force & Tipperary
County Council**

**Workshop for
Owners & Leaseholders
of Vacant Properties
in Tipperary Town**

6th October 2022

Venue: Tipperary Excel Heritage Centre



BEFORE



AFTER

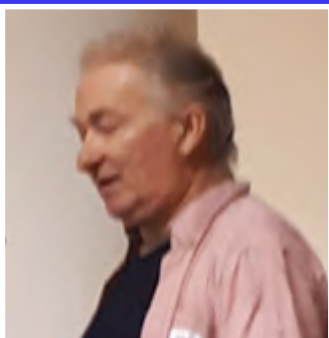


Workshop Feedback
from attendees

For agreement

January 2023

The CTCHC Programme, Tipperary Town Revitalisation Task Force and Tipperary County Council would like to extend sincere thanks to:



Chris Southgate
Southgate Associates



Anne-marie Devaney
Senior Executive Planner,
Tipperary County Council



Martin Moore
Assistant Chief Fire
Officer, Tipperary Fire
and Rescue Service



Nicola Matthews
Senior Conservation
Architect, Department
of Housing, Local
Government and
Heritage

**A list of attendees
is provided at
Appendix A.**

**The feedback
from the
Workshop is
summarised
below.**



Tony O'Neill
Vacant Homes Officer,
Tipperary County
Council



Anthony Coleman
District Administrator,
Tipperary County
Council



**An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council**



Ali Harvey, Founding Co-ordinator Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme

Presentation on Background to CTCHC Programme and Aims of the Workshop

Key Points:

- CTCHC Programme set up in 2016 – advocated for a Town Centre First Policy (TCF) in [2019](#) and again in [2020](#);
- CTCHC Programme included in the Programme for Government, 2020 – see pages 12/13;
- 15 towns/70+ partners in the CTCHC Programme including Tipperary Town¹ - plus 50+ towns on a waiting list;
- [Tipperary Town CTCHC Report](#) published in July 2022 in partnership with Tipperary Town Revitalisation Task Force, Tipperary Town Chamber and Tipperary County Council
- CTCHC Programme is included in Department of Environment's NIP for [UNSDGs](#) as a Best Practice Case Study, October 2022;
- Has advocated for updated statutory guidelines for Local Area Plans – see submission to Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, September 2022; and
- Irish Green Building Council (IGBC, e.g. ENACT Retrofit Programme) and Central Statistics Office (CSO) SDG Unit are new CTCHC Programme partners.

Government
Launch of NIP for
UN SDGs,
October 2022



¹ Tipperary Town joined the CTCHC Programme in 2020. Tipperary Town CTCHC Report 2022 was prepared through a MOU between the Heritage Council's CTCHC Programme and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Feedback from the One Word Game – Icebreaker!

What one word would you use
to describe Tipperary Town?

Historic

Feisty

Elegance

Ignored

Renowned

Potential

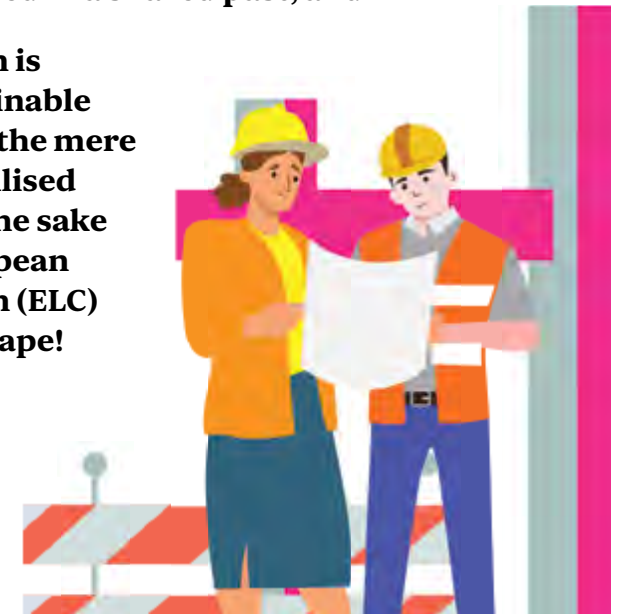
Abandoned



Presentation on Refurbishment of Old Buildings and Protected Structures, e.g. former Glove Factory, Tipperary

Key Points:

- Combating dereliction and vacancy involves many ingredients, e.g. technical best practice, Building & Fire Regulations, Ownership issues, etc;
- The Conservation Engineer works the opposite way to a conventional engineer – i.e. reverse engineering;
- Causes of building fabric deterioration – sun, wind, loading, fire, rising dampness, etc – the greatest is the result of rain and moisture-related deterioration;
- Key building conservation fixes – address jacking procedures, grouting, cills and horizontal weathering surfaces, chimneys, cracks and structural repairs and inappropriate cement renders, guttering, windows – see the Glove Factory Building Conservation Project – funded by the Heritage Council's Historic Towns Initiative (HTI);
- Need to follow a philosophy that historic spaces and places matter and that heritage resources are never discrete entities, but rather they sit in a connected relationship to a unique landscape and culture;
- This holistic approach enables us to promote historic places, which are alive with human culture and creativity and good for people to live in; to feel a sense of belonging and local identity rooted in a shared past; and
- Heritage Conservation is part of dynamic sustainable development and not the mere preservation of a fossilised and dead history for the sake of it – a what the European Landscape Convention (ELC) calls - A Living Landscape!



Presentation on Vacancy and Planning Policy

Key Points:

- **Policy context - what has changed?** – Programme for Government (2020) and Town Centres First (2022), National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES), Tipperary County Development Plan sets out the policy framework;
- **Tipperary Town is identified as a ‘District Town’** in the county settlement hierarchy – i.e. towns above 1,500 population;
- **Supports Compact Development and Town Centre First (TCF) + local Town Regeneration Teams + Vacant Property Strategy and Town Profile Plans;**
- **Tipperary County Council supports Adaptive Reuse of Town Centre Properties – Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and historic character informs the adaptive design and decision-making process;**
- **Tipperary County Council’s Derelict Sites process explained in a visual – links to LA request for emergency/ building works (Section 8 (2) and Section 8 (7) Notices) , then entry on TCC’s Derelict Sites Register;**
- **Planning Policy – supports reuse and conversion of former retail buildings to residential – exempted development provision exists for up to 9 no. residential units – [see SI No. 30/2018](#); and**
- **Regeneration Projects and Grant Assistance – Rural Regeneration Development Fund² (RRDF), Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund, Historic Towns Initiative, Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund, e.g. €30,000³+ additional €20,000 if derelict, etc.**

2 Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) is available for towns >10,000 population.

3 The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund is a fund of €50 million to support people to live in towns and villages in Ireland by providing a grant to refurbish vacant properties.





Issues raised by workshop attendees included:

- Support is needed to maintain old buildings in town centres – who do we go to for expert advice – there is no-one there?
- Need more design guidance and training for owners/leaseholders re reuse and repurposing of historic buildings in town centres;
- What are the main problems with buildings in town centres – need more information and technical advice for owners – support owners;
- Need more engagement with LA Planners to see what is possible – hard to understand the system when you do not work for the local authority;
- Need more information on government grants and funds available – not just for social housing – how to avail of them – can we meet with these people more often?;
- How do we fund private rental – we need new finance models that enable stakeholders/partners – not only for social housing units?; and
- Government needs to support more collaborative workshops like this one!!

Presentation on Fire Safety & Building Control

Key Points:

- Engage a competent registered professional from the start e.g. Chartered Engineer (EI), Registered Architect (Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland), Registered Building Surveyor (Society Chartered Surveyors Ireland/SCSI), Planner (IPI), etc.;
- Engage with the Local Authority at the start – get to know their Planning, Fire/Building Control, Housing, Municipal District people who can help you repurpose your traditional building – this will help in the long run;
- Important Legislation to consider - Fire Services Acts 1981 & 2003, Building Control Acts 1990-2014, Building Regulations – Health, Safety and Welfare, e.g. means of escape and maximum travel distance in the building;
- Ensure you have access to the available guidance – also [Bringing Back Homes](#);
- Building Control Regulations: Need Fire Safety Cert, Disability Access Cert (DAC) and Commencement Notices;
- What about Protected Structures – cases can be made for what is practicable – material alterations need to be planned and designed to code; and
- Challenges envisaged re. design – existing buildings were generally constructed prior to Building Regs, older construction/materials (no fire doors, etc.) location of stairways (separate to commercial), poor layouts – long pathways, no access to back streets, separation of different occupancies – **SOLUTIONS CAN BE FOUND!**



Presentation on Best Practice in Repurposing Vacant and Derelict Buildings

Key Points:

- The EC is promoting through the New European Bauhaus that Heritage needs to be seen as an opportunity for communities, business and civic leaders; this requires a new integrated approach to the sustainable management of historic towns – one that is policy led with a clear focus on access to resources and effective project delivery;
- Towns and town centres are about a shared culture of architecture and concepts and criteria of quality including governance, functionality, economy, environment, diversity, context, sense of place and beauty;
- New National Policy on Architecture 2022 – focuses on Sustainability, Quality, Leadership and Culture;
- Interesting case study is [Aungier Street](#) – traditional building classification and baseline data – aligns with CTCHC Programme - developing an understanding of cultural significance and layering of data to inform policy and overall strategy;

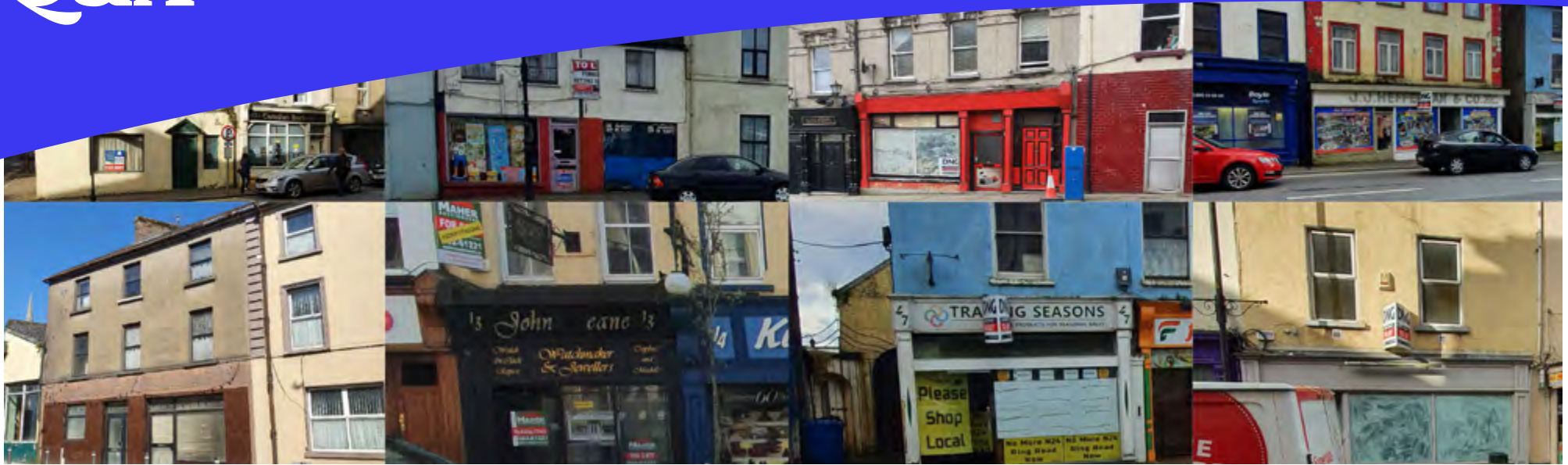
National Contact Point



- Best Practice – see Architectural Conservation Officers' projects – reference support materials and guidance, e.g. Ballina, Rathmelton, etc;
- Support Guidance – Old House New Home, Bringing Back Homes: Manual for the reuse of existing buildings, What the Building Told Us – a short film about 5 case studies by Ros Kavanagh www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbw9Q9IImRA; and
- Dublin Civic Trust runs excellent training courses in relation to repurposing and maintenance of traditional buildings - www.dublincivictrust.ie/learn/courses--seminars.



18 Ormond Quay
Europa Nostra
Award for urban
conservation and
revitalisation.



Issues raised by workshop attendees included:

- Owners never meet the technical experts – more opportunities for exchange and mentoring, etc – need more platforms for this – can all the information be put onto a digital platform?;
- Need for owners to meet built architects on a regular basis as there is no Architectural Conservation Officer in the local authority – this workshop is a good start – need more information on technical codes and guidance – producing policy is only the first step – building owners need more collaboration and engagement with policy makers;
- There is no civic trust in Tipperary Town or the County – who can help set this up – how do we learn from other places and not reinvent the wheel as we don't have the time or money?
- Information on funding is needed – can we link up with other towns in the CTCHC Programme – can we learn from them re. building management, building repurposing, etc?; and
- Government needs to support more collaborative workshops like this one!!

Presentation on Overview of Supports and Incentives for Vacant and Derelict Properties

Key Points:

- Identify vacant homes, prioritise and establish ownership, make contact with owners, to promote the reuse of properties through available funds, e.g. repair and lease (social housing scheme – minimum, 12 months vacant/not new builds), Croí Cónaithe Scheme;
- Repair and Lease – introduced under Rebuilding Ireland, loans of up to €60,000 available, property owner enters into a lease with the housing authority for use as social housing, LA pays for the necessary works and the loan is paid back through applying a discount on the rent paid to the owner – owner receives 80-92% of market rent;
- Expanded RLS (Circular 25 of 2022) includes conversion of vacant commercial and institutional buildings into residential units;
- Buy and Renew - can be purchased by the local authority, renovated and brought back into use. Suitability is determined by need, usability / suitability and value for money;
- **Croí Cónaithe** (Towns) Fund (since July 2022) - a national fund of €50 million to support people to live in towns and villages by providing a grant to refurbish vacant properties. Properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for >2 years and built before 1993;
- Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund - grant of up to €30,000 is available for occupation as principal private residence by the owner + top up grant of <€20,000 is available if property is derelict - Confirmation of vacancy and ownership will be required ****Works covered by SEAI Better Energy Homes Scheme will NOT be covered****; and
- First Time Buyers or Fresh Start Applicants: Applicants with particular needs. People with disabilities, older people moving from their current home (sold) + Applicants other than above who have sold or are selling their current home to move.



Presentation on Overview of the Tipperary Town Streetscape Enhancement Scheme 2022

Key Points:

- Townscape Enhancement Scheme is being promoted by the Department of Rural and Community Development which is responsible for towns with less than 10,000 population – see Cahir Enhancement Scheme for examples of works undertaken - €100,000 made available to Tipperary in 2022;
- Objective of this scheme is to enhance the streetscape environment of Tipperary Town Centre by encouraging and supporting businesses and property owners to improve their individual shopfronts and building facades on the Main Street including Bank Place, Tipperary Town;
- Focus of this scheme will be to target properties on the eastern end of Main Street / Bank Place including a mixture of existing commercial / residential properties and vacant / derelict units;
- Matched Funding Element: Grant funding to be provided at the following rates, subject to number of applications received: (all match funding to be provided by the property owner): 70% for individual premises – matched funding 30% plus 80% for joint applications (groups of 3 or more adjacent premises)– matched funding 20% 100% - Where painting is undertaken by direct labour by applicant (i.e. 100% of the cost of materials). For example; to benefit from the maximum funding of €8,000 you will be required to spend €11,428.57;
- Procurement/ Quotations – the following procurement rules apply, as a minimum, to the individual projects funded: Two contractors' quotations required where the contract value is less than €5,000; One materials' quotation required where the contract value is less than €5,000; For contracts €5,000+ three written quotations are required, as per national procurement guidelines;
- Tipperary CTCHC Report (July 2022) mapped 84 vacant buildings in the town centre = 73 retail/commercial & 11 residential buildings; and
- An ownership database (Step 7 CTCHC) is already underway with some of the owners of these properties in Tipperary.





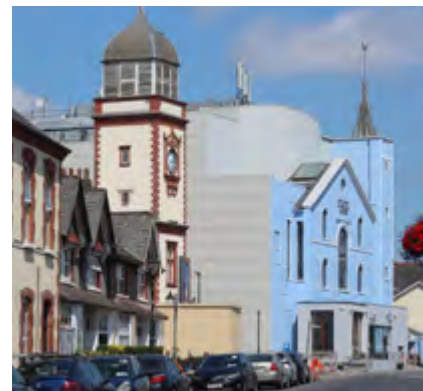
Issues raised by workshop attendees included:

- Would be really useful to have all the relevant funding deadlines in one doc for owners – can all the information be put onto a digital platform?
- Owners need time to prepare a funding application, particularly if they have no experience of making funding applications before;
- Information giving and exchange sessions in the run up to deadlines would be useful along with contact details for building repurposing experts in the local area – how are owners meant to find out the information themselves – too hard, needs to be more support for building owners from LA and others;
- Need better financial support for owners who don't want to do social housing units -what about private rental – what support is available from the government?;
- Where are the finance models – government needs to do more to set this out for people to understand and to get involved – doing up a building needs to be easier and less cumbersome; and
- More workshops like this one!

Groupwork - Supports Needed for Owners of Vacant Property in Tipperary Town

Summary

- **Practical Design guidance for repurposing buildings – examples of success stories – what works and what doesn't work;**
- **Lessons learned needs to be fed through to owners so that the do not replicate mistakes made elsewhere;**
- **Can we learn through other towns in the CTCHC Programme – Government needs to support this;**
- **Access to building repurposing experts;**
- **Regular updates on funding opportunities; and**
- **Digital platform for all information on repurposing and conserving town centres properties;**
- **More workshops please!**



Appendix I. List of Attendees

(in alphabetical order)

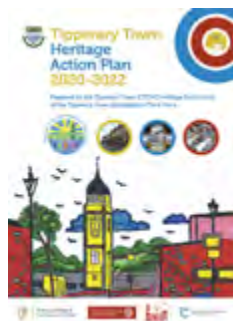
There has been excellent feedback from the workshop attendees - many thanks to everyone involved for their time, lively input and support.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Kate Barry | 17. Sylvia Greene | 33. Deirdre Molamphy |
| 2. Michael Begley | 18. Alison Harvey | 34. Martin Moore |
| 3. Lauren Butler-Ryan | 19. Alice Holmes | 35. Denis Mulhair |
| 4. James Byrne | 20. Siobhan Hyland-Ryan | 36. Albert Nolan |
| 5. Gerry Carew | 21. Nessa Jennings | 37. Billy Nolan |
| 6. William Carroll | 22. Aoife Joyce | 38. Anne Marie O'Conner |
| 7. Donnacha Cleary | 23. Marie Kavanagh | 39. Paddy O'Dwyer |
| 8. Anthony Coleman | 24. Orla Kelly | 40. Liam O'Grady |
| 9. Catriona Costigan | 25. Thomas Kiely | 41. Marion O'Neill |
| 10. Anne Marie Devaney | 26. Mike Lynch | 42. Martin O'Neill |
| 11. Herbert Evans | 27. Nicola Matthews | 43. Kathleen Prendergast |
| 12. Ger Feeney | 28. Aine McCarthy | 44. Annemarie Ryan |
| 13. W Fitzgibbon | 29. Maresa McCormack | 45. Eamon Ryan |
| 14. Jonothan Flood | 30. Verena McGrath | 46. Matthew Ryan |
| 15. Ciara Flynn | 31. Martin McHugh | 47. Chris Southgate |
| 16. Vivienne Gray | 32. Tom Meagher | |

Tipperary Workshop Feedback Report written by Ali Harvey

Contact aharvey@heritagecouncil.ie

The Heritage Council and Partners intend to hold more workshops through the ongoing activities of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme.



Workshop Organisers:

(in alphabetical order)

Michael Begley (Tipperary Task Force)
info@tipptownrevitalisation.ie

Anthony Coleman (Tipperary County Council)
anthony.coleman@tipperarycoco.ie

Ali Harvey (CTCHC Programme)
aharvey@heritagecouncil.ie

Cllr Annemarie Ryan (Tipperary County Council)
annemarie.ryanshiner@cllr.tipperarycoco.ie

www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/town-centre-health-check-programme

www.tipptownrevitalisation.ie

www.tipperarycoco.ie