

Tourism for Towns

An introduction to developing a sustainable tourism sector in your historic town



Main Street, Cashel



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Who is this publication for and what does it try to do?

The purpose of this document is to help residents in towns across Ireland develop a sustainable tourism sector in their town. The creation of a viable tourist sector which provides valuable employment and improves the liveability of a place is a long process requiring cooperation, careful planning and targeted actions. What follows is guidance on how people can get together and devise an appropriate way forward. There are also short descriptions of inspirational projects that have successfully used the cultural heritage of their town. Finally, some information is provided on likely funding sources and useful reading.

Within this document a sustainable tourist sector is taken to mean one which brings economic and social benefits to the present, is robust and adaptive to change and does not compromise core cultural distinctiveness or the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Some background facts and figures

- Overseas visitors predominately come to Ireland to meet the people, experience the beautiful scenery and explore our historic sites.
- Ireland's main markets for cultural and heritage tourism are the UK, US, France and Germany, as well as the domestic market.
- In 2014, 83% of foreign tourists rated 'attractive cities and towns' as important in their decision to come to Ireland.
- Two thirds of overseas visitors participate in historic or cultural activities.
- Cultural tourists tend to be affluent and highly educated. They also stay longer and spend more.
- In 2015, there were over 8 million overseas visits to Ireland.
- In 2010, overseas tourists who engage in cultural and heritage pursuits were worth over €2 billion to the Irish economy.
- The average cultural tourist spends €70 a day compared to €40 a day for someone on a city break.
- The internet is by far the most important source used by overseas visitors when planning their trip to Ireland. Websites should be designed to render best on mobile devices.
- Almost half of foreign tourists either bring over or hire a car when in Ireland.
- In 2015, 84% of overseas visitors arranged their trips independently, 16% bought packages.
- In 2014, there were 7.3 million domestic trips. This was worth €1.46 billion to the Irish economy.
- The main activities engaged in by domestic tourists are visits to historic buildings, hiking/walking, visits to national parks and gardens, time spent in a spa, water based activities and visits to museums and galleries.

(Source: Fáilte Ireland)

A brief note on developing your town's tourist sector

Tourism is often proposed as a solution to the economic decline faced in many rural towns. This is understandable. The Irish countryside and its service towns are full of historic sites that are attractive to foreign visitors. Certainly, tourism can make a positive difference. Likewise, opportunities do exist. However, tourism is a very competitive and dynamic business. Within the sector, marketing and promotion are as important as the product itself. That is why "hidden gems" tend to remain hidden. It must also be acknowledged that there is a high level of risk involved for possibly low economic gain. This is a vital concern given the small size of many town populations and business sectors. Consequently, effort needs to be focused on actions and market segments that will provide the greatest return.

A mistake that is consistently made is the belief that a particular local hero or incident has a mass tourist appeal when plainly it does not. Often a scenario is played out whereby a great deal of time and money is spent on items such as heritage centres that attract low visitor numbers and drain valuable resources for years. Usually these projects occur without a cost benefit analysis or an adequate annual budget for events and temporary exhibitions. There is also frequently a lack of international contextualisation which makes it hard for foreign tourists to gain any meaning. Obviously, any town or village has the right to commemorate an important local person or event. Nevertheless, people should not trick themselves into thinking that the local event will appeal widely to people from Chicago or Cologne. By contrast, many seemingly mundane experiences that have been

quantifiably shown to be desirable to tourists are often ignored or downplayed. These can include exploring ruined castles, watching a hurling match, visiting a holy well, and drinking a local craft beer while listening to a session in a pub that also happens to be a shop. In effect, the tourism assets of our towns are the simple, everyday places and practices that make Ireland different. The best part of all this is that these items typically do not need massive funds, just care, presentation and promotion.

Thankfully, almost every Irish town still has lots for tourists to see and do. This is important, especially considering that in 2014, 87% of foreign tourists rated 'history and culture' as important in their decision to come to Ireland. In a way, the hard work has been done. The product is already there. However, without the community uniting to

develop that product, few will visit and little employment will be created. In order to address this, the following four steps should be adhered to.

I. Cooperate

Solo runs by individuals can have a beneficial impact on a local economy. However, the possibility of a nascent tourism sector becoming a strong pillar of a town's economy is significantly improved if various stakeholders in the private, community and public sectors come together as a group. The group could consist of representatives from the local heritage society, arts collective, tidy towns organisation, visitor attractions, accommodation providers and chamber of commerce. It may also consist of the local authority's Heritage and Tourist Officers, a LEADER project officer, and a representative from Fáilte Ireland.

In order to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings or splits, there should be a simple written agreement, which outlines goals and responsibilities. Above all, members must be optimistic about what can be accomplished and forgiving towards each other.

Regardless of any one town's attributes it is highly unlikely that there will be a sufficient quantity or quality of attractions for it to be a standalone destination. Accordingly, in order for your town to attract a large number of overnight stays it should look to its hinterland, neighbouring towns and places with similar stories. These mutually beneficial connections will create an enhanced pool of resources and significant cross selling opportunities. It is vital that the town also tie into the appropriate Fáilte Ireland brand offering (i.e. The Wild Atlantic Way or Ireland's Ancient East).

2. Plan

Next comes the strategy. If one is not created, either little will be done, or alternatively, what is completed will lack a unity of purpose. The plan must be based on realistic goals inspired by the experiences of comparable examples both in Ireland and beyond. A key task is the identification of likely audiences. Fáilte Ireland has undertaken extensive market research on the motivations of visitors and identified a range of domestic and international market segments likely to be interested in visiting historic towns. One common trap is to think that everyone is open to visiting your town. This belief will only damage the rate of economic return.

Within the strategy it is essential that the tourism group acknowledges the town's limitations. That is why it is so important to develop relationships with other places.

Another aspect of knowing your limitations is by realising when professional help is needed. The best plans are written in a spirit of cooperation between consultants, clients and wider stakeholders. In this situation empathy and patience between all parties is essential. The job of the consultant is to process all the ideas and create a plan that is proportional to the abilities, resources, and resourcefulness of the tourism group and town in general. The final area where understanding limitations is essential, is to appreciate the possible detrimental impact increased tourism numbers can have upon built heritage and the character of the place. The excessive sweating of assets caused by the absence of appropriate management practices and impact appraisals will ultimately undermine the long term sustainability of the town's tourist sector.

Likely requirements of the tourism plan will include attractions, visitor management proposals, infrastructure, accommodation, the local food offering and marketing. It is important to be mindful of the possible negative impacts an improving tourism sector may have on the town's liveability. More people almost inevitably means traffic management issues, strain on waste water treatment systems and the threat of radically increased house prices.

Focus should be placed on creating a range of quality products desirable to the target markets and not on creating a new large scale iconic attraction. Today's cultural tourists want authentic experiences. They want to feel as if they are discovering something not many other tourists see. Ireland's towns already have that. An excellent way of examining what a town and its surroundings have to offer is to create an inventory of

all the historic, natural and cultural attributes. Once all of these are identified, ways of protecting, developing, bundling and promoting the most interesting of the sights and activities must be designed and implemented.

3. Act

Ultimately, the tourism plan may take ten or fifteen years to fully implement. Accordingly, the document could be condensed into a manageable three year action plan that should be adhered to. Likely funding sources should be identified. From the action plan an annual work programme with responsible people is essential. This work programme could then form the basis for discussion at the regular meetings of the tourism action group. Feedback from the work programme and action plan can then form the basis of any review of the overall strategy which should take place at least every five years.

4. Protect

Every Irish town is entitled to its share of the cultural tourist market. Fortunately, almost all have a dense and rich heritage that is attractive to high spending cultural tourists. The key differences between towns such as Westport and Lismore that are realising their tourism potential and those that don't, are teamwork and perception. The importance of teamwork is obvious. It is the nebulous concept of perception that is often most difficult to change. Simply put, towns that perceive their heritage and culture as truly important will typically make strong planning decisions and use their historic sites well. They will also more likely ensure appropriate maintenance and conservation actions take place. In turn, this will lead to a higher standard of living and a better tourism product. By contrast, towns that generally perceive heritage as an encumbrance to development will usually make ill-advised but seemingly pragmatic development

decisions that gradually erode their cultural and historic character. Over time, this undermines the possibility of a sustainable tourism sector ever being realised.

Ultimately, it is the people of the town as a community that will make the difference. It is not an easy journey. The creation of a robust tourism sector usually takes at least five years, often much longer. That means making tough decisions that in the short term may be painful but which in the long term will bring significant dividends. It also entails investing strategically in a town's assets. This not only means putting funds into interpretation or improved public domains but also supporting the conservation of built, natural and intangible heritage. All this is hard to do and even still, there is the risk of local resistance and the chance of failure. That is why it is so important to work together and conduct cost effective actions that are calculated to succeed.

Projects and places to inspire



Carrickfergus Castle



Loughrea and Youghal's Medieval Festivals

Loughrea's medieval festival is Ireland's largest free medieval themed event. Established in 2014, it attracts roughly 15,000 people into the town. In Youghal, Co. Cork, a similar event attracts up to 8,000 people annually. In 2008, a KPMG report estimated that the economic benefit for Youghal from this one day was €480,000. Both Youghal and Loughrea's festivals depend on close cooperation between the community and the local authority in order to succeed.

www.loughreamedievalfestival.com

Both festivals have received funding from the IWTN.



The Kilkenny Way Hurling Experience

Often it is the everyday aspects of Irish people's lives that foreign visitors want to experience. One such example is the GAA. The Kilkenny Way gives tourists the opportunity to sample the skills of hurling, learn about its heritage and go behind the scenes at Nolan Park. Such is the popularity of The Kilkenny Way that it is now one of the top rated activities to do in Kilkenny on Tripadvisor. A cross selling agreement with another company allows patrons to upgrade to a combination deal which involves a cycling tour of historic Kilkenny.

www.thekilkennyway.com



Lismore Heritage Centre

Over the years the heritage centre has become the hub for all activities in this small town. It is not just a place of learning; it is the tourism office, a high quality craft and gift shop, a booking office and a venue. Its staff coordinate events and festivals that take place across the town throughout the year. The heritage centre also provides packages for school and tour groups that can incorporate visits to craftspeople, heritage sites, historic gardens and artisan food producers.

www.lismoreheritagetown.ie



Kilkenny Pop-up Museum

Over four Thursdays in August 2014, a pop-up museum brought heritage directly to the people by locating itself in the place of highest footfall, right beside the weekly farmers market. By combining archaeology with art, public theatre and food, it worked to excite people about the relevance of the past. The Kilkenny Pop-Up Museum was an attempt to see if a seasonal heritage attraction which was low on capital expenditure but high on interactivity would work. It did. In four days 3,080 attended.

This project received funding from the IWTN.



Athenry Town Walls

Athenry has one of the finest circuits of town walls left on the island. Since 2007, the IWTN has aided the county council in the conservation of this fantastic monument. As part of the conservation project there is ongoing work to make the towers accessible to visitors and provide them with a medieval eye view of the town.

This project received funding from the IWTN.



Collegiate Church, Youghal

The Collegiate Church in Youghal is one of the oldest churches in continuous use in Ireland. Facilitated by a community employment scheme, tours take place daily. In the first nine months of 2016, almost 4,600 people went on a tour of the church. Aside from the weekly religious services, concerts and other events frequently occur. In conjunction with the opening up of the church for tourism, a dedicated programme of conservation actions have been undertaken. A recent archaeological dig in the building to facilitate repair works acted as a tourist attraction in its own right.

This project received funding from the IWTN.



Derry-Londonderry's wave on the walls

As a way of commemorating the 400th anniversary of Derry-Londonderry's city walls almost 2,000 volunteers lined the ramparts and took part in a Mexican wave that went around the full circuit. The wave event was complemented by a pop-up 17th century market. Together they attracted over 6,000 into the heart of the city.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY0bgRh-i3o

The medieval village received funding from the IWTN.

Hickey's Bakery, Clonmel

Tourists experience a place with all their senses, not just sight. Good, local food that represents the character of the place can significantly impact on how a town is enjoyed. One great example of where people can encounter local flavours in a building full of character is Hickey's Bakery. The family bakery and cafe has been producing fine bread and cakes for four generations. Their tea brack is particularly well known.



Rindoon abandoned medieval town

Rindoon in Co. Roscommon is the best preserved abandoned medieval town in either Ireland or the UK. Located on a peninsula jutting out into Lough Ree the site contains an impressive collection of medieval remains. The local community working in partnership with several state agencies have managed to save much of what survived. To aid navigation and understanding a walk was developed and interpretation signage installed. From very low numbers the site now attracts c. 8,000 visitors annually.

This project received funding from the IWTN.



P.J. Drohan's Shop, Carrick-on-Suir

Tourist attractions don't have to be big to be interesting. In P.J. Drohan's shop you can buy fishing tackle, electrical goods and ask him to organise a funeral. The shop is unique. Also distinctive is the fly-fishing lure that P.J. makes himself. For foreign tourists wishing to understand what is different about Ireland, places like P.J.'s gives them an uncontrived view into both the character of the country and town. The River Suir which runs through the town is abundant in trout. Fishing permits are available from Carrick-on-Suir Angling Club.



Kilmallock's archaeological monuments

One of Kilmallock's strengths are the high quality archaeological monuments open for exploration. The two abbeys are continuously accessible. Other medieval towers are opened occasionally. There are also plans to create a linear park along the west face of the town wall. In 2014, a two day conference focusing on 16th century Ireland was held in the town. The c. 70 attendees stayed and ate locally. Their presence filled up the local hotel and B&Bs.

The conference and conservation of the town walls have received funding from the IWTN.



Clarke and Sons, Drogheda

The Irish pub is a key reason why many foreign tourists visit Ireland. Although most of the older pubs have lost their original features, there are still many which retain their late 19th/early 20th century character. One such place is Clarke's in Drogheda. The pub is a collection of atmospheric snugs where tourists can talk to locals while drinking beer brewed in the region. Clarke's also acts as a music and comedy venue.



Archaeology dig in Kilkenny

During the development of the Medieval Mile Museum a series of archaeological excavations were conducted in order to facilitate the necessary changes to the site. Most of the digs were located behind the boundary wall, away from any passersby. However, one small dig was needed at the entranceway. This excavation was made viewable to the public. The medieval human remains that were uncovered created massive interest. Up to 1,000 people a day visited the site. Some came as far away as Dublin to see the skeletons and talk to the archaeologists.



Irish Handmade Glass Company, Waterford

After the closure of the Waterford Crystal factory in 2009 several master craftsmen joined together to create a brand new crystal company. Their small workshop allows visitors to see the crystal being blown and then cut by hand. They can also talk to the craftsmen about the making process and buy their products in the attached shop.

www.theirishhandmadeglasscompany.com



Exploring Wexford's natural heritage

Located just outside Wexford Town, the Slobs are an internationally important bird habitat. Two hundred and fifty species of birds have been recorded on the 800 hectare site. One quarter of the Slobs lie within the Wexford Wildlife Reserve. The reserve's visitor centre has a strong educational programme suitable for both families and schools. During the summer months there are daily tours and twice weekly pond-dipping, bug hunting and animal tracking events. Other activities include bat-detection, beachcombing and Wild Goose Week.

www.wexfordwildfowlreserve.ie



Athlone boat tours and kayaking in Cork

Several operators run tours of the River Shannon in Athlone. The excursions provide guests with a different perspective of Athlone and of the river. Tours typically include a visit to Clonmacnoise. Further south in Cork, it is possible to experience the City at night by kayaking along the River Lee's two main channels.



Sweny's Pharmacy, Dublin

Run by volunteers, Sweny's Pharmacy was the place where James Joyce had Leopold Bloom purchase lemon soap during his odyssey around Dublin in Ulysses. The pharmacy is an early 20th century time capsule where visitors can take part in daily readings of Joyce's work and buy their own bar of lemon soap. In addition to English, there are readings in French, Portuguese and Italian. Other Joyce themed events also take place in the pharmacy.

www.sweny.ie/site/



Adventure in Carlingford

One of the great strengths of Carlingford as a destination is the combination of an attractive town with medieval archaeology, spectacular hiking on the Cooley Mountains and the opportunity to kayak or sail on Carlingford Lough. The recently opened greenway to Omeath also provides a rewarding walking and cycling experience. There are plans to extend the greenway along the route of the disused railway line to Newry.

www.carlingford.ie

The town walls have received funding from the IWTN.



X-PO, Kilnaboy, Co. Clare

X-PO was established in 2006 by artist Deirdre O'Mahony and local community in Kilnaboy in the former post office. It was set up to be a social and cultural space, and in particular to reflect on the idea of 'belonging' in rural communities. The X-PO team use the space to programme public events such as heritage talks, exhibitions and film screenings and to publicly represent alternative accounts of local knowledge. Four different archives focusing on various aspects of local life are also kept on site. X-PO is run voluntarily and events are free.

www.deirdre-omahony.ie/public-art-projects/x-po.html



Bridge Street Will Be, Callan

Bridge Street is a street of medieval origin in a state of near dereliction with typical recent issues of abandonment, traffic and accessibility. In 2014, an inclusive theatre group initiated a creative project that could encourage positive thinking about the future of the street which led to three years of highly ambitious projects in architecture, theatre, town planning and civic engagement. Bridge Street Will Be was an original work of interactive promenade theatre, with over 80 professional and community actors, telling the local stories of Bridge Street from the 1880s to the present. Free workshops were held with architects to design and make street furniture, and to paint imaginative new facades on the buildings. Over 700 people attended or participated in the project.



Ocean to City – An Rás Mór, Cork

Meitheal Mara is a community boatyard, local charity and training centre in Cork City. The organisation is dedicated to promoting and fostering maritime culture and traditional skills through currach and wooden boat building. Woodwork and seamanship are the basis of a training programme for people at risk of social exclusion. The Ocean to City – An Ras Mór event, which is a key event at the Cork Harbour Festival, is Ireland's largest and most inclusive rowing race. More than 600 participants in over 200 boats compete in the event. One of the race's purposes is to raise funds for the charity.

www.oceantocity.com

Viking House, Botanic Gardens, Dublin

The OPW invited master woodwright Eoin Donnelly to recreate a Viking longhouse in the Botanic Gardens – similar to those in Dublin in the 8th-10th century – to use as an educational space. All of the tools, technologies and materials employed to build the house were original to the time period and the public could witness the construction of the house on site. The gardens immediately surrounding the house feature plants and herbs associated with the Viking period in Dublin.

www.botanicgardens.ie/viking/



Knockmealdown Active

This multi-community organisation was established to promote trade and tourism in their region in South Tipperary. Drawing on the historic St Declan's Way Pilgrim Path, they have created branded events such as Knock Me Down Mountain Challenge and the Canoe-B-Q to focus attention on the area. The group have also organised a number of historic grave recordings and have, with the support of LEADER funding, developed looped and linear walks along the Knockmealdown Mountains, and supported other local groups to progress with their projects such as the Kildanogue Duck Ponds Nature Reserve.

www.knockmealdownactive.com/



The Gobbins Cliff Path, Co. Antrim

Envisaged as a tourist attraction in the early 20th century by the railway engineer, Berkeley Deane Wise, the Gobbins Cliff Path is a unique leisure amenity. The path, built along the base of a cliff, makes the best of beautiful and otherwise difficult-to-access scenic views in an area designated as Special Scientific Interest. In the 1950s the path closed due to damage. Community efforts and support from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and EU Intereg funding saw the path restored and reopened in 2014. In the six months after opening there were 25,000 visitors, 45% of which were from outside Northern Ireland.

www.thegobbinscliffpath.com/



Irish Landmark Trust

Staying in a castle hotel or Georgian house B&B can be a wonderful, immersive experience for any visitor. What the Irish Landmark Trust do is slightly different. They restore and rent out historic properties throughout the island. From their 29 properties, people can choose to stay in such places as a Dublin mews, a County Wicklow lighthouse or a Victorian gate lodge in County Antrim. The benefits of the Trust's approach is that it brings a possibly unsightly ruin back to life, provides direct employment during the restoration process and then maintains a local economic dividend through the hosting of holidaymakers.

www.irishlandmark.com/



Mountain biking on the Ballyhouras

Straddling the Cork/Limerick border, the 98km of mountain bike trails on the Ballyhoura Mountains attracts over 50,000 visitors annually. The length of the five trails varies from 6km to 50km. Difficulty levels also vary. The result is a facility that can cater for both novice families and experts. Servicing the visitors are bike rental businesses, local B&B's, hotels, shops and cafes. In 2014, the level of economic benefit of the trails to the Ballyhoura region was projected to increase from €3 million annually to €5 million within several years. There is a second network of tracks especially for walkers.

www.visitballyhoura.com/index.php/mountain-biking/



Waterford Cycle Greenway

Officially opened in 2017, the 46km greenway linking Waterford City to Dungarvan follows the course of a disused railway. Providing both locals and visitors alike with a safe, off-road route, its course runs across rolling countryside, over 19th century viaducts and through tunnels dug by hand. Already, usage by locals is very high. The economic objective is to replicate and improve upon the results of the Westport-Achill greenway where in 2014 38% of its users were foreign visitors.

www.visitwaterfordgreenway.com/



Bandon and Kilkenny's Farmers Markets

So much of the memory of a holiday is bound up with food. High quality farmers markets such as those in Bandon and Kilkenny which supply overwhelmingly local produce give visitors a very specific insight into the essence of a place. The presence of market stalls also serves to animate the urban centre. Another benefit is that they attract locals into the town who may otherwise have shopped elsewhere. Successful markets that serve the needs of visitors should be located in the town centre, in an area of high footfall. Bandon's market takes place each Saturday, Kilkenny's every Thursday.



Archaeological based tourism in Trim

Since 2010, archaeological excavations have been taking place on the medieval friary of Blackfriary. An education programme facilitates college students who pay for the practical excavation training they receive on site. In five years these students have provided over 8,000 bed nights to the local economy. Interaction with the surrounding community is strong. Now there are plans to provide a full tourist experience based on tours of the site, hands-on activities and encounters with the archaeologists.

www.iafs.ie

This project received funding from the IWTN.

Carlingford Oyster Festival

Festivals can be an excellent way of bringing the town together and of generating revenue by attracting visitors. They can be particularly good at encouraging people to stay overnight. Each town should look to its own unique character for an event that makes it stand out from the crowd. In Carlingford the annual four day oyster festival works off the area's reputation for high quality oysters which are cultivated in the lough. In 2016, the event attracted over 30,000 people.

www.carlingford.ie/events/

This project received funding from the IWTN.



The Lee Sessions, Cork

Running since 2011, the Lee Sessions is an initiative supported by the local authority whereby traditional musicians are encouraged to play in pubs throughout the city. Some monetary support is provided during the summer. Assistance to the pubs on booking suitable musicians is also available. The real strength of the programme is the marketing it provides the various establishments. In just a few years the quality and quantity of traditional music sessions has increased significantly, as have the attendance figures.

www.theleesessions.com/index.php

Medieval Mile Pass, Kilkenny

One of the great challenges for any place with a large, well known tourist attraction is to encourage those visitors to go to other sites in the town. In Kilkenny City, the drop off in visitor numbers from the Castle to St Canice's Cathedral, only fifteen minutes walk away, is over 300,000. As a way of countering this, the local chamber has created the Kilkenny Medieval Mile Pass. The 24 hour pass can be purchased throughout the city and allows the holder to visit all the main tourist attractions, go on most of the city tours and get discounts from a selection of cafes, bars and restaurants.

www.kilkennychamber.ie/medieval-mile/



Archaeology and new development

During archaeological excavations to enable the extension of the Revenue Commission offices in Galway the remains of the 13th century Hall of the Red Earl were uncovered. The discovery of the building resulted in a radical change to the proposed new structure's design. Much of the site was preserved and made accessible to the public. Another example of the reuse of medieval archaeology in new construction is the Wood Quay Venue in Dublin.

The Wood Quay Venue exhibition received IWTN funding.

www.galwaycivictrust.ie/index.php/projects/27-hall-of-the-red-earl

www.woodquayvenue.ie/

A City of a Thousand Welcomes, Dublin

A City of a Thousand Welcomes is a unique civic initiative, run through the Little Museum of Dublin. The programme matches visitors to the city with a Dublin Ambassador who will meet the holidaymaker, share a pint or a cup of tea or coffee and welcome them to the city. The ambassadors are not professional tour guides, just voluntary locals with a passion for their city. The Sydney Morning Herald has called it the 'best free thing to do in Europe'. This initiative could be replicable with passionate volunteer ambassadors, some sponsorship and a heritage or tourism site who can coordinate introductions.

www.cityofathousandwelcomes.com



Siege Museum/Museum of Free Derry education programme

The Museum of Free Derry and The Siege Museum have partnered on an education programme for post-primary level students. This initiative gives free access to both museums, with talks and museum tours for the students who are introduced to two cultures and traditions in Derry/Londonderry. Six hundred students attended the programme in the pilot year, with students attending from across Northern Ireland.

www.museumoffreederry.org
www.thesiegemuseum.org/



Linehan Hand Made Sweets & The Truffle Fairy

The Linehan's have been making sweets by hand in the shadow of Shandon Steeple since 1928. Visitors can pop into their small factory and see the father-son team in action. Using only natural flavours the Linehan's specialise in producing hard sweets, all of which are available for sale at the factory door. The building itself dates to the 1870s. Further north in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, customers of the Truffle Fairy chocolate shop can see the chocolatier prepare the various truffles and fudges for sale.

www.shandonsweets.com/
www.trufflefairy.ie/

Possible funding opportunities

Even though there are always things that can be done at zero or low cost, much of what will need to be accomplished in your town tourism plan will require funding. Grant opportunities from the State and the EU can change frequently. Accordingly, a detailed breakdown of existing funding schemes could become quickly redundant. Nonetheless, although the nature of schemes regularly changes, the organisations that provide funding remain fairly consistent. Careful observation should be maintained of their respective grant programmes and how they could help fund planned actions. Funding bodies provide guidance notes for making an application and many share details of previously successful applications. The following list of relevant State, NGO and EU funding sources is not exhaustive:

- Create Ireland
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

- Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Public Bodies Insurance
- Local Enterprise Office
- The Arts Council
- The Heritage Council
- The Ireland Funds
- Your County Council
- Your local LEADER group

Where possible, local business and community sourced funding should be obtained to support projects. Most government and EU funding requires some level of matched funding. The Wheel, which is a representative body for charities and voluntary organisations, provides useful information both on fundraising from the public and grants on its website, www.wheel.ie. The website also has a regularly updated directory of live grant opportunities. Finally, if your application is unsuccessful don't be afraid to ask for feedback. Don't be disheartened and keep trying.

Further reading

Conserving built and natural heritage assets

Conserving and maintaining wildlife in towns and villages: a guide for local community groups

www.noticenature.ie/files/Conserving%20and%20enhancing%20wildlife.pdf

Maintenance: a guide to the care of older buildings

www.ahrrga.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Maintenance-A-Guide-to-the-Care-of-Older-Buildings-2007.pdf

Ruins: the conservation and repair of conservation ruins

www.ahrrga.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Ruins-The-Conservation-and-Repair-of-Masonary-Ruins-2010.pdf

Developing a tourism sector

Historic towns in Ireland: maximising your tourist potential

www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/5_Cultural_Tourism/Historic-Towns-In-Ireland-with-link-1.pdf?ext=.pdf

Rural Tourism

<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2016/Rural-Tourism-Booklet.pdf>

Fundraising

Help with fundraising

www.wheel.ie/funding/fundraising-guidance/help-with-fundraising

Walled towns days fundraising advice

www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/irish-walled-towns-network

Heritage interpretation

Bored of boards: ideas for interpreting heritage sites

www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/bored_of_boards_1mb.pdf

Sharing our stories: using interpretation to improve the visitors' experience at historic sites

www.failteireland.ie/Failtelreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/1_StartGrow_Your_Business/NEW-Sharing-our-stories_1.pdf

Managing your town

Solving our own problems! A two day workshop identifying Carrick-on-Suir's issues and coming up with solutions

www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/solving_our_own_problems_workshop_report_2014_3mb.pdf

Village design statement toolkit

www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/community_led_village_design_statements_toolkit_2012.pdf

Market segments

Driving growth through segmentation: an introduction to best prospect global and domestic customer segments

www.failteireland.ie/Failtelreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/Domestic%20segmentation/FI-Global-Domestic-Brochure-Interactive.pdf

Growing international sales: global segmentation toolkit

www.failteireland.ie/Failtelreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/9_International_Sales_Toolkit/FI-Growing-International-Sales-interactive_1.pdf

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