

Wednesday 1st March 2023



Rialtas na
hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland

2040

Our Rural Future: Ministers Humphreys and Martin officially open ‘Ireland’s Global Garden’ – Mount Congreve Estate in Waterford

- ***Over €7 million investment delivers world class tourist attraction for South East***

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, have today (Wednesday, 1st March) officially opened ‘**Ireland’s Global Garden**’.

The Mount Congreve Estate in Kilmeaden, County Waterford, has been re-developed into a world class tourist attraction and is expected to welcome over 86,000 visitors this year alone.

The landmark project received €5 million under the **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)**. An additional investment totalling €1.2 million was provided by Fáilte Ireland and a further €1.2 million was provided by Waterford City and County Council to complete the project.

It is the largest single investment in a tourist project in Waterford’s history.

As part of the multi-million euro project, the once privately-owned historic Mount Congreve Estate underwent a major restoration over the past two years.

The works include the reinvigoration of the gardens, a new state-of-the-art visitor centre, the restoration of the ornate Georgian Glasshouse, the provision of retail and food outlets and the completion of a children’s playground.

It is estimated that the landmark tourist attraction will create almost 30 full and part time jobs and provide a major boost to the local economy.

Speaking at the official opening of the project today, Minister Humphreys said:

“The opening of the spectacular Mount Congreve Gardens marks a historic day for Waterford and the South East.

“This is a world class tourist attraction that will welcome tens of thousands of visitors every year and provide a huge boost to the local economy.

“With the support of €5 million from my Department’s Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, ‘Ireland’s Global Garden’ has undergone a major transformation over the past two years.

“It has now been restored and re-developed as part of the largest single investment in a tourism project in Waterford’s history.

“The investment represents a major vote of confidence in the South East and demonstrates our commitment to helping our rural communities go from strength to strength.”

Minister Martin said:

“The Investment of €1.2 million made by Fáilte Ireland towards this world class tourism destination will without doubt open the south east region to a raft of new visitors. It is anticipated the visitors attracted to Mount Congreve will spend a total of €64.5 million in the area by 2033.

“This represents spend in the Waterford region of €6.45 million annually and the spend generated because of this investment will indirectly support 174 jobs annually.

“The sustainable redevelopment of Mount Congreve is an example of how we can achieve great things if we work together. The future of tourism in Waterford is brighter today thanks to the success of this project.”

Paul Kelly, CEO of Fáilte Ireland added:

“Investing in standout attractions and unique experiences is a key element of attracting international visitors to Ireland and encouraging domestic tourists to explore different areas of the country. Fáilte Ireland’s research into gardens shows that visitors see gardens as highly immersive and dynamic experience for the senses, that allows them to reconnect with nature and encourages them to explore.

*“Fáilte Ireland’s investment of €1.2 million** in capital and business supports for Mount Congreve brings the visitor experience of these world-renowned gardens to the next level. It has also delivered the commercial plan, retail offering and restaurant to ensure the financial sustainability of this beautiful place for future generations.*

“Mount Congreve is also part of Fáilte Ireland’s Digital that Delivers programme, which has transformed the online booking system at the attraction and makes it more visible, and importantly bookable, to domestic and international visitors. Fáilte Ireland is currently collaborating with industry and stakeholders to develop tourism in Waterford through the development of a Destination Experience and Development Plan (DEDP), which will drive economic and employment opportunities in the local community”.

While in the county, Minister Humphreys paid a visit to the Cheekpoint Pontoon and Gangway to open the access pontoon. The Minister also visited Dunmore East for a naming ceremony of a new Sea Safari boat and replacement equipment, funded under LEADER.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Photography available from Patrick Browne.

Fáilte Ireland Investment

**There was a capital investment of €960,000 from Fáilte Ireland with an additional €280,000 investment for business supports including consumer research, online booking system development and retail design.

The visitors attracted to Mount Congreve will spend a total of €64.5 million in the area by 2033. This represents spend in the Waterford region of €6.45 million annually.

The spend generated because of this investment will indirectly support 174 jobs annually.

Our Rural Future

Our Rural Future is the whole-of-government policy for rural Ireland for the period 2021-2025. It offers a blueprint for a thriving and inclusive rural Ireland and adopts a more strategic, ambitious and holistic approach to investing in and maximising opportunities for rural areas.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund provides funding for the development and construction of capital projects in towns and villages and rural areas across Ireland. In total the Fund has now provided over €395 million for 215 projects across Ireland, worth a total of €542 million. In relation to projects in County Waterford, the Fund has provided €12.7 million for 5 projects located in Waterford worth a total of €16.7 million.