

Media Release

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Rialtas na
hÉireann
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Tionscadal Éireann
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Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys opens large scale rural development projects during visit to Meath

- ***Minister officially opens the Trim Cultural Centre.***
- ***Investment of almost €4.5 million from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund has delivered a new performance space in Trim.***
- ***Enfield Community and Economic Hub delivered with €1.5 million investment also officially opened.***
- ***The Minister also visits Bective GAA to launch Meath Broadband Connection Points and view demonstrations of a creative coding club by 'OurKidsCode'.***

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, today (Wednesday 24th May) visited Trim, Co Meath, to officially open the Trim Cultural Centre.

The site of the historic Methodist Chapel on High Street has been transformed into a new major performance space.

Funded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, together with match funding from Meath County Council, the project has been delivered at an overall cost of €9 million.

This project demonstrates a significant investment in the Trim area that will contribute to the economic, social and cultural regeneration of the town centre.

The investment from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in the town is consistent with the *Our Rural Future* and *Town Centre First* objectives of attracting more visitors and investors into rural towns.

Meath County Council was awarded funding of almost €4.5 million under the Rural Regeneration for the Trim Library and Cultural Centre Project.

Speaking at today's opening in Trim, Minister Humphreys said:

"I think it's fair to say that the scale of this investment really does speak to the level of ambition shown by the local community in coming forward with superb ideas and locally-led plans."

"Today's occasion also demonstrates the vision that underpins our landmark rural development strategy 'Our Rural Future'."

"That's to deliver projects that make our rural towns and villages more thriving, inclusive and sustainable places for our citizens and our families."

"People are choosing to live in rural areas, because of the quality of life, the beautiful natural and built heritage and, above all, that sense of community."

Earlier today, the Minister visited Enfield to officially open the Enfield Community and Economic Hub. Meath County Council was awarded over €1.5 million under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to develop this new community hub.

It will provide greatly needed facilities and deliver a range of cultural, educational and social activities for the local community.

Speaking at the opening in Enfield, Minister Humphreys said:

"This is a wonderful project that has created a new community hub in a vacant building here in Enfield."

"I am very pleased that funding of over €1.5 million from my Departments Rural Regeneration and Development Fund has enabled Meath County Council to deliver this hub that will bring so many benefits to the community in Enfield creating new opportunities for work, leisure and social activity."

While in the county, the Minister also opened St Kinneth's Ballivor, a project funded under Town and Village Renewal Scheme that turned a heritage building, once an old church, into a community facility.

She also launched the network Broadband Connection Points in Meath at Bective GAA where she saw demonstrations of how high-speed broadband has huge benefits for rural communities.

The Minister also visited Dunderry Community Centre. The centre was recently awarded €300,000, under the Community Centre Investment Fund, to allow improvements to the building's structure and make the centre more accessible to users.

ENDS

Note to Photo desks:

Official photography will be available from Barry Cronin.

Notes to Editors:

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 Irelands 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 €397m for 215 projects across Ireland, worth a total of €544m.

In relation to projects in County Meath, the Fund has provided €10.9 million for 11 projects worth a total of €16 million.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme provides funding for small to medium capital projects in towns and villages across Ireland. In total the TVRS has now provided over €149 million for more than 1,600 projects across Ireland.

In relation to projects in County Meath, the TVRS has provided over €5 million in funding for some 67 projects since the beginning of the scheme in 2016.

Town Centre First

'Town Centre First' contains 33 unique actions which will give our towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, visit and run a business.

It is underpinned by multi-billion euro investment spread across major Government schemes such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

For the first time, designated towns will gain their own dedicated Town Regeneration Officers, who will be crucial to driving future development.

The policy also contains a range of actions designed to achieve key objectives such as social and economic revival in towns, the provision of housing, as well as addressing challenges like vacancy and derelict buildings.

The actions also support the protection of our environment, as well as the heritage and culture of our towns.

Broadband Connection Points

Through the Broadband Connection Points (BCP) Initiative the department will establish 300 digitally-enabled community hubs. These hubs are based in community centres, GAA clubs and tourist sites across the country and are centres of community life. These BCPs will each have different offerings, some with a focus

on remote work while others focused on education programmes and digital skills training. The current focus of the Public BCP project is to complete the rollout of the 300 sites which are already within the project plan. When completed, the Public BCP network will have a presence in every county in the State and in some of our most rural and isolated communities, including many off-shore islands.

There are 16 BCPs live in county Meath.

Community Centre Investment Fund

The 2022 Community Centres Investment Fund was warmly welcomed the length and breadth of the country. Over €45.5 million has been committed to the improvement and refurbishment of existing community centres across the country. These projects are ongoing and will be completed over the coming year.

Following on from this, the focus of the 2023 Community Centre Investment Fund has is in on new build community centres. In March a €20 million Fund to support communities with 'shovel-ready' projects on green or brownfield sites to build new community centres was announced.

This Measure will target areas which do not have an appropriate facility to meet the needs of their area. The minimum grant funding available is €1 million with the maximum being €6 million.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 3rd July 2023