
Cloontuskert Development and Tidy Towns Association CLG

Planning Department,
Roscommon County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Roscommon,
F42 VR98

Re: Issues Paper | County Roscommon Development Plan 2021 to 2027

Dear Sir/Madam,

Cloontuskert Development and Tidy Towns Association CLG is grateful for the opportunity presented to comment on the Issues Paper in line with the preparation of the County Roscommon Development Plan 2021 to 2027, with the aim of ensuring further sustainable development of Cloontuskert village and its environs. Our group would also like to take this opportunity to thank Roscommon County Council for the many assistances it provides to our community and foresight it sustains in relation to a multitude of areas which make county Roscommon a very unique and special place.

Our submission shall take the following format in which our observations, comments and suggestions shall be nested under the appropriate title as per each relevant section in the Issues Paper, as can be seen immediately below.

1. THE VISION FOR COUNTY ROSCOMMON

Our future vision for county Roscommon is one that also underpins the direction of development envisaged for our village of Cloontuskert and its environs. As an original Bord na Móna village, we are placed right at the heart of where the peat-harvesting story began. The prosperity of this time which saw mass migration to Cloontuskert and the Midlands in general is reaching an abrupt end. Cloontuskert village and its environs has been significantly affected by the closure of the local peat-harvesting operations on the local Bord na Móna boglands and at the ESB power station in Lanesborough, as part of the current climate action measures. We envisage a future in which sustainability in its fullest sense is at the core of any future developments that take place.

Given the collective rurality of county Roscommon and Cloontuskert, we would hope that this feature would be drawn on to, rather than being a barrier to, in providing an excellent quality of life in which needs of inhabitants are addressed in the fullest way; such as in additional availability of housing, transport, employment opportunities, availability of educational centres and recreational facilities developed in line with the application of the greatest principles of environmental protection, sustainability and biodiversity awareness. We would hope that rather than our young people having to move away elsewhere for education, (though this cannot be avoided in all cases), that a greater availability of educational opportunities in line with advancements of STEM, Green Technology, Biodiversity, Environmental Protection, etc, which will be key to our county's future development, would become available more locally.

Our county has a great deal of open space which should be utilised in the greatest manner possible to create a sustainable network of opportunity that ensures that all inhabitants have the same availability of access to resources available in the county. With reference to Cloontuskert, our area has a great deal of open space as a key design feature of the village which would lend itself to the development of an educational centre which could potentially provide a unique window to bridging the gap between significant local employment issues which are likely to occur in the near future with harnessing local biodiversity, natural and cultural heritages, green-space, surrounding Bord na Móna boglands, as well as the development of our SEAI Sustainable Energy Community (SEC).

A major issue faced at present is the lack of local transport opportunities. We would appreciate if consideration could be given to connecting Cloontuskert, and surrounding areas, which currently has no Local Link service, or otherwise, with other local public transport services available in Ballyleague and Roscommon Town. Without adequate public transport, a key chain is lost in allowing access to opportunity for availing of other resources in the county.

Recreationally, Cloontuskert currently has no play-area or playground for the children of the village. The children currently play at the rear of the Old School House building where it is extremely dangerous due to broken glass, loose/uneven surfacing and also to the general dereliction of this area which is a cause of great concern. The children also play on the large lawns in the estate right outside residents' properties which are also located right by the roadside in the estate. In the absence of adequate facilities, they unfortunately have nowhere else to go. We would propose that in the absence of such rudimentary facilities in areas such

as Cloontuskert that the community and Roscommon County Council could jointly work on development to satisfy the recreational needs of residents.

2. CORE STRATEGY AND SETTLEMENT POLICY

In relation to this section, we fully appreciate its background of development of the Core Strategy being based in the policy framework set out in the NPF and the RSES, which is evidence-based, as advised in the Issues Paper. However, we feel that there is a potential for communities such as Cloontuskert, which has a tremendous potential for development in line with the unique surrounding landscape, community appetite for development and the clear need to urgently address significant local employment challenges due to the wind-down of the operations of Bord na Móna and the ESB in the area, to miss out further due to being located in Tier 4 of the Hierarchy presented, despite showing a distinct evidence of need and appetite for development by our local community group. This potential falls directly into the question of how Roscommon Council can support sustainable rural communities, such as Cloontuskert.

We would suggest that a development officer be assigned to interested communities via a competitive application process who show distinct evidence of need and appetite for development. The aim of this suggestion would be to have an alternative means of providing core support to communities who are trying their best to realise the fullest potential of our communities, which we believe we are doing in Cloontuskert, but may miss out due to our position in the Hierarchy presented. An additional suggestion that we would make to combat this from potentially happening is to introduce a blended feature to the Tiers in the Hierarchy presented, which we would envisage as working in addition to our suggestion of a development officer for communities, such as Cloontuskert. This would allow for a greater consideration of motivating factors behind intended developments, rather than strict reliance on the discrete levels presented in the Hierarchy as providing a gauge of relative importance based on where communities are located in terms of delivering any scoring matrix for funding schemes etc. Considering these points, we do not think there should be a clear physical distinction between the development boundaries of our towns and villages and the surrounding countryside.

3. PEOPLE, PLACES AND HOUSING

In relation to the question posed in the Issues Paper on encouraging younger adults to remain in or return to County Roscommon, we believe that this may be aided by consideration of the

points made above under section 1 relating to ensuring that all opportunities required for the allowance of an excellent quality of life are given the fullest notice in the planning of future developments and maintenance/development of current residential areas. One major consideration, as highlighted previously, is the lack of adequate public transport in areas such as Cloontuskert that may be a significant barrier to some in gaining and maintaining employment. We would ask that rural areas such as Cloontuskert are consideration in the future development of Local Link Services, which had previously been suggested by Cllr. Orla Leyden, who completed excellent work in researching this possibility and the provision of local community surveys which conveyed a clear need for such services in the Cloontuskert area.

It is also advised that given future employments are more likely to be based in STEM, Green Technology and other related areas, which would link into the development of sustainability in our communities in the fullest way possible, that educational centres be developed more locally in the county to link into the development of future employments locally in line with the development of community sustainability. The disused former National School and its surrounds in Cloontuskert is currently in a dilapidated state and requires addressing such that it can be brought back to safe use in the community, rather than falling into a state of greater disrepair. This may be a potential location for such a suggested development. Younger people often move away from rural communities, such as has been in the case in Cloontuskert, in following further education and then cannot gain employment locally in line with their academic qualifications and skill-sets. This is a great shame for our county as we often lose some of the greatest minds to highly populous cities, such as Dublin or Galway, who often end up settling away from county Roscommon.

4. OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES

As noted in this section regarding the aim of the Development Plan maintaining the momentum in reversing the decline of towns and villages, we would like to draw on this point to highlight a number of suggestions that we would like to make. The points made above in previous sections also play into the suggestions we will make below. As part of our work with Cloontuskert Tidy Towns, we aim to complete projects in a sustainable manner that has environmental protection at the core of what we do. Indeed, this is a key feature of Tidy Towns work all around the country. Participation in the National Tidy Towns Competition has transformed considerably in more recent years. Rather than seeking conventional 'neatness' and 'order', a heightened approach towards sustainability, protection

of biodiversity and employing thorough consideration of all factors involved in the long-term, sustainable success of projects completed has been brought to the fore in terms of importance. Therefore, as regards what makes a town/village centre attractive, we would suggest that this be measured through employment of good practice as regards sustainability and protection of biodiversity, rather than via conventional means. In practical terms, we would suggest that the Roscommon County Council set aside funding specifically for the creation of wildflower and pollinator-friendly areas along town/village approach roads and within towns/villages themselves, where it is possible in line with road safety so as to not impede road users' visibility etc. There are vast expanses of areas around the county that our group have noted as being appropriate under this suggestion. Due to the decline of bees and other pollinators, there is a huge weight of importance behind creating works such as this. It is very tough for local community groups to bear the full costs of insurances, machine purchase/maintenance, completion of ongoing maintenance and development projects, so it would be greatly appreciated if some funding could be set aside specifically for the creation of wildflower and pollinator-friendly areas along town/village approach roads and within towns/villages themselves.

Regarding vacant properties as per this section, we shall describe how this relates to Cloontuskert below. Part of the issue also involves a serious lack of a sustainable management plan regarding the disused school building in the centre of the village which was formerly Cloontuskert National School. In 2012 the roof on this structure partially collapsed following years of dilapidation. There is also an urgent risk posed to the health and safety of residents here due to a lack of safe surfacing surrounding the building, presence of broken glass and easy access to the two gardens of the adjoining properties which are now full of briars and other dangerous articles. Both adjoining properties (61 and 62 Cloontuskert) are currently unlive in and also face a risk of falling into severe dilapidation if action is not taken urgently by the powers that be.

The children of the village play at the rear of the disused school where it is seriously dangerous due to broken glass, loose/uneven surfacing and to the general dereliction of this area which is a cause of great concern. The children also play on the large lawns in the estate right outside residents' properties which are also located right by the roadside in the estate. This is not the children's fault of course. In the absence of adequate facilities, they unfortunately have nowhere else to go. The last time that the children of Cloontuskert had any play facility was back in the early 1980s when the children's playground (installed by

Bord na Móna during development of the Cloontuskert housing scheme in the 1950s) was removed. Unfortunately, no area/facility was ever developed to replace this. The significance of not having any play area for the children has been highlighted time and time again by residents at community meetings and as part of community needs surveys we have undertaken as a group. Residents have also made contact with our group on numerous occasions asking that the issue be highlighted and that an adequate area/facility be developed. We would appreciate the assistance of Roscommon County Council in developing a suitable area for the children of Cloontuskert as it is certainly against the county development plan to have an area such as ours with no safe or appropriate recreational or play area/facility specifically for the children to use. By the same token, Cloontuskert has also no community centre at present which is a huge loss for the community. We would greatly appreciate the assistance of Roscommon County Council in tackling this issue through a sustainable approach that is in line with regulations and guidelines as this is a major issue for the community of Cloontuskert.

5. RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Again, with this section, this is a great degree of crossover between it and previous points made. As a rural community in Cloontuskert, this section has particular relevance to our village. Cloontuskert's surrounding landscape is dominated by the extensive tracts of bog-land located in the area. It is to this feature that the Cloontuskert housing scheme owes its formation. In 1953 the scheme was officially opened as one of the original Bord na Móna villages which catered for the families of workers who came from all over Ireland to gain employment on the bogs. The prosperity of this time which saw mass migration to Cloontuskert and the Midlands in general is reaching an abrupt end. Cloontuskert village and its environs have been significantly affected by the imminent closure of the local peat-harvesting operations in Bord na Móna and the ESB power station in Lanesborough, as part of the current climate action measures. Without considerable action from the local community we fear that Cloontuskert and its environs will not have a source of economic viability in which to sustain our community, provide local employment, or indeed to allow it to grow. Unemployment has been a significant feature in our community due to a pronounced lack of local rural development over recent decades and a classical over-reliance on Bord na Móna and the ESB for employment.

One point that we feel is of huge importance is the inappropriate use of weed killer and other hazardous chemicals in public areas, without reason, which are seriously harmful to the

environment and public health. On some occasions, weed killer has been used in the village around trees, on approach roads and in the village where its use was not necessitated. We were grateful to have received inclusion in the 'One Change for Biodiversity' programme through the Heritage Office of Roscommon County Council, where we worked alongside a wildlife/biodiversity expert who created a village plan for Cloontuskert. This was an excellent initiative and we are very grateful to have been included. As part of this plan, the inappropriate use of weed killer and other hazardous chemicals have been highlighted. We would suggest that further educational measures being supported by Roscommon County Council in educating the public on the dangers of same and in support of why wildflower schemes, as suggested above, are an excellent alternative to aid biodiversity and the environment. Along the same lines, we are disheartened to see clearance of grass verges and hedges in areas where road users' visibility or safety is not being impeded, especially during the season of the hedge-cutting ban. We would suggest that stricter enforcement of the ban and a clearer methodology for its enforcement be given attention as much needless destruction occurs each year which opposes protection of biodiversity and the environment. Hence, we do not believe that the visual amenity of the landscape is sufficiently protected at present.

As regards the location of enterprises in rural areas, may we suggest that the local enterprise office look specifically into potential partnership with rural communities in developing small-scale enterprises that would allow a source of income to be generated to drive further community development of rural areas. When we look to our natural resources, there are an abundance of schemes that could potentially operate. In Cloontuskert we would be interested in housing a site for the sowing and grafting of fruit trees at our Community Orchard area so as to produce further stock for sowing in other areas that are adjusted to a rural Irish climate.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As mentioned above, without considerable action from the local community we fear that Cloontuskert and its environs will not have a source of economic viability in which to sustain our community, provide local employment, or indeed to allow it to grow. As such, we suggest that linking of eco-tourism centres between towns/villages across county Roscommon is our shot at tackling this issue together as a county. Cloontuskert boasts a unique tourism potential in terms of the history of the village, its surrounding landscape features and the presence of our group who are very enthusiastic about ensuring sustainability of Cloontuskert into the future. The history of Cloontuskert includes being a Bord na Móna

housing scheme which is of huge historical and architectural importance, the surrounding vast tracts of Bord na Móna bogland in the Cloontuskert peat-production area, and the presence of Cloontuskert Abbey which has world-renowned archaeological importance. We are also very closely situated to the Sliabh Bawn mountain which is another unique point for exploration in terms of creation of eco-tourism in the area. The Old School House in Cloontuskert is currently lying idle and has reached a state of dilapidation. It is located right in the centre of the village. We believe that there is scope to bring the building and surrounds back to safe community use, rather than allowing a furthering of dereliction to develop. We envisage the Old School House becoming an epicentre of development. The site would host a suite of amenities/facilities that Cloontuskert is severely lacking.

We would also aim to join forces with Bord na Móna as part of their bog rehabilitation programme to have an innovative cycle and walking trail developed that would link together Cloontuskert with other surrounding areas of interest. Cloontuskert possesses a very unique sense of rurality due to the location of our village which is nested at the centre of the surrounding vast tracts of boglands which form the Cloontuskert peat-production area which is situated right beside the village. The trail would serve to highlight and attract visitors and locals alike to learn about the rich history and archaeological significance of Cloontuskert through its early monastic beginnings, for which ruins of Cloontuskert Monastery/Abbey still exist today, through its development as an authentic Bord na Móna housing scheme, right through to the present day where Cloontuskert is writing its next chapter in its energy story as an SEAI Sustainable Energy Community.

Regarding the above points, we would appreciate assistance on further development of our suggestions. A key aim in the potential development of the above ideas, alongside other developments which could take place in Cloontuskert due to the vastness of open space and availability of immediate wonderful natural resources in terms of the surrounding boglands, is to create much-needed local employment and to create a sustainability of employment into the future rather than completion of development that exhaust themselves after a finite number of years.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

As previously mentioned in section 3, Cloontuskert currently has a significant lack of public transport. This is an issue of major consideration, as highlighted previously; the lack of adequate public transport in areas such as Cloontuskert that may be a significant barrier to

some in gaining and maintaining employment. We would ask that rural areas such as Cloontuskert are considered in the future development of Local Link Services, which had previously been suggested by Cllr. Orla Leyden, who completed excellent work in researching this possibility and the provision of local community surveys which conveyed a clear need for such services in the Cloontuskert area. We would also suggest that, in line with work through our Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) in Cloontuskert, that electric vehicle use is made more easily accessible to people, through lowering of costs involved with the purchase of same in terms of household cars, development of local EV charging points, highlighting of the cycle-to-work scheme in terms of electric bicycle purchase where employments would be required to be made more locally to avoid great commutes, which many in Roscommon currently undertake in order to work elsewhere in the country. We would also suggest that further investment is made by the government in creating a network of electric buses in the Local Link Service.

In terms of mobile phone reception in Cloontuskert, one point that we would like to note is the location of the village on the boundary of two coverage areas based on the operation of two local masts. This leads to a dipping out of reception and mobile data at points around the village. Perhaps this is something that could be investigated by the department that has responsibility for this within the local authority, if appropriate. As regards broadband service, some residents have continued issues with the speed and reliability of their connections. We would greatly welcome greater affordability of fibre-broadband, which I believe is available to some households in Cloontuskert. As regards future sustainability of local employment, working from home and study needs of local students, the standard of broadband certainly needs to be made more affordable, accessible and readily available. We would suggest that this be of key consideration in the potential future repurposing of the disused school in the centre of Cloontuskert where technological advancement will be of key importance in driving green technology/STEM-related employments locally. For example, this would be necessary in terms of provision of a hot-desk space in such redevelopment.

8. CLIMATE ACTION, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Under this section, we would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank the entirety of the Environment Department for their hard work and foresight in developing excellent litter management and environmental protection measures in county Roscommon. We recently submitted part of the below as part of compilation of the Draft Litter Management Plan 2020-2022, but we also feel it has relevance here. The magnitude of work that is put in on a

continual basis by the Environment Awareness Officer, Litter Wardens and Enforcement Staff, Administrative and all other Staff involved is clearly evident.

A number of our members attended the Master Composting Course held in Ballyleague in 2018 by Mr. Craig Benton. This was a wonderful initiative and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to learn the 'ins and outs' of composting professionally. However, it is unfortunate that we have encountered a number of difficulties in the roll-out of a community composting area in Cloontuskert where some residents have shown a lack of awareness and care for composting correctly. We have created posts on our social media pages highlighting our community composting area, provided online information relating to correct composting and offered our help to residents should they have any queries. Despite the creation of this area, some residents are continuing to discard ashes, turf-mould, plastics and other wastes not appropriate for disposing of in our composting area. Some residents are also dumping a mix of wastes in small piles in other areas away from the composting area. We believe the issue is linked to a general lack of awareness as regards correct composting and care for the environment. We would ask that it be considered that composting signage be provided to community groups who wish to/have established composting areas in their communities highlighting the 'dos and don'ts' as regards composting/ the distinction between this and what constitutes illegal dumping.

We would suggest that the legal obligations surrounding waste management be made into attractive infographics that could be shared on the Roscommon County Council social media pages. We believe that there is a lack of awareness surrounding the laws involved in the Waste Management Act 1996, as evidenced in a number of encounters we have had through our work with Cloontuskert Tidy Towns. We believe that there is a scope to develop example cases where one would be in breach of the Act. Local community groups could use these for resharing on their own social media pages to create further awareness and education.

We would like to highlight how we as a group would be interested in having Bring Banks installed in Cloontuskert given the number of people living in our village and its environs. There is a great hinterland of the Ballagh/Doughil/Curraghroe and other nearby areas which are not served by Bring Banks. Cloontuskert is the nearest point for these locals. The main challenge that is preventing our group from formally requesting Bring Banks for Cloontuskert is the likelihood of illegal dumping around the Bring Bank area, as occurs in many other areas. If CCTV was to be installed in and around a potential Bring Bank area in Cloontuskert along with assistance from the Litter Wardens and Enforcement Staff, we believe this would

be a good plan as regards prevention of illegal dumping around a potential Bring Bank area, which would allow us to proceed. We forecast that this challenge is likely preventing other groups from taking part in the initiative.

9. BUILT HERITAGE

This section is one of the most important we would like to receive your attention on due to the great relevance of built heritage in relation to Cloontuskert village. We would like to initiate our writing in this section by thanking sincerely the Heritage Office of Roscommon County Council who do truly excellent work in increasing awareness, understanding and access to heritage (in all its forms) in county Roscommon.

Cloontuskert village is the only original Bord na Móna village in county Roscommon and as such, we believe it is a key feature of the architectural heritage of the county. Cloontuskert's surrounding landscape is dominated by the extensive tracts of bog-land located in the area. It is to this feature that the Cloontuskert housing scheme owes its formation. In 1953 the scheme was officially opened as one of the original Bord na Móna villages which catered for the families of workers who came from all over Ireland to gain employment on the bogs. Having completed much research surrounding the rich history of the Bord na Móna villages in Ireland, I believe that the importance of creating awareness surrounding and protecting the architectural heritage of the village is of utmost concern.

Cloontuskert Tidy Towns has completed much work in recent years in promoting our home village and bringing its importance to a wider audience. A recent publication 'Irish Housing Design 1950-1980' sets out the surprising number of references in contemporary writing to the architectural, historical and social significance of the Bord na Móna villages. The Bord na Móna housing schemes were designed by famous architect, Frank Gibney. We have been in touch with the author of "Ambition and Achievement: The Civic Visions of Frank Gibney", Fergal MacCabe, who recommended in his book that all Gibney's villages should be designated as Architectural Conservation Areas as Westmeath County Council did with Rochfortbridge some years ago. I believe there is tremendous potential of our Bord na Móna village as an Architectural Conservation Area, as is noted on page 133 of "Ambition and Achievement: The Civic Visions of Frank Gibney".

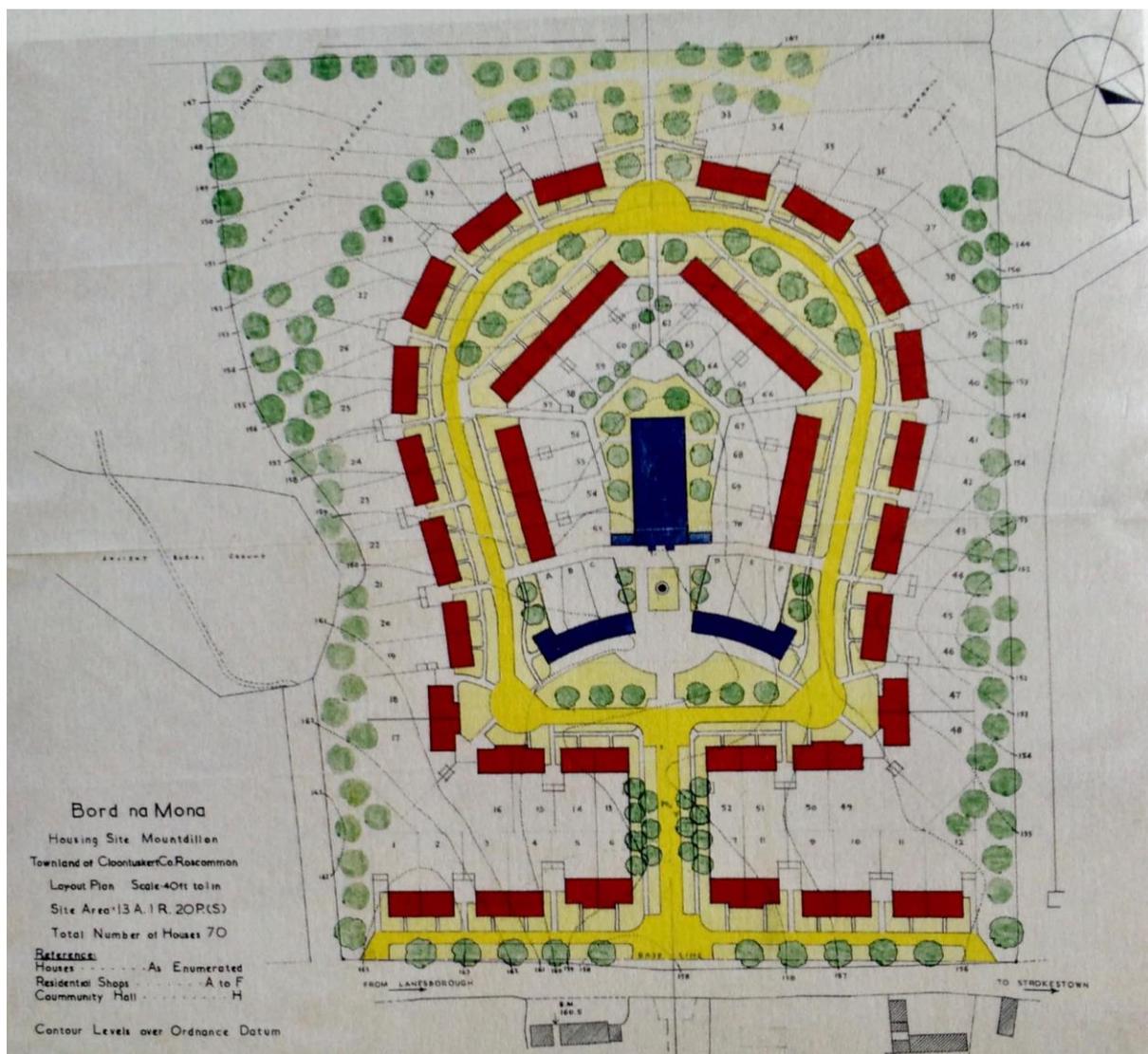
I believe that designation of Cloontuskert as an ACA would help to further inform the community of the huge tourism potential of Cloontuskert which could benefit the area economically. As an area highly dependent on Bord na Móna for employment Cloontuskert

will face significant employment challenges in the near future. The strong architectural design principles imbedded in the original scheme, which focused on community, open green space and walkability can be used as a backbone to address the other challenge of sustainability and climate change that faces all communities.

The housing in Cloontuskert features a number of unique designs which I believe require protection to avoid a disruption of the rich architectural heritage of the village as a whole. A long-standing major issue in Cloontuskert is a serious lack of sustainable management plan regarding the disused school building in the centre of the village which was formerly Cloontuskert National School. In 2012 the roof on this structure partially collapsed following years of dilapidation. There is also a urgent risk posed to the health and safety of residents here due to a lack of safe surfacing surrounding the building, presence of broken glass and easy access to the two gardens of the adjoining properties which are now full of briars and other dangerous articles. Both adjoining properties (61 and 62 Cloontuskert) are currently unlivd in and also face a risk of falling into severe dilapidation if action is not taken to protect these structures. Given the location of the Old School House at the very heart of the community as a key focal point, it would be a truly terrible occurrence for this building to enter further dereliction, without the urgent intervention required. I fear that without designation of Cloontuskert as an ACA that the building will not be protected, will allow to pose a further risk to the health and safety of residents and that eventually, destruction of the building would be taken in terms of the making safe of the area. This occurrence would ultimately lead to a total wiping out of the character of the village for which it is widely known through destruction of what I believe to be the key focal point of Gibney's design in the village. The building and its surrounds have now reverted to the State as part of the OPW Portfolio in line with the dissolution of Cloontuskert Residents Association Limited in 1998. The Old School House is a fine Modernist building and hopefully an appropriate new use will be found to bring it back to life through our suggestions, as made in the above sections. Cloontuskert, as an authentic Bord na Móna village, is placed at the very heart of the Just Transition. We would hope to attract funding through the Just Transition Fund to bring the building and its surrounds back to safe use in the community rather than allow furthering of dereliction to occur, as it an integral element of the overall design of Cloontuskert village. We believe that seeking a new use for the building and its surrounds through attraction rehabilitation funding is a good route to take as regards addressing what has been a major issue for the community of Cloontuskert for years. Unfortunately, it seems that a large part of

what has created the issue above was a lack of creation in decades gone by a sustainable management plan for the building and its surrounds. We believe that designation of Cloontuskert as an ACA will not only be of key importance in achieving sustainability of protection of this building and its surrounds, but also with regards to the many unique design features of the housing and open spaces in Cloontuskert which were part of Gibney's magnificent design, which can be viewed immediately below courtesy of the Architectural Archive on Twitter. This is an original layout plan of our very own village here in Cloontuskert by famous architect and planning consultant Frank Gibney (1905-78) for Bord na Móna housing, Cloontuskert, Co. Roscommon c. 1952 (IAA 2014/63) Please see <https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2123/GIBNEY-FRANK> for further information also.

While a small number of design features in the below plan did not materialise, we believe it is truly fascinating to be able to see the work of the great mind of Frank Gibney which gave life to a very special place for many.



Under this section, we would also be very grateful for the cast iron Village Pump in Cloontuskert to be added to the Record of Protected Structures for county Roscommon, The Village Pump and its surrounding stonework is a key feature of the history of the village and its placement at the front of the village is a key design feature in the vicinity of the Grotto in Cloontuskert, which we also suggest is added to the RPS due to the requirement for protection of both structures in the future. Both structures are located adjacent to number 1 Cloontuskert. The Village Pump is currently in a poor state of repair and requires professional addressing to restore it to appropriate to avoid degeneration of its standard over the coming years. We would hope that through the entry of these structures on the RPS, that this would act as a driver to create greater heritage awareness locally, as would be also done above through the designation of Cloontuskert as an ACA, in order to achieve a long-term management plan for the entirety of Cloontuskert and its unique features. We feel that the above is of utmost importance in line with highlighting and furthering future development of Cloontuskert, given its unique tourism potential.

10. NATURAL HERITAGE

We believe that given our unique bogland heritage in Cloontuskert that this area is of particular relevance to our community. Our aim as part of protection of local natural heritage would be to join forces with Bord na Móna as part of their bog rehabilitation programme to have an innovative cycle and walking trail developed that would link together Cloontuskert with other surrounding areas of interest. Cloontuskert possesses a very unique sense of rurality due to the location of our village which is nested at the centre of the surrounding vast tracts of boglands which form the Cloontuskert peat-production area which is situated right beside the village. The trail would serve to highlight and attract visitors and locals alike to learn about the rich history and archaeological significance of Cloontuskert through its early monastic beginnings, for which ruins of Cloontuskert Monastery/Abbey still exist today, through its development as an authentic Bord na Móna housing scheme, right through to the present day where Cloontuskert is writing its next chapter in its energy story as an SEAI Sustainable Energy Community. The proposed trail would take in routes connecting Cloontuskert directly to the Sliabh Bawn wind-farm amenities (Cloontuskert-Doughil) for which a substantial length of road already exists, a wider development of a bog-exploration route including a connection from Moher to Kilmurtagh passway to allow experience of the vast wildlife/biodiversity in the area, and connection to Kilnacarrow railway bridge crossing the River Shannon. The intention of this development would be to connect our Old School

House proposal in with the wider development of greenways in Ireland. As part of such development, a unique opportunity presents for linking together the education on the rich and natural heritage of our surrounding boglands with the cultural heritage of Cloontuskert as an original Bord na Móna village. There is a scope to link in the key aim of our Tidy Towns activities in environmental and biodiversity protection with the bog rehabilitation scheme which will be taking place on the surrounding Bord na Móna boglands.

11. SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

We would like to make a singular suggestion under this section. We wonder at the possibility for a development officer to assist communities in county Roscommon in their community development work due to the huge change that is effected through the transition away from classical employment in the local area through peat-harvesting operations. Cloontuskert and its environs are at the very heart of the Just Transition due to the consideration of history of the development of the area.

ADDITIONAL POINT: REQUIRED AMENDMENT OF MAP

In the Map presented on page 23 of the Issues Paper, we must make special note of the location of Ballyleague presented which has unfortunately been relocated incorrectly to superimpose approximately with the Cloontuskert area. We would appreciate if this can be amended by repositioning the text to the centre of Ballyleague, and before the inclusion of this Map in subsequent drafts and final version of the County Roscommon Development Plan 2021 to 2027. Cloontuskert is an area in its own right, it is a recognised electoral division, and we fear without the addressing of this point, the efforts being made in Cloontuskert by Cloontuskert Development and Tidy Towns Association and those involved in the excellent upkeep of Cloontuskert Cemetery are shown to be secondary to those occurring in any nearby areas. Cloontuskert is a forerunner in the National Tidy Towns competition and as per 2019, the village finished on a points total of 331, just 15 points behind the national winner, Glaslough, in county Monaghan. We appreciate that this would not have been the intention of the development of this Map. I must note along with this point, an error that reoccurs often, is the misspelling of Cloontuskert (Cluain Tuaiscirt). Confusion often arises with this spelling due to the presence of 'Clontuskert' in county Galway.

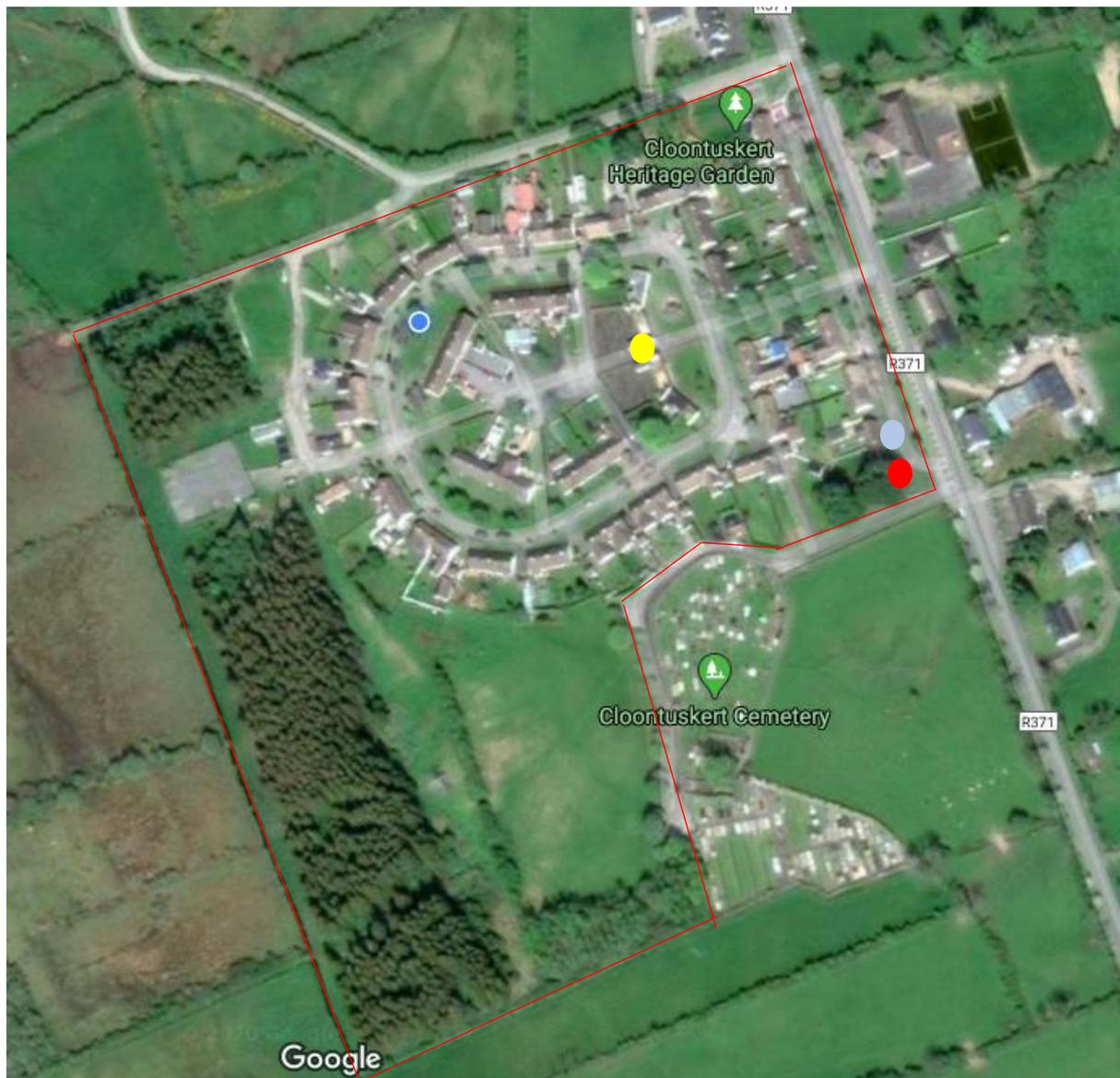
Kind regards,

Shauna O'Neill

Chairperson - Cloontuskert Development and Tidy Towns Association CLG

Postal Address:

MAP RELATING TO ACA AND RPS SUBMISSIONS



LEGEND: (MAP FROM GOOGLE.COM/MAPS)

- Cloontuskert Grotto
- Cast Iron Village Pump

* Cloontuskert village for designation as an ACA is contained in folio number RN15942 and is roughly marked using a red perimeter line as above. Old School marked as ●