

Solving our own problems!

A two day workshop identifying Carrick-on-Suir's issues and coming up with solutions

Summary Report and Event Template



COSTEDC

Working for Carrick-on-Suir



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report details the findings from a two day town health check seminar called *Solving our own problems!* Held in Carrick-on-Suir on November 7th and 8th, 2014, the event's concept was that five experts / mentors in various areas (tourism, heritage, public realm, retail, roads and parking) would help the people of Carrick come up with ideas to help tackle their place's issues. The role of the mentors was to assist the people of the town in coming up with solutions that are sustainable, i.e. that are doable, taking into account the skills and abilities of those who live there.

The Friday session comprised of lectures from the mentors. On Saturday, a town walkabout and workshop were held.

The weekend was a concept of the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN). The IWTN was founded by the Heritage Council in order to unite and co-ordinate local authorities involved in the management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns in Ireland, both north and south. One of the core roles of the Network is to enable people to make better decisions for their town. This is mainly done through a training programme. The *Solving our own problems* weekend was part of that programme.

The right of hosting the event was decided through a competition held amongst IWTN member towns. Carrick-on-Suir won. They did so because they had the most community buy-in to the concept. The resulting event was a partnership between the town and the IWTN.

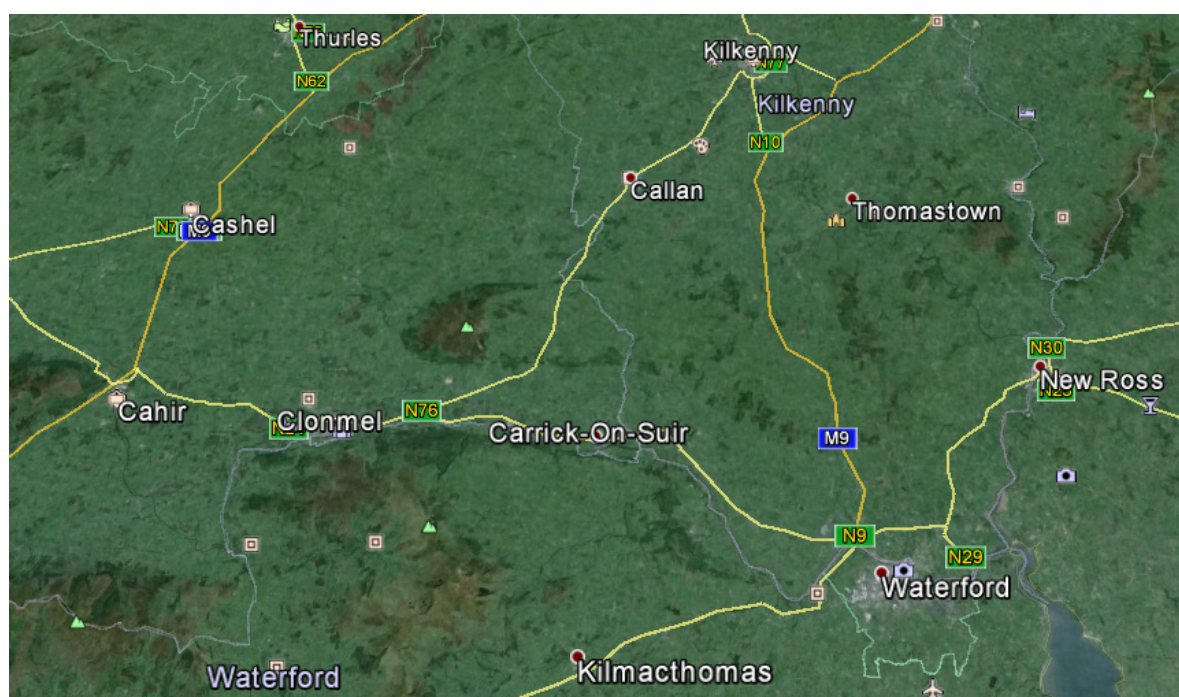
The five mentors were:

- David Fitzsimons, CEO, Retail Excellence Ireland – Topic: enhancing the town centre retail experience
- Simon Wall, Westport Town Architect – Topic: improving the public realm
- Dave O'Connor, Planning Lecturer, DIT – Topic: parking and traffic management
- Paddy Mathews, Destination Development Manager, Fáilte Ireland – Topic: tourism development in historic towns
- Grainne Shaffrey, Director, Shaffrey Associates Architects – Topic: using heritage intelligently

1.2 Site Location and Context

Located 27km to the northwest of Waterford City, Carrick-on-Suir's dominant character is that of rural market town (see figure 1.1). Over the past two decades a large commuter population has developed both within and immediately surrounding the town. The town's population of 5,886 (CSO, 2011) can be broadly split between richer, better educated people located on the town's periphery and poorer, less well educated inhabitants living in the core. Unemployment is high. Between February 2007 and February 2012 the number of people signing on at the Carrick-on-Suir Social Welfare Office increased from 913 persons to 2,085 (<http://www.southtipperaryinfo.ie/media/280-IS8%20Carrick-on-Suir%20Profile.pdf> accessed 10/12/2014). That is a 228% increase. The key tourist attraction is Ormond Castle. The castle is Ireland's best remaining Elizabethan mansion. In 2012, it attracted 9,539 visitors (<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2012/01/31/00172.asp> accessed 10/12/2014).

Fig. 1.1 Location of Carrick-on-Suir



(Source: Google Earth, accessed 10/12/2014)

1.3 Methodology

This document comprises short summaries of the discussions from the five working groups. The groups each focused one of the following topics: the public realm, tourism, traffic and parking, retail, and heritage.

1.4 Implementation

The implementation of this document is up to the town. Once the report has been published a follow-up meeting is to be held between relevant community stakeholders and outside agencies. Stakeholders include COSTEDC, COSBA, Tipperary County Council, South Tipperary Development Company and the Heritage Council. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. The kick-start meeting will review the document and decide upon actions for the coming year. Responsibilities are to be ascribed and minutes kept. Follow-up meetings are to be arranged as deemed necessary.

1.5 Author Identification

The summaries were prepared by a representative from each of the five working groups. The authors are: Rachel Cunningham, Róisín O’Grady, Liam Mannix, Tony Musiol, and Linda Fahy. The report was edited by Liam Mannix, Project Manager of the Irish Walled Towns Network. Ian Doyle, Head of Conservation at the Heritage Council, reviewed the document.

1.6 Acknowledgements

The IWTN acknowledges the help of Rachel Cunningham, Róisín O’Grady, Tony Musiol, and Linda Fahy in the preparation of this report. We would also like to thank: Niall Walsh, Clare Lee, Colette Nash, Patsy Fitzgerald, Anthony Fitzgerald, Margo Hayes, Martin Nolan and Ian Doyle for their help in making the weekend happen. Our greatest thank you goes to the five mentors that so willingly gave their time and expertise: David Fitzsimons, Simon Wall, Dave O’Connor, Paddy Mathews, and Grainne Shaffrey. Finally, thank you also to Minister Anne Phelan TD for launching the event.

2.0 Workshop group summaries

2.1 Retail

Mentor: David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence Ireland

Author: Liam Mannix

Issue identified: Weak retail core.

Policy:

Focus attention on the area of Main Street between the West Gate and the junction for the New Bridge. Over time, work out from there. Encourage the public to first visit and then linger in this area. The space must be animated and made into a desirable destination.

Actions:

- a. Create a subsidised paint scheme that will enhance the public realm. This was done in Youghal.
- b. Support the installation of appropriate awnings along the street.
- c. There is the possibility of substantially widening the street without the loss of car park spaces. This will create a more pleasant realm and encourage businesses to spill out on to the street.
- d. Once the footpaths have been widened, the possibility of moving the farmers market to the street should be considered.
- e. Improve existing events in the town centre and where possible develop new ones. The town centre is to be used as a venue for these events.
- f. Local businesses should think of the Supervalu as an anchor store to the whole retail core. They should work off it. Entice people onto Main Street with special offers.
- g. Develop the town centre voucher system. Look at the Letterkenny model. <http://www.shoplk.ie/>

Funding identified:

Tipperary County Council for the paint scheme.

Irish Walled Towns Network for the medieval festival.

Issue identified: Some retailers are not maximising the potential of their business. There is poor engagement with prospective customers in the town (both resident and visiting). Many shops are cluttered and poorly laid out. Others have poor window displays that do not effectively communicate what they are about.

Policy:

Improve the skill set of retailers.

Action:

Engage Retail Excellence Ireland to discreetly mentor businesses over several years.

Likely funding:

Community Enterprise

Issue identified: Although Main Street is one way, the footpaths have not been widened to provide a more pleasant shopping environment.

Policy:

Where possible widen the footpaths of Main Street (fig. 2.1).

Actions:

- a. Widen footpaths to allow traders to spill out. This can be done without the loss of any car spaces.
- b. Investigate the possibility of losing one or two spaces to create better public spaces as in Westport.
- c. Put a mini play park in the middle of the town. This will encourage families onto Main Street.

Fig 2.1 Main Street, Carrick-on-Suir



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Issue identified: There is a lack of weekend experiences to bring people into the town centre.

Policy:

Develop desirable experiences.

Actions:

- a. Create a programme of events, large and small, to bring people into the town. Make sure these are marketed well. Link the castle to other experiences and businesses in the town.
- b. The castle is a key asset for the town. Weekend experiences should be hinged around it.
- c. The castle needs to become more of a hub for activities. Work with the OPW to bring this about.

Issue identified: Gaps in the town's retail offering.

Policy:

Create a more complete shopping experience.

Actions:

- a. Conduct an audit of what types of shops are not on Main Street. For instance, there is no bookshop or high end food shop offering organic produce.
- b. Where gaps have been identified use enticements to encourage retailers to set up in Carrick (e.g. low rents, grants for fit out costs, no rates for the first year). Ensure there is no displacement.

Issue identified: The night time economy is fractured.

Policy:

Enhance the town's night time economy through cooperation, safety measures, and events.

Action:

- a. Develop a programme of events for various audiences (families, elderly couples, younger couples, etc). The programme should be marketed well.
- b. Initially run a small series of various events to build confidence and competence.
- c. Work with the publicans and Guards to better improve safety during the night.
- d. The town has two theatres. Special offers bundling tickets with meals in local restaurants could be created.

Focus on the quick wins!

2.2 Tourism

Mentor: Paddy Mathews, Fáilte Ireland

Author: Linda Fahy

Please note that additional information on tourism assets in Carrick can be found in appendix A.

Issue identified: Lack of a cohesive cultural tourism product and brand. Lack of awareness amongst prospective tourists of what Carrick-on-Suir has to offer.

Policy:

Focus on identifying and developing a unique brand identity that sums up what makes the town special and why people should visit it. Enhance connections between local businesses, the castle, river, greenway, and Butler Trail. Cross promote with other nearby attractions. The town needs to be firmly put on the tourist map.

Actions:

- a. Define a distinctive brand image. Create a brand that stands out and showcases the town's key attributes, from the big (Ormond Castle) to the small (P.J. Drohan's fishing tackle shop).
- b. Destination Carrick on Suir! Create a brand identity that sums up what makes the town special. Identify the unique selling point. Care should be exercised in not losing focus by falling into the trap of highlighting everything. Establish an elevator pitch focusing on Carrick-on-Suir's natural and built heritage.
- c. Consider identifying different quarters in the Town (e.g. the shopping quarter, cultural quarter, maritime quarter, ecclesiastical Carrickbeg).
- d. Promote and enhance the existing tourist trails (e.g. the Butler Trail, the East Munster Way, the greenway). Enhance links with surrounding towns located along the trail routes in Tipperary, Waterford, and Kilkenny. Where strategic gaps are identified, develop new trails as deemed necessary (e.g. heritage trail, art/crafts trail, food trail, music trail)
- e. Create a cultural tourism spine, a "golden mile", from the Westgate to Ormond Castle (fig. 2.2). Check out Kilkenny's medieval mile for inspiration <http://www.failteireland.ie/Utility/Media-Centre/Brand-launched-for-Ireland%E2%80%99s-Medieval-Mile-in-the.aspx>
- f. Rediscover the unique "forgotten" laneways. These are the connectors between the town's assets (figures 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5).
- g. Involve young people in all initiatives, including during the planning stage.

Fig 2.2

Kilkenny's medieval mile brand



(Source: http://visitkilkenny.ie/ireland_medieval_mile_in_kilkenny, accessed 10/12/2014)

Fig 2.3

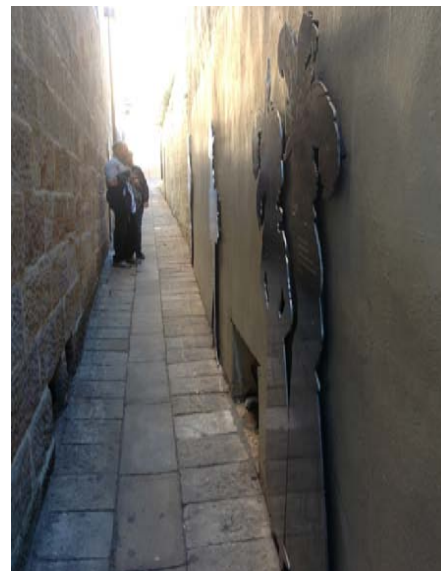
Sydney laneway with interesting street art



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Figures 2.4 & 2.5

In this historic Sydney laneway 19th century characters have been installed



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Issue identified: Lack of accommodation.

Policy:

Improve the marketing of existing accommodation in the town and surrounding areas along the Butler Trail / Suir Valley Region. Research possible additional accommodation resources. Focus attention on the main accommodation facilities in the town, how they can be used to their maximum potential. Offer support / funding to those interested in developing other forms of accommodation, e.g. caravan / camping facilities, hostels, guesthouses, B&Bs, self-catering.

Actions:

- a. Identify a clear listing of accommodation in the Town and surrounding areas. Include type of accommodation and what each one can offer and its proximity's to Carrick on Suir and main attractions.
- b. Improve the marketing of the existing Caravan Park accommodation along the greenway and river (blueway).
- c. Look into developing additional cost-effective accommodation cost effectively, maybe "pop-up" accommodation as necessary for events, e.g. self catering. The town has many empty residential houses. Maybe offer funding / incentives to property owners to turn these premises into self-catering holiday homes.
- d. Become a host. Offer incentives to homeowners willing to rent out a room during festivals, events, thereby giving tourists the ultimate "unrivalled" Irish cultural experience. AirBnB provides a worldwide platform to enable this (www.airbnb.com/)².
- e. Consider turning vacant pubs into guest houses or self catering spaces. Hostels for the "active" traveller.
- f. Identify quirky or themed living accommodation for holiday makers. Give them a unique experience.
- g. Collaborate with businesses (e.g. auctioneers / property agents) and community groups on this initiative.

Issue identified: There is no town brochure or website. The town's social media presence is poor.

Policy:

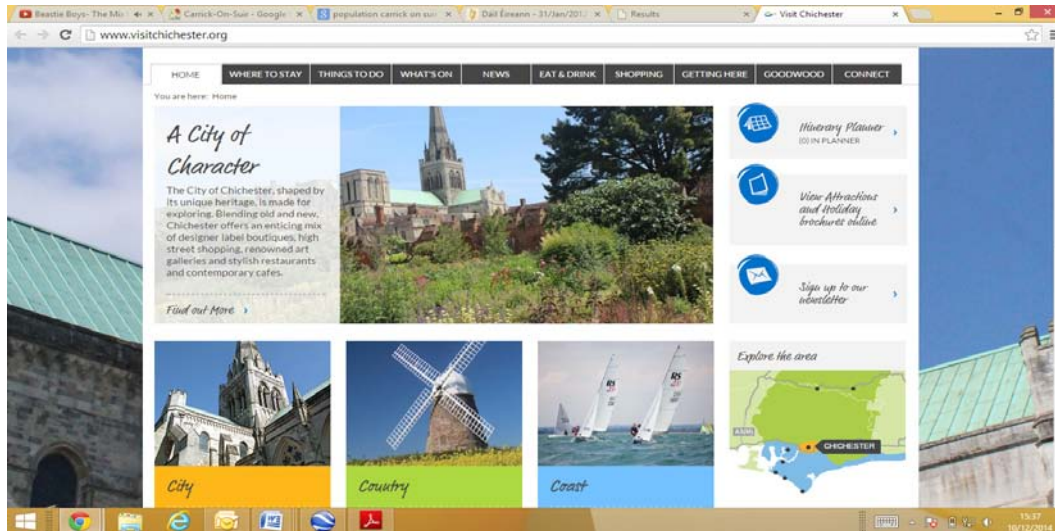
Once town branding has been created, focus on developing a marketing strategy facilitated by a website, possible app, brochure, and an active social media presence.

Actions:

- a. Develop a simple, clear, easy to navigate website for the town. Use www.visitchichester.org/ as a model (fig. 2.6).
- b. Develop a brochure with map highlighting the town's main attractions, and unique attributes (fig. 2.7).
- c. Develop a one day itinerary flyer.
- d. Develop a "whats on" App to keep locals and visitors up to date on what's happening in Carrick-on-Suir and surrounding areas.
- e. Radically improve the town's social media presence. Create the stories!

Fig 2.6

Screen grab of visitchichester.org



(Source: www.visitchichester.org/, accessed 10/12/2014)

Fig. 2.7

Waterford's Viking Triangle tourist map



(Source: <http://discoverwaterfordcity.ie/flash/map/map100.htm>, accessed 10/12/2014)

Issue identified: The town's assets are underutilized.

Policy:

Clearly identify the town's assets: cultural, heritage, retail, social, sporting, transport, etc. Use them to attract visitors

Actions:

- a. River Suir - the town is located along the beautiful River Suir (fig. 2.8). The river needs to be highlighted and marketed as a selling point for attracting visitors to the town. Angling tourism needs to be supported by restocking the River. Encourage and develop other activities on the river for the whole family to enjoy. This could include kayaking, scenic tours, fly-fishing workshops, boatbuilding workshops, events, concerts, etc.
- b. Marina - already in place. Inject funding to make it more attractive to tourists and link with the town's "golden mile", Manor House, Butler Trail and Greenway. Improve marketing and linkages with the harbour in Waterford City. Improve use through running boat rallies and other events.
- c. The Ormond Castle - Improve signage, access and branding of the Tudor Manor House (fig. 2.9). Have more interactive days in the Castle for the whole family. Host more events, concerts, storytelling, etc. Link the castle back to the town, marina, and river.
- d. Improve relationships with the OPW.
- e. Greenway - need to complete the project and link it to the town centre and other assets.
- f. Laneways - need to develop a plan to uncover and utilise the unique forgotten laneways that connect the town's assets. The use of the lanes could be a key aspect of the 2015 Clancy Brothers Music & Arts Festival.
- g. Train Station - Unique and quirky, the station opened in 1853. It lies along the Waterford to Limerick line. The line is underutilised. No trains run on Sundays.
- h. Cycling / Sean Kelly - Sean Kelly Cycling Tour. There is a strong cycling club in Carrick-on-Suir. This should be highlighted and built upon. Investigate moving the focus of the existing tour from Dungarvan to Carrick-on-Suir www.carrickwheelers.com. A Sean Kelly exhibition should be considered.
- i. Motor Club – there is a very strong motor club, need to utilise / highlight more. Build tourism around rally events. www.carrickonsuirmotorclub.com
- j. Maurice Davin - statue unveiled in 2013. There is the opportunity to develop an annual event.
- k. Clancy Brothers - celebrated annually in June as part of the Clancy Brothers Music and Arts Festival. The festival was started in 2008. The event should be developed further.
- l. High Crosses – largely unknown, the crosses are potentially a great tourist attraction. They should be built into town's tourism portfolio.
- m. Two Theatres - Brewery Lane Theatre and the Operatic Society. While the Operatic Society tends to focus on musicals, operas and pantomimes, Brewery Lane usually does drama. Both theatre spaces are heavily utilized and supported by all forms of arts and across all age groups. Need to market / sell these assets better and link with each other and other assets. www.brewerylanetheatre.com, www.carrickmusicals.com
- n. Numerous Sports Clubs - host more events that could attract the active tourist. <http://www.seankellysportscentre.ie>, www.carrickgolfclub.com, www.castleviewlrc.ie, www.carrickswan.gaa.ie

- o. The well established Camera Club that hosts many competitions. www.carrickcameraclub.ie
- p. Military History - Town could host more military events that could attract tourists.
- q. Maritime History - Town could host more maritime history workshops/events that could attract tourists.
- r. There are strong Newfoundland connections. This is getting bigger and needs to source funding to sustain.
- s. Urban Puc Fada - Unique to Carrick on Suir, the event could be developed.
- t. The Tudor Artisan Hub showcases and promotes works of over 60 local artists. There is a need to link up with the surrounding towns - build a Suir Valley Art Trail.
- u. Drohan Fishing Tackle Shop - This is a hidden gem that needs to be uncovered. The Carrick lure should be marketed as a distinguishing aspect of the town.
- v. Local and Organic – The Farmers Market takes place every Friday from 10am-2pm outside the Heritage Centre (fig. 2.10). Fresh local produce is available. The Market is hidden away. Once the paving on Main Street has been widened the Market should be moved onto the main thoroughfare. This will animate the street and increase overall footfall.
- w. Link up with Suir Valley Foodies - Build a food trail focusing on local and organic produce.
- x. Involve young people from the start.

Fig 2.8 **The River Suir and Marina**



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Fig 2.9

Ormond Castle



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Fig 2.10

Farmers Market and Heritage Centre



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Issue identified: Lack of youth involvement/participation.

Policy:

Engage with a cross section of the youth when planning and developing tourism in the town. Getting input from our local youth is critical.

Actions:

- a. Contact Schools - Incorporate town tourism into curriculum for transition year students
- b. Contact local youth groups – This includes sporting, cultural, social and charity organisations and ask them to delegate a member to get involved with the town plans.
- c. Engage with your local CoderDojo movement to develop Apps that will engage the younger generation. The Clancy Brothers Festival collaborated with CoderDojo in the 2014 Festival, (the “Tech meets Trad” App).
- d. The HUB, Clancy Brothers Festival and local Lions Club have just funded a Youth and Arts programme and have engaged with a local fifteen year old to lead this initiative which covers all art disciplines, with backup support.

Issue identified: Businesses not pulling together adequately.

Policy:

Need to improve cohesion among businesses and local groups.

Actions:

- a. Discovery Day for locals and businesses to uncover all the Hidden Gems. The locals need to be town ambassadors.
- b. Hold monthly events whereby all business can unite for the common good.
- c. Co-advertising, discounts, and cross selling to improve cohesion amongst businesses.
- d. Put together a welcome COSBA package in the Tourist Office / Hotel with coupons / Carrick treats. We need to care for our visitors so they will want to come back and tell their friends how well they were treated on their visit here.
- e. Encourage tour groups to spend a day in Carrick-on-Suir. Outline an itinerary that includes shopping time in the town with incentives.

Issue identified: The town needs to be cleaner.

Policy:

Everyone needs to have pride in their space – Businesses, Community Groups, locals – across all age groups. It cannot just be up to the over-stretched local authority.

Actions:

- a. Re-establish Tidy Towns.
- b. Engage with all businesses, community groups / organisations, locals from across all age groups.
- c. Establish “adopt a space” program whereby business, community groups/organisations, locals adopt a space, e.g. a laneway, and are responsible for cleaning and maintaining it.

- d. Run competitions for the best maintained space.
- e. Have themed events to make it fun and quirky.
- f. Use these spaces to advertise what is happening in Carrick on Suir in creative ways.
- g. Consider making improving Carrick's aesthetic appeal a transition year project.
- h. Engage with local Scouts Club and ask if they would take a lead on a portion of this initiative.
- i. Get paint suppliers to supply materials in return they can advertise their business / services.

Issue identified: The town's geographic location. It is seen as a drive through town, peripheral to the three counties.

Policy:

Tourists don't care it is on the edge of three counties. There is a need to put a positive spin on the location of Carrick-on-Suir. Situated on the National Primary Route N24 Carrick-on-Suir is just 13 miles east from Clonmel, 17 miles northwest from Waterford, and 26.5 miles from Kilkenny. The town lies over three county lines and is conveniently connected to Limerick by road and rail. It is in close proximity to beaches and coastal tourist towns - Dungarvan, Tramore and Dunmore East. It also lies close to the Comeragh Mountains. The town is served by bus and boasts a charming railway station.

Action:

Sell Carrick on Suir as a destination spot for day trippers. Link with surrounding towns in the three counties using The Butler Trail, The East Munster Way, The Heritage Trail, Art / Crafts Trail, The Greenway, The Riverway, Food Trail, Sports Trails, Music Trail, Angling Trail, etc.

Issue identified: Local apathy.

Policy:

A lot of the public seem indifferent to what happens in their Town. There is a need to find a way to generate interest and encourage more people to get involved in "solving the town's problems"

Actions:

- a. Target more community groups across all ages. Give each group "Action" tasks to solve a current identified issue. Give them a voice and see if we can peak their interest. Reawaken their concern and get Carrick moving in the right direction.
- b. Build confidence, capacity and interest through quick and easy wins.

Likely funding: Heritage Council, County Council, Waterways Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Arts Council, Interreg, Community Enterprise.

2.3 Traffic and Parking

Mentor: David O'Connor, Planning Department, DIT

Author: Tony Musiol

Issue identified: The town has a relatively high volume of through traffic that comes into the town over the new bridge and which must proceed down Main Street and through the West Gate en-route to the N24. This makes progress through Main Street slow and little of the traffic adds business value.

Policy:

Improve traffic flow through Main Street.

Actions:

- a. Building upon work already done by Tipperary County Council, use DIT post-grad students to conduct a traffic and parking study to provide suitable solutions. Some solutions could involve simple change experiments such as single side, nose in parking on Main Street, bicycle rack space on key streets, using flower beds to modify traffic flow, and modifications to the New Street-Castle Street junction to enable coach access to Ormond Castle, etc.
- b. Widen the footpaths to create a single lane along much of Main Street. This will stop double parking. It will also help regulate the speed of cars and create a sense of order. This will result in an enhancement in pedestrian safety. Ultimately, it creates a more pleasant experience for both driver and pedestrian alike. All this can be done without losing any car spaces.
- c. Any long term plan should include a new bridge to take traffic out of the town centre.
- d. The beautiful medieval streetscape of West Gate, Bridge Street into Old Bridge and Carrickbeg is not exploitable due to some parking and traffic decisions. Seek solutions to these issues (fig. 2.11).
- e. Explain to traders that slightly less parking on Main Street may mean more business.
- f. Changing the flow of traffic on New Steet and the Old Bridge could be considered.

Issue identified: Visitors may not be know where car parks are and their charges. Seminar attendees spoke of not seeing the car park just across from the Carraig Hotel.

Policy:

Improve awareness of parking options.

Actions:

- a. Create high quality, elegant, uniform signage directing people to car parks.
- b. Investigate the installation of digital displays on approaches into the town centre containing information on the numbers of spaces in car parks and their rates. Such an action has taken place in Kilkenny.
- c. Improve visibility of J. Foran car park on Main Street.

Fig 2.11

The West Gate



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Issue identified: Parking discipline is an issue. Double parkers do not block flow but anywhere they don't block flow they double park. Poor parking practices at the west end of Main Street and at the Post Office is likely to be hindering traffic flow and hence creating congestion.

Policy: Reduce bad parking opportunities.

Action:

Widen the footpaths to create a single lane along much of Main Street. This will stop double parking.

Issue identified: There needs to be a clearer definition of when you are entering an urban space as compared to passing through. Examples included the N24 end of Kickham Street, New Street, and the Clonmel Road Roundabout.

Policy:

Create clear town entry point indicators at New Street, Clonmel Road Roundabout and Kickham Street.

Action:

A sense of arrival could be communicated by using a combination of pinch points, paving, heritage interpretation, art, planting, and signage.

Issue identified: A lack of bicycle traffic on town streets was observed during the walking tour along with a lack of secure bicycle racks. Cycling is a significant mode of transport in Wesport. It could also be in Carrick. The quality of the public realm for cycling is also a major issue if the town wishes to benefit from cycling tourism.

Policy:

Improve the environment for cycling in the town.

Actions:

- a. Ensure the Greenway project brings cyclists / walkers into centre of the town.
- b. Provide extra places to park bikes in the town centre.

Issue identified: Access to Ormond Castle needs to be improved.

Policy:

Where possible improve pedestrian and vehicular access to the Castle. This should be done to maximise the earning potential of businesses in the town. The design of any solutions should encourage castle visitors to linger in the town. Any proposed initiative must be mindful of the town's historic grain.

Actions:

- a. Enable visitors to access the Castle directly from New Street car park. Soon to be installed Butler Trail signage should help with this goal.
- b. A long term solution to entice tourist busses into town is to build a new road from Railway Bridge into the Wicklow Garden Site. This should be bus only solution. In the mean time consider improvements at the top of New Street / Castle Street.

Likely funding:

- a. Expenses to cover travel for the DIT study in 2015 from the IWTN.
- b. Some elements of the actions may be funded through Tipperary County Council plans.
- c. The actions will link closely with public realm, tourism, heritage and retail actions so common funding of projects may be possible.
- d. New bridge funding is not likely in the short to mid-term.

2.4 Using Heritage Intelligently

Mentor: Grainne Shaffrey, Shaffrey Architects

Author: Róisín O'Grady

Issue identified: There is a lack of public awareness of the town's rich streetscape and heritage. There is a need to identify what the story of Carrick-on-Suir is and how to tell it?

Policy:

Need to find effective ways of promoting Carrick-on-Suir to the community and the visitor.

Action:

- a. Local history event / project communicating the Carrick-on-Suir Story (e.g. an event focusing on Black Tom).
- b. Strengthen the character of areas like Carrickbeg and the Castle.
- c. Promote positive use of the network of lanes by ensuring in the short term they are clean. In the long term, improvements to the public realm should be considered. Any design should be high quality and respectful of the lane's heritage.
- d. Work with the OPW to get the most out of the Castle and Gardens.
- e. Recover public space on the Main Street and improve the pedestrian environment.
- f. The West Gate's potential is limited by its location. It is largely hidden. Possibilities for opening the building on special days should be considered. In Conwy, Wales, access to the town walls is controlled by a small number of key holders. All are insured by the town council. Some of the key holders also provide tours of the town. Over time, a similar scenario could be considered in Carrick-on-Suir.
- g. There is significant potential in the river and the town's industrial heritage.
- h. Future developments must be truly cognisant of the place's historic character. This includes being mindful of the historic settlement pattern and the relationship with the river.

Likely funding:

- a. Local history projects may get funding from the Heritage Office or the Heritage Council / IWTN.
- b. Event funding from the Irish Walled Towns Network.

Issue identified: There are several derelict structures in the town centre that could be used for accommodation.

Policy:

Encourage people to better use existing structures in the town centres.

Action:

There are no easy answers. One possible solution would be to allow the amalgamation of houses by creating openings between adjoining buildings.

Funding:

Heritage Council for research paper on the reuse of historic structures in town centres.

2.5 The Public Realm

Mentor: Simon Wall, Mayo County Council

Author: Rachel Cunningham

Issue identified: Poor quality and low number of public realm areas.

Policy:

Develop pedestrian friendly zones in key locations with special emphasis upon the historic commercial spine of Main Street (Carrick-on-Suir's Royal Mile).

Actions:

- a. Create four high quality public realm squares along Main Street at:
 1. Sean Kelly Square
 2. the junction of Bridge Street and Main Street
 3. between the commercial banks
 4. on the Castle Street cul-de-sac outside Ormond Castle (see figures 2.12 & 2.13).
- b. Consider opening up and developing the area around the Garda Station and the Court House.
- c. Investigate the possibility of converting Kickham Street into a pedestrian street. This was successfully done on a temporary basis during the Clancy Brothers festival on the June Bank Holiday.
- d. Investigate the possibility of transforming the medieval bridge into a pedestrian bridge which will link the two historical areas on either side of the river (see figures 2.14 & 2.15).
- e. Where possible, mark the location of the medieval wall.

Figures 2.12 & 2.13 Improvements in public realm, Westport, Co. Mayo



(Source: Simon Wall, 2014)

Fig. 2.14

Medieval Bridge looking towards Carrickbeg



(Source: Heritage Council, 2014)

Fig. 2.15

Pedestrian medieval bridge in Carcassonne, France



(Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/abberdab/5006448573/>, accessed 10/12/2014)

Issue identified: The new Greenway is flawed in that it currently terminates outside of the town centre.

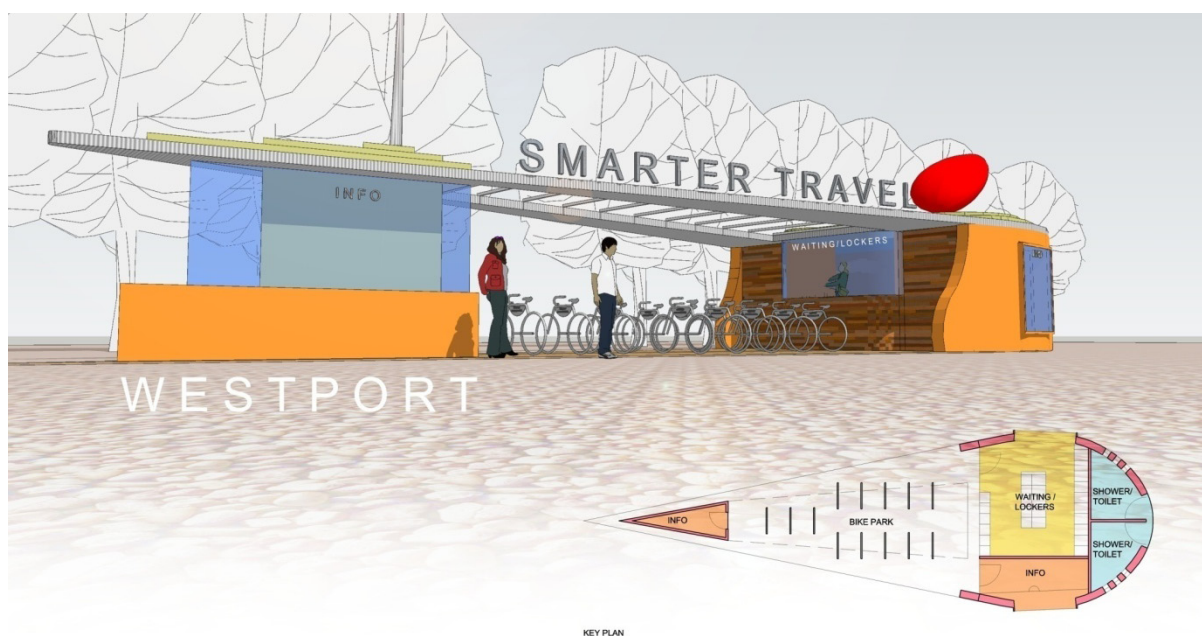
Policy:

Continue the Greenway route into the core of the town where there should be facilities provided at the terminal point.

Actions:

- a. Carry on the Greenway into the town, preferably along the river. Transform the North Quay road (Castle Lane) into a continuation of the Greenway.
- b. The Greenway and the Blueway (the River Suir) should be linked up. Services and facilities could be constructed to facilitate both cyclists and boaters.
- c. The medieval lanes which link the riverfront to the Main Street should be developed and made attractive. This would draw cyclists up towards the newly developed town squares. It would also attract people down towards the river. A nodal point could be created on Oven Lane where there is space for a bike park (see fig. 2.16).

Fig. 2.16 **Proposed Westport smarter travel pavilion with toilets, showers, lockers, bike park, and tourist information**



(Source: Simon Wall, 2014)

Issue identified: The proposed N24 junction road that would come in by the castle will not substantially improve the economy of Carrick-on-Suir. The presence of large car parks right beside the heritage destinations of the Rock of Cashel and Trim Castle has led to tourists simply visiting the attraction and immediately leaving.

Policy:

Plan an alternative route which draws visitors up through the town when visiting Ormond Castle.

Action:

A road (with suitable parking facilities and signage) should come down the west side of the town. The movement of tourists through the town would generate visitor numbers to the shops and businesses.

Issue identified: The Sheebeen building is at risk of being demolished.

Policy:

Ensure that the Sheebeen building is retained.

Action:

Seek ways to make the building safe so it is no longer at risk of demolition. Its retention is very important. Although derelict, it naturally draws the curious eye down towards the castle and leads people through the town. The easy temptation to demolish should be resisted. The buildings rehabilitation would add significantly to the quality of the street (see figures 2.17 & 2.18).

Figures 2.17 & 2.18 **Below are before and after images of the Triumphal Arch Lodge, Colebrook, Co. Fermanagh recently restored by the Irish Landmark Trust**



Source: <http://www.irishlandmark.com/property/triumphal-arch-lodge/>, accessed 10/12/2014)

3.0 Running Your Own Event Template

3.1 Introduction

The great benefit to an event such as the *Solving our own problems*, is that allows locals to have a sense of ownership in the ideas that are created. Another great result is the development of empathy between local businesses, community groups, and the local authority. Empathy leads to a greater understanding of what can be done. It also improves the connections between the various parties and thereby the capacity to develop schemes better than what each could do individually. At the Carrick-on-Suir event everyone's voice was treated equally.

The Carrick event was essentially split into Friday night lectures and the Saturday workshops with walkabout. The lectures from the five mentors educated those in attendance as to what has been done in other towns of similar size. The Saturday tour of the town and workshops was where the locals in conjunction with their mentor came up with sustainable solutions to problems in the town. This two day teach / reflect / plan approach was found to be highly effective.

Before you decide to run your own event it is important to ascertain if you should do so. Is there enough local interest from the business and community sectors? Will the local authority be supportive? It might be useful to fill out the event application form we issued to all IWTN member towns (appendix b). The process should help you figure out if running a workshop would be worthwhile.

If you do decide to run an event, great! The next thing to do is to ascribe responsibilities for the various tasks to a small team. Make sure everyone is aware of the responsibilities of each member. There should be one leader.

3.2 Timing

There is no such thing as a good time to run an event. The reason we chose Friday night and Saturday is that most people would not have to take a day off work. A second reason was that the momentum of the event would not be lost by running it across two weeks. The scheduling worked. During the Friday night lectures there were 60 attendees. For the walking tour and workshops on Saturday, roughly 30 people attended. The Friday lectures ran from 5.30pm-8.40pm. The Saturday session went from 10am-4pm.

3.3 Bookings

It was up to the local host partner (COSTEDC) to advertise the event. Invitations were issued to a large number of local groups and interested people. Posters were put up around the town and a press release was issued (appendix c). One change we would make now is to involve youth groups.

The Friday night lectures should be open to anyone who wishes to attend. For the Saturday workshops a limit of 40 participants should be kept. Numbers above this are hard to coordinate and can lead to disruptive behaviour. Booking priority should be given to relevant groups. Nonetheless, at least ten places must be kept for people not aligned with any group. This will ensure diversity of opinion. The ten places can be given out on a first come, first served basis or by lottery.

It is important that you have one point of contact for all bookings. This will ensure total control on numbers and contact details. Have one master excel sheet with names, emails, and phone numbers.

The IWTN devised the workshop's concept. For us it was important that a holistic approach be taken. Nothing stands in isolation. A town is not just one business or a single tourist attraction. It is a place where people live, work, and visit. Consequently, we booked mentors from five different areas. They were: retail, heritage, the public realm, traffic and parking, and tourism. What was interesting to see during all the presentations on Friday was how problems and solutions overlapped between the various disciplines. The IWTN booked the speakers. We went to the top and were lucky to get everyone we wanted. When planning your event, it is vital that you obtain this breadth and quality of mentor. If your event is of high quality many speakers will help for free. However, make sure that they are well taken care of. It is also essential that the speakers be given clear instructions as to what is expected of them and the nature of the event. Any relevant reports should be forwarded on. Checkout appendix d for the final detailed set of instructions issued to the mentors.

We used one venue for the whole weekend (The Carraig Hotel). With a complicated two day event, locating all lectures, workshops, and food in one place made organising the seminar significantly easier than it could have been otherwise. The hotel was also the place where the mentors stayed on Friday night.

3.4 Food

If you are asking for locals to give up their free time you better feed them! Food also helps to keep up the spirits of attendees. For the Friday lectures we had teas / coffees and scones available for everyone on arrival. There was a break half way through with teas / coffees and biscuits on offer. The food was made available in the ballroom where the event was taking place. This made it easy to bring people back to their seats for the second part of the lectures. After the event the mentors had a meal.

On Saturday each attendee was given a lunch token. Upon their return from one of the five walking tours they got their lunch and sat in the ballroom where the workshops would be happening. The workshop tables were kept separate from the lunch tables. Teas and coffees were also available.

3.5 The Event

Upon arrival there should be a registration table with name badges present. The Friday event started and ended late. Below is the schedule for the seminar on the Friday evening. It is useful to build in a time buffer that you can claw back during breaks. It is best that questions be allowed at the end of each talk. We allowed five minutes of questions after each presentation. However, if we were running over time cut back on this slightly.

5.30-5.35	Carrick-on-Suir welcome
5.35-5.45	Launch of seminar by Minister Anne Phelan
5.45-6.00	Ian Doyle (Heritage Council) – lessons from the historic towns initiative
6.00-6.25	Paddy Mathews – tourism development in historic towns
6.25-6.50	Grainne Shaffrey – using heritage intelligently for your town
6.50-7.15	Dave O'Connor – traffic and parking in a medieval town
7.15-7.30	Break
7.30-7.55	David Fitzsimons – enhancing the town centre retail experience
7.55-8.40	Simon Wall – improving the public realm

PowerPoint facilities should be available for the speakers. Make sure to test if the presentations work on the screen before people come in. Check if there is a projector and screen on site. In Carrick we had one microphone for the speakers and one roving microphone for questions. Don't forget to bring back-up batteries.

It is important that you have an excellent chairperson for the seminar. The job of timekeeping should be given to another person. In our case, simple signs with the numbers five and two were shown to each speaker telling them they had five and two minutes left respectfully.

When the lectures are finally over don't rush people out. Allow them to mingle.

At 10am on Saturday the various locals in attendance were split up into five different working groups. Each mentor led a group through Carrick, highlighting issues which they noticed during their own exploration of the town. During each of the tours the mentors debated constantly with the group as to how to resolve the identified problems. The five groups all returned back to the hotel by 12.30pm for lunch. At 1.30pm a workshop was conducted. Each group listed out the issues identified, created possible solutions, and noted the required funding (if any). A group rapporteur from the town reported on what they had discussed and the possible solutions. After each report, wider discussion and feedback came from the floor. Feedback forms were then given to every participants (see appendix e). The last act was a summation of what has happened and what can happen. The event finished at 4pm.

3.6 Budget

The cost of your event depends on your ability to get things for free and find value. Below are some indicative costs for various items:

Teas / coffees and scones: €4-5 per person

Proper lunch with tea / coffee: €10 per person

Venue hire: €150-500 per day

Mentor accommodation and expenses: €100- €200 per mentor

If you cannot procure a mentor for free, a suitably qualified person could cost between €300-500 per day.

Graphic designer: €60 per hour

Miscellaneous costs including printing, projector hire, batteries, phone calls, etc: €200

3.7 The Report

Creating a post event report is vitally important to compiling the actions. A report also allows people to track the rate of completion of those same solutions. Split into themes each section of the document should be completed by a member of the various mentor groups. It is useful if everyone follows the same template. For the Carrick-on-Suir report we decided on using the headings: issues identified, policy, and action. Your document should be edited by one individual. The initial draft must be issued for comment before finally being published. The Carrick-on-Suir report is available online and in the local library.

3.8 Follow-up

Having a great weekend and a lovely report is nothing without the commitment to follow-up on the actions. Implementation should not be left to the Council. It is the responsibility of the town as a whole to make things happen. Accordingly, the creation of a town team made up of the private, public and community sectors is essential to the realisation of the document's actions. Regular follow-up meetings must be held. Minutes should be kept and responsibilities ascribed. A review of the level of implementation should occur one year after the event was held.

3.9 The Carrick-on-Suir Lectures

All the lectures from the Carrick-on-Suir event were recorded. They are available to watch on the Heritage Council's YouTube channel. Besides being highly educational, they should give you an idea to the calibre of mentor you need to book. The website address is below:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIKz_D-MJSUn9SXAU4J2x7axsX-ZucJJB

Appendix A

Additional Tourism Information

Author: Linda Fahy

Core Assets - Ormond Castle, (Tudor Manor House) , Butler Trail, River Suir, 2 renowned Theatres, Heritage Centre, Clock Tower, Farmers Market, Newfoundland Connection, Angling, Boating, Marina, Sports (Sean Kelly, Maurice Davin), Music (Clancy Brothers), Greenway, Riverway, Mountains - Comeragh & Slieve na mBan, Heritage Walled Town, Old Bridge,

Hidden Gems – Fly fishing Shop, Laneways, The Tudor Artisan Hub, Spudballs, O’Ceallachains, Golf Clubs, Maritime History, The Munster Way

Places to Visit/Things to do in and around Carrick on Suir

- Ormond Castle - 14th century residence of the Butlers of Ormond
- Heritage Centre - 13th century Church Site off Main Street
- West Gate - Early defensive gate at Town Walls
- Town Clock Tower - (1794)
- Old Bridge - (Mid 15th century) 1799 River disaster
- St. Mollerans Church - 14th century early Franciscan Abbey
- St. Nicholas Church - Church site since 18th century
- Town Hall - Administrative Centre
- Dillon Bridge - 19th century
- Oven Lane - Off Main Street (15th century)
- River Suir Quayside - Marina
- Fair Green Commonage - 13th century
- Town Park - Early 19th century
- Clairin Well - Early 16th century water source
- River Suir - Walking town path route
- Coolnamuck Road - 13th century townsland
- Reilig na Muc - 13th century Graveyard
- Brewery Lane Theatre - Castle Street
- Glen River - Wildlife & Aviary Wetland site
- Villa Terrace - Malcolmsons Houses, St. Johns Road
- Bother Bui - Yellow Road – old route to Waterford via Kilmeaden.
- The Dove Hill Design Centre
- Ahenny High Crosses - 10 km
- Kilkieran High Crosses - 6 km
- Curraghmore House & Shell House - 12 km (by appointment)
- Tybroughney Castle - 5 km (by appointment)
- Ballyneale Castle - 5 km (by appointment)
- Churchtown Graveyard - 6 km (Burial Site of Maurice Davin, 1st President of the G.A.A.)
- Mothel Holy Well - 4 km (Ancient Religious Site)
- Ink Bottle House - 4 km
- Teagasc Kildalton Agri College - 5 km (Formerly Bessborough Estate)

- Knockroe Tombs - 13 km (Ancient Burial Site, approx 5,000 years old)
- Harristown Dolmen - 13 km
- Rathgormack Castle - 12 km
- Clonea Castle - 12 km
- Wall's Castle, Coolnamuck - 3 km
- Victoria Slate Quarries - 10 km
- Waterford & Suir Valley railway station

Sports/Culture/Workshops etc, Carrick on Suir

- Cycling
- Sports Centre
- Swimming
- Golf
- G. A. A.
- Soccer
- Rugby
- Community Games
- Athletics
- Tennis
- Handball & Racquet Ball Club
- Davin Park Indoor Courts
- Walking
- Horse-Riding
- Boxing
- Angling Club
- Motor Club
- Gun Club
- 88 Bridge Club
- Shotokan Karate Club
- Taekwondo School
- Zumba Fitness Studio
- Musical Society
- Brewery Lane Theatre & Arts Centre
- Carrick Camera Club
- Poetry Nights
- Creative Writing Workshops
- Art Galleries
- Art Classes
- Folk Music Sessions
- Trad School of Music
- Tearoom Music Sessions
- Film Club
- Art Studio
- Traditional Crafts
- Knitting Workshops
- Dark Room

- Drama Workshops
- Music Academy
- Irish Dancing
- Ballet
- Folk Choirs
- Brass Bands
- Carrick-on-Suir Active Retirement Club
- The Carers Association
- Sacred Dance:
- Folk Group/Choir
- Bunny Hop
- South Tipperary VEC Adult Learning Scheme
- Basic Adult Education
- Art Workshops
- Art (Watercolours)
- Basic Irish
- Basic Polish
- Bridge Classes
- Weight Watchers
- Unislim
- Yoga
- Pilates
- First Aid Courses
- Cardiac First Response (Defibrillator)
- Civil Defence
- Health Promotion Events and Courses
- Manual Handling
- Sign Language
- STAGES (South Tipperary Adult Guidance in Education Service)

Appendix B



Solving our own problems: a weekend of generating ideas Town Application Form

Introduction

The IWTN has committed to arranging a two day town specific health check seminar. The concept is that five experts / mentors in various areas (heritage tourism, public realm, architecture / planning, retail, roads and parking) will help the people of a historic town come up with ideas to help tackle their place's problems.

On the evening of day one (possibly Friday) there would be a seminar where each expert would speak for 30-40 minutes on best practice examples in places similar to the town. This event will be open to all, including representatives from other IWTN towns.

During the next morning a cross section group of 30-40 locals would conduct walking tours of the town centre with the five mentors. It is expected that the chosen town will have ensured the active participation of as many key decision makers as possible for both days. Possible participants include representatives from the chamber of commerce, tourism group, heritage group, tidy towns, local councillors, local authority planners, and heads of council services. During the walk issues will be highlighted. After the tours there will be workshops during which the people from the town would have to come up with the ideas. The mentors' role at this stage is merely to help craft the initiatives. After the weekend a report on the seminar will be completed and issued to the council. A list of actions will also be created.

The IWTN will be providing funding towards the cost of the mentors. We will also provide project management services. The town that will get the seminar is the place that the selection committee think will best use the opportunity. The event will take place towards the end of October / start of November.

Towns are invited to apply for support in running the seminar / workshop. The closing date for receipt of the application form is 12 noon July 9th. The filled out form, along with any letters of support, should be sent to Liam Mannix, Project Manager Irish Walled Towns Network at lmannix@heritagecouncil.ie. Applicants will receive e-mail confirmation once the application has been received.

The winning town will be selected by the IWTN Management Committee. Should there be an application from a town from the same county as an ordinary town committee member, that member will be omitted from the selection process. Applicants will receive notification via email of the result by July 17th.

Name of town

Contact person

Name	
Position	
Organisation	
Address	
E-mail	
Telephone	

Why should your town host the seminar / workshop? (max 400 words)

What would be its legacy? (max 200 words)

Which key decision makers and groups have committed to attend both days?

What role could the key decision makers in attendance have in implementing the ideas generated (max 200 words)?

What resources is your town willing to provide to the seminar / workshop (venue, catering, etc)?

How would your town add value to the seminar / workshop? (max 200 words)

Please list any letters of support / intent from key decision makers (the letters should be attached to the application email):

Appendix C

Event Poster

Solving our own problems!

A two day workshop identifying

Carrick-on-Suir's

issues and coming up with solutions

We want you to get involved!



Friday **7th November** - Information seminar 5.30pm - 9pm

Saturday **8th November** - Workshops 10am - 4pm

Venue - The Carraig Hotel

Five mentors will help the people of Carrick-on-Suir come up with sustainable answers to the towns social and economic challenges.

David Fitzsimons CEO, Retail Excellence Ireland – enhancing the town centre retail experience
Simon Wall Westport Town Architect – improving the public realm
Dave O'Connor Planning Lecturer, DIT – parking and traffic management
Paddy Mathews Destination Development Manager, Fáilte Ireland – tourism development
Grainne Shaffrey Director, Shaffrey Associates Architects – using heritage intelligently



Appendix D

Final Instructions To The Mentors

Below is the planned schedule for the seminar on Friday evening in the Carraig Hotel. Please note that the talks by Paddy, Grainne and the two Davids are scheduled to be 20mins long. Each will be immediately followed by five minutes of questions. Simon's presentation is 45min. PowerPoint facilities will be available.

5.30-5.35	Carrick on Suir welcome
5.35-5.45	Launch of seminar by Minister Anne Phelan
5.45-6.00	Ian Doyle (Heritage Council)– lessons from the historic towns initiative
6.00-6.25	Paddy Mathews –tourism development in historic towns
6.25-6.50	Grainne Shaffrey – using heritage intelligently for your town
6.50-7.15	Dave O'Connor – traffic and parking in a medieval town
7.15-7.30	Break
7.30-7.55	David Fitzsimons – enhancing the town centre retail experience
7.55-8.40	Simon Wall – improving the public realm

At 10am on Saturday the various locals in attendance will be split up into five different working groups at the Carraig Hotel. Each mentor will have a group. The mentors will then lead their respective group through Carrick, highlighting issues which they have noticed during their own exploration of the town. The mentor will debate constantly with the group as to how to resolve the identified problems. Conversation with the group is essential. The five groups are to return back to the hotel by 12.30 for lunch. At 1.30 a series of workshops will be conducted. Each group will list out the issues identified, create possible solutions, and note the required funding (if any). Where necessary, funding sources for the various ideas are to be identified. A group rapporteur from the town should then report on what they had discussed and the possible solutions. After each report, wider discussion and feedback should then be allowed from the floor. After the final presentation of ideas/results a general discussion will occur. The last act will be a summation of what has happened and what can happen. The event will be over by 4pm at the latest.

I would encourage everyone to explore the town before the event begins at 5.30pm on Friday. This will help you plan your walking tours and improve the quality of your talks. If you wish, I can have someone with you to guide your group around Carrick-on-Suir during the Saturday walking tours.

Appendix E

Participant Review

Please take one minute to tell us about your experience of this course. Your feedback is valued and will be used to enhance future workshops.

1. The overall quality of the talks on Friday night was ...

Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Bad	Very bad

2. To what level to you agree or disagree with the following statement: over the two days there was plenty of opportunity to engage with the speakers and ask questions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. To what level to you agree or disagree with the following statement: the event was well run.

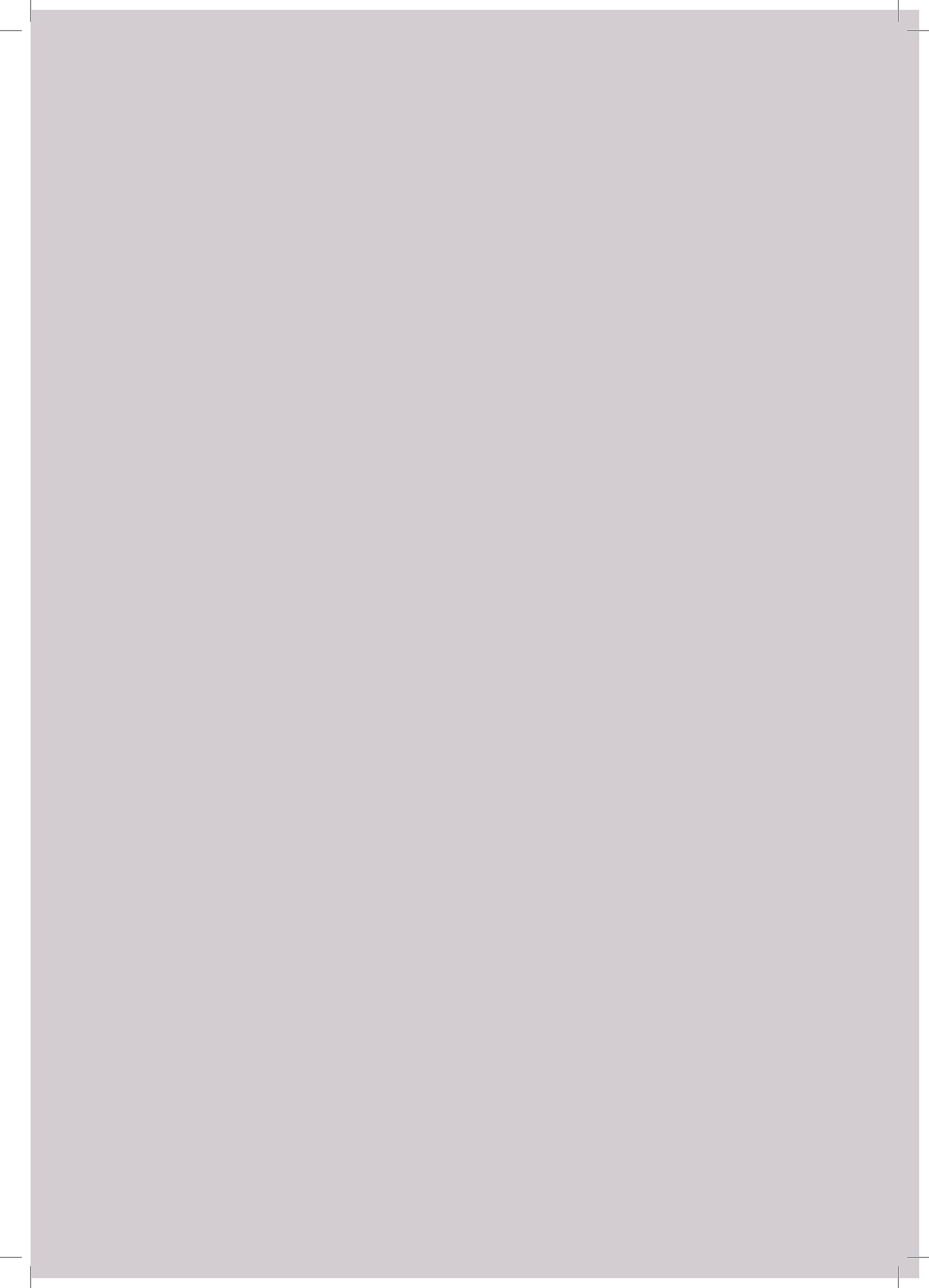
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. To what level to you agree or disagree with the following statement: I got a lot out of the weekend workshop.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Have you any comments for us? For example, on the delivery or content of the workshop.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this review form. Have a safe journey home!





COSTEDC
Working for Carrick-on-Suir

