



LEADER in Wexford



LEADER - '*Liason Entre Actions pour le Développement d'Economie Rurale*' is a Rural Development Programme part-

funded by the European Union. LEADER was launched in 1991 by the then Commissioner for Agriculture, Ray MacSharry. LEADER funding is administered by local companies also known as Local Action Groups (LAGs) who distribute grants and other supports to projects within their areas.

The approach and success of LEADER in Ireland has been presented internationally as a model of good practice and the Irish LAGs are at the forefront of an EU-wide LEADER movement constituting over 2000 groups in 27 member states. LEADER has made a significant

contribution to the development of rural areas throughout Europe since 1991 by providing supports to community groups and innovative small local businesses.

Wexford Local Development (WLD) and our predecessor organisation the Wexford Organisation for Rural Development (WORD) have successfully supported Wexford communities and small businesses under the LEADER programme since 1991.

We have built a track record of working with local community leaders and businesses to assess their needs and to provide supports to help them prosper.

Under the most recent LEADER programme, which has been operational since 2009, we have awarded €9 million in grant aid throughout Co. Wexford. We have worked with local communities and businesses to ensure that this grant aid has been delivered to projects which will provide real benefit to rural Wexford. This grant aid has greatly improved the facilities available to local communities and has created hundreds of sustainable jobs in all parts of Co. Wexford.

Developing a “Wexford Brand”

WLD believes that Wexford is one of the most unique locations in Ireland. Very few other places can match the range of activities and amenities Wexford can offer to visitors and to locals and we want to tell the world about this uniqueness which makes Wexford so special. We have worked with our tourism partners, such as Fáilte Ireland and Visit Wexford, to develop an identity and brand for the Wexford Trails. This new brand will give a common identity to each of the Wexford trails and will represent what we think makes Wexford



great. WLD hope that the Wexford Trails brand will become one of the most recognisable Irish tourism identities in the coming years.

Supporting Job Creation in Wexford

Technology

Innovate Business Technology Ltd is a vibrant, innovative and driven business, owned by Jim Hughes and Enda Cahill and based at Knockmullen Business Park in Gorey.



Established in 2005, the business delivers high end IT consultancy and associated management services to a range of clients from Wexford and beyond.

Innovate Business Technology Ltd developed its Cloud Computing Platform in 2011 through a commitment to continued high investment in research & development. This platform changes the landscape for the delivery of IT services to SME's. It delivers cost savings and stability to its clients, resulting in them being more competitive and more focused on their core activities. The company's business model is based on its ownership of I.T. equipment at the user site and charging a monthly recurring rental for the assets, services, monitoring and management of the I.T. infrastructure.

WLD have provided grant aid of €180,000 under the LEADER programme towards the costs of a range of equipment for the user site, data centre and network operating centre. The services delivered by Innovate Business Technology as a result of this support are already giving significant cost savings to several local businesses in Wexford and throughout Ireland. These savings enable the wider SME community to be more competitive. WLD is delighted to have played a key role in the development of this niche business which is now supporting sixteen sustainable jobs in Gorey.



Scurri.com is an innovative internet company and website based in Duncannon. Scurri.com was founded on a simple idea – online sellers need an inexpensive and reliable way to link with transport providers.

Scurri Web Services Ltd., the Duncannon company behind Scurri.com, approached Wexford Local Development with their idea. They had undertaken market research, completed a business plan and knew they had a business idea that would work. They asked us if we would be willing to support their venture. We looked at their proposals and felt that this was a unique idea which had the potential to bring employment to Duncannon. We worked with Scurri Web Services and provided them grant aid to purchase office and IT equipment and to develop their website. Scurri.com was launched in November 2010 with the support of Wexford Local Development and is now one of the success stories of the Wexford IT industry. Since its launch Scurri.com has grown quickly. Scurri surpassed their employment projections and now employs 11 people.

They opened an office in London in 2012 and have big plans for expansion into the USA in 2014. Wexford Local Development are proud to have supported Scurri.com in its early days and are delighted to see a company like this based in rural Wexford.

Food



Ten years ago Malcolm & Fiona Falconer left their home in South London and bought a small holding of four acres in Monamolin, Co Wexford. They built an eco-friendly house and planted a large traditional vegetable garden and forage forest on the land. As a huge array of plants matured within a few years, Wild About Food Ltd was born with the ethos of “providing quality, seasonal, local products, ecologically grown at an affordable price”. Their range of preserves, pestos, salad dressings and snacks are seasonally driven, going from garden to jar to stall. When the harvest is gone, they move onto the next product in the seasonal cycle.

Wild About Food Ltd are conscious of brand identity and have developed a bright and vibrant colour scheme across the product range which works well in both display and multi-packaging, drawing the customer to the product.

Wexford Local Development is delighted to have been able to support this innovative new business with grant aid towards capital and marketing costs which has helped to develop Wild About Food as a premium artisan brand.



Kavanagh Meats is based in Enniscorthy and has serviced the local meat and agricultural sectors since the 1970's.

The company were acutely aware in recent years that the lack of their own slaughtering facility was inhibiting their overall profitability and marketability. They required significant investment to upgrade a previous slaughter facility to EU approved standards in order to recommence slaughtering. With the support of WLD the proposed works were agreed and grant aid of almost €150,000 was approved under the LEADER programme for the upgrading a new slaughtering, cooling and freezing facility.

The works were completed by specialised local contractors and slaughtering of cattle and sheep recommenced in November 2013. This has help the company secure their existing twenty six jobs and has already resulted in the recruitment of six additional staff.

This investment by WLD ensures that Kavanagh Meats will remain in this market and continue to pay a competitive price to local farmer producers. The return of the provision of a home freezer service to farmers to kill their own cattle and sheep for their own personal use is also an important step for Kavanagh Meats and for local farmers. The company can now also provide customers with fully integrated traceability from farm to table. This is all as a result of their successful application to WLD for LEADER funding.

Crafts

Robert O'Connor from Gorey produced high quality kitchens and cabinets for more than twenty years. The downturn in the economy in recent years was instrumental in Robert's decision to

Robert O'Connor

The Woodturning Studio

explore alternative income streams. His skills and expertise in wood turning and his desire to share these skills with others led him to

opening a woodturning studio and developing a series of wood turning classes at his premises on the Arklow Road in Gorey with the support of LEADER grant aid from WLD towards capital and marketing costs.

Robert now offers individual and group woodturning classes to people of all abilities. This teaching role allows Robert to pass on his unique talents to his students who include retired and unemployed people who wish to develop a new skill. The availability of individual tuition in the unique skill of woodturning is benefitting a range of people in the wider community. The new business is also a welcome addition to the facilities available in Gorey town.

Robert now works full time in the business while his wife Mary works on a part-time basis. Mary participated in the recent Wexford Local Development Craft Training programme and sees the development of the WLD Craft Trail of huge importance to their Woodturning Studio.



Simone Walsh

is a graduate of the College of Art & Design in Dublin. She is a visual artist who has developed her own unique style which captures the vibrancy and transparency of colour. Simone first came to national prominence in 1995 when two of her art campaigns, “Green Island” and “Naturally Guinness” were used in national advertising promotions.

Her paintings are colourful, fun and eye-catching. She offers a new way of looking at scenes that are familiar to all us, from familiar landscapes to Irish kitchens. Simone now works from a studio near Bridgetown and creates hugely popular prints of her original paintings.

In 2012 Simone contacted Wexford Local Development to enquire about supports which could be available to help develop her artistic business. Wexford Local Development are very supportive of the local art and crafts sectors and we were happy to assist Simone's work. We provided grant aid under the LEADER programme to develop a new e-commerce store www.SimoneWalsh.net to help promote and sell Simone's wonderful creations as well helping her to purchase a range of computer and printing equipment which will increase the range and quality of artistic prints she can sell.

Wexford Local Development are proud to support innovative artists like Simone Walsh and to help develop and promote Wexford's crafts sector.

Manufacturing

Pure Oil Ltd is an on farm business which was established in 2010. The company has grown quickly to become the leading players in the cooking oil market in Ireland. Pure Oil collects used cooking oil from the hospitality sector, recycles it and sells it back to customers.

Pure Oil operates from a new manufacturing and distribution facility in Barntown which was built with the assistance of grant aid from Wexford Local Development in 2013. This facility has allowed the company to grow at a rapid but sustainable pace and this start-up enterprise now employs 9 workers.

This company is an example of one of the many businesses based on family farms which WLD has been able to assist under the current LEADER programme. We are committed to supporting small, local enterprises throughout Co. Wexford as a means of creating jobs and driving economic growth in our county.



Slaney Precision Ltd is a small precision engineering business located near Ballycarney, Enniscorthy. The company currently has five employees and produces various machined precision components for a range of hydraulic related manufacturing companies in Ireland.

In 2012 Slaney Precision saw significant opportunities for growth by being able to produce more complex parts than were then produced in Ireland and at lower cycle times than the company's then machinery can deliver. Following considerable research, the company identified a specialised CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) machine which would greatly increase their capabilities.

Wexford Local Development could see the job creation potential of this machine, the first of its type in Ireland, and awarded grant aid of €150,000 towards its purchase. The new machine allows more detailed and cost effective work to be completed, giving the company a significant advantage in both quality and service. The new investment gives the company the opportunity to complete orders for work that is currently being outsourced to Asia & Eastern Europe and that no other operator in Ireland is currently offering.

This investment opportunity is viewed by Slaney precision as a significant development for the company which plans to create 3 new jobs over the coming year. WLD are happy to support this niche business become a larger and more successful company with increased employee numbers.

Developing Tourism in Co. Wexford

Wexford Local Development and the LEADER programme have been strong supporters of the tourism sector in Co. Wexford for over 20 years. We have supported many exciting new tourism businesses and our grant aid and training supports have allowed them to become successful and sustainable.

Cowhouse Studios

Rathnure native Rosie O’Gorman and her husband Frank Abruzzese are trained artists. They wanted to develop a visual arts centre which would allow young overseas students to take inspiration from the Irish countryside. Rosie and Frank founded Cow House Studios in 2008 and named it after its location on Rosie’s family farm – a converted cow house!



Cow House Studios offer painting, drawing and photography classes in a residential setting for 15-18 year old students from all over the world. They successfully developed a Summer programme which attracts artistic teenagers who wish to improve their skills and experience a new country.

Cow House Studios approached Wexford Local Development and told us of their plans for the business. We could see that this was a successful rural business with great potential and we were delighted to provide them with grant aid. Our first grant to them was for underfloor heating and a subsequent grants provided funding for marketing support, equipment and expanded studio facilities.

Hooked Kite Surfing

Kitesurfing is one of the most exciting and fastest growing water sports in the world. A kitesurfer holds onto a large kite and uses the power of the wind to pull them along the

water on a small surfboard. Wexford’s long coastline and the prevailing winds makes it one of the best spots in Ireland for kitesurfing.

Niall Roche is a native of Duncannon and has over 10 years experience kite surfing. Niall established Hooked Kite Surfing as a training school for kite surfers in Duncannon in 2011 and since then it has become one of the most successful kite surfing centres in Ireland. Hooked Kite Surfing also organise the annual Wexford Kitesurfing Festival which sees hundreds of participants and spectators visiting Duncannon every August.

Niall took part in a tourism training course organised by Wexford Local Development when he was starting his new business venture and then successfully applied to WLD for a grant to help set up the business. We provided grant aid to allow Hooked Kite Surfing to buy equipment, develop their website and to build Ireland’s first purpose built kitesurfing centre which is located on Duncannon beach. Wexford Local Development are proud to support this innovative local business which is attracting visitors to Duncannon from all parts of Ireland and beyond.

Wells House & Castle Archers

Wells House is a substantial tudor-gothic country house, built in the 1830’s and located between Wexford and Gorey. Wells House has a magnificent terrace garden and is surrounded by 100 acres of woodlands.

Uli and Sabine Rosler, the owners of Wells House & Gardens recognised that their property had enormous potential for development as a tourist attraction and they approached Wexford Local Development for support. We were able to provide grant aid to allow them to undertake a feasibility study to examine the opportunities to develop a strong tourism business in Wells House & Gardens.

Based on the recommendations of the feasibility study, Wexford Local Development approved a further grant aid application for capital funding to allow Wells House & Gardens to open to the public. Wells House & Gardens have now developed a new visitor attraction, restored the gardens to their original splendour, redeveloped the 1.2 km “Lady Frances Woodland Walk”, installed a new interactive children’s playground and developed a tour of the fabulous Wells House building.

Wells House & Gardens opened to the public in July 2012 and has proven to be an outstanding success, attracting visitors from far and wide and providing employment for a number of local people. Wells House & Gardens is a wonderful visitor experience suitable for all the family.



Another business supported by Wexford Local Development and located on the grounds of Wells House is Castle Archers. Castle Archers have developed the first 3D archery range in Ireland and offer beginners a fun day out, taking part in this family-friendly activity. Wexford Local Development provided Castle Archers with grant aid to purchase their equipment and develop a website.

Wexford Local Development are proud to support the development of new tourism businesses like Wells House & Gardens and Castle Archers.

Kennedy Summer School

The third annual Kennedy Summer School takes place in New Ross in September 2014. This event has now grown to become one of the most popular in the diary of anyone with an interest in the history and politics of Ireland and America. The occasion brings international publicity to New Ross every September.

Wexford Local Development supported the first Kennedy Summer School and provided financial support to allow the first years events to take place. We appreciated that this was a pioneering idea which would quickly gain recognition and become sustainable if the right supports were provided in the first year. We offered the organisers of the Kennedy Summer School grant aid of €19,000 to help them organise and market the first year’s activities. The success of that first Kennedy Summer School is confirmed by the succession of top Irish and American politicians and historians who now make the trip to New Ross each September.

Wexford Local Development has supported communities and small local businesses in all corners of Co. Wexford under the current LEADER programme. These maps show the locations of businesses (above right) and communities (below right) who have received grant aid from us since 2009.



Community Enterprise/ Kilmuckridge Memorial Hall

The Kilmuckridge Memorial Hall (KMH) was built in 1953 by voluntary labour and voluntary funds. The building had fallen into disrepair over the years and required considerable upgrading. In 2009 a development plan was drawn up and later that year Phase 1 of the development works, including upgrading the hall roof and enhancement works to the toilets and kitchen facilities, were carried out with the support of grant aid of over €80,000.00 from Wexford Local Development. The completion of Phase 1 brought new life to the KMH. In 2010 Wexford Local Development provided a further €117,000 in LEADER grant aid to allow Phase 2 of the development works for a community enterprise centre including a public café; a public internet access station and a new foyer and entrance to the existing auditorium, a multi-functional space to be utilised as training and meeting rooms and designated spaces for business incubation for new local businesses.

This development has encouraged and provided supports to both the community and enterprise sectors of North Wexford. It has lead to an increase in service provision, provided employment opportunities and has

assisted with building a stronger sustainable community overall. Kate's Coffee Shop which operates daily from the new facility has also gained a popular reputation in the local community.

Wexford Local Development are proud to have provided almost €200,000 in grant aid to support the development of this community enterprise facility.



Before



After

€190,000 For New Training Centre in Taghmon

Taghmon has always been a priority work area for Wexford Local Development. We have worked closely with many agencies and local groups to develop strategies which will help to improve the lives of local residents.

One of the local groups we work with in the Taghmon area is Taghmon Action Group and we have developed a strong relationship with them over many years. In 2005 we awarded this group grant aid to undertake a development study for land which had been donated to them in the centre of the village. The study which we grant aided brought forward many exciting proposals to improve access to social facilities in Taghmon. Many of these proposals have now come to fruition in the "Meitheal Munna" complex of buildings, which are now at the heart of community activities in Taghmon.

One of the central recommendations of the WLD funded study was the construction of a purpose built community training and education centre to offer training opportunities to local people within their own community. Wexford Local Development strongly supports this initiative and we have awarded grant aid of over €190,000 to help build and furnish this training and education facility.

This building is now one of the finest community facilities in Ireland. It will be of huge benefit to residents of the Taghmon area for many years to come.

WLD have supported many villages throughout Co. Wexford to develop outdoor facilities for their local community. Pictured here are Pat Rath, Chairman of Wexford Local Development and Ben Doyle, Newbawn Field Development Committee, inspecting the new WLD funded walking track in Newbawn village.



Askamore Muintir na Tire Community Council

Wexford Local Development realises the importance of maintaining vibrant rural communities and we have supported communities throughout the county. One good example is the community of Askamore, in North Wexford, close to the Wicklow and Carlow county boundaries where we have provided almost €200,000 in grant aid under the current LEADER programme to help develop a range of facilities which focus on improving quality of life and generating economic activity in the area.

The community hall refurbishment project was carried out in 2010 and was quickly followed by the establishment of a community based ICT training facility. In 2012, the group received grant aid for a professional study to develop a five year plan of projects and activities to strengthen the already positive sense of community in the area.

In the first of the follow up projects the group received Village Renewal funding to transform a disused parish field into a magnificent community park with facilities to attract and entertain all age groups. Today, this unique park acts as a focal point and meeting place in the village. View all that this community has achieved with support from WLD on www.askamore.com

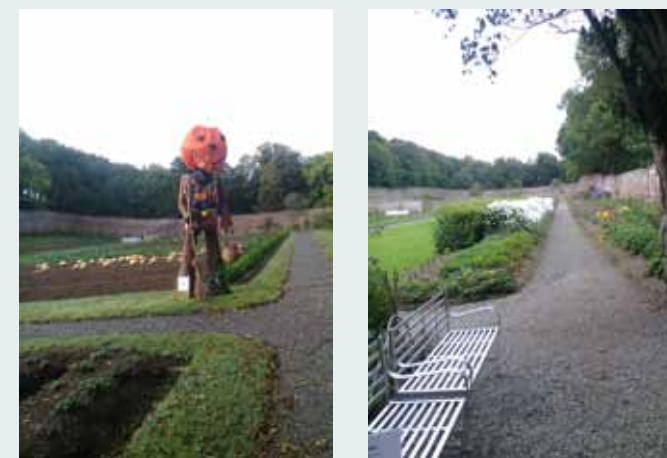
WLD Supporting Rural Communities

Wexford Local Development provides ongoing support for many communities under the LEADER programme and these communities see us as a valuable partner in developing facilities and activities in their local area. The majority of communities we have supported apply to us for a series of development grants over years and are constantly planning their activities years in advance.

Fethard on Sea is an example of a community we have strongly supported over many years and we have worked in partnership with many different organisations in this active coastal community. Some of the recent supports we have provided to different community organisations in Fethard on Sea include:

St. Mary's Community Centre is at the heart of community life in Fethard on Sea. We have provided a number of grants in recent years to help upgrade this fine facility. WLD provided a grant of €40,000 to upgrade toilet facilities and provide wheelchair accessible toilets and we provided a subsequent grant of almost €80,000 for large scale refurbishment works in 2013. These works have greatly improved this local community centre.

Fethard Community Development Association were given a derelict field in the middle of Fethard village. They saw huge potential in this field and approached Wexford Local Development asking for our support. We were happy to work with the local community to develop this field and offered them two separate grants totalling approx. €88,000. The local community used this grant aid to turn this overgrown and derelict site into a modern community field which is in constant use by locals and visitors. The community field is now a beautifully developed area with car parking, picnic facilities and a walking track.



The Colclough family built a beautiful walled garden in the grounds of Tintern Abbey over 200 years ago. The walled garden fell into decline after the Colclough family left Tintern and was derelict up to recent years.

The local voluntary tourism committee, Hook Tourism, obtained a licence from Coillte to take over the management and redevelopment of the walled gardens. They developed detailed plans for the restoration of the walled gardens and hoped to return it to its original layout as detailed on maps from 1838. The committee approached Wexford Local Development and we were pleased to offer them grant aid to restore these grounds to their former glory. A team of volunteers started work on this overgrown site in 2010 and two years later the Colclough Walled Gardens opened to the public. The 2 acre walled garden is now one of the finest restored gardens in the South East and has become an extremely popular tourist amenity.

For the past number of years the management committee responsible for St. Mary's Community Centre have organised a wide variety of training courses in the community centre each winter. These training courses are designed to be of interest to local people who may be out of work or retired and encourage them to engage with other members of the local community. Wexford Local Development has provided grant aid to allow these training courses to take place because we recognise the importance of providing opportunities to people in their local areas.

Hook Tourism is a local tourism marketing group which aims to market the Hook Peninsula as a holiday destination. It has been in operation for over 40 years and is one of the most successful groups of its type in the country. The voluntary board of Hook Tourism is comprised of local people who see that tourism can benefit everyone on the Hook Peninsula. Wexford Local Development recently offered Hook Tourism a grant to help update their marketing activities. This grant will provide extra facilities for the local tourist office, update the group's website and brochures and allow them to produce a promotional video of their beautiful locality. WLD looks forward to continuing our excellent working relationship with local groups such as Hook Tourism.

Developing The “Wexford Trails”

One of the most important pieces of work undertaken by Wexford Local Development under the most recent LEADER programme was the development of the Wexford Tourist Trails.

The concept behind the Wexford Trails is very simple - bring a group of tourism attractions with a common theme together, get them to work on joint marketing initiatives and then sell Wexford as a visitor destination for people with an interest in those attractions.

The first visitor trail we developed was the Wexford Garden Trail. Wexford has some of the most beautiful gardens in Ireland but in many cases they were “Secret Gardens”, unknown to the vast majority of visitors to the county. We brought together a group of garden owners and organised a specialist training course for them covering all aspects of managing and marketing a garden as a tourist attraction. We then encouraged them to work as a group to develop a proposal to market all of their gardens together and to sell Wexford as a destination for garden enthusiasts. The group came together as the Wexford Garden Trail. They developed their proposals in conjunction with WLD and we provided them with the grant aid to launch the Garden Trail. The Wexford Garden Trail has been hugely successful and has brought a new appreciation and knowledge of Wexford’s magnificent gardens.

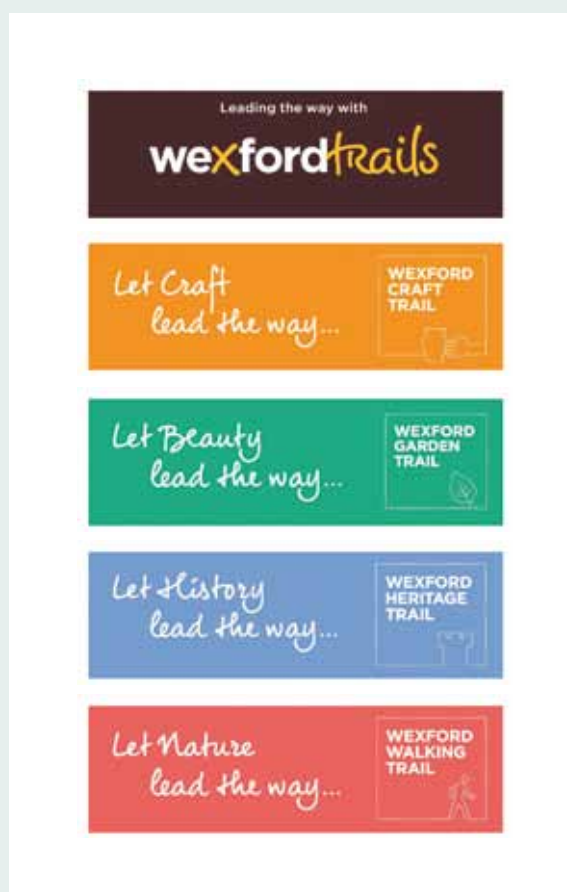
Our next venture was to highlight Wexford’s many heritage attractions. We worked with the owners and managers of local heritage attractions for several months to develop proposals to market Wexford as the heritage county. The Wexford Heritage Trail now promotes 32 unique attractions of built and natural heritage. This trail encourages everyone with an interest in heritage to visit Wexford and to experience as many of our heritage attractions as possible.

We have recently launched the Wexford Craft Trail. This tourist trail highlights the best that Wexford’s craft sector has to offer and showcases crafts in a diverse field such as jewellery, wood, rugs and pottery. The craft sector is one of huge importance in Ireland’s tourism industry and this is WLD’s opportunity to support and promote Wexford crafts.



Wexford Local Development has many plans to develop further tourism trails in Co. Wexford. In the coming months and years we hope to launch a trail for everyone interested in walking which will promote our inland, mountain and coastal walking routes; a tourist trail focusing on adventure activities in Co. Wexford, a food trail and a number of other trails which we are very excited about.

The success of the Wexford Trails launched to date is as a result of the collaborative focus of Wexford Local Development in bringing many diverse groups and bodies together and working for a common goal.



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