

Introduction

As a lifelong resident of Castleconnell, I present my proposals for consideration. These proposals are practical for the most part, however some in my opinion are critical to the long-term success of Castleconnell as a place for all where community, tourism, local employment, inward investment, nature and bio-diversity thrive together.

1. Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities

To ease congestion and improve the safety for both pedestrians and motorists, consideration should be given to a one-way traffic system around the village's three main streets

- New St
- Castle Street
- Main Street

2. Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities

To ease congestion and improve the safety for both pedestrians and motorists, consideration should be given to the current street parking setup, by limiting parking to one side of the village's two main streets.

- New St
- Main Street

3. Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities

The existing walking route through Castlerock which links the Village to Belmont Road would benefit from upgrades to the surface, during periods of wet weather, the trails become muddy, with significant amounts of standing water.

4. Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities

Belmont Hill has a significant issue with speeding vehicles and a significant blind spot at the top of Belmont Hill. This is a real hazard for both pedestrians and motorist. Several near miss collisions between vehicles have been reported to local representatives and to the council in 2021 and 2022. In February 2022 a collision was narrowly avoided due to the quick reactions of a driver, which resulted in a car crashing into the front garden of a house in order to avoid T boning another vehicle.

Consideration needs to be given for the introduction of speed ramps, flashing amber lights and a zebra crossing at the top of the blind spot at Belmont Road 52°42'17.0"N 8°29'48.3"W.

5. Community, Amenity and Recreation

At a minimum maintain and also further develop green corridors for the safe movements of wildlife around our community. A huge opportunity to establish new areas for the planting of native tree species and replanting of native tree species that we lost to storms and housing development over the last few decades. Rewilding portions of expansive green mono culture (mown lawns areas) with varieties of trees, hedges, wild flowers etc that are beneficial to our native wildlife, pollinators and insects. Castleconnell is lucky to still have the chance to do this, some towns and villages around the

country have all but wiped out their local wildlife from over development without giving consideration for the impact felt the wildlife, who's habitats were taken as a result of development.

6. Community, Amenity and Recreation

A formal policy should be considered by the council for the outright ban on the use of herbicides, insecticides and pesticides in Castleconnell and county wide by council staff, sub contracted landscape and grass mowing contractors. While targeted use may be required to control invasive species etc, the use of such products around the base of trees, along borders etc purely for convenience and "presentability" of an area shouldn't be allowed. These harmful chemical products wipe out local insect populations overnight, endanger human life, animal life and the list goes on.

7. Planning now to position Castleconnell as a significant employer in the region and as a magnate for tourism.

In support of the Castleconnell Area Plan's objective to support

- 1. Climate Adaptation and Mitigation**
- 2. Retail, Commercial, Employment and Enterprise**
- 3. Surface Water Drainage and Flooding**
- 4. Active Travel, Transport, Infrastructure and Utilities**
- 5. "Community, Amenity and Recreation"**

*And as outlined in the Area Plan, **The development of business, enterprise and employment in the village and any expansion of existing facilities needs to be planned and managed to ensure an appropriate mix of facilities to sustain a vibrant community.***

A proposal is being put forward for discussion ahead of the existing zones in Castleconnell being reviewed.

Consideration is sought for the rezoning from Agricultural to Commercial status of lands that are marked out in blue 52°42'58.5"N 8°29'20.8"W in the drawing below. Due to the size and proximity of the holding to Castleconnell, Castletroy, Nenagh, Limerick city as well as Shannon airport and N7/M7 significant opportunity exists and should be seriously considered.

The potential to develop a "sustainable commercial park" that supports five of the goals as set out in Castleconnell's Local Area Plan and also in support of creating significant employment and tourism opportunities within Castleconnell and its surrounding areas should be considered.

To help demonstrate the potential benefit to the area especially for '**Retail, Commercial, Employment and Enterprise**', I researched communities of similar sizes to Castleconnell across the UK to give examples on how they improved the lives of inhabitants and while securing a vibrant future for the area while respecting residents, environment and supporting nature and bio-diversity.

1. Regional, Bio-diversity and Sustainable development and upskilling training centre (Solas, Tegasc, skillnet Ireland)
2. Micro to mid-scale sized Brewery and Distillery related facilities that utilises solar PV power that is harvested on site as well as harvested rain water from roof top and hard scape run-off. Irish Brewed and Distilled products enjoy a premium place position in almost all international markets and are great export friendly products and also have a huge tourist

attraction factor to the area where they are located, resulting in both employment and attracting a healthy footfall into the village in support of other existing and future enterprise.

3. Micro scale IT server farms utilising on site resources solar power and harvested water
4. Whiskey storage maturation facility and tourist experience powered from on-site solar PV farms.
5. On site Roof mounted and Ground mounted Solar Photo Voltaic Energy panels to power on site facilities. The sustainable commercial park should have a goal of being carbon neutral at the least and possibly carbon negative. Rewilding of part of the park with native hardwoods and hedging for carbon sequestering would be a further boost for Castleconnell to promote itself as having a carbon neutral / carbon negative commercial park.
6. Attenuation ponds to prevent **'Surface Water Drainage and Flooding'**, preventing runoff during prolonged rain reduces pressure on surrounding water courses and the harvested rain water could be utilised as a resource on site. Reducing pressure on the local mains water supply.
7. Workshop space in support of the arts, crafting, sculpting, painting, performance arts.
8. Small to medium regional office space with the advantage of modular R&D spaces.
9. Park walks for the community and tourists in support of the area plan's goal to support.
10. Electrical substation for grid tied enterprises and for exporting excess power generated on site from solar PV farms.



Examples of communities that have transformed their locality through innovation.

- [Workspaces Wiltshire for small businesses - Glove Factory Studios](#)
- [business innovation Redundant Rural Buildings Inspiring Workspaces - Story So Far - December 2018 \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](#)

8. Population and Housing

In support of the need for sustainable housing development within and around the village, I request consideration be given for the rezoning of the areas marked out in red outline $52^{\circ}42'53.8''\text{N}$ $8^{\circ}29'48.3''\text{W}$ and that it to be returned to its original zoning classification of Residential. As I understand, the zoning of this area was changed outside of the normal area plan process which did not require public consultation.



Yours Respectfully.

Patrick Meskell