

**Bedford, Katie**

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**From:** Abbeyfeale Community - [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday 29 May 2023 16:30  
**To:** Forward Planning; Burke, Karen  
**Cc:** Maurice O'Connell; Aoife Keogh; James Harnett - T/Park; Frank Dennisson  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Submission / Observations re Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029  
**Attachments:** Draft LAP Submission.pdf

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Hi All @ LCCC / Forward Planning  
cc Karen Burke - LCCC / Town Centre First Plan  
cc Board of Abbeyfeale Community Council  
(Maurice O'Connell / Aoife Keogh / James Harnett / Frank Dennisson)

Please see attached;  
Submission / Observations re Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029

On behalf of the Board

Regards and Thanks

Maurice O'Connell  
Chairperson - Abbeyfeale Community Council  
#Abbeyfeale #LoveAbbeyfeale #LimerickGreenway  
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Hi All @ LCCC / Forward Planning

### **Submission / Observations regarding Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023-2029**

This submission is being made in relation to the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan (LAP) 2023 – 2029. The Board of Abbeyfeale Community Council (ACC) welcome the publication of the Draft Plan and the importance of the Section relating to the Town Centre First Plan within it. ACC recognise the importance of the Statutory Plan making process and wish to make the following Comments / Observations in relation to the Draft LAP:

#### **Urgent Requirement for Family Resource Centre:**

Abbeyfeale is the second largest town in the County, after Newcastle West, and it is not serviced by a Family Resource Centre and associated services. Having regard to scale of the town and its significant hinterland, the provision of such a service is critical to support the existing and proposed population of the town. Family Resource Centres can provide a range of universal and targeted services and development opportunities that address the needs of families. This has now become a critical requirement to sustain and support the demographic makeup of the various communities within Abbeyfeale.

#### **Urgent requirement for Community Crèche:**

It is difficult to believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that the second largest town in the County (Abbeyfeale) has no childcare facility to cater for 0 – 3 year olds. The development of such a facility would contribute to addressing high unemployment rates in the town, address social integration, and offer employment opportunities within the town. The development of a Community Crèche in Abbeyfeale needs to be earmarked as a high priority and given prominence in the new Abbeyfeale LAP.

#### **Urgent Requirement for Fibre Optic Broadband**

Abbeyfeale Town has exceptionally poor Broadband Service and this needs to be highlighted as both a "Challenge" and a "Threat" to the economic growth of the Town.

#### **Poor Public Transport Options:**

Lack of public transport in the evening in Abbeyfeale is limiting the potential of the Town in terms of growth as an Employment Centre and also in its Tourism potential. There is a growing need for reliable Bus Services serving the town, and particularly in the evening after 6.30pm which will support economic growth in terms of employment and tourism opportunities. Having regard to the projected growth for Abbeyfeale and the transition to a low carbon society, additional Public Transport options are needed to support this development.



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## **Abbeyfeale Biodiversity Park:**

The Draft Plan needs to identify and support the newly developed Abbeyfeale Biodiversity Park, as an Opportunity Site. This project has been developed, within the Community and provides a valuable education and amenity resource for Abbeyfeale. Abbeyfeale would welcome the support of the Council in the further development of this important asset.

## **Derelict Buildings with Multi-Use Potential:**

There are numerous vacant and derelict buildings in Abbeyfeale, along with a few significant size Buildings such as the Old Cinema Building and the Old Convent Building, which could support a multi-functional use space in Abbeyfeale, including Heritage Centre / Museum / Community Centre / Resource Centre / Art Centre, and of which would also support the existing and emerging Artists in the town. There is a very strong Traditional Skills and Arts Culture in Abbeyfeale, which should be recognised and acknowledged in the final LAP.

## **Old Convent Building – Zoning Concerns:**

Notwithstanding the need to transform this large derelict eye-sore of a Building into something positive with a predominant Community aspect and a new lease of life, it is imperative that the Zoning of "Community and Educational" purposes of that Site remain as is. This is hugely important with regards to the All-Girls National School to the rear of that Building and the Co-Ed Secondary School adjacent to it.


## **Riverside Walk:**

The Draft Plan shall include the potential for the development of a Riverside Walk, connecting the Limerick Greenway to the Town Park and also connecting the Town Centre to the River, Abbeyfeale was developed with its back to the river and it is crucial that this Plan includes for the potential development of a recreational asset that connects the town's amenities and provides a facility to enhance the liveability of the Town. There are many benefits that such an asset would bring to the town, including health, recreational, wellbeing, ecological connections etc.

## **Greenway to Town Centre Connectivity:**

The Draft Plan identified the connection from the Limerick Greenway to Abbeyfeale Town Centre, this is a critical link in terms of tourism potential, as well as supporting active travel, health and wellbeing and bringing economic benefit to the town centre. The delivery of this connection should be an immediate priority for the Local Authority.

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## **Extensive River Erosion:**

Abbeyfeale Town Park has experienced significant erosion in recent years and this issue continues to diminish the extent of the Park, the Draft LAP has not addressed this issue and it needs to be included in the final LAP as a "Threat" to the Town with regards to Land Loss / Destruction to Town Park / Threat to Town Water Supply / Threat to Housing etc. There is a need for a Management Plan to be prepared to address this issue and all of the relevant stakeholders engaged to take responsibility for addressing the ever-increasing significant destruction being caused by the ongoing erosion by the River Feale in Abbeyfeale.

## **Old Bank of Ireland Building:**

Prior to this Building being confirmed for upgrading to house Ukrainian Nationals fleeing the war in their own Country – which has been welcomed and approved by Abbeyfeale Community Council following a Meeting with LCCC and West Limerick Resources – the Building had been earmarked as a most likely opportunity for the development of a multi-functional Community use space in Abbeyfeale, including Heritage Centre / Museum, Community Centre / Resource Centre, and which would also support the existing and emerging Artists in the town. There is a very strong Traditional Skills and Arts Culture in Abbeyfeale, which should be recognised and acknowledged in the LAP.

It is widely recognised that this Building may very well become vacant again within the next 2-4 years and it is critical for the development of the Town Centre that the opportunity is taken to re-look at the Community aspect development of that Building.

## **Concerns regarding de-zoning of Mix-Use Land**

An area of Land between Tesco and New Street which had been Zoned for Mix-Use is now showing as Agricultural Land on the new Draft LAP. This needs to revert back to Mix-Use as it's the only opportunity Abbeyfeale has for the potential of attracting large scale mix-use development within a couple minutes' walk of the Town Centre – the cornerstone of the Town Centre First Plan initiative of which Abbeyfeale is now part of.

## **Errors in the Draft LAP.**


(i) On Page 8 of the Draft LAP / Section 2.3 - Historic Settlement Context

It states towards the end of the paragraph, the following:

*"has since all but disappeared, and the only identifiable remnants are of a Roman Catholic Church built in 1847"*

We believe the information as presented is incorrect as the 1847 Church being referenced, was built on an adjoining Street, and no remnants of that Church exist today.

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However, it is correct to state that there are remnants of the Old Abbey still within the boundary walls of the original Abbey Site, but we suggest that in order to improve this entry that the end sentence of that paragraph be adjusted / corrected to read as follows:

"has since all but disappeared, and the only identifiable remnants is that of the lower section of the Gable end of an 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century Thatched Chapel which is just inside the Entrance Gates to the Old Abbey Site".

(ii) On Page 54 of the Draft LAP / Section 5.2 Parks, Walkways, Open Space and Recreation / Objectives C 04 Parks, Open Space and Recreation / (e):

It states the following:

"Support any upgrade maintenance works to the Páirc Cois Féile and the development of the Biodiversity Park on Bridge Street, subject to resources".

The information as presented does not give the full name of the Parks being referenced and also places Abbeyfeale Biodiversity Park in the wrong location in the Town. We suggest that in order to improve this entry that it should be adjusted / corrected to read as follows:

"Support any upgrade maintenance works to Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park and the development of the Abbeyfeale Biodiversity Park on New Street, subject to resources".

Signed:

Maurice OConnell - Chairperson

Aoife Keogh - Secretary

James Harnett - Joint Treasurer

Frank Dennison - Joint Treasurer

29/05/2023

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