



*Communities Planning For Their Future*

**BALLA  
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN  
2017 - 2021**

Balla Community Council

# INTRODUCTION

## BALLA COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The Balla community participated in the Mayo Community Futures programme in 2008 which resulted in the Balla Community Action Plan 2008-2011. This plan summarised our community's view on:

- what Balla was like then
- the vision for the future of our area
- the issues that mattered most
- the priorities for projects and action

The plan guided our community development over the 9 years since the plan was launched.

We have now finalised a process of renewing the action plan by identifying projects and actions which the community wishes to focus on for the 5 years 2017- 2021. The preparation of the renewed plan has been carried out by Balla Community Council with guidance and support from the Mayo Community Futures Programme.

## LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

This Renewed Action Plan is the result of the following process:

*Progress Update:* we evaluated what we had achieved from our plan, what was no longer relevant and what we had left to achieve

*Community Views Event:* the whole community were invited to give their views on what they think should be included in the renewed plan

*Business Survey and Youth Survey:* we conducted these surveys to gather the specific views of our businesses and our youth

*Update Community Profile:* we had a look at the housing and population demographics to see what had changed since we last did our plan

*Workshop Event:* data from the surveys, community views event and the progress update were collated into themes. Everyone in the community was invited to a workshop event which facilitated the community to prioritise actions by voting with dots for what they thought was most important

*Renewed Action Plan:* the results of the workshop event were devised into the community action plan by Mayo Community Futures. The plan was approved by the community

*Community meets Agencies:* an important aspect of the process is that communities and agencies meet to see how they can work together to deliver the actions in the plan. This event is organised by Mayo Community Futures.

## Theme 1 - Roads, Traffic and Safety

Substantial work has been done in providing traffic calming measures over the last number of years but the community still has concerns over traffic speed. They also expressed a need for the extension of footpaths and the further provision of cycle paths and lighting.

The community has highlighted a number of priorities that they would like to see initiated as part of a road safety programme.

### Main Priorities

Provide pavements, cycle paths and lighting to:-

- The housing estates
- The Town Park
- Leisure facilities i.e. Golf Club, GAA Pitch, Manulla Soccer Pitch
- Pullavaddy
- The Backline
- Link the town with the Woods in a complete walking/cycle circle
- Erect light on Station Hill

Implement traffic calming and traffic flow measures

- Install speed bumps
- Move the speed limits further camera van
- Define the right of way on the Golf Club road
- Look at ways of improve the junction at the Claremorris Road end of the village
- Open up back road from Golf Club to Secondary School to take traffic away from Main Street

Install pedestrian crossings at the

- Secondary School
- Entrance to the Town Park

## Theme 2 - Community Facilities, Activities and Organisations

While the village boasts a range of indoor and outdoor community spaces, they do not have a dedicated indoor space for sports activities. They have also identified that girls drop out of sports activities early and are keen to address this issue. The community has a number of unused buildings at the Secondary School that they would like to develop for the benefit of the community.

The following priorities have been identified as factors that would expand the range of facilities and activities to the community and provide access to a wider range of social, participative and learning opportunities.

### Main Priorities

Further develop sports facilities and activities

- Develop an indoor facility
- Further develop the tennis courts
- Encourage girls involvement in sport

Look at developing unused buildings and land at the Secondary School

- Look at community uses for these assets
- Research restoration work needed
- Look at possible funding requirements
- Look at the establishment of a Men's Shed

Increase activities in the Resource Centre

- Continue to develop and support the Pre and After School facilities
- Look at the possibility of organising more social get togethers
- Develop more services to fill gaps in local provision i.e. computers and computer classes for Active Age group, children
- Look at providing more art/culture based activities including Irish language initiatives

Community Co-operation

- Look at innovative ways community groups could work together to eliminate duplication and ensure everyone is working together
- Encourage sports groups/facilities to come together in partnership for the benefit of the wider community Town Park, Golf and GAA Clubs, Secondary School

Youth

- Liaise with the youth of the area to assess the need for a dedicated youth space
- Investigate ways of harnessing the energy and potential of youth through established groups such as the Tidy Towns
- Look at supporting and facilitating youth led activities and events
- Continue to use social media as a way of informing the youth of events and engaging with them

## Theme 3 - Access to Services

The provision of high speed broadband for all the residents of the area is still high on the list of priorities in relation to services. The business community in particular consider it as an essential infrastructural component in the competitiveness of their businesses. Security and the lack of a Garda presence continue to be an issue with some members of the community.

In the process of compiling this plan, the community has identified a number of actions they would like to see taken to improve life in Balla.

### Main Priorities

#### High Speed Broadband

- Continue to press for the roll out of fibre broadband to the wider community

#### Public Safety

- Lobby for an increased Garda presence
- Look at the possibility of setting up a Text Alert system

#### Transport

- Lobby for an improved bus service from Balla especially at work appropriate times
- Lobby for the re-opening of the railway station for passengers

#### Water

- A continuous, reliable supply of clean water is needed?

#### Services

- Support the local Post Office
- Look for banking services to be provided, even part time
- Look for an ATM at the Credit Union

## Theme 4 - The Local Economy and Tourism

The number and variety of small businesses in Balla reflects the independent and entrepreneurial characteristic of the population. They recognise that the need to develop employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are essential not only to business but also to the social development of the area. They are keen to encourage young business people to set up in the area and have identified the provision of small business incubation units as crucial to attracting them. They also recognise the tourism potential of the town based on the range of outdoor and sports facilities they can offer and are keen to capitalise on their location at the start of the Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail?

Here are some of the priorities the community have put forward to help develop the local economy.

### Main Priorities

#### Local enterprise and employment

- Research the possibility of establishing small business units in the Square
- Look for support from relevant agencies
- Look at ways for businesses to co-ordinate their efforts
- Set up business/networking group
- Look for a 'hook' to stop passing traffic
- Promote the area as a good location for business, short travel times, low rents, parking etc
- Support local employment schemes

#### Tourism

- Bring all relevant parties together
- Research tourism activity packages based around the Town Park, Golf Club, sports clubs, playground and walks
- Look at innovative ways other communities have provided tourist accommodation
- Look at ways of capitalising on the Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail
- Look at marketing strategies for the area

## Theme 5 - Town Enhancement, Environment and Heritage

Significant improvements have been made to the appearance of the village with the recent completion of the Square and the Blessed Well Restoration project. The village has a very active Tidy Towns group who have worked tirelessly for the benefit of the community and their work is reflected in the overall positive impact and appeal of the town. The community also acknowledge the contribution that the various community employment schemes make to the attractive appearance of the village.

Here are some of the priorities the community has put forward to enhance the appearance of the village and to make take advantage of the natural environment.

### Main Priorities

Maintain the appearance of the village

- Continue to monitor litter and improve the appearance of the village
- Support the work of the Tidy Towns group
- Ensure all groups work together
- Organise local awareness and clean up campaigns
- Involve schools in the campaigns
- Erect appropriate 'Welcome to Balla' signs

The Town Park

- Support the work being done in improving the Park
- Develop signage, maps, walks and interpretation and notice boards
- Set up 'Friends of the Park' membership
- Organise and support events and activities in the Park

Preserve, enhance and promote local heritage

- Put together an inventory of historical and cultural assets and resources
- Look at developing the Walled Garden project
- Develop a programme of work to restore/highlight monuments such as the Nally Monument, light the Tower at night etc

Examine options for the development of a biodiversity and horticultural project

- Highlight and develop Portahard as a wildlife area and look for designated Special Area of Conservation status

## BALLA COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2017 - 2021

This plan guides our community and our organisations on the actions to be implemented over the next five years.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART IN THE PROCESS  
THE RESPONSES HELPED TO INFORM THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN

### MAKING IT HAPPEN!

Balla Community Council will take responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the plan as a whole. We are keen to work in a coordinated and inclusive manner and we are anxious not to duplicate or overlap the good work that is being done at present by a variety of active voluntary groups. We will continually strive to ensure that we are truly representative community organisations, open and transparent and that we adhere to good governance practices.

### REVIEWING THE ACTION PLAN

We will, from time to time, look at how we are all doing at implementing this plan. We will convene a REVIEW meeting annually to take stock of what has been achieved to date, as well as agreeing on updated actions for the next year. This will be incorporated in an Annual Progress Report for the Mayo Community Futures Programme.

### FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Name:	
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### MAYO COMMUNITY FUTURES

The Community Futures programme assists communities to prepare their own action plans in a way that is inclusive and participatory. The process not only leads to good action planning that really reflects the priorities of communities but also encourages people to get involved in making things happen locally. Plans prepared in this way strengthens the communities ability to access funding for their priority projects and effectively represent their interests at area, county and national levels.

The programme is managed by a partnership of community based organisations and agencies who are committed to supporting communities in having a say in their own future.

Mayo Community Futures is funded and supported by Mayo County Council. If you would like to know more about Mayo Community Futures please contact:

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