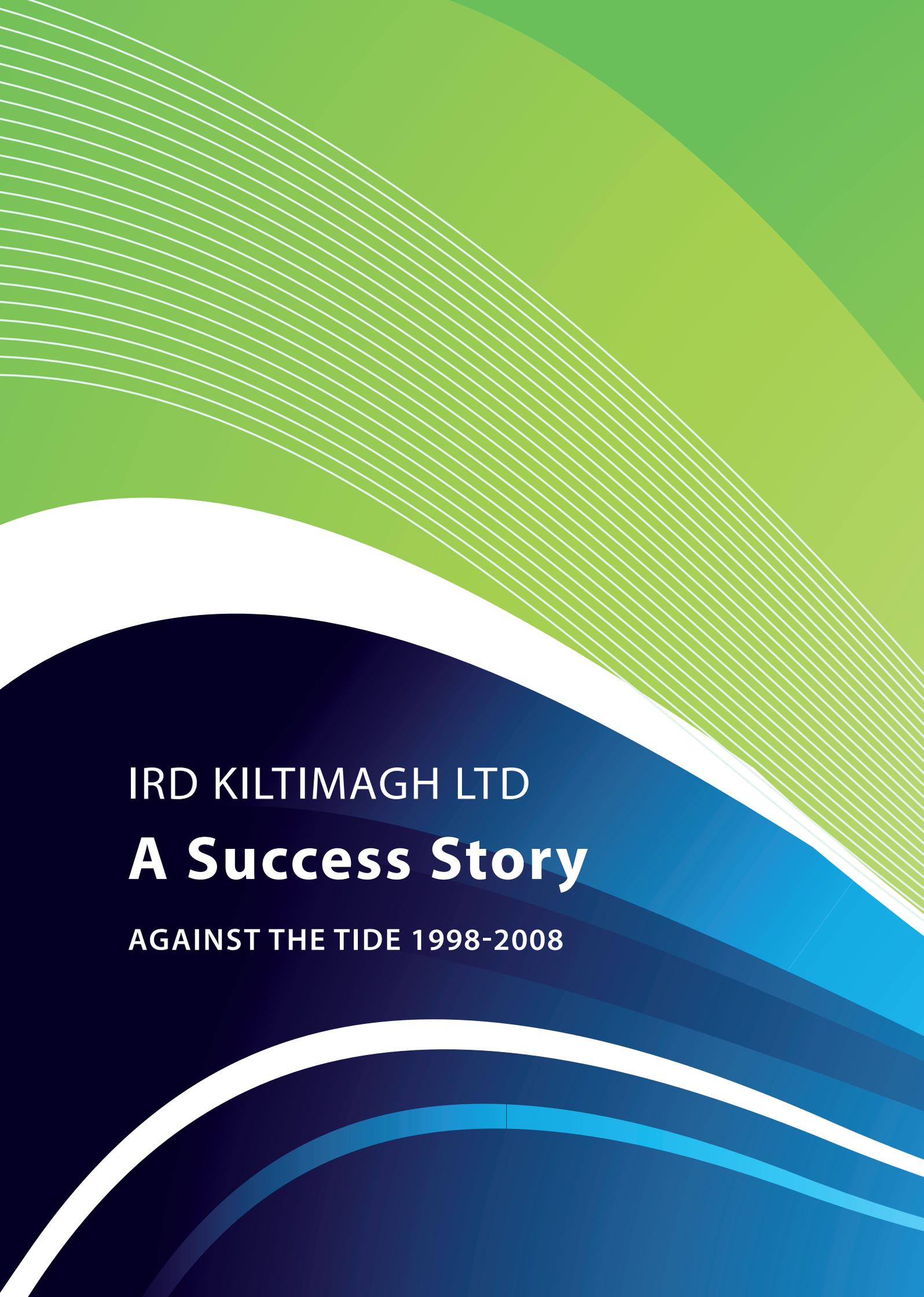




IRD KILTIMAGH LTD

A Success Story

AGAINST THE TIDE 1998-2008



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AGAINST THE TIDE 1998-2008



Chairmans Address

It seems like a few short years since IRD started. The Ireland of the late 80's and early 90s, was very different to the Ireland of today. The Kiltimagh of that time certainly was a different Kiltimagh. Many will remember the streets full of dereliction, closed shops and houses that nobody wanted.

All that has changed. There are new shops and most of the old houses have been rebuilt. New people walk our streets. All around our town, there are new housing estates. Kiltimagh shows that it is a town well cared for by its people, the same people that have made this great change.

This ability to change is the key factor underlying our success. The world is changing fast and we must move with it or be left behind. Kiltimagh has more facilities than most towns twice its size. We have to be, and are, better than the best.

To the people of Kiltimagh parish and town, I want to say "Thank you for putting your shoulder to the wheel when it was needed most".

Thanks also to the Board of IRD, Working Groups and to all those who picked up a piece of litter or painted a gate. It is these individual efforts that have combined together to make our town what it is today.

I especially want to thank Joe Kelly and the staff of IRD for their untiring work for us, the people of Kiltimagh. Their dedication and ability to overcome all obstacles is an example to us all.

Lets continue with our efforts and hand on a town we are proud of, to the next generation of Kiltimagh people.

Brian Mooney

Brian Mooney



Chief Executive's Foreword

Since its inception, I.R.D. Kiltimagh Ltd. has been innovative and proactive in devising and implementing a wide-ranging development programme for Kiltimagh and indeed the broader area. This programme has been viewed objectively by large numbers of people who have acclaimed its success, and, in many cases, tried to emulate the activities and structures in their own areas.

Throughout the lifetime of the organisation, IRD could be regarded as a facilitator for all the various actors and local development agencies in the West of Ireland. To enable progress and generate results, I.R.D. Kiltimagh Ltd. has acted as a 'hub', facilitating these agencies with information and assistance, often lobbying stringently with requests for activities to be carried out within the Kiltimagh area. Through this process and by providing seed capital funding in its own right, the organisation has managed to make a difference in the Kiltimagh area. This difference is something that the Kiltimagh community – the driving force behind this initiative, can be justifiably proud of.

This document tries to encapsulate the main points of a long and intensive process. It is intended to give the reader a grasp of the process and how various projects were initiated and developed. It is targeted at those wishing to learn more about the Kiltimagh Development Programme and also to give encouragement to other communities to implement a similar programme in their own areas. Last but not least, it is intended to remind Kiltimagh people of the gravity of the situation from which the community has emerged, and in doing this, instil a pride in the local community for their part in this successful process.

I wish to sincerely thank all of the officials of the various state agencies who have been crucial to making this process possible. Sincere thanks also to a loyal and committed Board of Directors and an equally loyal and committed staff. Without dedicated people like these, the Organisation and indeed the Kiltimagh area could not have achieved any of its relative successes.

The successes of the past only serve to make us more hungry for progress in the future and confident that this progress is achievable. We look forward to the future with renewed vigour and optimism. We now know that Kiltimagh and the other small rural towns can survive long into the future.

Joe Kelly

Joe Kelly,
Chief Executive Officer,
IRD Kiltimagh Ltd.



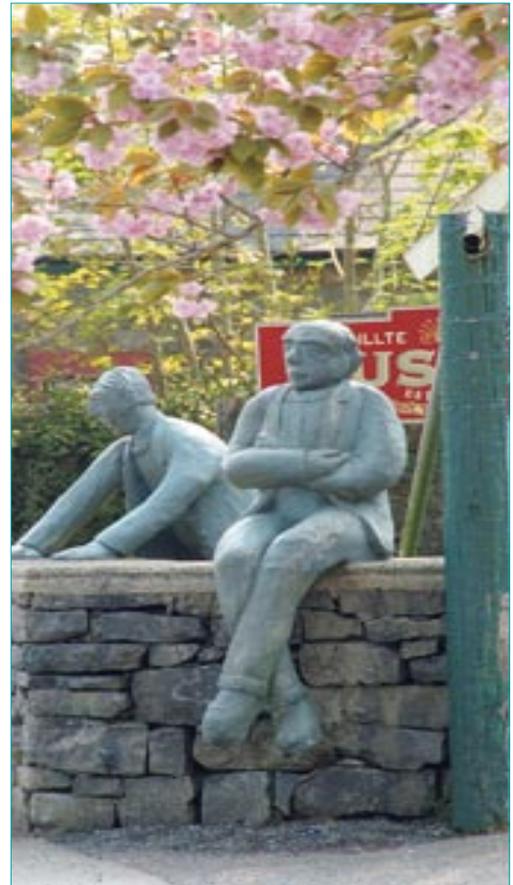


Introduction

IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. was formed in 1989, in direct response to the high level of out-migration from the Kiltimagh area which formed one corner of the Black Triangle, an area in East Mayo renowned for its extraordinarily high levels of sustained emigration over many decades and the relative absence of employment. Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to capture the spirit, enthusiasm and substance of Kiltimagh, its community and the development process undertaken by the community. In such a short document, it is impossible to go beyond giving a flavour of the work carried out.

It must be said that the progress made in Kiltimagh would not be possible but for the significant and sustained support of the Community, State Agencies, Local Authority, the Banks and many others. At the outset of IRD, this Community took a 'leap of faith' by trying something new, and doing it in a way that had never been done before. It was a 'high risk' strategy. If it failed, then it would take many years for the 'hurlers on the ditch' who would say 'I told you it wouldn't work', to be taken from their thrones. But work it did to the point that Kiltimagh has become one of the foremost developmental models not only in Ireland but also in the EU, such that many communities are using 'The Kiltimagh Model' as the basis for their own development.

Whatever your reason for reading this short document, we hope that you find the information or the inspiration you are looking for and can sense the feeling and scope of the work of the Kiltimagh community since 1988.



The Journey / Two Figures and a dog

The root of the decline

A survey of the population migration in the Kiltimagh area was carried out in 1988 and the results showed that 75% of the youth (17 - 25 age group) of the area were forced to emigrate in order to find work. This figure in absolute terms was estimated as being about half of the overall emigration from the area. In simple terms, the area had lost its productive and economic population, most with no hope of ever returning. This survey merely confirmed what had been known for some time, as this trend had been consistent for many years in this area which forms one of the corners of 'The Black Triangle' - an area in East Mayo traditionally renowned for its high unemployment and out-migration.

The manifestation of this problem was evident in the town and its hinterland. Whole townlands had been wiped out, denuded of their population by death of the old and emigration of the young. The decaying, derelict houses and farmyards were clearly visible in the countryside. In the town, the problem was equally apparent. Over 40% of the buildings in the town were derelict to the point of being appropriate for demolition. The other 60% were not far behind - the result of years of non - investment. Not alone had no new businesses been established for many years, it was a regular feature that a local business closed. It was a picture that would neither entice nor encourage investment.



Taking Flight

Compound this with the fact that money was tight among all but very few of those who could remain in the area, farms were small and the land poor. It was fair to say that the 'knocking at deaths door' could be heard.

It is also fair to say that conventional 'top-down' systems had failed the Kiltimagh area. The absolute reliance of the population on 'the government' to solve the ails of a small rural town had led to this debacle and now something radical had to be done to retrieve the situation. Further, it was clear that this reliance on the top-down approach had to change in the future.

Probably, the main driving forces behind the initiative were: -

- A deep sense of community spirit and pride of place.
- A hunger for change, given that many parents had watched one by one of their offspring emigrate until they were alone.
- A harnessable bank of leadership, vision and innovation.

Irish Times Columnist, Ms. Caroline Walsh, who reported on the Emigration Survey in 1988, unwittingly activated these characteristics. She portrayed the town as decimated with no hope. This created a scenario where those who knew of the problem and never admitted it, now had to come out of the denial phase. In essence (and hindsight) this portrayal worked like an outsider criticising a member of a family. This family member may argue freely with others internally but faced with a threat from outside then they will all band together into an effective combating force. This was certainly the case in Kiltimagh.

A group of 10 people came together realising that the solution to the problem was neither a simple nor a short - term action. Extensive meetings were held and a model was researched and developed - in fact, a model already was already in existence, in Portugal where local community representation came together with state agencies and employers to form an entity, which would prepare and implement an action plan for the area. This model had been proposed in a report entitled "The Moy Catchment's future" carried out by Philip Mullally on behalf of the Mayo County Development Team in the mid 1980's.

A prospectus was prepared and then the issue of funds became important. The prospectus was used to carry out a door-to-door collection, which raised £41,000 in 1989, on the basis of £2.00 per week per wage earner. The initial commitment was sought and generally given, for 4 years.



Wetlands Hide June 2002

The annual collection was very significant. It not only gave the financial basis for an administration and matching funds for projects but also demonstrated the

reasonably broad support for the initiative and commitment to its ownership. It was further significant given the economic circumstances of the people of the area at the time and given the overall population base of 2,500 people (1,000 in the town). A firm foundation had been established but now it was time to deliver the promise.

The initial group realising the enormity of the task that lay before them asked for the support of the people for 4 years and further asked that the success or otherwise of the initiative would not be judged within this period. This is particularly important, as Community Projects tend to rely on the co-ordination of a series of Agencies/Departments whose wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly and therefore lengthens the duration of an individual project. This can cause the well documented 'highs and lows' of the community development process.



Getting started



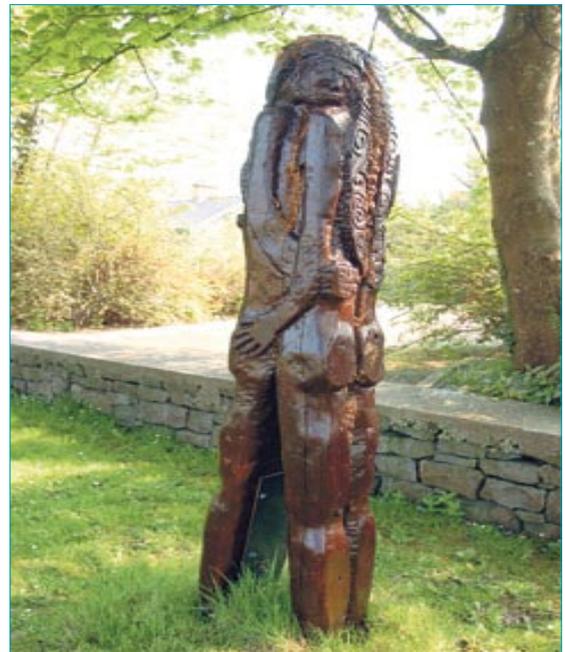
The group realised that if the project was to succeed, then it required more than just an evening voluntary commitment from those who were busy themselves. For this reason, an office was established and a full time Manager and Secretary were employed in February 1990.

It was time for action. The prospectus was taken in context with the resources of the area, the views of the local community, the state agencies and others and a full business plan was formulated. This initial plan covered the period 1990 - 1994 and because this needed to create a chance for people to live and work in their native area; employment creation was crucial. In fact, the Mission Statement: "The development of the economic potential of Kiltimagh and its hinterland to the fullest and in a way which will benefit the whole community" was adopted and remains in place to the present day.

It is fair to say that the resources of the area were few. One of the main handicaps to be overcome was the fact that the town was the only inland town in the county which was not on a main road- there was no reason to pass through the town en-route elsewhere. Other disadvantages included:

- the small farms of poor agricultural land.
- low base of industry.
- absence of a 'natural' tourism product.
- high level of dereliction and decay.

In fact, the area had many more disadvantages than advantages, but the programme being undertaken sought to convert adversity to advantage, and many of what are now the resources of the area were initially thought to be problems that could not be overcome. Ultimately, the greatest resource of any area is its people and it was the rallying of its people at home and abroad that led to the hurdles of adversity and disadvantage being crossed by the Kiltimagh Community.



Lovers



Sally McKenna, Joe Kelly and Bill Durkan pictured at the unveiling of "I'll Send You The Fare"

Enhancement Programme

Clearly, a large amount of work lay ahead. The challenge was huge. However, it was equally clear that one of the first problems to be tackled was the Streetscape and the amount of dereliction that had afflicted the town. If Kiltimagh was to become a place that would attract investment both from the indigenous population and from outside, then the area would need a significant overhaul. With this in mind, financial support was garnered from the Mayo County Development Team for the engagement of an Architect who would draw up a plan for the town according to a specific theme. The Architect chosen was John Halligan of Halligan and Associates, Charlestown. John carried out a survey of all of the buildings and features of the town and in consultation, proposed the theme of 'The Nineteenth Century Market Town'. All buildings and all features of the town were to conform to this theme. Mayo County Council and Bord Failte subsequently adopted the plan, as the way forward for Kiltimagh.

One of the first projects to be tackled was the restoration of the Market Square. The Square, the focal point of the town, had become an eyesore with its rusting galvanise sheds, broken surface and closed up buildings. The refurbishment of the square carried out in conjunction with Mayo County Council was extensive. The ground surface was replaced with cobble lock, the walls were restored to their original dry stonework, the houses at the rear of the square were refurbished with the co-operation of their owners and the walls of the square were adorned with hand painted wooden plaques which depicted the byelaws of the town as they existed at the turn of the century. The Market Square today still remains the focal point of Kiltimagh, but is now an attractive feature that shows confidence in the future.

Another project to be tackled was the under grounding of the cables that had blotted the streetscape for years. This was a complicated project, as there were so many bodies to be considered, namely ESB, Telecom Eireann (now Eircom), Mayo County Council and not least the local community. The project took great co-ordination and about IR£30,000 of IRD money to restore the street. Under grounding, coupled with the putting in place of traditional street lighting was carried out in the centre of the town. As part of the reinstatement process, the street was lined with kerbs and the footpaths cobbled or stoned as far as the money could stretch.



Market Square 1990



Market Square 2004



Main St., Kiltimagh





Probably, most important in the overall development of the Theme Town was the role that private individuals played by enhancing their own properties. For its part, IRD sourced small grants under the LEADER 1 programme to facilitate people who would take the lead with their properties. A very small amount of money went a long way and today Kiltimagh has gotten rid of the plastic signs and neon lights and boasts many very attractive traditional shop fronts.

Through the theme town development, IRD has received significant co-operation from Mayo County Council through their enhancement programme. An example would be the many derelict sites, which had ruined the Kiltimagh streetscape. In the early days, the plan was to purchase these sites or alternatively have them compulsorily acquired using the derelict sites act. This has only needed to happen in a very small number of cases. In general terms, the rising tide of confidence in the area has led to a situation where the locals who owned these sites have either put them to some use themselves or alternatively, the reinvigorated economic activity of the area has dictated that they have become attractive to a third party for development purposes. Either way, there are now very few sites in Kiltimagh which could be classed as derelict. None the less, it is the intention of IRD and the Kiltimagh community that these sites will also be enhanced using whatever means necessary in the near future. An example of using the Derelict Sites Act in Kiltimagh would be the area, which is now a Car Park adjacent to Enterprise House on Aiden St., where a large overgrown and derelict site was acquired by the County Council and passed to IRD who subsequently not only enhanced the site, but also provided a public facility which was badly needed.



St. Patrick's Day Parade, Kiltimagh, 2007



Aiden St., Car Park



Bohola Road



Bohola Road after Enhancement

In recent years, IRD has played an increasing role in the maintenance of a clean and tidy town environment. It works hand in hand with Mayo County Council to ensure that the town is presented in the best way possible. With this in mind, IRD owns and operates a 'Green Man' street sweeper. At the time of its purchase, this was the only machine of its type in Mayo. It is operated on the basis that its use is additional to the role which is normally performed by the Local Authority.

IRD has led a strong annual programme of litter control and planting with Kiltimagh consistently advancing its marks in the National Tidy Towns competition each year and emphasised in the fact that Kiltimagh became Mayo's first Litter Free Town, taking first place in the inaugural competition run by Mayo County Council in 2003.

Clearly IRD does not limit its efforts to the Town Centre though it could be said that this is possibly the most important location in which to make an impact. Other projects carried out by IRD would include the redevelopment of Station Rd., where this roadway linking the Knock and Kilkelly roads, was widened, had services installed and had paths, kerbs and walls restored or installed. IRD and Mayo County Council carried out the project. Another example would be the 'Wickets Road' which links the Swinford Road with the town centre and the Bohola Road approach. These areas were both enhanced significantly in 1997/98 when works on the approach road uncovered the overgrown 'right of way' known as the 'Wickets' which was subsequently restored as a pedestrian walkway with tarmac surface, fencing and lighting.

Additionally, IRD has developed various locations in the townlands surrounding Kiltimagh. These are generally a leisure area for use by the locals and visitors to the area and tie in with the walking routes which have been developed by IRD as part of the Tourism Development Programme. Examples include the work carried out at Develeash, Oxford Cross, Bushfield, Thornhill and Knock Road.

Village Placenames have also been erected at the main road junctions with each of the village roads surrounding the town. The names of each village have been engraved in Lacken stone and these stones erected facing Kiltimagh town so they are clearly visible to traffic in an outward direction from Kiltimagh.



Bushfield



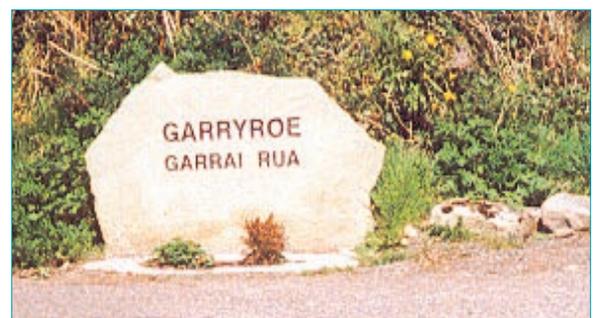
Develeash



Thornhill



Oxford



Village Signs

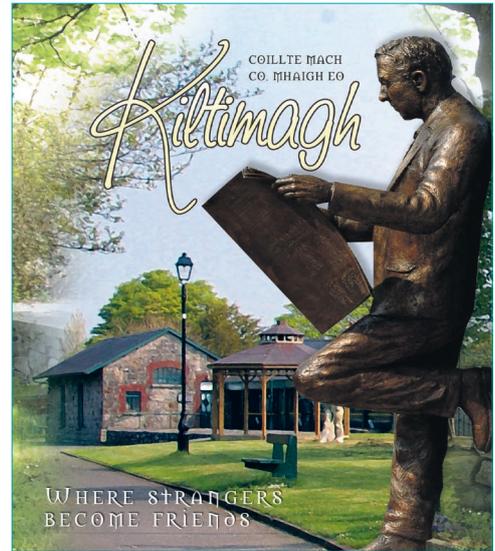




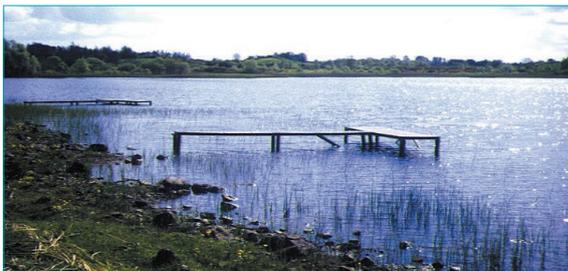
Tourism

One of the next steps was to try and do something to develop tourism in the Kiltimagh area. Tourism was relatively undeveloped and untapped with the exception of an innovative approach among the local B&B operators to capitalise on some aspects of the Knock Shrine trade.

For its part, IRD established Mayo Celtic Holidays, a wholly owned subsidiary of IRD, which also trades as 'Naturally West Holidays'. The role of this company is to carry out research, product development, training, marketing and tourist reservations for the Kiltimagh area. This is probably one of the most difficult areas to develop in the Kiltimagh context, given that there is no history of tourism, coupled with the fact that Kiltimagh is not on a main route, as well as lacking any very significant natural tourism product.



Tourism Promotion



Course Angling Stands

Notwithstanding these handicaps, working with the Kiltimagh Tourism Association and the local accommodation providers, some success has been achieved. Local walking routes have been mapped and marketed. A Game angling development programme was carried out on the local rivers, themselves being tributaries of the River Moy, and having good stocks of trout. Access has been provided to these rivers, stiles and bridges have been erected, and overgrowth has been cleared. Kiltimagh now has an angling product it can sell.

As a natural progression to this project, the issue of coarse angling was looked at together with the local angling club and the North Western Fisheries Board. A small LEADER grant was sourced and a new product was developed for coarse anglers on the local lakes that are heavily stocked with species such as Pike and Perch. Again, access was provided to the lakes. Once by the lakeside, fishing stands have been erected to allow casting beyond the weeds on the shore, Boat stands have been erected and locals have been financially assisted to provide boats and become trained as ghillies. This project has proven to be a significant success and the Kiltimagh area has played host to a number of National and International Pike angling competitions. It would be fair to say that this is not all due to the quality of the angling product. It is also down to the camaraderie established between the local anglers and those visitors who regularly take part in the competitions and the hospitality shown to the visitors during their stay in Kiltimagh.

Critical to the success of any tourism development programme is a vibrant accommodation sector. At the outset of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., Kiltimagh had two hotels but neither was to a standard that would attract visitors to the area. By natural attrition, the 'Railway' hotel closed and the 'Continental Hotel' was purchased and refurbished. Though small in size the area now had a the "Cill Aodain Court Hotel" that it could be proud of and which could attract tourists in its own right. Through clever marketing, the hotel enjoyed some considerable progress over the years. For its part, IRD has recognised the critical nature of having the hotel not only



Cill Aodain Hotel, 2007

as a tourism feature but also in terms of having a base to boost enterprise, entice those considering investing in the area, or even to make Kiltimagh an attractive place to choose as a residential location, has played its part, and has worked closely with the hotel owners and managers at all times to ensure that any assistance required would be forthcoming.

More recently, due to the availability of a serviced site, IRD Kiltimagh has attracted the "Park Hotel" to the Swinford Road. Providing

45 bedrooms and a large function room it targets a market which has not been catered for in this area. Few towns the size of Kiltimagh can boast one high quality hotel, never mind two. Through innovative approaches to their marketing and development, they form a major part of the engine of development in the area and draw local business from a 30+ mile radius in addition to their national and international tourist impact, by being the best at what they do.



Park Hotel, 2007



Tir Na nOg Funpark, 2007



Maghu's Castle - Indoor play area at Tir Na nOg Funpark

The approach taken to develop tourism in Kiltimagh has to a large degree been guided by the principle: 'to develop for the local community in the first instance in the hope that the facilities provided would also be attractive to incoming tourists'. This has meant that facilities provided are clearly put in place to fulfil a local need and to make the area more attractive to reside in. The origins of IRD must be respected in this regard. The community needed to provide a town and area, which would be attractive to those considering out-migration as well as those looking for a new location in which to reside, even if they were formerly residents of Kiltimagh. Therefore, the Kiltimagh tourism development programme has included such developments as the 'Tir na nOg' children's play area. Initially provided in 1993 as an outdoor play area for children aged 3 - 12, the project has had a 450sq. metre indoor play area added in 2002. This state of the art facility was the first dedicated project of its type to be provided in Mayo and it was made possible by an innovative cocktail of funding and co-operation which involving: IRD Kiltimagh Ltd, Mayo County Council, LEADER + and the Western Development Commission. In 2007, IRD undertook a full refurbishment of the outdoor funpark investing €160,000 provided by Mayo County Council, LEADER/Clár and IRD. This involved the provision of new equipment which exceeds the current standards for safety and stimulation together with the provision of the first MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) in Mayo. The project provides indoor and outdoor play facilities for children aged 2-12 in a safe and supervised environment. Custom built equipment has been installed and the fact that the facility carries on a significant trade in Birthday Parties exemplifies the statement 'that Kiltimagh has developed for the locals first and the tourists second'.





Naturally West Holidays successfully sells school tours to Maghu's Castle and the other facilities around Kiltimagh. The definition of tourism in Kiltimagh is not so purist that people need to have taken a boat or a plane to get to the area in order to earn the term 'tourist'. Where they come from is unimportant. What is important is that they spend some quality enjoyable time in Kiltimagh, and maybe some money also.

The aforementioned school-tours serve to integrate many of the aspects of the Kiltimagh development. Many different tours are offered on varied themes that would include; The Kiltimagh development programme, Playtime and party time in Maghu's Castle, Arts time in the Town Hall theatre, Ecological Tours of the Wetlands Park and the Glore Project, to name just a few.

In June 2003, IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. officially opened the 'Wetlands Park' located on the Swinford Road. This is a natural park based on the ecology of the area and featuring both water and land based habitats. It would also serve as a good example of adversity turned to advantage, in this case, converting a derelict waterlogged site into an attractive park for the local community and visitors alike. This was made possible through financial assistance from LEADER together with a significant contribution of labour through the FAS Community Employment programme. The park itself features approximately 1.5 Hectares of fully interpreted natural parkland that is open all year round to visitors free of charge.

Provided on a similar basis to the Wetlands Park, the recently completed 'Glore Project' further out on the Swinford Road, has provided a similar area of naturally occurring parkland as a leisure amenity for locals and visitors. This project is located adjacent to the newly refurbished Glore Mill Arts Centre and features part of the old millrace. Both projects feature extensive pathways together with picnic areas. The Glore Project also features barbecue facilities.

One of the most successful features of the Kiltimagh Tourism calendar is the St. Patrick's Week Festival. The celebratory week features much in the way of Art and Pageantry and the Parade itself is one of the biggest and best in Connaught. A central feature of the Parade and indeed the St. Patrick's Week are the Quaker City String Band from Philadelphia, USA who have attended each year since 1987 generally with a group averaging about 100 people. The week features many other Bands including long-time travellers to Kiltimagh, the German Flag Throwers Fanfarenzug Niederburg Constance. The Parade attracts in excess of 10,000 people each year, the majority of whom are from outside Kiltimagh line the streets each year. Children's entertainment is provided to make the day a full day of family entertainment. The staging of events each year is carried out by the Kiltimagh Tourism Association supported by IRD. It is important to note that IRD does not see its role as taking over the activity of any of the existing organisations in the Kiltimagh area but rather seeks to support and enhance the impact that these organisations can have in their own right.



St. Patrick's Day Parade, 2007

Enterprise

Given that the "raison d'être" of IRD Kiltimagh is firmly rooted in forced out-migration, the provision of an environment that supported and facilitated job creation was critical. One of the first significant projects undertaken by IRD was the provision of enterprise workspace. While at the time the location for the first units of Enterprise space generated significant and often heated debate, the town centre location chosen, has proven to be the correct decision based on the need to provide employment in an obvious location, which facilitates the further development of projects the space is used to incubate. Enterprise House on Aiden St. was developed in two separate phases. Phase 1 involved the reconstruction of what was formerly a Builders Providers and adjacent Grocery Store. This yielded about 3,000 sq. ft. of units and offices that included provision for the IRD offices, which up to this time had been accommodated in the local Credit Union building.



Enterprise House before reconstruction



Enterprise House 2004



Phase 2 of the development involved the provision of a further 7,000 sq. ft of new build and refurbishment. The overall development of Enterprise House on Aiden St., was funded by financial support from IDA Ireland, IRD own resources and mortgage, as well as a significant contribution from FAS under a Community Youth Training Programme (CYTP). What is not so well known is that in order to buy the derelict building, four of the founding directors of IRD each had to sign personal guarantees and lodge the deeds of their own houses in the Bank in order for funds to be advanced. This shows the dedication and commitment and lengths that those who had faith in Kiltimagh and in the development process would go to, in order to advance the Kiltimagh cause. In any event the building was provided and was responsible for one of the most remarkable projects in the Entrepreneurial history of Mayo.

A small UK based company CMS Peripherals specialising in the telemarketing of computer peripheral products and owned by Frank Salmon from Knock was directed to IRD by IDA Ireland. Frank considered addressing the Irish market and had hoped to do this by locating in the Mayo area. Frank and IRD agreed a lease on a small office in Enterprise House on Aiden Street that grew quickly to the point that in April 2000, with 45 employees, the business had outgrown the space that IRD was able to allocate to it. In this scenario, CMS purchased the available former FARAH factory on the Bohola Road and the project now employs in excess of 70 people, predominantly from, or living in, Kiltimagh. The fact that CMS is located in Kiltimagh proves the validity of the former IDA policy of providing advance workspace. (The building formerly occupied by FARAH was provided on this basis.) Further, it proves the point that smaller projects can incubate quite successfully in more remote locations if the will and the infrastructure is in place to make it happen.



CMS Peripherals



Two events in the Kiltimagh history are commonly associated with the demise of the town and area. They are:

- The closure of the Railway station in 1975.
- The closure of the Irish Spinners factory in 1982 which had employed up to 150 local people.

The Spinners factory remained essentially idle until 1993 when a liquidator was appointed to sort out the affairs of the then owner. At this stage, IRD made an approach to the liquidator, leading a group which included a number of local business interests and IRD itself. Over 70,000 sq. ft of the building was offered for sale. IRD allowed the private sector the pick of what was available and when those dealings finished, IRD purchased 30,000 sq. ft. of the building and reconfigured it into 9 larger units of workspace. This not only breathed new life into a derelict area of the town but also gave much needed employment.



Old Spinners Factory 1993



Station Road Development

Finally, conscious of the need to facilitate the retail sector, IRD purchased the former 'Murtaghs' shop on James St., and converted it into 3 apartments and retaining the shop unit on the ground floor for the retail sector. Spurred on by the success of this Project, IRD then purchased the former Higgins' Drapery store which had lain idle for some years and developed another large shop unit with 2 apartments overhead and a further 2 townhouses on the allotment at the rear.

Today over 90 people are employed directly in or by projects located in IRD workspace. This figure does not include those projects like CMS Peripherals, which incubated in IRD workspace and relocated in various locations in or about Kiltimagh. The projects currently in IRD workspace range from office based administrative and consultancy companies to food companies, crafts manufacture, distribution and retailing. The success of this initiative lies solidly in the hands on approach taken by the company with regard to projects establishing in Kiltimagh. Projects in IRD workspace have access to the back-up and expertise of the employees of IRD with respect to Business Advice, Grant Applications, Marketing Advice, etc. Finally, IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., also extends this advice, guidance and support to all of those establishing or developing a business in the Kiltimagh area.

Probably the single biggest step forward in recent years has been the advent of Broadband facilities in the Kiltimagh area. IRD for its part, lobbied strongly to have Kiltimagh included in the Department of Communication, Marine and Natural Resources programme to roll-out broadband into the regions of Ireland. Mayo County Council responded and included Kiltimagh as one of two locations for the Mayo Broadband Network. In the summer of 2003, the fibre-optic Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) was laid in Kiltimagh. In another innovative approach, IRD joined forces with Rural Broadband Ltd and provided satellite based broadband in the area in February 2004. This filled the void until Eircom provided ADSL in April 2006. Kiltimagh now boasts broadband infrastructure and connectivity which is world class and can be used as a springboard for business development.



The Former Higgins' Shop, Aiden Street

Housing

Housing has remained competitively priced in Kiltimagh though the pricing structure has altered significantly since the late 1980's when it was exceedingly difficult to sell property in the Kiltimagh area mainly due to a lack of people and a failing confidence in the future of the area. The first estate of private houses to be provided in Kiltimagh was 'The Pines' built by Tarpey Construction in 1993. Even at this early stage in the redevelopment of Kiltimagh, there was an air of confidence and optimism about the future prospects for the area. Since then private estates have been provided in numerous locations and to varying standards in Kiltimagh. It remains possible to purchase new housing in Kiltimagh at a fraction of the cost of similar housing in the larger urban centres. This gives Kiltimagh a significant competitive advantage in this market and has been instrumental in making Kiltimagh attractive as a residential location for those working in Castlebar and other centres. Ideally, employment would be provided in Kiltimagh for these commuters but it is better from a Kiltimagh perspective that they commute rather than live in the larger centres. These people form part of the Kiltimagh community and contribute to the economic and social life of the area. They create employment by spending their paycheques locally so their presence in Kiltimagh is very much welcomed. The future of Kiltimagh and places of similar nature will depend to some extent on having the competitive advantage that the difference in housing prices bestows.



'The Pines' Housing Development



'Cois Abhann' Housing Development



Rathcluain Village, Kiltimagh



Foxfield, Kiltimagh



Housing for the Elderly, Main Street



Corcorans, Main Street

Even before this newfound impetus in the private housing market, IRD Kiltimagh had embarked on a programme of Social Housing under the Department of the Environment Capital Assistance Scheme, administered by Mayo County Council. In 1991, IRD Kiltimagh purchased one of the 40% of sites on the Kiltimagh townscape which could best be described as totally derelict with a view to providing the first units of 'Housing for the Elderly' as it was then known. The building known as 'Corcorans' was demolished and the first 3 Units of Social Housing were brought into being. They were officially opened in 1992, by Fr. Harry Bohan, he himself being long associated with similar type projects.

IRD saw the possibility as it brought many advantages which included:

- The ability to provide housing to those needing it.
- The prospect of supporting the Local Authority work in this regard.
- The possibility of having some of those forced out of the area in pursuit of similar facilities returning once more to Kiltimagh.
- Additional population in the Kiltimagh area.
- Using the programme to remove derelict sites.





Walshtown, Kiltimagh



Spurred on by the relative success of the project, IRD Kiltimagh moved to provide a further 2 phases of its Social Housing Project as a new build project on a site purchased at the rear of Aiden St. This led to the provision of a further 14 units of accommodation in a combination of 1,2 & 3 Bedroomed houses in an estate known as Walshtown.

Again IRD looked to the existing properties in need of attention in the town for Phases 3, 4 and 5 of the Housing Programme and purchased properties in need of attention on the various streets

and backways throughout the town. Most recently, IRD has completed Phase 6 of the Social Housing Programme and at this stage has completed 34 units of accommodation, which collectively house over 80 people (or approximately 7% of the Kiltimagh town population according to the 2006 census). The recent phases of accommodation sees a combination of new build and refurbishment in a way that maximises the efficiency in usage of resources and delivers all of the advantages mentioned above.

An interesting relationship that has evolved is that which has been created with the Western Health Board which currently rents 5 units of accommodation for the purpose of the integration of those with disabilities into the Kiltimagh community in a caring and supervised fashion. The vacation of the former "O'Hara Home" has created an opportunity for total refurbishment and enhancement and the provision of a new range of 'day-care' services in the facility which would not have been possible in Kiltimagh without the advent of the Social Housing Programme.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., as the name suggests has a policy of integrated developmental programming coupled with a belief that the programme in Kiltimagh must make the town and area different to the surrounding towns. It is often possible to overlook projects that tend to cost money and which do not have an obvious return on investment. Clearly, therefore, projects that fit into the heading of Arts, Culture and Heritage can be forgotten and generally are. IRD therefore took a decision to develop the town and area through the provision of works of art and the provision of facilities and infrastructure as a foundation for a vibrant arts programme. This is an area of activity that is seldom found in similar sized towns in the region.



Goods Store of Railway Station

IRD also has a policy of restoration of old buildings that most organisations would justifiably demolish as eyesores. One of the first such projects to fall into this category in Kiltimagh was the Goods Store of the Railway Station that had lain idle and become derelict. In fact, the platform area of the station had become overgrown. The building was restored to its former glory and now operates as the Kiltimagh Town Museum. It stores many of the artefacts, pictures and records of an era passed. The Kiltimagh Historical Society operates the museum, with operational and maintenance support from IRD.



Kiltimagh Town Museum



Station Masters House, 1993



Kiltimagh Exhibition Centre now the Mayo School of Music

Again at the location of the Railway Station, IRD secured the Station Masters House and ticket office from Mayo County Council in 1993. At this stage it was in a highly decrepit state. This building was restored to its former glory as an Arts Exhibition Centre used regularly for exhibitions from local, national and international artists. Funding for the project was sourced from the Bord Failte Agritourism Scheme. The building hosted an Artists Retreat where an artist looking to do some work in a quiet but stimulating location, could come to stay for a short period for a nominal sum. The restoration of these buildings is of significant sentimental value to the Kiltimagh community as so many of each successive generation would have left Kiltimagh from the platform of the Railway Station, many never to return. Both the Town Museum and the Exhibition Centre are now in the Co. Mayo list of protected structures.

In 2006, two local teachers established the Mayo School of Music in the Station House. The first of its type in Mayo, the school offers tuition in all types and grades of Music, theory and practice to pupils from all over the county and beyond and is a project that we are proud to be associated with. Its location in the Station House, in the heart of the Sculpture Park creates an ideal artistic ambiance for the project. It is also adjacent to the Town Hall Theatre which it uses extensively for concerts and other activities.

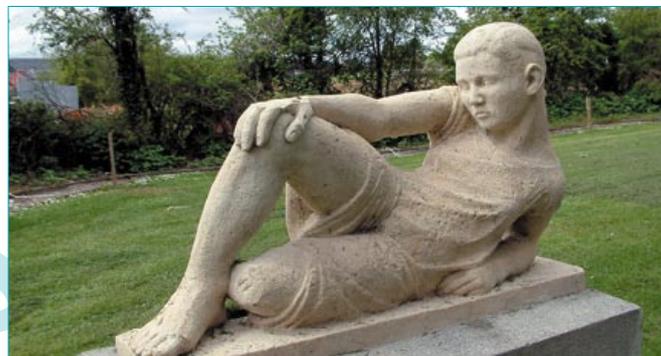


Cill Aodain Choral Society performing at the opening of the Mayo School of Music



Station Master in Bronze

In 1993, IRD Kiltimagh organised a 'Sculpture Symposium. This involved the engagement of 10 sculptors of international renown. They came to Kiltimagh in the summer and over a 6 week period. They worked with the local children, and produced a series of unique pieces of Sculpture that are on display in the Sculpture



Lady in Bathstone

Park, again part of the former railway station. LEADER 1 provided the funding for this innovative project that left Kiltimagh with such a unique arts facility, something that few very much larger towns could boast. The local children under supervision, created the piece of sculpture located at the Kilkelly Road entrance to the Sculpture Park. It demonstrates a typical Irish country scene with the two men and their dog having a leisurely chat leaning on the wall and shows that Art has a place in every community and that it need not be mysterious but can be created and enjoyed by everyone.





Never forgetting its heritage, the Kiltimagh Community through IRD has restored both Killedan and Ballinamore Churchyards. Killedan Cemetery dates back to the 8th Century and had a 12th Century Chapel and Cells. These had all fallen foul of the West of Ireland climate and were hardly recognisable. A FAS Social Employment Scheme was initiated and a Galway based Archaeologist appointed and the Cemetery was restored. Following the success of this project Ballinamore Churchyard which is a much more recent Church of Ireland Churchyard with chapel was restored. This area, which dates from the 18th Century, had fallen into an equal state of disrepair and overgrowth. Again, the work on this project was carried out as part of a Community Employment Scheme.



Killedan Churchyard



Last Forge in Kiltimagh

The old town forge in Kiltimagh had lain idle since the last blacksmith ceased operations. While the building needed extensive repair, it contained many of the implements that the blacksmith would have used as part of his daily routine. IRD took over the building in trust for the local community. Using some labour provided under a Community Employment Scheme, materials finance under the Bord Failte Agritourism Programme and IRD funds, the forge was restored. This involved the replacement of the blockwork with traditional stone and the thatching of the roof. Unfortunately, the thatching did not stand the test of time and in 2002 had to be replaced with a more practical slate roof.



Forge after refurbishment

In 2001, IRD Kiltimagh was approached by the local Dramatic Society to take over the 'Town Hall', which this group had used as a theatre for the previous 20 years. IRD carried out a major refurbishment of the building and converted it to a truly multi purpose building. It now comprises tiered, theatre style seating, full stage facilities, dressing rooms, lounge, kitchen area, as well as state of the art sound, lighting and projection systems. It is used not only as a theatre but also as a conference centre, cinema, courthouse, meeting hall, amongst other uses. A number of National Conferences have been held in the venue. Interestingly, as IRD was commencing the refurbishment of the building, the district court was about to leave Kiltimagh due to the inadequacy of the facilities available to it. IRD was able to incorporate the requirements of the court into the refurbishment works and so keep this activity in town. The theatre is regularly used to host performances of drama and music, and has played host to such names as Anna Manahan, Tom Hickey, Don Baker, Niall Toibin, Aonghus McAnally, Charlie McGettigan as well as many of the well-known Drama Groups.



Town Hall, Kiltimagh



'The Way Home' Wetlands Park

Finally, IRD has established a Sculpture trail around Kiltimagh, which commenced with the first piece commissioned by IRD, 'An Chead Cheim' by Jackie McKenna located in the Market Square. This piece has since been relocated to the Tir na nOg Funpark and has been replaced by the 'Fountain of Eternal Spring' by Ben Byrne. Other pieces have been added at various locations, including 'The Way Home' by Sally McKenna, which was located in Wetlands Park, 'Western Day' on Main St., depicting the importance of the local newspaper, the 'Western People' in times past and also, 'I'll send you the Fare', which depicts the outmigration from Kiltimagh and which was kindly sponsored by former Mayo Person of the Year, Bill Durkan.



'I'll Send You The Fare'



Eternal Spring



Western Day





Other Projects and Roles

While IRD Kiltimagh would like to see itself mainly as the 'doer' or the implementer of projects in the Kiltimagh area, in truth its role is very much broader than that. Very often, IRD finds itself having to lobby other organisations, bodies, agencies and departments to deliver projects that are badly needed for the Kiltimagh area. One example of this was where IRD Kiltimagh secured funding for the carrying out of the resource audit which subsequently led to the establishment of the Department of Social Welfare funded Kiltimagh Community Development Project. Ironically, IRD was not granted a role in the operation of the project but this does not in any way take away from the fact that IRD is largely responsible for the existence of the project in Kiltimagh today.

IRD KILTIMGH LTD. HAS ALSO LOBBIED FOR ITEMS SUCH AS:

- Upgrading the Kiltimagh Sewerage Scheme.
- Traffic Management and Parking in Kiltimagh.
- Enterprise Supports for Rural Areas.
- Broadband provision in Kiltimagh.
- Town and Village Enhancement.
- Speed Limits.
- Childcare Facilities.
- Library Facilities.
- Retention of services and facilities in Kiltimagh.
- Preservation of retail infrastructure in the smaller towns.
- Support for the retail infrastructure in small towns generally against the Larger Centres and the Multiples.



Kiltimagh CDP

• Western Rural Development Company

In 1991, IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., joined forces with Moy Valley Resources IRD, North Connacht Farmers and Teagasc to form the Western Rural Development Company Ltd. (WRDC). This entity was established purely to administer the LEADER 1 funds that were about to come on stream. The administrative area of the company was split between Moy Valley and IRD Kiltimagh with IRD delivering the programme to an area serving about 20,000 people in East Mayo. Since 1991, WRDC has successfully implemented the LEADER 1, LEADER II and LEADER + Programmes. Predominantly an economic development programme LEADER is designed to support rural development and job creation in rural areas. Examples of projects funded would include:

- Visitor Farms.
- Tourist Accommodation, Amenities and Services.
- Community Development Planning.
- Small Business Projects.
- Food Projects.
- Community Facilities and Village Enhancement.

As part of the operation of the LEADER Programme, WRDC also administers the CLÁR programme for the East Mayo area. This is a leverage type programme and has been successful in establishing a variety of enhancement and community development projects in partnership with the Local Authority.



Board and Staff of Western Rural Development 1992

- **East Mayo Rural Social Scheme (RSS)**

The delivery of the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) in East Mayo employs over 100 people in various community projects throughout all of East Mayo. Under the auspices of the Western Rural Development Company, IRD oversees a total of 5 schemes centred on the communities of Kiltimagh, Kilkelly, Swinford, Charlestown, and Ballyhaunis. The schemes generally have 20 participants each who work a total of 19.5 hours a weeks in various projects which range from the

- Provision of Walking Facilities,
- Upkeep and Supervision of Community Facilities,
- Provision of Social Care Supports,
- Village Enhancement and so on.

The scheme which targets farmers on low income has provided a major boost for both the participants themselves and the community organisations which they support and has Social, Economic and Infrastructural benefits for all.



East Mayo Rural Social Scheme in Kiltimagh Wetlands Park



East Mayo Rural Social Scheme at Charlestown Swimming Pool

- **East Mayo Local Development Programme (LDP)**

IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., secured the administration of Partnership funding in 1995, as an agent for Meitheal Mhaigh Eo, the area based Partnership Company for the county of Mayo. The geographical area concerned is identical to that of LEADER. The LDP deals with projects and clients that are suffering from social disadvantage and deprivation. Some examples of projects the LDP has been involved in would include:

- Provision of Childcare Facilities.
- Family Support Teaching.
- Rural Transport Initiative.
- Traveller Resource Centre.
- Travellers Creche.
- Training Facilities for People with Disabilities.
- Asylum Seekers.
- Legally Resident Immigrants.

The programme is also concerned with leverage of funds from other sources and therefore the strategic alliances established with other agencies are critical to the mainstreaming of the various initiatives taken.

One of the more visible projects that this area of activity has been involved in has been the provision of the "InfoWeb" project on Aiden St. This involves the provision of an Internet Café and Low Cost Call Centre primarily targeting those who are from foreign countries so they may have access to cheap communications to their families at home. In addition to this, "InfoWeb" also tries to provide information on a range of items from local facilities and amenities to contacts for accessing entitlements.



InfoWeb, Aiden Steet



InfoWeb Internet and Information Centre





- **Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations.**

In 1999, IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., became involved with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations and specifically in the Rural Development Summer School. This is a major annual event bringing rural development practitioners from all EU and Eastern European countries together to discuss rural development issues and to exchange information and experience. IRD Kiltimagh Ltd has participated in the Summer Schools in Estonia (1999), Wales (2000), Lithuania (2003) and Austria (2004). Moreover, the company was successful in bringing the summer school to Ireland (Kiltimagh) in 2001. This had never been achieved before and involved putting in place a partnership project with the Department of Agriculture in order to be able to host the event. Based on the reputation of Kiltimagh and Ireland in an EU context, the attendance at the School in Kiltimagh was the most largest ever, with over 30 people taking part.

- **Podhorie Resource and Enterprise Development Programme.**

Through Sr. Maureen Lally of Teagasc and her networking activities with International groups, IRD was approached in 1997 with a view to leading the Podhorie Resource and Enterprise Development Programme in the region of Western Slovakia. The theory behind the project was to attempt to bring expertise, motivation and confidence to the people of the area so that they would be enabled to embark on a programme similar to that undertaken successfully in Kiltimagh. A large number of IRD staff and the voluntary sector in Kiltimagh became involved in the project which took place over 2 years in 1998/99 and saw several exchange visits from Podhorie to Kiltimagh and vice versa. This EU (PHARE funded) programme also paid for a full time complement of staff (3) based in Podhorie for the duration of the programme and they were responsible for the project management of very many of the initiatives undertaken in Slovakia. The project also involved a partnership with the Slovak Agency for Rural Development (similar to the rural development section of Teagasc). Many of the initiatives stimulated as part of this project have served as a stimulus for the ongoing community led development of this area of Slovakia to the current day.

- **Other EU Programmes.**

IRD has had various roles in a number of other EU funded projects with partners in:

- France.
- Romania.
- Spain.
- Germany.
- Scotland.
- England.

- **Involvement in Local and National Bodies and Agencies.**

IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. plays an active role in the Mayo County Development Board, established to achieve greater co-ordination of development efforts within the county. This role is implemented by effective participation in the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group.

The Chairperson, Brian Mooney has also sat on the Rural Partnerships Group (PLANET) and on the Board of ADM, while the CEO, Joe Kelly, was elected to the 9 member Executive Committee of Comhar LEADER na hEireann for the term 2003-2005 and is the Chairperson of the West Region Association of Enterprise Centres as well as representing the West Region on the National Association of Enterprise Centres.

The Cairn International Trade Centre



Cairn International Trade Centre aerial view



Undoubtedly, the most significant project to be implemented in Kiltimagh for many decades is the Cairn International Trade Centre (CITC). The project was born in the community facilitation process undertaken by IRD in 2005 and is inspired by the Government decentralisation programme, the success of the Western Development Commission 'Look West' campaign, the desire to try and create graduate employment for the high proportion of students from Mayo who complete third level courses, having to look outside the county for relevant work subsequently and the need to create an infrastructural support for entrepreneurs to create employment in the area.

The Cairn International Trade Centre is a 32,000 sq. ft. Office Block, designed to the highest standards by Halligan Architects, Charlestown, and built by JJ Rhatigan and Co., with facilities that exceed expectations. Laid out in 15 suites, ranging in size from 1,000 to 3,000 sq. ft, each unit of accommodation has its own toilet and shower facilities, air-conditioned heating and cooling, access to world class broadband facilities, as well as use of the meeting rooms, restaurant, car-parking and other facilities. Each unit is modular, facilitating the client to use adjacent units for those projects that require larger spaces than a single unit can accommodate. In fact, the entire building can be occupied by anything from just one client up to 15 different projects.



Cairn International Trade Centre - Sadie Mulhern "Turns the Sod"

The Centre is targeting projects that can 'decentralise' in whole or in part to the West of Ireland and this centre in particular. For example, the accounts section of a bank could operate here, remote from the retail banking facility which could be located in a major urban location where it would have its client base. The centre is designed to accommodate any office based clients to a high standard, including but not restricted to companies or company departments in the activity areas of insurance, banking, investments, engineering, consultancy, human resources, marketing, accounts and so on.





Cairn International Trade Centre front entrance

Costing almost €7m, the building of this project is ambitious for any community development organisation in any location. The ability to raise this level of finance is based on the existing asset portfolio and income stream of IRD Kiltimagh and a proven track record over almost 2 decades, of delivery of projects, both on time and on budget. IRD's record on workspace has been particularly impressive with over 40,000 sq. ft. currently let to entrepreneurial projects which represents over 99% occupancy

IRD has received support for the Cairn International Trade Centre project from:

- Enterprise Ireland,
- Western Development Commission,
- Clann Credo,
- Commercial Banks,
- Mayo County Council,
- LEADER / Clár.



The Centre offers a major quality of life improvement to those moving from the cities, whether they are employees or owner / managers with:

- top class schools and facilities for children,
- little or no commuting,
- lower property and living costs,
- affordable and accessible childcare,
- quality environment for children.

It also offers employers:

- Access to a highly motivated and educated workforce.
- Top class facilities which represent excellent value for money.
- Good infrastructural links for road, rail and air transport, broadband and communications.
- Excellent location within easy reach of Galway, Sligo, Castlebar, etc
- An employee base not fatigued by a 60+ minute commute before they start work at all.

The project represents a major step in securing the future of Kiltimagh. It will create in the region of 150 quality jobs which will have a major economic impact on Kiltimagh and the surrounding areas. These jobs and the families they support will help to secure the future of the facilities, services, institutions and retail outlets so that they will be stronger for future generations. It also represents another step towards the goal of Kiltimagh becoming a self contained economic unit.



Cairn International Trade Centre contract signing on October 4th, 2007.

Worth the effort ?

The question to be asked is "Did it succeed and was it worth the effort both voluntary and professional, not to mention the cost?" Most critics will agree that on the basis of the following results, not alone was it worthwhile but most communities who are threatened, should be facilitated to implement a similar programme.

Results

- 550 people in work that most likely would not have work in this region but for the existence of I.R.D.Kiltimagh Ltd.
- Population stabilisation and growth. Growth in population of 28% took place in the period 1996-2006. By comparison, similar sized towns in the region grew by approximately 16% in the same period.
- About 400 people have been trained in programmes directly or indirectly organised by I.R.D. Kiltimagh Ltd. Many of these have found full or part-time work.
- 34 units of social housing have been provided.
- Many new businesses / services have been established because of the local confidence created which in turn, boosts this confidence even further.
- Economic Activity in the period 1990 to 1994 increased at 15.8% per year - in the period 1995 - 1998, this had increased to 30.2% per annum.
- About 30,000 people representing communities from all over Ireland and indeed Western Europe have been given a slide presentation on what has been achieved and on how they might initiate similar initiatives in their own areas.
- Last but by no means least, the young population holds the lifeblood and reason for confidence in the future of any area. Recent studies have shown that Kiltimagh National School pupil numbers have been increasing at a rate of 6% per year while other comparable schools in the West Region have been declining at 6% per year. In addition, 40% of those new pupils were not born in the parish i.e. they are the children of returnees and immigrants to the area.



The tide has been turned due to the implementation of the above plan. Confidence has been restored and people now have the belief in the area to justify investment in business and property. Most importantly, attitudes have been changed. The old phrase 'it won't work' has been challenged and defeated in its wisdom and an emphatic transformation has occurred in relation to the support for local business and services. All of the core foundation stones remain in place to be built upon in the future. The plans of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. are attempting to be even more ambitious than before as the organisation has now gained the confidence of the Banks, State Agencies, and Local Authorities. Proof has been provided that:

- IRD Kiltimagh Ltd is in place for the 'Long Haul'.
- IRD Kiltimagh Ltd has the necessary skills and professional approach to drive the programme and the organisation for the future.
- IRD Kiltimagh Ltd has the capacity to be trusted with public funds and the implementation of large-scale projects.
- IRD Kiltimagh Ltd can provide an effective vehicle for the State Agencies/Local Authority to work through and with, in the local and regional context.

The Kiltimagh community can and should be proud of the achievements of their community and their company. It can never be over-stressed that this is the work of the community, not the work of an individual or the work of the state. New houses and new people in our community are a most welcome addition and are the essence of the overall development process locally. They should feel welcome to become involved in the local development organisations and process and help us leave something better behind, than that which we inherited. New people are always welcome to join the work of IRD and can become involved or get more information by calling to our offices.





Conclusion

This document has endeavoured to give some appreciation of the scale of the problems inherent in the Kiltimagh of the late 1980's, how the problem was tackled in terms of the main points, and why we feel that the process was worthwhile. It has also attempted to give some basic understanding of the approach and initiatives undertaken to tackle these problems and in the words of our Chairman, Brian Mooney, 'to change what is rotten and leave something better for the next generation'. Unfortunately in a document this size, it is not possible to capture all of the intricacies and detail of 15 years of an intensive development process. The projects described in this document are not an exhaustive list of the activities of IRD since 1989, but rather just serve to give an overview of the flagship projects developed in this period.

We wish to acknowledge all of our State Agencies, Local Authorities and Banks without whose help, advice and funding, the process would have been impossible. It is apparent from the enclosed that the success of this programme has not come solely from within Kiltimagh but from the ability to marry the local community and the State Agencies / Local Authority, the top - down and the bottom - up, the voluntary and professional in a way which is meaningful and fruitful.

We are indebted to the other local organisations, who work so hard for the betterment of our community. Similarly, we are indebted to Fr. Paddy Kilcoyne and the local Parish for lands donated for the Community Playgroup facility which is one of the finest in the county. We must acknowledge the role of the Kiltimagh Diaspora, particularly Mr. Tom Flatley, for the financial support, guidance and assistance shown to their native place.

This programme has laid the foundations for the Kiltimagh Community, for survival and development into the future. Most importantly it holds the key of choice, the choice of living and working at home, the choice to be close to family as they grow older in particular and the choice to depict ones native area with the immense pride it deserves, to our own children or grandchildren. IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. is owned and driven by the people of Kiltimagh. The Kiltimagh community can and should be proud of the achievements of their community and their company. It can never be over-stressed that this is the work of the community, not the work of an individual nor the work of the state. New houses and new people in our community are a most welcome addition and are the essence of the overall development process locally. They should feel welcome to become involved in the local development organisations and process and help us leave something better behind, than that which we inherited.



Inion Mathu

Q What is the legal status of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd.?

A IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital and is a registered charity with the Irish Revenue Commissioners.

Q Does the organisation have open membership and are new people welcome?

A Yes. Anybody is entitled to become a member of IRD Kiltimagh through the payment of an annual subscription. Working Group meetings are open to those who have project ideas and who wish to get involved in a positive and constructive way in the advancement of the Kiltimagh area. New people are very welcome to come to any of the working group meetings and see IRD in action. The Annual General Meeting is also open to the public.

Q What is IRD worth?

A. In terms of financial worth, the company owns and operates assets worth in excess of €10 Million. Some of these assets would have charges registered against them in favour of either a lending institution or a Government Department but ultimately they will be owned by IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. when the moratorium expires.

Q Do the members of IRD own the assets if the company ceases trading?

A. There is a commonly held misconception that they do. The Memorandum and Articles of Association of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. clearly states that upon winding up, the assets of the company must pass to the community, by being transferred to another community organisation, with similar aims and legal status. This is also a condition that applies to any organisation successful in attaining Charitable Tax Exemption.

Q Are the Directors of IRD paid?

A. No. Again the Memorandum and Articles of Association clearly states that no Director may be remunerated for their time given to the organisation. All of the directors give freely of their time without seeking reward.

Q Does IRD give grants?

A. No. IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. like any other small company struggles to make ends meet. It has never given grants to any one or for any purpose. It does however, direct qualifying projects towards sources of grant aid and loan finance, including the County Enterprise Board, LEADER, LDP, Enterprise Ireland, Western Commission, etc. Whenever IRD makes a profit, it is ploughed back into the community generally in the form of matching finance for some source of grant aid thereby giving a multiplier effect on core funds.

Q How is IRD Funded?

A. In the early days of the Organisation, the main funding source was voluntary donations from a local community that dug deeply into its pockets. This money was used and invested wisely and today, IRD owns and operates a significant series of assets on a commercial basis. It also provides a number of services for which it can charge. This money is used to fund the organisation and any 'profit' is invested into projects which cannot be expected to make a financial return in their own right but are still essential to have in Kiltimagh. The same principles apply to the running of IRD as apply to any other successful business in any location. In fact each component of IRD is treated as a stand-alone business. Each component must cover its own costs. Without this business approach, there is no prospect for the survival of the company into the future.





Staff of IRD

Photographs of Staff and descriptions of roles.



Joe Kelly.
Chief Executive Officer,



Mary Nolan
Financial Administrator



Mary Glynn
Administrator



Brendan O'Shea
Manager-Leader Programme



Ann Mc Nicholas
Manager
Naturally West Holidays



Anne Marie Carroll
Manager
East Mayo Local Development
Programme



Tommy Gallagher
Supervisor -
Kiltimagh Community
Employment Group Ltd.



Anne Marie McGing
Arts Officer



Ann Moran
RSS Supervisor
Ballyhaunis Area



Jacqui Russell
RSS Supervisor
Charlestown Area



Mary Boyle
RSS Supervisor
Swinford Area



Frank Devaney
RSS Supervisor
Kilkelly Area



Caroline Mulvey
RSS Supervisor
Kiltimagh Area

Board of Directors



Brian Mooney
Chairperson



Patricia Dillon
Secretary



Sadie Mulhern
Financial Controller



Nancy Lavin
Assistant Financial Controller



Chris Glynn



Eugene Lavin



Gerry King



Brendan Killeen



Danny Doherty



Ray McGreal



Patrick English



Frank Fullard
Mayo County Enterprise Board



Peter Leonard
Teagasc



Noel Burke
Mayo County Council.



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F.A.S

Mayo County Council

Mayo County Enterprise Board

Enterprise Ireland

N. W. Fisheries Board

E.S.B

Mayo County Development Board

Eircom

Bord Failte

Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs

Department of Agriculture

WestBIC

Department of Environment and Local Government

Western Rural Development Company

Business Community

Emigrants (U.S. & U.K.)

Banks

Teagasc

Clann Credo

Western Development Commission

Mayo Naturally Ltd

Local Media

Others

The success of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd. would not have been possible without the significant help of all of the following Government Department, Agencies and Bodies. IRD Kiltimagh Ltd hereby acknowledges their role in the revival process.

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