



# O'Rahilly's Ballylongford G.A.A. Club. *Cumann Peil Uí Rathaille C.L.G.*



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## Submission on Draft Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028

Ballylongford GAA club wish to make the following observations on the draft County Development Plan.

Ballylongford GAA is a PPN registered group in the Listowel Municipal District.

Ballylongford GAA is a community-based volunteer organisation promoting Gaelic Games, culture and lifelong participation. We reach out to and include all members of our society. Our vision is that everybody is welcome to take part in Gaelic Games and culture, to participate fully in, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with Ballylongford GAA club.

### **Observation 1:**

We request that prior to adopting a new County Development Plan that Kerry County Council conduct a review of the last number of cycles of the County Development Plans. We believe that this review will show that the County Development Plan process has failed the North Kerry Area.

Over the course of the last 2 or 3 County Development Plans Ballylongford has lost greater than 20% of it's population, losing 7% between the 2011 (*population 418*) & 2016 (*population 391*) censuses alone.

Over the course of the last 2 or 3 County Development Plans Ballylongford has seen the closure of our Post Office, the local garage, the corner shop, and many other shops, pubs and small businesses. Our local National School has lost a teacher. This picture of depopulation and closure is not limited to Ballylongford but is mirrored throughout the many little villages across North Kerry that were once such vibrant places.

This has led to increased difficulties in our ability to field teams. As numbers in our National School plummet, we have now amalgamated with three other small village clubs – Asdee, Ballydonoghue & Clounmacon – to field underage teams. This year the 4 villages combined have just 19 players at the u-15 grade.

This decay has taken place on Kerry County Council's watch over the course of a number of County Development Plans. Therefore, we feel that a review of the last number of County Development Plans must take place before the current Draft Plan is adopted.

**Observation 2:**

We request that Kerry County Council include as an objective in the County Development Plan the renewal of the small villages in North Kerry. These villages need an influx of people, to ensure that the infrastructure, the services and the businesses in place are utilised to their full potential. The built environment in these villages has been expensively assembled over the years (*often by Kerry County Council – Roads, Water & Wastewater etc.*) and should not be allowed to decay & disintegrate.

**Observation 3:**

We request that prior to adopting a new County Development Plan that Kerry County Council set up the Shannon Estuary Coastal Network (*or North Kerry/West Limerick/Shannon Estuary/Clare Settlement Network*). We feel that this must be put in place to function as a balancing countermeasure to the Kerry Hub & Knowledge Triangle. We fear that if this is Network is not established before the adoption of the new County Development Plan that The Kerry Hub & Knowledge Triangle will develop at a rate that is detrimental to North Kerry (& *the rest of Kerry*) and further marginalise the Kerry residents, ratepayers and (*local property*) taxpayers of North Kerry.

**Observation 4:**

We request that prior to adopting a new County Development Plan that Kerry County Council conduct a review of the community gain funds that wind farm owners operate in North Kerry.

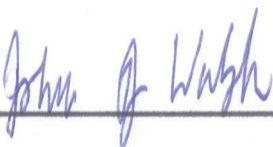
There are two large windmill arrays (*they are not really farms*) around Ballylongford (*with planning permission granted for another large array*). Lenamore is operated by SSE Renewables, who have a well-managed community gain fund in place. Ballylongford GAA club – in common with other nearby GAA clubs and other Ballylongford community groups – has benefited from this fund, and we are very grateful to SSE Renewables.

However, Tullahinell was recently purchased by Greencoat Renewables from Apollo Global Management. Both are investment companies. Neither has put in place a community gain fund (*albeit Greencoat Renewables has had little time to do so*).

Ballylongford GAA request that only wind farm operators who have had a community gain fund in place for the operational life of their wind farm will be considered for “repowering” permission.

If you feel that I can be of any further assistance, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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John Joe Walsh,  
Chairperson,  
Ballylongford GAA.