**Ardmore Tidy Towns Submission to The Waterford City & County Draft Development Plan.**

Ardmore Tidy Towns Association was originally founded as Ardmore Development Association by members of The I.C.A. who co-opted some business people and representatives of other organisations with a view to improving Ardmore and marketing it as a visitor destination. We have entered The Tidy Towns Competition every year since 1963 and we are continuously mindful of our mission statement of:

* *PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT;*
* *CARING FOR OUR HERITAGE;*
* *PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY;*
* *ENHANCING OUR AMENITIES*.

We have always received wonderful support, help and advice from Waterford City & County Council at all levels and we work in close harmony with them. We are excited about the proposed new Water Sports Facility for the village and the proposed increase to our Car Park and hopefully Coastal Erosion Protection works including the new path to Curragh. In view of this we have decided to make a submission to The Waterford City & County Development Plan as we see significant opportunities for our community to build on our strengths and try to offset our weaknesses and threats to our development.

**We badly need to revitalise the centre of our village, create employment, lengthen the holiday season and improve the economy to support all year round catering and retail.**

* Ardmore is a Heritage Village of Ecclesiastical importance with St Declan’s Well, The Round Tower and The Cathedral.
* We boast a blue Flag Beach, 3 Clean Coast Beaches as well as the 2km beach at Whiting Bay.
* We have the beautiful Cliff Walk and several other looped walks as well as Pilgrim Path, St Declan’s Way from Ardmore to Cashel.
* Ram Head is one of Ireland’s most popular Whale Watching locations.
* We have a very strong Community identity built mainly around The GAA Club and Tidy Towns Association both of whom promote sustainability & biodiversity. All our local organisations work in close harmony and cooperation with one another.
* We also have a long history of positive visitor experience from all who enjoy our amenities and inclusiveness and our richness in culture and the arts.
* In addition to The Cliff House Hotel & Michelin Star restaurant we have The Round Tower Hotel, famed White Horses Restaurant, the new Urchin Bar and Adventures, a variety of food outlets, the traditional Keevers Village Pub, Caravan Parks and Motor Home Park and numerous self catering options and an excellent convenience grocery.
* Sadly our existence as a sustainable village is threatened by the fact that we have very few residents in the heart of our village.

**Perks Site.**

* It is our understanding that the unsightly and almost derelict former Perks Funfair site may be for sale and if so the people of Ardmore would love to see it developed in a similar way to the fantastic development at **Ballymacarberry**. It would be an ideal location for a **Retirement Village** as it’s within 200metres of all the services – Health Centre, shop, hotel, restaurant, bar, post office, pharmacy, bus stop, community hall, church and beach.
* The site would also have ample room for **Affordable and Social houses** – which are needed for the future sustainability of the village and our school. At present only 4 children aged 0-14 live in the centre of Ardmore Village (Main St, Cliff Road, Duffcarraig, College Road, Rocky Road and New Line) and nearly 40% of houses in the entire village are either Holiday Homes or Rented Accommodation.
* The Old Court House on the same site would be ideal if developed as a **Business Hub**. Many of the holiday home owners spent lockdown in Ardmore and worked remotely. If we had a proper business hub we could create badly needed employment opportunities and a serious economic boost to the village.
* A Business Hub could also accommodate space where business executives could also **rent a desk or a screen or a room with video facilities** . There is already a demand for this from families who could extend their holiday in Ardmore if a family member who needs to work remotely could avail of such accommodation and benefit from our Fibre Broadband, whilst the remainder of the family holiday.
* A Business Hub could also possibly accommodate a **Visitor/Heritage Centre**
* Obviously the existing **Business Units** would remain and a few additional ones could be added to offer affordable opportunity for **Startups.**
* And we believe the site also offers a unique natural opportunity for a **Green Area and Eco Pond**. Lack of a green area has often been highlighted to us by Tidy Towns Adjudicators.
* Part of the site known as ‘Perks Bog’ is already a **Natural Habitat** to a variety of wildlife including mallard, hare, snipe, pheasants, coots, foxes and rabbits etc as well as a significant cluster of Alder, Spires and Tussock. *This is right in the heart of our village and has to be preserved in any proposed development.*
* This would also afford us the opportunity to convert the unsightly scrub area alongside the R673 from Perks to The Fire Station into a lovely **Green** **Biodiversity** walkway right in the middle of wildflower meadows, natural bog & wet area and a several acres of wild bird cover. This would be a major addition to Ardmore Tidy Towns intense biodiversity efforts over the past 10 years.

**Extension of The Cliff Walk.**

The improvement work carried out by Waterford City & County Council has taken the historic Ardmore Cliff Walk to a new level and brings thousands of visitors to our village every year and is helping extend the visitor season. We believe that a spectacular natural extension awaits to bring the walk to **Goat Island.**

If The Cliff Walk was extended to Goat Island, an existing albeit overgrown 200 metre bóitrín connects to Whiting Bay and as we know Whiting Bay is connected to Ferrypoint by a couple of kilometres of road. **Ferrypoint** of course offers the opportunity for someone to run a ferry to & from Youghal and connect to the fabulous Youghal Board Walk and Greenway beyond.

Now to really think outside the box....a similar ferry from The Quay in Dungarvan to The Cunnigar would connect the wonderful **Waterford Greenway** to An Rinn and Old Parish to Glencorrin, Ballyquin & Curragh and The Cliff Walk and St Declan’s Way.

Assuming The OPW approve the funding for the proposed Coastal Erosion Protection Works on Ardmore Beach it would really finish the job if a walking path similar to the **Board Walk** in **Bonmahon** was built around **The Point at Curragh**, where the existing walking path is seriously damaged. This would provide once again a **Full Bay Walk** from Glencorrin, through Ballyquin, Curragh and Ardmore Beaches and connecting to the Cliff Walk and beyond.

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to make our submission.

Yours sincerely.

Bill Ramsell, Chairman Ardmore Tidy Towns.

[Redacted – Personal information]

Billy Harty P.R.O.

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