

Graiguenamanagh

Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Report

2025



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
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Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

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1. Aims of the CTCHC Report

The 15 step Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme was established by the Heritage Council in 2010 and is a critical component of the Town Centre First Plan. This report describes the findings that were gathered in Graiguenamanagh as part of the CTCHC process. The findings of the CTCHC Programme provide an overview of the Town Baseline Analysis stage of the Town Centre First Plan. The CTCHC may also inform plans and strategies in relation to the following:

- Arts, Heritage and Culture;
- Climate Change Adaptation;
- Community Health and Well-being;
- Public Realm, e.g. historic streetscapes, parks, greenways and public spaces;
- Cultural Tourism;
- Heritage-led regeneration;
- Living in the Town Centre; and
- Strategic Planning and Place-making.

This CTCHC report was completed in April 2025 as part of the Graiguenamanagh Town Centre First Plan preparation process.

Ireland's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme The 15-Step CTCHC Process



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2. Survey Methodology

The CTCHC research and surveys for the Graiguenamanagh Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) took place between February 2025 and April 2025 by the Town Regeneration Team of Kilkenny County Council in collaboration with the Graiguenamanagh Town Team and various departments of the Local Authority. Surveys carried out under the process are outlined below.

Land Use & Vacancy Survey

The Town Regeneration Office of Kilkenny County Council carried out a land use survey of the town centre in February 2025. Land uses were recorded using ArcGIS Online and the accompanying Field Maps app. Vacant property surveys have been previously carried out by the Town Regeneration Team which assisted in the collation of vacant units. The land use survey in February 2025 verified vacant units and recorded additional units.

The land use and vacancy survey noted the ground floor uses of the properties. Each building use was selected in accordance with the GOAD Classification of Land Use to ensure consistency with other CTCHC surveys.

Footfall/Pedestrian Survey

In March 2025, staff members of Kilkenny County Council and members of the Town Team carried out a pedestrian and cyclist count in Graiguenamanagh. The count was carried out at three different times across two days. The data was inputted to a table showing the locations and times, in which pedestrian footfall and cyclist traffic was at its highest and lowest.

Public Survey / Questionnaire

An online survey questionnaire based on best practice Town Centre Health Check research in Ireland and abroad was available for a 4-week period for town users (residents; business owners; employers; visitors and people passing through) to complete between 10th February to 11th March 2025. 288 no. respondents

completed the survey. The survey questions were based on the environment and people's experience of Graiguenamanagh, public realm, transport, car parking and accessibility, activities and uses, and work and the local economy in Graiguenamanagh.

Business Owner Survey / Questionnaire

A survey was issued to Business Owners in Graiguenamanagh to understand the business perspective. 5 no. responses were received.

Youth Survey

A Youth Survey ran for four weeks to encourage youth engagement in the process and to understand the perspective of the youth community in the area. Schools and youth organisations in the study area were contacted and informed of the survey. A total of 37 no. responses were received.

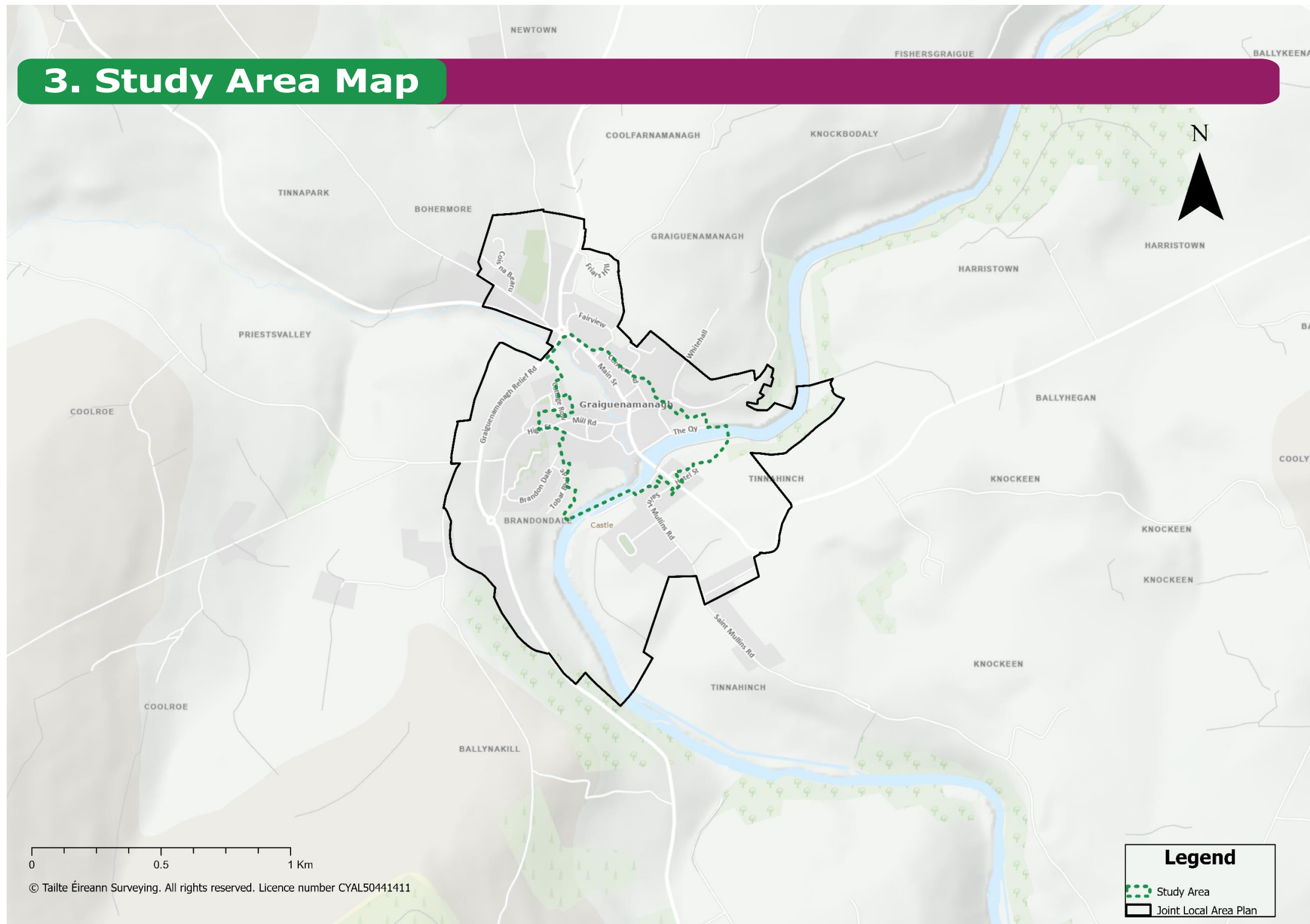
Car Parking

A Mobility Management Study was previously prepared by Roadplan Consulting on behalf of Carlow & Kilkenny County Councils in August 2021 which reviewed existing car parking locations. In March 2025, car parking areas within the study area were monitored for occupancy on various days and at different times.

Urban Design Appraisal

An Urban Design Audit was carried out in March 2025 which identified features within the Study Area which contribute to the area. As part of the process, 'Desire Lines' were also observed.

3. Study Area Map



4. Introduction to Graiguenamanagh

Locational Context

The settlement of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch is situated on the River Barrow in the steep sided valley between Brandon Hill in County Kilkenny and Mount Leinster in County Carlow. It is a rich cultural town located 16km from Thomastown, 33km from Kilkenny City, 40km from Carlow, 19km from New Ross and 41km from Waterford City. The settlement also occupies a bridging point at George Semple Bridge, where the River Duiske enters the River Barrow, which divides Tinnahinch from Graiguenamanagh, and which is a superb amenity for boating, fishing and recreational pursuits.

Historical Development

The name Graiguenamanagh (Graig na Manach) means 'Grange (Valley or Village) of the Monks'. The town has a rich heritage dating back to the founding of Duiske Abbey in 1204. The town has a rich heritage and may yet have unidentified sites/features of archaeological activity associated with the settlement of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch area. It is believed that the Abbey takes its name from the Duiske or Black Water that cascades from Brandon Hill into the River Barrow. Duiske Abbey is a fully restored Cistercian church, reputedly the longest in Ireland (approx. 70m). Duiske is the daughter house of Stanley, situated in Wiltshire. As with many other monastic sites in Ireland, the Abbey was dissolved in 1536 by Henry VIII. The Abbey prospered with the establishment of a nearby mill and the export of wool. The trade flourished with the arrival of Flemish weavers in the 1600s. One of their descendants, Mr. Cushen, established the Cushendale Woollen Mills in the 1800s, featuring traditional colourful textiles in natural fibres. Graiguenamanagh expanded beyond the Abbey as a market town, aided by the development of the Grand Canal and the navigation of the River Barrow, which ultimately connected the town with Dublin, New Ross, Waterford and Carlow.

The production of wool was historically important to the town's economy and sheep rearing remains a predominant agricultural activity in the hinterland.



ORDNANCE SURVEY, 6 INCH MAPPING 1829-1841

The name Tinnahinch (Tighe-na-hinse) means 'the House of the Island or River Meadow'. Whilst Graiguenamanagh can trace its earliest origins to the Duiske Abbey, Tinnahinch is a comparatively new settlement, with the exception of the area associated with the use of the River Barrow and the main approach roads. Tinnahinch is home to a castle dating from 1615, and although now in ruins, it occupies a picturesque location on the banks of the River Barrow. The castle was built by James Butler Duke of Ormonde to defend and control passage across the River Barrow at a point where a wooden bridge once existed. He lost his castle and his lands after joining the Confederate War in 1641, and the castle was subsequently burnt and has remained in ruins since 1700.

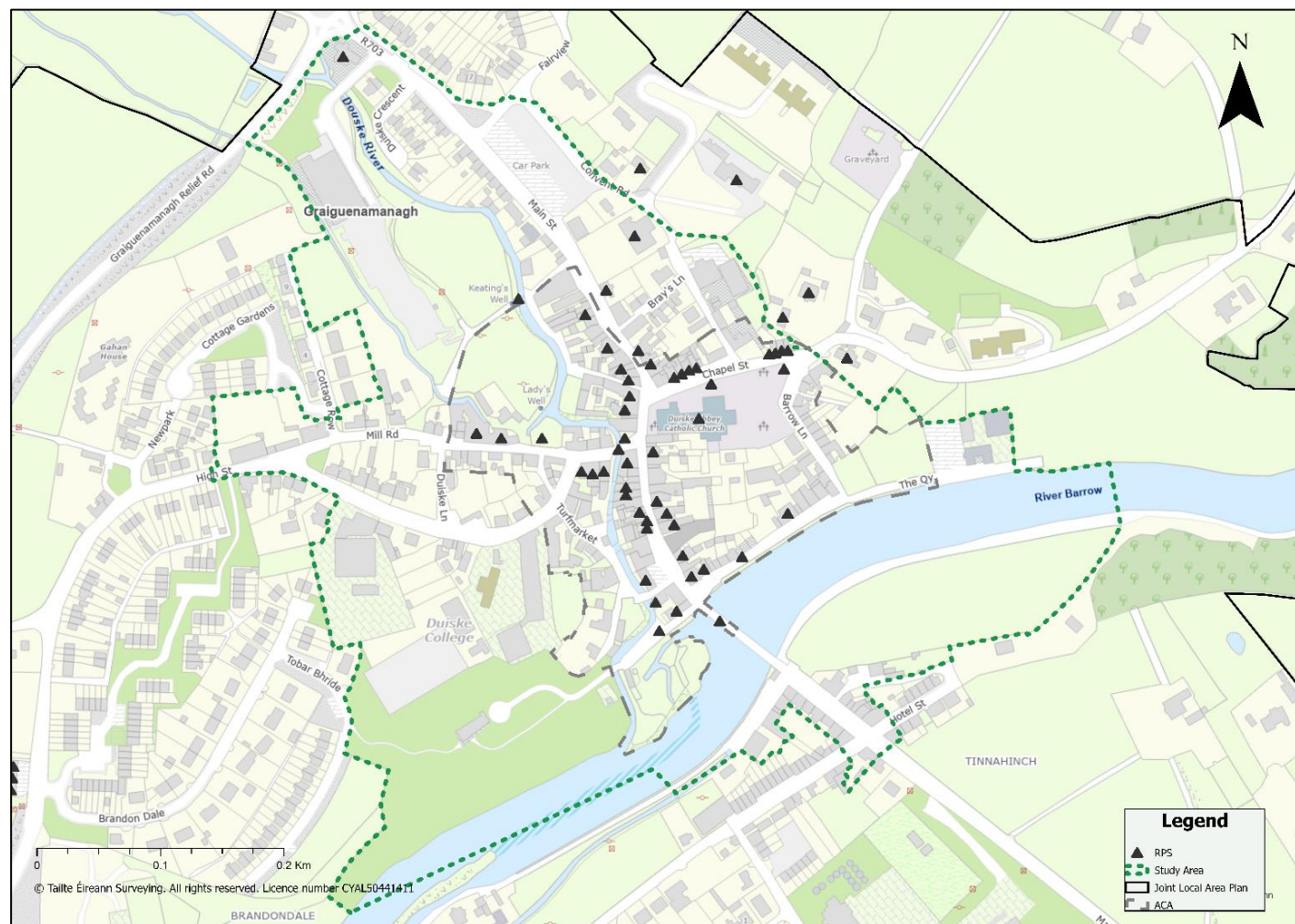
The George Semple Bridge, built between 1764 to 1767, forms an attractive landmark linking Tinnahinch with Graiguenamanagh. The bridge is of additional importance in the locality for the associations with the 1798 Rebellion when some of the arches were destroyed by a Crown Force initiated explosion to prevent access across the River Barrow from County Carlow to County Kilkenny.

The population of Graiguenamanagh was 1,506 as per the 2022 Census.

5. The Built Heritage of Graiguenamanagh

Graiguenamanagh contains many individual features of archaeological, historical and architectural interest, ranging from important ecclesiastical structures to gothic cottages, industrial archaeology and traditional 2 and 3 storey buildings, which are worthy of protection, as well as other potential features of archaeological merit not yet discovered, all worthy of protection. Such protection is provided not only by the designation of Protected Structures, but also through the identification of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Graiguenamanagh contains 60 structures which are included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027 whilst Tinnahinch contains 4 additional structures. A total of 52 structures are located within the Town Centre study area. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has also recorded 58 structures (54 in Graiguenamanagh and 4 in Tinnahinch) within the confines of the settlement area, with each designation given a national, regional or local importance classification.

Two designations were classified as being of national importance and fifty-six of regional importance. The purpose of the inventory is to identify, record and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage.



6. Land Use and Vacancy

A land use and vacancy survey of buildings in the Graiguenamanagh study area was carried out in February and March 2025. A total of 796 buildings were surveyed in the wider settlement (Local Area Plan area) which included 218 buildings located within the refined Town Centre Study Area. The survey indicates that town centre vacancy is an issue, including both residential and commercial units.

Graiguenamanagh Settlement Land Uses

Total Buildings Surveyed 796

Residential Use 87.5%

Non-Residential Use 12.5%

84.5%	Residential
2.5%	Vacant Residential
3%	Vacant Non-Residential
2%	Leisure Services
2%	Public Service
1.5%	Comparison
1%	Health and Medical Services
1%	Retail Services
0.5%	Convenience
0.5%	Financial and Business Services
0.5%	Other Retail
0.5%	Religious Service
0.5%	Storage and Warehousing

Residential use was the most prominent land use in both the Town Centre First Study Area and the wider area. Leisure services i.e. bars, take-aways, restaurants were the most prevalent commercial activity in the study area.

Graiguenamanagh Town Centre First Study Area Land Uses

Total Buildings Surveyed 218

Residential Use 62%

Non-Residential Use 38%

57%	Residential
5%	Vacant Residential
10.5%	Vacant Non-Residential
7.5%	Leisure Services
5%	Public Service
4.5%	Comparison
3.5%	Retail Services
2%	Financial and Business Services
2%	Health and Medical Services
1.5%	Convenience
0.5%	Other Retail
0.5%	Religious Service
0.5%	Storage and Warehousing

Land Uses within the Study Area



Legend

- Study Area (1)
- Comparison (10)
- ▨ Vacant Unit (23)
- Storage and Warehousing (1)
- Residential (125)
- Open Space (1)
- Other Buildings (107)
- ▨ Vacant Residential (11)
- Convenience (3)
- Retail Service (8)
- Other Retail (1)
- Leisure Services (16)
- Financial and Business Services (4)
- Health and Medical Services (4)
- Public Service (11)
- Religious Service (1)

0 100 200 Meters

Vacancy and Dereliction within the Study Area

Vacancy within the Study Area

Residential Vacancy (11 no.) 8%

(Calculated using 'residential' and 'vacant residential' values)

Non-Residential Vacancy (23 no.) 28%

(Calculated using all GOAD land uses surveyed excluding 'residential' and 'vacant residential')

Total Vacancy (34no.) 16%

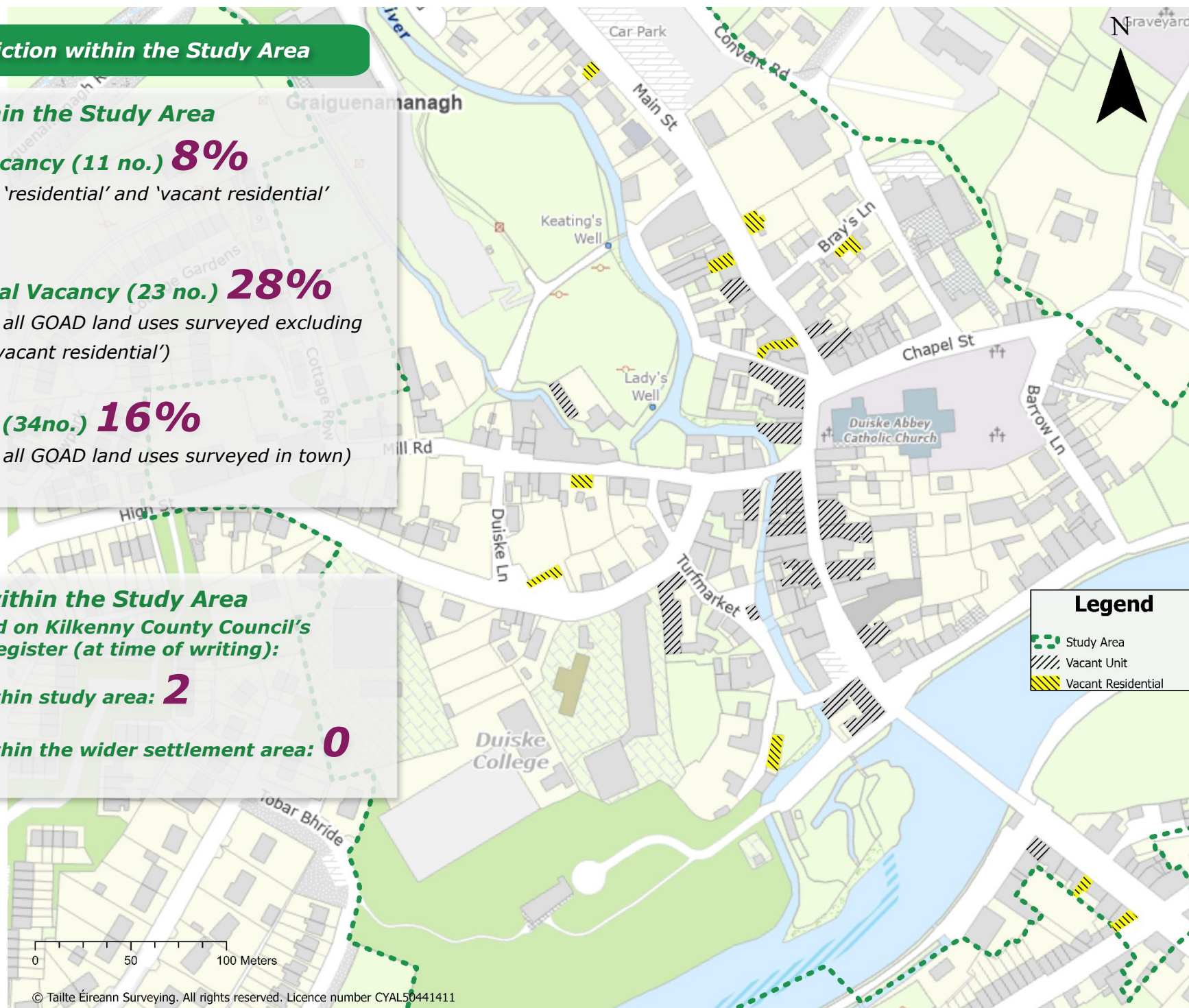
(Calculated using all GOAD land uses surveyed in town)

Dereliction within the Study Area

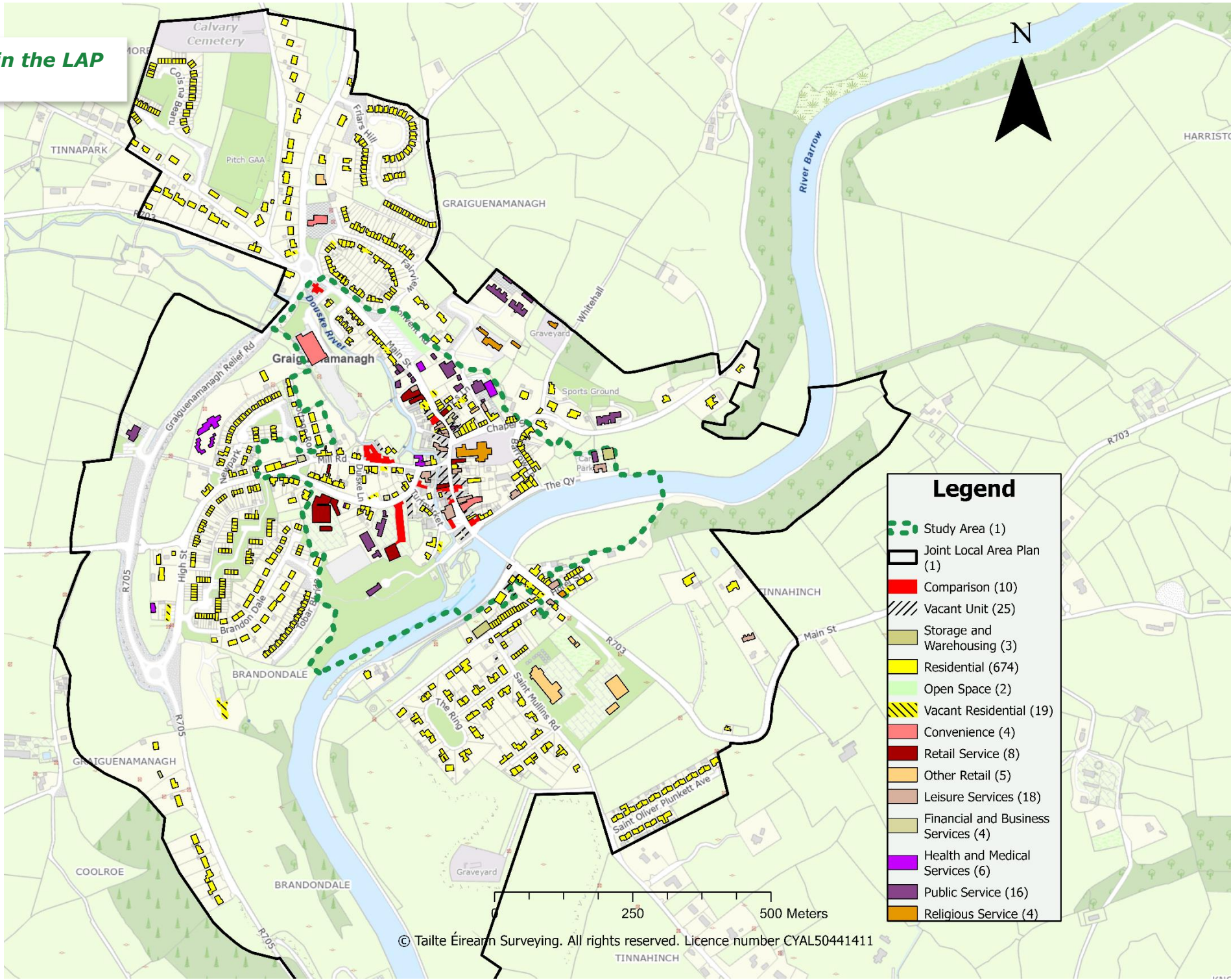
Properties listed on Kilkenny County Council's Derelict Sites Register (at time of writing):

- Structures within study area: **2**

- Structures within the wider settlement area: **0**



Land Uses within the LAP Area



7. Public Survey / Questionnaire

Overview

An online survey questionnaire based on best practice Town Centre Health Check research in Ireland and abroad was available for a 4-week period for town users (residents; business owners; employers; visitors and people passing through) to complete between 11th February 2025 and 11th March 2025. 288 no. respondents completed the survey. The survey questions were based on the environment and people's experience of Graiguenamanagh, public realm, transport, car parking and accessibility, activities and uses, and work and the local economy in Graiguenamanagh.

The results of the public survey were analysed using the Place Standard Tool, focussing on 14 no. topics: Moving Around; Public Transport; Traffic and Parking; Streets and Spaces; Natural Space; Play and Recreation; Facilities and Services; Work and Local Economy; Housing and Community; Social Interaction; Identity and Belonging; Feeling Safe; Care and Maintenance; and Influence and Sense of Control.

The topics that the highest were Feeling Safe (5.9); Identity and Belonging (5.4) and Natural Space (5.4). The topics that scored the lowest were Public Transport (3.1), Work and Local Economy (3.2).

The results indicate that Graiguenamanagh is doing well in many areas, however, there are some areas that need attention.

- 7 **Doing very well**
- 6 **Doing quite well – a few things to be worked on**
- 5 **Doing well – but some actions needed**
- 4 **Doing ok – but it could slip back without attention**
- 3 **Weak - but can improve if worked on**
- 2 **Quite weak – many actions needed**
- 1 **Very weak – a lot of improvements needed**

Topic	Average Rating
Moving Around	4.7
Public Transport	3.1
Traffic and Parking	3.6
Streets and Spaces	3.9
Natural Space	5.4
Play and Recreation	4.7
Facilities and Services	4.2
Work and Local Economy	3.2
Housing and Community	3.7
Social Interaction	3.7
Identity and Belonging	5.4
Feeling Safe	5.9
Care and Maintenance	3.5
Influence and Sense of Control	3.8

Place Standard Tool



Moving Around Score: 4.7

The highest response for Moving Around was '5' (26%). The main area of concern raised by respondents was the bridge with many respondents noting pedestrian safety concerns. Pedestrian crossings and improved footpaths was also a recurring theme. Cycle infrastructure also arose with respondents suggesting cycle lanes and e-bikes.

Public Transport Score: 3.1

Public Transport was the lowest rated theme in the Place Standard assessment with 27% responding with '1'. Respondents suggested additional services to nearby larger towns; train stations and to Dublin. Student routes to colleges was also suggested. Respondents also suggested improved local link services to the hinterland.

Traffic and Parking Score: 3.6

The most common score of the Traffic and Parking theme was '4' (20%). On-street car parking was the most common issue raised by respondents with many noting the impact on road safety and footpath accessibility. A new off-street car park was suggested. Additional traffic concerns raised by the respondents primarily related to the bridge. Suggestions include one-way systems and the use of traffic lights.

Streets and Spaces Score: 3.9

The most frequent response to Streets and Spaces was '5' (25%). The main concern relating to this topic was the reuse of vacant or underutilised buildings and spaces in the town centre. Respondents suggested a mini plaza outside of the Duiske Abbey and at Market Square car park.

Natural Space Score: 5.4

'4' was the most frequent response to Natural Space with 31%. Respondents noted the high quality spaces including along the Barrow and at Silaire Wood. Suggestions for improvement include additional green spaces more centrally located; provision of a skate park / cycle track space. An undeveloped parcel of land along the Quay was suggested as a possible green space area.

Play and Recreation Score: 4.7

Play and Recreation was scored highly with 27% of respondents answering with '7' and an additional 27% answering '6'. Respondents suggested designated sport and recreation areas such as a skate park, tennis courts. Respondents also raised concerns regarding the limited availability of non-sport Play and Recreation facilities.

Facilities and Services Score: 4.2

The most common result for Facilities and Services was '5' with 26%. The main concerns raised by the respondents included the lack of restaurants and cafés throughout the year; childcare facilities, particularly full day care; and healthcare services. Tourist accommodation was also raised as an area requiring improvement. Suggestions from the respondents included providing more community services by reusing vacant properties. The respondents also suggested additional public street amenities such as bins, toilets.

Work and Local Economy Score: 3.2

Work and Local Economy were varied with 26% rating the topic as '4'. Respondents noted the limited opportunity for careers. Suggestions include reusing vacant properties to encourage growth in the local economy.

Housing and Community Score: 3.7

The most frequent response to Housing and Community was '4' (26%). The main concerns raised by respondents are the lack of availability of housing. Vacant above the shop units on the main streets was also raised. The reuse of vacant buildings was strongly encouraged by respondents.

Social Interaction Score: 3.7

Social Interaction was most frequently rated '4' (28%) with respondents acknowledging the existing facilities, however, the lack of seating was noted. Respondents raised concerns with social interaction opportunities for those who are not involved in sport. Respondents also raised concerns regarding evening recreational opportunities for adults apart from pubs / bars.

Identity and Belonging Score: 5.4

The most popular response to Identity and Belonging was '7' (38%) indicating that there is a sense of identity and belonging within Graiguenamanagh. Respondents noted the availability of multiple groups, however, finding information about the groups was a hurdle. Promotion of existing groups and activities was suggested.

Feeling Safe Score: 5.9

Feeling Safe was the highest rated topic in the Place Standard assessment overall with the most popular response being '7' (38%). '6' was the second most common response with 36%. Areas of concern include anti-social behaviour, traffic and footpaths. Suggestions for improvement include a more active garda presence, additional lighting and footpath maintenance. Additional clubs and amenities for youth activity was also suggested.

Care and Maintenance Score: 3.5

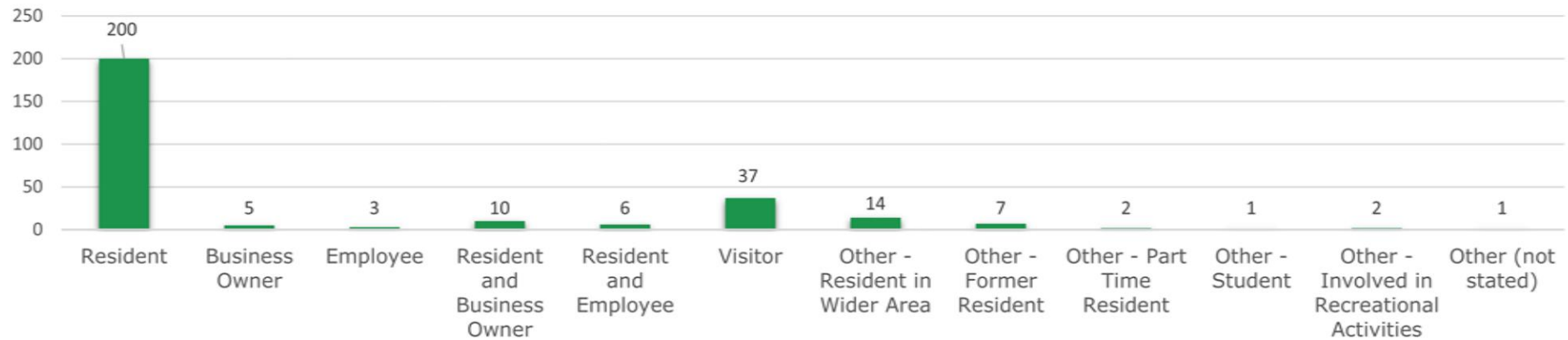
The most common response to Care and Maintenance was '4' (28%). Respondents raised concerns regarding vacancy and dereliction particularly along Main Streets and respondents suggested the reuse of these for housing or community services. The painting and upkeep of certain buildings was complimented.

Influence and Sense of Control Score: 3.8

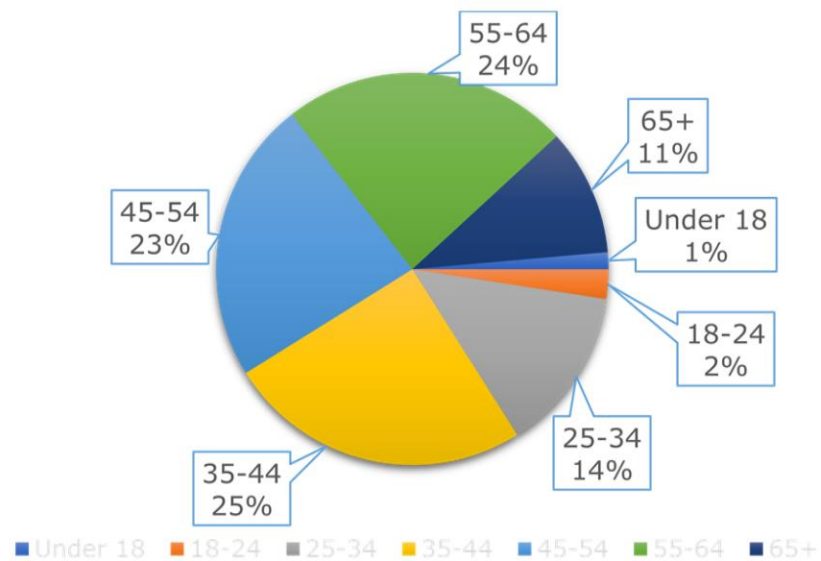
29% of respondents rated Influence and Sense of Control as '4'. Suggestions for improvements include using local assets for regular community and council meetings.

Public Survey Questionnaire – Summary of Responses

Respondent Profiles



Respondent Age Profile



What Makes You Feel Most Proud about the Town Centre?



What concerns you about the town centre?



What services, amenities or facilities would you like to see in the town centre?



Are there any buildings or spaces in the town centre that you consider under-utilised?

Boats Bistro
Hughes
Corner Site on Quay
Davy's Butchers
Main Street
The Anchor
The Globe
Joyce's
Angler's Rest
Abbey Centre
Old Bank
Coffee on High
Old Vets
Cosy Inn
Old Pubs
Prendergasts

How should they be reused?

Community Space
Café
Hotel
Museum
Accommodation
Hostel
Tourist Centre
Business
Restaurant

Please list 3 actions you would like to see as a priority in the Graiguenamanagh plan.

Respondents provided over 260 suggestions. The most prevalent include:

Tackle dereliction in the Town Centre

Improve car parking

Traffic Management

Reuse of vacant buildings

More planting and green spaces

More recreational opportunities

Improve the streetscape and public spaces

Compulsory Purchase of derelict properties

Improve biodiversity

Increase housing supply

Increase in community facilities and amenities

Continued expansion of tourism sector

Promote the arts and culture

Address dereliction on Main Street, particularly the Anchor and Old Bank

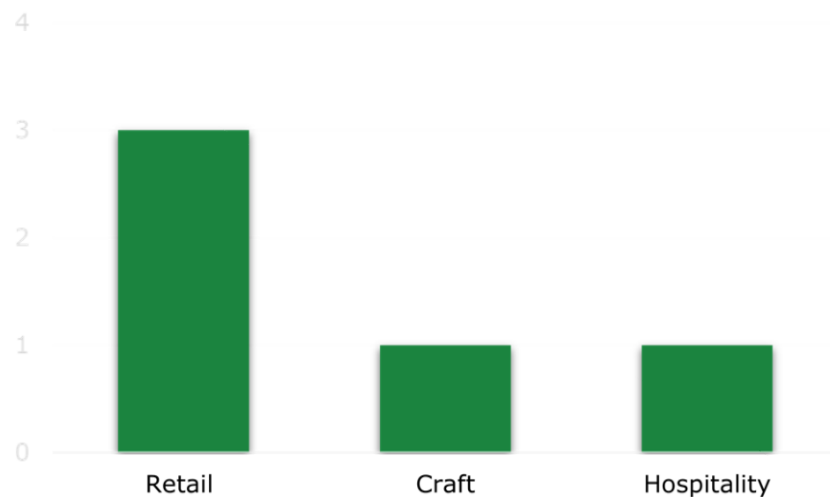
8. Business Owner Survey

Respondent Profile

How many years have you been operating at your current location?

100% of business respondents have been in operation in excess of 10 years.

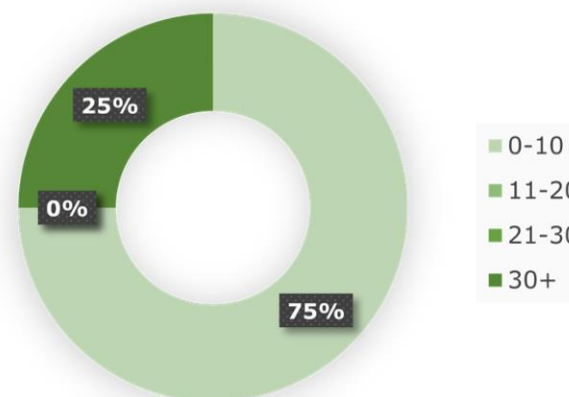
In which sector does your business /organisation operate?



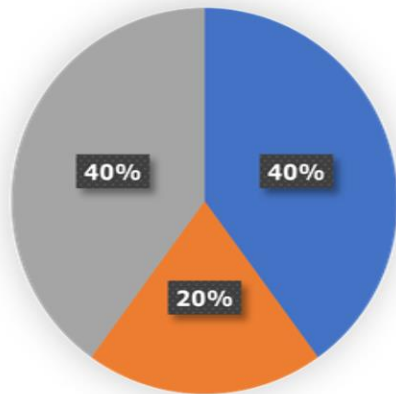
What type of facility does your business /organisation primarily use?



Approximately how many people does your business/organisation directly employ?

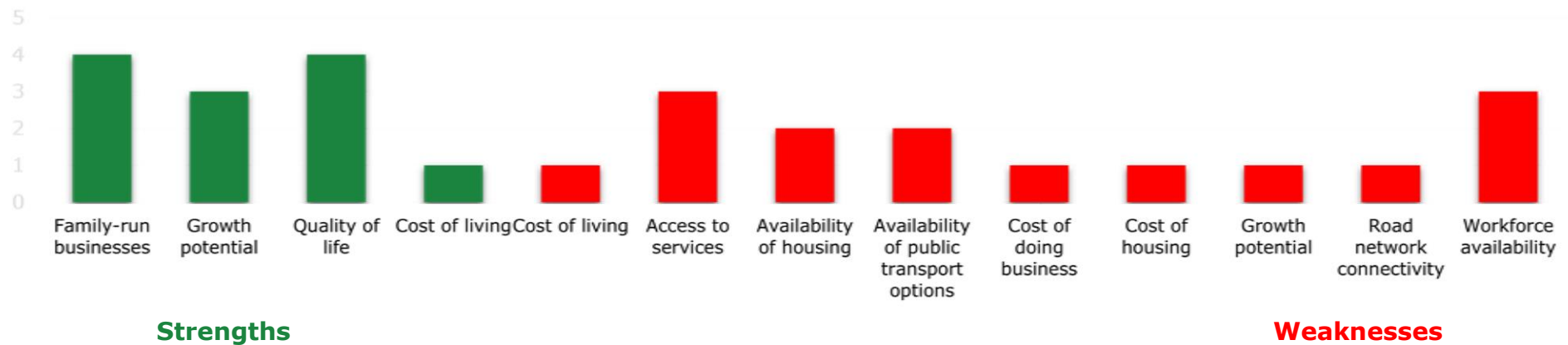


Do You Consider Graiguenamanagh an Attractive Place to do Business?



- The Graiguenamanagh business environment can be improved significantly for enterprise growth to be realised.
- Graiguenamanagh has a vibrant enterprise environment in which both young and established firms can grow.
- Graiguenamanagh has a solid business environment, where growth can be realised. Some improvements could be made.

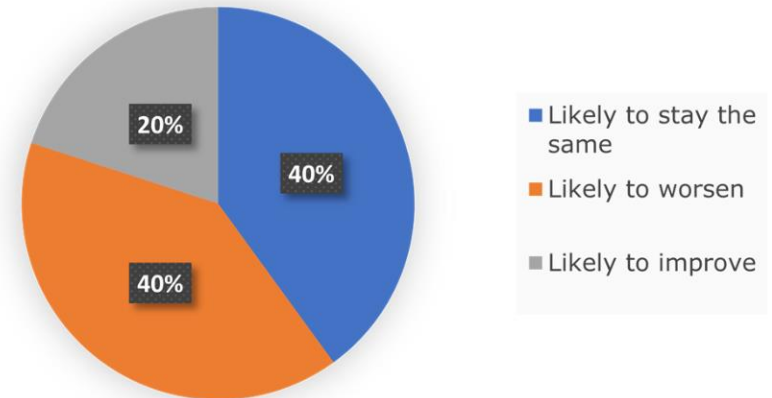
What are Graiguenamanagh's three main strengths and weakness as a place to do business?



What would you regard as Graiguenamanagh's unique selling point, or a factor that makes Graiguenamanagh stand out from other towns of its size?

Hub
Abbey
Attractive
River Barrow
Beautiful Scenery
Friendly Atmosphere

What are your expectations for trading over the next two years.



Have you tried to source space in Graiguenamanagh area in the past 3 years?

None of the business owners who took part in the survey tried to source space in the past 3 years.

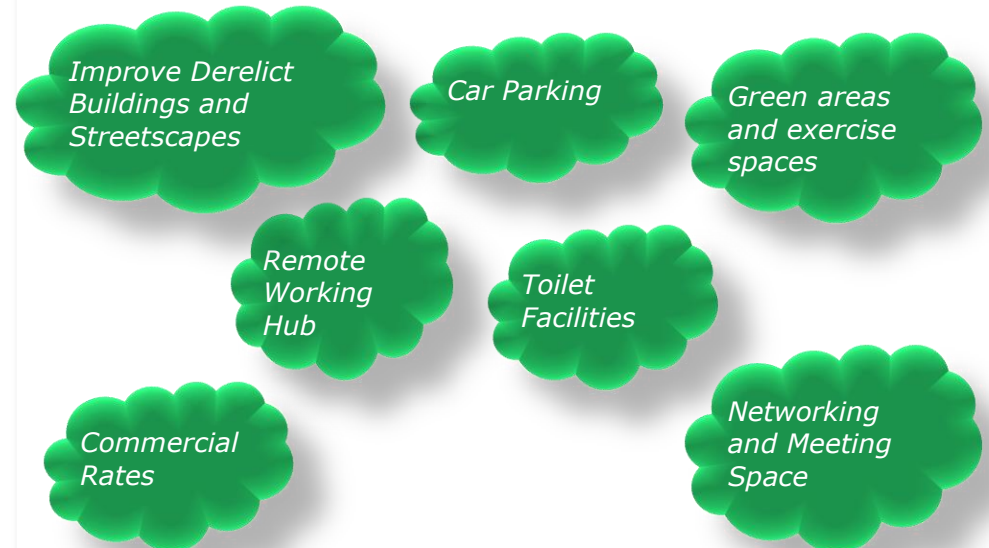
Considering your own firm if currently located in Graiguenamanagh, what is your own position on scaling-up, expanding or relocating your operations in the future?

Two businesses intended on scaling up at their existing locations.

Please outline the ways in which you plan to scale-up or expand.

Business owners intend to upscale through additional hiring; offering new services or products; new markets and by increasing sales.

What changes or improvements would you suggest as part of the Graiguenamanagh plan to help boost business in Graiguenamanagh town centre?



What types of events or festivals would do well in Graiguenamanagh?

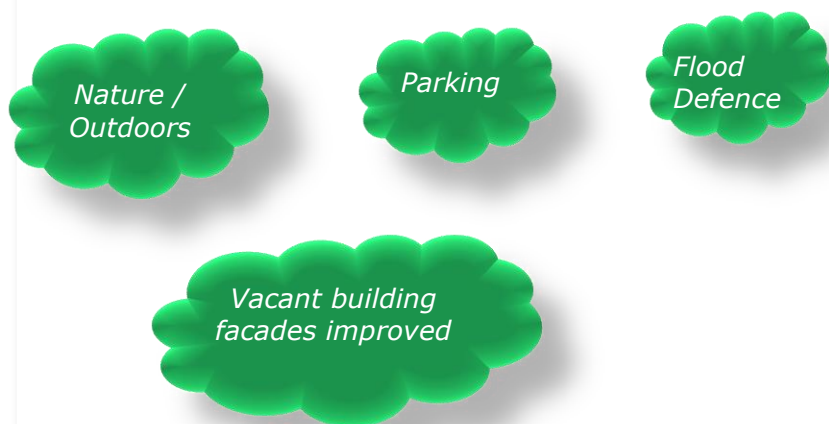


Is there a particular building (or buildings) which you would consider vacant or underutilised buildings in Graiguenamanagh which could be repurposed to a use which supports the town's vibrancy?



Are there other important issues or goals that should be given priority in the Graiguenamanagh Plan?

The business owner respondents noted the following important issues and goals:



What is your vision for Graiguenamanagh moving forward?

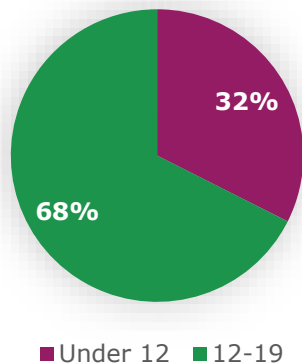


9. Youth Survey

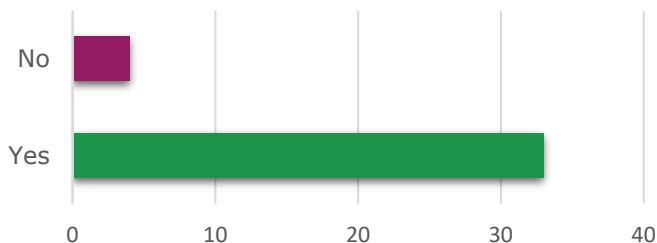
According to 2022 Census data, the youth population (Under 19) of the study area comprises 22% of the overall population. The Public Survey was regularly monitored to review engagement and activity. On week two of the four week period, responses from the youth cohort accounted for just 1%. To encourage engagement with the youth population, a youth survey was launched and shared with schools and youth organisations in the area. A total of 37 responses were received.

Summary of Responses

Age Profile



Do you feel safe in Graiguenamanagh?



Perception of the Town

Most liked about the town

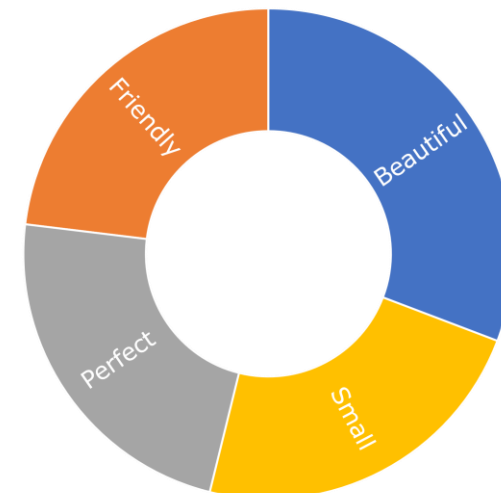
People / Friends
The River
The Shops
Restaurants
The Size
Landscape
Nature
Recreation
Youth Group

Most disliked about the town

It's small
Campervans
Vacancy
No indoor recreation
Youth Group
Loudness
It's boring
Not a lot to do
No girls football team
No late night activities
Limited Restaurants

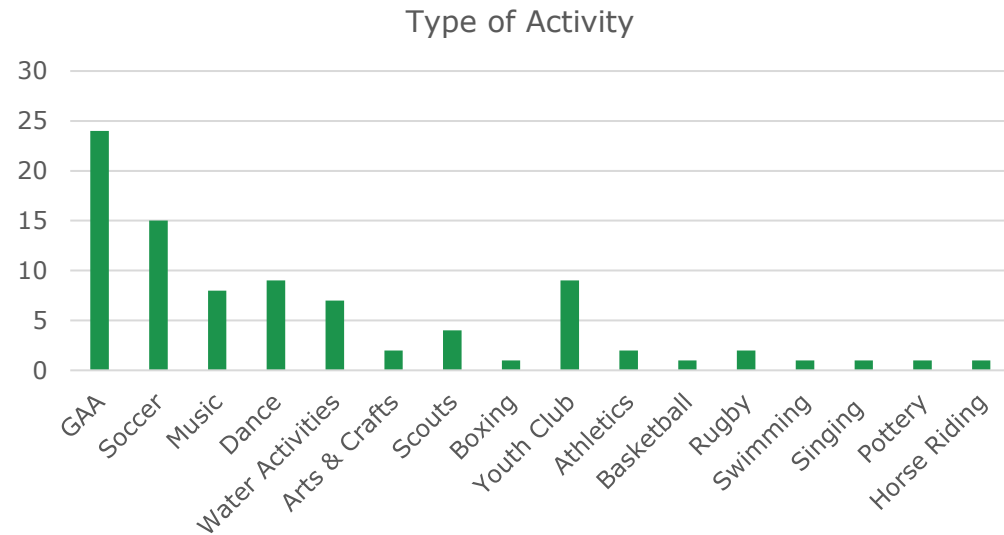
Graiguenamanagh in one word

When asked to describe Graiguenamanagh in one word, the following were the most common:



Activities

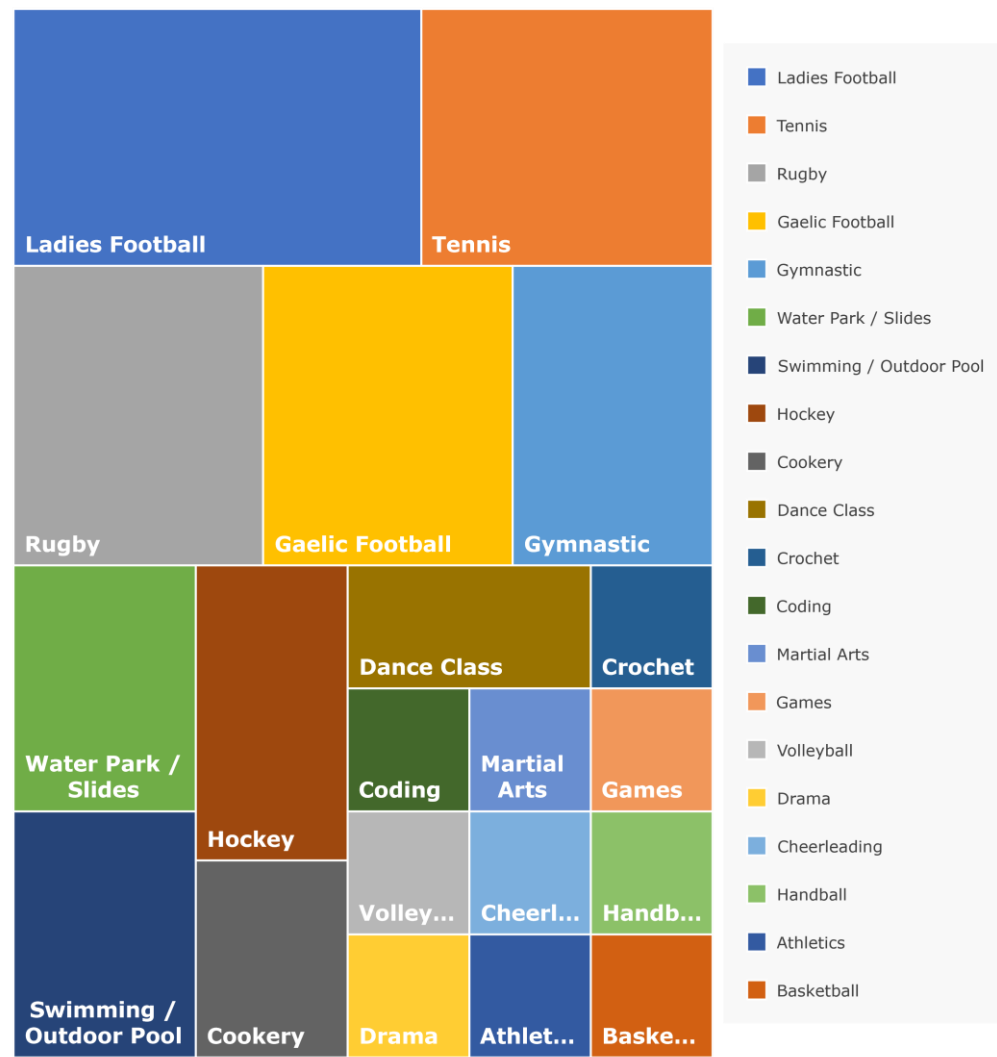
All of the youth survey respondents stated that they were involved in a recreational activity.



The majority of activities take place in Graiguenamanagh, however, many youths travel to surrounding towns to take part in the activity.

What activities would you like to see in Graiguenamanagh?

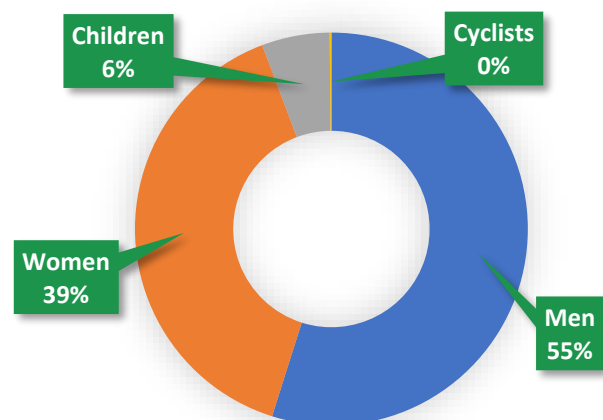
When asked what activities they would like to see in Graiguenamanagh, the following were the most common:



10. Town Centre Footfall

A footfall survey was undertaken by the Town Team and the Town Regeneration Section of Kilkenny County Council on Friday 7th March and Saturday 8th March 2025, as per the CTCHC methodology. Pedestrians and routes were counted during three time slots on both days. Routes of travel were also recorded. The below table summarises the count results per location whilst the adjacent map indicates the number of pedestrians using main routes in the town. Due to the seasonal tourism industry of Graigueenamanagh, it is recommended that a comparative footfall survey be carried out during the summer period.

Day	Time	The Quay	The Abbey	Abbey Hall	Total Per Time
Friday	10.45am-11.00am	18	15	8	41
07/03/2025	1:00pm-1.15pm	33	23	11	67
	4:15pm-4.30pm	28	28	13	69
Saturday	10.15am-10.30am	28	22	15	65
08/03/2025	12:15pm-12.30pm	40	17	16	73
	4:15pm-4.30pm	51	31	19	101
Total Per Location		197	134	81	416



11. Car Parking Survey

A survey of car parking spaces within the study area was carried out as part of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check process. The off-street parking spaces relate to locations available to the general public and do not include off-street parking spaces within the study area that are exclusively for private domestic use. Graiguenamanagh contains a number of off-street car parking facilities within the town centre, providing c. 228 no. formal off-street car parking spaces, however, usage may not be public. Formal (marked) on-street spaces within the study area are found on Main Street with additional designated disability spaces provided on Barrow Lane, Upper Main Street and Chapel Street.

Significant lengths of informal car parking occurring on all streets in the study area, particularly Upper Main Street, the Quay and Chapel Street. parking occurs along both/either sides of Chapel Street, Barrow Lane, Bray Lane, Convent Lane, Graiguenamanagh Quay and Mill Road.

Additional car parking demand arises from the seasonal tourism parking requirements. As noted in the Mobility Management Study, this situation presents major road safety issues for all road users, businesses and residents within Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch (e.g. obstructed/restricted emergency vehicle access along Graiguenamanagh Quay). A follow up car parking survey during the peak season is recommended.

All parking is free with no pay and display parking system in operation.

Location	Type	Total Spaces	Occupied	Occupancy (%)
The Quay	Public car park	38	7	18%
Market Square	Public car park	8	5	63%
Turf Market	Public car park	15	11	73%
Fair View	Public car park	50	18	36%
SuperValu	Customer car park	22	12	55%
Aldi	Customer car park	85	23	27%
Brandonvale Pharmacy	Customer car park	4	3	75%
The Quay (Tinnahinch)	Resident spaces	6	3	46%
Total	Off-Street	228		
Lower Main St.	On-street	7	3	43%
Barrow Lane	On-street accessibility space	1	1	100%
Upper Main St.	On-street accessibility space	1	1	100%
Chapel St.	On-street accessibility space	2	1	50%
The Quay (Tinnahinch)		13	6	46
Total	On-Street	11		

Formal (marked) car parking facilities.

12. Urban Design Appraisal

During the CTCHC process, features within the Town Centre study area which contribute to the streetscape and the character of the town were observed. The main findings are detailed below.

Squares and Plazas

The Graiguenamanagh study area contains several public areas which benefit from planting or street decoration, however, there are limited outdoor spaces in the town centre which may function as civic spaces. Options to improve same may be explored.

Street Furniture

Street furniture in the study area is most evident on Main Street and along the Quay. Historically sensitive lighting columns are found at Main Street Lower, however, typical galvanised utility poles are located throughout the town. Monk statues are found throughout the public realm within the town centre. A consistent street furniture scheme which connects with the history of the settlement would contribute to the overall streetscape.

Signage, Plaques, Emblems, etc.

Various areas of the town centre include historic signage, including memorials and plaques at locations of cultural heritage, e.g. Peg Washington Lane, Turf Market. A visitor information sign is located in the town centre and wayfinding signage is located throughout the town centre. Abbey Lane has recently been refurbished with local photograph of historic interest. Gateway signage into the settlement are standard and do not add to the sense of place or heritage of Graiguenamanagh. Opportunities for further enhancement may be explored, as well as promotion of the features.

Natural and Green Spaces

The river frontage and associated recreational uses make a significant contribution to the town's natural spaces. The green infrastructure belt in the town runs primarily along the east west axis, along the river. The protection and enhancement of these areas as well as the links between them will play a significant role in enhancing biodiversity and providing opportunities for sustainable travel. Additionally, the town benefits from two sports pitches, a playground and a pocket park. More centrally in the town centre study area, there are limited green spaces which are functional, excluding the playground and the Abbey Hall multipurpose space. Opportunities for greening of the town centre may be explored further.

Trees and Planting

Notwithstanding the natural and green spaces, the town also benefits from the presence of street trees and planting which are most prevalent on Main Street and along the Quay. The Graig Garden was identified during the public survey as being a notable feature in the streetscape.

Desire Lines

A 'Desire Line' is the preferred route from one point to another and is typically the most direct and shortest route. 'Desire Lines' were observed in Graiguenamanagh during the CTCHC process. Formal pedestrian crossings along Main Street are very limited with just one present at Abbey Hall. Pedestrians were also observed making crossings at junctions off Main Street to minor streets.

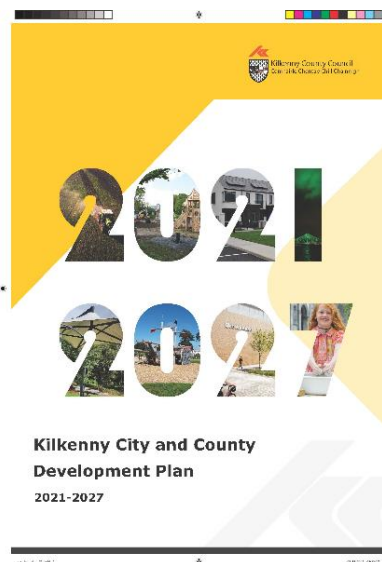
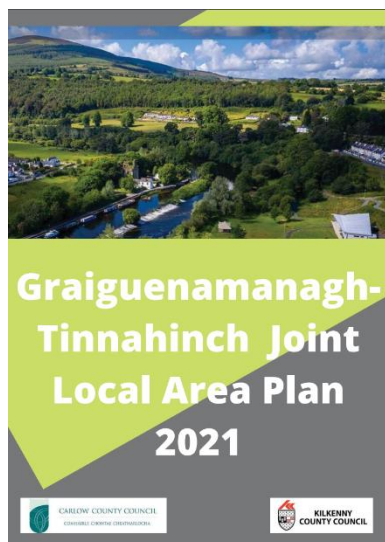
13. Planning Policy Context

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out policies and objectives for development until 2027. Graiguenamanagh is identified as one of 4 'District Towns' within the settlement hierarchy of the Development Plan, along with Callan, Castlecomer and Thomastown.

Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch Local Area Plan 2021-2027

A Local Area Plan (LAP) for Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch was jointly prepared by Kilkenny County Council and Carlow County Council in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and was adopted in July 2021. The LAP sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the joint settlements. The LAP comprises the statutory land use plan for the town in the promotion and regulation of development and provides a clear vision for the joint settlement of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch. It provides a development framework for Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch by setting out policy and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town, having regard to the needs of the town. The LAP plays a key role in translating overarching County Development Plan policies and objectives at the local level.



14. Social Infrastructure Audit

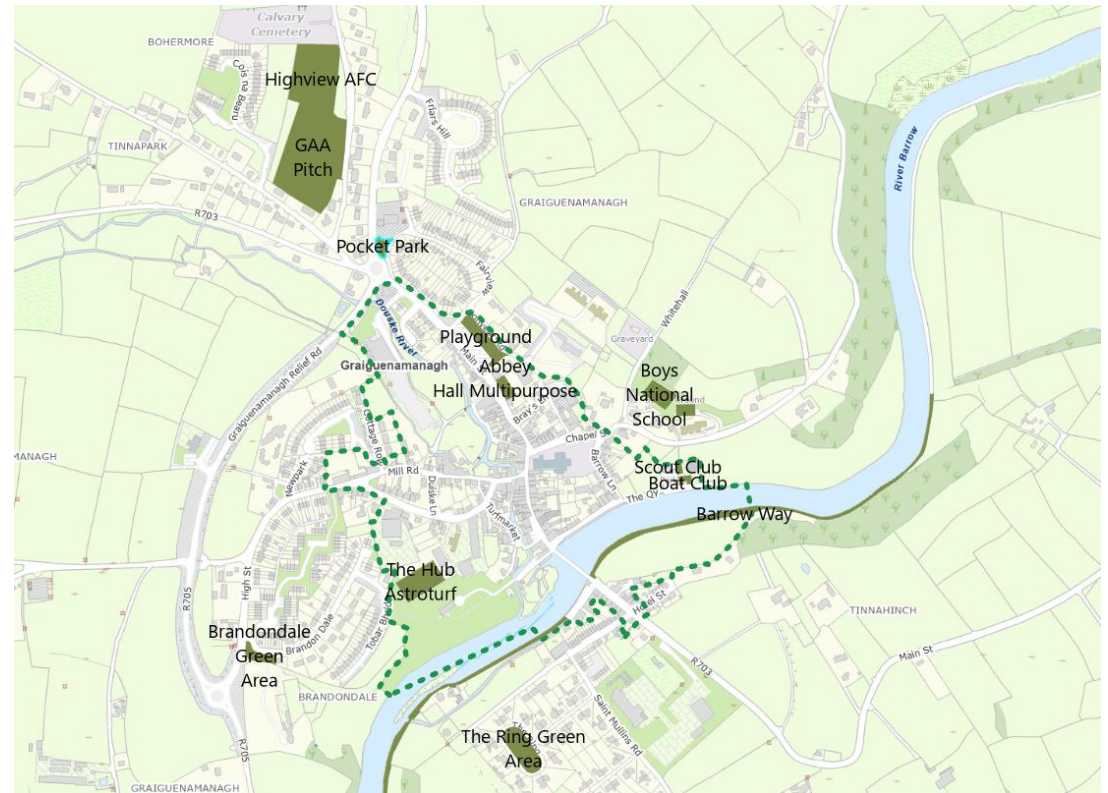
The Planning Department of Kilkenny County Council carried out a review of existing social infrastructure as part of this Collaborative Town Centre Health Check. The study area for the audit was the Local Area Plan boundary for Graigueenamanagh-Tinnahinch. This audit comprised an examination of the existing situation with regards to social infrastructure provision, and highlighted any gaps.

One deficiency identified through the audit process was the capacity of existing healthcare facilities in the town centre and the lack of certain facilities such as dentalcare. A site has been identified by the HSE for a Primary Care Centre which would increase capacity in this regard.

Recreational and open spaces within the town were found to exceed the minimum requirements of the County Development Plan.

The Hub and the Abbey Hall were identified as community assets in the town, with both accommodating a variety of events and activities for the community by a variety of local groups. In general, the town has a strong recreational and social infrastructural base but limitations on healthcare facilities exist.

The open space and recreational features of the central area are shown on adjacent figure.



15. SCOT Analysis

Following completion of the above research and surveys, an assessment of the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) of Graiguenamanagh has been carried out. The SCOT can be defined as follows:

- Strengths – i.e. existing positives and advantages of Graiguenamanagh town centre.
- Constraints – i.e. existing constraints facing Graiguenamanagh town centre.
- Opportunities – i.e. areas that have been identified as being potential future strengths for Graiguenamanagh town centre.
- Threats – i.e. potential future challenges facing Graiguenamanagh town centre.

STRENGTHS	CONSTRAINTS	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BUILT HERITAGE OF THE TOWN, INCLUDING THE ABBEY - STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT - RIVER BARROW AND ASSOCIATED RECREATIONAL WATER ACTIVITIES - LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY - STRONG TOURISM INDUSTRY - WIDE RANGE OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES - COMMUNITY BUILDINGS WITH RANGE OF USES - STEADILY GROWING POPULATION - ESTABLISHED TOWN IDENTITY WITH REGULAR EVENTS - PUBLIC ART AND PLANTING 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HIGH RATE OF VACANCY AND BUILDINGS AT RISK OF DERELICTION - LIMITED YEAR-ROUND HOSPITALITY OFFERING INCL. ACCOMMODATION AND DINING OPTIONS - PRIORITY OF CARS OVER PEDESTRIANS - NO CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ALONG THE BRIDGE - DEPENDENCY ON LARGER URBAN AREAS FOR RETAIL AND SERVICES PROVISION - NO CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE - FLOOD RISK - LIMITED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR SPECIFIC AGE GROUPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REFURBISHMENT AND REUSE OF VACANT, DERELICT AND UNDERUTILISED PROPERTIES - USE OF HERITAGE SITES AS COMMUNITY ASSETS - ENHANCEMENT OF SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, USING COMMUNITY SKILLS - TRAFFIC CONTROL - REDUCTION OF CAR-DEPENDENCY VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION - PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND FUNDING STREAMS TO ENABLE DEVELOPMENT - CONNECTIONS TO LOCAL AMENITIES - REUSE AND IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES - BUILDING ON THE TOWN'S IDENTITY - GREENING OF THE TOWN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EXTERNAL FACTORS, INCLUDING ECONOMIC AND LEGISLATIVE - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - IMPACT OF INCREASED POPULATION ON EXISTING SERVICES - DEPENDENCY ON TOURISM SECTOR - ADDITIONAL VACANCY AND DERELICTION WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE - CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE - FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

16. Considerations and Opportunities

- **Vacant and Derelict Properties:** The rate of vacancy in the town centre is very high. Vacancy is particularly concentrated along Main Street but there is also vacant units on most side streets in the study area. Many existing vacant buildings have been maintained and painted which maintains the quality of the streetscape, however, a number of properties have been identified as being derelict whilst many have been found to be at risk of dereliction. Preventing further vacancy and dereliction is a priority for the study area.
- **Public Realm and Streetscape:** The main streets of the town are quite narrow, leading to the public realm being dominated by cars and traffic. Public spaces have limited usability for public events. Future opportunities to enhance the public areas for public uses may be considered including enhancing lighting, seating, covered areas. There is also opportunity to improve existing public spaces. Areas in particular include Main Street and along the Quay.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The town has a rich heritage which is promoted in the town centre. Opportunities to further enhance the town's heritage should be explored to encourage a consistency with heritage features and their promotion.
- **Traffic Management:** Opportunities to enhance traffic management and car parking may be considered, including provision of safer pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian safety along the bridge was a common issue raised in the community survey. Use of existing off-street car parks in the town may be promoted. Opportunities to permanently address the seasonal car parking deficits may also be considered.
- **Tourism:** The town is a renowned tourist destination, particularly during the summer season. Opportunities to build on this may be explored to maximise the benefits to the town including provision of tourist accommodation and eateries and expanding on recreational opportunities.
- **Community Engagement:** Graiguenamanagh benefits from the presence of local groups and sports teams. Opportunities may arise to build capacity in groups or establishing newer groups to involve marginalised groups of the community. The community responses to the survey indicated a demand for activities for all age groups and a desire to raise community spirit. Opportunities to involve the wider community may be considered.
- **Car-Dependency:** Most town users rely on private cars for their mobility as the infrastructure is catered to motorised vehicles. There is an opportunity to enhance active travel and public transport opportunities. Opportunities to improve walkability have also been identified.
- **Population Growth:** Graiguenamanagh experienced a minor population increase between Census 2016 and Census 2022 of 31 people. Opportunities to continue the steady growth of the town arise, including tackling the high level of vacancy and enhancing the town as an attractive place to live by the provision of amenities.

