Mooncoin
Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Report

2025

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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
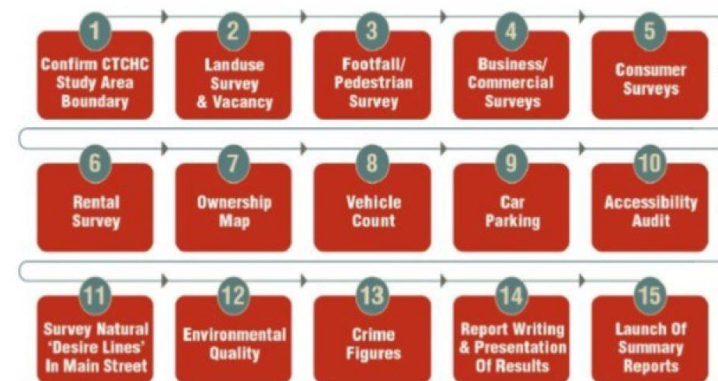Kilkenny County Council

Contents

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 Mooncoin as part of the CTCHC process. The findings of the CTCHC Programme will 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 January 2025.

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

1. Confirm CTCHC Study Area Boundary
2. Landuse Survey & Vacancy
3. Footfall/Pedestrian Survey
4. Business/Commercial Surveys
5. Consumer Surveys
6. Rental Survey
7. Ownership Map
8. Vehicle Count
9. Car Parking
10. Accessibility Audit
11. Survey Natural 'Desire Lines' In Main Street
12. Environmental Quality
13. Crime Figures
14. Report Writing & Presentation Of Results
15. Launch Of Summary Reports

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2. Survey Methodology

The CTCHC research and surveys for the Mooncoin Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) took place between October 2024 and December 2024 by the Town Regeneration Team of Kilkenny County Council in collaboration with the 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 November 2024. Land uses were recorded using ArcGIS Online and the accompanying Field Maps app. Vacant property surveys have previously been carried out by the Town Regeneration Team which assisted in the collation of vacant units. The land use survey in November 2024 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 November, staff members of Kilkenny County Council carried out a pedestrian and cyclist count at three different locations in Mooncoin. 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.

Business Owner Survey Questionnaire

A Business Owners survey was issued to businesses in Mooncoin which accepted submissions from 16th December 2024. Each business in the town centre was contacted directly. The survey garnered limited interest from the business community, receiving one submission.

Car Parking

In November 2024, car parking areas within the study area were counted and surveyed for occupancy on various days and times.
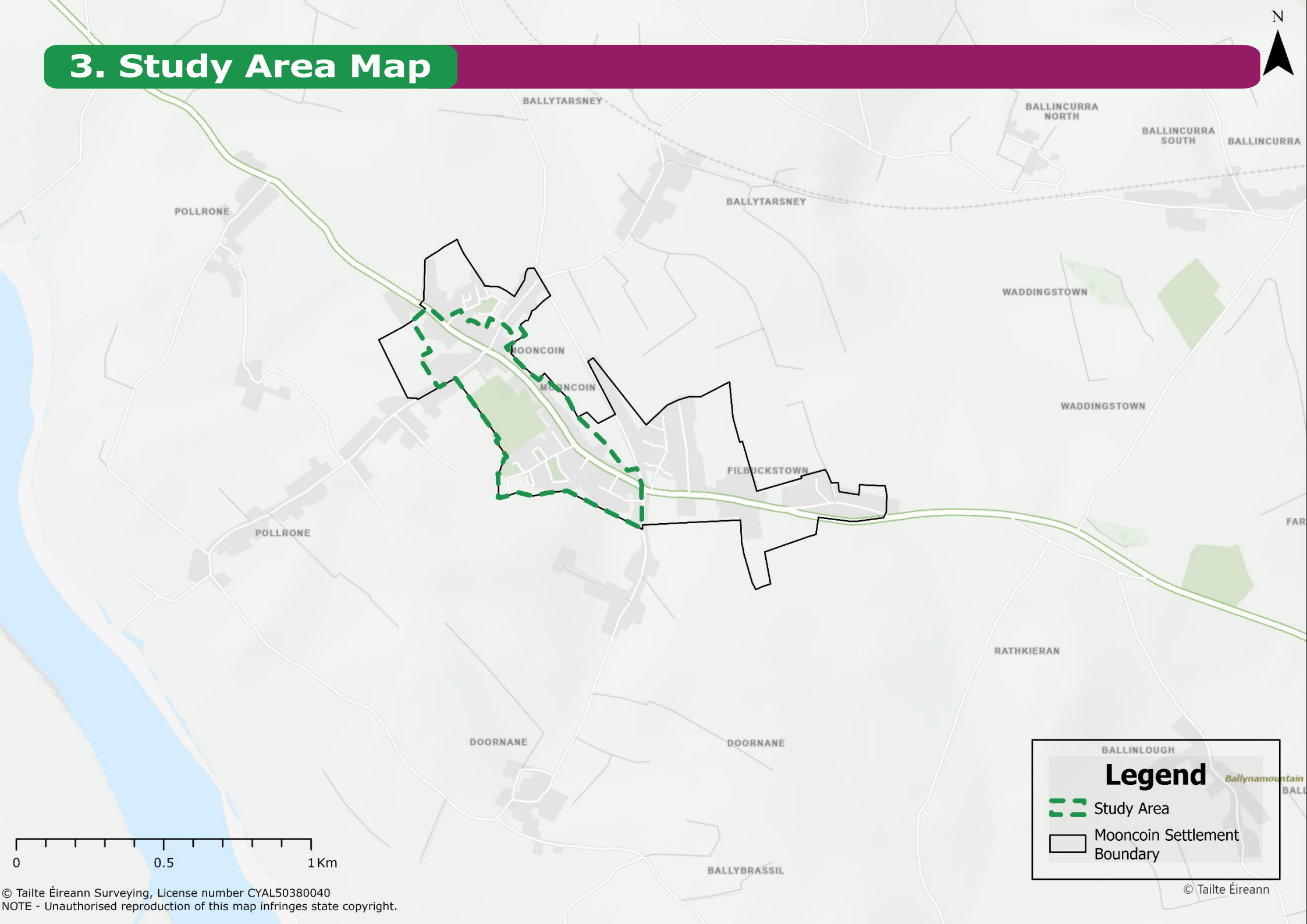
Natural Desire Lines

'Desire Lines' are informal paths / ways / crossings used by pedestrians to enable a direct route. Desire lines, i.e. areas where pedestrians attempted to cross the road, were observed in the Town Centre by the Town Regeneration Team.

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 25th October 2024 to 30th November 2024. 16 no. respondents completed the survey. The survey questions were based on the environment and people's experience of Mooncoin, public realm, transport, car parking and accessibility, activities and uses, and work and the local economy in Mooncoin.

3. Study Area Map

N

BALLYTARSNEY

BALLINCURRA
NORTH

BALLINCURRA
SOUTH

BALLINCURRA

POLLRONE

BALLYTARSNEY

WADDINGSTOWN

MOONCOIN

MOONCOIN

WADDINGSTOWN

FILBUCKSTOWN

POLLRONE

FAR

RATHKIERAN

DOORNANE

DOORNANE

Legend

BALLINLOUGH

Ballynamountain

BALL

Study Area

Mooncoin Settlement
Boundary

BALLYBRASSIL

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0   0.5   1 Km

4. Introduction to Mooncoin

Mooncoin is located in the extreme south of County Kilkenny, in the valley of the River Suir. Mooncoin is ringed by uplands, with Slievenamon to the northwest, an outlier of Slievenamon to the north and the Comeragh Mountains to the west. Mooncoin is situated on the N24 National Road which links Waterford City to Limerick via Carrick-on-Suir. Mooncoin is approximately 10km from Waterford city and 50km from Kilkenny City. The Waterford-Limerick railway line runs to the north of the village, through Ballytarsney.

Mooncoin developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a result of rural settlement occurring in a linear form around the new road being constructed. According to O'Kelly, the name Mooncoin derives from an anglicized version of Moin Chaidhn, which, when translated literally, means Coyne's Bogland. Coyne Grant was a member of the Grant family who were property owners in Pollrone, Dungooly and Ballynabooly prior to the Cromwellian confiscation of their lands. The Presentation nuns began teaching in the village in 1829, when the then Parish Priest, Rev. Nicholas Carroll, bought the order a house in the centre of the village. The Convent school was built next to the Church in 1871. The Catholic Church, which is single cell, was built in 1869.

The present form of the town is linear, spread along a considerable stretch of the N24, the main Waterford – Carrick-on-Suir road, with minimal development to the north and south of this. The town is characterised by a variety of building types and scales, including traditional cottages, large private dwellings and public amenities and services such as the church, schools, parish hall, petrol station and shops. Mooncoin lacks a coherent village centre in the traditional sense of layout and form.
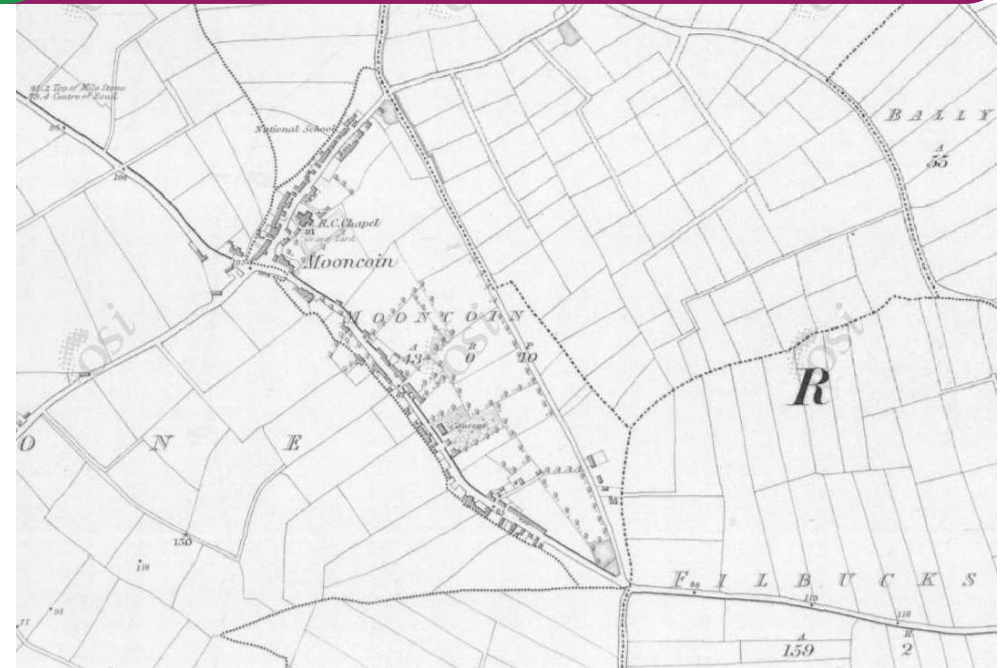
ORDNANCE SURVEY, 6 INCH MAPPING 1829-1841

The extent of the main street between the two crossroads is narrow and does give some sense of enclosure, but the original settlement has now largely decayed, leaving gaps in the streetscape. The western end of the town is well defined by the presence of the Church, convent and school, and the housing on the opposite side of the street. The eastern approach to the town is less structured, with a number of large stand-alone buildings set in their own grounds, such as the two schools, and the Suite Deal Furniture Shop. The open space of Comeragh View also serves to give an open feel to this part of the town.

The population of Mooncoin was 1,184 as per the 2022 Census.

5. The Built Heritage of Mooncoin

The town centre of Mooncoin contains 5 no. structures which are included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has also recorded a number of structures within Mooncoin, comprising 10 no. structures in total. 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.
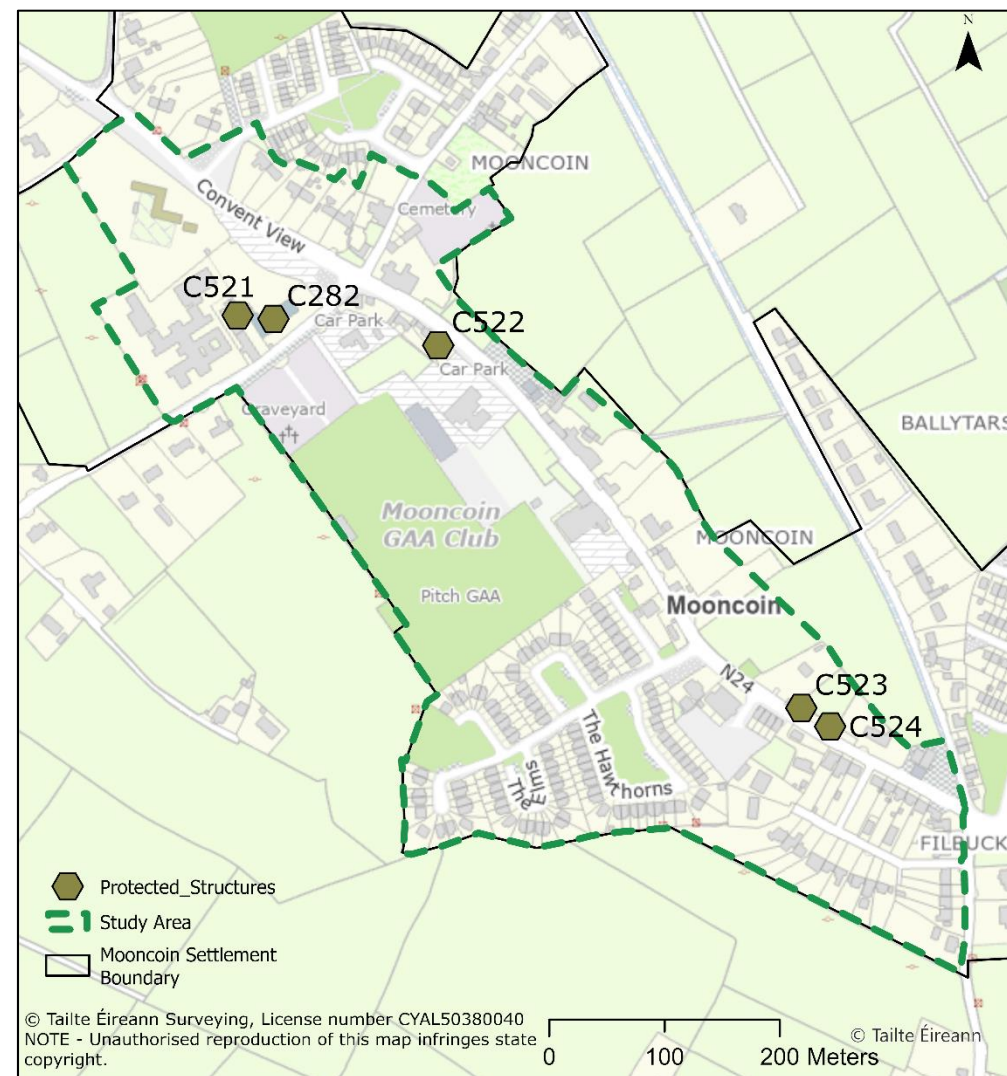

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6. Land Use and Vacancy

A survey of the land uses and vacancy rates of buildings within the Mooncoin study area was carried out in November 2024.

A total of 192 buildings within the town centre were surveyed with 87.5% comprising residential buildings and the remaining 12.5% comprising services, commercial activities or open space. There is limited retail land uses within the town centre, resulting in a dependency on surrounding settlements.

Vacant residential units within the town centre comprised 3% of the overall land uses whereas vacant commercial units comprised 1.5% of the land uses. This demonstrates that vacancy is not a significant issue within the town centre.

Land Uses within the Study Area
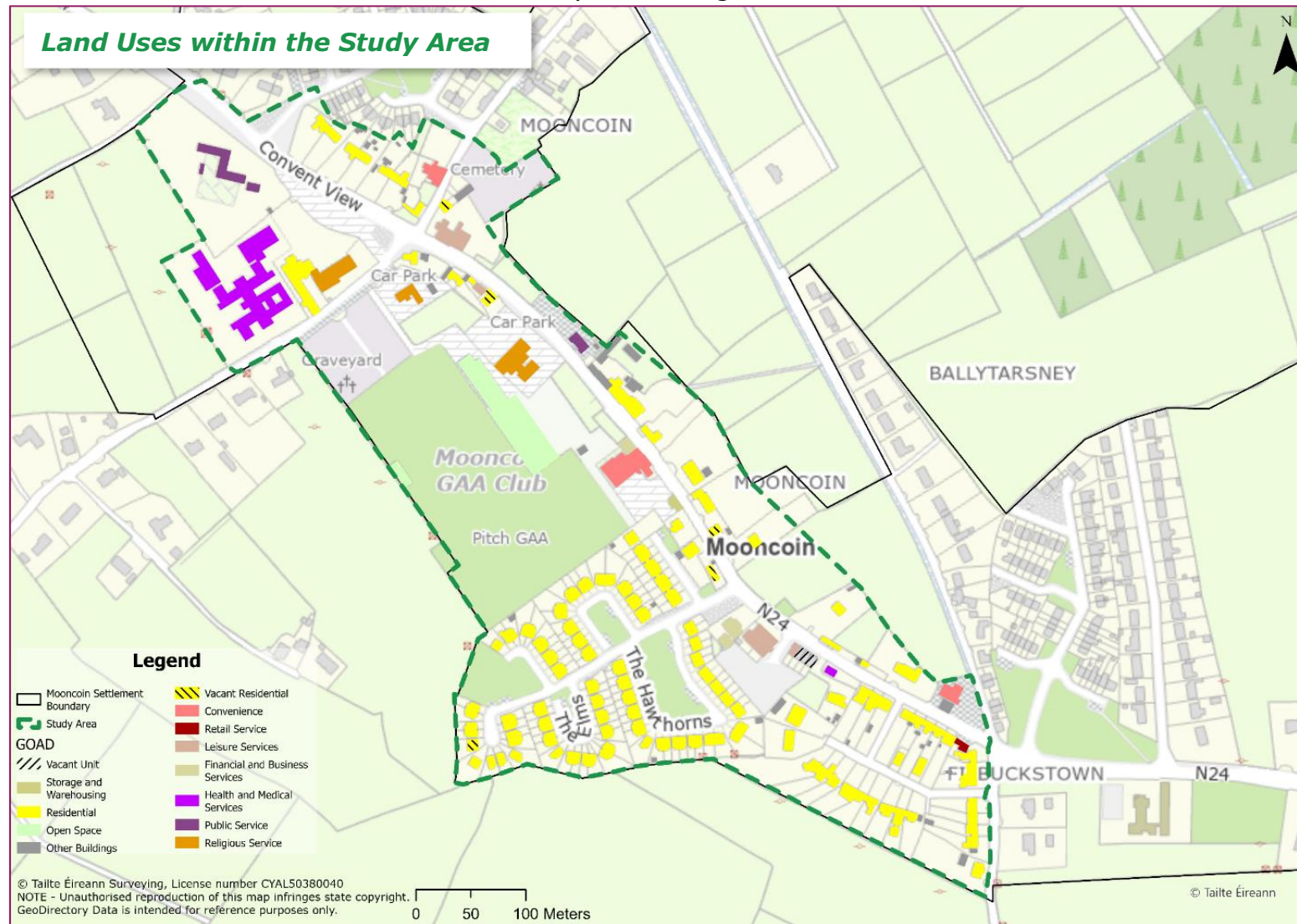
Mooncoin Town Centre Land Uses

85%	Residential
3%	Vacant Residential
1.5%	Health and Medical Services
2%	Leisure Services
1.5%	Religious Service
1.5%	Convenience
1.5%	Vacant Non-Residential
1%	Public Service
1%	Financial and Business Services
1%	Open Space
0.5%	Retail Services
0.5%	Storage and Warehousing
0%	Other Retail
0%	Comparison

Total Buildings Surveyed 192

Residential Use 87.5%

Non-Residential Use 12.5%

Legend

- Mooncoin Settlement Boundary
- Study Area
- GOAD
- Vacant Unit
- Storage and Warehousing
- Residential
- Open Space
- Other Buildings
- Vacant Residential
- Convenience
- Retail Service
- Leisure Services
- Financial and Business Services
- Health and Medical Services
- Public Service
- Religious Service

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0   50   100 Meters

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Legend

- - - Study Area
/// Vacant Unit
\\\ Vacant Residential

Vacancy within the Study Area - Key Findings

Residential Vacancy (5 no.) **3%**
(Calculated using 'residential' and 'vacant residential' values)

Vacancy Non-Residential (3 no.) **1.5%**
(Calculated using all GOAD land uses surveyed excluding 'residential' and 'vacant residential')

Total Vacancy (8no.) **4%**
(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: **0**

- Structures within the wider settlement area: **2**

0   100 Meters

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 25th October 2024 to 20th November 2024. 16 no. respondents completed the survey. The survey questions were based on the environment and people's experience of Mooncoin, public realm, transport, car parking and accessibility, activities and uses, and work and the local economy in Mooncoin.

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 (5.1) and Identity and Belonging (5.0). The topics that scored the lowest was Traffic and Parking (2.9).

The results indicate that Mooncoin is doing well in certain 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	**2.9**
Public Transport	**2.9**
Traffic and Parking	**2.8**
Streets and Spaces	**3.9**
Natural Space	**4.0**
Play and Recreation	**3.5**
Facilities and Services	**4.3**
Work and Local Economy	**3.8**
Housing and Community	**3.4**
Social Interaction	**3.9**
Identity and Belonging	**5.0**
Feeling Safe	**5.1**
Care and Maintenance	**4.2**
Influence and Sense of Control	**3.3**

Place Standard Tool

Public Transport Score: 2.9
44% of respondents rated Public Transport as '1'. Suggested increased frequency of bus connections to Waterford and Carrick-on-Suir.

Traffic and Parking   Score: 2.8
Traffic and Parking was the lowest score in the Place Standard assessment overall with 44% of responding with '1'. Traffic levels and speeds are the most common issue raised by respondents which reduce safety in the town.

Streets and Spaces   Score: 3.9
The most frequent responses to Streets and Spaces were '4' (25%); '5' and '7' (both 19%). The main concern relating to this topic was road safety and accessibility of footpaths. Respondents also suggested streetscape improvement such as tree maintenance and additional public lighting.

Natural Space   Score: 4.0
'4' was the most frequent response to Natural Space with 31%. The respondents suggested a greenway to Waterford and a public park.

Play and Recreation   Score: 3.5
42% of respondents gave Play and Recreation a '3'. Respondents suggested improvements to the existing playground or alternative spaces for older children. Additional recreational opportunities for all ages were also suggested.

Facilities and Services Score: 4.3
The most common result for Facilities and Services was '5' with 44%. Suggestions from the respondents included more regular health / medical services and finance/banking services.

Work and Local Economy   Score: 3.8
Results to Work and Local Economy were varied with 26% rating the topic as '1', yet 20% responded with '6'.

Moving Around   Score: 2.9
The highest response for Moving Around was '1' (28%). Respondents noted the existence of high amenity walking areas, however, safety concerns are a significant area of concern, particularly the level of road traffic and footpath widths. Respondents also raised concerns regarding the level of public transport to Waterford and nearby settlements. Cycle infrastructure was also a recurring theme.

Housing and Community   Score: 3.4

The most frequent response to Housing and Community was '5' (33%). The main concerns raised by respondents are the lack of availability of housing and the overall safety of the area due to traffic speed and tree-maintenance. A lack of community spirit was also an issue raised.

Social Interaction   Score: 3.9

Social Interaction was most frequently rated '4' (33%) with respondents acknowledging the existing recreational opportunities and suggesting additional opportunities.

Identity and Belonging   Score: 5.0

The most popular response to Identity and Belonging was '7' (33%) indicating that there is a sense of identity and belonging within Mooncoin. Improved community spirit was suggested.

Feeling Safe   Score: 5.1

Feeling Safe was the highest rated topic in the Place Standard assessment overall with the most popular responses being '7' (27%); '4', '5' and '6' (each 20%). Suggestions include a more active garda presence to reduce crime rates in the town and actions to reduce traffic speed. Additional lighting was also suggested to improve safety on walkways.

Care and Maintenance   Score: 4.2

The most common responses to Care and Maintenance were '4' and '5' (both 20%). The respondents did not raise any concerns regarding any particular buildings in the town. Maintenance of trees appears to be a key concern.

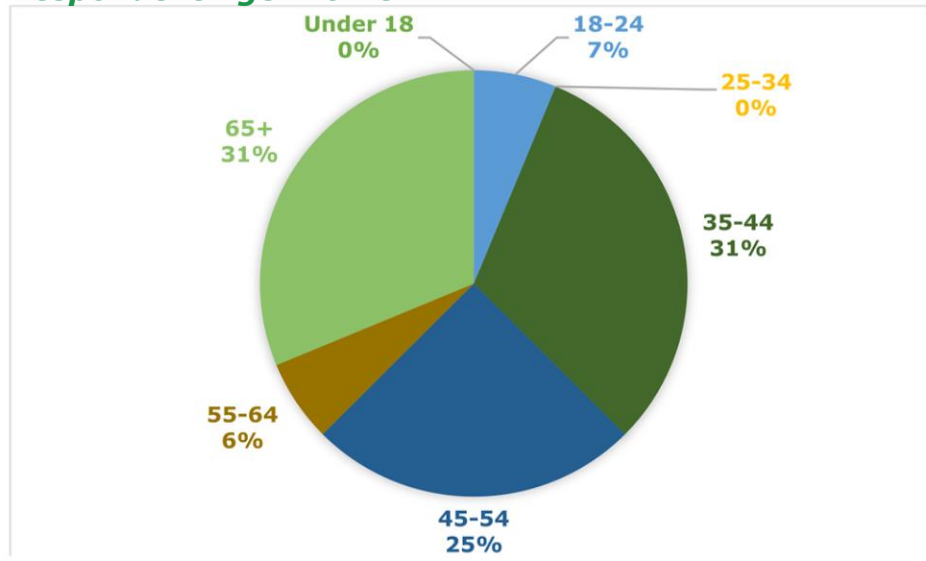### Influence and Sense of Control   Score: 3.3

33% of respondents rated Influence and Sense of Control as '4'. Suggestions for improvements include public meetings throughout the year.

Public Survey Questionnaire – Summary of Responses

Respondent Profiles
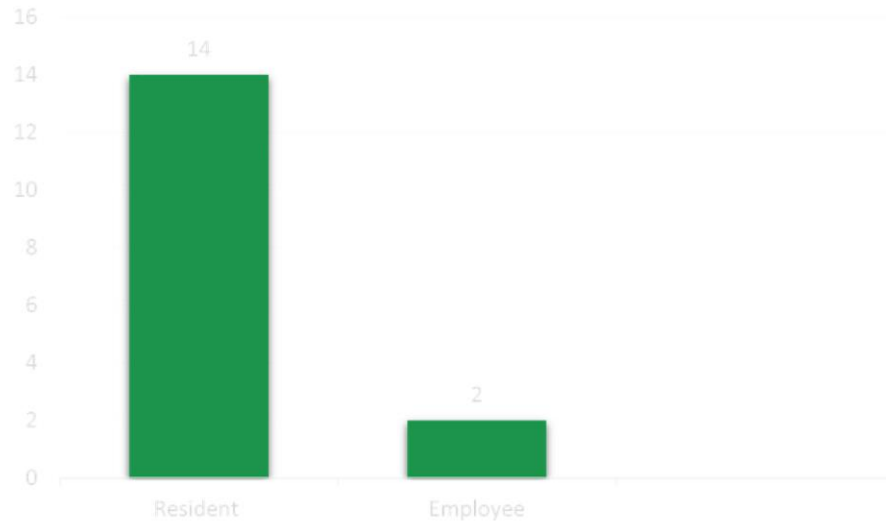
Respondent Age Profile

Are there any linkages that could be improved? / Have you any specific suggestions for improvements?

Calming Measures

Some nice local walks but dangerous roads with no pathways

More frequent buses to Waterford and Carrick on Suir

Bus Times

City Link bus with access for all users

Along the Rose Walk

Paths are too narrow

Good linkages, not only around GAA club

Have you any specific suggestions for improvements?

Safety Improvements
Improve Playground
More Car Parking on Chapel St
Reduce Speed
Greenway along River
Speed Bumps
Speed Van
Cycling Infrastructure
Traffic Management and Regulation
Public Park
Improve Lighting
Walkway

What are the main issues and priorities for change in Mooncoin?

Use of Community Hall
Greenway to Waterford
GP Service
Traffic Levels
Traffic Speed
Road Safety
Housing
Crime
Capital Input
Antisocial Behaviour
On-street Car Parking
Traffic Management
Walkways
Better Public Transport
Cycling Infrastructure
Improve Engagement
Private Housing

Is there anything specific that is needed in Mooncoin to serve the population?

Improved Playground
Doctor / GP
Dentist
Accessibility Improvements
Bank
Public Transport
Public Park
Better Public Transport
Credit Union
Disabled Car Parking Spaces
Better Pathways and Walkways

Can you list your top 3 priorities for Mooncoin here?

Public Consultation
GP Service
Footpaths
Public Transport
Rubbish Bins
Bypass
Road Safety
Police Station
Lighting
Recreation for All Ages
Inclusive Car Parking
Community Spirit
Tree Maintenance

What actions could be taken to deal with these?

Council Meetings in Mooncoin with locals.

Improve walkability on main streets

Make Exit from Centra safer

Manage speeding in the village

Better public transport

City Link Bus

Maintain the trees

More disabled parking

Safer Road

Reduce Speeding

Stop mast developments in populated areas

8. Town Centre Footfall Survey

A CTCHC footfall survey was undertaken by Kilkenny County Council on Friday 22nd November and Saturday 23rd November 2024 as per the CTCHC methodology. Three time slots were recorded on both days. Pedestrians were recorded at both sides of the road at each survey point. The count locations are shown on the below map. The survey indicated that Centra generated a large proportion of footfall, however, many users also used private cars. The results indicate that Mooncoin has a high dependency on private cars.

Day	Time	1	2	3	Total Per Time
Fri 22 Nov 2024	10.45am-11.00am	4	17	13	34
	1:15pm-1.30pm	5	20	25	50
	4:15pm-4.30pm	16	9	10	35
Sat 23 Nov 2024	10.15am-10.30am	5	11	7	23
	12:15pm-1.00pm	11	11	17	39
	4:15pm-4.30pm	10	10	4	24
Total Per Location		**51**	**78**	**76**	

Profile of Pedestrians

Cyclists 0%
Children 17%
Men 44%
Women 39%
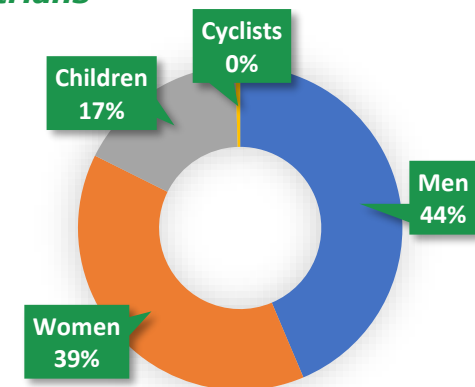
9. Car Parking Survey

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. Mooncoin benefits from a large number of off-street car parking facilities within the town centre with additional on-street car parking provided adjoining retailers, service providers and fast-food establishments.

The survey found that there are c. 335 no. formal off-street car parking spaces and c. 35 no. formal on-street car parking spaces.

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

The surveys indicate that all on-street car parking spaces being occupied within the core area were occupied on a short term basis, associated with the service provider or retailer. Off-street car parking spaces were observed to be occupied longer term.

Location	Type	Total Spaces	Occupied	Occupancy (%)
Emo Courtyard	off-street	12	3	25%
Main Street (opposite Marion's Hair Salon)	on-street	4	0	0%
Health Centre	off-street	5	1	20%
Rose of Mooncoin	off-street	70	3	4%
Centra	off-street	33	14	10%
GAA Club	off-street	89	8	9%
Garda Station	off-street	13	3	23%
Parish Hall	off-street	47	1	2%
Comerford's	off-street	14	4	28%
Graveyard	on-street	21	4	19%
Church	off-street	36	8	22%
Main Street (opposite Mondo's)	on-street	6	1	16%
Main Street (outside Centra)	on-street	4	3	75%
Credit Union	off-street	6	0	0%
Total		**360**	**53**	**14%**

10. Desire Lines

During October and November 2024, 'Desire Lines' in Mooncoin were observed. Crossing along the Main Street was most frequent at the traffic light junctions. Pedestrians were also observed crossing the road at unmarked locations during times of low traffic. Desire lines were also witnessed where footpaths on the main road abruptly ended requiring footpath users to either walk on or cross the road. On the minor streets within the study area, footpaths, e.g. Chapel Lane and New Road where there is an absence of any formal pedestrian crossings and where footpaths were located on one side of the road only.

Some examples of desire lines include:

— Footpath narrows / ends

↖ Informal crossing

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11. 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. Mooncoin is identified as one of 22 'Smaller Towns and Villages' within the settlement hierarchy of the Development Plan.

The following is an objective of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027:

4La   To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:
(a) The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford)
(b) Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc., (c) Identify land with development constraints.
This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan.
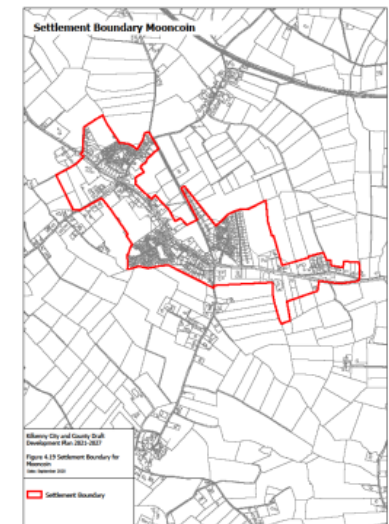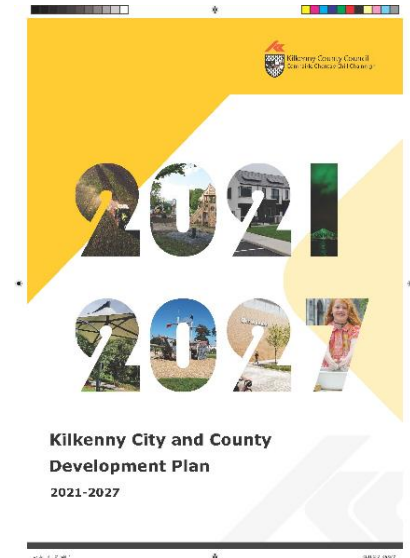
12. Social Infrastructure Audit

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 settlement boundary for Mooncoin as set out in Section 4.6, Volume 1 of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan.

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 lack of healthcare facilities in the town centre. Whilst there is a pharmacy operating within the Centre, a demand for a Health Centre with increased availability was noted. Recreational and open spaces within the town were found to exceed the minimum requirements of the County Development Plan, though there was a noted shortage in non-sports related outdoor spaces, excluding the playground.

The Community Hall was identified as an asset in the town, 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.

13. SCOT Analysis

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

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

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Strategic location on a national road. Good accessibility to larger urban areas such as Waterford, Carrick-on-Suir, Kilkenny. - Range of recreational activities, including high-quality playground and sports facilities. - Community buildings with range of uses - Steadily growing population. - Built Heritage of the town. - Sense of community. - Low vacancy rates compared to similarly sized towns. - Public art and planting.	- Traffic volume on N24 and impact on town centre. - Dependency on larger urban areas for retail and services provision. - Engaging all members of the community. - No cycling infrastructure within the town centre. - Management and operation of traffic. - Limited recreational activities for various age groups.	- Reuse of vacant or underutilised buildings. - Traffic Control. - Reimagining town centre after completion of N24 Waterford-Cahir road project. - Completion of approved residential development (PL23/60515) in the town centre. - Reduction of car-dependency via public transport and cycle infrastructure provision. - Public Investment and funding streams to enable development. - Connections to local amenities. - Reuse of public spaces.	- External factors, including economic and legislative. - Successful Judicial Review of N24 Waterford-Cahir road project. - Anti-social behaviour. - Impact of increased population on existing services. - Potential vacancy and dereliction within the town centre. - Climate change and resilience.

14. Considerations and Opportunities

- **Traffic Management**: The N24 national road carries significant levels of traffic daily which impacts the amenity of the town centre. Opportunities arise to enhance traffic management and foster a safer environment. In the longer term, completion of the N24 Waterford-Cahir road project provides opportunity for larger scale public realm improvements in the town centre to overcome traffic safety issues.

- **Public Realm and Streetscape**: The public realm is dominated by the N24 and its associated traffic, resulting in areas having 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.

- **Community Engagement**: Mooncoin 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 should be considered.

- **Recreation**: The community survey indicated a desire for expanded recreational activities, particularly non-sport related activities and activities for specific age-cohorts. This contributes to quality of living and may impact on mental health. Opportunities for additional recreational activities e.g. improved walkways and a potential greenway.

- **Cultural Heritage**: Public areas in the town reflect the cultural heritage of Mooncoin such as place-names and public sculptures. Opportunities to a create a heritage strategy should be explored to maximise the heritage to the benefit of the town.

- **Car-Dependency**: Most town users rely on private cars for their mobility as the infrastructure is catered to motorised vehicles. Whilst there is an existing Bus Éireann and Local Link bus routes serving the town, there may be an opportunity to enhance active travel and public transport options. Opportunities to improve walkability have also been identified.

- **Underutilised Buildings**: The community survey revealed an interest in expanding the range of uses in community buildings, particularly the community hall. Opportunities may arise to review the uses of buildings in both public and private ownership to meet the needs of the community.

- **Population Growth**: Mooncoin experienced a minor population increase between Census 2016 and Census 2022 of 9 people. Opportunities to continue the steady growth of the town arise.