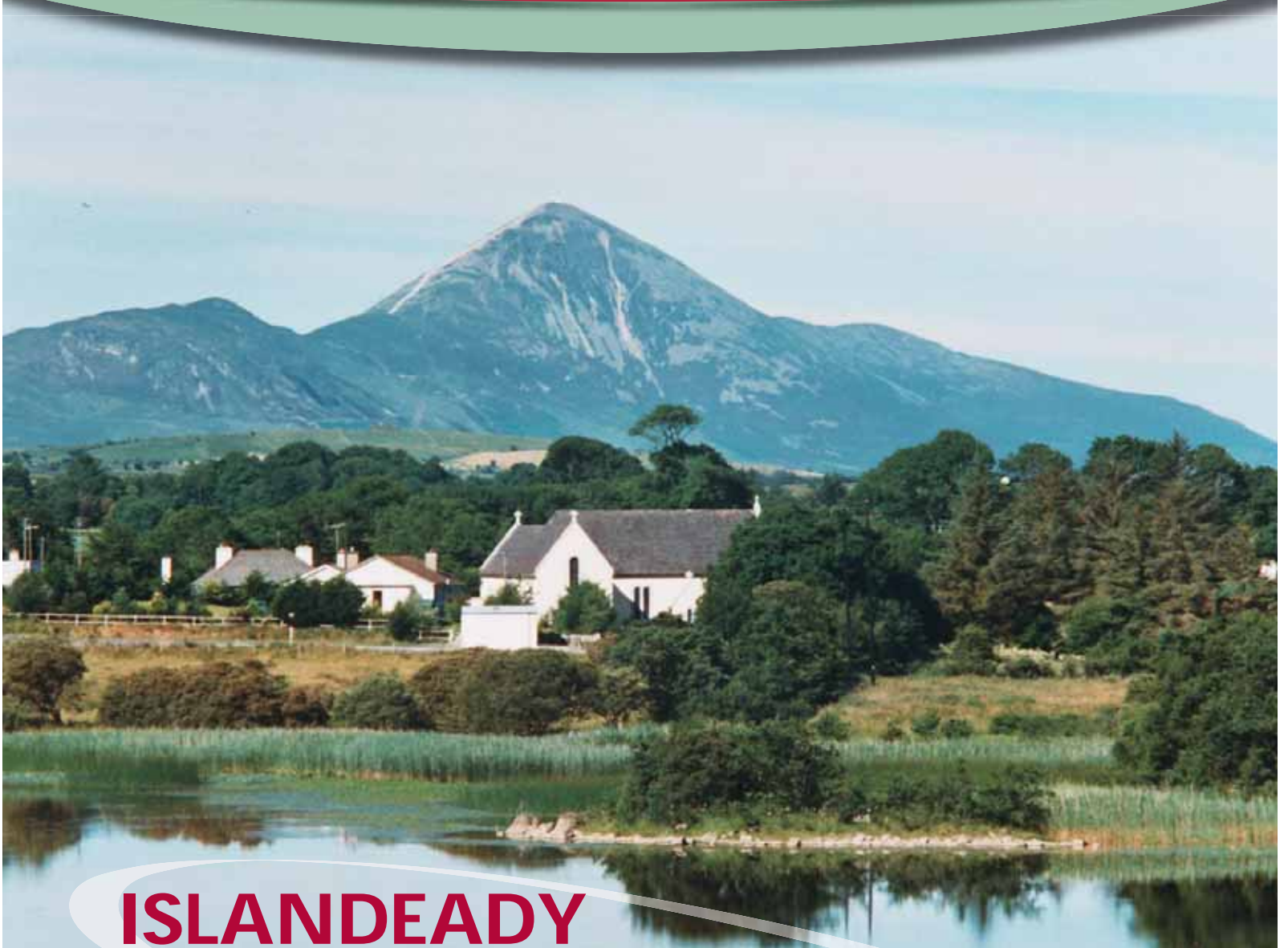


# Mayo Community Futures



**ISLANDEADY**

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

**2007 - 2010**

*Islandeady Community Futures Steering Group  
Mayo County Community Forum  
Mayo County Development Board*

## Introduction



*The Travelling Shop*

### ISLANDEADY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

This Community Action Plan summarises community views about:

- o Islandeady now
- o The vision for the future of Islandeady
- o The issues that matter most
- o The priorities for action.

The plan will be our guide for what we - as a community - try to make happen over the next number of years.

### ISLANDEADY COMMUNITY FUTURES STEERING GROUP

The preparation of the Action Plan has been guided by a local steering group that brought together all the organisations in the community. It was seen as vital that the task of preparing the Action Plan was not just the work of one organisation but rather that of a partnership representing all interests and organisations in the community.

The Islandeady Community Futures Steering Group was made up of representatives from the following organisations and stakeholders in our community: Community Council; Elderly; Neighbourhood Watch; Pastoral Council; Angling; IFA; Rural Social Scheme; Water Scheme; Foroige; Walks Committee; Tourism; GAA; Ladies Club; Pre-School.

The Steering Group was supported in their work by Catherine O' Hare who worked as a Community Support Volunteer to help with surveys, meetings, profiling and organising the Community Open Day. We are very grateful for all her hard work.

We also wish to acknowledge the role of Sr. Maureen Lally and Terry Gallagher (Tochar Valley Network), who were instrumental in bringing the Community Futures process to the attention of Islandeady Community Council.

### LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Action Plan was compiled based on extensive community engagement carried out over a four-month period (February – June 2006).

The process involved:

- Holding meetings and interviews with different groups and individuals representing all aspects of the community
- Carrying out a community views survey
- Preparing a community profile detailing facts and figures about the community
- Organising a Community Futures Open Day Event

**26 MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS WERE HELD  
702 COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY FORMS WERE RETURNED FROM OUR 483 HOUSEHOLDS  
OVER 150 PEOPLE ATTENDED AND TOOK PART IN THE COMMUNITY OPEN DAY  
THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART**

## Our Community Now

To help us put the plan together, to identify the main issues and priorities, we listened to local peoples' views and gathered facts and figures about the community now. We have summarised below some of the information from the **Community Profile** and some of the views from the **Community Views Survey**.

### ISLANDEADY COMMUNITY PROFILE 2006

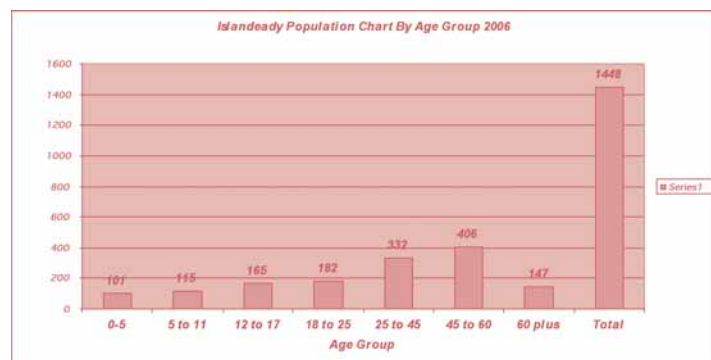
#### SUMMARY

#### Location

Islandeedy is a rural parish situated between the two bustling towns of Castlebar and Westport in South West Mayo.

#### Population

The population of Islandeedy is around 1,450 – and is relatively young with only 10% of its residents over 60.



#### Housing

There are 567 houses in Islandeedy of which approximately 483 are permanently occupied. About 60 of those houses have been built since 2002.

#### Employment

The local tourist town of Westport and the busy town of Castlebar provide substantial employment opportunities for the local people. There are also a significant number of self employed people in the area. We identified as many as 81 businesses operated by local residents both inside and outside the community.

There are still around 250 farm holdings in Islandeedy rearing cattle and sheep and producing silage and hay – however 95% of those farmers now subsidise their farm income by working outside of the farm.

#### Social and Community

Although Islandeedy is drawn into the towns on either

side of it, it retains a strong identity of its own with a very strong community spirit. In total there are 27 different interest groups, clubs and organisations in Islandeedy.

It has a recently refurbished small Community Centre, GAA facilities and church. Since the centre was refurbished it has been used to its full capacity and is already too small for the number of people and groups who use it.

#### Education

Islandeedy parish has 4 rural primary schools and a private secondary school, St Patrick's Academy. Primarily, students from the parish use the secondary schools in Castlebar and Westport to gain their second level education.

#### Transport

In addition to the bus service the parish also has two resident taxi services.

The recent household survey in Islandeedy has highlighted the need for rural transport for all and especially the elderly.

#### Environment

Although Islandeedy is situated between two busy towns it still retains its rural atmosphere. The small country roads, lakes, rivers, forestry and wildlife make it very attractive to walkers, fishermen and the naturalist. Bilberry Lough (Islandeedy Lough) is the largest lake and stretches across 1000 acres. Cornagushlane Wood contains 500 year old oak trees and could be described as a woodland museum and a unique resource in the area.

#### Heritage

Islandeedy has numerous heritage sites, some of which date back to the Bronze Age. In the spring of 2006 a study, conducted by a Michigan State University student, identified twenty-seven sites of both local and national importance. Some of those sites were already officially recorded but now all are mapped.



COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY  
- THE LIKES AND DISLIKES

The Likes		The Dislikes	
<b>The Top Five</b>	<b>% of responses</b>	<b>The Top Six</b>	<b>% of responses</b>
Community spirit	55%	The condition of the roads	31%
The environment	48%	The lack of care for the environment	15.5%
Community facilities and organisations	35%	The lack of facilities for young /old	14%
Location and accessibility	23%	The fact that there is no local shop	12%
Church	16%	Poor public services	10%
		A large area with no centre	6%

*"That the community is trying to improve the lot for everyone"*

*"Its determination to be as important as anywhere else."*

*"The countryside - the hills, lakes, rivers, bridges, trees, fields, boreens - I definitely feel I live in the country but it still has the village feel."*

*"Church, schools, pubs, well run Community Centre, good sporting facilities, well organised Community Council."*

*"Something for every age group including Play Group for the kids and day trips for the elderly"*

*"Islandeedy parish is strategically placed between Castlebar and Westport which offers convenience to services and amenities for our people"*

*"We have a lovely priest who is interested in the community."*



Islandeedy Railway Station - 1914 to 1963



Dambaduff Lake

*"Roads!! Most of the roads are narrow and badly maintained, particularly by the lake. This is the main road through Islandeedy but it is dangerous."*

*"The way the lakes are being destroyed due to substances leaking into the water (pollution)."*

*"Not enough to do for the youth of today in the area, most teenagers spend their time in the town rather than in their local area."*

*"Lack of focal point i.e. local shop or post office"*

*"Bus service to collect the elderly and deliver home again."*

*"Is unacceptable that in the 21st century water of such quality continues to be supplied in our area." (Cogaula/Sheeaune area)*

*"The community has lost its post office, shop and its sense of independence."*

## ISLANDEADY – OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

***This statement has been prepared to summarise the main views that have been expressed by local people and organisations, when they were asked what they hoped Islandeady would be like in 10 years' time.***

**A community that has made the most of its environment and heritage.**

Our lakes and rivers will have been preserved and enhanced offering a wide range of recreational opportunities. We will have developed a local paths network that can be used by locals and promoted to visitors. We will have preserved, interpreted and promoted our local heritage.

**A community with a heart and centre.**

We will have enhanced our sense of community rather than lost our identity. We will have developed community facilities, services and recreational activities, creating more of a village centre / focal point at the heart of Islandeady.

**A community that has benefited from and not been made worse by planning and development decisions.**

We hope that through strong and thoughtful representation of our interests we will have been able to retain and build on our identity and not be swamped by over development, spoiled by inappropriate development or planning decisions.

**A community that has supported local business and 'green' tourism.**

We will have developed more local services for our residents and visitor attractions and activities linked to the enjoyment of our natural environment and heritage.

**A community that is able to nurture its young people and to care for its elderly and vulnerable.**

We hope that we will be able to have created a 'care continuum' within our own parish that stretches from good childcare through to care for our elderly and that in all our efforts we will have taken account of the most vulnerable in the area.



Bilberries Playgroup

## MAIN STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

*These are the main strategies and priorities that the community will work to achieve in partnership with a range of agencies and supporters.*

### MAKE THE MOST OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

There is a clear desire by residents to make more of the lakes as a recreational resource and to ensure they are adequately protected and enhanced. There is concern about their pollution as well as recognition of their potential for fishing, boating and swimming, for walking around and as a destination for picnics and family outings. In general there is an opportunity to develop local path networks - trying to create off road routes as well as making the most of the quiet country lanes. Work has recently been carried out to identify the local heritage resources and these could form part of local 'heritage trails' or be on local heritage maps or even form the basis for a heritage centre.

#### Main priorities

- Protect and enhance the lakes and rivers
- Develop the lakes for recreational uses
- Develop a local path network
- Develop heritage interpretation and facilities

### DEVELOP COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The community has identified the need for a larger Community Centre that can cater for the needs of the community and our organisations into the future. For example the Centre should be able to accommodate the increased provision of childcare, development of facilities to allow better care for our young, the elderly and create additional space for a wide range of leisure, recreational and cultural activities.

There is also a desire for more outdoor recreational facilities for children and young people. The ideal aim would be to have a play and sports area linked to picnic facilities around the lake. This would also help to develop more of a physical heart to Islandeady.

Other smaller ideas like installing a Community Information Notice board should also be pursued to support this strategy.

#### Main priorities

- Develop playground and outdoor recreation and picnic areas
- Enlarge or construct new Community Centre
- Erect Community Notice Board



Islandeady Community Centre

### SUPPORT BUSINESS AND DEVELOP TOURISM

There is potential to develop and support local business in a way that would benefit the local economy. In particular, tourism as a product could be enhanced and encouraged by the development of a roadside service area, setting up a farmers' market, organising a local festival and building on other strategies i.e. making better use of our natural and cultural assets.

#### Main priorities

- Support existing local businesses
- Explore the potential for new business ventures
- Develop tourism as a marketable product

### DEVELOP CARE SERVICES

The process of consultation highlighted the need to provide care within our community for people of all ages. There is a real desire to develop full childcare services, to provide more for young people, to support young families and to provide more services and facilities for the elderly.

#### Main priorities

- Develop childcare provision
- Develop care services and facilities for the elderly
- Research support needs of young people and young families

### ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY SENSITIVE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Islandeady, located between two growing towns of Castlebar and Westport, is vulnerable to development pressure – consequently it would be easy for it to lose its identity or for its concerns to be overlooked. There is a real need therefore for the community to take a proactive approach to make sure it is involved in decisions around planning and development and that wherever possible it can influence outcomes that are in the community's best interest.

#### Main priorities

- Ensure the N5 doesn't make the community less safe and geographically more divided
- Support housing and zoning decisions that help develop a heart and centre to Islandeady
- Lobby for the protection and enhancement of the lakes and rivers
- Resolve water quality and supply problems
- Encourage informed and careful decision making about the Roadstone Quarry
- Lobby for broadband accessibility
- Monitor planning permission applications for telecommunication masts
- Explore the potential to re-open the Railway Station at Islandeady
- Identify and lobby for appropriate traffic calming measures and a road maintenance programme

## ACTION

*Some of the steps to be taken over the next 12 months.*

## MAKE THE MOST OF OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

## Priority 1: Protect and enhance the lakes and rivers

*Next steps*

- Work with the Fisheries Board for the improvement of water quality and the stabilisation of water levels
- Introduce a sampling programme to monitor pollution
- Restock the lakes for fishing and create a wild fishery
- Support IFA and encourage all local farmers to join REPS

*Action by*

Environment and Heritage Action Group in association with the Fisheries Board, IFA, Mayo County Council, local farmers, local businesses, Community Council and local Angling Club.

## Priority 2: Develop lakes and rivers for recreation

*Next steps*

- Research and develop potential opportunities including boat trips
- Negotiate and improve access to and around lakes
- Identify and develop safe swimming areas
- Encourage wildlife and explore potential for a bird sanctuary

*Action by*

Environment and Heritage Action Group in association with Mayo County Council, Fisheries Board, Tochar Valley Network and other key organisations.

## Priority 3: Develop local paths network

*Next steps*

- Research and document existing paths and roads used for walking, cycling or horse riding
- Consult on ideas for new paths and routes and for the improvement of existing paths
- Develop proposals for a local network
- Lobby for a cycle path between Castlebar and Westport

*Action by*

Environment and Heritage Action Group in association with Mayo County Council, Tochar Valley Network, Islandeady Walks Group, local landowners and wider community.

## Priority 4: Develop heritage interpretation and facilities

*Next steps*

- Review, research and agree the best ways of developing the interpretation of and information about our local heritage
- Look at how interpretation and signage could link and add value to a local path network
- Develop a map of local heritage sites with background information
- Explore potential for RIC Barracks to be developed as a heritage centre

*Action by*

Environment and Heritage Action Group in association with Mayo County Council, Tochar Valley Network and other key organisations and individuals.



**DEVELOP COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

**Priority 1: Develop playground and outdoor recreation and picnic area/s**

*Next steps*

- Research other playgrounds, best practice, regulations and potential for funding
- Identify potential sites and negotiate with landowners
- Develop proposals for equipment and landscaping that are in keeping with the site

*Action by*

Community Facilities Action Group in association with local young families and children and Mayo County Council

**Priority 2: Enlarge or develop new Community Centre**

*Next Steps*

- Agree to commission feasibility study
- Raise funds for study

- Prepare brief and commission study
- Carry out own research in support of the study e.g. users survey, visits to other centres

*Action by*

Community Facilities Action Group in association with existing and potential users, GAA and other stakeholders and local landowners

**Priority 3: Erect Community Notice Board**

*Next steps*

- Decide suitable location for a notice board
- Decide on the materials
- Research the information to go on it
- Organise funding and its completion
- Decide on management strategy of the notice board

*Action by*

Community Facilities Action Group in association with local landowners, Community Council, the Environment and Heritage Action Group

**SUPPORT BUSINESS AND DEVELOP TOURISM**

**Priority 1: Support existing local businesses**

*Next steps*

- Research how local business and tourism groups work and how they operate
- Convene meeting of local businesses and tourism interests to consider setting up a local association
- Promote local businesses and job opportunities on the local website /newsletter

*Action by*

Business and Tourism Action Group in association with local businesses

**Priority 2: Explore opportunities for new local business ventures**

*Next steps*

- Identify and explore feasibility of new ventures including;

- o Local shop
- o Roadside Service area
- o Tourism ventures e.g. agri-tourism; fishing tourism
- o Farmers Market including local organic produce.
- Develop action around preferred ventures

*Action by*

Business and Tourism Action Group in association with local businesses



13th Century Islandeady Church Cemetery

**DEVELOP CARE SERVICES**

**Priority 1: Develop Childcare provision**

*Next steps*

- Research how other communities have developed Childcare facilities
- Develop proposals for improvement of childcare in Islandeady

*Action by*

Caring Islandeady Action Group along with existing providers – Mothers and Toddlers, Play Group and the After School Care Scheme

*Action by*

Caring Islandeady Action Group in association with local elderly and relevant service providers

**Priority 3: Improve local access to health services**

*Next steps*

- Encourage local outreach health services and clinics e.g. health visitors, chiropody etc.

*Action by*

Caring Islandeady Action Group in association with health service providers

**Priority 2: Improve care and services for the elderly**

*Next steps*

- Research with elderly on care needs
- Ensure elderly know of existing services
- Review transport arrangements for the elderly and lobby if appropriate for reinstatement of rural transport initiative services
- Research potential for sheltered housing development
- Explore housing provision for returned immigrants

**Priority 4: Research and take action on other local needs.**

*Next steps*

- Carry out research on needs of young people and young families
- Develop proposals for action including babysitting services and parenting groups etc.

*Action by*

Caring Islandeady Action Group in association with existing local groups for young people and young families

**ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY SENSITIVE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Main priorities*

- Ensure the N5 doesn't make the community less safe and geographically more divided
- Support housing and zoning decisions that help develop a heart and centre
- Lobby for the protection and enhancement of the lakes and rivers
- Tackle water quality and supply problems
- Encourage informed and careful decision making about the Roadstone Quarry
- Lobby for broadband accessibility
- Monitor planning permission applications for telecommunication masts
- Explore the potential to re-open the Railway Station at Islandeady
- Identify and lobby for appropriate traffic calming measures and a road maintenance programme

*Next Steps*

- Establish a Planning and Development Sub Group of the Community Council
- Keep up to date with all planning and development decisions that may affect Islandeady
- Make recommendations on how best to represent the Community's interests
- Inform the community of what is happening
- Involve the community in decision making processes
- Look at how planning and development could best contribute positively to the other strategies in this report

*Action by*

Planning and Development Action Group in conjunction with the Community Council

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Islandeedy Community Council is now looking at the best way to implement the priorities and actions identified in this plan.

It will explore the setting up of a **Community Development Company** or other suitable structure for Islandeedy. This would be community owned, with charitable status, capable of owning land and property and raising funds for priority projects.

In the meantime we will continue to work as a partnership of organisations through the Islandeedy **Community Futures Steering Group** with the full support and backing of the Community Council.

As a first step the Community Council will establish the following action groups to make progress on the main strategies.

- Environment and Heritage
- Community Facilities
- Business and Tourism
- Caring Services
- Planning and Development

If you would like to take part in one of the Action Groups or if you just want more information then please contact Ms Philomena Browne who is secretary of both the Community Council and the Community Futures Steering Group.



Community Open Day 10th June 2006

Contact Details  
MS PHILOMENA BROWNE,  
KILFEA,  
ISLANDEADY,  
CASTLEBAR,  
CO MAYO

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### **Members of the Steering Group:**

James O'Malley(Chairperson), Philomena Browne(Secretary), Kathleen Feeney(Treasurer), John Cannon, Fr. Pat Donnellan, Matt Fahey, Jimmy Heneghan, Breege Joyce, Brendan Sammon.

### **Sub Committee members:**

Eileen Cawley, Gerard Fahey, Marian Irwin, Lorraine Laffey, Carmel Masterson, Joe Moylette, Noreen Sadler, Bernie Walsh, John Walsh.

The Steering Group also wishes to thank members of Islandeedy Community Council and other willing helpers who assisted in the whole process.

Mayo Community Futures is supported by Mayo County Development Board and reflects their commitment to involving communities in the preparation of the County Development Strategy. The Community Forum and the County Development Board will assist in the brokering of Community Futures Community Action Plans to make sure that public agencies are aware of their contents and take community priorities into account wherever possible in developing their own strategies and services.

### **REVIEWING THE ACTION PLAN**

*We will from time to time look at the progress being made on implementing this plan. A year from the launch of this plan we will convene a REVIEW meeting to take stock of what has been achieved and agree an update of the action for the next year.*

# Mayo Community Futures

2007 - 2010

**Islandeedy was supported in the preparation of their Community Action Plan by Mayo Community Futures.**

## **What is Mayo Community Futures?**

Mayo Community Futures has been established by Mayo Community Forum to:

- Assist communities prepare Community Action Plans
- Involve all sectors of the community in the process of preparing Plans
- Encourage more people to become active in their community
- Strengthen local community organisations
- Enable communities to effectively represent their interests at local, county and national levels

## **Who is involved?**

A Community Futures Management Group has been set up to bring together representatives from:

- Mayo County Community Forum
- Mayo County Development Board
- Mayo LEADER
- VEC
- Tochar Valley Network
- Moy Valley Resources

Thanks to our funders; Mayo County Council, LEADER, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, VEC and Mayo County Community Forum.



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**For more information:**  
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Community Futures is a programme designed and supported by the Small Town and Rural Development Group, Scotland.  
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