



# **Action for Sustainability**

**Final Draft**

**A strategy and model towards integrated  
sustainability in Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen  
County Wexford**

**Prepared for County Wexford Partnership by  
Anne Behan, Ph.D., November 2002**

## ABOUT ANNE BEHAN

1959-2004



Anne Behan was a native of Kildare and studied for a doctorate in Zoology at UCD and worked as an independent environmental consultant from her home base at Redhills, Kildare. Her consultancy work involved environmental impact assessments, wildlife and landscape assessments, surveys and many community related projects.

Anne believed that the environment belonged to all but that a modern problem is that people have been removed from immediate contact with their environment. This she believed made it difficult in situations where there is a decision to be made or a dispute to be resolved.

Through her eco-tourism initiative, 'The Hidden Wilds', Anne found that an association with the environment comes naturally to people but the pressures of modern life often denies people this opportunity. She believed a short explanation was usually sufficient to bring people back in touch and rekindle the innate association with all that surrounds us.

Anne was a keen wildlife and landscape photographer and used her photographs to illustrate the "hidden" environment which she used to good effect in her award winning slide shows and in 'Environment Kildare' a publication for Kildare County Council and her final piece of work 'Local Environment – Clonroche, Newbawn, Raheen, Co. Wexford', for County Wexford Partnership.

Anne's life's work was dedicated to environmental awareness and education and an integrated approach towards sustainable living in communion with all life.

*'To understand any area, one must first look to the landscape because it is the land itself that shapes the plant and animal communities that live upon it, that determines the nature of soils and water flows and influences the lives of the human community.'*

These words, capture Anne's belief that for communities to flourish they must understand the landscape and environment that surrounds them and only then can local communities have informed local input into local issues and decisions that determine their future. Anne believed in the capacity of all communities to forge a future for themselves and *'facilitate the development of vibrant, self-motivated and self-sustaining communities ....while celebrating difference and ensuring that adequate care is taken of vulnerable members of the community.'*

While working in Wexford, Anne often used this quote from 'Soil and Soul' by Alastair McIntosh a Scottish environmentalist, activist and philosopher: *'It is when the capacity of a place to sustain itself becomes ruptured that the human mind is forced to reflect on ecology. Only then do most of us consider the interconnections between plants and animals and their environment.'*

## Table of Contents

About Anne Behan .....	2
Chapter One - Introduction.....	4
Action for Sustainability in Context .....	4
1.1 Background .....	4
1.2 Aims and objectives .....	4
1.3 Description and history of the project .....	5
1.4 Relating Action for Sustainability to the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) guidelines from Area Development Management Limited (ADM).....	5
1.5 Local Agenda 21 (LA21).....	8
Chapter Two - Defining Sustainability .....	11
2.1 Elements of sustainability .....	11
2.2 Key words .....	12
Chapter Three - Methodology .....	14
3.1 Introduction .....	14
3.2 History of the project to date.....	14
Chapter Four - Lessons From the Community .....	20
4.1 Introduction .....	20
4.2 SWOT analysis of sustainability in existing community - Problems / pitfalls.....	21
Chapter Five - SWOT Analysis of the Project to Date .....	24
5.1 Strengths of project .....	24
5.2 Weaknesses - of project.....	24
5.3 Opportunities.....	25
5.4 Threats .....	25
Chapter Six - Strategy Towards Sustainability .....	26
6.1 Introduction .....	26
6.2 Organisation, capacity-building and pre-development.....	27
6.3 General procedure .....	28
Chapter Seven - Environment .....	30
7.1 Introduction .....	30
7.2 Local issues .....	31
7.3 Barriers to action .....	32
7.4 Strategy.....	33
Chapter Eight - Social Inclusion and Culture.....	40
8.1 Introduction .....	40
8.2 Sport and Recreation .....	40
8.3 Transport.....	43
8.4 Youth .....	43
8.5 Attitudes.....	44
8.6 Other aspects of social inclusion .....	45
8.7 Heritage and Culture .....	45
Chapter Nine - Local Economy .....	47
9.1 Introduction .....	47
Chapter Ten - Information and Resources .....	50
Chapter Eleven - Sustainability Checklists / Proofing.....	51
Chapter Twelve - Local Sustainability Indicators .....	52
References.....	57
Elements & Factors.....	59
Voluntary organisations in Clonroche – Newbawn –Raheen.....	61

# Chapter One - Introduction

## ACTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN CONTEXT

### **1.1 Background**

Action for Sustainability is a long-term project that was initiated by County Wexford Partnership in 2000. The objective of the project is to select and work with an existing rural community towards integrated sustainability incorporating social, economic, environmental and cultural elements.

This report was prepared at the request of County Wexford Partnership and was compiled after research relating to the formulation of a strategy towards sustainability in the Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community and the development of a transferable model that would be applicable to other rural communities, which may wish to repeat the efforts of Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen.

Rapid economic, social and environmental changes since the Industrial Revolution have brought about methods of economic practice, which are damaging to society and environment (R. Douthwaite, 1999). The situation is exacerbated by globalisation and pressure for continuous economic growth. As a consequence, numerous rural and urban communities are facing social, economic and environmental problems, the solutions to which, under the current system, appear to be outside the control of local communities. Aggressive commercial trade has left many communities with declining local economies (e.g. Irish agriculture), degraded environments, depleted local resources and damaged social structures. Many sectors of rural Ireland have become dependent on grants and have lost the courage to look away from global trade mechanisms for economic survival, even though these mechanisms are no longer supporting them. Also, most communities have now developed into systems which do not provide the services inherent in a sustainable system e.g. circulation of money in the local economy, local food production, local markets, self-governance, input into control of the local environment, residential areas and places of employment in proximity to services. There has been a shift from self-sufficiency and self-reliance to dependence on global trade and economic support systems. The complexity of interacting economic and social factors makes it difficult for most communities to analyse for themselves exactly why they face these problems and how they can find solutions.

The impact of globalisation on the environment is significant to all human beings. There has been extensive documentation of these effects, but perhaps most threatening are those which we cannot accurately predict or quantify e.g. climate change, loss of biodiversity, etc. Environmental degradation impacts on human communities and further diminishes their capacity for self-dependence. Therefore, in any study of alternative systems, environmental issues must be taken into account.

In practical and local terms sustainability is an effort to give self-reliance back to communities, to seek local solutions to local problems within an awareness of global issues. This report was written for a local community in south County Wexford within the context of increasing global debate on the subject of sustainability and a growing movement towards self-reliant communities.

### **1.2 Aims and objectives**

The effects of rapid change on local communities have been recognised by County Wexford Partnership, which has organised its structure as a sustainable development company. Action for Sustainability was devised by the Partnership in conjunction with County Wexford Heritage Forum as part of a learning and action process towards local sustainability. The objective of the Action for Sustainability project is to address local problems in the context of sustainability

and to increase community awareness and sense of potential and self-reliance. The Partnership aims to work with an existing rural community and to use this community as a model of practical action towards sustainability in rural Ireland.

By concentrating its efforts towards sustainable development in one community the Partnership believes that it will be in a position to learn and apply its findings elsewhere in the county in a more efficient and effective manner.

The approach taken in this report and in the research carried out in its preparation is complete integrated sustainability. This may seem unattainable, but it must remain the ultimate goal of any sustainability project because anything less would fail to appreciate the potential of local communities. The author of this report has therefore approached the project from the viewpoint of integrated economic, social and environmental sustainability. Culture has been added as a fourth pillar because of its fundamental significance to human beings. It has been the experience of the author in this and other projects that, as individuals and groups become involved and informed, the discussion process grows and the potential for successful change becomes apparent.

### **1.3 Description and history of the project**

The community chosen as the model is Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen, located in south-west County Wexford – see Map1, Appendix 1. Population statistics and a list of voluntary organisations within the community are given in Appendix 2.

See Chapter 3 for details of progress to date.

### **1.4 Relating Action for Sustainability to the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) guidelines from Area Development Management Limited (ADM).**

County Wexford Partnership operates under the Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme, which is administered by ADM. The mandate of the Partnership is social inclusion, delivered specifically under three measures:

1. Services for the unemployed
2. Community development
3. Community-based youth initiative

To relate Action for Sustainability to the social inclusion remit of County Wexford Partnership, it is necessary to briefly examine the objectives of the LDSIP.

#### **Services for the Unemployed**

The stated objectives of the LDSIP guidelines under this measure are:

To improve the options within the labour market, of the long-term unemployed and those most distanced from the labour market through specifically targeted services, including pro-active targeting and outreach to marginalised groups who require support and interventions.

To identify, nurture and support individuals, groups and communities in accessing suitable gainful and sustained employment and self-employment, through education, training, work experience, job placement, enterprise and the local economy.

The inclusion, in the LDSIP objectives, of local economy as a support to communities is significant because local economies are central to sustainability and to the Action for Sustainability project.

Eligible groups:

- the long-term unemployed and those at risk of reverting to long-term unemployment - relevant to local farmers and local economy.
- those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed – relevant to members of the community who, for lack confidence, training or other reasons are dependent on local employment i.e. local economy
- the under-employed e.g. seasonal workers, low income farm families
- women who are socially and economically disadvantaged
- travellers
- disabled people
- low income family units
- young people who have left school early, especially those who have had direct experience of disadvantage or unemployment
- others who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

### **Community Development**

The stated objectives of the LDSIP guidelines under this measure are:

- To enhance the capacity of people living in disadvantaged areas to participate fully in local development opportunities and to counter social exclusion.
- To provide support for small-scale improvements to the local environmental and community infrastructure.

Eligible groups and individuals covered under this measure include:

- disadvantaged young people
- people with disabilities
- lone parents
- travellers
- disadvantaged women
- elderly people
- people who are long-term unemployed
- people with inadequate incomes, including low-income smallholders,
- refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants
- ex-prisoners
- substance mis-users
- homeless people
- disadvantaged communities who suffer further marginalisation due to their isolation in remote rural areas due to poor social, economic and infrastructural supports to address the cumulative effects of deprivation and poverty.

All of the above are relevant to sustainability, but true sustainability reaches beyond segregated target groups (see below). The aim of Action for Sustainability is to alleviate the pressures on disadvantaged people in an integrated manner, thus reaching the target groups, and others, via sustainable community structures.

### **Community-based Youth Initiative**

The stated objectives of the LDSIP guidelines under this measure are:

- to enhance the social and personal development of young people who have left school early or are at risk of early school-leaving, at risk of underachieving at school or who are involved or at risk of becoming involved in drug misuses, criminal activity and other forms of anti-social behaviour.
- to expand the range of community based education and youth development opportunities available from early years through to early adulthood, in areas of disadvantage.

- to alert young people to the dangers of substance abuse and to equip them with the skills to make the right choices in terms of saying no to drugs.

Eligible groups and individuals:

- young people who have left school early or are at risk of early school-leaving
- children and young people who need additional supports especially underachievers to maximise their potential and encourage them to stay within the formal education and training system
- young people at risk who need support and provision in the youth and community sector to assist their social and personal development
- children and young people whose behaviours and learning difficulties present a particular challenge
- special interest groups who need additional supports to assist their full participation in education/training
- young people involved or at risk of becoming involved in substance abuse and other forms of anti-social behaviour
- young offenders who need structured support in a community setting to accommodate progression to education, training and work
- parents/guardians/carers of young people at risk

Most community members see their youth as being at risk. Substance abuse is a possibility in all communities/families and avoidance of the problem before it becomes widespread is compatible with Action for Sustainability.

Because of its three-fold mandate: Services for the unemployed, community development and community-based youth initiative, County Wexford Partnership is uniquely placed to be instrumental in working towards sustainability. In fact, actively working towards sustainability gives the Partnership the opportunity to deliver its mandate in an effective manner because it examines efficient methods of practice, shared resources, zero wastage, social inclusion and the nurturing of self-sustaining communities which in the long-term will provide, not alone for the stated target groups, but all members of society.

The definition of social exclusion as used in the LDSIP Guidelines is “cumulative marginalisation from production (employment), from consumption (poverty), from social networks (community, family, neighbours), from decision making and an adequate quality of life”. Throughout the Guidelines there are several references to sustainable development, economic, social and cultural dimensions of intervention. It is universally agreed that economic, social and environmental factors are the pillars of sustainable communities and development. Thus, the principles of Local Agenda 21 (see Section 1.5) and other agreements on sustainable development are reflected in the LDSIP Guidelines and the remit of rural Partnerships.

Because of their mandate to target disadvantaged members of society, Partnerships automatically assume a role in rural development. People become disadvantaged primarily because of economic circumstances, poverty, unemployment, underemployment, etc. Thus, the interaction of economies with social exclusion/deprivation cannot be denied. It will be repeated throughout this project that communities must tackle the causes, not just the symptoms of their problems. If the symptoms [social exclusion/deprivation] are to be alleviated, the underlying causes [declining local economies and social pressures] must be addressed in the context of sustainable development.

Providing training for employment may make a person more employable, but it is only really useful if the trainee can find employment. If there is a shortage of employment, or an excess of underemployment, it is necessary to investigate the economic circumstances maintaining the state of unemployment i.e. the state of the local economy and local development. Thus in order to deliver its mandate of social inclusion County Wexford Partnership must play a sensitive role in rural development. By aiming for sustainable development, it is addressing all identified aspects of social inclusion because the aim of sustainable development is to nurture vibrant, self-sustaining communities that provide essential services and embrace inclusiveness of all citizens.

The principle of sustainable development is that it meets the needs of today without diminishing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Inherent in sustainable development is the attainment of an *appropriate* level of development. Pressures for conventional economic growth demand constant development, but the optimum or appropriate level of development for specific communities is rarely considered. This drive for development is supported by well-intentioned community development associations who witness local unemployment and still harbour memories of the economic depression of the 1980's and early 90's. Media repeat poorly reasoned phrases such as "good for the community" and "it will open up the area" and the drive for development intensifies. However, without assessment of the specific needs and characteristics of local communities, conventional development can be detrimental because it alters local economies and environment, drains local resources, rapidly increases population, commuting distances, etc. Those who have adequate employment may experience other problems as environmental, cultural and social issues become less obvious within the changing community. The factors contributing to social exclusion may shift from lack of employment to lack of identity, etc. Rural development, if it is to be sustainable development, should increase the worth of all individuals and give them a sense of belonging. Sustainable development originates in local communities; conventional development is imposed on local communities.

County Wexford has been documented as the county with the lowest uptake of third level education in Ireland and this has been interpreted as an indication of disadvantage. However, it is important that the distinction between statistics and indicators is recognised. A statistic is merely a figure that reflects a situation or trend. An indicator is a measurement that obliges intervention. The uptake of third level education in County Wexford is a statistic and does not automatically indicate deprivation. Considering areas to be deprived because of lack of third level education detracts from the value of those living locally, particularly those who are perceived to be uneducated or under-educated. It also fails to recognise the importance of the "unskilled" worker. Lack of appreciation of the individual exacerbates the difference between rich and poor and thus contributes to the maintenance of "deprivation". The important point to consider is availability and access to education. The aim, within a sustainable community, is to increase awareness of the value of all workers within a community, to encourage systems which will allow these workers to receive equitable livelihoods and to provide supplementary education as desirable and/or useful to the individual(s) concerned.

Care must be taken to recognise the choices of self-excluded groups and individuals (Rogaly et al, 1999). Issues of poverty and low income-related deprivation are widely recognised, but while targeting the environmentally and/or culturally excluded, the identity of those who do not wish to be part of particular aspects of mainstream society must be recognised. Healthy societies celebrate difference and while this may be obvious in relation, for example to asylum seekers, there is a danger that indigenous individuals and/or groups who wish to maintain a particular identity are affected as a result of intervention. For example, asylum seekers may wish to maintain cultural identity while being afforded economic inclusion and social acceptance. Other members of rural communities, and on occasion recipients of social inclusion intervention (including people from Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen), report that they are isolated by attitudes, particularly within rural communities. The aim of Action for Sustainability is to facilitate the development of vibrant, self-motivated and self-sustaining communities with availability of and access to services (health, transport, etc.), opportunity for social interaction and adequate employment, while celebrating difference and ensuring that adequate care is taken of vulnerable members of the community.

## **1.5 Local Agenda 21 (LA21)**

International concern relating to social inequity and degradation of the earth's environment, with increasing problems such as global warming, led to the meeting of over 150 nations at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Nations agreed on a number of strategies including Local Agenda 21. Agenda 21 is the United Nations Action Plan to achieve global sustainable development. Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) calls on local authorities worldwide to draw up local action plans to promote sustainable development at local level. The purpose of LA 21 is to bring sustainable development principles and objectives into practical action at local level.

The main aims of LA 21 include:

- reducing the consumption of energy and resources, waste and pollution
- protection of fragile eco-systems and environments
- more equitable distribution of wealth between countries and between different social groups within countries
- emphasis on the needs and rights of poor and disadvantaged people.

Some of the principles of LA 21 include:

- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- Development today must not undermine the development and environment needs of present and future generations.
- In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.
- Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. Governments shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.

LA 21 is based on four pillars: Social, Economic, Environmental, & Institutional.

The above aims, principles and pillars are quoted from Local Authorities and Sustainable Development and towards Sustainable Local Communities - Guidelines on Local Agenda 21 by the Department of Environment and Local Government.

The politics of LA 21 are complex and it only takes on institutional meaning when it is incorporated into other political initiatives. There is reference to sustainable development in many national and international pieces of legislation. However, in the context of international treaties, the commitment to sustainability and the principles of LA 21 remains ambiguous because it represents a contradiction to conventional competitive markets and free trade (O'Riordan & Voisey, 1998).

#### **Selected quotations from Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992.**

*"People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature"*

*"In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process, and cannot be considered in isolation from it."*

*"Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible."*

#### **Selected quotations from LA 21**

*"human activities must be adapted to fit within the limits of nature, so that the healthy functioning of ecosystems can be preserved"*

*"Transportation strategies should reduce the need for motor vehicles by favouring high-occupancy public transport and providing safe bicycle and foot paths".*

*"Human health depends on a healthy environment".*

*"...promote sustainable consumption through education, public-awareness and the positive advertising of products and services that encourage sustainability."*

*“Make environment and development education available to people of all ages.”*

*“...learn from local, civic, community, business and industrial organisations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies.”*

In the Irish National Report to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Section 3.14.1 states “In the Environment Action Programme it is recognised that although the State has to take the lead in strengthening and expanding environmental programmes, the quality of the environment can only be maintained and enhanced if all citizens play their parts. The Programme emphasises the need to intensify environmental awareness, information and promotional programmes so that people will know how, as individuals, they can act positively towards their environment”. Section 3.5 states the Programme “is founded on the principle of sustainable development”.

In reality, little was done at national or international level to encourage local sustainability since 1992. In September 2002 international representatives re-convened in Johannesburg at the Earth Summit 2002 to discuss progress. It was widely anticipated that the Summit would be disappointing and this anticipation was realised. A book detailing examples of unsustainable practice in Ireland since 1992 have been compiled detailing examples of unsustainable development over the last 10 years and emphasising the lack of commitment to sustainable development (Earth Summit Ireland, 2002). However, the number of independent conferences and community initiatives that have taken place on the subject of sustainability in recent years is encouraging. The discussion among communities, community workers and those responsible for the delivery of social inclusion programmes is growing.

Action for Sustainability is suited to the delivery of the aspirations put forward at the 1992 Earth Summit and in LA 21. Its success will ultimately depend on the willingness to adopt the principles of sustainability, the energy of committed individuals and support of County Wexford Partnership. The growing awareness of the problems faced by the global community combined with the possibilities offered by sustainability should act as encouragement for Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen and other communities.

## Chapter Two - Defining Sustainability

Sustainability has been described by several authors, but there is no single accepted definition. In fact, defining and measuring sustainability is still a matter of ongoing debate worldwide. It is a concept more than a strict code, but refers to responsible and ethical methods of practice in economic, social and environmental management. Like many currently discussed issues, it is not the concept, but the terminology that is new. This often leads to confusion and misinterpretation. In many ways sustainability refers to new methods of old practices. It is often misinterpreted as relating solely to environment, but in practice, it is an integrated approach to all aspects of life – economic, social, environmental and cultural.

The Irish government has stated that its strategy for sustainable development is: "To ensure that economy and society in Ireland develop to their full potential within a well protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community." from Our Environment – Making it Work. Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland 1997. Government of Ireland.

In 1997 an international report, the Brundtland Report, was commissioned. While this report has generated discussion and not all workers are in agreement of the findings, its definition of sustainable development is often quoted in a working context:

*"Meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."*

The Sustainable Development Program defined sustainability as

*"Meeting human needs without undermining human communities or natural environments."*

In practice, sustainability is:

- Best possible practice, taking account of the potential outcomes on people and environment and seeking alternatives so that we avoid adverse impacts, in all that we do.
- A system which can be continued for 100's of years without having to be changed, i.e. a system which can last.

Many workers have devised their own definitions, but at the outset of this project it was evident that simpler definitions are effective in relating the concept of sustainability to communities, especially in the initial stages of contact. As communities become more familiar with the concept of integrated development, they can accept and work with the more lengthy and descriptive definitions. It has been the experience of the author that this does not necessarily entail a lengthy learning period, provided that communities are given good examples of how alternative systems can succeed.

### **2.1 Elements of sustainability**

The three accepted pillars of sustainability are:

Economic, Social and Environmental

It is generally accepted that consideration of economic, social and environmental factors adequately covers all aspects of life. Some people may consider it necessary to formally

specify other factors e.g. culture, etc. If one wishes to stipulate additional elements, this is perfectly acceptable because true sustainability is all-encompassing.

Essential ingredients of a sustainable system:

- Self-reliance
- Self governance
- True and honest consultation where all opinions are taken into account (the Sustainability Web (Chapter 6) was designed specifically for effective local consultation).
- Local knowledge
- Local solutions to local problems
- Efficient use of resources
- Vibrant, functioning, self-maintaining communities
- Equity
- Honesty, openness, a willingness to admit one's shortcomings
- Genuine sustained efforts to seek alternatives to damaging activities
- Well informed individuals and communities
- Widespread understanding of environment and the earth's processes

In working towards sustainability certain codes must be maintained:

Consultation must be holistic. Without true and accurate information it is meaningless e.g. people are regularly "consulted" regarding developments, which they would like to see in a particular area and plans may be designed on the basis of such consultations. However, if people received prior information of potential adverse impact of such developments the outcomes of consultations may be different and the subsequent plans less damaging. Consultation without adequate information denies people the opportunity of meaningful discussion.

Understanding of environment is essential because the earth is our source of food, water, shelter, raw materials and psychological well-being. There are a number of natural processes which help to keep the earth in balance e.g. weather systems, the water cycle, the carbon and nitrogen cycles, ecological systems, etc. When these systems fail to function, the consequences can be catastrophic for the human population. Failure of natural systems has been responsible for famine, drought, flooding and other disasters. The principles of sustainability suggest that we work within the earth's processes. This is not solely for the good of the environment, but also for the benefit of humankind. Unfortunately, people have been conditioned to perceive environment as a threat to progress. This misconception supports unsustainable practice and development.

## **2.2 Key words**

### **Self-sufficiency**

In a sustainable system, people are self-sufficient in the production of food, etc. This removes the threat of sudden events, beyond the control of the community, which could leave the community in need.

### **Dependency**

In a sustainable system people are not dependent on outside sources/powers for food and other essentials. Dependency leaves communities vulnerable.

### **Equity**

A sustainable system is based on fairness and equity among all people. Social justice and equity are central to the principles of sustainability, but frequently receive less attention in discourse on the subject.

### **Quality of life and well-being**

A sustainable system offers a good quality of life for all people. However, the meaning of the term “quality of life” has been tarnished by its association with the provision of services, infrastructure, etc. without consideration of the broader, more holistic, aspects of life. The term “well-being” is meaningful in the context of sustainability because it refers to the wholeness of the human being.

### **Empowerment**

This term is generally used in relation to people having control of their own lives and communities. However, the “power” element of empowerment is against the ethos of sustainability because power suggests dominance of individuals over others. Although the term “empowerment” is widely used in discussions of sustainability, the author has adopted the terms **strength** and **self-governance** throughout this and previous reports relating to this project.

## Chapter Three - Methodology

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter is an account of the methodology applied since the initiation of the Action for Sustainability project in 2000. Methods applied in Phases I and II are described in report on Phase II which was presented to County Wexford Partnership by the present author in Autumn 2000. For reasons of continuity, the entire process is recounted below, including a summary of Phases I and II.

Despite extensive literature on the subject of sustainability, Action for Sustainability is a novel project and there is neither blueprint nor guidelines for the development of the project. Thus, it has been accepted from the outset that it will also be a learning process and that the lessons learned at each stage will influence and shape the future of the project. It is essential that these lessons are documented and that the format of the plan is flexible to allow for adaptation and learning by the community and County Wexford Partnership - see Chapter 4.

### **3.2 History of the project to date.**

The project was designed for implementation in three phases:

Phase 1	community selection phase
Phase II	review and planning phase
Phase III	development of a 10-year plan and implementation of the plan.

#### **3.2.1 Phase I**

In the interests of fairness to rural communities, County Wexford Partnership opted to select the future model community by a competitive process. In early 2000, the project was advertised and communities were invited to apply in writing on a standard application form. From the written applications three communities were short-listed. These communities were Craanford-Monaseed-Hollyfort, Castletown-Ballymoney-Tara Hill and Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen.

Each of these three communities was then awarded the services of a consultant to formulate frameworks towards local sustainability –see Chapter 10. It was the duty of the consultant to inform, educate, stimulate ideas, co-ordinate their efforts and assess proposals for sustainability. The Partnership stipulated that the communities were to write the frameworks themselves.

Work with the three communities took place simultaneously over a seven-week period in Spring 2000. The written frameworks were then submitted to the Partnership and judged by a panel comprising members of the County Wexford Heritage Forum. It was the opinion of the judges that Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen should be the future model rural sustainable community.

#### **3.2.2 Phase II**

Phase II involved a review period and development of a model for the future implementation of the project. Agencies which had been involved with the original formulation of the concept of a model rural community project were interviewed in relation to their future input to the project. These included SERTA, IFA, community representative, Duchas, The Heritage Council, Teagasc, Wexford County Council.

The interest expressed was encouraging and some agencies made generous offers of help.

A literature review and computer search for similar projects were also carried out.

A model for the implementation and assessment of sustainability, named The Sustainability Web, was designed by the author, Anne Behan - see Appendix 8 (extract from Phase II). The concept and principles of the model are described in Report on Phase II. In summary, the sustainability Web is a visual representation of local sustainability. It is based on the identification of the elements and the relationships (linkages) between the elements which make up an individual community. Elements are listed around a circle and linkages are represented by lines between the elements. A completed web is a visual representation of a local community. It is then possible to identify issues which need to be addressed within the community and to assess the potential impact of proposed developments.

An elaborate consultation process was designed based on the use of the Sustainability Web. It was proposed to consult the community and compile Sustainability Webs at public meetings. The community webs were then to be assessed by professionals and returned to the community for further comment. If necessary a further visit to professionals and community would be arranged before any action would be instigated.

### **3.2.3 Phase III**

Phase III was initiated in January 2001. A team of 12 people comprising four representatives from each of the three villages, Clonroche, Newbawn and Raheen, were selected as a steering committee to liaise with the residents in their local areas. The selection process was loosely defined and based on recommendations by those already involved with community development. A co-ordinator Ms. Mary Howlett was appointed to arrange meetings and liaise between the Partnership, consultant and community. A researcher, Mr. Tom McDonald was also appointed.

The Sustainability Web (see Appendix 9) was presented to the steering committee and adopted as the working tool for advancement of the project. It was decided at the initial meetings of the steering committee that in order to reach as many community members as possible, special interest groups would be invited to attend meetings where they would be asked to identify the elements and factors of their community, the links and focus links. It was planned that they would be free to speak of the community in general and/or in particular about their special interest area. If, at any time, other members of the community wished to attend any meeting, they would be allowed to do so, since the ethos of sustainability is complete consultation and openness. These meetings would be followed by open meetings to which there would be public invitation to all members of community.

It was hoped that, from the consultation process, it could be established which issues needed to be addressed, where joint efforts could be made and resources shared. A list of all known special interest groups was drawn up (see Appendix 2) and dates were set for the initial meetings.

Because, during Phase I there was limited community input at Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen in terms of numbers participating, it was obvious that the greater audience attending consultation meetings would not be familiar with the concept of sustainability. To properly inform the community an intensive awareness programme would have been necessary. However, this was not practical because it was generally understood that the attendance would be poor. To most of the community sustainability was, at most, a vague concept. Many community members in Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen devote considerable time to specific group/community interests (sports, etc.) and it was unrealistic to expect large attendances to receive tuition on sustainability. However, it was hoped that the public compilation of Sustainability Webs, taking account of what people themselves proposed, would generate an interest and understanding of sustainability and encourage the lateral thinking that is necessary for its attainment.

It was hoped that:

- people would realise that every opinion was taken into account and recorded
- people would realise that the web applied to their own community and that it was not just a general concept

- people would realise that their special interests were catered for in the overall picture of their community
- after consultation with community, special interest groups and professionals the Webs would be brought back to the wider community for comment, thus reinforcing the message of open consultation. The demonstration of linkages/interactions would be a further opportunity to reinforce the concept of sustainability.

It was evident to the steering committee that information and awareness were lacking among the greater community. It was agreed that awareness would be nurtured and allowed to grow as the project progressed.

### **3.2.4 Outcome of consultation phase**

Unfortunately, the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in England and Northern Ireland and the subsequent restrictions on movement curtailed the consultation process and the planned meetings did not begin until May 2001. Some meetings were held, but attendances were low. However, those who did attend meetings showed positive reaction to the use of the Sustainability Web and the establishment of linkages. Some useful information was gathered and this indicated potential for the success of the Sustainability Web, not alone in assessing and monitoring sustainability, but also in informing the community.

Because of the late start in the calendar year only a few meetings were possible before the summer months. Attendances dropped drastically in summer because people are involved in various sporting and recreational activities. Traditionally, community development associations cease or slow down their activities for this period. It became apparent that there was nothing to be gained with continuing the consultation programme until the autumn and it was therefore suspended.

Steering group meetings were held through spring 2002 and in October, 2002 a public consultation event was held in each of the three villages. The event was advertised and held over a period of six days. Mr. Billy Murphy of County Wexford Partnership facilitated the event for two days each in Clonroche, Newbawn and Raheen. The public were invited to come and give their opinions on a number of community issues. A series of thirteen questions were posted on stands and the community were asked to give their responses, in writing, anonymously if they wished. The event was worthwhile, but relatively small numbers attended. The questions and responses are shown in Appendix 6.

### **3.2.5 Awareness Week**

It was decided that in order to maintain confidence and to further promote the project a festival would be held. It was recognised and agreed by the steering committee that the Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community reacts positively to visible action and that the project needed a visible profile. An Awareness Week was planned.

The Awareness Week entitled "A Celebration of our Locality" was held from September 25<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The event entailed a series of lectures, seminars, demonstrations, school activities and outdoor activities. See Appendix 3.

### **3.2.6 Nations in Bloom international competition for Liveable Communities**

Shortly after the Awareness Week the community received word that it had been accepted to the finals of the Nations in Bloom international competition for Liveable Communities to be held in Shenzhen, China, November 29<sup>th</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. The emphasis of the project then shifted from consultation to preparation for the Nations in Bloom finals. Preparations involved briefing of the steering committee on the competition and the presentation that would be required in Shenzhen, selection of the presentation team and preparation of the presentation – see Appendix 5.

After intensive preparation the presentation was finalised and presented in Shenzhen on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The presentation stressed sustainability as a central theme within the community. It was significant that the community were unique among the 37 finalists in their integrated approach to community development and in the use of a model towards sustainability. The level of voluntary input by the community was also unique among the finalists. Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community received a silver award.

Between January and April 2002 the team repeated the presentation for Newbawn ICA, members of the steering committee who had not travelled to China and Clonroche community.

### **3.2.7 Other practical work carried out in 2001-2002.**

#### **Estate enhancement - Newbawn**

As part of the Awareness Week an estate “make-over” was carried out at Beech View Estate, Newbawn (see Appendix 4). The aim was to encourage interest and self-help in the maintenance of one’s immediate surroundings. It was hoped that the make-over would also generate an interest in plants and horticulture among the residents of Newbawn.

Plants were purchased by County Wexford Partnership and planted in conjunction with the estate residents. Compost from the nearby Berridge’s anaerobic digester was used as fertiliser. Adults and children worked together and the exercise generated a sense of excitement and pride. Some residents expressed an interest in attending a gardening course if one was available locally.

Efforts were made to arrange a course in spring 2002. The aim was to arrange a local tutor and offer the course to any of the residents of Newbawn, Clonroche and Raheen. Because of the time of year no tutor was available and the course was postponed.

#### **Tree-planting at Newbawn sports field**

Following extensive work carried out at the new sports field by the Newbawn sports committee, County Wexford Partnership funded the purchase of trees for planting at the site. Trees were purchased from Future Forests, County Cork and planted by community members. The trees were native species, mostly of native provenance and with a few beech and ornamental species for variety. The aim of the planting was to provide shelter, enhance the site and to blend the site into the surrounding landscape. Because the field is situated at the edge of the village, most of the planting was in the form of hedgerows and ground cover to mimic the vegetation of the surrounding areas and to provide visual continuity (see Appendix 4).

#### **Hydrogeological survey**

A hydrogeological survey of the community area was commissioned and completed by Geotechnical and Environmental Systems, Carlow, in late 2001 (see Chapters 7 and 10). The purpose of the study was to investigate the local hydrogeology so that the community would have its own information on local groundwater. The advantage to the community is that they now have information on the aquifer potential and vulnerability of the area. This information would be useful in planning for future development and in making informed comments on planning applications for the area.

#### **Spatial development Plan**

A spatial development plan was commissioned and completed by Mr. Philip Geoghegan and associates in 2002 (see chapters 7 and 10). The plan involved a site visit and investigation by Mr. Geoghegan and his students from U.C.D. School of Architecture. The students investigated the three villages of Clonroche, Newbawn and Raheen and put forward some suggestions for the sensitive development of the villages. This was followed by a more in-depth study and report by Mr. Geoghegan and his colleagues. The plan is a suggestion of possibilities for the three villages in terms of future development and enhancement, taking into account the particular character and requirements of the three villages.

**Research on waste management**

Initial research on possibilities for local recycling possibilities were made by the author and Ms. Mary Howlett. A visit was made to Sunflower Recycling in Dublin to speak with Ms. Bernie Walsh in relation to the project. Because of the scale of the project and time necessary to carry out research on the subject, it was agreed that the work will be completed in late 2002. County Wexford Partnership has agreed to fund a feasibility study in November 2002 (see Chapter 7).

**Contact with Ugandan community**

At the Nations in Bloom finals in Shenzhen, 2001 the presentation team made contact with the team from Uganda. Details were exchanged and it was agreed to maintain contact and potentially to make direct links if possible (see also Chapter 7).

**Research in UK**

Because of lack of information on local economies, local food programmes, etc. and lack of cohesiveness and confidence on behalf of the local agricultural sector, contacts were established and valuable information was obtained from New Economics Foundation, Development Trusts Association and Foundation for Local Food Initiatives in England – see Chapter 10.



## Chapter Four - Lessons From the Community

### 4.1 Introduction

Action for Sustainability has been a learning process throughout the entire project. Valuable information has been gathered at each stage and for this reason the project has not been rushed and strict deadlines have not been imposed.

The concept of sustainability is new to communities. Communities, community workers and Partnership staff have been accustomed to working on issues in isolation. For example, they have not had to consider environmental impacts when dealing with social issues. Furthermore, in respect of such issues, it is project finance, rather than local economy which is generally the consideration. Consideration has rarely been given to global effects – they are accepted as inevitable and beyond the control of local communities.

It is in this context that the Action for Sustainability project was initiated and instigated. It was never anticipated that its application would be straightforward or easy. It was necessary to proceed slowly because a loss of confidence in the project could be fateful to its continuation and its ultimate success. It was essential to gain maximum information and learning as the project progressed. To the knowledge of the Partnership and consultant there were no similar projects in progress and Action for Sustainability therefore appears to be unique. It appears that other sustainability projects tackle specific issues, but no information could be found (Action for Sustainability Report, Phase II) on a project which is taking a completely integrated approach with an existing rural community. Some projects are working towards the creation of new communities and eco-villages.

The formulation of a conceptual strategy, however practical its application, would not necessarily succeed without gaining experience in application of sustainability at a very local level. This represents the greatest distance between policy and application of policy i.e. from the theory of sustainability to its direct application in a living community.

It must be realised and accepted that this is a practical project and that many of the concepts discussed in the extensive literature on the subject of sustainability cannot be immediately applied in the real-life situation of Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen. In order for sustainability to be achieved there must be a period of transition where inertia, *status quo*, fear of change etc. must be overcome. Time must be given, not just to community development workers to absorb the concepts, but also to individuals with whom the Partnership and/or consultant come in contact. Action for Sustainability will be a growing, continuous learning experience with a considerable transition period from existing practices to effective action towards sustainability. Intensive capacity-building, information and awareness with understanding must be encouraged constantly.

It has been the experience of the author that some communities accept new concepts and change more readily than others. Some communities are led by example, action and encouragement by what has been achieved elsewhere. Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen is encouraged by visible action. While certain actions may be carried out and even funded by County Wexford Partnership, they may not be entirely in keeping with the principles of sustainability. However, learning and confidence must be gained from each intervention, even if it is to be learning in retrospect. If apparent lost opportunities are accepted as learning experiences, they can be considered as part of transition to sustainability rather than lost opportunity. These points may be illustrated by simple case studies – see Appendix 4.

It must also be accepted that this and all other communities are composed of a mixture of human beings each with individuality of person, expression, belief, experience, etc., but all influenced by landscape and local factors, which in turn can be interpreted by the individual in different ways.

To impose sustainability would be presumptuous and result in failure. To nurture an understanding of the principles of sustainability and to allow time for this understanding to emanate through all practices is the project's best chance of success. It must be guided and progress must be assessed regularly. The interaction and reluctance of the individuals must be accepted. Certain actions must be considered important as part of confidence and capacity-building.

In any event, acceptance of the individual and individual expression is an essential element of a sustainable community.

## **4.2 SWOT analysis of sustainability in existing community - Problems /**

### **pitfalls**

#### **4.2.1 Strengths – community lessons**

Prior to the Action for Sustainability project the Clonroche-Newawn-Raheen community have been active in specific areas of community including the following:

- Recycling in Raheen

Raheen Community Centre has acted as a collection centre for newspapers. These are collected, for recycling, on a regular basis by a County Wexford waste management company.

- Childcare facility in Raheen

An independent childcare facility has been in operation in Raheen Community Centre for a number of years. Young children are left in the care of a trained specialist, leaving parents free to work, etc.

- Sports field in Newbawn

A field was purchased and developed into a community sports field at Newbawn. Funding was raised and work was carried out on an entirely voluntary basis by members of the community. The field has a GAA, soccer and rounders pitch. It is hoped to develop a running track and changing facilities at a later stage.

- Millennium Park in Clonroche

A park was developed in Diers/Robinson's Lawn, by the Clonroche Community Development Association to preserve part of the site for the community, to provide open space for the enjoyment of the community.

- Voluntary organisations

There are an estimated 46 voluntary associations in the Clonroche-Newawn-Raheen area (see Appendix 1). These are active in many aspects of community life, from sports to music, crafts, community alert, etc.

- Community website Clonroche

A website has been designed by Clonroche Community Development Group. The site provides information on the area, the work of the community, etc and it is updated regularly.

- IT training in Raheen

A multi-media training centre has been operating in Raheen for a number of years. The centre is open to all members of the community and people can receive specialist tuition for a small fee. The centre was initially set up with the aid of FAS, but when the mobile facility was withdrawn, the community set up their own facility to maintain the service.

- Appointment of community development manager in Raheen

A full-time trained community manager has been appointed by Raheen Community Development Association. Raheen Family Resources Centre has developed an independent workplan for 2001-2003.

- Maintenance of heritage sites

A group of community members have maintained an active interest in local heritage and historical sites in the area. They have cleared and maintained walks on Carrigbyrne Hill, cleared and made accessible the oak field on Carrigbyrne Hill, re-discovered and made

accessible the site of a Mass Rock. A colour brochure of walking routes on Carrigbyrne Hill has also been produced.

- Team-work and professionalism displayed during preparation of the presentation for the Nations in Bloom competition and its delivery in China.

Four members of the community were on the team which represented the community at the Nations in Bloom finals. Throughout the preparations and during delivery of the presentation in China the team, and associated members of the community, displayed impressive community spirit, teamwork and professionalism.

#### **4.2.2 Weaknesses – lessons from community consultations and assessment of Sustainability Webs**

- Voluntary work prior to the project was carried out in isolation and without any consideration of sustainability. There is a tendency to continue this trend, despite the fact that the community applied to become the model of sustainability. The project was seen as profile, or “good for the community” without consideration of the implications. It is proving difficult to reverse this trend.
- It has been observed in general, and in this community in particular, that people expect authorities to provide services/social services, which would otherwise have to be supplied from within the community. It appears that roles are cast for authorities as providers. Communities become dependent/expectant on them to provide and therefore lose willingness to make efforts for themselves.
- People seem to accept that corporations/bodies act as intelligent entities and fail to see that there are merely collections of individuals. Thus they are reluctant to challenge the “thinking” of corporations and there is a tendency to accept a subservient role and maintain *status quo*.
- Some sectors and individuals are reluctant to come to meetings and express opinions.
- The community appear reluctant to actively promote the concept of sustainability on a daily basis. There was good support for the Awareness Week, but little discussion of sustainability outside the formal structure of events.
- There is an inertia and general reluctance within the community to take ownership/responsibility for its own destiny.
- There is a tendency to look to the Partnership to deliver funding and initiatives.
- In some cases there is an impression that the Partnership has unlimited resources.
- Globalisation has generated a feeling that self-help has limited potential.
- There is poor understanding and awareness of environment within the community. There is complacency in believing that it is in good order. People do not think of water quality etc. when asked about their environment. It appears that, to the community, such issues are the responsibility of official bodies such as Local Authority, Department of Agriculture, etc. There is a general impression that the rural environment is “safe” because many farmers are members of the REPS scheme. When asked about the elements of environment they responded by talking of access and the voluntary input of community members in maintaining walks, etc, but there was no evidence of an understanding of the environment itself.
- The community is very aware of social issues and heritage, but not of environmental issues. Habitats and biodiversity do not appear to be a consideration within the community.

- Nobody identified the elements of tourism, energy/resources, emissions, air quality, need for water treatment, flora and fauna, decreasing use of car, self-reliance, self-governance.
- Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen looked on the Phase I information day as a baseline study on behalf of the Partnership. By contrast, Craanford accepted it as education (which was the intention) and enquired as to how they could do baseline studies for themselves.
- Attitudes are an important issue within the community and some community members feel isolated by the attitudes within the community. Long-term association with FÁS often weakens the confidence of the individual and some feel that it influences their integration in community. This has the effect of isolating individuals within the community.
- Skills of elderly are often quoted as in danger of being lost in the near future, but there is no framework for the appreciation and/or preservation of these skills.
- Communities themselves never mention well-being as an element. In general, people appear to concentrate on specific issues, without considering the integrated holistic aspects of their lives/community life.
- Agriculture is significant, but poorly represented at consultation meetings. It appears that either farmers do not come forward, other community members are unaware of the real problems which are facing them, or feel powerless to help them.
- There is a suspicion of change among the agricultural sector, but they do recognise that they have problems. There is a feeling that changes will come from outside, but that it is almost impossible to change agriculture at local level.
- The significance of shops is seen in the context of access, rather than what is supplied in them.

# Chapter Five - SWOT Analysis of the Project to Date

## **5.1 Strengths of project**

The project has become a forum for expression for those who attend meetings. This was apparent from the early stages of Phase I. It has been the experience of the author that while relatively few will have the energy/commitment for sustained effort on practical issues, most people display a need for a forum to express. In expression, the real needs of the human become apparent. Apart from being a personal support, consultations were useful in gathering information that can be applied in addressing human needs.

Some less obvious linkages were identified by using the Sustainability Web e.g. lack of transport inhibits access, this denies knowledge of environment, which prohibits care of environment and diminishes well-being. These are negative links, but the opposite is true in the positive sense – access to landscape gives knowledge of environment, this in turn promotes well-being, interest in and care of the environment. It is advised that Action for Sustainability continue to monitor for, and nurture, positive indications such as this.

The project identified how people perceive their environment and this is useful in addressing problems.

By establishing links and related bundles of links, people can be delegated to work together on related elements of community life e.g. transport is directly linked to social inclusion/heritage, etc. By using Sustainability Webs the community/Partnership can see the origin of influences. This allows for more effective work towards the sharing of resources.

The Sustainability Web helps people to assess the consequences of their own actions.

In general, people have been conditioned not to think about the causes of problems and the solutions which can be achieved by self-reliance. The Sustainability Web generates and encourages thinking.

The consultation process identified that people are not thinking about tourism, energy/resources, emissions, etc.

By using the Sustainability Web and introducing in a practical way the concept of shared resources, the concept of sustainability is constantly being delivered and reinforced.

When encouraged to do so, people establish links, but these links are not obvious to them in their daily lives – the Sustainability Web helps them to see linkages in their own community.

Use of the Sustainability Web has helped in the assessment of peoples' priorities and the identification of what they see and do not see as being of significant. Both the positive and negative aspects of this are significant.

## **5.2 Weaknesses - of project**

There is no clear structure on the steering committee.

Initial capacity-building in community was non-existent and the project has suffered as a result.

There has been only one day's capacity-building in County Wexford Partnership. This is insufficient.

There is only one designated person within the Partnership to work on the project.

The principles and ethos of sustainability have not been nurtured within the Partnership. If it were so, this would have emanated out to the community via outreach staff.

The project was delayed for some months because of the difficulty of gaining effective help with respect to local economy. This is being addressed via research through the New Economics Foundation.

The project has not yet been successful in setting in place a system which will self-perpetuate and pursue sustainability without the intervention of the Partnership.

Indicators of sustainability differ from the performance indicators used by ADM, the body which funds the Partnership. For continued support it would be desirable if there were a system whereby ADM could be given appreciation of the value of Action for Sustainability.

No structure has been put in place to specify "rules" of intervention by the Partnership. All intervention should be accepted by the community in the understanding that all supported activity must be within the principles of sustainability. For example, no method has been established whereby Newbawn sports field committee could be told that in order to receive assistance their activities must be chemical-free. This leaves scope for lost opportunities.

The project has been weak in reaching/informing all members of the community.

### **5.3 Opportunities**

The project presents considerable opportunities for the Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community, as a model of transition to sustainability and as a transferable model.

There are opportunities for communication with other communities, particularly those who took part in Phase I of Action for Sustainability (Craanford-Monaseed-Holyfort and Castletown-Ballymoney-Tara Hill).

The project allowed the community to present themselves on the global stage in the Nations in Bloom finals in China.

The project has generated discussion on waste management within the community.

### **5.4 Threats**

Lack of information could be detrimental to the success of the project.

The project could be in danger of losing interest within the community due to lack of energy and commitment to sustainability. The community tendency towards selective action is strong and the thought process involved in Action for Sustainability may be interpreted as lack of action.

Lack of alternative economics would mean that social and environmental elements may be improved upon, but sustainability could never be realistically aspired to.

Lack of action could cause loss of confidence in the project.

# Chapter Six - Strategy Towards Sustainability

## **6.1 Introduction**

A schedule of action towards sustainability in Clonroche-Nebawn-Raheen must be based on realistically achievable goals. It is most likely to succeed if the concerns of the community are treated as priority, because it is inevitable that there will be pressure within the community to carry out planned activities regardless of Action for Sustainability. However, particular changes which may be additional to community plans, but which are essential for the promotion of sustainability, must be introduced and set in motion at the outset. The co-ordinators of Action for Sustainability will have to be innovative and energised in keeping such issues in the public domain.

Despite some community feeling that there has not been enough direct action in this project to date, the pace has allowed County Wexford Partnership an insight into local community dynamics. When intervention is slow, the community drifts back into its three separate villages and the concepts of sustainability fade. It has been important to learn this and to observe first-hand the difference between the three groups. It has become apparent that maintenance of interest in sustainability will be a significant aspect of this project (McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999). It must be acknowledged however that the concept of sustainability has been adopted by individuals within the community and the term "sustainability" has become embedded in the language of development in the locality (Raheen Family Resource Centre Workplan 2001-2003, Clonroche Sustainability Needs, 2002).

All activities, whether proposed by the community, co-ordinators or others, must be assessed and refined to comply with the principles of sustainability. If they are not in keeping with such principles, the reasons should be recorded by the project co-ordinators.

The approach taken in this project is to be all-inclusive and to establish, not just the perceived problems but to establish where these may be linked with others and aim to encourage the community to collectively examine root causes of problems. For this reason statistics have not been applied. The aim is to promote sustainability and a strategy for approaching sustainability. As the project progresses some interesting statistics should emerge and the community is advised from here on to keep records of numbers consulted, outcomes of initiatives, etc.

Some general points must be taken into consideration:

1. Elements put forward by the community represent local thinking and interest. These must be represented in action for sustainability.
2. The community expect delivery – most are not willing to do for themselves. There is a sense of inertia in relation to tackling unfamiliar issues. It is essential to energise the project. Positive examples of achievements elsewhere may encourage the community. Incorporation of the Craanford and Castletown communities may also help. Both of these communities displayed a willingness to transfer the discussion of sustainability into action. Their activities may encourage Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen. By holding joint meetings between the communities, the spirit of sustainability may be nurtured.
3. "Information", during consultation, was taken to mean information relating to social welfare only. The community is poorly informed on many issues and this must be addressed
4. Ownership, a sense of ownership and self-reliance of the community must be regenerated within the community.
5. Popular methods, such as innovative community recycling schemes in the UK, generate a sense of pride and fun and help to maintain interest. Such popular methods should be encouraged where possible.

Webs 1 - 7, Appendix 5 and Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 2 show the priorities of the community as identified during 2001 at consultation meetings, steering committee meetings and in

discussion with members of the community during the Awareness Week, etc. Sport, transport, social services, isolation/social inclusion were the main priorities identified by the community.

## **6.2 Organisation, capacity-building and pre-development**

### **Step 1 Co-ordinating team**

It has become obvious from the community and the project to date, that a definite operational structure is essential for the success of the project. This will involve an extension of the 12-person steering committee that was in place in 2001. The first step in the 10-year plan must be the putting in place of an organisational structure. Such a structure should be capable and willing to:

- implement the plan
- use the Sustainability Web
- assess progress towards sustainability
- incorporate unforeseen elements into the plan and assess them for sustainability
- recognise when outside/professional help is needed
- adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining the sustainability theme
- maintain good relations with the community.

The selection of the co-ordinating team must be a democratic process, but it will of necessity involve the selection of individuals for their talents, skills and/or understanding of sustainability. It is important to avoid political appointees, but it is equally important not to exclude anybody from the team. It will be necessary to have a chairperson, secretary, P.R.O., etc.

The co-ordinating must have a means of recording the proceedings of meetings, consultations, activities, positive and negative aspects of activities, etc.

The team should have clearly defined roles. A back-up network system of contacts/professionals in the areas of economics, social inclusion, environment, heritage, etc. should be arranged. These should be familiar with, or become informed on, the project and the principles of sustainability.

A consultant team should be assigned to attend/assess at regular intervals and should be on-call to advise on specific issues.

As stated earlier in this report, the Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community is action oriented and encouraged by visual activity. For this reason it is important that practical work is in progress at all times. However, early in the implementation of the 10-year plan the following are essential:

### **Step 2 Regular meetings**

Agree regular meetings of the co-ordinating team. Meetings should be held at pre-arranged times e.g. first Monday of each month, etc. All members should have knowledge of their commitments in advance.

### **Step 3 Code of Practice**

The co-ordinating team should agree a general Code of Practice for dealing with issues, especially with respect to projects funded by the Partnership e.g. planting must be chemical-free. The message of sustainability must be constantly reiterated.

### **Step 4 Capacity building**

It is imperative that the co-ordinating team in particular and the community in general become better informed of the meaning of sustainability and develop a mindset and work ethos which is in keeping with the concepts of sustainability. Until this is achieved sustainability will remain

an additional mental burden. When it is achieved sustainability will be a normal part of day-to-day and long-term work and planning.

Capacity-building within the County Wexford Partnership is also essential. It is important that all work which relates to the community is within the concept of sustainability. This will constantly reinforce the message to the community and it is important, not alone for the success of specific projects, but for the overall success of Action for Sustainability.

### **Step 5            Generation of awareness**

Seek a weekly "Sustainable Community" report in the local newspapers. Set up a Sustainable community newsletter for distribution within the community. A weekly "Know your sustainable community" feature on local radio would be effective in generating awareness and in spreading an understanding of sustainability.

Public meetings and information/awareness workshops should be scheduled regularly.

### **Step 6            Sustainability Webs**

Construct webs as issues arise. Re-visit existing webs and assess links.

### **Step 7            Indicators**

Discuss and agree indicators with the organisational committee and present to wider community for discussion.

### **Step 8            Recording**

Set up an agreed system to record activities and progress. This should include written, photographic and video. Such records will be useful in assessing progress, for updates for the community, for future events such as Nations in Bloom, etc. should the community wish to partake in the future.

## **6.3    General procedure**

The co-ordinating team structure should agree a procedure for dealing with issues:

- Discuss
- Draw sustainability web and establish links
- Evaluate links to determine an indicator(s)
- Decide action
- Do checklist for sustainability
- Refine proposed action towards better sustainability
- Initiate action
- If action involves meeting with other agencies, individuals, etc. brief all attendees of meetings in relation to the sustainability aspects of the issue. This has not happened to date and since the inception of the project meetings have been held along conventional lines.
- Assess progress regularly

### **Using the Sustainability Web / Continuous self-assessment**

- Construct webs and insert links in webs, as they become apparent.
- Include social inclusion, environment, well-being and economics in all webs.
- Establish direction of links
- If a link has multiple arcs, this could be used as an indicator.
- Always cross-check between webs for links and indicators. If links are in one web, they should be represented in others where appropriate.

- Assess indicators/links – as direct between elements (bridge), between factors (radii), or indirect (arc). Use the cumulative scores as indicators. For examples of spin-off links (arcs) see sustainability Web 9, Appendix 5.
- If there are numerous links relating to a particular element(s), then construct a separate web for this element(s).
- Cross-check: if negative links decrease for one element they should consequently decrease for other [linked] elements. Such decreases could serve as indicators.

**Note:**

Sustainability Webs 1-7, Appendix 9 were constructed from information supplied by the community.

Web 1 is a general community Sustainability Web which includes all elements, factors, positive and focus linkages.

Webs 2-7 were constructed for selected elements and show focus linkages as identified by the community.

Web 2a illustrates how the Sustainability Web can be used to focus on a particular issue, in this case the effect of building development within the community.

Webs 8 and 9 refer to focus linkages in Environment/Landscape/Heritage and were constructed by the consultant to demonstrate the difference in perception of community elements.

Web 9 shows spin-off links or “arcs” (shown as red arrows connecting links) relating to the impact of lack of information in a community. Lack of information influences attitudes, which in turn can lead to the support of inappropriate development, which can lead to environmental degradation, which can impact on small business, etc.

## Chapter Seven - Environment

*"It is when the capacity of a place to sustain itself becomes ruptured that the human mind is forced to reflect upon ecology. Only then do most of us consider the interconnections between plants and animals and their environment."*

From *Soil and Soul*  
By Alastair Mc Intosh

### **7.1 Introduction**

Environment and economy are two subjects of enormous significance for local communities, but there is a general lack of information and understanding of how their respective systems work. Economy is perceived as being subject to national manipulation and global pressures and beyond the control of small communities – see Chapter 9. Environment is generally taken for granted and there is little or no overall consideration of its interacting factors or awareness of its vulnerability. The frequent mention of environmental issues in the media, especially in relation to controversial developments, gives the impression that environment is “being looked after”. Protected species and water quality receive mention, but at local level there is little or no integrated approach to the protection of biodiversity, water quality, etc. There is a perception that wildlife is being protected by Dúchas, water by the Local Authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency, etc. If a community assumes a role in environmental management it is often associated with specific interventions such as “cleaning-up”, walking trails, Tidy Towns or documentation of local wildlife in the form of brochures, etc. Few communities have knowledge of the state of their local environment. Environment is, in fact, distant to most local communities.

*"I watched my daughter and her 'Anglo' friend take their infant sons out for their first springtime. My daughter set her eight- or nine-month son on to a barely greening lawn. She introduced him to the grass, encouraging him to touch it, even taste it. She pointed out the temperature, the breeze, the sky and clouds. The other mother came differently prepared for her son's encounter with the world. She brought a blanket which she spread out for her son. She brought toys as distractions and she did not join her son so much as she hovered over him in a protective manner, not allowing him to crawl away from the blanket; not allowing him to grasp at the grass ('dirty'). My daughter introduced her son to the world he lived in; the other mother introduced her son to a potentially dangerous 'environment'.....the world 'out there' was alien..... We transmit these values by loaning our attitudes to our children."*

Apache philosopher V.F. Cordova  
From *Soil and Soul* by A. McIntosh

The Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen community area is approximately 9,350 hectares (23,000 acres) in extent. This is an approximate figure because, for reasons of inclusiveness, no definite map and/or socio-demographic boundaries have been drawn in relation to Action for Sustainability (see Map 1, Appendix 1).

The principal landscape features in the area are the hills of volcanic rock, the highest being Carrigbyrne Hill, located between Newbawn and Raheen and rising to a height of 234m OD. Carrigmastia Hill, south-west of Clonroche, reaches a height of 167m and Tinnycarrig Hill, west of Newbawn, reaches a height of 137m. The land between the hills is undulating and the soils are predominantly glacial till (GES hydrogeological assessment, 2001). Peat occurs in a low-lying area south-east of Ballynaboola, close to Bridge Quarter.

The study area lies in a watershed between the rivers Barrow to the west and Slaney to the East. A number of small streams drain into the Boro River, the Owenduff and Corock Rivers. The Owenduff and Corock drain into Bannow Bay to the south.

The study area is typical of a cultivated agricultural landscape and there are few natural or semi-natural habitats, other than trees and hedgerows. Semi-natural grasslands are not evident although small portions have been reported. There is a relatively intact network of hedgerows and it appears that there has been relatively little hedge removal compared to other parts of East Leinster.

There are some commercial forestry plantations, especially in the vicinity of Ballynaboola and Carrigbyrne Hill. These are comprised mostly of coniferous species and are typical of commercial plantation forestry. The peatland area south-east of Ballynaboola has also been planted.

## **7.2 Local issues**

The principal problem encountered in considering sustainability and environmental issues in the area is the apparent lack of knowledge and understanding of the natural environment. Environment is discussed only in terms of waste management with some mention of pollution from the sewage treatment plant at Clonroche and some concern in relation to groundwater pollution from septic tanks. There appears to be a general perception that because many farmers are in the REPS scheme that the environment is "alright".

During community consultations environmental factors put forward by local residents include waste recycling, composting, rivers, water supply and open spaces. The latter were mentioned in terms of access for casual play. Connection to landscape appears to be associated with Carrigbyrne Hill, but this is related more to the historical events which took place there. Although it is extensively planted as a commercial forestry, Carrigbyrne Hill is generally perceived as being natural and the view from the hill is appreciated. On prompting by the author, wildlife was added as a factor in the Sustainability Web, but it does not appear to be of primary concern or particular interest within the community. There appears to be little knowledge or interest in the natural habitats of the area prior to intensification for agriculture and forestry. No information on the peatland close to Bridge Quarter could be ascertained. Air quality, biodiversity, energy usage, etc. are not generally discussed in the community and were not put forward as of concern.

There appears to be a perception that the natural environment is the responsibility of Dúchas, that all tree-related issues should be undertaken by Coillte and that water quality is the responsibility of the Local Authority and the EPA.

There is local interest in Tidy Towns, particularly in Clonroche.

There is a poor understanding of native species and their significance.

Specific indications of interaction with environment within the community are encouraging, but the overall impression is that there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of local environment and environmental issues. Despite the apparent lack of interaction with environment, there are positive aspects of environmental awareness in the area. There is immense pride in the locality, which ranges from association with historical events to appreciation of the rural nature of the locality. A significant number of people took part and enjoyed the nature walk led by Mr. Dominic Berridge on Carrigbyrne Hill during the Awareness Week, September 2001. Schools have demonstrated an interest in environmental education. All schools have compost bins and battery recycling boxes. Composting demonstrations by Mr. Liam Morrissey and anti-litter presentations by Wexford County Council were delivered to all schools in the community during the Awareness Week. Childcare specialists in the crèche at Raheen actively encourage an interest in plants, seasons, etc.

A hydrogeological assessment was commissioned by County Wexford Partnership for the community. A waste management feasibility study has been commissioned by County Wexford Partnership and is to be completed in late 2002. County Wexford Partnership has committed to the initiation of a community composting scheme and Raheen Family Resource

Centre has included such as scheme in its Workplan 2001-2003. Lectures and demonstrations on composting are regularly presented to I.C.A. and other groups by Ms. Bessie French of Newbawn.

The planting of flowers at Beech View Estate, Newbawn and the practical demonstration of planting by Mr. Sil Doyle during the Awareness Week were well-received and indicated an opportunity for further instruction within the concepts of chemical-free gardening.

An interest, albeit small, was expressed for further information after the sustainable building seminar during the Awareness Week.

A leaflet was produced by the Raheen Heritage Group in relation to walks on Carrigbyrne Hill. This included some information on species which may be seen on the hill, including owls and red squirrel.

The waste management facility at Raheen is well supported and there have been numerous enquiries as to the extension of the collection facility. Other environmental issues are not a priority. Community interest is directed towards social issues and local history, which is seen as heritage. Carrigbyrne Hill is perceived as an amenity for walking and connection with local "heritage", the main connection being with the 1798 rebellion.

There is limited interaction with Coillte in relation to forest paths, but none in relation to wildlife habitats and open spaces within the forests, or species mix when replanting. Trees were felled in 2002 and despite advice that this would be an opportune time to be pro-active as local stakeholders, local representation to Coillte was minimal.

Catchment management is not discussed publicly.

In general, there is a lack of information and understanding of the physical landscape, habitats, water systems and the state of the environment. The plans, as discussed, appear to concentrate on specific issues and lack an integrated approach.

### **7.3 Barriers to action**

There is a sense of fatalism in relation to the effects of the by-pass, Coillte and other state developments. There is a lack of commitment to voicing opinions and being pro-active in environmental issues. There is also a lack of focus in this respect.

There has been no effort to restore degraded habitats and with lack of knowledge of significance there is no effort to regain these. Because of the overall inertia and lack of awareness local knowledge is scattered and it is difficult to locate people with an active interest. There are some semi-natural grasslands but the danger is that these will become targets for drainage for intensive agriculture, forestry or housing development. The overall ecological richness will be impoverished, but there will be no community sense of loss because they are only appreciated by a very limited number of people.

Plastics used in the fruit growing industry cannot be recycled and are accumulating in field corners, to the extent that this is impacting on the growers in terms of quality labelling.

There is community concern about access to playing areas and open spaces, but this is always in the context of activities for children and without apparent awareness of the significance of open spaces for well-being.

There is a general reluctance to accept advice on proper procedures for the maintenance of old graveyards in terms of wildlife value and potential monuments.

The intangible connection between humans and landscape is a dimension of the subject that receives little attention. This interaction with landscape relates to well-being and is deeper than the traditional Irish connection relating to ownership of land. In recent years there has been an increasing suspicion in rural areas of those who 'wander' across lands. This is

understandable in the context of fear of liability for damages, animal diseases, excessive regulations, etc. but the consequence is that freedom to roam is now denied to most people. Even in rural areas, most people are effectively denied access to landscape, unless they use roads or publicly-owned places.

## **7.4 Strategy**

The initial essential step in improving environmental sustainability is information and local knowledge and understanding. It is imperative that the local community gain some local information and appreciation of the landscape as more than amenity and historical significance, but as aesthetic quality.

- \* Short-term strategy
- \*\* Medium-term strategy
- \*\*\* Long-term strategy

The following strategies towards sustainability in relation to specific aspects of environment require information and awareness campaigns. Such campaigns should be discussed by the co-ordinators of Action for Sustainability and the aim should be to deliver integrated information in a lively interactive manner.

### **7.4.1 Landscape**

Landscape can be considered in two aspects – visual and physical. *Visual landscape* refers to the visible aspects of landscape and how pleasing, unspoiled, or otherwise, it appears to the human eye. *Physical landscape* refers to the landscape features such as hills, rock outcrops, mountains, valleys and other structures of the earth. These can be degraded by changes such as quarrying, etc. Quarrying can change both the physical and visual landscapes by e.g. removal or changing the shape of a hill and consequent visual scar on the landscape. Inappropriate building can impact upon both physical and visual landscape. For example, a house built on a raised base on the crest of a hill alters the physical profile of the hill and also becomes visually intrusive.

- 1) \* Discuss landscape in a broad context and establish links on the Sustainability Web. Landscape links to well-being, sport & recreation, wildlife, etc.
- 2) \* Investigate the possibility of making an arrangement with the owners of Diers/Robinson's Lawn to re-instate the old connection. Perhaps a rent or short-term lease as community field could be arranged.
- 3) \* Investigate the possibility of setting up a Landscape Trust to purchase community land – for community access.
- 4) \*\* Aim to re-establish concept of commonage. Common land acquired for the community (possibly by a Landscape Trust) could serve many purposes– access to landscape, casual play areas, sports fields, wildlife habitats, open space, all of which have been expressed during community consultation and in community development plans. See Development Trusts Association literature in Reference section.
- 5) \*\* Develop a Code of Practice in relation to landscape and related environmental issues.
- 6) \* Encourage activities which make people look at landscape e.g. photographic exhibitions/competitions, art, etc.
- 7) \*\* Aim to establish walking corridors/walking trails, cycling corridors, rejuvenate mass paths/rights of way.

### **7.4.2 Ecology and biodiversity**

Little or no information on local habitats, species and biodiversity is available locally. Such information is essential and influences peoples' perception of their own environment. It allows them to play informed roles in decision-making, consultation and planning for their future and

in responding to proposed developments within the locality. The current lack of information should be considered prior to any further action in implementing local development plans or the UCD Spatial Plan.

### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss local ecology and establish links on the Sustainability Web (links with open space, landscape, well-being, etc.). Assess all future plans for impact on ecology and biodiversity.
- 2) \* Compile a reader-friendly information package explaining local geology and landscape, habitats, species and surface waters for the community. Involve residents and the Heritage in Schools Scheme (with parent involvement) in field-work. Avoid the temptation to produce a tourist-oriented brochure with advertisements of local attractions, etc.
- 3) \* Follow this up with a series of information events where people are brought outdoors and encouraged to look around locally.
- 4) \* Set up a working group and maybe a local interest group/club. Publicise local sightings of species, etc.
- 5) \* Encourage local schools to participate in Heritage in Schools Scheme.
- 6) \* Encourage interest in environment by carefully designed horticultural courses which would support local interest Tidy Towns, estate maintenance, etc. but also highlight the responsibility of the gardener in the environment. All courses should emphasise chemical-free gardening. Indicator – No. of people practicing chemical-free gardening.
- 7) \*\* Maintain interest by organising, maybe, a yearly or biennial Summer School for adults. Encourage linkage between environment and arts in the event.
- 8) \*\* Organise local hedgerow survey and construct hedgerow map. Maybe, initiate Field Fences project similar to that which was completed in Sligo in 2000.
- 9) \*\* Organise stream survey. Map catchments, riparian habitats and publish.
- 10) \*\* Encourage habitat creation. Investigate the possibility of involving farm clusters – neighbouring farmers to donate a field corner to scrub, woodland, wetland, etc. If each farmer in a neighbouring cluster were agreeable, this would involve one field corner from each farm. This would help to highlight and address the problem of habitat fragmentation.
- 11) \*\* Investigate if constructed wetlands (reed beds) could be used as wastewater treatment and construct wetlands with a view to providing additional habitat.
- 12) \*\* Investigate the possibility of purchasing unimproved lands for the re-creation of commonage – perhaps by the setting up of a community Landscape Trust – see Section 6.4.1. If vendor wished to maintain lands for a purpose, perhaps the Trust could offer alternative improved lands in order to save lands with habitat value.
- 13) \*\* Develop and publish a Code of Practice in relation to ecology and related environmental issues.
- 14) \*\* Assess need for a biodiversity protection plan.

#### **7.4.2.1 Forestry**

- 1) \* Establish links on the Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* It is imperative that the community become involved in forestry issues. Changes can be made for the support of wildlife. Certain trees could be planted and maintained for the protection of species of particular ecological interest, such as red squirrel (if it recovers from the recent clear-felling), or for future provision of habitat for this and other species.
- 3) \* Encourage the community to adopt a “sustainable timber” policy in terms of the timber they use in their homes e.g. recycling of timbers, getting best advantage of the timbers they use, seeking substitutes for tropical hardwoods, etc.
- 4) \* In shops, schools and other public places, advertise what timbers are being used and their sources.
- 5) \* Plan for the best possible sustainable use of timbers, avoiding tropical hardwoods, in the new building at Raheen. Advertise this policy and use it as a model for the community.

- 6) \* Establish connection with a community in the developing world which is affected by deforestation e.g. Ugandan community with whom Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen made contact during the Nations in Bloom finals in China, 2001.

### **7.4.3 Water**

#### **7.4.3.1 Groundwater**

A hydrogeological assessment of the area was commissioned by County Wexford Partnership in 2001. The purpose of the assessment was to gain baseline information on local hydrogeology as part an environmental information base which would support strategy towards sustainability. With the information contained in the report the community would be better informed, in a scientific sense, of the extent and vulnerability of local groundwater. This should assist them in decision-making relating to the location and extent of development and protection of groundwater resources. It should also be valuable to the community in responding to planning applications and in the broader sense, as a basis for the future integrated planning of the area.

The report, completed by GES, is available as part of the information/resource base which has been compiled as part of this report – see Chapter 7. The report states that information on groundwater vulnerability in County Wexford is not currently available because a Groundwater Protection Scheme has not been prepared by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) for the county. The report gives interim advice for the protection of local groundwater. The aim of Groundwater Protection Schemes is to protect the best aquifers. The community are advised to follow official recommendations, but to keep in mind that a sustainable community should aim to protect all groundwater.

#### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss groundwater and establish links on the sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Spread awareness of groundwater, maybe with innovative promotions during a “Think about Water” campaign
- 3) \* Summarise the GES hydrogeological assessment and circulate the summary within the community.
- 4) Encourage water conservation whether individuals are on wells or mains/group supply.
- 5) Encourage well-owners to test water at least once a year. Compile results and publish general results for community awareness.
- 6) \*\* Compile information on alternative forms of wastewater treatment and information on septic tanks with specific reference to local groundwater.
- 7) \*\* When information becomes available, compile precise groundwater protection plan.
- 8) \*\* Compile an information package on environmental protection, including groundwater protection, as part of a follow-up to the environmental information package described in Section 6.4.2 above. Include information on wells and relative chemistry of groundwater versus conventionally treated water.

#### **7.4.3.2 Surface water**

There is a feeling of complacency that local surface waters are of good quality, despite a lack of data on the subject locally. During public consultation in October 2002, one person mentioned the problem of groundwater and surface water pollution as a result of increasing numbers of houses in the countryside. The problem of the pollution of a local stream at Clonroche by the sewage treatment plant is frequently mentioned. The plant is inadequate for the village and outflows into a stream which flows to the River Boro, a tributary of the River Slaney. The location of the existing plant is suitable for a constructed wetland (reed bed) treatment system. Such a system would raise awareness of water and wastewater treatment in the town.

### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Establish links on Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Include surface water in a "Think about Water" campaign – see 6.4.3.1.
- 3) \* Map all streams – see 6.4.2
- 4) \* Distribute Code of Practice for the protection of surface water – see 6.4.3.1.
- 5) \* Offer information on different wastewater treatment systems – see 6.4.3.1
- 6) \* Encourage corporate openness in wastewater issues
- 7) \* Test quality of local rivers/streams and publish results
- 8) \* Encourage catchment management at local level – Teagasc to help with Nutrient Management Planning (NMP).
- 9) \*\* Encourage community NMP.

### **7.4.4 Waste management**

Zero waste must be considered in any strategy towards sustainability. This has remained a distant aspiration in most communities because of the perceived difficulties in its attainment. This is especially true of Irish communities because of Ireland's poor record in reduction/recycling and reliance on disposal rather than waste management. A civic amenity centre was opened in 2002 in New Ross, but members of the community frequently ask if local facilities could be made available.

Ms. Mary Howlett and Ms. Marie-Louise Byrne have reported an increasing number of people delivering papers for recycling at Raheen Community Centre and increasing numbers of people asking if other materials could be accepted.

### **Strategy**

- \* Discuss waste management and establish links on the sustainability Web.
- \* A waste management feasibility study for the area has been commissioned by County Wexford Partnership and is to be completed by late 2002. This study will examine the feasibility of waste reduction, recycling and composting within the community, as outlined below.
- \* Set up local fund for the collection of donations towards costs of plastics recycling; demonstrate monetary saving by the potential to cut down on local authority waste collection charges.
- \* Encourage implementation of the recommendations of the waste management feasibility study.
- \* Network with other communities who are active in waste management. Join Community Recycling Network.
- \* Discuss methods of reminding and encouraging the community to reduce, re-use, recycle.
- \*\* Expand the local waste management initiative to other communities.

### **Issues relating to feasibility of local community-operated waste management:**

#### **A. Waste minimisation**

- Establishment of local outlets for eco-sensitive detergents (in containers which could be re-filled) in the community. These outlets could be established in existing local shops in each of the three villages in the community.
- Establishment outlets/agents for other eco-sensitive products within the community.
- Compilation of source list of suppliers of eco-sensitive products nationally and possibly in the UK.
- Compilation of information on zero waste programmes globally.
- Establishment of methods of encouraging decreased use of packaging, etc. at source.

## **B. Re-use of materials**

- Establishment of a system for the distribution of materials within the community and/or between communities of reusable materials e.g. building rubble, timber products, etc.

## **C. Composting**

Investigate the following aspects of community composting:

- collection of compostables by workers or delivery by community members
- methods of composting
- equipment and space required
- outlets for composted material
- personnel to operate the facility
- operating the facility as a commercial operation / income generation for the workers

## **D. Recycling**

Investigate the following aspects of community recycling:

- instigating and maintaining a community recycling scheme.
- feeding recyclables into local authority recycling schemes
- sending recyclables to commercial Irish recycling units
- sending recyclables direct to continental recycling outlets via direct Rosslare, etc.

### **7.4.5 Air**

No figures on local air quality were available at the time of writing. There is a local assumption that air is clean because there are neither major industrial centres nor traffic congestion in the locality. Consequently, there is limited awareness of the collective responsibility to air quality.

#### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss air quality and establish links on the Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Organise a "Clean Air" week. Emphasise our global responsibility to air quality. Make it known that the products we use have effect on air somewhere on the planet.
- 3) \* Test local air and publish results.
- 4) \* Encourage car-pooling. (This links this to local economy.)
- 5) \*\* Survey the community area and calculate how much greenhouse gas is produced within the community. This may be carried out as part of a Young Scientist Project, Third /level project, etc.

### **7.4.6 Soil**

#### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss soil and establish links on Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Compile information on soil awareness for builders, farmers, others in the construction industry, as part of environmental protection package discussed in Section 7.4.2.
- 3) \* Investigate community Nutrient Management Planning – as discussed in Section 7.4.3.
- 4) \*\* Investigate the concept of eco-tillage. Avoid any links, even temporary, with corporate interests. Avoid increasing the use of sprays as part of eco-tillage practice.

### **7.4.7 Noise**

Because of the rural location of the community, noise is seldom discussed as an issue, except in Clonroche with respect to traffic.

#### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss noise and establish links on Sustainability Web.

- 2) \* Measure tranquillity times in each of the villages, on each of the main roads and at a selection of points in between.
- 3) \* Construct tranquillity map of the community.
- 4) Observe planning applications, make suggestions in relation to noise reduction

#### **7.4.8 Light**

Light was not mentioned during community consultation, except in relation to the provision of street lighting in Clonroche. Light was of major concern to Castletown-Tara Hill-Ballymoney community in Phase I of Action for Sustainability. In that area there has been a rapid expansion in the number of houses, particularly holiday homes. Local residents are now upset that they cannot see the night sky because of this proliferation of house and street lights.

Views of the night sky should be available to all humans, but its significance is generally not appreciated until it is lost.

##### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss light and establish links on Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Encourage interested individuals to initiate a local astrology group – maybe organise a star-watching event with a visitor from Astronomy Ireland - use Carrigbyrne Hill or Diers/Robinson's Lawn (if available). This may have connections to youth (by providing a diversity of local hobbies).
- 3) \*\* Compile a local "natural light" map.

#### **7.4.9 Products and materials**

This topic relates to waste management, forestry and air, but to emphasise its significance it is treated separately in this report.

Construction and household products are damaging to the environment, but there are numerous alternatives which are more environmentally sensitive than conventional products. The Community and IT Centre at Raheen uses only recycled paper and purchases environmentally-sensitive office products from an outlet in Dublin. Elsewhere in the community, the use of sensitive products is minimal and there are no outlets for such products locally or in neighbouring towns.

Availability and cost of environmentally-sensitive products are deterrents to their use in Ireland. There are a limited number of outlets where paints, building products, etc. can be purchased. Because of this, people either have to travel to purchase products or to order them via the post. Information on these products is not widely available and there is a general mindset that they may not be as good as the conventional materials. The power of commercial advertising is evident in the reluctance of people in charge of children to use alternative compounds despite the high incidence of asthma among children. Some health professionals relate the latter to chemicals in the environment.

##### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss the subject and establish links in the Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* The waste management feasibility study will investigate sources and costs and benefits of environmentally-sensitive detergents, building products, etc.
- 3) \* Information should be made available within the community.
- 4) \* The feasibility study will also investigate the possibility of establishing an outlet (within existing shops) in each of the three villages for a number of products. The aim should be to increase the range of products over time. Communication should be maintained between the three villages so that if one falls into short supply the other may help out. The shops could purchase collectively to minimise costs. This interaction is linked to the local economy.
- 5) \* Be innovative in reminding people that these products are available.
- 6) \* Source an agent who would arrange for import of products from UK.

- 7) \* Ask community tender groups to quote prices using these products, even if they are not asked to do so and to advertise that they can supply such products. This issue is interacts with the local economy.

#### **7.4.10 Energy**

As part of the Awareness Week in 2001 an energy awareness lecture was delivered by Mr. Xavier Dubisson of the Irish Energy Centre. However, energy is rarely discussed as an issue within the community and was not put forward as an environmental factor during community consultation.

##### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss the subject and establish links on the Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Organise local energy awareness week
- 3) \* Ask a number of households to reduce their energy usage and to record whatever reductions they have made. Use this information as a local demonstration of energy and money saved. Ask households to keep record of savings on ESB bills. These could be carried out as part of a second-level study and publicised as part of energy awareness programme.
- 4) \* Put reminders in shops and public places, etc.
- 5) \*\* Compile an information pack on passive solar energy, etc. for distribution to builders, architects locally and in Enniscorthy, Wexford, New Ross, etc. This should also be provided to those planning to build houses or business premises in the area. The Local authority Planning Office could be approached and asked to help in this matter.
- 6) \*\* Research renewable energy options, but consider all options in terms of impact and integrated sustainability. Do not limit judgements to sustainable energy alone.

# Chapter Eight - Social Inclusion and Culture

## **8.1 Introduction**

Social justice and equity are central to sustainable communities. The causes of social exclusion can include geographical isolation, financial difficulty, unemployment, attitudes, lack of social interaction, etc. The interaction between social inclusion and sustainable development is discussed in Chapter 1. The aim, for a community in transition to sustainability should be for complete social inclusion by providing essential services and opportunity for social interaction while respecting the wishes of those who wish to exclude themselves from aspects of mainstream thinking and activity.

Issues relating to social interaction are discussed in this report under the heading of Social Inclusion. Not every issue shown on Sustainability Web 1, Appendix 9 is discussed in detail, but the existence of an element or factor on a Sustainability Focus Webs 2-9 denotes a need for improvement. The use of the Sustainability Web should help to focus community attention on issues of exclusion and to address these in an integrated manner as societal issues rather than target-group intervention.

Social issues put forward during community consultation are represented in this chapter, but it must be noted that further discussion, research, professional input and refining of linkages on Sustainability Webs is necessary.

## **8.2 Sport and Recreation**

### **8.2.1 Consultation**

During community consultation in 2001 meetings were arranged with local sports clubs. Representatives of Clonroche Soccer Club, Cloughbawn G.A.A. Club, Clonroche Badminton Club, Game Preservation Society, Newbawn Sports Ground Committee attended. The issue of sport and recreation was discussed frequently at general meetings and meeting of the steering committee. Numerous comments relating to sport were put forward at the open consultation event in October, 2002.

Sport and recreation issues are of significant relevance to the community of Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen. Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 7 and Sustainability Web 2, Appendix 9, show that the community identified 26 focus links where improvement could be made in relation to sport locally. Appendix 2 shows the variety of sports clubs and societies which are active within the community.

### **8.2.2 Issues**

Sport is of significant local interest and large numbers of community are involved.

Participation in sport is hindered by lack of transport and security in access.

Lack of financial resources also inhibits the acquisition of facilities.

The proportion of income spent on sport and in particular, on summer activities for children is of concern to parents.

Some people perceive a negative interaction between the hunting aspect of G.P.A. and animals, but it appears that the G.P.A. in South Wexford is well organised and operates within the accepted guidelines and code of practice. The existence of a well-organised club in a locality usually deters local irresponsible in the activity. Many members in the G.P.A. report that children have taken a greater interest in wildlife because of their association with

members of the G.P.A. It appears that a small awareness programme or the circulation of contact details to reassure any community members with doubts would alleviate problems. G.P.A. members in neighbouring communities are concerned that their activities will be curtailed by the influx of non-locals because of development in the countryside and these people not understanding the way of life.

Increased interest in technology discourages young people from participating in sport.

A pool table formerly located in the shop in Raheen has been removed. This is missed by the community and cited as a loss to young people locally. The table served as a focal point for youth. The shop owner was happy to have it in the shop and regretted having to remove the table. This might appear to be a relatively small issue, but it has had a significant impact on the local community.

Sports clubs, parents and other members of the community face related problems and similar concerns. Sports clubs aim to promote their sport and many participate in competition; other members of the community are anxious for areas where people have access to land for casual play and recreation. Dier's /Robinson's Lawn in Clonroche is an ideal location for community land which would serve several needs. This was mentioned by a number of people during community consultation and is re-iterated in the UCD Spatial Plan, but the practicalities in acquiring that plot of land appear to be prohibitive.

Issues arising repeatedly during consultation include activities to occupy youth, activities for summer holidays when children are off school and activities for winter when the days are short. It has been said by parents, and by youth themselves, that more facilities would offer alternatives to alcohol and drugs and "keep them out of trouble". However, the issues of television, excessive time spent on computers, boredom with free time, etc. are mentioned but not discussed at length

Major influences impacting on sport include money and insurance.

In terms of sustainability, there is scope for better communication, sharing of resources, collective purchase and shared use of community land.

### **8.2.3 Barriers**

Increasing land prices have made it prohibitive to purchase land for sporting and recreational activities. This also inhibits informal recreation and social interaction because casual access to landscape is denied – see Section 7.4.1 and Clonroche Development Association *Proposal for the Provision of a Playing Field at Clonroche Village*.

If a sports club acquires money for acquisition of land, this land becomes club property, despite the fact that, in most circumstances, the entire community will have contributed via collections, fund-raising, etc. In theory, the ability and/or likelihood of the community to acquire additional land for other purposes is therefore lessened. Those who participate in the particular sport may benefit, but those who wish for casual play/access remain without access to land. The issue of land is a community problem and should be approached collectively by all sports groups and other community members. Success was achieved by Newbawn in the purchase and development of a sports ground.

It is anticipated that the proposed construction of a by-pass of Clonroche Village will further increase land prices and prohibit purchase of any lands in the vicinity of the village. There is a sense of fatalism in relation to the by-pass and the community are not willing to challenge the proposals. The construction of the road is linked to other aspects of community and local economy – see Sustainability Webs, Appendix 9. Other spin-off impacts of building development and increased land prices are illustrated on Sustainability Web 2a where only development-related focus links are shown.

Concerns for children's safety, (road and personal safety), prohibits parents from allowing children to roam, but it also restricts children's freedom.

There is a tendency to link increasing crime levels in Clonroche with lack of sports facilities, but not all young people will participate in sport regardless of availability of facilities. The correlation between increasing crime levels and greater inequity between rich and poor is well documented, but local discussion on causes and prevention of crime is necessary.

Clonroche Soccer Club has no pitch of their own and are playing on a local farmer's field as a temporary arrangement. Because of insurance fears the farmer is reluctant to allow young members to play. The Club could face expulsion from the league because each team is expected to have its own playing field. This is a national ruling applied at local level, but contrary to the principles of sustainability. There is a shortage of referees and teams often travel to a match to find that there is no referee. The club believe that they would attract more members if they had their own grounds.

Insurance is prohibitive to most sports and issues of insurance deter many people from becoming involved in the organisation of events, etc. This is being experienced by sports clubs and other interest groups nationwide.

Territoriality within sport, albeit historic, is not conducive to sustainability and social inclusion. A GAA player can play for his/her own parish and if transferring to another team the player must live in that parish.

Other barriers to sustainability in sport (as identified by the community) include association with politics and lack of communication between sports.

#### **8.2.4 Strategy for action**

- 1) \* Discuss the issue of sport and recreation further and in a more focused manner in relation to establishing focus points and links on Sustainability Webs.
- 2) \* Initiate discussion on broader aspects of sport and recreation in terms of linkages to youth, crime and social exclusion. Discuss issues such as the level of participation which would be achieved if lack facilities were not an issue. Consider the positive elements of youth and self-made recreation of fifty years ago (freedom to roam, hours spent in the company of other young people, "divilment", less danger of drugs, etc.) compared to the facilitated recreation which appears to be the norm today. Perhaps engage the services of experienced psychologists/sociologists in this.
- 3) \* Link with other communities to establish community network and seek community insurance. Seek collectively to change the legislation regarding insurance, especially in relation to disclaimer clauses, etc. Some progress has been made in this respect in relation to farm insurance. Approach insurance collectively, share resources and costs. Approach this as part of the local economy initiative – to maximise gain from money spent and to minimise the outflow (e.g. insurance) from the community.
- 4) \* Link with other rural communities to challenge the FAI in relation to its sports field regulations and the implications for sustainability in rural communities.
- 5) \*\* Expand discussion of "sport and crime" to "crime and its causes" – or else are treating wrong symptom and issues of crime get worse. Inequity must be considered at local level in Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen or is national inequity manifesting as a local problem?
- 6) \* Internal club politics cannot be resolved in this document and should be approached by the clubs themselves.
- 7) \*\* Discuss the issue of personal safety. It is important that the community, perhaps in conjunction with other communities, tackles the cause not the symptom. It is understandable that parents will not allow children to roam freely, but the problem will not be solved by simply transporting children wherever they need to go. These are difficult to issues to deal with, parents and group leaders are reluctant to do anything except intensify protection for children. This is understandable, but the current situation is unsustainable and will only get worse, especially for future generations if it remains unaddressed.
- 8) \* Call collective meetings of various clubs and discuss sharing resources, halls, etc. rather than each club seeking to build its own hall, changing facilities, etc.

### **8.3 Transport**

The community identified transport as a significant element – see Sustainability Web 3, Appendix 9. Lack of public transport has numerous impacts throughout the community and it is one of the most frequently mentioned issues at consultation meetings. Through the use of the Sustainability Web, it became apparent that there is a strong focus link between public transport and social inclusion/isolation. It appears that the problem of isolation within the community is greater than was previously understood.

Transport has social implications because it replaces the proximity to services and social interaction of traditional communities e.g. people used to walk/have time to walk; services/employment used to be closer to home, etc. On a national level, the lack of an effective public transport system and the proliferation of private cars has facilitated commuting and raised issues in relation to rural communities and community development (see Chapter 1).

#### **Strategy**

- 1) \* Discuss the subject and establish links on the Sustainability Web.
- 2) \* Assess exactly how and where isolation is caused by lack of transport.
- 3) \* Assess exactly how access to sport is inhibited by lack of transport.
- 4) \* Assess exactly how access to employment is inhibited by lack of transport.
- 5) \* Assess other issues affected by lack of transport.
- 6) \* Initiate action by organising car-pooling to work, where possible.  
Popularise terms such as *work miles*, *car miles*, etc. to raise awareness of the issue. This is also linked to air quality/emissions and use of energy.
- 7) \* Initiate dial-a-link programmes or regular bus service on popular routes by a local operator, as appropriate to particular situations.
- 8) \*\* A local/community transport system could be related to a community token system. This would have the added advantage of providing supplementary income for local people who may be underemployed.
- 9)\*\*\* The ultimate aim of a sustainable community is that residents would work within walking distance of home. This should remain an aspiration for the community when responding to planning applications or when considering long-term development.

### **8.4 Youth**

Youth were directly involved in consultation only at the time of open consultation in October, 2002. Earlier plans for direct and more in-depth consultation with youth were hampered by restrictions relating to Foot and Mouth disease in 2001. However, the issue of youth was discussed on several occasions at general and steering group meetings.

Comments from youth centred on specific issues relating to sports (soccer and games room in particular), discos, loss of the pool table, place to meet. Some comments indicated that youth themselves are aware of the need for alternatives facilities and activities to keep them away from pubs, drugs and crime.

Issues raised by adults were concentrated on similar issues. It is of concern to the organisers of the youth club that there is a shortage of voluntary help to organise activities and outings for the club.

Access to land and areas for non-specific and casual play were discussed frequently. Apart from village streets, Millennium Park, Carrigbyrne Hill there are no other public areas for youth in the community area.

Lack of organised activities are frequently mentioned, but deeper issues and factors relating to the desire for continuous organised activity were not discussed at length. Lack of work, influence by television, commercial pressures creating wants, need for constant communication via mobile phones, etc., were not debated.

### **Barriers**

Shortage of volunteers to work with youth - adults are busy on other committees. Youth are not content with local activities and want to be brought to far-away places.

Youth have expressed that they have no place merely to congregate and talk. Indoor as well as outdoor community space is essential.

Pool tables were popular and a loss to the community particularly Raheen when it was taken away because of insurance costs. Perhaps insurance should be paid by the youth themselves. It seems that the shop in which it was located became a meeting place and young people were happy to have this.

Significance of areas where young people can meet on a casual basis should be discussed.

### **Strategy**

- 1) Discuss the subject and establish links on Sustainability Web.
- 2) Initiate discussion on youth activities, crime, etc. Perhaps engage experienced psychologists and sociologists. Involve local Gardaí, if possible, in discussions on crime, its causes and prevention.
- 3) Investigate possibility of a youth community whereby youth pay for the insurance of pool tables, etc. This would encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility. Controlled access to community halls as meeting places was suggested by some young people during consultation
- 4) Investigate mentoring in conjunction with County Wexford Partnership
- 5) Involve youth in a community work/timebank system. This links to most other areas of social inclusion.
- 6) Investigate alternative time-consuming hobbies such as astrology, photography, etc.

## **8.5 Attitudes**

Acknowledging the good intentions and commitment of voluntary workers in Clonroche, Newbawn and Raheen and their impressive achievements in providing social support and services, the following section on attitudes, as expressed by members of the community must be included in this report because the author and County Wexford Partnership have committed to represent all opinions.

Attitudes are significant because they can contribute to social exclusion. When they inhibit people from taking part in community issues and decision-making, this is a loss to the community and sustainability.

The difference in opinion between residents of the three village areas during open consultation was interesting and highlighted how opinions can vary within small areas – see Appendix 6.

Opinions of Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen vary from positive in terms of good community spirit, sense of belonging, friendly peaceful, very little snobbery, etc. to negative in terms of clannishness, few making decisions for all, unwelcoming of some opinions.

### **Strategy**

Strategy in addressing the negative impacts of attitudes is difficult because some people wish to remain private about their opinions and often attitudes can be entrenched, with or without

justification. It is important that community development associations and the co-ordinators of Action for Sustainability are aware of the attitudes and opinions within the community.

Negative attitudes often originate in feelings of isolation or uselessness. It is important that attitudes can be expressed without fear of further isolation. If Action for Sustainability is well designed and delivered; if openness is maintained and all attitudes and opinions are respected, it should come about that as sustainability grows, so too should acceptance of all individuals and the negative aspects of attitudes should lessen.

## **8.6 Other aspects of social inclusion**

Other aspects of social inclusion locally include education, parenting, access to information, community services, care of vulnerable members of the community. Almost all of these issues are inter-connected and the Sustainability Web can be used to clarify these linkages.

Rather than treat each issue separately the author advises that further discussion take place to refine the Sustainability Web and identify related focus areas. It is important in the use of the Sustainability Web that links be clearly defined to avoid duplication of links and over or under-emphasising linkages.

The community are advised to investigate the possibility of:

- setting up timebanks and/or a
- setting up a community token system
- community service, whereby every member of the community donates a period of time to community work is practiced by rural communities in parts of South America.

All willing/interested members of the community, including youth, could become involved.

It is important to keep in mind the principle of shared resources and assessment for sustainability in all actions.

## **8.7 Heritage and Culture**

There is a very obvious interest in heritage in Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen. There is an active group whose interests are in recent history and their activities have included: the opening of walking trails on Carrickbyrne Hill, making the Camp field accessible to the public, locating and clearing a Mass Rock, locating Freany's Cave, maintaining churchyards.

There are a number of archaeological features in the locality and the state of a local dolmen is of concern.

There is also interest in local stories, music and dance.

Heritage and culture are important to human well-being and identity. It is important that people feel free to relate to their culture. Despite local interest in heritage and history, there is a tendency in Ireland to cast off what is considered to be old and look outward to other places. There is a danger in this in that those who maintain stronger cultural links could become socially isolated.

A modern aspect of culture is the number of non-national people who have come to Ireland and the consequent influx of a mixture of cultures. This gives opportunity to experience and celebrate cultures.

The aim, in a sustainable community, should be to work towards a society which accepts its own culture and allows freedom of expression in this regard.

### **Strategy**

- 1) Discuss the subject and establish links on the Sustainability Web.
- 2) Maintain awareness of heritage and culture in all community work and actions

- 3) Investigate actions to sensitively preserve and celebrate culture and heritage. Campaigns to promote interest in culture and heritage are not always successful as they can be perceived to be forcing people to display an interest. Actions must be innovative and non-intrusive and designed to provide a lasting support for heritage and culture, rather than once-off events. Perhaps contact TG4, etc.
- 4) Seek advice in the maintenance of heritage and archaeological features. The Heritage Council have promised to deliver a course on field monuments and their identification locally.
- 5) Invite guest speakers to lecture on different aspects of culture, folklore and Heritage.
- 6) Identify views to be protected. Incorporate these into the UCD spatial development plan and make representation to have them included in the County Development Plan.
- 7) Investigate the possibility of setting up a Landscape Trust for the community purchase of land as commonage for use as access to landscape and heritage sites in conjunction with the protection of habitats, for sporting/play areas and open spaces – see Section 8.2 and Chapter 7.
- 8) Produce information package on local heritage, similar to environment information package as discussed in Chapter 7

# Chapter Nine - Local Economy

## **9.1 Introduction**

*“The problem is not necessarily that too little money flows into a neighbourhood. Rather it is what consumers, public services and businesses do with that money. Too often it is spent on services with no local presence, and so immediately leaves the area”.*

UK Government National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

Quoted from Plugging the Leaks (Ward & Lewis, New Economics Foundation, 2002).

Issues relating to agriculture, enterprise, employment, money, financial institutions, etc. are included in this report under the heading Local Economy, because they are all closely related. Social implications of local economy are illustrated on Sustainability Webs 1-9 (Appendix 9) and discussed in Chapter 1.

Issues relating to the economy are prevalent at national level and in the media, but local communities generally feel that they are helpless in economic affairs other than aspirations to attract investment from outside or increase their business output through Chambers of Commerce, etc.

The economic depression of the 1980's and early 1990's continue to haunt Irish communities and they now face an uncertain future with the downturn of the Irish economy and the blame being publicly placed on the global economy.

Rural communities have suffered economic decline and many agricultural families face economic difficulty. Many farmers are underemployed and some have sought additional employment and farm part-time. There has been a growing reliance on grant-aid and increasing numbers of farmers are availing of the Smallholders initiative offered by County Wexford Partnership.

Comments made during community consultation were surprising in that the first issues which spring to mind, when asked to list elements of local community, were sport, transport, isolation, etc. Unemployment, small business, distance to work and lack of training were mentioned, but each was put forward as a separate issue and little or no correlation was drawn between them in terms of a local economy. Unemployment (community employment figures are shown in Appendix 2) was mentioned, but did not appear to be a major concern. When asked during consultation “what would be good for the local economy?” the response was generally the standard answer “more industry”. One person specified local spending as of benefit to the local economy (see Appendix 6). In general it can be said that there is a perception that employment is provided [and removed] by outside forces and that training will [“hopefully”] ensure employment.

### **Barriers**

- Community inertia
- Fear of taking action beyond the constraints of conventional development steps. Small numbers of individuals willing to initiate new systems
- Competition with larger outlets such as supermarket chains
- Possibility that most people will go the supermarkets anyway, even when it is demonstrated to them that it can be cheaper to shop locally (Rogaly et al, 1999).
- Fear of regulations
- Fear of failure
- Reluctance to move out on one's own because grant culture has inhibited thinking.
- Lock-in to conventional systems and reluctance to be the one that is seen to be different
- The proposed by-pass of Clonroche is seen as a threat to local business with loss of passing trade. Sense of fatalism exists in relation to the by-pass

- There is little local employment and the lack of public transport makes it difficult to work out of the area. Local people feel that there is little information in relation to enterprise.

### **Strategy**

During consultation and steering group meetings conversations of economics inevitably drifted to the global situation and local helplessness. It became almost impossible to initiate discussion on local solutions to economic problems. Contact was made with the New Economics Foundation in 2002 in order to research methods of energising the community to take a pro-active role in the local economy.

Much of the strategy proposed in this report is based on New Economics Foundation literature.

Three areas of focus within a local economy are (1) bring money in, (2) retain money, (3) minimise outflow. This inflow and outflow is illustrated in New Economics literature as a “leaky bucket” and the aim is to plug the leaks i.e. minimise the flow of money outwards.

**Outflows:** money spent on interest payments, everyday expenses by people working out of the area, interest, non-local business owners, gas, ESB, telephone – apart from economising can’t do a lot about this but it demonstrates the loss.

**Inflows:** Inward investment, social welfare payments, grants, passing trade. Locally in Clonroche-NewbawnRaheen this would include welfare, REPS, passing trade, particularly in Clonroche.

### **Multiplier**

The multiplier is an illustration of how money spent in the local economy can generate further spending locally and thus boost the economy and benefit the local area.

#### **Extract from *Plugging the Leaks***

by Bernie Ward and Julie Lewis, New Economics Foundation, 2002.

#### **Example of the multiplier:**

*“Anne receives £100 and £80 immediately leaves her housing estate, swallowed up by gas and electricity bills, mortgage repayments, food from a supermarket and a new dress from a boutique in the city. The remaining £20 stays in the local area because: £15 pays her cleaner, 50p buys an apple from the farm next door, £1.50 goes to her credit union savings scheme and £3 buys some groceries in the corner shop.*

*Meanwhile Jessica receives £100. To celebrate she asks a local baker to bake a special cake for her that costs £35. She then asks the local plumber to un-block her drains (at a cost of £45). The remaining £20 goes to her telephone bill and so leaves the local area. Jessica has re-spent £80 in the local area.*

*If Anne receives a pound she is likely to re-spend 20% locally. Jessica, on the other hand, would spend 80% locally and thus the value of the pound has multiplied several times. If 80% of every £100 stays in the local economy, the total amount of spending that that £100 will generate is about £500 – a multiplier of 5.*

### **Action**

- 1) Discuss local economy and establish links on Sustainability Web.
- 2) Initiate workshops on “Plugging the leaks” and the multiplier as illustrated in New Economics foundation literature.
- 3) Examine methods of plugging leaks locally.
- 4) Initiate awareness programme and action towards “plugging the leaks”.
- 5) Develop progress indicators.
- 6) Encourage household balance sheets/audits, etc.
- 7) Invite groups of farmers, however small to meet and discuss local markets.

- 8) Make contact with Dublin food Co-op, West Cork farmers markets and examine feasibility of study visit in conjunction with Foundation for Local Food in UK.
- 9) Investigate regular outlets for farm produce e.g restaurants, etc.
- 10) Investigate local enterprise supports, local credit unions and the initiation of local micro-finance institutions (Rogaly et al, 1999).
- 11) Encourage audits of small self-employed units – identify the threats, if any, to their survival.
- 12) Identify individuals / groups in the community with particular skills, experience which would be of benefit to local enterprise, agriculture, etc.
- 13) Examine systems such as one-person agricultural systems proposed by David French.
- 14) Set up working group to investigate feasibility of local Development Trusts (in conjunction with Landscape Trust as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9). Information and advice available from Development Trusts Association and County Wexford Partnership.
- 15) Re-visit Sustainability Web regularly to investigate focus links as action proceeds and knowledge is gained.
- 16) Encourage people to engage in simple strategies – e.g. car-pooling, buy fuel locally – may give vouchers, group-buying of certain products, shops buy in bulk, share cost of trips to wholesalers, etc.
- 17) Local events to highlight the buy local campaign.
- 18) Investigate the feasibility of local transport initiatives
- 19) Joint tenders by locals – maybe organise tradesperson's guild
- 20) Encourage people to engage local services e.g. mechanics, plumbers, electricians, builders, carpenters, hairdressers, etc.
- 21) Encourage businesses to employ local people

It will be important to remind and re-encourage people to re-spend the money locally and support the local economy in all of the above. Use reminders / prompts such as suggested by MeKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999. This will take commitment, time and energised strategy.

## Chapter Ten - Information and Resources

It is essential in the effort to encourage thinking towards sustainability that good information is provided to the community. It can be assumed that a single lengthy document will not be read and acted upon by the community as a whole. Therefore the following strategy, in terms of direct information for the community, is suggested:

- 1) This report will be submitted to County Wexford Partnership. County Wexford Partnership to circulate a number of copies to the community – at least one to each village represented among the steering group and one to each of the development associations.
- 2) Summary information in leaflet form to be printed (locally) and distributed to households, schools, made available in shops, schools – shop assistants to be encouraged to give on to each customer – perhaps over a particular week and thereafter to have them available at the counter. Also to be available in churches, meeting halls etc.
- 3) Details of information/reference list to be made available to special interest groups, etc., development associations and help groups e.g. I.F.A. for local food initiatives, etc.
- 4) Each development group is advised to hold information workshops with its members to encourage awareness. Information and understanding of how process work and interact with other processes should be the cornerstone of each group's ethos.
- 5) The provision of information should be co-incident with think-tanks/discussion groups formal and informal of sustainability and linkages. This process could be enlivened by community/local radio discussions, debates, features in local newspapers, etc. Community representatives should arrange to meet the editor(s) of such newspapers to encourage them to take an active interest in the subject.

**See Page 61 for list of resources and information.**

## Chapter Eleven - Sustainability Checklists / Proofing

- 1 Always ask the questions:
  - What exactly are we trying to achieve?
  - If there is a problem, what exactly is the problem, i.e. identify the problem to which a solution is sought.
  - Is this development necessary?
  - What is the best possible solution to the problem?
  - Are we closing the circles or is this a “transit” development? How can this be made more efficient?
  - Are we sharing resources / how could we share resources?
- 2 Always, aim to identify the least intrusive solution the solution which is least costly to the environment. This will inevitably be the least costly in financial terms.
- 3 Always look for linkages i.e. how factors within a community interact. Consider how a proposed development could impact, not alone on individual factors, but also on the interaction of factors e.g. motorway development and effects on landscape, soil water, air climate ecology human beings and the interaction of all of these factors.
- 4 Think local, national and global.

Need sustainability checklists for

- environmental
- social
- cultural
- security
- economic/employment
- office procedure
- management of waste
- use of timber
- sustainable building

For example, purchase bus for public transport – ask:

- new or secondhand? Which is best use of resources?
- fuel efficient?
- minimum emissions?
- which routes will provide maximum service for least fuel consumption?
- will the service fulfil a social function?
- will it cater for isolated members of the community?
- will it encourage/support local business?
- arrange for maximum occupancy
- bus size suitable for existing roads?
- means of carrying goods?

## Chapter Twelve - Local Sustainability Indicators

As Action for Sustainability progresses indicators of progress towards sustainability will be needed. Indicators must reflect a trend within the community and they must be of a significance that encourage reaction.

Working indicators will be designed when further refinement of sustainability Webs is carried out with the community. It is intended that the number of focus links relating to a particular factor plus a priority "weighting" by the community and/or professionals will serve as local indicators. It is essential to re-visit the sustainability Webs so that accurate indicators can be devised.

Other suggestions for indicators are listed below. Some have general application and the selection of others will depend on the particular details of the community.

### Local economy

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
|   | linked to employment       |
| 1. drain of money from local economy                |                            |
| 2. availability of local produce                    |                            |
| 3. drain on personal finances                       |                            |
| 4. local incomes                                    |                            |
| 5. Distance (miles/time) i.e. drain on income from: |                            |
| employment  |                            |
| shops   |                            |
| schools   | linked to social inclusion |
| childminder   | linked to social inclusion |
| post office   | linked to social inclusion |
| employment exchange                                 |                            |
| office services                                     |                            |
| public transport                                    | linked to social inclusion |
| health services                                     | linked to social inclusion |

If single household, single business, single farm audits could be carried out with respect to finding out the levels of efficiency in individual situations, the information would be useful in the assessment of the local economy. This would only be appropriate where individuals are willing or keen to participate in the process. Issues of confidentiality, etc, would have to be carefully addressed prior to any assessments.

### Employment

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
|   | linked to local economy    |
|   | social inclusion           |
| 1. skills, potential for employment/self-employment   |                            |
| 2. potential of the individual to make own livelihood: enterprising nature of individual, ability to secure start-up loans, ability to secure premises (own/rent/lease) |                            |
| 3. constraints on start-up – capital, interest,   |                            |
| 4. immediate repayments, tax, premises, rent, insurance, etc  |                            |
| 5. competition with larger companies, skills as an employer   |                            |
| 6. existence of back-up business and secretarial services   |                            |
| 7. infrastructure   |                            |
| 8. Employed / unemployed  |                            |
| 9. Underemployment  | linked to social inclusion |
| 10. How long unemployed   | linked to social inclusion |
| 11. How long on supported employment  | linked to social inclusion |

## Agriculture

1. food production, variety, adaptability,
2. costs of input, returns per unit of input
3. local food production, food miles, access to local markets

## Environment and landscape

- 1 Water
  - quality
  - quantity linked to local enterprise
- 2 Access to landscape
  - no./extent of land acres accessible to the public linked to landscape/heritage
  - rights of way extant linked to heritage/well-being
  - area of community land per head of population.
  - average distance of people from public or community-owned land.
- 3 Biodiversity
  - key species
  - area of habitat other than agricultural and developed land linked to small business
- 4 Length of hedgerow
- 5 Resources
  - local timber linked to small business
  - other local resources linked to small business
- 6 Waste management linked to small business
- 7 Noise/tranquillity areas linked to development
- 8 Night skies
  - extent of natural light on light map
  - linked to development
- 9 Air
  - Local air quality figures
  - Local contribution to greenhouse gases (to be studied as student project, etc. See Section 6.4.5)
- 10 Energy
  - reductions and savings made by members of the community
  - use as positive indicator to encourage others to do likewise.
- 11 Products
  - quantity of sensitive products sold locally
  - demand for products

## Health

- 1 Level of fitness linked to sport, social inclusion
- 2 Incidence of illness
- 3 Number of visits to hospitals/doctors
- 4 Social/psychological problems linked to social inclusion

## **Heritage / landscape**

- 1 Access to heritage sites
- 2 Access to landscape
- 3 Extent of intact physical landscape
- 4 Uninterrupted vistas

## **Education**

- Basic skills – literacy, numeracy, other skills

## **Social integration**

- Access to services
- Culture
- Access to employment
- Access to recreational facilities
- Feeling of isolation

## **Transport**

Numbers of people who leave their car at home when travelling to work  
Number of journeys made by those who have been identified as isolated  
Number of miles travelled e.g. work miles, car miles (if car-pooling)  
Number of people with no access to transport

List of information, resources and contacts compiled during  
**Action for Sustainability, Phases I, II and III.**

**Phase I**

- Action for Sustainability Framework by Tara Hill-Ballymoney-Castletown
- Action for Sustainability, a Model Rural Community Framework by Craanford-Monaseed-Hollyfort
- A Place to Grow, Framework by Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen

**Phase II**

- Action for Sustainability, Report on Phase II and development of a model by Anne Behan.
- Computer search and reference list on sustainability compiled by Anne Behan
- Sustainability Web by Anne Behan

**Phase III**

- Action for Sustainability – A strategy towards integrated sustainability in Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen by Anne Behan.
- Newbawn Community Sportsground - Suggestions for planting by Anne Behan.
- Hydrogeological Assessment [Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen area] by GES Ltd.
- Spatial plan for Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen by UCD School of Architecture.

**Nations in Bloom** presentation, 2001.

- Video of Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen. Compiled by Dermot O'Connor and narrated by Lorcan Dunne. See Appendix 4.
- Script of presentation delivered in China. See Appendix 4
- Photo library for presentation at Nations in Bloom by Dermot O' Connor, Joan and Anne Behan
- Broadcasting video of presentation as delivered in China Presented by organisers of Nations in Bloom.

**Work in progress**

Waste management feasibility study for Clonroche-Newbawn-Raheen.

**Organisations contacted / contacts established during Action for Sustainability**

Development Trusts Association  
2-8 Scrutton St.,  
London EC2A 4RT.  
(Community-based regeneration network)

FEASTA,  
158 Lr. Rathmines Rd.,  
Dublin 6.  
(The Foundation for Sustainable Economics)

New Economics Foundation  
Cinnamon Hse.,  
6-8 Cole St.,  
London SE1 4YH.

New Economics Foundation acts through policy, research, training and practical initiatives to promote a 'new' economy which is people-centred, delivers quality of life and respects environmental limits.

Foundation for Local Food Initiatives  
PO Box 1234,  
Bristol BS99 2PG.

Non-profit organisation providing advisory services to help develop local food solutions.

Richard Douthwaite  
Economist and author.

**Websites frequently used in Action for Sustainability**

Development Trusts Association	<a href="http://www.dta.org.uk">www.dta.org.uk</a>
The National Association of Farmers' Markets, UK	<a href="http://www.farmersmarkets.net">www.farmersmarkets.net</a>
Foundation for Local Food Initiatives	<a href="http://www.localfood.org.uk">www.localfood.org.uk</a>
New Economics Foundation	<a href="http://www.neweconomics.org">www.neweconomics.org</a>
Ecological architecture	<a href="http://www.solearth.com">www.solearth.com</a>
Community Recycling Network	<a href="http://www.crn.org.uk">www.crn.org.uk</a>
Sligo Field Fences Project	<a href="http://www.sligofieldfences.com">www.sligofieldfences.com</a>
Timebanks	<a href="http://www.timebanks.Countyuk">www.timebanks.Countyuk</a>

**Community Reports**

Clonroche Rural Sustainability Needs, 2002.  
A proposal for the provision of a playing field at Clonroche Village, 2002.  
Raheen Social Audit, 1998  
Raheen Family Resource Centre 3-year plan, 2002.

## References

Groundwater Protection Schemes

Department of the Environment and Local Government  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Geological Survey of Ireland, 1999.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme Guidelines

Area Development Management Limited, 2000.

IRELAND National Report to the United Nations conference on Environment and Development

Department of the Environment, 1992.

Local Authorities and Sustainable Development  
Guidelines on Local Agenda 21

Department of the Environment, June 1995.

Bowers, John, 1997.  
Sustainability and Environmental Economics.  
Published by Prentice Hall.

Bruges, James, 2000.  
The Little Earth Book by James Bruges  
An Alastair Sawday Publishing Special

Conaty, Pat & Bendle, Steve, 2002.  
Ending fuel poverty and financial exclusion. A Factor Four Approach.  
Published by New Economics Foundation.

Development Trusts Association Rural Forum, 2001.  
Rural Agenda for community-led enterprise.  
Published by Development Trusts Association

Development Trusts Association  
Fabulous Beasts: stories of community enterprise from the DTA  
Published by Development Trusts Association

Douthwaite, Richard, 1999.  
The Growth Illusion.  
Green Books Ltd.

Earth Summit Ireland, 2002.  
Telling it like it is. 10 years of unsustainable development in Ireland.  
Published by Earth Summit Ireland.

Elliott, David, 1997.

Energy, Society and Environment.  
Published by Routledge.

McIntosh, Alastair, 2002.  
Soil and Soul, People versus Corporate Power  
Published by Aurum

McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, William, 1999.  
Fostering Sustainable Behaviour. An introduction to community-based social marketing.  
Published by New Society Publishers.

McLaren, D., Bullock, S. and Yousuf, N., 1998.  
Tomorrow's World  
Published by Earthscan

O'Riordan Tim & Stoll-Kleeman, Susanne (Editors), 2002.  
Biodiversity, Sustainability and Human Communities. Protecting beyond the protected.  
Published by Cambridge University Press.

O'Riordan, Timothy & Voisey, Heather, 1998.  
The Transition to Sustainability. The Politics of Agenda 21 in Europe.  
Published by Earthscan.

Rogaly, Ben, Fisher, Thomas & Mayo, Ed, 1999.  
Poverty, Social Exclusion and Microfinance in Britain.  
Published by Oxfam.

Mark Roseland (Editor), 1997.  
Eco-City Dimensions. Healthy communities, healthy planet.  
Published by New Society Publishers.

Ward, Bernie & Lewis, Julie, 2002.  
Plugging the Leaks. Making the most out of every pound that enters your local economy.  
Published by New Economics Foundation.

Wood, Alexander, Stedman-Edwards, Pamela & Mang, Johanna (Editors), 2000.  
The Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss.  
Published by Earthscan.

Zadek, Simon, Lingayah, S. & Forstater, M., 1998.  
Social Labels as a tool for Ethical Trade  
Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

## Elements & Factors

**Table 1: Community identification of elements and factors (ranked in order of focus links identified by the community)**

Community Rating	Element	Number of factors identified	Number of focus links identified	Total factors/links
1	Sport	12	22	34
2	Transport	9	16	25
3	Social Services	11	14	25
4	Isolation / social inclusion	11	13	24
5	Building development	1	11	12
6	Landscape	9	10	19
7	Education	8	9	17
7	Elderly	7	9	16
8	Attitudes	4	8	12
8	Youth	7	8	15
9	Information	8	7	15
10	Heritage	16	6	22
10	Employment	7	6	13
10	Enterprise/small industry	4	6	10
10	Road development	4	6	10
10	Voluntary organisations	1	6	7
11	Business/commerce	5	5	10
11	Health	10	5	15
12	Agriculture	10	4	14
12	Insurance	2	4	6
12	Recreation	4	4	8
13	Environment	7	3	10
13	Parenting	4	3	7
13	Population	1	3	4
13	Security	2	3	5
14	Culture	8	2	10
14	Estates	1	2	3
14	Forestry	1	2	3
14	Income	2	2	4
14	Services	2	2	4
14	Technology	3	2	5
15	Animals	5	1	6
15	Communications	2	1	3
15	Gardening	4	0	4
15	Politics	4	1	5
15	Religion	6	1	7
15	Shops/shopping	1	1	2
16	Community spirit	-	-	-

**Table 2: Community identification of elements and factors (ranked in order of total score of factors + negative links)**

<b>Community Rating</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Number of factors identified</b>	<b>Number of negative links identified</b>	<b>Total factors/links</b>
1	Sport	12	22	34
2	Transport	9	16	25
2	Social Services	11	14	25
3	Isolation / social inclusion	11	13	24
4	Heritage	16	6	22
5	Landscape	9	10	19
6	Education	8	9	17
7	Elderly	7	9	16
8	Youth	7	8	15
8	Information	8	7	15
8	Health	10	5	15
9	Agriculture	10	4	14
10	Employment	7	6	13
11	Attitudes	4	8	12
11	Building development	1	11	12
12	Road development	4	6	10
12	Enterprise/small industry	4	6	10
12	Business/commerce	5	5	10
12	Environment	7	3	10
12	Culture	8	2	10
13	Recreation	4	4	8
14	Voluntary organisations	1	6	7
14	Parenting	4	3	7
14	Religion	6	1	7
15	Insurance	2	4	6
15	Animals	5	1	6
16	Politics	4	1	5
16	Security	2	3	5
16	Technology	3	2	5
17	Income	2	2	4
17	Services	2	2	4
17	Population	1	3	4
17	Gardening	4	0	4
18	Communications	2	1	3
18	Estates	1	2	3
18	Forestry	1	2	3
19	Shops/shopping	1	0	2
20	Community spirit	-	-	-

# **Voluntary organisations in Clonroche – Newbawn – Raheen**

(in alphabetical order)

## **Clonroche**

Aerobics Club  
Canon Murphy Park Residents Association  
Clonroche Badminton Club  
Clonroche Community Centre Committee  
Clonroche Community Watch  
Clonroche Development Association  
Clonroche Golf Society  
Clonroche National School Board  
Clonroche Pantomime Society  
Clonroche School Board  
Clonroche Snooker Club  
Cloughbawn Bord na nOg (G.A.A.)  
Cloughbawn Camogie Club (G.A.A.)  
Cloughbawn G.A.A.  
Cloughbawn Gun Club  
Cloughbawn Indoor Hurling  
Cloughbawn Soccer Club  
Community Games  
Fianna Fail, Clonroche Branch  
Fine Gael, Clonroche Branch  
Irish Countrywomens' Association  
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association  
Irish Dancing  
Irish Farmer's Association, Clonroche Branch  
Irish Music and Drama  
Killegney School Board  
Labour Party, Clonroche Branch  
The Villas Residents Association  
The Tapestry Group

## **Newbawn**

Carrigbyrne Forest Walks Group  
Courthoyle Development Group  
Irish Farmer's Association, Newbawn Branch  
Newbawn Gun Club  
Newbawn Irish Countrywomen's Association  
Newbawn Legion of Mary  
Newbawn National School Board of Management  
Newbawn Pioneer Total Abstinence Association  
Newbawn Residents Association  
Newbawn Sports Ground committee  
Newbawn-Raheen Community Games  
St. Abban's G.A.A. Club

## **Raheen**

Newbawn-Raheen Community Games  
Raheen Community Development Group  
Raheen F.C. Soccer Club  
Raheen Primary School Board of Management  
Raheen Youth Club

<b>Local Economy</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Means of achieving</b>	<b>Conventional Losses</b>
	Employment	Inflow of money	Increase inflow	Local based businesses	Investing outside the area
	Income			Local investment	Non-local ownership of local business
				Government grants / assistance	
Local Economy	Agriculture			Tourism	Work outside the area
	Back to work / training	Retention of money	Increase retention time	Spend local	
				Local markets	
	Transport to work			Decreased food miles	Shopping outside the area
					Local produce out to mainstream economy
	See Sustainability Web 6, Appendix 8	Outflow of money	Plug leaks / minimise outflow	Spending inside the area	Interest
				Services inside the area	Non-local finance institutions
				Local finance institutions	Construction
				Minimise interest	Energy