

LOCAL NEWS

Towns across Cork County including Cobh develop ideas for their future vision

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By admin



Eight towns across Cork County have been developing exciting new visions for their respective towns as part of the *My Town, My Plan Community Training Programme*. Community representatives from Carrigaline, Cobh, Clonakilty, Kinsale, Middleton, Rosscarbery, Skibbereen and Youghal committed to several months engagement and participation to collaborate and develop new ideas.

The Hincks Centre for Entrepreneurship Excellence, part of the School of Business at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) designed and delivered the programme and funded through SECAD Partnership CLG. The face-to-face training and consultative sessions by expert facilitators began last September and as Covid-19 hit in mid-March, the April and May sessions moved online. The programme comprised of 4 core topics, delivered by experts, on developing community projects/enterprises, moving from ideas to validation, legal structures/governance and strategic planning and were delivered in each town over 8 evening sessions. In addition to the core topics, each town group selected 4 specialist topics most relevant to their town's future development.

Dr Helen McGuirk, Head of the Hincks Centre said; "We noticed one general theme across most towns and that is the idea of developing greenways/trails and parks, opening up new areas to be explored and enjoyed by locals and visitors. This is particularly pertinent with many Irish holidaymakers opting for a staycation this year due to Covid-19. The shared learning between the towns has been incredible and the Hincks Centre is delighted to have played a part in empowering these local communities. It was all about the participants and stakeholders working together, thinking creatively, evaluating options and making collaborative decisions to develop clarity and vision for their individual town ideas".

Ciaran Dineen from Carrigaline remarked, "My Town, My Plan gave me the chance to share my thoughts and ambitions for the future of Carrigaline. By meeting people who shared an appetite and desire to make a real difference, My Town, My Plan has encouraged me to move forward and build upon the conversations we have had with the information and knowledge around community development that has been provided. It has been a fantastic experience".

Maaikje Mijland from Cobh spoke of her experience on the programme, "It has been very useful as it helped us to focus on our community goals, provided guidance with project planning and offered a wealth of information from experts. I really enjoyed connecting with my community and the facilitator and speakers were excellent and gave me useful tools, motivation and hope for the future".

Two free online shared learning events taking place on 29th September (West Cork) and 7th October (South Cork) at 7pm, will showcase each town's work so far and listen to great speakers from around the country on topics such as Social enterprise, retail in towns and tourism. The events will also introduce the next phase of support that SECAD is offering through the LEADER 2014-2020 Programme. For more information on the project and to register for the free events please visit www.hinckscentre.ie.

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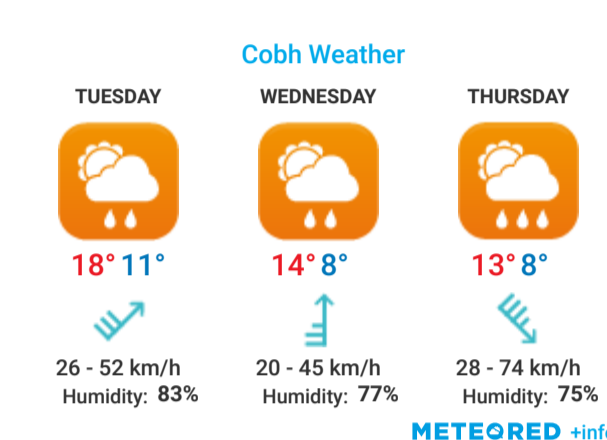
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