

# REIMAGINING ST. BRIGID'S

## Workshop Summary Report

Prepared by



Connect  
the Dots

A project led by Minister Denis Naughten





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# 1. Overview

**This Summary Report provides an overview of the workshop - the process and the findings, highlighting key visions for the site, commonalities amongst the visions, and recommendations going forward.**

The most critical learning from the workshop was that across the diverse stakeholders present from all sectors and backgrounds, there came a very clear consensus around the vision for St Brigid's and the next step. This is quite unique and is a strong indicator as to the potential support and momentum for the project.



# 2. Workshop Design

## a. Background

**Local Minister Denis Naughten has undertaken a new project – ‘Reimagining St Brigid’s’. The project aims to stimulate debate on the future of St Brigid’s, an iconic landmark in Ballinasloe, and take the first step towards reimagining its future use.**

**Connect the Dots was brought in to design and facilitate this process through community engagement and a key stakeholder workshop.**

Following in-depth research on the site and local area, the second step of this process was a public survey for everyone with views on the future of the St. Brigid’s campus to complete. The survey explored how people use the town and its amenities, what they think is missing, as well as their hopes and concerns around the future of the St. Brigid’s site. The findings were then analysed and used to inform the next step of this process: an exploratory workshop on the 1st of June in Gullane’s Hotel in Ballinasloe.

The purpose of this exploratory workshop (the focus of this report) was to bring together key stakeholders and community members of different perspectives and backgrounds to develop ideas for the potential reuse of the St. Brigid’s site, as well as explore first steps of how to make them happen.

## b. Objectives

**The purpose of this exploratory workshop was to bring together key stakeholders and community members of different perspectives and backgrounds to**

- Explore the potential of the St. Brigid’s site
- Develop ideas for the potential reuse of the St. Brigid’s site
- Build out these ideas in detail, drawing on attendee expertise to strengthen them
- Explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats around these visions
- Develop first steps of how to move forward with 'Reimagining St. Brigid’s'



## c. Format

### **Attendees**

Those who attended the exploratory workshop in Gullane's Hotel on Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> were selected to represent various sectors and key perspectives within the local area - as well as key regional and national stakeholders.

### **The Space**

Each group was made up of a mix of perspectives to encourage cross-sectoral thinking and the innovation that can spark from it. The presentation from the front of the room was used to deliver the context and public insights gathered, and keep track of each activity as the workshop progressed. Attendees could also view aerial footage of the St Brigid's site to give further context to the proceedings.

### **Facilitators**

At each table, there was a facilitator, briefed and trained by Connect the Dots in the workshop methodology and accompanying worksheets. Connect the Dots facilitated the event from the front of the room, explaining each activity and providing support to facilitators throughout.

### **Information Collection**

To capture the ideas at each table there were strategic, custom-designed worksheets for each activity. The style of activities varied, from individual brainstorming to collaborating as a group and more. The facilitator captured notes as well as facilitated the conversation at each table.

## d. Methodology

The first part of the event focused on introductions and sharing the insights from the previous research completed and public survey. Key to this section was ensuring the public's view was shared so it could be incorporated into the group's ideas.

The second part of the event was in the format of a workshop - with 6 groups going through a variety of carefully designed activities, accompanied by worksheets and tools to facilitate their brainstorming and strategising process.

Throughout the workshop, the groups were given opportunities to feed back to the room and gather feedback and suggestions from the other groups; ensuring a cross-sectional approach that leveraged the expertise of the attendees.



The day's agenda:

### Introductions and Context

**10:15 AM**      **Welcome by Minister Denis Naughten**

**10:25 AM**      **Presentation and workshop overview**

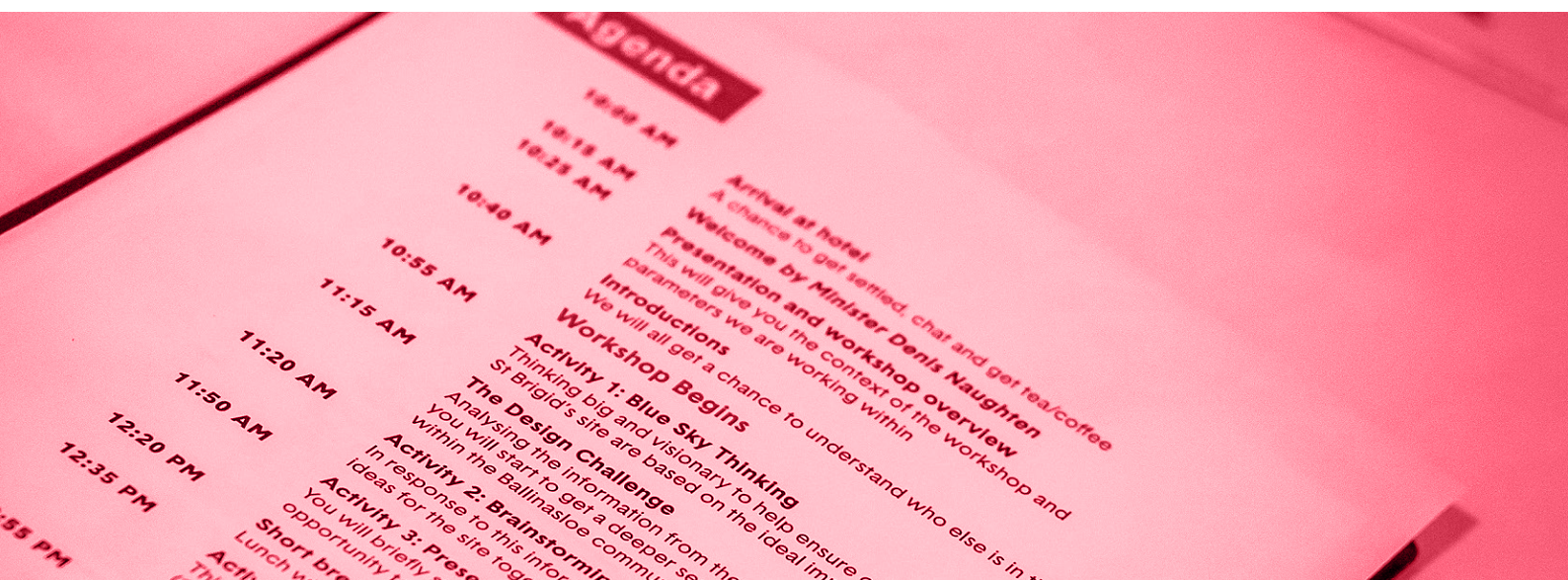
**This this gave attendees the context of the workshop and parameters for the project. Included in the opening presentation were**

- Overview of current sentiment of community - needs, wants, hopes and concerns; from the public survey and from previous surveys
- Overview of the opportunity context
- Overview of key assets and strengths of the town
- Overview of key strategies and policies St Brigid's reuse could feed into
- Overview of the St Brigid's site

**10:40 AM**      **Introductions** all attendees introduced themselves to each other to get a sense of the expertise and diverse backgrounds in the room

## Workshop

- 10:55 AM**      **Activity 1: Blue Sky Thinking**  
Thinking big and visionary to start to help ensure the ideas for the St. Brigid's site are based on the ideal impact the site can have
- 11:15 AM**      **The Design Challenge**  
Attendees were presented with a map showing local assets, personas summarising public survey insights, and inspirational case studies to draw upon when developing their vision for the space.
- 11:20 AM**      **Activity 2: Brainstorming an idea**  
In response to this information each group then generated ideas for the site
- 11:50 AM**      **Activity 3: Presenting initial ideas to the room**  
Each group briefly shared their main concept to the room and had an opportunity to receive and incorporate feedback
- 12:20 PM**      **Short break**  
Lunch was served
- 12:35 PM**      **Activity 4: Digging Deeper**  
Each group completed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of their updated concept
- 12:55 PM**      **Activity 5: Ideas to Action**  
This stage was about moving their concept to smaller actionable steps, thinking about the finer details of how to progress the project.
- 1:15 PM**      **Activity 6: Presenting final ideas back to the room**  
This was a final presentation of ideas and next steps from all teams.
- 1:40 PM**      **Feedback**  
Attendees had a chance to share their thoughts on the process and project.
- 1:55 PM**      **Close**  
Minister Denis Naughten gave closing address.





# 3. Workshop Findings

## a. Executive Summary

Unlike many other workshops of its nature, this was in that consensus was reached among the groups of diverse stakeholders within the 4-hour timeframe. Developing such a collective vision is a significant achievement and clearly demonstrates the potential of this project, with a strong united group of stakeholders behind it with the potential and desire to drive it forward.

There is a strong willingness of all attendees to continue to support and be involved in the project.

### Based on the feedback survey results

- 100% of attendees felt strongly in a positive manner about the project and re-imagining St Brigid's site more now (more so than before the workshop)
- 96% of attendees said they would be likely to stay engaged in the next steps of the Reimagining St. Brigid's process (all said yes except for one 'perhaps')

While more specific elements differed per group, the overall vision the groups came to was

- **Multi-use space:** achieve a variety of aims and engage a variety of target groups through leveraging the extensive size of the site and varied spaces within it
- **Draw on health / mental health history of the site:** Transform the site into a centre for wellness; emphasise the authenticity of the space by:
  - creating an interactive museum and heritage site
  - forming global centre of excellence around this sector; research centre / training facilities
  - setting up Outdoor wellness trails, wellness village
- **Commercial element** is necessary to help drive job growth locally and regionally

- **Training and education:** This could take the form of an ambulance training college, apprenticeships centre, school tours, R&D - research centre related to STEM / health
- **Commercial / job creation:** Many groups agreed that the site could offer office space, conference space, start-up incubation space and also potential to use this site for film / production / media
- **Community space:** The idea of a centre for the community was brought up in many of the groups as well as created indoor and outdoor spaces for all ages; especially youth / teens; some of the groups mentioned potential for creative arts hub

**All groups agreed on the next steps - with key next steps including selecting an action group and main promoter, continuing community engagement, and completing a Feasibility Study of the vision.**

## **b. Overview of Visions for St. Brigid's**

Below is a summary of each vision developed by each of the table groups at the workshop. For more information and further detail on the intricacies of each idea, please see *Appendix Part II*.

### **Table 1**

#### **Vision**

Wellbeing and Corporate Centre with training opportunities and wellness programmes the "Heart of the Town" that reflects Ballinasloe's heritage and owns and drives Ballinasloe's future.

#### **Components**

##### **Mental health-themed multi-use space drawing on the legacy of the site, featuring**

- Interactive museum
- Wellness village
- Centre for traditional building skills
- Potential to use site as film-sets

- Conference centre
- Incubation centre around healthcare - start-up potential
- Community ownership - community centre and outreach centres for youth
- Visitor centre - tells story of history and productions
- Training such as National Ambulance service

### **Value it can provide**

150 – 200 Jobs locally; unique focused setting to improve well-being

## **Table 2**

### **Vision**

Multifunctional Complex split into different zones.

### **Components**

#### **Commercial**

- R&D Companies
- Biomedical
- Economic viability of site, not retail

#### **Creative Hub – Arts – Museum**

- Museum with diverse activities for all ages
- Gallery, exhibition
- Artist's retreat
- Tourist office
- Education & training area

#### **Residential (Elderly Care)**

- Managed residential / assisted living
- Coffee shop / restaurant within facility

#### **Recreational (parks/playgrounds)**

- Community centre - O'Shea Hall developed for community groups
  - Indoor and outdoor
  - Not just mainstream sports
  - Amenities for the young and for teens
- multifunctional

### **Value it can provide**

Employment, rejuvenation of town and town image, recreational facilities, cultural and historical significance.

## Table 3

### **Vision**

Interactive Museum (panoptic) and Heritage/Nature Mindfulness Park with sensory gardens and walking trails to put Ballinasloe on the map and develop into a learning & training centre.

### **Components**

- Heritage and history: Interactive, pay-in museum with restaurant
- Sensory garden, outside gym, walking trails (promoting mindfulness / health i.e. Alzheimer’s walking trails)
- Arts & Music: St Brigid’s Hall
- Training & learning services: Academic component - potential for research facility; paramedics / ambulance training, Pieta House; potential for school and bus tours
- Assisted Living Section: self-accommodated village

### **Value it can provide**

Employment, upkeep, community well-being, brings people to the town, eventual link to services and learning regarding mental health.

## Table 4

### **Vision**

Centre of Excellence for Apprenticeships / Training & Education with a special focus on trades (including medical) and arts, cultural, Design and Construction

### **Components**

- Educational Facilities, Conference Centre
- SME Hubs & Artists Studies
- Ancillary supports (catering, accommodation, recreational zone)
- Apprenticeships (3rd Level) - relates to Action Plan to increase number offered - National Skill Strategy 2025

### **Value it can provide**

Fills a gap in current system nationally and regionally; provides for social needs of community; benefit jobseekers countrywide.

**Table 5****Vision**

Immersive, Multimedia, experiential, heritage site, bring together our past present and future; combining Academic, Wellness, and office space.

**Components**

- Global heritage interactive museum – let's take the past and develop into the future in terms of history, culture and wellness.
- Wellness village
- Rejuvenate walled garden, organic farm, old buildings into restaurants and cafes
- Convert old church- for use in humanist weddings or music (like Other Voices)
- Office space; innovation hub (related to mental health / wellness sector)
- Centre of excellence for training and education
- Global education and conference centre to attract international experts in mental health and related fields

**Value it can provide**

Economic, Wellness, Academic - site of global significance in multiple ways.

**Table 6****Vision**

Ireland's First Interactive Science & Adventure Park (Science & History) including Museum of Psychiatry - Multi-use area combining industry / incubator, museum (heritage and science), and outdoor space i.e. walkways

**Components**

- Commemorative Walk – Historical stops (e.g.: 5k Walk) Run Track and Cycle Track
- Museum Wings
  - Science Interactive to draw crowds, like ones in major cities (WS)
  - Major Psychiatric History of Ireland, preserve rooms, history
  - Horse Museum, 300-year-old Horse Fair
- STEM / Research Centre - partner with 3rd level universities
- Big Enterprise – employer
- Smaller Incubation hub for small businesses
- Additional: residential science camps, cafes/restaurants, conferences

## **Value it can provide**

Fills a gap in current system nationally and regionally; provides for social needs of community; benefit job-seekers countrywide.

## **c. SWOT Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Below is a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that applied across all six visions. For the SWOT for each specific vision, please see *Appendix Part II*.

### **Strengths**

- Unique site of national significance; Ireland as pioneer in Mental Health which gives credibility
- Unique location - well-connected
- Ballinasloe diaspora - regional players on board with project
- Community has started this project
- Size of site + infrastructure already there
- Collaboration of state agencies has begun
- Encompasses all community
- Improve mental well-being
- Local employment
- Economic benefit - job generation and visitors
- Links into heritage trade and tourism with Portumna Workhouse & Clonmacnoise

### **Weaknesses**

- Youth need a voice at the table
- Potential lack of capacity
- Listed buildings - it could be difficult to attract private investment
- Sewage facilities
- Sustainability
- Not focused enough - need to prioritise features?
- No promoter yet
- Lack of housing / accommodation space

## **Opportunities**

- Two county boundary
- Creation of employment
- Availability of funds
- Possibility of commitment from stakeholders after workshop
- To open the site for international input
- Immediate opportunity: Ambulance service
- County council levies - use this to make HSE utilise / offload lands
- Focal point to sell the town
- Creation of employment
- Sell valuable assets within the site
- Family research centre - national archives
- Swifts - birds
- Chapel for weddings, space for conferences / events
- Local pool of knowledge, residents, workers
- Multimedia / offshoot business - media / production / film
- Tap into universities to carry out research
- Overseas colleges coming to the museums as interns

## **Threats**

- Time - sense of urgency to commit to an idea
- Ourselves
- Bureaucracy and red tape
- Cost & Capacity to source funding
- Roadmap that needs to be stuck to
- Integration and ownership
- Engagement of local authority
- Planning
- Cost of dealing with structure
- Timing for delivery
- Private ownership
- Commercial viability
- Support from community
- HSE - ownership of site

## d. Recommendations Moving Forwards

Interestingly, the groups were overall in consensus as to the next steps to move the vision for St. Brigid's forward. Below is a summary of their key insights and suggestions.

What's needed	What we already have to progress this
HSE agreement to sell	Commitment of relevant people / players in the market
Both local authorities	Already potential working group in place - BACD, Town Team, Support from Minister Denis Naughten and Connect the Dots
Sponsors, partners, advocates: via consultation with experts and with additional local stakeholders and government department	Archive of information and expert knowledge
Endorsements / involvements / affiliation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Ireland</li> <li>• Culture Ireland</li> <li>• The Arts Council</li> <li>• Fáilte Ireland</li> <li>• Discover Ireland</li> <li>• Department of Arts</li> <li>• OPW</li> <li>• European Union and UNESCO</li> <li>• HSE</li> <li>• Solas</li> <li>• Galways Leader</li> <li>• GRETB</li> <li>• Academic (i.e. 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Athlone &amp; Galway)</li> <li>• Skillnet</li> <li>• QQI</li> <li>• WDC</li> <li>• Enterprise Ireland</li> </ul>	Agreed vision and collective thinking
Discussions with Potential Funders	Appetite and ambition - good will of the town (community has started this project) and interest from diverse parties
Funding from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Investors, philanthropists, Enterprise Ireland</li> <li>• County Councils, government departments, MEPs, OPW</li> <li>• European Funding - European Union, UNESCO</li> <li>• Creative Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Culture Ireland</li> </ul>	People resources - people in room capable of reports, grant applications
More inside knowledge on the site and size	Proven statistics and government reports
Liaison with HSE and St Brigid's manager	Networks
Clear concise plan - definitive timeline as to next steps and milestones	Potential funds available ( national and local - perhaps international too)
Team to deliver project	National Planning Framework
Advice from Dept. of Heritage/ National Monument Service Parks and Wildlife	Connected infrastructure of town
	The authenticity of the idea with its relation to the history of the town - turn it into the forwarding of Mental Health
	Absolute potential to turn this into an incredible endeavour
	Variety of valuable artefacts and resources in the buildings still such as archives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limestone</li> <li>– Laundry machines</li> <li>– Kitchenware</li> <li>– X-ray machines</li> <li>– Mirror archives in house</li> <li>– Other Artefacts, etc.</li> </ul>

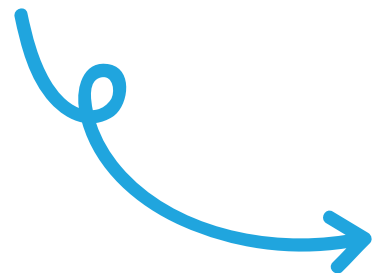
## Recommended Next Steps

The next steps suggested from the different groups have been analysed and collated to produce the below recommended process. In this section, across all the groups, there was an emphasis on timing and the necessity to move fast. Feasibility Study was the most important next step identified. The groups, however, seemed unclear on when the step of 'Securing site' should happen; some advocated for it to be the first step, while others advocated for it to be after the feasibility study.

1. Form Team - potentially BACD or explore new legal entity for this committee / action group - and identify main promoter / project lead
2. Committee could / should also include historical/heritage/culture advisors, financial advisors, planners, etc.
3. Integrity report on site
4. Community engagement (following from engagement done so far) to further shape idea
5. Ensure fit with regional plan and additional frameworks / funding sources; meetings with local authorities to get on board & discussions with potential funding sources such as philanthropists, EU funding, Enterprise Ireland, County Councils, Departmental Capital Funding and more
6. Consultation with HSE and representation re securing of site
7. Feasibility Study; including grand plan for idea plus economic plan for sustainability (business plan) - potentially completed by consultant via local state agencies, WDC, local enterprises
8. Source experts: science, technology, enterprise, history, parks
9. Exploratory missions to cities - European Capitals, Paris Science Museum, Manchester Part Industrial part science, Chicago Science & Industry as well as local such as Portumna Workhouse
10. Develop Master Plan
11. Site needs to be transferred to Local Authority?
12. Narrow idea into phases and develop critical path towards implementation with defined milestones
- 13. Go!**

# Appendix

1. **Attendee List**
2. **Table Notes: Raw Data from Worksheets**



# 1. Attendee List

## Group / Organisation

Construction Federation

GRETB

IFA

Dept. of Culture - Built Heritage Division

Marketing

Arts Division of CHG

Ballinasloe Country Markets

Ballinasloe Area Community Development

Easy Fix

Enterprise Ireland West

Town Team

Ada English Heritage Group

Local Businesses

Galway County Council

Western Development Commission

Druids Golf

National Ambulance Service

Beauchamps

Leader

Head of Arts & Culture, RTE

Film Board

Ard Scoil Mhuire

Member of Group 8 Visual Art Group

Auctioneer

DEASP

IDA

## 2. Table Notes Raw Data from Worksheets

Table 1

### 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- Museum
- Training Centre
- Start Up Potential

#### Our Visions for St Brigid's

A Centre of Wellbeing & Corporate Centre with training opportunities and wellness programmes.

### 2. Brainstorming an Idea

#### Our concept

Sustainability of the site. The main concept is to preserve Mental Health as part of the site development of the site, through wellbeing enhancement of the area. Mental Health 21st Century. Activity Tourism/Multipurpose Centre.

#### What are the main components?

- Mix of activities to all
- Pharma Companies coming in
- Incubation
- Archaeologist, Architect and Wildlife Scientist
- Community Ownership
- Conference Centre
- Who are the users?
- Youth/Aged
- Recreational
- Nationally – Research Centres, Conference Centres
- Economic Site

#### What value does the idea provide?

- 150-200 Jobs Locally
- Unique focused setting to improve wellbeing
- Site of Strategic importance

### 3. Feedback to the room

#### Vision

- Education facility
- Athlone IT to be given University status faculty for site
- National training centre – heavy duty machinery
- National Ambulance Training College

#### Feedback

- Film Studio & Set – visitor centre incorporated offsite. Tell the story of History & productions taking place. Base for Film locations throughout the country.
- Take the wall down and create hub for Arts & Crafts
- Museum – two places old & new church
- Accommodation similar to former St Mary's Site in Castlebar
- Restore at least 10 bed in former Admission area
- Pitch could be upgraded as there is an old centre trail there
- Community Engagement
  - Maybe needs mixed use?
  - National showcase for excellence in history and re-use
  - Needs a multi-disciplinary team
  - Line-up site, lots of people
  - Some buildings changed, some preserved
  - Maybe architecture competition internationally
  - State/public areas and businesses
  - Economic benefit – visitors, business
  - Places to (1) Visit: locals & tourists (2) do business, (3) teach & Learn (4) Film sets
- A Multi-use, multi-sector vibrant 51-acre site, that is the “New Heart of the Town” and growth engine of Ballinasloe, that reflects and owns Ballinasloe Heritage and owns Ballinasloe's future
- National Site
  - Youth – Social forums, innovation
  - Cherishes ethnicity – Ballinasloe Fair Celebrates
  - Owns and names our 'National Mental Health past'
- Training Centre, National Site, Museum
- Tourism, economic growth, sports health, business generation, youth development, employment generation
- How can money be generated to sustain the venture?

- Multiple Networks working blending talent, finance towards a 10-year ambition
- Where are you generating money from to make it viable & sustainable?
- Table 1's idea could be aligned with the idea of table 4 as a centre of excellence for training in a lot of trades etc
- EU Centre for Health & Wellbeing to link up with IT and other centres
- Brendan Flynn, Cliften Arts Festival
- Unique Anchor Tenant – must have visitor/museum
- Hospital – Education of Ambulance – NUI Galway training medics
- Explore possibility of developing site as Museum akin to Kilmainham. Develop site to incorporate:
  - Cafes
  - Educational Centres – Mental, IT Uni-health
  - Outreach Centres – Youth Culture
  - Exhibition Spaces
  - Community Centre

## The revised idea!

1. Interactive Museum
2. Wellness village
3. Centre for Traditional Building Skills
4. A key strand that is commercial
5. Incubation centre for health
6. Social Form Concept

## 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

### Strengths

- Education facility
- Athlone IT to be given University status faculty for site
- National training centre – heavy duty machinery
- National Ambulance Training College

## Weaknesses

- Youth – needs a voice at the table
- Lack of capacity
- Listing – could be difficult to attract private investment
- Sustainability
- Sewage facilities
- Challenge to communicate the plan in place from today

## Opportunities

- Two county boundary
- Creation of employment
- Extent of opportunities
- Availability of funds
- Possible of commitment after today
- To open the site for international input

## Threats

- Ourselves – we could be the blocker
- Capacity to source funding
- Roadmap that needs to be stuck to
- Needs to be integrated
- Engagement of local authority
- Ownership
- Planning is a threat
- Cost of dealing with structure

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

- Commitment of relevant people/players in the market
- Appetite and ambition
- Networks
- Funds available
- Timing
- National Planning Framework

### What's Needed?

- Both local authorities
- Clear concise plan
- Team to deliver project – international aspect
- Advice from the Dept. of Heritage/National Monument Service Parks and Wildlife
- Circa to arrange some to help with the above

### What needs to be done?

Team Together

### Who should do it?

BACD

### When?

ASAP

with various elements from each community

### What needs to be done?

Community Engagement

### Who should do it?

Local group

### When?

ASAP

### What needs to be done?

Needs to fit overall regional plan

### Who should do it?

Local

### When?

ASAP

### What needs to be done?

Feasibility Study – 21st Century Mental Study,  
Grand plan for idea, Economic Plan for sustainability

### Who should do it?

Local State Agencies – Leader –  
Local Enterprises – WDC

### When?

6 – 9 months

### What needs to be done?

Funnel the ideas

### Who should do it?

Fund BACD implement this into a plan

### What needs to be done?

Drive it on – Critical path with defined milestones

## 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- Impact – all employment
  - Good place to live for Elderly and Specific needs
  - Retirement village – not nursing home
  - Assisted living – Special needs, Acquired Brain Injury
  - Museum – Tourism – excellent location centre of Ireland
- Impact – Local
  - Historical Record
- Impact – Appearance/Perception of the town
  - Former employees have interest (harness this)
- Regional/National
  - Central Location for National HQ
  - National Historical?
  - National Ambulance Service
- Who to benefit?
  - Local Tourism – Greenways
  - Local Businesses
  - Provide Services
- Arts Retreat – will bring artists/visitors to the town
  - Not private development only
  - Cultural & Arts Centre – bring cultural activity out of Dublin
  - Centre of Arts Excellence for West of Ireland
  - Gallery Space
- Recreational/Sports/Youth Activities/Museum/Arts & Culture/Enterprise
- Economic priorities
 

Engage the correct stakeholders to invest in project

  - Long term plan containing the following
  - Business plan
  - Inclusion Strategy of utilizers
  - Marketing
  - Financial Projection
- Priorities
  - Feasibility study to identify a sustainable plan for site
  - Community space within site
  - Youth space
  - For viability it has to have an economic side to it.  
This could be done through a workspace hub

## Our Visions for St Brigid's

- Employment
- Cultural/Historical
- Rejuvenation
- Recreation Facilities

## 2. Brainstorming an Idea

### Our concept

#### **Multifunctional Complex split into four different zones**

1. Commercial
2. Creative Hub – Arts – Museum
3. Residential (Elderly Care)
4. Recreational (parks/playgrounds)

### What are the main components?

- Commercial
  - R&D Companies
  - Biomedical
  - Economic viability of site, not retail
- Museum, Gallery/Exhibition, Artists Retreat
- Managed Residential/assisted living
- Recreation
  - Indoor/outdoor
  - Non mainstream sports
  - multifunction

### Who are the users?

- Elderly – residential
- Amenities for the young
- Activities 15-30 yr. olds
- Creative space – artists in residence
- Cycling/walking facilities
- Museum – diverse activities
- Community Centre

## Raw Data from Post-Its: similar to above but with more detail

### Long Term Vision for St Brigid's -One Large Area broken in zones

#### Zone 1

Communicable Building placed centrally in the site, surround by green area

#### Zone 2

Commercial Area

Creative Hub, Historical Centre

Tourist office

Education & Training Area

Food & Beverage Business

Users: General Public, Co Working people/Commuters, Community, Tourists etc

#### Zone 3

Residential Area for Elderly

Man Made Mini Recreation Park

1. General area for recreation – park, playground, obstacle courses, walking areas.
2. Link to Historical, Museum, Culture/arts
3. Coffee Shop/restaurant within facility

New Building at rear of site – Museum

- O'Shea Hall developed for Community Groups
  - Assisted living accommodation
  - Ambulance Training Centre for West
  - Green Space – family amenities
- 
- 20 Year Plan – Mixed Campus
  - Enterprise – Genesis, high end R&D
  - Residential – the Naas model – Multinationals
  - Medical – Primary Care Centre – other
  - Arts – Music School
  - Sports – Centre for minority sports
  - Education – virtual college

### 3. Feedback to the room

- Love the Music School the Midlands (Athlone/Roscommon) needs this Centre
- Maura Canning – Different zones are a great idea: 4-5 zones would be brilliant
- Use some of the existing buildings for small scale manufacturing as there are no such facilities in the Region
- Residential Zone: does not reflect society (Elderly People & People with disabilities) Residential zone need to reflect society – all demographics
- What is the core focus? Where do you state the development?

### 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

#### Strengths

- Community has started the project
- Infrastructure is there
- Collaboration of State Agencies has begun
- Filling gaps required in the area
- Encompasses all aspects of the community, all demographics covered for

#### Weaknesses

- Not focused enough. What is priority?
- HSE?
- Need for Masterplan/Feasibility Study for funding
- No recognised promoter to drive this project. Who are the stakeholders?
- Cost prohibited due to listed buildings

#### Opportunities

- Immediate opportunity – Ambulance Service
- County Council Levies – (force HSE to utilise/offload lands)
- Focal point to sell the town
- Creation of employment – make town more

#### Threats

- Timing for delivery
- Availability of funding
- Private Ownership
- Commercial viability
- Sustainability
- Support from community

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

- Already a working group in place – BAC D, Town Team  
– Support from Minister and Connect the Dots
- Have the site – facilities with campus
- Town has infrastructure – roads, broadband, water etc
- Appetite

### What's Needed?

#### 1. Who needs to be involved?

- a. Identify the potential shareholders
- b. Establish Project Promoter
- c. Need Feasibility study/main masterplan

#### 2. Who else should we consult?

- a. Local Stakeholder - LEO, Galway Co Co, Local Government.
- b. Government departments
- c. Private Investors
- d. MEPS – funding sources

#### 3. What are the potential financial sources?

- a. European Funding
- b. Philanthropists
- c. Departmental Capital Funding
- d. County Council/Enterprise Ireland

### Potential steps

4. Identify main promoter / project lead
5. Feasibility Study required, terms of reference to be agreed, masterplan to be done
6. Site needs to be transferred to the Local Authority (Galway County Council)
7. Identify stages

### 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- Interactive Museum & Heritage Park
- Nurses Home
- Ambulance College
- Supervised Independent living for older people
- Supported living for those with Mental Illness, Acquired Brain Injury and the Elderly, Assisted Living for people with Dementia all the while preserving the site as a History Site
- Hobby Farm
- Wedding Centre – small chapel
- Concerts in front of the panoptic building or in 1970's church
- Escape Rooms
- Ireland was the 1st Country in the Western World to house an official district lunatic asylum system with 22 lunatic asylums. It is only a matter of time that one will be rejuvenated and turned into a **Heritage Site**. Turn the panoptic into an interactive tour/museum/exhibition with park/grounds for locals.

### 2. Brainstorming an Idea

#### Our concept

Interactive Museum (panoptic) and Heritage/Nature Mindfulness Park with sensory gardens and walking trails. Put Ballinasloe on the map. Culture and History attracts massive tourism. Tourism Funding.

#### What are the main components?

- Ready market in school tours/bus tours
- Academia History
- Interactive pay-in Museum (panoptic) with Restaurant
- Sensory Garden, Outside Gym, Walking Trails – promoting mindfulness, Alzheimer's Walking Trails, Greenway

### Who are the users?

- All ages – local/school tours and tours from afar
- Local community for paths
- Academics
- Service Users – sensory gardens
- Elderly have their own plots for garden (Roof variety)

### What value does the idea provide?

- **Local** – Employment, Upkeep, Community Building, Wellbeing, opening this side of the town – create a pathway into the town
- **National** – History Site, brings people to the town, Academia (psychiatric history), School Tours & Curriculum, Assisted Living → self-sustainability.
- Epic → Research Facility → eventual link to services & learning of mental health.

## 3. Feedback to the room

Our Interactive Museum and Heritage/Mindfulness Park is simply a root. It would develop to a learning/training centre promoting mental health and facilitating those needs.

### The revised idea!

#### Four Spaces

1. Training/learning services → Paramedics/Ambulances, Pieta House
2. Arts/Music → St Brigid's Hall
3. Heritage & History (panoptic) → interactive museum & park
4. Assisted Living Section → self-accommodated village

## 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

### Strengths

- Taking advantage of a unique, national identity that could put Ballinasloe on the map
- Preservation of our heritage and cultural history/identity
- Improve mental wellbeing (recreational)
- Community involvement in sustainability
- Exhibiting an educating people on mental health

- Keeps St Brigid's for Ballinasloe (e.g. developers)
- Local Employment (e.g. rejuvenation/sustaining)
- Economic Benefit (visitors coming to the town)
- Links into heritage trade and tourism with Portumna Workhouse & Clonmacnoise
- Facility – facilitates please > designated land zone helicopter

## Weaknesses

**This is an expensive endeavour but no doubt of surmountable benefit – puts Ballinasloe on the map and creates a pathway**

- Economic Benefit to Ballinasloe – how?
  - Spinoff > bringing people into the town nationally & internationally
  - Local employment
  - Self-sustainability
- West of Ireland > away from Dublin – Why?
  - New National Framework Plan – Athlone (City)
- What's the evidence of benefit?
  - e.g. Epic Centre/Kilmainham/Grangegorman/Moate Heritage Park
- This is an amenity – This is a benefit for all – Self-preservation, Local Business (Restaurant), Community Outreach

## Opportunities

- Costs – Limestone/Laundry Machines/Kitchen Machines – Sold
- Family Research Centre – National Archives Digitalised – preservation of sources
- Film Set – by retaining the original set/architecture
- Swifts – birds
- This is a root – it could expand to a broader national centre for mental health wellbeing
- Conference/Lectures/Offices/Services – Large Campus
- Chapel for Weddings

## Threats

- HSE
- Preserve the Birds
- Private acquisition
- Insurance – public liability
- Cost – funding
- Old fashioned ideas – counteract with education
- Another department could come in and turn it into a juvenile centre
- This is a golden opportunity and we need to do something now because the later we leave it, the costlier it will be as already costly.

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

- The Building (plan to gain access)
- Representative for our voice at Dáil Eireann and Minister with a passion to better our town
- The history – the name – let's use that PR and turn it into the forwarding of Mental Health
- The good will of the town – variety of interest from different parties here today
- Absolute potential to turn this into an incredible endeavour
- Philanthropists/Entrepreneurs, interest and passion of a variety of agencies
- Potential funding
- Limestone/laundry machines worth thousands/ Kitchenware/ artefacts/ X-ray machines etc/ Mirror/ archives in house

### What's Needed?

- Departments that can provide funding e.g. Enterprise Centre
- Need Expertise – Heritage, Culture, Historical Advisors, Financial Advisors
- Definitive timelines – what happens next?
- HSE representative, St Brigid's Manager, HSE Liaison
- Experts to draw up a business plan and further consultations and timelines

### Potential steps

- First Committee
  - Historical Advisors
  - Financial Advisors
  - Business People
  - PR – Funding's/ planners/ architects
- Need to talk/research with other projects such as Portumna Workhouse to have strong and watertight proposal
- Consultation with HSE and representatives
- Expertise to draw up a business plan and efficient/realistic timeline
- Funding

## 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- A one size fits all approach didn't seem right and therefore could the site have multiple uses?
- Centre for Training and Education – Trades/Digital Hub/links with IT's.
- Cultural spaces
- Activity, sports, adventure centre
- Third level education, apprenticeships
- Job growth – use for groups such as Ambulance Service
- Museum
- Theme Park
- Keep some buildings for workshops – teach and train young people in practical works – stone-leather-glass etc. (college)
- Develop River area for Fishing to attract back overseas anglers
- Centre of Excellence for training and education
- Digital Hub
- Cultural space – exhibition – artists- studios
- Animation & Gaming collective
- Government agencies/councils
- Hotel
- Base for new industries
- Mixed use
- 51 acres to be sold to reuse money within Health System to help reinvest in St Brigid's
- Manmade lake again to attract anglers from all over
- Employment opportunities with third level Resident component and develop Agency interaction
- Cultural/Heritage attraction with associated amenity space

## 2. Brainstorming an Idea

### Our concept

Centre of Excellence for Training & Education with a special focus on trades (including medical) and arts, cultural, Design and Construction.

### What are the main components?

- Educational Facilities, Conference Centre
- SME Hubs & Artists Studies
- Ancillary supports (catering, accommodation, recreational zone)

### Who are the users?

- Students
- Educators
- Local businesses
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Level

### What value does the idea provide?

- Nationally, Regionally - fills a gap within current system
- Economic Impact locally (accommodation, services, more jobs, social, transport)
- Social

## 3. Feedback to the room

### The revised idea!

- Centre of Excellence – these exist
- Focus: National Centre for Apprenticeship (hugely reliable)
- Great idea – need to clear us as to how it could finance itself
- 3<sup>rd</sup> level for Apprenticeships – multi agency – aligned to Government Strategy
- No duplication – addressing deficits in various areas
- Bring all to a central location
- Funding model – similar to existing, this is one element of the campus, one piece could subsidise, central but only one part – anchor for other developments

### Reflections from other tables:

- Interactive Museum
- Mindfulness Centre
- R&D Biotech
- Financial Services
- Creative Activities – History of St Brigid's & Mental Health, Horse History, School of Music
- Sports Hub excluding existing recreational groups i.e. Rugby, GAA etc.
- Great idea need to clear up how it would finance itself!

## 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

1st Step in bringing all the other suggestions together.

This can progress with all other ideas

### Strengths

Supported by Published Statistics – e.g. only 24 live apprenticeships in 2016 and rising slowly, only rising by 10 (action plan to expand apprenticeship and traineeship in 2020 – it aims to get 19,000 new enrolments before 2020).

The National Skill Strategy 2025 is part of the Programme for Government so could get funding through same. Huge European funding coming down the line delivered piecemeal at the moment this would bring it together as a centre of excellence, local knowledge willing to support it, local funding from multiple.

### Weaknesses

- If HSE doesn't work with those involved
- HSE digging it heels
- Drawing down on grants

### Opportunities

- All other programmes mentioned today could run in conjunction with this project.
- Countrywide this would benefit both jobseekers and employers.
- To turn negatives into positives as different groupings
- Would be working together for the betterment of the area
- There will always be a requirement for apprenticeships
- Opportunity to expand out to up-training centres

### Threats

- Network there at the moment which could see this as a treat.

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

- Proven Statistics and Government Reports
- People Resources (loads of people in the room capable of doing reports, submitting grant applications)
- Groups already in place if they were brought on board
- Local business for funding!!
- Machines etc/ Mirror/ archives in house

## What's Needed?

- Feasibility study, business plan
- Others that need to be involved are: HSE, Solas, Galway Leader, GRETB, 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Athlone & Galway, Skillnets, QQI, WDC, Enterprise Ireland
- Financial Resources: Grants, Donations, Loans

## Potential steps

- **What needs to be done?** → Feasibility Study
- **Who should do it?** → Consultant
- **When?** → Starting point without feasibility study cannot continue.

## Table 5

### 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- Historical journey / Images/videos etc. – possible in church on site
- A beautiful worldwide recognised testimony to the thousands of stories here.
- Linking past to the future i.e. learn from the past to move to the future (wellness)
- Architect design “build it and they will come” e.g. Smithsonian in Washington DC or the Holocaust Memorial Berlin
- Building which reflects the old and the new the future and the positives
- A-grade office space
- attract FDI
- Fast landing office space – innovation hub
- Must attract people who will spend money in the town
- Tourism
- Agency interaction
- Cultural/Heritage attraction with associated amenity space

### 2. Brainstorming an Idea

#### Our concept

Immersive, Multimedia, experiential, heritage site, bring together our past present and future. Combining Academic Wellness and office space.

### What are the main components?

- Historical site – let's take the past and develop into the future in terms of history, culture and wellness.
- Reflect on where we have been – huge storytelling capabilities.

### Who are the users?

- Tourists, families and residents.

### What value does the idea provide?

#### Locally, Regionally, Nationally

- Iconic, immersive, museum, develop a wellness village:
- Rejuvenate the walled garden, rejuvenate the organic farm and convert the lovely old buildings into cafes and restaurants.
- Humanist Weddings- tap into this market convert the old church, possible Other Voices type venue.

## 3. Feedback to the room

Our Interactive Museum and Heritage/Mindfulness Park is simply a root. It would develop to a learning/training centre promoting mental health and facilitating those needs.

### The revised idea!

1. Develop historical aspect of site into a global heritage global interactive museum.
2. Identify site as a global educational/conference centre which would attract international experts in the mental health and psychology fields.
3. Develop an international academic hub/online on mental health wellness.
4. Create a wellness village – rejuvenate walled garden, organic farm etc.
5. Centre of excellence for training and education.
6. Office space within the mental health and wellness sector.

## 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

### Strengths

- Ireland pioneer in Mental Health which gives a credibility and legitimate reason to tell the stories,
- Immense history
- Legacy

- Architecture
- Geographical location
- Sear Size of site
- Centre of excellence
- Rejuvenation of walled gardens and far

### Weaknesses

- Lack of knowledge for progress of project
- Potential of cost of development
- Access to funding
- Are the ideas too big for the town?
- Lack of housing or accommodation space.
- Amenities/facilities in town
- Potential for “negative/sad image”

### Opportunities

- Local pool of knowledge/residents/workers
- Convert the patients records and history involve the diaspora
- Tap into university third level institutions to carry out research
- Partnership/Links with education
- Multi-media/offshoot business - Media/ production/ podcasts (from the patient history/ archives)

### Threats

- Time is a huge threat
- Definite sense of urgency to commit to idea
- Acquire funding – a fear that other pitches could get chosen before our own
- Time – in terms of the building itself, as long as its left idle it continues to into disrepair.
- Potential to loss or damage to the archives – historians
- Bureaucracy and red tape
- Fear of the unknown
- Potential objectors

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

#### What Resources do we have?

- BACD and Town Team Agreed vision and collective thinking
- Potential access to national funding
- Archive of information and expert knowledge ready to go
- The site
- Ministerial support

#### What's Needed?

- HSE agreement to sell
- Sponsors, partners and advocates
- Endorsements - Creative Ireland, culture Ireland, the arts council, Fáilte Ireland, discover Ireland, department of arts, OPW, European union and UNESCO
- Academic affiliation
- Consultation with experts
- Establish a volunteer committee to pitch the idea
- More inside knowledge of the site and the size

#### Potential steps

1. Secure site
2. Establish a committee to deliver a pitch (plus the minister) explore the legal entity for development of committee
3. Integrity report on site.
4. Master/visual plan
5. NOW!

## Table 6

### 1. Blue Sky Thinking

- Sports & Recreational Centre
- Small Enterprises and Start Up Incubator
- Big Enterprises (Apple)
- Pieta House
- Public Spaces & Walk Ways (Commemorative)

- All Weather Sports Pitch
- Museum (Horse)
- Mental Health Museum
- Walkways
- Cultural Space (which involves the community)
- Satellite Campus
- Residential for 3rd Level (International Students)
- Assisted Living for Elderly People (Communal Living)
- Location for decentralised Government Department
- New Creative Government Agency
- A place for people to retire (not a nursing home)
- Campus for FDI Company (i.e. Silicon Valley)
- National Science Museum (e.g. Belfast)
- R&D Campus
- Creative Arts Centre – Education, Production, Performance, Research
- Distillery & Brewing Centre

## 2. Brainstorming an Idea

### Our concept

#### Multi-use area

- Walkways
- Industry/Incubator
- Museum (Heritage/Science)

### What are the main components?

#### MUSEUM – with different wings

- Heritage – Horse Fair - History of Mental Health Services in St. Brigid's (Museum of the Science of Psychiatry)
- Ireland's first Interactive Science Museum – An experience, interactive experience
- Residential Science Camps
- Cafes, Restaurants
- Conferences – Speakers, talks
- River – showcase for sustainability

### Who are the users?

- Children/Students – primary and post primary schools
- Elderly people
- Teenagers
- Middle aged parents
- Young Creative

### What value does the idea provide?

- Job opportunities for the town
- Attracts people from all around the country
- Tourist attraction
- Area for locals to socialise, entertainment

## 3. Feedback to the room

Ireland's First Interactive Science & Adventure Park (Science & History) including Museum of Psychiatry.

### The revised idea!

1. Commemorative Walk – Historical stops...5k walk?? Run Track and Cycle Track
2. Museum Wings
  - Science Interactive to draw crowds, like ones in major cities (WS)
  - Major Psychiatric History of Ireland, preserve rooms, history
  - Horse Museum, 300-year-old Horse Fair
3. Big Enterprise – employer
4. Smaller Incubation hub for small businesses

## 4. Digging Deeper (SWOT Analysis)

Plenty of room for expansion and development  
Interactive & Adventure Centre

### Strengths

- Job Opportunities
- Economic Growth in the town
- Atmospheric Buildings
- Good Geographical Location
- Picturesque ground
- Dynamic Town Team

- Increasing reputation in Ire of the importance of Science & Technology
- Focus on Government Developing STEM

### Weaknesses

- Lack of Skills required
- Require outside experts
- Who will we attract? – especially if the museum was focused on heritage only
- Availability of €€€€€

### Opportunities

- Jobs
- Overseas Colleges coming to the Museums as interns
- Create unique habitats
- Science Walk routes
- To increase the quality and understanding of STEM
- Huge learning potential
- Opportunity to partner with 3rd level colleges and industries/businesses that need STEM and Research Centres Research wing that partners with a 3<sup>rd</sup> level college
- Residential
- Summer Camps
- Access NPF €€€
- Test concept via a Pop Up Facility
- Pilot facility
- Incubator/start-up space for research and for enterprise in the science and technology areas

### Threats

- Funding
- Lack of commitments and ownership from Local community and Government
- To get an agreement on a way forward
- Concept needs to be fully realised before putting forward

## 5. Ideas to Action

### What do we already have to progress this?

- Site
- Iconic Buildings
- Grounds
- River

- Location
- Government commitment to developing STEM
- GMIT and AIT nearby
- Big Community Support (buy in) locally
- Desire for change
- Science, ICT, capability is huge within a 50/40-mile radius
- Political energy to develop area
- Motorway
- Rail links
- Bus Route

### What's Needed?

- Investor – Funds
- State Buy In
- Team – Drive to take it on
- Vision
- HSE buy in
- Local buy in
- Leadership/Ambassador
- Strong Advisory Board Positivity – cooperation
- Seed funding to pilot a project
- Feasibility Study
- Agreement

### Potential steps

- Draft a Blueprint/Plan
- Source the experts: Science, Technology, Enterprise, History, Parks, Entertainment centres etc.
- Visiting/Fact Finding mission to cities.  
Delegation to tour them, European Capitals, Paris Science Museum, Manchester Part Industrial part science, Chicago Science & Industry
- Preliminary meetings with the Local Authority/Agencies  
– those who have to be on board
- Identify people who are interested to drive Film Location

