

# Let's Develop Our Vision for Community Wellbeing for This and Future Generations in Westport- Belmullet Municipal District



**What community groups said at the  
Mayo PPN Community Workshops  
held in**

**Broadhaven Bay Hotel, Belmullet on 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2022  
& the Town Hall Theatre, Westport on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2022**



## Why are we collecting the views of community groups?

The Mayo Public Participation Network (PPN) is working with its members to produce a shared vision for the future wellbeing of the Westport-Belmullet Municipal District for this and future generations. This vision will be used to inform the work of the PPN and its representatives.

Community wellbeing combines a number of issues such as health, social and community development, the environment and public participation. All the different aspects of community wellbeing are captured in the diagram set out below. We want to hear your organisation's or group's ambitions and aspirations for our community around these issues.



As part of the consultation process Mayo PPN held workshops in the Broadhaven Bay Hotel, Belmullet on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the Westport Town Hall Theatre on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The inputs made by representatives of PPN member groups at that workshop are presented here for your information; those from Westport in the left-hand column and those from Westport in the right-hand column.

There is now a 2-week opportunity for groups that were not able to attend the workshops, or who were present but have additional inputs they want to make, to contribute their views. This can be done via the link in the email.

All the responses received will be collected and considered with those from the workshop (presented here) and incorporated into a Draft Vision for Community Wellbeing for the Mayo PPN for This and Future Generations. This draft vision will be made available for feedback from all PPN member groups before being finalised and published.

## This document

This document includes all the inputs that were made at the workshop, presented under the headings where they were made. They have been grouped by themes where this appeared to be helpful, but please note that these themes are only provided to help make the material more accessible.

# Health (Physical and Mental)

## Westport

### Access

- Access to everything for people with disabilities
- Support for those living with disability to participate fully in the community & not be isolated

### Facilities

- Accessible footpaths/ sidewalks
- Community hub model facilitating community groups and activities (Men's Sheds, markets, etc.) that also benefit mental health & wellbeing
- Facilities for youth; games rooms, youth café, sports & variety (not just for those into GAA)

### Community Support

- No stigma associated with mental health challenges: "it's ok not to be ok"
- People are supported to live independently for as long as possible.

- Support for lone parents

### Services

- Health hub that is person centred & has holistic approach, with social prescribing
- Better primary health care centres
- Continuum of care in your own community

## Belmullet

- Wellbeing for everyone

### Access

- Access for everyone to all our amenities, natural environment, etc.
- Nitty gritty accessibility – adequate thought into how? where? cost? Etc.
- Rest areas around town, walk amenity for people with mobility issues
- Accessibility – price, parking, transport – can everyone actually get onto the bus?

### Facilities

- Provide public toilets
- Family Resource Centre
- Indoor swimming pool publicly funded

### Community Support

- Ring people to inquire how they are – befriending
- Provide a central community hub/ one stop shop – providing information on how to access mental health, youth, family support services etc.
- Family Resource Centre

### Services

- Ensure health services are available to the local community – think about the huge travel distance to Castlebar/ Galway, etc.
- Day service for elderly
- Family resource centre with services

## Westport

### Services (cont.)

- Gentle counselling & support for older people; taking away the stigma of mental health
- More GPs/ doctors & healthcare workers
- Home help as part of social prescribing
- Good support to live independently & be connected to your community.
- Respite home

### Housing

More community housing for the elderly. (Keep older people living in their community and carers employed locally)

### Transport

- Better transport – Local Link running regularly several times a day, reduce single car journeys

### Education

- End bullying in the workplace
- No discrimination

## Belmullet

### Services (cont.)

- Accessible counselling service for all ages and fully inclusive
- Provide Rainbow (children services) in Erris
- Open more hospital beds
- Extend access to services e.g. X-ray available 5 days a week
- Wheelchair accessible dentist

### Infrastructure

- Fibre optic broadband for all
- Help for IT classes

### Transport

- Local link from Blacksod to Belmullet
- Local link – promotion locally so everyone knows what's available

### Education

- More courses in GMIT, so students can go [attend] by bus
- Entrance to Erris at Corrick – craft shop – Central point where the area can be promoted

# Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

## Westport

### Local Authority

- Provide clearer information on grants available – “Freedom of Information” regarding funding; telling groups what’s available to help
- Hold public forums around issues where the public can participate
- Good relationships between government structures & community
- Open day for schools to meet Council members & learn workings of Local Authority
- Community Futures – encourage more communities to develop plans as this is participative democracy at its best
- Strong Council support for Community Futures initiative in the municipal district
- Feedback on Community Futures and consultations
- Increased liaison between the Council & community groups prior to any works being carried out in a community by the Council.
- Forward planning for projects to be carried out
- More equitable representation at local government
- Representatives to reflect local community they serve
- Accountability from those with responsibility
- Funding should be spread across the County

### Governance for community & voluntary groups

- Garda vetting overhaul – allow people to volunteer without having to be vetted separately for every organisation
- Establish a volunteer bank (listing)
- Set up an open access register for voluntary groups in the area, through which updates can be given, activities & services notified, & news shared on grants, training, etc. (equal access)
- Accountability, honesty, equity & respect. Get to know your neighbours

## Belmullet

### Local Authority

- [Deliver on] Belmullet Community Futures
- Review municipal funding
- Provide clear guidance (from County Council) on funding
- Ensure transparency and consistency around grants
- Appoint a liaison officer locally for community queries, grants, etc.
- Too fragmented – ensure the same person to deal with a query, follows through
- Listen and respond
- [Ensure] equal representation

### Governance for community & voluntary groups

- Too much red tape
- Provide one card for all Garda vetting
- [Simplify] rules

## **Westport**

### Facilities & Support for Community

- Provide buildings for community organisations e.g Family Resource Centres, Men's Sheds, Scouts, Civic Trust, etc.
- More funding for effective community groups
- Fair access to community buildings – needs to be affordable for voluntary organisations
- Provide indoor community sports hall

### General

- Good inter-generational connection incentives that promote young & older people to engage

## **Belmullet**

### Facilities & Support for Community

- Mayo Volunteer Centre outreach in Erris
- Paid officers under each theme

# Social and Community Development

## Westport

### Older people

- Sheltered accommodation for the elderly
- Retirement villages
- Care of the elderly; able to stay in their own homes as long as possible & then the choice to stay in their own community.

### Children

- Accessible & affordable childcare for all
- Pre-school, early childhood and after school services available
- Facilities for childcare expanded, linked to schools

### Young people

- Events for 13-18 year age groups
- Link elderly with youth
- Local facilities for our youth (youth cafés, gaming hubs, sports facilities)
- More co-educational & non-denominational schools (none currently at secondary level)
- Intergenerational incentives and projects bridging age gaps

### Employment & Business

- Remote working hubs with good broadband service
- Serviced enterprise hubs
- Retention of community jobs
- Lifting of rates from charity shops

## Belmullet

### Housing & Homes

- Everyone should have a home.
- Variety of housing to meet people's needs.
- Affordable housing
- Build homes that won't need to be retrofitted in 10 years!

### Planning

- Consultation [of community] with local authority re: future planning
- By-laws to be put into Belmullet. Dip to access streets, because there is not by-laws in Belmullet.

### Great places to live

- Vibrant village communities that prevent isolation.
- Return to the model of building council houses in villages.
- Proper real-life accessibility – ask those who know; not just wheelchair users, visual impairment, deafness, etc. For example – cost.

### Community supports

- Family Resource Centre

### Employment

- Jobs
- Remote study and work hubs

## Westport

### Facilities & services

- Astro turf facilities for kids
- Indoor “muga”
- Big community hall/hub for multiple voluntary organisations with meeting space, gym, café, playground, etc.
- Affordable utilities; solar panels, renewable energy choices
- High quality water
- Meals on Wheels
- CSP manager plus staff
- Community development officer to co-ordinate all groups
- Re-opening of social services centre – social contact
- Good services for those living with disabilities
- Both natural and built environment accessible for all

### Health

- Hospital patient discharge liaison person to manage transition from hospital to home

### Safe community

- No violence

## Belmullet

### Infrastructure

- All truly accessible
- Services
- Transportation
- Better broadband
- Mobile coverage
- Free broadband for tourism

### Health

- Properly resourced community hospital
- Integrated medical system
- Westdoc to have access to medical records, etc.



## Westport

### Protect our Heritage

- Interactive tours/ walks to explore & experience our heritage & history
- Irish language spoken
- Traditional music and dance
- Preserve historic buildings and structures
- Preserve our graveyards
- Preserve the heritage of Westport
- Record & celebrate our local history
- Keep traditional shop fronts
- Reinforce laws regarding town heritage
- Develop the heritage aspect to include a centre for all areas; genealogy, customs, archaeology, our roots

### Community Arts

- More cultural workshops for all ages involving arts, music, dance, etc. allow people to try things for free

### Multi-cultural community

- We are respectful of others; culture, religions and choices
- Celebrate multi-cultural community
- Integration of marginal groups such as refugees, those living with disabilities, etc.

### Community

- Strong community spirit
- Friendly place
- Meitheal
- We look out for our neighbours
- Meeting friends
- Multi-generational community (that mixes well)

## Belmullet

### Protect our Heritage

- Need to record and interpret our heritage; music, stories, legends, etc.
- Provide a heritage centre in Belmullet
- Inter-generational recordings
- Old graveyards and killeens
- Spirituality, wells and monasteries
- Our lost islands; Inís Ge & Inís Gluaire
- Irish language
- Practical incentives to use Irish

### Community Arts

- Programmes to surround and support community arts
- Support for local radio

### Traditions & practice

- Open fires
- Turf fires
- Meet for the craic
- Storytelling
- Music
- The GAA - development

### Food

- Boxyty

## Westport

### Community (cont.)

- Pride of place; proud to support our GAA, agriculture, etc.
- Good information on events & activities that are well supported
- Events & activities are genuinely inclusive for all (ages, abilities, cultures, etc.)
- Strong culture of volunteering amongst all ages in the community.
- Good quality of life in our area
- Scouts, Foroige, GAA to continue and grow, connecting with other groups in the area
- Appreciating our environment by participating in sporting & environmental events

### Safety

- This is a safe environment where we are all free to partake in any activities that are going on

## Belmullet

### Food (cont.)

- Bacon & cabbage

### Natural environment

- Sea/ beaches
- Fresh air
- Swimming & surf
- Native trees that support wildlife rather than conifers
- Prevent loss of our seaweed – sold to foreign companies
- Make public areas and [heritage] sites fully accessible

## Westport

### Housing

- Provide more housing so that people do not forfeit jobs here because they can't find housing which will affect the economy
- Affordable housing in sought after areas; a new housing model that meets the needs of local people
- Holiday homes to become primary homes
- Inclusive housing model that creates good housing mix; examine qualifying conditions for social housing

### Services

- Extend sewerage system
- Make all services available; schools, shops, post offices, etc. in local areas so that these are attractive communities for people to live in

### Infrastructure

- Good transport infrastructure: road, rail, cycling, etc.
- Good broadband a necessity
- Good mobile phone coverage
- Mobile & broadband services to support emergency services

### Work

- Facilitate remote working, including in hubs (for social aspect)

### Business supports

- Attract more small businesses so fewer people depend on large companies for work
- Support new businesses to be environmentally friendly
- Fully staffed community business hub with excellent internet access
- Full childcare facilities locally available, linking to enterprise hubs

## Belmullet

### Tourism

- Tourism-related rubbish – needs a mechanism for disposal of waste – not relying on community groups cleaning up.
- Eco-tourism
- Water sports tourism
- Wild Mayo
- All tourism to be kept sustainable
- Local benefits from natural resources
- Need campsites and caravan park

### Infrastructure

- Good broadband
- Good mobile phone services

### Work

- Remote working opportunities

### Business supports

- Less red tape on grant applications
- Funding for sustainable fishing and farming in rural areas
- Attract more multi-nationals into Erris for sustainable jobs

## **Westport**

### Business supports (cont.)

- Initiatives & supports to keep youth in the area, with good jobs available locally
- Link businesses
- Generate diverse employment initiatives, in tourism & other areas
- Enterprise hub to encourage small business with office space, shared administration & hotdesking facility
- Other

### Respect for homemakers

- Respect for carers who receive a living wage
- Understanding of the destructive nature of substance abuse on our economy & individuals & effective ways to address this

## **Belmullet**

### Education and training

- More apprenticeships and FET courses available & known about that are accessible and attractive

### Food

- Proper incentives for biodiversity and being self-sufficient
- Farmers markets
- Food security

## Westport

### Agriculture

- Support farmers to go organic & promote this area as an organic food district
- Proper [environmentally friendly & sustainable] farm development
- Sustainable farming practices

### Minding Nature

- More biodiversity
- Work closely with the NPWS (National Parks & Wildlife Service) to fully preserve the National Park & its important habitats

### Energy

- Solar & wind energy
- This municipal district should aim to be carbon neutral

### Environmental Quality & Pollution

- Clean beaches, forests, etc.
- Clean beaches for all
- Achieve & maintain protection of water at risk of pollution.
- National regulations & legislation – local planning & enforcement of regulations around water quality, heritage, environment, etc.
- Sustainable development
- Low level lighting to assist dark skies
- Follow Mayo Dark Sky Park lighting control recommendations countywide.

### Recreation & access to outdoors

- More natural playgrounds – like the one at the museum in Turlough
- Development of water sports facilities e.g. kayaking, paddle boarding, kite surfing, etc

## Belmullet

- Do things well and properly – [“environment” and “sustainability” not just a “buzz word”]
- Preservation of islands.
- Not to become over commercialised
- Maintain our Cead meila failte
- Local benefits from local natural resources

### Minding Nature

- Protection of habitats, Machair, etc.
- Protection of endangered species – corncrake, bees, moths, curlews, etc.
- More support for Tidy Towns and sustainability issues e.g. solar power
- Restoration of natural heritage

### Environmental quality

- Green flag
- Blue flag beaches
- Maintain our beaches and high-water quality
- Maintain high water quality and Blue Flag beach designations

### Recreation & access to outdoors

- Development of tidal pool
- Greenway as a future

## **Westport**

### Recreation & access to outdoors (cont.)

- More all-weather facilities at beaches (indoor changing facilities, showers)
- Make public spaces available to community groups for exercising, get-togethers, etc.
- Board walk under Mulranny village – safe pedestrian access from village to Blue Flag beach
- Development of Mulranny Pier – all round facility for leisure & fishing boats
- Foot path for walkers over Sandyhill
- Footpath out the Ballinrobe road
- Footpaths 1km each side/ direction of National Schools in the area to promote a safe healthy living for the young.
- Finish off the greenway to Roonagh Pier
- Expand the Greenway to Ballycroy & beyond
- Mulranny causeway repair & maintenance
- More pedestrian areas in towns

### Waste Management

- Recycling bins emptied at peak times e.g. bank holidays
- Better facilities for waste management by community
- Greater enforcement of litter laws

### Education

- Educate the community on local issues of environment, e.g. water, rivers
- Higher education in regard to recycling

### Built Heritage

- Restore the old historic buildings to preserve our history/ culture for future generations
- Re-use/ repurpose derelict buildings

## **Belmullet**

### Recreation & access to outdoors (cont.)

- All areas get the same – accessible walking
- Wheelchair accessible blue mats: sustainable environmental solution, like blue mat at all beaches, tidal pools, etc.

### Irish language

- Support for the Plean Teanga
- Cuntoipí Teanga do gach scoil – sa phobal freisin

### Built heritage

- The old church – a great heritage centre
- Keep our heritage – Blacksod Light House, Ballyglass Light house, Glosh Tower – as a protected structure
- Preserve the railway hotel and causeway – Mulranny
- Restoration of built heritage.

### Waste management

- Regular litter warden
- Regular street cleaning

### Education

- Education, training & support for sustainability

### Other

- Áris Inish Gluaire – arts centre  
Eachleim Heritage Centre
- Supply from gas field to town local area Erris

## Westport

## Belmullet

### Transport

- Safe walking & cycle paths
- Parking spots for older people
- Easier/ flexible parking payment system
- More car-free areas in town
- Shuttle bus for tourists at Keem Bay during summer months (as local access only for farmers otherwise). This would facilitate access for emergency services & safety for all)

### Community Action

- Support local climate action & groups (like CALL)
- Work on reducing energy consumption, retrofitting, carbon neutrality, etc.
- Increase food security
- Promote health & wellness
- Actively pursue sustainable transport

### Other

- Affordable housing for all

If you want to make an input to the Mayo PPN Westport-Belmullet Municipal District Vision for Community Wellbeing, you can do this either online or in hard copy (form available from the PPN).