

# County Waterford Community Forum

## VOLUNTEER CORPS PROGRAMME

### BRIEF EVALUATION REPORT

March 2007

Community Consultants Ltd.  
Ardsallagh, via Youghal,  
Co. Waterford.



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Background to this report

In January 2007 the County Waterford Community Forum contracted Community Consultants Ltd. in West Waterford to carry out an independent evaluation of the Volunteer Corps programme<sup>1</sup>. The contract for the work totalled two days and involved the following:

- Consultation with the County Waterford Community Forum and background reading
- Distribution and collation of a questionnaire to all five Volunteer Corps projects<sup>2</sup>
- Facilitation of an evaluation session with all involved in the programme<sup>3</sup>
- Writing of a brief evaluation report.

### The Volunteer Corps Programme

The Volunteer Corps programme for County Waterford was established by County Waterford Community Forum. Funding for the programme was sourced by the County Development Board from the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs under Improved Cohesion of Local Development Structures and Programmes. The funding totaled €50,000, with an additional top up grant from County Waterford LEADER Partnership of €10,000. The funding was channeled through the Leader Partnership. It was envisaged that a five-person Volunteer Corps would be established in selected voluntary ‘host’ groups in each of the five electoral areas in County Waterford. A total of €10,000 was allocated to each project, plus €2,000 for training and/or equipment.

#### Aims and objectives of the programme:

1. Promote volunteering by bringing citizens of the county together in a totally new, structured way; by creating a 5-person Volunteer Corps in each of the five electoral areas, involving:
  - 1 young person (18-25)
  - 1 senior person (retired or shortly to retire)
  - 1 marginalised and socially excluded person
  - 1 business person
  - 1 volunteer, from the ‘host’ group.
2. Deliver on five socially inclusive projects, designed and managed by the Volunteer Corps themselves.

#### The principles underpinning the programme were as follows:

- Social inclusion: ensure economic growth benefits everyone
- Access: ensure target groups access services/supports needed wherever they live
- Impacts: the need to maximise effectiveness of the structures for delivery of services & supports

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for the proposal to establish a Volunteer Corps programme in Co. Waterford.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 for the completed questionnaires from the Volunteer Corps projects. In addition questionnaires were administered internally to key personnel involved in the management of the programme (see Appendix 4).

<sup>3</sup> Appendix 3 shows the format for the facilitated evaluation session.

## SOME QUOTES FROM THE EVALUATION PROCESS

*Five diverse projects in rural Ireland, Co. Waterford – the spirit of volunteerism is certainly not dead in this county!*  
(Ballyduff)

*It really worked; plus it brought people together and we had great fun.*  
(Tramore)

*It was some value for €50,000 – money well spent.*  
(Ballyduff)

*There was tremendous work done by all the projects and great diversity between them all.*  
(Portlawn)

*It inspired us to do more than we intended.*  
(Crough Wood)

*A special thanks to Oliver, Sinead and Orfhlaith for all their hard work.*  
(Craobh na gCumarach)

## 2. EVALUATION OF THE VOLUNTEER CORPS PROGRAMME

Five groups in County Waterford were selected to take part in hosting the Volunteer Corps Programme, in the following areas:

- a. Ballyduff
- b. Crough Wood
- c. Portlaw
- d. Craobh na gCumarach
- e. Tramore.

The Volunteer Corps programme ran from January to December 2006. All five projects involved in the programme set out ambitious goals for themselves to be achieved in the year and to a large extent great progress was made on these goals. See overleaf for details on the goals of each project at the outset and corresponding outcomes at the end of the programme.

The programme was independently evaluated in January 2007. Through the evaluation process all five Volunteer Corps projects confirmed that they had met the criteria under the aims and objectives for the programme, in relation to representation, design and management of the projects. The groups adhered to the demands of the programme by providing regular up-date reports to the Community Forum, as well as financial records on the expenditure of the funding.

One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme related to social inclusion. In the course of the evaluation the projects were asked how they, through their work had contributed to social inclusion. There was a mixed understanding of the concept of social inclusion across the spectrum of the five projects. The point was made that the rural experience of social exclusion is very different to the urban experience, in that it can be much less visible in the country and therefore more complicated to address. In general, there was a sense

that the projects had contributed to social inclusion in the following ways:

- o By adhering to the commitment to involve people from the five different target groups in the composition of the project personnel (see page 3).
- o By choosing projects democratically that would be of benefit to the whole community.
- o By focusing on making local amenities available and accessible to all, young, old, abled and disabled, etc.
- o By being open and active in involving people of varied backgrounds from the localities in the wider work of the projects and in some cases proactively targeting newcomers to the areas to get involved.

*Our project was socially inclusive from the start from our choice of volunteers and also our concept of the project.*

*People from all walks of life were encouraged to join in walking routes. All walks were disability friendly and families with children welcome. We also held a Wheels Walk open to people in wheelchairs and people with young children in prams and buggies.*

*(Tramore)*

Opportunities for training and support were on offer to the project volunteers during the year as part of the planned budget. Much of the training was informal and experiential and volunteers learned to deal with issues as they arose. Other training opportunities were more formal. The training taken up by the volunteers included the following:

- Training in how to operate a projector
- Site digging under archaeological supervision
- Establishing and maintaining website
- Walking leaders training
- First aid training.

At the end of the programme the Volunteer Corps projects were asked if they had any outstanding training needs and three of the five had none. The group in Portlaw identified a need for PowerPoint presentation training, using a laptop and projector. The group in Ballyduff did not identify any outstanding training needs, but noted that the availability of broadband would be an advantage to the group in order to be able to readily access information they may require in the future.

**The Volunteer Corps Programme – Goals and Outcomes**

	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>
<b>Ballyduff</b>	To respond to the needs of local senior citizens, mothers and toddlers and under 18's by renovating a local heritage building (Carnegie Library) and make it an accessible, comfortable and multi-functional resource space. Provision of space for senior citizens to socialise, Foróige youth club activities, music and dance classes and as a training centre.	Agreement with Waterford County Council on the purchase of the building; architectural plans developed to re-design the building; full planning permission granted; some funding received for the project and further funding applied for.
<b>Craobh na gCumarach</b>	To raise heritage awareness in the locality through acquisition and stabilisation of the Conneries homestead site, promote a song project in four local schools, promote the project through website and other media, and develop a monthly adult singers gathering club.	Acquired the Conneries homestead site and reconstruction work begun; song project developed in the schools; website developed; adult singers club developed; local community interest in heritage inspired.
<b>Crough Wood Project</b>	The sensitive development of Crough Wood as a tourist, educational and natural resource, including the development of a safe and environmentally friendly nature walk with signposting and seating at intervals along the paths, provision of car parking areas, fencing, on-going repair of stone ditches, unobtrusive labelling of trees, development of picnic areas and creation of bridges across streams and the river.	Pathways cleared, drained and trunking laid on a walk approximately ¾ mile long.
<b>Portlaw</b>	To encourage integration between the existing community and the newer communities in the Portlaw area through the development and dissemination of an information pack (DVD, brochure cover, insert map and directory) and a tourist information sign, and to assist newcomers to the area in becoming informed of services, sports clubs and other facilities available.	Production of the planned information pack, a public launch in the community and wide distribution of the pack.
<b>Tramore Footsteps Project</b>	To plan and establish a fitness walking programme encouraging and promoting adult fitness, health and socialisation, based on the Irish Heart Foundation's 'Walk Leadership Programme'. Map out 6-8 new walking routes in Tramore and grade them according to time, fitness level required, safety issues, etc. Work with Waterford County Council on route signage.	Production and distribution of walk advertisement posters and leaflets; walk leadership training undertaken; organised fitness walks, happy heart walks and socials; development and distribution of a walking route map.

In the course of the evaluation the volunteers in the projects were asked to comment on the process they had been through, in terms of things that had gone well or had not gone well, any learnings from the process, what they might have done differently given a second chance and plans for the future. The feedback on the process is detailed below.

<p><b>Ballyduff</b></p>	<p>The volunteers in the Ballyduff project found that the group worked well together. Everyone who got involved stayed involved and there was strong commitment to the project. They learned that a small, cohesive group of committed volunteers could make significant progress and could work just as well as a bigger group. They found that having a focused project, with seed funding over a 12-month period, with a clear beginning and end, was very beneficial. They noted the contact they had with Waterford County Council in the course of their work as being particularly positive.</p> <p>While it was intended that the project would be finalised by year end, they experienced some delays with regard to getting decisions on the ownership of the Carnegie Library and this resulted in creating a very tight time scale for the project. Had they realised earlier in the process that the ownership on the building was so unclear, they might have decided on a different project.</p> <p>Going forward into the future the group see themselves continuing on their journey towards completing the re-development work on the building and developing the nearby community field.</p>
<p><b>Craobh na gCumarach</b></p>	<p>The volunteers in the Connery’s project learned that a small start in terms of seed funding was all they needed in order to get their project off the ground. They also found that the money assisted in leveraging funding from other sources. There was great enjoyment in the singing classes and the Irish language groups, with people generally willing and able to participate. On the downside, the work on the project was impeded by poor weather and delays in acquiring insurance, which resulted in the timescale being very tight. They felt that with more time they could have got more people involved. In retrospect, the group would have spent more time planning the project at the outset and ensuring that everything was in place before starting.</p> <p>The experience on the project has opened the door to further local study of the area. Given that the group is an active branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, they intend pursuing the exploration of the history, place names and general Irish heritage of the locality. In addition they intend working on further landscaping of the site, installing an interpretive sign, completing the old stone wall and pursuing grant aid for the production of information brochures.</p>

<p><b>Crough Wood Project</b></p>	<p>The group working on the Crough Wood Project found that the three-quarter mile walk they created evolved beyond any of their expectations – “like uncovering a beautiful canvas”. The number of local people willing to volunteer their time on the project was very impressive in that it elicited great local support, including offers to help with the development and maintenance of the walk.</p> <p>The main problem they encountered in the course of the project was dealing with poor weather conditions, with heavy rain setting them back on more than one occasion. In retrospect, they would have started the project earlier in the year so as to make the most of any good weather. They found that the project was more costly than anticipated with the need to buy or hire a variety of equipment for the work and in fact had to supplement the €10,000 with other funds.</p> <p>The walk is now established and will be opened to the general public later in 2007 when all the environmental, health and safety issues have been fully addressed. For the future, the group hopes to involve local schools in labelling the trees in the wood, they hope to develop a website and to eventually extend the walk all the way up to Mahon Falls.</p>
<p><b>Portlaw</b></p>	<p>The experience of team work for the volunteers in Portlaw was very positive, with everyone working well in their own sub-groups and then linking in the bigger group. The volunteers felt the project went very well overall, thanks to the good team work, an excellent leader (host), the guaranteed funding and having a clear focus. In addition, there was great support for the project in the local community.</p> <p>Some aspects of the project proved difficult, not least the fact that the demands on them as volunteers to keep track of the finances and produce accounts to a standard required at professional level were onerous and a great responsibility. In retrospect the group could have done with more support and training on book-keeping skills, and they would have benefited in a practical way from using a cheque book to track expenditure. In addition, the cost of designing and producing the pack was much higher than expected, which placed an extra financial burden upon them.</p> <p>Through the process the group found that theirs was a much more ambitious project than originally anticipated and demanded more voluntary input, energy and funds than expected. However, they also found that excellent teamwork paid off in terms of achieving their goals. Given that this project has been successfully completed, for the future the group intend putting energy into developing the facilities in their local community hall.</p>

**Tramore  
Footsteps  
Project**

The volunteers in the Tramore project were pleased with their achievement of several successful walks in the summer, with the production of the 16-page walking map, and with the way the group had worked so well together in the process. They appreciated having the seed funding for the project as it relieved them of the worry of sourcing finance that can so often take time away from the core work to be done.

Similar to some of the other Volunteer Corps projects, the Tramore group found the timescale for the project difficult to manage, particularly given that they had some delays in getting started. Despite this, and the poor availability of volunteers during the summer holidays, they managed to complete all that they set out to do.

They found it was easier to get new volunteers for a specific, focused project. Many of these volunteers are willing to commit to further projects in the area. Looking to the future, the group intends, amongst other projects, producing and circulating 10,000 colour booklets promoting the local walks.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Volunteer Corps initiative was run over a relatively short period of time (1 year) and on a relatively small degree of funding, given the ultimate scale and output of the programme. As can be seen in section 2 of this report the programme generated great success in each of the five locations in which it was based. Through the process of this evaluation the feedback from those involved directly in the programme was overall extremely positive from many points of view. A tremendous amount of work was achieved by the groups, all on a voluntary basis and there will be lasting benefits to all five communities as a result. Reference was made by the groups to key factors which aided the success, including excellent teamwork, having a clear focus and target to work on, the designated funding, etc. All of these plus other factors were clearly beneficial in the process, including the enjoyment of working together on a common purpose which cannot be overlooked.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly this programme has been highly successful, but as in any successful story there are always lessons to be learned. On reflecting back over the year there are some factors which could have aided the effectiveness of the programme. For example:

- 1) For some projects the time scale of 1 year was tight and could usefully have been extended to aid full completion of the work.
- 2) With a longer time scale each group could have had adequate time to ensure best-fit between the funding and the actual project chosen.
- 3) Given the accounting responsibilities attached to the funding there would have been great benefit in providing more focused technical assistance and training to the groups on particular areas such as budgeting, financial management and accounting procedures.
- 4) Given the focus in the initiative on promoting social inclusion, it would have been beneficial to have generated more awareness of this concept among groups during the life of the programme.
- 5) Finally, for those groups that are continuing work following completion of the Volunteer Corps programme, it would be constructive for them to receive support on accessing further grant aid if needed.

**Appendix 1 Proposal to establish a Volunteer Corps in Co. Waterford**

**COUNTY WATERFORD COMMUNITY FORUM  
PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A VOLUNTEER CORPS IN COUNTY WATERFORD UNDER THE  
UMBRELLA OF COUNTY WATERFORD COMMUNITY FORUM**

14<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Steps to implementation of the proposal	Schedule
1. Establish one five-person Volunteer Corps in each of the five electoral areas: Kilmacthomas, Suir, Tramore, Dungarvan and Lismore	November 2005
2. Ask the Volunteer Corps to identify a suitable project	December 2005 & January 2006
3. Put the project to the host community group for agreement	December 2005 & January 2006
4. Get the Volunteer Corps and the group to agree timelines, goals, progress assessment and outcome analysis	December 2005 & January 2006
5. Submit a brief (4 or 5 pages) summary of the application to County Waterford Community Forum, showing items listed in 4 above and the level of seed funding required	by 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2006
6. A four-person evaluation team will jointly review the applications (2 members from Waterford LEADER Partnership and 2 from County Waterford Community Forum)	To 14 <sup>th</sup> February 2006
7. Seed funding will be agreed between the evaluation team and the Volunteer Corps	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2006
8. Monitoring of the projects will be jointly conducted by Waterford LEADER Partnership and County Waterford Community Forum	1 <sup>st</sup> March to 31 <sup>st</sup> October

9. A budget of €12,000 will be set aside for each project: to be funded €10,000 by the Volunteering Fund and €2,000 by Waterford LEADER Partnership	
10. Training will be provided by Waterford LEADER Partnership in support of the host groups and the Volunteer Corps	
11. Overall evaluation of the process will be done	November 2006
12. Final report to the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	December 2006

Signed on behalf of County Waterford Community Forum

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Oliver Coffey  
Chair, County Waterford Community Forum

Signed on behalf of Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd

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Jimmy Taaffe  
Manager, Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd

Date

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Appendix 2 Completed questionnaires from the Volunteer Corps projects

**BALLYDUFF UPPER COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**1) What did your volunteer project set out to do?**

To look at developing the Carnegie library into a comfortable suitable facility for the elderly and the Foróige youth group and as a training centre.

**2) What did your project achieve?**

We have achieved an agreed a purchase arrangement with Waterford County Council. Plans have been drawn for the development and full planning permission is due to be granted. Our architect is contracted to draw full plans to go to tender. Funding was applied for the project, to date we have been granted €20,000 from 'Waterford Capital Grants Scheme' and an offer of €100,000 from WLP. Further granting has been applied for.

**3) A representative person from the following 5 target groups was to be used to constitute the Volunteer Corps:**

- 1 young (18-25)
- 1 senior (retired or shortly to retire)
- 1 marginalised and socially excluded (a newcomer in our case)
- 1 business
- 1 volunteer, from the 'host' group.

Was this done? Yes  No  If not, why not?

**4) Was the project managed by yourselves?**

The project was designed by Waterford Community Forum and managed by ourselves but reported and documented to Waterford Community Forum.

**5) One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme relates to social inclusion. Based on your understanding of the concept, how did your project contribute to social inclusion?**

A review was undertaken by the group in deciding the project. The senior members and the youth are to be accommodated in this facility. It will also be wheelchair accessible with a lift to accommodate the two floors.

**6) Were there any difficulties/issues encountered during the course of running your project?**

The project was meant to be finalised by year end, we experienced some delays in getting decisions in regard to ownership. This as a result let us very tight in the time scale.

**7) Would you do anything differently if the project was to be repeated?**

We would like to have the funding allocated to the project rather than the project allocated to the fund.

**8) What are the key learning's from the process?**

Small groups like the 5 member group can make great progress as against groups with larger numbers.

**9) What training did you do as part of the Volunteer Corps process?**

We purchased a laptop and saved all correspondence and reports so that if members changed within the group all information would be available.

**10) What training needs do you have at this stage?**

We have not identified any training needs at this point, but availability of broadband would be an advantage to our group in order to be able to readily access information that we may require in the future.

**CRAOBH NA GCUMARACH**

**1) What did your Volunteer Corps project set out to do?**

To Establish a Local Heritage Awareness through:

- (a) Acquisition and stabilisation of the Connery's homestead site
- (b) A song project in 4 schools
- (c) Promotion of project through web-site and other media
- (d) Setting up of monthly adult singers gathering club

**2) What did your project achieve?**

The basic aims as set out above as well as creating community interest. It has created interest further development both at the Connery site and also for traditional singing.

**3) A representative person from the following 5 target groups was to be used to constitute the Volunteer Corps:**

- o 1 young (18-25)
- o 1 senior (retired or shortly to retire)
- o 1 marginalised and socially excluded
- o 1 business
- o 1 volunteer, from the 'host' group.

Was this done? Yes  No  If not, why not?

**4) Was the project designed and managed by the yourselves? Yes**

**5) One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme relates to social inclusion. Based on your understanding of the concept, how did your project contribute to social inclusion?**

No one was excluded and we actively encouraged the involvement of various individuals, both young and old.

**6) Were there any difficulties/issues encountered during the course of running your project? No**

**7) Would you do anything differently if the project was to be repeated? No**

**8) What are the key learnings from the process? The time schedule should not be so limited.**

**9) What training did you do as part of the Volunteer Corps process?**

Digging site under archaeologists supervision.  
Establishing and maintaining website

**10) What training needs do you have at this stage? None**

**CROUGH WOOD**

**1. What did your Volunteer Corps project set out to do?**

We set out to open a walk in Crough Wood, near to the Mahon River, as an amenity for the general public.

**2. What did your project achieve?**

The project achieved a walk approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long. It is now established and will be opened to the general public later in 2007 when all the environmental, health and safety issues have been fully addressed

**3. A representative person from the following 5 target groups was to be used to constitute the Volunteer Corps:**

- 1 young (18-25)
- 1 senior (retired or shortly to retire)
- 1 marginalised and socially excluded
- 1 business
- 1 volunteer, from the 'host' group.

Was this done? Yes  No  If not, why not?

**4. Was the project designed and managed by yourselves? Yes.**

**5. One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme relates to social inclusion. Based on your understanding of the concept, how did your project contribute to social inclusion?**

We believe that we met the criteria for social inclusion because we were able to bring together people from different backgrounds to achieve a goal. It not only encouraged people to join our group but showed us that we are more than capable of bringing new people on board.

**6. Were there any difficulties/issues encountered during the course of running your project?**

Our main problem with the project has been dealing with the weather. Heavy rain has set us back on more than one occasion.

**7. Would you do anything differently if the project were to be repeated?**

We would try to ensure that more work could be done when the weather was good. We would do this by trying to encourage more volunteers out on the good days to enable us to make the most of the weather.

**8. What are the key learning's from the process?**

We have learnt that projects such as ours help to unite our community. The more work we have done the more offers we have received to help with the maintenance of the walk. This in turn will lead to more contacts and volunteers for future projects in our area.

**9. What training did you do as part of the Volunteer Corps process?**

The training was very much on the job, learning to deal with issues as they arose. Good work practices, teamwork, decision making, health and safety (in particular regard to the equipment that was purchased for the work on the trees etc). These are all skills that can be put to excellent use in everyday life.

**10. What training needs do you have this stage?**

Currently we feel that we have no training needs at this time. Any that arise will be address to the best of our abilities as a group. If help is needed outside the group we will source the appropriate aid.

**PORTLAW COMMUNITY HALL**

**1) What did your Volunteer Corps project set out to do?**

To produce a DVD, Brochure Cover, Directory, map insert and a tourist information sign.

**2) What did your project achieve?**

An info pack, but not a tourist sign.

**3) A representative person from the following 5 target groups was to be used to constitute the Volunteer Corps:**

- o 1 young (18-25)
- o 1 senior (retired or shortly to retire)
- o 1 marginalised and socially excluded (a newcomer in our case)
- o 1 business
- o 1 volunteer, from the 'host' group.

Was this done? Yes  No  If not, why not?

**4) Was the project designed and managed by the yourselves?**

Yes, along with printers and film production team.

**5) One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme relates to social inclusion. Based on your understanding of the concept, how did your project contribute to social inclusion?**

Project included participation from Volunteer Corps team and host team. It could not have been completed with just 5 people. The project was directed towards newcomers and existing residents in the Portlaw community.

**6) Were there any difficulties/issues encountered during the course of running your project?**

Separate projects  
Time allocation was difficult  
Funding  
Timing

**7) Would you do anything differently if the project was to be repeated?**

Book keeping – better organised. The use of a cheque book would have been beneficial.

**8) What are the key learnings from the process?**

Excellent teamwork pays off.

**9) What training did you do as part of the Volunteer Corps process?**

A crash course on how to operate projector.

**10) What training needs do you have at this stage?**

Powerpoint presentation work with the aid of laptop and projector, but the project completed so this would be extra activity.

**TRAMORE DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

**1) What did your Volunteer Corps project set out to do?**

To plan and establish a fitness walking and strolling leadership programme.

To explore and rough map six to eight new walking routes in Tramore.

To encourage local people and visitors to enjoy walking in Tramore and improve their fitness levels.

**2) What did your project achieve?**

a. Walk leadership training undertaken

b. Establishing organised fitness walks throughout the summer from coastguard station

c. Organised walks from within town for visitors, five mornings a week for two months

d. Organising two happy heart walks and socials

e. Researching and developing walking route map

f. The finance has allowed us to have printed €10,000 copies of the 16-page booklet in full colour.

**3) A representative person from the following 5 target groups was to be used to constitute the Volunteer Corps:**

o 1 young (18-25)

o 1 senior (retired or shortly to retire)

o 1 marginalised and socially excluded

o 1 business

o 1 volunteer, from the 'host' group.

Was this done? Yes  No  If not, why not?

**4) Was the project designed and managed by the yourselves?**

The project was designed by ourselves. But when we reached the map design and production stage we employed a Tramore based Graphic Designer to work with us to produce the final 16-page walking route brochure.

**5) One of the key principles underpinning the Volunteer Corps programme relates to social inclusion. Based on your understanding of the concept, how did your project contribute to social inclusion?**

Our project was socially inclusive from the start from our choice of volunteers and also our concept of the project. People from all walks of life were encouraged to join in walking routes. All walks were disability friendly and families with children welcome. We also held a Wheels Walk open to people in wheelchairs and people with young children in prams and buggies.

**6) Were there any difficulties/issues encountered during the course of running your project?**

The start date was late thus giving us to tight a time frame for completion. Whereas we completed all we set out to do which included bringing the walking map to a rough finish. The careful management of our finance allowed us to pay for ten thousand full colour booklets which will not be ready to collect from the printers until mid Jan 2007.

**7) Would you do anything differently if the project was to be repeated? No.**

**8) What are the key learnings from the process?**

It is easier to get new volunteers for a specific project. A project that is financed doesn't carry the worries of sourcing finance that often takes time away from main concerns of the project. Also a way of sourcing new volunteers and making new friends.

**9) What training did you do as part of the Volunteer Corps process?**

Two volunteers took part in a weekend Walking Leaders Training Course organised by the Irish Heart Foundation. The skills and techniques learned on this course were passed on and demonstrated to other volunteer corps members and participants taking part in walking routes. Volunteer Corps members also completed a first aid course, thus enhancing safety of participants on walking routes.

**10) What training needs do you have at this stage?** None.

### Appendix 3 Format for facilitated evaluation session

#### Volunteer Corps – Evaluation Meeting Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 7-9pm – Clonea Hotel

- 7.00pm Welcome everyone and briefly explain the purpose of the meeting.  
Introductions – name and project.
- Explain the format for the evening.  
Handout copies of the statement of intent, aims & objectives of the Volunteer Corps programme  
Handout the write-up from the questionnaires.
- 7.10pm Split into small groups for 20 minutes – an opportunity to mix, network and share information. Appoint a notetaker.  
Key questions:
- Overall what did your project do during the Volunteer Corps programme?
  - What went well?
  - Anything that did not go well?
- 7.30pm Move people into their own project groups for 20 minutes:
- Briefly feedback what they found out about the other projects
  - Discuss and write up on flipchart:
    1. What, if anything you would do differently
    2. The main learnings for your project from the Volunteer Corps process
- 7.50pm Group feedback:
- One thing you found out about the other projects
  - What went well
  - What did not go well
  - What would be done differently
  - The main learnings from each project
- 8.40pm Brainstorm what people understand by social inclusion? How did the Volunteer Corps programme contribute to social inclusion?
- 8.55pm Any final comments?
- 9.00pm Close

#### Appendix 4 Completed questionnaires from (Jimmy Taaffe, Oliver Coffey)

##### EVALUATION TEMPLATE VOLUNTEER FUND

As you are aware the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has commissioned ERM Environmental Resources Management Ireland Ltd. to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Cohesion Programme by the successful recipients of cohesion and volunteer funds.

These Evaluation Templates should be completed for existing initiatives/programmes reflecting updates/progress made up to **31<sup>st</sup> December 2006**.

Jimmy Taaffe  
Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd.  
6<sup>th</sup> February 2007

<b>Organisation(s) Name:</b> Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd.
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**1) What have been the actions and progress to date on volunteering initiatives up to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006? Please state organisations involved in delivering and implementing these initiatives.**

The Volunteering Project was a joint initiative between County Waterford Community Forum, and WLP Ltd. The County Waterford Community Forum did out a detailed work breakdown for each of the five projects. These work breakdowns were agreed with each group by the Community Forum, and WLP Ltd.

As a result, the five projects have come in on target with specific actions, and achievements by the end of January 2007. While this is one month later than projected, for Community Based Activities, this is a good performance, as they are often dogged by wooliness, and lack of focus. The voluntary groups involved, and the Community Forum have performed admirably in this context.

**2) Please provide a brief description of the individual initiatives which have commenced and the projected number of population who have benefited/taken part to date? Please include any outcomes of the programmes.**

As stated above, five voluntary groups took part in the Volunteering Project. The County Waterford Community Forum is divided up into the five electoral areas. One Community Group was selected from each of the five electoral areas to participate in a volunteering project. The criteria for selection was that the group had to be totally voluntary, a member of the Community Forum, and be prepared to operate in a structured manner during the project, delivering on agreed targets, and goals. The track record of past performance was also important.

The groups were allowed to put forward projects that were relevant to their own area, as after all the overall remit of the project was to encourage voluntary endeavour in rural areas, and if your project is stipulated for you, it takes away the voluntary nature. The one stipulation each group had, was that they had to have a young person, an unemployed person, a refugee, an older person and one member of their committee as the Volunteer Corps.

As a result, all five projects have a different focus, but each has a focus relevant to its area of operation, and the promoting group. The five participant groups are:

- o Tramore Development Trust
- o Comeragh Development
- o Portlaw Community Hall
- o Craobh na gCumarach
- o Ballyduff Upper Community Council.

#### Tramore Development Trust

This project involved establishing walking routes around Tramore to encourage Healthy Heart activities the elder members of the Community, and exercise routines for young mothers in the Community.

The Project is community based, and involves the two different age groups in the Community. The group has stuck to its action plan, and completed the project. This project is social in nature, and focuses on a major health issue within the Community.

#### Comeragh Development

This project involved the development of a walk in the Comeragh Valley Area. This group's focus is environmental protection, as they organise the annual clean up of the Comeragh's every St. Patrick's day.

The group picked the development of a structured walk in the Comeragh's, near Lemybrien. The part of the walk that they were doing under the project is now complete. This project would fit into a rural tourism category.

#### Portlaw Community Hall

This project involved an education and information campaign to facilitate the integration of new members of the Community into the village of Portlaw.

The project arose from members of the Community realising that the number of new houses in Portlaw (over 100 new houses) in the last five years, meant that many newcomers to the village had no sense or knowledge of the place, and indeed had not been welcomed officially to the village.

The project involved bringing some of the newcomers in with some of the original residents to do an Information Booklet, and CD which would be distributed to the Community.

This project has proved extremely successful, and has completed its actions. This project is social in nature.

#### Craobh na gCumarach

This project involved the Comhaltas Group in Coolnasmear, near Dungarvan, where they decided to commence a project on the Connery brothers.

The project involved the marking out and development of the site of their birthplace, and a number of training sessions for young people in the music of the Conneries. The relevance of the project is that it underpins the training/teaching of up to 100 young people per year from the Dungarvan area in traditional music and dance.

This project is complete, and the project is cultural in nature.

Ballyduff Community Council

This project involved the preparation for the development of the Carnegie Library as a dual purpose centre for younger people, Foróige, and the Community Care which is over 65.

This project has succeeded in purchasing the Library from the County Council, getting Planning, and obtaining Grant aid. The Volunteering proposal has been completed and has been successful.

This project is social in nature.

**3) Extent of Draw down of funding?**

The €50,000 is fully drawn down.

**4) Total funding spent to date and on what programme/project/initiative?**

€50,000 has been invested in the five volunteering initiatives outlined above.

**5) Any issues or obstacles encountered to date?**

None, as the Community Forum, and the five selected groups have been totally professional in their dealings.

**6) Any other comments**

I realise that the activities of Community Fora throughout the Country are uneven. However, the above project has shown a relatively inexpensive mechanism to support voluntary activity at a local level. Each forum should be provided with an action budget of €100,000 to be invested by say the six best voluntary applications in any one year, i.e., €15,000 per group, with €10,000 for the forum to cover running costs.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

## EVALUATION TEMPLATE VOLUNTEER FUND

As you are aware the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has commissioned ERM Environmental Resources Management Ireland Ltd. to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the Cohesion Programme by the successful recipients of cohesion and volunteer funds.

These Evaluation Templates should be completed for existing initiatives/programmes reflecting updates/progress made up to **31<sup>st</sup> December 2006**.

Oliver Coffey  
Chair County Waterford Community Forum  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2007

<b>Organisation(s) Name:</b> County Waterford Community Forum
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**1) What have been the actions and progress to date on volunteering initiatives up to 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006. Please state organisations involved in delivering and implementing these initiatives.**

Community Forum and Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd. The Volunteer Corps Projects are:

- Comeragh Development Group
- Ballyduff Upper Community Council
- Tramore Development Trust
- Portlaw Community Hall
- Craobh na gCumarach Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann

**2) Please provide a brief description of the individual initiatives which have commenced and the projected number of population who have benefited/taken part to date? Please include any outcomes of the programmes.**

- Comeragh Development Group – Rural Walk
- Ballyduff Upper Community Council – Development of old Library
- Tramore Development Trust – Walk way/walking map in Tramore
- Portlaw Community Hall – Information Pack on Portlaw
- Craobh na gCumarach Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann – Promotion of Irish culture in schools, research of Connery Homestead in Bohadoon.

**3) Extent of Draw down of funding?**

Total funding of €50,000 was drawn down-€10,000 per group was drawn down in four stages by each group:

- 2x €3000
- 2x €2000

**4) Total funding spent to date and on what programme/project/initiative?**

€50,000 from Dept of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and €10,000 from Waterford LEADER Partnership Ltd. for training.

**5) Any issues or obstacles encountered to date?**

The Volunteers Corps 2006 worked very well for the groups involved. The only problem was that for some of the projects the outdoor work was delayed due to the bad weather from October – November.

**6) Any other comments/recommendations**

The money was very important in getting the groups started.

It is very important for County Waterford Community Forum that the Volunteer Corps is rolled out again in the County in 2007 with the same conditions as 2006 applied.

Criteria for 2007 initiative would need to have a greater emphasis on selecting projects that have a specific focus on involving those that may not be involved in their communities.

Greater emphasis on training for the Volunteer Corps groups if it is to be repeated in 2007.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**