

Sustainability Plan – Waterville/ Ballinskelligs/ Inny Valley Catchments

Community Consultation, 1st on-line meeting, 16th July 2020.

Summary of breakout room discussions.

General comments:

- Presentation was very comprehensive, it gives a good picture of the elements that may be having an impact on water quality, and their location,
- Can impact of golf courses on environment be assessed?
- Other comments that Hogs Head Golf Course is not an issue as it is not in the catchments,
- There may have been issues regarding the Mink Farm in the past, but it is operating to a high standard now,
- Streams need to be cared for/ cleaned/ re-gravelled, they are silting and overgrowing, inhibiting fish spawning, This has only been done about three times in the past forty years. Refer to Dr Ken Whelan's report.
- "The flood of 2017 was frightening, but why is the flow out of Lough Currane so slow? What's happening?
- Big change in water quality jumped in 2017? Why did it change so much. Severe weather?
- Interesting to see how SC changing, land-use changes,
- Shows the complexity of a catchment , different types changing may be impacting water quality,
- Important to look at the catchment as a whole, effects downstream Vs upstream,
- Water quality changes happened quickly so can hopefully be resolved as quickly,
- Improvements should resulting an increase in water quality,
- Sustainable development necessary: the three-legged stool of economic, social and environmental development
- Surprise that Ballinskelligs beach has such a high status given the absence of a sewage treatment plant, it was suggested that a reed bed system would be a solution to ensuring high quality water remains high for the future of the area,
- HOPE

Breakout Room Questions:

1. What do the catchments mean to you/ to the communities?
2. What are the untapped, or underdeveloped key assets?

Feedback:

- Water quality
 - This is essential – we need / depend on good water quality, "The water quality has to be got right",
 - It's distressing to see the decline in water quality, especially in this area, which has a low population density,
- Connectivity
 - There seems to be a lack of awareness of the connectivity between the factors mentioned in Niall's presentation. It would be interesting to know if people are aware,

- Sense of Place
 - folkloric, historic – interconnectedness. It would be hugely beneficial to make people aware of this – especially younger people. Incredibly rich set of heritage resources,
 - Storytelling – the story of Uíbh Ráthach is not widely known; it's moving and must be woven in, giving us a stronger sense of place and underpin conservation and economic development. The stories are there for the telling; we have the assets,
 - There is a culture and heritage attached to the River,
 - Preservation of the language and pools in the river tell a story of the social history, it's a special place,
 - Enriches our appreciation , sense of place, helps understand what has gone before us, association with where you are in the catchment, we all live in catchments and should have a connection with them,

- Tourism
 - River walks – open up the rivers for enable the telling of the stories. Engage with farmers and work with them to open-up access and enable education to happen,
 - Is there potential for a walk around Lough Currane,
 - There is potential for routes along the old road in the Inny Valley,
 - Potential for water sports/ leisure activities, kayaking,
 - Hostel could be used more,

- Fishing and Maintenance of Streams
 - Some streams require urgent attention,
 - Everyone will benefit with good fishing for sea trout,
 - Angling club maintains streams, but since fishing went out interest is down,
 - Govt gives a grant to re-drain on the farm, follow up to repair the damage done to the stream,
 - Streams are not in good condition, priority streams from Ken Wheelan report, re-gravel every year, no machines required, just manpower,
 - From 42 boatmen to 12 - golf is good but they are gone, fishermen are a repeat business,
 - Install a cell trap (slow down water),

- Farming
 - Farming on both sides on the Inny, part of our life, part of heritage and culture and sense of place,
 - Numbers are lower in farming sheep and cattle, farmers are wiped out,
 - An issue is that landowners need to protect their banks,

Recommendations:

- 🚧 Need to increase people's awareness of the interconnectedness. Awareness-raising is a prerequisite to positive action. Current awareness is inclined to be superficial. Need to embrace the complexity. Therefore, we need to communicate this effectively and simply,
- 🚧 Education on how we manage the water. People are not damaging the water intentionally,
- 🚧 Discussion groups and this forum are vital,
- 🚧 Maintain the streams regularly,
- 🚧 Provide information sessions for farmers and landowners regarding the best way of undertaking work on streams, drains etc.