

DUNMANWAY

THIS IS A GREAT TOWN.



A Civic Pride Project.

BY FIONA HAYES in collaboration with Dunmanway Chamber of Commerce and Dunmanway Community Council. July/August 2021.

20/09/2021

Introduction

This project is a civic pride project aimed at increasing positivity within the local community and increasing awareness of all that is truly great within the existing framework of the community. It is not controversial to note that rural communities and market towns have changed dramatically in the last 50 years and with that change, opinions and perceptions of these once energetic spaces have also altered. It is easy to overlook all that is great about your civic space, and coming out of covid restrictions seemed the perfect opportunity to attempt to re-introduce the community to the bounty of GREAT amenities and resources that Dunmanway has to offer.

Far way fields may seem greener, but this is not always the case.

Attracting the Audience

In order to create positive thought within the community about the community, signs were prepared stating 'THIS IS A GREAT TOWN' and installed at the entrances to the town.

The initial more obvious answers were collected by the chamber of commerce through local engagement and general feedback from the question ‘WHY IS THIS A GREAT TOWN?’



Followed by

WHY IS THIS A GREAT TOWN



Followed by the answers at the installation sites, the square, the library and the Coach road Green.



This phase of the project has ended and the installation has been taken down.



Engaging with the community

Further answers were sought

With continuing covid restrictions social distancing methods of engagement were sought. It was hoped all age groups would interact. A sign with a quick response code was generated and linked to the Chamber of Commerce Facebook page for the tech savvy. A post box was set up in the library for the not so tech savvy, and the schools were approached via art based feedback was encouraged.



The community were asked for the deeper and more meaningful reasons as to why they thought that 'THIS IS A GREAT TOWN' in response to the installation. Here are a few responses from the QR CODE signs at the installation sites.





Media and Social media coverage

The project was covered by TV3, County Sound Radio, The Bandon Opinion, The Southern Star, The Evening Echo, Echo live and Fanlobbus parish.

<https://play.acast.com/s/c103/civicprideindunmanway-patriciachattingwithfionahayes-corktoday>

<https://twitter.com/virginmedianews/status/1411388017093189637?s=10>

<https://www.facebook.com/dunmanway.ie/videos/1009900353149299>

<https://www.facebook.com/dunmanway.ie/posts/10159323264229866>

<https://www.echolive.ie/corklives/arid-40341131.html>



Thank you to Paul Byrne and Virgin Media News for featuring Dunmanway on this evening's news. Dunmanway is a GREAT town 🌟🌟🌟🌟...



Dunmanway - This is a GREAT town

Stills from Tv3 and An interview as part of the Sunday Service at St Marys Church of Ireland, broadcast on a large screen during the Sunday service... My personal favourite.



Photograph by Flash photography studio.



Engaging with the schools

The Chamber approached the schools with the question ‘WHY IS THIS A GREAT TOWN’ and this phase is currently ongoing, so far there has been great feedback from the younger generation .

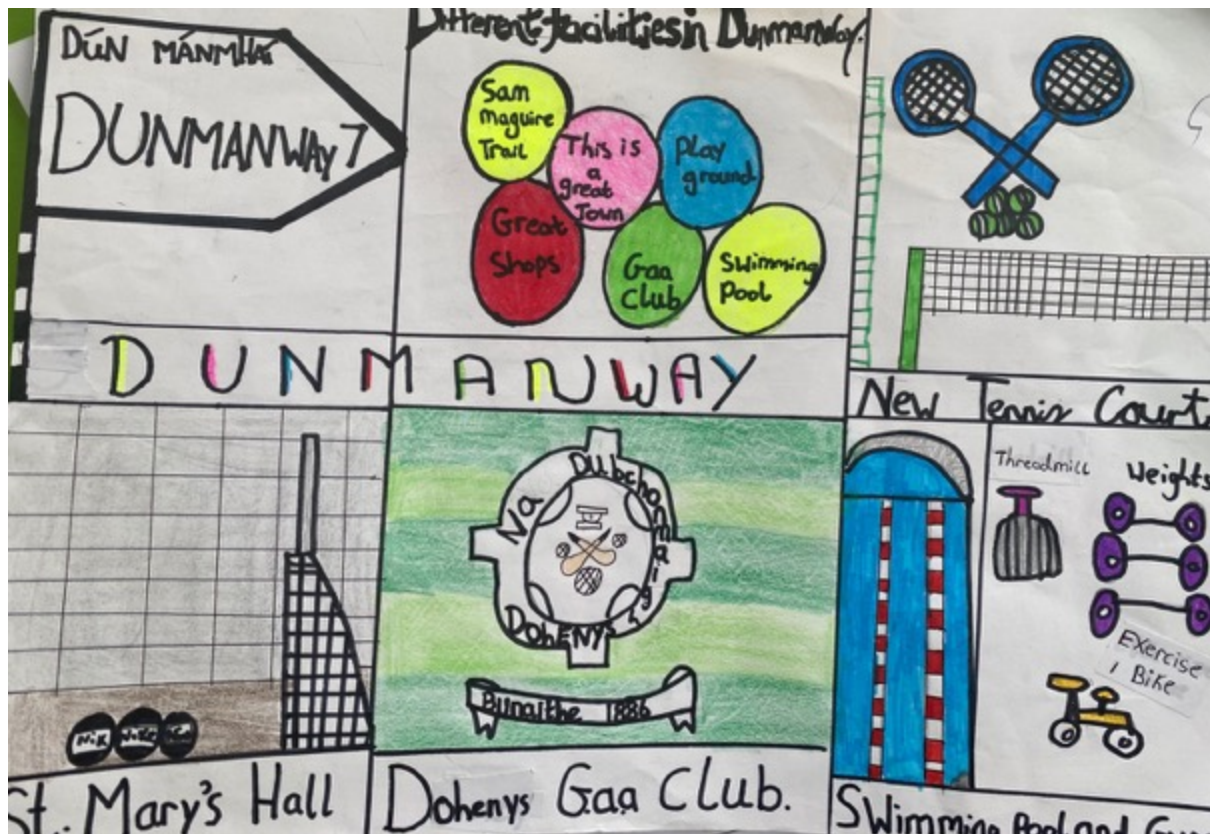
OUR GREAT TOWN.

By Aron Donegan, age 11, Kilnadur National school.

Dunmanway is a great town
Up town to Centra
Never sad in our great town
Make a frown go upside
down in our great town
A massive pitch you will love
Nothing bad in our great town
Would you come here?
Awesome town Dunmanway
You will have great fun in our great town.



Interactive storyboard by 6th class St Marys Girls school.



The Findings

The project was very well received and there was a great response locally. It has created deep and meaningful conversation around the fabric of the town. Positive thought has definitely been generated, this is not something that can be easily quantified but there is an overwhelming consensus that this is the case, based on local interaction and conversation. It is very encouraging to note that the junior school children are very positive about their great town and there will be an Art exhibition in the coming months to showcase their feedback. As the school children hold the future of the town in their grasp it is encouraging to note the fantastic POSITIVE response to the directed question WHY IS THIS A GREAT TOWN.

Conclusion...Future of the project,

I recently had a meeting with Aine Crowley at Create Ireland and it is hoped this project is the starting point for engagement and deep dialogue with ALL organisations within Dunmanway. That the conversation can commence regarding the decline of rural market towns but also their recreation in this new era as GREAT civic spaces. That these once energetic places can be reborn amidst community positivity and hope for the future, and that the wider community can be activated to engage. That positivity can be ignited and that time, and thought, the invisible materials in this project will give support to further action and negate any past negative profile.

WHAT DOES DUNMANWAY NEED

LETS CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Artist's project shows pride in her hometown of Dunmanway

DUNMANWAY artist and businesswoman Fiona Hayes has launched a civic pride project called 'This Is A Great Town' to spread joy and positivity about her home town.

As we slowly emerge from covid restrictions, she wants people to have a reason to smile and take pride in their surroundings.

Ms Hayes is a fourth year bachelor of visual art student at Bava Sherkin, an outreach level eight degree course managed and delivered by TU Dublin, Sherkin Island Development and in collaboration with the West Cork Arts Centre.

With the support of programme chair, Dr Glen Loughran, lecturer and artist Jesse Jones and facilitator local artist Majella O'Neill Collins, Fiona set about creating a project with a focus on the meaning of place and its people, through socially engaged practice.

She collaborated with the local community council and Chamber of Commerce to create the project, which highlights what is great about the town through a number of positive statements.

In phase one, an initial call out for submissions was



Showing off their 'great town' are Dunmanway locals Grace O'Donovan, Ethan Kelly, Teo Kelly, Jacob Cronin, George Cronin, Ella Kingston, Ella O'Donovan and Harry Cronin. (Photo: Flash Studio)

shared among the local community to answer one question: 'Why is Dunmanway a great town?' and the response was phenomenal, she said.

'I'm delighted with the enthusiasm that this project has generated. My hope is to encourage deep and meaningful conversation around all the fantastic things that Dunman-

way has to offer,' added Fiona.

Phase two will dig deeper in search of more defined and specific answers, inviting both young and old to share their thoughts on what is great about Dunmanway.

Signs sponsored by the local business community are placed throughout the West Cork town displaying the ini-

tial set of replies from people in the community on why they feel Dunmanway is a great town. Replies include 'heart of West Cork', 'amazing community spirit', 'award-winning schools', 'great place to raise a family' and 'inclusive society', to name just a few.

Fiona said: 'The last 50 years has seen a dramatic

change in many market towns across Ireland. It is easy to forget or overlook what is truly great about these towns. This project aims to highlight the smaller more important values that are often taken for granted when evaluating a space and celebrate the everyday amenities and offerings that make our town great.'

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