

**Proposed Feasibility Report and
Conceptual Plan for the Possible Development
of a New Village Centre for Glenealy Village**

Client: Mr John Kinsella

**Date: November 2014
(Amended 2021)**



FOREWORD

This report is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying proposed Conceptual Plan Drawing attached to the end of this report.

The lands contained in the Conceptual Plan and referred to in this report are lands owned by our Client, Mr Kinsella. Additional lands outside of the proposed Village Centre study area are included to give an overall Masterplan on how the Village could develop in the long term/ distant future. These lands are also in Mr Kinsella's ownership and have been included to show further possible uses that are compatible with proposed uses for the Village Centre.

Proposed uses, activities, services, facilities, redevelopment and gateways are followed by a reference which corresponds to the same reference on the proposed Conceptual Plan and indicates the possible location of each.

Please note that all of the images included in this report are for illustrative purposes only. These images have been obtained from the internet and are neither the property of this office or actual proposals for the Conceptual Plan. They are merely a tool to convey a certain type of development, an atmosphere or idea.

Please also note that this is only intended as a conceptual idea and is in no way intended as a proper developed scheme. Proposed buildings and uses may be suited to other locations. The buildings and usages are only indicative of the type of activities that may suit the area. Any of the proposals could be swapped for other activities that may be more suited to a village centre setting to retain the uniqueness of Glenealy.

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INTRODUCTION

This report had been prepared on behalf of our client, Mr Kinsella, in support of possible future proposals for the development of Glenealy Village.

Over the years Glenealy has seen the decline in commercial based facilities and this has led to the loss of a village centre or heart to the village. The village has lost a hotel, bar, several shops and the train station and little has been done to entice such commercial ventures back into the village. At present the village is sprawled in a linear line along the main Rathdrum Road. This road dissects the village and reinforces the idea that there is no apparent village centre.

As noted in the Glenealy Village Design Statement (VDS), *“Glenealy has a distinctive and diverse character which is highly valued by its local residents. Any change brought about by future growth needs to be positively managed so that the unique qualities that contribute to the village’s distinctive identity can be protected and enhanced.”*

This report and subsequent Conceptual Plan strives to use this statement as the key driving force behind any proposals and various sections of the VDS will be referred to throughout.



PURPOSE OF VILLAGE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Our client acquired a substantial section of additional lands within Glenealy. Having been an employer in the village for many years Mr Kinsella is no stranger to the problems facing Glenealy due to the sprawling nature of the village and lack of basic facilities. Even before the acquisition of additional lands our client has been actively seeking ways of improving the village as a whole and now hopes that this land could be the vehicle in which to do so. By proposing to create a Village Centre, it is hoped that Glenealy will be provided with a much-needed heart and sense of place.

Prior reports have discussed the sporadic nature of the Glenealy and have looked into how improvements such as landscaping and street furniture/ signage etc could be used to develop a brand for the village. The acquisition of land in a prime location together with lands previously owned could offer a more substantial method of developing the village for its inhabitants to allow it to thrive and hopefully ensuring its future as a viable village and growth area.

While this report discusses a concept plan for the proposal of a Village Centre for Glenealy, it is important to note that it is only a conceptual plan and is intended for discussion purposes only, to initiate dialogue. It is not the intention to incorporate or develop existing reports or recommendations at this stage. It does however take aspects of the VDS into consideration. The purpose of the report was to investigate the possibility of pulling all the disparate sections of the village together in the form of a masterplan and provide a heart and village centre. It is hoped that this conceptual masterplan will facilitate discussions with the Wicklow Council Forward Planning Department and Wicklow Rural Partnership as well as locals, property owners, business owners, potential developers and other stakeholders to identify aspirations and development that could allow Glenealy to become a growth area in the future. While proposals have taken on board many aspects of the village it does not take into account detailed design at this stage nor has it investigated proposed usages in depth. However, many of the proposed facilities and services have been listed as services requested in the VDS.

Keys areas noted in the VDS are that there is a *“good community spirit which could be strengthened with greater provision of basic facilities such as a post office, supermarket, health centre, crèche etc and improved facilities for children and teenagers as well as tackling the lack of public transport.”*

GOAL OF VILLAGE CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The goal of the Conceptual Plan is to establish a core area of the community with key civic, residential, and commercial uses. It is hoped that this area will incorporate essential elements of traditional village character such as historic architectural styles, a common or village green, buildings close to the street, parking on the street and behind the buildings, an attractive streetscape, an intimate pedestrian atmosphere, and a mixed-use environment. It is also hoped that it will be a place where people can grab a bite to eat, make a variety of stops for business and pleasure, and converse and socialise with friends and acquaintances.

Glenealy has good potential for a variety of future development opportunities including residential (mixed-income rental and ownership), commercial, light industrial, medical and personal service, educational and civic uses. Opportunities for a farmers / artisan market and cottage industry could be created and we also believe that the village can expand and incorporate the concepts of the Ballinagran Project by integrating an ecovillage within the new village centre. This could create further business through tourism and tap into the sustainable product/ concept industry.

It is envisaged that public and private development will be required as an integral part of the Conceptual Plan to provide the needed framework to advance the following goals:

- **Develop the Village Centre as a mixed-use centre which links new and existing services and facilities, landmarks and buildings.**
- **Rehabilitate important structures and buildings and services (some of which are historic).**
- **Develop housing types for various income and age groups.**
- **Provide opportunities for new business development that support local entrepreneurship and create high-quality jobs.**
- **Provide specific commercial and retail operations desired by the community.**
- **Create tourism opportunities and establish public transport links.**

LOCATION FOR PROPOSED VILLAGE CENTRE

To facilitate the establishment and development of a new Village Centre the Conceptual Plan is based mainly on the area centrally located along the main route through Glenealy adjacent to the main residential areas, school and the former Kerry Foods factory. The area is also located close to the former Glenealy Railway Station. As our client is also in possession of the land containing the station there is a possible opportunity of reopening the former station. This could bring numerous benefits for the village making it a commuter area.



Based on the location and connection to existing facilities we believe this area has much potential to serve as the civic and mixed-use centre for Glenealy. The location of the land will facilitate development within the village boundary therefore discouraging further ribbon development. Discouraging further ribbon development is a key concern within the VDS.

Mr Kinsella owns further lands to the south i.e. the lands indicated as Ballinacoola. These lands are included in this report as they represent an area for possible development that may benefit the village as a whole and compliment other proposed uses.

DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE VILLAGE CENTRE

A reoccurring statement throughout the VDS is that the locals place utmost importance on the openness, green areas/ forest walks and rustic image of the village.

“The ribbon nature of Glenealy and the bends in the road prelude views of the whole village at once from the main road giving instead a sequential view of the village. This combined with the dramatic wooded hillsides and open lower slopes is an impressive setting to the village and creates a predominantly rural feeling when travelling through the village.”

The VDS calls for the development of a Community Park in what is considered the centre of the village at present. This Conceptual Plan seeks to expand on a Community Park by not only incorporating the woodland opposite Kane’s Pub but to actually place the New Village Centre within a proposed larger park.

For these reasons the concept for the future development of a Village Centre is based on a village common/ green idea with an extension of the woodlands/ forestry into and around any new proposals, therefore recreating the rural feeling that defines Glenealy.

IN ESSENCE THE CONCEPT IS FOR A VILLAGE IN A PARK.



Rural village centres are characterised by compact mixed-use settlement patterns, a community focus (such as a town common or green), traditional architectural design, and pedestrian (rather than emphasis on cars) orientation. They offer basic employment, services, and shopping for their residents as well as for those living in the surrounding lower-density rural areas. Rural village centres also provide civic facilities and activities for social interactions. At present Glenealy does not have a “main street” or Village Centre that is supported by the activities noted above.

Therefore the main design principals of the Conceptual Plan focus on the following:

- **Village in a Park**
- **Creating Vistas and Gateways**
- **Pedestrian Orientation**
- **Outdoor Activities**
- **Mixed Uses, New Land Development and Infill**
- **Building Redevelopment and Reuse**
- **Public Transport Links, Road Network, Pathways, Trails and Cycle Routes.**

DESIGN PRINCIPALS

Village in the Park

Central to the main concept is the relationship of the proposed Village Centre to the woodlands and pockets of open space and greenery within the village and surrounding areas. It is proposed that the Village Centre will be an extension of the woodlands and that the heart of the centre will be a village green/ park with a possible pond. Proposed mixed usages will integrate into the park providing a mixture of soft and hard landscaped areas, creating character and a uniqueness and brand for the village.

Buildings should respect the existing built fabric, architectural details and characteristic features of the village to create a unified identity for Glenealy.



Creating Vistas and Gateways

Village centres should be visually distinct from surrounding landscapes. They should create a sense of arrival on approaching the centre. However traveling through Glenealy there is nothing to announce the core area or village centre. This visual issue needs to be addressed through a combination of attractive gateway treatments, infill buildings and existing building renovations with traditional village design and architecture, formal streetscape improvements such as interconnecting walkways, street trees, cycle paths, and lighting etc.

While this report has not gone into detail regarding gateways at the extensive ends of the village it does suggest locations for prominent gateways announcing the village core at particular strategic points.

- **Gateway 1 (G1)** The grounds of the Church and Old School could be developed to provide an important gateway through possible appropriate signage on new stone walls and planters. This could create a sense of arrival approaching from Glenealy.
- **Gateway 2 (G2)** The Gatelodge opposite Kane's Pub could be developed into a café/bistro and signage used to announce the entrance to the Park from this direction.
- **Gateway 3 (G3)** The area beside the existing Kerry Foods Factory area will form the main entrance to the Village Centre/ Park. This could have formal gates and possible railings.

- **Gateway 4 (G4)** The intersection of the proposed relocated GAA grounds, proposed new Village Centre and existing Railway Station will form the gateway to the Village Centre on approach from the Rathdrum side. A sculpture, for example, could announce the entrance from this section. This could be anything from a sculpture depicting an historic event such as St Kevin and the establishment of the monastery at Kilnamanagh through to a modern piece depicting a sense of community etc.



Pedestrian Orientation

A key characteristic of the concept is that the village centre is pedestrian-oriented and that a reasonable number of homes (representing the primary users) are within walking distance of the centre in order for it to be successful. This is one of the many advantages of the location of the proposed Village Centre in that it will be adjacent to the main residential areas and within walking distance of the majority of all residential developments. Any proposed pedestrian heart will spill out to the surrounding areas allowing links to the existing woodlands and walks further afield and permitting the pedestrian opportunities to filter through the many suggested uses for the Village Centre. Pedestrian circulation and safety are important features of the design.



Outdoor Activities

We believe outdoor uses are very important to attracting residents and visitors to any Village Centre. While this would include formal areas such as the village green and park, other suggested activities could be useful. Proposals for outdoor retail displays, outdoor dining, vendors, entertainment and farmers' markets are proposed along the main core of the village green. While external areas for seating for cafés/ restaurants could generate new business and encourage additional pedestrian traffic, give identity and vitality to the Village Centre, serve as a special attraction, and enhance the aesthetic value of community life.



Mixed Uses, New Land Development and Infill

The long-term viability of the village is dependent on the expansion and flexibility of commercial, professional, light industrial, and residential uses. A combination of uses including retail, food and entertainment, professional services, light manufacturing and trades, recreational, cultural, and governmental will need to be catered for if the Village Centre is to become a “place of necessity” for residents and an attraction for visitors and prospective investors.

We have suggested a variety of mixed uses and development potential for the conceptual plan. Again, we would like to point out that these uses are suggested here for discussion purposes and would require further investigation into the feasibility of such uses specifically for Glenealy. Requested specific services as requested in the VDS are noted when they appear as suggested services. Each service is numbered on the Conceptual Plan prefixed with MU for Mixed Use. Suggested uses include the following:

- **Medical Arts Health and Wellness Centre (Health Centre and Chemist listed in VDS) MU1**

It is noted in the VDS that the elderly residents would particularly benefit from the provision of local health facilities. With the opening of the new Health Centre in Wicklow Town we believe that any sizable health centre would now be unfeasible. However the health and wellness industry could be a potential primary employer and service provider in plans for growth and expansion. Suggested activities could include a gymnasium, spa, yoga/ dance studio, vein and laser therapy, dentistry, alternative medicine, nutrition counseling, laboratory services, pharmacy etc.



- **Light Retail and Commercial Centre (Listed in VDS) MU2**

Units to support key services such as clothes/shoe shops, hairdresser, bakery, bookshop, charity shops, eateries etc.



- **Historic Centre, Arts and Entertainment Centre (Listed in VDS) MU3**

The Village Centre could be recognised as a high-quality district for the arts, entertainment, and history that becomes the hub for local cultural activities. The Village Centre could become the site of mixed venues and support services for art exhibits, shows and entertainment. These activities could spill out onto outdoor spaces as previously discussed. A cultural centre has been included possibly containing a gallery, dance studio, hall, drama group spaces etc.



- **Civic buildings – Library MU4**

The conceptual Plan allows for a new library set in the park. This links in with the proposed playground and proposed café culture. There are other opportunities for further civic/ government buildings within the scheme.



- **Protected Playground (Listed in the VDS) MU5**

A protected playground has been located at the main entrance to the Village Centre/ Park. This will connect with the proposed library and be close to proposed shops/ café/ eateries as well as linking to a walk through the park to the existing woodlands at the existing Gatelodge and various other routes.



- **Farmer’s Market/ Artisan Market MU6**

A farmers market could bring in trade to the village centre. It would allow locals and visitors the chance to purchase fresh, local fruit, vegetables, meats, dairy, breads, pastries and cheeses direct from the growers and farmers.

Artisan Markets feature gifts and handmade pieces including ceramics, jewellery, hats, handbags, cosmetics, children’s toys, soft furnishings, candles, paintings, photographs, baskets, clothing and costumes, accessories, haberdashery, mirrors, pottery and antiques etc. It is a chance to experience a versatile outdoor galley showing a wide range of functional art and design items. Artists personally display and sell only their own original creations. It is a chance to purchase a unique item but also provides an opportunity to speak with the artist themselves and experience demonstrations.



- **Cottage Industry MU7**

Both of the above mentioned markets could tie in with the cottage industry theme whereby artists, niche producers, crafts persons etc could be in permanent residence in cottage style units, producing, displaying and teaching their work. This would be centrally located within the Village Centre/Park and link in with other mixed uses.



The concept plan illustrates a series of small to moderate-sized buildings that would be used for light industrial and trades. These buildings could primarily serve as a business incubator to create employment opportunities for local residents.

- **Sheltered/ Independent Living Units for the Elderly MU8**

Another important factor in the development of the Conceptual Plan is the inclusion and integrating of the older generation of both existing and future residents. For this reason a nursing home has been located in the heart of the Village Centre/ Park with additional individual units for independent living serviced by the nursing home. Integrating these units within the actual village centre allows residents the opportunity to experience village life without having to travel. The majority of amenities will be on their doorstep.



- **Bowling Club and Green MU9**

A bowling green and club building has also been incorporated close to the nursing home. The individual units will have small self-contained gardens while the nursing home itself will be in landscaped grounds. The home and independent units will connect directly to the village core and woodlands trails allowing residents to take advantage of all the amenities on offer while feeling part of the wider community.



- **Crèche (Listed in the VDS) MU10**

A crèche has been located close to the existing wooded area of the proposed park. The children could avail of woodlands walks and be brought to the library on foot.



- **Traditional Neighbourhoods MU11**

The Conceptual Plan incorporates a series of infill housing and small neighbourhoods that are laid out to connect with existing and proposed new infrastructure, the proposed Village Centre and woodland park concept. Development includes a variety of housing types to meet the income and age demands of the community today and in the future. Traditional neighbourhoods are characterised by smaller house plots with the dwellings placed closer to the pathways, tree-lined streets and links and common open space. The concept plan integrates these neighbourhoods into the core area through roadway, walkways and trails and cycle way connections. These new and existing “village neighbourhoods” will serve as the primary market for the Village Centre. As part of the Conceptual Plan additional residential development has been included in lands outside the Village Centre study area to show how these could be linked into the core area of the Centre to allow Glenealy to become a growth area in the future. Again, these areas and the location of such are only indicative

At present there is no publicly owned land for affordable or social housing in the village, the provision of which is set out under Part V of the Planning & Development Act. Social and affordable housing will form an important part of the proposed residential areas and neighbourhoods.



- **Ecovillage MU12**

Based on the present interest around sustainability and the close proximity of Glenealy and possible connections to the Ballyinagran Project an Ecovillage has been incorporated into the design. The idea is that the Ecovillage will be self sufficient and act as a working/ learning/ teaching environment.



- **Garden Centre and Allotments MU 13**

As part of the self sufficient idea the Ecovillage could incorporate allotments. A possible garden centre could use products from the Ecovillage to create further retail opportunities.



- **Campsite MU14**

A campsite has been incorporated into the Ecovillage as part of the overall concept which could bring tourism into the centre. It offers another type of accommodation which will be integrated with the surrounding woodlands, lake, walks etc and a chance to try out life within an Ecovillage, if interested. Alternative camping ideas such as tree houses could set it apart and pull in tourism due to a unique/ niche market.



- **Educational Centre MU15**

An educational centre/ shop is located within the Ecovillage which could serve as an interpretative centre, educating others as to the workings of an Ecovillage.



- **Holidays Homes/ Cabins MU16**

These units could be connected to the hotel therefore offering different types of accommodation.



- **Centre of Excellence for Cycling MU17**

Opportunity to pull tourism into Glenealy via the Enduro by providing a Centre of Excellence for Biking. In turn this could be connected to an Outdoor Pursuits Centre linking the village centre to the Carrick Mountain. Overnight residential stays could be provided, therefore creating many opportunities for ancillary shops and facilities.



- **Petrol filling Station/ Car Showroom/ Small Supermarket (Petrol Station listed in the VDS) MU18**

A proposal has been included to provide a petrol station/ small supermarket / car showroom on the site of the school if it ever came up for relocation and it was viable to locate it into the core of the Village Centre. These services would be located on the main route through Glenealy and could pull in passing trade.



- **Solar Farm MU19**

In keeping with the Ecovillage and possible connections to the Ballinagran Project a Solar Farm has been included on the opposite side of the railway lines. Depending on planning laws and viability this farm could possibly power the proposed new Village Centre.

(An alternative or supplementary use could be a Willow Farm. Bioenergy has the potential to make a significant contribution to Ireland's 2020 targets for renewables.)



Building Redevelopment, and Reuse

Also central to the concept is the redevelopment of a few of the village's historic buildings. Areas included in this section are marked on the Conceptual Plan as BR. Proposals include the following;

- **Reopening of Glenealy Railway Station (Better public transport facilities are noted in the VDS) BR1**

As mentioned previously, proposals could be put in place for the reopening of the Railway Station which could generate potential tourism, open up Glenealy to commuters as well as benefiting potential job creation and need for housing. Car parking will be included within this part of the scheme and a possible alternative exit route could be facilitated. Commuters proceeding on foot will be in the proposed Village Centre in minutes.

- **Glencarrig Hotel, Ballyfree BR2**

There is evidence that a hotel existed within the subject site in the 1900s. There are no places of accommodation listed for Glenealy on any tourism sites. Glenealy lacks any facility of this sort and the only existing public house has limited opening hours. Proposals include the rebuilding of a modest size hotel on the grounds of the former Glencarrig Hotel site. The hotel will connect to the Village Centre/ Park through landscaped walkways.



- **New Purpose Built School BR3**

There is also the possibility that the existing school could be relocated to the core of the Village Centre should the school come up for redevelopment. This could secure the future of the school in the long term with opportunities for growth or a possible campus incorporating a secondary school, complete with a secure environment, playing fields and parking, which the current school lacks at present.



- **Gatelodge BR4**

Turning the existing Gatelodge building at the entrance to the existing woodland area into a coffee shop/ bistro will create a gateway to the new development and create a sense of arrival in this location.

- **Kerry Foods Factory**

It is hoped that the former Kerry Foods factory will be re-opened as a factory, retail or further enterprise venture. We have not developed the factory site as this stage.

- **Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings**

The rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings is also key to the Village Centre Concept Plan. It is important to include existing uses and services within the plan. The wooded area and village in the park concept purposely extends to what is considered the existing village centre or hub ie the area containing Kane's Pub and the village shop. Some of the existing buildings in this area could be expanded or rehabilitated for existing or new uses. Reconfigured parking, access, cycle paths and landscaping will serve to pull this area into the overall concept plan.

Public Transport Links, Road Network, Parking, Pathways, Trails and Cycle Routes

To retain emphasis on the concept of the Village in the Park theme and pedestrian-orientated scheme a connector road has been proposed along the rear of the main core of the proposed Village Centre. This will keep vehicular traffic out of the main activity areas but allow for parking adjacent to these areas. Parking will be integrating into the scheme in a sympathetic manner.

This link road has been continued to show how future connections could work, allowing an alternative route into the village from any future development to the east of the proposed Village Centre.

In all cases walkways, pathways and cycle routes will link through and tie all the various areas together. Walkways and trails will also extend to the woodlands and forest walks further afield.

At present many people avail of the cycle routes in the surrounding forests. Users park opposite Kane's Pub. There could be opportunities for a cycle/ repair or hire shop if the village were to capitalise on this asset.

Glenealy could also be marketed as a stopping point along the Wicklow Way

PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The overall Conceptual Plan could be broken down into various progression stages of development based on the priorities of the Wicklow County Forward Planning Department and the Glenealy Community. Before any further discussions for a possible Conceptual Masterplan takes place, many planning tools will be required to be adopted to guide new development and Village Centre design standards. Additionally, many of these development stages include public infrastructure improvements and these will need to be identified early in the process.

It is important to reiterate that this report has not taken on board the above aspects in any depth as all areas of the proposed Conceptual Plan would be up for debate.

CONCLUSION

Our Client, Mr Kinsella, is a native of Glenealy and has provided employment in the area for many years. He is interested in developing his lands in a manner that would be most beneficial to the village and its inhabitants. He wishes to facilitate sustainable development that will improve the quality of life for the existing inhabitants and make provisions for the possible future development of the area as a more self-sufficient village.

He is in ownership of a substantial section of land in a prime location within the Village, providing the unique opportunity that could allow growth while maintaining the rural setting so characteristic of Glenealy.

Mr Kinsella has invested a great amount of time and energy in producing a Conceptual Plan for his lands and has put much thought into what he thinks might be lacking in the village in terms of housing, employment opportunities and community facilities. He is prepared to supply land for such community facilities, the positioning of which have been proposed within the overall Conceptual Plan for the site. The report has taken on board many aspects of the VDS.

It is important to reiterate that this is a Conceptual Plan produced to investigate the possibility of pulling all the disparate sections of the village together in the form of a masterplan and provide a heart and village centre. It is hoped that this Conceptual Plan will facilitate discussions with the Wicklow Council Forward Planning Department and Wicklow Rural Partnership as well as locals, property owners, business owners, potential developers and other stakeholders to identify aspirations and development that will allow Glenealy to become a growth area in the future.

Mr Kinsella is also prepared to facilitate the reopening of the Glenealy train station and redevelop the lands that would be left vacant should he relocate his existing business to any future Enterprise Centre.

Proposals would be required under certain phases and if the Council deems that certain facilities could, or should, be provided at certain stages then Mr Kinsella would be willing to accommodate such requests, within reason.