



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Link Modules

Case Study 2019

Ballytiernan Community Co-operative

Ballytiernan is a picturesque village situated on the banks of a river. It is located twenty kilometres from the nearest city and has an adequate bus service. Agriculture is the main economic activity while tourism is also important to the local economy. The village is popular with anglers and has hosted many angling competitions in the past. It has two primary schools and a co-educational community college which offers Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses. An active local development group is in existence.

The Local Development Group has been working on concerns raised by anglers about illegal dumping at a number of locations along the banks of the river and in the river. The group is afraid this could ruin the reputation of the town as a clean and beautiful area.

A farm set on fifty acres of land at the edge of the town was bequeathed to the community of Ballytiernan by a local farmer. His express wish was that the farm should be used for the benefit of the community and in particular to teach young people the art of horticulture, gardening and sustainable animal husbandry. He had always been an advocate for sustainable and ethical business practices. The farm has been given to the Local Development Group to manage.

The Local Development Group in Ballytiernan formed the Ballytiernan Community Co-operative (Co-op) to manage the 50 acre farm. Its aim is to establish community based enterprises operating from the farm site. It has received assistance from the County Council, The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society, and Teagasc. The Co-op runs the farm itself, using organic and sustainable farming practices. It has established a farm shop which sells farm produce and local crafts and a café which uses locally sourced produce. Space is available for other appropriate local enterprises.

The farm is also being used by Leaving Certificate students and college students, particularly those doing courses in agriculture and horticulture for work experience and to complete the practical components of their courses. Allotments have been created which the local community can use for a small fee.

A large tract of land has been designated for use by local clubs, schools and organisations. The local Foróige club and the Men's Shed group have already been using the farm buildings. Schools in the area have been invited to submit proposals / plans for how they would use the designated land.

The Co-Op is aware of the huge potential of the site both for the local and the extended community and it has drawn up a plan to manage current projects. The Co-op is also assessing the economic viability of a number of projects, including glamping in luxury yurts, a weekend music festival and an open farm.