**Rural Society in Transition: The Changing Role of the Rural Town**

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**Community Enterprise Development Experiences**

- 28 plus years of professional advice
- The Kiltimagh Experience (1990 – 1995)
- More recently
  - Ballaghaderreen & Oldcastle – Community Tourism Toolkits
  - Kilbeggan with Brady Shipman Martin
  - 6 Town Teams with Roscommon County Council
  - Recently Castlerea Town Integrated Action Plan
  - Currently WDC Plan for Creative Hub Ballaghaderreen
  - Currently Longford County Council – Drumlish
  - Currently 4 REDS Areas for Galway County Council
The Three-stage Development Process

Creating the Foundation through animation & capacity building

Establishing the Vision through Facilitated Worshps

Action Plan Preparation & Project Implementation
Town Development: The Essential As

- **ATTRACTION**
- **ACTIVE**
- **ACCESSIBLE**

Town Survival: The Three Economies in Sync

- Daytime Economy: Morning shopping - Lunchtime
- Evening Economy: Food - Dinner - Families
- Nighttime Economy: Social evenings - events
Roscommon County Council: Backing Brave!!!

Are Town Teams the only Solution?
Is Money the only Solution?

Where stands Government Policy & Strategy?

The missing ingredients?
- Community Leadership & Volunteers
- Local Jobs – Commuting V Survival

Leadership & Volunteers: Capacity Building

- Local natives
- New Comers
- Future generations
- Existing business
- New business potential
- Business decline
- Community concern
- Green environment
- Hobbies
- Local heroes
Current Policy: All go one-way in morning!!!!
All go opposite way in evening!!!!
Results: Human Stress/CO2 Footprint/Town Economy Suffers
Solution: A policy on moving jobs to peripheral towns

What has happened?

Remote Decision–making:
- Recession
- Job losses/closures
- Growth of centres
- Town by–passes/motorways
- Centralisation of production
- Drink–driving
- Public Transport
- Business Retrenchment
- One–stop shopping
- Out–of–town stores
- Product obsolescence
- Increased standards of living

Local Issues & Personal Choices
- Out–of–town living
- Greater private mobility
- Commuting
- Shopping specialisation
- On–line shopping
- The advertising “pull”
- Lack of investment
- Second–generation failures
- Broken–window phenomenon
- Lack of Management
Realism: For Rural Towns

Errand Shopping:
A short and quick trip to accomplish a specific purpose, as to buy something, deliver a package, or convey a message.

Realising what will survive or thrive?

Have a mix of products with a USP

and/or

Be “convenient”

and/or

Dominate the advertising market

and/or

A mix of floor and on-line shop

and/or

Take account of ethnicity

Trends & Realism
Realism: The Story of one Rural Town

In my time to now

- Town of 1,500 to 2,000 population with good catchment area for shoppers
- Heart of Connaught – Galway/Sligo/Athlone/Westport all 40 miles
- Proximity to Knock Shrine with over a million visitors per annum
- Proximity to an airport – 15 miles

- 52 licenced pubs – now 6
  - 15 Grocery outlets – now 1 in–town 1 out–of–town
  - 8 Confectionary shops – now 3
  - 5 Drapery Shops – now 3
  - 3 banks – now 1
  - 2 Travel Agents – now 0
  - 2 cinemas – now 0
  - 1 dance hall – now 0
  - 1 bottling store – now 0
  - 2 cycle repair/sales shops – now 0
  - 2 hotels – now 0
  - 3 butcher shops on Main Street – now 0
  - 2 book shops – now 0
Realism: The Story of one Rural Town

Former AIB Bank
Now Computer Repairs

Former Ulster Bank
now For Sale

Realism: The Story of one Rural Town

Former Main Ford Dealership
Now fast Food Outlet

Former Hillman Dealership
Now Credit Union
Realism: The Story of one Rural Town

From Builders Providers to Asian Foods

From Hardware to Regional Radio Station

Main Street: Travel Agency “closed” / Butcher Shop “closed”
The Arrival of Charity Shopping

Thank you