



# Castleblayney Library and Market Square Regeneration project

Innovation in Regeneration Conference, Peace Campus,  
Monaghan, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin  
Monaghan County Council

# Castleblayney Gate Lodge Building – Prior to Project Intervention



- Castleblayney Gate Lodge is a **protected structure** of regional importance (built circa **1870**) and a landmark building in the historic centre of Castleblayney Town.
- Located on Market Square, the building is one of two gate lodges, which frame the entrance to the Hope Castle Estate. The buildings are particularly notable for their **high-quality brick work and ashlar stonework**.
- Building became vacant in the early 1990's and fell into state of disrepair, suffering from significant vandalism and arson.
- At project inception, the building was in an **advanced state of dereliction**, the **integrity** of the structure was in very poor condition.

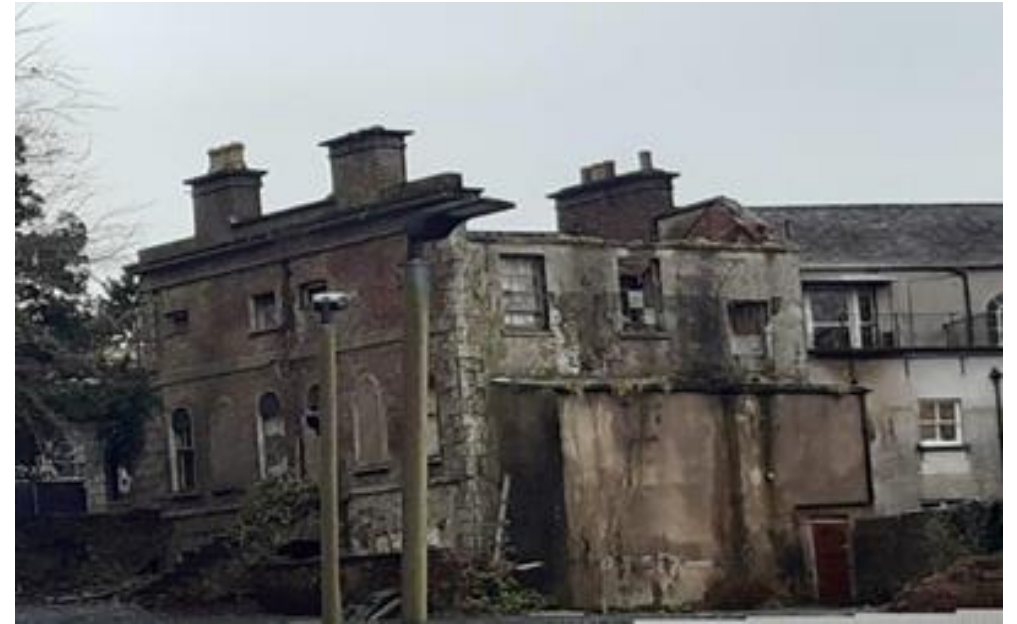
# Proposed Project Consisted of the following elements:

**Conservation and renovation** of the derelict Gate Lodge building to provide a modern public library, community and cultural space.

**Public realm enhancements** works to Market Square to link the building to its adjacent sister building.

**A new extension** was proposed as a contemporary addition, maximising natural light and conveying openness and activity to the public.

In addition to the conservation of the historic structure, the **wider objective of Market Square Regeneration** was to enhance the user experience entering the estate, with the provision of quality community spaces and public realm improvements.



# Project Communication: Relevant Stakeholders

- **Shared vision** for Castleblayney town was formed through public consultation workshops and meetings with the community and business sectors in 2018.
- **Castleblayney Town - Public Realm and Economic Plan** was prepared in 2019. The plan identified key projects such as restoration of the Gate Lodge building with the potential to regenerate Castleblayney town centre.
- An intensive **community consultation process** was undertaken in the preparation of the Town Plan.
- Workshop attendances included **representatives** from relevant government, public and state agencies, as well as multiple local groups and organisations.
- The **results** of the **community engagement** and the feedback from key stakeholders **supported** the restoration of the Gate Lodge building, highlighting community access and public use as key priorities.
- Monaghan County Council **communicated** updates to relevant stakeholders throughout each stage of the project lifecycle.



# Castleblayney Gate Lodge Library and Market Square – Project Inception

- Gaffney & Cullivan Architects in association with Craftstudio Architecture – Design Team Consultants appointed December 2017
- Part 8 Planning Permission – July 2018.
- RRDF Funding Application submitted August 2019.
- RRDF Funding of €2.6m secured from DRCD in February 2020.



## Castleblayney Library and Market Square Regeneration

The conservation and adaption of two gate lodges, framing the entrance to Hope Castle Estate, creating a branch library for Castleblayney and community spaces. The project includes an extension containing a children's library, carefully designed to be respectful of the existing gate lodges. Buildings that were originally designed to form a barrier between the town and estate lands have now been transformed into public amenity spaces for local residents, the design of the extension composed to convey openness and activity, whilst framing views of the lakes and landscape beyond.



- Market Square public realm works (1)
- Multi-purpose community space (2)
- Adult collection (3)
- Outdoor event space (4)
- Meeting space (5)
- Children's collection (6)
- Connectivity to Lough Muckno (7)
- Hope Castle Estate (8)
- Lough Muckno (9)



East elevation



Ground floor plan

# Building Design & Aesthetics

- Key Design Criteria – **Functionality & Flexibility**
- The **architectural language** is distinctive, maximising natural light and conveying openness and activity to the public.
- New extension provides a **contemporary addition**, contrasting with formality of the existing building.
- Materials were specified to **protect** and **compliment** the historic building fabric.
- **Challenge of level difference** between streetscape and existing park facilities overcome through stepped design and incorporation of integrated series of ramps to facilitate universal access.



- **Layout of library** devised to meet changing needs of the community.
- My Open Library Service – **356/7 days**
- Externally, a **minimal palette** of materials used to complement and contrast the historic building.
- Internally, a **comfortable and inspiring environment** is provided for occupants.
- **Moveable** book shelving to create performance/community spaces for events.



- (1) Projecting cast in situ concrete detail
- (2) Brick detail in historic context
- (3) Glazed south elevation
- (4) Children's library and multi-functional space
- (5) Restored historic detailing





## Sustainability

The project responds to three critical pillars of sustainability:

- **Economically**, by generating development and creating sustainable communities with enhanced local amenity.
- **Environmentally**, by remediating the environmental hazards of a derelict building.
- **Socially** by bringing new life into a forgotten urban space and generating pride and identity in the locality.
- **Climate Action**: Recognising embodied carbon in the existing building in context of a new build
- **Sustainable waste management** of demolition materials.
- **Energy efficiency**: Air to water heat pumps controlled by BMS, energy efficient lighting and automated windows to provide natural ventilation. Building achieve B1 BER Rating.
- **Modern community library** coupled with external public realm enhancements creates a wonderful community gathering space and provides a catalyst to promote and grow the town's cultural and creative expression.



## Inclusion

**Libraries = inclusivity, accessibility and affordability**

**Public access** to information and resources that give people opportunities to improve their lives.

**Inclusive spaces** where cost is not a barrier to new knowledge and skills

**Neutral and welcoming spaces** that make learning accessible to all, including marginalized groups like migrants, refugees, minorities, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities

**Equitable access** to information that supports social, political, and economic inclusion

**Trusted institutions** devoted to promoting cultural inclusion and understanding

**Documentation and preservation** of cultural heritage for future generations

**Co-Create and citizen centre community led** approach to planning and designing programming.



## Local History Talk

BY MICHAEL BURNS  
STROLLING AROUND TOWN

(IDEAS FOR STROLLS, WALKS, RUNS, CYCLES,  
DRIVES IN THE "BLAYNEY AREA "WHILE  
SITTING DOWN".)



**Thursday 10th October, 11am**  
**Castleblayney Library**

MONAGHAN  
COUNTY  
LIBRARIES

All welcome  
No booking necessary  
Tea/Coffee



# Challenges

1. Detailed Design & Contractor Procurement - Conducted during **Covid** 19 Restrictions (new online forums)

2. Extended construction period and increased costs:

(i) Covid site restriction January - May 2021

(ii) Materials **Inflation** (Brexit / Ukraine War)

(iii) **Unforeseen building condition** (extensive dry rot treatment)

(iv) **OGP Inflationary Agreements** – Communication among relevant parties

3. **Meeting expectations** of citizens and ensuring the library facility can cater for the changing needs of the community



Castleblayney News M.B



Castleblayney News M.B



Castleblayney News M.B







NATURE + SCIENCE +  
ACROBATICS =

# Nature's Secret Circus

cavan & monaghan  

**SCIENCE  
FESTIVAL**  
 science in everyday life



# Eco Arts

Supported by Creative Ireland via Monaghan Council's  
Creative Monaghan Programme

Location: Castleblayney Library and Lough Muckno

Join artist Grace Haynes in a workshop series  
exploring alternative eco arts processes in paper making,  
Cyanotypes, Nature journaling, Antrotypes, Cenotypes, Gelli  
Plate Printing, Alternative Print Processes.

**Dates:**  
 June - 13th and 14th  
 July - 11th and 12th  
 August - 15th and 16th

**Times:**  
 Meeting at the library at 11:30am to explore the surrounding areas  
of Lough Muckno ( weather dependent)  
( Half hour break)  
 returning to Castleblayney Library for workshop at 1pm

**Booking through Castleblayney Library**  
 - email -  
[Castleblayneylibrary@monaghancoco.ie](mailto:Castleblayneylibrary@monaghancoco.ie)



MONAGHAN COUNTY LIBRARIES

# Board Games Club



Wednesday,  
25th of  
September

4-5pm

Next Game -  
Alien: Fate of the  
Nostromo

For Ages 12-14

Resource Room,  
Castleblayney Library.

Other board games also  
available.



Welcome

## Castleblayney Alzheimer Café



Castleblayney Library  
Lough Muckno gate lodge 2  
Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan, A75 V383

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September  
11:00am to 12:30pm

(and the last Monday of each month thereafter)

Guest Speaker: Kellie Ann  
Topic: Family Carers Ireland



There will also be **Singers/Music** and the very  
important, cup of tea and chat.

For more information contact Elaine/Martin 087 978 3959

The cafe provides a warm welcoming place for people to meet others also living with  
dementia/cognitive impairment, their carers and health & social care professionals.

For more info: [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)  
The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, National Office,  
Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin  
Charity Number:  
CHY7868



# Ciorcal Comhrá

## Baile na Lorgan



6<sup>in</sup> Dé Céadaoine (Wednesday)

Leabharlann Bhaile na Lorgan

Fáilte roimh gach duine!

Céad Dáta Eile  
18/09/24



# MONAGHAN COUNTY LIBRARIES

Love music?  
Looking for something  
new?



Welcome to Talking Tracks  
Castleblayney library's music club  
To join call 0429740281



## FAMILY CODING SUMMER CAMP



PRIMARY  
AGE KIDS  
AND  
PARENTS  
TOGETHER

MAKE A DANCE MAT WITH  
SCRATCH, A ROCK PAPER  
SCISSORS GAME WITH  
MICRO:BIT & MUCH MORE.....



4 DAYS  
CODING  
AND  
CRAFT

### Castleblayney Library

15th - 18th of July (Mon-Thurs)- 10.30-12.30 , 2 hrs a day

*Please note: this is not a drop-off activity. Parents must attend with their children!*

**REGISTER NOW** to Book Your FREE Place\*

<https://www.ourkidscode.ie/register/>

Club Code: MonaghanCastleblayneyLibrary01

\*Limited to 6 families, first come first served

\*Activities are aimed at ages 7-12, but all children are welcome



Enquiries to **Louise O'Hare** on lohare0@gmail.com



## LEARN THE ESSENTIALS OF THE INTERNET

FREE  
Course

- Connecting to a secure internet connection
- Booking a hotel or a flight
- Buying goods or booking a service
- Filling in forms for passports, driving licences etc
- Comparing insurance quotes
- How to make a secure online payment using paypal, debit card
- Scams and what to look out for

Our training facilitator will happily demonstrate any website or App that the learner needs support with



WEDNESDAYS

Castleblayney Library

11.00am-1.00pm

21st February

for 2 weeks

Booking @ Library Desk  
or phone (042) 9740281



MONAGHAN  
COUNTY  
LIBRARIES





## BABY BOOK CLUB

SUITABLE FOR BABIES WHO  
ARE NOT YET WALKING

**NEXT SESSION: FRI  
4TH OCTOBER**

**10AM - 11AM**

**FIRST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH**

STORY/SONGS FOLLOWED  
BY SENSORY PLAYTIME

Tea/coffee  
No need to book



MONAGHAN  
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LIBRARIES

## Crosswords & Croissants



First Thursday of every  
month

Next Session: 3rd October  
11am - 12.30pm

Come along for a cuppa, a  
croissant and a crossword or  
two.

No Need to book  
All provided



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## STUDY SPACE

**WEDNESDAYS 2PM - 5PM**

STARTING WEDNESDAY THE 21ST OF  
FEBRUARY



The resource room in Castleblayney library will be a dedicated study space on Wednesdays from 2pm-5pm. Open to library members junior certificate and up. No booking required but you must sign in and out at desk. If you are looking a quiet study space at other days/times please enquire at desk and we will do our best to accommodate you.

**IT'S FREE TO JOIN YOUR LIBRARY  
CALL IN TODAY TO GET SIGNED UP**

## OUR FIRST YEAR

28 SEP 2023 - 27 SEP 2024

### VISITORS



71,436

280% INCREASE (2019)\*

### EVENTS



110

7,727 ATTENDEES

### SCHOOL VISITS



125

2,243 STUDENTS

### LOANS

= BORROWED + RENEWED



40,935

179% INCREASE (2019)\*

### INTER LIBRARY LOANS



RECEIVED 2,706  
SENT 2,528

= BOOKS FROM LIBRARIES  
IRELAND SHARED SYSTEM

### Creative Cafes attendee:

Wonderful book folding class, by lovely friendly instructor , highly enjoyable & relaxing.. with beautiful individual pieces for every participant to take home.. highly recommended.. and can't praise Castleblayney Library high enough for their crafting classes .. they keep me sane lol 😄

Fiona – FB – Adult crafts

### Student:

The librarians are very attentive and friendly they always try help you find exactly the book you need for your studies. Thanks a million Monaghan county council for new library. I am so happy and delighted.

### Teacher/class at event:

🌟 What a fantastic morning at Castleblayney Library!🌟  
We had an amazing time with Gráinne Holland Music and friends presenting Draíocht an Dúrla, sharing the magic of nature with kids on their school tour. The children were captivated by the enchanting music and stories—what a beautiful way to celebrate the traditional arts! 🎵🌿



**New library user:** We couldn't operate without it so many little services that are useful to us. Brilliant service.

**Grandparent:** my grandchildren were in today and they had a wonderful time. 🙌🙌🙌

### Regular User:

A wonderful Amenity. The Best Part of my life outside my home

### Author

I love visiting new libraries, and on a recent trip to Castleblayney, I stopped by their gorgeous library with a stunning view of the lake. Delighted to see The Lake House at Lenashee on the shelves! Such a beautiful town and an even more beautiful library. Huge thanks for the warm welcome!

Shiela – author

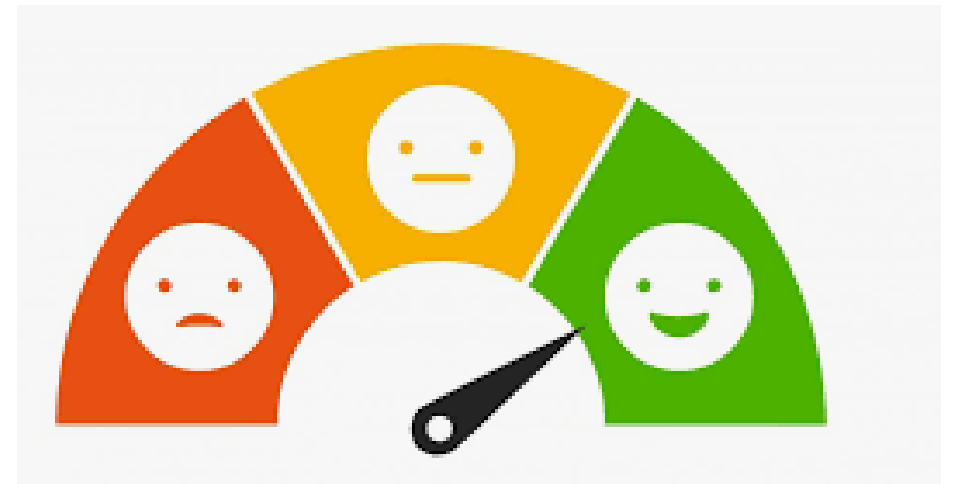
### New group:

It has helped **establish** our group. We couldn't have got going without the library

### New Local History Group:

When you talked about the Blacksmiths around Main Street, I could recall Pat Lynch's Forge on the upper commons, and concrete circle for placing metal hoops on wooden cart wheels, the image of two men carrying the red hot metal with thongs and placing it on the wheel and adding water...what skills to get perfect fit....I think Pat Lynch was the father of Morris Lynch musician...Thank you for a rich tapestry of people to have had my childhood to grow up with and evoke memories that are coming alive even in my dotage,

Noel Branigan ,Sydney Australia





MONAGHAN  
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LIBRARIES

## Castleblayney Library wins *Public Building of the Year* at the Building and Architect of the Year Awards 2024



In adjudicating upon the project, the judging panel outlined that “the transformation of Castleblayney Library showcased a **stunning rejuvenation that significantly benefits the local community and acts as a gateway** to Lough Muckno. The project **blends meticulous conservation with inventive design and is outstanding as a model of adaptive re-use.**” They further added that the completed building “**enhances the architectural fabric of Castleblayney and enriches the communities cultural and recreational amenity**”

## Project Awards

- (a) Craftstudio Architecture and Gaffney & Cullivan Architects won “**Public Building of the Year**” at Building and Architect of the Year Awards 2024
- (b) Broomfield Construction Contractors won “**Leisure Tourism Project**” at Irish Construction Excellence Awards 2024
- (c) Monaghan County Council shortlisted for **Excellence in Local Government Awards 2024 - Heritage & Built Environment Category**



### WINNERS COMMENT

This win means a lot to us in Broomfield Construction. We believed we delivered an outstanding project and it is great to get recognition of this achievement from a prestigious award.

The Castleblayney Library project displays the beauty of historical construction methods, recreated to its original glory with new intention and combines modern state of the art construction.

The ICE Awards judging panel were very informed, experienced and understood the challenges and tribulations of the project. We found them very knowledgeable and the management of the event as a whole was seamless and professional.

The feedback has been very positive. We see this as a milestone for our company and our team.

The Gala was a great night. We brought clients and design team members with our construction team to the Gala and it was great to discuss the project in hindsight and our relationships and how they grew over the project. To do this in the CCD was a nice touch.

Thank you to our clients, subcontractors and supply chain partners for your great work on delivering this project with us.

Our advice when entering the ICE Awards is to ensure you capture the essence of the project and what makes it stand out as excellent and head and shoulders above the rest of the projects in that field. ●



Cathal Flynn (Monaghan County Council), Emmet Reilly, Colm O'Reilly (Broomfield Construction), Aoife Flynn (ICE Awards Judge), Jason Reilly, Neill McKeon (Broomfield Construction), Robert Fitzpatrick (Craftstudio Architecture), David Cullivan (Gaffney & Cullivan Architects) and Deirdre O'Kane



