

ROSTREVOR PUBLIC REALM COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Virtual consultation by ZOOM

28th July 2020

Co-ordinated by:

Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency and Down Business Centre

On behalf of:

Newry Mourne and Down District Council

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1. BACKGROUND

Historically, eligibility for investment by the Department for Communities (DFC) in public realm (PR)/environmental improvement (EI) was restricted to urban areas with a population greater than 5,000. The DFC is now changing its eligibility criteria to include smaller towns with a population less than 5,000, but greater than 2,500.

In Newry Mourne and Down Council area, this now brings forward:

1. Bessbrook
2. Castlewellan
3. Killyleagh
- 4. Rostrevor**
5. Saintfield

What can be funded

Eligible public realm/environmental improvement works can include upgrade works to pathways, street lightening, landscaping, and street furniture. Other works may be considered, subject to further discussion and approval from DFC, such as revitalisation works including upgrades to building facades and visual improvements to vacant or derelict properties. The eligible boundary will be within the town centre, i.e. within the 30-mph zone.

Requirement

Working with DFC, Newry Mourne and Down District Council will be putting in place a forward capital plan that will identify over the next 5 years schemes to be profiled for public realm investment. This will enable the Council and the Department to better plan budgets, submit funding applications, commission early pre-development design works, and apply for statutory approvals – all of which, are required ahead of scheme implementation.

The Council now needs to put in place a forward capital plan for these 5 rural settlements, which now fall within the public realm remit of DFC. Implementation of the forward plan will be subject to funding from DFC. Putting in place a forward plan will enable Council to take some early steps to work schemes up to a point where they are “funding ready.” To inform this plan, some scoping work has been required to identify where the need for investment in public realm/environmental improvement is greatest.

Community Engagement

To formalise the inclusion of these 5 rural settlements in a forward work plan for submission to DFC, and to develop potential future scheme proposals, Newry Mourne and Down Council engaged **Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency (NMEA)** and **Down Business Centre (DBC)** to prepare a report for consideration. These organisations are a local enterprise partnership whose sole aim is the furtherance of economic and business development within the Newry Mourne and Down region. The partnership is assisted by Eamon Larkin, Managing Partner of **Milligan Reside & Larkin**, and uses the services of other professional advisors across a range of disciplines.

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The Brief

The brief given to NMEA and DBC was to consult with stakeholders in Rostrevor to learn their views on what public realm works should be prioritised in Rostrevor and to prepare a final consultation report for the District Council to consider.

Consultation – during Covid 19

All consultations were undertaken within the terms of the Government’s 2020 Covid19 public health guidance, remotely using email and video / telephone conferencing.

Rostrevor Overview

For the purposes of this report the area referred to as Rostrevor is that which is delineated by the 30 mph signs on the various approach roads into the village; Rostrevor electoral ward covers this area. Unless otherwise stated the statistics below have been taken from the NI 2011 census.

The population of Rostrevor Ward was 2847 in 2019 (NISRA), which represented a very small decrease on the 2011 census figure; the population has remained stable for over 20 years, the phenomenon of high levels of population growth seen in other localities in recent years has not occurred in Rostrevor. The village is located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and development is subject to very strict planning controls. As a result there has been little new housing development in the village or its environs in the last 20 years. In terms of demographics, 20% of residents are aged under 16 years with 16% aged 65 and over which is close to NI average. In relation to housing 66% of households are owner occupied and 31% are rented. Despite its beautiful setting, popularity with visitors and desirability as a place to live, Rostrevor has issues associated with significant income inequality (issues which can be at their sharpest when the highly advantaged live in very close proximity to the less advantaged and those challenged by adversity). The most recent Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation measure indicated that Rostrevor Ward is designated as being among the 25% most income deprived wards in Northern Ireland and the 30% most disadvantaged with respect to access to services.

Previous studies of the area include an in-depth “Rostrevor Cluster Village Renewal and Development Plans” in 2012 for the Rostrevor and Killowen areas prepared at the request of Newry and Mourne District Council by URS, with an addendum commissioned by the Newry Mourne and Down District Council completed in late 2017 by Ove Arup and Partners.

2. THE CONSULTATION: When did it take place? Who participated?

The Rostrevor stakeholder consultation was carried out using the Zoom video-conferencing platform on Tuesday 28th July 2020. The attendees were as follows:

Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency

Dr Conor Patterson (Facilitator)

Colin Hanna (Scribe)

Eamon Larkin (Milligan Reside & Larkin Architects)

Newry, Mourne & Down Council representatives

Martin Patterson, Enterprise and Regeneration

Shirley Keenan, Crotlieve DEA Co-ordinator

Rostrevor participants

Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly

Cllr Gerry O'Hare

Cllr Declan McAteer

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Barbara Wendel-Sands (Rostrevor Community Cinema)

Bronagh Vos (Tom Dunn Project)

Catherine Bescond-Sands (Poetic Action Rostrevor)

Ciaran Fearon (Kilbroney Community Association)

Seth Linder (Visit Rostrevor Group)

Tony Williamson (local businessman)

Alistair Livingstone (Spot-lit Project)

Paul Clerkin (local businessman/environmental activist)

Colum Sands (Rostrevor Action Respecting Our Environment)

Rós Ní Dhubháin (various performance-based projects)

Paul Hagerty (local businessman)

Briege MacMahon (Community activist)

3. WHAT PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS DO CONSULTEES THINK ARE NEEDED?

3.1 Consultees participated in a virtual tour of the village using the Google Street View app. While some of the photography used by Google was relatively recent,(September 2016), some dated back to 2011.

This was followed up with a walking tour by Conor Patterson which was facilitated by Paul Clerkin accompanied by Colum Sands. Up to date photographs were taken during that exercise.

3.2 The key issues highlighted by the consultees were:

Short-term

- 3.2.1 The possibility of using the rear of Ranfurly House for parking**
- 3.2.2 The lack of signage to welcome visitors and direct them to the area's attractions**
- 3.2.3 The need to improve the area to the rear of the phone boxes/bus shelters in the village centre**
- 3.2.4 The need for a clean-up to the access to Rostrevor Beach and to signpost it**
- 3.2.5 The need for remedial work in the Crag Graveyard**
- 3.2.6 The provision of flowerbeds/hanging baskets**
- 3.2.7 The need for safe access for swimmers to water opposite JC Campbell**
- 3.2.8 The Fairy Glen – lighting and features**
- 3.2.9 Sensory garden located in Kilbroney Park**
- 3.2.10 The need to improve footpaths throughout the village**

Medium-term

- 3.2.11 The old tram station's dilapidated condition and the possibility of restoring its historic frontage**
- 3.2.12 The Ross Monument - lack of car parking, safe access and possible development**
- 3.2.13 The need to address parking in the village**
- 3.2.14 Congestion as well as ongoing damage to the cobbles on Bridge street**
- 3.2.15 The need for more cycle lanes and walking routes**
- 3.2.16 Tourist Information Centre**

Long-term

- 3.2.17 Develop Ranfurly House while preserving its 18th Century architectural features**
- Tourist Information Centre.**

4. SHORT-TERM

4.1 The possibility of using the rear of Ranfurly House for parking

Ranfurly House is a property owned by the GAA situated on a prominent site at the junction of Mary Street and the Shore Road in the centre of the village. While the local GAA club has a redevelopment plan for the building, this would be a longer-term project; in the interim there is a significant area to the rear of the building which could be utilised for carparking – perhaps for visiting coaches and motorhomes.



Ranfurly House



Area to rear of Ranfurly House with potential to be used for parking

4.2 The lack of signage to welcome visitors and direct them to the area's attractions

It was felt that the signage in the village needed to be upgraded to indicate more of the attractions which the area has to offer. In particular reference should be made to Rostrevor being “the gateway to the Mourne”. The possibility was also discussed of attaching signage to BT street furniture as part of a programme of upgrading those units to make them aesthetically more in keeping with the village’s historic 18th and 19th century built environment.

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4.3 The area to rear of the phone boxes/bus shelters in the village centre

This is a prominent site in the centre of the village which needs attention; it was suggested that it could do with a 'tidy up', with a view to perhaps creating more parking spaces. It was noted, however, that the ownership of this site wasn't clear. The first task of any scheme to upgrade this site would be to ascertain its ownership. It was also noted that the fencing around this site was in a very poor state of repair.



Site to rear of phone boxes on Mary Street

4.4 The need for a clean-up of the access to Rostrevor Shore/Beach

There is an existing right of way which leads to the Rostrevor shoreline/ beach. Unfortunately, both the pathway and the beach at the end of it are regularly used by fly tippers. It was suggested that an upgrade of the footpath and a general clean-up would open this picturesque site with its stunning views across Carlingford Lough for public use at relatively small cost. Seating could be introduced and a walk/cycle-path could be opened around the shore from this point. (see 4.5 below)



The path leading to the beachfront



Rostrevor Beachfront

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4.5 The need for remedial work for The Crag Graveyard and St Paul's Church.

Both the graveyard as well as the church next to it need remedial repair and stabilisation work done as a matter of urgency. St Paul's Church which is of historic significance is in an extremely poor state of repair with the belltower in danger of imminent collapse. The Ross Cross also requires some preservation work which would ensure it was protected for future generations. While this calls for a significant project to be pulled together which would involve several government agencies, something which falls outside the remit of this sort public realm programme, given the historical importance of this site and its precarious state of repair urgent short term remedial repairs should be carried out and a commitment should be made to a bigger enhancement to and protection of the site. There are many features of cultural and historic significance in this hidden corner of the village which even many people who know the village quite well do not know exists, not least the church and the graves, one of which belongs to a forebear of the Disney family.



The church belltower which is in danger of collapse



Closeup of a wooden beam which is supporting the belltower

4.6 The provision of flowerbeds/hanging baskets

Several of those present felt that there was a need for more flowerbeds and hanging baskets to be installed in the village. Flowerbeds and hanging baskets when well maintained can give a welcome 'lift' to an area for what is a very modest cost

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4.7 The need for safe access for swimmers using the pier opposite JC Campbell

The large numbers of people participating in open water swimming has been one of the more surprising outcomes associated with the current pandemic in Rostrevor. For many years sea swimmers have used the jetty opposite the JC Campbell garage on the Shore Road to access the sea throughout the year. However, the closure of public swimming pools has led many former pool users to switch to swimming in the sea as an alternative. The surface of the jetty was described as unsafe, especially for swimmers who by and large would be bare footed. it is very uneven with sharp edges. For a modest cost the surface of the jetty could be upgraded, e.g. repointed where necessary, to offer safe access to swimmers.



The pier opposite JC Campbell on the Shore Road

4.8 The Fairy Glen – lighting and features

Several consultees felt that the Fairy Glen needed some attention, including at the very least appropriate signposting. One suggestion was to have some character lighting running down the hill from the camping site. Another novel proposal was to have a statue of the once world famous “Giant Murphy” lighting his pipe from one of the antique lamp posts in the vicinity of the entrance to the Fairy Glen, a project likely to have a high impact as a tourist attraction for a relatively modest cost. At 8ft 1inch the Giant Murphy who was born and raised in Killowen was the world’s tallest man. He used to amuse the children of Rostrevor by lighting his pipe from the gaslight of the lamp posts in the village. He died in 1862 and is buried in Kilbroney graveyard.

4.9 A sensory garden located in Kilbroney Park

Sensory gardens are becoming more common as their therapeutic value has become more widely recognised across the world. One consultee suggested that such a garden could be established for what would be a relatively low cost within the grounds of Kilbroney Park.

4.10 The need to improve footpaths throughout the village

Poor pedestrian access throughout the village was a recurring theme of this consultation. Among the specifics mentioned were pavements which were not wide enough to accommodate prams/buggies and not ramped to facilitate pram and wheelchair movement onto and off the paths. Bridge Street was of particular concern, along with the Greenpark Road. A full survey of the pavements within the village needs to be completed with remedial action taken as soon as possible to address health and safety risks.

5. MEDIUM-TERM

5.1 The old tram station

The old train/tram station is a prominent site at the junction of Mary Street and Shore Road has been in a poor state of repair for many years. The building which is a distinctive blue colour is a listed building, the site is privately owned. The current legal status of the building/site was described as holding up potential re-development work. Given it's high profile location and its interesting history and architectural features this building merits inclusion in a large, properly resourced village redevelopment scheme which places value on the historic significance and distinctiveness of buildings which are currently derelict or dilapidated. Consultees spoke of how Rostrevor should be given the same attention to its history as Carlingford was, where buildings which had in the past been in a state of collapse had been restored and integrated into that village's narrative with great success.



A gas lamp, a feature on the old tram station

5.2 The Ross Monument – lack of car parking, safe access and possible development

After many years of neglect, the Ross Monument having been taken into the ownership of the then Newry and Mourne District Council was reopened in 2008 after a major refurbishment. The monument has become a popular tourist destination for visitors to the area. However, this popularity has brought with it a challenge in that it is difficult for visitors arriving by car to safely access the site. Currently they must park in the layby opposite the monument and then negotiate their way across a very busy road to gain access to the site. Several of the consultees felt that there was scope for parking and a tourist centre to be developed to the rear of the monument. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to suggest that few historical figures in the Newry Mourne and Down District have had as much influence on American history as Major General Robert Ross. In fact many tourist attractions have been developed out of more tenuous links. Consultees were of the view that priority should be given to further developing the Ross Monument site and in particular to make provision for off-road parking.



The Ross Monument which is located on the Warrenpoint Road

5.3 The lack of, and need for rationalisation of existing parking in the village

5.3.1 This issue was mentioned multiple times during the consultation; Rostrevor is a 'go to' tourist destination. During peak times (such as on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer) parking is difficult. However, even during the 'off peak', parking especially in the centre of the village is a major problem. By 07.30am on weekday mornings the small number of centrally located parking spaces are all occupied by commuters many from the surrounding area who continue their journeys to work from

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Rostrevor by bus. These parking spaces are completely blocked until these commuters return at the end of the working day. This practice means that invariably there is little or no parking available in the centre of the village for local people, especially those with restricted mobility to access shops and the village's other amenities.

5.3.2 One of the suggestions made was that a park-and-walk scheme should be introduced with designated parking areas set aside all of which could be within under 5 minutes walk from the main bus pick up.

This could be facilitated by:

- Opening up the large carpark at St Jude's Gardens for general use. This car park is hidden away and isn't signposted
- Utilising the rear of Ranfurly House for parking (mentioned at paragraph 4.1)
- Removing the boundary wall of Kilbroney Park along Bridge Street to allow new parking spaces to be developed along part of the shore front of the Park
- Using the site of the former Roxboro Hotel as a car park
- Widening the parking layby at Kilbroney Parish Church, Church Street

5.4 Congestion as well as ongoing damage to the cobbles on Bridge street

Bridge Street which is one of the main shopping areas of the village as well as a main route to the Fairy Glen and Kilbroney Park despite it being very narrow was described as being frequently congested with traffic. Consultees felt that as a result it was hazardous for pedestrians, especially those with prams and/or limited mobility. One idea suggested was to pedestrianise Bridge Street, re-routing through-traffic via the Shore road. Another was to instigate a one-way system for traffic using Bridge Street which would also alleviate much of the congestion. It was also felt that this would help to minimise the damage regularly being done to the historic street's cobblestones by HGVs manoeuvring around an extremely restricted space. It was the consensus among consultees that solutions for Bridge Street should be a priority in a future Rostrevor Master Plan (see below). The need for traffic calming on other routes such as the Shore Road and Greenpark Road were also mentioned.

5.5 The need for cycle ways and walking routes

The hills and mountains above Rostrevor attract cyclists from all over the world to what are well designed and maintained tracks/paths. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the village and its immediate environs with provision for cyclists described as non-existent. The consultees felt that a plan was needed which would identify and cost improvements which could be made to both improve the experience of pedestrians in the village and make cycling a realistic option. A significant first step would be to develop a walkway and cycle path running along the sea front from the old pier/ dock to the Ross Monument.

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5.6 Tourist Information Centre

The lack of a fit-for-purpose tourist information centre was highlighted in 2012. This gap in the facilities offered in the village remains to be filled, a significant concern given the number of visitors which the Rostrevor area now attracts and its position as the gateway to the Mourne from population centres in east Leinster and south Ulster.

5.7 Master Plan

If Rostrevor is to further develop its potential as a tourist destination a complete rationalisation of the parking in and around the village must be prioritised as part of a Master Plan for the village. This plan should also address the concerns and proposed solutions which this consultation exercise has identified. There is a need for an inter-agency strategy to guide Rostrevor towards a future in which its many assets can be accessible to the wider population of the district and visitors from further afield, who can be hosted well and have an opportunity to spend their money in the village, while at the same time ensuring that the sensitive natural environment in which the village sits and its own unique built environment are not damaged.

6. LONG-TERM

6.1 Develop Ranfurly House while preserving its 18th century architectural features

Eighteenth Century Ranfurly House occupies a prime site in the village. It is owed by the GAA. While works were carried out some 15 years ago to stabilise the building and make it weather and flood proof it is vacant today. Much more work is needed to bring this beautiful building and its unique architectural features into productive use. The expense of that would be beyond the local GAA club. It is willing to work with other groups in the community to develop a scheme to transform Ranfurly House into a vibrant community hub. Council support for the concept would give impetus to the establishment of a working group which could draw up a business plan for a financially sustainable use of the building which could then be used to attract public sector and other funding (e.g. Heritage Lottery).

7. WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

7.1 Among the key points raised in the Rostrevor and Killowen Village Renewal and Development Plan (2012, updated November 2018) was the need for several high-profile buildings which had fallen into disrepair to be refurbished and brought back into use for the benefit of the community. Consultees said that it was disappointing that 8 years after that plan had been drafted most of those buildings were still awaiting attention.

7.2 It was noted that it had been approximately 20 years since the last EI scheme in Rostrevor. The consensus among all the consultees was that it was now time that another EI and public realm scheme was implemented in the village.

7.3 What would be the benefits of making these improvements?

The proposed improvement schemes identified through this consultation have the potential to produce a significant positive impact. These include:

- Facilitating the expected rise in the numbers of visitors to Rostrevor which will generate higher levels of spend in the village, where almost all of the businesses are locally owned and operated. This would create new employment opportunities as well as safeguarding existing jobs.
- A properly resourced and well executed Master Plan would have the effect of boosting the appearance of many of the prominent buildings in the village as well as improving both the flow of vehicular traffic and improving the availability of car parking. This would contribute to the benefits described above.

7.4 What would be the negative effects of doing nothing?

The negative effects of doing nothing are likely to include:

- If parking issues aren't properly addressed, Rostrevor is likely to become a destination to be avoided with a reputation as a traffic bottleneck.
- Some of the village's most historic buildings are in such a poor state of poor repair that if remedial work isn't carried out soon they are likely to deteriorate to such an extent that they will for all intents and purposes be irrecoverable and lost to future generations.

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8. WHAT WOULD BE THE COSTS OF SHORT-TERM SCHEMES?

8.1 The projects identified through this consultation are listed below. Total costs involved in the implementation of each project will require to be worked up to take account of all expenditure items, including the:

- Appointment of design team (Architect, Quantity Surveyor, Structural Engineer etc)
- Preparation and costing of final designs
- Pre-tender and post-tender collaboration
- Planning submissions
- Final scheme costs.

8.2 This report does not include a full summary of these costs. At this stage we have compiled estimated per-project costings based on experience. However, these costs are not definitive and have not been subjected to a bill of quantities assessment.

SHORT TERM PROJECTS

	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST £
1	The possibility of using the rear of Ranfurly House for parking	£60,000
2	The lack of signage to welcome visitors and direct them to the area's attractions	£20,000
3	The area to rear of the phone boxes/bus shelters in the village centre	£100,000
4	The need for a clean-up of the access to Rostrevor Beach (including seating and a path)	£100,000
5	The need for remedial work for The Crag Graveyard and St Paul's Church	£100,000
6	The provision of flowerbeds/hanging baskets	£50,000
7	The need for safe access for swimmers using the pier opposite JC Campbell	£30,000
8	The Fairy Glen – lighting and features	£100,000
9	A sensory garden located in Kilbroney Park	£40,000
10	The need to improve footpaths throughout the village	£100,000

MEDIUM TERM PROJECTS

	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST
1	The old tram station	£500,000
2	The Ross Monument – lack of car parking, safe access and possible development	£300,000
3	The lack of and need for rationalisation of existing parking in the village	£300,000
4	Congestion as well as ongoing damage to the cobbles on Bridge street	£100,000
5	The need for cycle ways and walking routes	£300,000- £500,000
6	Tourist Information Centre	£200,000
7	Master Plan	£50,000

LONG TERM PROJECT

	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	
1	Develop Ranfurly House	Capital Cost £1.5m
	Plus....	Business Plan £10,000
	Plus....	Design/Planning / Professional costs £120,000

8.3 Sources of Funding

The Department for Communities (DFC) will be the primary funding source. Working in conjunction with Newry Mourne and Down District Council, the Department will decide and agree which projects, if any, will be selected for drawdown of funds to meet project costs.

9. Next Steps

This report has been submitted to Newry Mourne and Down Council for consideration and discussion at various levels, including the Council's Economic Development Committee, before being tabled for scrutiny and decision by a meeting of the full Council. Those councillors with responsibility for the Rostrevor area will consult with village representatives to ensure the report's content reflects the outcomes of the consultation.

It will be for the Council, working closely with the Department for Communities, to move forward as follows:

Action	Outcome
Step 1	Secure Funding
Step 2	Appoint a Design Team (through Central Procurement Directorate)
Step 3	Secure Planning Permission
Step 4	Tender for a Contractor (through Central Procurement Directorate)
Step 5	Complete Construction

APPENDIX

Rostrevor improvement project proposals compiled by Mr Paul Clerkin following consultation with residents and stakeholders in Rostrevor.

Some suggestions to improve Rostrevor and Kilbroney park for all and perhaps encourage tourists to come and stay

1. Erect brown tourism signage

Are we keeping these areas a secret for us locals only?

In Newry-

Erect brown tourism signage at the motorway to Newry turn off and at the top of Killmorey st, at the turn for Warrenpoint Rostrevor and Carlingford Lough

At Rostrevor village-

1. Kilbroney Meadow, Cloughmore, Slieve Martin first Mourne summit, the View points.
2. Kilbroney park upper car park.
3. The Mourne way and all the local lowland, Hill walking and right of way trails
4. The Ancient Oak Forest and Fiddler's Green.
5. The Fairy Glen with Rostrevor River.
6. The Meadow and Ancient trees.
7. The Rostrevor beach right of way.
8. The St Bronaghs bell in the Chapel 1000yrs since first struck
9. Kilbroney cemetery, with the church, the Ancient Cross, the Well, Giant Murphy's and wheel barrow head stone and the other historic interesting plots.
10. Rostrevor House and Sir John's Ancient and Rare trees, some of world importance.
11. The interesting plots of Knotty Ash and Crag Cemeteries.
12. The Mass rocks at valley of the tears, Batts wall with the Ross, Killmory and Batts marker stone.
13. The Lime kilms at Reedhall hill.

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Section 1, Kilbroney Meadow.

2. **Name all local established forest and mountain trails**

Name all 18 known established walking trails and provide way markers en route.

Provide a large, detailed, rustic, protected map stand prominent in the main car park with leaflets indicating all these walks including distance, times, terrain, points of interest and equipment recommended. This would allow and encourage all arriving tourists / visitors to choose and do suitable walks and allow all our local citizens to also use the walks with confidence knowing they could phone for help and indicate where they were on the hill should any problem arise.

3. **Clear and re-establish the trail along the Glen Stream Central Section**, going in along the stream at the caravan site entrance road, along behind the tennis court, cross the road at Glen Stream bridge, then back in and follow the stream on up behind the house over new small bridge to join up with the upper Glen Stream trail, there by recreating the great continuous trail from the Fairy Glen, along the Glen Stream to Cloughmore

4. **Lighting** The Fairy Glen and Meadow main central trail and from the shore main entrance road to the Caravan site and car park should be illuminated at night with traditional character lights.

This would be wonderful and a great asset for local residents and facilitate and encourage the caravan site guests to the village at night

5. Clear along the neglected frontage to Kilbroney park at the front boundary stone wall approaching the shore road entrance and plant new colourful scrubs and trees

6. Build proper **grand stone entrance pillars and new gates** at the Shore road entrance. This would benefit our wonderful meadow / park. Continue the stone copings on the top of the wall to the right-hand side of the entrance gates.

7. **Plant a row of colourful trees** or fruit trees right up along the main entrance road to the caravan site and main car-park.

8. **Plant a new beech hedge** to screen off the skips full of rubbish and the council yard machinery from the mountain bike car park.

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9. **The Meadow wild flower area** is currently being used as a dump.

Clean out all the briars, dumped branches, grass and park cuttings from the top of the wild flower area which is blocking access to the largest / oldest sycamore in the park and the glen stream

10. Create a proper **enclosed concreted yard compound** area with built bunkers and bays to process, chip and keep separately wood chippings, bark, mulch, compost, soil, gravel, sand, then all branches and park cuttings could be put to good use and with a small loader, be returned to the trails, beds and trees (perhaps beside the council yard)

11. **Create a propagation area** with a covered potting up workspace and poly tunnels to grow collected seed and cuttings from the ancient and rare trees in the fall and allow and encourage people and school groups in to see and get involved

12. **At the site of the Lodge** in the Kilbroney Park arboretum, erect an information plaque indicating the history of the Lodge, its 5000 acre Estate and the families that lived there through the ages; Ross, Roxborough, Canning and Bowes-Lyons

13. **Restore the metal estate railings** that run along the front of the arboretum to the lodge site and small car park. Cut back and clear away the evasive species, the overgrowth of gorse, holly and laurel etc. Expose, lift out, refurbish, replace the missing sections, then refit and paint black

14. At the new Events Centre, **display a large sawn tree ring from a fallen ancient tree**, sand and varnish to highlight the growth rings, metal band to keep it together and indicate from the heart out to the present day all the important historical events of the past 300 yrs during the life of this tree

15. **Clean out the open drain along the centre ditch from the northern boundary** running south to the small beech woodland and glen stream in the north meadow, to stop it flooding the meadow field

16. **Form a new lake** in the rushes hollow of the already level northern meadow field fed from the glen stream, for wildlife and leisure and in drought to fill bowsers to water trees and plants in the park, with a new trail, trees, planting and seats around it

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17. **Remove the centre birch tree from in front of the restaurant** windows so the great meadow can be seen from the restaurant

18. Cut out and provide **an additional 10 caravan parking bays** in the non landscaped unused rough grass areas of the main caravan site

19. At the Fiddlers green and the Cloughmore trail view points, **raise or lower the tree crowns** and leave only the good tree species to **allow all to see the panoramic views**

20. The very dedicated youth of the village train in the park in all weathers both male and female football teams + other sports and activities without any facilities of any kind.

We should **provide specific shelters, changing areas and toilets** for them

21. **Adjustments, Maintenance and Protection of Ancient Trees.**

The Evergreen Holm Oak 3.9m girth (Old Homer tree of the year 2016) at the park entrance from the fairy glen gate, although leaning now our lifetime, the great bows have with age and the lean have become enormously heavy and as it is Evergreen and keeps its foliage during the winter, I am concerned the tree may soon not be able to support the weight of these leaning limbs, never mind with a fall of snow or storm. I fear without sympathetically cutting back to reduce its weight and providing prop support, these great bows will rip from the main trunk or pull the tree over with devastating results to this wonderful tree. With some help this tree could survive another 200yrs.

The great multi-stem Sessile Oak on the Fairy Glen (8.3m Girth), 80m past the glen stream trail, possibly sprang from a squirrels hoard of acorns buried and forgotten centuries ago. We should reroute the trail out from this tree, remove the old compacted hardcore trail in to close and replace with soil and humus, erect a little low rustic fence around to protect and indicate its importance. The five bows of this tree are about equivalent to the five mature oaks in the square. Place a bench/seat close by so this unique, wonderful, ancient tree can be seen and enjoyed by generations to come.

There is only one other 8m girth oak I know of in Northern Ireland (the dying 500yr old oak Belvoir Park Belfast).

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The Sequoia Giganteum (4.9 m girth), undisturbed for 150yrs in the arboretum, is now showing damage to bark, trunk and roots due to the increased number of people using the Narnia trail. Before more irreversible damage is done to this wonderful tree, clear the scrub and evasive species and create a new trail between the Two Sequoias to leave both visible.

Remove the old hardcore compacted trail that is harming the known tree and encouraging people to the trunk and replace this hardcore with rich soil, compost and humus to feed and nourish and create a bed for falling seed.

Carefully cut and stop the ivy smothering the second Sequoia. With a bit of care these trees could go on for 1000 years.

22. Name the Great Trees of the arboretum. Provide the posts and plaques to name the 8 additional wonderful, ancient trees now visible and accessible along the last Narnia trail extension. If we made the most important of the other 60 individual tree species present accessible, perhaps we could also provide name plaques on those.

23. In the Arboretum, sympathetically thin out and remove the gorse, overgrowth and evasive species clearing around all the important ancient trees now smothered, allowing light back to them and people to see. Remove the Narnia mounds of compacted hardpan -till on the surface damaging the Holm Oak roots, leave old fallen timber for wildlife habitat and humus. In open internal areas plant crocus, bluebell, primrose and snowdrop. Clear and lay bark on all the internal trails to display and leave accessible this wonderful Cathedral of trees we are so lucky to have.

24. Rebuild the Kilbroney meadow gate lodge to provide an events ticket office, craft shop and information

25. The old Rostrevor Killmory - Canning Reservoir at the upper car park

- a. Clear the reservoir area enclosed by the fine stone walls, cut out all the overgrowth,
- b. Create new trails and area above the reservoir and stream
- c. Keep and prune any mature good tree species allowing movement along the new trail,
- d. Clear the fine stone walls and all trees roots and growth undermining walls and copings and repair the entrance pillars and gate
- e. Remove trees growing into the reservoir walls and fallen in the reservoir.

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f. Provide benches, bins, lifebelt, information board and signage,

(Have a look at the area enclosed with the wall on Google Earth)

26. Build a Hydro Turbine on the glen stream. The head of water from the reservoir would provide all electrical power for the Caravan site, office, the Cloughmore centre and park lighting. (Clerk Engineering)

27. The Syenite Granite Quarry - Climbing wall

Move the Oak forest conservation area boundary line to the forest side of the old Syenite Granite quarry. Clean off all the ivy and overgrowth from the rock face. Lay a drain for the quarry base surface water. Sympathetically clear a path in among the trees and make a proper rustic gravel access trail along the bottom of the climbing walls.

Create a safe access/descent trail along the top of the crag and down through the trees. Provide secure belay points for top rope and abseil points for the top of all climbs.

All the climbing routes could be listed, graded and given local names. Some I climbed and named 30 years ago. This proper climbing wall could be outstanding, giving a completely sheltered all year round climbing experience at sea level with existing parking facilities available for all outdoor activity groups, schools and individuals alike. Now with rock climbing included in the Olympics, even to watch the climbers on the wall would be an attraction and the area could also be perfect for an amphitheatre

28. Slieve Martin, Chair and Bike Cable Lift

Build a chair and bike cable lift centre from the rear meadow field to Slieve Martin for bikers, walkers, tourist, people with disabilities, senior citizens and first responders.

The benefits of a lift system for the village would be game changing. It would increase the numbers of people now using the hills and pay for itself in no time. People would come from all over Ireland for the experience. The outstanding views over Carlingford Lough, from the high Mournes to the Dublin hills, the 1600ft height and the wind in their faces perhaps for the first time in their lives.

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Section 2. Other Rostrevor Projects

29. Rostrevor Beach Front

The right of way to the shore - sea front, opposite St Colman's gardens.

Clear the overgrowth and litter from the access / right of way and lay new surface of sand washed pebbles. Repair and improve the road with rock armour at the river corner and remove all rubbish. Clear weeds and rack, clean up the beach and the mouth of the Ghan River. Haul in and lay new raised sand beach area, Provide benches, bins, dog poo bins, game areas and Life belt. Provide and erect brown tourist sign indicating the beach and amenity area and create a small parking area in the unused space along the Ghan River in St Colman's gardens (access road was cleared 2017 by Jarlath and Rostrevor volunteers).

30. Right of way trails

- A. The Scholars Path, Upper Kilbroney to Drumreagh.
 - B. The park lane to Kilbroney upper, around Lacken beg at Paddy Murphy's
 - C. Drumreagh by the Marl hole to Moygannon, and back by shore road
 - D. The black lonan from Newtown road to Donnans now Sweeney's and the Graveyard
1. Approach the local land owners to secure and open the original right of ways
 2. Inspect, clear paths, provide stiles, gates, way markers and seats at view points,
 3. Erect weatherproof information boards on points of interest
 4. Erect protected detailed route map maybe in the Square or at the Monument
 5. Produce leaflets and maps of routes for tourist centres and accommodation providers.

31. New Rostrevor Shore front public walkway and cycle path

Create a new walkway and cycle path along the entire shorefront from the Docks to the Monument. Provide access points at the Monument, the Ghan and Kilbroney Rivers, the slope and the docks and access to the beach. Provide, bins, seats, lifebelts, and signage.

32. The Ranfurley house

This unused property could, with help, be converted and advertised as providing **affordable type accommodation**.

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With its village center location, existing car park for cars, mini buses, Motorhomes etc.

Tourist, walkers, climbers, students, mountain bikers, school groups, international groups might stay and then use our restaurants, pubs, shops and all local businesses instead of just driving in, enjoying our great location and facilities for free, eating there packed lunches in the car park and then, just going away.

33. From the Docks to the Woodhouse, **cut out all the overgrowth** at the sea side of the road, raise the crowns and leave the good mature trees only, allowing all to see the wonderful views of our Carlingford Lough.

34. **Advertise the story of General Ross, Bladensburg, The Whitehouse, War of 1812 and Rostrevor** on all Irish and NI tourism websites. Produce leaflets for the Tourist offices and accommodation providers with the facts connecting Ross and Rostrevor to The Battle of Bladensburg, the taking and sacking of Washington and The Whitehouse.

The Generals death at the advance on Baltimore.

The connection with the American National Anthem.

The Great 40 x 30ft Star Spangled Banner displayed in Rostrevor.

A leaflet and map Indicating All the Ross family locations and influences in Rostrevor.

35. 1730 Carrickbawn – 1836 Bladensburg - 1900 Rostrevor House

The Historic Gothic Revival Castle-Residence, Elizabeth Ross and families home after the Generals death at north point. Endless possibilities. The Ross story and memorabilia.

The most wonderful important site for the much needed Rostrevor hotel.

(note: now privately owned, 2018)

36. **List, name and describe the collection of ancient and rare trees planted by Sir John Ross of Bladensburg from 1870 – 1925.**

He was a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Cold Stream Guards and was an equally important historical figure as his Grandfather the General. Sir John Ross was head of the Dublin metropolitan police, took the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Carnarvon to the holly sea and was highly thought of by the Pope and presented him with a relic of the cross. He was multi-lingual with 7 languages and an amazing Arborist. In 1900, his plantings and grounds were recognised as the finest in Ireland with 2500 rare trees and plants growing in the open more than anywhere else in the UK. Hundreds of his rare,

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ancient and notable trees are still there in their prime now, I have identified 13 species of Oak alone so far.

Provide a map and leaflets; create trails through the Ancient woodlands and magnificent grounds to view the wonderful trees.

Bring back the garden fete.

Every local knows of the Ancient Oak wood running down to the Lough, but coming from Warrenpoint to Rostrevor look to the left, 30 acres of rare, ancient and world important trees, all of different species from all over the world. He helped Lady Londonderry with plants for Mount Stewart and liaised with and sent plants to Kew gardens.

37. **The Crag Cemetery**- clear, improve and indicate the Ross plot and Cross. Stabilize the collapsing Church gable and the bell stones before it's too late and clear and tidy around all the interesting graves

List and make known:

38. The history of the Mass rocks, the Martyred Priest Memorial and slaughtered people at Altataggart and Batts - The Famine wall at the valley of the tears.

39. The Tom Dunn story, flogged to death at Barack Green.

40. TK Whitaker, born Rostrevor, Economist, awarded greatest living Irish person 2002.

41. A Statue or Plaque of Giant Murphy or Tom Dunn in the Square.

42. List the historical story of St Bronagh, The Bell, The Cross, The Well and Monastery.

43. The Lime Kilms at Reed Hall hill Kilbroney upper.

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44. New Welcome to the Mourne Tourist Information Centre.

The Elevated site and house platform prepared and planted out by General Ross with Oak and Beech for his new home in 1813 behind the now Monument site and field to the Warrenpoint road.

1. Purchase The Field.
2. Build a new Welcome to the Mourne Tourist Information Center and craft shop
3. Build an entrance to this center of Huge Mourne Granite Megaliths
4. Provide a car, motorhome and bus parking area at this new center
5. Build new footpaths from the new center up to and through the mature Beech and Oak trees planted by General Ross to approach the fantastic views of the Lough, the Mourne and the Monument from behind
6. Bridge over the fine moat ha-ha drain channel walls to the Monument and form a new opening and trail through the fence, the overgrowth and some recent young tree planting to the monument grounds
7. At the mature beech and oak tree area and monument grounds provide park benches, seats and bins
8. Clear the view to Carrickbawn-Rostrevor house and provide information board
9. Access to the Monument would now be totally safe and a new interesting approach the Lough, Rostrevor and the Mourne, No Longer would people, senior citizens and families have to run the gauntlet of cars trying to cross the road to get to the Monument.

Mark proper parking spaces facing out to sea at the old monument corner lay-by site.

Implementing these items would improve our village and bring attention to the wonderful assets we have, provide some new work for local people, new jobs and help all local businesses, attract and entertain more tourists bringing in much needed revenue and show the Rostrevor we all know and love to the world.