

# Ballinrobe Town Hall

## Prospectus

*The beating heart of our community*



*We will deepen  
our bonds as a  
community there*



*We will  
sing there*



*We will  
cry there*



*By the community,  
for the community,  
enhancing the  
community life*



## ***Ballinrobe – a vibrant community***

We are proud of our community, cultural and sporting groups.

When the town was nominated for the 2013 Pride of Place national awards, the abundance of community life became fully apparent for all to see.

But there is something missing in Ballinrobe life, something fundamental, something critical, and it has been missing for too long.

Our old Town Hall fell into disrepair in the 1990s, was closed in 1996 and demolished out of concern for public safety in 1999.

Now we are going back the future.

Using the site of the old Town Hall on Ballinrobe's Cornmarket, we aim to make Ballinrobe Town Hall the beating heart of our community once again.

And we are looking for your support to make this dream a reality.

Our project is not overly ambitious: in fact, in our drawings, we have made maximum use of the footprint available to us at the venue. Through judicious use of space, we can create a multi-functional venue that will serve this community for many years to come.

***Michael Sweeney, Chairperson, Ballinrobe New Town committee***

***Ballinrobe New Town Hall committee***

**Chairperson:** Michael Sweeney

**Secretary:** Siobhan O'Malley

**Treasurer:** Sean O'Connell

**PRO:** Liam Horan

**Committee Members:** Rory O'Neill, Tony Walkin, Margot O'Shea, Michael Burke, Mary Jackson, Tim O'Sullivan, Gwen Costello, Des May, Sheena Duddy, Mike Finnerty, Emmet Humphreys

**Local Representatives:** Cllr Damien Ryan (Cathaoirleach Mayo Co. Co. 2014-'15), Cllr Patsy O'Brien

***I will get my  
player of the year  
award there***



***It's where I will  
learn ballet***



## *A typical Thursday night in February in the new Ballinrobe Town Hall*

- Ballinrobe Musical Society rehearse for their next award-winning show at the front of the main performance area
- Ballinrobe GAA club plot future successes in a discrete room at the rear of the main performance area
- A fly-tying workshop for angling enthusiasts goes ahead in an upstairs meeting room – and they must clean the place up afterwards because Ballinrobe Active Retirement Association will be using the same room in the morning for their Creative Writing class
- A local author launches her book in another meeting room area – and the kettle is on in the kitchen for some refreshments afterwards
- Teenagers from the Maple Youth Centre hold a team-building activity event.
- Ballinrobe Folk Choir rehearse in advance of upcoming performances.



*We will  
meet there*



## *A typical Friday morning in December*

- Corporate training in progress on the balcony
- Irish language classes upstairs
- Touring group setting up their stage for tonight's production
- Teachers from around south Mayo undergo an in-service training programme.
- St Joseph's Primary School apply the finishing touches to their Christmas musical.

## *Features of the new Ballinrobe Town Hall*

- Seven disparate spaces where events can take place at the same time
- 408-seater auditorium
- Emphasis on multi-functionality and sustainability
- Energy efficiency a key priority



*I will make my  
acting debut there*



## *Financial Overview*

Based on current projections, supported by Construction Industry Federation (CIF) guidelines, we forecast the project cost to be approximately €1.5m. This to include:

- Design
- Construction
- Fit-out

On completion of the project, we will have an attractive, ergonomically-designed building suitable to host small groups and gatherings, as well as large ones. Our clear strategy here is to ensure the long-term viability of the facility through careful management of day-to-day costs such as lighting, heating, repairs and maintenance.

While our project is a relatively modest proposal, it does require a significant amount of money to ensure its completion. We have already begun the process of engaging with the groups from whom we will be seeking support. These include local government (Mayo County Council), the European Rural Development Programme / LEADER (via South-West Mayo Development Company Ltd), and central Government (via relevant departments and agencies).

Of course, this endeavour will not succeed without local financial support and the involvement of the community.

## *The History*

Since 1886, a Town Hall had existed in Ballinrobe. Due to a lack of funding to renovate it, the building fell into disrepair and was abandoned in 1996 and eventually demolished in 1999. The site on which the building stood has continued to be owned by a Town Hall Company, a body first formed in 1886 when the Town Hall was purchased by the town for £80.

Today, following the purchase of a small piece of land adjacent to the site, the integrity of the old Town Hall site is assured. Our committee is confident that with the goodwill and financial support of Mayo County Council, South West Mayo Development Company, national Government, other interested stakeholders and the wider community of Ballinrobe and surrounding areas there is a very real prospect of again having a Town Hall in which to congregate and socialise.

*“...hard work, creativity and ingenuity were truly remarkable and testament to everything that is so strong and wonderful about the county of Mayo and its people. The work of local groups, such as the Musical Society, cannot be underestimated in adding to the quality of life of the people of the locality. John [McColgan] and I sincerely hope the vision of the people of Ballinrobe will find expression in the building of this new and vital resource for all to enjoy”*

***- Moya Doherty, co-founder of Riverdance, along with John McColgan. They attended the world amateur premiere of their show The Pirate Queen, staged by Ballinrobe Musical Society in Ballinrobe Community School, 2010.***



**Teresa Reaney  
as Ethel Brander**



**Gerry Hughes  
as Boiled Herman**



**Colm Finnerty  
as Emile la Flamme.**



**Marian Kelly  
as Lady Jane**



“Living in the vicinity of Ballinrobe, I am familiar with - and an admirer of - the work of the Ballinrobe Musical Society, whose annual show is one of the highlights in the region. But this group, which stages performances of the highest quality, is severely hampered by the lack of a proper theatre and the accompanying production facilities. I strongly support the community initiative to build a new Town Hall which will also incorporate a performance theatre and so encourage further local, cultural and education-linked performances.

Rural Ireland is afflicted in so many ways by the flight from the land, through either external or internal emigration and the centralising pull of major towns. There is, too, the loss of services at every level for those of us who live here. With so much being lost, this cultural initiative to serve Ballinrobe and its surrounding hinterland presents an opportunity to show support for the sustaining of cultural life in the rural west...and would go some way towards the reversal of the current erosion of services and support.

*The West is Awake.”*

*- Brendan Graham is a best-selling novelist and internationally renowned composer, with the Sunday Times, Canberra, declaring his documentary novel, The Whitest Flower, ‘an important addition to the Irish national story’. The Irish Times dubbed him a ‘Musical Midas’, and his song, You Raise Me Up, with almost one thousand different recordings and one billion internet views, has become one of the most successful songs in the history of popular music. He is also the composer of Ireland’s last two, winning Eurovision songs - ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll Kids’ and ‘The Voice’ and his songs have been translated into over 40 languages and recorded by artistes across the genres, from folk to pop to classical. He lives in Co. Mayo.*

## ***The Proposal***

It is our intention to develop a Town Hall for the benefit of the whole community on the historical site of the old Town Hall in the centre of the Ballinrobe.

Comprehensive, community-wide public consultation has been undertaken to establish the needs of the community. A committee consisting of townspeople, representatives of various local social and community organisations and elected representatives has been established. Plans are being designed based on the afore-mentioned needs. A Company with charitable status is already in place and the Board of Directors has been added to with some members of the wider committee.

We wish to have a bright, modern, warm, welcoming and multifunctional building of which the community will be proud. Additionally, the economic boost this project will afford Ballinrobe Town and surrounding area is not to be underestimated.

## *The Need*

In recent times, Ballinrobe has seen significant improvement in the town amenities. However there is no facility to gather together as a community to socialise, to hold festivals or similar events. We cannot offer a suitable space to invite touring artistic and cultural acts. We do not have a facility to host a seminar, a cine club or any similar cultural experience. The young Irish dancers, ballerinas, musicians and actors and actresses have no local facility in which to showcase their talent. Members of our community have achieved many successes in national sports, at AIMS (national musical society awards) to name a few, but we do not have a place where we can gather to celebrate those successes and to hold charity events or fundraise to assure future successes.

A recent study identified more than 50 groups in the area covering a wide range of activities and catering for a diverse population; all of whom rely upon a great variety of buildings, and the generosity of their owners, in which to hold meetings, whether the space is appropriate or not.

Here is a sample list of needs identified by our recent Public Consultation Process – this list is by no means exhaustive but is merely an indication of the needs that exist in our community:

### **Primary Schools**

Summer Tea Party, Parents Body meetings, Choir and Band performances, Christmas Concerts Teacher Courses

### **Ballinrobe Enterprise Organisation (BEO)**

Press Conferences, Public Relations events.

### **Ballinrobe Musical Society**

Annual productions – these run for seven consecutive nights each January or February.

### **Pastoral Council**

Grow in Faith Programme, Confirmation events.

### **Queen of the Lakes festival**

Annual Queen of the Lakes pageant - was a hugely popular annual event in the old Town Hall.

### **No Name Club**

Talent competitions.

### **Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann**

Ceilidhe, Set Dancing classes, Trad. Music classes.

### **Comhrá & Craic group**

Conversational Circle, Irish language classes.

### **World Cup Brown Trout Angling Competition**

Annual gala banquet – hosting over 400 people.

### **Ballinrobe GAA Club**

Annual dinner-dance and other club events.

### **Foróige & Maple Youth Centre**

Teenage discos, Fun Days, Youth Team Building.

### **Business opportunities**

Corporate training venue.

### **Western Lakes Cycling Club**

Feeding point & pit-stop for major cycling tours and races passing through Ballinrobe, annual dinner, up to ten times per year, starting-point for local tours and races.



# *Ballinrobe Town Hall*

*Let's make it happen!*

*If you want to help make it happen,  
please contact any member of the committee.*

*We need YOUR support!*