



INISHTURK RENEWED COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025-2030



INTRODUCTION

INISHTURK COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The Inishturk community participated in the Mayo Community Futures programme in 2015 which resulted in the Inishturk Community Action Plan 2015-2020. The plan summarised our community's views on:

- What Inishturk was like then
- The vision for the future of our island
- The issues that mattered most
- The priorities for projects and action

We have now finalised a process of renewing the Action Plan by identifying projects and actions which the community wishes to focus on over the next 5 years 2025 – 2030. The preparation of the renewed plan has been carried out by the Inishturk Community Futures Group with guidance and support from Mayo Community Futures.

LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

This Renewed Action Plan is the result of the following process:

Progress Update:

We evaluated what we had achieved from our plan, what was no longer relevant and what we had left to achieve

Community Household Survey:

A household survey was conducted on the island

Business Survey consultation:

An online survey was conducted to gather the specific views of our businesses

Update Community Profile:

We have noted what has changed since we last did our Action Plan

Community Voting Event:

Data obtained from the household survey, the business survey and the progress update were collated into themes. Everyone in the community was invited to a community event, which facilitated the community to prioritise actions by voting with dots for what they thought was most important.

Renewed Action Plan:

The results of the Community Voting Event were devised into this Community Action Plan by Mayo Community Futures

OUR COMMUNITY NOW

We have summarised below the main facts and figures from the Community Profile since the 2015 – 2020 Action Plan.

INISHTURK COMMUNITY PROFILE 2024

Population

Local knowledge shows that the current population on the island is 51. This is down from 53 people shown in the last plan. The decline in the age group of 25 to 44 years is critical for the future of island life. Increasing the population especially families has been identified as a key issue in this plan.

Housing

At present there are 34 houses on Inishturk, 23 are occupied by local islanders and 7 are holiday cottages. There are 3 derelict houses and 1 house requires minor repair. The need for additional housing, both residential and tourist had been identified as a key issue in attracting people to move to the island.

Education

A new permanent building is being constructed to replace the porta cabins at the Primary School. Currently there are three pupils enrolled. Unfortunately, the school is facing a critical situation and the residents are working to encourage families to move back to the island. Two secondary school students only live on Inishturk for half the year as they are enrolled in the Sacred Heart and Rice Colleges; Secondary schools in Westport. The separation for long periods creates significant challenges for students and families during the students' formative teenage years. At present, there is one third-level student attending college.

A variety of courses are offered every winter and spring to support the residents of the island, e.g. cookery, first aid, creative skills, music, art, farming and marine studies.

Health and Care Services

The Health Centre continues to provide health screening services for all residents of the island. A Public Health Nurse is permanently stationed on the island. A doctor from Clifden visits every three weeks, weather permitting and depending on other commitments. All other specialist treatments are on the mainland and patients must travel to Castlebar or Galway. The HSE does not cover travel expenses for islanders attending these appointments. In emergencies, evacuations are conducted by helicopter; typically transporting patients to Mayo General Hospital in Castlebar. A new helipad that meets all safety standards was launched in May 2025. This reassures the community that, in the event of a medical evacuation, emergency services will be able to land safely in response to the emergency.

There is no Garda or Fire Service on the island. Every household has basic firefighting equipment, such as fire extinguishers, smoke alarms, and fire blankets. However, this equipment is now outdated, and there is an urgent need for households to be equipped with modern firefighting tools and to receive training in fire prevention.



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Employment and the Local Economy

Most farmers in Inishturk are smallholders, with an average landholding of 20 to 25 acres. Approximately 60% of the land is commonage. The land quality is generally poor, characterised by hilly and rocky terrain, which is primarily suitable for the rough grazing of sheep.

Currently, there are up to six people engaged in seasonal lobster and crab fishing on Inishturk, supported by a fleet of three fishing boats and approximately three currachs. Tourism has also become an important part of the local economy. The island has two bed and breakfasts, with a total of twenty-seven bed nights available. From May to September, walking groups, anglers and day trippers visit for various events and weekend festivals organised on the island. Over the past twenty years, these visitors have played a crucial role in the development of tourism on Inishturk.

One person is employed on a CE Scheme which is supervised and managed by South West Mayo Development Company.

There are five people employed on the Community Services Programme. They operate the Community Club, Shop, and Marketing of the island. The Community Development Programme has one full-time coordinator and one part-time Finance Manager. There is also a Rural Social Scheme which employs two people in a part-time capacity. During the summer the Community Club employs approximately six seasonal staff.

Transport

A subsidised ferry service connects the island to the mainland, offering a minimum of 14 return sailings each week throughout the year. Additionally, there is a postal service that operates twice a week, provided by a local twelve-seater ferry. There is a subsidised cargo service to the island that services the island four times per week. Islanders would like

to have a designated parking area on the mainland at Roonagh leaving spaces for tourists and visitors to avail of the remaining area.

Community Organisations, Clubs and Groups

The Community Club is the focal point for the island. It continues to house various social events and all training and educational courses are conducted there. It is managed by the voluntary board of Trustees and the Community Development Coordinator. Profits generated from the company are reinvested back into the community. In 2023, the Inishturk Community Club CLG completed the construction of two new self-catering cottages to promote tourism on the island and increase visitor numbers.

Sports facilities on the island include a football pitch and dressing rooms.

New community organisations and groups which have been formed since the original Community Action Plan include:-

- The Harbour Working Group,
- The Clare Island/Inishturk Sustainable Harbour Group,
- The Ferry Monitoring Group,
- The Sustainable Population Working Group,
- The Rural Regeneration Development Fund - Working Group
- and The Net-Zero/Environment Group.

Outdoor Facilities and Open Spaces

Lobbying and planning are currently underway to install public toilets and showers at the harbour, as well as a shelter on the pier. There are two registered looped walks, which are included in the Wild Atlantic Way.



INISHTURK

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In 2022, an exciting new playground facility was established, designed to provide a fun and engaging environment for children of all ages. It boasts a variety of features, including swings, a zip line and slides, ensuring plenty of play options. Additionally, the facility incorporates equipment for adults promoting a family-friendly space where everyone can enjoy outdoor activities together.

Environment

Inishturk is currently embarking on the creation of a 5-year biodiversity Plan. This Summer, 2025, will also see work progressing on a Net-Zero - and Environmental Best Practice Road map.

Heritage

Inishturk Community Club was awarded training for 2 people for Cuimhneamh an Chláir's Oral History Mentoring Programme for Community and Heritage groups.

As part of the training, professional equipment will be provided and used to record the community of Inishturk, the stories, and the heritage. A culture and heritage objective is included in the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund application for the multipurpose hub.



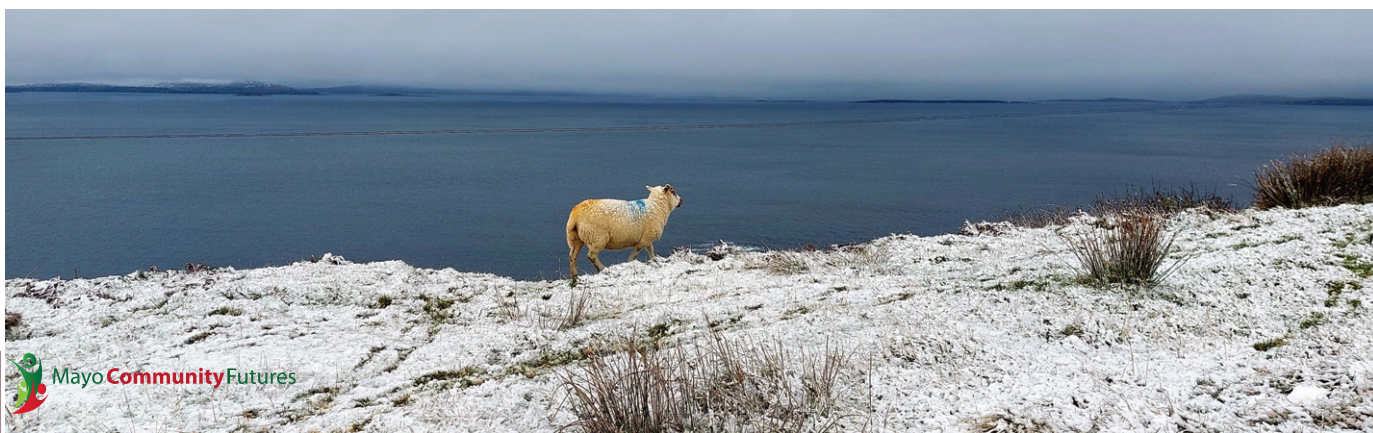
Restaurant at Inishturk Community Club.



'No ordinary moment'



Harbour at eveningtime



INISHTURK COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025-2030

Theme 1 INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the most important structures for the residents of Inishturk is the pier and harbour. Boats need to dock safely behind a breakwater, a proper slipway needs to be created and mooring for an island ferry. The provision of a shelter and public toilet in the harbour has been sought previously and residents are anxious to see this project completed. On the mainland; docking at Roonagh pier needs to be made safe and designated parking spaces need to be created for islanders as during the tourist season much of the parking can be taken up with tourists and visitors.

The community want to ensure fire equipment and training are kept up to date. They will continue to liaise with the Fire Department in Mayo County Council to get water hydrants installed and the provision of a fire hose that can be transported around the island.

Recent storms have highlighted the need to have backup lighting for the helipad and this has been addressed.

Road and public lighting need to be maintained, and the current phone coverage and broadband service provider needs to make improvements to the service.



Power being restored after storm Eowyn

In the process of compiling this plan, the community has identified a number of steps they would like to see taken in relation to infrastructure on the island:

Main Priorities

Harbour and Pier improvements

- Develop the harbour to create breakwater area, slipway access, room for an Island owned ferry
- Ensure Roonagh pier is made safe for the landing area
- Continue to liaise with MCC on the shelter and public toilet in the harbour
- Create designated car parking spaces for Islanders at Roonagh pier

Island Fire Fighting Service

- Consult with Mayo County Council Fire Department on training residents in fire control
- Fire training and the upgrade of fire equipment in each house
- Research the provision of water hydrants at each house
- Seek to have a fire hose available on the island

Helicopter Service

- A new helipad that meets all safety standards was launched in May 2025

Improve roads and public lighting

- Identify roads that need maintenance
- Identify areas where lighting is a problem

Phone coverage and Broadband

- Approach service providers to get a better service

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Theme 2 LOCAL ECONOMY

Creating and increasing employment opportunities on the island is key to building the population there. There is a need for increased population, especially of families to sustain the community and the school service. People moving to the island need to know they can make a living and that there are a wide range of services available to them. The proposal for a Fish Farm along with creating employment opportunities including a Digital Hub are seen as key priority. The establishment of an Industry and Investment Task Force is vital to bringing employment to the island.

The following priorities have been identified to develop the local economy on the island:

Main Priorities

Proposed Fish Farm

- Continue to Support the Proposed Fish Farm on the Island. Currently waiting on Minister to review the island's application.

Create Employment opportunities

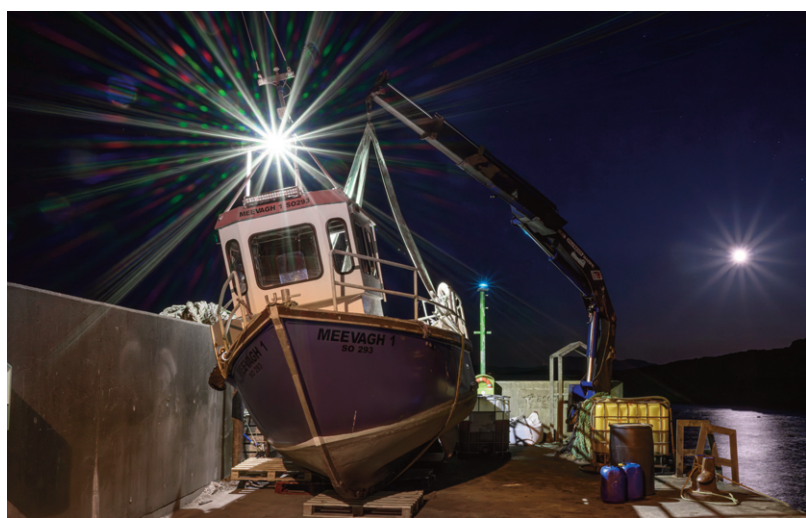
- Create Digital Hub
- Seaweed/sea salt harvesting
- Organic Food – lamb, fish, vegetables
- Rental business – bikes, aquatic sports
- Tour guide - for people on a day trip to the island

Encourage an Islander to apply for the boat tender

- Support applications from islanders

Consider establishing an Industry and Investment Task Force

- Bring together a group of interested islanders in partnership with universities, relevant development and enterprise agencies etc.
- Make an inventory of all the assets of the island - natural, human and structural
- Encourage the island diaspora to support and attract investment
- Look at ways to market island produce
- Research what other Island communities have done



Theme 3 TOURISM AND HERITAGE

Developing Inishturk as a must-see destination for tourists is one of the goals for the community. The creation of a marketing and promotional plan along with targeting special interest groups is key to this. The development of tourist facilities, activities and accommodation will help to attract tourists to the island. Employment opportunities can be created as part of these developments. The community would like to have a designated building that will house a display of the islands history and celebrate the heritage of the island.

Here are some of the priorities the community have put forward in relation to tourism and heritage:

Main Priorities

Continue to develop a Marketing and Promotional Plan

- New website
- Host festivals and cultural events
- Creating an “Inishturk Brand” and promote
- Promote Tránaun Beach – Green Coast Award

Developing the Natural Resources and Tourist Facilities on the Island

- Maintain Green Flag beach
- Continue to develop outdoor activities e.g. walking, cycling, water-based activities and bird watching
- Continue to target special interest groups based on above activities

Develop Tourist Accommodation

- Support existing businesses
- Investigate alternative tourist accommodation ideas to increase availability

Improve roads and public lighting

- Identify roads that need maintenance
- Identify areas where lighting is a problem

Develop a Museum or Heritage Centre

- Display the history of the island using maps, stories, films and interactive displays
- Continue to organise culture events that celebrate the heritage of the Island



Theme 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

There is a need for more housing and accommodation on Inishturk. The community expressed a need for more social activities that will cater for both tourists and to bring the people of the Island together encouraging participation and engagement. The community would like to see public areas better maintained and litter free. They would also like to see a heating oil cooperative formed, a community multi use area and the reassurance of increased health services. The community would like to maintain the National School facility and keep it in good repair. They would also like to create distance learning opportunities for future secondary school pupils.

The community has highlighted a number of priorities that they would like to see developed as part of community facilities and activities:

Main Priorities

Increase in Housing Stock

- Encourage owners of vacant houses to apply for Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant
- Identify potential families wishing to live on the island
- Liaise with Mayo County Council in relation to planning for suitable sites and housing

Better Management of Public Areas

- Agree a plan to maintain the public areas
- Campaign to prevent litter in public areas

Home Heating Cooperative

- Research the creation of a Heating Oil co-operative that could register for VAT and claim back

Support and Expand Existing Services

- Maintain Community integrity and Community engagement
- Increase activities for children
- Establish a multi-use community corner
- Review and campaign for increased doctor visits and locum cover

National School/Secondary School

- Continue with National School works.
- Research the opportunity to conduct distance learning for students



Theme 5 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Inishturk community are eager to become a more sustainable community, and they want to raise awareness of the environment and promote better choices for the future. Island living inherently provides an appreciation for unpolluted and scenic natural environments and it is important to the community to protect and maintain these assets. They would like to ensure that recycling and litter control along with waste removal are a priority in the community. Many in the community have been farming for generations and it is hoped that some of the traditional methods of growing vegetables and fruit along with methods of composting will be revived. The establishment of a community garden and green initiatives are some of the projects the community would like to develop. The community would like to explore renewable energy options for their houses, businesses, public buildings and travel.

The community identified a number of priorities that they would like to see developed that will make their community more environmentally sustainable:

Main Priorities

Waste Management

- Improve and expand recycling facilities
- Increase waste removal services
- Arrange teams to do litter picks/campaign to prevent litter in public places
- Community Garden

Community Garden

- Identify an area for a community garden
- Erect polytunnels with a view to growing a variety of foods and vegetables
- Establish a composting area

Green Initiatives

- Identify areas where trees could be planted
- Look at adapting organic farming practices
- Tackle Invasive species

Sustainable and Renewable Energy

- Develop a Renewable Energy Plan for the island
- Look at solar, wind and wave energy sources
- Retrofit Houses
- Electric cars and charging points
- Electric community bus



INISHTURK COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2025 – 2030

This plan guides our community and our organisations on the actions to be implemented over the next five years.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART IN THE PROCESS
THE RESPONSES HELPED TO INFORM THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN

MAKING IT HAPPEN!

Inishturk Community Futures will take responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the plan as a whole. We are keen to work in a coordinated and inclusive manner and we are anxious not to duplicate or overlap the good work that is being done at present by a variety of active voluntary groups. We will continually strive to ensure that we are a truly representative community organisation, open and transparent and that we adhere to good governance practices.

REVIEWING THE ACTION PLAN

We will, from time to time, look at how we are all doing in implementing this plan. We will convene a REVIEW meeting annually to take stock of what has been achieved to date, as well as agreeing on updated actions for the next year. This will be incorporated in an Annual Progress Report for Mayo Community Futures.

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MAYO COMMUNITY FUTURES

The Community Futures programme assists communities to prepare their own action plans in a way that is inclusive and participatory. The process not only leads to good action planning that really reflects the priorities of communities but also encourages people to get involved in making things happen locally. Plans prepared in this way strengthen the communities' ability to access funding for their priority projects and effectively represent their interests at area, county and national levels.

The programme is managed by a partnership of community based organisations and agencies who are committed to supporting communities in having a say in their own future.

Mayo Community Futures is funded and supported by Mayo County Council.



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



If you would like to know more about Mayo Community Futures please contact;

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