

National Enterprise Town Awards: KBK Village

We are profiling all the towns to enter this year's [National Enterprise Town Awards](#). Today we are looking at KBK Village.

KBK Village is an area made up by three different parishes; Knocktopher, Ballyhale, Knockmoylan. It was formed to help alleviate the isolation and deprivation that affected the villages of Knocktopher and Ballyhale in particular, following the opening of the M9 Motorway and the recession.

Ballyhale-Knocktopher is unique as it is made up of two geographical settlements, connected by a regional road of 1.5km approximately. This gives the impression of two separate village centres, however, the two settlements share most services and facilities such as schools, Garda Station and a health centre.

Knockmoylan is a rural townland with no village or centre. Its main identification is its church which dates back over 200 years. Both Villages suffered badly during the recession, resulting in the loss of retail outlets and resulted in numerous vacant business and residential properties.

Local groups within the area realised that as a community they had to take action to solve the rural isolation that swept across area. A committee comprising representatives of all three areas was formed, which includes local and national politicians, with both community and business interests at its heart.

They undertook the task of identifying the needs of each community and working together to find a solution to address the issues identified. Out of this a number of projects developed; Billy's Tea Rooms and Shop, a community co-operative, owned by the community and run for the benefit of the community, a walkway between the villages of Knocktopher and Ballyhale for which funding was obtained through Kilkenny County Council, and the re-opening of the old Mass path to the Parish church of Ballyhale.

Following on this success, the KBK Group approached Kilkenny County Council and produced a Village Health Check which identified the assets and defects of the community. Following the publication of the Health Check in late 2018, the committee have developed an action plan for the next five years which will see the area continue to grow and support local businesses.

Written by Stephen Larkin

Published: 8 November, 2019