



NOREVISION

NORE RIVER CATCHMENT TRUST

Draft Strategy 2022 – 2027

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about”

– Margaret J Wheatley

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Nore River Catchment Trust (NRCT) exists so communities in the Nore can collectively take actions that will help improve the quality of the river Nore and its catchment. Those actions have for the most part been identified by the communities themselves and focus on environment, heritage, land-use, amenity, recreation and enterprise.

The training and education participative programmes undertaken by Nore Vision 2018–2021 laid the foundations of this work as did the work carried out by anglers in the Nore River Trust (NRT). The large number of skilled and motivated individuals in the catchment are ready to rise to the challenges presented by climate change, loss of biodiversity and loss of water quality. NRCT provides a sustainable structure through which we can all be part of the solution.

**NORE RIVER CATCHMENT TRUST
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
NOVEMBER 2021**



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1. OUR VISION AND VALUES



WHAT WE ARE:

Community based organisation working with individuals and groups in the Nore Catchment



OUR VISION:

A healthy and vibrant Nore catchment that is appreciated and enjoyed by all.



TO BE ACHIEVED BY:

Awareness-raising, education, training, recreation and collaborative actions identified by the people of the catchment.



WHAT WE OFFER:

A proven record of delivery and access to, and trust of, a large number of skilled, motivated and committed people.



OUR VALUES:

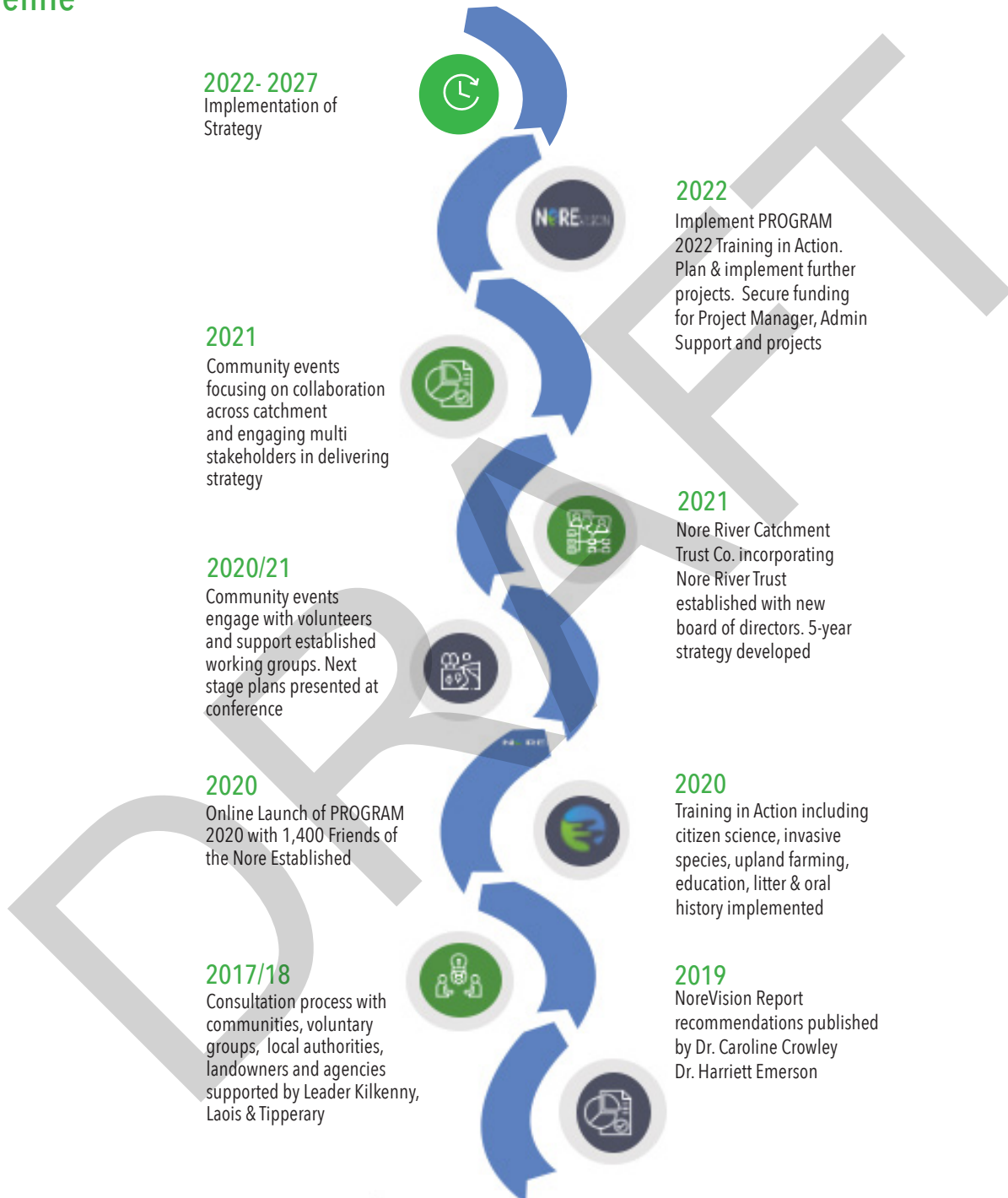
NRCT seeks to be inclusive, respectful, open and collaborative at all times.



2. INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGY



Timeline



The Nore River Catchment Trust (NRCT) was established as a Company Limited by Guarantee in July 2021. The sole purpose of the company is to provide a sustainable structure through which the skilled, motivated and committed communities in the catchment can deliver actions that they believe will improve and enhance the health and vibrancy of the river Nore and its catchment.

These actions, for the most part, were identified during the Nore Vision (2018 -2021) community engagement projects. They focus on activities in three key areas namely;

- environment and heritage
- land use and enterprise
- recreation and amenity

This first strategic plan covers the period 2022 – 2027. Its successful implementation will be dependent on ensuring communities are at the heart of all the work. Their ownership and development of the processes through which we operate, including its governance, collaborative approach and work programmes, will therefore be a central tenet of all our operations.

The vision is clearly articulated namely to have:

“A healthy and vibrant Nore catchment that is appreciated and enjoyed by all.”

The plan sets out at a **strategic level** how we can begin to realise this vision by focusing and working in collaboration with a range of agencies and individuals. Above all the success of this plan is dependant upon maintaining the support and trust of those communities with which it was created.

This NRCT Strategy aligns with sustainable development goals, national and regional plans including those for climate action, river basin management, biodiversity and county development.

All of these increasingly require meaningful community participation for their successful implementation. Individuals and communities within the Nore catchment can add value to that process through the NRCT.



3. PILLARS & ENABLING MECHANISMS

The key pillars and examples of the work sectors on which the NRCT will focus are presented in diagram 1. Diagram 2 represents the key enabling mechanisms for NCRT with “COMMUNITY” placed as the central cog on which all the work through knowledge and training, collaboration and communication and good governance will be driven.

Diagram 1:
Sectors of Work

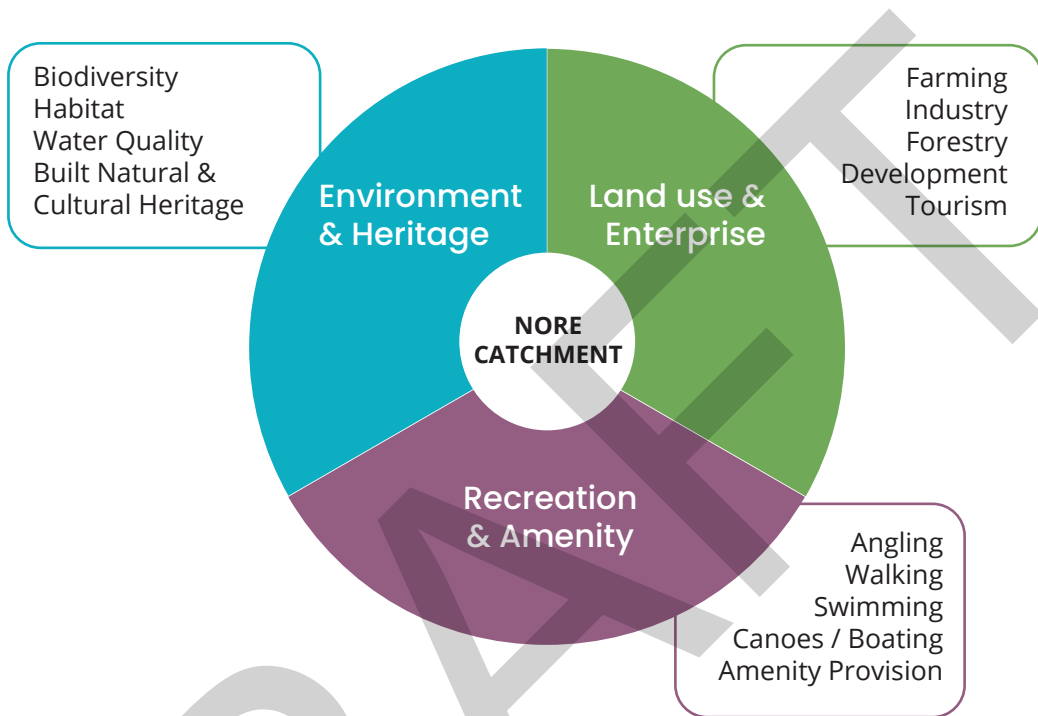
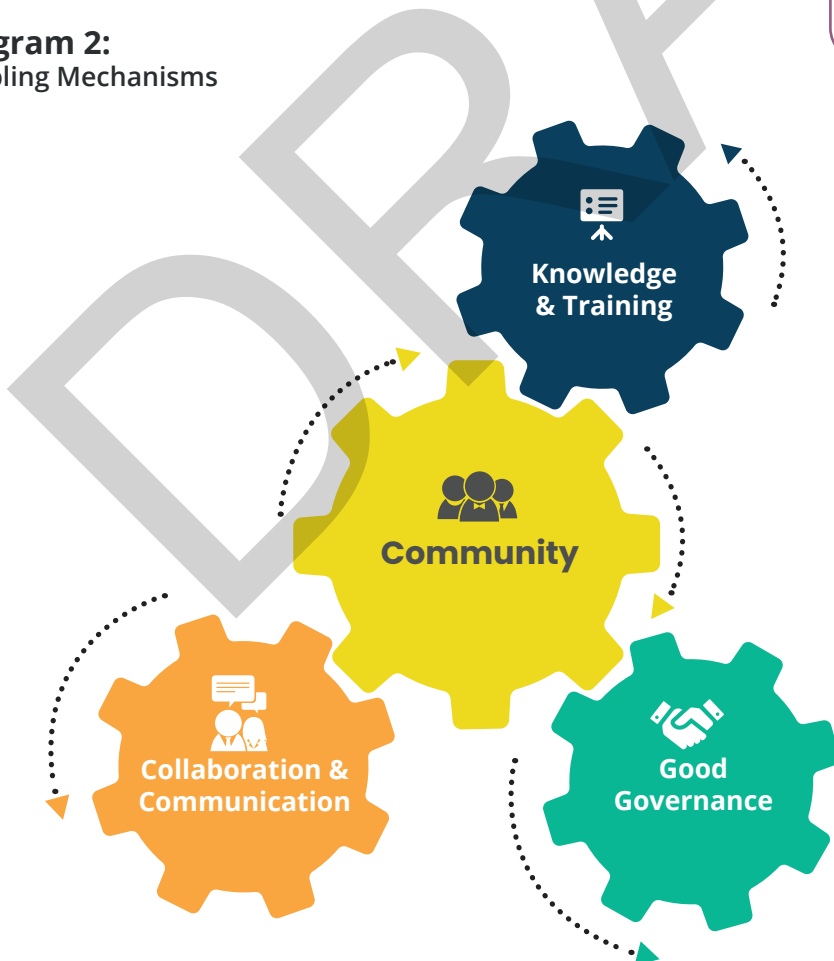


Diagram 2:
Enabling Mechanisms



4. SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2022 – 2027

NRCT has developed Strategic Objectives for each of its Key Pillars and for each of its Enabling Mechanisms. These are summarised below.

These strategic objectives provide focus. They bridge the gap between the big vision set for the organisation and the specific and measurable actions which will be carried out to help achieve that vision. Through these pillars and enabling mechanism The Trust will deliver a clear set of actions derived from those identified by communities in the catchment. The speed at which those actions can be delivered is dependant on available resources.

NRCT seeks to build on the commitment to the educational and collaborative approach which has been so evident in all the communities which the organisation has engaged with. The organisation's strategic objectives emphasise the interrelationships between each pillar and the connections between the enabling mechanisms and actions.

PILLARS



Environment and Heritage

To ensure communities play an effective role in improving water quality and appreciate their heritage throughout the catchment.



Recreation and Amenity

To promote sustainable recreational use within the catchment and to support new sustainable amenities on the River Nore and its tributaries with a focus on access for all.



Land Use and Enterprise

To support and protect the social infrastructure in rural areas and the systems that sustain them through encouraging a shift to environmentally sustainable activities

ENABLING MECHANISMS



Community

To support and develop all communities across the catchment to increase their capacity (including skill sets and resources) to deliver and shape NRCT programmes throughout the catchment.



Knowledge and Training

To provide educational opportunities for communities and individuals to enhance understanding and appreciation of all aspects of life in the catchment.



Communication and Collaboration

To promote and ensure good collaboration and communication between all groups, agencies and individuals to achieve the vision of a vibrant and healthy river catchment.



Good Governance

To put in place and implement structures, systems and processes to ensure that the organisation achieves its objectives and acts legally, with integrity and is managed in an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent way

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND MEANS TO ACHIEVE

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

INTRODUCTION

The catchment is home to a wide range of habitats and a treasure of built and natural heritage sites. The Trust recognises the pressures on habitats and biodiversity, and the difficulties posed by flooding and the water quality, climatic changes that are occurring in Ireland and around the world. It also recognises the significance and importance of our cultural, natural and built heritage and acknowledge its value to all.

Strategic Objective (2022 – 2027)

To ensure that communities play an effective role in improving water quality and appreciate their heritage throughout the catchment.

Achieving the Objective

1. Working with Farmers and Agencies, to seek the establishment of a results based Agri Environmental Scheme.
2. Contributing data to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) in relation to invasive species in order to ensure a digitised resource is available to support the management of the species
3. NRCT will set targets to achieve at least an 80% reduction in the coverage of Himalayan Balsam and eliminate crayfish plague outbreaks and other invasive species.
4. Seek support for policies that will ensure a minimum 10% gain in biodiversity for developments within the River Nore SAC.
5. Encourage the recording of threatened species and reporting to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) / NBDC / Birdwatch Ire / other relevant authority.
6. Identify of blockages to fish passage throughout the catchment and collaborate with relevant agencies re removal of same or insertion of effective fish passages.
7. Increase carbon capture and decrease flooding through tree planting, rewetting and natural flood management projects.
8. Working with Local Authority Officers and groups such as Tidy Towns, schools, TY students, local clubs to promote a Leave No Trace policy
9. Organising walk and talk events to celebrate our built heritage, particularly in National Heritage Week.
10. Organising a series of built heritage events in the summer months
11. Recording and noting important aspects of Cultural Heritage eg. oral history



RECREATION AND AMENITY

INTRODUCTION

NRCT recognises the importance and value of sustainable recreation and amenities to the communities along the river for health and wellbeing. It also recognises the current value of tourism to those communities and the recreational potential of the river..

Strategic Objective (2022 – 2027)

To promote sustainable recreational use within the catchment and to support new sustainable amenities on the River Nore and its tributaries with a focus on access for all.

Achieving the Objective

1. Providing training to individuals and communities re the development of recreational facilities/amenities.
2. Working with and supporting organisations such as Trail Kilkenny, Canoe/Kayak clubs, Fishing groups, swimming groups including supporting biosecurity best practice.
3. Identifying amenity gaps and opportunities and working with the Local Authorities to address these.
4. Working towards creating a Nore Blue Way/advocating for a Nore Blueway with LAs and other stakeholders.
5. Working with stakeholders to reduce litter dumping through campaigns.
6. Working with stakeholders to enhance water safety for recreation users.
7. Working with stakeholders to enhance access to the river and associated services.

LANDUSE AND ENTERPRISE

INTRODUCTION

The Nore catchment covers an area of 2,500 km² with 123 distinct water bodies. The population is approximately 100,000 people. Kilkenny City is the main centre of population and the other significant towns, including Abbeyleix, Thomastown, Castlecomer, Durrow and Callan. Landuse ranges from upland forestry, agriculture, agri-food, creative services, finance, hospitality and manufacturing. NRCT recognises the pressures that landuse, enterprise and development can have water quality and biodiversity in the catchment.

Strategic Objective

To support and protect the social infrastructure in rural areas, and the economic systems that sustain them, through encouraging a shift to environmentally sustainable activities.

Achieving the objectives

1. Protecting the social infrastructure in rural areas and supporting family farms.
2. Raising awareness of the adverse environmental impact of some current practices.

3. Promoting actions and practices that are environmentally aligned in order to reduce pressure on water quality and biodiversity.
4. Encouraging biodiversity on all landholdings and in gardens through training and awareness campaigns.
5. Promoting the planting of native tree species in forestry plantations, small and large holdings and gardens.
6. Facilitating collaboration between farmers, landowners and community groups
7. Providing biodiversity action plan training for farmers, landowners, community groups and individuals.
8. Encouraging the removal of impediments in current agricultural schemes that may prevent farmers and landowners from taking positive environmental action.

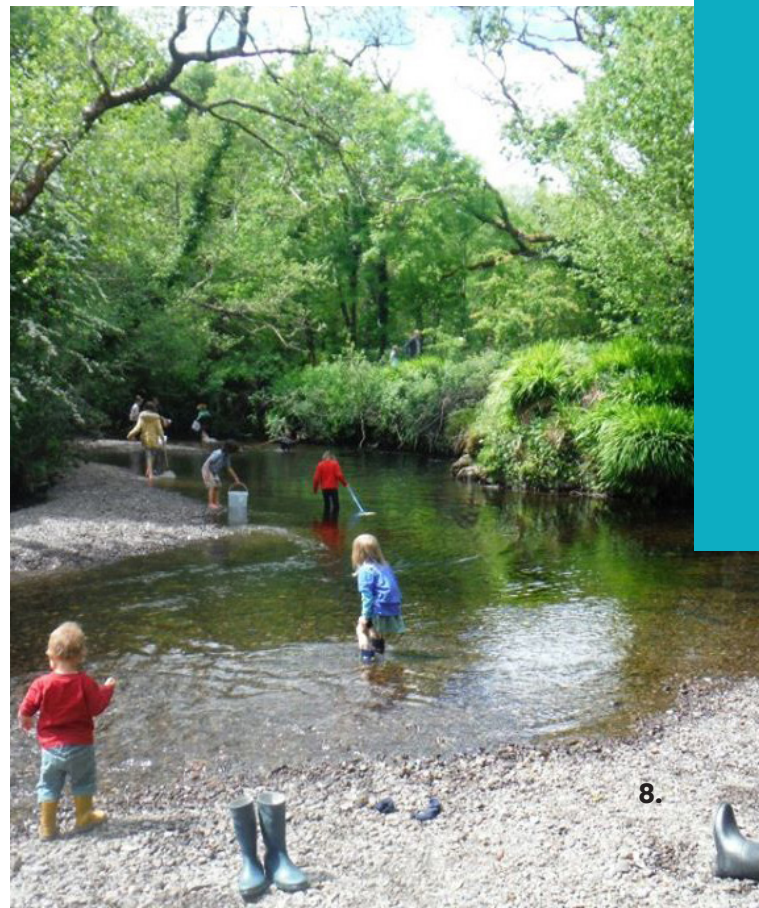
ENABLING SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

NRCT has identified 4 enabling mechanisms to help deliver the objectives and actions associated with the key pillars

- Working with Communities
- Knowledge and Training
- Collaboration and Communication
- Good Governance

These mechanisms are identified diagrammatically on page 4. Working with communities is the central part of those mechanisms. The community will drive delivery of each of the work programmes in the key pillars with the support of a combination of knowledge and training, communication and collaboration and good governance that NRCT in collaboration with other agencies will help provide.



WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

A strong community base and communities ownership of the Nore River Catchment Trust is what makes it unique. This gives it the ability to get things done and strengthens the capacity to collaborate with state, statutory and other stakeholders.

The following two quotations summarise the manner in which Nore River Catchment Trust wishes to work:

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”

Helen Keller

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about”

Margaret J. Wheatley

Strategic objective

To support and develop all communities across the catchment to increase their capacity (including skillsets and resources) to deliver and shape NRCT programmes throughout the catchment.

Achieving the objective

1. Ensuring that communities consider themselves part of the NRCT organisation.
2. Providing communities with the opportunity to input into the development of NRCT strategies and programmes.
3. Developing and supporting an increasing number of engaged and skilled communities throughout the catchment that assist in achieving the objectives.
4. Ensuring communities are part of the Governance and other structures of Nore River Catchment Trust: eg via The Forum.
5. Helping collaborate and co-ordinate programmes with state and statutory bodies that communities help execute. The goal is to avoid each community using scarce energy to navigate through the maze of dealing with multiple agencies and allow them to focus on using limited resources to implement the changes required.

KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

NRCT recognises the importance of raising awareness of the river and all its aspects including its built and natural heritage, water quality and recreation. Awareness, knowledge and education are the first steps in creating a community that appreciates and is motivated to act to care for the catchment.

Strategic Objective

To provide educational opportunities for communities and individuals to enhance understanding and appreciation of all aspects of the catchment.

- i. Helen Keller was an American author and disability rights advocate
- ii. Margaret J Wheatley is a teacher and writer who works to create organisations and communities that represent the best of human capacity.

Achieving the Objective

1. Raising Awareness
 - Ensuring good communication between the NRCT and all communities within the catchment.
 - Creating and supporting inclusive and accessible events that highlight the river and its catchment.
 - Hosting events including National Heritage week, National Biodiversity Week, National Tree Week etc.
 - Creating a River Nore community forum group.
 - Establishing a Friends of the Nore River supporters group/database. This will be composed of persons and organisations relevant to the activities of the company and for the purpose of facilitating engagement between the company and its stakeholders
 - Facilitating local groups to get involved in citizen science , invasive species control and other activities.

2. Developing Skill Sets
 - Identifying skills required to enhance all elements of the river through working with groups like men's shed/Tidy towns.
 - Arranging skill sharing events.
 - Providing access to additional skills as required.

3. Offering Training
 - Assessing training needs through linking with local communities
 - Providing education, training and capacity building throughout the catchment

4. Prioritising and targeting young people
 - Working with local schools, particularly TY students and youth environmental groups to encourage and facilitate their enthusiasm and participation
 - Working with training bodies such as ETB to establish appropriate training
 - Working with agencies such as the Arts Council and the Heritage Council to facilitate their school-based programmes

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

The values introduced at the beginning of this document will ensure the NRCT operates in a collaborative manner with all organisations and individuals which share the vision for the Nore. This collaboration will be supported through a wide range of communication initiatives to ensure the greatest possible involvement in all its activities.

Strategic Objective

To promote and ensure good collaboration and communication and collaboration between all groups, agencies and individuals to achieve the vision of a vibrant and healthy river catchment.

Achieving the Objective

1. Establishing a community forum
2. Putting the constitution and strategy on the website for easy access for all
3. Establishment of a communications sub-group to:
 - Maintain good relations with local and national media

- Maintain an active presence on social media
- Ensuring information is accesible and widely available

GOOD GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

Good governance is critical to the on-going success of any organisation and particularly for voluntary organisations. Governance is the steering of the organisation so that it follows its constitution, keeps within the law and required code of practice, achieves its objectives, maintains its reputation and the confidence of its stakeholders. Without this good reputation the company is unlikely to maintain either the funding it requires or the volunteers to run and support it.

Strategic Objective (2022 – 2027)

To put in place and implement structures, systems and processes to ensure that the organisation achieves its objectives and acts legally, with integrity and is managed in an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent way.

Achieving the Objective

1. Establishing a Board of Trustees as directed by its constitution
2. Implementing the constitution
3. Following the code of good practice for voluntary organisations including agreeing a strategy and business plan and getting the resources including funding in place to deliver these.
4. Getting structures and skills in place to deliver the strategy:
 - Establish a Community Forum or other supporting structures to ensure good communication, collaboration and action across the catchment.
 - Establish Short term Collaborative Working Groups (CWGS) to help provide the focus, skillsets and ownership to develop plans for each pillar.
5. Securing funding to engage the human and other resources (Project Manager/ Administration) and support the organisation to achieve its objectives



6. USEFUL REFERENCES

REPORTS

- The Nore Vision, What we want for the River, its Land and People: Dr Caroline Crowley and Harriet Emmerson
- Nore Vision, Community Initiatives for Sustainability of the River Nore Catchment Final Report May 2021

WEBSITE

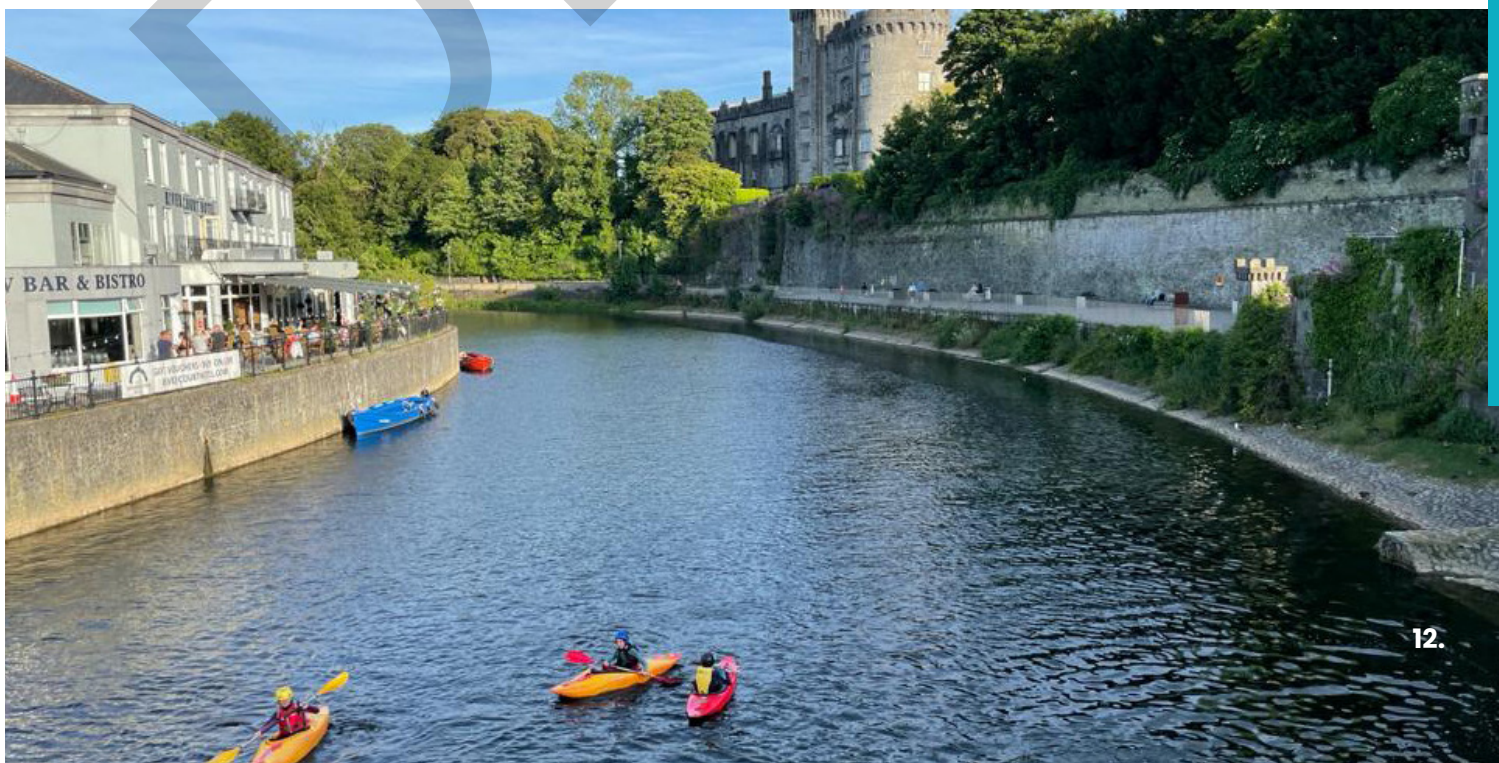
www.norevision.ie

SOCIAL MEDIA



NRCT BOARD MEMBERS

- Michael Starrett (Chairperson)
- Maurice Keane
- Denis Drennan
- Suzanne Champion
- Jim Finn
- Bob Wemyss
- Amanda Greer
- Tony Walsh
- Declan Rice
- Anne Marie Maher



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