

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Iconic Cross Restored to Glory for Downpatrick

This project was launched in November 2013 with the aim of preserving the 1100 year old High Cross of Downpatrick by relocating it to a purpose-built extension, to be constructed to the rear of Down County Museum. Down District Council has worked closely with the Church of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the East Border Region to facilitate the project by means of a grant of £486,000 from the EBR Tourism Development Plan.

The Mourne granite cross, damaged by centuries of exposure to the elements, was removed from its commanding position in

front of Down Cathedral and replaced by an exact replica just before Easter 2014. Conservators brought the original into the protected and controlled environment of the nearby museum and began a complicated conservation process never before seen in Northern Ireland. In April the original cross was restored to take centre stage in a new specially constructed Christian Heritage gallery within the Down County Museum in Downpatrick.



OLD TOWN QUAY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Under the Tourism Development Plan the much anticipated environmental improvement works at Old Town Quay in Portadown have begun and over the next 12 weeks will see a



number of exciting upgrades and enhancements taking place. This project will see a new car park constructed with 20 car parking spaces, including two disabled spaces at the site adjacent to Haldane Fisher. A new boat loading and unloading area and boat trailer storage area will also be constructed as part of the project. In addition, a new 24 metre long floating pontoon and access walkway will be created in the River Bann, including a section for launching canoes. A new fixed timber jetty will also be provided along with new paths, hand railings, street furniture and soft landscaping along with the upgrading of the existing river banks and slipway walls. Alderman Hatch in whose electoral area this development is progressing said "I welcome this much needed improvement at the former Shillington's Quay where an elderly lady nearly lost her life in a flooding incident a few months ago. I also pay tribute to Sandra Durand from the former Craigavon Borough Council in obtaining over £270,000 under the TDP and Dette Hughes who managed over 30 projects totalling over £3,000,000 including this one in EBR".

NEW PROGRAMMES

INTERREG VA –

The new INTERREG VA Cross Border Programme for 2014-2020 will have an ERDF contribution of €240m. The programme will focus on 4 key themes:

- **RESEARCH & INNOVATION**
- **ENVIRONMENT**
- **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT**
- **HEALTH**

A timetable of funding calls will be issued by SEUPB with calls generally open for a period of approximately six weeks. A Citizens Summary relating to the new Programme is available on SEUPBs website www.seupb.eu EBR are proactively working on project proposals for submission when the programme opens.

TRANSNATIONAL & INTER-REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

EBR have recently submitted applications to the ERASMUS+, North West Europe, COSME and Horizon 2020 programmes. In addition two project proposals are currently being developed by the EBR Energy Steering Group for submission to the Northern Periphery & Artic (NPA) programme over the coming weeks. The EBR Biodiversity Steering Group are developing a Green Infrastructure proposal for submission to the EU LIFE Programme. In the field of Tourism the Geo Tourism and Tourism Development Plan steering groups are developing separate proposals project for submission to the Atlantic Area Programme when it opens for applications later in the year and the EBR Economic Development sub committee are in the early development stages of a number of potential projects.

Contact Us – Meet the team

The Secretariat of EBR comprises 6 members of staff covering Development, Finance, Project and Administration roles. The team is led by Ms Pamela Arthurs, Chief Executive, Mrs Dette Hughes, INTERREG IVA Programme Manager, Mrs Sharon Digby, Development Officer, Ms Lorraine Stewart, Finance/Personnel Officer, Mrs Joanne McCourt, Assistant Finance Officer, and Mrs Rachael Harrison Administrator. Project staff also located at the East Border Region office include Mrs Lissa O'Malley, Tourism Project/Finance Officer, and Ms Margaret McAvoy, Project Co-Ordinator, IOTA.

Please feel free to contact us or log onto our website www.eastborderregion.com for regular updates.

East Border Region Ltd
2 Monaghan Court, Monaghan Street
Newry, BT35 6BH

Tel: (NI) 028 3025 2684 (ROI) 048 3025 2684
Fax: (NI) 028 3025 2685 (ROI) 048 3025 2685
Email: admin@eastborderregion.com
Web: www.eastborderregion.com



East Border Region NEWSLETTER

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM EAST BORDER REGION LTD

12TH EDITION // SUMMER 2015

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Welcome from the Chairman



CLLR PETER SAVAGE
Chairman

Welcome to the 12th edition of the EBR Newsletter which provides a snapshot of EBR activity over the past 3 months. As the closure of the INTERREG IVA Programme draws near, 5 of our 10 INTERREG projects have now completed. You will read about some of the project closure events in this edition. The remaining 5 projects will all close by 30th June 2015.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Project staff who worked tirelessly on all of EBRs INTERREG IVA projects since they commenced in 2010. The administrative workload involved in delivering EU projects can not be underestimated and the dedicated project staff were key in assisting EBR ensure 100% of project expenditure was eligible to claim. I wish all of the project staff the very best for their future endeavours. The focus for EBR in the coming months is in moving forward with new funding programmes and in working closely with our Local Authority Officers in developing new projects for submission to the forthcoming INTERREG VA cross border, transnational and inter-regional programmes. EBR staff have a number of project proposals already submitted to programmes which have

opened such as ERASMUS, COSME and Horizon 2020. We eagerly await their outcome! In addition a number of proposals spanning sectors such as Energy, Biodiversity, Economic Development and Tourism are currently being developed and will be submitted to relevant programmes as and when the calls open. I hope you find this edition of our Newsletter informative. If you have any suggestions for future editions please contact the EBR office. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

Peter Savage

CLlr Peter Savage
Chairman



THIS PROJECT IS PART FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND THROUGH THE INTERREG IVA CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME MANAGED BY THE SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY



ASPIRE CELEBRATION EVENT



The first group of businesses and graduates to complete their ASPIRE project were guests of honour at a recent event held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Dundalk. The aim of the evening was to celebrate the success of the Projects completed so far and recognise the contribution made to local economic growth by the ASPIRE businesses and graduates. The ASPIRE Programme, a highly successful, cross border initiative led by East Border Region Ltd. and Banbridge District

Council, provides practical and financial support to assist micro businesses to employ a high calibre graduate for a 12 month period to work on a specific project that will impact positively on the performance of the business. An experienced business mentor is also assigned to ensure a positive outcome for both the business and the graduate.

The evidence as we near the close of the ASPIRE project demonstrates that ASPIRE is on track to exceed the original targets set for the Programme in relation to business growth, graduate employment and job creation. Councillor Peter Savage, Chairman of EBR praised the Programme's success: "The results of the individual ASPIRE Projects include increased sales, new product development, the introduction of innovative management and technical systems, and expansion into new markets including cross border and export trade."



ASPIRE will hold one further closure event on 23rd June 2015 to celebrate the final group of graduates and businesses to complete their projects.

IOTA PROGRAMME CELEBRATORY EVENT



The iOTA Programme hosted a celebratory event on Thursday 14th May in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. The event was held to celebrate the success of the Programme and highlight the positive effect it has had throughout the East Border Region. Mrs Lorraine McCourt, Director of the Joint Technical Secretariat opened the event commenting "Encouraging innovation and competitiveness is a key strand of the INTERREG IVA Programme as it seeks to promote cooperation

for a more prosperous cross-border region. iOTA is a prime example of this strand of the current programme, as the project works directly with businesses and individuals to develop and diversify the economy." Cllr Peter Savage, Chairperson of East Border Region Ltd in his opening notes said "Given today's severe economic climate, the timing for an intervention such as the iOTA Programme was extremely significant to supporting both potential, new and existing SME's and micro businesses in the region". He went on to praise all those involved in the delivery of the programme and on reaching their targets. The key speaker at the event was Susan Hayes, Managing Director of Hayes Culleton Ltd and author of 'The Savvy Woman's Guide to Financial Freedom' and 'Positive Economics'. Susan is also known as the Positive Economist and is, herself an entrepreneur. Susan's uplifting speech gave the attendees an over-

view on the meaning of innovation and the impact it can have on a business. Susan was impressed with the results the iOTA Programme had achieved and wished all participants every success for the future. Out of 350 businesses assisted 72 developed new products, 49 entered new markets, 58 participants created a new business, 29 new jobs were created and 177 jobs sustained. With results like these it is evident that the positive effects of the iOTA Programme will be felt throughout the region for many years to come.



STEM PROJECT CLOSING EVENT



The STEM project which officially closed at the end of March held an extremely successful closing event at which over 160 delegates attended. Long standing advocate of the STEM project N.I. Minister Mark H Durkan delivered the opening address while Susan Hayes "The Positive Economist" delivered the key note speech which was both praising of the STEM project and inspirational to the STEM businesses in attendance. The STEM project has assisted over 150 cross border businesses save in excess of £1 million through networking, identifying savings and enhancing their environmental performance.

PLATO EBR LAUNCHES REPORT ON SUSTAINING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS FOR THE SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR



Over 150 Micro-enterprises and SMEs across the East Border Region were welcomed to the PLATO EBR Sustain 2015 event in Carrickmacross to mark the success and closure of the PLATO EBR project. The Sustain event drew together businesses from diverse industry sectors participating on the 2-year PLATO EBR Programme. The Plato Model is underpinned by 'Parent companies' who are larger SMEs or multinationals in the region who provide senior executives to the

Programme with significant levels of expertise in specialist functional areas. Two senior executives from two different Parents, act as Group Leaders for a group of 10-15 growth-oriented small businesses that meet every month. The PLATO EBR Programme hosted 13 Groups and an additional 2 graduate or advanced Fora and 3 clusters in the area of export, food and tourism. The Programme therefore supported over 200 companies across the East Border Region. At the Sustain event, much of the discussion focussed on the value of sustaining collaborative networks in challenging growth conditions where PLATO EBR launched an official report into their findings throughout the Programme. The audience heard from a range of Parent and participant companies, they included Brian McConville MJM Group who talked about ways to sustain the entrepreneur through global growth. Brian started his company with

one and in 2013 the company celebrated 30 years in business and celebrated with the official opening of its custom built 100,000ft² manufacturing facility in Newry, Northern Ireland. Since moving to the new facility, MJM's turnover has grown from £11.7m to £30m. Brian may operate a multi-million pound international company which takes him to far flung places of the world, but he returns to his native Banbridge to facilitate the PLATO EBR Group. Dr Cecilia Hegarty Director of PLATO EBR, who presented some of the key findings from the PLATO EBR Report, "Sustaining Collaborative Networks" took the opportunity to highlight some of the soft impacts of the Programme and indicated the evidence showed already some initial key financial improvements in the participating companies as a result of their involvement in the PLATO EBR cluster.

SMART ECO HUB SUSTAINABLE BUILDING GUIDE LAUNCHED IN STORMONT BELFAST



On 14th April 2015 the Smart ECO Hub Sustainable Building Guide was officially launched by Minister Mark H Durkan in the prestigious Parliament Buildings Stormont in Belfast. The event was attended by representatives from local government and the private sector. Speaking at the launch, which saw representatives from local businesses, local government and the construction industry, North and South, Minister Durkan said: "I very much support the use of sustainable renewable technologies in new buildings. We have geared planning policy to help integrate renewable energy technology into the design, siting and layout of existing and new buildings. "This Guide demonstrates another good example of the benefits of collaboration between local authorities and the private

sector. It has produced a practical document that can be applied in the planning and adaption of buildings in the North and South. "It is important that we continue to work together and share our experiences as well as exchange ideas that will support our wider understanding of issues that affect our environment.

The Smart ECO Hub initiative has demonstrated the benefits of collaborations between local authorities. Over the last 3 years the Smart ECO Hub has grown the energy cluster to include over 100 member companies. It is very encouraging to see that some of the members have been successful in obtaining funding to support product development and this highlights the innovation capabilities in the region. Without this regional cluster initiative these opportunities would have been unlikely to develop and consequently the region and the respective counties are better as a result. The Smart Eco Hub project completed at the end of May however the project steering committee have committed to continue to meet to explore opportunities for developing the legacy of the project further.

NEW FOOTPATH AT THE HILL OF SLANE

The Hill of Slane just outside the village of Slane is a Christian Abbey that was reported to have been set up by St Patrick. Under the Tourism Development Plan, Meath County Council constructed a new footpath to improve access to the Hill of Slane Christian Heritage Site. This footpath will ensure the safety of visitors and locals to the area and encourage visitors to walk from the Village to the Hill of Slane and visa versa.

