

BALLINTUBBER + ABBEY

*Strategy*

*2025 – 2028*



# *Ballintubber Abbey Strategy*

## *2025 – 2028*

### **Introduction**

At the heart of County Mayo, nestled in the shadow of Ireland's sacred mountain, Croagh Patrick, lies Ballintubber Abbey, one of Ireland's greatest pilgrimage sites. For more than eight centuries, the Abbey and its grounds have provided respite, offering a place for quiet contemplation and renewal.

The Abbey has an eventful history and was nearly lost following the destructive days of the Cromwellian era. It remained an unroofed shell for over two centuries before restoration efforts began in 1881. That work continues today, with the next phase, the reconstruction of the East Wing, set to commence in 2025.

Ballintubber Abbey Trust, an independent charity established in February 1991, is responsible for guiding the Abbey's future. This strategy sets out the Trust's ambitions for the four-year period from 2025 to 2028.

Developed over six months through extensive stakeholder consultation, the strategy outlines the Trust's vision, values, and objectives, as well as the actions planned to realise the full potential of this unique and sacred place.



Photograph courtesy of TRISTAN HUTCHINSON PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM

# *Priorities for the next four years*

## **Process**

A Steering Team, comprising of the Manager and members from the Board and Committee of Ballintubber Abbey Trust, was guided through the strategy development process by an external consultant, Mary Carroll from Growth Potential.

The Vision, Mission and Values of Ballintubber Abbey Trust were defined and stakeholders were consulted to inform the direction and priorities for the next four years. The consultation included a facilitated session with the Board and Committee and one to one interviews with a number of Committee members.

Having reviewed stakeholder consultation outputs, the Steering Team agreed on seven key areas of focus for the period of the strategy. A strategic objective was agreed for each of these areas.

Metrics and actions were established to measure and achieve these strategic objectives. These clearly defined, measurable objectives and high-level actions are essential for tracking progress with certainty, ensuring people are clear on the steps needed, and driving progress forward.

The feasibility of the strategy was analysed and a final review by both the Steering Team and the Board marked the completion of the strategy development process.



# *Vision, mission and values*

## *4-year goal*

### **Vision**

To provide a beacon of light and hope for those who are searching for a deeper meaning and a response to a spiritual hunger

### **Mission**

Creating a transformative pilgrimage journey that links Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick via Tóchar Phádraig.

### **Values**

**INCLUSION** ~ Rooted firmly in Christian faith, but welcoming, respectful and inclusive of those of all other faiths and of none.

**SHARING** ~ At the heart of the local community, and reaching out across the world

**INTEGRITY** ~ Creating an authentic enduring spiritual experience

**SUSTAINABILITY** ~ Nurturing the Abbey, its traditions and values for future generations

### **4 Year Goal 2025-2028**

An Oasis of Spirituality and Tranquility as a stepping stone to renewal which attracts 100,000 visitors per year by YE 2028.



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# Our Team

## Who we are



Fr Michael Farragher  
Chairperson Ballintubber Abbey Trust



Fr Frank Fahey  
Vice Chairperson  
Ballintubber Abbey Trust

<b>Fr Michael Farragher</b>	Chairperson Ballintubber Abbey Trust
<b>Fr Frank Fahey</b>	Vice-Chairperson Ballintubber Abbey Trust
<b>Margaret Corkell</b>	Committee
<b>Padhraic Corkell</b>	Committee
<b>Eanya Egan</b>	Committee
<b>Peter Hynes</b>	Director
<b>Mary Kelly</b>	Director
<b>Con Lydon</b>	Construction Project Manager
<b>Paul McCarthy</b>	Director/Secretary
<b>Brian McConnell</b>	Director
<b>Suellen McKenna</b>	Manager Ballintubber Abbey Trust
<b>David Quinn</b>	Committee
<b>Fr Tomás Surlis</b>	Director
<b>Deirdre Walsh</b>	Committee





Photograph courtesy of BALLINTUBBER ABBEY ARCHIVES





Image courtesy of HOWLEY HAYES COONEY ARCHITECTS

# Strategic Objectives, Metrics & Actions

<b>SO1</b>	<b>Strategic Objective Number 1</b> <b>ABBEY – EAST WING</b> New East Wing fully operational with 30,000 visitors per annum
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2028
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Wing fully operational by Q3 2027</li> <li>• 30,000 interpretative centre visitors per annum by YE 2028</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint Design Team and complete detailed design for Tender stage</li> <li>• Tender for construction phase of project and award contract for construction by Q3 2025</li> <li>• Design Team to sub-contract interiors design and fit-out of interpretative centre</li> <li>• Launch project plan in place by Q3 2026, including marketing and resourcing</li> <li>• Construction and fit-out to be completed by Q1 2027</li> <li>• Launch in Q3 2027</li> </ul>

<b>SO2</b>	<b>Strategic Objective Number 2</b> <b>ABBEY – FURTHER DEVELOPMENT</b> Masterplan for further development of Abbey site in place
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Masterplan in place by Q3 2027
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Wing fully operational by Q3 2027</li> <li>• 30,000 interpretative centre visitors per annum by YE 2028</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate ideas for further development and ongoing maintenance of Abbey site (eg: Toilets, paths, landscaping)</li> <li>• Agree vision for Abbey site</li> <li>• Develop and agree proposals for management and funding of additional site development</li> <li>• Develop financial model for further development of Abbey grounds</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing maintenance of historic site</li> <li>• Complete masterplan for further development of Abbey grounds</li> </ul>

<b>SO3</b>	<b>Strategic Objective Number 3</b> <b>ABBEY – SURROUNDING</b> Further develop infrastructure around Abbey in the form of the Tóchar, Church Island and the Celtic Furrow
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2025 / 2027 / 2029
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tóchar Upgrade First Phase – YE 2025</li> <li>• Complete redevelopment of Church Island – YE 2027</li> <li>• Complete redevelopment of the Celtic Furrow – YE 2029</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement existing plans for the Tóchar Upgrade</li> <li>• Develop and agree Vision for Church Island and the Celtic Furrow</li> <li>• Develop Business Plans for Church Island and the Celtic Furrow</li> <li>• Set up sub-committees to manage developments</li> <li>• Secure required funding – Ref SO6</li> <li>• Appoint contractor for development of Church Island</li> <li>• Appoint contractor for development of Celtic Furrow</li> <li>• Oversee work of contractor on both projects</li> <li>• Manage delivery and launch of both projects</li> </ul>

<b>SO4</b>	<b>Strategic Objective Number 4</b> <b>EXPERIENCE</b> To ensure visitors have a positive, impactful experience and are encouraged to extend their stay and to return
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2028
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookable experiences by YE 2028 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpretative Centre – 30,000 pa</li> <li>Abbey Guided Tour – 17,500 pa</li> <li>Tóchar – 1000 pa</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Return bookings (for Interpretative Centre) – 20% by YE 2028</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booking system and new website in place by Q1 2025</li> <li>• Feedback system in place by YE 2025</li> <li>• Develop and maintain events programme</li> <li>• Maintain ongoing communication with visitors and supporters through newsletters and social media</li> <li>• Incorporate visitor feedback into future plans</li> </ul>

## Strategic Objectives, Metrics and Actions *Continued*

<b>SO5</b>	<p><b>Strategic Objective Number 5</b></p> <p><b>RECOGNITION</b></p> <p><b>Ballintubber Abbey is recognised as a world class Oasis of Spirituality and Tranquility and a must-visit destination</b></p>
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2028
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100,000 visitors per annum by YE 2028</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install visitor measurement system</li> <li>• Develop and implement marketing and communication plan to promote Ballintubber Abbey as an Oasis of Spirituality and Tranquility</li> <li>• Monitor and encourage positive feedback on relevant public review platforms</li> </ul>

<b>SO6</b>	<p><b>Strategic Objective Number 6</b></p> <p><b>FUNDING</b></p> <p><b>Secure further funding to complete and maintain all infrastructure</b></p>
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2028
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for match funding of East Wing by Q1 2025</li> <li>• Secure match funding of East Wing by YE 2025</li> <li>• Business Plan for Operations by Q2 2025</li> <li>• Secure further funding to upgrade and maintain Tóchar Phádraig - Ongoing</li> <li>• Secure further funding for Church Island by YE 2026</li> <li>• Secure further funding for the Celtic Furrow by YE 2028</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for match funding of East Wing by Q1 2025</li> <li>• Secure match funding of East Wing by YE 2025</li> <li>• Business Plan for Operations by Q2 2025</li> <li>• Secure further funding to upgrade and maintain Tóchar Phádraig - Ongoing</li> <li>• Secure further funding for capital projects to include Church Island and Celtic Furrow by YE 2028</li> <li>• Secure funding for Operations and Maintenance as required</li> <li>• Examine potential benefits of registering as a social enterprise</li> </ul>

<b>S07</b>	<b>Strategic Objective Number 7</b> <b>RECOGNITION</b> <b>Develop and implement People, Community and Stakeholder Plans</b>
<b>Completion Date:</b>	Year ending 2025
<b>Metrics:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop People Plan – Q2 2025</li> <li>• Develop Community Engagement Plan – Q3 2025</li> <li>• Develop Stakeholder Plan – Q3 2025</li> <li>• Implement all three Plans – Ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and Implement People Plan, to include competence and capacity</li> <li>• Develop and promote a positive culture throughout the organisation by embedding appropriate values and behaviours</li> <li>• Develop and Implement Community Engagement Plan</li> <li>• Develop and Implement Stakeholder Engagement Plan</li> </ul>



# *Strategy Implementation*

## *Operational*

### *The strategy must drive all activity*

For the strategy to be effective, it must guide all activities within Ballintubber Abbey Trust. Our daily actions should align with the strategy and, ultimately, reflect our Values, Vision, and Mission.

To achieve this, the strategy will be further developed into an operational plan and into the goals and performance metrics for all employees. A template to report progress against the operational plan has already been developed.

An ability to respond to changing dynamics and circumstances is critical, so agility must be built into the strategy implementation. A review of the external and internal environment will be built into the implementation and review processes and, where necessary, appropriate modifications or recalibration may be made to the strategy. It will be imperative that any such changes, their rationale, and any resulting amendments to operational plans and individual goals, be agreed and communicated clearly and consistently.





# *Strategy Review*

## *Overseen*

### *This strategy will be overseen by the Board*

The implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Board, with the Manager providing regular updates at Board meetings regarding strategic, financial and operational issues.

To measure and communicate our progress in executing this Strategy, we will employ the following methods:

- Regular updates to the Ballintubber Abbey Trust Board on milestones, targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the operational plan.
- A yearly evaluation of the strategy and all associated metrics conducted by the Board and Management.
- The Annual Reports of Ballintubber Abbey Trust.
- The Annual Financial Statements.
- Keeping stakeholders informed through meetings, engagement activities, as well as via communication channels and routine reporting.



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