

Cuilcagh to Cleenish

A Great Place



Final Evaluation (Executive Summary)

October 2018 – September 2021

Prepared by



The Cuilcagh to Cleenish: A Great Place Project is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. The project is being delivered in partnership by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (lead partner), Cleenish Community Association, Killesher Community Development Association and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council through the resources of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	Page 5
2.0	Approved Purposes	Page 5
3.0	Project Management	Page 6
4.0	Strategic Fit	Page 7
5.0	Evaluation Methodology	Page 8
6.0	Project Achievements and Impact	Page 10
6.1	Meanwhile Projects	Page 10
6.2	Community Trails	Page 12
7.0	Impact	Page 14
8.0	Social Return on Investment (SROI)	Page 16
9.0	Looking Ahead	Page 17
	Conclusion	Page 18

Acknowledgments

Following on from the Year 1 and Year 2 Summary Review reports for the Cuilcagh to Cleenish: A Great Place (C2C) Project, Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) has appointed Insight Solutions to undertake a final evaluation of the project.

This final evaluation report focusses on the achievements of the C2C Project in its 3-year lifespan (October 2018 – September 2021). It assesses the impact of the project and outlines if it has met its anticipated outcomes, aims and objectives. Furthermore, a Social Return of Investment (SROI) analysis has been undertaken to provide an independent assessment of the social value created because of the C2C Project.

From the outset it was clear that this project was destined for success due to the diligence taken in investing in and developing the appropriate governance and management structures. This collaborative model was underpinned by a clear understanding of what each partner was bringing to the project, with knowledge, skills and experience used to best effect.

C2C has built on the existing strong appetite for local heritage which exists within the area. Building on the community-led work of the award-winning 'Battles, Bricks and Bridges', 'Making it Home' and the refurbishment of Tully Mill projects it went further to engage even more widely with people, build local capacity and deliver an extensive range of high-quality heritage and cultural programmes and activities. More importantly, it has been championed and led by local people who have been the foundation of its success. Local volunteers playing a proactive role in shaping and delivering projects has been the hallmark of C2C. The work undertaken has helped connect local people of all ages to the local natural, built, archaeological and cultural heritage of the beautiful footprint area. It has inspired a new vision for how local heritage and culture can be showcased and celebrated in developing sustainable, vibrant, and healthy rural communities.

In our experience, many funded programmes are time bound and often leave a void when they come to an end, despite the best efforts of everyone involved. C2C is different in this regard because it leaves a legacy of ideas and defined projects which can now become a focus for the local community to advance in the future. Critically, local skills have been built and relationships between key statutory partners and local communities are now well established, which will undoubtedly help bring future projects to fruition.

Insight Solutions would like to acknowledge the project partners and local people who have generously given their time to help us tell the story of C2C. Your passion, commitment and dedication to this project has been inspiring. Having a close personal insight into the C2C project over three years has been a great privilege for our team and has reminded us of the power of local people united by a common purpose.

Fergal O'Donnell

Director, Insight Solutions

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Executive Summary

1.0 Introduction

The *Cuilcagh to Cleenish: A Great Place Project* (C2C, the Project) is a three-year project (October 2018 – September 2021) supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) and delivered in partnership with Outdoor Recreation NI, Cleenish Community Association, Killesher Community Development Association and FODC through the resources of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark.

2.0 Approved Purposes

The project has focussed on connecting people and communities in south-west Fermanagh through community-led heritage, culture, and outdoor recreation initiatives to deliver the strategic actions of local authorities, working towards meeting the following approved purposes:

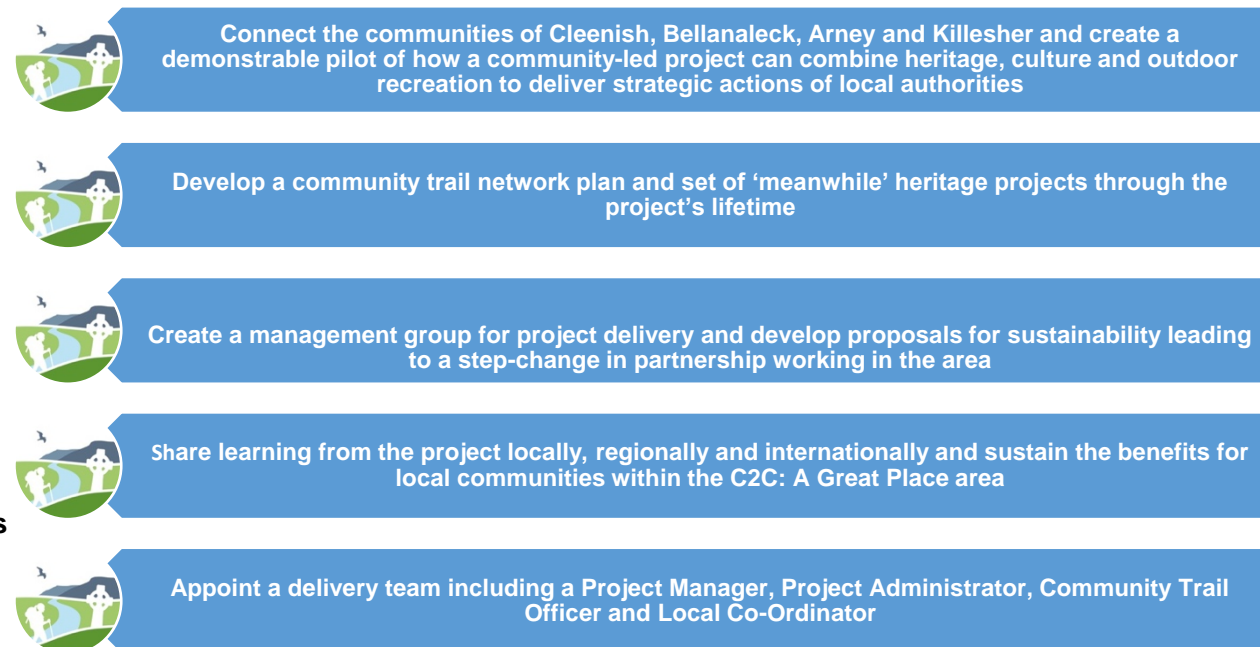


Figure 1: Approved Purposes

3.0 Project Management

The C2C Project has been one focussed on partnerships, with a collaborative approach underpinning its approach. The Project consisted of five key stakeholders:

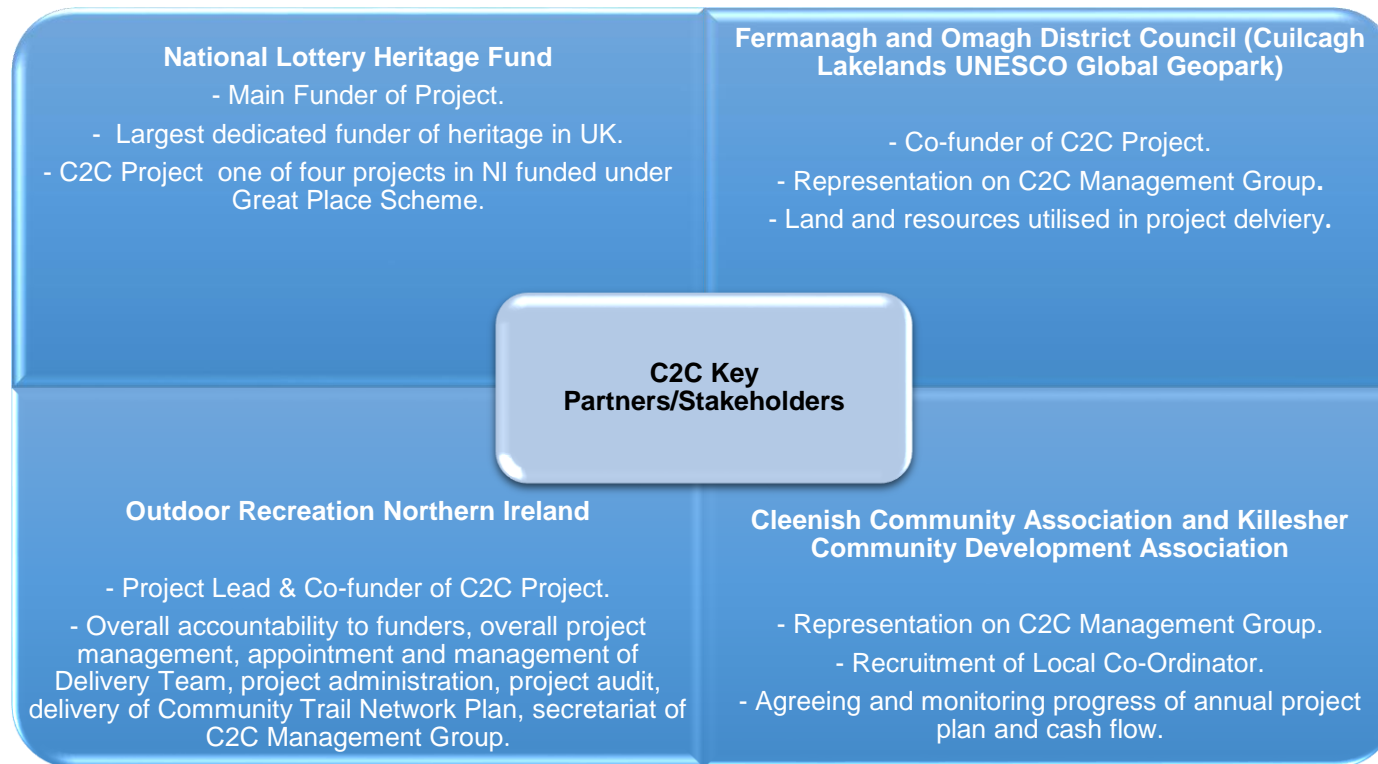


Figure 2: Project Management

In Year 1 of C2C, a Delivery Team was appointed consisting of a Project Manager, Project Administrator, Community Trail Officer and Local Co-Ordinator, with the staff team remaining consistent for the duration of the C2C Project.

4.0 Strategic Fit

The C2C Project links with the strategic actions outlined in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Community Plan 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030' under the following three themes:

'People and Communities' – C2C has contributed to helping communities become more inclusive, resilient and empowered – strengthening community infrastructure, increasing community interaction, and allowing communities to make decisions and real change.

'Infrastructure and Skills' – The C2C Project, through the development of its Community Trails has contributed to better physical infrastructure which has enhanced connectivity between communities and to the natural and built heritage of the area. The development of Meanwhile Projects and Community Trails within C2C has been a result of strengthened community collaborations and partnerships and participants of the project have been able to develop skills relating to heritage, history, culture, crafts, traditions, volunteering and management.

'Environment' – The C2C Project has allowed for the environment in the footprint area to be better managed and taken care of. Local people understand the importance of the local landscape and built heritage and therefore are better equipped to manage and maintain these. The area has been greatly improved through the development of trails and local people have been encouraged and empowered to develop projects which focus on accessing, celebrating, and conserving the environment.

Furthermore, the Project has contributed to the strategic actions outlined in the FODC Corporate Plan, ensuring:

- The natural environment and built and cultural heritage are enhanced and sustainably managed;
- Communities are inclusive, safe, resilient, and empowered;
- Contributions made towards a thriving economy through increased tourism and stronger rural economies.

Alongside the fit to local strategic plans as outlined above, the C2C Project has also aligned with the Strategic ambitions of the Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark and The Council of Europe's Faro Convention.

5.0 Evaluation Methodology

To date, two Summary Review evaluations have been completed for the C2C Project (Year 1 – 2018/19 and Year 2 2019/20) and an overall Final Evaluation Report which reflects Year 3 (2020/21). Evaluation methods included meetings with C2C Delivery Team, Management Group, Project Partners, surveys disseminated to participants and stakeholders and reviews of secondary materials. Within evaluation reports, in-depth accounts of project successes, challenges and recommendations were presented.

C2C AT A GLANCE

- IMPACT

- SROI of £1:£12 - For every pound invested in the C2C project approximately £12 of social value is created.
- 99% of participants rated the C2C Project as 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- 94% felt the C2C Project was either 'extremely important' or 'important' for their community.
- 94% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the C2C Project allowed them to be more involved in their local community.
- 98.5% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the C2C Project allowed them to feel more connected to local heritage/history.
- 98.5% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the C2C Project allowed them to develop knowledge of local heritage/history.
- 96% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the C2C Project helped them learn more about local traditions.

- COMMUNITY TRAILS

- 2 New Community Walking Trails complete.

- Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Arney River Canoe Trail in development.
- Phase 3 of Arney River Canoe Trail shovel ready.
- **MEANWHILE PROJECTS**
 - 18 Meanwhile Projects successfully delivered.
 - 1650 + people engaged in 18 Meanwhile Projects.
 - 8000+ digital engagements.
- **FUNDING SECURED**
 - Additional £353,325 external funding secured.
- **VOLUNTEERS**
 - 105 volunteers delivered 324.5 volunteer days.
 - Volunteer contribution worth £42,150.
 - Non cash contribution from GeoPark Team worth £37,800, equivalent to 88 days of professional time.
- **LEGACY**
 - Digital Legacy provided by C2C.org.uk
 - Legacy Plan in place.

6.0 Project Achievements and Impact

6.1 Meanwhile Projects

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Heritage Audit prepared outlining areas of built, natural and archaeological importance.- Community Archaeological Dig carried out at Arney Fort.- 8 x History talks delivered by a variety of experts.- Going Underground musical and storytelling concert in Marble Arch Caves.- Give it a Go Projects including 3D modelling, 2 x Arney canoe trips and 2 x natural heritage walks.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 x History talks delivered by a variety of experts• Give it a Go Projects including 2 x canoe trips and 1 x natural heritage walk• Artsland – Schools arts programme - ‘Ellen Cutler’s Dresser’ and ‘Boyle Cutler Glassie and the Ceili Wake’, a visual art piece and play, respectively.• Memory Map (https://www.c2c.org.uk/C2Cindex.html) developed and launched as an online interactive resource featuring interviews, recordings and films made by and with local people allowing users to connect with and learn about 110+ local historical and cultural events and their locations in the landscape.• ‘Cuilcagh to Cleenish: A Great Place’ Short Film - developed for National Heritage Week 2020 showcasing the area’s rich landscape and heritage. Awarded County Award.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local History Cluster - Bellanaleck History group and Killesher History Group produced two important publications. “Nixon Hall: The Rise and Mysterious Demise of a Late Georgian Manor House” was researched and written by Marion Maxwell with assistance from the group, and “Bumblebees, Bicycles

	<p>and Tilley Lamps” was researched and written by Dr Barbara Graham and Dr Lyn McKerr with voluntary support, research, and coordination of interviewees from the Killesher History group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Education Programme – Delivered by Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark staff and ambassadors, 160 P6 and P7 children from four local schools engaged with and learned about their local heritage through a combination of indoor and outdoor heritage based activities including a journey along the proposed Arney River Canoe Trail. • Legacy - As part of its commitment to legacy planning Cuilcagh to Cleenish produced a discussion document to stimulate debate about furthering the principles and values of both the Faro and European Landscape Conventions to bring together cross-border rural communities and statutory sector partners to develop and deliver a unique heritage-led regeneration and place-making programme on a landscape scale around Cuilcagh mountain. • Local Bells – seven local church bells recorded in situ with recordings integrated within C2C Memory Map. • Partnership with Catchment Care to record and film 12 natural heritage sound recordings of the Arney Catchment area. • Design of interpretation panels based on local history and culture with links to Memory Map.
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Table 1: Meanwhile Projects

6.2 Community Trails

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Trail Plan – developed through extensive community consultation, desk research and fieldwork. 11 potential Trails identified to progress to feasibility assessment stage. - Arney Battlefield Trail – 1.9 km walking trail ‘shovel ready’¹ by end of Year 1 with funding applications submitted. - Nixon Hall Trail – trail concept completed with further negotiations required to take trail forward. - Arney River Canoe Trail - trail concept completed with further negotiations required to take trail forward.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arney Battlefield Trail – £94,000 secured from National Lottery Heritage Fund and £50,000 from DAERA Environmental Fund Capital Challenge Competition. • Nixon Hall Trail – 2.5 km walking trail ‘shovel ready’ by end of Year 2 and funding application submitted. • Arney River Canoe Trail – progressing design of 4 access points, ecological studies completed landowner / statutory agency permission received in principle. Funding application made to Catchment Care Community Incentive Scheme for Old Arney Bridge Canoe Step.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arney Battlefield Trail – 1.9km walking trail complete.

¹ The term ‘shovel ready’ means the trail project is ready to progress was funding is secured i.e. design complete, all necessary permissions are in place (e.g. planning, landowner permission), management roles agreed (for C2C Trail projects FODC agreed to manage, maintain and ensure trails with local community groups entering into a Service Level Agreement to assist with inspection and basic maintenance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nixon Hall Trail – 2.5km walking trail complete. £81,600 funding secured from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme and £24,326 – Fermanagh and Omagh District Council via Landfill Communities Fund • Arney River Canoe Trail – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 1 – Old Arney Bridge to Bellanaleck – permission in place to utilise existing facilities at Rossdoney Quay, Corrigan’s Shore and Bellanaleck Marina. £21,404 Funding secured from Catchment Care Community Incentive Scheme for canoe steps at Old Arney Bridge. Landowner permission in place (subject to final licence agreement). ○ Phase 2 – Boheveny to Old Arney Bridge –Boheveny Access point design complete, landowner permission in place (subject to final licence agreement) and planning permission submitted. £42,496 funding secured from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Environment Challenge Competition and £7,499.25 – Fermanagh and Omagh District Council via Landfill Communities Fund • <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 3 – Boheveny to Belcoo – Cottage Lawn (Belcoo) access point and downstream weir portage design complete, landowner permission in place (subject to final licence agreement) and planning permission submitted. ○ ○ Phase 4 – Belcoo to Lower Lough MacNea – no further works required in NI, Leitrim County Council engaging with FODC re cross-border potential.
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Table 2: Community Trails

7.0 Impact

C2C Project Impact	
COMMUNITY	Connecting to the Community <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community engagement has been a priority throughout the project;- Representation on Management Group of local groups allowed for project to be built on existing relationships;- Many members of the community connected through Meanwhile Projects and events and activities on offer;- Local people have built relationships with each other, formed new friendships and strengthened existing connections;- Local people feel more connected to each other through shared heritage, history and culture;- Cross community interaction has been increased;- Community infrastructure and local groups have been strengthened with existing community groups working collaboratively with new member engagement;- Local people have availed of volunteering opportunities.
	Connecting to Place <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community Trail Development has allowed people to experience better connection to place;- Community connections have led to the development of physical connections via the landscape;- Trust built between community and landowners, allowing land to be accessed;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better sense of understanding of heritage, history and culture associated with the area – allowing people to feel more connected to their local area.
PLACE	Education and Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People involved in project have had the opportunity to learn about heritage, history and culture; - Project has opened a new audience to heritage focussed activities happening in the area and has allowed people to feel a new sense of belonging; - Skills developed in many areas of heritage and history with experiences including canoeing, nature walking, arts, archaeology, music and outdoor recreation; - Intergenerational opportunities and work with local schools; - Development of skills and awareness will be key part of project legacy.
	Better understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People have experienced a better understanding of and connection to their place and surroundings; - People instilled with sense of pride and appreciation of their heritage and local area; - Placemaking on a landscape scale – interactive and community-led approach who have been able to better understand and reimagine existing places, spaces and sites; - Better understanding of how communities can engage with and enhance the landscape around them.
	Preserving and Protecting Heritage, History and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better awareness, understanding and exposure to heritage, history, culture and the landscape will lead to areas being better protected and preserved;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased sense of connection and pride in area, community empowered to protect and enhance the area for future generations; - Community sense of ownership leading to upkeep and management of trails; - Strengthened community infrastructure leading to further projects focussed on heritage, history and culture.
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Table 3: C2C Impact

8.0 Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an outcomes-based measurement tool for measuring and communicating the broad concept of value that incorporates social, environmental and economic impacts. SROI produces a description of how a project creates value and a ratio that states how much social value (in £) is created for every £ of investment.

This SROI sought to engage key stakeholders involved in the C2C Project across this 3 year evaluation process and account for the value created by activities and the inputs that made that activity possible.

TOTAL PRESENT VALUE (PV)	£4,643,759
NET PRESENT VALUE (PV minus investment)	£4,263,809
SOCIAL RETURN	£1:£12

To summarise, for every pound invested in the C2C project approximately £12 of social value was created.

9.0 Looking Ahead

The final legacy action of the C2C Project was to explore the potential for the development and delivery of similar community-led heritage activities through a new cross-border project within a 10-mile radius around Cuilcagh Mountain, so that it can be a connected landscape where people are proud of their history and culture. The development of this project has been a significant achievement of the C2C Project, which has acted as a catalyst pilot project for future community-led heritage projects on a wider scale (both in Northern Ireland and further afield). The project has encouraged and empowered local people to suggest ideas or activities which promote, preserve and celebrate the heritage and culture of their communities around Cuilcagh Mountain and has helped enhance local rural community development by connecting people to their built, natural, cultural and archaeological heritage. This project, which was enabled by the successes of the C2C Project has given local people a leading role in shaping and delivering a plan of heritage activities which are meaningful to them and will be a powerful legacy product and the catalyst for much more heritage-focussed activity in the future.

Alongside the Legacy Project, the legacy of the C2C Project will impact communities for years to come through the development of skills, exposure to heritage focussed activities and the implementation of community-led trails which will connect communities physically and socially.

10.0 Conclusion

The C2C Project can be deemed a remarkable success in its 3 years of project delivery. The project has acted as a trailblazer and has demonstrated to communities and individuals involved the possibilities of heritage-focused projects and how powerful the partnerships of communities working together can truly be in leveraging both experiences and physical infrastructure.

Those involved have been able to build skills, understand and reimagine their heritage, history and culture and develop relationships through mutual interest in place and surroundings.

Through the extensive offering of exciting projects, participants have taken part in projects of interest, tried new things, developed friendships, gained skills and connected with their local heritage, history and culture. Alongside this, individuals have experienced improved mental and physical wellbeing as a result.

The work completed in community trail development has been remarkable within a relatively short-scale time period. The passion and drive of the C2C Delivery Team and Management Group who have gathered the support and enthusiasm of the local communities and landowners have allowed their ambitions to come to fruition. Significant progress resulting in trails on the ground being launched in Autumn 2021 show the drive and determination of the C2C Project team and the communities within the project area.

The legacy of the C2C Project will not only be demonstrated through the communities who are more skilled, knowledgeable, and enthused to showcase, access, protect and conserve their local heritage, but also through the trail infrastructure which has been developed on the ground and which will be utilised by people of all ages and backgrounds for many years to come.