

# ***ENLIVEN***

## ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

This report is the result of a feasibility study grant for the preparation of an application for funding under Concerto, an EU Renewable Energy programme. But it aspires to be more than the basis for a grant application. It is a first attempt to outline a new vision for rural communities. For too long rural development policies have sought to preserve threatened ways of life or to revive those had already passed into history. These usually failed because external forces that should have been foreseen overwhelmed the efforts. This study looks to the future instead of the past and actively prepares for largely predictable events. But the report does not overlook local place and local culture. The plans outlined here are rooted in specific natural and social contexts.

The Irish rural village has undergone several transformations since it began as the offshoot of monastic settlement. It evolved in Norman times into the mixed activity Farm Village, was decimated by the Cromwellian conquest and reinvented in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries with early industrialization. Then in the more prosperous areas came the familiar market centres of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries built by the newly emerging Catholic merchant class. In the poorer lands, self-contained Clochán villages flourished until they were scattered by either by the Famine itself or by the operations of Congested District Boards in response to the Famine.

Today, the Irish village is often depending on location, a dormitory outpost of the city or a summer-time holiday destination. But in most rural areas, the village has lost its market role and with it its population, its heart decays as new housing expands only on its fringes and rural hinterland. The village's next role could be crucial for the future of Ireland. We believe that, developing its own local renewable energy sources, it could thrive in a period in which global oil and gas production is declining and when severe measures are likely to be taken to slow the pace of climate change.

This report presents a model of how that energy resource development might come about, a model which should have relevance not only for rural areas but also for settlement development throughout Ireland and into wider Europe.

### **Genesis**

This project came about through the convergence of two compatible objectives; one of an NGO, the other of a local businessman. The NGO is Irish Rural Link, the national network for local development organizations in Ireland. Seamus Boland, Chief Executive of IRL, had identified the uncertainty over fossil fuel supplies and prices as a factor that would have a major impact on the welfare of rural communities in the short to medium term future. He saw also that these same threats could bring opportunities for rural regeneration through the development of renewable energy sources.

At the same time, Martin Langton, a local businessman and owner of a 40-acre farm in Cadamstown and a partner in a consortium that owns a similar parcel in Ballyboy was

aware of the same threats and opportunities. He was determined to develop his land in a way that supported the social and cultural needs of the community and the natural environment. This led him to ask Emer O'Siochru of EOS Architects, an ecological design and development consultancy to prepare a development proposal for Cadamstown that responded to the changing environment.

Emer O'Siochru's research into local renewable energy generation led her to Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) and to the EU's Concerto programme for community-led renewable energy demonstration projects and the idea grew to extend the project beyond a single commercial development. Contact with Seamus Boland, also an Offaly man, immediately led IRL to put together a team to bid for feasibility funding to develop a project, based on Cadamstown and Ballyboy but that could be replicated easily into many more villages.

Offaly County Council joined the team, reaffirming its leadership in environmental management. Richard Douthwaite, a leading sustainability economist and writer was quickly recruited along with Larry Staudt, an expert in wind generation, and Vicky Heslop, an expert in biogas and biomass energy. Later, Michael Layden, a windfarm expert and advocate of community-owned energy systems and Pauric Davis, an ecological mechanical and electrical engineer joined the team and ENLIVEN took shape.

## **The Project Team**

**Seamus Boland** started his career in the Arts qualifying in Speech and Drama in London. Community Arts facilitation was his route into community development and in 1988 he returned to Ireland to manage the Tullamore and Athlone Training Centres mainly working with the Travelling Community. In 1993, he worked with people with disability as Employment Training officer for an Phobail Teo and then broadened into general youth training as project manager of the Athlone Youth Community Project and in 1996, Director of Midland Regional Youth Services Ltd. until he took up his present post as Chief Executive officer of IRL. During this time he took qualifications in Rural Development and now lectures part time in NUI Maynooth on rural development issues. His European project experience includes roles as chair of *North South Voice*, a peace programme supported by European funding drawn down jointly by the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Dublin, and by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Belfast. The programme based on the border region aims to develop communities, in particular Protestant communities, who are disadvantaged as a result of the conflict. Costing over 1 million Euro over a three-year period ending in Dec 2006; the programme employs six people, and is working with over 100 communities on both sides of border. Areas of work include community development, economic assessment, and unemployment issues. *PACE AVENIR* is a joint research programme involving Irish Rural Link, Combat Poverty, and organisations in Portugal, France, and Germany. It was supported by the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs). A yearlong programme (2003), its main aim centered on the evaluation of policy systems at local and national level as they affect rural communities.

**Paoric Davis** BEng (Hons) Energy Engineering MInstE VDI MIEI CEng qualified in building services and electrical engineering. He is a chartered member of the Institute of Energy, member of Verein Deutscher Ingenieure (Society of German Engineers), member of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland and chartered member of the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers. Paoric's experience, gathered in Ireland, the UK and Germany, ranges through residential, commercial, civic, educational and institutional projects. Among articles and presentations he has written recently are '*Building Sustainable Communities*' Institution of Engineers of Ireland Annual Conference, 2005. '*Low Energy Building Design*' Natural Building Conference, Dublin 2004. '*Sustainable Energy and Building Design*', Irish Architect magazine, 2003. '*Designing for Natural Ventilation*' presented to Irish Energy Centre / Department of Education Conference, December 1999. He been an external tutor in Sustainable Environmental and Services Design in Queens University Belfast, since 2001. Paoric Davis is director of Davis Associates.

**Richard Douthwaite** is an economist and writer with special interest in energy issues and local economic development. He has made a special study of rural sustainability and

his book *Short Circuit* (1996) gives examples of currency, banking, energy and food production systems which communities can use to make themselves less dependent on the world economy. He was a founder of Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability, a registered charity which aims to establish the characteristics that an economic system would have to possess to be truly sustainable. He is co-editor of the *Feasta Review*, which appears every second year. He has acted as economic adviser to the Global Commons Institute (London) for the past twelve years, during which time GCI has developed the Contraction and Convergence approach to dealing with greenhouse gas emissions which has now been backed by a majority of countries in the world. In 2002 he organised the conference Ireland's *Transition to Renewable Energy* for Feasta, with the Tipperary Institute and Sustainable Energy Ireland. He edited and published conference papers in 2003 as the book, *Before the Wells Run Dry*. He is a founder of the Mayo Community Wind Energy Group. He edited *To Catch the Wind*, a report on the feasibility of such community investments in current conditions in Ireland, which was published in June 2004. Richard Douthwaite is now working on an EPA funded research project to develop scenarios for an energy scarce future.

**Vicky Heslop** has been actively involved in the biogas industry in Ireland since 1991 and is co-founder of Methan O Gen Ltd and Methanogen (UK) Ltd. Since 1996, Vicky has operated a multi tank digester based on her farm that processes both solid and liquid wastes and is used for educational and trial purposes. Vicky is also a director of Sustainable Energy Ireland (a Government Agency), Vice President of the Irish Bioenergy Association, Renewable Energy industry representative on the Government's Renewable Energy policy development group and an organic farmer. Vicky has participated in a number of EU projects already completed on behalf of the Irish Bioenergy Association; Altener - *Lets Give the Floor to Farmers*; Altener – RAGS project – contract no. 4.1030/C/00-0023 project 276. Currently she is a partner in the EU project as partner Altener - Probiogas project – EIE 2003 117.

### **Martin Langton**

Martin Langton grew up in a small farm in Ballyboy Co. Offaly. He started his career in farming and still farms organically part time. One of ten children steeped in the GAA tradition, played hurling and Gaelic football at all levels for Kilcormac Killoughey. He played senior hurling for Killeigh and two years with the Offaly team in New York and now trains Na Fianna (Killeigh) minor hurling team. A passionate environmentalist he has a keen interest in saving the local peat bogs and local bio-diversity. His career brought him to work in both New York and London but now lives in Geashill, Co Offaly. He is owner director of the Irish Pub Company, which provides a total design and fit-out service for the hospitality sector.

**Michael Laydon** qualified in mechanical engineering at University College Galway. From 1986 to 1990 he held a management position in Arigna Collieries until its depletion and closure. He researched and then worked in windfarm operations and management in the United States and Ireland. In 1994 Michael carried out the wind portion of the Connacht Regional Planning Study. He worked on a number of proposals for AERI,

including a Joule 1.2 MW project. Michael worked as Manager of the East Connacht Energy Agency from 1997-2000. Since then, he has practiced as an energy consultant on wind energy projects in Ireland, the UK and the US. He carried out the feasibility study for a co-operative windfarm in County Roscommon and is currently developing an energy strategy for communities in Ireland.

**Vivienne O'Brien** has a B.A, B.A.I Engineering and Maths and is an Executive Engineer working in Technical Design in the Housing Section in Offaly County Council. Part of this role is to actively promote energy efficiency in the design and construction of local authority dwellings. The housing department seeks to provide innovative design proposals involving geo-thermal and air thermal heating systems, passive solar design of buildings, high levels of building fabric thermal insulation, solar heating and the use of high efficiency heat pumps, boilers and heating appliances for social housing in the county. This year, Vivienne O'Brien has contributed to two pilot schemes in mid-construction in Shinrone and Edenderry, which incorporate some of the above standards. Following on from this experience, Offaly Council intends to expand this concept into its housing programme as standard if found to be practicable, of significant benefit and if the necessary additional capital funding is made available.

**Sean O'Riordain** is a graduate in Business Studies (Commerce) from University College Dublin. He founded Park Communications in 1981. Park is one of Ireland's top ten communications, public relations and training. Sean is a founder member and past Chairman of the Public Relations Consultants Association (Ireland). He regularly manages research projects on behalf of a clientele of leading Irish and international organizations. Sean has considerable experience of communications and consultation projects with local residents in the property development area.

**Emer O'Siochru** qualified as an architect with a BArch from UCD in 1976 and as a valuation surveyor in development and planning in 1988. She worked in various commercial architectural practices and taught as a studio lecturer in UCD School of Architecture until 1987. She first got actively involved in advocacy planning and community architecture as a student and continued this interest in all her work. She was part of a successful public private partnership consortium, Temple Bar 91, whose winning bid secured Dublin as European Cultural Capital in 1991. She has wide experience as architect and project manager of city centre mixed-use redevelopments; one with a building cooperative of long term unemployed in Temple Bar. Working in Community Technical Aid in 1999, she developed the EU funded, *SUS Project* to develop sustainability indicators for the redevelopment of Dublin's docklands. Emer O'Siochru is an executive board member of Feasta. She has contributed a number of submissions and reports on land and housing topics in response to Oireachtas Committee invitations. She coordinated the Feasta's annual conference in 2003 on *Land: the Claim of the Community*. She co-edited the independent Irish Report '*Telling it Like it is*' for the world summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg in 2002, where she was part of the official Irish delegation. She represents the environmental NGO sector on Comhar, the National Sustainable Development Partnership since 2003 and professionally, is a

member of the Sustainability Task Force of the RIAI. Emer O'Siochru is currently Director of EOS Architects which specialises in sustainable settlement design and development,

**Lawrence Staudt** received a B.Sc. and M.Eng degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the USA. He worked as engineer and engineering manager of Enertech, a wind energy company involved in the California wind farms in the 1980s. He came to Ireland in 1985, doing research toward a Ph.D. at University College, Dublin. During this time Hurley Staudt Associates carried out the first wind energy survey of Ireland. He worked for the Electricity Supply Board for nine years working in the area of power station control systems, and during this time was a founder director of the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) and a vice president of the European Wind Energy Association. He left the ESB in 1998 to become the first chief executive of the IWEA, a post he held for three years. He subsequently spent one year with Airtricity in the area of wind farm development, before becoming a lecturer in engineering at Dundalk Institute of Technology where he is now head of its Centre for Renewable Energy. He worked with David Crane on the development of the Irish ECCO model which follows the flow of energy and materials in the economy rather than those of money in 2002. He is a co-director of Celtic Wind Turbines, and holds a patent for an aspect of small generator technology.