



A Tale of Two Wicklow's.

Date: 29th November 2025 | Location: Tinahely
Community Sports Centre

ABSTRACT

This report combines insights from the Wicklow PPN Membership Consultation on transport. It highlights community feedback, identifies challenges, and provides recommendations to improve transport services, and accessibility in County Wicklow.

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Transport Report – Wicklow PPN Representatives Discussion

Date: 29th November 2025 | Location: Tinahealy Community Sports Centre

1 CONTEXT

County Wicklow Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in July 2014 under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. It serves as the main link between local authorities and community, voluntary, and environmental sectors. This report reflects the consultation held on 29th November 2025, focusing on transport related issues and integrated safety concerns raised by participants.

Co Wicklow PPN has 523 diverse member groups, some of these groups are networks. PPN representatives are volunteers who have served as a voice for the community on structures including: the Local Community Development Committee; Wicklow County Council Strategic Policy Committees, Co Wicklow Children & Young People's Services Committee; Co Wicklow Volunteer Centre, County Wicklow Partnership, and Co Wicklow Joint Policing Committee. PPN Representatives strive to ensure that the needs of the community sector are prioritised within local policy processes.

2 ANALYSIS OF IRISH TRANSPORT POLICY GAPS

Irish transport policy emphasises sustainable mobility, integration of services, and accessibility through initiatives like the National Transport Authority (NTA) programs and Local Link services. However, feedback from Wicklow communities reveals significant gaps:

- Poor frequency and reliability of buses and trains in larger towns and urban areas, leaving rural areas underserved with minimal access to transport.
- Lack of connectivity between transport modes (bus, train, Luas), causing delays and inefficiencies.
- Inadequate infrastructure such as bus shelters, lighting, and digital displays for timetables, while rural communities, however, have bus stops on the verge of the roads, with no lighting, no shelter and very often no footpath.
- Limited provision for vulnerable groups, including wheelchair users and visually impaired passengers countywide.
- Absence of meaningful community consultation and codesigning in route planning and service provision.
- Lack vision for meeting future needs for a growing, aging population and regional development.

3 DISCUSSION THEMES & RESPONSES

3.1 IF YOU COULD INTRODUCE ONE THING TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT IN YOUR LOCAL AREA, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- Increase frequency and reliability of bus and train services, especially in rural areas.
- Introduce local shuttle/loop services connecting villages to main transport hubs.
- Upgrade bus shelters with lighting, seating, and real-time digital displays.
- Develop safe pedestrian and cycling routes to reduce car dependency.

3.2 WHAT DOES TRANSPORT MEAN TO YOU AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP?

- Transport is a lifeline for accessing work, education, healthcare, and social activities.
- It represents independence and inclusion for older people, people with disabilities, and those without private cars.
- Reliable transport is essential for reducing isolation in rural communities.

3.3 WHAT ROLE SHOULD TRANSPORT PLAY IN COMMUNITIES?

- Enable connectivity, social inclusion, and economic participation.
- Support sustainability goals by reducing reliance on private cars.
- Public transport should be safe, affordable, and accessible for all demographics.

3.4 WHAT DO YOU THINK IS WORKING IN WICKLOW WHEN IT COMES TO TRANSPORT AND WHAT'S NOT WORKING?

- **Working:** Local Link services provide vital connections for **some** rural areas where they are available; it was noted there have been recent improvements in **some** bus routes along main corridors.
- **Not Working:** Poor frequency and reliability of services; inadequate infrastructure; accessibility gaps and lack of integration between buses and trains. Highlighting tangible inequalities between urban and rural areas.

3.5 DOES A STRONG LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM HELP TO BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY?

- **Yes.** It fosters inclusion, reduces isolation, and supports local businesses.
- Influences decision making for young people to return to rural areas.
- Reliable transport encourages community engagement, participation, tourism, economic development and in events planning.

3.6 DO YOU THINK THAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAYS A ROLE IN CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY?

- Accessible transport is critical for people with disabilities, older adults, and low-income households.
- Lack of accessibility features currently excludes many.

3.7 WHEN MAKING A DECISION REGARDING WHAT FORM OF TRANSPORT TO TAKE, DOES THE IMPACT OF YOUR JOURNEY ON THE ENVIRONMENT PLAY A ROLE IN YOUR DECISION MAKING AND WHY?

- Many participants consider environmental impact but are constrained by lack of viable alternatives.
- Strong desire for greener options (electric modes of transport, improved active travel infrastructure).
- The bigger vision for active travel, linking villages, towns and cities, sustainable economic development and tourism. Future growth in populations and activities that support healthy transport and people.

4 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON TRANSPORT CHALLENGES

- Open the train stations in Avoca, update the station.
- NTA bus service to start in Glendalough, good idea all agreed.
- Not enough buses in most of the country areas.
- A bus in Tinahely that goes to Arklow, to service Tinahely.
- A good road network and too few buses using it.
- Hackney for Castletown subsidised hackney for reaching impact of transport.
- Countywide carpooling app with vetting attached to help safeguard people.
- Public Transport to the visually impaired is a lifeline and they are dependent on it.
- Standing room only on the train, poor times and no joined-up thinking.
- Frequency of buses and trains.
- Dependency of service (bus don't turn up) ghost buses.
- TFI app is inaccurate, and shadow buses never turn up.
- Security on buses required due to antisocial behavior.
- We as females are feeling unsafe on public transport, getting off buses when lighting is very poor or in isolated areas. No Garda presence.
- Lack of digital display with timetables, or voice announcements for hearing impaired.
- More bus shelters with lighting fit for purpose.
- We need more connectivity between Trains, Dart, Luas and bus times.
- NTA does not listen to community groups, our policy should ensure meaningful consultation.
- Public transport in communities is a necessity or if there is none then the people living there should have access to subsidised taxi fares etc.

5 ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONCERNS

- Civil infrastructure such as paths, public lighting, guardrails at pedestrian crossings are in disrepair.
- Parking chaos at schools and events; enforcement needed.
- E-scooters pose safety hazards; risk of accidents.
- Cyclists ignoring road rules on narrow rural roads.
- Active Travel must be embedded in all transport policies.

- Speed limits should be reduced on rural and urban roads.
- Overgrown hedges and verges block signage and increase accident risk.
- Farm machinery and slurry trails create hazards for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Safety should be prioritized alongside biodiversity goals.
- Lack of local engagement between community stakeholders and transport authorities.
- Verges maintenance neglected since COVID; urgent action needed.
- Community Cycle Teams proposed for education, monitoring, and focused engagement with local county council and transport authorities.
- Road walkers lack awareness of safety rules; enforcement and education needed.

6 ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY IN TRANSPORT

- Public transport is a lifeline for visually impaired individuals; dependency is high.
- Accessibility gaps: lack of digital timetable displays and voice announcements for hearing-impaired users.
- Women and vulnerable groups often feel unsafe using public transport in poorly lit or isolated areas; absence of Garda presence increases insecurity.
- Install and maintain adequate street lighting near bus stops and pedestrian routes.
- Increase Garda patrols in high-risk areas, including tourist sites like Glendalough.
- Ensure safe and accessible transport options, including well-lit bus shelters and CCTV coverage.
- Develop and promote safety apps and community alert systems for real-time alerts and location sharing.
- Introduce subsidised taxi services or vouchers for areas without public transport.
- Digital solutions (apps for carpooling, real-time bus tracking) should include safety features.
- Inadequate parking for people with disabilities, particularly in rural areas.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Increase frequency and reliability of bus and train services, especially in rural areas.
- Introduce shuttle and loop services to connect smaller villages with transport hubs.
- Upgrade infrastructure: bus shelters with lighting, seating, and digital displays.
- Ensure accessibility for all: audio announcements, wheelchair-friendly vehicles, and Blue Badge parking at hubs.
- Increase Blue Badge parking, particular at recreational sites including rivers and lakes.
- Commitment to park and ride facilities countywide.
- Develop and promote community carpooling apps with vetting for safety.
- Improve integration between modes of transport to reduce waiting times and missed connections.
- Mandate meaningful community consultation and codesign in transport planning and policy decisions.
- Improve safety: CCTV at stops, trail cameras, better lighting, and Garda presence.
- Embed active travel policy in decision making and in meeting the needs of villages, towns, cities and visitors to our community.

8 NEXT STEPS

Share this report with Wicklow County Council and NTA. County Wicklow PPN membership, Representatives, and Secretariat and organisations, advocating for inclusion of these recommendations in local transport plans. Continue dialogue at Strategic Policy Committees and future PPN Plenary meetings.



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Public Participation
Network Wicklow