



Fort Dunree Business  
and Marketing Plan  
2021 - 2023

<b>Section No</b>	<b>Section title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Executive summary	3
2	Fort Dunree and Project Background	3
3	Needs Analysis	10
4	Marketing Strategy	17
5	Financial Projections	23

## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

The aim of Fort Dunree Military Museum Ltd is to preserve, maintain and develop the rich natural and built heritage of Fort Dunree and further develop this as a major tourist attraction on the Inishowen Peninsula which offers the visitor a satisfying interesting and educational experience at Fort Dunree.

## 2. BACKGROUND TO FORT DUNREE MILITARY MUSEUM LTD

Fort Dunree is located about seven miles north of Buncrana on the Inishowen Peninsula in County Donegal. The site is situated along the shores of Lough Swilly commanding a majestic view of the Lough and its shorelines. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a small fort was erected to guard against a possible French invasion. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century the fort was modernised and enlarged with the building of the "Top Fort" on Dunree Hill. During World War I it stood guard whilst Admiral Lord Jellicoe's Fleet anchored in Lough Swilly prior to engaging the German Navy at the Battle of Jutland. Control of the Fort was transferred to the Irish Free State just before World War II.

The Fort Dunree heritage museum complex was originally opened to the public in 1986, and over the subsequent years it has provided a fascinating and unique experience for visitors of all ages. It has also been a source of great pleasure and reminiscence for those of a military background, whether having served at the post or being involved in its military history.

### Cultural Heritage

Fort Dunree has an ongoing, collaborative relationship with the Department of Defence and the Irish Defence Forces to preserve this very important national asset. In recent years this relationship has seen the range of artefacts on display augmented with new impressive artillery pieces, including our first Armoured Personnel Carrier, handed over in a special ceremony by Chief of Staff Brig. Gen Conor O'Boyle. These artefacts come from the Department of Defence and are a sign of confidence and appreciation of the work carried out by Fort Dunree Military Museum.

Fort Dunree through its engagement and participation with Inishowen Friends of Messines has become a centre for Peace & Reconciliation on the Island of Ireland and across the community divide, embracing all religious

and political groupings. As part of this process Fort Dunree was integral in the delivery of its own program of Remembrance, Reconciliation and Remembrance through our shared history. This is an OCN accredited program which has been delivered successfully to approx 500 trainees both youth and adult through our facilities at Fort Dunree. Fort Dunree will continue to be used as a centre for peace and reconciliation by working in partnership with other peace building organisations to promote mutual understanding and enhanced community relationships and contribute to conflict transformation and a peaceful future.

### Natural Heritage

In its natural spectacular setting, Fort Dunree is rich in wildlife, some of it unique to the area. The facilities at Fort Dunree are used for educational purposes, to profile the rich flora and fauna of the region through exhibitions, nature walks and educational classes. Fort Dunree has built up a relationship with local nature organisation Wild Inishowen to help develop awareness of the rich natural heritage on offer at the site.

### Community Collaboration and Participation

Fort Dunree is a vital component for the local community. It has been developed as a centre for Cultural Tourism and it's cross community history has been a catalyst for a variety of activities including remembrance ceremonies, wildlife programmes, musical events, storytelling evenings, art exhibitions and reconciliation workshops. There is series of walks on the site which provide an invaluable resource for the local community. They provide not just physical health benefits but act as a source of social interaction for an elderly local population, who utilise the walks on a daily basis. In recent years Fort Dunree has worked with other local community organisations to facilitate fund raising efforts, providing a base for fun days and treasure hunts. The Fort has also helped raise funds for Cancer Care West by hosting a Charity Cycle and Walk for the past three years.

Due to the varied nature of the services it provides, Fort Dunree work in collaboration with many groups at community, local and national level. Locally the Fort works in partnership with Failte Ireland to help ensure that the area is marketed to its full potential. The Fort collaborated with other tourist attractions in Inishowen to produce a brochure and map which details what the area has to offer. Fort Dunree has a close working relationship with Inch Wildfowl Reserve to promote both attractions jointly to potential visitors. We are also closely linked to the Ulster Canadian Initiative which

organises the annual Laurentic Commemoration that sees the Canadian Ambassador visit Fort Dunree every year. The Fort has developed a relationship with ex prisoners group An Eochair from Belfast and groups visit Fort Dunree and hold workshops. Locally there are strong ties with the Desertegney Community Association which sees fun days and treasure hunts held on site and the Fort works in tandem with West Inishowen Historical Society to organise events and talks. Artlink and other arts based organisations host exhibitions and residentials at Dunree and Wild Inishowen host talks and field trips exploring our rich natural heritage.

The Department of Defence use the site to carry out riot training for Battalions prior to their peace keeping missions abroad. Fort Dunree has in recent years acted as a base for local emergency services, including Civil Defence, RNLI, Coastguard and Mountain Rescue to conduct active rescue scenarios.

There is now a need to consolidate the capital works carried out to date, and to further enhance and expand the range of facilities on offer to visitors. The works have enhanced Fort Dunree's appeal with a view to improving visitor numbers and generating increased revenue, which will contribute to its long-term sustainability.

### Fort Dunree Governance Structure

Fort Dunree Military Museum was established in 1986 by the Department of Defence and in 1994, Fort Dunree Military Museum Ltd (FDMM) was formed to further develop the facility. The Museum holds title to 3 acres of ground within the approximately 68 acres, which make up the old army camp at Dunree. Donegal County Council (DCC) is the owner of the other 67 acres. This situation has created a unique partnership between DCC and those members of the community who have been responsible for recent developments related to the museum. This partnership provides a powerful opportunity to develop Fort Dunree into a significant attraction within both Inishowen and Donegal.

The Board of Directors of Fort Dunree Military Museum Ltd is made up of representatives of the community and public sectors as follows:

1. Community individuals known as "The Friends of Dunree"
2. Nominated elected representatives from Donegal County Council
3. Nominees of the Chief Executive of Donegal County Council

4. Nominees of the Minister of Defence or Army Chief of Staff, provided that any such nominee is a commissioned officer of the Defence Forces.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
John Mc Carter	Chairman	Former Director of Fruit of the Loom
Judith Mc Carthy	Nominee of the Chief Executive	Curator of Donegal County Museum
Dermot Mc Laughlin	Treasurer	Retired wildlife ranger
Rena Donaghey	Director	County Councillor
Nicholas Crossan	Director	County Councillor
Albert Doherty	Director	County Councillor
Lt.Col Paul Kelly	Board Member	Army Officer
Brian O Reilly	Director	Retired Army officer
Declan O'Carroll	Director	Retired Army officer
Jack McElroy	Director	Retired Army officer
Jim Prendergast	Board Member	Retired Army Officer

The Board of Directors and Members collectively form the partnership which has facilitated so much of the work to date. It has been the considerable hard work, energy and commitment of this group and in particular those members representing the Friends of Dunree, who have secured necessary funding, and overseen the transformation of the Museum. Core funding for Fort Dunree Military Museum Ltd comes from Pobal under the Community Services programme, this gives Fort Dunree a Manager and three full time staff, enabling the site to remain open on a full time basis.

## Recent Developments

The Board has led a series of extensive refurbishments and developments at Fort Dunree in recent years with the creation of a network of walking paths, the restoration of former military buildings to create a wildlife exhibition, the installation of further military displays and the improvement of the shop and water front cafeteria. All of these developments were initiated by the Board in collaboration with Donegal County Council and other relevant organisations, and were funded through a variety of local and national schemes as appropriate.

Since 2013 with the advent of marketing initiatives such as the Gathering and in particular the Wild Atlantic Way, Fort Dunree has been attracting increasing visitor numbers. As a Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way visitor numbers have increased year on year for the past five years. Social Media has also been a contributing factor to this increase and Fort Dunree has been the recipient of the Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor for the past 6 years. This increase in visitors has led the Board to embark on a programme of works to enhance the overall product offering to meet the increased demand being generated.

The success of Fort Dunree to date has been achieved through the hard work and collaboration of a number of stakeholders. This cooperation has enabled the Museum to flourish and increase visitor numbers to this remote location whilst providing four full time posts, two part time posts and six seasonal jobs. As well as the direct employment at Fort Dunree other organisations also benefit from the work undertaken at Fort Dunree. The Dunree Yoga Centre, based at the site, supports one employee. Artlink, a Community arts based organisation work with Fort Dunree to host numerous art projects and exhibitions.

## Dunree Pier

Since the development of the Museum and associated facilities at Fort Dunree, the Pier has remained derelict and officially out of use. Following a successful funding application by Donegal County Council the pier at Dunree has recently been redeveloped. The finished product is a magnificent addition to the tourism product at Dunree and will attract a wider range of new visitors in the years ahead. At least one group is planning marine tours of Lough Swilly this year and Fort Dunree will be major stop off/pick up point for this operator. This is only the beginning of new usage for the pier.

The path to the pier was upgraded to a standard that would meet relevant health and safety requirements.

## Boathouse

Another exciting development at Fort Dunree was the restoration of the old Boathouse at the pier. With a grant from FLAG we were able to install a new roof and doors to this wonderful old building and also create a new path connecting it to the pier walkway. This building allows for the start of a fantastic new product on site with Inish Adventures coming on board to offer Kayaking, Snorkelling and Coasteering at Fort Dunree, now in it's third year this offering has been extremely successful and will be expanded in the years to come. A further grant from FLAG has seen the Slipway extended to the Pier and electricity added to the Boathouse, with changing facilities installed last year, further augmenting the water sports product on site.

## Coffee Shop

With funding from REDZ and Donegal County Council Fort Dunree were able to renovate the old coffee shop on site with the aim of increasing the capacity for catering for visitors at the site. This entailed refitting the interior of Café, extending the kitchen area and extending the seating capacity to exterior of the Coffee Shop with the creation of an outside seating area.

The success of the Wild Atlantic Way has seen a significant increase in the coach market that uses Fort Dunree. Most coaches seat at least 50 passengers on board. The new refit of the remaining interior of the coffee shop will allow better use of the existing space and allow a better seating arrangement with increased capacity.

The development of an outside seating area in the court yard to the rear of the Café caters for an additional 20 people. This space will be used on a year round basis, allowing visitors to avail of "al fresco dining" when appropriate and providing a closed in, comfortable space, when the weather is not suitable. The kitchen area of the Coffee Shop was upgraded to cater for the growing demand. The Café now offers visitors a range of food prepared on site which enhances the site's appeal. Since June 2017 the Coffee Shop at Fort Dunree has been leased to John and Michelle McLaughlin of the Coffee Cup in Bunrana. This has been a massive success, increasing the range of products on offer, bringing more visitors to the site. These new developments were officially opened by the Minister with Responsibility for Defence, Paul Kehoe T.D. on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Fort Dunree now hosts art exhibitions, wildlife talks, yoga classes and even weddings.

## Needs Analysis

### **Introduction**

Fort Dunree provides a community tourism project that benefits both locals and visitors to the area.

Fort Dunree is a Military Museum which houses a fascinating display of Military memorabilia and artefacts as well as an array of large guns from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The Museum sits on a 68 acre site which also has a waterfront café, exhibition space, scenic walks, car and coach parking, unique flora and fauna and birdlife.

Fort Dunree Military museum Ltd is a Company limited by Guarantee with its principal objective being the development and maintenance of Fort Dunree Military Museum as a key cultural, historical tourism and reconciliation facility within Inishowen.

The Museum's collection of military artefacts and memorabilia, particularly those relating to coastal defence, is an attraction of national importance. The location and existing Fort, are of major significance in terms of the history of Ulster, Donegal and Inishowen, and are situated in one of the most scenic areas of the Inishowen Peninsula. Operating with a board of Directors drawn from the community, public and private sectors Fort Dunree is established as a key element in the overall tourism product of Inishowen.

Fort Dunree has exhibition spaces and rooms for hire also, that local businesses and community groups use.

Fort Dunree provides direct benefit to both the social and economic fabric of Inishowen through the creation of jobs and the development of skills amongst those working there. There is a definite need here as the unemployment rate in Donegal is the highest in the country, according to the CSO statistics from 2011 and It has the lowest disposable income per household.

A series of walks has been put in place around the Dunree site. These walks are complimentary to the internal exhibition and are a recreational/amenity resource for both tourists and particularly the local community.

Its status as one of only a limited number of visitor attractions within Inishowen means it is important in terms of providing a reason to visit the peninsula. This will bring benefits to both local tourism providers and the

local Service/retail sector, thereby helping to maintain jobs and generate revenue for the local economy, an economy which has been severely affected by high unemployment and emigration in recent years.

### **Who**

Visitors from all over the world come to Fort Dunree, 25% of our visitors are from outside the island of Ireland. Remembrance activities are held at Fort Dunree. Retired people have a great interest in the History and people that had emigrated come to visit each year. For a family day out or just to have a look around. The local community use Fort Dunree walks every day. The walks are a vital resource, for health benefits both mental and physical. Fort Dunree is a social medium, recreational/amenity for both tourists and the local community. Community businesses use Fort Dunree, renting exhibition space and office space. Paying visitor numbers are around 14,000 per year indicating the need for our service. We have Schools, cross-border groups, families, backpackers, wildlife clubs, history groups, ex-army, walkers/hikers, cyclists, vintage car clubs, motorbike clubs, artists, ex-patriots, fishermen, etc. visit/use Fort Dunree.

We have volunteers coming for work experience also, this helps develop their skills and gives them knowledge of the history of Fort Dunree and its importance as a National asset.

We have sponsored Charity walks/cycle here at Fort Dunree this is very well supported and appreciated.

Tourism Industry was worth 7bn to the Irish economy in 2016, 3 out of 4 visitor attractions had more visitors according to Failte Ireland Research. Oversea market is up 10% to 8.8bn and domestic tourists up 2%.

These numbers are growing year on year.

### **Service**

We are providing a visitor/ heritage centre, a cultural, historical, tourism and reconciliation facility. A series of walks are in place around the Dunree site and are a recreational/ amenity resource for both tourists and the local community. There are units for rent for exhibitions and office space which are used by local business and artists.

Remembrance Events at Fort Dunree

Each year we hold an annual commemoration at Fort Dunree in association with the Inishowen Friends of Messines (IFOM) for the men and women of

Inishowen who fell in the Great War 1914 to 1918. Since the event commenced in 2005 it has grown in stature and popularity with people from all over Ireland, North and South. This service of remembrance has become a platform for disparate communities to come together with a unity of purpose, foster relationships and build new ones as the years roll on. During this time Fort Dunree has been active in promoting its peace and reconciliation aims coupled with building a lasting legacy so that these men and women will never again be forgotten. To achieve this, we have created a Peace Wall and Garden inside the grounds of Fort Dunree in which we have installed five Memorial plaques with the names of the Inishowen war dead on them. Commemoration of historical events is a prominent feature in the culture of both main traditions in Ireland. In the coming Decade of Remembrance there are a number of key historical events such as the signing of the Ulster Covenant in 1912, passing of the Irish Home Rule Bill in 1914, Battle of the Somme 1916, the Easter Rising and proclamation of 1916, all of which impacted in the World in which we live in today and the centenaries which will be commemorated over imminent years. Fort Dunree will be prominent in hosting ceremonies and events to mark these momentous periods in our past.

In the last year Fort Dunree has begun to facilitate study trips to First World War Western Front to study Ireland's involvement in that war, and the lessons to be learned for building peace and conflict transformation in Ireland today. 'Remembrance ,Reconciliation, Renaissance ,Learning through our Shared History' is a peace and reconciliation programme based around studying the shared experience of Irish people in the First World War, and looking at what we can take from that experience to help us build peace and good relations on our island today. To date Fort Dunree have facilitated five of these trips through Donegal County Council's Hands of History Programme and Engage Youth run by Inishowen Development Partnership. These study visits have become a way of extending Fort Dunree's Peace and Reconciliation aims and also generate an income.

### **Target**

The Target population are:

There are approximately 300,000 people living within a 50 mile radius of Fort Dunree. We are on the doorstep of Northern Ireland with a population of 1.8 million people of which a sizeable proportion traditionally holidaying in Donegal.

- School groups (local and regional) who are looking for opportunities "on the ground" that can be linked to course curricula. The primary school population in Donegal/Derry and Strabane Council areas is approx 34,000. There are 27 Secondary schools in Donegal with a student population of 12,450.
- The Great Lighthouses of Ireland brand attracts a significant customer base.
- Everyday tourists who are always looking for something new and different.
- Overseas tourists - looking to learn more about the area. Older tourists - they have an interest in things which have a personal and historic element to which they can relate.
- Families with young children - fun activities and something to do on a wet day.
- Individuals/ groups with an interest in/focus on key themes.
- Peace and reconciliation groups - have an interest in the Remembrance Ceremonies that are held here annually.
- Couples that are getting married and would like to use the accommodation for themselves and or friends and family.

### **Demographics**

Fort Dunree is situated in Inishowen the most northerly part of County Donegal, it has a total population of 44,314.

There are 175 national schools and 27 secondary schools in Donegal.

15% of the population in Inishowen is over 60years old.

Donegal had 174,000 overseas visitors in 2012 contributing € 40m in revenue to the local economy, according to Failte Ireland Research.

Fort Dunree has survived in spite of the problems and harsh economic realities, in the last year visitor figures have gone up, services have increased, proof there is a need for this facility.

## **Competition**

There are three other tourist centres in the Peninsula. Doagh Famine village. The Inishowen Maritime Museum, The old church visitors Centre Burt. Last year saw the opening of the massively successful Wild Ireland in Muff. Each of these centres have a unique focus and rather than representing competition for Fort Dunree, they are complimentary, particularly in terms of their constituting a large part of the fabric of the overall Inishowen tourism "product". At Fort Dunree there is a Military Museum a network of walks, which include information boards at key locations, a wildlife and environment centre, exhibition spaces, a waterfront coffee shop, water sports, remembrance activities, wedding ceremonies, a hotspot for photography, the Aurora Borealis has been captured here on numerous occasions in recent years, kayaking snorkelling and coastering are also now available on site. Nowhere else has the range of services that Fort Dunree has on offer.

## **Why**

Fort Dunree is about much more than viewing military equipment, it tells a graphic tale of the history of Lough Swilly and the crucial role the Fort has played in protecting Irish neutrality. It also highlights the human element which is such an important part of the Fort and its History. In addition to the military focus, there is also a wildlife and environment exhibition. The information describes many aspects of Inishowen's natural history heritage and the mock rock-pool has species from the local area. A series of walks around the site are complimentary and are a recreational/ amenity resource for both tourists and the local community which helps them adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Fort Dunree Museum has created employment in a disadvantaged area. Tourists visiting the area have something to do when they get here. We are preserving a national asset. There is no other Military Museum of this nature in the locality, and neither is there anywhere in Inishowen offering information on the Peninsula's wildlife or environment therefore there is a great need for this service. Fort Dunree brings benefits to both local tourism providers and the local service/retail sector thereby generating revenue for the local economy. Visitor numbers have increased dramatically since 2002 going from 5000 to 14000 in 2017. Other businesses benefit from this, like Hotels/BnBs, restaurants etc. Fort Dunree appeals to all facets of education from primary to adult.

Fort Dunree is always a place where you can relax, unwind, chill out or slow down from the fast paced life outside. We have a seaview coffee shop and with an increasing number of users we are expanding. We can identify this need from previous years and the growing numbers that are using the facility.

The questionnaire that we have placed in the museum has been very helpful in indicating what our visitors want and enjoy about our facility.

### **Options**

There is no other option like this in the area. The Inishowen Peninsula is currently poorly served in terms of visitor attractions. Apart from Fort Dunree, the only real alternatives for visitors are the Inishowen Maritime Museum, Doagh Famine Village and the Old church Visitors centre Burt. Each of these has a unique focus and rather than representing competition for Fort Dunree, they are complimentary, particularly in terms of their constituting a large part of the fabric of the overall Inishowen Tourism 'Product'. The Location is significant in terms of the history of Ulster, Donegal and Inishowen and is one of the most scenic areas of Inishowen. Fort Dunree is open all year round and gives tourists with families/children something to do on a wet day.

Every single day in the year, January through to December there are people using the network of walks here at Fort Dunree.

It is a social medium as well as an educational/healthy place for all ages.

A Community Service that is indeed needed.

Malin Head - Ireland's most northerly point attracts 100,000 visitors per year, however no visitors centre, not an all-weather attraction. This is a 25 minute drive from Fort Dunree.

The displays and services are updated regularly; we can identify what is needed and what is not from the questionnaires, visitors book, facebook twitter etc.

## **1.4 PREMISES**

Fort Dunree comprises around 68 acres of ground at Dunree Point which lies some 14kms north of Buncrana on the eastern shore of Lough Swilly.

### **Physical Description:**

The site is dominated by the hill on which the upper fort sits and which rises to a height of 103 metres. The northern and western boundaries are marked by sea cliffs which rise to around 20 metres.

## THE NEXT STEPS

The present Museum is a tourist amenity and we have continuously developed and built on this for the past 34 years since it was opened. It has relied heavily on volunteerism and sporadic funding to grow in that period and we are proud of what we have achieved in the period. In 2019 we had a visitor counter installed at the gate and there were 104,000 visitors to the site, Our paying visitors number around 14,000 per year so we need to ensure that we see a lot more of the visitors to the site paying to go into the Museum. To this end we have applied for and were successful in obtaining €217,580 from Leader and Donegal County Council to modernise and upgrade the Museum facilities. This project should ensure a far higher percentage of site visitors pay to visit the Museum. This project is due to be completed by June 2021.

The Fort area contains numerous buildings and structures from its military days as well as many natural attributes. These could relatively easily be harnessed together to build an exciting and extensive Tourism complex embracing the natural environment from water to shore to land, cliffs and hills. Fort Dunree is currently involved in a funding process through the Failte Ireland Platforms for Growth programme. Donegal County Council is the lead partner in the application and should it be successful it will be a multi million euro investment in the site that will transform the project into one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Northern half of the Country. This business plan is not based on that project.

## MARKETING STRATEGY

Identifying precisely who constitutes the target market for the expanded facilities is essential in terms of defining the nature of the facilities.

The markets will be drawn from the following:

### SPECIALIST VISITORS:

Military History Societies both in Ireland and Britain are a source of potential visitors and could lead to repeat visits by such groups, however important these groups are, they are unfortunately a small niche market.

### WALKING AND CYCLING TOURISTS:

There is massive potential for walking tourism in both Donegal and Inishowen. Walking tourism actually accounts for more visitors to Ireland than golf. Cycling is now a massive resource and there will be a new Greenway opening between Derry and Buncrana in 2020.

### WATER SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

We have in association with Inish Adventures been providing kayaking, snorkelling and Coaststeering on site since March 2018. This has proven to be very successful and there lies an opportunity to expand this service with other offerings such as Kayak Fishing, Stand up Paddle Boarding, diving and wind surfing.

### ARTISTS AND WRITERS

The site at Dunree is a paradise for artists and writers alike, providing inspiration with its majestic scenery. Artlink a community based arts organisation use the site and host residencies on site.

## INVOLVING OTHERS

The potential for joint marketing has been recognised for some time by the board of Fort Dunree. It seems reasonable to assume that a greater impact will be had if individual attractions pooled limited resources and undertook marketing programmes which were focused and well monitored rather than the traditional fragmented approach with inadequate resources. Fort Dunree has been involved with various joint marketing initiatives in recent years which have proved to be moderately successful and established the value of this type of exercise.

## OUR COMPETITION

The Inishowen Peninsula is currently poorly served in terms of visitor attractions. Apart from Fort Dunree, the only real alternatives for visitors are Inishowen Maritime Museum, Doagh Famine Village, Old Church Visitor Centre and Wild Ireland. However, these each have a unique focus and rather than representing competition for Fort Dunree, they should be regarded as complimentary, particularly in terms of their constituting a large part of the fabric of the overall Inishowen tourism 'product'.

Elsewhere in the region, there exists a network of 74 visitor attractions within a 1.5 hours drive/60 mile radius of Fort Dunree. Although a number of regionally important attractions (e.g. Giants Causeway, Glenveagh National Park, Ulster American Folk Park) fall within this radius the majority are small with visitor numbers of less than 10,000.

### 3.7 SWOT ANALYSIS

The following is a SWOT analysis of Fort Dunree focusing on its strengths and weaknesses.

<b>STRENGTHS</b> New Museum Exhibition opening Discovery Point on Wild Atlantic Way History and Culture Landscape Wildlife Large site Facilities already available Nothing similar in Inishowen	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> Covid 19 Isolated Location Dependence on Funding Brexit
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> <b>Wild Atlantic Way</b> Funding Availability Demand for Walks and outdoor activities Need for accommodation Donegals growing reputation as tourist destination	<b>THREATS</b> Post Covid Landscape Funding drying up Brexit Precarious Political Situation in N Ireland

The principle marketing objectives are:

To capitalise on the continuing success of the Wild Atlantic Way.

To work pro-actively with tourism agencies and organisations in the region in developing the overall regional product.

To maximise the value of Dunree's stunning location.

To develop and position Fort Dunree as a key element in the regions tourism infrastructure.

## Capitalize on continued success of Wild Atlantic Way

Without doubt the most impressive marketing initiative to have been introduced in Ireland and indeed beyond has been the Wild Atlantic Way. The project aims to develop the site as a key stop along this route. The Wild Atlantic Way is a world-famous coastal route that spans seven of Ireland's counties, taking in some breathtaking scenery along the way. From Donegal to Galway, Kerry to Cork, the Wild Atlantic Way is promoted internationally as a journey of discovery.

Fort Dunree is a discovery point in Donegal and this offers huge potential benefits to the project. Since its inception in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way has increased visitor numbers year on year at Fort Dunree. This has given the Board the confidence to develop the site and bring external operators to enhance the Fort Dunree product.

The feel good factor that the Wild Atlantic Way has brought looks set to continue. In Failte Irelands Tourism Barometer for December 2017 it states that sentiment in the industry is good and 58% of northern counties, even with Brexit concerns have experienced increased visitors in 2017. Almost two thirds of visitor attractions experienced an upward trend in their numbers for 2017 and expect this to continue. Donegal was named the Coolest Place on the planet in 2017 and with StarWars being shot in the peninsula, tourism confidence has never been higher.

## Social Media

Undoubtedly one of the most important marketing tools for any business is now Social Media. Fort Dunree has a strong Social Media presence through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google+. For the past eight years Fort Dunree have received a Certificate of Excellence award from TripAdvisor, an important barometer of customer attitudes to our product. We continue to adapt to this ever changing medium and update all these platforms on a daily basis.

## BROCHURES

A Fort Dunree Lighthouse brochure will be an important instrument for promotion. The standard of Dunree brochures is continually being raised and this effort will be maintained in the future. The intention of the brochure is to provide potential visitors with a taster of what is available to them during a visit and this will require the use of high quality imagery and professional design and will obviously take in the new brand when it is introduced.

## WEB SITE

The Website will be an integral part of the marketing of the Fort Dunree Accommodation. The Website continues to be updated and will have a section leading the user to the booking section for the accommodation.

## ADVERTISING

There are numerous opportunities for Fort Dunree to advertise in a range of magazines and other publications, however it is questionable as to the actual benefit of these publications and highly unlikely that most of them provide value for money. Fort Dunree will continue to advertise through Discover Donegal and other publications published through organisations such as Failte Ireland, Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau and the newly formed Explore Inishowen.

## MEMBERSHIP OF TRADE ORGANISATIONS

Membership will be maintained of Failte Ireland, Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau, and will work closely with the Explore Inishowen, these are essential if Fort Dunree is to be promoted through their in-house publications and their network of Tourism Information offices.

## DIRECT MARKETING AND MAILING

Distribution of brochures is an essential part of our marketing strategy and we hope to extend the number of outlets we currently have a presence in. Brochures are and will continue to be distributed through Tourist Offices, Hotels, B&B's and shops.

## SIGNAGE

Fort Dunree as a Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way now has very visible road signage from all directions.

## LOCAL MEDIA

Regular exposure in local media is considered essential, particularly in terms of raising the numbers of local people visiting the centre and encouraging repeat visits. The local promotion and advertising of events will be a key part of the media strategy.

## FINANCE

At present annual revenue for Fort Dunree has been identified as coming from the following sources:

Admission Fees, Rent from Coffee Shop, Kayaking, Profits from Merchandise, Rent from Exhibition hire and weddings.

	2021	2022	2023
<b>Income</b>			
Museum Admissions	39,000	49,000	62,000
Shop Sales	12,000	18,000	22,500
Café Rent	9,100	10,000	11,000
Other Rent	6,000	7,500	9,000
Water Sports	3,000	4,500	6,500
Donegal County Council	15,000	15,000	15,000
Pobal Grant	89,099	89,099	89,099
<b>Total</b>	<b>173,199</b>	<b>193,099</b>	<b>215,099</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Wages	105,000	115,000	120,000
Training	1,500	1,750	2,000
Rates	500	500	500
Cleaning	1,000	1,000	1,000
Power, Light & Heat	6,500	7,000	7,500
Repairs & Maintenance	5,500	5,750	6,000
Insurance	650	650	650
Computer Costs	2,000	2,200	2,400
Motor Expenses	5,500	5,750	6,000
Legal and Professional	5,000	5,000	5,000
Audit Fees	3,800	3,900	4,000
Bank Charges	1,700	1,750	1,800
Advertising	7,000	7,500	8,000
Telephone	2,900	3,000	3,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,550</b>	<b>160,750</b>	<b>167,950</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>24,649</b>	<b>32,349</b>	<b>47,149</b>