

Minister,

Re above.

I was born and raised in a small village in west Limerick, now living in Dublin.

It evolved from the 1800's as one long Main Street and few short streets off it here and there.

It was two-sided street from the Church to the Bridge.

At the Bridge was a cross roads with 400 yards short street off the Main St.

Straight up the hill were two staggered side-roads, one left and one right.

Then was the Square with two sides of it housed and the rest walls or sheds.

Straight on another 100 yards and one exited into the country.

This is a North-South description.

In the 1940's 18 social houses were built. Four were integrated into the side of the Square.

The other fourteen were built on a stand-alone green field site just outside the village.

Not connected.

In more recent times there were four house build schemes in my old native village.

In one of the side streets an old house was demolished, a cul-de-sac created and some social houses 'hidden'.

The same happened off the square. Social houses hidden in a cul-de-sac.

The commercial developments were built on green field sites on the 'back line' - a road that runs in a loop around

the west side of the Main St and village. These houses are hidden from the view of the Main St.

Only by going 'round the back road' can you see them.

Those houses may as well be built ten miles away!

Technically, one could live and die in one of those houses and never visit the Main St.

For the rest the cross at the Bridge to access the other roads will suffice.

In a nutshell, these developments were sanctioned and approved by the relevant planning authority.

Why was there no attempt to upgrade and develop the 'heart' of the village - it's Main St. and side roads.

To add insult to injury, access to the stream that flows through the village under the Bridge has been blocked off.

From time immemorial the villagers could walk into and out of this stream. To make it worse ordinary white

cement blocks were used, cheek-by-jowl with ye olde grey limestone cut stones. It has all the appearance of being 'slapped up'.

Social history was destroyed. People used to water their animals in this stream, passing cattle to and fro the nearby fairs

walked their animals into it as well as the County Hounds on their winter visits to hunt in the parish.

Ye olde steps where the people from one side accessed the stream for buckets of water have disappeared.

I remember when the women nearby washed their clothes in the stream, particularly in the early post Winter clothes wash.

The local Church of Ireland was leased by the Council for 99 years to an electronic company. For 'insurance purposes' access

to this church is denied.

In the village the castle is showing signs of final wear-and-tear. I notice some of the base rocks are beginning to extrude.

Now your much-vaunted RURAL IRELAND 2040 will not address the above.

From what I can establish no political party gives a fiddlers damn about the destruction of rural Ireland.

Will your PLAN make a difference ?

Try visiting my neighbouring villages and the story is the same. Decay and destruction.

I could add the appalling development of strip houses (small mansions) along the sides of the beautiful agricultural environment ...

When I go down from Dublin and visit people in these villages all I hear is lamentation re the disappearing village.

There is no need of a plan - just a constitutional amendment to force planning authorities to integrate the villages.

Christy Kerins.

P. S. Did I mention that all the old tradesmen and shopkeepers are gone except one big shop which now houses the Post Office.

The Garda Barracks was abandoned in favour of a nice new bungalow built on a side street and now manned part-time.

The old Courthouse is long gone, the old ball-alley. Soon it will be the turn of the old jail and old Barracks

I could go on ...