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## **Historic Towns Initiative Launched In Ennis**

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Ennis is one of thirty towns in the country involved in the Historic Towns Initiative, which is part-funded by Fáilte Ireland under the National Development Plan. The concept is developed around the interpretation of Ennis' heritage and facilitates visitors to the town through a range of tourist signage, including orientation, interpretative and information boards, along a designated historic route.

Launching the initiative in the Civic Room of Ennis Town Council, Mayor Of Ennis Councillor Frankie Neylon said: "Ennis boasts a long and varied history that is excellently profiled in this new initiative, which will no doubt prove to be very popular with the many thousands of people who visit the town each year."

"I have no doubt that this initiative will further enhance the attractiveness of the town as a visitor location and improve the overall tourism product on offer. Furthermore, the history trail will act as a useful educational outlet for schools throughout County Clare", added the Mayor.

Established in the 13th century when the O'Brien's of Thomond built an Abbey on the banks of the River Fergus, Ennis has long thrived as a bustling market town and is famed for its narrow winding streets. The Clare County Capital is associated with pivotal moments in the careers of some of Ireland's most famous political figures, including Charles Stewart Parnell, Daniel O'Connell and Eamon de Valera.

The Historic Town Initiative in Ennis consists of four routes, which are marked by 126 colour-coded bilingual finger post signs. Each route commences and finishes outside the Clare Museum building. There are forty-one interpretation boards erected at key locations in Ennis' history, including O'Connell Square and Ennis Abbey, as well as the Cathedral, West Clare Railway, Workhouse, Causeway and Gaol.

All historical information has been researched and prepared by local historian and author Seán Spellissy, who was engaged by Ennis Town Council. The approach in the design and presentation of the interpretation boards is in scrapbook format using black and white photos as a central theme. All interpretation boards, which were designed and produced by Highway Safety Developments Ltd, and the mapping which was prepared by True North Mapping, will be on display in exhibition format in the Civic Room until this Friday before being installed at their respective locations throughout Ennis.

Commenting on the new initiative, Eddie Power, Ennis Town Clerk, stated: "It is vital that international and domestic tourists who come to Ennis are provided with a positive visitor experience. This initiative will assist the development of tourism by focusing visitors' attention on the historical significance of the town."

He continued: "Visitors using the Ennis town trail will be able to enjoy a short and longer route, which will both start and finish at Clare Museum in the town centre. I am confident that the trail will further add to the tourism potential of the town."

The Historic Towns Initiative forms part of the Tourism Product Development and Infrastructure sub-programme of the National Development Plan 2007-13. The initiative is also a component of the Tourism Infrastructure Fund, which supports local authorities and other infrastructural providers to develop facilities for tourists, such as walking and cycling routes, jetties and moorings, angling stands, and access paths to areas of environmental and scenic interest.

# Irish Press Releases

The Ennis project has a budget of EUR145,000, 75pc of which is grant aided through Fáilte Ireland under the National Development Plan.

-ENDS-

Note to Editor:

Eddie Power, Ennis Town Clerk is available for interview. To arrange please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy PR on 086-8534900 or [media@dunphypr.com](mailto:media@dunphypr.com)

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