



SUSTAINING SUCCESS IN THE YEAR AHEAD: PLANS FOR 2019

Visitor Experience Development Plans

Tales of Two Worlds

- Roll out of a bespoke 15 month Great Houses & Gardens Experience Development Programme looking at house and garden experiences including guiding, events development, cost and revenue management and sales distribution
- Supports programme for our attractions telling famine and emigration stories
- Continue to develop gateway garden festival
- Develop a shared plan for the Sport of Kings theme

Castles & Conquests

- Roll out of plan for Castles and Norman Experiences Development Programme
- Develop new connected experiences between key sites in Kilkenny, Tipperary and Wexford
- Partnering with the OPW to deliver a visitor engagement and event strategy at key sites
- Roll out an evening economy plan for Kilkenny
- Implement a visitor orientation strategy for Cashel

Vikings

- Roll out of an 18 month Viking Development Activation Programme
- Work with industry to deliver clusters of new Viking experiences
- Launch programme of supports to enhance economic impact for activity providers, industry, food and drink providers as well as services delivered on the Waterford Greenway
- Deliver a Viking Fire Festival in Waterford
- Launch a new Viking Fire Festival in Wexford

Ancient

- Put an 18 month shared Visitor Experience Development Plan in place
- Deliver workshops with key stakeholders to agree outputs for delivery
- Plan in place to develop Trim as a Destination Town

Maritime

- Initiate and develop a Maritime Visitor Experience Development Plan
- Deliver workshops to key stakeholders and industry to identify and agree new and enhanced experiences for the Maritime signature story theme
- An 18 month shared Visitor Experience Development Plan in place with actions identified
- Implementation Steering Group in place

Historic Towns

- Update interpretation and visitor orientation signage in six Historic Towns, bringing the total number to 92 signs

Capital Investment

- 19 new and improved visitor experiences at IAE attractions resulting from Fáilte Ireland investment under the Storytelling Interpretation Grants Scheme

Business Supports

- Visitor Experience Development Plans – deliver supports which help businesses create new experiences, extend the season and enhance sales skills to drive growth in visitor numbers and revenue
- Work with visitor attractions to improve storytelling and audience engagement
- Work with industry to improve sales skills and revenue and distribution management capability in the Southeast corridor
- Craft – Training businesses in how to create saleable experiences and how to optimise sales from in-market platforms

Marketing

- Continue to market and promote Ireland's Ancient East with a new creative campaign to domestic visitors with a focus on season extension
- Continue to market and promote Ireland's Ancient East overseas through international channels
- Streamline our digital activities and online presence by making it easier for visitors to access the information they need to visit Ireland's Ancient East



MEET THE TEAM

Jenny De Saulles – Head of Ireland's Ancient East

Colm Breheny: Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Cavan
colm.breheny@failteireland.ie

Mary Houlihan: Cork, Waterford, Wexford
mary.houlihan@failteireland.ie

Justine Carey: Kilkenny, Tipperary, Laois, Carlow
justine.carey@failteireland.ie

Derek Dolan: Wicklow, Kildare, Westmeath, Offaly
derek.dolan@failteireland.ie

Carlow: Gráinne Ward
grainne.ward@failteireland.ie

Cavan: Shane Raftery
shane.raftery@failteireland.ie

Cork: Hilary Creedon
hilary.creedon@failteireland.ie

Kildare: Fiona Moore
fiona.moore@failteireland.ie

Kilkenny: Gráinne Ward
grainne.ward@failteireland.ie

Laois: Sarah O'Dwyer
sarah.odwyer@failteireland.ie

Louth: Martina O'Dwyer
martina.odwyer@failteireland.ie

Meath: Martina O'Dwyer
martina.odwyer@failteireland.ie

Monaghan: Shane Raftery
shane.raftery@failteireland.ie

Offaly: Marie McCormack
marie.mccormack@failteireland.ie

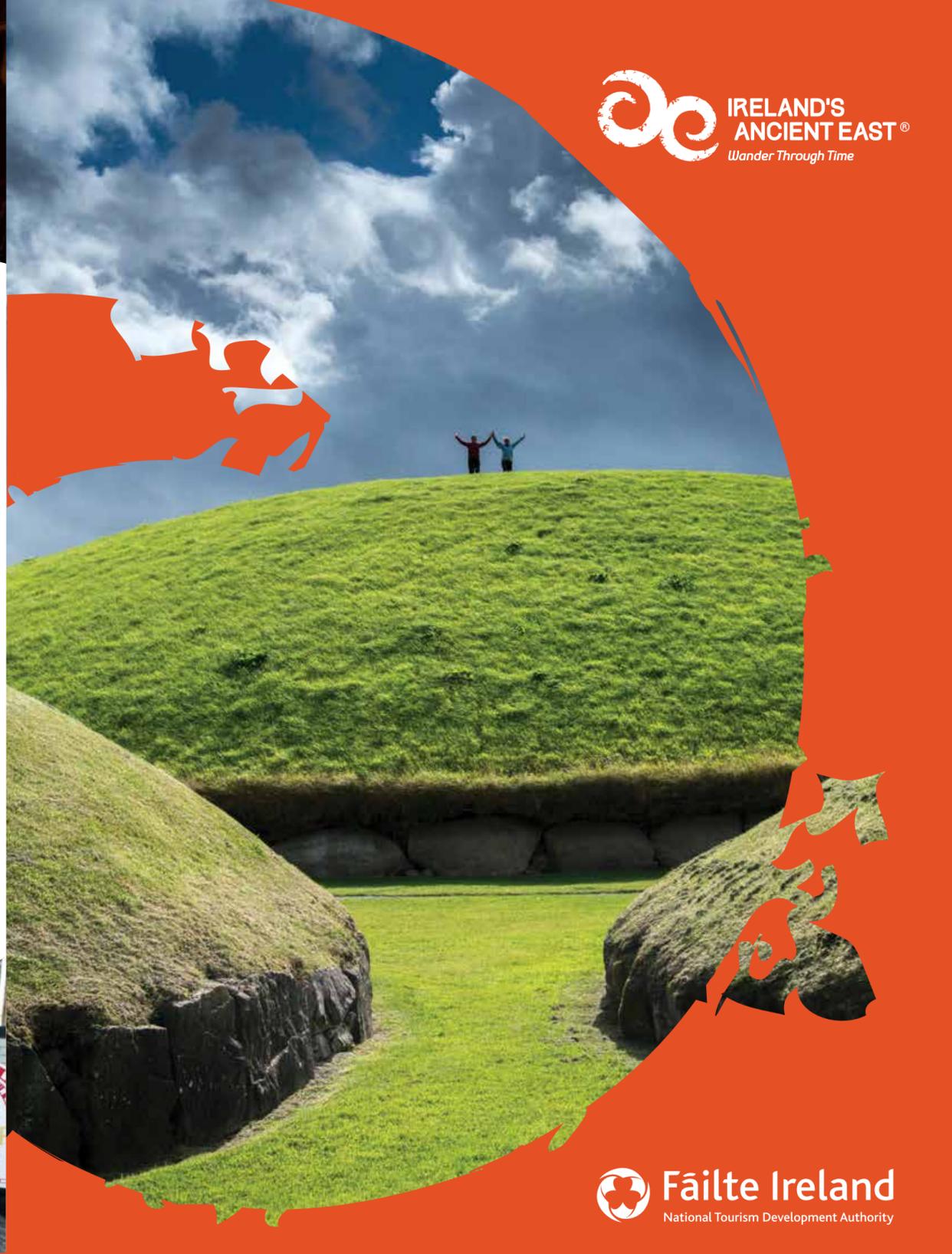
Tipperary: Sarah O'Dwyer/Deirdre Cole
sarah.odwyer@failteireland.ie /
deirdre.cole@failteireland.ie

Waterford: Sarah Fitzpatrick
sarah.fitzpatrick@failteireland.ie

Wexford: Aileen Dowling
aileen.dowling@failteireland.ie

Westmeath: Marie McCormack
marie.mccormack@failteireland.ie

Wicklow: Ivona Carr
ivona.carr@failteireland.ie



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Just three years since its launch, Ireland's Ancient East is now a well-established regional experience brand and is making significant impact on tourism across the east of the country delivering increased visitor numbers and spend, season extension and creating jobs.

We know that our core overseas markets actively look for compelling visitor experiences when they book a trip to Ireland. This is something that is central to the Ireland's Ancient East brand, and our focus this year has been very much on developing brilliant visitor experiences which have the potential to drive increased visitor numbers, incremental bed nights, and revenue across the region.

Over the summer, we announced funding of over €2.1m for 19 grantees as part of our Storytelling Interpretation Grants Scheme, which will really transform the visitor experiences at these attractions. In the next year, we will have similar schemes in store and I look forward to seeing the potential projects we can invest in.

With challenges on the horizon, including Brexit and overseas competition, it is more important than ever that we continue to invest in visitor experiences, and support the industry to prepare for both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead – all of which will underpin our work in 2019.

I'm proud to see the incredible amount of work that has been achieved so far this year – this is very much testament to the strong partnerships between the industry, public sector organisations and our Ireland's Ancient East team at Fáilte Ireland. We will continue to work closely with you all over the course of 2019 and beyond as we strive to build on what has been a buoyant year for Ireland's Ancient East.

Jenny De Saulles
Head of Ireland's Ancient East

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Ireland's Ancient East brand is having an impact on the region:

2.8M
OVERSEAS
TOURISTS

€1.6BN
IN SPEND

44,000
JOBS
SUPPORTED

Based on Fáilte Ireland's national performance estimates 2018

A BUOYANT YEAR: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018

Capital Investment Programme

- Over **€30m** invested to date
- Working on projects with potential to deliver over **€35m** in value over the next 3 years
- 10 projects with Strategic Partners OPW and Coillte - **€13.9m**
- 19 projects through IAE Storytelling Interpretation Grants Scheme 2018 - **€2.1m**
- Historic Towns signage - 6 towns completed with 59 map and story boards installed

Driving Performance - Industry and Stakeholder Engagement

The Ireland's Ancient East team is working with industry and stakeholders to drive performance. 2018 has been another great year for our attractions and hotels in terms of economic growth.

- Total industry engagements: **542**
- 220** industry meetings
- 84** stakeholder meetings
- 238** engaged through workshops

Promotion Domestic and Overseas

€1.5m has been invested in domestic marketing, reaching 94% of all adults. Ireland's Ancient East hosted 553 buyers on trade familiarisation trips, 165 media on international publicity familiarisation trips and secured 64 international events worth €15m to the region.

Attractions

Key account performance:

- 25%** growth in visitor numbers
- 19%** growth in revenue
- 28%** attractions have increased employment
- 14%** attractions have extended their season

Hotels

- 73%** average room occupancy
- 4%** year on year revenue growth
- 32%** hotels have increased employment



PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS FROM ATTRACTIONS ACROSS THE REGION

- A Westmeath attraction is reporting 40% growth in visitor numbers
- An Offaly attraction is contracting new business with an additional 33 tour operators
- A number of Cork attractions are reporting average year on year revenue growth of 21% and visitor numbers growth of 33%
- A Kilkenny attraction is reporting year on year revenue growth of 46% and visitor numbers growth of 17%
- A Waterford attraction is reporting advance tour booking up 9.5% year on year mainly from US market

** Performance metrics based on key account meetings with 100 industry throughout the year*

BUSINESS SUPPORTS 2018

Ireland's Ancient East continues to support the building of industry and stakeholders' capabilities through a suite of training supports including Revenue Management, Market Diversification, Brexit Ready, Customer Service, improving interpretation and delivery of visitor experiences workshops.

- 425** industry engagements
- 405** businesses supported
- 100** workshops
- 1,700** front-line staff trained

DELIVERING BRILLIANT VISITOR EXPERIENCES - VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Tales of Two Worlds

- 50** industry and stakeholders engaged in delivering the plan
- 22** industry commitments to enhance visitor experiences
- 16** new and improved saleable experiences for leisure and incentive markets
- International **garden festival** feasibility study finalised and **15 month** activation plan for **houses & gardens** developed

Castles and Conquests

- 50** industry and stakeholders engaged in delivering the plan
- 20** committed to delivering an evening economy plan in Kilkenny
- €2m** investment from Wexford Local Authority to bring the Norman story to life in New Ross
- 25** industry and stakeholders in New Ross and Hook Peninsula committed to working together to deliver Norman experiences
- Festivals in Laois identified as a driver of revenue and visitor numbers – working plan established to deliver actions
- Visitor flow and orientation strategy to increase dwell time in Cashel in development

Vikings

- 40** industry and stakeholders engaged in delivering the plan
- Viking Visitor Product Development Plan feasibility study underway
- New Viking Fire Festival in Waterford
- Plan underway to provide targeted programme of supports for activity providers, industry, food and drink providers and services to enhance economic impact of the Waterford Greenway

Ancient

- Ancient Visitor Experience Development Plan has been initiated
- Mystery shop of 18 businesses completed
- Boyne Valley Development Masterplan completed
- International benchmarking underway

Food

- 25** industry engaged on the **Waterford Greenway**
- 10** new and improved saleable experiences
- 8** attractions committed to improving food and drink experiences through **Taste of Place** programme

Craft

- 50 craft businesses** working with our team
- 5** craft experiences supported to develop new saleable experiences
- 15** businesses signed up to develop more saleable experiences

