

## Inishturk Community Club CLG

**Inishturk Community Club CLG**, currently in the process of becoming Inishturk Development Company, is effectively the development company for the island of Inishturk. On an offshore island with a resident population of around 60 people, it plays a central role in community-owned hospitality and accommodation, while also supporting work on ferries, harbours, housing, wellbeing, events and long-term development. As Sinéad Cahalan, Development Manager, puts it, *“all life on an offshore island runs through the development office.”*

Crucially, the organisation does not see the community as only the people currently living on Inishturk. It sees the island as having a much wider circle of belonging: residents, children and grandchildren of island families living elsewhere, and a broader network of people who may not be related but who have built a strong connection to the island over time.

CASE STUDY



Photo courtesy of Inishturk Community Club, CLG

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Over the last two and a half years, that understanding has become more strategic. Inishturk Vision 2050 is a community led strategy and has a linked five-year action plan to build the Island into a resilient, sustainable, and vibrant community. The board has grown to ten members, supported by several subcommittees, and most of those involved now live off-island. In that sense, diaspora engagement is already shaping the island's future from within.

The Inishturk Community Club engages with its diaspora in a deliberate and multi-layered way. This includes a monthly newsletter, WhatsApp groups, hybrid AGMs and town halls, family reunions, social media, and a dedicated section on the website focused on the island's future and opportunities to get involved. What is clear is that this engagement is not driven by nostalgia alone. As Sinéad Cahalan emphasises, it is about *“work, future strategy, and good governance.”*

There is a strong sense of connection and shared purpose, with many people feeling a genuine pull to contribute in a positive and meaningful way. The challenge is not a lack of interest, but the absence of clear structures and channels to translate that goodwill into practical support.

The island wants to build a better way of identifying its wider network, understanding what skills and support people can offer, and regularly putting out a clearer “menu” of ways to help. A strong example of what that can unlock is the board itself. One young man with grandparents from Inishturk became involved through the newsletter, joined the board, now chairs the heritage group, and has already gone after several funding streams while helping to document island life and argue for the conditions needed to move back. That story captures the wider point: people do not just want updates from home. They want to be useful.

The organisation is also finding that visibility creates opportunity. When the island shares its ambitions clearly, people respond. Current work on renewable energy, invasive species removal and the native Irish black bee is helping people see Inishturk not as a place standing still, but as a place trying to build something imaginative and worthwhile. As Sinéad puts it, when the island puts its dreams out there, *“somebody’s catching them.”* That creates pride, engagement and, increasingly, practical support. The biggest barriers are time, staff capacity and the lack of a dedicated communications push. Sinéad says that the most useful support would be a skilled communications and outreach resource, someone who could help develop a smart social media campaign, create templates and messaging for regular asks, and build a better system for logging and thanking people for their contributions.

What this story shows is that Inishturk already has something many places would envy, a diaspora and friendship network that cares deeply about the island's future.

**The task now is not to persuade people to care, but to build the structures that let that care turn into action.**

