



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Link Modules

**The Case Study in Link Modules is compulsory for all candidates in
Leaving Certificate 2023**

Case Study 2023

Ballyfert

Ballyfert is a small, picturesque town with a population of approximately 1,200 people. It is situated on the popular Wild Atlantic Way tourist route and it is very dependent on its tourism trade. In recent years it has suffered from rural depopulation. A large number of young people have left to attend third level education in other parts of the country. Upon graduation they have moved to big cities to secure employment and have not returned to live in Ballyfert.

The town is now hosting 320 refugees and the local people have extended a very warm welcome to them. The local community held a family festival to help increase visitors to the local area and integrate the refugees. One of the main events at the festival was an open-air market, where local producers showcased their produce and the refugees performed cookery demonstrations of their country's cuisine. Locals and tourists sampled the produce on show. The event was a great success.

A local Community Development Committee has been in existence for a number of years. They noticed a change in the demographics of Ballyfert. They undertook some research which identified two key areas that needed to be focused on. Firstly, in order to make it more attractive for locals to stay, and to encourage people to relocate to Ballyfert, suitable work spaces would have to be available. The committee is aware that future trends in the workplace include more employees working remotely and support for new innovations. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the benefits of remote working and having a better work life balance. Secondly, the research also found that to support the integration of the refugees in the local community, a number of initiatives needed to be set up. Suggestions made included English language classes, Start Your Own Business programmes and also clothing and toy appeals.

The Community Development Committee must plan continuously so that they can capitalise on their findings. To do this, they requested advice from the Western Development Commission on different types of remote working facilities and Innovation Centres. They were informed that there are numerous options available, for which suitable vacant properties have been identified. It also learned that one of the key areas to the success of the plan is broadband provision. The committee is relieved that Ballyfert has recently benefitted from the National Broadband Plan and the town now has access to high-speed broadband.

The Community Development Committee had a lot of work to do to put their plan into action, all suggestions made are now up and running. A public meeting was called by the chairperson to outline the plans to the community and everyone was invited to become involved.

The Community Development Committee plan has now been in operation for six months. A recent evaluation of the plan showed that Ballyfert's population is growing, bringing back life, activity, enterprise and innovation to the town. The capacity of the community is increasing, leading it to be more sustainable in the long term.