

# Better Rathkeale Poll

Analysis of 3 related online polls in 2020  
by David Lamont | 28/9/23

Statistically Speaking  
Opinion backed by research

Three related online surveys about what would make Rathkeale a better place to be were conducted in May and June in 2020 producing indicative<sup>1</sup> opinions relevant to rejuvenating the local economy.

Combining all the results, it could be presumed that “Better” appears to mean *More Stuff for Me*. Accordingly there was a desire for retail type businesses for residents, rather than less personal business-to-business types or attractants for non-residents. There was also a desire for reward/results with no or low personal risk.

No one thought Rathkeale was perfect as it was. 64% said Rathkeale can be improved, and they would help.<sup>2</sup> 36% said Rathkeale should be improved by someone other than them. Only 4% thought that Rathkeale does not need any business ambassador. Similarly, only 4% thought that politicians should be the sole business ambassadors.

Respondents ranked what they thought would make Rathkeale a better place to be:	The businesses they would like to see were:
1. More local businesses.	1. Gym (11%.)
2. More open shops on Main Street.	2. Dentist.
3. Stricter planning regulation enforcement.	3. Florist.
4. A new business/industrial park.	4. Bakery (large.)
5. Stricter law/traffic enforcement.	5. Burger Restaurant (Diner.)
6. Tourist visitors.	6. Gift Shop.
7. Integration of the settled and Traveller communities.	7. Heritage Centre (Museum.)
8. More residents.	8. Residential Care Facility.
9. More in-town entertainment.	9. Start-up Incubator.
10. Rising home values.	10. Warehousing.
11. A town theme.	
12. Better schools.	

57% thought a not-for-profit Rathkeale Chamber of Commerce should be set up with unpaid volunteers to attract businesses. 77% believed this would succeed. However the non-profit Team Rathkeale business group did not attempt to attract<sup>3</sup> new businesses and ended up organising community entertainment events overlapping with the Rathkeale Community Council.

35% thought a for-profit Rathkeale Ltd. corporation should be set up with shareholders and team members that earn financial rewards by attracting businesses. 85% believed this would succeed. If an organisation was established to bring more businesses to Rathkeale 40% would provide skills and time in exchange for shares. 20% would invest €100 to €999 in exchange for shares. 10% would not invest any money.

**Bottom Line:** The poll results prioritise many of the items on the 2023 Rathkeale Community Council rejuvenation agenda as well as a level of entitlement within the community. It could also be viewed through the eyes of Henry Ford who when asked about customer input in the development of the Model T automobile, said, *"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."* There are less obvious factors underpinning Rathkeale's decline and, if addressed, its rejuvenation.

<sup>1</sup> Most respondents lived in Rathkeale with a few elsewhere in Limerick County and the odd foreigner. The response rate was in the 30-range including 3 members of the Rathkeale Community Council and significant overlap between surveys. As such the results could be considered indicative rather than conclusive. Additionally, subsequent events might change the results if the surveys were conducted again.

<sup>2</sup> It's likely that fewer would participate than indicated because respondents identified themselves to enter a raffle.

<sup>3</sup> Anecdotally, there was fierce opposition to facilitating a competitor by members of previous business groups.