

Cantillon

Kells jobs shows that ConnectIreland is beginning to confound the sceptics

The announcement yesterday of 70 jobs for Kells, Co Meath, in the rather obscure area of basalt smelting represents the triumph of hope over experience.

The jobs come courtesy of Terry Clune and his ConnectIreland initiative which are behind the €105,000 bounty paid to the local auctioneer Hugh Morris that made the connection.

ConnectIreland is a creature of the Action Plan for Jobs launched in early 2012 and the notion that the Irish predilection for talking and networking could be harnessed into some sort of global investment hunt seemed as best quaint and at worst an act of desperation.

The initial reaction was understandably sceptical and remained so despite early success in May last year when US environmental company Intergeo opted for Ireland over Scotland following the intervention of one Eddie Horkan.

Yesterday's announcement is another significant step towards confounding the sceptics and although it remains early days is further proof that, unlikely though it may seem, the concept is sound.

And there is more to come according to Clune with three other projects ready to roll. which will create another 70 jobs.

A two projects – which could bring 25 jobs – are submitting business plans which will be vetted by the IDA.

The imprimatur of the IDA gives comfort that the projects are both substantial and sustainable.

There is still some way to go before Richard Bruton's (pictured) prediction that the scheme will deliver on its target of 5,000 jobs over the next five years looks truly attainable, but if yesterday's news tells us anything it is to keep an open mind and start networking.



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