

News release

Vantage Towers Ireland brings connectivity to Cape Clear Island

- Cape Clear Island connectivity project aims at connecting rural communities, encouraging development and enabling job creation
- Massive engineering challenge: five cement lorries were barged from the mainland as locals prepared the groundwork for the structure which is revolutionising the way they live and work

Dublin, 21 December 2022 – Islanders off the south coast are celebrating their first fully connected Christmas after a huge community effort brought mobile and broadband coverage to one of Ireland’s most beautiful outcrops.

Residents of Cape Clear, off Cork, often had to travel to the other side of the island to make calls – while businesses and tourists were left unconnected.

But after discovering how well an amateur radio antenna worked on the island’s highest point, locals seized the initiative, contacting a Vodafone store in Skibbereen – and offering to help install a mast at the same spot.

In a massive engineering challenge, five cement lorries were barged from the mainland as locals prepared the groundwork for the structure which is revolutionising the way they live and work.

The Cape Clear Island connectivity project was carried out by Vantage Towers under their Towers for Good programme, which is aimed at connecting rural communities, encouraging development and enabling job creation.

“We really suffered due to a lack of mobile signal – driving to another part of the island to make a phone call was a way of life for some people,” said **Mairtín Ó Méalóid, Chairman of Comharchumann Chléire Teoranta**, the Cape Clear Co-operative. “I can now make a call from my house, which is something that I could never do. There is a certain resilience which comes from island life, but something like this reduces our sense of isolation. It also enables businesses such as the glamping site to offer connectivity to tourists, as well as providing service to parts of the mainland and Sherkin Island that were previously isolated.”

The new installation is a massive boost to the community, according to **Vantage Towers Ireland Managing Director Brian McHugh**. “It significantly improves mobile and data coverage not only to Cape Clear Island itself but also to the neighbouring island communities of Sherkin Island, Hare Island, and Long Island,” he said. “It will also have a positive impact on residences located in difficult to service areas dotted along the coastline between Baltimore and Crookhaven.”

Fishing and leisure boat users on the waters between Crookhaven and Baltimore, as well as islanders, will also now be able to contact the emergency services if needed.

Seamus Ó Drisceoil, founder and manager of Cape Clear Island Distillery, said that picking up and losing coverage around the island was a way of life. “We had to adjust our business as a

Contact:

media@vantagetowers.com

Registered office: Vantage Towers AG, Prinzenallee 11-13, D-40549, Düsseldorf, Germany. Amtsgericht Düsseldorf, HRB 92244.

result and accept that we would lose opportunities due to lost calls,” he said. I now have a mobile phone signal in my house for the first time in 25 years – and I am getting a 5G signal at home and at work.”

The sustainable community partnership saw Cape Clear islanders reuse an existing structure with services in place and build the base of the tower at Quarantine Hill, using concrete sourced in Skibbereen.

Islanders also helped in the dismantling of a former wind turbine pole at the site, which will be recycled.

The tower, which will go live with the Vodafone signal but be open to all service providers, was manufactured in Ireland by Carlow firm Delmec, who co-ordinated the complex transportation logistics.

“There was a huge amount of collaboration and community goodwill towards the project,” said **Patsy Ó Drisceoil, owner of the tower site**. “The logistical planning was worth it in the end because almost the whole island now has high speed coverage.”

Vodafone Ireland Network Director Sheila Kavanagh emphasised the company’s commitment to enhancing network infrastructure in the most rural areas of Ireland so that all communities can benefit in the digital society. “From the initial engagement with residents on the island, everyone was very supportive of the proposals to develop this unique telecommunications infrastructure,” she said.

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About Vantage Towers

Vantage Towers is a leading tower company in Europe with around 83,000 sites in ten countries, connecting people, businesses and devices in cities and rural areas.

The company was founded in 2020 and is headquartered in Düsseldorf. Vantage Towers has been listed on the Deutsche Börse’s Prime Standard in Frankfurt since 18 March 2021. The shares are included in the MDAX, TecDAX, STOXX Europe 600 and FTSE Global Midcap Indices.

Vantage Towers’ portfolio includes towers, masts, rooftop sites, distributed antenna systems (DAS) and small cells. By building, operating and leasing this infrastructure to MNOs or other network providers such as IoT companies or utilities, Vantage Towers is making a significant contribution to a better connected Europe.

While already 100% of the electricity that Vantage Towers uses to operate its infrastructure is obtained from renewable energy sources, green energy is increasingly being generated directly on site with the help of solar panels, micro wind turbines and in future also hydrogen solutions. This fits well into the overall strategy of the company to drive a sustainable digitalisation in Europe and to support partners through technological innovation in decarbonisation and achieving their climate goals. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.vantagetowers.com/en>, follow us on Twitter at @VantageTowers or connect with us on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/vantagetowers.

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