

TOBIN

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

Management Plan

Final Issue

April 2025

BUILT ON KNOWLEDGE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE CLIFFS OF MOHER COASTAL WALK

The *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk* is a nationally important amenity on the Wild Atlantic Way. The Coastal Walk showcases the Cliffs of Moher and most visitors to the cliffs spend at least some time on the Coastal Walk.

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk runs from Doolin in the north to south of Hags Head (see Figure 1-1). The official start and end points are somewhat poorly defined. In some documentation the trail continues to south Liscannor, while in other documentation it terminates at Moher GAA (the official trailhead at the southern end). The off-road section of the coastal walk runs for 11.43km.

The trail owes its popularity to the Cliffs of Moher. The Visitor's Centre for the cliffs has the official title of the *Cliffs of Moher Experience*. This facility is located centrally along the Coastal Walk.

The *Cliffs of Moher Experience* (COME) is the most visited natural attraction in Ireland attracting 1.6M visitors in 2019. A large proportion of these visitors leave the COME and make their way onto the Coastal Walk.

In general visitors do not differentiate between the COME and the *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk*, they are all part of the visitor attraction at the cliffs.

The *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk* also functions as a popular trail that is accessed at locations other than outwards from the COME. It forms part of the Burren Way, which is a 114km National Waymarked Trail from Corofin to Lahinch. The Burren Way is one of 24 such National Waymarked Trails in Ireland. Consequently, the trail is frequently accessed at Doolin to the north, and at Hags Head to the south.





Figure 1-1: Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk - Extents

1.2 HISTORY

Due to its iconic views, the Cliffs of Moher have always drawn both domestic and international visitors. Many of these visitors have walked along the cliff top to a greater or lesser degree, long before there was an official Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.

The Visitor's Centre was developed in the early 1970s, giving visitors a focal point close to O'Brien's Tower, and increasing the tourist offering at the cliffs.

In 2007, the new Visitor's Centre (titled The Cliffs of Moher Experience) opened. By 2010 recorded annual visitor numbers reached over 720,000.

From 2010 to 2013 an official trail north and south of The Cliffs of Moher Experience was developed by Clare County Council, in consultation with landowners, and designed to Sport Ireland criteria. This trail was funded by Fáilte Ireland, and opened in 2013 under the title the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.

By 2019 The Cliffs of Moher Experience attracted 1.6M visitors, making it the most visited natural attraction in Ireland.

This report was prepared by TOBIN on behalf of Clare County Council in partnership with Department of Rural and Community Development, Fáilte Ireland and Clare Local Development Company who came together in 2023 to commission a Management Plan with the objective to secure the future of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.

1.3 NOMENCLATURE

There is a lack of consistency in terminology in respect of the coastal walk. The trail is variously referred to as:

- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk*
- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail*
- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Path*
- *The Moher Walk*
- *The Doolin to Liscannor Coastal Walk*

For the purposes of this report, the official title of *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk* has been used. In general terms this describes the official trail from the trailhead at Doolin to the north, to the trailhead at Moher GAA grounds to the south.

1.4 THE CLIFFS OF MOHER 'AMENITY'

Visitors to the 'Cliffs of Moher' have very simple expectations. They want to see the cliffs, perhaps get an impressive photo or two, get something to eat or drink, use the toilet facilities, pick up a souvenir, maybe explore the interrelationship between the Cliffs of Moher Experience and the Coastal Walk, and walk along the cliffs (to a greater or lesser extent depending on their level of mobility and desire for exploration).

Visitors will not differentiate between the two constituent parts of the overall Cliffs of Moher 'amenity', which are the Cliffs of Moher Experience/Visitor's Centre on one hand, and the Cliffs



of Moher Coastal Walk on the other. The transition points between the Visitor's Centre and the Coastal Walk will not have any significance for them, and neither will the two entities that manage the two constituent parts.

For this reason, throughout this Management Plan, it is important for the reader to appreciate the interrelationship between the Visitor's Centre and the Coastal Walk, and the extent to which the two parts of the 'amenity' are mutually dependent.

1.5 THE BRIEF

Section 3.1.5 of the Brief issued for the project included the following requirements:

- **Visitor Management.** Review of visitor infrastructure relating to visitor numbers & management, peak tourist season impacts, unlimited access to the public etc.
- **Financial Model.** Prepare required financial models for payments to landowners
- **Landowner Agreement.** Review of land ownership, existing agreements, options for future landowner agreement and legal interests.
- **Signage:** The full range of signage requirements should be outlined and costed including technological solutions, locations and quantities
- **Assessment:** Assess existing infrastructure and activity, interpret existing condition reports and issue a report with recommendations for improvements.
- **Maintenance & Repair Programme:** Outline a proposal for the implementation of a routine maintenance and repair programme including access requirements.
- **Villages/Trailheads:** Assess how best the 'off road' section of the trail can interface seamlessly with the "beginning/end" of the coastal walk and in the villages along the proposed route.
- **Sustainable Transport:** Assess the current parking and servicing arrangements adjacent to the trailheads. Propose solutions for parking, sustainable transport and other services to cater for demand created by the walking trail.
- **Health & Safety:** Develop preliminary health and safety plan
- **Ancillary infrastructure:** Prepare a design to highlight locations and quantities of location markers, people counters, access for emergency and other vehicles.
- **Marketing:** Develop proposals on how the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is marketed to ensure there is a local benefit to the towns and villages in Co. Clare.
- **International Comparisons:** Conduct a comprehensive exploration of relevant international and national best practice examples.
- **Other:** Any other trail interventions that the client team consider appropriate to this coastal walk plan management project for visitor management and to protect the habitats.



- **Environmental Assessment.** Identify if environmental and ecological assessments are required along the walk route bearing in mind the location of the Coastal Walk in the Cliffs of Moher Special Protection Area.
- **Public Consultation.** The consultant will work with a committee and will undertake landowner consultations and consultation with other key stakeholders.
- **Constraints and opportunities.** Identify and document constraints and opportunities.

1.6 UNIQUE REFERENCE POINTS

During the initial data collection phase of this project, it was evident that there was no accepted unique reference for any point along the Cliff of Moher Coastal Walk. Such a reference would be useful in discussing the location of particular features or issues.

While there were various options for assigning unique references, such as grid co-ordinates (ITM) or longitude/latitude, the Project Team felt that the simplest system was to assign chainages from north to south along the current official trail, with Chainage Zero being the start of the off-road section close to Castle View House, approximately 400m south of the bridge at Fisher Street, Doolin. Locations along the trail are referred to using these chainages. For example, the COME area runs from Chainage 6160 to Chainage 6850 (i.e. a length of 690m). The 'end' Chainage was Chainage 11430 at the end of the off-road section, approximately 500m south-east of Hags Head.

Later in this report a discussion is presented about potential reroutes along sections of the Coastal Walk. For consistency, the chainages stated in that discussion are those associated with the existing Coastal Walk route not the new alignment.





Figure 1-2: Chainages (Distance Markers) Used in this Report



2. KEY PREVIOUS STRATEGIES AND PLANS

2.1 CLDC VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2018, as part of their remit as trail managers, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) commissioned a Visitor Safety Management Plan for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. This report was prepared by Kenn Dodd Visitor Safety Group and sets out at a policy and procedure level the management of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.

2.2 CLIFFS OF MOHER STRATEGY 2040

The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy was developed by Clare County Council, supported by Fáilte Ireland and in collaboration with other stakeholders, and sets out a long-term vision for the Cliffs of Moher Experience focusing on the sustainable development of the Cliffs of Moher Experience over the next 20 years.

The draft Strategy was published in June 2024 and aims to enhance the visitor experience while preserving the unique environmental and cultural heritage of the Cliffs of Moher. It includes detailed analysis of the site's natural, heritage, architectural, tourism, and economic contexts to inform future developments. The draft Strategy emphasizes the importance of community involvement and public consultation to address key challenges and opportunities.

In essence, the draft Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy sets out a proposed masterplan for the development of the entire Cliffs of Moher amenity. Importantly it considers the entire amenity, including both the Visitor's Centre, and the Coastal Walk.

The draft Strategy identifies the Coastal Walk as a key tourism and economic asset, and suggests the following direction:

“Walking within the region will be promoted through an improved Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and enhanced connectivity to other waymarked routes”

Under the heading of Opportunities, the following is referenced:

Redesigning and managing the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk to become a walk of global significance with managed access and extended value.

While the draft Strategy focuses heavily on developing and enhancing the Cliffs of Moher Experience, centred around the current facilities at the Visitor's Centre, it is an important document in the context of this Management Plan as it sets a framework for any proposals made in respect of the Coastal Walk. At a minimum, and proposals arising from this Management Plan need to align with the principles set out in the Strategy.



2.3 THE BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER VISITOR EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (VEDP)

The *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan* (VEDP) was published by Fáilte Ireland in January 2020. Its key objective is to increase the economic and social contribution to the destination. The Cliffs of Moher Experience is a main Geosite of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark, and for that reason the VEDP incorporates both amenities. The VEDP has identified a number of issues in the hinterland of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk which are relevant to this Management Plan. It discusses uncontrolled parking in the southern portion of the Coastal Walk, west of St. Brigid's Well. The lack of adequate parking at Doolin is also called out in the VEDP, which is directly relevant to this Management Plan as Doolin is the northern trailhead of the Coastal Walk.

The VEDP also identifies issues with signage in the general area and discusses confusion in relation to the Coastal Walk signage, given that the Burren Way includes the 11.43km stretch of the Coastal Walk. In relation to sustainable transport, a Bus Park outside Doolin is suggested with a park and ride to Doolin Pier and the Cliffs of Moher.

The VEDP has identified out a list of Catalyst Projects. Of direct relevance to this Management Plan are the following Catalyst Projects:

- *Catalyst Project 1:* Develop and implement an integrated traffic and transport strategy for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher
- *Catalyst Project 2:* Upgrade 2km of the Cliff Walk (1km either side of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre) through a partnership with land owners and National Parks to develop a management plan and future funding model that supports the land owners and allows for reinvestment and a sustainable walking infrastructure

Catalyst Project 2 above is important in understanding the development of the Coastal Walk, in that it recognised the high footfall on the central 2km of the Coastal Walk and recommended that this section be upgraded in consultation with the landowners on that section.

2.4 WILD ATLANTIC WAY REGIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023–2027

Fáilte Ireland's *Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy* (2023–2027), aims to strengthen tourism infrastructure and grow the visitor economy to create sustainable, high-quality jobs in the sector, that will support and strengthen local communities while protecting the natural environment. It targets domestic and international visitors who will stay longer in the region, spend more, and/or arrive in off-peak periods. Strategic Product Development Initiative No. 8 of the Strategy makes reference to the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Trails and the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk as follows:

Develop a framework to guide the development of the Wild Atlantic Way Coastal Path through the upgrading and enhancement of existing coastal trails, e.g., Cliffs of Moher Coast Path & The Dingle Way, and the identification and development of new coastal trails and linkages.



3. KEY ISSUES

In this chapter, some of the key issues with the current operation of the Coastal Walk are introduced briefly and are developed upon in later chapters of the report.

3.1 TRAIL OWNERSHIP

Ownership of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is at present a hybrid model.

Clare County Council own the 1000m central section at the Cliffs of Moher Experience. The remainder of the Coastal Walk, comprising 10.8km out of 11.43km (95%) is privately owned. The privately owned portion comprises 46 separate folios (with 36 landowners), with a wide range of trail lengths per folio, from 31m up to 1265m. The *median* trail length per folio is 176m.

The multitude of land owners has led to difficulties in managing the Coastal Walk. In particular, any plan to carry out improvements to sections of the trail must be agreed by each and every landowner on the section in question. In this way any land owner has an effective veto over improvement plans.

It should be said however that this veto has rarely been exercised, and land owners have generally engaged with both Clare Local Development Company (the current managers of the trail) and Clare County Council to facilitate necessary improvements.

These 46 folios, comprising 36 separate landowners, are shown overleaf. This map clearly shows the significant variation in the lengths of trail on each folio (from 31m to 1265m).





Figure 3-1: Ownership Folios



3.2 CURRENT MANAGEMENT MODEL

The current management model for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is also a hybrid model.

In essence, in terms of trail management, there are three zones:

- **Zone A.** Owned and operated by Clare County Council
- **Zone B.** Owned by 6 landowners, managed by Clare Local Development Company (CLDC), with investment and maintenance by Clare County Council
- **Zone C.** The remainder of the trail, owned by 28 landowners, operated by Clare Local Development Company (CLDC).



Figure 3-2: Current Trail Operation and Maintenance Zones

Trail management and maintenance is discussed further in Chapter 8 of this report.



3.3 CURRENT FINANCIAL MODEL

3.3.1 Overview

The current financial model for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk to some extent follows the current operational and maintenance model outlined above.

- **Zone A.** As this area is owned and operated by Clare County Council, the operational costs are borne by Clare County Council, under a budget assigned to the Cliffs of Moher Experience.
- **Zone B.** Landowners in this zone receive payments under the Walks Scheme (discussed below) as they are all participants in that Scheme. In addition, landowners in this zone have also received a temporary licence payment, as discussed below.
- **Zone C.** In this zone the 28 landowners receive payments under the Walks Scheme. Clare Local Development Company administer the distribution of these payments (as discussed below) and manage the Walks Scheme. A temporary Sustainability Payment was available to landowners for three years from 2023-2025 for co-operation with this Management Plan (discussed below).

3.3.2 The Walks Scheme

The Walks Scheme is an initiative of the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). It has been in place since 2008.

The objective of the Scheme is to develop, enhance and maintain trails on private lands, such that they are approved by Sport Ireland and listed on the National Trails Register. A trail can only be registered under the Walks Scheme where all of the private landholders along the trail agree to the terms of the Scheme.

Trails on the National Trails Register operate on a permissive access basis and the participants agree to allow access to the public to the trail on their land while in the Walks Scheme. A landowner can withdraw from the scheme with 6 months' notice.

The scheme is administered by 20 Local Development Companies (LDCs) on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Under the Scheme, landowners sign an agreement for a period of 5 years to undertake works on the basis of an agreed Work Plan and receive a *Participant Payment*. These payments are issued every 6 months.

Participant Payments comprise a labour element and a materials element. The labour element is capped at 200 hours per annum per landowner (at standard labour rates, regardless of the length of trail on a participant's land), while the DRCD provide a materials budget of €100 per annum per participant.

The total annual Participant Payments for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, under the current Walks Scheme, is €28,370 (2024 figure). This equates to €2.40 per linear metre of the trail. A review of the Walks Scheme in July 2021 allocated a maximum materials budget of €4,100 for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, equivalent to €0.33 per metre.



3.3.3 Temporary Licence Payments

Zone B extends 1.56km north and 1.12km south of the COME area and is owned by 7 separate landowners (recent reduced to 6 landowners due to acquisition of one folio).

These lands experience the heaviest footfall along the trail (outside the COME area) and generally cover the popular area from the Southern Viewpoint to Poolboy Lookout. For this reason, this zone requires the most maintenance along the trail and special provisions have been put in place by Clare County Council to facilitate this maintenance.

In 2019 agreement was reached between Clare County Council and the 7 landowners to pay an annual licence payment of €7,650 per landowner for a period of 4 years (2020 to 2023 inclusive). As part of this agreement, the landowners agreed to allow Clare County Council to carry out upgrade works.

In 2024 the agreement covering this temporary licence payment timed out.

As discussed later in this report, the payments received by landowners in this section were based on sound judgement as they reflected the need to upgrade the central portion of the Coastal Walk due to higher usage (a point reiterated in the *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan*), however this has led to a sense of inequity amongst landowners that lie outside this zone.

3.3.4 Temporary Sustainability Payments

A temporary Sustainability Payment of €1000 was made available to landowners in 2023 for co-operation with this Management Plan. A total of 24 landowners availed of this Sustainability Payment.

3.4 UNRESTRICTED ACCESS AND CAPACITY ISSUES AT PEAK TIMES

As stated earlier, the *Cliffs of Moher Experience* (COME) is the most visited natural attraction in Ireland and attracted 1.6M visitors in 2019.

Based on counters at the exit points from the *Cliffs of Moher Experience*, a large proportion of these visitors make their way onto the Coastal Walk.

Most of the visitors entering the Coastal Walk from the COME only go a short distance, mostly to the Southern Viewpoint south of the COME, or north to the start of Surfer's Path near Pollboy Lookout, although this varies considerably. From counter data over the 12-month period from July 2023 to June 2024, of those that passed the counter at the southern exit point from the COME, only 23% went further than the Southern Viewpoint. To the north the percentage is not known as counter data is not available north of O'Brien's Tower.

In general terms the stretch of trail extending approximately 1km north and south of the COME, from Pollboy Lookout to the Southern Viewpoint, is very heavily trafficked. There are no restrictions on visitor numbers, the trail is quite narrow along some of this stretch (as little as 1.2m wide north of O'Brien's Tower) and does not have the capacity to accommodate the numbers currently using the trail at peak times.



3.5 TRANSPORT AND PARKING

The current official trailheads for the Coastal Walk are:

- **Doolin end.** The official start of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is at the Doolin Community Centre located 1.5km north of the bridge at Fisher Street.
- **Cliffs of Moher Experience.** At the main visitor car park
- **Liscannor end.** The official end of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is at the Moher GAA grounds

There are a number of issues with all three of these trailheads. This is explored in detail in Chapter 9.

Problems associated with uncontrolled parking on local roads west of the R478, south of the COME, at Slievenageeragh has been highlighted in previous reports. This is also discussed in Chapter 9.

3.6 HABITAT DEGRADATION

The narrowness of the trail in a number of areas, coupled with the high number of walkers, in particular 1km north and south of the COME, has resulted in significant habitat degradation.

As discussed in the Site Synopsis for the Cliffs of Moher SPA, the cliff-top vegetation is a typical maritime sward, including such species as Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Campion (*Silene vulgaris subsp. maritima*), Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*) and Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*).

There are areas of worn ground / unofficial trails as a result of overcrowding, and this has caused extensive damage to existing biodiversity. These areas are characterised by bare ground/recolonising bare ground (ED1/2).

There are many examples of this degradation in the section of trail south of the Southern Viewpoint (see photo below). Damage to biodiversity is explored further in Section 6.5.





Figure 3-3: Example of Habitat Degradation

3.7 TRAIL CONDITION AND SAFETY

The Coastal Walk is a technically difficult walking trail and accidents and incidents occur from time to time on the Coastal Walk. The more serious accidents are dealt with by the Irish Coast Guard and Emergency Services, while first aid cases tend to present themselves at the Visitor's Centre. Sport Ireland currently permissive access categorise the Coastal Walk as *Strenuous*, which is the 2nd highest level of difficulty and covers physically demanding trails.

High profile fatalities in recent years, in addition to the closure of parts of the trail as a result of the Sport Ireland audit, have highlighted the fact that sections of the trail are clearly unsafe.

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk runs for most of its length along an unprotected cliff edge (see example in the photo below), and this carries an inherent risk for walkers.

A number of sections of the Coastal Walk have already been improved (see Table 6-1) through the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), as discussed in Section 6.1. Trail condition and safety is explored further in Chapter 6.



Figure 3-4: Trail Condition – Sample Unprotected Edge

3.8 SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING

Inadequate signage along the trail has been highlighted in previous reports, including *The Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy*, the CLDC *Visitor Safety Management Plan* (2018), and the *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan*. This signage deficit is compounded by a lack of consistency in terminology in respect of the Coastal Walk, as discussed earlier.

Wayfinding and signage are explored further in Chapter 7.

3.9 UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT

There are examples of unauthorised development along the trail, in particular on the southern section. This includes unauthorised car park facilities.

At present it is difficult for the visitor to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised parking, as the latter is well signposted and is promoted on social media. This has the potential to frustrate any initiatives to provide sustainable transport options for the Coastal Walk.



4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the overarching approach taken in the development of the Management Plan.

4.1 CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the Management Plan.

A range of consultation methods was employed, including:

- One to one on-line meetings. This included tourism interests and community groups
- Small ‘grouped’ on-line meetings. This included service providers and other groups where there was an overlap in membership and a grouped session was appropriate
- Invitation events. Landowners were invited to an in-person event
- In-person meetings. These generally related to landowner representative groups and their advisors

Consultation events were arranged by invitation, and were held in March, April and May 2024. Landowner engagement events were led by Pat Mellon (the Project Landowner Liaison Officer), supported by TOBIN personnel.

Table 4-1: List of Consultees

	Consultees	Date	Format
1	Ollies Tours (guided tours)	13 th March 2024	Online (Teams)
2	Doolin Cliff Walk (guided tours)	14 th March 2024	Phonecall
3	Clare Tourism Development	27 th March 2024	Combined - Online Teams
4	Coastguard		
5	Landowners	8 th April 2024	In-person meeting
6	Liscannor Community Reps (Liscannor GAA)	9 th April 2024	Online (Teams)
7	Burren Ecotourism Network	15 th April 2024	Online (Teams)
8	Doolin Tourism Cooperative	17 th April 2024	Online (Teams)
9	Clare Active Travel	18 th April 2024	Online (Teams)
10	NPWS	14 th May 2024	Online (Teams)
11	IFA	24 th May 2024	In-person meeting



As is evident from the table below, a number of recurring themes were raised during this consultation.

Table 4-2: Main Themes Arising from Consultation

Theme	Specific Points Raised	Raised By (Ref: Table 4.1)
Parking	Existing COME carpark is satisfactory Illegal parking on surrounding roads	All 6
Transport parking and	Shuttle bus service is needed, existing Bus Eireann bus service is very limited Operation of an unauthorised carpark	All 10
Maintenance	Lack of regular maintenance on the trail	All
Trail surface	Concern over condition of the trail	1, 2, 7, 8
Trail safety	Safety issues when walkers stray from the main trail, unprotected edges	1,2, 3, 8
Communication	Lack of clarity on who to contact regarding the trail	8
Signage/Wayfinding	Better signage required	1, 3, 4, 6, 8
Visitor management	No problem with number of people using the trail	All
Trail Development	Parts of the trail were developed without due process	10, 11
Financial	Inadequate payments to landowners Pricing structure for COME carpark is not an issue	11 1, 7
Emergency access	Improvements required for emergency services access	2, 3, 4, 8



4.2 DATA COLLECTION AND CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

At the project outset, all relevant datasets were collated to inform the Management Plan. This included:

- Key strategic reports
- Geohazard reports
- Environmental reports
- Safety reports
- Land ownership boundaries
- Land owner names and folios
- Total Walks Scheme payments
- Details on recent trail upgrades
- Current operational expenditure
- Visitor counter data
- Sport Ireland Audits
- Details on previous accidents (fatalities and injuries)
- Insurance details

Any geospatial data obtained was uploaded onto a project GIS database and used in the preparation of output maps for the Management Plan.

4.3 WALKOVER AUDITS

It was necessary to walk all or part of the Coastal Walk on a number of occasions to appreciate the issues that had been raised in the Brief and also by consultees. A desk top review, while useful, would only provide limited information on key issues such as trail condition, trailheads, parking etc.

For this reason, a full walkover audit was undertaken in February 2024, a second in August 2024, and a final walkover in January 2025. These walkover audits were used to develop recommendations for management of the Coastal Walk.



4.4 INTERCEPT SURVEYS

To inform the Visitor Management section of the Management Plan, a number of intercept surveys were undertaken, on the following dates:

- 28th / 29th March 2024, north of the Visitor’s Centre (COME)
- 20th May 2024, in the vicinity of Hags Head

Summary data from these surveys is presented below:

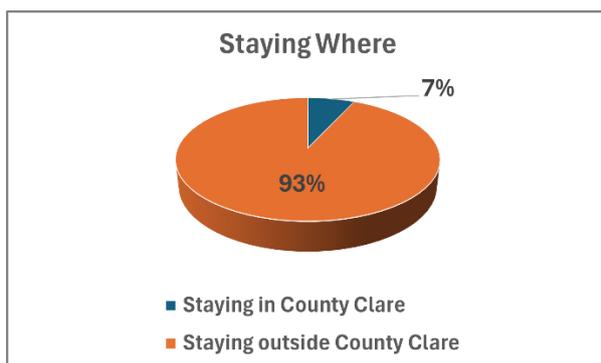
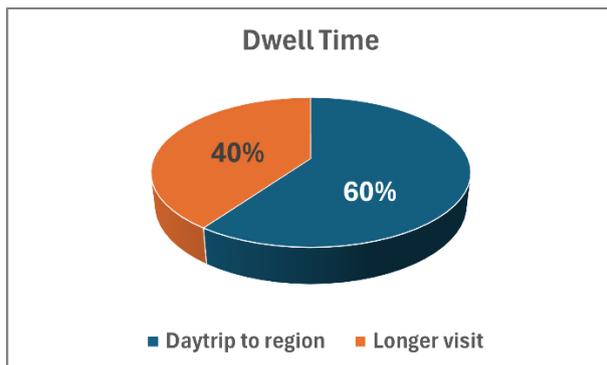
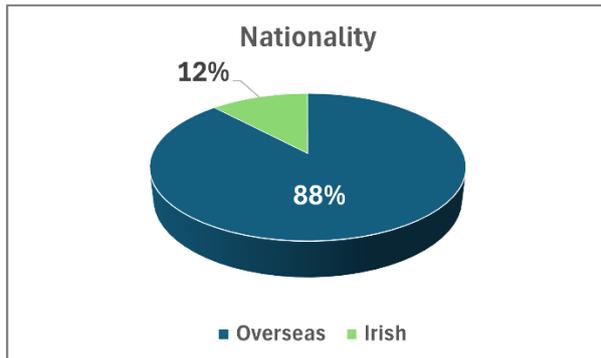


Figure 4-1: Outputs from Intercept Survey, 28th / 29th March 2024 (north of COME)



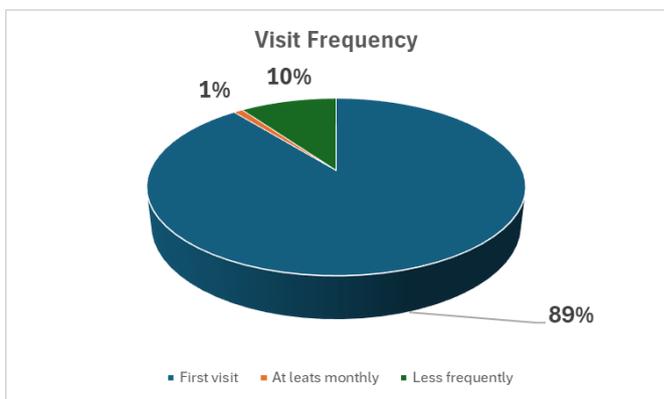
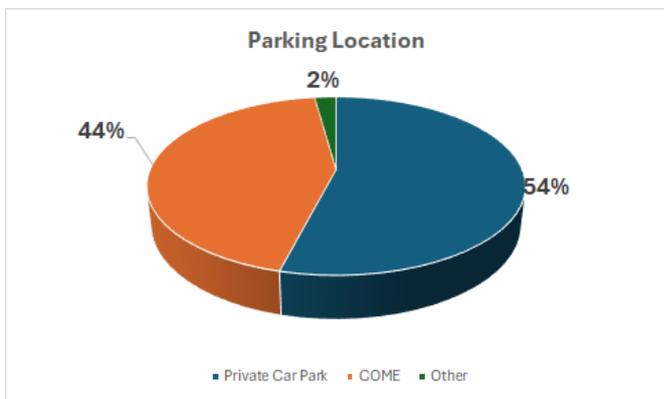
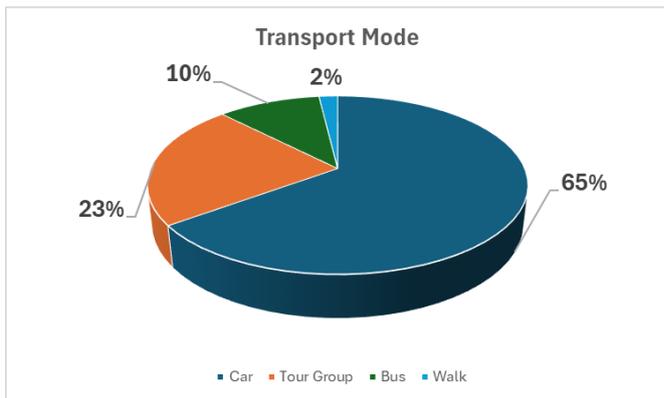
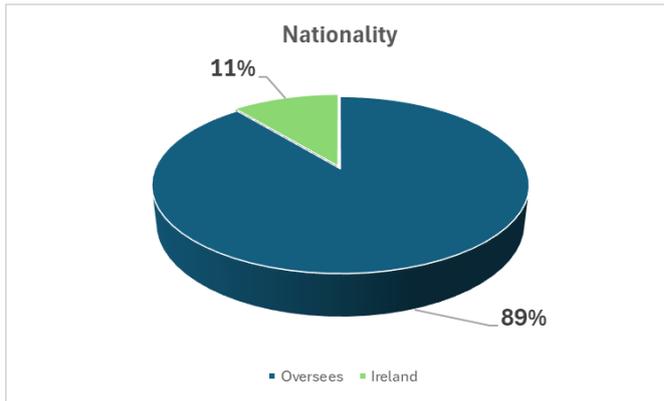


Figure 4-2: Outputs from Intercept Survey, 20th May 2024 (Hags Head)



4.5 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Brief for the project required a comprehensive exploration of relevant international and national best practice examples.

To this end, our project partners Land Use Consulting (UK) carried out a comprehensive review of comparable trails across the world. Initially the study sought to identify walking trails that:

- Are coastal
- Are of a similar length (5 to 20km)
- Are centred around a focal point such as a visitor’s centre, lighthouse or similar
- Charge users (either for access to the visitor’s centre, or to the walk)

It proved difficult to find an exact international comparator to the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The Coastal Walk is somewhat unique in being centred on an iconic tourist amenity that charges for entry to a visitor’s centre but allows uncontrolled access from there onto a trail. For this reason, the study was expanded to examine any best practice examples of walking trails under a number of headings. A total of 22 trails were examined, as listed below.

Table 4-3: Trails Included in International Experience Study

Ref.	Trail	Location
1	Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk	Co. Clare, Ireland
2	Grand Cliff Top Walk	Blue Mountains, Australia
3	Giant's Causeway Clifftop Experience	Antrim, Northern Ireland
4	Howth Head	Howth, Dublin
5	Bray Head	Wicklow, Dublin
6	Ayrshire Coastal Path	Ayreshire, Scotland
7	Tregavone Cliff Top Walk	Cornwall, England
8	White Cliffs of Dover Walk	Kent, England
9	Cinque Terre Coastal Walk	Liguria, Italy
10	Ardmore Cliff Walk	Ardmore, Waterford
11	Shifting Dunes Trails Łeba	Slowinski National Park, Łeba, Poland
12	The Gobbins	Antrim, Northern Ireland
13	Anglesea Coastal Path	The Isle of Anglesea Coastal Path, Wales
14	Lizard Coastal Walk	Cornwall, England



15	West Coast Trail	Vancouver Island, British Columbia
16	Rota Vicentina Fisherman's Trail	Alentejo and Algarve, Portugal
17	The Corfu Trail	Corfu Island, Greece
18	The Kalalau Trail	Hawaii, United States of America
19	Quoddy Head Coastal Trail	Maine, United States of America
20	Lost Coast Trail	California, United States of America
21	New Plymouth Coastal Walkway	New Plymouth, New Zealand
22	Kilkee Cliff Walk	Kilkee, Co Clare, Ireland.

A discrete number of these 22 trails were selected for a more detailed analysis. These were:

- Cinque Terre Trails, Italy
- Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim
- The Gobbins Cliff Path, Co. Antrim
- West Coast Trail, Canada
- The Lizard Coastal Walk, Cornwall

Appendix B contains a summary table of the 22 trails examined, and also a report that includes the details analysis of the above listed trails.



5. VISITOR MANAGEMENT

5.1 VISITOR NUMBERS

Exact numbers using the Coastal Walk are uncertain, but some empirical data is available, sufficient to identify a significant increase in numbers since The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk opened in 2013, coupled with a growth in visitors to the Cliffs of Moher Experience site.

Visitor numbers walking the full Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk are estimated at 50,000 per annum. The last available official counter figures (2016) showed 105,798 passing the Hags Head counter, and 83,920 passing the Doolin counter. Some of these visitors will only walk part of the trail, in particular those recorded at Hags Head.

Visitor numbers to the Cliffs of Moher Experience in 2010 were 720,000, rising to 1,600,000 in 2019, many extending from the site onto the Coastal Walk one kilometre north and one kilometre south.

5.2 CURRENT VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND ISSUES

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk (COMCW) currently does not employ an integrated visitor management approach. The COMCW is free to access with no regulation of visitor numbers accessing the trail from three main access points, Southern (Liscannor), Northern (Doolin) and the Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre. In addition to these three access points, there are a series of unregulated access points adding to further visitor management challenges. From a visitor perspective, a range of issues were identified through a programme of visitor research. The principal visitor management issues highlighted by visitors included:

- There is no coherent visitor journey associated with the COMCW. This includes limited pre-visit information, no booking systems and limited route information available online.
- Online mapping of the route is accessed through a downloadable PDF file which is presented as a large-scale map.
- Visitors have difficulty distinguishing between the official path and unofficial (unsafe) areas.
- Visitors have difficulty in finding the main trail access points and dedicated parking for the COMCW.
- Official car parks provide no visitor services (e.g. toilets) and served by poor signage and lack of onsite visitor information.
- There is unregulated car parking outside the three main access points at peak periods creating additional pressures in how visitors access the trail.
- The distance of the official car parks to the start of the COMCW provides an accessibility challenge for some visitors and is a contributing factor to increased levels of unregulated parking.



- There is a lack of directional signage, mapping and route information to influence visitor flows and encourage visitors to stay on the main trail route.
- No capacity management or effective footfall measurement and monitoring systems are in place across the three main access points.
- There is a lack of a visitor education strategy i.e. route maps, signage or points of interest interpretation of the route using story boards on the trail.
- Safety and quality of paths was frequently mentioned with many visitors highlighting a need for wider paths.
- No warning or safety awareness signage exists at certain points where visitors are required to take extra care.
- Unregulated visitor flows off the main path are resulting in environmental degradation and bio-diversity risk across the COMCW.
- There is a lack of visitor services on the route such as environmentally friendly toilets, seating and bins.

5.3 VISITOR PROFILE

Visitor profile information is based on independent visitor research conducted on the Coastal Walk during 2024 (sample size 451).

Six in ten visitors state their main reason for visiting the COMCW as specifically to walk the coastal path. A higher percentage of international visitors are interested in combining the COMCW with a visit to the Visitor's Centre. A total of 84% of visitors are visiting the COMCW for the first time. 88% of visitors surveyed during the visitor research were from abroad.

Almost 60% of visitors to the COMCW are in full time employment. A further 13% are students and 11% retired. Domestic visitors to the COMCW are older with 22% in the 36 – 45 age group and 18% in the 46 – 55 age group. International visitors tend to be younger. The largest cohort of international visitors (31%) are in the 26 – 35 age group.

Almost nine in ten domestic visitors will use a car to travel to the COMCW. A higher percentage of international visitors use or are willing to use public transport or travel in a tour group.

International visitors visit the COMCW while on holidays and staying outside of Clare. The highest proportion of visitors travel to the COMCW as a couple (41%). Over a quarter visit with a group of friends. Visitors mainly hear about the Coastal Walk through word of mouth, local recommendations, holiday itinerary suggestions and social media channels.

The highest percentage of international visitors were staying outside Clare. Overseas visitors were more likely to visit the Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre and combine it with the coastal walk. The majority of visitors spend less than 2 hours on the coastal path. Almost a quarter spend between 2 and 2.5 hours on the while 18.3% spend over 2.5 hours walking the coastal path. Overseas visitors tend to spend more time walking on the COMCW when they visit. A total of 26% walk between 2 – 2.5 hours in comparison to 19% of domestic visitors.



The main domestic markets for the COMCW are Dublin, Galway and Limerick. Domestic visitors to the COMCW largely travelled as a couple or with a group of friends. The main international markets for the COMCW are USA, Germany, France and the UK.

Domestic visitors were most likely to travel to the coastal walk by car, with 87% of domestic visitors driving to the trail heads. Domestic visitors were less likely to visit the Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre, with 64% of the domestic market visiting to specifically to do the coastal walk. The domestic market rated the coastal walk experience as 65 on the Net Promoter Score while overseas visitors gave a rating of 70.

A higher level of overseas tourists visits the Coastal Walk in a family group in comparison to domestic visitors. Overseas visitors to the COMCW largely visit as a couple or with a group of friends. International visitors travelled to the coastal walk by car (71%) or as part of a tour group (15%).

5.4 VISITOR MANAGEMENT APPROACH

5.4.1 Guiding Principles

There are a number of guiding principles for the visitor management approach for the COMCW:

1. Understanding the visitor and their motivations – Build a greater understanding of our visitors and influence their behaviour and how they engage with the COMCW
2. Enhancing the COMCW Visitor Experience - Adopt a world class approach to the visitor experience along every engagement point on the visitor journey.
3. Preserving and Protecting the Natural Environment of the COMCW – ensure we protect our most valuable asset for future generations in how we management visitor engagement with the COWCW.
4. Balancing Stakeholder Needs – Achieve the appropriate balance for all stakeholders in how we integrate conservation, tourism, community interests, and sustainable practices in managing our visitors
5. Delivering Sustainable Tourism and Economic Prosperity for our community – ensuring a responsible visitor management that balances environmental conservation with economic opportunities for our community.
6. 'Bookend' the COWCW to elevate the quality of the trailhead experience from the points of access, improved signage, enhanced parking and visitor services.
7. Ensure that visitor management is founded on ensuring the safety of visitors at all times.

5.4.2 Visitor Management Planning Considerations

COMCW Visitor Quotas and Permits

The carrying capacity of the future Coastal Walk has not been determined as it is very much dependent on issues such as trail width, any future reroutes, trail surface etc. An Operational



Plan would determine the carrying capacity and is recommended once the trail width and alignment are clear. Should the Operational Plan confirm that visitor restrictions are necessary, the recommended approach is to impose a visitor quota per day on the Coastal Walk. Among the options open to implementing this include advance booking systems timed entry or daily visitor caps. Visitor permits (free of charge to the user) will regulate entry and ensure that only a manageable number of people access the coastal walk each day from each of the access points. This may also include only guided access at certain times to control daily volumes. Additional considerations will be the allocation of time slots to visitors staying in local accommodation providing priority access to overnights guests. This will result in increased dwell time in the destination and grow the value of tourism in the community. The option of allocating separate visitor permits for locals should also be considered.

Seasonal Restrictions

Additional restrictions could be placed on a seasonal basis to manage the carrying capacity of the COMCW. This will take into consideration where environmentally sensitive areas along the walk might be most vulnerable at certain times of the year (e.g. breeding seasons, bird migrations, or during periods of heavy rainfall when soil erosion risks are high).

Strategically Bookend the COMCW - Designated Access Points

A suggested approach for the COMCW will include the examination of zoning or the enhancement of the designated access points. This will involve dividing the coastal walk into different sections with varying levels of access and activity allowed where possible.

The three designated access points (Northern and Southern access point and the Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre) will lead to well signposted paths to help manage visitor movement and minimise footfall on sensitive areas. There will be an emphasis on creating well-marked routes so visitors are less likely to deviate 'off the beaten track' and disturb fragile habitats.

The bookending of the COMCW will place a heightened focus on improving the quality of the trail heads at the north and south access points in addition to the access from the Visitor's Centre. This will become a core focus of annual marketing and communications activity designed to directing visitors to the trail head / start points to alleviate peak season pressures on the coastal walk.

Communications - Education and Awareness Campaigns

Central to the visitor management plan is a rolling communications plan designed to educate visitors around access and their responsibilities as visitors to the COMCW. The marketing and communications strategy will take into account the identified user segments and their motivations to the visit the COMCW.

The communications programme will include a focus on the environmental sensitivity of the area, access limits to private lands and the importance of responsible behaviour while on the COMCW. Additional considerations will include increased levels of signage, brochures and information provided at the trails heads / Cliffs of Moher Visitor's Centre on the importance of staying on the marked coastal route. It is recommended that guided tours are pre-booked and scheduled.



COWCW Monitoring and Data Collection

Effective visitor management and planning will require year-round monitoring of visitor behaviour. This will include the use of visitor counters to provide real-time data on footfall along the COMCW using the route zones and access points as the basis for measurement.

There will be an increased level of tracking visitor footfall data along the COMCW to consistently monitor and manage visitor quotas and ongoing performance of the three access points. These will be supplemented by regular assessments to identify areas where visitor activity may be causing damage.

Rotational Access

Rotational access from the north or south / Visitor's Centre will be considered as required to ensure no single area experiences overuse and enabling vegetation and wildlife the opportunity to regenerate. It could result in the closure of trail access for part of the year or setting aside certain days of the week when access is restricted.

5.4.3 Learnings from Visitor Management (International)

Cinque Terre National Park

Cinque Terre National Park in Italy faces significant challenges in managing the large influx of tourists while maintaining the area's environmental, cultural, and social sustainability.

Visitor Pass System: The 'Cinque Terre Card', which has been in operation since 2001 and was originally designed to enable people to visit the park, is now used as a method of dealing with capacity management issues. Visitor's cards are scanned upon entry which enables the Park to limit the number of daily visitors on certain trails.

Trail Monitoring: Park authorities monitor trail conditions and can close paths if they become overcrowded or if weather conditions make them unsafe, ensuring visitor numbers remain within sustainable limits.

Seasonal Closures: Certain trails are closed during the off-season to allow the environment to recover from the wear and tear caused by high visitor numbers.

Milford Track, New Zealand

Milford Track is New Zealand's most famous walking track. The walk is in total 53.5km long and is located in the Fjordland National Park. The track welcomes roughly 800,000 visitors annually. To deal with this large influx of visitors, Milford Track has implemented the following capacity management measures.

Quotas and Advanced Bookings: Any visitors looking to walk the route independently must book at least one overnight stay in the park's accommodation offering to gain access to the walk. Day trip visitors can only access the walk via a guided tour experience. They have implemented a strict booking system which ensures the trail, and its facilities are not overwhelmed, and that the wilderness experience remains high quality.



Guided Tours Only During Off-Season: During the off-season, the track can only be accessed through guided tours regardless of an accommodation booking. This limits the number of visitors and ensures that those who do visit are led by professionals who can mitigate any potential environmental impact.

Infrastructure: The Department of Conservation (DOC) has installed robust facilities, including eco-friendly toilets and well-maintained tracks, to handle the environmental and health and safety concerns of visitors. Waste management systems are also in place to ensure that litter and human waste do not impact the environment.

Catlins Coastal Heritage Trail

Catlins Coastal Heritage Trail is a 70km walking trail in New Zealand. They have used the following measures to deal with large influxes of tourists.

Promotion of Off-Peak Tourism: The Catlins Coastal Heritage Trail is promoted as a destination for off-peak tourism, helping to spread visitor numbers throughout the year. Marketing efforts focus on the unique experiences available in different seasons, reducing pressure during the busiest times.

Entry Fees and Timed Entry (for Specific Sites): Certain locations along the trail, such as Cathedral Caves, require entry fees and have limited hours of access due to tidal conditions. These fees not only help with maintenance costs but also manage the number of visitors by ensuring controlled access during peak hours.

Visitor Caps for Popular Sites: To avoid overcrowding at high-demand locations, such as Nugget Point and McLean Falls, visitor numbers are regulated through physical or time-based limits. For example, limited parking or timed access helps distribute visitors more evenly throughout the day.

Voluntary Visitor Contributions: Visitors are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to support conservation efforts along the trail. These funds are used to maintain the trail and its surrounding environments, ensuring that visitor impact is minimized.

Hā'ena State Park, Hawaii

Reservation & Permit Systems: Entry into Hā'ena State Park (which includes Kē'ē Beach as well as access to Hanakāpī'ai Falls and the Kalalau Trail) requires an advanced-paid permit at www.gohaena.com and are available up to 30 days in advance. Parking Passes sell out extremely quickly. The Kaua'i North Shore Shuttle pass (also available on gohaena.com) includes entry into the park and is a good option for those who were unable to secure their parking pass.

Online Reservation System: Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve has implemented an online reservation system that allows visitors to select a show time up to 48 hours ahead of their planned visit. Reservation time slots are available in 10-minute increments, beginning from 7 a.m. until 1:40 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays. Reservations can be made for up to 10 people at a time—no more than five children and/or five adults.



Zion National Park, Utah, USA

Zion National Park exceeds over 5 million visitors annually and has for a long time been implementing measures to deal with overcrowding issues.

Ticketing System: Zion National Park requires permits for certain areas of the park, such as the popular Angels Landing Trail. This limits visitor numbers and helps control overcrowding on the narrow trail.

Pre-Booking: Visitors must enter a lottery system in advance to secure their hiking permit, which can be done either seasonally or through a day-before lottery.

Seasonal Shuttle Service: Zion National Park has operated a mandatory shuttle system in its main canyon (Zion Canyon Scenic Drive) since 2000. The shuttle system runs from during peak months helping to reduce vehicle traffic, parking issues, and congestion within the park.

Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

Plitvice Lakes National Park receives more than 1 million visitors annually and has implemented a number of capacity management measures;

Capped Number of Visitors: Plitvice Lakes National Park has a strict daily limit on the number of visitors allowed to enter the park, particularly during the high season.

Dispersion of Visitors: Plitvice Lakes National Park operates electric boats on the lakes and shuttle buses between different sections of the park. These services help manage visitor movement across the park, reduce crowding in specific areas, and provide environmentally friendly transportation options.

Machu Picchu, Peru

Machu Picchu welcomes more than 1.5 million visitors annually and has implemented a number of measures to ensure visitor safety and site safety.

Controlled Access: Machu Picchu limits the number of daily visitors to protect the ancient ruins and surrounding environment. Only 2,500 people are allowed to enter the site each day, and different time slots help reduce overcrowding.

Sustainability Measures: There are specific hiking permits for the Inca Trail, which are capped at 500 per day (including guides and porters). Pre-booking is required months in advance.

Pre-Defined Circulation Paths: Visitors must follow designated walking routes within Machu Picchu. There are various circuits visitors can choose from, and each one follows a one-way system to reduce congestion and manage the flow of tourists.

Guided Tour Restrictions: Guided tours are encouraged for visitors, but there are strict regulations on the size of groups. Currently, groups must have a maximum of 16 people per guide.



Torres del Paine National Park, Patagonia, Chile

The popularity of Torres del Paine National Park has led to the implementation of various capacity management measures to protect the fragile environment while ensuring that hikers can still enjoy a high-quality experience.

Mandatory Reservations: To hike the W or O Circuit, trekkers must reserve campsites or refugios (mountain huts) in advance. This reservation system is crucial in controlling the number of hikers allowed on the trail, as the campsites along the route have limited capacity.

Park Rangers: Park Rangers are stationed throughout the park to enforce regulations, assist hikers, and ensure compliance with the rules.

Galápagos Islands, Ecuador

The Galápagos Islands have strict limits on the number of tourists allowed each year. Only a limited number of tour operators are licensed to operate, and visitor numbers are capped to minimise ecological disruption.

Controlled Entry and Permits: Visitors must be part of an organised tour, and permits are required to visit specific islands and wildlife areas. Different islands have different capacity limits based on ecological sensitivity.

Rotating Tourism Zones: To prevent overuse, specific visitor zones rotate access, allowing areas time to recover from foot traffic while others are opened for exploration.

Mandatory Safety Briefings: Tourists receive mandatory briefings on conservation practices before entering the islands.



6. TRAIL SAFETY

6.1 SPORT IRELAND CRITERIA

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is on the *National Trails Register* (Trail ID 670). This register includes all trails that meet the requirements of the *Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland* (Sport Ireland Outdoors). The benefits of a trail being listed on the National Trails Register are stated by Sport Ireland as:

- Reassurance for trail users and management that the trail is safe and of high quality
- Promotion on Sport Ireland's website
- Access to the public liability insurance policy which is administered by Sport Ireland Outdoors, if eligible
- On-going inspections and advice to maintain standards and best practice

Consequently, for a trail to remain on the *National Trails Register* it must be periodically inspected by Sport Ireland. To meet the required threshold:

- There must be no safety issues on the trail
- A *Trail Infrastructure Score* of at least 70% must be achieved overall and in each category
- *Trail Management Plans* must be in place and be appropriate for the length and complexity of the trail

The designated *Trail Management Organisation* for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is the Clare Local Development Company. In recent years two Sport Ireland audits have been carried out:

- On 21st March 2019
- On 12th August 2024

Copies of these two audit reports are included in **Appendix A**.



6.2 CONTEXT

The fact that Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk runs for most of its length along an unprotected cliff edge carries an inherent risk. This inherent risk is no different to that at other popular cliff walks such as the White Cliffs of Dover or Beachy Head in the UK.

With an unprotected cliff edge and the wide variation in human behaviours, accidents will occur. There have been a number of fatalities over the years at the cliffs, due to medical emergencies, accidental falls and suicides. All of these fatalities are tragic for the families involved and also place significant pressure on emergency services.

It is prudent to consider trail safety under two risk categories:

- Risk Category A: The risk of falling on the trail resulting in minor or non-fatal injuries
- Risk Category B: The risk of falling over the cliff edge resulting in fatal injuries

It goes without saying that there is a fundamental difference between these two risk categories. For Risk Category A, the consequences are minor. The consequences are generally no different to a fall on any trail including inland trails.

For Risk Category B, the consequences are catastrophic and are particular to any trail with an unprotected edge. To a certain extent the extreme height of the Cliffs of Moher, rising to approx. 200m, is not the issue, as the same risk applies to lower elevation sections such as those at Doonagore south of Doolin (a fall from 10m above sea level carries the same risk as a fall from 200m above sea level).

There are a number of factors that exacerbate the risk of fatalities at Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, including:

- **Trail popularity.** High visitor numbers increase the risk of fatalities (in the same way as an increase in road traffic increases the risk of road fatalities).
- **Available trail width.** Compared to similar coastal walks, the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is somewhat unusual in that for long stretches there is a fenceline in place, but users of the trail have to walk on the seaward side of the fenceline.
- **Iconic views.** Given that in some locations the best views are from the cliff edge, this draws walkers to the edge.
- **First time visitors.** From our Intercept Surveys we know that the majority of visitors are first time visitors and may not fully appreciate the inherent risks.
- **Visitor age.** From our Intercept Surveys we also know that a large percentage of visitors to the Cliffs of Moher Experience are in their 20s or 30s and are travelling as a group (eg. bus tours). These visitors are the most likely to venture from the Cliffs of Moher Experience onto the coastal walk. They may also be the most likely to take risks on the trail.
- **Presumption of safety.** Given that the Cliffs of Moher is a world-renowned attraction, first time visitors will assume that the entirety of the offering is safe. Visitors may not



distinguish between the Cliffs of Moher Experience (i.e. Visitor's Centre) and the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. If they exit from the Cliffs of Moher Experience onto the trail, they may assume that the same level of safety applies to the coastal walk, regardless of the signs warning them that exiting onto the trail carries a risk. Online reviews of the Coastal Walk and images of people dangerously close to the edge give a false impression of safety.

- **Unauthorised Development.** Online imagery of unauthorised wedding ceremonies taking place on the cliff edge again gives a false impression of safety and leads walkers to take selfies in locations where they are not equipped to deal with the environment of an unstable cliff edge.
- **Wind Conditions.** It is known that the area at the cliff edge experiences higher peak winds than immediately inland (even at the car park 500m inland). Walkers may enter the trail with a poor understanding of this particular risk.
- **Lack of a Communications Plan.** There is no formal communications procedure in place to temporarily close the coastal walk as a result of poor weather or other concerns.
- **Ownership and management model.** The Coastal Walk includes a publicly owned 1000m central section but is otherwise privately owned by 36 individual landowners. If the entirety of the Coastal Walk were in public ownership, there would be a responsibility on the public body to keep the trail safe. The current management model may be leading to a situation where there a disparity between how safety issues are dealt with on areas managed by Clare County Council, and areas outside their control.

These are not the only factors that determine the risk of fatalities. Issues like trail condition, geohazard etc. also contribute to the risk profile but are generally no different to those experienced on any upland trail. Those listed above can be considered unique to the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk.



6.3 TRAIL WIDTH/EXISTING FENCELINE

As mentioned earlier, compared to similar coastal walks, the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is somewhat unusual in that users of the trail have to walk on the seaward side of an existing fenceline over long stretches. An example of this is shown below at Chainage 8400.



Figure 6-1: Example of Fenceline on Inland Side of Trail (Chainage 8400)

The purpose of the fence is therefore to prevent unauthorised access to the fields on the land side of the fence, rather than to protect the walker.

Our review of coastal walks both in Ireland and in other countries has highlighted that this situation is not common. In most cases a fence is either:

- in place to protect walkers (eg. Cinque Terre), or
- is absent entirely (eg. White Cliffs of Dover)

In the latter case, where a fence is absent entirely, walkers have the option of moving well away from the edge if they are uncomfortable with their proximity to the cliff edge or if they feel inherently unsafe. At the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk this option is not available, and walkers have no option but to continue along a trail which is in some cases less than 3m in width between the fenceline and the unprotected edge.

6.4 WALKOVER AUDIT

As part of the study, a full walkover audit was undertaken in February 2024, and again in August 2024. A final walkover was undertaken in January 2025.

The 11,430m length of the trail is characterised by a number of discrete sections. Working from north to south these can be described as per the table below. This characterisation also takes account of the recent and planned upgrades of sections of the Coastal Walk through the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), which provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure as well as for the necessary repair, maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.

Table 6-1: Trail Audit and Condition Status

Section	Chainage	Type	Upgrade Comment	Upgrade Status
1	0 to 1070	On farm road, inland	Not applicable (farm road)	
2	1070 to 1850	Along cliff edge, unprotected	No current plans to upgrade	
3	1850 to 2660	Along cliff edge, unprotected	Included in ORIS 2023 Measure 3 (Section B), granted	
4	2660 to 3150 (Luogh Point)	Inland	Trail has been diverted inland (upgrade included in ORIS 2023 Measure 3, Section B)	
5	3150 to 3980	Along cliff edge, unprotected, with inland sections	Included in ORIS 2023 Measure 3 (Section B), granted	
6	3980 to 5400	Inland	Trail diverted away from Pollboy Lookout under ORIS 2022 Measure 3 (part of Zone B)	
7	5400 to 5500	Away from cliff edge	Unimproved section of steps, part of Zone B, awaiting landowner approval to proceed	
8	5500 to 6170 (O'Brien's Tower)	Along cliff edge, protected	Fully improved, part of upgraded Zone B	
9	6170 to 6840	COME, owned by Clare County Council	Not applicable, part of COME	
10	6840 to 7970	Along cliff edge, protected	No current plans to upgrade	
11	7970 to 9550	Along cliff edge, unprotected	No current plans to upgrade	
12	9550 to 10900 (Hags Head)	Along cliff edge, unprotected	Included in ORIS 2023 Measure 3 (Section B), granted	
13	10900 to 11430	On farm road, inland	Not applicable (farm road)	



Representative views of each of these sections are presented below.



Figure 6-2: Representative Photos of Trail Sections

6.5 UNOFFICIAL TRAILS

A significant issue along the walk, and in particular on the southern section is the existence of areas of worn ground that can be described as unofficial trails. These unofficial trails have formed at certain locations as a result of:

- overcrowding on the trail, leading walkers to venture off-trail for space
- walker curiosity, as there is a sense that better cliff views can be had closer to the edge

These unofficial trails have caused extensive damage to existing biodiversity and has accelerated in recent years as numbers on the coastal walk have increased. A good example is shown below at Chainage 8250, over a 10-year period from 2014 to 2024.

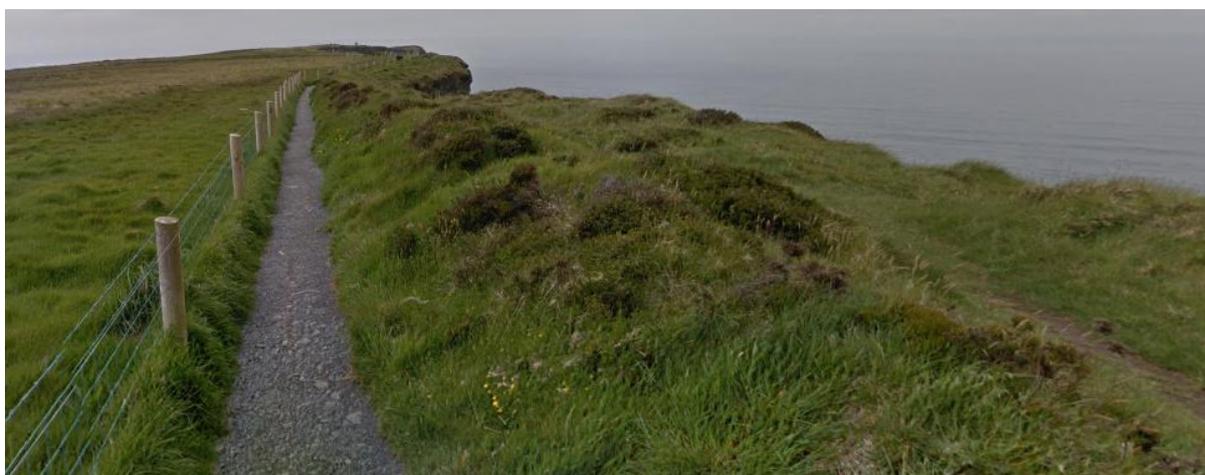


Figure 6-3: Unofficial Trail Example, Chainage 8250 (top: from Google, 2014, bottom: from walkover 2024)

6.6 ROCK AND SOIL INTEGRITY

The Cliffs of Moher are composed of horizontal beds of sandstones, siltstone and mudstone/shale. A number of previous reports have been prepared on the rock formation and on the risks associated with localised collapses.

In 2023, Clare County Council (CCC) appointed Arup to undertake a geohazard assessment of the concept design for a proposed Cliffs of Moher Loop Walkway that included the 1km sections to the north and south of the COME. The study area for that assessment roughly corresponds to Chainage 4100 to Chainage 8000 in this Management Plan.

That report concluded that failures are occurring in both the soil and rock along the entire cliff face at the Cliffs of Moher. Soil failures were attributed to unstable angles of the residual shale soil, while rock failures were attributed to ongoing wave, wind and rain erosion, resulting in undercutting of the rock mass and widening of major joint sets.

The Arup report considered the proposed route of the Cliffs of Moher Loop Walkway and recommended that the loop be moved away from the headland at Aillenasharragh due to significant public safety concerns and this recommendation was accepted by Clare County Council, who moved the loop inland (corresponding to Chainage 4100 to Chainage 5250 on the current route).

North of the Visitor's Centre, Arup recommended moving the Coastal Walk some 25m inland due to significant erosion and undercutting of the cliff face. It is noted that, as of February 2025, these lands are in the process of being transferred to Clare County Council to facilitate the future development of the Cliffs of Moher Experience, which would allow Clare County Council to act on Arup's recommendations and move the trail inland in this location.

Immediately south of the Visitor's Centre (approximately from Chainage 4100 to Chainage 8000 in this Management Plan) Arup identified undercutting and recommended moving the Coastal Walk some 20m inland. More significantly Arup recommended moving the trail some 60m inland around the Southern Viewpoint (around Chainage 7750) due to the presence of a sea cave.

The conclusions reached in the Arup report cover Chainage 4100 to Chainage 8000 cover 34% of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. It is likely that a detailed geotechnical assessment of the remaining 66% of the Coastal Walk, and in particular elevated portions, would highlight similar risks, as the rock formation is reasonably consistent along the full length of the Coastal Walk.

It is recommended that a detailed geotechnical assessment of the remainder of the Coastal Walk be undertaken to quantify this risk.



6.7 EXISTING VISITOR SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Visitor Safety Management Plan prepared for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk in 2018 (ref: Section 2.1) sub-divided the Coastal Walk into three zones:

- Highly Developed Zone (i.e. part of the COME area, Zone A in this Management Plan)
- Moderately Developed Zone (Zone B in this Management Plan)
- Lightly Developed Zone (Zone C in this Management Plan)

The plan includes a number of actions in respect of providing accessibility for disabled users.

A number of the actions listed in the plan have been completed by either CLDC or others, including adding emergency location references to the waymarks on the path. Other key actions are not yet commenced.

The plan also recognises the need for a geotechnical survey of the Moderately Developed Zone and on places where the path is very close to the cliff edge. This has been discussed under Rock and Soil Integrity above.

6.8 LOCALISED GROUND FISSURES (AWAY FROM CLIFF EDGE)

A previous geotechnical survey (2019) identified a number of deep fissures in an area 45m back from the cliff edge, over a 100m stretch from Chainage 5300 to Chainage 5400. These fissures are evident from the overhead view below (2024) and seem to be the result of water running down a steep embankment to the north and causing scouring below the surface.

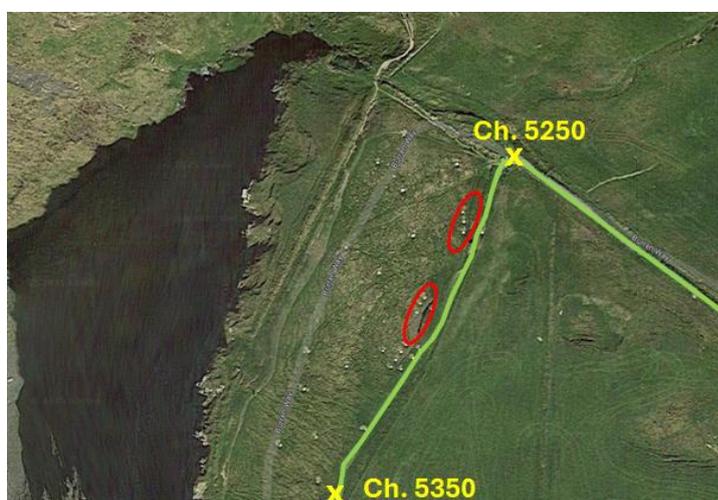


Figure 6-4: Localised Ground Fissures (map)

These fissures are over 1.5m deep in places (in the background in the photo below) and currently constitute a safety risk to walkers. One incident occurred during 2024 where a child fell in to one of these fissures and had to be extracted.



Figure 6-5: Localised Ground Fissures (photo)

6.9 GEOPARK INFORMATION NOTE ON GEOHAZARD

An Information Note issued by the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark lists a number of geohazards that apply to the Cliffs of Moher. The Information Note references the following geohazards:

- Tsunamis. While the likelihood of this is low, there is some evidence that a 1755 earthquake off the coast of Portugal triggered a tsunami, with resulting waves travelling north and striking the south and western coast of Ireland
- Rockfalls and landslides. The Information Note states that most landslides in the Geopark are considered happen along the coast, with minor rockfalls common along the Cliffs of Moher.

Information and photos on the Geopark website points to a number of historical landslides along the Cliffs of Moher, including in the summer of 2016, as evidenced by the photo below.



Figure 6-6: Landslide along the Cliffs in 2016 (source, Burren Geopark)

6.10 SAFETY CONCERNS RAISED IN SPORT IRELAND AUDITS

As discussed above, in recent years two Sport Ireland audits have been carried out. A total of 39 safety issues were identified in the August 2024 audit, a full copy of which is included in **Appendix A**. In summary, Sport Ireland concluded that:

there was evidence that walkers were leaving the official trail whether deliberately ignoring the multiple warnings and engaging in risky behaviour, or inadvertently because the distinction between the official and unofficial routes was unclear.

Given the unsuitability of this trail for the type of user it is attracting, the increase in volume of visitors accessing the trail at any one time and the dangerous/risky behaviour witnessed during inspection in spite of the numerous warning signs at all trailheads and at multiple locations along the trail, it is recommended that the entire trail be closed immediately in order to facilitate any upgrading works necessary to make the trail safe.

In September 2025, Sport Ireland clarified the status of the trail by adding:

Due to the large volume of visitors on the trail at the visitor centre and the high quality of that trail section, we understand that the Clare Local Development Company may choose to keep open those sections of trail with no outstanding safety issues beyond the stated 30-day issue resolution time limit, while conducting repairs on other, closed, sections. If sections of the trail are closed, it is important that all reasonable efforts are made to prevent access to the trail, and members of the public are notified of the closure and made aware of the risks of trespassing.

As stated earlier, for a trail to remain on the National Trails Register it must meet minimum requirements, one of which is that there must be no safety issues on the trail.

6.11 FUTURE TRAIL ALIGNMENT

Any discussion on the optimum route of the future Coastal Walk will include both geohazard considerations, and amenity considerations.

Moving the trail inland in certain areas would result in partial loss of visual amenity and would detract from one of the defining features of the Cliffs of Moher. Arup suggested that a number of elevated platforms be provided on sections where the trail is moved inland.

Further discussions with Clare County Council are required to establish whether the detailed geotechnical assessment needs to be extended to include the entire trail, and what actions would arise if similar geohazard risks were identified.

For the purposes of this Management Plan, and in the absence of a detailed geotechnical assessment of the entire route, the future trail alignment has been taken to be the current alignment, which has already been amended to take account of significant issues north of Surfer's Path. The only additional deviation from the current alignment would be from Chainage 5300 to Chainage 5400 (as discussed above) to avoid known areas of deep fissures.

6.12 SUMMARY OF SAFETY CONCERNS

A large body of data is now to hand in relation to safety issues on the Coastal Walk. This includes issues identified in:

- The Arup Geohazard Report, 2023 (covering Chainage 4100 to Chainage 8000)
- Sport Ireland audits (2019 and 2024)
- Reports from two fatalities during 2024
- Burren Geopark information on historical landslides
- The Walkover Audits undertaken as part of this Management Plan

In the table overleaf, the main themes arising from all of these data sources are presented, and a commentary provided on each hazard.



Table 6-2: Summary of Safety Issues

Risk Ref.	Hazard	Risk/Consequence	Interaction with Risk Ref.	Comment
1	Unprotected cliff edge	Walkers falling from height, fatality	4	Areas close to the Visitor's Centre (Zones A and B) have been upgraded to provide adequate edge protection, but areas in Zone C remain largely unprotected
2	Inadequacy of current edge protection	Walkers falling from height, fatality	-	Some areas in Zone C have elements of edge protection, but this is considered inadequate and needs to be upgraded
3	Slips, trips and falls	Walkers falling, injury	-	Areas that have been upgraded (ref: Table 6.1), enjoy an excellent trail surface. Other areas have a poor surface, exacerbated in places by poor drainage
4	Instability of soil and rock	Walkers falling from height, fatality	1	Previous geohazard assessments have highlighted areas of concern between Chainage 4100 and Chainage 8000. A detailed geohazard assessment of the remainder of the trail is required to establish the geohazard risk elsewhere.
5	Localised fissures	Walkers falling, injury	4	The deep fissures that have opened up 45m back from the cliff edge from Chainage 5300 to Chainage 5400 present a risk to walkers and a trail reroute is required in this area.

6.13 EDGE PROTECTION

Many of the safety concerns highlighted in previous reports relate to a lack of edge protection along long stretches of the Coastal Walk. Again, it is noted that the provision of edge protection is not mandatory for cliff edge walking trails, and there are many examples of unprotected cliff edges on designated walking trails around the world.

What makes this Coastal Walk different is:

- the high number of visitors using the trail
- the sense that better views are possible closer to the edge
- the poor condition of the trail in some areas
- the risk of soil and rock collapse in some areas

The Sport Ireland audit in August 2024 makes the following comment in relation to the unprotected cliff edge:

Most of the walkers observed to be using the trail at the time of inspection were holiday makers and day trippers often family groups with very young children unprepared either mentally or physically (with appropriate hiking gear including adequate footwear) for the dangers on this exposed and unprotected cliff edge walk



Any of the sections of the trail that have already been upgraded are either inland or have had edge protection provided, as shown in the table below.

Table 6-3: Edge Protection Status of Previously Upgraded Sections

Section	Chainage	Type	Edge Protection
6	3980 to 5400	Inland	Trail diverted inland, edge protection not required
8	5500 to 6170 (O'Brien's Tower)	Along cliff edge, protected	Edge protection provided, mix of stone wall and 1.1 to 1.3m high flagstones
9	6170 to 6840	COME, owned by Clare County Council	Edge protection provided
10	6840 to 7970	Along cliff edge, protected	Edge protection provided, 1.6m high flagstones

There remains a total of 5350m of trail without edge protection (47% of the trail length), in the following sections.

Table 6-4: Areas Without Edge Protection

Section	Chainage	Type
2	1070 to 1850	Along cliff edge, unprotected
3	1850 to 2660	Along cliff edge, unprotected
5	3150 to 3980	Along cliff edge, unprotected, with inland sections
11	7970 to 9550	Along cliff edge, unprotected
12	9550 to 10900 (Hags Head)	Along cliff edge, unprotected

It is recommended that all future trail upgrades, where the trail runs along the cliff edge, incorporate a barrier as edge protection.

In terms of the height of this barrier, there are no applicable standards for edge protection in Sport Ireland Outdoors *Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland* as that document was not written specifically for elevated trails. For this reason, guidance on the height of barrier must be taken from comparable standards.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland specify pedestrian barrier heights of 1.3m to over 2.0m depending on the application, while other agencies specify barrier heights from 1.2m for low-risk sites to 2.4m for full security fencing. In the absence of a definitive standard, 1.6m could be adopted as a suitable height for barriers along the Cliffs of Moher to provide safety to walkers but retain the visual amenity that makes the cliffs so iconic.

There are several ways of providing 1.6m high barriers, including:



- Liscannor flagstones, inclined at approximately 10 degrees off-vertical
- An earthen berm (similar to that which exists in certain areas along the trail)
- A suitable unclimbable fencing system

Liscannor flagstones are the most visually appealing option and have been installed in certain areas close to the COME. These are a costly option however and are also prone to structural damage during high winds, as is evident from the damage shown below as a result of Storm Eowyn.



Figure 6-7: Damage to Liscannor Flagstones During Storm Eowyn

6.14 TRAIL INSPECTIONS

For a trail to remain on the *National Trails Register*, it must be regularly inspected to confirm that it achieves the required standard.

Sport Ireland *Management Standards for Recreational Trails* states the following requirement in respect of inspections:

[there should be in place] plans for routine inspections on the trail to be carried out at least twice annually. Inspections will check for safety and maintenance issues and where a site of environmental, archaeological or architectural interest is on the route, it should be examined for damage potentially caused by trail users. The plan must detail who will carry out inspections and when.

Sport Ireland Outdoors *Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland* states the following requirement in respect of inspections:

Trail infrastructure can change over time due to weather, wear and tear and other reasons and a hazard which was not present when a trail was originally developed may arise or an existing hazard may become more significant over time and require action. To ensure the ongoing safety of a trail, regular inspections must be part of the Trail Management Plan. This is a key element of risk management.

Both of the above requirements apply to any recreational trail. Clearly there is an increased risk on the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk compared to inland trails.

On an interim basis and pending a detailed geotechnical assessment that will establish geohazard risk and the future trail alignment, it is recommended that trail inspections be carried out weekly. In addition to the normal criteria included in any trail inspection, for the Coastal Walk these inspections should include:

- Changes in soil and rock stability
- New localised fissures, or changes to existing fissures
- Areas of poor drainage (following heavy rainfall)
- Damage to barriers

Planning of inspections should recognise that the environment at the Cliffs of Moher is dynamic, and changes are frequent, in particular following extreme weather events. The trail should also be inspected following extreme weather events.



7. WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

7.1 REQUIREMENTS OF THE BRIEF

The Brief for this study included a review of existing signage and the development of proposals for the improvement of signage along the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. Proposals are to include the following categories of signs:

- Entrance information signs
- Directional signage
- Waymarking
- Location marking
- Road safety signage
- Advisory signs

In broad terms, there are two discrete considerations in relation to wayfinding signage:

- The adequacy of signage to the trail (how to find the trail, and get access onto it)
- The adequacy of signage along the trail (once on the trail, how users obtain the information that they need)

Sport Ireland Outdoors *Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland* discusses waymarking on trails under three headings:

- *Warning signage*, as required
- *Information signage*, at trailheads on Information Boards and at key features
- *Directional signage*, at changes of direction and temporary diversions

A Wayfinding Plan (included in **Appendix C**) has been developed to outline proposals for enhancement of signage under each of these categories. To inform that Wayfinding Plan, an examination of the adequacy of existing signage was undertaken.

7.2 WAYFINDING ISSUES PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED

Previous reports have highlighted inadequacies in relation to signage at the Cliffs of Moher. As discussed earlier, The *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan* identifies issues with signage in the general area and mentions confusion in relation to the Coastal Walk signage.

The *Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy* includes an assessment of signage at the Cliffs of Moher Experience, and it is not intended to repeat the finding of that assessment here as they relate mainly to the Cliffs of Moher Experience and not the Coastal Walk. The *Strategy* mentions that visitors sometimes go straight to the cliffs (which can either be within the COME, or onto the Coastal Walk outside the COME). It states that external signage is inconsistent in presentation and displayed in a piecemeal fashion.



More specifically, in relation to the Coastal Walk, The Strategy states that:

Walking within the region will be promoted through an improved Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and enhanced connectivity to other waymarked routes, including the Burren Way. Improved signage and information will be developed at the access points to the Coastal Walk between Doolin, the Cliffs of Moher, Liscannor and Lahinch. Links will also be developed with transport services, including the proposed Cliffs of Moher park and ride shuttles, to provide greater opportunities and flexibility for visitors wishing to explore the wider area on foot. The proposed looped bus service will enable visitors to hop on and off the bus at multiple locations, thereby facilitating people seeking to walk the length of the Coastal Walk before returning to their starting point by bus.

In their August 2024 trail audit, Sport Ireland identified a total of 6 significant issues and 27 safety issues in respect of signage. The details noted can be read in the audit report in **Appendix A**.

7.3 SIGNAGE AND BRAND IDENTITY

As part of the *Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy*, a new Cliffs of Moher logo and brand guidelines were developed, as shown below.

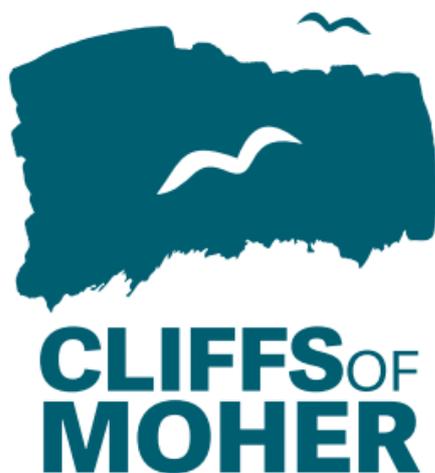


Figure 7-1: Official Cliffs of Moher logo

As discussed earlier, in general visitors do not differentiate between the two constituent parts of the Cliffs of Moher 'amenity' (the *Cliffs of Moher Experience*, and the *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk*), they are all part of the visitor attraction at the cliffs. For this reason, and if the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is to be managed as some point in time by Clare County Council as part of the overall amenity at the cliffs (see Chapter 12), it is recommended to base any future signage on this new logo.

7.4 EXISTING SIGNAGE ONTO THE TRAIL

7.4.1 Entrance Signage from the Cliffs of Moher Experience

The vast majority of users access the coastal walk from the Visitor's Centre at the Cliffs of Moher Experience. It is estimated that this accounts for an estimated 80% of users of the walk. For this reason, it is important that signage at the Visitor's Centre referencing the walk is clear, unambiguous and appropriate.

The key criteria for such signage are that:

- the overall 'Cliffs of Moher' experience includes the option of walking the cliffs, in either direction away from the Visitor's Centre
- the coastal walk extends a considerable distance north (6km) and south (4.5km) of the Visitor's Centre
- the coastal walk is challenging and is not suitable for all users
- the walk is a linear 'out-and-back' trail (as opposed to a looped walk)
- there are shorter-length options available, in particular south to the Southern Viewpoint

At present, signage at the Cliffs of Moher Experience is dominated by aspects other than the walk and it is difficult to identify the start points of the walk. The exit points from the Cliffs of Moher Experience, onto the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk (which technically runs through the Visitor's Centre area) are clearly marked.



Figure 7-2: Official COMCW Signage at Entrance from COME

7.4.2 Entrance Signage from Other Access Points

Walkers that do not access the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk from the Visitor's Centre (i.e. an estimated 20% of all users), generally access the Coastal Walk at either:

- Hags Head
- Doolin

It is possible to access the walk at other intermediate points, but this is constrained by a lack of parking facilities.

These two 'terminal' points are different from each other. At Hags Head parking is available at a privately operated car park. There is no official Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk signage at this car park but the route to the cliffs along the roadway is obvious. A further 570m along roadway, an official Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk sign has been erected, as shown below.



Figure 7-3: Official COMCW Signage at Hags Head

At Doolin, the exact start point of the walk is less clear. The official start of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is at the Doolin Community Centre located 1.5km north of the bridge at Fisher Street, Doolin. At this location an information board provides a map of the Coastal Walk.

The de-facto start point sign however is the start of the off-road section, approximately 400m south of the bridge at Fisher Street, Doolin. At that location, an official Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk sign has been erected, similar to that at Hags Head shown above.

7.5 EXISTING SIGNAGE ALONG THE TRAIL

7.5.1 Existing Directional Signage

Inadequacies in directional signage are related to a lack of consistency in terminology in respect of the Coastal Walk, as discussed earlier, where the trail is variously referred to as:

- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk*
- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail*
- *The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Path*
- *The Moher Walk*
- *The Doolin to Liscannor Coastal Walk*

At present, other than the entry signs at Hags Head and Doolin, there are no official directional signs along the Coastal Walk. There are a number of small directional signs located along the trail, as shown below, using the following colour system:

- **Yellow**, indicating the Burren Way
- **Red**, indicating the direction of Liscannor or Doolin (taken presumably from The Doolin to Liscannor Coastal Walk)
- **Green**, indicating The Moher Walk (a title which is not explained on any mapping)



Figure 7-4: Existing Directional Signage

7.5.2 Existing Distance Signage

On a linear trail, distance signage can be considered an important sub-set of directional signage.

Currently there is no distance signage or markers along the Coastal Walk, and there is no information for visitors on the distance to key points of the trail. i.e. Southern Viewpoint or Liscannor Trailhead.

On any trail, distance markers are needed:

- To give walkers information on how far they need to walk to reach points of interest (particularly important here given that this is a linear trail over 11.43km long, as opposed to a looped trail)
- To direct emergency services to the location of incidents so that their response can be targeted

Consultation with the key stakeholders, including emergency services such as the Coast Guard highlighted that there is an urgent need for signage to pinpoint locations on the Coastal Walk.

In response to the concerns around a lack of location markers on the walk, Clare County Council, as an interim step, and in consultation with the emergency services, proposed a temporary solution consisting of a colour coded system that divided the walk into discrete zones. These zones were generally dictated by access locations, with the colour changing at each access point. Marker plates consist of circular colour markers are mounted on fence posts, as shown below.



Figure 7-5: Existing Colour Coding 'Zone' Markers

Mapping showing these colour zones is available to the emergency services (as that was the intended purpose), but the system has not yet been adopted for users of the Coastal Walk.

7.5.3 Existing Safety Signage

Given the risks associated with a trail along a largely unprotected cliff edge, it is clear that safety signage is one of the most important categories of signage. The Sport Ireland August 2024 audit identified a total of 27 safety issues related to signage.

It should also be said however, that signage should not be relied upon to keep walkers safe. Simply erecting a sign warning users of a risk is not sufficient in isolation, and it should always be assumed that a user will not see a sign.

There is also the possibility of *Cluster Sign Blindness*, where too many safety signs are installed together causing confusion (exacerbated by a failure to remove temporary signs or old signs), or *Familiarity Sign Blindness*, where seeing the same sign multiple times results in the sign losing its impact.

In high-risk areas, the risks also have to be mitigated through edge protection or similar.

Through an assessment of previous reports, the Sport Ireland August 2024 audit, and the Walkover Audit undertaken as part of this Management Plan, a number of inadequacies in respect of safety signage are evident:

- In many locations, and in particular remote from the COME, it is unclear where the alignment of the approved trail lies
- The safety signs at exit points from the COME do not set out a system for designating the approved trail
- Some safety signs are too low and could be missed by walkers
- Safety signs have no unified appearance and are missing clear branding (such as the new Cliffs of Moher logo)
- Safety signs are not designed to an internationally recognised iconography



Figure 7-6: Safety Sign at Exit from COME area (sample)



Figure 7-7: Safety Sign at Start of Off-Road Section at Doolin end

7.5.4 Information Signage

This assessment has found that there is a lack of clear mapping at the key entry points to the Coastal Walk.

The only available mapping at the Visitor's Centre, which is where the majority of visitors start the walk, is limited to a small A4 printout at the main desk.

Information Boards specific to the Coastal Walk are located at:

- the Moher GAA grounds (difficult to read as it is behind a wall)
- at Doolin Community Centre
- outside the Visitor's Centre

There are no other Information Boards along the Coastal Walk, which is unusual given the iconic nature of the cliffs. It is assumed that this dearth of Information Boards results from the hybrid management model, where Clare County Council operate the COME but not the remainder of the Coastal Walk. The lack of information boards also arises from the fact that statutory permissions may be required for such display boards in environmentally sensitive areas.

In addition, while the Cliffs of Moher are a main Geosite of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Geopark, the Coastal Walk does not include any Geopark Information Boards outside of the COME area.

The Wayfinding Plan discussed below includes proposals in respect of the provision of additional Information Boards.

7.6 WAYFINDING PLAN

To enhance wayfinding and signage along the Coastal Walk, a Wayfinding Plan has been developed and included in **Appendix C**.

This Wayfinding Plan broadly includes the following concepts:

- Clear mapping, to align the information online to that on the ground
- Use of consistent branding, based on the new Cliffs of Moher logo
- Putting in place waymarkers to make it clear to visitors where they are on the trail ('You Are Here'), how far it is to the next key viewpoint, and how long that should take
- The use of internationally recognised iconography for safety signage
- Decluttering of existing signage
- Making safety signage more prominent
- Zone Designation (see discussion below)
- Chainages/distance markers

In relation to Zone Designation, it is recommended to create a unique reference for any point along the Cliff of Moher Coastal Walk. There are a number of options for this:

- Using the recently developed zone colours, as set out in the Wayfinding Plan
- Using the distance marker (chainage) system used in this Management Plan (zero at Doolin to 11430 at Hags Head). The disadvantage of this approach is that most visitors start at the Visitor's Centre, and would expect that to constitute Distance Marker Zero
- Using a distance marker system with zero at the Visitor's Centre, and running to 6160 north (N6160) and 4580 south (S4580)
- A hybrid of these, or a system incorporating both coloured zones and distances



8. TRAIL UPGRADE, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

8.1 CURRENT MAINTENANCE MODEL

The current maintenance model for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is a hybrid model, which reflects the fact that Clare County Council and CLDC are responsible for maintenance of different parts of the Coastal Walk.

In terms of maintenance of the trail there are three distinct zones:

- **Zone A.** This comprises the 1000m of trail owned and operated by Clare County Council, based around the Cliffs of Moher Experience (COME). Clare County Council are fully responsible for the operation and maintenance of the trail in this zone.
- **Zone B.** This comprises the 'shoulder areas' immediately north (1.6km) and south (1.1km) of the Clare County Council owned area. This zone is owned by 6 separate landowners and was the subject of upgrade works in 2020 managed by Clare County Council in collaboration with Clare Local Development Company (CLDC). As the designated Trail Managers, CLDC have responsibility for trail maintenance in this zone through the Walks Scheme (discussed later), however the area is in effect maintained by Clare County Council through a maintenance contract with a local service provider.
- **Zone C.** This comprises the remainder of the trail (8.1km) north and south of Zone B areas, and includes lands owned by 28 landowners. Clare Local Development Company have responsibility for trail maintenance in this zone.



8.2 CURRENT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS (ZONE B)

Operation and maintenance expenditure data provided by Clare County Council for the period July 2022 to May 2023, for Zone B (the 'shoulder areas' immediately north and south of the COME), and excluding temporary payments to landowners under various agreements, indicates an expenditure of approximately €210,000 over this period (over and above the spend of €500,000 on trail upgrades through ORIS funding).

Assuming that this expenditure is representative of a normal year, this would indicate an expenditure of approximately €60,000 per year (just under €30,000 per km per year).

8.3 CURRENT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS (ZONE C)

It is difficult to establish current operational costs for the portion of the Coastal Walk operated by CLDC.

As discussed earlier, the total annual Participant Payments for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, under the current Walks Scheme, amount to €28,370 (€2,400 per km). This however is not the true operation and maintenance cost of Zone C as it does not take account of CLDC management costs and other incidentals.

The annual cost to CLDC for operating the Coastal Walk is of the order of €17,200, while local contractor maintenance totalled €60,000 over the last five years.

8.4 ALTERNATIVE NORTHERN TRAIL ROUTE

All of the discussion to date on future maintenance needs assumes that the route of the future coastal walk follows the existing trail route. ORIS funding has been granted for Sections 3, 4 and 5 (see Table 6.2), but these upgrades have not yet commenced.

It is noted that an old road from Doolin to Liscannor ran along the route shown in the image below and was still in use in the early part of the 20th century.





Figure 8-1: Old Doolin to Liscannor Road (in yellow)

This old road is still in place and is used by landowners. In most locations the road corridor is approximately 6.5m wide and the foundation of the road seems to be still intact, but the road surface has gradually grassed over. No building has taken place along this corridor, and it would be technically feasible to reconstitute the corridor as part of the Coastal Walk.

While this would represent a significant change to the character of the Coastal Walk in that it would not run along the cliff edge, the route enjoys excellent views of the Aran Islands and would be attractive to walkers. The point at which the Coastal Walk departs from the old road is shown below (Chainage 1070).



Figure 8-2: Old Doolin to Liscannor Road (background) at Chainage 1070



If this old Doolin to Liscannor road is to be used, the necessary upgrades would commence at Chainage 1070 (see photo above) and would continue to Chainage 4240 on the current Coastal Walk alignment, as shown below. The total distance between these two points is 2410m.

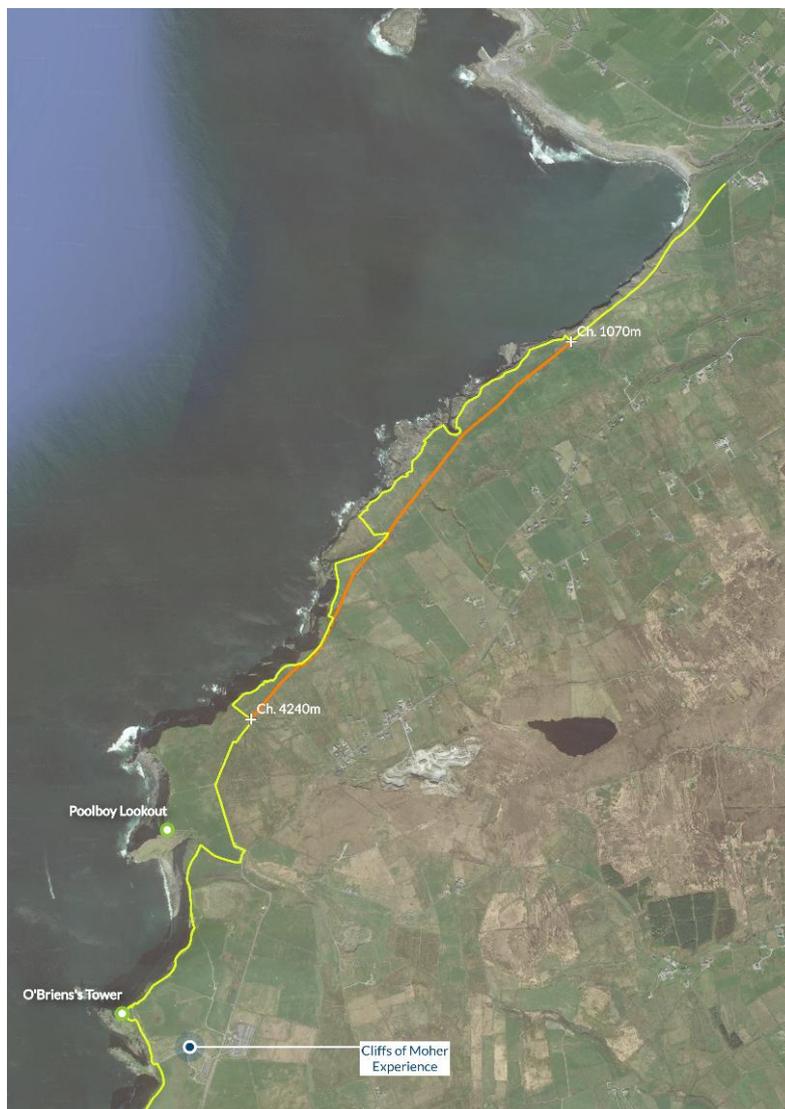


Figure 8-3: Alternative Northern Trail Route

This option would require agreement to be reached with approximately eight landowners along this old road. The repurposing of the old road would involve stripping back the existing surface (with soil moved to the margins) and stoning the corridor over a width of 5m. Farm gates would have to be provided to allow all landowners to cross the corridor.

It would also require delineation as in many places the old stone walls have been removed. Boundary options would include stockproof fencing or rebuilding old dry stones walls.

The total estimated cost would be of the order of €420,000 for the 2.4km length, or approx. €175,000 per km, based on the provision of stockproof fencing.

It is recommended in this northern section of the Coastal Walk to fully move the Coastal Walk inland away from the cliff edge onto the old road from Doolin, and it is noted that part of this old



road is already used for the Coastal Walk. This would future proof the Coastal Walk in this area from coastal erosion risk and the associated high level of maintenance.

8.5 FUTURE TRAIL UPGRADES

As outlined in Chapter 6, various sections of the Coastal Walk have been upgraded under ORIS funding, while ORIS funding has been allocated to other sections but has not yet been spent.

In terms of future upgrades, it is proposed to sub-divide the trail into four upgrade sections, as follows:

- **Section W** (2410m), comprising the trail reroute (inland) along the old Doolin to Liscannor road, as discussed above (Chainage 1070 to Chainage 4240 on the current alignment)
- **Section X** (1200m), comprising the section of trail from Chainage 5010 (the end of recently upgraded section from the interface with the R478 to Chainage 6170 O'Brien's Tower). This section would include the localised trail reroute discussed in Section 6.9, the improvement of the steps from Chainage 5400 to Chainage 5500 (currently awaiting landowner approval), and the widening of the heavily trafficked section of trail from Chainage 5500 to Chainage 6170 (O'Brien's Tower)
- **Section Y** (1130m), comprising the section immediately south of the Visitor's Centre from Chainage 6840 to Chainage 7970. Only 150m of this has been improved to an acceptable width and this section is also heavily trafficked.
- **Section Z**, comprising the remainder of the trail route south from Chainage 7970 to Chainage 11430 Hags Head

These sections are shown in the image below. Sections X and Y can be considered the future *Control Zone*, comprising the heavily trafficked sections, while Sections W and Z lie outside this Control Zone, but are also an integral part of the Coastal Walk.



Figure 8-4: Future Trail Upgrade Sections



8.6 FUTURE TRAIL CROSS SECTIONS

The width, and boundary treatment of the four upgrade sections will be fundamentally different.

Section W will run along the old Doolin to Liscannor road, utilising the existing road corridor. A typical cross-section of this is shown below.

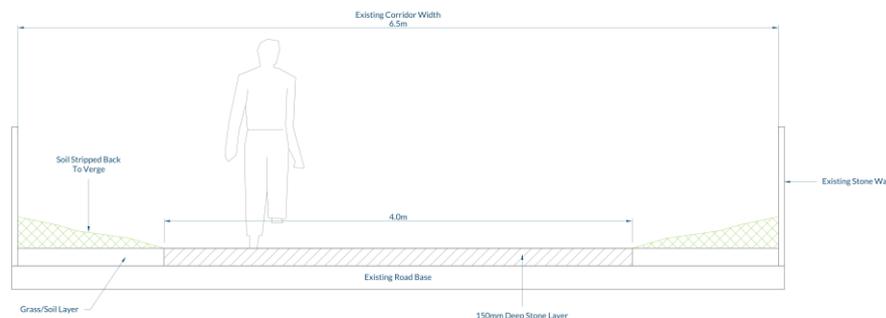


Figure 8-5: Typical Cross-Section (Section W)

Section X and **Section Y** will have similar cross-sections. In these areas the trail is either inland or already has suitable edge protection, and any upgrades would concentrate on providing adequate width for high visitor numbers. A typical cross-section of this is shown below.

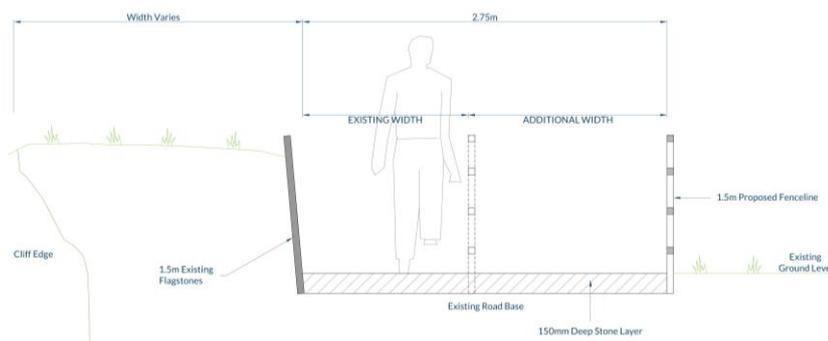


Figure 8-6: Typical Cross-Section (Sections X and Y)

In **Section Z** any upgrades would concentrate on providing edge protection and also adequate width. A typical cross-section of this is shown below.

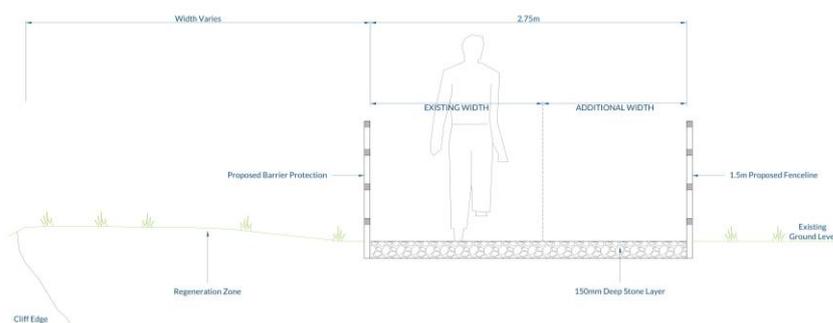


Figure 8-7: Typical Cross-Section (Section Z)



8.7 FUTURE MAINTENANCE NEEDS

The future maintenance needs (and costs) of the Coastal Walk are dependent on a number of key factors:

- The quality to which the trail is to be upgraded
- Whether the northern section of the trail remains along the existing cliff edge alignment, or is moved inland (Section W)
- The proposed trail width
- The type of edge protection to be provided, and the extent of this edge protection
- The type of fencing to be provided
- Who is to undertake maintenance of the trail

All of these aspects are intrinsically linked to the future management model for the trail. This is explored further in Chapter 12. In broad terms however, it is possible to put approximate costs on ongoing trail maintenance. Such maintenance will include:

- Re-stoning of trail surface
- Repairs to edge protection such as flagstones, and replacement of these flagstones
- Repairs to culverts
- Repairs to fencing

An indicative annual budget for such ongoing maintenance is detailed below.

Table 8-1: Future Maintenance Requirements

Ref	Description	Frequency	Frequency (for costing)	Equivalent Annualised Cost per km
1	Re-stoning of trail surface	Reactive: as required, eg. following storm damage Scheduled: minimum 5-year frequency (75mm depth, €5/m ²)	5 years	€3,000
2	Repairs to edge protection	Reactive: as required, eg. following storm damage (€200 per m, assume 10 flagstones replaced per year per km)	As required	€2,000
3	Repairs to culverts	Reactive: as required, (€1000 each, assume 5 repairs per year per km)	As required	€5,000
4	Repairs to fencing	Reactive: as required, (€15 per m, assume 300m repaired per year per km)	As required	€4,500
Total indicative annual maintenance cost per km				€14,500

On this basis, over the full 11.43km of the Coastal Walk the total annual maintenance cost would be approximately €165,000.



8.8 OPERATIONAL PLAN

An Operational Plan for the future operation of the Coastal Walk would establish the detailed requirements of the day-to-day operation of the trail.

This Operational Plan would include aspects such as:

- An assessment of Carrying Capacity
- The frequency of safety inspections
- Protocols for undertaking remedial actions following a safety inspection



9. TRAILHEADS, PARKING AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

9.1 CURRENT TRAILHEADS

The current official trailheads for the Coastal Walk are:

- **Doolin end.** Doolin Community Centre
- **Cliffs of Moher Experience.** At the main visitor car park
- **Liscannor end.** Moher GAA grounds

These trailheads are discussed in turn below.

9.1.1 Doolin Trailhead

The official start of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is at the Doolin Community Centre located 1.5km north of the bridge at Fisher Street and containing 30 parking spaces (see photo below).



Figure 9-1: Doolin Trailhead

Most walkers would consider the vicinity of the bridge at Fisher Street to be the de facto start of the trail, while the 'true' trail starts at the off-road section 400m south-west of the bridge. For this reason, the parking facilities available at Doolin Community Centre are not typically used by walkers on the Coastal Walk.

There are no active counters at the Doolin end of the trail and therefore visitor numbers accessing the trail are unknown. Consultation with stakeholders has suggested that numbers accessing the trail at the Doolin end are considerably lower than those at the COME or at Hags Head. Private guided hiking tours operate successfully from Doolin but otherwise numbers accessing the trail are fairly low.

It is accepted by all stakeholders that parking in Doolin is a major issue, given the popularity of the village. Parking is limited to street parking along Fisher Street, and to off-road parking in the vicinity of the R459/R479 junction close to Hotel Doolin.

At peak times in Doolin, users of the Coastal Walk parking their vehicles in the Fisher Street area can put pressure on available capacity for local businesses as spaces are tied up for extended periods. The parking facilities at the official start of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk at Doolin Community Centre are generally underused, certainly by users of the trail.

9.1.2 Cliffs of Moher Experience Trailhead

As outlined in the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, there is only one car park for visitors to the COME, located across the road on the eastern side of the R478. This car park has capacity for approximately 480 vehicles.



Figure 9-2: Cliffs of Moher Experience Trailhead

Coach parking is located on the western side of the R478 at the COME and can accommodate 28 vehicles.

Historically, parking was a significant issue in the vicinity of the entrance, with uncontrolled parking along the R478. In recent years this has been somewhat alleviated through the provision of:

- A left turn lane into the COME for northbound traffic (mainly coaches)
- A right turn lane into the COME for southbound traffic (mainly coaches)
- A right turn lane into the Main Car Park for northbound traffic (mainly cars)
- Double yellow lines along the R478

The Cliffs of Moher Experience has put in place a pre-booking system for coaches, which has helped to reduce pressure on both parking and indeed visitor numbers at peak times.

Notwithstanding the above improvements, the volume of traffic at peak times is such that tailbacks are still experienced along the R478 and Traffic Wardens are employed seasonally to manage traffic on the R478.

There is a lack of transport alternatives to private cars and coaches. The remoteness of the amenity means that measures to provide for cyclists, while important, will always have a limited effect on reducing private car or coach use.

Clare County Council has in recent years made efforts to plan and develop Park and Ride facilities to alleviate transport issues at peak times. At the time of writing these initiatives are still pending.

9.1.3 Liscannor Trailhead (Moher GAA)

At the Liscannor end of the trail, the official trailhead is at the Moher GAA grounds and there are approximately 18 parking spaces available along the edge of the public road at this location (foreground of the photo below). The main car park in the GAA grounds is not available for public parking and the gates of the facility are generally locked.



Figure 9-3: Liscannor Trailhead at Moher GAA (parking in foreground)

9.2 CLIFFS OF MOHER 2040 STRATEGY

The *Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy* provides a comprehensive review of access and parking issues at the Cliffs of Moher. It highlighted a number of issues in respect of transport and access at the Cliffs of Moher Experience. Some of the key points raised include:

- A dominance of Fully Independent Travellers (FiTs) accessing the cliffs in private cars
- Pressure on the main car park during peak times, with cars backed up on the narrow R478.
- Lack of adequate road infrastructure in this part of County Clare
- Lack of active travel options to the cliffs, noting cyclists' concerns during peak times
- Limited bus options
- Heavy reliance on carbon intensive modes of transport

It was also projected that average visitor dwell time would increase from 120mins to 180mins through improvements in the facilities at the COME, further increasing pressure on parking capacity during peak times.

The Strategy stated that improving access to the Cliffs of Moher will require a more strategic and proactive approach to traffic management at the site. The key recommendations of the Strategy in respect of transport and parking were:

- An overall aim to reduce visitors arriving at the site by car by 50% during peak times.
- The establishment of a new park and ride hub to address additional parking demand caused by extended dwell times. This would operate during peak and shoulder seasons. Pre-booking would be required.

Two intended locations were identified for Park and Ride Hubs, one north to serve traffic from Galway and one south to serve traffic from Ennis, Limerick and Dublin. These hubs will be served by a shuttle bus with stops serving towns and villages in north Clare.

The chosen Park and Ride Hubs would be served by a shuttle bus powered by sustainable fuel. The shuttle bus would operate along the R478 and have a number of intermediate stops, including Lahinch and Liscannor.

9.3 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT POLICY AND CONTEXT

Sustainable transport is enshrined in international, national and regional policy.

At an international level, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) were adopted by Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, as shown in the graphic below.



Figure 9-4: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Specifically, Sustainable Development Goal 13 Climate Action requires initiatives to reduce carbon in the transportation sector.

At a national level, Ireland’s first Climate Action Plan (2019) set out a ‘roadmap’ comprised of 183 actions to achieve net zero carbon energy system by 2050, and in the process, create a



resilient, vibrant and sustainable country. The Climate Action Plan was updated most recently in May 2024, and now sets a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050.

In terms of providing investment for transportation initiatives, the modal hierarchy set out under the *National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland* (NIFTI), prioritises Active Travel first, Public Transport second and private vehicles third, as shown below.



Figure 9-5: NIFTI Modal Hierarchy

9.4 CYCLING

As per the *National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland* (discussed above), investment in Active Travel is prioritised first, then Public Transport, and lastly for private vehicles.

The *Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy* identified a lack of active travel options to the cliffs. This point is as relevant to the Coastal Walk as it is to the Visitor’s Centre.

Eurovelo is a network of 17 approved cycle routes that connect the continent. Eurovelo 1 (Atlantic Coast Route) runs south from Doolin along the R478 to a point 800m north of the Visitor’s Centre before continuing east. Loop 2 of the North Clare Cycling Route continues along the R478 past the Visitor’s Centre, as shown below.



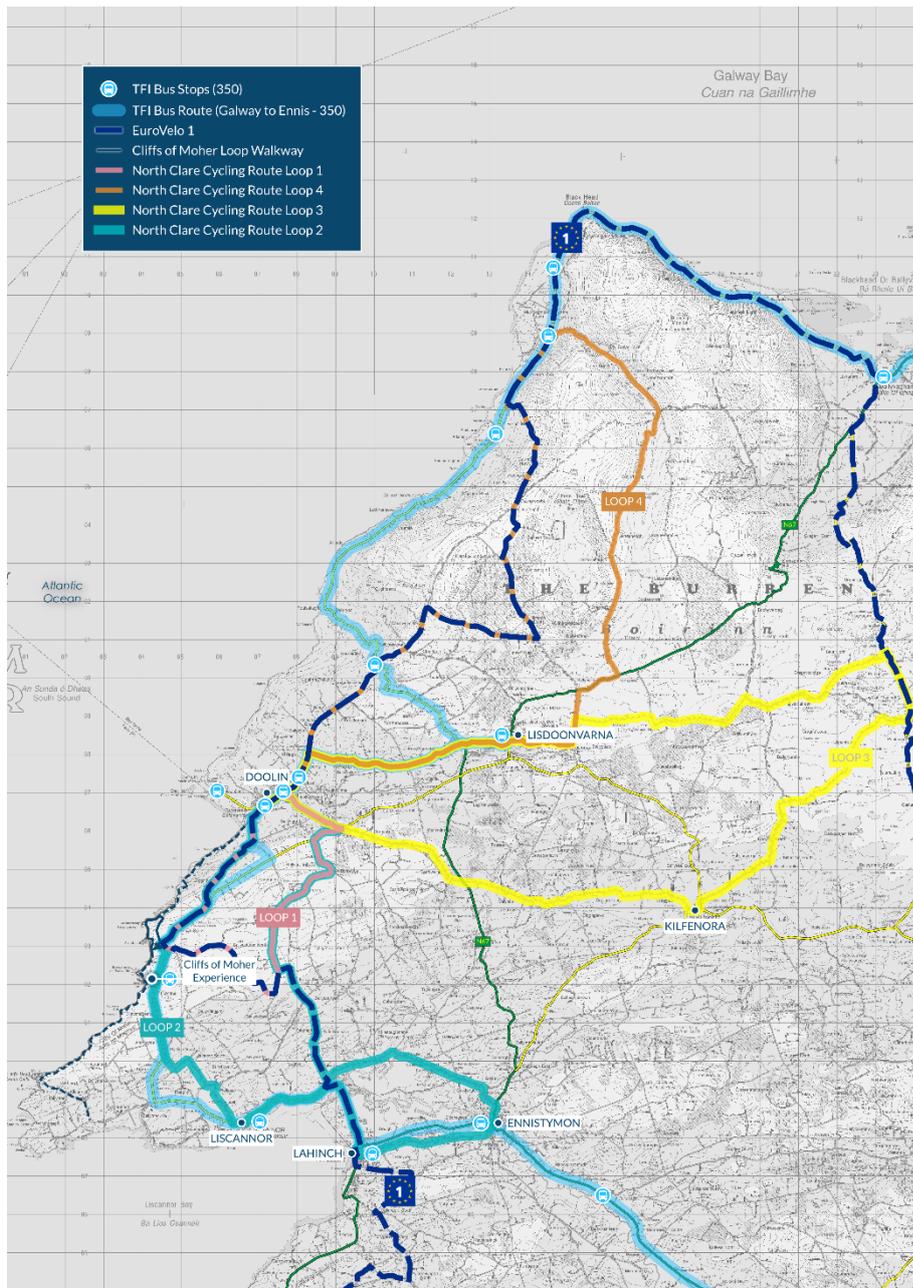


Figure 9-6: Cycling and Bus Routes in North Clare

The remoteness of the amenity means that measures to provide for cyclists, while important, will always have a limited effect on reducing private car or coach use. Nevertheless, initiatives to encourage active travel modes for visitors to the Coastal Walk should be encouraged, and certainly and future development proposals for the Cliffs of Moher Experience should incorporate facilities for cyclists.

It is recommended that facilities for cyclists be provided at other access points to the Coastal Walk, in particular at Liscannor Trailhead (Moher GAA) and Doolin Trailhead.

It is recommended that facilities should consist of the ancillary infrastructure for cyclists set out in the DTTS Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines. At both Liscannor



(Moher GAA) and Doolin, and given the relatively remote nature and low security risk of these locations, this should include only the following:

- Bike stands (uncovered)
- Bike repair station

9.5 UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENTS AT HAGS HEAD

At Hags Head, approximately 700m north-west of the official trailhead at Moher GAA, an unauthorised car park is privately operated.

This car park was granted a 5-year planning permission in 2014 by Clare County Council, under Planning Reference 14149. Condition 2 of that grant required the car park to be returned to its former use after a period of 5 years. In 2019 an application for the continued operation of the car park was submitted under Planning Reference 19334. Permission for a further 3 years for 20 parking spaces was subsequently granted by Clare County Council. This permission lapsed in June 2022.

There is also a separate unauthorised car park at the cliff edge, approximately 750m north-east of Hags Head. This was developed to support the operation of a humanist wedding ceremony business and has been in operation for several years. This is not considered to be publicly available parking as the car park is only operated during these wedding ceremonies. In 2019 a retention planning application was submitted by the operator to retain this car park and associated access road (approx. 900m long). This application was deemed invalid by Clare County Council. The continued operation of this car park is therefore currently not in compliance with planning regulations.

9.6 UNCONTROLLED PARKING ON LOCAL ROADS

There is a growing issue with uncontrolled parking west of the R478, south of the COME, at Slievenageeragh (see image below) and locations further south.

During peak times in particular, uncontrolled parking occurs on the verges of local roads in this area and access the cliffs either along local roads or in some cases across fields. This is causing considerable concern amongst the local community.

This uncontrolled parking has a number of drivers:

- A small number of visitors avoiding the paid admission at the COME
- Information shared on social media pointing visitors to this area and the option of avoiding parking charges at the COME
- The close proximity of these local roads to the highest points of the cliffs. In some places it is less than 400m from the local road to the cliffs.



Figure 9-7: Local Road at Slievenageeragh (location of uncontrolled parking)

In response to these concerns Clare County Council has tried to control parking by erecting No Parking signage and by employing Traffic Wardens during peak season. This has had some effect, but the problem persists at peak times.

9.7 PARK AND RIDE

9.7.1 Background

In developing proposals for sustainable transport for the Coastal Walk, it is recommended to base any proposals on the recommendations of the overarching strategy for the *Cliff of Moher Strategy 2040* given that the majority of users access the Coastal Walk at the Cliffs of Moher Experience. For this reason, the concept of a Park and Ride service is a key aspect of the future operation of the Coastal Walk.

Over the last number of years, the concept of a Park and Ride (P+R) service, or a shuttle service, for the cliffs has been examined as part of different initiatives.

9.7.2 Park and Ride Proposals in the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040

The P+R proposals outlined in the *Cliff of Moher Strategy 2040* envisaged hubs north and south of the Cliffs of Moher Experience. To date this has not progressed in this exact format but has to some extent been incorporated into the Clare County Council shuttle proposals outlined below.

9.7.3 Interim Shuttle Proposal

Clare County Council, under the Traffic and Transport Plan for North Clare, has plans to operate a hop on hop off shuttle for the summers of 2025 and 2026 on a pilot basis from towns and villages in the hinterland of the Cliffs of Moher.

This proposal is being tendered in two lots:

- Lot 1 Local Service (serving Liscannor and Doolin):
 - Route 1: Liscannor to the Cliffs of Moher Experience, leaving Liscannor generally every half hour starting at 09:00
 - Route 2: Doolin to the Cliffs of Moher Experience, leaving Doolin generally every hour starting at 09:00
- Lot 2 Regional Service (serving Kilfenora, Lisdoonvarna, Lahinch and Milltown Malbay):
 - Route 1: Leaving Kilfenora three times each day, and leaving Lisdoonvarna generally every 55 mins
 - Route 2: Leaving Milltown Malbay generally every 80mins, and leaving Lahinch generally every 80mins

The service would operate over June, July and August, with an option to operate also over May and September.

The service includes the provision of informative commentary for visitors.



9.7.4 Assessment of Clare County Council Shuttle Proposals

The two main *gateways* to the Cliffs of Moher are Lisdoonvarna and Lahinch. Traffic coming from Galway, the Burren and the north of the county passes through Lisdoonvarna, while traffic coming from Ennis/Limerick passes through Lahinch.

The Clare County Council interim shuttle proposals service both of these gateways.

In order for the service to be successful, the travel time from any shuttle bus stop to the Cliffs of Moher Experience needs to be minimised.

The Clare County Council shuttle proposals have the following benefits:

Table 9-1: Benefits of Proposed Shuttle Proposal

Issue / Driver	Benefit
Policy requirements	It supports UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action) by reducing carbon in the transportation sector It is consistent with the Climate Action Plan
Uncontrolled parking	It would alleviate issues associated with uncontrolled parking on local roads south-west of COME by offering an alternative parking option at reasonable cost
Road capacity	It would avoid traffic backing up on the R478 at the main car park at peak times It would take the pressure of the local road network at peak times
Visitor experience	It would provide a more attractive option for foreign visitors who are nervous about driving the narrow roads west of the N67 The shuttle bus would enhance the visitor experience through guided commentary
Local economy	It would increase dwell time in the Park and Ride Hubs

It is recommended that the remote parking hubs proposed north and south of the Cliffs of Moher Experience will be the parking hubs for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, serviced by a shuttle bus to the trailheads.

9.8 BUS ROUTES

As shown in Figure 9-6, the Cliffs of Moher Experience is already served by TFI Bus Route 350, which runs from Galway to Ennis via Doolin, Lisdoonvarna and Ennistymon. This route has a designated stop at the Cliffs of Moher Experience.



10. BIODIVERSITY

10.1 DESIGNATED SITES

10.1.1 Sites of International Importance

The Natura 2000 network is made up of European sites including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) (more generally referred to as the 'Birds Directive') and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (more generally referred to as the 'Habitats Directive'). The Natura 2000 network helps provide for the protection and long-term persistence of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

The Cliffs of Moher is a Special Protection Area (SPA), site code: 004005 under the EU Birds Directive. Qualifying interests include the following species:

- Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)
- Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)
- Guillemot (*Uria aalge*)
- Razorbill (*Alca torda*)
- Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)
- Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*)

The site is of further special conservation interest for hosting over 20,000 breeding seabirds annually. Additional species of interest for this site include the Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) and Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*).

A key conservation objective of this SPA is to restore and maintain this habitat for chough.

The Coastal Walk runs almost over its entire 11.43km length within the SPA (see Figure 10.1). The boundary of the SPA at the northern end of the trail is the start of the Luogh North townland (approximate Chainage 950) and continues unbroken to the headland at Mullaghroe South, 2km south of Hags Head. The SPA boundary extends inland approximately 200 to 300m from the cliff edge, to include foraging areas for the bird species for which it is designated.

10.1.2 Sites of National Importance

Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) are the basic wildlife designation in Ireland. These areas are considered nationally important for the habitats present or contain species of plants and animals whose habitats require protection. Under the Wildlife Act 1976 as amended, NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 and have not since been statutorily proposed or designated.



The Cliffs of Moher is a Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA), site code: 000026 under the Wildlife Act. The boundary of the pNHA generally lies within the SPA boundary but only extends a short distance inland (approx. 10m to 20m).



Figure 10-1: Natura 2000 Sites along the Coastal Walk



10.2 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES RAISED

A meeting was held between TOBIN ecologists and NPWS representatives on 14th May 2024 as part of the development of this Management Plan. The purpose was to discuss any concerns that the NPWS have in relation to the current operation of the Coastal Walk, and to explore the biodiversity requirements that would be associated with any planned upgrade works to the Coastal Walk.

Discussion points at that meeting were as follows:

- There is significant erosion and loss of habitat at the cliff edge along most of the Coastal Walk
- This habitat degradation has increased in recent years due to an increase in visitor numbers
- Habitat degradation has caused pressures on the chough population, which are more affected than the other designated species due to their foraging and habitat preferences near cliff edges. The increase in visitor numbers has resulted in a reduction in availability of foraging ground for chough
- There have been a number of unauthorised developments, including car parks, within the SPA
- Previous trail upgraded have taken place either within the breeding bird season or directly after, increasing pressure on designated species in the SPA
- NPWS suggested that moving the trail inland would be preferable from a biodiversity perspective, although choughs can be disturbed up to 50m from the cliff edge
- NPWS stated that if visitors arrived later and left earlier, that would reduce the disturbance of the chough
- NPWS would be concerned about any proposals to increase visitor numbers on the trail, or any upgrade works that would lead to an increase

10.3 HABITAT DAMAGE AT THE CLIFF EDGE

As discussed earlier, a number of unofficial trails have developed at the cliff edge due to 'walker curiosity' (a sense that better cliff views can be had closer to the edge), and these unofficial trails have caused extensive damage to existing biodiversity, which has accelerated in recent years as numbers on the coastal walk have increased. A good example of this is shown in Figure 6.3.

The cliff-top vegetation includes such species as Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Campion (*Silene vulgaris subsp. maritima*), Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*) and Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*).

Habitat for chough extends inland, up to 50m from the cliff edge and numbers using the Coastal Walk are such that disturbance of chough is difficult to mitigate.

Notwithstanding this, there is a need for these denuded areas to be restored. This is primarily safety driven, as the disappearance of unofficial trails over time will bring walkers back onto the official trail. However, such restoration will have an ancillary benefit in reinstating some of the chough foraging habitat lost over the years.



11. MARKETING

11.1 CONTEXT

The Brief for the preparation of this Management Plan includes the development of proposals on how the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is marketed to ensure there is a local benefit to the towns and villages in Co. Clare.

As stated earlier, the trail owes its popularity to the Cliffs of Moher. Visitors do not differentiate between the *Cliffs of Moher Experience* and the *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk*; they are all part of the visitor attraction at the cliffs.

For this reason, marketing of the Coastal Walk goes hand and hand with marketing of the *Cliffs of Moher Experience*.

11.2 CURRENT MARKETING APPROACH

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk (specifically, as opposed to the Cliffs of Moher) is marketed on the following public websites:

- On the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark website (www.burrengeopark.ie) . The Coastal Walk is normally listed as a walking trail on this site but has been temporarily removed due to its current closure: [Walking & Cycling routes in the Burren | The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark](#)
- As the *Cliffs of Moher Trail*, on the official Cliffs of Moher website (www.cliffsofmoher.ie). The Coastal Walk is listed under the *Beyond the Cliffs* section of this website: [Cliffs of Moher Walk, Cliff Walks Ireland | Cliffs Of Moher](#)
- On the Sport Ireland website, as a National Trail: [Find Your Trails | Sport Ireland](#)
- On the Visit Clare website (Clare County Council), as a listed walking trail: [Activities | County Clare, Ireland](#) (note: the Coastal Walk is not currently listed, pending completion of upgrade works)
- On the Clare Get Sidetracked website [Clare Get Sidetracked ...get sidetracked](#)



11.3 CURRENT ISSUES

One of the key issues associated with marketing of the Coastal Walk is that in some ways visitors consider it to be part of the overall amenity at the Cliffs of Moher, rather than a separate feature. The majority of users of the Coastal Walk enter the trail as an extension of their visit to the *Cliffs of Moher Experience*.

11.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made with respect to marketing of the Coastal Walk:

- Ensure that the official title of *Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk* is used on all documentation, signage and promotional material and that all other titles are discontinued
- Incorporate the new brand identity for the Cliffs of Moher, developed as part of the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Strategy, into all marketing material
- Marketing material produced should aim to educate walkers on all aspects of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, including access points, parking and any closures
- Based on the principle that a Visitor Management Plan will be in place for both the COME and COMCW, clear differentiation must be made between the COME (fully accessible site) and the COMCW (Grade 5 high difficulty walking trail)



12. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT MODEL

12.1 THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

As stated earlier, visitors will not differentiate between the two constituent parts of the overall Cliffs of Moher ‘amenity’ (the Cliffs of Moher Experience/Visitor’s Centre on one hand, and the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk on the other). The entities that manage the two constituent parts are irrelevant to them.

In broad terms, visitors probably have an expectation that the entire amenity is operated by a single entity, given that there is a seamless transition from the Visitor’s Centre to the Coastal Walk and that they only have to pay once to access the entire amenity (for those arriving at the Visitor’s Centre and accessing the Coastal Walk from there)

The current management model of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is not fit for purpose and is less than optimal in many areas, as set out below.

Table 12-1: Inadequacies of the Current Management Model

Element	Inadequacy
Ownership and Responsibilities	<p>CLDC are the designated trail managers, but do not own any lands on the trail.</p> <p>Clare County Council do not own any lands outside of the COME area. They have however engaged in upgrade works on the trail to fulfil their overall public remit in respect of public safety.</p> <p>The trail is privately owned by 36 individual landowners, with plot lengths ranging from 31m to 1265m.</p> <p>It can be concluded that the roles and responsibilities in relation to the COMCW are unclear at best and have led to confusion.</p>
Maintenance	<p>Under the permissive access arrangements for a National Trail, ownership resides with the landowner. Other than the minor repairs required under the Walks Scheme Work Plans, there is no onus on the landowner to make the trail safe or to carry out major repairs.</p> <p>The Walks Scheme is not the optimum vehicle for delivering the required maintenance for such a heavily used trail. The agreed participant Work Plans require minor repairs, but do not cover more significant repair works. The unsuitability of the Walks Scheme for the COMCW has been highlighted in previous reports.</p> <p>The multiplicity of owners on the COMCW, combined with the lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities of both Clare County Council and CLDC, has led to a situation where individual landowners do not feel compelled to maintain the trail to a high standard. Furthermore, given the high footfall on the trail and the resultant degradation, landowners do not have the financial means to properly maintain the trail.</p>
Safety	<p>The trail is clearly unsafe in places, as highlighted by recent Sport Ireland audits.</p> <p>The trail width is inadequate to ensure the safety of users of the trail. The existing fenceline corrals walkers into a narrow strip that is subject to erosion in places, and there is no mechanism for widening the trail, given that it is owned by 36 individual landowners.</p>



12.2 OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF LANDS

12.2.1 Defining Operational Control

One of the critical success factors for any trail management organisation, is the requirement to have full operational control, such that any repairs, upgrades or improvement works can be arranged. It is recommended that Clare County Council become the Trail Management organisation as the only organisation with resources and expertise to manage this walk.

This model is the most appropriate for a nationally significant amenity centred on the most visited natural attraction in Ireland. It will be necessary for Clare County Council as the Trail Management Organisation to have full control of these lands.

As presented earlier, the existing trail width is inadequate to ensure the safety of walkers. The existing fence line corrals walkers into a narrow strip that is subject to erosion in places, and there is no mechanism for widening the trail, given that it is owned by 36 individual landowners.

In order to provide for the future management of this important amenity, it will be necessary for the Management Company to have full operational control of the lands. The extent of these lands is outlined in the next section.

12.2.2 Lands Required for Operational Control

In order for the Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation, to secure full operational control of the lands, this needs to include:

- Sufficient area that provides a minimum trail width of 2.75m throughout, to allow two-way pedestrian traffic, and to facilitate maintenance along the trail
- Sufficient area that considers erosion risk and allows the Trail Management Organisation to set the trail back from the cliff edge where required, to ensure public safety
- Sufficient area that allows denuded areas to regenerate (Regeneration Zones). This will have two benefits:
 - It will enhance public safety by making the official trail clearly defined (at present these unofficial trails give walkers the impression that it is acceptable to walk at the cliff edge)
 - It will restore the original grasslands in these denuded areas, ultimately providing foraging areas for birdlife

For this reason, the default position should be that all lands from the (future) landside fence to the cliff edge are under the control of Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation.



12.2.3 Options for Securing Control of Lands

There are a number of acquisition options available to allow Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation, to gain full operational control of the lands, in order to properly manage the amenity. These have been presented below.

Option 1: Full Ownership by Clare County Council

It is recommended that Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation, should secure full title of the lands by outright purchase and therefore have full operational control.

Option 2: Hybrid of Sale and Lease

Clare County Council would pursue acquisition by agreement with those landowners willing to sell, and a long-term lease agreement with the remainder.

Option 3: Lease Agreement with All Landowners

This option would be explored where the collective preference of all landowners is to agree to a long-term lease. The structure and terms of the lease will be discussed between the representatives of Clare County Council, the landowners, the IFA and their land valuers.

Of critical importance however is that such a lease would need to have a duration that allows Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation, to plan and develop the trail in the medium to long term, without the end date of the lease becoming a disincentive to proper development of the trail. There are many examples of short-term lease durations being a barrier to investment in an asset, both in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The lands to be leased would include the full width from the existing fenceline to the legal boundary of the lands (i.e. the High Water Mark). It is suggested that the lease be long-term, with an upfront lump sum payment.

Option 4: Ancillary Options

Given that the objective is to have full operational control for the entire 11.43km of the trail, it is important that a situation doesn't arise where a small number of landowners do not agree to either a sale or long-term lease of their lands on the trail, thereby preventing Clare County Council, as the Trail Management Organisation, from having full operational control.

It is recommended that, if Options 1 to 3 above fail to get secure operational control, Clare County Council should, in consultation with local stakeholders, explore their options for securing control of the lands through compulsory purchase. This however would be an option of last resort as walking trails in Ireland are provided on the basis of permissive access as agreed with the landowner. The application of the compulsory purchase mechanism is as set out in the Code of Best Practice National and Regional Greenways (Section 3.3). The Trail Management Organisation will engage with all stakeholders to deliver all or part of the trail, however in the event that the majority of landowners do not wish to give Clare County Council operational control to manage the trail, the only option remaining would be to close all or part of the trail.

It is recommended that these options be explored sequentially from Option 1 through to Option 4. Should all of the above options fail to get the support of landowners, Clare County Council would not be in a position to progress the recommendations outlined in this Management Plan.



12.3 NEW MANAGEMENT MODEL

Given the inadequacies highlighted above, there is a need for a new management model for the Coastal Walk.

As reported earlier under International Experience, there are some good examples of trail management companies that have sufficient powers to ensure that trails are maintained to the highest standards (eg. the Ayrshire Coastal Path Management Group).

Critical Success Factors for a Trail Management Organisation are:

- It needs to have full operational control of the trail, such that any necessary upgrades or improvement works can be arranged without consent of multiple landowners
- It needs to have a dedicated, ring-fenced Multi-Annual budget that meets the needs of the management of the trail
- It needs to be headed up by a public body
- It needs to have a fulltime Trail Manager
- It needs to have representation from key stakeholders

There are some good examples in Ireland of trails fully owned and managed by a public body, or semi-state organisations. These include Forest Parks managed by Coillte, and National Parks managed by NPWS. In these examples the function of the organisation is to manage all activities across the entire estate, including the trails themselves.

It is recommended Clare County Council as the Trail Management Organisation utilise its resources and wholly owned subsidiaries to manage, operate, market and maintain the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, that will be overseen by a dedicated board of expertise under a new model proposed in this plan. It is important Clare County Council as the new Trail Management Organisation operate collaboratively with representative stakeholders.

Utilising the employment vehicle, Clare Tourism Development DAC (a wholly owned subsidiary of Clare County Council), it is recommended a full time Coastal Walk Manager be employed. This Manager will have access to maintenance personnel and contractor to carryout bigger maintenance requirements and upgrade work. The suggested model for Clare County Council is set out graphically in Figure 12-1 below.



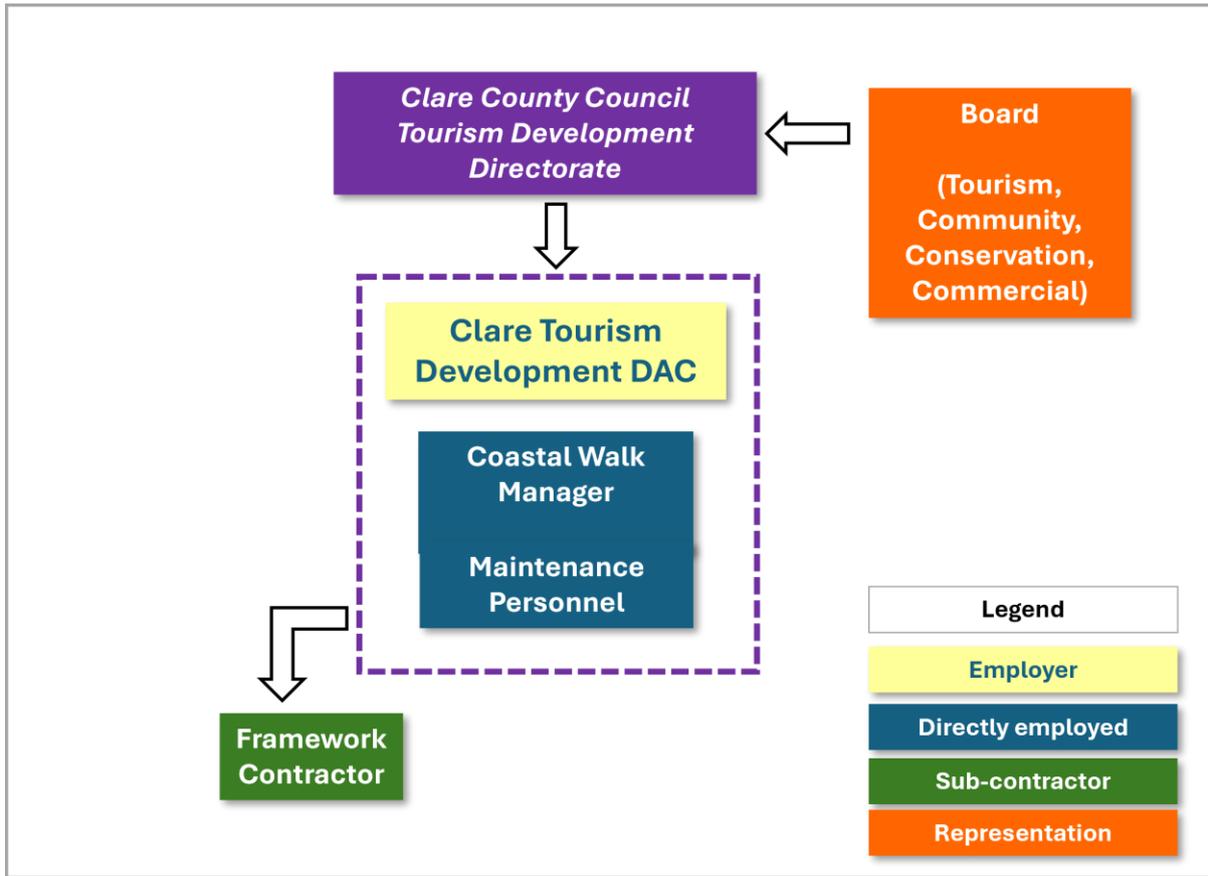


Figure 12-1: New Management Model

12.4 FINANCIAL MODEL

12.4.1 Current Sense of Inequity

The need for a new approach to the management of the COMCW has been set out above. It will not be possible to put a new management model in place without a new approach to the financial operation of the Coastal Walk.

At present there is a perceived inequity associated with the financial operation of the two constituent parts of the Cliffs of Moher 'amenity' (i.e. the Visitor's Centre, and the Coastal Walk). Landowners are fully cognisant of the entry fees to the Cliffs of Moher Experience. They see Clare County Council collecting significant fees annually from the COME and given that the Coastal Walk is an important part of the overall Cliffs of Moher amenity, they feel that they are not properly compensated for providing access to their lands for the enjoyment of visitors.

To illustrate this point further, if you consider a scenario where the Cliffs of Moher Experience facility had not been developed and this was simply a beautiful coastal walk accessed at various points between Doolin and Liscannor, it is likely that there would not be the same expectation for compensation over and above what is due to landowners under the Walks Scheme. It is the income generated at the Cliffs of Moher Experience, and the continued operation of the Walks Scheme as the only means of landowner compensation that is leading to a perception of inequity.

The approach taken to landowner compensation over the past number of years, whereby landowners closer to the Visitor's Centre received a separate payment, as a temporary measure, to facilitate trail upgrades, was the correct approach as it reflected the higher level of visitor numbers on the central section.

Notwithstanding this, it has led to landowners remote from the central section feeling aggrieved as they have stated that all lands along the Coastal Walk carry the same level of importance in relation to the continued operation of the trail.

12.4.2 Principles of a New Financial Model

The main principles of a new financial model for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk should be that:

- That Clare County Council, as the new Trail Management Organisation, is sufficiently funded to:
 - Carry out necessary trail repair and upgrades
 - Employ a fulltime Coastal Walk Manager
 - Employ the necessary Maintenance Personnel (or Framework Contractor)
 - Provide an equitable and sustainable level of compensation to all landowners along the Coastal Walk
- In return for the provision of an equitable and sustainable level of compensation to all landowners, the landowners cede full operational control of the lands (but not necessarily full title) to Clare County Council



12.4.3 Landowner Payments

It is proposed that payments to landowners under the Walks Scheme cease and be replaced by a new model that is equitable and sustainable and reflects the importance of these lands in the context of the overall Cliffs of Moher amenity.

In order to set a suitable rate for landowner payments, it is prudent to examine other comparable landowner compensation schemes for amenity provision. *The Code of Practice for National and Regional Greenways* (Dept. of Transport, December 2021) contains a number of important provisions in respect of landowner liaison, accommodation works, land acquisition, and landowner payments. A copy of this document is included as **Appendix D**.

Landowner payments would be contingent on a purchase of lands or agreeing a long-term lease, with an upfront sustainability lump sum payment for the lands and a nominal annual payment thereafter. The purchase amount and long-term lease amounts will be set by an agronomist appointed by Clare County Council.

12.4.4 Operational Costs (Non-Landowner)

Other than landowner payments as set out above, the future operation of the Coastal Walk will require ongoing expenditure. These are set out in the table below.

Table 12-2: Future Operational Costs (Non-Landowner)

Element	In respect of	Estimated Annual Cost (ex. VAT)
Direct personnel costs	Trail Manager	€70,000
Maintenance costs	Direct (in-house)	€50,000
Maintenance costs	Framework contractor	€200,000
Environmental surveys	Bird surveys (SPA), other surveys	€20,000
Geotechnical surveys	Geohazard	€20,000
Consultancy and legal fees	Stakeholder consultation, landowner liaison	€100,000
Total		€460,000



12.4.5 Income

In order to meet the operation costs of the future Coastal Walk, assuming that a gate fee for entry to the walk is not an option, the only potential income sources available to Clare County Council is to assign funding from the revenue budget of Clare County Council to support the operation and management of the trail with additional funding sought for maintenance and/or upgrades through available national funding schemes and /or subvention from various partners.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessments presented in the preceding chapters (Chapters 5 to 12) have been used as a basis for developing recommendations for the future management of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. In this chapter, these recommendations are collated and presented in tabular format, with commentary provided where appropriate.

Table 13-1: Recommendations

Visitor Management		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
1.1	Explore options for visitor permits on the Coastal Walk	This would be based on a system where a pass (free of charge) is obtained by the user in advance and available for inspection
1.2	Explore options for limiting capacity during environmentally sensitive times	This may include breeding bird season (March to August inclusive), and times of high erosion risk, and would be tied into a visitor permit system
1.3	Nominate designated entry points	Possibly limited to Doolin, Hags Head and COME. Again, this would be incorporated into a visitor permit system
1.4	Develop Communications Plan	The key themes would include environmental sensitivity, safety, expected behaviours
1.5	Monitor visitor numbers and profile	To include additional counters (particularly on the northern section) and additional visitor Intercept Surveys
1.6	Explore rotational access options	This would allow environmentally sensitive areas to regenerate and would be tied into item 1.2 above

Safety		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
2.1	Provide edge protection	To be incorporated into any upgrades of the 5350m of the Coastal Walk currently without edge protection. Any barriers provided should be difficult to climb and should retain the current level of visual amenity
2.2	Detailed geotechnical assessment	Due to the likely geohazard risk, this assessment should cover the entire trail length that runs along the cliff edge
2.3	Improve trail surface to reduce slips, trips and falls	This is to incorporate drainage improvements to reduce standing water on the trail. The trail surface should be to a standard to match recently upgraded sections



2.4	Increase trail width	Recently upgraded sections have a surfaced width of 2.5m to 3.0m. It is recommended that the trail width be increased to a minimum of 2.75m along the entire trail to accommodate the high volume of visitors using the trail, and also to provide an adequate corridor for both maintenance and emergency services
2.5	Local trail reroutes	Change alignment of the trail between Chainage 5300 and Chainage 5400 to avoid deep fissures in this area. Explore feasibility of moving the trail inland in Section W (alternative northern route).
2.6	Trail inspections	Trail inspections should be carried out weekly or following extreme weather events, and focus on changes in soil and rock stability, new localised fissures or changes to existing fissures, areas of poor drainage and damage to barriers

Wayfinding and Signage

Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
3.1	Implement Wayfinding Plan	As per Appendix C
3.2	Develop consistent signage	Align all signage to the new Cliffs of Moher branding
3.3	Develop Zone Designation and distance marker system	Based on one of the options presented in Chapter 7
3.4	Provide trail information along the Coastal Walk, outside of the Cliffs of Moher Experience area	To enhance visitor experience

Trail Upgrades, Maintenance and Repair

Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
4.1	Develop Maintenance Plan	To be developed for the phased trail upgrade
4.2	Complete proposed trail upgrades	Prioritise upgrades in the following sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections X and Y (most heavily trafficked areas) • Section W (alternative northern route) • Section Z (subject to planning process)
4.3	Assign dedicated maintenance budget, sufficient to achieve the necessary trail safety standards	This is tied in with the proposed change in trail management, set out in Chapter 12



Trailheads, Parking and Sustainable Transport		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
5.1	Provide trailhead access	The P&R hubs identified in the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 will provide transport, bins, visitor facilities and information
5.2	Promote active travel to the Coastal Walk	Provide facilities for cyclists at Doolin and Hags Head
5.3	Reduce uncontrolled parking	This is tied in with the proposed visitor permit system (Item 1.1) which would be based on access at Doolin, Hags Head and COME only
5.4	Progress Park and Ride proposals	The proposed Clare County Council shuttle service could form the basis for a future P+R system which would be of significant benefit in providing a sustainable transport alternative to the COME and by extension to the Coastal Walk
5.5	Discontinue unauthorised developments	This item has been raised by NPWS as it is compromising the conservation objectives of the SPA. The proposed Park and Ride initiative should also reduce demand for the use of unauthorised car parks

Biodiversity		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
6.1	Identify area for habitat regeneration	This relates mainly to areas where unofficial trails have developed at the cliff edge
6.2	Discontinue developments	As outlined under Item 5.4, this is compromising the conservation objectives of the SPA.
6.3	Consider seasonality in future trail upgrades	Trail upgrades should in particular avoid breeding bird season, for chough and other species
6.4	Improve visitor management	The visitor permit system proposed in Item 1.1, could be used to reduce disturbance on chough

Marketing		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
7.1	Discontinue use of all titles other than the <i>Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk</i>	Ensure that the official title of Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is used on all documentation, signage and promotional material



7.2	Use new Cliffs of Moher brand identity on all marketing material for the Coastal Walk	To provide a unified approach to marketing, utilising existing digital assets to educate & promote responsible visiting
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Management Model		
Ref.	Recommendation	Comment
8.1	Clare County Council should become the Trail Management Organisation for the future Coastal Walk	Clare County Council would have dedicated staff members employed directly by a Designated Activity Company (DAC)
8.2	A Coastal Walk Manager should be appointed	This would be a fulltime position appointed by Clare County Council and employed by the DAC
8.3	Clare County Council should have full operational control of lands	Operational control is required for the area of lands required to provide safety to users, and to carry out necessary repairs and upgrades
8.4	Options for securing operational control of lands should be progressed	Options should be explored in the sequence set out in Chapter 12
8.5	The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk should be removed from the Walks Scheme	This model is not considered appropriate for the future management of the trail
8.6	A new model for payments to landowners should be put in place	Landowner payments would be contingent on a purchase of lands or agreeing a long-term lease, with an upfront sustainability lump sum payment for the lands and a nominal annual payment thereafter The purchase amount and long-term lease amounts will be set by an agronomist appointed by Clare County Council
8.7	Income streams to fund the future operation of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk should be explored	This is likely to include funding from the revenue budget of Clare County Council to support the operation and management of the trail, with additional funding sought for maintenance and/or upgrades through available national funding schemes and /or subvention from various partners
8.8	Develop an Operational Plan	This would include specific details that guide the day to day operation of the Coastal Walk



14. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

14.1 CONTEXT - CURRENT TRAIL CLOSURE

The recommendations made in this Management Plan have been made to fulfil the requirements of the Brief, which was developed in late 2023. Most of the recommendations made are independent of the current status of the trail and are valid regardless of the events that transpired in August 2024.

Clearly the status of the Coastal Walk has changed significantly since this project commenced in early 2024. At the time of writing the majority of the trail is closed on foot of the Sport Ireland audit in August 2024 which raised a number of safety concerns. Outside of the Cliffs of Moher Experience area (owned by Clare County Council), only some 470m of the trail north of the Cliffs of Moher Experience is currently open, and no distance to the south.

It is evident that any implementation programme, to achieve the objectives listed earlier and set out in the recommendations made in Chapter 13, needs to consider both short-term measures (i.e. what is required to reopen the trail in the immediate future, by the summer of 2025 or the summer of 2026 for example), and longer-term measures to achieve all of the stated objectives.

14.2 IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk is largely closed at present as discussed above. The basis for this closure is the safety concerns raised by Sport Ireland in their August 2024 audit. In response, CLDC closed the trail pending implementation of the necessary improvements.

The initial question is, can anything be done to reopen the trail by the summer of 2025 or the summer of 2026? Many of the issues raised by Sport Ireland require significant investment and substantial works. Such works take time to properly plan, design and construct and will not be completed by the summer of 2025.

As an interim step, it is recommended that the current trail managers (CLDC), or the proposed future trail managers (Clare County Council) engage with Sport Ireland to see if any of the proposals made in the Management Plan could be put in place in the short-term to allow the Coastal Walk to reopen. This may include elements such as:

- Weekly safety inspections
- Provision of additional warning signage
- Localised upgrades to the trail surface in high-risk areas
- Localised drainage upgrades
- Provision of earthen berms or other barriers in high-risk areas

It should be noted that the above measures would not achieve the long-term objectives for the Coastal Walk but may allow the trail to reopen pending more substantial upgrades.



14.3 SHORT TERM PROGRAMME

In the short term it should be possible to progress works on Sections X and Y, to bring them up to a standard that ensures user safety and provides adequate trail width for these most heavily trafficked areas.

This should be progressed using Clare County County's proposed plans.

14.4 MEDIUM TERM PROGRAMME

In the medium term, and subject to landowner agreement, upgrade works on Section W, along the old Doolin to Liscannor road, could be progressed. These works would be subject to a Clare County Council application for planning exemption under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act, given that this corridor was previously a public road.

14.5 LONG TERM PROGRAMME

The long-term programme would apply to Section Z, from the southern end of the Control Zone to Hags Head. A preliminary programme has been developed that would see the realisation of all of the long-term objectives for the Coastal Walk in this section. This programme includes:

- Negotiations with landowners and their representatives on securing operational control of lands, and a suitable payment mechanism
- Completion of the necessary surveys to remove some of the current uncertainties in relation to geohazard
- Design and planning of trail improvement works in areas not previously upgraded
- Statutory processes associated with the planning process for trail upgrades
- Baseline bird surveys (which should be commenced in Summer 2025)
- Procurement and construction of these works

In compiling this programme, it assumed that a planning application is required for the upgrade of the trail. Given that the upgrades would be proposed in an SPA, the development is unlikely to screen out for Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive, and therefore a planning application to an Bord Pleanála will be required.

On this basis the likely programme for completion would be:

- Planning application, submitted by early 2026
- Landowner negotiations and funding application, completed by Q3 2025
- Design and procurement of upgrade works, completed by Q2 2026
- Planning approval, secured by Q3 2026
- Construction works, commenced by Q3 2027, completed by Q4 2027



Appendix A SPORT IRELAND AUDIT REPORTS

Trail Audit Report

This report summarises the findings of an audit carried out by *Sport Ireland Trails*.

Trail:	Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk
Audit Date(s)	21 st March 2019
Trail Management Organisation	Clare Local Development Company
Trail Management Representative	Eoin Hogan

Background: To be added to the National Trails Register and www.irishtrails.ie, new trails must initially go through a Registration Inspection and become accredited. Following this a sample of all registered trails are audited every year. An audit assesses the trail to verify that it is being appropriately managed and that it remains in good condition. The outcome of the audit is used to determine if the trail should continue to be listed on the *National Trails Register* as accredited (and on the trails insurance policy where relevant).

A trail audit is also intended to provide advice and assistance to the trail management organisation regarding the management and quality of the trail.

Note: Not all of the details found during the audit are included in this report. Some of the less significant findings will have been recorded by the Trail Management Representative who accompanied the auditor.

Summary of Audit Findings	
Trail Management Score	95% **
Trail Score	72% overall but 10% for Trail Surface and 68% for Waymarking and Potential Safety Issues*
Number of Potential Safety Issues	3
Number of Other Significant Issues	15
**70% minimum must be reached overall	
*70% minimum must be reached overall and for each section for the trail to be accredited	

This trail needs some work and is currently not fully accredited. To be re-accredited when the work is completed please send us confirmation with photos where possible.

Comments

■ The condition of the trail surface was very poor in places following some very wet weather in the weeks preceding the inspection, with numerous boggy and waterlogged stretches particularly in the section between Hag's Head and the visitor centre. The worst locations have been noted in the list of significant issues below. One location was noted as a potential safety issue after witnessing a group of visitors/walkers wearing inadequate footwear skirting around the muddy/waterlogged section of the trail to avoid the mud, bringing them dangerously close to the cliff edge.

■ Regarding mapboard and waymarking – there was confusion over what colour waymarking was used on the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk with inconsistent waymarking along the route and no clear explanation of the waymarking used given on the mapboard. Also, the mapboard was very difficult to read as it was partially covered by vegetation and being located behind the boundary wall of the Moher Sports Field, it was too far away to read easily. The mapboard should be relocated on the side of the road at the car park so that it can be seen clearly.

■ While the map shows the route starting in two locations (Liscannor village and the Moher Sports Field), the trail management have produced a brochure which shows the walk starting at the sports field only. Eoin Hogan explained that the route between Liscannor and Moher Sports Field was a section of the Burren Way and did not form part of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. It was therefore not included in this audit inspection.

■ There is a significant amount of work planned including widening the trail for about 1km either side of the visitor centre in order to handle the c. 800,000 visitors to this section of the trail every year. This work is urgently needed and is due to be carried out by Clare County Council. The trail surface along the c. 1km stretch to the south of the visitor centre was in very poor condition at time of inspection due to recent weeks of wet weather. Some urgent works within this zone which involve removal of a stile to rationalise the route and improvements to the trail surface, have already been sent out to tender.

■ **Maintenance and monitoring:** This trail is very closely monitored and has been the subject of a recent safety audit following which a visitor safety plan was published in 2018. This 27-page document contains a visitor safety policy and a section on inspection and maintenance. This includes a proposal to carry out regular monitoring as well as ad hoc checks while maintenance is being carried out. This document also points out that most farmers/landowners along the trail receive a payment for participation in the Walks Scheme and that this payment reflects time spent on monthly inspection and maintenance. This visitor safety plan is subject to a yearly review. The Rural Recreation Officer manages the work programme, small works being carried out by landowners and two part-time workers employed by the Rural Social Scheme. Major works are carried out by contractors.

Issues Identified

Potential Safety Issues

The following items may expose a trail user to possible injury or harm:

Surface Dangers

- **Deep holes or collapsed drains in the path or track:**

- Map 2, Item 727

Other Potential Safety Issues

- **Potentially dangerous trail surface issue:**

- Map 1, Item 700

- **Trail emerges abruptly onto cliff edge:**

- Map 2, Item 728

These items should be addressed as a priority

Significant Issues

Trail Information

■ **Route Information**

Route information is available for the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk (www.irishtrails.ie) which complies with the Management Standards for Recreational Trails.

Note: Sport Ireland Trails includes route information (map and route details) for the trails on its website, www.irishtrails.ie. To make information available on www.irishtrails.ie, please supply details to Sport Ireland Trails as soon as possible. If information is supplied on other websites, or locally in the form of map, booklets etc, these should also be kept up-to-date.

■ Information/Map Boards

There is an information/map board at the trail head of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. However the following information is not included:

- up-to-date version of the route
- description of waymarking used on the trail

In order to comply fully with Management Standards for Recreational Trails the additional information should be included when the information/map board is being upgraded or replaced.

■ Additional Comments on Trail Information

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk starts at Moher Sports Field only and does not include the section from Liscannor village to the sports field. The mapboards need to reflect this change. Information on the waymarking used needs to be much clearer.

Waymarking

□ Essential waymarking missing:

- Map 1, Item 695 708 712

□ Inconsistent waymarking:

- Map 1, Item 689 690

Trail Surface

□ Trail Surface Issues:

- Map 1, Item 693 702 705 711
- Map 2, Item 723 724

Trail Furniture

□ Trail furniture unfit for purpose:

- Map 1, Item 713
- Map 2, Item 730

□ Essential trail furniture missing:

- Map 1, Item 719

Other Important Maintenance Issues

□ Map board poorly located behind low wall and partially covered by vegetation. :

- Map 1, Item 689

Maps:

The map(s) below show the locations of any Potential Safety Issues and other Significant Issues identified and discussed during the audit.

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk : Map 1



Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk : Map 2



Trail Management Score Sheet

Trail Name: Cliffs of Moher Coastal path	Responsible Body: Clare Local Development Company	
Scored By: Eoin Hogan	Checked By: Áine Doyle	Date: 21/3/19

Prerequisites for a trail to be listed as accredited on the National Trails Register are:

- An organisation or body with responsibility for the management of all sections of the trail.
- An up-to-date Trail Management Plan, including Maintenance, Monitoring, Funding and Promotion.
- Regular Trail Maintenance with records kept.
- Regular Trail Monitoring with records kept.
- Trail Repair & Upgrades as required, with priority given to Potential Safety Issues and records kept.

A minimum of 70% of the total score available must be achieved for a trail to be considered as meeting the standard.

Please score each question based on the Scoring System below and add up the score in each category and overall.

See notes provided for help in scoring each question.

Scoring System: Please use the following ratings

0	None	1	Something in place, but basic and lacks important elements
2	In place, but needs some improvement	3	Meets requirements

	1. Trail Management (The body responsible for the trail)	Score 0-3	Comments/Details
i)	The management team is appropriate for the length, complexity and popularity of the trail.	3	
ii)	The team has clear roles and holds regular meetings with minutes.	2	
iii)	There is a suitable promotion plan in place for the trail.	3	
iv)	There is a suitable funding plan in place for the trail.	3	
v)	The management team has access to appropriate resources & personnel to carry out trail maintenance, monitoring and repairs.	3	
	Total	14	/15
	2. Trail Maintenance (Regular tasks to keep the trail in good condition)	Score 0-3	Comments/Details
i)	There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail maintenance, with suitable forms/templates.	3	
ii)	All regular maintenance tasks have been identified along the entire trail.	3	
iii)	Each maintenance task has been given an appropriate frequency.	3	
iv)	It is clear when each maintenance task will be carried out.	3	
v)	It is clear who will carry out each maintenance task.	2	
vi)	Clear records are being kept of all trail maintenance activity.	3	

	Total	17	/18
3. Trail Monitoring (Checking the trail for issues)		Score 0-3	Comments/Details
i) There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail monitoring, with suitable forms/templates.		3	
ii) An appropriate monitoring calendar is in place, which may vary throughout the year, depending on seasons, events etc.		3	
iii) It is clear when each trail monitoring will be carried out.		3	
iv) It is clear who will carry out the trail monitoring.		3	
v) Clear records are being kept of all trail monitoring activity.		3	
	Total	15	/15
4. Trail Repairs & Upgrades (Larger issues that cannot be quickly & easily solved)		Score 0-3	Comments/Details
i) There is an appropriate system in place to plan and record trail repairs/upgrades, with suitable forms/templates.		3	
ii) The system includes prioritising Potential Safety Issues.		3	
iii) It is clear who will coordinate each trail repair/upgrade.		3	
iv) Clear records are being kept of all trail repair/upgrade work.		2	
	Total	11	/12
	Overall Total	57	/60
	Percentage	95	%

Trail Score Sheet

Trail Name: Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk	Date: 21 March 2019
<p>Prerequisites for a trail to be listed as accredited on the National Trails Register are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that the owners of any land over which the trail passes have given their permission - that there are no hazards on the route which potentially endanger the walker <p>A weighted score has been assigned to each requirement in the standard. A minimum of 70% of the total score available for each set of requirements and 70% of the overall score must be achieved for a trail to be considered as meeting the standard.</p> <p>The scores below exclude any Potential Safety Issues. Even if the total score exceeds 70%, the trail will not be accredited until these safety items are addressed.</p>	

	Ref. section in Standard (breakdown of score available shown in brackets)	Score Available	Score Awarded	Report References/Comments
	3.1 Trail Information			See inspection report for details
1.	Route Map (for any route longer than 2km) and route information:			
a.	An up-to-date map of the route (60) available, showing sufficient detail such that it can be used for route finding (30) - including start/finish points (10).	100	100	
b.	Information on trail grading (15) including a definition of the grades (5).	20	20	
c.	Information on the length of the trail (15), the total ascent in metres (1) and the estimated time to complete (4).	20	20	
d.	A description of waymarking used on the trail.	5	5	
e.	A brief description of the route.	5	5	
f.	A phone number or email address for trail management organisation.	5	5	
g.	Contact details for nearest emergency services.	5	5	
h.	Information on whether dogs are permitted.	5	5	
i.	"Leave No Trace" or Countryside Code principles.	5	5	

2.	Information Board at trail head with:			
a.	Up-to-date map of route (6) showing start and finish points (2) and 'you are here' pointer (2).	10	4	
b.	Information on trail grading (3) including a definition of the grades (2).	5	5	
c.	Information on the length of the trail (3), the total ascent in metres (2) and the estimated time to complete (1).	6	6	
d.	A description of waymarking used on the trail.	4	0	
e.	A brief description of the route.	1	1	
f.	A phone number or email address for trail management organisation.	1	1	
g.	Contact details for nearest emergency services.	1	1	
h.	Information on whether dogs are permitted.	1	1	
i.	"Leave No Trace" or Countryside Code principles.	1	1	
	Total:	200	190	
			95%	

	3.2 The Route			
1.	Route unobstructed and passable due to vegetation or other issues (deduct 20 points for each issue).	40	40	
2.	Warning sign(s) erected on any electric fences on the route with which the user is likely to come in contact (deduct 8 points for each issue).	40	40	
3.	Protective tubing used on electric fencing which needs to be crossed (deduct 8 points for each issue).	40	40	
4.	Livestock signs at entrance to fields containing bulls or suckler cows (deduct 10 points for each issue).	40	40	
5.	Warning signs on the road where the route crosses an N or R road or a busy trafficked road (deduct 8 points for each issue).	40	40	
		200	200	
			100%	

3.3 Waymarking				
1.	Waymarking at junctions or other locations on the route where it is essential to direct the walker (deduct 20 points for each issue).	80	20	• Map 1, Item 695 708 712
2.	Waymarkers correctly aligned at all junctions/locations where waymarking is essential to direct the walker (deduct 10 points for each issue).	40	40	
3.	Waymarking positioned so that it is clearly visible to an approaching walker at junctions or other locations on the route where it is essential to direct the walker (travelling in either direction on a two way route) (deduct 4 points for each issue).	20	20	
4.	Consistent waymarking (same type/colour) used throughout the route (deduct 2 points for each issue).	10	6	• Map 1, Item 689 690
5.	Markers differentiated by colour, number, letter or name where there are multiple trails in the same area (deduct 10 points for each issue).	20	20	
6.	Yellow arrow and "walking man" symbol used on National Long Distance routes only (deduct 2 points for each issue).	10	10	
7.	Any temporary diversions clearly waymarked (20).	20	20	
		200	136	
			68%	

	3.4 Trail Surface			
1.	Trail surface is durable, robust and fit for purpose i.e. free from extended sections which are severely waterlogged, boggy, have deep mud or are severely eroded such that it is difficult to walk through (deduct 30 points for each major issue).	200	20	• Multiple Items
			10%	
	3.5 Vegetation and Litter			
1.	Invasive species of vegetation found on the route (deduct 10 points for each issue).	40	40	
2.	Markers unobstructed by vegetation (deduct 5 points for each issue).	40	40	
3.	Free from litter or other waste (deduct 4 points for each issue).	20	20	
		100	100	
			100%	
	3.6. / 3.7 Trail Furniture/ Services			
1.	Trail furniture designed, constructed, installed and maintained such that it is fit for purpose, robust and reliable (deduct 8 points for each issue).	40	16	• Map 1, Item 713 • Map 2, Item 730 • Map 1, Item 719
2.	Walking surface on stiles, board walks, bridges or steps must have a suitable 'non-slip' surface (deduct 8 points for each issue).	40	40	
3.	Suitable off-road car parking space at the trail head (20).	20	20	
		100	76	
			76%	
	Grand Total	1000	722	
			72%	

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Sport Ireland Trails supports the development of sustainable trails and their management and promotion.

Sport Ireland Trails undertakes audits on recreational trails in Ireland to provide guidance to those responsible for the trails and as part of our accreditation process. Ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the trails and records of this work are a requirement for accreditation and continued cover under the Trails Insurance Scheme public liability insurance.

Sport Ireland does not accept any responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of any trails or any liability for any accident or injury arising from their use.

This report is based on a structured assessment undertaken by Sport Ireland using the *Management Standards for Recreational Trails* as the basis of the assessment. Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this report, and it is believed to reflect the state and condition of the trail on the date of audit, Sport Ireland makes no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content contained in this report is accurate, complete or up to date. Clare Local Development Company [Insert specific relevant County Council, local authority, trail owner, trail developer or body responsible for the trail(s)] should satisfy themselves as to the safety, suitability, standard and condition of the trail.

This report should not be understood to suggest that the trail in question is maintained, supervised or otherwise monitored by Sport Ireland. Those are matters solely for Clare Local Development Company and are outside the scope of this report.

Official Languages Act 2003

■ As a point of information please note that a public body has a duty to ensure that signs placed by it or on its behalf are in Irish or bilingual. Further information on requirements and exemptions are available from the link <http://www.coimisineir.ie/downloads/Guidebook4.pdf>.

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

Walking Trail Inspection Report

Trail ID:	670
Trail Network/Location:	Liscannor Doolin
Trail Management Group:	Clare Local Development Company
Trail Management ID:	136
Inspector:	Áine Doyle
Accompanied By:	Eoin Hogan
Date:	12 August, 2024



Purpose of this Report

1. To provide details of the inspector's findings during the inspection, when the trail infrastructure and management arrangements were assessed against the [Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland](#). Trails that meet the criteria will be listed as registered on the National Trails Register.
2. Highlight issues that may negatively impact a walker's safety and enjoyment in using the trail.
3. Provide further details and general feedback to support those responsible for the trail in their on-going management and maintenance of the route.

Inspection Result

The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk does not currently meet the criteria.
To remain listed on the National Trails Register, the management & safety and/or significant issues identified in this report need to be addressed.

Report Summary

Trail Infrastructure Issues

Issues identified with trail infrastructure are reported as one of the following types:

Trail Infrastructure Issue Types	
.	Safety Issues are considered serious and may injure a walker. They are shown in red text. If any Safety Issues are identified, a trail cannot be listed as registered until they are resolved.
.	Significant Issues may considerably detract from a walker's experience. They are shown in blue text. Significant Issues reduce the trail's score in relevant categories and overall.
.	Advisory Issues are less serious than Safety or Significant Issues. These are shown in black text. They should be resolved to improve the quality of the trail and the users' experience.

Requirements & Findings

To Meet the Criteria		Findings
1	There must be No Safety Issues on the trail.	Safety Issues were identified on the trail.
2	A Trail Infrastructure score of minimum 70% Overall and in each Category is required.	Significant Issues have reduced the score below the minimum required.
3	Trail Management plans are appropriate for the length and complexity of the trail.	Trail Management does not currently meet the criteria.

Summary of Findings	
Number of Safety Issues	39
Number of Significant Issues	41
Trail Infrastructure Score	74% overall but less than 70% in at least one category
Trail Management Assessment	Fail

Resolving Issues

Issues detailed in this report should be addressed by the trail management and feedback provided to Sport Ireland within the timeframes below. On receiving adequate details and photographic evidence of work done on an issue, the status of the issue and the trail's score will be updated.

- **Safety Issues should be treated as a priority** and addressed immediately or as soon as possible. If safety issues are not addressed by the timeframe below, the trail will temporarily be removed from the National Trails Register until the safety issues are addressed.
- If the trail does not currently meet the criteria and issues are not addressed within the timeframes below to meet the minimum score for each section, the trail will temporarily be removed from the National Trails Register until sufficient issues are resolved.
- Even if listed as registered, it is encouraged to resolve all issues, including Advisory Issues.
- Please note that issue resolution deadlines are measured from the date of inspection.

Issue Type	Deadline	Send Details & Photos Via
Safety Issues	30 Days	Dashboard*
Significant Issues	90 Days	Dashboard*
Trail Management Issues	90 Days	Email to outdoors@sportireland.ie .

* Details on dashboards can be found in Appendix 3. Online dashboards show all trail issues with an option to report them as addressed and easily provide details and photos of their resolution.

Score Details

A trail's compliance with the [Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland](#) is evaluated using a scoring system for both the trail infrastructure and trail management. The safety of a walker is considered separately from the scoring system, and any safety issues will result in not meeting the criteria.

1. Trail Infrastructure Score

To be listed as registered a trail must:

1. Reach a Score of Minimum 70% in each Category.
2. Reach a Score of Minimum 70% Overall.
3. Have no Safety Issues.

Category	Significant Issues	% Score	Safety Issues	Complies
Trail Information	0	100%	n/a	Yes
Fencing	1	90%	3	No
Litter/Dumping	0	100%	0	Yes
Roads	0	100%	0	Yes
Route	0	100%	1	No
Signage	6	40%	27	No
Structures	2	80%	5	No
Surface	7	30%	3	No
Vegetation	0	100%	0	Yes
Waymarking	25	0%	0	No
Overall	41	74% *	39	No

*Though the overall score is above 70%, the score in one or more categories is below 70%

Please Note:

1. Further details on scoring can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.
2. Significant Issues reduce the score in individual categories and overall. Safety Issues and Advisory Issues do not affect the scoring.
3. If the score is below 70% in any category, the trail's overall score will not be relevant.
4. Safety Issues are not applicable in the Trail Information category.
5. Further details on the requirements can be found in the [Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland](#).

2. Trail Management Assessment

To be listed as registered, Trail Management Documentation must be appropriate for each of the assessment categories, with no more than [one significant concern](#) highlighted.

Requirement	Result
1) Trail Management Group: The Trail Management Group is appropriate for the length, complexity and popularity of the trail	Meets Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
2) Trail Management Plan: There is a written/documented Trail Management Plan (TM Plan)	Does Not Meet Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
3) Trail Monitoring: The TM Plan includes the frequency and month trail inspections are to be carried out	Does Not Meet Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
4) Maintenance Tasks: The TM Plan includes regular maintenance tasks to be carried out	Does Not Meet Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
5) Trail Maintenance: The TM Plan includes the frequency and month that regular maintenance tasks are to be carried out	Does Not Meet Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
6) Documented Evidence: There is a written record/log of trail activity (inspections, maintenance and repairs) which includes the dates activity was carried out, findings and dates any identified issues were resolved	Does Not Meet Requirements
Comment: Maintenance and monitoring plan not made available for inspection.	
Overall Trail Management Result	Does not currently meet requirements

Documentation Provided for the Inspection:



Please Note:

If Trail Management Issues have been identified, even if the overall result was a Pass, it is recommended that improvements should be considered to meet the inspector’s recommendations. This will help ensure best practice in the management of the trail.

Trail Overview

Trail Length (km)	Trail Format	Trail Grade (Difficulty)
19.5	Linear	Strenuous

Strenuous Grade Definition:	Strenuous Trails are Suitable For:
Will include predominantly Class 4 Trails but can include sections of Class 1, Class 2 or Class 3 trails (typically for no more than 30% of the route distance). Overall the route will have moderately steep climbs for long sections (up to 20 mins). The going underfoot can be extremely rough and can include many obstacles.	People accustomed to walking rough trails and with a high level of fitness. Typically all day or multiday walkers. Specific outdoor walking footwear and clothing required.

Further details can be found in the document: [Classification and Grading for Recreational Trails](#)

Additional Feedback following Inspection

- The Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk provides walkers who are adequately prepared for an exposed cliff hike requiring a high level of fitness and who are properly equipped for the rugged and potentially dangerous conditions with a rewarding trail experience not without the risks usually associated with a trail of the advertised grade 'strenuous'. Warnings about the dangers associated with the walk are given on information boards at each of the trailhead locations: Moher Sports Field at the southern end, Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre at the midway point, and Doolin Community Centre at the north end. The safety message includes the following wording: this cliff top trail is remote challenging and demanding with no barriers, handrails or seaward fencing. The cliff path safety code shown on each map board contains the following advice: 1. Keep to the constructed path away from cliff edges and overhangs. 2. Always supervise children especially near cliff edges. 3. Walking surfaces can vary considerably with the weather. Always wear strong footwear with good grip and ankle support.

- Most of the walkers observed to be using the trail at the time of inspection were holiday makers and day trippers often family groups with very young children unprepared either mentally or physically (with appropriate hiking gear including adequate footwear) for the dangers on this exposed and unprotected cliff edge walk. During the inspection many walkers were observed to walk past warning signs at the trail heads without reading them. The number of walkers using the trail was very high with large numbers coming from the visitors centre and from near the trailhead at the Hag's Head end with the availability of three fields of unofficial car parking at this end increasing numbers accessing the southern end. At one location a humanist wedding ceremony was observed to be underway, facilitated by a local landowner, the couple standing close to the cliff edge with their backs to it. In summary it was observed that walkers were unprepared for this grade of walk, warning signs were unheeded, the volume of walkers was too high for some sections of the trail and unofficial events were being held close to the cliff edge.
- While walkers are asked to keep to the official trail and signs have been erected in multiple locations pointing to the direction of the official trail with a 'no entry' sign to the unofficial route, many walkers were observed to simply ignore these signs and continue on the dangerous unofficial path. Walkers were also observed climbing over the flagstone barriers at a number of locations where the official route was clearly distinguished from the unofficial path. In many cases where there were no flagstone barriers or earthen mounds present walkers were observed deliberately branching off the official trail to walk directly out to the cliff edge. Facilitating of events such as wedding ceremonies at the cliff edge sends the wrong message to users of the trail giving the impression that these are officially sanctioned events and that it is safe and acceptable to stand off the official trail and at the cliff edge.
- At some points along the trail the distinction between the official and unofficial route was unclear as the unofficial route is so worn in. Greater clarity is needed in these locations through increased signage, erection of fencing and/or through a complete trail upgrade where the trail surface of the official route is distinctly differentiated from the unofficial path and the official trail is made wider and set further back from the cliff edge. In some locations the official trail was too narrow to cater for the volume of walkers travelling in both directions making the unofficial path, which is often wider, more attractive. In other locations the official trail was waterlogged resulting in walkers with inappropriate footwear choosing to skirt around the wet and muddy areas bringing them uncomfortably close to the cliff edge.
- This report has marked each location where there was evidence that walkers were leaving the official trail whether deliberately ignoring the multiple warnings and engaging in risky behaviour, or inadvertently because the distinction between the official and unofficial routes was unclear.
- Given the unsuitability of this trail for the type of user it is attracting, the increase in volume of visitors accessing the trail at any one time and the dangerous/risky behaviour witnessed during inspection in spite of the numerous warning signs at all trailheads and at multiple locations along the trail, **it is recommended that the entire trail be closed immediately in order to facilitate any upgrading works necessary to make the trail safe.** In recent years works have been carried out by Clare County Council immediately to the north and south of the visitor centre. In these locations the new wall of flagstones effectively forms a fence boundary between walkers and the cliff edge and at the time of inspection no visitors were observed climbing or attempting to climb over this barrier.

Trail Information

Summary:

Information Source	Points Deducted	Points Available	% Score
1. Website Information	0		
2. Information Board at Main Trailhead	0		
3. Information Boards at Other Trailheads	0		
Total: (Minimum 70% required)	0	10	100%

Note: Percentage Scores for individual Information Sources are not provided.

1. Website Information

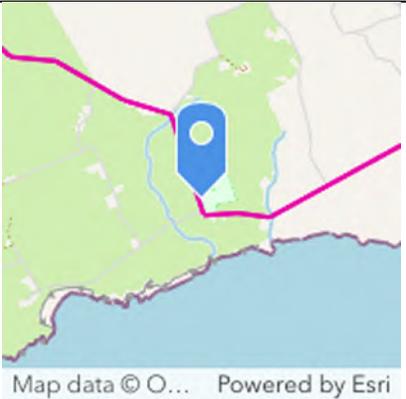
Website: www.sportireland.ie/outdoors
Comment: None

Required Information (Should be available and correct on Website)		Website	Points Deducted
Significant:			
1	Map: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
1a	Up-to-Date Map of the Route	Yes	
1b	Clearly Defined Trail Route	Yes	
1c	Start/Finish Point	Yes	
2	Grade: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
2a	Grade (Difficulty Rating) of the Trail	Yes	
2b	Definition of the Grade	Yes	
3	Length of Trail (in km) from Start to Finish	Yes	
4	Estimated Time to Complete the Trail for the Average User	Yes	
5	Information on Whether Dogs are Permitted on the Trail or not	Yes	
Total Points Deducted:			0

Advisory:			
6	Ascent in Metres	Yes	
7	Description/Images of Waymarking Used on the Trail	Yes	
8	Brief Description of the Route	Yes	
9	Contact Number or E-mail Address for the Management Organization	Yes	
10	Emergency Contact Details	Yes	
11	The Leave No Trace Principles or Country Code	Yes	
12	Notification of any Significant Temporary Diversions	Yes	
13	Details of Services Available if any	Yes	
14	Link to Online Directions e.g. Google Maps	Yes	

Note: Items in Blue are deemed Significant and subject to scoring. Advisory items are also important to provide for walkers, to give them an informed and enjoyable experience.

2. Main Trailhead & Information Board

Main Trailhead: Moher Sports Field		
Sufficient Parking?		
Yes		
No. of Car Parking Spaces?		
10		
Trailhead Signposted?		
No	<p>Comment on Trailhead: The information board is located behind a wall at the entrance to the Moher Sports Field facility. The information is difficult to read as it is difficult to get close enough to the board. The board should be located on the footpath side of the entrance wall. The trail management, Clare Local Development Company, have a plan in place to upgrade and or replace all existing information boards on the Burren Way and Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The map board contains information about the dangers of walking the cliff path and includes safety advice to be followed in relation to this. This info should be written in larger font with red lettering and international infographics used for trail users who do not have English, to ensure the safety message is clearly visible and understandable to all at the start of the trail.: The information includes the following advice:</p> <p>1. Keep to the constructed path away from cliff edges and overhangs. 2. Always supervise children especially near cliff edges. 3. Walking surfaces can vary considerably with the weather, wear appropriate footwear.</p>	
Information Board?		
Yes		

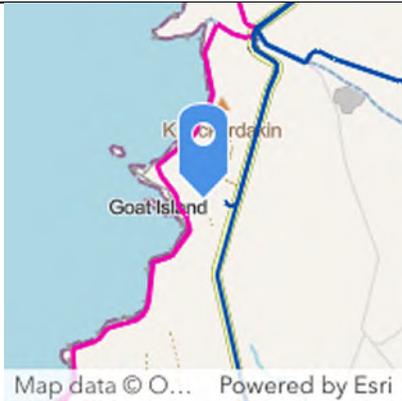
Required Information (Should be available and correct on Information Board)		Information Board	Points Deducted
Significant:			
1	Map: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
1a	Up-to-Date Map of the Route	Yes	
1b	Clearly Defined Trail Route	Yes	
1c	Start/Finish Point	Yes	
1d	'You are Here' Pointer	Yes	
2	Grade: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
2a	Grade (Difficulty) of the Trail	Yes	
2b	Definition of the Grade (Difficulty Rating)	Yes	
3	Length of Trail (in km) from Start to Finish	Yes	
4	Estimated Time to Complete the Trail for the Average User	Yes	
5	Information on Whether Dogs are Permitted on the Trail or not	Yes	
Total Points Deducted:			0

Advisory:			
6	Ascent in Metres	Yes	
7	Description/Images of Waymarking Used on the Trail	Yes	

8	Brief Description of the Route	Yes	
9	Contact Number or E-mail Address for the Management Organization	Yes	
10	Emergency Contact Details	Yes	
11	The Leave No Trace Principles or Country Code	Yes	
12	Notification of any Significant Temporary Diversions	Yes	
13	Details of Services Available if any	Yes	

Note: Items in Blue are deemed Significant and subject to scoring. All other items are also important to provide for walkers, to give them an enjoyable and safe experience.

3. Other Trailheads & Information Boards

Secondary Trailhead: Cliffs of Moher Visitor centre		
Sufficient Parking?		
Yes		
No. of Parking Spaces?		
c.200		
Trailhead Signposted?		
No		
Information Board?	Yes	

Comment on Trailhead: The information board at this trailhead is very well positioned and visible to all who come from the visitor centre car park or who pass through the visitors centre itself.

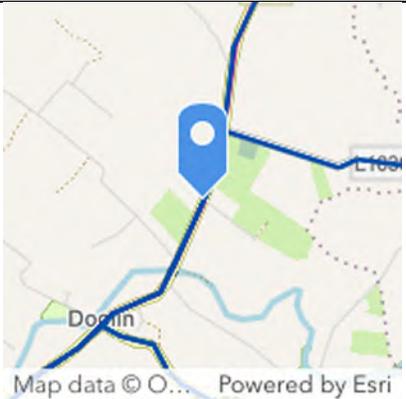
The trail management, Clare Local Development Company, have a plan in place to upgrade and or replace all existing information boards on the Burren Way and Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The map board contains information about the dangers of walking the cliff path and includes safety advice to be followed in relation to this. This info should be written in larger font with red lettering and international infographics used for trail users who do not have English, to ensure the safety message is clearly visible and understandable to all at this point of access to the trail.: The information includes the following advice:

1. Keep to the constructed path away from cliff edges and overhangs.
2. Always supervise children especially near cliff edges.
3. Walking surfaces can vary considerably with the weather, wear appropriate footwear.

Required Information (Should be available and correct on Information Board)		Information Board	Points Deducted
Significant:			
1	Map: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
1a	Up-to-Date Map of the Route	Yes	
1b	Clearly Defined Trail Route	Yes	
1c	Start/Finish Point	Yes	
1d	'You are Here' Pointer	Yes	
2	Grade: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
2a	Grade (Difficulty) of the Trail	Yes	
2b	Definition of the Grade (Difficulty Rating)	Yes	
3	Length of Trail (in km) from Start to Finish	Yes	
4	Estimated Time to Complete the Trail for the Average User	Yes	
5	Information on Whether Dogs are Permitted on the Trail or not	Yes	
Total Points Deducted:			0
Advisory:			
6	Ascent in Metres	Yes	

7	Description/Images of Waymarking Used on the Trail	No	
8	Brief Description of the Route	Yes	
9	Contact Number or E-mail Address for the Management Organization	Yes	
10	Emergency Contact Details	Yes	
11	The Leave No Trace Principles or Country Code	Yes	
12	Notification of any Significant Temporary Diversions	Yes	
13	Details of Services Available if any	Yes	

Note: Items in Blue are deemed Significant and subject to scoring. All other items are also important to provide for walkers, to give them an enjoyable and safe experience.

Secondary Trailhead: Doolin Community Centre		
Sufficient Parking?		
Yes		
No. of Parking Spaces?		
30		
Trailhead Signposted?		
No		
Information Board?		
Yes		
<p>Comment on Trailhead: This trail head information board is clearly visible to all trail users at the entrance to Doolin Community Centre.</p> <p>The trail management, Clare Local Development Company, have a plan in place to upgrade and or replace all existing information boards on the Burren Way and Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk. The map board contains information about the dangers of walking the cliff path and includes safety advice to be followed in relation to this. This info should be written in larger font with red lettering and international infographics used for trail users who do not have English, to ensure the safety message is clearly visible and understandable to all at this point of access to the trail.: The information includes the following advice:</p> <p>1. Keep to the constructed path away from cliff edges and overhangs. 2. Always supervise children especially near cliff edges. 3. Walking surfaces can vary considerably with the weather, wear appropriate footwear.</p>		

Required Information (Should be available and correct on Information Board)		Information Board	Points Deducted
Significant:			
1	Map: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
1a	Up-to-Date Map of the Route	Yes	
1b	Clearly Defined Trail Route	Yes	
1c	Start/Finish Point	Yes	
1d	'You are Here' Pointer	Yes	
2	Grade: (1 point deducted if any information missing/incorrect in this group)		
2a	Grade (Difficulty) of the Trail	Yes	
2b	Definition of the Grade (Difficulty Rating)	Yes	
3	Length of Trail (in km) from Start to Finish	Yes	
4	Estimated Time to Complete the Trail for the Average User	Yes	
5	Information on Whether Dogs are Permitted on the Trail or not	Yes	
Total Points Deducted:			0

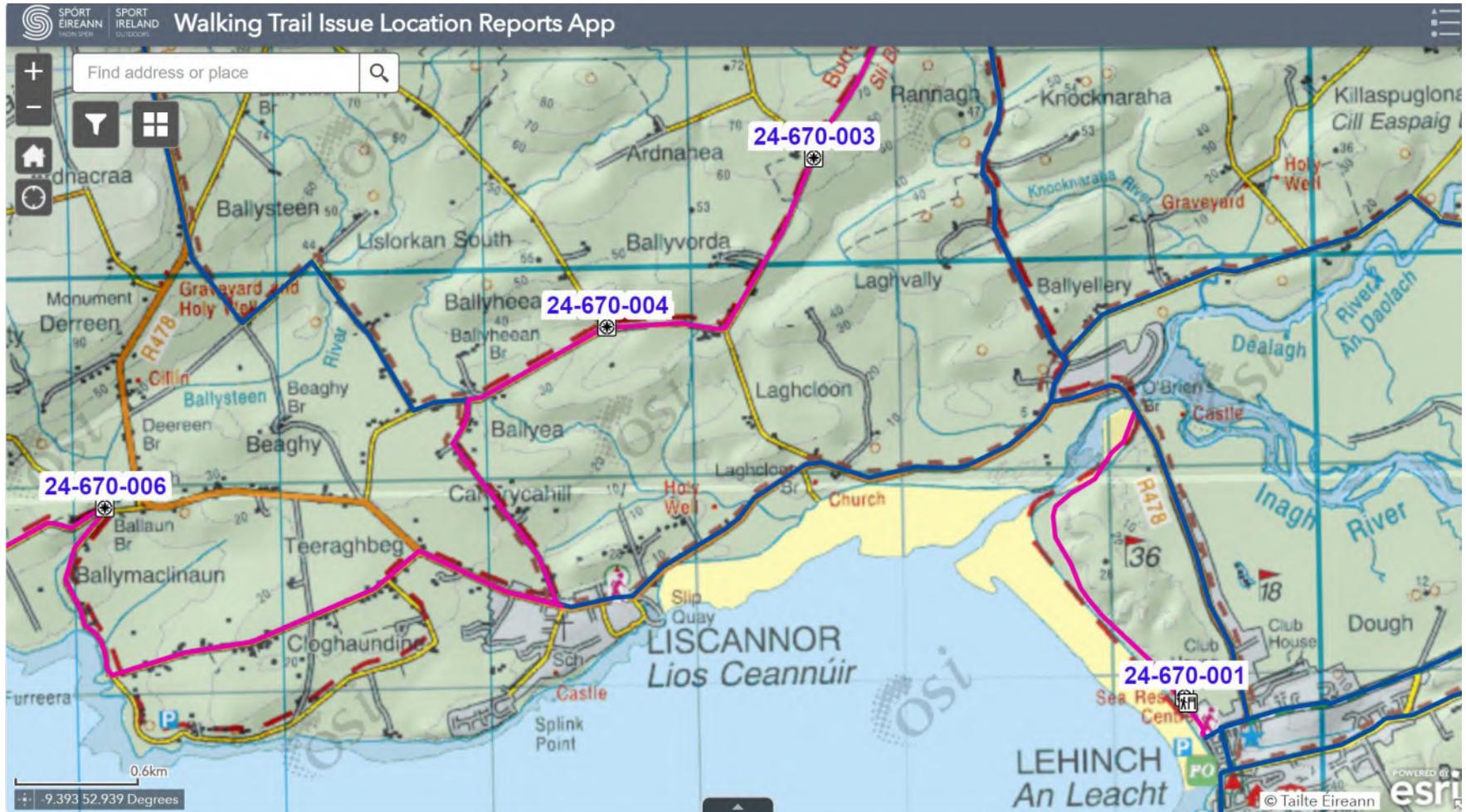
Advisory:			
6	Ascent in Metres	Yes	
7	Description/Images of Waymarking Used on the Trail	No	
8	Brief Description of the Route	Yes	

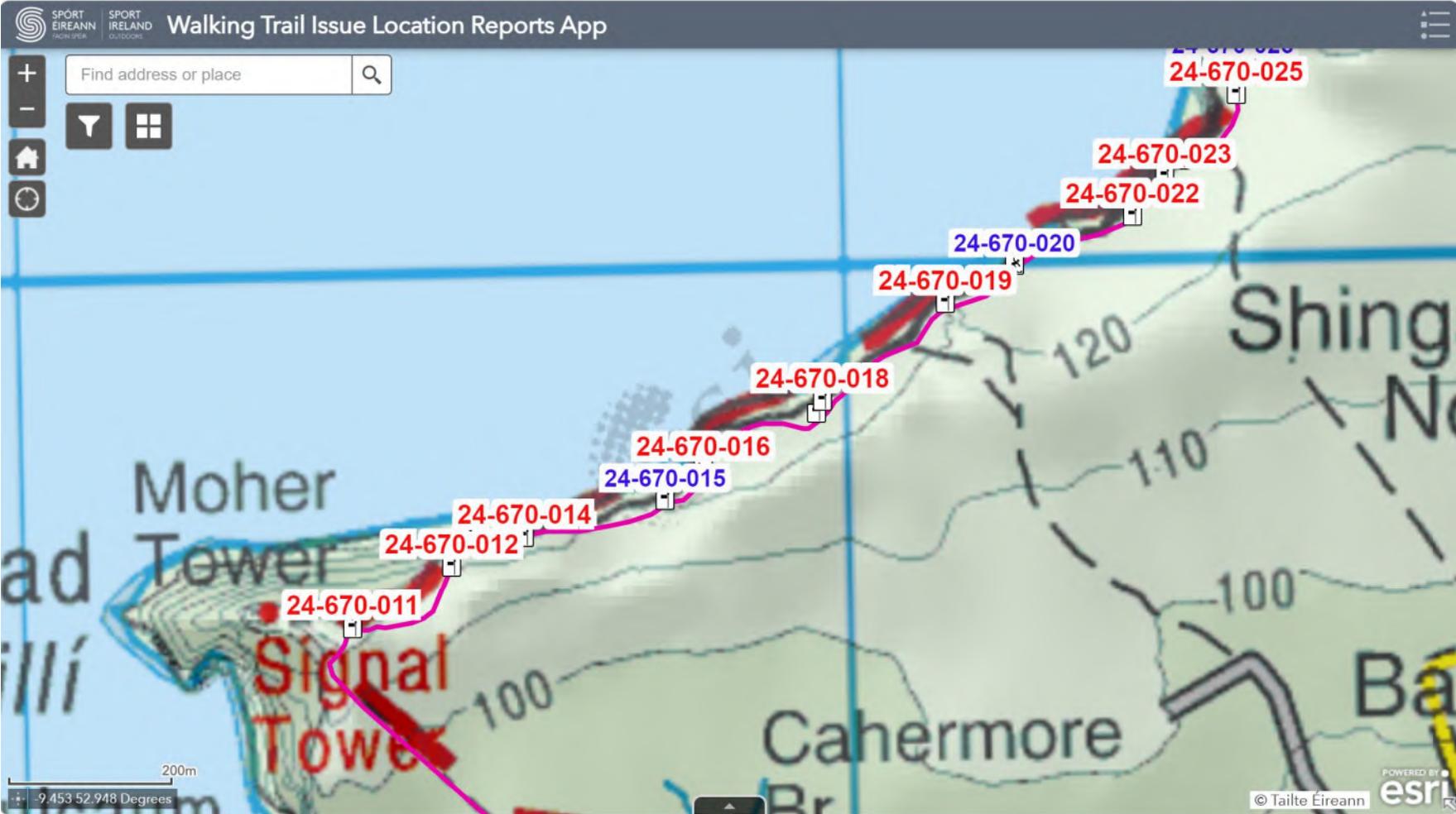
9	Contact Number or E-mail Address for the Management Organization	Yes	
10	Emergency Contact Details	Yes	
11	The Leave No Trace Principles or Country Code	Yes	
12	Notification of any Significant Temporary Diversions	Yes	
13	Details of Services Available if any	Yes	

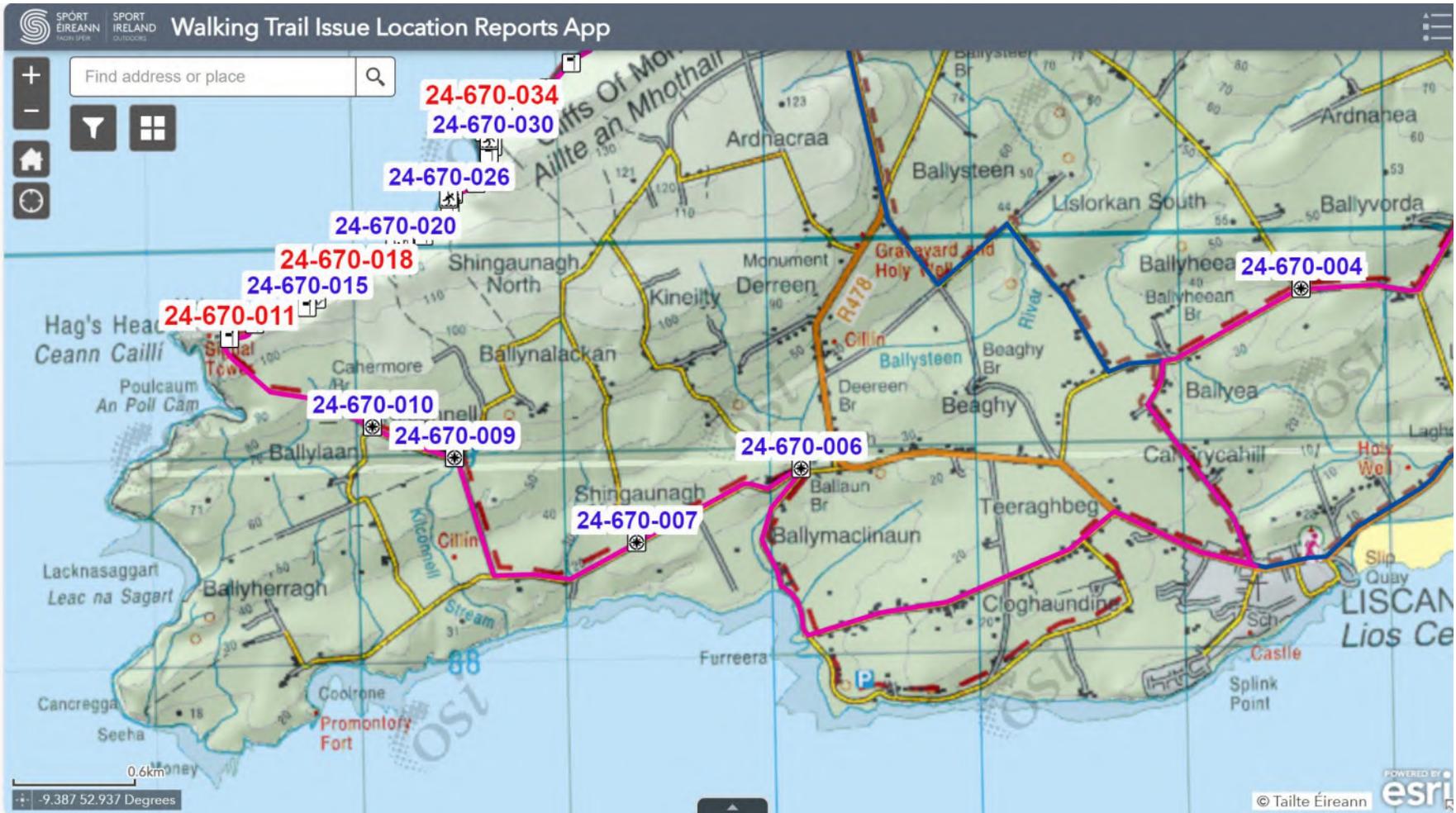
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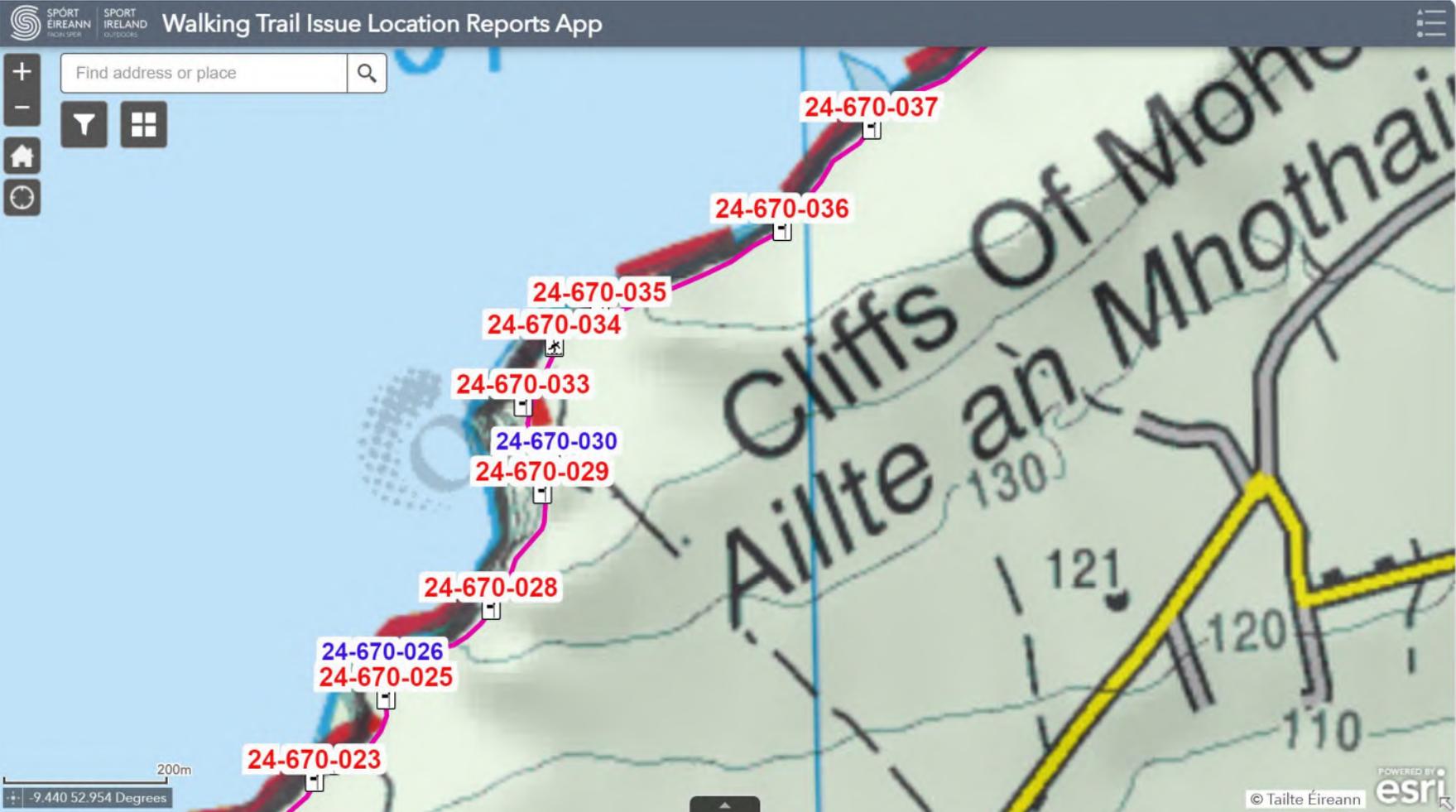
Trail Infrastructure Issues

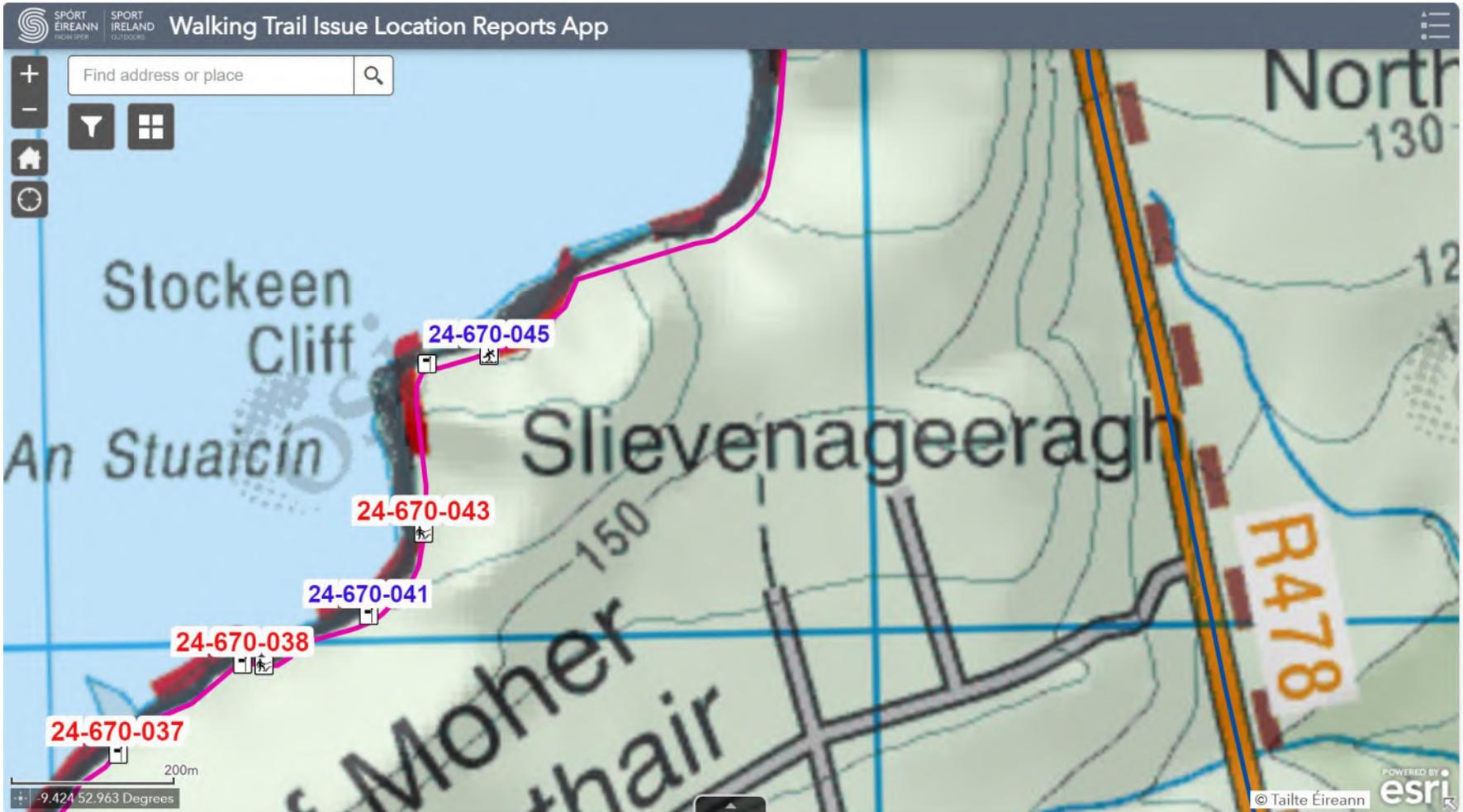
Issue Overview Map

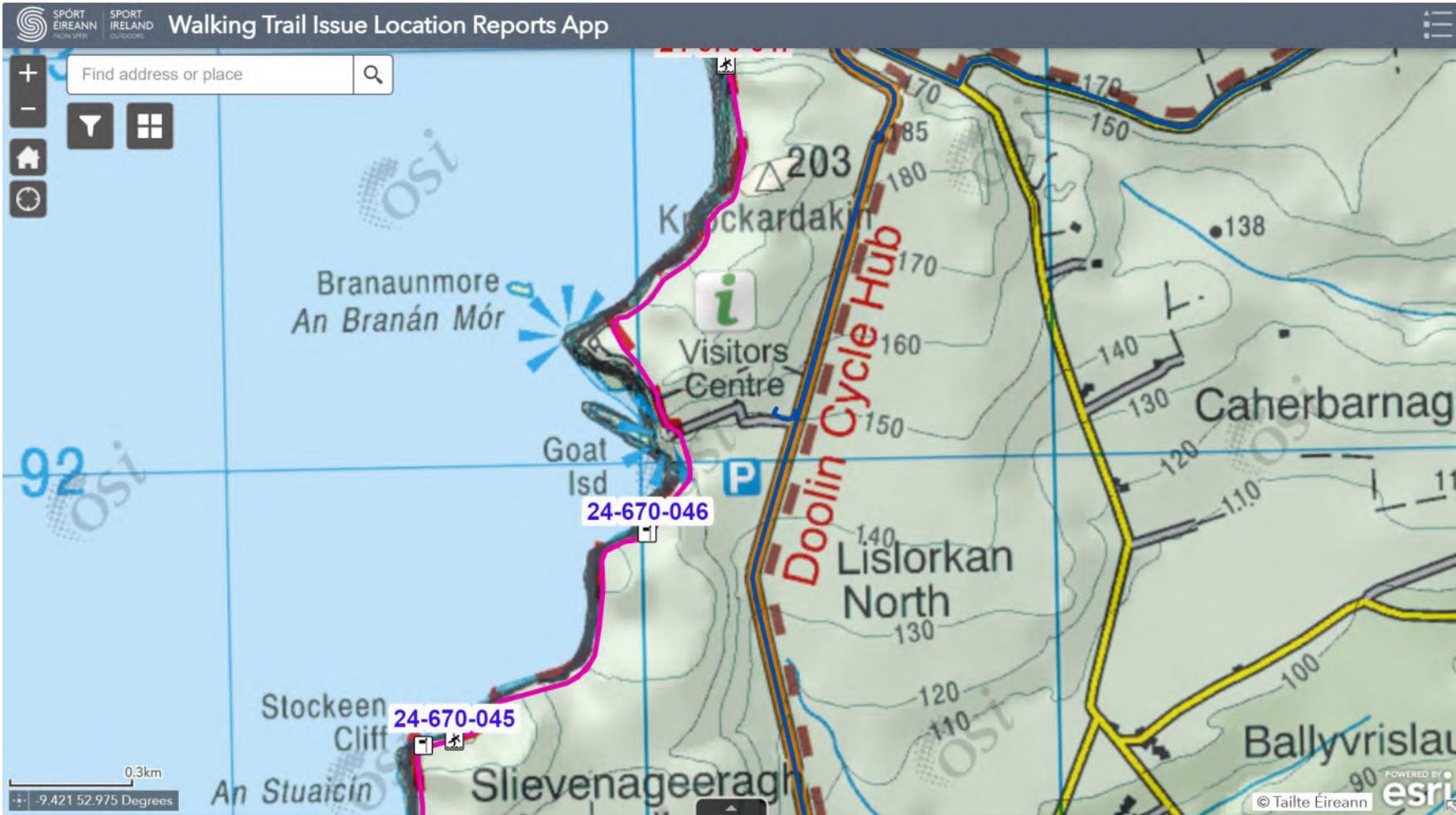


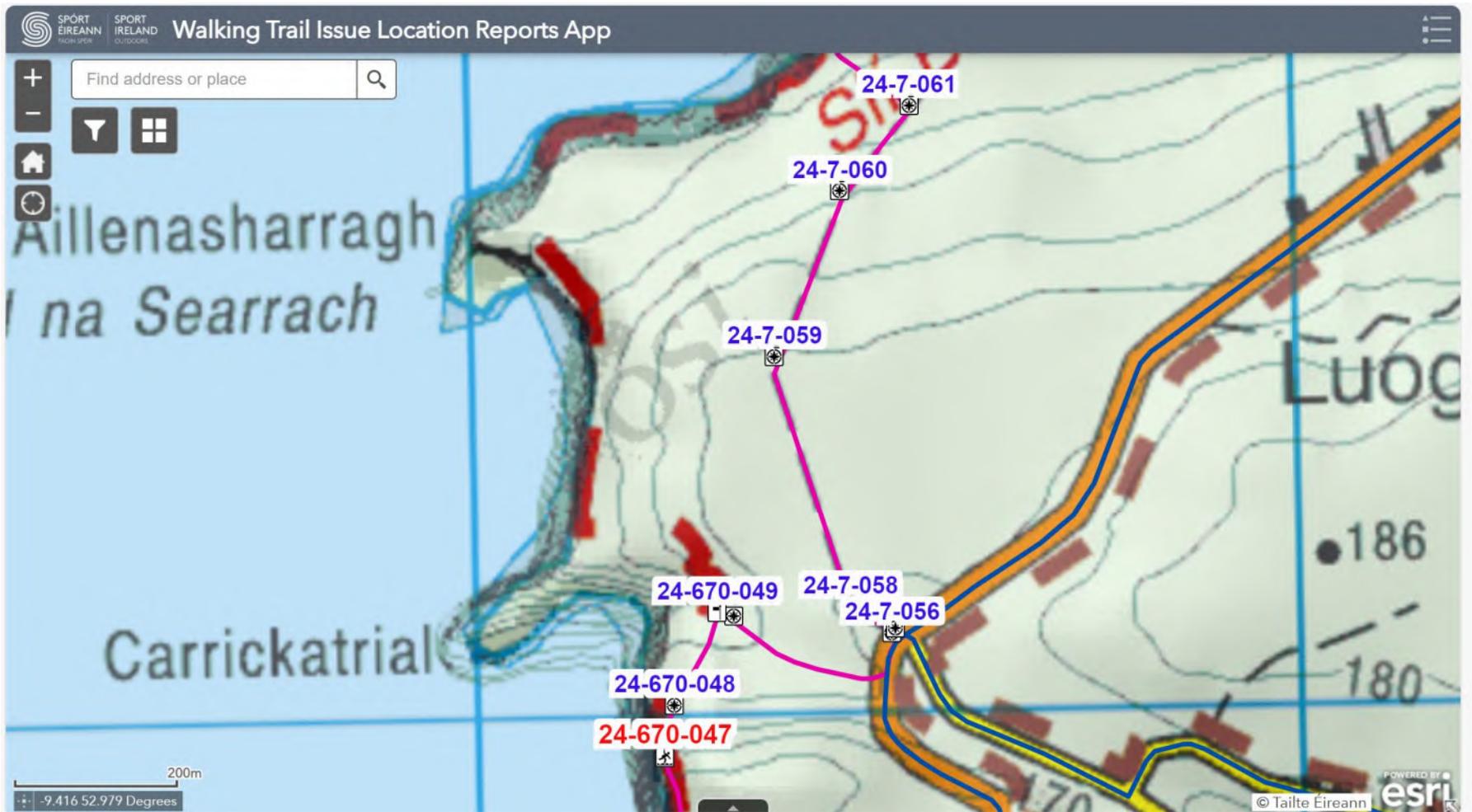










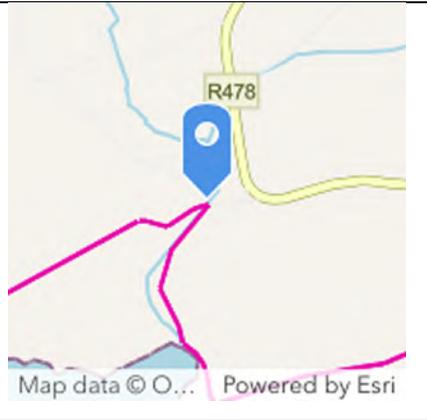


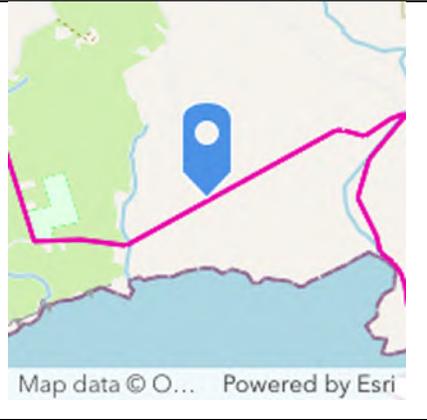


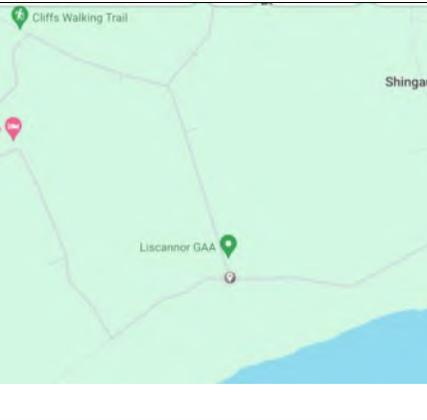


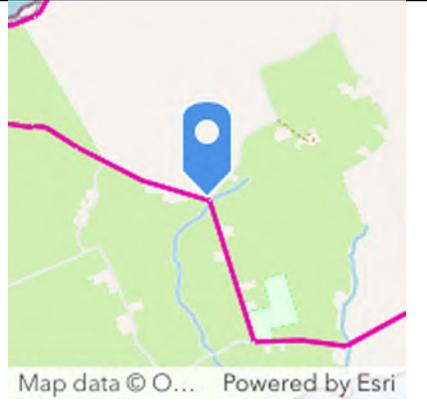


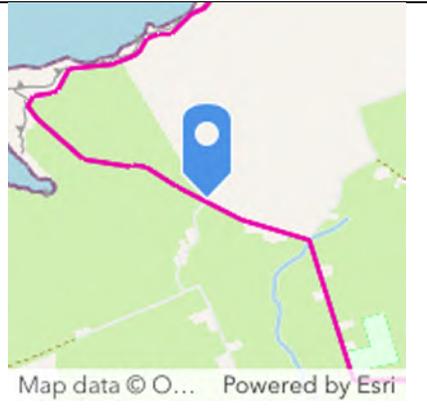
Safety Issues	Significant Issues	Advisory Issues
43	36	0

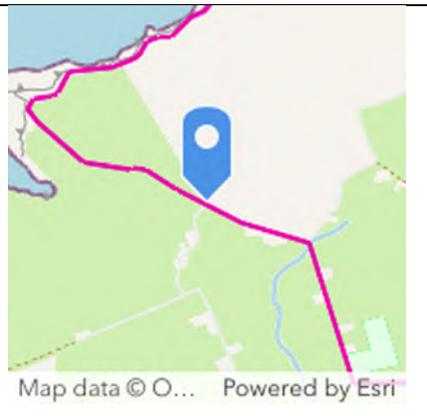
Issue ID		
24-670-006		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.94261, -9.42647		
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map		
Comment: None		

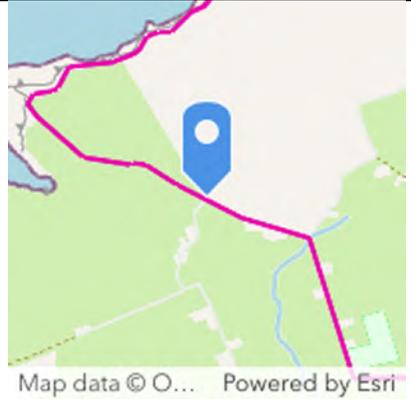
Issue ID		
24-670-007		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*		
52.93939, -9.43827		
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map		
Comment: Straight on yellow arrows on black background mounted on telegraph pole needed as existing signage prone to disappearing among roadside vegetation.		

Issue ID		
24-670-008		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*		
0.00000, 0.00000		
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map		
Comment: None		

Issue ID			
24-670-009			
Severity			
Significant			
Category			
Waymarking Issue			
Issue			
Broken/Damaged/Collapsed			
Coordinates*			
52.94304, -9.45141			
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map			
Comment: None			

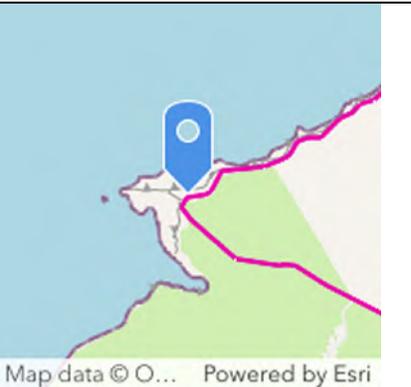
Issue ID			
24-670-010			
Severity			
Significant			
Category			
Waymarking Issue			
Issue			
Missing/Needed			
Coordinates*			
52.94438, -9.45736			
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map			
Comment: Straight on arrows needed			

Issue ID			
24-670-010A			
Severity			
Safety			
Category			
Signage			
Issue			
Missing/Needed			
Coordinates*			
52.94438, -9.45736			
Location: At gate from public roadway onto start of Cliffs of Moher Walking Trail			
Comment: Warning signs needed on this gate using internationally understood infographics alerting trail users to the dangers of the cliff walk. The existing signs only refer to car parking.			

Issue ID	24-670-010B		
Severity			
Safety			
Category			
Signage			
Issue			
Not clearly visible on approach			
Coordinates*			
52.94438, -9.45736			

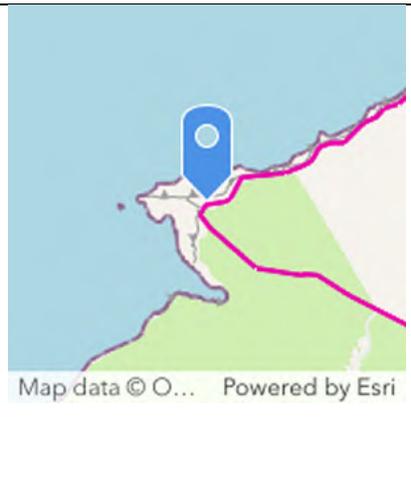
Location: Beside gate leading from public roadway onto start of Cliffs of Moher Walking Trail

Comment: The photograph shows the current warning sign in place at this location. It is easy to walk past this sign without seeing it. The sign appears to be informational rather than warning of danger. Larger international infographic symbols in red font warning of cliff edge danger required here and sign should be located on gate so that trail users cannot pass it without seeing it.

24-670-010C		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.94438, -9.45736		

Location: Just before signal tower at Hag's Head.

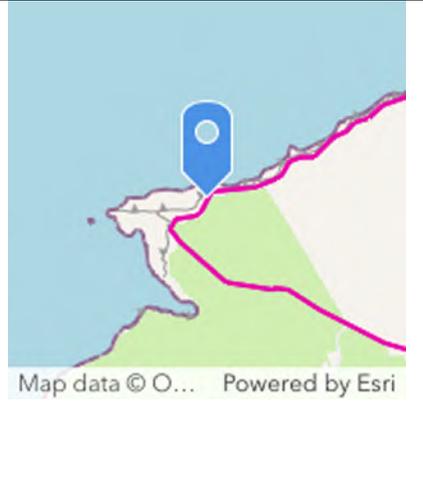
Comment: The distinction between the official and unofficial paths is very clear here but warning signs are needed to alert trail users to stay on the official path.

Issue ID	24-670-011		
Severity			
Safety			
Category			
Signage Issue			
Issue			
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas			
Coordinates*			
52.94821, -9.46766			

Location: Just north of the signal tower at Hag's Head.

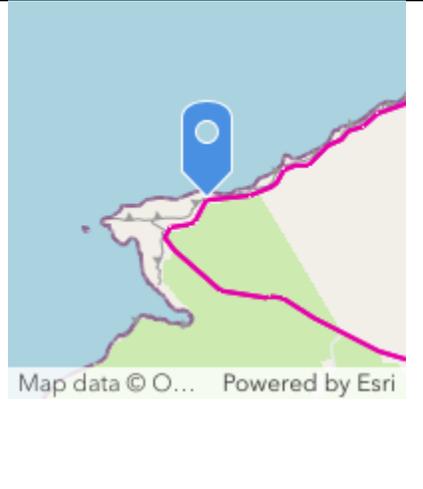
Comment: Trail users were observed stepping over/past this sign and walking down the unofficial path to the cliff edge. The sign requests that walkers stay on the official path but it does

not contain a warning about the danger and cliff edge straight ahead. Additional warning/fence needed here.

Issue ID	 <p>Map data © O... Powered by Esri</p>	
24-670-012		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.94886, -9.46587		

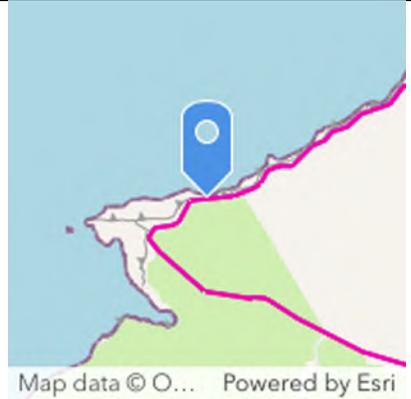
Location: Just north of the signal tower at Hag's Head.

Comment: Official path to the left signpost needed. The photograph shows the view south to the signal tower with the official path to the left and unofficial path branching off to the right. There is little differentiation in trail surface between the official and unofficial path here and there is no sign to warn trail users to keep to the left.

Issue ID	 <p>Map data © O... Powered by Esri</p>	
24-670-013		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.94917, -9.46554		

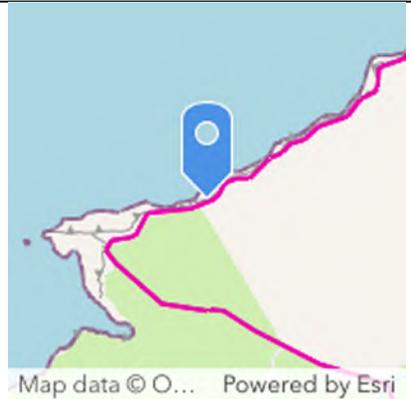
Location: North of the signal tower at Hag's Head.

Comment: The unofficial trail is visible on the LHS of the photograph. Signage is needed here to warn people to keep to the official trail on the right and not to climb over the barrier.

Issue ID	24-670-014		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.94920, -9.46458		

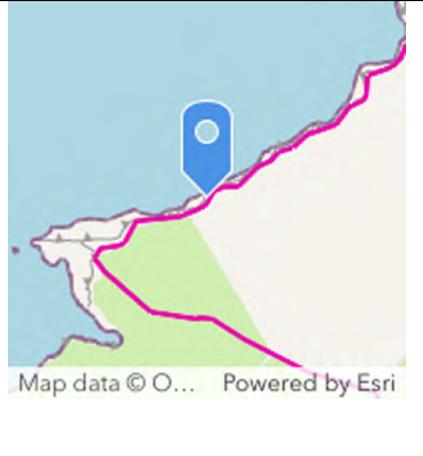
Location: North of the signal tower at Hag's Head.

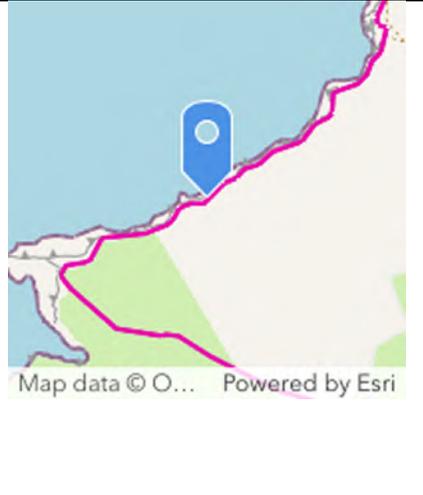
Comment: At this location the official trail brings the walker around a pinch point in the trail created by a field boundary jutting into the trail reducing the width of the trail considerably and bringing the walker close to the cliff edge. In addition the trail is waterlogged just beyond the pinch point resulting in walkers skirting around the puddle bringing them dangerously close to the cliff edge. The trail should be re-routed away from the cliff edge here and/or fencing and signage erected to protect trail users.

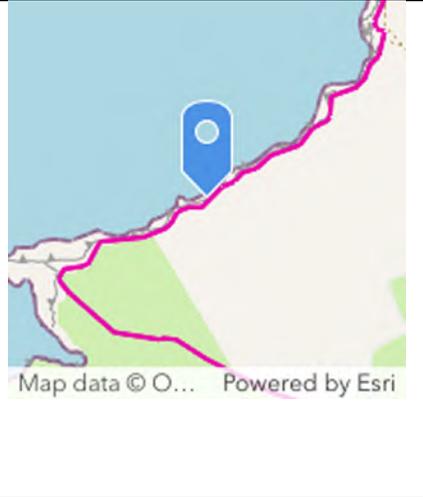
Issue ID	24-670-015		
Severity	Significant		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.94959, -9.46204		

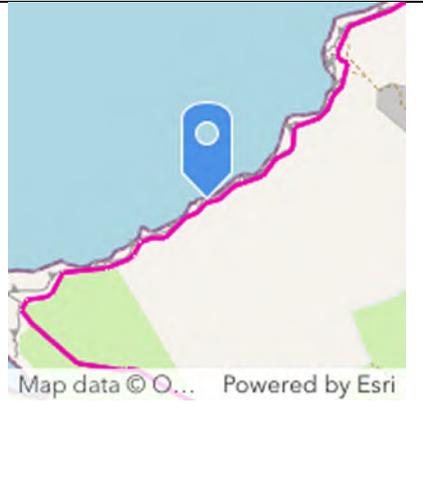
Location: North of Hag's Head

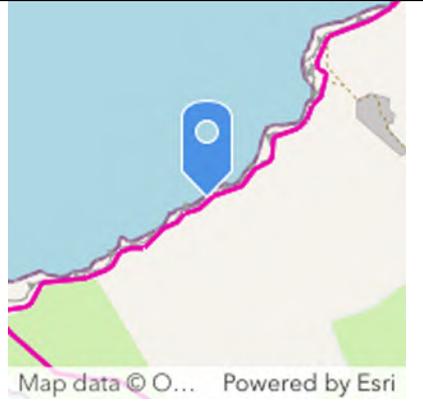
Comment: Trail upgrade required here to distinguish official trail from unofficial trail. The unofficial trail at this location has been fenced off but trail users can still cross over to the unofficial trail beyond this fence. The official trail needs to be widened here with a barrier/fence on the seaward side and visitor numbers controlled to allow adequate room for trail users going in opposite directions to pass each other safely.

Issue ID	24-670-016		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Fencing Issue		
Issue	Barbed Wire that may injure a Walker		
Coordinates*	52.94993, -9.46136		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: The official trail is too narrow here for walkers going In opposite directions to pass each other easily bringing them close to exposed barbed wire fencing. The trail needs to be widened here and/or protective tubing put on all barbed wire lining the trail.			

Issue ID	24-670-017		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95053, -9.45932		
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map			
Comment: A wedding ceremony was underway at the time of inspection close to the cliff edge off the official path. Events such as these should not be permitted. What appears to trail users as an official event sends out the wrong message that it is ok to stray from the official path and to stand close to the cliff edge.			

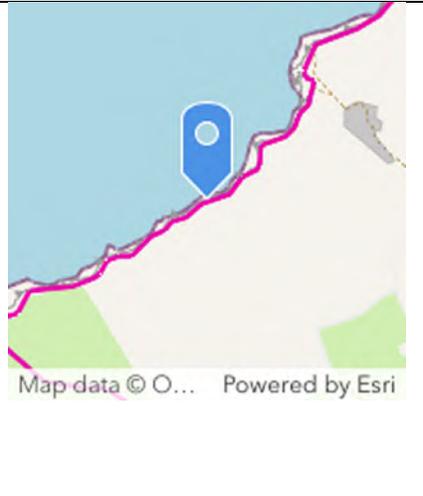
Issue ID		
24-670-018		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95067, -9.45920		
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: This is a pinch point on the trail where the official and unofficial paths meet briefly and are not distinguishable by trail surface. Warning signage is needed to divert walkers back onto the official trail at each side of this point and ultimately the trail should be upgraded/re-routed so that the official path is back from the cliff edge, does not go around a pinch point and is clearly differentiated from the unofficial path.		

Issue ID		
24-670-019		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95172, -9.45699		
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: The photograph shows a well used unofficial path leading to cliff edge with no warning signs present. Warning signs and signs to stay on the official path needed here.		

Issue ID		
24-670-020		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*		
52.95214, -9.45574		

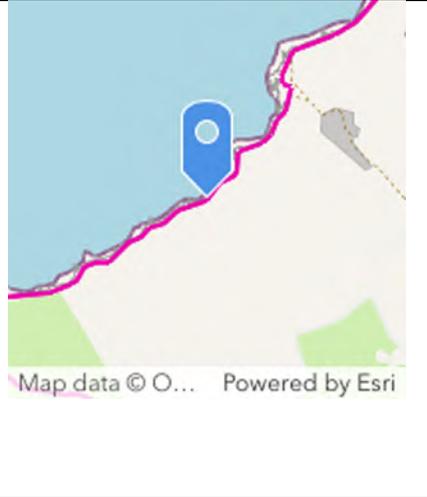
Location: North of Hag's Head.

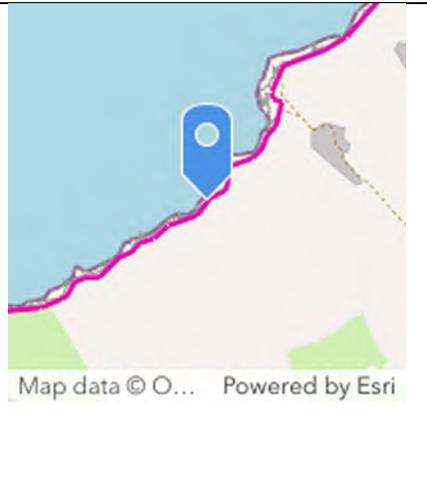
Comment: Drainage/ gravel needed here to avoid trail users skirting around this section of trail on the cliff side.

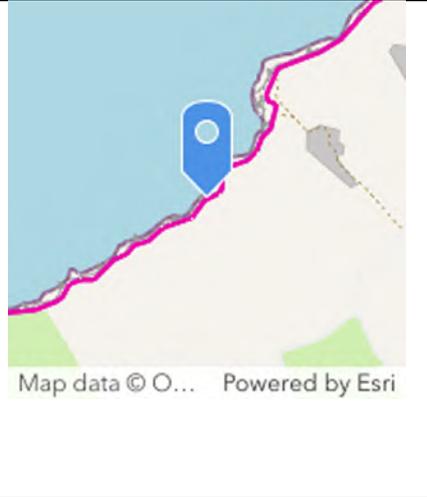
Issue ID		
24-670-021		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95238, -9.45499		

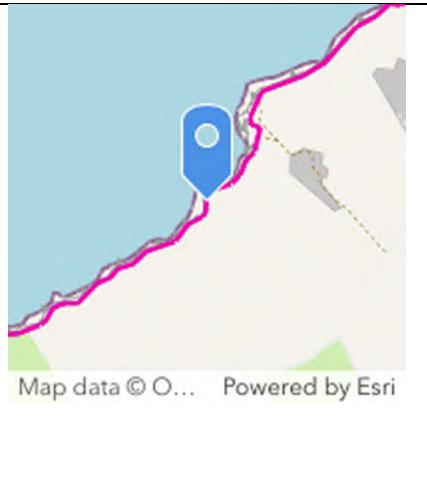
Location: North of Hag's Head.

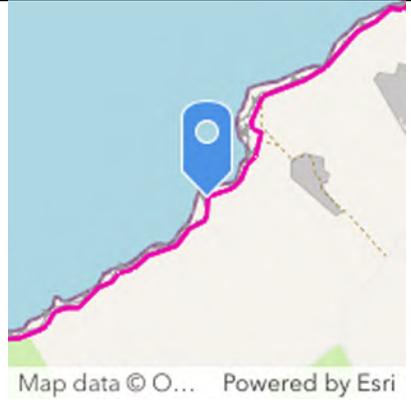
Comment: The photograph shows a clear and distinct official trail but with multiple unofficial paths through the grass where trail users are approaching the cliff edge. The person in the photograph on the left is standing well off the official trail. Warning signage is needed here advising walkers to stay on the official trail.

Issue ID	24-670-022		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95266, -9.45363		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: Fencing and warning signage needed here where the ground drops away at a steep angle from the path very close to the cliff edge posing a safety issue even for those walkers who do not leave the official trail.			

Issue ID	24-670-023		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95310, -9.45306		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: Trail users leave the official trail here to stand on the rock platforms close to the cliff edge. Warning signs needed and arrows directing walkers to stay on the official trail.			

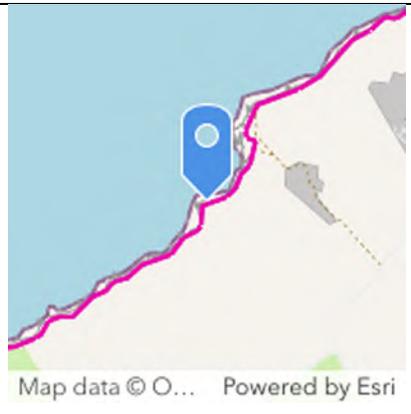
Issue ID		
24-670-024		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95328, -9.45274		
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: This is an extremely dangerous point on the trail where an unofficial path leads to a point right on the cliff edge not visible to walkers approaching from the south. This point needs to be fenced off with warning signs and directional arrows warning walkers to stay on the official trail.		

Issue ID		
24-670-025		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95399, -9.45176		
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: Many walkers were observed leaving the official trail here to stand on a cliff overhang. Warning signs/fencing needed here to warn trail users to stay on the official trail.		

Issue ID		
24-670-026		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*		
52.95428, -9.45183		

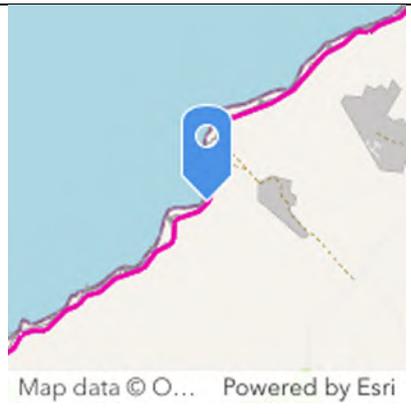
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: Waterlogged section of the trail causing walkers to skirt around and come close to the cliff edge. Trail upgrade needed and/or fencing and warning signage.

Issue ID		
24-670-027		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*		
52.95447, -9.45149		

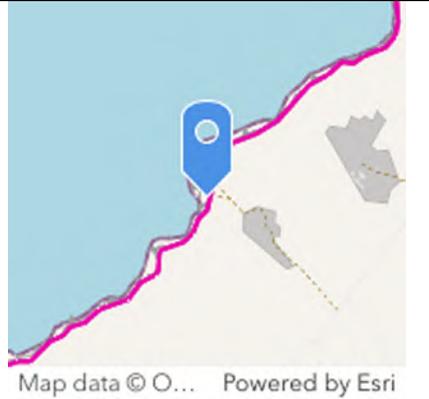
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: Waterlogged section of the trail causing walkers to skirt around and come close to the cliff edge. Trail upgrade needed and/or fencing and warning signage.

Issue ID		
24-670-028		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.95495, -9.44986		

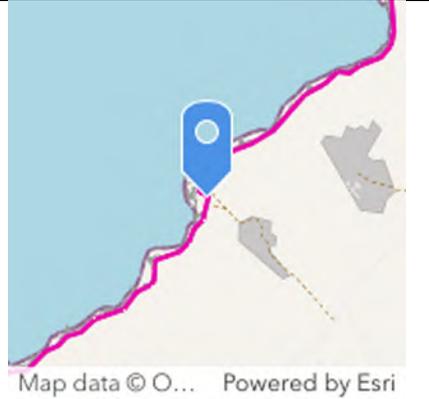
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map

Comment: Multiple unofficial paths through the grass at the cliff edge branching off the official trail. Signage needed here to warn walkers to stay on the official trail.

Issue ID	24-670-029		
Severity			
Safety			
Category			
Signage Issue			
Issue			
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas			
Coordinates*			
52.95621, -9.44894			

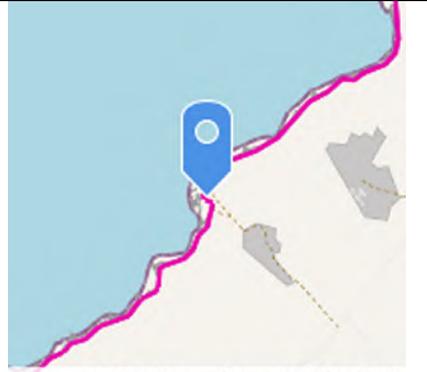
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: The photograph shows the official trail to the right which is too narrow for the large numbers using the trail resulting in an unofficial path which is very close to the cliff edge forming to the left. Fencing/warning signs/trail widening and upgrade needed here.

Issue ID	24-670-030		
Severity			
Significant			
Category			
Signage Issue			
Issue			
Incorrect Signage			
Coordinates*			
52.95657, -9.44869			

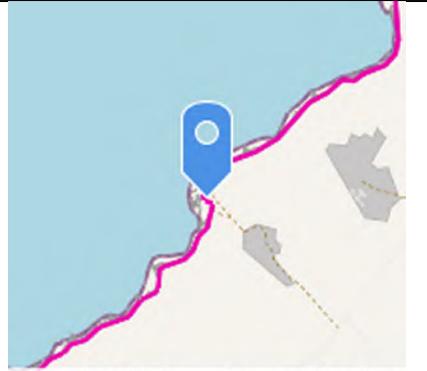
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: Redundant signage should be removed.

Issue ID	 <p>Map data © O... Powered by Esri</p>	
24-670-031		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95681, -9.44895	

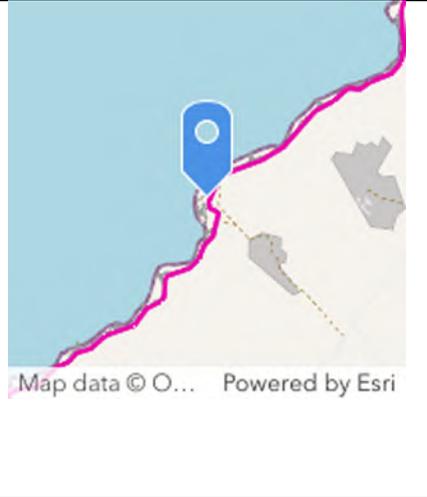
Location: North of Hag's Head.

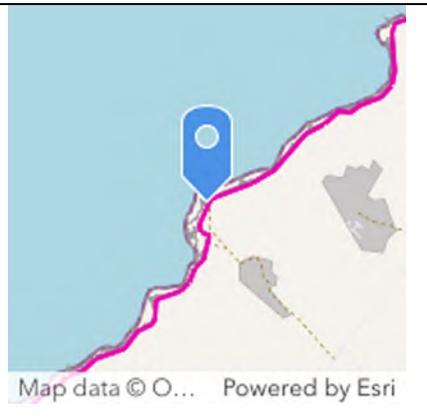
Comment: The photograph is taken looking south along the trail with the cliff edge to the right. It shows trail users climbing the earthen barrier separating the official trail from the unofficial trail. Warning signs and directional arrows requesting that trail users stay on the official trail are needed here.

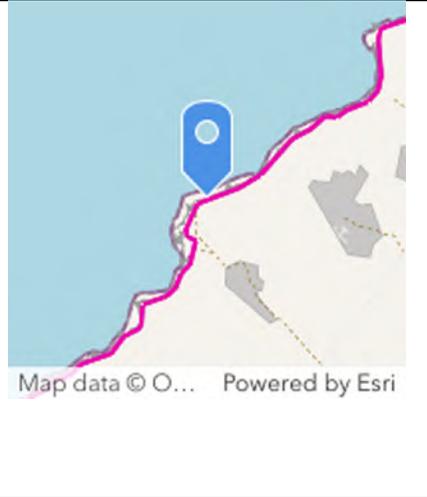
Issue ID	 <p>Map data © O... Powered by Esri</p>	
24-670-032		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*	52.95681, -9.44895	

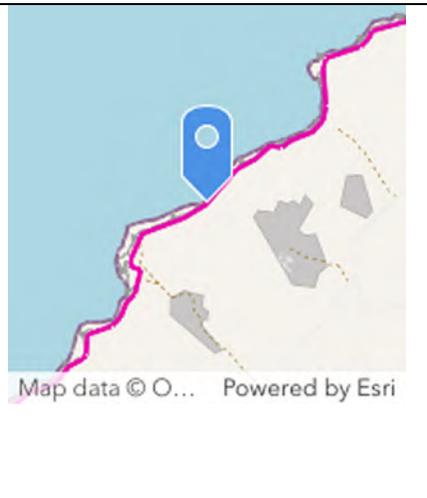
Location: The same location as the previous issue

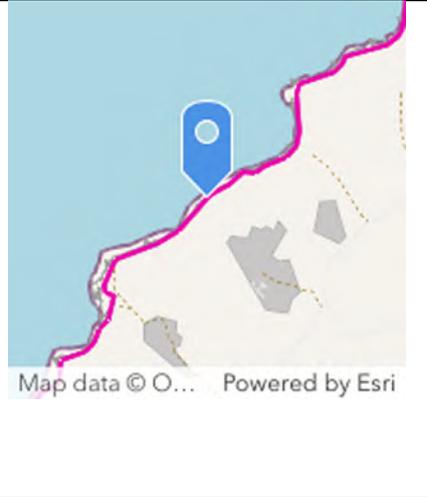
Comment: This section of the trail is prone to flooding and becoming waterlogged and muddy making the unofficial trail close to the cliff edge a more attractive route. Trail upgrade needed to prevent flooding and signage needed to warn walkers not to climb the barrier.

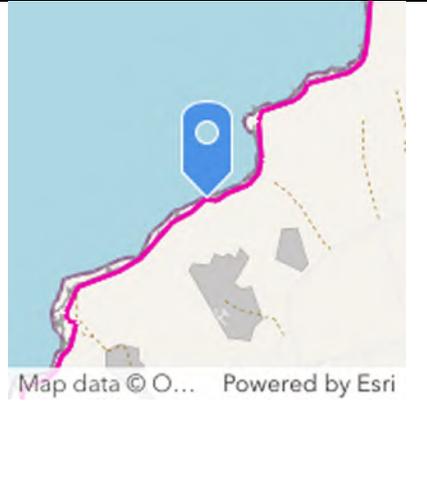
Issue ID	24-670-033		
Severity			
Safety	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95715, -9.44929		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: The photograph is taken looking north along the trail with the cliff edge to the left. The majority of trail users can be seen using the much wider unofficial path. The official path is too narrow for the large numbers using the trail and there are no warning signs directing walkers not to cross the barrier.			

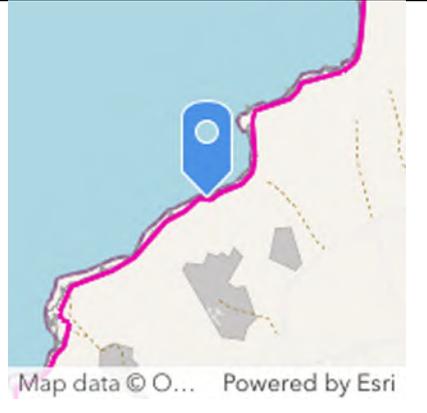
Issue ID	24-670-034		
Severity			
Safety	Safety		
Category	Surface Issue		
Issue	Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*	52.95781, -9.44873		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: Looking north along the trail the photograph shows the majority of trail users walking the unofficial path at the top of the high earthen barrier. The official trail on the right is waterlogged and very narrow and there are no warning signs directing walkers not to climb up to the unofficial path. This trail surface here needs to be upgraded and the trail widened to allow for the large number of trail users.			

Issue ID	24-670-035		
Severity			
Safety	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95816, -9.44792		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: The photograph is taken looking south along the trail with the cliff edge to the right. Multiple trail users can be seen climbing off the official trail which is located behind the high earthen barrier to the left. There is no warning signage here directing people to keep left and stay on the official trail.			

Issue ID	24-670-036		
Severity			
Safety	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.95906, -9.44463		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: the photograph is taken looking north along the trail with the cliff edge to the left. Multiple unofficial paths are visible to the left and the official trail surface merges with these to widen into a path that comes close to the cliff edge with no warning signs.			

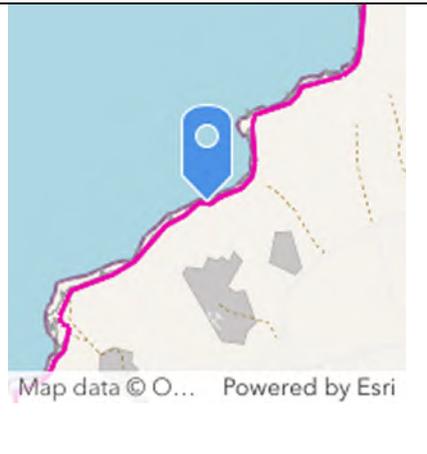
Issue ID	24-670-037		
Severity			
Safety			
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.96015, -9.44304		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: The photograph is taken looking north along the trail with the cliff edge to the left. Here it is difficult to distinguish between the official and unofficial trails as the surfaces are the same and the path to the right is very narrow. A trail upgrade is needed here to widen the official trail, clearly distinguishing it with a different trail surface from any adjacent unofficial paths and provide warning signage to keep right.			

Issue ID	24-670-038		
Severity			
Safety			
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.96112, -9.44078		
Location: North of Hag's Head.			
Comment: The photograph is taken looking north along the trail with the cliff edge to the left. Here the official trail to the right is through a 'stile' made of two flagstones placed in an upturned V. This presents a visual barrier to the trail user and presents an unnecessary obstacle. This stile should be removed. The warning signage should be accompanied by a fence preventing walkers from using the very dangerous unofficial trail to the left.			

Issue ID		
24-670-039		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Route Issue		
Issue		
Other		
Coordinates*		
52.96111, -9.44040		

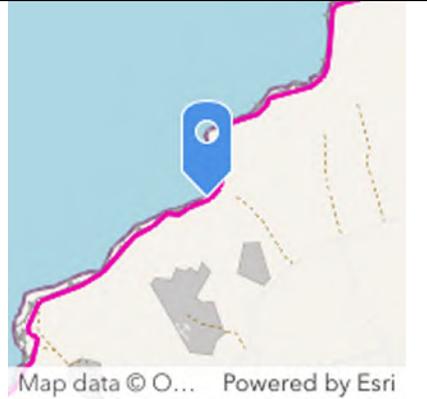
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: The waymarker plaque located on the narrow section of official trail presents a trip hazard and a barrier to two way traffic. This section of the trail needs to be upgraded and widened to allow for walkers to pass each other easily and discourage people from climbing over the barrier to the dangerous unofficial path.

Issue ID		
24-670-040		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Fencing Issue		
Issue		
Barbed Wire that may injure a Walker		
Coordinates*		
52.96111, -9.44039		

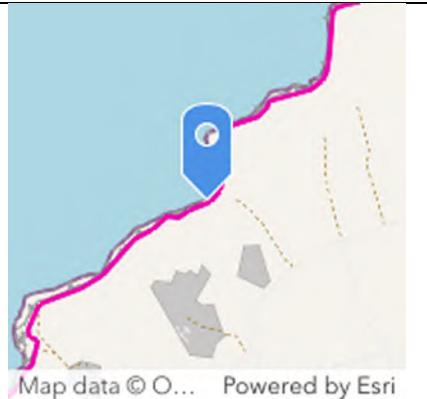
Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: Exposed barbed wire poses a risk of injury to walkers who are forced to hug the fence to make way for walkers passing in the other direction. Official trail should be widened here and barbed wire fencing removed.

Issue ID	24-670-041		
Severity			
Significant			
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.96166, -9.43850		

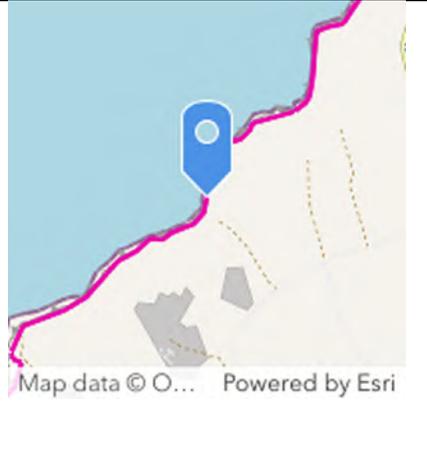
Location: North of Hag's Head.

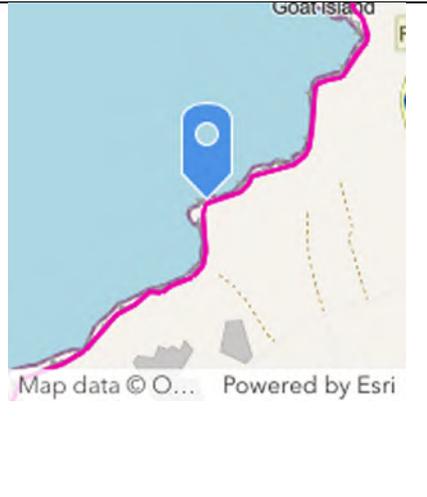
Comment: The photograph is taken looking south along the trail with the cliff edge to the right. While signage has been erected here directing walkers to stay on the official path, fencing should be erected here to prevent walkers from stepping over the signage and using the very dangerous unofficial path.

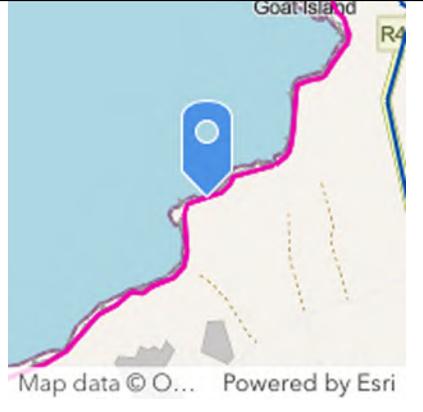
Issue ID	24-670-042		
Severity			
Safety			
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.96166, -9.43850		

Location: North of Hag's Head.

Comment: This photograph shows trail users who have ignored the signage standing on the unofficial path, sitting on the barrier and other trail users sitting low down on the right hand side close to the cliff edge. Warning signs are needed here to remind trail users of the dangers, access to this path should be fenced off and the official trail upgraded and widened.

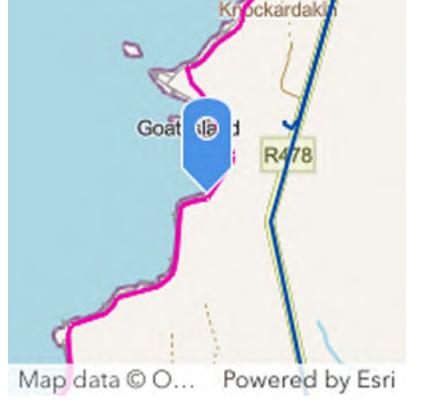
Issue ID		
24-670-043		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Fencing Issue		
Issue		
Barbed Wire that may injure a Walker		
Coordinates*	52.96254, -9.43751	
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: Barbed wire could cause injury to walkers forced to move in close to the fence when leaving way for walkers going in the opposite direction. The official trail needs to be upgraded and widened and barbed wire removed from fencing.		

Issue ID		
24-670-044		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.96438, -9.43746	
Location: North of Hag's Head.		
Comment: The photograph is taken looking south along the trail with the cliff edge to the right. It shows trail users climbing back off the official path through a break in the barrier. The broken section of barrier should be repaired and signage erected reminding walkers to stay on the official path and not to cross the barrier.		

Issue ID	24-670-045		
Severity	Significant		
Category	Surface Issue		
Issue	Wet, Muddy or Boggy		
Coordinates*	52.96447, -9.43634		

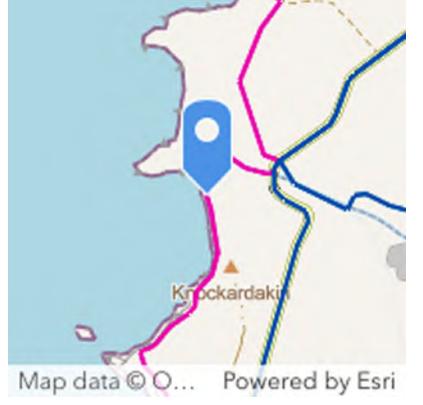
Location: Inside the 1km zone south of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: The trail is waterlogged and requires an upgrade to improve drainage. The safety barrier here was observed to be working very well with all walkers staying on the safe side of the barrier.

Issue ID	24-670-046		
Severity	Significant		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Not clearly visible on approach.		
Coordinates*	52.96894, -9.42939		

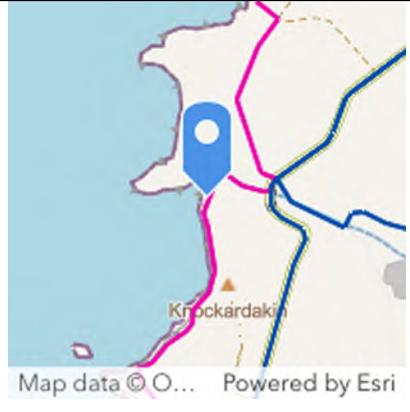
Location: Inside the 1km zone south of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: The safety signage in the photograph is located to the side of the walk and is not clearly visible. It should be relocated where people can see it on approach. The safety signage should also be clearer with larger red font and international infographics to communicate with visitors who can't read English.

Issue ID	24-670-047		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Surface Issue		
Issue	Erosion/Trail Spread		
Coordinates*	52.97906, -9.42658		

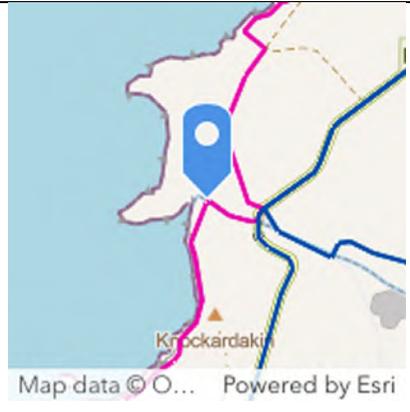
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: A set of steep steps where the steps are loose and misaligned in places and where poor drainage has led to water gouging out deep channels to one side of the steps. The trail is dangerous here particularly for those not used to strenuous trails and not wearing appropriate footwear. The steps need to be upgraded and drainage improved.

Issue ID		
24-670-048		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Not Differentiated		
Coordinates*		
52.97963, -9.42641		

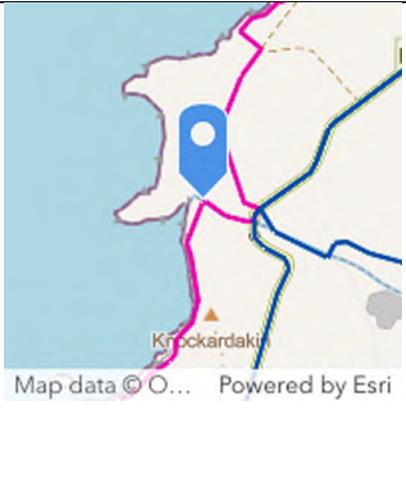
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre just before the trail leaves the cliffs to move briefly inland.

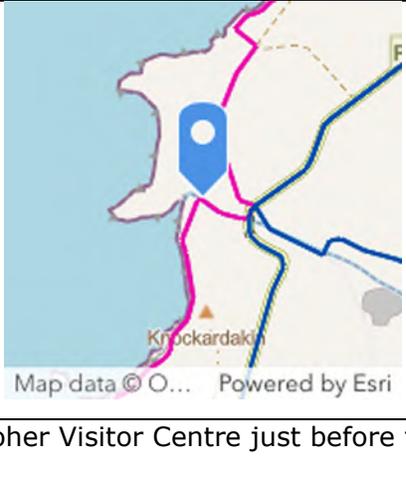
Comment: Yellow walking man arrows for Burren Way not present. Cliff of Mother Coastal path arrows are red here – they should be blue. All existing waymarking along the cliffs should be upgraded with arrow plates with yellow arrows on black background and blue arrows on white background attached at regular intervals to fence posts visible from both directions.

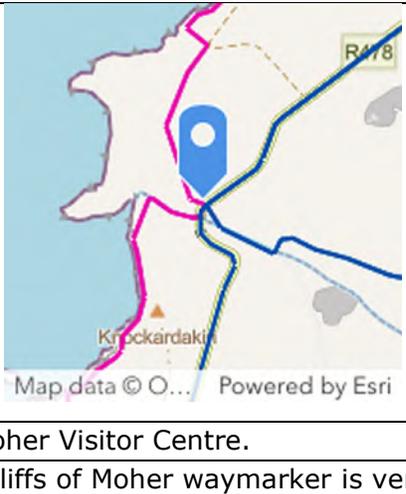
Issue ID		
24-670-049		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Faded/Unreadable		
Coordinates*		
52.98063, -9.42564		

Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre just before the trail leaves the cliffs to move briefly inland.

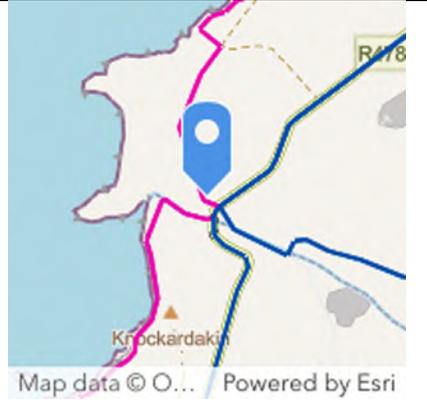
Comment: Old Burren Way signage is faded and requires upgrading.

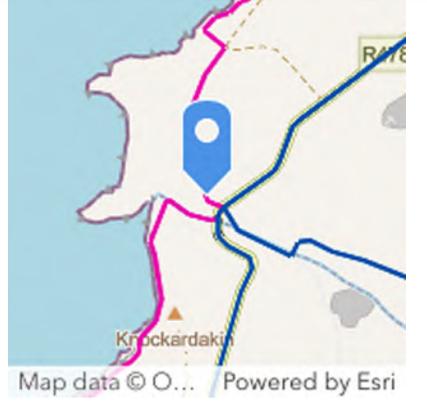
Issue ID	24-670-050		
Severity			
Safety			
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.98063, -9.42564		
Location: : North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre just before the trail leaves the cliffs to move briefly inland.			
Comment: Left turn waymarking is needed here and warning signs to stay on the official trail.			

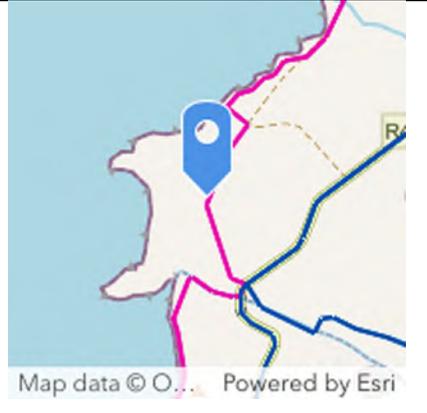
Issue ID	24-7-054		
Severity			
Significant			
Category	Waymarking Issue		
Issue	Not Clearly Visible on Approach		
Coordinates*	52.98059, -9.42535		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre just before the trail leaves the cliffs to move briefly inland.			
Comment: Clear left turn arrow needed. At the point where the trail turns left (when going south) there is no left turn waymarker and walkers could walk straight on onto the unofficial path leading to the cliffs			

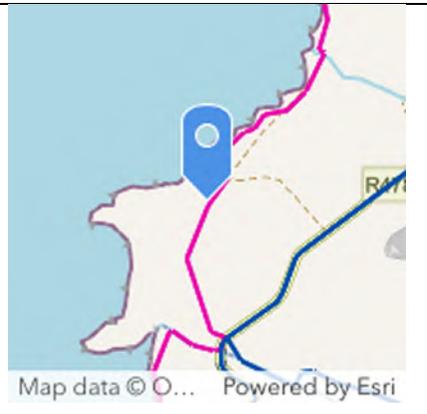
Issue ID	24-7-055		
Severity			
Significant			
Category	Waymarking Issue		
Issue	Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*	52.98047, -9.42244		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Old Burren Way and Cliffs of Moher waymarker is very faded and needs to be upgraded with yellow arrow on black background and blue arrow on white background mounted on waymarker posts.			

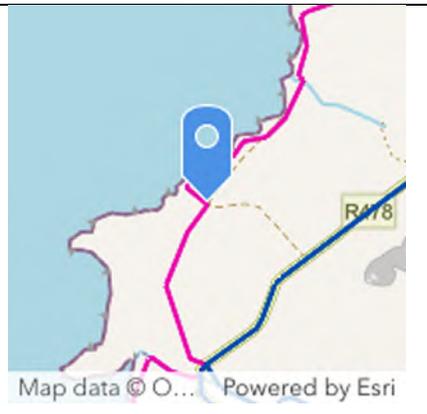
Issue ID		
24-7-056		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.98042, -9.42250		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre		
Comment: Left turn brown finger post sign Burren Way waymarking needed here.		

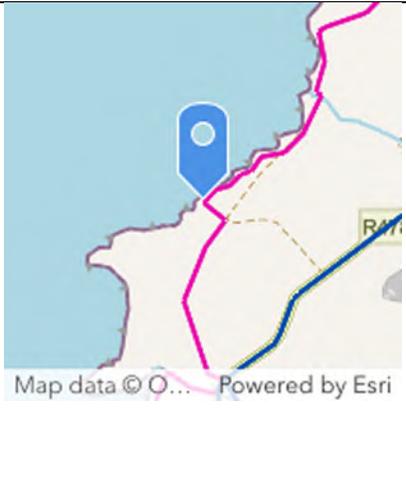
Issue ID		
24-7-057		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.98063, -9.42299		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Straight on waymarking arrows needed here for Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and Burren Way to direct walkers to the left of the outbuilding where the stile is located.		

Issue ID		
24-7-058		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.98070, -9.42323		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Straight on waymarking arrows needed here for Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and Burren Way to direct walkers to the left of the outbuilding where the stile is located.		

Issue ID		
24-7-059		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*	52.98342, -9.42461	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Right turn waymarking arrows needed here for Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and Burren Way at stile		

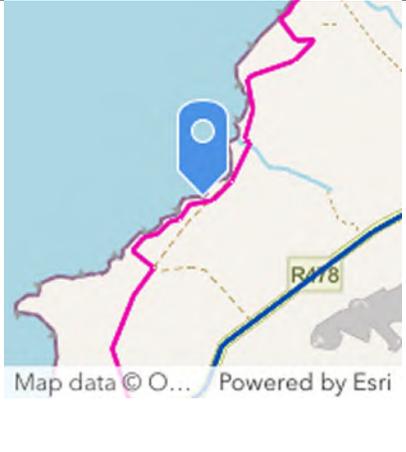
Issue ID		
24-7-060		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*	52.98521, -9.42343	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Straight on waymarking arrows needed here for Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk and Burren Way at stile		

Issue ID		
24-7-061		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Not Clearly Visible on Approach		
Coordinates*	52.98614, -9.42219	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Left and right turn waymarking arrows needed at stile.		

Issue ID		
24-7-062		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.98678, -9.42349		

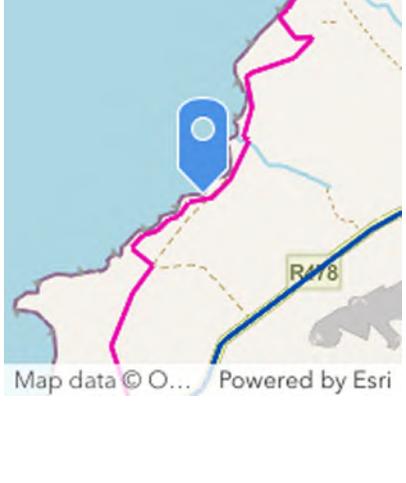
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: This gap in the fencing needs to be closed and signage improved. With the new bridge in place it appears that this is an official route when in fact it leads over to an unofficial path to a sign that says no entry.

Issue ID		
24-7-063		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Structures Issue		
Issue		
Footbridge: Damaged, Rotting, Loose		
Coordinates*		
52.98860, -9.41922		

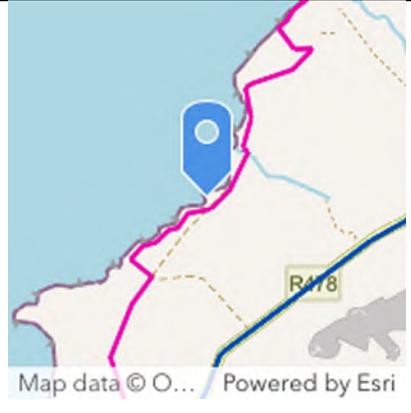
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

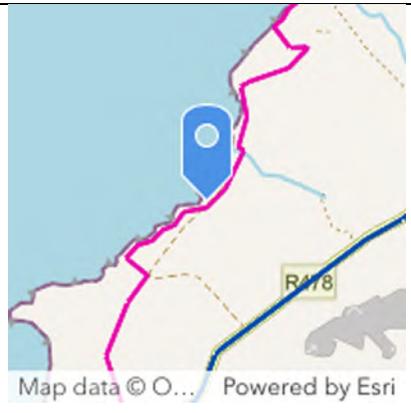
Comment: A large hole in a stone flag bridge at the base of a set of steps requires urgent repair.

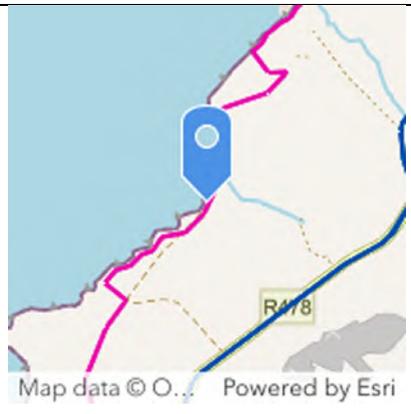
Issue ID		
24-7-064		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Signage Issue		
Issue		
Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*		
52.98859, -9.41916		

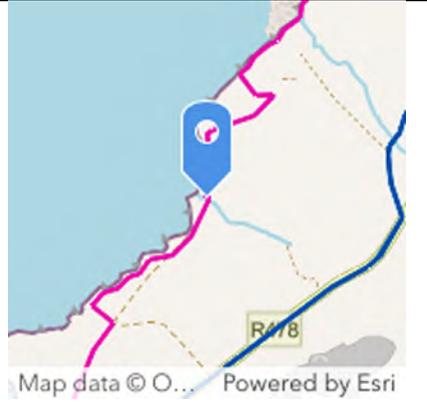
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

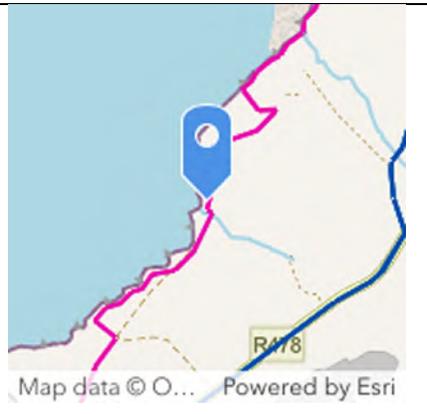
Comment: Warning signage and fencing needed here to protect walkers from cliff edge at bend in the trail.

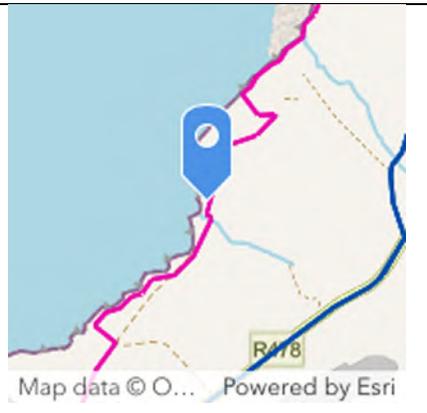
Issue ID		
24-7-065		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*	52.98889, -9.41888	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Right turn arrow needed here approaching from the south and left turn arrow approaching from the north.		

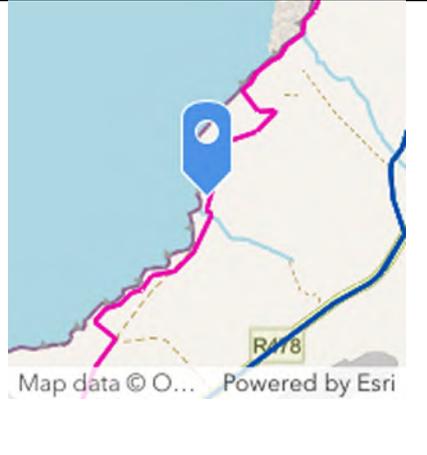
Issue ID		
24-7-066		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*	52.98870, -9.41861	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Old Burren Way Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail signage needs to be replaced.		

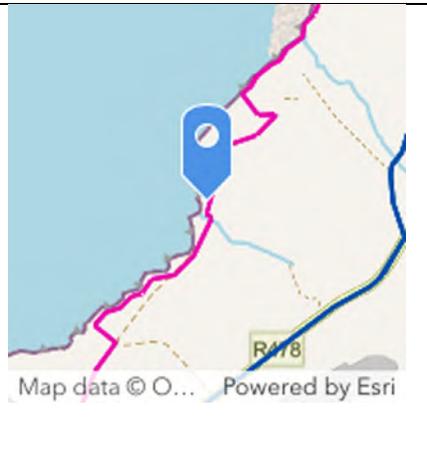
Issue ID		
24-7-067		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Erosion/Trail Spread		
Coordinates*	52.98956, -9.41734	
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Severe erosion of the trail surface due to water running down the trail and gouging out furrows. Improved drainage on steep slope required.		

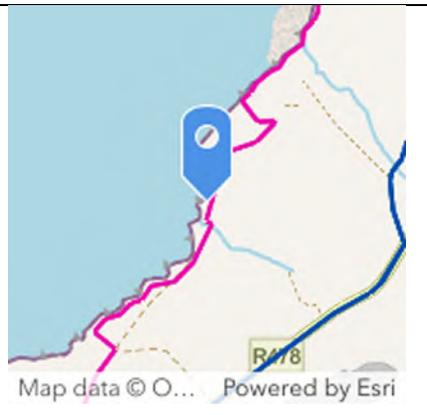
Issue ID		
24-7-068		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*		
52.99054, -9.41657		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Old Burren Way Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail signage needs to be replaced.		

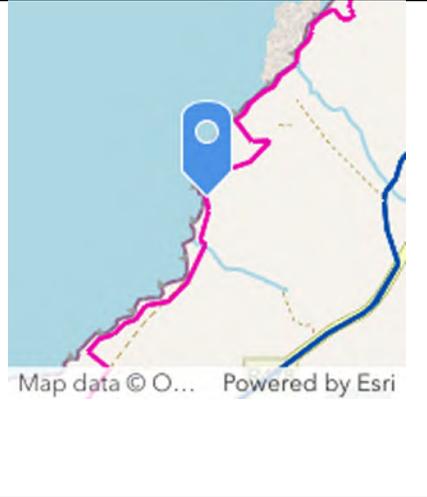
Issue ID		
24-7-069		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Fencing Issue		
Issue		
Other		
Coordinates*		
52.99094, -9.41673		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Broken fence is falling into the trail and needs to be replaced.		

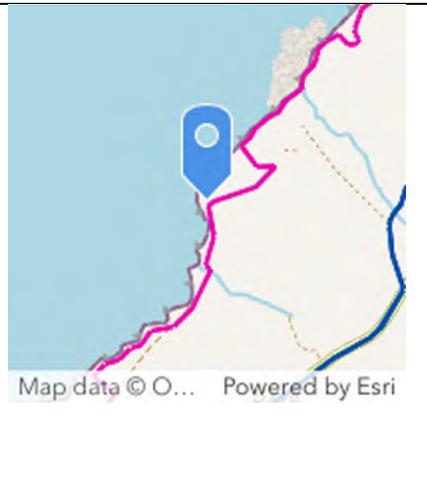
Issue ID		
24-7-070		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Structures Issue		
Issue		
Handrail: Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.99112, -9.41671		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Handrail needed on uphill side of bridge.		

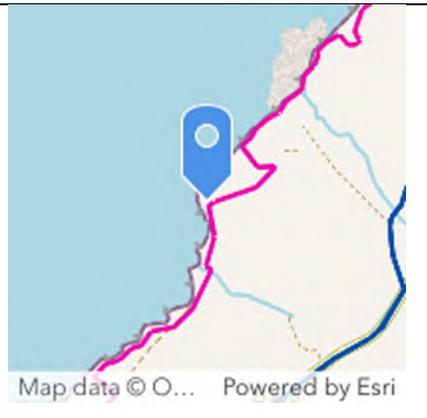
Issue ID	24-7-071		
Severity	Significant		
Category	Structures Issue		
Issue	Steps: Damaged, Rotting, Loose		
Coordinates*	52.99112, -9.41671		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Top stone in steps down to bridge needs to be replaced.			

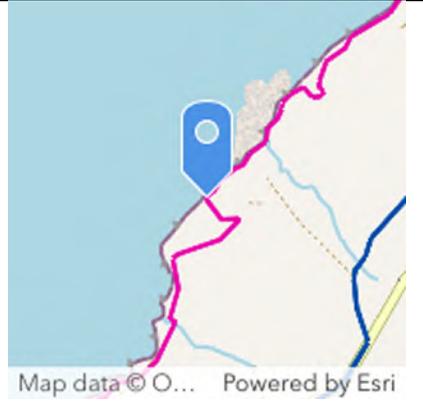
Issue ID	24-7-072		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.99112, -9.41671		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Unofficial path leading off the official trail towards the cliff edge needs warning signage and advice to walkers to stay on the official trail.			

Issue ID	24-7-073		
Severity	Significant		
Category	Waymarking Issue		
Issue	Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*	52.99132, -9.41669		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Straight on arrows needed in both directions as stile is not part of the way marked way.			

Issue ID	24-7-074		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.99220, -9.41633		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Signage needed to warn walkers not to leave the official trail.			

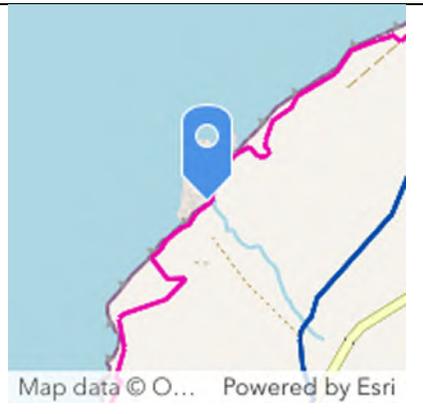
Issue ID	24-7-075		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Signage Issue		
Issue	Hazard without Warning Signs e.g. Dangerous cliffs, mines or tidal areas		
Coordinates*	52.99298, -9.41665		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Signage needed to warn walkers not to leave the official trail.			

Issue ID	24-7-076		
Severity	Safety		
Category	Structures Issue		
Issue	Fence: Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*	52.99297, -9.41668		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.			
Comment: Crash barrier/fence needed where walkers come down a sloping section of the trail and out onto the cliff edge.			

Issue ID		
24-7-077		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Erosion/Trail Spread		
Coordinates*		
52.99499, -9.41452		

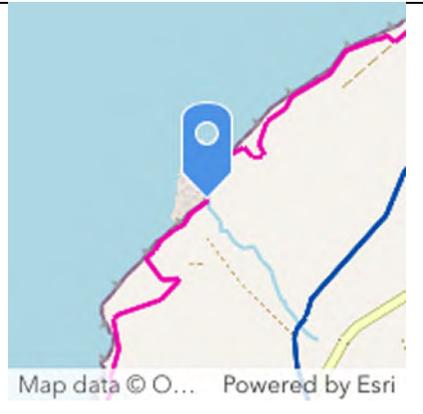
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: Severe erosion of the trail surface. Drainage and trail surface need to be improved.

Issue ID		
24-7-078		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Structures Issue		
Issue		
Fence: Missing/Needed		
Coordinates*		
52.99699, -9.41131		

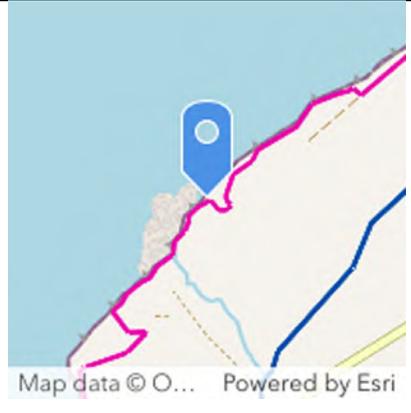
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: Crash barrier fence needed where walkers come down a sloping section of the trail and out onto the cliff edge.

Issue ID		
24-7-079		
Severity		
Safety		
Category		
Structures Issue		
Issue		
Handrail: Damaged, Rotting, Loose		
Coordinates*		
52.99710, -9.41097		

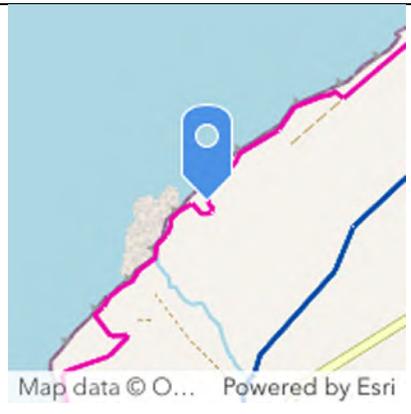
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: New handrail needed where the trail crosses the bridge.

Issue ID		
24-7-080		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*		
52.99905, -9.40897		

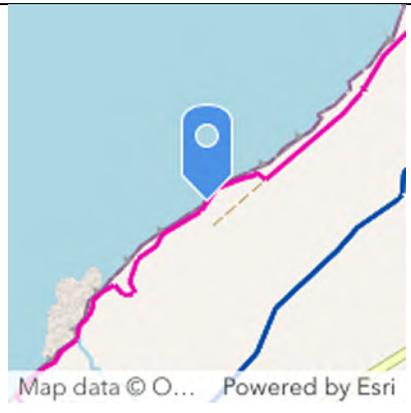
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: Old Burren Way Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail signage needs to be replaced.

Issue ID		
24-7-081		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue		
Hidden/Very Faded		
Coordinates*		
52.99903, -9.40790		

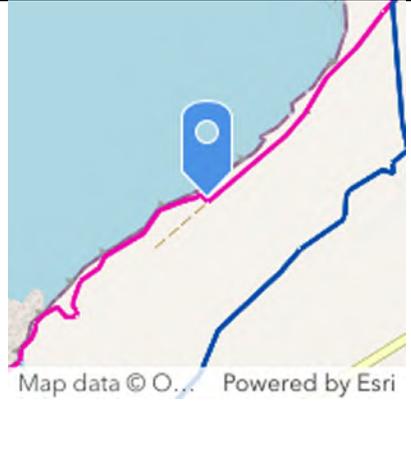
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

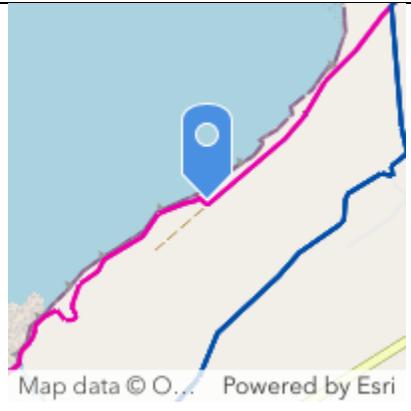
Comment: Old Burren Way Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail signage needs to be replaced.

Issue ID		
24-7-082		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Surface Issue		
Issue		
Erosion/Trail Spread		
Coordinates*		
53.00196, -9.40325		

Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

Comment: Severe erosion of the trail surface. Drainage and trail surface need to be improved.

Issue ID		
24-7-083		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Structures Issue		
Issue	<p>Fence: Damaged, Rotting, Loose</p>	
Coordinates*		
53.00288, -9.39983		
Location: North of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.		
Comment: Fencing broken needs to be fixed.		

Issue ID		
24-670-081		
Severity		
Significant		
Category		
Waymarking Issue		
Issue	<p>Hidden/Very Faded</p>	
Coordinates*		
53.00290, -9.39978		
Location: As discussed during inspection & shown on map		
Comment: Old Burren Way Cliffs of Moher Coastal Trail signage needs to be replaced.		

***Note:** Coordinates can be used directly in [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps/) or converted to Grid References using an online tool such as <https://irish.gridreferencefinder.com/>

Appendix 1: Explanation of Infrastructure Scoring

Overview:

1. Trails begin with a certain number of points, referred to as the Allowance. **Longer trails are given a higher Allowance.**
2. **Points are deducted for all Significant Issues.** Safety Issues and Advisory Issues do not affect the scoring.
3. A trail must achieve a **minimum score of 70%** in each category and overall to meet the criteria.

Allowance:

1. There are **10 Scoring Categories**: These include Trail Information and nine other categories covering the complete range of route and infrastructure requirements.
2. For the majority of trails (up to 20km long), the Allowance will be **10 points per category, giving a total of 100 points.**
3. In most categories, the Allowance is **increased for longer routes, with an extra 4 points for every extra 20km** (or part of). This gives some breathing space for long-distance trails, where the quality may be high, but a few issues spread out along the route could prevent the trail from being listed as registered.
4. However, there is **no extra Allowance for Trail Information**, which should be of the same standard, no matter how long the trail.

Example: An **80km trail** is 60km longer than the basic 20km, so it gets 3 extra allowances: 1 for each extra 20km. Each extra allowance gives 4 points, so this trail gets an extra allowance of $3 \times 4 = 12$. When this is added to the basic allowance of 10 points, it gives 22 points allowed in each increased category.

Length	Extra Length	Extra Allowances	Extra Points	Allowance
80km	$80 - 20 = 60$	$60 / 20 = 3$	$3 \times 4 = 12$	$12 + 10 = 22$
Trail length for this example	This trail is 60km longer than the basic 20km	1 allowance for each extra 20km	Each extra allowance gets 4 points	Extra points are added to the basic 10 points

Allowance Examples:

Category	Allowance		
	Short Trail (up to 20km)	Sample Long Trail (80km)	This Trail (19.5km)
Trail Information	10	10	10
Fencing	10	22	10
Litter/Dumping	10	22	10
Roads	10	22	10
Route	10	22	10
Signage	10	22	10
Structures	10	22	10
Surface	10	22	10
Vegetation	10	22	10
Waymarking	10	22	10
Total	100	208	100

Scoring:

1. **1 point is deducted** for any **Significant Issue** identified in any category.
2. To meet the criteria, a trail must reach a **score of 70%** overall and in each category.
3. This is simple **for most trails: a score of 7 out of 10 is needed in each category** and 70 out of 100 overall. This means that the trail can have up to 3 Significant Issues in each category before it drops below 70%.
4. For longer trails, the number of issues allowed before dropping below 70% will be higher. The table below shows how it would be for a short trail and the example 80km trail.

Table below shows, for trails of different lengths:

- i. The Allowance (higher for longer trails)
- ii. The number of points needed to reach 70%
- iii. The number of Significant Issues allowed before dropping below 70%

Category	Short Trail (up to 20km)			Longer Trail (e.g. 80km)		
	Allowance	Needed for 70%	Issues Allowed	Allowance	Needed for 70%	Issues Allowed
Trail Information	10	7	3	10	7	3
Fencing	10	7	3	22	16	6
Litter/Dumping	10	7	3	22	16	6
Roads	10	7	3	22	16	6
Route	10	7	3	22	16	6
Signage	10	7	3	22	16	6
Structures	10	7	3	22	16	6
Surface	10	7	3	22	16	6
Vegetation	10	7	3	22	16	6
Waymarking	10	7	3	22	16	6
Total	100	70	30	208	146	62

Actual Scoring for Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk:

Category	Allowance (19.5km)	Points Deducted	Points Awarded	% Score
Trail Information	10	0	10	100%
Fencing	10	1	9	90%
Litter/Dumping	10	0	10	100%
Roads	10	0	10	100%
Route	10	0	10	100%
Signage	10	6	4	40%
Structures	10	2	8	80%
Surface	10	7	3	30%
Vegetation	10	0	10	100%
Waymarking	10	25	-15	0%
Total	100	26	74	74%

Appendix 2: Sport Ireland Outdoors & Inspection System Overview

This section gives an overview of Sport Ireland Outdoors and its role in supporting sustainable trails in Ireland. For further information, please feel free to contact us at: outdoors@sportireland.ie

Sport Ireland Outdoors

Sport Ireland Outdoors is a unit within Sport Ireland which:

- i. **Supports** the development, management, and promotion of sustainable recreational trails (walking, cycling, equestrian & paddling).
- ii. Provides **training** to those involved in developing, managing and maintaining trails. See <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/training-courses> for further information.
- iii. Facilitates **cooperation and consultation** among trails stakeholders and landowners.
- iv. Develops and promotes trail **Criteria and Best Practice** in conjunction with partners.
- v. Runs an on-going programme to **inspect trails** against the national criteria.
- vi. Maintains a **National Trails Register** of routes which meet the national criteria.
- vii. Manages a **Public Liability Insurance** policy for eligible trails listed on the Register.
- viii. **Promotes** registered trails to the public through the website www.sportireland.ie/outdoors.

Walking Trails Criteria

To ensure the consistency and quality of walking trails, Sport Ireland has produced and published the [Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland](#) for use by all trail developers and managers. The criteria were published following consultation and agreement with key stakeholders. Trails that meet these criteria will be listed on the National Trails Register.

National Trails Register

The National Trails Register includes all trails that meet the national criteria. The benefits of being listed on the register include:

- i. Reassurance for trail users and management that the trail is safe and of high quality.
- ii. Promotion on Sport Ireland's website www.sportireland.ie/outdoors.
- iii. Access to the public liability insurance policy which is administered by Sport Ireland Outdoors, if eligible.
- iv. On-going inspections and advice to maintain standards and best practice.

Inspection Programme

i. Trail Registration Inspection

When a trail has been developed, a Trail Registration Inspection can be requested by trail management. The inspection is carried out by Sport Ireland Outdoors to assess a trail and determine if it meets the criteria. Trails that meet the criteria will be listed on the National Trails Register.

ii. Follow Up Inspections

Periodically, a Trail Inspection will be carried out on registered trails. These assess if the trail continues to meet the criteria and can remain listed on the National Trails Register.

iii. Approach:

Registration Inspections and Follow Up Inspections assess both Trail Infrastructure and Trail Management, using a scoring system. For a trail to meet the criteria, a score of 70% or greater must be achieved overall and for each category within the criteria. General feedback is also provided to assist those responsible for the trail in their on-going management and maintenance activities.

Responsibility

Sport Ireland does not accept any responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of any trails or any liability for any accident or injury arising from their use. Those who manage the trail are responsible for all aspects of trail safety, maintenance, monitoring and development.

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this report, and it is believed to reflect the state and condition of a trail on the date of inspection, Sport Ireland makes no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content contained in this report is accurate, complete or up to date. The trail management organisation should satisfy themselves as to the safety, suitability, standard and condition of a trail.

This report should not be understood to suggest that a trail is maintained, supervised or otherwise monitored by Sport Ireland. Those are matters solely for the trail management organisation.

Official Languages Act 2003

As a point of information, please note that a public body has a duty to ensure that signs placed by it or on its behalf are in Irish or bilingual. Further information on requirements are available from the link:

<https://www.coimisineir.ie/userfiles/files/Guidebook4.pdf>.

Appendix 3: Trail Management Dashboard

Your Dashboard:

We have provided an interactive map-based dashboard, allowing you to:

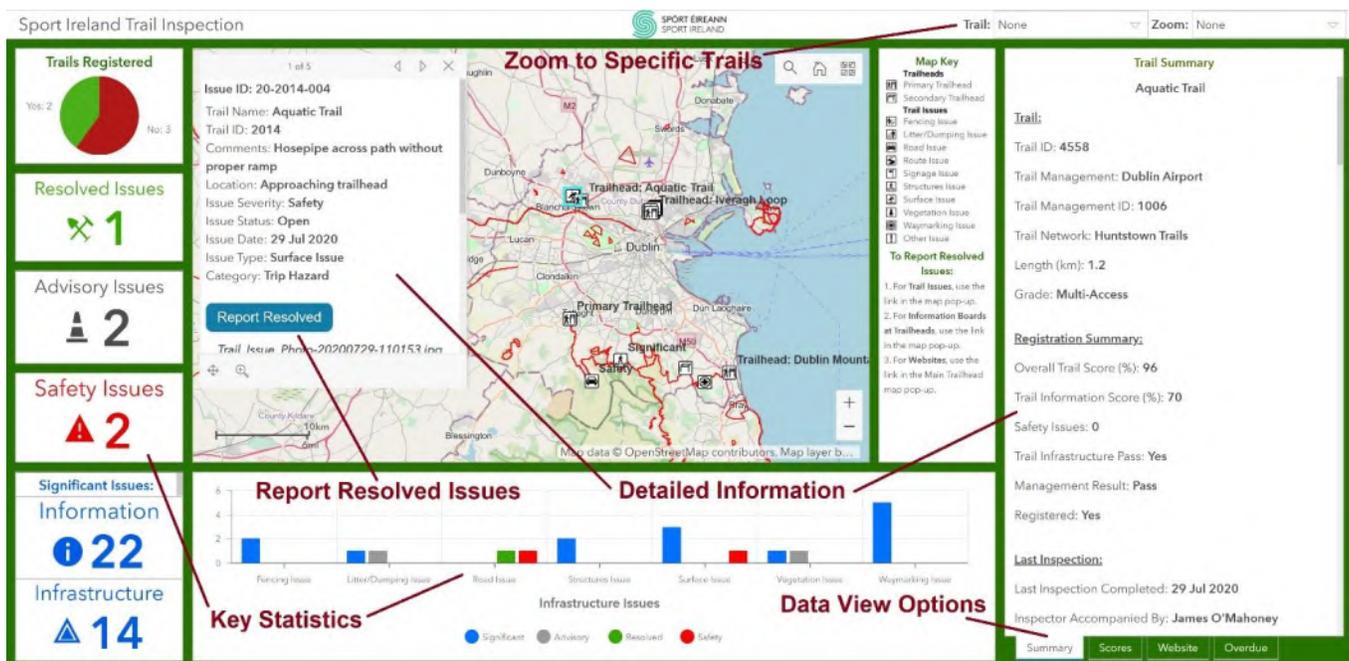
- View any trails managed by Clare Local Development Company.
- Access detailed inspection and scoring information.
- Quickly see key statistics. Examine issue locations more accurately.
- Provide feedback on any issues resolved.
- Monitor improved trail scores as issues are fixed.

Please Note:

Dashboards are in Pilot Phase, not requiring a login for now, and with the (*very small*) potential to be viewed by others. Please contact us with any queries.

Your dashboard can be accessed here:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/9848b37025d842109332cb8520adf376?MPar1=136&MPar2=136>



Dashboard Instructions:

1. Click on the link above or copy it into a web browser.
2. Explore accurate, up-to-date information on your trail/s with the interactive map.
3. As you scroll on the map, the data will change to reflect the range you are looking at.
4. Zoom in to see individual trails and issues more accurately.
5. Click on any trail, trailhead or issue for more detailed information.
6. To focus on a single trail, use the Trail Selector on the upper-right corner of the page or click on the trail in the panel on the right. When you choose one, the page will show the route and data for that trail only.
7. For any issues you have resolved, please report them to Sport Ireland Outdoors by using the links in the Dashboard. Your trail's score will be updated to reflect the improved condition of the route.

Appendix B INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Clare County Council

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk Management Plan

International Comparisons



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Document control

Version	Date	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved
1.0	13/05/2024	Issue for review	KT	JH	JWA
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Project

Cliffs of Moher

Client

TOBIN Consulting Engineers

LUC Project Number

12765

Project Team

Julie Hyslop Project manager & landscape architect

Kamila Tobola, Senior landscape architect

Date

30.04.2024

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Note

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LUC

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Chapter 01
Site Analysis

Chapter 01: Analysis

Site Context

Introduction

The Cliffs of Moher, located on the western seaboard of Ireland, represent a significant geological and tourist landmark. Extending for approximately 14 kilometres along the County Clare coastline, these cliffs reach heights of up to 214 meters.

The nearest town to the Cliffs of Moher is Liscannor, located approximately 6 kilometres to the south. Other significant nearby settlements include:

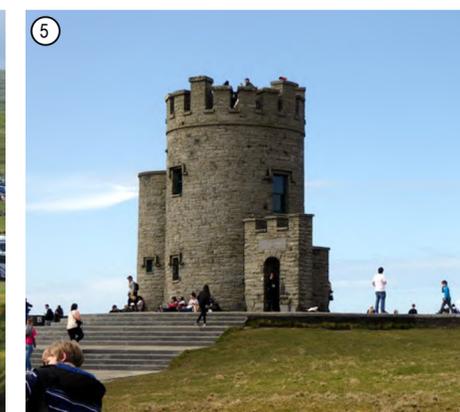
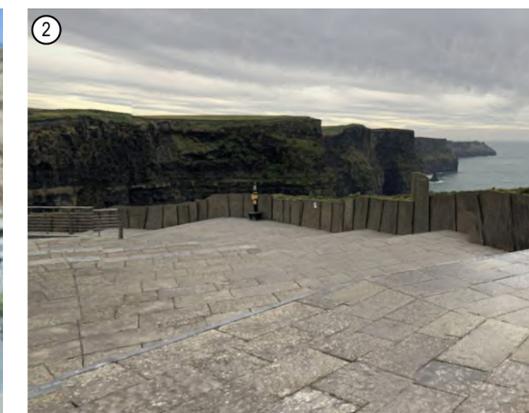
- **Doolin:** Approximately 7 kilometres to the north, known for its traditional Irish music and as a gateway to the Aran Islands.
- **Lahinch:** Roughly 10 kilometres to the southeast, famous for its beach and golf course.
- **Ennis:** The largest town in County Clare, situated about 35 kilometres to the east, providing broader services and transport links.
- **Galway:** A major city located about 75 kilometres to the north, accessible via the N67 and M18 motorways.

The Cliffs of Moher are accessible via several key roadways:

- **N67:** This national secondary road runs along the coast, connecting the cliffs to Doolin and Lahinch.
- **M18:** An important motorway linking Ennis and Galway, facilitating access from broader regions of Ireland.
- **R478:** A regional road providing direct access from Liscannor and intersecting with the N67.

Public transportation options include bus services operated by Bus Éireann and private tour companies, which offer regular routes to the cliffs from major towns and cities.

The Cliffs of Moher are a critical natural landmark in Ireland, managed by Clare County Council with significant infrastructure to support tourism, which includes Visitor Centre, Exhibition Area, car parking facilities, cafe, gift shop and toilets. The cliffs are accessible via major motorways and are proximate to several towns and cities, making them a key destination in County Clare. The combination of natural beauty, strategic location, and well-developed visitor facilities ensures the Cliffs of Moher remain a premier attraction in Ireland.



Chapter 01: Analysis SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- **Iconic Natural Landmark**
The Cliffs of Moher are a globally recognized and iconic natural attraction, drawing approximately 1.1million of visitors in 2022.
- **UNESCO Global Geopark**
Designated as part of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, highlighting its geological significance.
- **Visitor Facilities**
The site features a well-developed visitor centre with amenities, guided tours, and educational exhibits. However the visitor centre experience could be improved to provide to manage visitor numbers and ensure conservation of the Geopark site.
- **Biodiversity**
The cliffs are home to diverse sea bird species including puffins, fulmars, guillemots and skylarks, contributing to their ecological importance.
- **Tourism Infrastructure**
The area benefits from excellent transport connections, including major highways (M4, M6, M18) providing great links to Galway, Limerick and Dublin, a bus line from nearby Doodlin, Liscannor and also from Galway, Limerick and Ennis, and proximity to an international airport in Shannon which is located approximately 65km away
- **Car Parking Availability**
There are two car parks available, one located on the eastern side of the R478 which has capacity of approximately 480 spaces and one located on the western side of R478 providing 28 spaces for coaches and disable car parking spaces. Despite challenges with capacity, the presence of car parking areas enhances accessibility for visitors, although management may need to address increasing demand.
- **Attractive Wider Location**
County Clare offers a wealth of attractive tourism resources, including diverse natural and cultural attractions, vibrant towns and villages, and picturesque landscapes. These opportunities contribute to the overall appeal of the region and enhance the visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher site.

The Cliffs of Moher exhibit a robust set of strengths, including iconic natural landmarks, UNESCO recognition, well-developed visitor facilities, biodiversity, excellent transport connections, and an abundance of attractive tourism resources in County Clare. These strengths provide a solid foundation for further enhancement and improvement initiatives, positioning the site well for sustainable tourism development and enriched visitor experiences.

Weaknesses

- **Over-tourism**
The site experiences high volumes of day-trippers who do not stay overnight, leading to overcrowding and limited economic benefits for local businesses.
- **Limited Diversification**
Dependency on a single tourism model focused on day-trippers, lacking diversity in visitor offerings and experiences.
- **Economic Leakage**
The majority of visitors do not contribute significantly to the local economy beyond their immediate visit, limiting long-term economic benefits for the region.
- **Accessibility**
Limited accessibility for visitors with mobility challenges due to rugged terrain and cliff side location.
- **Seasonal Dependency**
Reliance on seasonal tourism can lead to fluctuations in visitor numbers and economic activity.
- **Environmental Vulnerability**
The cliffs are susceptible to erosion and environmental degradation from visitor impact and natural forces.
- **Insufficient Public Transport Links**
The availability of public transport options, such as buses, is limited, leading to a reliance on private vehicles which exacerbate traffic congestion and parking challenges. The challenges associated with insufficient public transport provision at the Cliffs of Moher site, contributing to issues related to traffic congestion, parking shortages, and environmental impacts.
- **Infrastructure Strain**
Inadequate infrastructure to accommodate large volumes of visitors, including parking shortages, traffic congestion, and strain on public amenities.

Addressing some of these weaknesses requires diversifying the tourism model, promoting longer stays, and implementing sustainable tourism strategies to ensure the Cliffs of Moher site's long-term viability and economic resilience.

Opportunities

- **Sustainable Tourism Initiatives**
Sustainable tourism practices to mitigate environmental impacts and support local communities. Implementing sustainable tourism practices at the Cliffs of Moher would involve managing visitor numbers, educating visitors about conservation, and investing in eco-friendly infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts while supporting local communities. This approach aims to balance tourism development with environmental protection and community well-being for the long-term sustainability of the site.
- **Diversification of Offerings**
Introducing year-round events, activities, and packages to attract visitors during off-peak seasons.
- **Community Engagement and Local Partnerships**
Collaborating with local stakeholders to develop cultural experiences and promote responsible tourism
- **Educational Programs**
Offering educational programmes and partnerships to raise awareness about conservation and biodiversity.
- **Economic Development Opportunities**
Leveraging the site's UNESCO status and global recognition to attract investment in sustainable infrastructure, accommodation, and amenities that contribute to economic growth and job creation.

These opportunities highlight the potential for economic growth and development through sustainable tourism initiatives at the Cliffs of Moher, emphasizing the importance of balancing economic benefits with environmental conservation and community well-being.

Threats

- **Environmental Risks**
Climate change pose long-term threats to the stability and integrity of the cliffs.
- **Regulatory Challenge**
Adherence to conservation regulations and zoning restrictions may impact future development and operations.
- **Economic Uncertainty**
Fluctuations in global tourism and economic conditions can affect visitor numbers and funding for conservation efforts.
- **Environmental Vulnerability**
The cliffs are susceptible to erosion and environmental degradation from visitor impact and natural forces.
- **Over-tourism**
Risk of increased traffic congestion, overcrowding, and environmental impacts if parking and public transport challenges are not addressed amid growing tourist numbers.

Chapter 01: Analysis Objectives

Improvement of condition and appearance



One of the primary objectives for the Cliffs of Moher site is to **enhance** its overall **condition and appearance**. By addressing maintenance issues, implementing landscape enhancements, and restoring infrastructure where necessary, the aim is to create a more **visually appealing** and **welcoming environment** for visitors. Enhancing the condition and appearance of the Cliffs of Moher will not only **elevate the visitor experience** but also **contribute to the preservation** of this iconic natural landmark for future generations to enjoy.

Safety and accessibility



Improving safety and accessibility at the Cliffs of Moher site is a critical objective. While the visitor centre and some paths are currently **wheelchair-accessible**, there is a need for further enhancements to accommodate visitors with limited mobility more effectively. Additionally, addressing **safety** concerns is imperative, as visitors often put themselves at risk by venturing too close to the cliff edges for photo opportunities, leading to **erosion and safety hazards**. **Enhancing safety measures**, such as clearer **signage**, **protective barriers** and appropriately positioned **interpretation** or **art work** will not only **protect visitors** but also **preserve the natural integrity of the cliffs**. By implementing comprehensive safety and accessibility improvements, the aim is to ensure a safer and more **inclusive experience** for all visitors while safeguarding this iconic natural landmark for future enjoyment.

Sense of arrival



Creating a distinct **sense of arrival** at the Cliffs of Moher site is one of the key objectives. Currently, the main car park poses challenges as it is located across a busy road, leading to **traffic congestion** and **safety concerns for pedestrians**. To address this, the objective is to redesign parking facilities for easier access and improved traffic flow, **minimizing disruption** and **enhancing safety**.

Additionally, the visitor centre, intended as the gateway to the site, is overwhelmed by high volumes of visitors due to over-tourism. The objective is to optimize the visitor centre's capacity and functionality to efficiently manage visitor flow and provide a welcoming and informative entry point that enhances the overall arrival experience for all visitors. By implementing these improvements, the aim is to create a more organized and enjoyable arrival experience while mitigating the impact of over-tourism on the visitor centre.

Protection of natural assets



Preserving the ecological integrity and biodiversity of the Cliffs of Moher site is a fundamental objective. The Cliffs of Moher is a Special Protection Area (SPA) and designated as a Proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA). The site is of significant ecological importance, hosting nationally important seabird colonies and species listed under the EU Birds Directive, including puffin, guillemot, razorbill and many more. Proactive **habitat and visitor management initiatives** would support **conservation research**, **monitoring**, and **educational efforts** through **strategic partnerships**.

Public transport, traffic and parking



Addressing **traffic congestion** caused by over-tourism is an objective for the Cliffs of Moher site, as it directly impacts local residents and landowners. The current parking strategy requires significant **improvement to alleviate congestion and enhance visitor experience**. **Enhancing public transport connections** with major towns and cities including Ennis, Limerick and Galway presents an opportunity to reduce traffic volumes and reliance on private vehicles. Implementing a more **efficient booking system** and **monitoring tourist numbers** would enable **better management of visitor numbers**, allowing visitors to plan their visits based on predicted capacity. By implementing these improvements, the aim is to mitigate traffic-related challenges, improve relationships with neighbouring residents and landowners, and enhance overall visitor experience at the Cliffs of Moher site.

Sense of journey and signage



Improving signage and enhancing the sense of journey at the Cliffs of Moher site is a key objective. Introducing **trails with varying levels of difficulty** will cater to visitors of different abilities, providing accessible and enjoyable experiences for all. **Clear and unified signage** throughout the site will **enhance navigation and safety**, ensuring visitors can easily find their way and access designated trails. Additionally, enhancing the sense of journey involves creating a cohesive and immersive experience for visitors, allowing them to appreciate the natural beauty and historical significance of the cliffs through **engaging storytelling and interpretive elements along the trails**. By focusing on signage improvements and enhancing the overall sense of journey, the aim is to elevate the visitor experience and promote meaningful interactions with the Cliffs of Moher's unique landscape and heritage.

Value for money



The key area of concern is the current car parking fee structure, where visitors are charged based on the number of people rather than per car. Implementing a more transparent and visitor-friendly payment system that offers options and tiered pricing dependent on visiting date / time and duration will provide better value for money. Providing **flexible payment methods** and **clear pricing structures** will empower visitors to make **informed decisions** and **optimize their experience based on their preferences and budget**. By addressing these concerns visitor satisfaction will be enhanced.

Relationship with landowners



Implementing a more effective reward system that prioritizes input and **collaboration** from local landowners and stakeholders will **foster stronger relationships, promote engagement and focus conservation efforts**. Enhancing communication channels and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes will ensure that **their perspectives and concerns are heard and promote buy-in**. By formulating a clearer landowner engagement plan focused on **transparency, collaboration, and mutual benefit**, the aim is to build **positive and sustainable relationships with landowners and stakeholders, creating a shared vision** for the preservation and enhancement of the Cliffs of Moher site.



Chapter 02 Case Studies

1. Cinque Terre Trails: Italy
2. The Giant's Causeway: Northern Ireland
3. The Gobbins Cliff Path: Northern Ireland
4. West Coast Trail: Canada
5. The Lizard Coastal Walk: United Kingdom

Cinque Terre Trails

Italy



Via dell'Amore trail (Photo: cinqueterre.eu.com)

Overview

Cinque Terre comprises five villages—Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore—located along the Italian Riviera and compose the Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre part of UNESCO world heritage site. These villages are connected by a network of ancient footpaths, offering scenic hiking opportunities through vineyards, olive groves, and coastal cliffs.

Located in the Liguria region of north-west Italy, Cinque Terre is easily accessible from major cities like Genoa and Pisa. Its rugged terrain and limited road access have helped preserve its traditional way of life and natural beauty, attracting outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers.

The Parco Nazionale delle Cinque Terre was created in 1999, forming Italy's smallest National Park. The area of the park is 3 868 hectares and comprises of terraces spreading over 2 000 hectares, 48 trails and 6 700km of dry stone walls which creating a characteristic feature for the region.

The Cinque Terre trails are a paid-for visitor attraction which accommodates walkers of all levels, with a total of 48 trails spanning approximately 120 kilometres in length. Each trail is graded, allowing visitors to choose routes that suit their capabilities and interests. The Cinque Terre website provides comprehensive information on trail difficulty, along with detailed descriptions including length, approximate duration, altitude and associated maps, allowing visitors to plan their hiking adventures with ease. These trails offer options ranging from gentle coastal paths to more challenging routes along steep cliffs. Additionally, the multiple points of entrance for the hikes provide flexibility, allowing visitors to start their journey from various locations within the five villages.

Travelling between the villages of Cinque Terre is made easy by the efficient train service. Visitors have the flexibility to start their walk from any village they choose, with all five villages interconnected by these trails. The villages are well-served by a reliable train service, providing convenient transportation options for visitors. This train service not only contributes to the region's economy but also offers a flexible and cost-effective means of commuting between villages.

Visitors Centres are located in villages where visitors have the opportunity to gain more information on trails and also have the option to purchase The Cinque Terre Card. These cards offer various access options incorporating public transport tailored to visitor's preferences. There are two types of cards Trekking Card and the Treno Card, which provide flexibility and budget control while exploring the region. The Trekking Card is ideal for walking enthusiasts, granting access to the extensive trail network, while the Treno Card offers unlimited train travel between the villages. Additionally, some trails are completely free of charge, allowing visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of Cinque Terre without any additional fees. The region's economy and local businesses benefit from visitors who utilize facilities and services offered along the trails, contributing to the sustainability and vitality of the area.

Exploring the Cinque Terre trails offers a unique blend of history, culture, and natural scenery. Whether leisurely strolling between villages or tackling more adventurous routes, visitors can immerse themselves in the charm of this coastal region, leaving with lasting memories of its beauty and hospitality.

Trail length



48 trails



120km



Popularity of the Trails

In recent years, Cinque Terre and its villages have seen a substantial increase in tourism, with an average of three million visitors annually. Whilst this surge in tourism brings economic benefits to the region, it also presents challenges, particularly regarding trail maintenance and the adverse impacts on local residents. The extensive network of hiking trails requires regular upkeep to ensure visitor safety and preserve the natural beauty of the landscape. Additionally, many locals have their land and produce near these trails, relying on them for their livelihoods. The growing number of visitors has led to concerns about conservation, sustainability, and the delicate balance between preserving the environment and supporting the local economy.

To manage the high volumes of visitors, the Cinque Terre National Park has implemented several initiatives over the years. One significant action was the adoption of the card system in 2001, which has been instrumental in financing trails and community improvements. This system includes entry fees for more popular trails, helping to offset maintenance costs and manage visitor numbers. To alleviate pressure on these popular trails, the park also offers a number of free trails, providing alternative options for exploration.

Visitors staying in hotels and B&Bs that obtain the Certification of Environmental Quality from Parco Nazionale Cinque Terre ECST Phase II are eligible for discounts, encouraging sustainable tourism practices. The certification is issued by the National Park and stands for quality of service, attention to the environment and respect for local traditions. Businesses seeking certification are awarded by following the EUROPARC Federation strategy outlined in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Additionally, the park supports local agriculture by offering subsidies to make farming more sustainable. This includes providing free materials for repairs and rebuilding of dry stone walls, helicopter transport of materials, and free furniture for grapevine supports and chestnut poles. These efforts aim to strike a balance between preserving the natural environment, supporting local livelihoods, and providing an enjoyable experience for visitors.

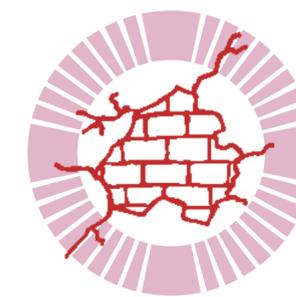


Manarola Riomaggiore path (Photo: cinqueterre.eu.com)

The Challenges



Over-tourism
3 million visitors / year brings economic benefits but can also pressures on the physical fabric of the trail



Detrimental Effect on Local Area
Visitor impacts on agriculture land and damage to produce



Missed Opportunities for Economic Investment
Including wider visitor amenities such as hospitality



Maintenance Issues
The extensive trail network requires regular upkeep to maintain safety standards



Manarola village and terraced vineyards (Photo: atlasobscura.com, Eloi, Omella)



Monterosso to Vernazza hike (Photo: by Vicky, ostrichtrails.com)



Case Study vs objectives

Improvement of condition and appearance



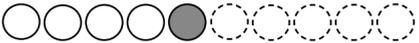
Regular maintenance of trails ensures a safe and enjoyable walking experience in Cinque Terre. The Cinque Terre National Park Authority prioritizes the upkeep of its extensive trail network, implementing routine maintenance tasks to address wear and tear, mitigate erosion, and enhance visitor safety. Trail maintenance activities may include repairing steps and pathways, clearing vegetation, installing signage, and reinforcing protective barriers along cliff edges. By investing in regular maintenance, the park aims to preserve the integrity of its trails, promote sustainable recreation, and safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of Cinque Terre for generations to come.

Sense of arrival



In Cinque Terre, the sense of arrival is understated, with visitor centres positioned within the villages, often at a distance from trail entrances. The entrances themselves maintain a low-key and informal atmosphere, blending seamlessly into the surrounding landscape. While this may initially seem unassuming, it contributes to the authentic charm of the region, allowing visitors to transition smoothly from the bustling village streets to the tranquil trails beyond. Despite the lack of formal grandeur, the understated entrances evoke a sense of anticipation and discovery, inviting travellers to embark on their hiking adventures with a spirit of exploration and curiosity.

Safety and accessibility



Many of the trails commence with steps, limiting accessibility for individuals with mobility impairments. Additionally, some trails demand considerable walking experience, which may pose challenges for inexperienced trekkers. To aid visitors in making informed choices, comprehensive trail information is available on the website, highlighting accessibility levels and skill requirements. Despite efforts to enhance safety, including protective barriers along hazardous edges, certain trails lack such measures, necessitating caution from walkers. Moving forward, initiatives to improve accessibility and bolster safety measures will be crucial to ensure that all visitors can enjoy Cinque Terre's natural beauty while minimizing risks.

Protection of natural assets



The Cinque Terre National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, confronts several significant challenges that impact the area's natural assets. Over-tourism strains the region's infrastructure and threatens its cultural and natural integrity. Extreme meteorological events, such as landslides and flooding, pose imminent threats to the area's landscape, cultural heritage, and marine ecosystems. While management initiatives are evident, including efforts to mitigate the effects of over-tourism, a comprehensive plan to address these challenges is yet to be developed. As the park navigates these complex issues, collaboration among stakeholders and the implementation of sustainable practices will be crucial to safeguarding Cinque Terre's unique heritage and ensuring its resilience in the face of environmental and societal pressures. Cinque Terre's busiest trail the Sentiero Azzurro that runs between Monterosso Al Mare and Vernazza has been made one-way on public holidays by the National Park Authority. Limits have also been imposed on both kayaks and electric boats to minimise impacts on marine life.

Public transport, traffic and parking



Vehicular accessibility in Cinque Terre is carefully managed due to limited parking opportunities within the adjacent villages. Visitors are typically advised to park outside of the villages and utilize alternative transport methods to explore the area. The introduction of the Card system was a strategic response to the challenge of excessive traffic and limited parking, offering a convenient solution for visitors to access the villages while minimizing congestion. The train system operates efficiently, providing an excellent transport option for travellers to move between the villages with ease. By prioritizing sustainable transport and reducing reliance on private vehicles, Cinque Terre ensures that its natural beauty remains accessible to all while preserving the charm of its historic villages.

Value for money



Value for money is a significant consideration for visitors exploring the Cinque Terre trails. The region offers a range of trail options, including free trails and paid trails that require purchase of the Cinque Terre Card for access. This card not only provides trail access but also includes unlimited train travel between the villages and access to shuttle buses, offering visitors a comprehensive and cost-effective way to explore the area. The Cinque Terre Card represents excellent value, as it allows visitors to maximize their experience while saving money on transport and trail access fees. This integrated approach not only enhances the value for the visitor but also contributes to the economic and environmental sustainability of the region.

Sense of journey and signage



In Cinque Terre, the sense of journey is evident throughout the trails. Each trail serves as a conduit to the next destination, guiding walkers through a captivating landscape of breathtaking views and natural wonders. With well-marked signage and comprehensive information available on websites and visitor centres, walkers can easily navigate the trails and prepare for their adventure ahead. Detailed maps provided by the park's website and at visitor centre, provide visitors with the resources needed to embark on a memorable journey of exploration and discovery.

Relationship with landowners



The Cinque Terre National Park maintains a close relationship with landowners, recognizing their vital role in preserving the region's natural and cultural heritage. Through collaborative efforts, the park authorities work alongside landowners to ensure the sustainable management of shared land, including maintaining walking trails, preserving agricultural terraces, and protecting biodiversity. The park provides support and resources to landowners, such as assistance with maintaining dry stone walls and providing subsidies for environmentally friendly farming practices. This partnership fosters a sense of stewardship among landowners, promoting the long-term conservation of Cinque Terre's unique landscape whilst supporting the local economy and traditional way of life.

Legend:



Case Study: Key Lessons

Availability of Free Trails

One key lesson learned from the Cinque Terre Park is the effectiveness of offering a variety of trails, including both free and paid options. By providing a range of trail choices, visitors are encouraged to explore less popular trails that are free of charge, distributing foot traffic more evenly across the site. This approach helps alleviate congestion on popular trails while promoting access to lesser-known areas. Implementing a mix of free and paid trails enhances visitor experience and supports sustainable use of trail infrastructure.

Integrated Public Transport

A valuable lesson from the case study is the integration of public transport with trail access. By offering combined train and trail passes, visitors perceive greater value and savings, enhancing the overall visitor experience. This integrated approach encourages the use of public transportation, reducing reliance on private vehicles and minimizing environmental impact. Implementing combined ticket options fosters convenience and affordability for visitors, promoting sustainable travel practices and enhancing accessibility to trailheads. Moreover, this integrated approach contributes to the economic vitality of the region by encouraging visitors to spend locally, supporting businesses and communities along the trail routes. This lesson emphasizes the importance of strategic partnerships between transport providers and trail managers to optimize visitor experiences, promote sustainable tourism, and boost the regional economy.

Integration into Wider Tourism System

An intriguing lesson from the Cinque Terre trails is their integration into a broader tourism attraction rather than being a standalone offer. Alongside the card system, the trails are linked to the Environmental Quality Label 2.0 (ECST II), a certification awarded to hotels and B&Bs that demonstrate exceptional service quality, environmental awareness, and respect for local traditions. These certified accommodations actively promote the local heritage and sustainable tourism practices. By choosing ECST II-certified establishments, visitors support these initiatives and receive discounted prices on trail cards, access to services dedicated to an authentic local experience. This highlights the integration of tourism components and demonstrates the benefits of collaborative efforts in promoting responsible tourism practices.

Relationship with Landowners

As part of the Cinque Terre National Park, the trails support sustainable agricultural practices by providing free building materials to landowners for repairing or rebuilding dry stone walls. Landowners receive approximately 0.6 cubic meters of building material per square meter of dry stone wall, promoting the preservation of traditional agricultural landscapes. The park facilitates the transport of stone materials via helicopter, ensuring efficient delivery to remote locations and reducing impact on the landscape. Additionally, the park supports landowners by offering maintenance services for monorail engines and tracks, essential for agricultural operations. The provision of free grapevine shoots (barbatelle) and chestnut poles encourages sustainable viticulture and supports local craftsmanship. These collaborative initiatives underscore the importance of partnerships between park authorities and landowners in preserving cultural landscapes and fostering sustainable land stewardship.

Managing Tourist Numbers

Distributing tourism across the full geographical extent of the trail has been a particular challenge. The National Park Authority alongside town mayors have implemented a number of measures including restrictions on marine access, one-way systems on public holidays and small sections which will only offer time-slotted guided tours with limits on group size. The key solution to managing crowds is felt to be dispersal into the mountains where visitors can get to know the real Cinque Terre and the farming community that grows vines, olives and fruit trees in cliff terraces.



Manicola footpath in Cinque Terre (Photo: cinqueterre.eu.com)



Northern Ireland

Giant's Causeway

Giant's Causeway basalt columns (Photo: goaheadtours.com)

Overview

Located along the rugged coastline of County Antrim, in Northern Ireland, the Giant's Causeway stands as a geological wonder steeped in myth and scientific interest. The site attracts visitors from around the world to witness its unique hexagonal basalt columns, formed over 60 million years ago through volcanic activity. Approximately 40,000 basalt columns form the overall structure of the geological phenomenon. The site was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 and a national nature reserve by the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland in 1987. The Giant's Causeway is primarily owned by the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The remainder of the site is owned by the Crown Estate and several private landowners. As one of Northern Ireland's premier tourist destinations, the Giant's Causeway offers not only stunning natural beauty but also a rich tapestry of geological history and cultural heritage.

The Giant's Causeway emerged as a tourist hotspot in the 19th century, gaining popularity following the inauguration of the Giant's Causeway Tramway. However, it wasn't until the National Trust assumed custodianship in the 1960s that efforts to diminish commercial influences were realized. Today, visitors have the opportunity to stroll along the basalt columns, located just a half-mile from the main site entrance and visitor centre extending to the edge of the North Atlantic Ocean.

Visitor Centre

In 2000 the former visitor centre burned down leaving the causeway without a permanent visitor centre until 2012 when a new facility was opened. Since its opening, the new visitor centre has received mixed reviews from visitors, citing concerns about pricing, design, content, and its location relative to the descent along the causeway walk. In 2018, the visitor centre welcomed a total of 1,011,473 visitors. There are generally good facilities provided including reception desks, interactive maps, cafe area, gift shop, toilets and car park. In addition to its informative exhibits and interactive displays, the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre provides visitors with audio guides and guided tours to enhance their experience. Audio guides offer a self-paced exploration of the site, providing detailed information about the geological formations, local flora and fauna, and historical significance of the area. For those seeking a more in-depth understanding, guided tours led by knowledgeable park rangers or local experts offer a personalized journey through the landscape, delving into the stories, myths, and legends that surround this iconic natural wonder. Whether exploring independently with an audio guide or joining a guided tour, visitors can gain a deeper appreciation for the Giant's Causeway and its rich cultural and geological heritage.

Accessibility

The Giant's Causeway prioritizes accessibility and offers a variety of trails to accommodate visitors of all abilities. Efforts have been made to ensure that the site is accessible to individuals with disabilities or mobility limitations, with accessible pathways and viewing areas near the visitor centre. The visitor centre itself is equipped with facilities to accommodate individuals with disabilities, including accessible restrooms and parking. Additionally, the site features a main trail leading from the visitor centre to the basalt columns along the coastline, providing a relatively easy walk with stunning views. For those seeking a more immersive experience, longer hiking trails extend beyond the main site, offering opportunities to explore the surrounding landscape. Guided tours are also available for visitors who want to learn more about the geology, history, and folklore of the area while exploring the trails. Overall, the Giant's Causeway strives to ensure that everyone can enjoy this iconic natural wonder in Northern Ireland.

Trails

The Giant's Causeway offers a diverse range of trails, catering to various preferences and fitness levels. Choices include the Green Trail which is fully accessible for wheelchair users, and also The Blue, Red and Yellow Trails. There are seating opportunities available along the routes for visitors.

Trail length



The Challenges

The Giant's Causeway has encountered a number of challenges, both historical and ongoing, that have shaped its management and conservation efforts. Historically, issues such as inadequate infrastructure, including parking facilities and access roads, have strained the site's capacity to accommodate visitors, leading to dissatisfaction among local stakeholders. Over-tourism has been a persistent concern, resulting in overcrowding and environmental degradation, threatening the site's sustainability. Additionally, managing the delicate balance between conservation and tourism promotion has been a long-standing challenge, with tensions arising over the perceived conflict between the National Trust's role as custodians of a protected area and their responsibility as managers of a popular tourist attraction.

Presently, these challenges persist, exacerbated by evolving visitor demands, environmental concerns, and the need for effective management strategies to ensure the long-term preservation of this iconic natural landmark. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that prioritizes sustainable tourism practices, community engagement, and proactive conservation efforts. The challenge of increased tourism also involves preserving the character of the site amidst growing visitor numbers. Moreover, there is a need to encourage a shift away from the 'day-tripper' tourism model towards a more sustainable approach where tourists stay longer in the area to explore its surroundings. This shift not only enhances the visitor experience but also results in greater economic benefits for the local community. The engagement of the local community in conversations about the site's future is paramount, as they have expressed an interest in being involved and to see tangible benefits from increased tourism, emphasizing the importance of fostering mutually beneficial relationships between the site management and the surrounding community.



Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre (Photo: global-geography.org)



Tourists at Giant's Causeway (Photo: belfasttoursni.com)



Over-tourism
 Growing visitor numbers can impact the physical fabric of the site and need to be managed.



Local dissatisfaction and Break of Trust
 Impacts of over-tourism on the local community and perception of limited local economic gain from day tripper tourists



Insufficient Infrastructure and Insufficient Management
 Historically inadequate parking facilities and access roads have put pressure on site capacity, although recent improvements to both have alleviated some issues



Sustainability and Conservation of Natural Assets
 Balancing the demands high visitor numbers place on the site's natural assets

Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan 2021 – 2027

In response to the multifaceted challenges facing the Giant's Causeway, a comprehensive management plan *Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan 2021 – 2027* has been developed to guide conservation efforts and address the issues at hand. This management plan outlines a series of strategic actions aimed at preserving the site's natural and cultural heritage while ensuring sustainable tourism practices. Key components of the plan include 4 aims stated in the document.

Aim 1. Safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting for present and future generations

This objective recognising the importance of the site and encompasses several key strategies: firstly, conserving the geological and geomorphological attributes of the site while allowing natural processes to occur. The report suggest that the existing pathways may need to be changed and amended following the erosion, rising sea levels, etc.

Report's supporting a healthy natural environment and upholding the landscape character, setting, and sense of place for the site.

Lastly, the aim includes encouraging, supporting, and promoting outcomes of research and monitoring programs that inform the sustainable management of the site and its distinctive landscape setting. The management plan recognising the threats presented by the nature such as natural erosion and also a human threats introduced by increasing tourism. The management plan seeks to ensure the preservation of the site's unique natural and cultural heritage while promoting its sustainable use and enjoyment by visitors.

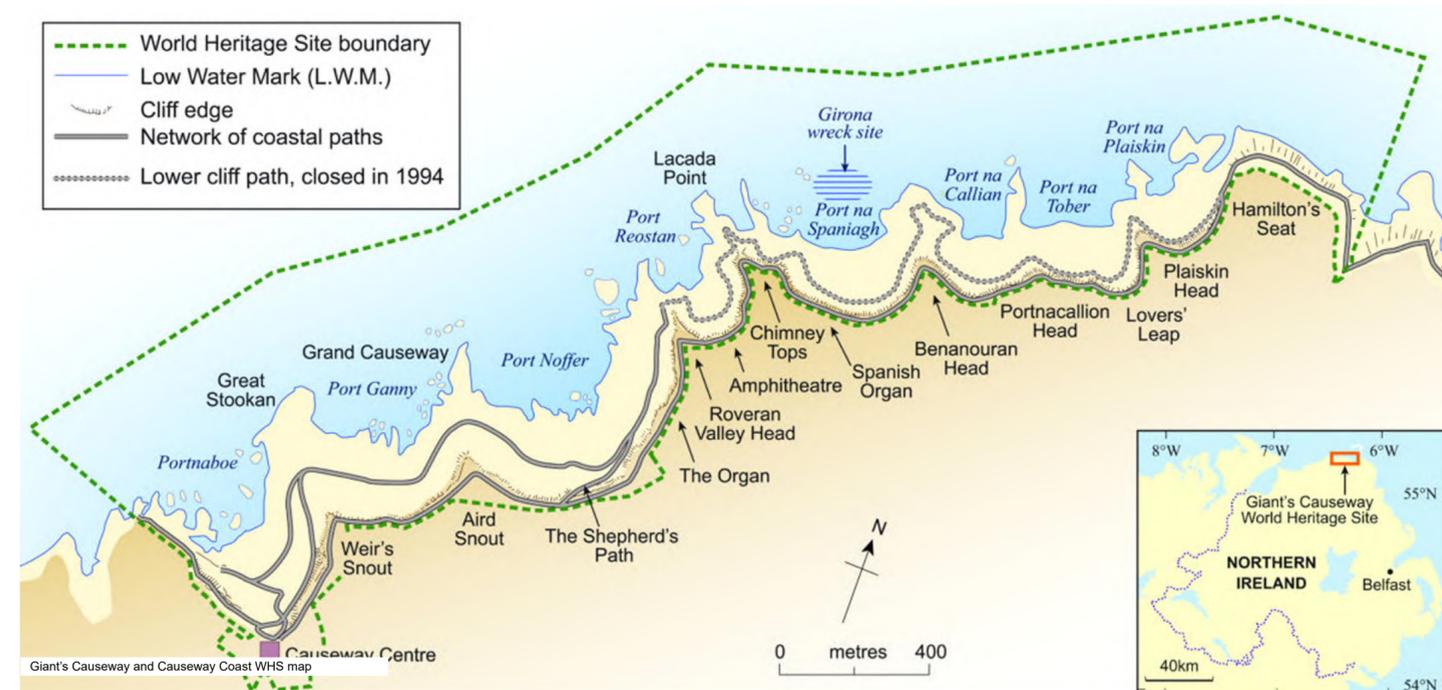
Aim 2. Demonstrate and support excellent World Heritage Site Management

It is vital to establish a robust management system given the involvement of multiple bodies, including the local community, which is directly affected by activities on site. Among the six entities with legal rights to the site are the Crown Estate, which owns approximately two-thirds of the site, and the National Trust,

which holds ownership of 95% of the terrestrial area, including the majority of cliffs and foreshore. Additionally, the Causeway Hotel and the Visitor Centre play pivotal roles in visitor management and public access. The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, leasing certain lands to the National Trust, also contribute to site management. Furthermore, three private landowners own smaller portions of the land, managed by the National Trust. Effective coordination and collaboration among these stakeholders are essential for ensuring the sustainable management and preservation of the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site..

This aim encompasses several key objectives: firstly, maintaining a robust management structure to facilitate effective coordination of activities that influence or impact the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and integrity of the site.

Secondly, ensuring that sufficient resources are secured to enable the effective delivery of the World Heritage Plan (WHS), thereby supporting ongoing conservation efforts and sustainable management practices.



Lastly, the aim emphasizes the importance of sharing knowledge and collaborating with other World Heritage Sites to promote responsible management practices and foster a global network of conservation stewardship.

Aim 3. Raise awareness and understanding of the Giant's Causeway WHS status

This aim encompasses several pivotal objectives: firstly, elevating public and sectoral awareness of the site's WHS status and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), ensuring stakeholders grasp the significance of the site and its World Heritage designation. Secondly, ensuring broad recognition and elucidation of the WHS status across diverse audiences, including visitors, local communities, and pertinent sectors such as tourism, education, and conservation. Lastly, the aim underscores the importance of maintaining and enhancing educational, training, and research opportunities and facilities both at the WHS and beyond. This approach nurtures a deeper understanding of the site's cultural and natural heritage values, bolstering ongoing endeavours for conservation and protection. Through these concerted efforts, the management plan aims to cultivate public appreciation and engagement with the Giant's Causeway as a World Heritage Site, thus fostering its enduring preservation and sustainable management.

Aim 4. Provide a safe, enjoyable and sustainable visitor experience that does not compromise the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site

This aim will be realized through the maintenance of appropriate access to and around the site, prioritizing measures that safeguard the site's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and natural environment. It involves fostering environmentally sustainable behaviours among visitors, encouraging them to make eco-conscious choices during their visit. Furthermore, the aim encompasses the development of suitable and sustainable regional visitor infrastructure to enhance the overall visitor experience while minimizing environmental impact.

Aim 5. Better engage local communities with the World Heritage Site, enabling them to gain greater benefits from the attraction.

This aim will be achieved by ensuring the inclusion of local community representation in World Heritage Site management, enabling meaningful engagement with the WHS among local communities, and leveraging the site's potential contribution to community life. Additionally, it involves supporting local communities in advocating for the WHS and its protection, empowering them to become champions of conservation efforts and stewards of their cultural and natural heritage.

Future Tourism

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council recognises the tourism opportunities for the area whilst acknowledging the current issues. Key objectives for the future tourism include attracting a greater volume of visitors and encourage extended stays, thus promoting year-round tourism. This approach aims to ease up the high volumes of tourists who only visit the Giant's Causeway site for one day. Moreover, the focus extends to fostering growth in specific sectors and bolstering the tourism offer. To achieve these goals, the Council is committed to supporting existing tourist operators while also fostering an environment conducive to the emergence of new, competitive, and innovative businesses within the tourism sector. Additionally, plans are underway to establish a Destination Management Organization (DMO) within the Council area, tasked with coordinating efforts to promote the area as a premier tourism destination. Research and monitoring activities will be conducted to track tourism trends and inform strategic decision-making. Through these concerted efforts, the Council aims to position the Borough as a thriving and sustainable tourism destination, poised for continued growth and success in the years to come.



Case Study vs objectives



Efforts to enhance the walking conditions and appearance of the Giant's Causeway trails have led to a more enjoyable and accessible experience for visitors. Various trails cater to different difficulty levels, from leisurely strolls to challenging hikes, ensuring options for all abilities. Priority has been given to accessibility, with trails suitable for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility. The modern design and amenities of the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre complement the surrounding landscape, providing a welcoming space for visitors to learn about the area's geological wonders and cultural heritage before embarking on their exploration. This commitment reflects a dedication to preserving the site's unique character while enhancing visitor enjoyment.



The sense of arrival at the Giant's Causeway is carefully managed, with the visitor centre serving as the welcoming gateway to the experience. Upon arrival, visitors are greeted by the modern and inviting facilities of the visitor centre, which offer a wealth of information through interactive exhibits and educational displays. These exhibitions not only explain the geological phenomena of the site but also delve into its rich history and cultural significance. The visitor centre provides a comprehensive introduction to the Giant's Causeway, setting the stage for a memorable exploration of this iconic natural wonder.



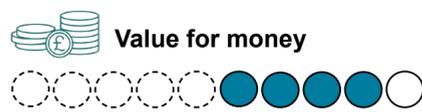
Safety and accessibility are paramount considerations at the Giant's Causeway, where a range of measures are implemented to ensure a positive visitor experience for all. One key aspect is the provision of trails with varying levels of difficulty, catering to visitors with different fitness levels and abilities. This ensures accessibility for all, allowing individuals to choose trails that align with their confidence and physical capabilities. Additionally, efforts are made to maintain safe walking conditions along the trails, with regular maintenance and the installation of safety features where necessary. These initiatives contribute to a welcoming and inclusive environment, where visitors can explore and enjoy the natural beauty of the Giant's Causeway with peace of mind.



The protection of natural assets at the Giant's Causeway is a priority within the management plan, which acknowledges the various threats facing the site, including those posed by climate change, flooding, and erosion. To address these challenges, the National Trust, responsible for managing the site, implements practices aimed at conserving its geological and geomorphological attributes. This approach involves striking a delicate balance between conservation efforts and allowing natural processes to occur. By managing terrestrial aspects of the World Heritage Site within their remit, the National Trust aims to safeguard the site's unique geological features while fostering resilience against environmental pressures. This commitment to conservation ensures that the natural beauty and significance of the Giant's Causeway are preserved for future generations to enjoy.



While efforts have been made to address public transport traffic and parking concerns at the Giant's Causeway, there remains room for improvement. On the surface, infrastructure has been put in place to manage visitor traffic and parking, with designated parking areas and public transport options available. However, there is dissatisfaction among residents, stemming from tourists seeking to avoid parking fees by parking along access roads, leading to congestion and difficulties with traffic flow. This issue significantly impacts the day-to-day lives of residents, causing frustration and inconvenience. Addressing these challenges will require ongoing collaboration between local authorities, transport agencies, and community stakeholders to develop effective solutions that balance the needs of visitors with the concerns of residents, ensuring a harmonious coexistence within the surrounding area.



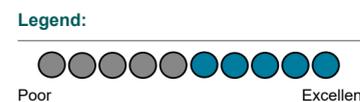
While the entry to the natural site itself is free, the visitor centre offers various ticketing options and visitor passes that provide access to amenities such as guided tours with the story-telling experts, access to exhibition area and access to other facilities. These combined offers enable visitors to maximize their experience whilst enjoying cost savings and convenience. Moreover, the Giant's Causeway prioritizes transparency in pricing and service quality, ensuring that visitors feel they are receiving good value for their investment. By focusing on value for money and leveraging the free entry to the natural site, the site enhances visitor satisfaction and encourages repeat visits, contributing to the sustainability of the tourism industry in the region.



Currently, there is a need for clearer and more sensitive signage that guides visitors through the site while respecting its natural beauty. While the visitor centre offers valuable resources and exhibits, enhancing onsite interpretation and signage could enrich the sense of journey and understanding for visitors exploring this iconic natural landmark.



The site engages with landowners through partnerships and initiatives that support conservation and sustainable management practices. By working closely with landowners and involving them in decision-making processes, the management ensures mutual understanding and shared responsibility for the protection of natural and cultural assets. Collaborative relationships with landowners promote stewardship of the landscape and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Giant's Causeway as a World Heritage Site (WHS).



Giant's causeway Visitor centre (Photo: archdaily.com)

Case Study: Key Lessons

Inclusivity

A significant lesson from the Giant's Causeway is the importance of providing an inclusive visitor experience that caters for all levels of ability. Efforts have been made to develop accessible routes and facilities, ensuring that visitors of all ages and abilities can enjoy and appreciate the site's natural beauty and geological wonders. The implementation of accessible trails, interpretive signage, and audio guides enhances the experience for visitors with mobility challenges or sensory impairments. Visitor Experience tickets holders are able to use a range of equipment available such as motorised scooters and wheelchairs. By prioritizing inclusivity, the Giant's Causeway promotes accessibility and diversity in tourism, allowing more people to connect with and appreciate this iconic natural landmark. This lesson emphasises the value of accommodating diverse visitor needs and preferences to create meaningful and equitable experiences for all.

Environmental Conservation

One important lesson from the Giant's Causeway case study is the significance of environmental conservation in preserving natural heritage sites. The Giant's Causeway, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, faces challenges such as over-tourism and extreme weather events that threaten its geological formations and ecological balance. The management of the site prioritizes conservation efforts, including habitat restoration, erosion control measures, and sustainable tourism practices. By implementing proactive conservation strategies, such as habitat restoration and visitor management, the Giant's Causeway demonstrates the importance of balancing tourism with environmental stewardship to ensure the long-term sustainability of natural heritage sites.

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Collaboration

Engaging local communities and collaborating with stakeholders are essential lessons from the Giant's Causeway. The site's management partnership actively involves local communities in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and pride among residents. One of the main objectives set out in Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site, Management Plan (2021-2027) is to establish better engagement with the local community by ensuring that the local community is embedded in site management and by enabling local communities to be engaged with UNESCO and harness contributions that the site can make to the community life. Collaboration with stakeholders, including conservation organizations, government agencies, and tourism operators, helps promote responsible tourism practices and ensures coordinated efforts in site management and conservation. By prioritizing community engagement and stakeholder collaboration, the Giant's Causeway exemplifies the importance of inclusive governance and collective action in safeguarding and promoting natural heritage sites for future generations.

Establishment of a Collaborative Steering Group

A notable lesson from the management of the Giant's Causeway is the establishment of a Steering Group composed of diverse stakeholders representing conservation, tourism, economic, educational, and landowner interests. This Steering Group plays a pivotal role in overseeing the implementation of the site's Management Plan through an Action Plan, ensuring strategic guidance and coordination of activities related to the WHS status. The Steering Group's composition reflects a commitment to inclusivity and collaboration,

with representation from local communities, governmental and non-governmental organizations, private entities, and landowners. By fostering partnerships and engaging stakeholders, the Steering Group facilitates participatory WHS management and promotes community involvement in conservation efforts. Additionally, the inclusion of external experts provides valuable insights and expertise, enhancing decision-making and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of World Heritage conservation. Moving forward, the Steering Group aims to further expand external expert participation to strengthen WHS management and address pertinent topics effectively. This lesson underscores the importance of collaborative governance and stakeholder engagement in achieving the aims and objectives of heritage site conservation and management.

Implementing Sustainable Tourism Practices

A valuable ongoing lesson from managing the Giant's Causeway is the recognition of seasonal tourism peaks and the need to promote year-round visitation for sustainable economic benefits. Efforts are underway to shift from a summer-centric tourism model to one that encourages visitation throughout the year. One strategy involves limiting day-trippers and encouraging longer stays which presents benefits for the area. By extending the tourism season and promoting longer stays, the area can diversify its economic impact beyond peak periods, supporting local businesses and enhancing the overall visitor experience. This lesson highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to implement sustainable tourism practices that promote economic resilience and community engagement while minimizing environmental and social impacts associated with tourism peaks.

The Gobbins Cliff Path

Northern Ireland

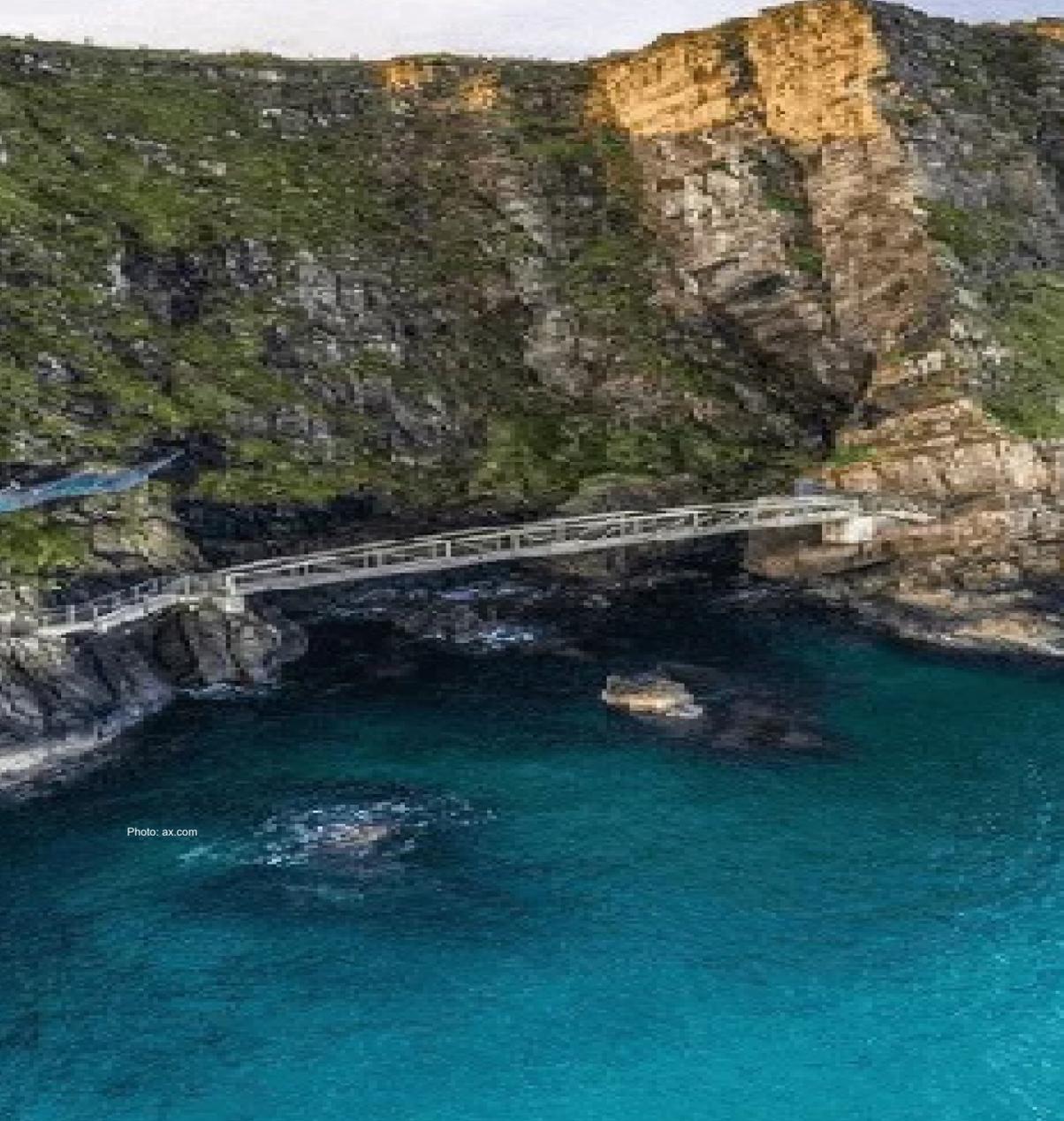


Photo: ax.com

Overview

The Gobbins experience is situated on the Causeway Coastal Route on the Islandmagee peninsula, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. It is approximately 30 kilometres from Belfast, making it easily accessible for both locals and tourists. Originally opened in 1902, the Gobbins was designed and constructed by Berkeley Deane Wise, a chief engineer for the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway Company. The trail was designed to attract tourists to the area and was an engineering marvel of its time. The Gobbins path became a popular tourist attraction placed on a similar level as Giant's causeway. However, the path fell into disrepair during the Second World War due to lack of maintenance and it closed in the 1950s.

In recent years, The Gobbins has undergone extensive restoration and reopened to the public in 2015. The Gobbins trail offers a challenging and adventurous experience. Visitors can walk along a series of metal bridges, pathways, and tunnels that hug the cliffs and pass over crashing waves below. Highlights of the trail include the tubular bridge, suspension bridge, and the Man O'War sea stack. To ensure safety, the trail is guided, providing informative commentary about the history, geology, and wildlife of the area. Due to its rugged nature, The Gobbins trail is physically demanding and not suitable for everyone. Visitors must book guided tours in advance, and appropriate footwear and clothing are required. The trail includes steep climbs, narrow paths, and steps, which may not be accessible for individuals with limited mobility or certain health conditions. Potential access limitations are highlighted during the online booking process.

Visitor Centre:

The Gobbins Visitor Centre serves as the starting point for tours, offering parking, ticketing, and visitor information. The centre also features exhibitions that provide insights into the history, geology, and wildlife of the area, enhancing the overall visitor experience. Additionally, it offers a range of facilities, including a café with food and drinks, lockers, toilets, boot hire, and a gift shop. While the paths themselves are not accessible for visitors with specific mobility requirements, the visitor centre is fully accessible.

Tourism Impact:

The Gobbins has become a popular tourist attraction, drawing visitors from around the world. It contributes to the local economy by creating jobs and supporting local businesses, such as restaurants, accommodation providers, and transport services.

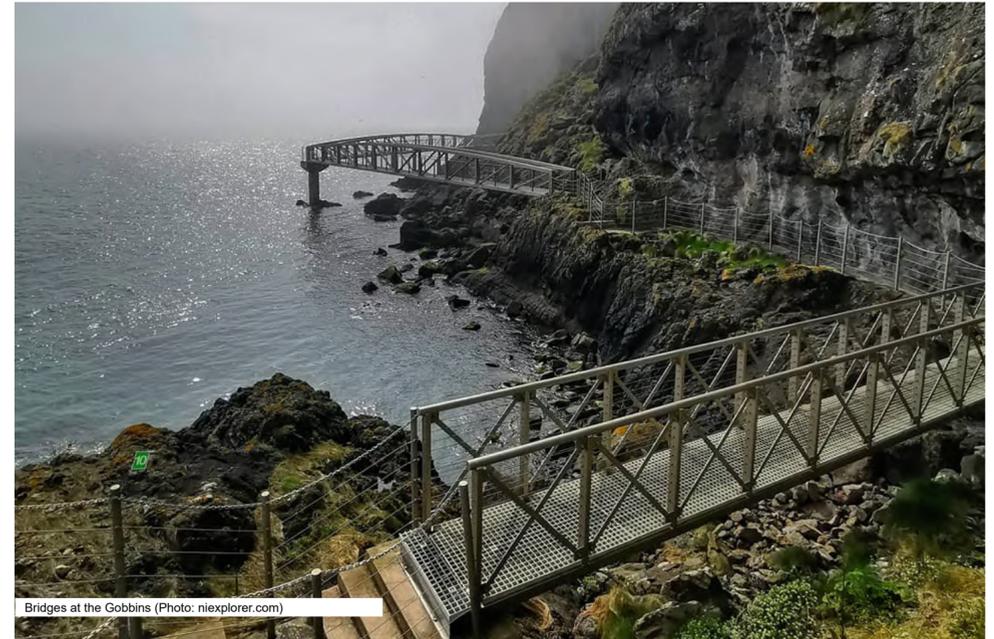
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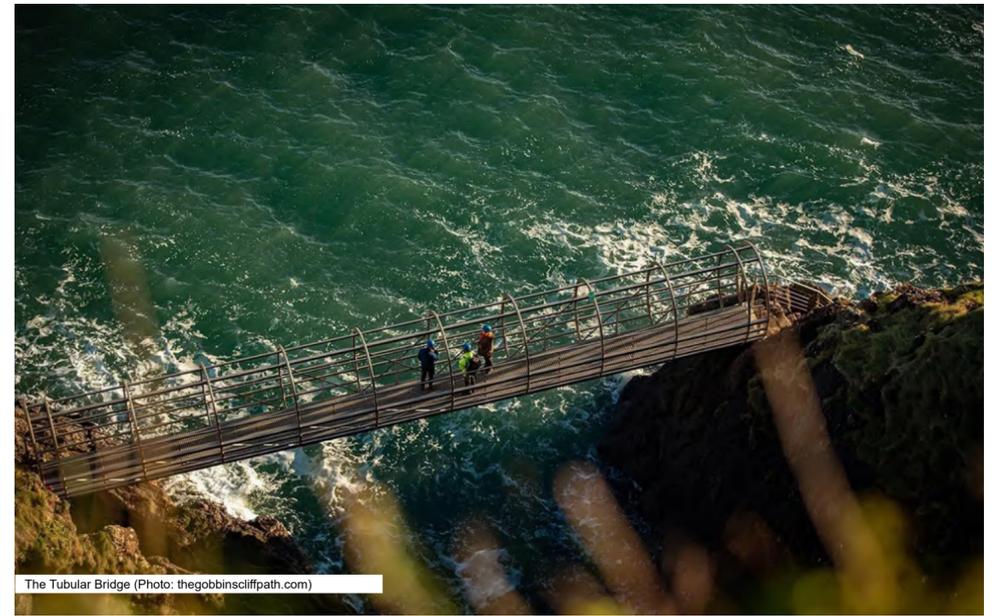
ASSI Recognition

The Gobbins Coastal Path is recognised as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). ASSIs in Northern Ireland are designated by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to protect and conserve areas of significant scientific interest due to rare species, habitats, geological features, or ecological value. These areas are legally protected under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. ASSIs are similar to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in other parts of the United Kingdom. They play a crucial role in biodiversity conservation and environmental management. The ASSI status emphasises the importance of conserving The Gobbins' natural features, ensuring that its geological and ecological characteristics are protected. This recognition adds to the site's appeal, offering visitors not only a remarkable walking experience but also an opportunity to appreciate and learn about its scientific and environmental significance.

The cliffs, composed of amygdaloidal basalts, contain rare minerals like gobbinsite and gonnardite, dating back to the Palaeogene period, approximately 60 million years ago. The site also features older marine sedimentary rocks from the Upper Triassic and Lower Jurassic periods. Ecologically, The Gobbins supports a vital seabird colony, including kittiwakes, razorbills, and Northern Ireland's only mainland nesting Atlantic puffins, as well as peregrine falcons. The maritime cliff plant communities, influenced by salt spray and seabird enrichment, host a variety of species such as red fescue, thrift, sea campion, and notable plants including sea spleenwort. The diverse vegetation is shaped by factors like soil depth, slope, and exposure to the elements.



Bridges at the Gobbins (Photo: niexplorer.com)



The Tubular Bridge (Photo: thegobbinscliffpath.com)

The challenges



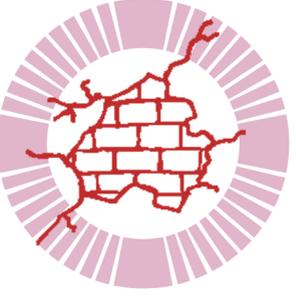
Safety Considerations

Physically challenging, narrow, uneven steps, sheer cliff faces. Visitors must wear boots with ankle support and hard hats



Area of Special Scientific Interest

Environmental constraints - consultation with the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs required to ensure conservation



Ongoing Maintenance

Storm damage and landslides require high cost yearly maintenance programme



Wise's Eye at The Gobbins (Photo: thegobbinscliffpath.com)

Restoring the Gobbins path

Historical Foundations

Nestled along the County Antrim coastline in Northern Ireland, the Gobbins Cliff Path stands as a symbol of human endeavour among nature's grandeur. The name 'Gobbins' comes from the Irish 'An Gobain', meaning 'the points of rock'. The path was created by Berkeley Deane Wise, a pioneering railway engineer, in 1902. The path aimed to provide visitors with an immersive encounter with the raw beauty and power of the Antrim coast. Named after the distinctive rock formations, the Gobbins quickly became a renowned attraction, drawing adventurers and nature enthusiasts from far and wide.

Berkeley Deane Wise was a railway engineer with a enthusiasm for innovation, he envisioned the Gobbins Cliff Path as more than just a tourist attraction. His approach was grounded in a deep respect for the natural landscape and a desire to provide visitors with a unique experience of close encounter with

powerful nature. In designing the path, Wise was mindful of the coastal landscape's natural features, aiming to create an experience that complemented rather than disturbed it. He wanted visitors to enjoy the thrill of exploration while ensuring the preservation of the environment. His approach emphasized the importance of responsible tourism and ecological conservation, seeking to strike a balance between adventure and sustainability.

The Gobbins became an immediate sensation becoming an extremely popular attraction.

Decline and Neglect

The decline of the Gobbins Cliff Path can be attributed to a combination of factors, including natural erosion and a lack of maintenance. The onset of World War II exacerbated these challenges, diverting attention and resources away from leisure and tourism activities. As

a result, necessary repairs and upkeep were deferred, accelerating the path's deterioration. By the mid-20th century, the effects of neglect had become evident, with sections of the path succumbing to the elements. In 1954, amidst safety concerns and dwindling visitor numbers, the decision was made to close the Gobbins Cliff Path, marking the end of an era for this once-thriving tourist attraction.

The Vision for Restoration

In the early 21st century, as awareness of the Gobbins Cliff Path's historical and cultural significance grew, the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council recognized the need for a comprehensive restoration efforts. With the path closed since 1954 due to neglect and safety concerns, there was a shared determination to restore the landmark and breathe new life into the site.



Photo: thegobbinscliffpath.com

The council embarked on a bold initiative to restore the Gobbins to its former glory, recognizing the path's potential to revitalize tourism in the region and celebrate Northern Ireland's natural heritage. Drawing upon the expertise of engineers, conservationists, and community stakeholders, the council developed a visionary plan for the path's restoration that began in 2013.

The Engineering Challenges and Solutions

The restoration of the Gobbins Cliff Path presented numerous engineering challenges related to health and safety, sustainable tourism, and environmental conservation. The project's scope included installing approximately 1.1km of new coastal path, 22m long tunnel, and 23 footbridge structures ranging from 5m to 35m span, including a replication of the famous tubular Hoop Bridge at the Man'O'War sea stack site.

One of the key challenges was stabilizing the precarious cliffs, ensuring the new structures could withstand the harsh coastal environment. This involved using marine-grade stainless steel to fabricate the 23 new bridges, including the iconic Tubular Bridge and Gordon's Leap Suspension Bridge. The choice of materials was critical for durability and resistance to the corrosive sea air.

The design was also required to incorporate a path guardrail system to enhance safety and upgrades to walkways to facilitate increased and improved tourist access. Engineers faced the challenge of following the original route as closely as possible, utilizing the same steps and pathways, upgrading guardrails, and making minor repairs where necessary to preserve the historical integrity of the path.

Given the Gobbins' designation as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), the project had to be carefully phased to minimize environmental impact. This included considerations for the breeding patterns of cliff-top birds, requiring sensitive implementation to avoid disturbance.

The improvement works, which spanned 60 weeks, required meticulous planning and innovative solutions to ensure the project met its goals. The reconstruction of the iconic bridges to match their originals was particularly complex, demanding both historical analysis and modern safety standards.

The New Offer and Impact

After years of meticulous planning and construction, the Gobbins Cliff Path was reopened in August 2015. The restoration integrated modern safety features while maintaining the path's historic character, allowing visitors to safely enjoy the scenic views and historical significance of the Antrim coast.

The restoration project demonstrated effective collaboration and perseverance, leading to significant positive impacts on tourism in the region. The redesigned path has attracted visitors from around the world, boosting the local economy and providing new employment opportunities. Local businesses have benefited from the increased tourist traffic, contributing to the economic revitalization of the area.

The project's cultural and environmental benefits are also noteworthy. The Gobbins Cliff Path now serves as an educational and recreational resource, highlighting the importance of preserving Northern Ireland's natural and historic heritage. Visitors can appreciate the unique geological features and diverse wildlife of the area, promoting ecological awareness and conservation.



(Photo: thegobbinscliffpath.com)

Case Study vs objectives



The Gobbins underwent major renovations to make the site more accessible and enhance overall safety, year-round usability, and appearance. These improvements not only made the Gobbins Cliff Path more usable but also ensured the site's durability and accessibility for future generations. As part of the comprehensive renovation efforts, a visitor centre was also added. This facility provides tourists with essential information about the path's history, geology and ecology and also a base for equipment hire and safety information. The comprehensive renovation project reflects a significant commitment to high-quality and sustainable recreation-focused tourism.



The sense of arrival at the Gobbins Cliff Path is designed to be understated and respectful of the area's natural beauty. The visitor centre serves as an effective gateway, providing essential amenities and information without overshadowing the main attraction - the cliff path itself. This low-key approach ensures that the focus remains on the breathtaking landscape and the immersive experience of exploring the rugged coastline. The visitor centre enhances the overall visit by offering a convenient base.



The Gobbins Coastal Path is not accessible for individuals with limited mobility or health problems due to its challenging nature. The 5km (3 mile) trail includes steep gradients (up to 1:4), narrow paths, and 50 flights of uneven, hand-carved steps. The trail demands physical fitness, and safety is a priority. Access is permitted only with a guide on a pre-booked tour, ensuring visitors adhere to safety protocols, which are presented during the safety briefing before the tour. The website is an additional resource offering detailed advanced information about potential hazards, requirements for appropriate footwear and clothing. Additionally, the website comprehensively covers features of the trail such as suspended walkways and caves, allowing people to make an informed decision about their ability to undertake the trail.



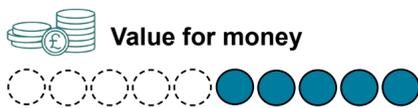
The restoration of the Gobbins Cliff Path demonstrates a strong commitment to preserving natural assets. Throughout the project, measures were taken to minimise impact on the surrounding environment, aligning with the path's designation as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). By prioritising environmental stewardship, the project ensures the protection of the Gobbins' biodiversity and geodiversity, setting a precedent for responsible tourism and conservation efforts.

The Gobbins closes each January and February to carry out annual maintenance as required and set up for the new season.



The Gobbins Cliff Path is accessible by public transport, though it is not the most convenient option. Visitors can take Ulsterbus services to nearby towns such as Larne or Ballygally and then use local taxi services to reach the site. For those arriving by car, there is a dedicated parking area available at the visitor centre.

Comprehensive information on transport options, including public transport routes and parking details, is available on the Gobbins Cliff Path website. This ensures that visitors can plan their journey effectively.



The Gobbins offers a valuable experience for visitors seeking a unique and thrilling coastal adventure. The entry fee includes a guided tour that provides insights into the area's history, geology, and wildlife, ensuring a rich and informative experience. Additionally, the admission price covers a shuttle bus to the Gobbins trailhead from the visitor centre car park. The visitor centre enhances the experience with a range of amenities such as a café, lockers, toilets, boot hire, and a gift shop. While the trail itself is challenging, the comprehensive facilities contribute to the overall experience. The attention to safety and the quality of the guided tours provides additional value for money and ensures a memorable and secure experience.



The restoration of the Gobbins Cliff Path is a prime example of a sense of journey for visitors. By strategically incorporating points of interest along the route including bridges, elevated walkways and caves, the Gobbins became more than just a walking trail - it became an immersive experience. Honouring the original design, the path leads visitors on a captivating journey through the rugged beauty of the Antrim coast, inviting them to engage with their surroundings and forge a deeper connection with nature. From scenic viewpoints to geological wonders and historical landmarks, each step of the journey offers something unique and memorable, enriching the overall visitor experience and fostering a lasting appreciation for the site's natural and cultural heritage.



The Gobbins Cliff Path is owned by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, which plays a crucial role in the management and preservation of the site. The council's ownership allows for coordinated efforts in maintaining the path, implementing safety measures, and undertaking restoration projects. By owning the land, the council can effectively oversee the development of amenities such as the visitor centre and parking facilities, enhancing the overall visitor experience while preserving the integrity of the Gobbins Cliff Path. The restoration project was welcomed by neighbouring residents, who recognized the path's historical significance and natural beauty. The visitor centre is a shared resource providing a community hall and meeting room. This sense of local pride and ownership contributed to the success of the restoration, fostering a collaborative relationship between the council and the local community. Council ownership ensures that the ongoing relationship with the local community is central to the management and preservation of the Gobbins Cliff Path, reinforcing its status as a recreational asset.

Case Study: Key Lessons

Prioritising Safety

A vital lesson drawn from the Gobbins Cliff Path restoration project is the importance of prioritising safety, from design to ongoing operation. The meticulous reconstruction of iconic structures, such as bridges, reflected historical trail features whilst incorporating modern techniques to ensure structural integrity and visitor safety. New safety measures, including hand rails and guard rails, were seamlessly integrated into the design process to minimise risks.

Safety considerations continue to be at the forefront today, with comprehensive safety briefings prior to access, requirements for appropriate clothing, footwear and hard hats, and restrictions based on height and health to ensure a safe experience for all visitors. The requirement for guided tours further emphasizes the commitment to visitor safety, providing guidance throughout the trail. By prioritizing safety at every stage, the Gobbins Cliff Path sets a standard for responsible tourism and visitor safety in challenging natural environments.

The Big Vision: Taking a Holistic Approach

One of the significant lessons learned from the restoration of the Gobbins Cliff Path is the importance of adopting a holistic approach to site redesign. By looking at the trail as a whole, rather than focusing on individual components, challenges can be identified and addressed more effectively. Instead of providing temporary solutions to recurring issues, a comprehensive redesign allowed for a more sustainable and long-term solution. This approach encourages a better reconciliation of the site's environmental constraints alongside visitor requirements, leading to more thoughtful and enduring restoration outcome.

Respect of the Nature

A fundamental lesson learned from the story of the Gobbins Cliff Path is the importance of respecting and preserving the surrounding natural environment. From its inception, the design team emphasised the conservation of the natural environment to be a priority within the design, allowing visitors to experience the raw forces of the rugged coastline without adverse effects. This ethos of environmental stewardship and preservation was carried through to the restoration process, where every effort was made to minimize environmental impacts.

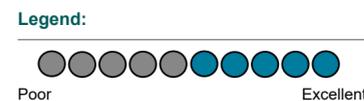
Throughout the restoration, the delicate balance between conservation and accessibility was carefully considered. The location of the trail within an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) further highlights the environmental importance. This designation serves as a reminder of the responsibility to safeguard the site's biodiversity and geological features for future generations to enjoy.

By respecting and preserving the Gobbins' natural heritage, the restoration project not only honours the vision of its design team but also reinforces the site's status as a cherished natural treasure. Visitors are invited to immerse themselves in the untamed beauty of the Antrim coast, forging a deeper connection with the natural world. This commitment to environmental stewardship serves as a model for responsible tourism and conservation efforts.

Sense of Journey: Points of Interest

By faithfully adhering to the original design, which strategically incorporates points of interest, the restoration project successfully retained the historical trail's unique character. Visitors are able to experience the same captivating journey that was envisioned by the path's creators over a century ago.

This commitment to honouring the original design continues to guide the ongoing management of the Gobbins Cliff Path. By preserving its historical integrity and ensuring that each element of the journey remains true to its original intent, the site continues to captivate visitors, providing a truly unforgettable experience of exploration and discovery.





Canada
West Coast Trail

Coastline of West Coast Trail (Photo: Parks Canada/Madeleine Lahaie; bbc.com)

Overview

The West Coast Trail, nestled within the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve on Vancouver Island in Canada, is a popular hiking route renowned for its stunning coastal scenery, challenging terrain, and rich history. Spanning approximately 75 kilometres from Gordon River in the south to Pachena Bay in the north, the trail offers a unique adventure that attracts outdoor enthusiasts from around the globe. Its rugged beauty and demanding conditions provide an immersive experience in one of Canada's most spectacular natural settings.

Hiking Experience

The West Coast Trail is celebrated for its challenging and varied terrain which includes muddy paths, timber boardwalks, steep ladders, suspension bridges, and cable cars providing access across rivers. Hikers must be prepared for significant physical exertion and possess a good level of fitness. The trail typically takes between 5 to 7 days to complete, depending on weather conditions and the hiker's pace.

The West Coast Trail features a network of designated campsites strategically located along the route, to provide essential rest stops. These campsites are often situated near picturesque beaches, streams, and sheltered coves, offering both convenience and natural beauty. Each campsite typically includes basic amenities such as marked pitches, composting or pit toilets, and food storage lockers designed to protect supplies from wildlife. Some sites also have access to fresh water sources, though hikers are advised to treat or filter water before consumption.

Trail length



1trails



75km

Due to the remote nature of the trail, amenities are intentionally minimal to maintain the wilderness experience and reduce environmental impact. Hikers must carry their own gear, including tents, sleeping bags, cooking equipment, and food. The focus is on self-sufficiency and responsible tourism causing minimal impact on the environment.

Parks Canada provides detailed information and guidelines on campsite usage, waste disposal, and fire safety during the mandatory orientation session. All visitors must participate in this orientation session which provides crucial information on trail conditions, safety protocols, and *Leave No Trace* principles.

Access Monitoring and Restrictions

Access to the West Coast Trail is carefully managed to preserve its wilderness status and ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for hikers. To mitigate environmental impact and prevent overcrowding, Parks Canada implements a permit and quota system, limiting the number of hikers allowed on the trail each day. This system not only helps to protect the wildlife but also helps minimise congestion and monitor visitor safety. Permits must be obtained in advance, with reservations often made months ahead due to the trail's popularity. Regular monitoring by park staff ensures compliance with regulations, helps maintain trail infrastructure, and provides assistance in emergencies. Restrictions on camping locations, waste disposal, and fire usage are strictly enforced to minimize human impact and preserve the natural beauty of the trail.



Management Plan 2010

The 2010 Management Plan for Pacific Rim National Park Reserve outlines a strategic approach for the park's sustainable management, emphasizing the integration of Indigenous knowledge, the conservation of natural resources, and the enhancement of visitor experiences. The West Coast Trail is a key part of the National Park's Management Plan.

Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Collaboration: The plan prioritizes partnerships with the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation. Key actions include protecting cultural heritage sites and incorporating Indigenous knowledge into park management practices, ensuring that the Nuu-chah-nulth's historical and cultural connections to the land are respected and preserved.

Environmental Conservation: The plan focuses on maintaining ecosystem integrity through habitat restoration, invasive species management, and ecological monitoring. Sustainable practices are emphasized to ensure that park activities do not negatively affect the natural environment.

Visitor Experience and Education: Enhancements to visitor facilities, such as trails and interpretive centres, aim to improve the visitor experience whilst minimizing environmental impacts. Educational programs are designed to increase visitor awareness of the park's natural and cultural significance.

Research and Monitoring: Ongoing scientific research and environmental monitoring are key parts of the National Park's remit. Programmes are designed to inform conservation practices and adapt management strategies as needed. These efforts ensure that maintenance and management practices are focused on the areas that need it.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement: The management plan includes provision for public consultation and engagement, ensuring continuous community and stakeholder input. Volunteer programmes are encouraged to foster community participation in conservation and education activities.

The 2010 Management Plan for Pacific Rim National Park Reserve is crucial for the sustainable management of this iconic natural area. With emphasis on collaboration, research programmes, environmental conservation, enhanced visitor experiences, and community engagement, this sets a strong foundation for the park's future ensuring it remains a vibrant and resilient space for both nature and culture, benefiting future generations.



Suspended Bridge (Photo: sincovaga.com.br)



Campers at the trail (Photo: Katee Pederson)



Hikers at the trail (Photo: Jason Hummel)



Photo: adventuresunabridged.com

The challenges



Over-tourism
 Increased visitor numbers can create pressures on the physical fabric of the trail if not adequately managed



Protecting Ecological and Cultural Integrity
 Indigenous cultures and ecological sensitivities require conservation



Visitor Experience and Safety
 Managing and monitoring visitor numbers requires additional mechanisms



Ladders at the trail (Photo: bitracktravel.com)

Indigenous Community Collaboration

Indigenous communities have a long-standing relationship with lands that now constitute many of Canada's National Parks. The integration of Indigenous knowledge and participation in park management is essential for the conservation of natural and cultural resources. In Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, the First Nation Indigenous community collaborates closely with Canada's National Park authority Parks Canada to ensure that their ancestral lands are managed sustainably and respectfully. This partnership emphasises the importance of community stewardship in modern conservation efforts and highlights a model of cooperative management that benefits both the environment and the local community.

Historical Context

The lands encompassing Pacific Rim National Park Reserve have been inhabited by the First Nations community for thousands of years. Their deep-rooted knowledge of the land, sea, and wildlife has been

passed down through generations. When the park was established in 1970, it marked the beginning of a new era in land management that sought to balance conservation aims with the rights and traditions of the Indigenous community. In 1973, Leslie Cook Sr, a member of one of the local First Nations, was hired by Parks Canada to maintain the trail which formulated the West Coast Trail Guardian Program which provides collaborative management and employment opportunities for Indigenous Communities.

Collaborative Management Structure

The management structure of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve integrates Indigenous perspectives through several mechanisms:

Co-management Agreements: Formal agreements between Parks Canada and the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation establish a framework for shared decision-making. These agreements outline the

roles and responsibilities of each party and ensure that Indigenous knowledge and cultural values are incorporated into park management practices.

Advisory Boards and Committees: Indigenous representatives participate in various advisory boards and committees that guide park management decisions. These bodies provide a platform for Indigenous voices to be heard and ensure that their concerns and insights are considered in planning and operational activities.

Indigenous Guardians Programs: Indigenous guardians play a crucial role in monitoring and managing the park. They conduct environmental assessments, protect cultural sites, educate visitors, and assist in emergency response. Their presence on the ground enhances the Park's management capabilities and fosters a sense of stewardship among the local Indigenous communities.



Backpackers gather in camp on Tsusiat Beach (Photo: Ethan Welty/TandemStock)

Guardian programs

Indigenous Guardians Programs play a vital role in the stewardship of natural and cultural resources across The National Park. These programs empower Indigenous peoples to take an active role in managing their traditional territories.

Roles and Responsibilities

Environmental Monitoring: Indigenous knowledge, often referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), is incorporated into ecological management practices. This includes habitat restoration, species monitoring, and sustainable resource use, ensuring that conservation efforts are informed by centuries of Indigenous experience and wisdom. Guardians conduct regular patrols to monitor the trail's condition, assess environmental impacts, and ensure compliance with conservation regulations.

Cultural Protection: The guardians work to protect culturally significant sites along the trail, ensuring that these areas are respected and preserved. They educate hikers about the historical and cultural importance of the land, fostering a deeper understanding and respect amongst visitors.

Visitor Education: Providing orientation and information to hikers is a key part of the guardians' role. They share knowledge about trail safety, environmental stewardship, and the cultural history of the First Nation people. This educational focus helps promote responsible hiking practices and enhances the overall experience for visitors.

Emergency Response: Guardians are trained to assist in emergency situations, providing first aid and search and rescue support in partnership with Pacific Rim National Park Reserve authorities and emergency services. Their presence on and around the trail improves safety for hikers.

Maintenance Support: While major maintenance work is typically carried out by Parks Canada, Guardians assist with routine tasks such as repairing boardwalks, clearing debris, and maintaining campsites. Their efforts help keep the trail in good condition for future hikers.

Importance of Indigenous Stewardship

The Guardians of the West Coast Trail embody a holistic approach to trail management that integrates traditional knowledge with contemporary conservation practices. Collaborative achievements to date include the co-design of the Kwisisit Visitor Centre, story-telling and interpretive opportunities with First Nation Indigenous guest speakers, ongoing protection of species at risk and incorporation of Indigenous language and content into communication materials.

Community Benefits

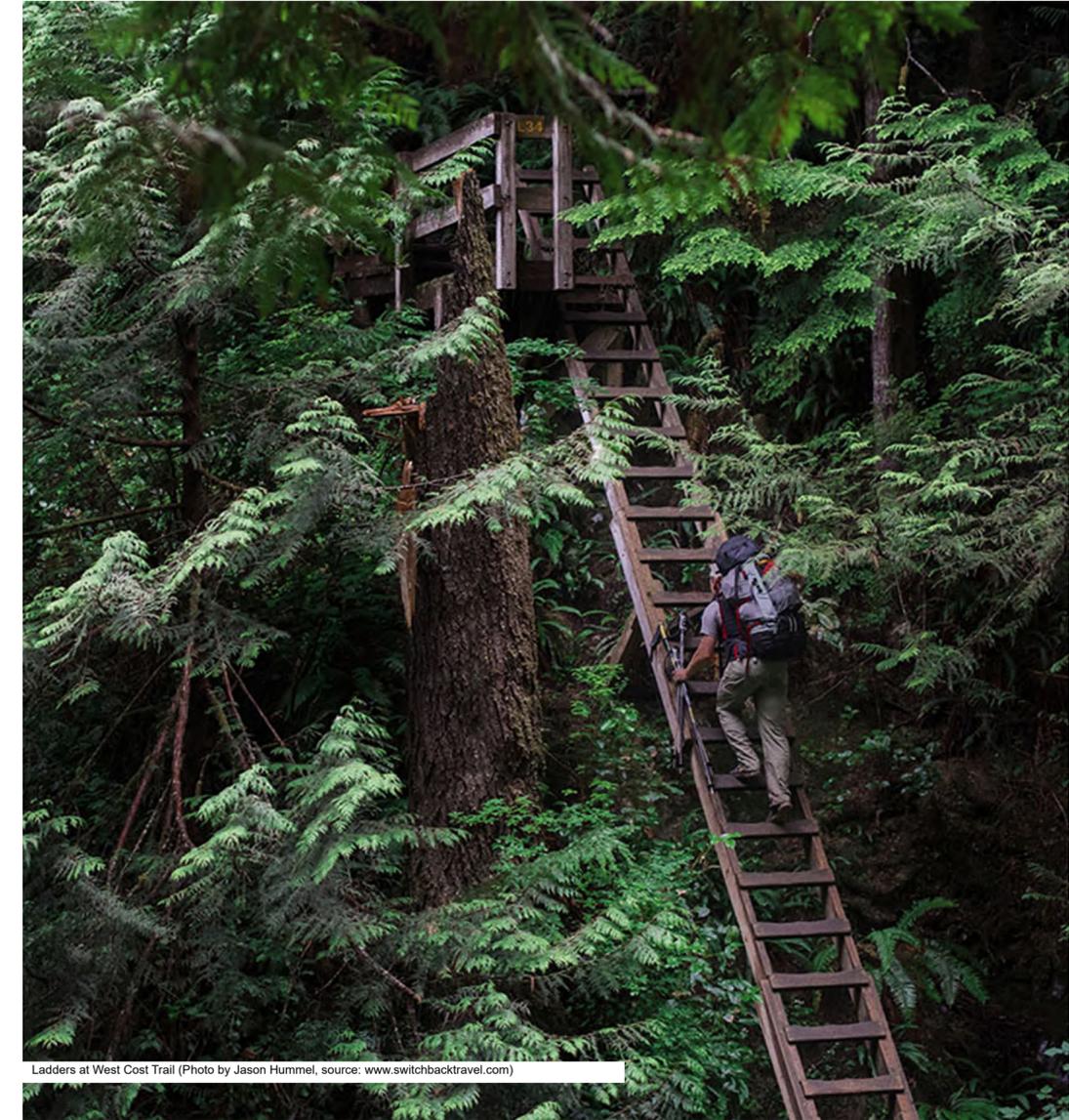
Collaborative projects create economic opportunities for Indigenous communities, such as cultural tourism initiatives and employment in park management roles. This engagement supports local economies and strengthens community ties to the local area.

The Significance and Impact

Cultural Preservation: It ensures that Indigenous cultural sites and practices are respected and preserved, providing a living legacy for future generations.

Enhanced Conservation: Indigenous knowledge contributes to more effective and holistic conservation strategies, benefiting the park's diverse ecosystems.

Reconciliation and Respect: This collaborative approach fosters mutual respect and understanding, contributing to the broader goals of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.



Ladders at West Cost Trail (Photo by Jason Hummel, source: www.switchbacktravel.com)

Case Study vs objectives

Improvement of condition and appearance



The West Coast Trail has seen significant improvements in conditions and appearance over recent years, aimed at enhancing the overall experience for hikers while preserving the trail's natural beauty. Efforts include the construction and maintenance of boardwalks, bridges, and stepped access to ensure safer and more manageable pathways. Regular trail maintenance addresses erosion, debris, and vegetation overgrowth, maintaining clearly identifiable hiking routes. The installation of informative signage and wayfinding markers helps guide hikers and provides educational insights about the trail's natural and cultural history. Signage, wayfinding and path legibility not only enhance the visual appeal of the trail but also provide a safer and more enjoyable experience for the thousands of visitors whilst helping protect more environmentally sensitive parts of the surrounding area.

Public transport, traffic and parking



The West Coast Trail's access points, public transport options and car parking facilities present a mix of advantages and challenges for hikers. Shuttle services transport visitors to and from trailheads like Pachena Bay, Gordon River, and Nitinat Lake, reducing the need for cars within the National Park and lowering environmental impact. However, these services can be limited and costly, especially in out-of-season. Designated parking areas provide convenience for hikers. Such facilities can become overcrowded during peak seasons, and parking fees add to the cost of the hike. Overflow parking may result in long walks to the trailhead, and leaving vehicles unattended for extended periods can raise security concerns. In summary, while public transport and parking are available to facilitate access to the West Coast Trail, there are still challenges to address in order to improve access for visitors.

Legend:



Sense of arrival



Arriving at the West Coast Trailhead provides an immediate sense of arrival and adventure. The entry points at Pachena Bay, Gordon River, and Nitinat Lake are clearly signposted both from neighbouring highways and within the route and are also equipped with essential facilities, including orientation centres where hikers receive important information and safety briefings. These trailheads are designed to welcome hikers and prepare them for the journey ahead, featuring informative displays about the trail's history, terrain, and safety guidelines. All hikers are required to attend an induction session, ensuring they understand the challenges and responsibilities of the hike. This initial sense of arrival sets the tone for the adventure, ensuring that hikers feel well-prepared.

Safety and accessibility



The West Coast Trail has made significant improvements in safety and accessibility through the installation of reinforced ladders, suspension bridges, and boardwalks, along with the establishment of emergency shelters and communication systems. These enhancements ensure a safer and more navigable experience for many hikers. However, the trail's rugged and remote location still presents challenges, including physically demanding sections, rapidly changing weather conditions and access for emergency response teams. While infrastructure improvements have made the trail more accessible, certain areas remain challenging for less experienced and less able hikers. Despite these challenges, ongoing efforts continue to focus on making the trail as safe and accessible as possible for a diverse range of visitors.

Sense of journey and signage



The West Coast Trail provides hikers with a very strong sense of journey, enhanced by effective signage. The trail guides hikers through diverse landscapes, from rugged coastlines to old-growth forests, offering unique visitor experiences. The presence of distinct "landmarks" scattered along the trail, such as dramatic viewpoints, historic shipwrecks, and unique rock formations, contributes to a strong sense of progression and accomplishment. Campsites along the way serve as milestones, reinforcing the feeling of moving from one significant point to another. Clear and informative signs aid navigation enhance the experience, providing information on trail conditions, distances, and points of interest. Interpretive signs offer insights into the area's natural and cultural history. However, some sections could benefit from more frequent and visible signage, especially in poor weather conditions. Overall, the well-marked trail, combined with its varied scenery and notable landmarks, ensures that hikers can fully immerse themselves in the experience, appreciating both the journey and the destination.

Protection of natural assets

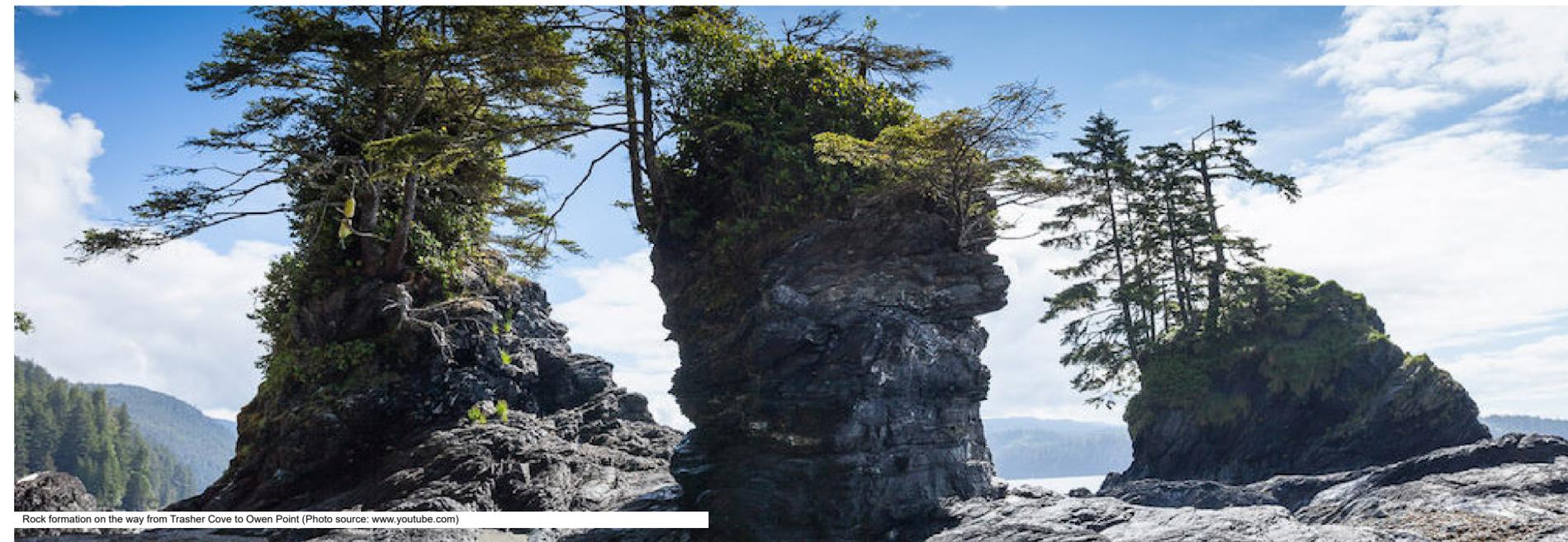


The protection of natural assets on the West Coast Trail is a key priority, with numerous measures in place to preserve its unique environment. Conservation efforts include habitat restoration projects to repair damage from erosion and human activity, ensuring that the trail is managed in a sustainable way. Strict regulations govern visitor behaviour, including guidelines on waste disposal, camping, and interaction with wildlife, to minimize human impact on the environment. Educational programmes and signage along the trail raise awareness about the importance of preserving natural habitats and respecting the local flora and fauna. Despite these efforts, challenges such as the threat of invasive species and the impact of climate change require ongoing research and management.

Relationship with landowners



The relationship between the Parks Canada who manage the National Park and landowners, particularly the Indigenous communities whose traditional territories the trail traverses, is fundamental to the trail's operation and preservation. Collaboration with the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation is crucial, as their knowledge and cultural practices significantly contribute to the stewardship of the land. Formal agreements and regular consultations ensure that landowners' rights and interests are respected and that their traditional knowledge is integrated into trail management practices. This partnership supports joint initiatives in cultural heritage preservation, environmental conservation, and visitor education. However, maintaining this relationship requires ongoing dialogue, mutual respect, and adaptability to address any arising issues or concerns. This collaborative approach enhances the trail's management, enriching the visitor experience while honouring and protecting Indigenous lands and traditions.



Case Study: Key Lessons

Quota System

The quota system for the West Coast Trail was implemented in the late 1990s. As visitor numbers increased over the years, concerns arose regarding the environmental impact, trail preservation, and safety of hikers. In response to these challenges, Parks Canada introduced the quota system to manage the number of hikers accessing the trail each day. This measure aimed to balance the demand for trail use with the need to protect the National Park environment and ensure a high-quality and safe experience for visitors. Since its implementation, the quota system has become an integral part of managing the West Coast Trail, helping to sustain its natural beauty and wild character for future generations. This system presents various advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages:

Environmental Protection: Limiting the number of hikers helps minimize the impact on the trail infrastructure and surrounding environment, resulting in reduced soil erosion, vegetation damage, and disturbance to wildlife habitats.

Trail Preservation: Controlled access prevents overcrowding and reduces wear and tear on infrastructure such as boardwalks, bridges, and campsites. This ensures that these facilities remain in good condition for hikers and preserves the trail's rugged character.

Enhanced Safety: By understanding the number of hikers present each day, the quota system facilitates better emergency response and search and rescue operations. Park staff can allocate resources more effectively, improving overall safety for hikers.

Quality Experience: The quota system helps maintain a more enjoyable and less crowded experience for hikers. With fewer people on the trail each day, visitors can better appreciate the natural beauty that the West Coast Trail offers.

Disadvantages:

Limited Availability: Due to the restricted number of permits available each day, securing a visit to the trail can be challenging, especially during peak season. This can result in disappointment for hikers who are unable to obtain permits for their desired dates.

Reduced Flexibility: The quota system requires hikers to plan their trip well in advance and commit to specific start dates. This limits flexibility for spontaneous or last-minute trips, making it more difficult for some individuals to access the trail.

Increased Pressure on Alternative Routes: When permits for the West Coast Trail are fully booked, some hikers may turn to alternative routes or backcountry areas, increasing pressure on these more remote and less regulated locations.

Administrative Burden: Managing the quota system requires significant administrative resources, including processing permit reservations, conducting orientation sessions, and enforcing compliance with trail regulations. This can strain park staff and resources.

Overall, while the quota system offers important benefits in terms of environmental protection, trail preservation, safety, and visitor experience, it also presents challenges related to availability, flexibility, alternative routes, and administrative cost. Balancing these factors is essential to effectively manage the West Coast Trail and ensure its long-term sustainability and enjoyment for all hikers.

Relationship with First Nations

One of the most significant lessons learned from managing the West Coast Trail is the importance of collaboration and partnership with First Nations communities. Recognising their profound connections to the land and rich cultural heritage and engaging in meaningful dialogue and collaboration with Indigenous peoples has become paramount to sustainable trail management. Lessons learned emphasise the significance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives, values, and traditional ecological knowledge into decision-making processes and resource management. Building and maintaining positive relationships with First Nations communities fosters mutual understanding, trust, and respect, which are essential for effective collaboration and cooperation in managing the trail.

Recognizing and upholding Indigenous rights, land tenure, and governance structures are integral aspects of this collaboration. Lessons learned emphasise the importance of supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, economic opportunities, and capacity-building within First Nations communities, contributing to their empowerment.

Overall, the lessons learned from collaborating with First Nations on the West Coast Trail highlight the significance of Indigenous partnerships in promoting cultural understanding, environmental stewardship, and sustainable management practices. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and values not only enhances the trail's authenticity but also contributes to reconciliation efforts and fosters a more inclusive and equitable approach to conservation and outdoor recreation management.



Cornwall, United Kingdom

The Lizard Coastal Walk

Visitors at the coastal path at Kynance Cove (Photo: nationaltrust.org.uk)

Overview

The Lizard Coastal Walk is situated on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall on the southern tip of Britain, in an area recognized as part of the Cornwall National Landscape (formerly referred to as the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). A National Landscape is designated for landscape distinctiveness and landscape character and natural beauty is protected in such areas. Known for its dramatic cliffs, rugged coastline, and unique serpentine rock formations, the Lizard Coastal Walk provides a key section of the South West Coast Path. This coastal walk, which includes routes ranging from 4 kilometres to longer, more challenging hikes, features scenic ocean views and opportunities to observe wildlife. Birdwatchers can spot a variety of seabirds such as puffins, gannets, razorbills, and kittiwakes. Walkers may encounter Atlantic grey seals and common seals basking on the rocks or swimming in the waters.

Walking Routes

The Lizard Coastal Walk provides 11.2km of the South West Coast Path, which extends over 1,000km and stands as the UK's longest national trail. Offering a variety of walking routes to accommodate different user requirements and fitness levels, it provides a captivating journey through Cornwall's coastal landscape. Organized group walks, facilitated by organisations such as the National Trust, offer an excellent opportunity for individuals to explore the trail in the company of others who share a love for nature and hiking. These group walks not only provide guidance and support but also foster a sense of community as participants traverse the stunning landscapes together.

Lizard Point to Kynance Cove: This popular and relatively easy circular walk covers approximately 4km. It offers stunning coastal views and the opportunity to visit Kynance Cove, known for its picturesque beach and turquoise waters.

Lizard Point Circular Walk: An 11km circular route that starts and ends at Lizard Point, taking you through diverse landscapes including coastal cliffs, coves, and historic villages including Cadgwith.

Biodiversity

The Lizard Peninsula features a rich biodiversity that includes a variety of rare plants and flowers. This unique ecosystem benefits from an unusually mild maritime climate, which provides favourable conditions for a range of flora to flourish. Vegetation found here includes species that are endemic to the region, meaning they are native and exclusive to this particular area. Examples of these endemic plants include the Cornish heath (*Erica vagans*), Cornish eyebright (*Euphrasia vigursii*), and the Lizard orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*). These plants have adapted to the specific environmental conditions of the Lizard Peninsula over time, resulting in a distinct and specialized flora that contributes to the area's ecological significance. Conservation efforts are vital to safeguarding these unique plant species and preserving the natural heritage of the Lizard Peninsula for future generations to enjoy.

Landmarks

Lizard Lighthouse and Heritage Centre

The Lizard Lighthouse, in operation since 1752, is a significant historical landmark along the Cornish coast. It has guided ships safely through the area's hazardous waters for centuries. Today, the Lizard Lighthouse serves as a symbol of resilience and maritime heritage. Visitors to the lighthouse have the opportunity to explore its historic grounds and ascend the tower to take in panoramic views of the surrounding coastline. The site features a visitor centre that offers an exhibition on the environmental and cultural significance of the area. Through interactive displays, visitors can learn about the technological advancements in maritime navigation and the vital role played by the lighthouse in safeguarding sailors and vessels.

Shipwrecks

The waters around Lizard Point have a history of being dangerous for ships, leading to numerous wrecks over the years. As walkers explore the coastline, they may come across remnants of these wrecks, such as rusted hulls or debris. Each wreck tells a story of maritime peril, reminding visitors of the challenges faced by sailors and the power of the sea. Exploring these sites adds a sense of history and reflection to the coastal walk, connecting visitors to the maritime heritage of the area.

Lizard Village

The village of Lizard serves as the perfect trailhead for exploring the natural wonders of the Lizard Point coastal walk. Situated amidst stunning coastal scenery, the village offers a range of amenities for visitors. Cafés and pubs provide refreshment after a day walking. The village also provides convenient parking facilities, allowing visitors to easily access the nearby walking trails. For those seeking to immerse themselves in the local culture, the village boasts a number of retail outlets and galleries, where unique souvenirs and local crafts can be found.

Trail length



Significant Landowners and Stakeholders

The Lizard Coastal Walk is situated along the coastline of the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. The ownership of the land varies, with a mix of private, public, and conservation organizations including:

The National Trust: A major landowner and conservation organization that owns and manages significant parts of land on the Lizard Peninsula, including coastal areas, cliffs, and wildlife habitats. The National Trust implements initiatives such as Grazing Schemes and Natural England's Species Recovery Programme aimed at preserving biodiversity. Additionally, land management practices target invasive species while protecting the natives found in the area.

The Cornwall Wildlife Trust: Another conservation organization that owns and manages nature reserves and wildlife habitats on the Lizard Peninsula. They work to protect and enhance biodiversity in the region.

Natural England: In collaboration with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, and the Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society, Natural England oversees the management of the Lizard National Nature Reserve. Natural England also funds the Species Recovery Programme.

Cornwall Council: The local authority for the area and also one of the main stakeholders in the Lizard Peninsula.

Private Landowners: Like many rural areas, sections of the Lizard Peninsula are owned by private individuals or organizations. These include farmers, country estates, and private residences.



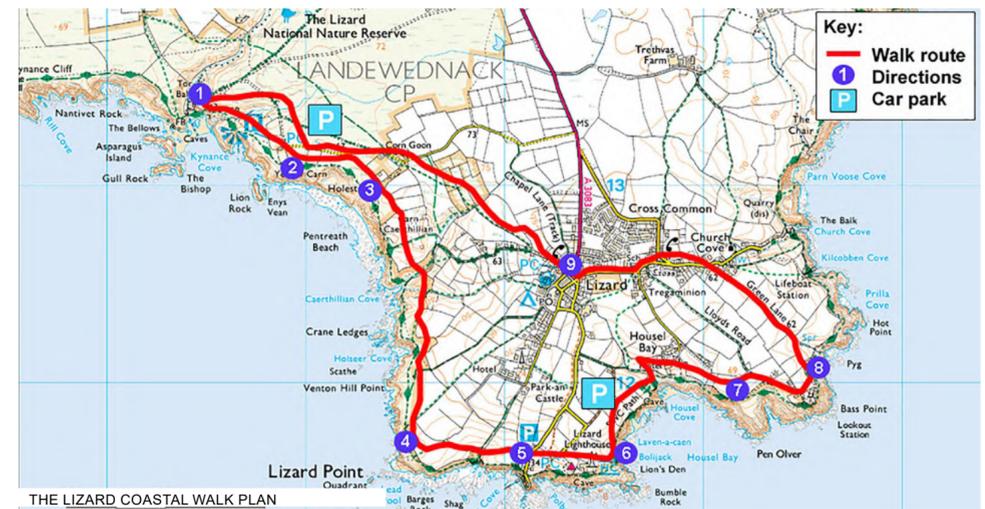
South West Coast Path (Photo: kittiaroundtheworld.com)



Example of Signage (Photo: macsadventure.com)



Coast at the Lizard Coastal Walk (Photo: travellmademedoit.com)



The challenges



Safety

Sheer cliffs adjacent walks present safety concerns



Protection of Natural Assets

Increased visitor numbers can create pressures on the natural environment, particularly flora and fauna



Management

Multiple landowners create issues in terms of management coordination

Case Study vs objectives



Efforts to improve the conditions and appearance of the Lizard Coastal Walk are ongoing, driven by the commitment of conservation organizations and local authorities. Regular maintenance of the paths helps to mitigate erosion and manage vegetation, ensuring a safe walking experience. Enhancements to signage and wayfinding contribute to better orientation and navigation. The introduction of designated viewpoints and rest areas improves the overall aesthetic and functionality of the trail. Despite these improvements, challenges such as managing litter and maintaining facilities during peak tourist seasons remain. Continuous investment in infrastructure and conservation practices is essential to preserve the trail's natural beauty and enhance the visitor experience.



Visitors or walkers embarking on the Lizard Coastal Walk have the option of several starting points, each offering parking facilities and some visitor amenities. While there is no formal visitor centre, these starting points provide a sense of arrival, as the equivalent of a minor trailhead. The major trailheads include Lizard village, Kynance Cove, and Lizard Point. Lizard village serves as a convenient starting point with car parking and refreshments available in a number of eateries. Similarly, Kynance Cove offers parking facilities and toilets, making it another popular starting point. Lizard Point offers car parking, toilets, and a cafe, providing a further option for walkers to start the trail. Despite the absence of a formal visitor centre, these starting points offer practical amenities and a modest sense of arrival for those embarking on the Lizard Coastal Walk.



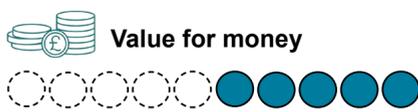
The Lizard Coastal Walk offers a number of safety and accessibility features, enhancing the experience for a wide range of visitors. Clear signage along the trail aids navigation and ensures walkers can follow the route easily. Parking facilities at trailheads including Lizard village, Kynance Cove, and Lizard Point provide convenient access. However, the rugged terrain and proximity to cliff edges require walkers to exercise caution, particularly in adverse weather conditions. Sturdy footwear is recommended to navigate uneven paths safely. While the trail's natural beauty and diverse landscapes are major draws, some sections may pose challenges for those with mobility issues, limiting accessibility for all visitors. Overall, while the walk is generally well-maintained and accessible, safety considerations remain a key consideration for visitors.



The protection of natural assets along the Lizard Coastal Walk is a priority for several conservation organizations, including the National Trust and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. These efforts focus on preserving the area's unique biodiversity, including rare flora and fauna. Initiatives such as grazing schemes help maintain the natural landscape, while the Species Recovery Programme aims to protect and revive threatened species. Additionally, active land management practices address the control of invasive species, ensuring that the native ecosystems thrive. Through these measures, the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Lizard Coastal Walk are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.



The Lizard Coastal Walk provides convenient options for visitors arriving by car or public transport. Car parking facilities are available at Lizard village, Kynance Cove, and Lizard Point. Alternatively, for those opting for public transport, bus services connect nearby towns and villages to the starting points of the trail. Buses typically connect larger towns such as Helston and Falmouth, offering a convenient and sustainable travel option for visitors exploring the Lizard Coastal Walk and Lizard Peninsula.



Visitors utilizing the car parking facilities at the major trailheads on the Lizard Coastal Walk may encounter a small fee for parking. However, for members of the National Trust, parking is typically free of charge. This fee contributes to the maintenance and upkeep of the parking facilities, as well as supporting conservation efforts along the coastal trail. While non-members may incur a modest expense for parking, the amenities and convenience provided at these starting points, including access to toilets and other facilities, offers reasonable value for the overall experience of exploring the stunning coastal landscape. Additionally, two attractions along the trail, The Wireless Station and the Wildlife Watchpoint, are free of charge and welcome any donations to support their upkeep and ongoing maintenance. These attractions add further value to the visitor experience, allowing all individuals to enjoy the natural and cultural history of the area without additional cost.



The Lizard Coastal Walk offers signage strategically placed along the trail, aiding wayfinding and orientation. Clear signposts provide directions to key landmarks, trailheads, and points of interest, facilitating navigation and enhancing the overall experience for visitors. Additionally, the presence of distinct landmarks and amenities such as the lighthouse with interpretation contributes to the sense of journey and experience. These points of interest guide walkers from one location to another and provide opportunities for rest and refreshment along the way. As walkers progress along the trail, the presence of these landmarks creates a tangible sense of progression and achievement and encouraging further prolonged interaction with the coastal landscape.



Lizard Point, located on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall, is primarily owned and managed by the National Trust, a conservation organization in the United Kingdom. The National Trust acquired significant portions of land on the Lizard Peninsula, including Lizard Point, to protect and conserve its natural and cultural heritage. Some areas surrounding Lizard Point are owned by other entities such as the Cornwall Wildlife Trust or private landowners. The National Trust plays a central role in bringing landowners together and managing and maintaining the coastal landscapes and heritage sites around Lizard Point.

Case Study: Key Lessons

Protection of Natural Assets

One key lesson from the Lizard Coastal Walk case study is the importance of a comprehensive approach to protecting natural assets. The collaborative efforts of organizations like the National Trust and Cornwall Wildlife Trust have been instrumental in preserving the area's unique character. Initiatives such as targeted grazing schemes and the Species Recovery Programme play a crucial role in maintaining the health of ecosystems. These efforts help control invasive species and protect rare and endemic flora and fauna. By prioritizing both habitat conservation and sustainable visitor access, the Lizard Coastal Walk demonstrates how integrated management practices can effectively safeguard natural environments while allowing for public enjoyment. This approach ensures the long-term preservation of the area's ecological integrity and highlights the value of proactive, science-based conservation strategies.

Collaborative Management

Collaborative management is at the heart of the stewardship of the Lizard Coastal Walk, where various stakeholders join forces to ensure its preservation and enjoyment. Organizations such as the National Trust, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, local authorities, private landowners, and community groups come together in a shared commitment to safeguarding the natural and cultural heritage of this landscape. This collaborative approach enables the pooling of resources, expertise, and perspectives to address complex challenges effectively. By working in partnership, stakeholders can implement comprehensive conservation strategies, manage visitor access sustainably, and enhance the overall quality of the walking experience. Communication channels are kept open, fostering dialogue, coordination, and mutual understanding among all involved parties. Through collaborative management, the Lizard Coastal Walk continues to thrive as a vibrant and resilient destination, where natural beauty is preserved and celebrated for generations to come.

Strong Sense of Journey

A significant lesson from the Lizard Coastal Walk case study is the creation of a strong sense of journey. This is achieved through strategically placed "destination points" and landmarks scattered along the trail. These points of interest, such as Kynance Cove, Lizard Lighthouse, and various viewpoints, enhance the walking experience by providing natural stopping points for rest and exploration. They offer a sense of achievement as walkers progress from one landmark to the next, making the journey more engaging and rewarding. Additionally, a well-implemented signage strategy aids in orientation, ensuring that visitors can easily navigate the trail. The signage is designed to be in line with the coastal character of the trail, blending seamlessly with the natural environment. This approach not only makes the walk more interesting but also helps manage visitor flow and minimize environmental impact by encouraging visitors to spread out along the trail. The sense of journey fosters a deeper connection to the landscape and contributes to a memorable outdoor experience.

Guided Tours and Bird Watching Opportunities

A notable lesson from the Lizard Coastal Walk case study is the value of organized guided tours by the National Trust and the opportunities for bird watching along the trail. These initiatives offer several advantages for visitors and the local environment:

Educational Experience: Guided tours provide visitors with in-depth knowledge about the area's history, ecology, and ongoing conservation activities. Trained guides offer insights into the landscape, wildlife habitats, and cultural heritage, enriching the visitor experience.

Enhanced Safety and Confidence: For those unfamiliar with the terrain or wildlife, guided tours offer a sense of safety and confidence. Guides ensure that visitors know the route, follow designated paths, and adhere to conservation guidelines, minimizing the risk of accidents and environmental damage.

Access to Expertise: Bird watching opportunities facilitated by organizations like the National Trust and local bird watching societies allow visitors to benefit from the expertise of experienced ornithologists. Participants can learn about bird identification, behaviour, and conservation while observing a diverse range of species in their natural habitat.

Community Engagement: Guided tours and bird watching activities foster a sense of community among participants. Visitors have the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and develop a deeper appreciation for local area.

Support for Conservation: By participating in guided tours and bird watching activities, visitors contribute directly to the conservation and preservation of the area. Proceeds from tour fees and donations support ongoing conservation projects, habitat restoration, and environmental education initiatives, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Lizard Coastal Walk and its surrounding landscape.

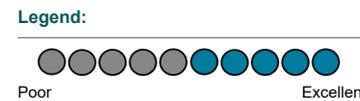
Overall, organized guided tours and bird watching opportunities play a vital role in promoting sustainable tourism, fostering environmental stewardship, and enhancing the visitor experience along the Lizard Coastal Walk.

Integration into a Wider Tourist Destination

An important lesson learned from the Lizard Coastal Walk case study is the recognition of its role as part of a wider tourist offer. Situated within Cornwall, a well-established tourist destination, the walk benefits from good links to other popular visitor attractions in the region. This integration allows visitors to seamlessly incorporate the coastal walk into their broader holiday itinerary, enhancing the overall appeal of the destination. Accessible transport options and well-connected routes to nearby attractions ensure that visitors can easily explore more within the local area. By securing its position as part of a wider tourist offer, the Lizard Coastal Walk attracts a diverse range of visitors and contributes to the economic vitality of the region. This emphasises the importance of strategic planning, collaboration and marketing to maximize the tourism potential of natural assets.



Path down to Kynance Cove (Photo: cornwalls.co.uk)



Appendix C WAYFINDING PLAN



Version 1
Sept 2024

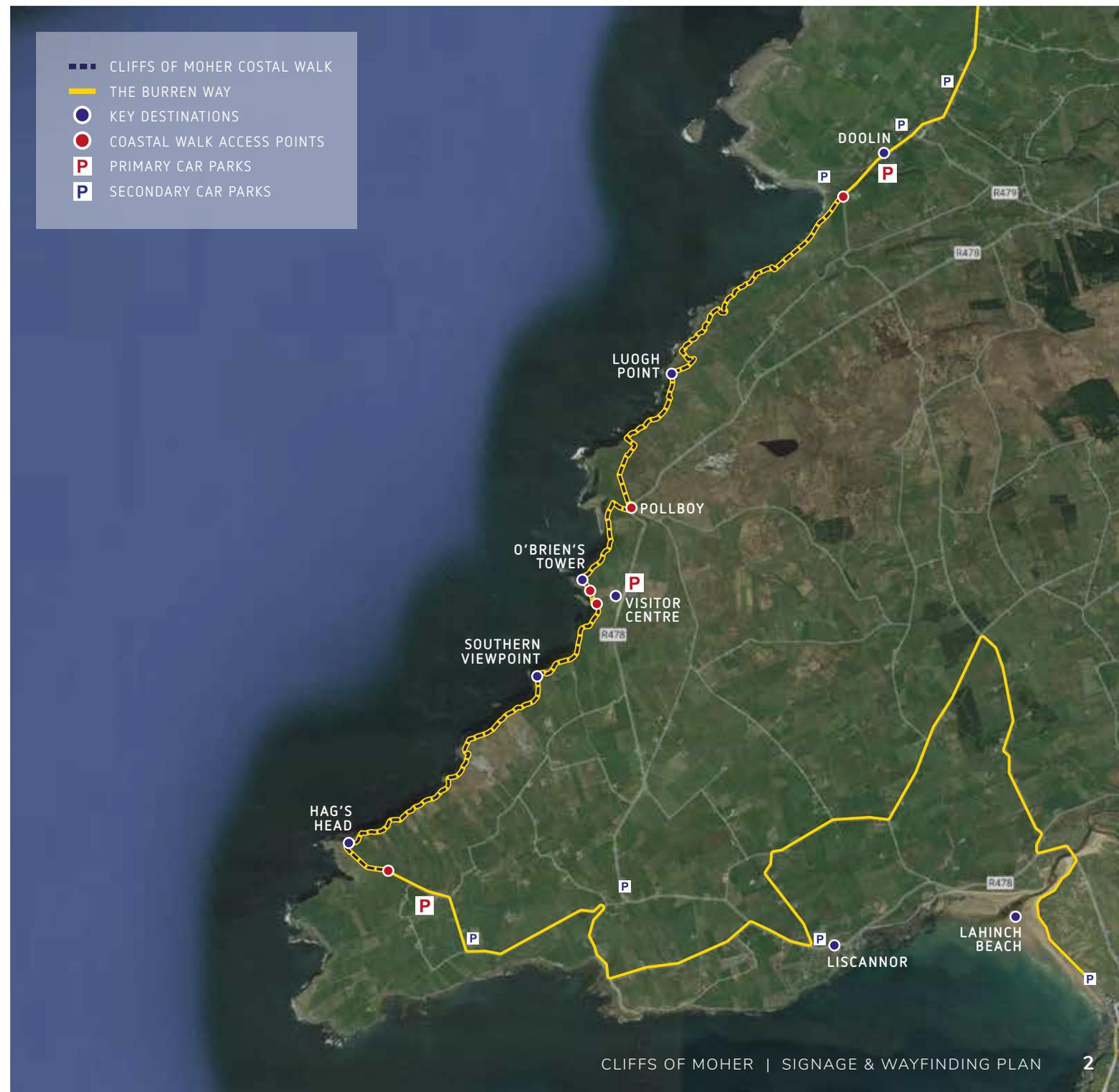
Cliffs of Moher Signage & Wayfinding Plan

ROUTE SUMMARY

Key Issues

- Lack of clear mapping and directional signage at the key entry points to the Coastal Walk.
- The only available mapping at the Visitor Centre, which is where the majority of visitors start the walk, is limited to small A4 printout at the main desk.
- There is a lack of clear wayfinding and distance location markers along the trails to show visitors how far and how quickly you can walk to key points of the trail. I.e. Southern Viewpoint or Hag's Head Car Park.
- There is a large amount of inconsistently branded signage and safety signs, often clustered together. Resulting in an overload of information which can be easily missed or disregarded.
- The start and end points at Doolin & Hag's Head could be more clearly marked as start / end points and show mapping in a more prominent way.
- Safety signs don't make it clear enough where the approved trail is and the signs at the exit points onto the path from the north and south of the Cliffs of Moher Experience don't explain this clearly enough.
- Some safety warning signs are situated quite low and might be easily missed or ignored by visitors.
- As signage has been added over the years, old signage has been left in situ which adds to the visual clutter, overloading visitors with information.
- There is safety information provided at the 3 main 'terminal' access points along with grading, however, this information could be more prominent and make use of internationally recognised iconography for international visitors.
- The information board located behind a wall at the entrance to the Moher Sports Field facility is difficult to read as it is difficult to get close enough to the board.
- The Burren Way is not clearly marked with yellow walking man icons and arrows. Similarly the Cliff of Moher Walk lacks blue arrows on markers or fence posts.
- Signage should ensure that they adhere to the Official Languages Act and be bilingual in Irish then English.

- CLIFFS OF MOHER COSTAL WALK
- THE BURREN WAY
- KEY DESTINATIONS
- COASTAL WALK ACCESS POINTS
- P PRIMARY CAR PARKS
- P SECONDARY CAR PARKS



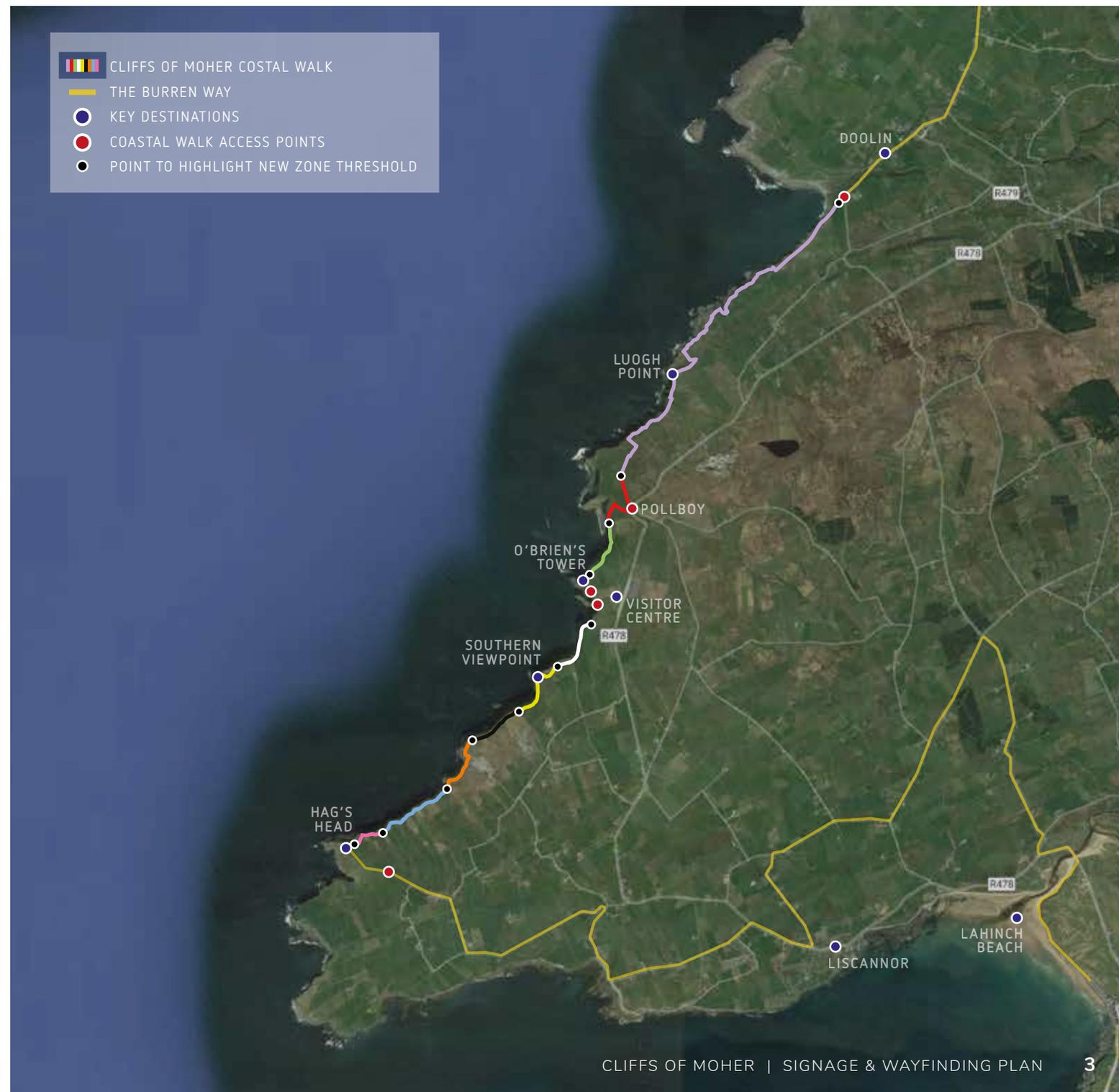
COLOUR CODING ZONES

In response to the concerns around a lack of location markers on the walk, Clare County Council, in consultation with the emergency services, have proposed a colour dosing system that would divide the walk into discrete sections. These sections are determined by access locations, with the colour changing at each access point.

Consultation with the key stakeholders, including emergency services such as the Coast Guard has highlighted that there is an urgent need for signage to pinpoint locations on the walk. The coastal walk is 11.4km in length, and location markers are needed for a number of reasons:

- To give walkers a sense of how far they need to walk to reach points of interest (given that this is a linear trail as opposed to a looped trail).
- To direct emergency services to the location of incidents so that their response can be targeted.

-  CLIFFS OF MOHER COSTAL WALK
-  THE BURREN WAY
-  KEY DESTINATIONS
-  COASTAL WALK ACCESS POINTS
-  POINT TO HIGHLIGHT NEW ZONE THRESHOLD



SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Clear Mapping



Currently, there is a miscommunication between the information that is online and maps on site. For the mapping to be effective, the information provided needs to be consistent. At the minute there are several maps that can be found online and are too detailed for a single linear footpath, showing more information than necessary.

The suggestion would be to redesign a map in the correct brand styling so that it can be used through out the official website and on the ground at access points and visitor centre.

Internationally recognised icons



Using internationally recognised symbols on signage provides quick recognition and improved safety by being clear, accessible and understood by international visitors. There should be icons to also distinguish the grading of the Coastal Walk so visitors know what to expect if they do use the footpaths.

Wayfinding & Distance Location



As mentioned previously and highlighted in the Sport Ireland Walking Trail Inspection Report, there is currently a lack way markers and distance markers in prominent locations.

We would recommend this is introduced and upgraded in the same branded way. The colour coded system that the emergency services have recommended should be introduced into the signage at intervals along the route and also within the mapping so that visitors are constantly and consistently aware of this system.

De-clutter



Clear and unambiguous information at relevant locations should be displayed to avoid giving too much information and creating visual clutter which will confuse the user, impair legibility and can create a state of overwhelming information or 'information overload'.

When too many signs compete for attention, it can lead to confusion and misinterpretation, as users may struggle to discern which signs are most important. The impact of each individual sign is reduced, and important messages may be overlooked.

Consistent Branding



Consistency in the branding of signage ensures that all information is conveyed in a uniform way, making it easier for users to understand directions, warnings, and other important details. When signage follows a standard format, it reduces confusion and misinterpretation, ensuring that everyone receives the same message. Additionally, it reinforces the identity of the walk.

It also ensures emergency protocols and warnings are immediately recognisable. This can expedite emergency response times, as both users and responders are more likely to understand and follow the instructions provided.

More prominent safety signage



To increase the prominence and effectiveness of the walk's safety signage there should be clear, bold icons and high-contrast colours to ensure signs are easily noticed, Sport Ireland have suggested red text and icons. Currently a lot of the safety signage and messaging is low and not at eye level, we would suggest that the warnings are large, readable, and positioned at eye level, possibly incorporating reflective materials for visibility in low light.

There should also be an element that highlights the colour coding as described earlier to aid emergency services and reinforce the system while visitors are walking.

WAYFINDNG BRANDING

We propose using the typeface Adelle Sans as has been used the Cliffs of Moher 2040 Draft Strategy, a clear, legible font that works well for wayfinding. We assume this is the standard typeface used for the new brand, and should be used across all web, print media and signage.

Adelle Sans - Extra Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

123456789

Adelle Sans - Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

123456789

Adelle Sans

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

123456789

CORE BRAND LOGO



SECONDARY LOGOS



WAYFINDNG ICONOGRAPHY

Using internationally recognised symbols on signage provides quick recognition and improved safety by being clear, accessible and understood by international visitors. Below are a set of icons form the National Parks wayfinding toolkit, we suggest that a full set of icons are developed for the Cliffs of Moher of the range shown below.

WALK GRADING



CAUTION



EMERGENCY



INFORMATION & FACILITIES



PROHIBITED





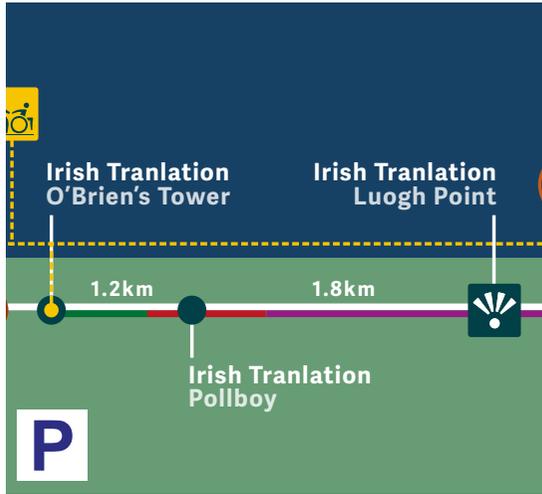
IRISH TRANSLATION CLIFFS OF MOHAER COASTAL WALK

P Irish Translation Parking	Irish Translation Use appropriate clothing
Irish Translation Start / End	Irish Translation Weather can change quickly
Irish Translation Key Destinations	Irish Translation Caution Slippery Terrain
Irish Translation Strenuous terrain	Irish Translation Stay on the correct path
Irish Translation Accessible	Irish Translation Cliffs can falls without warning
Irish Translation Visitor Centre	
Irish Translation Viewpoint	
Irish Translation Toilets	
Irish Translation Food & Beverages	

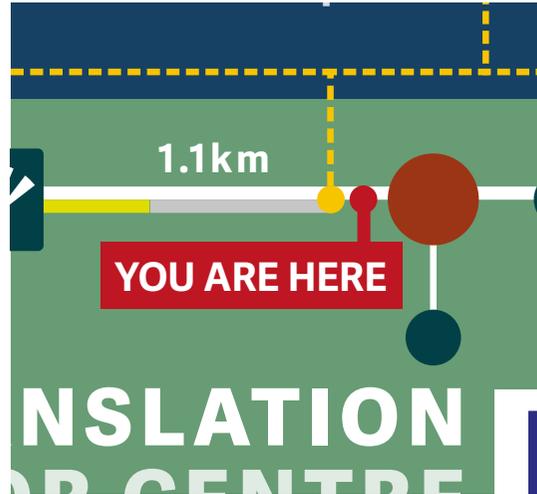


MAPPING CONCEPT - DETAIL

We have set out a very high level mapping concept to show the level of information we think is required. We suggest using quite a diagrammatic map base which allows visual information to be interpreted by a large number of people as quickly as possible and makes it accessible to international visitors. By using a diagrammatic map, visual clutter and unnecessary detail is taken away so that only the key information is displayed. The icons and mapping will need to be progressed further for a final map.



Key Locations



'You are here' Point



Cautionary and Informational Universal Icons



Distance in KM



Emergency Service Colour Coding



Reinforcing Brand

CONCEPT SIGN FAMILY - WAYFINDING

As part of the wayfinding plan, we have set out a co-ordinated sign family which uses the same branding and visual language throughout the visitor journey.



Sign Type: **Visitor Map and Caution Sign**
Code: **ST01**

Powdercoated map panel and cautionary informations, to be located at all key entry points to the walk and in prominent locations. Should display all safety and emergency information.

Sign Type: **Branded Fingerpost**
Code: **ST02**

Fingerposts provide directional information when there are several destinations to direct to, they should be located at key arrival to direct to the start of the trail and exit points close to towns.

Sign Type: **Standard Fingerpost**
Code: **ST03**

Standard fingerposts should be used where minimal directional information is required or in more rural locations.

Sign Type: **Distance Marker**
Code: **ST04**

Recycled plastic posts with hard-wearing panel & full colour printed graphics. To show distance to next destination and display emergency contact information.

Sign Type: **Trail Marker**
Code: **ST05**

Standard route waymarkers to use correct waymarked route colours and display emergency contact information. Recycled plastic post with aluminium plaques, or plaques fixed to existing posts.



INDICATIVE SIGN LOCATIONS

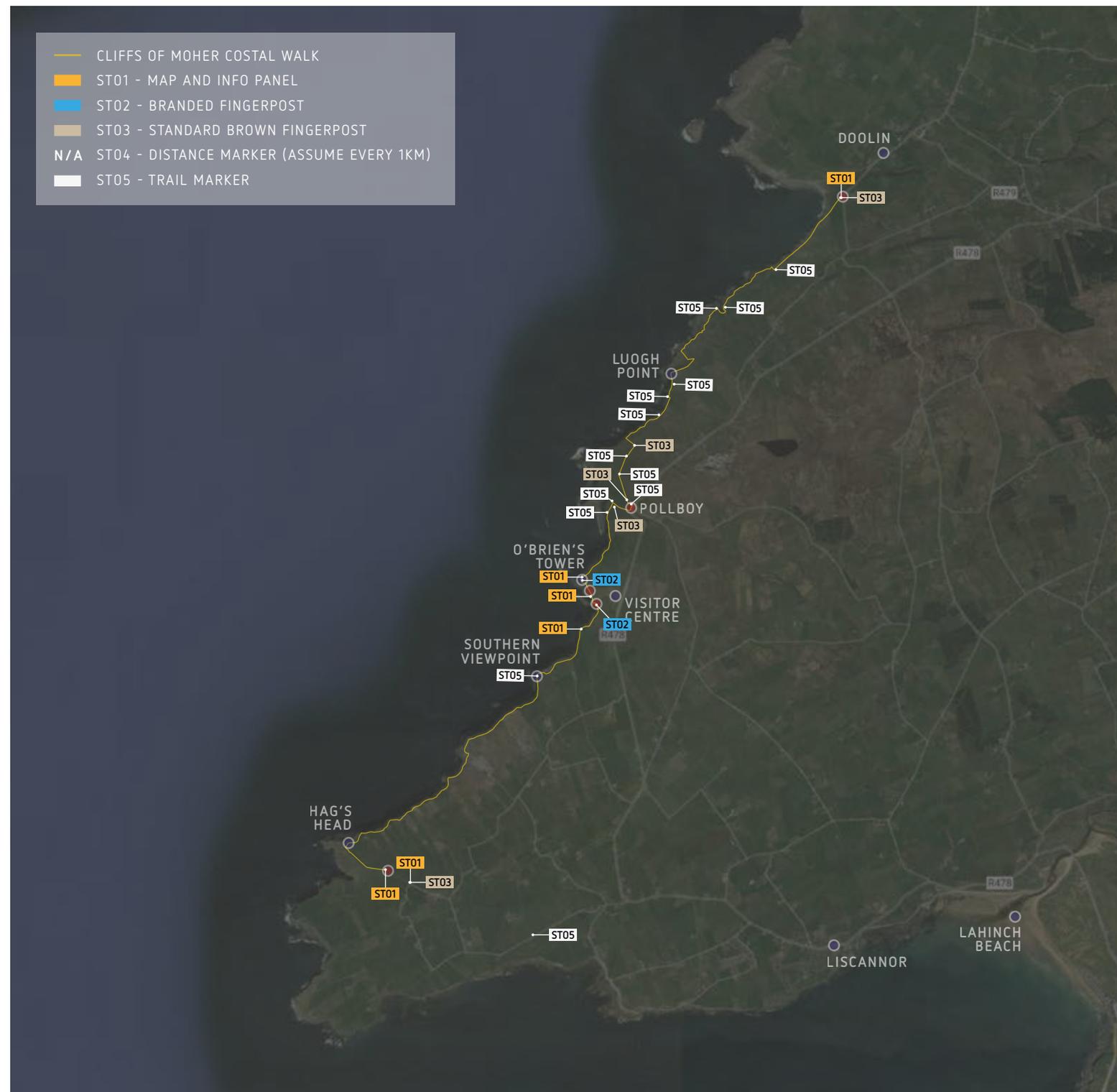
We have shown indicative sign locations using the recent Sport Ireland Inspection Report audit as a basis for new signage.

The principle should be to have map panels with cautionary information at the key entry points to the walk coming from one of the 4 main entry points, i.e. Hag's Head, Doolin, Visitor Centre (North and South thresholds).

Branded fingerposts should be positioned within the Cliffs of Moher Experience boundary, and standard brown fingerposts outside of this boundary.

Distance Markers should be positioned every 1KM along the route, and trail markers interstitially and at key turnstiles and junctions.

	CLIFFS OF MOHER COSTAL WALK
	ST01 - MAP AND INFO PANEL
	ST02 - BRANDED FINGERPOST
	ST03 - STANDARD BROWN FINGERPOST
N/A	ST04 - DISTANCE MARKER (ASSUME EVERY 1KM)
	ST05 - TRAIL MARKER



Appendix D THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GREENWAYS



CODE OF BEST PRACTICE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GREENWAYS

December 2021



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND



Fáilte
Ireland



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



IRISH CATTLE & SHEEP
FARMERS' ASSOCIATION



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí



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2.4	Preferred Route Corridor Consultation
2.4.1	Preferred Route
2.5	Preliminary Design
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Code of Practice for the Prevention of the Spread of Animal Disease

Appendix 2: Site Investigation Works and Archaeological testing

Appendix 3: Form of Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement for National and Regional Greenways

Foreword



Greenways have been one of our great success stories in recent years, and I'm very pleased to see the publication of this Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways. This Code sets out a new way of developing our Greenways in a collaborative way, which take into account the views of landowners, local communities, other stakeholders and the needs of those who will use them.

During the pandemic we've all realised how important it is to get out into nature on foot, by bike or on a wheelchair or mobility device, and to find safe places to do so. Greenways are also for everyday journeys, providing safe segregated walking and cycling infrastructure that make it easier to visit neighbours, get to school or work and connect villages and towns. This Code will help us design routes that have widespread support, that minimises severance of farming land, that provide access to our towns and villages as well as wonderful ways to experience our beautiful countryside.

This Code has taken some time to develop, and I would like to thank all those who contributed to producing a document that addresses all the issues that arose during the process. By coming together to discuss the issue in a fair and equitable way, we have achieved a balanced outcome for everyone.

People in many parts of the country have championed their local Greenways and have seen them become a success on many levels. The range of stakeholders involved in devising and agreeing this Code show the wide benefits that Greenways can have; Rural Regeneration and Recreation, Tourism, Sport, Land Use, Agri-tourism, Local Business development and of course, Transport itself.

All National and Regional Greenways will follow the Code, and we hope to see a new collaborative approach to delivering Greenways as part of our new National Cycle Network that will be published next year. Government is making significant investments in Greenways through the National Development Plan and there will be some very exciting new developments in the next few years.

I would like to thank in particular the sub-group that finalised agreement on the Code – the representatives of TII, Westmeath County Council, The Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, the Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers Association and the Irish Farmers Association. I would also like to congratulate Tom Considine, the Independent Chairperson, for a successful outcome that will guide Greenway development over the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Ryan', written in a cursive style.

Eamon Ryan, T.D.

Minister for Transport

1.0 Introduction

A Greenway is an attractive trail mainly used for recreational purposes by pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility for non-motorised journeys. The popularity of recently opened Greenways throughout Ireland demonstrates the many benefits that they bring to rural areas. Greenways are providing wonderful new experiences of Ireland's beautiful countryside for both visitors and local people alike. Our network of Greenways contributes to Ireland's health and wellbeing, enhances local communities with opportunities for new and existing businesses, strengthening regional economies and offering an alternative means for tourists and locals to access a hidden Ireland.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the **Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways** (the Strategy), published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DoTTS) in July 2018, which committed to the development of a Code of Best Practice as part of Transport Infrastructure Ireland's (TII) work on the development of the Galway to Dublin Greenway. The Strategy

provides for the development of the Code by a working group including the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), Irish Farmers Association (IFA), Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA), Irish Cattle & Sheep Farmers Association (ICSA), Department of Rural and Community Development, Sports Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, a Rural Recreational Officer and representatives from the local authorities.

The Code provides comprehensive information in relation to the process involved in planning, designing and constructing National and Regional Greenways. It includes an overview of the public consultation processes, constraints study, route selection and statutory processes, as well as information about the use of State-owned lands and the acquisition of private lands for developing Greenways. The Code also outlines the relevant roles of the 'project promoter' which is comprised of the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, local authorities and other specific stakeholders. The Code acknowledges the important role of farmers / landowners in the process and outlines the procedures to ensure that they are treated fairly and equitably.

This Guide and Code will apply to the delivery of National and Regional Greenways. The implementation and operation of the Code will be reviewed in conjunction with the farming organisations and updated, where required, on a bi-annual basis initially and on an annual basis thereafter.

Our network of Greenways enhances Ireland's local communities with opportunities for new and existing businesses, strengthens regional economies, and shows tourists and local people a hidden Ireland.

Definitions from the 'Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways 2018'

- National Greenways are those which are at least 100 kilometres long
- Regional Greenways are those which are at least 20 kilometres in length, but preferably closer to 40 kilometres long, or which can be extended to connect to a longer strategic route



2.0

GUIDE TO PROCESS



2.1 National and Regional Greenway Planning Procedures

The Department of Transport (DoT) is charged with implementing the development of National and Regional Greenways across Ireland in accordance with the policy framework set out in 'Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework' and the 'National Development Plan 2018-2027'. The role of Greenways, as part of Ireland's tourism product and its contribution to rural development, is outlined in 'People Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025' and the Action Plan for Rural Development, 'Realising our Rural Potential'; and increasingly their tourism potential is complemented by their usage as active travel corridors for local communities in towns and villages across Ireland.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has been requested by DoT to assist with the delivery of the Galway to Dublin National Greenway. In order to progress this exciting and innovative project, TII is working in conjunction with the relevant local authorities who are responsible for undertaking the constraints study, route selection and planning and design work on the scheme, as well as securing the necessary statutory approvals and acquisition of lands required for the delivery of the project. Given the scale and complexity of the Greenway, the project promoter may engage consultants to assist with the planning and design process.

The planning and design of a National or Regional Greenway is undertaken in a number of development phases before the route of the scheme is finally selected and planning consent is sought from An Bord Pleanála (ABP or the Board).

The views of the public are an important and central element of the planning and design process and this Code makes extensive provision for public consultation and the dissemination of information to the public during the development of the project. The principle phases in this process are set out below and are summarised in the Greenway Guide to Process on page 10.



Public consultation will inform project development at four key stages:

- Scheme Study Area Public Consultation
- Route Corridor Options Public Consultation
- Preferred Route Corridor Public Consultation
- Preferred Route Consultations with individual landowners.

2.2 Scheme Study Area

Initial Public Consultation and Identification of Constraints

The public, farm organisations and Elected Members of the County / City Council will be informed of the Greenway proposal at the initial public consultation. At that stage, the need for the scheme and the scheme objectives will be outlined, as well as the process by which the eventual route will be selected and the considerations that will inform this choice. These considerations are the overall scheme objectives and the **“Five S”** criteria, i.e. to be **Scenic, Sustainable, Strategic, Segregated and lots to See and do**, in conjunction with environmental, engineering and financial considerations.

The Five S criteria are outlined in the Government’s Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, published by DoT (see <https://assets.gov.ie/10364/abd98a35c61e4de4ba00a341eb7e0d13.pdf>).

This initial public consultation will afford the public, landowners and all stakeholders the opportunity to identify what they require from the scheme from an early stage.

A **Project Agronomist (PA)** will be engaged by the project promoter at this point to undertake a high level agronomy assessment and identify any relevant agronomy issues arising and to ensure that landowners’ interests are captured.

The project promoter will initially assess and determine the lands within the study area that are in State ownership, including any lands owned by Government agencies, Government departments and local authorities. The project promoter will endeavour to map all State-owned lands and make the map available for public viewing at the initial public consultation. The map will also be available on the project website and will be updated to include details of any additional State-owned lands that may subsequently be identified. It is the clear intention to utilise State-owned lands within the Study Area to the greatest extent possible and in doing so assists in minimising the potential impacts on privately owned land.

The project promoter will prepare a Constraints Study Report which will outline the various constraints, including physical (e.g. mountains, rivers, lakes), archaeological, cultural and environmental constraints, that have the potential to affect the design and location of the Greenway. The report will also identify the towns, villages, desirable amenities, points of interest and rest areas within the study area that could be potential stopping points for users of the Greenway, have the facilities required for a good visitor experience or provide scenic viewing points. Having regard to the requirements of the Rural Cycleway Design Standards (see <https://www.tiipublications.ie/library/DN-GEO-03047-02.pdf>), the constraints study may also identify unsuitable terrain due to the topography of the area.

During the constraints study phase, the public and interested parties will be able to highlight issues of concern or potential opportunities to be considered by the project promoter and its consultants in advancing the planning and design of the proposed Greenway.

When preparing for this first public consultation, the project promoter will seek to maximise public awareness of the proposed scheme through the use of social media, local media, promotional leaflets and the project website. These media will be used to notify the public about the public information events that will be held within the study area and to invite interested individuals and groups to have their comments and views made known at these events.

Following this initial period of public consultation, surveys will be carried out to identify the potential constraints in greater detail. Based on these surveys and the consideration of views raised at the public consultation, a Constraints Study Report will be completed and made available for public inspection, including on the project website. This report will inform the next stage in the planning process, which is the identification of route corridor options.

2.3 Route Corridor Options Consultation

The route options selection process will have regard to the overall scheme objectives and take cognisance of the Five S criteria outlined in the DoT Strategy, in conjunction with environmental, engineering and economic considerations.

Following the initial assessment work, a number of broad route corridor options (which may be up to hundreds of metres wide) shall be identified. An **independent Agronomist** will be engaged by the project promoter during the route corridor option selection stage in agreement with the farming organisations to consider any relevant agronomy issues. The independent Agronomist will be available to farmers / landowners to provide impartial opinion on the proposals. Public information

sessions providing the public and interested parties with the opportunity to view and comment on the route corridor options will be arranged by the project promoter.

Project Liaison Officer(s) (PLO) will be available to discuss the route corridor options and every effort will be made to ensure that the impacts of the route corridor options on private land and property are minimised. The PLO will provide contact details to the farmer / landowner and be available at all reasonable times.

The public will again be invited to comment on the proposals and highlight any issues that may not have been considered previously.

2.4 Preferred Route Corridor Consultation

Following the consultation on the route corridor options and further studies and evaluations, an emerging preferred route corridor will be determined. While the views of the Independent Agronomist will be considered during this stage of the process, farmers / landowners within the emerging preferred route corridor may also independently engage the services of their own Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor to advise on individual agronomy issues and their landholding. The fees involved will be paid for by the project promoter. (See Section 3.1.4)

The emerging preferred route corridor will be identified based on the respective advantages and disadvantages of the various options, as well as consideration of the various route corridor options in relation to the scheme objectives and Five S criteria. The issues considered in arriving at the preferred route corridor will also include environmental, engineering and economic factors; and the nature of impacts of the route on individual farm holdings. Every effort will be made to choose the route corridor that maximises the support of potentially affected landowners and the local communities.

2.4.1 Preferred Route

Following selection of the preferred route corridor, work will commence on the process to identify the optimum route for the Greenway within this corridor. In arriving at this optimum route, the project team will have regard to the Five S; the Rural Cycleway Design standards; the scheme objectives; and minimising the impact on landowners by following field and property boundaries to reduce severance. The preferred route will lead to discussions taking place on a one-to-one basis with the potentially affected landowners. The project promoter will take all reasonable steps to notify each property holder likely to be affected by the preferred route in advance of official public announcements.

While the provision of a safe amenity accessible to all is an overriding design issue, and therefore requires limits on gradients and route curvature, it should be

noted that the flexibility of a Greenway alignment design enables the designers, in the vast majority of cases, to minimise severance on individual landholdings by following the perimeter of farm / existing field / property boundaries. Where severance is unavoidable, appropriate accommodation works will be agreed between the PLO, the landowner and their advisors, to assist in mitigating the impact on the landholding thus reducing the impact on the landowner's business, residence or livelihood.

The services of a Project Agronomist(s) / Property Advisor(s) dedicated to the Greenway project will still be available to landowners in order for the respective landholdings to be fully and fairly assessed in terms of the potential impacts on farming / business operations / residential / other relevant considerations. The farmer / landowner may also be advised by their own Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor during this stage. The fees involved will be paid for by the project promoter. (See Section 3.1.4)

Following one-to-one consultation with the potentially affected landowners and their representatives, a Route Selection Report will be prepared outlining the process to-date and the basis for choosing the preferred route. This report will outline the basis on which the route has been selected, having regard to the relative attractiveness of each option, and based on potential impacts on the various criteria set out above.

The Route Selection Report identifying the preferred route will be appraised by the relevant authority before proceeding to the more detailed planning and design phase of the scheme.

The approved Route Selection Report, including the preferred route, will be made available for public inspection. Locations where copies of the Route Selection Report may be inspected will be advertised in the local media and may include the offices of the relevant local authority, local libraries and the project website. See overleaf for a step-by-step guide to the process for Greenway development.

2.5 Preliminary Design

A preliminary design of the Greenway scheme will then be prepared, and more precise land acquisition requirements determined. This will allow a clearer picture to emerge regarding the exact location of the Greenway route by identifying specific characteristics such as vertical and horizontal alignments, as well as the likely general impacts on individual landowners. The Greenway will typically be

8m wide but this may vary in width from approximately 6m to 10m depending on topography and drainage requirements. The PLO will be available during this phase to discuss issues relating to the proposed Greenway scheme and potential issues of concern with individual property owners.

GREENWAY GUIDE TO PROCESS

Route Corridor Options

- Scenic / Segregated / Sustainable / Strategic / See and Do (Five S)
- Environment / Economic / Engineering
- Public Consultation No 2
- Independent Agronomist in place for project duration

Preferred Route

- Farmer Agronomists / Property Advisors available to landowners
- Consultation meetings with individual landowners and / or representatives
- Accommodation works outlined and discussed / agreed

Environmental Evaluation

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Appropriate Assessment (AA)
- Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

Oral Hearing

- An oral hearing may be held by ABP to examine issues and concerns raised by persons with objections to / issues with the proposed Greenway
- Voluntary Land Acquisition Process continues

Construction of Greenway

- If the scheme is successful at the planning stage, the project promoter will proceed to construction, subject to Government funding

Constraints Study

- Map State-owned lands and stopping points
- Environmental / Physical / Archaeological
- Highlight opportunities and concerns
- Public Consultation No.1
- Project Agronomist (PA) in place for project duration

Preferred Route Corridor

- Farmer Agronomists / Property Advisors available to landowners
- Consultation meetings with individual landowners
- Public Consultation No 3

Preliminary Design

- Horizontal and vertical alignment established to determine precise land acquisition requirements
- Accommodation works agreed with landowners and / or representatives
- Voluntary Land Acquisition Process commences

Application to An Bord Pleanála

- Completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report/ Natura Impact Statement (NIS) where required
- Application Submitted to ABP including notice of the making of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)
- Voluntary Land Acquisition Process continues

ABP Decision

- ABP either approves the scheme, rejects the scheme or approves the scheme with modifications
- Where scheme is approved by ABP Voluntary Land Acquisition Process continues where applicable

2.6 Environmental Impact Assessment

As part of the statutory procedures governing the development of a National or Regional Greenway scheme, the project promoter may be required to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) describing the likely effects of the proposed Greenway development on the environment.

The project promoter will adhere to the requirements for Appropriate Assessment (AA), as set out in the EU Habitats Directive, to assess if the proposed Greenway scheme is likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site.

As environmental impacts are identified, the necessary changes / ameliorative measures can be incorporated into the scheme design for the Greenway. The project promoter will publish an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and make copies available for inspection. Locations, where copies of the EIAR may be inspected, will include the offices of the relevant local authorities, local libraries and on the project website.

The Executive Summary of the EIAR will be made available, free of charge, to property owners from whom it is proposed to acquire lands as part of the Greenway scheme.

Members of the public wishing to obtain additional information on proposed mitigation measures relevant to them, their land

or property, may contact the PLO who will supply or arrange for the supply of the relevant information.

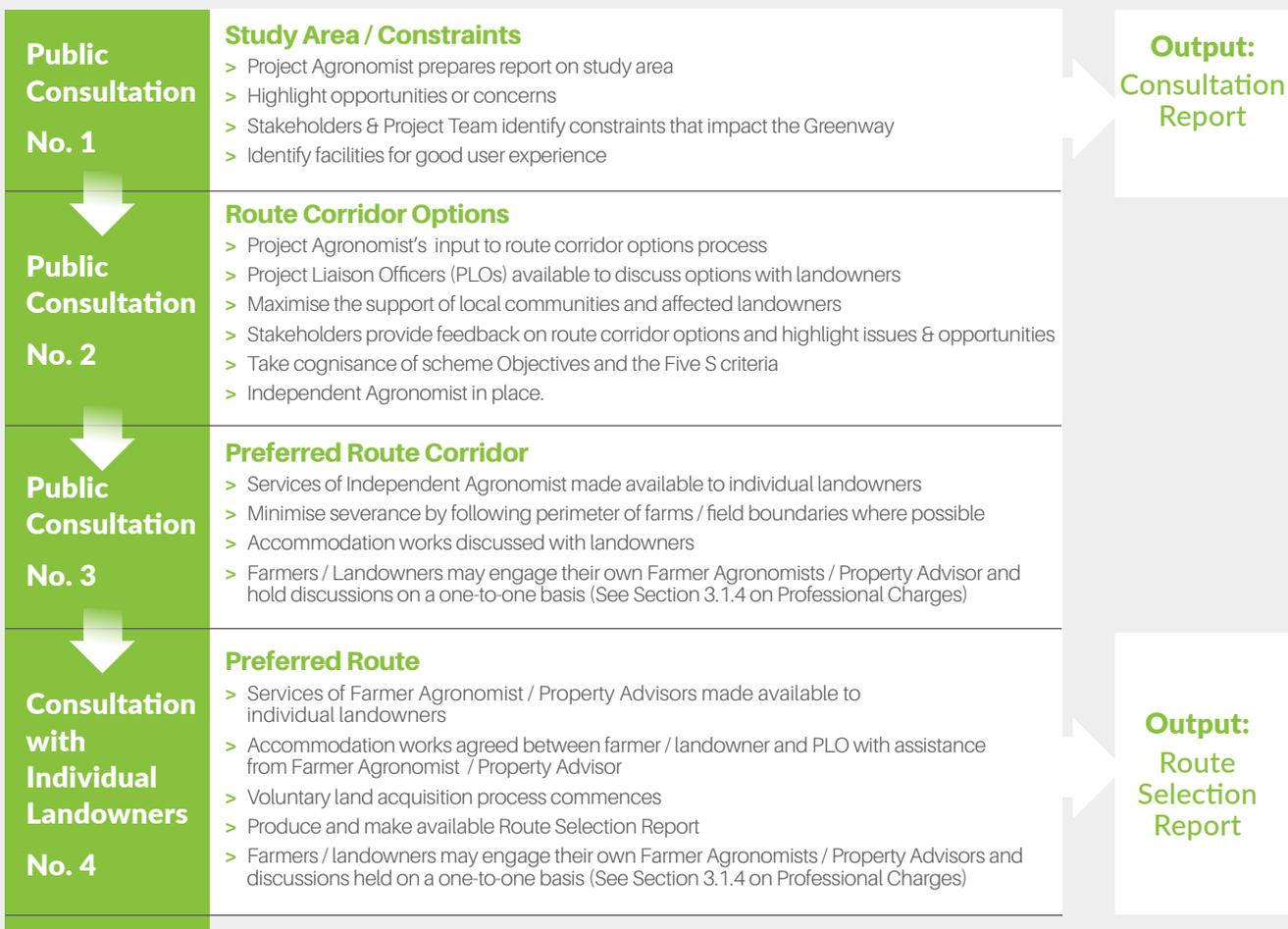
The project promoter will submit the EIAR / Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to An Bord Pleanála for consideration as part of the Board's assessment of the application for planning consent. Any person may make a submission to the Board in relation to the EIAR or any aspect of the proposed scheme.

In the event that the Board grants development consent, the project promoter will proceed to detailed design, incorporating any conditions imposed by the Board.

Certain Greenway schemes may not require the preparation of a formal EIAR because of their relative size, nature and location and absence of significant environmental effects. In these cases, the project promoter will make relevant documents, plans and other information available, including environmental reports and planning information produced for the proposed Greenway's planning process. This may include a NIS or Part 8 planning application documentation where applicable.

The public will have an opportunity to make submissions or observations to the relevant planning authority and this feedback will assist in informing the decision to proceed with the Greenway scheme.

Farmer / Landowner Engagement





3.0

CODE OF BEST PRACTICE



3.1 General Provisions

3.1.1 Project Liaison Officer (PLO)

The project promoter will appoint a lead PLO for each National or Regional Greenway scheme. The appointment will be made at the route corridor options stage of the Greenway design and planning process. The PLO will liaise and engage with affected parties or their representatives on any matters relating to the Greenway scheme.

The PLO will, in particular:

- provide information on the Greenway scheme proposal and the procedures involved in the development of the scheme;
- outline the manner and the extent to which individuals and / or their property may be affected;
- discuss an optimum route through the holding of an individual landowner to minimise impacts on their property, whether it is a farm, residential or other type of property;
- inform interested parties of the opportunities to be involved in the planning process and to have their views and submissions considered by ABP when deciding on whether to grant consent to the Greenway scheme development;
- outline the procedures whereby work to be undertaken as a consequence of the construction of the Greenway are agreed between individuals / those acting on their behalf and the project promoter, i.e. accommodation works concerning matters such as access, fencing, drainage, planting, etc.;
- provide information on the programme of work for the completion of the Greenway;
- seek to minimise the impact of construction works on farm operations;
- provide contact details / mobile number to farmer / landowner and be available at all reasonable times.

The PLO will seek to provide information in a clear and easily understood format. He / she will provide drawings and maps in circumstances where planning has sufficiently advanced to accurately depict the likely effects of the Greenway scheme on a property holding.

During construction, the PLO will also act as the first point of contact if individuals should encounter difficulties regarding:

- the development of the Greenway scheme proposal and the procedures involved;
- the timely implementation of agreed accommodation works;
- the nature of the accommodation works to be undertaken;
- the contractor's response to any disruption of access or services occurring during Greenway construction.

3.1.2 Project Agronomist / Property Advisor

The services of a Project Agronomist / Property Advisor, engaged by the project promoter, will be made available to landowners to fully and fairly assess the impact of the proposed Greenway on their farms, business and other property types. The Project Agronomist / Property Advisor will assist in identifying a route which minimises the impact of the scheme on affected properties. The Project Agronomist / Property Advisor will also assist in agreeing upon appropriate accommodation works and access arrangements in consultation with the farmer / landowner Agronomist / Property Advisor.

3.1.3 Indemnification

The project promoter will indemnify the landowner against all actions, claims and demands arising from advance surveys, investigation works and its acquisition of the land for the Greenway, for both the construction and operational phases of the scheme, other than claims arising from negligence or neglect on the part of the landowner.

Insurance cover and cost of cover can be included as part of the review of the Code.

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

3.1.4 Professional Charges

The project promoter will pay the reasonable and necessary costs, including professional fees, properly incurred by the property owners as a direct consequence of being affected by the proposed acquisition of land for Greenways. This will include fees related to the formal transfer of good and marketable clean title of the relevant portions of the landowner's property, and completion of the Deed of Transfer together with abbreviated queries on title. It will also include agent fees incurred in the negotiation and settlement of land acquisition terms including details on accommodation works.

Property owners may claim for one set of professional fees and costs, where applicable, in each category relating to:

- Solicitor's costs for the conveyance of good title.
- Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor professional fees including advice on preferred route corridor to cover negotiations on Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements / compensation including details on accommodation works and all other necessary work.
- Other professional fees where the engagement is necessary and is agreed in advance with the project promoter.

Where a requirement is identified as necessary for another type of professional advisor or in exceptional circumstances, either during the land acquisition or construction stage, then the landowner must obtain prior written approval from the project promoter in advance of any such commission. The proposed requirement must be outlined and the scope of the engagement and associated scale of fees agreed. The project promoter will endeavour to have all relevant areas of expertise in place in any event to assist the farmer / landowner in the process.

3.1.5 Advance Works

Access to lands will be required by the project promoter and its consultants at different stages of the planning of a Greenway scheme. At the early stages non-intrusive examination of the land, such as walk-over studies, may suffice (e.g. for ecology). More detailed investigation (such

as archaeological surveys or site investigation works) will usually be necessary, as design progresses, to determine the preferred line of the Greenway and the ground conditions that could affect construction.

Archaeological works will be conducted in accordance with the 2017 Code of Practice for Archaeology, as agreed between the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and TII. See <https://www.tii.ie/news/archaeology/code-of-practice/TII-Code-of-Practice.pdf>

Persons authorised by the project promoter will seek consent to enter onto land at all reasonable times for the purpose of planning and related activities. Where such access is required to any landholding, the PLO on behalf of the project promoter, will give at least 14 days written notice of the date they intend to enter the land and commence the works. To the extent that it is feasible, the PLO will provide an indicative time of arrival to the landowner together with contact details of the personnel involved. The persons concerned may wish to carry out surveys, investigations, excavations, borings or tests in connection with the Greenway scheme and will notify the landowner of the scope and timeframe for these works.

In order to ensure that proper records are maintained, the project promoter will ensure that pre and post condition surveys of the land are carried out and made available to the landowner by the PLO on request. The PLO will also notify the landowner when works are completed.

In the event that site investigation works or archaeological works are necessary, as required by planning or other consents, the project promoter will make payments to the landowner for excavations / bore holes or archaeological works. The current payment rates for site investigation works and archaeological works are outlined in Appendix 2 of this Code.

Payment will be made within three months of the completion of the advance works or phases thereof. The project promoter will make good or compensate (subject to agreement) the landowner for any exceptional damage directly caused by advance works, providing such damage is notified to the project promoter in a timely manner.

In cases where the project promoter is made aware of written agreements regarding land, which is the subject of lease / tenancy arrangements, the project promoter will make payment for excavations / borings based on these agreements to the relevant leaseholder / occupier. In all other cases, the project promoter will liaise with and arrange payment to the landowner.

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

3.1.6 Commencement of Work

A minimum of fourteen days' notice of intention to commence any work shall be given to landowners along the route of the Greenway before entry is made to their lands. The landowners shall be kept informed of the intended programme of works for construction.

A record of the condition of the landholding in the vicinity of the proposed Greenway will be agreed between the PLO and the landowner in advance of the commencement of any works.

3.1.7 Supervision of Work

The work shall be undertaken to the appropriate standards and the PLO will act as the main point of contact on behalf of the project promoter. The PLO, in conjunction with members of the construction team, will supervise the execution of the works and maintain contact with the landowners along the route of the Greenway. Landowners will be informed of the contact details of the PLO to whom queries may be addressed.

The project promoter will accept responsibility for the actions of the appointed contractors and subcontractors and all persons employed by the project promoter in connection with the works. Actions or works carried out expressly by any contractor at the request of the owner or occupier of the land will not be the responsibility of the project promoter and no costs in connection with any such actions or works will be borne by the project promoter. Any instructions or alterations required on behalf of the landowner shall only be negotiated and agreed directly with the PLO and recorded in writing. Any other agreement(s) between the landowner and the contractor (and its servants and agents) will be the sole responsibility of those parties.

3.1.8 Reinstatement of Temporary Works Area

The project promoter shall be responsible for restoring all ground within any temporary works area that is agreed between the project promoter and the landowner, and any other ground disturbed by its operations, to a condition equivalent to that existing before the commencement of works and will cover associated losses as a result of the temporary works incurred by the farmer / landowner. In such situations, these works can be covered within the agreed schedule of accommodation works and carried out within an agreed and reasonable time period. Pre and post condition surveys will be prepared and can be provided to the Landowner on request to the PLO in order to ensure proper records exist and that any issues can be resolved in an efficient manner.

The project promoter shall be responsible for restoring all ground disturbed by its operations

3.1.9 Animal Disease

The project promoter will comply with any Regulations in connection with the Department of Agriculture Disease Eradication Scheme (see Code of Practice for the Prevention of the Spread of Animal Disease at Appendix 1 of this Code).

3.1.10 Invasive Species and Noxious Plant Species

All reasonable steps will be taken by the project promoter to avoid the dispersal and spreading of any scheduled plant species, such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and other knotweed species within the footprint of the Greenway, in accordance with the relevant Regulations. See <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2011/si/477/made/en/pdf>

3.1.11 Department of Agriculture / EU Schemes

The project promoter will provide a letter of explanation to any farmer / landowners impacted by the Greenway, outlining the relevant dates that the Greenway impacted on the farm / business and cover any losses/penalties incurred by the farmer / landowner under all Government / EU schemes as part of their compensation claim.

3.1.12 Countryside Issues

The project promoter recognises that farming activities, by their nature, may generate noise and odour. Farming practices can and will continue as heretofore where a Greenway is developed adjacent to farmland, subject to existing Good Agricultural Practices.

3.1.13 Public Facilities

In conjunction with the private sector the project promoter will ensure that toilet facilities are provided at appropriate locations along the Greenway.



3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

3.2 Accommodation Works

3.2.1 General Provisions

Accommodation works will be carried out by the project promoter to mitigate the impacts that may be experienced by a landowner as a direct result of the construction and operation of the Greenway scheme. Examples include the provision or reinstatement of access to property and the erection of walls, gates, and fencing. Where necessary and appropriate, the provision of an underpass may also comprise accommodation works. In certain instances, the monetary value of an agreed item of accommodation work can be made available to the landowner where the mutual preference is for the landowner to directly engage / arrange for the agreed works to be undertaken on their own lands.

As outlined in Section 3.1.2 of the Code, the services of a Project Agronomist(s) / Property Advisor(s) dedicated to the Greenway project will be made available by the project promoter to landowners to ensure that the respective landholdings are fully and fairly assessed in terms of the potential impacts of the scheme on farm / business operations / residential and other relevant considerations. As part of this process, a suitable schedule of accommodation works will be developed in each case, in conjunction with the Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor together with a schedule of commitments such as the non-interference of services and utilities and maintaining access during construction. These schedules will be issued to the landowner.

In the event that a land / property owner wishes to engage their own professional representation, whether Property Advisor / Rural Chartered Surveyor / Agronomist, to liaise with the Project Engineer / Project Liaison Officer / Agronomist / Property Advisor on their behalf, then this facility will be available given the early engagement. This representative must be suitably qualified and experienced and fulfil the role of acting for the land / property owner as part of this Section, 3.2 Accommodation Works and Section 3.3 Land Acquisition. The fees involved will be paid for by the project promoter. (See Section 3.1.4).

The project promoter will make contact with relevant professional representative bodies (such as the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and Agricultural Consultants Association) to inform them of the provisions of this Code; and to request that they put in place a panel of independent advisors or provide access to the contact details of professional members of their organisations that are suitably experienced and qualified.

In the case of non-farm related properties or where elements of a landholding contain non-farm related activities, the services of Project Engineers and, where necessary, Property Advisors will be made available to landowners by the project promoter in order to fully and fairly assess the potential impacts. As part of this process, the measures that may be employed to mitigate potential impacts will be identified and, as above, appropriate accommodation works specific to the property, together with a schedule of commitments, made available.

3.2.2 Mediation Mechanism for Accommodation Works

It may not be possible in all circumstances to come to an agreement on accommodation works and there may need to be recourse to a mediation mechanism.

It must be recognised that it may not be possible in all circumstances to come to an agreement on accommodation works and that there may need to be recourse to a mediation board, with the objective of arriving at a solution on accommodation works as part of the overall Landowner Agreement. Where this need arises, a solution on accommodation works will be sought from a mediation board of three individuals which will be comprised of a representative of the landowner, a representative of the project promoter and an Independent Mediator or by nomination from the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Ireland (CI Arb) if required.

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

Where accommodation works are to be provided, the detail should be developed and agreed between the project promoter and the landowners and their Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor as part of the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement / compensation contract and set out in a schedule attached thereto. If lands are severed, appropriate access arrangements will be agreed between the farmer / landowner or his / her nominated Agronomist and the PLO on behalf of the project promoter.

3.2.3 Fencing / Boundary Treatment

Where necessary, fences shall be provided to assist in preventing trespass and for the protection of members of the public and animals. Fencing and boundary treatment will be discussed and agreed with the landowner and provided by the project promoter. At a minimum, fencing will be stock proof (i.e. suitable for the containment of cattle and sheep) and will have regard to the farming activity carried out by the landowner at the date of land acquisition. Permanent fencing including crossing points, if required, will be erected / replaced with appropriate materials in each case.

Where any fences, walls, boundary treatments or hedges are damaged they will be made good and will be reinstated with similar materials at least as good as heretofore, in a timely manner. Boundary fences erected as part of the Greenway will be maintained by the project promoter, unless otherwise agreed. The type of fencing will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis with each landowner and their representative. The typical standard of boundary treatment will vary depending on land use. An example of standard fencing detail can be found here: <https://www.tiipublications.ie/library/CC-SCD-00301-03.pdf>

The farmer / landowner will grant all reasonable access to his / her property to facilitate maintenance of boundary fences. The project promoter will not be liable for any consequences of the unreasonable withholding of access that is necessary to perform inspections or maintenance work. This is regardless of whether the project promoter is responsible for the maintenance of fencing.

Suitable temporary (or permanent if appropriate) stock proof fencing shall be erected where required before construction commences and shall be maintained thereafter until reinstatement of the land is completed and the temporary fencing is removed.

3.2.4 Farm Crossings

Where a farmer / landowner needs access across the Greenway to severed land, the project promoter shall provide a suitable means of crossing. The crossings will be designed to facilitate the movement of farm machinery and include a gated arrangement to allow the safe crossing of livestock. The farmer / landowner undertakes to ensure crossings are managed in a safe, efficient and timely manner. Greenway users should afford reasonable opportunity for this and not interfere with this activity.

3.2.5 Private Roads

The project promoter will make every effort to avoid crossing any private access roads / driveways. If a crossing is unavoidable it is important that pedestrians and cyclists give way to property owners using the private access road / driveway and the crossing will, therefore, be constructed to include a staggered chicane and warning signs on the Greenway leading to the private road / driveway.

3.2.6 Underpasses

During the route selection process, the project promoter will endeavour to take all reasonable measures to avoid direct impacts to those parts of a farm holding that are integral to a farm operation, e.g. a dairy grazing platform. The project promoter undertakes to engage with the landowner and their Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor to examine all viable options to minimise any potential impacts to land / property holdings. In the event that severance to an integral part of the farm operation is unavoidable, then, an underpass or other appropriate structures / crossing or compensation in lieu will be provided by the project promoter on a case-by-case basis, in conjunction with the farmer / landowner and their Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor.

3.2.7 Water Services

All necessary precautions shall be taken to protect watercourses and water supplies against pollution attributable to the construction of the Greenway. All proper steps will be taken to minimise any interference with water supplies. Before site investigation or construction operations commence, the project promoter shall acquaint themselves with the position, type and size of all underground services and wells, and monitor these supplies where necessary. In the event of a water pipe or supply being severed, the project promoter shall effect an immediate repair or provide alternative supply. In the event of a well or other water supply being permanently affected or removed as a result of the Greenway, the project promoter will either construct an alternative supply (e.g. a second well) or where warranted / agreed, monetary consideration in lieu of works will be made to the landowner who then arranges their own water supply solutions on their retained lands.

3.2.8 Drinking Troughs

Where drinking troughs are located within the works area, or where fields are severed from the normal supply, temporary drinking troughs shall be provided. Upon the completion of the works, all troughs shall be reinstated or replaced in their original position or in an appropriate alternative location agreed with the landowner.

3.2.9 Land Drains

The project promoter is responsible for existing land drains

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

within the footprint of the Greenway which will be maintained during the works. Any damage to land drains caused by the Greenway development will be repaired during construction and, in the longer term, throughout the operational phase of the Greenway. Landowners will inform the PLO of the locations and direction of any land drains that may be affected by the works in a timely manner.

3.2.10 Sewers / Septic Tanks / Percolation Areas

Where excavations interfere with sewers / septic tanks / percolation areas / soakaways within the curtilage of a dwelling house, even though these may be outside the Greenway, these utilities shall be maintained by the project promoter without interruption during the course of the work. The landowner shall provide all necessary access facilities to enable the project promoter to do so. They shall be restored to the satisfaction of the landowner on completion of the Greenway.

3.2.11 Trees

Any trees that require to be removed from within the works area shall be removed after consultation between the PLO and the landowner. All usable timber shall remain the property of the landowner and shall be cut and disposed of in accordance with the reasonable requirements of the landowner. A Felling License will be obtained by the project promoter. All other scrub or timber shall first be offered to the farmer / landowner or be disposed of by the contractor on behalf of the project promoter.

3.2.12 Ducting

Two service ducts (150mm diameter) may be provided to any adjacent areas of physically severed lands that may occur as a result of the construction of the Greenway. Water and electrical services that are severed will be restored to the severed portion of lands.

3.2.13 Signage

Wayfinding, regulatory and information signs will be erected on the greenway/public road and away from the farmer / landowner's property at public access points to the Greenway and approaching crossings / features, where the user requires advance warning.

The project promoter will erect signs on the Greenway stating that dogs must be kept on a lead at all times.

3.2.14 Construction Stage

The project promoter will:

- > Give the landowner two months' notice of commencement of construction.
- > Supply a map to the contractor and the landowner that will indicate the lands on which the Greenway is to be

constructed. The contractor will be advised that access to other lands should only be gained with the consent of the landowner, and along the acquired strip only.

- > Instruct the contractor that any gates used by the contractor or its agents to gain access must be kept closed to prevent animals from straying.

The landowner will grant all reasonable access to his / her property to the contractor to facilitate the construction of the fence line / accommodation works. The contractor will not be liable for any consequences where the necessary access to perform such works is unreasonably withheld. The contractor will deal with the day-to-day issues of repairing damage to services, provision of access, water runoff, fencing and controlling mud, dust and waste.

Contact details for the PLO will be made available to affected landowners.

During construction of a Greenway the PLO will, without prejudice to the rights and responsibilities of the contractor, liaise with the landowners to help resolve any issues arising in relation to matters such as:

- > Minimising the impact of construction works on farm operations, crops, etc.
- > Programmes of work for the completion of the Greenway project.

Existing access to property, including homes, farms and severed lands, will be maintained during construction of the Greenway. Otherwise, reasonable temporary access will be provided to the property owner. All permanent pathways / roadways and property outside the Greenway that are affected will be restored to their original state.

3.2.15 Post Construction

Notwithstanding the undertakings outlined above, the project promoter will address any snag list submitted to it by an individual farmer / landowner within six months of the completion of accommodation works and will arrange to rectify faults where they are due to defective workmanship or materials.

3.2.16 Greenway Maintenance

The project promoter will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Greenway, including litter control, to an appropriate standard by implementing an ongoing Maintenance Plan.

3.2.17 Future Farm Expansion

Should a farmer / landowner adjoining the Greenway or having had land acquired for the Greenway, wish to expand his / her landholding by acquiring or long-term leasing another property adjoining the other side of the Greenway, the project promoter / Local Authority will agree to provide appropriate access arrangements to connect the two farm properties alongside the Greenway.



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3.3 Land Acquisition

It is anticipated that the use of state-owned lands, in conjunction with the lands acquired by Voluntary Agreements, will deliver the majority of the lands required for the Greenway.

3.3.1 General Provisions

The project promoter will make every effort to minimise the number of private land holdings directly affected by a proposed Greenway. The strategy will be to use existing suitable State-owned lands (Coillte, Bord na Móna, flood defence, etc.) along the proposed route corridors. These lands will be prioritised in determining the preferred route corridor options.

However, due to the extensive scale of National Greenway projects (such as the proposed Greenway between Galway and Athlone (140km), and the absence of linear State-owned features (such as disused railways or canals), it is anticipated that a substantial number of private land parcels will also be required to deliver the project.

These private lands need to be acquired in order to secure ownership and to protect the use of the strategic Greenway network and the substantial investment made by the State for future years.

Where private land acquisition is necessary following the selection of the preferred route corridor, the project promoter will engage with individual landowners in an effort to agree upon a route that minimises the impact on their respective farm / property holdings and enter into Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements where possible. The process of agreeing upon Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements will be initiated in advance of the project promoter making an application for planning consent.

Where a landowner and the project promoter reach agreement, the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement will be honoured in full.

The landowner's title must, of course, be confirmed and, if a mortgage or charge exists over the property, a letter will be required from the Mortgagee or Charge Holder consenting to the release of the mortgage or charge.

It is anticipated that the use of State-owned lands in conjunction with the lands acquired by Voluntary Agreements will deliver the majority of the lands necessary for the Greenway.

Many landowners and their representative bodies hold serious reservations and have legitimate concerns as to the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers in the provision of National and Regional Greenways. The strategy and commitments outlined in this Code will, it is hoped, facilitate the acquisition of lands by way of Voluntary Agreements. Where this does not prove possible, it may be necessary to exercise the compulsory purchase mechanism. This mechanism will, however, only be exercised as a last resort and in circumstances where for example:

- (I) Voluntary Agreement cannot be reached between the parties following a comprehensive negotiations process.
- (II) An economically feasible alternative route that meets the scheme objectives and the Five S criteria, as set out in the Code, does not exist.
- (III) Legal title issues such as proof of ownership (clean title); unregistered land; ward of court; competing claims, etc.

Where such circumstances arise, the project promoter will seek to acquire the outstanding plots of land using the existing legal mechanisms already available, including

Overview of Process involved in developing a Greenway

Preferred Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Project Agronomists / Property Advisors available to landowners > Consultation meetings with individual landowners and / or representatives > Accommodation works proposals outlined and discussed where possible > Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor available
Preliminary Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Horizontal and vertical alignment established to determine precise land acquisition requirements > Accommodation works proposals agreed with landowners and / or representatives > Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor available
Application to An Bord Pleanála (ABP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Completion of the EIAR / NIS, if applicable > Application submitted to ABP including Notice of Making a Compulsory Purchase Order
Oral Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > An oral hearing may be held by ABP to examine issues and concerns raised by persons with submissions / observations on the proposed Greenway
Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > ABP either approves the scheme, rejects the scheme or approves the scheme with conditions / modifications > This includes a Notice of Confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order > Final approval timing may be impacted if Judicial Review taken
Construction of the Greenway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > If the scheme is successful at planning the project promoter will proceed to construction subject to Government funding

Voluntary Land Acquisition Process



service of Notice to Treat under the relevant legislation in order to keep the project consent alive.

The above process ensures that all Voluntary Agreements can be honoured in full and a National or Regional Greenway can be delivered through the acquisition of all interests and rights in land.

The Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements will be completed and the compensation paid when the scheme has obtained development consent from ABP and the required funding to implement the scheme is approved.

The application to ABP for development consent will include approval for the entirety of the lands for national and regional Greenway projects which will be included in a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). This will ensure

that the scheme can proceed in the absence of Voluntary Agreement for all individual plots or if there are title difficulties which cannot be resolved by an individual landowner.

The availability of the CPO would allow the acquiring authority and the landowner to proceed and resolve title difficulties where Agreement has been reached with an individual landowner, for example, if a third party asserted some rights over the landowner's holding or where probate has not been concluded. The project promoter would then be able to extinguish that third party right and obtain clean title. This provision will benefit both the landowner and the project promoter by enabling title issues to be resolved and allow land payments to be made.

The main headings to a claim for compensation can include the following

Landtake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Value of legal interest in land to be acquired. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Permanent land acquisition by reference and comparison to the size, location and quality of the parcel to be acquired > Permanent wayleave acquisition > Impact on a private right of way > Other impact on a legal right / interest such as a lease on land for a year or more
Severance and other Injurious Affection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Severance: The reduction, if any, in the market value of lands retained by the landowner due to the taking of part. > Injurious affection: Any damage or devaluation in the market value of lands retained by the landowner caused by the construction of the Greenway and its subsequent use to include any damage to the viability of the farm business.
Disturbance and any other matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Permanent disturbance: The loss sustained or expenses incurred by an owner as a result of the acquisition of land, apart from the value of the land taken and the reduction in value, if any. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Includes reasonable professional fees properly and necessarily incurred in the preparation, submission and settlement of a claim and reasonable legal fees / costs for the transfer of title. > Covers any losses / penalties incurred by the farmer / landowner under all Government / EU schemes as part of their compensation claim. > Temporary disturbance: Includes issues such as dust and nuisance and disruption to water supplies, operational impacts and other services during construction , including the landowner's time and trouble in dealing with the issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Includes the temporary possession of land such as working strips to install and erect fencing / boundary treatments. > Crop loss

3.3.2 Summary of an Accurate Voluntary Acquisition Price / Compensation

For the purposes of arriving at an accurate acquisition price, the project promoter will ensure that fair and equitable principles are applied in respect of the Voluntary Land Acquisition Process and in line with the principles set out in this Code of Best Practice. In achieving this outcome, the principles applied in terms of the assessment of compensation will be adopted in order to safeguard the landowner of their statutory entitlements whilst ensuring consistency and equality of treatment across all individual cases.

The project promoter will engage the services of a Property Advisor(s) / Agronomist(s) to act on their behalf in the negotiations process. This Code and process also

provides for the farmer / landowner to have available to him / her independent, suitably qualified and experienced professional representation at all times during the process. The fees involved will be paid for by the project promoter. (See Section 3.1.4).

It is important to note that each case will be assessed and negotiated entirely on its own, individual merits and, whilst a general approach in the treatment of certain cases may be agreed between parties during negotiations, it is recognised that no two cases are exactly the same.

Once an agreement is reached between the parties, this Agreement represents full and final settlement under all heads of claim.

3.3.3 Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement Process

An invitation to participate in Voluntary Land Agreement negotiations will be issued by the project promoter to landowners approximately twelve months in advance of the intended application date to ABP for planning consent for National and Regional Greenway projects.

An early sign-on payment will be paid by the project promoter to the landowner once a Voluntary Agreement has been signed and the farmer's / landowner's Solicitor has provided satisfactory evidence that good title is available.

Professional Fees Associated with Voluntary Land Acquisition Process

In relation to professional representation during the Voluntary Land Acquisition process the following applies:

- > The Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor will be paid an advanced professional fee of €1,000 plus VAT once a Voluntary Agreement is appropriately signed and returned and the legal title verifications have been completed as part of this process.
- > The landowner's Solicitor will be paid an advanced professional fee of €750 plus VAT once proof of title is validated. This allows a legal file to be opened and caters for progressing the conveyance process at a later date, where time is of the essence in that the Agreement is activated.
- > The balance of professional fees will be calculated in accordance with the relevant Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) Circular (see [www.LINK required here](#)), as updated from time to time, payable on completion of the transfer of legal title to the project promoter. This can include the balance of legal costs to conclude the land transfer and the balance of Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor costs, including the standard allowance for agreement on accommodation works, if applicable. This also includes any costs properly and reasonably incurred where a Mediation Process was concluded.

Voluntary Land Acquisition Process Overview

Preliminary Design Stage

Invitation to Participate

- > Invitation to initiate Voluntary Land Acquisition Process issued by project promoter to landowners approximately twelve months in advance of intended date of application to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval for the scheme.
- > Accommodation works proposals to be outlined and discussed and agreed, where possible.
- > Farmer / landowners will be requested to submit a claim (through their Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor).
- > Project promoter will fairly consider and evaluate the claim under all headings and negotiations will ensue.
- > Any Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements reached will be processed by Law Agents.
- > The farmer / landowner and project promoter can avail of the voluntary land acquisition Mediation Process at this stage - see Section 3.3.5.1 below.
- > Early sign-on payment will be made to landowner, once Agreement is executed.

Voluntary Land Acquisition Process Overview (Continued)

Application to An Bord Pleanála

- > Project promoter submits scheme to ABP for planning approval.
- > Voluntary Land Acquisition process continues on outstanding cases.
- > Accommodation works proposals to be agreed with landowners / their representatives.
- > Any Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements reached will be processed by Law Agents.
- > The landowner and project promoter can avail of the Mediation Process at this stage - see Section 3.3.5.1 below.
- > Early sign-on payment will be made to landowner once Agreement is executed.

Oral Hearing

- > An oral hearing may be held by ABP to examine issues and concerns raised by persons who make submissions / observations on the proposed Greenway project.
- > Accommodation works proposals to be agreed with landowners and / or representatives.
- > Any Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements reached will be processed by Law Agents.
- > Early sign-on payment will be made to the farmer / landowner within a 4 - 6 week time period of the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement being executed.
- > The Early sign-on payment will be available up until An Bord Pleanála has issued its Decision.

An Bord Pleanála Decision

- > ABP will either approve the scheme, reject the scheme, or approve the scheme with modifications. If the scheme is approved:
- > ABP issues confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order.
- > The project promoter commits to exercising all executed Voluntary Agreements three months after confirmation by ABP of the scheme, subject to commitment on funding for the scheme. Transfer of legal title to occur and the agreed Voluntary Acquisition payment made to the landowner.
- > Voluntary Land Acquisition process continues on all other outstanding cases.
- > Where individual cases remain outstanding following twelve months of the planning authority confirming the scheme and it becomes operative, the project promoter will serve a Notice to Treat to ensure the scheme can proceed.
- > The Land Acquisition Process will continue until all cases are approved.

Construction of the Greenway

- > If the scheme obtains planning consent from ABP, the project promoter will proceed to construction, subject to Government funding.
- The Land Acquisition Process will continue, until all remaining cases are resolved.
- The project promoter will require control of all lands necessary to construct and operate the scheme and will serve Notices of Entry, where and when relevant, following service of Notice to Treat.
- Where negotiated Agreement on remaining individual Land Acquisition Agreements is not possible, either party will have recourse to have the matter determined by an Independent Assessor under an independent third party Assessment Process or Arbitration Process.

**Voluntary
Land
Acquisition
Process
Active**

3.3.4 Greenway Sustainability Payment

It is acknowledged that landowners are being requested to engage in the progression of a National or Regional Greenway project at a much earlier timeframe than under the normal statutory regime and potentially entering commitments / advanced considerations as part of this process.

By way of recognising the continued co-operation of directly impacted farmer / landowners, a payment will be paid on completion of the scheme when the Greenway opens. This co-operation payment will be subject to a minimum payment for each landowner / Land Agreement per scheme.

Where applicable, this ex-gratia payment will be available whether a landowner's case is concluded under the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement process or under the statutory compensation process.

Where there are recorded incidences of non-cooperation by the landowner during the process and the project promoter and / or its agents can demonstrate that they acted reasonably, the cooperation payment will be forfeit. Non-cooperation to be determined by the mediation board (please see Section 3.2.2).

For clarity, this ex-gratia payment, and the separate early sign-on payment, where applicable, will be over and above the negotiated land acquisition / compensation payment that may be agreed between the landowner and the project promoter.

Cooperation payment and any early sign-on payment will be over and above the negotiated land acquisition / compensation payment that may be agreed





Each case is to be assessed and negotiated on its own merits as no two cases are exactly the same

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

There are several different scenarios that may arise; and for demonstrative purposes we have outlined two below.

Landowner A

Following consultations with a landowner, a 100-metre linear length of land is identified as being required for the scheme. The landowner instructs a Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor to act on their behalf and a Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement is negotiated and agreed in advance of any ABP oral hearing.

- > Entitled to an early sign-on payment, payable on execution of Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement.
- > On confirmation by ABP of the scheme and subject to commitments on funding, the negotiated Voluntary Acquisition Price will be honoured and becomes payable on completion of the legal land transfer. Law Agents to be instructed after three months of scheme confirmation.
- > On the basis that the landowner cooperates during the entire process, on completion of the Greenway works, the landowner will be entitled to a further separate payment.

Landowner B

Following consultations with the landowner, a 400-metre linear length of land is identified as being required for the scheme. The landowner instructs a Farmer Agronomist / Property Advisor to act on their behalf and a Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement is negotiated and agreed six months after the scheme is granted planning consent.

- > The early sign-on payment does not apply.
- > Once a commitment to funding for the scheme is confirmed, the negotiated Voluntary Acquisition Price becomes payable on completion of the legal land transfer. Law Agents to be instructed to complete.
- > On the basis that the landowner cooperates during the entire process, on completion of the Greenway works the landowner will be entitled to a further separate payment.



This Guide and Code applies to the delivery of National and Regional Greenways

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

3.3.5 Conciliation Processes

Given the spirit of engagement and collaboration underpinning this Code and advanced measures to be taken, it is envisaged that the vast majority of Voluntary Land Acquisition and Compensation Agreements will be achieved by direct negotiated means. It is, however, acknowledged that this may not always be possible and, accordingly, the parties can avail of a Mediation Process in the first instance.

3.3.5.1 Voluntary Land Acquisition - Mediation Process

In the event that the parties are unable to reach agreement on an appropriate voluntary acquisition price, either the landowner or the project promoter can apply to have the case listed for mediation.

The Mediator will bring the parties together to see if a settlement can be reached between the parties. Where the parties reach an agreement, a Settlement Agreement is signed by all the parties and is completely confidential. The Law Agents are then instructed to arrange for the drafting of a Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement to reflect the Agreement reached.

The Mediator is appointed by the Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Irish Branch, from a panel of competent, independent and suitably qualified Mediators.

Either party can avail of the Mediation Process in circumstances where:

- > the invitation to participate in the Voluntary Land Acquisition Process for the scheme has been initiated; and
- > a claim was lodged by the landowner's Agent; and
- > an offer was made in response to the claim by the project promoter's agent; but agreement has still not been achieved; and
- > the voluntary negotiations process has been exhausted.

The Mediation process should include a representative of both the landowner and the project promoter. It is envisaged that the Mediation Process would be

conducted between the Agronomist / Property Valuers for both parties and availed of at any time prior to the convening of an oral hearing by the relevant planning authority, into the Greenway scheme.

The costs of the process will be paid for by the project promoter and determined in accordance with the table for professional fees and any associated circulars that may apply.

In the absence of an agreement between the parties at the Mediation process, there will be a further opportunity to negotiate any remaining outstanding cases following the planning consent / Compulsory Purchase Order being confirmed and made operative.

3.3.5.2 Independent Third Party Assessment

When planning consent is in place and the Compulsory Purchase Order has been confirmed and made operative, the parties have a further opportunity to negotiate and reach a negotiated Agreement. As outlined above, the Voluntary Negotiations process continues for a further period of twelve months from when the scheme is confirmed by the planning authority and becomes operative.

At this stage of the process, if it has not been possible for the parties to agree on a monetary consideration, then either party may apply for an independent assessment to be determined by an Assessor appointed from a panel of competent, independent and suitably qualified Assessors established for this scheme by the Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Irish Branch.

3.0 CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

On payment of an administrative fee by the project promoter, the Chairman of the Institute shall nominate a member of the panel to make an independent assessment. The assessment shall be in accordance with the principles set out in Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 above, whereby the monetary consideration will be determined in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions governing land acquisition. The project promoter and the landowner will have due regard to the non-binding assessment. The process will be available to both parties once the relevant project has been granted planning consent and the Compulsory Purchase Order has been confirmed and made operative.

The nominated Assessor shall review the application made, request brief statements from both parties and thereafter apply case management principles to enable the matter to be determined fairly and without unnecessary delay or expense. The procedures available can include the following:

Where the quantum of monetary consideration is not significant and / or it is a straightforward valuation issue in dispute the Assessor may proceed on the basis of written submissions only. Each party will submit and exchange written submissions and be afforded the opportunity of making written counter submissions.

Where it is determined by the Assessor that a hearing is warranted and there is no substantial point of law or valuation practice in dispute then the Property Advisor / Agronomy Expert, and other specialist experts where necessary from both sides, will submit and exchange written submissions in advance of a hearing. The experts will present their evidence at the hearing and be open to cross examination, by their opposite number, before the Assessor.

Where there is greater complexity, higher monetary value or the case has wider significance, the nominated Assessor may convene a case management hearing in order to identify the issues, the number and specialisms of any expert witnesses and give directions as to how the case should proceed. Any points of law or issues of valuation practice will be addressed by way of a determination of a preliminary issue prior to a hearing. This should reduce the number of issues, thereby saving costs, avoiding delay and facilitating settlement.

Any and all reasoned determinations made by an independent Assessor under this scheme will be accessible and available to all parties who confirm acceptance of the terms of the scheme. The availability of reasoned determinations should greatly assist in informing future applications under the scheme. The parties should be aware that, in availing of the independent third party Assessment process, they are providing their consent that a reasoned determination of the case will be available to landowners on the scheme, subject to appropriate redactions to remove the name of the landowner and the plot number in the scheme.

The parties will only consider using the services of a Law Agent, and potentially Counsel, where a point of law or issue of valuation practice arises under this process, or where preliminary issues can be determined in advance to enable a more efficient hearing. Where it is considered that Counsel's presence at a hearing was not warranted, the Assessor shall have the right to disallow the costs of same, irrespective of the outcome of the process.

If the independent Assessor determines an amount in excess of the sum offered by the project promoter, then the costs of the assessment will be borne by the project promoter. If the independent Assessor determines an amount less than the amount offered by the project promoter, then the costs of the assessment will be borne by the claimant.

Either party shall have the right to avail of the statutory arbitration process as provided for under legislation

3.3.6 Land Payments

The project promoter is committed to minimising the period between the conclusion of a Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement and the payment of compensation. Subject to approval by ABP for the Greenway scheme and the necessary funding for land acquisition being made available, the project promoter commits to exercising the Voluntary Land Acquisition Agreements within three months of all final necessary development consents being obtained. It is envisaged that payment of the agreed monetary consideration will be made within six weeks of the production of satisfactory vouched title.

Where settlement is reached at a later stage, whether by Agreement or determined, it is also envisaged that payment of the monetary consideration will be paid within six weeks of the production of satisfactory vouched title.



APPENDICES



Appendix 1:

Code of Practice for the Prevention of the Spread of Animal Disease

- > This Code of Practice seeks to prevent the spread of animal disease in the course of work on National and Regional Greenway projects. All personnel involved in such work will be required to comply with the Code in circumstances where the working area has not been fenced off from the adjoining land.
- > All equipment coming from outside the State will be cleaned and disinfected on entry to the country.
- > On first arrival on site all machines will be sprayed with appropriate disinfectant. The contractor will verify to the project promoter that this has been done and the project promoter may carry out spot checks as appropriate.
- > The project promoter PLO will liaise with the local District Veterinary Office (DVO) to establish the location of any restricted herds along the route of investigation work. The liaison will continue on a regular basis throughout the investigation and reinstatement periods. Where any landholder becomes aware that his / her herd has become infected, it is his / her responsibility to inform the PLO as a matter of urgency.
- > Where the project promoter has been informed of a restricted herd along the route of the Greenway scheme, it will require the contractor to disinfect machinery and personnel before leaving the land concerned. The number of accesses across the working strip will be reduced to one in the case of lands having restricted herd status. The contractor will arrange for disinfectant mats / baths to be replenished with disinfectants, as required.
- > PLOs and other personnel working for or on behalf of the project promoter in connection with the Greenway scheme, who may have to call on landowners of restricted herds, will ensure that their footwear and clothing are disinfected on leaving the property (or land) concerned.
- > In the event of an outbreak of a serious Class A Disease, the local authority in the area concerned, or its agents / contractors, will be subject to such operational restrictions as are imposed by the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Marine.
- > The project promoter will require contractors and their agents to confine access to the working area to Greenway crossings, unless otherwise agreed with the landowner.

Appendix 2:

Site Investigation Works and Archaeological testing

Where advance works are undertaken by the project promoter, or its agents, the following schedule of rates will apply:

Site Investigation Works

Type	Rate effective from 1 June 2020
Boreholes	€159
Probes (per 30m x 50m grid)	€120
Trial Pits	€398
Double Trial Pits	€1,031
Boreholes with standpipes	€398
Survey control points (fenced)	€398
Piezometer	€219

Archaeological Testing

Category of land use	Crop loss	Disturbance	Total Per Acre
	Rate effective from 1 June 2020		
Grassland Dairy Dry stock & Maize	€541	€452	€993
	€541	€169	€710
Cereals Winter Wheat Other cereals (incl. spring wheat, barley, oats, peas and beans)	€474	€169	€643
	€395	€169	€564
Sugar Beet crop planted crop not planted	€1,015	€339	€1,354
	€564	€169	€733
Other crops / land use	Assessed on a case-by-case basis		

Appendix 3:

Form of voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement for National and Regional Greenways

SCHEME – AS SET OUT IN THE FIRST SCHEDULE HERETO

ACQUIRING AUTHORITY – AS SET OUT IN THE SECOND SCHEDULE HERETO

LANDOWNER – AS SET OUT IN THE THIRD SCHEDULE HERETO

LANDOWNERS PROPERTY – AS SET OUT IN THE FOURTH SCHEDULE HERETO

GENERAL CONDITIONS – AS SET OUT IN THE FIFTH SCHEDULE HERETO

SPECIAL CONDITIONS – AS SET OUT IN THE SIXTH SCHEDULE HERETO

ACCOMODATION WORKS—AS SET OUT IN THE SEVENTH SCHEDULE HERETO

COMPENSATION AMOUNT – AS SET OUT IN THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE HERETO

WHEREAS: -

- A. The Acquiring Authority are the promoters of the Scheme and propose seeking Development Consent pursuant to the Roads Act, 1993 as amended, the Planning & Development Act, 2000 as amended and the Housing Act, 1966 as amended (to include authorisation for the compulsory acquisition of lands where necessary) which Consents/ Approvals are hereinafter collectively referred to as Development Consent.
- B. The Acquiring Authority is committed to using its best endeavours to negotiate a voluntary Land Acquisition Agreement with individual Landowners affected by the Scheme without the need to exercise the Compulsory Purchase authorisation being obtained as part of the Development Consent.
- C. The Acquiring Authority in its dealings with landowners on the Scheme have agreed to abide by the terms of the Code of Best Practice for the provision of National & Regional Greenways agreed with the farming organisations and dated the ___ day of _____ 2021 as may be updated and revised from time to time (the Code) and will apply the Code to its interaction and negotiations with the Landowner.
- D. The Landowner and the Acquiring Authority have now agreed to the following provisions applying to the Acquiring Authority's proposed acquisition of the Landowners Property for the purposes of the Scheme

Memorandum of agreement

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS: -

1. The Acquiring Authority shall pay to the Landowner the Compensation Amount for the acquisition of the Landowners Property subject to the Acquiring Authority achieving each of the following namely: -

- (i) Development Consent which will be deemed to have been achieved on the expiration of all periods for Judicial Review or on the Scheme being upheld by way of final Judicial determination of the last challenge to the Development Consent and;
- (ii) The Landowners Property forming part of the Development Consent obtained for the Scheme and;
- (iii) The Acquiring Authority obtaining funding approval for the acquisition of the lands the subject the Scheme.

PROVIDED ALWAYS that this Agreement will terminate and cease to have effect in the event of the aforementioned 3 matters not being achieved within 36 months from the date hereof but without prejudice to the exercise by the Acquiring Authority of its statutory compulsory acquisition powers independent of this Agreement.

2. The provisions of the Eight Schedules appended hereto shall apply to this Agreement.

3. The Terms of the Code, a copy of which is appended hereto, shall form part of this Agreement however should there be any conflict between the terms of this Agreement and the Code the terms of this Agreement shall prevail.

Dated the _____ day of _____ 202_ .

Landowners Signature

Witness Signature

Witness Signature

Address of Witness

Printed Witness Name

Occupation of Witness

Address of Witness

For and on Behalf of the
Acquiring Authority

Occupation of Witness

Printed Witness Name

Signed by and on behalf of the
Acquiring Authority by a person
Duly authorised to do so

SCHEDULE ONE SCHEME

SCHEDULE TWO ACQUIRING AUTHORITY

SCHEDULE THREE LANDOWNER

SCHEDULE FOUR LANDOWNERS PROPERTY

Schedule five general conditions

1. Title

- 1.1 The Landowner shall at the time of entering in to this Agreement provide a good marketable unencumbered freehold title (assuming the application of the Law Society Conditions of Sale for the sale of property) to the property in accordance with the guidelines of the Conveyancing Committee of the Law Society of Ireland and where any dispute arises with regard to the quality of such title, the Opinion of the Conveyancing Committee of the Law Society shall be accepted by the parties.
- 1.2 In the event of the Landowners title to the property being subject to any Charge, Encumbrance, Third Party Rights or Claims the Landowner shall procure and provide to the Acquiring Authority, in advance of signing this Agreement, the consent of the holder of the said Charge, Encumbrance, Right or Claim to the Landowner entering into this Agreement which consent shall commit to discharging the property from the said Charge/ Encumbrance/Rights/Claim in the event of this Agreement becoming operative on the occurrence of the conditions referred to in paragraph 1 of the Memorandum of Agreement.
- 1.3 Once the conditions referred to in paragraph 1 of the Memorandum of Agreement hereto are complied, the Acquiring Authority shall issue a Notice to that effect to the Landowner or his/her/their Solicitor and the transfer to the Acquiring Authority of the legal title to the property and the payment of the compensation to the Landowner shall be completed within 3 months of such Notice or such extended period as the parties may mutually agree.
- 1.4 The Landowner shall be responsible for the payment of all outgoing in relation to the property up to and including the date of transfer of legal title to the Council.
- 1.5 The Acquiring Authority shall, with view to ensuring that the Compulsory Acquisition authorisation the subject of the Development Consent remains operative and is available to address any unforeseen title difficulties, serve within 18 months of the Compulsory Purchase Order becoming operative, a Notice to Treat on the Landowner. This Notice to Treat shall not affect the terms of this Agreement between the parties.

2. Compensation

- 2.1 The compensation payable is as per the Eight Schedule hereto and shall be paid to the Landowner on the transfer of legal title as referred to at Clause 1 above to the Acquiring Authority.
- 2.2 The compensation shall be paid to the Landowner within 21 days of the Acquiring Authority Solicitors title requirements being met and the Solicitor being in receipt of executed Transfer Documents to be held by the Solicitor in trust for the Landowner pending the payment of the compensation and subject to any acts appearing on Closing Searches being addressed to the satisfaction of the Acquiring Authority's Solicitor.
- 2.3 The Compensation amount is in addition to any sums which may become payable to the Landowner by way of Early Sign on Payment or Cooperation Payment pursuant to the terms of the Code.

3. Occupation

- 3.1 The Acquiring Authority shall be entitled to take possession of the property from the date of payment of the compensation however in the event of there being a delay in the transfer of title to the Acquiring Authority it shall be entitled to serve a Notice to Treat and issue a Notice of Entry pursuant to Section 80 of the Housing Act, 1966 and to take possession on foot thereof with statutory interest being paid to the Landowner in accordance with that section.
- 3.2 The Landowner shall be entitled to remain in occupation of the property up to the completion of transfer of legal title to the property to the Acquiring Authority or the service of the Notice of Entry as referred to above whichever is the earlier.
- 3.3 Should the Landowner remain in possession of the land or resume possession thereof following upon the transfer of title to the Acquiring Authority or the taking of possession by the Acquiring Authority pursuant to Section 80 of the Housing Act, 1966, any such use and occupation of the lands by the Landowner shall be in the capacity as Caretaker for and on behalf of the Acquiring Authority and the Landowner shall furnish vacant possession of the property to the Acquiring Authority immediately on being requested so to do. The Landowner acknowledges that any such use and occupation by him of the lands shall not constitute adverse possession against the interests of the Acquiring Authority in the property.

4. Landowners Costs

- 4.1 The Acquiring Authority will pay the Landowners reasonable legal costs and outlay together with VAT thereon in relation to the acquisition of the property. Both parties agree that such costs shall be paid in accordance with the current TII/NRA Circular Guidelines, the relevant extract of which is set out in Appendix B hereto.
- 4.2 Where the Landowner has established good marketable title to the property to the satisfaction of the Acquiring Authority and has executed this Agreement the Landowner's Solicitors shall be entitled to request a part of payment in respect of its fees from the Acquiring Authority in the sum of €750 plus VAT at the applicable rate and necessary legal outlays incurred up to that date with the balance of the Landowners Solicitors fees as referred to in sub-clause 1 above being paid following completion of the transfer of legal title to the Acquiring Authority.
- 4.3 The Acquiring Authority shall pay the Landowners reasonable Agents/Valuers costs and outlay together with VAT thereon at the appropriate rate in relation to negotiations in respect of the Compensation with such payment being in accordance with the current TII Circular Guidelines, the relevant extract of which is set out in Appendix B hereto.
- 4.4 Upon the signing of this Agreement, the Landowner's Agent/Valuer shall be entitled to request a part payment of his/her/their fees in the sum of €1,000 plus VAT at the applicable rate with the balance of the Agent/Valuer's fees as referred to in Subclause 3 hereof being paid following completion of the transfer to the Acquiring Authority of the Legal Title to the Landowner's property.

5. Successors in Title

- 5.1 Where the Landowner's title to the property is registered with the Property Registration Authority the Landowner hereby consents to the Acquiring Authority registering a Caution on the relevant Folio or Folios to the following effect "no disposition by the Registered Owner of that part of the property shown as Plan XX (the Landowners Property) to be made without Notice to YY" (the Acquiring Authority).
- 5.2 This Agreement shall be binding on the Landowner, his/her/their Executors, Administrators and Successors in Title.
- 5.3 In the event of the Landowner contracting to sell the property to a third party, such Contract shall provide for the Purchaser to be bound by the terms of this Agreement and for the Purchaser to sign prior to closing, a direct acknowledgement with the Acquiring Authority confirming his agreement to the terms hereof.

6. Special Conditions/Accommodation Works

- 6.1 The Special Conditions (if any) negotiated with the Landowner in relation to the Acquisition of his property are as set out in the Sixth Schedule hereto and shall be adhered to by the Acquiring Authority in the construction of the Scheme.
- 6.2 The Standard Accommodation Works to be provided as part of the Scheme are as set out in the Seventh Schedule hereto and shall be provided by the Acquiring Authority when constructing the Scheme.

7. Settlement

7.1 Subject to the payment of the Landowners costs in line with Clause 4 above the Landowner confirms and agrees that the Compensation Amount is in full and final settlement of all amounts due to the Landowner in relation to the acquisition by the Acquiring Authority of the property and the construction of the Scheme thereon PROVIDED ALWAYS that this shall not preclude claims by the Landowner for damages or injury arising from negligence or failure by the Acquiring Authority to carry out Accommodation Works or implement Special Conditions as referred to in the Sixth and Seventh Schedules hereto.

8. Counterparts

8.1 This Agreement may be executed in any number of Counterparts and each of which is an original and all of which when taken together shall constitute one of the same Agreement.

8.2 This Agreement shall not be effective however until each party has executed at least one counterpart and those counterparts have been exchanged.

8.3 Subject to a specific acknowledgement in writing (whether electronically or otherwise) of receipt by the Receiving Party, of a transmission by email in PDF or Jpeg format (or such other format as is agreed between the parties in advance of transmission) by one party to this Agreement (or their Solicitors) to the other (or their Solicitors) of a complete copy of the entire of this Agreement duly executed, shall have the same effect as delivery of an original of the Agreement. Without prejudice to the validity of the Agreement thus made each party shall provide the other with the original counterpart signed by them as soon as possible thereafter.

8.4 Subject to other express terms of this Agreement covering its validity (including but not limited to the foregoing Subclause 2 and 3 above) each of the parties to this Agreement agree that: -

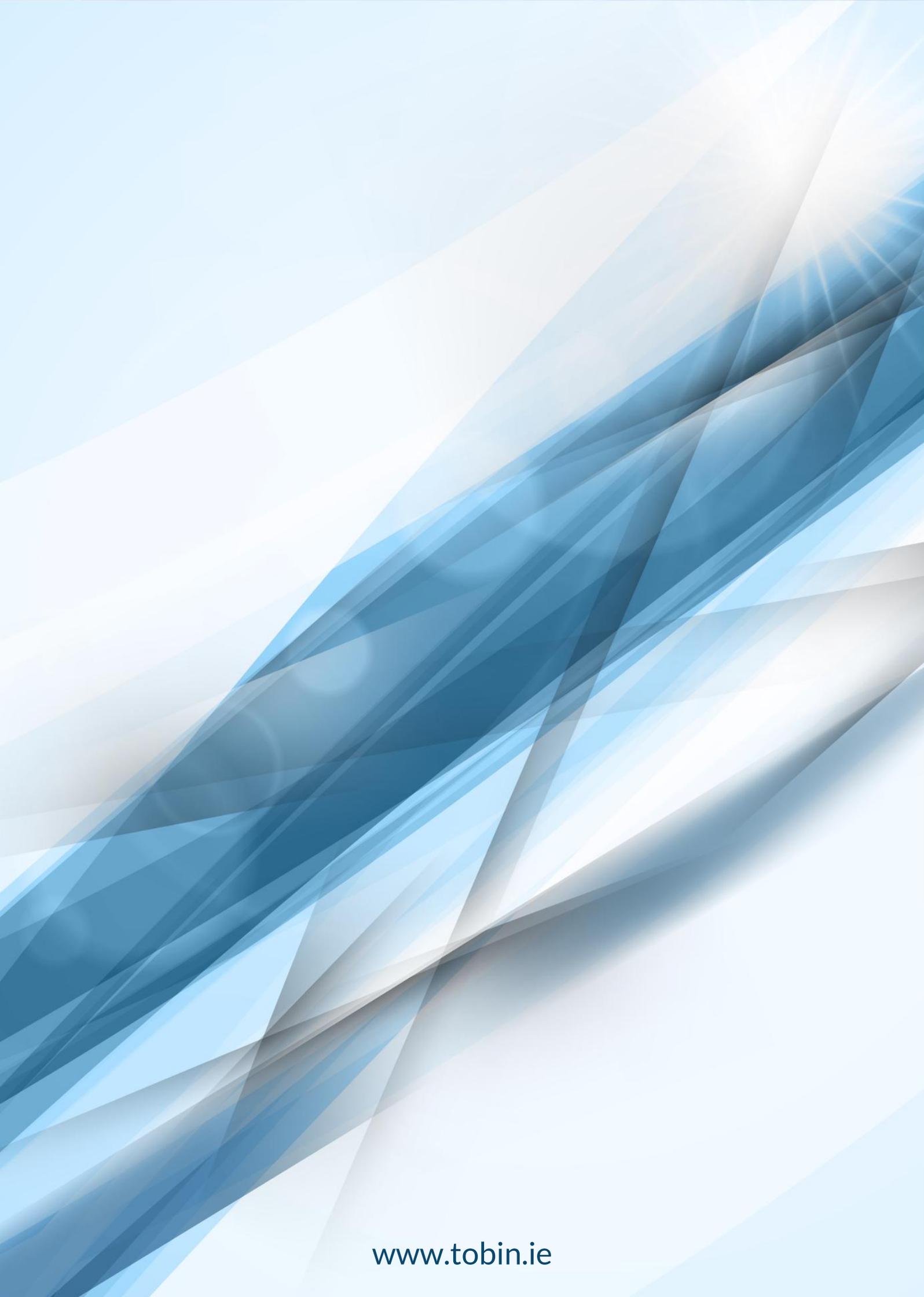
- (a) The other party shall be entitled to rely on the signature execution, and or exchange of this Agreement effected electronically and;
- (b) The signature, execution and/or exchange of this Agreement effected electronically, shall constitute a legally binding Agreement among the parties to it and conclusive evidence of such Agreement, in each case as if it had been, as applicable, signed, executed and/or exchanged manually.

SCHEDULE SIX SPECIAL CONDITIONS

SCHEDULE SEVEN ACCOMMODATION WORKS

SCHEDULE EIGHT COMPENSATION AMOUNT

APPENDIX A**Code of Best Practice for National & Regional Greenways****APPENDIX B****Relevant Extract from TII Circular No. X of 20XX in Relation to Professional Fees
and Other Payments**



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