Loop Head and Kilkee Heritage Trail on the Wild Atlantic Way

Pilot Project

Public Consolation, the Production and Recording of Heritage Information on the Wild Atlantic Way in Kilkee and Loop Head

Final Report
November 2014

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Wild Atlantic Way is Ireland's new scenic coastal route stretching over 2,500 km along our western seaboard from Donegal to West Cork. With visitor numbers up approximately 10% in 2014, Ireland is again proving very attractive and the Wild Atlantic Way being hailed as a huge success for Irish tourism. Wild Atlantic Way route itself encourages visitors to experience Ireland's incredible seascapes, history, heritage, culture, folklore and importantly the local people and communities.

With this in mind, the Heritage Officer of Clare County Council in partnership with the Heritage Council, Failte Ireland and Loop Head Tourism chose Kilkee and Loop Head for a community based pilot project to develop a local heritage trail along this 60km section of the Wild Atlantic Way. The project aimed to promote a greater sense of understanding of our history, heritage, folklore and culture along the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) route by connecting with and placing the local community at the core of this and future WAW projects.

With the community at the core of all project tasks, the overall aim of the project was to produce design ready interpretation content for 12 sites on a proposed WAW Loop Head heritage trail and then store this content on a database. This interpretation content including text, photographs, audio interviews, maps and other information could then be easily used with existing products or to develop future tourism products such as smartphone Apps, websites, interpretation boards, print maps, online maps, brochures, audio guides, podcasts, social media and much more.

Importantly, this pilot project also made recommendations and formulated a model for working with the local community and stakeholders to help to make it more efficient, streamlined and cost effective to replicate the same project for other local communities along the entire Wild Atlantic Way in the medium to long term.

As part of this project, early contact was also made between this project and 2 other separate but complimentary heritage and tourism projects running concurrently on Loop Head with the aim to utilise and share all available project information and ensure that there is no duplication of work and wasted resources between projects. These other projects included the Loop Head Heritage Audit being undertaken by local community members Trea Heapes and Frances Birmingham and funded by the Heritage Council and the WAW Discovery Point Interpretation project undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of Failte Ireland.

Project Methodology

To achieve these project objectives, a systematic project methodology was used. The first key task was the identification of potential heritage trail sites. As part of this project, the local community and tourism groups had already completed the task of agreeing and identifying over 27no. potential local heritage sites as part of a previous trail map initiative. An inspection of each potential heritage site was then undertaken where a set of site assessment criteria were applied and this potential list was refined, removing unsuitable sites were appropriate. A consultation meeting with the steering group and key community representatives then allowed a final list of Heritage Sites to be agreed upon before any major research or interpretation tasks were undertaken as outlined below.

Through consultation with the local community, Steering Group and other ongoing projects on Loop Head it became apparent that all 4no. WAW Discovery Points and an additional 4no. heritage areas

of interest (not official stops on the trail) should be included as part of this project, resulting in this final list of 18no. heritage trail sites as outlined below on the Final Z-card printed trail map:

No.	Final List of Heritage Trail Sites	Type of Site
1	West Clare Railway	Heritage Site
2	Querrin Pier	Heritage Site
3	Carrigaholt Castle and Bay	WAW Discovery Point
4	Kilcredaun Churches and Holy Well	Heritage Site
5	Rinevella Bay and Submerged Forest	Heritage Site
6	Grave of the Yellow Men	Heritage Site
7	Pilots Memorial and Kilbaha Bay	Heritage Site
8	Loop Head	Heritage Site
9	Church of the Little Ark	WAW Signature Point
10	Bridges of Ross	WAW Discovery Point
11	Dunlicka Castle	Heritage Site
12	Bishops Island	Heritage Site
13	Kilkee Cliffs and Pollock Holes	WAW Discovery Point
14	Kilkee Victorian Town	Heritage Site
15	Blackweir Bridge	Heritage Area
16	Doonaha Ringforts	Heritage Area
17	Tullig Famine Village	Heritage Area
18	Corbally and Coosheen	Heritage Area

Site Research and Database Entry

Once the final list of sites has been fully agreed, the research and information gathering for each site began and included the following key tasks:

▪ Detailed desktop research for each site, identify existing sources of heritage information
▪ Detailed field research – Site visit from both the point of view of a tourist and as a consultant

- Interviews – Record interviews with local community members for each site and topic
- Collect all database fields and metadata for each site and enter into the database

Although the primary source of information, stories, facts for each site were the interviews conducted with the local community, these were fact checked and supplemented by the overall site research to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of each site as outlined below.

Site Interpretation

During the interpretation process, context has been given to the information collected from interviews with the local community and all other site research by weaving these stories and facts into new, fresh, concise and easy to understand interpretive text explaining the culture, history, people, environment and folklore attached to each heritage site on the Loop Head Heritage Trail.

It was estimated that up to 80% of all interpretation text originated from these interviews all of which were fact checked and supplemented by site research above.

As part of this project, the interpretation text for each site has also been complimented with following project deliverables outlined below all of which are stored in the database.

Project Deliverables

In order to produce the final design ready interpretation content for each site, the following key project deliverables were complete:

1) Project Database to store all design ready interpretive content
   a. The easy to use Omeka.net cloud storage database solution was chosen
2) Full Interpretive Text for each of the 18no. sites
   a. Edit full text to create short (up to 50 words) and medium (up to 150 words) versions
3) A summary Interpretation Text for the Loop Head Heritage Trail
4) Full recorded interviews with 15no. members of the local community
   a. Editing full interviews into individual clips for each site and specific topic
   b. 55 Audio Clips and 2 Songs recorded
5) Professional photographs of each site on the heritage trail
   a. Average of 10no. photographs per site. Total of nearly 200 photographs.
   b. A photograph of each interviewee
6) GPS survey of all site locations and nearby existing and potential walking and cycling routes
7) Full Graphic Design of Z-Card Print Map for the Loop Head Heritage Trail
8) Inclusion of Business Fields and extra heritage areas in database for future data entry
9) Project Presentations
10) Final Report with a set of overall and site specific recommendations

Project Recommendations

A series of recommendations were made as part of this pilot project. Pilot projects by their nature require flexibility to ensure that any opportunities or issues encountered during the project as well any requested additional tasks can be accommodated into the changing project objectives and deliverables and used to form practical and realistic recommendations for similar future projects. A summary of key recommendations are outlined below with the full set of recommendations contained in the main body of the report;

Community Consultation: It is recommended that a structured schedule of community consultation and feedback be implemented throughout the project timeline to ensure that the community is at the core of all site identification, research, interpretation, decision making and all final deliverables.

Site Assessment, Identification and Research: To agree the final list of suitable sites for the heritage trail, it is recommended that all potential sites be firstly evaluated and assessed based on their level of

importance as a heritage site and a set of engineering criteria. Once the final list of sites has been agreed, it is recommended that detailed site research be carried out in a systematic and efficient manner including desktop research, identify existing literature and online sources of information, field research and site surveys for each site.

Interviews: To compliment and supplement the factual site research, it is recommended that interviews be undertaken with local community members who live or work in the area, thereby firmly placing the local community at the core of heritage interpretation. This recommended approach to site research firmly places the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee at the core of all heritage interpretation with up to 80% of all site interpretation material originating from these interviews.

Interpretation Text: It is important that interpretive text be clear, concise and importantly easy to read and understand. It is also necessary that the text is both interesting and meaningful to the visitor. For a successful interpretation, it is recommended that only the most interesting and essential information is included.

Interpretive Signage: It is recommended that the location of interpretative proposals, signage or boards must be obvious and intuitive to visitors arriving at each site by car, bike or on foot and also suitably located to help the visitor understand, orientate and view their surroundings while reading the interpretative text. It should be consistent with existing and proposed WAW signs and interpretation.

Database: The primary aim of the database is to store and display essential interpretation content for each heritage site to allow the development of future tourism products and promotion material. It is therefore recommended that the project database be easy to use and in addition to full stakeholder access, 'non administrative' access should be made available to community of all technical abilities to promote the WAW Loop Head Heritage Trail on their own websites, social media platforms and other non-commercial use of the information.

Site Access: Where public access issues exist at certain sites on the heritage trail, it is recommended that dialogue should be initiated as soon as possible between all stakeholders, tenants and landowners regarding achieving public access to the site.

Future WAW Heritage Trail Projects: The recommendations, processes and checklists outlined in the main body of this report should allow the project to be replicated and help future projects be more efficient, streamlined and cost effective. They also provide a clear model for working with the local community and stakeholders and will help deliver high quality and consistent design ready interpretation content along the entire WAW.

To ensure that the proposed tender scope, budget and timeline for future projects are accurate and realistic; the cost, timeline and deliverables including all additional tasks associated with this pilot project should be used as a direct comparison and be factored into estimating future budgets and timescales.

It is recommended any future WAW heritage trail project pay close attention to the probable number of sites on a heritage trail, project deliverables, meetings and project presentations when producing the tender brief as these must be reflected in the proposed project budget and timeframe. The number of heritage sites has a direct impact on costs and the time required to complete various project elements including: site assessment, site research, data collection, mapping, interviews required, site interpretation, photography, database design and data entry.

Considering the current investment in this and other projects on Loop Head and on the WAW, it is recommended that the next natural step would be to undertake a trial project to install and analyse physical interpretation at sites on the proposed Loop Head heritage trail, the design of which would be undertaken by suitable consultants to ensure consistency with overall WAW interpretation proposals.

With the rural nature of the local road network, it is recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of a trial 50kph speed limit on Loop Head, a first on the WAW, thereby improving road safety and placing more importance on pedestrians and cyclists on the route.

Site Specific Recommendations: A list of key recommendations are made for each site in the main body of the report covering various items such as interpretation, car parking, access, signage, cycle parking, nearby activities such as walking, and cycling.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) is Ireland's exciting new signed scenic route stretching 2,500 km from Donegal to West Cork. The route encourages visitors to experience Ireland's incredible coastline, seascapes, history, heritage, culture, folklore and importantly local people and communities. Recent Fáilte Ireland statistics show that visitor numbers are up approximately 10% in 2014, helped by a number of factors including economic recovery in key overseas markets and importantly the success of new initiatives like the Wild Atlantic Way. Ireland is again proving a very attractive to the overseas traveller with the WAW leading the way.

With this in mind, the Heritage Officer of Clare County Council (CCC) in partnership with the Heritage Council, Failte Ireland and Loop Head Tourism chose Kilkee and Loop Head for a community based pilot project which aims to develop a local heritage trail for Loop Head, creating an archive of heritage interpretation information and media for a variety of future tourism products and for posterity. This project was awarded to ActiveMe Heritage Services in 2014 by means of a public tendering process.

The objective of this project is to promote a greater sense of understanding of our history, heritage, folklore and culture along this section of Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) route by connecting with and placing the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee at the core of all heritage site interpretation.

The project study area section of the WAW route comprises the entire Loop Head peninsula in addition to the town of Kilkee and village of Moyasta as shown in Figure 1.1. It covers an area of approximately 212km^2, over 60km of the WAW route on Loop Head and contains 4no. WAW Discovery Points.
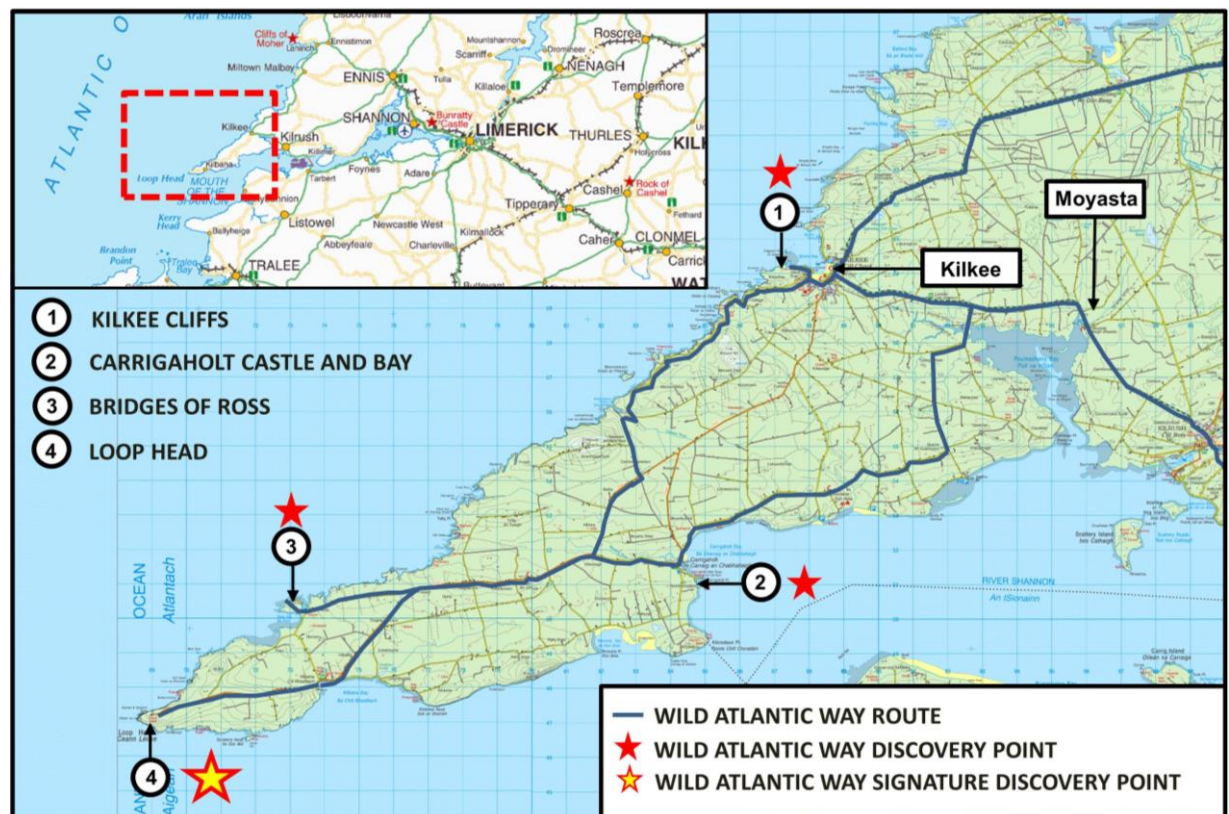

Figure 1.1 The Loop Head and Kilkee Study Area on the Wild Atlantic Way

At present, including this project, there are 3 separate but complimentary heritage and tourism projects running concurrently on Loop Head focussing on 3 distinct levels of detail and phases of site interpretation and product development. Early contact was made between these projects to utilise and share all available project information to ensure that there is no duplication of work and wasted resources between projects. These projects included:

1) The Loop Head Heritage Audit being undertaken by local community members Trea Heapes and Frances Birmingham is funded by the Heritage Council. The Loop Head community have been very active in recent times, with 'reading the landscape' heritage training undertaken, the results of which were locally exhibited and the findings of which recommended this further heritage audit work. This academic project is a field by field systematic audit of all heritage sites on Loop Head to record detailed site information and assess the potential of these sites to form future heritage products, projects and services.

2) This WAW Loop Head and Kilkee Heritage Trail project being undertaken by ActiveMe Heritage Services on behalf of Clare County Council, the Heritage Council and Failte Ireland. This project is the next phase after an audit of sites, whereby design ready interpretation content is produced for each site on the proposed trail and this can then be used to design future tourism products.

3) The WAW Discovery Point Interpretation project undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of Failte Ireland. This project is the final step whereby physical interpretation proposals are being designed (signs, boards, seats, etc) to accommodate their own interpretation content.

1.2 Project Objectives, Tasks and Community Consultation

The overall project aim is to consult with the local community to produce and display design ready interpretation content for the proposed heritage trail on the Loop Head peninsula and store it on an easy to use project database. With the interpretation content such as text, photographs, recorded interview clips, maps and other media in place, this content can then be used in existing tourism products or used to develop a wide variety of future tourism promotion products such as:
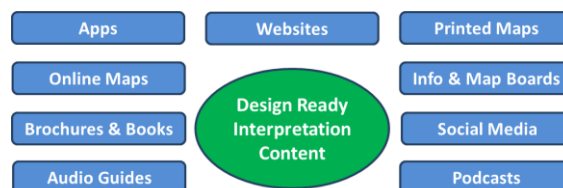
Once complete, this pilot project also aims to formulate a model for working with the local community and stakeholders by developing a set of recommendations to help to make it more efficient, streamlined and cost effective to replicate the same process for other communities along the entire Wild Atlantic Way in the medium to long term.

To achieve these project objectives, the following key tasks were undertaken by ActiveMe in conjunction with the project steering group:

- Consult with the local community and distribute project progress reports at regular intervals
- Develop and agreed Heritage Trail sites with the community and stakeholders
- Research and interpret each site on the trail
- Conduct recorded interviews with local community members regarding each site
- Map the route, locations of each site and survey any nearby walking and cycling routes
- Produce final design ready interpretation content for each site
- Store and display this interpretation content on the project database
- Design a print map of the heritage trail using the interpretative content
- Make a series of recommendations including:
    - Overall Project Observations and Summary Recommendations
    - Site Specific Observations and Recommendations
    - Recommended Processes for future WAW Heritage Trail projects

1.3 The Wild Atlantic Way

The entire Wild Atlantic Way route is shown below in Figure 1.3. It is Ireland's new signed coastal route spanning seven of Ireland's western counties at approximately 2,500 km long and contains:

- 160 Discovery Points
- 16 Signature Discovery Points

Figure 1.3   Wild Atlantic Way Route

1.4 Standards and Project Metadata

As part of the project, a number of documents, standards and projects were reviewed and taken into account including:

- A Tourism Toolkit for Irelands Built Heritage by Fáilte Ireland
- Ideas for Interpreting Heritage Sites, Bored of Boards by IWTN, Heritage Council
- Infrastructure and Interpretation plans for Connemara and the Aran Islands by Fáilte Ireland
- Lough Derg Heritage Audit Project
- Kerry Way Folklore Project
- National Roads Authority document The Traffic Signs Manual
- Department of Transport document, Traffic Management Guidelines
- National Disability Authority and Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht document, Access – Improving the Accessibility of Historic Buildings and Places

This project is accompanied by suitable Metadata to describe the information collected (i.e. information about the information). Metadata is a record of who collected the information, when it was collected and other essential elements for a proper heritage archiving and database process. The use of Metadata will add significant value to your information. It adheres to the international best practice known as Dublin Core Metadata set which consists of up to 15 elements some of which are applicable to this project. The elements include Title, Creator, Subject, Description, Publisher, Contributor, Date, Type, Format, Identifier, Source, Language, Relation, Coverage and Rights. These elements were collected for each of the 18 heritage sites on the proposed trail and stored in the database.

The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI) was adopted by the chosen project database, known as OMEKA (see Section 2.0) as it supports best practices in archiving projects. The name 'Dublin' is due to its origin at a workshop in Dublin, Ohio and 'Core' because its elements are broad and generic, usable for describing a wide range of resources.

1.5 Project Team

The ActiveMe Project Team consisted of the following:

- Brian Coakley – Project Manager, Surveyor and Research
- Valerie O'Sullivan - Photographer and Videographer
- Deirdre McCarthy – Folklorist, Archivist, Archaeologist and Genealogist
- Cathal Cudden – Graphic Design and Map Production

The Client Team members consisted of the following

- Congella Maguire – Heritage Officer (CM), Clare County Council
- Michael Fitzsimons – Client Services, Fáilte Ireland (MF)
- Flan Quilligan – Client Services, Fáilte Ireland (FQ)

The primary Community Steering Group members included:

- Trea Heapes (TH)
- Cillian Murphy (CM)
- Frances Birmingham (FB)

Many other Local Community members were also consulted as part of the project during Heritage Week presentation and Q&A session afterwards, community presentations and importantly through the interview process whereby 20 local people were interviewed and many others introduced to the project.

2 Project Database

2.1 General

The primary aim of the project database is for the storage, easy access, search and display of all design ready interpretation material for the project partners and importantly the local community.

- The database must allow the user friendly display of all relevant data and multimedia for individual heritage sites.

- The database must be able to display in a simple and easy to use manner, all text, photos, audio and other media collected for each heritage site as part of this project and importantly for potential future community projects along the WAW.

- Once a project is complete the database must be easily accessible online by chosen project partners and community members to enable a review of all design ready content when necessary and when they are in the process of designing a tourism product such as Apps, Websites or Maps

With these objectives in mind, the following database choice was proposed at the project outset.

2.2 Database Choice

At the initial project meeting, the steering group suggested that an offline database would be sufficient. However, on evaluation of the project objectives and community involvement it became apparent that neither an offline database (MS Access) or local server solution (using a database hosted by secure servers in Clare County Council or Failte Ireland) were suitable.

One of the key objectives of the project was to create a database to store and display design ready interpretation material and to allow the users from the project partners and local community to access and review the database at any time and from any location when designing future tourism products.

Another important consideration was that the user demographic of typical community groups accessing and viewing the database would indicate a mix of various age groups and technical abilities. If the community cannot interact intuitively with the chosen database software, it would simply not be suitable for this or future projects.

With these objectives in mind, a number of specialist database options were reviewed and the Omeka.net database software was identified as the best solution. It is considered a 'perfect fit' for the storage of digital heritage information, remote and secure online access and is a low cost open source cloud computing solution to suit this and any future project budget constraints. The Omeka system is used worldwide in many Heritage, History, archival and museum databases.

2.3 OMEKA Database

The OMEKA open source database solution (www.omeka.net) utilises a range of features, functionalities and useful plug-ins which make the site user friendly and very easy to manage into the future with minimal IT knowledge needed to view, add or edit content.

Omeka.net has a free 500MB cloud storage database plan option but due to large audio files and high resolution images as part of this project, the Silver 2GB Omeka plan was chosen for the annual fee of only $99. ActiveMe has paid the first year hosting fee which is due for renewal in Aug/Sept 2015. See www.omeka.net for the various plans which can be upgraded at anytime.

Details include:

- Omeka Silver Plan is a MySQL Database with 2 GB of storage

- It is hosted on Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud Servers (EC2)

- The database is currently set as private with access and login by assigned users only:

    o https://wildatlanticway.omeka.net

    o Initial access details (username and password) are available on request.

     o   These initial access details will be changed by the Client at project handover and database transfer.

The project is a collaboration of Clare County Council, The Heritage Council, Failte Ireland and the local community groups. Therefore, a cloud database solution is ideal as it operates independently of the various IT infrastructure requirements of all project partners whilst importantly allowing each to easily connect and communicate with the database securely.

Using an in-built API (Application Programming Interface), any IT department or website/App can connect and communicate directly with the OMEKA Database securely. Using this API you could therefore connect the OMEKA database to existing and future websites and Apps, export the database or make backups at any time.

2.4   Database Fields

All essential database tables and fields collected for each element of the project have been carefully selected and are shown in Appendix A.

2.5   Database Navigation

The OMEKA database contains an extremely user friendly Content Management System – CMS for easy and intuitive database searching, navigating, reporting, maintenance, data entry and editing into the future (i.e. adding new heritage sites or new media to the trail if required). The following sections and screenshots explain a number of key database operations.

2.5.1   Database Login

Enter your assigned username and password to gain access to the private database here.

https://wildatlanticway.omeka.net/admin/users/login

Once logged in, you can view and search the database in the backend CMS shown below or click the database title button 'Wild Atlantic Way Heritage Trails' to view it as a user-friendly website display as shown overleaf. Viewing as the user friendly frontend is advisable.

Figure 2.1 Wild Atlantic Way Omeka Database - CMS View

2.5.2 Searching the Database for Design Ready Content

Through the user friendly website display of the database as shown in Figure 2.2, it is easily searched by Heritage Site (Items) by Map (Heritage Site Location) and by Tag Words (Keywords associated with particular sites). If you wish to find a particular heritage site, please follow these steps:

- Click 'Browse Items' to see a list of all heritage sites displayed over 2 pages

- Click 'Browse by Tag' or 'Browse Map' to search by keyword or location respectively as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.2 Wild Atlantic Way Omeka Database - Website View

Figure 2.3 Seach Heritage Sites by Tag Word and Seach by Map

Once you find the site of interest, all design ready interpretation material is presented in a clear fashion for easy review of each site.

2.5.3   Editing and Adding to the database

If you wish to add a new photo to a heritage site, click 'edit' under any of the sites as shown in Figure 2.1. To add a new heritage site, click 'Add and Item' as shown on Figure 2.1. To add a new user to the database please click 'Users' as shown in Figure 2.1.

2.6   Recommended Database Choice - OMEKA Details

In simple terms, the OMEKA database precisely meets the needs and objectives of this and future community based WAW heritage trail projects. In simple terms, it stores and displays easy to find design ready interpretation content for each heritage site.

Some of the important characteristics and advantages of OMEKA are summarised below:

- The database has been carefully designed to meet all project requirements and accommodate any future heritage trail projects along the WAW (i.e. North Clare, Dingle Peninsula, Mayo, etc)

- User friendly Content Management System – CMS (Database Backend) for easy searching, navigating, reporting, maintenance, data entry and editing into the future (i.e. adding new sites or media to the trail if required).

- User friendly interface to display content for review (Database Frontend – private website page). This Html frontend can be edited to display content in various ways

- The database presents the design ready content in an easy to use and accessible to all format. This is invaluable for community involvement when designing future products like App, etc.

- It is industry standard for the storage and display of heritage information and multimedia

- All information stored using international Dublin Core Standards

- Safe cloud storage and backup of database and content (Amazon Servers)

- All users including Admin must login to gain access to the online database

- Various user roles and levels of database access including Super Admin, Researcher, Contributor and Viewing Only can be assigned at any time, with only certain people (users) allowed to edit the database.

- Being a cloud based database, remote safe access by multiple partner and community users is possible now and into the future as more information is added over time.

- Cloud option is less problematic than hosting the database on Local Authority or Fáilte Ireland IT servers

- Importantly, the OMEKA database compliments the inventory style MS Access database being undertaken as part of the Loop Head Heritage Audit project.

- Easily connect and communicate with the database via a built-in API. For example connect a website or App to the database to use any content.

- Easily export part or the entire database onto any servers or software at any time as a backup or for other reasons.

- Omeka Database is hosted on Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud Servers (**EC2**) who also host companies like Netflix and more, so are considered very safe and reliable.

- OMEKA completes daily backups of the entire database

- OMEKA are continually improving the database features and plugins offered as part of their hosting service and this keeps the database up to date as the WAW project grows.

- The database can also be viewed and searched as a private or public website page. This user friendly frontend is invaluable for community groups. With the flick of a button you can make some or all of the database a public website

- Using this Omeka.net Silver package you can create up to 5 separate databases. This project uses only 1no. database for the WAW Heritage Trails but other databases could be created for other existing or future local community heritage projects. This Silver package can be upgraded at any time as the overall project grows.

- ▪ Omeka can also allow Contributions from the public in the future via secure easy to use online forms (crowdsourcing stories, photos, and much more). Contributors would not have access to the database itself.

- ▪ To save storage space on the database, consideration should be given to reducing the file size of all images to <500kb (suitable for websites, Apps, etc) and keeping all high resolution images separately. Considerable should also be given to transferring audio files to services such as YouTube or Soundcloud whereby only a URL link to these audio file would be contained in the Omeka database.

ActiveMe considered an offline MS Access database at the project outset but omitted it on the following grounds:

- - It does not lend itself to multiple users and remote online community access

- - More suited to Heritage Audits when creating a large inventory of heritage sites and their associated detailed characteristics

- - Not suited to the display of Design Ready Multimedia for individual Heritage Sites

- - Maintaining an offline master copy of a database can sometimes cause issues if users have or are using different versions. Data can often go out of date if not maintained or 'go missing' between versions.

3 Community Consultation

3.1   General

Engaging with the local community for their input, feedback and agreement is essential for buy-in and the sustainability of this and future local WAW projects in the longer term. This placement of the community at the core of the heritage interpretation process forms the entire basis of the project. Public consultation, including interviews with the local community should strengthen the relationship between the heritage sites and those who live around them, thereby taking advantage to the potential local economic benefits of increased Wild Atlantic Way tourism into the future.

3.2   Community Consultation – Project Steering Group

Consultation meetings with the steering group and key community representatives should take place at the project outset and once every 4 or 8 weeks from that point depending on project timeline.

At the outset of the project or after the initial 'Information Sessions', it is crucial to identify primary representative (s) within the community. Ideally there should be 2 community representatives at each steering group to give balance and focus but this will depend on the existing make-up of local community groups and may be different for any future WAW heritage project. This will enable the project to be as efficient as possible allowing proposals and decisions to be made quickly within the steering group but with the approval of these key community representatives. Using these primary points of contact in the community, you can easily disseminate information to the wider community using one channel and also receive combined feedback from one source. Having multiple sources and timing of community feedback can cause significant delays to a project.

3.3   Initial Community Consultation - Identify List of Potential Heritage Sites

To enable the project to move forward, the most crucial part of the community consultation process is the initial identification and agreement of local Heritage Sites which will be part of the proposed WAW Heritage Trail.

As part of this project, the local community and tourism groups had already completed the task of agreeing and identifying over 27no. potential local heritage sites as part of a previous trail map initiative. Therefore our project was able to move to the next and more difficult stage of the consultation process where this longer list of potential sites was reduced down to a final list of the most valuable and publically accessible sites for our new Heritage Trail through a detailed assessment of all sites (see Sections 4.3 to 4.5).

Where communities have not already taken the step to identify an agreed list of potential local Heritage Sites, the recommended consultation process is outlined in Section 3.8.

3.4   Community Consultation - Identify Final List of Heritage Sites

Once a detailed assessment of all potential sites was undertaken, a consultation meeting with the steering group and key community representatives allowed the final list of Heritage Sites to be drawn up and fully agreed upon on the in early September.

3.5   Community Consultation – Heritage Week Presentation

As part of Heritage Week 2014, a project presentation in conjunction with Kilkee Civic Trust was undertaken on the 27th Aug 2014 where a significant number of local community members and others attended. This was ideal exposure for the project with a high level of community consultation. Discussions with local community members also took place in an informal Q&A session afterwards where many contacts were made and future interviewees identified.

3.6   Community Consultation – Recorded Interviews with Locals

An extremely important element of the community consultation process are the project interviews with local community members. These interviews, discussed in Section 5, add a local voice and local stories and information to the project and allow a stronger buy in from the community and significantly enhance the visitor experience. These topic based interviews will provide interesting short audio clips for each site for use on future tourism products such as Apps, websites storey maps, audio guides and podcasts.

As part of this project, 15no. Interviews with local community members were undertaken. Through the interview process many more people were exposed to the project and became part of the overall community consultation process.

3.7   Community Consultation – Interim and Final Presentations

As part of the project, the local community were involved and consulted for many of the project processes. An interim community presentation was organised for the 29th September 2014 and an invitation was extended to all Loop Head tourism members for their input and feedback regarding the project progress.

3.8   Recommended Community Consultation Process

As a pilot project, we have identified any opportunities and oversights regarding community consultation while delivering the project. This has allowed us develop the following efficient community consultation process to achieve best results for any future WAW Heritage Projects:

At the project outset, it is recommended to organise initial information sessions with local community members, selected groups and other people confirmed by the Steering Group.

- These meetings should take place in a convenient location and venue to ensure that members of the public can easily attend and feel comfortable expressing their views

- Suitable dates and locations should be discussed and agreed at the outset of any project

This public consultation approach is an efficient and cost-effective way of quickly gathering large amounts of important local information from multiple sources with specific local knowledge and perspectives. This 'listening research' approach should include the following elements:

- Introduce the project using appropriate visual aids (PowerPoint, maps, photos, projector)

- Set out the objectives of the project, the session and topics to be covered

- Lead the discussions but do not lead the answers similar to a structured Focus Group

- Encourage participation with a number of short tasks for the group

- Agree list of potential Heritage Sites based on agreed set of criteria

- Identify suitable key people for separate interviews from within or outside group

- Assess the requirement of additional sessions or workshops with this or other groups

- Collate and Analyse all information and feedback gathered during public consultation

- Identify Key Community Contacts for Steering Group (see section 3.3)

- Identify relevant community members for Recorded Interviews (see section 3.4)

Once the list of potential sites has been identified, these will be assessed and a final list of Heritage Sites drawn up for approval through the steering group and feedback from the community.

- Incorporate community feedback and agree Final List of Agreed Heritage Sites with steering group and proceed to the site research (see Section 4)

- At this point you will have received community input into all major elements of the project and work can commence on all tasks.

- Before the project is complete it is advised that a final community consultation take place where locals can provide their final feedback and input regarding the project progress and final deliverables. In addition, this consultation stage can act as an opportunity for the community to sign off on the project.

4 Heritage Sites – Identification and Research

4.1 General

In order to identify and agree a final list of suitable Heritage Sites with the Steering Group, all potential sites above were firstly assessed in terms of engineering and other criteria outlined in section 4.3. Only after the final site list has been approved can site research, photography, interviews, interpretation and other tasks begin.

4.2 Potential Heritage Trail Sites

A list of 27no. potential heritage sites for the Wild Atlantic Way were issued to ActiveMe during the initial community consultation and are shown below in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Existing Loop Head Tourism Heritage Trail Map

1. West Clare Railway
2. Poulnasherry Bay and SAC
3. Black Weir Bridge
4. Cammoge Point
5. Querrin Pier
6. Doonaha Ringforts & Gun Battery
7. Carrigaholt Bridge and Pier
8. McMahon Castle
9. Shannon Estuary and SAC
10. O'Curry Irish College
11. Napoleonic Battery, Holy Well & Church
12. Kilcredaun Lighthouse
13. Pol na Gardi and Portach Báilte
14. Rinevella Beach
15. Grave of the Yellow Men
16. The Little Ark
17. Commemoration to Pilots
18. Kilbaha Pier
19. Doondahlen House
20. Loop Head Lighthouse
21. Eire Sign and WWII look out
22. Bridges of Ross
23. Tullig and Moveen famine village ruins
24. Doonlicka Castle
25. Bishop's Island
26. St. Caoi's Holy Well
27. Kilkee Sea Wall, Bandstand & Boathou

4.3 Engineering Assessment of Potential Sites

Each potential site must be accessible and safe to navigate to in order to be included as part of a local WAW Heritage Trail. Therefore, it is recommended that all potential sites be assessed firstly in term of their importance and potential as heritage sites and secondly based on engineering and safety standards. A visit to each site must be conducted and a detailed assessment carried covering the following elements:

Site Assessment Checklist	
Assessment Criteria	**Checklist for Engineering Assessment and other Criteria**
Site Access	Road Width, Road Condition, Speed Limit, Forward Driver Visibility, Accessibility, Terrain, Local Road Network, Vulnerable Road Users
Signage	Existing directional and interpretive signage, Can you easily find the site? Can you see the site from the road? Proximity to official WAW route?
Parking	Parking availability (Yes/No), parking type (formal car park, road side, grass verge, etc), capacity, parking demand during site visit, car park condition, potential future car parking area and spaces, turning facilities
Facilities	Pedestrian and cycle access, cycle parking, toilets, lighting, seating and more
Land Ownership	Is the site on private property? Any other access issues.
Tourism Criteria	Evaluate potential tourism experience at each site. Is the site of Local, National and International importance? Is the site within an SAC, SPA for birds, NHA, etc.? Is the site a protected structure? Any other issues.

As part of this project, the engineering assessment process above identified that a number of the potential sites from Section 4.3 were difficult to find, access, park and turn your vehicle and therefore road safety was a concern. For these reasons, a number of sites were omitted as they were deemed currently unsuitable for interpretation and inclusion on the trail. This is a critical stage of the project where tough decisions must be made regarding the sites to include and exclude. The final list of Heritage Trail sites agreed with the Steering Group are outlined in Section 4.5.

4.4 Final Agreed List of Heritage Trail Sites

As part of the original tender, it was agreed to interpret 12no. heritage sites on Loop Head excluding the 4no. WAW Discovery Points as these were being undertaken by the Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of and as part of a separate Fáilte Ireland interpretation project for all WAW Discovery Points.

However, it quickly became apparent and was agreed that in order to keep consistency in relation to the produced interpretation material for the Heritage Trail, all 4no. WAW Discovery Points should be included as additional sites in this project.

Through consultation with the local community and Steering Group, a final list of 18no. sites was agreed upon as shown below and on the proposed Heritage Trail map.

1) West Clare Railway
2) Querrin Pier
3) Carrigaholt Castle and Bay
4) Kilcredaun Churches and Holy Well
5) Rinevella Bay and Submerged Forest
6) Grave of the Yellow Men
7) Church of the Little Ark
8) Pilots Memorial and Kilbaha Bay

9)   Loop Head

10) Bridges of Ross

11) Dunlicka Castle

12) Bishops Island

13) Kilkee Cliffs and Pollock Holes

14) Kilkee Victorian Town

15) Blackweir Bridge

16) Doonaha Ringforts

17) Tullig Famine Village

18) Corbally and Coosheen

As shown below in Figure 4.2, the final list of 18no. sites can be broken down into 14no. Heritage Sites and 4no. additional Heritage Areas.
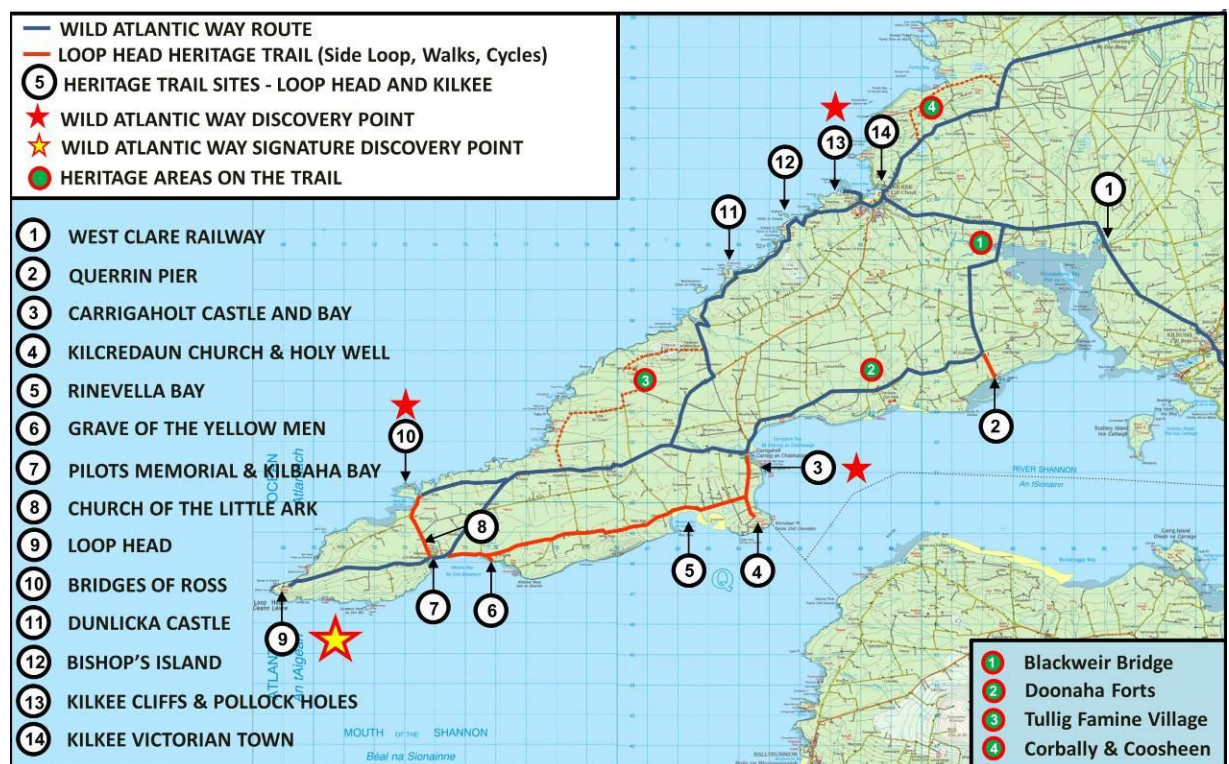
Figure 4.2 Proposed Loop Head and Kilkee WAW Heritage Trail

As shown above, 4no. sites from section 4.3 have been included as supplementary heritage areas in the heritage trail as shown above. These areas are of significant heritage interest but at present do not have a safe or specific location to stop and park a vehicle or place interpretation on the trail. These sites include:

- No.1   Blackweir Bridge
- No.2   Doonaha Forts
- No.3   Tullig Famine Village
- No.4   Corbally / Coosheen

Although, not official 'stops' on the proposed Heritage Trail, preliminary interpretative text for each of these heritage areas have been included in the database for potential use now as 'drive by' sites whereby the tourist can read briefly about the site as they drive, walk or cycle by and in the future as

official 'stops' (Heritage Sites) after access and other improvements have been made. Other areas which could be considered in the future are Cross, Cammoge and Farrihy.

A sample online map version of the proposed heritage trail is also shown below in Figure 4.3 for illustrative purposes only.
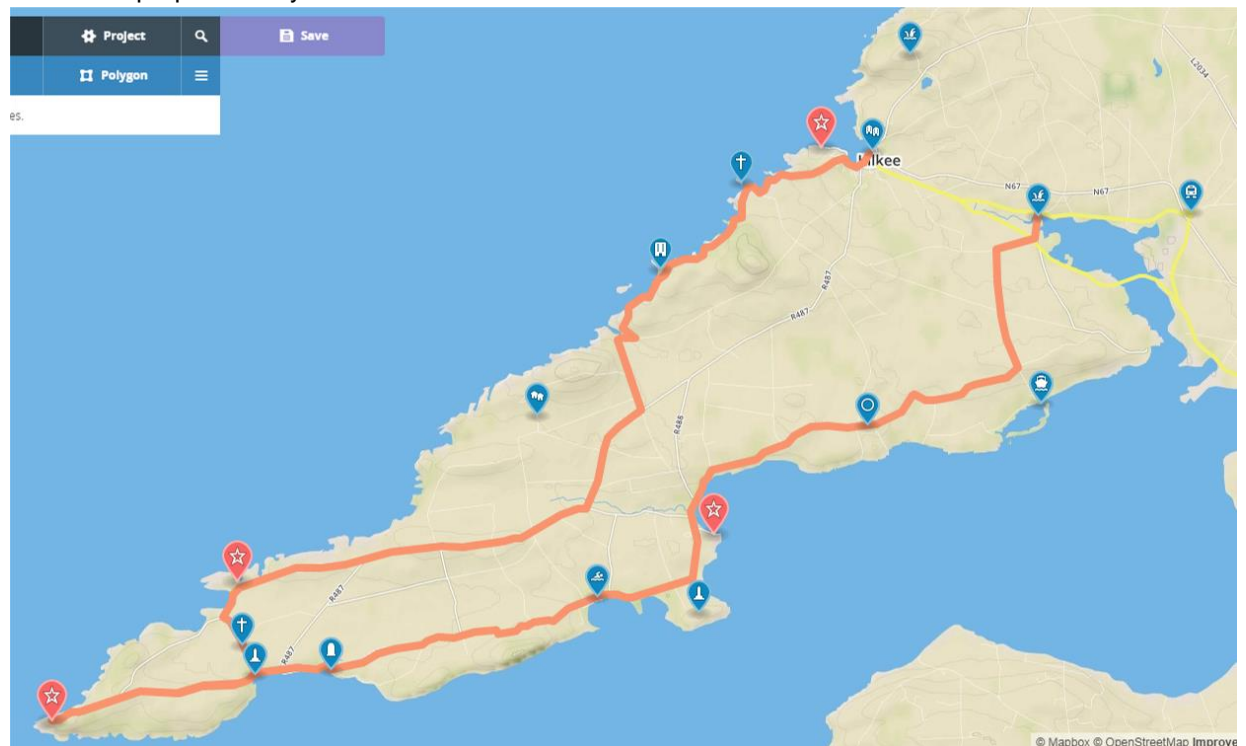
Figure 4.3 Sample Online Heritage Trail Map

4.5   Heritage Site Unique Database Identifier (ID)

As outlined in Section 2, the unique database identifier for each Heritage Site are shown below

- **WAW001** refers to the first pilot project (001) for local heritage trails on the WAW

- **LH_001** refers to the first Heritage site in the database for the Loop Head Heritage Trail project

Database ID	Heritage Site Name
WAW001_LH_001	West Clare Railway
WAW001_LH_002	Querrin Pier (multiple points)
WAW001_LH_003	Carrigaholt Castle & Bay (Discovery Point)
WAW001_LH_004	Kilcredaun Church and Holy Well
WAW001_LH_005	Rinevella Bay
WAW001_LH_006	Grave of the Yellow Men
WAW001_LH_007	Pilots Memorial and Kilbaha Pier
WAW001_LH_008	Church of the Little Ark
WAW001_LH_009	Loop Head (Signature Discovery Point)
WAW001_LH_010	Bridges of Ross (Discovery Point)
WAW001_LH_011	Dunlicka Castle
WAW001_LH_012	Bishop's Island
WAW001_LH_013	Kilkee Cliff Walk and the Pollock Holes (Discovery Point)
WAW001_LH_014	Victorian Kilkee Town
WAW001_LH_015	Blackweir Bridge
WAW001_LH_016	Doonaha Ringforts
WAW001_LH_017	Tullig Famine Village
WAW001_LH_018	Corbally and Coosheen

4.6   Site Research and Sources of Information

Once the final list of sites has been fully agreed the information gathering for site interpretation began. Whilst the primary source for each site interpretation was the interviews conducted with the local community, a fact checking and desktop survey was also conducted for each site, to ensure a comprehensive interpretation. In addition to a detailed site visit both existing literature and online resources were consulted for each site and also for Loop Head in general. The following key sources of information were used in the site interpretation and are also stored in the database:

General Sources

1) Clare Library

2) Guide Books: Lonely Planet and Rough Guides

3) Older Guide Books

4) Local History Publications and Talks

5) Archaeology Publications

6) Geology Publications

7) Newspapers: The Clare Champion, The Clare People, The Limerick Leader

8) Leaflets from The Heritage Council, Clare County Council, National Parks & Wildlife

9) CSO Census Data

10) Existing Interpretation Signage

- Pilots Memorial
- Grave of the Yellow Men
- Loop Head
- West Clare Railway

11) Websites

- www.loophead.ie
- www.loopheadclare.com
- www.clare.ie
- www.npws.ie
- www.clarelibrary.ie
- www.clarebirdwatching.com
- www.clarecoco.ie
- www.theheritagecouncil.ie
- www.failteireland.ie
- www.irishlandmark.com
- www.discoverireland.ie
- www.thelongwayaround.ie
- www.dolphinwatch.ie
- www.westclarerailway.ie
- www.kilkee.ie
- www.limerickcity.ie
- www.fishinginireland.info
- www.irishwrecksonline.ie
- www.gso.ie

Note: Documents, articles and websites consulted that relate specifically to a site and may provide supplementary information will be detailed in the database.

4.7   Recommended Heritage Site Identification Process

The systematic identification of suitable sites for inclusion on a Heritage Trail included the following recommended steps:

- Initial community consultation (see Section 3.8)
- Desktop Research – Initial review of potential sites from community consultation stage
- Draft list of potential sites
- Site visit and engineering assessment of each potential site
- Evaluate the potential visitor experience at each site
- Agree final list of heritage trail sites
    - Detailed site research and community consultation
    - Media collection (Photo/Audio/etc)
    - Interpretation of each heritage site

4.8   Recommended Site Research and Data Collection Processes

Once the final list of sites agreed, the following methodology is recommended to research, collect, collate and archive the content in the database in a systematic and efficient manner:

- Detailed desktop research for each site

- Identify existing sources of heritage information for each site and store these in the database

    - These sources may include; Guide books, Leaflets, Local history publications, Specific Websites, Heritage centres, Tourist offices, Notice boards, CSO Census Data and existing Interpretation Signage.

- Detailed field research – site visit from both the point of view of a tourist and as a consultant

- Basic Archaeological and/or Architectural survey of the site

- Determine if the site is of Local, National and International importance.

- Identify if the site is located with an SAC, SPA Birds, NHA, or another classification

- Determine who owns the site, if there is public access and if the site is a protected structure?

- Community Consultation to uncover local and interesting facts and stories

- Recorded Interview with local community member for each site and other specific topics. These interview are invaluable and without fail uncover new information and material not available online or in existing literature (see section 5.0)

- Review, Process and Edit each Interview Recording and split into individual clips of interest

- Professional Photographs of each site

- Video clip for each site, if applicable

- Map and geo-tag each site (Latitude, Longitude and Elevation)

- Nearby walks and cycles

- Collect all database fields for each site (outlined overleaf)

Once complete, a list of key Recommendations should be made for each site which may include interpretation, access, signage, nearby activities such and walking, cycling and more.

Database fields for each site will be collected in a systematic manner during desktop and field research tasks. In order to populate the custom database and allow for a future population of a website and/or App, the essential database fields outlined in Section 2 have been collected for each site.

5 Interviews & Audio Recordings

5.1   General

To compliment and supplement the factual research of Heritage Sites from Section 4.0, interviews were undertaken with local community members who live or work in the area.

Research of available literature and online sources can often reveal information and facts used over and over again. However, these interviews add significant value to the listener and a fresh approach to the interpretation of each site, thereby giving a local insight and improved visitor experience. The interviews uncover new and interesting local stories and information from the point of view of locals living and working in the area. Recording audio clips of locals talking about these Heritage Sites firmly places the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee at the core of all heritage interpretation.

It was estimated that up to 80% of all interpretation material originated from these interviews all of which were fact checked and supplemented by other research.

The interviews were carried out and recorded using ActiveMe's professional audio recording equipment and edited into topic/story based clips using industry standard audacity software to broadcast standard.

5.2   Number of Interviews

The proposed number of interviews relates directly to the number of Heritage Sites on the trail and also the number of local people identified as suitable interviewees with knowledge of a specific site or specific topic of interest or a good speaking voice.

As part of the original tender brief, it was agreed to record 10no. interviews with local community members. However, due to the increased number of heritage sites on the trail, it quickly became apparent that this project required up to 15no. interviews to ensure each site had at least one suitable audio clip.

5.3   Interviewee Selection

Interviewees were selected based on their local knowledge of the Heritage Site or given subject such as geology or nature. Naturally some interviewees were able to talk about multiple Heritage Sites and various subject matters, all of which was recorded, edited into valuable clips and summarised as part of the project.

When selecting the interviewees, careful consideration was given to ensuring an even distribution of gender, age profile, location and employment among the interviewees, as far as possible. All of the suggested interviewees agreed to take part in the project with no refusals.

Although a wide range of topics are covered in the interviews undertaken, each interviewee agreed to talk about a particular topic (s) regarding the heritage site in question.

5.4   Database Storage

As outlined in Section 2.2, recorded audio clips were uploaded to their relevant Heritage Site in the database.

5.5   Interviews – Audio Recordings

As part of the project 15no. interviewees were recorded during the community consultation process. Once the interview is complete it was processed using industry standard audio engineering software, where the sound quality is cleaned up to broadcast standards where possible. Next, each audio file was reviewed several times before it was edited to create individual audio clips which talk about various heritage sites and other topics.

As part of the editing process, 55 clips and 2 songs were created from the 15no. original interviews. The final list of interviews and produced clips for each site is shown overleaf. A slightly more detailed version of the interview list is also contained and in Appendix B which outlines the name and ID of the interviewee, the relevant heritage site and number of audio clips created from each interview.

Name	Heritage Site / Area	No. Of Clips by Subject/Topic
Jackie Whelan	West Clare Railway	2 Clips – Railway & War of Independence
Richard Gair	West Clare Railway	2 Clips – Railway Freight & Percy French
Gabriel Keating +	West Clare Railway	Song: Percy French, Are you right there Michael
Trea Heapes	Querrin Point	8 Clips – Salmon Weirs to Ferry Disaster
Geoff McGee	Carrigaholt	3 Clips – SPA, Castle & Boat Trip
Laura Foley	Carrigaholt	1 Clip – The MacMahons
Geoff McGee	Kilcredaun	1 Clip - Okeanus Shipwreck
Laura Foley	Kilcredaun	5 Clips - Battery, Church, Well, St.Credaun, Lighthouse
Laura Foley	Rinevella Bay	1 Clip – Submerged Forest
Carmel Madigan	Rinevella Bay	2 Clips – Hedgerows and Rinevella Beach
Martin McKeown	Rinevella Bay	1 Clip – West Clare Sediment
Ailish Connolly	Grave of the Yellow Men	1 Clip – Grave of Yellow Men History
Ailish Connolly	Church of the Little Ark	1 Clip – Little Ark
Ailish Connolly	Kilbaha & Pilots Memorial	2 Clips – Pilots & Henry Blake
Marty Crotty	Kilbaha & Pilots Memorial	Song: Commemoration Song
Ailish Connolly	Loop Head	2 Clips - Eire Sign & Mythology
Stephen Rowen	Loop Head	1 Clip - Lighthouse
Carmel Madigan	Loop Head	1 Clip - Heathland Flora
Laura Foley	Loop Head	3 Clips - Look Out Post, Folklore & Lighthouse
Martin McKeown	Loop Head / Bridges of Ross	2 Clips - Geology
Carmel Madigan	Bridges of Ross	2 Clips - Seaweed and Limpets
Martin McKeown	Dunlicka Castle	1 Clip - Horse Island
Deirdre McCarthy	Dunlicka Castle	1 Clip - Archaeology
Deirdre McCarthy	Bishop's Island	1 Clip - Archaeology
Martin McKeown	Bishop's Island / Kilkee Cliffs	1 Clip - Geology
Manuel Di Lucia	Kilkee Cliffs / Pollock Holes	1 Clips - Sea Life
Laura Foley	Victorian Kilkee	2 Clips - Victorian History
Carmel Madigan	Victorian Kilkee	1 Clip - Periwinkles
Trea Heapes	Corbally	1 Clip – Corbally, Coosheen, Farrihy Lough
Trea Heapes	Tullig	1 Clip – Tullig Famine Village
Deirdre McCarthy	Doonaha Forts	1 Clip - Archaeology
Trea Heapes	Blackweir Bridge	1 Clip – Bridge and surroundings
Criostóir MacCarthaigh	Blackweir Bridge	1 Clip – Bridge and Turf Boats
Criostóir MacCarthaigh	Corbally	1 Clip – Corbally and Cully Marrinan

5.6   Interview Audio File

The recorded audio clips from each interviewee have been saved in .wav file format on the project database under the relevant heritage site.

5.7   Recommended Interview Release Form

As part of this project, an appropriate Multimedia Release Form was developed and agreed to by all project team members. This release form is critical to the project as it allows the interviews and audio clips to be used on future tourism products such as websites, apps and other media.

A blank copy of this release form is contained in Appendix C along with the the signed Release Form for each interviewee.

Each interviewee is informed of the Release Form before the interview begins and then signs this release when the interview is complete. As well as the original paper form, a scanned .pdf copy of each release form has been created and stored in the database for archiving if required in the future.

5.8   Recommended Interview Checklist

An interview checklist contained in Appendix D. It is recommended to use this checklist to ensure that all aspects of the interview have been covered and recorded by the interviewer as it is difficult to get the interviewee to repeat the interview if something goes wrong.

5.9   Recommended Interview Process and Procedures

The following Interview process was agreed and adopted for this project:

1) Identify and agree relevant potential interviewees

2) Make a phone call and/or write to the interviewees depending on age and circumstance.

3) Inform them of the value of their contribution to the project

4) Arrange interviews at a time convenient with the interviewee

5) Check and test equipment is in working order and that you have spare batteries

6) After arriving to their house/other meeting place, sit with them, discuss the project and listen before any equipment is taken out of the bag. Many people have never been formally recorded or interviewed before and they may be nervous. It is essential that you make them feel comfortable. This will result in the best quality audio and information.

7) Agree heritage site, topics, questions and interview approach to ensure interviewees are comfortable before you start

8) Spend at least 1 hour with each person, allowing them the space and time to be themselves

9) Conduct and Record Interview

10) Try to read and record the full or summary of the Release Form to the interviewee on tape at the start or end of the interview

11) Introduce the interviewee and interviewer (yourself) at the start or end of the interview and state the date clearly.

12) Go through the interview checklist to yourself and make sure you didn't forget anything (see Appendix D)

13) If required, call the interviewee at a later date, reassuring them of their contribution

14) Review the recording of each full interview a number of times to identify suitable audio clips relating to particular heritage sites, local stories or specific topics

15) Process each to remove any noise and clean up the audio quality

16) Edit each full interview recording and extract the identified audio clips

17) If required, review edited recording with Interviewee and make any changes required

18) Save audio clips to the relevant heritage sites in the project database

6 Photography

6.1   General

An average of 10no. new professional photographs have been provided for each heritage site on the trail, a sample of which are contained in Appendix E and shown below. All photographs have been stored in the database connected to their relevant heritage site.

Photo 1: Loop Head Lighthouse and Cliffs with autumn sun warming the landscape

Out of nearly 2,000 photographs taken for the project, after processing and editing on professional photography software in the studio, approx. 150 final photographs made it to the final cut. The final collection of photographs cover each heritage site and a wide range of topics. As part of the project, photographer Valerie O'Sullivan has also given permission to this project to use a selection of her 2011 Loop Head Photograph Collection taken as part of her most recent book entitled 'Irelands Wild Atlantic Shore' published in 2012 by Collins Press and these are also stored in the database.

6.2   Historic Images and Photographs

Research was conducted to find a relevant historic image of suitable quality for each heritage site where possible. Due to their nature and limited availability of historic photographs, not all sites were found to have relevant and suitable historic images. The following relevant images were found and have been uploaded to the relevant heritage site location in the database:

- 4no. historic images of Kilkee

- 3no. historic images of Dunlicka Castle

- 1no. historic image of the Bridges of Ross

- 1no. historic image of Diarmaid and Grainne's Rock, Loop Head.

- 1no. historic image/sketch of Tullig Famine Village

If used, visitors and locals viewing future interpretation products will be able to look in the past using the historic image themselves.

A number of community pages entitled 'Down Memory Lane' have been recently set up on Facebook to allow local communities to share old photographs. These pages have been hugely successful in

making otherwise private photographs collections open to the public to talk about, research and identify people in these old images. It is highly recommended that a page similar to this be set up for loop head.

6.3   Recommended Photography Process

Although the project began in mid-July 2014, photography could not effectively begin until the final list of sites on the heritage trail had been fully agreed with the steering group nearly 8 weeks later.

Photography cannot begin until the final list of heritage sites has been identified. Therefore, it is recommended that any proposed future project identify the final list of site as early as possible in consultation with the local community and project steering group and/or include contingency time into the project deadline to cater for potential delays as a result of weather, the identification of sites, arranging site access and if required, arranging photographs of people and interviewees from the community.

Weather plays a key factor and even bright sunny days do not lend well to high quality photography where capturing light conditions plays an important role as shown above in Photo 1.

7 Mapping and GPS Surveys

7.1   General

To enable the future mapping compatibility on an App, website and printed map, ActiveMe agreed to digitally map a number of existing and potential future routes on or near the proposed Heritage Trail. Please note that many of the potential routes digitally surveyed as part of the project are not formal walking routes and are on private lands with no public access permitted. Therefore, it is essential that these walks are not promoted as public walking routes and this route survey information be used only to progress with future proposals and dialogue with local land owners and stakeholders. The surveyed routes include:

- Scenic Driving Routes
- Walking Routes
- Cycling Routes

The output for this GPS survey and mapping task is a GPX file which contains information on Route Distance and Latitude, Longitude and Elevation for every point along the route. They can then be used with online mapping websites, software and products such as Apps and online maps.

Figure 7.1 below is a combined illustration of all heritage sites and all driving, walking and cycling routes mapped as part of this project.

This map is an example of possible future online tourism products using mapping software and Google maps. Photographs, interpretative text and other media can then be added to these online maps and layer such as heritage site, driving routes, walking routes and cycling routes can be turned off and on with the click of a button.
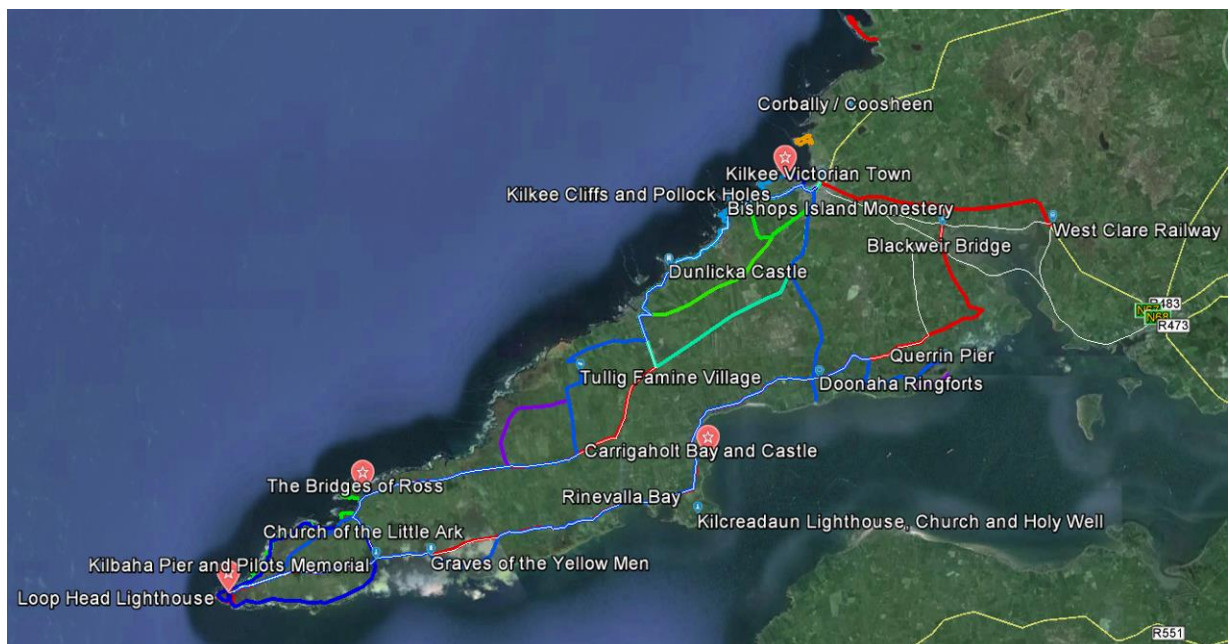
Figure 7.1 Combined Google Map of the WAW, Proposed Loop Head Heritage Trail, Routes and Sites

7.2   Route Profile

Created using the GPS/GPX files, route profile shows the elevation along the route and give a visitor a better picture and understanding of a walking, cycling or driving route.
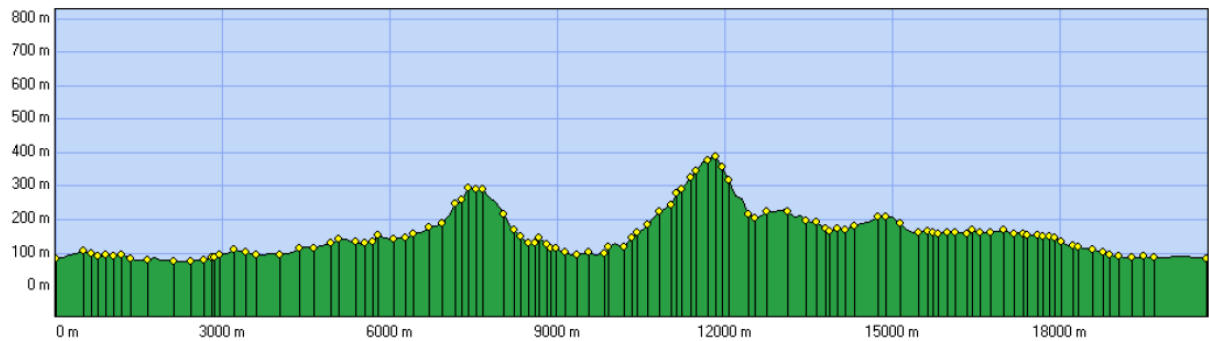
7.3   Wild Atlantic Way Route

As part of the project, the current signed WAW route on Loop Head was surveyed and mapped in addition to the official stopping points known as Signature and Discovery points. These include:

1. Loop Head Lighthouse (WAW Signature Point)

2. The Bridges of Ross (WAW Discovery Point)

3. Carrigaholt Bay (WAW Discovery Point)

4. Kilkee Cliffs (WAW Discovery Point)

These official WAW points are not formally numbered as visitors can travel the WAW in both directions, from south to north or from north to south as shown in Figure 1.2 and 1.3 in Section 1 of this report.

The WAW route on Loop Head peninsula is approximately 61km in length and is shown below in Figure 7.2.
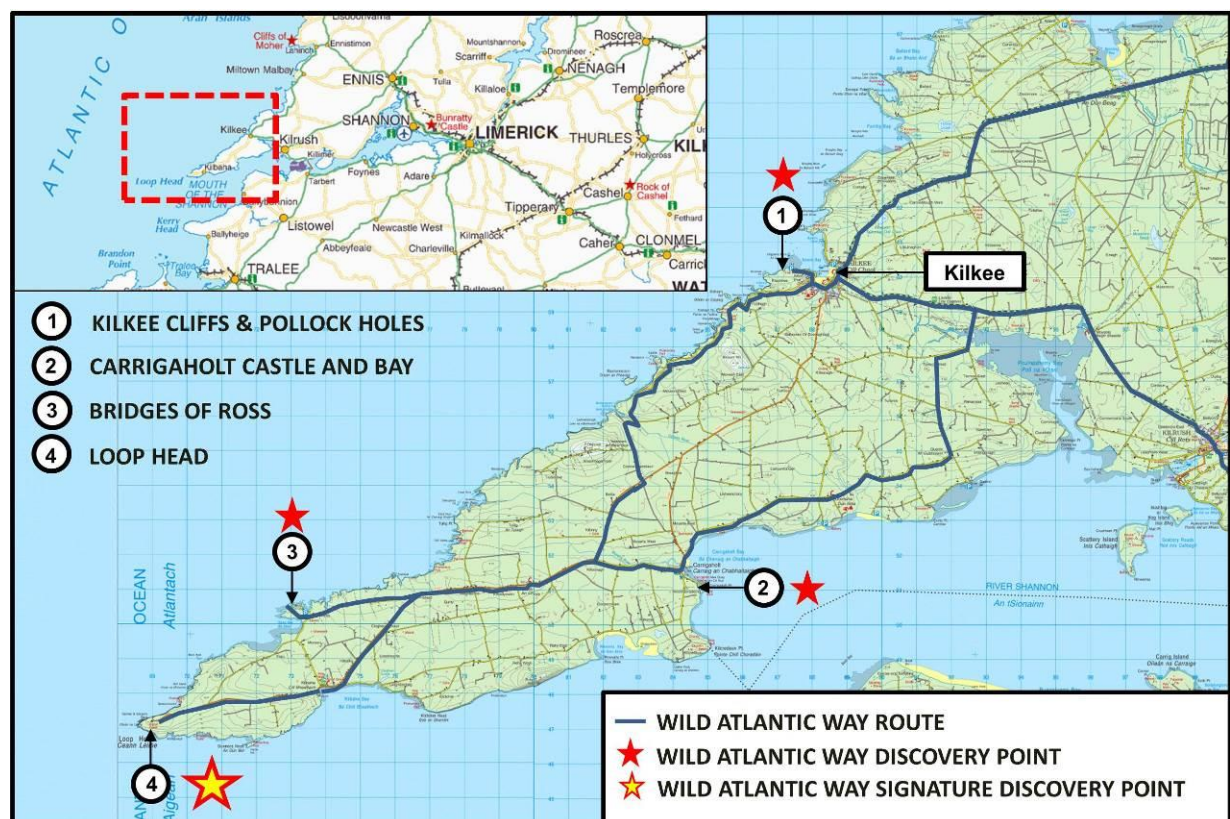
Figure 7.2 WAW Routes and Discovery Points

7.4 Proposed WAW Local Heritage Trail

As discussed in Section 4.4, the majority of the proposed Loop Head Heritage Trail route follows the currently signed WAW route shown above in Figure 7.2 and the existing Loop Head Scenic Drive Route.

The proposed heritage trail only deviates a short distances from the WAW to gain access to the local Heritage Sites such as Querrin Pier, Kilcredaun, Rinevella Bay and the Church of the Little Ark as shown already in Figure 4.3 but shown again overleaf. The entire heritage trail is approximately 70km in length.

It is recommended that suitable signage be designed taking into account the National Roads Authority document called the Traffic Signs Manual and also the existing WAW signage branding. This will ensure that adequate and consistent signage will be provided to direct visitors along heritage trail.
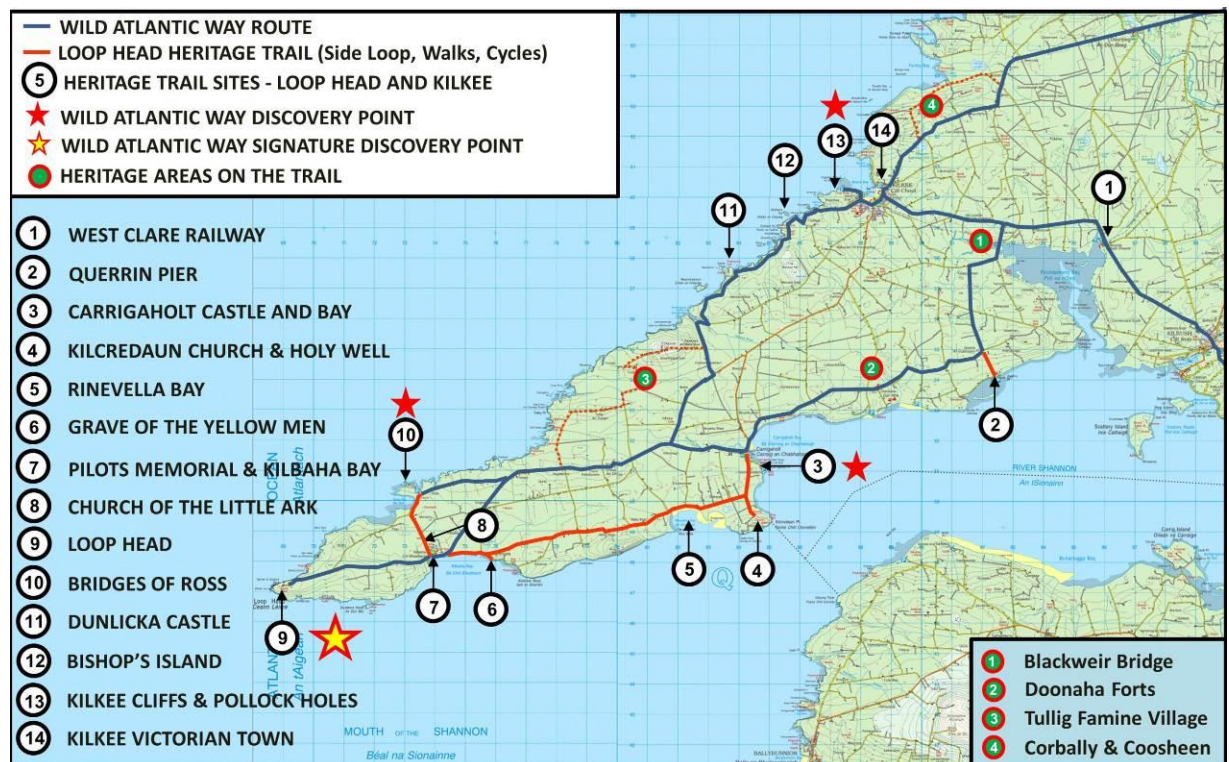
Figure 7.3 Proposed Loop Head and Kilkee WAW Heritage Trail

7.5 Cycle Routes

The existing Loop Head Cycleway route follows the majority of the proposed heritage trail route and only deviates onto short sections of rural narrow roads which are unsuitable for heavy car traffic near Loop Head and Querrin Pier. As part of this project ActiveMe have digitally surveyed cycle route options including:

- Loop Head Cycleway Signed Route = 65km+

- Loop Head Cycleway Signed Route incl. Moyasta = 73km+

- Other Cycle Route Options of various lengths = 15km to 70km

- These routes can be seen in Figure 7.1 and in the database.

7.6 Walking Routes

From a review of all sites, there are many established walks and also locations with potential to develop major and minor walking trails on Loop Head peninsula. Walking routes add significant value to the visitor experience for any tourism destination but especially in conjunction with an official

heritage trail. A number of potential walking route locations (ignoring any access issues for this task) have been digitally surveyed and their GPS files are linked to in the database.

It must be clearly understood that many of the potential walking routes digitally surveyed as part of the project are not formal walking routes and are on private lands with no public access. Therefore it is essential that these walks are not promoted as public walking routes until public access is permitted. This route survey information for potential sites should only be used to progress with future proposals and dialogue with local land owners and stakeholders.

It is recommended that further investigation, dialogue and development work be undertaken at some or all of the following potential routes with no use of walking route information until full public access is permitted on the route:

- Kilkee Cliffs Walk (4km Short Loop and 8km Long Loop) - Surveyed
- Loop Head Walks (short 1.5km and long 15km loop) - Surveyed
- Kilkee Cliffs to Bishops Island and Dunlicka Castle – 7km Surveyed
- Kilkee Cliffs Walk to Loop Head - Recommended long term aspirational proposal.
- Loop Head to Bridges of Ross – 9km Surveyed
- Loop Head to Kilbaha Loop – 15km Surveyed
- Corbally and Coosheen Loop Walk – Various routes available
- Kilkee Town to Pollock Holes – 3km Surveyed
- Kilkee Town Heritage Walk
- Querrin Pier to the Island (6km) - Surveyed
- Kilcredaun (Guided Route Only) – Seek public access through dialogue
- Beach, Bay and Road Walks
  - Kilcredaun road walks
  - Rinevella and Kilbaha
  - Querrin Pier to the Island – Surveyed
- Georges Head / Kilkee Golf Course Loop Walk – 1.6km Surveyed
- Corbally to Farrihy Bay
- Donegal Point Walk – 3km Surveyed
- Walking/Cycling greenways developed on or adjacent to old railway lines
- These routes can be seen in Figure 7.1.

7.7   Database Location
Each of the above GPS files for walking and cycling routes are linked to within the database and are stored in the general Loop Head database item.

7.8   Recommendations
Digital survey information can only be used with online and other digital mapping software. It is therefore recommended that these survey GPX files be used when producing any new online or mobile tourism products.

It is recommended that any route signage be carefully planned, located and tastefully designed to fit in the natural landscape ensuring that scenic views are not impacted upon.

As with many potential route proposals, public access can often be an issue. It is therefore recommended that a practical approach be taken, working closely and starting meaningful dialogue with local landowners and state agencies at the outset. It is recommended that further investigation and development work be undertaken with no public use (offline or online) of walking route information until full public access is permitted on the route.

Finally, it is also recommended that any future walking paths be designed into the natural environment and where possible avoid the use of inappropriate surfacing materials.

8 Heritage Site Interpretation

8.1   Design Ready Interpretation

During the interpretation process, context has been given to the information collected from interviews with the local community and all other site research by weaving these stories and facts into new, fresh, concise and easy to understand interpretive stories explaining the culture, history, people, environment and folklore attached to each heritage site on the Loop Head Heritage Trail.

The community interviews add significant value to the interpretation of each site and to the project as a whole. The interviews uncovered new, fresh and interesting local stories. They also uncovered unique information from the point of view of locals and their families living and working in the area for generations. This recommended approach to site research firmly places the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee at the core of all heritage interpretation with up to 80% of all site interpretation material originating from these interviews.

As part of this project, the interpretation text for each site has also been complimented with following, all of which are stored in the database:

- Interview Clips associated with the site with local community members (See section 5)
- Photographs of the site (see Section 6)
- Mapping information for the site (see Section 7)
- Sources of Information used during the research of each site (see Section 4.6)
- All other database information for each site (See Appendix A)

All design ready interpretation content (i.e. text, audio, photo and more) has been stored for easy access in the project database. From this database, content for future tourism products such as website, apps, maps, interpretation boards and books can easily be reviewed, extracted and added to the future products.

With content easily representing up to 80% of costs and labour time when developing the above tourism products, this project is a valuable long term investment providing the local community an extremely valuable resource for developing products and conducting further research now and into the future.

8.2   Final Design Ready Interpretation Text

The final design ready interpretation text for each site is contained in Appendix F and also stored in the database in each relevant heritage site.

ActiveMe were also requested to complete an additional task to provide a full Summary Interpretive Text for the entire Loop Head area. This is also contained in Appendix F.

8.3   Sample of Database Content

Overleaf we have provided an example of the heritage site content stored in the database for the Loop Head Lighthouse site. These database fields are essential to the future use of this database content in Apps, website and other media. As outlined in Section 2 and in Appendix A, there are many more features available in the database to make it a richer user experience. For example you listen to all audio clips for the site, view all photographs and the location of the site.

Site Name	Loop Head Lighthouse
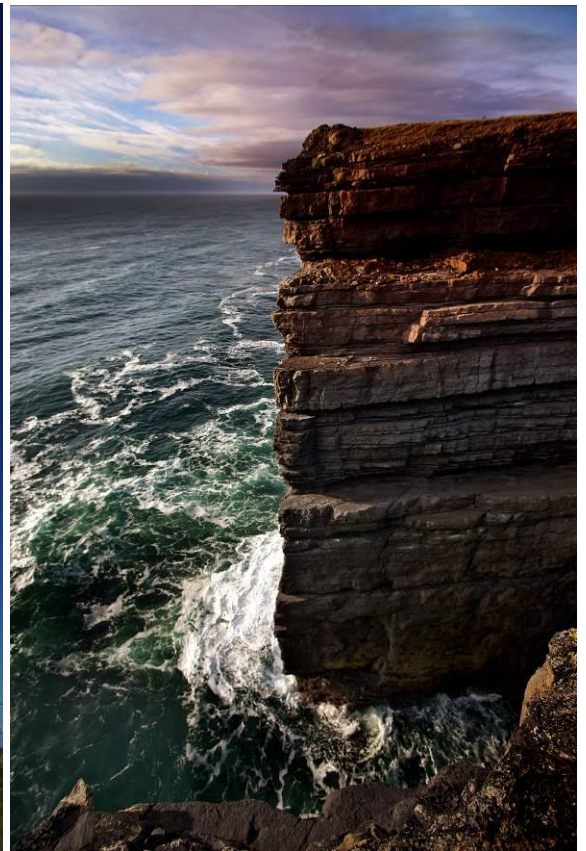
The full set of photographs and images for Loop Head are stored in the database.

GPS Location	52.560979, -9.932341
Type	WAW Signature Discovery Point
Category	Tourist Attraction
Sub-Category	Lighthouse, Headland
Heritage Category (s)	Natural, Historical, Architectural
Heritage Designation (s)	SPA, SAC, Protected structure, Recorded monument, The Loop Head Peninsula awarded European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) in maritime tourism.
Summary Description	Visitors can take a guided tour up Loop Head Lighthouse and marvel at the contract between the rugged Atlantic on one side and the sheltered Shannon Estuary on the other.
County	Clare
Nearest Town	Kilkee
Creator	ActiveMe Heritage Services
Publisher	Clare County Council, Fáilte Ireland, The Heritage Council
Date	October 2014
Interviewee (s)	Ailish Connolly, Carmel Madigan, Laura Foley
Audio Recording (ActiveMe have reviewed each full interview and edited out specific clips about certain topics that can be used for future projects and tourism marketing products such as Apps and Websites, Audio Trails, Podcasts, etc)	Audio Clips with Interviewee Ailish Connolly - Diarmuid and Grainne's Rock (29secs) - EIRE Sign (49secs) Audio Clips with Interviewee Carmel Madigan - Flora (1min:24secs) Audio Clips with Interviewee Laura Foley - Look Out Post (1min:14secs) - Folklore (1min:39secs) - Lighthouse (2min:03secs)

Rights	Full rights. See signed release forms
Database Identifier (ID)	WAW001_LH_009
Full Interpretation Text	There are 80 lighthouses in Ireland, all automated with 40 located offshore and 40 located on the mainland. Loop Head Lighthouse is located at the tip of the Loop Head Peninsula which is the furthest point west on the Clare coastline. The setting of the lighthouse is spectacular with the wild Atlantic coastline on one side contrasting with the sheltered Mouth of the Shannon on the other side. There has been a lighthouse at Loop Head since 1670. It was originally a signal fire on the roof of a single-storey cottage.

The present tower designed by George Halpin stands at 23 metres high. It was built in 1854 and was operated and maintained by a keeper who lived within the lighthouse compound. It is a free standing circular plan single bay, four stage lighthouse, surrounded by a metal framed blazed lantern with a metal walkway and cut limestone walls. The range of the light is 23 nautical miles and its signal is a white light flashing four times in 20 seconds. There is a walled enclosure around the lighthouse complex. The operation was converted to electricity in 1871. Brendan Garvey was the last lighthouse keeper to serve in the lighthouse. At various intervals Brendan spent a total of fifteen years as lighthouse keeper before the lighthouse went automatic in 1991. Since then, it is in the care of an attendant and is also monitored by the Commissioner of Lights from their base in Dun Laoghaire. Visitors can take a guided tour up the lighthouse during the tourist season.

At the edge of the peninsula, there is a sea stack known as Diarmuid & Grainne's rock, or Lover's Leap. The mythical Diarmuid and Grainne were running around Ireland, trying to escape from Fionn, Grainne's betrothed. The legend is that they spent a night on this rock. Loop Head was originally called Leap Head or Ceann Léime. This name goes back to the 9-10th century and originates with the folklore story of Cúchulainn. The hag or witch Mal was chasing Cúchulainn around Ireland. If she managed to touch him, he was to fall in love with her. In his efforts to prevent this and escape Mal, Cúchulainn jumped across to the sea stack and Mal followed. Cúchulainn jumped back to the mainland but Mal fell into the sea. Her body was said to have washed up at Hag's Head near the Cliffs of Moher. There is also a connection with nearby town Milltown Malbay, called after Mal; whose blood it is said washed ashore there.

There is a restored EIRE sign located at Loop Head. During World War 2, there were 85 EIRE signs placed along the western Irish seaboard so that American and German pilots knew that there was passing over neutral territory. At the bequest of the Americans each sign was also given a number so that the pilots might know where exactly they were, an early GPS system. Loop Head is number 45. The EIRE sign at Loop Head was built on commonage land and unlike most of the others signs, was not dug up after the war.

There is also a coastal watch station at Loop Head where local men were employed to report on any sea or sky activity. These World War 2 lookout posts or LOPs were located 15km apart and there is a total of 83 of them in the country. Local people were employed at these LOPs as it was considered they were best placed to recognise any war activity in the sea or air that might affect neutral Ireland's safety. In fact, one of the earliest phones in Ireland was installed at Loop Head so that messages could be relayed to coastal headquarters in Dublin on a daily basis.

In 1943, an aircraft, first spotted by the LOP at Loop Head contained John Francis O'Reilly ('the flighty boy') from nearby Kilkee town. He parachuted and landed near Kilkee but was questioned and arrested the next day at his family home. It turned out he was a spy for Nazi Germany during WW2 but |

	never got to 'spy' and was sent to Arbour Hill Military Detention Barracks in Dublin until the end of the war. He escaped in 1944 but was recaptured, again at his family home in Kilkee when the bounty on his head was collected by his father no less. Quick thinking by John and his father, they realised that the military had never specified who could and could not collect the bounty. In 1940, John was working in Jersey Islands while occupied by the Germans. Looking for more work, he moved to Germany in 1941 working at a steel mill before joining the staff of Irland-Redaktion, the Irish section of the German propaganda broadcasting service where he himself broadcast back to neutral Ireland. From there he joined German Military Intelligence and started planning his return to Ireland by any means possible. The maritime landscape at the tip of Loop Head results in the flora footprint being dominated by maritime plants. These include a variety of heathers. The pretty and delicate flora grows smaller here than in other places out of necessity to survive the exposed, windswept environment. The geology at Loop Head is unique and draws geologist from all over the world to the area. The rocks at Loop Head represent the type section of the Upper Carboniferous Ross Sandstone Formation. This formation consists of alternating, parallel bedded sandstones and dark shale. The cliff-face rock formations on the southwest and north sides of the peninsula trace the evolution of a great river delta during the Upper Carboniferous Period, about 320 million years ago when Clare was located close to the equator and was part of the great land mass, Pangea. Migrant and resident birds are attracted to Loop Head because of its mild Atlantic winters, an abundance of wetlands, rich feeding grounds and undisturbed coastal cliffs. The headland near the lighthouse is the end of major flyways of birds migrating south for the winter from North America, Greenland, Iceland and the Arctic. Over-wintering barnacle geese from Greenland, cormorants, great black-backed gulls and storm petrels can be observed. Autumn is by far the best time of year to visit this region for bird watching. Late July to early November are the most productive months. Regular passage migrants in the autumn include, Turtle Dove, Spotted & Pied Flycatcher, Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Black Redstart, Brambling, Snow and Lapland Buntings.
Medium Interpretive Text Version	Loop Head Lighthouse is located at the tip of the Loop Head Peninsula which is the furthest point west on the Clare coastline. The setting of the lighthouse is spectacular with the wild Atlantic coastline on one side contrasting with the sheltered Shannon Estuary on the other side. There has been a lighthouse at Loop Head since 1670. The operation was converted to electricity in 1871, and was automated in 1991. Visitors can take a guided tour up the lighthouse. At the edge of the peninsula, there is a seastack known as Diarmuid & Grainne's rock, or Lover's Leap. There is a restored EIRE sign located at Loop Head. During World War 2, there were 85 EIRE signs placed along the western Irish seaboard so that American and German pilots knew that there was passing over neutral territory.
Short Interpretive Text	Visitors can take a guided tour up Loop Head Lighthouse and marvel at the contract between the rugged Atlantic on one side and the sheltered Shannon Estuary on the other.
Site Observations and Recommendations	Acknowledging the fact that significant numbers of visitors already walk on Loop Head at present, it is recommended that a walking path be considered on Loop Head. There is significant potential for a high quality loop walk (s) on Loop Head whilst also ensuring that the local environment remains adequately protected.

	While it is recognised that preventing people from walking in the area would be difficult, the provision of a walking path should help control and reduce the number of people walking in all directions and on more sensitive areas on Loop Head and should help provide more effective protection to the existing Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on Loop Head. A variety of walking path solutions could be considered.
	Loop Head lighthouse as with many paying tourist attractions such as Muckross House and Cliffs of Moher, a certain percentage of visitors do not pay for entry but enjoy the surrounding 'free' amenities. Therefore it is recommended that in addition to catering to and providing facilities (walking paths, seats, picnic table, etc) for those visitors who do not enter the lighthouse, the quantity of these annual visitors should also be surveyed and counted to gain a better insight into total visitor numbers and their experience at Loop Head.
	Loop Head Lighthouse is closed for a period during the year. Tourists arriving in this off peak and shoulder season would like something to do and walking on Loop Head is an obvious activity.
	The existing interpretation boards on Loop Head are focused primarily on bird life and are somewhat faded. It is recommended that these could be updated or supplemented with additional interpretation material from this project whilst ensuring that it compliments the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company. It is also recommended that a full review of all tourist and information signage be undertaken on Loop Head where all interested parties co-operate to optimise and minimise signage on Loop Head and avoid any duplication of signage.
	It is recommended that the provision of additional parking should be considered during the peak season. Parking counts should also be undertaken during the peak season to confirm and quantify any additional parking requirements.
	All proposals must comply with all planning, local authority and other statutory requirements.
	All proposals for development within, adjacent to or with the potential to affect a Natura 2000 site will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening. To ensure that a Habitat Directive Assessment is carried out to assess the likely impacts on Natura 2000 sites in order to comply with Article 6(3) of the Habitat Directive and in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.
	All projects must be undertaken in accordance with the Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points Remedial Works Guidelines, including the Ecological Method Statement.
Sources of Information	1) Interview with Stephen Rowen 2) Interview with Laura Foley 3) Interview with Ailish Connolly 4) Interview with Carmel Madigan

	5) Interview with Martin McKeown 4) Online Research www.loophead.ie www.loopheadclare.com www.clare.ie www.npws.ie www.clarelibrary.ie www.clarebirdwatching.com www.clarecoco.ie www.theheritagecouncil.ie www.failteireland.ie www.irishlandmark.com www.discoverireland.ie
Other Research and Facts	Lighthouse- http://www.cil.ie/tourism/our-lighthouses/loop-head.aspx EIRE signs- http://eiremarkings.org/ Bird watching - http://www.clarebirdwatching.com/ Geology- Parkes, M., McAteer, C., & Engering, S., The Geological Heritage of Clare: An audit of County Geological Sites in Clare (2005). http://www.gsi.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A6A0DE5E-DE94-448E-922C-0E352BB91A65/0/Clare_section1.pdf
Site Ownership and Access	The Commissioners of Irish Lights owns the lighthouse and grounds. The publically accessible part of the lighthouse is managed by Clare County Council with public open hours during the tourist season. The surrounding headlands on Loop Head are privately owned.
Parking	Car parking available for approximately 40no. spaces.
Cycle Parking	Yes
Toilet Facilities	Yes
Accessible Toilet	Yes
Accessible Access	Yes to heritage centre. No to lighthouse tower.
Ordnance Survey Map	63
Website	www.loophead.ie
Travel Information	Access to the lighthouse, museum and grounds is only available during public opening hours.
Opening Hours	Open to the public daily 10am to 6pm from April/May through to August/September (2014 Season). Subject to change.
Entry Fee	Admission is Adults €5, Children €2, Family Ticket €12 (2 adults and up to 3 children) for 2014 season. Subject to Change.
Contact Number	na
Email	sgarvey@clarecoco.ie. Subject to change.
Site Location Summary	The site is 1 of only 16 Signature Discovery Points located on the entire WAW route on the most western point of the Loop Head peninsula on a local coastal road between Carrigaholt and Kilbaha.

8.4   Recommended Interpretation Process

Instead of a one fit all approach to interpretation, it is recommended that the interpretation texts for each site be presented in different length versions (number of words) to suit various media and future tourism products:

- Full Interpretation Text (unlimited words) – pick and choose elements of interest
- Short Text (up to 50 words) for Print Maps with restricted space
- Medium Text (50-150 words) for Apps, Websites and other similar media

Reading and writing interpretative text is a subjective process where individuals who reads the same piece of text might disagree over the meaning. Therefore it is important that interpretive text be clear, concise and importantly easy to read and understand. It is also necessary that the text is both interesting and meaningful to the visitor.

For a successful interpretation, it is recommended that only the most interesting and essential information is included. It is important to remember that you are writing interpretation for tourists, be they domestic or overseas visitors. It is therefore recommended that you avoid the following:

- Excessive information (padding and waffle)
- Detailed facts
- Complicated descriptions
- Long descriptive passages
- Long sentences
- Local dialect and slang
- Extravagant or flowery language
- Academic facts, words and terms

Combining the desktop and field research and most importantly local knowledge gathered from the public consultation and interviews, it is recommended that this raw factual information be interpreted for each site taking account of the following where applicable:

- Interaction of local community with the site
- Local stories relating to the site
- Significance of the site
- Function; what the site was/is used for
- Site context and location in the landscape
- Key message and story (s) you wish to tell
- Who is your target audience
- Comparison with similar sites in the area, county, country and international
- Preservation and changes to site over time
- Former inhabitants of the site
- Extent and accuracy of site information currently available from various sources

9 Print Map Design

9.1   General

The proposed Heritage Trail Map design is based primarily on the original 'Loop Head Heritage Trail' map by the Loop Head Tourism but will contain the design ready interpretation content produced as part of this project. It will be laid out as a Z-Card map which folds out to from a near credit card size map.

The Map will cater for the basic needs of the WAW tourist by providing accurate locations of all sites along the heritage trail route. Although not formally part of the project brief, ActiveMe agreed to include the design of this map leaflet at no additional cost as part of the project for Loop Head Tourism. All details, photos and text will be edited and finalised with the Loop Head Tourism Group before final printing. The draft Print Map Design is contained in Appendix G with a sample below.

Front Cover
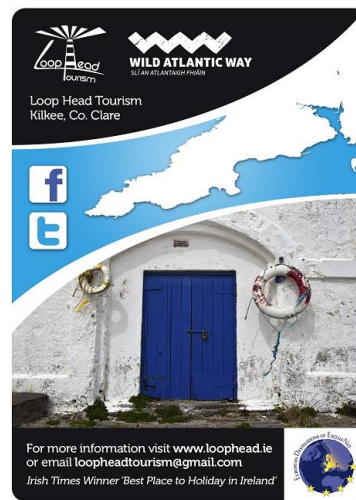
Back Cover

10 Project Recommendations

10.1 General

The project recommendations include:

- Overall Project Observations and Summary Recommendations
- Summary Recommendations for future WAW heritage projects based on this pilot project
- Site Specific Observations and Recommendations

10.2 Overall Project Recommendations

A set of summary recommendations for key project tasks and other important elements are outlined below:

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
Community Consultation	It is recommended that a structured schedule of community consultation and feedback be implemented throughout the project timeline to ensure that the community is at the core of all interpretations, proposals, decision making and final deliverables.
	The community consultation methodology used in this project firmly places the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee as the primary source of all heritage interpretation with up to 80% of all site interpretation material originating from these interviews with local people.
	The community consultation and interviews add significant value to the project and interpretation of each site by revealing new interesting local stories and unique information.
	It is recommended that the first role of community consultation is the quick identification of all potential heritage trail sites during the initial community consultation at the project outset. This ensures that all other project tasks can begin with minimal project delay encountered.
Site Assessment	To agree the final list of suitable sites for the heritage trail, it is recommended that all potential sites be firstly evaluated and assessed in terms of their importance and potential as a heritage site and secondly based on a number of engineering criteria including access, road width, road safety, road condition, speed limit, driver visibility, vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists), parking, signage, passing opportunities, and vehicle turning.
	Based on this assessment, sites that are deemed currently unsuitable for interpretation and inclusion on the trail should be omitted and the final list of sites identified. If justified, it is recommended that infrastructural improvement measures should be considered for important sites omitted at this stage.
	When deciding your final list of sites, it is recommended to step back from the process and put yourself in the position of a visitor, rather than someone who knows the area or project very well and is too close to its history and heritage. A visitor must be able to stop, park and turn their car safely at the site and be able to see and understand each site clearly from the interpretation location.
	As with any destination, local community consultation will uncover a multitude of interesting stories and heritage sites, all of which are valuable on their own right. However, it is recommended that only the most valuable sites are chosen for inclusion on the main Heritage Trail proposal. The inclusion of minor sites relative to other sites on the trail may dilute the

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	potential tourism impact and consistency of the interpretation material on the heritage trail.
Site Research and Data Collection	Once the final list of sites has been agreed, it is recommended that detailed site research be carried out in a systematic and efficient manner including desktop research, identify existing literature and online sources of information, field research and site surveys for each site.
	Once all site research has been complete, it is recommended to collect, collate and archive key data in the relevant database fields.
Community Interviews and Consultation	To compliment and supplement the factual site research, it is recommended that interviews be undertaken with local community members who live or work in the area. This stage of community consultation is extremely important and can reveal extremely valuable local information which does not exist in existing literature or online sources thereby adding significant value to the interpretation of each site.
	Recording interviews of locals talking about these Heritage Sites firmly places the local community at the core of heritage interpretation in the project.
	Local community members listening to people they know talk passionately and knowledgeably about the local heritage of the area helps them engage with the project and importantly with the WAW.
	Although only 10 interviews were proposed as part of the original tender, it became apparent early in the project that more than 10 interviews were required to ensure full coverage so that each site had at least one recorded clip.
	Therefore, it is recommended that future projects should incorporate an appropriate number of interviews into the proposed project budget and timescale to reflect the potential number of final sites on the trail.
Route Surveys	It is recommended that only existing established routes and those with a high potential of being implemented should be surveyed as part of the project. These may include walking, cycling or drive routes.
	It is recommended that contact be made with all relevant personnel and departments regarding existing and potential routes before survey work is undertaken to reduce any duplication of work if GPS route information is already available.
	As part of this project both established and potential routes were surveyed and GPS files created for future use on smartphone Apps, website and other online map features.
	It must be clearly understood that many of the potential walking routes digitally surveyed as part of the project are not formal walking routes and are on private lands with no public access. Therefore it is essential that these walks are not promoted as public walking routes until public access is permitted. This route survey information for potential sites should only be used to progress with future proposals and dialogue with local land owners and stakeholders.
	It is recommended that the entire Wild Atlantic Way route be digitally surveyed and mapped to create a GPX file and a variety of file formats. This will ensure that correct file formats and information will be available for use on digital mapping, online maps, Apps, websites, SAT NAVS and

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	other software. It will also allow an accurate confirmation of the entire WAW route length and side loops.
Site Interpretation	Only after all site research, community consultation and community interviews have taken place can site interpretation commence. Any research or interview (whether the first or last to be recorded) may uncover local and interesting facts and stories about some or all sites. Therefore, it is recommended that the project timeline should factor in the completion of the majority of project tasks before site interpretation commences. It is recommended that new and original interpretive text be clear, concise, interesting and importantly easy to read and understand. It is recommended that the interpretation texts for each site be presented in different length versions (number of words) to suit various media and future tourism products: ▪ Full Interpretation Text (unlimited words) ▪ Short Text (up to 50 words) for Print Maps with restricted space ▪ Medium Text (50-150 words) for Apps, Websites & other similar media For a successful interpretation, it is recommended that you avoid where possible; Excessive information (padding and waffle), Detailed facts, Complicated descriptions, Long descriptive passages or sentences, Local dialect or slang, Extravagant or flowery language, unfamiliar words and finally Academic facts, words and terms. It is important to highlight that the use of new and original text (plus different versions) on websites, social media and other online platforms will have a significant positive impact in terms of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation). In simple terms, Google algorithms love new and original text and can reward you, by ranking your page/text higher in google search results (possibly in the first page of results). It is recommended that any future WAW heritage trail projects include a budget for an ecologist as part of the project team to address the natural heritage elements of the project. With this in mind, it is also recommended that natural heritage be further investigated on Loop Head as part of a separate but complimentary project.
Project Database	The primary aim of the project is to create an easy to use database to display the interpretation content for each heritage site collected through community consultation. Paying close attention to this aim, it is recommended that only essential content be stored in the database. Once all tasks are complete, only then is it recommended to save all interpretation content to the relevant sections of the database. In order to effectively manage and maintain the database into the future, it is recommended that one project partner be allocated to manage and administer the database in the long term giving certain responsibilities to other assigned users within the steering group and local community. It is recommended that 'non administrative' access to the project database and content be made available to the community to promote the WAW Loop Head Heritage Trail.

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
Interpretative Signage and Information	It is recommended that the location of interpretative proposals, signage or boards must be obvious and intuitive to visitors arriving at each site by car, bike or on foot and also suitably located to help the visitor understand, orientate and view their surroundings while reading the interpretative text.
	One example of innovative interpretation which may be suitable for a number of sites on Loop Head would be the use of engraved Perspex glass. This would allow the visitor to 'see' the site and other locations on the landscape through the glass with their own eyes. It may be useful for showing visitors where to look and what they are looking at (i.e. previous location of a castle, position of points of interest on the far off landscape such as islands, mountains and other counties/counties across the sea).
	It is also recommended that any site interpretation should be consistent for all sites in terms of design, size and branding and should tie into the existing designs and branding for WAW signs and interpretation.
	Although it is crucial that physical interpretation of a site does not impact, interfere or stand out in the surrounding landscape (i.e. large signs blocking scenic views), tastefully designed and innovative interpretation can also become iconic (a recognisable tourist brand) and help the promotion and marketing of an area by encouraging and attracting visitors to use the site interpretation signs in their photos and video and post them online where they are instantly recognisable.
	The Interpretation should help the visitor orientate themselves, locate the island and view what Island looked like in the past.
	Considering the current investment in this and other projects on Loop Head and on the WAW, it is recommended that the next natural step would be to undertake a trial project to install physical interpretation at sites on the proposed Loop Head heritage trail including adequate roads signage, the design of which would be undertaken by suitable consultants. This hard infrastructure could include interpretation boards, signs, name plates and other designs and should be consistent with the overall WAW interpretation proposals in terms of materials used and type of information presented.
	With this hard infrastructure on the ground, it is also recommended to consider a variety of methods to get information into people's pockets such as the use of websites, social media, QR codes and other methods on the physical interpretation. Importantly, once in place, it is critical that proposed interpretation measures be monitored to analyse their performance in terms of delivering information to visitors (via App downloads, website visits via QR codes, and other methods).
	With this in mind, it is also recommended that baseline traffic and pedestrian/cycle surveys be undertaken at selected sites and on the WAW route itself. Once complete, it is then recommended to repeat these surveys annually in order to accurately monitor the performance of the WAW. Due to the rural nature of Loop Head and the fact that it is a natural loop on the WAW route, it is an ideal location to monitor WAW visitor numbers and performance.
	The associated Road Signage recommendations are in the next section.
Road Signage	For the visitor, it is essential that navigating the WAW and proposed Heritage Trail around Loop Head is easy and stress free and that

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	directional signage is clear and in the necessary and correct locations.
	The majority of the proposed Loop Head Heritage Trail follows the current signed WAW route and only deviates for short distances to gain access to the local Heritage Sites such as Querrin Pier, Kilcredaun, Rinevella and the Church of the Little Ark and therefore, adequate and consistent signage must be provided to direct visitors to these sites. It is anticipated that this will also be the case for any future WAW Heritage Trails around the country.
	To ensure a consistent signage, logos and branding for the tourist, WAW style signage for local Heritage Trails should be considered.
	With this in mind, it is recommended that specific WAW signage and other marketing material for the proposed Heritage Trail should tie into the existing Wild Atlantic Way and Loop Head Branding which can be incorporated into the interpretation at the site, on maps, Apps and other tourism products.
	It is recommended that a full review of existing and proposed road signage be undertaken to identify exact locations where signage is required to provide a consistent, easy to follow routes around Loop Head.
	At present, the main directional route signage on loop Head includes: ▪ The WAW ▪ Loop Head Scenic Drive ▪ Loop Head Cycle Loop
	To optimise signage on Loop Head it is recommended that consideration be given to replacing or updating existing Loop Head Scenic Drive Signage with signage for the proposed Heritage Trail.
	The location and design of directional road signage must be in accordance with the NRA document Traffic Signs Manual and the Clare County Development Plan 2011 to 2017 whilst also taking into account branding and sign specifications for the WAW and Loop Head.
	Making sites easy to find and get to will make the WAW and Loop Head experience more enjoyable for visitors, give them more confidence and leave them with a good impression of the local area and WAW route in general, leading to positive reviews, repeat visits and recommendations to friends.
	In addition to the provision of directional road signs and interpretation information, it is also recommended that an 'Arrival Sign' be provided at each site. As many of these sites are in rural locations, it is essential that it is visually obvious to the visitor that they have arrived at a particular site. If possible, it is also recommended that the design of these arrival signs should be consistent along this heritage trail and along the entire WAW.
Existing Road Condition and Width	The existing road network on Loop Head is rural in nature with restricted road width on the vast majority of the WAW and proposed Heritage Trail route. These existing road conditions act as a natural traffic calming measures resulting in average observed vehicle operating speeds in the region of 50kph. The roads on the peninsula form a natural and unique loop on the WAW route and are not 'through' roads used for commuting or part of the national primary or secondary road network.
	With this in mind, it is recommended that consideration be given to undertaking a further study and survey work for the introduction of a trial 50kph speed limit on Loop Head. With actual vehicle operating speeds on

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	Loop Head already in the region of this recommended 50kph speed limit, there would be a minimal impact on existing non-WAW motorists. However, this recommended trail project would have a significant positive impact on the value placed on pedestrians and cyclists on Loop Head and the WAW. This unique pilot measure would be a first on the WAW, should greatly improve road conditions and road safety for these vulnerable road users and would be easy to implement as a trial and monitor whether it is successful or not.
	Due to the locations of some heritage sites, visitors must drive, cycle and walk on local rural roads some of which are in poor and sub-standard condition with evidence of potholes, rutting and edge deterioration. It is recommended that a pavement condition survey be undertaken on Loop Head to identify key locations where road improvements are required.
	Where road width is restricted, it is recommended that intervisable 'passing' bays be considered in appropriate locations to ensure that vehicles can safely pass each other.
WAW Discovery Points and Fáilte Ireland projects	It is recommended that the design ready interpretation content developed as part of this project should be used to compliment, influence and tie in with separate interpretation proposals for all Discovery Points along the WAW being prepared by consultants on behalf of Failte Ireland.
Walking Routes	From a review of all sites, there are many existing established walks and also locations with potential to develop major and minor walking trails on Loop Head peninsula. Walking routes add significant value to the visitor experience for any tourism destination but especially in conjunction with an official heritage trail whereby they will encourage people from their car to spend more time on Loop Head. From cliff walks to beach walks and from strolls down county lanes to exploring rich heritage, there are numerous opportunities available to promote walking tourism on Loop Head.
	The Kilkee Cliff Walk is unique in Ireland, offering freedom to the visitor to taste and experience the real WAW. This route is promoted in many areas but there are many other obvious locations for potential signed walking routes in the study area. A number of walking routes with potential (overlooking any access issues for this survey task itself) have been digitally surveyed and their GPS files are linked to in the database.
	It must be clearly understood that many of the potential walking routes digitally surveyed as part of the project are not formal walking routes and are on private lands with no public access. Therefore it is essential that these walks are not promoted as public walking routes until public access is permitted. The route survey information for potential sites should only be used to progress with future proposals and dialogue with local land owners and stakeholders.
	It is recommended that further investigation, dialogue and development work undertaken at some or all of the following routes: ▪ Loop Head Walks (short and long loop) - Surveyed ▪ Kilkee Cliffs to Bishops Island (Surveyed) and Dunlicka Castle ▪ Kilkee Cliffs Walk (4km short and 8km long loops) - Surveyed ▪ Kilkee Cliffs Walk to Loop Head

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	- Loop Head to Bridges of Ross – 9km Surveyed - Loop Head to Kilbaha Loop – 15km - Corbally and Coosheen Loop Walk – Various routes available - Kilkee Town to Pollock Holes – 3km Surveyed - Kilkee Town Heritage Walk - Querrin Pier to the Island (6km) - Surveyed - Kilcredaun (Guided Route Only) - Beach, Bay and Road Walks - Rinevella and Kilbaha - Querrin Pier to the Island - Georges Head / Kilkee Golf Course - Surveyed - Corbally to Farrihy Bay - Donegal Point Walk - Surveyed - Walks developed on or adjacent to old railway lines As with many walking route proposals in Ireland, access can often be an issue. It is therefore recommended that any walking route proposal must take a practical approach, working closely and starting meaningful dialogue with local landowners and state agencies whilst acknowledging the wide economic benefits measures like these can achieve in a short period from local accommodation, food and drink, transport, local guides, route maintenance funding and much more. All surveyed established and potential walking, cycling and driving routes have been stored in the database and displayed via the www.gpsies.com website for ease of gpx file display. ActiveMe have set up a profile for Loop Head Tourism. Login details include; username: LoopHeadTourism, password: loophead. All potential walking routes on private lands are set as 'private' with information only available to view by Loop Head Tourism when logged in. It is recommended that consideration be given to creating a continuous off-road cliff walk from Kilkee to Loop Head. A walk of this type could also help created jobs whereby a shuttle services could drop visitors to Loop Head and they then walk back to Kilkee. A similar walk should also be considered on the Shannon estuary side using quiet roads and beaches where possible whilst also taking account of private lands and access.
Cycling Routes	The WAW is not just a scenic driving route; it is also an ideal cycling route and forms an ideal loop route around the peninsula for cyclists. It is therefore recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at all sites on this WAW heritage trail. It is recommended that the existing signage plan, route guidance and sign provision be reviewed for the existing Loop Head Cycleway Route. Loop head is blessed with an abundance of rural county roads, all of which are suitable for leisurely tourist cycling and exploration of Loop Head. It is therefore recommended that variety of options and shorter cycle loops should also be considered using both print/online maps combined with minimal signage (walking style posts with coloured arrows representing various route lengths around loop head). As part of this project ActiveMe

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	have surveyed cycle route options including: ▪ Loop Head Cycleway Signed Route – 65km+ Surveyed ▪ Loop Head Cycleway Signed Route incl. Moyasta – 73km+ Surveyed ▪ 6 Route Options of various lengths – 15 to 70km Surveyed Increased demand for guided cycle tourism and bike hire could be one of the resulting economic benefits of these recommendations and bring added value to the Loop Head Heritage Trail. The provision of Bicycle Hubs providing self-service cycle repair facilities should also be considered on Loop Head.
Suggested Itineraries	It is recommended that, with the implementation of the proposed Heritage Trail, a full set of suggested itineraries be developed to compliment this proposal and encourage people get out of their car, explore more and to stay longer on Loop Head. A suggested 1 Day itinerary could include: - Guided Walk around Kilcredaun or Victorian Kilkee - Swim or explore the Pollock holes or walk the Kilkee Cliffs - Lunch - Cycle or Drive some or all of the Loop Head Heritage Trail - Dinner - Stay the night – with much more to do the next day
Site Access	A number of sites on the trail are fully open to the public (Public Access), while others are located on lands owned privately with the remainder publically owned and under the guardianship of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG). Therefore public access and land ownership can be an issue for some sites: - West Clare Railway: Privately owned with Public Access during opening hours only. - Blackweir Bridge: Public Access - Querrin Pier: Public Access - Doonaha: On Private Lands. Multiple owners subject to change. - Carrigaholt Castle: The castle is privately owned with no public access permitted. Public access is available to the car park and area overlooking the bay and castle. - Kilcredaun: Restricted Public Access. These sites are on private lands with access only by appointment and with a permitted guide. Multiple land owners are subject to change. - Rinevella: Public Access. - Grave of the Yellow Men: Public Access. - Kilbaha Bay and Pilots Memorial: Public Access. - Little Ark, Kilbaha Chruch: Public Access. Church is part of the Kilballyowen Parish and Killaloe Diocese. - Loop Head: The lands on Loop Head are privately owned. Public Access to the lighthouse and grounds during opening hours are managed by Clare County Council and in the ownerships of The Commissioners of Irish Lights.

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
	- Bridges of Ross: Public Access. - Dunlicka Castle: Public Access. - Bishops Island: Public Access to lands overlooking the island. - Kilkee Cliffs: Public Access. - Kilkee Town: Public Access. Where sites are located on lands owned privately, ownership details are subject to change over time. Sites can also be located over large sections of land owned by multiple landowners. It is therefore recommended that land ownership details be confirmed when communication, dialogue and proposals are ready to begin. Where public access issues exist, it is recommended that dialogue should be initiated as soon as possible between all stakeholders, tenants and landowners regarding public access to the site. It is hoped that most of the issues can be resolved through constructive dialogue. Where sites are publically owned in state care, they can be looked after in a partnership with the National Monument Services and the Office of Public Works (OPW). The conservation and preservation of these sites are managed by the OPW, with the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs responsible for archaeological aspects. See section 10.4 for all site access observations and recommendations.
Parking	Car and Cycle Parking design should conform to standards contained in the Clare County Development Plan 2011 to 2017 with larger parking areas including the provisions of disabled parking. Where spaces allows, consideration should also be given to relining visitor car parks with wider car parking spaces than normal to make the driving experience easier and more comfortable for visitors, the majority of whom may be driving rental cars. Spaces up to 3.0m wide should be considered for easy access. Adequate parking provision is essential at all proposed Heritage Sites on the trail. It is recommended that existing car park be improved and if necessary, new parking be provided at a number of sites (see Section 10.4). Although the WAW is seen as predominately a driving route, It is recommended that a balance be struck between car parking provision and the encouragement of visitors to explore areas on foot and on a bike through adequate facilities and infrastructure, which can lead to extended stays in Ireland, increased local bed nights and increased economic benefits through associated services such as walking guides, bike hire and tour guiding. The provision of cycle parking should be considered at all WAW Discovery Points and heritage trail sites. The key recommended improvement measures include: ▪ Resurfacing ▪ Relining ▪ Peak season parking surveys, to determine actual parking requirements ▪ Provision of sufficient car and cycle parking spaces, where required

General Topics	Project Observations and Recommendations
Photography	Photography cannot begin until the final list of heritage sites has been identified. Therefore it is recommended that any proposed future project include contingency time into the project deadline to cater for potential delays as a result of weather, the identification of sites and arranging site access, arranging photographs of people from the community among other factors.
	In conjunction with WAW promotion, it is recommended that the project partners consider investment in high quality aerial (helicopter) and/or drone photography and video stock for the study area including all sites.
	These types of images and video are invaluable for a variety of uses now and into the future, including tourism, events, promotion, planning, construction, archaeology reports and other uses and would a valuable long term investment.
Print Map Design	It is recommended that the Heritage Trail print ready z-card map be the first in a series of z-card trail maps. It is recommended that z-cards be considered for individual heritage sites in the future, all of which should encourage people to get out of their cars, explore the area and increase bed nights in Loop Head.
Site Facilities	For those tourists who are driving, cycling or walking the WAW, it is recommended that adequate rest area facilities such as seating, picnic tables, toilets and other items such as viewing areas be considered at each site as these may be key resting points along their route depending on time of arrival (i,e, lunch).
Tourism Events	It is recommended that potential future events and festival should be considered around some or all of the proposed Heritage Sites and niche tourism areas. The following is a non-exhaustive list of possible events: ▪ Walking and Cycling Festivals ▪ Little Ark – Build a simple replica ▪ Bird Watching ▪ Watersports ▪ Geology ▪ Flora and Fauna ▪ Photography ▪ Treasure Hunt and Prize style exploration of Loop Head

10.3 Future WAW Heritage Projects

Pilot projects by their nature, require flexibility regarding the overall project scope, tasks, deliverables, budget and timeframe. This is to ensure that all project team members can accommodate any opportunities or issues encountered during a pilot project as well as include any required additional tasks which may have been overlooked in the original tender brief and project specification process.

From this pilot project it is clearly evident that the overall number of Heritage Sites on the proposed Trail has a direct impact on the time required to complete various project elements including: site

assessment, site research, data collection, mapping, number of interviews, site interpretation, photography, database design and data entry.

Taking the above into account, it is recommended any future WAW heritage project firstly pay close attention to the estimated number of sites on a heritage trail and also the project deliverables, meetings and project presentations when producing the tender brief as these must be reflected in the proposed project budget and timeframe.

The proposed recommendations, processes and checklists outlined in this report should allow the project to be replicated to the same high standard for any future community Heritage Trail project along the Wild Atlantic Way.

These recommendations should help future projects be more consistent, efficient, streamlined and cost effective, whilst also providing a clear model for working with community groups and delivering consistent high quality design ready interpretation text and multimedia along the entire WAW.

A summary of key observations and recommendations are outlined below:

Project	Key Observations and Recommendations
Timescale	It is recommended that the project timescale should reflect the number of sites on the heritage trail in addition to all other project deliverables for any future WAW Heritage Trail projects.
Budget	It is recommended that the project budget should reflect the number of sites on the heritage trail in addition to all project tasks undertaken and deliverables produced.
Scope & Brief Project tasks	It is recommended that the tender brief and scope of work for any future WAW Heritage Trail project contain sufficient detail for all required deliverables (directly compared against the final deliverables of this pilot project). This will enable the receipt of accurate bids during the tendering process and reduce the need to request the inclusion of additional tasks and their associated costs during the project itself. To ensure that proposed budgets and deadlines for future projects are accurate and realistic; the fee, timeline and deliverables associated with this pilot project should be used as a direct comparison. With this in mind, it is important that the supplementary tasks requested and undertaken as part of this project outside the original tender submission should be factored into estimating future budgets and timescales to achieve more realistic figures.

The recommended processes to be considered and followed for future WAW Heritage Trail projects are shown in detail at the end of each chapter for the following project tasks:

- Database Recommendations (Chapter 2)

- Community Consultation Recommendations and Best Practice (Chapter 3)

- Site Identification and Research Recommendations (Chapter 4)

- Interview and Audio Recordings Recommendations (Chapter 5)

- Photography Recommendations (Chapter 6)

- Route Surveys and GPS Information Recommendations (Chapter 7)

- Site Interpretation Recommendations (Chapter 8)

- Map Design (Chapter 9)

10.3.1 Opportunities, Issues and Delays

Below are some of the key opportunities, issues and delays encounter during this pilot project with which you can benefit from, learn from or avoid in future projects:

- A significant opportunity for large community consultation arose when this project linked up with the Kilkee Civic Trust as part of our Heritage Week 2014 project presentation and over 200 local community members attended giving great exposure for the project and a level of community consultation and Q&A unprecedented for many local or even national projects.

- In order to keep consistency in relation to the interpretation material for each site, it was decided to add all 4no. WAW Discovery Points to this pilot project.

- Significant delay was experienced in contacting, arranging and conducting the project interviews due to the time of year (peak summer season) where many interviewees were just too busy to contribute.

- Where possible, it is recommended to arrange multiple interviews on the same day, thereby saving time and associated travel costs.

- Starting the photography of sites and conducting interview was delayed as the final list of sites was only fully agreed upon nearly 8 weeks into this approx. 16 week pilot project.

- At the project outset, it is recommended to contact and work with any other tourism or heritage projects being currently undertaken in the study area. This will ensure that you can utilise and share as much available information as possible and importantly, reduce any duplication of work. As part of this project, ActiveMe worked closely with other ongoing projects including the Loop Head Heritage Audit and the Failte Ireland Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Point Interpretations project.

10.3.2 Recommended Database Use and Maintenance

The following recommendations for the future use, development and maintenance of the database should be considered and adopted:

- Assign a project partner to manage and administer the database in the long term and agree who and how the annual cloud hosting fees will be funded

- Assign at least 2 people (in case one person is unavailable at a particular time) to manage and administer the database in terms of assigning new users to view and edit the database as required.

- Assign specific users from the community and all project partners. The database is currently set as private so those who wish to use the database need to be assigned a user role (admin, editor, view only, etc) and set their own username and password

- The most important advantage of this database solution is the user friendly CMS (Content Management System). This CMS allows anyone with minimal technical knowledge to view, edit and manage database in the future for this and future WAW heritage projects

- Future WAW projects will have an easy to use and defined separate section in the database

- Those delivering future WAW projects can be assigned separate database user access

10.3.3 Influencing other Fáilte Ireland Interpretation & Infrastructure Projects

The following recommendations outline the steps required to work with, compliment and influence existing and upcoming Fáilte Ireland interpretation and infrastructure projects:

1) Identify nearby Fáilte Ireland projects and relevant sites which overlap your project

2) Identify main point of contact within project (Failte Ireland or private consultancy)

3) Make contact and agree process of information sharing to avoid duplication and wasted work between projects and identify how both projects can influence and benefit each other

4) Share all relevant project information and help influence the interpretation or infrastructural work for each project.

We have also made a number of recommendations regarding potential Failte Ireland infrastructural projects along the WAW covering topics such as signage, parking, access and nearby activities like walking and cycling for the proposed Heritage Trail. These recommendations are made in Sections 10.2 and 10.4.

10.4 Site Specific Observations and Recommendations

From the assessment of each Heritage Trail Site, key recommendation(s) for each site were proposed, covering one or a number of topics including existing and potential interpretation, site access, parking, signage, nearby activities and more. The following three statements apply to all site recommendations:

- 'All proposals must comply with all planning, local authority and other statutory requirements.'

- ▪ 'All proposals for development within, adjacent to or with the potential to affect a Natura 2000 site will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment Screening. To ensure that a Habitat Directive Assessment is carried out to assess the likely impacts on Natura 2000 sites in order to comply with Article 6(3) of the Habitat Directive and in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.'

- ▪ 'All projects must be undertaken in accordance with the Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points Remedial Works Guidelines, including the Ecological Method Statement.'

The following key site observations and recommendations should be read wholly in conjunction with the overall project observations and recommendations outlined above in Section 10.2:

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
West Clare Railway	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this tourist attraction on the main N67 Kilrush to Kilkee Road in both directions. At present there is insufficient road signage for tourists trying to find and visit this site. The locations is these signs will be determined by the detailed signage design process taking into account the NRA document Traffic Signs Manual in addition to any future branding for the Wild Atlantic Way or Loop Head Tourism.
	At present it is not visually obvious that you have arrived at the West Clare Railway until you drive into the car park. Therefore, it is recommended that an Arrival Sign be considered to adequately inform visitors. If considered, these 'Arrival Signs' should be consistent for all sites in terms of design, size and branding.
	The provision of cycle parking should be considered at this and all heritage trail sites. This site is on key cycling routes including the Wild Atlantic Way and the West Clare Cycleway Route among others.
	With the provision of signage and possible future increase in traffic along the WAW, additional car parking provision may be required on site. It is recommended that capacity surveys (spot checks) be undertaken during the peak season to identify if additional parking is required.
	It is recommended that the proposed design ready interpretation content for the site could be used by the West Clare Railway in a variety of different ways to compliment their existing information on-site.
Querrin Point	It is recommended that adequate road signage for the proposed Heritage Trail be provided for this site at the nearby crossroads. Replacing any existing signage should be considered to avoid any confusion. At present it is not visually obvious that you have arrived at Querrin. It is therefore recommended to again consider an 'Arrival Sign' to inform arriving visitors of their destination.
	At present there is no existing interpretation at Querrin Pier. With several points of interest on view from Querrin Pier and nearby, it is recommended that appropriately located and suitable site interpretation measures be used to help the visitor orientate themselves and view their surroundings with ease while reading the interpretative text.
	There is significant potential for the development of a walking route (s) at Querrin using the roadway, foreshore and possibly what is known as 'The Island' dependant on rights of access. It is recommended that further research be undertaken.
	It is recommended that cycle parking be considered at this and all

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
	site.
Carrigaholt Castle and Bay	Being a WAW Discovery Point, it is recommended that all proposed improvement measures and recommendation tie into and compliment the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company and any proposed Failte Ireland site improvement measures. Due to the prominence of Carrigaholt Castle in the local landscape, it is recommended that dialogue should be initiated as soon as possible between all stakeholders, tenants and landowners regarding possible future public access and improvements to the site. Due to the sites proximity to the village centre, it is recommended that consideration be given to locating some interpretation in the village centre as people can then walk from there to explore the area. It is recommended that the existing car park be resurfaced and lined provision of additional parking should be considered during the peak season. Parking counts should also be undertaken during the peak season to confirm and quantify any additional parking requirements. It is recommended that cycle parking be considered at this site.
Kilcredaun	There are many existing and established walking routes on the public roads in the Kilcredaun area. However, for both a local and visitor to fully appreciate the rich heritage in the area, it is recommended that further investigation, dialogue and development work be undertaken regarding possible future public access to the heritage sites located on private lands on the Kilcredaun headland. The number and location of these sites on this scenic headland, points to significant potential for the development of a high quality public walking route to enjoy the area and the economic benefits that come with a successful walking trail. It is recommended that all proposed tourism literature and site interpretation material state that there is currently (2014) no public access to the site and to explore and enjoy the area you require a local guide who is permitted access by the landowner (s). If a public access walking route is secured in the future, it is recommended that consideration also be given to the provision of adequate road signage, car and cycle parking and interpretation before or after walking route development works are complete.
Rinevella Bay	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this site in both directions In addition it is also recommended to locate and provide a new parking area and viewing point overlooking the bay to allow visitors to enjoy the view even in bad weather from the comfort of their car. At present it is not visually obvious where the submerged forest is, how to get to it and importantly what it is. If public access to the submerged forest site is to be encouraged as part of a side trail, then appropriate directions, map and tide times should form part of the site interpretation in the future.

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
	It is recommended that cycle parking be considered at this site.
Grave of the Yellow Men	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this site in both directions.
	This site is ideally placed to take advantage of the spectacular scenery overlooking Kilbaha Bay and rugged coastline however there is no formal parking spaces provided only road side parking on the grass verge. Therefore, it is recommended to provide new end-on parking spaces overlooking the bay to allow visitors to enjoy the view even in bad weather. There is adequate space to provide up to 10 spaces adjacent to the existing memorial.
	The existing interpretation boards at the site are somewhat faded and it is difficult to read. It is recommended that these could be repaired and/or updated/supplemented with additional interpretation material from this project.
	It is recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at this site.
Pilots Memorial & Kilbaha Bay	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this site in both directions.
	This site is again ideally placed to take advantage of the spectacular scenery overlooking Kilbaha Bay. However during peak times parking is difficult to find adjacent to the site. It is recommended to provide additional parking spaces in the area to cater for demand.
	There is a considerable amount of existing interpretation at the site itself.
	The number of interpretation locations in Kilbaha lends itself to some confusion if you are trying to find a particular heritage site. Therefore it is recommend that tastefully designed signs or plaques similar in nature to those described as 'arrival signs' for the above sites be considered to identify and distinguish between each heritage or memorial site in Kilbaha.
	It is recommended that repair and improvement measures be implemented at all Kilbahas heritage sites which were damaged in the 2014 storms.
Church of the Little Ark	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided in both directions from Kilbaha and from the Bridges of Ross. The provision of an arrival sign consistent with the existing aesthetics of the church should also be considered in conjunction with the Church Authorities.
	Due to the location of the Ark within the local church, it is recommended that consideration be given to building a replica of the Ark for promotional use, potential future events and other uses.
	The proposed interpretation material should compliment the existing interpretation material within the church.
	It is recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at this site.

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
Loop Head	Acknowledging the fact that significant numbers of visitors already walk on Loop Head at present, it is recommended that a walking path be considered on Loop Head. There is significant potential for a high quality loop walk (s) on Loop Head whilst also ensuring that the local environment remains adequately protected.
	While it is recognised that preventing people from walking in the area would be difficult, the provision of a walking path should help control and reduce the number of people walking in all directions and on more sensitive areas on Loop Head and should help provide more effective protection to the existing Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on Loop Head. A variety of walking path sustainable solutions could be considered.
	Loop Head lighthouse as with many paying tourist attractions such as Muckross House and Cliffs of Moher, a certain percentage of visitors do not pay for entry but enjoy the surrounding 'free' amenities. Therefore it is recommended that in addition to catering to and providing facilities (walking paths, seats, picnic table, etc) for those visitors who do not enter the lighthouse, the quantity of these annual visitors should also be surveyed and counted to gain a better insight into total visitor numbers and their experience at Loop Head.
	Loop Head Lighthouse is closed for a period during the year. Tourists arriving in this off peak and shoulder season would like something to do and walking on Loop Head is an obvious activity.
	The existing interpretation boards on Loop Head are focused primarily on bird life and are somewhat faded. It is recommended that these could be updated or supplemented with additional interpretation material from this project whilst ensuring that it compliments the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company. It is also recommended that a full review of all tourist and information signage be undertaken on Loop Head where all interested parties co-operate to optimise and minimise signage on Loop Head and avoid any duplication of signage.
	It is recommended that the provision of additional parking should be considered during the peak season. Parking counts should also be undertaken during the peak season to confirm and quantify any additional parking requirements.
Bridges of Ross	Being a WAW Discovery Point, it is recommended that all proposed improvement measures, interpretation and recommendations made in this report tie into and compliment the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company and any other proposed Failte Ireland site improvement or infrastructural measures.
	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this site in both directions and in conjunction with proposed WAW signage proposals for Discovery points.
	As a WAW Discovery Point, it is recommended that parking counts be undertaken during the peak season to quantify if additional parking is required. It is recommended that cycle parking be considered at this site.
	Due to the location of the arches, it is recommended that the existing walking route from the car park to the site be extend along the cliffs to

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
	form an official loop walk on the headland and possibly further along the cliffs in both directions. For example, to connect Loop Head and the Bridges of Ross with a cliff top walking route similar to the Kilkee Cliff Walk. If considered, it is recommended that dialogue should be initiated between all stakeholders, tenants and landowners regarding possible future public access.
	Due to the site location approx. 500m away from the car park, it is recommended that consideration be given to locating interpretation information at both the car park and the site itself.
	It is recommended that appropriately located and suitably visual and physical site interpretation measures be considered to help visitors grasp the vast time periods you are dealing with in Geology.
	It is recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at this site.
Dunlicka Castle	It is recommended that adequate road signage be provided for this site in both directions.
	Although the existing car park is large and provides significant space for the movement of vehicles, it is recommended that the existing car park be upgraded, resurfaced and lined to cater for all vehicle sizes.
	Although this area gets a significant number of visitors, there are no formal paths. It is recommended that measures be implemented to create obvious paths exploring the site.
	Although the castle is no longer present, it is recommended that appropriately located and suitable site interpretation measures be used to help the visitor orientate themselves on the landscape. This will allow visitors to locate and view what the Castle looked like in the past, the locations of nearby Islands such as Illaunonearaun (*Oileán an Fhearáin*) the southwest and Bishops Island to the northeast while reading the interpretative text.
	It is recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at this site.
Bishops Island	This existing car parking area is ideally placed to take advantage of the spectacular scenery overlooking the Kilkee Cliffs and islands. However, there is only space to cater for approx. 8 parked cars.
	It is recommended that additional parking should be considered during the peak season and parking counts should confirm and quantify additional parking requirements. It is also recommended that the car park be upgraded, resurfaced and relined.
	As visitors cannot get to the island, it is recommended that appropriately located and suitable site interpretation measures be considered to bring the island to the visitor and let them experience the site it either visually or physically. The Interpretation should help the visitor orientate themselves, locate the island and view what Island looked like in the past while reading the interpretative text.
	It is recommended that cycle parking be considered at this site.
	It is recommended that consideration be given to extending the Kilkee Cliff Walk as far as Bishops Island and onto Dunlicka Castle.

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
Kilkee Cliffs & Pollock Holes	Being a WAW Discovery Point, it is recommended that all proposed improvement measures, interpretation and recommendations tie into and compliment the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company and any proposed Failte Ireland site improvement or infrastructural measures. It is recommended that adequate signage be provided from Kilkee Town to the start of the Kilkee Cliff Walks and entrance to the Pollock Holes. Although the car park is relatively new and of high quality, it is highly recommended that additional parking should be considered during the peak season. Site observations noted that the car park was at full capacity on numerous days during the 2014 peak season with no available spaces and minimal turnover of spaces as people were leaving their vehicles there for extend period of time. A peak season parking and traffic count should confirm and quantify additional parking requirements. The existing interpretation boards on the boardwalk adjacent to the car park are somewhat faded and are difficult to read. It is recommended that these could be repaired and/or updated/supplemented with additional interpretation material from this project and from the official WAW interpretation proposals being undertaken by The Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of Fáilte Ireland. It is recommended that the provision of cycle parking should be considered at this site.
Victorian Kilkee	It is recommend that a specific location with the town be identified as the site for interpretation. Although Kilkee has rich Victorian Heritage, this is somewhat lost on visitors as many would find it difficult to identify without some form of interpretation. It is recommended therefore, that appropriately located and suitable site interpretation measures be used to help the visitor orientate themselves and identify where the Victorian heritage locations are and read the stories behind them. It is suggested that the main interpretation could be located at the bandstand near Kilkee beach and from here a trail of markers could be placed in the footpaths leading visitors on a Victorian Heritage and Local History Trail around the town and the west end.
Heritage Areas	**Key Observations and Recommendations**
General	As part of the initial Heritage Trail, it is not recommended that visitors be encouraged to stop at these 'Heritage Areas' as there are a number of existing issues and safety concerns raised during the project site assessment regarding primarily parking and access. Visitors should only be provided with information as they drive, walk or cycle past the site without stopping. Drive by interpretation may include the use of a website, app, map, audio trail or podcast.
Blackweir Bridge	It is recommended that an adequate pull in bay, parking and signage are firstly implemented before any other measures such as site access and physical site interpretation are considered. All longer term improvement measures must take into account the protected status of the bridge.

Heritage Site	Key Observations and Recommendation (s)
Doonaha Ringforts	It is recommended that public access to at least one ring fort in Doonaha (or in any other location on Loop Head) be secured before consideration of any other improvement measures.

If public access is secured, other recommendations may include a full heritage and interpretation report on the site, improved site conditions, access, site interpretation, parking, signage and more. |
| Tullig Famine Village | In the short term, it is recommended that adequate parking, signage and interpretation are firstly provided at a specific location on the trail to view the area where the village existed. As the village no longer exists, interpretation of the site must include some visual proposals to give an idea of what the village looked like in the past. One possibility could be a drawing of the old village engraved on Perspex glass, allowing the visitor to place the village on the famine landscape with their own eyes.

In the medium to long term, it is recommended that consideration could be given to interpretation in the form of reconstructing the famine village to give the visitor a more physical experience. |
| Corbally / Coosheen | Due to the size of the area and the multitude of interesting points, it is firstly recommended that one specific, easily accessible location with views of the entire area is chosen for parking, signage and interpretation. It is recommended that the parking area be located immediately north of Corbally hill (102m) to give the best scenic views (approx location 52.705940, -9.633673). This site must then also be adequately signed on the main WAW N67 route. |

Appendix A – Database Tables & Fields

All Essential Database Fields for Each Site – Fields for Searching, Display & Future Products

Db Field	Database Field	Database Field Description
1	GPS Location	Latitude, Longitude
2	Short Interpretive Text	Approx. 25-50 words – Print Map, etc
3	Medium Interpretive Text	Approx. 50-150 words – Apps, etc
4	Long Interpretive Text	All text
5	Site Recommendations and Observations	Taken from Report – Section 10
6	Sources of Information	Approx. 150-500 words – Websites, etc
7	List of key sources of information	Source of site research
8	Other Research and Facts	Source of site research
9	Site Ownership	Access and site ownership details
10	Cycle Parking	(Yes or No)
11	Category	Attraction, Geographic Feature,
12	Sub-Category	Fort, Lighthouse,
13	County	County – for Future Projects
14	Nearest Town	Nearest village/town to the site
15	Toilet Facilities	(Yes or No)
16	Accessible Toilet	(Yes or No)
17	Accessible Access	(Yes or No)
18	Parking	Existing parking
19	Signage	Existing parking
20	Map Number	Ordnance Survey Map Number
21	Heritage Designation	Natural, Built, Archaeological, etc
22	Category of Interest	SPA, SAC, etc
23	Travel Information	If applicable.
24	Website	If applicable
25	Opening Times	If applicable.
27	Entrance Fee	€ or Free
28	Contact Number	If applicable.
29	Email Address	If applicable
30	Local URL	If needed
31	URL	If needed
32	Site Location Summary	Type available
33	Audio Files for interview clips	Interviews
34	Photography of sites	A collection of photos for each site

Database Table and Fields - Dublin Core Metadata (see Section 1.4 for explanation) – Best Practice

Db Field	Database Field	Database Field Description
1	Title	Name of Site
2	Subject	Topic
3	Description	Summary
4	Creator	Primary creator of interpretation information
5	Source	Where the info was originally sourced
6	Publisher	Who responsible for making the resource available
7	Date	Date
8	Contributor	Who made contributions to the interpretation or info
9	Rights	Copyrights, media sign off, etc
10	Relation	Related Source
11	Format	Files formats
12	Language	Source and Interpretation Languages used
13	Type	The nature or genre of the resource
14	Identifier	Unique Db Number
15	Coverage	Location and Area covered by the site

Database Table and Fields for Tag Words (search keywords) for each Site

Db Field	Database Field	Database Field Description
1	Identifier	Unique Db Number
2	Tag Words	Each Tag word separated by a comma (Fishing, Religion, etc)

Database Table and Fields for Businesses

Db Field	Data Field	Description
1	Unique ID Number	
2	Business Name	
3	Business Category	Accommodation, Restaurant, Pub, etc
4	Business Sub-Category	Hotel, B&B, Guesthouse, Hostel, etc
5	Address	Street/Road Number, Town/Village, County
6	GPS location	Latitude, Longitude
7	Description	* The business must provide this description *
8	Photograph (s)	
9	Contact Name	Contact Details
10	Telephone	
11	Mobile	
12	Email	
13	Website	
14	Facebook	Link to Social Media Page for the business Links
15	Twitter	
16	TripAdvisor	
17	Google+ and YouTube	
18	Instagram	
19	Pinterest	
20	Flickr	
21	LinkedIn	
22	Dog Friendly	Yes / No
23	Wheelchair Friendly	Accessible – Yes / No
24	Any Other Fields	

Appendix B – List of Interviews

Number of Interviews: 15
Interview ID's: LH_INT001 – LH_INT015
No. of Individual Clips Created: 55 Individual Clips and 2 Songs
Interviewer and Date: Deirdre McCarthy - Sept and October 2014

Int. ID	Category	Name	Heritage Site / Area	No. Of Clips by Subject/Topic
LH_INT001	Interview	Jackie Whelan	West Clare Railway	2 Clips – Railway & War of Independence
LH_INT002	Interview	Richard Gair	West Clare Railway	2 Clips – Railway Freight & Percy French
LH_INT003	Song	Gabriel Keating +	West Clare Railway	Song: Percy French, Are you right there Michael
LH_INT004	Interview	Trea Heapes	Querrin Point	8 Clips – Salmon Weirs to Ferry Disaster
LH_INT005	Interview	Geoff McGee	Carrigaholt	3 Clips – SPA, Castle & Boat Trip
LH_INT006	Interview	Laura Foley	Carrigaholt	1 Clip – The MacMahons
LH_INT007	Interview	Geoff McGee	Kilcredaun	1 Clip - Okeanus Shipwreck
LH_INT006	Interview	Laura Foley	Kilcredaun	5 Clips - Battery, Church, Well, St.Credaun, LightH
LH_INT006	Interview	Laura Foley	Rinevella Bay	1 Clip – Submerged Forest
LH_INT008	Interview	Carmel Madigan	Rinevella Bay	2 Clips – Hedgerows and Rinevella Beach
LH_INT009	Interview	Martin McKeown	Rinevella Bay	1 Clip – West Clare Sediment
LH_INT010	Interview	Ailish Connolly	Grave of the Yellow Men	1 Clip – Grave of Yellow Men History
LH_INT010	Interview	Ailish Connolly	Church of the Little Ark	1 Clip – Little Ark
LH_INT010	Interview	Ailish Connolly	Kilbaha & Pilots Memorial	2 Clips – Pilots & Henry Blake
LH_INT011	Song	Marty Crotty	Kilbaha & Pilots Memorial	Song: Commemoration Song
LH_INT010	Interview	Ailish Connolly	Loop Head	2 Clips - Eire Sign & Mythology
LH_INT012	Interview	Stephen Rowen	Loop Head	1 Clip - Lighthouse
LH_INT008	Interview	Carmel Madigan	Loop Head	1 Clip – Heathland and Flora
LH_INT006	Interview	Laura Foley	Loop Head	3 Clips - Look Out Post, Folklore & Lighthouse
LH_INT009	Interview	Martin McKeown	Loop Head / Bridges of Ross	2 Clips - Geology
LH_INT008	Interview	Carmel Madigan	Bridges of Ross	2 Clips - Seaweed and Limpets
LH_INT009	Interview	Martin McKeown	Dunlicka Castle	1 Clip - Horse Island
LH_INT013	Interview	Deirdre McCarthy	Dunlicka Castle	1 Clip - Archaeology
LH_INT013	Interview	Deirdre McCarthy	Bishop's Island	1 Clip - Archaeology
LH_INT009	Interview	Martin McKeown	Bishop's Island / Kilkee Cliffs	1 Clip - Geology
LH_INT014	Interview	Manuel Di Lucia	Kilkee Cliffs / Pollock Holes	1 Clip - Sea Life
LH_INT006	Interview	Laura Foley	Victorian Kilkee	2 Clips - Victorian History
LH_INT008	Interview	Carmel Madigan	Victorian Kilkee	1 Clip - Periwinkles
LH_INT004	Interview	Trea Heapes	Corbally	1 Clip – Corbally, Coosheen, Farrihy Lough
LH_INT004	Interview	Trea Heapes	Tullig	1 Clip – Tullig Famine Village
LH_INT013	Interview	Deirdre McCarthy	Doonaha Forts	1 Clip - Archaeology
LH_INT004	Interview	Trea Heapes	Blackweir Bridge	1 Clip – Bridge and surroundings
LH_INT015	Interview	Criostóir MacCarthaigh	Blackweir Bridge	1 Clip – Bridge and Turf Boats
LH_INT015	Interview	Criostóir MacCarthaigh	Corbally	1 Clip – Corbally and Cully Marrinan

Appendix C – Multimedia Release Form

For Office Use	Reference Number	

Media Release Form

Name of Contributor   …………………………………

Address: …………………………………

      …………………………………

      …………………………………

Email   ………………………….........

Telephone no   …………………………………

Date of Recording   …………………………………

Location of Recording   …………………………………

Comhairle Contae an Chláir
Clare County Council

The purpose of this form is to ensure that your contribution is added to the archive of Clare County Council. All material provided by you, including sound, video recordings and photographs, will be preserved as part of the archive of Clare County Council..

I hereby grant permission to Clare County Council. to distribute or license the recordings in all media now known, or to be invented, worldwide, in perpetuity of the series and without any restrictions or payment to me.

I assign the copyright in all contributions by me to the series worldwide, in all media now known, or to be invented, to Clare County Council..

I agree that my contributions will be subject to the editorial control of Clare County Council.. I understand that not every part, or even any part, of my recordings will necessarily be used, as this is wholly dependent on the editing process.

………………………………   ………………………………… Date
Signed by the Contributor

………………………………   ………………………………… Date
Signed on behalf of Clare County Council.

Appendix D – Interview Checklist

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Loop Head and Kilkee Heritage Trail on the Wild Atlantic Way

Ref. ID	
Name of Contributor	
Date of Interview	
Address	
Telephone / Mobile	
Email	
Location (& GPS)	
Other Persons Present	
Start and End Time	

PROJECT TEAM Members and Contributors Present

Project Team	Present	Contributor and Others

Checklist

Item		Comments	Tick Box
1	Recording Device		
2	Back up Recording Device (Phone, Video, etc)		
3	Batteries		
4	Camera		
5	Video Camera and Tripod		
6	Laptop		
7	Scanner		
8	Check all power Sources		
9	Sign Release Form		
10	Other Items		

Appendix E – Sample Site Photography

Loop Head Lighthouse and Cliffs

Diarmuid and Grainne's Rock, Loop Head

Loop Head Cliffs

Loop Head Cliffs

Walking on Loop Head

Church of the Little Ark

Kilbaha Bay

Interviewee Profile Photograph: Laura Foley

Kilkee Cliffs

Unique Geological Features at the Bridges of Ross, Loop Head

Bird Watching at the Bridges of Ross

The Bridges of Ross

Appendix F – Site Interpretation Text

LOOP HEAD HERITAGE SITE INTERPRETATIONS
Oct 2014

WAW001_LH_001 West Clare Railway

Early proposals for a west Clare railway service were dismissed by investors who did not think there was enough freight or people for a railway to make a profit. The Parliament passed an act in 1883 which included clauses to permit a narrow gauge track, thereby more than halving the building costs. Building of the west Clare railway tracks, often through boggy land began soon after.

The West Clare Railway line was opened in 1893 and its initial timetable consisted of three daily trains between Ennis and Kilkee, with a branch line connection to Kilrush. The railway line provided a gateway to the Loop Head Peninsula for tourists and business alike, allowing for easier transportation of goods and services. By the turn of the century, there were five daily trains and approximately 250,000 passengers and 80,000 tonnes of freight and livestock carried on the West Clare Railway annually. The Lahinch golf course was laid out at this time; many British Army officers used the railway to travel to the course. The Lisdoonvarna Festival, the Kilrush Horse Fair and the Lahinch Garland Day events attracted visitors from all parts of Ireland who could now travel to the events by rail. The Burren cattle trade was enhanced by the ease of transporting the cattle away from the market. The maximum speed the steam engines could travel at was 25 miles an hour and while the journey was timetabled to take 2.5 hours, it often took 4 hours and more.

The train went through many turbulent times, including during the War of Independence, when the staff defied their directors and refused to carry British Army soldier's weapons on the train. The train was hit by Black & Tan bullets after the Rineen Ambush when Captain Meldrum was ambushed and killed at Clohanes. The lack of coal during World War 2 was overcome by the railway; when turf, plentiful in the region but ultimately unsuitable was used as an alternative. Its eventual closure in January 1961 was down to increased emigration and dwindling population. There was simply not enough traffic to keep the line open.

The West Clare Railway line is forever associated with Percy French, a popular entertainer and songwriter who sued the directors of the West Clare Railway Company for loss of earnings. He and his troupe of entertainers were late for a performance in Moores Hall, Kilkee in 1897, after a long delay on his train journey from Ennis. The water supply, essential for the steam train was contaminated with rushes and the train grind to a halt. An alternative train was sent to the scene but Percy arrived in Kilkee 10 minutes after he was due to start his performance and half the audience had left. He sought damages and was awarded £10 compensation but surprisingly the railway line appealed. The original

verdict was upheld. Percy French wrote the famous song Are you right there, Michael?, a catchy, comical tune about the railway line and its casual approach to timekeeping.

Restoration of part of the West Clare Railway began in the 1990s and in 2009, the restored 'Slieve Callan' steam engine was returned to the Moyasta Junction. At Moyasta, the visitor can take a trip aboard the steam train 'Slieve Callan' and learn about the famous West Clare Railway, the history of steam trains in Ireland and the impact the railway had on the local community.

Additional information
http://www.westclarerailway.ie/

WAW001_LH_002 Querrin Pier
At Querrin Pier, the visitor can see Scattery Island, home to a 6th century monastic site, founded by St. Senan, who was born locally. The site contains the ruins of six churches and has one of the largest round towers in Ireland at 120 feet in height but unusually its door is at ground level. The main church on the island is Teampall Naomh Mhuire (Cathedral of Saint Mary), which is situated next to the round tower. Scattery was invaded by the Vikings in the 9th century and the word Scattery might come from the Norse word Scatty, which means treasure. Folklore suggests that St. Senan fought the sea serpent for control of Scattery. The sea serpent is a common figure in local legend in the area. It is reported that St. Senan would not allow females on the island so a nunnery was built on the main land, overlooking Scattery. The nunnery buildings no longer exist but the nuns graveyard can still be seen at Cill a' Cailleach to the north east of Querrin.

In the 1840s Scattery was part of the estate of the Marquis of Conyngham whose son-in-law, Marcus Keane, acted as land agent. In March 1843, pilots from Kilbaha boarded a deserted ghost ship, The Windsor Castle of Liverpool, which had left Bombay in June 1842. They brought it ashore and were eventually awarded compensation for their efforts. Keane approached the compensated families and offered to sell them land on Scattery, an offer which many families took up, increasing the population of the island considerably. There are nine surnames associated with Scattery Island, some of them belong to the pilots families; Keanes, (Kanes or O'Cahanes), Scanlon, MacMahon, Brennan, Melican, Hanrahan, Hehir, Moran and Griffin. Scattery Island consists of a diverse range of habitats including lagoons, saltmarsh, loughs and eroded sea cliffs on the western fringe. Over forty-one species of birds have been recorded on the Island.

From this point at Querrin Pier, the extent of the mouth of the Shannon, Ireland's largest river and a natural heritage hotspot is evident. This is a designated SAC (Special Area of Conservation). The site is of international ecological importance, comprising of Carboniferous limestone, mudflats and salt marshes. It contains many important habitats, including three species of lamprey, bottlenose dolphin, otter and freshwater pearl mussel. The estuary is also a designated SPA (Special Protected Area) for

bird species including Brent Goose, Golden Plover, Dunlin, Redshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, and Black-tailed Godwit.

The Mouth of the Shannon has been the route for boats in and out of Limerick Port since the 9th century. There was a ferry disaster on 12th December 1849, when those seeking relief at the workhouse in Kilrush took the ferry from Cammoge Pier. They had come from the western parishes of Kilballyowen and Moyarta but didn't receive relief at the workhouse that day and were turned away. On the return journey, the ferry sunk and 41 victims drowned, no doubt partly because they were too weak to swim ashore. A memorial to those that died is located at the ferry crossing at Cammoge and was unveiled as part of the National Famine Commemoration in 2013.

Querrin pier was built in the 1842. It took a year to build and the justification for its construction was the boat traffic at Querrin at the time. A large number of locals were involved in commercial fishing. There were at least 50 currachs, 15 bigger boats and another 15 trading boats operating from Querrin. At the time, the locals had rights to the seaweed along the shoreline, which they used for cultivating their potatoes and vegetables. As well as the pier, Querrin also has a creek which fills at high tide, protected by what is known locally as the Island. This area is not actually an island at all and locally the story is that the area was kept attached to the mainland by stones placed by the local community. The pier is a popular place for fishing with flounder, bass and dogfish popular catches.

On the sea shore, an example of a currach can be seen, this is an example of the traditional canoes of the Loop Head peninsula, which were used for both fishing and transport. These sturdy and versatile vessels were constructed from a frame of wooden ribs, or hoops, traditionally with animal hides stretched over it, and more recently canvas. The West Clare Currach Club was established to resurrect the old boat building methods and Querrin Pier is home to the Sally O'Keeffe, a replica Shannon hooker, a 25 foot gaft- rigged sailing craft that was launched in 2012. It was named after a local woman whose family had the last hooker in the area.

County Clare's maritime tradition has been an integral part of local communities for many years, especially true of the community at Querrin. In recognition of this, *Clare Traditional Boats and Currachs Study* was commissioned and published in 2008. The study examined the distribution, diversity and social intricacies of Clare's boats and currachs, as well as contextualising their profound role in Clare's history and culture.

The two towers at Moneypoint power station rise high above the estuary to the southeast. This is Ireland's largest electricity generation station and the only coal fired power station. It was constructed at cost of €700 million euros and is capable of meeting 25% of the country's electricity needs.

There is a handball alley at the pier. Handball was one of the original four sports of the Irelands Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884, with the earliest written record of the game from the

town statutes of Galway City in 1527. The alley at Querrin Pier has been the location of many tournaments and competitions over the years but nowadays is more commonly used by locals playing tennis and racket ball.

Additional information:

Clare Traditional Boats and Currachs Study 2008 -

http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/heritage/pdfs/clare_traditional_boat_and_currach_project_2008.pdf

SPA & SAC - http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/specialareasofconservationsac/lowerrivershannonsac/

WAW001_LH_003 Carrigaholt Castle & Bay (Discovery Point)

Carrigaholt Castle, now in ruins, is the former residence of MacMahon family who built the castle around 1480. The MacMahons were the chiefs of the Corcabascin Peninsula, the old name for Loop Head. Like most medieval tower houses, this was strategically located for defensive purposes. It is located at the end of the fishing pier overlooking the Shannon Estuary and the harbour, providing an excellent view up and down the bay. The castle was enclosed by courtyards and high walls on one side and rocks and bay on the other. The castle is of typical tower house design, bearing all the defensive features associated with them; it is five storeys high, has a mural winding staircase, pistol loops and a murder hole inside its main doorway.

The castle was occupied by Teige Caech "the short sighted" McMahon in September 1588 when seven ships of the Spanish Armada anchored at Carrigaholt. He provided aid to the Spanish, which did not go down well with the English overlords, who had ordered all Spanish to be killed. The following year the renegade fourth Earl of Thomond, Donagh O'Brien captured the castle after a four-day siege and, in breach of the surrender terms, hanged all the defenders.

Ownership then passed to the Earl's brother Donal O'Brien, who was responsible for inserting many of the castle's windows as well as the fireplace on the fifth floor, which bears the date 1603. Donal's grandson was the celebrated third Viscount Clare who resided at Carrigaholt and raised a regiment of horses known as the "Yellow Dragoons" for the House of Stuart King James II of England's armies. After the forfeiture of his extensive estate by the Williamites, the castle was acquired by the Burton family, who lived there until the late 19th century. The building today is in ruins and is under the care of the Office of Public Works. It is not possible to enter the castle itself at present.

The village of Carrigaholt, meaning 'Rock of the Fleet' grew up around the castle and its pier was a very vibrant commercial centre, with many goods being transported in and out. In 1837, Samuel Lewis recorded that up to 400 locals were employed at the pier and six hookers, of seven tons each, and upwards of 500 currachs were active near the pier. The town of Carrigaholt was a thriving town with many shops and services. In recent years, during construction works the remains of a light railway was uncovered. This was to transport goods from the town to the pier.

It is possible for visitors to take boat trips from Carrigaholt Pier around the peninsula to see the only resident group bottlenose dolphins in Ireland, as well as amazing views of the coastline, cliffs and geology around Loop Head. There are about 200 dolphins living in the estuary, an EU Special Area of Conservation, and calves are born every year. There are three main areas that the dolphins frequent, where they eat mackerel, herring and salmon, depending on the season. What makes this area so special is that the river Shannon flows in from the midlands, bringing nutrients from the bogs and meets water from the Atlantic, rich in plankton.

Carrigaholt is a popular spot for fishing and angling; trips can be arranged in local boats. The fish caught include cod, pollock, haddock, whiting, hake, spur dog, ray and lots of mackerel, which in turn can be used as bait for other species including blue shark and large skate. Carrigaholt also has a safe sandy beach used for swimming and water sports.

There is an undisturbed view of the bay from Carrigaholt, making it popular with birdwatchers. In winter the bay can have Great Northern Diver, Cormorant, Black Guillemot, a small flock of Brent Geese with the occasional Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, and Red-throated Diver. The beach and rocky shore hold wildfowl and wading birds for example; Teal, Wigeon, Mallard, Oystercatcher, Grey Golden, and Ringed Plovers, Redshank, Greenshank, Curlew, Dunlin, Sanderling Turnstone and the Bar-tailed Godwit.

Rare migrants can be observed up the Moyarta River that flows under the main bridge on approach to the village from Kilkee. Common Eider, Little, Glaucous and Iceland gulls, Great and Arctic Skuas have all been observed from the top of the main pier wall on open water beyond the castle. Gannets sometimes perch on the pier wall and Black Guillemot nest in the walls and have nested in the old castle.

Additional information
Carrigaholt Castle- http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/places/carrigaholt1837.htm
http://www.irelandseye.com/aarticles/travel/attractions/castles/cargahlt.shtm
Bird watching - http://www.clarebirdwatching.com/
Dolphins- http://www.dolphinwatch.ie/

WAW001_LH_004 Kilcredaun
The townland of Kilcredaun is named after St. Credaun, who apparently lived in the neighbouring townland of Carrigaholt. He was a disciple of St. Senan of Scattery Island around the 6th century. There are the remains of two early single cell Christian churches, associated buildings and a holy well at this townland that may be connected to St. Credaun. The Early Christian lower church, was constructed of uncut field stones, indicating it has an early date. There was a later Romanesque window added, with the stone for the window imported from the midlands. The church ruins were later

used as a graveyard and the crypt of the last man to live at Carrigaholt Castle, Henry Stewart Burton is located there.

The holy well, the suggested burial place of St. Credaun is unusually tidal. It is submerged with sea water when the tide comes in and fills up with fresh drinkable water when the tide goes out. There is a cave close by which was used as a place for those with relatives lost at sea to pray.

A landmark for those travelling up and down the river is Eugene O Curry's Irish College which is the location of a 19th century coast guard station. The coast guard station had uninterrupted views up the Shannon river. Eugene O'Curry was born in nearby Doonaha and was a prominent academic who translated and transcribed many early Irish texts.

The Napoleonic Period battery which has been sitting in defence of Kilcredaun since 1814 is one of six batteries located in the vicinity. There were Napoleonic French invasion plans to access and invade Britain from the west of Ireland. The Mouth of the Shannon was one of the three invasion areas included in the French Directory's instructions to Vice- Admiral Villaret de Loveuse in October 1796, during the preparations of an expedition to Ireland and the batteries were constructed to ensure the seas leading to Limerick were adequately monitored and protected. Napoleon was defeated soon after the batteries were built so the canons were never used but there were soldiers based there for a time.

Kilcredaun was also the location of a World War 2 lookout post number 44, part of the coastal watching service which guarded the coastline. These World War 2 lookout posts or LOPs were located 15km apart and local people was employed at them to report any unusual activity in the sea or air that might affect neutral Ireland's safety.

The recently decommissioned Kilcredaun Point Lighthouse is built on Kilcredaun Head. It is a single bay, two-stage round stone tower with lantern and gallery attached to one-story keeper's house. The lighthouse was built in 1824 and cost £8,000 to build. It is a miniature version of Loop Head Lighthouse and was designed by the same architect George Halpin. There are beautiful views of the Kerry coastline and mountains and the iconic Rehy hill (124m high) from the lighthouse.

The Okeanos, a 7,000 tonnes Panama steamer ran aground at Kilcredaun point in 1947, in suspicious circumstances. Having delivered 5,000 tonnes of grain to Limerick Port, it was on the way back in good conditions with clear instructions from pilots were to go when it was probably deliberately run aground, for insurance purposes. The 12 Greek sailors on board came ashore and by all accounts have an eventful stay in Carrigaholt before their journey home. At low tide, part of the ship is still visible today.

Kilcredaun Point/ Kilconly Point is bounded by high rocky sea cliffs. The cliffs are sparsely vegetated with lichens, red fescue, sea beet, sea campion, thrift and plantains. There is a high chance of spotting

dolphins from Kilcredaun; one of their popular feeding points when the tide turns. Kilcredaun also has quiet country roads, popular with walkers.

The sites at Kilcredaun are mostly on private land but can be accessed by taking a tour with a local guide.

Additional sources:
Kilcredaun sites- http://www.thelongwayround.ie/
Battery- http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/Media,3997,en.pdf

WAW001_LH_005 Rinevella Beach
At Rinevella Bay, Portach Bailte, lies an ancient submerged forest which is visible at low tide. A submerged forest is where the remains of a forest lie submerged beneath a body of water. This forest is one of a number of submerged scots pine forests in the estuary; some of which have been dated to Neolithic (4000-2500BC) period. These forests were covered by peat and estuarine clays in the late Iron Age (300AD) and provide paleo-environmental evidence that allows us to reconstruct these ancient landscapes. The Neolithic landscape along the Shannon estuary would have been highly attractive to prehistoric communities with many food sources in the mixed landscape of estuarine waters, woods and marches. Stray finds of stone tools, megalithic tombs and a Neolithic wetland settlement excavated on the upper Shannon estuary indicates that people have been living, foraging and eventually farming in this area for thousands of years.

The hedgerows at Loop Head are distinctive; there are few trees at Loop Head so the hedgerows are exposed to a lot of light. The open ditches outside the hedgerows also encourage tall marsh loving flora. Local artist Carmel Madigan has identified over 100 species in the Loop Head hedgerows. The flora landscape changes dramatically at Rinevella. In contrast, the salty shingle environment with thin soils at Rinevella provide a completely different habitat to the hedgerow flora. The salt loving flora at Rinevella includes sea aster, common scurvy grass, cow parsley and sea rock milkwort. The flora at Rinevella is exposed to the rigors of winter storms and changes from season to season, depending on weather.

Rinevella Beach, a sandy beach with stony shore is the closest point to County Kerry across the bay. It is a popular area for swimmers. Stone salmon weirs have recently been discovered in the area, indicating that this area has been a popular fishing area for millennia. This is an ideal fishing spot for flatfish and dogfish using lugworm and fish bait. The best time to fish this beach is at low water and the first three hours of the flooding tide. At low tide there are patches of lugworm all along the beach and the most productive areas are in the shelter of the rocky outcrops and sand banks.

There is a local myth that an earthquake around the fifth century submerged a village called Cill Stuifín in the bay. The legend is that this so called hidden city is inhabited by fairies and can be glimpsed every seven years but will bring bad luck to anyone who has the misfortune to see it.

Additional Information
People, Place & Time on Shannon Estuary-
http://www.ucd.ie/archaeology/research/shannon_estuary/more_information.html
Seashore- Madigan, C., 'Seasons, Species and Patterns of a North East Atlantic Shore'. 2014.

WAW001_LH_006 Grave of the Yellow Men
Limerick port was a trading port from the 9th century, with huge expansion in the 12th century. Therefore there were many boats and ships passing along Kilbaha Bay and navigating the shoreline. There have been over a hundred recorded shipwrecks around the peninsula. In the 19th century, a group of foreign sailors drowned in a boating tragedy close to Kilbaha pier. The locals made an attempt to rescue the sailors but this was unsuccessful. The name and nationality of the sailors were unknown and since then they were referred to locally as the yellow men. Details are still unclear to this day but they remain part of the Kilbaha community's oral tradition. A memorial consisting of six stone slabs representing each of the sailors was established to commemorate the unknown men. The memorial is located at an idyllic spot outside the village of Kilbaha, overlooking the beautiful bay.

WAW001_LH_007 Kilbaha Pier & Pilots Commemoration
Kilbaha, the very last village on the Loop Head peninsula, is tucked into a small, sheltered bay at the western edge of the Shannon Estuary. Looking south across the river, the village enjoys arresting views of Kerry Head and the Brandon Mountain Range. Kilbaha's small, picturesque pier was built in the early 19th century to cater for the large numbers of people making their living from fishing, seaweed gathering and piloting the large ships going up the Shannon to Limerick docks. It was also used by cargo vessels bringing supplies to Loop Head lighthouse, four miles west of the village. Fishing is still very popular in Kilbaha. Deep sea fishing can be explored by taking an angling trip from Kilbaha pier. Fishing for conger on the rough ground on the outer side of the pier is very productive at night.

Many local men worked on the sea, piloting Limerick bound cargo vessels up and down the estuary, navigating the Atlantic on one side and the shipping lanes of the estuary on the other side. On 8th May 1873, five of these pilots died when their canoe capsized in high seas, when they were piloting an Austrian brig. There is a memorial to them in Kilbaha and also a ballad written to commemorate their lives. Under an Act of Parliament of 1823 the Limerick Bridge Commissioners (Later Harbour Commissioners) were given authority for the administration of pilotage on the River Shannon. For operational reasons the pilotage body was divided into two divisions, Western and Eastern. The Western Pilots were based in the Kilbaha and Carrigaholt areas and serviced the ships using canoes until a two masted sailing ketch was purchased in 1875 after the five pilots were drowned in Kilbaha.

In March 1843, pilots from Kilbaha boarded a deserted ghost ship, The Windsor Castle of Liverpool, which had left Bombay in June 1842. The pilots succeeded in bringing the vessel to Kilbaha using their canoes and a pilot hooker. They brought the boat to Scattery Roads and guarded her around the clock to prevent plunder. The pilots were offered compensation for their efforts, which they refused. After many months the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland awarded the pilots £5,000 plus their costs and expenses, the award being divided amongst 18 pilots and 16 assistants. In the 1840s Scattery was part of the estate of the Marquis of Conyngham whose son-in-law, Marcus Keane, acted as land agent. Keane approached the compensated families and offered to sell them land on Scattery, an offer which many families took up, increasing the population of the island considerably.

In 1906, the Morven ship, a four masted ship of 2000 tons was shipwrecked at Horse Island, near Kilbaha. The vessel had an eventful voyage from Portland, USA having taken 160 days to reach the mouth of the Shannon and provisions were almost exhausted. When making a tack in the direction of Horse Island the wind suddenly shifted and stiffened and when the order to 'put about' was given the vessel refused to answer her helm and in a short space of time reached the rocks at the base of the cliff. Her bow came very close to the cliff front and her bottom must have been crushed in, for by morning, the whole of the stern portion was underwater and her cargo swept out to sea. Amazingly, not a single life had been lost. The Morven's giant anchor is on display in Kilbaha village.

There is an exhibition commemorating Henry Blake from Kilbaha, the last native Irish speaker, at the Kilbaha Gallery and Crafts. Henry Blake died in 1974 and was a famous seanchaí (a traditional Irish storyteller) and craftsman. Henry also made sugan chairs, which are traditional Irish chairs made without nails and with a weave bottom. His achievements are all the most inspiring because Henry was blind from his teenage years.

Additional Information
Kilbaha Gallery & Crafts- https://www.facebook.com/kilbahagallery

WAW001_LH_008 The Little Ark
In the 19th century, in spite of Catholic Emancipation the Protestant landlords of Loop Head refused permission for the building of a Catholic Church on their land. Catholic Emancipation involved reducing and removing many of the restrictions previously imposed on Roman Catholics to practicing their faith. The Loop Head Peninsula was a part of the estates once forfeited by Lord Clare, and had become the property of Burton and Westby. Their agent Marcus Keane was adamant in his refusal to accommodate the local community's efforts to build a church. This was unacceptable to the locals, who wished to practice their faith. They came up with a number of solutions including using makeshift tents and turning abandoned houses into temporary churches but these were forcibly removed by Marcus Keane. Masses were also said in some of the farmer's houses but they were subsequently threatened with eviction if they persisted with the practice.

In 1852 Father Michael Meehan came up with the solution of building a wooden box on wheels, with an altar inside which could be rolled onto the beach at low tide as the sea shore was considered no man's land. He commissioned a carpenter, Owen Collins in Carrigaholt to build the Ark at a cost of £10. The design was inspired by the Victorian Bathing Machines in Kilkee. The Ark had to be built on the street at Carrigaholt as it was too large for the carpenter's workshop and was completed in two weeks. For five years, masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals took place at the Little Ark before permission to build a church was granted in 1857. The unique Little Ark has been preserved and can be seen in an annex to the existing church at Moveen, originally dedicated to Our Lady, Star of the Sea but more commonly known as the Church of the Little Ark.

Additional Information

 Clune, V. Rev J. cc 'The Little Ark'. Booklet available at Moveen Church.

WAW001_LH_009 Loop Head (Signature Discovery Point)

There are 80 lighthouses in Ireland, all automated with 40 located offshore and 40 located on the mainland. Loop Head Lighthouse is located at the tip of the Loop Head Peninsula which is the furthest point west on the Clare coastline. The setting of the lighthouse is spectacular with the wild Atlantic coastline on one side contrasting with the sheltered Mouth of the Shannon on the other side. There has been a lighthouse at Loop Head since 1670. It was originally a signal fire on the roof of a single-storey cottage.

The present tower designed by George Halpin stands at 23 metres high. It was built in 1854 and was operated and maintained by a keeper who lived within the lighthouse compound. It is a free standing circular plan single bay, four stage lighthouse, surrounded by a metal framed blazed lantern with a metal walkway and cut limestone walls. The range of the light is 23 nautical miles and its signal is a white light flashing four times in 20 seconds. There is a walled enclosure around the lighthouse complex. The operation was converted to electricity in 1871. Brendan Garvey was the last lighthouse keeper to serve in the lighthouse. At various intervals Brendan spent a total of fifteen years as lighthouse keeper before the lighthouse went automatic in 1991. Since then, it is in the care of an attendant and is also monitored by the Commissioner of Lights from their base in Dun Laoghaire. Visitors can take a guided tour up the lighthouse during the tourist season.

At the edge of the peninsula, there is a sea stack known as Diarmuid & Grainne's rock, or Lover's Leap. The mythical Diarmuid and Grainne were running around Ireland, trying to escape from Fionn, Grainne's betrothed. The legend is that they spent a night on this rock. Loop Head was originally called Leap Head or Ceann Léime. This name goes back to the 9-10th century and originates with the folklore story of Cúchulainn. The hag or witch Mal was chasing Cúchulainn around Ireland. If she managed to touch him, he was to fall in love with her. In his efforts to prevent this and escape Mal, Cúchulainn jumped across to the sea stack and Mal followed. Cúchulainn jumped back to the mainland but Mal fell into the sea. Her body was said to have washed up at Hag's Head near the Cliffs of Moher. There is

also a connection with nearby town Milltown Malbay, called after Mal; whose blood it is said washed ashore there.

There is a restored EIRE sign located at Loop Head. During World War 2, there were 85 EIRE signs placed along the western Irish seaboard so that American and German pilots knew that there was passing over neutral territory. At the bequest of the Americans each sign was also given a number so that the pilots might know where exactly they were, an early GPS system. Loop Head is number 45. The EIRE sign at Loop Head was built on commonage land and unlike most of the others signs, was not dug up after the war.

There is also a coastal watch station at Loop Head where local men were employed to report on any sea or sky activity. These World War 2 lookout posts or LOPs were located 15km apart and there is a total of 83 of them in the country. Local people were employed at these LOPs as it was considered they were best placed to recognise any war activity in the sea or air that might affect neutral Ireland's safety. In fact, one of the earliest phones in Ireland was installed at Loop Head so that messages could be relayed to coastal headquarters in Dublin on a daily basis.

In 1943, an aircraft, first spotted by the LOP at Loop Head contained John Francis O'Reilly ('the flighty boy') from nearby Kilkee town. He parachuted and landed near Kilkee but was questioned and arrested the next day at his family home. It turned out he was a spy for Nazi Germany during WW2 but never got to 'spy' and was sent to Arbour Hill Military Detention Barracks in Dublin until the end of the war. He escaped in 1944 but was recaptured, again at his family home in Kilkee when the bounty on his head was collected by his father no less. Quick thinking by John and his father, they realised that the military had never specified who could and could not collect the bounty. In 1940, John was working in Jersey Islands while occupied by the Germans. Looking for more work, he moved to Germany in 1941 working at a steel mill before joining the staff of Irland-Redaktion, the Irish section of the German propaganda broadcasting service where he himself broadcast back to neutral Ireland. From there he joined German Military Intelligence and started planning his return to Ireland by any means possible.

The peat landscape at the tip of Loop Head results in the flora footprint being dominated by peat loving plants. These include a variety of heathers. The pretty and delicate flora grows smaller here than in other places out of necessity to survive the exposed, windswept environment.

The geology at Loop Head is unique and draws geologist from all over the world to the area. The rocks at Loop Head represent the type section of the Upper Carboniferous Ross Sandstone Formation. This formation consists of alternating, parallel bedded sandstones and dark shale. The cliff-face rock formations on the southwest and north sides of the peninsula trace the evolution of a great river delta during the Upper Carboniferous Period, about 320 million years ago when Clare was located close to the equator and was part of the great land mass, Pangea.

Migrant and resident birds are attracted to Loop Head because of its mild Atlantic winters, an abundance of wetlands, rich feeding grounds and undisturbed coastal cliffs. The headland near the lighthouse is the end of major flyways of birds migrating south for the winter from North America, Greenland, Iceland and the Arctic. Over-wintering barnacle geese from Greenland, cormorants, great black-backed gulls and storm petrels can be observed. Autumn is by far the best time of year to visit this region for bird watching. Late July to early November are the most productive months. Regular passage migrants in the autumn include, Turtle Dove, Spotted & Pied Flycatcher, Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Black Redstart, Brambling, Snow and Lapland Buntings.

Additional Information
Lighthouse- http://www.cil.ie/tourism/our-lighthouses/loop-head.aspx
EIRE signs- http://eiremarkings.org/
Bird watching - http://www.clarebirdwatching.com/
Geology- Parkes, M., McAteer, C., & Engering, S., The Geological Heritage of Clare: An audit of County Geological Sites in Clare (2005). http://www.gsi.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A6A0DE5E-DE94-448E-922C-0E352BB91A65/0/Clare_section1.pdf

WAW001_LH_010 Bridges of Ross (Discovery Point)
The spectacular natural sea arch at the Bridges of Ross gives the site its name. There was originally a trio of spectacular natural sea arches, until two of them gradually fell into the sea in the last hundred years. The cliff-face rock formations on the southwest and north sides of the peninsula trace the evolution of a great river delta during the Upper Carboniferous Period, about 320 million years ago when Clare was located close to the equator and was part of the great land mass, Pangea. Current formations at Bridges of Ross were created by later movements of the earth's plates which folded and tilted the beds of sedimentary rock.

The shoreline at Ross beach is home to many creatures and seaweeds that thrive in this undisturbed semi-sheltered shore. Among the species in the lower shore and rock pools include sea anemones and limpets. The limpets, which have re-emerged following near extinction due to over harvesting during the famine, vary in size depending on their location on the shoreline. There are 85 different types of seaweeds identified on the beach. These seaweeds were cultivated for many years by local farmers. Tillage is not carried out much in the area anymore so the seaweed are not harvested and undergo a natural decay process, which in turn results in nutrients for the ocean, which benefits the many creatures living in it.

This area is low lying and seabirds pass very close to shore, if not over your head during autumn migration. The area is regarded as one of the best bird watching sites in Europe. In late summer and autumn thousands of rare seabirds pass close to shore on their southbound migration and makes for really exciting watching and allows the observer superb views of all passing seabirds.

During late summer and early autumn Great Cory's, Balearic, Sooty and Manx Shearwater passage can be excellent. All four skuas; Great, Arctic, Pomarine and Long-tailed are regular and occur from late July to early November. Storm Petrels can be seen from mid-July to late October. Wilson's Storm Petrels are seen normally from mid-July to mid-September with mid-August being the best time of year for passage. Leach's Petrels are always that bit later and occur in large numbers from late September to late October. Sabine's Gulls also appear from mid-August to late October. Grey Phalarope are regular in September and October. Little Auks put in an appearance from early October to late winter depending on wind direction.

In autumn the best sea watching conditions are often after north-westerly gales, especially if the storm centre lies well to the north between Scotland and Iceland or if a fast depression moves down from Greenland and arctic Canada across the north Atlantic. These systems blow in Sabine's Gulls, Leach's Petrels, Little auks, and Grey phalaropes along with a good selection of skuas. Of the rarer seabirds so far there has been ten Fae's Petrels, two Swinhoe's Petrel, one Sooty Tern and three Little Shearwaters. There are regular updates on birds in the area on the website www.clarebirdwatching.com.

It is also possible to spot whales, dolphins and sunfish from the coastline. Keep an eye out for flocks of birds (where there are birds feeding, there could be dolphins or whales too), a change in wave patterns, a blow (a plume of water vapour) or footprint (the circular, smooth patch of surface water where a whale or dolphin has dived to a lower depth).

While most of the famous movie, Ryan's Daughter (1970), was shot in Dingle, Co. Kerry; some scenes were filmed at Bridges of Ross and near Dunlicky Castle.

Additional information:
Seashore- Madigan, C., 'Seasons, Species and Patterns of a North East Atlantic Shore'. 2014.
Bird watching - http://www.clarebirdwatching.com/
Geology- Parkes, M., McAteer, C., & Engering, S., The Geological Heritage of Clare: An audit of County Geological Sites in Clare (2005). http://www.gsi.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A6A0DE5E-DE94-448E-922C-0E352BB91A65/0/Clare_section1.pdf

WAW001_LH_011 Dunlicky
Dunlicky Castle also known as Doonlicka, was built sometime before 1574 by the MacMahon family whose chief residence was Carrigaholt Castle. Similar to Carrigaholt, the castle at Dunlicky was a tower house. It had an earth bank running along the majority of the cliff edge, which may not have been purely defensive but may have provided protection from the high winds. This was not the most hospitable place to live and by 1675, it was described as being in ruins. There are no remains to be seen on the site nowadays as its stone was removed for use elsewhere and the elements took its toll, not helped by the overuse of crushed shell as mortar during its construction.

The castle was built on the site of a much older promontory fort and there were nine of these forts doted along the coastline at Loop Head. These sites were created by the erection of earthen or stone ramparts across the necks of headlands, forming promontory forts. These forts were built primarily for defence or refuge purposes and vary greatly in size. Though generally assigned to the Iron Age, they can vary widely in date from c.1000 BC to 1700 AD and usually have the element dún, meaning fort, in their names, such as here at Dunlicky.

The former site of Dunlicky Castle is a very popular spot for fishing from the cliff face over 100 feet in height. The locals fish primarily for mackerel which are often very plentiful around September, as well as pollock and coalfish off the cliff edge. This is in contrast to the southern shore of the Loop Head peninsula, which offers calmer and sheltered fishing in the mouth of the Shannon.

Visible to the west from Dunlicky Point is a small inaccessible island located approximately 300m off the coast. It is a large flat-topped sea stack surrounded by high cliffs and a rocky shore. This island called Illaunonearaun (*Oileán an Fhearáin*) is a designated SPA (Special Protected Area). The sea surrounding the island, to a distance of 200m, where seabirds forage, bathe and socialise, is included in the designated site. The island is a regular haunt for wintering Barnacle Geese. Flock size varies as birds move between here and Mutton Island to the north with up to 200 recorded at times. The island is very important as a seabird colony.

Additional Information

Castle-
http://www.academia.edu/411910/Reconstructing_the_past_charting_the_destruction_of_Doonlicka_Castle_Co._Clare

Illaunonearaun - http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/specialprotectionareasspa/illaunonearaunspa/

WAW001_LH_012 Bishop's Island

The spectacular rugged coastline is dotted with a number of small islands and sea stacks. Bishop's Island is an example of a sea stack, a geological landform consisting of a steep, often vertical column of rock in the sea near the coast. Sometime in the last thousand years Bishop's Island was connected to the mainland. Over the years, the force of the water has weakened cracks in the headland, causing them to collapse forming this free-standing sea stack, measuring 180m x 90m and 40m high. What makes this site unique is that there are the remains of a church, a clochaun (beehive hut) and the ruins of 3-4 other buildings on the sea stack.

The remains of the church indicate that it was a dry stone church of Gallarus type. This building type takes its name from the famous Gallarus church located in Dingle, Co. Kerry and its design has been compared to that of an upturned boat because of its sloping side walls with stones cut on every side

that fit perfectly together. The smoothly finished outside facings follow the slant of the wall. The Bishop's Island church was small, with an area of only 9m², designed to only accommodate the small resident isolated community. The clochaun, or beehive hut was constructed in a similar style to the church. This monastic settlement is possible connected to St. Senan or his followers who founded a prominent monastery at Scattery on the opposite side of Loop Head in the 6th century.

There is a local legend relating to the name Bishop's Island. A bishop, apparently attempting to escape the Irish famine, brought food to the island. He became trapped on the sea stack and starved to death. The sea stack was subsequently named *Oilean an Easpoig Gortaigh*, the island of the hungry bishop.

Additional Information
Bishop's Island-
http://www.academia.edu/774602/A_Flying_Visit_to_Bishops_Island_Co._Clare_Archaeology_Ireland_19.1_2005

WAW001_LH_013 Kilkee Cliffs (Discovery Point)
The Kilkee cliff walk can be accessed from the car park overlooking the world famous Pollock Holes at the west end of Kilkee town. This national loop walk has 5km or 8km options, following a cliff path along the coastline, passing the truly breath-taking and varied coastline from the truly remarkable Pollock Holes to the amphitheatre, with its tier upon tier of seat-like rocks; the Pink Caves; the nearby Diamond Rocks; Intrinsic Bay and Look Out Hill. The reefs are exposed to the full force of Atlantic swells from the west. The site is a SAC (Special Area of Conservation) selected for the following habitats; large shallow inlets and bays, reefs and sea caves.

At the beginning of the walk, next to the café is a Seamus Connolly's bronze sculpture of the actor Richard Harris with racquet in hand. A version of racquetball has been played against the high sandstone walls in the West End for generations. Harris was an accomplished squash player, winning the Tivoli Cup in Kilkee four years in a row from 1948 to 1951, a record surpassed by nobody to this day.

The Pollock Holes are a famous bathing place in Kilkee. The three large, natural rock pools offer safe and sheltered swimming, in which the sea water is refreshed with every tide. At one time the pool closest to shore was for female bathers only, while the farthest one, Pollock Hole 3, was just for men. The reason the reef is called Pollock Holes is because small pollock take up residence in them for six months of the year. The pools vary in size from 20-50m and are between 1-2.5m in depth. There are many species of fish, weeds, corals and birds to be observed in the holes. As well as swimming in the pools, they are also used by snorkelers for training before taking up scuba diving. There are other spectacular dive locations along Kilkee's coastal reef offering extensive marine life and great visibility in calm conditions. In fact Jacques Cousteau declared that it was the best place in Europe for diving, and one of the top five in the world.

The treacherous seas beyond Kilkee Bay have been the location of a number of shipwrecks over the years. On 30 January 1836 the Intrinsic, a ship from Liverpool bound for New Orleans, was blown into a bay near Bishops Island. The ship was dashed repeatedly against the cliffs and sank along with her crew of 14, of whom none survived. The bay closest to the shipwreck site is now called Intrinsic Bay. A chartered passenger sailing vessel named the Edmond sank at Edmond Point on 19 November 1850. The ship was sailing from Limerick to New York City but was driven into Kilkee Bay by a storm. As the tide was very high, the ship was driven all the way to Edmond Point, where it split in two. Of the 216 on board, 98 drowned in the disaster. Exactly 50 years to the day after the Intrinsic sank, on 30 January 1886, the Fulmar sank just north of Kilkee in an area known as Farrihy Bay. The ship was a cargo vessel transporting coal from Troon in Scotland to Limerick, but never reached its destination. Of the 17 crew members aboard only one body was ever recovered.

Resident birds along the cliffs include, breeding seagulls, Kestrel, Peregrine, Rock Dove, Raven, Chough, Fulmar, Shag, Skylark, Rock and Meadow Pipits. The common migrant breeders include Swift, Swallow, House Martin Wheatear, Whitethroat, and Sedge Warblers. Late October through to March of most years normally sees a small influx of northern gulls to the area with Glaucous and Iceland Gulls regular. Small flocks of Purple Sandpipers frequent the rocky outcrops. Great Northern Divers and auks like Razorbill and Black Guillemot can be seen at Moore Bay.

Scarce or rare birds seen in the locality include: Eider, Surf Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Sabine's, Ring-billed and Yellow-legged Gulls, all four skuas, Little Auk, Waxwing, Golden Oriole, Turtle Dove, Black Redstart, Blackcap, Twite, Lapland and Snow Bunting.

Additional Information
Kilkee Reefs SAC-
http://www.npws.ie/media/npwsie/content/images/protectedsites/sitesynopsis/SY002264.pdf
Pollock Holes-
http://www.clarechampion.ie/pollock-holes-eighth-wonder-of-the-world/

WAW001_LH_014 Kilkee

Kilkee is renowned as one of Irelands premier seaside tourist towns and regarded as one of the safest bathing places in Ireland being protected from the full force of the Atlantic by a reef known as the 'Duggerna Rock' upon which are the famous natural swimming pools, known as the Pollock Holes.

Kilkee derives its name from the Irish Cill Chaoi that means Church of Chaoineadh Ita or St. Caoi's Church. It was by this name Cill Chaoidhe that the coastal town got its first mention under in the Annals of the 14th Century, ancient Irish texts. In the late 15th century, Kilkee Castle was constructed by the MacSweeney's as supporters of the MacMahons and later of the O'Briens. At the beginning of the

1800s, Kilkee was just a small fishing village. There was a large aristocratic community in Limerick who because of the Napoleonic Wars couldn't take the Grand Tour of Europe. They were looking for an alternative. Kilkee offered them the natural amenities and bathing areas so coveted at the time. They were also drawn to the area's unique climate. The air here benefits from the west winds journey across the broad expense of the Atlantic Ocean being warmed by the Gulf Stream.

The horseshoe bay was surrounded by sand dunes, which was the location of some of the local fishermen's cottages. These was rented out to the Limerick tourists and started to be advertised in Limerick newspapers as salt lodges. In the 1820s a paddle steamer service from Limerick to Kilrush was launched providing easier access to Kilkee. In the 1830s Kilkee expanded to accommodate the numerous wealthy visitors from Ireland and overseas and this is when many of Kilkee's Victorian buildings originate. Gradually the town grew as wealthy merchants from Limerick wanted holiday homes by the sea, resulting in a building boom in the 1830s. As demand for lodgings in Kilkee grew, several hotels were built. Along with these, three churches were built, a Roman Catholic church in 1831, a Protestant church in 1843 and a Methodist church in 1900, reflecting the cosmopolitan feel of the town in that era. In the early 19th century when it was featured on the front page of the Illustrated London News as the premier bathing spot in the country. In 1892, the West Clare Railway was extended to include Kilkee and brought with it another tourism boom. At its height, the railway carried nearly 250,000 people to Kilkee annually.

At one stage in the 1800s the beach was divided into three parts, the middle part for men and the two outer ones for women. This arose when local magistrates received complaints that men were bathing naked. Women were more modest, they entered the water by means of bathing boxes or machines which were towed out into the sea so that a lady could dip in the sea away from prying eyes. The first bathing box erected in the West Clare resort in the 1830s was known as the Lady Chatterton. These bathing boxes were used for changing up to the 1950's. The 1901 census revealed that a number of single or widowed women were listed as owning bathing-machines and offering donkey rides as their occupation. The sea wall and embankment around the bay was begun on the west side as part of famine relief work in 1846 and completed in the 1860s.

Kilkee has had a number of famous visitors over the years; Sir Alfred Tennyson visited on a number of occasions in the 1940s and Charlotte Bronte spent most of her honeymoon in Kilkee in July 1854. She wrote of her trip "Here at our Inn - splendidly designated 'the West End Hotel' - there is a good deal to carp at, were in a carping humour - but we laugh instead of grumbling - for out of doors there is much indeed to compensate for any indoor shortcomings, so magnificent an ocean - so bold and grand a coast - I never yet saw." In 1896, the Crown Princess of Austria visited the town. In 1961, Che Guevara and his group visited and stayed in Kilkee as they were unable to fly from Shannon airport due to fog. In a local bar a young Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick met with Che. Jim later went on to produce one of the worlds most famous and iconic posters of Che Guevara called VIVA CHE in 1968.

The famous movie director John Ford, shot a short film called 'One Minute's Wait' in Kilkee. It was one of three short stories of Irish life that Ford weaved into a feature-length film called 'The Rising of the Moon', released in 1957. 'One Minute's Wait' is a comic story about a train station and glimpses into the lives of the passengers. It starred Maureen O'Hara.

A popular tradition on the seashore is venders selling cooked periwinkles to tourists. The periwinkles are particularly popular with tourists from Limerick, who have coveted this delicacy at Kilkee for hundreds of years. There are six different species of periwinkle at Kilkee and the only edible one is found throughout the shoreline. Local fishermen continue to set pots for lobster, edible crab and crawfish. Deep-sea fishing and shore angling from high rocks are popular pursuits and Pollack, ballan wrasse and couger eel are often caught.

For the bird watching enthusiast, the bay and sandy beach is the focal point of Kilkee. Rocky coastal zones, attracting many waders and gulls fringe the sandy beach in the bay. Early morning excursions are best during the summer as the birds tend to avoid the beach when it is occupied by holiday makers. Autumn and winter are by far the best times to visit for good birding. Life on this storm battered coast can be hard and flocks of birds regularly take shelter on the beach and the grassy slopes during times of rough weather. In winter the beach and bay are the main attractions with lots of wading species like Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Sanderling, Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit and Oystercatcher. Roosting flocks of Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls can have European visitors like Mediterranean Gull mixed with Common and Black-headed Gulls.

The sandy beach forms part of the Kilkee SAC (Special Area of Conservation) which is a rich and diverse marine environment. The beach at Kilkee is composed of brown-coloured, poorly sorted sand and is fairly flat over most of its width. There is a small amount of drift weed on the strand line and a sand hopper community is present. In the mid shore, polychaete worms are occasional to abundant. At the low shore, polychaete worms are evident and amphipod crustaceans are common.

The Strand Races are horse races contested annually on the Kilkee strand. They first began in the 19th century on the sand-hills where the golf club is now. The races are normally held over two days in September, when the summer season is drawing to a close. The course is made by placing poles on the beach and when the tide goes out the races begin.

Additional Information
Kilkee- http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/places/kilkee_history.htm
Bird watching - http://www.clarebirdwatching.com/

ADDITIONAL HERITAGE AREAS- general interpretations

WAW001_LH_015 Blackweir Bridge

The turf trade accounted for some of the boat traffic up and down the Shannon Estuary. There is a large area of bog near Moyasta, (at Tullaher, Moanmore and Sragh) close to Blackweir Bridge and there were approximately 20 turf boats, bringing turf from Poulnasherry Bay around 1900. These turf boats were built locally. The turf boats were double-enders, built with short crosswire timbers for the bottom instead of the conventional long boards. The sticky muddy shallow water around Blackweir Bridge meant that small boats locally called cots were employed to bring the turf from the bridge out to the larger turf boats. The remains of one of these cots was excavated in recent years. It measured in excess of 30ft in length, with a maximum beam of over 14t and a depth of 4ft. The last man to work on a turf boat in the area was William Lynch in the 1940s. Lorries then began to transport the turf along newly improved roads, making the practice of using turf boats redundant.

From the bridge, the sheltered and isolated bay at Poulnasherry can be observed. Poulnasherry Bay is stony and unusually rich in wildlife. Poulnasherry Bay has designated shellfish waters under the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations. Poulnasherry affords a great view over the slob-lands, which attract large flocks of overwintering wild fowl and waders in particular Brent Geese, Wigeon, and Greenshank. Shelduck are common all year and breed in the summer. Aquaculture and fishing is popular at either side of the bay. Ideal fishing is bottom fishing where you can catch bass and flounder using crab and lugworm as bait. The estuary was historically an important food producing area and is recorded as 'Oyster Hole' on the Pelham Grand Jury map of 1787 or Poll Na N`íosraí (Oyster hollow) in Gaelic, later anglicised to Poulnasherry.

WAW001_LH_016 Tullig

Tullig, from the Irish work Túllaig, meaning a hill. In 1841, the village of Tullig had a population of 269 people and there was 50 houses recorded. It had a bustling fishing and seaweed industry. The *Strapa Mór* is a difficult cliff path which was used for centuries to transport seaweed from the beach to nearby farms, where it was used as a fertilizer. Another enterprise, towards the end of the 19th Century, was the quarrying of the brown stone blocks from the Tullig cliffs. They were then loaded on a raft on the shore, and, when floated by the tide, were towed to their destination in Ross Bay, where they formed a retaining wall on the raised shore. As boats left Tullig Bay, rowers would have been careful to negotiate the "Custom Gap" between the three rocks at the entrance. The village of Tullig was completely wiped out by the famine and there are no remains of this once bustling village to be seen. In 1849 the Illustrated London News printed a picture of the then deserted and desolate village.

Additional Information

http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/history/strapa_mor.htm

WAW001_LH_017 Doonaha

There are twelve ringforts in the townland of Doonaha. The prominence of ringforts is reflected in the townland's name in Irish *Dún Átha*; dún is the Irish word for fort. The Loop Head Peninsula has one of the highest densities of ringforts in any part of Ireland, with over 240 ringforts recorded on the peninsula. A ringfort is a circular raised space, enclosed by a ditch and external bank. More prominent ringforts have two or three external banks and ditches. The majority of ringforts were constructed in a three hundred-year period from the beginning of the seventh century to the end of the ninth century. They mostly functioned as farmsteads engaged in pastoral farming. They are almost always built in clusters and measure between c.24-60m in diameter. The ringforts in Doonaha and on the Loop Head Peninsula are on privately owned land.

There is a Napoleonic Period battery at Doonaha since 1814 and is one of six batteries located in the vicinity. There were Napoleonic French invasion plans to access and invade Britain from the west of Ireland. The Mouth of the Shannon was one of the three invasion areas included in the French Directory's instructions to Vice- Admiral Villaret de Loveuse in October 1796, during the preparations of an expedition to Ireland and the batteries were constructed to ensure the seas leading to Limerick were adequately monitored and protected. Napoleon was defeated soon after the batteries were built so the canons were never used but there were soldiers based there for a time.

The 3km of coastal rock by Doonaha exposures comprises micaceous sandstones, siltstones and shales of importance at this site are the trace fossils preserved in the Upper Carboniferous, Namurian rocks. These starfish traces represent the only Namurian starfish traces in Ireland. They are the only fossils found in this otherwise barren sequence of sandstones and siltstones. The presence of sand volcanoes at Doonaha indicates evidence of sedimentary instability. A sand volcano is a cone of sand formed by the ejection of sand onto a surface from a central point. The sand builds up as a cone which looks like a small volcanic cone and can range in size from millimetres to metres in diameter.

Additional Information
Ringforts in Loop Head-
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/archaeology/statistical_analysis_ringfort_loop_head.htm
Battery- http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/Media,3997,en.pdf
Geology- Parkes, M., McAteer, C., & Engering, S., The Geological Heritage of Clare: An audit of County Geological Sites in Clare (2005). http://www.gsi.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A6A0DE5E-DE94-448E-922C-0E352BB91A65/0/Clare_section1.pdf

WAW001_LH_018 Corbally

North of Kilkee is the village of Corbally, with its traditional small streetscape. There is an amazing view of the north and south coastline from this point. Its high viewpoint also illustrates the long narrow field

systems adopted in Ireland following the redistribution of land from landlord to tenant by the Land Commission from 1885.

Corbally was the location of a World War 2 lookout post number 46, part of the coastal watching service which guarded the coastline. These World War 2 lookout posts or LOPs were located 15km apart and local people was employed at them to report any unusual activity in the sea or air that might affect neutral Ireland's safety.

At Coosheen in Farrihy Bay is the remains of an improvised slipway. This hints at the once bustling fishing industry at this site. In 1837, there were 50 currachs working along this coastline; at the turn of the 20th century, this was down to 13 currachs. The fishing agent from the nearby towns met the boats when they came ashore in the morning to buy the fish. At its height, there were up to 20 local women gutting, curing and cleaning the mackerel on tables on the seashore. The local women also earned money selling seaweed, fish and shells in the nearby towns. Traditionally three men owned each currach, which they used alternatively and the takings from each fish catch was divided equally between them.

In recent years a project was set up Kilkee where six working currachs were built using a template from a fifty year old currach, traditionally called 'canoe' in West Clare. The West Clare 'canoe' was built by the last of the great traditional currach builders John 'Cully' Marrinan of Corbally.

Loop Head WAW Site Interpretation Introduction and Summary

November 2014

Introduction

The Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) is Ireland's exciting new signed scenic route stretching 2,500 miles from Donegal to West Cork. The route encourages visitors to experience Ireland's incredible coastline, seascapes, history, heritage, culture, folklore and importantly local people and communities. With this in mind, the Heritage Officer of Clare County Council in partnership with the Heritage Council, Failte Ireland and Loop Head Tourism chose Kilkee and Loop Head for a community based pilot project which aims to develop a local heritage trail for Loop Head. The objective is to promote a greater sense of understanding of our history, heritage, folklore and culture along this section of Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) route by connecting with and placing the local community of Loop Head and Kilkee at the core of all heritage site interpretation. The overall project aim is to consult with the local community to produce and display design ready interpretation content for the proposed heritage trail on the Loop Head peninsula and store it on an easy to use project database.

Loop Head offers the visitor spectacular and differing landscapes, with the Shannon Estuary on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. The interpretations focus on the landscape, history and unique aspects of the site and are explained to give the visitor a local's insight into the sites. The unique aspects cover topics such as geology, flora, fauna, and maritime heritage, built heritage, religious sites, military heritage, folklore and early tourism. A summary of the interpretations under these headings are recorded below.

Geological Landscape

The geology at Loop Head is unique and draws geologist from all over the world to the area. The rocks at Loop Head represent the type section of the Upper Carboniferous Ross Sandstone Formation. This formation consists of alternating, parallel bedded sandstones and dark shale. The cliff-face rock formations on the southwest and north sides of the peninsula trace the evolution of a great river delta during the Upper Carboniferous Period, about 320 million years ago when Clare was located close to the equator and was part of the great land mass, Pangea.

The natural sea arch at the Bridges of Ross gives the site its name. There was originally a trio of spectacular natural sea arches, until two of them gradually fell into the sea in the last hundred years. Current formations were created by later movements of the earth's plates which folded and tilted the beds of sedimentary rock.

A spectacular cliff walk begins at the west end of the town of Kilkee and follows a cliff path along the coastline. There is the option of a five or eight kilometre looped walk. The Cliff scenery is truly breathtaking and varied from the unique Pollock Holes (three natural rock pools) to the amphitheatre,

with its tier upon tier of seat-like rocks; the Pink Caves; the nearby Diamond Rocks; Intrinsic Bay and Look Out Hill. The reefs are exposed to the full force of Atlantic swells from the west.

Fauna

The mouth of the Shannon, Ireland's largest river and a natural heritage hotspot is a designated SAC (Special Area of Conservation) for a number of habitats and a SPA (Special Protected Area) for a number of bird species. Migrant and resident birds are attracted to Loop Head because of its mild Atlantic winters, an abundance of wetlands, rich feeding grounds and undisturbed coastal cliffs. The headland near Loop Head lighthouse is the end of major flyways of birds migrating south for the winter from North America, Greenland, Iceland and the Arctic. At the Bridges of Ross, the area is low lying and seabirds pass very close to shore, if not over your head during autumn migration. The area is regarded as one of the best bird watching sites in Europe. Visible to the west from Dunlicky Point is a small inaccessible island called Illaunonearaun located approximately 300m off the coast that is a designated SPA (Special Protection Area) because the island is a regular haunt for wintering Barnacle Geese.

There are about 200 dolphins living in the Shannon Estuary and calves are born every year. There are three main areas that the dolphins frequent, where they eat mackerel, herring and salmon, depending on the season. What makes this area so special is that the river Shannon flows in from the midlands, bringing nutrients from the bogs and meets water from the Atlantic, rich in plankton.

The shoreline at Ross beach is home to many creatures and seaweeds that thrive in this undisturbed semi-sheltered shore. Among the species in the lower shore and rock pools include sea anemones and limpets. The Pollock Holes are a famous bathing place in Kilkee. The three large, natural rock pools offer safe and sheltered swimming, in which the sea water is refreshed with every tide.

Flora

There are three distinctive flora landscapes evident in Loop Head. Firstly, the hedgerows at Loop Head are distinctive; there are few trees at Loop Head so the hedgerows are exposed to a lot of light. The open ditches outside the hedgerows also encourage tall marsh loving flora. Over 100 species have been identified in the Loop Head hedgerows. Secondly, in contrast, the salty shingle environment with thin soils at Rinevella and Querrin provide a completely different habitat to the hedgerow flora. The salt loving flora includes sea aster, common scurvy grass, and cow parsley and sea rock milkwort. Thirdly, the landscape at the tip of Loop Head and at the Bridges of Ross results in the flora footprint being dominated by heath and maritime grasslands. The peat loving plants include a variety of heathers. The pretty and delicate flora grows smaller here than in other places out of necessity to survive the exposed, windswept environment.

At Rinevella Bay, Portach Bailte, lies an ancient submerged forest which is visible at low tide. A submerged forest is where the remains of a forest lie submerged beneath a body of water. This forest

is one of a number of submerged scots pine forests in the estuary; some of which have been dated to Neolithic (4000-2500BC) period. These forests were covered by peat and estuarine clays in the late Iron Age (300AD) and provide paleo-environmental evidence that allows us to reconstruct these ancient landscapes. The Neolithic landscape along the Shannon estuary would have been highly attractive to prehistoric communities with many food sources in the mixed landscape of estuarine waters, woods and marches.

Maritime History

County Clare's maritime tradition has been an integral part of local communities for many years, especially true of the communities at Loop Head. In recognition of this, Clare Traditional Boats and Currachs Study was commissioned and published in 2008. Its findings examined the distribution, diversity and social intricacies of Clare's boats and currachs, as well as contextualising their profound role in Clare's history and culture.

The piers at Camogue, Querrin, Kilbaha and Carrigaholt constructed in the 19th century, were built in response to the large scale commercial fishing that the locals were engaged in at the time. For example, in 1842, there were at least 50 currachs, 15 bigger boats and another 15 trading boats operating from Querrin. In 1837, it is recorded that at Carrigaholt up to 400 locals were employed at the pier and six hookers, of seven tons each, and upwards of 500 currachs were active near the pier.

Limerick port was a trading port from the 9th century, with huge expansion in the 12th century. Therefore there were many boats and ships passing along the estuary and navigating the shoreline. The piers at Cammogue, Portnasherry, Querrin, Carrigaholt and Kilbaha were among those built to cater for the large numbers of people making their living from fishing, seaweed gathering and piloting the large ships going up the Shannon to Limerick docks. There have also been over a hundred recorded shipwrecks around the peninsula.

Under an Act of Parliament of 1823 the Limerick Bridge Commissioners (Later Harbour Commissioners) were given authority for the administration of pilotage on the River Shannon. For operational reasons the pilotage body was divided into two divisions, Western and Eastern. The Western Pilots were based in the Kilbaha and Carrigaholt areas and serviced the ships using canoes until a two masted sailing ketch was purchased in 1875 after the death of five pilots from Kilbaha.

Built Heritage

Carrigaholt Castle, now in ruins, is the former residence of MacMahon family who built the castle around 1480. The MacMahons were the chiefs of the Corcabascin Peninsula, the old name for Loop Head. Like most medieval tower houses, this was strategically located for defensive purposes. It is located at the end of the fishing pier overlooking the Shannon Estuary and the harbour, providing an excellent view up and down the bay or Estuary. As well as their main residence at Carrigaholt, the MacMahons built Dunlicky Castle also known as Doonlicka, sometime before 1574. This castle was

located close to Kilkee on the edge of a cliff and may have been built to reinforce the MacMahon's control over the peninsula. Similar to Carrigaholt, the castle at Dunlicky was a tower house. It had an earth bank running along the majority of the cliff edge, which may not have been purely defensive but may have provided protection from the high winds. This was not the most hospitable place to live and by 1675, it was described as being in ruins.

Dunlicky Castle was built on the site of a much older promontory fort and there were nine of these forts doted along the coastline at Loop Head. These sites were created by the erection of earthen or stone ramparts across the necks of headlands, forming promontory forts. These forts were built primarily for defence or refuge purposes and vary greatly in size. Though generally assigned to the Iron Age, they can vary widely in date from c.1000 BC to 1700 AD and usually have the element dún, meaning fort, in their names, such as here at Dunlicky.

The Loop Head Peninsula has one of the highest densities of ringforts in any part of Ireland, with over 240 ringforts recorded on the peninsula. A ringfort is a circular raised space, enclosed by a ditch and external bank. More prominent ringforts have two or three external banks and ditches. The majority of ringforts were constructed in a three hundred-year period from the beginning of the seventh century to the end of the ninth century. They was mostly built in clusters and functioned as farmsteads engaged in pastoral farming.

Loop Head Lighthouse is located at the tip of the Loop Head Peninsula which is the furthest point west on the Clare coastline. The setting of the lighthouse is spectacular with the wild Atlantic coastline on one side contrasting with the sheltered Mouth of the Shannon on the other side. There has been a lighthouse at Loop Head since 1670.

Religious Heritage

There is evidence of early monastic settlement on Loop Head. At Querrin Pier, the visitor can see Scattery Island, home to a 6th century monastic site, founded by St. Senan, who was born locally. The site contains the ruins of six churches and has one of the largest round towers in Ireland at 120 feet in height but unusually its door is at ground level. In the townland of Kilcredaun, there are the remains of two early single cell Christian churches, associated buildings and a holy well. The townland of Kilcredaun is named after St. Credaun, who apparently was a disciple of St. Senan.

Bishop's Island is an example of a sea stack, a geological landform consisting of a steep, often vertical column of rock in the sea near the coast. Sometime in the last thousand years Bishop's Island was connected to the mainland. Over the years, the force of the water has weakened cracks in the headland, causing them to collapse forming this free-standing sea stack. What makes this site unique is that there are the remains of a church, a clochaun (beehive hut) and the ruins of 3-4 other buildings on the sea stack.

In the 19th century, in spite of Catholic Emancipation the Protestant landlords of Loop Head refused permission for the building of a Catholic Church on their land. In 1852 Father Michael Meehan came up with the solution of building a wooden box on wheels, with an altar inside which could be rolled onto the beach at Kilbaha at low tide as the sea shore was considered no man's land. For five years, masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals took place at the Little Ark before permission to build a church was granted in 1857. The unique Little Ark has been preserved and can be seen in an annex to the existing church at Moveen, originally dedicated to Our Lady, Star of the Sea but more commonly known as the Church of the Little Ark.

Military Heritage

There are the remains of six Napoleonic Period batteries located in the Shannon Estuary, including at Doonaha and Kilcredaun. There were Napoleonic French invasion plans to access and invade Britain from the west of Ireland. The Mouth of the Shannon was one of the three invasion areas included in the French Directory's instructions to Vice- Admiral Villaret de Loveuse in October 1796, during the preparations of an expedition to Ireland and the batteries were constructed to ensure the seas leading to Limerick were adequately monitored and protected.

There are three Lookout Posts (so called LOPs) in Loop Head, one at Kilcredaun, one at Loop Head and one at Corbally, north of Kilkee. These World War 2 lookout posts or LOPs were located 15km apart and local people was employed at them to report any unusual activity in the sea or air that might affect neutral Ireland's safety. There is also a restored EIRE sign located at Loop Head. During World War 2, there were 85 EIRE signs placed along the western Irish seaboard so that American and German pilots knew that there was passing over neutral territory. At the bequest of the Americans each sign was also given a number so that the pilots might know where exactly they were, an early GPS system.

The Irish Famine

Loop Head was among the areas worst hit by the Great Irish Famine between 1845 and the early 1850s. The local population was decimated by the devastating impacts of the famine. As well as the many deaths by starvation, many people were evicted by the landlords and there was widespread emigration. Between December 1849 and February 1850, the *Illustrated London News* carried a lengthy seven-part series entitled *Condition of Ireland: Illustrations of the New Poor-Law*, illustrated by a total of eighteen sketches, which mainly focused on the Kilrush Union and showed graphically the devastating efforts of the famine in this region.

In 1841, the village of Tullig had a population of 269 people and there was 50 houses recorded. It had a bustling fishing and seaweed industry. The village of Tullig was completely wiped out by the famine and there are no remains of this once bustling village to be seen. In 1849 the *Illustrated London News* printed a picture of the then deserted and desolate village.

There was a ferry disaster on 12th December 1849, when those seeking relief at the workhouse in Kilrush took the ferry from Cammoge Pier. They had come from the western parishes of Kilballyowen and Moyarta but didn't receive relief at the workhouse that day and were turned away. On the return journey, the ferry sunk and 41 victims drowned, no doubt partly because they were too weak to swim ashore. A memorial to those that died is located at the ferry crossing at Cammoge and was unveiled as part of the National Famine Commemoration in 2013.

Folklore

There were a number of local legends revealed during interviews and research for this project. Folklore suggests that St. Senan fought the sea serpent for control of Scattery Island. The sea serpent is a common figure in local legend in the area.

There is a local myth that an earthquake around the fifth century submerged a village called *Cill Stuifín* in Rinevella bay. The legend is that this so called hidden city is inhabited by fairies and can be glimpsed every seven years but will bring bad luck to anyone who has the misfortune to see it.

At the edge of the peninsula, there is a sea stack known as Diarmuid & Grainne's rock, or Lover's Leap. The mythical Diarmuid and Grainne were running around Ireland, trying to escape from Fionn, Grainne's betrothed. The legend is that they spent a night on this rock. Loop Head was originally called Leap Head or *Ceann Léime*. This name goes back to the 9-10th century and originates with the folklore story of Cúchulainn. The hag or witch Mal was chasing Cúchulainn around Ireland. If she managed to touch him, he was to fall in love with her. In his efforts to prevent this and escape Mal, Cúchulainn jumped across to the sea stack and Mal followed. Cúchulainn jumped back to the mainland but Mal fell into the sea. Her body was said to have washed up at Hag's Head near the Cliffs of Moher. There is also a connection with nearby town Milltown Malbay, called after Mal; whose blood it is said washed ashore there.

There is a local legend relating to the name Bishop's Island, a sea stack with monastic remains. A bishop, apparently attempting to escape the Irish famine, brought food to the island. He became trapped on the sea stack and starved to death. The sea stack was subsequently named *Oilean an Easpoig Gortaigh*, the island of the hungry bishop.

Land Redistribution

From 1885, the Land Commission set about redistributing land from landlord to tenant. Their method of redistribution often involved dividing the land into long narrow fields. These distinctive field systems are still evident in Loop Head, especially at Corbally, north of Kilkee, where the long, thin field systems cover the landscape.

19th Century Tourism

At the beginning of the 1800s, Kilkee was just a small fishing village. There was a large aristocratic community in Limerick who because of the Napoleonic Wars couldn't take the Grand Tour of Europe. They were looking for an alternative. Kilkee offered them the natural amenities and bathing areas so coveted at the time. They were also drawn to the area's unique climate. The air here benefits from the west winds journey across the broad expense of the Atlantic Ocean being warmed by the Gulf Stream. In the 1820s a paddle steamer service from Limerick to Kilrush was launched providing easier access to Kilkee. In the 1830s Kilkee expanded to accommodate the numerous wealthy visitors from Ireland and overseas and this is when many of Kilkee's Victorian buildings originate. Gradually the town grew as wealthy merchants from Limerick wanted holiday homes by the sea, resulting in a building boom in the 1830s. As demand for lodgings in Kilkee grew, several hotels were built.

The West Clare Railway line was opened in 1893 and its initial timetable consisted of three daily trains between Ennis and Kilkee, with a branch line connection to Kilrush. The railway line provided a gateway to the Loop Head Peninsula for tourists and business alike, allowing for easier transportation of goods and services. By the turn of the century, there were five daily trains and approximately 250,000 passengers and 80,000 tonnes of freight and livestock carried on the West Clare Railway annually.
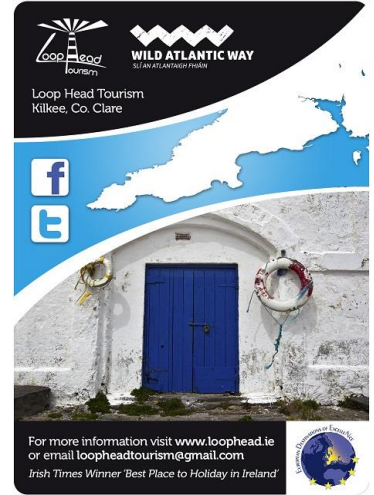
Appendix G – Z-Card Print Map Design

Z-Cards fold into near credit card sized maps with hard board front and back covers. All details, photos and text will be edited and finalised before printing.

Front Cover Option 1

Front Cover Option 2

Back Cover

Z-Card - Map Side

1. West Clare Railway
At Moyasta, the visitor can take a trip aboard the steam train 'Slieve Callan' and learn about the famous West Clare Railway which opened in 1893. By allowing for easier transportation of goods and services, the railway provided a gateway for tourism and commercial trade to the Loop Head Peninsula.

2. Querrin Pier
At Querrin Pier, the visitor can see Scattery Island, home to a 6th century monastic site. The Shannon Estuary is a designated Special Area of Conservation containing many important habitats and is of international ecological importance. This was the route for boats and ships going up Limerick Port since the 9th century.

3. Carrigaholt Castle & Bay
The village of Carrigaholt grew up around the castle, now in ruins, which was built by the MacMahon family in 1480. Visitors can take boat trips from Carrigaholt Pier around the peninsula to see the only resident group bottlenose dolphins in Ireland, as well as amazing views of the coastline, cliffs and geology around Loop Head.

4. Kilcredaun Church & Holy Well
The townland of Kilcredaun contains a number of archaeological buildings including church ruins, a holy well, the 19th century coast guard station, a Napoleonic battery, World War 2 lookout post and Kilcredaun lighthouse. The sites at Kilcredaun are mostly on private land but can be accessed by taking a tour with a local guide.

5. Rinevella Bay
Rinevella Bay is a popular swimming and fishing bay. The remains of a submerged forest at Rinevella is one of a number of submerged scots pine forests found in the Shannon Estuary. Rinevella Beach, a sandy beach with stony shore is the closest point to County Kerry across the bay.

6. Grave of the Yellow Men
The Grave of the Yellow Men is a memorial at an idyllic spot outside the village of Kilbaha consisting of six stone slabs, representing each of six sailors who died in Kilbaha Bay in the 19th century. The name and nationality of the sailors were unknown and they were referred to locally as the yellow men.

7. Pilots Memorial & Kilbaha Bay
Kilbaha's small, picturesque pier was built in the early 19th century to cater for the large numbers of people making their living from fishing, seaweed gathering and piloting the large ships going up the Shannon to Limerick docks. There is a memorial to five local men, who drowned when piloting a ship along this coastline in 1873.

8. Loop Head
Visitors can take a guided tour up Loop Head Lighthouse and marvel at the contrast between the rugged Atlantic on one side and the sheltered Shannon Estuary on the other. At the edge of the peninsula, there is a sea stack known as Diarmuid & Grainne's rock, or Lover's Leap which is steeped in Irish mythology.

9. Church of the Little Ark
In the 19th century the landlords of Loop Head refused permission for the building of a Catholic Church on their land. The Little Ark, currently located in the church at Moveen is a wooden box, containing an altar which was rolled onto the beach at low tide, to allow the Catholics practice their faith.

10. Bridges of Ross
At the Bridges of Ross, marvel at the spectacular and unique natural sea arch and keep an eye out for the many rare seabirds that pass close to shore here on their southbound migration. The shoreline at Ross beach is home to many creatures and seaweeds that thrive in this undisturbed semi-sheltered shore.

11. Dunlicky Castle
This exposed cliff edge was the location of Dunlicky Castle, a tower house built sometime before 1574 by the MacMahon family, although no remnants of the castle remain. The former site of Dunlicky Castle is a very popular spot for locals who fish for mainly mackerel off the cliff edge.

12. Bishop's Island
Bishop's Island is an example of a sea stack, separated from the mainland over the last thousand years. What makes this site unique is that there are the remains of a church, a beehive hut and other ruins on the sea stack, built there before it separated from the mainland.

13. Kilkee Cliff Walk & Pollock Holes
The Kilkee cliff walk can be accessed from the car park overlooking the world famous Pollock Holes at the west end of the town. The national loop walk follows a cliff path along the coastline, passing the truly breathtaking and varied coastline with five or eight kilometre loop options. The Pollock Holes are three large, natural rock pools that offer safe and sheltered swimming during low tide.

14. Kilkee Victorian Town
The town of Kilkee, with its unique climate, natural amenities and coveted bathing areas has been a popular tourist destination since the Victorian era. At its height, the railway carried nearly 250,000 people to Kilkee annually. The town retains some of its 19th-century Victorian feel, alongside with many modern facilities.

Heritage Areas

- **Corbally and Coosheen**
  Rich in heritage and tradition, this area has amazing views of the coastline.

- **Doonaha Forts**
  With 12 ringforts in Doonaha, there are over 240 ringforts on Loop Head.

- **Tullig Famine Village**
  Completely wiped out by the famine, over 200 people had once lived in the village.

- **Blackweir Bridge**
  The sheltered bay at Poulnasherry attracts large flocks of overwintering wild fowl and waders.

- **Cammogue**
  Rich in heritage and history, Cammoge suffered a ferry disaster during the famine.

- **Cross**
  With Loop Heads largest church, this attractive country village is centrally located on the peninsula.

Z-Card – Heritage Site Side