

# SHANNON ESTUARY WAY HERITAGE RECORDING PROJECT

Abarta Heritage  
November 2018



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR  
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



OUR HERITAGE:  
WHERE THE PAST  
MEETS THE FUTURE

2018  
EUROPEAN YEAR  
OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
#EuropeForCulture



Clare Local Development Company  
Cuideachta Forbartha Áitiúil an Chláir



Fáilte Ireland  
National Tourism Development Authority



# PROJECT TERMS OF REFERENCE

- **To Produce Visitor Information and Interpretation**
- **Bank of High Quality Photographs**
- **Recording of Oral History**
- **Assessment and Infrastructural Recommendations**
- **The Creation of a Bespoke Database**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shannon Estuary is a spectacular area of unspoilt beauty with a rich heritage of stories, traditions and folklore where visitors can experience diverse heritage, scenery and hospitable communities.

### **The Project:**

The Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project is a large multi-faceted project with heritage, tourism and community as the central core themes. The project has sought to:

- Identify key heritage assets,
- Record local stories,
- Work with communities to identify tourism opportunities along the Clare section of the Shannon Estuary Way.

This project has been informed through consultation with the Heritage Officer of Clare County Council, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) Fáilte Ireland and a large number of individuals and communities who very generously gave their time and insights into life on the estuary. There has been a strong level of engagement amongst the communities throughout the project.

### **The Legacy:**

The project has captured a wealth of information about the heritage of the Shannon Estuary, while engaging with the locals whose lives are shaped by the river. It has created an awareness and appreciation for the heritage of the Shannon Estuary and the stories and knowledge that have been shared for centuries, forming a rich resource that will be an invaluable educational and promotional asset for the region. Extensive desk based research was carried out on the heritage of the Shannon Estuary Way and a database of Heritage Points of Interest was created with information about visitor access. This project provides a foundation for the next level of development of the Shannon Estuary Way, such as the Networking Programme that is being instigated by Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources over the coming months. Through this project communities have been provided with a roadmap of how to complete projects that they are interested in developing to develop tourism and visitor information along the Shannon Estuary Way.

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Fintan Ginnane and Róisín Burke, Crovraghan Pier



John Cleary, Killadysert

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project is an initiative of Clare County Council in conjunction Fáilte Ireland. Abarta Heritage were appointed to undertake the Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project from mid July to mid November 2018. This project is an action of the County Clare Heritage Plan 2017 - 2023 and was funded by Clare County Council, the Heritage Council and Fáilte Ireland. This report is authored by Róisín Burke and Neil Jackman of Abarta Heritage. All images are by Neil Jackman, unless stated otherwise.

## 1.1 Project Background

The key aim of this project was to create a shared understanding of the heritage of the Shannon Estuary Way, primarily consisting of the production of a digital archive to form a baseline of information for future promotional, educational or visitor related products. Tourism development was also an important focus of this project and communities were engaged with along the Estuary to discuss tourism developments for their area. Communities discussed what they valued about the heritage of their area and discussed their priorities. Following these discussions, a range of recommendations to help them to realise their ambitions have been put forward. These recommendations are outlined in the Community Sections below.

The Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project captured and compiled information and identified points of interest, from the estuary at Bunratty to the villages Knock / Killimer. To achieve this a number of key tasks were undertaken, such as:

- Desk-based research,
- Meetings with community groups,
- Site visits and assessments,

- Recorded interviews with contributors along the Estuary Way,
- High resolution photography (including aerial) of points of interest along the Estuary Way,
- Mapping of the points of interest,
- Development and population of a database,
- Creation of interpretative and promotional content (including a short promotional video).

The outcomes of this project have helped to raise awareness of the rich and varied heritage of the Shannon Estuary Way, and helped to identify a number of enthusiastic locals who live along the banks of the river.

## 1.2 Project Team - Abarta Heritage

Since Abarta Heritage was founded in 2012, the company has helped many national institutions, county councils, community development organisations and the private sector to identify, assess, interpret, conserve and promote their heritage. The focus is on digging deep to research and discover the truly meaningful stories, and empowering communities to take an active role in the promotion and management of their local tourism assets. Creating positive and robust frameworks for collaboration between stakeholders, local government and national bodies is a central the company ethos.

This project was led by Róisín Burke (MA) who met with local communities and carried out the oral heritage recordings. Neil Jackman (BA, MIAI, MRSAI) visited all the accessible heritage sites along the estuary to assess them for suitability for tourism and to capture images, and Dr Conor Ryan (Ph.D) carried out all the research on the heritage sites identified and digitally mapped the points of interest. Geni Murphy (MA) and Neil Jackman worked on producing the promotional content and the short promotional video.



Figure 1 Location of the Shannon Estuary Way

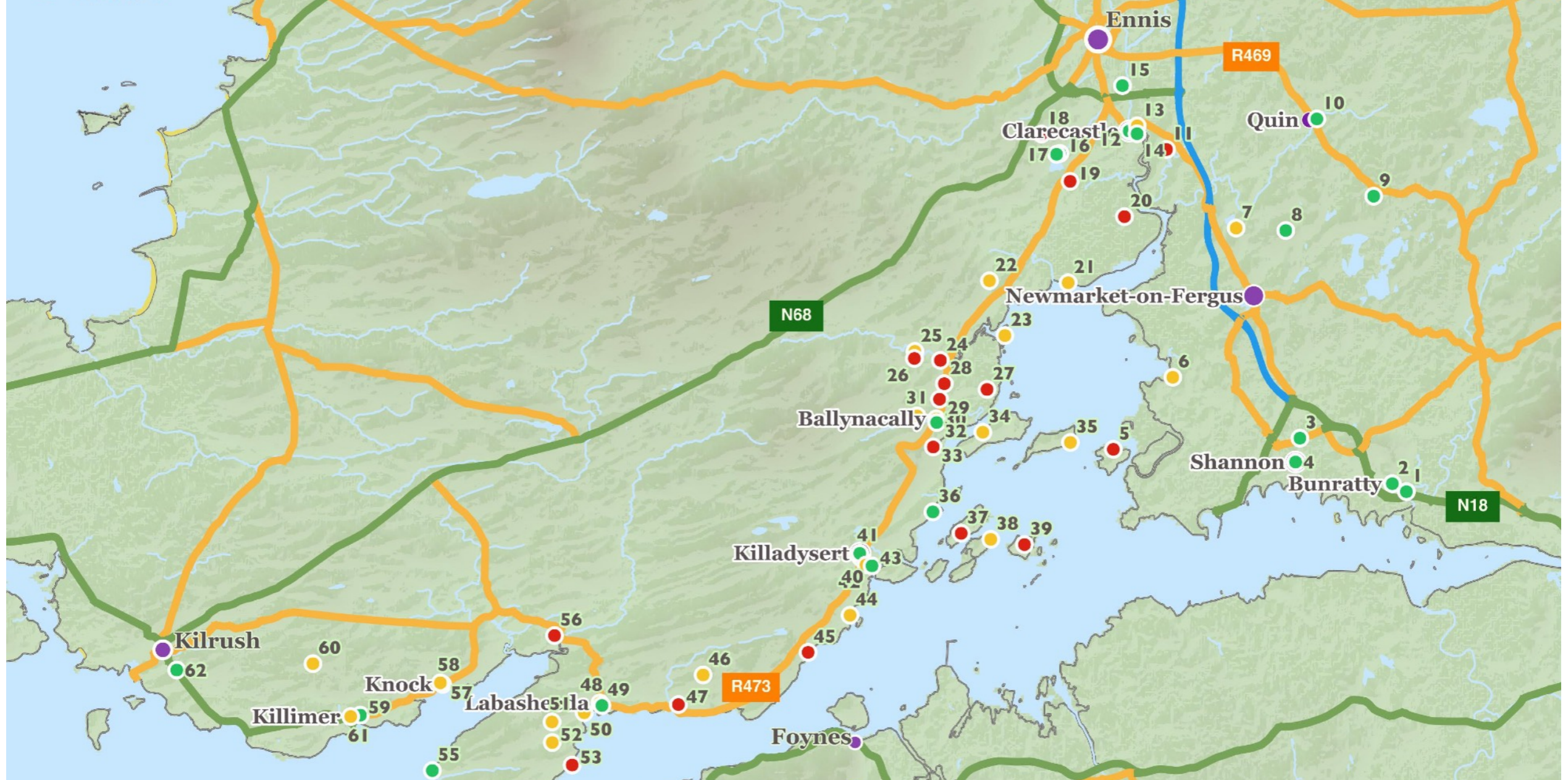


Figure 2: Overall map of the study area

### 1.3 Study Area of the Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project

The Shannon Estuary Way is a spectacular and varied landscape located just off the Wild Atlantic Way. This route, is unspoilt and allows the visitor to gain an appreciation for the remarkable natural beauty of the River Shannon. The area is rich in heritage and has a number of communities nestled along the banks of the estuary. The focus of our project was concentrated in County Clare – specifically the communities from Bunratty to Killimer. The communities that were engaged with as part of this project are:

- Bunratty
- Shannon
- Clarecastle
- Ballynacally & Clondegad GAA
- Killadysert
- Labasheeda
- Knock/Killimer

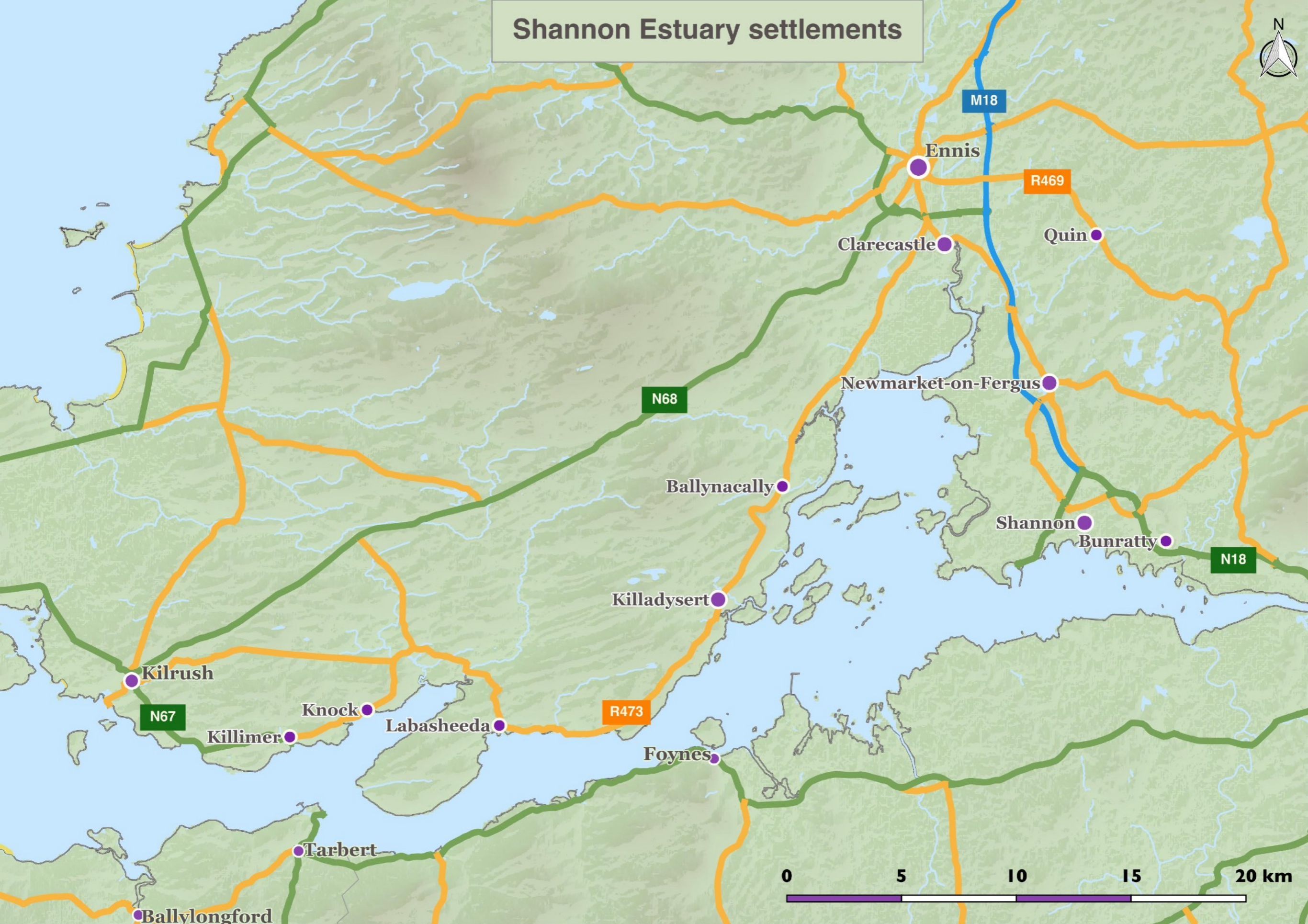


Figure 3: Locations of settlements in the Study Area



## 1.4 Background and Context

### 1.4.1 Wild Atlantic Way

Stretching from west Cork to the very northernmost tip of County Donegal, the Wild Atlantic Way (Slí an Atlantaigh Fhián) is fast becoming one of the world's favourite long-distance touring routes. The untamed beauty of the green Irish landscape that ends in soaring cliffs often provides a seemingly endless view over the deep blue Atlantic Ocean. It is a landscape that provides not only stunning views and scenery, but also has a deep and rich cultural heritage, full of stories and mythology.

As the drive has become more and more popular, areas of congestion are starting to emerge along the route. As a means of alleviating this congestion and of spreading tourism across the region, spurs or loops off the Wild Atlantic Way are being developed and one of these spurs is the Shannon Estuary Way.

### 1.4.2 Shannon Estuary Way

The Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme 2015 - 2019 recommended that a series of drives off the Wild Atlantic Way be developed. One such drive is the Shannon Estuary Way. The aim of the development of the Shannon Estuary Way is to offer an additional tourism experience for visitors drawn to the Wild Atlantic Way and to encourage a spatial spread of visitors across the wider Western region. The Shannon Estuary Way extends from Listowel in Kerry all the way around the estuary including Tarbet, Foynes, Pallaskenry, Limerick City and on into Shannon, Ennis and down to Kilrush in Clare. The Shannon Estuary Way map with information about activities along the Estuary Way was launched by Fáilte Ireland in June 2017.

Fáilte Ireland have engaged in a programme of consultation with local communities as part of a process to identify stories for interpretive signage and a common branding theme for the Shannon Estuary Way. Local people attended a number of story sharing workshops and information evenings in 2017 and 2018 and points along the estuary

were identified for interpretive signage. Six points have been identified in County Clare where Fáilte Ireland interpretive signage will be installed in the coming months. These signs will be located at:

- Tullyglass Point, Shannon
- Clarecastle Quay
- Crovraghan Pier
- Killadysert Pier
- Labasheeda Quay
- Knock Pier

Clare County Council wish to fully realise, along with local communities, the potential for and variety of activities as well as the diversity of built heritage along the route of the Shannon Estuary Way. It is hoped that the Shannon Estuary Way will encourage visitors to move away from the more congested sites along the Wild Atlantic Way to discover the communities, heritage and stories of the Shannon.

### 1.4.3 Market Segmentation

Fáilte Ireland have identified three core market segments for tourism to Ireland. These segments have been characterised by their motivations for tourism rather than strictly by traditional demographics such as their age or nationality. This motivational approach to segmentation can be applied equally to domestic tourism as to overseas visitors. The three core groups are the Culturally Curious, Great Escapers (both addressed in more detail below as they are the groups that are the most suitable for the Shannon Estuary Way) and the Social Energisers (this group is more focused on city breaks although many are interested in quirky accommodation and non-formal experiences). There is some overlap of wants and needs between the two key groups of the Culturally Curious and Great Escapers, and happily the Shannon Estuary Way is perfectly suited to satisfy both of these core groups.

QUICK REFERENCE TABLE	
TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE CULTURALLY CURIOUS	
1	<i>Curious learners who want to visit new places and explore landscapes, history and culture</i>
2	<i>Explorers rather than tourists - they want to discover hidden stories</i>
3	<i>They base themselves in a location, used serviced accommodation, hire a car and explore the area</i>
4	<i>They want an interactive, local and personalised experience - something out of the ordinary</i>
5	<i>They want to relax and explore the natural environment and experience the real Ireland</i>
6	<i>Socially responsible and environmentally conscious</i>
7	<i>Quality conscious in terms of products and services, and willing to pay extra for quality</i>
8	<i>Health conscious and will go out of their way to eat healthy and stay active</i>
9	<i>They like to be recognised for having made a good holiday choice</i>
10	<i>They like to share their experiences with others by word of mouth</i>

**Table 1:** *Ten Things to Know About the Culturally Curious* (Source: Fáilte Ireland)

### 1.4.3.1 The Culturally Curious Market

#### *Independent thinkers with a craving for culture and history*

According to Fáilte Ireland, Culturally Curious visitors are independent travellers who are generally in a mature age bracket (typically 40+) with a particular interest in history and heritage and who want to get off the beaten track and discover new and interesting places. They choose their destinations carefully and are active sightseers, who are looking to expand their experience and appreciation of culture by exploring landscapes, and encountering traditional crafts and events. They conduct thorough research in advance of their trip (often online), and they demand an authentic experience. They dislike being told what to do, they dislike being hurried and they have a broad and inclusive view of culture that can include historical attractions, natural heritage, music, food, crafts or events.

Culturally Curious visitors are most likely to stay in a hotel, self-catering accommodation or a B&B as long as there's a lot to see. They are three times more likely to take long breaks than average but they also take more short breaks than average, both at home and overseas. They are happy to pay for something that is out of the ordinary. Superior service – “people who recognise me by name” A human guide that offers real insight into the history of a place. They value environmentally friendly practices, (Source Fáilte Ireland).

<b>QUICK REFERENCE TABLE:</b> <b>TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GREAT ESCAPERS</b>	
1	<i>Their primary motivation is to spend quality time away with friends and family in a place that offers the chance to get away from the daily grind</i>
2	<i>Nature and rural settings are highly desirable.</i>
3	<i>They want to have the opportunity to enjoy experiences, walking, kayaking, exploration, hands on with craft or creative arts.</i>
4	<i>They want to connect to the landscape, to feel the earth beneath their feet and to absorb the stories and history of a place.</i>
5	<i>They are seeking mindfulness and a place apart. They want to go home refreshed and revitalised.</i>
6	<i>They don't particularly want to make connections with other people, be they locals or others on holiday, they are there to spend quality time with their own family and friends. Guided tours are not as appealing, they would appreciate being facilitated to make their own independent way - so better on-site interpretation, audio guides and brochures so they can pick and choose their own priorities.</i>
7	<i>Great Escapers could particularly encompass the domestic market</i>
8	<i>Health conscious and will go out of their way to eat healthy and stay active</i>
9	<i>They may seek relatively strenuous activities</i>
10	<i>They appreciate things that take the hassle away</i>

### 1.4.3.2 The Great Escaper Market

#### *Adventurous and committed to spending quality time in a breathtaking place*

According to Fáilte Ireland, the Great Escapers are often couples, in their late 20–30s, some with young children. They are seeking time away from their busy lives and careers. They are specifically interested in rural holidays, and travel as a family or in a small group with close friends. They want a break, to get physical with nature, and to reconnect to their partner or friends. They often seek to take part in strenuous (though not necessarily extreme) activities. They want to connect to the landscape and soak in the history and heritage of a place. They want a mindful experience where they can understand a sense of the history and reflect on their place in the vastness of space and time. They want to come home refreshed and revitalised with their batteries recharged. They love to escape to breath-taking landscapes. They love actively exploring more remote and exciting places, on foot or by bicycle. They enjoy visiting heritage landmarks. They particularly enjoy fun and authentic experiences like traditional

music sessions in a local pub, or a relaxed meal of fresh local produce. However, they don't particularly want to interact with other people. They would much prefer to be provided with the means and information to explore by themselves rather than take a guided tour. So good interpretation at the sites and things like audio guides and brochures are essential for them. They love things that take the hassle away, and that lets them focus on relaxing and immersing themselves in the landscape and culture. The Great Escapers are as likely to be from the domestic market as much as an overseas one. (Source Fáilte Ireland). The Shannon Estuary Way is ideally placed to capitalise upon current market trends and marketing initiatives in tourism. What is required to achieve this is a structured plan of action that provides a road map for future development. This report aims to provide such a road map and will ensure that the Shannon Estuary Way can showcase its wonderful heritage and stories to visitors from near and far, (Source Fáilte Ireland).



# METHODOLOGY

# 2. METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Defining the Shannon Estuary Way and its Communities

The first action undertaken was to meet the steering committee for the project which consisted of Congella McGuire; Clare County Council Heritage Officer, Gloria Callinan; Clare Local Development Company, Michael Foley; Community Representative and Siobhan King; Fáilte Ireland. Following consultation with the steering committee, the study area for this project was defined as the area along the estuary stretching from Bunratty to Knock / Killimer. This study area was cross-referenced with the map that Fáilte Ireland has produced to ensure that sites they had selected were also included on our inventory of sites. The clear focus of the study area was communities living alongside the river and engaging with these communities throughout the project.

## 2.2 Community Engagement

A press release was drafted to inform the public about the project and how people can get involved. This press release was circulated to community groups along the estuary way and people then began to email their interest to be kept informed about the progress of the project. Meetings were then set up with the individual communities along the estuary way. Róisín Burke travelled to each community to meet representatives of the community groups and to discuss the project with them. The project was split into three entities:

1. Creation of a heritage database and identification of key heritage assets in each community
2. Oral Heritage Recordings
3. Sustainable tourism development in the area

Each group were asked to consider the three aspects of the project and propose sites for inclusion in the database, people who could be recorded in their area and sustainable tourism developments. A spokesperson for the group was nominated who would be the point of contact for the group. Further details about the groups and recommendations for tourism developments can be found in section three of this report.

A list of all the people expressing interest in the project was maintained as part of the project archive.

## 2.3 Storytelling Evening

As part of raising awareness about the shared heritage along the Shannon Estuary Way, a storytelling event was organised and delivered as part of Heritage Week 2018, as the theme for Heritage Week 2018 was “*Sharing Our Stories*”. A flyer advertising the event was designed and circulated and Shannon Heritage provided the use of Mac’s Bar in Bunratty Folk Park and supplied teas / coffees and scones for all who attended the storytelling evening.

The event took place on Wednesday 22nd August and approximately 30 people came along to listen and share stories. Almost every community along the estuary way was represented at the event and individuals in attendance were invited to share their stories with the group.



Fintan Ginnane recounting stories about life on Horse Island



Communities meeting at Mac's Bar prior to the Storytelling

Almost everyone in attendance had a story to tell. During the course of the evening the following stories were recounted:

- Punt Guns along the River Shannon
- Life on Horse Island
- How Saint's Island got its name
- The story of the Colleen Bawn
- St Senan, Scattery Island and the story of how he defeated the serpent
- The construction of Shannon Airport
- The Killadysert Agricultural Show
- Air Tragedies that took place in the early years of Shannon Airport and their effect on the communities along the estuary
- Poitín production on the islands
- Transportation on the River

Over the course of the evening, as stories about life in the past were recounted, connections were made and an appreciation for the wealth of heritage and history along the estuary way was developed. The event was a great success. Afterwards, a number of people expressed interest in attending another event like it so there is great potential to develop a regular storytelling evening focusing on stories from the Shannon as there is such a wealth of stories relating to life beside and on the river.



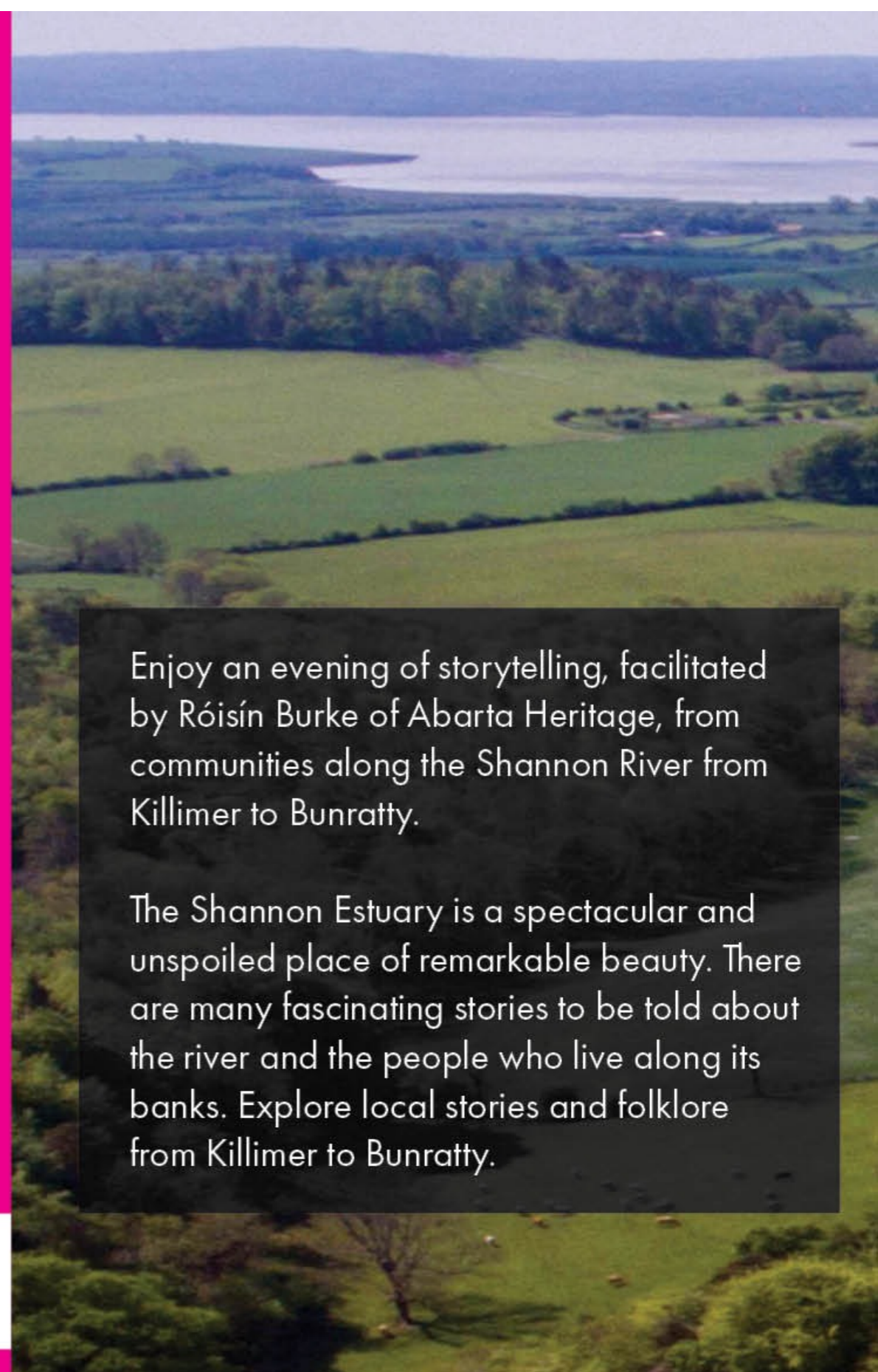
# Shannon River & Estuary Stories

**DATE: 22 August 2018**

**TIME: 7:30 - 9:30pm**

**LOCATION: Mac's Barn, Bunratty Castle  
& Folk Park, Bunratty, County Clare.**

Free admission - booking required  
on 065 684 6454.



Enjoy an evening of storytelling, facilitated by Róisín Burke of Abarta Heritage, from communities along the Shannon River from Killimer to Bunratty.

The Shannon Estuary is a spectacular and unspoiled place of remarkable beauty. There are many fascinating stories to be told about the river and the people who live along its banks. Explore local stories and folklore from Killimer to Bunratty.



Clare Local Development Company  
Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil an Chláir

## 2.4 Heritage Audit and Bespoke Database

### 2.4.1 Desk Based Research

An intensive phase of desk based research was carried out by Dr Conor Ryan and Róisín Burke. Previous work that had been carried out by Fáilte Ireland was reviewed and other consultants with communities along the estuary way identifying stories that could be used on Shannon Estuary Way interpretive signage to be installed by Fáilte Ireland. This previous research had identified some points of interest along the estuary way and the stories associated with them. All of the historical, archaeological and architectural sites were identified using the following sources;

- ***Archaeological Survey Database, National Monuments Service.***

Compiled by the National Monuments Service and available online at [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie), this contains individual entries for over 138,000 recorded monuments. Each record includes a map, aerial photograph, geographical coordinates, site categorisation and a description of the site.

- ***National Inventory of Architectural Heritage .***

Compiled by the Department of Culture, Heritage & Gaeltacht and available online at [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie). It contains detailed descriptions of historic buildings and other objects of architectural significance, along with an appraisal of each one and location information.

- ***Ordnance Survey Letters.***

Letters compiled by John O’ Donovan, Eugene O’ Curry and other scholars in the 1830s and 1840s during the mapping of Ireland by the Ordnance Survey. They contain first-hand accounts of antiquities, details of the origin and meaning of placenames, and local folklore and mythology. Individual volumes are available for each county.

- ***Schools Folklore Collection.***

Local folklore, stories and customs gathered as part of the Schools Folklore project in 1937– 1938 and held in the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin. The information was gathered through the national school system by pupils with the support of teachers. The collection is currently being digitised with many counties now available online at [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie).

- ***National Parks & Wildlife Service Site Synopses.***

These documents are compiled by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and are available online at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie). They contain descriptions of Protected Sites around Ireland (National Parks, National Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Wildfowl Sanctuaries) and provide details of their ecological and environmental significance.

- ***logainm.ie***

The Placenames Database is maintained by *Fiontar*, a collaboration between Dublin City University and the Department of Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht. It can be accessed online at [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie). Research was carried out on all placenames associated with the Liffey and the POIs.

- ***Geological Survey of Ireland: County Geological Site Audits.***

The Geological Survey of Ireland has published reports on sites of geological and natural heritage significance around Ireland on [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie). These audits include maps, photographs, location information and a description of each site and its significance.

- ***Heritage Council’s Map Viewer.***

The Heritage Council’s Map Viewer incorporates information from a range of different sources such as: National Museum of Ireland, Local Authorities, Royal Irish Academy, National Biodiversity Centre as well as many other organisations.

- ***Aerial Imagery.***

Bing and Google Maps were consulted to gain a sense of the location of sites, their landscape setting and their state of preservation.

- ***Clare County Library.***

Clare County Library has an extensive online database of information concerning heritage sites, historic houses, people of note and folklore in County Clare and it was an invaluable resource during our research phase.

All of this research was then cross referenced with local publications that community groups had published and research that had been carried out during Shannon Estuary Way consultations by Fáilte Ireland.



## 2.4.2 Site Selection and Evaluation

After carrying out desk based research, sites were evaluated to assess tourism potential and suitability. Each site was evaluated according to considerations around responsible and sustainable tourism. The geographic area of the study focused on the area from Bunratty to Knock/Killimer. Sites were included that were located within a close proximity (around 2 km or less) of the N18/M18 road from Bunratty to Clarecastle and the R473 from Clarecastle to Killimer. There are hundreds of monuments recorded on the Archaeological Sites and Monuments record for this area. Some of the more common types of monuments that are located in this region are:

**Ringforts:** A common feature in the Irish landscape, ringforts are a form of rural settlement that typically date to the Early Medieval Period (between 400–1200 AD). They are usually sub-circular areas enclosed by an earthen bank and ditch. They functioned as farmsteads and residences.

**Cashels:** The equivalent of a ringfort with a drystone rather than earthen enclosure.

**Fulacht Fia / Burnt Mounds:** One of the most common archaeological sites in the country. They typically date from the Bronze Age (2,400–500 BC) and are defined as horse shoe or kidney shaped mounds consisting of cracked burnt stone and soil built up around a trough. They are usually located in marshy or boggy areas close to a water supply and are associated with a variety of purposes – from cooking, dyeing, bathing, beer production or tanning hides.

**Enclosures:** These sites are defined by an enclosing feature such as a bank or ditch and have no other distinctive features that could date them to a specific time period.

When choosing sites for the database the following criteria was utilised:

I. **Access, Consent and Safety** relates to ease of access to the site, whether the landowner has given permission and any safety or environmental considerations. Many of these archaeological sites are on private land and have no visitor access. Consideration was also given as to whether increased visitor numbers would have a detrimental impact on the preservation or biodiversity of each site.

II. **Visual Aspect** considers the extent to which the heritage site or the journey to it is likely to enthuse or excite visitors, particularly due to its appearance and atmosphere.

III. **The Story** rates the site on the degree to which it has an interesting and engaging story e.g. historical personalities, events, folklore associated with the site, does it fit within an overarching theme?

An initial examination indicated that many of the archaeological sites were situated on private farmland and/or were in a poor state of preservation. Several architectural sites were identified as being private residences and therefore did not have potential as visitor attractions. Other sites were deemed not to have potential as they had low visitor experience benefit, with little to see, no distinctive story or compelling characteristics associated with them. Some groups suggested lists of local sites some of which were included and others were deemed ineligible after field assessment.

Sixty two sites were selected for inclusion in the database based on the criteria above. The sites in green in the database (see Appendix I) are well-known heritage sites which are already visitor attractions and/or have strong potential for development as attractions. There are 25 sites rated as green. The sites in amber have potential as visitor attractions without being key assets. There are 20 sites rated as amber. However, in some of these cases the potential could be realised by taking appropriate measures (improving access or interpretation for example). The sites in red have no appreciable potential as visitor attractions for now. There are 17 sites rated as red.

## 2.4.3 Field Work

In order to maximise time in the field, all the top rated sites were visited and photographed in high-resolution using state-of-the-art DSLR cameras and [where appropriate] aerial photography from a drone (in accordance with Irish Aviation Authority guidelines and in awareness of the proximity of Shannon Airport, all aerial photography was carried out at very low altitude. A number of selected images will form part of the Image Bank (see Section 2.7).

#### 2.4.4 Database

A heritage database was created to house all the information that was collected during the heritage audit. This database contains the following fields:

1. Site Name
2. Townland
3. Nearest Town / Village
4. Longitude / Latitude
5. Ref. No.
6. Rating
7. Description
8. Ownership / Access

62 points of interest were added to the database. It is hoped in the future that the Shannon Estuary Way Steering Committee will take ownership of this database and add more heritage sites to the list. The list that has been created is not exhaustive and can be added to and developed in the future by communities and this was communicated to them during meetings. This database can be used by communities to promote the fantastic heritage sites in their area. If a Shannon Estuary Way website is developed, the content can be adapted and uploaded to be used as interpretative content or as a promotional tool for the area.

#### 2.4.5 Mapping

Maps were produced using open source data and QGIS software along with co-ordinate data gathered during site visits and desk research. Maps were produced to show the location of key Points of Interest that form the database. An overall map was produced showing all 62 points of interest along the Estuary Way and then four individual area maps were also produced showing a breakdown of the points of interest.

### 2.5 Oral History Recordings

A key component of this project was to conduct, record and index interviews to broadcast standard with relevant people to give a voice to the River Shannon Heritage Recording Project. Every community group was asked to suggest people that may be interested in being interviewed as part of this project. Communities were asked to propose individuals that could tell local stories in their own words. A list of people to consider for interview was then drawn up and the recordings took place at times and locations that were most convenient for the interviewees. The following table illustrates the contributors to the River Shannon Heritage Project:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Charlie O Shea	Labasheeda	Growing up in Labasheeda Rendition of The Hills of Ailroe
Tommy McCarthy	Kilmurry McMahon	Athletics in Labasheeda and growing up in Kilmurry McMahon in the 40's
John O' Brien	Bunratty	History of Bunratty
John Cleary	Killadysert	Peadar Clancy and Killadysert connection
Oliver Garry	Killadysert	Growing up in Killadysert
Fintan Ginnane	Killadysert / Horse Island	Growing up on Horse Island
Jackie Elger and Dolores Meaney	The Islands - Coney Island	The Islands of Shannon Estuary Island Life - Coney Island
Eric Shaw	Clarecastle	Punt Guns on the Shannon and the History of Clarecastle The mermaid of Newhall Lake
Mary Hester	Ballynacally	Holy Wells of Ballynacally Paradise House and other Big Houses

Dúchas na Sionna (Shannon History and Heritage Group) carried out an extensive social history oral recording project over the last number of years and recorded many people and their memories of growing up in the new developing town of Shannon so in light of their excellent work there were no new recording opportunities identified in Shannon.

Prior to the interview, each contributor was informed about the project and database and how their contribution would be added to the collection. A consent form was discussed with each contributor and they were given time to review the form before the interview. The audio consent form informs the contributor about the project and that their contribution will only be used for this project. Every contributor signed the form after their interview took place. These forms have been included as part of the archive for this project.

The interviews were carried out using broadcast-quality equipment that records the highest quality digital audio and is very non-intrusive to help to keep the participants at their ease. The audio interviews were edited using the state of the art Pro Tools Software, that created .MP3 and WAV (suitable for archive) files. Each interview was catalogued and archived in accordance with oral history best- practice.

## **2.6 Interpretive Content including Short Video**

During the desk based research phase for the heritage database, the history and folklore of the selected sites was assessed. This information was then distilled to create short interpretive descriptions of the sites which can be used in future marketing or promotion of the sites.

## **2.7 Image Bank Creation**

During the site visits to the most accessible and visitor ready heritage sites, images were generated to create an image bank. These sites were photographed in high resolution using DSLR camera and a drone (where appropriate).



# COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

# 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES ALONG THE SHANNON ESTUARY WAY

Communities in Bunratty, Shannon, Clarecastle, Ballynacally, Killadysert, Labasheeda and Knock/Killimer were all engaged with to discuss possibilities for sustainable tourism developments in their area. A number of projects that were put forward by communities were the development of heritage trails or animation of existing heritage trails or points of interest. Tourism in many of the communities (apart from Bunratty) has not been a major economic feature previously. As such, there were no tourism projects at an advanced stage for any of the communities. Despite this, all of the communities are very interested in developing their tourism offerings and are keen to be part of the next phase of the Shannon Estuary Way development, in particular the networking programme that is being developed by Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources. A key area that needs to be developed along the Shannon Estuary Way is the provision of visitor services, particularly food and drink offerings. When a visitor leaves Clarecastle, there is no coffee shop or restaurant until they get to Kilrush (apart from the Centra shop in Killadysert that has a coffee station). This is quite a gap and a number of communities are interested in getting involved in the food and beverage trade. They will require support before they begin the process as seasonality is a concern for potential businesses. The tidal nature of the River Shannon, may pose challenges and constraints to riverine development and development of water based activities.

The following sections outline the recommendations for each community that have been discussed and proposed by the communities themselves. This is a key part of sustainable tourism development. To be successful the communities have to put forward the ideas and have the drive and initiative to see them through, otherwise they will not succeed. Short term projects have been costed.

This section also highlights the heritage assets and the projects that can easily be developed to enhance the area not just for visitors, but for locals too. In Section Four detailed overall recommendations are proposed for the future development of the Shannon Estuary Way.

The River Shannon is also a nationally important nature habitat, and there is significant potential in the development of nature-focused tourism. A separate report will detail this potential, along with recommendations to help communities. This report will:

- Document key natural heritage information
- Make developmental and promotional recommendations
- Provide individual site assessments and recommendations

# 3.1 BUNRATTY

## 3.1.1 Introduction to Bunratty

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park is undoubtedly one of the most renowned heritage sites in Ireland. The Castle has been a focal point for the community for centuries, indeed the settlement at Bunratty initially developed around the castle and the nearby medieval church on the western banks of the Owenogarney or Ratty River. The modern village dates largely from the nineteenth century, when the bridge, creamery and post office were constructed. Bunratty then became an important location on the route between Limerick and Ennis. In the twentieth century, the village expanded as a result of tourism development following the restoration of the castle in the 1950s and the opening of the Folk Village, which recreates nineteenth century life in Ireland. 369,275 visitors were recorded at the attraction in 2017. With such enduring popularity, retail and accommodation services have grown up around the area as a result. Bunratty's location close to Shannon Airport and on the N18 route adds to its accessibility. A slipway on the river to the south of the bridge provides access to the Shannon Estuary for boats and Bunratty Search and Rescue operate from the slipway too.

## 3.1.2 Community Group and Engagement

Bunratty Local Development Association (BLDA) is a very active and engaged group that have been working tirelessly over the last number of years to improve public amenities around the village. These amenities include the attractive bus shelters that were recently erected on the Old Bunratty Road. The village is very well maintained with many flower beds and it is a clean a pleasant place for locals and visitors alike. BLDA are taking part in a Clare Local Development Company supported community development project with Etownz Consultants, to produce a community plan as part of that scheme (due end of January 2019). A conservation report is currently being completed on Bunratty Church and Graveyard and a new pathway to the Church and Graveyard is being installed. The group have been very engaged with this project and have discussed issues that the village faces and projects that could be completed in the short to medium term.



Bunratty Castle

### 3.1.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Bunratty

#### **Bunratty Castle and Folk Park**

Bunratty Castle and Folk Park is one of the most famous and iconic sites in Ireland. This early fifteenth century tower house is the fourth castle that was built on this site on the banks of the Owenogarney/Ratty River. It was originally built by the McNamara clan and later became the seat of the O'Briens of Thomond. Bunratty Castle was restored by Lord Gort with the assistance of the Office of Public Works and was formally opened to visitors in 1960. Shannon Heritage established a medieval banquet experience at Bunratty Castle in 1963 to encourage transatlantic passengers to spend time in the area. Since that time Shannon Heritage have invested heavily in developing this tourist attraction. The Folk Park (which was developed with the help of Kevin Danaher from the Irish Folklore Commission) was opened by President Erskine Childers in 1964. Initially it consisted of two small farmhouses, a fisherman's hut and a forge but over the years more buildings have been added, including MacNamara's Pub, Ardcroney Church, Hazelbrook House and many others. Visitors can also experience a Fairy Village and Bunratty Walled Garden.

There are a number of interesting nineteenth century buildings in the village as well as a medieval church and graveyard. There is more information about these points of interest below.



Bunratty Old Post Office / Blarney Woollen Mills



Old Bunratty Church and Graveyard

### 3.1.4 Suggested Project Details

#### SHORT TERM: Development of Heritage Trail

Bunratty is a major tourist destination due to the popularity of Bunratty Castle and Folk Park. Many visitors to the area are independent travellers who have time to wander around the village and learn more about the heritage of the area. During meetings with Bunratty Local Development Association (BLDA), the group expressed concern that visitors to the Castle and Folk Park do not travel further to experience all the heritage that Bunratty has to offer. The development of a heritage trail for the village was proposed, and the group sent on work that had been completed on developing a heritage trail in 2011. This work consisted of a detailed powerpoint presentation which outlined over 20 stops or points of interest in the village and surrounding area. Having reviewed these points of interest from a visitor point of view, it is recommended to develop a smaller heritage trail focusing on the core of the village (see map below).

By developing a heritage trail visitors will be able to experience a deeper appreciation of the whole story of Bunratty. A well designed heritage trail is the most effective way of connecting sites to form an engaging tourism and heritage product. The heritage trail proposed for Bunratty is a short looped walk around the core of the nineteenth century village including Bunratty Castle and the River. On the map board that is located outside the Old Post Office a longer 1.8km 40minute loop walk is already mapped out, this walk is suitable for those interested in a long walk around the village and is separate to the proposed Heritage Trail. The following checklist can be used to help develop the trail:

What is the overall theme:	Bunratty Heritage Trail
What type of trail will it be:	Walking Trail
Number of Points of Interest:	9
Length of time to complete the trail:	30 minutes
Type of Signage required:	9 freestanding A3 interpretation panels 1 Finger Post required at entrance to churchyard

Selecting the Points of Interest is a key part of the development of the trail. It is critical to ensure that permission has been sought to include the site on the trail and that it is safe for visitors. It is also important to ensure that each stop is worth visiting on its own merits as this will lead to a better visitor experience. The first point of interest should always be situated at a visitor centre or close to facilities or shops and a looped trail is always the preferred option.

#	Stop	Description
1	Blarney Woollen Mills and Bunratty Old Post Office	The Old Post Office at Bunratty was in use up until the 1950s when it relocated to Hurler's Cross after repeated floods.
2	Bunratty Creamery	The Creamery was constructed in the 1820s and was a stopping point for Bianconi Coaches (the horse drawn transport system that operated throughout Ireland in the nineteenth century).
3	Bunratty Castle Hotel	The House was originally built in around 1810. It was extensively renovated in the 1980s and is now a Hotel.
4	Bunratty Church and Graveyard	There are records of a church on this site from the thirteenth century when the Norman de Clare's established a castle here. The church on the site today dates to the late medieval period.
5	Bunratty Castle	The first castle constructed on this site was built by the Norman family: the de Clare's. The present castle is the fourth castle on the site and was constructed by the McNamara's but came into the possession of the O'Briens of Thomond in the sixteenth century.
6	Durty Nelly's	Durty Nelly's, situated beside the Old Bridge was originally a Toll House and it is said to have been used as a pub since 1620 making it one of Ireland's oldest pubs.
7	Bunratty Bridge	This single arch humpback bridge was constructed in 1804 and replaced an earlier medieval bridge.
8	Bunratty Torc Sculpture	This Sculpture was created by Sligo artist Fred Conlon in the shape of a Bronze Age Torc.
9	Bunratty Quay and Search and Rescue and Wildlife on the Estuary	From the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries, Bunratty Port was a bustling economic hub for goods and traffic moving upstream to Limerick and up the Ratty River to Sixmielbridge. Today Bunratty Search and Rescue are based at the Quay



# Bunratty - Heritage Points of Interest



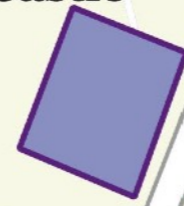
**Bunratty Old Church**



**The Creamery**



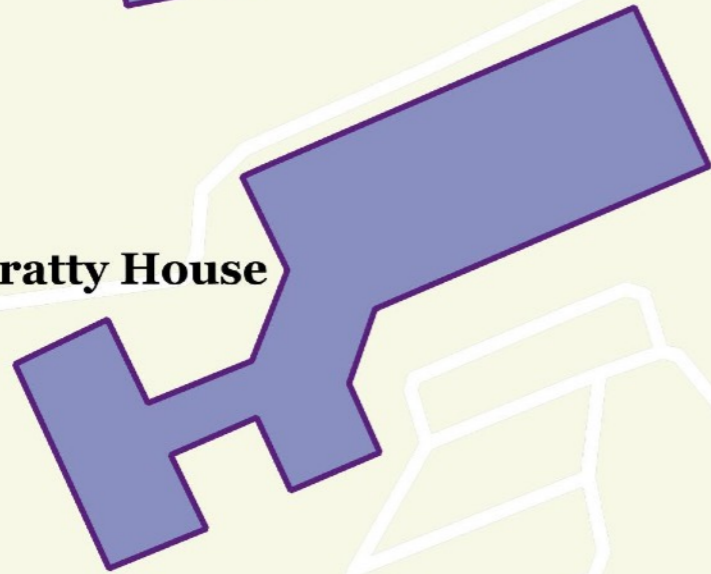
**Bunratty Castle**



**Durty Nelly's**



**Bunratty House**



**Torc Sculpture**



**Old Post Office**



**Bunratty Quay**



**Old Bridge**



 **Heritage Point of Interest (plaque required)**

 **Directional sign required**

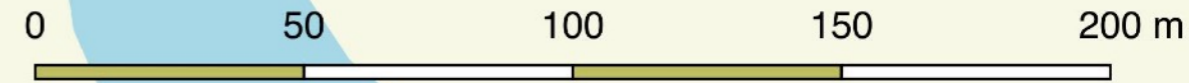


Figure 4: Bunratty Heritage Points of Interest

## Roadmap for Project Development

- **Step One:** BLDA to discuss Heritage Trail with Clare Rural Recreation Officer.
- **Step Two:** Following consultation with the Rural Recreation Officer, BLDA agree on signage locations and content for signage.
- **Step Three:** BLDA seek permission from landowners to install signage at proposed locations.
- **Step Four:** Apply for funding to cover the cost of signage design, manufacture and installation. For more information on funding sources, please see section 5.
- **Step Five:** Work with the signage design company to ensure the content is accurate.
- **Step Five:** Inform Clare County Council Heritage Office of signage location and liaise with council regarding any planning considerations before signage is installed.

It is recommended to install vintage-style cast lectern units (see image below) in A3 size to animate the Heritage Trail through Bunratty village. A large and detailed map board is already located outside the old post office. This map board is a nice addition to the streetscape and it is not recommended for replacement it as it contains all the information about points of interest along the trail. Instead, it is recommend to install the lectern units at each point along the trail. The lectern units should be single pole lectern manufactured from galvanised steel complete with a cast bollard and powder coated black or to an agreed RAL colour.

Nine Lectern Units will be required to animate the trail. BLDA have already amassed a large amount of historical information and this can be edited to create engaging content for the signage. 250 words per sign is the recommended standard and if historic images of the buildings can be obtained, these should be used on the signage as historical images can convey much more than words on an interpretive panel.

One finger post sign is also required as there is already an existing finger post sign directing visitors to the Church and Graveyard and Bunratty Castle Hotel at Blarney Woollen Mills. The additional finger post sign is required at the back of the Bunratty

Castle Hotel to show the way to Bunratty Church and Graveyard which is located at the back of the Hotel.

## Estimated Costs

Description	Cost
Old Cast Lectern Unit in A3	€785.00
9 Old Cast Lectern Units *	€7,065.00
1 Finger Post sign (700mm x 200mm) + 1 pole (76mm x 3.3m) *	€160.00
Delivery and Installation	TBC depending on quantity ordered
Write, edit and design 9 Interpretive panels** (this price includes 2 amendments per panel)	€3,150.00

VAT: 23%

\* Signage Quotation provided by Signiatec

\*\* Panel Design Quotation provided by Abarta Heritage



Vintage-style cast iron lectern unit example – Image by Signiatec.

## MEDIUM TO LONG TERM: Development of a Public Realm Plan

Having consulted with Bunratty Local Development Association, it was clear that the group are anxious to develop the sense of place of the village and connect all aspects of the village in a fully cohesive way. To achieve this, the commissioning of a public realm plan for the village is recommended. A public realm plan would be designed to act as guidance for all those involved with development of Bunratty, including central government officials, local council planners, private developers and other interested parties. It will map out the strategic direction of public realm improvements needed in the village, setting the context for further consultation, detailed design and formal approvals as necessary. Specifically, a public realm plan would help to foster a sense of place and draw all aspects of the village together.

Through public consultation and assessment, the key issues the public realm plan could address are:

- Pedestrianisation of the Old Bunratty Bridge
- Development of the walk from Shannon to Bunratty
- Land and building uses in the area such as the future of the Old Shamrock Hotel
- Establishing a shared vision for the future of the village.

### Estimated Costs

Public Realm plans can be commissioned by the Local Authority and budgets for plans vary depending on the size of the area being assessed. The Heritage Council and Clare County Council may fund the completion of a public realm plan.



Bunratty Castle and Durty Nelly's



Bunratty Bridge

# 3.2 SHANNON

## 3.2.1 Introduction to Shannon

Shannon Town was developed in the 1960s following the construction of Shannon Airport and the Shannon Free Zone Industrial Estate. It was built on marshland reclaimed from the Shannon Estuary. It is Ireland's oldest new town and has grown significantly since its establishment, with a current population of around 10,000 and a range of facilities and services in place. A walking route connects a number of green areas and other points of interest around the town, including the Town Park, the wetlands (both amenities are currently under development) and the estuary. It is possible to walk for several kilometres along the embankment beside the estuary and enjoy fine views across to County Limerick as well as a wide range of wildlife and birds feeding and roosting on the Shannon Estuary mudflats. Close to the end of the walk are the remains of Hasting's farmhouse – a vernacular cottage, where the British General C.H. Lucas was held captive during the War of Independence in June 1920.

## 3.2.2 Community Group and Engagement

There are a number of voluntary and community groups working in Shannon, delivering improvements to the town and local area and a number of people expressed interest in this project when information was circulated. Dúchas na Sionna were the primary point of contact during the course of the project.





Atlantic Air Adventures, Shannon



Hastings Farmhouse, Shannon

### 3.2.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Shannon

#### Atlantic Air Adventures

This is an aviation museum in Shannon town which reflects the aviation history of Shannon and surrounding areas. It features a range of aeroplanes, including a De Havilland Venom, a Cessna Skymaster 337 and a Piper Cherokee, cockpits, and two Rolls Royce jet engines. A replica Spitfire is another interesting exhibit. There is also a Boeing 737 Flight Simulator here which clocked up over 70,000 hours of flying with Canadian Air before it was acquired by the museum. Visitors can experience what it is like to fly a jet airliner inside a cockpit which retains much of its original interior. The museum is operated by a team of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. It provides a range of fun and training activities for both adults and children and is also an approved flight training centre. The museum have applied for funding to develop the museum further to build on a coffee shop as well as other amenities. The development of the Aviation Museum at Shannon will create a key tourism attraction in the area.

#### Hastings Farmhouse

Hastings Farmhouse is a traditional nineteenth century Irish cottage that once had a thatched roof. It was constructed of stone, brick and cob. British General C.H. Lucas, was held captive here during the War of Independence in June 1920. In his report about his time in the farmhouse, he noted that he was well treated and that he was treated kindly. John Hastings was the last person to live in the farmhouse. He passed away in the 1970s.

A fire caused extensive damage to the house and it fell into ruin. In 2012 Dúchas na Sionna conserved the remaining structure and erected an interpretative panel.

### 3.2.4 Suggested Project Details

#### **SHORT TERM: Development of Shannon Walks**

Extensive public amenity enhancement works have been carried out over the last number of years. During consultation with the community in Shannon, the walks that have been developed were discussed. There are a number of walks around the town that connect a number of green areas and heritage sites and provide a potentially valuable amenity for locals and visitors alike. Among the points of interest along the walking route are Powers Cottage, Tullyvarraga Hill, the site of O' Gorman's Cottage, the Town Park, the Shannon wetlands, the Estuary, and Hasting's farmhouse. Work carried out to date by Clare County Council in consultation with Dúchas na Sionna includes surfacing and installation of lighting. There are a number of "Shannon Loop" bollards along the route but these are not directional signs. Funding has been allocated for major improvements to Shannon Town Park. Dúchas na Sionna have also been carrying out works on the Shannon Wetlands to improve access. These will enhance the walking route when completed.

Fáilte Ireland are installing a Shannon Estuary Way sign at Tullyglass Point in the coming months. There is great potential to develop bird watching and nature based activities at Shannon along the Estuary and any signage (should be kept to a minimum so it doesn't detract from the scenery) installed at this location should feature wildlife information.

#### **Roadmap to Completion**

##### **Step One: Clarification of Walking Routes**

Clarification is required on the precise route to be used for the walking trails. A map has been produced by Shannon Region Trails showing two looped walks around the town:

- *The Shannon Estuary Loop*
- *The Illaunmanagh Loop*

This map is currently available for download on DiscoverIreland.ie (see Figure 5 below). Proposed trails are outlined in the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan available on [www.clarecoco.ie](http://www.clarecoco.ie).

The routes recommended are the walks promoted on DiscoverIreland.ie (see map below). These routes encompass the points of interest and amenities that are being developed in the town such as Hastings Cottage, The Shannon Estuary Walk, The Shannon Wetlands and The Town Park.

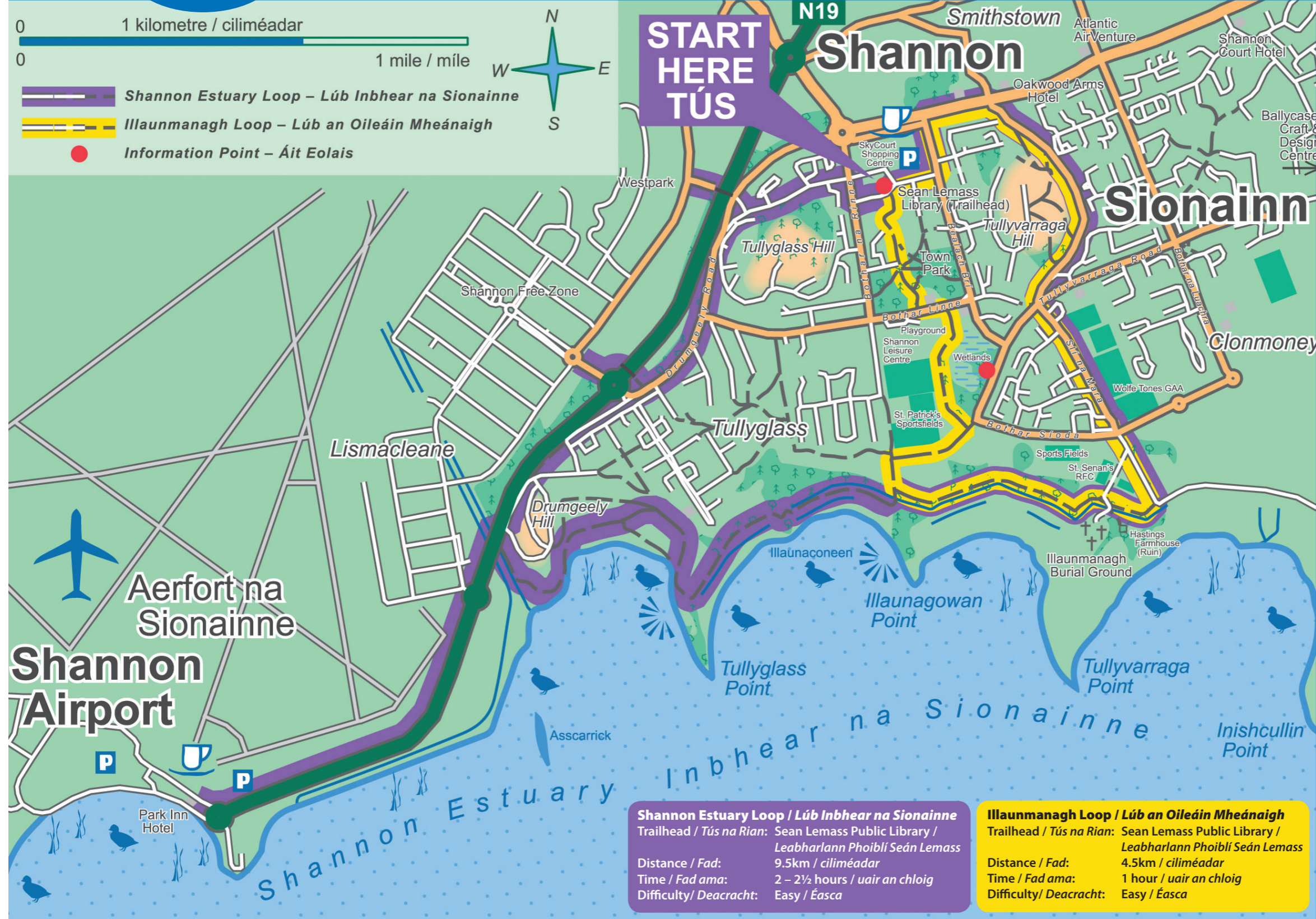
##### **Step Two: Animation of Walking Routes with Interpretive Signage & Waymarkers**

Slí na Mara was walked with local community representatives and directional and interpretive signage locations were assessed. Slí na Mara is the only indigenous piece of roadway in Shannon from before the Airport construction. At the start of Slí na Mara (beside Powers Cottage opposite Oakwood Hotel) there is a large bollard with Shannon Loop on it but there is no panel or finger post to direct the walker further.

Interpretive panels would enhance the walking route and their installation should be prioritised. New signage should be designed, manufactured and installed for the points marked on our map below (see Figure 6).



# Shannon Estuary Loop Walks Lúb Inbhear na Sionainne



[www.shannonregiontrails.ie](http://www.shannonregiontrails.ie)

This loop was developed by Shannon Development, Clare County Council and Shannon Town Council. The loop is also part of the Shannon Region International Trails Programme which is a Shannon Development initiative.

Forbraíodh an lúb seo ag Forbairt na Sionna, Comhairle Contae an Chláir agus Comhairle Baile na Sionna. Is é an lúb mar chuid de Chlár Chonairí Idirnáisiúnta Réigiún na Sionainne, a bhfuil tionscnamh Forbairt na Sionna.

OSI Permit EN019607  
 Map Ref: O.S.59 R405 624  
 Map not to scale. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained on this mapguide is accurate, no responsibility will be accepted by the promoters for any errors or inaccuracies contained therein.  
 Léarscáil ní de réir scála. Cé go bhfuil gach iarracht déanta chun a chinntiú go bhfuil an fhaisnéis atá ar an léarscáil seo cruinn, ní bheidh aon freagracht a ghlacadh ag na tionscnóirí as aon earráid nó míchruinnis atá ann.

Figure 5: Shannon Town Trails map available for download on discoverireland.ie





Figure 6: Shannon Town Proposed Walking Trail with interpretive signage locations marked.

Other signage requirements are:

1. Signage at Wetlands. The existing sign at the Wetlands is becoming very dilapidated and it needs to be replaced.
2. Signage at the Town Park: The development of the Town Park is a great enhancement for the local community. An interpretive panel should be placed here to orientate visitors to the range of amenities that are in the area.
3. Finger Posts along the route to direct walkers

Any additional signage that is designed and manufactured should reflect the signage that has previously been designed to ensure consistency across all walks.

### Enhancement works along Slí na Mara

Further conservation works are required at the site of O' Gorman's cottage where two remaining piers and a section of wall are still standing. A tarpaulin is currently covering the section of wall. A large electricity box is located in front of one of the piers and this should be removed as it detracts from the visual aspect of the site. A masonry specialist has been working on the site in consultation with Clare County Council Area Engineer and further works are planned to take place at O' Gorman's Cottage.

### Estimated Costs

Description	Cost	Total Cost
Manufacture of a 2 Pole Lectern Freestanding A0 Sign to replace existing sign at the Wetlands (Stainless Steel)	€1,590.00 (ex VAT) per unit - 2 units required	€3,180.00
Manufacture of sign for wetlands (size dependent on other signs that have been manufactured for Slí na Mara)	€1,000.00 (approx)	€1,000.00
Finger Post sign (700mm x 200mm) + pole (76mm x 3.3m)	€160 per pole - 16 units required	€2,560.00
Delivery and Installation	TBC depending on quantity ordered	n/a

VAT: 23%  
\* Signage Quotation provided by Signiatec

### LONG TERM: Exhibition Space; Development of Cultural Centre

Dúchas na Sionna have carried out extensive social history recording project in 2011–2014 recording the history of the development of the town and the strong community spirit that was so evident in the pioneering days of the towns establishment. During the course of this work and other local history projects that they have undertaken, they have amassed a large archive of recordings and information about the history of Shannon. In the future, it is hoped that a premises or space could be obtained where all of this information is curated and displayed and made publicly accessible so that the story of Ireland's 'oldest new town' could be shared with the wider public.



Stainless steel double-pole A0 lectern unit example – Image by Signiatec.

# 3.3 CLARECASTLE

## 3.3.1 Introduction to Clarecastle

Clarecastle is a thriving village located close to Ennis and the Shannon Estuary Way. The village evolved around the River Fergus crossing and developed further with the building of a castle at the site, later to be replaced by the thirteenth century Anglo-Irish castle that controlled the crossing point on the river. The Irish word ‘*clár*’ from which Clare derives, means board or plank and refers to the early wooden bridge which was built across the Fergus. The modern village began to develop in the late eighteenth century when the castle was converted to a barracks. A number of early quays were erected over the years, with the present quay built between 1843 and 1845 and this led to further growth. In the nineteenth century it became an important port for Ennis and Clare, with goods brought in and sent out from the quay. Due to its proximity to Ennis, the village has experienced rapid growth and expansion in recent decades. It offers a wide range of amenities and services including retail outlets and pubs and also has numerous protected structures and heritage assets. Both Killone Abbey and Clare Abbey are within easy reach and both are highly significant monuments.

## 3.3.2 Community Group and Engagement

Clarecastle Community Development have been engaged with the project since its initiation. Clarecastle Community Development is a not for profit development company that was established in 2012 with the main objectives of promoting the educational, cultural, social and economic well being of all members of the community. Róisín Burke met the members of the group during the project and corresponded with the group regularly to finalise project proposals. Development of a Heritage Trail was the key project identified by the group in the short term. Completion of the current Village Streetscape Enhancement Project (Phase 3 – incorporating upgrade and health and safety improvements at the Castle Café corner) is a key public realm investment priority/need, having regard to the location of the Heritage Trail Bianconi Stage Coach Stop and the proposed map board.



Clare Abbey



A gandelaw on Clarecastle Quay



Clarecastle Castle and Barracks

### 3.3.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Clarecastle

Clarecastle is an area that is steeped in history. Situated on the banks of the River Fergus at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary, this area has an incredibly rich and diverse past. Stretching back to the Palaeolithic, evidence has been found at the nearby Alice and Gwendoline Cave at Edenvale. In 2016, a scientific re-evaluation of a patella of a brown bear (which had been discovered during cave surveys in the early 1900s) found that the cut marks on the bone had been made by humans when the bear had been killed, over 12,500 years ago. This significant discovery pushes the occupation of Ireland back over 2,000 years, to the time of the Palaeolithic period. Prior to this discovery, the earliest human habitation site had been found at Mount Sandel on the banks of the River Bann in County Derry dating to the Mesolithic period, approximately 10,000 years ago. Clarecastle has evolved over the centuries to become a bustling market village. Fishing was of huge importance to the local economy and the importance of the river can be seen at the large quay which is a key tourism asset for the village. The key tourism assets for Clarecastle and the surrounding area are:

#### **The Port of Clare / Clarecastle Quay:**

Clarecastle Quay was an important port for County Clare from the seventeenth up to the mid-twentieth centuries from where goods were exported and imported. The long quay could accommodate just one vessel at a time with the New Quay as a staging post and was important as it was the closest point to Ennis that ships could reach. Ore from the Ballyhickey Mines was transported from here to Wales for smelting. Grain and other agricultural produce was also sent from here to Liverpool.

#### **Clarecastle Castle and Barracks:**

A thirteenth century Anglo-Norman castle built here was converted into a military barracks in the eighteenth century. It is located on an island in the River Fergus and was of strategic importance in medieval times and later. The castle was initially constructed by Robert de Mescegro. It came under the control of the O'Briens of Thomond in the fourteenth century and became one of their main strongholds. It was converted into a barracks around 1750 but by the end of the nineteenth century it had diminished in importance.

## Clare Abbey

Clare Abbey was founded for the Augustinian Order by the King of Thomond, Domhnall Mor O'Briain, in 1189 and a copy of the founding charter of the abbey survives. Sited on the banks of the River Fergus, it was the first Augustinian house founded in Clare and remained the most important for centuries. The Augustinian Canons who lived here had a pastoral role in the community. The plan of the abbey is typical of the monastic houses of the time and consist of buildings enclosing a central cloister with the church to the northern side. The majority of the remaining buildings date from the fifteenth century and include the very fine bell tower and a number of beautifully carved windows. Clareabbey was the site of a major battle between rival O'Brien factions in 1278 when both soldiers and civilians were slaughtered. The monastery was dissolved in 1541 but the monks remained there for another century under the protection of the O'Briens. A sketch of the abbey by Thomas Dineley in 1681 shows it largely unroofed and it fell into ruin in subsequent decades.

## Killone Abbey and St John's Well:

Killone Abbey was founded in the late twelfth century for the Augustinian nuns by Donal Mór O'Brien, King of Thomond. It was mentioned in the Annals in 1260 when the Abbess, Slaney O'Brien, died. Killone was dissolved in 1584. A satirical seventeenth century poem which references Killone tells the story of Lady Honora O'Brien, who left the nunnery to run off with Sir Roger O Shaughnessy, with whom she had two children. The Pope had to give a dispensation so that their marriage could be recognised. Killone was laid out in a similar manner to other monasteries, with buildings enclosing a central cloister and the church to the northern side. An unusual feature of the monastic remains is a crypt underneath the chancel of the church, where it is believed the nuns were buried. Local folklore tells us that eerie 'corpse lights' can be seen around the ruins at night time. The beautiful setting of the ruined abbey overlooking Killone Lake adds an air of tranquility and spirituality. St. John's Well is located close to Killone Abbey on the shores of Killone Lake. It is connected to Ennis by a pilgrims road which is still accessible and the well is still visited, particularly on St. John's Eve, June 23rd. The well is inside a walled enclosure which contains an altar

dated with an inscription to 1731, which records that the altar was repaired by a merchant from Ennis, Anthony Roche. A more modern altar was built in 2010. It is customary for visitors to do rounds on their knees and to bathe their head, hands and feet in the water from the well, which is said to have curative properties. Bark from a tree which grows near the well is said to cure toothache. A number of cursing stones can be found at the site which are linked to the tradition of 'doing the rounds'. According to a story in the Schools Folklore Collection, the miraculous properties of the well were discovered by a blind man in 1190. He was walking in the area and heard a voice saying 'Stop'. He was then instructed to take off his boots and walk around the well three times. When he did so, his sight was restored.



Clare Abbey



Killone Abbey

### 3.3.5 Suggested Project Details: Short / Medium / Long Term Projects

A key focus for the Clarecastle group is the development of a heritage trail through the village. The group have already identified the sites to be included in the trail. It is recommended that the number of points for the Heritage Trail be reduced from 14 to 12, making a more user-friendly and compelling route for visitors, with a central loop through the village and additional (or optional) sites on the outskirts.

What is the overall theme:	Clarecastle Heritage Trail
What type of trail will it be:	Walking Trail
Number of Points of Interest:	12
Length of time to complete the trail:	1 Hour approximately
Type of Signage required:	Freestanding / Wall Mounted A3 Heritage Zinc interpretation panels 1 Map Board (one at the Car Park opposite the Castle Cafe)



Killone Abbey

The following points of interest are recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Trail.

#	Point of Interest	Significance
1	Bianconi Stop	A mounting block for Bianconi's stage coaches, this is a rare example of a mounting block in stone in Ireland
2	Scott's Corn Store	This six storey corn store was built during the famine years and used as an auxiliary workhouse
3	Port of Clare	This was the chief port of mid-Clare.
4	Famine Memorial Stone	Erected in 2013 to commemorate over 1,000 locals who are thought to have died in the area during the Famine in the 1840's
5	The GAA Stone	The GAA stone commemorates the establishment of the first GAA club in the parish in 1887
6	Abbey Hall	The 1843 Boys & Girls National School is opposite the Church and is now part of the Abbey Hall—a community-based facility. It was the first National School in the Village.
7	Peter & Paul's Church	Catholic Church which replaced a much older church. Construction began in 1839 and was completed in the early 1840's
8	The Fair Green Area	Site of what is thought to have been the oldest fair in Co Clare - the Fair of Clare. Close by was St Mary's Church which was destroyed in a malicious fire on April 17th 1920.
9	The Market House, Bannatyne's Corn Store and Miller's House	The buildings date from the mid 1700s and were used as an auxiliary workhouse during the Famine when the area was badly affected by the loss of the potato crop.
	Clarecastle Castle and Barracks	A thirteenth century Anglo-Norman castle built here was converted into a military barracks in the 18th century.
	Clare Bridge	The site of the magnificent John Semple Bridge of c. 1780. This was demolished in 1971 and replaced by a concrete structure.
	Old Clare Hill Cemetery	This cemetery was used by both faiths and the earliest headstone dates to the mid 1700s



Figure 7: Map of Clarecastle showing the Heritage Points of Interest and Suggested Trail Route



### 3.3.6 Roadmap for Project Development

In order to animate the trail through the village - signage is required. A centralised map board should be installed at the car park in the centre of the village (opposite The Castle Coffee House and Eatery) which will orientate visitors. Heritage plaques should then be installed at the twelve points of interest throughout the village. Each sign should have no more than 3–4 sentences about each point of interest. If historical images of the points of interest can be sourced, it should be considered including these for etching on the plaques (see attached example image of heritage plaques with illustration). The content for each plaque can be created based on the extensive research that has been carried out by the sub committee to date.

#### Roadmap for Project Development

- **Step One:** Clarecastle Community Development (CCD) to discuss Heritage Trail with Clare Rural Recreation Officer.
- **Step Two:** Following consultation with the Rural Recreation Officer, CCD agree on signage locations and content for signage
- **Step Three:** CCD seek permission from landowners to install signage at proposed locations
- **Step Four:** Apply for funding to cover the cost of signage design, manufacture and installation. For more information on funding sources, please see section 5.
- **Step Five:** Produce content for signage (no more than 100 words per sign) and acquire historical images of buildings (if possible), or consider engaging a reconstruction artist to show the features in their heyday.
- **Step Six:** Work with a design company (with input from Fáilte Ireland) for the design of the large map board at the car park to ensure the content is accurate and that the branding and design reflect the overall brand of the Shannon Estuary Way
- **Step Seven:** Inform Clare County Council of signage location and liaise with them regarding any planning considerations before signage is installed.

Etched zinc heritage plaques (see image) in A3 size are recommended to animate the Heritage Trail through Clarecastle village. A large map board should be installed to orientate visitors in the car park in the village centre. The Heritage Plaques should

be installed at each point of interest along the Heritage Trail. Depending on the building and planning considerations, the plaques can be wall mounted or freestanding. The group have already amassed a large amount of historical information and this can be edited to create engaging content for the signage. As the Etched Heritage Zinc Plaques are only A3 size, it is recommend that no more than 40–50 words per plaque and if historic images of the buildings can be obtained, these should be also used on the signage.

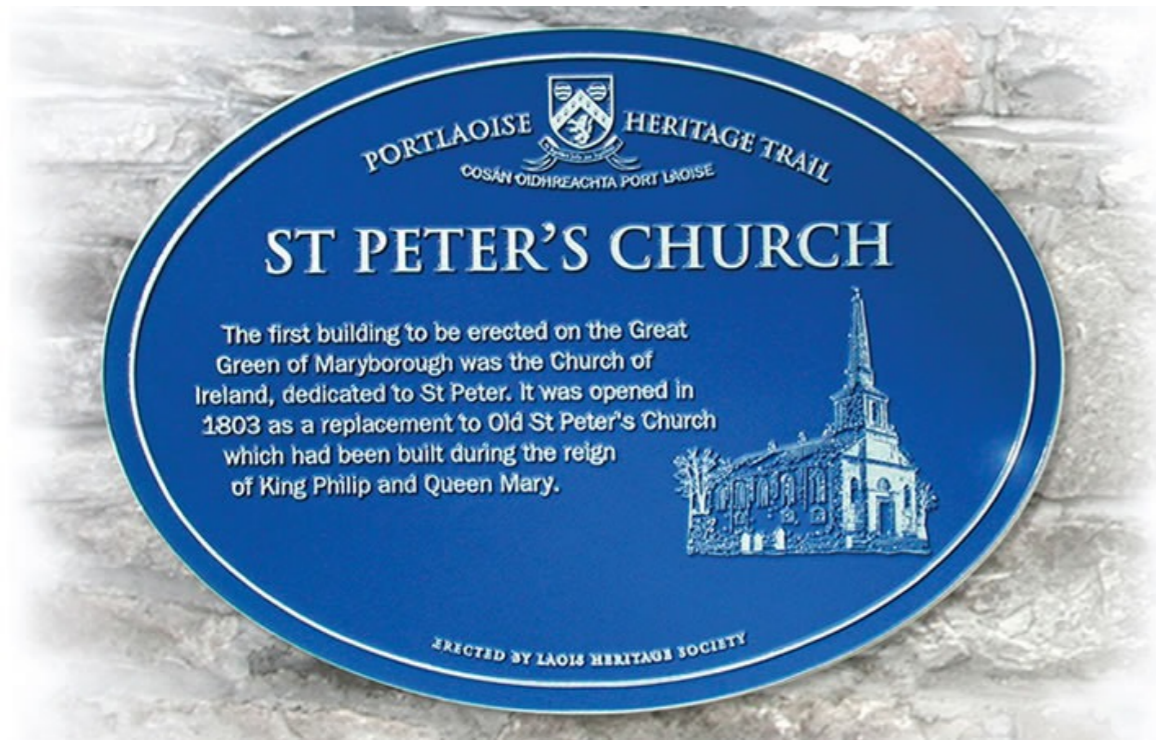
#### Estimated Costs

<b>Etched zinc heritage plaques *</b>	€560.00 per plaque €6,720.00 for 12 points on Clarecastle Heritage Trail
<b>Drawings on Plaque*</b>	€120.00 per plaque
<b>Pedestal Mount*</b>	€175 per plaque
<b>Map Board - A0 double pole lectern in stainless steel *</b>	€1,590.00
<b>Design of Map Board (includes 2 amendments) **</b>	€550.00
<b>Delivery</b>	€120.00
<b>Installation</b>	TBC depending on number of pedestals required

VAT: 23%

\* Signage Quotation provided by Signiatec

\*\*Quote provided by Abarta Heritage



Zinc Heritage Plaques Examples – Images by Signiatec.

## Brochure Development

A brochure should be developed to highlight the history and heritage of Clarecastle when the signage is installed. The brochure should feature a short description of each of the points of interest on the heritage trail as well as a map of the village. It could also feature historic images of what Clarecastle and the Port looked like in the past (subject to copyright). A z-card brochure format should be considered for the Clarecastle Heritage Trail as z-cards is very user-friendly.

## Estimated Costs

Description	Units	Price
Z card Pocket Card Format with 4 Panels	5000 copies	£1,965.00
Z card Pocket Card Format with 4 Panels	10,000 copies	£2,345.00
Design of z Card (includes 2 amendments) by Z Card Limited		£350.00

\* Prices in sterling have been supplied by Z Card Limited - Quote 125837/856

## Longer Term Projects

### *Feasibility Study of Embankment Walks*

Clarecastle Community Development are currently working with a consultant to investigate the feasibility of creating an embankment walk from Clarecastle to Ennis. This would be a very welcome addition to the extensive amenities around Clarecastle. Future interpretation of the walk should reflect the Shannon Estuary Way brand that is currently being developed by Fáilte Ireland. The Embankment Walks would provide a great opportunity for bird watching and enjoying the wonderful natural heritage of the Shannon Estuary Way.

### *Exhibition about life on the Shannon*

The Clarecastle Ballyea Heritage and Wildlife Group have acquired two punt guns and a punt boat which they are holding in trust for the people of Clarecastle. The guns and boat, along with fishing memorabilia were put on display first at a regatta in June 2018

and again during Heritage Week in August 2018 when people from both sides of the estuary came to view the exhibition. More than 150 people viewed the exhibition. The group have made connections with other collectors and people interested in the use of punt guns. In the future, they hope to acquire a property or room to display the memorabilia related to fishing on the estuary. There is a similar museum in County Laois called 'The Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum' and the group have made contact with the owner of that museum. If a permanent exhibition is created here in Clarecastle, it could tell the wider story of the the River Shannon and how it sustained life in the region for thousands of years, stretching all the way back to the Palaeolithic era. The development of an exhibition space in Clarecastle could also be used to highlight the story of the medieval fish traps which were discovered in the Fergus Estuary. These fishtraps are located in mudflats in the estuary and can only be accessed by boat during a few short weeks of the summer when the tide is low. They are in danger of disappearing due to the tidal flows and an exhibition could highlight their importance.

There are a number of other key themes that could be portrayed via an exhibition, such as:

- Hunting and Fishing on the Estuary
- Transportation on the River
- The Reclamation of the River.

The Clarecastle Ballyea Heritage and Wildlife Group have sourced a number of historical photographs of Clarecastle and the Port and these form a very interesting insight into the social history of the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The exhibition could also serve as a visitor hub for those wishing to explore the Shanon Estuary Way. It could provide information on sites to visit and other museums and activities in the other communities along the Estuary Way.

# 3.4 BALLYNACALLY AND CLONDEGAD GAA

## 3.4.1 Introduction to Ballynacally / Clondegad GAA

Ballynacally village is situated on the western side of the Fergus Estuary and on the Ballynacally River. The village is a very pleasant and well maintained estuary village. Its name means 'land of the nuns' as it was part of the property of Killone Abbey. The village overlooks several islands in the Fergus Estuary which have associations with Saint Senan and Saint Brendan. Míceál Ó hÉithir, the famed Gaelic Games commentator, spent much of his youth in the area as it was his father's home place. A small fair green in the village was the location for regular cattle fairs and agricultural produce was traded through the nearby quay. A number of attractive cottages on one side of the green are still in use. Other points of interest in the area include Kilchreest Church, St. Martin's Well and the shell of Paradise House. Ballynacally retains its unique village character and setting to this day. Its facilities include a community centre, children's playground, GAA pitch and several pubs.

## 3.4.2 Community Group and Engagement

A meeting was held with the Ballynacally Development Association on the 3rd of September to discuss the scope of the project. After a mid-project meeting with Clare Local Development Company, Clondegad GAA were put forward as potential contributors to the project, as they were working on plans to develop the GAA grounds in Ballynacally and a meeting was held with this group on the 10th October.



Ballynacally Cottages



St Martins Well, Ballynacally



Fairgreen, Ballynacally

### 3.4.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Ballynacally

There are many notable heritage sites located around Ballynacally. The village of Ballynacally itself is exceptionally well maintained with a large information panel detailing heritage sites in the area. There are also very interesting heritage plaques located on the walls of the cottages at the Fair Green. These plaques have stories about the heritage of the area.

#### **St Martin's Well:**

This holy well in Ballynacally village is still maintained and venerated by locals. It is dedicated to St Martin of Tours and it is thought that the dedication to this French saint may reflect his links to Saint Senan, who is said to have bestowed the well on the area. The shrine and statue of St. Martin over the well was built in the 1930s, when every house in the locality contributed money. The well is situated in a small cliff overlooking the Ballynacally river as it flows towards the Fergus Estuary. Water from the well is said to cure eye ailments, sore feet and rheumatism. Local tradition holds that it was also the site of a Mass rock in Penal time. It is still venerated on St. Martin's Feast day of November 11th.

#### **Paradise House**

Only the shell of Paradise House remains today. Two crests on the house have the dates 1685 and 1863, indicating the dates of construction of the first house and the later extension. It was the home of the Henn family who were granted land here by the Earl of Thomond in the late eighteenth century. Lieutenant William Henn, RN (1857-1894) is commemorated by a monument in Ballynacally village marking his participation in the Americas Cup yacht race in 1886. He was second in command of the Relief expedition to find Dr Livingstone in East Africa in 1872. His diary recording the expedition was sold at auction in 2014. The house was accidentally burned in 1970.

## Deer Island

Deer Island lies about a quarter of a mile offshore and was a deer park for the Earl of Thomond. The remains of a church can be seen on the island; it is said to have been founded by St. Senan who appointed St Liberius to preside over it.

## Coney Island

Coney Island takes its name from the large number of rabbits that were present there. It is also known as *Inishdadrum*, the Island of the Two Backs, referring to the two hills on the island. The island was inhabited into the twentieth century and the Schools Folklore Collection from Coney Island National School contains a wealth of information about life on the island up to that point

### 3.4.5 Suggested Project Details:

#### Renovation of Cottages on the Fair Green

The Ballynacally Development Association have been working on a number of projects to improve the village over the last number of years. They are currently working on re-roofing the old school house which will be a great amenity for the community once the project is complete. Over the course of this project, the group expressed interest in developing the cottages to the side of the Fair Green. All four vernacular cottages are now empty having been previously used as a credit union, creche, HSE building and private accommodation. The group applied to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to renovate and re-purpose three of the cottages (as the fourth cottage was still in use until recently). In October, the group received confirmation that their application to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme had been successful and they were awarded €93,000.00 to carry out the renovations to the cottages. The group want to convert the 3 vacant cottages into a 3 bedroom apartment and co-op store. After speaking with the group, it is recommended that the fourth cottage be converted into a cafe and visitor information point for people wishing to find out more about places to visit on the Shannon Estuary Way.

## Roadmap for Project Development

**Step One:** Begin work on the renovation of the three cottages that have been funded as part of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

**Step Two:** When the cottages are renovated, any revenue that can be generated from either the apartment or the co-op store should be used to create a fund to renovate the fourth cottage. This cottage could become a dedicated Shannon Estuary Way Visitor Information Point and coffee shop if there was interest in taking this on locally.

**BUDGET:** Estimated budget for renovating the fourth cottage: €30,000 - €40,000, based on costings for the renovation of the three other cottages.

## Longer Term Projects

### *Clondegad GAA and the Míceál Ó hÉithir Media Centre - Traditional Sports, Culture and Media Centre*

Clondegad GAA, situated just outside Ballynacally on a site overlooking the Shannon Estuary have a very proud GAA history and a strong connection with Míceál Ó hÉithir (1920-1996). He was regarded as the voice of the GAA and was RTE's principal sports commentator. He was known primarily for his Gaelic Games commentary, but also commentated on horse racing and even provided commentary to the nation for John Fitzgerald Kennedy's funeral. Many of the games he commentated on and his quotes from them have become part of Gaelic Games folklore.

Míceál was the son of Jim Hehir, who was born in Paradise, just outside Ballynacally. He was the trainer of the 1914 All Ireland winning Clare hurling team, and Míceál's cousins still reside in Ballynacally today. The young Mícheál spend a lot of time in the Ballynacally area and maintained these connections throughout his life. In 1993, the new pitch at the club was opened and officially named: Páirc Mhichil Uí Eithir. The club are anxious to recognise the connection to Míceál Ó hÉithir and to celebrate the importance of GAA at a local grass-roots level, particularly as the bid for UNESCO World GAA Clubs Heritage Project is underway.

Clondegad GAA are currently undertaking the development of new dressing rooms and meeting room facilities. A second phase of this development is a 40-metre long covered seating area on the eastern side of this pitch (see plans below). It is proposed that this would include a dedicated visitor experience in rooms to the rear of the seating area with exhibitions relating to Míceál Ó hÉithir and to the wider story of the GAA in Irish life. The club are proposing developing an interpretive centre that celebrates the GAA, what it means to local communities and the great personalities that have been involved with it like Míceál Ó hÉithir. This centre aims to be different from static exhibitions on the GAA and will have a strong immersive and experiential themes throughout. The experience would be very interactive in nature and would be designed to communicate the importance of the GAA to community life in Ireland. Ideas include a commentary box where young people could test their commentary skills, archival footage of broadcasts by Micheál Ó hEithir, and for international visitors an opportunity to try out Gaelic Games on the playing field. Potential visitors would include school tours, GAA enthusiasts and international visitors who want to learn about Gaelic Games. The centre would also act as a hub for visitors to the area. There will be a viewing area looking out over the islands in the Shannon Estuary at the rear of the building providing an opportunity for visitors to engage with the unique and fascinating heritage of these places. There are a number of themes that will be represented in the media centre:

### ***History and Heritage of The GAA***

- The heritage of Gaelic Games at local and world levels
- Traditional Sports as played today amongst other nations and build on the Clondegad GAA club's role in representing Ireland in the first European Traditional Sports Games

### ***The Contribution of Míceál Ó hÉithir to the GAA***

- The Heritage and Values of good coaching as embodied and passed on by Jim Ó hÉithir, Míceál's father and trainer not just of Clare's first All Ireland winning

senior hurling team but also Leitrim's Connacht Senior Football championship winners.

- The Míceál Ó hÉithir Broadcasting InterActive LiveMike to engage new generations with the symbolic voice of a people which Míceál represented to millions of Irish both at home and abroad

### ***The UNESCO World GAA Clubs Heritage Project***

- To mark the designation of Hurling by UNESCO as one of the Masterpieces of Humanity and its induction to the World Intangible Heritage Representative List, the project is honoured to host also the World GAA Clubs Heritage StoryMap Project which features both display and virtual Heritage StoryMaps of not just the clubs of the 32 counties but the 500 international GAA clubs abroad which will be feature in a unique Diaspora expo.

### ***Islands of the Shannon & Fergus Viewing Platform***

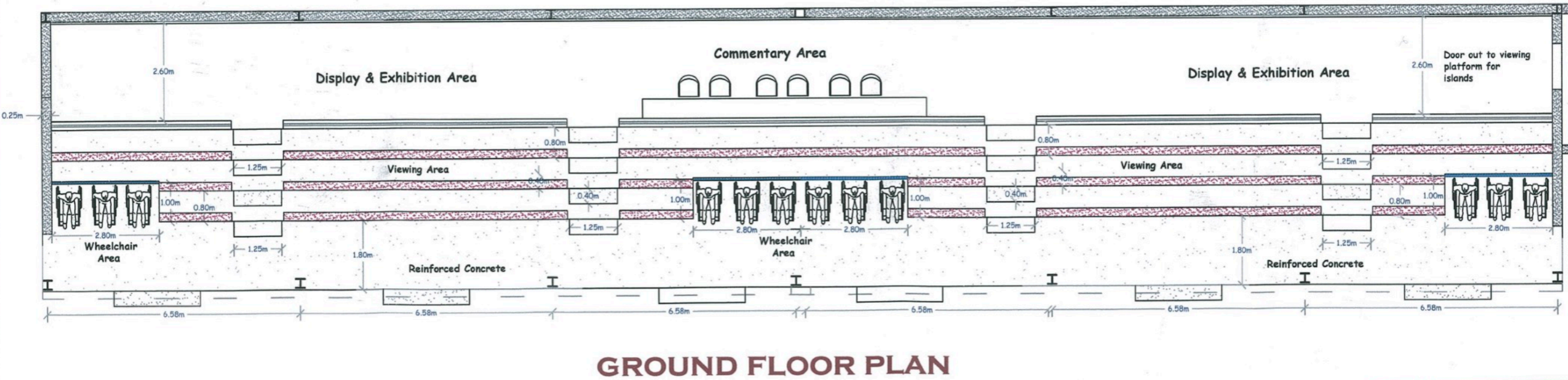
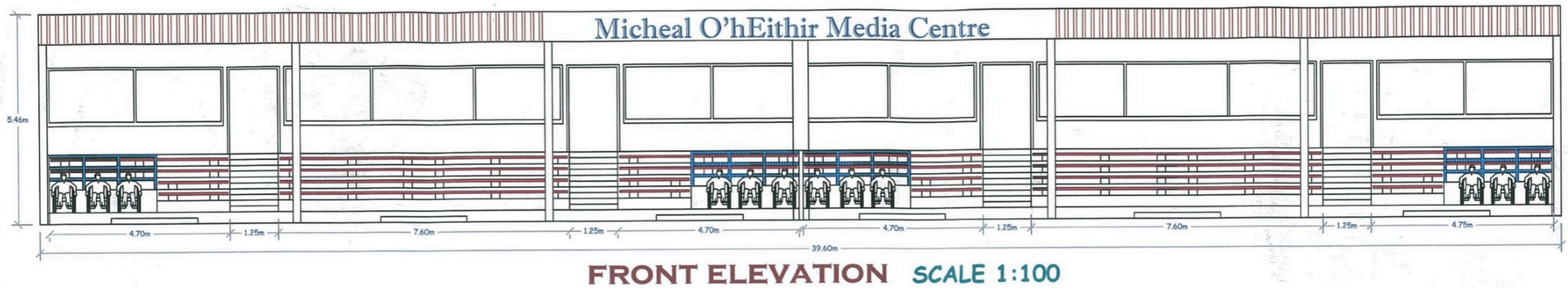
- The centre will be located in an ideal location to view the Shannon Estuary and the islands and information about what life was like on the islands could be featured here.

### ***Shop and Café***

- The shop and cafe could feature local produce. Tickets to all current and future attractions available here along with tourist information point

### ***Gaelic Park and Gaelic Games and Culture Residential Academy***

- An Outdoor Gaelic Games and Traditional Sports Themed Recreational Family Park as well as a Gaelic Games & Culture Residential Academy



Drawn by :	Padraig Hogan Newhall Tiernaclane Ennis
Phone:	086 3699713
Date :	06th October 2016
Scale :	1 : 100

Figure 8: Initial plans for Miceál Ó hÉithir Media Centre



This unique project seeks to highlight the best of the area; with a focus on the strong sense of community and how the GAA is a key part of that. The centre could become a tourist hub along the Estuary Way where tickets for island boat tours could be purchased (when that tourism offering is developed).

“This project has the potential to be signature flagship engine for Irish and international traditional sports, culture and media. It is not an ambitious plan but a practical initiative with a socio-economic and cultural tourism engine at its heart, an appropriate vehicle to both commemorate and celebrate not just the spirit of Ireland, but the voice of Ireland and the Irish itself, that of the great Miceál Ó hÉithir. This project honours our past, its innovation inspires in the present and its intangible interconnectivity through a tangible, physical hub point in this virtual world enriches our future”.

(Source: *MacCarthy, D. Outline Proposal for The Shannon Estuary Way Development of the Miceál Ó hÉithir Traditional Sports, Culture and Media Centre. 09/10/2018*).

### Roadmap to Project Completion:

This project is an ambitious undertaking and will take a number of years to complete. It will require a long term commitment from project promoters and from funding bodies but it has the potential to become a new and exciting visitor attraction in this area celebrating not only the estuary but also the importance of the GAA to rural communities throughout Ireland. These are the initial steps that need to be undertaken to determine the projects feasibility in terms of funding and national promotion:

**Step One:** Working with the written proposal that Clondegad GAA Club representative and Historian Daniel MacCarthy produced for this project, it is recommended that a meeting should be organised with Clare Local Development Company and Clare County Council to discuss potential funding opportunities.

**Step Two:** Develop ties with GAA commentators such as Marty Morrissey who could promote the project on a national level within the GAA.

**Step Three:** Begin process of fundraising and grant applications to secure funding for project development.

**Step Four:** Link with other similar attractions like The Michael Cusack Centre in Carran.

**Step Five:** Test the viability of developing the attraction with a feasibility study.

There is good enthusiasm and commitment locally for the project. However, costing and funding the project will be a significant challenge. This will be a long term project but could serve to become a key visitor attraction in the area.

Description	Costs
Estimated construction costs of 40 metre stand and interpretive centre	€200,000 (estimate cost from builder)
Interpretive fit out for media centre	€1,500 - €2,000 per m <sup>2</sup>

# 3.5 KILLADYSERT

## 3.5.1 Introduction to Killadysert

Killadysert is located about 20km south-west of Ennis and its name is derived from the Irish Cill Disért meaning ‘church of the hermitage’, a probable reference to an early medieval monastic foundation in the area. The village is centred upon the main square which has a distinctive triangular layout. A monument here commemorates Peadar Clancy (1888-1920) who was prominent in the War of Independence and was killed in British custody on Bloody Sunday 1920. The village has a range of facilities and services including a library, post office, credit union and a number of shops and pubs.

Killadysert’s location close to where the estuaries of the River Fergus and River Shannon join makes it an ideal place to access the water. There are piers close to the village and also to the south at Inishmurray. It also lies close to the Shannon Estuary Special Area of Conservation. Although the village has grown in recent years, it has managed to retain its character and this is primarily due to the very strong sense of community in the village.

## 3.5.2 Community Group and Engagement

Killadysert Community Development Association (KCDA) were consulted about the project on the 3rd of September and the scope of the project was outlined. KCDA were asked if they had any projects they would like to propose. The group mentioned a number of projects that were already taking place in the locality such as improvements at the slipway at Crovraghan, installation of toilets and showers at the pier at Killadysert and the development of a children’s playground. During the course of the meeting, a number of individuals mentioned the possibility of developing a Lay-By and this proposal is discussed in more detail below.



Crossing the Shannon to Horse Island



Ringfort, Horse Island



Augustinian Abbey, Canon Island

### 3.5.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Killadysert

#### **Horse Island (also known as Inishmacowney Island)**

Horse Island is located in the estuary. The base of a castle is located on a small hilltop on the island. The stones were used to build houses on the island in the 19th century. The castle was owned by Teige O'Brien in 1574, who is also associated with Ballycorick and Crovraghan. It was recorded as part of the estate of the Earl of Thomond in 1680. A ringfort is also located on the island. Fintan Ginnane, who was born and raised on the island, has been interviewed for the project about his experiences of life on the island.

#### **Canon Island**

Canon Island is the largest island in the group of islands where the Fergus Estuary meets the Shannon and is close to Killadysert. The Augustinian Canons established a monastery here in the later twelfth century under the patronage of Domhnall Mór O'Brien, King of Thomond. The monastery appears to have existed for only a few centuries and was described as a ruin in 1393. The island is place of pilgrimage for those living along the estuary and mass is celebrated there annually.

#### **Crovraghan Pier**

The pier at Crovraghan was reputedly built on the base of a castle, of which no trace remains today. The castle was demolished in the late eighteenth century. It was a stronghold of the O'Briens and was listed as being owned by Teige O'Brien, son of Conor O'Brien, last King of Thomond, in 1574. The pier is used by many of the farmers who still farm land on the islands to transport animals in lighters (large flat bottomed animal transportation boats).

### **Peadar Clancy Monument, Killadysert**

A monument in the square in the centre of Killadysert commemorates Peadar Clancy (Peadar Mac Flannchadha) (1888–1920), who was born near Cranny about 6km west of Killadysert. He was a prominent figure in the struggle for Irish Independence and took part in the 1916 Rising. His death sentence after the Rising was commuted and he spent a year in prison. Upon his release, he set up the Republican Outfitters drapery store on Talbot Street in Dublin which became one of the most important meeting places in the city for IRA men during the War of Independence. Clancy became second in command of the Dublin Brigade. He took part in many operations included jail breaks, attempted assassinations and an attack on the offices of Independent Newspapers. He was involved in the planning of Bloody Sunday but was arrested the evening beforehand. He was killed on the evening of Bloody Sunday along with Dick McKee and Conor Clune. It is generally believed that they were murdered in reprisal for the killing of British spies earlier that day. Clancy is buried in the Republican plot in Glasnevin cemetery.



Peadar Clancy Monument, Killadysert

### **Killadysert Pier**

Killadysert Pier dates from the early nineteenth century but has been modernised in recent years. Boats plied their trade between here and Limerick carrying agricultural produce and it is specifically mentioned in Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of 1837. The pier is also an access point for many of the islands in the Fergus Estuary, such as Canon Island and Inishloe.



Killadysert Pier

### 3.5.4 Suggested Project Details:

#### Medium / Long Term Projects: Development of Lay-Bys

KCDA are a very successful community group that have completed a number of public realm enhancement projects in recent years including the construction of a large community hall and playground. Work is also being carried out to upgrade the slipway at Crovraghan where Fáilte Ireland interpretive signage is going to be installed. During the meeting, a number of people talked about the view of the estuary and the islands and said it was a shame that there was no dedicated lay-by on the R473 where the islands and estuary could be viewed. A development of a lay-by on the main estuary road (R473) could feature an interpretive sign which would orientate visitors to the amenities and heritage sites along the route and encourage visitors to spend time exploring the villages. One location for lay-by development was proposed at Ailroe Beg but this land is in private ownership.

Other locations for lay-by development were proposed and five more potential locations were reviewed. Two locations that were proposed were discounted as they were located off the main road. Three locations were forwarded on for consideration to the Local Area Engineer; John O' Malley and Róisín met him on Tuesday 6th November to assess the viability of the locations.

The three locations that were assessed were located at:

1. **Crovraghan Townland:** 52.686652 latitude, -9.092229 longitude. Located on the R473, this location is on the Shannon side of the road before the turn off down to Crovraghan Pier at Crovraghan Cross.
2. **Crovraghan Townland:** 52.685498 latitude, -9.092484 longitude. Just beyond Crovraghan Cross towards Killadysert on the R473, this location is on the Shannon side of the road opposite The Terrace (site of former Workhouse) beside the stone Fáilte sign for Killadysert. St Breckan's Holy Well (CL060-003) is located in the field below the verge and there is access to the Holy Well via steps from the roadway.

3. **Quay Road, Killadysert.** 52.671166 latitude, -9.105458 longitude. Located on the Quay Road in Killadysert, this location is in front of the former Shannon Development factory.

Following a review of the locations with Clare County Council Area Engineer, Option 1 was discounted as it is located just before a cross roads which compromises the safety of cars exiting the lay-by and the junctions. Option 3 was discounted as it is located off the main road and too close to the pier where Fáilte Ireland will be installing interpretive signage.

The most suitable site for development of a lay-by or viewing area of the estuary and islands was **Option 2** at Crovraghan Townland opposite the site of the former workhouse as it is under the responsibility of the council and can be developed, is located close to interesting sites like the site of the Workhouse and St Breckan's Holy Well and there is space for the development of the lay by.

#### Roadmap for Project Development

**Step One:** All members of Killadysert Community Development Association agree on development of lay-by at Crovraghan Townland.

**Step Two:** Killadysert Community Development Association approach landowner beside the proposed location to inform them of the plans

**Step Three:** Seek support from Clare County Council to apply for funding under the Community Support Scheme to the Rural Development Section of Clare County Council in 2019. This development should be part of the Public Area Enhancement section of the fund. The closing date for this scheme in 2018 was May 16th.

**Step Four:** Gather information or historic images for an interpretive panel which should be erected at the verge to highlight the islands of the estuary

**Step Five:** Work with a design company to design an interpretive sign for the Lay-By that reflects existing Shannon Estuary Way signage for Fáilte Ireland.

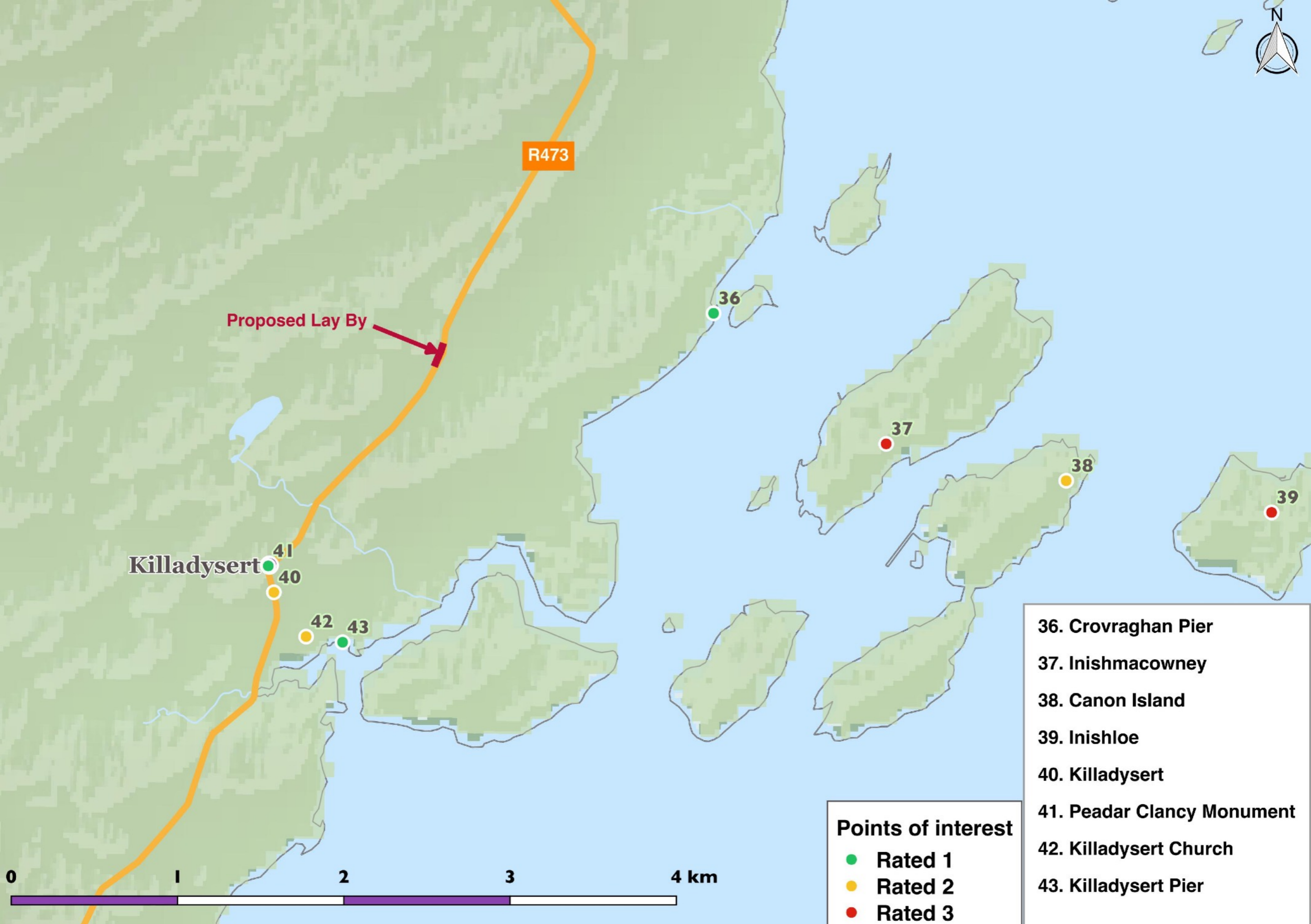


Figure 9: Killadysert Proposed Location for Lay By Development

## Estimated Costs

Description	Costs
Development of lay-by at Crovraghan Townland - this approximate cost includes cutting back the verge, tarring, fencing and road painting	Approximate Costs: €6,000 - €10,000.00
Design of A1 Interpretive Panel for Lay-By**	€550.00 (ex VAT)
Manufacture of A1 Interpretive Panel - Lectern Old Cast single pole	€915.00 (ex VAT)

\*Estimate provided by Clare County Council Area Engineer based on similar projects and size of area to be developed,

\*\* Design quote provided by Abarta Heritage,

\*\*\* Signage Manufacture quote provided by Signiatec

# 3.6 LABASHEEDA

## 3.6.1 Introduction to Labasheeda

The name Labasheeda means ‘bed of silk’ and the village is on the shores of the estuary with the nineteenth century quay providing access to the water. The area is known for its traditional music and local man Dan Furey was a noted dance teacher. A festival is organised in August every year to commemorate his connection with the area. There are a number of interesting heritage sites in the vicinity, including Kilkerin Battery Fort, Killofin Church and the former St. Kieran’s Church, now a community centre, which retains its cruciform plan. In the past, there was a ferry service from here to Tarbert, Co. Kerry, as well as regular trade with Limerick. There are many good vantage points locally from where it is possible to appreciate the views over the Shannon Estuary. The quay in Labasheeda dates from the late nineteenth century but there was trade taking place from the harbour prior to its construction. Culm (mix of clay and anthracite waste from coal mines rolled into balls) was brought here to be transported. The quay has been repaired since its construction and remains in good condition and regular use. There is further potential for tourism development in the village and surrounding area.

## 3.6.2 Community Group and Engagement

Labasheeda Projects Group were formed on 31st July after consultation to discuss the project. The group have been extremely engaged with the project and have worked to develop achievable projects that can be put forward for inclusion in this report. The group are very enthusiastic about tourism developments in Labasheeda and have expressed commitment to applying for funding to achieve many of the projects outlined below.



Labasheeda Quay





Kilkerin Battery Fort



Aerial View of Kilkerin Battery Fort

### 3.6.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets in Labasheda

The area around Labasheeda has a number of heritage assets which can be explored by visitors. Located almost on the shore of the peninsula is the most well-known heritage asset in the area; Kilkerin Fort.

#### **Kilkerin Battery Fort**

Kilkerin Battery Fort is one of a series of coastal defence structures built along the Shannon Estuary in the early nineteenth century to counteract the threat of an invasion by Napoleon's army. Construction began in 1811 and 600 men worked on the site. Limestone and flagstones from nearby locations along of the estuary were used. It was completed in 1814 but was made redundant after just one year following the Battle of Waterloo. The fort is surrounded by a deep dry moat and the first floor is accessed via a drawbridge. It has thick walls, underground storage chambers where gunpowder was kept and a rooftop parapet accessed by a stone stairway inside the wall. Two Howitzer guns were positioned on the roof but were only ever fired in training exercises. In fact, the firing of the guns caused damage to the structure. Although the fort could accommodate up to twenty men, there were only seven stationed here in the 1840s. Kilkerin is considered the best preserved of these forts along the Shannon.

#### **St Kieran's Community Centre**

This former nineteenth century church building was in use as a place of worship from 1837 to 1977. It was later used as a factory for the production of boardgames and then converted into a community centre and officially opened in 1988. It has been the location for the annual Dan Furey festival of set dancing since 1995. The building retains its cruciform shape and is not rendered which gives it a distinctive appearance.

### **Labasheeda Quay**

The quay in Labasheeda dates from the late-nineteenth century but there was trade taking place from the harbour prior to its construction. Culm was extracted locally and brought here to be transported. The quay has been repaired since its construction and remains in good condition and regular use.

### **Killofin Church**

Killofin Church is a ruined medieval church located on the peninsula south of Labasheeda. Its name appears to derive from a family named O'Finn. The east gable of the ruined church contains a Gothic window. It is located about 1/4 mile from St. Kieran's well. The graveyard is still in use as a burial ground.



Labasheeda Quay



Killofin Church and Graveyard

### 3.6.4 Suggested Project Details

#### **Short Term Projects: Development of Cycle / Walking Routes and interpretation / signage for those routes**

The group in Labasheeda were very focused in identifying projects that could be completed quickly to gain momentum and awareness for the potential of the Shannon Estuary Way before they tackled longer term projects.

The area around Labasheeda is quiet and unspoilt and the village itself is very attractive. There is great potential here for tourism development. Two tourism businesses have recently been established in the vicinity offering glamping experiences and these businesses are anxious to capitalise on the tourism potential of the area. One of the great assets of the area are the quiet roads and views of the estuary along these roads. The group have identified the development of cycle and walking routes as the short term project that they would like to develop over the coming months.

Fieldwork was undertaken in Labasheeda in September to review the walks / cycle routes that are being considered by the group for development. A number of routes were being considered as walking trails. Given that the routes are all on tarmac road, it is suggested that developing the routes as cycle trails could create a business opportunity – in renting electric bikes to visitors who want to get out and experience the unspoilt areas around Labasheeda.

Sport Ireland Trails guidelines and management standards state the following in relation to the use of roads: *“Walking trails should avoid roads entirely where possible. It is a requirement that no walking trail should include more than 20% of its length on asphalt roads”*

(Source: National Trails Office, 2008, Management Standards for Recreational Trails).

While there may be some leeway in relation the use of quieter rural roads (and all of the routes are on quieter roads with low vehicular traffic), the overall length of public road

used far exceeds the guidelines and is a hindrance to the development of a walking route. A more general rule of thumb for walking trails is that there should be no more than 5km (around one hour) of continuous walking on public road. Lengthy sections on public road are unattractive, tiring and rather dull - therefore developing routes as cycle trails is more attractive for visitors. Cycle routes have been developed successfully on rural roads in locations such as Kilmallock, Doolin and Nenagh (listed on [irishtrails.ie](http://irishtrails.ie)) so it is not unusual for country roads to be used for this purpose.

The group have proposed a number of provisional routes and will begin the process of securing land owner agreement over the coming months. These routes have been reviewed and mapped (see below). They are only provisional at this stage and are subject to change depending on landowner agreement and feasibility of walks development. A similar development is taking place in Loop Head which could provide for the opportunity of bundling a cycling experience around County Clare.

#### **Roadmap for Project Development:**

**Step One:** Group to secure permissive access agreements with all landowners of privately owned sections of road.

**Step Two:** Group to meet with the Clare Local Development Rural Recreation Officer to show him the routes that are being considered.

**Step Three:** Group apply to Sport Ireland Trails to have the routes recognised and covered under Sports Ireland Trails insurance

**Step Four:** Group submit an application for the Outdoor Rural Recreation Grant Scheme in 2019 to secure funding for waymarking, interpretive signage and a brochure of the route and any other works required to enhance the routes. In 2018, applications for this scheme closed in July.

**Step Five:** Group should make connections with the tourism group in Loop Head to look at cross promotion of cycling routes.

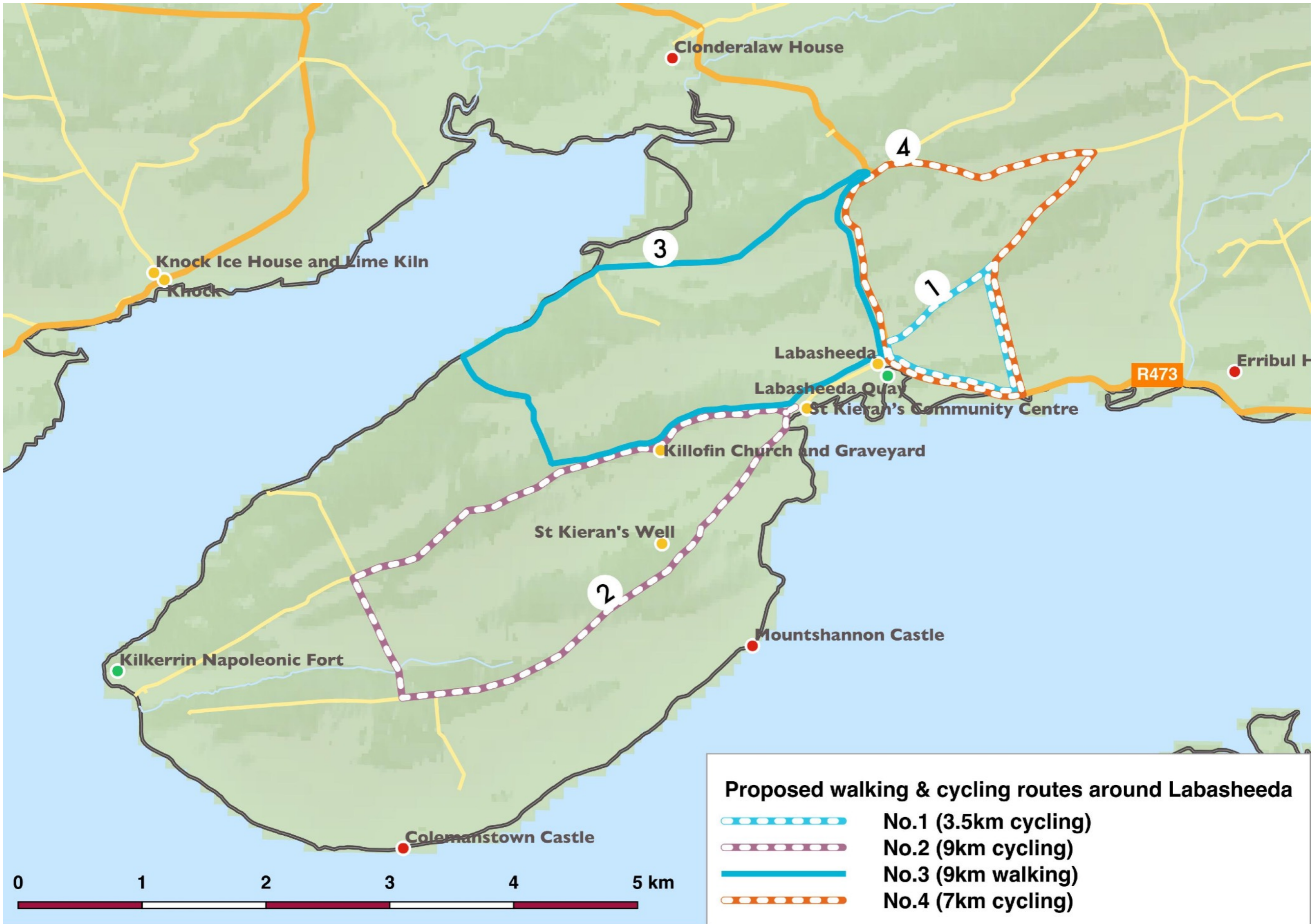


Figure 10: Proposed walking and cycling routes around Labasheeda

**BUDGET:** Cost Neutral at this planning stage. Funding will be required for animating the routes in the future when the routes are agreed upon and infrastructure required has been identified.

### Medium Term Projects: Conservation Works required to Protected Structures in the Locality

Conservation works are required at a number of protected structures in the locality to ensure their survival for future generations. The buildings that require works are Kilkerin Battery Fort, Kilkerin Church and Killofin Church.

Name	Townland	Sites & Monuments Record #	Record Protected Structures #	Landowner
Kilkerin Battery Fort	Lakyle North	CL068-046	345	Private (Martin Fitzpatrick)
Kilkerin Church and Graveyard	Kilkerin	CL068-032001, CL068-032002	n/a	Private
Killofin Church and Graveyard	Killofin	CL068-041001, CL068-041002	n/a	Local Authority

It is recommended that conservation reports are commissioned for each site by a qualified conservation engineer outlining a detailed method statement of works required. All three sites are listed on National Monuments Service, Record of Monuments and Places and are therefore protected under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. This means that prior to any works being carried out at any of the three sites, notice is required to be submitted in writing to the Minister two months before commencing that work. This is to allow the National Monuments Service time to consider the proposed works and how best to proceed to further the protection of the monument. Notification forms can be downloaded from National Monuments Service website ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)).

Prior to any works taking place at Kilkerin Battery Fort, a Section 57 declaration would be required to be completed and submitted to the Conservation Officer of Clare County Council as it is listed on the Record of Protected Structures for Clare County Council. This is a written request to the planning authority to issue a declaration as to the type

of works which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure, thereby clarifying which works would be considered exempted development.

It is recommended that the group apply to the Heritage Council community grants scheme to fund the completion of the conservation reports. Two conservation reports will probably be required: one for the Battery and one for both churches (provided that the landowner at Kilkerin Church will give permission for the report to be completed). Heritage Council community grants are usually launched in Spring and the application forms can be completed online.

The group should work with the landowners throughout the process at all three sites to ensure that they are aware of the programme of action and recommendations following the conservation reports. The landowner at Kilkerin Battery is working closely with the group and has been in touch with FÁS workers who will help out with clearing back brambles and ivy from the site but it should be noted that no works should take place at the site without seeking advice from a qualified conservation engineer first and submitting notification to the Local Authority and National Monuments Service.

**BUDGET:** Conservation Reports carried out by qualified Conservation Engineers generally cost in the region of €5,000.00 (ex VAT).



Kilkerin Battery

## Long Term Projects

### 1. Develop a Food Offering

The group have identified the gap in a food offering in this part of the Estuary. They hope to work with local businesses to develop a village café or restaurant or a mobile food unit initially but it is an area that the group need the most assistance with in the future as there is a lot of training and investment required to develop a sustainable, traceable and quality food offering for the area. There is very low competition for food businesses along the Clare section of the Shannon Estuary Drive so there is great potential to develop a quality product. Mentoring and support is required to develop a food offering in the area and the group are keen to be involved in the next phase of networking that is being rolled out by Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources.

### 2. Forest Walks at Mountshannon

Mountshannon is a large wooded area that extends down to the shore of the estuary. It is a Coilte owned plantation. The group would like to work with Coilte and local landowners to develop walks through the plantation down to the shore. As the Shannon Estuary is designated as a Special Protection Area for the protection of wild birds and a Special Area of Conservation, any works relating to walks development along the shore line would have to be agreed with National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to any works taking place.

### 3. Development of Labasheeda Pier

Developing the amenities at the pier at Labasheeda for water sports is a long term ambition for this group. Over the last few months, work has been carried out at the pier including a complete tidy up of the area, a new bench and picnic table has been installed, the entrance has been made wider for buggy's and wheelchairs and new stepping stones to the existing picnic table have been installed. The group are planning the next stage of developments which include:

- (i) Tarring the area and marking out parking spaces
- (ii) Installing an electric charging point for cars.

The long term development aim for Labasheeda Pier is to dredge the pier to create access to water at low tide. This access would then attract boating and water sports enthusiasts which would have a very positive economic impact on the area.

### 4. Mindfulness Retreat

The group recognise the peacefulness at Labasheeda as an asset and hope to develop mindfulness activities for those wishing to tap into the beauty of nature. There is the potential to develop yoga or tai chi retreats and mindfulness weekends as well as spa breaks. These could be developed as activities for those staying at the glamping sites. These are projects which the group will be assessing in the future for long term development.

# 3.7 KNOCK / KILLIMER

## 3.7.1 Introduction to Knock / Killimer

Knock is a small village on the Shannon Estuary and on the western side of Clonderlaw Bay. It has a picturesque setting on the shores of the estuary with high ground to the north. Both the eastern and western approaches to Knock descend into the village and offer great views across the Shannon. The village is clustered around a crossroads with two public houses in the village centre. There is a pier on the waterfront that was used in the past to bring ashore seaweed that had been harvested in the estuary.

Killimer is located further west along the R486 (which then becomes the N67). It is a small village on the northern side of the Shannon Estuary. It is one of two embarkation points for the Tarbert–Killimer ferry which crosses the estuary. The traditional musician and busker Pecker Dunne (1933–2012) lived in Killimer and is buried in Burrane graveyard. The Colleen Bawn, Ellen Hanley, is also buried in this graveyard.

## 3.7.2 Community Group and Engagement

Killimer Local History Group and a representative from Knock village were consulted about the project in Knockerra Village Hall on 6th September. The scope of the project was outlined and potential projects that could be developed were discussed. A summary of projects discussed was emailed prior to the interim report being submitted to ensure that they reflected what had been proposed.



St. Senan's Church and Graveyard

### 3.7.3 Tourism / Heritage Assets

The two small villages of Knock and Killimer are steeped in heritage and folklore. There are a number of points of interest in both villages including:

#### **Knock Ice House and Lime Kiln:**

Knock Ice House and lime kiln both date from the early 19th century. Both structures have been restored in recent years by the local community. Ice houses were used in the days before refrigeration to store perishable goods and were often partially sunken into the ground to maintain a constant temperature. Lime kilns were used to burn limestone and make lime for use as an agricultural fertilizer and for making mortar and whitewash.

#### **Burrane Cemetery and the Colleen Bawn and Peter O' Connell Monuments**

Ellen Hanley, known as the Colleen Bawn, was murdered by her husband John Scanlan in 1819. She was the daughter of a small farmer from Bruree, Co. Limerick and was said to have been very attractive. Scanlan was from Ballycahane, Co. Limerick and was part of the landed gentry class. He persuaded Ellen to marry him in secret but soon tired of his new bride. He brought her out on boat trip on the estuary and pressured his servant Stephen Sullivan to shoot her dead. Her body was washed ashore near Killimer and buried in the graveyard at Burrane. Scanlan and Sullivan were both apprehended, tried and executed for the crime. The Colleen Bawn's tragic story has inspired books, operas and films since then. There is a modern monument in Killimer commemorating her, but a cross erected in the nineteenth century was gradually chipped away and eventually destroyed by souvenir hunters. Peter O' Connell is also interred in Burrane Cemetery. He was a renowned scholar and lexicographer born near Killimer in the eighteenth century. He devoted most of his life to compilation of a very comprehensive English – Irish dictionary.

#### **St Senan's Church and Lough**

This graveyard north of Killimer contains three church ruins: St. Senan's Church, St Senan's Chapel and St. Senan's small chapel. The site overlooks St. Senan's Lough to the south. Holy rounds are still performed at the lake in honour of St. Senan. There is a holy well and a penitential station on the northern shores of the lake which is said to be the birthplace of Senan. There are very interesting turf covered vaults in the graveyard that date to the nineteenth century.



Colleen Bawn Memorial, Burrane Cemetery



St Senan's Church and Graveyard



### 3.7.5 Suggested Project Details

#### Short Term

Having met with individuals from Knock and Killimer; the following short term projects were suggested for enhancement of the tourism potential of the area:

- Create brochure for Points of Interest in the area - Short Term
- Install interpretive signage at Points of Interest in the area - Short Term
- Install townland stone markers with the townlands inscribed in Old Irish - Medium / Long term

These three proposals are very achievable and do not require large capital outlay.

#### Roadmap to Completion: Brochure Design and Print and Interpretive Signage Design, Manufacture and Installation:

**Step One:** Form a sub committee to lead the brochure and signage development project. The sub committee should decide in advance of commissioning the design work what points of interest should be included and should gather any historical images that are to be used on the brochure and signage.

The Points of Interest recommended to be included in a brochure and that may require signage are:

#	Point of Interest	Longitude	Latitude
1	Knock Quay	52.628396	-9.332466
2	Knock Ice House and Lime Kiln	52.628894	-9.333729
3	Burrane Graveyard (Story of Colleen Bawn and Peter O' Connell [scholar and lexicographer])	52.617747	-9.376686
4	St Senan's Church and Graveyard	52.634411	-9.402882
5	St Imy's Holy Well, Killimer	52.617734	-9.373972

**Step Two:** Secure funding for the development of the brochure and signage (for more information on funding, see Section 5).

**Step Three:** Commission a marketing / heritage / design company to design the brochures. The sub committee should forward on all relevant information to that company so that they can distill the information to write engaging copy for the brochure

**Step Four:** Liaise with Fáilte Ireland to ensure that the brochure and signage design are in keeping with the overall Shannon Estuary Way brand and standards guidelines.

**Step Five:** Consult with Clare County Council before any signage is installed to ensure that all planning requirements are fulfilled.

Description	Costs
Design an A3 to DL brochure with images and a map highlighting points of interest. Price include 3 edit stages. *	€550.00 (VAT @ 23%)
Design 5 A2 signs to animate a heritage trail in Killimer / Knock area *	€1,750.00 (VAT @23%)
Manufacture / Supply / Installation of 5 A2 signs	€850 (ex VAT) per sign €4,250.00 for 5 signs Supply and Installation costs dependent on quantities ordered

\*Quote for signage and brochure design: Abarta Heritage

\*\* Quote for signage manufacture and installation: Signiatec

## Medium to Long Term Projects

### Townland Markers

Following consultation with locals from the area, they suggested that townland markers would enhance the local area and enhance the sense of community. These townland markers have already been installed in other parishes along the Shannon Estuary Way so their installation in Knock / Killimer would be consistent with work that has been carried out elsewhere. The townland markers are large boulders of limestone with the townland incised in Old Irish or English. There are approximately 22 townlands in the Knock / Killimer Parish so this could be a phased project with a number of townland stones completed every year over five years.

### Estimated Costs

Description	Costs
Townland Boulder with Inscription	€400 - €500 (VAT @ 13.5% included) per stone

\* Quote provided by Michael McTigue Headstones, Ennis

### Digitisation of Local History Archive

The Killimer Local History Group have recently published '*Living on the Wild Atlantic Way, The History of Killimer Parish*'. This extensive volume includes many historical photographs and information. The digitisation and archiving of information that was generated during the research phase of this publication could be considered as a long term project for Killimer Local History Group. Digitisation and appropriate archiving ensures that collections are safe for future generations. Creative Ireland have funded cultural heritage digitisation projects in the past and may be a source of funds. The Digital Repository of Ireland ([www.dri.ie](http://www.dri.ie)) may be of assistance with best-practice guidelines and standards.

## Long Term Project: Craft / Food Offering

There is some interest locally in Knock village in developing a seasonal craft shop that would also serve coffees and light snacks. This is a long term aspiration and the feasibility of undertaking such a venture has to be established before any plans are outlined. It is hoped that the local community will engage with the Networking programme that is being put in place by Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources over the next few months so that support can be given to explore the possibilities of starting such a business.

# OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS



# 4. OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHANNON ESTUARY WAY

## Recommendation 1 – Establish a Shannon Estuary Way Steering Committee

A local voluntary steering committee is the first step in the process of sustainable tourism development. This committee should be made up of committed individuals from the communities along the Estuary Way as well as tourism businesses and other interested individuals who are in a position to give the time and energy required to implement the recommendations of this report. When working with the communities, it became clear that there are a number of individuals that would relish the opportunity to be part of a Steering Committee. It is important from the outset that a strong committee is formed as it will give clear direction and purpose to implementing the remaining recommendations. The steering committee should include representation from all of the communities to ensure inclusion and the best balance for future engagement.

An initial list of actions for the new committee would be:

- Adopt a constitution or articles of association
- Election of officers
- Establish a bank/credit union account
- Obtain a tax clearance certificate (required for funding applications)
- Fundraising
- Development of an online/social media presence

These actions are necessary to give the committee a solid foundation, and importantly, they will ensure that the committee is in a position to manage finances and apply for funding.

The Steering Committee should be established as part of the ‘Shannon Estuary Way Networking Project’ that is being undertaken by Tina O’ Dwyer on behalf of Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources over the coming months.



The Wild Atlantic Way at Killimer

## Recommendation 2 – Consultation and Network & Alliance Building

Once formed, the committee should foster connections with stakeholders. The purpose of these consultations should be to communicate the vision and objectives of the Shannon Estuary Way committee, to gather information, and to discuss mutual co-operation and support. These consultations should be the start of a process of developing long-term relationships with key stakeholders. Suggested actions include:

- Build on existing foundations with Clare Local Development Company particularly in relation to funding and training opportunities.
- Meet with the following public bodies and agencies: Fáilte Ireland, Clare County Council, Limerick County Council, Kerry County Council, National Monuments Service, Coillte, Sport Ireland Trails and the National Parks & Wildlife Service.
- Develop links with local voluntary organisations.
- Develop links with the other stakeholders in the Shannon Estuary Way in Counties Limerick and Kerry.
- Link with and visit other community-based rural tourism organisations to learn from their experiences.
- Consult with local landholders where there are access issues in relation to certain sites

This network and alliance building should take place as part of the upcoming project that is being undertaken by Tina O’Dwyer on behalf of Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources.

## Recommendation 3 – Develop Specific Trails

### Shannon Estuary Way Garden Trail & Museum Trail

Trail routes and itineraries provide visitors with a convenient means of accessing the attractions in an area and help them to plan their visit and maximise their time. The

trail route connects the various points of interest and can be signposted to help visitors navigate their way around. This is important in a rural area such as the Shannon Estuary Way where many sites are remote from towns and villages and are situated on quiet country roads and laneways. The trail route should reflect the overall theme that is consistent with the Shannon Estuary Way identity.

Garden tourism is becoming more and more popular. According to Fáilte Ireland statistics, 19% of domestic holidaymakers visited gardens on their holiday in 2016. This rose to 21% in 2017. Many Local Development Companies are supporting local Garden Trails in their area to link in and cross promote these sites under a common umbrella. Working to attract visitors collaboratively has far more benefits and attracts a wider audience rather than individual tourism products trying to compete and market themselves separately in a relatively small geographic area.

The Shannon Estuary Way Garden Trail could be developed to offer a day out for both domestic and international visitors and would be a relatively inexpensive and effective itinerary to develop initially. In Co. Clare there are four potential gardens that could be included in the trail:

- Knappogue Castle and Walled Garden (Owned by Shannon Heritage)
- Bunratty Castle and Walled Garden (Owned by Shannon Heritage)
- Dromoland Castle and Walled Gardens (Owned privately)
- Vandeleur Walled Garden (Managed by Kilrush Amenity Trust)

The owners / managers of these gardens should be approached about the development of the itinerary. A brochure could be created with a map highlighting the gardens. The Garden Trail could be extended to include historic gardens in Counties Limerick and Kerry. Examples of Garden Trails in other localities can be seen at: [wexfordgardentrail.com](http://wexfordgardentrail.com), [carlowgardentrail.com](http://carlowgardentrail.com) and [tipperary.com/experience/things-do/gardens-tipperary](http://tipperary.com/experience/things-do/gardens-tipperary)

**A Museum Trail** could also be developed for the wider Shannon Estuary. There are a number of heritage centres and museums operating along the Estuary Way and these could be connected under a Museum Trail umbrella ensuring cross-promotional opportunities. Visitor attractions that could be included are:

- Listowel Writer’s Museum
- Foynes Flying Boat Museum
- Adare Heritage Centre
- Hunt Museum, Co. Limerick
- Limerick City Museum
- Clare Museum, Ennis
- Atlantic Air Adventures, Shannon

This list is only a provisional list and other visitor attractions could be included.

There are also a significant number of ‘Big Houses’ along the Shannon Estuary Way. The vast majority of these houses are currently in private ownership. The steering committee could consider approaching the owners of these properties to enquire about developing a “*Grand Houses of the Estuary Trail*”. This trail would be an exclusive tour through some of these large houses and estates.

## **Recommendation 4 - Develop a Shannon Estuary Way Website and / or a Community Heritage Website**

It is recommended that a bespoke website for the Shannon Estuary Way should be developed. This website should be highly visual so that visitors to the website are encouraged to explore the content to find out more information about what the Shannon Estuary Way is all about. There should be high quality images used throughout as well as engaging copy highlighting the activities, heritage and accommodation offerings in the area. Itineraries should also be included to allow visitors to see all that can be seen in a short space of time. The steering committee should be involved in the creation of the website as the content that is housed there

should be promoting each of the local communities. An example of an excellent community tourism website can be found at [loophead.ie](http://loophead.ie).

Another online offering that could be developed to help raise the awareness of the Shannon Estuary Way is a community heritage forum. Using a service such as [www.communitysites.co.uk](http://www.communitysites.co.uk), a bespoke community heritage archive could be developed specifically for the Shannon Estuary Way where communities can become curators of the information and contribute to the content. The information that was amassed during this project could be uploaded to the website including snippets of the audio that was produced during the course of this project.

The website should be overseen by the steering group and with support from Clare County Council and it would provide an excellent resource for all the communities along the Estuary Way and for visitors travelling to the region. Community archive websites are currently used by:

- Galway Community Heritage ([www.galwaycommunityheritage.org](http://www.galwaycommunityheritage.org)) - supported by Galway County Council Heritage Officer: Marie Mannion, Galway Heritage Forum and the National Museum of Ireland (iCAN).
- Our Wicklow Heritage ([www.countywicklowheritage.org](http://www.countywicklowheritage.org)) - supported by Wicklow County Council Heritage Officer: Deirdre Burns and National Museum of Ireland (iCAN).

There is a cost involved in creating these bespoke community heritage websites. Companies such as Community Sites ([www.communitysites.co.uk](http://www.communitysites.co.uk)) specialise in building websites and catalogues for community groups, museums and archives and they have software that is designed for community heritage projects. They recommend a budget of around €5,000 to set up a site which is easy to run and navigate but has features such as data search which is very useful if a lot of content is uploaded on the site. The benefit of developing a site like this is that local historians, researchers and interested individuals can become actively involved in the site and upload their research so that it reaches a wide audience. It is also a great way of highlighting heritage work that is being undertaken in the county.

## Recommendation 5 – The Shannon Estuary Way Symbol & Brand

Fáilte Ireland have created a symbol (the gandelaw) for the Shannon Estuary Way for use on signage. It is recommended that it is a prerequisite for communities and tourism businesses to adopt this symbol as the overarching symbol for the Shannon Estuary Way. This will create brand awareness and consistency.

## Recommendation 6 – Interpretation for the Shannon Estuary Way: Audio Guide

Interpretation is the way in which we tell the story of a site or a place. Good quality interpretation is about communicating the meaning of a place and giving the visitor a deeper understanding and appreciation. Interpretation can take many forms, ranging from interpretive signage to a printed publication or an audio-visual presentation.

The stories of the Shannon Estuary Way should be well told with the highest standard of interpretative signage, brochures and audio guides to allow people to explore independently. A number of communities have carried out excellent local history research and have compiled stories about their area. These stories could be incorporated into interpretive panels in their communities. For more information on interpretation please see; Ideas for Interpreting Heritage Sites, Bored of Boards, Irish Walled Towns Network, The Heritage Council.

Specific interpretation needs have been addressed for each community in the Community Section of this report. Panels and interpretative signage have been recommended for a number of the locations, however if communities can access funding and artistic collaboration to develop artistic installations as part of the interpretation of their area, this should be encouraged as other forms of media can make a place stand out and be remembered.

Consideration could also be given to create overall interpretation products such as a professionally produced audio guide that would be designed to allow people to explore the Shannon Estuary Way in their own time, with layered information to satisfy those who want to dig deeper into the stories of this beautiful estuary. This audio guide could feature local voices and could tell the story of each community along the Estuary Way. An example of such a guide is the Loop Head Heritage Trail: [www.abartaheritage.ie/product/loop-head-heritage-trail-audio-guide/](http://www.abartaheritage.ie/product/loop-head-heritage-trail-audio-guide/)

The interpretation should be complementary to the interpretive signage that Fáilte Ireland are in the process of installing at key locations along the estuary and it should feature the Shannon Estuary Way symbol.



Shannon Estuary Way symbol – Source Fáilte Ireland.

## Recommendation 7 – Local Heritage Training / Tour Guide Training

Fáilte Ireland’s tourism offerings: *Ireland’s Ancient East* and the *Wild Atlantic Way* emphasises unique and authentic experiences for visitors that help them to truly get to know and understand the place they are visiting. The Culturally Curious visitor enjoys engaging directly with people as part of their holiday. Bearing this in mind, a pool of local trained tour guides who are knowledgeable about history and heritage can be a huge advantage in promoting a rural tourist destination. These local guides can act as ‘champions’ for the region, and provide compelling and tangible incentive for visitors to seek to experience the authentic stories of the Shannon Estuary Way. Having met many communities along the Estuary Way - there is a great wealth of stories and interest in the heritage of the area and a real willingness to share that knowledge with visitors.

Clare County Council Heritage are planning on running the Reading the Landscape Training Course to enable course participants to identify, examine and record the heritage features of their own local area through desk research and fieldwork. Through this training course local community members will be empowered to discover, recognise, promote and conserve their unique local heritage resources. Group project work will enable citizen engagement and mainstream creativity into the conservation of local heritage. Course participants will discover and engage with their cultural heritage and reinforce a sense of belonging to their local area.

A foundational course titled; ‘*The Story of your Place*’ could also be delivered in a central location along the estuary that is targeted at interested individuals. This course would run for 6 - 8 weeks, one evening a week and include modules on:

- The story of your place; from earliest times to present day
- How to research the story of your place
- How to present information to visitors to your area
- Links that can be made with other areas along the estuary way

- How to tell the story of your place digitally

The benefits of running a course like this is that it will:

Bring like minded people together which would create a strong network of interested individuals in the area.

Increase local knowledge about the heritage all along the estuary

Empower local people to get more involved with sharing the heritage of the area and how they can do that digitally

By creating a strong forum, ideas and new business opportunities can be shared and developed and links can be made to other businesses in the area.

Following the successful completion of this course, it would be recommended that participants who want to become local tour guides should complete the Fáilte Ireland accredited regional tour guide training course that takes place in Tralee with Kerry ETB and runs for a duration of 17 weeks.

## Recommendation 8 – Familiarisation Trips

Making local organisations, businesses and agencies aware of what the area has to offer and what promotional work is being undertaken is important. Familiarisation trips for tourist accommodation providers, agency representatives, businesses and other stakeholders will give them a better understanding of the trail and the sites. They will then be in a better position to inform visitors about attractions and activities along the Shannon Estuary Way.

These trips could be organised annually in advance of the start of the tourist season. They could also serve as networking events and a way of attracting new people to the committee. Following the creation of a strong brand identity, it is recommended that the steering committee seek advice and support from the tourism officers of Clare, Limerick and Kerry County Councils and the Fáilte Ireland team on delivering familiarisation trips for travel journalists and bloggers to help spread the word of the wonderful Shannon Estuary Way and all it has to offer.



## Recommendation 9 – Programme of Events and Activities to Celebrate the Shannon Estuary Way

Organising a programme of events that run throughout the year can be a very positive way to attract visitors to an area, particularly outside the main tourist season. Suggested events could include:

### **Storytelling Event: *Stories from the Mouth of the Shannon***

Following the success of the Shannon Estuary Way Storytelling Evening that took place during Heritage Week, it is recommended that more storytelling events should be considered. Following the event, a number of people were disappointed that they weren't able to attend and would love to attend one in the future. As well as being of interest to local people, evening time story events held in local pubs or community halls can be attractive for the Culturally Curious visitor who wants to learn more about the history of the area and meet local people. A storytelling evening could involve local historians and storytellers relating the folklore and history of the Shannon Estuary Way. The storytelling event could be hosted by different communities (including those in other counties along the Estuary Way) during the summer months and be promoted locally and online to encourage locals and visitors to take part. There is such a wealth of stories along the estuary way that an event like this would be a great way of keeping those stories alive.

This could be a project that the Steering Committee take on following the networking programme being delivered by Clare Local Development Company and West Limerick Resources as a celebration of the Estuary Way in the two counties. Heritage Week 2019 could be an ideal time to host the event again. Shannon Heritage very generously allowed the use of Mac's Bar to host our event in 2018 and they should be approached again to get involved in future storytelling evenings.

Other events that take place during the year that could be included in promotion of

events along the Shannon Estuary Way include the Dan Furey Festival in Labasheeda and the Killadysert Agricultural Show as well as other local community festivals.

## Recommendation 10 – Island Tours

The islands along the estuary are unspoilt hidden gems full of stories with the promise of exploration. During the course of the Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project, it became very clear that although all of the islands are now uninhabited since 2004, they are still very much part of the community. Many former islanders still farm on the islands as it is very fertile land. They still retain their strong connection with island life. There is great awareness amongst the communities along the estuary of the way of life and traditions that existed. Many people travel to the area carrying out genealogical research and would love to access the islands. There are no formal tours going from any of the piers. If you want to access the island, you have to get in touch with a local that owns a boat who is happy to bring people out on the river. There are a couple of local people (who formerly lived on the islands) who are happy to bring out visitors but there is no formalised way of booking a tour or finding out who can bring you out. Travelling on the river by boat can be dangerous and wearing life jackets is essential. Navigating the estuary can be extremely tricky and dangerous and the person operating the boat must have detailed knowledge of the tides and landing spots on the islands.

There is great potential to develop tours to the islands, particularly the islands off Killadysert as improvement works are taking place at Crovraghan pier and there is parking there. It will also have Fáilte Ireland interpretive signage installed. If possible, local island farmers (who have an in-depth knowledge of the tides and currents of the estuary) should be encouraged to establish island boat tours. In particular Fintan Ginnane (formerly of Horse Island, now residing in Killadysert) should be supported in exploring the feasibility of developing island tours as he has exceptional knowledge about life on the islands, owns a 6 seater boat, is an excellent storyteller, is passionate about the history of life on the islands and has great knowledge of the river and tides.

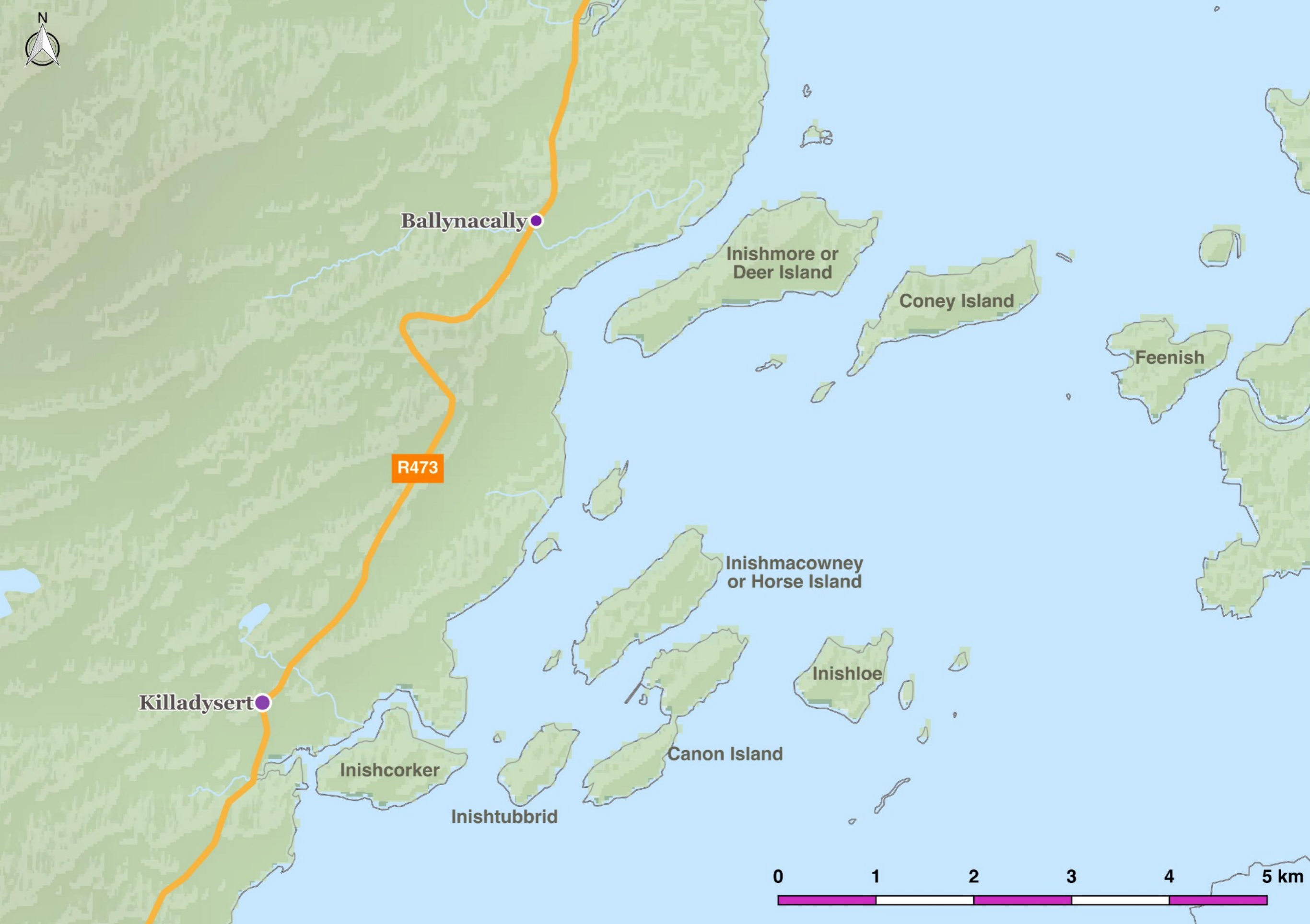


Figure 11: Map of Islands in Shannon Estuary accessible from Crovraghan / Killadysert / Ballynacally

Visitors to Horse Island can see the house that Fintan grew up in that he is now in the process of restoring, the site of the old castle, the school house and the ringfort. When Horse Island was visited as part of this project, the experience of walking down the road on the island, passing a derelict cottage and abandoned tractor was extremely striking and offers a different, completely off the beaten track visitor experience which fits in with what the Culturally Curious and Great Escaper tourism markets are looking for.

Fintan could also bring visitors to Canon Island to visit the medieval Augustinian Friary which is owned by the Office of Public Works. Access to Canon Island is difficult at the moment as there is no slipway to land boats. Boats have to navigate mudflats to land close to the shore. Visitors then have to walk over seaweed covered rocks to reach solid land. The island itself is very overgrown with brambles. A slipway is recommended to make access for visitors easier (further conservation recommendations for Canon Island are included below). Any slipway development on the islands must have appropriate planning and heritage assessments carried out prior to works, and must be carried out in consultation with the landowner, National Parks and Wildlife Service and Clare County Council.

## **Recommendation 11 – Walking / Cycling Tours**

Communities along the Estuary Way such as Shannon, Bunratty, Clarecastle and Labasheeda are developing walks or cycle routes to enhance their local area and provide activity for locals and visitors. These walks and cycle routes could be promoted to encourage visitors to the area to take part. Cycle or walking festivals and events could also be created to promote these amenities further. Links should be made by the Steering Group with other cycling hubs in the country such as Loop Head Tourism who are currently developing routes around their area.

## **Recommendation 12 – Conservation Needs and Requirements**

During the course of our fieldwork, a number of sites were identified that are at risk from excessive ivy growth.

**Canon Island Augustinian Abbey** is located on Canon Island, the largest of the 20 or so islands located in the Shannon Estuary. The Abbey is a National Monument owned by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (National Monument Number: 195, CL060-011002). The island was visited on the 17/10/2018 as part of our fieldwork assessing heritage sites along the Shannon Estuary Way. During the visit, it was noted that there is extensive ivy growth on the masonry walls of the church. The ivy has taken hold in the walls and may now pose a structural threat to the building.

Since 1990, the Parish of Killadysert organise an annual pilgrimage to Canon Island for Mass. The pilgrimage has taken place in previous years in mid August or the end of July. Boats ferry people to the island where mass is celebrated in the Augustinian Friary. Locals who attend the annual mass at Canon Island are becoming increasingly concerned that masonry is becoming dislodged due to the growth of ivy. The Office of Public Works maintain the site on behalf of the Minister and it is essential that the Office of Public Works be informed of the conservation requirements at the site and that a vegetation management programme be undertaken under supervision of an experienced conservation architect by the Office of Public. The Parish of Killadysert are very invested in the ongoing maintenance and care of the site and it is recommended that the Office of Public Works work with the local community to maintain the site into the future.

**Burrane Church** (CL068-024001) located between Killimer and Knock in Burrane Lower townland was also extensively covered in ivy and requires a vegetation management plan and ivy removal under the guidance of a conservation engineer.

**Kilchreest Church** (CL050-03601) located just outside Ballynacally in Carrowkilla townland was also extensively covered in ivy and in our opinion requires a vegetation management plan and ivy removal under the guidance of a conservation engineer.

Other sites encountered during fieldwork that require conservation works are located in Labasheeda and have been addressed directly in the Labasheeda section of this report.

## **Recommendation 13 – Mindfulness on The Shannon Estuary Way**

The Shannon Estuary is an area that is rich in unspoilt views, pretty villages and quiet country roads. The landscape and the tranquility of the area makes it a place apart where people can escape the daily grind. The Estuary Way could be developed as a place for mindful contemplation, where people can get away from it all and relax and unwind as they enjoy the slower pace of life along the Estuary. There is the opportunity to develop activities for people who wish to get back to nature and slow down. Yoga retreats, mindfulness courses, foraging trails, walks and cycles as well as water-based activities could all be developed and marketed to those who wish to get off the beaten track and take some time out of their busy lives. There is an increasing desire for people to surrender to nature and to reconnect with themselves, and this experience can be developed and delivered along the Shannon Estuary Way.

## **Recommendation 14 – Nature-Focused Tourism on the Shannon Estuary Way**

There is great opportunity to develop the Shannon Estuary Way as a nature / bird watching destination. A separate report on developing nature based tourism opportunities on the Shannon Estuary Way is currently being completed. This report will document key natural heritage information which will inform development of nature-based (wildlife-) tourism in the area, make developmental and promotional recommendations and will provide site-by-site assessments and recommendations for key sites and area-based recommendations for strategic level planning.



# SUPPORT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

# 5. SUPPORT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In order to implement the vision for the Shannon Estuary Way, the Steering Committee will need to seek support and funding from a range of sources.

## 5.1 Rural Development Programme

The current Rural Development (LEADER) Programme runs from 2014 to 2020. It is being administered across Clare by Clare Local Development Company CLG. Under the programme, projects can be funded to a maximum of €200,000. The rate of aid for capital projects where the promoter is a community organisation is 75%. Feasibility studies can be funded at a rate of up to 90% and training projects can receive up to 100%.

The **Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme** supports the development of recreational amenities being developed in rural areas that contribute to active healthy lifestyles and enhance the economic and tourism potential of that area. The Scheme encourages projects of differing sizes to be put forward by interested parties and partnerships. Applications for funding up to €20,000 are administered by Clare Local Development Company. Projects in excess of this are administered by Local Authorities and State Bodies in partnership with Clare Local Development Company and community bodies.

Under the Rural Development Programme, Co-operation projects which cross county boundaries can be funded. An application must be submitted to the Department of Rural & Community Development and the total budget nationally is €10 million.

See [www.cldc.ie](http://www.cldc.ie) for more information.



Quin Friary

## 5.2 Local Authority

The **Town & Village Renewal Scheme** is an annual scheme that aims to revitalise rural towns and villages. It includes measures to enhance local cultural and heritage assets and to promote tourism. Each local authority receives a sum annually to provide support to a maximum of eight towns/villages. Projects can be funded to a maximum of €100,000.

See [www.drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/town-village-renewal-scheme/](http://www.drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/town-village-renewal-scheme/) for more information.

**CLÁR** is a targeted investment programme delivered by The Department of Rural and Community Development providing funding for infrastructural projects in rural areas that have suffered population decline. The funding works in conjunction with local funding in response to local identified needs and is delivered by local authorities. The national budget was €5 million in 2017. The types of projects funded under CLÁR varies from year to year. Killimer, Knock, Labasheeda, Killadysert and Ballynacally are all located within CLÁR areas. Communities outside of CLÁR areas are; Clarecastle, Shannon and Bunratty.

See [www.drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/clar/](http://www.drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/clar/) for more information.

**Built Heritage Investment Scheme** and **Structures at Risk Fund** are funds that are managed by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht . Their purpose is to fund works that will aid in reducing the deterioration of Ireland's architectural heritage while supporting employment for conservation professionals, contractors and specialists. Funding for both schemes is administered by the Local Authority.

See [www.chg.gov.ie/heritage/built-heritage/financial-assistance-for-architectural-heritage/](http://www.chg.gov.ie/heritage/built-heritage/financial-assistance-for-architectural-heritage/) for more information.

## 5.3 Heritage Council

The Heritage Council runs a Heritage Management Grants scheme to support projects that apply good heritage practice in the management of places, collections or objects.

Heritage Council Grant Funding has not been confirmed for 2019 at time of print.

Grants of between €2,000 and €10,000 are awarded. All applications must be made through the online grants system and the scheme is usually open for applications early each year (The closing date in 2017 was in March).

See [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie) for more information.

## 5.4 The Wheel

The Wheel is a national support and representative body connecting community and voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises across Ireland. It acts as a one-stop-shop providing advice, information and support. It maintains an online database of funding grants for the community and voluntary sector known as *Fundingpoint*. This is a subscriber-based, fee-paying service with the option of a free 2-hour trial.

See [www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie) for details.

## 5.5 Corporate Sponsorship

Many businesses are willing to support local community projects financially, either to benefit their own business or to generate positive PR for their company. The committee should seek to identify potential donors in the area that could be approached. It is important that a clear proposal is presented to any potential donor that outlines the resources being sought and how any donations will be managed.



**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**



# 6. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

A key priority for tourism development along the Shannon Estuary Way should be sustainability and low impact tourism development. The unique selling point of the area is its rural nature and its wealth of heritage. It is important that these are protected by any proposed measures to develop tourism. In the context of the Shannon Estuary Way, sustainable tourism could include:

- Protecting and conserving the landscape which gives the area its distinctive character
- Protecting and conserving the unique habitats along the Shannon Estuary Way
- Ensuring that monuments and sites are protected
- Marketing the destination to visitors who will also appreciate the landscape and heritage of the area and support its protection e.g. Culturally Curious and the Great Escapers and/or Free Independent Travellers
- Monitoring visitor numbers to various heritage sites by installing electronic pedestrian counters
- All relevant agencies working together to ensure appropriate measures and policies are in place.

There are already a number of policies and plans that protect the landscape and heritage sites of the Shannon Estuary Way while also aiming to support development of tourism and recreational amenities. These provide a strong level of protection for the Shannon Estuary Way and its key sites and local efforts should focus on ensuring that these policies and plans are adhered to.

## Planning Policy

The Clare County Council Development Plan (2017 - 2023) states the following in relation to tourism (9.3.3 Tourism Developments and Tourist Facilities):

“Clare County Council aims to promote the development of tourism in a manner that is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the environment”.

## Record of Monuments and Places

Archaeological sites listed in the Record of Monuments and Places are protected by law

under the National Monuments Acts. Any person or organisation proposing to carry out works on such a site must give two months notice in writing to the Minister prior to carrying out any work. The National Monuments Service will then assess the potential impact of the proposed work on the monument prior to giving approval.

## Record of Protected Structures

Structures included in the RPS have special architectural, archaeological historical, artistic or cultural significance. Any work which would materially alter such structures requires planning permission.

## Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

These are areas of special architectural merit of unique character. They are designated to preserve the character of places and townscapes which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contribute to the appreciation of protected structures. Clare County Council’s policy is to ensure the enhancement and management of ACAs. As such, they are protected from inappropriate development. There are four ACAs of interest in the Shannon Estuary Way area listed in Clare County Council Development Plan (2017 - 2023): Ballynacally, Clarecastle, Kiladysart and Labasheeda.

## Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) & Natural Heritage Areas

The River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries form the largest estuarine complex in Ireland. The area supports large assemblages of wintering waterbirds, wintering waterfowl, cormorant breeding population and many other species on their migration paths. It is a Special Protection Area under the EU Birds Directive and a Special Area of Conservation. These areas are legally protected from damage and development within them is strictly controlled. Any development which has the potential to impact upon an SAC or SPA must first be subject to expert assessment.



**CONCLUSION**



Oral Heritage Recording in Killadysert

The Shannon Estuary Way Heritage Recording Project has engaged and empowered communities to propose tourism developments in their area that they are interested in. It has highlighted the wealth of heritage that is along the Shannon Estuary Way and the vibrant communities that are tasked with protecting this heritage, curating their stories and keeping traditions alive.

There are many projects detailed within this report which do not require large capital outlay that can be easily achieved by communities. It is hoped that the funding can be secured for these projects which will lead to increased community buy-in and more ambitious tourism projects managed by the communities.

Given that the Shannon Estuary Way can become a gateway for many tourists wishing to access the Wild Atlantic Way, there is a wealth of opportunity for individuals to get more involved in delivering tourism offerings in this area and with the right support and mentoring, it is our belief that sustainable tourism jobs can be created.

# APPENDICES



# Shannon Estuary Way Points of Interest

## Points of interest

- Rated 1
- Rated 2
- Rated 3

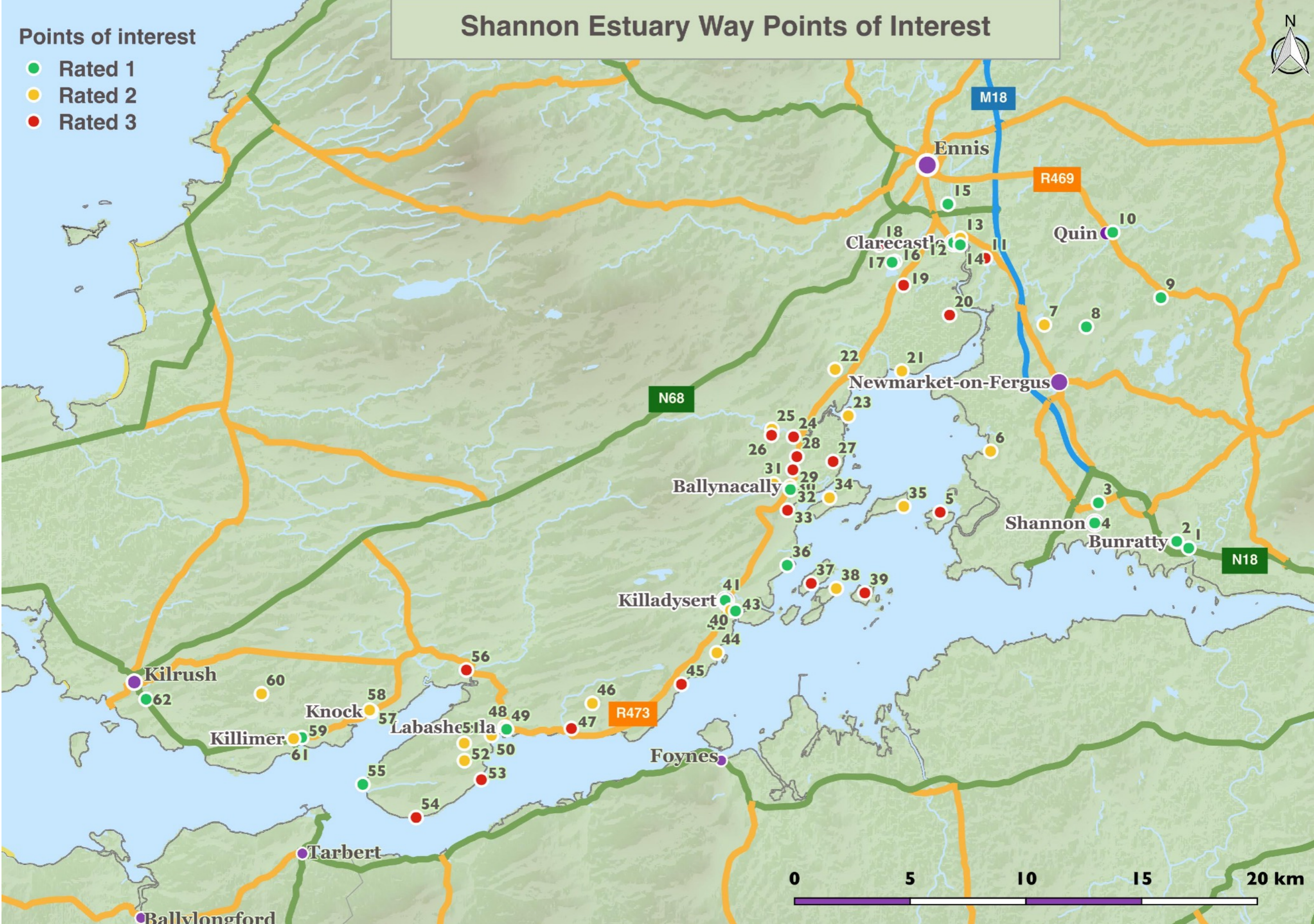


Figure 12: Shannon Estuary Way Points of Interest



Figure 13: Shannon Estuary Way Points of Interest from Bunratty - Clare Abbey

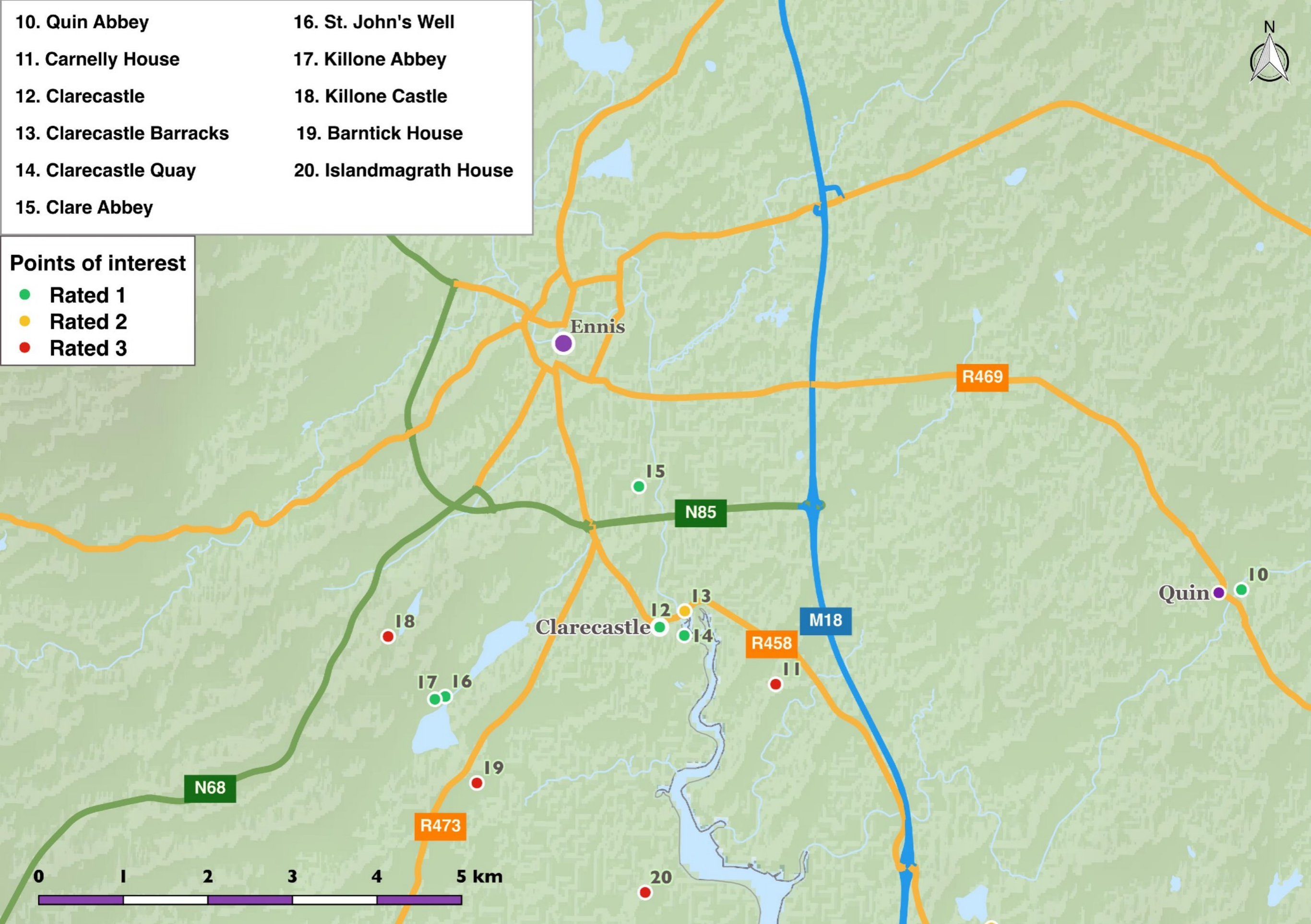


Figure 14: Map showing the Points of Interest in the Clarecastle area

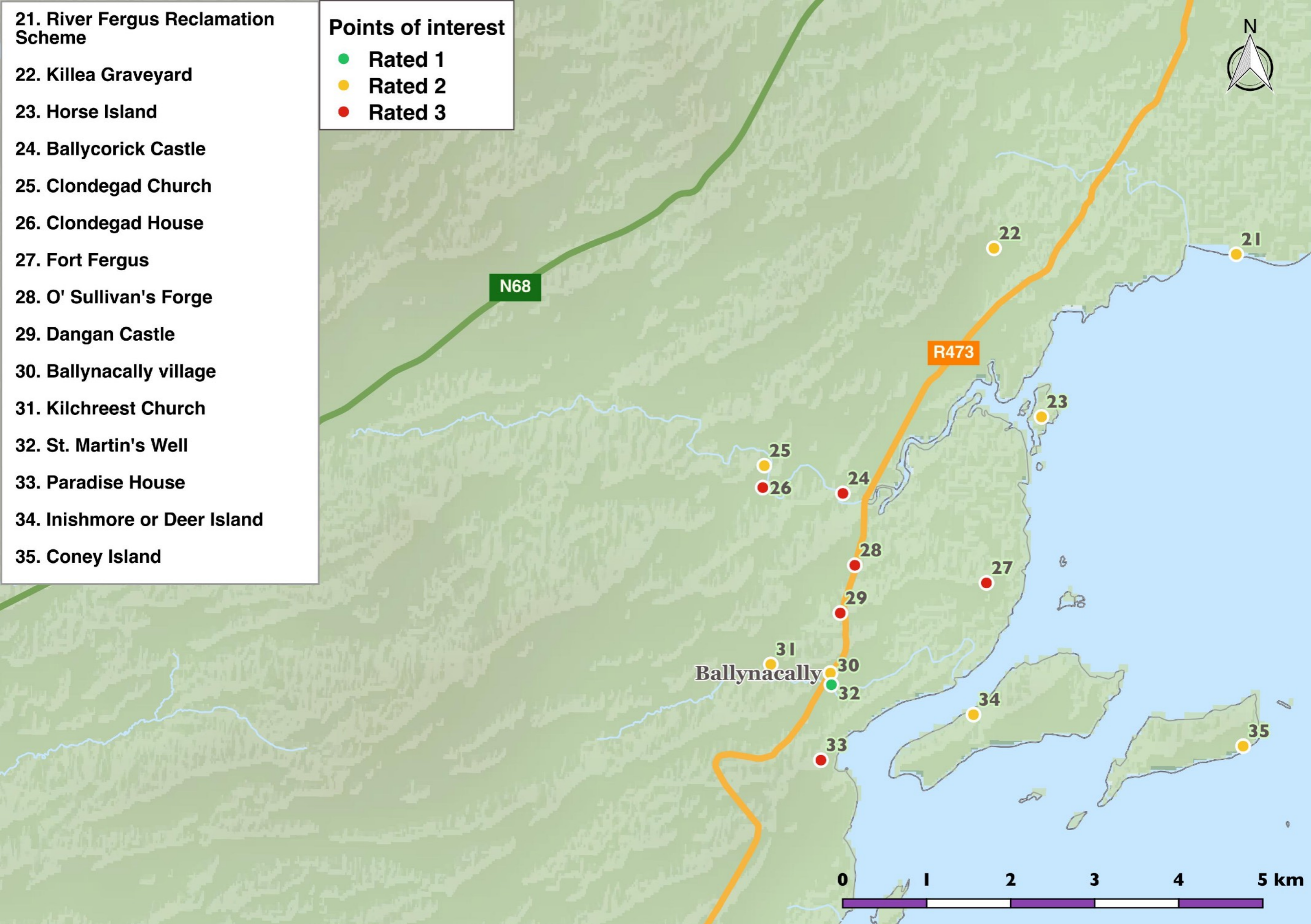


Figure 15: Map showing the Points of Interest in the Ballynacally area



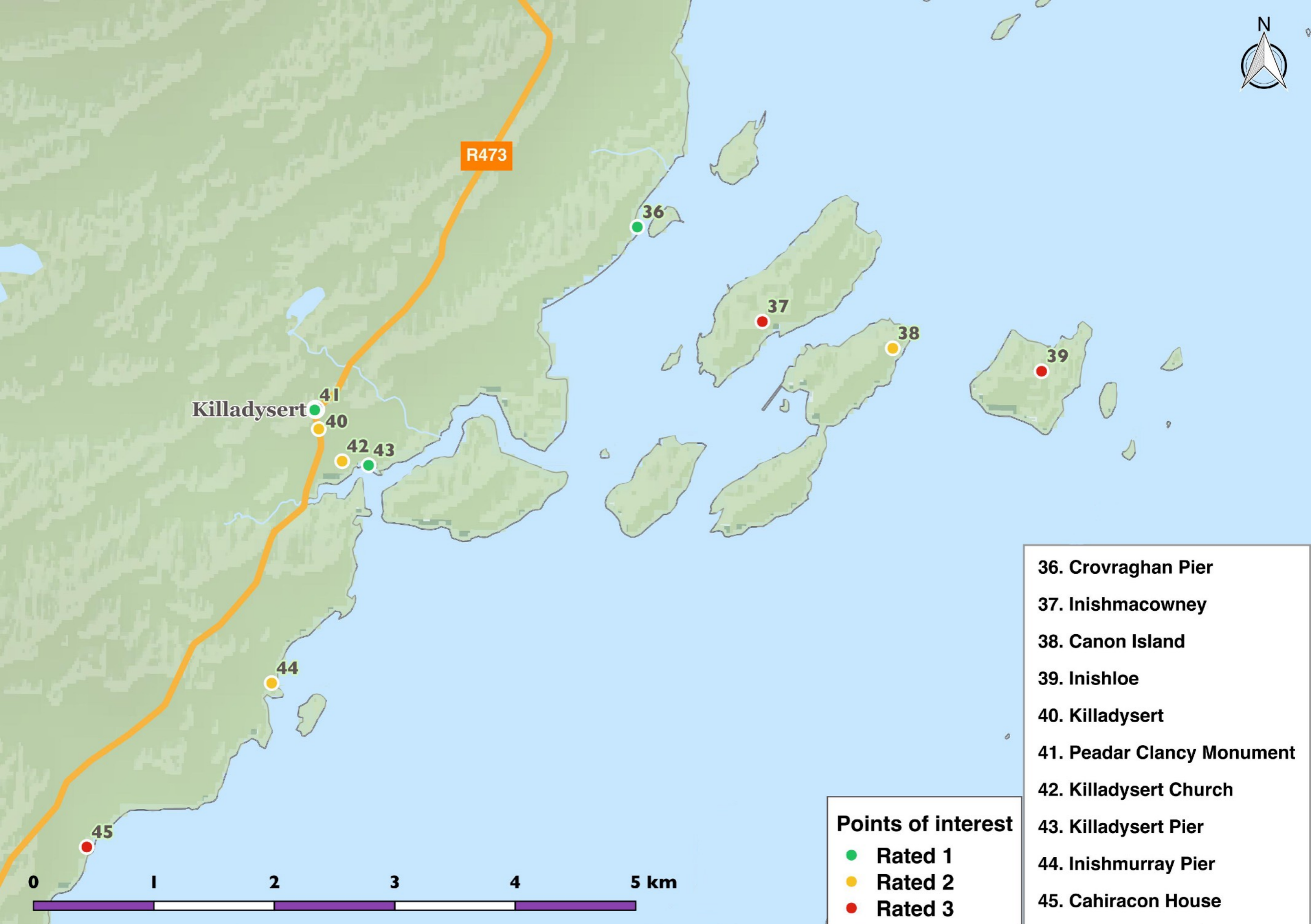
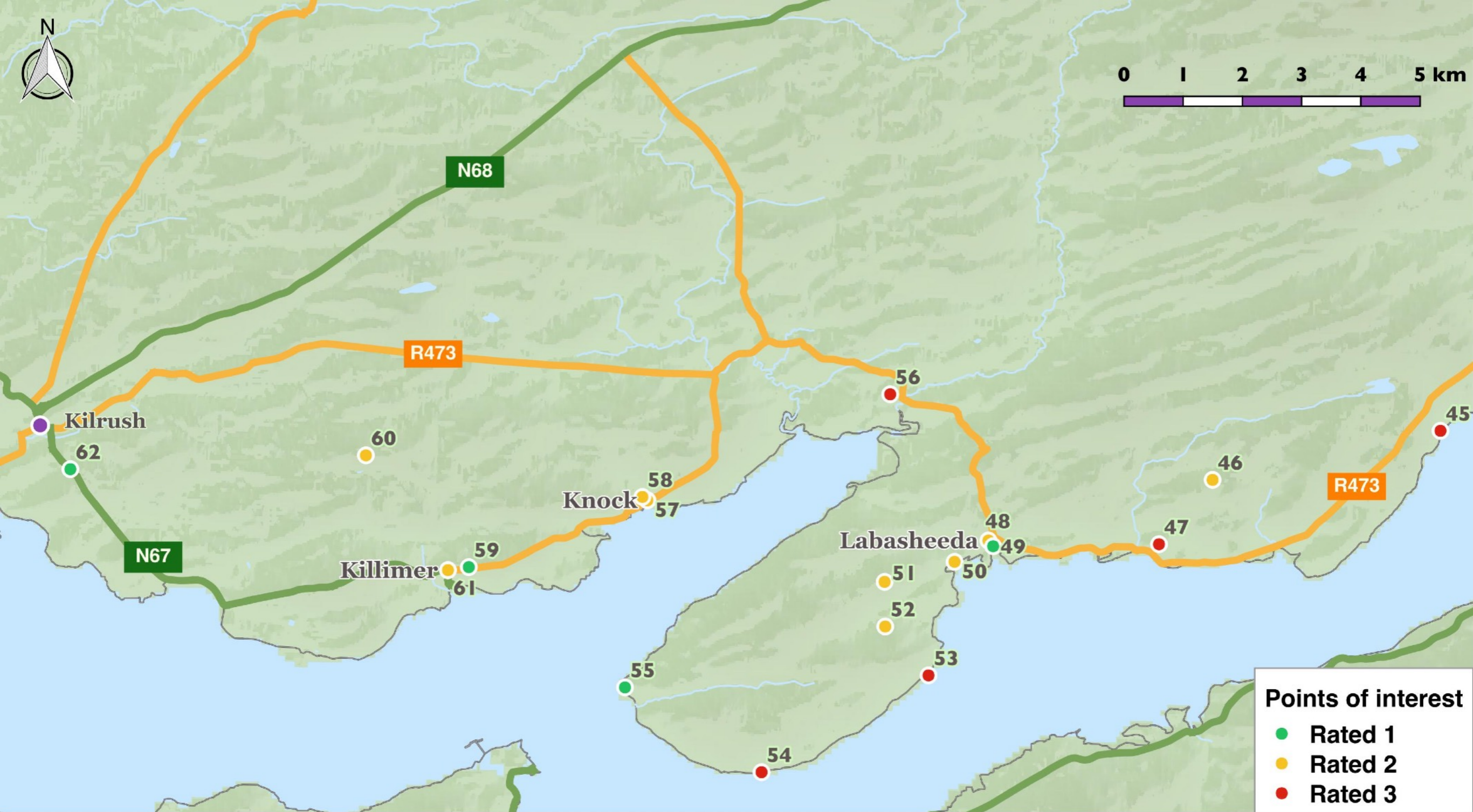


Figure 16: Map showing the Points of Interest in the Killadysert area



45. Cahiracon House	50. St Kieran's Community Centre	55. Kilkerrin Battery Fort	60. St. Senan's Church & Lough
46. St. Senan's Well, Erribul	51. Killofin Church	56. Clonderalaw House	61. Killimer village
47. Erribul House	52. St. Kieran's Well	57. Knock village	62. Vandeleur Walled Gardens
48. Labasheeda village	53. Mountshannon Castle	58. Knock Ice House & Lime Kiln	
49. Labasheeda Quay	54. Colemanstown Castle	59. Colleen Bawn Grave & memorial	

Figure 17: Map showing the Points of Interest in the Labasheeda area

# APPENDIX 2 – INTERPRETIVE CONTENT

POI #	Site	Description
1	<b>Bunratty Castle and Folk Park</b>	Bunratty Castle is a large imposing castle which has been beautifully restored. You can explore the many small rooms and passageways that zig zag throughout the thick walls of the castle that was built in the 1400s by the McNamara clan. This is fourth castle to have been built in this location. The first castle that was constructed here was probably timber and was built by the Norman family; the de Clare's. They lost the castle after a savage defeat at a battle at Dysart O' Dea and their castle was destroyed. By the 16th century, this castle became the chief stronghold of the O' Brien's of Thomond. It was the scene of a two month siege in 1646 during the Confederate Wars and after the Cromwellian conquest it came into the ownership of the Studdart family who held it until 1804. The castle was purchased by Lord Gort in 1953 and was fully restored in the following years.
2	<b>Bunratty</b>	Settlement at Bunratty initially developed around the castle and the nearby medieval church on the western banks of the Owenogarney or Ratty River. The modern village dates largely from the 19th century, when the bridge, creamery and post office were constructed. Bunratty then became an important location on the route between Limerick and Ennis in the 20th century. The village expanded as a result of tourism development following the restoration of the castle in the 1950s and the opening of the Folk Village, which recreates 19th century life in Ireland.
3	<b>Atlantic Air Adventures</b>	The aviation history of Shannon and surrounding areas is explored here at Atlantic Air Adventures. A range of aeroplanes, including a De Havilland Venom, a Cessna Skymaster 337 and a Piper Cherokee, cockpits, and two Rolls Royce jet engines, as well as a replica spitfire can all be seen. Visitors can experience what it is like to fly a jet airliner inside a Boeing 737 Flight Simulator cockpit which retains much of its original interior. The Flight Simulator had clocked up over 70,000 hours of flying with Canadian Air before it was acquired by the museum. The museum is operated by a team of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. It provides a range of fun and training activities for both adults and children and is also an approved flight training centre.
4	<b>Shannon</b>	Shannon Town is Ireland's newest planned town and was developed in the 1960s following the construction of Shannon Airport and the Shannon Free Zone Industrial Estate. The town was built on marshland reclaimed from the Shannon Estuary. Fantastic amenities have been developed in the town including walking routes which link the Town Park, the Wetlands and the Estuary. It is possible to walk for several kilometres along the embankment beside the estuary and enjoy fine views across the River Shannon to County Limerick. Close to the end of the walk are the remains of Hasting's farmhouse - a traditional Irish cottage, where the British General C.H. Lucas was held captive during the War of Independence in June 1920.
8	<b>Mooghaun Hillfort</b>	Mooghaun Hillfort is the largest site of its kind in Ireland. The fort is located on Mooghaun Hill, overlooking the Shannon Estuary and is enclosed by three massive concentric stone walls. The outermost rampart is over 2km in length. The fort has been dated to the Bronze Age, around the tenth century BC when it would have dominated the landscape radiating power over the entire region. A large hoard of gold objects was discovered close to here in 1854 when the rail line to Ennis was being constructed. It was the largest hoard of Bronze Age gold ever found in Western Europe.
9	<b>Knappogue Castle</b>	Knappogue Castle is a 15th century, six-storey tower-house built by the MacNamara clan and held by them until the early 19th century. The castle became a ruin in the 1920s but was restored in the 1960s and is now a tourist attraction where medieval banquets and other events are held. The walled gardens are also open to the public.
10	<b>Quin Franciscan Friary</b>	Quin Friary stands on the site of a late 13th century castle, built by Thomas de Clare, Lord of Thomond. It is said that in around 1286, the Irish attacked the castle and left it in the words of a contemporary observer; "a hideous blackened cave". The MacNamara family granted the site to the Franciscan Order to establish a friary here. Most of the buildings visible today date to the fifteenth century. Although it was dissolved in 1541, the friars continued to reside there under the protection of the O'Brien but were eventually forced to leave in the 17th century.
12	<b>Clarecastle</b>	The village evolved around the River Fergus crossing and developed further with the building of a castle at the site, later to be replaced by the thirteenth century Anglo-Irish castle that controlled the crossing point on the river. The Irish word 'clár' from which Clare derives, means board or plank and refers to the early wooden bridge which was built across the Fergus. The modern village began to develop in the late eighteenth century when the castle was converted to a barracks. A number of early quays were erected over the years, with the present quay built between 1843 and 1845 and this led to further growth. In the nineteenth century it became an important port for Ennis and Clare, with goods brought in and sent out from the quay. Due to its proximity to Ennis, the village has experienced rapid growth and expansion in recent decades.

POI #	Site	Description
14	<b>Clarecastle Quay</b>	Clarecastle Quay was an important port for County Clare from the seventeenth up to the mid-twentieth centuries from where goods were exported and imported. The long quay could accommodate just one vessel at a time with the New Quay as a staging post and was important as it was the closest point to Ennis that ships could reach. Ore from the Ballyhickey Mines was transported from here to Wales for smelting. Grain and other agricultural produce was also sent from here to Liverpool.
15	<b>Clare Abbey</b>	Clare Abbey was founded for the Augustinian Order by Domhnall Mor O Briain, King of Thomond, in 1189 and a copy of the founding charter of the abbey still survives today. Situated on the banks of the River Fergus, it was the first Augustinian house founded in Clare and remained the most important for centuries. The Augustinian Canons who lived here had a pastoral role in the community. The plan of the abbey is typical of the monastic houses of the time and consist of buildings enclosing a central cloister with the church to the northern side. The majority of the remaining buildings date from the 15th century and include the very fine bell tower and a number of beautifully carved windows. Clare Abbey was the site of a major battle between rival O' Brien factions in 1278 when both soldiers and civilians were slaughtered. The monastery was dissolved in 1541 but the monks remained there for another century under the protection of the O' Brien's. A sketch of the abbey by Thomas Dineley in 1681 shows it largely unroofed and it fell into ruin in subsequent decades.
16	<b>St John's Well, Killone</b>	St. John's Well is located close to Killone Abbey on the shores of Killone Lake. It is connected to Ennis by a pilgrim road which is still accessible and the well is still visited, particularly on St. John's Eve, June 23rd. The well is inside a walled enclosure which contains an altar dated with an inscription to 1731, when the altar was repaired by a merchant from Ennis, Anthony Roche. A more modern altar was built in 2010. It is customary for visitors to do rounds on their knees and to bathe their head, hands and feet in the water from the well, which is said to have curative properties. Bark from a tree which grows near the well is said to cure toothache. A number of cursing stones can be found at the site which are linked to the tradition of 'doing the rounds'. According to a story in the Schools Folklore Collection, the well was founded by a blind man in 1190. He was walking in the area and heard a voice saying 'Stop'. He was then instructed to take off his boots and walk around the well three times. When he did so, his sight was restored.
17	<b>Killone Abbey</b>	Killone Abbey was founded in the late 12th century for the Augustinian nuns by Donal Mór O Brien, King of Thomond. It was mentioned in the Annals in 1260 when the Abbess, Slaney O' Brien, died. Killone was dissolved in 1584. A satirical 17th century poem which references Killone tells the story of Lady Honora O' Brien, who left the nunnery to run off with Sir Roger O Shaughnessy, with whom she had two children. The Pope had to give a dispensation so that their marriage could be recognised. Killone was laid out in a similar manner to other monasteries, with buildings enclosing a central cloister and the church to the northern side. An unusual feature of the monastic remains is a crypt underneath the chancel of the church, where it is believed the nuns were buried. Local folklore tells us that eerie 'corpse lights' can be seen around the ruins at night time. The beautiful setting of the ruined abbey overlooking Killone Lake adds an air of tranquility and spirituality.
30	<b>Ballynacally</b>	Ballynacally village is situated on the western side of the Fergus Estuary and on the Ballynacally River. Its name means 'land of the nuns' as it was part of the property of Killone Abbey. The village overlooks several islands in the Fergus Estuary which have associations with Saint Senan and St Brendan. Michael O Hehir, the famed Gaelic Games commentator, spent much of his youth in the area as it was his father was from here. A small fair green in the village was the location for regular cattle fairs and agricultural produce was traded through the nearby quay. Ballynacally retains its unique village character and setting to this day.
32	<b>St Martin's Holy Well, Ballynacally</b>	This holy well in Ballynacally village is still maintained and venerated by locals. It is dedicated to St Martin of Tours. It is thought that the dedication to this French saint may reflect his links to Saint Senan, who is said to have bestowed the well on the area. The shrine and statue of St. Martin over the well was built in the 1930s, when every house in the locality contributed money. The well is situated in a small cliff overlooking the Ballynacally river as it flows towards the Fergus Estuary. Water from the well is said to cure eye ailments, sore feet and rheumatism. Local tradition holds that it was also the site of a Mass rock in Penal time. It is still venerated on St. Martin's Feast day of November 11th.
36	<b>Crovraghan Pier</b>	The pier at Crovraghan was reputedly built on the base of a castle, of which no trace remains today. The castle was demolished in the late 18th century. It was a stronghold of the O' Briens and was listed as being owned by Teige O' Brien, son of Conor O' Brien, last King of Thomond, in 1574. The pier is used by many of the farmers who still farm land on the islands to transport animals in loiters (large flat bottomed animal transportation boats).
40	<b>Killadysert</b>	Killadysert is located about 20km south-west of Ennis and its name means 'church of the hermitage'. The village is centred upon the main square which has a distinctive triangular layout. A monument here commemorates Peadar Clancy (1888-1920) who was prominent in the War of Independence and was killed in British custody on Bloody Sunday 1920. The village has a range of facilities and services including a library, post office, credit union and a number of shops and pubs. Killadysert's location close to where the estuaries of the River Fergus and River Shannon join makes it an ideal place to access the water. Although the village has grown in recent years, it has managed to retain its unique character.

POI #	Site	Description
41	<b>Peadar Clancy Memorial</b>	A monument in the square in the centre of Killadysert commemorates Peadar Clancy (Peadar Mac Flannchadha) (1888-1920), who was born near Cranny about 6km west of Killadysert. He was a prominent figure in the struggle for Irish Independence and took part in the 1916 Rising. His death sentence after the Rising was commuted and he spent a year in prison. Upon his release, he set up the Republican Outfitters Drapery Store on Talbot Street in Dublin which became one of the most important meeting places in the city for IRA men during the War of Independence. Clancy became second in command of the Dublin Brigade. He took part in many operations including jail breaks, attempted assassinations and an attack on the offices of Independent Newspapers. He was involved in the planning of Bloody Sunday but was arrested the evening beforehand. He was killed on the evening of Bloody Sunday along with Dick McKee and Conor Clune. It is generally believed that they were murdered in reprisal for the killing of British spies earlier that day. Peadar Clancy is buried in the Republican plot in Glasnevin cemetery.
43	<b>Killadysert Pier</b>	Killadysert Pier dates from the early 19th century but has been modernised in recent years. Boats plied their trade between here and Limerick carrying agricultural produce and it is specifically mentioned in Lewis' Topographical Dictionary of 1837. The pier is also an access point for many of the islands in the Fergus Estuary, such as Canon Island and Inishloe.
48	<b>Labasheeda</b>	The name Labasheeda means 'bed of silk' and the village is on the shores of the estuary with the 19th century quay providing access to the water. The area is known for its traditional music and local man Dan Furey was a noted dance teacher. There is an annual Dan Furey Set Dancing Festival at the end of August celebrating his contribution to Irish culture. There are a number of interesting heritage sites in the vicinity, including Kilkerrin Battery Fort, Killofin Church and the former St. Kieran's Church, now a community centre, which retains its cruciform plan. In the past, there was a ferry service from here to Tarbert, Co. Kerry, as well as regular trade with Limerick. There are many good vantage points locally from where it is possible to appreciate the views over the Shannon Estuary.
49	<b>Labasheeda Quay</b>	The quay in Labasheeda dates from the late 19th century but there was trade taking place from the harbour prior to its construction. Culm was extracted locally and brought here to be transported. The quay has been repaired since its construction and remains in good condition and regular use.
55	<b>Kilkerrin Battery Fort</b>	Kilkerrin Battery Fort is one of a series of coastal defence structures built along the Shannon Estuary in the early 19th century to counteract the threat of an invasion by Napoleonic French forces. Construction began in 1811 and 600 men worked on the site. Limestone and flagstones from nearby locations along the estuary were used. It was completed in 1814 but was made redundant after just one year following the Battle of Waterloo. The fort is surrounded by a deep dry moat and the first floor is accessed via a drawbridge. It has thick walls, underground storage chambers where gunpowder was kept and a rooftop parapet accessed by a stone stairway inside the wall. Two Howitzer guns were positioned on the roof but were only ever fired during training exercises. In fact, the firing of the guns caused damage to the structure. Although the fort could accommodate up to twenty men, there were only seven stationed here in the 1840s. Kilkerrin is considered the best preserved of Battery Fort along the Shannon.
57	<b>Knock</b>	Knock is a small village on the Shannon Estuary and on the western side of Clonderlaw Bay. It has a picturesque setting on the shores of the estuary with high ground to the north. Both the eastern and western approaches to Knock descend into the village and offer great views across the Shannon. The village is clustered around a crossroads with two public houses in the village centre. There is a pier on the waterfront used in the past to bring ashore seaweed that has been harvested in the estuary.
59	<b>Colleen Bawn Grave</b>	Ellen Hanley, known as the Colleen Bawn, was the daughter of a small farmer from Bruree, Co. Limerick and was considered to be a local beauty. John Scanlan was from Ballycahane, Co. Limerick and was part of the landed gentry class. He met Ellen in 1819 and was immediately taken with her kind nature and good looks. He proposed marriage which she refused as she was concerned about their different social standing. Eventually she relented and they married in secret but John soon tired of his new bride. He brought her out on boat trip on the estuary and pressured his servant; Stephen Sullivan to shoot her dead. Sullivan lost his nerve and they returned to Glin. Scanlan sent them out again after plying Sullivan with whiskey and Sullivan shot Ellen dead. He tied her body to a stone and pushed her into the Shannon. Her body was washed ashore near Killimer six weeks later. Scanlan and Sullivan were both apprehended, tried and executed for the crime. Ellen was buried in Burrane Graveyard and a Celtic cross was erected over her grave. However, it was gradually chipped away and destroyed by souvenir hunters. The Colleen Bawn's tragic story has inspired books, operas and films. Also buried in Burrane Cemetery is Peter O' Connell. He was a renowned scholar and lexicographer born near Killimer in the 18th century. He devoted most of his life to compilation of a very comprehensive English - Irish dictionary.

POI #	Site	Description
61	Killimer	Killimer is a small village on the northern side of the Shannon Estuary. It is one of two embarkation points for the Tarbert-Killimer ferry which crosses the estuary. The traditional musician and busker Pecker Dunne (1933-2012) lived in Killimer and is buried in Burrane graveyard. The Colleen Bawn, Ellen Hanley, is also buried in this graveyard.
62	Vandeleur Gardens	Kilrush House was home to the Vandeleur family. They came to the area in the late 1600's and became increasingly powerful over the following centuries. They developed the gardens and Kilrush House in the late 1700 and early 1800's. During the famine years, the Vandeleur's were synonymous with forced evictions dispossessing over 180 families. Large scale evictions took place again on the estate in the 1880s. In 1897, Kilrush House was badly damaged in a fire and the estate was taken over by the Department of Forestry in the 1920s. Today, the walled gardens have been restored and are now open to the public. Features include a glasshouse, an arboretum and many rare and exotic trees. There is also a cafe on site.

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# ARCHIVE

- Consent Forms for Oral Heritage Recording
- Short Promotional Video featuring sites in the Shannon Estuary Way
- Oral Heritage Recordings
- Database of Points of Interest
- Attendance Information and Contact Lists
- Image Bank



A tractor returns to nature on Horse Island