

Update on Development of Limerick Greenways



January 2021

Limerick City and County Council



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**

Limerick City
& County Council

1. Existing Great Southern Greenway (Rathkeale to Abbeyfeale)

(a) Upgrade Works – Phase 1 (Surfacing Contract)

The contract awarded to Roadbridge in June 2020 involves the upgrade of the entire 40 km's of the greenway to a 3-metre wide macadam surface; bringing the route to the highest national standard.

These works have progressed well to date and at the end of December 2020 a 9 km section from Rathkeale to Ardagh was opened for local use which has been very well received. The next section to open, Ardagh to Newcastle West, is nearing completion.

Arising from Covid-19 restrictions on non-essential construction projects, it has been necessary to temporarily suspend work on the greenway. Completing the upgrade of the greenway by summer 2021 remains the target but this is likely to be impacted on by current Covid-19 related stoppages. Limerick City and County Council was awarded €2.5 Million in Government funding in December 2020 towards the cost of these upgrade works, as part of the Budget 2021 allocation towards greenways.

Action required: for noting

(b) Upgrade works – Phase 2 (Underpasses/Carparking)

Part 8 planning approval was received in December for the construction of six cattle underpasses/1 overpass and the construction of a car park at Newcastle West. Detailed design for these works is now being undertaken and an application for funding has been made to the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF).

Action required: for noting

(c) Ardagh & Barnagh Station Houses

In 2020, the Council purchased the old Barnagh and Ardagh stationhouses as part of its efforts to conserve and promote the railway heritage associated with the greenway. A contractor (Thomas Nolan & Sons Builder Ltd) has been appointed to carry out initial stabilization works to both buildings.

The work to the Barnagh Stationhouse had advanced significantly prior to the recent closure of non-essential construction projects. The contractor will commence work on the Ardagh Stationhouse once the work in Barnagh is completed with a target date for their completion of April 2021. This phase of works is being funded by GMA/Development Fund from the elected members of Newcastle West Municipal District, the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF) and the July 2020 Stimulus Fund.

Part 8 Planning approval was received in December 2020 to carry out the next stage of refurbishment works and included change of use of the stationhouse buildings to community/tourism use, to service greenway users. Funding for these works has been sought through an application to the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF) submitted in December.

Action required: for noting

(d) Greenway Facilities & Amenities

In addition to the stationhouses projects and car parking, the Council is advancing a work programme for facilities and amenities for greenway users. This includes picnic areas, seating/bike stands at regular intervals, small children's play areas, e-bike charging points, bike repair points, water points etc. Funding for these works has been sought under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2020.

Action required: for noting

(e) Bike Hire Provision

Limerick City and County Council has commenced an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process to attract a private sector operator of scale that specialises in bike hire with a shuttle service incorporated. This will form part of the provision of an international standard of cycle tourism infrastructure along the Greenway.

Research into existing successful greenway destinations has demonstrated that a large number of patrons and in particular families, only wish to cycle all or part of the greenway "one way" and then return to their start point by shuttlebus. This requires at least one operator of scale to have bike hire and pick up points at multiple locations.

The successful applicant will benefit from Limerick City and County Council owned sites/ facilities and "shop front" infrastructure in Rathkeale, Ardagh, Newcastlewest and Abbeyfeale at prime locations along the greenway. Bike hire points and shuttle bus pick up provision will be a requirement at Rathkeale, Newcastlewest and Abbeyfeale as a minimum. The operator will be independent of Limerick City and County Council.

Existing smaller operators will remain unaffected and further bike hire start-ups will be encouraged. Limerick City and County Council has also secured €200,000 in funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme 2020 towards the restoration of the old railway goods shed at the start of the Greenway in Rathkeale. Once completed this will be used for bike hire and other greenway services.

Action required: for noting

(f) Marketing/Signage/Naming

The route was developed originally to be primarily a walking trail and there is little awareness of its existence outside of Limerick. Promotion of this newly upgraded greenway is therefore a critical part of the overall project. Limerick City and County Council has awaited investing in significant marketing until 2021 when the greenway will be upgraded to full national standards and therefore more suitable for attracting recreational cyclists.

Following a tender process, Limerick City and County Council have appointed consultant firms Springboard and Totem to lead on the production of tourism promotional material, brochures, enhanced visitor and interpretation signage and a launch of the Greenway in summer 2021. Springboard/Totem have previously carried out work of a similar nature for Waterford City & County Council as part of the development of their award winning Waterford Greenway.

As part of the marketing considerations for the Greenway, it is proposed to transition the name from the current “Great Southern Greenway” to the “Limerick Greenway”. Kerry County Council have advised that the Kerry section of the Greenway will be named either the Kerry or North Kerry Greenway. Both Councils have agreed to engage in joint marketing and promotion of the route and destination development (see below).

Once completed this year, the upgraded greenway will be a new key tourism product for Limerick and Ireland. Using place/geography in the name keeps it simple, makes it easily understood and effectively “self-promotes” the greenway. This has proven to be the most successful approach in other locations e.g. Waterford Greenway.

Limerick City and County Council Marketing & Communications and Springboard PR & Marketing have both advised that the Great Southern Greenway name would be much more difficult to sell as a visitor proposition. From a digital marketing perspective (search engines, key words etc.) ‘Limerick Greenway’ is a much more preferential name.

To develop the tourism industry in Limerick, we need visitors to immediately associate the greenway with the destination so that they are aware of local accommodation providers, services and other activities within the area.

In addition, to facilitate local pride, we need all the citizens of Limerick across the wider city and county to advocate for and feel ownership of ‘our Limerick greenway’ as a key part of our new Limerick brand. The greenway will play a key role in the promotion of our new brand in 2021.

The greenway will be supported and hosted on the Limerick.ie digital platform and in turn supported by its social media platforms.

This name change is also being recommended as the Greenway in Limerick will eventually extend as a minimum from Rathkeale to Limerick City (via Adare/Patrickwell) and from UL to Montpelier. Establishing the “Limerick Greenway” name now creates a single unified brand that will not need to change as the greenway (s) network extends throughout Limerick.

Action required: Agreement sought to transition change of name to “Limerick Greenway”.

(g) Greenway Destination Development Programme

West Limerick Resources have applied for €75,000 in funding to roll out a Greenway Destination Development Programme under the LEADER Programme. This will be a capacity-building programme to support communities and businesses situated along the route of the greenway in Limerick and North Kerry to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the investment in the project.

The local development companies, West Limerick Resources (WLR) and North East West Kerry Development (NEWKD) are rolling this out on behalf of Limerick and Kerry Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's), Kerry County Council and Limerick City and County Council. Failte Ireland will also assist in the roll out of this programme.

The training programme has several objectives including but not limited to the following:

- *To develop strong collaborative networks and a shared vision for the development of the greenway as a tourism destination and ensure that all towns along its route are working as a unified destination.*
- *To provide an opportunity for individual businesses and communities along the route to network and build relationships and a framework for ongoing collaboration between stakeholders in both counties.*
- *To develop a "Destination Mindset" amongst community and trade that transcends the county boundaries and has the capacity to deliver a distinctive greenway experience to visitors.*
- *To investigate potential for collaborative marketing and packaging along the route that aligns with marketing plans at county, regional and national level.*
- *To build awareness amongst the communities and businesses of each other's product offerings and experiences and equip businesses with the opportunity to cross-promote.*
- *To support towns/villages/business along the greenway to develop their own well-managed presence online.*
- *To work with main accommodation providers to review sales strategies in order to maximise capacity and to encourage a collaborative, destination approach that links accommodation with activities.*
- *To encourage all food service outlets to review opportunities to expand their menus to highlight local food/drink produce and local food traditions.*

Action required: for noting

2. Extensions to Greenway

(a) Rathkeale to Adare and Patrickswell

Limerick City and County Council have received funding of €150,000 to commence feasibility work on extending the greenway from Rathkeale to Limerick City via Adare and Patrickswell. This is funded by the Carbon Tax Fund administered by the Department of Transport as part of the Government Strategy for Future Development of National & Regional Greenways.

Given the scale of the proposed project, this work will need to occur in tandem with the drafting of the new Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. It is important that the project has the statutory support of the new development plan. The Department of Transport are also in the process of issuing a Greenway Developers Toolkit and a Code of Practice for the development of new greenways based

on learnings from projects underway or planned around the country. These will require careful consideration by the Council.

A project team to lead the development of new greenways will be established within the Capital Investment Directorate of the Council in 2021 to ensure that priority is given to these projects.

Action required: for noting

(b) UL to Montpelier

Limerick City and County Council have allocated funding of €200,000 from its own Rural Development Fund to advance the feasibility/design of a new greenway from UL to Montpelier. A previous feasibility study has been reviewed. Given the scale of the proposed project and its sensitive location, further work on assessing its feasibility will need to occur in tandem with the drafting of the new Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. It is important that the project has the statutory support of the new development plan.

The Department of Transport are also in the process of issuing a Greenway Developers Toolkit and a Code of Practice for the development of new greenways based on learnings from projects underway or planned around the country. These will need to be considered, particularly as most of the land is not in public ownership and will require engagement with private landowners.

A project team to lead development of new greenways will be established within the Capital Investment Directorate of the Council in 2021 to ensure priority is given to these projects.

Action required: for noting

(c) Other Greenway & Cycle Routes

The identification of other potential greenway and cycle route will firstly be considered as part of the new Limerick Development Plan. This is in order to ensure a plan led approach to projects of this nature and provide a statutory backing that will assist in the planning process and their future delivery.

Action required: for noting

Gordon Daly
Director of Service
Community Development Directorate
January 2021

Abbeyfeale–Newcastle West–Rathkeale 40km



- Access Point with Parking
- Place of Interest
- Facilities
- Hotel

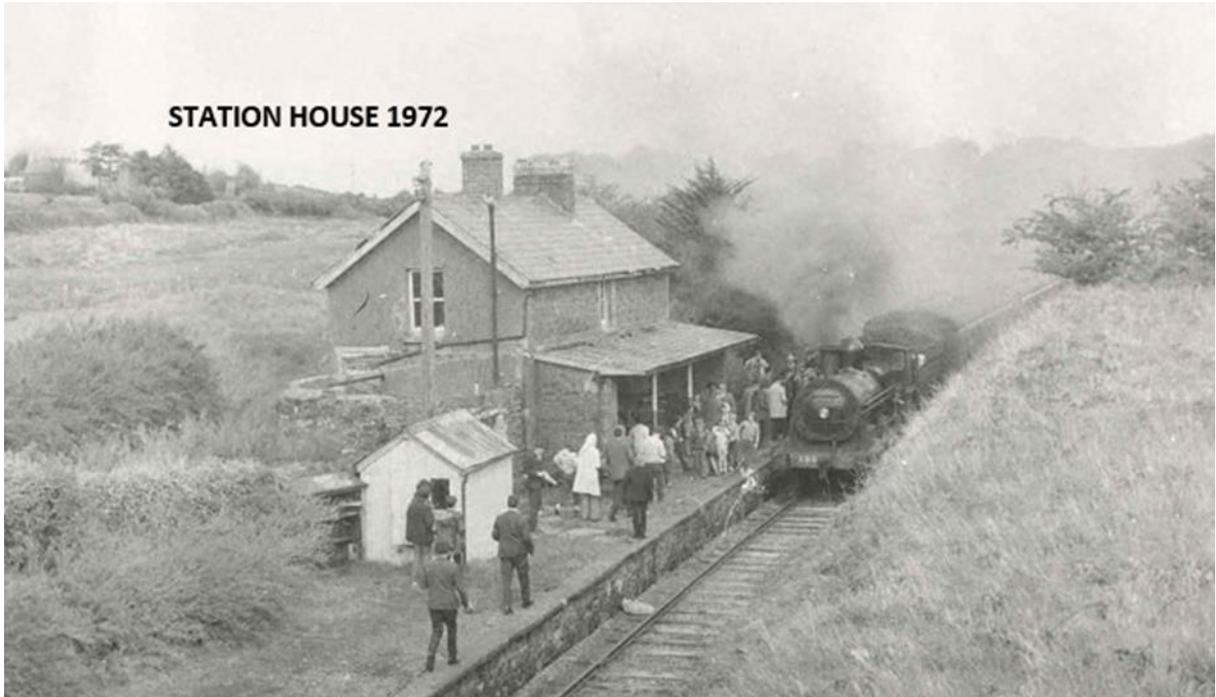
Resurfacing Works







Barnagh Station House & Site Archive Image





Work Underway at Barnagh Station House – November 2020





[Ardagh Station House & Site Archive Image](#)





