

BRUFF PUBLIC REALM PLAN



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**
Limerick City
& County Council

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Figure no. 1: Site visit with stakeholders

Limerick City and County Council

Gordon Daly	Director of Service
Thomas Joyce	Project leader
Trevor Mc Kechnie	Area Engineer
Sarah McCutcheon	County Archaeologist
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PART I

What makes Bruff so unique in terms of its history, landscape and built heritage ?

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Summary

Bruff is a small town (Population 803 Census 2011) with a vibrant community spirit and a strong sporting tradition, located in the Golden Vale, approximately 25km south of Limerick city. The Limerick- Killmallock road (R512) runs north south through the town and forms the Main Street. The regional road R516 from Croom converges with the Limerick- Killmallock Road in the town.

Its spatial heritage is rooted at a strategic intersection of the Morning Star River and a north south crossing, where a Ring Fort and later, a Castle was located nearby. Bruff has many attributes not least the beauty of its surrounding landscape, the Morning Star river and proximity to Lough Gur, the site of a nationally renowned prehistoric settlement and heritage centre. The town also boasts a number of famous residents including ascendants of the Kennedy family, war hero Sean Wall and the late rock star Dolores O Riordan, who frequented the local park of the Morning Star.

Bruff faces many changes which will impact its future development including climate adaptation, a carbon neutral and online economy. These changes provide challenges but offer significant opportunities to future-proof the town and its public realm. Public realm is essentially the glue that holds a town together; the streets, the parks the rivers, but also that aspect of a town's landscape that shape its appearance and impacts the day to day lives of its residents; the views, mobility, the appearance of properties, places to sit, rest or come together for celebrations. The question at hand is how the public realm can be shaped to accommodate the changing needs of the town and make it more sustainable, green, and inclusive?

The public realm plan examines this question by looking in detail at what makes the town so unique in terms of its history, landscape and built heritage in part 1. It then focuses on three main areas in part 2 : The Main street,

the Morning Star Riverpark and the overall structure of the town. Each of these areas is analysed to establish its challenges, and then elaborated to provide design principles and proposals for adaptation and transformation of these spaces. The process is carried out as a co creation with residents, stakeholders and Limerick City and County Council (LCCC). Finally in part 3, a delivery and phasing plan is developed to demonstrate how the projects can be incrementally rolled out with the active support of residents, stakeholders and LCCC.

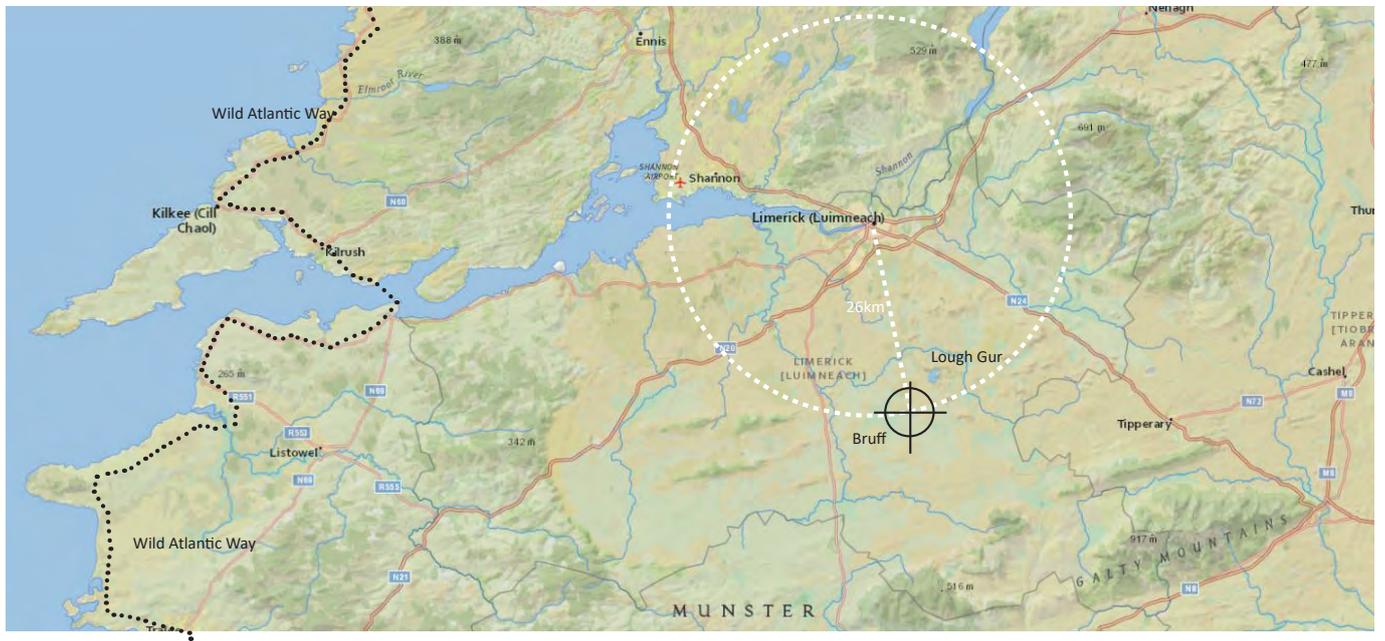


Figure no. 2: Location of Bruff in the region

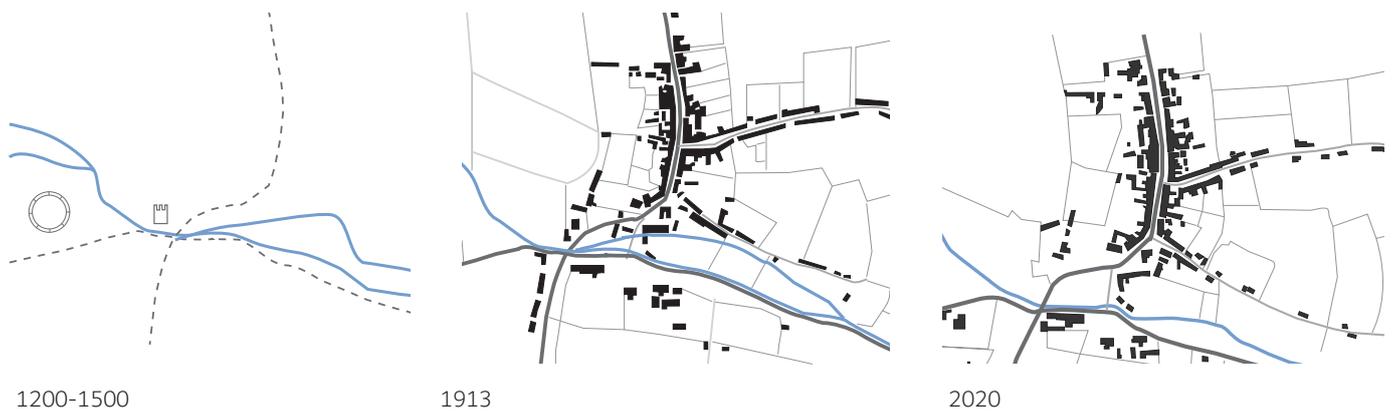


Figure no. 3: Historical development of Bruff

Vision and objectives

The vision for Bruff celebrates the unique and intrinsic qualities of the place, its past, and its people. It recognises the changing needs of Bruff and proposes a sustainable, green and inclusive public realm. By reflecting these needs it aspires to improve the quality of life for its residents and contribute to the overall prosperity of the town and locality.

To complete this vision a series of aims and objectives were formulated as a basis for exploring and developing the public realm, together with its residents and representatives. These are listed below.

Objectives

- Assess each public space, their design, impact and future use.
- Assess existing town circulation (both pedestrian & vehicular) and consider how these may be improved.
- Assess existing walking routes / trails around the town and consider opportunities for improvements / new additions / connections / extensions.
- Assess the existing streetscape and associated infrastructure (street furniture, overhead wires, signage, lighting) and provide proposals on improvements to include traffic calming, car parking areas, road width reductions, etc.
- Assess and review information/interpretation/signage as viewed by a tourist/visitor.
- Assess the impression of the approach roads into the village and provide advice on how these can be enhanced.
- Assess planting within the overall study area and make recommendations on same.
- Assessment and proposals to address the current parking capacity to the Main Street. The plan should include suitable sites for off-street/ back land parking within the town.
- A public realm upgrade plan for the Main Street including junction realignment, planting, street furniture, street crossings.
- Green infrastructure assessment for the town including opportunities for ecological corridor along the Morning Star River to south of town.
- Assessment of relationship between Bruff and Lough Gur.
- Opportunities for Bruff to benefit from increased number of tourists visiting Lough Gur.



Figure no. 4: Aerial image of Bruff

Methodology and role

The Public Realm plan for Bruff was started in October 2020 and was commissioned by Limerick City and County Council. The plan was carried out by REDscape Landscape and Urbanism, a landscape architect led company comprising multidisciplinary teams (of urbanists, architects, ecologists, engineers) with experience in delivering public realm and urban projects in Ireland and the Netherlands.

The process in the adjacent diagram was undertaken in close collaboration with LCCC, Bruff's residents and a local steering group comprised of key representatives over a 6 month period.

A number of important studies have been prepared for the development of the town and its surroundings which are statutory and are listed below. The Bruff Public Realm Plan (PRP) is not a repetition of these documents, but a development of their aims and objectives and although not statutory is cognizant of their requirements. These include The Bruff Local Area Plan (2012 – 2018) has been extended to 2022, A Community Development Plan (2019-2023) for Bruff and Bruff Tourism and Marketing Plan 2015.

In combination with these statutory documents a wider research included looking at local heritage websites, tourist sites, cartographic material including soils, geology, flooding, topographic maps, planning maps and domestic news issues affecting the public realm.



Figure no. 5: Plan process for project

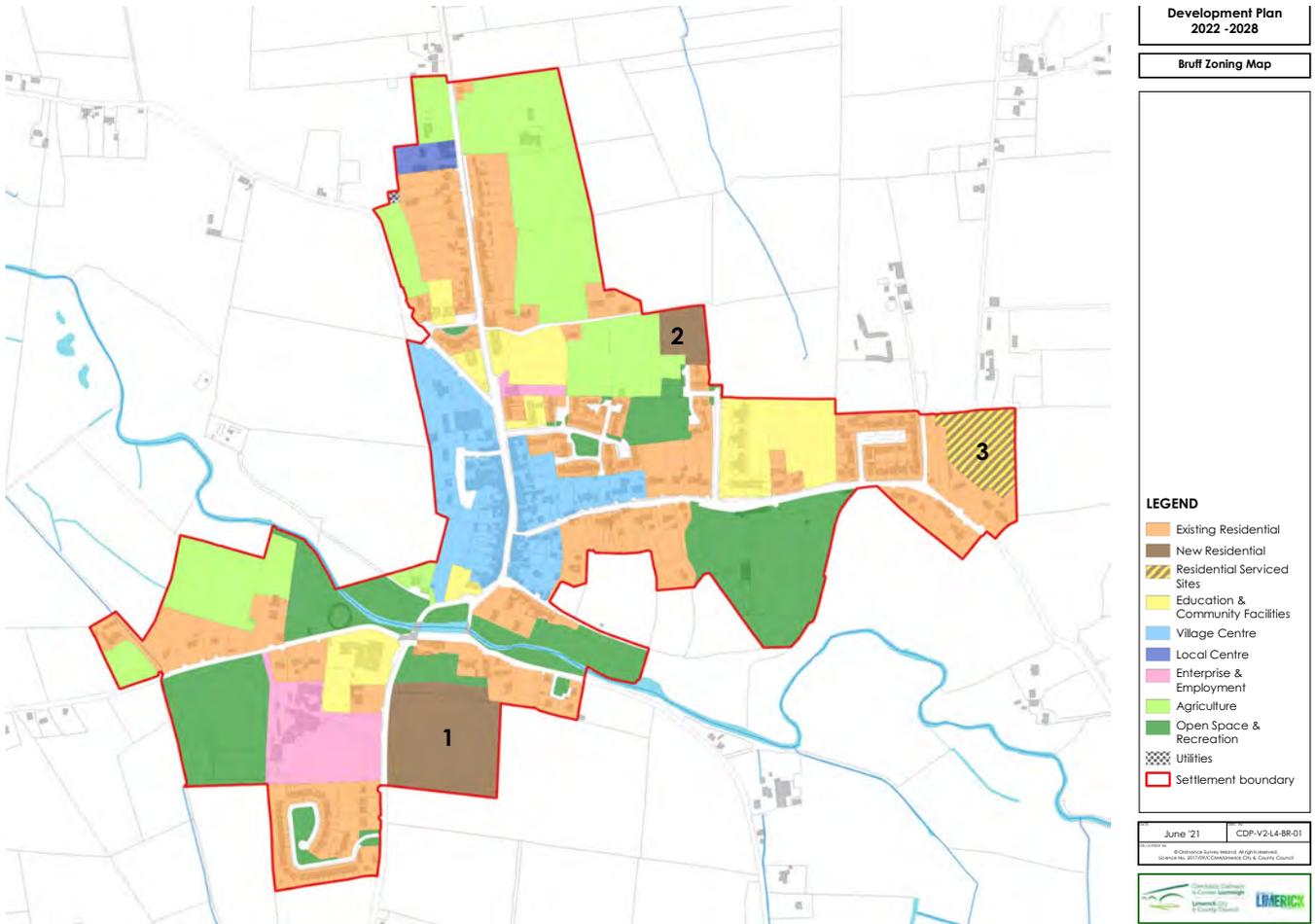


Figure no. 6: Zoning Map from Draft Limerick Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Co creation and engagement

The brief was formulated by Limerick City and County Council together with the local steering group. REDscape Landscape and Urbanism was appointed in October 2020. The company applies a research through design approach, in which ideas are co-created through analysis, sketching and discourse with stakeholders.

An inception meeting was held in October 2020, which set out the main objectives of the project. An initial analysis of themes and a map for a site visit was prepared which defined the task in more detail.

The first public consultation was organized in December 2020 around a site visit in which resident representatives, LCCC and different experts walked the town and surrounding areas. Key stakeholders discussed their ideas, ambitions and intentions, which were documented. Subsequent bilateral workshops with LCCC were carried out to discuss technical issues of traffic, dereliction and other requirements for the public realm in general. All meetings, walkabouts were fully compliant with Covid 19 health guidance at the time.

In February 2021 a midway workshop was held with the LCCC and its team to present the analysis, first concepts and design principles. The workshop was attended by internal experts and was positively received. A number of ideas emerged in relation to parking which required further research internally to estimate feasibility.

In March 2021, a meeting was held with LCCC to present the draft public plans to disseminate the design principles and concepts to LCCC and key stakeholders based on the comments received in the first workshop. In the interim two additional meetings were held to examine the issues of underwiring, traffic and parking.

In April a second public workshop was held. Members of the public and key stakeholders were invited to give their feedback on a draft of the public realm plan, the proposed projects and alterations. This event was well

attended (despite being virtual) and provided a valuable opportunity for residents to share their comments and views. A video of the presentation was downloaded by public over 800 times and more written responses were received. The steering group continued to engage with the consultants till the end of the project.

In May 2021, this was followed by a 6-week consultation period to ensure all comments were captured and integrated into the proposals. A draft report was published for 2 weeks in June 2021.

In July 2021, the report was finalized and presented to residents and LCCC as a co creation. The ownership of the project rests with the residents of Bruff with support of LCCC.



Figure no. 7: Site visit map

2.0 CONTEXT

Location and Landscape

The bedrock geology of Bruff' is limestone over which layers of glacial drifts have been laid down to form its current landscape. The geomorphology and soils of Bruff reflect this history.

The melting of the glacial drifts formed glacial rivers which deposited sands and gravels as found along the river area of the Morning Star. Fine loamy soils (excellent for farming) and clayey drifts were laid down post glacial. Field patterns show a clear distinction between the dynamic river landscape and the higher elevated landscapes of loam and clayey drifts. This differentiation is a key characteristic which is to be emphasized in the public realm plan.

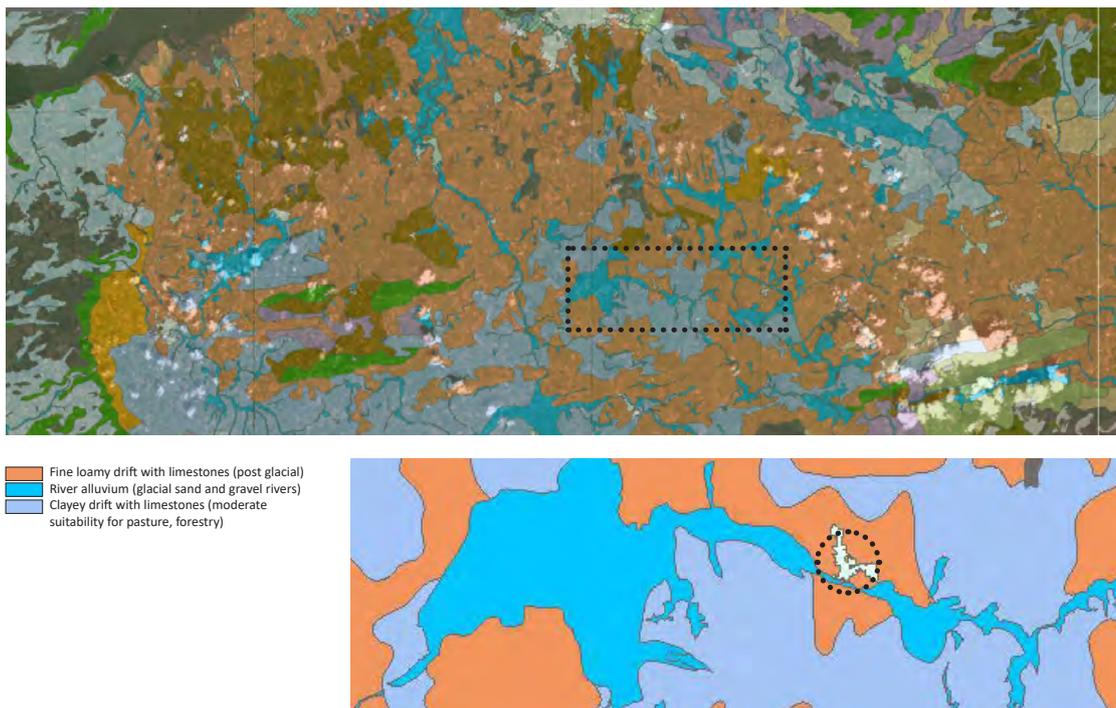


Figure no. 8: Landscape Character of Bruff shown in soil maps.

Historical development

The spatial heritage of Bruff is rooted at a strategic intersection of the Morning Star River and a north south crossing, where a Ring Fort and later, a Castle was located nearby.

The town later developed northwards where it formed a 19th Century Main Street (The Limerick- Killmallock road), that still forms the historical core of the town to this day. The town has continued to expand along its main roadways with the construction of individual houses, residential clusters and amenities, including schools and sport areas.



Figure no. 9: Images and diagrams showing the historical development of Bruff

Spatial Qualities

Bruff has many attributes not least the beauty of its surrounding landscape. The town's public realm has several characteristic areas; the 19th Century core, the River Morning Star with its characteristic limestone walls, and finally its proximity to Lough Gur, the site of a nationally renowned prehistoric settlement and heritage centre.

The 19th century historical core of the town is delineated by the Fair Green and St. Peter's and Paul's Church to the north and the Church of Ireland which is located to the south by the Morning Star River. The Morning Star River, is a tributary of the Maigue and flows through the south of the town in an east – west direction confluencing with the Maigue approximately 12km downstream. Finally Bruff has an active an engaged community which is one of its greatest assets.

Trends

The covid 19 pandemic has accelerated several global developments. These include the increase in remote working, the increase in online trade, a more urgent shift to a carbon neutral economy (sustainable mobility and energy production). Climate adaptation is an increasing requirement to address the symptoms of changes in the environment including flood protection and air quality. These trends, pose challenges but more importantly offer great opportunities for Bruff.

Investing into a more sustainable public realm is a proven method to improve the town at many levels, its attractiveness, the quality of life socially and economically. This contributes to the overall sense of the town and community as a better place to live, work and visit.



19TH CENTURY MAIN STREET



MORNING STAR RIVERPARK



BRUFF COMMUNITY

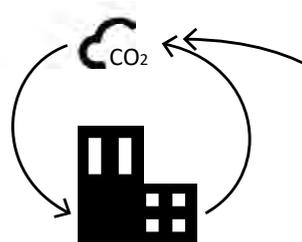


LOUGH GUR & SURROUNDINGS

Figure no. 10: Images showing the qualities of Bruff



Remote working



Carbon neutral



Attractiveness

Figure no. 11: Global trends

PART II

What key changes do we propose for Bruff ?



Figure no. 12: site visit

3.0 Public realm

Having studied the unique qualities of Bruff we have selected three key layers which form the focus of the public realm plan. These layers integrate the requirements of the public realm from micro to macro level to give an overarching vision for transformation.

They include.

1. Main street
2. The Riverpark
3. The Green infrastructure

The masterplan doesn't attempt to solve all issues, but offers a framework to interpret spatial questions while remaining flexible enough to allow for unseen and as yet unknown future requirements.

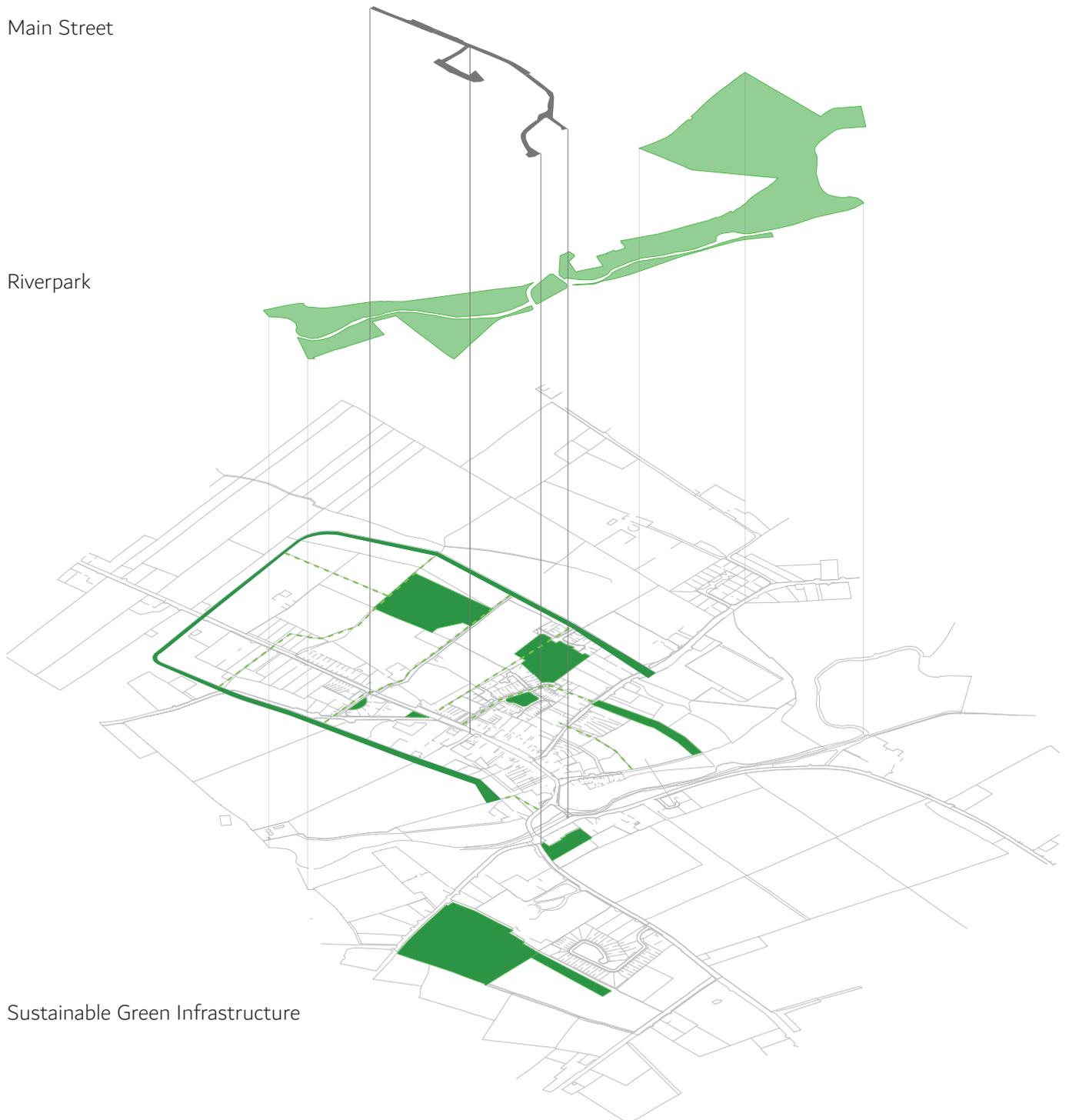


Figure no. 13: The public realm plan focuses on three layers for Bruff

Main Street

General

The town has a simple linear street layout characteristic of many Limerick towns. The gently curving Main Street is dominated by late nineteenth century architecture of terraced buildings, two and three storey, some with retail uses on the ground floor. Main Street was originally designed with a dirt road for horses and the occasional car and bike. Designated footpaths were part of the original design.



Figure no. 14: Main Street map with sections

Main Street forms the heart of Bruff, a tier 4 town with a mix of services from surrounding areas. Main Street is 13-14.5m wide and 315m long from Chapel Street to the Sean Wall Memorial. A more recent photo of the same location shows the transformation to an asphalted carriageway and concrete paved footpath. The facades retain much of their original quality. The colourful facades and characteristic murals form an important aspect of the street.

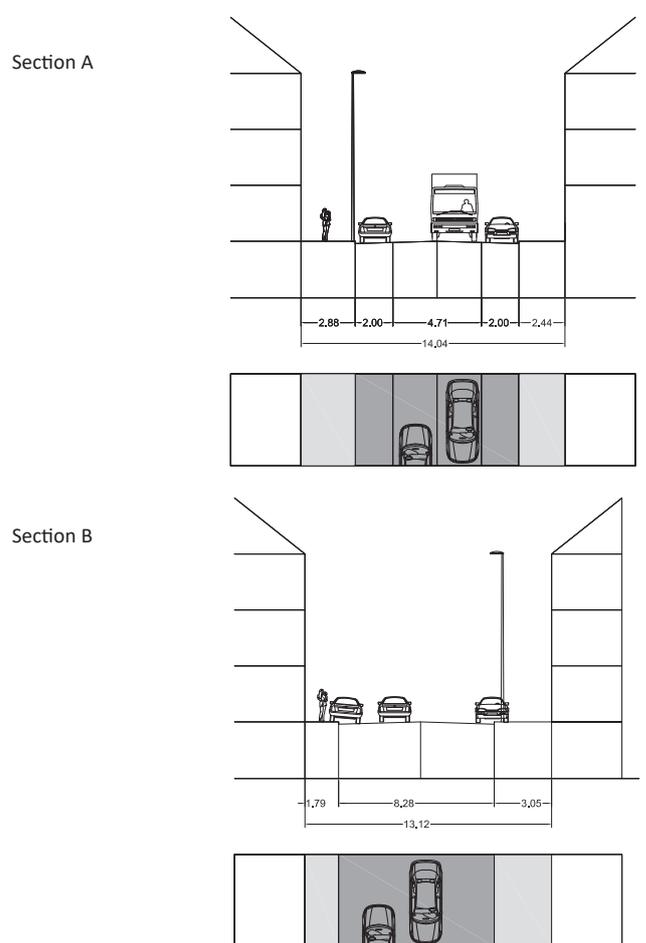


Figure no. 15: Sections of Main Street



Figure no. 16: 19th Century Main Street with 3 storey buildings



Figure no. 17: Main Street is the heart of Bruff, a tier 4 town with a mix of services for surrounding areas.

Mobility and safety



Figure no. 18: Mobility and speed map of Main Street

Over 60% of motorists break speed limit in Limerick village

by Donal O'Regan 28 Nov 2019 share 0



Speeds are more that 50kmph in the Main Street for over 60% of the time. This is not pedestrian friendly.

Figure no. 19: newspaper article

-  Two way traffic ahead
-  Turn
-  Speed Limit

Main Street forms a two-way street with a speed limit of 50kmph. In November 2019, a survey* showed that over 60 % of the time motorists break the speed limit in the village centre. This indicates there is a speed and safety issue in Main Street.

*Source Limerick Leader

Parking



Figure no. 20: Parking map of Main Street



Parking is at capacity on Main Street. No more space is available. Alternative parking concepts are required if the town centre is to grow.

Figure no. 21: Images of parking in Main Street

Most visitor & residential parking is located on Main street. This includes approximately 81 non appointed spaces, and 3 disability spaces. Several pockets of off-street (private) parking also exist at adjacent side roads. It is clear that parking is at capacity on Main Street and no more space is available. Discussions with stakeholders indicated that there is clearly a need to assess parking capacity. Importantly the streetscape is dominated by cars either parked or driving through Main Street, which can be perceived as harsh and unwelcoming for visitors and residents alike. Alternative parking concepts will be required if more parking for the town centre is to be addressed.

Dereliction



Figure no. 22: Dereliction map of Main Street

Dereliction is increasing and has adverse effects for the vitality of the town centre. There are 10 properties currently registered at different stages of dereliction. Although a threat for the Main Street, these properties could offer an opportunity for potentially reconfiguring circulation by offering connections to off-street parking. It is important that derelict buildings are repurposed and made fit for use.



The properties need to be made fit for use. What uses are these?

Figure no. 23: Images of dereliction in Main Street

 Derelict Buildings

Pedestrian comfort

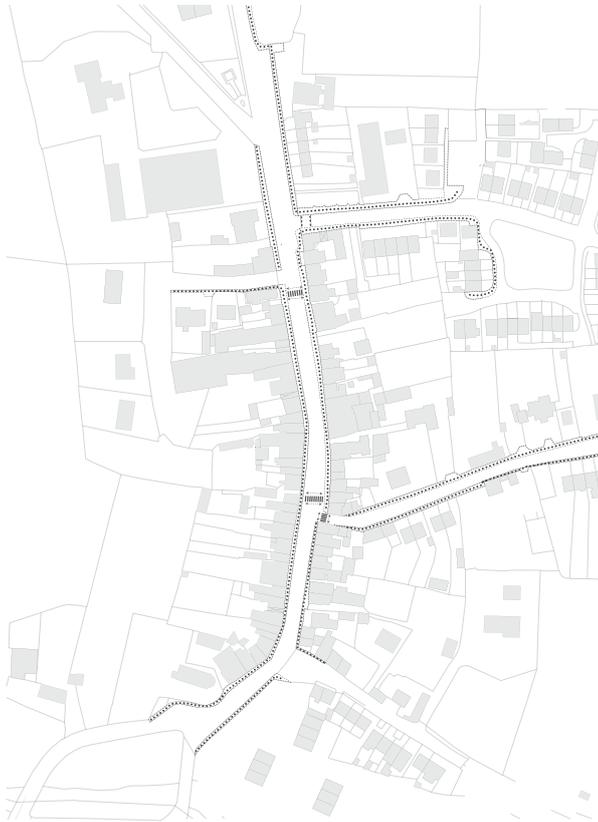
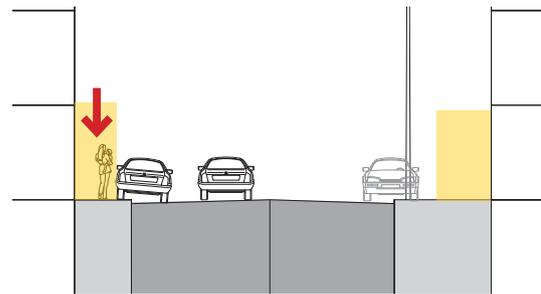


Figure no. 24: Pedestrian area map of Main Street



On average 75% of the street space is given to use by the car.

Figure no. 25: Uses in pedestrian areas in Main Street

On average 75% of the street space is given to use by the car only. Pedestrian comfort, and street life (terraces, seating) has been increasingly reduced by narrowing pavements and encroaching parked cars. The overall effect is that the streetscape is relatively hard and unwelcoming.

Vision Statement

Together with stakeholders a vision statement with more public realm objectives for this area was compiled for preparing ideas and proposals.

- Retain and enhance vitality in the Main Street.
- Attract and retain visitors and businesses.
- Make Main Street safer for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages.
- Make Main Street visually more welcoming and attractive for residents and visitors.
- Create opportunities for sitting, resting and relaxation.
- Provide alternative proposals for parking.
- Reduce dereliction.
- Improve pedestrian comfort in the Main Street.
- Make a green, sustainable Main Street that is climate adapted.
- Create a sense of place.
- Make Main Street more flexible for different uses, such as events.
- Reduce Street clutter
- Provide short- and long-term proposals that catalyze the new developments.
- Create seasonal differences.

Transforming a Main Street for future use is typically not a single step process. It requires a series of well-orchestrated decisions and actions which we call design principles. If supported by the community of Bruff and applied in unison, these can solve many of the challenges facing the Main Street and provide room for its future transformation. The design principles are explained below.

Define a compact primary core



Figure no. 26: Core area map of Main Street



Retention and focus of commercial activities at the core of the town is important to retain vitality and activity at street level. Create a compact core. Make derelict buildings fit for use.

Figure no. 27: Images of businesses in Main Street

Retention and focus of commercial activities at the core of the town is important in order to retain vitality and activity at street level and allow Bruff to function as a tier 4 town for its surrounding hinterland. This can be achieved by creating a compact core which encourages, actively attracts, and prioritizes commercial activities and services that stimulate street life in the core to ensure its long- term viability. Make derelict buildings fit for use, ensure and provide a continuous façade of active businesses that offer a diversity of services and activities. Stimulate additional activities which fit these criteria where possible. That approach does not suggest that areas outside of the core are not suitable for business. However, the priority should always be to retain the core for commercial activities and allow secondary areas by default to become residential, should commercial activities decrease.

Develop off-street parking



Figure no. 28: Off street parking map of Main Street

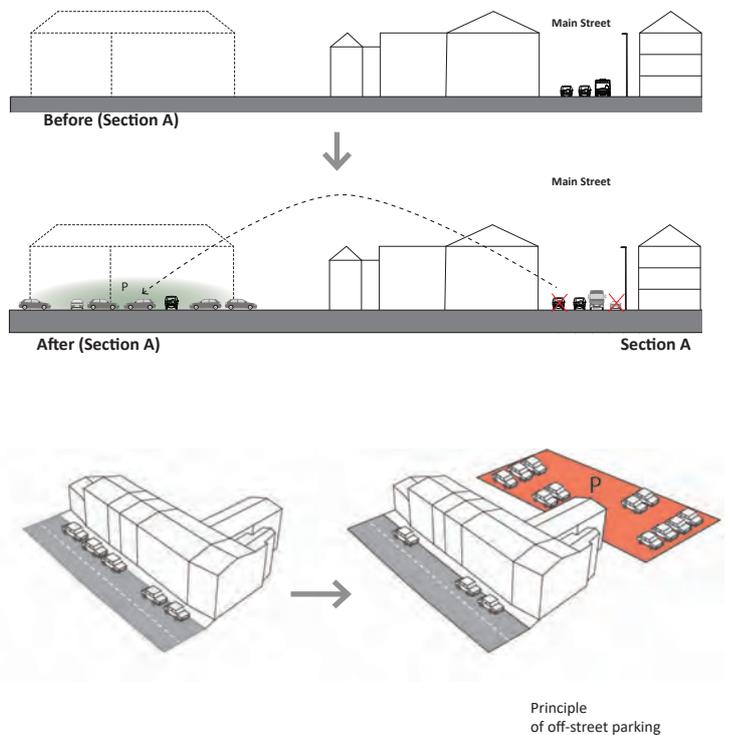


Figure no. 29: Off street parking schematic of Main Street

The car occupies 75% of the of the public realm in Main Street for its exclusive use. Parking on the Main Street is at capacity and there is physically no space to develop additional parking. Parked cars block visual and physical contact across the street and encroach on pavements to cause pinch points. As a result, the street does not facilitate pedestrian and cycle comfort and significantly limits the appeal of sustainable movement such as walking and cycling, which has great potential to develop in Bruff. A predictor of this potential could be the objective of having 60% sustainable mobility within a 6km radius of the centre.

To address this issue a new parking concept is proposed which will allow cars to park off the Main Street, in parking

plots, behind the 19th century façade. In spatial terms there is sufficient room to replace parking on Main Street, several times over. Further study is required to develop the best approach, but several parking plots on either side of the core would provide an optimum solution for Bruff.

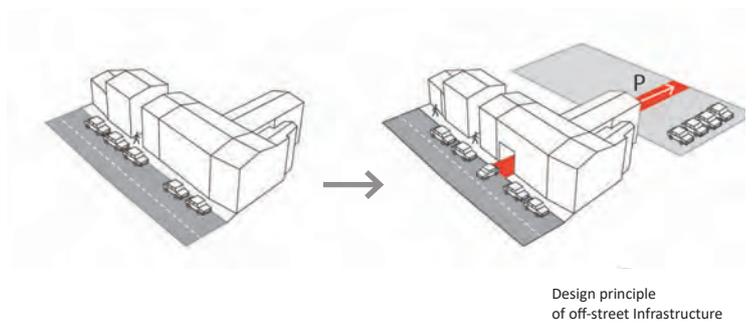
Develop off-street infrastructure



Figure no. 30: Off street infrastructure map of Main Street



Existing pedestrian lanes and coach house entrances. Derelict properties can offer opportunities for off-street infrastructure.



Design principle of off-street infrastructure

Figure no. 31: Off street infrastructure schematic of Main Street

Having developed off street parking a new form of infrastructure is also required for Bruff. This is called off-street infrastructure and has two components. Firstly, an infrastructure that connects cars to off-street parking and allows vehicles to permeate through these areas at slow speeds, improving accessibility and reducing traffic flows on the Main Street. The coach entrances along the 19th century buildings provide a basis or inspiration to develop a new typology of entrance that respects the character of the 19th century street and serves future needs. Secondly, a new infrastructure needs to be developed to allow pedestrians to permeate through the parking plots and connect them to the Main street. This offers visitors flexibility to park and conveniently walk to and from Main Street. Gaps between houses,

private entrances and laneways could all provide ideal connections from the parking plots to Main Street. As a rule of thumb, access every 75m provides good linkage into the commercial core.

Potential to densify backlands to strenghten town core



Figure no. 32: Densification map of Main Street

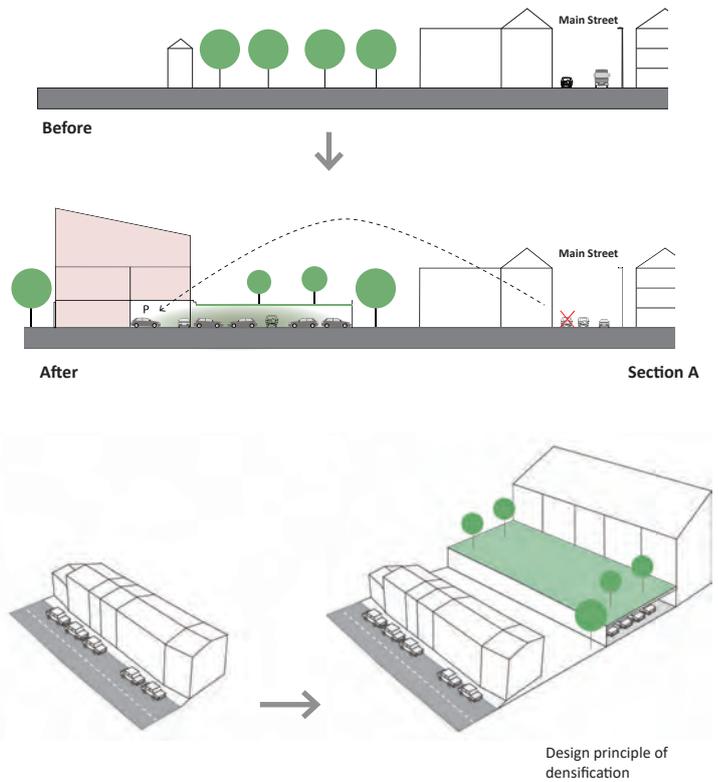


Figure no. 33: Densification schematic of Main Street

Increasing the density of housing, within the footprint of the town centre makes sense at many levels. It increases populations and footfall in the areas where services are available, improves overall viability of services, reduces carbon outputs, and increases sustainable movement. Potential to develop an urban framework to enable backland development is recommended as an approach to ensure that urban infill is well considered and ties in with the overall objectives of the public masterplan and statutory documents. The diagram demonstrates how densification could be developed in combination with parking, double ground use and development of higher density housing typologies that fit the historic core of the town. These would be expected to fully complement existing properties and potentially develop (traffic free)

facades that tie into the overall green infrastructure of the town. In theory a new edge of the town (the backlands) could be developed but would require a series of overarching urban design objectives to be established for these areas prior to development.

Transformations to Main Street



Figure no. 34: Phase 1 map of softening Main Street



Westport and Amsterdam street with combined parking and trees. Reduce speeds to 30kmph.

Figure no. 35: Images of similar locations for softening Main Street

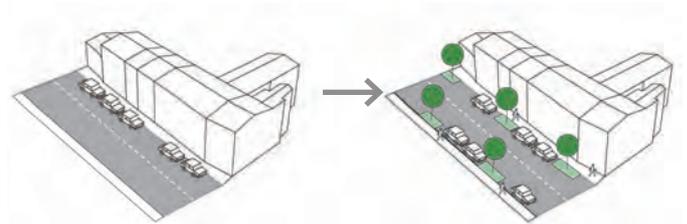


Figure no. 36: Phase 1 schematic for softening Main Street

Step 1. Soften the public realm

The short term vision seeks to replace some of the parking spaces (6 - 10 parking spaces) in the core of Main Street with off-street parking where possible. This would allow parking spaces to be reconfigured to enable the planting of trees along one (or both sides) of Main Street. Trees would require to be planted with appropriate tree pits of 20m³ with reinforced pits.

Moving cars at high speeds are loud and intimidating and limit pedestrian comfort for walking, sitting, and meeting. To encourage sustainable movement, it is recommended that speeds in the core be reduced to 30 kmph and that road markings be added to roadways for cycle routes.

Step 2. Create a pedestrian core



Figure no. 37: Phase 2 map for softening Main Street

Bruff does not have a central square or town centre in the classic sense, instead it can develop a high-quality pedestrian area in the commercial core that can substitute this.

The long-term vision seeks to replace most of the parking in the core of Main Street with off-street parking, and to allocate alternative uses to this space to improve the experience of Main Street to attract and retain visitors.

This entails a widening of pedestrian areas in the core to develop a pedestrian friendly zone. This zone would require a higher quality public realm in terms of materials and furniture which would facilitate an active street life, with seating areas, terraces etc. It is about 'experience'

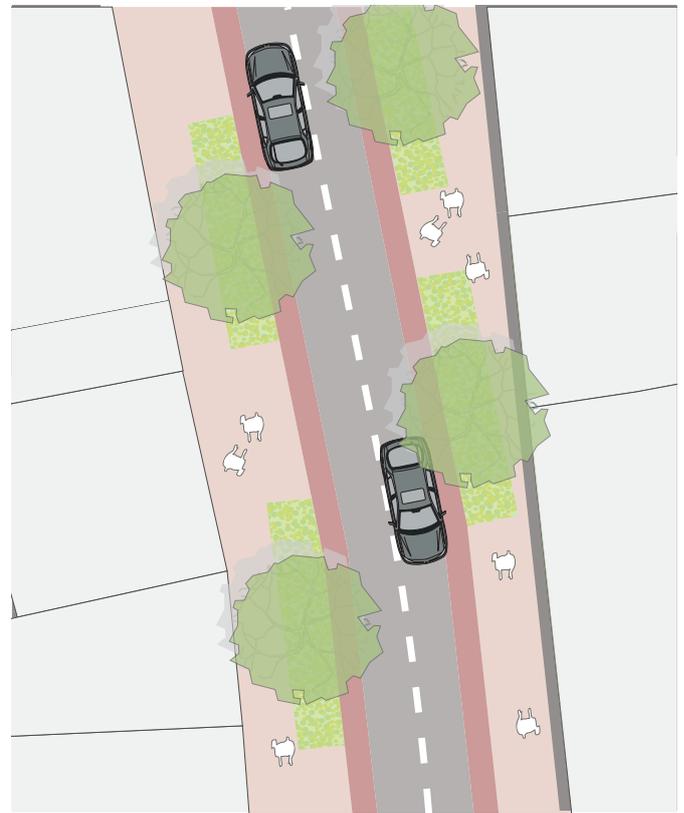


Figure no. 38: Phase 2 plan for softening Main Street

as well as convenience. Potential for colourful perennial street planting in the streetscape is also critical and would be well served with support from the Tidy Towns committee and other community and business interests. The carriageway could be clearly marked with cycle routes and the crossing of the road should be made easier and more frequent for pedestrians to give them increased priority over the cars in the commercial zone.



Figure no. 39: Phase 2 sketch for softening Main Street showing benefits

By combining the design principles with the transformations to the Main street a new type of public realm can emerge for Main street in Bruff that better serves the community. The following attributes can emerge;

1. Wider pavement areas and new paving materials.
2. Benches and seats
3. Trees and colourful perennial planting as suds.
4. Narrower carriageway with reduced speeds of 30 kmph
5. Cycle lanes indicated.
6. Safe crossings, in combination with traffic calming measures.
7. High quality kerbs
8. Undergrounding of wiring.
9. Tree lighting (for festivals)
10. Energy efficient catenary lighting or post lighting
11. Suds

Main Street



Figure no. 41: Illustration of proposal for Main Street

An example of how Main Street could appear in the future is generated to demonstrate how the street could continue to function as a commercial hub, while at the same time generating new qualities for pedestrian comfort, sustainable movement, and a greener, healthier public realm where people will want to linger and stay as a resident or visitor. Expanding outdoor dining areas can also play a role. A high-quality public core is important for the town of Bruff to compete for, attract and retain new residents and visitors, thereby improving the overall vitality of the town.

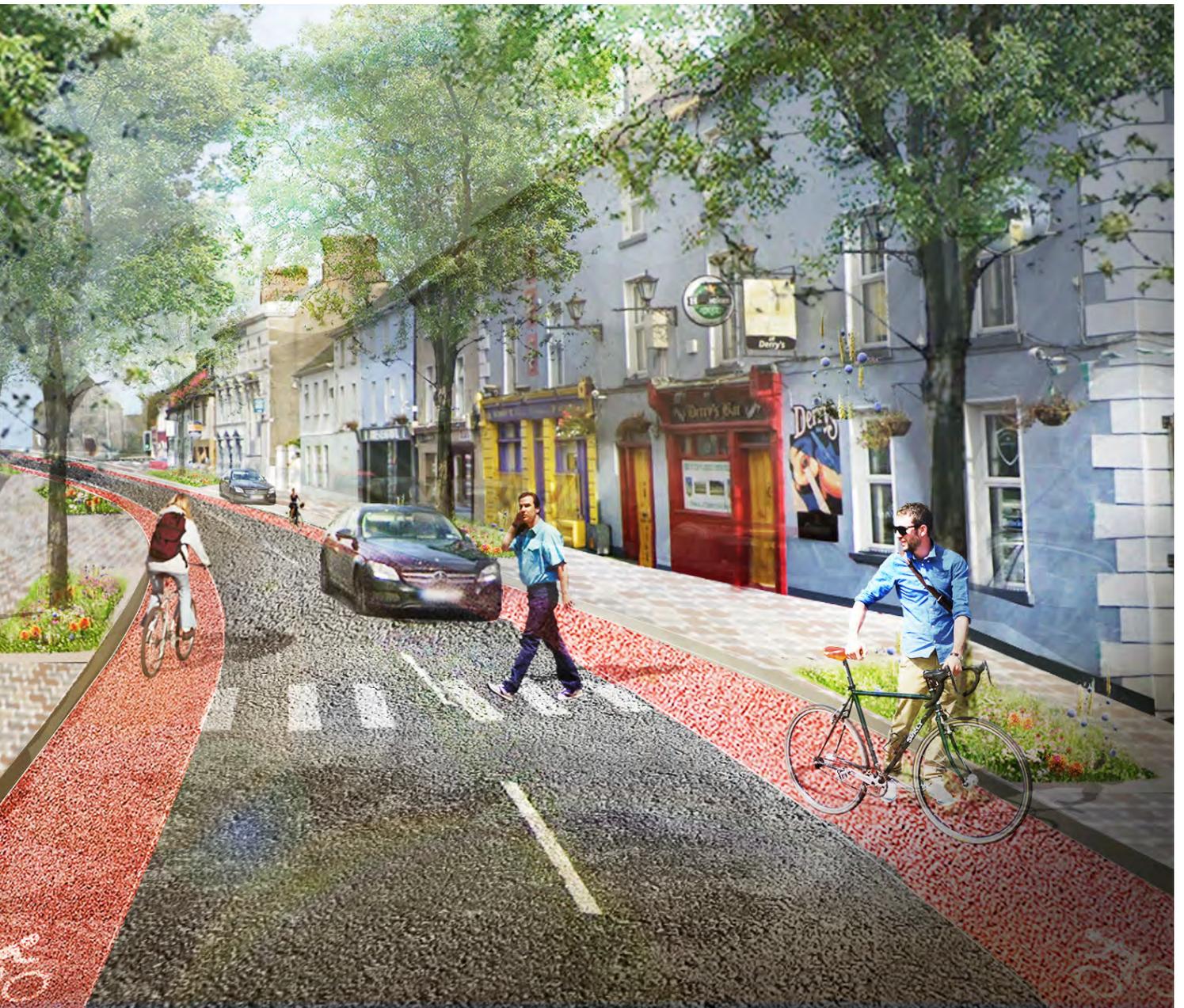


Figure no. 42: Illustration of existing Main Street

Morning Star River Park

General

The origin's of Bruff's settlement are strongly related to the Morning Star River. Connecting the river to the town and its environs is a key objective for the future development of Bruff. The historical image from the 1900's shows how the river landscape has transformed significantly in the last century. New quays and bridges were constructed to improve mobility and reduce flooding and mills were built to harness energy. The town park was a commonage with an important functional role for grazing and washing.

Qualities

The town park's area encompasses about 23 ha in the current LAP and is comprised of several parts, including the Morning Star Park, the Grove, the waterfall, and the areas in between. It has many key features including characteristic limestone walls and bridges, the Grove, and ancient ringfort, and its waterfall and extensive flood prone areas.

A review of the park was carried out to include existing reports and feedback from the walkabout. This was developed as part of a new vision statement for the park and include the following objectives.

- Attract more users of different ages to the park;
- Connect the components of the River Park into a continuous experience;
- Create trails and walks that form loops and offer different surroundings/ experiences;
- Improve biodiversity in the park and develop seasonal variation;
- Protect and retain all limestone walls and original details;
- Promote educational activities around food production and ecology;
- Strengthen the built heritage of the park;
- Offer space for local initiatives e.g., beekeeping, meditation, fitness;
- Make the Riverpark more accessible from the town centre;
- Create space for adventure and nature play areas;
- Create an event/ performance space for Bruff;
- Propose energy production in the park;
- Connect neighbourhoods more directly to the park.

Several challenges were identified in the park.



Figure no. 43: Historical image of Morning Star River Park



Figure no. 44: Map of places in Morning Star River Park

Missing links

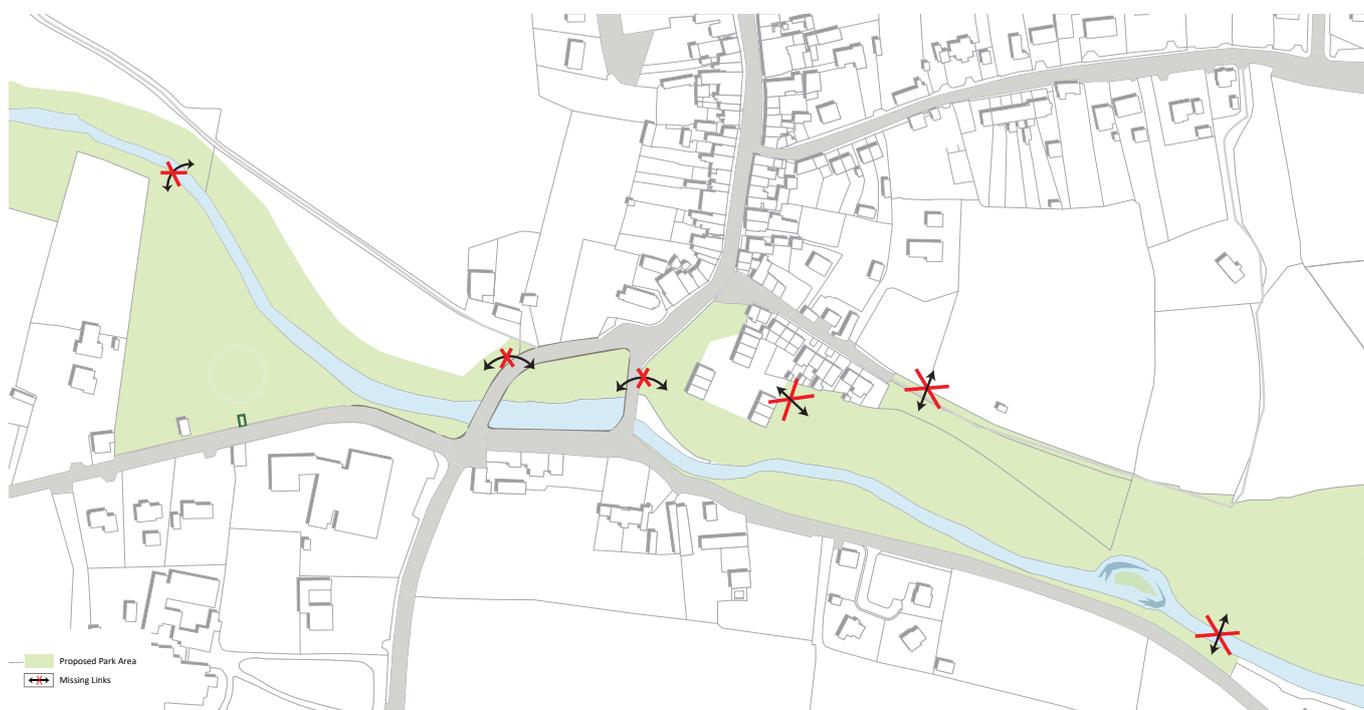


Figure no. 45: Map of missing links in Morning Star River Park

Connectivity needs to be strengthened including within the park and its constituent parts to create a continuous network. This includes a crossing at the waterfall and near the old ring fort. These improvements can be summarised as the missing links.

Flooding



Figure no. 46: Map of flooding in Morning Star River Park

Flooding is a natural process that has a potential basis for increasing biodiversity and variation in the landscape of the park. This variation needs to be more clearly expressed and designed to develop the ecology and offer more variation in experience.

Making new connections

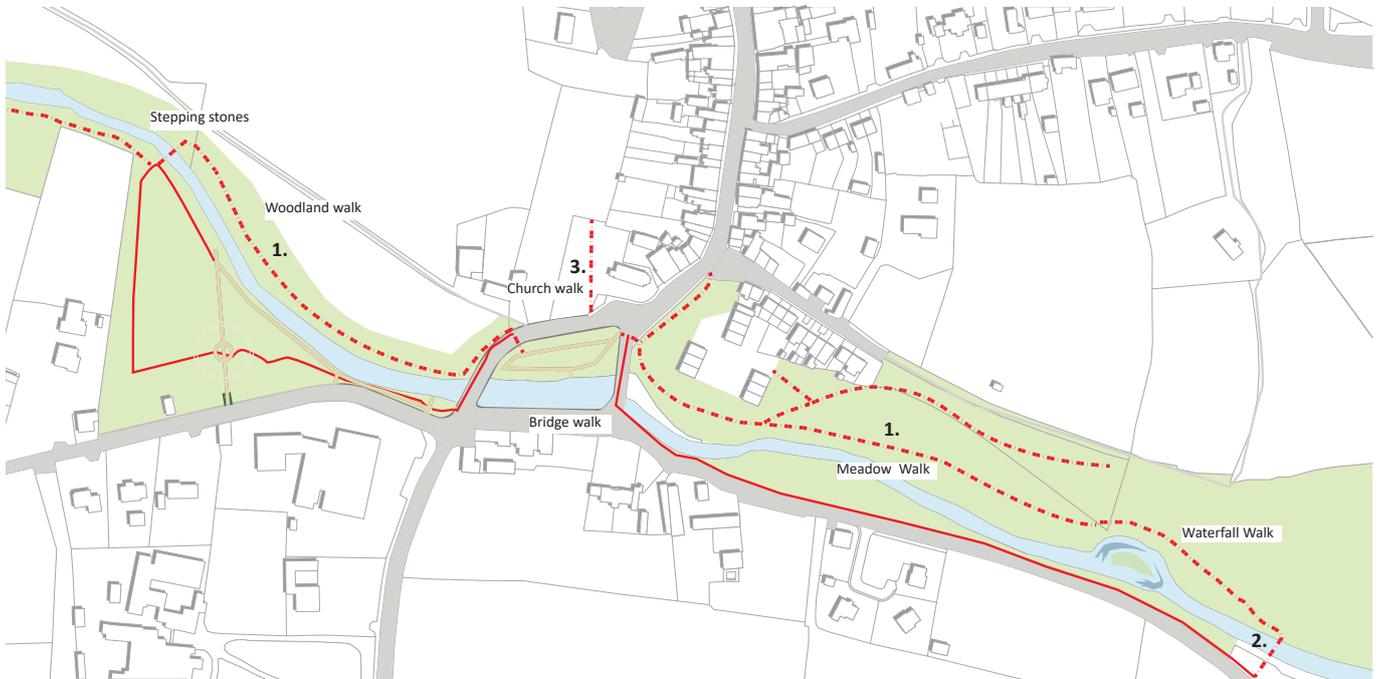


Figure no. 47: Map of new connections in Morning Star River Park



Figure no. 48: image of Grit or hoggin paths



Figure no. 49: images of Pedestrian bridges



Figure no. 50: image of Church Walk

As a first step in designing this part of Bruff's landscape, we would like to describe all these component areas as being a part of a wider concept called the Morning Star River Park. A series of design principles are proposed for the park to be developed incrementally over time. The steps are aimed at improving the accessibility, biodiversity, experience and uses within the park.

park's landscape to include the bridge meadow walk, the woodland walk and the church walk. This includes a new pedestrian crossing of the Morning Star at the waterfall and a steppingstone crossing of the river near the Grove, where historically a steppingstone was present (see maps).

The assortment of walking loops and alternatives needs to be strengthened and extended. A series of new loops are proposed that also strengthens the identity of the

Developing the river (riparian) landscape



Figure no. 51: Map of new ecologies in Morning Star River Park



Figure no. 52: images of pollinator margin



Figure no. 53: images of wet meadow



Figure no. 54: images of eco trial, boardwalk & nestbox

The ecology of the river park is built around a set of complementary ecological subsystems that work in unison to create diversified biodiversity of a riparian landscape. These will be further developed to include a wet woodland, wet grasslands and flooding meadows and the edges of the river itself. An eco-trail with educational and interactive points such as nest boxes, boardwalks for flood areas could be integrated into a final design. We also recommend that the former river arm east of BrunanDeise be redeveloped to enhance flooding of the meadow areas and potentially harness hydrokinetic energy to compliment other renewable resources for energy use

in the local area. A pollinator margin is recommended along the north bank of the Morning star to develop a

Offering new activities



Figure no. 55: Map of possible activities in Morning Star River Park



School garden

Forest school

Event space

Play and natural play

Fitness & meditation

Figure no. 56: Images of possible activities in Morning Star River Park

The park needs to attract new users of all ages, that can benefit from this blue green resource. Many ideas are listed and are to be discussed further in the context of a more detailed design. These include a school garden, an events space, a natural play area, forest school and fitness points.

An openness to integrate local ideas and proposals, where suitable can be adopted. This needs to be qualified with a level of spatial supervision from a competent designer to ensure that the spatial capacity of the park and its spatial concept is always respected.

Transformations to the River park / existing situation

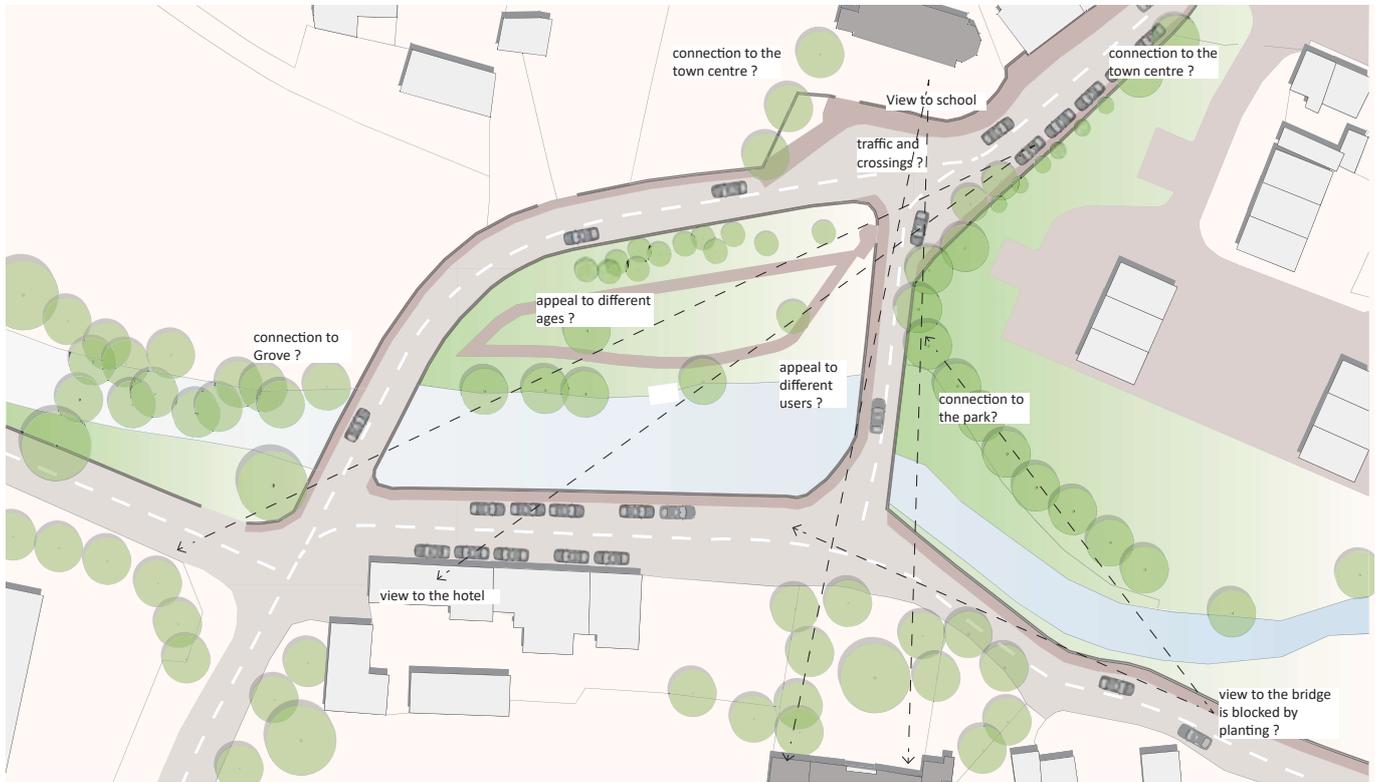


Figure no. 57: Existing plan for Morning Star Park

To demonstrate the potentials of the design principles an example of a design proposal was developed for the Morning Star River Park.

Existing situation

The existing park has been carefully looked after and works well for many people. To build on this success and in discussions with the stakeholders, a series of potential improvements were sketched and identified for the existing situation. These are listed in the map above.

New proposal



Figure no. 58: Proposed plan for Morning Star Park

The example design shows the implementation of several design transformations which are listed below.

Integration of existing green area into the Park

Adjacent to the Main Street the green area (near housing) has been redesigned. The existing hedge has been removed and replaced with a new hedge along the eastern periphery of the green area. A new pathway has been added that leads directly to the River Park

Meadow walk and replacement of trees

The planting along the river to the east of Brugh na nDeise has been removed to allow views to the old bridge. The bridge could potentially have upward lighting as a feature, while recognizing the need to check ecological requirements. The quay wall has been exposed and a new pathway has been added on top of this as part of the meadow walk which continues to the waterfall from Main Street. New trees have been replaced adjacent to the

periphery of the housing. A stepping stone route under the northern arch is proposed to link the park areas along the water as a potential play route that stimulates contact with the river, to be used when not in flood.

Amphitheatre and event space

A raised walkway in form of an amphitheater has been developed to create a new connection and crossing at the R512. The amphitheatre has grassed steps which functions as a seating area for events. The park has retained memorial trees (although some may require relocation) and suggests new planting could be added for colour and biodiversity.

The Bruff High Line

Brugh na nDeise has an interesting history and may not be required as a vehicular access. For the proposal, the bridge has been pedestrianized and converted into a green bridge – the so-called Bruff High Line with a new

New proposal with detail

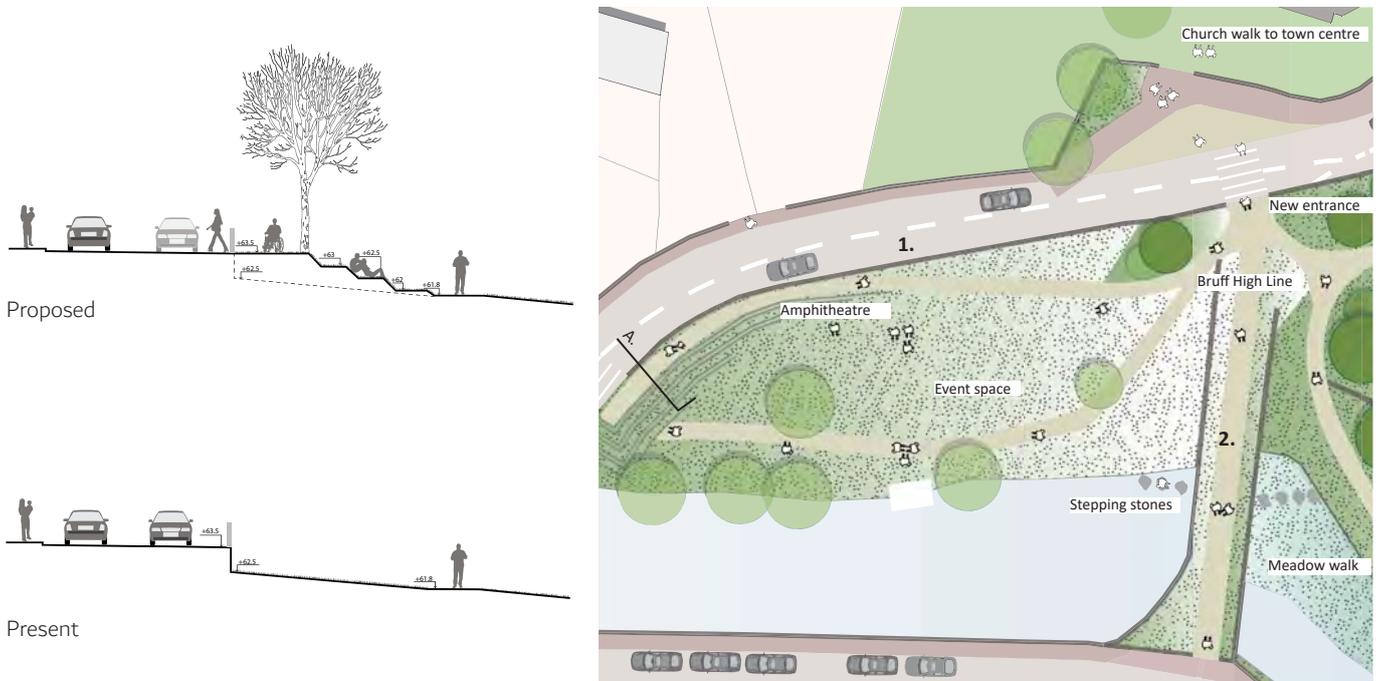


Figure no. 59: Proposed plan detail for Morning Star Park with sections

entrance to the Church and Main Street. Access to the bridge area has been redesigned with new limestone walls and possibly a gate to mark a newly configured entrance to Main Street and the L1413 road.

Church of Ireland Bruff

The disused Church is an architectural asset for the town. A Feasibility Study is to be undertaken in collaboration with Ballyhoura Development for the Church of Ireland building to be adapted for use as a performance space/art gallery by the community. The access to the Church from street level would need to be considered as part of this study. A possible route (the Church Walk) through the grounds into the town centre could be explored as part of an amenity route. The Church and the old school building are part of a design composition. The viewing line to the old school could be reinstated in the future (with the removal of some trees) with the agreement of the owners.

Crossing of R512 and the pollinator walk

A universal pedestrian crossing has been developed at the R512 to the pollinator walk which continues along the north bank of the Moring Star River. The crossing of the road could be designed as a wide ramp or traffic calming measure. Access to this crossing point from the Morning Star River Park is proposed with an earthen ramp with path for universal access. It is recommended that the R512 could have as its speed reduced to 30 kmph from the L1413 into the town as a traffic calming measure. This design would ensure a safer walking route for children to the local school. The design proposes a pollinator walk as a route along the margin of agricultural lands with a buffer zone of approximately 5-8m. Although the zoning of the park includes a larger part of this agricultural area in the new Development Plan, it is felt that facilitating a good connection with a pollinator route is sufficient.

Morning Star River Park



Figure no. 60: Illustration of proposal for Morning Star Park

An example of how the Morning Star River Park could appear in the future is generated to demonstrate its increased potential as a green resource for all the town's inhabitants, strengthening the town's sustainable green infrastructure and bringing the park closer to the town's centre and attracting visitors to the area.



Figure no. 61: Image of existing Morning Star Park

A Sustainable Green Infrastructure

General

As a final step for the public realm, the overall structure of Bruff's wider public realm is considered.

Landscape as a basis for identity

As a basis for identity, the geomorphology of Bruff shows that there are two distinguishable landscapes present; a river landscape and a half open agricultural landscape. These offer a basis for differentiation to underpin and strengthen the identity and development of the town in a specific place related way. It is recommended that this landscape differentiation be used as a basis to underpin identity and inform future urban development.

Green structure to strengthen permeability

This wider perspective reframes the public realm at a different scale level. While discussing the future of the town with stakeholders new ideas emerged that were potentially beneficial for both long and short-term projects. Wouldn't it be beneficial to have safe green connections and walking loops connecting different areas of the town? Wouldn't it be wonderful to allow children to safely walk or cycle through the town? To harvest these ideas a sketch was developed to show a sustainable green structure at the scale of the town. The maps can be applied as a template for discussion and future development based on the LAP. It is important to note that these connections are not agreed with landowners, nor is their location finalized. Instead, the map demonstrates the necessity for these green areas and connections, in the event sites as detailed in the LAP, be developed in the future. At that point, these ideas can be translated into more detailed proposals in collaboration with landowners. The legend of the map details the typology of green spaces proposed and the overall objective is to improve permeability and characterize typologies of green spaces for the town, to benefit residents in the future.

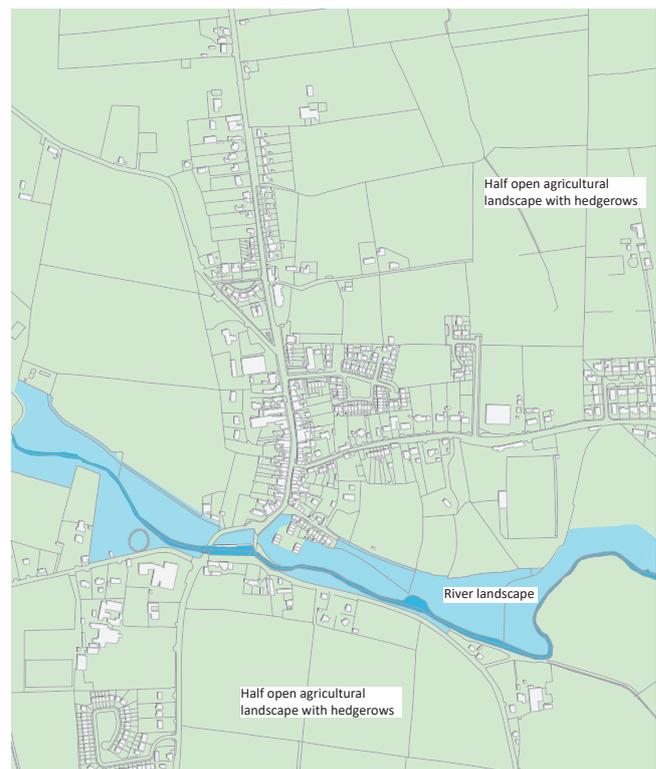


Figure no. 62: Landscape typology map for Bruff



Figure no. 63: Green typology map for Bruff

Develop cycle and pedestrian connections within Bruff

Walking and cycling has great potential to develop in Bruff, a relatively small town with a commercial core. A predictor of this potential could be the objective of having 60% sustainable mobility within a 6 km radius of the centre. This entails developing a network of routes. The map shows a grid structure for sustainable movement to connect the town centre with the Riverpark, sports area etc. The west flank of the town shows how a route from the river park could be extended along the church northwards and into the Main street. A walking route could also be extended along the margin of the town. A ladder structure of walking and cycling routes (where possible on either side of the road) with appropriate crossings for both, could be developed in an east west direction to extend to the edge of the town, including along Crawford Street to the GAA club. A cycle route could be extended down the Main street and along the eastern periphery of the town. A route could link the sports park (including the GAA pitches) with the river park along existing margins of tree lined fields.

Tourism destinations and amenities

There are a number of tourist attractions within the town including the Thomas Fitzgerald Centre, the Kennedy Rooms, the Kennedy cottage (home of the Kennedy descendant) , the Morning Star River park (with Dolores O Riordan dedicated memorial) a town Heritage Trail, Sean Wall memorial, Ballygrennan castle, and the Old Irish Ways Museum. There are a number of walking trails in and around the town including the Bruff Sli na Slainte which is a 3.5km route located to the north of the town. Bruff also has several local amenities which need to be linked to the town's sustainable network. These include schools, public sport amenities, the Bruff GAA club and the Morning Star River Park.

Wayfinding strategy

A wayfinding strategy is to be implemented to support a sustainable network and indicate the most important tourist destinations and local amenities. The strategy will



Figure no. 64: Image of sustainable bus shelter

tie in with all existing digital tourist information systems and apps. The physical implementation will review existing signage with a view to decluttering and applying the house style for rural towns developed by LCCC.

Bus shelters

Many stakeholders requested that bus shelters be provided to offer protection during bad weather.

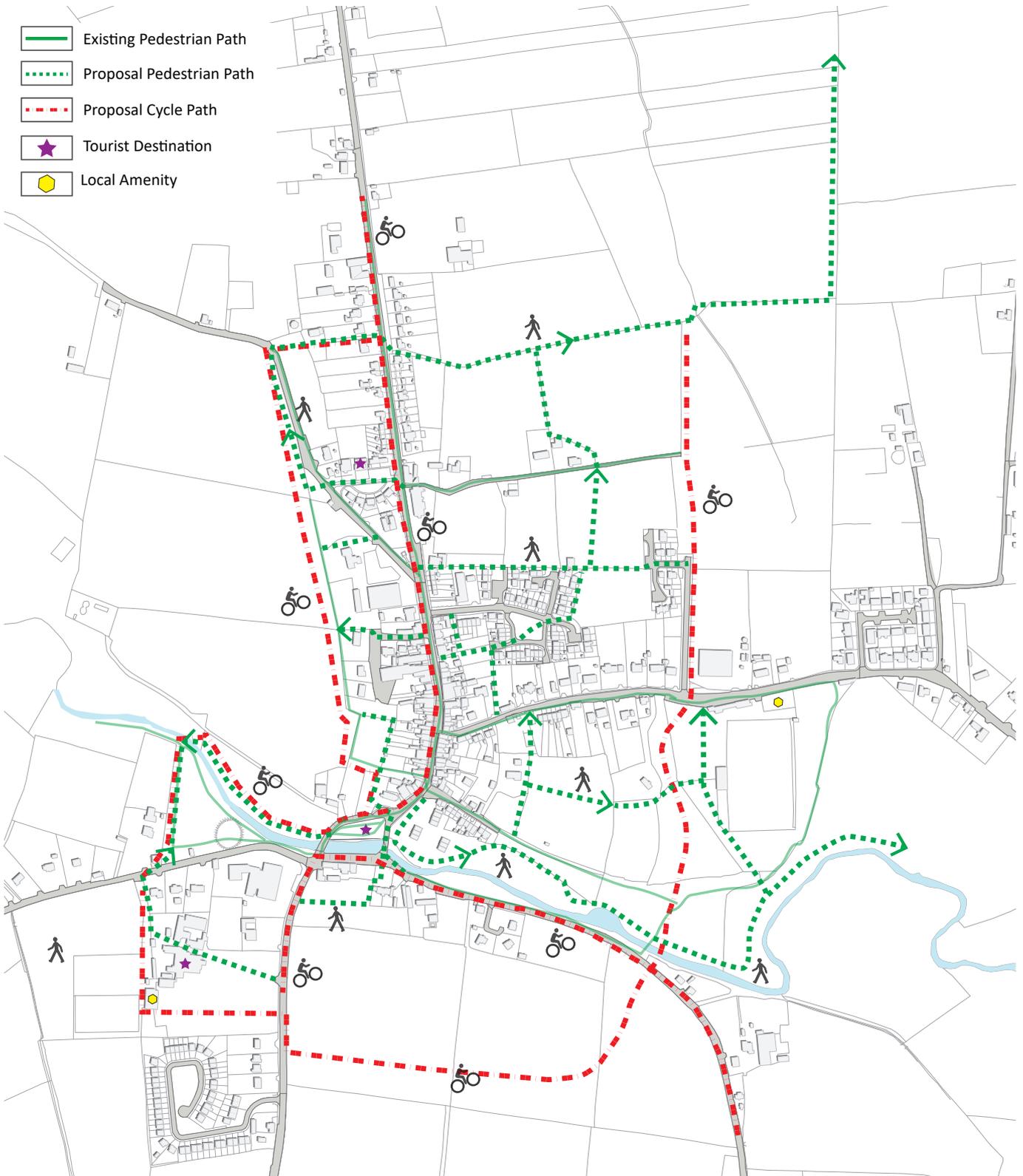


Figure no. 65: Network typology map for Bruff

Connection to Lough Gur.

One of the key tourist destinations local to Bruff is Lough Gur, a world famous archaeological site and visitor centre located 5 km to the north of the town. The Option 1 for a connection to Lugh Gur has been being carefully studied. This option could be improved by implementing traffic calming measures and reducing traffic speeds to 50kmph along those sections of the northern road with 80 kmph as well as introducing road markings for segregated cycleways. See image 1 as an example of the markings proposed.

A long- term alternative would be to look for an off-road route (option 2) along the backs of fields. This would offer a pedestrian and cycle route or greenway and despite being relatively short would contribute significantly to the safety, experience and overall potential use of the route between Bruff and the Lough Gur visitor's centre. Option 2 would also tie into Thomas Fitzgerald visitor's centre in the town of Bruff.



Figure no. 66: images of segregated cycleways and

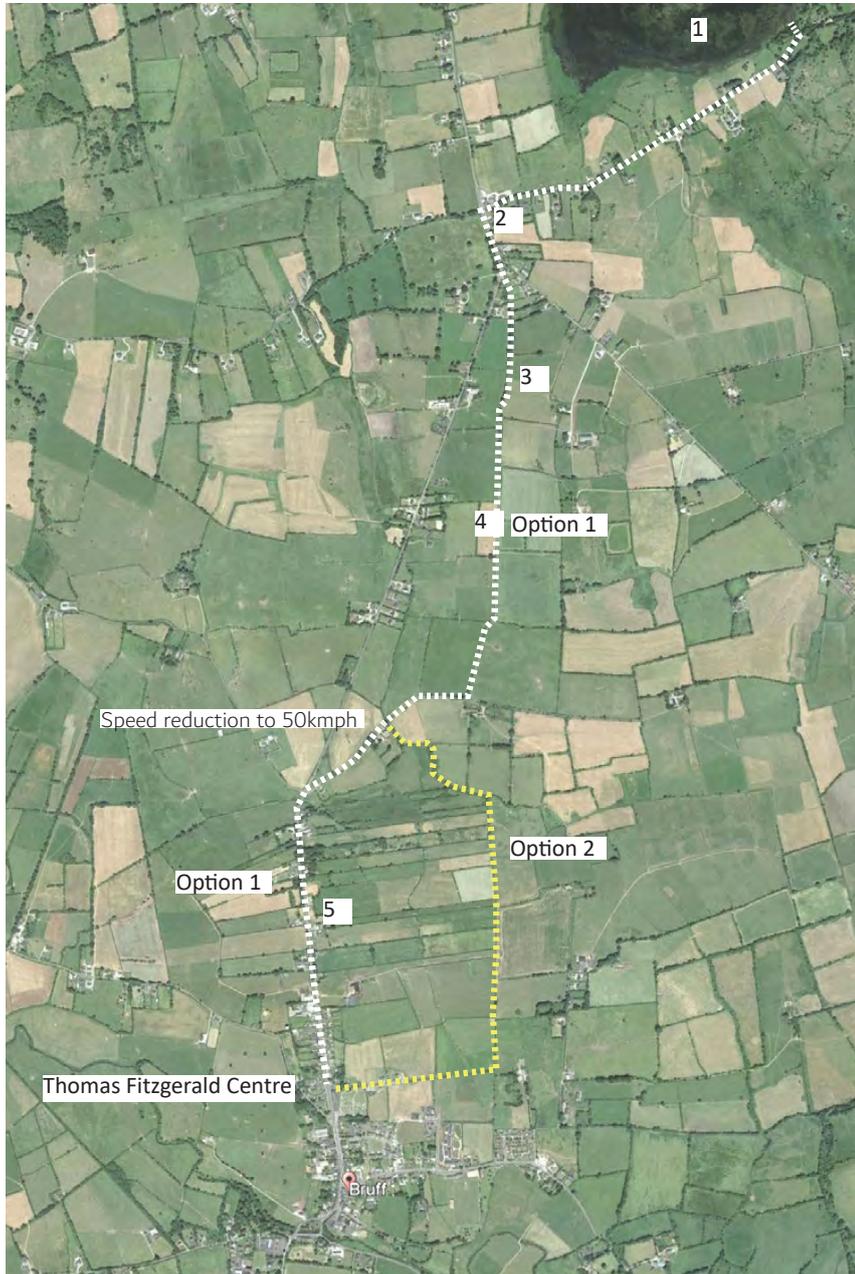


Figure no. 67: Cycleway options to Lough Gur



Figure no. 68: Images of route to Lough Gur.

PART III

How can we deliver the vision with the active support of residents and stakeholders ?

4.0 Delivery plan

The Bruff Public Realm Plan (PRP) sets out a series of projects based on three areas; Main Street, The Morning Star River park and a Sustainable Green infrastructure. They vary in scale and complexity with some actions suited to short-term delivery, while others take longer to realise. The delivery of the projects will lead to the incremental transformation of Bruff's public realm, improving sustainable mobility and future proofing the town for the coming 10-20 years.

Many projects will depend on the availability of funding and will be subject to further design development, local engagement, and where necessary, planning approvals. Other projects however can be driven forward by collaboration, volunteer work, local support, and committee agreement. The residents need to play a leading role in driving the projects forward with the support of LCCC.

Co-ordination and oversight of the plan and its delivery will require a continued process of partnership between LCCC and local groups and businesses within the town.

Responsibility for the delivery of the actions should be shared between different organisations and groups, including LCCC as well as other public bodies, community groups and the private sector.

The following Action Plan should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals (every two years) during the next 10 to 15 years, as projects are delivered and circumstances change.

Future projects

Main Street

General	Develop orientation and way finding signage that aligns with the village experience. Decluttering, removal of overhead wires. Undertake age friendly audit of Main Street. Outcomes to feed into detailed masterplan for refurbishment of Main Street.
Parking	Develop a feasibility study for alternative off street parking and deliver these areas in a phased way. Develop a through-way for parking areas. Deliver a series of public pedestrian links between off street parking and the Main Street in collaboration with landowners to stimulate access and economic activity.
Greening of core	Develop a part 8 public realm plan for the refurbishment of the Main Street to phase 2. Also include a traffic plan to support the public realm plan. See below. Develop planting of street trees with best practice tree pits (REDScape standard, 20-25m3) phase 1.
Traffic	Realignment of Main Street for phase 2 with extension of pedestrian areas. Reduce speeds to 30 kmph along Main Street. Develop traffic calming measures. Develop pedestrian crossings. Develop a supporting traffic management plan for a public realm design (leading). Introduction of cycle paths. Provide bus shelters.
Dereliction	Dereliction and building improvement strategy. Renovation of housing and infill developments for re use. Catalyze the development of commercial uses in the primary core.

Sustainable green infrastructure

Sustainable green infrastructure	Predicate future development on the inclusion of a green infrastructure program, including connecting routes, parks and tree-lined routes, connector green areas to be fully worked out in a preparatory urban framework per development.
Sustainable connections in the town	Develop traffic calming measures for approach roads. Use funding schemes to develop a wider network of paths and cycle routes in collaboration with landowners. Integrate tree lined field margins with new cycle and walking routes for future developments. Reduce traffic speeds along Crawford's street. Provide bus shelters.
Connection to Lough Gur	Develop cycle lanes and reduce speeds along Main Road to 50 kmph. Assess feasibility in developing an alternative connection.

The Morning Star River Park

	<p>Develop a masterplan to part 8 for the park to include the following.</p> <p>Pedestrian crossing at the R512 southern entrance bridge to the town.</p> <p>Pedestrianization and greening of Brugh de nDeise.</p> <p>New park entrance and crossing at the Church.</p> <p>Realignment of park with housing area east of Brugh na nDeise to extend up to Main Street,</p> <p>Amphitheatre with ramped access for Morning Star River Park.</p> <p>Steppingstone crossing under the Brugh na nDeise.</p> <p>Develop a pedestrian bridge at the waterfall.</p> <p>Protect and retain limestone walls.</p> <p>Develop a planting plan for different areas of the park together with a maintenance approach.</p> <p>Develop a biodiversity plan for the park to include wet woodlands, flood meadows, pollinator margin, wet meadow and other appropriate ecologies. Integrate with flooding plan.</p> <p>Develop a new river arm in the east of the park to include energy production.</p> <p>Develop community activity plan – to be phased incrementally to include fitness, natural play, forest school, school garden, etc. To be carried out under spatial supervision, to ensure capacity of the park is sensitively treated.</p> <p>Develop paths (and possible boardwalks) for looped walks including Church, meadow, woodlands, waterfall walks.</p> <p>Assess feasibility and develop connections and paths to surrounding areas.</p> <p>Develop views to Brugh na nDeise by clearing planting.</p>
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Figure no. 69: Table of future projects for Bruff

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Public realm is essentially the glue that holds a town together; the streets, the parks the rivers, but also that aspect of a town's landscape that shape its appearance and impacts the day to day lives of its residents; the views, mobility, the appearance of properties, places to sit, rest or come together for celebrations. The transformations in the public realm if achieved will deliver long term benefits to significantly improve the quality of life in the town and strengthen its economic resilience.

Commitment and cooperation of stakeholders.

Achieving the vision for the town requires a long-term commitment and focused effort by all parties. The nature of any public realm plan is that it is public. It requires a strong if not unanimous consensus from the people of Bruff to achieve overarching gains for the local community. With this commitment, residents and stakeholders will need to cooperate in terms of decision making and a shared vision to solve the wider problems in the town, especially with issues such as off-street parking and infrastructure.

Incremental development and celebrations

The integrated approach of the masterplan requires a prioritization of projects. While long term-term projects are being prepared or incrementally developed, other short-term projects can be delivered. It is important that these milestones of success are celebrated and shared publicly and used as a basis for the next step.

Quality and design.

For every project, a high level of professional design quality should be expected and not compromised on. Quality is not just about funding or high-quality materials. It is also about creativity, problem solving and the use of time. The role of design can be fragile in long term processes. It is important that stakeholders recognize and support design as a key driver in achieving optimum results for the public realm.

A template for opportunity

The Bruff public realm plan demonstrates how the town can respond to its future needs to make it more sustainable, green and inclusive. It is a shared template for opportunity which can greatly improve the town for the benefit of the people who work, live, and visit it. The masterplan is the next step in consolidating the existing qualities of place, history and people to develop Bruff to its full potential for the benefit all.

