



# Galway City – Oughterard Greenway

Daithí Flood | Galway County Council



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# Project Brief:

- Galway County Council on delivery of the National Cycle Network in County Galway on a phased basis:
  - Section 1: Clifden to Oughterard.
  - Section 2: Oughterard to Galway City via Moycullen.
  - Section 3: Galway City to Ballinasloe.
- Community based approach to delivery of this project, including the following stakeholders:
  - Department of Transport
  - National Parks and Wildlife Service
  - Failte Ireland
  - Community Groups

# Galway City to Oughterad - Greenway Specification

- 28Km of Greenway linking:
  - Galway City
  - Moycullen
  - Rosscahill
  - Oughterad
- Average carriageway width 5m
- Average surfaced width 3m
- Proposed carriageway to be fenced
- Allow for agricultural access only

# Proposed indicative route



# Current Situation

- It is planned to deliver this project in partnership with landowners using ten year permissive access agreements.
- Consultations with landowners commenced in 2014 in an attempt to secure agreements on land access through the permissive access method. Of the ninety landowners along this route over 90% have had discussions with Galway County Council. To date no land owners have signed a permissive access agreement along this section.
- Galway County Council formed a steering group as part of the process of progressing this portion of the National Cycle Network. The steering group is made up of representatives from the Community Groups along the route, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Coillte, Failte Ireland, Galway City Council, National University of Ireland, Galway and Galway County Council.
- Department funding was not allocated for the purchasing of lands.

# Consultation with landowners

- Discussions with affected landowners along the Galway City to Moycullen section of the greenway began in November 2014. In February 2015, Galway County Council held two days of public consultation in Oughterard. Landowners were contacted and invited to view the draft proposals and begin consultation with Galway County Council. Following this public consultation briefing, individual meetings with landowners took place.
- In December 2015, Galway County Council held a further two days of public consultation in Moycullen where landowners and concerned parties could give feedback.
- Observations/comments from public and landowners were received in the following months.

# Landowners along proposed Greenway

We identified 120 individual plots of land with c.100 landowners.

- They represent a wide variety of farmers and farming operations (part-time and full-time, beef, sheep and equestrian, or a combination of these).
- They also include several other types of landowner who are not farmers but whose property is within the route corridor (householders, developers).
- The landowners we met with, were generally selected on the basis of their availability to meet us.

# Main Issues raised by Landowners

- Potential impacts on farmland and on farming operations dominated landowner discussions. Severance, livestock watering and loss of lands were some of the issues raised by landowners. Other related themes raised were, potential loss of market value of agricultural lands adjacent to a Greenway, increases in farmers' public liability insurance premiums, and an increased threat of animal disease borne by walkers and cyclists traversing the countryside on the cycleway route (e.g. foot-and-mouth disease).
- The security of dwelling houses and farmyards was also a strong theme raised, with some landowners fearful that the Greenway would provide vandals and burglars with a new route into rural communities. Nuisance (dogs, litter, trespass) and loss of privacy (dwelling houses) also featured as issues of concern
- Many of the comments concerned the selection of the route itself. The hard shoulder or within the existing road boundaries of the N59 was an alternative route most frequently proposed by landowners.
- Despite the negative comments from some landowners, there was also acknowledgement of the potential benefits of the proposed cycleway, both in economic terms (i.e. new tourism business) and amenity terms (health, recreation and local connectivity), and some of this positive feedback did come from farmers who are potentially directly affected by the project.

# Land Access Challenge

The established policy to utilize existing and approved routes and disused railway line corridors is being pursued in County Galway but 95% of the land required to develop the Greenways remains in private ownership. The cycle way project in its infancy, was being advanced as a community based project and the provision of access through privately owned land was negotiated locally by means of 'Permissive Access'. This approach of negotiated permissive access has recognized value from the perspective of cost and community ownership but can prove impractical for the Projects of a scale of the Dublin to Clifden Greenway.

The practice of relying on permissive access agreements along such an extensive piece of key infrastructure exposes the State to vulnerability given that any such agreement can be withdrawn at any time without any recourse to the State. Acquisition of access by permissive access does not offer sufficient security of investment from the States perspective.

# Permissive Access

## Advantages

1. Communities like this approach and buy-in to this mechanism of land acquisition.
2. Costs for the delivery of a project are reduced as there are no land acquisition costs.
3. Some landowners along cycle routes prefer this method of granting access as they may not wish to sell their land and they feel they retain control
4. If all landowners agree to give their consent to permissive access then a cycle way project can be delivered successfully with real buy-in from the community.

## Disadvantages

1. Consent from all landowners is required and can be very difficult to achieve.
2. Achieving consent and agreement with all landowners is extremely time consuming.
3. Accommodation works which are part of permissive access agreements can vary thus giving rise to dissent and frustration.
4. Permissive access only gives the right to cross over lands and can be withdrawn at short notice.
5. Where substantial investment of state funds are made the uncertainty surrounding permissive access is a concern to the security of that investment
6. Where there are a large number of landowners along a long stretch of cycle way it is very difficult to get permissive access from all and construction of a large portion of the cycle way can be difficult

# What next

- EIS & NIS documents are complete, not submitted.
- Assessment of alternative route document is near completion
- A submission in relation to the Greenway Strategy was drafted and submitted to the Department of Transport in July 2017
- In February 2018, Galway County Council received and reviewed a draft of a new National Greenway Strategy and made a number of comments to the Department of Transport.
- We are awaiting the final National Greenway Strategy document for review.
- An application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála once a clear pathway to success is visible.

# Section 1 : Oughterard to Clifden

- Galway County Council has received approval from An Bord Pleanála to construct 52km of Greenway from Clifden to Oughterard. A steering group was formed which included the local community groups, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Coillte, Local Councillors, Failte Ireland and Galway County Council. To date funding has been provided by Failte Ireland to construct the first 3.2km section of the Greenway, east of Clifden, a further 6km section has been funded in Ballinahinch also by Failte Ireland.
- Galway County Council has spent the last number of years in discussions with the 89 landowners on the Clifden to Oughterard section with a view to securing permissive access arrangements. To date we have succeeded in getting 19 agreements, a 21% success rate. Construction work is completed along a 3.2km section of this route which enjoys a public right of way and underway on the 6km section in Ballinahinch.

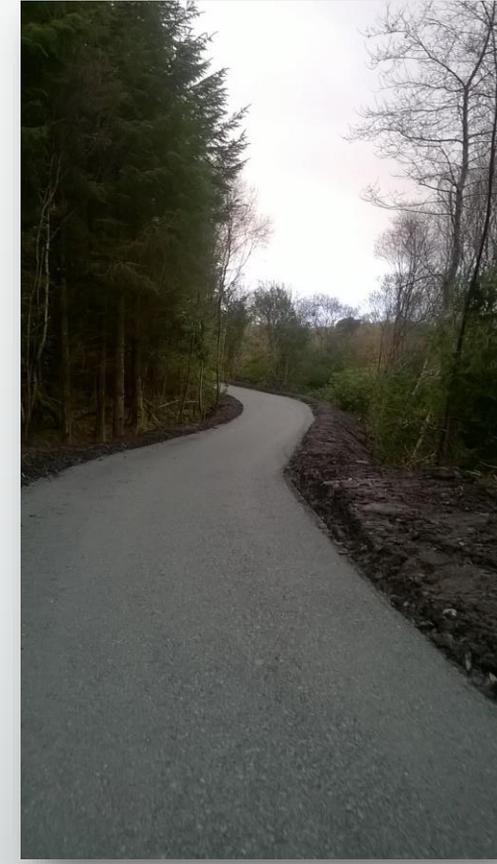
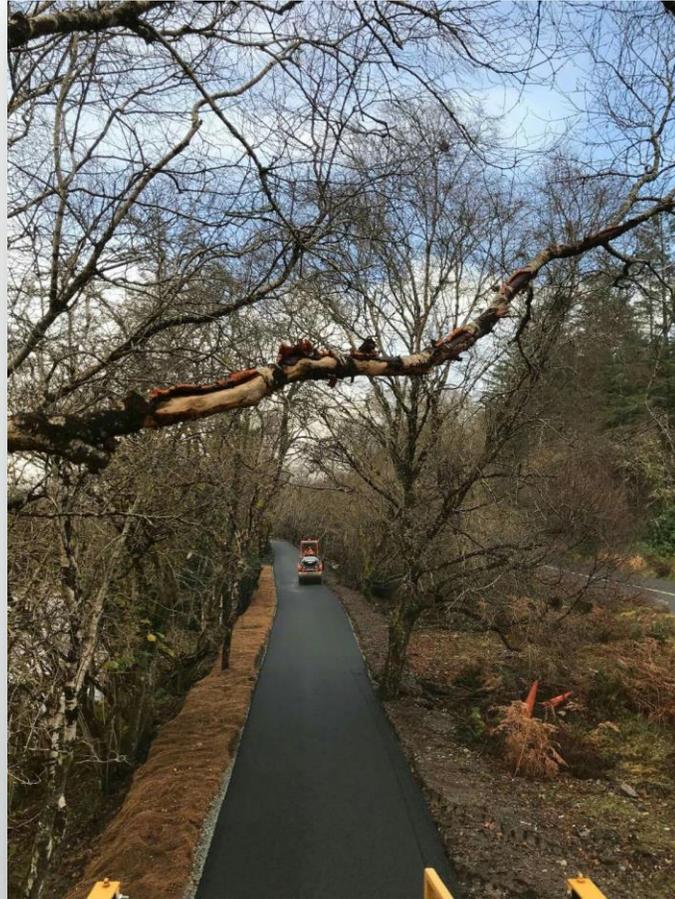
## Photos of the 3.2Km east of Clifden



# Photos of the 6Km section in Ballinahinch



# Photos of the 6Km section in Ballinahinch



# Proposed Galway City – Oughterard Route Photos

