

An Bord Pleanála,
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D01V902

AN BORD PLEANÁLA
LDG- 030609-20
ASP- _____
11 SEP 2020
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Time: _____ By: Post

09.09.2020

Dear Sir / Madam

Re:- Boyne Greenway (Drogheda to Mornington, Co Meath & Co Louth)

I am writing to commend the work of the Boyneside Trail committee, Meath County Council and many others to bring this submission to fruition.

This walkway from Drogheda to the coast would be a great addition to the limited walking routes locally. Such a route would compliment greatly the Ramparts / Boyneside trail from Drogheda to Oldbridge, the planned extension of such to Newgrange and on further to Slane, Navan which we understand are under consideration.

I do however wish to highlight concerns in relation to the protection of the Boyne Estuary as an internationally significant SPA and SAC under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, and a Ramsar site on account of the numbers and diversity of over-wintering birds. The areas of particular concern are approx 1km East and West of the bridge at Mornington Village.

The mudflats in this area, which forms the widest point of the Estuary are the primary feeding zones for the over wintering birds. As per the enclosed submission as part of the pre-planning consultation by Meath County Council, I've flagged my concerns in relation to the global decline in the over wintering bird species numbers, the historical degradation of the estuary by dredging, dumping, infilling polders, etc., thus causing loss of habitat and feeding grounds, and the fact that there are many reports suggesting disturbance could lead to abandonment of feeding grounds,

I see from the submission with ABP that mitigations have been suggested in relation to timeframes for activity, screening for sensitive areas, etc. I would respectfully request alternative routes to be found in the very sensitive areas for wildlife as well as input from NPWS and Birdwatch Ireland (national and local) in relation to the birds and habitats.

It would be great to see Drogheda linked safely to the coast for walkers and cyclists, but not at the expense of wildlife. It is widely acknowledged that wildlife is under severe stress with loss of habitat, climate change, predation, food source depletion, lack of breeding success, etc., we would hate this project to exacerbate these stresses. I therefore hope very much priority can be given to wildlife, while still finding a very workable and safe option for the Boyneside Trail.