

# Birds under threat from Boyne Greenway <sup>16/10/19</sup>

Dear Sir,

Each winter hundreds of thousands of waterfowl arrive in Ireland from northern and eastern Europe, Iceland and Canada and overwinter on our many inland wetlands and coastal estuaries. These sites provide a very important food source because of our mild wet winters.

The Boyne Estuary is one of these sites both as a feeding area and as a link between the vast area of Dundalk Bay to the north and the large Dublin estuaries to the south.

It is a small estuary of approximately 450 hectares in area, however it still attracts between 25 and 30 different species of waders, ducks, geese, swans and gulls, numbers reaching between 6000 and 8000 on most years and over 10,000 when weather is severe on the continent.

The mud flats on the Boyne Estuary are a very rich source of food and any interference with such habitat can cause serious damage to it carrying capacity for wintering water

birds. A perfect example of this occurred back in the 1990s when the river was dredged and the spoil dumped on Staggrennan Polder which turned 17 hectares of prime mud flat into a sand bank.

Approximately 80% of the spoil was removed however there are still some large deposits left and what is more worrying is that the area is now infested with Spartina or chordgrass a plant notorious for choking mudflats. The result of this is that it now only supports about 50% of the bird numbers and some species no longer use the site, especially the flocks of Golden Plover.

The second major incident happened when a golf driving range was built on a wet site on the edge of the estuary at Mornington. This site was used not only as a feeding area for birds but also as a high tide roost. The driving range unfortunately closed after a few years. The site is now derelict and abandoned by the birds.

The Boyne Estuary is a Special Protected Area and the most important site in Co. Meath for

wintering waterfowl and is ranked in the top 25 sites in Ireland. The purpose of the S.P.A. on the estuary is to provide a site that allows the waterfowl to feed and roost undisturbed. If the Drogheda-Mornington Greenway is sanctioned it will cause serious disturbance to the feeding waterfowl on the mud flats at low tide and also to the roosting birds at high tide at several sites all along the south side of the estuary.

I cannot emphasise enough the importance of the Boyne Estuary in this region and it must be protected from any further development.

I would ask the Greenway Group to take this into consideration and withdraw their application and put the habitat before the walkway. The wildlife of today is not ours to dispose of as we like, we have it in trust for the generations that follow.



The proposed Greenway

**AN BORD PLEANÁLA**

LDG- 030429-20

ABP- \_\_\_\_\_

**09 SEP 2020**

Fee: € \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ By: post

EK

## MAPS.

No 1 The two sites mentioned in attached letter.

STAGRENNAN POLDER. Now hold only about 50% of waterfowl it supported before the spoil was dumped on it.

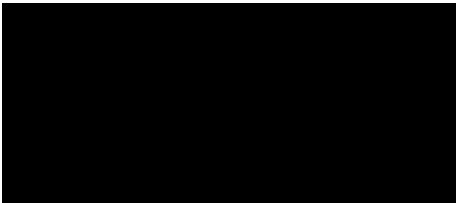
MORNINGTON SECTION. Now deserted. Was once a high tide roost as well as a feeding site.

No 2

Feeding areas which will be disturbed. Section A and B will probably be destroyed. Section C is very important as this area has inflow from Boyne. Section D at low tide hold moister longer and allows birds more feeding time.

No 3

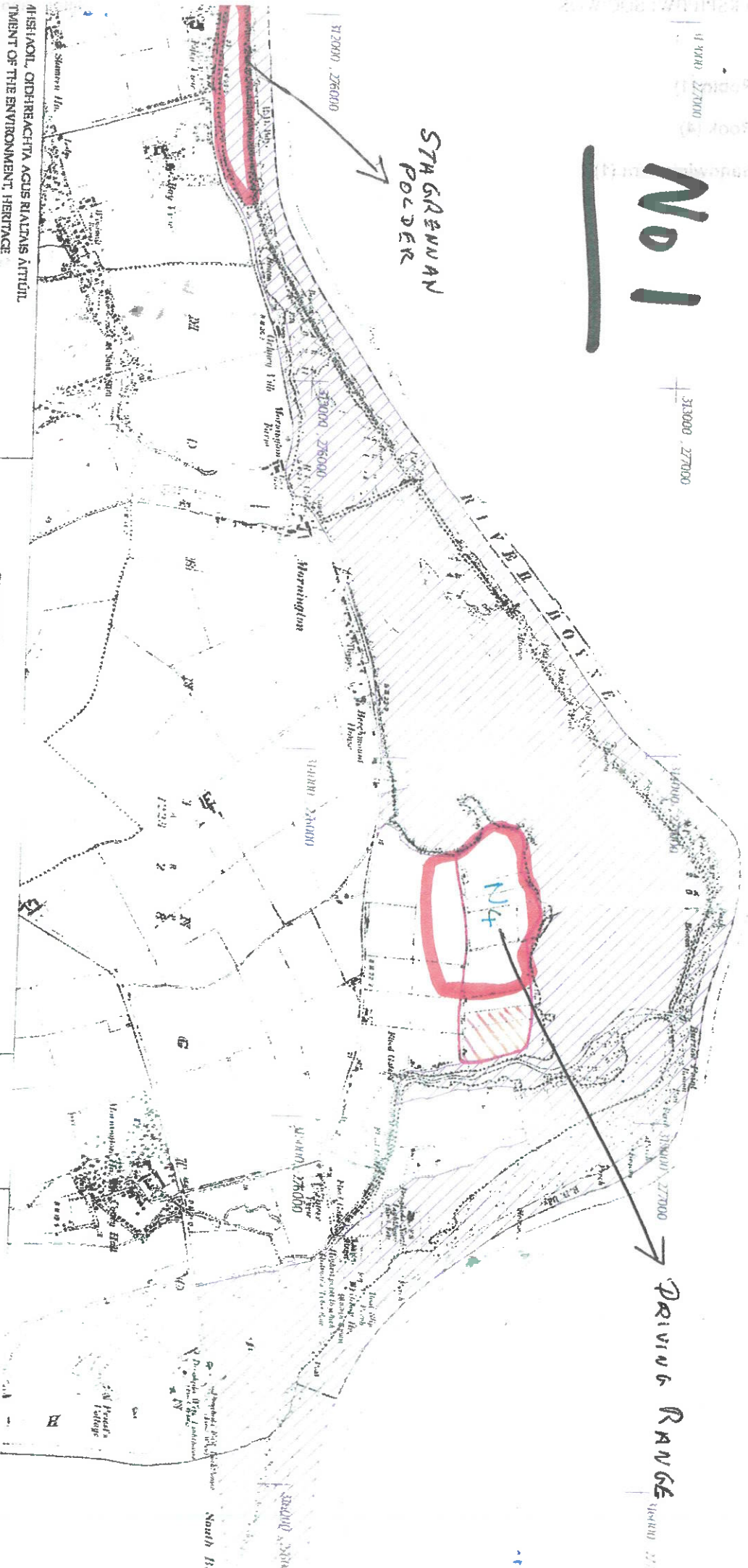
High tide roosts which will be disturbed by the walkway.



**No 1**

STAGREWAN  
POLEDER

DRIVE RANGE



**Schedule 1**  
Page 3 of 3 (CO. MEATH)

horth-mhaoinithe trí chiste 'LIFE' an A. E.  
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**SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA**  
**LIMISTÉIR CHAOMHNAITHE SPEISIÁLTA**

Area/Achar  
is 2001 ha.

**Boyne Estuary SP**  
**6" O.S. MEATH SHEET 021**

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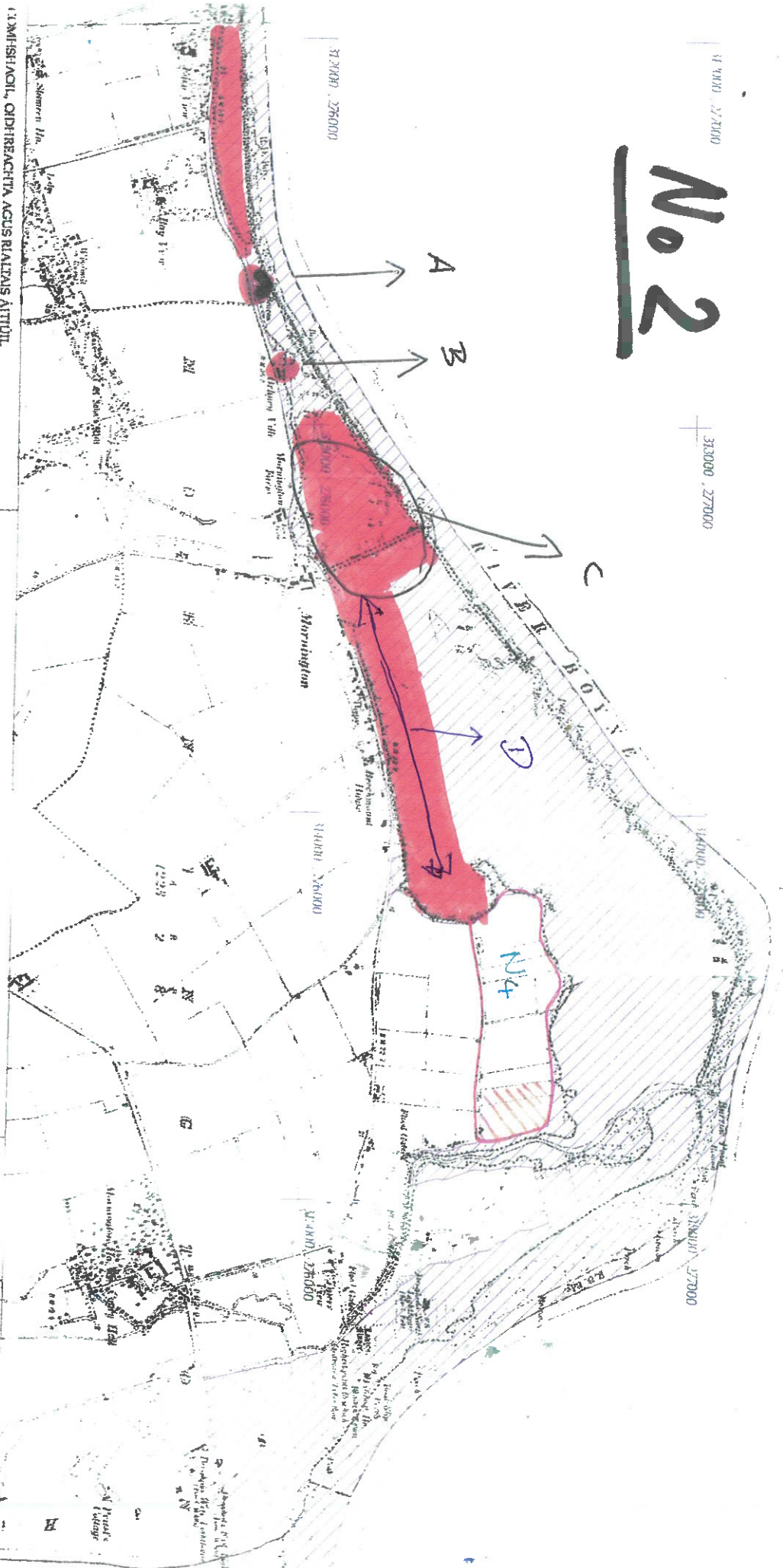
Scale 1:15000  
Scála 1:15000

Sloot

# No 2

31 3000 27000

31 3000 27000



LIMISTHAIL, OI DHEACHTA AGUS RIALAIS AITIUIL  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE  
 AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Schedule 1

Page 3 of 3 (CO. MEATH)

Chomh-mhaoinithe trí chiste 'LIFE' an A.E.  
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## SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA

### LIMISTÉIR CHAOMHNAITHE SPEISIALTA

Realtair aibhinnithe a thair ar na coisdear / sites subject to provision

Manamhail d'ádhair na Sairbhreachtáil i ndealúir le coisde ar Rialais (Coisdearann Limh. 5953)

Repreasentair ón 'Lifearann Sairbhreachtáil' i ndealúir le coisde ar Rialais (Coisdearann Limh. 5953)

Area/Achar  
 is 200 ha.

Boyne Est

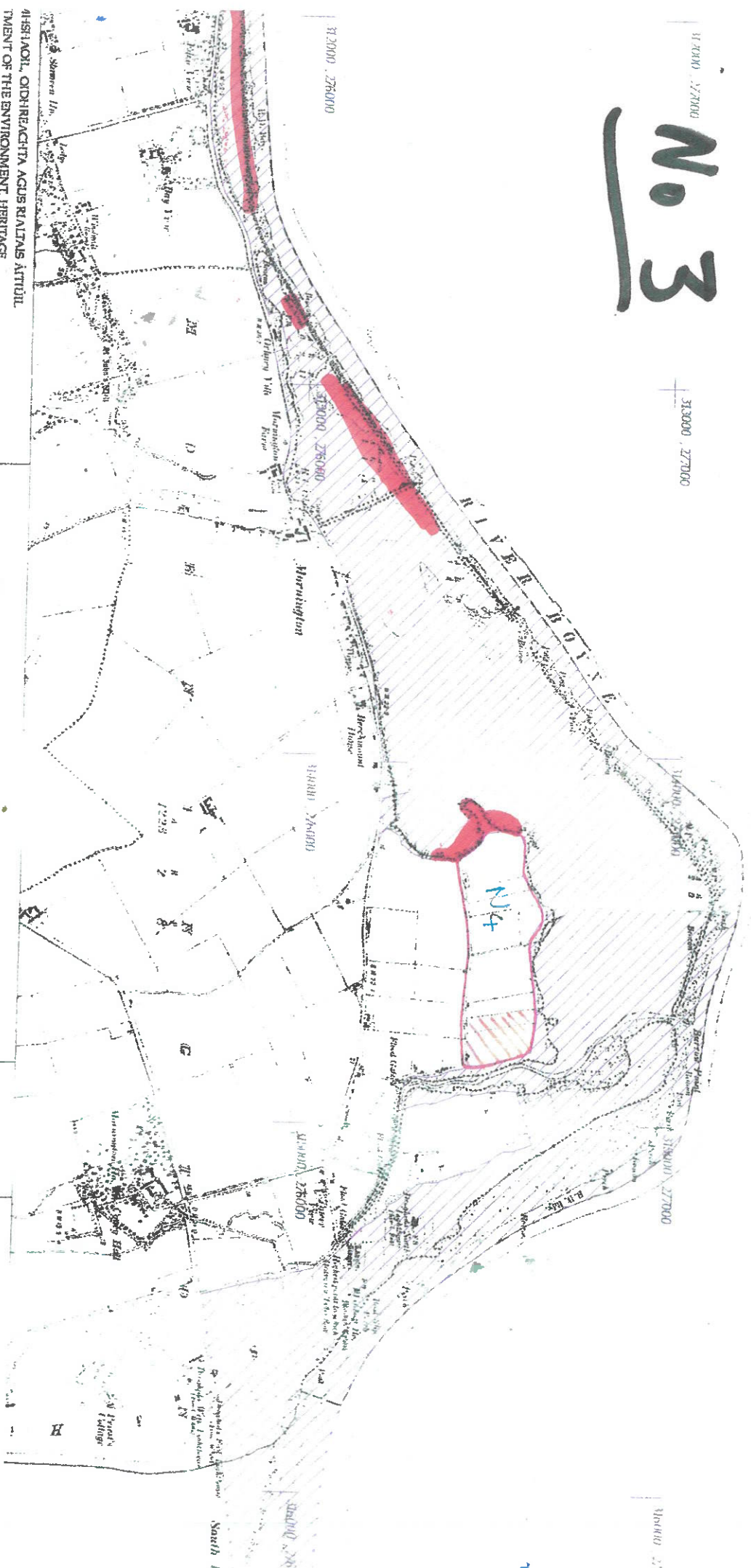
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# No 3



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 AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Schedule 1**  
 Page 3 of 3 (CO. MEATH)

honn-mhaoinithe trí chiste 'LIFE' an A. E.  
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**SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA**  
**LIMISTÉIR CHAOMHNAITHE SPEISIALTA**

Féadfaidh ábhair a chur ar na cearnaig / Sites subject to provision  
 Mairsearthaí a fágfar na Sárthreachtairt a bhfuil le ceol an Rialair (Ceolairis Uimh. 9853)  
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Arca/Achar  
 is 200 Ha.

**Boyné Estuary SP**  
**6" O.S. MEATH SHEET 021**



Map No 271