

Re: Submission to An Bord Pleanála Boyne Greenway – Drogheda to Mornington Route

To Whom It May Concern:

As a [REDACTED] one of the biggest issues [REDACTED] on a daily basis, is the provision of safe cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. I genuinely believe that the development of a walking and cycling route along the River Boyne from Mornington in County Meath to Drogheda County Louth, will go some way to providing a safe (and beautiful) route from East Meath into Drogheda, and indeed, from Drogheda out to our beautiful beaches in Mornington, Bettystown and Laytown.

This route forms part of an overall aspirational plan currently being developed by Fingal County Council in collaboration with Meath County Council, that would see an entire route delivered from Newbridge to Newgrange. The wider Boyne Greenway would see the route completed from Mornington to Drogheda, Drogheda to Oldbridge (the only section already complete), and on past Oldbridge, to Newgrange, Slane, Stackallen and into Navan. The Boyne Greenway and Navigation Restoration (Oldbridge to Navan) was recently awarded €750,000 to progress Stage 1 Feasibility. The Drogheda to Mornington Section is a key section in the overall scheme.

The section from Drogheda to Oldbridge is a fine example of what can be achieved, and what is currently enjoyed by many people, walking, cycling, jogging. It is a very popular route and one of great beauty which has instilled a sense of great pride within the wider community and a desire to protect and preserve it for generations to come. This has never been more prevalent than during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the non-statutory public consultation of the Drogheda to Mornington Route, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there was overwhelming support, [REDACTED] issues raised by those with concerns were:

- The impact on birdlife
- The impact on private gardens
- The impact on the green space in Mornington Court estate
- The safety of cyclists and pedestrians where the route passes a private entrance
- The safety of cyclists and pedestrians on a road already heavily trafficked with buses and trucks

I believe these concerns were very valid and were, for the most part, addressed by the consultants and Meath County Council. 2723 submissions were received during the non-statutory public consultation, an unprecedented number that left the Local Authority shocked at just how much support there was within the community for this project. 2600 submissions were in favour!

In relation to the impact on local birdlife, the very section of most significant importance is already heavily trafficked with cars, buses and trucks. The provision of a greenway would provide a barrier to prohibit and protect the area from further encroachment. The disturbance of the birds caused by flickering of light between a person's legs as they walk, or dogs barking, can and will be mitigated by the provision of a solid screen 900mm high as the riverside railing to the boardwalk. The greenway undoubtedly would be used less during this overwintering feeding season (November-March), but these birds should be protected as much as possible by the provision of screening in the most significant areas.

In relation to the impact on private gardens, we must ask the community to consider the bigger picture, and the long term benefits. We have so many footpaths and cycle lanes that must be constructed in the East Meath area, as the increase in population and significant development of our towns did not see the necessary infrastructure materialise. We are now retrofitting many areas, and find ourselves having difficult discussions with residents whose gardens need to be reduced in order to provide crucial footpaths and cycle lanes for the public. The realignment of the road at the Mornington Court Section has significantly reduced the land required from private home owners on the opposite side of the road.


In relation to Mornington Court, Meath County Council removed the proposed parking area in the original draft drawings and have reinstated the green space. The modest land take and repositioning of the boundary wall at the Mornington Court estate will address the very serious sight line issues that residents have raised [REDACTED] over the past number of years, and ensure that residents of the estate can exit safely. I welcome the provision of the raised table but would caution in relation to the height of this table so that it does not impact on emergency services vehicles or hinder them in any way.

In relation to the concerns raised about cyclists and pedestrians passing the entrances to homes, this is already the case as it is a public road. The provision of a footpath and cycle lane would make it safer for the cyclists and pedestrians as they would have the protection of a kerbed carriageway. Motorists exiting their driveways along this section already have to exercise a normal level of care that any driver must take when crossing or entering any traffic route.

This route has the potential to allow many students cycle or walk to either Drogheda Grammar Secondary School or Le Cheile Educate Together National School which are both popular schools for children from both Drogheda and East Meath. I welcome the proposed provision of raised tables and a pedestrian crossing at this educational campus currently on the maps.

In summary, the provision of the Boyne Greenway from Drogheda to Mornington would:

- Provide much needed, safe pedestrian and cycle lane infrastructure from East Meath into Drogheda.
- Provide much needed, safe pedestrian and cycle lane infrastructure for school children travelling from both Drogheda and East Meath to Drogheda Grammar Secondary School and Le Cheile Educate Together National School.
- Provide a fantastic amenity for the local community and visitors, resulting in economic benefits for the entire wider Boyne Valley Region.
- Provide a fantastic amenity for the community and visitors resulting in improved physical and mental health benefits for those who use it.
- Result in a positive engagement between the community and our natural environment, ensuring a greater understanding of nature and the importance of protecting it for generations to come.



The provision of this Greenway is consistent with many national, regional and local policies, from Climate Action, Sustainable Development, Tourism, Transport and Sporting policies, seeking to get Ireland healthy and active whilst addressing our over-reliance on cars. Indeed it is a significant goal of the Programme for Government 2020, to address cycling and pedestrian deficiencies across the country, and to reallocate road space for pedestrian and cycle space where possible.

I ask that the Bord consider this Planning Application and the very positive impact it would have, and grant Meath County Council permission to deliver this project.

Kind regards,

