



It is requested that the two items outlined below are considered for inclusion as Specific Objectives for Rahan Village under the proposed County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 and for Offaly County Council to support uses, infrastructure and development that achieve these objectives. 1.0 Rahan Monastic Site Rahan Monastic Site could be promoted as a point of interest on the 'Grand Canal Greenway' and the proposed 'Shannon Monastic Greenway' cycling routes contained in Figure 6.14 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan by providing a safe link to the Grand Canal Greenway for pedestrians and cyclists with car and bicycle parking and picnic facilities at the Monastic Site entrance if feasible. The close proximity of the site to the Grand Canal Greenway and existing connection as a point of interest along the route reinforces the value of this attraction. This would align with objectives SO7 & SMAO-06 of this County Development Plan in addition to complying with the aims of the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, 2019-2031 which supports local strategies to link the development of the Midlands Cycling Destination (Offaly). Is there an opportunity to enhance visitor information based on the extensive data (3D scans, geophysical survey) and contextual information (Howley Hayes Conservation Plan) collected about the site? This site has been highlighted as a Monastic Site of note in the current and previous County Development Plans and is already highlighted as a point of interest (Item No. 9) on the Grand Canal Greenway Tourist Map. The site is also referenced for the proposed 'Shannon Monastic Greenway' cycling routes contained in Midlands Cycling Destination (Offaly) Feasibility Study as illustrated in Figure 6.14 of Volume 1 of this County Development Plan. However, little has been done in the last 10 years with respect to enhancing the information or visitor experience at the site. The conservation works carried out at the church following the Conservation Plan produced by Howley Hayes Architects are completed to a very high standard and it is great to see the impressive 3D scans of the rose window, church door and arches in addition to the Geophysical survey data by Paul Gibson (2007) being made freely available online. This information is not easily accessible to potential tourists visiting the site, however. The 3D scans of the doors and rose window are detailed and are very impressive. There is considerable interest in this type of Romanesque sculpture as is evident on the information collected by The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain & Ireland on the Rahan Monastic Site (<https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item>). With the sculpture style so similar to Clonmacnoise, there is a real opportunity to capitalise on this location being approximately 10km from Tullamore on the Grand Canal Greenway, making it an ideal stop-off point for passing cyclists. As much of the groundwork with respect to creating the impressive 3D scans and

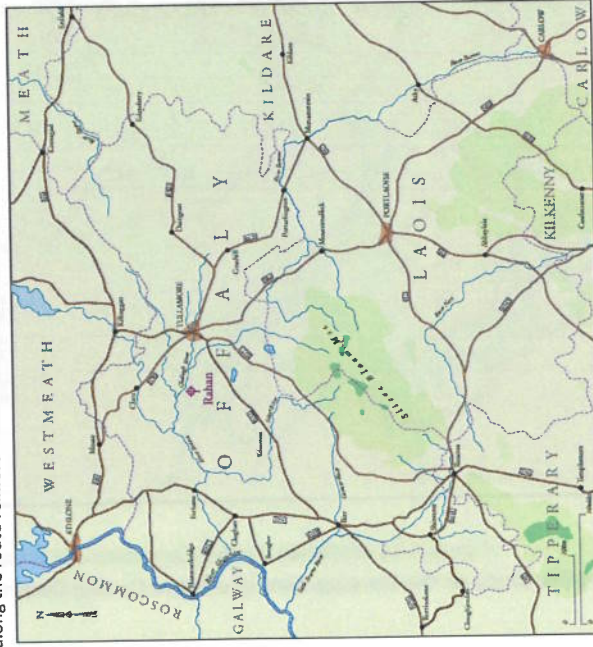
background research that went into the Conservation Plan it would be a shame to see these only exist online in a disparate fashion. 2.0 Grand Canal Greenway Link to Rahan Village & Schools Rahan parish has a primary and secondary school with a student attendance of 190 and 497 respectively. The primary means of transport to these schools are via car and bus transport where vehicles arrive to the village centre, at the bridge crossing the Clodiagh River, and turn right to the primary school and left to the secondary school. At peak times local roads L2007 & L2011 have high traffic volumes, leaving little scope for local children attending the primary or secondary school to cycle or walk to school safely. Having the Grand Canal Greenway in close proximity to both schools provides an excellent opportunity to provide for a predominantly off-road connection between the primary and secondary schools while also enhancing the walking and cycling infrastructure in Rahan village by providing an appropriate pedestrian and cycling link between the village and the Grand Canal Greenway. It is noted that the proposed development plan includes a General Objective 'to improve pedestrian facilities in the settlement including links to the GAA grounds, community hall, national school and the Grand Canal Greenway' however it is considered appropriate to strengthen this commitment by including this as a Specific Objective that will also include a long term sustainable connection between schools in the parish. This would align with Sustainable Mobility and Accessibility Policy SMAP-08 of this County Development Plan in addition to complying with the aims of the National Cycling Policy Framework, Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020 and the Green Schools Initiative.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rahan Monastic Site lies on the south bank of the Clodiagh River, seven miles west of Tullamore, on the road from Rahan to Killina. The Grand Canal passes to the south of the site. The Monastery was founded by St Carthage in the sixth century. The monastery is contained within a large D-shaped enclosure with the Clodiagh River forming the straight section on its northern side.

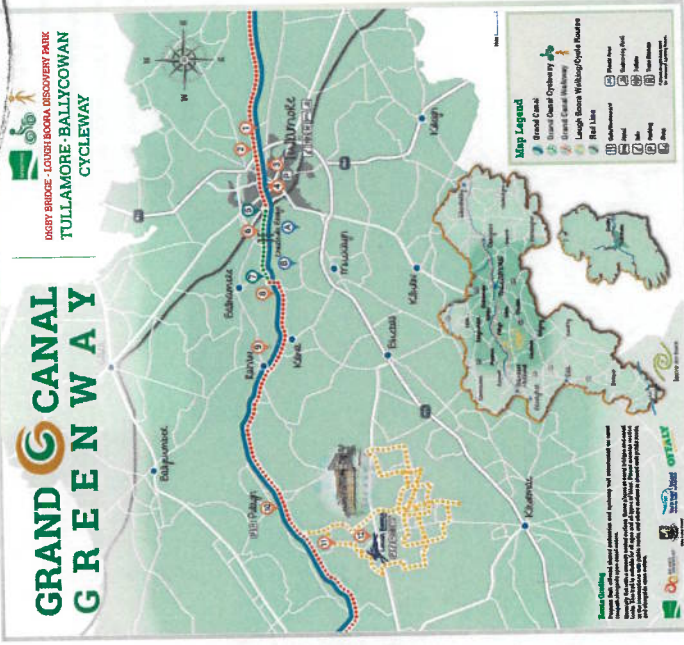
Rahan Monastic Site could be promoted as a point of interest on the 'Grand Canal Greenway' and the proposed 'Shannon Monastic Greenway' cycling routes contained in Midlands Cycling Destination (Offaly) Feasibility Study by providing a safe link to the greenway for pedestrians and cyclists with bicycle parking and picnic facilities at the site entrance. The close proximity of the site to the Grand Canal Greenway and established connection as a point of interest along the route reinforces the value of this attraction.



This site has been highlighted as a monastic site of note in previous County Development Plans and is also highlighted as a point of interest (Item No. 9) on the **Grand Canal Greenway Tourist Map**. The site is also referenced for the proposed 'Shannon Monastic Greenway' cycling routes contained in Midlands Cycling Destination (Offaly) Feasibility Study.

However, little has been done in the last 10 years with respect to enhancing the information or visitor experience at the site. The conservation works carried out at the church on the back of the Conservation Plan produced by Howley Hayes Architects are completed to a very high standard and it is great to see the impressive 3D scans of the rose window, church door and arches in addition to

the geophysical survey data by Paul Gibson (2007) being made freely available online. This information is not easily accessible to potential tourists visiting the site, however.



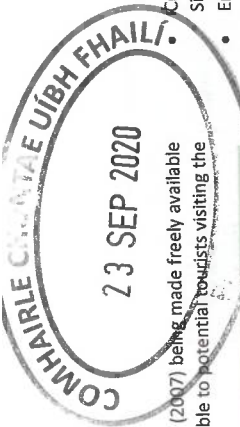
is there an opportunity to enhance visitor information based on the extensive data (3D scans, geophysical survey) and contextual information (Howley Hayes Conservation Plan) collected about the site? The 3D scans of the doors and rose window are very detailed and impressive. There is considerable interest in this type of Romanesque Sculpture and with the style so similar to Clonmacnoise, there is a real opportunity to capitalise on this location being approximately 10km from Tullamore on the greenway making it an ideal stop-off point for a break for passing cyclists.

Visitor experience could be further enhanced through the provision of public realm upgrades at the site entrance.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is based on implementing specific, relevant and achievable actions, in line with best practice and DMURS, with a view to enhance Rahan Monastic Site for visitors and local residents alike by:

- Improving wayfinding from the Grand Canal Greenway,
- Increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety along Local Road L2007,



Creating a Gateway to Rahan Village at the entrance to Rahan Monastic Site,

- Enhancing information about the site via information boards and graphics,
- Enhancing the leisure and amenity value at the site through public realm upgrades at the site entrance.

Wayfinding

DMURS states 'for pedestrians and cyclists wayfinding is of particular importance as they are more likely to move through an area if the route is clear'.

The current signage from the Grand Canal Greenway to Rahan Monastic Site is poor and enhancing this element is relatively straightforward through erecting appropriate signage at nearby entry/exit points.

Shared Surface

DMURS highlights that 'shared surfaces are an effective way of promoting place and providing pedestrians and cyclists with a more enjoyable experience, particularly in areas of historic significance'.

It is considered that improvements to signage along local road L2007 could be made to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety between Rahan Monastic Site and the Grand Canal Greenway.

Gateway

DMURS highlights that 'gateways are used to demarcate a point of arrival from one place to another. They are important placemaking tools as they form the 'first impression' of a place. Gateways are also an important traffic-calming tool as they can be used to inform drivers of a change in driving conditions ahead.'

By enhancing the public realm at the entrance to Rahan Monastic Site, there is an opportunity to create a gateway for Rahan Village.

Information

The information board at Rahan Monastic Site has not been updated since the early 2000's and could be updated to include more recent information that has been collected on the site as presented in the Howley Hayes Conservation Report and 3D Scan imagery of the rose window and chapel door.

Public Realm

There is an opportunity to enhance the amenity and leisure value for local residents and visitors through public realm upgrades. For example, the installation of car, bicycle parking and picnic facilities at the entrance to the site.

Engagement

All stakeholders for the Monastic Site should be engaged with respect to any proposals to develop an appropriate and sustainable plan for the benefit of all stakeholders and the wider community.



GRAND CANAL GREENWAY

DICKY BRIDGE - LOUGH BOORA DISCOVERY PARK
TULLAMORE - BALLYCOWAN
CYCLEWAY

Map Legend

- Grand Canal
- Grand Canal Cycleway
- Grand Canal Walkway
- Lough Boora Walking/Cycle Routes
- Rail Line
- Class/Management
- Rest
- Info
- Parking
- Shop
- Public Area
- Discovery Park
- Water
- Water Station
- Water Management

Points of Interest

Points of interest are indicated on the map and are numbered 1 to 12. Points of interest are indicated on the map and are numbered 1 to 12.

Other Points of Interest

- Charleville Cable
- Lynally Monastic Site

Planes:

- Look to your left, pass on the right, stay your left
- Keep deep water and take out, especially with children.
- Cycle on an appropriate speed.
- Take off your feet!

The Grand Canal Discovery

The Grand Canal Discovery is an historic trail which traverses Lough Boora from Kesh to Tullamore in Co. Offaly. The Discovery is an historic trail which traverses Lough Boora from Kesh to Tullamore in Co. Offaly. The Discovery is an historic trail which traverses Lough Boora from Kesh to Tullamore in Co. Offaly.

The Lough Boora Discovery

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3D Scans from Rahau Monastic Site

