REVIEW OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN Submission on behalf of Ferbane Tidy Towns to Stage 1 Consultation. 25th September 2019 We are delighted to have the opportunity to make a submission to the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. We welcome the general approach outlined in the paper and wish to contribute our proposals in relation to that vision for the county. In May 2019, the Draft Ferbane Community Action Plan was published. Simultaneously Ferbane Tidy Towns developed a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane as a discussion document for the town. It supports the aims and objectives of the Ferbane CAP, and encapsulates specific projects within the environmental context of green infrastructure. The GI Strategy has now evolved through stakeholder consultation into the document attached as part of this submission. It has also been on public display in Ferbane and has won the support of the community. This environmental context of the GI Strategy has three strands: 1. Access, health and well-being 2. Natural Heritage 3. Sustainable Drainage To this we have added the fourth - Cultural Heritage - which is essential for bringing the strategy to life and engaging the community in the interwoven aspects of environment and culture. 4. Cultural Heritage The GI Strategy responds to several strands of the Development Plan's consultation paper: • Towns Villages and Regeneration • Climate Action and Energy • Economic Development • Natural Assets • Key Resources • Sustainable Communities • Rural Areas The GI Strategy does not specifically address Housing, however we welcome initiatives relating the consolidation of housing areas to produce sustainable communities, reduction in urban sprawl into the countryside, and the encouragement of living above the shop to invigorate town and village centres. We acknowledge that the peatland landscape of west Offaly is changing, and we encourage Offaly County Council to implement policies of landscape protection and enhancement in this transition, and positive sustainable development and management in relation to job creation and energy initiatives. The connectivity of Ferbane, and other local towns and villages, to the proposed Grand Canal Greenway is an essential component of this welcome tourism and recreation initiative. We believe this can be supported with other tourism initiatives in the area, also outlined in the GI Strategy. The Ferbane Green Infrastructure Strategy is written specifically to the local context, and we would welcome further discussion for its incorporation in the Town Plan for Ferbane in the Development Plan 2021-2027. The GI Strategy also resonates with a countywide approach to the environment. Indeed, we encourage Offaly County Council to develop the objective set out in the current development plan to implement a county-wide Green Infrastructure Strategy for Offaly. Is mise, le Ferbane TidyTowns meas,

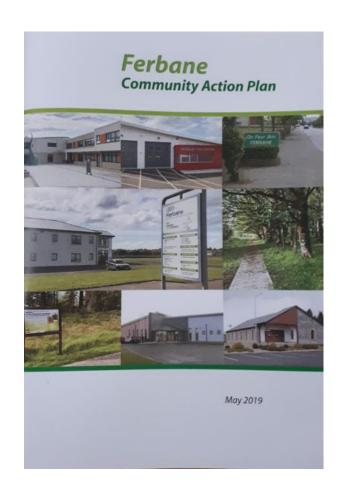


This is a draft for a **Green Infrastructure Strategy** for Ferbane. Is dréacht é seo de Stráitéis do Bhonneagar Glas an Fhéir Bháin.

It forms part of the Ferbane Community Action Plan (May 2019)

This strategy supports the goals of the Community Action Plan:

- 1. Development of Ferbane as a centre of excellence for food research, development and production.
- 2. Development of Ferbane as a carbon-free community in which to live and work
- 3. Development of the peatlands of Noggus Bog and Ballylin Bog to become significant visitor attractions.
- 4. Demolition of old fires station and creation of a public space. (Restoring Fairgreen)
- 5. Provision of housing and marketing of Ferbane as an attractive place to live.
- Development of looped walks in the local area maximising the attractiveness of the river Brosna



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What is **Green Infrastructure**? Céard is Bonneagar Glas ann?

Green Infrastructure is a way of looking at the *natural heritage* of a place and how to use them for the benefit of the population, the economy and the environment.

Examples of these resources in Ferbane are places such as:

- The River Brosna
- Ferbane Bog
- The Grand Canal
- Trees, Hedges, Wooded areas and Meadows
- Open Spaces, green spaces, play areas and sportsgrounds
- Biodiversity Management Plan Hotspots

For Green Infrastructure to work effectively, these places should be connected.

They make a *network* through a series of *corridors*.

By its nature, Green Infrastructure traverses private, institutional and public land and must have the support and engagement of stakeholders for it to be successful.



Grand Canal Corridor



River Brosna Corridor



Ferbane Bog



Church of Ireland Grounds



Relief Road Corridor



Old Railway Corridor

Some of the Green Infrastructure places and corridors in Ferbane Cuid de na háiteanna agus dorchlaí glasa atá le feiceáil san Fhéar Bán

What is a Green Infrastructure Strategy? Céard is Stráitéis do Bhonneagar Glas ann?

A Green Infrastructure Strategy is a way of making the network and corridors so that they can be used for:

- Accessibility, Recreation, Health and Well-being (for people)
- **Natural Heritage** (for biodiversity)
- Water Quality and Sustainable Drainage (for environmental quality and flooding)

and

Cultural Heritage (for inspiration and posterity)

By their nature, Green Infrastructure Strategies traverse private, institutional and public land and must have the support and engagement of stakeholders to be successful.



• The bridge over the river Brosna is a good example of the potential for incorporating *cultural heritage* of the former railway with the *natural heritage* of the river, its *water management and quality* and a walking route that will provide *health and well-being* benefits to the local community.

Ferbane Green Infrastructure Strategy – some **proposals** and **ideas** Stráitéis do Bhonneagar Glas an Fhéir Bháin – cuid **moltaí** agus **smaointe**

- Grand Canal Greenway (*due 2020+*) The Offaly Way (*existing*)
- Ferbane Bog Walkway (due autumn 2019)
- Ferbane Environs Bogs loop
- Forest of Ferbane
- Restoring Fairgeen and Mass Path link
- Brosna Railway corridor loop
- An ongoing Green Infrastructure Plan for Ferbane



Ferbane Environs Bogs loop Lúibe Phúrláin Phortaigh an Fhéir Bháin

Physical connection of walking and cycling route that links with The Offaly Way and the proposed Grand Canal Greenway. It connects bogs that will cease working, and those being reclaimed and intact bogs centres around Ferbane. The network of bog railways has the potential for wider connections, for example, to Lough Boora, and Clonmacnoise.

Status: Access to Ferbane Bog with a boardwalk is planned for late 2019.

Access, Recreation,
Health and well-being

- Universal access
- Walking, running and cycling
- Exercise
- Proximity to nature
- Fresh air
- Angling

Natural Heritage

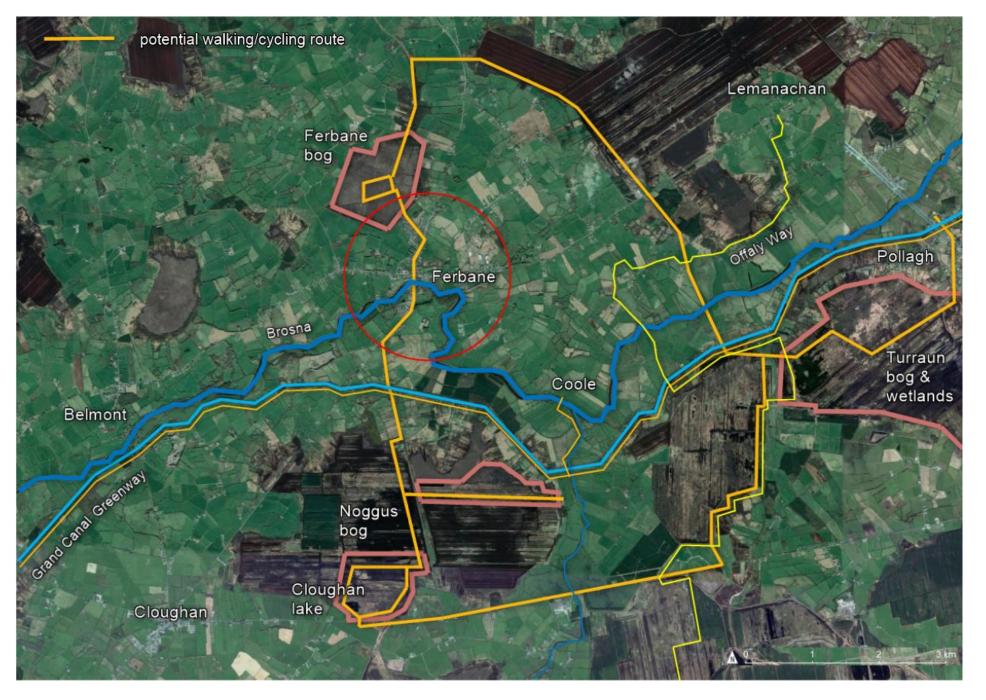
- · Bogs; intact, reclaimed
- Connectivity to canal, river
- Cranberry fields
- Cloughan lake
- Biodiversity Hotspots

Water Management

- Water filtration
- Swales
- Water attenuation
- Bog hydrology

Cultural Heritage

- Bord na Móna industry
- Grand Canal
- Art
- Science
- Spirituality (Lemanchan)



Ferbane Bog – The Living Bog Portach an Fhéir Bháin – An Portach Beo

Ferbane Bog is one of 12 bogs identified across Ireland for The Living Bog project – to heighten awareness of the importance of the natural heritage of the bog. It is unique in that of all the bogs it is closest to a town, and the site of many of the C19th scientist Mary Ward's observations. A proposed boardwalk to make it more accessible. Although it already contributes greatly to the environs as a piece of green infrastructure, its improved access will allow people to engage with it more effectively – encouraging both eco tourism and local amenity. Wayfinding and interpretation signage, as well as good footpaths and crossings will help the connection with the rest of the strategy.

Status: Access to Ferbane Bog with a boardwalk is planned for late 2019.

Republication of Mary Ward's book 'The World of Wonders' is planned by Offaly County Council for late 2019

Accesss, Recreation, Health and well-being	Natural Heritage	Water Management	Cultural Heritage
 Universal access Walking Exercise Proximity to nature Fresh air 	Intact bogBiodiversity Hotspot	Water filtrationSwalesWater attenuationBog hydrology	Science and Art – Mary Ward













Ferbane Bog Boardwalk Clárchosán Phortach an Fhéir Bháin

The Forest of Ferbane Foraois an Fhéir Bháin

The idea of an urban forest is to show people how to think about trees in an urban area collectively as a forest. So a tree in a front garden, or on a street, or in an open space, are not just individual trees on their own, but together make up a larger group — a forest. The project is using the Curio app that located and records the trees for a database that can be used for analysis. This in turn will be used for management and planting schemes.

Status: The project has commenced, with an initial identification of key areas that will be surveyed by community volunteers.

Access, Recreation,
Health and well-being

- Universal access
- · Walking, running and cycling
- Exercise
- Proximity to nature
- Fresh air
- Attractive environs

Natural Heritage

- · Trees and woodland
- Associated habitats
- Biodiversity Hotspots

Water Management

- Water filtration
- Water attenuation

Cultural Heritage

- Demesnes
- Tree stories
- 'The Green Fields 'Round Ferbane' lyrics



Pollution removal

1,339,636 kg/year worth €2,461,348 per year



Carbon storage

3,621,932 kg worth €72.450



Carbon sequestration

165,595 kg worth €3,316



Oxygen production

441,503 kg/year



Avoided runoff

6,317 m3/year worth €12,058 per year

The value of trees

Even quite small areas can have thousands of trees across parks, gardens, woodlands and lining streets and main roads. These trees support a region's ecosystem as well as making it a more beautiful place to be.

Analysing a region's trees demonstrates some of the amazing benefits they deliver. They store and sequester carbon, reduce storm water runoff and clean the air by capturing particulate matter and gaseous pollutants.

The value that trees deliver can be maximised by ensuring trees are maintained into maturity, as large, mature trees provide by far the greatest level of benefits, more than prepaying the investment made in their care.

Ecosystem services are calculated using i-Tree.

Protect and explore your local environment with photos and stories

Explore now in your browser

or get outside with the smartphone app









Forest of Ferbane – Examples of data analysis
Foraois an Fhéir Bháin – Samplaí d'anailís ar shonraí

Restoring Fairgreen Athchóiriú Fhaiche an Aonaigh

The proposed demoloition of the disused firestation offers the opportunity to restore Ferbane Fairgreen. The proposal aims to provide an open space that incorporates a plaza, terraced lawn, orchard, raingarden and re-organised parking. It is intended as a town park, linking with the Mass Path as a sensory route, and a key open space in the green infrastructure strategy.

Status:

Meeting place

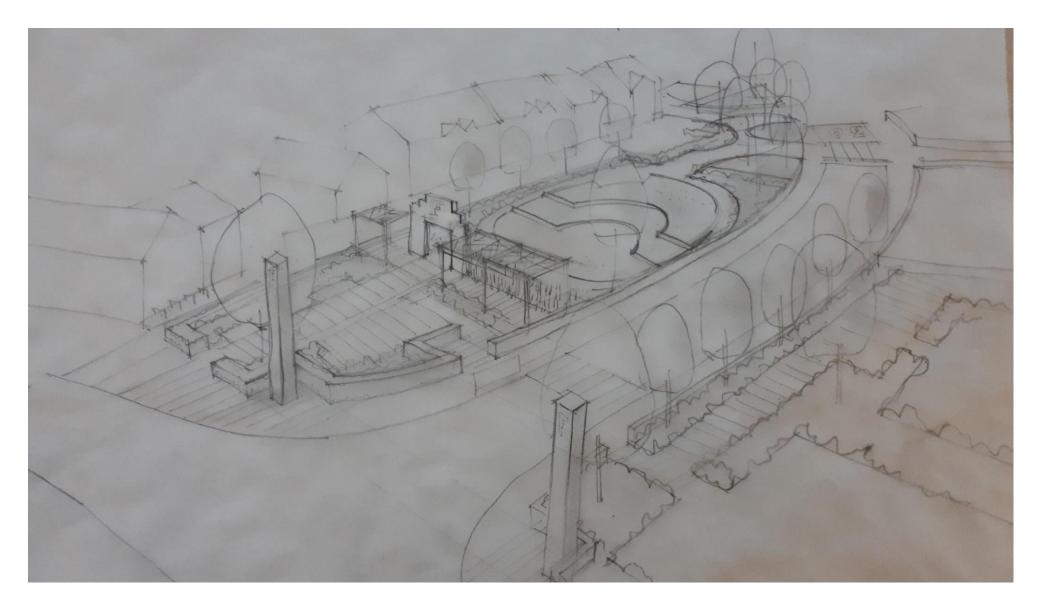
The idea has been proposed to Offaly Co Co and sketch design has been presented to local community groups and will now go on display in the local library. Funding through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme has been applied for to progress the project.

Accesss, Recreation, Health and well-being	Natural Heritage	Water Management	Cultural Heritage
 Universal access Walking Exercise Proximity to nature Fresh air 	Pollinator-led plantingTreesOrchardBiodiversity Hotspot	Swales and raingardenReduced hardstanding	Restoration of FairgreenFire StationMicroscope-themed objectsArtScience





Fairgreen and former Firestation
Faiche an Aonaigh agus an Seanstáisiún
Dóiteáin



Restoring Fairgreen Sketch Sceitse d'Athchóiriú Fhaiche an Aonaigh

Restoring Fairgreen and Mass Path link - Sketch plan

River and Railway Walk Siúlóid Abhann agus Iarnróid

The proposed walking route from the centre of Ferbane along the River Brosna heading eastwards, joins the former railway line and the railway bridge across the river. The walk also encounters railway artefacts and the former mill race – a site therefore that contains some of Ferbane's industrial as well as natural heritage. It becomes a loop walk back in to the town which would be safer if a new footpath was included on the Coole road.

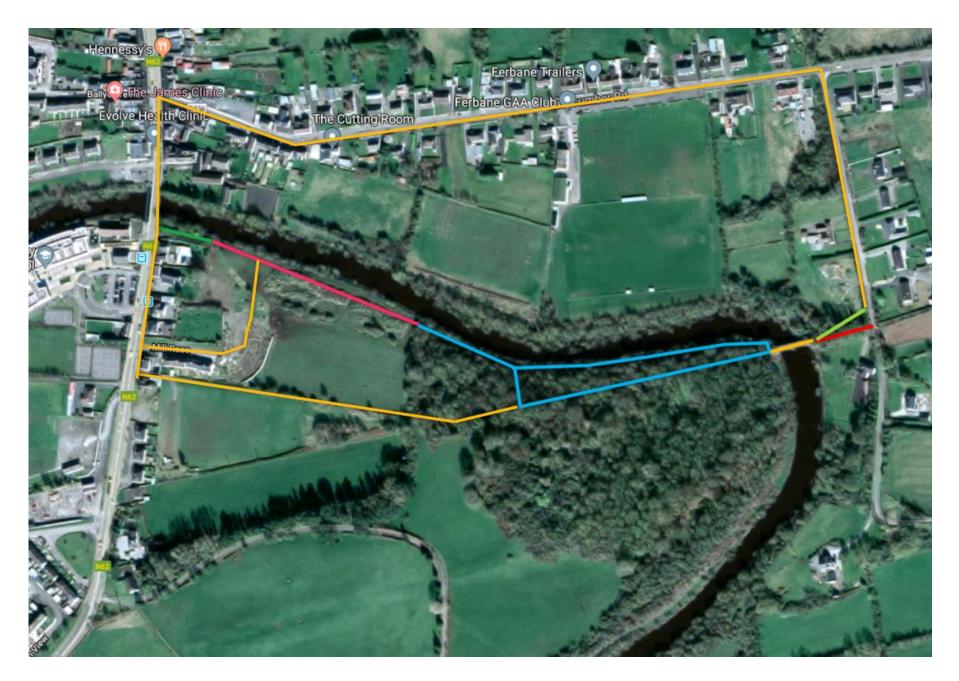
Status: The idea has been agreed with local landowners, apart from one preferred access point. The proposal is being detailed

for approval and subject to funding.

Fresh air

The footpath upgrades have been discussed with Offaly County Council.

Access, Recreation, Health and well-being	Natural Heritage	Water Management	Cultural Heritage
Universal accessWalking, runningExerciseProximity to nature	Riparian habitatWoodland habitatRailway groundfloraBiodiversity Hotspot	Proximity to riverOld mill race	Railway heritageMill heritageGallen PrioryRiver drainage scheme



Railway and River Walk Map



House at Bridge



Railway arch over mill race



Bridge abutments over road



Railway line



Railway bridge over the Brosna

An Ongoing Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane Stráitéis Leanúnach do Bhonneagar Glas an Fhéir Bháin

As the principles of the Green Infrastructure Strategy become defined, new projects can begin to respond to these principles - for example: new walks can be added making better connectivity; new public realm improvements can incorporate natural heritage; new tree planting opportunities can be developed; and cultural heritage can be conserved. The draft plan incorporates key projects and can evolve to incorporate new ones.

Status: Ongoing

Next updates:

- Biodiversity Management Plan Actions (Ongoing)
- Ballycumber Road environmental improvements
- Residential green spaces review
- Main Street environmental improvements
- Kilreaghan Cemetery Part 8 observations

Notes Nótaí

Comments and Queries Tagairtí agus Ceisteanna

Ferbane Tidy Towns welcomes your feedback: email jillgleeson@yahoo.com