



## ACTION B2 SITES AND MONUMENTS PROGRESS REPORT

17-4-15

### 1. KEY OBJECTIVE

To develop transferrable toolkits for the monitoring and visitor management of sites and monuments

### 2. PROPOSED ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Objective	ACTION	OUTCOME
1. Developing a collaborative approach	Establish a working methodology for collaboration; including group research, site visits, meetings, implementation of work programmes and monitoring.	A template for collaborative visitor management at sites and monuments
2. Developing baseline data for selected demonstration sites	Demonstration sites are selected representing the East, Centre and West areas of the Burren. Each site is assessed, previous data is gathered, environmental and visitor surveys are conducted and analysed.	Baselines are developed on the visitor access and usage of each site. Indicators of change are agreed.
3. Developing a work programme and testing of interventions at demonstration sites	A work programme is developed and implemented to improve conservation, universal access, interpretation, and visitor awareness.	A methodology for the impact of interventions and conservation measures is produced.
4. Monitoring and managing change	A maintenance and monitoring programme is developed focusing on the management of visitor impacts.	Systems are developed for the ongoing monitoring of the sites which can be transferred to other sites and monuments.
5. Reporting	All actions evaluated on the basis of environmental and economic objectives and indicators	Transferrable tool kits are developed for use by other regions and destinations in Ireland and Europe.
6. Policy Implications	All actions are evaluated on the basis of existing local and national policy frameworks, which are mapped during the programme.	Recommendations are made for strengthening interfaces between policies, improving communication and support networks, and on conflicting policies that need to be changed.

### **3. PROGRESS TO DATE**

#### **Objective 1: Developing a collaborative approach**

The B2 working group, consisting of representatives from NPWS, NMS, OPW, Clare County Council, BurrenLIFE, UCD (B3 rep) and the Geopark, meet on a three month basis. Each meeting is 3 hours in duration. A programme of meetings (4 in total) has been agreed up to December 2015.

Meetings have also taken place with various stakeholders to progress certain actions. These include landowners (An Rath/Cahermore, Aillwee Caves, Blackhead/Fanore); representatives from the Brothers of Charity (Universal Access) and NPWS (An Rath/Cahermore).

A collaborative process was undertaken with the Burrenbeo Trust and Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers (BCVs) to undertake a programme of work around the monitoring of visitor behaviour at the demonstration sites. Due to the logistics involved however BCVs were unable to commit to the work programme. Negotiations are now taking place with the Rural Social Scheme (managed by Clare Local development Company) with regard to their involvement in this programme through the Rural Recreation Officer (see Objective 4)

Meetings in the near future are planned with National Trails Office, Mountaineering Ireland, Ballyvaughan-Fanore Walking Group, Fáilte Ireland, NPWS, Leave No Trace and pilgrimage/spiritual tourism operators.

#### **Objective 2: Developing baseline data for selected demonstration sites**

Data has been collected through the following surveys and work programmes:

- Millward Brown *'Burren & Cliffs of Moher GeoparkLIFE Programme Visitor Survey'* 2014
- CAAS Ltd. *'Pilot Observation Studies of Environmental Impacts at the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark'* 2014
- EirEco *'Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark Ecological Study of Visitor Movement Areas'* 2014
- Joe Saunders *'Buses in the Burren 2014 – a study of the Impacts and Issues'*
- trial observation studies 2014 and assessment of the current condition of each of the seven demonstration sites in terms of infrastructure, visitor usage patterns, natural, built and cultural heritage (Zena Hctor)
- Installation of people counters at each of the demonstration sites (Dr. Eamon Doyle)
- Preliminary assessment of universal access at demonstration sites (Brothers of Charity)

This data has been collated and issues arising identified (detailed below under Objective 3).

### Objective 3: Developing a work programme and testing of interventions at demonstration sites

Site	Issues arising from baseline data	Work Programme	completed	Underway
Slieve Carran Nature Reserve	Path erosion at oratory entrance	<p>Compilation of condition reports on ecology and geology of site and visitor impact by the B2 working group</p> <p>Agreed interventions by working group to expose path to drying- Hazel to be cut back</p>	<p>15-10-14</p> <p>10-3-15 by NPWS operatives</p>	<p>Monitoring of intervention commenced 9-4-15 using fixed point photography</p>
	Walking trails - path condition and maintenance	Path survey to monitor erosion on designated walking trails		<p>Initiated in 2013 by Conservation Ranger (NPWS) - continuing through 2015 season</p>
	Unstable condition of oratory, unrecorded scattered architectural fragments, unrecorded archaeological features in wider Nature Reserve site and future management of oratory complex.	Compilation of Archaeological and Architectural Condition Assessments of buildings, audit of unrecorded archaeology and architectural fragments and recommendations for future management	<p>Compilation of preliminary reports by working group: Ristead Ua Croinin 'Measured Survey and Architectural Heritage Appraisal of St Colmán Mac Duach's Oratory' and Christine Grant: 'Preliminary Archaeological Report on St.</p>	<p>Compilation of full archaeological condition report by NMS to inform future work programme to be completed 24-4-15</p>

	<p>Increased number of votive offerings and increased popularity of site for spiritual tourism</p>	<p>Complete Audit of votive offerings at site.</p> <p>Work with spiritual tourism groups/guides on an awareness programme with regard to visitor management and maintenance of promoted sites and features.</p>	<p>McDuagh's Hermitage, Keelhill Nature Reserve'</p>	<p>Final draft of audit report being prepared</p> <p>Proposed to be developed in conjunction with B3 as a case study</p>
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Burren National Park	<p>Lack of Parking</p> <p>Bus Service</p> <p>Trails monitoring and maintenance</p>	<p>Negotiations to be undertaken to attempt to address this situation.</p> <p>Work with NPWS to assess current bus usage – numbers and visitor type and effectiveness of promotion/awareness of service among visitors. Carry out visitor survey – make recommendations for future promotion and carry out any feasible actions arising.</p> <p>Develop path survey technique and equipment (possible APP) which is easy to use, transferable and feeds into a dedicated database which can be used for feed-in and storage of information from future ‘Citizen Survey’ monitoring work (both path survey monitoring and Adopt-a-Monument/Habitat – B3 case study).</p>		<p>Preparation of short visitor survey to be completed during summer season</p> <p>Meeting to be organised in early May 2015 with National Trails Office, NPWS, Fáilte Ireland and Leave No trace to determine outcomes of audit work which is currently being undertaken on the NP trails under WAW funding; to discuss duplication of work on monitoring, interpretation and promotion and to find a unified way forward.</p>
An Rath/ Cahermore	<p>Increasing use of An Rath by coach tours</p> <p>Road safety</p> <p>Parking</p>	<p>Develop car and coach park with off road entrance to Cahermore and controlled access to An Rath via viewing platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of design drawings</li> <li>• Screening out</li> <li>• Part VIII planning application</li> </ul>	Project Design Supervisor appointed 17-2-14.	Design drawings currently being prepared. Ecologist appointed and screening out to be completed on

	Erosion of earthen bank of An Rath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase of land subject to planning</li> <li>• Development work</li> </ul>		finalisation of design drawings. Part 8 planning application to be made on completion of above.
Poul nabrone	<p>Anti-social behaviour Theft</p> <p>Lack of toilet facilities</p> <p>Buses parking outside designated zones causing congestion</p>	<p>Place and monitor visible signage to warn visitors against leaving valuables in cars. Explore possibility of placing CCTV cameras at site.</p> <p>Explore possibility of provision of toilets on site - assess environment impacts. Also explore alternative of provision at nearby serviced site e.g. local visitor centre</p> <p>Carry out awareness programme among coach drivers – place signage</p>		Initial approach has been made to landowner.
Carran Church	<p>Lack of Parking</p> <p>Confusion over correct access to site – using neighbours gate for parking and access lane</p>	<p>Negotiate with landowner for purchase of land for parking. Carry out required surveys and draw up plans (as per Rath/Cahermore template). Apply for planning permission. If successful, purchase land and develop car and coach parking spaces.</p> <p>Provide clear, visible signage from current parking lay-by to gate entrance to site.</p>		
Fanore Beach	<p>Condition of dunes due to storm damage and recreational activity</p> <p>Parking during high pressure weekends</p>	<p>Draw up a brief of work, in conjunction with Clare County Council Engineer, for the commissioning of an expert dune protection and management plan</p> <p>Put tender out.</p> <p>Commission plan.</p> <p>Act on recommendations of plan.</p>		Brief being drawn up

		Connect universal access proposal (see below) with this plan		
Blackhead	<p>Increasing number of casual and group walkers</p> <p>Damage to archaeological monuments (Caher Dun Irghuis and Carnesfin)</p> <p>Parking on private property</p> <p>Parking along coastal route</p>	<p>Explore with Mountaineering Ireland and other walking organisations information with regard to users, numbers and promotion. Carry out awareness campaign on issues arising from visitor impact on this environment.</p> <p>Carry out archaeological condition assessment of monuments. Develop photographic archive of level of change in recent years. Develop awareness campaign to protect the monuments against further damage.</p> <p>Work with landowners to identify issues and possible solutions</p> <p>Continue to work to find solution post Sweetman Ruling which prevents removal of limestone pavement to create parking lay-bys.</p>	<p>Discussion with MI Access Officer indicated how popular this area is for walkers, the vast extent of promotion it receives and how difficult this usage is to track</p> <p>Initial meeting held with landowners 5-3-15</p>	<p>Meeting (see Paths Survey) to discuss way forward to be held in May 2015.</p> <p>Condition report being prepared by NMS</p> <p>Next meeting mid May</p>
All Sites	Universal Access	<p>Undertake audit of all sites (plus a number of tourism businesses from B1) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical (approach, parking, signage, entry/exit, access routes, resting places, safety),</li> <li>• communication (review current information provision, publications, ICT related to each site for all disabled users),</li> </ul>	<p>Initial assessment of sites by Bros of Charity group in May 2014 – production of video</p> <p>Meeting with Bros of Charity reps 13-</p>	<p>Compilation of personal worksheets of Bros of Charity group detailing reactions to the sites into comprehensive report</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-site interpretation</li> <li>• education/ training,</li> <li>• policies and practices that service providers currently employ.</li> </ul> <p>Aim to develop at least one fully accessible nature trail in the Burren –(connect its development to a B3 case study)</p>	4-15 to discuss way forward	Brief for commissioning of Access Audit being prepared
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#### **Objective 4: Monitoring and managing change**

A template for visitor observation surveys was developed in conjunction with the CAAS/Fáilte Ireland WAW survey during the pilot project in 2014. The focus of this work was to develop a template suitable for studies on a WAW basis. Following further pilot observation studies at the seven demonstration sites carried out by Zena Hctor, this template has now been adapted slightly to be more site specific for the Burren. As the sample studies completed during the 2014 pilot project were too small to give reliable data results, a more complete programme of visitor observation studies for 2015 is currently being planned to provide additional data. Detailed site survey cards and instruction sheets have been developed and sites have been prioritised in terms of level of coverage (i.e. numbers of days of observation) required. A brief of work for the 2015 programme was prepared and forwarded to the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers for their consideration. Following discussion with regard to the logistics of the work required, the BCVs declined this work programme as it was felt that it was not **W**ithin the scope of the work that the BCV carry out.

A proposal for this work is now being considered by the Rural Social Scheme supervisors (Scheme managed by Clare Local Development Company) through collaboration with the Rural Recreation Officer, Eoin Hogan. It is proposed to start the observation studies in May and continue on the basis of one day per month until September.

#### **Objective 5: Reporting**

All actions will be evaluated on the basis of environmental and economic objectives and indicators. Research has been undertaken with regard to developing indicators of change for B2. The ETIS model in use by B1 does not include enough measurable indicators to cover the aspects being explored under B2. Indicators developed for World Heritage Sites are more applicable but are still lacking in addressing the Burren specific objectives of B2. This action needs further research and development.

#### **Objective 6: Policy Implications**

Research being undertaken by Gabriel Cooney and Joanne Gaffrey (UCD)