



ACTION B2 SITES AND MONUMENTS PROGRESS REPORT

21-10-15

1. KEY OBJECTIVE

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

Through the development of

- A collaborative approach
- Baseline data for seven selected demonstration sites
- A work programme and testing of interventions at demonstration sites
- Monitoring and managing change
- Reporting
- Policy implications

2. PROGRESS

April-September 2015

The Table below provides detail of

- the issues that have identified for the demonstration sites,
- the actions completed between April 2015 and September 2015,
- the collaborative approach taken,
- where monitoring has commenced and
- where some of these actions may guide policy

SUMMARY CHART FOR B2 DEMONSTRATION SITES (April – September 2015)

Site	Issues identified	Collaboration	Work programme	Monitoring and management	Potential Policy Guidance
Slieve Carran	Lack of baseline data.	The collaborative approach adopted by the B2 working group at this site has resulted in the production of preliminary baseline geology, ecology, archaeology and architectural reports by various members of the group. Following a group review of these reports, it was felt that a more in-depth archaeological survey was required to identify where conservation work may be possible. Christine Grant of the National Monuments Service completed this report.	Production of baseline geology, ecology, archaeology and architectural reports by the B2 working group. (Completed December 2014) Archaeological Assessment of Oratory site completed by National Monuments Service (for discussion purposes within the B2 working group) (Completed August 2015)	The Slieve Carran site is owned by the DAHG and managed by the NPWS. The archaeological monuments at the site are under pressure from increasing visitor numbers. Following the identification of issues and the production of baseline reports by GeoparkLIFE, discussion is to take place internally within the Dept. to decide on the future integrated management of this site and the possible transfer of the management of the archaeological monuments within the site from the NPWS to the OPW.	This site is proving to be a very good case study with regard to integrated management of heritage sites between relevant agencies.
	Limited parking at site entrance. Approach road very narrow	Through site visits and discussions it was decided by the B2 working group that due to the sensitivities of this site and increasing visitor awareness, additional promotion of this site at present is inadvisable. The narrow approach road, lack of directional signage and the small parking area helps to discourage coach tourism at present.			
	Impact of visitor numbers and footfall to walking trails	Monitoring of trails is being undertaken in conjunction with the NPWS	Monitoring of trails was carried out in summer 2015 by the NPWS conservation ranger. Visitor numbers were collected through the GeoparkLIFE people counters	Monitoring of trails using fixed point photography ongoing 2014-2016. Collection of visitor numbers ongoing.	
Burren National Park	Traffic congestion at Gortlecka Crossroads		An application for the development of a car park at Knockanroe was made by the NPWS to Clare County Council in 2012. This resulted in a request for further information/revised plans by CCC. The further information		

			requested was to show an 'overall plan' for the Burren National Park, particularly in relation to visitor management including visitor facilities, toilets, car parks, transport, access, visitor numbers, traffic generation etc. This information should be shown in the context of any adjoining towns and villages and their present/planned role. The NPWS withdrew their application in May 2013.		
	Underutilisation of the BNP Free Bus Service	Survey of bus users undertaken in conjunction with the BNP information centre staff	A survey of bus users to determine the numbers utilising the service and the source of their information, was undertaken in July-Sept 2015. Based on the findings discussion will be held with the NPWS re the future promotion and development of this service.		
	Footfall erosion on walking trails	Trails monitoring and visitor number recording in conjunction with NPWS	Monitoring continued summer 2015. Six people counters installed on the designated trails.	Monitoring of trail erosion through fixed point photography 2014-2016. Monitoring through people counters continuous.	
Blackhead/ Fanore	Fanore Beach: Condition of dunes due to storm damage and recreational activity. Car parking pressure during bank holiday weekends.	In collaboration with Clare County Council Engineering staff, Heritage Officer, NPWS	A brief of work for an expert dune protection and beach management plan was drawn up. Tender issued August 2015. No replies. Re-issued Sept 2015. Consultant appointment to be completed October 2015.	Management plan will include recommendations for monitoring programme.	
	Increasing number of walkers along Blackhead trail and across uplands.	Collaboration with the Rural Recreation Officer, Clare LEADER Company.	Monitoring of visitor numbers and impacts along Blackhead Trail through trail assessment and installation of people counter.	Dec 2014-ongoing visitor counting	
	Damage to	Collaboration with landowners, NMS	Installation of signs to inform	Discussion underway with archaeology	Adopt-A-Monument approach

	archaeological monuments (Caher Dun Irghuis and Carnesfin) caused by visitors climbing onto the walls of the monument	and NUI Galway Archaeology Department	visitors/walkers of importance of sites and damage caused by climbing on monuments (August 2015) Preparation of baseline archaeological condition reports for the monuments. Completed by Christine Grant NMS, representative on B2 working group (August 2015)	department of NUIG to undertake topographical survey of sites and develop community restoration project for cairn.	being taken – may have future policy implications for Community Based Archaeology projects.
	Traffic congestion due to lack of parking facilities along narrow coastal route	CCC engineers, Heritage Officer and NPWS	A large study of this site was carried out by the Geopark between 2007 and 2013 resulting in land acquisition and documents prepared for Planning permission including Appropriate Assessment for 14 car parking lay-bys. The DAHG subsequently advised CCC to defer a decision on planning pending Supreme Court ruling on European Court of Justice Case C-258/11 Peter Sweetman and others v An Bord Pleanála. Following this ruling an AA and NIA are required for the proposal which must be made to An Bord Pleanála.	Discussions are underway with the NPWS to determine whether this issue can be resolved.	Issues of health and safety vs the EU Habitat Directive
An Rath/ Cahermore	Increasing use of An Rath by coach tours. Road safety issues due to sightlines and lack of safe parking areas at both sites. Large numbers of visitor impacting on earthen banks at An Rath causing soil	CCC, OPW, NMS, NPWS, landowner	Planning for provision of a car/coach park between the two sites; an internal pathway leading to each site and a viewing platform at An Rath to control visitor access and prevent further erosion of the embankment. Initial design drawings prepared and ecology screening out	Ecological assessment carried out for purposes of screening out July 2015. Archaeological topographical Survey of site completed by OPW Discovery team April 2015. Visitor numbers recorded between Dec 2015 and closure of site in August	Future integrated management of heritage sites.

	erosion. Very small numbers visiting Cahermore.		completed July 2015. Options for preferred access points to An Rath completed by OPW Sept 2015. Currently under review by NMS. Part 8 planning application to be made on completion of above. Purchase of land subject to planning. An Rath was closed by the OPW in late August 2015 for safety reasons.	2015.	
Poulnabrone	Lack of toilet facilities Anti-social behaviour	Clare County Council Environment Section	Exploration of possibility of provision of toilets on site – assessment of environmental impacts and of alternative provision at nearby serviced site i.e. local visitor centre Explore possibility of placing CCTV cameras at site.	Feasibility Study re provision of toilets being undertaken by Tracy Duffy, Environment Section of Clare County Council to be completed Oct. 2015. Research completed re provision of CCTV July 2015.	
Carran Church	Lack of Parking Confusion over correct access to site – visitors using neighbours gate for parking and access lane Condition of Church building	Planning/Engineering Departments of CCC CCC, OPW, NUI Galway Archaeology Department	Exploration of feasibility of providing car parking at site. Carry out required surveys and draw up plans (as per Rath/Cahermore template). Apply for planning permission. If successful, purchase land and develop car parking spaces. Provide clear, visible signage from current parking lay-by to gate entrance to site. Report on condition of church by Risteard UaCróinín,	Negotiations underway with Planning/Engineering Department of Clare County Council re provision of car park and signage. NUI Galway Archaeology Department	

			Conservation Officer in 2005. Assessed as part of the Burren Heritage Sites Report (Burren Connect, 2009) by <i>ACP, Limerick</i> to determine the methods and materials required to carry out immediate remedial works. Reports require updating to carry out any works on the building.	to be requested to undertake a topographical survey of the site.	
Aillwee Cave	Presence of Red Valerian (invasive species) on site	Aillwee Cave Management, BEN and Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers	Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers to deliver training in Treatment of Invasive Species to Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) conservation and advocacy group in 2016. This training will inform on removal methods of Red Valerian and a programme of work may then result with BEN.	Develop monitoring programme to measure level of success of removal programme	
All Sites	Existing interpretive panels on sites at times provide duplication of information and use complex specialist language. Need for cohesion and prioritising of information presented to the visitor and review of directional signage along designated walking trails.	All site owners and managers	Review of Interpretation and development of overall interpretive plan to include all demonstration sites. To be linked to Universal Design project. To commence November 2015.		
	Lack of Universal Access/Design	Work has commenced with the National Disability Authority (NDA) and the Brothers of Charity Group	The Brothers of Charity Learners group assessed all the demonstration sites in June		At present there are general guidelines for built heritage but none for natural heritage

		Ennis to develop Universal Design Guidelines for Heritage sites in the Burren.	and July 2015 with regard to physical and intellectual accessibility. (Report to be completed November 2015). They were joined at Slieve Carran by representatives of the NDA on June 9 th . The NDA are organising a one day workshop aimed at site managers, planners and designers to assess how existing guidelines are being implemented, where gaps exist and how this can be resolved. A workshop in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and NDA is also being organised for BEN members for early 2016.		sites and none specific to the Burren terrain.
	Collection and presentation of data	The Heritage Council	All data collected for the demonstration sites will be collated and presented through a redeveloped GIS Heritage Council Map Viewer. Work commenced on this project Sept 2015.		National Landscape Strategy
	Visitor impacts on the landscape through mini-dolmen building, deposition of votive offerings and littering.	Leave No Trace Ireland, Cliffs of Moher staff	Work has commenced on the development of Burren specific Leave No Trace guidelines which will incorporate the Burren Code. Clinics were held throughout Sept 2015 at the Cliffs of Moher Centre with coach drivers to determine their awareness of the codes, how they inform their passengers and how best to update the drivers with new information.		

