



ACTION B2 SITES AND MONUMENTS PROGRESS REPORT

7-4-16

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

September 2015-April 2016

The Table below provides detail of

- issues identified for each demonstration site,
- actions completed to date and
- actions underway

Site	Issues	Collaboration	Work programme	
			Actions completed	Actions underway
Slieve Carran	Lack of archaeological and architectural baseline data.	B2 working group (NPWS, OPW, NMS, CCC)	Baseline geology, ecology, archaeology and architectural reports - Completed December 2014. Archaeological Assessment of Oratory site completed August 2015.	The Slieve Carran site is owned by the DAHG and managed by the NPWS. Discussion currently underway within the Dept. on the future integrated management of this site.
	Impact of visitor numbers and footfall to walking trails	NPWS	Footfall counters installed Sept. 2014. Data collected and analysed Sept 2014-Sept 2015. Path monitoring data collected by NPWS 2014.	Continuing monitoring of trails through fixed point photography. Collection and analysis of visitor numbers through footfall counters. Collection and analysis for data was a function of the Geopark geologist. Until a new geologist is appointed, funding is being supplied for one data collection and a servicing of all counters to be carried out by MCA consulting. T
	Deposition of votive offerings at MacDuagh's oratory site	NPWS	Baseline report on numbers and types of offerings present – completed March 2016.	All votive offerings will be removed by NPWS staff in April 2016. This is an agreed action by the B2 working group in order to monitor the scale of deposition during the 2016 summer season. Monitoring of votive deposition will be undertaken from May to October 2016 on a monthly basis. An awareness raising seminar will be held in October 2016 with regard to 'Leave no Trace' and the deposition of offerings at sites within the Burren.
Burren National Park	Traffic congestion at Gortlecka Crossroads	NPWS, local landowners and businesses	Visitor observation and attitudes surveys 2014.	Input into development of brief of work for 'Visitor and traffic management plan for BNP' by NPWS through provision of following data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor numbers (footfall counters) • Traffic count to be placed on four entry roads to Gortlecka area over one week period to include August Bank Holiday weekend. • Consultation with local residents with regard to attitudes to traffic volume and current parking facilities. • Series of random daily recordings of numbers of vehicle and type parked within Gortlecka area over summer season 2016.

	Underutilisation of the BNP Free Bus Service	BEN, Geopark and NPWS	Bus survey 2015.	Promotion of bus service through various media and personal communication with visitors by Geopark and BEN. Recording of numbers using bus service over 2016 season.
	Potential footfall erosion on walking trails	NPWS	Recording of numbers through footfall counters at six stations. Trail monitoring through fixed point photography.	Trail Monitoring May-September 2016 Continuous footfall recording at six stations.
Blackhead/ Fanore	Fanore Beach: Impact on dune system due to recent storms, climate change and recreational activity.	Clare County Council Engineering staff	Draft report completed March 2016 by MaREI (Marine Renewable Energy Ireland Centre) UCC.	Review and finalisation of management plan. Implementation of agreed recommendations.
	Lack of data for user numbers of Blackhead walking trail and across uplands.	Rural Recreation Officer, Clare LEADER Company.	Monitoring of visitor numbers along Blackhead Trail using footfall counter installed November 2014. Data collected and analysed Nov 2014 – Sept 2015. Visitor observation study at Caher Dun Irghuis to determine numbers of walkers and impacts at site (2014)	Continued recording and analysis of numbers using footfall counter. Visitor observation study to be repeated over summer months 2016.
	Damage to archaeological monuments	Landowners and NMS (NUI Galway have withdrawn from the project)	Preparation of baseline archaeological condition reports completed August 2015. Signs requesting visitors to refrain from climbing on monuments prepared and erected at sites October 2015.	Following withdrawal of NUIG on this project, Christine Grant (NMS) has agreed to prepare a brief of work for a detailed survey of the cairn, application for Ministerial consent to undertake conservation work at site and RFT document for development and implementation of community archaeology project to carry out the conservation work.
	Traffic congestion due to lack of parking facilities along narrow coastal route	CCC engineers, Heritage Officer and NPWS	A site visit was undertaken by Enda Mooney (NPWS), Congella McGuire and ZH in Sept 2015 to determine the extent of limestone pavement present on the land purchased in 2010 for lay-by development and the possibility of developing these sites. Proposal prepared and approved for work required. Report prepared Feb 2016 (ZH) on each of 14 originally proposed lay-bys, indicating potential development area where limestone pavement is absent. Recommendations: sightlines to be checked by engineer; scrub to be cleared at four sites for full determination of habitat present. AA screening for scrub removal prepared by Congella McGuire 24-2-16. Scrub clearance completed 26-2-16.	Quotes are currently being sought for a technical survey of each of the proposed parking lay-bys, which will result in detailed site maps and sightlines. If sightlines are unfavourable they will further reduce the parking space available. The Technical Survey will be followed by detailed habitat mapping. This will determine suitability in terms of habitat present. If deemed suitable (in terms of environment and economics) a full engineers report and AA will be commissioned for Part 8 planning application.
An Rath/ Cahermore	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	CCC, OPW, NMS, NPWS, landowner	Draft drawings for car park development completed by Colemans. Drawings for entry structures and viewing points to An Rath completed by OPW. Monitoring of visitor numbers to An Rath ceased in August 2015	Completion of ecological screening by Paul Murphy (EirEco). Ministerial consent being sought by OPW. Submission of planning application to be made by

	causing soil erosion. Very small numbers visiting Cahermore.		with closure of site for safety reasons by OPW.	Colemans. Footfall monitoring continuing at Cahermore.
Poulnabrone	Lack of toilet facilities Anti-social behaviour Integration of management of site (monument and car park under different management – OPW and CCC)	Clare County Council, OPW	Feasibility study completed (Tracy Duffy, Environment Section CCC) April 2016. Research completed re provision of CCTV July 2015.	 Continuing exploration of development of integrated management plan for site.
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	Feasibility for provision of parking area completed by CCC Dec2015. Result – sightlines not favourable on western side of R480. Eastern side unsuitable due to presence of several archaeological monuments. Baseline reports completed 2005 and 2009. Proposal to carry out conservation work on NW corner, which is in danger of collapse.	 New signage/interpretation template being designed. As of April 7 th we are awaiting confirmation of admissible funding to carry out building work which addresses health and safety issues.
Aillwee Cave	Presence of Red Valerian (invasive species) on site	Aillwee Cave Management, BEN and Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers	Burrenbeo Trust ‘Invasive Species Workshop’ delivered to Burren Ecotourism Network (BEN) March 2016. Outcome: Discussion over whether Red Valerian is actually a ‘problem invasive’. It often occurs on disturbed pavement and is good for pollinators. Further research needs to be carried out as to whether it is displacing other species. Suggest monitoring of site in terms of spread.	Develop monitoring programme to determine if spread is occurring.
All Sites	Dated information on interpretive panels and panels in need of replacement	All site owners and managers	Review of Interpretation and development of overall interpretive plan underway.	Sample panel template being designed.
	Lack of Universal Design Guidelines for natural heritage sites	National Disability Authority (NDA) and the	The Brothers of Charity Learners group report on demonstration sites received December 2015. NDA workshop for site managers delivered Jan 25, 2016. NDA/Fáilte Ireland workshop for BEN members (service	‘Walkability’ audit form for natural heritage sites currently being designed as they only exist for built heritage sites. Organisation of one-day audit by Brothers of Charity group and Age Friendly group to

		Brothers of Charity Group Ennis	providers) delivered 10 Feb, 2016.	assess a walking trail in the BNP. This data will be used to develop guidelines for the adaptation of this trail to allow 'least restrictive access'.
	Collection and presentation of data	The Heritage Council MAC (Microelectronics Application Centre) Limerick	All data collected for the demonstration sites will be collated and presented through a redeveloped GIS Heritage Council Map Viewer. New layout incorporating GeoparkLIFE section designed. Discussion has taken place with MAC Limerick with regard to the Heritage App they piloted last year (as part of their Smart Open Data project) and its adaptation and further development for use as a monitoring tool at conservation sites and trails within the Burren. The purpose of this would be to collect continuous monitoring information on the demonstration sites and in the future all heritage sites within the Burren, which could be fed into the Heritage Council Map Viewer system and presented through a map system.	Layout and input of existing datasets underway by Heritage Council. Preparation of GeoparkLIFE data for input. Identification of information to be collected through ground recording at each site. Exploration of development of suitable forms for use in the App and how collected data could be fed into Heritage Council Map Viewer system.
	Visitor impacts on the landscape	Leave No Trace Ireland, Cliffs of Moher staff	Clinics held in 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. Wording for an agreed amalgamated Burren Code and Leave No Trace principles for use on signage and digital media was completed in January 2016.	A Burren specific Leave No Trace Skills and ethics book is currently being developed.