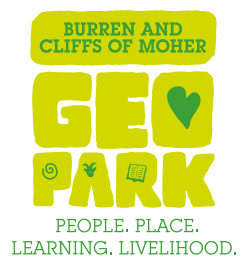
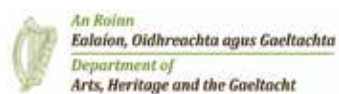


Good Practice Guide

Heritage site management



Thank you to the GeoparkLIFE funding partners



GEOPARKLIFE TOURISM FOR CONSERVATION

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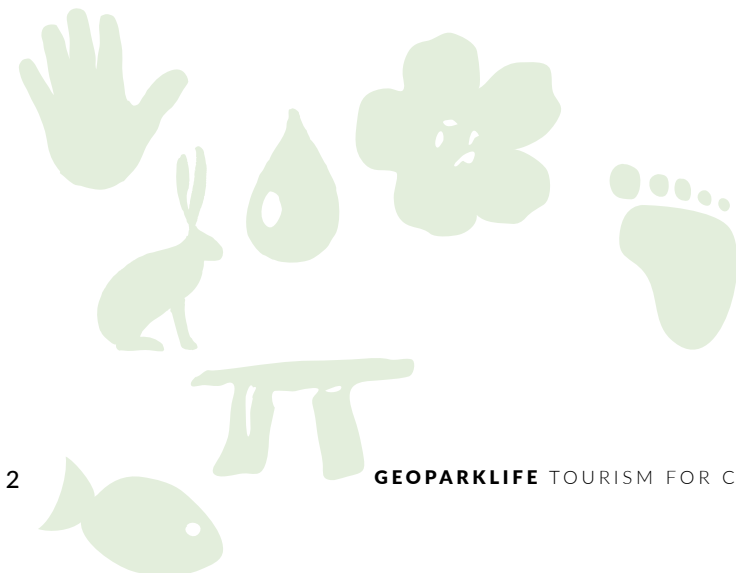
It's all about management



The benefits of conserving our heritage attractions are wide reaching, from economic to social to environmental to educational. To conserve our heritage and its significance, effective management is essential.

Within a tourism destination, the pressures on heritage attractions will be increased through visitor promotion. Good conservation management must include **a thorough understanding of all the pressures** that impact on a site including those caused through visitor behaviour. Only through this understanding can effective management actions be designed and implemented.

Changes do occur over time in visitor numbers, in the popularity of sites and pressures on attractions. Good management must be able to recognise and measure these changes and adapt appropriately to implement effective conservation practice while ensuring visitor satisfaction.



Working in Partnership

By providing platforms for collaboration between all stakeholders responsible for the management of heritage sites and allowing time to build trust and relationships. GeoparkLIFE was able to identify the specific management needs of heritage attractions, site owners/managers and visitors.

GeoparkLIFE developed a structure that allowed stakeholders to collaborate, to pool knowledge and datasets, to share details of existing management policy and regulations and to produce 'best practice' approaches and actions ensuring the future conservation of heritage sites and an enhanced visitor experience within the Geopark destination.

The GeoparkLIFE partnership operated on a two tier structure. The first tier was the Steering Group which included representatives of all our identified stakeholders. This group met on bi-annual basis. At these meetings the GeoparkLIFE management team reported on progress and sought advice on issues arising.

At the second level were working groups made up from members of the Steering Group. The working group concerned with our heritage attractions included representatives from all the heritage related agencies e.g. the National Parks & Wildlife Service, the National Monuments Service, the Office of Public Works, the Heritage Council and Clare County Council. Work plans were agreed, progress updated, issues debated and solutions sought. Tasks were assigned to the various representatives that were relevant to their agencies brief. This structure allowed for interactive discussion between the agencies and highlighted where certain procedures must be followed to meet the policies and governance required under various legal directives.



Building a new way to look after our heritage

GeoparkLIFE developed an integrated management methodology for the conservation and visitor use of the Geopark's heritage sites. In addition to being appropriate for implementation within the Geopark, it can be transferable to other tourism destinations.

Seven demonstration sites were selected to develop and test this methodology.

We decided our sites should represent:

- a good geographical spread across the Burren,
- variation in terms of intrinsic interest from built to natural to cultural heritage and
- varied visitor profiles and numbers.

Detailed assessments and observation studies provided a lot of data but also showed where gaps in the baseline information existed. For example, there is information with regard to visitor numbers, profiles and attitudes available on a regional basis, but none or very little for particular local sites. Footfall counters were installed to determine which sites visitors frequented on a yearly, monthly, weekly, daily and hourly basis. Visitor surveys were carried out at each site asking how the visitor heard about the site and their overall

satisfaction with their visit. These actions provided baseline data that identified the issues and impacts affecting each site.

The working group discussed actions, how they might be implemented, by whom and at what cost. These discussions were often lengthy but of great value in allowing the group to determine the procedures and policies that regulate heritage conservation. The discussions provided time for cross communication between the representatives of the various agencies within the partnership and helped the agencies representatives to better understand the situation from a community perspective. Agencies gained a better understanding of how difficult it can be at a voluntary level to address all the legal requirements and meet the time commitment and costs involved when attempting conservation work at a heritage site.



- conservation work at two archaeological monuments
- repair of a parking area boundary
- a feasibility research for parking facilities at three sites
- a development of a beach and dunes management plan
- collection of traffic data to inform a traffic and visitor management plan for the Burren National Park
- research on votive offerings deposition at a holy well
- a feasibility study for provision of a toilets in car parks
- the development of an integrated management plan template for heritage sites and the design and installation of integrated interpretive signage at Burren heritage sites.

Monitoring of heritage sites in a destination is vital and allows managers to analyse, evaluate and adapt decisions and actions resulting in the formulation of effective adaptive management plans.

[illegible]

The experiences of the GeoparkLIFE programme have taught many lessons. These lessons are encapsulated into the following guidelines, which will hopefully be of use to other destinations, agencies and organisations interested in adapting the models produced under GeoparkLIFE.

Guidelines for heritage site management

- 1** Include Everyone
- 2** Select your Sites
- 3** Collect baseline data
- 4** Agree actions
- 5** Monitor
- 6** Develop an Adaptive Management Plan



GUIDELINE 1:

Include everyone

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

To link, co-ordinate and balance the management needs of the heritage attractions within the destination, an integrated approach will produce the most impact.

All of the various stakeholders (landowners, agencies and community) should be actively involved in the planning, development and management of heritage attractions so that all viewpoints are included and collective agreements are reached.

This can lead to the creation of a structure in which the community and the agencies can engage and collaborate to deliver a strong conservation programme in conjunction with tourism promotion and access.



WHAT TO DO

1: Identify, inform and involve all the stakeholders in your destination

These could include representatives of

- the various Government Departments, statutory and semi-state bodies that have a remit for heritage conservation within the destination. For example,
 - > The Heritage Council
 - > National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
 - > National Monuments Service (NMS)
 - > Office of Public Works (OPW)
 - > Coillte
 - > Waterways Ireland
 - > Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
 - > Local Authority
- Agencies with a tourism remit such as
 - > Fáilte Ireland
 - > Local and regional tourism organisations
 - > Leader Companies

- Landowners
 - > the owners of the land on which your heritage sites are located and also the access routes, as there may be more than one owner.
- Local community groups. For example
 - > Heritage groups
 - > Community tourism groups
 - > Educational establishments
 - > Regional colleges heritage and tourism departments
 - > Local schools

2: Establish a Working Group

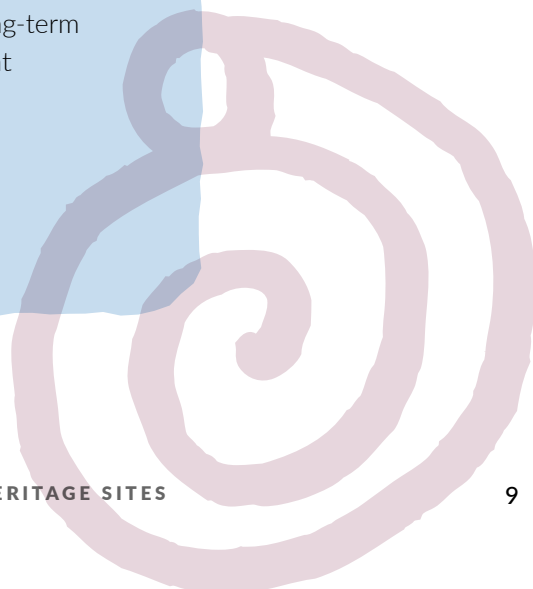
Form a working group with your stakeholders. This group should meet on a regular basis, perhaps every 2-3 months, to agree work plans and actions, set and assign tasks and take stock of progress.

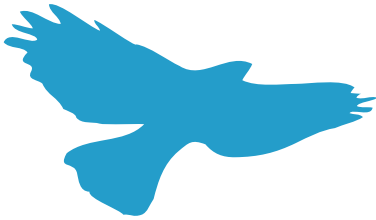


WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

Active participation in the partnership and the formulation of an agreed work programme plan should ensure that

- the agreed actions are owned by the stakeholders
- the actions are implemented
- responsibilities and agreements are kept by the partners and
- the continuous monitoring and future management of the site is secured under a long-term partnership agreement





GUIDELINE 2

Select Your Sites

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Every tourism destination will include a number of heritage attractions, some of which will be unsuitable for visitor promotion, due to their condition and/or sensitivities. As destination managers seeking to conserve heritage sites for the future, while allowing appropriate access where possible, assess attractions in terms of their suitability and make a list of sites that will work well in terms of their conservation and promotion. Note how the sites relate to each other, will it be easy for visitors to travel from one site to the other? Will the linkage of sites create traffic issues on local roads?



WHAT TO DO

1. List all the heritage sites in your

destination and mark them on a map to provide a spatial view of all the potential attractions. Assess the condition and capacity of the approach roads. Note the proximity and availability of facilities such as toilets and food outlets.

2. Visit each of your listed sites and assess

- Visitor appeal
 - > Is the condition of the site good enough to allow a visitor to recognise its features?
 - > Is the location appealing and accessible?
 - > Can the local roads infrastructure cater for increased visitor traffic?
- Accessibility
 - > Who owns the site and the access to it?
 - > Who are the site managers?
 - > Whose permission do you need to promote this site?
 - > Are there physical and/or ownership obstacles to access by visitors?
 - > What are the local access roads like?
- Sensitivities
 - > Is the site within a protected designated area e.g a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, Nature Reserve etc.?
 - > Is the monument legally protected e.g. is it a National Monument, A recorded Monument?
 - > Are there any legal procedures/ conditions that you must undertake/meet if you are going to promote this site to visitors?
- Promotion and Interpretation
 - > Is the site already promoted for

tourism?

- > If yes, what are the current facilities and infrastructure provided?
- > Will it be possible to provide parking, and if needed, toilets?
- > Is it close enough to other facilities for toilets not to be an issue?
- > What type of interpretation is being used and how effective is it?

3. Using the detailed information you have recorded for each site

- determine any obstacles to conservation and promotion which have been identified
- decide what measures will have to take to overcome the identified obstacles
- rank the heritage sites assessed in terms of suitability for the destinations promotional purposes
- eliminate sites which are beyond current resources to develop to promotional level

4. Assess how the sites selected will interact with each other

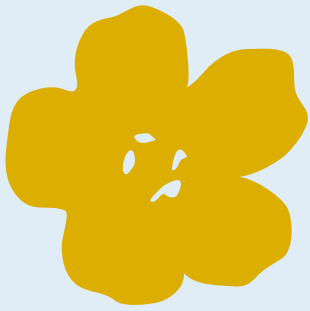
- Do they form a natural trail? Can they be promoted as such?
- Can the local roads infrastructure handle the potential volume of visitor traffic from one site to the other sites?

Is universal access an option?

see National Disability Authority code of practice on accessible heritage sites www.nda.ie

WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

You will now have a working list of sites which best represent the heritage of the destination while providing a good spatial spread of **accessible** locations to disperse the visitor throughout the area, encouraging them to explore wider and stay longer.



GUIDELINE 3

Know Your Site

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Identifying, including and understanding all the integrated components and pressures at each attraction is vital to inform the effective planning and development of a site management strategy.

You must know your site before you can manage it!

WHAT TO DO

Desk research, field survey and consultation involving all stakeholders (landowners, tourism and conservation agencies, roads and planning department of the local authority and community interests) and visitors are the means to gathering this important baseline data. This is a vital component of the process. Make sure to allot adequate time within the work programme for completion.

1: Compile a desktop site description for each attraction.

The description should answer the following questions:

- What will attract visitors to this site?
- Is its location easily accessible?
- What is its significance in terms of the built, natural and cultural heritage?
- Are there past reports, plans and management actions related to the site?

- Who is responsible for the current management of the site?
- What are the management issues at the site?
- Have any interventions been applied previously to address issues?
- If yes, how effective have these interventions been?
- To answer these questions consult with the site managers, owners and other relevant partners.

2: Carry out a field survey to document the current condition of each site and its visitor usage.

Detail gathered for each site should include:

- **Access**
 - > What is the status and condition of the approach roads to the site?
 - > What is there suitability for different types of users and vehicles e.g. walkers, cyclists, cars, coaches?

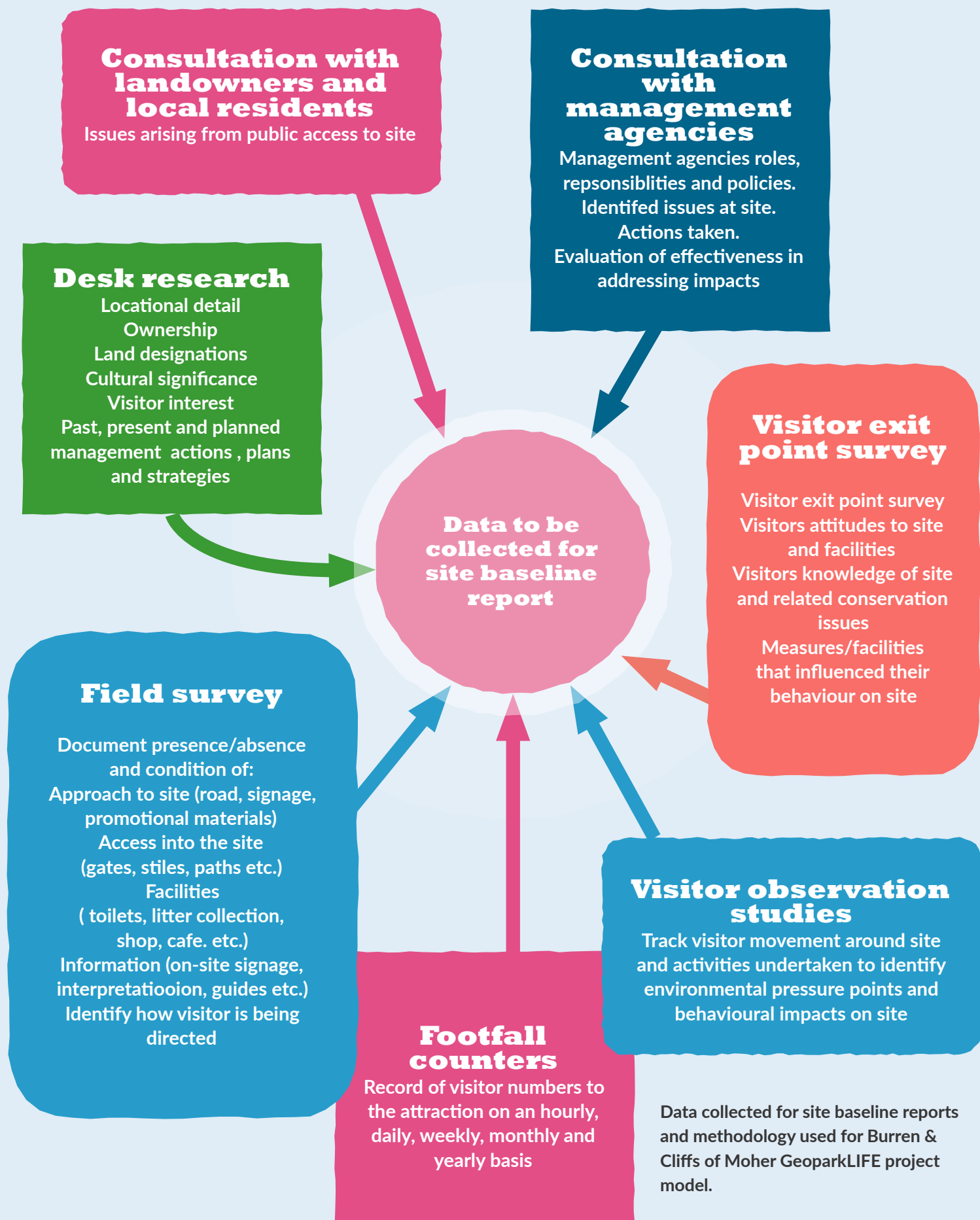
- Is there directional signage to the site?
 - > If yes, what type of directional signage is used? – are there different types and designs in use? Or is it uniform and instantly recognisable to the visitor?
 - > What is the condition of each sign – does it need replacement?
- Is there a parking facility at the site?
 - > If yes, how many car/coach/ bicycle spaces are available?
 - > How many spaces have universal access design?
- What is the form of the physical entry to the site?
 - > For example – is there a gate or stile?
 - > Does this entry allow universal access for all visitors?
- **Visitor facilities**
 - > What facilities e.g. guides, toilets, interpretation, information, directional services are available for the visitor at the site?
 - > Who manages these facilities?
 - > What is the current condition of the facilities?
- **Numbers of visitors**
 - > How many people visit the site on an annual, monthly, weekly, daily basis?
- > Where do they come from?
 - > How do they hear about the site?
 - > Are the visitors satisfied with the overall site experience?
- **Visitor safety**
 - > What health and safety measures have been implemented at the site?
 - > Who is responsible for the upkeep of these measures?
 - > How effective are these measures?
- **Site pressures**
 - > Are there areas of damage visible at the site?
 - > What is the cause of this damage?
 - > What are the vulnerabilities of the site?
 - > What are the potential threats to the site?
 - > How is visitor behaviour impacting on the site?

TOP TIP

Take photos of the access points, signs and facilities and mark their locations on a map as you work.

WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

Completing this step will very likely indicate gaps in the information about the site. For example if the existing information on visitor numbers and attitudes to the site is inadequate or non-existent the need to count and to carry out a visitor survey is obvious.





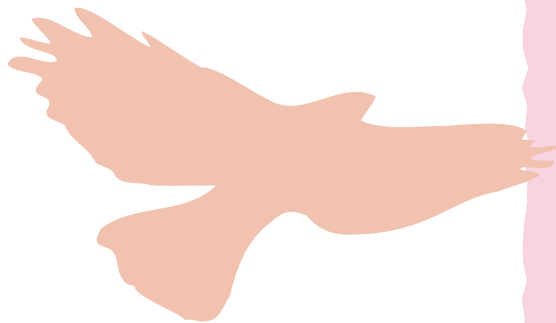


GUIDELINE 4

Agree actions

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Collective agreement on actions and plans by the working group will lead to stronger long term impacts on the overall management of the site. The value of an integrated management partnership will be evident from the different ideas that emerge and the sharing of knowledge of policy and regulations which may affect an action.



WHAT TO DO

1. Analyse baseline information

- The completion of the information gathering detailed in Guideline 3 will provide a very good baseline profile for each site.
- Cross referencing data will identify issues at the site and possible causes e.g. the visitor survey may indicate that visitors are having problems understanding the significance of the heritage attraction. The site assessment may show that there is a lack of signage and interpretation on site. This indicates the need to address the educational and awareness raising aspects of promotional material.
- Damage may be occurring at certain pressure points in the site. The location and type of damage will have been noted through site assessment, but the cause may not have been identified. A need now arises to find out what is causing the damage and why, to find a suitable solution.

2. Prioritise the issues

- The analysis will provide a list of the issues and pressure points at the sites. Some will need more immediate attention than others.
- Prioritise than list into the issues requiring urgent, short-term or long term attention.
- This priority list will inform the timescale of the work plan for each site.

3. Formulate actions

- From the prioritised list formulate an appropriate action to address each issue. Discuss among the working group the feasibility of each action, what is required for implementation and how this will be achieved.
- Assign responsibility for implementation of various actions to members of the working group.

WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

Data collected through the baseline study of the site informs the formulation of management actions. The collectively agreed actions and methods of implementation inform the work plan for each site. These work plans in turn form the foundation for the development of an adaptive management plan for each of your heritage sites.





GUIDELINE 5

Monitor

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Continuous monitoring of the attraction is vital to inform adaptive management planning, which allows flexibility to react to negative impact situations.

There is always an element of risk and uncertainty about the effect of interventions at sites.

Each and every agreed action which is implemented should be carefully monitored to measure its impact. Change should be monitored against the baseline data collected as detailed in Guideline 3. A monitoring programme should be designed and repeated on a six-month to yearly basis depending on the popularity of the attraction. If actions are creating an adverse effect the monitoring programme will indicate this and action can be taken to remedy the situation.



WHAT TO DO

Monitor site condition

- Monitor the various components of the site through field survey.
- Include access points, infrastructure, facilities, interpretation and the physical fabric of the attraction itself e.g. the built monument and/or natural feature.

Monitor visitor numbers

- Use footfall counters to record the number of visitors to an attraction.
- Place the counters at entry points to the attraction.

Carry out Visitor observation Studies

- Monitor visitor behaviour and resulting impacts at each site through observation studies.
- Assign field surveyors to observe visitors from a set location,

tracking their movement around the site, recording their actions and any impacts they may cause to the condition of the site.

Complete visitor surveys

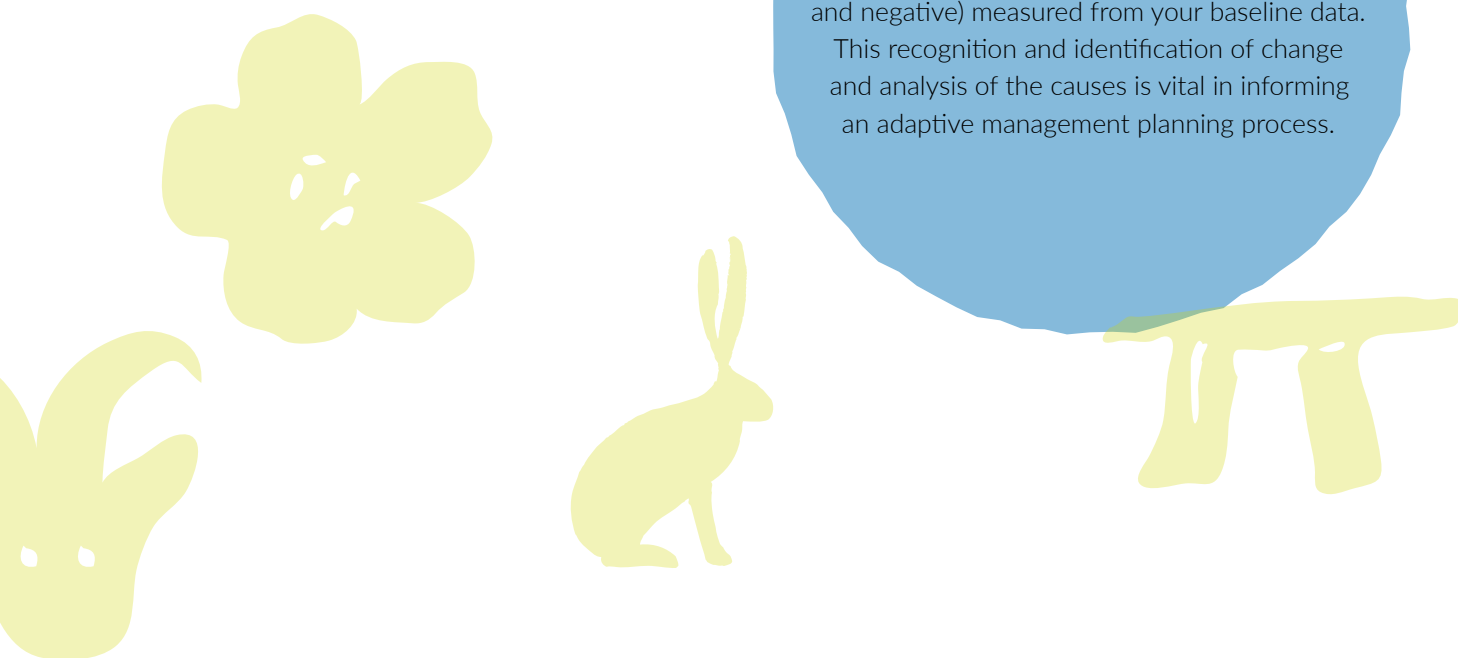
- Interview visitors at 3 year intervals, if possible, about their attitudes to the attraction and the associated facilities.
- Use the same questionnaire format each time to obtain comparative results.

Develop a recording system

- Through the GeoparkLIFE project a monitoring methodology was developed from a paper based to a digital system resulting in a '**Heritage Site and Trails Monitoring App**'.
<http://www.burrengeopark.ie/geopark-life/guides-and-toolkits/>

WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

The data collected through each monitoring event will highlight changes at the site (positive and negative) measured from your baseline data. This recognition and identification of change and analysis of the causes is vital in informing an adaptive management planning process.





GUIDELINE 6

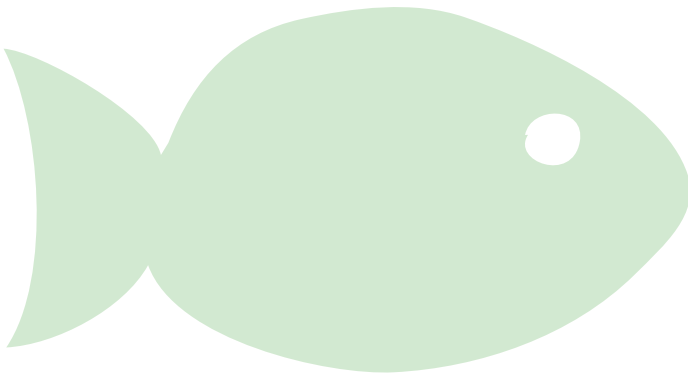
Develop an Adaptive Management Plan

WHY YOU SHOULD DO THIS

Adaptive management is a structured process which involves evaluating the results of your site assessments and monitoring sessions and adjusting your management actions on the basis of what has been learned.

Initial management decisions are made with a degree of uncertainty as to the future impact of the action proposed. The overall aim of the adaptive management planning is to reduce this uncertainty over time through continuous monitoring, reviewing of the changes and adaptation of actions where required.

Through this process the management team become very familiar with all the integrated aspects of the site and through collective decision making, incorporate different viewpoints and policies of which they may have been unaware previously. This partnership planning structure leads to a more holistic and effective management approach.



WHAT TO DO

Compile an Adaptive Management Plan for each site.

Include in each plan

- detailed baseline site information
- the identified pressures; resulting impacts and issues for each site
- the management groups objectives and targets to address the issues
- agreed actions to be implemented
 - > resources required for implementation
 - > timescale for implementation
 - > allocation of responsibility for implementation of actions
- a detailed 5 year monitoring plan and outline 10 year plan specifying
 - > methodologies to be used
 - > resources required
 - > timing
 - > allocation of responsibility for completion
- methodology for analysis and evaluation of monitoring results
 - > Resources required
 - > Allocation for responsibility for completion
 - > Agreed partnership strategy for review and adjustment of actions when and where required.



WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

An adaptive management plan agreed through a participative process involving all stakeholders and resulting in a holistic approach to heritage attraction management through a long-term partnership agreement.



GeoparkLIFE

People Counters

In August 2014 18 people counters were installed in remote outdoor sites in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark to establish baseline data counts for visitors to those areas.

The battery operated people counters use infrared sensor technology to detect the body heat of people as they pass a counter.

Positioning of counters

The counters they need to be strategically located, ideally along a narrow confined path. In open countryside sometimes the only suitable location may be at a stile or gate. The following guidelines will help to eliminate some potential issues:

- Position the counter at a point where all visitors must pass. In open countryside or along some trails visitors may take short cuts or approach or exit from multiple entrance/exit points and some visitors may not be counted..
- Position the counter with back against a wall or in such a way that visitors are unable to walk behind the counter. On open trails or paths visitors can stray off a path and may pass behind a counter.
- Position the counter at the narrowest point of a trail or path. Many visitors will walk two abreast and the counter will only register a single count.
- Position the counters so that animals such as sheep, goats, cattle and horses cannot walk past the counter. In open farmed land this

may be impossible without the construction of additional barriers around the counter which only people can access.

- Position counters away from vegetation. Fast growing plants such as briars can grow in front of counters and trigger false readings or block the counter from registering any visitors.
- Do on-site checks after installation to verify visitor behaviour. Counters and trails need to be managed.
- Collect data regularly. This will minimise the amount of data loss in the event of unforeseen damage to the counter.

Accuracy of counters

It is important to note that no counter of any type will be 100% accurate. Even with the counter in an ideal location such as a stile there are factors which cannot reasonably be controlled, in particular groups or individuals stopping at the counter location and moving back and forth in front of the counter. People stop to take photos, for a rest or simply to talk.

Presentation of Data

Once the data has been collected it can be graphically presented to easily show visitor number trends over a wide variety of time scales as required.

The Burren & Cliffs of Moher GeoparkLIFE Map Viewer

The Heritage Council's Heritage Maps Viewer is a web-based spatial data viewer which focuses on the built, cultural and natural heritage around Ireland and off shore.

As part of the GeoparkLIFE programme the Heritage Council, as a partner of the LIFE programme, provided the opportunity for the Geopark to develop a specific Burren focused map viewer.

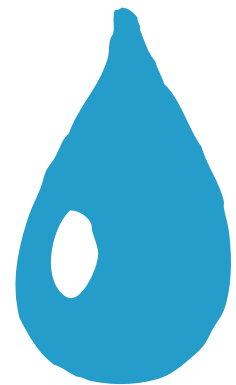
The Burren & Cliffs of Moher GeoparkLIFE Map Viewer acts as a “one stop shop” discovery tool, providing spatial and contextual heritage and planning data from a very wide range of local authority and national datasets. The information is provided through layers. There are 11 layers in total with 96 sub layers. Each sub layer is supported by contextual data contained in linked text boxes and folders. Some of the datasets have been uniquely created for this project including that which details the GeoparkLIFE demonstration sites which were used to

test the conservation actions for visitor management within the Burren. All reports relating to these sites can be accessed through links connected to the relevant layer.

The viewer uses web services to access live data where possible, thereby increasing data reliability and metadata is provided where possible to permit the user to understand the motive for the creation of individual datasets.

The Burren & Cliffs of Moher GeoparkLIFE Map Viewer can be used to create customized maps, measure area and distance, locate points of interest, study local heritage, identify protected areas and access local planning information. The project is co-ordinated by the Heritage Council, working with the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark, Clare County Council.

www.heritagemaps.ie





The Heritage sites and trails monitoring APP



The monitoring app is a mobile application for the monitoring for heritage sites, based on practical application at seven demonstration within the Burren region, a transferable monitoring toolkit for use by site managers.

The focus of the toolkit is to allow user friendly monitoring of visitor usage and related impacts at heritage sites in a holistic manner, incorporating all the natural, built and cultural heritage features that may occur at any one site. The data collected over time can then be used to inform the creation of adaptive management strategies on an individual site basis.

The GeoparkLIFE mobile monitoring application allows the collection of data (text and photographs) from three sources - visitor observation, condition of built monuments and walking trail health. The Visitor observation section is used to collect information with regard to the direction from which the visitor approached the site, mode of transport, parking location, the profile of the visitor (group), time spent at a site, activities undertaken and time spent at each activity. It also allows the user to track the movement of the visitor through the site resulting in spatial information with regard to

core and peripheral areas of use, where impacts occur due to visitor behaviour and resulting damage. Also included is a short questionnaire by which the user can obtain information with regard to the visitor's attitude to the site facilities and how they heard about the site. The built monuments section allows for the inputting of information (text and photographs) with regard to the presence, location and condition of all aspect of accessibility (including signage, parking and pathways), condition of the monument structures and where and when action should be taken.

The walking trails health section allows the user to select monitoring stops along the trail, document the width of the trail, comment on any issues, take multiple photographs, identify where action is required and provide a timescale for implementation of actions. Location and condition of signage along the trail can be mapped and photographed and can the presence of invasive species.

The app can operate in both online and offline scenarios allowing the user to collect the required information in the field and upload where appropriate. The results are then uploaded to a remote server and displayed through a web portal where reports can be generated and assessed for planning and implementation of management actions.



Acknowledgements:



Heartfelt thanks to the agencies, businesses, groups and individuals that gave of their valuable time, experiences and vision.

burrengeopark.ie

BURREN AND
CLIFFS OF MOHER



PEOPLE. PLACE.
LEARNING. LIVELIHOOD.