

# Loughanleagh Masterplan 2022 - 2032

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Prepared by

McAdam Consulting Services Ltd



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Ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil leis na heagraíochtaí seo a leanas, as ucht cuid den airgead a chur ar fáil le haghaidh na scéime seo; Coiste Forbartha Pobail Áitiúil Chontae an Chabháin, Comhairle Chontae an Chabháin, Breifne Aontaithe CLG, an t-Aire agus an Roinn Tuaithe, agus forbairt Pobail, EU agus an EAFRD.

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**Develop a Masterplan for the Loughanleagh and Muff area of Co. Cavan**  
**Máistirphlean a fhorbairt do cheantar Loch an La agus Muff i gCo. Chabhain**

Cavan LEADER LAG is an initiative of County Cavan Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in partnership with Breffni Integrated CLG and Cavan County Council, funded through Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 and governed by the Department of Rural and Community Development in line with the EU Programme Operating Rules.



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Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine  
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Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara

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## 1. Introduction

Loughanleagh & Muff Heritage Trust have commissioned this Masterplan to provide a roadmap for the future development of the Loughanleagh and Muff area and prepare proposals that will interpret the assets and uniqueness of the area.

The development of the Masterplan will act as a strategic framework for the development and regeneration of the Loughanleagh and Muff areas for the next 10 years and contains a series of actions that can be implemented over a number of phases and funded within that timescale.

By appropriately framing the structure and scope of the Loughanleagh and Muff outdoor context, this Masterplan seeks to consider the needs, relevance and effectiveness of the valuable ecology, archaeology and visual impact of Loughanleagh and Muff, and guide how the Trust can sustain and develop its key role in heritage management in the area.

This masterplan has been prepared jointly by the group with considerable input sourced from the local community and landowners.

## 2. Methodology

This project was initiated in December 2021 and completed in summer 2022. The development of the master plan encompassed the following actions;

- A vision for the short, medium and long-term development of the Loughanleagh and Muff area.
- Feedback from consultations with local community & stakeholders to ensure their ideas, suggestions and aspirations for the future of the area are included in the Masterplan.
- Details on requirements for gaining National Heritage Status as an area of high cultural and heritage importance along with national approval and recognition from the various tourist bodies as an approved unique recreational amenity location.
- A list of national & local strategies and initiatives that the project can be aligned with i.e., Ireland's Ancient East and Irelands hidden heartlands.
- A plan for the development of existing and new walking trails in conjunction with Coillte & Greenbelt to include graphics, signage & information points for the walks and to include signage of the 3 burial cairns on the Loughanleagh mountain range.
- A strategy to facilitate building relationships & developing contacts with appropriate bodies to include Coillte Teoranta, Greenbelt, Failte Ireland, Sports Ireland, National Parks & Wildlife, Dúchas, Cavan Sports Partnership, Cavan County Council, stakeholder groups, adjoining landowners, commercial operators and any other statutory agencies relevant to the project.
- A plan for establishing the site as a Heritage Information Hub for the catchment area (Kingscourt, Bailieborough, Shercock & Mullagh).
- A Bio-diversity plan for the protection and development of biodiversity in the Loughanleagh and Muff area in conjunction with our stakeholders.
- Design of the Interpretive/History centre to include toilets & kitchen incorporating a link with the amenity area
- A plan to ensure the financial viability/sustainability of the project.
- A list of current sources of funding that could support the project i.e., LEADER, along with guidelines for identifying future sources of funding & other supports to ensure the long-term viability of the project.
- An overview of the economic and social benefits expected from the project versus the costs.
- A strong and sustainable marketing & promotional strategy for the project.
- Prepare a time bound implementation plan aligned with funding opportunities.
- Key Performance Indicators to measure the success of the project to include measurement of visitors to the area.
- Proposed new car parking facility and up-grade to the amenity area to be included in the Masterplan.

The master plan involved the carrying out of extensive research, and a public and stakeholder engagement and consultation process. Key stakeholders including landowners, public bodies and community and voluntary organisations contributed to the development of this plan.

In addition to the methodology above the consultant provided two footfall counters free of charge to the group which were installed at the two main entrances to the site. The data from these is included in the appendix. This can provide a baseline from which future actions progress can be assessed to demonstrate their effectiveness in increasing footfall to the amenity sites.

### 3. Background of Heritage Trust

Loughanleagh and Muff Heritage Trust CLG (LMHT) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to the preservation of the Loughanleagh, to protect it from the adverse effects of development and the negative impact this may have on its ecology, archaeology and visual impact on the area. The Trust is actively involved in promoting its history and heritage and the development of walkways and trails through its landscape for its community and visitors.

Their mission statement is to 'Protect' and 'Preserve' the rich heritage and environment of the Loughanleagh mountain and its hinterland. The organisation was established as a Company Limited by Guarantee in July 2003.

Primarily, they are a voluntary organisation dedicated to promoting the cultural history and heritage of Muff & Loughanleagh and protecting Loughanleagh from the adverse effects of development and the negative impact this may have on its valuable ecology, archaeology and visual impact on the area. Secondly, in conjunction with our stakeholders they are actively involved in the careful and sensitive development of walkways and trails through this landscape for our community and the many visitors who visit to explore this hidden treasure and to enjoy the experience and legacy of our ancestors.

#### Vision and Values

- To be a protector and provider of our cultural and historic heritage and ensure it forms a core part of our community.
- To foster and promote best practice in the conservation and management of heritage and culture for Loughanleagh & Muff as a shared responsibility and a shared treasure.
- Inspire a pride in our history and culture through events, education and outreach activities and online services.
- Building relationships with stakeholders and partners to actively engage in the care for our heritage.
- Provide a safe environment and outdoor amenity for our visitors and members.

The groups mission, vision and values are strongly aligned to the findings and actions in the Masterplan and have helped shape the suitability, feasibility and acceptability of the overall strategic plan.

## 4. History of Loughanleagh area and existing facilities

### 4.1 Loughanleagh Area overview

The Loughanleagh area is a region of high landscape value situated in east Cavan between the towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt off the R165. It covers an area of approx. 3 kilometres in length by up to 1 Kilometre wide and rises to a height of 344 meters (1119 ft) above sea level. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty offering spectacular panoramic views of up to fourteen surrounding counties of the Irish countryside. The summit is just 5km East of Bailieborough and the 6km west of Kingscourt.

The name Loughanleagh originates from Lough-an-Leighis or 'Lake of the Cures'. Its former name was Sliabh Gaileng- 'The Mountains of the Gailenga'. Loughanleagh is steeped in history and folklore covering the Neolithic, Stone age, Celtic and Norman periods. There are three Stone Age Cairns straddled across the ridge of Loughanleagh mountain.

Loughanleagh is rich in historical value dating back to the 3rd century when it was inhabited by the "Gaelinga" people



## **Loughanleagh Geography and History**

Loughanleagh Mountain is a long ridge of Silurian rock which forms part of a range of hills stretching 5 miles between Tierworker to the South and to Taghart to the North. It encompasses part of six townlands- Bracklin, Cornasaus, Mohercrum, Moyer, Corraweelis and Edenagully. The range forms a watershed between the Drumlin Lake District of East Cavan, drained by the Blackwater and Annalee rivers, and the richer farmlands bordering on County Meath drained by the Glyde and Dee rivers to the Irish sea.

The summit of the mountain is 1119 ft (344 m), and this point is evident as the Main Cairn (Moyer Cairn) of the mountain. There are three Cairns on Loughanleagh, all of which are registered and protected by "Duchas", Ireland's heritage protection body. The Cairn located at Corraweelis was subjected to damage some years ago, resulting in Duchas representatives visiting the site and erecting a protection notice. These cairns were recognised as burial chambers for tribal chiefs. The word 'Cairn' literally means "Heap of Stones".

From the highest point on a clear day when visibility is good you can see up to 14 counties. Easily visible are Slieve Gullion, the Mourne Mountains, Cuilcagh, Fermanagh, Hill of Tara, Loughcrew and the Slieve Blooms eighty miles away towards the south.

Two rivers flowing from the mountain are the Blackwater (Bo Guaire) and the Borora (Bo Rua). Both these rivers flow towards the Boyne (Bo Fhionn). The fact that these rivers were all named after sacred cows, demonstrate that our ancient farmers found the cow an indispensable and valuable animal, and still the cow continues to be one of our sources of wealth. Bailieborough Creamery (now Lakeland Dairies) still flourishes locally and provides valuable local employment through its network of companies.

Towards the west we view rolling drumlin country interspersed with lakes well stocked with fish. This is an ancient land with tradition and folklore reaching back thousands of years to the Ages of Stone and Bronze. Cavan, itself in prehistoric times was known as the "Highland of the Gods of Craftsmanship and Artistic Expression", and Cavan folk today are reviving the skills of their ancestors in their modern industries.

Loughanleagh was inhabited during the third century by the "Gaelinga" people an ancient tribal race. One of the earliest known names for the mountain was Sliabh Gaileng (The Mountains of the Gaelinga). The townland name Moyer dates back to Gailinga times.

Bilberry Sunday is a remnant of the ancient festival of "Lughnasa" and still continues on Loughanleagh on the 3rd Sunday of July each year. On Bilberry Sunday local people and visitors still gather on the mountain to pick bilberries, which are abundant on Loughanleagh. In the past, this tradition was widespread across Ireland as part of the Lughnasa festival but very few places continue the tradition now.

In times past, an old coach road from Dublin to Derry crossed part of Loughanleagh mountain. That part of the road which crossed the mountain was known as the “Bridle Path” and races were run here in preparation for the Fair of Muff.

The Sunday before the Fair of Muff was called “Patron Sunday” and was traditionally a time of celebration before the Fair. The Fair of Muff dates back to 1608 and may have earlier origins. The Fair is still held each year on August 12th and continues to attract large numbers of horse traders and visitors

### **Lake of the Cures (Loch an Leighis)**

Loughanleagh used to be known as “Loch an Leighis” which means the Lake of the cure. Local history tells us that this lake was near the top of the mountain, beside the old coach road, and was reported to have been a sacred Celtic pool in pre-Christian times. It was much resorted to by patients suffering from scurvy, but especially for two or more Sundays at the end of July. It is said that great crowds used to visit in thousands with their sick and ailing for the healing properties in the water as it was believed that the water and mud of the lake were especially potent in curing skin diseases.

In Coote’s Statistical Survey of County Cavan of 1802, we have his account of the famous pool.

“This lake”, he says well deserves a minute investigation, as much from the singularity of its situation and the virtues of its waters, as well as from the peculiar circumstances attending it, of never raising or lowering, neither is there any evident supply to keep up so deep of water, nor does any discharge appear to issue from it, besides it is remarkable that the sun has no effect in imparting its genial influence, or in reducing its waters by attraction, nor has it ever been frozen, or its temperature altered in the severest winter. Coote goes on to tell that the mud from the lake has been frequently sent many miles to patients afflicted with skin complaints and many instances were known of cures being effected. It is remarkable that a military gentleman, who had been dreadfully afflicted with a leprosy, and had ineffectually tried the most celebrated waters in England, and on the continent, was in one season effectually cured with the mud from the Loughanleagh. This vicinity was ever after dear to him, and there he resided in perfect health for many years and lived to a very old age.

The holiness of the lake and the well that is fed from it, is accounted for by a legend set in penal Days. A priest was celebrating Mass at a rock beside the well. Peggy Dunt, a goat woman who lived beside the cairn on top of the mountain, saw an army coming from the direction of Moybolgue. She filled her apron with stones which she threw at the goats to make them rush past the priest, thus warning him and giving him time to throw his chalice into the lake, this giving it its miraculous cure. Dr. Maire MacNeill suspects that the holiness of the lake far ante-dates penal Days. It must go back to a faith much older than that of Saint Patrick, whose knee-mark is shown on a rock beside the alter and well, which, perhaps significantly faces the rising sun coming up over Dundalk Bay, for in ancient times the Irish were sunworshippers. Sad to say, the mysterious little lake has dried up, turf cutting caused the water to leave it, and the ancient pool where so many cures took place, is no longer to be seen, and a sedgy spot of about half an acre in extent, is all that remains to show the place where so many afflicted persons gathered in years long past.

The mass(altar) rock is still to be seen this day and continues to be a place of reflection for those who visit the site. In recent years, it has become an annual event to celebrate a “Dawn Mass” on Easter Sunday morning at the mass rock. The event continues to attract hundreds of people who celebrate the rising of Christ and the arrival of Eastertide.

### **Muff Castle (Caislean an Mhaga)**

The earliest recorded castle in the parish was at Muff or Cordoagh. According to a list of Breffini castles entered in the O’Reilly pedigree this castle, Caislean an Mhaga – (Muff Castle/ Castle of Clanchye)” was erected by Conor Og O’Reilly – son of Conor Mor. The death of Conor Og is entered in the Four Master 1436. Politically the O’Reilly family belonged to the Loyalist side and supported the Steward Kings against the Cromwellian forces.

The foundation of the castle therefore can be ascribed to the first half of the 15th century. The castle, in the townland of Cordoagh, is shown on the baronial map of 1609, and on the Down Survey record of half a century later.

The castle is believed to have been destroyed by Cromwell’s forces in 1641.

The ruins of the castle were still to be seen up to the early 1900’s. According to local accounts the walls were uprooted and used for road and house building material. Sadly, today there are no visual remains to be seen of this great castle.

Before the arrival of the Cromwellian forces, local history says that the treasures of the castle were secured and sunken in a nearby lake. Folklore has it that a female servant of the castle had known of the whereabouts of the jewels and had consented to take a party who wished to secure them. When they came within sight of where the treasure was supposedly concealed, the woman stood up excitedly in the sidecar in which they were travelling and exclaimed “I can see the spot”. With these words she fell dead.

## **4.2 Folklore of the Loughanleagh**



Local folklore has many stories loaded with ancient mythology. One such example is the “One-Eyed Hare of Loughanleagh”. It is said that a gamekeeper lived on the mountain and had been told that a fine hare had been seen beside the “Lake of the Cure”, so he concealed himself nearby to kill it. One day, just as the sun was sinking beneath the horizon a hare came bounding to him. But what he saw astounded him and he could not move.

The hare was no ordinary hare – it had a great big red eye in the centre of its forehead and dived right down into the lake to the “Otherworld” where it belonged. The lake was therefore a sacred entrance to the “Otherworld” where the ancient Gods and heroes dwelt and feasted. In pagan times they offered

sacrifices to their gods by throwing valuable objects into deep water. Hordes of gold and bronze have been discovered in bogs and lakes on the continent and in Britain where they were deposited thousands of years ago to please their gods. Some of our Irish lakes and bogs may have similar treasures but so far, no treasure has been unearthed here.

### **The Cailleach of Loughanleagh**

It was an ancient goddess of the Irish known in tradition as the Cailleach who dropped stones out of her apron to form the cairns on the Sliabh Na Caillighe hills in Meath and on Loughanleagh mountain. Sometimes she appeared very ugly but when she chose, she could be young and beautiful. There was according to the old folk a dramatic confrontation between the CAILLEACH representing the old faith and Saint Patrick representing the new faith, in the hollow in the Tiervurcher road east of the ancient church of Moybolgue.

Legend has used a language of its own to describe the event which we may not take as the literal truth. It tells how a beautiful lady was riding to Mass being celebrated by St. Patrick.

It may be significant that the Cailleach was coming from the direction of the ancient stone Age Court Cairn of Carnaville. As she passed some blackberries, she disregarded her intentions and ate them. Instantly she was transformed into a ferocious monster, which swallowed the horse and horse-boy. Then she started to devour the people. Going down on one knee, Patrick with his staff (one version of the legend says with an arrow) struck her and she was blown to pieces. A cairn on the roadside marks the site of her grave of which only a few large stones remain in the ditch. It used to be feared that the monster would rise again and continue her work of destruction. Children used to pass the ‘Tory Bush’ on the north side of the mountain in fear and trembling for that was one of the places from which it was believed she would emerge someday to destroy the country.

### **The Fair of Muff**

The Fair of Muff is one of the oldest fairs in Ireland dating back to 1608.

The ancient Fair of Muff was one of the celebrations connected with the Loughanleagh Festival of Lunasa (August). It was an ancient Celtic Fair, which has its origins in the remote past. A famous horse-fair was held there on the 12th of August and has continued annually since. Before the calendar change of 1752 it was held on August 1st – La-Lunasa. The “modern” Fair of Muff can trace its origins to the year 1608, when King James 1 granted a licence to Garret Fleming of Cabragh, to hold a Tuesday market at the “Castle of Clanchye” (Muff Castle), and a fair on the first of August and the two following days. This of course was a revival or renewal of the old Celtic Fair. Fleming’s interest was chiefly in securing tolls. In the early decades of the last century, when faction fighting was the order of the day, the fair was often the scene of riot and tumult.

Today, the tradition of the Fair still takes place on the August Bank Holiday each year and continues to be a focal point in the Irish calendar amongst horse traders for the buying and selling of horses with many's a deal done and sealed with the traditional spit and a handshake. In addition, it's become part of the pageantry for all kinds of street vendors to set up their stalls for

the day and bargain with the visitors. At the Rock of Muff, games representing the old "Penny Toss" and "Skittles" attracts those interested in gambling a few bob in the hope of turning a profit. The bar close by, the dancing deck and music provides visitors with an opportunity to re-acquaint, enjoy the crack and talk about old times.

The Fair's importance in Irish culture is highlighted each year with features in both national and local newspapers, not to mention a special feature in 2011 on the renown 'Lesser Spotted Ulster' programme by journalist and broadcaster Joe Mc Mahon (Season 14, Episode 18).

### **Traditional site of the Fair of Muff**

Faction fighting was a recognised pastime at Irish fairs. 1830 is remembered as the date of a serious scrimmage between Orangeman and Ribbonmen. The following account of the Fighting Fair of Muff is taken from an account written by James Traynor in the Anglo-Celt of 17th December 1898:

"Resistance to tithes and evictions lighted the fires of religious bigotry in many districts, especially in East Cavan, and the bitterest feeling of hatred existed between the Orangeman and Catholics who had formed themselves into vast organisations for their own protection."

In the year 1830, the Orange Lodge of Kingscourt, convenient to the Rock of Muff, was in possession of a man called Glasford. The big Pattern commenced on Sunday August 8th, and a pre-arranged order was attended by vast contingents of tithe opponents, who marched to the spot from all directions with a decided appearance of military discipline. They took their part in the amusements of the day and left again in the evening in processional order.

The Orangemen heard that their lodge was to be attacked on fair day, the result of the rumour was that they left in a stock of arms and ammunition with the object of defending the place. The carrying of the arms and ammunition to the house created a sensational story on the opposite side; nothing less than a massacre on the day was feared.

As the late P.J. Gaynor's father was from that area I am giving his dramatic account of what actually happened, for there are different versions. "There was no disturbance till evening. The Orangemen were holding a meeting beside the fair in Glasford's house. A man from Bailieborough with a 'stanner' packed up his wares and fired a pistol shot in the air. The Orangemen thought they were being attacked and fired a volley in reply. The crowd then rushed for the house where the Orangemen were holding their meeting, evidently to burn it. Rev. Tom Burke, the Catholic curate in Kingscourt, entered the lodge and remained there to prevent the place being burned, knowing that in so doing the Catholics would not attack the house.

In the commotion, when the crowd was outside and this is the strange reason, they were mistaken for Protestants on account of the 'Broadcloth' suits they were wearing. It seems that in the days only well-to-do Protestants wore factory-made tweed, and Catholics usually wore 'frieze' manufactured at home.

The affair caused the greatest excitement for miles around on the same night, and the news spread like wildfire. The worse construction was put on the affair, and a massacre was reported as going on. Many people did not go to bed for a week. Immense funerals attended the bodies of Fitzsimons and O'Reilly, the cortege carrying long white rods in their hands.

The report of the riot at the fair was conveyed to every anti-tithe man within a radius of twenty miles and the evening of the 13th found 10,000 armed men in the neighbourhood of Muff. There they heard that nothing further had happened after the attack on the house was abandoned, and also that large forces of military were proceeding to the district from Dundalk, Dublin and Cavan and that a large force of cavalry was not more than six miles distant. After a hurried consultation the leaders decided on leaving for their homes again. For months afterwards the district was very excited, and a force of military was kept in the neighbourhood towns prepared for emergencies but fortunately antagonism calmed down. There was turmoil for seven years in Ireland after the Riot of Muff, till in the first year of the reign of Victoria, 1837, the Commutation Act abolished forever the collection of Tithes.

### 4.3 Archaeology

There are three prehistoric Cairns on Loughanleagh located in the townlands of Cornasaus, Moyer and Corraweelis. Cairns are mounds of stone, usually representing burial sites and often date back to the Bronze Age. There is strong evidence that Cairns may cover chambered burials. This archaeology site has good economic and tourist interest, and its location is of national importance with these monuments being registered and protected by "Duchas", the heritage protection body of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The occurrence of a number of monuments on the site emphasizes the importance of Loughanleagh mountain to people through the ages. It has not yet been investigated whether there is a connection in archaeological terms, between Loughanleagh and other sites of north Meath/South Cavan. Some researchers believe that the site has strong links with other Neolithic sites located at Loughcrew, Tara and Newgrange.

#### Edenagully School

Edenagully School was the last school to close in Kingscourt parish, this occurred in July 1973.

#### Cairns at Loughanleagh

There are 3 Cairns of interest on the mountain. These include;

- Moyer Cairn  
Situated at the highest point of the mountain range. This is a large, well-preserved circular Cairn of small and medium stones (diam. At base 17.8m).
- Corraweelis Cairn  
Situated on the second highest hill in the Loughanleagh range affording panoramic views in all directions except NE. A large, well-preserved, circular cairn of medium and large stones (diam. at base 16m.).
- Mohercom Cairn  
Situated on a SE-facing slope a short distance below a prominent peak in rough, mountainous terrain. Relatively well-preserved, circular cairn (diam. At base 11m).

*Ref information taken from previous report compiled by: David Sweetnam- Archaeology, Anne Behan – Environment, John Lovett – Ornithologist, Maurice Eakin - Duchas*

#### 4.4 Ecology and Walking Trails

##### Ecology

***“The ecology of the Loughanleagh is fundamental to the beauty of the area. In this page we detail some of the ecology of the surrounding area to give a flavour of the Loughanleagh environment”***



The slopes of Loughanleagh Mountain, up to a height of approximately 270m are used for agriculture by local farm families. There is a relatively intact hedge network on local farms, and it appears that hedgerow removal has not been excessive.

The top of Loughanleagh mountain is a mixture of open dry heath, small patches of wet heath and large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry. Because the heath area is non-productive in agricultural terms it has not been cultivated. The boundary between agricultural and heath is marked by a combination of hedgerow and post and wire fences. The heath is owned by a number of local farmers, but there are no obvious field boundaries dividing fences. Commercial coniferous forestry at Cornasaus is owned by Green Belt and the remainder of the forestry at Loughanleagh is owned by Coillte.

The top of Loughanleagh mountain is a mixture of open dry heath, small patches of wet heath and large tracts of commercial coniferous forestry. Because the heath area is non-productive in agricultural terms it has not been cultivated. The boundary between agricultural and heath is marked by a combination of hedgerow and post and wire fences.

The heath is owned by a number of local farmers, but there are no obvious field boundaries dividing fences. Commercial coniferous forestry at Cornasaus is owned by Green Belt and the remainder of the forestry at Loughanleagh is owned by Coillte.

Please see Appendix 3 for Habitat and Plant List

## **Walking Trails**

There are several walking trails on Loughanleagh Mountain. These include

- Blue Trail - 'Adrian's Way' Linear Trail
- Red Trail - 'Adrian's Way' Loop Trail
- Brown Trail – 'Moyar Trail' Loop
- Green Trail – 'Cornasaus' Trail Loop
- Purple Trail – 'Bracklin' Trail Loop
- Yellow Trail – Bridle Path Loop Trail

Please see Appendix 2 for maps of the above trails.

The term 'Natural Heritage' covers wildlife, plants and animals and their habitats, and also includes geological and geomorphological sites. Wildlife sites are identified and surveyed by staff of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, part of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (since April 2011), while the Geological Survey of Ireland is responsible for identifying earth-science sites.

Wildlife sites can be important at the local, regional, national or European (or other International) level. There are no official protective designations for wildlife sites which are important at a local or regional level only. Wildlife sites that are of national importance (and, in practice, many sites of regional importance) can be designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Sites that have been identified but not yet designated as NHAs are known as 'proposed Natural Heritage Areas' (pNHAs). These sites are protected from development only by the relevant development plan (e.g., the County Development Plan).

Wildlife sites that are of European importance will usually be designated as NHAs too but also qualify for designation under two different European Union Directives. Sites which are of Community Importance for wild birds will be designated as Special Protection Areas under the EU Birds Directive of 1979, as revised in 2009. Sites of importance for all other (non-avian) species or which support important habitats are protected under the EU's Habitat Directive 1992. These Directives were transposed into Irish law as the Habitats Regulations 1997.

These two different types of sites (which often overlap) are known collectively as Natura 2000 sites (referred to as 'European sites' in the Planning and Development Act). Any project or plan that is being proposed must be 'screened' to see if an 'Appropriate Assessment' is required. Sites of importance for geology and geomorphology are being identified, on the basis of 'themes', by a geological heritage project run by the Geological Survey of Ireland. These sites will also be designated as NHAs.

The Loughanleagh is a region of high landscape and natural heritage value situated in east Cavan between the towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt off the R165. It covers an area of approx. 3 kilometres in length by up to 1 Kilometre wide and rises to a height of 344 meters (1119 ft) above sea level. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty offering spectacular panoramic views of up to fourteen surrounding counties of the Irish countryside.

The area has considerable flora and fauna on site, which is complemented with geological, geomorphological and some historic heritage.

## 5. Profile of the Area

This section focuses on the demographics of the area, and the nearest 2 towns, Bailieborough and Kingscourt. Given its close proximity to the 2 market towns, the catchment area has a population of 8,200. Before even considering the area as a tourist destination, there is a significant pool of users current and future, that can visit the area as a local amenity. This section emphasises the need for the development of infrastructure and to promote the area locally to enhance its usage.

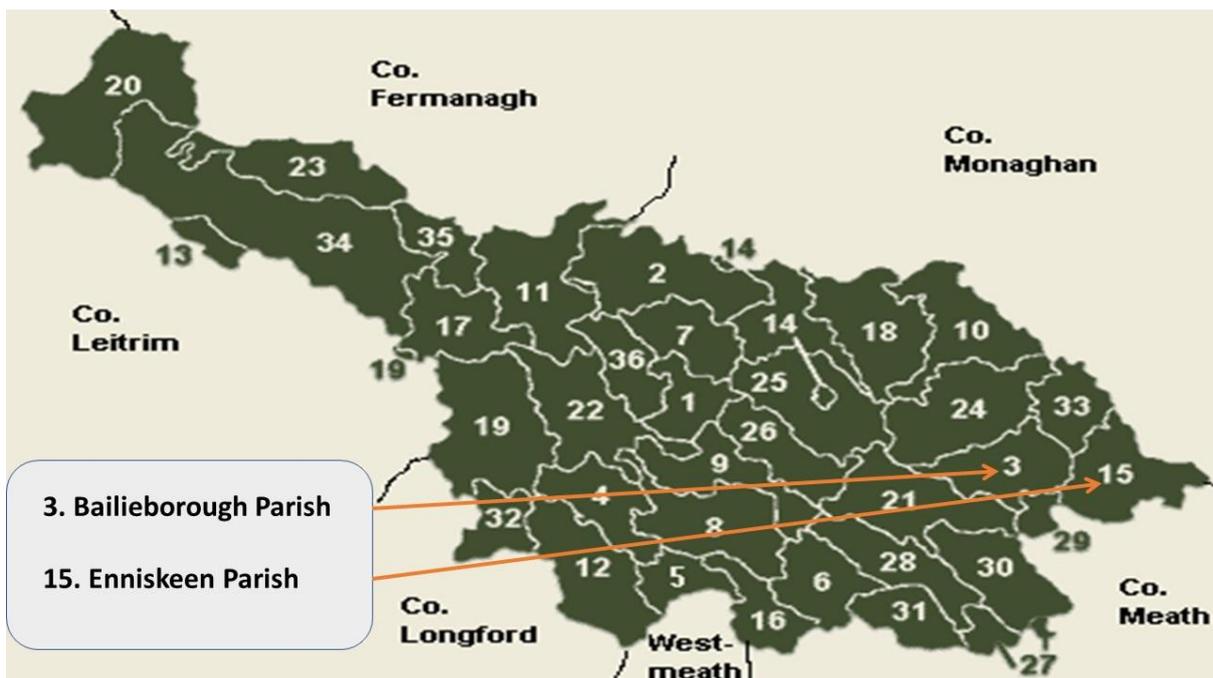
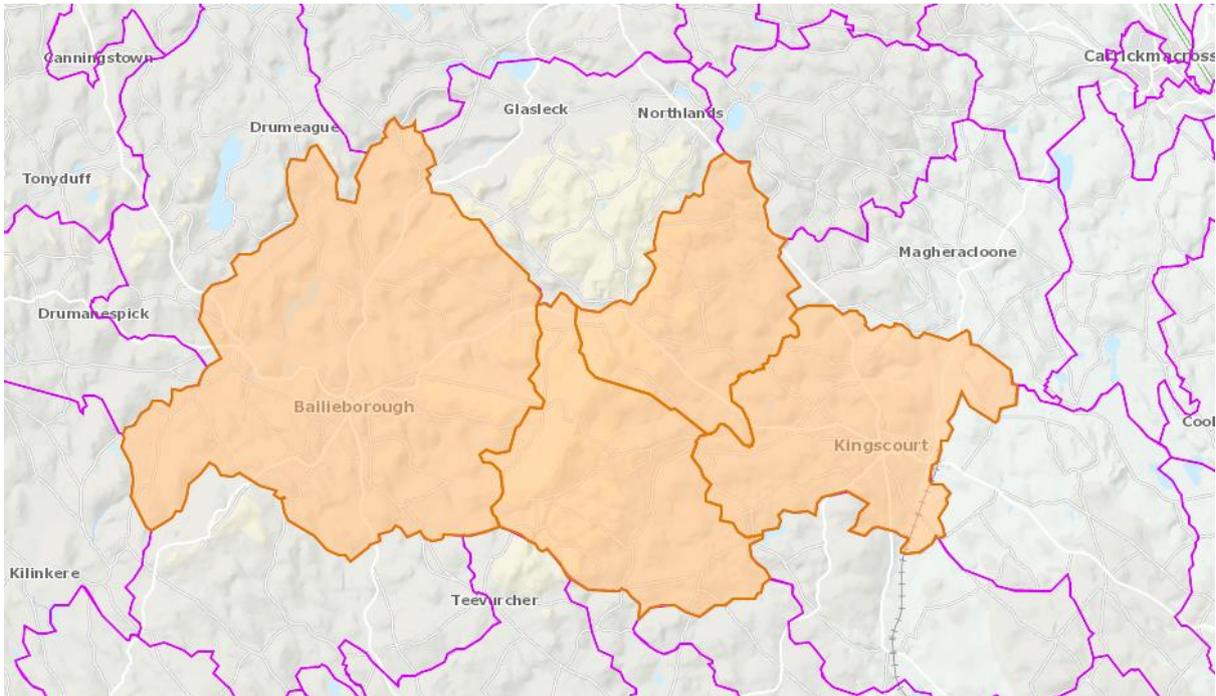
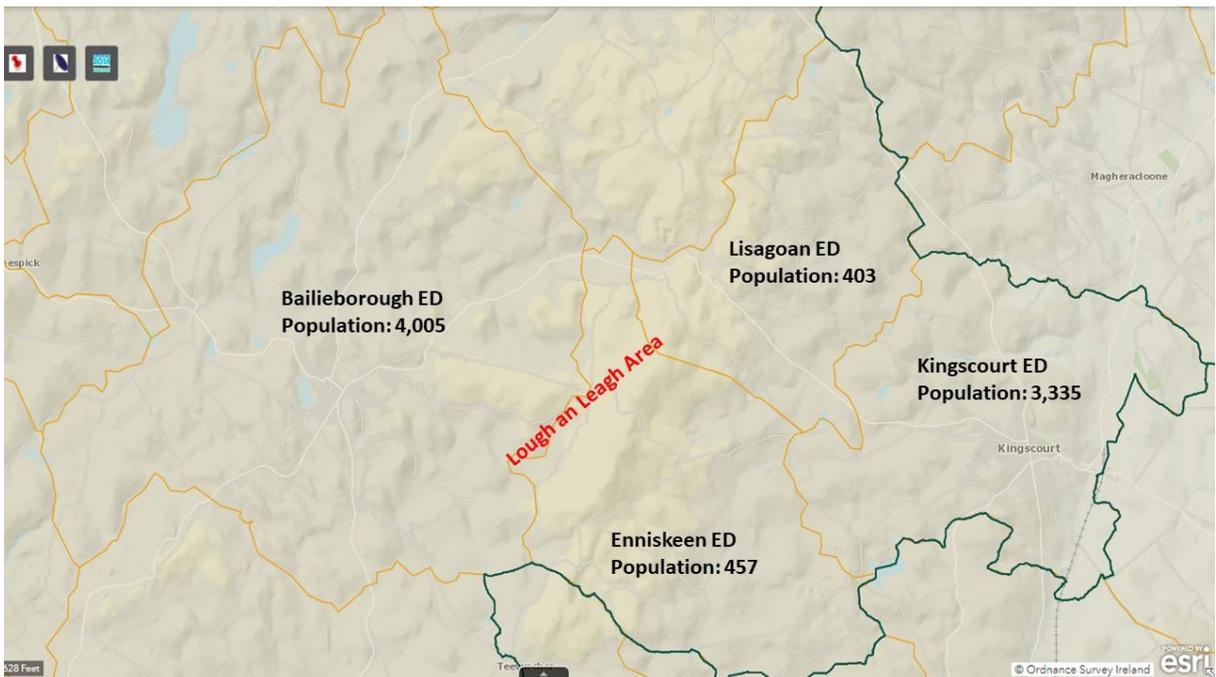


Fig. 5.1 Location in County

The area of focus in this study is Loughanleagh which extends along 2 civil parishes in Southeast Cavan, Bailieborough Parish and Enniskeen Parish. The area is known for its various tourist attractions such as Muff Rock, Battle of Muff, and Muff castle. This area is inclusive of the market towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. Demographics for this area can be sourced through the Central Statistics Office's Census data. The most optimal coverage layers to derive the data for the purpose of this study are Electoral Divisions. There are 4 electoral divisions encompassed in these 2 parishes and are illustrated in the figures below.



*Fig. 5.2 Location relative to neighbouring towns*



*Fig. 5.3 Location relative to Electoral divisions*

The 4 Electoral Divisions are Bailieborough, Lisagoan, Enniskeen and Kingscourt. The total population of these 4 EDs in 2016 was 8,200. This section analyses the demographics of this area. Most of the Loughanleagh long ridge mountain is in Enniskeen ED. Enniskeen ED is exclusively rural but has demographics that contrast with the typical EDs that are 100% rural, mainly attributable to its characteristics as a dormitory area with a significant proportion of

commuters to the nearby larger urban settlements and the Greater Dublin Area. This section also analyses Bailieborough and Kingscourt towns. The first section details Loughanleagh mountain and its features.

Loughanleagh is situated in Enniskeen Electoral Division (ED). Enniskeen Electoral Division is situated between the towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. The ED is exclusively rural with no urban settlements of any size. In 2016 the population size was 457, a slight fall from 461 in Census 2011. The population has grown by 40.6% from its low of 325 in 1991. Given its 100% rural landscape, the age dependency is remarkably low at 50.3%, with just a 13.2% aged dependency, which is significantly lower than its environs, the county average (21.8%) and the national average (20.4%).

Enniskeen ED demographics indicate a significant proportion dormitory / commuting culture given the employment and age profiles etc. With the greater Dublin area just over an hour away and the towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt less than 5 miles, the area is ideal for this segment. This electoral division is 100% rural but is relatively diverse and despite the diversity just one person cannot speak English well. There is a higher proportion of young families than average, and a low proportion of households are retired. Some of the key findings from the demographics from the 2016 census of Enniskeen include;

- Diverse demographics for rural area. 96% lived in same address since 2011. Only 1 person does not speak English fluently.
- Higher proportion of families have children
- Low proportion of households are retired (4%)
- A low proportion of population 15+ are retired (8.1%)
- Lower proportion of householders live alone (17%)
- High Proportion of houses with mortgage (50.3%)
- High Labour Participation rate (69%) and unemployment below average (11.4%)
- 93.2% report their health being either very good or good. Significantly high proportion.

Table 1 Loughanleagh EDs, County Cavan, Border Region and State Population Change 2002-2016

| Area                         | 2002         | 2006         | Chg 02-06     | 2011         | Chg 06-11     | 2016         | Chg 11-16    | Chg 02-16     |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Enniskeen ED                 | 372          | 391          | 5.11%         | 461          | 17.90%        | 457          | -0.87%       | 22.85%        |
| Bailieborough ED             | 2,844        | 3,190        | 12.17%        | 3,862        | 21.07%        | 4,005        | 3.70%        | 40.82%        |
| Kingscourt ED                | 2,019        | 2,580        | 27.79%        | 3,224        | 24.96%        | 3,335        | 3.44%        | 65.18%        |
| Lisagoan ED                  | 319          | 327          | 2.51%         | 388          | 18.65%        | 403          | 3.87%        | 26.33%        |
| <b>Total Loughanlea 4EDs</b> | <b>5,554</b> | <b>6,488</b> | <b>16.82%</b> | <b>7,935</b> | <b>22.30%</b> | <b>8,200</b> | <b>3.34%</b> | <b>47.64%</b> |
| County Cavan                 | 56,546       | 64,003       | 13.19%        | 73,183       | 14.34%        | 76,176       | 4.09%        | 34.72%        |
| Border Region                | 432,534      | 468,375      | 8.29%         | 514,891      | 9.93%         | 523,217      | 1.62%        | 20.97%        |
| State                        | 3,917,203    | 4,239,848    | 8.24%         | 4,588,252    | 8.22%         | 4,761,865    | 3.78%        | 21.56%        |

| Area                          | 1991         | 1996         | 2002         | 2006         | 2011         | 2016         |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total Loughanlea 4 EDs</b> | <b>5,114</b> | <b>5,177</b> | <b>5,554</b> | <b>6,488</b> | <b>7,935</b> | <b>8,200</b> |
| County Cavan                  | 52,796       | 52,944       | 56,546       | 64,003       | 73,183       | 76,176       |

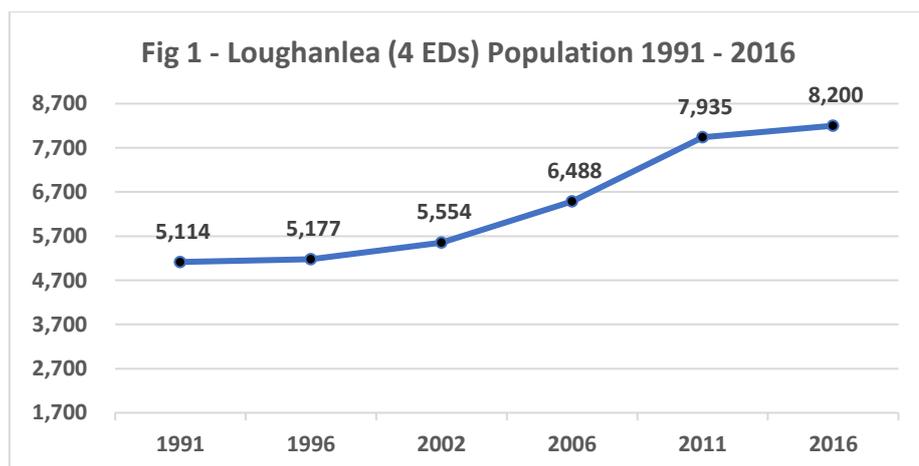


Figure 1

The total population of the catchment area is 8,200, which includes the urban settlement areas of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. The population has increased by almost half (47.6%) in the 14 years up to 2016 and is still growing. The growth is at a faster pace than the County and Nationally, with Kingscourt ED growing at the largest rate.

Table 2

| Year   | Aged 0 to 19 | Aged 20 to 29 | Aged 30 to 44 | Aged 45 to 64 | Aged 65 to 79 | Aged 80 Plus | Total |
|--------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 2011   | 2,486        | 1,132         | 1,815         | 1,670         | 634           | 198          | 7,935 |
| 2016   | 2,591        | 884           | 1,880         | 1,876         | 734           | 235          | 8,200 |
| Change | 105          | - 248         | 65            | 206           | 100           | 37           | 265   |
| Change | 4.22%        | -21.91%       | 3.58%         | 12.34%        | 15.77%        | 18.69%       | 3.34% |

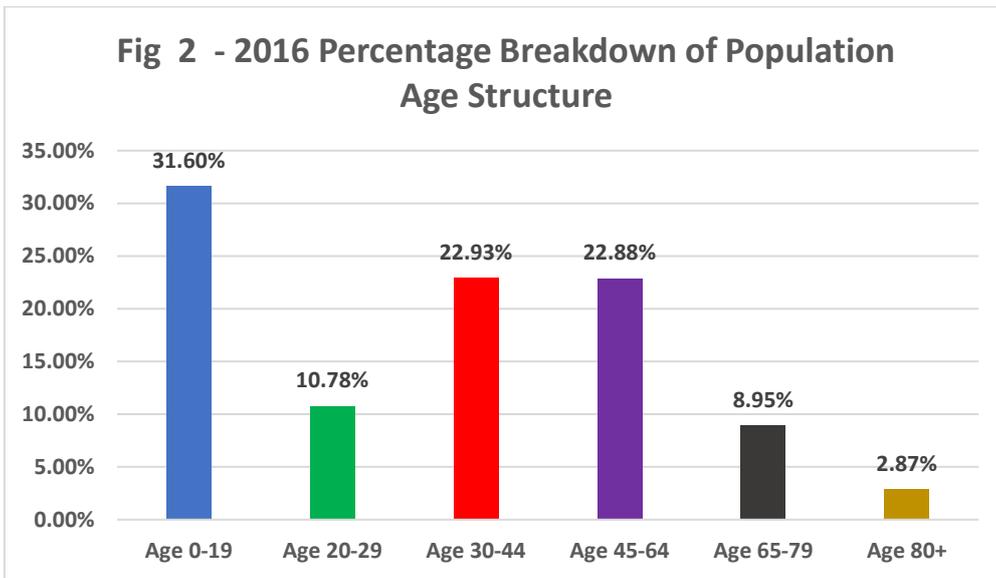


Figure 2

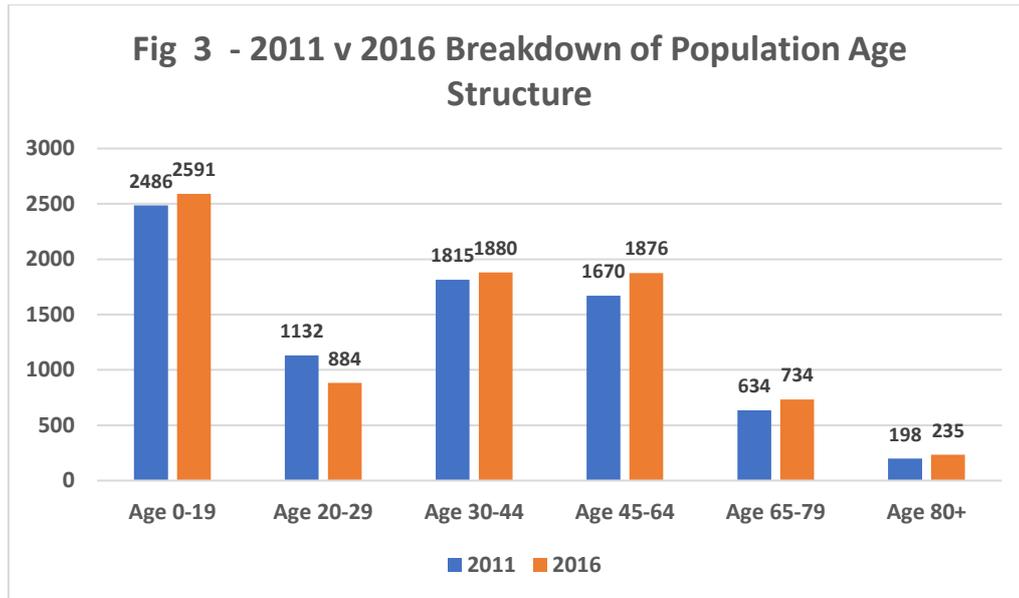


Figure 3

Table 3

| Year          | Aged 0 to 4    | Aged 5 to 9   | Aged 10 to 14 | Aged 15 to 19 | Total        |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>2011</b>   | <b>790</b>     | <b>628</b>    | <b>587</b>    | <b>481</b>    | <b>2,486</b> |
| <b>2016</b>   | <b>659</b>     | <b>776</b>    | <b>608</b>    | <b>548</b>    | <b>2,591</b> |
| <b>Change</b> | <b>- 131</b>   | <b>148</b>    | <b>21</b>     | <b>67</b>     | <b>105</b>   |
| <b>Change</b> | <b>-16.58%</b> | <b>23.57%</b> | <b>3.58%</b>  | <b>13.93%</b> | <b>4.22%</b> |

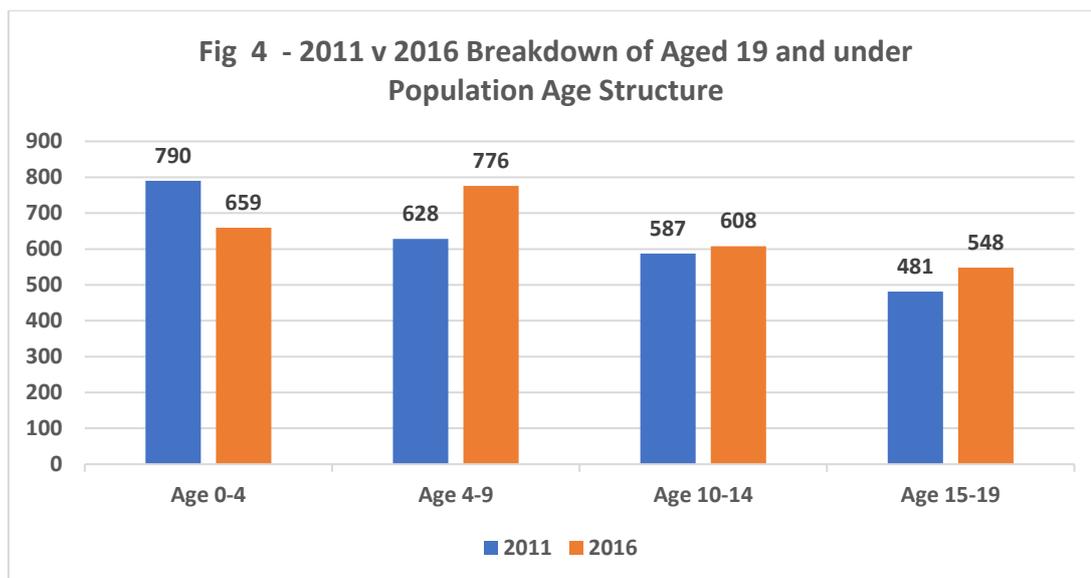


Figure 4

As indicated in the following table County Cavan and Loughanleagh Coverage area have a higher percentage of its population within the age dependency groups than the state and most of the Border area. The area's total dependency in 2016 of 58.1% is marginally lower than County Cavan (58.4%). As outlined above the increase the substantial increase in the elderly population has added significant pressure on the elderly dependency ratio, while the sharp decline in the under 14 age group has resulted in a contrasting drop in youth dependency. However, this decline could weigh more pressure on elderly dependency in future years. Such population statistics are highly relevant for the provision of services such as schools, crèches, playschools, playgrounds etc for younger people and nursing homes, accessible community facilities and age friendly policies for older people.

Table 4 Families family members and children in families by size of family

| Size of family    | No. of families | No. of persons | No. of children |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2 persons         | 805             | 1,610          | 204             |
| 3 persons         | 436             | 1,308          | 518             |
| 4 persons         | 466             | 1,864          | 979             |
| 5 persons         | 291             | 1,455          | 888             |
| 6 or more persons | 130             | 830            | 575             |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>2,128</b>    | <b>7,067</b>   | <b>3,164</b>    |

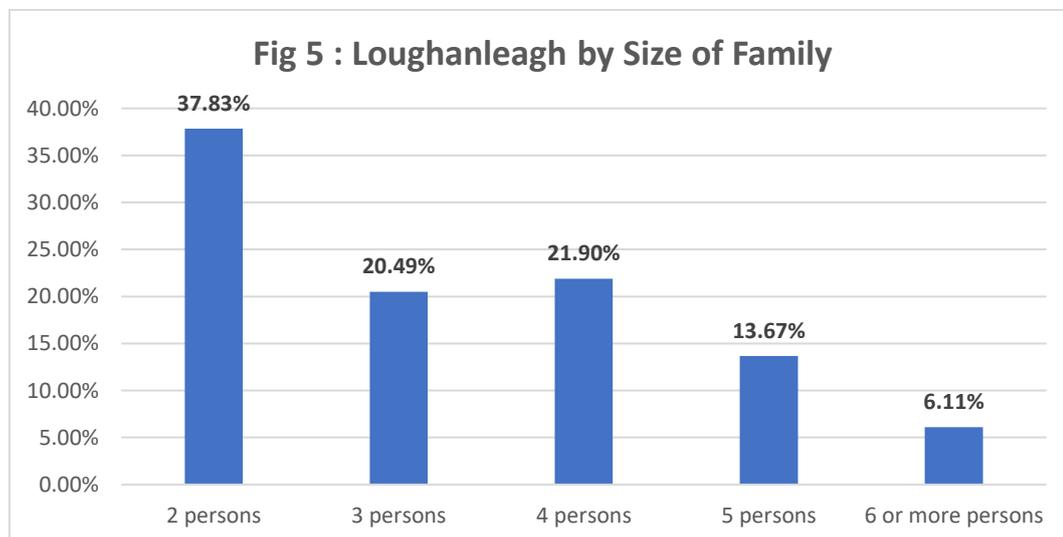


Figure 5

Table 5 Family units with children by size and age of children

| Number of children | All children under 15 | All children 15 or over | Children both under and over 15 | Total        |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 0 children         | -                     | -                       | -                               | 601          |
| 1 child            | 264                   | 294                     | -                               | 558          |
| 2 children         | 295                   | 127                     | 79                              | 501          |
| 3 children         | 158                   | 62                      | 103                             | 323          |
| 4 children         | 38                    | 11                      | 55                              | 104          |
| 5 or more children | 14                    | 5                       | 22                              | 41           |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>769</b>            | <b>499</b>              | <b>259</b>                      | <b>2,128</b> |

There are 2,128 families in the area representing 86.2% of the population and 3,164 children in total (including sons and daughters of all ages). A lower than average of families has just 2 members (37.8%, compared to the State (39.5%) and Cavan (36.9%)). Consequently, there are more large families than average with one fifth (19.78%) with 5 members or more. 28.2% of families have no children, compared to 27.8% in Cavan and 29.2% for the State.

Table 6 Families by family cycle

| Family cycle   | Number of families | Number of family members |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Pre-family     | 170                | 340                      |
| Empty nest     | 232                | 464                      |
| Retired        | 199                | 398                      |
| Pre-school     | 218                | 703                      |
| Early school   | 289                | 1,131                    |
| Pre-adolescent | 262                | 1,121                    |
| Adolescent     | 283                | 1,195                    |
| Adult          | 475                | 1,715                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>2,128</b>       | <b>7,067</b>             |

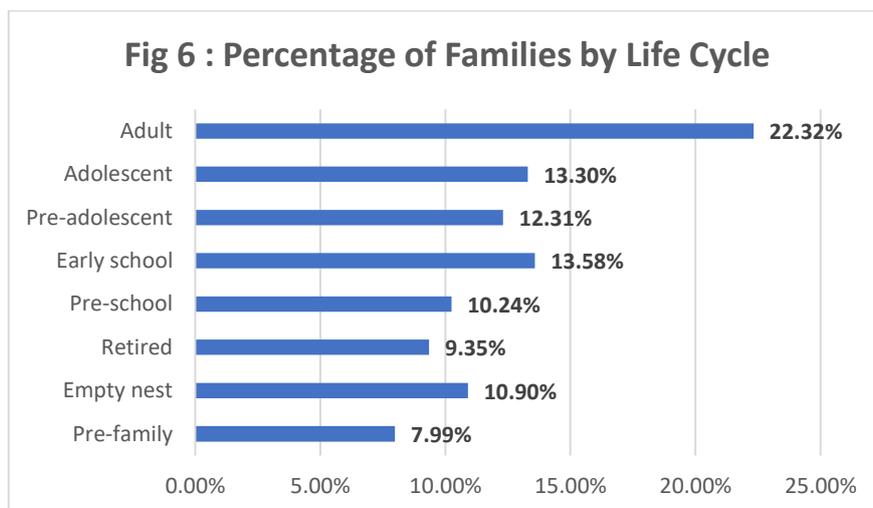


Figure 6

28.2% of families have no children at home, categorised as pre-family (female is under 45, 7.99%), empty nest (female is between 45 and 64 years, 10.9%) and retired (65 and over, 9.35%). This figure has increased from 26.6% in 2011. This compares to the National average of families with no children at home of 29% and 28% in County Cavan in 2016.

22.32% of families have an eldest over the age of 20, while the rest (49.13%) have the eldest child at various stages of childhood development.

Table 7 Private households by type

| Type of Household                   | Households   | Persons      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| One person                          | 733          | 733          |
| Married couple                      | 450          | 900          |
| Cohabiting couple                   | 113          | 226          |
| Married couple and children         | 941          | 3,989        |
| Cohabiting couple and children      | 165          | 652          |
| Father and children                 | 37           | 95           |
| Mother and children                 | 267          | 725          |
| Couple and others                   | 23           | 79           |
| Couple children and others          | 54           | 302          |
| Father children and others          | 4            | 17           |
| Mother children and others          | 23           | 90           |
| Two or more family units            | 25           | 138          |
| Non-family households and relatives | 42           | 88           |
| Two or more non-related persons     | 39           | 94           |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>2,916</b> | <b>8,128</b> |

## 6. Consultation and Needs analysis

### 6.1 Consultation Process

In an effort to identify and also to assess the needs of the Loughanleagh area a consultation exercise was undertaken with local community interests and other key stakeholders through a series of meetings, phone calls, e-mail and online survey communication. The consultation took place during the period February to June 2022.

The following groups and individuals were targeted for initial consultation;

- Landowners
- Local residents
- Cavan County Council
- Members of Loughanleagh and Muff Heritage Trust CLG.
- Members of the wider local community and rural catchment areas.
- Local Community and Voluntary Organisations of the greater Loughanleagh area including Bailieborough and Kingscourt.

Key needs identified as part of the consultation for the area were categorised broadly under the three main headings of social and economic and the following is a synopsis in bullet point format of needs identified:

#### **Social needs**

1. A shared outdoor community space near the urban settlements of Kingscourt and Bailieborough.
2. Greater amenities for the local population.
3. Increased awareness of biodiversity and the environment
4. Facilities for young people in the area.
5. Novel means of education such as off-site classes in the great outdoors
6. Improving preventative health outcomes through exercising and relaxing in picturesque and tranquil rural settings near urban settlements.

#### **Economic needs**

1. Restoration, preservation and establishment of a 'Bailieborough Bridewell' tourist attraction
2. Employment locally.
3. Catalyst or incentive for job creation.

4. A tourist attraction near both Kingscourt and Bailieborough
5. A Heritage/Cultural area
6. Rentable space for onsite catering.
7. Craft workers/artists space.
8. Staging post for tours of the local area.
9. Maintaining the viability of both towns' retail sector.

### **Environmental needs**

1. Enhanced protection of the biodiversity at the Loughanleagh mountain area
2. Develop the area appropriately for Eco-tourism
3. Education on-site on the environment and sustainability
4. Promote and raise awareness of the environment in an apt rural setting near the 2 market towns of Kingscourt and Bailieborough

Tourism and other development opportunities, co-ordination and marketing of the area featured strongly in the consultation engagement. It was felt that the Loughanleagh could be appropriately utilised as resource to act as a focal point through which the co- ordination of eco-tourism and biodiversity educational activities could be developed in balance with the preservation of the area as a biodiversity site / natural reserve.

The area was also noted as steeped in heritage and nature and has a very unique story to tell in terms of its habitant and history and its story could be interpreted and told to form part of the Ireland Ancient East offering in the region.

### **6.2 Community Online Surveys**

2 comprehensive consultation surveys were undertaken as part of the planning process covering households/residents and a second one covering organisations. The following is a summary of the results of the households/residents' survey.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Masterplan Public Consultation Survey       | 401 Responses |
| Masterplan Organisation Consultation Survey | 28 Responses  |
| Total Amount:                               | 429 Responses |

### **6.3 Public Consultation Survey**

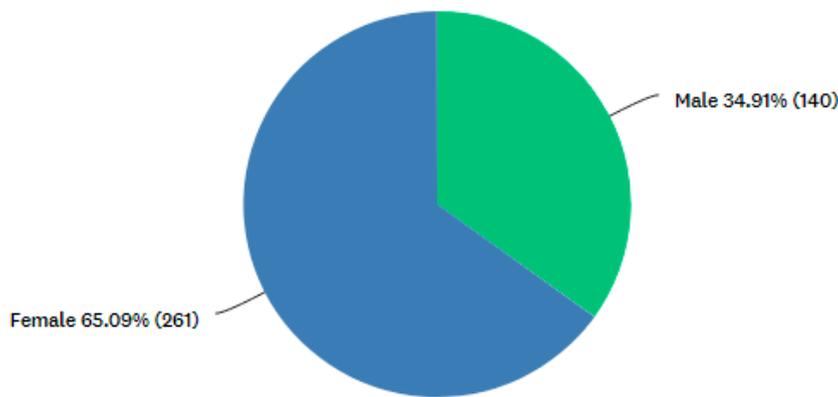
A comprehensive survey was carried out among the broader community in the Loughanleagh area. This involved the completion of 401 questionnaires through the online survey facility Survey Monkey. Even taking the wide focus area including the 2 towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt ED's, the sample size is 4.89% of the total population of 8,200 giving a 95% confidence level with a 4.78% margin of error. This is a significant sample size for the purposes of this analysis. Householders were invited to participate in the survey through social networks and e-mails and a large representative group of all sections of the community completed the survey. This also includes manual entries by those who have no online presence.

## 6.4 Public consultation Survey's Findings

The following section provides a summary of the findings from the completed questionnaires circulated to the broader population in the area. A copy of the survey is included in appendix 1.

### The Respondent

#### Q1 Are you?

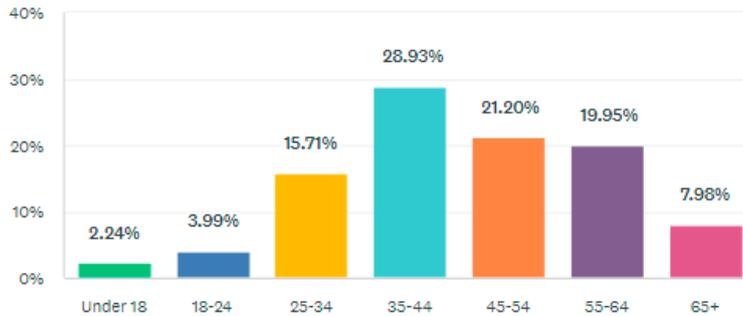


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES  |
|----------------|------------|
| ▼ Male         | 34.91% 140 |
| ▼ Female       | 65.09% 261 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>401</b> |

Nearly two thirds of respondents (65.1%) are female, which is a significant variance from the typical 50 / 50 gender split in the general population

## Q2 Please select the age category which describes you?

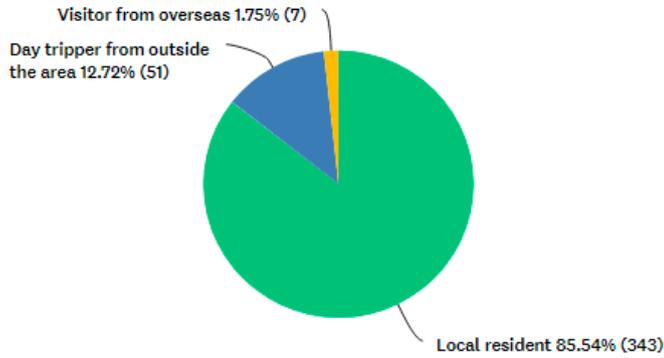
Answered: 401 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |            |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Under 18       | 2.24%     | 9          |
| 18-24          | 3.99%     | 16         |
| 25-34          | 15.71%    | 63         |
| 35-44          | 28.93%    | 116        |
| 45-54          | 21.20%    | 85         |
| 55-64          | 19.95%    | 80         |
| 65+            | 7.98%     | 32         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |           | <b>401</b> |

85.79% of respondents in this survey are aged between 25 and 65 years of age. 7.98% are over 65 and 6.23% have members under 25 years of age. The average age in this survey is within the 35 to 44 age category (also the largest proportion of respondents). This skews from the Census data, similar to the question 1, where those under 18 are the largest proportion and 11.8% are over 65, probably attributable to most of these demographic types are not suited for engaging in online surveys.

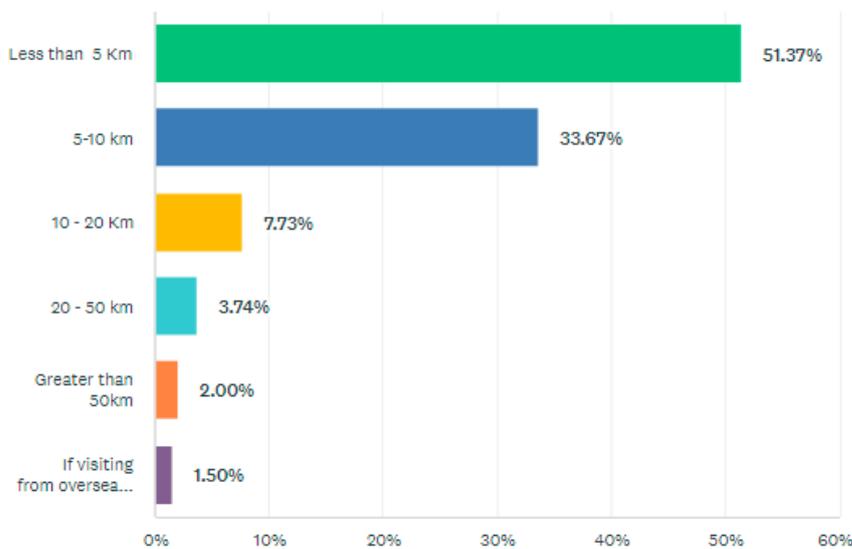
### Q3 Are you a?



| ANSWER CHOICES                    | RESPONSES |            |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Local resident                    | 85.54%    | 343        |
| Day tripper from outside the area | 12.72%    | 51         |
| Visitor from overseas             | 1.75%     | 7          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      |           | <b>401</b> |

343 of the respondents (85.5%) identify themselves as local residents. 12.7% are day-trippers from outside the area. 7 respondents are overseas but visit the area.

### Q4 How far from Loughanleagh do you live?

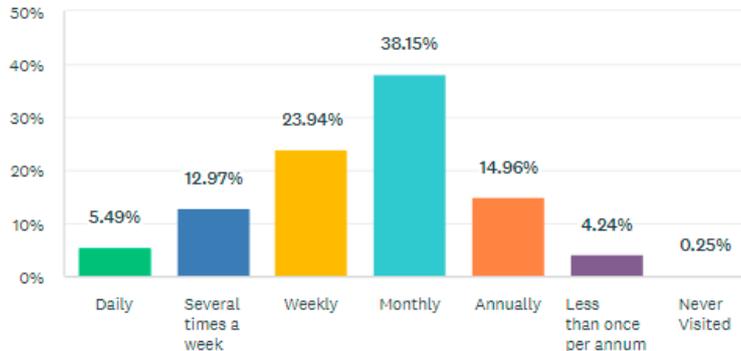


| ANSWER CHOICES                                   | RESPONSES         |
|--|-------------------|
| Less than 5 Km                                   | 51.37% 206        |
| 5-10 km  | 33.67% 135        |
| 10 - 20 Km                                       | 7.73% 31          |
| 20 - 50 km                                       | 3.74% 15          |
| Greater than 50km                                | 2.00% 8           |
| If visiting from overseas please specify country | Responses 1.50% 6 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>401</b>        |

206 respondents live in the direct vicinity of Loughanleagh and are not living in the nearby towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. There are approximately 2,200 living in this area, which indicates that a significant proportion of this population responded to the survey. 135 respondents are between 10 and 20 kilometres which includes the 2 towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. 7.24% live beyond this area with 6 respondents visiting from overseas. 4 are from the UK (1 of specifying England) and the other 2 live in Australia.

### Q5 How often do you visit Loughanleagh?

Answered: 401 Skipped: 0

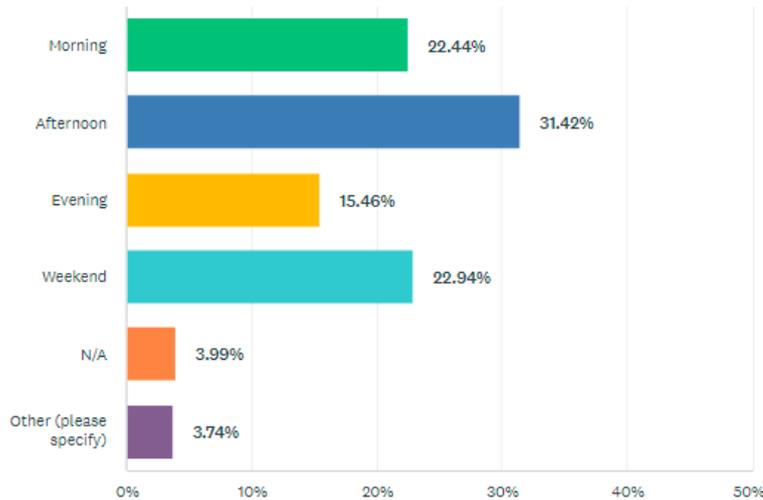


| ANSWER CHOICES           | RESPONSES  |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Daily                    | 5.49% 22   |
| Several times a week     | 12.97% 52  |
| Weekly                   | 23.94% 96  |
| Monthly                  | 38.15% 153 |
| Annually                 | 14.96% 60  |
| Less than once per annum | 4.24% 17   |
| Never Visited            | 0.25% 1    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>401</b> |

The most frequently selected time recurrence for visiting Loughanleagh is monthly with 38.15% of respondents. 23.94% visit weekly and 18.46% visit more frequently including 5.49% who visit daily. 19.18% visit at the most annually and just 1 respondent never visited at all.

### Q6 When would your visits typically be?

Answered: 401 Skipped: 0

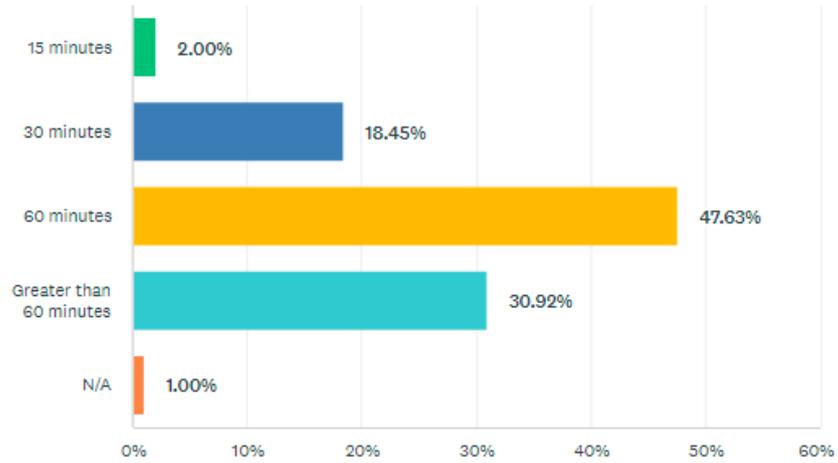


| ANSWER CHOICES           | RESPONSES |     |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|
| ▼ Morning                | 22.44%    | 90  |
| ▼ Afternoon              | 31.42%    | 126 |
| ▼ Evening                | 15.46%    | 62  |
| ▼ Weekend                | 22.94%    | 92  |
| ▼ N/A                    | 3.99%     | 16  |
| ▼ Other (please specify) | Responses | 15  |
| TOTAL                    |           | 401 |

The afternoon is the most popular time for respondents to visit Loughanleagh (31.42%). Mornings are the next most frequent time of day for visiting (22.44%) with evening time at 15.46%. 22.94% of respondents visit at the weekends. Other responses included at night (for astronomy purposes), summertime, lives / farms on mountain, various times and anytime.

### Q7 How long would your visits typically be?

Answered: 401 Skipped: 0

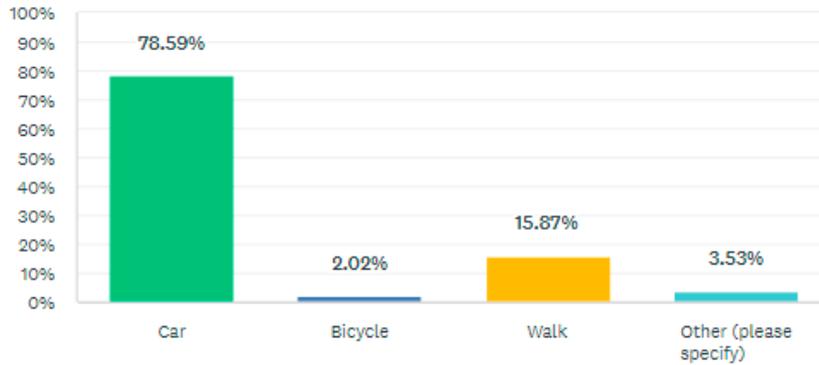


| ANSWER CHOICES          | RESPONSES  |
|-------------------------|------------|
| 15 minutes              | 2.00% 8    |
| 30 minutes              | 18.45% 74  |
| 60 minutes              | 47.63% 191 |
| Greater than 60 minutes | 30.92% 124 |
| N/A                     | 1.00% 4    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>401</b> |

78.55% of respondents spend one hour or greater in Loughanleagh.

### Q8 How do you travel to the area?

Answered: 397 Skipped: 4

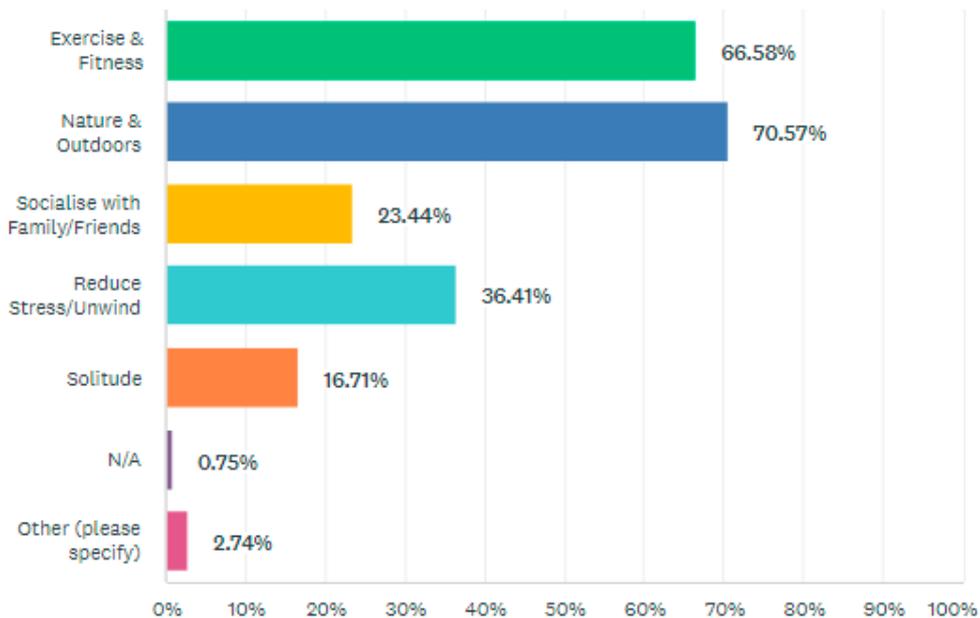


| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES          |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Car                    | 78.59% 312         |
| Bicycle                | 2.02% 8            |
| Walk                   | 15.87% 63          |
| Other (please specify) | Responses 3.53% 14 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>397</b>         |

The vast majority (78.6%) travel to Loughanleagh using a car. 15.9% walk and just 2% travel by bicycle. Other answers include a combination of the 3 answers and by horseback.

### Q9 What are the primary motivations for your visit?

Answered: 401 Skipped: 0

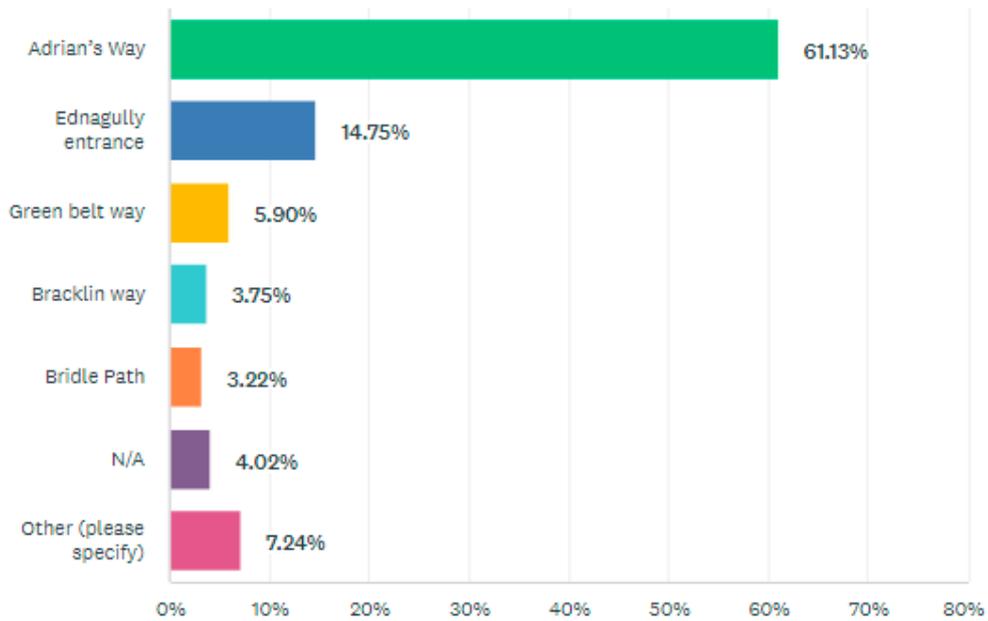


| ANSWER CHOICES                |           | RESPONSES  |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Exercise & Fitness            |           | 66.58% 267 |
| Nature & Outdoors             |           | 70.57% 283 |
| Socialise with Family/Friends |           | 23.44% 94  |
| Reduce Stress/Unwind          |           | 36.41% 146 |
| Solitude                      |           | 16.71% 67  |
| N/A                           |           | 0.75% 3    |
| Other (please specify)        | Responses | 2.74% 11   |
| Total Respondents: 401        |           |            |

Respondents could answer more than 1 option to their motivations to traveling to Loughanleagh. The 2 key selections are Nature and Outdoors (70.57%) and Exercise and Fitness (66.58%). There is a significant gap to the third most frequent selection, reduce stress / unwind (36.41%) with socialising with family and friends at 23.44%. 16.7% of respondents selected solitude. Other motivational factors include work, viewpoints and scenery, photography, astronomy, dog walking and horse riding.

### Q10 Which entrance point would you usually use when visiting?

Answered: 373 Skipped: 28

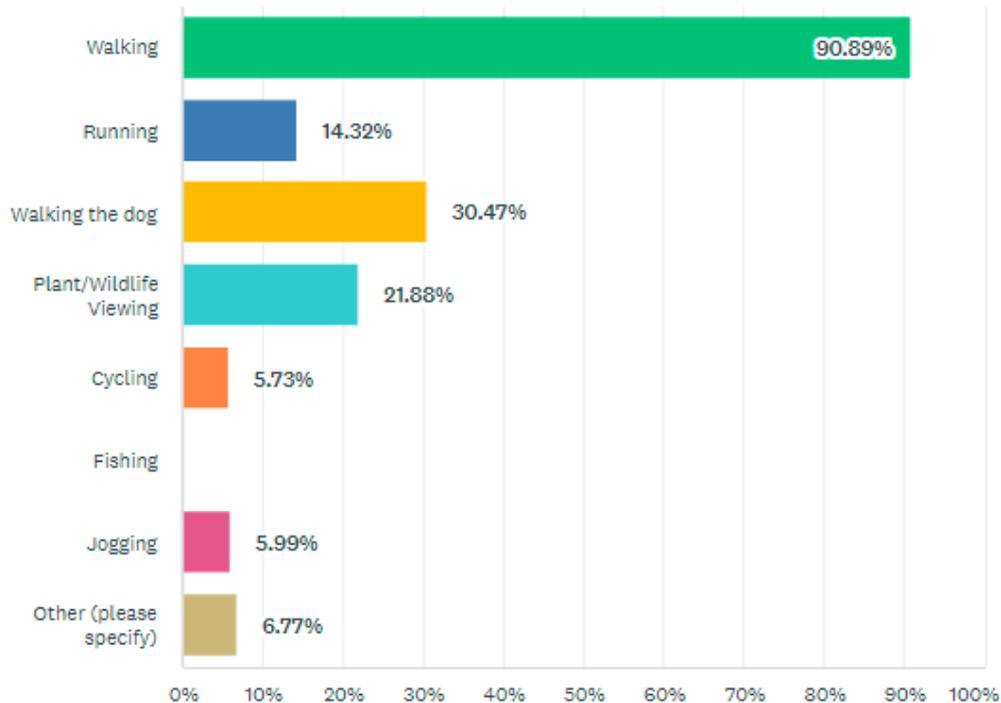


| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES  |
|------------------------|------------|
| Adrian's Way           | 61.13% 228 |
| Ednagully entrance     | 14.75% 55  |
| Green belt way         | 5.90% 22   |
| Bracklin way           | 3.75% 14   |
| Bridle Path            | 3.22% 12   |
| N/A                    | 4.02% 15   |
| Other (please specify) | 7.24% 27   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>373</b> |

The most salient response to the entrance point for Loughanleagh visits is Adrian's Way with 61.13% of the participants. Ednagully entrance is a distant second with 14.75% and Green belt way is 3<sup>rd</sup> with 5.9%. Bracklin way and Bridie Path are last with 3.75% and 3.22% respectively. 27 respondents give other answers including all of the above, most of the above and varies. Individual stated entrances include, opposite the Picnic area, Corraghy Road entrance, forest entrance, Kingscourt main road, Mass Rock, Shuck Lane & Mattie Cahill's house. 3 respondents are not familiar with the names.

## Q11 Activities you undertake while visiting Loughanleagh?

Answered: 384 Skipped: 17



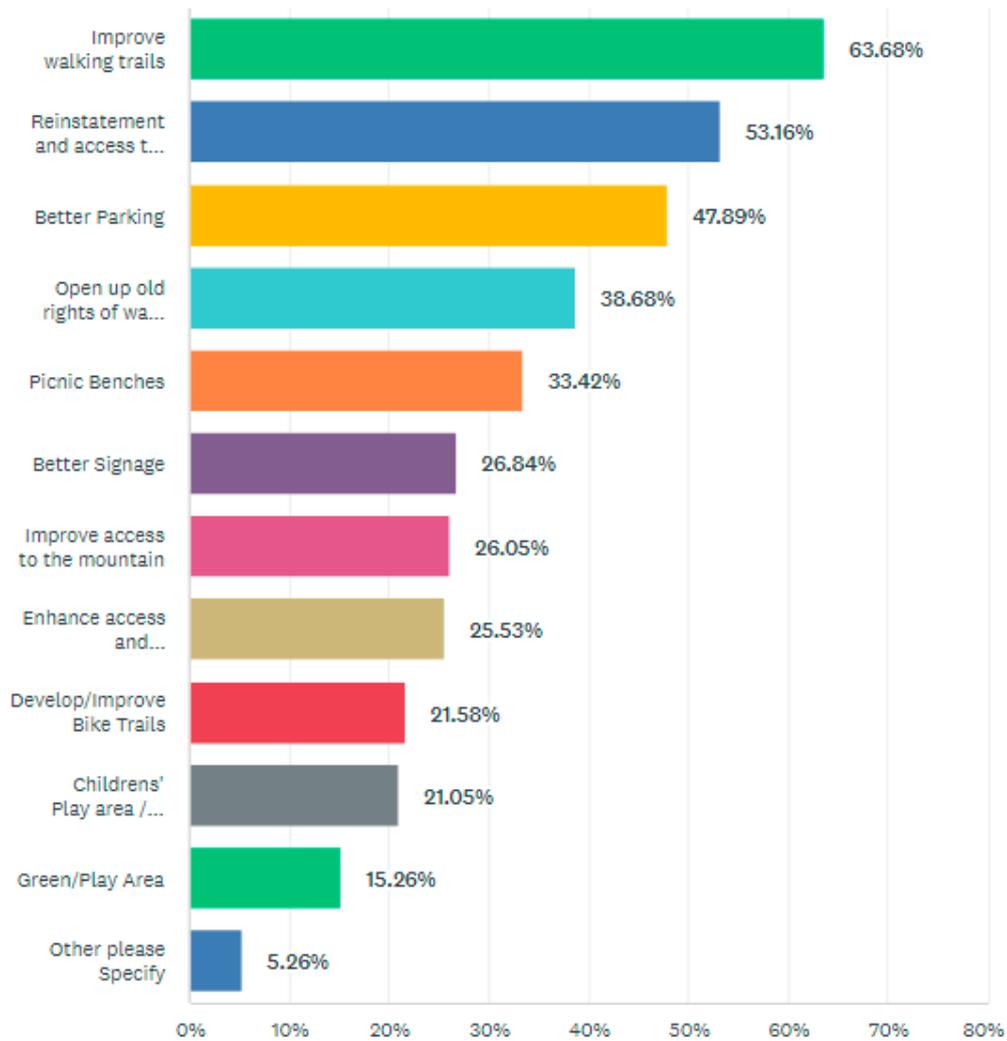
| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES |       |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Walking                | 90.89%    | 349   |
| Running                | 14.32%    | 55    |
| Walking the dog        | 30.47%    | 117   |
| Plant/Wildlife Viewing | 21.88%    | 84    |
| Cycling                | 5.73%     | 22    |
| Fishing                | 0.00%     | 0     |
| Jogging                | 5.99%     | 23    |
| Other (please specify) | Responses | 6.77% |
| Total Respondents: 384 |           | 26    |

Respondents could select more than one answer on the activities they engage in at Loughanleagh. 90.89% of respondents undertake walking at the area, with 30.47% selecting walking the dog. Compatible to this activity is running with 14.32% of respondents and jogging with 5.99%. 21.88% of respondents engage in Plant and Wildlife viewing and 5.73% cycle.

26 respondents provided other answers, with horse-riding being the most common activity (8 respondents). Other responses include Art, photography (3), astronomy, farming, forestry, hiking, litter picking, breathing exercises, picnics, sit and relax (2), and view-watching (2).

**Q12. Please identify from the list below the projects you believe should be prioritised?**

Answered: 380 Skipped: 21



## Loughanleagh Masterplan 2022-2032

| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES |     |
|--|-----------|-----|
| ▼ Improve walking trails                               | 63.68%    | 242 |
| ▼ Reinstatement and access to the lake at Loughanleagh | 53.16%    | 202 |
| ▼ Better Parking                                       | 47.89%    | 182 |
| ▼ Open up old rights of way. ( Example Bridle Path)    | 38.68%    | 147 |
| ▼ Picnic Benches                                       | 33.42%    | 127 |
| ▼ Better Signage                                       | 26.84%    | 102 |
| ▼ Improve access to the mountain                       | 26.05%    | 99  |
| ▼ Enhance access and interpretation of heritage sites  | 25.53%    | 97  |
| ▼ Develop/Improve Bike Trails                          | 21.58%    | 82  |
| ▼ Childrens' Play area / equipment                     | 21.05%    | 80  |
| ▼ Green/Play Area                                      | 15.26%    | 58  |
| ▼ Other please Specify                                 | 5.26%     | 20  |
| Total Respondents: 380                                 |           |     |

Respondents could select more than one option in what they believe should be prioritised in the masterplan. The most frequent selection is “Improve walking trails” with 63.55% of respondents, which positively correlates with the high numbers of walkers from the previous question. 53.16% of respondents would like the reinstatement and access to the lake at Loughanleagh. 47.89% selected better parking, reflecting the high numbers of visitors that drive to Loughanleagh. 38.68% would like old rights of way opened up and 33.42% would like more picnic benches. Better signage (26.84%), Improve access to the mountain (26.05%) and enhancing access and interpretation of heritage sites (25.53%) are closely grouped together, with finally developing and improving bike trails (21.58%), Children’s Play area / equipment (21.05%) and Green / Play Area (15.26%) being the least popular actions for priority in the master plan. 20 respondents gave other answers and form part of the following open-ended question.

**Q13 Please provide any other comments in relation to the master plan for the area that you may have here**

Respondents were asked an open question on what they felt were priorities for the development of the Masterplan. 89 respondents provided suggestions on a wide variety of types of issues for the Masterplan. A thematic analysis was carried out on this qualitative data and the findings are outlined below.

The first level of data extrapolated was specific priorities. The frequency of the specific priorities was recorded and categorised into broad themes. Table 8 below lists all the specific priorities sorted by their frequency of responses and aligned with their broad themes. These broad themes include;

- Accessibility at Loughanleagh
- Amenities and Services in Loughanleagh
- Biodiversity
- The Community and Anti-Social Mitigation
- Education of Loughanleagh
- Infrastructure at Loughanleagh
- Maintenance of Loughanleagh
- Positive sentiments
- Promotion of the area
- Proposed Restrictions for the area
- Tree Felling and Forestry

Table 8

| Specific Priorities for Masterplan | No. | Broad Theme             |
|------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Path upgrades                      | 11  | Infrastructure          |
| Coillte Tree Felling               | 9   | Tree Felling / Forestry |
| Carpark spaces                     | 6   | Infrastructure          |
| Access for buggies                 | 5   | Accessibility           |
| Keep natural                       | 5   | Biodiversity            |
| Toilets                            | 5   | Infrastructure          |
| Coffee Van                         | 3   | Amenities and Services  |
| Dog litter                         | 3   | Restrictions            |
| Litter                             | 3   | Maintenance             |
| More signage                       | 3   | Infrastructure          |
| Picnic Benches / Tables            | 3   | Infrastructure          |
| Seating / Seating Areas            | 3   | Infrastructure          |
| Access for Horses                  | 2   | Accessibility           |
| CCTV                               | 2   | Anti-Social Behaviour   |
| Coillte plant native trees         | 2   | Tree Felling / Forestry |
| Horse paths                        | 2   | Infrastructure          |
| Information boards                 | 2   | Education               |

|                                   |   |                        |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Keep up good work                 | 2 | Positive               |
| Lake Signposting                  | 2 | Infrastructure         |
| Playground                        | 2 | Amenities and Services |
| Quad / Dirt bike tracks           | 2 | Infrastructure         |
| Signage more of                   | 2 | Infrastructure         |
| Viewing point                     | 2 | Infrastructure         |
| Wheelchair Access                 | 2 | Accessibility          |
| Access for all                    | 1 | Accessibility          |
| Access to Lake                    | 1 | Accessibility          |
| Anti-Social barriers              | 1 | Anti-Social Behaviour  |
| Ban Cyclists                      | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Ban Horses                        | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Ban Scramblers                    | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Barbecue                          | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Bicycle Tracks                    | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Bike parking                      | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Bike stand / Shelter              | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Bike trails bikes only            | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Bins                              | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Biodiversity                      | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Biodiversity plan                 | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Bird boxes                        | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Cairn Area - Info board / Seating | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Cairns protection                 | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Campsites                         | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Carparking                        | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Cars blocking road                | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Community activities              | 1 | Community              |
| Defibrillator                     | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Dog Facilities                    | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Dogs hunting                      | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Dogs on lead                      | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Education                         | 1 | Education              |
| Electricity at picnic area        | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Enjoyed                           | 1 | Positive               |
| Facilitating increased traffic    | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Folklore information              | 1 | Education              |
| Heritage information              | 1 | Education              |
| Invite people                     | 1 | Promotion              |
| Keep trees                        | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Lake of cure upgrade              | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Lunch provider                    | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Maps                              | 1 | Infrastructure         |

|   |   |                        |
|---|---|------------------------|
| Maps / Grid references  | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Mass rock stones return                                       | 1 | Maintenance            |
| Mitigate erosion risk from increased footfall                 | 1 | Maintenance            |
| More child amenities  | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Motorised bikes use   | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Mountain bike facilities                                      | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Nature protection   | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Networking  | 1 | Promotion              |
| No hunting  | 1 | Restrictions           |
| No Playground - Anti social behaviour                         | 1 | Restrictions           |
| No playground, kids should learn to hike and appreciate Earth | 1 | Restrictions           |
| Off road trail to Kingscourt and Bailieborough                | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Picnic area upgrade   | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Plant trees   | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Praise on area  | 1 | Positive               |
| Praise on masterplan  | 1 | Positive               |
| Preserve area   | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Promotion of area   | 1 | Promotion              |
| Restore Lake  | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Risk of increasing parking                                    | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Risk of losing Charm  | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Road upgrade  | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Senior Citizen access   | 1 | Accessibility          |
| Signs to slow down  | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Stop non-native tree planting                                 | 1 | Biodiversity           |
| Tea and homemade cake stand                                   | 1 | Amenities and Services |
| Upgrade roads   | 1 | Infrastructure         |
| Walking groups  | 1 | Promotion              |
| Walks with buggies  | 1 | Accessibility          |
| Wildflowers on paths  | 1 | Infrastructure         |

The most frequent priority that featured is the upgrade of the existing paths in Loughanleagh with 11 responses referring to this issue. Coillte Tree Felling is second with 9 responses. More Car park spaces is 3<sup>rd</sup> with 6 responses and Improving Access for Parents with Buggies, Installing Toilet Facilities and to keep the place natural are joint 4<sup>th</sup>. Installing a Coffee Van / Shop, addressing the Dog litter, addressing litter in general, more signage in the area, more Picnic Benches / Tables and more seating / seating areas were joint 7<sup>th</sup>.

These and other priorities are discussed further next under their respective broad themes and sub-themes.

## **Accessibility**

This theme featured in 13 responses. Respondents would like improved accessibility for parents with buggies, senior citizens and wheelchair access. Improving the accessibility for horse riders and equestrianism all featured.

## **Amenities and Services**

Respondents provided a broad range of suggestions of amenity and service types (13 responses in total) to improve the offerings of Loughanleagh while people are visiting. These included (frequency in brackets)

- Barbecue Facility
- Campsite Facility
- Coffee Van / Shop / Dock (3)
- Lunch provider
- More child amenities
- Playground (2)
- Tea and Homemade cake stand
- More amenities in general to match the increase in footfall

Respondents feel that increasing the number of visitors to the area requires a matching increase in the supply of amenities and services to complement the experience of people who spend time in the area. This could be a source of income of the area.

## **The Community and Addressing Anti-Social behaviour**

4 respondents referenced themes around the community and working together to mitigate for anti-social behaviour. More community events were suggested with park runs and a local grower's market. Concerns were raised about amenities attracting anti-social behaviour and barriers and CCTV cameras should be installed to mitigate this risk.

## **Biodiversity**

15 respondents expressed various concerns under the theme of Biodiversity. This included Biodiversity in general and having a specific biodiversity plan. 5 respondents requested that the area should be kept natural without interference. Others were concerned with keeping / planting more trees. Having the area as a nature reserve / protection area was also suggested. The risk of increased parking and the place losing its charm was expressed along with requesting the end of planting non-native trees.

## **Education**

5 respondents conveyed comments that can be categorised as education of Loughanleagh. This includes talks on ecology, folklore information, heritage information, and providing info-boards on-site to assist in the education process of the area.

## **Infrastructure**

The theme of Infrastructure had the highest number of responses from the categorisation of the specific priorities. These included a broad range of physical capital investment elements including;

- Bicycle Tracks / parking / stand and shelter
- Bins
- Cairn area upgrade – Info boarding, Seating and Protection
- More Car Parks / Mitigate cars blocking roads
- Defibrillator
- Dog Facilities
- Electricity at Picnic areas
- Horse Paths
- Lake of the Cure upgrade / Restore Lake
- More Signage
- Motorised Bike usage areas
- Mountain bike facilities
- New off-road trail to Kingscourt and Bailieborough
- Path Upgrades
- Picnic Area Upgrade / More Picnic Tables / Benches
- Tracks for Quads and Dirt Bikes
- Road upgrades
- Seating area / more seating
- More Signage
- Signs to slow down
- Install public toilets
- Upgrade viewing points
- Plant wildflowers along paths

These measures conflict with the some of the requests under the biodiversity theme, but are congruent with the amenities and services suggestions for increasing provision for activities for increasing number of visitors during their stay at Loughanleagh.

## **Maintenance**

5 respondents suggested priorities that can be categorised as maintenance. These included actions to negate and prevent the litter problem. (Bins was suggested as a negative measure as it would attract dumping). Also referenced was returning the Mass rock stones and mitigating erosion risk that could result from the increased footfall.

## **Positive Sentiments**

5 respondents provided positive affirmations towards the area and the Heritage Group. This included encouraging them to keep up the good work, enjoying and praising the Loughanleagh area and showing gratitude for taking the initiative to developing the masterplan.

## **Promotion of the Area**

This theme received 4 specific priorities, including directly inviting people to the area, increasing networking to provide synergy to raise awareness and promotion, general communications and marketing of the area and developing walking groups.

## **Proposed Restrictions in Loughanleagh**

12 Respondents proposed specific actions that can be categorised as restrictions on certain areas to optimise the experience of visitors to the area, for locals or for the biodiversity. These include;

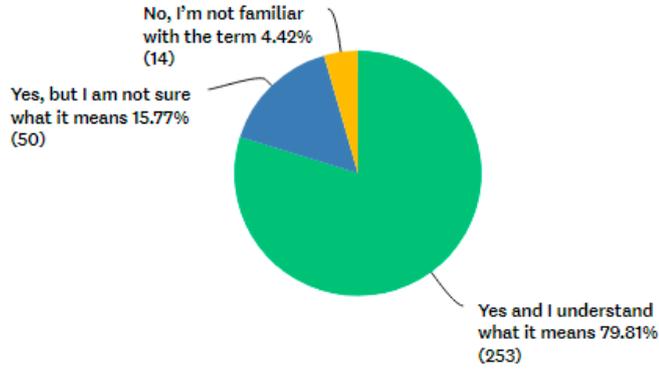
- Banning/restricting access for cyclists
- Banning Horses
- Banning Scramblers / dirt bikes
- No hunting allowed
- No playground installation as it could encourage anti-social usage by teenagers
- No playground as it would be a distraction for children to learn about nature from the area
- Dog control including dog littering mitigation measures, dogs on leads only and no dog hunting
- Ensuring any Bike trails are for bicycles only/dangerous for mixed mountain bikes/pedestrians.

## **Tree Felling / Forestry**

11 respondents expressed views about the forestry and intensive tree felling operations in the area. This included criticism of the Coillte tree felling commercial activities and its aftermath on the sparseness of the mountain in those areas. Respondents also requested that Coillte replant trees that are native.

### Q14 Are you familiar with the term "biodiversity"?

Answered: 317 Skipped: 84

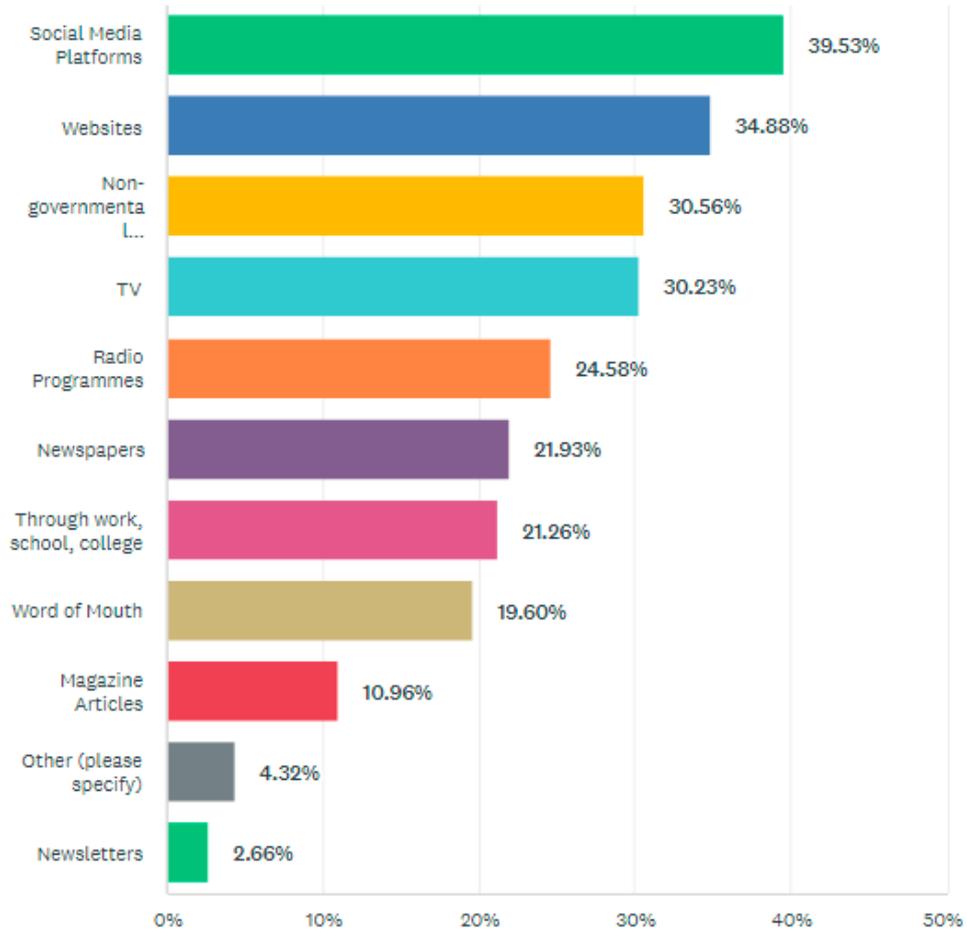


| ANSWER CHOICES                       | RESPONSES  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Yes and I understand what it means   | 79.81% 253 |
| Yes, but I am not sure what it means | 15.77% 50  |
| No, I'm not familiar with the term   | 4.42% 14   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                         | <b>317</b> |

The vast majority (95.58%) of respondents are familiar with the term “biodiversity”, with 83.5% of those respondents understanding what biodiversity means.

**Q15, Do you get your information about biodiversity from any of the following sources?  
Please select as many as apply**

Answered: 301 Skipped: 100

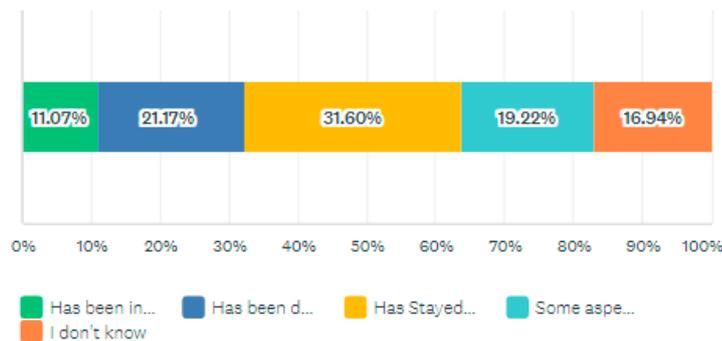


| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES          |
|--|--------------------|
| ▼ Social Media Platforms   | 39.53% 119         |
| ▼ Websites   | 34.88% 105         |
| ▼ Non-governmental Organisations, e.g. Birdwatch Ireland, Irish Wildlife Trust | 30.56% 92          |
| ▼ TV   | 30.23% 91          |
| ▼ Radio Programmes   | 24.58% 74          |
| ▼ Newspapers   | 21.93% 66          |
| ▼ Through work, school, college  | 21.26% 64          |
| ▼ Word of Mouth  | 19.60% 59          |
| ▼ Magazine Articles  | 10.96% 33          |
| ▼ Other (please specify)   | Responses 4.32% 13 |
| ▼ Newsletters  | 2.66% 8            |
| <b>Total Respondents: 301</b>  |                    |

Respondents could select more than 1 answer on what source of medium they receive information on biodiversity. The frequency of answers is reasonably distributed with Social Media platforms the most selected with 39.53% of respondents, followed closely by websites with 34.88%. NGOs are 3<sup>rd</sup> with 30.56% followed closely by the Television with 30.23%. More traditional media such as Radio (24.58%) and Newspapers (21.93%) are next, followed by places of work or education (21.26%) and word of mouth (19.6%). Printed media such as Magazine articles (10.96%) and Newsletters (2.66%) are the least selected forms of media. Other answers include peer reviewed research journals, podcasts, specific sources such as You Tube, UK NGOs, and Teagasc.

**Q16. Do you think that Biodiversity in the area over the past five years....**

Answered: 307 Skipped: 94

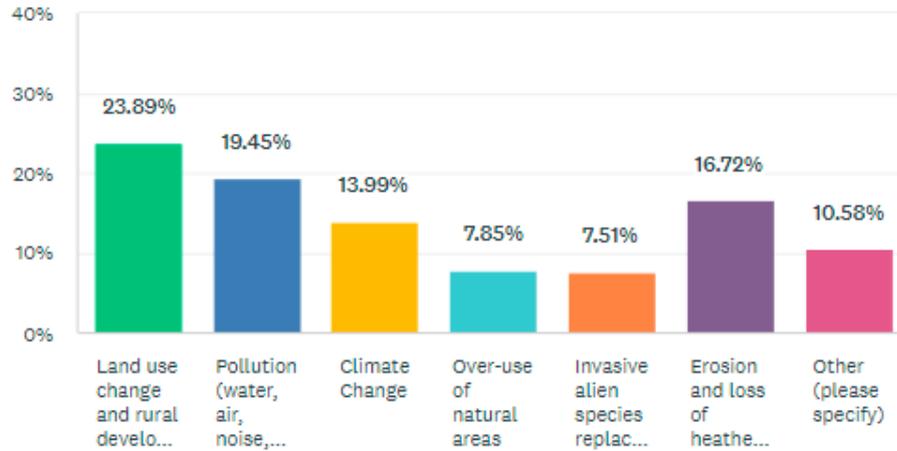


| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES  |
|--|------------|
| Has been increasing  | 11.07% 34  |
| Has been decreasing  | 21.17% 65  |
| Has Stayed more or less the same   | 31.60% 97  |
| Some aspects have been increasing and other aspects have been decreasing | 19.22% 59  |
| I don't know   | 16.94% 52  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>307</b> |

Only 11.07% of respondents feel that Biodiversity in the Loughanleagh area has been increasing. 21.17% feel that it has been decreasing, while half of the respondents (50.82%) feel there has been no net change with 62.2% of these respondents believing it has not changed and 38.8% believing the surpluses in some areas have been cancelled out by the deficits in others. 16.94% of respondents do not know if it has changed.

### Q17. What do you think is the greatest cause of biodiversity loss in the area?

Answered: 293 Skipped: 108



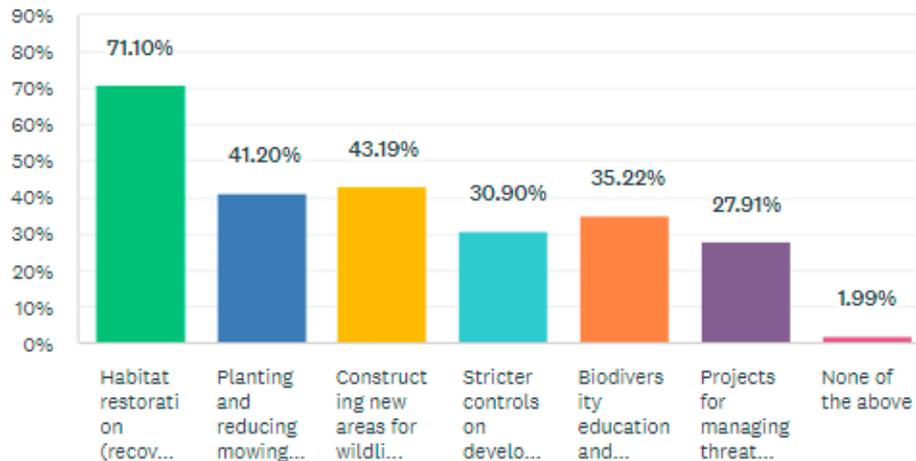
| ANSWER CHOICES                                   | RESPONSES  |
|--|------------|
| Land use change and rural development            | 23.89% 70  |
| Pollution (water, air, noise, litter)            | 19.45% 57  |
| Climate Change                                   | 13.99% 41  |
| Over-use of natural areas                        | 7.85% 23   |
| Invasive alien species replacing native species  | 7.51% 22   |
| Erosion and loss of heatherland                  | 16.72% 49  |
| Other (please specify) <a href="#">Responses</a> | 10.58% 31  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | <b>293</b> |

23.89% of respondents feel that Land use change and rural development is the primary cause of the loss of biodiversity in the area. 19.45% attribute pollution, 16.72% believe Erosion and loss of heatherland, while 13.99% stated climate change. The least popular options are Overuse of natural areas (7.85%) and Invasive alien species replacing native species (7.51%).

31 respondents selected other reasons as the primary cause of the loss of biodiversity. The majority are attributed to forestry and tree-felling / harvesting / deforestation with 18 respondents. Other responses include wind turbines, non-native trees, scrambler bikes and cyclists.

## Q18 Which of the following initiatives for biodiversity would you like to see carried out more?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 100



| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| ▼ Habitat restoration (recovering heatherland and moss areas and improving existing areas for wildlife) | 71.10%    | 214 |
| ▼ Planting and reducing mowing to help pollinating insects  | 41.20%    | 124 |
| ▼ Constructing new areas for wildlife (e.g. creating new wetlands and woodlands)                        | 43.19%    | 130 |
| ▼ Stricter controls on development to protect biodiversity  | 30.90%    | 93  |
| ▼ Biodiversity education and outreach   | 35.22%    | 106 |
| ▼ Projects for managing threatened or protected species   | 27.91%    | 84  |
| ▼ None of the above   | 1.99%     | 6   |
| Total Respondents: 301  |           |     |

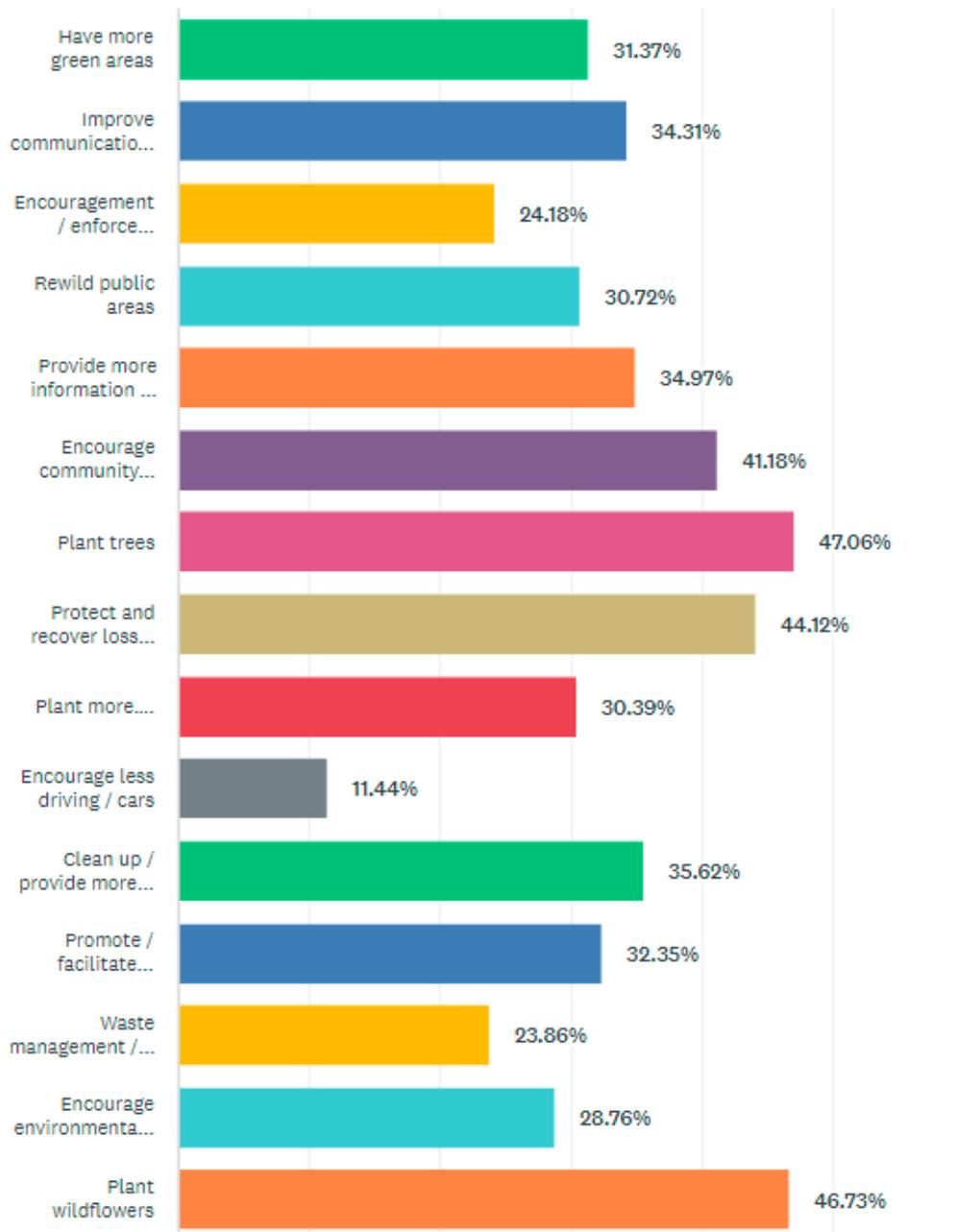
Respondents could select more than 1 answer in initiatives they would like to see for biodiversity. The most salient selection is Habitat restoration with 71.1% which includes recovering heatherland and moss areas and improving existing areas for wildlife. On similar themes, constructing new areas for wildlife (43.19%) and planting and reducing mowing to help pollinating insects (41.2%) are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in frequency of selections. Administrative actions are the least selected options including stricter controls on development (30.9%), biodiversity education (35.22%) and projects for managing protected species (27.91%).

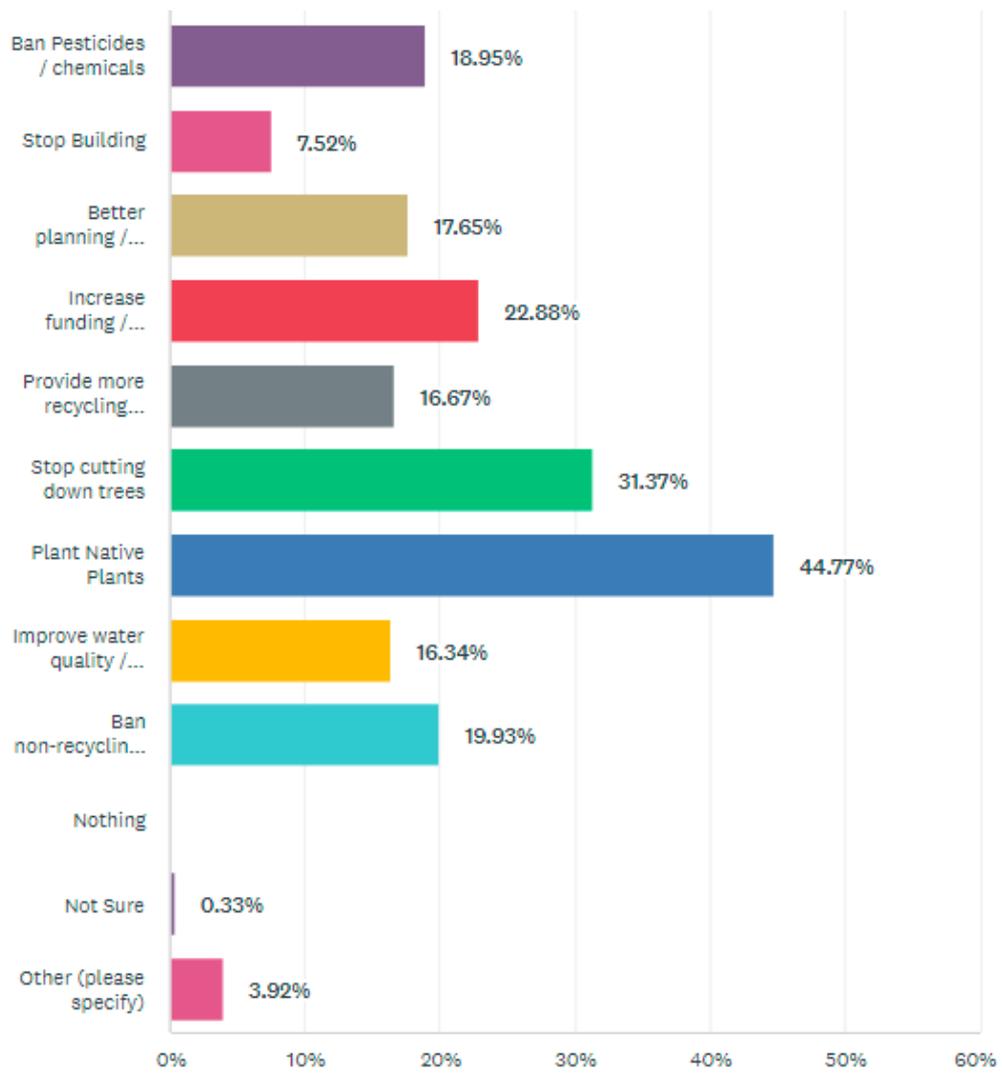
Heather and mosses are keystone components of peatland ecosystems. They facilitate the accumulation of carbon in peat deposits. Heathers often grow on the hummocks of moss to avoid losing water in the summer when the bog dries out a little. Bog Cotton grows can grow in the bog pools amongst the moss also. A huge number of tiny, microscopic plants and animals live within the mosses and heathers. A few drops of water squeezed from wet moss contains hundreds of microscopic species such as desmids, diatoms, algae, cyanobacteria, amoebae, rhizopods, flagellates, ciliates, rotifers (wheel organisms), worms, nematodes (round worms), flat worms and heliozoans (sun animals). The microscopic plant and animal life found in moss and heatherland provides food for other organisms living in the wet bog. These animals include dragonflies,

damselflies, caddis flies, mosquitoes, midges, bloodworms, water boatmen, water beetles, water lice, and frogs. The erosion of natural habitat through loss of heatherland and moss areas was sighted as a area respondents would like to see addressed by biodiversity initiatives on Loughanleagh Mountain.

### Q19. What actions do you think need to happen to protect and improve biodiversity? - Actions by your local authority

Answered: 306 Skipped: 95





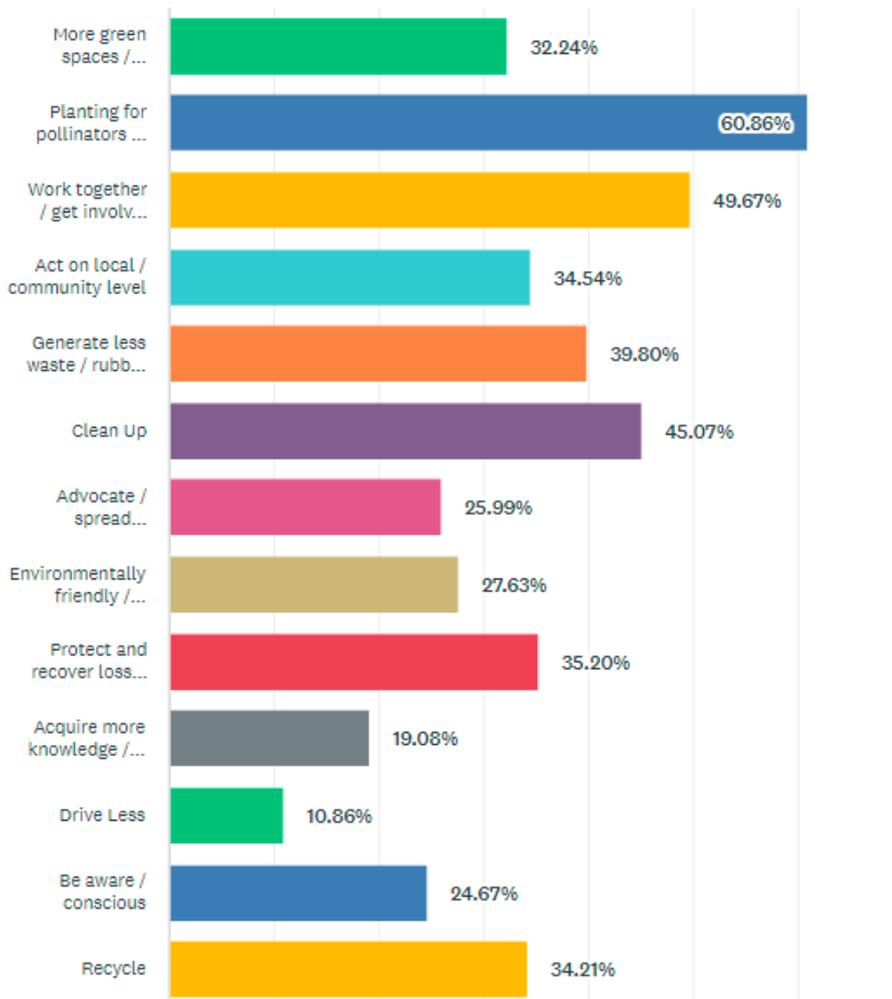
| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |       |
|---|-----------|-------|
| ▼ Have more green areas   | 31.37%    | 96    |
| ▼ Improve communication / advice / campaign / signs                     | 34.31%    | 105   |
| ▼ Encouragement / enforce existing regulations / restrictions if needed | 24.18%    | 74    |
| ▼ Rewild public areas   | 30.72%    | 94    |
| ▼ Provide more information / Education                                  | 34.97%    | 107   |
| ▼ Encourage community involvement                                       | 41.18%    | 126   |
| ▼ Plant trees   | 47.06%    | 144   |
| ▼ Protect and recover loss of heatherlands and moss habitant            | 44.12%    | 135   |
| ▼ Plant more....  | 30.39%    | 93    |
| ▼ Encourage less driving / cars   | 11.44%    | 35    |
| ▼ Clean up / provide more bins  | 35.62%    | 109   |
| ▼ Promote / facilitate walking and cycling                              | 32.35%    | 99    |
| ▼ Waste management / decrease pollution                                 | 23.86%    | 73    |
| ▼ Encourage environmentally friendly behaviour / conservation efforts   | 28.76%    | 88    |
| ▼ Plant wildflowers   | 46.73%    | 143   |
| ▼ Ban Pesticides / chemicals  | 18.95%    | 58    |
| ▼ Stop Building   | 7.52%     | 23    |
| ▼ Better planning / decision making                                     | 17.65%    | 54    |
| ▼ Increase funding / investment   | 22.88%    | 70    |
| ▼ Provide more recycling facilities                                     | 16.67%    | 51    |
| ▼ Stop cutting down trees   | 31.37%    | 96    |
| ▼ Plant Native Plants   | 44.77%    | 137   |
| ▼ Improve water quality / wastewater management                         | 16.34%    | 50    |
| ▼ Ban non-recycling plastics / reduce plastic                           | 19.93%    | 61    |
| ▼ Nothing   | 0.00%     | 0     |
| ▼ Not Sure  | 0.33%     | 1     |
| ▼ Other (please specify)  | Responses | 3.92% |
| Total Respondents: 306  |           |       |

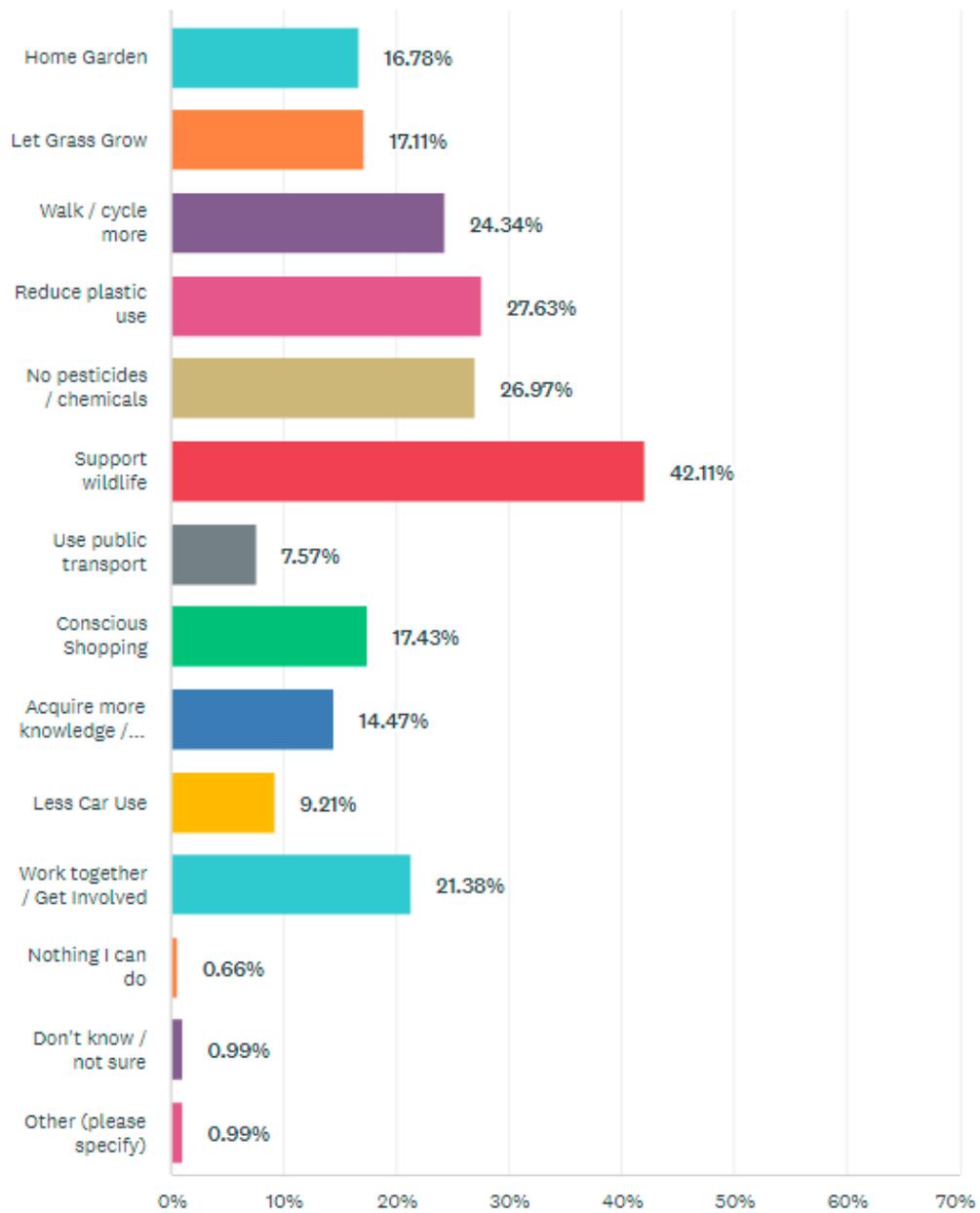
Respondents were then presented with an extensive list of options to what actions by the local authority are needed to happen to protect and improve biodiversity. Respondents could select more than one answer. The results feature in the table and charts above. The most popular selections are planting (Trees (47.06%), Wildflowers (46.73%), Native plants (44.77%)). Protect and recover loss of heatherlands and moss habitant follows closely in 4<sup>th</sup> at 44.12%. Several options featured with frequencies between 41% and 30% (in order of popularity) Encourage community involvement; Clean-up / provide more bins; Provide more information / Education; Improve communication / advice / campaign / signs; Promote / facilitate walking and cycling; Have more green areas; Stop cutting down trees and Rewild public areas. Options that featured with 20% to 30% frequency included in order of popularity; Encourage environmentally friendly behaviour / conservation efforts; Encouragement / enforce existing regulations / restrictions if needed; Waste management / decrease pollution; and Increase funding / investment.

The least popular options under 20% include, in order of popularity; Ban non-recycling plastics / reduce plastic; Ban Pesticides / chemicals; Better planning / decision making; Provide more recycling facilities; Improve water quality / wastewater management; Encourage less driving / cars; and Stop Building. Other responses that were not already mentioned above include banning quads, scramblers / dirt bikes, and encouraging a reduction in meat consumption

**Q20 What actions do you think need to happen to protect and improve biodiversity? - Actions by your community**

Answered: 304 Skipped: 97





| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES |       |
|--|-----------|-------|
| More green spaces / communal areas                         | 32.24%    | 98    |
| Planting for pollinators / plant wildflowers               | 60.86%    | 185   |
| Work together / get involved / action groups               | 49.67%    | 151   |
| Act on local / community level                             | 34.54%    | 105   |
| Generate less waste / rubbish / litter / pollution         | 39.80%    | 121   |
| Clean Up   | 45.07%    | 137   |
| Advocate / spread awareness / encouragement                | 25.99%    | 79    |
| Environmentally friendly / reduce carbon footprint         | 27.63%    | 84    |
| Protect and recover loss of heatherlands and moss habitant | 35.20%    | 107   |
| Acquire more knowledge / research                          | 19.08%    | 58    |
| Drive Less   | 10.86%    | 33    |
| Be aware / conscious                                       | 24.67%    | 75    |
| Recycle  | 34.21%    | 104   |
| Home Garden  | 16.78%    | 51    |
| Let Grass Grow   | 17.11%    | 52    |
| Walk / cycle more  | 24.34%    | 74    |
| Reduce plastic use   | 27.63%    | 84    |
| No pesticides / chemicals                                  | 26.97%    | 82    |
| Support wildlife   | 42.11%    | 128   |
| Use public transport                                       | 7.57%     | 23    |
| Conscious Shopping   | 17.43%    | 53    |
| Acquire more knowledge / research                          | 14.47%    | 44    |
| Less Car Use   | 9.21%     | 28    |
| Work together / Get Involved                               | 21.38%    | 65    |
| Nothing I can do   | 0.66%     | 2     |
| Don't know / not sure                                      | 0.99%     | 3     |
| Other (please specify)                                     | Responses | 0.99% |
| Total Respondents: 304                                     |           |       |

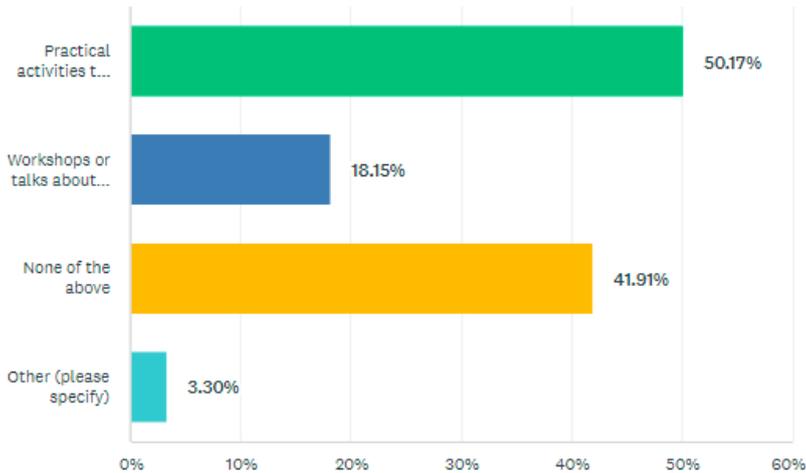
Similar to the previous question involving the local authority, the planting theme is the most popular selection for actions by the community in improving biodiversity with 60.86% of respondents selecting this answer. With a frequency range of between 40% and 50% Work together / get involved / action groups; Clean Up; and Support wildlife were the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most popular selections respectively. 5 actions were selected with a frequency range between 30% and 40%; Generate less waste / rubbish / litter / pollution; Protect and recover loss of heatherlands and moss habitant; Act on local / community level; Recycle; and more green spaces / communal areas.

7 actions were selected with a frequency range between 20% and 30%; Environmentally friendly / reduce carbon footprint; Reduce plastic use; No pesticides / chemicals; Advocate / spread awareness / encouragement; Be aware / conscious; Walk / cycle more; and Work together / Get

Involved. Finally, the least popular actions by the community in improving biodiversity, all under 20% are; Acquire more knowledge / research; Conscious Shopping; Let Grass Grow; Home Garden; Acquire more knowledge / research; Drive Less; Less Car Use; and Use public transport.

**Q21. Have you ever taken part in any of the following activities? Please select as many as apply.**

Answered: 303 Skipped: 98

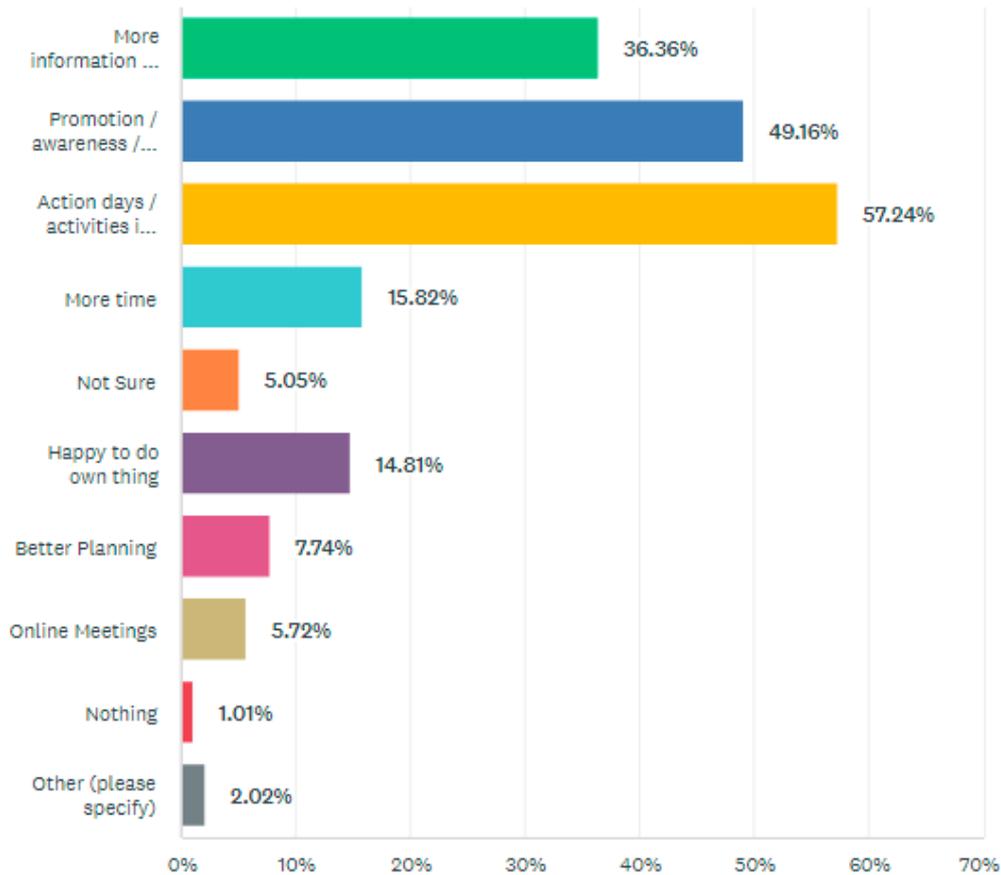


| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES          |
|--|--------------------|
| ▼ Practical activities to help the environment, such as local clean ups, or local residents group projects | 50.17% 152         |
| ▼ Workshops or talks about biodiversity and nature delivered by Groups                                     | 18.15% 55          |
| ▼ None of the above  | 41.91% 127         |
| ▼ Other (please specify)   | Responses 3.30% 10 |
| Total Respondents: 303   |                    |

Respondents were asked what activities they engaged in to boost biodiversity and the environment. 50.17% stated that they took part in practical activities to help the environment, such as local clean ups, or local residents group projects. 18.15% stated that they took part in workshops or talks about biodiversity and 41.91% did not take part in any activity. Other activities include, cleaning up dumped rubbish, gathering litter, organic farming, Moynalty goes wild biodiversity festival, Bee keeping, and Mass Rock maintenance.

## Q22 What, if anything, would encourage you to take part in activities related to the environment and biodiversity?

Answered: 297 Skipped: 104



| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |     |
|---|-----------|-----|
| More information / better understanding / education                               | 36.36%    | 108 |
| Promotion / awareness / communication / engagement / advertisement of events      | 49.16%    | 146 |
| Action days / activities in local area community based / in schools / easy access | 57.24%    | 170 |
| More time   | 15.82%    | 47  |
| Not Sure  | 5.05%     | 15  |
| Happy to do own thing   | 14.81%    | 44  |
| Better Planning   | 7.74%     | 23  |
| Online Meetings   | 5.72%     | 17  |
| Nothing   | 1.01%     | 3   |
| Other (please specify)  | 2.02%     | 6   |
| <b>Total Respondents: 297</b>   |           |     |

Respondents were presented with activities that they would engage in related to the environment and biodiversity. Respondents could select more than one option to answer and Action days /

activities in the local community is the most popular with 57.24% of participants. The promotion of events is the second most frequent option with 49.16% and more information and education is 3<sup>rd</sup> with 36.36%.

15.82% of respondents felt they needed more time while 14.81% are happy to do their own thing. 7.74% stated better planning while 5.72% selected online meetings. 5.05% are not sure.

**Q23 If you have any further comments or suggestions on what you would like to see your local community do more of / do in a new way to help biodiversity across the area, please enter your comment here**

34 respondents left further comments / suggestions to this open-ended question. A thematic analysis was carried out on this qualitative data and the findings are outlined below.

The first level of data extrapolated was specific priorities. The frequency of the specific priorities was recorded and categorised into broad themes. Table 9 lists all the specific priorities sorted by their frequency of responses and aligned with their broad themes. These broad themes include;

- Biodiversity
- The Community
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Maintenance
- Positive sentiments
- Promotion of Loughanleagh
- Restrictions
- Tree Felling / Forestry

Table 9

| Specific suggestions to help biodiversity | No. | Broad Theme             |
|---|-----|-------------------------|
| Loughanleagh praise                       | 4   | Positive                |
| Keep natural                              | 2   | Biodiversity            |
| More Community Involvement                | 2   | Community               |
| Awareness of area and group               | 1   | Promotion               |
| Ban Cyclists                              | 1   | Restrictions            |
| Ban hunting                               | 1   | Restrictions            |
| Ban quads                                 | 1   | Restrictions            |
| beehives                                  | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Biodiversity                              | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Biodiversity area, no people at all       | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Biodiversity walking trails               | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Coillte tree felling                      | 1   | Tree felling / Forestry |
| Digital Marketing                         | 1   | Promotion               |
| Education / Schools                       | 1   | Education               |
| Insect hotels                             | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Lake upgrade                              | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| Litter Picking                            | 1   | Maintenance             |
| Local community who uses it               | 1   | Community               |
| More awareness                            | 1   | Promotion               |
| More consultations                        | 1   | Promotion               |
| More events                               | 1   | Community               |
| More green areas                          | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| More trees, wildflowers, meadows          | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| New Kingscourt walk                       | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| No dogs                                   | 1   | Restrictions            |
| Plant native trees                        | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Playground                                | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| Pond for frogs                            | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| Preservation order                        | 1   | Biodiversity            |
| Road's upgrade                            | 1   | Infrastructure          |
| Water quality and LAWPRO                  | 1   | Maintenance             |

The most frequent comments that featured is positive comments about Loughanleagh with 4 responses referring to this sub-theme. Keeping the area natural and more community involvement were joint second with 2 comments each. 28 other suggestions were stated and are outlined in the table above with the frequency of one each. Most of these are reiterated from question 13 by respondents.

These and other priorities are discussed further next under their respective broad themes and sub-themes. Unique suggestions include beehives; digital marketing; insect hotels; more consultations; more green areas; pond for frogs; and the water quality.

## **Summary of Survey Findings**

A comprehensive survey was carried out among the broader community in the Loughanleagh and surrounding area. This involved the completion of 401 questionnaires through the online survey facility Survey Monkey. This was a strong representative sample given the population of the area.

Even taking the wide focus area including the 2 towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt ED's, the sample size is 4.89% of the total population of 8,200 giving a 95% confidence level with a 4.78% margin of error.

Nearly two thirds of respondents (65.1%) are female, which is a significant variance from the typical 50 / 50 gender split in the general population, however similar to other surveys undertaken in rural Ireland.

85.79% of respondents in this survey are aged between 25 and 65 years of age. 7.98% are over 65 and 6.23% have members under 25 years of age. The average age in this survey is within the 35 to 44 age category (also the largest proportion of respondents).

343 of the respondents (85.5%) identify themselves as local residents. 12.7% are day-trippers from outside the area. 7 respondents are overseas but visit the area.

206 respondents live in the direct vicinity of Loughanleagh and are not living in the nearby towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt. There are approximately 2,200 living in this area, which indicates that a significant proportion of this population responded to the survey.

The most frequently selected time recurrence for visiting Loughanleagh is monthly with 38.15% of respondents. 23.94% visit weekly and 18.46% visit more frequently including 5.49% who visit daily. 19.18% visit at the most annually and just 1 respondent never visited at all.

The afternoon is the most popular time for respondents to visit Loughanleagh (31.42%). Mornings are the next most frequent time of day for visiting (22.44%) with evening time at 15.46%. 22.94% of respondents visit at the weekends.

78.55% of respondents spend one hour or greater in Loughanleagh.

The vast majority (78.6%) travel to Loughanleagh using a car. 15.9% walk and just 2% travel by bicycle. Other answers include a combination of the 3 answers and by horseback.

Respondents could answer more than 1 option to their motivations to traveling to Loughanleagh. The 2 key selections are Nature and Outdoors (70.57%) and Exercise and Fitness (66.58%).

There is a significant gap to the third most frequent selection, reduce stress / unwind (36.41%) with socialising with family and friends at 23.44%.

The most salient response to the entrance point for Loughanleagh visits is Adrian's Way with 61.13% of the participants. Ednagully entrance is a distant second with 14.75% and Green belt way is 3rd with 5.9%. Bracklin way and Bridie Path are last with 3.75% and 3.22% respectively.

Respondents could select more than one answer on the activities they engage in at Loughanleagh. 90.89% of respondents undertake walking at the area, with 30.47% selecting walking the dog. Compatible to this activity is running with 14.32% of respondents and jogging with 5.99%. 21.88% of respondents engage in Plant and Wildlife viewing and 5.73% cycle.

Respondents could select more than one option in what they believe should be prioritised in the masterplan. The most frequent selection is "Improve walking trails" with 63.55% of respondents, which positively correlates with the high numbers of walkers from the previous question. 53.16% of respondents would like the reinstatement and access to the lake at Loughanleagh. 47.89% selected better parking, reflecting the high numbers of visitors that drive to Loughanleagh. 38.68% would like old rights of way opened up and 33.42% would like more picnic benches.

Respondents were asked an open question on what they felt were priorities for the development of the Masterplan. 89 respondents provided suggestions on a wide variety of types of issues for the Masterplan. 90 specific priorities were identified under 11 separate themes. These themes included;

- Accessibility at Loughanleagh
- Amenities and Services in Loughanleagh
- Biodiversity
- The Community and Anti-Social Mitigation
- Education of Loughanleagh
- Infrastructure at Loughanleagh
- Maintenance of Loughanleagh
- Positive sentiments
- Promotion of the area
- Proposed Restrictions for the area
- Tree Felling and Forestry

The vast majority (95.58%) of respondents are familiar with the term "biodiversity", with 83.5% of those respondents understanding what biodiversity means.

Respondents could select more than 1 answer on what source of medium they receive information on biodiversity. The frequency of answers are reasonably distributed with Social

Media platforms the most selected with 39.53% of respondents, followed closely by websites with 34.88%. NGO's are 3rd with 30.56% followed closely by the Television with 30.23%.

Only 11.07% of respondents feel that Biodiversity in the Loughanleagh area has been increasing. 21.17% feel that it has been decreasing, while half of the respondents (50.82%) feel there has been no net change.

23.89% of respondents feel that Land use change and rural development is the primary cause of the loss of biodiversity in the area. 19.45% attribute pollution, 16.72% believe Erosion and loss of heatherland, while 13.99% stated climate change.

Respondents could select more than 1 answer in initiatives they would like to see for biodiversity. The most salient selection is Habitat restoration with 71.1% which includes recovering heatherland and moss areas and improving existing areas for wildlife. On similar themes, constructing new areas for wildlife (43.19%) and planting and reducing mowing to help pollinating insects (41.2%) are 2nd and 3rd in frequency of selections.

Respondents were then presented with an extensive list of options to what actions by the local authority are needed to happen to protect and improve biodiversity. The most popular selections are planting (Trees (47.06%), Wildflowers (46.73%), and Native plants (44.77%)). Protect and recover loss of heatherlands and moss habitat follows closely in 4th at 44.12%.

Similar to the previous question involving the local authority, the planting theme is the most popular selection for actions by the community in improving biodiversity with 60.86% of respondents selecting this answer. With a frequency range of between 40% and 50% Work together / get involved / action groups; Clean Up; and Support wildlife were the 2nd, 3rd and 4th most popular selections respectively

Respondents were asked what activities they engaged in to boost biodiversity and the environment. 50.17% stated that they took part in practical activities to help the environment, such as local clean ups, or local residents group projects. 18.15% stated that they took part in workshops or talks about biodiversity and 41.91% did not take part in any activity.

Respondents were presented with activities that they would engage in related to the environment and biodiversity. Action days / activities in the local community is the most popular with 57.24% of participants. The promotion of events is the second most frequent option with 49.16% and more information and education is 3rd with 36.36%.

34 respondents left further comments / suggestions to this open-ended question. The frequency of the specific priorities was recorded and categorised into broad themes. These broad themes include;

- Biodiversity
- The Community
- Education
- Promotion of Loughanleagh
- Restrictions
- Tree Felling / Forestry

- Infrastructure
- Maintenance
- Positive sentiments

## 6.5 Organisation Consultation Survey

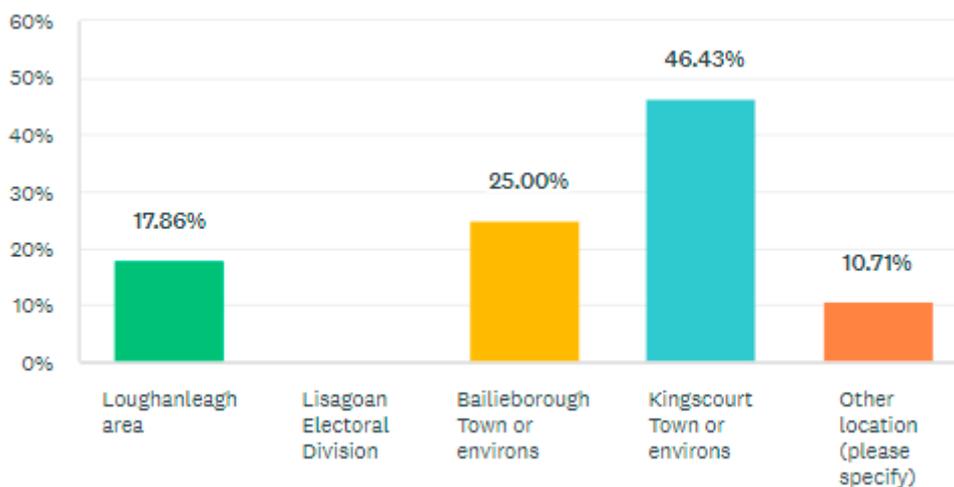
A comprehensive survey was carried out among key stakeholder organisation in the greater Loughanleagh area and environs. This involved the completion of 28 questionnaires through the online survey facility Survey Monkey.

The results of this survey are as follows;

27 of the 28 respondents gave their details for this question. 26 groups were represented in total in the survey. The most frequent type of organisation is Educational based (6), with Sports closely following with 5 respondents. Recreation based and Business organisations had 3 respondents each. Other types included Charity, Community, Health and Fitness, Music, Religious, Scouts and Digital Marketing.

46.3% of the respondents are from Kingscourt and 25% are from Bailieborough. 17.9% are from the Loughanleagh area and 3 are from other locations including the Muff area, Meath Hill and locating in both Kingscourt and Bailieborough.

### Q2: Where is your organisation located?



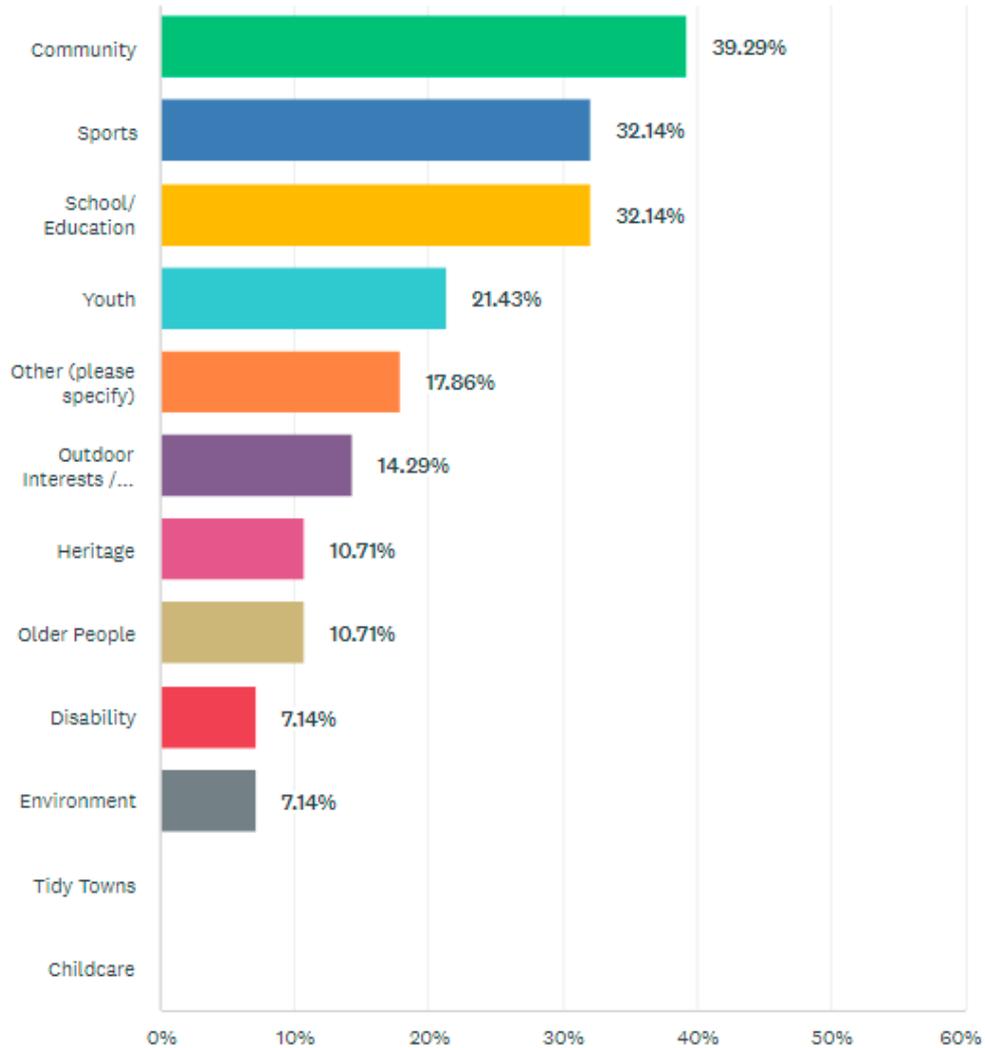
| ANSWER CHOICES                    | RESPONSES        |           |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| ▼ Loughanleagh area               | 17.86%           | 5         |
| ▼ Lisagoan Electoral Division     | 0.00%            | 0         |
| ▼ Bailieborough Town or environs  | 25.00%           | 7         |
| ▼ Kingscourt Town or environs     | 46.43%           | 13        |
| ▼ Other location (please specify) | Responses 10.71% | 3         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      |                  | <b>28</b> |

Most respondents are from the Urban parts of the study geographically area (71.4%). 46.4% of respondents are from Kingscourt and 25.0% are from Baillieborough. 17.9% are from the

Loughanleagh area and 3 respondents are from other areas (Muff, Meath Hill and both Kingscourt and Baillieborough).

**Q3: What is the main focus of your group (please select one)?**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



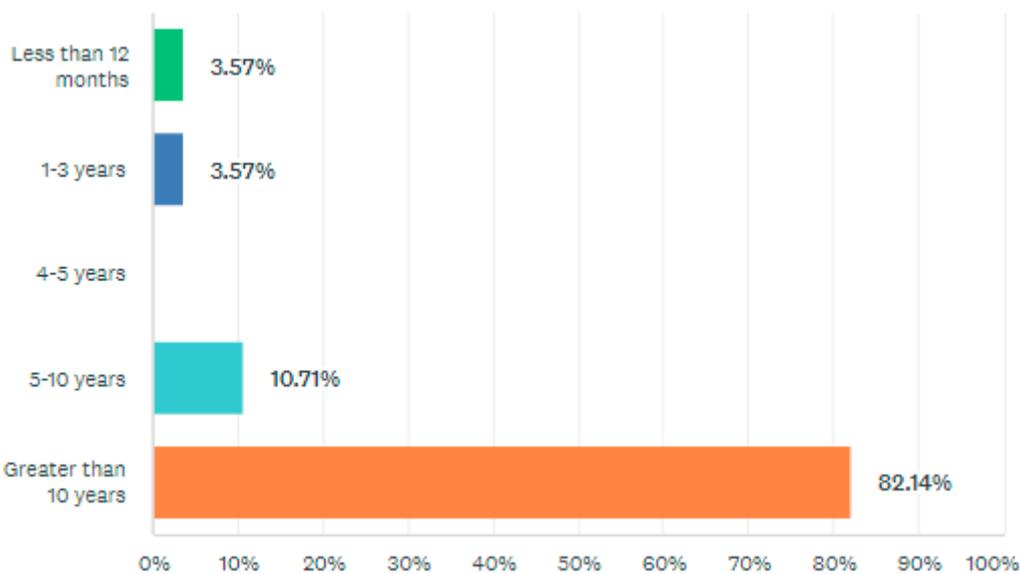
| ANSWER CHOICES              | RESPONSES        |    |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----|
| Community                   | 39.29%           | 11 |
| Sports                      | 32.14%           | 9  |
| School/ Education           | 32.14%           | 9  |
| Youth                       | 21.43%           | 6  |
| Other (please specify)      | Responses 17.86% | 5  |
| Outdoor Interests / Walking | 14.29%           | 4  |
| Heritage                    | 10.71%           | 3  |
| Older People                | 10.71%           | 3  |
| Disability                  | 7.14%            | 2  |
| Environment                 | 7.14%            | 2  |
| Tidy Towns                  | 0.00%            | 0  |
| Childcare                   | 0.00%            | 0  |
| Total Respondents: 28       |                  |    |

Respondents could select multiple answers for identifying their main focus as an organisation. Community, Sports, Education and Youth were the most frequently selected.

**Q4. Please briefly explain the purpose of your organisation and its primary activities.**

The primary activities of the respondents are outlined in the introduction paragraph above.

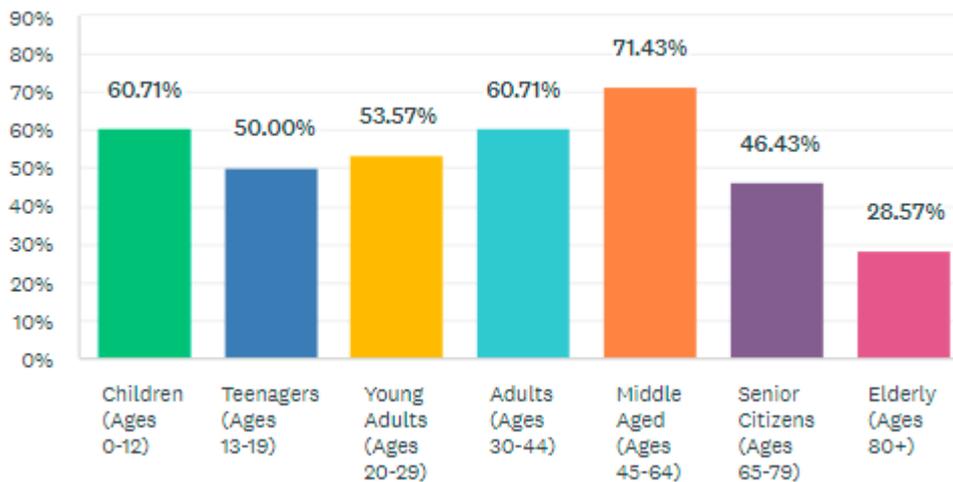
**Q5. How long has your group/organisation been in operation?**



| ANSWER CHOICES        | RESPONSES |    |
|-----------------------|-----------|----|
| Less than 12 months   | 3.57%     | 1  |
| 1-3 years             | 3.57%     | 1  |
| 4-5 years             | 0.00%     | 0  |
| 5-10 years            | 10.71%    | 3  |
| Greater than 10 years | 82.14%    | 23 |
| TOTAL                 |           | 28 |

92.9% of the organisations have been in operation for over 5 years with 88.5% of those being in operation for greater than 10 years. Just 3.6% have been existing for less than 1 year.

**Q6. Which age groups best describe your organisation’s participants/members? Please select all that apply.**



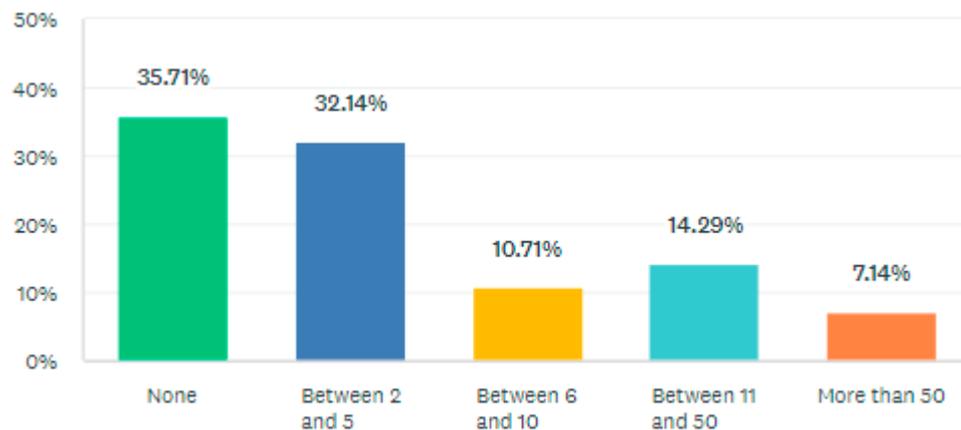
| ANSWER CHOICES               | RESPONSES |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Children (Ages 0-12)         | 60.71% 17 |
| Teenagers (Ages 13-19)       | 50.00% 14 |
| Young Adults (Ages 20-29)    | 53.57% 15 |
| Adults (Ages 30-44)          | 60.71% 17 |
| Middle Aged (Ages 45-64)     | 71.43% 20 |
| Senior Citizens (Ages 65-79) | 46.43% 13 |
| Elderly (Ages 80+)           | 28.57% 8  |
| <b>Total Respondents: 28</b> |           |

The organisations are reasonably evenly distributed in their age categories, with middle aged being the most frequently selected (71.4%).

**Q7. How many participants/members/people belong to your organisation?**

27 of the respondents provided estimates of their member numbers. These ranged from 5 up to 14,266. The mean number of group members is 400 and the median number is 135. This indicates that this sample of organisations are large viable groups.

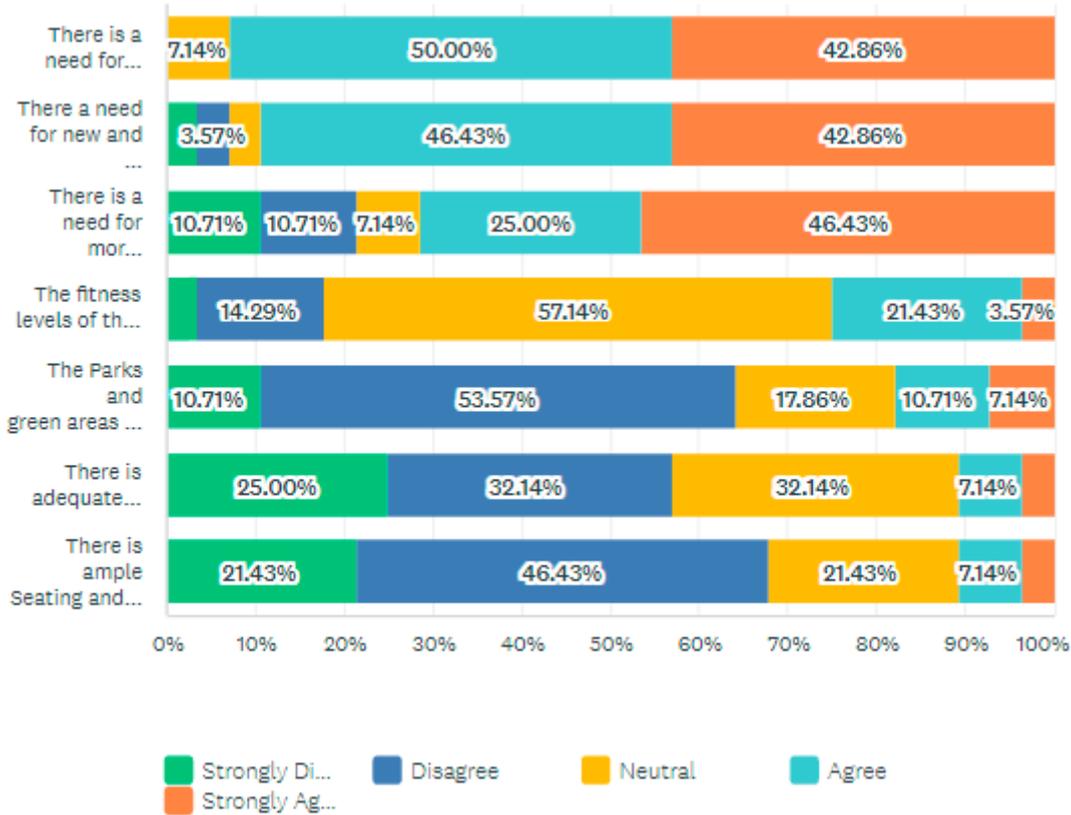
**Q8. How many employees/scheme workers does your group have?**



| ANSWER CHOICES    | RESPONSES |
|-------------------|-----------|
| None              | 35.71% 10 |
| Between 2 and 5   | 32.14% 9  |
| Between 6 and 10  | 10.71% 3  |
| Between 11 and 50 | 14.29% 4  |
| More than 50      | 7.14% 2   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>28</b> |

35.7% of the organisations are purely voluntary and 32.1% of them have employees / scheme workers less than 6 people. 21.4% have paid workers greater than 10.

**Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree)**



|  | STRONGLY DISAGREE | DISAGREE     | NEUTRAL      | AGREE        | STRONGLY AGREE | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|--|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|-------|------------------|
| There is a need for improved Biodiversity education in the area                          | 0.00%<br>0        | 0.00%<br>0   | 7.14%<br>2   | 50.00%<br>14 | 42.86%<br>12   | 28    | 4.36             |
| There a need for new and / or enhanced recreation facilities to be developed in the area | 3.57%<br>1        | 3.57%<br>1   | 3.57%<br>1   | 46.43%<br>13 | 42.86%<br>12   | 28    | 4.21             |
| There is a need for more outdoor activities and scenic places with amenities in the area | 10.71%<br>3       | 10.71%<br>3  | 7.14%<br>2   | 25.00%<br>7  | 46.43%<br>13   | 28    | 3.86             |
| The fitness levels of the local population is generally poor                             | 3.57%<br>1        | 14.29%<br>4  | 57.14%<br>16 | 21.43%<br>6  | 3.57%<br>1     | 28    | 3.07             |
| The Parks and green areas in the area are adequate                                       | 10.71%<br>3       | 53.57%<br>15 | 17.86%<br>5  | 10.71%<br>3  | 7.14%<br>2     | 28    | 2.50             |
| There is adequate availability of outdoor class facilities at Loughanleagh               | 25.00%<br>7       | 32.14%<br>9  | 32.14%<br>9  | 7.14%<br>2   | 3.57%<br>1     | 28    | 2.32             |
| There is ample Seating and areas to congregate in Loughanleagh                           | 21.43%<br>6       | 46.43%<br>13 | 21.43%<br>6  | 7.14%<br>2   | 3.57%<br>1     | 28    | 2.25             |

The table and chart above orders the rated answers by the most strongly agreed along a 5 point Likert scale. Improved Biodiversity education in the area is the most highly rated statement with the need for new and / or enhanced recreation facilities to be developed in the area also in the top tier category. A need for more outdoor activities and amenities is in the second tier Agreed category. The fitness levels being poor is in the neutral zone among respondents and finally the park green areas being adequate, adequate outdoor facilities and ample seating all in the second lowest disagree category.

### **Q10. What do you think are the strengths of the Loughanleagh area for enabling Recreational Activities?**

Respondents were presented with a series of open ended questions where they could freely state their suggestions. The first focused on what strengths Loughanleagh has to offer. These answers help shape the analysis of the internal environment of the area.

27 respondents answered and a thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data. The themes were also analysed quantitatively and their frequency is outlined in the table 10 below.

Table 10

| <b>Loughanleagh Strength</b> | <b>No.</b> |
|------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Scenery</b>               | <b>19</b>  |
| <b>Walks</b>                 | <b>9</b>   |
| <b>Green Space</b>           | <b>6</b>   |
| <b>Location</b>              | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Accessibility</b>         | <b>4</b>   |
| <b>Emotional Wellbeing</b>   | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Exercise</b>              | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Heritage</b>              | <b>3</b>   |
| <b>Hiking</b>                | <b>2</b>   |
| <b>Children</b>              | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Fair of Muff</b>          | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Potential</b>             | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>Privacy</b>               | <b>1</b>   |

The most salient strength identified was the aesthetic scenery at Loughanleagh. The walkways and green spaces were also frequently referenced by the organisations. Its convenient location equidistant between the 2 towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt is considered a strength as is its accessibility. Other strengths includes its suitability for exercise and how it enhances emotional wellbeing along with its heritages.

### Q11. What do you think are the biggest challenges in the Loughanleagh area for Recreational Activities?

Respondents were invited to express what they think are the biggest challenges or weaknesses in the area. These responses also help shape the analysis of the internal environment of Loughanleagh.

| Loughanleagh Challenge | No. | Loughanleagh Challenge | No. |
|------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Carparking             | 7   | Maintenance            | 2   |
| Funding                | 7   | Rough Ground           | 2   |
| Seating                | 6   | Amenities              | 1   |
| Accessibility          | 5   | Coffee vendor          | 1   |
| Pathways               | 5   | Greenbelt              | 1   |
| Signage                | 5   | Injuries               | 1   |
| Toilets                | 3   | Insurance              | 1   |
| Coillte                | 2   | Parking                | 1   |
| Facilities             | 2   | Roads                  | 1   |
| Lighting               | 2   | Space                  | 1   |
| Litter                 | 2   | Weather                | 1   |

The most common themes were appropriate carparking facilities and funding for developing the area. A deficit in seating facilities was identified by several of the respondents along with a perceived sense of poor accessibility (mainly from a motorist's perspective). Infrastructural issues were also frequently referenced including pathways, signage and toilets and facilities in general. Coillte and the forestation are seen as challenges along with the absence of lighting, litter, maintenance and the rough ground.

**Q12. What improvements would you like to see prioritised in Loughanleagh for advancing your organisation?**

Respondents were given an opportunity to provide an open ended answer to what improvements they would like to see prioritised in Loughanleagh in terms of advancing their organisation. 24 of the 28 respondents answered this question.

| Loughanleagh Improvements | No. | Loughanleagh Improvements | No. |
|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| Pathways                  | 9   | Coillte                   | 1   |
| Signage                   | 6   | Development               | 1   |
| Carparking                | 5   | Discovery Points          | 1   |
| Picnic Area               | 4   | Fitness                   | 1   |
| Amenities                 | 3   | Health                    | 1   |
| Accessibility             | 2   | Heritage Centre           | 1   |
| Education outdoor         | 2   | Markets                   | 1   |
| Facilities                | 2   | Misc.                     | 1   |
| Lake of the Cures         | 2   | Outdoor Gym               | 1   |
| Lighting                  | 2   | Recreational Areas        | 1   |
| Natural                   | 2   | Safety                    | 1   |
| Seating                   | 2   | Shelters                  | 1   |
| Bins                      | 1   | Toilets                   | 1   |
| Car Park                  | 1   | Tours                     | 1   |
| Children's Area           | 1   | Walkways                  | 1   |

Upgrading the pathways / walkways is the most popular improvement suggested by the respondents. This includes level paths, implementation of walking trails, kept safe and well maintained. Also walkways to improve accessibility to heritage sites was suggested. Improving and increasing the level of signage was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most requested improvement. More parking facilities for cars and buses was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most requested and a greater provision for a picnic area / tables was 4<sup>th</sup>. Greater level of amenities in general was 5<sup>th</sup> with a broad range of activities suggested with 2 and one respondents as outlined in the table above.

**Q13. What events and activities would you like to see in Loughanleagh that would attract more people?**

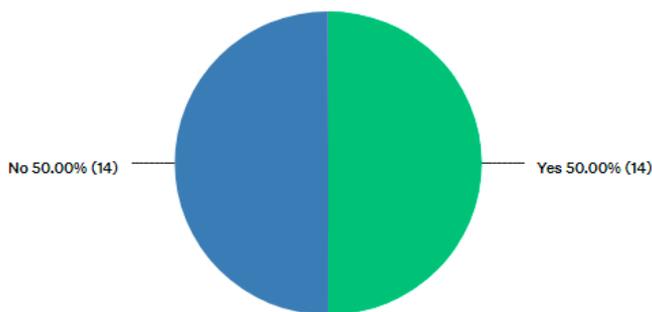
Respondents were given an opportunity to provide an open-ended answer to what activities they would like to see Loughanleagh that would attract more people. 24 of the 28 respondents answered this question. The most frequent stated type of activity or event is Nature walks / talks with 13 of the respondents. This would involve organised walking tours or guided nature walks in Loughanleagh. Specific answers on this theme included upgrading the pathways to facilitate walks and informative nature tours of the area.

Educational outdoor sessions, information activities and music events in Loughanleagh also featured (3 each) along with Cultural events in general and improved information and signage.

| Activities / Events    | No. | Activities / Events | No. |
|------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| Nature Walks / Talks   | 13  | Events              | 1   |
| Pathways Upgrade       | 4   | Heritage Centre     | 1   |
| Guided Tours           | 4   | Heritage Events     | 1   |
| Education Outdoors     | 3   | Hiking              | 1   |
| Information activities | 3   | Markets             | 1   |
| Music Events           | 3   | Natural             | 1   |
| Cultural Events        | 2   | Parkrun             | 1   |
| Signage / Information  | 2   | Pet Farm            | 1   |
| Accessibility          | 1   | Picnic Areas        | 1   |
| Biodiversity           | 1   | Running Track       | 1   |
| Camping                | 1   | Seating             | 1   |
| Dancing                | 1   | Story Telling       | 1   |

**Q14. Would you like to participate in organising and co-producing events / activities in Loughanleagh to attract more people to the area?**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Yes            | 50.00%    | 14        |
| No             | 50.00%    | 14        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |           | <b>28</b> |

50% of organisations would like to participate in organising and co-producing events in Loughanleagh.

**Q15. What opportunities do you see for Loughanleagh in the future?**

Respondents were then asked to focus on the external environment. The first one was to suggest opportunities for Loughanleagh. The most frequent theme that emerged from the data is the tourist potential that the area could tap into, including Ireland's ancient East. The increasing cultural norm of health and fitness also attracted responses such as exercise, walking and emotional wellbeing. Economic factors were also suggested with benefits for business and employment and social dividends for communities and their groups from developing the Loughanleagh area. Ecological and biodiversity opportunities were also stated along with maintaining the area as a place of natural beauty as it is currently or developing more green areas. Its rich heritage is also seen as an advantage to attract visitors to the area, tapping into the growing curious traveller market segment. Its potential as a location of education was also suggested to attract school tours and outdoor lectures and classes. The wide range of funding streams was also stated as an opportunity the area has in attracting inward investment.

**Q16. What threats do you see to Loughanleagh in the future?**

The other part of the external environment respondents were asked to focus on was threats to the Loughanleagh area. A lack of political will by the local authorities was seen as a threat by a few respondents. This included that the lack of attention could render a beautiful area forgotten and neglected. More involvement by the local authority is required to promote the area and raise awareness.

Economic threats were also seen in the external environment by the respondents. These included the lack of funding which is required for the maintenance of the area and future capital investment needed for the proposed upgrades as identified in this study.

Social factors identified by the respondents as threats include anti-social behaviour in the area, too much dependency on cars creating bottlenecks and the potential for accidents to pedestrians, dumping in the area and litter, too much demand for housing, and quads and dirt bike culture.

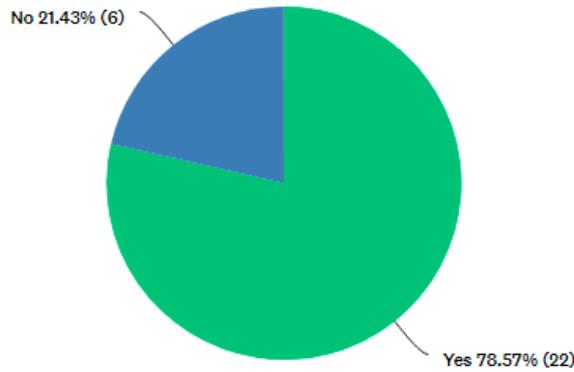
Technological Factors seen as a threat to the area include infrastructure such as development of wind farms, pylons, telecommunications masts and over forestation.

Environmental threats were highlighted frequently in this question. This included pollution, sustainability of the area, climate change and forestation. Overdevelopment of farming and of facilities were also seen as a threat, where the natural biodiversity could be affected by more human interaction and livestock.

Other threats identified included competitive / substitute barriers in the future from other outdoor events and activities in the area, and the lack of partnership with key stakeholders.

### Q17. Does your organisations have a website/webpage?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

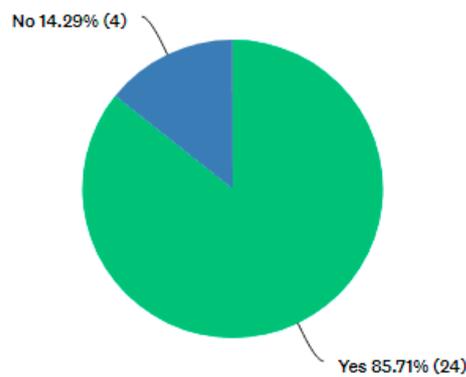


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| ▼ Yes          | 78.57%    | 22        |
| ▼ No           | 21.43%    | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |           | <b>28</b> |

Over three quarters (78.6%) of the organisations in this survey have a website.

### Q18. Do you use Social Media for your organisation?

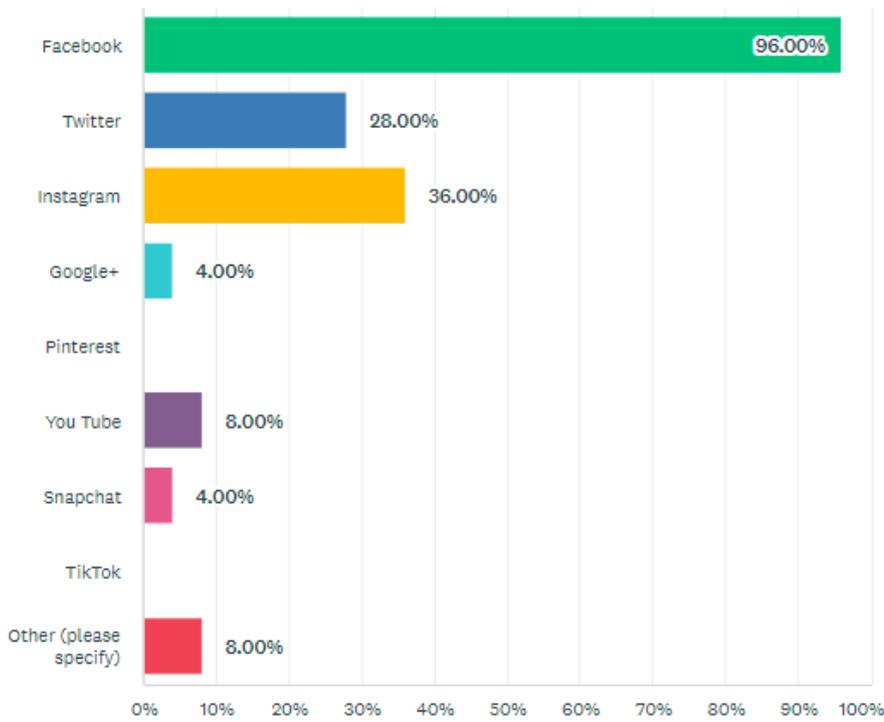
Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |           |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| ▼ Yes          | 85.71%    | 24        |
| ▼ No           | 14.29%    | 4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |           | <b>28</b> |

85.7% of the groups use social media to promote their organisation.

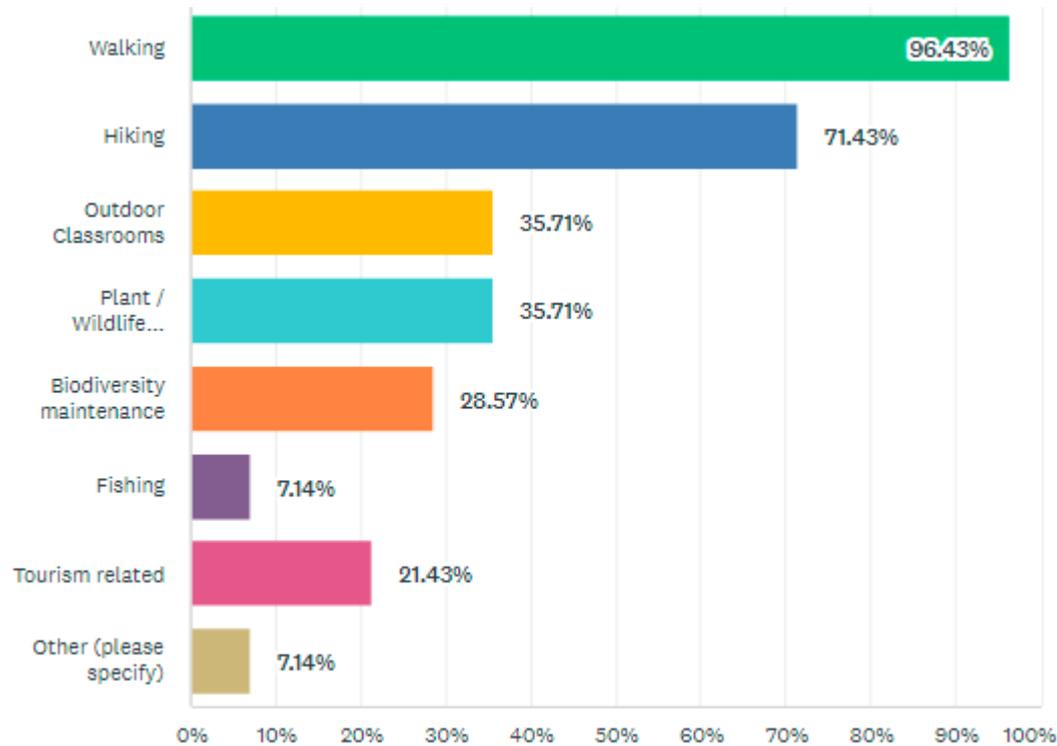
**Q19. If Yes, which Social Media platforms? (You can Select more than one)**



| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES         |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Facebook               | 96.00% 24         |
| Twitter                | 28.00% 7          |
| Instagram              | 36.00% 9          |
| Google+                | 4.00% 1           |
| Pinterest              | 0.00% 0           |
| You Tube               | 8.00% 2           |
| Snapchat               | 4.00% 1           |
| TikTok                 | 0.00% 0           |
| Other (please specify) | Responses 8.00% 2 |
| Total Respondents: 25  |                   |

The vast majority (96.0%) use Facebook, 28.0% use twitter and 36% use Instagram. Other platforms include YouTube, Snapchat, Google+, LinkedIn and WhatsApp.

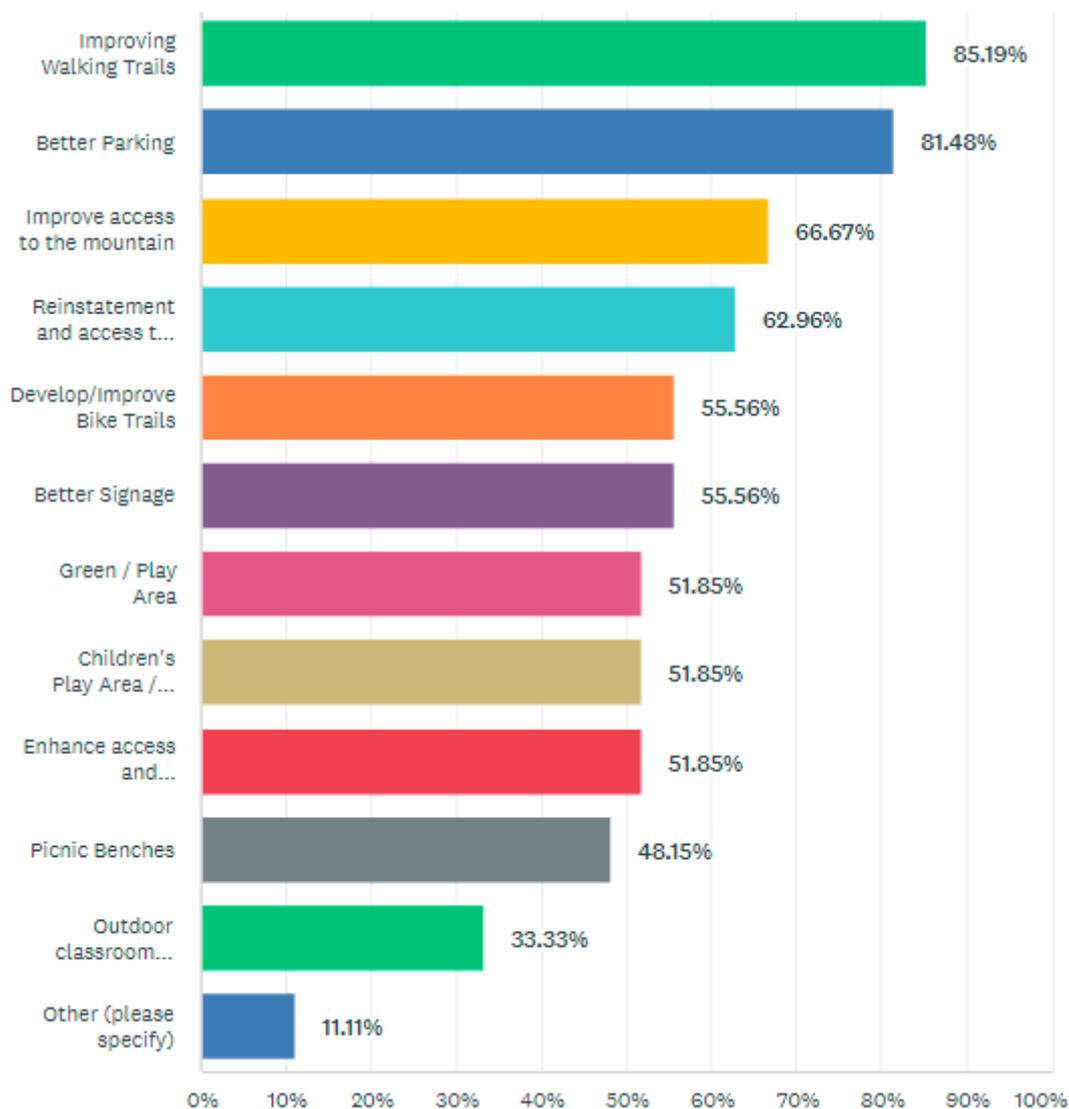
**Q20. What activities or interests would your group/organisation undertake while visiting Loughanleagh?**



| ANSWER CHOICES               | RESPONSES         |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Walking                      | 96.43% 27         |
| Hiking                       | 71.43% 20         |
| Outdoor Classrooms           | 35.71% 10         |
| Plant / Wildlife Viewing     | 35.71% 10         |
| Biodiversity maintenance     | 28.57% 8          |
| Fishing                      | 7.14% 2           |
| Tourism related              | 21.43% 6          |
| Other (please specify)       | Responses 7.14% 2 |
| <b>Total Respondents: 28</b> |                   |

Respondents could select more than one answer. Walking and hiking are the most frequent activities that interest the group members in this survey with 96.4% and 71.4% of respondents respectively. Outdoor classrooms, plant / wildlife viewing and biodiversity maintenance are tightly grouped with 35.7% and 28.6% of respondents and also under the similar theme of ecology. 21.4% of respondents selected tourism related activities. Other responses include fishing, heritage and folklore, cycling, outdoor swimming and Kayaking.

**Q21. Please identify from the list below the projects you believe should be prioritised?**

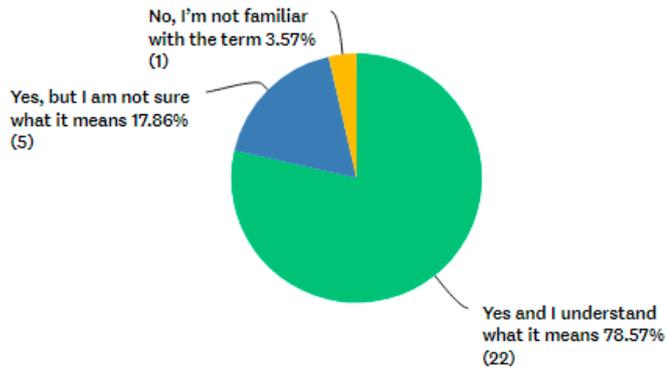


| ANSWER CHOICES                                       | RESPONSES        |    |
|--|------------------|----|
| Improving Walking Trails                             | 85.19%           | 23 |
| Better Parking                                       | 81.48%           | 22 |
| Improve access to the mountain                       | 66.67%           | 18 |
| Reinstatement and access to the lake at Loughanleagh | 62.96%           | 17 |
| Develop/Improve Bike Trails                          | 55.56%           | 15 |
| Better Signage                                       | 55.56%           | 15 |
| Green / Play Area                                    | 51.85%           | 14 |
| Children's Play Area / Equipment                     | 51.85%           | 14 |
| Enhance access and interpretation of heritage sites  | 51.85%           | 14 |
| Picnic Benches                                       | 48.15%           | 13 |
| Outdoor classroom facilities                         | 33.33%           | 9  |
| Other (please specify)                               | Responses 11.11% | 3  |
| <b>Total Respondents: 27</b>                         |                  |    |

Similar to the findings to the qualitative questions above, improving walking trails and better carparking where the most popular selections.

### Q22. Are you familiar with the term "biodiversity"?

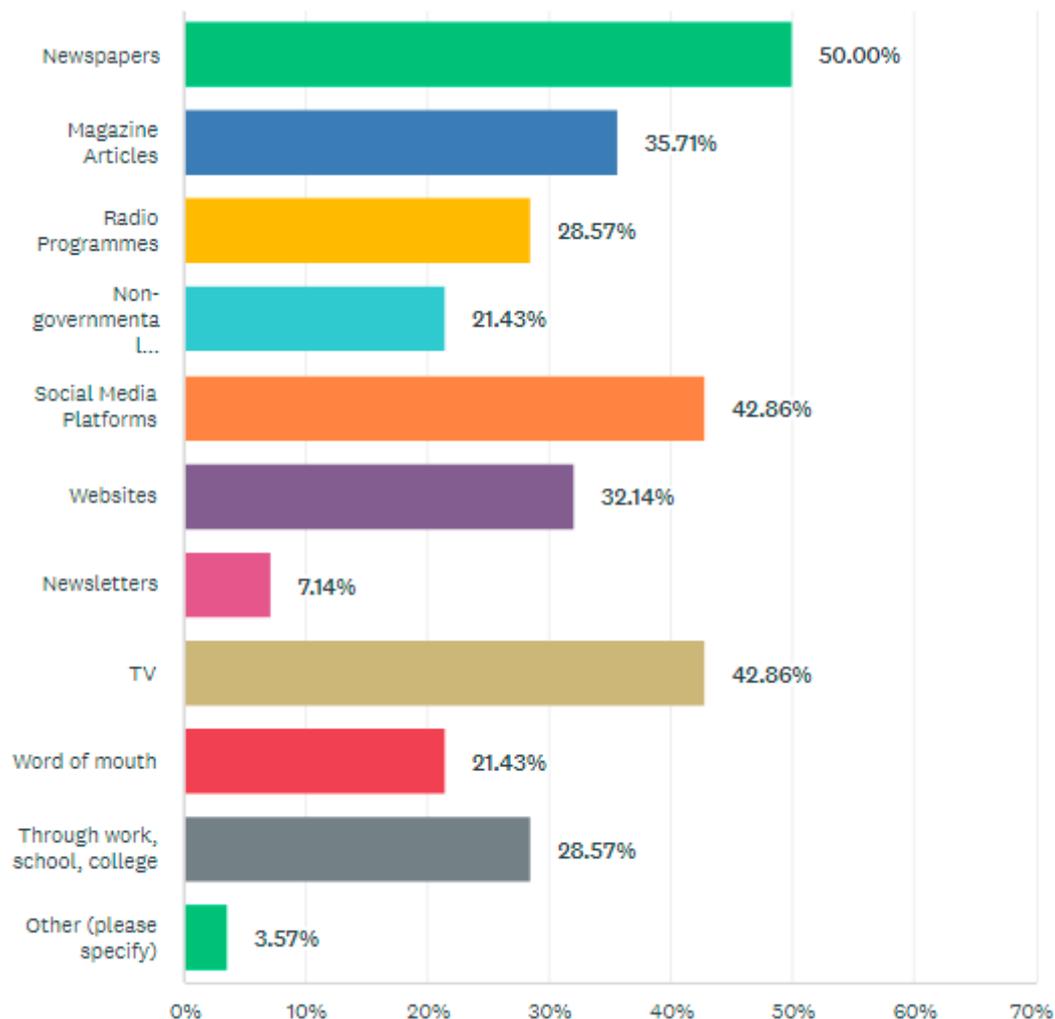
Answered: 28 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES                       | RESPONSES |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Yes and I understand what it means   | 78.57% 22 |
| Yes, but I am not sure what it means | 17.86% 5  |
| No, I'm not familiar with the term   | 3.57% 1   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                         | <b>28</b> |

96.4% of respondents are familiar of the term biodiversity and 81.5% of those understand the term.

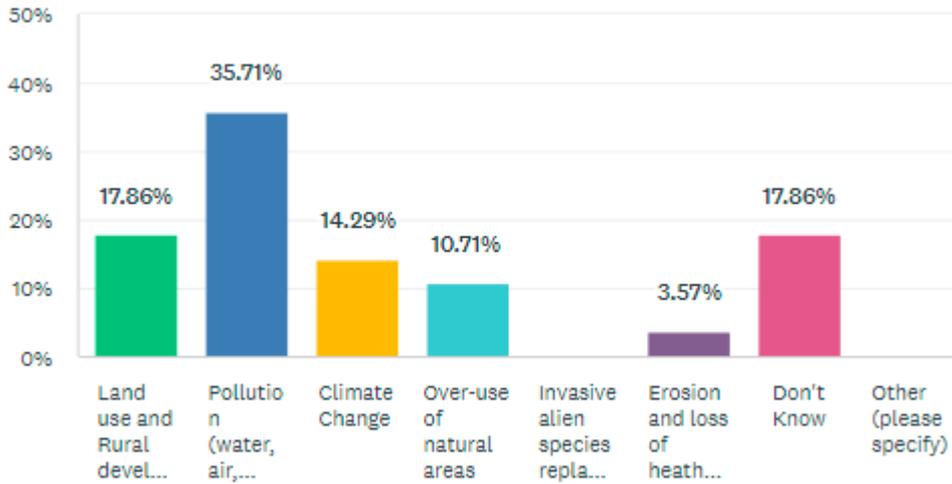
**Q23. Do you get your information about biodiversity from any of the following sources?  
Please select as many as apply**



| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES         |
|--|-------------------|
| ▼ Newspapers   | 50.00% 14         |
| ▼ Magazine Articles  | 35.71% 10         |
| ▼ Radio Programmes   | 28.57% 8          |
| ▼ Non-governmental Organisations, e.g. Birdwatch Ireland, Irish Wildlife Trust | 21.43% 6          |
| ▼ Social Media Platforms   | 42.86% 12         |
| ▼ Websites   | 32.14% 9          |
| ▼ Newsletters  | 7.14% 2           |
| ▼ TV   | 42.86% 12         |
| ▼ Word of mouth  | 21.43% 6          |
| ▼ Through work, school, college  | 28.57% 8          |
| ▼ Other (please specify)   | Responses 3.57% 1 |
| <b>Total Respondents: 28</b>   |                   |

The most popular medium to source information about diversity is the Newspapers with exactly half of the respondents. Digital sources such as Social Media (42.9%) and websites (32.1%) are also popular sources. TV (42.86%) and magazines (35.71%) indicate the high relevance of traditional sources of information on biodiversity.

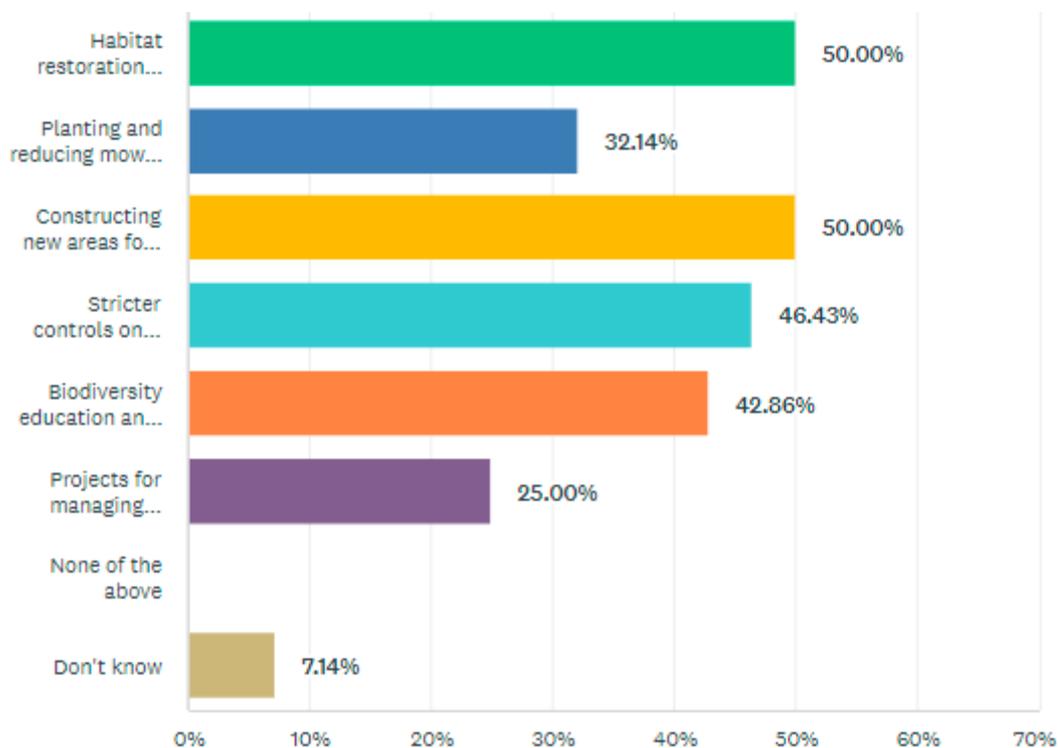
**Q24. What do you think is the greatest cause of biodiversity loss in Cavan?**



| ANSWER CHOICES                                  | RESPONSES         |
|---|-------------------|
| Land use and Rural development                  | 17.86% 5          |
| Pollution (water, air, noise, litter)           | 35.71% 10         |
| Climate Change                                  | 14.29% 4          |
| Over-use of natural areas                       | 10.71% 3          |
| Invasive alien species replacing native species | 0.00% 0           |
| Erosion and loss of heatherland                 | 3.57% 1           |
| Don't Know                                      | 17.86% 5          |
| Other (please specify)                          | Responses 0.00% 0 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>28</b>         |

Respondents attribute pollution as the greatest cause of Biodiversity loss in Cavan in general (35.71%). Land use and rural development is the second most selected cause with 17.9% of respondents. Climate change is third with 14.3%. Overuse of natural areas was 4<sup>th</sup> (10.7%) with just 1 selecting erosion and loss of heatherland.

**Q25. Which of the following initiatives for biodiversity would you like to see carried out more?**

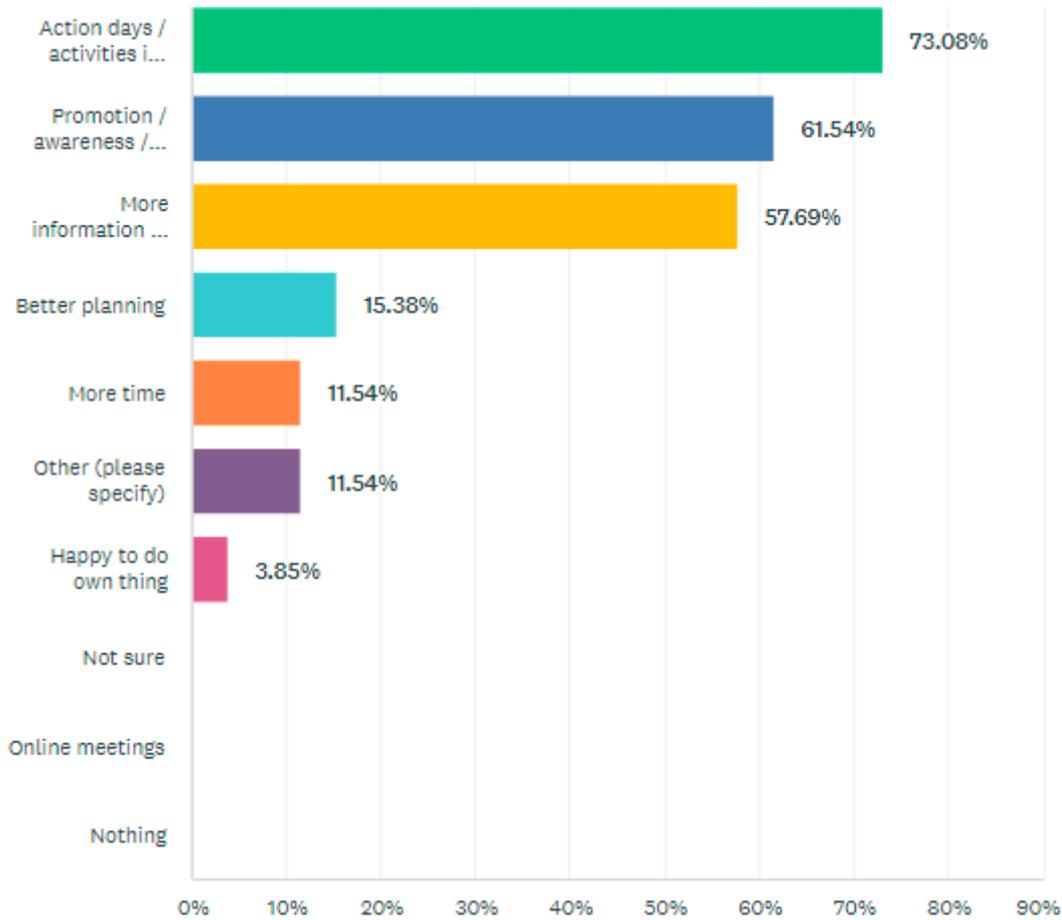


| ANSWER CHOICES   | RESPONSES |    |
|--|-----------|----|
| ▼ Habitat restoration (recovering heatherland and moss areas and improving existing areas for wildlife). | 50.00%    | 14 |
| ▼ Planting and reducing mowing to help pollinating insects   | 32.14%    | 9  |
| ▼ Constructing new areas for wildlife (e.g. creating new wetlands and woodlands)                         | 50.00%    | 14 |
| ▼ Stricter controls on development to protect biodiversity   | 46.43%    | 13 |
| ▼ Biodiversity education and outreach  | 42.86%    | 12 |
| ▼ Projects for managing threatened or protected species  | 25.00%    | 7  |
| ▼ None of the above  | 0.00%     | 0  |
| ▼ Don't know   | 7.14%     | 2  |
| <b>Total Respondents: 28</b>   |           |    |

**Q26. What actions do you think need to happen in the area to protect and improve biodiversity? - Actions by your community**

| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |       |
|---|-----------|-------|
| Community gardens / green spaces / communal areas         | 55.56%    | 15    |
| Planting for pollinators / plant wildflowers              | 59.26%    | 16    |
| Protect and recover loss of heatherland and moss habitat. | 40.74%    | 11    |
| Work together / get involved / action groups              | 59.26%    | 16    |
| Act on local / community level                            | 40.74%    | 11    |
| Generate less waste / rubbish / litter / pollution        | 55.56%    | 15    |
| Clean up  | 74.07%    | 20    |
| Advocate / spread awareness / encouragement               | 40.74%    | 11    |
| Environmentally friendly / reduce carbon footprint        | 37.04%    | 10    |
| Acquire more knowledge / research                         | 22.22%    | 6     |
| Be aware / conscious                                      | 25.93%    | 7     |
| Recycle   | 48.15%    | 13    |
| Walk / cycle more   | 51.85%    | 14    |
| Acquire more knowledge / research                         | 14.81%    | 4     |
| Less car use  | 14.81%    | 4     |
| Work together / Get involved                              | 33.33%    | 9     |
| Nothing I can do  | 3.70%     | 1     |
| Don't know / not sure                                     | 11.11%    | 3     |
| Other (please specify)                                    | Responses | 3.70% |
| <b>Total Respondents: 27</b>                              |           |       |

**Q27. What, if anything, would encourage you to take part in activities related to the environment and biodiversity?**



| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES        |    |
|---|------------------|----|
| ▼ Action days / activities in local area community based / in schools / easy access | 73.08%           | 19 |
| ▼ Promotion / awareness / communication / engagement / advertisement of events      | 61.54%           | 16 |
| ▼ More information / better understanding / education                               | 57.69%           | 15 |
| ▼ Better planning   | 15.38%           | 4  |
| ▼ More time   | 11.54%           | 3  |
| ▼ Other (please specify)  | Responses 11.54% | 3  |
| ▼ Happy to do own thing   | 3.85%            | 1  |
| ▼ Not sure  | 0.00%            | 0  |
| ▼ Online meetings   | 0.00%            | 0  |
| ▼ Nothing   | 0.00%            | 0  |
| <b>Total Respondents: 26</b>  |                  |    |

**Q28 If you have any further comments or suggestions on what you would like to see your local community do more of / do in a new way to help biodiversity across the area, please enter your comment here**

Finally, respondents were given an opportunity to leave any final comments or suggestions. 4 organisations left the following comments;

*“Education on biodiversity especially in National Schools”*

*“More education and information on a local level”*

*“People should work together and appreciate what's on our doorstep”*

*“Loughanleagh is an area of great beauty but needs to be developed in a sympathetic way in order to attract more visitors and to be a place that people know and want to visit”*

### **Summary of Organisational Consultation Findings**

A comprehensive survey was carried out among stakeholder organisations and some local businesses in the area. This involved the completion of 28 questionnaires through the online survey facility Survey Monkey.

The results of this survey are as follows;

27 of the 28 respondents gave their details for this question. 26 groups were represented in total in the survey. The most frequent type of organisation is Educational based (6), with Sports closely following with 5 respondents. Recreation based and Business organisations had 3 respondents each. Other types included Charity, Community, Health and Fitness, Music, Religious, Scouts and Digital Marketing.

46.3% of the respondents are from Kingscourt and 25% are from Bailieborough. 17.9% are from the Loughanleagh area and 3 are from other locations including the Muff area, Meath Hill and locating in both Kingscourt and Bailieborough.

Most respondents are from the Urban parts of the region (71.4%). 46.4% of respondents are from Kingscourt and 25.0% are from Bailieborough. 17.9% are from the Loughanleagh area and 3 respondents are from other areas (Muff, Meath Hill and both Kingscourt and Bailieborough).

Improved Biodiversity education in the area is the most highly rated statement with the need for new and / or enhanced recreation facilities to be developed in the area also in the top tier category. A need for more outdoor activities and amenities is in the second tier Agreed category. The fitness levels being poor is in the neutral zone among respondents and finally the park green areas being adequate, adequate outdoor facilities and ample seating all in the second lowest disagree category.

The most salient strength identified was the aesthetic scenery at Loughanleagh. The walkways and green spaces were also frequently referenced by the organisations. Its convenient location equidistant between the 2 towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt is considered a strength as is its accessibility. Other strengths includes its suitability for exercise and how it enhances emotional wellbeing along with its heritages.

Respondents were invited to express what they think are the biggest challenges or weaknesses in the area. The most common themes were appropriate carparking facilities and funding for developing the area. A deficit in seating facilities was identified by several of the respondents along with a perceived sense of poor accessibility (mainly from a motorist's perspective). Infrastructural issues were also frequently referenced including pathways, signage and toilets and facilities in general. Coillte and the forestation are seen as challenges along with the absence of lighting, litter, maintenance and the rough ground.

Upgrading the pathways / walkways is the most popular improvement suggested by the respondents. This includes level paths, implementation of walking trails, kept safe and well maintained. Also walkways to improve accessibility to heritage sites was suggested. Improving and increasing the level of signage was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most requested improvement. More parking facilities for cars and buses was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most requested and a greater provision for a picnic area / tables was 4<sup>th</sup>. Greater level of amenities in general was 5<sup>th</sup> with a broad range of activities suggested with 2 and one respondents as outlined in the table above.

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The other part of the external environment respondents were asked to focus on was threats to the Loughanleagh area. A lack of political will by the local authorities was seen as a threat by a few respondents. This included that the lack of attention could render a beautiful area forgotten and neglected. More involvement by the local authority is required to promote the area and raise awareness.

Economic threats were also seen in the external environment by the respondents. These included the lack of funding which is required for the maintenance of the area and future capital investment needed for the proposed upgrades as identified in this study.

Social factors identified by the respondents as threats include anti-social behaviour in the area, too much dependency on cars creating bottlenecks and the potential for accidents to pedestrians, dumping in the area and litter, too much demand for housing, and quads and dirt bike culture.

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Environmental threats were highlighted frequently in this question. This included pollution, sustainability of the area, climate change and forestation. Overdevelopment of farming and of facilities were also seen as a threat, where the natural biodiversity could be affected by more human interaction and livestock.

Other threats identified included competitive / substitute barriers in the future from other outdoor events and activities in the area, and the lack of partnership with key stakeholders.

Respondents could select more than one answer. Walking and hiking are the most frequent activities that interest the group members in this survey with 96.4% and 71.4% of respondents respectively. Outdoor classrooms, plant / wildlife viewing and biodiversity maintenance are tightly grouped with 35.7% and 28.6% of respondents and also under the similar theme of ecology. 21.4% of respondents selected tourism related activities. Other responses include fishing, heritage and folklore, cycling, outdoor swimming and Kayaking.

It is very clear from the consultations that there is considerable scope for Loughanleagh to be utilised as an outdoor classroom setting to enable experiential learning to take place.

## 6.6 Consultation with local landowners

5 semi-structured telephone interviews were held with local landowners who have property in the immediate vicinity of in January 2022 to assess their needs and gauge their sentiments towards any potential developments concerning the masterplan.

To summarise the majority of landowners were broadly supportive of the development of the masterplan and very much welcomed the opportunity to contribute to it.

It was noted that the relationship with the Heritage group was reasonable with most landowners however there was a body of work required to develop a much closer working relationship and to

in some cases rebuild trust. One landowner was particularly concerned at the impact of enhancing visitor access to the area would impact on their property and farming enterprise.

It was felt strongly that landowner consent was needed for any works that would impact on them directly. There were also the views expressed albeit in isolation that there was allegedly someone locally reporting local landowners when they carried out any land improvement works on their property. This has led to mistrust and bad feeling with non-landowners and also with the Heritage group.

Another issue that were raised quite consistently by landowners were the issue of littering and people dumping rubbish and the need to address same.

The issue of public liability insurance was raised as essential to cover landowners and indemnify them against any claims of walkers on their lands. The progression of the Sports Ireland scheme adoption at Loughanleagh could address this.

The point was also made that the Heritage group while consisting of local residents did not have strong landowner representation, it is noted that while none of those consulted requested to be represented on the committee this is something that could be considered. This would help the view expressed by some landowners of the need to get the balance correct between the amenity value of the area with that of the owners of the land who farm the area and who also would wish to develop and improve their holdings.

The issue of car parking and congestion to access their lands and properties was raised by most landowners. This was particularly prevalent at weekends and during the summer months in good weather. There was general consensus that this needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency prior to encouraging more visitors to the area. It was felt that toilets were badly needed and could be located near to a car park if one was to be developed.

At present the almost abandonment of vehicles and the volume of cars up the relatively narrow roads to access the area were a considerable inconvenience. Traffic calming or a means of ensuring safe passage of walkers across the public road was also an issue that needed to be addressed.

Separate consultations took place with both Coillte and Greenbelt as the primary landowners of the area covered in commercial forestry. A broad number of issues were discussed relating to potential projects on parts of their lands and it was agreed that anything that was to be included in the masterplan relating to their properties would be agreed in advance and consent provided prior to inclusion of any given action.

## 7. Strategic Context

### 7.1 Introduction

The Master plan for Loughanleagh and the themes and actions within this document have been considered in the context of all relevant local, regional and national policy and strategy documents. A scoping exercise was carried out to assess what policies and strategies were relevant to Loughanleagh area and in turn the actions were proofed for congruence with these strategies.

#### **Tourism in County Cavan**

County Cavan's tourism sector has enormous potential for future growth. The Cavan Tourism Strategy identified that there were over 144,000 overseas visitors to the County in 2019 with an associated revenue of €50 million. Tourism is thus an important sector of activity in the County and one which has the added benefit of acting as an external economic driver whilst also significantly improving the quality of life of the residents of the County. Cavan's relative proximity to Dublin and other large settlements and being alongside the border with Northern Ireland offers significant opportunities to expand the existing tourism offer and brand for the County. Furthermore, the County can benefit from the constrained capacity of larger settlements and act as an accommodation base for those visiting the east and north subject to a broadening of the current available tourism accommodation profile. Paramount to this is creating a tourism package that appeals to likely consumers.

Significant strides have been taken in recent years, with the €1.2 Million development of Cavan Burren Park, the award winning World War One Trench, 1916 Experiences in Cavan County Museum and the Castle Saunderson trail, all enhancing the existing quality tourism infrastructure in Cavan. The inclusion of Cavan in Failte Ireland's "Ireland's Ancient East" proposition also bodes well for the County, providing greater opportunity for overseas visitors to discover Cavan, provide additional revenues and include new developments and tourist initiatives in the county for people to visit.

There is also a deficit of biodiversity sites in County Cavan. This Masterplan complements both tourism and biodiversity objectives through actions of the development of trails, interpretation, providing tourism product, biodiversity educational area and the protection of the environment.

This section considers relevant national, regional and local strategic plans that cover County Cavan and the surrounding region, and that relate to this study.

## 7.2 National and Regional Plans & Policies

Link to the National Strategic Outcomes in the National Planning Framework from Project Ireland 2040.

Out of the following 10 National Strategic Outcomes in the National Planning Framework this project proposal supports; (those that are ticked)

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1.  | Compact Growth  |   |
| 2.  | Enhanced Regional Accessibility                                   |   |
| 3.  | Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities                      | ✓ |
| 4.  | Sustainable Mobility  |   |
| 5.  | A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills  |   |
| 6.  | High-Quality International Connectivity                           |   |
| 7.  | Enhanced Amenity and Heritage                                     | ✓ |
| 8.  | Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society          | ✓ |
| 9.  | Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources | ✓ |
| 10. | Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services        |   |

The following describes in detail how the project meets the NSOs indicated above;

The Loughanleagh Masterplan satisfies several of the criteria from each of the National Strategic Outcomes as established in the National Planning Framework. The particular objectives from the NPF are outlined in the next section and are compatible with the National Strategic Outcomes.

The criteria within the National Strategic Outcomes as ticked above are as follows;

### **National Strategic Outcome 3: Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities**

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund will, combined with wider urban and village renewal, housing and community development initiatives, create a virtuous cycle of progressive planning for, investment in and economic diversification of our rural towns and villages, re-purposing them to meet the challenges of the future. This masterplan of the Loughanleagh rural area will assist interweaving the urban and rural social fabric of the South East County Cavan, serving both nearby market towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt with an idyllic place for both visiting and commuting. In particular the proposal will directly or indirectly meet the criteria of;

- Implementation of some of the actions outlined in the Action Plan for Rural Development;

- Implementation of a targeted Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to enable opportunities to secure the rejuvenation and re-purposing of rural towns and villages weakened by the structural changes in rural economies and settlement patterns;
- Invest in greenways, Blueway's and peatways as part of a nationally coordinated strategy.

### **National Strategic Outcome 7: Enhanced Amenities and Heritage**

Appealing and attractive places are defined by their character, heritage and sense of community. This includes attractive buildings and street layouts, civic spaces and parks and regeneration of older areas and making places feel safe through active use and design.

This outcome shall be addressed by redeveloping and reinventing the town core while respecting the heritage of the main street. Public spaces for amenity use will be created and use of space for the growing population and indeed visitors alike will be transformed. Better use of the very wide market town main street will be identified and implemented with agreement of the traders and local community. For example, the layout and design of the existing Bailieborough and Bridewell Jail complements the existing historic buildings adjacent to the site and pedestrian space adjoining the street.

- The Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds will support transformational public realm initiatives to give city and town centre areas back to citizens, encouraging greater city and town centre living, enhanced recreational spaces and attractiveness from a cultural, tourism and promotional perspective.
- We will conserve, manage and present our heritage for its intrinsic value and as a support to economic renewal and sustainable employment.

### **National Strategic Outcome 8: Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Society**

The proposal is congruent with the national strategic outcome in combatting Climate Change with regard to the following characteristics;

- Increase in efficiency from consolidating resources
- Protection of natural habitat.
- Eco-friendly upgrading and development of Loughanleagh
- Utilising local existing buildings and natural resources and land to provide a base for community activities and education involving sustainability and Climate action.
- Biodiversity Site to promote awareness of climate change and assist behavioural change with local residents towards NSO 8.
- More efficient and sustainable services in the area – providing access to local early-intervention programs can also forestall more intensive and costly programs later. Some economies of scale and scope can also be achieved through shared community duties on-site. Funders also benefit from co-location of local providers, increasing service access and reducing duplication.

## **National Strategic Outcome 9: Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources**

The biodiversity elements of this proposal is congruent with this outcome in relation to the protection of natural resources and the enhancement of the quality of the environment, water and biosphere.

### **7.2.1 National Planning Framework**

**This Proposal is directly congruent with the National Planning Framework under the following objectives**

- **1. A NEW WAY FORWARD**

Objectives

1(b) Northern and Western Region: 160,000 - 180,000 additional people, i.e. a population of just over 1 million

1(c) The Northern and Western Region: around 115,000 additional people in employment, i.e. 450,000 (0.45m) in total

2(b) The regional roles of Athlone in the Midlands, Sligo and Letterkenny in the North-West and the Letterkenny-Derry and Drogheda-Dundalk-Newry cross-border networks will be identified and supported in the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

2(c) Accessibility from the north-west of Ireland and between centres of scale separate from Dublin will be significantly improved, focused on cities and larger regionally distributed centres and on key east-west and north-south routes.

3(a) Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements

3(c) Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints

- **2. NORTHERN & WESTERN REGION - P. 38**

#### **Cavan-Monaghan/North East**

Within the Northern and Western region, most of County Cavan and County Monaghan have a more easterly focus than elsewhere. They comprise part of a North-Eastern functional area that also includes County Louth in the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area. The key driver for this regional area is the Dublin-Belfast cross-border network, the influence of which, as well as that of the Dublin Metropolitan area, extends into Cavan and Monaghan. Addressing economic resilience and connectivity will be strategic priorities for this area. The maintenance of seamless cross-border movement for people, goods and services, together with improvements in digital and physical infrastructure will create new opportunities to leverage employment and for sustainable population growth, focused on the county towns. Enhanced connectivity would result in this area being strategically located almost equidistant between the Dublin, Belfast and Derry City regions in terms of time, as well as distance.

### • 3. URBAN PLACES

#### Objectives

4. Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
6. Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.
7. Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on:-
  - Encouraging population growth in strong employment and service centres of all sizes, supported by employment growth;
  - Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities;
  - Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch-up, jobs and/or improved sustainable transport links to the cities, together with a slower rate of population growth in recently expanded commuter settlements of all sizes;
  - In more self-contained settlements of all sizes, supporting a continuation of balanced population and employment growth.
9. In each Regional Assembly area, settlements not identified in Policy 2a or 2b of this Framework, may be identified for significant (i.e. 30% or more above 2016 population levels) rates of population growth at regional and local planning stages, provided this is subject to:
  - A co-ordinated strategy that ensures alignment with investment in infrastructure and the provision of employment, together with supporting amenities and services.
- 10(b). Regional and Local Authorities to identify and quantify locations for strategic employment development, where suitable, in urban and rural areas generally.
14. Protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish rural landscape that make Ireland's rural areas authentic and attractive as places to live, work and visit. The Action Plan for Rural Development will support this objective up to 2020; thereafter a review of the Action Plan will be undertaken to ensure continued alignment and consistency with the National Policy Objectives of this Framework.

- 4. RURAL PLACES

Objectives

16. Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.
17. Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.
- 18a. To support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.
21. Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
22. Facilitate tourism development and in particular a National Greenways, Blueway's and Peatways Strategy, which prioritises projects on the basis of achieving maximum impact and connectivity at national and regional level.
23. Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.
24. Support and facilitate delivery of the National Broadband Plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas.
25. The Department of Rural and Community Development, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and other relevant Departments and Agencies will continue to invest in rural Ireland, including through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and will work together to establish a mechanism to co-ordinate structures for funding rural development to align with other national strategies.

- 5. PEOPLE, HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Objectives

26. Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.
28. Plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.
29. Support the implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks.
30. Local planning, housing, transport/accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.
31. Prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with investment in:-
  - A childcare/ECCE planning function, for monitoring, analysis and forecasting of investment needs, including identification of regional priorities;
  - The provision of childcare facilities and new and refurbished schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas, that meet the diverse needs of local populations;
  - The expansion and consolidation of Higher Education facilities, particularly where this will contribute to wider regional development, and
  - Programmes for life-long learning, especially in areas of higher education and further education and training where skills gaps are identified.
32. To target the delivery of 550,000 additional households to 2040

- 6. WORKING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS

Objectives

45. In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, support and promote the development of the North West City Region as interlinked areas of strategic importance in the North-West of Ireland, through collaborative structures and a joined-up approach to spatial planning.
48. In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, develop a stable, innovative and secure digital communications and services infrastructure on an all-island basis.
49. Support the coordination and promotion of all-island tourism initiatives through continued co-operation between the relevant tourism agencies and Tourism Ireland.
50. In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, ensuring effective management of shared landscapes, heritage, water catchments, habitats, species and trans-boundary issues in relation to environmental policy.

- 7. ENVIRONMENTAL & SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Objectives

- 53. Support the circular and bio economy including in particular through greater efficiency in land management, greater use of renewable resources and by reducing the rate of land use change from urban sprawl and new development.
- 54. Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- 60. Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 62. Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.

- 8. IMPLEMENTING THE NPF

Objectives

- 66. A more effective strategic and centrally managed approach will be taken to realise the development potential of the overall portfolio of state owned and/or influenced lands in the five main cities other major urban areas and in rural towns and villages as a priority, particularly through the establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency.
- 72a. Planning authorities will be required to apply a standardised, tiered approach to differentiate between i) zoned land that is serviced and ii) zoned land that is serviceable within the life of the plan.
- 72b. When considering zoning lands for development purposes that require investment in service infrastructure, planning authorities will make a reasonable estimate of the full cost of delivery of the specified services and prepare a report, detailing the estimated cost at draft and final plan stages.
- 72c. When considering zoning land for development purposes that cannot be serviced within the life of the relevant plan, such lands should not be zoned for development.
- 73a. Guidance will be developed to enable planning authorities to apply an order of priority for development of land, taking account of proper planning and sustainable development, particularly in the case of adjoining interdependent landholdings.
- 73b. Planning authorities will use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the delivery of enabling infrastructure to prioritised zoned lands, to accommodate planned growth.
- 73c. Planning authorities and infrastructure delivery agencies will focus on the timely delivery of enabling infrastructure to priority zoned lands in order to deliver planned growth and development.
- 74. Secure the alignment of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan through delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes.

• 9. ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Objective

75. Ensure that all plans, projects and activities requiring consent arising from the National Planning Framework are subject to the relevant environmental assessment requirements including SEA, EIA and AA as appropriate.

**7.2.2 Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025**

This proposal is congruent under the following outcomes of the Our Rural Future development policy document;

- Increase in number of people living in rural areas - Towns < 10,000
- Increase in number of people in rural areas in Employment or Self Employment
- Number of town regeneration Funded
- Increase in rural transport services / numbers of passenger numbers
- Reduction in regional income disparity

The proposal is congruent under the following deliverables of the document;

- Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages
- Jobs for Rural Ireland
- Rural Living
- Rural Ireland's Unique Tourism, Culture & Heritage
- Supporting Communities to create their own future
- Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry
- Transitioning to a climate neutral economy

Specific Policy Measures in the document that this proposal is aligned to include;

*Supporting Employment and Careers in Rural Areas*

26 Maximise our resources and strengths in the Green Economy to support employment opportunities for rural communities in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, energy retrofitting, the Bioeconomy and the Circular Economy.

30 Deliver a suite of new measures to support the development of Social Enterprises in rural areas to increase their social, economic and environmental impact and contribute to job creation locally.

31 Further develop the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Ireland's Ancient East as regional tourism offerings and further diversify tourism opportunities by strengthening Ireland's image as an outdoor activity holiday destination to the domestic and international markets.

36 Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreational tourism.

### *Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages*

57 Expand the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as an enabler to bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces and for residential occupancy.

62 Identify potential State owned properties in rural towns and villages which can be used for community purposes.

68 Support the development of Smart Towns and Villages which use innovative solutions to improve resilience, build on local strengths and maximise opportunities to create desirable places for people to live and work.

85 Empower local communities and enhance community health and wellbeing by supporting heritage, arts, cultural activities and other activities to tackle social issues such as cohesion, rural isolation and mental health.

### *Enhancing Public Services in Rural Areas*

102 Invest in high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure specifically targeted at towns and villages across the country.

### *Implementation of the Policy*

147 Support rural communities to develop long-term cohesive Master Plans for their areas, to support an integrated place-based approach to rural development (aligned with the RSEs, County Development Plans, Local Development Plans and relevant national, regional and local policy objectives).

## **7.2.3 National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021**

### Biodiversity Training Area

Objective 3: Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services

Target 3.1 Enhanced appreciation of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services amongst policy makers, businesses, stakeholders, local communities, and the general public

Page 40 to 42 for description of educational initiatives.

3.1.1. Engage with local communities and stakeholders to help achieve the objectives of this plan

3.1.2. Enhance training, communication, cooperation and concerted action between relevant sectors in support of biodiversity conservation

3.1.5. Establish an island-wide Biodiversity Awards initiative where local, sectoral and educational projects or groups with a “biodiversity enhancement” focus compete for innovative prizes that will support their ongoing work and provide a springboard for public awareness and participation

3.1.6. Include biodiversity and ecosystem services in relevant courses in primary, secondary and tertiary level education

3.1.8. Engage landowners, farming and aquaculture sectors to promote the benefits of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

### Protection of the Environment

Objective 4: Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside

Pages 45 – 46

Target 4.1: Optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development, forestry and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity

4.1.1. Development and implementation of Agri-environment schemes (AES) under the current and next Rural Development Programme (i.e. Green, Low Carbon, Agri-environment Scheme (GLAS) and locally led AES (LLAES). Ensure AES achieve a quantifiable net gain for biodiversity and ecosystem services including significant habitat maintenance and restoration measures

4.1.2. Describe High Nature Value (HNV) farmland and develop measures and support tools to maintain and enhance its biodiversity and ecosystem services

4.1.3. Implement Bord na Móna’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021 and any revisions of the Plan

4.1.5. Progress implementation of BirdWatch Ireland’s Group Species Action Plans for birds (e.g. lowland farmland birds, riparian birds, woodland and scrub birds, upland birds and Lake, Fen and Turlough birds)

### Other Biodiversity Plans that may be of use.

- *National Plant Conservation Strategy*
- *National Genetic Conservation Strategies*
- *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan*

#### **7.2.4 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-2022**

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) were adopted by the Regional Authority in 2010 following a review of the previous guidelines for the period 2004-2016. The Guidelines provide a long term planning framework for the Region, and have been closely aligned with the National Spatial Strategy and National Development Plan in Ireland, and the Regional Development Strategy in Northern Ireland. Thriving towns and villages are identified as a strength in the RPG, with facilitation and promotion of place-making, and opportunities for employment included as opportunities in this area.

Relevant policies focus on support for water-based activities, rural tourism along with support for the Green Box Tourism Project. The Green Box Tourism Project is a project launched in 2003 with the support of INTERREG, is centred on tourism development and marketing and forming the first integrated ecotourism destination. The area of the Green box includes Counties Fermanagh, Leitrim, Cavan, North Sligo, South Donegal and North West Monaghan.

#### **7.2.5 Failte Ireland – Tourism Development & Innovation: A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022**

The objectives of this strategy are framed within the internationally recognised VICE model. This model identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that provides services to them, the Community and culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the Environment where it all takes place. The location of the proposed site of this feasibility study is within Ireland's Ancient East which is outlined in this strategy.

##### **Ireland's Ancient East**

The Ireland's Ancient East initiative is designed to allow visitors peel back the layers of time and to go off the beaten track to experience thousands of years of history. Covering the South and East and part of the Midlands, it focuses on the wealth of cultural and heritage attractions in the area.

##### **Brand Proposition**

*"Ireland's Ancient East offers a personal experience of 5,000 years of Europe's history. Your journey of discovery in this relaxing, off the beaten track, lush beautiful landscape, that attracted warring settlers for millennia, will be made illuminating by stories from the best story tellers in the world"*

The overarching theme for Ireland's Ancient East focuses on:

5000 years of European history, lush green landscapes and stories told by the best storytellers in the world.

## **Strategic objectives of the Ireland's Ancient East Proposition**

The key strategic objectives of the Ireland's Ancient East initiative are:

1. To drive growth in international visitor numbers, tourism revenue and associated tourism employment in the regions which currently underperform in these areas.
2. To move Ireland's east and south from a transit and day tripping zone to a destination which attracts international overnight visitors.
3. To develop a world class visitor experience, which delivers fully on the brand promise.
4. To differentiate the Ireland's East and South destination, within the international tourism marketplace, on the basis of the quality of its heritage experiences and a clear and memorable narrative, which links all experiences within it.
5. To disperse visitor traffic by encouraging the exploration of both the well-known attractions (in some cases congested) and lesser known sites and experiences (hidden gems).
6. To ensure Ireland's Ancient East is delivered in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism, ensuring that economic, social and environmental benefits are delivered in a balanced way.

### **7.2.6 North and Western Regional Assembly - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

#### *Regional Policy Objectives*

##### 3.3 | Placemaking

4. Nurturing of world class infrastructure and competitive services with capacity, resilience and quality;

7. Co-location or dynamic clustering. For example, in the agri-food sector, enterprises will seek to locate close to local suppliers of produce. Enabling connectivity and linkages within and between suppliers and purchasers, between enterprises and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) is an important consideration for the RSES;

##### 3.5 Smaller Towns, Villages and Rural

15. To support the regeneration and renewal of small towns and villages in rural areas

20. Identify suitable development opportunities for regeneration and development that are supported by a quality site selection process that also addresses environmental constraints and opportunities.

##### 4.5.1 | Sectoral Focus - Tourism

24. To protect, conserve and enhance those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the resources on which the regions tourist industry is based. These features will include areas of important landscape, coastal scenery, areas of important wildlife interest, historic buildings and

structures including archaeological sites, cultural sites including the Gaeltacht areas, arts and cultural sites and the traditional form and appearance of the built environment.

25. Promote and integrate trends in international tourism, measures will include

- Smart tourist destinations
- Tourism based on experiences
- Bedrock industries (the connection of sectors of the rural economy with technologies)
- Hyperconnected and multichannel digital tourism (mobile applications and services) of complex and highly automated new productive environments

26. Encourage and facilitate investment by Failte Ireland in the delivery of suitably scaled tourism related developments at appropriate locations that leverage increased visitor numbers through Wild Atlantic Way; Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Ireland's Ancient East whilst protecting and conserving environmentally sensitive sites.

#### *Ireland's Ancient East*

28. To ensure provision is made for the expansion in accommodation and facilities within Candidate Destination Towns. Supporting infrastructural investment will also be provided, including improvements to public realm, Transport Links, Accommodation, night time economy and the sustainably development of our natural and built heritage.

29. To establish potential tourist and amenity attractions of scale in the Cavan / Monaghan Region, in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, and the relevant Local Authorities.

### **7.2.7 Fáilte Ireland Midlands Study**

A strategy was developed for the Midlands region as a distinct brand for Ireland. This study defines the branding and wider development strategy for the region. The study is jointly funded by Roscommon, Westmeath, Longford and Offaly County Councils and by Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, National Parks & Wildlife Service and Bord Na Mona. The study is expected to be completed by May 2018. The study focuses on 'Activities in Nature' and is based mainly on the Shannon corridor and the Beara Breffni Way. The Beara-Breifne Way is a 500 km walking route which goes from the tip of the Beara Peninsula at Dursey in Co. Cork to the Breifne area of Counties Leitrim and Cavan, following generally the line of the 17th century march of O'Sullivan Beare, the last great chieftain of the West Cork and South Kerry area. Members of the Galtee Walking Club and Ballyhoura Bears under the leadership of Mike Moroney have walked the full length of the Beara to Breifne Way in stages over different weekends in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

## 7.3 County Plans & Policies

### 7.3.1 Cavan County Development Plan

Cavan County Development Plan 2022-2028 which has now included the following text on Loughnaleagh:

“KT109- Protect Loughanleagh for it’s scenic & amenity value by restricting inappropriate development and support further scientific studies to facilitate the appropriate conservation, management & protection of the area, to promote proposals under national designation”.

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## **8.8 Landscape Features**

The following are areas of County Cavan’s landscape which are not protected under European or National Legislation. They are identified as requiring special landscape policies and are listed in the Landscape Categorisation for each Character Area.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, provides for the designation of Areas of Special Amenity for reasons of outstanding natural beauty or special recreational value. Planning Authorities are also empowered to designate landscape conservation areas. Development can be prescribed as non-exempted development for these areas by the planning authority. Whilst there are currently no such designations in County Cavan it is proposed to review this during the lifetime of this plan.

### **8.8.1 Special Landscape Policy Areas<sup>34</sup>**

#### **Areas of High Landscape Value or Special Landscape Interest**

There are four High Landscape Areas.

#### **High Landscape Areas Landscape Character Area No.**

1. Upland Areas West Cavan Area 1 Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands
2. Lough Oughter ‘Lakeland’ area Area 2 The Lakelands
3. Lough an Lea Mountain Area 5 Highlands of East Cavan
4. Erne-Shannon Canal Corridor Area 1 Cuilcagh-Anierin Uplands

NHEO26 To maintain the scenic and recreation value of these areas by restricting all adverse uses and negative visual impacts.

#### **Scenic Views and Viewing Points**

There are seventeen scenic viewing points

#### **Scenic View & Viewing Points Landscape Character Area No.**

8. Lough an Lea Gap Area 5 Highlands of East Cavan

NHEO28 To restrict development that would obstruct views and to minimise visual intrusion by only permitting compatible uses.

NHEO29 To ensure that the location, design and visual prominence of developments are examined, including possible effects on views from the public realm toward sensitive or vulnerable landscape features.

### 7.3.2 Cavan Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2021

Goal 1: We will promote Cavan as an attractive investment location

Objective 1.1 Attract inward investment

C - This is Cavan Initiative to attract as a base for Tourism

D - Rural economy with low-cost base to attract business

Objective 1.2 Economic Development Forum

A - Tap into Cavan Economic Development Forum to stimulate the local economy

Goal 6: We will concentrate on the development of key niche areas

Objective 6.2: Development of Tourism Product and Tourism Marketing

A - Development of New "This is Cavan" strategy

D - Develop and Implement masterplan to upgrade facilities at Killykeen Forest Park,

Continue to promote and further develop other Coillte forest parks in County Cavan

(Baillieborough, Bawnboy, Deerpark, Dun-a-Rí and Burren)

F - Development of Angling Strategy for County Cavan

H - Improve walking infrastructure by developing new medium and long-distance way-marked walking routes

J - Raise profile of the County via the main festivals and events taking place

Objective 6.3 Support artistic excellence and professional development in the arts

A - Provide a range of supports directly to artists to develop their potential

B - Raise the public profile of the arts

C - Consolidate and build on strategic partnerships across all art forms.

Goal 9: We will support the ongoing development of safe, active and empowered communities.

Objective 9.1 Develop leadership and capacity within urban and rural communities to support their regeneration.

D - Organise networking opportunities for local communities to explore thematic Issues relating to the regeneration of their areas actively develop cross Border links

E - Deliver the LEADER local development strategy for the county

Goal 10: We will focus on developing the health and wellbeing of our communities

Objective 10.2 Support opportunities for sporting and recreational life within the county, ensuring equal access for all.

B - Develop a sports and recreation strategy for Cavan through consultation with all relevant stakeholders and community groups

C - Deliver a programme of community based physical activity programmes  
Targeting all population groups within the county

Goal 11: We will promote social inclusion and address disadvantage

Objective 11.1 Opportunities for the promotion of social inclusion and integration, reducing the isolation and marginalisation of specific communities within the county.

Goal 12: We will protect our natural resources/heritage and promote culturally rich communities

Objective 12.2: Development of Heritage Sites and Projects

A - Develop a strategic management plan to safeguard the natural, built and cultural heritage of County Cavan

C - Implement programmes and initiatives to nurture and enhance the natural, Built and cultural heritage of the county

D - Raise awareness of heritage throughout the county

E - Design initiatives to enhance ownership and pride in local heritage

Objective 12.3 Community arts initiatives

A - Support arts and community organisations with leadership and capacity skills to work in their community/special interest context

B - Work in Arts in Education contexts to enhance the arts experience of young people in County Cavan

C - Promote audience development and public engagement

D - Support the implementation of the Local Arts in Education Partnership

Objective 12.4 Green and Sustainable communities

B - Implement local environmental initiatives such as Tidy Towns, Estate Enhancement, Estate awards, 'Greening' initiatives, community gardens, Community composting, Green Schools, environmental awareness

### 7.3.3 Cavan Tourism Development Plan

Actions 1.8a, 1.8b, 1.9, 1.16, 1.17, 1.19, 1.20, 1.24, 1.27, 1.28

Action 1.8a: Lakes & Forests: Improve baseline infrastructure needed to allow operators to develop reviving family and ecologically themed experience at sites such as Dun a Rí Forest park.

This would include making available enabling funds from existing district resources for local operators.

Action 1.8b: Lakes and Forests: Review the potential of Castle Lake, Bailieborough, Deerpark Forest, Virginia for leisure development. Prepare a strategic development plan with Coillte to systematically improve all sites.

Action 1.9: Heritage: Review opportunities for heritage funds to be made available to improve sites relating to conservation designations and link to the themes of IAE.

Action 1.16: Ireland's Ancient East: Continue to develop storylines & interpretation and roll-out new IAE signage and sites

Action 1.17: Ireland's Ancient East: Develop story strands unique to Cavan's border county character and linked to IAE.

Action 1.19: Greenways: To support the ongoing development of

- Navan – Kingscourt – Meath
- Drumod – Ballinamore – Belturbet-Cavan
- Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway Greenway [SLNCR]

Action 1.20: Community Engagement: Linking with towns / villages renewal scheme, develop a programme which actively encourages greater knowledge and participation in tourism by the broader community [e.g. This is Your Cavan]

Action 1.24: Review and Integrate Programme of Events / Festivals – Taste of Cavan, Heritage Week, Culture Night, Geopark events, walking festivals, angling festivals – to assess gaps, weaknesses, opportunities for greater promotion and utilisation of new facilities [e.g. Cavan Town Hall, Castle Saunderson]

Action 1.27: Walking – develop an integrated route and marketing strategy to include the Cavan Way, Looped Walking Routes, Killeshandra, canal walk Ballyconnell and others included the review and re-packaging of ancient pilgrims' walks.

Action 1.28: Infrastructural Development: Review all infrastructural development above and integrate into ongoing implementation plan.

#### 7.3.4 Loughanleagh and Muff Heritage Trust CLG - 5 Year Development Plan 2021-2025

In 2020 LMHT developed a 5 year plan for the group including aims, objectives and actions to advance its vision for the Loughanleagh area. The relevant elements of this plan that are aligned to this masterplan include the following;

## Key Aims and Objectives

1. To promote and increase awareness, participation, knowledge and understanding of our local heritage & culture in regard to Loughanleagh and Muff.
  2. Seek “National Heritage Area (NHA)” status for Loughanleagh.
    - Loughanleagh is a designated area of “High Landscape Value” ref HL3 and listed as one of seventeen important “Scenic View & Viewing Points” in the County Development Plan. Cavan County Council must now recognise the true cultural importance and heritage significance of this area. (Refer to page 8, Appendix 1)
  3. Recognition & designation of Loughanleagh as an approved listed Coillte Recreational amenity location.
    - Development of new walking trails.
    - Upgrade and maintenance of existing walking trails.
    - Installation of new boundary fences and signage
  4. Development of walkway through Greenbelt Forest.
    - Consultation and agreement with Greenbelt Ltd.
    - Promotion and develop walking trail and signage to Cornasaus Cairn
  5. Seek inclusion & recognition in all future County Council public amenity, development plans & grants in terms of heritage, cultural recognition, flora and fauna significance etc.
  6. Development of Car Parking & Toilet facilities.
- 
1. Protect & preserve the heritage and landscape of Loughanleagh. e.g. Burial Cairns, heather, fauna and flora etc.
  2. Create & roll out marketing/advertising plan.
  3. Maintain & improve the quality of present walkways and implement preventive measures in regard to a strict prohibition plan in respect of Quad & motorcycles.
  4. Erection of robust boundary fencing along forest boundaries.
  5. Seek “buy in” and endorsement from all state bodies and tourism agencies.
  6. Clearly identify & signpost the 3 Burial Cairns that traverse Loughanleagh.
  7. Improve signage on all walkways & amenities.
  8. Ongoing development of existing picnic area & signposting of other attractions e.g. Mass Rock, Lake of the Cures, Cairns & local folklore etc.
  9. Design and build new eastern/south loop walkway across mountain summit.
  10. Develop car parking facilities
  11. Upgrade Information Boards.
  12. Research alternative attractions
  13. Design, develop & finish heritage building project as a possible visitor/interpretive centre. (Consider inclusion of coffee shop, toilet & washing facilities & car parking etc.)

## 9. Case Study

A number of relevant initiatives were identified and reviewed as potential benchmarks and functional areas of good practice comparable with the product use options discussed in this study.

This section reviews project(s) which are relevant for the Loughanleagh Masterplan.

### Slieve Beagh, North County Monaghan

Sliabh Beagh, translated from Irish as the Mountain of Bith, the Irish king, is a special landscape with a wealth of natural and cultural riches. Measuring some 250 square miles, it spans from Monaghan in the south, to the districts of Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster in the north, straddling the traditional county borders of Monaghan, Fermanagh and Tyrone and the national borders of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

A point just east of its summit is the highest point in Monaghan; however the true summit is on the Fermanagh-Tyrone border. The point where the three counties meet, is referred to as the "Three County Hollow". The original Irish name for the area is Sliabh Beatha, which has been anglicised to Slieve Beagh, but sometimes the two languages are combined to form Sliabh Beagh. According to Irish mythology, the name refers to the mythological figure Bith, who was buried in a cairn on top of the mountain. Although the summit is in fact marked by a cairn, called Dooearn, it is likely that the name's original meaning is "mountain of birch". In County Monaghan, the locals typically refer to the Slieve Beagh as the "Bragan Mountains", taking the name from a townland within the Slieve Beagh

The landscape is comprised of blanket bog, windswept moors, deep woodlands, tranquil lakes and rolling pastures. Shaped by centuries of cultivation, peat extraction and forestry, they are now home to an abundance of flora and fauna. Sliabh Beagh is sparsely populated, consisting of a network of small villages and hamlets, connected by narrow winding roads. Yet they travel through a landscape steeped in history, cultural tradition and legends, helping make Sliabh Beagh a special place, cherished by all who live there.

#### Ramsar site

The Slieve Beagh Ramsar site (wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention), is 1884.68 hectares in area, at latitude 54 20 53 N and longitude 07 11 38 W. It was designated a Ramsar site on 14 December 1999. The Ramsar site boundary coincides entirely with that of the Slieve Beagh Area of Special Scientific Interest and the Slieve Beagh Special Area of Conservation. Vegetation is characterized by sphagnum mosses and ericoid dwarf-shrubs.

## Vision for Sliabh Beagh

*“Sliabh Beagh is a unique cross border region of Ireland whose high quality natural environment provides a haven for wildlife and an opportunity to connect with and explore the natural world. Its natural assets are cherished and protected by the local communities, who work together, supported by Local Authorities, to develop improved access to the region’s many natural and cultural delights. The Sliabh Beagh visitor experience is community-based, sensitively managed and focused on promoting the exploration of the wonderful natural and cultural landscape of this unspoilt uplands area.”*

The area has been prioritised by the local community in partnership with the local authorities of both Monaghan and South Tyrone and Fermanagh (Fermanagh and Omagh district) for the further development of tourism, enhancing its assets to attract people to work and live, and to protect its biodiversity. A community run hotel operates in the area and this community led project to revitalise this area of natural beauty that straddles the border is finally starting to gain momentum and generate much needed jobs and economic activity in this rural area.

## 10. Market Analysis

This chapter examines the potential users of the Loughanleagh area which in turn will help inform actions that need to be undertaken and indeed prioritised. We examine trends, target groups, and also the operational model. This is done in the context that the site and environs in the first instance provides an amenity for the local population and that of the greater area. This also is some untapped tourism potential however while the area is reference both in heritage and tourism strategies for the County it is not prioritised at present.

### 9.1 Target Market

The Tourism agencies, Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, take a segmentation approach to the marketing of Irish tourism. This includes terms such as the Culturally Curious, Great Escapers, Social Energisers, Connected Families, Footloose Socialisers and Indulgent Romantics. Each segment has its own preferences and likely choices of promotional mix. In identifying market segments appropriate for this proposal, these tourist segments are aligned with the Loughanleagh product definition discussed in the previous section and with those identified in the Cavan Tourism Development plan in Section 3.2.3 for both geographical and product mix context consistency.

According to the Tourism Strategy there are 3 target segments and motivations for visiting an area/place. These include

#### 1. *Connected Families*

These are families looking for opportunities to spend time together through shared experiences. This segment accounts for 23% of the domestic market. Loughanleagh and its environs including Bailieborough and Kingscourt, can offer this segment a wealth of opportunities for shared outdoor adventure for all ages, along with self-catering accommodation and a nurturing environment.

#### 2. *Footloose Socialisers*

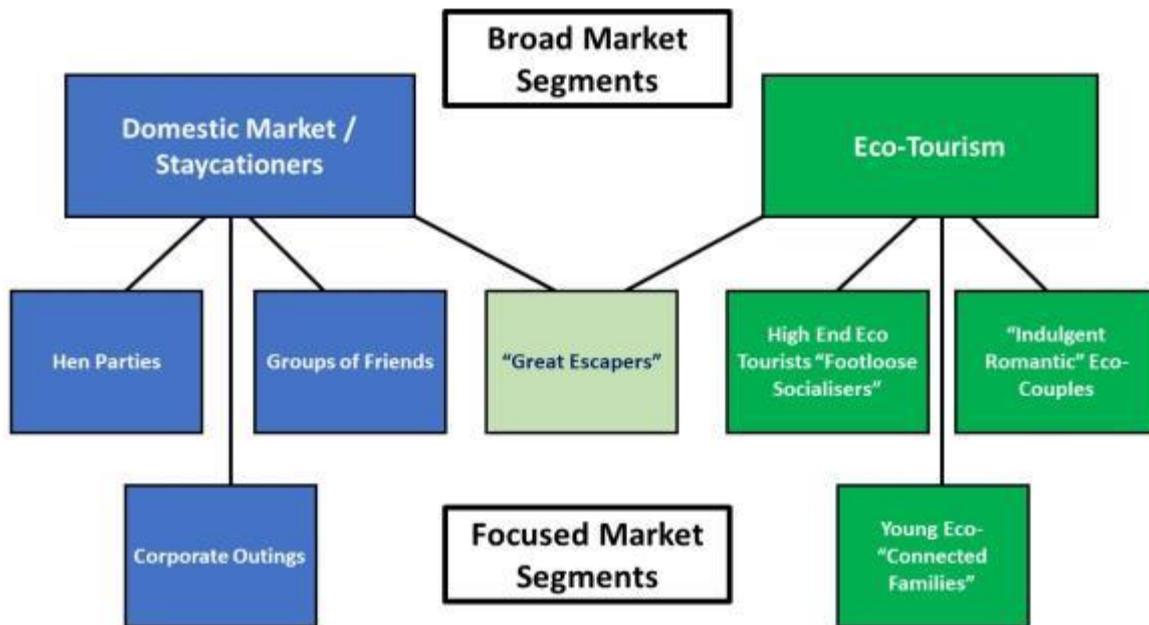
These are travellers in their 30s and upwards, well educated, who enjoy getting away and spending time with like minded people (e.g. eco-tourists). They account for 15% of the domestic market. Cavan can offer a choice of destination resorts combined with walkways, golf, angling, good food and adventure, in a central location easy to reach from the two large urban areas of the island.

#### 3. *Indulgent Romantics*

These are couples who want to spend time reconnecting and are particularly interested in the more luxurious end of the market. This segment accounts for 14% of the domestic market. Cavan

has the availability of destination resorts combined with the preferences of this segment including good food, spa experiences with quiet rural private scenic environment.

Also featuring in the Cavan Tourism strategy that is relevant to the Loughanleagh target market is the Great Escapers. These visitors are on holiday to take time out and to experience nature at close range. They tend to be younger and are specifically interested in rural holidays.



*Fig 9.1 Proposed Broad and Focused Market Segments*

Figure 9.1 above outlines several relevant target markets for the proposal and also for competitors in the regional area for the border counties. Two broad market segments, which are not mutually exclusive are the Domestic Market / Staycationers and the Eco-Tourism segments.

To maximise the visitor opportunity, it will be important to consider who are the likely target markets by country and within these markets which are the type of visitors or market segments most likely to be interested in a visit to Loughanleagh. By identifying these market segments, and their motivations, the focus then becomes the provision of suitable facilities and infrastructure to attract these visitors and provide them with the optimum experience. Data on visitors to Ireland, to Counties Cavan, Meath and Monaghan and core target market segments are included.

Visitors, both domestic and overseas choose to travel along the unspoilt Inland low smooth mountainous terrain, bogland and Waterways for many reasons including for peace and tranquillity, abundant wildlife and birdwatching opportunities, for coarse and game fishing, to explore quiet off the beaten track built heritage and to visit the many quintessential and authentic country pubs, restaurants and cafés. Above all it is a place to spend quality time together in a highly scenic area. While Loughanleagh can offer many of these attributes it lacks a hub, a place for visitors to stay, to linger. This proposed Masterplan would enhance the visitor experience by

providing amenities and facilities to incentivise their visit– encouraging return visits and positive word of mouth referrals.

## **2019 Tourism Spend Statistics**

Dublin is Ireland's most popular tourism region with almost six million visitors a year. Counties Monaghan, Cavan and its Lakelands are within 90 minutes access by road from Dublin via the M3/N3 road.

The data charts visitor numbers and revenue by region and county in 2017, a record-breaking year for Irish tourism.

Dublin is the county attracting the most overseas visitors and tourist spend, followed by Galway, Cork and Kerry, the figures show.

### *Overseas visitors and spend by county (2017)*

1. Dublin: 5,936,000 (€1981m)
2. Galway: 1,673,000 (€589m)
3. Cork: 1,600,000 (€631m)
4. Kerry: 1,277,000 (€337m)
5. Clare: 749,000 (€158m)
6. Limerick: 647,000 (€261m)
7. Mayo: 324,000 (€78m)
8. Kilkenny: 315,000 (€55m)
9. Wicklow: 275,000 (€73m)
10. Donegal: 255,000 (€82m)
11. Waterford: 255,000 (€69m)
12. Wexford: 232,000 (€61m)
13. Kildare: 211,000 (€91m)
14. Tipperary (N&S): 192,000 (€88m)
15. Sligo: 173,000 (€45m)
16. Louth: 172,000 (€55m)
17. Meath: 162,000 (€44m)
18. Cavan: 107,000 (€48m)
19. Westmeath: 103,000 (€46m)
20. Carlow: 79,000 (€45m)
21. Monaghan: 60,000 (€25m)
22. Roscommon: 54,000 (€27m)
23. Offaly: 52,000 (€16m)
24. Laois: 43,000 (€14m)
25. Leitrim: 41,000 (€18m)
26. Longford: 24,000 (€10m)

Ireland welcomed nine million overseas tourists in 2017, with a combined spend of €4.9 billion, according to the Fáilte Ireland figures.

The Midlands was Ireland's least-visited region, which is to be expected as it correlates to its population size ranking. However these numbers have risen significantly recently and will be expected to rise further, given the attention and focus of the strategic plans as discussed in previous section of this report.

The figures also show Irish residents took 9.6m trips, spending €1.9 billion.

*Domestic visitors and spend by county*

1. Dublin: 1,497,000 (€307m)
2. Cork: 1,113,000 (€337m)
3. Galway: 1,024,000 (€247m)
4. Kerry: 964,000 (€205m)
5. Wexford: 654,000 (€146m)
6. Mayo: 503,000 (€108m)
7. Tipperary (N&S): 496,000 (€92m)
8. Donegal: 376,000 (€96m)
9. Clare: 362,000 (€86m)
10. Wicklow: 319,000 (€49m)
11. Waterford: 327,000 (€58m)
12. Kilkenny: 298,000 (€69m)
13. Kildare: 286,000 (€36m)
14. Limerick: 284,000 (€46m)
15. Sligo: 247,000 (€51m)
16. Carlow: 228,000 (€36m)
17. Laois: 228,000 (€30m)\*
18. Offaly: 228,000 (€30m)\*
19. Meath: 223,000 (€44m)
20. Cavan: 206,000 (€32m)\*
21. Leitrim: 206,000 (€32m)\*
22. Louth: 179,000 (€30m)\*
23. Monaghan: 179,000 (€30m)\*
24. Westmeath: 159,000 (€18m)
25. Roscommon: 130,000 (€18m)\*
26. Longford: 130,000 (€18m)\*

The domestic figures are gleaned from CSO data, while overseas figures are calculated from a combination of the CSO's Tourism & Travel and Household Travel Surveys (HTS); NISRA's Northern Ireland Passenger Survey (NIPS) and Fáilte Ireland's own Survey of Overseas Travellers (SOT), it says.

Overseas visitors and associated revenue data, meanwhile, is derived from Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Overseas Travellers (SOT), which conducted 10,000 interviews with departing overseas tourists at major air and sea ports last year.

*\* The CSO publishes a combined domestic visitor figure for these counties as the sample size is insufficient to produce a robust result by Individual County*

## 9.2 Summary of Market Indicators for Tourism

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, overall the trend for overseas tourism growth in Ireland was strong, with record visitor numbers and strong growth forecast. While the main overseas visitor market for the West region is Mainland European, visitors to County Cavan are more likely to come from the UK, with 45% of the overall share. This market has more certainty in the current environment of the Pandemic and is a short to midterm opportunity to attract more visitors. The Domestic market and Staycationers is expected to have strong growth in 2022, despite the easing of international travelling restrictions.

In terms of overseas geographical target markets for the mid to long term, the most relevant are those from USA, Germany and France. Within these target markets the market segments of most relevance for the Loughanleagh area are likely to be the Eco-Tourist 'Indulgent Romantics', 'Connected Families', 'Great Escapers', and to a lesser extent the 'Social Energisers'. In terms of the domestic market it is envisaged that the 'Indulgent Romantics' in phase 1 followed by 'Connected Families'

## 9.3 Marketing strategy

### Loughanleagh Marketing Strategy

#### Target Markets

It is proposed that Loughanleagh will target the following broad markets:

- ✓ Local and County
- ✓ Domestic / Staycation
- ✓ Overseas
- ✓ Eco-tourism

Within these target markets, the priority market segments will be as follows:

- Romantic Couples
- Young Families
- Affluent eco-tourist Niche
- Great Escapers (combining a cultural experience with an activity in a rural setting, including those who travel alone)

- Culturally Curious
- Social Energisers
- School and colleges groups
- Corporate outings

### **Needs Identified to cater for these sectors of the market**

Walking Trails in picturesque setting

Amenities in picturesque setting

Biodiversity – View

Biodiversity – Functional

Networking with Bailieborough Museum

Picturesque place to live

Idyllic place to live and commute to work

Eco-tourism product

Signposting from Castle Lake and Dun A Ri Forest Park

#### **A. Marketing Objectives**

- Achieve Projected Visitor Numbers
- Raise Awareness of the Loughanleagh as a Biodiversity site through increased publicity in press and on-line
- Achieve a high satisfaction rating from Visitors utilising online review sites such as TripAdvisor for collecting feedback and discovering the key success factors in user satisfaction.

#### **B. Ireland's Ancient East**

The brand proposition of Ireland's Ancient East is that stories are at the heart of the experience. Therefore, a key element of the marketing plan will be to develop a pitch to convey a 'story' and to provide a compelling product experience for the buyer.

A huge investment has been made in developing the This is Cavan brand and Cavan County Council will leverage this experience brand in all its marketing and promotional activities

#### **C. Marketing Planning by Segment**

**Segment 1: Local Area and County**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Market Segment:</b><br>Local Area Market   |   |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b><br>Provide a compelling Product Experience that is engaging, unique and multi-faceted for locals to visit as a local amenity or reside. |   |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>  | Extensive local Integrated Marketing Communications plan;<br>Local Newspapers;<br>Local Radio<br>Media/PR articles in local publications and blog sites<br>Social Media campaigns<br>Online Review Sites<br>Direct Mail<br>Signs and boards<br>Local events/fundraisers use the area for sponsored walks etc./training.   |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>  | Growth in visitor local numbers annually<br>Increase in Loughanleagh population and households<br>Trip advisor reviews  |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>   | Direct to consumer via IMC channels above   |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a digital library of high quality photos for use by local media, biodiversity piece on local newspapers and media.</li> <li>• Build good relationships with local news editors, feature editors, journalists, photographers and cameramen working for within the media sector so as to attract as much publicity as possible</li> <li>• Publicise new investments in local media.</li> <li>• Update Website</li> <li>• Maximise word of mouth about Loughanleagh in the locality.</li> <li>• Promote through frequently used cost effective local media sources for community groups such as Parish Bulletins, Facebook groups, blogs, local influencers etc.</li> </ul> |

**Segment 2: The Domestic Market**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Market Segment:</b><br>The Domestic Market  |  |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b><br>Provide a compelling Product Experience that is engaging, unique and multi-faceted targeted at the domestic market and staycationers, and those who may potentially move to the area to reside. |  |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>   | Branded website<br><br>Media/PR articles in national publications and blog sites<br>Social Media campaigns<br>Online Review Sites  |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>   | Growth in visitor numbers annually<br>Trip advisor reviews   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>  | Direct to customer via Website and social media  |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a digital library of high quality photos for use by media, DMCs and tourism publications</li> <li>• Build good relationships with news editors, feature editors, journalists, photographers and cameramen working for within the media sector so as to attract as much publicity as possible</li> <li>• Organise Trips for press</li> <li>• Update Website</li> <li>• Promote through frequently used cost effective digital marketing sources for community groups such as Facebook groups, blogs, influencers, other social media platforms etc.</li> </ul> |

**Segment 3: Overseas Market**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Market Segment:</b><br/>The Overseas Market – Eco-Tourism &amp; Great Escapers, Culturally Curious, Social Energisers (With a particular focus on UK and US Markets in the first 3 years)</p> |   |
| <p><b>Marketing Objective:</b><br/>Offer a ‘Wow’ experience where visitors can engage with locals</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Key Communications Tools</b><br/><i>Offline Tools</i><br/><i>Online Tools</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branded website</li> <li>• App</li> <li>• Featured articles in UK publications and Blogs</li> <li>• Utilise National tourism bodies to :             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Get listed to reach global markets</li> <li>(2) Get access to In Ireland and in Market Trade events</li> <li>(3) Engage with Tourism Ireland’s social media platforms in UK and US markets</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Work with local tour operators and bus companies that bring people to the larger tourist sites in neighbouring Meath, encourage Loughanleagh as stop off point.</p> |
| <p><b>Key Metrics</b></p>   | <p>Website hits.<br/>Twitter impressions. #tag impressions.<br/>Number of media articles<br/>No. of blog posts referencing the centre.<br/>No. of trade shows attended where Biodiversity Site is featured in UK and further afield.</p>  |
| <p><b>Distribution Channel</b></p>  | <p>Direct = Website, on-line booking engines, social media<br/>Indirect = Incoming Tour Operators, Review sites</p> <p>The Loughanleagh &amp; Muff heritage trust proposes to establish partnerships with incoming tour operators in Ireland as a route to global markets for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A blend of operators can provide access to different markets</li> </ul>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spread sales across seasons</li> <li>• Detailed knowledge and expertise of markets</li> </ul> <p>Develop strategic partnership with Coach tourism and Transport Council (CTTC) members travelling the M1 corridor.</p>  |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | N/A  |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Upgrade website and brand with new 'look'</li> <li>➤ Utilise social media sites – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to reach international visitors. Develop a blog and use Facebook boost facility at particular market segments where appropriate (e.g. for Muff Fair festival and other events)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Tour Operators</u></b></p> <p>Identify and target key operators whose clientele provides a 'fit' with the tourism and biodiversity offerings</p> <p><b><u>Joint Promotions</u></b></p> <p>Develop joint promotional packages with local accommodation providers and / or other attractions (Bailieborough Courthouse), in order to cross sell to new audiences.</p> |

**Segment 4: Eco-Tourism**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Market Segment:</b><br>Eco-Tourism Broad market segment   |  |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b><br>Provide tailored option for broad Eco-Tourism category which includes some of the Great Escapers, Culturally Curious, Social Energisers market segments |  |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>   | Targeted email campaigns<br>Website<br>Ads in Specialist Publications<br>Familiarisation Trips for above media and teachers/educationalists  |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>   | Growth in eco-tourism numbers annually<br>Trip advisor reviews<br>Google analytics on website<br>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting eco-tourism  |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>  | In the hospitality and tourism industry, products are generally consumed when and where they are Produced. In Eco-tourism the environmental impacts of production are directly experienced by consumers and become part of the product package. Therefore eco-tourism practices that protect the environment translate directly into better quality products for customers. In addition, tourists have recently become more concerned about the environment.<br><br>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br>Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in online platforms |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>  | N/A  |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b>  | Scoping exercise into how Loughanleagh can tap into the Eco-tourist market, such as attracting visitors to spend time in the area; glamping feasibility etc.   |

**Segment 5: Educational**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Market Segment: Educational Market</b>  |   |
| Marketing Objective:<br>Provide tailored option for School tours primary and secondary (Cavan/Meath/Monaghan) and environmental / ecology studies 3 <sup>rd</sup> level students |   |
| Key Communications Tools<br>Offline Tools<br>Online Tools  | Targeted email campaigns<br>Website<br>Ads in Specialist Publications<br>Fam Trips for above media and teachers/educationalists   |
| Key Metrics  | Number of primary schools organising trips<br>No. of secondary schools organising trips.<br>Number of educational trips from third level or other sources.<br>Number of overseas educational visits.<br>Total number of educational visitors.<br>No. of educational packages developed and marketed.<br>Suite of educational materials and merchandise developed. |
| Distribution Channel   | Schools nationwide.   |
| Pricing Strategy   | Provide toolkits and materials that schools can use and supply at affordable school rates.<br><br>Develop and market friends of Loughanleagh membership package for teachers and also for students.   |
| Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives   | Develop school packages for tours with educational outcome to incorporate the Loughanleagh project and outdoor classroom experience.<br>Train volunteer and staff guides and tutor to a uniform and high standard. Develop training and educational materials and collate for use.  |

**Segment 6: Romantic Couples**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Market Segment: Romantic Couples</b>  |   |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the couples segment and position the Loughanleagh experience and proposed element of the Ireland's Ancient East in the minds of the segment with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication. |   |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>   | <p>Extensive Branded Website highlighting picturesque scenery with romantic touches ensuring relaxing, comfortable, and unique experiences of privacy and being in contact with nature.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs</p> |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>   | <p>Growth in couples segment numbers annually<br/>Trip advisor reviews<br/>Google analytics on website<br/>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting couples</p>   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>  | <p>Similar to eco-tourism Couples consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br/>Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in online</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | platforms   |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | Research indicates that eco-tourists are willing to pay more to enjoy environmentally sustainable Destinations. Eco-tourism couples are looking for a romantic experience with privacy coupled with being close to nature. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment. |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | Scoping exercise into how Loughanleagh can tap into the Eco-tourist / Romantic Couple market, such as attracting visitors to spend time in the area; glamping feasibility etc.  |

**Segment 7: Young Families**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Market Segment: Young Families</b>   |   |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the parents and young children segment and position the biodiversity experience in the minds of the purchaser and the individual family influencers on decision making Young Families segment with the appropriate product mix and communication. |   |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>  | <p>Branded Website highlighting picturesque scenery and biodiversity with children’s opportunities to play and learn, ensuring relaxing, comfortable, and unique experiences of safety and being in contact with nature.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> |

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|   | <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>                 Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs, Children related media.</p>   |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>                                      | <p>Growth in Young Families segment numbers annually<br/>                 Trip advisor reviews<br/>                 Google analytics on website<br/>                 Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting young families</p>   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>                             | <p>Similar to eco-tourism Young Families consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br/>                 Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in online platform</p>  |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | <p>Research indicates that eco-tourists are willing to pay more to enjoy environmentally sustainable Destinations. Eco-tourism Young Families are looking for a wholistic experience, where children have opportunities to play and learn safely and parents can have with privacy and time to relax while being close to nature. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment.</p> |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | <p>Scoping exercise into how Loughanleagh can tap into the Eco-tourist / Young Families market, such as attracting visitors to spend time in the area; glamping feasibility etc.</p>   |

**Segment 8: Affluent Eco-Tourist Niche**

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| <b>Market Segment: Affluent Eco-Tourist Niche</b>   |   |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the complex needs of the affluent eco-tourist niche and position the Loughanleagh Biodiversity Site in the minds of the purchaser and decision maker in the niche, with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication. This segment if to be pursued would required private sector investment in glamping and other products to accommodate these tourists. |   |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>  | <p>Focused and attractive, professionally Branded Website highlighting glamorous and luxurious tents / yurts / cabins / nouveau accommodation with evidence of craftsmanship, high-level service quality dimensions ensuring ultimate relaxing, comfortable, and unique experiences of premium differential elements, and being in contact with nature.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs, upmarket professional media.</p> |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>  | <p>Growth in affluent segment numbers annually</p> <p>Trip advisor reviews</p> <p>Google analytics on website</p> <p>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting affluent niches</p>   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>   | Similar to eco-tourism Affluent niche consume the product offerings when and where they are   |

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|   | <p>Produced.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br/>Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth in online platforms</p>  |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | <p>Research indicates that eco-tourists are willing to pay more to enjoy environmentally sustainable Destinations. Eco-tourism affluent niche are looking for an unique, highly differential experience, including aspects of top service quality: eco-tangibles (authentic eco-environmental facilities), assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and tangibles (physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials), with privacy and time to relax while being close to nature. This differential focus niche strategy can charge a top premium for this market segment.</p> |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | <p>Scoping exercise into how Loughanleagh can tap into the Affluent Eco-Tourist market, such as attracting visitors to spend time in the area; high class glamping feasibility etc.</p>   |

**Segment 9: Great Escaper**

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| <b>Market Segment: Great Escapers.</b>   |  |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the great escaper segment such as to get away from it all and to enjoy the beauty of breath-taking landscapes and to position the Loughanleagh experience in the minds of the great escaper directly, with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication. |  |
| <p><b>Key Communications Tools</b><br/><i>Offline Tools</i><br/><i>Online Tools</i></p>  | <p>Extensive Branded Website highlighting the beautiful scenery, the biodiversity and quiet tranquil environment, ensuring relaxing, comfortable, and unique experiences of differential escapism elements, and being in contact with nature.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>and You Tube.</p> <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs, and media.</p>   |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>                                      | <p>Growth in Great Escaper segment numbers annually</p> <p>Trip advisor reviews</p> <p>Google analytics on website</p> <p>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting great escapers</p>   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>                             | <p>Similar to eco-tourism Great Escapers consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media</p> <p>Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth in online platforms</p>   |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | <p>Research indicates that eco-tourists are willing to pay more to enjoy environmentally sustainable Destinations. Great Escapers are looking for an unique, highly differential experience, including Enjoyment of the beauty of a breath-taking landscape; to balance peace and quiet with doing some activities; to come home refreshed and revitalised, with their batteries recharged. They like privacy and time to relax while being close to nature. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment.</p> |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | <p>Use appropriate promotion mix for each of the local, domestic and overseas markets focusing on those who wish to get away from it all, looking for retreats and solace etc. This could involve linking in with the relevant social media groups and organisations and promoting on those platforms.</p>  |

**Segment 10: Group of Friends Segment**

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| <b>Market Segment: Group of Friends Segment</b>   |  |
| <b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the Group of Friends segment in general and to focus on potential sub-segments for novel weekend excursions, such as birthdays and reunions, and to position the Loughanleagh experience in the minds of these sub-segments directly and at key decision makers, with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication. |  |
| <b>Key Communications Tools</b><br><i>Offline Tools</i><br><i>Online Tools</i>  | <p>Extensive Branded Website highlighting appealing tents / yurts / cabins with evidence of fun activities, hospitality and group events, ensuring relaxing, comfortable, safety and unique experiences of differential party elements, and being in contact with nature.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>                 Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs, and media.</p> |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>  | <p>Growth in Group of Friends segment numbers annually</p> <p>Trip advisor reviews</p> <p>Google analytics on website</p> <p>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting Group of Friends candidates</p>  |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>   | <p>Group of Friends groups may consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced, but there are a host of other complementary goods and services that can be targeted at this group.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br/>                 Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth in online platforms</p>   |

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| <p><b>Pricing Strategy</b></p>                                 | <p>Research indicates that some Group of Friends sub-sections are willing to pay more to enjoy unique, a diverse fun experiential weekend all inclusive packages.</p> <p>They like a wide variety of fun activities, novel daytime group events and abundance of hospitality. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment with the propensity of extra group charges of related activities onsite.</p> |
| <p><b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b></p> | <p>Use appropriate promotion mix for each of the local, domestic and overseas markets focusing on those who novel group excursions. This could involve linking in with the relevant social media groups and organisations and promoting on those platforms.</p>  |

**Segment 11: Corporate Outings Segment**

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| <p><b>Market Segment: Corporate Outings Segment</b></p>  |  |
| <p><b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the Corporate Outings segment in general and to focus on potential sub-segments depending on organisational size / function / cultural variables etc., such as team building, internal marketing training, etc. and to position the Loughanleagh experience in the minds of the organisational decision makers directly in a B2B format, with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Key Communications Tools</b><br/> <i>Offline Tools</i><br/> <i>Online Tools</i></p>  | <p>Extensive Branded Website highlighting appealing tents / yurts / cabins with evidence of meeting areas, corporate related activities, hospitality and group events, ensuring relaxing, comfortable and unique experiences of differential learning environments, and being in contact with nature. Private sector investment would be required to pursue this segment.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> |

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|---|--|
|   | <p>Engaging with online review sites</p> <p>Featured articles in appropriate professional publications and Blogs, and media.</p>   |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>                                      | <p>Growth in Corporate Outings segment numbers annually</p> <p>Trip advisor reviews</p> <p>Google analytics on website</p> <p>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting Corporate purchasing and HR managers</p>  |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>                             | <p>Corporate Outings Groups may consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced, but there are a host of other complementary goods and services that can be targeted at this group.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media</p> <p>Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in online platforms</p>                           |
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | <p>Research indicates that some Corporation sub-sections are willing to pay more to enjoy unique, a diverse fun experiential weekend all inclusive packages.</p> <p>They like a wide variety of fun learning activities, novel daytime team building events and abundance of hospitality. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment with the propensity of extra group charges of related activities onsite.</p> |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | <p>Use appropriate promotion mix for each of the local, domestic and overseas markets focusing on those who novel group excursions. This could involve linking in with the relevant social media groups and organisations and promoting on those platforms.</p>  |

**Segment 12: Culturally Curious Segment**

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|--|--|
| <b>Market Segment: Culturally Curious.</b>   |  |
| <p><b>Marketing Objective:</b> Understand the needs of the Culturally Curious segment such as those who want to visit new places and expand their travel experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. be 'Explorers' rather than 'tourists' as they are well travelled and want to discover the hidden stories and get under the skin of a destination</p> <p>Position the Loughanleagh experience in the minds of the culturally curious directly, with the appropriate product mix, pricing options and communication.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Key Communications Tools</b><br/> <i>Offline Tools</i><br/> <i>Online Tools</i></p>  | <p>Extensive Branded Website highlighting the beautiful scenery, the biodiversity and quiet tranquil environment, ensuring relaxing, comfortable, and unique experiences of differential escapism elements, and being in contact with nature, and discovering the hidden stories of the area.</p> <p>Extensive Social media platforms to complement the above including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube.</p> <p>Engaging with online review sites<br/>                 Featured articles in appropriate publications and Blogs, and media.</p> |
| <b>Key Metrics</b>   | <p>Growth in Culturally Curious segment numbers annually</p> <p>Trip advisor reviews</p> <p>Google analytics on website</p> <p>Facebook analytics on advertised posts targeting great escapers</p>   |
| <b>Distribution Channel</b>  | <p>Similar to eco-tourism Culturally Curious consume the product offerings when and where they are Produced.</p> <p>Direct to customer via Website and social media<br/>                 Online review sites. Web reviews can be shared by tourists in different ways, generating powerful electronic word of mouth in online platforms</p>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Pricing Strategy</b>                                 | Culturally Curious are looking for an unique, highly differential experience, including<br>Enjoyment of the beauty of a breath-taking landscape; to balance peace and quiet with doing some activities; to come home refreshed and revitalised, with their batteries recharged.<br>They like privacy and time to relax while being close to nature. This differential focus strategy can charge a premium for this market segment. |
| <b>Actions required to Achieve Marketing Objectives</b> | Use appropriate promotion mix for each of the local, domestic and overseas markets focusing on those who are explorers. This could involve linking in with the relevant social media groups and organisations and promoting on those platforms.  |

## 11. Complementary Attraction Analysis

### ***Bailieborough Courthouse***

This ongoing project consists of the re development of the former courthouse and bridewell as a museum, cultural and exhibition space. This will ultimately involve the final phase of the regeneration of a substantial derelict building in the town core. Works commenced in 2017 under the REDZ programme and Phase 2 was funded by Town and Village Renewal and the PEACE IV Programme. To date over €500,000 has been invested in the first 2 phases of redevelopment. This project involves a unique partnership between Cavan County Council, Bailieborough Development Association CLG and a North South Body, The Ulster Scots Agency to develop a visitor centre and museum space in 370 sq. metres space both inside the building and in a number of small walled courtyards within the walls of the former Bridewell.

The visitor centre will tell the story of the jail and of the origins of the town as the most southerly planted town of Ulster. It will also bring to life the stories of key historic figures that came from the town and tell the story of Bailieborough and the surrounding area in an exciting, interesting and engaging way, adhering to the principles of Ireland's Ancient East – Fáilte Ireland's marketing proposition for the Eastern half of the country. The project area, over 50% of which will comprise of a Plantation museum, will be the first of its kind on the island of Ireland.

Elements of the plantation story have been interpreted as part of broader exhibitions in museum and visitor centres including Derry city but never before has the story of the plantation and its impact on an area been developed in a single location. Bailieborough has identified a unique aspect of the town's origins which can tell a story of national significance.

The overall renovation of the Bailieborough Courthouse and Bridewell will be as a hub for economic and social regeneration of the greater Bailieborough area.

The following is a summary of other tourist attractions in the area that there is potential to collaborate with and in turn both direct footfall towards Loughanleagh and indeed increase to the entire area.

### ***Castle Lake Loop***

The Irish language translation of Bailieborough is Coill an Chollaigh, meaning forest of the boar. The loop begins and ends at the car park on the lakeshore and takes you around Castle Lake, with some fine views and interesting sites along the way, including a memorial to those who died at Rebel Hill in 1798. The longer loop (add 3 kilometres) takes you by the graves of the Marist brothers who occupied Bailieborough Castle.

The castle (the remains of which are also to be seen in the forest) was built by William Bailie, a Scottish undertaker or planter, who was granted the lands of Tandragee in east Breffni by King James I. He built the castle and enclosed the demesne by 1629.

### ***Rock Equestrian Farm***

Rock Equestrian Farm are situated just outside Bailieborough on the ancient road to Virginia in the beautiful county of Cavan, the home of around 365 lakes which are very popular with European fishermen. The main house stands on top of a hill with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. All riding activities are fully supervised at all times by an adult as safety is our number one priority. Additional riding lessons are available on request by a qualified BHSAI Riding Instructor.

They keep a minimum of 40 Irish bred Irish bred horses, cobs and ponies which are used for pleasure riding, show jumping and hunting during the winter season. They have stabling facilities for 30 horses and the remainder enjoy living outdoors when the weather is suitable. They also have a large outdoor arena which contains a large amount of special soft rubber filling for the comfort of both the horses and riders and have over 25 Cross Country fences on their farm which include water jumps, stone walls, banks and a variety of other solid fences. The guests can enjoy leisurely rides around the Cross-Country track with the choice of a beginner's track or the more challenging track for the experienced, confident rider.

### ***Cavan County Museum***

Cavan County Museum is an award-winning museum in a beautiful Georgian building situated on the Virginia Road, Ballyjamesduff. They aim to collect, conserve and ultimately display the material heritage and culture of County Cavan and its environs, for the benefit of the public. Exhibition galleries feature unique artefacts dating from the stone age up until the twentieth century, material spanning over 6000 years of occupation in Cavan. Displays of notable interest include the Killycluggin stone and the three-faced Corleck Head, two of the most recognisable examples of Celtic spirituality in the country. The museum also houses a medieval Dug-Out boat and a selection of medieval Sheela-na-Gigs, as well as a Folk Life gallery depicting life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Newly opened galleries deal with topics as diverse as the Great Famine, Percy French and the Lords Farnham. Our temporary exhibition space plays host to visiting and currently relevant exhibitions, whilst our Eden Gallery is home to regular art shows given by local and national artists. The Museum delivers Education Workshops for Primary, Secondary and Third Level Students covering WWI, The Famine and Emigration. The Museum also welcomes younger visitors with our playground and children's quiz. Storytelling and clay-modelling are also available to children's groups on request. The coffee and craft shops are ideal for those wishing to relax and browse, and perhaps take with them a memento of their visit to the Museum. The Museum caters for groups large and small, and guided tours are available on request.

### ***Tanagh Outdoor Education & Training Centre***

Tanagh Outdoor Education and Training Centre is located in an aesthetic region of the Cavan-Monaghan border, near Rockcorry, County Monaghan on the R188 between Cootehill & Rockcorry - only 2 hours from Dublin / Belfast the region lies in its gentle rolling hills, lakes, meandering rivers through enchanting forests and ever changing vistas. The Centre provides a range of water-based and land-based adventure activities for all.

### ***Carrickmacross Lace***

In the town's former cattle yards, a local cooperative runs this thimble-sized lace gallery, where you can see lace-making demonstrations and check out exquisite designs. Carrickmacross' lace makers can take commissions and you can purchase small, exquisite pieces made into fridge magnets, bookmarks and similar for as little as €10. Carrickmacross lace graced the sleeves of Princess Diana's wedding dress and, more recently, the technique was used on the wedding dress for Kate Middleton's wedding to Prince William in 2011.

### ***Castlehamilton Estate***

Castlehamilton Estate, Cavan is a heritage site, located beside Killykeen National Forest Park and close to Farnham Estate, Cavan, Ireland. They offer luxury four-star self-catering accommodation and provide a haven for fisherman, golfers, walkers, cyclists, horseriders, bird watchers, and lovers of wildlife and the great outdoors. The Estate is nestled in the centre of Europe's largest inland waterways. With luxury four-star self-catering accommodation visitors can choose from a 16th century courtyard setting, a recently refurbished a 17th century Gate lodge, a 17th century Foresters house or a quaint lakeview lodge house.

Tourists can experience excellent pike, trout, fly and coarse fishing on their private lakes and rivers. There are also numerous other local activities for the entire family to enjoy including golfing, horse riding, canoeing, hill walking, adventure centres and numerous other activities. The local area is also a hotspot of Irish culture with numerous museums, cultural centres, Irish restaurants and pubs where traditional Irish music is guaranteed.

### ***Mourne Clay Shooting***

Set amid the rolling drumlins of County Monaghan. The core activities are built around various facilities - from air rifle shooting, 4x4 action, clay pigeon shooting, target shooting pistol shooting, to archery and falconry. Mourne Sports provide a variety of outdoor activities that suit everyone's needs. Whether you are organising a corporate entertainment / fun day, a stag or hen party or just a group activity day for friends and family, Mourne Sports can provide the ideal location and activities to make your day a memorable one. Combine a training day or corporate fun day with the wonderful surroundings of Co. Monaghan. A single event or a large number of activities each day can be individually tailored to your requirements. They regularly stage group games for large stately homes in the areas. Catering for parties of five and upwards, we can supply the perfect venue for a day out with a difference.

### ***Dun a Rí Forest Park***

Located on the outskirts of Kingscourt, Dun a Ri Forest Park forms part of what was formerly the Cabra Estate which was owned by the Pratt family. Legend stretches back to the time of Cuchullain the Gaelic warrior who rested in these woods while fighting the armies of Queen Maeve of Connaught. The O' Reilly family owned the lands up until the end of the 16th century when they were acquired by Thomas Fleming who built Flemings Castle . The ruins of the castle can still be seen in the park. The estate was acquired by the Pratt family and they built the town of Kingscourt in the years 1760-1770. The lands were acquired by the Irish Forest Service in 1959 and were developed into a forest park in the early 1970s. There is a great diversity of wildlife in the park.

### ***Cabra Castle Kingscourt***

Cabra Castle, Carrickmacross Road, Kingscourt, was constructed in a mixture of the "neo-Norman-style" and the "Gothick-style" in the first decade of the 19th century. Much of the exterior is in a form of what might be described as the "neo-Norman-style", while the interior is mainly "Gothic" This structure was originally called Cormey Castle, after the local townland where it was built. It was constructed for the Foster family, a local "Ascendancy" family. However, the cost of building the new country house effectively bankrupted the Foster family. So, in 1813, shortly after the new Cormey Castle had been completed, the Fosters sold their new country house to their much wealthier neighbours, the Pratt dynasty, who were another local 'Ascendancy' family. It changed hands multiple times over the years and was eventually turned into a hotel in the 1960s. Today it is a four star luxury hotel and about a hundred acres of land makes up the surrounding demesne of Cabra Castle.

### **Other Complementary Attractions within short distance of Loughanleagh**

- Brú na Bóinne Visitors Centre and Newgrange.
- Monasterboice - Early Christian site with round tower and 10th century high crosses.
- Hill of Tara – Celtic Royal site.
- Mellifont Abbey - Cistercian Abbey founded in 1142.
- Hill of Slane – Where St. Patrick lit the first paschal fire.
- Trim Castle - visit the grounds of the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland.
- Battle of the Boyne - site of the 1690 battle between King James and King William...
- Bective Abbey - Cistercian Abbey founded in 1150.
- Megalithic sites: Knowth, Dowth, Loughcrew and Fourknocks.
- Slane Castle Distillery - join a guided tour of the distillery located within the 250-year-old stables of the iconic Slane Castle.
- Sheela-na-gig - set in the wall of a farmyard at Balgeeth, Ardcath, Co. Meath.
- Kells - Celtic Crosses, Round Tower, St. Columbcille's House.
- Tlachtga (Hill of Ward) site of the Great Fire Festival at Samhain

## 12. SWOT Analysis

| <b>SWOT Analysis of Loughanleagh Area</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Strengths</i>   | <i>Weaknesses</i>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic area rich in natural environment</li> <li>• Optimally located between 2 market towns in Southeast Cavan, which is within 1 hour from the Greater Dublin area and Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• Strong heritage committee with in-depth knowledge of the area and natural heritage.</li> <li>• Existing walkways and greens in Loughanleagh have aesthetic scenic views.</li> <li>• Biodiversity and Natural Habitat Area</li> <li>• Suitable for outdoor eco-educational / classes</li> <li>• Appropriate area for hikers</li> <li>• Open all year round for free usage</li> <li>• Growing population in the area with a matching effective demand</li> <li>• Annual Fair of Muff Festival</li> <li>• Uniqueness of 3 burial cairns on site.</li> <li>• Strong in history and folklore between Muff and Loughanleagh.</li> <li>• Great variety of Flora and Fauna on the Loughanleagh.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some work to be undertaken to build relationships with landowners</li> <li>• Deficit of funding income streams</li> <li>• Accessibility to Loughanleagh is inadequate, including cars, buses, elderly, people with buggies etc.</li> <li>• Walking trails not fit for purpose</li> <li>• Absence of walking trails in some areas</li> <li>• Absence of mountain bike trails</li> <li>• Deficit of Amenities, facilities and services</li> <li>• Parking facilities are poor causing bottlenecks on roads</li> <li>• Insufficient signage</li> <li>• Absence of interpretative panels</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour onsite</li> <li>• Inadequate infrastructure</li> <li>• Coillte Tree-felling</li> <li>• Deficit of maintenance of area</li> <li>• Insufficient promotional materials</li> <li>• Absence on rating websites such as TripAdvisor.</li> <li>• Greenbelt in tree felling.</li> <li>• Absence on walking trail websites. i.e., Coillte, Tracks &amp; Trails etc.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Opportunities</i>   | <i>Threats</i>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and exploit the somewhat untapped biodiversity educational resource</li> <li>• The level of funding committed by current administration to outdoor and recreational facilities remains buoyant</li> <li>• Governments in general are under pressure from environmental lobbyists to increase expenditure for climate</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political instability and the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic has compromised the resilience of Global Supply Chains, rendering in particular building supplies scarce leading to a surge in construction costs.</li> <li>• Inflationary forces are pressurising consumer discretionary income as fuel, energy and food costs soar. This may</li> </ul>  |

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| <p>action and sustainability programmes facilitated through excise taxes from fossil fuels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Political willpower for biodiversity programmes</li><li>• Several Government Strategic plans in current usage that are aligned to this proposal including Our Rural Future and National Biodiversity action plan, and also Local Area Plans and the LECP</li><li>• Southeast Cavan population is increasing, which in turn is increasing aggregate effective demand in the region</li><li>• As discussed in the Profile of Area section, the growing population and in particular the demographic types that use the Loughanleagh site indicate an ongoing opportunity in the macroenvironment of the area</li><li>• Preferences towards healthy activities and consumption such as the great outdoors and rural scenic areas.</li><li>• Increase in the Staycation culture</li><li>• Post Covid cultural preferences for the great outdoors remains</li><li>• Increase interest in biodiversity among young people</li><li>• Increase usages of parks and green areas</li><li>• Increase in Arts and Culture preferences</li><li>• Preventative Health practices and recommendations increasing</li><li>• Social connections: Increase in community club and group memberships</li><li>• Sustainability: People more sensitive to biodiversity and the environment</li><li>• Maintenance costs reduction from the extension through sustainability solutions</li><li>• More awareness about the environment raised through a</li></ul> | <p>have a direct effect on the effective demand for Loughanleagh services that are reliant on people to travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High Health and Safety standards</li><li>• High Accreditation and Quality standards cost</li><li>• High Insurance costs</li><li>• Building rules and regulations</li><li>• Ongoing Planning restrictions and constraints.</li><li>• Windfarms/Telecommunication masts.</li><li>• Long term plan for removal of existing masts with new technology.</li><li>• Non-inclusion in Cavan Tourism Plan.</li><li>• Erosion of natural habitat through loss of heatherland and moss areas.</li></ul> |
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| <p>community focal point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Linkage with local towns.</li><li>• Development of discovery trail.</li><li>• Link with Duchas and national monuments.</li><li>• Six monthly newsletter for local stakeholders.</li></ul> |  |
|--|--|

## 13. Action Plan

### 12.1 Vision

The vision for Loughanleagh is;

‘To provide a high quality and viable public amenity of this upland area to the benefit of all in an environmentally sustainable and sensitive manner’

### 12.2 Objectives

The vision of for Loughanleagh is underpinned by a number of key objectives which will assist in achieving the overarching vision.

1. Improved interpretation and enhancement of User experience and of what the area to offer.
2. Provision of a high-quality local amenity and unique and sustainable tourism product.
3. Developing Loughanleagh as a key Biodiversity educational site and resource in the region.
4. Protection and interpretation of the history and heritage of Loughanleagh.
5. Protection, interpretation, and conservation of the natural environment and maintaining the unspoilt nature.
6. In partnership with landowners improve access to ensure that the area is accessible and can be enjoyed and respected by everyone.

### 12.3 Themes

The 25 actions within this master plan have been clustered on 4 key themes as follows;

- A. Development of Infrastructure
- B. Creating enhanced user experience
- C. Biodiversity and Environmental enhancement
- D. Maintenance and Management

## Theme A: Development of Infrastructure

| Objective |   |   |   |              |
|-----------|---|---|---|--------------|
| No.       | Action  | Tasks   | Partners                                      | Timeline     |
| A1        | Development of New walking trails   | New walking trails to be developed on Greenbelt lands to incorporate new looped walkway and viewing point   | Greenbelt, Rural Recreation Scheme            | 2023         |
| A2        | Develop a new car park  | Car park to be developed following securing appropriate permissions adjacent to site of lake to include coach parking. Consider Planning requirements   | Landowners, Cavan County Council, Funders     | 2023-2024    |
| A3        | Develop laybys/pull in areas on access roads  | Consultation with Municipal District Office and subject to Road Safety audit. Possible inclusion in annual Road Works proposals / schemes.  | Cavan County Council                          | 2026 onwards |
| A4        | Enhance existing green/reception area   | Existing reception area to be upgraded and enhanced under the Rural Recreation scheme.  | Rural recreation Scheme, Cavan County Council | 2022-2023    |
| A5        | Installation of new seating or picnic benches at appropriate locations and viewpoints | New seating and replacement of existing seating at viewpoints along walking trails as per map in appendix   | Landowners, funders.                          | 2024-2026    |
| A6        | Development of environmentally friendly natural Children's play area/equipment        | Identification of suitable location adjacent to car park for development of children's play area, other sites in region with similar equipment to be visited to finalise style and specification of equipment | Landowners, funders                           | 2026 -2030   |
| A7        | Create access to the former lake adjacent to proposed new car park                    | Development of access walkway and interpretation to the lake, from which the area gets its name   | Landowners, funders                           | 2024-2026    |
| A8        | Development of a new outdoor classroom area   | Identification of suitable site to develop an outdoor classroom area for hosting school and educational groups for biodiversity training and workshops  | Landowner                                     | 2024-2026    |
| A9        | Develop the existing cottage with interpretative centre and toilet facility           | Cottage to act as staging post for education tours and provide interpretation of the Loughanleagh site and biodiversity education centre. The completed cottage to house toilet facilities                    | Landowners, Funders.                          | 2025-2027    |

## Theme B: Encouraging Enhanced usage of Loughanleagh & Muff

| Objective |  |   |   |            |
|-----------|--|---|---|------------|
| No.       | Action   | Tasks   | Partners  | Timeline   |
| B1        | Improved directional signage from the towns and road access points to all entrances  | Installation of new additional finger post signage from Bailieborough and Kingscourt and at junctions on approach roads as per County Signage Strategy, Tourist Office and Municipal District Office  | Cavan County Council                                    | 2023       |
| B2        | Install interpretative panels and story boards at key locations and viewpoints   | Design and purchase of high-quality interpretative signage and panoramic signage at view points across the area, to “This is Cavan” branding  | Landowners, funders, Cavan County Council               | 2023-2024  |
| B3        | Agree and develop viewing points at strategic locations across the site  | Mapping exercise to be undertaken to finalise exact locations with landowners of viewpoints, and provide signage and seating, and directional trails signage to each location   | Landowners  | 2024-2025  |
| B4        | Install interpretative signage at heritage sites   | Design and procure interpretative, marker and directional signage at the 3 no. Cairns, the Fair of Muff, the Lake of the Cures and the Mass rock heritage sites   | Cavan County Council Heritage officer, OPW, landowners. | 2024-2025  |
| B5        | Develop a multi-access pathway on a section of the trails for people with reduced mobility and for buggies and wheelchairs | Develop a multi-access pathway adjacent to the lake with direct access from the car parking area. for access via wheelchair or for people who are mobility impaired   | Landowners, funders                                     | 2024-2026  |
| B6        | Examine the potential for a mobile coffee shop to locate during busier periods in summer period and at weekends            | Post infrastructural improvements conduct a survey to assess if it is commercially viable to provide a tea/coffee trailer locating at the site. If viable provide same.   | Landowners, funders                                     | 2026 -2030 |
| B7        | Explore further the development of a way marked walking route to Bailieborough or Kingscourt                               | Carry out a full mapping, consultation, and scoping exercise with landowners along potential routes of way marked way on and off-road walking routes to the tow towns   | Landowners, funders                                     | 2024-2026  |
| B8        | Upgrade the existing web site and enhance the social media presence to better promote the offering of Loughanleagh         | Upgrade the website <a href="http://www.loughanleagh.com">www.loughanleagh.com</a> expand social media presence. Secure high-quality photos and video footage of the area to better relay what the area has to offer, use the site as a mechanism of providing tool kits and materials for use in biodiversity training, study visits and provide access to local complimentary | Web design company, funders                             | 2023       |

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|     |  |   |   |           |
|-----|--|---|---|-----------|
|     |  | businesses, tourism providers etc.  |   |           |
| B9  | Development of a local area Discovery Trail  | Mapping of local sites of interest in the greater Loughanleagh and Muff and surrounding areas.  | Cavan Tourism, Heritage group members, Graphics design company. | 2024-2025 |
| B10 | Development of an APP for use on smart devices to access resources relating to the amenities of the site | Development of an app that can be downloaded at the site entrances via a QR code scan. The app could provide guided tours and maps of the trails. Audio interpretation at key sites across the area would automatically be provided when activated. | App design company, funders, Cavan Tourism office.              | 2024      |

## Theme C: Biodiversity and Environmental Enhancement

| Objective |  |  |   |           |
|-----------|--|--|---|-----------|
| No.       | Action   | Tasks  | Partners  | Timeline  |
| C1        | Prepare a code of usage of the trails and area, and erect signage at entry locations                     | Development of a code of usage for all visitors to the area, to outline the minimum standard that is expected to protect the environment and the respect the property and livestock of landowners. This should include outlining banned activities and a mechanism of reporting unsuitable behaviour or activities for follow up | National Trails office                                      | 2023      |
| C2        | Develop high quality educational materials in electronic format  | Develop high quality materials in electronic format for use by teachers to fully utilise the natural resources of the area for educational purposes. Different material will need to be developed to cater for different age groups, i.e., pre-school/primary school, secondary school and also for adults.                      | Schools, third level colleges, CMETB                        | 2025-2030 |
| C3        | Install or upgrade access barriers to trails to prevent quad bikes, motocross bike usage                 | In consultation with landowners install as appropriate access barriers that will prevent quad bikes gaining access to the trails, whilst ensuring full unimpeded access for the landowners and for pedestrians   | Landowners, funders   | 2024-2025 |
| C4        | Identify, develop and market dedicated nature walks with interpretation across the area                  | Develop a number of nature walks under guidance of qualified ecologist to provide an opportunity to experience the broad range of flora and fauna on offer   | Cavan County Council Heritage officer, schools, landowners. | 2024-2025 |
| C5        | Run an annual calendar of environmental events to raise the profile of the area and to attract new users | Develop a schedule of events annually and launch at the start of each calendar year. Events can be run by outside organisations and the area promoted as an outdoor events venue for walks and charity events  | Landowners, funders   | 2024-2026 |

## Theme D: Maintenance and Management

| Objective |   |  |   |          |
|-----------|---|--|---|----------|
| No.       | Action  | Tasks  | Partners  | Timeline |
| D1        | Develop and implement a maintenance plan for trails in consultation with landowners   | Consult with Coillte in relation to trail maintenance on its lands. Consult with other relevant landowners with potential assistance from the Rural Social Scheme and/ other schemes.  | Rural Social Scheme, Landowners                     | Ongoing  |
| D2        | Monitor site for anti-social behaviour and address promptly should it occur           | Monitoring by Committee members, landowners and members of the local community together with conscientious visitors to monitor in relation to anti-social behaviour. A zero-tolerance policy to be adopted and a plan to be put in place to deal with any occurrences  | Landowners, Cavan County Council, An Garda Síochána | Ongoing  |
| D3        | Develop an annual maintenance programme for signage to ensure it is visible and clean | An annual maintenance plan to be developed and undertaken every year, works to be carried out by scheme worker and/or volunteers to include cleaning of signage, litter picking and ensuring signage clear from foliage and visible.   | Rural Social Scheme, Cavan County Council           | ongoing  |
| D4        | Ongoing landowner engagement and consultation   | Develop a protocol and plan for ongoing liaison with landowners to ensure their views are prioritised in terms of any work or activities on their lands or lands adjacent. Consideration to inviting landowner representation on the committee and appointment of a committee member as the primary contact point for landowners wishing to discuss an issue at any time | Landowners, Cavan County Council                    | ongoing  |

## 14. Operational and Sustainability Considerations

### 13.1 Consents and Insurance

#### **Consents for developments**

In examining the actions included in this master plan the majority will not require planning permission, clarity would need to be sought from Cavan County Council in relation to development of a carpark area and if consents are so required. The planning status of the cottage in private ownership will need to be examined to assess if planning is required to make it usable as public toilets/visitor centre or coffee shop facility. None of the area of Loughanleagh is included in an NHA, SAC or SPA therefore consents for the development of new trails, or enhancement of existing is not required. The consent in writing of the relevant landowners would of course be required in advance of progressing and project, as none of the Loughanleagh area is in public ownership.

#### **Insurance**

The consent of landowners is required to apply to have the Loughanleagh trails included in the Sport Ireland national trails insurance policy. This is of significance and benefit to the landowners in question. It is understood that once this insurance cover is in place once consents/agreements with all landowners has been secured that insurance cover for the walks will no longer be a liability that will need to be covered by the heritage group annually,

### 13.2 Maintenance of the site

A minimum amount of maintenance is required currently and also once enhancement works are completed in phases. Some of the trails currently are almost impassable due to fallen trees and overgrown vegetation. A maintenance plan should be developed on an annual basis. Coillte have advised that they will continue to maintain trails on their own lands, all other trails and access routes will require routine maintenance. This shall include repair of trails surface, cutting back of vegetation and fallen branches if necessary to keep walkways open. Cleaning of signage and cutting back of foliage from way marker and interpretation signs. More details are included in the action plan section of this report.

The Rural Social Scheme and the local SOLAS CE schemes are to be contacted also with a view to assessing the possibility of carrying out routine maintenance works as described. Both schemes would consider this work subject to availability of suitable workers and places on same at time of application. In the event of no support being available through either scheme a rota will be established by the Loughanleagh group of volunteers who will carry out the maintenance duties as

described in this management plan. Young people in the area in particular should be encouraged to become involved.

### 13.3 Income generation option

At present there are no direct income streams from visitors to the Loughanleagh area. All access to trails is free of charge as is parking. There is no direct commercial gain to the immediate area, however businesses in the local towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt could benefit from those visiting Loughanleagh. As visitor numbers aside from local people are quite limited at present it is not possible to estimate a baseline for economic value of current footfall.

Upon review there are limited opportunities to generate recurring income. Other community-based amenities nationwide such as Stephenstown pond in County Louth charge a small fee for car park usage. It is envisaged this would not work at Loughanleagh as people would instead use the public road leading to continued congestion during busy periods.

If toilets were installed a small charge could also be agreed for automated use of same. Similar to the car parking there could be issues with people not willing or obliged to pay for same for use the WC.

Some sites and car parks have a donations box in situ to generate income for maintenance and upkeep of the site. There are again limited examples of this proving successful although some limited income could be generated, vandalism however can be a problem.

As visitor numbers increase there is potential for a mobile coffee shop or trailer similar to what is currently in place in Dun A Ri and Castle Lake. These are usually mobile and could be located in a new car park. A small charge could be levied on a provider to operate from there. This would of course be seasonal and at weekends and its success would be dependent on a dramatic increase in numbers.

The greatest single challenge to the Heritage group in terms of generating income is that they own none of the lands nor have any of them available directly to them. Public access walkways and heritage trails do not make money, rather provide a free to use amenity nationwide.

There is income generation potential from the provision of materials for schools to use for outdoor biodiversity education however these would need to be developed and the market for this with school examined in more detail.

Annual fundraisers, events and walks and an annual programme of activities currently provide the greatest single opportunity to generate income from the Heritage group annually. As the amenity value of the area is improved and footfall figures permit, other income generating opportunities could exist and emerge for local landowners such as tourism accommodation, camping facilities and potentially an outdoor education hub. At present current infrastructure would not justify these avenues.

## 15. Funding Opportunities and Implementation

The following provides an outline of potential funding opportunities to finance some of the actions covered by this master plan. Figures for individual actions can only be finalised following development of final specifications and tenders of the individual projects.

### 14.1 Funding Sources

All of the main relevant funds for capital works have been examined in relation to availability of support to finance these proposals and the following are the findings to date.

It should be pointed out that due to EU co-funding rules, funding from two sources of EU aid cannot be combined to fund an individual project or phase of a project. State aid rules in relation to limits of aid and the de minimis rule restricting supports to economic projects does not apply due to the social focus of the overall project. The Rural Development Programme would be seen as the most suitable source of funding for this proposal.

#### **Rural Development Programme – LEADER**

The new programme is due to start in 2023 and funding of up to 75% is usually available up to €200,000 for community projects. €180 million has recently been announced by government for the new funding round which would cover all measure.

This funding stream is suitable for large scale capital investments in this Masterplan such as a large Car-Park, access to the Lake of the Cures, and a boardwalk to link the house and picnic area. LEADER is also a potential funder in respect of biodiversity orientated elements of this action plan – current indications are that the next LEADER programme 2023 -2027 will have a strong emphasis on Climate solution projects and those with an emphasis on enhancing/protecting/sustaining the natural environment.

#### **Outdoor Recreation Grant Scheme**

This scheme is aimed at Capital funding for repair or upgrade for trails and amenity development. The focus of the scheme is to support outdoor recreational infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland.

The recent calls were particularly focused on supporting recreational infrastructure that not only provides an outlet for the communities in which they are situated but

that also delivers added value from a tourism perspective, positioning rural areas to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic environment. The Scheme is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development and supported by Fáilte Ireland. To date, ORIS has allocated funding of almost €68 million for 973 projects around the country. The scheme invests in the physical infrastructure that underpins sporting and recreational activities based on the use of the resources of the countryside; these contribute to healthy active lifestyles while building on the economic and tourism potential of the area, and so are to the benefit of both local communities and tourist visitors alike.

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) contributes to the strategic objective of strengthened rural economies and communities as set out in the Project Ireland 2040 strategy. The objective of the Scheme is to provide funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and for the necessary repair, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreation infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland. It specifically supports the growing outdoor activity tourism sector as prioritised in “Our Rural Future”, Ireland’s Rural Development

This funding stream could be applicable for the Seating and play areas.

### **Municipal District Grants**

The scheme is created annually by the members of Cavan County Council for the purpose of supporting community groups in delivering and promoting projects in their areas.

#### *Categories of Eligible Aid*

##### *Amenity and Environmental Schemes*

Grants to community groups for works which develop or promote publicly owned and/or community managed amenity areas.

Grants to community groups for works which preserve/promote environment.

##### *Heritage and Genealogy*

Grants to community groups for works which promote local community heritage/genealogy

*Match funding for works which are:*

Approved by the Local Community Development Committee under Peace/ LEADER and/or any other state aid

Approved by Fáilte Ireland and/or any other state aid

Projects promoted by Town Teams as part of their approved Town Teams Plan

Supplement the schedule of Municipal District works and/or any other works carried out by the local authority.

This funding will be aimed at Interpretation and location panel elements of the Masterplan.

### **Conclusion**

It is clearly evident from the aforementioned analysis of funding opportunities that opportunities exist to secure funding for developments at Loughanleagh.

Loughanleagh & Muff Heritage Trust have been proactive and successful in recent years in securing funding for projects in the area. There is considerable scope to develop facilities, amenities, new trails and also enhance those currently in place in Loughanleagh, in the form of the development of infrastructure, biodiversity and environmental enhancement, and maintenance and management.

Loughanleagh and Muff Heritage Trust CLG has taken the initiative to plan this development for the betterment of their community and its sustainability and the environment. The projects proposed clearly fit under a theme of social enterprise and the 'third sector'. The group has from its inception been striving to protect and preserve the heritage of the Loughanleagh area, and to enhance the experience of visitors to the area. This masterplan and actions agreed therein demonstrates the foresight and enthusiasm the committee has for its area and the level of support locally. The proposed facilities will not only provide outdoor amenities in a scenic area, enhanced walkways and opportunities for eco-education through local services to the Loughanleagh area but also to neighbouring electoral districts in rural and urban Southeast Cavan.

The overall costs of the proposals in relative terms are modest when the population of the greater area is taken into account. The community natural area would primarily service the Cavan / Monaghan / Meath area but has propensity for eco-tourist initiatives for beyond this area.

The proposals as outlined in this document and the funding required from funding agencies would present a solid and cost-effective investment of public money, in essential local infrastructure that will secure in no small way the social and economic wellbeing of many people in the greater Loughanleagh area.

## 14.2 Implementation

The actions within this master plan will be implemented over a 10-year period. Actions will need to be prioritised based on the availability of resources primarily financial through many different state schemes, coupled with local voluntary effort and fundraising.

The population of the area including the towns of Bailieborough and Kingscourt have grown rapidly, and the existing trails and infrastructure has enhanced the Loughanleagh mountain's usage. The footfall figures reflect the perceived usage patterns that have emerged from the study. However major upgrading of various infrastructure is required to satisfy the growing effective demand in the area and to unlock its optimal biodiversity and recreational balanced offerings.

Loughanleagh and Muff Heritage Trust CLG are driving development that has significant benefit not only for local landowners but also for the local community. It is of utmost importance that relationships between all parties are maintained and that trust and confidence is improved even further to ensure a good working relationship.

The Heritage group has the ability to apply for and lead certain aspect of the actions contained in this Master plan whereas there is also potential to collaborate with Cavan County Council and Coillte and indeed Greenbelt or other private landowners on other actions.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Consultation Surveys**

## **Appendix 2**

### **Maps of Trails**

## **Appendix 3**

### **Habitat and Plant List**

## **Appendix 4**

### **Profile of Committee Members**

## **2022 Officers & Committee Members**

Our officers and committee members are passionate about the preservation and protection of Loughanleagh mountain and Muff area. The “Trust” is actively involved in promoting the region’s rich history and heritage, and the development of walkways and trails that showcase the beautiful landscape for the enjoyment of both the local community and visitors.

### *Kevin Smith, Chairperson*

Kevin is a local dairy farmer. Having lived on Loughanleagh for almost 60 years, he is an advocate for biodiversity and protecting the environment and is aware of the importance of maintaining these habitats for birds and native wildlife.

### *Noreen Farrelly, Secretary*

Noreen has served as Secretary for over ten years. A native of Monaghan, she has lived in the area for almost 40 years and is actively involved in the community.

### *Martin Smith, Treasurer*

Martin takes on the role of Treasurer this year. As a local resident, he is passionate about the heritage, folklore and history of the area and believes this outdoor amenity offers great potential for tourism growth into the future.

### *Bernie Fitzsimons, Assistant Treasurer*

Bernie is the outgoing Treasurer. Living between Muff and Loughanleagh mountain, she is a keen walker and registered walking guide. She is also an active member of the local community and is involved in a number of other groups including the ICA.

### *Jamie Fitzcarlos, Public Relations Officer (PRO)*

Jamie is new to the committee this year having recently returned to the area after living in Australia for over 16 years. She is an avid trail runner and enjoys the choice of tracks that Loughanleagh provides. She has served as PRO for a number of voluntary sports organisations.

## **Directors**

*Kevin Smith, Brendan McMahon*

## **Committee Members**

*Aileen McGowan*

*Alain Raymond*

*Alocoque McMahon*

*Andrew Clarke*

*Anthony Farrelly*

*Colm Higgins*

*Conor McMahon*

*Edel Higgins*

*Eymard Reilly*

*Frank Cooney*

*Jeff Evemy*

*Lauren Kenny*

*Liam Kenny*

*Maria Farrelly*

*Marina Smith*

*Martin Fitzsimons*

*Mary Reilly*

*Padraig Smith*

*Patricia Cooney*

*Patsy Smith*

*Philip Smith*

*Theresa Reilly*



## **Appendix 5**

# **Automated Footfall Counters Report**

## **Appendix 6**

### **Map of proposed project enhancements**

## **Appendix 7**

### **Visitor Centre / Toilet Block Sketch**

## **Appendix 8**

### **Biodiversity Plan**