

Kilkee Biodiversity Plan 2019

From Bog to Beach



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1 Background

Kilkee was first recorded as a seaside resort in 1793. At that stage the town had not been built except for two houses on either side of the bay and it was ringed by large sand dunes. Subsequently these sand dunes were built on and from then it developed into the leading seaside resort in 19th century Ireland. The first visitors to the town were mainly attracted by nature and the wild under-developed nature of the wild Atlantic shore. Charlotte Bronte, who spent her honeymoon here in July 1854 at the West End Hotel, remarked:

“such a wild iron-bound coast with such ocean views as I had not yet seen battling of waves with rocks as I had never imagined.”

Famous writers, poets, painters etc. all frequented Kilkee. The poet Aubrey de Vere who invited his friends Alfred Tennyson and William Makepeace-Thackeray to Kilkee on a number of occasions wrote:

“Awfully beautiful art thou, O sea!
Viewed from the vantage of these great rocks,
That vast in air lift their primeval blocks,
Screening the sandy cove of lone Kilkee.”.



Figure 1 Photo of boy with donkey collecting seaweed.

Today Kilkee hosts thousands of tourists each year. It is vitally important that the biodiversity that exists is not overpowered by tourist development and that areas with potential for further biodiversity be nurtured.

2 Aims and Objectives

The Kilkee Biodiversity group seek to develop and implement this biodiversity plan with the following objectives:

1. Protect existing biodiversity and promote further growth of biodiversity in the area.
2. Build community engagement with the environment, creating a sense of ownership for the biodiversity, from our own back gardens to the land and sea surrounding us.
3. Involve all age groups in our community as whole in the project

3 Local natural resources inventory



Figure 2 Overview Map of Kilkee, Co. Clare

3.1.1.1 Natura 2000 sites

Kilkee is surrounded on nearly all sides by Natura 2000 sites as follows:

- *Carrowmore Dunes SAC*
- *Illeunonearan NHA*
- *Illeunonearon SPA*
- *Kilkee Reefs SPA*
- *Loop Head SPA*
- *Lower River Shannon SAC*
- *Mid-Clare Coast SPA*
- *Tullaheer Bog SAC*

3.1.1.2 Birds

Cliff top on both sides of Kilkee Bay provide a habitat for a number of endangered bird species including Choughs, Common Buzzard, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-Legged Kittiwake as well as a large number of marine plants.



Figure 3 Sea pinks on Kilkee Cliffs

3.1.1.3 Wetlands

There are a number of wetlands in the area including:

3.1.1.3.1 Lady Isabella's Pond



Figure 4 Overhead view of Lady Isabella's Pond, dried out

Dating to the 18th century, this served as a fish pond for holding edible fish for the McDonnell's, landlords of the area.

With the permission of the present owner, this historic area (it is designated monument) with the support of the Heritage Council could be re-vitalised and interpretation created.



Figure 5 Lady Isabella's pond

3.1.1.3.2 Victoria Stream

This stream (Figure 6 below) flows into Kilkee bay and had been effected by a number of pollution events in recent years. The Biodiversity Action group will liaise with Clare Co Council and Irish Water (responsible for the stream) to put in place measures to prevent this happening again.

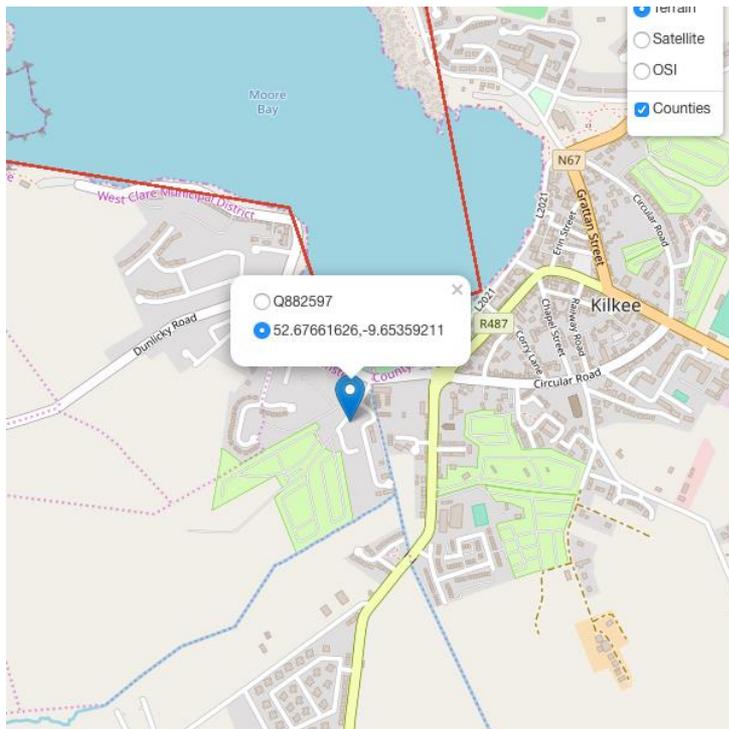


Figure 6 Victoria Stream

3.1.1.3.3 Golf Club Lakes

These lakes were constructed by the golf club by damming a river flowing through its land. That was done 25 years ago, so now these two lakes have developed their own habitats. This wetland should be surveyed.

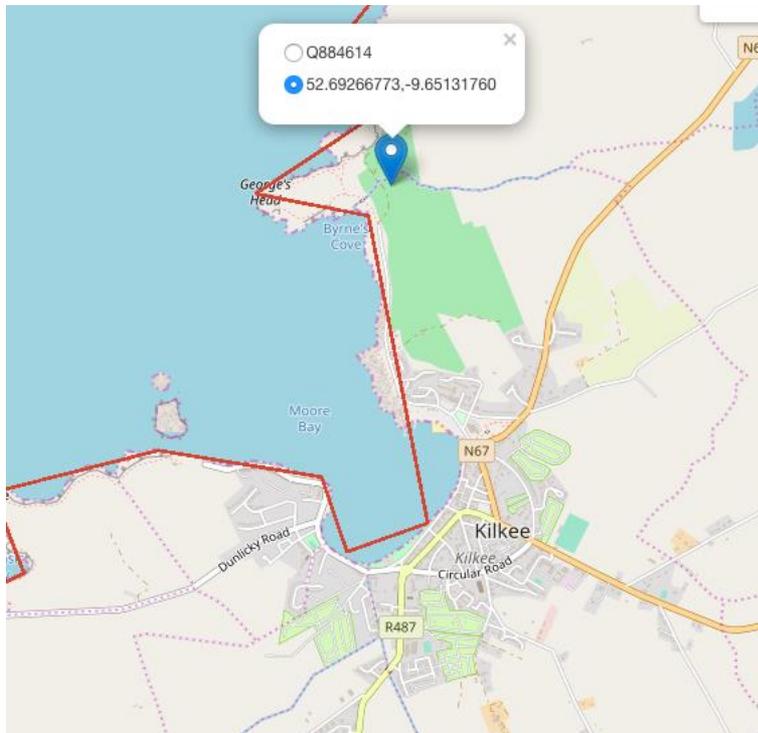


Figure 6 Golf Club lakes

3.1.1.3.4 Old Reservoir

This has been unused for over 10 years and is a marvellous site for a biodiversity-rich nature park and lake. It is in the ownership of Clare Co. Council and it is the intention of this Biodiversity Plans to develop the area in conjunction with the local authority. The group would hope to lobby Clare Co. Council to remove dumped asbestos from the site and if necessary professionally decontaminate the area. Accept the offer of the Fisheries Board to re-stock and revitalise the very large area with wildlife walks and industrial heritage display at old pumping station.

3.1.1.4 Beach and Shoreline

These areas are part of the Kilkee Reefs SAC and it is important that they be closely monitored to preserve the valuable habitats. The group would hope to help with the monitoring in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The group would hope to liaise with Kilkee Tidy Towns, and Kilkee chamber of commerce to organise regular beach and shore clean ups

3.1.1.5 URBAN area green spaces

There are a number of such areas in Kilkee, and it the aim of this plan to create a pollinator friendly environment by good practice grassland management and appropriate planting. Some areas are ideal for bat and bird boxes and appropriate locations should be surveyed. Many areas are in private hands and a process of community engagement, education and awareness programs will be initiated to actively involve householders and landowners.

Areas may include (not excluding others)

- Priest's graveyard
- Hodges Green
- Allender's Field

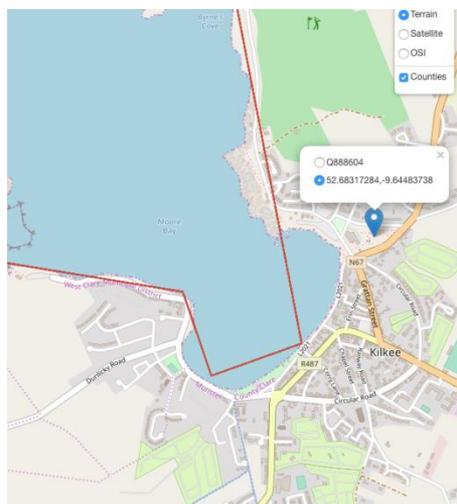


Figure 7 Allender's field location

- Allender's Stream
- St Senan's Stream
- Library Garden

3.1.1.6 Bog areas

Kilkee is surrounded by cut-away bog. These areas are ideal for nature and educational walks.

Examples:

3.1.1.6.1 The Old Bog Road

This is a 300 m cul-de-sac leading to a disused (for over 30 years) town dump. Because it has been disused for so long it has developed its own ecology system. The road into it is a hive of plant and animal wildlife and the hedges form ecological corridors. Good biodiversity planning would seek to re-establish and sustain ecologically intact habitats which restore themselves with low levels of management. The main area, with a seat or two, would have excellent recreational value for people to relax and enjoy nature all around them with only the sound of birds.



Figure 8 Bog road to proposed nature park

3.2 Education and community engagement

This is one of the more important aspects of the plan, because without public support, no biodiversity plan will be effective. The publication of this report will help publicise the importance of the biodiversity of Kilkee, in making it more attractive to live work and visit. The history of the origins of tourism in the town demonstrates this.

Actions:

- Distribute this Biodiversity plan to a wider audience including schools and encourage citizen science in the schools.
- Arrange a talk by nature enthusiast.
- Lead a nature walk.
- Place interpretative signage at all areas of biodiversity.
- Continue with clean-up of the beach and other ecological important areas.
- Promote the Kilkee Plastic Free campaign by persuading coffee shops to supply drinks in biodegradable or reusable cups.
- Arrange a calendar of events, including the following:
 - Bat walk
 - Dawn Chorus walk
 - Wildflower walk

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Action Plan

Action	Project	Description	Completion Date	Collaborators
Build a relationship with existing bird protection groups	Birds	Liaise with Birdwatch Ireland and Clare Birdwatching to assist with local conservation projects and community awareness. Get advice on placement of Swift boxes for example.	Ongoing	NPWS Dixie Collins, Mary Arthur (MA)
Field survey, Habitat Map, and interpretation	Wetlands	Lady Isabella's Pond. Use existing survey (Loop Head Wetlands by Geoff Oliver) Interpretation plan	One year	John Williams (JW) Kevin Haugh
		Victoria Stream – survey, map and plan		MA
		Golf Club Lakes – survey, map and plan		MA
		Old Reservoir – survey, map and plan	Long Term	JW Mary Redmond (MR)
Monitor and Clean coastline	Beach and Shore	Organise regular beach cleanups	Ongoing	MA Tidy Towns Clare Co. Council
		Support for Kilkee Plastic Free. Engage with campaigns, and local businesses	Ongoing	MA Chamber of Commerce Margaret Haugh Tidy Towns
		Liaise with Clare Co. Council regarding bin management.	Ongoing	MA Tidy Towns committee
Develop urban areas	Priest's grave yard	Soil Test, Habitat map, Planting and hedge im-	One year	MA Parish Council

		provement. Management plan for Wild Flowers and Bug Hotel		
	Hodges Green	Soil Test, Habitat map Wild Flower management plan	One year	MA Elaine Haugh Clare Co. Council
	St Senan's Stream	Habitat Map, Management plan	One year	MA
	Allender's Field	Habitat map Community Orchard, Pollinator Plan and planting, willow screening	Two Years	MA Clare Co Council Karen Foley Rory O' Connor
	Allender's Stream	Habitat map and management plan	One year	MA
	Library Wild flower Garden	Habitat map, soil test, planting plan	One year	LCEB, Clare Library, MA, Jacki McGrath Robert Brown
Protection and interpretation of Bog areas	Old Bog road	Habitat Map, Project plan for Sensory Garden and Nature Walk and Park	One to 5 years	JW
Education and awareness program		Distribute plan, create event calendar, arrange events		Robert Brown Trea Heapes Mary Redmond

3.3.2 Collaborators

Clare Co Council, Kilkee Chamber of Commerce, Kilkee Tidy Towns Kilkee Tourism and members of the public including the local schools.

3.3.3 Resources

Clare Co. Council (Community grants schemes) also technical support from Biodiversity officer. LEADER. NPWS. Community Foundation. Heritage Council. Kilkee Chamber of Commerce and business community.