

# CONNEMARA

**Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan**



**April 2012**



Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

the **paulhogarth** company

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# INTRODUCTION

The Paul Hogarth Company, working with Elspeth Wills was appointed by Fáilte Ireland to develop an integrated Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan for Connemara.

The Connemara area lies to the west of Galway, bounded to the south and west by the Atlantic. It is a place shaped by its relationship to the land and the water, which has for generations captured the imagination of visitors. Fáilte Ireland recognises that it is important to provide and promote routes around the region, which will encourage exploration and enjoyment for visitors and local people.

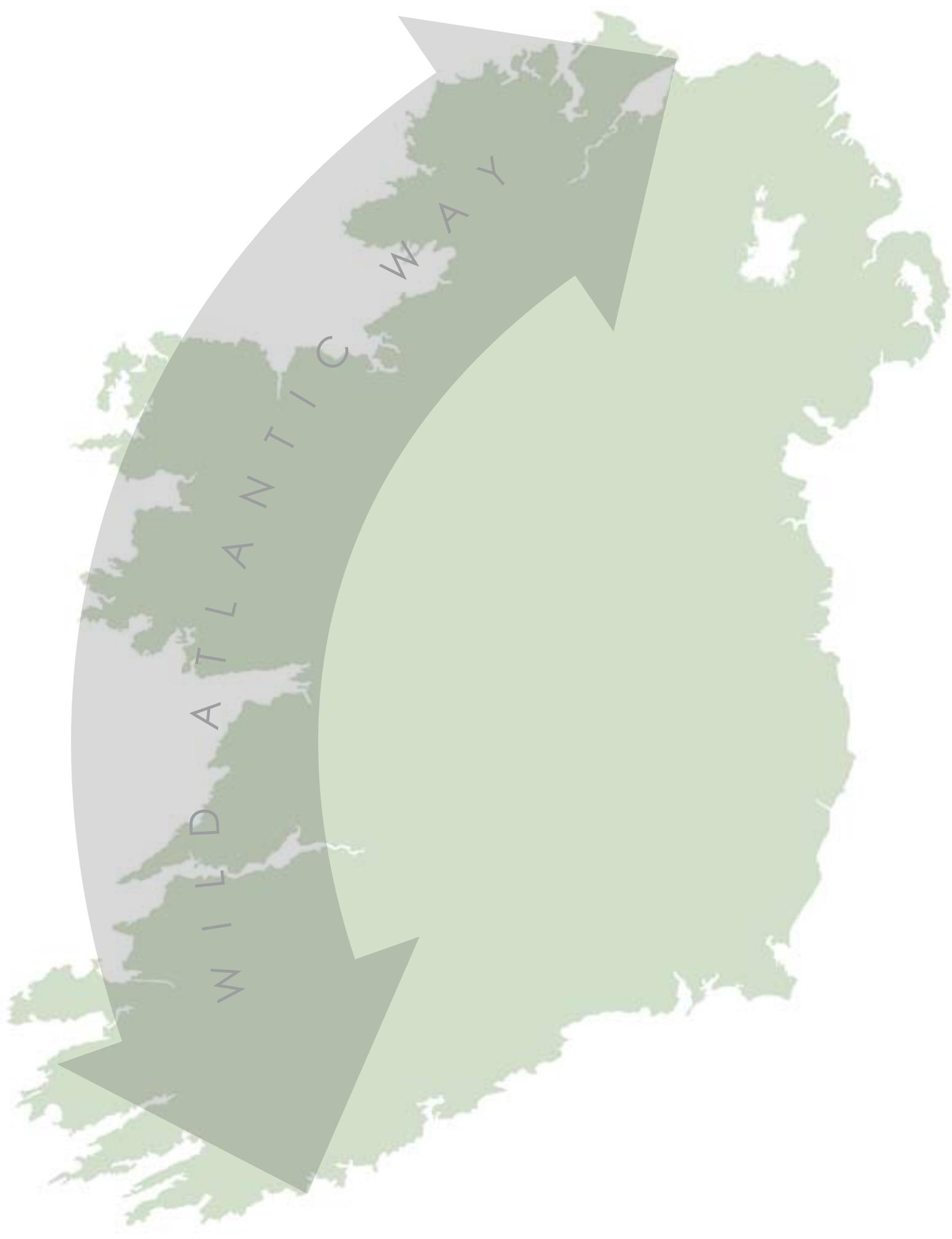
This Plan provides a clear vision for the delivery of a greatly enhanced visitor experience for Connemara, combining various aspects, including enhanced distinctiveness, appearance, interest, experience and the vital component of welcoming people. The Plan identifies how the physical components of the vision can be delivered to a standard benefitting of this internationally renowned region.

Existing and potential attractions, whether somewhere like Kylemore Abbey, a walking tour operator, boat excursion provider, hotel, café or craft shop have a vital role to play. Through delivery of this Plan, visitors will be attracted by the special qualities of the area – its mountains, its puffins, historical characters, the language and culture.

They will be directed to places where those special qualities can be experienced. It is then the role of the attraction providers to deliver the local welcome and continue to deliver the experience.

The following sections of this Plan outline our understanding of the area, and the different characteristics of the environment, its people, culture and history that are distinctive and which are or can be presented in a way which is of value to the visitor experience. Set in the context of prevailing visitor trends, the Plan outlines the approach, arrival and routes around Connemara. It highlights information that will be provided at specific locations that will facilitate understanding and exploration of the area.

The Community Toolkit outlines how towns and villages can play their part, developing the local welcome and providing an insight into aspects of history and culture that are specific to that place. Importantly, it also sets the context within which those who are providing a service can do so with confidence, and in the context that each is contributing positively to the overall visitor experience of Connemara. The purpose of this integrated plan is to identify how public and private investment and time commitments can be prioritised and co-ordinated to deliver a world-class experience for visitors, which will contribute significantly to enhanced economic activity and quality of life for local residents.



# WILD ATLANTIC WAY

The Wild Atlantic Way is an emerging concept of a long distance route from Derry to Cork. It is hoped that this will become internationally recognised, in the same way as the Garden Route in South Africa or Pacific Highway in New Zealand.

The Wild Atlantic Way will link regions and places, some of which already have a strong 'brand' such as the Ring of Kerry and Connemara. Each Region will continue to have and strengthen its own distinctive identity, with gateway signs, orientation and interpretation that is specific to it, but which encourages people to explore adjacent areas.

It is anticipated that as the Wild Atlantic Way is developed, that bespoke way-marking signs will provide cohesion along its length. These will require to be appropriately integrated within Connemara, celebrating its role in this 'bigger picture', without compromising its own sense of place.





# THE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

This section sets out the context of and the underpinning logic behind the proposed interpretation associated with the Connemara driving routes.

## Who is the Audience

Determining the audience for interpretation helps to decide what stories to tell and how.

The latest provisional figures from Fáilte Ireland show that there were 1,027,000 visitors to the West of Ireland in 2011 compared with nearly 1.5 million in 2007. Earlier research relating to the West of Ireland in 2009 indicated that 48% of trips were made by overseas visitors. While a shared heritage and culture is still a key driver for North American visitors, the West's appeal as one of Europe's last wilderness areas attracts increasing numbers of visitors especially from Northern Europe. With 23% of holiday trips, mainland Europe has overtaken both the UK (12%) and the USA (11%) in terms of market share.

A preliminary breakdown of results for 2010 differentiates the markets drawn to the West of Ireland.

- British visitors – Most are either Irish born (28%) or repeat visitors. Over half stay with family and friends. More than half are over 45+, tending to travel independently as couples. They use a car to move around and are most likely to visit rural areas. The peak holiday months are July to September.
- European visitors – Over 90% of European tourists visit Galway, often in combination with Dublin and the South West. More than half are on their first visit, travelling on their own or as a couple. They tend to be younger (25-54), office-based workers staying in hotels or B&Bs. The peak season is again July to September.
- North American visitors tend to arrive in June, staying largely in hotels and B&Bs. The majority are on their first Irish holiday, travelling as a couple and aged over 45. Almost half use a car and one in three take a coach tour involving at least a one night stop.

- Children are a small although important element of the visitor mix. Overall 9% of overseas visitors are under 19, with percentages for Britain, mainland Europe and North America being 8%, 13% and 6% respectively.

Three quarters of visitors to the West of Ireland visited historical attractions, with 45% visiting National Parks, 37% gardens of which Connemara has a very strong cluster and 10% attending festivals and other cultural events. Historical attractions can further be subdivided into historic houses/castles (visited by 67% of respondents), monuments (60%), heritage centres (47%) and museums/art galleries (46%). Activity holidays, especially both on and off road walking, are increasingly popular. While a quarter of all overseas tourists visited the West of Ireland, 40% of those engaged on activity breaks visited the region.

At an all-Ireland level, the annual Visitor Attitudes Survey commissioned by Fáilte Ireland consistently shows that the country is set apart from other similar destinations by the beauty of its scenery, a relaxed pace of life and the friendliness and hospitality of its people. The actual visitor experience slightly outperforms expectations. In 2010 visitors were asked to rate their interest in specific aspects of Ireland's heritage.

The country's natural heritage including the Burren and the cliffs of Moher far outperformed other aspects with 66% of visitors 'very interested', compared with traditional culture (45%) historic Ireland (41%), Celtic Ireland (37%), Christian Ireland (25%) and contemporary culture (12%).

An unspoilt environment (85% of respondents) and the range of natural attractions (81%) resonate with Europeans selecting an Irish holiday especially those from France and Germany. Eighty five per cent of overall visitors also agreed that Ireland is a 'green' destination in terms of the experience matching their perceptions. Given the importance of car touring, bad roads including difficult driving and poor signposting is second only to the cost of living as a negative factor in the holiday experience.

The Visitor Attitudes Survey, conducted by Fáilte Ireland among 900 visitors in the Galway Bay-Connemara-Clew Bay region in summer 2011, gives the clearest and most up-to-date indicators of visitor aspirations and interests.

### Why did visitors choose the area - % of visitors

	Domestic	UK	Europe	American
Previous Visit	22	12	-	-
Scenery	13	15	29	26
Visiting Friends / Family	9	17	-	-
Recommendation	-	11	13	20
Attractive Towns and Cities	-	-	14	-
History and Culture	-	-	-	22

- Scenery is the main reason most visitors choose to visit Connemara.
- Natural heritage and traditional culture are what interest non-Irish visitors most and Connemara has a very strong story to tell in both areas.
- Interpretation needs to be sensitive, blending in with the landscape and using natural materials wherever possible.

### Activity engaged in during their trip - % of visitors

	Domestic	UK	Europe	American
Historic House / Castle	34	33	38	58
Gardens	23	27	29	49
National Park	11	20	29	39
Museum / Gallery	15	19	20	31
Hiking / Walking	20	18	19	-
Traditional Music / Dance	11	16	19	14
Heritage / Interpretive Visitor Centre	18	15	18	41

- Although interpretation should be engaging for younger visitors, its primary audience is independent adult car travellers.
- Given the importance of walking as an activity, short, local walks and access to long distance footpaths should be marked on accompanying maps.

Audience profiles provide a number of pointers as to the nature and style of interpretation to be adopted.

As well as the domestic market where Galway City is a key short break destination, interpretation needs to appeal to local people. County Galway alone has a population of over 143,000 including 34,000 families. They are a potential market for half and full-day outings within Connemara and a means of introducing friends and relatives to the area. Interpretation increases local people's awareness of their heritage and allows them to engage with it in new ways. It also helps to instil a sense of pride in place.

- English is not the first language of a significant proportion of visitors. Text needs to be simple, clear and accessible.

# What sets Connemara Apart

Rather than adopting the marketing device of USPs, interpretation seeks to identify what is distinctive about an area as a way of informing storyline development and presentation.

Connemara is summed up in Fáilte Ireland's brand statement 'wild at heart'. The distinctive characteristics that we have identified include:

- A real feeling of wildness and remoteness.
  - A region surrounded and shaped by the wild Atlantic.
  - An almost indefinable quality of light and space, expressed creatively over the centuries.
  - The sheer variety of scenery encompassed within a small geographical area.
  - The diversity of wildlife habitats from moorland to marine.
  - A long, dramatic and at times 'edgy' history with strong emotional as well as intellectual appeal.
  - Distinctive traditions and culture which visitors can experience.
- Being 'on the edge', set apart historically and culturally as well as physically from the rest of Ireland.
  - An area of extremes from bog to exotic gardens, from sporting estates to grinding poverty.
  - Having icons that reflect the area's distinctiveness especially Connemara ponies, Gaelic culture and Galway hookers.

The local writer Tim Robinson summed up Connemara's distinctiveness as;  
*'The sound of the past, the language we breathe and our frontage onto the natural world'*.

Connemara, however, faces a number of interpretative challenges. It is too easy to 'do' Connemara simply by driving along the N59.

The presentation of its natural and human heritage is poor. Its rich and much promoted archaeology of stone circles, hermits' cells and crannogs, for example, is difficult to access on the ground and is virtually uninterpreted.

This is true also of its natural heritage, other than within the Connemara National Park Visitor Centre. Unless the visitor is already expert in bird watching or botany, Connemara can appear a very empty landscape.

Connemara closes down from late autumn to spring, meaning that visitors in off-peak months are left very much to their own devices in terms of accessing information and engaging with their surroundings.

There is limited off-road access because of land ownership issues leading to a paucity of short walks from car parks.

Such limited interpretation as there is, is piecemeal and often badly maintained. A model for the future would be that all external interpretation achieves the standards set by Kylemore Abbey – professionally designed, engaging and informative.



IONAD  
ATHCHURSA  
AN SPIOÉIL



# The Use of the Irish Language in Interpretation

In titling we propose to feature the Gaelic name followed by the English equivalent throughout Connemara. This provides visitors with a standard, consistent approach. The inclusion of the English equivalent is important as, for example, many brand-name guidebooks refer only to English names.

The current requirement is for full interpretive text in both Gaelic and English. As the recommended text length for an interpretation panel is around 250 words, this may limit the number of stories conveyed to three plus incidentals if the board is not to become too text-heavy. We have been exploring with Údarás na Gaeltachta and Fáilte Ireland the option for Connemara to pioneer an innovative approach to the presentation of the Irish language in the context of its cultural tradition.

The challenge is to strike the balance between giving local communities a rightful sense of ownership and place and communicating with visitors especially those from outside Ireland. Research has shown, for example, that overseas visitors, for some of whom English is not their first language, are confused by rather than engaged with paragraphs of a language that they cannot begin to understand. On the other hand, visitors enjoy the feeling of experiencing a different culture first-hand.

Part of the solution lies in the selection of stories to feature at Discovery Points especially within the Gaeltacht. This presents no problems, as there is a wealth of storylines and individual stories from which to choose. On relevant orientation panels we also highlight that visitors are entering the Gaeltacht, a distinctive area where a significant proportion of people speak Gaelic in their everyday lives.

Rather than presenting blocks of text in Gaelic, our proposal is to engage visitors with a living, vibrant language by dropping in sentences, quotations, sayings, song and phrases such as place names with an explanation in English of what they mean. In this way non-Gaelic speakers will start to recognise individual words and feel part of a unique linguistic culture with ancient roots.

# OBJECTIVES AND THEMES

## Objectives

Defining learning, emotional, behavioural and promotional objectives for interpretation helps to set the overall framework. What do we want visitors to discover and feel about Connemara and its specific locations, what do we want visitors to do and how do we promote the region's assets, tying in with overall brand values?

### Overall Objective - To Inspire, Engage and Inform

#### Learning Objectives

- why and in what ways Connemara has a distinctive character
- how its different landscapes evolved and what wildlife do they support
- what life was like in the past and is like today

#### Behavioural Objectives

- explore and stay longer
- treat the landscape sensitively and with respect

#### Emotional Objectives

- inspired and engaged
- sharing experiences with local people
- making a journey of the imagination, being a traveller in time and place

#### Promotional Objectives

- Distinctiveness
- Separateness
- Richness
- 'Wild at heart'

# Concept and Themes

Establishing the 'big idea' and expressing the overarching themes for interpretation demonstrates the logic for underpinning the selection of specific storylines and individual stories. It helps to achieve consistency across locations and to work out which stories to tell where.

## The Concept

Connemara is a landscape of water. This has shaped the lives of its people over the centuries and gives the region its distinctive character today.

## Themes

- Connemara is a place set apart by its history, culture, language and tradition.
- From earliest times the stories of people and place have been inter-twined.
- The scarce resources eked out from land and sea have shaped people's lives.
- The wild landscape has inspired creativity in poetry, art, writing and song.
- Wildlife has adapted in different ways to survival on the edge.





# MAPPING THE INTERPRETATION

This section describes the styles of interpretation proposed as key elements within the proposals for the driving routes.

Interpreting Connemara is like taking visitors on a journey. They have already made the decision to visit on the recommendation of others, and from the information that they have read in guidebooks or accessed through the web. They may have been influenced by the images that they have seen in films or tourist brochures. Some will already have booked their accommodation and decided on the length of their stay.

‘So here I am in Connemara, what now?’ Orientation and interpretation throughout the driving routes aim to provide visitors with the practical information that they need to make the most of their visit, to engage them in the stories associated with that neighbourhood especially those which relate to what they are seeing for themselves and to encourage them to explore further. By adopting a consistent overall design toolkit it subtly draws the elements into a coherent whole: visitors start almost subconsciously to look out for such signage as they travel around.

Dividing Connemara into landscape zones influences the overall ‘look and feel’ of interpretation, suggesting a design palette to reflect the very different hues and moods of the environment. It also provides a means of differentiating routes in terms of titles and colours giving visitors the opportunity to mix and match their own routes. The three suggested route zones are:

Atlantic Connemara - blue



Connemara mountains - red

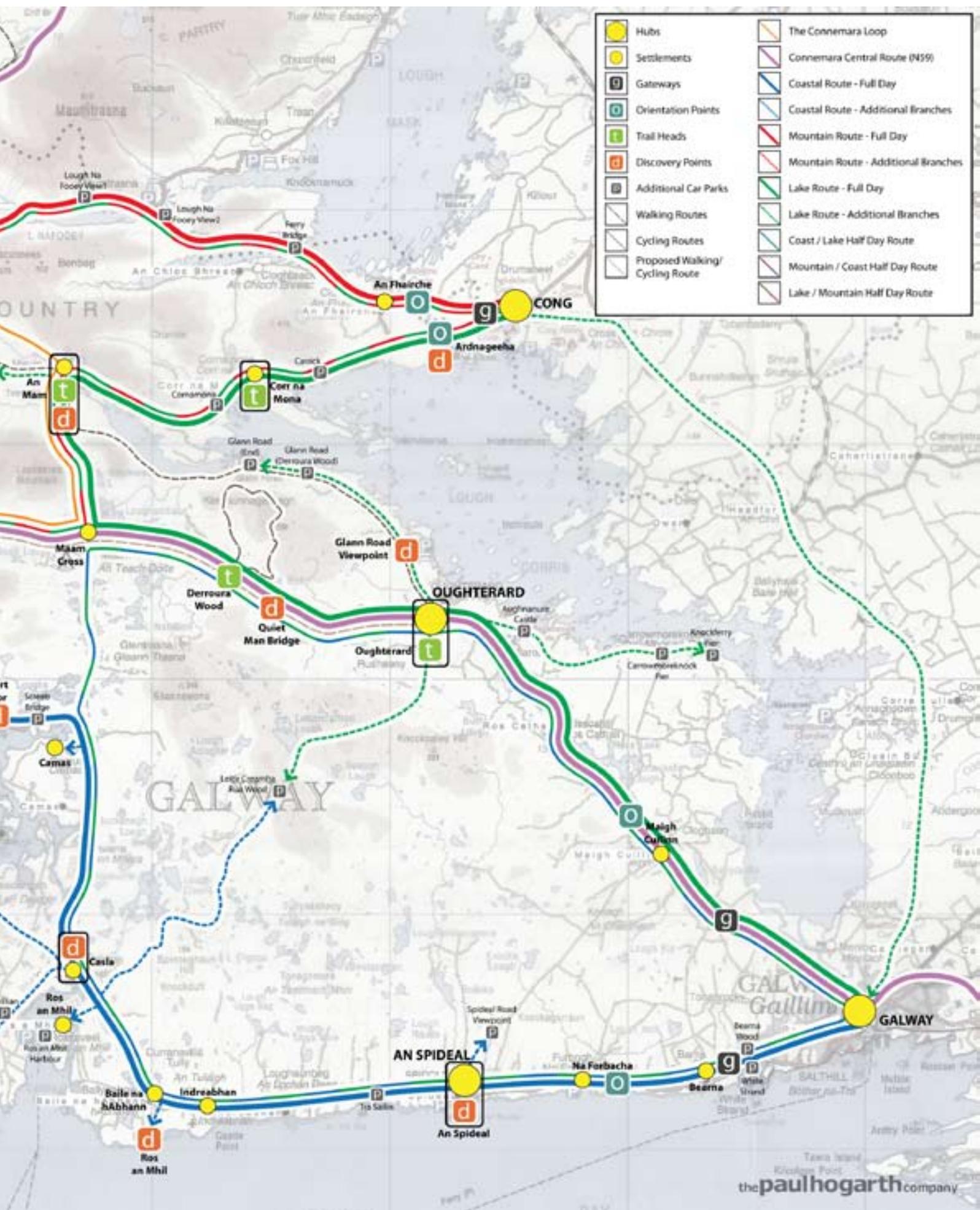


Connemara lakes - green



# Mapping the Interpretation





## Brown Signs

The following sections of this Plan identify the elements that need to combine effectively to provide the best possible experience for visitors to the area.

It is important to ensure that consideration is given to the means by which people arrive at the Gateways. Existing signs from the north and from Galway do not refer to Connemara. It is proposed that Brown Signs, are used to sign the approaches using the word 'Connemara' rather than places within it.

Having entered Connemara at the Gateways, Brown Signs should be used to sign the three Routes and nearby destinations.

Through the application of the new legislation relating to the provision of Brown Signs, it is important that the existing proliferation of signs is managed, having in place only those which help the understanding of route choices and navigation to places of interest. The ongoing management of this will be particularly important to maintain relevance and to ensure that unauthorised signs do not compromise the overall legibility.





# Routes

The land and coastal character, culture and heritage of Connemara are diverse and rich. The objective of developing the Routes is to facilitate the exploration and enjoyment of the area.

The Routes reflect the three themes of the Atlantic Coast, the Mountains and the Lakes. These headlines are evocative and provide a flavour of the character of each, from which other things of interest can be introduced.

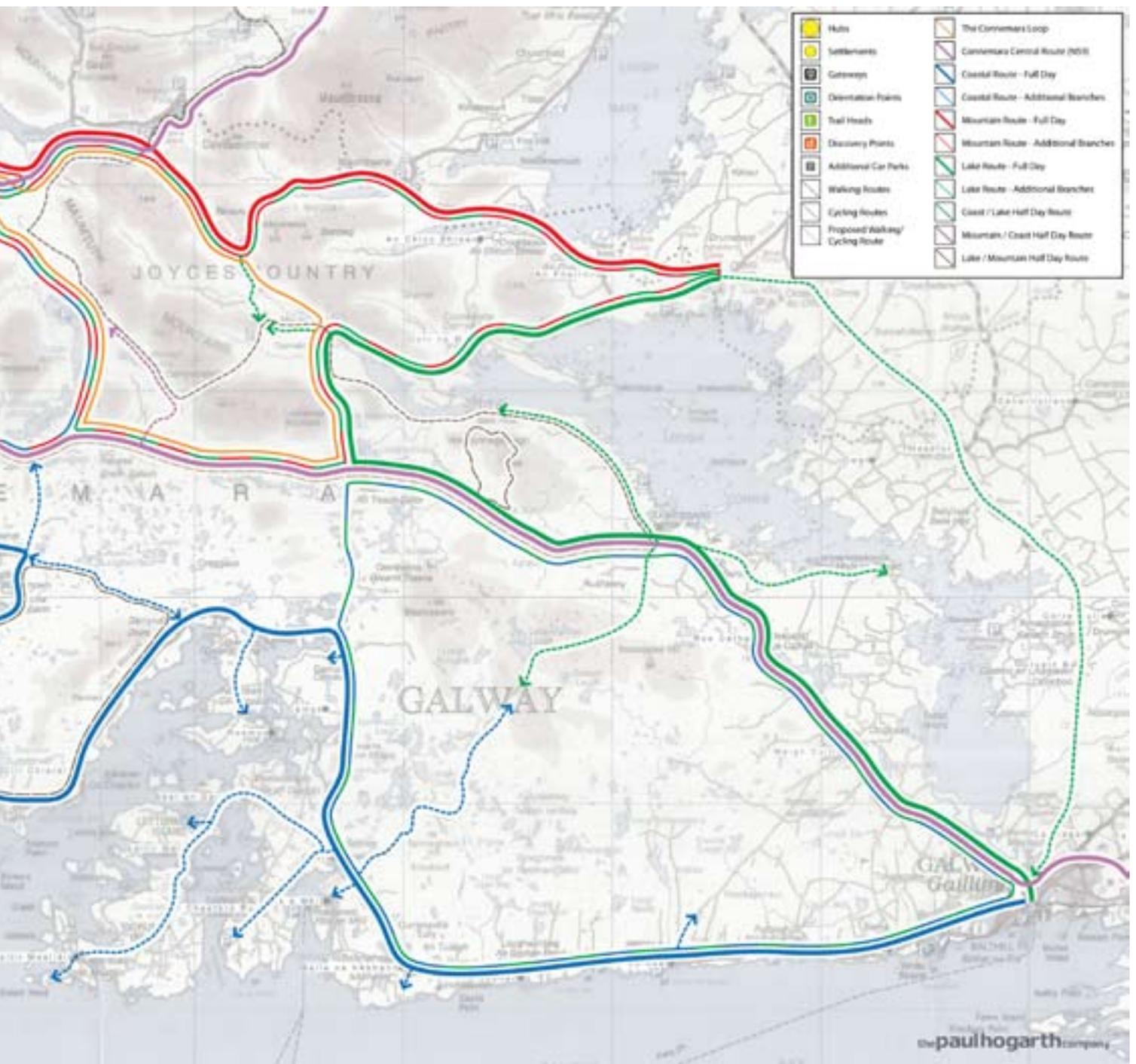
The N59 is the spine to the Routes, providing relatively easy access between the main towns of Leenane, Clifden and the City of Galway.

The Atlantic Coast Route connects to the south and west; the Mountains Route takes the visitor around the National Park area, whilst the Lakes Route provides an exploration of the landscape of inland water around Loch Corrib.

Whilst the Routes include sections of the N59 extensive parts are on roads that cannot and should not be travelled quickly, if the visitor is to engage with and experience Connemara. This has informed the development of a series of mini-loops, which provide flexibility and encourage people to plan their exploration of Connemara, depending on time available, and the aspects of the area that interest them.



The main Routes are appropriate for use by car and by bus. A number of the links, for example around the islands at Ros Muc are narrow and potentially difficult for buses to turn. These will be clearly identified, to minimise disruption, but also to ensure that these areas are promoted as key parts of the visitor experience, but with limitations on the appropriateness for buses.





# Materials

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In developing the Routes through Connemara, to enhance the visitor experience, encourage exploration and promote longer and return visits, the quality of interpretation and orientation and the quality of the environment should be complementary, reinforcing the impression of high quality and local distinctiveness.

Proposals for improving the physical qualities combine much needed 'house keeping' to address things that compromise the overall experience, including removal of piles of grit and filling of pot holes.

New elements should be introduced with confidence, using materials and forms which provide cohesion and which are appropriate to the sensitive often harsh environment.

At locations where work is needed to contribute to the visitor experience, the overall setting requires thoughtful and modest design tying-in walls, landform, grass, vegetation and surfacing with the wider landscape setting.

In many locations, through appropriate design, walls and ground profiles can be used to frame views, protect areas of seating and reduce the visual impact of the lay-by itself.



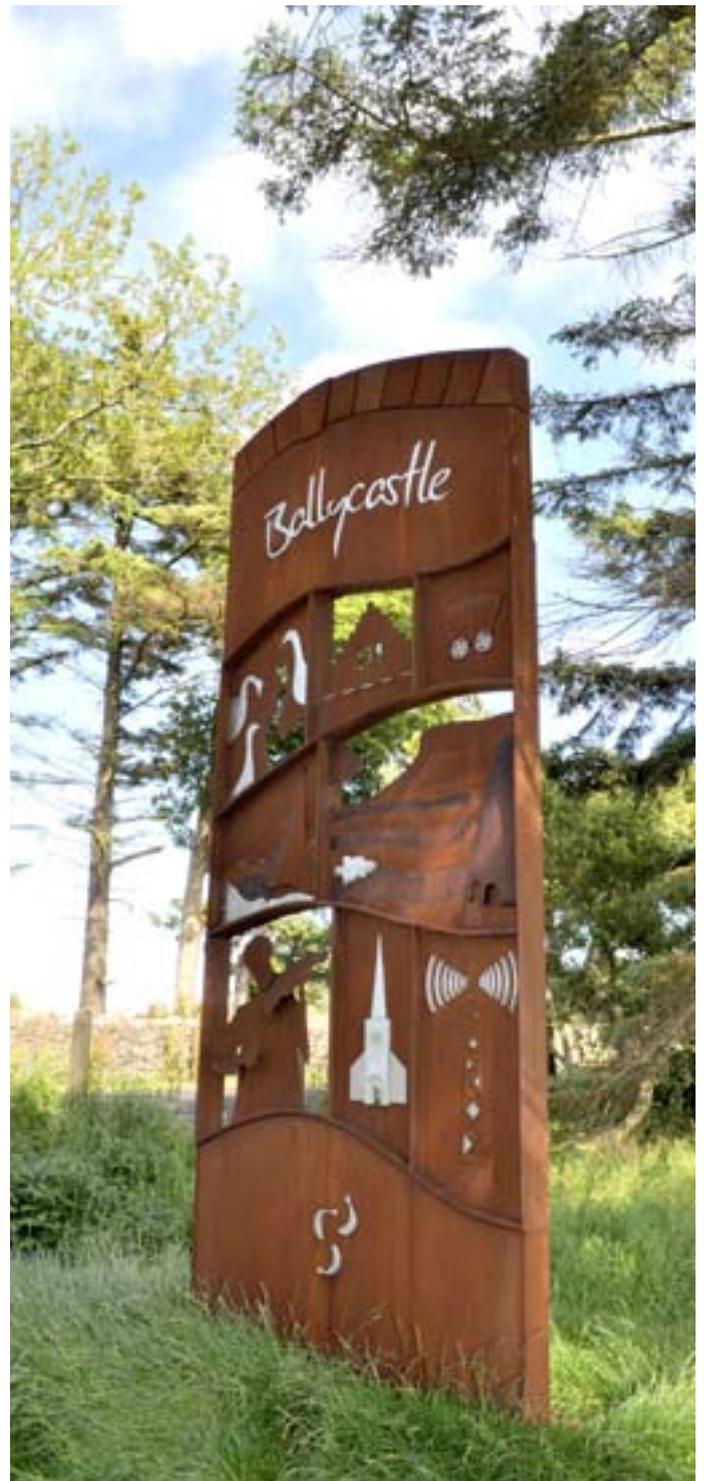
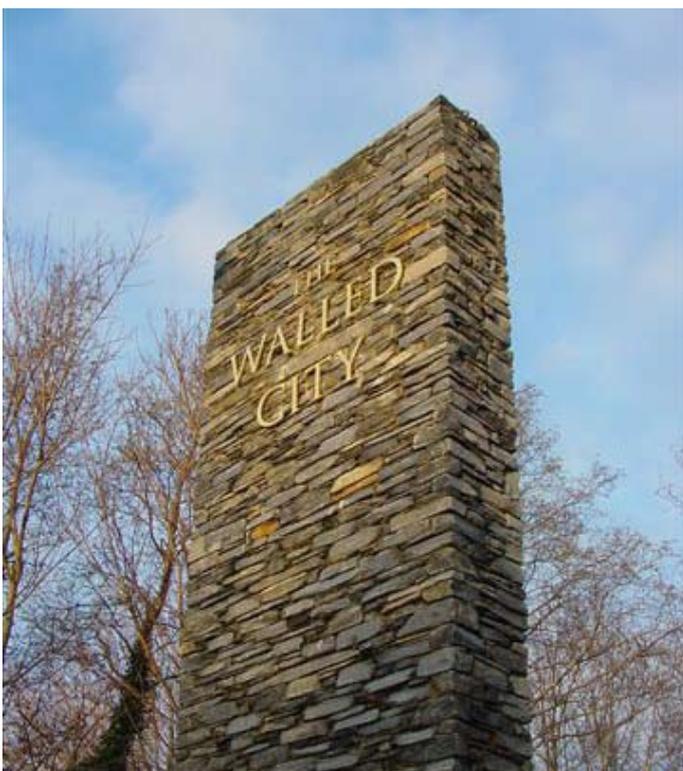
**CONAMARA**



## Proposed Modules

The gateway features and modules that are proposed for orientation, seating and viewpoints use materials that are considered appropriate throughout Connemara and in this way provide cohesion.

The russet hues of cor-ten steel and the use of large pieces of local stone have a timeless resonance with the area. The modules become recognisable features from one place to the next, but with inherent flexibility to respond to the shape and topography of each site.



Materials:  
Irish Blue Limestone base.  
Corten steel sign structure and furniture.



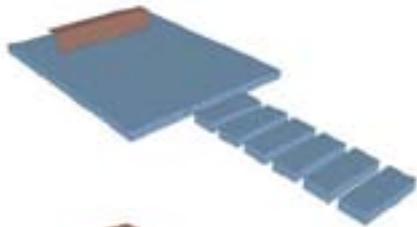
Interpretation



Interpretation & seating



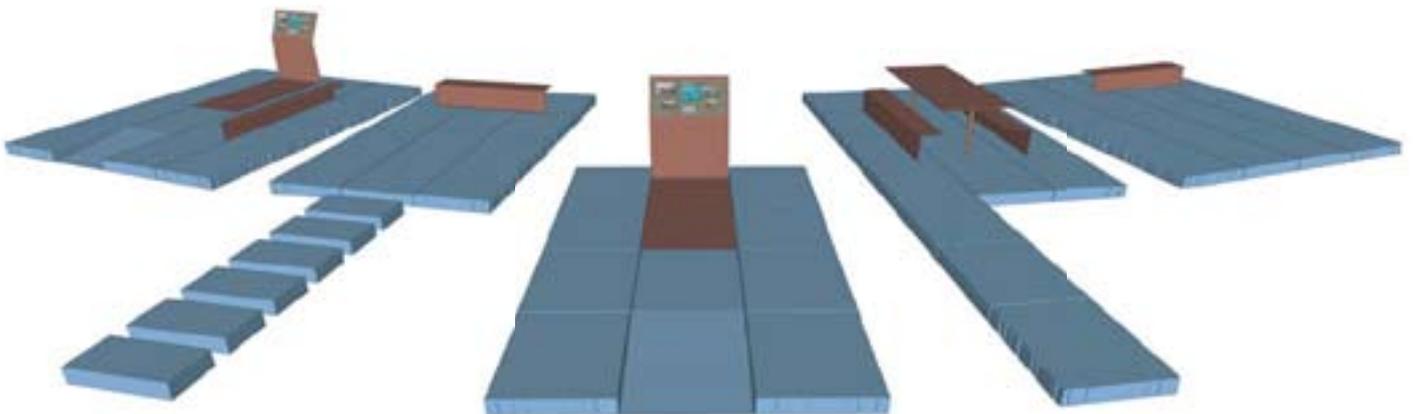
Viewpoint



Seating with stepping-stone path



Picnic table with path





# Gateways

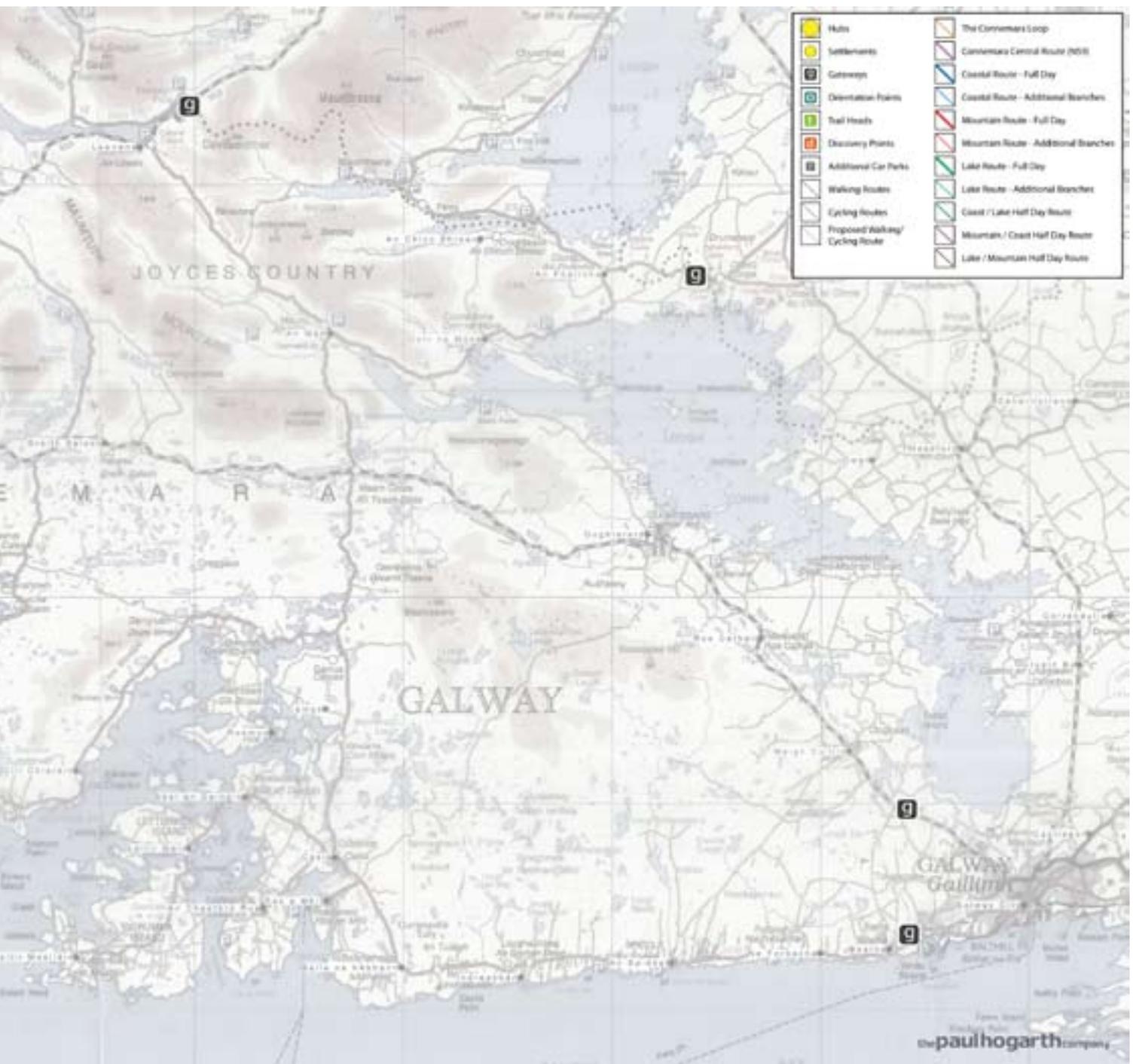
The gateways are designed to make a bold welcome statement and to stake out the territory that is Connemara. They create a mood of anticipation and the feeling of arrival. As illustrated on the gateway visualisation (page 26), the proposed gateways will incorporate the new Connemara logo. To emphasise the region's distinctive cultural tradition, it is proposed only to use the Irish language version of the name – Conamara.

The suggested gateway locations are north of Leenane, Cong, Maigh Cuillin and Bearna. Proposed site layouts for these locations are illustrated in the following pages

## Approximate Costings (Refer to Appendix 4)

- Bearna - €14,850
- Cong - €17,800
- Leenane - €15,450
- Maigh Cuillin - €14,850





New Gateway location:

- Remove advertisement signs.
- Relocate lighting column.
- Remove clutter of signs and furniture at junction.



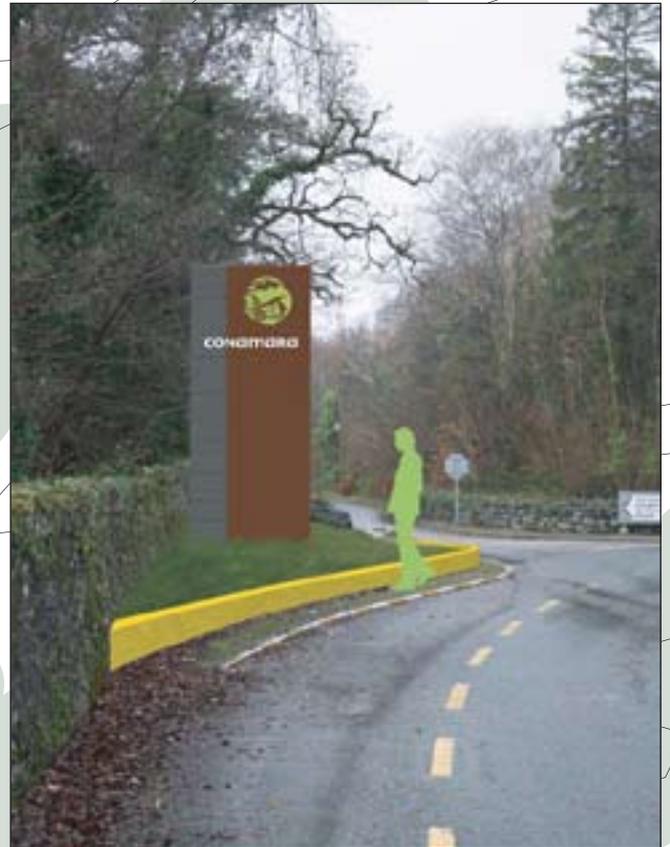
Notes

New Gateway location:

- Remove clutter of advertising signs.
- Create new walling to define edge.
- Realign kerb to carriageway.
- Softworks to base of sign.



Existing site



visualisation

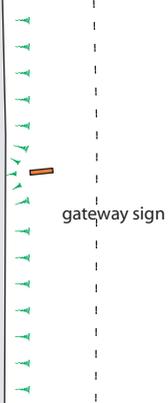


Existing Gateway location:

- Replace existing sign with new.
- Shape verge to form level platform.
- Softworks to finish.



visualisation



gateway sign

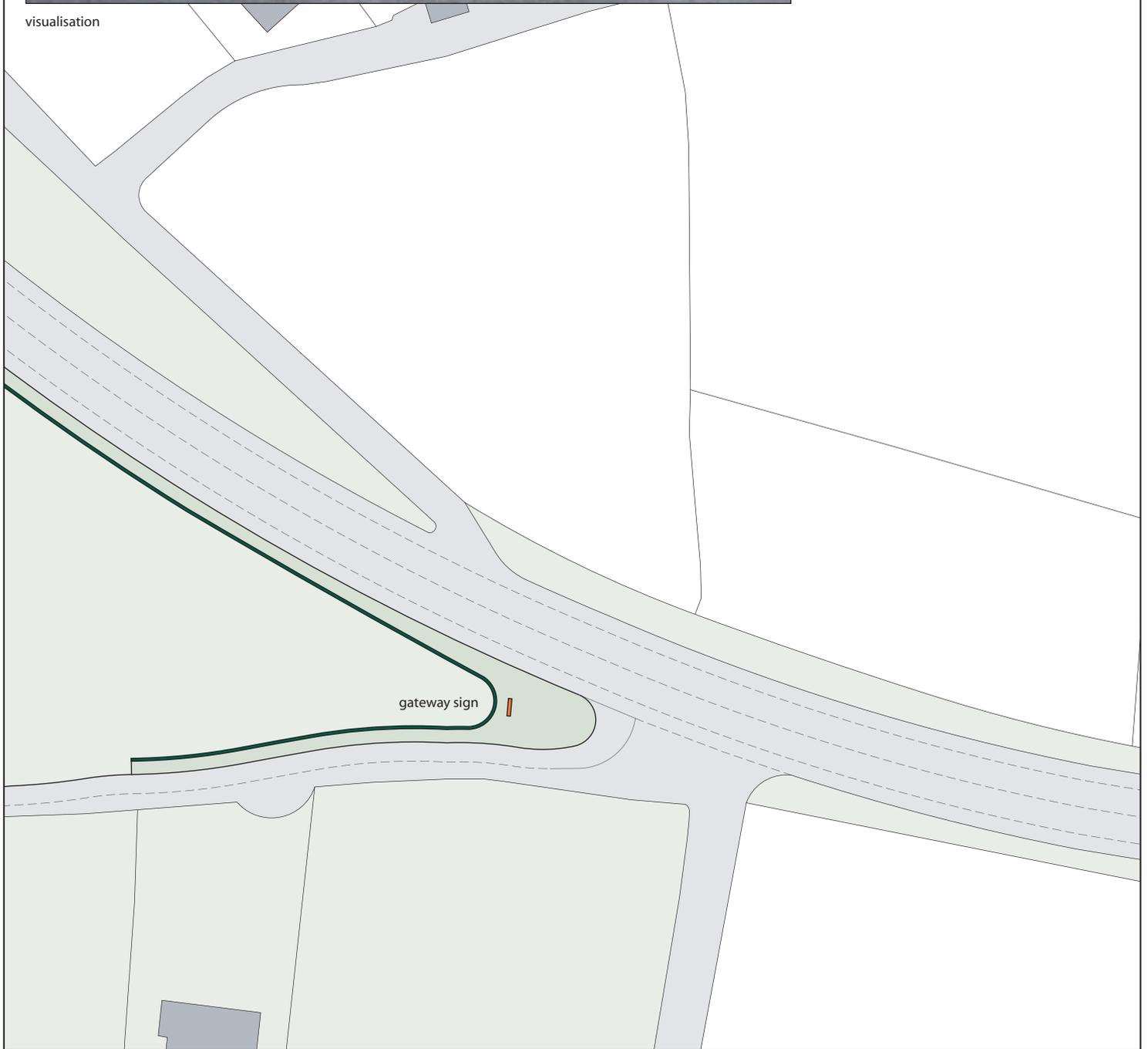
Notes

New Gateway location:

- Remove bollard and tidy up space.
- New kerb to define edge.
- Softworks to base of sign to finish.



visualisation



# Orientation Points

These will be located at the first suitable layby after the gateway signage. Their primary function is orientation, helping visitors to plan their trip. This will be achieved mainly by clear maps of the driving routes, marking with symbols settlements with facilities, visitor attractions, access to cycling and walking routes and discovery points etc. Although the emphasis is on orientation, interpretation is also appropriate where there are stories to tell.

The suggested locations for Orientation Points are Leenane, An Fhairche, Ard na Gaoithe, Maigh Cuillin and Na Forbacha. Site layout proposals at these locations are illustrated in the following pages

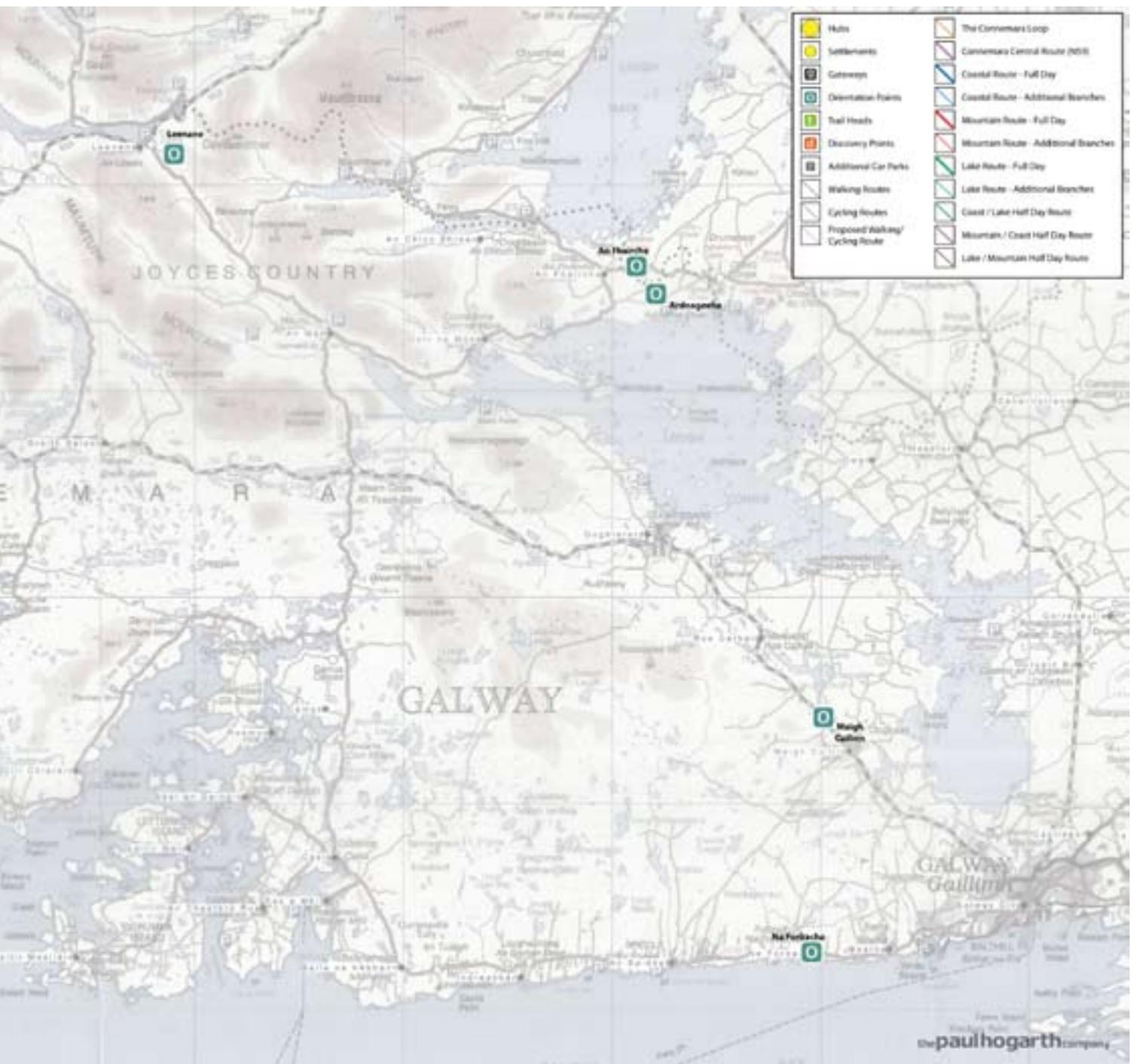
## Aims of Orientation Points

- To welcome visitors
- To help them plan their route
- To introduce them to stories about the locality which support broader themes

## Format

- One introductory paragraph to the area or three local stories





Notes

Site Improvements:

- Clear trees and scrub.
- Create new car park.
- New walling to define boundaries.
- bound gravel surfacing.
- Relocate vehicle barrier to forest.
- Softworks to finish.
  
- orientation module



visualisation



Existing site



# Orientation Point:

## - Ard na Gaoithe

### Lead Story (same as An Fhairche)

- Joyce country

### Other Stories (same as An Fhairche)

- The battle of the giants (Mount Gable walk)
- The dry canal (linking Loughs Corrib and Mask)
- The Guinness's holiday retreat (Ardnageeha and Ashford)

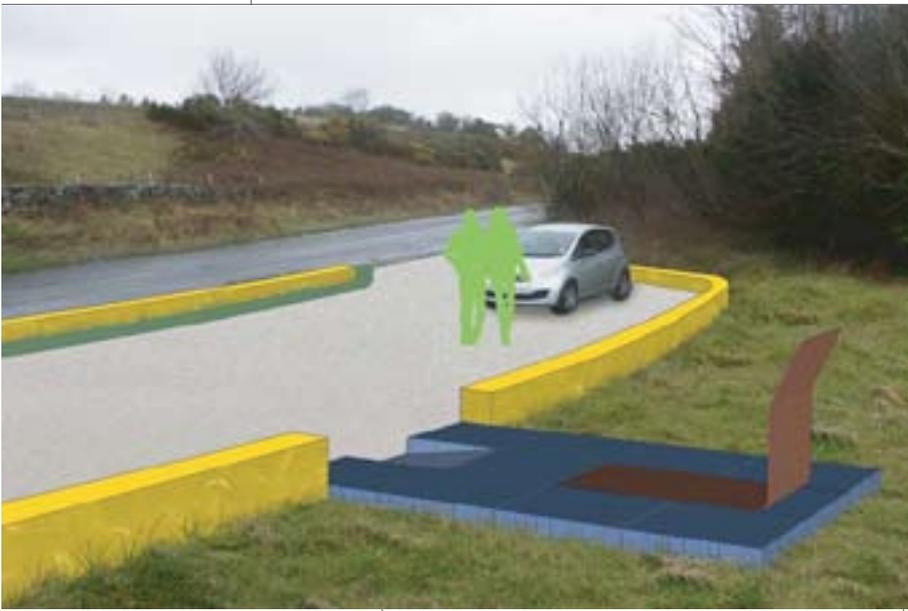
### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €45,500

Notes

Site Improvements:  
Increase size & reshape lay-by.  
Introduce island to define road edge.  
New walling to define boundaries.  
Replace surfacing.  
Softworks to finish.

orientation module



visualisation



# Orientation Point: - An Fhairche

## Lead Story (same as Ard na Gaoithe)

- Joyce country

## Other Stories (same as Ard na Gaoithe)

- The battle of the giants (Mount Gable walk)
- The dry canal (linking Loughs Corrib and Mask)
- The Guinness's holiday retreat (Ardnageeha and Ashford)

## Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €34,600

## Additional Interpretation

- Opportunity exists, at this location, to provide the visitor with more detailed interpretation of the Joyce Country Aspirant Geopark. The proposed area covers parts of Connemara and Mayo and much of the Connemara driving routes area including proposed orientation and discovery points near Cornamona and Leenane and in the Maam Valley.
- In the longer term it may be appropriate to create a driving route loop encompassing the Geopark with stopping places and discovery points dedicated to geology and landscape.

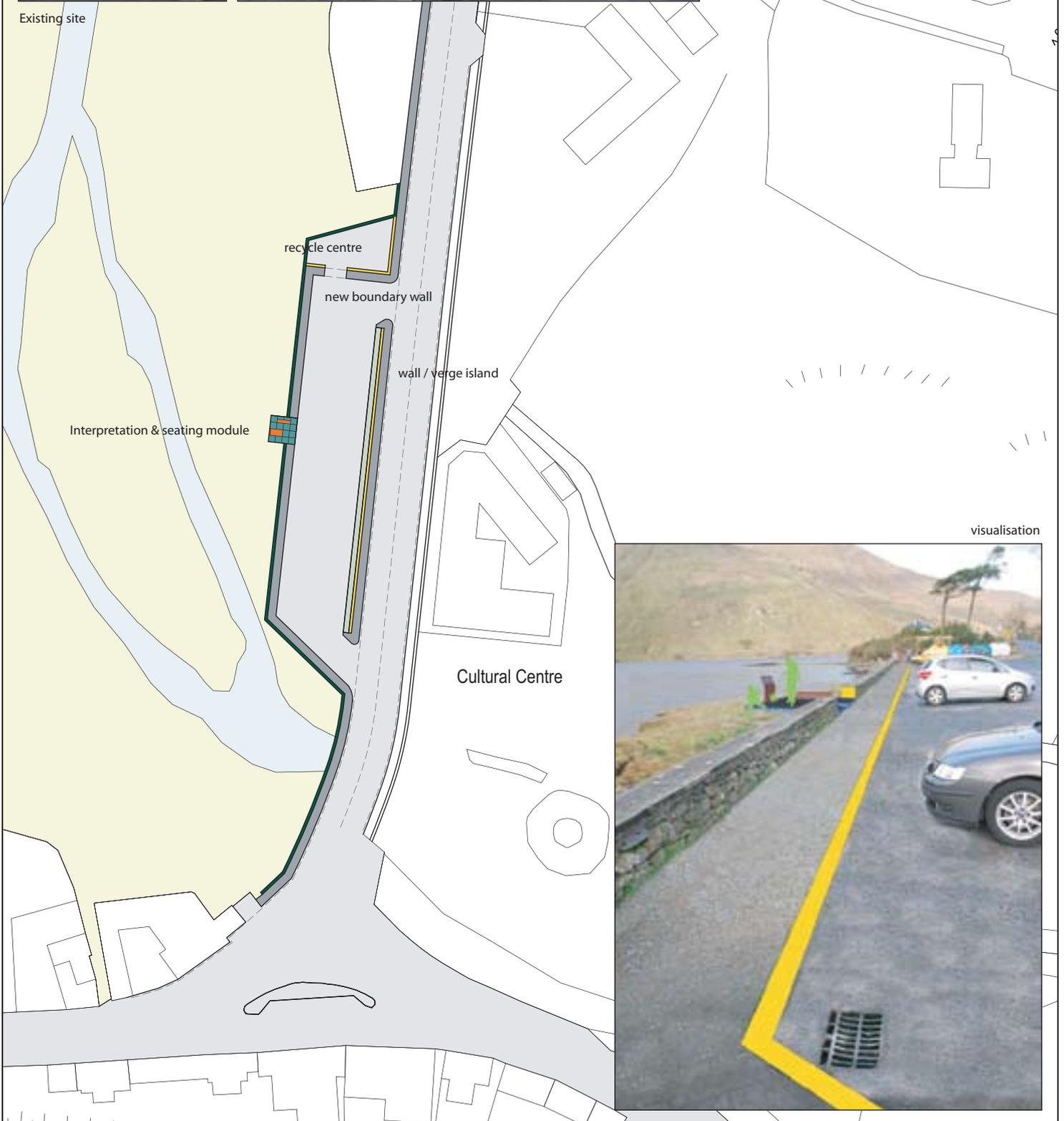
Notes

- Site Improvements:
  - Define entrance & exit of lay-by.
  - Introduce island to define edge.
  - Repair surfacing.
  - Repair damaged walling.
  - Replace damaged kerbing to footpath.
  - Removed stone sign structure.
  - Screen or relocate recycling point.

Orientation module



Existing site



visualisation



# Orientation Point:

## - Leenane

### Lead Story

- Ireland's only fjord

### Other Stories

- What's in a name Conamara – origin of name and different boundary definitions
- On stage and screen – local theatrical and film connections highlighting Conamara's wider cultural legacy
- The new road

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €38,850

Notes

Site Improvements:  
Reduce walling at entrance.  
Remove height restriction barrier.  
Repair damaged walling & infill gaps.  
Remove timber furniture and signing.

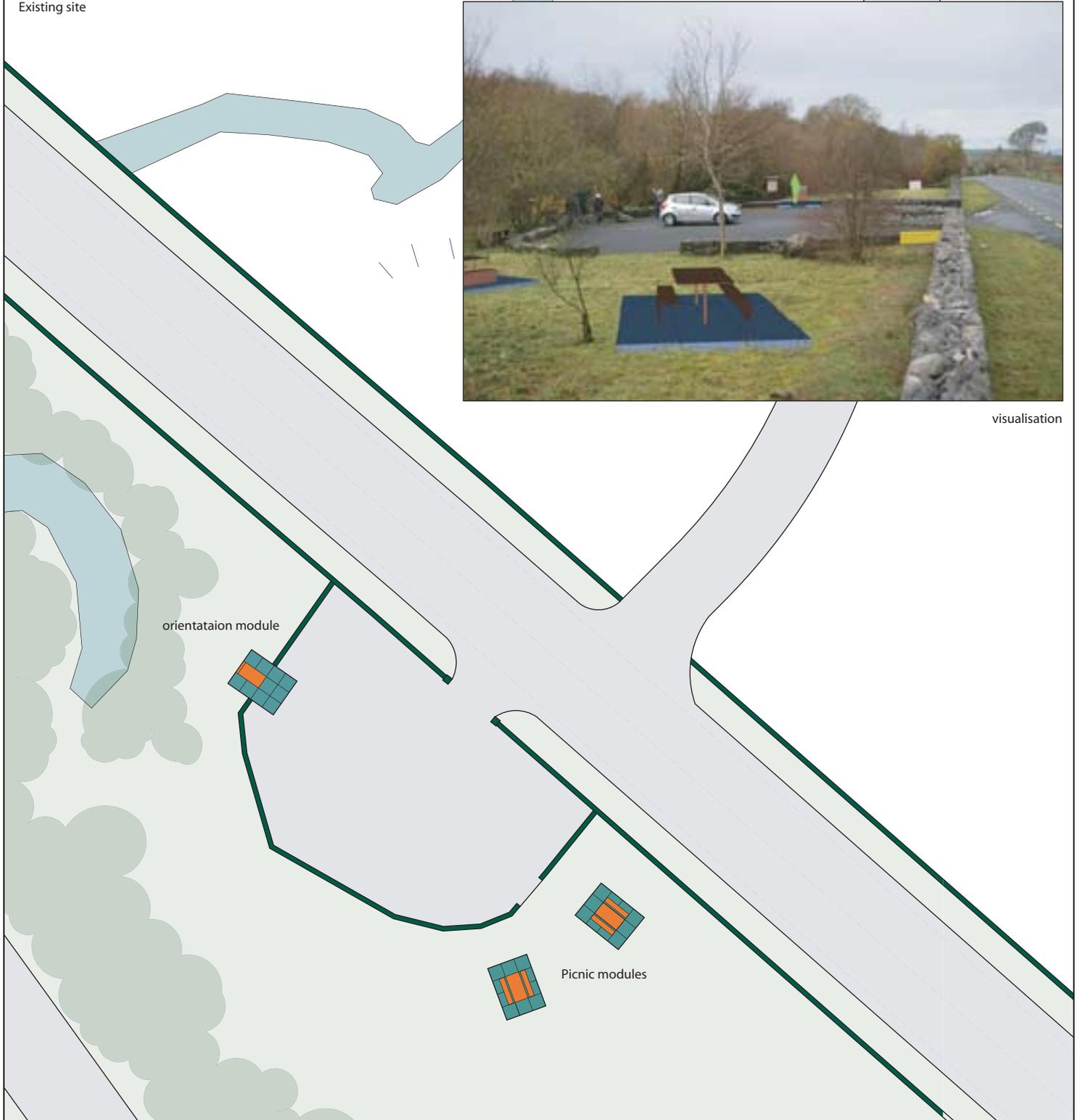
Orientation module  
Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



# Orientation Point: - Maigh Cuillin

## Lead Story

- An island for every day of the year (Lough Corrib)

## Other Stories

- Welcome to the Gaeltacht
- James and Nora – (the Joyces cycled along the N59)
- A quaking blanket – Maigh Cuillin and Oughterard bogs
- The Maigh Cuillin ponymen
- A legendary name – explanation of names for Moycullen

## Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €24,300

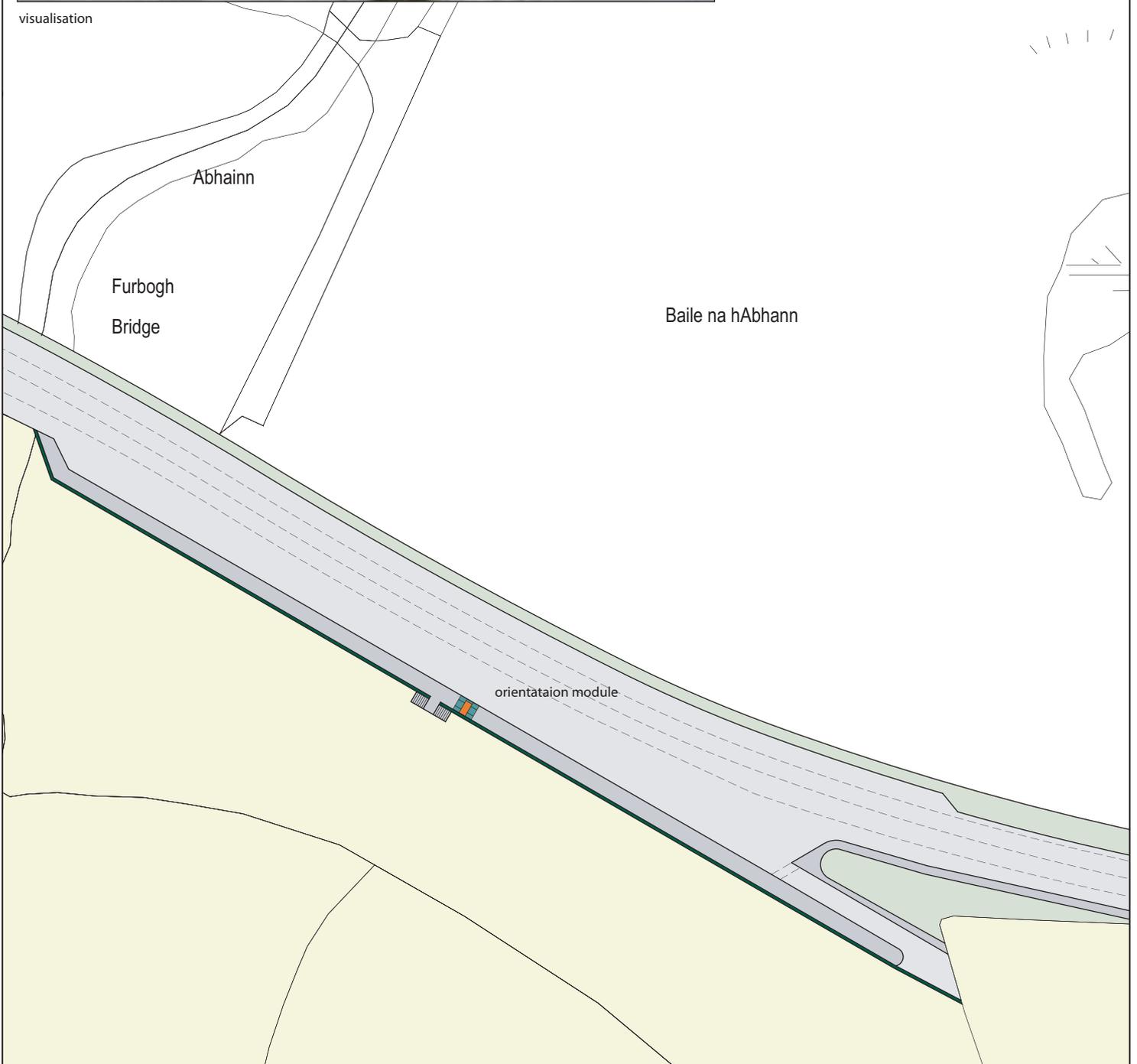
Notes

No improvements required:

Orientation module



visualisation



# Orientation Point: - Na Forbacha

## Lead Story

- Welcome to the Gaeltacht

## Other Stories

- Wild Atlantic beaches
- The ten townlands of Furboch – explanation of names relating to topography
- Homesick for Galway Bay - songs
- Tied up at the quay – Galway work boats and transport by sea

## Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €6,200

## Hubs and Settlements

As settlements like Roundstone and Letterfrack are distinct from driving routes, interpretation of these settlements is not included in this exercise. Some such as Clifden, Leenane, Cong and Oughterard are to a greater or lesser extent interpreted already. We suggest that individual communities should be responsible for the interpretation of their localities to demonstrate their commitment and pride of place but that they should adopt the overall concept and style of the driving routes. A design toolkit to guide communities forms a separate section of this report.

Within the scope of the driving routes is the interpretation of groups of scattered smaller communities such as the Renvyle peninsula or the causeway islands in order to tell a coherent story and encourage visitors to explore. Siting such interpretation at one key location also means avoiding cluttering beaches and other beauty spots with interpretation panels and avoiding too much traffic on single-track roads.





# Discovery Points

## Aims of Discovery Points

- To engage visitors with the history, culture and wildlife of the locality
- To make the layby itself a place to linger
- To encourage visitors to explore the locality through a map of the immediate area

## Interpretive Format

Most discovery points will have a standard, 250 word long panel covering 3-5 stories with strong imagery and, if there is space within the design, incidentals such as quotations or ‘wow’ facts designed to appeal to children. Each board will have an overall headline and feature a lead story, selected as most pertinent to the area. Family-friendliness may be enhanced by incorporating a ‘found’ object such as a scallop shell, a gull’s footprint or a horseshoe within the board’s housing.

In order to vary the style and pace of interpretation, suggestions have been made as to possible art works or graphic devices either to replace or in addition to the Discovery Point board. Art works would be supplemented by a simple plaque to give the context for the story eg the Quiet Man’s cap.



The panels would feature a map of the locality, showing the two adjacent Discovery Points and using symbols for settlements with amenities, visitor attractions, views/photo opportunities, beaches etc. Ferry and boat trip routes to adjacent islands would be marked by a dotted line from the destination port.



Notes

Site Improvements:

- Walling on approach & around periphery to define car park.
- Repair & replace surfacing.
- Remove timber furniture and signing.
- Replace stepped access.
- Replace barrier with vehicle and pedestrian gates.
- Softworks and tree planting to finish.

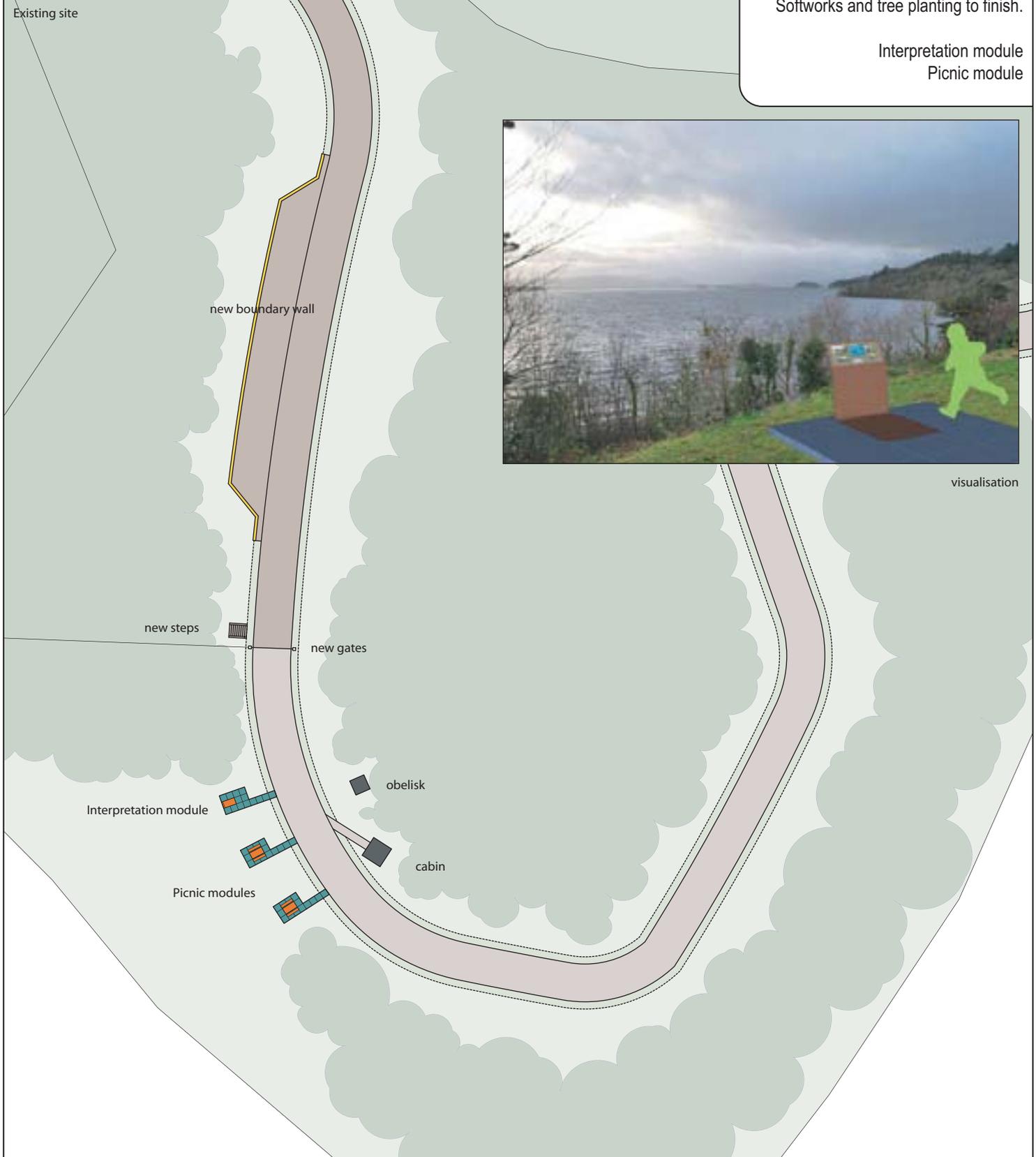
- Interpretation module
- Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Guinness View Discovery Point (Ard na Gaoithe An Fharaois)

### Lead Story

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- Lord and Lady Ardilaun's retreat
- €58,850

### Other Stories

- From brewer to country gentleman (biography of Lord and Lady Ardilaun)
- Deep in the forest
- A lakeside home (ecology)

### Additional Interpretation

- Restore and interpret the chalet where Lady Ardilaun read and took tea and her memorial to Lord Ardilaun.
- Map board of walks in area
- Provide information on forest and lakeside habitats – what to see when
- Children's nature trail – this could be a series of wooden discovery posts with carvings or brass rubbings of birds, animals, fungi etc and a sentence on each species featured.

Notes

Site Improvements:

- Remove gravel heaps.
- Define entrance & exit of lay-by.
- Reshape lay-by.
- Introduce island to define edge.
- New walling to define boundaries.
- Repair & replace surfacing.
- Softworks to finish.

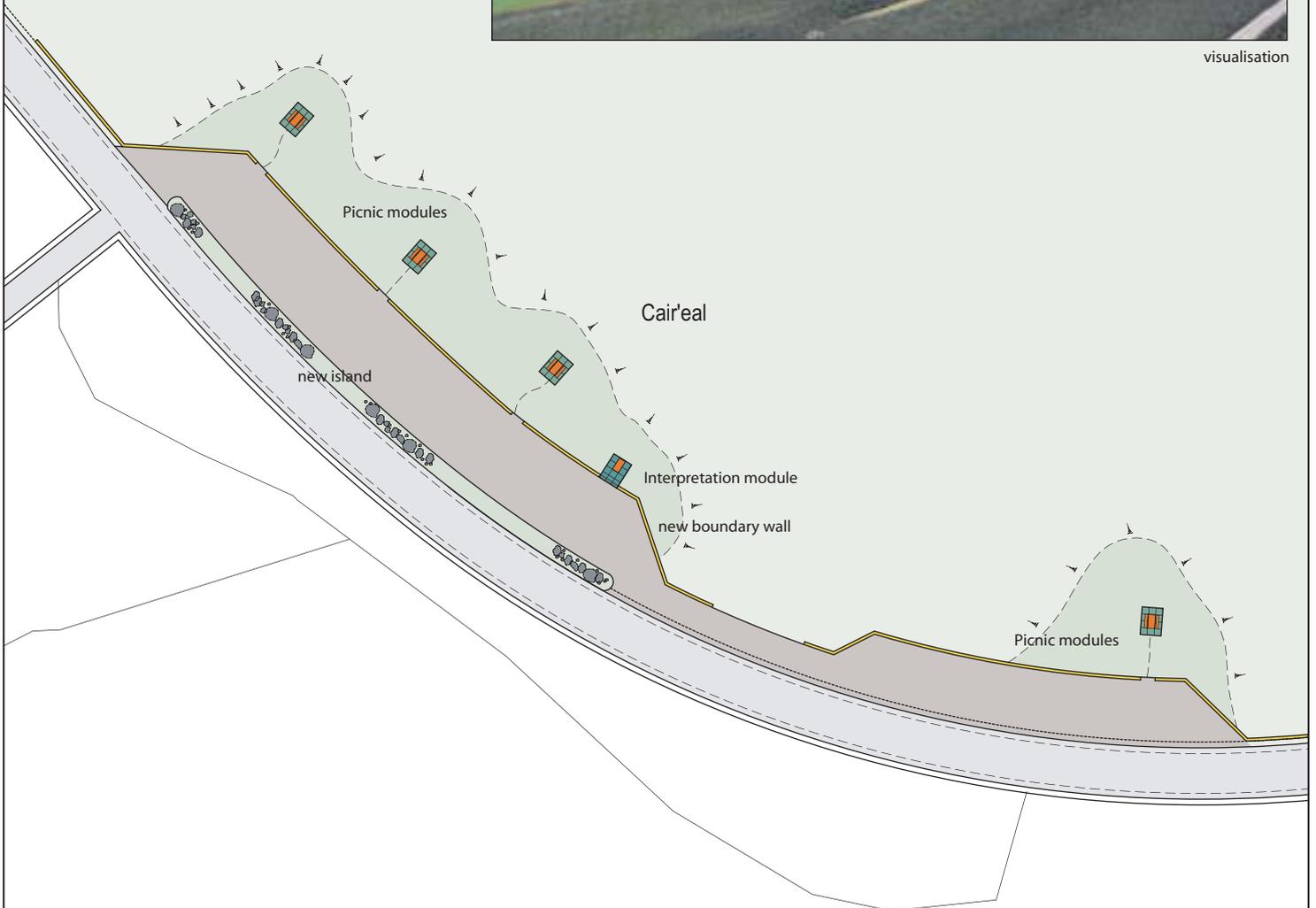
- Interpretation module
- Picnic module



existing site



visualisation



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- Ballynahinch Discovery Point (Baile na hInse Loch)**

#### **Lead Story**

- Manhattan to Mayfair - Connemara marble (Ballynahinch quarry)

#### **Other Stories**

- Les Lacs du Connemara  
The cricketing Maharajah (Ballynahinch Castle)  
'Humanity Dick' Martin
- Slow but steady - the Galway-Clifden Railway
- Catching the Bianconi – horse drawn coach from Galway-Clifden
- Unfit to appear – stand-in for Edward VII after too good a lunch at Recess

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €133,750

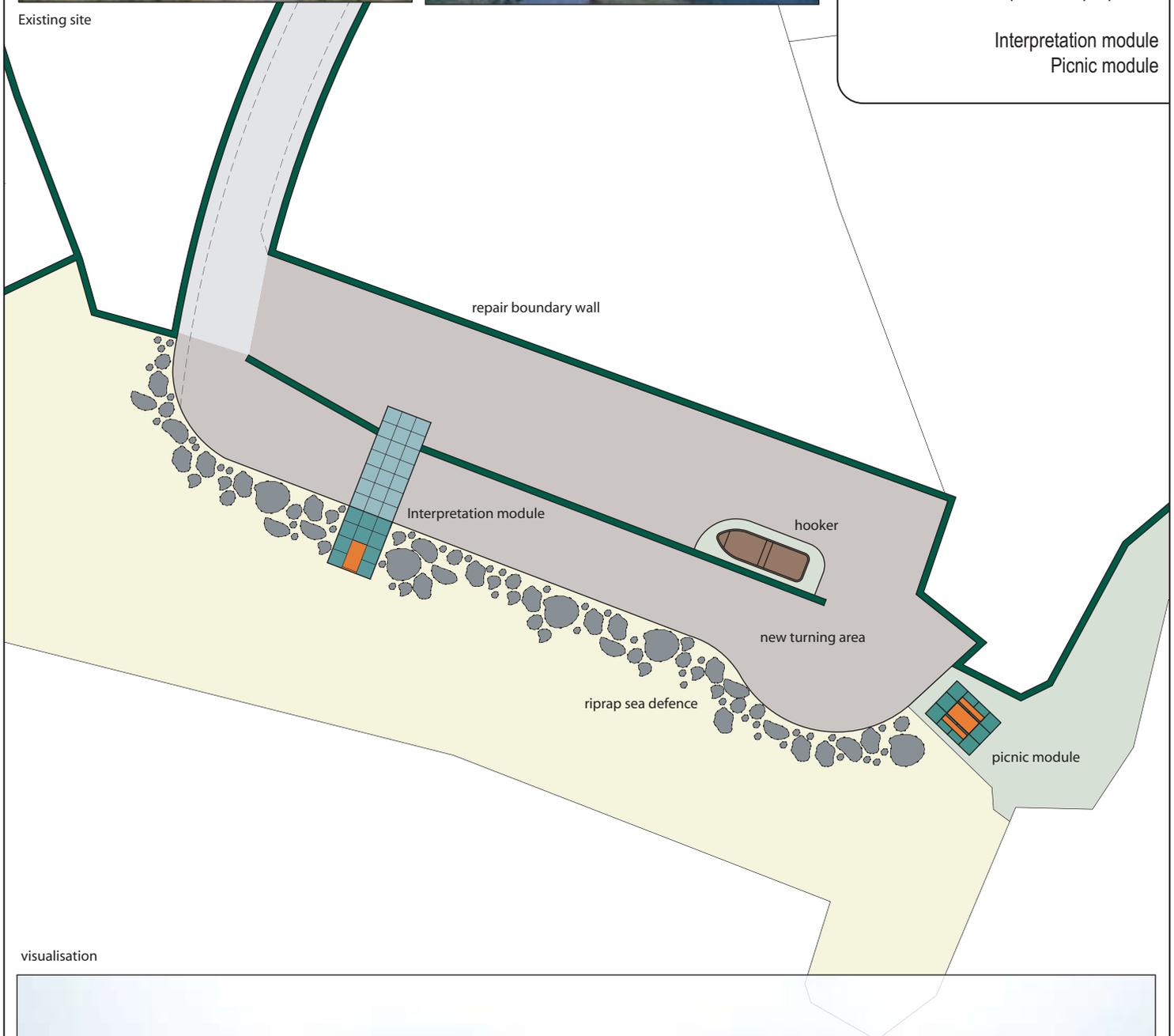
Notes

Site Improvements:  
General clean-up / remove clutter.  
New car park with entrance & exit.  
Replace surfacing.  
Repair damaged walling.  
Introduce new beach defences to protect access.  
Explore opportunities to retain Hooker for interpretation purposes.

Interpretation module  
Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- Seafarers Discovery Point (Carna View to Fínis)**

#### **Lead Story**

- Hookers and currachs - boatbuilding

#### **Other Stories**

- The last resident of Fínis Island
- 'Wreckers' lure Spanish galleon' – the wreck of the Conception
- Dipping sails to the Saint – St MacDara's island
- Sean-nós (Joe Heaney)
- A pound of tea for a bucket of winkles
- The headland of furse

#### **Additional Interpretation**

- an artwork reflecting Galway hookers or the restoration of a non-seaworthy hull

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €63,700

Notes

Site Improvements:

Cut back road edge & define lay-by.  
Repair & replace surfacing.

Interpretation / Seating module



Existing site



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Islands Discovery Point (Casla)

### Lead Story

- Island archipelago – description of islands and crossing before causeways

### Other Stories

- Titanic retreat (J Bruce Ismay and Costelloe Lodge)
- The kelp burners
- 'Pinched with hunger'

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €11,800

Notes

- New riverside car park:
  - Define boundaries of site.
  - Create enclosure with tree planting.
  - New walling to entrance & boundary to car park.
  - New bound surfacing.
  - Boulder edge and verge to riverbank.
  - Screen sub-station.
  - Tree & scrub planting.
  - General softworks to finish.

Interpretation module  
Picnic module



visualisation



Existing site



# Discovery Point:

## - Kylemore Estate Discovery Point (An Choill Mhóir)

### Lead Story

- Transforming a barren land – Mitchell Henry's estate

### Other Stories

- A causeway of lambs' wool – rerouting the N59
- A giant encounter – Fionn MacCool
- From Kylemore to Knightsbridge – memory of packing salmon in cabbage leaves
- A 'model' landlord – Mitchell Henry

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €73,550



Existing site

Notes

- Site Improvements:
- Define entrance & exit of lay-by.
- Introduce island to define edge.
- Repair car park surfacing.
- Raise ground around memorial to bury exposed foundation.
- Repair damaged walling.
- Remove furniture.
- Softworks to finish.

- Interpretation module
- Picnic module

repair boundary wall



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Atlantic Crossing Discovery Point (Deirgimleach)

Derrygimlagh is Connemara's most important, recent, historic site, within an astonishing landscape of blanket bog. It tells the story of two events of international importance. Alcock and Brown's trans-Atlantic flight and the siting of the Marconi radio station. The content of existing interpretation at the car park / viewpoint is good but text-heavy and dated in style.

### Short Term Potential

- Renew interpretation at Discovery Point as part of car park and seating area upgrade.
- Establish new artwork, seen from car park, at actual site to reflect its dual significance (see visualisation overleaf).

### Lead Story

- Alcock & Brown's breaking the news by Marconigram

### Other Stories

- Alcock and Brown's historic landing
- Marconi in Connemara
- Building the radio station
- Life at the radio station

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €29,850

### Long Term Potential

Plans are in place to conduct an archaeological investigation of the Marconi site where hundreds of workers were imported to man the radio station. Access both by car and thereafter on foot, however, is poor. Pending the results of the investigation, there is the potential to turn the whole site into a visitor destination using both physical and virtual interpretation to deliver the experience. Please refer to proposed site layout drawing overleaf.

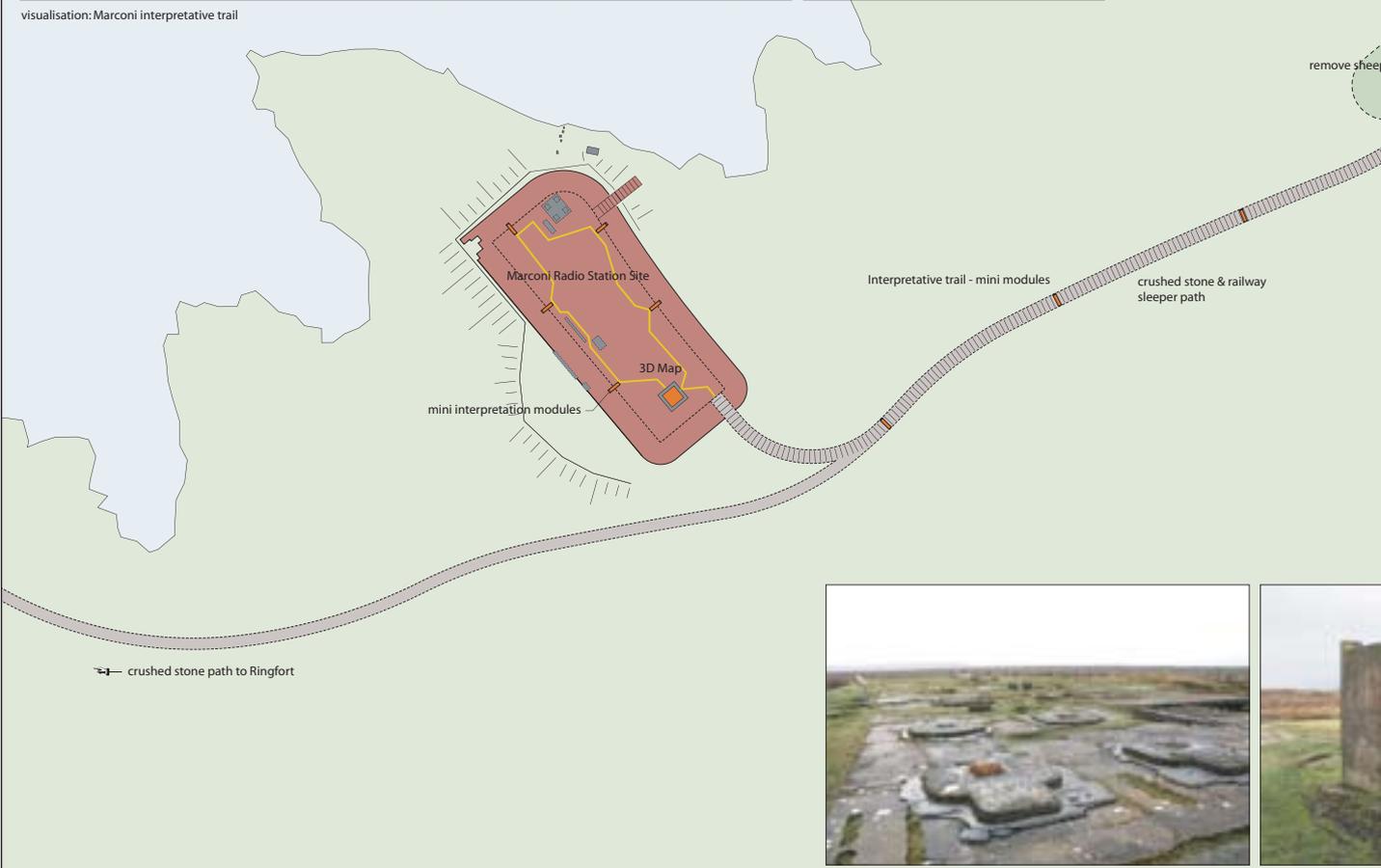
### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €387,000

# Discovery Point: - Atlantic Crossing Discovery Point (Deirgimleach)



visualisation: Marconi interpretative trail



Scale 1:1000



**Notes**

Site Improvements:  
 Improved signage at road junction.  
 Replace gate with cattle grid.  
 Upgrade access road & form passing places.  
 New car park.  
 Relocate sheep pens off-site.  
 Create interpretative along old railway to Marconi radio station.  
 Create boardwalk trail to Alcock & Brown landing site.  
 Interpretative 3D model of site.

Interpretation module  
 Interpretative trail  
 Picnic modules



Atlantic Crossing Discovery Point

## Proposed Artpiece

This proposed artpeice seeks to captures two Derrygimlagh stories:

- 1) the four, 10 metre high wooden uprights with an inverted wire pyramid stretched between them and anchored to the ground is a stylised version of Marconi's radio transmission equipment (taken from written decriptions and several images of other sites he constructed).
- 2) Going round all four sides of the pyramid are narrow corten (or stainless) steel sheets with holes in them - these are strips of 'ticker tape', the specific message they spell out being the one transmitted after Alcock & Brown had landed.



Notes

Site Improvements:  
Increase size & reshape lay-by.  
Introduce island to define road edge.  
New walling to define boundaries.  
Replace surfacing.  
Introduce remote viewpoint location.  
Relocate overhead cables from view.  
Softworks to finish.

Interpretation module  
Picnic module  
Viewpoint module



visualisation

Man's Island



## Discovery Point:

### - Pine Island Discovery Point (Doire an Chláir Loch)

#### Lead Story

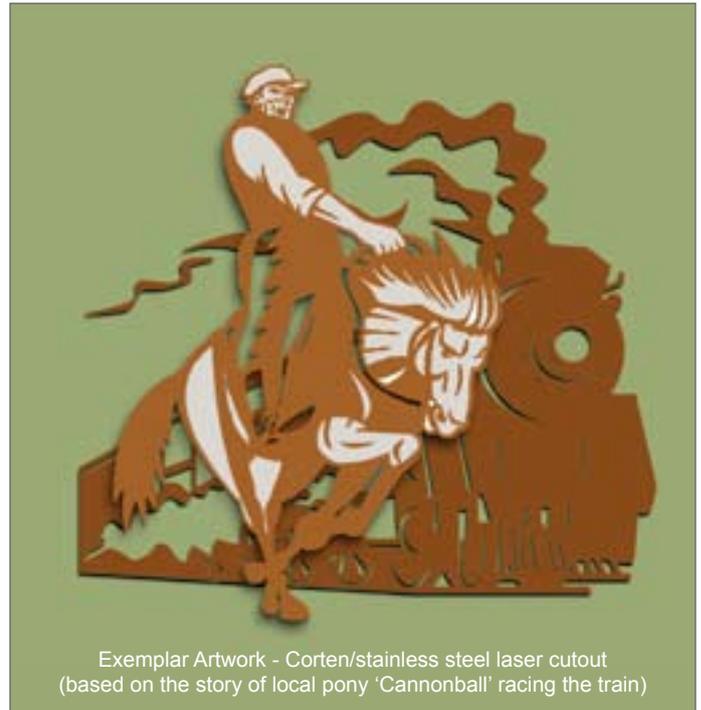
- Cannon Ball racing the Clifden train

#### Interpretive Approach

- Artwork of the story with short explanatory text giving the context

#### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €182,800



Exemplar Artwork - Corten/stainless steel laser cutout  
(based on the story of local pony 'Cannonball' racing the train)

Notes

Site Improvements:  
Create new lay-by.  
New walls to define edge of lay-by.  
Footpath to interpretation viewpoint.  
Sculptures to interpret peat cutting.

Interpretation module



Existing site



visualisation



## Discovery Point:

### - Turf Cutters Discovery Point (Doire an Chláir Loch/Loch Eidhneach)

#### Lead Story

- Turf cutting

#### Other Stories

- None

#### Additional Interpretation

- The main focus will be an artistic representation of turf cutters working at a peat bank with a short piece of text explaining the process.



#### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €65,850

Notes

Site Improvements:

- Reshape and increase size of lay-by.
- Address drainage issues.
- New walling to define boundaries.
- New entrance & exit to car park.
- Replace surfacing.
- Promote access to loughside.

- Interpretation module
- Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- St Patrick's Discovery Point (Loch Eidhneach)**

#### **Lead Story**

- St Patrick's bed

#### **Other Stories**

- Turks and pins
- The Connemara blackface
- A giant's stroll
- Thick, black and squelching

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €53,800

Notes

- Site Improvements:
  - Increase size of lay-by.
  - Define & formalise boundaries with low stone walls.
  - Remove old furniture.
  - Replace surfacing.
  - Softworks & planting to finish.

- Interpretation module
- Picnic & Seating module



Existing site



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Lough Corrib Discovery Point (Glann Road)

### Lead Story

- An island for every day of the year (Lough Corrib)

### Other Stories

- Watch out for the Garda – poitin distilling on the islands
- Dabbling and ducking – wildfowl on Lough Corrib
- 'It's a twenty pounder' – angling
- Island of the stranger – St Patrick and Inchnagoil
- Crossing for the GAA final – last caretaker of Inchnagoil
- The eachuisce and the golden shoe – water horse legend

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €35,150

Notes

Site Improvements:  
New wall & island to road edge.  
Boundary wall to define car park.  
Replace car park surfacing.  
Crushed stone and stepped path to  
viewpoint on rock outcrop.

Interpretation module  
Viewpoint module



visualisation



existing site



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- Little Gaelic Kingdom Discovery Point (An Gort Mór)**

#### **Lead Story**

- The Little Gaelic Kingdom - Pádraig Pearse

#### **Other Stories**

- The wild Earl and Lady Dudley's nurses
- Seeds from wine barrels – Lusitanian heaths
- 'The Little Black Donkey'
- Up river to spawn – the life cycle of the Atlantic salmon

#### **Interpretive Approach**

- Although the layby is currently surrounded by scrub, there is the potential to create and interpret a viewpoint on a raised knoll looking over the water towards Pearse's Cottage. His love of nature and landscape may be reflected through quotations.

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €49,800.00

Notes

Site Improvements:  
Rationalise clutter.  
Replace damaged handrail to beach.  
Repair damaged walling.

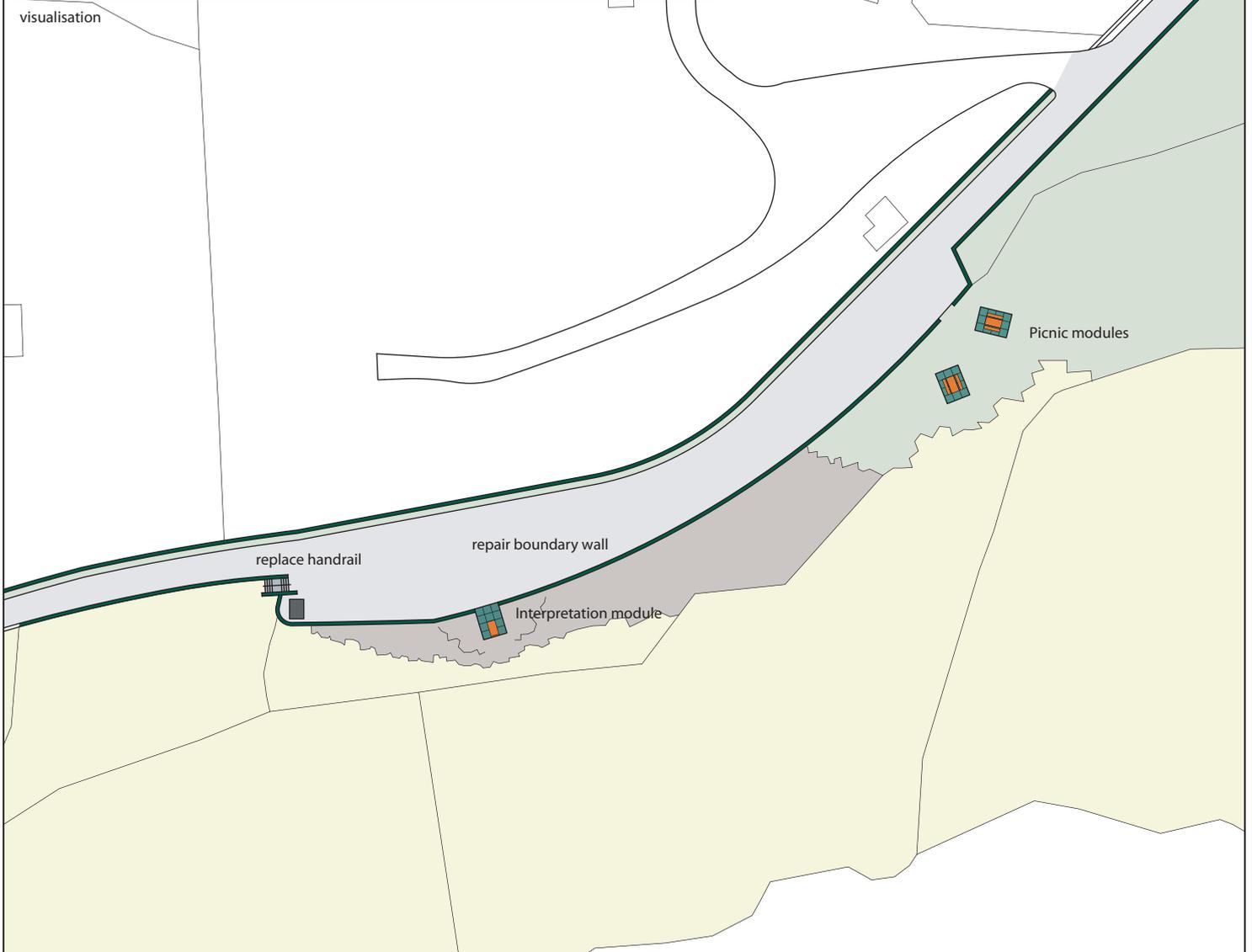
Interpretation module  
Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Coral Sands Discovery Point (Gorteen Bay)

### Lead Story

- Walking on coral

### Other Stories

- A moving landscape – dune ecology and tombolo
- A carpet of flowers - machair
- Who's taking a dip? (Birdlife)
- Galway's first settlers – (hunter gatherer shell middens in dunes)

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €23,700

Notes

Site Improvements:

- New wall to define entrance.
- Replace gabions to slipway.
- Repair car park surfacing.
- Repair damaged walling.

- Interpretation module
- Picnic module



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Seal Island Discovery Point (Iomai)

### Lead Story

- Hanging out to dry – seals

### Other Stories

- A holy island – Omey island
- Choughs, cormorants and corncrakes – island birdlife including Innisbofin
- Sylvia Plath's last holiday (link to Richard Murphy poet and hooker owner)
- Smuggler extraordinaire – Captain O'Malley
- The Cleggan fishing disaster
- Head in his hands - St Ceannanach

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €39,950

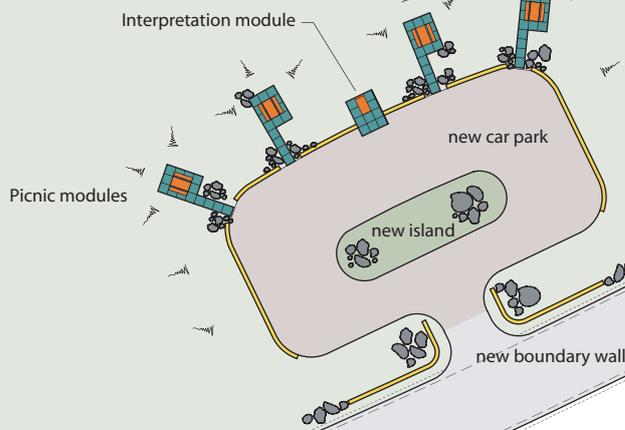
Notes

Site improvements:  
New viewpoint carpark:  
Remove boulders and debris.  
Replace fencing along road.  
New walling to entrance & around periphery of car park.  
New bound surfacing.  
Softworks to make good.

Interpretation module  
Picnic module



Existing site



visualisation



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- Killary Harbour Discovery Point (Killary Harbour)**

#### **Lead Story**

- Ireland's only fjord (including fish farming)

#### **Other Stories**

- Smugglers and the Devil's Pass
- Fleet ahoy - Edward VII's visit
- Writer's retreat – Wittgenstein and Yeats  
The Famine Road

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €92,800

Notes

Site Improvements:  
New walling to back of car park.  
Repair & replace surfacing.  
Remove height restriction barrier.  
Tree planting & softworks to finish.

Interpretation module  
Picnic module



visualisation



# Discovery Point:

## - Maam Valley Discovery Point (An Mam)

### Lead Story

- Opening up Connemara (Alexander Nimmo)

### Other Stories

- The centre of operations – Nimmo’s house at Maam
- Going, going, gone - Cattle and pony fairs at Maam Cross
- Booleys and summer camps – hill grazing from time of O’Flaherties onwards

### Additional Interpretation

- A map of Connemara sketched in paving showing Nimmo’s roads, piers and his ‘new town’ of Roundstone

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €40,000



Notes
<p>Site Improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reshape road junction to accommodate larger vehicles.</li> <li>Infill existing lay-by.</li> <li>Create new car park facility.</li> <li>Boundary walling to entrance &amp; retaining embankment.</li> <li>Interpretative trail to Quiet Man Bridge.</li> <li>Planting &amp; softworks to finish.</li> </ul>
<p>Interpretation modules</p>



Existing site

visualisation



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- The Quiet Man Bridge (Quiet Man Bridge)**

#### **The Quiet Man**

- The Quiet Man (film)

#### **Interpretive Approach**

- Photo opportunity  
Plaque explaining context
- Images from film on the side road from the N59
- Quiet Man trivia along the side road from the N59
- Artwork of Quiet Man's cap as if he had dropped it beside the bridge
- Map of other Connemara film locations

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €107,750

Notes

Site Improvements:

- Reshape & increase size of car park,
- Define boundaries & entrance with low stone walls.
- Replace surfacing.

- Interpretation module
- Picnic module



visualisation



Existing site



## **Discovery Point:**

### **- Pirate Castle Discovery Point (Rinn Mhaoile)**

#### **Lead Story**

- Grace O'Malley and Renvyle Castle

#### **Other Stories**

- Whale and dolphin watching (entrance to Killary Harbour)
- Seven royal daughters (ruins of Renvyle church)
- Artistic circles – St John Gogarty's visitors at Renvyle House

#### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €56,400

Notes

Site Improvements:

No improvements required.

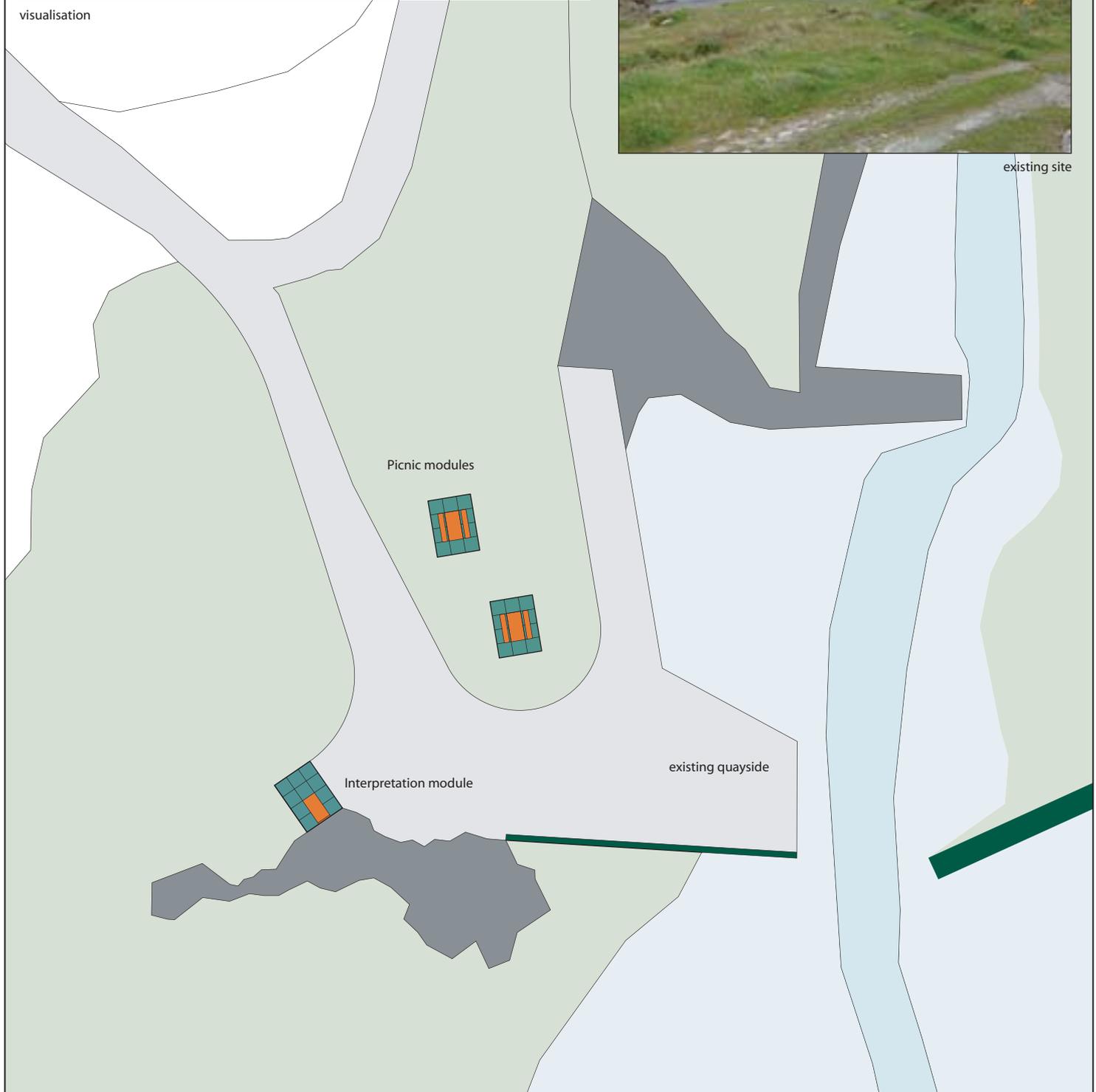
Interpretation module  
Picnic module



visualisation



existing site



## **Discovery Point:** **- Aran View Discovery Point (Ros a' Mhíl)**

### **Lead Story**

- Piers and peat - links with the Aran Islands

### **Other Stories**

- Famine villages
- Watching out for Napoleon - the Martello tower
- Peninsula of the sea monster – fishing
- Making their own music
- School's out – Irish summer schools

### **Approximate Cost** (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €22,500

Notes

Site Improvements:  
 Define entrance & exit of lay-by.  
 Introduce island to define edge.  
 Extend walling to define boundaries.  
 Repair & replace surfacing.  
 Repair damaged walling.  
 Reposition & repair fencing.  
 Introduce remote viewpoint location.

Interpretation module  
 Picnic module  
 Viewpoint module



Interpretation & Viewpoint modules



Existing site



## Discovery Point: - Sky Road Viewpoint (Sky Road)

### Lead Story

- None

### Interpretive Approach

- This is such an iconic view that there is no need for interpretation other than a few lines of poetry. An example is the lines from Thomas Kinsella:

“The great theatre of Connemara,  
dark. A cloud bank stretched in folds  
across the sky, luminous  
with inner activity.”

- There is the opportunity to commission a poet to come up with a few lines specific to the view, the light and the merging of land, sea and sky in Gaelic and English.

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €83,450

Notes

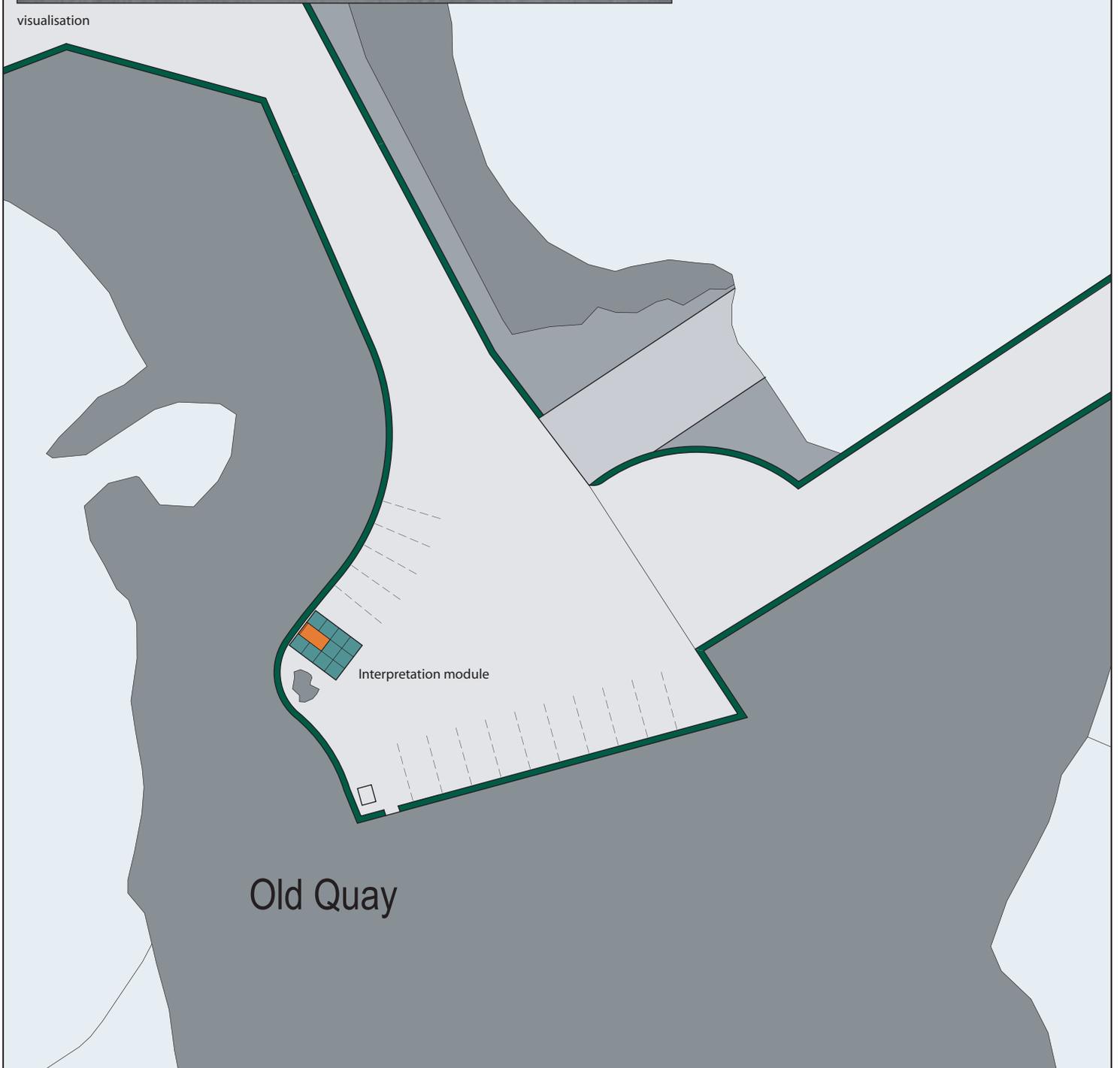
No improvements required:

Introduce some furniture to harbour area.

Interpretation module



visualisation



Old Quay

Interpretation module

# Discovery Point:

## - An Spidéal Discovery Point (An Spidéal)

### Lead Story

- Sailing at seven - An Spidéal's history as a working port – peat, herring etc

### Other Stories

- The last oak woodlands in the West (Bearna woods)
- A land of stone – erratics, drystone dykes, natural harbours etc
- Quotation from Connemara Cradle Song (Delia Murphy)
- The Galway hooker races
- Ros na Rún – the Irish 'soap'
- The last of the O'Flaherties – Roderick O'Flaherty (include quotation from his history)

### Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €5,600

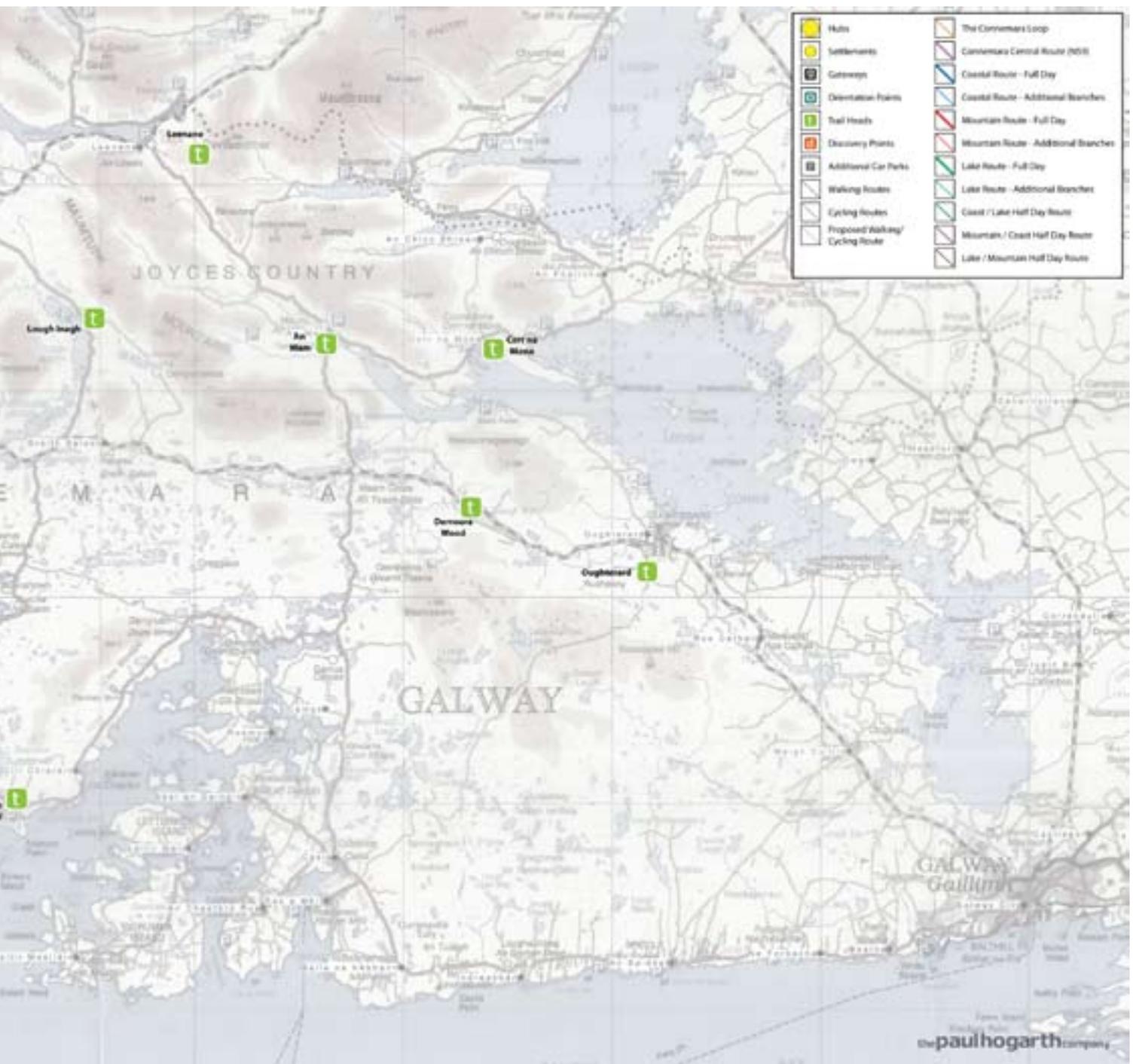
# Trailheads

Activities such as cycling and walking are increasingly popular. Cycling and walking trails include the Great Western Way, the emerging greenway cycle route along the N59 and the entrances to St Patrick's pilgrimage route. As well as marking cycling and walking trails on maps, most trail head car parks are featured as discovery points. Where this does not apply, a dedicated trail head sign should be established to promote walks and direct visitors.

## Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €44,500





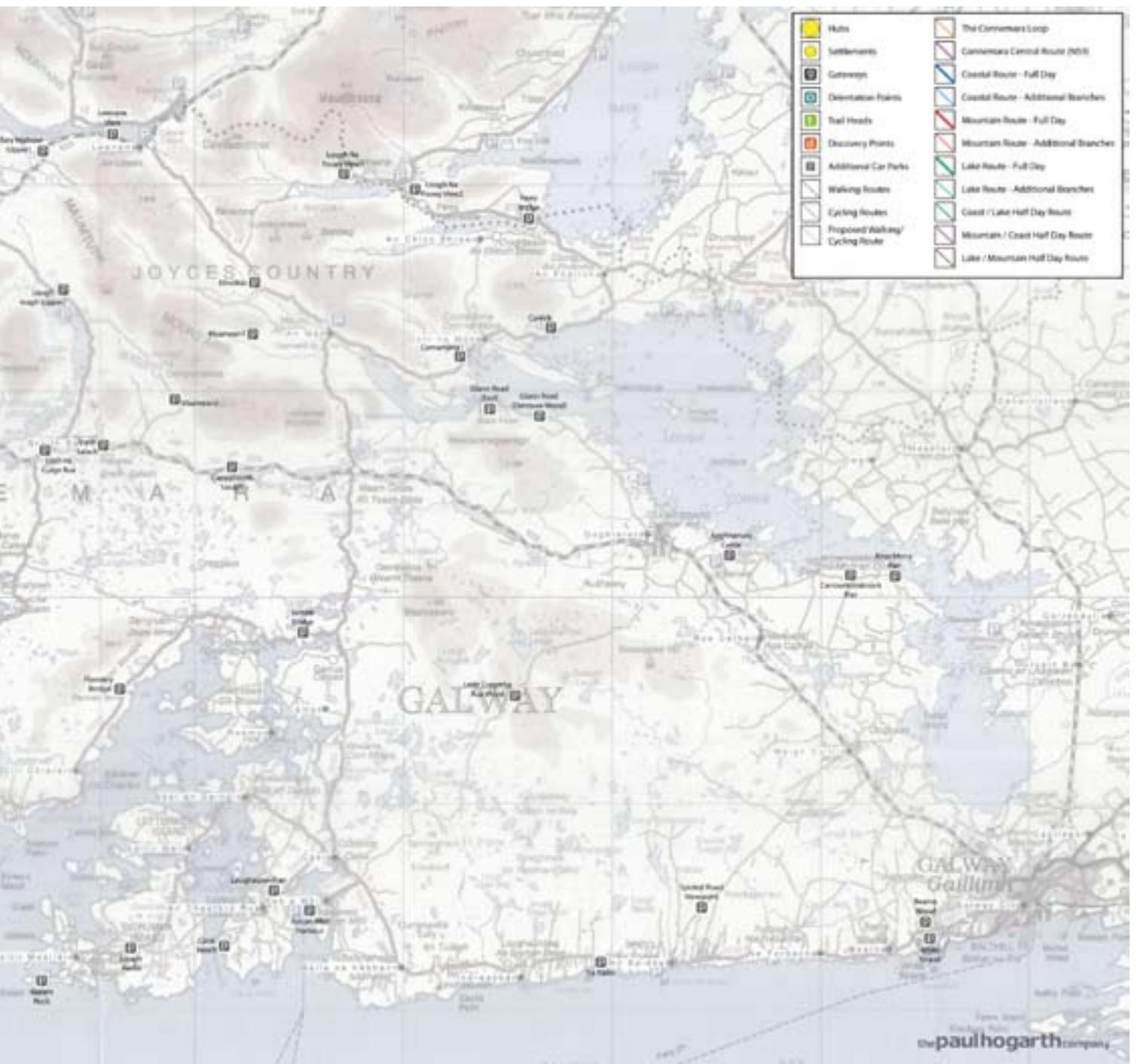
# Supporting Car Parks

These have been identified as benefitting from minor environmental improvements to give them a more cared-for appearance. If budget permits and where appropriate, a light touch of interpretation may be introduced such as a quotation on a picnic bench. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a full breakdown of proposed improvement works for each of the supporting car parks

## Approximate Cost (Refer to Appendix 4)

- €712,827







# ADDING TO THE EXPERIENCE

Interpretation is much more than the traditional panels which can sometimes detract from rather than add to the visitor experience especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

Interpretation can make links between places telling parts of the story at different locations. One can, for example, meet the O’Flaherty clan and the pirate Queen Grace O’Malley in several locations. The story of Atlantic blanket bog takes in its formation, buried forests, its unique characteristics, its ecology and plant life, the traditions of turf cutting, its past importance to the local economy and peat as an energy source. Visitors can still see the evidence of turf cutting. The influence of the sea on the traditional way of life is another sub-theme which can be explored at different locations through topics such as kelp burning, exporting peat, hookers and currachs.

Connections can also be made to other places, not interpreted as part of this exercise. At Quiet Man bridge for example, a map can pinpoint other locations associated both with the Quiet Man and with other films such as The Field at Leenane.

## **Dramatic Imagery**

The use of strong, dramatic imagery on interpretation panels can significantly reduce the need for words. This is important especially in the Gaeltacht areas where dual language requirements reduce the number of words that can be used by half. An outstanding image of an Atlantic sunset may compensate when the weather is not obliging or of a grey seal when they are at sea.

## **Artwork**

Provided that it is carefully briefed to ensure that it has content relevance, art work can reflect places and stories. It may be as simple as incorporating shells in a dry stone wall or as significant as a statue of Alexander Nimmo as the man who put Connemara on the map. A stone seal on which children can clamber or a currach filled with maritime plants adds interest to a harbour location and provides a photo opportunity. Derrigimlagh represents a very significant opportunity, perhaps in the form of an iconic radio aerial sculpture which can pinpoint the site of the Marconi radio station from the Alcock and Brown memorial car park.

## Viewpoints

Developing a 21st century take on the popular Victorian viewpoint board, by simply highlighting the names of landscape features such as the Twelve Pins or the complex archipelagos of islands off the southern coast, is a neat way of enhancing visitors' appreciation of a view.

## Photo Opportunities

Where are the best views? Visitors can be guided simply by using a camera symbol on the map. There is also the potential to enhance the Quiet Man bridge, already a mecca for photographers, by directing visitors as to where to sit to get the correct angle.



## Incidentals

Quotations, snatches of poetry and song, evocative Gaelic phrases and place names with their English translation can add a touch of interest when incorporated within the landscape from being carved on picnic tables to being inset in the hard landscape.

## Other Trails

There are many ways of cutting the storyline cake in terms of themed trails. Fáilte Ireland has already made an excellent start with the inclusion of food, garden, crafts, music, film, spirituality and history trails on the Destination Connemara website. Other themed topics that could be developed are wildlife and creativity, the latter highlighting locations associated with famous writers and artists.



## New Technology

New technology also offers significant potential to enhance the visitor experience by adding sound and images to conventional storytelling and by allowing visitors to access practical information such as opening times that need to be updated more frequently than on interpretation panels which are normally expected to have at least a ten year life-cycle.

The internet rather than the printed word is now the most popular means for visitors to source information. Two thirds of visitors use the internet in planning their holiday to the West of Ireland with the most popular sites being discoverIreland and user derived content such as Trip Advisor and blogs. Surprisingly guidebooks (54%) are the second most commonly consulted sources of information, especially by North Americans followed by word of mouth (40%) and tourist literature (27%). Forty percent of visitors consult tourist information offices. One in five visitors is also influenced by films in their initial choice of Ireland as a destination.

The more detailed survey of visitors to the Galway/Connemara region in 2011 showed a clear distinction between sources of information used in planning their trip and during their time in the region.

### Use of the internet in planning their trip (visitor %)

	Domestic	British	European	American
Use of any source	53	76	80	90
Of which the internet	82	85	82	69

### Information sources used during the trip (visitor %)

	Domestic	British	European	American
Information sought during trip	65	70	80	70
Satisfaction level	100	100	99	100

### Sourced through (visitor %)

	Domestic	British	European	American
Tourist Information Offices	62	75	91	93
Accommodation provider	32	25	30	38
Locals	25	23	17	15
Internet/mobile app/mobile device	25	15	13	10

These figures show the continued popularity of tourist information offices for visitors while in the area and the decreasing likelihood of overseas visitors to consult virtual sources during their holiday. Over half of European and American visitors surveyed also mentioned that they had consulted guide books when planning their trip.

It is assumed that downloadable versions of the Connemara Driving Routes including maps will be available on appropriate websites. There is also the potential to provide French and German versions of interpretative text. Given the challenge of pronouncing Gaelic place names and their importance, a place names audio device could be incorporated which simply gives the name in both Gaelic and English and a translation of its meaning spoken by a native Gaelic speaker. Such devices also help visitors to engage with the Irish language.

With many emerging technologies, different platforms and a highly competitive environment it is difficult to forecast which technologies are here to stay. Within interpretation and marketing many initiatives have been launched but few have been effectively evaluated.

Given budget constraints and the urgent need to improve the physical environment of laybys, new technology applications may need to be a longer term objective unless individual communities or interest groups can attract appropriate funding.

In adopting new technologies Connemara faces specific challenges. Mobile phone reception is patchy especially in remoter locations. The use of devices like PDAs, which are an excellent means of delivering walking trails, is dependent on there being a reliable distribution point from which visitors can rent them.

Evaluation has shown that many visitors are reluctant to pay the connection charges for audio tours and other experiences delivered by mobile phone. The expectation is still strong that interpretation should be delivered free of charge.

QR codes are increasingly being adopted as an unobtrusive way of accessing additional information within sensitive sites such as historic buildings or museum displays. They require that visitors have access to a camera phone in order to access the information delivered from a website.

As with many new technology devices but unlike conventional interpretation, one can only hope to reach part of the market and some critics argue that they create access barriers especially for older visitors and low income families.

Mobile phone apps are increasingly popular. Given a cut-throat market, apps can be developed relatively cheaply although there is growing evidence that users are being more discerning in terms of what they download. Users are weighing the time and cost of downloading against the relevance of the content. Also as yet apps are platform specific. They may be appropriate especially for wildlife and plant identification or for enjoying clips of music, poetry etc associated with particular locations.

Including a QR code to a website featuring visitor attractions in the area or developing a driving route mobile phone app have the benefit of allowing local practical information that requires regular updating to be delivered and of providing local tourism operators with a new way of promoting their facilities.



# THE DESIGN TOOL KIT

The Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan provides a comprehensive vision of the 'hardware' of lay-by improvements, site furniture and sign content that will welcome, guide and inform visitors, and which will retain its quality and remain relevant for 10 to 15 years.

The quality of the visitor experience will rely on that hardware being complemented by the focussed commitment of communities to play their part. At its most basic level, this is about ensuring that visitors are extended a warm and personal welcome and thereafter that opportunities are taken to offer high quality services and experiences, ranging from cafes and hotels, to visitor centres, outdoor activities and craft shops.

This information needs to be delivered locally, but also needs to be co-ordinated across Connemara and it is in that context that the Tool Kit has been developed to highlight the opportunities, and to establish parameters.

In the course of this project we came across a number of communities with active plans to promote their local assets through the development of visitor centres or other forms of interpretation.

The enthusiastic response to community consultation also demonstrated the desire by local groups to tell the story of their settlement. Groups are currently at different stages of this process.

This Tool Kit is designed to help in planning and delivering simple forms of welcome and interpretation such as information panels or village trails rather than major investments such as visitor centres. The aim is that the visitor moves seamlessly from being introduced to the locality at the Discovery Points to exploring their surroundings in greater depth and engaging with local communities through the rich seam of their stories.

The opportunity for interpretation may arise as part of a wider initiative such as a community development plan, village centre improvements or enhanced access to the countryside, as well as from the aspirations of local people to engage with visitors. This short guide is intended to assist communities in thinking through and delivering effective initiatives in line with the overall strategy and style proposed across Connemara.

## Providing the Welcome

It is important that as people approach a town or village that the welcome is extended to them. Gateway signs and their setting are important. They do not need to carry the words ‘failte go’ or ‘welcome’ – that should go without saying, but they should be of appropriately high quality, contribute to the overall identity of Connemara, and say something about the character of the specific place.

It is proposed that communities should identify the gateways to their town/village – ensuring that this marks the transition from the rural countryside into the built up area, is safe in relation to sightlines and vehicle protection and appropriate in relation to land ownership.

Communities should work with designers/craftworkers to use the palette of cor-ten steel and stone to create a simple, legible gateway sign and setting, appropriate in scale to its location.

## Delivering Information

At an appropriate central location, the community should identify where people can park, potentially associated with toilet facilities and where information about the local area can be provided.

It is proposed that the communities should use the cor-ten steel and stone signs, ensuring that the setting of them is carefully considered and enhanced, not simply installing the sign in an existing footpath.

The information that is contained on the sign requires to be carefully considered. The following section provides guidelines for the community to use in developing this.

## **How Does Interpretation Differ from Tourist Promotion? Who is Your Audience?**

As one visitor attraction manager summed it up ‘visitors are looking for ‘a pee, a cup of tea and something to see.’

There is a clear, if sometimes fine distinction, between interpretation and tourist promotion. Both are essential in encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more. Interpretation addresses the broader questions ‘what is there to see?’ and ‘what am I seeing?’ whereas the promotion helps visitors to plan their stay by making them aware of individual resources from B&Bs to attractions and leisure shopping. Interpretation has a longer shelf-life than promotion where practical details such as opening times, prices and special events may change. It deals with the historical, natural and cultural assets of the whole community creating a sense of place within which individual amenities fit. Interpretation signals the message not only that the community welcomes visitors but that it is place that is proud of and cares for its heritage.

What proportion are local people on day trips and how many are staying visitors? How many are families with children? How many come from overseas? Have they a special reason for being here from walking to photography? What will they already know about the area and what will appeal to them?

The answers help to establish which stories will engage visitors and how much you need to explain. Will people already know, for example, about the Famine or the O’Flaherties? Is the story sufficiently simple that it can be told in a few words?

## What is Special About Your Place?

Most places have a wealth of stories to tell. The challenge is to decide which ones will appeal most to visitors.

- Try putting yourself in the visitor's shoes. When exploring somewhere new what do you want to know?
- What three things would you like visitors to have learned when they leave?
- Try grouping a number of stories under a theme eg how people have used the land over time. This helps interpretation to hang together.
- What colours come to mind when thinking about your local area? This may prove a challenging question but it may influence the design approach.
- Does your community have an association with a celebrity that visitors will have heard of such as 'the quiet man' or W. B. Yeats? If your community has a 'local hero', can you tell their story in sufficiently few words?
- Introduce variety wherever possible. Not all visitors are interested in history. Many people will be more intrigued by the lifestyle of birds that they are likely to see than by rare migrants. Most people with a specialist interest will bring their own reference material.
- Focus on the familiar so that visitors engage from a common starting point. Many visitors will be more interested in what happened in the last century or so which is within the lifetime of their immediate ancestors than in the far distant past.

- Make your interpretation family-friendly. There are simple ways of achieving this from positioning a story or image with strong appeal to younger visitors towards the bottom of a panel to devising a children's trail or even a treasure hunt with objects that tell a story featuring as part of shop window displays.
- Look at interpretation produced by others. Did you read all of the text? How did it make you feel about the place? What worked and what didn't?
- If there are lots of sights of interest within your locality, you may want to draw these together into a walk or trail leaflet with directional markers on the ground. This encourages visitors to stay longer.
- Focus on the familiar so that visitors engage from a common starting point. This often relates to what they can see for themselves from an unusual looking building to waders on the beach.
- In addition to any legal requirements, consider ways of engaging visitors especially those who do not know any Gaelic or indeed for whom English is not their first language. The meaning of Gaelic place names, landscape features and some species is a rich starting point. By seeing the Irish words and the English explanation as well as translation visitors can start to pick up individual words and phrases, leaving with the feeling that they have learned something.
- Ensure that content comes from sources that you trust as accurate. Any facts used in the interpretation should be double checked against other sources.

## Preparing the Text

- Avoid too much text. A typical interpretation panel features four or five separate stories although a bilingual approach may reduce the content to three stories. Most individual stories can be told in around 50 words. Consider a diagram or illustration if the explanation is complex or technical such as the formation of peat.
- Some stories can best be told through captioned photographs or illustrations. 'A picture is worth a thousand words.'
- Include incidentals like quotations, short timelines, text boxes and 'wow' one line facts. This helps to break up the text and make it less daunting.
- Use the newspaper approach – a bold and intriguing headline to catch the visitor's interest, a first sentence explaining what the story is about and then the detail of the story. 'Fire, ice and water' is more likely to catch the visitor's attention than 'The Geology of the Mam Turks'.
- Keep stories short and to the point as visitors may be reading them in wet and windy conditions.
- Images should normally be accompanied by the source. Before using a photograph check whether there are any copyright implications.

## Selecting Images

- Select a small number of bold, strong images for each panel that complement and strengthen the content rather than lots of small images whose point may be lost.
- Carry out a wide trawl from albums stored in attics to books and image libraries, many of which like the National Library of Ireland's collection are now online. Some libraries and commercial sources will charge a reproduction fee.
- If using photos from individuals, check that they can be scanned to a sufficiently high resolution (300 dpi) to work effectively. Otherwise they can appear fuzzy and grainy. Similarly scans taken from books often lack sufficient clarity.
- Remember to check who owns the photograph. You may need permission to use it and have to acknowledge the owner or copyright holder under the photograph.
- Consider captioning some of the images to bring out a specific point that you want visitors to engage. Photographs whose content is obvious do not need captions. A caption should be 15 words or less.
- A local map may be relevant especially if you are developing a walking trail or want to highlight a number of attractions. Again there will probably be copyright and cost issues.

## Ways of Telling the Story

As well as interpretation panels and leaflets, there are other media, which may be relevant.

- More detailed information and leaflets can be accessed by interested visitors through a community or local history website.
- Technology makes it possible to deliver interpretation through audio and mobile phone tours, PDAs (hand-held computers) and apps.
- Whether carved paving slabs or sculpture, public art helps to tell a story through choice of themes, materials and information such as timelines, poetry or quotations.

## What About the Practicalities?

Visitors are more likely to enjoy themselves if they feel comfortable and confident. A map with symbols for toilets, car parking, tourist information, walking routes with an indication of length and time etc can convey much of the essential information.

Are there any safety issues to highlight such as keeping away from cliff-edges or controlling dogs?

Highlighting that a locality has shops, accommodation etc is helpful although there may be restrictions depending on the source of funding, which may preclude the promotion of individual businesses.

## The Delivery Process

If a large number of people have to be consulted, consider delegating the task to a small sub-group.

Consider appointing an external writer and designer unless you have professional skills within your community.

Set and stick to clear and deliverable deadlines especially if a large number of people need to comment or be consulted.

Check that factual information both within text and on maps is accurate and will not date. Information that may change is better conveyed in more readily updateable media such as leaflets and websites.

Thoroughly proof-read final text before it goes into the graphic design process.

## Neat and Tidy Towns and Villages

The quality of the visitor experience will be enhanced by a place looking well. It is important that the community, through a forum, such as Tidy Towns should undertake an audit of their place and identify how a combination of good management and maintenance alongside investment for which applications will need to be made, can improve the visual appearance.

Initiatives may include shop front improvements, provision of hanging baskets or festive lighting, feature lighting of a landmark or improvement of the environment of a car park or river.

Communities may find the facilitated development of a Village Design Statement a useful way of establishing a shared understanding of the issues and priorities, relative to which funds can be sought and actions allocated.

It is important that communities should develop Plans, to guide delivery and facilitate monitoring of progress. An appropriately constituted Steering Group should be established, if one does not already exist, who will manage this process. This will provide an appropriate point of contact for Fáilte Ireland and Galway County Council to encourage and ensure that projects are consistent with the overall vision for Connemara..



# CONCLUSION

The preparation of this integrated Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan for Connemara, has been informed by analysis of the place, has been guided by a highly motivated and committed Steering Group and underpinned by the input of a wide range of people, through one-to-one meetings, open forums and community networks.

The Plan identifies how, through a programme of investment, routes and supporting infrastructure can be delivered which will guide, inform and engage visitors and local people. The physical work that is proposed and the content of the interpretation and orientation will strengthen and promote the distinctiveness of the region and contribute to a world-class experience.

Delivery of the vision will require the ongoing commitment of Fáilte Ireland and its partners, including Galway County Council. Through the development of the detail design, the refinement of the stories and graphic content and through a process of securing approvals it will be important to maintain the clarity of focus that has been established to this point and indeed to add further richness to what is proposed.

Through this next stage it will be important to build on the community involvement that has shaped proposals to date. Through ongoing strong design and management, this will consolidate the sense of ownership, strengthen the stories and facilitate the use of local suppliers and crafts people with associated local economic benefits.

Use of the Tool Kit to empower local communities to see the relevance of playing their part and then to do so with confidence and within the context of the broader vision will be important. This approach should be piloted to demonstrate the value of it and to inspire other communities.

There is a clear opportunity to harness the enthusiasm that has been developed through this Plan to deliver an outstanding asset for tourists and local people. This will take considerable time and financial commitment, however, the expected resultant benefits are significant.

Safeguarding that quality and long-lasting benefits will require the continued commitment of the stakeholders, ensuring that the infrastructure is maintained and that the interpretation is managed – remaining relevant and engaging – ensuring that the profile of Connemara and the visitor experience is strengthened year after year.



# APPENDIX

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<b>1</b>	<b>Detail of Suggested Stories</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Bibliography of Main Sources</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Supporting Car park Improvement Matrix</b>	<b>178</b>
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# APPENDIX 1

## Detail of suggested stories

This appendix provides more detail of the stories proposed for the orientation and discovery points. It is intended to provide information for final selection during the implementation phase. Suggestions made by local communities during consultation have been researched and included. Although every effort has been made to compile the stories from reputable sources, as listed in Appendix 2, any material used should be double-checked for accuracy. These are content profiles, not final copy.

## Orientation Points

### An Fhairche and Ard na Gaoithe

#### *Joyce country*

From sheep stealers to guerrilla fighters during the Wars of Independence, the rugged, trackless hills of Connemara offered a safe place to hide. A Galway magistrate wrote in the early 19th century: 'Connemara is the asylum of outlaws, deserters and persons escaped from justice, the stronghold of smugglers.' The heart of the hilly and lonely Joyce country is the Maam Valley. Welsh Norman Thomas de Joise settled here at the end of the 12th century. His son married an O'Flaherty and thus the Joyce clan took control of the whole barony of Ross (Galway). The Joyces were later one of the 14 Tribes of Galway, the merchants who ruled the commercial and political life of the city.

#### *The Battle of the Giants*

An easy hour's climb up Mount Gable (418 metres) reveals a panorama over Lough Corrib, Lough Mask, the Connemara mountains and Lough Coulin, a favourite picnic spot of the Guinness family when staying at Ashford Castle. Legend has it that the Fir Bolg tribe massed their troops on the summit before the bloody, four day battle of Moytura near Cong which rival tribe the Dananns won.

## Leenane

### *The Dry Canal*

In 1848, as a famine relief scheme, a canal was built to join Lough Corrib and Lough Mask to allow steamer traffic from Galway to access Lough Mask and beyond. The limestone bed of the canal, however, proved too porous to retain water. The project was abandoned six years later. Sluice gates, locks of cut stone and arched bridges are a reminder of this engineering misadventure.

### *The Guinness's Holiday Retreat*

Young Arthur Guinness, first Baron Ardilaun sold his share in the family business and devoted himself to politics and living the life of a country gentleman. He considerably expanded Ashford Castle and its estate on the shore of Lough Corrib on the Mayo/Galway border which his father had bought in 1852. The estate traced its roots to a 13th century De Burgo stronghold. Both Baron Ardilaun and his wife Olive, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Bantry, were passionate gardeners and loved to walk on the shores of Lough Corrib. The lakeside at Ardnageeha was one of their favourite retreats. On being ennobled in 1880 Arthur Guinness named his title after Ardilaun, one of the islands on Lough Corrib whose name means 'high island on the lake'.

### *Ireland's Only Fjord*

Dominated to the north by Mweelrea (814 metres), the smooth bald hill, Killary Harbour is Ireland's only fjord. It was created during the last Ice Age when glaciers carved out a U-shaped valley. As the ice melted, sea levels rose. The newly formed glacial valley was flooded by the sea and the fjord, or drowned valley, was created. The nine mile long fjord with an almost constant depth of 13 fathoms provides a very safe anchorage, being sheltered from storms by mountain walls. In recent years it has provided shelter for fish cages for salmon and trout farming and rafts for mussels. Cetaceans regularly enter the Harbour and the clear waters of its mouth are popular with divers.

### *On Stage and Screen*

Connemara is famous for its storytellers and this area has featured on the wider stage. Leenane was the setting for the first trilogy of plays, including the award-winning *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* by Martin McDonagh who holidayed in Connemara as child. His second trilogy is set on the Aran islands. Connemara reflects a family love affair. Martin's younger brother scriptwriter/director, John, set his cop-buddy film *The Guard*, around Bearna.

Leenane was also the setting for film *The Field* (1990) starring Richard Harris and John Hurt about a tenant farmer's ill-fated plan to pass on a rented field to his son. The actual field is on the right of the N59 from Westport, six miles before Leenane. In 2006 film director Ridley Scott produced his adaptation of *Tristan and Isolde* the medieval legend of torn loyalties and love between the son of a Cornish leader and the daughter of an Irish warlord. Scenes shot in Connemara included the couple falling in love at Glassilaun beach at the mouth of Killary Harbour.

### *What's in a Name*

Connemara has no fixed boundaries. It can be taken to embrace the whole of County Galway or the area west of Lough Corrib, adjacent to the Joyce Country which extends into County Mayo. The region itself divides into two distinct areas in terms of language, tradition and history, North and South Connemara. Local writer Tim Robinson defines it as the area within sight of the Twelve Pins while poet Louis MacNeice gave up on any attempt to define it: 'The very name Connemara seemed too rich for any ordinary place.' Anglicised to Connemara in the 18th century the name of the region was originally Conmaicnemara, or 'the tribe of Cormac by the sea'.

The Conmhaícne were a clan divided into a number of branches scattered around Ireland in the early medieval period. They took their name from a mythical ancestor known as Con Mhac 'hound son'

### *The New Road*

The laying of the present N59 started in the late 1920s. Workers had to break the stones with small hammers and received two shillings and six pence a tonne. The road was tarred in 1932.

## Maigh Cuillin

### *An Island for Every Day of the Year*

Lough Corrib is the second largest stretch of inland water in Ireland, covering an area of 180 sq km. Forty five km long and 21 km at its widest point between Cong and Oughterard, it is studded with at least 365 islands. It is linked to the sea at Galway by the fast flowing Corrib river. Its geology divides it in two. The northwest comprises hard acidic rocks like granites and schists and is by far the deepest part. The shallow south-eastern arm of the lough overlies limestone. The lough is world famous for its trout and salmon fishing. People living on the shores are sometimes known as Corribians.

### *Welcome to the Gaeltacht*

Connemara is the heart of the Galway Gaeltacht, the most strongly Irish speaking part of Ireland. Local people have two languages, one that is uniquely theirs and one that they share with the world. Nearly two thirds of those living in the Galway Gaeltacht speak Gaeilge, the Irish language, and over 90% in the Ros Muc peninsula use it on a daily basis. South Connemara is home to the national Irish-language radio and television service. From sean nós singing to storytelling, the Gaeltacht has its own cultural traditions which are very much alive today.

### *Peddalling Along the N59*

Born in Galway City in 1884 Nora Barnacle was brought up in poverty. In the early 1900s her father, Thomas came to work in Oughterard as a baker for James Byrne, living with the Byrnes for almost 14 years. He rarely went home or sent money. This was partly why after a family dispute Nora moved to Dublin working as a chambermaid in Finn's Hotel. On June 10th 1904 while walking down Nassau Street, Nora met James Joyce.

In 1912, James and Nora journeyed 'countrybound' from Galway. Their outing, on Sunday, 4th August was to Oughterard, where they visited the cemetery to see the tomb of Michael Bodkin, an early boyfriend of Nora on whom Joyce based the character of Michael Furey in *The Dead*. The next day Joyce took the train to Clifden, possibly in the hope of interviewing Marconi for the Trieste newspaper *Piccolo della Sera*. Joyce's father liked to claim that he was a descendent of the Joyces, one of the fourteen tribes of Galway, but there is no evidence to support this.

### *A Quaking Blanket*

Unlike the raised bogs of central Ireland which were formed from shallow lakes, the peatlands of Connemara are Atlantic blanket bogs. The first farmers cleared the forests which had taken hold after the Ice Age. Rain washed away the nutrients in the soil leaving it so acid that dead plant material did not decay and layers of peat began to form. Good places to experience blanket bog with its unique plant life including seas of bog cotton and meat-eating sundew are between Moycullen and Oughterard, around Maam Cross, Roundstone and the Inagh Valley.

### *The Maigh Cuillin Ponymen*

Known as jarvies, Maigh Cuillin ponymen were legendary. During the summer season pony owners would go 'postin' with their Connemara ponies who otherwise worked on the farm or pulled drays with turf, farm products, timber and passengers to Galway. Some ponymen rented stabling in the city and ferried visitors from their hotels to local attractions. Passengers clambered onto the wooden seats of the side car behind a lively and often decorated pony. They had to hold on tightly to each other as the driver jolted the car along the rough roads.

The ponymen were at their busiest during Galway Race Week where they waited for fares in Eyre Square. The greatest excitement at local weddings at the start of the 20th century was the tarraingt abhaile, the draggin' home when a pony race was held to celebrate the homecoming of the bride and groom after the wedding ceremony. The races were run over rough gravel tracks, boreens and grassy paths. There were no rules. It was a mad helter skelter, often over several miles, followed by side cars with the wedding guests led by the bride and groom. Such races attracted big crowds. Riders took pride in the appearance, speed and stamina of their ponies many of which had been fed a special diet of eggs and white water (flour and water) for weeks beforehand. The winner was given a bottle of whiskey or poitin which he gifted to the newlyweds.

### *A Legendary Name*

Place names change over time and their original meaning may be lost. Moycullen's name may come from Maigh Uilinn, the field of Uilinn. According to legend he was the grandson of an Irish king who defeated a rival in battle. Another possibility is Magh Cuillin the 'plain of the holly'. For many years the village was called An Garraí Gamhain, the garden of the calves. (check)

## Na Forbacha

### *Welcome to the Gaeltacht*

Connemara is the heart of the Galway Gaeltacht, the most strongly Irish speaking part of Ireland. Local people have two languages, one that is uniquely theirs and one that they share with the world. Nearly two thirds of those living in the Galway Gaeltacht speak Gaeilge, the Irish language, and over 90% in the Ros Muc peninsula use it on a daily basis. South Connemara is home to the national Irish-language radio and television service. From sean nós singing to storytelling, the Gaeltacht has its own cultural traditions which are very much alive today.

### *Wild Atlantic Beaches*

Connemara is washed by the Atlantic Ocean with no land between it and North America. Thanks to the power of winds, waves and currents and to the shape of the land, beaches form, from tiny tidelines in rocky coves to wide strands. The latter are often backed by dunes sculpted by the wind. Today the beaches support sports from surfing to beach fishing as well as the traditional seaside pursuits of building sandcastles and beach combing.

### *The Ten Townlands*

There are over 300 townships in Connemara. The townland is the smallest unit of administration and the one with which residents most identify. Townlands are of ancient origin their boundaries being handed down through generations by memory. In the 1830s the Ordnance Survey mapped the area giving the townlands precise boundaries and names which were usually an Anglicisation of the Irish name. These were often misheard, misspelt or worse. From 2005 only Gaelic place names are recognised, removing the English names adopted by the Ordnance Survey engineers.

There are ten townlands in the Na Forbacha area. (Give Irish name and English translation for 2-3 of the more evocative names).

### *Homesick for Galway Bay*

Galway Bay was a place held dear by emigrants. It made its way into a number of songs, notably *My own dear Galway Bay* composed by Frank A. Fahy (1845-1935), a native of Kinvvara and Galway Bay written by Dr Arthur Colahan in 1947: he was brought up in Galway. As amended and sung by Bing Crosby, who was proud of his Irish ancestry, the song was a huge hit with homesick Irish emigrants worldwide.

*'Tis far away I am today from scenes I roamed a boy,  
And long ago the hour I know I first saw Illinois;  
But time nor tide nor waters wide can wean my heart away,  
For ever true it flies to you, my dear old Galway Bay.'*

*'Oh, grey and bleak, by shore and creek, the rugged rocks abound,  
But sweet and green the grass between, as grows on Irish ground,  
So friendship fond, all wealth beyond, and love that lives away,  
Bless each poor home beside your foam, my dear old Galway Bay.'*  
- Frank Fahy

*'If you ever go across the sea to Ireland,  
Then maybe, at the closing of your day,  
You can sit and watch the moon rise over Claddagh  
And see the sun go down on Galway Bay.*

*For the breezes blowing o'er the sea from Ireland  
Are perfumed by the heather as they blow  
And the women in the uplands diggin' praties  
Speak a language that the strangers do not know.'*  
- Arthur Colahan

### *Tied up at the Quay*

The complex south Connemara coast was once a maze of piers, quays and landing places. Until the arrival of the railway in the 1890s most goods came in and out by sea. Every rocky inlet and offshore island had its Galway hookers and currachs ferrying goods and people, exporting peat to the Aran islands, fishing and bringing seaweed to be burned in kelp kilns.

# Discovery Points

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## **Guinness View Discovery Point**

### **(Ard na Gaoithe An Fhóraois)**

*Lord and Lady Ardilaun's Retreat*

(story to follow)

*Deep in the Forest*

(story to follow)

*From Brewer to Country Gentleman*

*(biography of Lord and Lady Ardilaun)*

(story to follow)

*A Lakeside Home (ecology)*

## Ballynahinch Discovery Point (Baile na hInse Loch)

### *Manhattan to Mayfair*

Connemara marble is recognised as the world's leading luxury green marble, used as a decoration in churches and public buildings throughout Europe and North America.

Outcropping in a line between Streamstown and Lissoughter near Recess, the marble is noted for its wild veining, patterns and forty shades of green. It is over 600 million years old, formed when limestone was heated under pressure, producing a hard granular rock. Its colour is due to the presence of various elements. It is said to bring serenity to those who keep it close.

Connemara green marble has been quarried for up to 400 years. There are two quarries still in operation. Ballynahinch quarry is estimated to hold about 1.5 million tons of marble. Approximately 10,000 tons are extracted per year. Blocks of marble of up to 40 tonnes are diamond-wire-sawn from the quarry, cut to smaller sizes and shipped out to be sawn into slabs or tiles.

'And the workers who raise these giant blocks from the earth, transport them on miniature railways, black them out with hammer and chisel, turn them on the swishing lathes, polish them till they gleam with magic lights, and utilize even the chips that our desks and our drawing rooms may be adorned?'

- Connacht Tribune, Saturday, January 12, 1935

### *Les Lacs du Connemara*

Michel Sardou, the popular French balladeer, launched the song and the album of the same name, 'Les Lacs du Connemara' in 1981. According to a report in the Irish Times, Sardou admitted that he had not visited Ireland when writing it and that he chose the name from a tourist brochure. In 2011, Sardou was awarded "The Freedom of Connemara" at a special ceremony in Paris to mark the 30th anniversary of the release of the song.

'Terre brûlée au vent,	Des landes de pierres
Autour des lacs,	C'est pour les vivants
Un peu d'enfer,	Le Connemara
Des nuages noirs,	Qui viennent du nord
Colorent la terre,	Les lacs les rivières
C'est le décor,	Du Connemara.'

### *The Cricketing Maharajah*

Playboy, celebrity, cricketer and potentate, Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji, Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar (1872 –1933) known as K.S. Ranjitsinhji or Ranji during his career was an Indian prince and Test cricketer who played cricket for England. Ranji is widely regarded as one of the greatest batsmen of all time. ‘the Midsummer night’s dream of cricket’ (Neville Cardus). He was also Chancellor of the Indian Chamber of Princes and represented India at the League of Nations.

He made a semi-official tour of Ireland in 1924 including a fishing trip to Ballynahinch. He told the story against himself of one of his first fishing exploits. The ghillie treated him with the respect due to a prince until the salmon he was playing escaped. The ghillie shouted: ‘Ye bloody black bastard, ye lost him.’ Despite this Ranji became a very expert fisherman. He was very popular with the local community and was invited to open the first Connemara Pony Show.

Having been assured that he would be exempt from taxation, he bought Ballynahinch Castle as a sporting estate in 1926. He refurbished the castle including installing central heating and 16 bathrooms.

He also remodelled the grounds with flower beds, cascades, thatched picnic huts and no less than 80 stone fishing jetties. He dressed in plus fours and a tweed jacket. Local people who called him the Ranji recalled seeing his Indian nieces who attended Kylemore Abbey School in saris, an exotic sight in rural Connemara at the time and told stories of him keeping a bear on an island in the lake.

He had a guru who walked the local roads carrying ‘a god in a box’ to atone for the Ranji’s sins. Locals referred to the Indian servants as ‘smoked Irishmen’. By 1932, the year of his last visit, the Ranji was overweight, ill and in financial difficulty. News of his death arrived by telegraph on the evening of April Fool’s Day and at first local people dismissed it as a prank. There was a four day auction of his goods and the Castle passed into the hands of a Dublin businessman. It later changed hands a number of times until bought by Ballynahinch Castle Hotel Company.

### *'Humanity Dick'*

For generations Ballynahinch Castle was owned by the Martin family, whose fiefdom embraced much of western Connemara. The most famous Martin was Richard (1754-1834) known either as 'Hairtrigger Dick' because of his fondness for duelling or 'Humanity Dick' because of his role in the founding of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He had first been christened 'Humanity Martin' by his friend, the future George IV. When questioned on the contradiction of his interests, Martin quipped: 'An ox cannot hold a pistol.'

Parliamentarian, lawyer, spendthrift and eccentric - stories about him abound. When, for example, his wife eloped with an elderly Englishman, he won £10,000 in damages with which he shod his horse in silver and turned the rest into small coins which he scattered from his carriage on his way home. At Ballynahinch which his father had built to replace the old O'Flaherty stronghold on an island in Ballynahinch Lake, he sheltered, rent-free, Catholic exiles from the North who had been ordered to 'go to Hell or Connacht' and outlaws after the 1798 rising.

Martin was passionate about the humane treatment of animals. If he found a tenant beating his donkey he had him locked up in the old Ballynahinch Castle to consider his sins. Parliament passed Martin's Ill-Treatment of Cattle Bill in 1822. Known as 'Martin's Act' it is still regarded as the cornerstone of animal welfare legislation. He was one of the group who met in a London coffee house in 1824 to found the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In debt he spent his last years in the French resort of Boulogne.

### *Slow but Steady*

A railway was first mooted in 1872 and won the support of local landlords like the Martins of Ross and Mitchell Henry of Kylemore. After many delays and debates as to whether it should be a railway or a steam tramway or whether it should go by the coast beyond Oughterard to stimulate the fishing industry, the project finally won the support of Arthur Balfour Chief Secretary for Ireland and future British Prime Minister as a relief project in 1887.

To be operated by the Midland Great Western Railway Company, the line was over 48 miles long with stations at Moycullen, Ross, Oughterard, Maam Cross, Recess, Ballynahinch and Clifden. Work started in 1891 with over 1500 men employed two years later and the line opening in 1895. The workers slept in huts erected in places like Liam with up to 14 men sleeping in seven beds. Shebeens were established illegally to quench the thirst of the workers.

There were 18 gate keepers cottages at road crossings each with a living room and two bedrooms, a fuel shed and an outdoor toilet. The line took fish caught on Lough Corrib on the first stage of its journey to Billingsgate: other goods included cattle, sheep, ponies, Guinness, flour, sugar, tea and animal feed. The railway opened up the area to tourists and anglers and carried soldiers on their way to fight in WW1. The train travelled at a leisurely pace of 24km/h (15mph).

By 1935, the line had proved uneconomic and the last train left Clifden station at 5.00 pm on Saturday 27th April, 1935. Picking up wagons on the way, the train was very long by the time it reached Galway. Plans are afoot to provide a continuous cycleway along along the tracks of the railway by 2013 and some of the gatekeepers' cottages survive.

### *Catching the Bianconi*

Italian born Charles Bianconi ran a network of coach services throughout Ireland in the early 19th century. In Galway his horse drawn 'Bianconi' coaches or longcars ran a passenger and mail service from 1835 between Galway and Clifden. Coach stops tended to be outside inns. In 1856, for example, every day except Sunday, a Bianconi set out from Carr's Hotel in Clifden at 9 am. A car also left in the opposite direction from Galway at 9.30 am. There were also mail cars from Galway to Clifden at 1.30am and from Clifden to Oughterard at 4 p.m.

### *Unfit to Appear*

In 1903 Edward VII and Queen Alexandra paid an official visit to Connemara. The British naval fleet anchored at Killary while the royal couple disembarked for a sightseeing tour that included Kylemore Abbey and a Connemara marble quarry. The head of security was so worried that he stationed policemen from all over Ireland, disguised as cycling tourists, at a 100 yard distance from each other along the route. There were two giveaways. All the 'tourists' were dressed alike, from their straw hats to their knickerbockers: and all sprang to attention and saluted as the royal car passed.

## **Seafarers Discovery Point (Carna View to Fínis)**

### *Hookers and Currachs*

The last engagement was lunch at the Station Hotel in Recess where the King had a drop too much and was ordered by his doctor to rest. As the crowd was growing impatient to be addressed by the King, a royal equerry pulled a man who looked like the King out of the crowd, trimmed his beard like the King's and dressed him in naval uniform. The cheers of the crowd drowned his 'speech'. Intrigued the King demanded to meet his lookalike before heading for a specially commissioned saloon car on the train to Galway.

Carna and its islands are famous for boat building. In the 1830s over 400 sailing boats plied the coast between Galway and Slyne Head. With their tannin coloured sails and black tarred hulls, they delivered goods from Galway to village shops, took peat out to the Aran islands, delivered seaweed for kelp burning or went fishing for mackerel. They were built by craftsmen, who passed their skills from generation to generation, without plans and working from small boatyards or on flat places by the sea.

The hooker probably evolved from smaller craft between 1790 and 1830 and was very agile at dealing with the rocky and complex lea shores of South Connemara. The name probably comes from the Dutch hoeker applying to hook and line fishing or howker meaning a small manoeuvrable vessel.

There are two sizes of hooker, the *bád mór* 'big boat' 35-44 ft long and able to carry 12-15 tons of cargo and the *leath bhád* 'medium sized or half boat, 34 ft long. Both may be half or full decked with a high-peaked mainsail, a jib and a staysail. They have a strong sharp bow and outward curving sides like 'the breast bone of a water fowl'. There are also two smaller members of the hooker family.

Most hookers were rotting hulks until the boatbuilding craft was revived in the late 1960s with the restoration of old hookers and the building of new ones. The Galway Hooker Association was founded in 1978. Today the fleet consists of around 25 hookers and 30 smaller craft that race in a series of annual regattas round the coast: there are four regattas in the Carna region alone. One of the famous boatbuilding families are the Caseys. Their Saint Patrick has sailed all over the world including up the Hudson river to New York.

Currachs were wooden or, since the early 20th century, tarred, canvas-skinned rowing boats used for inshore fishing and for ferrying goods and passengers short distances. They were sometimes known as 'shop boats'. Too fragile to cope with rocky shores, they were pulled up on to sandy beaches: people would remove pebbles from them after storms. There are now currach races along the South Connemara coast.

The first timber-hulled currach was built by Paraic Ó Clochartaigh (Cloherty). The story goes that he went to a neighbouring island to teach other boatbuilders of the Casey family how to build the small shallow vessel, supposedly then rowing the new currach home seven days later.

From Carna to Renvyle, boat builders used to insert a small bottle of water from St. Cailin's holy well at Keeraunmore into the new laid keel of each boat. St. Caillin was an early Celtic monk who is the patron saint of seafarers along the Connemara coast.

#### *The Last Resident of Fínis Island*

At low tide it is possible to cross to Fínis Island. It has been inhabited since the first hunter gatherers moved round the Connemara coast. In the 1890s 25 families farmed the island growing corn and potatoes in the sandy soil. There were rabbits in the dunes and scallops to be dredged from the offshore sand banks. Despite the Congested Districts Board building a pier and stone slate-roofed houses people continued to leave the island. The last resident moved to Carna around 1980.

#### *'Wreckers' Lure Spanish Galleon'*

Following the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) the remnants of the fleet sailed along the Irish coast in the worst storm in a decade. Navigation was a problem as only half of Connacht appeared on their charts. The English feared an invasion of Ireland and the order went out that no Spaniards were to be spared.

A branch of the O' Flaherty clan under Tadgh na Buile had a castle at Ards near Carna. When the Conception, with 225 men and 18 guns on board, got into trouble in a storm at Mweenish Bay near Ards the crew saw fires on the shore. Thinking the fires were to guide them in they followed them, little realising that Tadgh na Buile deliberately intended to drive the ship aground and plunder what remained. The survivors were beaten, robbed and put in jail in Galway. Along with the crew of the Falco Blanco Mediano, wrecked off the Galway coast and men captured in Mayo, 300 Spaniards were executed at Galway.

### *Dipping Sails to the Saint*

The 6th century Celtic saint, St MacDara, established a cell on the tiny offshore island that bears his name. Pilgrims still visit the site on 16th July. According to tradition sailors dipped their sails as they passed the island of the saint of seafarers.

### Sean-nós

Nineteenth century travellers often remarked on the way that people sang while they worked and on the silence that fell after the Famine.

Sean nós (old-style) singing was promoted as part of the Gaelic revival of the late 19th/early 20th century. It is sung unaccompanied by a solo singer in Gaelic. Passed down from singer to singer The content is seen as being as important as the music. The themes are universal – love, misadventure and death – often within a local setting. 'Mouth music' or diddling where people dance to a singer rather than instrumentalist comes from the same origin. Today sean nós singers perform in pubs and at informal gatherings.

Joe Heaney (1919-1984) traditional music expert and possibly the most famous of all sean nós singers was born in Carna and is buried at Maoras three miles to the west. As a child he recalled 'People made their own music by singing and liling and storytelling ... we used to spend the evenings around the turf fire.' He introduced sean nós to the international music scene including a composition based on Finnegans Wake by John Cage.

It was said in 1935 that there were more unrecorded folk tales, those handed down through the oral tradition, in Carna than in the rest of Western Europe.

## **Islands Discovery Point (Casla)**

*Island archipelago*

*A Pound of Tea for a Bucket of Winkles*

Hooker traders often also ran the local shop. Less than a century ago one merchant ran a shop near Carna where customers could pay for household goods by bartering periwinkles, carrageen moss, sea rods, oar weed and eggs. He then shipped the local produce to London via Liverpool.

*The Headland of Furse*

The Gaelic name for the Carna peninsula is Iorras Aithneach, the headland of furse. The yellow flowers of gorse add touches of colour to the granite rocks and bog as they flower all year round.

This part of Connemara is more water than land. Alexander Nimmo charted this complex and often treacherous coast, incidentally giving the village of Casla its English name. He simply misheard Casla and wrote it as Costelloe. Until well after the famine the only road in the district, which ran from Galway, ended at Casla.

Since the 1890s causeways have linked the islands of Leitir Móir, Garomna and Leitir Mealláin, a giant's stepping stone from the Aran Islands. The three islands attracted their early Christian holy men the vestiges of whose cells and holy wells survive. It is said that at one time there were more hermits than laymen in Connemara.

*'Pinched with Hunger'*

At least 20 islands were inhabited in the 19th century but their inhabitants were among the poorest in Ireland, eking out a subsistence living from the sea and from the stony land. From 1891 the Congested Districts Board, which had been set up to alleviate poverty in the West of Ireland built roads, piers, causeways and bridges.

Around nine hundred islanders were employed on such schemes. The Board also attempted to set up a lace making industry for the women.

The Manchester Guardian commissioned playwright J. M. Synge to write about conditions in some of the Congested Districts. In his article 'From Galway to Garomna', published in 1905 he observed: 'one saw the destitute in still the same clothes, but this time patched and ragged, the women mostly barefooted, and both sexes pinched with hunger and the fear of it.'

For many, emigration to North America was the only solution. Young girls were sent as domestic servants, sending their earnings home to support their families. 'All the girls of large families who are not married at eighteen are dispatched to America, they become the rent-earners of the households they have left.' (Rev Thomas Finlay, 1898)

Today, ruined cottages and boreens leading from the fields to the shore serve as a reminder of these dark days.

### *Titanic Retreat*

J. Bruce Ismay, owner of White Star Line, retired a year after his flagship Titanic foundered. In preparation for his retirement and shunned by London society, he bought Costelloe Lodge which he rebuilt in 1925 after the IRA burned it to the ground.

Although Ismay never crossed the Atlantic again, the sea still had a hold on him. He spent an increasing amount of time in Connemara, fishing and shooting. He personally caught over 300 salmon in a single season in the 1920s in the famous Casla River. Salmon was so common in the household that he fed it to his dogs.

After Ismay's death in 1937, it is said that his wife Florence scattered some of his ashes in the garden where a memorial stone reads: 'In memory of Bruce Ismay, who spent many happy hours here 1913-37. He loved all wild and lonely places, believing that what we see is boundless as we wish our souls to be.'

### *The Kelp Burners*

People not only cut seaweed to fertilise their fields, the women and children helping to carry it from the shore, but as an industrial resource. In late summer and early autumn the shores of the islands were wreathed in smoke and the coastline lit up at night by the kelp burners' fires. Burning kelp, the thick, deep-sea seaweeds deposited by Atlantic storms, was a major industry from the 18th century until the 1940s, providing an additional source of income for local farmers. Kelp provided the raw material for alkalines, iodine and latterly alginates, thickening agents for the food and cosmetics industries.

Kelp burners set up their hearths, often little more than a pile of stones on the shore, of which few traces remain. After drying the kelp, they burned it, turning it regularly with a kelp rake until its ashes fused into thick blocks. These were sold to kelp agents who sold them on for final processing in Scotland. 'The island used to be hidden in red weed spread out to dry. Two good men with a good boat would gather three tons of oarweed a day. One year I spent six days and nights burning kelp without a wink of sleep.' (Micheál Mhac Dhonnchadha, 1930s)

Today bladder wrack is gathered from the beaches of South Connemara and the offshore islands for processing at Arramara Teo, at Cill Chiaráin, Kilkieran, founded in 1947. It is harvested by hand at low tide using a sharp knife or sickle to cut the weed eight inches above the tough hold-fast so that the plant will regenerate. The seaweed is then formed into a ball or cleimin and tied with ropes. Each ball weighs 2-3 tons.

The balls are stored on the pier head until ready for transport to the factory where the seaweed is washed, milled, dried, and milled again before screening and bagging into different products. Four tonnes of wet seaweed produces one tonne of seaweed meal. The final product is used as a fertiliser and supplement to animal feeds.

'Complaints are often heard about the idleness of the natives of Connemara; yet at the present time one sees numbers of the people drying and arranging their weed until nightfall, and the bays where the weed is found are filled with boats at four or five o'clock in the morning, when the tide is favourable.'

- J. M. Synge, 1905

## **Kylemore Estate Discovery Point** **(An Choill Mhoir)**

### *Transforming a Barren Land*

The character of the landscape of much of North Connemara is due to the vision of one man, Mitchell Henry. Mitchell and Margaret Henry fell in love with Connemara on honeymoon. On inheriting a fortune from his father, a Manchester cotton merchant, Mitchell was able to realise his dream of building a romantic castle and managing a great estate. In the 40 years after he bought the estate he turned 13,000 acres of barren bog into the wooded landscape of today. He planted 300,000 trees, mostly native oak and conifers on the mountains, and exotics, imported from all parts of the world, closer to the Castle.

In 1903 Mitchell sold Kylemore to the Duke and Duchess of Manchester who lived lavishly financed by the Duchess' wealthy father, the American businessman, Eugene Zimmerman until the money ran out in 1914. Six years later Ireland's only order of Benedictine Nuns, who had been looking for a home since their abbey at Ypres was destroyed in the First World War, purchased Kylemore selling some of the land to the Land Commission for division among tenants. They opened an international boarding school for girls which closed in 2010.

### *A Causeway of Lambs' Wool*

The main road between Letterfrack and Leenane originally ran right in front of Kylemore Abbey. At Mitchell Henry's expense the road was re-routed in 1871 to the opposite side of Lough Pollacappul. A causeway was constructed over Lough Pollacappul dividing it in two. The old road then became the principal avenue running for two miles through the estate. Henry planted a mix of native and non-native trees from all over the world on either side of the avenue, many of which still stand today.

Mitchell Henry who was a keen fisherman and had an inventive mind was reluctant to disturb the salmon spawning beds at the edge of the lake. So rather than concrete foundations for the causeway he laid branches and lambs-wool over the lake to create the causeway and then laid the road over it. The causeway is in fact floating and water can filter through it. The same principle was later used to create the 'Curragh Line', the road through the bog linking Galway city to Headford.

### *A Giant Encounter*

Irish giant Cu Chulainn dwelt on the Dúchruach Mountain behind Kylemore Abbey and Fionn McCool on the Diamond Hill in Connemara National Park. One day they were out hunting and threw a smoothing iron to each other. The iron can still be seen on Kylemore Abbey estate along the avenue between the church and the East Gate. Another day Fionn saw his hound Bran in danger, running after a deer. He called him back in vain, as he sprang from Leim na H'eilte, the deer's leap above Kylemore Church into the lake and was never seen again. The lake in front of the Abbey is called Pollacappul, 'place of the horse'. It is said that every seven years a white horse rises up from the water.

### *From Kylemore to Knightsbridge*

The large estate owners of Connemara usually also had town houses in Dublin or London. Mrs Aspell, the lady's maid of Florence the youngest child of Mitchell Henry, recalled being taught how to wrap salmon and trout in cabbage leaves and weave straw around the cabbage to create a package. The package was then labelled and put on a train to Galway where it went on to London.

Fish caught in the morning could be on the Henry family's London dinner table the following evening. Exotic fruit such as bananas, grapes and melons from the Kylemore greenhouses similarly found their way on to the London dinner table.

### *A 'Model' Landlord*

As an improving landlord seeking to create a model estate Mitchell Henry provided work, housing and a school for local people. He converted Addergoole Farm into a model farm. Over the years his experiments in agriculture, land drainage and land reclamation attracted international interest. Unlike many landlords he also cared for his tenants, dispatching a weekly cart of free meat to the poor of the district. His grandson recalled old women of the district kneeling down to pray beside his pram because his grandfather was so venerated.

'The scenery of this drive is by far the finest in Connemara especially going along the banks of the lovely Lake Kylemore, which really is as beautiful a thing as I ever saw in any country.'

- Letter, 1845

## Atlantic Crossing Discovery Point (Deirgimleach)

### *Pioneers of Atlantic communications*

This bleak bog witnessed two internationally important firsts – the first trans-Atlantic radio message and the first non-stop trans-Atlantic flight. Thanks to Derrigimlagh the world became a smaller place.

### *Alcock and Brown's Historic Landing*

Alcock and Brown crash landed in Derrigimlagh bog after making the first successful non-stop trans-Atlantic flight. Starting from St John's, Newfoundland at 5.13pm BST on 14th June 1919, they flew over 1900 miles in a Vickers-Vimy two-seater biplane. Their goal was the £10,000 prize offered by the Daily Mail for the first non-stop crossing in under 72 hours: they intended to land somewhere near Galway Bay, 1900 miles from St John's. They told reporters 'With this wind, we shall be in Ireland in 12 hours.' With a following wind they averaged 120mph. 'We were jolly pleased, I tell you, to see the coast.'

After spotting Turtle Island they circled Clifden until they saw the aerials of the Marconi station and aimed to land at the condenser station. The landing would have been perfect were it not for the bog which resulted in the plane landing nose first.

The time was 9.20am BST, giving a coast to coast flight time of 15 hours, 57 minutes. The operators and a few Clifden residents came out to greet the aviators. 'I'm Alcock; just come from Newfoundland.' He requested a bath and a shave. It is not known exactly where they landed as the co-ordinates published in the press were inaccurate. They made their way to the Marconi station to break the news of their triumph to the world.

Sightseers poured out from Clifden, wading ankle deep in the bog to view the plane. Several managed to take souvenirs despite a military presence. The Marconi car took Alcock and Brown to Galway in the evening, carrying a mail bag of 800 letters – 'the first aerial mail'. Next day they were feted in Galway before returning to London to receive the prize and knighthoods from King George V.

### *Marconi in Connemara*

Italian inventor Guglielmo Marconi opened his first trans-Atlantic radio station at Derrigimlagh in 1907, linking it to Glace Bay Station on Cape Breton Island. For the first time commercial wireless messages were transmitted across the Atlantic.

Messages from the UK were passed from Galway by conventional telegram, then transmitted across the Atlantic by wireless telegraphy (Marconigram). Little marked the historic occasion. The British, Canadian, US and Italian flags were raised on the masts and greetings were sent from Marconi to the President of the USA. Clifden became the hub for transmission of world news.

Marconi took a house in Letterfrack while overseeing the construction of a second telegraphy station. He was pioneering his duplex trans-Atlantic service which later became standard, building an almost identical receiver station at Marconi Towers, Louisburg, Nova Scotia to the transmission station at Letterfrack. Operators at Letterfrack continued to live at Derrigimlagh. The station operated from 1913-16 when the service transferred to Wales.

#### *Building the Radio Station*

A 1.5 mile long narrow-gauge railway was laid to bring stone to the site from a nearby quarry. The area was surrounded by a barbed wire fence as security was tight because of intense competition. The original wooden buildings were later replaced in red brick.

There were eight, 210 ft high wooden masts, bristling with aerials, about 20 yards apart, replaced in 1918 by four steel masts. The noise from the spark transmitter could be heard for miles around and the sparks resembled lightning. The steam driven plant was fuelled by turf.

#### *Life at the Radio Station*

Estimates of the number of permanent staff range from 50 to 150 as well as 70 full-time and up to 200 casual turf cutters as the station was powered by peat. There was a bungalow for the chief engineer, six semi-detached houses for maintenance men and their families and accommodation for single men: married men were lodged in Clifden. Facilities included a canteen, a vegetable garden and tennis courts. One of the operators from 1909-12 was Jack Phillips who requested a posting at sea because he found life in Clifden rather dull. He became the first radio operator to send an SOS at sea: his actions saved many lives although not his own as he died in the Titanic's sinking.

## **Pine Island Discovery Point (Doire an Chláir Loch)**

### *Connemara Ponies*

British troops were based at the station during the First World War. The Marconi station was burned down by the IRA during the War of Independence in 1922. It was likely that Marconi would have closed the station as more modern technology meant that such a remote location was no longer necessary. Virtually nothing remains today.

There is a memorial to Alcock and Brown in the form of the wing of a plane. Two km south there is a memorial cairn to Alcock and Brown and an information board about the realisation of Marconi's dream of fixed point-to-point wireless telegraph stations linking North America and Europe. A multi-disciplinary research project, with funding support from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is currently investigating the site which is owned by the Connemara National Park.

The only breed unique to Ireland, the origins of the Connemara breed, according to legend, go back 2,500 years to the time when Celtic warriors brought their dun-coloured ponies into Ireland and used them to draw war chariots and carts along the beaches and river plains.

Folklore tells that the tribes of western Ireland were mounted in battle and used horses in everyday life. In the 16th century Spanish ponies may have been introduced to native stock as there were strong trading links. Another version is that when Spanish Armada ships sank off the Galway coast in 1588, the horses swam to shore and bred with the ponies running wild in the mountains. They learned to thrive on the sparse vegetation.

From the 18th century wealthy landowners introduced Arab or Barb blood to the native breed. The Congested Districts Board, established in 1891 to encourage the people living in the over populated areas of the western seaboard to improve their way of life, introduced a variety of stallions to improve the breed.

Many proved unsuitable for crossing with Connemara mares. In 1897 a Royal Commission reported that such ponies were capable of living where all but wild ponies would starve, were strong and hard as mules, fertile and free from hereditary disease. It concluded that it was vital to avert their extinction by introducing new blood.

In 1901 Professor Ewart of Edinburgh University was commissioned to investigate developing the Connemara pony other than simply bringing in high class sires. He recommended setting up stud farms and establishing quality brood mares. His recommendations gathered dust until in 1923, to conserve and develop the breed, the Connemara Pony Breeders Society was founded in Clifden. It selected the best mares and stallions from within the breed to form the foundation stock for the Stud Book. Today the annual pony sales in August attract international buyers and there are Connemara Pony Breeders Societies as far away as Sweden and New Zealand.

The Connemara is the largest of the pony breeds, averaging 14 to 14.2 hands. They mature at around five years and can live well into their 30s. The most common colours are grey and dun. They are very popular with families.

### *Cannon Ball*

In 1893 a Welsh cob stallion offered by the Congested District Board was placed with Thomas Henry at Tullaboy and named Prince Llewelyn. The Prince sired offspring with Connemara ponies including Dynamite, a prize-winning chestnut trotting pony and sire of Cannon Ball. Dynamite crossed the Atlantic in 1904 on SS Umbria after being sold to a wealthy American. Cannon Ball, son of Dynamite, was foaled in 1904 and when fully grown was 13 hands and 3 inches tall. Inspected in 1924 he was No 1 in the Connemara Pony Stud Book published by the Connemara Pony Breeders' Society in 1926. He was owned by Harry 'Henri' Toole who lived at Leam four miles west of Oughterard where he owned a thatched pub. He and his wife liked a drop too much and when this happened, customers filled their own pints and left without paying.

On Saturdays, Henry and Cannon Ball travelled to a market in Athenry. For a fee of ten shillings, mares would be covered at various points along the way and the famous stallion would often find his own way home late in the evening with his owner asleep in the trap.

Cannon Ball won the Farmer's Race at Oughterard for 16 years in a row and locals claimed that he was fed a half barrel of oats the night before the race. He also raced elsewhere and was never beaten. He once raced the train from Oughterard to Leam (Quiet Man Bridge) and was waiting there when it went past.

When Cannon Ball died in 1926, the news quickly spread. His body was laid out in his owner's kitchen and a wake was held. Poitín and a half barrel of Guinness flowed until after midnight when somebody said 'Let's take him out of here!' Having been carried out on an old door, he was buried with great ceremony in a standing position facing east towards Oughterard.

The local headmaster, Máirtín O'Dowd is attributed with writing a eulogy read at the graveside. A white thorn tree marks the spot. Cannon Ball has been celebrated in verse.

'Sleep brave old pony, thy race is run,  
No more with earthly kin you'll mingle.  
Dream of racecourse triumphs you have won,  
Of noble steeds and epic deeds,  
And bookies left without a jingle.'

- Máirtín O'Dowd on death of Cannon Ball, 1926

'No Journey was too long for him, no job of work too tough,  
A pony for all seasons, he took it smooth and rough.  
No challenge could defeat him, regardless of the pain,  
He beat, on one occasion, the Galway-Clifden train.'

- Tom Mac Lochlainn, The Ballad of Cannon Ball, 1999

## **Turf Cutters Discovery Point (Doire an Chláir Loch / Loch Eidhneach)**

### *Turf Cutting*

Turf cutting tended to start in May. A week of turf cutting provided enough fuel for a family for one year. The answer to an old riddle 'It comes in on people's shoulders and goes out as a thread of silk' is turf. Each turf cutter had his own bank. First the top layer of turf, the scraw, was removed in cake-like slabs using a broad, pointed spade: the sods were tossed into the water at the bottom of the bank. Pegs and string were sometimes used to keep the cutting straight. Then the cutter removed the first layer of sods from the cleared area which might be 30ft long and 3ft wide. He used a sleán, a spade with a long blade about four inches wide with a small blade at right angles to the main blade, driving it into the peat at an angle of less than 30 degrees. Cutting and throwing the four inch square sods was performed as a continuous action. Then the next layer, spit, was ready to cut. Most banks yielded 3-5 spits, each sod representing 500 years of history.

Turf cutters tended to work in gangs, cutting one man's turf and then moving on to the next. One man would be stationed at either end using a left or a right handed sleán while two other men with pitchforks would toss the cut sods to the spreading out area where they were dried.

During the Second World War, one champion turf cutter could work so quickly that he could have six sods in the air at once. After a few days when they were dry enough to handle, the sods were stacked with 3-4 sods lined up and one on top to stabilise the stack. This is called footing the turf.

After ten days' drying the sods were rearranged in stacks, twice as large, with the sods lying end to end. A few more days drying and they were ready to be built into ricks, about four feet across at the base. The stacks were left to dry throughout the summer months. Then they were brought to the roadside by pony, wheelbarrow or on the turf cutter's back and either left there or transported home. By the time they were burned the sods were half the size that they were when taken from the earth.

Peat cutting is now a rare activity because of the hard work involved, the availability of fuels that give out more heat and less ash and the increasing drive to conserve peat bogs. Good places to see cuttings are around Quiet Man Bridge, Glen Inagh and Roundstone Bog.

## **St Patrick's Discovery Point (Loch Eidhneach)**

### *St Patrick's Bed*

Legend has it that St Patrick spent the night on Mám Éan, the Pass of the Birds one of two passes over the Mám Tuirc mountains on one of his journeys through Ireland. Some say that he climbed the pass from the east, looked at the barren waste of Connemara, spent the night in a rocky niche in the hillside (St Patrick's bed) and moved on. One story claims that he fought a huge serpent and imprisoned it in a nearby lake: another tells of his driving a bull that had killed anyone who ventured into the pass into the lake.

There is a long tradition of pilgrimage. The site, often referred to as St Patrick's well or St Patrick's bed, encompasses two holy wells, a number of pilgrim stations, St. Patrick's bed and an altar of Connemara marble. In the 19th century ceremonies often ended in a battle between the men of Connemara and the men of the Joyce country, Pilgrimages all but died out because of the clergy's hostility to pilgrims' indulgence in whisky and poitin and competition from Reek Sunday, the Crough Patrick pilgrimage on the same day, the last Sunday in July.

Local priest Fr McGreal revived the custom forty years ago and gradually the community built Stations of the Cross, a statue of St Patrick with sheep beside the path and a small chapel.

Pilgrimages are held on St Patrick's Day, Good Friday, and Crom Dubh 1st Sunday in August, a festival celebrated by Irish speaking Connemara.

### *Turks and Pins*

Ice forged a route through the mountains creating the Inagh valley. To the right looking north are the Maam Turks. The highest peak is Binn idir an dà Log (702 metres), the peak between the two hollows. Beyond are the steep sloped Northern Turks.

Facing the Maam Turks on the other side of the valley is Connemara's most famous mountain range, the Twelve Bens or Pins. The rocks formed from sediments deposited in a tropical sea between 700 and 550 million years ago. Upheavals in the earth's crust turned the sediments into crystalline schists.

The mountain tops are of more weather resistant quartzite, which gives them their white appearance especially Ben Brack and Benbaun, the white peak which at 729 metres is Galway's highest peak.

'One of the most wild and beautiful districts these wild mountains over which the clouds as they pass or the sunshine as it comes and goes casts such a variety of tint, light and shadow.'

- William Makepeace Thackeray, 1842

### *A Giant's Stroll*

Although there are in fact at least 20 peaks named ben in the area, the idea of twelve dates back to Roderic O'Flaherty who wrote in 1684 of 'the twelve high mountaines of Bennabeola'. Giant Beola, chief of the mythical tribe of Fir Bolg, used to walk the Twelve Pins. Every sunrise he saluted his friend and fellow giant on Aranmore off the Donegal coast. One morning Beola overslept and his friend threw a stone to wake him. Beola was so angry that he hurled a shower of stones back, thus explaining the Connemara granite blocks on Aranmore. According to legend Beola is buried in the village of Toombeola.

### *The Connemara Blackface*

Sheep graze the lower slope of the mountains. They are Connemara blackface, Ireland's most common breed of domestic sheep, first introduced from Scotland in the mid 19th century. They are tough, hardy and adaptable, their long coarse wool shielding them from moisture and biting winds. Both sexes have horns, black legs and black faces, sometimes with white markings.

Blackface lambs traditionally mature at a slower rate than most sheep, giving their lean meat, from a diet of natural herbs, heathers and grasses, a distinctive taste unique to the region west of Lough Corrib. In 2007 Connemara Hill Lamb Ltd, the producers' organisation, was awarded the European Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status.

## **Lough Corrib Discovery Point (Glann Road)**

*An Island for Every Day of the Year*

*Thick, Black and Squelching*

Unlike the raised peat bogs of central Ireland, much of inland Connemara is made up of Atlantic blanket bog. The landscape has changed little over the last 8000 years. Rain washed away nutrients resulting in the soil becoming acidic. Thick, black peat slowly formed from the squashed remains of dead plants, especially sphagnum mosses which retain rainwater like a sponge. In places the peat is now deep enough to bury two double decker buses. As dead plants sink and new shoots grow, the peat is still growing, though only at the rate of a millimetre a year. As organic matter does not rot, peat bogs are a time capsule preserving ancient tree branches and roots and even skeletons.

People have battled to yield resources from the bog for centuries. As well as the scars of turf cutting banks, tamhnógs, patches of bright green grass among the heather are evidence that the ground was once cultivated. Despite their appearance blanket bogs support a remarkable diversity of plants including bog cotton and the 'meat eating' sundew. Places where blanket bog dominates the landscape include Roundstone, between Ros a' Mhil and Maam Cross and the Inagh Valley

Lough Corrib is the second largest stretch of inland water in Ireland, covering an area of 180 sq km. Forty five km long and 21 km at its widest point between Cong and Oughterard, it is studded with at least 365 islands. It is linked to the sea at Galway by the fast flowing Corrib river. Its geology divides it in two. The northwest comprises hard acidic rocks like granites and schists and is by far the deepest part. The shallow south-eastern arm of the lough overlies limestone. The lough is world famous for its trout and salmon fishing. People living on the shores are sometimes known as Corribians.

*Watch out for the Garda*

Connemara is the spiritual home of poitin, often billed as the world's strongest alcoholic drink and supposedly introduced by St Patrick. After it was banned in 1661, production took to the hills and the islands of Lough Corrib, away from the watchful eye of the local Garda. Made from potato since the 19th century, the drink is named after the portable still or small pot (poitin) in which the liquor was distilled. Today two distilleries are licenced to distil poitin.

### *Dabbling and Ducking*

A stop at one of the laybys along Lough Corrib may mean an encounter with some of the many birds who live on the water and in the reed beds. Breeding birds include tufted duck, red-breasted merganser, pochard, shoveler, common scoter, great-crested grebe, black-headed and common gull, common and Arctic tern, lapwing, common sandpiper, redshank and ringed plover. In winter there are internationally important concentrations of pochard, tufted duck and coot and large flocks of lapwing and golden plover. Whooper swan and Greenland white-fronted geese are also present.

### *'It's a Twenty Pounder'*

Lough Corrib is world famous for its trout and salmon fishing. Salmon make their way up the Corrib river from Galway at the end of a journey which has taken them from Nova Scotia back to their home waters to breed. Eels travel from the Sargasso Sea. It is not only anglers who are on the lookout for salmon. They make a feast for the otters living on the banks.

### *Island of the Stranger*

Reached by boat trips in summer from Cong and Oughterard, Inchagoill, the island of the stranger, is the most famous and fourth largest of the islands on Lough Corrib. In the ruins of St Patrick's church is the 5th century Stone of Lugnad. It is inscribed in Old Gaelic 'The standing stone of Lugnad Son of Limanin'. The legend is that St Patrick and his nephew, who was also his navigator, were banished here by the Druids when St Patrick came to Cong to introduce Christianity. Nephew Lugnad died on the island: the stone is in the shape of a rudder. There are also the ruins of Templenanevee, the church of the saints, built by the Augustinian monks of Cong c1180 as a retreat. Its Romanesque door depicts the heads of the ten saints of Lough Corrib.

### *Crossing for the GAA final*

Inchagoill was part of the Guinness family estate. The island's last inhabitant was caretaker Tommie Nevin who lived here alone with his dog from 1931-48. He rowed to Cong or Oughterard every fortnight using the lights from Ashford Castle as a guide.

## **Little Gaelic Kingdom Discovery Point (An Gort Mór)**

### *The Little Gaelic Kingdom*

'The Little Gaelic Kingdom' was how Dublin born Pádraig Pearse (1879 –1916) described the area that he loved around the Ros Muc peninsula. Pearse was a poet, writer, educator, promoter of the Irish language and revolutionary. He was executed after the failure of the 1916 Easter Rising. As an educator who founded his own bilingual school outside Dublin Pearse believed that language is a vibrant, living thing that is best taught through immersion in daily life.

As an incomer he thought that the West represented the pure sense of Irishness embracing landscape, language, culture and heritage. From an artistic family he identified with the idea of 'sublime landscape', popular with painters of his day. He was the first Irish short story writer and made many references to place names and wildlife around Ros Muc. Only in the last four years before his death did he become a political radical

From 1909-1915 he had a summer retreat at Ros Muc He built his cottage in the vernacular style, it being the first in the region to be located for the view. He had a rather romantic view of the local 'peasantry' compared with the actuality of rural poverty.

The Guinness's gave him a radio to while away the lonely hours. In 1938 when County Galway and County Kerry played in the All Ireland football final, at least 100 people gathered in his house to listen on his dry battery radio, a rare commodity at the time.

### *The Eachuisce and the Golden Shoe*

There are many folktales of the eachuisce, the lake-dwelling water horses. The story goes that a local woman from near Lough Corrib married a giant. Their mare seduced a white eachuisce. They shod him with gold shoes. All was well until a servant stole the shoes. The stallion killed the giant and the lady drowned before the eachuisce returned below the lake.

The landscape of lakes, granite outcrops and bog with views of sea and mountain provided him with a place to withdraw and contemplate and inspired his writing.

'The Twelve Pins came in sight and Pearse waved his hand here and there over the land, naming lake, mountain and district away to the Joyce Country under its purple mist.'

- Desmond Ryan former pupil of Pádraig Pearse on a visit to Ros Muc, 1915

### *The Wild Earl and Lady Dudley's Nurses*

A few miles away among lake-strewn moorland is Screebe Lodge, a fishing and shooting lodge built by the Berridge family in 1865. Connemara was the sporting playground of the wealthy in the late 19th century. At Screebe sea trout fishing was first recorded in 1865 and four years later the salmon catch was 500.

When the Earl of Dudley, known for his wild behaviour as a young man and his extravagant lifestyle, became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in 1902 it was de rigeur to have a summer retreat in the west. He had married Rachel, the daughter of a London banker who had set up a millinery business with her divorced mother.

Society was shocked by the marriage referring to Rachel as 'the shop girl Countess'. While living at Screebe in 1903 Lady Dudley established a fund to help pay for district nurses in rural areas of the west of Ireland. She tirelessly raised money for her scheme through garden parties, her links with high society ensuring that nursing associations were seen as fashionable charities.

The first Lady Dudley nurse in Connemara was Elizabeth Cusack, appointed to Bealadangan (inland from Lettermore) in August 1903. It was a tough life: They travelled by bicycle along unpaved roads or walked across bogs and mountains to reach remote dwellings. They worked seven days a week, constantly on call, with just a few weeks' holiday each year. The nurse had to visit infectious patients in their home, change dressings, inspect school children, deliver babies and give child welfare advice. She could go a week without getting to her own bed, catching naps in patients' homes while waiting to deliver babies. Lady Dudley nurses continued in Connemara until 1974 after the creation of the public health nursing service.

Lady Dudley drowned while swimming near Screebe House in 1920. She is said to haunt the house.

### *Seeds from Wine Barrels*

There are some rarities among the plants growing around Ros Muc, colourful in summer with its gorse, fuscias and heathers. The bell-heather like St Dabeoc's heath is only found in Galway and Mayo. Like St Patrick's cabbage, it is one of 15 wildflowers native to Ireland but mainly absent from Britain known as the Lusitanian Flora. These plants are common in Northern Spain and Portugal. Unlikely to have survived since before the Ice Age, there is no explanation why they are here. One theory is that the seeds were carried over from Spain to Galway in wine barrels.

### *'The Little Black Donkey'*

Donkeys were Connemara's workhorses, being able to graze in the roughest of pastures. They carried creels of turf and pulled carts of seaweed to fertilise the fields. They were immortalised in the children's story *M'asal Beag Dubh*, *The Little Black Donkey* written by Pádraic Ó Conaire, (1882-1928) a pioneer of the Irish literary revival who was brought up in Ros Muc.

The story may have inspired young Orson Welles to spend the summer of 1931 jaunting through Connemara with a donkey called Sheeog before making his first acting appearance at the Gate Theatre in Dublin.

### *Up River to Spawn*

It is difficult in this part of Connemara to tell where land ends and water begins. The Screebe fishing system alone comprises almost two dozen loughs interwoven by a small river. From the mid 19th century landowners and their agents devised ways of encouraging the lucrative salmon fishing business by building salmon ladders and introducing hatcheries. At the same time as Patrick Pearse was fostering Irish culture, the fishing beats were the preserve of Edwardian scions of Empire.

## **Coral Sands Discovery Point (Gorteen Bay)**

### *Walking on Coral*

Connemara is famous for its white Atlantic strands, made up of shells ground into sand by time and tide. It has some even more remarkable white beaches which scrunch underfoot. Although known as 'coral' beaches, they are actually formed from the dead fragments of a strange hard seaweed called maerl, crushed by the waves and bleached by the sun.

Maerl belongs to the family of red seaweeds called 'coralline' algae which also form the hard, pink coatings lining rock pools. These seaweeds deposit lime in their cell walls as they grow, giving them a hard, brittle skeleton. Living maerl is a beautiful purple-pink and forms spiky underwater 'carpets' on the seabed. It provides a habitat for many marine creatures and a nursery for young scallops. Old skeletons of dead maerl build up into a deep gravel beneath the living maerl. These beds are good places for juvenile animals including sea urchins, sea cucumbers, anemones and worms to hide from predators.

(Note if used: need to check with expert as to whether the beaches are formed of maerl or foraminifera.)

### *A Moving Landscape*

Gorteen Beach lies back to back with the crescent of Dog's Bay. They are joined together by a narrow spit of sand ending in a granite island. This spit formation is known as a tombolo. Currents have washed up the calcium carbonate shells of minute, single-celled marine animals from deeper water into the channel between the island and the mainland.

Over time the accumulation of these shells has formed the tombolo. There is only one other tombolo in Ireland in County Donegal. The landscape is constantly on the move. With slowly rising sea levels, winter storm waves cut into the dune front. The wind gouges out corridors, gullies and blow-outs through the dune ridge. Recently the local community has been active in protecting the dunes against erosion.

### *Who's Taking a Dip?*

The beach is a great place to bird watch. Common and sandwich terns nest in the dunes. These sea swallows are the ultimate sun worshippers, summering in Connemara and wintering in Antarctica.

Common, black backed and herring gull wheel overhead and red breasted merganser and shelduck swim in the bay. The bobbing head of an Atlantic seal may appear on the water.

#### *A Carpet of Flowers*

In spring a carpet of flowers covers the coastal grasslands behind the beach known as machair. Machair is only found in the west of Ireland and of Scotland. The lime-rich fertile topsoil is made up of shells blown inshore and ground down by winter storms.

Sea pinks growing out of cracks in the cliffs give way to meadow flowers including orchids, harebell and eyebright. Yellow iris, primrose and bog pimpernel thrive on damper ground while the peaty boundary supports milkwort, bog cotton and midge-eating sundew.

#### *Galway's First Settlers*

Buried in the dunes are the rubbish tips of Galway's first settlers, seasonal travellers who moved along the coast by boat and camped where food was plentiful. They left heaps of shells like limpets and mussels to be covered by the sand.

From 1500-600 BC, permanent settlers left their mark on the Connemara coast - stone rows, burials, standing stones, cooking sites and cairns. Some were designed to be seen from a great distance; others to be seen from each other. Were they route markers, boundary stones, markers for the graves of important people or points from which to observe the planets?

## Seal Island Discovery Point (Iomaí)

### *Hanging out to Dry*

The rocky coastline and offshore islands around here are a good place to look for Atlantic seals. An adult female is seven metres long with a slender head and shoulders. Her coat is typically mid-grey, paler on the underside, with large dark markings. The male is nearly half a metre longer with a heavy 'Roman' nose and thickset 'shoulders'. He has a very dark, finely mottled coat. Every seal has a unique set of markings. Seals spend most of their lives at sea. Between fishing expeditions adult seals haul out on rocks and sandbanks, most having favourite basking spots. In late autumn they come ashore to rear their single pup, breed and moult.

Seals inspired poet and Galway hooker operator Richard Murphy, born in 1927, to write.

'Sometimes they sink and merge into black shoals;

Then rise for air, his muzzle on her neck,

Their winged feet intertwined as a fishtail.'

- Seals at High Island

### *A Holy Island*

At low tide you can walk or drive across to Omey Island. Although now only grazed by sheep in the 19th century it supported a community of several hundred. It has been a holy place for centuries as witnessed by its holy well and Teampal Feichin, a medieval granite church which lay buried under the sand until excavated in 1981.

It is dedicated to St. Feichin – the Little Raven - one of the most venerated saints of the early Irish church who died here of the yellow plague in 664AD, after founding a monastery at Cong. The Hillock of the Women is an ancient burial ground reserved for women only: St Feichin's mother is supposed to rest here. It is said that any man's body found buried here would be tossed up on the beach the following day. People are still buried in the island's cemetery.

### *Choughs, Cormorants and Corncrakes*

Cleggan is the ferry port for Innishbofin which lies offshore, its contours like a sleeping woman. Over 200 people still live on the island which before the Famine had a fishing community of around 1600. The name, the island of the white cow, recalls the legend of two fishermen who landed on the island when lost in thick fog. They lit a fire which dispersed the mist to reveal an old woman driving a white cow along the shingle. She struck the cow which turned to stone. The cow is said to rise every seven from the waters of Lough Bofin.

Walks traverse the island taking in the deep natural harbour fortified in Cromwellian times when the island was used as a prison for priests awaiting transportation after being found guilty of treason. They take in Iron Age forts, sea arches, stacks, a blow hole and the ruined medieval church on the site of St Colman's monastery which he founded in 665AD.

Inishbofin is a bird watcher's paradise. Breeding birds include the rare corncrake, common and Arctic tern, fulmars, shags, guillemots, cormorants, several species of gulls, Manx shearwaters and choughs.

### *Sylvia Plath's Last Holiday*

American poet Sylvia Plath spent her last summer in Cleggan, at the suggestion of her friend and fellow poet Richard Murphy. She wrote of her time in Connemara: 'Ireland is heaven, utterly unspoiled, emerald sea washing in fingers among green fields, white sand, wild coast, cows, friendly people, honey-tasting whisky, peat fires that smell like spiced bread – thank God I found it. Just in time.' Sadly it was to prove not just in time as she committed suicide shortly thereafter.

### *Smuggler Extraordinaire*

Cleggan is a vantage point over the Atlantic. Its signal station was built to look out for enemy ships during the Napoleonic wars. The coast guard station is one of a chain built in the 19th century round the coast of Ireland to discourage smuggling and revenue evasion. Connemara's deep inlets and rocky islands were a haven for smugglers. Everyone from landowner to fisherman was involved in the trade including wine, brandy, tobacco and other luxury goods.

Possibly the most famous smuggler and pirate of all was Captain George O'Malley who left a rambling account of his adventures. Even in the 1820s it is said that law enforcers from Clifden were afraid to go to Cleggan because of the armed bands of O'Malleys.

'The sea roared and the strong waves lashed,

The clouds gathered and the mist came down.

If the boat planks could speak what a story they'd tell

Of the nearness of death and how they saved us all.

- Traditional folk song told by Captain O'Malley

### *The Cleggan Fishing Disaster*

On 28th October, 1927 25 local fishermen drowned during a gale which arose without warning while they were mackerel fishing in Cleggan bay. The death of so many breadwinners devastated the area: the nearby village of Rossadilisk lost sixteen men and was subsequently abandoned. The disaster made international news and funds were raised from as far away as the US and Australia. The disaster is remembered in stories and poems such as Richard Murphy's the Cleggan Disaster.

### *Head in his Hands - St Ceannanach*

The name Cleggan comes from the Gaelic An Cloigeann meaning a head. Local folklore however believes that the name honours St Ceannanach, one of the earliest Christian missionaries to the west of Ireland. He angered a local pagan tyrant who beheaded him. There is a heap of stones at the east end of Cleggan, one of which is supposed to be stained with his blood. St Ceannanach then picked his head, took it to the Holy Well in Clooncree, washed it and lay down to die.

## **Killary Harbour Discovery Point (Killary Harbour)**

### *Ireland's Only Fjord*

Dominated to the north by Mweelrea (814 metres), the smooth bald hill, Killary Harbour is Ireland's only fjord. It was created during the last Ice Age when glaciers carved out a U-shaped valley. As the ice melted, sea levels rose. The newly formed glacial valley was flooded by the sea and the fjord, or drowned valley, was created. The nine mile long fjord with an almost constant depth of 13 fathoms provides a very safe anchorage, being sheltered from storms by mountain walls. In recent years it has provided shelter for fish cages for salmon and trout farming and rafts for mussels. Cetaceans regularly enter the Harbour and the clear waters of its mouth are popular with divers.

### *Smugglers and the Devil's Pass*

It is said that smugglers landing contraband at Little Killary used to carry it over the Salrock Pass, a rugged gap in the hills above Foher. According to legend, the gap was formed when the Devil dragged the local St Roc over the hills with a chain.

### *Fleet Ahoy*

In 1903 Edward VII and Queen Alexandra paid an official visit to Connemara. The British naval fleet anchored at Killary while the royal couple disembarked for a sightseeing tour that included Kylemore Abbey and a Connemara marble quarry. The presence of the fleet tied in with the dream of Mitchell Henry, owner of Kylemore Abbey, to make the Fjord home to the North Atlantic naval fleet. He actively campaigned for the project and drew up infrastructure plans which had they gone ahead would have made the Leenane area very different from today. The invention of the submarine ended his dream as a single submarine could destroy the fleet in the protected fjord.

### *Writer's Retreat*

This remote part of Connemara was favoured by writers as a place to escape and concentrate on their creativity. Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein lived and worked in Rosroe Cottage (now Killary Harbour Youth Hostel) in 1948. He wrote of finding 'the last pool of darkness in Europe'.

## **Maam Valley Discovery Point (An Mam)**

### *Opening up Connemara*

Alexander Nimmo, (1783-1832) opened up Connemara to travellers, traders, farmers and developers: 'he made its crooked ways straight.' Surveying the landscape he knew where and how to build roads and settlements.

Born in Kirkcaldy in Scotland, Nimmo gained experience of surveying and civil engineering under Thomas Telford, 'the father of civil engineering', mapping the county boundaries of the Highlands. He must have been familiar with Telford's innovations in road building - raising the foundation of the road in the centre to act as a drain for water and improving the method of building roads with broken stones by analysing stone thickness, road traffic, road alignment and gradient slopes.

Following a Parliamentary commission to investigate the practicality of draining and cultivating the bogs of Ireland, on Telford's recommendation from 1811 Nimmo mapped vast tracts of Ireland travelling on horseback or on foot. (Maps in National Library of Ireland).

Oscar Wilde's father William had a summer house Moytura on Loch Corrib near Cong and a hunting lodge, Illaunroe, on a wooded promontory beside the road along Lough Fee inland from Killary Harbour. Oscar Wilde stayed there in 1876-8 and enjoyed fishing on the Lough.

### *The Famine Road*

This part of Connemara was devastated by the Great Famine of 1845-9 when the potato crop failed and people died of starvation or disease. Vestiges of ruined buildings, abandoned settlements and field walls remain as a memorial to the disaster. During the famine a food depot was established in the customs house to feed the starving. In 1847 a member of the Relief Committee of the Society of Friends reported of one township: 'the men looked gaunt and haggard, stamped with the vivid mark of hunger, the children cried with pain and the women in the cabins were too weak to stand.' To provide work, funds were provided to build a pier at the head of the fjord and what became known as the Famine Road along its southern shore.

He attempted to address the problem of poverty in Ireland by the example of the Scottish Commission for the Highland Roads and Bridges carried out by Thomas Telford.

He moved to Connemara in 1813 thus starting a love affair with the region. He recommended the development of the lakes in the Inagh Valley, the creation of a port at the mouth of the Ballynahinch river and the laying down of roads. The Bogs Commission completed its work in 1814 and Nimmo devoted the next few years to private practice. In 1820 he was appointed as engineer by the Commission for Irish Fisheries and in 1822 Engineer to the Western District which largely covered Connemara.

In the early 19th century 'roads' in Connemara were very narrow and rough often taking a wandering route to avoid building bridges and only suitable for travel by horseback or foot. They were little more than mountain paths and bridleways along the foothills. The authorities showed little interest in what they saw as the lawless wilderness west of Oughterard.

Nimmo developed carriage roads from Oughterard to Clifden, Clifden to Roundstone and from Maam Cross to Leenane.

Funded largely by public money, his endeavours created work for thousands of people who in the 1820s were suffering near famine conditions. During construction the roads were so congested with waggons of goods that they provided a significant hindrance. He also built at least ten piers around the Connemara coastline and founded the new village of Roundstone, bringing in Scots families to establish a fishing industry.

Nimmo was a very private individual, on good terms with the landed families in Connemara such as the Blakes and the Martins. He also had a house in Dublin where he died aged 49, his death possibly hastened by over-work. His Irish legacy includes over 500 miles of roads, 30 bridges and 53 or more piers.

### *The Centre of Operations*

Nimmo built Corrib Lodge, a symmetrical house and office at Maam with a view down his straight new road from Maam Cross. The house had two outside stairs, one for Nimmo's workmen to enter and one for them to exit after getting paid on the balcony between the stairs. There were stores and workshops attached and living quarters above for his supervisors.

After Nimmo's death Corrib Lodge became an inn ideally placed to serve road travellers, sportsmen and engineers from the local iron mines as well as the pleasure and service boats that sailed up the Corrib from Galway. Today the building is Keane's Bar.

### *Going Going Gone*

Flocks of sheep, Connemara ponies, ducks and donkeys regularly made their way along the road between Maam and Maam Cross, the Piccadilly of Connemara. For centuries it was the marketplace where livestock and goods were traded, with sheep and pony fairs being held throughout the year. Sheep farmers did deals at the bar counter. There is still an October Fair where ducks, hens, rabbits, donkeys, ponies and horses are traded. According to Mrs Ann Burke of Clonbur, 'If you want to sell anything, even an old goat, go to a crossroads.'

### *Booleys and Summer Camps*

'They dwell for the most part next the borders of the country where commonly is the best land and in Summer time they drive their cattle to the mountaines, where such as looke to the cattle live in small cabbins for that season.'

So wrote Roderick O'Flaherty, the last of the O'Flaherty clan in 1684 of booleys (buaile). His ancestors regularly decamped to the hills from their fortresses in summer to graze their cattle.

The tradition of the booley, moving cattle to higher pastures in summer, was carried out until the early 20th century. Land near shore was unenclosed and farmers did not want cattle wandering into grain crops. They moved them to higher pastures where the grass was sweeter such as the slopes of the Maam Turks. Women stayed with the cattle and sheep over the summer as it was too far for calves to travel daily from the farm.

In May the men would build them a hut of wood and reeds with a door of heather or sticks. Five or six women shared a hut sleeping on heather mattresses and dining on milk, oat bread, porridge and potatoes. They passed the time between milking by knitting or sewing. They sang by the fire and danced in the evening, often joined by lads from the local villages. This gave rise to the saying 'You brought the dance from the booley with you.'

## The Quiet Man Bridge (Quiet Man Bridge)

*The Quiet Man (film)*

The famous bridge which features in the film was built in the 1840s possibly as part of famine relief works: previously local people had to jump the river. John Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952) tells the story set in the 1920s of an Irish American boxer played by John Wayne who returns to Innisfree to claim his farm. He falls in love with the landowner's sister played by Maureen O'Hara but her brother denies her, her dowry. Eventually he pays up and after brawling the two brothers-in-law become best friends. The bridge features at the start of the film where Wayne sits on the bridge, dreams of home and hears his dead mother describe White O'Morn Cottage.

### *Trivia*

John Ford's father came from An Spidéal where the ruins of his cottage survive.

'Every Sunday he'd call to the old house and bring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Victor McLaglen and Barry Fitzgerald with him. He'd bring them all to the house and my mother would make them all tea. ... Ford used to fill John Wayne up with a lot of lies.'

- Bartley Feeney recalling Ford's visits to his family home in An Spidéal: two of Feeney's sisters and a

cousin were extras in the film.

The film coincided with the setting up of the Irish Tourist Board in 1952. The lush green countryside portrayed in the film influenced travelogues and the attraction of generations of tourists.

It was the first film shot in colour outside the USA.

Winner of two Oscars, *The Quiet Man* regularly features in Top 100 film listings.

The film was shot around the Maam Valley, Ashford Castle, Thoor Ballylee Castle, Lettergesh Beach (horse racing scene) and Cong.

In *ET* (1982) the alien watches *The Quiet Man* on television and becomes nostalgic for his own home.

It is one of the few Hollywood films to feature the Irish language.

The original White o' Morn cottage close to the bridge is now a ruin, many stones having been removed by Quiet Man fans

## **Pirate Castle Discovery Point (Rinn Mhaoile)**

### *The Pirate Queen's Castle*

The castle was one of the western outposts of the O'Flaherty empire. The sea queen - pirate, sefarer, trader and chieftain - Grace O'Malley reputedly lived here after marrying Donal O'Flaherty. Born in 1530 in Co Mayo she always wanted to be a sailor. When her sea captain father refused to take her on a sailing trip, legend has it that Grace cut off her hair and dressed as a boy. Her father and brother nicknamed her 'Grainne Mhaol', 'Bald Grace,. Eventually her father relented. She rescued him from attack by English pirates while returning from Spain.

Grace married twice. Her first husband whom she married aged 16 was Donal O'Flaherty, the son and heir of the chieftain. They lived for a time at Renvyle Castle: it is said that Grace accidentally demolished part of the castle when firing a cannon at sea. After Donal's death Grace continued her adventurous career, trying to keep the English from invading her lands. She was even bold enough to negotiate in person with Elizabeth 1. The Battle of Kinsale in 1601 put an end to Irish resistance and signalled the end of the Gaelic world of Grace O'Malley.

### *Whale and Dolphin Watching*

Like much of north Connemara the Renvyle Peninsula is fringed by Atlantic beaches and offshore islands. The clear waters reveal to divers marine life, caves, sunken reefs and shipwrecks. Boat trips along the coast offer the opportunity to spot sea monsters (cetaceans), our largest mammals. Seventeen different species of whale and six of dolphin have been known to frequent the waters round here. The offshore islands like the cliffs on the west side of Innishturk echo to the din of nesting seabirds from April until July – kittiwakes, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and puffins

### *Seven Royal Daughters*

The ruined medieval church is dedicated to the seven royal daughters. Who they were is lost in the mists of time. They may have been the daughters of a Leinster king or of an Omev Island chief. They went round the Connemara coast preaching, leaving their name on a cursing stone and holy wells at Renvyle, Cleggan Head, Ailebrack, Mweenish Island and Doon Hill. According to tradition the King built the church in thanksgiving for the cure of his daughters at a nearby holy well.

## **Aran View Discovery Point (Ros a' Mhíl)**

### *Piers and Peat*

### *Artistic Circles*

In 1917 Oliver St John Gogarty (1878-1957) surgeon, wit, statesman, writer and Buck Mulligan in James Joyce's *Ulysses* bought the former home of the Blake family. Here he was the centre of an artistic circle including playwright J.M. Synge and Lady Gregory, co-founder of Dublin's Abbey Theatre. Augustus John painted his host and also fellow guest W. B. Yeats. Yeats presented his play 'At the Hawk's Well' to forty guests in the drawing room. When the Republican Army burned down the house in 1923, Gogarty rebuilt it as a hotel.

'If they have turf and potatoes enough, they reckon themselves provided for: if a few herrings, a little oatmeal, and, above all, the milk of a cow be added, they are rich, they can enjoy themselves and dance with a light heart, after their day's work is over.'

- Martha Louise Blake, Renvyle House, 1823-1824

'When Yeats was on his honeymoon he came to stay with us at Renvyle, a lovely sea-grey house in Connemara on the edge of the Atlantic at the extreme edge of Europe.'

- Oliver St. John Gogarty

'the most beautiful landscape in the world'

- Augustus John, artist of the Renvyle Peninsula

Ros a' Mhíl is the ferry port for the Aran Islands: their histories have been irrevocably linked for centuries. Unlike most of Connemara the bedrock of the Aran Islands is limestone rather than the granite that underlies much of Connemara. The strength of Atlantic gales ensured that the islands were virtually treeless. Islanders, therefore, were dependent on mainland Connemara for fuel as well as essential supplies.

From the 17th century Ros a' Mhíl had a simple landing place. Alexander Nimmo built a pier of granite capped with limestone from the Aran Islands to encourage the herring fishing industry. By 1824 100 boats sailed from his harbour. Nimmo described the people of nearby Cill Chiarán Bay as being 'principally employed in making kelp and preparing turf for sale in Galway and the county of Clare, where on the limestone land this article is scarce and dear; some limestone is returned as ballast, and the trade thus formed occupies a great many boats, which on a favourable appearance of herrings are all employed in the fishery...The transport of goods or people is therefore entirely done by water.'

Gradually the old pier, popular with artists, became too small to cope with the size of modern fishing boats and the scale of tourism to the Aran Islands. A new concrete pier was built in the 1970s with a fish auction hall and cold store but soon it could no longer cope with the ferries needed to make 300,000 passenger journeys to the islands. A new passenger terminal opened in 2010.

### *Famine Villages*

The vice of famine and greedy landowners gripped many people in the area. For much of the 19th century most of the local population were landless peasants who strove to carve out a few fields on the rocky hill of the peninsula: families worked together to farm, fish and house themselves. Life was lived at subsistence level, and famine was a constant threat.

Landless people moved into Tóin na Chnoic at the foot of the peninsula, building little huts and attempting to cultivate the land with ash which they created by burning the top layer of turf from the peat bogs. They survived the Great Famine rather better than many in Connemara as they could supplement their diet with fish and their potatoes remained relatively healthy.

Famine plagued them in other ways. Starving people on the move from other parts of Connemara stole sheep, potatoes and oats from the smallholdings which were struggling to feed themselves.

In financial difficulties the hated Blake landowners drove the Tóin na Chnoic settlers further east to the even more barren bog of Baile an tSléibhe. Today abandoned villages recall not only the famine but the aftermath of poverty and emigration.

### *Watching out for Napoleon*

During the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Ireland was on the alert against the threat of invasion. By 1810 the French were preparing to send a large-scale expedition to Ireland, along the lines of the attempted invasion during the Irish rebellion of 1798. An invading force could slip into Galway Bay, only a six day march from Dublin.

Three Martello towers were built along the south coast of Galway Bay at Ros a' Mhil, Kinvara and Aughinish between 1811-14 to supplement the chain of signal stations along the coast of Connemara. Each took around six months to construct.

The Ros a' Mhil tower is 40 ft high and 30 ft in diameter. The tower was designed as a bulwark to hold back invaders until such time as a regiment could be moved to the area. Thick walls, stout stonework and a slit-like door at first storey level ensured that it would be difficult to capture. The walls were built of Aran limestone, whitewashed to make the tower visible from the sea by day. It had a water tank, a magazine, stores and accommodation for an officer and thirty men with additional houses behind the tower. A large cannon on the roof offered a 365 degree range of fire. The French never came although the Martello tower, known locally as the Battery, was manned until the 1860s.

### *Deep Sea Monster*

In the Irish language, the area round Ros a' Mhil means 'the peninsula of the sea monster or whale'. Today the port is one of five national fishery harbour centres in Ireland. The regular catch of nearly 100 boats includes herring, mackerel, lobster and crab. Some more exotic species have been landed here. One boat landed a *Thalassobathia pelagica*, a deep sea fish so rare that it does not have an English language name. Less than two dozen have ever been recorded on the planet. The fish likes to keep company with monster jellyfish known as *Stygiomedusa gigantea*.

It was caught by the Rossaveal vessel Maria Magdalena III on a fortnight long prawn trip. Other rare catches have included silver dory and a rare species of shad, a large member of the herring family.

### *Making their Own Music*

The people of Ros a' Mhil 'would entertain themselves with games and music. In the winter pipers would come to the area and people would gather together in one of the houses for music, dancing, singing and storytelling. A piper would stay in one of the houses for around a fortnight and then move on to another village.'

- Beartlaí Ó Maoileoin, interviewed in the late 1970s

### *School's Out - Coláiste Chonnact*

Summer camps and colleges provide young people with a 2-3 week immersive experience in the Irish language and traditional culture through formal and informal learning and activities. Coláiste Chamuis at Camus was founded by Gearóid Denvir in 1973, with 52 students, 2 teachers and 10 host families. A second centre was opened in An Tulach in 1985 and the third centre at Ros a' Mhíl in 1992 where the College's headquarters also opened in 2000. Over 1500 students from all over Ireland attend its summer courses.

## **An Spidéal Discovery Point (An Spidéal)**

### *Sailing at Seven*

The South Connemara coastline is made up of deep inlets, islands and reefs. It has a remarkable ratio of shoreline to land area, the actual length of the shoreline proving virtually unmeasurable in its complexity. Wherever there was safe harbour, sometimes little more than a flat ledge of rock, there would be a boat. It is estimated that there are a hundred piers, quays and slips. The old quay at Spidéal was built by Alexander Nimmo in the early 19th century as a way of bringing new wealth from fishing into the area.

### *The Last Oak Woodlands in the West*

Leafy woodlands are rare in rocky and barren Connemara. For strollers, Bearna provides three woodland experiences in one. As well as a beech wood, the mixed wood includes native trees like ash, alder, birch and oak, some of the last surviving in the West of Ireland. In spring the dawn chorus, the sound of the cuckoo and the scent of bluebells and wild garlic makes the wood a special place. The wet woodland with alder, ash and grey willow is more open with damp-loving flowers like meadowsweet, water horsetail and yellow flag.

The alders are festooned with lichens which thrive in the clean, moist air. Insects and beetles thrive by the streams, on leaf litter and on fungi, providing rich pickings for bats and 37 different species of birds

### *A Land of Stone*

From An Spidéal the classic south Connemara landscape opens up. It is a land of stone. Wind, erosion and peat workings have exposed the granite bedrock. At the end of the last Ice Age, melting glaciers carried huge boulders called erratics down the hill sides scattering them as if they were pebbles thrown by a giant. The rocky coastline creates its own complexity of natural harbours, headlands and reefs. Farmers for centuries have cleared stones from the fields to enclose them with dry stone dykes. These are built without mortar, leaving gaps to allow the strength of the wind to diffuse.

### *The Connemara Cradle Song*

'Oh, winds of the night, may your fury be crossed  
May no one who's dear to our island be lost

Blow the winds gently, calm be the foam  
Shine the light brightly and guide them back home

Hear the wind blow love, hear the wind blow  
Lean your head over and hear the wind blow

The currachs are sailing way out on the blue  
Laden with herring of silvery hue  
Silver the herring and silver the sea  
And soon there'll be silver for baby and me.'

- Traditional

### *The Galway Hooker Races*

At summer weekends up to 100 Galway hookers race along the South Connemara coast with the racing season culminating in Cruinniú na mBád (the Festival of the Boats) held off Kinvara in mid-August. The festival has been held since 1978 with some of the restored boats being nearly 200 years old. During the festival some boats are laden with turf, reflecting their traditional role in taking turf to the Aran Islands.

Ros na Rún

Ros na Rún is the Irish soap opera produced for Irish language TV channel TG4. It is set in An Spidéal and is broadcast as far away as Philadelphia and the isle of Lewis in Scotland where Scottish Gaelic subtitles are provided.

### *The Last of the O'Flaherties*

An era of Irish history died with Roderic O' Flaherty (1629 – 1718). He was the last of the O'Flaherty clan chiefs whose motto was 'Fortune favours the strong' and the last de jure Lord of Connacht. He inherited Maigh Cuillin Castle and estate part of which was confiscated by Oliver Cromwell in the 1650s. He lost the rest thanks to the deception of his son's father-in-law, Richard 'Nimble Dick' Martin of Ross. He died in poverty at Park, Spidéal.

Unlike most of his clan he was a highly respected historian and writer in Latin, English and Irish. One of the stranger myths he described in his history of Connaught 1684 was the sea island of O'Brasil. 'From the Isles of Aran and the west continent (Connemara), often appears visible that enchanted island called O'Brasil ... Whether it be real and firm land, kept hidden by special ordinance of God, as the terrestrial paradise, or else some illusion of airy clouds appearing on the surface of the sea, or the craft of evil spirits, is more than our judgements can sound out.'

# **APPENDIX 2**

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# APPENDIX 3

## Supporting Car Park Improvement matrix

	SCP - Aughnanure Castle	SCP - Ballynahinch Lake (Upper)	SCP - Barnadrig Bay	SCP - Bearna Wood	SCP - Canal Bridge	SCP - Cappahoosh Lough	SCP - Carrick	SCP - Carrowmoreknock Pier	SCP - Cashel Ringfort	SCP - Cleggan Harbour	SCP - Coral Beach	SCP - Cornamona	SCP - Crocnaraw Lower	SCP - Crocnaraw Upper	SCP - Dawros Bridge	SCP - Derrylea Lough
Improvements req'd		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>General clean up</b>		✓		✓		✓					✓		✓		✓	
Gravel heaps removed						✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	
<b>Access</b>																
Fine		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Improve in / out					✓	✓						✓	✓		✓	
<b>Signage</b>	✓	x			x	x					✓	x	x	x	x	
Fine			✓				✓		✓	✓						✓
Rationlise clutter								✓								
Repair / replace	✓			✓							✓					
<b>Surfacing</b>	✓		✓					✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Repair						✓	✓									
Replace		✓			✓	✓							✓		✓	
Additional / new req'd													✓			
<b>Edging / kerbs</b>		x			x	x			x			✓	x	x		
Fine	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓					
Repair																✓
Replace																
Additional / new req'd		✓			✓	✓			✓				✓		✓	
<b>Walling</b>		✓			✓	x			x	x		✓	x	x	x	x
Fine	✓						✓				✓					
Repair		✓			✓			✓								
Replace		✓														
Additional / new req'd								✓	✓			x				
<b>Fencing</b>		✓			x	✓	x	x	x	x	x		✓		✓	x
Fine	✓		✓											✓		
Repair																
Replace		✓				✓						✓	✓		✓	
Additional / new req'd												x				
<b>Furniture</b>		x			x	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Fine			✓				✓				✓					
Replace																
Additional / new req'd								✓		✓				✓		
<b>Soft Works</b>		✓			x		✓					✓	x		x	x
Fine	✓		✓							✓	✓			✓		
Seeding						✓			✓							
Planting									✓							
Additional / new req'd						✓		✓	✓				✓			
<b>Size</b>		✓										✓				
Fine	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Increase													✓			
Decrease						✓										
Reshape					✓								✓		✓	
<b>Define boundaries</b>		✓			✓	✓			✓				✓		✓	
<b>New remote location req'd</b>												✓				
<b>Possible picnic site</b>					✓			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	

	SCP - Dogs Bay	SCP - Ferrybridge	SCP - Flannery Bridge	SCP - Glann Road (Derroura Wood)	SCP - Glann Road (End)	SCP - Glassilaun Beach	SCP - Golam Rock	SCP - Killary Harbour (Upper)	SCP - Kilmilkin	SCP - Knockferry Pier	SCP - Leenane View	SCP - Leitir Creamha Rua Wood	SCP - Lettergesh Beach	SCP - Lough Na Cuige Rua	SCP - Lough Awilla	SCP - Loch Inagh (Upper)
Improvements req'd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>General clean up</b>		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Gravel heaps removed	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓						✓		
<b>Access</b>																
Fine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
Improve in / out							✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		
<b>Signage</b>				✓			x	x						x	x	x
Fine	✓	✓								✓			✓			
Rationise clutter					✓	✓					✓					
Repair / replace			✓	✓					✓							
<b>Surfacing</b>				✓	✓	✓			✓				✓			x
Repair			✓					✓		✓	✓				✓	
Replace	✓										✓			✓		
Additional / new req'd										✓		✓				✓
<b>Edging / kerbs</b>	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Fine			✓													
Repair		✓														
Replace																
Additional / new req'd	✓									✓		✓	✓			
<b>Walling</b>	✓		✓	x	✓	✓		✓	x	✓	✓		x	x	✓	x
Fine		✓					✓									
Repair	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	
Replace					✓			✓			✓					
Additional / new req'd												✓				
<b>Fencing</b>	x		x	x	x	✓	x	✓		x	x			x	x	x
Fine													✓			
Repair		✓				✓			✓			✓				
Replace						✓		✓								
Additional / new req'd																
<b>Furniture</b>	x		x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fine																
Replace				✓												
Additional / new req'd	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
<b>Soft Works</b>	✓		x					x			x					
Fine		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	
Seeding	✓													✓		✓
Planting														✓		
Additional / new req'd												✓		✓		✓
<b>Size</b>																
Fine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓
Increase											✓	✓			✓	
Decrease														✓		
Reshape									✓		✓			✓	✓	
<b>Define boundaries</b>	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>New remote location req'd</b>																
<b>Possible picnic site</b>		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

	SCP - Loch Nafooy View _1	SCP - Loch Nafooy View _2	SCP - Loughaunwillian	SCP - Maamean_1	SCP - Maamean_2	SCP - Mannin Bay	SCP - Recess	SCP - Ros an Mhil Harbour	SCP - Screeb Bridge	SCP - Sky Road Beach	SCP - Sky Road Quay	SCP - Spideal Road Viewpoint	SCP - Tra Sallin	SCP - White Strand	SCP - Whitestrand Beach
Improvements req'd	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>General clean up</b>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓
Gravel heaps removed			✓												
<b>Access</b>															
Fine	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Improve in / out				✓			✓		✓						
<b>Signage</b>	x			x		x			x	x		x	x		✓
Fine															
Rationlise clutter			✓				✓	✓			✓				
Repair / replace					✓									✓	
<b>Surfacing</b>									✓			✓			
Repair		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓					✓		✓
Replace				✓						✓					
Additional / new req'd	✓				✓										
<b>Edging / kerbs</b>			x	x		x	x		x	x	✓	x	x		x
Fine														✓	
Repair								✓							
Replace															
Additional / new req'd	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓				
<b>Walling</b>				x		✓	x		x	✓	✓	x	x		✓
Fine			✓					✓						✓	
Repair						✓				✓	✓				
Replace										✓					✓
Additional / new req'd	✓	✓			✓										
<b>Fencing</b>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓
Fine															
Repair															✓
Replace				✓											
Additional / new req'd															
<b>Furniture</b>		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	x		x
Fine															
Replace	✓										✓			✓	
Additional / new req'd					✓					✓			✓		✓
<b>Soft Works</b>						x			x	x	✓				
Fine		✓	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓	
Seeding				✓			✓				✓				✓
Planting							✓								
Additional / new req'd	✓				✓										
<b>Size</b>															
Fine	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Increase				✓	✓					✓		✓	✓		
Decrease															
Reshape				✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		
<b>Define boundaries</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
<b>New remote location req'd</b>															
<b>Possible picnic site</b>	✓				✓					✓	✓		✓		✓

# APPENDIX 4

## Approximate Costings

## CONNEMARA - VISITOR DRIVING ROUTES INTERPRETATION & INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

1.0	GATEWAYS (inclusive of site works)	€	€
1.1	<i>Bearna</i>	14850.00	
1.2	<i>Cong</i>	17800.00	
1.3	<i>An Leonan</i>	15450.00	
1.4	<i>Maigh Cuilinn</i>	14850.00	
			€62,950.00
	Preliminaries (%)	10.00	€6,295.00
	Contingencies (%)	5.00	€3,147.50
<b>Sub Total - Gateways</b>			<b>€72,392.50</b>
2.0	<b>ORIENTATION POINTS</b>		
2.1	<b>An Fhairche</b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	14250.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	11750.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	0.00	
	<i>Orientation module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	2400.00	
			€34,600.00
2.2	<b>Ard na Gaoithe</b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	3550.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	16000.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	18550.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	0.00	
	<i>Orientation module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	2400.00	
			€45,500.00
2.3	<b>An Leonan</b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	4750.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	15200.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	10700.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	0.00	
	<i>Orientalional Module</i>	7600.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	600.00	
			€38,850.00
2.4	<b>Maigh Cuilinn</b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	1800.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	0.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	15700.00	
	<i>Orientation Module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	600.00	
			€24,300.00
2.5	<b>Na Forbacha</b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	0.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	0.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	0.00	
	<i>Orientation Module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	0.00	
			€6,200.00
			€149,450.00
	Preliminaries (%)	10.00	€14,945.00
	Contingencies (%)	5.00	€7,472.50
<b>Sub Total - Orientation Points</b>			<b>€171,867.50</b>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>DISCOVERY POINTS</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	<b><i>Ard na Gaoithe An Fhóraois</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	4750.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	12500.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	7850.00	
	<i>Furniture</i>	18050.00	
	<i>Interpretation</i>	6200.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	9500.00	
			€58,850.00
<b>3.2</b>	<b><i>Baile na hInse Loch</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	3000.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	37400.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	52250.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	31350.00	
	<i>Interpretation module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	4750.00	
			€133,750.00
<b>3.3</b>	<b><i>Carna View to Finis</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	5350.00	
	<i>Walling repairs</i>	7100.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	41600.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	7850.00	
	<i>Interpretation incl Hooker improvements</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	600.00	
			€63,700.00
<b>3.4</b>	<b><i>Casla</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Walling repairs</i>	600.00	
	<i>Surfacing repairs</i>	2400.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	0.00	
	<i>Interpretation module</i>	7600.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	0.00	
			€11,800.00
<b>3.5</b>	<b><i>An Choill Mhoir</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1800.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	19000.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	21400.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	18050.00	
	<i>Interpretation Module</i>	6200.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	7100.00	
			€73,550.00
<b>3.6.1</b>	<b><i>Deirgimleach (short term)</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	1200.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	2000.00	
	<i>Surfacing</i>	3550.00	
	<i>Furniture Modules</i>	15700.00	
	<i>Interpretation module</i>	5000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	2400.00	
			€29,850.00
<b>3.6.2</b>	<b><i>Deirgimleach (long term)</i></b>		
	<i>General Items</i>	23700.00	
	<i>Walling</i>	17800.00	
	<i>Surfacing (incl passing places &amp; cattle grid)</i>	47500.00	
	<i>Paths &amp; Boardwalks</i>	71400.00	
	<i>Furniture</i>	18600.00	
	<i>Interpretation</i>	46100.00	
	<i>Interpretative Sculptures</i>	150000.00	
	<i>Soft Landscape</i>	11900.00	
			€387,000.00

<b>3.7</b>	<b>Doire an Chlair Loch</b>		
	General Items	2400.00	
	Walling	59750.00	
	Surfacing	45600.00	
	Furniture Modules	46550.00	
	Interpretation Module & Art Feature	23750.00	
	Soft Landscape	4750.00	
			€182,800.00
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Doire an Chlair Loch / Loch Eidhneach</b>		
	General Items	1200.00	
	Walling	8100.00	
	Surfacing	5450.00	
	Furniture Modules	0.00	
	Interpretation module & Art Features	49900.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€65,850.00
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Loch Eidhneach</b>		
	General Items	2400.00	
	Walling	18800.00	
	Surfacing	10700.00	
	Furniture Modules	15700.00	
	Interpretation Module	5000.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€53,800.00
<b>3.10</b>	<b>Glann Road Viewpoint</b>		
	General Items	850.00	
	Walling	9850.00	
	Surfacing	4250.00	
	Furniture Modules	14000.00	
	Interpretation Module	5000.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€35,150.00
<b>3.11</b>	<b>An Gort Mor</b>		
	General Items	1200.00	
	Walling	17800.00	
	Surfacing	18400.00	
	Furniture Modules	6200.00	
	Interpretation Module	5000.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€49,800.00
<b>3.12</b>	<b>Gorteen Bay</b>		
	General Items	600.00	
	Walling	1200.00	
	Surfacing	0.00	
	Furniture Modules	15700.00	
	Interpretation Module	5000.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€23,700.00
<b>3.13</b>	<b>Iomai</b>		
	General Items	1200.00	
	Walling	12450.00	
	Surfacing	4400.00	
	Furniture Modules	15700.00	
	Interpretation Module	5000.00	
	Soft Landscape	1200.00	
			€39,950.00

<b>3.14 Killary Harbour Viewpoint</b>		
General Items	2950.00	
Walling	21400.00	
Surfacing	24950.00	
Furniture Modules	36100.00	
Interpretation Module	5000.00	
Soft Landscape	2400.00	
		€92,800.00
<b>3.15 An Mam</b>		
General Items	1200.00	
Walling	13350.00	
Surfacing	3550.00	
Furniture Modules	15700.00	
Interpretation module	5000.00	
Soft Landscape	1200.00	
		€40,000.00
<b>3.16 Quiet Man Bridge</b>		
General Items	9500.00	
Walling	45500.00	
Surfacing	33250.00	
Furniture Modules	0.00	
Interpretation Modules	14750.00	
Soft Landscape	4750.00	
		€107,750.00
<b>3.17 Rinn Mhaoile</b>		
General Items	2400.00	
Walling	23300.00	
Surfacing	8800.00	
Furniture	15700.00	
Interpretation	5000.00	
Soft Landscape	1200.00	
		€56,400.00
<b>3.18 Ros an Mhil</b>		
General Items	600.00	
Walling	0.00	
Surfacing	0.00	
Furniture	15700.00	
Interpretation	5000.00	
Soft Landscape	1200.00	
		€22,500.00
<b>3.19 Sky Road</b>		
General Items	2950.00	
Walling	12850.00	
Surfacing	10000.00	
Furniture	47050.00	
Interpretation	7600.00	
Soft Landscape and fencing	3000.00	
		€83,450.00
<b>3.20 An Spideal</b>		
General Items	600.00	
Walling	0.00	
Surfacing	0.00	
Furniture	0.00	
Interpretation	5000.00	
Soft Landscape	0.00	
		€5,600.00
		€1,618,050.00
Preliminaries (%)	10.00	€161,805.00
Contingencies (%)	5.00	€80,902.50
<b>Sub Total - Discovery Points</b>		<b>€1,860,757.50</b>

#### 4.0 OTHER CAR PARKS & LAY-BYS

4.1	<i>Aughnanure Castle</i>	1200.00	
4.2	<i>Ballynahinch Lake (Upper)</i>	5350.00	
4.3	<i>Barnaderg Bay</i>	5950.00	
4.4	<i>Bearna Wood</i>	1800.00	
4.5	<i>Canal Bridge (considered for discovery point)</i>	41600.00	
4.6	<i>Cappahoosh Lough (very large layby)</i>	35650.00	
4.7	<i>Carrick</i>	10700.00	
4.8	<i>Carrowmoreknock Pier</i>	7150.00	
4.9	<i>Cashel Ringfort</i>	14250.00	
4.10	<i>Cleggan Harbour</i>	2400.00	
4.11	<i>Coral Beach</i>	1800.00	
4.12	<i>Cornamona</i>	9500.00	
4.13	<i>Crocnaraw (Lower)</i>	19000.00	
4.14	<i>Crocnaraw (Upper)</i>	5950.00	
4.15	<i>Dawros Bridge</i>	4750.00	
4.16	<i>Derrylea Lough</i>	17800.00	
4.17	<i>Dog's Bay (2 locations)</i>	19000.00	
4.18	<i>Ferrybridge</i>	23750.00	
4.19	<i>Flannery Bridge</i>	3550.00	
4.20	<i>Glann Road (Derroua Wood)</i>	5950.00	
4.21	<i>Glann Road (End) (2 sites)</i>	16650.00	
4.22	<i>Glassillaun Beach</i>	11900.00	
4.23	<i>Golam Rock</i>	3550.00	
4.24	<i>Killary Harbour (Upper)</i>	41600.00	
4.25	<i>Kilmilkin</i>	10700.00	
4.26	<i>Knockferry Pier</i>	8300.00	
4.27	<i>Leenane View</i>	11900.00	
4.28	<i>Leitir Creamha Rua Wood</i>	4750.00	
4.29	<i>Lettergesh Beach</i>	10700.00	
4.30	<i>Loch Na Cuige Rua</i>	41600.00	
4.31	<i>Lough Awilla</i>	4750.00	
4.32	<i>Lough Inagh (Upper) (outstanding views)</i>	23750.00	
4.33	<i>Lough Nafoeey View_1</i>	4750.00	
4.34	<i>Lough Nafoeey View_2</i>	1200.00	
4.35	<i>Loughaunwillian</i>	2400.00	
4.36	<i>Maamean_1</i>	11900.00	
4.37	<i>Maamean_2</i>	8300.00	
4.38	<i>Mannin Bay</i>	5950.00	
4.39	<i>Recess</i>	59400.00	
4.40	<i>Ros an Mhil Harbour</i>	5950.00	
4.41	<i>Screeb Bridge</i>	9500.00	
4.42	<i>Sky Road Beach</i>	23750.00	
4.43	<i>Sky Road Quay</i>	14250.00	
4.44	<i>Spideal Road Viewpoint</i>	1200.00	
4.45	<i>Tra Sailin</i>	16650.00	
4.46	<i>White Strand (potential regeneration project)</i>	6000.00	
4.47	<i>Whitestrans Beach</i>	21400.00	
			€619,850.00
	Preliminaries (%)	10.00	€61,985.00
	Contingencies (%)	5.00	€30,992.50
			<b>€712,827.50</b>

**5.0 SETTLEMENT TRAIL HEADS**

5.1	Clifden (Trail head sign/sculpture)	7000.00	
5.2	Oughterard (Trail head sign/sculpture)	10000.00	
5.3	Cornamona (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.4	An Choill Mhoir (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.5	Loch Eidhneach (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.6	Carna View to Finis Island (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.7	An Mam (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.8	An Leonan (Trail head sign)	2500.00	
5.9	Connemara National Park	2500.00	
5.10	Derroura Wood (Sign already in place)	0.00	
			<hr/>
			€34,500.00
	Preliminaries (%)	10.00	€3,450.00
	Contingencies (%)	5.00	€1,725.00
			<hr/>
			<b>€39,675.00</b>

**OVERALL TOTAL** **€2,857,520.00**

**Exclusions :**

- VAT
- Professional Fees
- Archaeology (Deirgimleach)
- Underground/overhead services diversions
- Site Investigations

**Note:** At key Discovery Point there would be considerable benefit in undergrounding overhead telephone cables over a localised length to improve the views and experience of the site.



