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What area does your submission relate to? Tourism & Recreation

Your comments

I have some notes regarding the Lighthouse Road on the attached file. They relate to the permanent padlocking of a gateway on this stretch of roadway which goes from the public road to one of the most scenic areas of our county and which has been used without hindrance by past generations of our townspeople as many of my generation can testify. I am a member of Friends of the Murrough which, together with Wicklow Co Council secured a grant for the re-establishment of the Cliff Walk.

File Upload Yes

Created On 2019-12-13

November 2019: Public pedestrians denied access to Wicklow Head.

- In response to a query from a member of the public Irish Lights made the following points:
- Irish Lights owns the access road from the public road to the lighthouse. The access is privately owned by Irish Lights subject to the right of way of the owners of the former Lightkeepers' dwellings and local landowners.
- It was constructed by Irish Lights.
- It is maintained by Irish Lights.
- Irish Lights has always been aware of a certain number of the public using this access road as a place to walk to view the lighthouse and coastline.
- Irish Lights has no problem with the practice of the public heretofore in using this access but the issue of how to address unauthorized vehicular access is under consideration in order to protect their facilities and in the interests of public safety generally.
- Irish Lights requires 24-hour access to its facilities at Wicklow head lighthouse.
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- A recent website of Irish Lights indicated that:
- **Wicklow Head High (1) Accessible by road. Site open.**
- **Wicklow Head High (2) Accessible by road. Site open.**
- **Wicklow Head (Low) (2) Site and tower closed, but lighthouse can be viewed from above.**
 - This would indicate that the public had access right out to Wicklow Head but not to the lighthouse site situated there.
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- This roadway won the 2012 "Best Natural Heritage Award" in the Wicklow Uplands Council "PURE MILE" Competition.
- The area has been constantly monitored by people from the immediate locality who have regularly picked up and removed any stray litter from the roadway.
- Wicklow Head is a renowned "Special Protection Area" having phenomenal views all along the coastline – sometimes extending as far as Wales. It is the most easterly point of the Irish Republic. Along this roadway one can see a marvelous heritage of common and rare flowering plants. Wildlife includes red kites, rabbits, foxes, green lizards while nesting kittiwakes, razorbills, gulls, cormorants and kestrels can be seen all around the high cliffs.
- We have three lighthouses, one of which dates back to the late 1700s. We have here a rich, built heritage enjoyed by generations of Wicklow people.
- Legal Test: a public right of way exists where it can be shown that there has been public use since time immemorial. Start and Finish: traditionally, a presumption that a public right of way exists also requires that the route starts in a public place and ends in a public place. There is one exception to this rule: where the destination is a place of natural beauty, which requires access.
- Older residents from the locality do not have any recollection of this roadway ever having been permanently closed to the public; it is currently padlocked.
- All of this scenic area is now being blocked off by the action of one individual who also claims ownership of the road. Is the present generation of Wicklow people to be denied access to an area that countless past generations have enjoyed?
- Quite apart from the general public, emergency services such as lifeboat, mountain rescue, ambulances etc. will need to have unrestricted and immediate access to Wicklow Head. These people will not have time to go around scouting for a key when an emergency arises.