



## PRESS RELEASE

### CHERISH Project: Climate Change and Coastal Heritage Exhibition

1 February 2022

at Arklow Library, Main Street, Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

The CHERISH Project is delighted to announce that *The CHERISH Project: Climate Change and Coastal Heritage* exhibition will be on display in Arklow Library, Main Street Arklow, County Wicklow from 1 February 2022 until 27 February 2022. Sean Cullen, Head of the Marine and Coastal Unit, Geological Survey of Ireland will present an in-person lecture on Tuesday, 3 February 2022 March at 7pm in Arklow Library.

CHERISH is a team of archaeologists, geologists and geographers studying the effects of climate change on coastal and maritime heritage in Ireland and Wales. From the skies, at the coast edge, and beneath the waves we are using the latest technologies including planes, drones and sonar to carry out research. We are monitoring recent and long-term change to reveal the past and present impacts of weather and climate on our rich cultural heritage. Our work involves investigating archaeological sites and environments around our coasts including shipwrecks, promontory forts, wetlands and sand dunes.

CHERISH Project research in the east coast of Ireland has included Kilmichael Point near the Wicklow/Wexford border. The old Coastguard Station and the surrounding area have been the subject of repeated surveys to monitor the rate of change on this heavily eroding section of coastline. The team have conducted laser scan survey of the old Coastguard station as well as UAV (or drone) mapping survey and aerial survey of the coastline from a light aircraft. (see attached photos)

In light of the 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, outlining the irrefutable evidence that climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying, this is a timely exhibition. It aims to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on the rich cultural heritage of Ireland's coasts and seas. These impacts include erosion and loss of coastal sites due to wave actions during storms and the acceleration of structural damage to built heritage such as churches and castles through extreme weather events. Hotter, drier summers can produce cropmarks that allow the discovery of new archaeological sites. However, hotter conditions can also lead to the drying out of cliff faces increasing the risk of destabilisation and collapse affecting coastal heritage sites.

When Professor John Sweeney, Emeritus Professor of the Department of Geography, Maynooth University, addressed the CHERISH online conference in May this year, he said that "We have to get as much valuable information as we can from these [sites] before they

disappear. We need to protect heritage information on where we came from and how we got there, for future generations”.

CHERISH is the first step towards achieving these goals.

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Attached images

Image 1: Results of Survey of the Old Coastguard station

Image 2: Aerial image of Kilmichael Point taken during drone survey

### Further information

Dr Linda Shine, Public Engagement and Outreach Officer

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### CHERISH Project Background

The project is funded through the Ireland-Wales Programme 2014-2020, part of the European Regional Development Fund, which focusses on seeking solutions to shared challenges on both sides of the Irish Sea. The project will receive €4.9 million, and will run until June 2023.

CHERISH (Climate, Heritage and Environments of Reefs, Islands, and Headlands) is an exciting, 6-year European-funded Ireland-Wales project between the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the Discovery Programme: Centre for Archaeology and Innovation Ireland, Aberystwyth University: Department of Geography and Earth Sciences and Geological Survey, Ireland.

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