

**Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan
Submission by Rosemary Warner**

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

18 DEC 2024

PLANNING DEPT.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE

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This submission covers aspects of 1) protection of biodiversity 2) traffic management

Biodiversity Protection

General Points

I recognise that a Local Area Plan (LAP) is only a general framework, and is not designed to answer every query regarding specific areas, and specific planning issues. I also recognise that local planners are limited in what they can achieve by the following general constraints:

Planning Constraints:

- Because we need the houses so badly, there is pressure on the planning authorities to ensure that development takes place.
- Provision of housing is mainly developer lead under the current system.
- Councils have limited powers.
- Other bodies than the Co. Councils have powers and responsibilities over aspects of planning (e.g. NPWS).
- There will be many competing views and interests as to how to allocate and use limited public space.

However, the framework in which planners operate has changed in some respects in recent times:

- Climate action is now legislated for. Co. Councils have new responsibilities under law in this area
- The Dail and the local Council have voted to recognise that we have a biodiversity emergency.
- Protection of green spaces and biodiversity is no longer an added extra it would be nice to do if possible. It is an imperative under local policy and law.
- While the provision of sporting facilities is essential in any new development, it can no longer be assumed that playing fields are an answer to the needs of local flora and fauna. Playing fields are very necessary, but they are green deserts in biodiversity terms.
- There is a growing recognition of the need not only to preserve the existing pockets of woodland and other wildlife habitats, but also in as far as possible to link them by means of wildlife corridors
- Ecological surveys are now a recognised part of any planning process, but their effectiveness depends on who they are done on behalf of (e.g. The developer or the Council), and what time or times of the year they are being done.
- Bray is being asked to facilitate a huge amount of development and a big growth in population. To ensure local buy-in to this process, local people must see that their local facilities, including green spaces, are being preserved and enhanced. Without this local opinion may turn against future development of the town.

Fasseroe

Specific areas in Bray where biodiversity may come under threat in the future include a number of green undeveloped areas like Oldcourt, Sans Souci Wood and Fasseroe. Of these Fasseroe is the biggest and the one under the most immediate threat. The following points about Fasseroe should be noted:

While large parts of the site have been transformed by Roadstone quarrying and are entirely suitable for redevelopment for housing and sports fields, there is one section which should be preserved for wildlife. This is the area to the west of the designated site which is marked on the map as 'marshy'. (This area contains a long-established pond (see attached map) which pre-exists the Roadstone development, as well as a surrounding marshy overgrown area. The marshy nature of this area would make it naturally more difficult to develop, and it could instead act as a useful sink for storm water runoff from the estate.

There is a path running all round the outside of this area from the section of the site which Roadstone is currently rehabilitating to the side of Fasseroe House. This path is currently somewhat overgrown in places, but it could be made into a pleasant walk for older people, dog walkers etc. It would also link up with the path (on private land, but currently accessible) which leads down to the river, across the Barrington Bridge and out to the Enniskerry road.

The vegetation around this walk might perhaps appear to some people as 'scrub', but it serves as good wildlife habitat and contains interesting plants and animals. I am not an expert on wildlife or botany, but among what I have observed in this area are three species of orchid (Pyramid orchid, Common Spotted Orchid and Bee Orchid), and a range of birds including Yellowhammers, Sparrowhawks and Sand Martins. Maintaining the link between this area and the privately owned woodland leading down to the river would ensure a wildlife corridor between the two habitats.

I am asking that the Council planners consider removing this section of the site from the area which can be developed as either housing or sports facilities. It should instead be kept as a place for walkers and for the protection of biodiversity.

Traffic

Traffic in Bray is at times gridlocked. With the amount of development that is planned for Bray this can only worsen to the extent that the town can no longer function unless action is taken to deal with it.

The main pinch points in Bray are the bridge and the Main Street. I live in the Maltings estate, which means that I cannot go anywhere without facing these two pinch points. To be an effective long-term plan for Bray and its future development, the LAP must contain a scheme to alleviate these two problems.

Apart from causing gridlock, the intersection of the bridge, the Main Street, the entrance to The Maltings (Mill Lane) and Seapoint Road create a very dangerous crossing for children, old people and those with mobility problems. In particular the crossing from the bridge across the entrance to Seapoint Road to the Main Street is very dangerous. It is very heavily used by pedestrians, but there is never a time when the traffic is stopped to facilitate them. This seems to me to be an accident waiting to happen.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the draft LAP. I look forward to reading the finalised version.

Rosemary Warner

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Rosemary Warner

13-12-24

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