

3.0 WALKING TRAIL PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

NWWAC/ISC request the following questionnaire is completed by the Trail Development Committee prior to scheduling an Initial Consultation.

This questionnaire is available by e-mail: Contact cmacdonnell@irishsportsCouncil.ie.

This questionnaire should be returned to the NWWAC Programme Executive, Irish Sports Council, Top Floor Block A, West End Office Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Name of Proposed Trail Development: Wicklow Coastal Way

Contact Person for Project: Name, Address, Tel, e-mail.

Malcolm Spencer

malcolm@atec.ie

Tel

Q1. What is the purpose of the waymarked trail? (Max 100 words)?

e.g Tourist amenity, local recreation amenity/resource, to protect/promote heritage, etc.

All of the traditional walkways radiate from, and are adjacent to, Wicklow Town and have provided our local people with a unique scenic amenity. A number of looped walks could be established and rendered secure, going directly from the urban area, which would promote a healthy lifestyle for the local population and attract tourists and nature lovers, particularly from Dublin, which is only one hour away by rail or car. The area has great educational potential as it is of particular importance for its wildlife, having a bird sanctuary, and also for its wide diversity of natural flora. The very scenic Cliff Walk towards Wicklow Head holds many historical sites.

Q2. Who would be the main users of the walking trail?

i.e. local people, tourists and visitors to the area, experienced hill walkers, recreational walkers, younger people, families, day walkers, weekend visitors, etc.

Past generations of people from the locality have used this area for walking, jogging, cycling, shore angling, boating and swimming. It is an area much loved by artists and photographers on account of its scenery, wildlife, natural beauty and general tranquility. Our town is projected to expand to a population of 25,000 - 40,000, which will need these open spaces for recreation as we do not have any other parkland. The Murrough, in particular, has always been a recreational area for families where small children can easily be kept under observation. Its proximity to Dublin, along with the rail connection, is important in this age of congested traffic, or conversely, uncertain fuel availability.

Q3. What evidence would suggest a strong demand/requirement for the proposed trail?

We recently held two public meetings, which were attended by over 200 people and collected over 2,500 signatures from people who wished to have the area designated as a Special amenity Area. The people of Wicklow realise what a valuable asset this area is for recreational and educational purposes.

Q4. Please provide details of the location of the trail (refer to relevant OSI Discovery Series 1:50,000 map).

The proposed trail is a linear coastal trail starting at Kilcoole Train stop and following the coastal rail line to Wicklow Town, through the picturesque harbour to the Black castle and along the cliff walk to Wicklow Head. It is marked on the OSI map 56. Also proposed is a looped walk close to the town along the eastern bank of the Broadlough, through 'The Avenue' approximately 1k from the start and back along the coastal path.
See attached maps

Q5. What features of the trail stand out i.e scenery, physical features, heritage sites, etc?

Near Wicklow, The Murrough forms a flat linear parkland where the Vartry river flows through a couple of lakes. Further north, one can see long stretches of wetlands, home to a huge diversity of birdlife including many very rare species. The Wicklow and Dublin mountains form a contrasting backdrop to this tranquil area. The Cliff Walk, which commences at the 12th Century Norman Black Castle and goes south from the town, holds four small secluded bays which are often the playground of seals. The cliffs provide nesting grounds for many species of migratory birds. One can see the remains of a penal church, an old lime kiln and Bride's Well. There are caves where stone age flint makers carried on their trade. Further on towards Wicklow Head stands an octagonal lighthouse which dates from the late 1700s. There are great possibilities for looped walks in all of these areas.

Q6. What is the approx. length of the trail (km.)?

24k (Coastal path 15k Broadlough Loop 4k Cliff walk 5k)

Q7. What is the approx length on road (km)? Please give detail of the type of roads being used throughout.

There would be a short stretch of road approximately 1k linking the path from the harbour along the quays up to the Black Castle.

Q8. Is it a loop (circular) trail or a linear (point to point) trail?

The trail is envisaged as a linear walk with a loop diversion beside the Broadlough at the town end

Q9. Is the development suitable for wheelchair users?

It is proposed that the Broadlough loop should be entirely wheelchair (and buggy) accessible. Boardwalks would be needed in parts. The coastal trail would be left in its natural state and not be upgraded except in occasional difficult places. It would be accessible but not easy.

Q10. Is there a Trail Development Committee established for this project? If so, what bodies are represented

“Friends of the Murrough” is an established committee with members from the following groups and organisations and individuals from the local community
Wicklow Planning Alliance
An Taisce www.antaisce.org
Tidy Towns, Wicklow www.wicklowtidytowns.com
Birdwatch Ireland www.birdwatchireland.ie
An Tairseach www.ecocentrewicklow.com
Keep Ireland Open www.keepirelandopen.org
Inbhear Dee Athletics Club
Mountaineering Council of Ireland www.mountaineering.ie
Wicklow Active Retirement

The committee has been offered support from many local TDs and councillors.

Q11. How will the project be financed and who will complete the development works?

The committee has identified a number of possible sources for funding including Wicklow County Council Recreation Strategy, Bord Failte Tourism Infrastructural Funds, Heritage Council, European funds for nature conservation and development.
It is anticipated that there will be a partnership arrangements between local voluntary organisations, local government and contract workers undertaking work as appropriate to their skills.

Q12. Any additional information you would like to include.

Further information including photographs of the region can be accessed at www.saveourshores.eu

All of the walks as outlined have been used by past generations of Wicklow people, but some of them have been closed, or closure was attempted, within the past six years. These are areas of high amenity and are covered by National and European protection designations such as ‘Special Protection Area’, ‘Special Area of Conservation Candidate’, Proposed National Heritage Area’ and ‘Flora Protection Order’. We have been trying to secure an additional ‘Special Amenity Area Order’ for the whole coastal region from Kilcoole railway station to Wicklow Head. This is the only parkland that our fast growing town has to offer.

Signed:

Dated: