

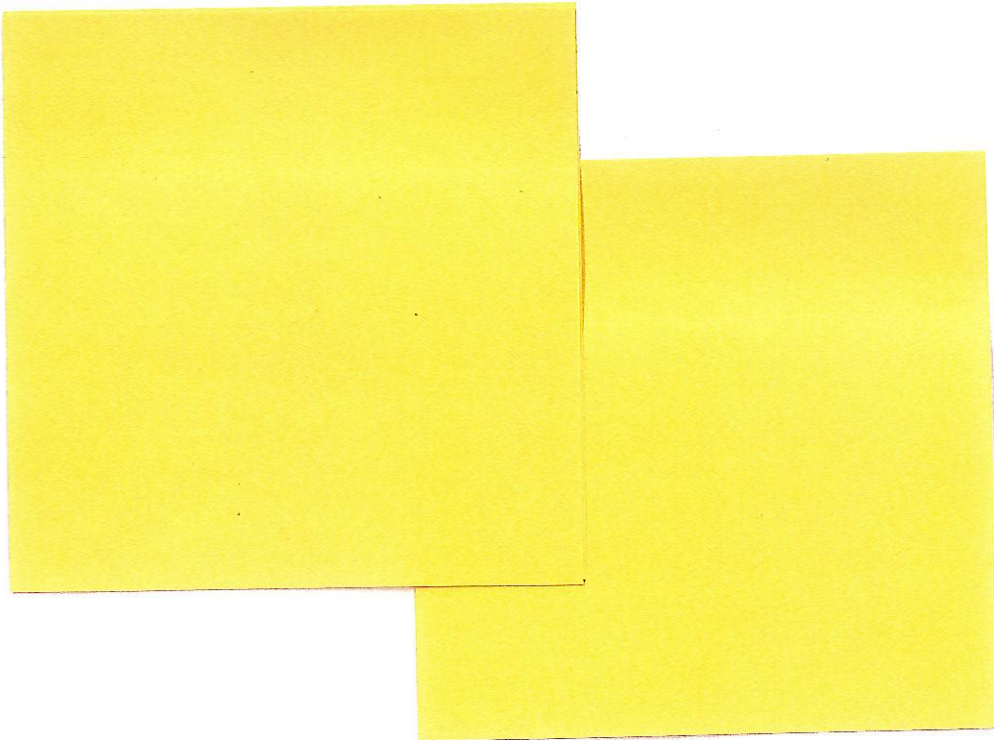
OLD ORCHARD PARK

PROPOSAL



SUBMITTED BY:

Catherine Kelly



MARCH 2ND 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN!

WE THE ADJOINING RESIDENTS AND SURROUNDING
AREA TO THE SITE -

FOWD!LS2577F PLAN NUMBER: B93TA

ARE REQUESTING THAT THIS SITE BE CHANGED
FROM RESIDENTIAL ZONING TO AMENITY/
ZONING IN THE NEW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Catherine Reel
ON BEHALF OF THE ABOVE.

Contents	Page
Title	1
Author	2
Contents	3
Outline	4-5
Impact	6-7
Proposal	8
Support	9
Biodiversity	10-11-12
Green Spaces	13
Tourism	14
Site Map	15
Hedgehogs Pathway	16
Photographs	17-18
Green Corridor	19
Park Planting	20
Park Layout	21
Appendices	22-31

Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages)

Laois County Council Development Plan 2017-2023 /UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities 2019-2024/ Checklist of protected and rare species in Ireland/ All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020/National Biodiversity Plan 2027-2021/

SEA Statement 2017-2023/ EPA Report 195 Health Benefits from Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure / EPA Report 188 Integrating Ecosystem Approaches, Green Infrastructure and Spatial Planning.

Signatures	32-60
-------------------	--------------

Re: Planning for houses on Folio: L525776F Plan Number: B93TA

It is strongly felt by the residents adjoining the proposed development for houses on this site that, serious, positive, consideration and approval be given to this proposal that the Old Orchard site with its old established Scots Pine trees and valuable wildlife habitat and resident protected species be preserved, protected and formed into a park as the Old Orchard Park, as this will meet a basic entitlement of the residents of Stradbally and outlying areas to an aesthetic green area, for their use, and enjoyment of the residents of Stradbally and outlying areas, for, relaxation and general well-being. This would be a quiet peaceful area, picnic area, site for environmental teaching, recreation, visual asset and open space for people with little or no garden of their own and a space that is more private for quiet time away from public roads where there are few trees and little or no green space.

As immediate neighbours to the site of the proposed development, we are of the view that the proposed development of two- storey houses on an elevated site above the existing adjoining houses will have a serious impact on our standard of living and right to privacy.

This small area of land available for the park is the only opportunity to have such a critical facility and the LAST there will EVER be that will be in the HEART of the town of direct benefit ALL in the town and the surrounding areas, and no park would be a tragedy.

The complete implementation of our proposal would demonstrate the adaptability, flexibility and forward thinking of Laois County Council and set a shining example to other Councils.

Approval would be a very clear sign that Laois County Council is serious in its approach to the natural environment and the positive and beneficial impact that this provides for its people, enabling productive, healthier and more contented residents in the town and surrounding localities.

People's needs and life concerns have changed since the original acquisition of the Old Orchard site when the fundamental importance of green areas for health and well-being was less understood and now a modern mindful accommodation must be applied to address these present day requirements.

Today's life is more stressful with an increasingly unequal work-life balance and rising pressures on families as people have to spend more time travelling to and from employment and work demands are greater so making quality time with families more important than ever. It is fully recognised that housing is needed but NOT at the expense of a town park within easy reach of all of Stradbally's inhabitants that would make that same housing all the more valuable while contributing to the creation of a more cohesive Stradbally community. With consultation and imagination this solution could be readily implemented.

It is believed that it would be more economical to address any shortfall in public housing needs by purchasing some more ready or about-to-be-built houses to allow the park proposal to proceed. A park would absolutely not be a waste of land but quite the opposite it would be a *vital asset* for all of the town.

The eleven (11) adjoining residents are supported in their proposal for a park by approximately 640 signatures from residents of Stradbally residents and the surrounding areas and regular visitors to the town.

We wish to make you aware of a strong number of objections that we have with regard to the proposed development of houses on the open space referred to above or the felling of any of the old Scots Pine trees. As immediate neighbours to the site of the proposed development, we are of the view that in its current form the development will have a serious impact on our standard of living and the biodiversity and habitats of the protected species therein.

Detrimental Impact upon Residential Amenities

Two-storey houses being built on high ground overlooking adjoining houses, resulting in an invasion of privacy and the unacceptable and inevitable dumping of rubbish into their properties in addition to the resultant devaluation of the their properties. Two properties which border an existing housing estate have already experienced large amounts of rubbish being deposited over their boundary fences.

The density of houses in such close proximity to each other would visually and mentally impinge on the existing houses thus resulting in a crowded and intrusive situation which would not make for happy residents.

While it is recognised that there is a requirement for housing this should be carried out in such a manner that is mindful of their fundamental needs and well-being of both the existing and future communities and their need for green spaces as part of the proposed expansion and development of the town and the significant ongoing negative impacts on our climate and biodiversity.

Guidelines to Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) 4. 1.9, 4.1.10, 4.25 & 4.26, 6.3 (c), 6 check list,7.0, 7.9.

4.1.9 *"Enhance and promote green infrastructure and biodiversity" "Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage".*

4.10 *"By considering peoples diverse needs and abilities throughout the design process, which reflects the life cycle approach, environments that meets the needs of all can be achieved".*

4.25 *"Within the context of a sustainable residential area, the focus should be on retaining and enhancing the natural setting" & "Landscape and natural features and their ecology are always important." The retention and use of existing natural and built features can give a sense of maturity and of individual place. The ranges of issues involved include retaining landscape feature".*

4.26 *"The National Biodiversity Plan 2002 requires local authorities to prepare local biodiversity plans that promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity." –*

"On less sensitive sites care should be taken to integrate existing landscape features, mature trees / plants into the site." Planning authorities may find the publication "Green City Guidelines" on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity useful in this regard".

6.3(c) *"In all cases special care will be required to protect architectural and environmental qualities of small towns and villages of special character."*

6 Check List *“focused on securing development patterns that are sustainable in economic and social development and environmental protection terms, recognising the challenges faced by rural economies in the future.”*

7.0 *“Residents are entitled to expect that their homes will offer decent levels of amenity, privacy, security and energy efficiency”.*

7.9 *“adequate semi private or communal open space, in the form of landscaped areas, should also be provided.”*

SEA Statement LCC Development Plan 2017-2023 15. 4.2 /PHH1/L1

15.4.2 PHH1: *“To protect populations and human health from exposure to incompatible land uses”.*

Laois Development Plan 2017-2023 page 62 NRA 13.NRA 14. NRA 16,NRA18.NRA19.NRA27

NRA13 *Develop a balance in the location and types of open space provided throughout the county and ensure the development of high quality open space areas, for both active and passive use and formal and informal activities.*

NRA14 *Ensure that open space is provided to enhance the character of open spaces.*

NRA16 *Encourage developers to pool land for the purposes of open space requirements to allow for the provision of multipurpose amenity areas (e.g. playing pitches) as well as small ancillary open spaces within residential areas.*

NRA18 *Encourage community gardening, allotments and other use of open space to facilitate lower carbon living and education and practice.*

NRA19 *Encourage open space use by community groups, schools and Tidy Towns to promote intergenerational and cross cultural skill sharing on edible landscapes, community composting and rainwater harvesting.*

NRA27 *Improve the provision of public play grounds / allow for recreational areas for the elderly and the youth in appropriate locations across the county with particular emphasis on those areas with greatest need.*

1. PROPOSAL

Taking all of the above into consideration it is proposed that a beneficial compromise that would be fully supported by the neighbouring residents and a large number of residents in Stradbally and surrounding areas, is for the creation of a green space in the form of a park. This would be called the Old Orchard Park and be situated on the old orchard site which will simultaneously preserve and enhance the existing protected habitat of hedgehogs and the other seventeen (17) protected species of birds and mammals on the site but also provide a much needed green space for ALL of Stradbally and its surrounding areas. Our proposal would both retain this important habitat and deliver on the housing needs which would be addressed by construction of houses on the other side of the existing Scots Pine trees.

No park area has been created in the town and this site is the **LAST** and **ONLY** area that will **EVER** be available within the **HEART** of the town, that is within easy walking for those who are unable to walk long distances or those who have impaired mobility or those who simply need quiet space away from traffic and the hustle and bustle of life to de-stress and unwind. These needs are vitally important to all communities and may even be viewed as a fundamental right for all communities and in particular for the children.

The proposed park area would be enclosed to include the old existing Scots Pine trees and the pedestrian access from Court Square would have gates that would be locked at night and opened in the morning. In this way the enclosed park to Mr. Graham's property, would allow continued access and a biodiversity corridor for the hedgehogs and a lockable gate reinstated in the wall at the back of the existing biodiversity gardens and woodland (which the orchard was originally part of) would facilitate access to the park area for educational purposes.

The park area would be a green activity space to be availed of by local children and those coming from Port Laoise and other areas outside Stradbally to use the existing Playground, as well as the residents of the Moore Abbey Cottages with the added advantage of being able to avail of the adjoining biodiversity gardens and woodland should they wish.

2. SUPPORT

The question was asked, "Would you like a people's park in Stradbally (Old Orchard Park)", and the question was supported by 640+ signatures from Stradbally and surrounding areas and those who regularly visit Stradbally in support of the park proposal put forward by the adjoining properties.

The park is also supported by Tidy Towns.

3. BIODIVERSITY

EU Birds and Habitats Directives and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000

The site is a mix of permanent dry meadow, scrub and recolonising bare ground which is used by a large number of animal species of which seventeen (17) are listed as protected species, including bats, the threatened Red Squirrel and the declining Hedgehog. The development as it currently stands would eliminate this habitat and displace or kill these animals.

Hedgehog – Berne Convention Annex III

Red Squirrel - Berne Convention Annex III

Song Thrush - Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention Annex III

Blackbird - Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention Annex III

Bullfinch - Directive 79/409 Annex 1 Possible Designation SPA

Chaffinch - Directive 79/409 Annex I SPA

Coal Tit - Directive 79/409 Annex I SPA

Collard Dove - Directive 79/409 Berne Convention Annex III SPA

Common Pipistrelle - All habitats excluding exposed ones

Frog - Directive 92/43 Annex V Berne Convention Annex III

House Sparrow - Berne Convention Annex III

Mistle Thrush - Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention Annex III

Pheasant; Directive 79/409 Annex II & III Berne Convention Annex III

Starling; Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention III

Rook; Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention Annex III

Jackdaw - Directive 79/409 Annex III SPA Nature Reserve

Magpie - Directive 79/409 Annex II Berne Convention Annex III

Wood Mouse; Berne Convention Annex III

Wild birds and their nests and eggs are also protected under section 29 of the Wildlife Act 1976 and Hedgehog, Bats and Red Squirrel are protected under the Fifth Schedule of the same Act.

The above species are all present in the biodiversity area adjoining the field in question and most are present in the field while the existing Scots Pines in the field form a rookery.

The proposal has been developed using Laois County Council's aspirations with regard to the county's biodiversity, future-proofing for climate change, environmental needs and the overwhelming body of evidence supporting the health and well-being aspect of benefits to communities of green spaces, all of which are currently unaddressed for the residents in our town of Stradbally.

Taking into account that the old orchard area has been a hedgehog habitat, for more than 40 years with numerous hedgehogs ranging from Mrs. Kennedy on the Timahoe Road, through Ms. Kelly's property, down to, Miss Hegerty's on Court Square, through the old orchard and down to Mr. Graham's on the main road.

Hedgehogs and their habitats are protected, and the park proposal would preserve their habitat and ensure their long-term survival in the town as well as protect and enhance the existing biodiversity area and that of the old orchard, as well as providing the local community with a vital green space for wellbeing.

Mr. David Graham will be planting trees at the back of his property adjoining the old orchard which connects with the proposed park, which adjoins the biodiversity garden and woodland, which connects to the wood in Mrs. Kennedy's which then constitutes *a vital green corridor* for the hedgehogs as well as other species.

Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023

SEA STATEMENT Pages 62 and 63 NRA 13, NRA 14, NRA 16, NRA 18, NRA 19, NRA 26

Page 153 7.10 Natural Heritage, OBJ 6, Page 154 7.11- Biodiversity, 7.12.7 Non Designated Sites, Page 155 Green Infrastructure

EPA Research Report 188

Integrating Ecosystem Approaches, Green Infrastructure and Spatial Planning

(www.researchgate.net/institution/EPA_Research)

All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020

Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021

Laois County Council *"Biodiversity is the word used to describe all living things on earth – plants, animals, humans, habitats and the links and relationships between them."*

153.7.10 Natural Heritage

OBJ 6 *"Where the opportunity arises, the Council will seek to create a green network of spaces and corridors in order to provide for richer ecological networks and also amenity areas by linking up existing fragmented green spaces"*

7.12 Green Infrastructure

NH3 *Ensure that landscaping plans incorporate features or measures to foster biodiversity and enrich ecological networks."*

7.12.7 Non designated Sites *It is the policy of the Council to*

NH16 *Maintain and enhance the quality of the natural environment in its entirety as wildlife heritage is not confined to designated areas.*

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

11.7 *By 2030, provide universal access to inclusive, accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.*

15.5 *Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020 protect and prevent the extension of threatened species.*

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities

A five year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2109-2024

"Community work has a unique contribution to make in relation to climate change and climate justice"

Life on Land why It Matters Question 15. *"Protected areas support healthy ecosystems which in turn keep people healthy"*

4. GREEN SPACES and MENTAL HEALTH

The following provides key extracts from the research demonstrating the criticality of 'green space' and human health and well-being.

EPA Research Report (Irish) 195

Health Benefits from Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/health/research195.html

Executive Summary

"Healthy environments promote human health and wellbeing. The connection between a high quality environment, a healthy society and the economy are emphasised by the Environmental Protection Agency strategy and Healthy Ireland Framework for action."
"There is an urgent need to reconnect an increasingly urbanised society with nature, in terms of both health and sustainability" " Biodiversity is essential to a health- sustaining environment The research shows that connecting with nature makes people feel happy, more restored and motivated to be more active which is in keeping with Healthy Ireland and EPA goals"

"We tend to focus on physical health, but mental health (which isn't really separate from physical health) is arguably more reliant on regular exposure to green spaces among both rural and urban residents, high levels of neighbourhood green space were consistently linked to lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress and people who move to "greener" urban neighbourhoods enjoy improved mental health in the subsequent years than people who move to "less green" urban areas".

"Case studies on engaging people with nature:

.applying an ecosystems approach to wellbeing and environment legislation (Wales)

.developing an integrated health-nature action plan (as proposed in Scotland)

.engaging people in nature based activities, such as green prescriptions Programme Pilot

(Donegal), Healthy Parks, Healthy People (international programme) and

monitoring such engagement (England)

The benefits of green space are supported by our local Medical Practitioners.

HSE, National Policy for Children and Young People 2014-2020 (Department of Youth Affairs and Positive Aging Strategy (Department of Health) and mental health services

5. TOURISM

The adjoining biodiversity garden and woodland is on the **Laois Garden Trail**, is a member of **Laois Tourism** and participates in Biodiversity Week by having a day event for children and parents in conjunction with the IWT. It is also linked with Heritage Week and Heritage Schools via Heritage Department in LCC.

These events and those carried out separately in the garden could all be linked to the park for picnics for attendees or for education. Local restaurants would be happy to create picnic packs for such occasions.

The park area could be utilised in conjunction with other public events for the benefit of the people of Stradbally.

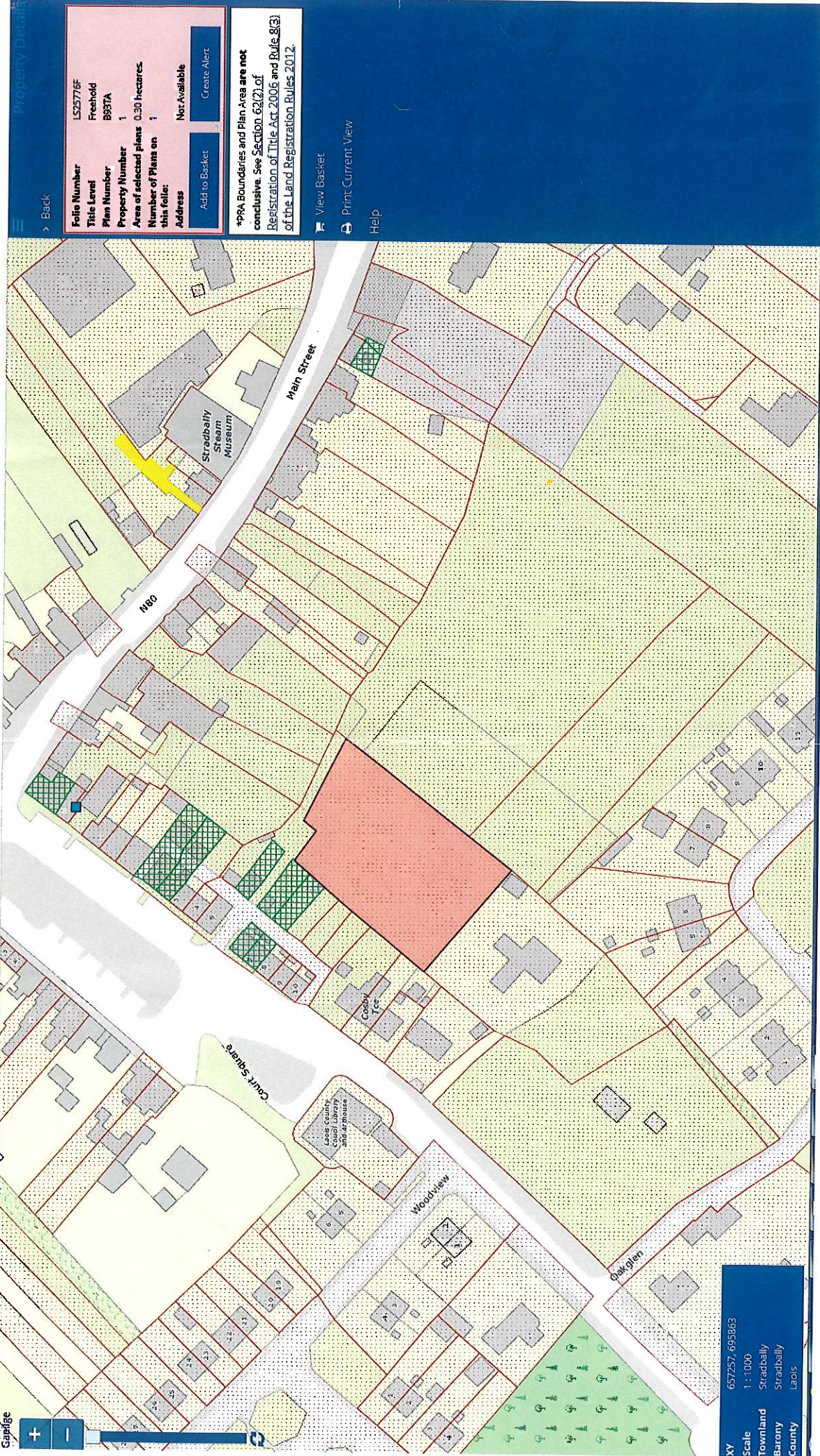
Laois County Development Plan 22017-2023

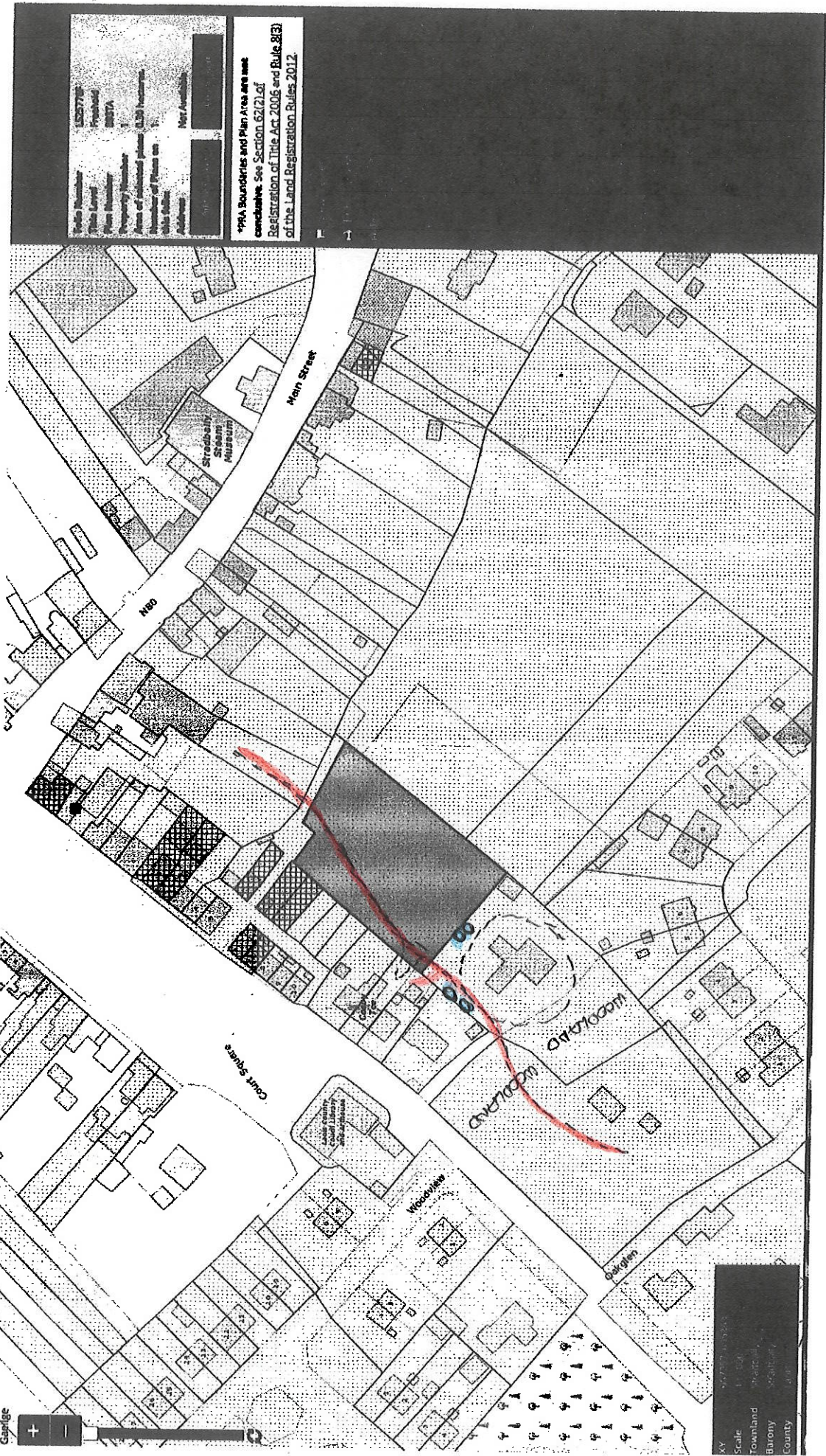
Page 87 5.2 Sustainable Tourism

Principle 1 *Tourism, when it is well managed and properly located should be recognised as a positive activity which has potential to benefit the host community, the place itself and the visitor alike. Sustainable tourism planning requires a balance to be struck between the needs of the visitor, the place and the community.*

Principle 2 *"Our landscape and our cultural heritage, our environment"*

Principle 3 *Built development and other activities associated with tourism should in all respects be appropriate to the character of the place in which they are situated, This applies to the scale, design and nature of the place as well as the particular land use, economic and social requirements of the place and its surroundings."*





Public Number	LS27762
File Level	Final
Plan Number	2017A
Property Number	
Area of interest plan	0.20 hectares
Number of Plans on	
Site title	
Address	
Not Available	

*PMA Boundaries and Plan Area are not conclusive. See Section 62(2) of Registration of Title Act 2006 and Rule 8(3) of the Land Registration Rules 2012.

ONE - - - HEDGEHOG ROUTE
 O HIBERNATION PLACES (USED ANNUALLY)



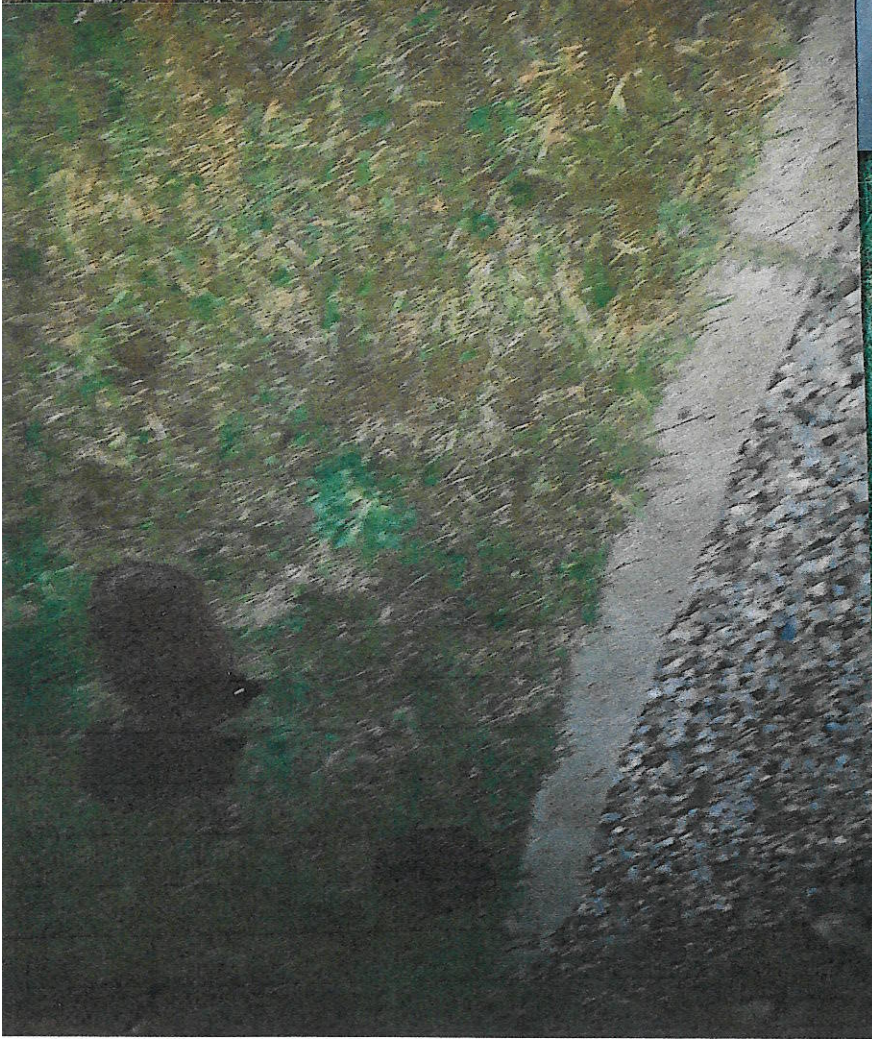
GRAVITY - LARKSALL

4 July 2019 08:54

Edit

DAWD - KEN GRAHAM - HAN ROAD.







Field Number	15257798
Title Level	Final
Plan Number	0007A
Property Number	1
Area of interest (sq. m.)	0.01
Number of Plans on	1
File Name	
Address	
Map Available	Yes

1994 Boundaries and Plan Area are not conclusive. See Section 62(2) of Registration of Title Act 2006 and Rule 8(3) of the Land Registration Rules 2012.

GREEN CORRIDOR

* EXISTING
+ PLANNED

PARK LAYOUT

1. CONSIDERATIONS

Simple
Accessible for everyone
Respect existing context
Accommodate for future changes
Ease and safety for people movement
Sustainability/Costs/Aesthetics

2. PARK

Sense of space
Quiet area
Wheelchair paths
Relaxing
Shade
Pollinator friendly
Hedgehog friendly
Scent, touch & hearing
Mounds of earth in places
Rotting wood
Green areas for picnics
Native plants predominately
Trees tall and short
Meadow
Boulders
Logs



LOG PILES
FOR HEDGEHOG
HIBERNATION

PLANTS FOR WILDLIFE)

Holly (berries)
Spindle (berries)
Rowan (berries)
Hazel (nuts)
Birch
Oak (sessile) x1
Crab Apple(bats)
Yew
(s) Lavender
(s) Catmint
(s) Rosemary
Knapweed (bats)
Fleabane (bats)
Oxeye Daisy
Teasel
(s) Night Stock (bats)
Globe thistle
Native primrose
Lungwort
Snowdrops
(s) Bluebells
Fratellerii
Buddleja
Michaelmas Daisy (bats)
Borage (bats)
Meadow cranesbill (bats)
Field scabious
Violets
Ferns
Various other pollinator plants
Meadow Grasses



WALL

SHAPED TREES

LOCKED GATE

PERENNIALS PLANTING

EXISTING SCOTS PINES

OPEN AREA

EXISTING HOUND

FARM EXISTING

EXISTING SCOTS PINES

WALL

QUIET AREA

MEADOW

LOCKED GATES

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS FROM COURT SQUARE

SHRUB/SHORT TREES

EXISTING FENCE