

MÚSCRAÍ HERITAGE PLAN: CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION PLAN 2018 - 2032



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The front cover image is of a vernacular gate in Cúil Aodha
The back-cover image is of a 19th century bridge at Baile Bhúirne

RESEARCH + DIG

Conservation/Heritage/Archaeology



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Definitions

Gaeltacht	The word 'Gaeltacht' is used for areas where the Irish language is, or was until the recent past, the main spoken language. Gaeltacht areas are defined by Government order. One of them is Múscraí.
Heritage	Our inherited traditions, monuments, landscapes, objects and culture. It can be natural or human made (i.e. cultural), tangible or intangible.
Heritage interpretation	Heritage interpretation is the communication of the meaning or meanings of a place through a variety of media. According to the international charter that guides interpretation this 'can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the process itself' ¹ .
Intangible heritage	Cultural heritage that takes the form of traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants. Intangible heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.
Spirit of place	The tangible (buildings, sites, landscapes, routes, objects) and intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, rituals, festivals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colours, odours, etc.), that is to say the physical and the spiritual elements that give meaning, value, emotion and mystery to a place ² .
Sustainability	Development that sustains the economic and social needs of the present without compromising core cultural distinctiveness or the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Tangible heritage	The physical manifestation of cultural heritage. Tangible heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments and artefacts.

¹ ICOMOS, *Charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites* (2007) 3

² ICOMOS, *Quebec declaration on the preservation of the spirit of place* (2008)

Vision

Múscraí is an incredibly vibrant place. It is a place where the character of its people and landscape are both intertwined and co-dependent. Change always occurs. The role of this document is to help the people of Múscraí manage that change and protect the core significant aspects of the region in which they live. Ultimately, it is envisaged that this document will help make the Gaeltacht become a better place in which to work, live and visit.

Executive summary

Purpose of the document

Lying on the County Cork side of the Cork/Kerry border, the Múscraí Gaeltacht is located 48kms to the west of Cork City. Rural in character, its area of c.255km² is dominated by numerous craggy hills. The 2016 census population of 3,785, represents c.4% of the total number of Gaeltacht inhabitants.

This fifteen-year heritage plan was commissioned by Cork County Council in conjunction with Acadamh Fódhla (full title: *Múscraí heritage plan: conservation, management and interpretation plan 2018-2032*). The project's main aims are to highlight the importance and heritage significance of the Múscraí Gaeltacht and to devise a number of heritage policies and actions to ensure that the area is appropriately conserved, managed and maintained into the future.

Methodology

This report is based upon archival research, site visits and an extensive programme of public consultation (see chapters 1-4). In addition to the steering group meetings with Acadamh Fódhla and the County Cork Heritage Officer, a string of public consultation meetings took place. The seven events happened in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Complementing the open public sessions was a series of interviews with approximately c.30 representatives from a cross section of representatives from the local public, private and community sectors.

Significance of the place

Good conservation management seeks to protect what is important about a place while at the same time permitting continued sustainable use. It does not try to stop change, rather, it aims to manage it.

After wide-ranging research, it was concluded that the tangible heritage (e.g. buildings, archaeology, bogs) of Múscraí is inextricably connected with the intangible (e.g. folklore, placenames, customs, music, poetry, ritual) (see chapter 5). There is a deep, complex, and symbiotic relationship between people and place. One is simply less without the other. It is this relationship that makes Múscraí a place of international importance.

It is the perception of the people of the character of the landscape itself that is unique.

For Ireland, Múscraí's cultural creativity and spirit of place acts as a reservoir of meaning and inspiration that helps counter the homogenising nature of globalisation.

The region is a tapestry of places of local, regional, national, and international importance that have created the place that it is today – a living landscape of dense meaning.

Aspects of identified international heritage significance include:

- The Gaeltacht's folklore collection and the connection between people and place
- The practice of pilgrimage/adoration of local saints
- The pilgrimage complex at St Gobnait's and 13th century statue of St Gobnait
- A ceremonial landscape in continual use since at least the Iron Age
- The living tradition of music and song, poetry and dance
- Múscraí has played a significant role in the preservation of the Irish language and Irish music
- The role of the Gaeltacht in the struggle for Irish independence and the creation of the State
- The rich diversity of habitats and high number of protected species in Múscraí.

Threats to significance

The most important factor to ensuring the preservation of the core heritage significance of Múscraí is ensuring that a sustainable community of mostly Irish speaking people is maintained (see section 5.5). It is essential that the community be deeply socialised with each other.

Specific key threats to the significance of Múscraí are:

- Mass tourism
- Reducing cultural tourist numbers
- Large new housing estates
- Withdrawal of services
- N22 upgrade
- Climate change
- A falling population both in the villages and hinterland
- Not enough Irish speakers moving into the Gaeltacht
- Inadequate broadband
- Local provision of jobs not adequately matching aspirations and skills of inhabitants
- Lack of shared co-working space for entrepreneurs and professionals
- Reducing economic viability of farming, particularly uplands farming
- The judgement of others concerning speaking Irish in public
- Reduction in the use of Múscraí Irish
- The lack of a strong, central and independent community based voice advocating for Múscraí
- Nationally important heritage places that are not legally protected
- Awareness of proper heritage management in Múscraí needs to be higher.

Conservation policies and actions

Below is this document's vision statement:

Múscraí is an incredibly vibrant place. It is a place where the character of its people and landscape are both intertwined and co-dependent. Change always occurs. The role of this document is to help the people of Múscraí manage that change and protect the core significant aspects of the region in which they live. Ultimately, it is envisaged that this document will help make the Gaeltacht become a better place in which to work, live and visit.

All the policies and actions detailed in chapter 7 are in keeping with this vision. None is an outlier. They have been designed to build upon and support the other.

General policies

- This heritage plan should provide the basis for all future decisions concerning the management of Múscraí's heritage.
- This heritage plan should be taken into account by Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta and other relevant State agencies when making decisions regarding Múscraí.
- Development should be sustainable and consistent with the Gaeltacht's culture and way of life.

Conclusion

Múscraí is a cultural region of international importance. The complexity and depth of the connection between people and place is rare in Western Europe. Such is Múscraí's significance that the area demands recognition and requires insightful supports to be put in place. If these are not done, then the core heritage distinctiveness of the place and its cultural value to the State and Europe in general will gradually diminish to a point where Múscraí becomes a place of no great importance or vitality.

1.0 Introduction

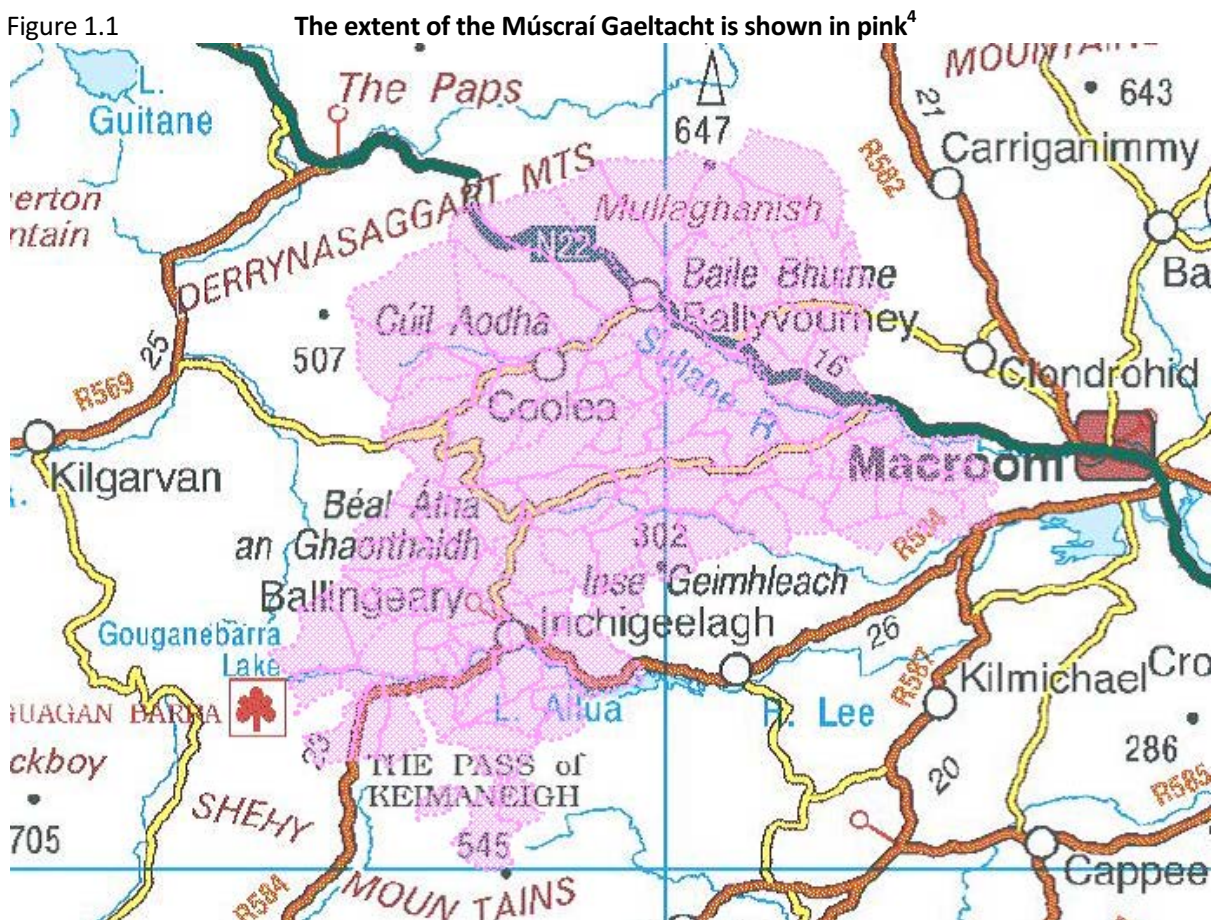
1.1 Background

This fifteen year heritage plan was commissioned by Cork County Council in conjunction with Acadamh Fódhla (full title: *Múscraí heritage plan: conservation, management and interpretation plan 2018-2032*). The project's main aims are to highlight the importance and heritage significance of the Múscraí Gaeltacht and to devise a number of heritage policies and actions to ensure that the area is appropriately conserved, managed and maintained into the future. The document builds upon the excellent work of the Gaeltacht's various community groups and the efforts of staff in Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta and other State organisations. The County Cork island Gaeltacht of Cléire (Cape Clear) is not considered in this report.

1.2 Site Identification and Profile

Lying on the County Cork side of the Cork/Kerry border, the Múscraí Gaeltacht is located 48kms to the west of Cork City (figures 1.1 & 1.2). Its population of 3,785³, represents c.4% of the total number of Gaeltacht inhabitants. The Múscraí Gaeltacht encompasses a geographical area of c.255km². This amounts to c.5.5% of the total Gaeltacht area. The largest settlements are the villages of Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Other significant settlements include Cúil Aodha, Réidh na nDoirí and Cill na Martra (fig. 1.3).

Figure 1.1



³ Census 2016 (Central Statistics Office)

⁴ Cork County Council, 2014

Figure 1.2 Location of the Múscraí Gaeltacht

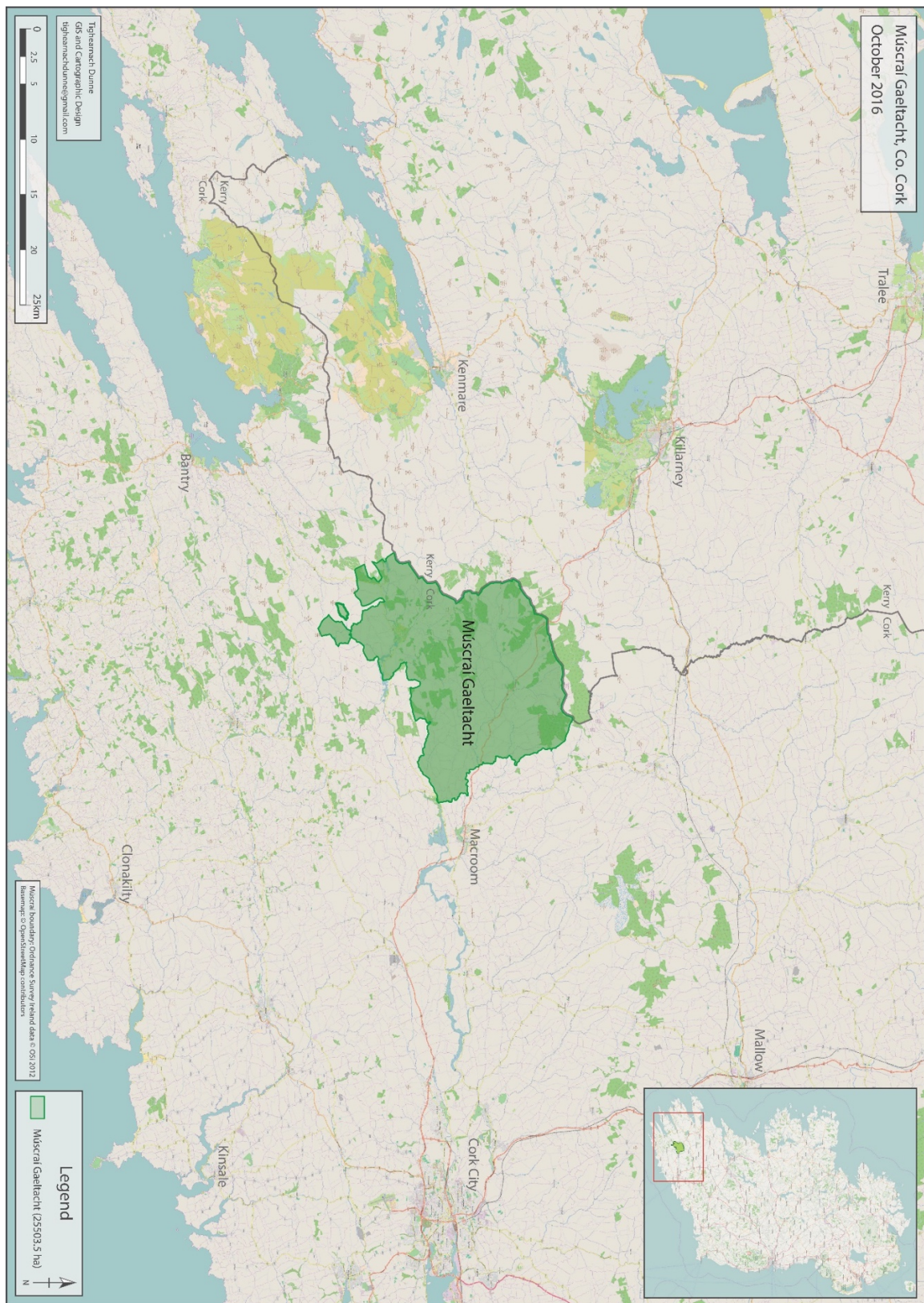
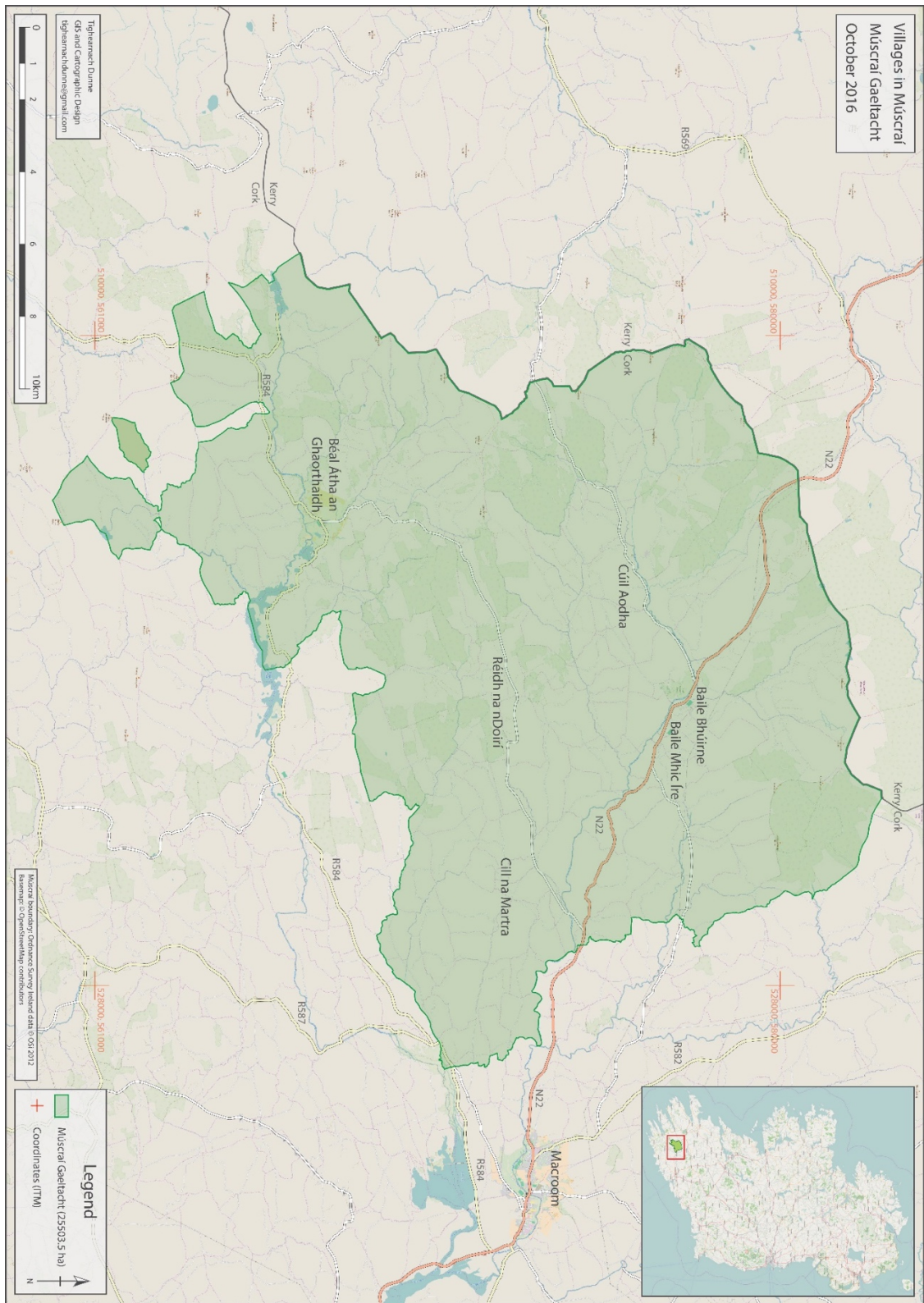


Figure 1.3 Location of Múscraí's villages



The landscape is dominated by numerous high craggy hills and the Derrynasaggart Mountains (fig. 1.4). The tallest peak, Mullach an Ois, rises to 647m. The pattern of daily life is directed along the river valleys of the Lee and Sullane. The two principal roads that cut through the Gaeltacht (R586 and N22) follow these river valleys. Both routes meet at the market town of Macroom. The harsh nature of the landscape and the importance of the two main roads have led to a certain fracturing of the Gaeltacht. Many people in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh have little to do with people in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and vice versa. The now ubiquitous car has led to a greater use of Macroom for services. There is no shop in Cúil Aodha. In Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, although there is one shop surviving, the village post office is now closed (fig. 1.5). Indeed, such is the level of retail business closure in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh that its ability to act as a meeting place for locals that are not already part of clubs or take part in organised group activities has been severely curtailed (see appendix a for a list of the community groups in Múscraí). Should the planned N22 upgrade through the Gaeltacht be completed, access to Macroom will improve and Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne will be bypassed. This will challenge the ability of Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne to act as an engine of socialisation.

Figure 1.4 **View over Múscraí facing north towards Mullach an Ois**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 1.5 **The main street of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

The 2011 census population of 3,771 represented a modest increase of 2.5% on the 2006 figure⁵. However, it marked an important reversal in a prolonged trend of declining numbers (table 1.1). The previous four census periods recorded a continuous decline with an overall reduction between 1986 and 2006 of 242 people (6%). Between 2011 and 2016 the Gaeltacht's population increased by 0.4% (fourteen people) to 3,785. By contrast, during that same period (2011-2016) the population of County Cork (excluding Cork City) increased by more than ten times that rate (4.2%)⁶.

Table 1.1 **Population Change Múscraí Gaeltacht 1986-2011⁷**

ED Name: Múscraí Gaeltacht	1986	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	1986- 2011	1986-2011 % change
Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh (part), Co. Cork	227	218	211	238	220	194	-33	-14.5
Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh (Ballingeary), Co. Cork	524	517	523	494	542	544	20	3.8
Ceann Droma, Co. Cork	271	260	256	257	292	317	46	17.0
Claonráth (part), Co. Cork	210	215	205	189	169	168	-42	-20.0
Doire Fhíniú, Co. Cork	235	230	243	217	229	251	16	6.8
Gort na Tiobratán, Co. Cork	440	426	438	425	420	450	10	2.3
Cill na Martra (part), Co. Cork	540	563	558	619	378	382	-158	-29.3
An Sliabh Riabhach, Co. Cork	871	761	747	761	816	833	-38	-4.4
Na hUláin, Co. Cork	602	561	564	537	612	632	30	5.0
Totals	3,920	3,751	3,745	3,737	3,678	3,771	-149	-3.8

In 2006, almost 87.7% of those living in the Gaeltacht were born in Ireland. By 2011, that had increased slightly to 88.3%⁸. Due to the overall decrease in population figures this indicates that non-Irish born residents were more likely to leave the Gaeltacht than Irish residents when the recession arrived in 2008. The two most common foreign countries of birth were the UK (5.9%) and Poland (2.2%). Overall, almost one in eight people living in Múscraí were not born in Ireland. In the view of the authors of the Údurás commissioned report *Gaeltacht Mhúscraí: a socio-economic and cultural needs analysis*, this figure 'presents an enormous opportunity/challenge as regards integration into the community, recognition of diversity within the community'⁹.

According to the same document, the level of home ownership was high. Just over 90% of households were owned by the occupying family¹⁰. This was above that of the national average. By 2011, only 82% of homes were owner occupied.

⁵ *Census 2011 and 2006*, (Central Statistics Office)

⁶ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpr/censusofpopulation2016-preliminaryresults/geochan/, (Accessed: 13/2/2018)

⁷ *Census 1986, 1991, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2011*, (Central Statistics Office)

⁸ *Census 2011*, (Central Statistics Office)

⁹ Phil Mortell et al, *Gaeltacht Mhúscraí: a socio-economic and cultural needs analysis* (Cork: Cork Institute of Technology, 2008) 21

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 21

There appears to be a significant educational divide between older and younger inhabitants. In 2011, primary school and/or the Junior Certificate were the highest educational achievements for 36.5% of people¹¹. This is slightly down from the 2006 figure of 37.3%¹². Anecdotally, it would seem that the vast majority of the less formally well-educated individuals are from the older generations. By contrast, the young are largely focused on gaining a third level qualification. Worryingly, it was discovered in *Gaeltacht Mhúscraí A socio-economic and cultural needs analysis* that many of the 3rd level students emerging from Múscraí tended to settle outside of the area. Evidence from our interviews has suggested that one of the main reasons for the trend is the insufficient number and breadth of quality professional jobs in the Gaeltacht. This is particularly the case for those qualified in the creative sector (e.g. web design, architecture).

In 2017, 684 people were employed in companies supported by the State agency Údarás na Gaeltachta in Múscraí¹³. Acknowledging the change in the expectations of locals, Údarás have been attempting for a number of years to shift somewhat away from a focus on semi-skilled manufacturing to assisting companies in the services sector and high-end manufacturing. Nonetheless, supply is not yet meeting demand. Perhaps, given the relatively small population of the Gaeltacht and proliferation of careers, it never will. Ultimately, there is only so much Údarás can do even as it pivots towards encouraging a greater variety of employment. There is also the risk identified by Walsh in 2005 that having too many factories and non-micro businesses in the Gaeltacht will probably require a large non-Irish speaking workforce to come in from outside Múscraí, thereby threatening the area's linguistic character¹⁴. Aside from manufacturing and the services sector, the farming sector remains a prominent component of the local economy. The cumulative impact of all this is that for many young people the current provision of opportunities is not enough.

One of the key reasons for the lack of professional opportunities is the scarcity of high speed broadband. Another contributing factor is the absence of a high-quality office hub where small professional firms could set-up and collaborate.

Almost 14% of Gaeltacht residents have obtained a degree or higher¹⁵. Many of these have chosen to stay or move into Múscraí despite the lack of career opportunities. Unless they are lucky, they commute. Illustrating this is the fact that the quantity of qualified teachers living in Múscraí (108) far exceeds the number of positions available in the Gaeltacht's schools¹⁶.

Roughly 29% of respondents to the 2008 Údarás report indicated that Irish was the primary language in their household¹⁷. Nearly 73% said it was the secondary language used. Geographically, the daily speaking of Irish outside of education is strongest in the area around Cúil Aodha. In 2006, overall fluency across the Gaeltacht was put at 40.5% of the population¹⁸. A further 34.6% had a mediocre ability in Irish. Of those who spoke Irish daily, over three quarters did so in their homes. Outside of the family house, usage was found to fall drastically. Encouragingly, a more recent study, *Nuasshonrú ar an Staidéar Cuimsitheach*

¹¹ *Census 2011*, (Central Statistics Office)

¹² *Census 2006*, (Central Statistics Office)

¹³ *Údarás na Gaeltachta: 2017 Review* (Údarás na Gaeltachta) 18

¹⁴ John Walsh, *The influence of the promotion of Irish language on Ireland's socio-economic development*, PhD Thesis, (School of law and government, Dublin City University, 2005) 205

¹⁵ *Census 2011*, (Central Statistics Office)

¹⁶ Phil Mortell et al, *Gaeltacht Mhúscraí A socio-economic and cultural needs analysis* (Cork: Cork Institute of Technology, 2008) 31

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 51

¹⁸ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin et al, *Comprehensive linguistic study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: principal findings and recommendations* (Galway: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2007), 19-21

Teangeolaíocht Ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006-2011 (2015), put fluency in Irish across Múscraí at 43%, with usage significantly increasing in the Cill na Martra district electoral division¹⁹.

Nuasshonrú ar an Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíocht Ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006-2011 offers a broad reflection on the status and use of the Irish language within the country's Gaeltachts. While it does not offer much specific detail on Múscraí, the analysis on broader Gaeltacht trends is still applicable. Significantly, the report's authors offer a sometimes robust critique of an earlier 2007 assessment²⁰. The broad findings of the 2015 report are critical of the earlier study and suggests that that document was 'too positive' towards the state of the Irish language and did not reflect the reality at a ground level, as found in the latter study. Despite the increase in fluency in Múscraí, the report makes for somewhat grim reading with regard to future predictions for the Irish language generally. The authors - Ó Giollagáin and Charlton - refer to 'bás na teanga' (death of the language) on a number of occasions and alarmingly suggest that within ten years (i.e. by 2021), Irish will not be the dominant language in any area of the Gaeltacht, in any part of Ireland. Their conclusion that Irish as a vernacular in Gaeltacht districts will not survive under current conditions beyond the next decade is alarming and should be taken very seriously within the context of Múscraí. Their warnings have been validated by the recent release of data from Census 2016 which indicated a significant 11.2% drop in the daily usage of Irish outside of the education system by Gaeltacht speakers when compared to 2011²¹. For the Cork Gaeltacht (Múscraí and Cléire) the fall was also 11.2%²².

The writers of the 2015 report reflected positively on the school system within the Gaeltacht areas and suggest that without the contribution of schools, the status of the language in the Gaeltacht could potentially be worse. Ó Giollagáin and Charlton found the highest rates of vitality amongst school goers and recorded a fall within older age groups.²³

In both the 2007 and 2015 documents there are a number of methods used to measure the status and strength of the Irish language. The overall aim of the assessment is to establish the position of the language as a 'dominant language' within the relevant community, ranking Gaeltacht areas within a grading system of A, B and C in descending order (table 1.2). Importantly for the Múscraí Gaeltacht, none of the areas within its boundaries are afforded a Category A status (Over 67% of the people using Irish as first and dominant language). The categorisation of Gaeltacht regions shows that most of the Category A regions are within the area of South Connemara with five also in Corca Dhuibhne and four in North West Donegal.²⁴ However, from a statistical point of view Ó Giollagáin and Charlton note that some Category C areas have moved up to Category B, particularly in Corca Dhuibhne and Múscraí.

¹⁹ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin and Martin Charlton, *Nuasshonrú ar an Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíocht Ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006-2011* (Galway and Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Galway and National University of Ireland, Maynooth) 71, The report title translates as 'Update of the Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: 2006-2011'

²⁰ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin was also involved in the compilation of the earlier report.

²¹ *Census 2016 summary results – part 1*, (Government of Ireland, 2017) 69

²² *Ibid.* In 2011, there was 982 daily Irish speakers outside of the education system. In 2016, there was 872.

²³ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin and Martin Charlton, *Nuasshonrú ar an Staidéar Cuimsitheach Teangeolaíocht Ar Úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006-2011* (Galway and Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Galway and National University of Ireland, Maynooth) 8

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7

Table 1.2 **Daily use of the Irish language²⁵**

Catagóir Ghaeltachta	% Cainteoirí Laethiúla Gaeilge do réir an Daonáirimh	% Teaghlaigh a bhfuil leanaí acu i dteideal an deontais faoi Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge
A	67%+	65% +
B	44% - 66%	30% - 64%
C	30% - 43%	10% - 29%
Gan Stádas	< 30%	< 10%

In the Múscraí Gaeltacht, Cúil Aodha was ranked in Category B (44% - 66% of daily Irish speakers), while the remainder of the Gaeltacht (apart from a part of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh) was placed in Category C (between 30% and 43%).

Overall, the picture on the use of Irish within Múscraí from the available written material, our interviews, and observations, is a complex one. Fluency is up but daily use outside of school is down. Several interviewees stated that there is a greater use of Irish amongst teenagers now than there was fifteen or twenty years ago, which can only be seen as a positive trend. Another person told how the adoption of Irish by a number of Eastern European children and the support from their parents has reignited greater use of Irish by some indigenous parents. Even within the electoral areas through which the language is officially analysed there was significant variation in the use of Irish in Múscraí.

1.3 Statutory Context and Listings

This plan has been commissioned by Cork County Council for the purpose of providing an understanding of the heritage values of Múscraí and to guide the authority and local community in the conservation, management and interpretation of the place. The plan is informed in particular by the *Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CCDP)*, which supports and is supported by the provisions of the *National Spatial Strategy (NSS)*, the *South West Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG)*, and the *North and West Strategic Plan (N&WSP)*.

The CCDP includes important provisions in relation to rural planning, housing and infrastructure development that will have a bearing on the Múscraí region. Identified under rural policy objective RCI 4-5 as a Transitional Rural Area, the region's specific development and economic characteristics are acknowledged and a positive approach to population and enterprise is set out²⁶. This plan has considered the CCDP's strategic approach to the area's settlement and population framework as outlined in the Core Strategy, as well as its policy considerations for natural and physical heritage, economic development in rural areas and local area planning. The plan also outlines comprehensive policy guiding rural housing development in such areas, requiring that new rural housing development outside the village settlements to be predicated on authentic social and economic ties to the locality. In 2013, a ruling by the European Court of Justice concerning "locals only" housing which became widely known about in May 2017 has raised a question mark over the legality of planning decisions for one-off housing outside of the villages being predicated on the applicant displaying authentic social and economic ties to the locality²⁷.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 61

²⁷ Michael Clifford, "Chance discovery spells end of 'locals only' restriction on one-off housing", *Irish Examiner* (May 22, 2017), <https://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/chance-discovery-spells-end-of-locals-only-restriction-on-one-off-housing-450596.html>, (Accessed: 30/10/2017)

The CCDP also has specific policy provisions aimed at protecting the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Múscraí Gaeltacht in 'HE 5-3: Gaeltacht Areas'²⁸:

- Encouraging development within the Gaeltacht, which promotes, facilitates or complements the cultural heritage, including Irish language use;
- Encouraging development within the Gaeltacht, which provides employment or social facilities, especially, but not exclusively, where these are of relevance to local young people;
- Resisting development within the Gaeltacht, which would be likely to erode the cultural heritage (including the community use of Irish language), unless there are overriding benefits for the long-term sustainability of the local community or for the proper planning and sustainable development of a wider area;
- Ensuring that where the County Council erects signs within the Gaeltacht, these have Irish as their primary language, unless there are positive and overriding reasons for doing otherwise;
- Discouraging the exhibition of advertisements within the Gaeltacht which do not use Irish as their primary language;
- Considering the desirability of demanding linguistic impact analyses with planning applications for particular major developments. These would be in cases where the potential impact of the development on the use of Irish as the community language is not immediately apparent and pivotal in the determination of the application.

In addition to the CCDP, there are three other significant and relevant local-level initiatives which will have an impact on the Múscraí area. Firstly, under new legislation, Cork County Council in partnership with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has prepared a six year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The plan has two distinctive themes; a local economic element and a community development element. Secondly, Cork County Council has prepared a suite of Local Area Plans (LAPs) to provide focused, area-based planning and land use zoning for each of the Municipal Districts. The Blarney-Macroom Municipal District statutory LAP covers the vast majority of the Múscraí region, including the five villages. The most southerly of Múscraí's townlands are covered by the West Cork LAP. Both plans deal with a range of planning, development, heritage, housing, infrastructure and economic issues. Finally, in accordance with the *Gaeltacht Act (2012)* Múscraí now has an area language plan of the same status of a town plan. Research and Dig representatives met the main author of Múscraí's language plan on several occasions to ensure that this document complemented and supported the language plan. The purpose of the language plan is to help direct the stabilisation of Irish as the community language²⁹.

Detailed planning policy and land use zoning for the Gaeltacht is provided by way of the *Blarney Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan*³⁰ (fig. 1.6). The key considerations for Múscraí include the following issues:

- A core settlement strategy which identifies a hierarchy of planned population settlement from large towns through to smaller rural villages and open rural areas;
- This structure accommodates a hierarchy of services to ensure that investment in housing, transport, employment, education, shopping, health facilities and community services can be delivered;
- A housing and population strategy based on strengthening the role and function of existing villages by directing development within development boundaries, whilst accommodating genuine rural housing needs in the countryside;

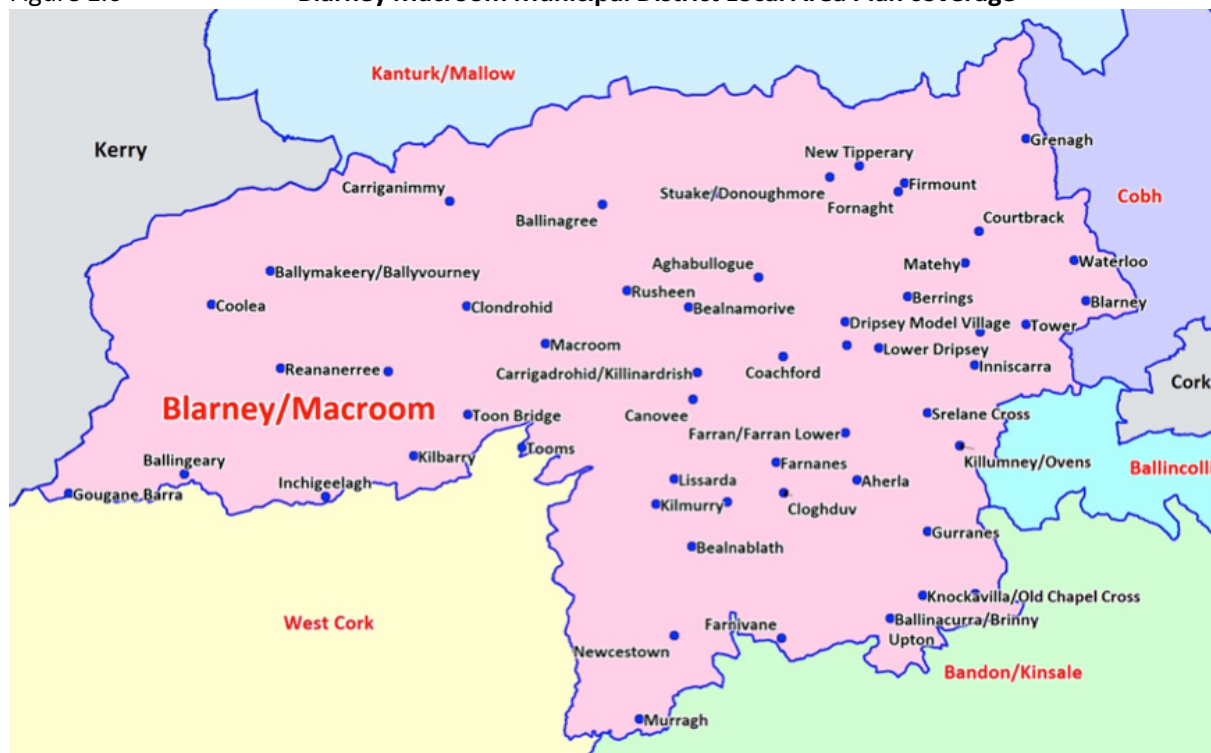
²⁸ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014) 200

²⁹ *20 year strategy for the Irish language 2010-2030*, (Government of Ireland) 20

³⁰ *Blarney Macroom Municipal District local area plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2017)

- Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne have been identified as ‘Key Villages’ – which possess a reasonable amount and range of local services and which are identified as locations for growth. However, the plan also recognises constraints concerning waste water treatment, the provision of drinking water and the maintenance of the Gaeltacht’s linguistic character;
- A set of policies covering economic development, infrastructure provision, transportation and environmental matters; and
- Policies which recognise the Múscraí Gaeltacht’s particular needs as a distinct region, and its unique culture and language. The LAP supports the protection and promotion of Gaeltacht settlements and areas, promotes employment and development opportunities in the Gaeltacht areas.

Figure 1.6 **Blarney Macroon Municipal District Local Area Plan coverage**³¹



There are eleven structures in the Múscraí Gaeltacht listed in the County Cork Record of Protected Structures (RPS). As a result, these properties are protected under the *Planning and Development Act 2000*. Should any building owner wish to make alterations that would change the character of one of these buildings planning permission must be applied for from Cork County Council. There are 28 buildings listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Ascription in this inventory does not provide legal protection. However, the inventory is used to inform future judgment on whether a building should be listed as a protected structure. There are no Architectural Conservation Areas in Múscraí.

The area contains 421 archeological sites listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). Being listed provides these places with protection under the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*. When the owner or occupier of a property, or any other person, proposes to carry out any work at, or in relation to, a recorded monument, they are required to give notice in writing to the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht two months before commencing any work. There are no national monuments.

³¹ <http://corklocalareaplans.com/blarney-macroon-municipal-district/>, (Accessed: 14/2/2018)

Múscraí has a number of battlefield sites. As befits the mountainous nature of the landscape, these tend to be small ambush sites. One notable exception is the relatively large area covered by the War of Independence Cúl na Catharach ambush site. According to historian Turtle Bunbury ‘some hold that the Coolnacaheragh Ambush was one of the most decisive engagements of the entire struggle. Precisely how decisive it was is hard to gauge, but it certainly gave the IRA a much needed boost in their belief that they could actually send the British into retreat³². Strategically, it secured the Derrynasaggart Mountains as a safe haven for the IRA³³. Despite the importance of Cúl na Catharach or any of the other battlefield sites, none have legal protection. The *Cork County Development Plan* does however include as a general objective concerning the protection of battlefields (Objective TO 2-1)³⁴. Section 12.5.5 of the Plan also sets out, with regard to War of Independence and Civil War sites that ‘it is the intention of Cork County Council to acknowledge the importance of these sites and to endeavour to protect and preserve them as places of historic heritage³⁵.

Protection to a number of species and designated landscapes are provided under the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the *Wildlife Acts* 1976 and the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act* 2000-2010. Where development is proposed that impacts upon a protect species or protected place, a derogation license must be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. There are eight sites designated for nature conservation in Múscraí.

There is no national legislation providing legal protection for intangible heritage. It is not mentioned in the *Heritage Act 1995*. Likewise, there is no mention of intangible heritage in the heritage section of the current *Cork County Development Plan* (2014). In December 2015, Ireland ratified the *UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage* (2003)³⁶. In it, article 11 (a) states that ‘each State party shall: (a) take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory³⁷. Furthermore, Article 13 (a) states that ‘each State Party shall endeavour to: (a) adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of the intangible cultural heritage in society, and at integrating the safeguarding of such heritage into planning programmes³⁸.

1.4 Methodology and Terminology

This report is based upon archival research, site visits and an extensive programme of public consultation.

The land area of the Múscraí Gaeltacht is large. No document in Ireland of this heritage plan’s breath has ever been conducted on a place of such size. Combining the conservation of a place along with its interpretation in an area of c.255km² brings challenges. However, it also presents the unique opportunity to have one coherent document guiding the care and presentation of all the area’s heritage.

It was concluded that the only way a document like the Múscraí Heritage Plan could be done both economically and to a high standard was for the consultants to retreat. Instead, the role of the professionals was to inform and facilitate discussions amongst those living in the Gaeltacht.

³² Turtle Bunbury, “The Coolnacaherach ambush - 25 February 1921,” www.turtlebunbury.com/history/history_irish/history_irish_ambush.htm, (Accessed: 22/06/17)

³³ Michael Hopkinson et al, “Coolnacaheragh ambush site and the N22,” (letter sent to An Bord Pleanála, May 7, 2010) 1

³⁴ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 122

³⁵ *Ibid*, 199

³⁶ *Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage*, (Paris: UNESCO) 2003

³⁷ *Ibid*, 5

³⁸ *Ibid*, 6

Accordingly, in addition to the Steering Group meetings with Acadamh Fódhla and the County Cork Heritage Officer, an extensive series of public consultation meetings took place. The seven events happened in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. In conjunction with the open public sessions a series of interviews with c.30 representatives from a cross section of representatives from local community groups, public sector organisations and businesses occurred with the lead consultant. The aim of these semi-structured and unstructured interviews was to obtain an illustrative sample of various viewpoints on Múscraí and its heritage. The formal interviews were supplemented by informal conversations with locals held throughout the project. Copies of ongoing drafts of the plan were posted on Cork County Council's website and emailed to participants of the public meetings. Drafts were also left at the public library in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne. Comment sheets were left in the library (see appendix b). Finally, a dedicated Facebook page was created where news on the report was posted. Throughout the whole consultation process the lead consultant's email and mobile number were distributed widely.

In order to fill perceived gaps in the available literature three research trips were made by the lead consultant to the Gaeltacht regions of An Rinn and Uíbh Ráthach and the Welsh speaking county of Gwynedd. During these visits, a series of informal interactions took place to ascertain the strength of the indigenous language and the key reasons as to why this was the case. The trips were supplemented with seven additional interviews between the lead consultant and experts in heritage, the Irish language and rural development.

This report's ecologist, folklorist and archaeologist also engaged in meetings with locals and relevant parties outside of the public consultation sessions so as to fill perceived information gaps.

A small steering committee comprising Peadar Ó Riada of Acadamh Fódhla and Conor Nelligan, Heritage Officer with Cork County Council provided valuable guidance.

The report incorporates relevant principles and processes of the *Granada charter* (1985), the *Burra charter: the Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance* (2013), and the *Ename charter, the ICOMOS charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites* (2008). The terminology used in this report is consistent with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's *Architectural heritage protection guidelines* (2004) and the *Burra charter* (2013).

1.5 Limitations

This report is a strategy document directing the management of heritage in Múscraí. Its role is to identify what is significant about the Gaeltacht's heritage and create a framework through which that significance is promoted and protected. Accordingly, an exhaustive inventory of the various monuments and heritage places is outside its scope. Similarly, an in-depth evaluation as to the health of the Irish language is outside the scope of this document. Please note that the following three chapters on the built, natural, and intangible heritage of Múscraí are only intended to provide an introduction to the profile and essence of these aspects of the Gaeltacht.

This report does not deal with the County Cork island Gaeltacht of Cléire (Cape Clear Island).

Such is the breadth of this document that in addition to being the conservation, management and interpretation plan for the Gaeltacht's heritage, it may also be considered to contain sufficient information to be used as a rural development plan and tourism framework plan by those who wish to do so.

The Irish language version of the document takes precedence over the English language version. This plan is to be reviewed at least every five years.

1.6 Author Identification

This conservation, management and interpretation plan has been conducted and prepared by:

- William Brady – Planner
- Terry Connell – Licensed archaeologist and farmer
- Tighearnach Dunne – Cartographer
- Dr Janice Fuller – Ecologist
- Dr Tomás MacConmara – Folklorist
- Liam Mannix – Heritage consultant

The document was edited by Liam Mannix.

The Irish version of this plan was translated by Eilís Ní Shúilleabháin, Peadar Ó Riada, Máire Ní Chéilleachar and Criostóir Ó Cróinín.

1.7 Acknowledgements

Research and Dig gratefully acknowledges the help of Peadar Ó Riada and Criostóir Ó Cróinín from Acadamh Fódhla and Conor Nelligan of Cork County Council. Valuable assistance was also provided by Beatrice Kelly of the Heritage Council. Special thanks go to those who have provided venues for the public meetings free of charge. These include: Séan Óg Ó Duinnín from Scoil Mhuire, Don O’Leary and the whole staff at the Mills Inn and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh GAA. The Irish version of this plan was translated by a dedicated team comprising Eilís Ní Shúilleabháin, Peadar Ó Riada, Máire Ní Chéilleachar and Criostóir Ó Cróinín. Go raibh maith agaibh!

Finally, the team wishes to send our deep appreciation to all those who gave us the benefit of their knowledge and opinions at the public meetings, interviews and casual encounters. Thank you!

2.0 Historical and Archaeological Profile

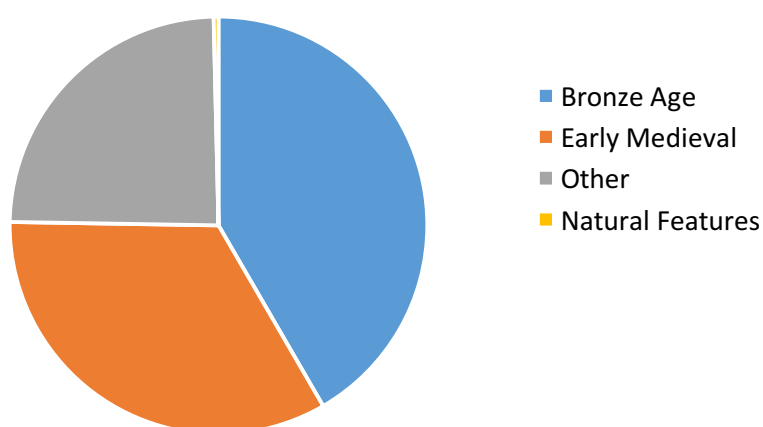
2.1 Introduction

The history and archaeology of Múscraí indicates a diverse region speckled with monuments, incidents and people that weave a picture of an area steeped in places of local, regional, national and international importance. This chapter will trace the area from its proven ancient Bronze Age beginnings right through to the twentieth century and offer a glimpse into Múscraí's tangible archaeological and historical past.

The area contains 421 archaeological sites listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) (fig. 2.1). Of these, the vast majority have been ascribed either a Bronze Age or Early Medieval date (table 2.1).

Table 2.1

Múscraí monument types³⁹



2.2 Bronze Age Beginnings

According to the RMP there are no definitive Neolithic field monuments in the Gaeltacht. Nevertheless, numerous pre-bog hut sites have been locally identified. This would suggest that human habitation in Múscraí could possibly date back to as far as the Neolithic Period. Occupation since the Mesolithic Period should also not be discounted. To validate this, thorough archaeological investigation is required.

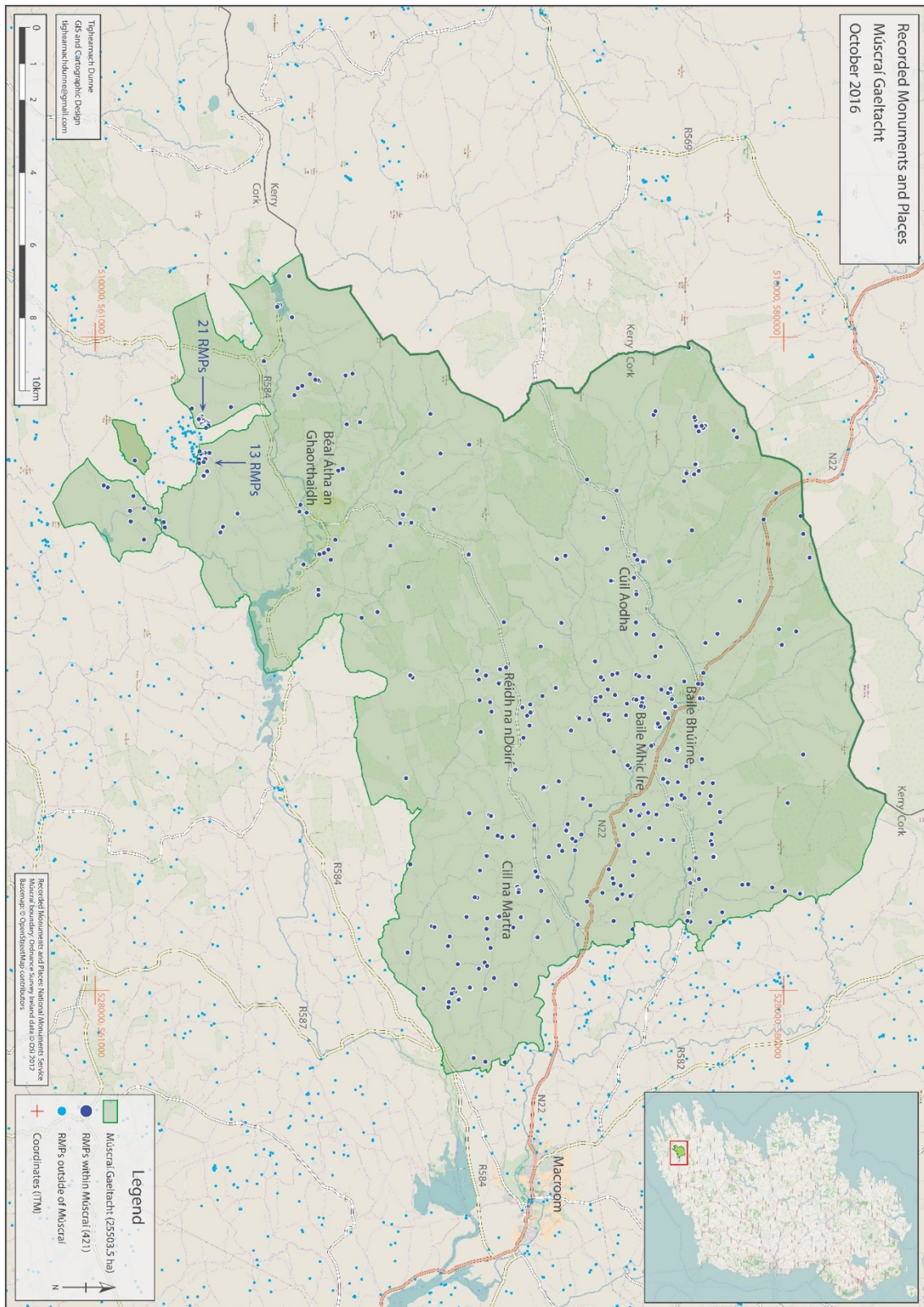
The Bronze Age in Ireland is noted as a time of extreme change within Irish pre-historic society. This period witnessed a transformation in material culture from flint to bronze. The RMP maps⁴⁰ indicate a large occurrence of Bronze Age (generally dated 2400BC – 700BC) monuments on the landscape. This would fit the national profile for the Bronze Age. During this period there was a large-scale movement of people toward the south-western corner of Ireland due to the abundance of copper in the mines of West Cork and West Kerry. The monument evidence, starting with the wedge tombs of the Neolithic/Bronze Age transition right through to the later standing stones is indicative of this in Múscraí. O'Sullivan has suggested that – 'wedge tombs formed an integral part of the development

³⁹ *Record of Monuments and Places, Cork*, (Dúchas, 1998), www.archaeology.ie/publications-forms-legislation/record-of-monuments-and-places, (Accessed: 9/2/2018)

⁴⁰ RMP stands for Record of Monuments and Place. They show the location of all classified monuments on the ordnance survey 6' inch maps of the early 1900s. Each monument is indicated by an arbitrary circle and given a classification number. This number communicates the county code (Cork CO), the number of the sheet that the monument is on and the number of the monument. All classified monuments are protected under law by the 1930 *National Monuments Act* and subsequent amendments.

Figure 2.1

RMP sites in Múscraí



of the farmed landscape⁴¹. Fifty six percent of all wedge tombs occur in the south-west of Ireland⁴². The area fits the regional profile with numerous wedge tombs, fulacht fiadh, stone circles and standing stones.

The enigmatic Iron Age does not definitively appear in the local RMP record. The monumental record for this period is sparse with defensive forts and barrows forming the majority of Iron Age site types nationally. This appears to fit a national profile, as only c.10% of sites excavated under the auspices of the National Roads Authority produced Iron Age dates. While apparently monumentally absent, it would be wrong to conclude that no Iron Age activity was present in Múscraí. It may be that the period is represented in early ringforts, ogham stones or other such field monuments generally dated to the Bronze Age or Early Medieval period. It is worth noting that evidence of an Iron Age presence was discovered by M.J. O'Kelly during his archaeological investigations at St Gobnait's Shrine.

While the RMP is clearly suggestive of a fledging Bronze Age landscape, there are problems concerning recognition and classification. Many sites listed in the RMP are generally classified to a particular period but without scientific dating no definitive dates can be individually given.

2.3 The Early Medieval Period

There is a strong pattern of Early Christian settlement in Múscraí. The most famous saint associated with the region is St Gobnait, the sacred abbess of the monastery at Baile Bhúirne (fig. 2.2). It is thought that her church was established here in the sixth century most likely by St Abbán, who in local legend is thought to have been Gobnait's brother.⁴³ Her pattern day is still celebrated on February 11th. The All – Ireland Review⁴⁴ of 1900 records it as:

Figure 2.2 **St Gobnait's hut excavated by O'Kelly in the 1950s**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

⁴¹ M. O'Sullivan, Wedge Tombs, *Archaeology Ireland*, Winter 2010, volume 24, issue 4, p. 38

⁴² Ibid, p. 38

⁴³ D. Harris, St Gobnet Abbess of Ballyvourney, *The Journal of the Royal Society Antiquaries of Ireland Seventh Series Vol. 8*, (1938), P. 276

⁴⁴ The National Calendar, *All Ireland Review*, Vol. 1, Number 14, (1900), p. 5

St Gobnet, Virgin and Abbess of Ballyvourney, Co. Cork (sixth century). It is related of her that she drove away a haughty invader by directing a swarm of bees against him. A fair and patron was held in her honour, at which the young men used to assemble on an eminence and invoke her to send them wealthy partners within the ensuing twelve months.

The archaeological remains left at St Gobnait's Shrine in Baile Bhúirne are a testament to its importance for at least fifteen centuries. The breadth of this record was greatly increased by the excavations of M.J. O'Kelly in the early 1950s. These include the remains of furnaces dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages under what became commonly known as St Gobnait's house. The site's link to fire has led Ronald Hutton to speculate⁴⁵ that there may be a titled link with the Celtic god of fire Goibniu; who in Irish mythology was the smith to the Tuatha de Dannan. This fire based link is also something that he claims may have been associated with the Abbess Bridget at Kildare⁴⁶. Allied to these remains are the ogham stones generally (but not scientifically) dated to the Early Medieval period⁴⁷. While the presence of ringforts shows us that Múscraí had a thriving secular population during this period also. The large dry-stone ringfort in Rath Ghaiscigh, complete with souterrain (an underground passageway), is a fine surviving example that is still accessible, albeit with some difficulty (fig. 2.3).

Figure 2.3 **Ringfort at Rath Ghaiscigh**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

Although the cult of Gobnait is an enduring tradition in Múscraí, she is not the region's sole significant saint. The early monastic settlement at Gougane Barra, west of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh is associated with St Fin Barre from the seventh century onwards (fig. 2.4). In Réidh na nDoirí, St Lachtaín is revered. The two holy wells (0.2m apart) in the townland of Cloch Eidhneach which are dedicated in the St Lachtaín are believed to have healing properties (fig. 2.5).

⁴⁵ R. Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy*. Oxford, Blackwell, (1991), 285.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.285

⁴⁷ M. O'Sullivan, *Ogham Stones, Archaeology Ireland, Summer 2014, volume 28, issue 2, p. 29*

Figure 2.4 **Gougane Barra**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Figure 2.5 **Tobar Lachtaín or St Lachtaín Well with its basins hand cut into the bedrock**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

2.4 The Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods

The archaeological record for later medieval Múscraí is greatly supplemented by documentary sources. From these a picture of internal power struggles and dispossession of land appears. Throughout the medieval period the McCarthy's were the ruling Gaelic Irish family. The initial land grant for what was to become the barony of Múscraí dates to 1352. Lands on the Cork-Kerry border were the subject of grant from the English crown to Cormac McCarthy after he and Sir Thomas de Rokeby defeated Dermot MacDermot McCarthy during an internal McCarthy power struggle. By 1365 Cormac McCarthy was referring to himself as 'Captain of the Irish of Desmond'⁴⁸. This lineage appears to have continued in various guises with McCarthy lands generally concentrated in the Múscraí area. Carrigaphooca Castle (just outside the Múscraí Gaeltacht), built in the mid-1450s by Dermot McCarthy was one of their strongholds.

The McCarthys sided with the crown forces during the attempted plantation of Munster in the late 1500s. They also sided with the crown forces during the Nine Years War. Following the restoration of Charles II in 1660, the McCarthys were rewarded with the title Earl of Clancarthy, this was an extension of the Earl of Clancare title instituted in 1565. Callaghan McCarthy was the main benefactor. He inherited land in the Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh area. The majority of this land appears to have being in the hands of the O'Learys during the pre-plantation era. McCarthy was distinguished by being a Catholic, something that was in the minority during this land transfer. Nationally, Protestant land ownership went up from 42% in 1641, to 70% in 1670.⁴⁹ In County Cork, land in Protestant hands rose from 23% in 1641, to 63% by 1670⁵⁰. The lands around in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Cúil Aodha were granted to John Colthurst who inherited c.15,000 acres of profitable land. The lands granted to Colthurst were in the main disposed from a Catholic named William Herlihy.

The primary idea of this land transfer was, as mentioned above, to repay loyalty. Consequently, these lands often passed from Catholic hands into Protestant hands. Interestingly, the surrounding area retained a higher proportion of Catholic landowners compared to the rest of the county. Nonetheless, this large-scale transfer of land laid the foundations for the landed ascendancy that held the sway of power in Ireland throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The importance of the cult of St Gobnait appears to be very much alive during this period (fig. 2.6). In 1601, Pope Clement VIII offered a ten year indulgence to all those who visited her shrine on her feast day. In 1602, Donal Cam O'Sullivan prayed at the shrine in Baile Bhúirne after fleeing the Crown forces conquering West Cork. The much maligned papal nuncio Rinuccini, sent over to assist the Confederates of Kilkenny, is also known to have celebrated mass at the site on Gobnait's feast day in 1645. All these actions indicate the importance of St Gobnait throughout the post-reformation period.

There are only three late medieval structures left standing in Múscraí. Two are ruined churches. One is at St Gobnait's Shrine. The other is the severely degraded ruin of An Teampaillín in Eachros (fig. 2.7). It was at An Teampaillín that Donal Cam O'Sullivan and his followers rested after their first day of marching on their fighting retreat to Leitrim in 1602. The site is also the location of a cillín, or burial ground for unbaptised or stillborn infants. The church is now on the route of the Beara-Breifne Way. The sole remaining medieval ruin as listed on the Record of Monuments and Places is the tower house in the townland of Dún Dea-Radhairc⁵¹ (fig. 2.8). Built by the McCarthy's, it survives in a ruinous state to first floor level. In 1602, it was captured by the O'Sullivan Bere⁵².

⁴⁸ K. Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland*, Dublin, Lilliput Press, (2003), p. 189

⁴⁹ Downesurvey.tcd.ie, (Accessed: 20/10/2014)

⁵⁰ Ibid, (Accessed: 20/10/2014)

⁵¹ Thanks goes to historian Tim Herlihy who notified us of this tower house.

⁵² *Archaeological inventory of County Cork. Volume 3: Mid Cork*, Dublin, Stationary Office (1997), CO070-084

Figure 2.6 **Late medieval church at St Gobnait's Shrine**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 2.7 **An Teampaillín**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 2.8 **Dún Dea-Radhairc tower house**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

2.5 Famine and the Age of Revolution

The Great Famine of 1845 – 1852 had a huge impact on the Ireland. Estimates of deaths coupled with emigration are in the millions. While all areas of the country were affected by An Gorta Mór, the marginalised areas of the west of Ireland were certainly the worst affected. This national picture is confirmed locally in the 32.7% drop in population in Baile Bhúirne and 35.1% drop in Cill na Martra between 1841 and 1851⁵³.

The barony of Múscraí was within the Poor Law Union of Macroom (304sq miles). The town's workhouse officially opened on the 1st of October 1842. The prevailing governmental and economic idea of the time was the policy of *laissez faire*. This hypothesised that nobody should benefit from governmental hand-outs. Therefore, the idea of the workhouse was to ensure that those who were receiving State assistance within it were contributing to society.

Although the workhouses were places of disease, degradation and shame, the conditions outside were worse. Nowhere is this more evident than in the numbers they contained by 1851. In 1845, the numbers in workhouses in Ireland were 38,497. This rose to 83,283 in 1847 and to 217,000 by 1851.⁵⁴ Locally, the presence of a porridge house at St Gobnait's Shrine (Tig na Leiteann) and a soup kitchen in the Kerry Yard in Cúil Aodha significantly reduced the level of deaths but not migration. The dire

⁵³ M. Mac Suibhne, *Famine in Muskerry, An Drochshaol*, Midleton, Litho Press, (1997), p. 82

⁵⁴ William J. Smyth, *The Province of Munster and the Great Famine*, in (eds) J. Crowley, W.J. Smyth & M. Murphy, *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine*, Cork, (2012), p. 363

situation was arrested further by the support of the Colthursts through their funding of a series of works on their estate which employed locals.

The story of the Buckley family travelling from Macroom workhouse to Carraigastya graveyard to mourn their two children and their ultimate death is one of the most enduring stories associated with the region.

The problems did not end with the Great Famine. Evictions were common in Múscraí during this period. An example being in Baile Bhúirne where 44 families were evicted from their homes in the post-famine period. This illustrates the unstable nature of society during this time and indicates how a struggle for landownership, equality and eventual independence came to pass.

Conditions in nineteenth century Ireland laid the foundation for the revolutionary zeal that captured the country in the 1910s and 1920s. The conditions at the time provided ample reason for discontent within the large majority of inhabitants. Múscraí was no different. The majority of the land was still in the hands of largely absentee landlords. This led to tenants doing little in return. They were simply pawns of the landed gentry. At any point they could be removed from their land, consequently, improvements were not made. Agrarian groups such as the Whiteboys and Ribbonmen sprouted throughout the country. Their main aim was to fight for the land rights of the labouring class. An incident at Keimaneigh in 1822 at which three Rockites (another agrarian group) and an English soldier was killed showed the intense nature of the agrarian resistance in Cork.

Although Catholic Emancipation was granted in 1829, it is in the post-famine years when changes really picked up pace. In 1869, the Church of Ireland was disestablished as the main church of the people, regardless of faith. This meant an end to the system of tithe paying to the established church.

The State sponsored numerous schemes to alleviate the agrarian tension that was rising in Ireland during this period, one such was the Congested Districts Board. This was established to help those in marginal areas of the west through grants to improve infrastructure and update farms. The remaining reports give a good indication of social conditions in Múscraí during the latter stages of the nineteenth century. Table 2.2 outlines the landownerships and values from Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and the surrounding areas from a Congested Districts Board report of 1892.

Table 2.2 **Congested Districts Board Report 1892⁵⁵**

Electoral Division	Area in Acres	Poor Law Valuation £	No. of ratings under £10 and over £4 Val	No. of Ratings under £4	Population 1891	No. of families in 1891	No. of families on holdings between £2 and £4 value	No. of families on holdings under £2 val.	No. Families in poor circumstances.	No. of families without cattle
Dromdaleague North	6089	678	39	24	562	93	9	7	10	
Ahil	13976	821	25	10	574	85	9	0	6	
Bealanageary	8368	1095	48	28	852	128	2	12	8	
Cleanrath	6868	642	27	18	491	77	7	4	5	
Slievreagh	11684	1562	58	52	1064	167	5	28	16	
Breadagh	4410	1593	38	90	1063	184	19	56	40	60*
Totals	51395	6391	235	222	4606	734	51	107	85	118

The gradual erosion of absolute power of the landed class eventually led to Land Bills being passed for Ireland. These were to have a dramatic impact on the landscape of Múscraí. The fight for tenant rights was greatly advanced by the formation of the Land League in 1878. Its sole purpose was to gain rights

⁵⁵ Information courtesy of Cumann Staire Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh.

for impoverished landowners. The League quickly spread with branches founded throughout the country. A local branch was formed in Inchigeela in May 1881 to protect the rights of the people of the area.

After two generally ineffective land acts in 1870 and 1881, progress was made on the land issue with a succession of following acts⁵⁶. These afforded tenants the opportunity to buy land through governmental grants and also legislated for disused estates to be sold. The economic landscape of Múscraí became significantly reshaped. A succession of standard farm cottages were constructed, the people now gained control of their land for the first time. These cottages represented the changed nature of Irish society, the slow erosion of an imperial classist system and its replacement with a burgeoning small independent Catholic farming class.

The changes were not limited to the erosion of the landed class, they were also influenced by the consolidation and enclosing of land, the disappearance of medieval cluster settlement and farmhouses been built close to the newly emerging road network. The cottages of this period, although in various states of disrepair, still dot the landscape especially in the hinterland of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. These are a constant reminder to the great changes that took place in the region during the pre-revolutionary period and stand as monuments to the transforming nature of Irish society in the late nineteenth century.

This societal change spurred a cultural and political change and laid the foundations for the revolutionary period.

The War of Independence period (1919-1921) was a time of extreme upheaval in Ireland but especially in County Cork. The number of incidents in Cork during this period outnumber any other county. Múscraí proved no exception to this. The recently released records from the Bureau of Military Archives offer first-hand accounts of events. One such account is that of Patrick J. Lynch of Ullanes, Baile Mhic Íre⁵⁷. Lynch served as a Captain of the Baile Bhúirne IRA during the War of Independence years. Rebel activity appears to have been constant throughout Múscraí; with 1920 having the greatest recorded instances. Lynch details events such as the attack on Baile Bhúirne RIC barracks on January 3rd, 1920, the burning of 'The Lodge' belonging to W.G Williams on June 9th, for which he (Williams) was later awarded £10,000 in damages,⁵⁸ and the fierce fight that occurred at Gattabaun on 17th July where Captain Ayrie of the Manchester Regiment was killed. The protagonists claim that this was the first attack on a military lorry in the independence period⁵⁹. These events show the unstable nature of society in Múscraí.

The ambush carried out at Knockanure in August 1920 typifies the activity of the IRA in Múscraí during the War of Independence. On August 17th two military lorries were returning to Macroom after delivering twenty bicycles to the military at Baile Bhúirne when the two outriders of the party ignored an IRA command to stop; instead they sped up to make their escape. The IRA, under the command of Paddy O'Sullivan and Patrick Lynch, opened fire immediately. Patrick Lynch recalls the incident:⁶⁰

We opened fire, killing the officer in charge – a Lieutenant Sharman – immediately and wounding four others. The others returned our fire. Shooting continued for about half an hour when eventually the remaining members of the patrol surrendered.

⁵⁶ Irish Land Purchase Act 1885, Balfour Act 1887, Wyndam Act 1903 and the Labours Act 1906

⁵⁷ P. Lynch, *Bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie*, (Accessed: 15/09/2014)

⁵⁸ *Skibbereen Eagle*, October 8th 1920, p. 2

⁵⁹ Op. cit Lynch, p. 9

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.9

This attack immediately prompted the Crown to act. The *Irish Times* reported on the 23rd of August that – about 200 men of the Manchester Regiment were drafted into Baile Bhúirne on Friday. On Friday night they surrounded the village, and effected several arrests.

The records of Cornelius Cronin a member of the Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh Company, 8th Battalion recalls the formation of the Irish Volunteers in the area in 1913 and the mobilization order given by Tomás McCurtain to 16 volunteers on Easter Sunday 1916. He also illustrates the anti-conscription sentiment that was gripping Ireland in early 1918 – ‘at the peak of the conscription scare our strength reached 130 men’⁶¹. Another extract recounts a crisis of conscience suffered by an RIC Sergeant (Sergeant Appleby) at his finding of Tomás McCurtain, in a room at the Gougane Barra Hotel – ‘When he entered one of the rooms he saw McCurtain, O’Higgins, Hyde and a Scottish Volunteer... He spoke for a few moments to McCurtain in Irish, then turned and left the room, closing the door behind him.’⁶² This testimony typifies the problems faced by so many RIC members in Ireland during the independence period.

The ambush at Cúl na Catharach is one of the most intense examples of fighting recorded from the War of Independence period. The battle took place on the 26th of February 1921 and comprised a force of 60 IRA men and an Auxiliary force that numbered over a hundred. The fighting was described by Patrick J. Lynch as – ‘a terrible fight which lasted four hours’⁶³. The fighting that took place at Cúl na Catharach lasted over four hours before a six hour running fight over the Múscraí terrain and according to local sources resulted in the loss of 28 auxiliaries with the IRA not suffering a single casualty. One of the few confirmed British deaths was possibly Australian. If that indeed was the case, then he was the only Australian to be killed due to the War of Independence.

Along with Clonbannin and Crossbarry (both March 1921), the ambush at Cúl na Catharach is a prime example of the efficient nature of guerrilla warfare carried out during the War of Independence. The British response to the ambush was for infantry, armed and air units to be called to the scene, thus it has been rightly described as one of the most ambitious military attacks of the entire period. Indeed, the nationally important battlefield at Cúl na Catharach is the only War of Independence battle site that is marked on the ordnance survey of Ireland maps. It exemplifies the region as one that was aware of its regional and national identity and illustrates the sacrifices made to protect and foster its cultural heritage.

While history mostly focuses on those who fought here, there were also 210,000 Irishmen who partook in World War I, with 49,000 never returning. Múscraí does not appear to have had many among the fallen. John O’ Leary (Baile Bhúirne) a member of the Munster Fusiliers was killed on the 22nd of March 1918 in France. Originally from Baile Bhúirne he is the only definitive soldier killed in action (others found but county of origin not available) that was found from the Múscraí region.

The story of Michael O’Leary of Inchigeela (just outside the Gaeltacht) is certainly one of note. He received the Victoria Cross for bravery in action while fighting in France in 1915. He led a charge of the 1st Battalion of the Irish Guards towards a German occupied trench, killing five machine gunners, thus saving his own comrades. A lance-corporal at the time of the incident, O’Leary was instantly promoted to sergeant. The exploits of O’Leary led to the British government using him as a recruiting poster boy for the remainder of the First World War.

The collective effort of the War of Independence was quickly replaced by the turmoil of the Civil War. Initially concentrated in Dublin, it quickly spread southwards and was a national affair by June 1922.

⁶¹ C. Cronin, *Bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie*, (Accessed: 19/11/2014), p. 2

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 4

⁶³ *Op. cit.* Lynch, p. 17

Múscraí was an anti-treaty stronghold. By October 1922, the National Army had advanced as far as Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. The *Cork Examiner* of October 2nd states – ‘severe and intense fighting commenced soon after the advance on Ballingearry’. The article suggests that Baile Bhúirne will be next to fall. The *Irish Independent* dated 1st October states – ‘the irregular casualties are believed to be heavy.’ There appears to have been little let up in the fighting as 1923 commenced. The *Freemans Journal* dated 2nd March details an ambush in Baile Bhúirne. With the end of the Civil War in 1923 the Gaeltacht came firmly under the control of the pro-treaty government in Dublin.

Much of the architectural heritage of the Gaeltacht comes from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Múscraí has eleven protected structures (fig. 2.9). Most are concentrated around Baile Bhúirne/Baile Mhic Íre. The main streets of the Gaeltacht’s villages are dominated by simple but elegant vernacular two storey terraced and detached houses (figures 2.10 & 2.11). These are complemented by a lovely scattering of vernacular slate roofed farm buildings and their associated outbuildings. There is little of the grand houses heritage in Múscraí. An exception to this is the ruinous Glebe building adjacent to St Gobnait’s Shrine (fig. 2.12). Built in the early 19th century by the Colthurst family, the house was later sold to the Church of Ireland during the late 1800s⁶⁴.

The 19th century was a period of greatest church building. At St Gobnait’s Shrine there is a good example of an Anglican Board of First Fruits church. Throughout the Gaeltacht there is also a fine collection of post-emancipation Roman Catholic churches (fig. 2.13). In almost all of the churches are some appealing stained-glass windows adding artistic importance (fig. 2.14). Perhaps the most significant Catholic church is St Fin Barre’s Oratory in Gougane Barra. Built in 1903 in accordance with Celtic revival design of S.F. Hynes⁶⁵, it is a physical manifestation of efforts at the time to create of a distinctly Irish national identity. When it was first constructed, the walls of the east end of the church were beautifully decorated by intricate designs. Those designs are no longer visible. Perhaps they still survive, hidden under later layers of paint. An ornate painted east wall also previously existed in the church in Cill na Martra. Now only the top section of the mural is present to frame the large copy of the Rubens painting ‘The raising of the cross’ located above the alter (figures 2.15 & 2.16).

Múscraí has good collection of well-built 18th and 19th century masonry bridges (fig. 2.17). They were constructed to improve trade and communications⁶⁶.

⁶⁴John Cronin and Associates, *Heritage Plan for St Gobnait’s Shrine and environs* (John Cronin and Associates 2003), 24

⁶⁵www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=CO®no=20908001 (Accessed: 6/2/2018)

⁶⁶www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=CO®no=20908103 (Accessed: 7/3/2018)

Figure 2.10 **Terraced shop and home in Baile Mhic Íre**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 2.11 **Vernacular building in Cúil Aodha built incorporating a rocky outcrop**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 2.12 **The Glebe**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 2.13 **Réidh na nDoirí Church with bullaun stone to the right of main entrance**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

Figure 2.14

Stained glass window in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh church



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

Figure 2.15

Interior of Cill na Martra church in 1924 as taken from on-site image



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

Figure 2.16 Interior of Cill na Martra church in 2017



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

Figure 2.17 c.1800 masonry bridge in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

2.6 A Cultural Renaissance

It should come as no surprise that Múscraí was an essential component in the Gaelic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century considering the lack of permanent incursion by the ruling British classes. The architectural footprint of Múscraí is suggestive of an area that did not have the settled village nature that dominated vast swathes of the country. Múscraí follows a more ancient style of settlement, one that bears witness to its Gaelic roots. This is a system of building in perishable materials, materials that leave little trace on the landscape. The village of Cúil Aodha perfectly illustrates this. The present village (built around the church in 1872) is the fourth incarnation of a settlement in the immediate area. This system of a moveable population very much in the Gaelic tradition and distinctly different from the English model of nucleated settlements appears endemic throughout Múscraí. Roads only came in the 19th century. Before this, movement for purposes of pilgrimage, cattle grazing and trade was done along Gaelic track ways.

The local resistance to many colonial ideas in conjunction with a fostering of a Gaelic identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed Múscraí at the forefront of the national cultural revolution.

The importance of place and tradition is something that is reflected in cultural work undertaken in Múscraí in the early twentieth century. This is typified by Dochtúir Donal Ó Loingsigh (b.1842 – d.1913). A native of Cúil Aodha, he was a pioneer of the National Cultural movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His career path was somewhat stifled by the hanging of one of his uncles as a convicted Whiteboy,⁶⁷ thus preventing him from joining the priesthood. Instead, he fought with papal armies in the Italian War of Unification and on the French side in the Franco-Prussian War before returning to Baile Bhúirne to practice medicine. He was a leading light in the establishment of the first dedicated Irish language school in Baile Bhúirne in 1898, in a public house ran by the Colthurst family. He was also instrumental in founding the renowned Coláiste Na Mumhan in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh in 1904. Quickly, the Coláiste became hugely significant to the Gaelic revival movement. Both Terence McSweeney and Tomás Mac Curtain were visitors. Ó Loingsigh's expansion of feis to Killarney and Dublin from Baile Bhúirne laid the foundations for Baile Bhúirne to become recognised as one of the core centres for Gaelic culture in an independence seeking Ireland. He represented Ireland (along with Pádraig Pearse and Douglas Hyde) at the Celtic Convention in Paris in 1900. His cultural work also included his endeavours with Conradh na Gaelige which he promoted throughout Múscraí and beyond. The impact of Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh was such that scholars from Múscraí were sought countrywide to lead the teaching of Irish and its promotion at a time of great change for Ireland.

While the expansion of Gaelic culture out of Múscraí is perhaps what Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh is most remembered for, his contribution to the local community through industry is something that cannot be overlooked. He realised that local industry was an essential tool in ensuring the survival of the region. He first founded a general store that provided animal feeds and met the agricultural needs of the locality. He further demonstrated this entrepreneurial zeal with the opening of a bakery and later a knitting factory that employed up to twenty local women. This element of Ó Loingsigh is something that contributed greatly to the region and laid the foundations for its economic sustainability in the fledgling Irish Free State.

It's not often that a single person, however gifted, can alter the character of a nation's culture. Ó Riada managed to do this – Thomas Kinsella

⁶⁷ An agrarian group that fought for the rights of subsistence farmers in the eighteenth century. Given the name whiteboys due to their dress when they raided landlord estates.

Composer Sean Ó Riada successfully intertwined numerous cultural influences throughout the 1950s and 1960s and reinvigorated Irish traditional music in the process. He is credited with changing the perception of Irish traditional music and reintroducing it to a new modern Ireland. Ó Riada had many musical tastes. He played with a jazz band in Cork in the early 1950s, while also being influenced by European classical ways throughout his life. His career included spells working for Radio Éireann, composing in Paris, serving as musical director at the Abbey theatre, and lecturing in the music department at University College Cork.

His realisation that Irish traditional music was in grave danger led him to impose his classical training upon the corpus of traditional music. He opted to perform in a theatre setting, something more akin to the classical music of European tradition. His traditional group Ceoltóirí Chualann offered him the platform to move away from the céilí band tradition and enabled him to establish a “folk orchestra” idea. Thus, he established a well from which many musical streams have flowed, earning Ireland much recognition for its musical groups in many genres.

Ó Riada was commissioned to compose the score for *Mise Éire*, a programme chronicling Ireland’s break from a colony to an independent nation. This was one of the seminal points in his career, further popularising his music and making the score a source of pride for the Irish nation. This left an imprint on the Irish people and pushed Irish traditional music to the forefront of national identity.

Throughout this period Ó Riada lived and worked in Dublin. His home at Galloping Green, was a vibrant hub for traditional gatherings of music, language, poetry, song and debate. In 1963, Ó Riada took up a lecturing position at University College Cork and moved to the ancestral land of his mother in Múscraí. Once resident in Cúil Aodha, he became a fervent ambassador for the people of Múscraí through his work with Ceoltóirí Chualann and the establishment of Cór Cúil Aodha.

The revolutionary Second Vatican Council established a basis for the Mass to no longer be celebrated in Latin, but rather in the vernacular of a region. Consequently, the participation of the congregation was encouraged in a greater way. Ó Riada embraced this opportunity to combine the chanting of the Latin style Mass with the ancient tradition of sean-nós singing, which became the blueprint for Masses in Irish speaking areas (and in English speaking areas offering an Irish Mass). These liturgical works were sang throughout Ireland by the Cór Chúil Aodha, heightening awareness of the Irish language, and reaffirming Ó Riada as a cultural ambassador for Irish language speakers throughout the country (fig. 2.14). Indeed, the Ó Riada Masses are still used throughout the country.

The achievements of Sean Ó Riada are not limited to what has been written. He reintroduced the harp to Irish traditional music (controversially favouring the harpsichord) and made the bodhrán a central instrument in his traditional works. His collection has enriched the corpus of Irish traditional music available and he managed to link it to the people and therefore increased its identity at a time when it had decreased in popularity. Like Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh before him, Ó Riada used his base in Múscraí to radiate a nationally recognised cultural contribution to Irish society. He managed to revitalise Irish music by blending newer traditions with the old, thus cementing his place among the greats of Irish traditional music.

Figure 2.18

Interior of Séipéal Ghobnatan, home of Cór Chúil Aodha



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

The history and archaeology in Múscraí is suggestive of a region that was at the forefront of regional and national issues. The Bronze Age monuments tell us that it was a fertile landscape that was had relatively intensive occupation during pre-history. It appears to have flourished in the Early Medieval period with religion playing a hugely important role. This devotion continued throughout the medieval and post medieval periods and is still evident today. The late medieval period was characterised by internal land struggles and land-grabs; none greater than the transfers in the late 1600s. The famine period once again brought Múscraí to the forefront of the national agenda. It was badly affected during the mid-1800s, with horrendous scenes of starvation and anguish. The push for independence and the cultural reawakening of the twentieth century show how the area led the fight for both political and cultural independence.

3.0 The Natural Heritage of the Múscraí Gaeltacht

3.1 Introduction

The island of Ireland is a cultural landscape that has been shaped by millennia of human habitation and land-use. Likewise, the landscape has shaped patterns of human settlement and the nature of human activity. The high mountains, steep hills, woodlands and fertile river valleys in the Múscraí Gaeltacht have undoubtedly influenced life in the Múscraí area for thousands of years. The strong links between the people, the language and the landscape is evident in the placenames, music and other intangible heritage of the area.

Natural heritage is defined by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention⁶⁸ as follows:

1. **natural features** consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
2. **geological and physiographical formations** and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
3. **natural sites** or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

3.2 Geology

The Múscraí Gaeltacht is framed by the Derrynasaggart Mountains to the north and north-west, the Shehy Mountains to the south, and the Lee River valley to the east. The underlying bedrock of the Múscraí area is Devonian Old Red Sandstone⁶⁹. This is evident in outcropping rocky slopes and corries in the uplands. The highest peak is Mullach an Ois (647m) at the northern edge of Múscraí in the Derrynasaggart Mountains but there are several other high peaks on the western and southern edge of the Gaeltacht (Knockbwee 461m, Mweelin 487m and Coomataggart 530m). The central part of Múscraí is also hilly with several hills c. 200m in height.

3.3 Habitats

The landscapes in this area are characterised by uplands and lowlands, peaks and valleys, rivers and wetlands. The uplands are covered in upland blanket bog and heath, coniferous forestry and rough grassland. At lower elevations productive farmland with improved pastures is more prevalent as is wet grassland on more marginal land. There are a few pockets of native oak woodland and stands of wet woodland in association with river and lake edges, and small areas of lowland blanket bog. There are two important river catchments in the Múscraí area, the River Lee and the Sullane River. Both rivers rise in the uplands on the western edge of Múscraí and flow eastwards. The Sullane River and its tributaries have a good stock of Brown Trout, and fly fishing is popular in the area⁷⁰. Water quality of the rivers is generally of good or high quality but there are a few water bodies with poor water qualityⁱ.

Land-use is predominantly coniferous forestry and rough grazing with sheep in the uplands, and pastoral farming with cattle in the low-lying areas of the Múscraí. Wind farms are a feature of the skyline at higher elevations.

⁶⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

⁶⁹ www.gsi.ie

⁷⁰ www.fishinginireland.info/trout/southwest/sullane.htm

The main natural and semi-natural habitats in the Múscraí area are in brief described below (table 3.1). They include several habitats of high nature conservation value that are listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive⁷¹. This list of habitats is based on a limited survey of the area by Janice Fuller, the sites synopses for designated sites⁷² and a review of the literature⁷³.

Table 3.1 **The main natural and semi-natural habitats that occur in Múscraí, Co. Cork. Habitats are classified according to Fossitt (2000) 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland'**⁷⁴

Habitat	Habitat code*	Description
Upland blanket bog	PB2	Upland blanket bog is abundant at higher elevations (>150m) often in a mosaic with wet heath. Much of this bog and heath has been planted with conifers. There are still large open and intact areas (e.g. Mullaghanish Bog SAC). The bog vegetation includes Ling Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>), Common Cotton-grass (<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>), Hare's-tail Cotton grass (<i>E. vaginatum</i>), Crowberry (<i>Empetrum nigrum</i>) and bog mosses (e.g. <i>Sphagnum papillosum</i>). Overgrazing by sheep is an issue in some places. This habitat corresponds with Annex I habitat 'Blanket Bog 7130' when actively growing.
Dry heath	HH1	Dry heath is common on steep slopes and high or rocky ground. Dwarf shrubs such as Ling Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>), Bell Heather (<i>Erica cinerea</i>) and Gorse (<i>Ulex</i> spp.) are also present. This habitat corresponds with Annex I habitat 'Dry siliceous heath 4030'.




⁷¹ Annex I habitats are listed on Annex I of the European Union Habitats Directive. These habitats are considered to be of the highest nature conservation value within the context of the European Union. http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/environment/nature_and_biodiversity/l28076_en.htm



⁷² www.npws.ie/protectedsites



⁷³ AOS Planning Limited. 2010. Constraints Report- Flora and Fauna. Dunmanway to Clashavoon 110kV Overhead Line Environmental Reports. Unpublished report; Dixon Brosnan. Ecology. Cleanrath Wind Farm. Unpublished report; Peppiatt, C. 2013. Chapter 5, Flora and Fauna. In 'Shehy More Wind farm- Environmental Impact Statement'. McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan. Unpublished report.



⁷⁴ Fossitt, J. 2000. A Guide to Habitats in Ireland. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

Wet heath	HH3	Wet heath is common, often in association with blanket bog and dry heath. It occurs on shallower peat (15-50cm) than blanket bog but has similar vegetation cover. This habitat corresponds with the Annex I habitat 'North Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica cinerea</i> 4010'.
Coniferous plantation	WD4	There are extensive areas of coniferous plantation within the Múscraí area. Much of this forestry is managed by Coillte (e.g. Glendav and Cúil Aodha Forests ⁷⁵) but some is privately-owned. The primary species is Sitka Spruce (<i>Picea sitchensis</i>) and it dominates most of the plantations. Wind farms have been developed in association with the forestry in some areas just outside the Gaeltacht's boundary. Associated with the conifer plantations are recently felled areas (WS5) and young plantations.
Rivers-upland/lowland	FW1/FW2	<p>There are many rivers and streams within the area and two important river catchments, the Sullane and the Lee. The Sullane is an important tributary of the Lee. It rises in the hills west of Baile Bhúirne and flows east to join the Lee near Macroom. The Lee rises in the Shehy mountains near Gougane Barra and flows east through Macroom and on to Cork City. The Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) has been widely reported in both catchments, as have Otters. Both are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The image below depicts the Sullane River in Cúil Aodha and associated wetlands.</p> 
Lakes	FL	There are several small and medium-sized lakes in the Múscraí area, the most iconic of which is Gougane Barra Lake. Most of the upland lakes, including Gougane Barra Lake, would be classified as 'dystrophic' lakes (FL1). Those with a higher nutrient status would be classified as 'mesotrophic' (FL4) (e.g. Lough Allua). Dystrophic

⁷⁵ www.coillte.ie/coillteforest/plans/forest_management_plans/progress_on_revising_our_forest_management_plans/cork/?tx_r3co086forestsdb_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=CK11&cHash=f248a02ccc;
www.coillte.ie/coillteforest/plans/forest_management_plans/progress_on_revising_our_forest_management_plans/cork/?tx_r3co086forestsdb_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=CK29&cHash=2ba771fe72

		lakes correspond with the Annex I habitat 'Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds 3160'.
Lowland blanket bog	PB3	<p>There are small areas of lowland blanket bog in the valleys and in association with rivers. Dominant species present include Bog Myrtle (<i>Myrica gale</i>), Ling Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>), Purple Moor Grass (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>), Common Cotton Grass (<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>), Cross-leaved Heath (<i>Erica tetralix</i>) and Bog mosses (<i>Sphagnum</i> species). This habitat also corresponds with the Annex I habitat 'Blanket Bog 7130' when actively growing.</p> 
Dry humid-acid grassland	GS3	<p>This type of grassland occurs in the uplands on acidic soils and much of it is grazed by sheep. This type of grassland tends to be less intensively managed but can be heavily grazed. The main grasses present are generally Bent Grasses (<i>Agrostis</i> species) and Mat Grass (<i>Nardus stricta</i>).</p> 
Wet grassland	GS4	<p>Wet grassland is abundant through the Múscaí area in areas that are poorly drained, or in association with water bodies. It is characterised by rushy fields with Soft Rush (<i>Juncus effusus</i>),</p>

		<p>Creeping Bent Grass (<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>), Yorkshire Fog Grass (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) and Cuckoo Flower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>).</p> 
Oak-Birch-Holly woodland	WN1	<p>There are a few areas of Oak woodland in Múscraí. The most notable are St Gobnet's Wood and Cascade Wood where there is a large but fragmented area of old Oak woodland. Much of the Oak woodland present is dominated by Sessile Oak (<i>Quercus petraea</i>) and Birch (<i>Betula pubescens</i>) with Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) in the understorey. This habitat corresponds to the Annex I habitat 'Old Oak woodland 91A0'.</p> 
Wet woodland	WN6	<p>Small patches of wet woodland dominated by Grey Willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i>) with some Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>) can be found along the edges of rivers and streams, and on the edges of bogs or in boggy depressions. The very rare plant, the Killarney Fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>), was recently found growing close to an upland stream in an area of native woodland not legally designated for nature conservation.</p>

		
Hedgerows	WL1	<p>A notable feature in the area is the richness of the hedgerow flora. Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) is the dominant hedgerow shrub but Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) are common, as well as Oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp).</p> 
Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland	WN2	<p>Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland is another type of Oak woodland found in the Múscraí Gaeltacht, especially on damp or flushed ground. It is dominated by Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) with Hazel abundant in the understorey (<i>Corylus avellana</i>). This type of woodland occurs in a mosaic with WN1. WN2 woodland is present in St Gobnet's Wood and Cascade Wood.</p>

* Habitats are classified according to Fossitt (2000) 'A Guide to Habitats in Ireland'

3.4 Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

There are eight sites designated for nature conservation in the Múscraí area including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) (fig. 3.1). They are described in brief below. Further details on all the sites are available in the sites synopses on www.npws.ie.

SACs are the prime areas for nature conservation in Ireland and the European Union. Sites are designated based on the presence species (listed on Annex II of the EU Habitat Directive) and habitats (listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive) that are considered of conservation importance in a European context.

SPAs are designated for birds of conservation concern (listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive) (including resident and migratory birds) in Ireland and the European Union, and their habitats.

NHAs are sites that are considered to be important for nature conservation in an Irish context. They are designated under the Wildlife Acts.

1. St Gobnet's Wood SAC (Site Code 000106)

This SAC includes St Gobnet's Wood and Cascade Wood. These woods are situated on hilly land on either side of the N22 in Baile Bhúirne with Cascade Wood to the north and St Gobnet's to the south. They form a relatively large but fragmented stand of mature woodland. They appear to exist on the area's first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map for the area, suggesting it can be considered as old woodland⁷⁶.

Much of the woodland consists of Oak-Birch-Holly woodland (as described in table 3.1) but Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland is also present particularly in flushed areas and towards the base of the slopes⁷⁷. There are also small areas of alluvial woodland along the Sullane River, where Alder, Ash and Downy Birch are abundant. The Oak on the site includes Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*), Sessile Oak (*Q. petraea*) and their hybrid, *Q. rosacea*. Large old Beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) are also common within the woods. Hazel is common in the understorey of the woods and Holly is present in places. The field layer is species-rich with woodland herbs such as Bluebell, Wood Anemone, Wood Avens, Enchanter's Nightshade and Hart's Tongue Fern. Opposite-leaved Saxifrage and Bugle are abundant in the damper spots. Rocky faces and boulders are abundant throughout the site and they are draped in mosses, liverworts, and in many cases, St Patrick's Cabbage (*Saxifraga spathularis*).

The site supports Kerry Slug (*Geomalacus maculosus*), a rare and protected species listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. Parts of Cascade Wood are known to be frequented by at least seven species of bat: Soprano and Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Leisler's, Daubenton's, Natterer's and Whiskered/Brandt's Bat⁷⁸. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat (a rare species in Europe and therefore listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive) was also recorded in Cascade Wood in recent years (2007) by the Cork Bat Group. There is also an old record of the Killarney Fern growing in this Wood⁷⁹. This is an extremely rare plant and listed on the Flora Protection Order (1999)⁸⁰.

Old Oak Woodland is an Annex I habitat in the EU Habitats Directive.

⁷⁶ www.npws.ie/publications/irishwildlifemanuals/IWM46.pdf

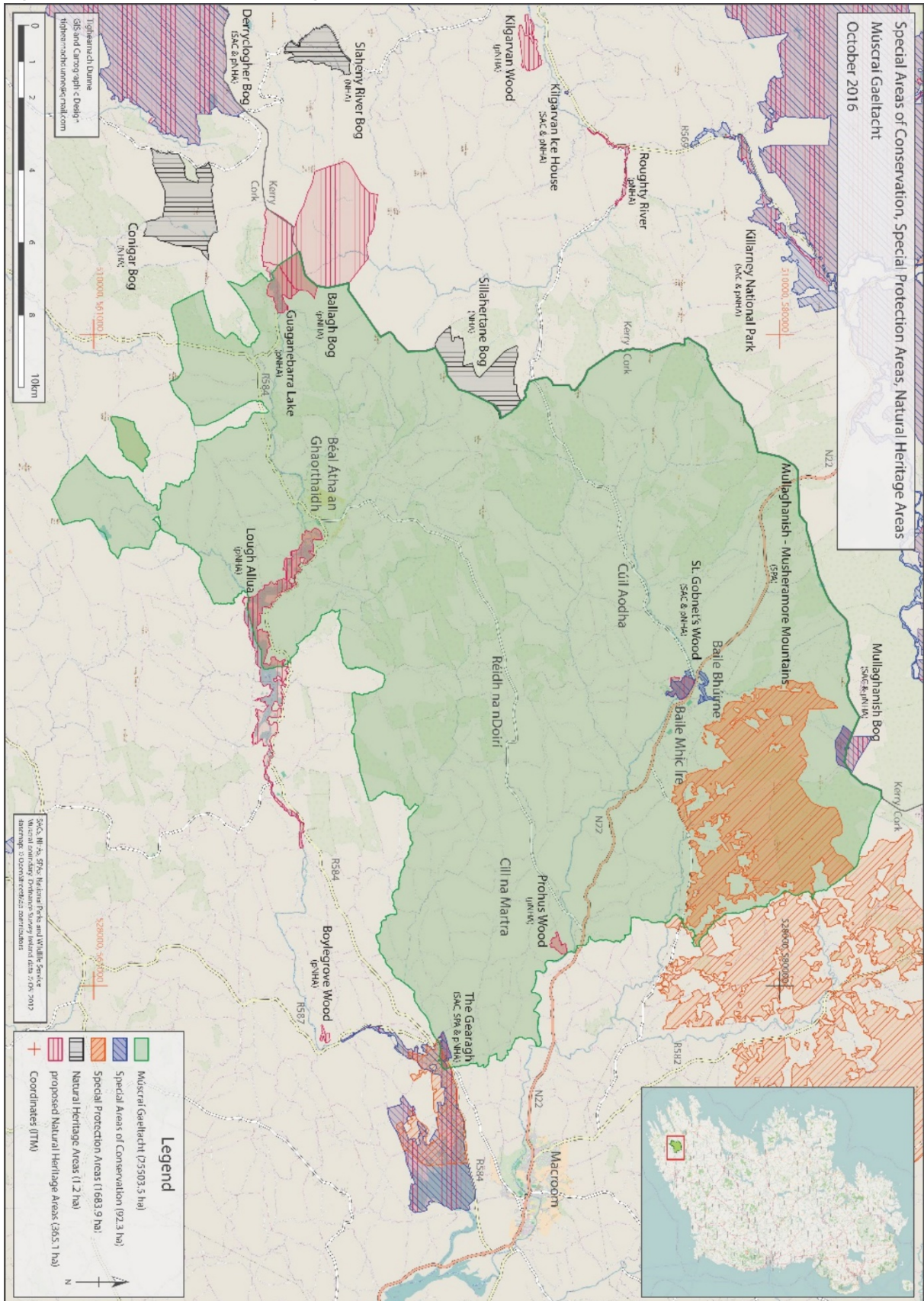
⁷⁷ Perrin, P., Martin, J., Barron, S., O'Neill, F., McNutt, K., and Delaney, A. 2008. National Survey of Native Woodland. Volume 3c Site reports. National Parks and Wildlife Service.

⁷⁸ www.corkcountybatgroup.ie/page/the-bats-of-cascade-wood

⁷⁹ www.bsbimaps.org.uk/atlas/main.php

⁸⁰ www.npws.ie/legislationandconventions

Figure 3.1 Sites designated for nature conservation



2. Mullaghanish Bog SAC (Site Code 001890)

Mullaghanish Bog is centred around the summit of Mullach an Ois Mountain. The site is designated as an SAC due to the presence of blanket bog (listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive). This small area of bog is of particular nature conservation interest because it is relatively intact (not damaged by overgrazing or erosion) with blanket bog and flush habitats.

3. Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA (Site Code 004162)

The Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA comprises a substantial part of the Boggeragh/Derrynasaggart Mountains. A portion of this large SPA lies within the Múscraí area. The site consists of a variety of upland habitat including coniferous forestry, blanket bog, wet heath and dry heath. This place is designated as an SPA due to the presence of Hen Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), one of our rarest birds of prey and an Annex I species on the EU Birds Directive. The site provides excellent nesting and foraging habitat for breeding Hen Harrier and is an important stronghold for the species. The site also supports a breeding population of Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), another rare bird of prey and Annex I species.

4. Prohus Wood NHA (Site code 001248)

Prohus Wood appears to have been cut in the 1950s and is now dominated by multi-stemmed Oak (*Quercus* spp.) and Birch (*Betula pubescens*) with an understory of Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Holly (*Ilex avellana*)⁸¹. A number of streams flow through the wood and into the Sullane River. There are abundant rock faces and rocks with St Patrick's Cabbage and Irish Spurge.

5. Lough Allua pNHA (Site code 00165)

Lough Allua is a ribbon lake (part of the River Lee system) surrounded by a mosaic of habitats including wet grassland, woodland, bog, and heath. The rare and protected Pale Violet (*Viola lactea*) grows along the northern shore, west of Inchigeela⁸².

6. Gouganebarra Lake pNHA (Site code 001057)

Gouganebarra Lake is situated in an upland setting surrounded by mountains. The high level of acidity in Gouganebarra Lake, combined with the peat content of the water means that there is little aquatic vegetation. Peregrine Falcons (another bird of prey and protected species that is rare in Europe) have been known to breed on the cliffs above the lake⁸³. In the evening, a large number of bats feed on insects over the water.

7. Ballagh Bog pNHA (Site code 001886)

About one third of this site lies within the Múscraí area. The site comprises a high-level river plain and surrounding mountain slopes. It includes a series of small, slightly raised valley bogs situated in the bends of a mountain stream⁸⁴.

8. The Gearagh SAC (Site Code 000108) and SPA (Site Code 004109)

The Gearagh is a special area of wet woodland that occurs in the River Lee floodplain south-west of Macroom. The north-western corner of the woodland occurs within the Múscraí Gaeltacht.

⁸¹ Perrin, P., Martin, J., Barron, S., O'Neill, F., McNutt, K., and Delaney, A. 2008. National Survey of Native Woodland. Volume 3c Site reports. National Parks and Wildlife Service.

⁸² AOS Planning Limited. 2010. Constraints Report- Flora and Fauna. Dunmanway to Clashavoon 110kV Overhead Line Environmental Reports. Unpublished report.

⁸³ Peppiatt, C. 2013. Chapter 5, Flora and Fauna. In 'Shehy More Wind farm- Environmental Impact Statement'. McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan. Unpublished report.

⁸⁴ Peppiatt, C. 2013. Chapter 5, Flora and Fauna. In 'Shehy More Wind farm- Environmental Impact Statement'. McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan. Unpublished report.

This type of alluvial woodland is very rare in Ireland today. Much of the woodland in The Gearagh was felled in the 1950s to facilitate the development of a hydro-electric scheme on the Lee. The area that remains has probably been wooded since the end of the last ice age 10,000 years ago and therefore can be described as an ancient woodland. Today, the woodland consists of a series of wooded islands with a complex network of river channels.

Oak woodland occurs on the islands with a rich mix of trees and shrubs including Birch, Ash, Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Purging Buckthorn, Bird Cherry, Willows and Alder. A diverse aquatic flora occurs in the river channels. As part of the River Lee system, the Gearagh supports important bird populations including Whooper Swans, Wigeon, Teal, Tufted Duck and Golden Plover.

3.5 Species of note

Several rare and protected species have been recorded in the Múscraí area. These include several birds of prey such as Hen Harriers, Peregrine Falcon and Merlin, which occur in the Derrynasaggart and Shehy Mountains. The elusive Barn Owl and Kingfisher have also been recorded in the area, as well as wading birds such as Lapwing and Curlew⁸⁵. The Gaeltacht is also well within the range of the White-tailed Eagles nesting on Garnish Island.

Múscraí is the heartland for the Kerry Slug, which has been recorded in Cascade Woods and at other sites in the area⁸⁶.

The Lee and Sullane River catchments are both known to contain Freshwater Pearl Mussel, which is a very rare species that requires water of the highest quality in which to live and breed. Unfortunately, the water quality present is not of the required very high level needed for the Freshwater Pearl Mussel to reproduce.

The Lesser Horseshoe Bat (a rare species in Europe which has its stronghold in the west of Ireland) was recorded in Cascade Wood by the Cork Bat Group in recent years (2005- 2007). It has also been recorded in other locations, including in the southern half of Múscraí near Inchigeela⁸⁷.

There appears to be a record of the very rare Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) within the hectad in which Múscraí is located. It was recorded 1987-1999⁸⁸. A further incidence of the Killarney Fern was recently discovered in an area of native woodland in the Gaeltacht not legally designated for nature conservation.

Otters have been widely reported in the Múscraí area. Although rare in much of Europe, Otters are widely distributed in Ireland. The extensive river catchments provide excellent habitat for Otters.

Sika Deer are abundant on the landscape, especially on the edge of the forestry. They are not a native species and they can have a negative impact on woodland habitats. The native Red Deer also occur in the area and they are thought to be linked to the native Red Deer population in Killarney National Park⁸⁹. Red Deer also like woodland edge habitats, blanket bog and heath. They are the largest type of deer found in Ireland. Other woodland and woodland edge specialists such as Red Squirrel, Badgers

⁸⁵ McCarthy Hyder Consultants. 2009. N22 Baile Bhúirne- Macroom. Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1 Non-technical Summary. Report for Cork County Council.

⁸⁶ NPWS. 2010. Threat Response Plan Kerry Slug *Geomaculus maculosus*.

⁸⁷ DixonBrosnan. Ecology. Cleanrath Wind Farm. Unpublished report

⁸⁸ www.bsbimaps.org.uk/atlas/main.php

⁸⁹ Declan O'Donnell (National Parks and Wildlife Service) pers. comm.

and Jays are on the increase due to the extensive woodland habitat available. Pine Marten, however, have not been recorded in Múscaí to date⁹⁰.

3.6 Nature outside of the designated sites

While the Múscaí area contains some important sites designated for nature, many species and habitats of ecological interest occur outside of these sites and in the wider landscape. Many of the species of note listed above occur outside of designated areas.

The Lee catchment is hugely important as a water source and wildlife habitat. Otters, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Kingfisher have all been reported in the River Lee and Sullane River. There are also extensive wetlands associated with these rivers and their tributaries.

Much of the upland area in Múscaí is not designated but contains large if fragmented areas of blanket bog and heath, and habitat for birds such as Hen Harrier and Merlin.

In addition, there are small but significant areas of Oak woodland within the region in the designated sites listed above and in other small sites such as the woodland at Derrylahan near Cúil Aodha. Irish Spurge and both species of *Hymenophyllum* filmy ferns have been recorded in this wood⁹¹.

The extensive network of hedgerows within Múscaí provides corridors for wildlife to move through the landscape. Most Irish hedgerows were established between 1750 and 1850 as landlords enclosed former commonage to create fields⁹². The network of hedgerows coupled with the hilly nature of the landscape combined to give the Irish Republican Army (IRA) a tactical advantage over British forces in the War of Independence.

The National Forest Park at Gougane Barra is a very popular amenity site with many kilometres of walking trails for people to enjoy, and picnic sites. The over 137 hectare site was the first national forest park created in Ireland. The park lies mostly just outside the boundary of the Gaeltacht.

⁹⁰ Ted Cook pers. comm.

⁹¹ Perrin, P., Martin, J., Barron, S., O'Neill, F., McNutt, K., and Delaney, A. 2008. National Survey of Native Woodland. Volume 3c Site reports. National Parks and Wildlife Service.

⁹² *Conserving Hedgerows*, The Heritage Council, Kilkenny, p. 1.

4.0 Intangible Heritage

4.1 Introduction

The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* under the auspices of UNESCO, defines the intangible cultural heritage as the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills (including instruments, objects, artefacts, cultural spaces), that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage.⁹³ It is sometimes called living cultural heritage and is manifested in a number of cultural domains including oral traditions and expressions, language, performing arts, knowledge and practices concerning nature and traditional craftsmanship.⁹⁴

Intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation. It is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history.⁹⁵ This chapter has been guided by the definitions and principles of the ICOMOS *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter)*. Within the category of intangible heritage there are a diverse range of values which lead to methodological challenges, including how to frame the exploration of intangible heritage in the context of Múscraí. In consideration of the latter, it is important to foreground a key dynamic, observed in the process of researching this chapter, that of the relationship between the intangible and the tangible.

Early in the research, the importance of acknowledging that intangible and tangible heritage are not mutually exclusive was determined. Public workshops and consultation has reinforced to Research and Dig the holistic way in which the people of Múscraí interpret their heritage. An excellent example of this is the role of St Gobnait. Her church and hut are not only archaeological sites. They are also key points for any pilgrim doing the rounds. Just beside her hut is a Seamus Murphy RHA carved statue of the saint with bees under her feet. Naomh Gobnait was believed to control bees in order to protect the area from cattle rustlers. It is in part because of the continued adoration of the saint that bee keeping is still an active tradition in the area⁹⁶. Additionally, folklore states that Gobnait used a 'bulla' (bowling ball) to disrupt the building of a castle on high rock, 'all the better to subdue the people.' The game of road bowling that is still popular across Múscraí and County Cork today.⁹⁷

4.2 Public Consultation/Methodology

Research and analysis were carried out through desktop research and fieldwork. A wide range of historical documents was consulted to establish the history and folklore of the place. Interviews with local people informed a further understanding of the extent to which intangible heritage plays a role in the lives of people in Múscraí. The identification of heritage significance by professionals is incomplete without acknowledgment to the local ascription of importance. The conservation of heritage is a social and cultural activity and is ultimately dependent on a positive engagement from local people. In the context of Múscraí, an evident commitment and dedication to the latter presents

⁹³ 'Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage', www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention (Accessed: 20/10/2014)

⁹⁴ Definition of Intangible Heritage, www.unesco.org/services/documentation/archives/multimedia/?id_page=13&PHPSESSID=743f303zf0b2452205c4a672fde9310bc (Accessed: 13/10/2014)

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Eilís Uí Dháiligh, *Saint Gobnait of Ballyvourney*, (Dublin, 1983), p. 7.

⁹⁷ Uí Dháiligh, *Saint Gobnait of Ballyvourney*, p. 8. Road bowling is part of the social, cultural and sporting fabric of west Cork, one of the few counties with a documented tradition of the sport. Fintane Lane has explored the history of the sport in the area; see Fintane Lane, *Long Bullets: A History of Road Bowling in Ireland* (Cork, 2005).

a uniquely positive platform from which the long-term conservation of the area can be achieved.

In addition to local consultation, a number of people whose parents were natives of Múscraí were contacted in order to establish the significance of Múscraí in the lives of their parents and also to themselves. Frances Madigan from Ennistymon in county Clare is connected to the area by her mother Mary Kelleher from Baile Bhúirne, who migrated to Clare in the 1930s. When asked to describe her connection to the area, Frances explained that;

‘Yes, I have gone to Baile Bhúirne for St Gobnait’s Day. Since I retired I am free to attend on the Feast Day. While others refer to February 11th as the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, in our house it was referred to as St Gobnait’s Day. We always had a St Gobnait’s Measure in the house ... I have visited at least once every year since I was seven or eight years old. I hope that will continue as long as I live, le Cúnamh Dé. My roots are there. I feel as strong a connection there as I do with my native place, Ennistymon. Reilig Ghobnatan is where generations of my ancestors are buried. It is a magical, peaceful, spiritual place. As I approach Baile Bhúirne from the Milstreet or the county bounds I feel a deep sense of connection and I feel as if I am coming home’.⁹⁸

4.3 Language

The continuing use of the Irish language across the Gaeltacht has been a critical factor in the retention of Gaelic tradition in song, poetry, dance, lore and music. Its retention as the primary language must stand as the central aim of any plan concerned with intangible heritage. According to the 2016 Census c.76% of Múscraí’s population were Irish speakers⁹⁹ (fluency was 43%¹⁰⁰). Results of the ‘Socio-economic and Cultural Needs Analysis’ of the Múscraí Gaeltacht, identified the need for strategies to strengthen the foundation of Irish as the primary language.¹⁰¹ Údarás na Gaeltachta assists strategically in the promotion of Irish in business and the community. The main regional Údarás na Gaeltachta office is in Daingean Uí Chúis with a local office located in Baile Mhic Íre. In 2017, 684 people were employed in a full-time capacity in Údarás client companies in the Múscraí Gaeltacht.¹⁰² Údarás and the Arts Council have also combined to help develop the arts in the Gaeltacht and collectively fund a broad range of traditional and contemporary arts initiatives through the subsidiary company, Ealaíon na Gaeltachta.

While a gradual decrease in the use of the Irish language was noticed from the early 1990s (with the exception of Cúil Aodha), the distribution of Irish speakers across Múscraí seems to have remained relatively static since 2002.¹⁰³ There remain areas which seem stronger than others. In 2008, the area north-west of Cúil Aodha and south-west of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, was regarded as the strongest with regard to the Irish language.¹⁰⁴ Contributors to this research also noted an upsurge across broader Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh in recent years. While Hindley noted a significant decrease in younger Múscraí people speaking Irish in the early 1990s, our research found that at least anecdotally, the

⁹⁸ Correspondence, Frances Madigan to the author 21 October 2014

⁹⁹ www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil/ilg/, (Accessed: 16/2/2018)

¹⁰⁰ *Census 2011*, (Central Statistics Office)

¹⁰¹ Results of the Socio-economic and Cultural Needs Analysis of the Múscraí Gaeltacht www.udaras.ie/en/nuacht/anailis-ar-riachtanais-socheacnamaioch-agus-culturtha-ghaeltacht-mhuscra/ (Accessed: 29/11/2014)

¹⁰² *Údarás na Gaeltachta: 2017 Review* (Údarás na Gaeltachta) 18

¹⁰³ For a detailed assessment of the status of the Irish language in Múscraí see, John Walsh, *Contests and Contexts: The Irish Language and Ireland's Socio-economic development* (Switzerland, 2011), pp. 232 – 243, Also see Reg Hindley, *The Death of the Irish Language*, (USA, 1990).

¹⁰⁴ Kendall A. King, Natalie Schilling-Estes, Lyn Fogle, Jia Jackie Lou, and Barbara Soukup, (Eds.), *Sustaining Linguistic Diversity: Endangered and Minority Languages* (USA, 2008), p. 119.

number of younger people speaking the language has increased. The project team met with a number of younger people throughout the process, who showed a remarkable ability with the language as well as a desire to use it as their first language. However, during research and consultation across Múscraí, it was evident that while most people could speak the Irish language, English was the language primarily used for communication in the pubs and shops of the area.

As an inland Gaeltacht similar to the Gaeltacht in Waterford, the area of Múscraí is linguistically isolated. This adds a further importance to the preservation of the language, as a result of the area's unique linguistic form and expression. The memory and lore of Múscraí are best retained, represented and communicated in Gaelic form and through the linguistic distinctiveness of the area. Therefore, the future health of the intangible heritage is inextricably connected to the health of the Irish language in the area.

4.4 Landscape and Place

The enclosed setting of the Múscraí Gaeltacht has been a critical influence in the retention of cultural aspects peculiar to the region. In 1965, Daniel Corkery, in his foreword to Mícheál O'Suilleabháin's *Where Mountainy Men have sown*, articulated the symbiotic relationship between the people of Múscraí and the landscape. In describing O'Suilleabháin's ability to communicate a sense of place to the readers, Corkery explains;

'His feeling for it. He is at one with it. As he makes his way towards some appointed hillside or hidden nook, the names of the rocks, the wells, the streams, the cumars¹⁰⁵ he encounters seem almost to sing to him: their associations, their very dressings of moss, or holly, or basil, he almost fondles. It is obvious they always have been part of his consciousness, of the depths of it; one and all they cannot now but counterpoint the excitement that is possessing him ... such scholarship as it needs is also in the possession of his every neighbour in this Irish speaking countryside'.¹⁰⁶

4.5 Continuity of Tradition

A continuity of tradition and artistic expression within geographically and culturally defined frames is evident in Múscraí. The history and tradition of music and song, poetry and dance is accepted as amongst the strongest in Ireland. As an area with such a depth of tradition in language, literature and culture, it is not surprising that it has been home to many creative and artistic people. Seán Ó Riada, Seán Ó Ríordain, Máire Bhuí Ní Laoighre, Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonnail, Séamus Ó Ceilleachair, An tAthair Peadar Ó Laoighre and Donal O Muláin are among those who have honed their artistic trade in Múscraí. While the area has been home to national figures, including Ó Riada and Ó Ríordáin, at a local level the traditions have continued for generations according to local practice for the primary benefit of local people and has continued to renew itself with every generation. Both poetry and music benefit from a rich creative energy in the broader Múscraí area. Acadamh Fódhla have suggested that almost 2,000 poets are buried in Baile Bhúirne graveyard alone. The area's rich hedge school and Bardic School tradition still live on in Dáimh Scoil Mhúsraí and Acadamh Fódhla.

Scoraíocht is a central feature of the cultural landscape. The tradition of scoraíocht (social visiting where songs are sung, music played and stories told) has helped to preserve both aspects of the past and also a sense of community and neighbourly interaction. A recent report by the HSE and University

¹⁰⁵ concourse

¹⁰⁶ O'Suilleabháin, Mícheál, *Where Mountainy men have sown, War and peace in rebel Cork in the turbulent years 1916-21*, (Kerry, 1965), pp. 8-9.

of Ulster, demonstrated the central place that scoraíocht held for older participants from County Cork.¹⁰⁷ In each of the Gaeltacht's three day centres for the elderly, scoraíocht events are regularly held.

The vibrancy of tradition is potently represented by the continuing presence of Cór Chúil Aodha. The choir was established in 1963 by Seán Ó Riada (fig. 4.1). In 2013, the choir, now led by Seán Ó Riada's son Peadar, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a special journey to Iona in Scotland. The trip was captured by a TG4 documentary, *O Chúil Aodha go hOileán Í (From Coolea to Iona)*.

Figure 4.1 **Monument to Seán Ó Riada at Cúil Aodha Roman Catholic Church**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

4.6 Folklore and Oral Tradition

A particularly vibrant folklore continues to be preserved in the locality which relates to features in the landscape, both human-made and natural. Oral tradition has always been the central medium of communication and a particularly strong tradition seems to exist in Músraí. The latter is exemplified by the way in which many poems have been transmitted orally across multiple generations. For example, Máire Bhuí Ní Laoghaire (1774-1849) who wrote *Cath Chéim an Fhia* was illiterate, resulting in a dependence on the oral folk tradition to preserve her work for generations.¹⁰⁸ Equally, *Caoineadh*

¹⁰⁷ Brendan McCormack and Elizabeth Breslin, *The Implementation of a Model of Person-Centred Practice In Older Person Settings*, (Dublin, 2010), p. 149.

¹⁰⁸ The poem records a fight between Yeomen militia and Whiteboys during agrarian resistance in 1822, See Brian Brennan, *Songs of an Irish Poet, The Mary O Leary Story* (Cork, 2000), pp. 12-13.

Airt Uí Laoghaire, written by Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill was primarily transmitted in oral form.¹⁰⁹ Fr. Pádraigh Ó Tuathaigh published *Filí an tSuláin*, which traces the intense development of Irish poetry in the Múscraí Gaeltacht.¹¹⁰

The area is not immune to the forces of change which have affected oral tradition in other parts of Ireland. Therefore, it must be aware of the inherent danger that aspects of oral tradition and community memory may be lost if not documented. A certain resistance to centralise oral tradition was detected in public consultation. While the appropriate retention of oral tradition in its historical cultural form is preferred, strategies to intervene in its potential loss should be considered.

During fieldwork and consultation, it was noted that a number of private audio collections exist. These should be centralised, digitized and made publicly available as soon as possible. Additionally, local school collection projects at Coláiste Ghobnait are being initiated which have been assisted by the Research and Dig team.

4.7 Preservation of Intangible - Motivation

Consistently during public consultation, concern was expressed that the need to connect the conservation of heritage with economic development would have an ultimately corrosive effect on the culture of the area. However, the picture is more nuanced. Certainly, mass tourism would erode the character of the area. Conversely, low/moderate volume, high quality and high spending tourism that revolves around celebrating the landscape, language and customs of Múscraí should be welcomed. It should also be carefully managed. Actions associated with cultural tourism such as the provision of quality eating and entertainment options can improve the liveability of the area for all residents. This is particularly relevant for those who have lived outside of the Gaeltacht and now have certain expectations.

In Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh the commercial nature of the village has been significantly eroded. In turn, this has reduced the ability of the village to act as a place where locals meet and socialise. Any effort to rejuvenate the village will need support from cultural tourists. Outside of some guidelines and suggested actions how that is exactly accomplished is outside the scope of this document. Nonetheless, whatever is planned must ensure that the core character of the area which tourists come to experience isn't undermined. Integrity and authenticity must be maintained.

4.8 Acadamh Fódhla

In 2000, the Academy of Irish heritage singing was established by Peadar Ó Riada and Máire Ní Cheocháin. Three further academies were later established around the themes of history, land, knowledge and energy. Acadamh have been crucial in the documentation of Múscraí's heritage and history. They have created a digital record of the layers of built, natural and cultural heritage in the area.

4.9 Saints/Devotion/Pilgrimage

Múscraí is significant in its continued devotional practices. Folklore and history associate key saints with each of the principle areas of Múscraí. In Cill na Martra, St Lachtaín is the patron saint and his name is given to the local primary school. The settlement at Gougane Barra, west of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh is associated with St Fin Barre (Patron Saint of Cork) who built a monastery on the island

¹⁰⁹ Maureen O'Rourke Murphy, James MacKillop (Eds.), *An Irish Literature Reader: Poetry, Prose, Drama*, (Second Edition), (USA, 2006), pp. 45-47.

¹¹⁰ Pádraigh Ó Tuathaigh, *Filí an tSuláin*, (Cork, 1993), Seán Ó Muimhneacháin's *Gleanntán an Aoibhnnis, Dánta agus Amhrain* also contains significant poetry and song from the Múscraí region.

in the 6th century. The current ruins are the remains of a settlement built by Rev. Denis O'Mahony around 1700.

In Baile Bhúirne, both St Abbán and St Gobnait have formed a key part of the local history and folklore (fig. 4.2). Naomh Gobnait, the best known of the saints, occupies a central place in the consciousness of the people in Baile Bhúirne and surrounding district. Folklore relates that the visiting sick would be cured by Gobnait and that the saint, who had a strong relationship with bees, used the properties of honey in the treatment of illness and healing of wounds. A shrine and holy well is carefully maintained where rosary beads, holy pictures and other personal offerings testify to an enduring devotion to Gobnait at Baile Bhúirne. One of the lintels on the late medieval church at St Gobnait's Shrine contains a Sheela-na-gig. A local tradition is that if a woman rubs the figurative carving of the naked woman and then herself, her chances of getting pregnant would be enhanced (fig 4.3). For centuries, Naomh Gobnait has been a reference point for historians and folklorists. For example, the site was mentioned by Charles Smith (1750), W.G. Wood Martin (1902), Edith M. Guest (1937) and Michael J. O'Kelly (1952).¹¹¹ The importance of deer in the folklore of Gobnait is reflected in their adornment of gates at both Reilig Ghobnatan and the parochial house (fig. 4.4). Local businesses have also integrated the lore into their names (e.g. the 9 White Deer Brewery in Baile Bhúirne).

Figure 4.2 **Statue of Naomh Gobnait by Seamus Murphy RHA at Baile Bhúirne**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

¹¹¹ Daphne D.C. Pochin Mould wrote a detailed account of the Pattern Day to Gobnait based on her research in the 1950s, see Daphne D.C. Pochin Mould, *Pattern Day*, in *The Capuchin Annual*, 1955.

Figure 4.3 **Sheela-na-gig in the late medieval church at St Gobnait's Shrine**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 4.4 **Deer adorning entrance to Baile Bhúirne Parochial house**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

The site of St Abbán on the south side of the River Sullane, in the townland of Shanacloon is less visited than that of Naomh Gobnait. However, Abbán plays an important role in the local folklore and lends his name to the local Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) club as well as its official playing field.

Not far from the holy wells of St Gobnait and St Abbán is a small 13th century wooden statue held in the care of the parish priest of Baile Bhúirne (fig. 4.5). Thought to depict St Gobnait, the statue is displayed to large crowds on her feast day (February 11th) in the 19th century parish church. During that time people take the opportunity to take a ribbon and measure the statue¹¹². The ribbon is then used for healing. In an account of the adoration of the statue from the early 18th century by John Richardson, he describes a ritual to fend off small pox involving the statue and the sacrifice of a sheep¹¹³. That particular practice is no longer conducted.

Figure 4.5 **13th century statue of St Gobnait c.1938¹¹⁴**



(Source: images courtesy of *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*)

¹¹² <https://pilgrimage-medievalireland.com/2013/02/18/pilgrimage-to-st-gobnait-at-ballyvourney-co-cork/> (accessed 8/3/2018)

¹¹³ John Richardson, *The great folly, superstition, and idolatry of pilgrimages in Ireland*, (Dublin: J. Hyde, 1727)

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¹¹⁴ [Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 8.2 \(1938\): Pl. XXXIII.](#)

4.10 Historical Consciousness

Evidence of a continuous human presence in the area from the early Bronze Age is testimony to the rich continuous history. Local tradition suggests that a significant amount of archaeological material and sites exist that reveal an even earlier human habitation in the broader area than the considerable found archaeology indicates.¹¹⁵ The retention of many of these sites into the broader historical landscape of Múscraí forms part of the human consciousness of the area.

The broader historical profile of Múscraí, while characterized by continuity, can be mapped chronologically using key historic and temporal landmarks. These temporal landmarks have been kept alive in folklore, poetry and song. The Irish famine (1845-51) was a key moment in the history of West Cork and of Múscraí (figures 4.6 & 4.7). *Famine in Muskerry - An Drochshaol* by Máire Mac Suibhne, profiles sixteen parishes within the Macroom Poor Law Union in the mid nineteenth century.¹¹⁶

Figure 4.6 **Famine commemorative plaque outside Baile Bhúirne RC Church**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

¹¹⁵ Interview with Peadar Ó Riada, Cúil Aodha, County Cork, 21/10/2014.

¹¹⁶ Máire Mac Suibhne, *Famine in Muskerry, An Drochshaol*, (Cork, 1997), See 'Irish Famine Report from Ballyvourney' in 'Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends during the Famine in Ireland'

Figure 4.7

Famine pot in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

4.11 Late 19th century

A very strong volunteer spirit has been identified in Múscraí. In public workshops, some contributors suggested that this could be connected to the spirit of the late 19th century in the area, which witnessed significant political and cultural activity as well as the development of co-operative societies on an unprecedented level (fig. 4.8). The period saw the evolution of the Aeríocht/Feis/Oireachtas in this area which later evolved nationally and was crystallised in the movement towards independence in the second decade of the 20th century. The Gaelic League, The Land League and the GAA were all active in the area. In proposing that the life of the contemporaneous Dr. Daniel Ó Loingsigh be incorporated into transition year curriculum for local students, Donnacha Ó Sé made the following observation.

‘It would have the twin advantages of not alone indefinitely commemorating Dr. Lynch but also contributing in a major way towards the positive formation of minds and character of each successive group, thus not alone laying the foundation for a stable and responsible society but also in the process ensuring that thinking, leadership, motivation and inspiration of Dr. Lynch would be perpetuated’.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Correspondence, Donnacha Ó Sé to author 22/11/2014.

Figure 4.8

Eviction resistance scene – Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh – 1906



(Source: image courtesy of Marian O’Leary)

4.12 Revolutionary Period

The area of west Cork has a well documented association with the Irish revolutionary period. In addition to the Kilmichael ambush of November 1920, the broader area was a hotbed of republican activity, particularly during the Irish War of Independence and Civil War (1919-1923).¹¹⁸

On 7th July, 1918 one of the first attacks on the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) since the 1916 Easter Rising is recorded at Béal a’Ghleanna (fig. 4.9), on the road between Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Baile Bhúirne. This occurred over six months before the Solahead Beg ambush, which is regularly recorded as the first ambush of the Irish War of Independence. The area remained intensely active over the following two years and on 25 February 1921, a major ambush was inflicted on the British forces stationed at Macroom, in an event known as the Cúl na Catharach ambush (figures 4.10 & 4.11).¹¹⁹ Cúl na Catharach is a strong temporal landmark in the local social memory regarding the Irish War of Independence. As with other parts of Ireland, the Black and Tans as a category of memory evoke strong emotional reactions based on oral tradition and post-memory. Tensions between development and existing historical sites became evident in 2009 with the proposal by Transport Infrastructure Ireland to route a new N22 dual carriageway through the Cúl na Catharach ambush site.¹²⁰ The subsequent impact on the battle site by the creation of the carriageway, functions as a reminder of the importance of local War of Independence and Civil War sites and encourages a clearer legislative and policy position with regard to same.

¹¹⁸ Fr. Pádraigh Ó Tuathaigh has written about the Civil War in West Cork in *The Dark Secret of Béal na mBláth*.

¹¹⁹ Donal Ó hÉalaithe, *Memoirs of an old warrior, Jamie Moynihan's Fight for Irish Freedom 1916-1923*, (Cork, 2014), p. 161.

¹²⁰ Irish War of Independence: Coolnacaheeragh Ambush Site & Proposed Realignment of N22 Route Macroom - Ballyvourney, <https://sites.google.com/site/coolnacaheeragh/> (Accessed: 20/11/2014).

Figure 4.9 **View north from Béal a'Ghleanna**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 4.10 **Cúl na Catharach ambush site**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Figure 4.11

In 2016, a series of flags were installed by locals at IRA positions at the Cúl na Catharach ambush site



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

There are many mnemonic (memory preserving) sites associated with the revolutionary period across Múscraí. In many cases memory is interpreted as part of a seamless history, stretching back generations. Marian O’Leary noted the connections between different struggles in the past. Referring to a monument on the road between Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Gougane Barra, where IRA Volunteer Christopher Lucey (killed on 20 November 1920) and IRA Volunteer Ian MacKenzie (killed on 8 August 1922) are commemorated, O’Leary records that (fig. 4.12);

‘The white cross marks where Criostóir Ó Luasaigh from Cork City died. He was the great grandson of Seamus Walsh who had taken part in Cath Céim an Fhia in 1822 and who it seems was responsible for killing Smith, the only yeomanry casualty.’¹²¹

With the impending centenaries of the War of Independence and Civil War, there will likely be an effort made to clean the existing monuments and erect new ones. If cleaning is to go ahead, then great care must be taken on ensuring appropriate techniques are used, otherwise, the monuments will be damaged and the rate of loss of the script increased significantly.

¹²¹ Correspondence, Marian O’Leary to the author, 10/11/2014.

Figure 4.12

IRA monument to Christopher Lucey and Ian MacKenzie outside Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Note white cross in background memorialising the site of Lucey's death (circled in red).



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

4.13 Múscraí – Sites of Memory

As part of the research methodology, a visual inventory was taken of the overt sites of culture and history in the principal parishes of Múscraí. For the purpose of this project, these sites are referred to as *sites of memory*. These sites are critical in reflecting what the community itself seeks to remember at a public level but also in symbolising what visitors see as representing the social memory of the area.

In each of the principal parishes, central people and events of the local area are celebrated. For example, in Cill na Martra, a bust of local sporting hero, singer and later Director General of the GAA, Seán Ó Síochán is erected in the centre of the village (fig. 4.13). In Cúil Aodha, a monument to IRA figure Seamus Ó Muineacháin is integrated into the wall across from Cúil Aodha Roman Catholic Church, where a bronze figure of the musician and composer Seán Ó Riada was installed in 2008. In Baile Bhúirne, monuments to the Cúl na Catharach ambush, republican martyr Liam Hegarty, as well as the noted statue of Saint Gobnait, are among the key sites of memory. In Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, a famine pot marks the area's suffering during the Irish Famine (1845-51). In addition, a plaque commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 rising on the site of Coláiste na Mumhan, the one hundred anniversary of which in 2016, is also marked by a monument. Finally, in Gougane Barra, the

poet JJ Callanan (1795 – 1829), the Roman Catholic Cardinal Timothy Manning (1909 – 1989) and Rev. Denis O'Mahony are memorialised on the site made famous by St Fin Barre.¹²²

Figure 4.13 **Monument to Seán Ó Siochán in Cill na Martra**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

4.14 Placenames

Placenames and fieldnames unlock key insights into the history of an area and how people perceived their place. They are the bridge between language and landscape. As a Gaeltacht area steeped in tradition, the placenames of Múscraí are of significant cultural and historical value. The need to document both placenames and smaller fieldnames was emphasised at public workshops.

The website www.logainm.ie provides useful insights into the local names and toponymy of the Múscraí area, including archaeological, geographic and historic information. The Cork Placenames Survey under the stewardship of Dr. Éamon Lankford has documented 260 names across the area¹²³. This survey covers the entire County of Cork and is available to view in the Cork County Library HQ, Carrigrohane Road, Cork.

¹²² Callanan wrote 'The Outlaw of Loch Lene'. In 1918, University of Illinois published *The Poems of JJ Callanan*, (USA, 1918)

¹²³ Correspondence, Kieran Wyse, Reference & Local Studies, Cork County Library, to author, 20/10/2014.

5.0 Assessment of Significance

5.1 Background

According to Historic England's *Conservation principles, policies and guidance for sustainable management of the historic environment* 'conservation is the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values'¹²⁴. Conservation strategy and management is a process by which a site's significance is maintained whilst permitting continued sustainable use.

The study of the physical remains alone rarely provides sufficient understanding of a site. Its significance needs to be set in the context of the social and cultural circumstances that produced the place. This is particularly true in the case of the Múscraí Gaeltacht. For all Irish sites, significance should be assessed according to the following criteria set down in *Architectural heritage protection: guidelines for planning authorities*¹²⁵:

- architectural interest
- historical interest
- archaeological interest
- artistic interest
- cultural interest
- scientific interest
- technical interest
- social interest

Natural heritage is an integral component of our heritage (see definition of 'heritage' in the *Heritage Act, 1995*¹²⁶). As a result, the criterion of natural interest is also considered.

Ideally, all the identified heritage values of a place should be conserved. However, on occasion what is necessary to sustain one criterion will be in conflict with another. If this is the case, then understanding the relative contribution of each criterion to the overall significance of Múscraí as a whole and its constituent spaces and places, will be essential to objective decision making.

5.2 Existing statements of significance

While there is no preexisting plan of comparative scale that has analysed the heritage of Múscraí, there is at least two documents that have examined two places of particular importance in the Gaeltacht (St Gobnait's Shrine and Cúl na Catharach). Below is the appraisal of Saint Gobnait's Shrine carried out by John Cronin and Associates in 2003¹²⁷:

In its present form, Saint Gobnait's Shrine is of significance for the following reasons:

- Due to the wealth and range of associative, cultural, aesthetic and economic values that the Saint Gobnait's Shrine possesses, it is considered to be of immense local, regional and national significance.

¹²⁴ Paul Drury and Anna McPherson, *Conservation principles, policies and guidance for sustainable management of the historic environment* (Historic England, 2008), 22

¹²⁵ Department of the Culture, Heritage and local Government, *Architectural heritage protection: guidelines for planning authorities* (Department of the Culture, Heritage and local Government, 2011), 24

¹²⁶ www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1995/act/4/enacted/en/html

¹²⁷ John Cronin and Associates, *Heritage Plan for St Gobnait's Shrine and environs* (John Cronin and Associates 2003), 27-28

- The association of the site with Saint Gobnait. The shrine is a very rich site with an unusual density of objects and practices. This places the monastic site at Ballyvourney on par with major sites like Lough Derg and Croagh Patrick. Its resilience, its adaptability and its endless manifestations make Saint Gobnait's Shrine a brilliant palimpsest of Irish religiosity.
- It is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Ireland; the continued tradition of people/pilgrims making the Round or Turas Ghobnatan heightens the cultural significance of the place. It is a place for worship, prayer, meditation and quiet contemplation.
- There is strong evidence for prehistoric activity in the environs of the site – the area shows evidence for settlement stretching back to the Bronze Age and the site may have been an important pagan site prior to the coming of Christianity to this area of the country.
- The surviving fabric of the structures and features on site reflect the fundamental changes and developments in Irish ecclesiastical history; the historic site also demonstrates many aspects of Christian tradition as practiced in this country over the course of 1500 years.
- The rural setting of the historic place is of high aesthetic significance and allows the modern visitor to contemplate the past.
- The presence of this important religious and heritage site within a Gaeltacht area is another facet of its cultural significance. The lands that surround the historic place have a rich diversity of local (Gaelic) place-names.

In addition to the above, the following sub-set of considerations is of importance:

- As a burial place the site has special significance for the local communities of Ballyvourney, Ballymakeera and Coolea. The modern cemetery, located to the south of the former Glebe House, is in frequent use.
- There is a long tradition of community involvement in the care and maintenance of the ancient church site associated with Saint Gobnait. The old graveyard is well maintained through community initiatives and is easily accessible to locals and visitor alike.
- Individual elements ranging from the sculpture of Saint Gobnait by Seamus Murphy to individual gravestones are of cultural significance in their own right. The bridge, located on the approach to the site from the east, is an inherently attractive feature.
- St Gobnet's Wood, located to the north of the monastic site, has been identified as a candidate Special Area of Conservation, and, as such, has been evaluated by Dúchas as being a site of international importance. However, an evaluation of this area, indicates that, while the site is of high enough quality for cSAC designation, it is at the lower end of the quality scale for cSAC sites.
- The tree-lined approach to the site is of visual and amenity significance and is critical to providing a visual backdrop to the site when viewed from the west.
- The farmyard adjoining the graveyard includes a number of buildings. Of these buildings, the farmhouse is of potential ecological interest as it is a state of semi-dereliction with features which make it potentially suitable as a bat roosting site. This potential is increased by its proximity to the high quality bat-feeding habitat in St Gobnait's Wood. There is also potential for the occurrence of Barn Owls in some of the farm outbuildings.
- The former Glebe House, though in derelict condition, is of architectural, historic and social significance.
- Saint Gobnait's site at Glebe is an important visitor attraction in its own right and consequently is of significance to the local economy.

It is worth noting three key differences between the St Gobnait Shrine heritage plan and this heritage plan. This plan has concluded that St Gobnait's Wood is of international significance and contains species protected under Irish and EU legislation. Therefore, the wood is not on 'the lower end of the quality scale'. The wood also received a 'very good' conservation assessment in the National Native Woodland Survey. Even though it is part of the overall ecclesiastical complex, the Porridge House (Tig na Leiteann) was

omitted from the conservation plan's significance statement. The Porridge House was used to dispense soup and porridge during the famine and is a protected structure. The structure is of regional significance. Finally, the complex at St Gobnait was assessed in this heritage plan as being of international importance.

In the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the new N22, the Cúl na Catharach War of Independence ambush site is listed as being of regional importance¹²⁸. However, in a 2010 letter signed by nine respected academics sent to An Bord Pleanála concerning the realignment of the N22 through Cúl na Catharach, the strategic importance of the ambush to the cause of Irish Independence is clearly laid out (see appendix c for the full text)¹²⁹. This letter when combined with our own studies leads us to contend that owing to the scale, result and timing of the event coming so soon after the significant setback for the IRA at Clonmult, that the ambush is certainly of national significance and quite likely of international importance.

5.3 Assessment of Significance

The following is an analysis of the relevance of the architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical, social and natural criteria to the significance of the Múscraí Gaeltacht.

Architectural Interest

There are relatively few buildings of architectural significance in Múscraí. An exception to this is the Church of Ireland rectory in Baile Bhúirne (the Glebe). It is the finest classical building in the Gaeltacht. Immediately to the North West is an early 19th century Board of First Fruits style church. Another building of note is the iconic oratory of St Finn Barre's in Gougane Barra (fig. 5.1). The fine Celtic revival chapel is the best physical manifestation in Múscraí of the late 19th/early 20th revival of Gaelic culture. The late 19th/early 20th century elegant vernacular buildings along the main streets and cores of Baile Mhic Íre, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, Baile Bhúirne, Cúil Aodha, Réidh na nDoirí (fig. 5.2) and Cill na Martra are of local significance. These streets and cores are complemented by the predominately late 19th century/early 20th century houses and farm yard buildings dispersed throughout the Gaeltacht (fig. 5.3). Múscraí has a fine collection of 19th century Roman Catholic churches (fig. 5.4) and 18th/19th century masonry bridges (fig. 2.16).

Figure 5.1 **St Fin Barre's Oratory**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

¹²⁸ McCarthy Hyder Consultants, *N22 Baile Bhúirne-Macroom (Baile Bhuine-Coolcour) environment impact assessment volume 2: main text* (McCarthy Hyder Consultants, 2009), 12-10

¹²⁹ Michael Hopkinson et al, "Coolnacaheragh ambush site and the N22," (letter sent to An Bord Pleanála May 7, 2010)

Figure 5.2

The centre of Réidh na nDoirí is defined by its late 19th/early 20th buildings



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 5.3

Farmyard building



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 5.4

Cill na Martra Church



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Historical Interest

The area has a rich documented history, which is connected with many of the key landmarks in Irish history nationally. However, the historical landmarks in Múscraí, while relevant to broader national history are remembered in folklore according to their local context first. For each official historical record, there exists a rich local context, which deepens and adds to that record. For example, found archaeology indicates a history stretching back to the early Bronze Age. However, local belief and folklore suggests that this may extend to the Mesolithic period. In addition, each historical site and feature carries significant local lore and oral tradition, which was passed from generation to generation in Múscraí and is not always discernible within documentary sources. A particular example of this is the internationally important complex at St Gobnait's.

In addition, a continuity of historical tradition defines Múscraí. For example, Cath Chéim an Fhia (The Battle of Keimaneigh) in 1822, memorialised by the poet Máire Bhuí Ní Laoghaire, was based on a local episode of wider agrarian resistance occurring across the country in the early 19th century. The Whiteboys were a secret agrarian society who used attacks against landlordism to defend tenant farmer's rights. The battle at Keimaneigh between Whiteboys and Yeomanry (fighting on behalf of the British establishment), resulted in the death of one Yeoman. However, the memory of 'Cath Chéim an Fhia' is understood according to a sense of continuity, with the later involvement of descendants of those Whiteboys in the Irish War of Independence in the 1920s. The traumatic local experience of the famine also has an impact on this narrative.

Topography and culture have combined to generate a distinctly local historical experience and memory. This has been maintained by a strong and vibrant folklore, transmitted in predominately Gaelic form within the communities of Múscraí. While not insular, the enclosed setting of Múscraí lends itself to an intense preservation of history, which is rare in Ireland.

Archaeological Interest

Of particular interest are the high concentrations of Bronze Age and Early Medieval monuments in the Gaeltacht. The large number of remaining Bronze Age monuments fit within a wider pattern of high Bronze Age habitation in the south-west of the country. Preliminary findings from archaeological investigations taking place along the proposed route of the new N22 indicate that the uncovered Bronze Age fulacht fiadhs are atypical. The two pilgrimage sites of St Fin Barre's and St Gobnait's are of national and international importance respectively (figures 5.5 & 5.6). The relatively high concentration of clapper bridges is of national interest.

Figure 5.5 **Late 17th century addition at St Fin Barre's pilgrimage site**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Figure 5.6 **St Gobnait's Shrine with Board of First Fruits style church to the left, medieval church in centre and St Gobnait's grave on the right**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Artistic Interest

The enclosed setting of Múscaí seems to have assisted in the generation of a creative energy and an unbroken tradition of art in its widest form. Poets, singers, musicians and artists have testified to the rich source of creative energy in the Múscaí Gaeltacht. The history and tradition of music and song and poetry is accepted as amongst the strongest in Ireland. Many artistic and cultural figures have worked locally within Múscaí and achieved national and international recognition as a result. These include Seán Ó Riada, Seán Ó Ríordain, Máire Bhuí Ní Laoighre, Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonnail, An Suibhneach Meann, Seámus Ó Ceilleachair, An tAthair Peadar Ó Laoighre, Seán O Cuív, Dónal O Muláin, Donnacha Ó Buachalla, Muintir Chéileachair (Bán), Amhlaoibh Ó Liongsigh, Tadhg Ó Riordain, Mícheál Ó Loingsigh (Maidhc Mór), Conchtúr Ó Deasmhumhna, Mícheál Máistir Ó Briain, Diarmaid 'ac Coitir, Cáit is Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin, Dómhnall Ó Luasa (Lios Buí), Séamus Mór Ó Muimhneacháin, Gaedhal na nGaedhal, Dónal Ó Liatháin, Donnacha Ó Laoighre, Bess Cronin, Peadar Ó Riada, Iarla Ó Lionáird and Muintir Mhaidhcí Uí Shúilleabháin.

Sean-nós singing is particularly strong in Múscaí. Of late, this can be significantly attributed to the Aisling Gheal school education programme.

The role of the dramatic landscape which encloses both the people and their culture is a key determinant in the rich artistic energy of Múscaí. It rains a lot. Historically, travel was difficult. Both these things along with the beauty of the place have led to a high level of creativity in storytelling, lore and music. The area is not impenetrable to the sometimes negative forces of globalisation and homogenisation. However, its setting has allowed it to enter the 21st century with a stronger identity and more intact vernacular cultural heritage than many areas in Ireland, bequeathing a unique platform for artistic nurturing and expression.

Ionad Culthúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh in Baile Bhúirne is a vital component to maintaining the artistic creativity of Múscaí. In addition to running a consistently high quality programme of traditional music concerts, it runs classes on playing various traditional music instruments, sean-nós singing, lúibíní (sung dialogue) and agallaimhe beirte (poetry through dialogue). It also supports the visual arts.

There are two statues of artistic interest in Múscaí. Both depict St Gobnait. An extremely rare 13th century wooden statue of the saint by an unknown artist is currently in the care of the parish priest of Baile Bhúirne. The statue is still believed to have curative powers. The other statue of artistic interest stands at St Gobnait's Shrine. It was carved in the 1950s by renowned sculptor Seamus Murphy RHA.

The interiors of the Gaeltacht's upstanding churches are of artistic interest. Much of the stained glass found in the churches is particularly fine.

Several places across the Gaeltacht were used as filming locations for Ken Loach's 2006 Palme d'Or winning film, *The wind that shakes the barley*. The film is set during the War of Independence and Civil War.

Cultural Interest

As an inland Gaeltacht, the area of Múscaí is linguistically isolated. This has resulted in a unique linguistic form and expression which reinforces cultural depth in the area. The memory and lore of Múscaí have been historically retained, represented and communicated predominately through a linguistically distinctive Gaelic form. Therefore, the future health of the intangible heritage is inextricably connected to the health of the Irish language in the area.

According to the geographer Jared Diamond, ‘each language is the vehicle for a unique way of thinking and talking, a unique literature, and a unique view of the world’¹³⁰. This assertion can be extended to the Múscraí Irish dialect.

On a national level, Múscraí has played a significant role in the preservation of the Irish language and Irish music and the progression of Irish language poetry. Dochtúir Dómhnall Ó Loingsigh was a key figure in this and in the development of the Gaeltacht in general. Coláiste Na Mumhan in 1904 was the first dedicated language college in the country for adults. Seán Ó Riada is a figure of international importance. There is no other person more responsible for the 20th century renaissance in Irish music than he. Born in 1916, Baile Bhúirne native Séan O Riordáin is regarded as one of the most important Irish language poets of the 20th century.

The area's intense historical association with saints in each of the principal areas of Múscraí, bequeaths a deep tradition of pilgrimage and devotional practices. This has direct relevance to the local folklore and cultural adherence in Múscraí, but is equally significant to many descendants of Múscraí natives. In addition, the devotional practices draw an interest from scholars and visitors from outside of the Múscraí Gaeltacht.

The highly unusual collection of St Gobnait’s Shrine, St Fin Barre’s Pilgrimage Site and An Teampaillín all exhibit pre-Christian origins either in their location or folklore or both. All three are still held in high regard. St Gobnait’s and St Fin Barre’s are still active pilgrimage sites (fig. 5.7). An Teampaillín with its location atop a steep incline and previous use as a children’s burial ground and first camp of the O’Sullivan Bere march, means that although unused, it is not forgotten. Together, the three sites amount to the physical manifestations of a deep ceremonial landscape with connections to at least the Iron Age. That this vulnerable landscape is still alive is rare in Western Europe. The three sites combined are of international importance. It is also worth noting that the holy wells dedicated to St Lachtaín have received renewed local attention.

Figure 5.7 **St Gobnait’s Holy Well (note the crosses inscribed by pilgrims, circled in red)**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

¹³⁰ Jared Diamond, *The world until yesterday: what we can learn from traditional societies* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 370

Scientific Interest

The archaeological excavations of two Bronze Age cookery sites (fulachtaí fia) conducted in 1952 by Prof O’Kelly were of central importance in our understanding of this site type. The experiment he carried out on site proving that meat wrapped in straw could be cooked in an open-air water trough was a seminal moment in experimental archaeology in Ireland.

Technical Interest

The tuck mill in Kilmore, just outside of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, is of technical interest. The mill was used in the woolen industry to improve the quality of the woven fabric. Múscraí has a fine collection of well-built 18th and 19th century masonry bridges which are a testament to the skill of the masons.

Social Interest

There is a strong sense of place from residents. The physical and cultural landscape is part of who they are and how they identify themselves. The sense of belongingness to townland and parish is often intense. As a result, the sense of loss from perceived negative physical and cultural changes can have an adverse impact upon their own enjoyment of place.

There is great pride taken in the resilience of the Irish language, music and dance in the Gaeltacht. This trend of resilience and independence of thought is continued by the local pride taken in Múscraí’s role during the fight for an independent Ireland.

Across Múscraí, deference to heritage and history is manifested in monuments, memorials, placenames and in the use of historical names for clubs, teams and buildings. For many inhabitants, Irish language, music, song and dance form a core part of their daily lives. The diminishing tradition of scoraíocht (social visiting) is a critical factor in the preservation of culture in Múscraí. It also performs an important social function in preserving neighbourly interaction.

The pilgrimage sites of St Fin Barre and in particular St Gobnait are of significant social importance to the people of Múscraí.

Natural Interest

The Múscraí landscape has considerable variation in topography from mountains to hills to fertile valleys. As a result, there is a rich diversity of habitats in the area including upland blanket bog, wet and dry heath and coniferous forestry at higher elevations, improved grassland, lowland blanket bog, native Oak woodland, hedgerows, wet woodland and wetlands in the lowlands.

A number of these natural and semi-natural habitats in Múscraí are of high nature conservation value and are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. In addition, there are several rare species that are protected under Irish and EU legislation. These include Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Kingfisher, Kerry Slug, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Killarney Fern and Otters. There are several sites that are designated for nature conservation in the Múscraí Gaeltacht (including SACs, NHAs and a SPA), which reflects the quality and importance of the biodiversity in the area at a national and international level.

There are two significant river catchments in the area, the River Lee and the Sullane River. The Lee is an important source of water, as well as a valuable wildlife habitat and fishing resource. The Freshwater Pearl Mussel is present in both catchments.

The rich natural heritage of Múscraí is a result of climate, geology, topography and land-use history. It greatly enhances the visual and natural amenity of the Gaeltacht, and is an important resource to protect for future generations.

The natural landscape around Múscraí was something that appears to have been used very effectively as an ally by Irish forces during the War of Independence.

5.4 Statement of significance

The tangible heritage of Múscraí is inextricably connected with the intangible. Public consultation has demonstrated that the majority of people in Múscraí interpret their heritage according to a very broad and holistic understanding. Accordingly, the evaluation of one particular place's archaeological or architectural importance without considering its role as a habitat and location within the oral tradition reduces the appreciation of both the individual place and Múscraí as a whole.

The landscape is dense. The hills and mountains surround, while the trees overlook. The clouds are usually low and heavy with incoming rain. It is a place where perceptions can easily become reality. In a simplistic way, the people living of Múscraí have shaped the landscape, and in turn have been shaped by it. However, it is the perception of the people of the character of the landscape itself that is unique. This is the core special quality of Múscraí.

There is a deep, complex, and symbiotic relationship between people and place. One is simply less without the other. It is this relationship that makes Múscraí a place of international importance.

For Ireland, Múscraí's cultural creativity and spirit of place acts as a reservoir of meaning and inspiration that helps counter the homogenising nature of globalisation.

Due to the region's strong poetry and music traditions, Acadamh Fódhla were asked to supply a poem or song they thought communicated the spirit of Múscraí. Written in the Múscraí Irish dialect, *Ceanntar Ghlas Mhúscraí* is that song:

Ceanntar Ghlas Mhúscraí

A'rabhais riamh i nGugán Barra, nú ar shleasa Chéim an Fhia,
In Uibh-Laoighre Maoineach aiceanta, nú ar mhacha Dhún Dá Radhairc,
Ar Thearman Ghort na Tiobratán, nú iargúlthacht Fuithirí,
Ceanntar aoibhinn maisiúil, iseadh gaoltacht seo Mhúscraí

Sé'n áit is breághtha in Éirinn é, tá féile ann a's ceól.
Dughaigh áluinn maorgha, faoi bhrat drúchta, maidean cheóig,
Gleannta, gaothraidh, glaise agus cumaracha fraoig,
Dob é sin fód mo shínnsear, i bhfearann ghlas Mhúscraí.

Annsúd a bheir fé gheasa ag fuaim easa an tSulláin,
Na h-éin go binn a' cantaireacht, ar ghéaga a's cnocán,
Caomghuth cuaiche'r chrannaibh, an sionnach glic imníoch,
An fhia'sa hos dea-dhathach, ar shleasa ghlas Mhúscraí

Tá lus na meala go flúirseach ann, go cúmhra fíor, ar feóir
Raithneach a's bláth na fiúise, ar chlathacha, i ngach clós
Fraoch bán, an plúirín sneachta, an rós, 'samn seamar caoin
A's an cuileann, rogha na coille, mar órnáid, ar fuaid Mhúscraí

Tá radharcanna do-chreidte, i bhfolach annsúd faoi scáth,
Planndaí nádurtha fiainne, agus crónán beach ar bhláth,
An méaracán beag dearg, a's lus gleoidhte, na mban sídhe
An Smólach a's an chéirseach, 's iad a fógairt seóide Mhúscraí.

Tá'n earc luachra fé leac ann, an broc, as an gráinneóg,
An lora-rua, an lasair coille, an eala, 'a an easóg,
An clumhar balbh ar a sheachaint, an druid, 'san fheadóg buí,
A's tá radhaise cearca feádha, i dtaobh tíre seo, Mhúscraí.

Annsúd tá aibhní gléineach, an Laoi, a's an t-Siulláin,
An madra uisge ar a léim ann, an breac, a's an bradáin
An eascuin I ngach mion-ghliase, 'san corr-iasg, a'leagaint scíth,
An nádúir ar theaspántas ar uisgí ghlan Mhúscraí.

Tá láithaireacha stairiúla ann, lorg uasal laoch gan cháim,
Béal A'Ghleanna, Cúl na Catharach, Céim an Fhia 'san Geata Bán,
Cnoc Satharain Chíl na Martra, Tuirín Dubh 'san Charraig Mín,
Go raibh leabaidh ins na Flaithis, ag fir chalma Mhúscraí

Ceanntar mór cultúra é, do cheol a's litiríocht,
Bhí Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonail, Ó Riada, a's Máire Bhuí,
Ó Síocháin, an t-athair Peadar, a's Bess Cronin an bhéil bhínn,
Tá na ceoltha sídhe mar annlann, ag amhránaithe Mhúscraí

Tá fotharacha creidimh ann, gur mhór a gclú, a's a gcáil,
Bhí Fionnbarra, agus Gobnait, Lachtín, a's Naomh Abán,
Do mhair an Oidhreacht creidimh seo, e paidir, a's aithríghe,
D'aindheoin gear-leannúint an t-Sassanaig, ar phobal seo Mhúscraí

Tá báighiúlacht agus caradas in abhantracht seo na Laoi
Tá mortas cinneadh agus díogras ag borradh I ngach croí
Tá an smior gaelach fós go daingean ann idir cheol is litiríocht
Níl DáimhScoil eile in Éirinn ach amháin ag Báird Mhúscraighe.

Moladh le Rí na hAoine a chruthaigh ár ndúthaig cháidh,
A's a bhron an gabhantas tíre seo, ar ár sínnsear, le mór-ghrá,
Gan truailiúgha, gan lot, gan aindhise, gan máchail ná ceataighe,
An nádúr mar mhaoín buan-sheasamhach, i gceanntar ghlas Mhúscraí

Má shiulaíonn tú gleannta a's sléibhte, Ó Thorraí go Cúil Aodha,
Beidh radharcanna na h-Éireann, le h-iniúchadh, a's le plé.
Ach níl aon áit chomh dea-thréitheach, dea mhaisithe, dea chroidheach
Leis a' gceanntar áluinn maorga, Múscraí glas Uí Fhloinn.

Composed in 2009. Words by Dónal Ó hÉalaithe. Music by Peadar Ó Riada.

5.5 Threats to significance

Tourism

Tourism is both an opportunity and a threat to the Gaeltacht's heritage values. More visitors are needed to ensure that jobs and particularly amenities of value are available to residents. This is especially the case in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. By contrast, excessive numbers and the wrong category of tourist could have an adverse impact on Múscraí's heritage. For example, inappropriate, large scale retail and hospitality development could employ an excess of non-Irish speakers. This would further reduce the possibility of Irish becoming the language of the public domain. Another threat comes from the dilution of community

spirit through the construction of holiday homes. A more prosaic issue is the ability of local roads and waste water systems to handle added pressure. Finally, a badly managed tourism sector could raise house values to such an extent that owning or even renting a home in the Gaeltacht becomes beyond the reach of many locals.

It is important to recognise that it is problematic to ascribe a sustainable cultural carrying capacity of tourists for Múscraí. One factor is the reaction of locals to increased numbers. For instance, although roughly 200,000 tourists a year visit Caernarfon Castle in Wales¹³¹, Welsh is still the daily language of the surrounding town's almost 10,000 residents.

High spending cultural tourists want authenticity. Múscraí has that. In the Gaeltacht it is possible for visitors to easily connect into the landscape and the people that fill it. At present, Múscraí is mostly seen as a place to pass through and not as a place to linger. By contrast, in the Dingle Peninsula almost 69% of foreign tourists stay for at least two nights¹³². However, while the dramatic landscape may be the key factor in bringing tourists to Dingle, Múscraí's uniqueness lies in the intimate connection between the people and place. It is this which the tourism sector in the Gaeltacht should focus on. This means creating experiences that connect with the five senses and use the natural and cultural attributes of Múscraí (e.g. hill walking, angling, Gaelic football, hurling, road bowling, music, an introduction to Múscraí Irish, céilí dancing, and consuming food and ale produced in the Gaeltacht). This is a relatively high end and high value market. These people like to feel that they are discovering something different. Consequently, mass numbers of the type that visit Kilkenny Castle or the Rock of Cashel are not wanted or needed.

Key threats:

- Mass tourism
- Reducing cultural tourist numbers

A commuter Gaeltacht?

Having a stable or increased population is useless and indeed damaging to the heritage of Múscraí unless people incorporate the places and people of the Gaeltacht into their daily routines. Most of Múscraí is within one hour's drive of Cork City. This means that it is within easy commuter range of a large centre of employment. Once the planned upgrade of the N22 happens travel time will decrease even more. This in turn will increase the area's attractiveness for housing development. Already in Baile Mhúirne/Baile Mhic Íre there is evidence of how its location between Cork and Killarney helped lead to a surge in a demand for dwellings far in excess of that witnessed in the Gaeltacht's other villages. Between 2005 and 2015 the number of dwellings in Baile Mhúirne/Baile Mhic Íre grew from 178 to 280¹³³. This was considerably greater than anywhere else in Múscraí.

One large, inappropriately located, badly designed housing estate has the potential to significantly undermine the possibility of Irish becoming the language of the public domain. An influx of non-Irish speaking people attracted by affordable house prices will further normalise English as the language of the everyday and undermine the linguistic character of the region. Analysis carried out in 2007 suggested that at least 67% of a Gaeltacht population must be active, integrated Irish speakers for use

¹³¹ There were 206,185 visitors in 2017, www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-42504430 (Accessed: 7/2/18)

¹³² Feargus Dunne and Fiona Tobin, *West Kerry Gaeltacht tourism survey 2010* (Údurás na Gaeltachta and Institute of Technology, Tralee, 2010) 9

¹³³ *Blarney Macroom Municipal District local area plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2017) 110

of the language to be sustainable¹³⁴. In 2011, fluency across Múscraí was put at 43%¹³⁵. In 2007, it was 40.5%¹³⁶.

Of course, an improved N22 makes it easier for those wishing to return to Múscraí to live in the Gaeltacht and work elsewhere. It also makes it easier for those already there to stay. However, this reliance on the car reinforces a strong pattern of using Macroom, Killarney and Cork, rather than the villages as the main service centres. There is no shop in Cúil Aodha. In Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, there is no post office or petrol station. Other businesses have also closed. Currently, in the most populated area of Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne local services are supported by a strong N22 passing trade. However, once the village is bypassed, many of these businesses will come under significant pressure. In Réidh na nDoirí and Cill na Martra both Post Offices are under threat of closure. Should this happen, the ability of the attached shops to survive will be reduced. Ultimately, with the end of the Gaeltacht's rural Post Offices and possible shutting of the shops, a key place of socialisation will be lost. This undermines community cohesion and the passing on of local knowledge. Combined, the gradual loss of services makes the Gaeltacht a worse place in which to live. This in turn will lessen the special qualities of the place and shift it towards being an area mostly seen in pragmatic economic terms.

Another consequence of the upgraded N22 is that the proposed route goes through the War of Independence ambush site at Cúl na Cathrach (fig. 5.8). Despite some mitigations and archaeological surveying carried out by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the integrity of the site will inevitably be significantly undermined. The battlefield site is not protected under any archaeological or architectural heritage legislation.

Figure 5.8 **The proposed route of the N22 through Cúl na Cathrach has already been fenced off**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

¹³⁴ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin et al, *Comprehensive linguistic study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: principal findings and recommendations* (Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2007), 10

¹³⁵ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin and Martin Charlton, *Nuashonrú ar an staidéar cuimsitheach teangeolaíoch ar úsáid na Gaeilge sa Ghaeltacht: 2006-2011* (National University of Ireland, Galway and the National institute for regional and spatial analysis, 2015), 71

¹³⁶ Conchúr Ó Giollagáin et al, *Comprehensive linguistic study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: principal findings and recommendations* (Galway: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2007), 19-21

In the mid to long term the ability of most inhabitants to commute regularly, freely and relatively cheaply will more than likely be challenged by climate change and our reaction to it. A reduced carbon economy, as prescribed by the Paris Climate Summit will likely impact on the cost of running the family car and the heating of detached homes¹³⁷. Of course, technology both existing and yet to be developed may provide solutions that could mitigate against the consequences of climate change.

Under the EU Renewables Directive 2009/28/EC Ireland is required to increase its share of renewable energy to 16% of gross national energy consumption by 2020¹³⁸. Going beyond that, the European Commission has adopted the Energy Roadmap 2050 which commits the EU to reducing emissions to 85-95% of 1990 levels. This necessitates a radical increase in renewable energy generation. The objective of all this is to create a secure energy supply and address the catastrophic consequences of unchecked climate change. At present, Ireland is expected to miss its 2020 target¹³⁹. This will result in fines and added pressure for renewable energy development.

Gathering data concerning windfarms in and around Múscaí has not been straightforward. Some information online appears out of date. As of October 2017, no commercial wind turbines exist in Múscaí. In 2016, planning permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála for eleven 150m high (at tip) turbines in the middle of the Gaeltacht. The ruling was challenged in the High Court. In July 2017, a judicial review was granted¹⁴⁰. As of November 5th, 2017, no final judgement has been delivered. An earlier High Court hearing in January 2017 found in favour of the construction of a six turbine windfarm in Derragh and other adjacent townlands¹⁴¹. These turbines are also to be 150m high at turbine tip.

According to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), as of September 2016, there are nine wind farms located within 5km of Múscaí (table 5.1). Combined, they can produce almost 162 MW of power. In July 2016, An Bord Pleanála granted planning permission for the Grousemount wind farm. This one scheme will add an additional 38 turbines within 5km of the Gaeltacht¹⁴². Grousemount has the capability to produce 114MW¹⁴³. The total height of these turbines will be up to 126m. Pooled together, the existing and currently planned wind farms will result in 134 turbines with a production capacity of 275.64MW, located a close distance from Múscaí. Already, some turbines are so near that their shadows extend out into Gaeltacht territory. In effect, although many of these turbines are positioned physically outside of Múscaí, they are part of the daily lives of most residents. For many, they are seen as an intrusive and incongruous part.

¹³⁷ Alan Hill, *Uplands community study*, (Irish Uplands Forum, 2016)

¹³⁸ *National renewable energy action plan, Ireland* (Government of Ireland, 2010), 4

¹³⁹ Paul Melia, "Ireland set to miss 2020 emissions targets by 'a substantial margin'", *Irish Independent* (July 26, 2017), www.independent.ie/news/environment/ireland-set-to-miss-its-2020-emissions-target-by-a-substantial-margin-35970003.html (Accessed: 7/2/18)

¹⁴⁰ http://highcourtsearch.courts.ie/hcslive/order_detail.show?sessionID=1688164683&yearNo=2017&recordNo=558&processType=JR, (Accessed: 1/11/17)

¹⁴¹ "Residents lose challenge over Cork wind farm permission", *Irish Times* (January 18, 2017), (www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/residents-lose-challenge-over-cork-wind-farm-permission-1.2942094, Accessed: 5/11/17)

¹⁴² Anne Lucey, "Major wind farm gets the green light after An Bord Pleanála ruling", *Irish Examiner* (July 30, 2016), www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/major-wind-farm-gets-the-green-light-after-an-bord-pleanala-ruling-413202.html, (Accessed: 7/3/2018)

¹⁴³ Brendan Allen, *Grousemount Wind Farm: planning report*, (Dublin: ESB International, 2015) 8

Table 5.1 **Wind farms located within 5km of Múscraí¹⁴⁴**

Scheme	No. of Turbines	Power Capacity in MW
Caherdowney	4	10
Clydaghroe	2	4.99
Coomachoo (2)	8	18
Coomagearlahy (1)	15	42.5
Coomagearlahy (2)	10	8.5
Coomagearlahy (3)	13	30
Glanlee (1)	23	29.8
Gneeves	11	9.35
Kealkil	10	8.5
Totals	96	161.64

In the *Cork County Development Plan* (2014), almost all of Múscraí is within an area where wind farms are deemed ‘open for consideration’ in their Wind Energy Strategy Map¹⁴⁵. By contrast, areas where wind farms are ‘normally discouraged’ are places where overall sensitivity arising from ecology, landscape, amenity, recreational and settlement considerations limits their development. In these locations, commercial wind farms will only be considered ‘in exceptional circumstances where it is clear adverse impacts do not arise’¹⁴⁶. The County Development Plan’s wind energy policy attempts to balance the provision of new energy infrastructure with the need to protect important assets throughout the county – however, it does not consider the sensitivity of the Múscraí region as a distinctive and important cultural asset of international significance. In the next review of the County Development Plan’s Wind Energy Policies, consideration should be given to better reflect the internationally important and sensitive nature of Múscraí’s landscape. Accordingly, consideration should be given to extending the current Policy Objective ED-3.6 ‘Normally Discouraged’ designation to cover the Gaeltacht area.

Setting aside the economic benefits to landowners/promoters of wind farms and the grants provided to some community groups, the construction of large wind turbine developments by outside agents in Múscraí will likely cause serious antagonism. Such disagreement and enmity are highly likely to disrupt the social coherence that is essential to Múscraí’s liveability, character and sustainability. This in turn damages the core heritage values of an internationally important landscape. Accordingly, the imposition of a developer-led approach to renewable energy in Múscraí would not be appropriate.

Key threats:

- Large new housing estates
- Withdrawal of services
- N22 upgrade
- Climate change

¹⁴⁴ maps.seai.ie/wind/, www.iwea.com/index.cfm/page/bycounty/id/21, www.iwea.com/index.cfm/page/bycounty/id/22, (Accessed: 8/9/2016)

¹⁴⁵ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 140

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 139

Patterns of habitation

Only 22% of Múscraí's population reside in the five key villages of Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, Cúil Aodha, Réidh na nDoirí, and Cill na Martra. Hence, the majority of the people living in Múscraí do so in one off houses outside the villages. This has resulted in a heavy reliance on the car and the decline of the villages as service centres. The dominance of the car is further aided by the low level of available public transportation. At present, there is no public transport connection between the two main river valleys of the Gaeltacht. The only Bus Éireann bus that goes through Múscraí is the Cork to Kerry route (via Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne). There was a Bus Éireann service from Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh to Macroom. However, this was discontinued in 2011 due to "low passenger support"¹⁴⁷. Funded by the National Transport Authority, Local Link Cork do provide a transport service from Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh via Cill na Martra to Macroom each Tuesday. There is also a Local Link bus connecting Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh to Bantry every Thursday. Knowledge of the Local Link routes appears relatively low, with the majority of patrons being old age pensioners.

The freedom of movement that the car brings, coupled with the dispersed nature of settlement has undermined the ability of the villages to act as successful service centres. One of the main reasons behind the loss of certain services and possible future loss of others is that for many inhabitants it might be as easy to go to Macroom as it to go to Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne or Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. This is particularly true for commuters whose routines are orientated towards Cork. The situation is worsened by the narrow, winding nature of much of the road between Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Ultimately, with this pattern comes reduced opportunities to use Irish in the public domain and to connect with neighbours. In Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh the number of neutral places to socialise has been gradually eroded to such an extent that there are few neutral places available for neighbours to connect with each other outside of the pub or GAA pitch. Compounding the reduction in community connectivity is the fall in numbers attending regular Mass. Somewhat filling the gap in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and elsewhere in Múscraí are the community services and the many local clubs and interest groups. The role that the various village community halls and pubs play in facilitating the various local interest groups is essential.

All the villages are vulnerable to change. All need more residents. Without this, many existing and possible future services and businesses will not be viable. The current reality is a cycle of decline where people aren't using local businesses enough. This results in closures which in turn causes people to go to the villages even less, thereby impacting negatively upon more services and establishments.

In the current map of the Gaeltacht whole townlands are given over to forestry. When the boundary of the Gaeltacht was being drawn in the 1950s people lived in those areas. However, due to gradual depopulation and the economic gains possible from forest plantations the areas denuded of people have become covered by trees. Forestries almost fully obliterate the cultural landscape. Archaeological monuments and certain natural habitats may be protected under legislation but all other visual anchors connecting people with place are usually lost. Current planning practice directs people towards struggling villages. This is proper. Dispersed rural housing has been a contributing factor in economic decline, isolation, environmental degradation, and the under-provision of infrastructure, employment opportunities and public services. However, with no new housing in the rural hinterland a greater amount of forest plantations will occur than would otherwise happen. This is also the case with wind turbines. Ultimately, without people living on the land the intangible heritage of the Múscraí would be severely undermined. This is in keeping with Cork County Council's rural housing policy by which local people will be facilitated if they wish to build an individual house

¹⁴⁷ Eoin English, "'Double blow' for Gaeltacht village as bus service axed," *Irish Examiner*, (January 27, 2011), www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/double-blow-for-gaeltacht-village-as-bus-service-axed-143297.html, (Accessed: 6/7/2016)

for their own permanent use in the Gaeltacht (subject to normal planning considerations). By contrast, people who do not qualify for a rural house are encouraged to locate within the settlement network.

More Irish speakers are needed. Generally, new households should reside in the villages. A lesser amount should be permitted to live in the wider countryside. Renovation of existing structures, should take precedence over new builds. Despite only having eleven protected structures, Múscraí does have a nice collection of late 19th and early 20th century buildings.

There is no bar on non-Irish speakers buying a second-hand house in the Gaeltacht. Likewise, there are no restrictions on non-Irish speakers buying new houses in housing estates. This is in sharp contrast to the restrictions on people building one off houses in the Gaeltacht. Such anomalies cause obvious issues for the prospect of Irish becoming the language of the public domain. Nonetheless, care must be taken not to bar non-Irish speakers from purchasing a house in the Gaeltacht. To do so would fail to recognise that many newcomers have a deep appreciation of Múscraí and its heritage. It also discounts the positive impact that many have on the community. Finally, barriers would also limit the number of possible buyers for houses and thereby reduce the value of all housing in the Gaeltacht.

One significant impediment to strengthening the villages is the poor waste water treatment infrastructure that exists throughout Múscraí (fig. 5.8). The inability of the waste water treatment facility in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh to take any extra capacity has impacted on planning applications for houses in the village. This is now a key impediment to the sustainable growth of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Although the population of the village increased marginally from 234 persons in 2006 to 238 persons in 2011, the number of dwellings decreased from 114 in 2005 to 96 in 2015¹⁴⁸. Both the septic tank in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and the septic tank in Baile Mhic Íre only provide primary treatment¹⁴⁹. This means that after debris, suspended solids and grease are removed, what remains is discharged into the river system. Like the septic tank in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, the tank in Baile Mhic Íre is operating beyond its intended capacity¹⁵⁰. Plans to build new facilities in Baile Mhic Íre and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh have not been realised. The proposed plant at Baile Mhic Íre is at planning stage¹⁵¹. By contrast, the required upgrades in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh appear to be of lower priority¹⁵². The poor waste water infrastructure not only impacts negatively on planning permissions for housing but also on local industry, tourism, the amenity value of the lakes and rivers and of course, natural heritage in general. Deficient fresh water supplies in both Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Baile Mhúirne are also impeding the sustainable development of new housing at levels appropriate to the villages.

Key threats:

- A falling population both in the villages and hinterland
- Not enough Irish speakers moving into the Gaeltacht
- Inadequate waste water treatment infrastructure

¹⁴⁸ *Blarney Macroom Municipal District local area plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2017) 104

¹⁴⁹ Fiona Gartland, "Sewage plants waste water not reaching EU standards," *Irish Times*, (July 2, 2009), www.irishtimes.com/news/sewage-plants-waste-water-not-reaching-eu-standards-1.690961, (Accessed: 7/11/17)

¹⁵⁰ www.epa.ie/licences/lic_eDMS/090151b2803a62d0.pdf, (Accessed: 7/11/17)

¹⁵¹ www.water.ie/news/investment-of-228-million/, (Accessed: 7/11/17)

¹⁵² www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2012-01-24.1661.0; (Accessed: 7/11/17)

Figure 5.9

The public toilet at Gougane Barra pilgrimage site. In 2016, Lonely Planet named it one of the top 100 toilets in the world¹⁵³. The sewage from the toilet is discharged into the lake without any secondary treatment.



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Employment

Despite significant effort from Údurás na Gaeltachta, the profile of employment available in Múscraí does not fulfil the needs of a large section of third level graduates emerging from the region. Given the proliferation of career types and the resources of Údurás it is perhaps unrealistic to think it will ever be so. In 2017, 684 people were employed in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies¹⁵⁴. Previously, manufacturing used to dominate, although there is now a broader base of employment available¹⁵⁵. Within these businesses the majority of roles do not require Irish.

Many college graduates from Múscraí either due to necessity or desire (or a combination of both) leave the Gaeltacht to further their careers. After gaining experience a large proportion return. However, those that do come back typically commute outside of the Gaeltacht for work. One result of the move by the young towards professional jobs is that the posts which they were supposed to fill in the factories and other businesses are often being filled by people from outside the Gaeltacht. By and large this workforce does not speak Irish. The result is a dominance of English speaking workspaces. Indeed, many of the companies supported by Údarás could be located anywhere in Ireland. Most do not incorporate the cultural capital of Múscraí as a key distinguishing factor for their products or services. To be fair, this does appear to be changing. For example, both Folláin and the 9 White Deer Brewery fundamentally incorporate the cultural heritage of Múscraí into their products. By contrast, one company that could be located elsewhere but which adds distinctiveness to Múscraí is the Prince August Toy Soldier Factory and Visitor Centre in Cill na Martra. Recently, its owner acquired the world's largest model battle scene (fig. 5.9).

¹⁵³ Nick Bramwell, "Gougane Barra has Ireland's top toilet," Irish Examiner (May 2, 2016), www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/gougane-barra-has-irelands-top-toilet-396073.html, (Accessed: 7/3/2018)

¹⁵⁴ *Údurás na Gaeltachta: 2017 Review* (Údurás na Gaeltachta) 18

¹⁵⁵ John Walsh, *The influence of the promotion of Irish language on Ireland's socio-economic development*, PhD Thesis, (School of law and government, Dublin City University, 2005) 204

Figure 5.10

The Battle of Waterloo model at the Prince August Toy Soldier Factory

(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Údurás recognises the historical dominance of manufacturing roles and are actively attempting to support other sectors. Despite a historical legacy of an over reliance on manufacturing jobs, the maintenance of a strong manufacturing base is vitally important to Múscraí. Their presence fulfils an employment role for a large section of the population with many of the factories also providing relevant employment to graduates. During interviews with several factory owners, there seemed to be dissatisfaction over the level of support provided by State agencies. Capital grants have declined and in various cases simple services such as waste water treatment, road alignment changes and broadband were not supplied. Mobile phone reception can also be bad. By and large though, the businesses had overcome these difficulties. However, such variation between available supports and needs is a concern particularly for the attraction of new businesses in the future. It should be noted that all interviewees had been beneficiaries of State assistance. For this, each was appreciative.

The ability of entrepreneurs and professionals to start their own businesses is severely curtailed by the absence of adequate broadband. A further barrier to professionals living and working locally is the lack of a shared co-working space where they could work either individually or together on projects.

In Múscraí, farming practice has traditionally been focused on dairy, although it is now more mixed¹⁵⁶. A high proportion of the land in the Gaeltacht is either mountainous or boggy and is thus unsuited to non-indigenous cattle. Milk prices post removal of the quota system have also meant a reduction in profits. These factors, coupled with the loss of REPs supported payments and the unsustainably low prices being offered for sheep fleeces, lamb and beef, have all meant a reduction in the number of farms and amount of land used to produce food. At present, much of the Gaeltacht's marginal land that was once used for grazing is covered by forestry (fig. 5.10). Forests do offer a good rate of return to the farmer. On the other hand, they render the land unusable for agriculture (fig. 5.11). As a result, even though forestry would make monetary sense for many of Múscraí's farmers, the amount of land currently given over to plantations is lower than the economic incentive should create in comparison with farming the uplands and other marginal land (54% of Múscraí lies above 200m elevation but only

¹⁵⁶ John Walsh, *The influence of the promotion of Irish language on Ireland's socio-economic development*, PhD Thesis, (School of law and government, Dublin City University, 2005) 192

c.17% of land is forested) (figures 5.12 & 5.13). To do so would impact upon their identities as food producers. That being so, nationally there is a fear that this could be the last generation of uplands farmers with younger generations largely forgoing the time heavy and relatively low earning lifestyles of their parents¹⁵⁷. As mentioned above, c.17% of Múscraí is forested. Almost all of this is commercial forestry. Nationally, 10.5% of land is covered in forest¹⁵⁸.

Figure 5.11 **Spread of forestry plantation on marginal farmland**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

Figure 5.12 **Post-harvest scene of forestry at Beal a Ghleanna**

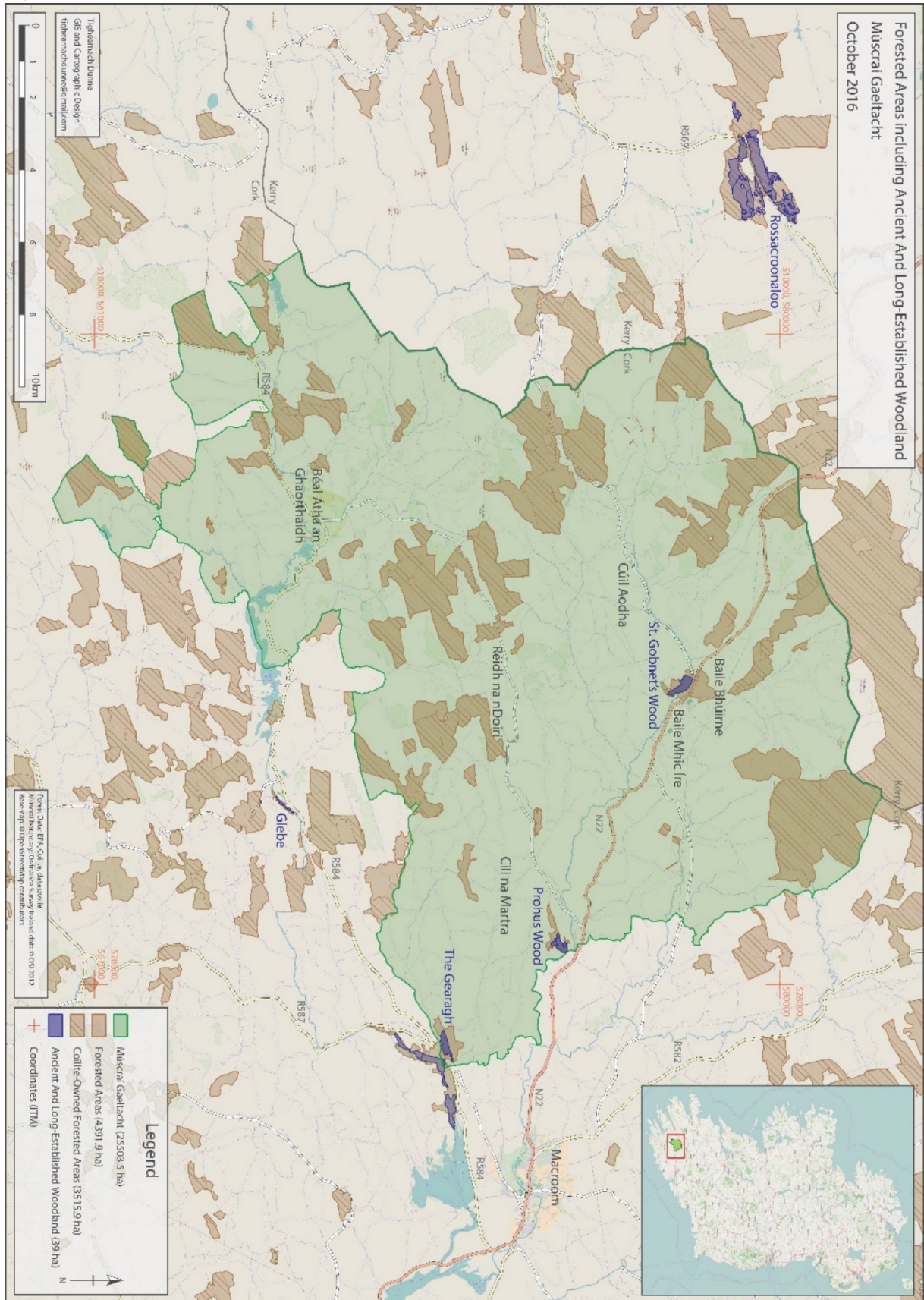


(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

¹⁵⁷ Tommy Moyles, "The last generation of upland farmers", *The Farmers Journal* (May 30, 2016), www.farmersjournal.ie/the-last-generation-of-upland-farmers-210311 (Accessed: 4/9/2016)

¹⁵⁸ Data from 2012. *Forest Statistics – Ireland 2017* (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, 2018) 2

Figure 5.13 Forest cover in Múscraí



In 2015, across the country, 53% of farm households had an off-farm job¹⁵⁹. In 2006, it was 59%¹⁶⁰. There are no specific figures for Múscraí. Nonetheless, given the mountainous nature of much of the land, a similar - if not higher - figure is to be expected (in 2015, 88% of small Irish farms were in receipt of some form of off-farm income¹⁶¹). Conversely, only 2% of the farms in Ireland had some form of on-site diversified enterprise¹⁶². In the UK, the figure is 31%¹⁶³. Although current levels of on-farm diversified enterprise are low, nationally, 33% of farmers are interested in starting their own business¹⁶⁴. Of course, interest and action are two different things. Nonetheless, if only a small proportion of farmers in Múscraí developed on-site activities this would reduce commuting to off-site jobs and possibly lessen the temptation to plant their land with evergreen trees. Another consequence could be the creation of a service or product that makes the Gaeltacht a better place in which to live and visit.

One particular area of farming that would suit Múscraí's strengths of environment and culture is the specialty food sector. In 2012, this sector was valued as being worth €615million to the Irish economy¹⁶⁵. The economic gain is multiplied when the locally produced food is bought in a local outlet. One UK study found that every £1 spent locally on local food generates £2.50 for the local economy¹⁶⁶.

An additional issue concerning the use of marginal land is drainage and its possible influence on flooding levels. In an effort to increase the productivity of land, local farmers often attempt to drain areas of waterlogged fields. One possible consequence of this is an increase in the likelihood of flooding happening along the Lee and Sullane. This of course can have a very serious impact on the homes, businesses and daily lives of others in the Gaeltacht. The risk of flooding is heightened further as climate change causes the rain patterns to move towards being longer in duration and higher in intensity¹⁶⁷.

A large possible solution to ensuring both the viability of farms and their landscape quality is to adapt the example set by the BurrenLIFE scheme. Launched in 2005, BurrenLIFE was the first major farming for conservation project in Ireland. Its objectives were to support the communities, heritage and environment of the Burren. Participating in the initiative sees farmers paid for both work undertaken and for the delivery of defined environmental objectives on their farms. The programme is both farmer led and low on administration¹⁶⁸. During the second round of the scheme (2010-2014) there were 156 farmers involved in the initiative. In that period almost €5 million was provided to participants. The average annual payment to each farmer was €6,500¹⁶⁹. For the third round, the

¹⁵⁹ Noel Baker, Farming poll 2015 – data: 'disgraceful reality' of need for off-farm income, *Irish Examiner*, (September 22, 2015) www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/farming-poll-2015--data-disgraceful-reality-of-need-for-off-farm-income-355102.html, (Accessed: 16/10/2016)

¹⁶⁰ Ciaran Moran, "Almost 1 in 3 farmers employed off farm" (May 27, 2014) www.agriland.ie/farming-news/almost-1-3-farmers-employed-farm/ (Accessed: 7/2/2018)

¹⁶¹ Emma Lynch et al, *Teagasc national farm survey: the sustainability of small farming in Ireland* (Teagasc: Athenry, 2015) 6

¹⁶² David Meredith, Kevin Heanue and Sinead McCarthy, "Farm development: attitudes of farmers to farm diversification", presentation at *National Rural Development Conference* (October 16, 2012) 11

¹⁶³ Ibid

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 13

¹⁶⁵ Cathal O'Donoghue et al, *Rural economic development in Ireland*, (Athenry: Teagasc, 2014) 82

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 83

¹⁶⁷ Beatrice Kelly and Mary Stack, *Climate change, heritage and tourism: implications for Ireland's coast and inland waterways*, (The Heritage Council and Fáilte Ireland, 2009) 4

¹⁶⁸ <http://burrenprogramme.com/the-programme/our-approach/>, (Accessed: 4/10/2016)

¹⁶⁹ Brendan Dunford, *The Burren life programme: an overview*, (National Economic and Social Council, 2016) 12

number projected to be involved is 450¹⁷⁰. In 2005, there were only 20 participating farmers¹⁷¹. Such an increase is a testament to the scheme's success. The beauty of BurrenLIFE is that its actions and processes increase the ease by which farmers may farm their land through providing infrastructure while simultaneously providing a direct incentive to farm for biodiversity. This has ultimately encouraged the perseverance of the Burren as a living landscape. Essentially, conflict between nature and farming has been replaced by a virtuous relationship incorporating liveability, economics and nature. Other comparable projects include AranLIFE and the proposed locally led agri-environmental scheme in the Blackstairs Mountains.

Key threats:

- Inadequate broadband
- Local provision of jobs not adequately matching aspirations and skills of inhabitants
- Lack of shared co-working space for entrepreneurs and professionals
- Reducing economic viability of farming, particularly uplands farming

Attitudes to Irish

Overall, there is great pride taken by the people of Múscraí in the use of Irish. Despite this, there is reluctance by many to publicly use whatever Irish they have. Consequently, people need to see that it is not only acceptable to speak Irish but also desirable to do so. On a national level, high profile personalities at various levels of society should be covertly encouraged to embrace Irish. On a local level prominent core groups of influencers must do the same. This will help create an increased desirability factor in speaking Irish. Correspondingly, those who care deeply about Irish should relax about the use of correct grammar or dialect. Even those who have a high proficiency in Irish have been corrected when they have used an apparently unsuitable word or phrase. This results in embarrassment and a reluctance to use the language again. By contrast, English is consistently abused and changed by the vast majority of its speakers whom have little fear of censure. The variance is a significant impediment to the daily use of Irish in the public domain. One of the reasons Welsh underwent a resurgence in use was the ability of young people to adapt it for their lives.

It appears that use of the Múscraí dialect is diminishing and being replaced by a more generic form of the language. This is causing conflict with people correcting others for their use of the supposedly inappropriate form of Irish. This document acknowledges that the distinctive dialect of Múscraí is critical to the cultural identity of the area. It is important that this is maintained and cherished by the local population. The issue of different forms of Irish gradually becoming more prevalent in Múscraí or the standardisation of the language was a concern voiced in consultation workshops. However, this plan takes the view that it is primarily important to animate and engage people in their native language first. By focusing on perceived mistakes or departures from the localised vernacular, a negative experience can result for learners. Once a learner is engaged in their native language and proud of that engagement, the deeper importance of the local vernacular can be encouraged as a further immersion in the heritage of the area.

Although the education system is successful in teaching Irish to young Gaeltacht residents, the rate of raising children in the Gaeltacht through Irish is low.

¹⁷⁰ Odile Evans, "BurrenLIFE programme takes home top award from the European Commission", *The Farmers Journal* (June 2, 2017), www.farmersjournal.ie/burrenlife-programme-takes-home-top-award-from-the-european-commission-282228, (Accessed: 9/2/2018)

¹⁷¹ Brendan Dunford, *The Burren life programme: an overview*, (National Economic and Social Council, 2016) 11

The vulnerability of the Irish language not only in Múscraí but across Ireland is part of a broad international trend of declining linguistic diversity. By 2100, if current trends are maintained, 95% of all languages in the world will be dead or moribund¹⁷².

Key threats:

- The judgement of others
- Reduction in the use of Múscraí Irish

Lack of a strong centralised voice

Despite the number and vibrancy of community groups in Múscraí, it is a fundamental weakness that no strong, independent, broad based, community council exists. Without this, the Gaeltacht is more vulnerable to outside influences. The ability to lobby and advocate on behalf of Múscraí is also curtailed. Finally, a strong community council or trust would be the ideal body to implement and monitor the recommendations of this report.

In Scotland, the emergence of community councils or trusts has been central to the recent modest population increase experienced in its islands¹⁷³. Indeed, in the tiny island of Canna, its owners - the National Trust of Scotland - have acknowledged the limits of a top down approach and have handed control to a development trust, run by residents¹⁷⁴.

Funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta, Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo has created a Gaeltacht wide community council. This action is certainly laudable and worthwhile. Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo is the lead organisation responsible for the implementation of Múscraí's language plan.

Given many of the threats, both potential and existing that have been identified in this heritage plan, Múscraí would benefit from either an enhanced Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo or a newly constituted group with the remit of striving to realise the many actions and objectives set out in this document. Whatever eventual form the group takes it should work closely with Cork County Council and Údarás na Gaeltachta. The exact nature of the group will be informed by research currently being undertaken by Acadamh Fódhla.

Key threat:

- The lack of a strong, independent, Gaeltacht wide, community based voice, advocating for Múscraí.

Varying degrees of protection

The best way of protecting Múscraí's heritage is to empower the people of the Gaeltacht with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions on how best to adapt their place to meet the challenge of change. Listing sites can only ever protect a relatively small number of significant places. The beauty of Múscraí is in its densely layered landscape of meanings. This evolving tapestry of small important places needs individuals to take responsibility for their protection and use. It is something the State cannot and should not do. Its role should be to advise and support.

¹⁷² Jared Diamond, *The world until yesterday: what we can learn from traditional societies* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 370

¹⁷³ Kevin McKenna, "After centuries of neglect are Scotland's island on the road to recovery?", *The Observer*, (October 8, 2017), www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/07/are-scotland-islands-on-road-to-recovery (Accessed: 2/3/2018)

¹⁷⁴ Severin Carrell, "Tiny Scottish island's 15 strong community gets control of its destiny", *The Guardian*, (December 28, 2017), www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/28/tiny-scottish-islands-canna-15-strong-community-gets-control-of-its-destiny (Accessed: 2/3/2018)

There are many places and objects with no legal protection under heritage legislation. These include: vernacular buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, War of Independence and Civil War ambush sites, natural landmarks associated with local folklore and certain buildings connected with Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh and Seán Ó Riada. Some places should be listed. Some should not. For those places that aren't and for the vast majority of Múscraí's moveable heritage, it will fall to the landowners and the community in general to protect.

There is no legal protection for any element of Múscraí's intangible heritage (e.g. local tunes, agallaimh beirte/lúibíní, sean-nós singing, the Múscraí dialect).

A suggestion has been made that the Gaeltacht should go for UNESCO World Heritage Site Status. Certainly, there is a strong case that Múscraí could qualify for inclusion under UNESCO WHS selection criterion iv:

to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.¹⁷⁵

Furthermore, comparable places such as St Kilda in Scotland and the Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley in Andorra are on the list. Without doubt, listing would enhance the prescriptive protection levels of the Gaeltacht. However, inscription is by no means certain (a broader application incorporating Gaeltachts of comparable heritage significance would be more likely to succeed). What is more, unless the costly process is carefully managed, sizable conflict could be created. Finally, inscription for sites with low levels of tourism often has the effect of significantly increasing tourist numbers. In Múscraí, this could result in visitor numbers growing beyond sustainable levels.

An alternative that would help protect Múscraí while possibly limiting undesirable consequences, is to list the special connection between people and place, agallaimh beirte/lúibíní, sean-nós singing, the Múscraí dialect or the adoration of local saints on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The River Lee catchment is hugely important for Cork City as well as the local population. However, it has no protection through designation. The new Flood Management Plan includes features (e.g. flood walls/embankments in Baile Mhic Ire) which may pose a threat to archaeological features, the visual amenity, and St Gobnait's Wood. Accordingly, inappropriate flood mitigation measures and flooding are both potential threats. This report supports the construction of appropriate flood defences and sensitive land management that protects those living in houses in danger of flooding and the local heritage. This report also supports early consultation with the community concerning the creation of flood management plans and flood defenses (i.e. a participative process). There is no flood management plan for the Sullane. The need for an adequate plan and management solutions is heightened by the forecast for increased incidences of long duration, high intensity rainfall resulting from climate change¹⁷⁶.

The issue of greater knowledge and community participation in the management of Múscraí's cultural landscape is made plain by the case of Cúl na Catharach. For many in Múscraí, the War of Independence ambush site at Cúl na Catharach is of international importance. Nevertheless, local advocacy for its proper management is largely restricted to Acadamh Fódhla. In the environmental impact statement for the new N22, the site is listed as being of regional importance¹⁷⁷. We would contend that owing to the scale, result and timing of the event coming so soon after the significant

¹⁷⁵ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>, (Accessed: 7/2/2018)

¹⁷⁶ Beatrice Kelly and Mary Stack, *Climate change, heritage and tourism: implications for Ireland's coast and inland waterways*, (The Heritage Council and Fáilte Ireland, 2009) 4

¹⁷⁷ McCarthy Hyder Consultants, *N22 Baile Bhúirne-Macroom (Baile Bhuine-Coolcour) environment impact assessment, volume 2: main text* (McCarthy Hyder Consultants, 2009), 12-10

setback for the IRA at Clonmult, that the ambush is certainly of national significance and may be of international importance. According to the Cork County Council publication, *Heritage Centenary Sites of Rebel County Cork*:

the ambush at Coolnacahera was one of the largest in Cork, and was also notable in that in the aftermath the British employed planes in an effort to spot the IRA's movements. It is today depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping, and a monument is located at the site of the ambush¹⁷⁸.

The new N22 is planned to go directly through the western portion of the ambush site. Although the route is located away from the main engagement area, there will be a significant negative impact on the integrity of the battlefield. Alternative alignments were considered which would have avoided the site. However, these were deemed unviable 'primarily due to impacts on property, increased earthworks and potential impact on other sites of cultural heritage interest'¹⁷⁹. It is worth noting that during clearance works of the route in 2017 a service trackway caused significant disturbance to the eastern section of the battlefield.

Perhaps greater local interaction as to what would happen to the site could have created different management outcomes, perhaps not. At the very least it would have further impressed upon Transport Infrastructure Ireland the national and possible international importance of the place. This importance and its rarity would have given greater weighting to protecting the site which in turn could have led to different outcomes. It is worth noting that the site is not legally protected under the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*. The *Cork County Development Plan (2014)* does however include as a general objective, the protection of battlefields (Objective TO 2-1). Section 12.5.5 of the Plan also sets out, with regard to War of Independence and Civil War sites, 'it is the intention of Cork County Council to acknowledge the importance of these sites and to endeavour to protect and preserve them as places of historic heritage'¹⁸⁰.

As part of the schedule of commitments regarding heritage along the route, Transport Infrastructure Ireland are conducting a program of metal detection and archaeological test trenching in the ambush site. Finally, drone footage of the battlefield and a photographic survey prior to road construction is already complete.

Key threats:

- Nationally important places that are not legally protected
- Awareness of proper heritage management in Múscraí needs to be higher

¹⁷⁸ Rubicon Heritage, *Heritage centenary sites of rebel County Cork* (Cork County Council: Cork, 2016) 169

¹⁷⁹ Irish Archaeological Consultancy, *A review of the evidence – the Coolnacaherach Ambush Site, 25th February 1921, County Cork* (2008), 16

¹⁸⁰ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 198-199

6.0 Opportunities and Constraints

6.1 Background

The role of the conservation policies is to provide specific guidelines for the conservation and development of the Múscaí Gaeltacht so that its heritage significance is appropriately maintained.

Development of a set of conservation policies involves the consideration of the following issues:

- requirements of the Gaeltacht's inhabitants;
- constraints and opportunities presented for the use and development of the site arising from the statement of significance;
- the principles of the relevant charters and declarations (e.g. *Burra & Québec*);
- relevant legislation, guidelines and development plans.

6.2 Requirements of inhabitants

The Múscaí Gaeltacht is a continuously changing living landscape. It is a place where people want to be. However, despite an increase in population during the Celtic Tiger period, the Gaeltacht has suffered from a long period of gradual population decline. Without a sustainable indigenous population many of the key aspects that make Múscaí a place of international importance will disappear. Central to the needs of those living in the Gaeltacht are suitable jobs that complement their education, abilities and aspirations. Another essential item to enhancing the liveability of the Gaeltacht is the provision of adequate services (e.g. shops, post office, bus, broadband).

In all the public consultation meetings and interviews with Gaeltacht residents the intimate connection between people and place came through. While adequate jobs and services are essential to daily life, so too is the quality of the cultural and physical environment. Without this, many would simply move to locations with better infrastructure and employment prospects. Many people have already done so, although anecdotally it seems that most of those would have either preferred to stay or hope to eventually return.

While there are common core needs amongst Múscaí's residents, there can be disagreement about how to resolve these. The Gaeltacht is not a monolithic community. For instance, some may wish to attract more tourists to the region. This would support jobs and local services which may be under threat. Conversely, others may consider tourism a threat to the Gaeltacht's character. A second example is the financial reward that is possible from planting forestry on marginal land. Unfortunately, another consequence is the near obliteration of the plot's heritage. Many may also feel that the trees are visually intrusive. All views in both examples are valid. Where such conflict arises, it is the role of this plan to provide guidance. Change is inevitable. This document will help the people of Múscaí manage that change.

6.3 Constraints arising from significance

6.3.1 Assessed Heritage Values

The Múscaí Gaeltacht has been deemed to be of international importance. Within the region is a tapestry of places of local, regional, national, and international importance that have created the place that it is today – a living landscape of dense meaning. Its future management should take account of the constraints arising from its identified heritage values.

Aspects of identified significance include:

- The oratory of St Fin Barre's in Gougane Barra. (importance rating: national)

- The pilgrimage complex at St Gobnait's and the 13th century statue of St Gobnait (importance rating: international)
- The Gaeltacht's folklore collection and the connection between people and place. (importance rating: international)
- The role of locals and the landscape in the struggle for land rights and independence. (importance rating: international)
- The high concentrations of Bronze Age and Early Medieval monuments. (importance rating: national)
- The practice of pilgrimage/adoration of local saints. (importance rating: international)
- A ceremonial landscape in continual use since at least the Iron Age. (importance rating: international)
- The living tradition of music and song, poetry and dance. (importance rating: international)
- The two statues of artistic interest in Múscraí. (importance rating: national)
- The unique linguistic form of Irish in Múscraí. (importance rating: national)
- Múscraí has played a significant role in the preservation of the Irish language and Irish music. (importance rating: international)
- The archaeological excavations of two Bronze Age cookery sites (*fulachtaí fia*) conducted in 1952 by Prof O'Kelly. (importance rating: national)
- The tuck mill in Kilmore. (importance rating: regional)
- The late 19th and early 20th century streetscapes of the villages. (importance rating: regional)
- The late 19th and early 20th century farmhouses and associated out buildings. (importance rating: local/regional)
- The first fruit church and Glebe in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne. (importance rating: regional)
- Collection of 18th and 19th century masonry bridges. (importance rating: regional)
- Collection of 19th century Roman Catholic Churches. (importance rating: regional)
- The rich diversity of habitats and high number of protected species in Múscraí. The quality and importance of biodiversity in the area is at a national and international level. (importance rating: international)
- The River Lee catchment. (importance rating: regional)

Opportunities to retain, and where appropriate reinstate these heritage values should be investigated and implemented. Particular focus should be placed on strengthening the use of significant places and practices within the daily routine of inhabitants.

6.3.2 Guiding Heritage Principles

There is no general conservation charter that specifically deals with the management of large historic regions. The most applicable is the *Burra Charter* (2013). Another document of relevance is the *Québec Declaration on the preservation of the spirit of place* (2008). The principles contained within both the charter and declaration provides specific guidance concerning the development of the Gaeltacht. Accordingly, the conservation and development of Múscraí is to be carried out in accordance with the relevant principles of the charter and declaration. These include:

Burra Charter Article 1.2

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Burra Charter Article 2.4

Places of cultural significance should be safeguarded and not put at risk or left in a vulnerable state.

Burra Charter Article 12

Conservation, interpretation and management of a place should provide for the participation of people for whom the place has significant associations and meanings, or who have social, spiritual or other cultural responsibilities for the place.

Burra Charter Article 13

Co-existence of cultural values should always be recognised, respected and encouraged. This is especially important in cases where they conflict.

Burra Charter Article 22.1

New work such as additions or other changes to the place may be acceptable where it respects and does not distort or obscure the cultural significance of the place, or detract from its interpretation and appreciation.

Burra Charter Article 24.2

Significant meanings, including spiritual values, of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.

Burra Charter Article 25

The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and engagement, and be culturally appropriate.

Burra Charter Article 27.1

The impact of proposed changes, including incremental changes, on the cultural significance of a place should be assessed with reference to the statement of significance and the policy for managing the place. It may be necessary to modify proposed changes to better retain cultural significance.

Burra Charter Article 27.2

Existing fabric, use, associations and meanings should be adequately recorded before and after any changes are made to the place.

Québec Declaration 1

Recognising that the spirit of a place is made up of tangible (sites, buildings, landscapes, routes, objects), as well as intangible elements (memories, narratives, written, documents, festivals, commemorations, rituals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colours, odours, etc.), which all significantly contribute to making place and giving it spirit, we declare that intangible cultural heritage gives a richer and more complete meaning to heritage as a whole and it must be taken into account in all legislation concerning cultural heritage, and in all conservation and restoration projects for monuments, sites, landscapes, routes and collections of objects.

Québec Declaration 3

Since the spirit of place is a continuously reconstructed process, which responds to the needs for change and continuity of communities, we uphold that it can vary in time and from one culture to another according to their practices of memory, and that a place can have several spirits and be shared by different groups.

Québec Declaration 9

Given that local communities are generally in the best position to comprehend the spirit of a place, especially in the case of traditional cultural groups, we maintain that they are also best equipped to safeguard it and should be intimately associated in all endeavors to preserve and transmit the spirit of place. Non-formal (narratives, rituals, performances, traditional experience and practices, etc.) and formal

(educational programmes, digital databases, websites, pedagogical tools, multimedia presentations, etc.) means of transmission should be encouraged because they ensure not only the safeguarding of the spirit of place but, more importantly, the sustainable and social development of the community.

Following on from the relevant principles outlined above, adverse impacts on aspects of Múscraí's significance should only be permitted where:

- there is sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal onto the significance of the Gaeltacht;
- a full assessment of alternative options has been undertaken to minimise adverse impacts;
- it makes possible the recovery of aspects of greater significance (only applicable for items of little significance or that are intrusive);
- it helps ensure the continued occupation and use of individual sites of significance and the region as a whole;
- there is no feasible alternative to meet safety and/or legal requirements, and
- the area or element has been adequately recorded.

6.4 Heritage Planning Context

Elements of Múscraí's landscape are protected under international treaties and conventions, national legislation, and both statutory and non-statutory guidance. These include the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*, the *European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives*, *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011*, the *Wildlife Acts 1976*, and the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010*, *Cork County Development Plan 2014* and the *County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2014*. Other State or local government initiatives such as the *CEDRA report*, County Cork's tourism strategy, the *20 year Strategy for the Irish Language (2010-2030)*, the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025* and the *Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018)* have a bearing on any proposed policies and actions.

6.4.1 Planning and Development Act 2000

There are eleven structures in the Múscraí Gaeltacht listed in the County Cork Record of Protected Structures (RPS). As a result, these properties are protected under the *Planning and Development Act 2000*. Should any building owner wish to make alterations that would change the character of one of these buildings planning permission must be applied for from Cork County Council.

6.4.2 National Monuments Acts

The area contains 421 archeological sites listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). Being listed provides these places protection under the *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004*.

6.4.3 Wildlife Protection

Protection to a number of species and designated landscapes is provided under the *European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives*, *Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011*, the *Wildlife Acts 1976* and the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010*. Where development is proposed that impacts upon a protected species or place, a derogation license must be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. There are eight sites designated for nature conservation in Múscraí.

6.4.4 County Development Plan

The *Cork County Development Plan 2014* recognises the importance of our linguistic heritage. The policies and objectives set out in the plan give clear protection and guidance on how to deal with developments that might have an adverse impact on the culture of the Gaeltacht. The document states that the Gaeltacht areas of County Cork 'require special treatment to protect their linguistic and cultural heritage without

hindering development and with an appropriate response to opportunities and challenges¹⁸¹. It also recognises that ‘an economically and socially vibrant community is a pre-condition for sustaining Irish as a community language’¹⁸². Finally, the plan acknowledges the central role the planning system plays in the livability of the Gaeltacht, ‘recognition that the relationship between development and the Irish language and culture is a complex one not amenable to simplistic measures, and also that planning powers have significant though indirect and not limited, influence on the protection and promotion of culture’¹⁸³.

The development plan proposes to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht areas of Cork by:

- a) Encouraging development within the Gaeltacht, which promotes, facilitates or complements the cultural heritage, including Irish language use;
- b) Encouraging development within the Gaeltacht, which provides employment or social facilities, especially, but not exclusively, where these are of relevance to local young people;
- c) Resisting development within the Gaeltacht, which would be likely to erode the cultural heritage (including the community use of Irish language), unless there are overriding benefits for the long-term sustainability of the local community or for the proper planning and sustainable development of a wider area;
- d) Ensuring that where the County Council erects signs within the Gaeltacht, these have Irish as their primary language, unless there are positive and overriding reasons for doing otherwise;
- e) Discouraging the exhibition of advertisements within the Gaeltacht which do not use Irish as their primary language;
- f) Considering the desirability of demanding linguistic impact analyses with planning applications for particular major developments. These would be cases where the potential impact of the development on the use of Irish as the community language is not immediately apparent and pivotal in the determination of the application¹⁸⁴.

Concerning the management of rural housing the development plan notes that local people will be facilitated if they wish to build a house for their own permanent use. Indeed, it is a stated policy of the plan to ‘sustain and renew established rural communities, by facilitating those with a rural generated housing need to live within their rural community’¹⁸⁵. People who do not qualify for a rural house are encouraged to live in a village or town. The development plan actively encourages the reuse of derelict structures (Objective RCI 8-1). The construction of second houses/holiday homes outside the development boundaries of settlements is not permitted.

6.4.5 Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Ireland (CEDRA) Report

Established by the government in 2012, CEDRA’s primary task was to identify strategic initiatives that would ensure rural areas contribute to sustained and sustainable national economic growth and development in the future. The resulting report, published in 2014, provided an incisive analysis of the issues and presented a set of recommendations for the government. It also established a set of Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ). REDZ are functional rather than administrative geographic areas that reflect the spatial patterns of local economic activities and development processes. The REDZ that Múscraí falls into is Macroom. This heritage plan is in keeping with the CEDRA report’s philosophy of advocating place specific solutions and engaging in a cross-sector approach. The heritage plan also acknowledges the key role Macroom has to play in the socio-economic vitality of Múscraí. Accordingly, this

¹⁸¹ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 199

¹⁸² Ibid

¹⁸³ Ibid

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 200

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 54

heritage plan supports Macroom's designation as Múscraí's prime service town as defined by the *Gaeltacht Act 2012*.

6.4.6 Growing tourism in Cork: a collective strategy

Published in 2016, the joint City and County Council tourism strategy aims to increase domestic and foreign visits to Cork to 2.8 million by 2020. The plan focuses considerably on Cork's coast. The words 'Múscraí' or 'Gaeltacht' are not apparent.

The document identifies three visitor types that were warm to visiting Cork. They are what Fáilte Ireland call: the culturally curious; social energisers; and great escapers. Although there are differences between the three categories, by and large, they all want interesting, authentic experiences. The four key markets from which these people currently come from are the U.S.A., the U.K., France and Germany. In 2013, these four countries accounted for 97% of all visitors to Cork¹⁸⁶. That same year, the typical daily spend of these visitors was €94.59¹⁸⁷.

Although, the strategy focuses on the natural, physical and intangible heritage of the county, the plan does not sufficiently address the importance of such heritage and the need for protection; and indeed, the concern that badly managed tourism can often have negative impacts on historic sites, the natural environment and cultural traditions. The County Development Plan does however recognise this aspect (Objective TO 2-1).

Múscraí's border is c.15.7km east of the Wild Atlantic Way tourist route. The Gaeltacht lies outside of Ireland's Ancient East.

6.4.7 20 year Strategy for the Irish Language (2010-2030)

The main objective to this 2010 document is the trebling of daily Irish speakers to 250,000¹⁸⁸. Two other aims are to increase by 25% the number of people who can speak Irish in the Gaeltachts and to increase the ability of people to access State services through Irish. The document builds upon the 2006 *Government strategy on the Irish language*. Of this earlier strategy's thirteen policy objectives, objective four states that 'the Gaeltacht will be given special support as an Irish-speaking area'¹⁸⁹.

As part of the 20 year strategy each Gaeltacht district area is obliged to create a sustainable language plan that protects and promotes the use of Irish as a community language. Failure to do so inside the prescribed two years will result in that area no longer being designated a Gaeltacht. Within Múscraí, Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo was selected by Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake the language plan. The plan was submitted in 2017. The following are the main objectives of Múscraí's Irish language plan¹⁹⁰:

- Social events and activities – to provide a wide range of social activities through the medium of Irish for every age group thus increasing the amount of informal Irish being used in the community.
- Parents – support services for parents through a range of informal Irish language workshops, formal Irish language classes, social activities through the medium of Irish. Resources to help with school work, more information about the benefits of bilingualism.
- Irish classes – to provide a wide range of Irish language classes, both formal and informal, for all age groups.

¹⁸⁶ MCCP The Planning Agency, *Growing tourism in Cork: a collective strategy* (Cork City Council and Cork County Council: Cork, 2016) 14

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 11

¹⁸⁸ *20 year strategy for the Irish language*, (The Government of Ireland, 2010) 9

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 4

¹⁹⁰ *Plean teanga do limistéar pleanála teanga Mhúscraí*, (Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo, 2017) 183-184

- Childcare centre (crèche) – the sooner the child hears Irish, the better. A childcare centre needs to be developed in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí to provide early education and childcare facilities through the medium of Irish.
- Conscious decision – the people and the local business must make a conscious decision to speak more Irish.
- Household language – to increase the amount of Irish being spoken at home.
- Language awareness – raise a sense of awareness, pride and place when speaking Irish.
- Irish language policies – to increase the number of Irish language policies being created and implemented by local businesses, community groups and public centres.
- Number of Irish speakers – measures to be taken to stop the decline in the number of Irish speakers and to stop the increase in the number of people without any Irish. And again, to increase the number of Irish speakers and reduce the number of people without Irish.
- Number of Irish speaking pre-school children – to increase the number of pre-school children with ‘good Irish’ and ‘native speakers’.
- Policy on Gaeltacht education – that each of the schools in Múscraí will attain Gaeltacht School Recognition during the term of the language plan.

Several meetings have been held between the editor of this heritage plan and the principal author of Múscraí’s language plan to ensure this document complements the objectives and actions of the language plan.

6.4.8 National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The current plan essentially focuses on research, awareness building and training. Its objective is to provide the data that will allow for better decision making concerning how we manage our landscape.

6.4.9 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

Published in February 2018, the framework aims to guide the country’s national, regional and local spatial development until 2040. The document is to be given statutory footing under the amended Planning and Development Bill. Within the framework there is one national policy objective that deals specifically with the Gaeltacht:

National Policy Objective 29

Support the implementation of language plans in Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas, Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Language Networks.¹⁹¹

Some other policies relevant to the development of Múscraí include:

National Policy Objective 14

Protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish rural landscape that make Ireland’s rural areas authentic and attractive as places to live, work and visit.

National Policy Objective 15

Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

¹⁹¹ Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, *Project Ireland 2040: national planning framework*, (Government of Ireland, 2018) 85

National Policy Objective 23

Facilitate the development of the rural economy through supporting a sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and food sector, together with forestry, fishing and aquaculture, energy and extractive industries, the bio-economy and diversification into alternative on-farm and off-farm activities, while at the same time noting the importance of maintaining and protecting the natural landscape and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism.

National Policy Objective 55

Promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

While there is consideration given within the framework's policy objectives to the protection of built and natural heritage, there is no explicit mention of intangible heritage. Indeed, the only relevant objective is:

National Policy Objective 60

Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The companion document to the *National Planning Framework* is the *National Development Plan 2018-2027*. As part of the plan's ten year capital investment programme of almost €116 billion, the upgrade of the N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom road is to progress¹⁹². The plan also commits to investing €178 million on specifically supporting the Irish language, the Gaeltacht and the islands¹⁹³. Finally, the roll out of the National Broadband Plan was envisioned to occur as part of the National Development Plan. However, just before the National Development Plan was launched, one of the two last companies tendering for the broadband contract withdrew from the process, casting doubt over the Broadband Plan's viability¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹² Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, *Project Ireland 2040: national development plan 2018-2027*, (Government of Ireland, 2018) 41

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 50

¹⁹⁴ Will Goodbody, "Is the National Broadband Plan doomed", *www.rte.ie* (February 4, 2018), www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2018/0204/938189-rural-broadband/, (Accessed: 26/2/2018)

7.0 Conservation Policies and Actions

7.1 Introduction

Given the fusion of the core heritage significance of Múscraí with those who live there, the only viable approach to the conservation of the heritage values is to incorporate the wider social and economic issues affecting its residents. For several decades both the core heritage values of the Gaeltacht and its socio-economic vitality have been under pressure. This has come from not only incremental change (depopulation and globalisation) but also the reaction to that change.

Effective heritage management demands a strong vision which provides clear direction towards sustainable conservation and development. Any strategy should be both balanced and flexible to the long-term needs of Múscraí and its residents. Below is this document's vision:

Múscraí is an incredibly vibrant place. It is a place where the character of its people and landscape are both intertwined and co-dependent. Change always occurs. The role of this document is to help the people of Múscraí manage that change and protect the core significant aspects of the region in which they live. Ultimately, it is envisaged that this document will help make the Gaeltacht become a better place in which to work, live and visit.

All the following policies and actions are in keeping with this vision. None is an outlier. They have been designed to build upon and support the other.

In addition to being in keeping with the vision, the conservation policies and actions also take into account the relevant constraints, opportunities, resident requirements and following principles:

- retention of heritage significance of the individual places that make up Múscraí;
- the use of professional advice and competent contractors where required.

7.2 Policies and Actions

General policies

- This heritage plan should provide the basis for all future decisions concerning the management of Múscraí's heritage.
- This heritage plan should be taken into account by Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta and other relevant State agencies when making decisions regarding Múscraí.
- Development should be sustainable and consistent with the Gaeltacht's culture and way of life.

Tourism

Policy

Encourage the development of a sustainable tourism industry which focuses on the language, landscape and the traditions of Múscraí. Although the Gaeltacht's identity and sense of itself is strong and distinctive, outside of Múscraí knowledge of the region's existence as a unique and distinctive cultural entity could be improved. A place's uniqueness, attractiveness and coherence can be consolidated and strengthened when it needs to be articulated to a wider audience.

Actions

- The five villages of the Gaeltacht need to come together in a unified effort to create a sustainable tourism sector. Loop Head Tourism is a good example to follow. Run a sustainable tourism conference where stakeholders from every village are invited to hear from best practice examples and discuss a Gaeltacht wide strategy. Possible speakers include representatives from Loop Head

Tourism, Knockmealdown Active, the Lee Sessions, Sheep's Head Way, a City of a thousand welcomes and Burrenbeo. A research trip to Loop Head could also be considered.

- Develop a detailed tourist and marketing plan for Múscraí. Likely requirements of the plan will include attractions, visitor management proposals, infrastructure, accommodation, interpretation, key markets and marketing (including a social media strategy). The plan should principally focus on attracting high earning cultural tourists that appreciate the region's distinctiveness and have the flexibility to stay overnight. Another important market are school groups that wish to immerse themselves in the Irish language. Specific care should be given to ascertaining the impact of tourism on Múscraí's heritage significance and how this can be managed. Broader environmental impacts must also be ascertained, addressed and monitored. This heritage plan may be used as required in the detailed tourist plan.
- Conduct a detailed heritage audit of all the tangible and intangible heritage places and practices of the Gaeltacht.
- Múscraí should consider a 'brand proposition exercise' – whereby the region has a conversation with itself (assisted by specialists) about its image, its identity and how best to shape and present this outwardly. This exercise must be sensitive to the need to protect and not dilute the Gaeltacht's heritage and language. Consequently, it must not become a shallow or conceited PR campaign. The resulting attractive Gaeltacht Mhúscraí branding should be used by all local tourism, craft and food providers.
- Create an attractive bilingual consumer focused website. It should contain information on what makes Múscraí special, how to get there, activities and places to stay. Easy to purchase, bundled packages providing a variety of experiences should be available. Use www.visitichichester.org/, www.carlingford.ie and www.loophead.ie as models.
- A collection of high quality, free to use images should be created and uploaded to Fáilte Ireland's image content pool (www.irelandcontentpool.com/account/landingpage/). Local businesses should then be made aware of this facility.
- Local businesses and community groups should be encouraged to work together and create experiential packages that revolve around the five senses. Some possible activities include introductory classes in Múscraí Irish, watching a local Gaelic football match, cycling, food trails, having a go at road bowling, attending a music session, taking part in Céilí dancing, bird watching, staying overnight at a working farm, fishing and kayaking. The various activities could be promoted through events. It is essential that the businesses and community groups engaged within the tourist sector cross sell and cross promote each other. The objective is to keep people in the Gaeltacht and obtain a high financial yield.
- Develop Coláiste na Mumhan as a year-round language centre. Investigate the possibility of developing the Coláiste as a field studies centre for ecologists, folklorists, historians and archaeologists. Look at Colaistí Chorca Dhuibhne for inspiration (www.colaieste.ie).
- Create a management plan with the lakeside community and interested parties for Lough Allua to sustainably activate its leisure possibilities.
- Scéal Mhúscraí! A list should be created of heritage sites that would give a cross section of Múscraí's story. Subject to the approval of the relevant landowners and stakeholders, the twenty or so places of greatest intactness, accessibility, durability and safety should be opened to the public. Landowners should be indemnified against insurance claims and appropriate insurances put in place. Some sites may need to be assessed for any potential environmental or ecological impacts. Risk assessments and safety statements must be conducted for all proposed Scéal Mhúscraí sites. The assessments and statements are to be undertaken by a suitably qualified health and safety professional with deep experience of flexibly working in sensitive, historic landscapes. Where physical risk control actions are required, they are to be designed and installed by suitably qualified personnel and be in keeping with the guidelines contained within the publication *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*

(2015)¹⁹⁵ and the *Burra Charter*¹⁹⁶. Where needed, appropriate access, safety and erosion management facilities should be installed (e.g. directional signage, warning signage, styles, fencing, bike stand, parking, etc). All locations are to have a bilingual information panel. The sites are to be checked at least quarterly to ensure the area is safe and undamaged. A maintenance stipend should be paid to the relevant site owners. A legally binding legal guarantee should be supplied to site owners stipulating that access is at the discretion of the landowners and that no right of access has been established. Scéal Mhúscraí will help disperse tourism across the Gaeltacht.

- After consultation with local heritage and tourism groups and any nearby residents, Coillte should be encouraged to permit access to a number of archaeological monuments on their land (e.g. the stone ringfort at Rath Ghaiscigh). Where needed, appropriate access, safety and erosion management facilities should be installed (e.g. directional signage, warning signage, styles, fencing, bike stand, parking, etc). All locations are to have a bilingual information panel. All physical risk control interventions should be in keeping with the principles of the *Burra Charter* (2013)¹⁹⁷ and the publication *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice* (2015)¹⁹⁸. The sites are to be checked at least quarterly to ensure the area is safe and undamaged. Some of these sites may or may not be part of Scéal Mhúscraí.
- The feasibility should be ascertained of allowing access to the souterrain at Rath Ghaiscigh in a manner similar to the already accessible 15m long souterrain at Culsh, outside Tarland in Scotland (fig. 7.1).

Figure 7.1

Entering the Iron Age souterrain at Culsh means crouching down with a torch in hand. The site is not staffed. Tarland, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

¹⁹⁵ Kenneth Dodd, *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*, (Visitor safety in the countryside group, 2015)

¹⁹⁶ <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>, (Accessed: 8/2/2018)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ Kenneth Dodd, *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*, (Visitor safety in the countryside group, 2015)

- Local tourist sector enthusiasm for the Múscraí section of the Beara-Breifne Way is being undermined by lower interest levels in certain places along its 500km route. At present, a definitive walking trail does not exist. Capital funding is now in place to make this happen. After completion of the walking route, adequate resources are needed to ensure that both the walking and cycling routes are maintained and promoted. The *Beara Breifne Way Marketing Strategy (2014)*¹⁹⁹ should be implemented.
- Events revolving around the Beara-Breifne Way should be held to further cultivate local interest in this historic and beautiful walk.
- The creation of themed walks and cycle routes should be supported. Particular focus should be put on folklore. There are three national looped walks in Gougane Barra Forest Park. However, the route of only one of these actually passes through the Gaeltacht. Additional looped walks are needed throughout the Gaeltacht. Where possible, these walks should incorporate proposed Scéal Mhúscraí sites. The walks and cycles could be promoted with events.
- Slí Fhionn Barra (St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path) starts in Drimoleague and follows a 35km route north to Gougane Barra. The route and other pilgrim routes to Gougane Barra should be sensitively developed in consultation with landowners and relevant parties for those wishing to engage in a spiritual experience.
- Appropriate levels of insurance should be put in place to cover all walks and places that are made accessible to the public (i.e. walking routes and accessible heritage sites). The National Trails Office/Irish Sports Council arranges insurance for waymarked walking routes and other recreational trails²⁰⁰. The policy indemnifies private landowners along these routes.
- A risk assessment and safety statement is to be conducted for all proposed rural walks and publicly accessible heritage sites. If any existing accessible sites or routes do not already have these, then they should be completed.
- There should be eye catching signage at each point of entry to the Gaeltacht. The signage should be inspired by the cultural distinctiveness of Múscraí.
- The post of tourism and events project manager should be created. Their role will be to implement the tourism plan, run the new tourist website, help drive tourism projects in the region, monitor impacts upon heritage significance, monitor visitor numbers and satisfaction, coordinate maintenance of accessible heritage sites and the review of site safety plans, organise necessary training courses and finally, to both coordinate and market events. The proposed tourism and events project manager should work from a new combined Tourist Office / Folklore Education & Research Centre, Archive / Café (as described in section 10.4).
- Implement the interpretation strategy contained within this document (see chapters 8, 9 & 10).

A Commuter Gaeltacht?

Policy

Encourage residents to incorporate the various services and amenities of Múscraí into their daily routines and to promote a vibrant and near self-sustaining region. The villages are important service centres and they will not prosper by competing with Macroom, Killarney or Cork for services. They can however flourish if people live in them.

Actions

- Greater provision of public transport is needed. The existing Local Link bus service should be expanded in frequency and number of routes. Another possibility is to provide support to Scéim Sóisialte to allow them to purchase an additional bus which could help fulfil the role. Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh must be connected by public transportation.

¹⁹⁹ Harriet Emerson, *Beara Breifne Way Marketing Strategy* (Castletownbere: Beara Tourism, 2014)

²⁰⁰ *Recreation in the Irish Countryside: property rights, obligations and responsibilities* (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013)

Greater advertising is essential for additional local usage. A master timetable available online and via print with all the various public transport options (i.e. Local Link, Scéim Sóisialte and Bus Éireann) should be created. The various organisations should coordinate their timetables to allow easier connections. In 2018, Loop Head Tourism are launching an electric bus public transport network in the peninsula that will cater for both locals and tourists²⁰¹. It will use a small electric bus which Loop Head Tourism believes is more economic than a diesel bus. The Loop Head model should be investigated. In the future, consideration should be given towards developing a communal pool of electric, self-drive cars.

- The buses on the Bus Éireann Cork-Kerry route should allow pick-ups and drop-offs near the social welfare office in Macroom.
- The post offices and their ancillary shops in Réidh na nDoirí and Cill na Martra are vital to the social cohesion of these villages. They must not be shut. The post office in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh must be reopened. A post office should also remain in Baile Mhic Íre. There is an immediate and short term cultural-linguistic-economic imperative to maintain post office services and this should involve a State subsidy²⁰². However, this forms part of a broader village revival strategy – which includes efforts to enhance the role of the villages, which in turn enhances their attractiveness as places to live, which will in turn increase their population, thereby supporting local services. Thus, the State subsidy should be seen as a stimulus rather than a permanent underwriting. The recommendations to enhance the attractiveness of rural post offices contained in the *Final report of the Post Office network business development group* (2015) should be implemented in the Gaeltacht’s post offices in cooperation with the post masters. As per the development group’s report, the Gaeltacht’s post offices should be able to provide as broad a range of government services as is reasonably possible²⁰³. All future post masters should be able to converse in Irish.
- The location of public services in village centres matters. Schools, health facilities, the library, and all other services currently located in the villages centres should be retained there.
- Weekly visits should be made by a doctor or district nurse to Cill na Martra.
- Bantry General Hospital provides a vital, accessible medical service for many residents in Múscraí. This report supports the continuation of services at the hospital.
- During further construction of the N22 at the Cúl na Cathrach ambush site the following should be carried out to limit impact on the battlefield:
 - Where possible, work on the site should be restricted to the immediate route of the road and areas already disturbed by machinery.
 - Should additional undisturbed areas be required for construction, Transport Infrastructure Ireland’s archaeologists are to liaise with the contractors and provide them with appropriate advice on how best to avoid areas of high importance. Transport Infrastructure Ireland’s archaeologists should consult with Acadamh Fódhla on this matter.
 - There should be mandatory site inductions for all personnel who enter the site on the significance of the location and the importance of keeping to prescribed work areas.
- The retail and hospitality sector should be strengthened.
 - Create a combined brand for all retailers in the Gaeltacht (this includes restaurants, bars, hair dressers, butchers, chemists, shops, co-ops, etc). If deemed suitable, this could be part of the tourism brand.
 - Develop a Múscraí voucher system. Look at the Letterkenny model (www.shoplk.ie).

²⁰¹ Peter O’Connell, “Electric bus to go around the loop”, *The Clare Champion*, <http://clarechampion.ie/electric-bus-to-go-round-the-loop/>, (Accessed: 8/3/2018)

²⁰² For Réidh na nDoirí and Cill na Martra, this is in keeping with recommendation 18 as contained in the *Final report of the Post Office network business development group* (Business Development Group, 2015) 70

²⁰³ *Final report of the Post Office network business development group* (Business Development Group, 2015) 68

- Retailers and hospitality sector businesses should meet regularly to coordinate discount bundles, cross promotion and marketing activities.
- Mentoring for businesses who wish it should be sought from Retail Excellence Ireland or similar.
- A retail and hospitality focused conference should be held in Múscraí as a way of kick-starting greater cooperation. It should focus on how Múscraí's retail and hospitality sectors can meet the challenge of car dependant customers.
- Macroom students interested in Irish should be facilitated in finding weekend and summer work in Múscraí.
- A concerted effort should be made to enhance the ease by which Irish can be used as an everyday language in Macroom.
 - Free lunchtime and evening classes on conversational Irish should be provided both for the town's general population and interested businesses.
 - A pin system could be introduced identifying people as Irish speakers in the town. This would allow Gaeltacht residents the opportunity to speak Irish as they shop in Macroom. It would also improve the levels of Irish of people in Macroom. A full green circle pin could identify a person of high competence. A semicircle could identify a person with limited ability. A distinctive sticker on the business's window could identify a place where there are Irish speakers present.
 - Business owners should be encouraged through a small grant stream or VAT reduction to make their signage and printed material bilingual.
 - The primary and secondary schools of Macroom should be encouraged to enter the Gaelbhreach scheme. The initiative promotes the respect and use of Irish in schools.
- In the next review of the *Cork County Development Plan* wind energy policies, consideration should be given to adapting them to reflect the internationally important and sensitive nature of Múscraí's landscape. Accordingly, consideration should be given to extending the current Policy Objective ED-3.6 'Normally Discouraged' designation to cover the Gaeltacht area²⁰⁴.
- A community-led energy strategy should be devised. This could be a suitable long-term solution that reduces possible community divisions and protects liveability. The strategy would address the use of various renewables in the Gaeltacht (wind, solar, biomass), micro generation, energy conservation, carbon sequestration and transport. Investment in community-led energy schemes could be considered (e.g. Templederry Community Wind Farm, Co. Tipperary and Brixton Energy Solar 3, London). Any income generated could be sent back to local shareholders and used on community schemes. In effect, the document would be a proactive community-led acknowledgement of the challenges climate change brings. The strategy should be adopted by Cork County Council and its findings incorporated into subsequent county development plans. Due to the speed by which renewable technology is progressing, the energy strategy should be reviewed at least every five years. Interestingly, the Aran Islands Gaeltacht is already taking control of its own energy destiny. By 2022, Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Arainn/Aran Islands Energy Group aim to have all three islands energy independent and carbon neutral²⁰⁵. Another relevant scheme is the group heating scheme in CloghJordan Ecovillage.
- Regardless of the presence or absence of a local energy strategy, the local authority, when considering planning applications for wind energy developments, should exercise their powers under Article 103 (1) of the *Planning and Development Act* (2000) and require all planning applications for wind energy developments in Múscraí to be accompanied by an Environmental

²⁰⁴ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 139

²⁰⁵ Sylvia Thompson, "Power to the people: is community energy the way forward?", *Irish Times* (January 30, 2016), www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/power-to-the-people-is-community-energy-the-way-forward-1.2515437, (Accessed: 8/2/2018)

Impact Statement (EIS)²⁰⁶. The only exception to this should be for local farms and businesses trying to meet their own energy needs up to a maximum of 800kW. Furthermore, all EISs for commercial renewable energy projects in Múscraí should specify the likely impacts on intangible heritage and liveability. The ascertaining of impact upon intangible heritage and liveability should be done at the scales of the immediate locality and wider Gaeltacht. Such an appraisal will necessitate the involvement of the local community. Due to frequent under reporting of archaeological sites in upland areas, any archaeological assessment should involve comprehensive on-site examination for the EIS²⁰⁷. Likely cumulative consequences to the character of the historic landscape should also be ascertained. These actions are to be in addition to the typical analysis of impacts upon natural and built heritage.

- Cork County Council's GIS based online planning enquiry system provides excellent information regarding planning applications in the county²⁰⁸. News of this and the planning alerts system needs to be better dispersed.
- Third level institutes should be encouraged to use the Gaeltacht as a testing site for new technology and a location for research. Strong public consultation may be needed for certain proposals.

Patterns of Habitation

Policy

In general, there needs to be an effort to sustain the villages through increased population, whilst protecting the vitality and cultural heritage of the countryside.

Actions

- To support the villages as service centres the majority of new housing should be concentrated in the Gaeltacht's villages.
- High quality social housing should be provided for Gaeltacht residents who require it. The housing should be located in the villages.
- Any new retirement homes should be located in the villages. Single floor retirement homes should be permitted in the villages.
- Múscraí's villages are an important part of the area's heritage, as well as being crucial to the area's survival. The majority of new housing should be accommodated within or close to the villages (within 10 minutes' walk of the village centre).
- It will be important to dissuade inappropriate housing being developed in the villages. Inappropriate housing for example would include suburban or standardised repetitive forms as well as poorly designed one-offs within the village boundaries.
- New multi-unit housing schemes in the villages should be designed in a manner that is sympathetic to the villages' character and heritage and should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that they enhance the attractiveness, sustainability and appearance of the village.
- The construction of new multi-unit housing schemes should be in keeping with Cork County Council's guidance document *Making places: a design guide for residential estate development*²⁰⁹.
- For multi-unit housing schemes where front gardens are planned, that garden should preferably be fully enclosed with a boundary wall. The dividing wall between two properties

²⁰⁶ www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/30/enacted/en/html, (Accessed: 8/2/2018)

²⁰⁷ Alison Harvey and Kate Moloney, *The onshore wind farm sector in Ireland: planning in harmony with heritage* (The Heritage Council: Kilkenny) 2013

²⁰⁸ <http://maps.corkcoco.ie/planningenquiryv3/LAResources/info.aspx> (Accessed: 8/2/2018)

²⁰⁹ Melville Dunbar Associates, PRC Architects and Ailbhe Cullen, *Making places: a design guide for residential estate development*, (Cork County Council: Cork) 2011

should preferably be 65cm-85cm in height with a wall cap comfortable to sit on. The enclosing wall will be a strong visual indicator to occupants that their lawn is definitively their own, thereby increasing the likelihood of its usage. The low height of the wall and its relatively flat nature will facilitate casual neighbour interaction. Where enclosing walls are deemed visually incongruous to the overall appearance of the estate, they may be replaced by hedgerows composed of native plant species.

- Only native plant species are to be used in the public spaces of new multi-unit housing schemes.
- The speed limit within any new multi-unit housing scheme is to be 20kmph. This will help give parents confidence that their children can play safely with other children.
- Generally, schemes in the villages should provide no more than a 10% expansion of the existing residential building stock.
- The villages should also be considered as places in which the latent demand for rural housing may be accommodated. This would involve identifying locations in and at the edge of villages where loose clusters of houses can be developed in a form that appeals to rural people but in a location that supports village sustainability (i.e. the provision of clustered serviced sites).
- Each of the villages could be subject to a “Village Appraisal” or “Village Design Statement” process. These would provide a clear framework for sensitive and appropriate development in the villages whilst identifying their core heritage assets, landscape features, architectural and cultural profiles. These would be non-statutory documents but would complement the local area plan and zoning measures already in place. They would in effect be another ‘layer’ of detail underneath the traditional zoning maps contained in the Macroom Electoral Area Local Area Plan. The *Cork County Development Plan (2014)* contains an Objective in relation to Village Design Statements (Obj. HE 4-7)²¹⁰ - facilitate the preparation and implementation of village design statements and other community led projects to enhance village environments whilst ensuring that such initiatives are consistent with Local Area Plan policy.
- Generally, new retail space should only be permitted in the villages.
- A modern waste water treatment infrastructure is essential for the social and economic betterment of Múscraí. New plants at Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh should be prioritised. No primary treated waste water should be discharged into Gougane Barra lake (the lake is a key component to pilgrimage site’s sacred landscape). Wastewater throughout the Gaeltacht must be treated appropriately. It is a long-term objective of this plan that conditions be created whereby the freshwater pearl mussels in the Gaeltacht have the conditions they require to reproduce. Accordingly, the two villages’ future waste water plants should be constructed with this in mind.
- With the construction of the improved N22 there is the opportunity to bring piped natural gas to the Gaeltacht, in particular to Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne.
- Additional incentives for Irish speakers wishing to live in the Múscraí Gaeltacht should be considered. A small-scale version of the Living City tax incentive scheme should be considered and should be targeted territorially and time limited. For example, incentives could be offered to those refurbishing buildings over 50 years old within village development boundaries and in rural areas. This incentive would be in addition to the residency grant. The conversion of derelict or semi-derelict farm buildings into residences would be included in the scheme. The tax incentive would incentivise redevelopment of existing building stock and the enhancement of the region’s physical heritage. The incentives and grants should be marketed to parents of children in Gaelscoilenna outside of Múscraí. In the existing Living City programme tax relief is provided for ‘owner-occupiers by way of a deduction from their total

²¹⁰ Cork County Council, *Cork County Development Plan, volume 1: main policy material* (Cork: Cork County Council, 2014), 198

income of 10% per annum of qualifying expenditure over a 10 year period and is only available where the property is the claimant's only or main residence²¹¹.

- In order to ensure that the cultural landscape in the rural hinterland is protected and known about housing will be needed outside the villages. Reuse of existing structures should be preferred to new build (this includes buildings previously used for agriculture, now derelict). Any new build is to follow the Cork County Council's *Rural Design Guide* (2010)²¹². In the Council's rural housing policy local people will be facilitated if they wish to build an individual house for their own permanent use in Múscraí (subject to normal planning considerations).
- Any new forest plantation should follow the best practice *Forestry and landscape guidelines* (2000) as set out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine²¹³.
- Before forestry plantations are planted, a full record should be made of the proposed site. This should include a detailed photographic record, site history, existing placenames, archaeological features, folklore and buildings. Electronic and hard copies of the document should then be deposited with Cork City and County Archives, Cork County Library, Baile Bhúirne Library, the Planning Department at Cork County Council and Acadamh Fódhla.
- The Native Woodland and Neighbourwood forestry schemes provide financial support for the creation or enhancement of local forests as public amenities. These schemes should be promoted in the area.
- A farmer led farming for nature scheme similar to the BurrenLIFE initiative is to be created. Such a scheme could create significant gains both for local farmers and the heritage value of the Gaeltacht.
- The road between Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh would benefit from being improved, particularly along the section from the townland of An Ráth Thoir via Réidh na nDoirí to Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh.

Employment

Policy

A cross section of jobs must be created or supported that match the aspirations and education of Múscraí's population. This can be greatly achieved if the region manages to exploit its competitive advantage and natural assets in terms of promoting sustainable enterprises in agriculture, food, craft/design, tourism and culture. Manufacturing companies in Múscraí should be supported according to their needs. In addition, Múscraí businesses should be assisted in increasing the use of Irish in their workspaces. Companies should also be encouraged to add distinctiveness to their products and services through the incorporation of the Gaeltacht's culture and traditions into branding, marketing and composition.

Actions

- High quality broadband must be made available throughout the Gaeltacht.
- A shared-space facility should be established for the use of Irish speaking professionals in one of the villages. This low rent facility could be modelled on the Fumbally Exchange (www.fumballyexchange.com) or the Ludgate Hub in Skiberreen (www.ludgate.ie/). Another possible model is the E-Youghal Enterprise Centre (<http://ecentres.ie/youghal/>). The centre in Youghal also provides strong support to craftspeople. One possible location for the Múscraí facility is Coláiste Íosogáin. The use of old structures has consistently been shown to be an

²¹¹ www.revenue.ie/en/personal/living-city-initiative.html, (Accessed: 16/6/2015)

²¹² Colin Buchanan and Partners Ltd. and Mike Shanahan and Associates Architects, *Cork rural design guide: building a new house in the countryside* (Cork: Cork County Council) 2003

²¹³ *Forestry and landscape guidelines* (Dublin: The Forestry Service, Department of the Marine and Natural Resources) 2000

advantage for creative sector start-ups over those located in new builds²¹⁴. Although only constructed in the 1930s²¹⁵, Coláiste Íosogáin retains much of its character and was used as a location for the 2003 film, *Song for a raggy boy*, directed by Aisling Walsh.

- Free lunchtime Irish classes should be provided to businesses. The in-house classes should be conversational and fun. They should also be as practical as possible and tailored to the function of each establishment.
- Organise a conference on the benefits of incorporating local cultural and natural capital into products and services.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta should conduct qualitative surveys every five years to ascertain the employment aspirations of those emerging from education both at second and third levels. This will permit it to target certain business types more in keeping with what residents want.
- The grant programmes and supports being offered by various State agencies should, where possible, match closely the needs of employers. More communication, consultation and cooperation is needed.
- Although Múscraí already produces high quality food and drink that are well known individually (e.g. Coolea Farmhouse Cheese, Macroom Buffalo Mozzarella, Folláin, De Róiste Artisan Meats, 9 White Deer Brewery), there is little recognition of the Gaeltacht being a food region. Accordingly, food and drink produced in Múscraí should be incorporated into the Gaeltacht's tourism branding programme. Where possible, producers should be encouraged to open to the public and be part of a Múscraí food and drink trail.
- On-farm economic diversification should be encouraged through a kick-start conference on artisan foods, speciality breeds and farm tourism. This could then be followed up by a mentoring programme. Particular focus should be placed on assisting farmers in creating businesses, co-op schemes and speciality supplier agreements that will bring in an annual profit of c.€10,000.
- The potential for involvement by Cork County Council's Local Enterprise Office with the Múscraí region should be explored.

Attitudes to Irish

Policy

Encourage the use of Irish by residents and visitors at whatever level people have.

Actions

- The implementation of the new language plan for the Gaeltacht, as led by Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo, is to be fully supported.
- Provide conversational Irish classes at various levels for those who wish to learn or improve. The classes should be fun and not revolve around the leaving cert.
- All signage and printed material created for specific use in the Gaeltacht should be either solely in Irish or bilingual. This could be encouraged through a small grant stream or VAT reduction.
- A well-researched publicity campaign should be created inviting people to use whatever level of Irish they have without judgement.
- Create a Scoraíocht Festival where people are encouraged to meet in neighbours' houses and talk through Irish. The programme could include coffee mornings, dinner parties, music, dance and storytelling in a number of houses.
- Anecdotally it appears that usage of Irish amongst Múscraí's teenagers is better than two decades ago. This needs to be encouraged further. However, the worst thing adults can do is to simply tell

²¹⁴ Paula Wallace, "Why your new company needs an old building", *Entrepreneur* (January 3, 2018), www.entrepreneur.com/article/306787, (Accessed: 9/2/2018)

²¹⁵ www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=CO®no=20905806, (Accessed: 11/2/2018)

teenagers that Irish is “cool” or push them to use it more. It is best to allow them to lead. A fund should be made available for ideas from teenagers that revolve around bringing Irish into their lives through events.

- Establish a small grant stream for organisations that would like assistance in running one-off or regular events through Irish.
- Ensure that adequate Irish language family support services are available. This includes subsidised childcare and pre-school services.
- All financially supported Irish lessons should be in the Múscraí dialect.
- Create a light-hearted campaign to encourage people to use Múscraí dialect words and phrases.

Lack of a strong, centralised voice

Policy

The formation of a strong, independent, broad based community council is to be encouraged.

Action

- A strong, independent, broad based community council is to be created. A Múscraí Community Council would provide a strong collective voice for the various interests within the region, providing much-needed advocacy, visibility and coherence. This requires careful consideration for it to succeed. The council could simply be an enhancement of Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo or be based on a new model resulting from research being undertaken by Acadamh Fódhla. If indeed, a new separate trust or council is created, then it should complement and work closely with Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teo. The council should also work closely with Údurás na Gaeltachta and Cork County Council. Possible models include the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust in Scotland (www.isleofeigg.org/ieht/), the Mull and Iona Community Trust (www.mict.co.uk/), the Wicklow Uplands Council (<http://wicklowuplands.ie>) and the Bere Island Projects Group (www.bereisland.net).
- The group should be transparent in its decision making and engage in strong public consultation. It should not over promise. To ensure the protection of institutional memory the gradual regular turnover of members is to be encouraged.
- Instead of being merely reactive to outside influences, it should be proactive and reflective in how it helps manage Múscraí.
- The group should acknowledge the limits of its expertise and engage outside assistance where appropriate.
- In order to increase cohesion and reduce the risk of conflict, a group constitution or terms of understanding are required.
- The group is to implement the recommendations of this heritage plan. To aid implementation a series of consecutive three year action plans with actions predominately emanating from this document should be created. Each action should be connected with possible funding sources. The action plans may form the basis of the council’s meetings. The group should also review this heritage plan at least every five years.
- All actions emerging from the group should be in keeping with the policies and principles of this report.
- Early wins should be conducted by the group so as to gain confidence and competence. These will also help spread the group’s profile within Múscraí, develop skills and expand the number of local supporters.
- In an effort to avoid isolation and enhance its ability to problem solve, the community council should connect regularly with similar Gaeltacht and upland community groups outside of Múscraí.

Varying degrees of protection

Policy

It is the responsibility of the people of Múscraí to care for their heritage. They are to be supported through education, guidance and grant aid.

Actions

- One or more of the following should be inscribed onto the UNESCO list of intangible heritage:
 - the connection between people and place
 - the adoration of local saints
 - the use of the Múscraí dialect
 - Agallaimh beirte/lúibíní
 - Sean-nós singing
- The list of possible archaeological sites compiled by Acadamh Fódhla is to be investigated in the field by archaeologists working on behalf of the Archaeological Inventory of County Cork or Cork County Council. Any verified archaeological sites are to be listed on the Record of Monuments and Places.
- A list of ambush sites associated with the War of Independence and Civil War should be drawn up. The most important of these sites should be ascribed on the RMP and given protection under the *National Monuments Acts*. Prime candidates are the Beal a Ghleanna and Cúl na Catharach ambush sites.
- A comprehensive study, possibly by Acadamh Fódhla with the support of Cork County Council of what occurred at the War of Independence ambush at Cúl na Catharach should be conducted. This action will permit appropriate conservation and interpretation measures to be put in place.
- A list of non-battlefield sites associated with the War of Independence and Civil War should be drawn up (e.g. safe houses, homes of prominent republicans, the IRA observation post at Candroma). Where required, site owners should be made aware of their place's history. After consultation, consideration should be given to legally protecting some of the more important sites.
- Funding opportunities for farming in an environmentally sensitive manner and the conservation of agricultural buildings (i.e. GLAS - the successor to REPS 4) should be communicated to Múscraí's farmers. Seminars and mentoring on writing successful applications and farming for nature on marginal land may be needed. A Múscraí version of BurrenLIFE should be established.
- A workshop on the importance, conservation and repair of hedgerows should be held.
- Sectors whose activities are likely to affect archaeology, listed buildings, designated sites, and protected species (e.g. tourism, farming, construction) are to be made aware of their responsibilities as custodians of Múscraí's heritage. They are also to receive information on who to talk to if they suspect their actions might disrupt archaeological deposits, listed built fabric or protected natural heritage. Otherwise, not only would the heritage of the Gaeltacht be damaged but so too would its attractiveness for tourists.
- Disseminate existing publications on heritage protection throughout the Gaeltacht.
- Work with the Tidy Towns groups on enhancing their ability to care for built and natural heritage.
- Céilí dancing and set dancing should be supported in the Gaeltacht through the provision of classes and the creation social opportunities to dance.
- Develop a transition year course on heritage awareness and management in Múscraí. Particular attention should be placed on intangible heritage. A strand of this course should be on the work of Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh.
- Promote use of the Heritage in Schools programme by primary schools.
- The Aisling Gheal sean-nós school education programme should continue to be financially supported. The programme has been very successful in increasing the quantity and quality of sean-nós singers in the Gaeltacht.
- Local experts on built, natural and intangible heritage should be encouraged to conduct talks in local primary and secondary schools and conduct Múscraí based tours.

- It should be an objective that all the primary schools in the Gaeltacht obtain the Green Flag.
- Local community groups and heritage enthusiasts should be encouraged to create a strong programme of events for Heritage Week.
- Any tourism strategy for the Gaeltacht must identify threats to the heritage resource and how these will be mitigated against.
- It is a long-term objective of this plan that conditions be created whereby the fresh water pearl mussels in the Gaeltacht have the conditions they require to reproduce. A feasibility study should be carried out to ascertain what needs to be done and if this objective is possible within the confines of the locals' socio-economic requirements. Adequate waste water treatment facilities, the support of high nature value farming and the careful management of forestries will be essential if water quality is to improve to the required levels.
- In addition to the 20 or so sites selected under the Scéal Mhúscraí scheme, as many places as possible of heritage interest should be made accessible to the public. This can only be done with the approval of the land owner and on sites that are robust enough to take visitors. Environmental and ecological assessments may also be needed. When new sites become accessible the landowners should be indemnified against insurance claims and appropriate insurances put in place. Risk assessments and safety statements must be conducted for all proposed accessible sites. The assessments and statements are to be undertaken by a suitably qualified health and safety professional with deep experience of flexibly working in sensitive, historic landscapes. Where actions are required, they are to be designed and installed by suitably qualified personnel and be in keeping with the guidelines contained within the publication *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice* (2015)²¹⁶ and the *Burra Charter*²¹⁷. If safety and access actions are deemed to excessively impact upon the character of a site, then that place should not be made accessible to the public. All sites should be monitored at least quarterly. A register and online map of publicly accessible sites should be created.
- It is vital that a coherent programme be established to document and share the oral heritage and folklore of Múscraí (both Irish language and English language). This should be carefully organised involving long term investment from relevant authorities, ethical, theoretical, technical and practical training, as well as a clear long-term strategy for its sustainability within the community. While initially, collection will be the primary aim, a well thought out education programme must follow for the use of collected material.
- Many existing oral history/heritage and folklore audio collections were identified during the research. These should be located, obtained, digitally converted and integrated into the Múscraí oral heritage programme archive. The archive should be available online and incorporated into a centralised open access mapping source (consideration should be given to using the Heritage Viewer as a platform www.heritagemaps.ie). The name of the primary collector(s) should always be identified with these integrated collections. All schools in the Gaeltacht should participate in this programme as part of their continual education programme, linking both the collection and use of material to existing strands of the curriculum. The cultural resource which will follow from the development of the above can feed into educational and tourism activities.
- As part of the above programme, a placenames collection and dissemination strategy should be created and implemented. The placenames collection project should build upon the excellent work already carried out by the Cork Placenames Survey.

²¹⁶ Kenneth Dodd, *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*, (Visitor safety in the countryside group, 2015)

²¹⁷ <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>, (Accessed: 8/2/2018)

- Ultimately, a centralised open access mapping source should be created compiling all places of intangible heritage value (e.g. placenames, folklore, songs and poems associated with particular places). Consideration should be given to using the Heritage Viewer (www.heritagemaps.ie).
- A folklore education centre could be housed in the middle of Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. The folklore education centre should have a close working relationship with Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh. Indeed, ultimately, it could be under its management structure. A formal connection should be developed with the UCC's folklore department. Further details are provided in chapter 10.
- Ensure that the excellent Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh has sufficient budget to continue its top quality educational programme and schedule of events.
- The more people know about and enjoy heritage sites and traditions, the more likely these places and practices will be passed on to future generations. One sector of society that is often forgotten about is those with physical or mental disabilities. Access to heritage sites and traditional communal activities has been shown to improve health, especially mental health²¹⁸. Appropriate advice should be sought from the National Disability Authority and other relevant bodies on formulating a strategy on enhancing accessibility to places and practices. Any future on and off-site interpretation actions should be cognisant of those with physical and learning disabilities. With an aging population particularly in mind, appropriate interventions to allow greater wheelchair access may be required in the pilgrimage sites of St Fin Barre's and St Gobnait's. Any proposed physical intervention to a heritage site should be in keeping with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's publication *Access – improving the accessibility of historic buildings and places*²¹⁹.
- The main objective of future heritage interpretation actions will be to enhance the appreciation by both locals and visitors of the heritage significance of Múscraí as a whole and its constituent places.
- Emergency conservation repairs should be carried out at the tower house ruin at Dún Dea-Radhairc. Of immediate concern is ensuring the monument is safe and that further degradation is halted. A conservation plan for the site should also be created in cooperation with the landowner.
- A study should be conducted of the stained-glass windows in the various churches of the Gaeltacht to ascertain their importance and conservation needs.
- It is recommended that a scholarly recreation of the 1920s interior of the east end of Cill na Martra Church be conducted in accordance with conservation best practice. Deep consultation with the local congregation and clergy is essential.
- Conservation plans should be carried out for An Teampaillín and St Fin Barre's Pilgrimage site. Deep consultation with the local congregation, clergy and land owners is essential.
- An Teampaillín (fig. 7.2) should be assessed for its structural stability and appropriate conservation works, as recommended, carried out in as expedient a manner as possible. Given possible concerns regarding the structure, in the interim, until any recommended conservation works are carried out, walkers on the Beara-Breifne Way should be safely diverted around the site and bilingual warning signs erected.

²¹⁸ Gareth Maer, Amelia Robinson and Marie Hobson, *Values and benefits of heritage*, (London: Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016) 17

²¹⁹ Shaffrey Associates Architects and Fionnuala Rogerson Architects, *Access: improving the accessibility of historic buildings and places* (Dublin: Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) 2011

Figure 7.2 **An Teampaillín**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

- There are several areas at Fr. Denis O'Mahony's structure at the St Fin Barre's pilgrimage site that have a significant lean/bulge (fig. 7.3). An inspection from a suitably experienced conservation engineer should be carried out to appraise the situation and provide necessary guidance.

Figure 7.3 **Bulge in wall visible on left of image**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

- As part of the conservation of St Fin Barre's Oratory it is recommended that a scholarly recreation of the original painted interior be conducted in accordance with conservation best practice (figures 7.4 & 7.5). Deep consultation with the local congregation and clergy is essential.

Figure 7.4

Early 20th century interior of St Fin Barre's Oratory



(Source: image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Figure 7.5

Current interior of St Fin Barre's Oratory



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

- The holy medieval site of St Gobnait’s is in need of the following actions:
 - Without conservation work the medieval church is in danger of partial collapse. A specialist conservation engineer is required to specify appropriate interventions to ensure the full structure remains upstanding. Wall capping, flaunching, and wall pointing, all using appropriate soft lime mortar, will likely be needed. Grouting may also be required.
 - Existing monuments and the housing for the Stations of the Cross on the medieval church should remain. However, no new monuments should be attached to the medieval walls. They damage the breathability of the church walls.
 - The existing rounds signage probably disturbs human remains. As the signage fades it should be replaced by signage on free standing saw horses or similar (fig. 7.6).
 - The bell tower and roof of the First Fruits Anglican Church should be inspected. If repairs are needed these must be done soon. Waiting will only increase the damage and cost (figures 7.7 & 7.8).
 - Consideration should be given in future to increasing usage of the First Fruits Church.
 - The former Church of Ireland rectory (the Glebe) should be mothballed. The walls and openings should be secured and the wall heads covered. A temporary roof may be considered. A photographic report should also be conducted. Any loose elements that can be reused should be removed and secured in appropriate conditions for possible future reinsertion. Any reusable slate should be kept and appropriately stored for possible reuse on site. In the future, the house and its associated buildings could be rehabilitated and used as a retreat centre similar to the Glendalough Hermitage Centre (www.glendaloughhermitage.ie). Appropriate advice should be obtained from an experienced conservation engineer (fig 7.9 & 7.10).
 - Appropriate conservation works should be undertaken to the Porridge House (Tig na Leiteann) (fig. 7.11).
- Should conservation advice and funding to carry out best practice conservation be requested for the 13th century wooden statue of St Gobnait by its custodians, then it should be provided.
- The Shrines Committee, Tidy Towns groups and other custodians of Múscraí’s graveyards should be assisted with training on the care, conservation and recording of graveyards and advice on how to obtain grant aid. Cork County Council regularly conducts such workshops and these groups should be encouraged to attend.

Figure 7.6 **Interpretative signage on saw horses, Rindoon, Co. Roscommon**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Figures 7.7 & 7.8

Vegetation growth throughout the bell tower and on north side of roof



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 7.9

Rear of the Glebe



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

Figure 7.10

Gable end of the Glebe



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

Figure 7.11

The Porridge House (Tig na Leiteann)



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

- Appropriate conservation work should be carried out to the 19th century Royal Irish Constabulary police barracks in An Sliabh Riabhach (located beside The Mills Hotel) (fig. 7.12)²²⁰.
- Where practicable, all repairs to masonry bridges in the Gaeltacht (regardless of they being listed as protected structures or not) are to use traditional materials and methods.

Figure 7.12 **Former Royal Irish Constabulary police barracks**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

- Before the cleaning is undertaken of any external statue or War of Independence/Civil War memorial, appropriate advice on suitable methods should be sought from the County Architectural Conservation Officer. Overly abrasive cleaning can severely damage the face of a statue or memorial and significantly increase the rate of erosion.
- Coláiste Íosogáin retains much of its inter-war character and was used as a location for the 2003 film, *Song for a raggy boy*, directed by Aisling Walsh. Although listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage as being of regional importance²²¹, Coláiste Íosogáin is not listed as a protected structure under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*. It has been suggested in this plan that the building could be used as a business incubation centre. If that does happen, renovations to the structure should be respectful of its character. Although this will probably add to the initial cost of the project, by retaining the distinctiveness and cultural capital of Coláiste Íosogáin a creative environment more conducive to success will be created.

²²⁰ CO058-010001-, *Record of Monuments and Places, Cork*, (Dúchas, 1998), www.archaeology.ie/publications-forms-legislation/record-of-monuments-and-places, (Accessed: 9/2/2018)

²²¹ www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=CO®no=20905806, (Accessed: 11/2/2018)

- Both the Sullane and Lee are prone to flooding. A flood management strategy already exists for the Lee. However, it is more focused on the downstream sections. A flood management plan for the Gaeltacht is required to meet the needs of the local population and the challenge presented by climate change. This report supports the construction of appropriate flood defences and sensitive land management that protects those living in houses in danger of flooding and the local heritage. This report also supports early consultation with the community concerning the creation of flood management plans and flood defences (i.e. a participative process). During consultation for this report a preference of working with nature, taking a landscape management approach and soft landscaping was clearly apparent.
- In the absence of a Gaeltacht flood plan all proposed flood management solutions should be discussed with the affected locals as soon as possible. In effect, they should be a core part of the design process. As stated above, during consultation for this report a preference of working with nature, taking a landscape management approach and soft landscaping was clearly apparent.

Expansion

Policy

- If all or the majority of the above actions are implemented the Gaeltacht will become an even better place in which to live. This will incentivise people living in adjacent areas to request Gaeltacht status for their townlands. Should those townlands meet the Gaeltacht Category B threshold for Irish speakers (i.e. at least 44% of residents over three years of age being daily Irish speakers²²²), they deserve to be designated as being part of the Gaeltacht. A gradual expansion of the Gaeltacht would make the area, as a whole, more robust to change.

Action

- If capacity allows it, people in townlands adjacent to Múscraí should be permitted to use Gaeltacht schools and other Irish language services. If capacity needs to be increased, it should be.

7.3 Funding

While it is desirable to carefully ascribe likely State, EU and non-governmental funding sources for the suggested actions, owing to the fifteen year time span on this plan and the as yet unknown strengths of the implementing body, this is simply not feasible. For instance, the emphasis on what type of projects differing governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGO) will support can change significantly within a few years. Nonetheless, the organisations listed below have through various grant programmes provided funding for social, economic, tourism and heritage initiatives similar to those being recommended. Accordingly, careful observation should be maintained of their grant programmes and how they could help fund the suggested actions. The following list of relevant State, EU and NGO funding sources is not exhaustive:

- Cork County Council
- Creative Ireland
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (please note: this department has been reconfigured after each election since its inception in 1994)
- Department of Rural and Community Development
- EU INTERREG and other EU funding sources
- Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Georgian Society

²²² Conchúr Ó Giollagáin et al, *Comprehensive linguistic study of the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht: principal findings and recommendations* (Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway, 2007), 13

- Irish Public Bodies Insurance
- Foras na Gaelige
- Leader (please note: Údarás na Gaeltachta administer Leader funds in Múscraí)
- Local Enterprise Office (now part of Cork County Council)
- Pobal
- Royal Irish Academy
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
- The Arts Council
- The Heritage Council
- Údarás na Gaeltachta

Where possible, local business and community sourced funding should be obtained to support projects. Most government and EU funding requires some level of matching funding. Companies and individuals can avail of tax relief on charitable donations under Section 848A of the *Taxes Consolidation Act 1997*²²³. If the implementing body for this report obtains charitable status this will be an additional incentive for companies and individuals to provide financial support.

The Wheel, which is a representative body for charities and voluntary organizations, provides useful information on fundraising from the public and grants on its website, www.wheel.ie. The website also has a regularly updated directory of live grant opportunities.

Funding bodies provide guidance notes for making an application and many share details of previously successful applications. If an application is unsuccessful don't be afraid to ask for feedback.

Grant aid and tax schemes can have unintended damaging consequences for a community. Unless they are place appropriate, carefully managed and monitored, schemes can lead to unbalanced development that undermines long term liveability. By contrast, certain funding that could enhance liveability may not be in place (e.g. greater support for uplands farming). Accordingly, an audit of all available tax and grant schemes should be conducted. Recommendations should then be made as to what grant and tax breaks are currently appropriate, possible changes and additions. Some possible additions have already been identified in this document.

7.4 Implementation

It is envisioned that the implementation and monitoring of this report will be conducted by a strong, independent, broad based community council. Meetings should be held at least quarterly. A meeting specifically dedicated to quantifying what has and has not been done from the plan should be conducted at least once a year. Comprehensive reviews of the plan should be undertaken at least every five years.

To aid implementation, a series of consecutive three year action plans with actions predominately emanating from this document should be created. Each action should be connected with possible funding sources and responsible parties. The action plans may form the basis of the council's meetings.

Regardless of the establishment of a strong, independent, community council, this document may be used by any person or group wishing to make Múscraí a better place in which to live, work and visit. The actions suggested in the document are not exhaustive. Nor do the authors of this report have a monopoly on ideas. Accordingly, any actions that are in keeping with the vision, principals, policies and guidelines of the plan are to be welcomed.

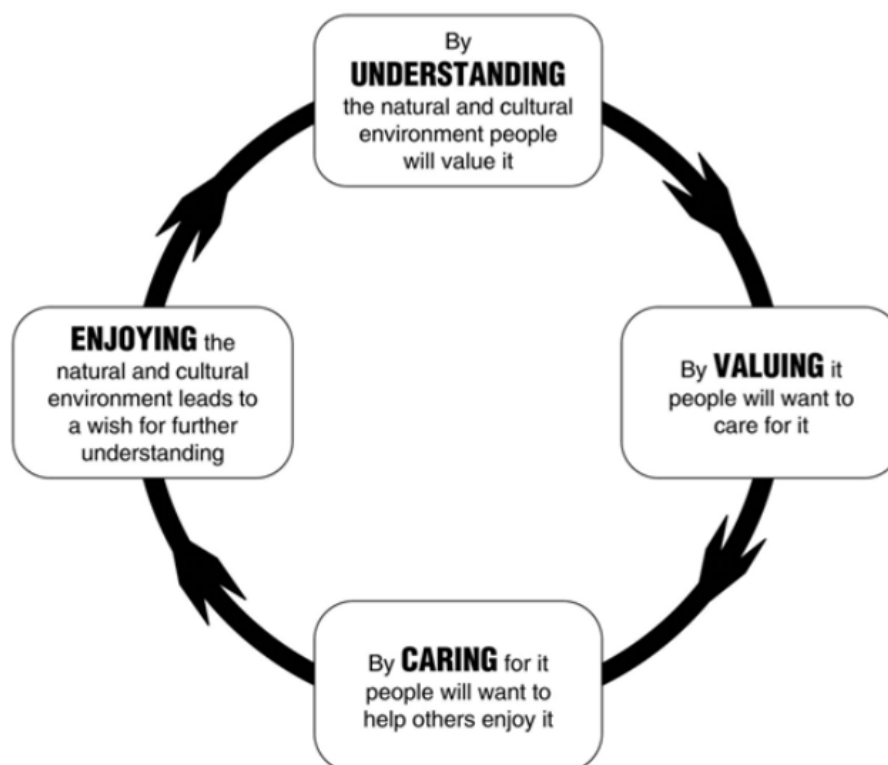
²²³ Róisín Burke, Neil Jackman and Conor Ryan, *Adopt a monument: guidance for community archaeology projects*, (The Heritage Council, 2017) 51

8.0 Heritage Interpretation Principles

8.1 Why Interpret?

Múscraí is a cultural landscape of international importance. Unfortunately, its status as such is under threat from a combination of gradual long-term depopulation and the undermining of the social connectors that bind residents together. Within this, the promotion of heritage and the use of heritage interpretation have essential roles to play. Strong, incisive interpretation has the ability to connect people with the story of a place more deeply than would otherwise happen. This in turn leads to an increase in the level of interest as to its management and the advocating for its protection (fig. 8.1). It also enhances the level of enjoyment.

Figure 8.1 Heritage interpretation virtuous circle²²⁴



The key objective of the following interpretation strategy is to improve the breadth and depth of understanding of Múscraí's heritage. The most important audience for this are the locals themselves. They are the region's prime custodians. Although overall awareness from locals of the Gaeltacht's heritage values is high, greater knowledge would lead to a more resilient cultural landscape. The next audience of importance are visitors to Múscraí. In order to sustain certain services and help create others which would enhance the quality of life for residents, high spending cultural tourists that would appreciate the uniqueness of the Gaeltacht are needed. Mass tourism which would undermine the

²²⁴ Sharon Veale and Sheridan Burke, *Castle Hill Heritage Park interpretation plan, stage 1 strategic overview* (Sydney: Godden Mackay Logan Ltd., 2008) 6

character of the region is to be avoided. Such an occurrence would weaken the authenticity of place that is necessary for a sustainable and high yield tourism sector. Adequate heritage interpretation actions are required to help connect visitors with the Gaeltacht, enhance enjoyment and deepen their level of respect for Múscraí.

8.2 Múscraí's Meanings

Múscraí's core meaning has been identified as the symbiotic relationship between people and place. One is simply less without the other. It is this relationship that makes Múscraí a place of international importance.

Within this evaluation no one monument, time period or personality dominates. Accordingly, to focus disproportionately on a particular person, monument or period would distort the presentation of Múscraí's complex story. Therefore, the interpretation of Múscraí's heritage must be broad in its implementation.

Typically in Ireland, what are seen as the core, impressive attributes of a region tend to be promoted by conservation professionals and their funders. Indeed, it is usually the large, imposing sites that are conserved at all (e.g. Dublin Castle, Newgrange, and The Rock of Cashel). The result is a skewed and elitist version of the past revolving around great men and great events. Women, children, the heritage of the everyday are side-lined and placed in the context of powerful men. This situation is certainly beginning to change but the legacy remains. In Múscraí, the interpretation should aim to demonstrate the complex character of the Gaeltacht and the connection between people and place.

8.3 Guiding Heritage Principles

The interpretation of Múscraí is to be carried out in accordance with the relevant principles of the *Granada Convention*²²⁵, the *Burra Charter*²²⁶ and the *Ename Charter (Charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites)*²²⁷. The principles contained within the charters provide specific guidance for works on the site. Relevant principles from the *Granada* and *Burra* charters include the following:

Granada Charter Article 12

While recognising the value of permitting public access to protected properties, each Party undertakes to take such action as may be necessary to ensure that the consequences of permitting this access, especially any structural development, do not adversely affect the architectural and historical character of such properties and their surroundings.

Burra Charter Article 2.2

The aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place.

Burra Charter Article 5.1

Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.

Burra Charter Article 7.2

A place should have a compatible use. The policy should identify a use or combination of uses or constraints on uses that retain the cultural significance of the place. New use of a place should involve minimal change, to significant fabric and use; should respect associations and meanings; and where appropriate should provide for continuation of practices which contribute to the cultural significance of the place.

²²⁵ www.esiweb.org/pdf/granada%20convention.pdf

²²⁶ <http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>

²²⁷ www.enamecharter.org/downloads/ICOMOS_Interpretation_Charter_EN_10-04-07.pdf

Burra Charter Article 14

Conservation may, according to circumstance, include the processes of: retention or reintroduction of a use; retention of associations and meanings; maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and interpretation; and will commonly include a combination of more than one of these.

Burra Charter Article 15.2

Changes which reduce cultural significance should be reversible, and be reversed when circumstances permit.

Burra Charter Article 15.4

The contributions of all aspects of cultural significance of a place should be respected. If a place includes fabric, uses, associations or meanings of different periods, or different aspects of cultural significance, emphasising or interpreting one period or aspect at the expense of another can only be justified when what is left out, removed or diminished is of slight cultural significance and that which is emphasised or interpreted is of much greater cultural significance.

Burra Charter Article 25

The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and enjoyment, and be culturally appropriate.

The full extent of the *Ename Charter (Charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites)* is of relevance (see appendix d for the charter's text)²²⁸.

8.4 Possible Tourism and Visitor Management Issues

- Disruptive to daily lives of landowners and other residents
- Increased traffic and parking on roads
- Conflict between conservation and tourism, e.g. one location may be in greater need of conservation work yet is not seen as fundamental to the tourist product
- Increased visitor numbers mean increased needs, i.e. toilets and refreshments
- Damage by visitors to fields through the creation of rough dirt paths
- Damage by visitors to monuments
- Some historic sites in Múscraí are still of structural concern
- Undermining the integrity of local sites, traditions and artistic practices through their commodification
- Reduction in rental stock available to locals as properties are made available to tourists on Airbnb or similar and resulting increase in rents
- Increase in house prices beyond levels that are affordable to many locals
- Excessive development
- Some people will benefit directly from tourism (e.g. income), others indirectly (e.g. additional services). However, some will not and may only see inconvenience (e.g. increased traffic).

An increase in the numbers of visitors to Múscraí will bring benefits to local shops, bars, restaurants, B&Bs and hotels. However, it is inevitable that the increased numbers will create management issues which should be taken into account now. If this is not done, conflict will certainly arise between the desire for the public to enjoy the Gaeltacht, the various landowners' rights to use their land as they see fit within the law and the integrity of region's cultural identity. Consequently, visitor numbers and

²²⁸ Ibid

behaviour must be monitored so as to protect both the heritage values of Múscraí and the rights of the residents to live positively.

Should as recommended by this report a Gaeltacht trust or council be established, then a standing agenda item at meetings ought to be a discussion on the impact of tourism on Múscraí's heritage values and the quality of life of residents. All heritage interpretation and tourism actions that emerge from these meetings should be in keeping with this heritage plan.

8.5 Audience

Improved interpretation of Múscraí will make the place appreciated by a wider population. However, that interpretation must be designed to fulfil the needs of a person with a general interest in heritage and culture. In no way should there be any onsite interpretation created solely for the benefit of specialists. This would simply put off the vast majority of locals and visitors. Instead, all interpretation works should engage with the audience and provoke them into wanting to learn more.

Typically, heritage interpretation actions are targeted at enhancing the enjoyment of a place by tourists. In Múscraí, the primary aim of heritage interpretation actions as guided by this document will be to broaden the knowledge and appreciation by locals for their region. Nonetheless, that does not mean that incisive and accessible interpretation for visitors is not important. Such actions are vital to the enjoyment of the region by high earning cultural tourists (both domestic and foreign) that are essential to the maintenance of services and the creation of others.

Overall, locals already have a deep appreciation about Múscraí's special character. No written inventory could do justice to the knowledge they retain about the multitude of places that make up the region. Despite this, the promotion of the full breadth of the significance of the Gaeltacht would help deepen each resident's connection with the landscape and bring greater conservation gains. A key local audience is the large number of foreign born residents that make up nearly one eighth of inhabitants. Well planned heritage interpretation actions could help the relative newcomers learn about and connect with Múscraí. This would also be the case for the unknown number of non-Múscraí raised Irish that have moved into the Gaeltacht.

At present, the overall visitor numbers to Múscraí for leisure or tourism purposes is unclear. One indicator is the 63,000 that visited Gougane Barra forest park in 2010²²⁹. Unfortunately, how many of these are foreign tourists, domestic tourists or locals is unknown. In Cill na Martra, the Prince August model soldier factory attracts over 20,000 visitors annually²³⁰. The factory owner hopes that this number will double over the coming years. There are no visitor figures for St Gobnait's Shrine or any other principal attraction. Within the Gaeltacht there are three small hotels. Two are located on the main Cork-Killarney N22 road while the other one is found in Gougane Barra. The hotel at Gougane Barra is largely dependent on overseas tourists and is consequently closed during the winter. There appears to be a relatively low number of B&Bs and Airb&bs on offer. There are no cafés, food pubs or restaurants in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, Cúil Aodha or Réidh na nDoirí. In Cill na Martra, Ó Murchú's Pub offer pizza. All the above indicates capacity for higher numbers of cultural tourists, particularly those staying overnight.

According to CSO figures the combined population of counties Cork and Kerry in 2011 was 665,000²³¹. Of these, almost 220,000 people were listed as being either professionals, employers or managers.

²²⁹ *Tourism to the South West (Preliminary)* 2010, (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland) 13

²³⁰ Ralph Riegel, "Steadfast tin soldiers now capturing the hearts of a whole new generation", *Irish Independent* (December 25, 2015), www.independent.ie/irish-news/steadfast-tin-soldiers-now-capturing-the-hearts-of-a-whole-new-generation-34313909.html (Accessed: 13/1/2015)

²³¹ www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/populationofeachprovincecountyandcity2011/, (Accessed: 8/2/18)

This is particularly relevant as two thirds of committed cultural tourists work in professional or managerial positions.

In 2016, 2,229,000 overseas tourists visited the Cork-Kerry region²³². Unfortunately, no breakdown exists for Múscraí. Nonetheless, it can be surmised that the vast majority of these did not set foot in Múscraí. Indeed, in a question from a 2012 survey by Fáilte Ireland asking 567 tourists ‘is there any one thing about West Cork in particular that [they] would advise other holidaymakers to do or see?’ no one said Múscraí²³³. That being so, Gougane Barra did appear prominently in the same survey. Nonetheless, the research displayed that Múscraí as an entity does not widely exist in the perceptions of either foreign or domestic tourists. This lack of awareness is particularly worrying for the development of a sustainable tourism sector when just over half of the people surveyed in that same study first heard of West Cork through word of mouth.

Of the tourists that came to the island of Ireland in 2016, 57% were white collar workers (C1). A further 30% were managerial/professional (AB)²³⁴. Forty two percent of all tourists either rented or brought over a car²³⁵. For visitors to West Cork that figure rises to 85%²³⁶. When they managed to get to West Cork, the most popular activity to do by far was hill walking/hiking (27% of visitors)²³⁷. This makes sense when considering that the main reason tourists give for visiting the area was to experience the beautiful scenery. Another key factor is the friendliness of the people. When planning their trips to West Cork 88% of tourists consulted the internet, 35% guide books, and 25% the Irish tourist board²³⁸. It is worth noting that in the 2012 edition of the Lonely Planet Guidebook for Ireland only Gougane Barra is mentioned²³⁹. The word Múscraí does not appear.

8.6 Target Market

Any future interpretation actions will seek to consolidate the existing audience and provide encouragement to those who have yet to visit Múscraí to do so. Neither local inhabitants nor tourists possibly warm on coming to the Gaeltacht are a homogenous group. There are various audiences within each that may need different interpretation actions.

Not everyone will be interested in visiting Múscraí. The destination quality of the Gaeltacht revolves around the cultural identity of the region, the deep connection between people and place and the beauty of the landscape. Crass overdevelopment or pastiche exploitation of the local traditions and landscape will only serve to undermine the long-term sustainability of a high yield cultural tourism sector and erode heritage values. Accordingly, judicious targeting of key markets must be followed.

Tourism groups often target bus tour operators to bolster visitor numbers. Certainly, bus tours can increase the economic viability of the individual tourist attraction they are visiting. However, unless these bus groups stay overnight in the area the economic return versus community effort can be relatively small. Loop Head Tourism discovered that the economic yield from bus tour groups was so

²³² *Tourism Facts 2016* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland, 2017) 5

²³³ *Holidaymaker study – West Cork 2012* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland) 1

²³⁴ *Island of Ireland: overseas tourism performance, 2016 facts and figures* (Dublin: Tourism Ireland, 2017) 4

²³⁵ *Tourism Facts 2016* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland, 2017) 7

²³⁶ *Holidaymaker study – West Cork 2012* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland), 3

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 4

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 2

²³⁹ Fionn Davenport, *Ireland* (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 2012)

low that they decided not to target them²⁴⁰. It is worth noting that in 2015, 84% of overseas visitors to Ireland arranged their trips independently, 16% bought packages²⁴¹.

Fáilte Ireland have conducted extensive market segmentation research. For Múscraí, the two key international segments are those termed the Culturally curious and Great escapers. Of these, the Culturally curious segment more closely matches what Múscraí has to offer and the type of tourist which the Gaeltacht needs. This segment tends to value the distinctiveness of places and are more likely to stay longer. The Culturally curious are typically:

independent 'active sightseers' looking to visit new places, and expand their experience by exploring landscapes, history and culture. They are unlikely to return for some time once they have visited a new place, and often travel in a couple or as individuals and rarely in a family group. The age group for this demographic is 40 plus.²⁴²

Great escapers are:

are often couples, approximately 30 years old, some with babies or quite young children. Most are in serious need of time out from busy lives and careers. They are specifically interested in rural holidays and travel very much as a couple or family. Great Escapers are on holiday for a break, to get physical with nature, and to reconnect with their partner. More likely to take part in slightly more strenuous, but not extreme, exploration. More interested than other segments in getting connected to nature especially the more remote and exciting places.²⁴³

In research undertaken by Fáilte Ireland on tourists to West Cork it was found that two thirds of visitors to the region were aged over 35²⁴⁴. Over a third were couples. The two main things that struck visitors when they visited West Cork was the beauty of the countryside and the friendliness of the locals.

Target Groups	Interests and Expectations
Irish Speaking Local Residents	Figuring out how the various places that make up Múscraí fit into their sense of self and where the Gaeltacht lies within national and international narratives. Interesting and informative interpretation explaining the region's evolution and distinctiveness. Nice, interesting walks and experiences.
Non-Irish Speaking Local Residents	Figuring out how the various places that make up Múscraí fit into their identity and where the Gaeltacht lies within national and international narratives. Interesting and informative interpretation explaining the region's evolution and distinctiveness. Nice, interesting walks and experiences.
Day Visitors	An interesting afternoon which will enrich their body and mind. High quality interpretation explaining Múscraí within a wider Irish and

²⁴⁰ www.loophead.ie/responsible-tourism-policy/, (Accessed: 8/3/2018)

²⁴¹ Liam Mannix and Hollie Kearns, *Tourism for towns: an introduction to developing a sustainable tourism sector in your historic town*, (Kilkenny: The Heritage Council, 2017) 3

²⁴² www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/International-sales/Culturally-Curious.aspx, (Accessed: 1/11/17)

²⁴³ www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/International-sales/Great-escapers.aspx, (Accessed: 1/11/17)

²⁴⁴ *Holidaymaker study – West Cork 2012* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland) 5

	international context. Easily navigable walks, cycles and drives which provide a sense of exploration. An experience to remember.
Families on Holiday	Great scenery. Child friendly environment where children can explore and learn. An experience that will invigorate the adults.
Older People	Accessible and easily navigable pilgrimage and tourist attractions with high quality interpretation.
Irish Tourists	An interesting visit which will enrich their body and mind. High quality interpretation explaining Múscraí within a wider Irish and international context. Easily navigable looped walks, cycles and drives which provides a sense of exploration. An experience to remember.
Overseas Visitors	Multi-lingual, high quality interpretation explaining Múscraí within the wider Irish and international context. They want an interesting experience and a sense that the Gaeltacht is unique. They also want a sense that they are walking through a special place not experienced by the vast majority of tourists.
School and Education Groups	Activity sheets and online material that are linked through Irish with the national school and secondary school curricula. High quality interpretation that makes Múscraí's culture come to life.
Travel Groups	High quality interpretation explaining the cultural significance of Múscraí. A route that is easily navigable with points of interest that are readily accessible. Múscraí's lack of excessive development and continued operation as a living Gaeltacht will give visitors the satisfaction that they are entering a 'real' place not contrived for tour groups. Unless these groups stay overnight in the Gaeltacht they should not be actively targeted as part of a Múscraí wide tourism drive.

8.7 Key Messages and Stories

According to Fáilte Ireland only a small percentage of the population have learning as a prime objective when visiting attractions. It is a secondary motivation to experiencing something authentic and enriching. The laying out of archaeological or historical facts on lectern units is interesting to only a narrow band of society. What's more, it fails to 'people' the place and give visitors a sense of what the region was actually like. All heritage interpretation should be interesting, informative and accessible. It does not necessarily need to be enjoyable. This is particularly the case for places where unsavoury episodes occurred (e.g. War of Independence and Civil War sites). Interpretation should seek to enhance the experience or both visitors and locals. This is accomplished by using the key messages and stories of the site. These messages and stories should emerge from the principal themes of the Gaeltacht's existence.

Historic maps, written sources, interviews and site visits have provided much information about how Múscraí has developed. These are the key ingredients when considering the stories through which the Gaeltacht will be interpreted. The key stories are:

People and place are one and the same– The chief story of Múscraí is that of the relationship between people and place (land management, language, folklore). One is simply less without the other. How has this relationship developed over time?

A place apart– What makes Múscraí a distinct region (linguistically, culturally, archaeologically) both now and in the past? Why is it important to maintain the Gaeltacht’s cultural integrity?

An independent spirit– Múscraí has a long and multifaceted tradition of doing things differently. During the Medieval period the Gaeltacht was a stronghold of Gaelic culture and self-determination. In the 19th and 20th centuries there was the struggle for land rights, Irish Independence, and against pro-treaty forces during the Civil War. There was also an interesting relationship with the local ascendancy. Perhaps most important of all is the continued role Múscraí plays in the promotion of the Irish language, poetry and song.

8.8 Interpretation Objectives

After moving through the Gaeltacht, visitors should have significantly enhanced their understanding of Múscraí and why it is significant. Both tourists and locals should have a greater appreciation and breadth of knowledge of this vibrant cultural landscape. Below are the objectives of all future interpretation actions:

Knowledge and understanding

Visitors and locals will:

- learn about the complex relationship between the people and the place and how this has evolved over time
- learn about the landscape of ritual that combines pre-Christian and Christian characteristics
- learn about the role of Múscraí in the emergence of the Irish State and the promotion of the Irish language, music and poetry
- learn about the various flora and fauna that exist in Múscraí and how the physical landscape has impacted upon the cultural distinctiveness of the Gaeltacht.

Skills

Visitors and locals will:

- be introduced to the concept of ‘reading’ the landscape for clues to its use and changes over time.

Enjoyment/inspiration

Visitors and locals will:

- have the satisfaction of learning about a cultural landscape of international importance
- enjoy the sense of exploration and discovery
- enjoy the beauty of the place
- feel inspired and invigorated by the location and people.

Attitudes and values

Visitors and locals will:

- grow to appreciate the complexity of the past and its impact upon the present
- appreciate the valuable addition that monuments, vernacular structures, traditional land uses and the natural environment make to the region's liveability and tourism attractiveness
- value the continuation of traditional land uses, the Múscraí dialect and the living tradition of Irish music, poetry and dance
- understand the importance of Múscraí as a place of international significance
- understand the role Múscraí has in forming and grounding Ireland's national identity
- understand the role Múscraí and other places like it play in allowing us the ability to think differently in a globalised world.

Activity and behaviour

Visitors will:

- wish to return and stay longer
- encourage friends and family to visit
- wish to find out more about Múscraí
- feel a connection to Múscraí and its future
- feel compelled to visit other heritage sites
- support the work of a future Múscraí council or trust.

Locals will:

- have a deeper connection with Múscraí
 - have a deeper interest in the Gaeltacht's future management
 - feel compelled to visit heritage sites within the Gaeltacht
 - protect the everyday heritage sites not legally protected that they have direct control over
 - practice the Múscraí dialect
 - take greater part in Múscraí traditions and community events
 - pass on local stories and folklore
 - support the work of a future Múscraí council or trust.
-

9.0 Interpretation Critical Review and Site Inventory

9.1 Pre visit Information

At present there is a low level of awareness by people nationally and internationally of Múscraí as a distinct region. There is additional confusion in County Cork over the geographical range ascribed to the Múscraí place name. For instance, does Múscraí only mean the Gaeltacht or is it the old Muskerry barony or the GAA division which incorporates areas outside the historical barony? Intelligent branding, assertive marketing and the exclusive use of the Irish place name Múscraí for the Gaeltacht should help resolve this.

There is a simple and by now out of date website that covers the Gaeltacht as a tourist destination²⁴⁵. Unfortunately, it does not match modern expectations of an easy to navigate tourism website. Furthermore, it is not complemented by a social media presence. Indeed, despite there being several social media accounts dedicated to Múscraí there is no single widely used twitter, Facebook or Instagram account with uniform branding focused on tourism and events in the Gaeltacht. This diffuse situation is also replicated in print material. There is a good map of Slí Mhúscraí (the local section of the Beara-Breifne Way). Ultimately though, the overall pattern is one of strong individual or single group effort being undermined by the lack of adherence to a single marketing and branding strategy.

9.2 Circulation and Arrival

At the various crossing points into Múscraí there is a simple sign indicating that you are entering the Gaeltacht. The signage is similar to that in other Gaeltachts. Road signage directing people to the various villages is good. Signage along the road network to places of interest is limited for some (St Gobnait's pilgrimage site, An Teampaillín, the ringfort in Rath Ghaiscigh) and non-existent for others (Cúil Aodha church, Béal a Ghleanna ambush site) (fig. 9.1). In Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne, several attractive but now seemingly isolated fingerpost signs are present directing people on walks (fig. 9.2).

Figure 9.1

Although there is a directional sign on the L3402 Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh-Réidh na nDoirí road for the ringfort at Rath Ghaiscigh, there is no signage showing where to stop. The ringfort is hidden behind forestry.



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

²⁴⁵ <http://homepage.eircom.net/~meithealmhuscraig/guide/>, (Accessed: 13/1/2016)

Figure 9.2 Signage spotted in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

There is no tourist information at the bus stops at Baile Mhic Íre or Baile Bhúirne. In general, for those driving there are few information panels in the middle of the villages showing points of interest in the Gaeltacht. The exception to this is the Beara-Breifne Way (cycle and walking routes) information panels in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh (fig. 9.3). The Beara-Breifne information panel in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne is located away from the main hubs. There are no tourism information panels in Cúil Aodha, Réidh na nDoirí or Cill na Martra.

Figure 9.3 Beara-Breifne Way panels in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh (circled in red)



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

9.3 Access and Existing Interpretation

The interpretation of heritage sites is very limited. An Teampaillín which is on the Beara-Breifne way has an interpretive sign in English (fig. 9.4). There is no interpretation at St Fin Barre's Oratory or St Gobnait's. Indeed, aside from An Teampaillín and the Gougane Barra lake there is no interpretation at any place of archaeological, historical, natural or architectural interest. Monuments to various historical personalities, War of Independence skirmishes and episodes in the past are dotted across the landscape. However, there is little or no context provided.

Figure 9.4 Onsite interpretation panel



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

The interpretation panels surrounding the Battle of Waterloo model at the Prince August model factory in Cill na Martra focus solely on the Napoleonic Wars.

Even taking into account all the limited interpretation in the villages and at An Teampaillín there is no provision for people who prefer a more active engagement when learning. Instead, passive reading dominates. The existing interpretation does not adequately connect the visitor with the character of the place nor does it ask them to use all their senses. For instance, there is no audio guide with music or poetry. There are no onsite interpretive activities that are dedicated to children. Overall, where it exists, the interpretation provision merely permits visitors some comprehension of what they are walking across or that something or someone is being commemorated.

That there is any interpretation or monuments is something that has to be commended. Nonetheless, the existing interpretation should be seen as being only a base to build upon. More is needed to increase the level of appreciation and comprehension that both locals and visitors have for Múscraí.

9.4 Events

The level and intensity of events focused on music, poetry (e.g. Dámhscoil Múscraí), art and sport (Gaelic football, hurling and road bowling) is impressive in its quantity and quality. The Ionad Cultúrtha has a vibrant, high quality programme of events and classes. Its traditional music programme in particular is exceptional. As the events in Múscraí are primarily put on for locals they are of the highest authenticity and integrity. It is essential that the Ionad Cultúrtha continue to operate an arts programme of national and international quality without compromise to tourism interests.

10.0 Possible Interpretation and Visitor Management Actions

The role of all onsite heritage interpretation actions should be to develop the connection that both locals and visitors have with Múscraí. Through the use of story, the interpretation of the region should provide clarity about its culture, encourage awareness and offer insight. Above all, Múscraí's interpretation should enrich people's experience and encourage active engagement with the place.

All installations should be designed to cause the minimal disturbance to the cultural landscape. Care must also be made so as to not impede the activities of locals as they go about their daily lives. Proper adherence to the *National Monuments Act* (1930-2004) and various wildlife protection acts should be followed at all times.

The interpretation actions suggested in this chapter are not exhaustive. The imagination of consultants only goes so far! Accordingly, any ideas that are in keeping with the principals, policies and guidelines of this document's interpretation section are to be welcomed.

10.1 General Heritage Interpretation Guidelines

1. All written material should be bilingual. Irish should always be the most visually dominant language. All audio guides and any other aural material should be available in both Irish and English.
2. All interpretation actions should be tied in with the key messages and stories described in section 8.7.
3. All interpretation actions should be based on sound scholarly research.
4. Stick to the known facts. Speculation should be avoided.
5. Where there are conflicting accounts consideration should be given to displaying the various versions and allowing the audience to make up their own minds.
6. Researchers and designers should reflect upon their own backgrounds and possible prejudices when devising interpretative schemes.
7. When interpreting places or periods of conflict, commemorate do not celebrate. Do not use emotive or bombastic language.
8. In general, do not use technical terms or complex words where simple ones will do.
9. Do not presume that people know about certain personalities or time periods. Interpretation should be aimed at the general audience.
10. The word length of panels and audio guides should be kept to a minimum.
11. Do not refer to "famous" people or places. If they are truly famous they do not have to be called so.
12. Interpretation should be interesting and relevant.
13. Interpretation should not needlessly or excessively damage the setting or the physical fabric of the place it is addressing.

10.2 Pre-Arrival Actions

- **Webpage**

Develop a simple, clear, easy to navigate, bilingual website for the Gaeltacht. The website should be consumer focused and contain information on what makes Múscraí special, on activities, events, accommodation, how to get there and public transport within the Gaeltacht. The website should have a series of suggested one, two, three and seven day itineraries tailored to various audiences. Businesses and activity providers must be encouraged to habitually cross sell and cross promote each other. Activity and accommodation bundles should be available to easily purchase. Use www.visitchichester.org/, www.carlingford.ie and www.loophead.ie as models.

- **Brochure and Flyer**

A high quality colour brochure and smaller leaflet telling prospective visitors of Múscraí's heritage value is needed. The leaflet should communicate that Múscraí is a special destination, worthy of a visit. On the leaflet a map showing Múscraí's location should be included, as well as the address of the new webpage. There is room for more information in the brochure on the Gaeltacht's attractions, uniqueness and accommodation options. A distribution plan for both the brochure and leaflet should be created. Likely locations include tourist offices, Cork and Killarney bus stations, airports, ferry ports, local hotels, shops, pubs and B&Bs, etc. The leaflet and brochure should be available in Irish, English, French and German.

- **Public Transport**

As stated earlier, greater provision of public transport to and within Múscraí is needed. The existing Local Link bus service should be expanded in both frequency and number of routes. Another possibility is to provide support to Scéim Sóisialte to allow them to purchase an additional bus which could help fulfil the role. Baile Bhúirne and Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh must be connected by public transportation. Greater advertising is essential for additional usage by both locals and cultural tourists (especially walkers). A master timetable available online and via print with all the various public transport options (i.e. Local Link, Scéim Sóisialte and Bus Éireann) should be created in Irish, English, French and German. The various organisations should coordinate their timetables to allow easier connections. In 2018, Loop Head Tourism are launching an electric bus public transport network in the peninsula that will cater for both locals and tourists²⁴⁶. It will use a small electric bus which Loop Head Tourism believes is more economic than a diesel bus. The Loop Heap model should be investigated. There should be some form of uniform branding on the non-Bus Éireann buses. A network of branded bus stops may also be needed for the Múscraí bus network (i.e. the Musbus) (fig. 10.1). In the future, consideration should be given towards developing a communal pool of electric, self-drive cars. The scheme should be open to temporary subscribers visiting the area.

Figure 10.1 **Distinctive tourist bus and bus stop in Bayonne, France**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

²⁴⁶ Peter O'Connell, "Electric bus to go around the loop", *The Clare Champion*, <http://clarechampion.ie/electric-bus-to-go-round-the-loop/>, (Accessed: 8/3/2018)

10.3 Arrival and Circulation

- **Arrival Signage and Public Art**

At present, the entry signs into Múscraí are plain, generic Údarás signs. Large Múscraí specific signage is needed at each main point of entry (figures 10.2 & 10.3). They should communicate a sense that people are entering somewhere distinctive. This could be complemented by distinctive roadside and village centre public art that is inspired by local built, natural and intangible heritage (figures 10.4, 10.5 & 10.6). The Gaeltacht deserves great art. This will add distinctiveness and enhance sense of place and is very much in keeping with the Creative Ireland Programme in County Cork. In order to help ensure that derivative art is not created, it is advisable to follow the commissioning process set out in publicart.ie²⁴⁷.

Figure 10.2 **Entry signage on the minor roads into Cairngorms National Park, UK**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

²⁴⁷ <https://publicart.ie/main/commissioning/commissioning-process/>, (Accessed: 8/3/2018)

Figure 10.3 **Entry signage into Loch Lomond National Park, UK**



(Source: www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3464998, accessed 03/11/17)

Figure 10.4 **A horseman commemorating a fording point across the Bandon River on the N71**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 10.5

Art from the Camino de Santiago commemorates past pilgrims and provides reassurance to those walking the route today that they are on the right path



(Source: [www.google.ie/search?q=camino+monument&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=623&source=Inms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiSsaKGpsLKAhVFqA4KHdRRAtgQ_AUIBygC#tbn=isch&q=camino+de+santiago+monument&imgcr=KCDPnWgJjEwC-M%3A](http://www.google.ie/search?q=camino+monument&espv=2&biw=1366&bih=623&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiSsaKGpsLKAhVFqA4KHdRRAtgQ_AUIBygC#tbn=isch&q=camino+de+santiago+monument&imgcr=KCDPnWgJjEwC-M%3A), Accessed: 16/01/16)

Figure 10.6

The living grass sign in Vitoria Gastiez, Spain, provides a great sense of arrival to a dynamic, interesting city



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

- **Directional Signage for Heritage Sites**

Branded directional signage within the Gaeltacht should be provided for the 20 or so Scéal Mhúscraí heritage sites (e.g. Séipéal Ghobnatan, the clapper bridges, Beal a Ghleanna ambush site), even for those with existing signage (e.g. Gougane Barra, An Teampaillín). In certain locations where the old signage creates clutter it may need to be removed. However, this can only occur with the approval of the relevant stakeholders. All signage should keep to an agreed design and branding palette (figures 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 10.10 & 10.11).

Figure 10.7 **National Trails in the UK use elegant, standardised directional signage made from natural materials that blend into the landscape**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

Figures 10.8-10.11 **In the Navia district of Asturias, Spain, all directional and information signage for archaeological and historical sites has been standardised. Such uniform but elegant designs are easy for passing motorists and cyclists to identify. They also provide reassurance that the site is of sufficient quality to be worth a visit.**





(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

- **Directional Signage for Tourist Accommodation, Activities and Crafts**

Better directional signage within the Gaeltacht should be provided for accommodation, activity sites, food producers that open to the public and craft workshops, even for those with existing signage (e.g. Coolavokig Pottery and the Prince August model factory). In certain locations where the old signage creates clutter it may have to be removed. However, this can only occur with the approval of the relevant stakeholders. All signage should be bilingual and be in keeping with the agreed branding palette. The signage should be brown and could be similar to those in Westport, Co. Mayo (fig. 10.12).

Figure 10.12

Westport Town Council in Co. Mayo created a standardised scheme for tourist signage that reduces clutter, improves the public realm and increases the legibility of signage, thereby making navigation easier



(Source: Simon Wall, 2014)

- **Village Information and Orientation Boards**

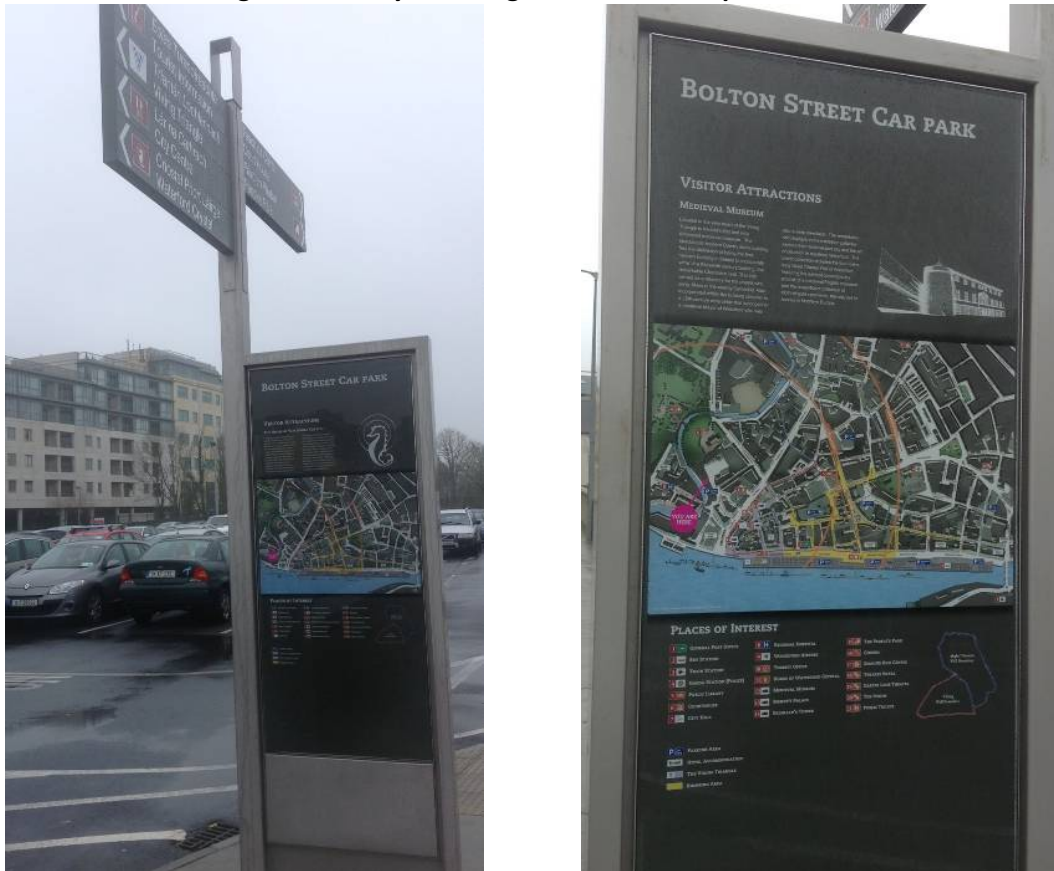
A comprehensive set of well-designed information boards are needed in the centre of each of the five villages that make up the Gaeltacht (Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, Cúil Aodha, Réidh na nDoirí, and Cill na Martra). One is also needed at Gouganne Barra. Each board should contain information on the immediate location, local points of interest and a map of the Gaeltacht (figures 10.13, 10.14 & 10.15). All text should be both in Irish and English. Irish is to be the visually dominant language on all signage. Where appropriate, summaries in French and German of local information should be provided. A QR code linking smartphone users to the new Múscaí tourist website is to be included (subject to adequate broadband being available). The amount of text on the board should be limited. The less the word count, the more likely it will be read. All tourist information signage should keep to an agreed design and branding palette.

Figure 10.13 **Tastefully designed information board with map, Lough Boora, Co. Offaly**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2013)

Figures 10.14 & 10.15 Waterford City Centre now has a standardised series of information signage throughout the city directing visitors to main points of interest.



(Source: Research and Dig, 2013)

- **Gaeltacht Map**

A high quality A3 tourist map of the Gaeltacht already exists (produced by Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí Teoranta). The Cúpla Focal introduction to Irish section is particularly good. Either this map should be amended to include the locations of the Scéal Mhúscraí sites, future bus stops and bike rental stations or another distinctive A3 map could be created. All maps should be available in Irish, English, German and French. The maps are to be made available in each hotel, B&B, self-catering house, shop, pub, café and manned tourism site in Múscraí.

- **Toilets and Refreshments**

There are only three public toilets in Múscraí (two in Gouganne Barra and one in Cúil Aodha). Elsewhere, toilet facilities are provided at the discretion of the owners of the Gaeltacht's pubs, hotels and cafés. In time, consideration may have to be given towards the construction of discrete well designed public toilets in the car park at St Gobnait's. Between Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh and Baile Bhúirne there is no place where walkers can obtain refreshments. A way of addressing this is to have an honesty box with drinks and snacks (fig. 10.16). Another option is to work with landowners and create free public water fountains or taps. Over time, small local businesses such as a tea houses may be established to service the needs of the walkers and other tourists.

Figure 10.16 Honesty box along Hadrian's Wall Way, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

- **Bike Rental Scheme**

A low-cost bike rental scheme should be established allowing both public transport users and car users the opportunity to explore the Gaeltacht (fig. 10.17). Gougane Barra Hotel already operates a bike rental scheme for their guests. Perhaps this could be opened to the public in general and a partnership agreement entered into with one or both of the hotels in Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and businesses or community groups in the other villages. The bike rental scheme must be complemented by bike stands where required in the villages and elsewhere in the Gaeltacht. Uniform branding should be created for all elements of the bike rental scheme (i.e. the Musrothar). In 2015, Ireland's first rural based community bike scheme was created in Clonakilty (www.clonbike.com/). Cavan County Council operates a free scheme from their offices (www.cavancoco.ie/free-bike-scheme). The bike scheme should be integrated with local bus services. This will lead to greater usage of both.

Figure 10.17 A bike hire scheme being operated from a pub in Sydney, Australia



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

- **Bike Stands**

In order to facilitate the exploration of Múscraí by cycling, appropriate bike stands should be installed at points of interest throughout the Gaeltacht. Where possible, the stands should be located immediately beside that point of interest's introductory information panel. The stands would complement the bike rental scheme and facilitate the exploration of Múscraí by long distance cycling tourists, other holiday makers staying in the Gaeltacht and Irish people exercising. In 2016, almost 400,000 overseas tourists participated in cycling when in Ireland²⁴⁸. Eight percent of domestic holidaymakers engaged in cycling²⁴⁹.

10.4 On-Site Interpretation

- **Interpretation Panels**

The great bulk of existing heritage interpretation in Múscraí is connected with the Beara-Breifne Way. Although of high quality, almost all the text is in English.

All new panels in Múscraí are to be bilingual and in keeping with an agreed design palette (figures 10.18, 10.19, 10.20 & 10.21). Text is to be kept to a minimum. Simple, easy to understand words are to be used. Authors of text should try to engage their audience and not bore them. Most sites will only have one panel. The panel should not simply be a list of facts. Instead, it should provide context and insight. This will be greatly helped by following one of the three Gaeltacht themes/stories as described in section 8.7 (i.e. people and place are one and the same, a place apart, an independent spirit). There should be three layers to the text. This allows visitors to read to a level they are comfortable with. Layer one tells the visitor what it is, (i.e. the name and site category). Layer two comprises c.50 words in bold that gives basic information (e.g. who built it and why). The final layer (c.150-200 words) provides the reader with more detail on the place. If there is a relevant publication concerning the site which will provide in depth information, this should be mentioned. The use of re-creation drawings for certain sites that have undergone severe changes can help visitors visualise what the place once looked like. Synopses of the site's character should be made available in French and German (c.50 words).

The location of the sign must be carefully selected so as to not take away from a visitor's view of the site or disturb any archaeological, architectural or ecological heritage. No interpretative sign should be located directly on religious grounds. Subject to adequate broadband, each panel could have a QR code linking to a YouTube video where further information could be obtained. All panels should have the address of the proposed Múscraí tourism website.

²⁴⁸ *Tourism Facts 2016* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland, 2017) 6

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 10

Figure 10.18

The interpretative panels in Vindolanda, Hadrian's Wall, UK, are fitted onto concrete trays. This means that no excavation is required. Such an archaeologically non-invasive approach is only suitable in areas with no livestock. In places where sheep or cattle are present a more durable solution is necessary (see fig. 10.19).



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

Figure 10.19

The interpretive signage in the abandoned medieval town of Rindoon rests on the ground. It exists in an area accessible to sheep and cattle. The saw horse is too big to be easily moved off site by possible vandals. Yet, it is light enough to be moved as required by the farmer. Its sturdy design has meant it has successfully withstood livestock using it to scratch against.



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

Figure 10.20

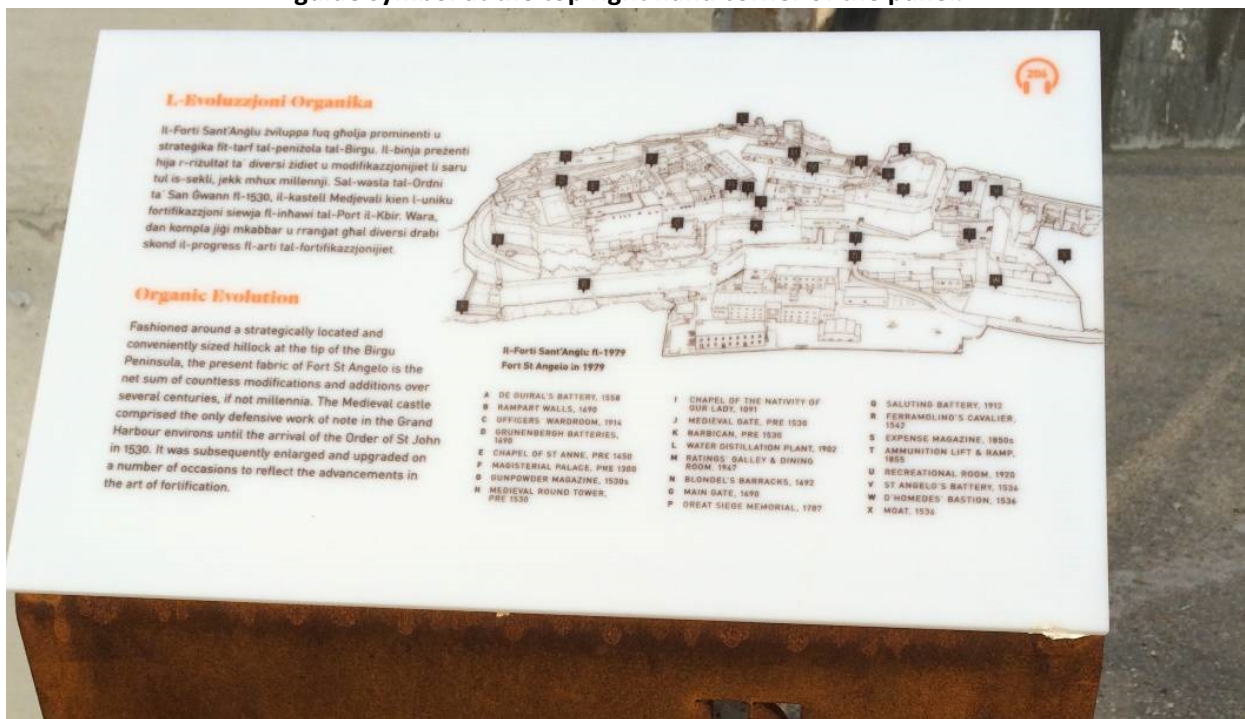
The bilingual text on the interpretation panels in Conwy Castle, UK, are a great example of brevity. The use of contemporary terms acts as a hook to attract visitors' attention.



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 10.21

Elegant bilingual signage in Fort St Angelo, Malta. Check out the small audio guide symbol at the top right hand corner of the panel.



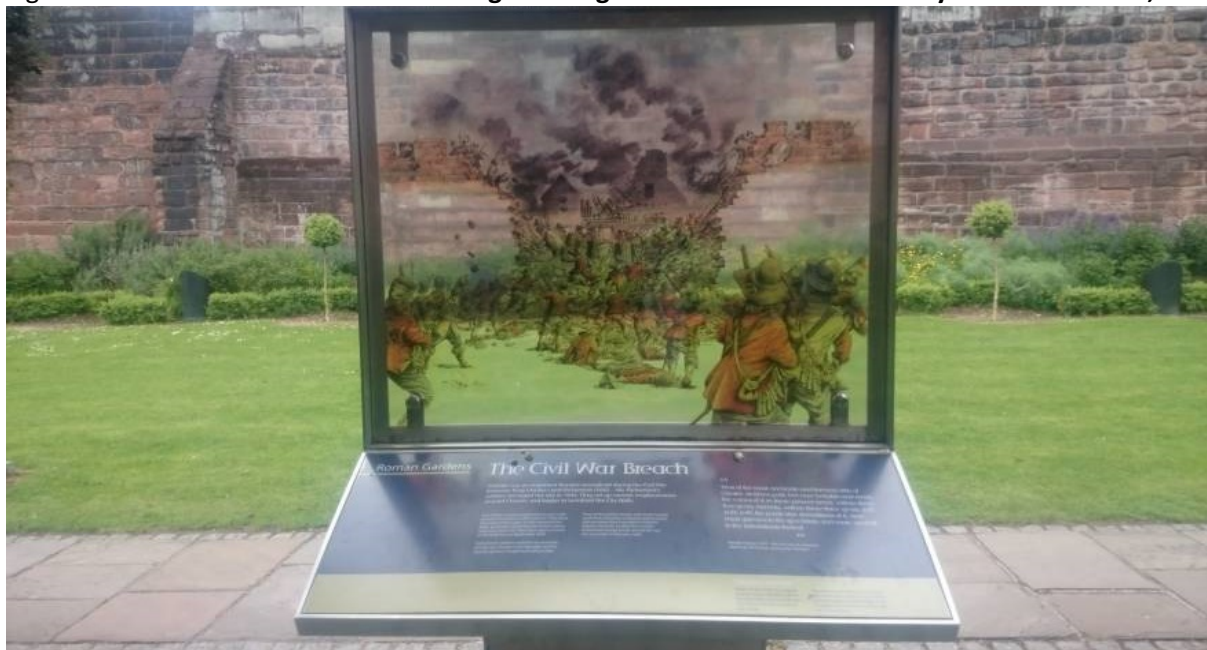
(Source: The Heritage Council, 2015)

- **Windows on the Past**

In a small number of areas protected from cattle 'windows on the past' could be erected (fig. 10.22). These would have translucent images on a toughened glass screen showing events or how a site may

have looked like in the past. These could be created with the correct perspective across the landscape thereby creating a spatially accurate overlay.

Figure 10.22 **Translucent image showing Cromwellian breach on city walls in Chester, UK**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

- **Murals**

There are several gables in the Gaeltacht's villages that could be used as canvases to help tell the story of Músraí through high quality interpretations of local folklore or historical events (figures 10.23 & 10.24).

Figure 10.23 **The stylised murals of Vitoria Gastiez, Spain, make something beautiful out of something boring**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2015)

Figure 10.24

A late 19th/early 20th century photo of a now gone section of a street has been painted onto a wall of the motorway it was destroyed to make way for in Sydney, Australia



(Source: Research and Dig, 2014)

- **Village Street Signage**

Subject to owner approval, each 19th/early 20th century street building in the various villages could have a small bilingual plaque noting its various uses over time (figures 10.25 & 10.26).

Figures 10.25 & 10.26 **Signage in Bayonne, France**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2012)

- **Text Fragments**

On the footpaths of the Gaeltacht's villages insert text fragments of quotes (inscribed on stone) from prominent thinkers (e.g. Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh and Sean Ó Riada) and extracts from poetry and local folklore based on Múscaí (e.g. poetry by Séan Ó Riordáin and Máire Bhuí Ní Laoghaire). In one location a large full-length poem should be inscribed in stone and laid out as paving (fig. 10.27).

Figure 10.27

Paving making the location of the medieval city walls in Kilkenny



(Source: Research and Dig, 2017)

- **Audio Trails**

Develop a series of audio trails linked with specific sites based on the three key messages and stories (i.e. people and place are one and the same, a place apart, an independent spirit). The trails should incorporate poetry, folklore, song, natural history and historical/archaeological information. QR codes for the various tracks should be present on the appropriate site interpretation panels (this depends on adequate broadband being available). The trail points should be linked to GPS. Should broadband connections be inadequate then portable devices may have to be considered. The audio trails could also be available fully downloadable on smart phones before starting a tour.

Two additional audio trails aimed at children should be created. One should focus on the daily life of a girl during the Medieval period under McCarthy rule. The other trail audio trail should focus on the daily life of a boy during the War of Independence and Civil War.

The audio guides should be complemented by a well-designed, easily to follow map. All audio trails should be available in Irish, English, German and French.

The audio guides should support and build upon Scéal Mhúscraí.

- **Book**

A 15,000-20,000 word book on the character of Múscraí should be commissioned (archaeology, folklore, music, landscape, history and the people). The book should be well designed and be dominated by high quality images. It should be written for a general audience. Versions should be available in Irish, English, German and French.

- **Tourist Office / Folklore Education & Research Centre, Archive / Café**

A year round tourist office and folklore education/research centre should be developed in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. A particular focus should be placed on promoting Múscraí's folklore. The centre should have a high quality café and gift shop selling local crafts and produce. The centre should also be the location of the proposed Gaeltacht tourism manager. The tourist office function will also facilitate visitors in the booking of accommodation and tickets for events. The role of a tourist office in promoting and managing tourism is essential. In 2012, 71% of tourists in a Fáilte Ireland commissioned survey said they obtained information from tourist offices when in West Cork²⁵⁰. The proposed tourism and events project manager should work from here.

²⁵⁰ *Holidaymaker study – West Cork 2012* (Dublin: Fáilte Ireland) 2

A folklore officer should be employed to work with local schools and students attending a hopefully enhanced Coláiste na Mumhan. They could also connect with various departments in third level institutes and facilitate visiting scholars. A formal connection should be developed with UCC's folklore department. The centre should be a dynamic space that complements and works closely with Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh. Indeed, it might be part of the same management structure. A publicly accessible research folklore archive holding written and recorded material should be established within the centre. Elements from Lismore Heritage Centre (www.discoverlismore.com), X-PO in Kilnaboy (www.deirdre-omahony.ie/biog/42-artworks/2000-s/51-x-po-killinaboy.html) and Beara Island Heritage and Information Centre could be used as models (www.bereisland.net/activities/heritage-centre/).

The centre will in all likelihood not be profitable. This should be accepted. Its role is to introduce visitors to the Gaeltacht, educate students and provide a place where walkers and cyclists can eat and go to the toilet. Another essential function is to be a year round meeting place for locals. The venue should have a sufficient annual budget to run temporary exhibitions and develop interesting education programmes. The café should be of McKenna Guides quality and focus on promoting local food and drink.

An excellent example of a café reusing a historic structure, promoting local food and creating high quality events that increase the number of visitors to a small town is Fennelly's in Callan, Co. Kilkenny (www.facebook.com/fennellysbridgest/).

- **Developing Structured Learning Activities**

Given the proper resources Múscraí can be a national centre of learning in folklore, nature and the Irish language. Developing a strong learning service for primary, secondary, tertiary and research students provides a great opportunity to protect and grow knowledge of Múscraí's cultural character. It also ensures visitors with appropriate motivations come to the Gaeltacht. All future primary and second level programmes should be linked with the National Curriculum. Connections should be developed with UCC's Department of Folklore and Ethnology and other relevant third level institute departments. The role of Coláiste na Mumhan is essential in this endeavour.

- **Residencies**

A residency programme should be created whereby free accommodation and a stipend is provided to researchers, artists and poets wishing to focus on Múscraí. Accommodation should only be provided in one of the villages. The scholars and artists should not be dispersed. The concentration of artists in one place has been shown to help rejuvenate towns and villages. Having the artists live close to each other will also aid the creative process. Workstations could be provided at the folklore education centre. The Ionad Culthúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh is to be centrally involved. Cill Rialaig could be used as a model (www.facebook.com/CillRialaigArtsCentre/).

- **Archaeological Research Framework**

A series of archaeological research questions should be created in order to fill the information gaps which exist about Múscraí. These questions will dictate the manner of all future onsite investigations. A partnership with the Department of Archaeology at UCC should be developed. Members of the academic staff working with local groups should formulate the questions and encourage students conducting research to gradually answer these over time. All information should be made available on the Múscraí history and folklore archive webpage (possibly hosted on the Heritage Map Viewer <https://heritagemaps.ie/>). Hard copies should be made available at the library at Baile Mhic Íre/Baile Bhúirne and the proposed folklore education centre in Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh. Consideration should be given to holding lectures, conferences and walking tours based on the research undertaken.

- **Excavation Open Days**

If archaeological excavation is deemed necessary, publicised open days should be held. Local schools should be encouraged to visit and take part (fig. 10.28).

Figure 10.28 **Blackfriary Archaeology Summer School in Trim, Co. Meath**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2013)

- **Events**

Create a Scoraíocht Festival where people are encouraged to meet in neighbours' houses and converse through Irish. The programme could include coffee mornings, dinner parties, music, dance and storytelling in a number of houses. A race/walk/march across Múscaí commemorating the O'Sullivan Bere march should be held each summer. As part of this event a medieval camp could be created along its route (fig. 10.29). This would also be a great opportunity to educate people about the Gaeltacht's Medieval Gaelic heritage. A more adventurous idea would be to create a two week endurance race going from Glengarriff to Leitrim. Each stage of the race would correspond to a day's march by O'Sullivan Bere. A bi-annual conference/festival focusing on local folklore and folklore studies in general could be held during the shoulder months of the tourist season (i.e. October, November, February, March, April).

Figure 10.29

Re-enactors cooking rabbit at Fethard Walled Towns Day, Co. Tipperary



(Source: Research and Dig, 2010)

10.4 Managing visitors in rural areas

It is envisioned that a series of heritage sites previously unknown or inaccessible to the public would become accessible. Some of these may be on farmland or on other private land. It is envisioned that all of these will be unmanned and free of charge to enter. It is essential that the rights of the landowners at whose discretion access is permitted be legally guaranteed. It is also essential that visitors be able to navigate the site relatively easily and in safety. Many of the future publicly accessible sites and routes will also cross or follow public roads or be accessible directly from one.

- **Risk Assessments and Safety Statements**

Risk assessments and safety statements must be conducted for all places and routes that are planned to be made accessible to the public. The assessments and statements are to be undertaken by a suitably qualified health and safety professional with deep experience of flexibly working in sensitive, historic landscapes. Where physical risk controls are required, they are to be designed and installed by suitably qualified personnel and be in keeping with the guidelines contained within the publication *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice* (2015)²⁵¹. All proposed management and physical risk control actions should be designed so as to cause as little impact as possible on the heritage values of the site or route. Proposed interventions may require archaeological consent or other permissions. Should planned safety and access actions be deemed to unduly impact upon the heritage values of a place, then access for the public should not be granted. Access should only be permitted to places where risk can be effectively managed as deemed by a

²⁵¹ Kenneth Dodd, *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*, (Visitor safety in the countryside group, 2015)

competent health and safety professional. On all sites where risk control interventions are planned there should be a consistency of approach. The behaviour and experiences of visitors should be monitored and visitor safety plans regularly reviewed.

Please note: there is a duty to maintain in a safe condition all infrastructure installed for the benefit of recreational users and visitors²⁵².

- **Maps, Guides and Website**

All maps and guides directed for use by members of the public and tourists in their exploration of the countryside must include appropriate safety information. The proposed new tourism website should contain safety information and photos of all publically accessible heritage sites.

- **Traffic**

Where walking routes are planned to cross roadways, the crossing points should be located away from blind corners and be such that a walker can judge when it is safe to cross. Likewise, the crossing points should be easily viewable by motorists so that they can safely stop before reaching the crossing point. Starting off points for visits to places of interest which are accessed from public roads must be positioned away from blind corners and be such that a visitor can judge when it is safe to cross. Likewise, the location of starting off points should be easily viewable for passing motorists so that they can safely stop, if so required. In all locations where walkers or cyclists are to use public roads, appropriate warning signage for both motorists (e.g. beware of pedestrians and cyclists) and recreational users (e.g. beware of traffic) must be put in place. Visitors using cars to explore Múscraí must only be directed to points of interest in the Gaeltacht where it is safe to park. Barriers stopping people from running from a path onto a road may also be required.

The recommendations below are primarily applicable to linear or looped walks on farmland and in forestries:

- **Waymarking Walks**

Ensure that there are adequate waymark posts along the route. This will counteract any uncertainty that walkers may have of not being on the correct route. It will also make sure they do not wander off the path.

- **Safety Signage**

Where required, clearly designed warning signs of possible hazards and responsibilities should be installed telling people how to behave when visiting various heritage sites (figures 10.30 & 10.31). The behaviour guidelines should be clearly set out on the new information panel. Depending on the site, visitors could be told to: lock their cars and ensure no valuables are visible, respect the archaeological monuments, not conduct metal detecting, remain on the route, keep dogs on a lead, close all gates, bring home all rubbish, not to climb the monuments, not to camp, not to light fires, etc. Visitors could also be told to be mindful of: livestock, loose masonry, uneven surfaces, uneven steps, traffic, deep water, slip hazards, trip hazards and sudden drops. On all sites visitors are to be reminded to be mindful of their own safety. The lack of toilets may also be mentioned. Parents should be reminded to supervise their children at all times. Finally, visitors must be told to respect the landowners' property and their right to privacy. All warning signs are to be in both Irish and English. Warning symbols are to be used whenever possible. Preferably, safety signage should create a welcoming first impression (e.g. the sentiment in fig. 10.31). It may be possible to integrate safety signage with site interpretation.

²⁵² *Recreation in the Irish Countryside: property rights, obligations and responsibilities* (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013) 8

Figure 10.30 Safety information in Wharram Percy, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2012)

Figure 10.31 Safety information in Rindoon, Co. Roscommon



(Source: Research and Dig, 2016)

- **Keeping walkers to the route and managing both erosion and flooding**

Along the vast majority of the Hadrian's Wall route in North England walkers go across open fields. Usually, a c.1.5m wide strip of grass is cut to mark the way (fig. 10.32). This ensures that walkers stay to the prescribed route and away from possible hazards. Over time as the grass is regularly trimmed it becomes more concentrated and better to walk on. Where possible and applicable, walks should be regularly trimmed to encourage better walking conditions. In marshy areas, either diversions should be well marked or remedial actions taken place. Such actions could include the installation of appropriate plastic grates in small boggy sections or paving (preferably of suitable natural stone) (fig. 10.33). In areas of erosion, temporary signage should be erected advising walkers to walk beside but not on the exposed areas (fig. 10.34). Alternatively, a new path may be cut into the grass close by. Temporary signage may have to be erected during the lambing and calving season. For steep slopes, appropriate paving (preferably natural stone) or appropriate timber steps may need to be installed (fig. 10.35). Overall, a flexible and adaptive approach should be taken as regards the management of visitors. Regular inspections should be carried out to ensure that walkers can easily navigate the site. Where practical, all trail management infrastructure (e.g. stiles, gates, barriers, bridges, fingerpost signage) should be made of high quality natural materials (figures 10.36 & 10.37). All proposed interventions to walks should be specified by a suitably qualified health and safety professional with deep experience of flexibly working in sensitive, historical landscapes. Proposed physical risk control interventions are to be in keeping with the guidelines contained within the publication *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice* (2015)²⁵³. Planned interventions may require archaeological consent or other permissions.

Figure 10.32 **Cut grass path in open field along Hadrian's Wall route, UK**

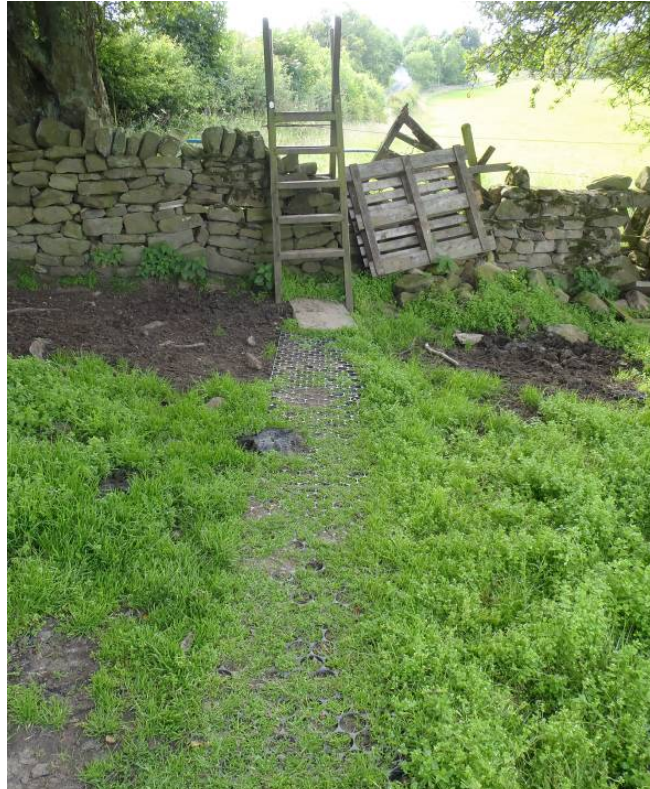


(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

²⁵³ Kenneth Dodd, *Managing Visitor Safety in the Historic Built Environment: principles and practice*, (Visitor safety in the countryside group, 2015)

Figure 10.33

Simple plastic mesh along Hadrian's Wall route, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

Figure 10.34

Information about erosion control and lambing, Hadrian's Wall, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2011)

Figure 10.35 **Natural stone steps, Hadrian's Wall, UK**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2012)

Figure 10.36 **Timber barrier at edge of public road, Cairngorms National Park, UK**



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

Figure 10.37

Timber bridge over stream in Cairngorms National Park, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2018)

- **Managing Localised Danger Spots**

In areas of particular danger, such as sharp drops (e.g. the souterrain at Rath Ghaiscigh as currently presented), visitors should be directed away from the particular location and warning signage erected (fig. 10.38). Barriers made preferably from timber may also be deemed necessary. Localised signage could also be erected warning people not to climb monuments. If the area of localised danger involves ruinous built heritage, then an appropriate conservation strategy should be devised and implemented.

Figure 10.38

Localised warning sign, Kirkham Priory, UK



(Source: Research and Dig, 2012)

11.0 Conclusion

Múscraí is an area of international heritage significance. The strength of the relationship between people, place, ritual and memory that exist in the Gaeltacht is rare in Western Europe. The depth, breadth and significance of the Gaeltacht's heritage took the whole project team by surprise. As we investigated, we uncovered layer after layer of meaning. Eventually, what emerged was a picture of a little known but vitally important cultural landscape.

The core significance of Múscraí is not dependant on a massive medieval cathedral or a stunning geological formation. Instead, its significance is bound up in a relationship between people and place that has deepened and grown more complex over time. What exists is a credit to the current inhabitants of Múscraí and those that went before them.

The tangible heritage of Múscraí is inextricably connected with the intangible. Public consultation has demonstrated that the majority of people in Múscraí interpret their heritage according to a very broad and holistic understanding.

For Ireland, Múscraí's cultural creativity and spirit of place acts as a reservoir of meaning and inspiration that helps counter the homogenising nature of globalisation.

The Gaeltacht is not a fossilised place where observers merely look back at what once was. The culture and the various constituent places and practices that make up the Gaeltacht is still vibrant. However, that vibrancy is under threat.

Gradual rural depopulation and reactions to cultural pressures caused by macro socio-economic trends, policy decisions and individual choices are eroding the cultural integrity of Múscraí. Such is the Gaeltacht's significance that the area demands recognition and requires insightful supports to be put in place. If these are not done, then the core heritage distinctiveness of the place and its cultural value to the State and Europe will slowly diminish to a point where Múscraí becomes a place of no great importance or vitality.

This document builds upon the excellent work of the Gaeltacht's various community groups and the efforts of staff in Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta and other State organisations. It is hoped that the policies and actions suggested within this heritage plan will help the people of Múscraí effectively manage the challenge of change, protect the core heritage significance of the area and make the Gaeltacht an even better place in which to work, live and visit.

Appendices

- Appendix A Local community groups in the Múscraí Gaeltacht
- Appendix B Comment sheet
- Appendix C Letter to An Bord Pleanála
- Appendix D The Ename Charter (Charter for the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites)

Appendix A Local community groups in the Múscaí Gaeltacht

• Acadamh Fódhla • Aisteoirí Chúil Aodha • Aisling Gheal • Aonach na Nollag • Banna Céilí Lachtaín Naofa • Bantracht na Tuaithe - Cill na Martra • Bia Gleann na Laoi • Bol Chumann - Baile Mhúirne • Bol Chumann - Chúil Aodha • Bolchumann Réidh na nDoirí • Bord Bainistíochta Coláiste Ghobnatan • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Abán Naofa • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Chúil Aodha - Barr d'Inse • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Lachtaín Naofa • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Mhuire • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Naomh Fhionnbarra • Bord Bainistíochta Scoil Réidh na nDoirí • Brian Ó Tuama Fund • Buíon Phóibairí Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh • Bunchlub Cúil Aodha • Bunchlub Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh • Cairde Mhúscaí san Eoraip • Coiste Staire Réidh na nDoirí • Club Gunna Baile Mhúirne agus Cúil Aodha • Club Óige an tSuláin • Club Óige Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Club Páistí Cúil Aodha • Club Sóisialta Barra agus Rónán Naofa • Coiste an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh • Coiste an Halla Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Coiste Aonach Ceoil Bhaile Mhúirne • Coiste Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscaí Teo • Coiste Comhcheangal Gaeltacht Mhúscaí • Coiste Dílleachtaí Shearnóbail • Coiste Féile na Laoch • Coiste Forbartha Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Coiste Forbartha Chill na Martra • Coiste Forbartha Réidh na nDoirí • Coiste Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh • Coiste Litríochta Mhúscaí Plean Teanga Mhúscaí Aguisín III – Páirtithe Leasmhara 280 • Coiste Lourdes • Coiste Mainistir - Cúil Aodha • Coiste na dTuismitheoirí Scoil Fhionnbarra • Coiste Bailte Slachtmhara Baile Mhúirne/Baile Mhic Íre • Coiste Bailte Slachtmhara Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Coiste Bailte Slachtmhara Cill na Martra • Coiste Bailte Slachtmhara Cúil Aodha • Coiste Paráid Lá le Pádraig, Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Coiste Scrín Ghobnatan • Coiste Tacaíochta Choláiste Samhraidh Baile Mhúirne • Coiste Tithíochta Uíbh Laoghaire Teo. • Coiste Tuismitheoirí Scoil Lachtaín Naofa • Coláiste na Mumhan • Coláiste Samhraidh - Baile Mhúirne (Gael Linn) • Comhairle Phobal & Ceantar Bhaile Mhúirne • Comhairle Tuismitheoirí Choláiste Ghobnatan • Comhaltas Cosanta Chúil Aodha • Comhlacht Tithe Sóisialta & Forbairt an tSuláin Teo. • Conradh na Gaeilge • Cór Ban Chúil Aodha • Cór Bhaile Mhúirne • Cór Bhéal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Cór Chill na Martra • Cór Chúil Aodha • Cór Réidh na nDoirí • Craobh Lachtaín Naofa, Cill na Martra (C.C.É.) • Cruinniú na bhFlúit • Cuan Barra - Spraio na Laoi • Cumann Bheachairí Mhúscaí • Cumann Ceamara Locha Lua • Cumann Drámaíochta Cill na Martra • Cumann Iascaireachta Guagán Barra • Cumann Peile Cill na Martra • Cumann Peile Naomh Abán Baile Mhúirne • Cumann Peile Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Cumann Peil na mBan Naomh Fionnbarra • Cumann Seana Ghluaisteáin agus Tarracóirí Mhúscaí • Cumann Siúlóide Chill na Martra • Cumann Staire Bhéal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Cumann Tuismitheoirí Scoil Abán Naofa • Dáimhscoil Mhúscaí Uí Fhloinn • Daonscoil an Ghuagáin • Dúlra & Dúchas Bhaile Mhúirne • Ealaíontóirí Mhúscaí • Éigse Dhiarmuid Uí Shúilleabháin Plean Teanga Mhúscaí Aguisín III – Páirtithe Leasmhara 281 • Féile Damhsa agus Ceoil Chorcaí agus Chiarraí • Feirmeoirí Aontaithe na hÉireann (I.F.A.) • Fo-choiste na Linne - Cúil Aodha • Glór na nGael Chill na Martra • Grúpa Chéad Freagróra Phobal Bhéal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Grúpa Tuismitheoirí agus Leanaí Bhéal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Grúpa Tuismitheoirí agus Leanaí Réidh na nDoirí • Grúpa Tuismitheoirí agus Leanaí Chúil Aodha • Grúpa Turasóireachta Gleann na Laoi • IMBOLC • Ionad Cultúrtha an Dochtúir Ó Loingsigh • Iontaobhas Fódhla • Irish Hill Farmers • Karate / Caráité • Lá Lus an Chromchinn • Laochra Óg Hurling & Camogie Club • Meitheal Pleanála Teanga Mhúscaí • Muintearas /Óige na Gaeltachta • Mullach na Réidh - Ionad Áise • Naomh Uinseann de Pól (Comhdháil Naomh Gobnait) • Naomh Uinseann de Pól (Craobh N. Rónáin Uíbh Laoire) • Peileadóirí an tSuláin • Pobal ar Aire (paróiste

Uíbh Laoire) • Pobal ar Aire Cill na Martra, Réidh na nDóirí, Baile Mhúirne, Cúil Aodha. • Ranganna Ceoil • Réadóirí Ceantair Ghobnatan Naofa • Réadóirí Chill na Martra • Rince Gaelach/Scoil Rince Uí Thuama • Séipéal Chúil Aodha • Séipeal Naomh Fhionnbarra & Rónáin, Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh • Séipéal Naomh Ghobnait, Baile Mhúirne • Séipéal Chill na Martra • Séipéal Réidh na nDóirí • Séipéal Ghuagán Barra • Slí Gaeltacht Mhúscraí • Special Olympics Irl, Múscraí • Taekwon-do • Taispeántas Baile Mhúirne/Cúil Aodha • Tionól Paróiste Uíbh Laoire • Torrach go Brollach

The above list was taken from the stakeholders list in appendix three of *Plean Teanga Mhúscraí* (2017).



Cruinniú Eolais Poiblí

15th November 2014

Ba mhaith linn bhúr dtuairimí a fháil maidir le dearú plean nua oidhreachta do Ghaeltacht Mhúscraí.

COMMENT SHEET

Please fill in this sheet. Your comments will be very helpful. Feel free to use the back of the page if you run out of space.

You can either leave the completed sheets with us today, drop them into the library in Baile Mhúirne, or post them to Liam Mannix, 12 Parnell Street, Kilkenny.

* * * * *

NAME (optional) _____

CONTACT DETAILS (optional)

What makes Muscraí special to you?

Do you have any concerns about the management of the Gaeltacht's heritage? If so, please give details:

Do you have any ideas about what should be in the plan or issues that you think we should address?

Appendix C Letter to An Bord Pleanála

To: An Bord Pleanála
From: The undersigned
Re: Coolnacaheragh ambush site and the N22

7 May 2010

We, the undersigned historians of the Irish War of Independence, are writing to support the preservation of the Coolnacaheragh battlefield, currently threatened by the proposed N22 dual carriageway. Coolnacaheragh (also referred to as Coolavokig and Ballyvourney in the literature) was one of the most notable ambushes of the Irish War of Independence, and for cultural and educational reasons the site should be retained in its current state.

The Coolnacaheragh ambush was one of the largest and longest encounters of the War of Independence. Nearly 200 combatants exchanged fire for four hours, and then continued a six-hour running fight across miles of broken country. With Clonbannin (5 March 1921) and Crossbarry (19 March 1921), Coolnacaheragh reflected the IRA's growing guerrilla sophistication in early 1921. In three large-scale engagements, the Cork IRA proved its ability to successfully engage strong British forces in nearly conventional warfare settings. Coolnacaheragh should thus be classified as one of the IRA's most ambitious operations of the entire conflict. The British response at Coolnacaheragh was also notable in its use of combined arms tactics, with the deployment of infantry, armour, and air units to the scene.

Strategically, the Coolnacaheragh ambush secured the IRA's safe haven in the Darrynasggart Mountains, along the Cork/Kerry border. After the IRA's damage to the strong Auxiliary Cadet force at Coolnacaheragh, the Crown forces proved unwilling to enter the region except in overwhelming strength. The area became the redoubt of the Munster IRA, providing refuge to the Cork No. 1 Brigade and Cork No. 3 Brigade flying columns (the latter after the Crossbarry fight). It also hosted the headquarters of the First Southern Division, which emerged as the critical formation of the ensuing Civil War. The Coolnacaheragh Ambush was essential to the establishment of the largest Republican safe haven of the 1920-21 period.

Reflecting its historical importance, the ambush appears in numerous histories of the Anglo-Irish conflict. For example, Michael Hopkinson's *The Irish War of Independence* (2002), the standard work on the military conflict, provides Coolnacaheragh with as much space as Kilmichael. William Kautt (professor at the US Army's Command and Staff College) uses the ambush as a key case study in his new *The Irish Rebellion, 1919-1921: Ambushes and Armour* (2010). The engagement is also described in John Borgonovo's *Florence and Josephine O'Donoghue's War of Independence* (2006), and Richard Abbott's *Police Casualties in Ireland* (2000). *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story* (the 1961 edition) dedicates an entire chapter to the battle, as do two memoirs written by IRA participants (Charlie Browne's *The Story of the Seventh* (1971), and Michael Ó Suilleabháin's *Where the Mountain Men have Sown* (1965)).

In its current state, Coolnacaheragh offers one of the most attractive opportunities in Ireland for battlefield archaeologists. British observers reported impressive IRA entrenchments on the site, the remnants of which will be destroyed by the proposed road-works. Changes to the landscape will further eliminate key ground features that are essential to understanding the battle. This will ruin the site's potential as an interpretive centre, just a few years before the centenary of the Easter Rising. The loss of such an educational, cultural, and tourism resource must be avoided.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Michael Hopkinson (University of Stirling) – author of *The Irish War of Independence* (2002)
[michaelhopkinson@btinternet.com]

Prof William Kautt (US Army Command and General Staff College, Kansas) – author of *The Irish Rebellion, 1919-1921: Ambushes and Armour* (2010)
[william.kautt2@us.army.mil]

(PTO)

Dr Peter Hart (Memorial University of Newfoundland) – author of *The IRA and its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (1990) and *The IRA at War 1916-1923* (2003)
[phart@mun.ca]

Dr John Borgonovo (University College Cork) – author of *Florence and Josephine O'Donoghue's War of Independence* (2006)
[johnnyborg@yahoo.com]

Prof Diarmaid Ferriter (University College Dublin) – author of *The Transformation of Ireland* (2004)
[diarmaid.ferriter@ucd.ie]

Dr Marie Coleman (Queen's University Belfast) – author of *County Longford and the Irish Revolution, 1910-1923* (2003)
[m.coleman@qub.ac.uk]

Dr Donal Ó Drisceoil (University College Cork) – historical advisor, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006)
[d.odriscoll@ucc.ie]

Dr Ruan O'Donnell (University of Limerick) – author of introduction to *Limerick's Fighting Story 1916-21 - Told By The Men Who Made It* (2009)
[Ruan.ODonnell@ul.ie]

Mr Gabriel Doherty (University College Cork) – editor, Mercier Press 'Military History of the Irish Civil War' series
[g.doherty@ucc.ie]

Note: *all of the signatories are active in researching/teaching the Irish War of Independence. The publications listed indicate only their most recent or relevant contributions. Due to the logistical difficulties in having everyone personally sign the letter, email addresses are provided if verification is required.*

The ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites

PROPOSED FINAL DRAFT

Revised under the Auspices of
the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee
on Interpretation and Presentation

10 April 2007

Preamble

Definitions

Objectives

Principles

PREAMBLE

Since its establishment in 1965 as a worldwide organisation of heritage professionals dedicated to the study, documentation, and protection of cultural heritage sites, ICOMOS has striven to promote the conservation ethic in all its activities and to help enhance public appreciation of humanity's material heritage in all its forms and diversity.

As noted in the Charter of Venice (1964) "It is essential that the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions." Subsequent ICOMOS charters have taken up that mission, establishing professional guidelines for specific conservation challenges and encouraging effective communication about the importance of heritage conservation in every region of the world.

These earlier ICOMOS charters stress the importance of public communication as an essential part of the larger conservation process (variously describing it as "dissemination," "popularization," "presentation," and "interpretation"). They implicitly acknowledge that every act of heritage conservation—within all the world's cultural traditions—is by its nature a communicative act.

From the vast range of surviving material remains and intangible values of past communities and civilisations, the choice of what to preserve, how to preserve it, and how it is to be presented to the public are all elements of site interpretation. They represent every generation's vision of what is significant, what is important, and why material remains from the past should be passed on to generations yet to come.

The need for a clear rationale, standardised terminology, and accepted professional principles for Interpretation and Presentation^{*} is evident. In recent years, the dramatic expansion of interpretive activities at many cultural heritage sites and the introduction of elaborate interpretive technologies and new economic strategies for the

^{*} See definitions on page 3.

marketing and management of cultural heritage sites have created new complexities and aroused basic questions that are central to the goals of both conservation and the public appreciation of cultural heritage sites throughout the world:

- What are the accepted and acceptable goals for the Interpretation and Presentation of cultural heritage sites?
- What principles should help determine which technical means and methods are appropriate in particular cultural and heritage contexts?
- What general ethical and professional considerations should help shape Interpretation and Presentation in light of its wide variety of specific forms and techniques?

The purpose of this Charter is therefore to define the basic principles of Interpretation and Presentation as essential components of heritage conservation efforts and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites.⁴

⁴ Although the principles and objectives of this Charter may equally apply to off-site interpretation, its main focus is interpretation and presentation at, or in the immediate vicinity of, cultural heritage sites.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of the present Charter,

Interpretation refers to the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself.

Presentation more specifically denotes the carefully planned communication of interpretive content through the arrangement of interpretive information, physical access, and interpretive infrastructure at a cultural heritage site. It can be conveyed through a variety of technical means, including, yet not requiring, such elements as informational panels, museum-type displays, formalized walking tours, lectures and guided tours, and multimedia applications and websites.

Interpretive infrastructure refers to physical installations, facilities, and areas at, or connected with a cultural heritage site that may be specifically utilised for the purposes of interpretation and presentation including those supporting interpretation via new and existing technologies.

Site interpreters refers to staff or volunteers at a cultural heritage site who are permanently or temporarily engaged in the public communication of information relating to the values and significance of the site.

Cultural Heritage Site refers to a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance.

OBJECTIVES

In recognizing that interpretation and presentation are part of the overall process of cultural heritage conservation and management, this Charter seeks to establish seven cardinal principles, upon which Interpretation and Presentation—in whatever form or medium is deemed appropriate in specific circumstances—should be based.

Principle 1: Access and Understanding

Principle 2: Information Sources

Principle 3: Attention to Setting and Context

Principle 4: Preservation of Authenticity

Principle 5: Planning for Sustainability

Principle 6: Concern for Inclusiveness

Principle 7: Importance of Research, Training, and Evaluation

Following from these seven principles, the objectives of this Charter are to:

- 1. Facilitate understanding and appreciation** of cultural heritage sites and foster public awareness and engagement in the need for their protection and conservation.
- 2. Communicate the meaning** of cultural heritage sites to a range of audiences through careful, documented recognition of significance, through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.
- 3. Safeguard the tangible and intangible values** of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.
- 4. Respect the authenticity** of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.

-
5. **Contribute to the sustainable conservation** of cultural heritage sites, through promoting public understanding of, and participation in, ongoing conservation efforts, ensuring long-term maintenance of the interpretive infrastructure and regular review of its interpretive contents.
 6. **Encourage inclusiveness** in the interpretation of cultural heritage sites, by facilitating the involvement of stakeholders and associated communities in the development and implementation of interpretive programmes.
 7. **Develop technical and professional guidelines** for heritage interpretation and presentation, including technologies, research, and training. Such guidelines must be appropriate and sustainable in their social contexts.

PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Access and Understanding

Interpretation and presentation programmes should facilitate physical and intellectual access by the public to cultural heritage sites.

1.1 Effective interpretation and presentation should enhance personal experience, increase public respect and understanding, and communicate the importance of the conservation of cultural heritage sites.

1.2 Interpretation and presentation should encourage individuals and communities to reflect on their own perceptions of a site and assist them in establishing a meaningful connection to it. The aim should be to stimulate further interest, learning, experience, and exploration.

1.3 Interpretation and presentation programmes should identify and assess their audiences demographically and culturally. Every effort should be made to communicate the site's values and significance to its varied audiences.

1.4 The diversity of language among visitors and associated communities connected with a heritage site should be taken into account in the interpretive infrastructure.

1.5 Interpretation and presentation activities should also be physically accessible to the public, in all its variety.

1.6 In cases where physical access to a cultural heritage site is restricted due to conservation concerns, cultural sensitivities, adaptive re-use, or safety issues, interpretation and presentation should be provided off-site.

Principle 2: Information Sources

Interpretation and presentation should be based on evidence gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.

2.1 Interpretation should show the range of oral and written information, material remains, traditions, and meanings attributed to a site. The sources of this information should be documented, archived, and made accessible to the public.

2.2 Interpretation should be based on a well researched, multidisciplinary study of the site and its surroundings. It should also acknowledge that meaningful interpretation necessarily includes reflection on alternative historical hypotheses, local traditions, and stories.

2.3 At cultural heritage sites where traditional storytelling or memories of historical participants provide an important source of information about the significance of the site, interpretive programmes should incorporate these oral testimonies—either indirectly, through the facilities of the interpretive infrastructure, or directly, through the active participation of members of associated communities as on-site interpreters.

2.4 Visual reconstructions, whether by artists, architects, or computer modelers, should be based upon detailed and systematic analysis of environmental, archaeological, architectural, and historical data, including analysis of written, oral and iconographic sources, and photography. The information sources on which such visual renderings are based should be clearly documented and alternative reconstructions based on the same evidence, when available, should be provided for comparison.

2.5 Interpretation and presentation programmes and activities should also be documented and archived for future reference and reflection.

Principle 3: Context and Setting

The Interpretation and Presentation of cultural heritage sites should relate to their wider social, cultural, historical, and natural contexts and settings.

3.1 Interpretation should explore the significance of a site in its multi-faceted historical, political, spiritual, and artistic contexts. It should consider all aspects of the site's cultural, social, and environmental significance and values.

3.2 The public interpretation of a cultural heritage site should clearly distinguish and date the successive phases and influences in its evolution. The contributions of all periods to the significance of a site should be respected.

3.3 Interpretation should also take into account all groups that have contributed to the historical and cultural significance of the site.

3.4 The surrounding landscape, natural environment, and geographical setting are integral parts of a site's historical and cultural significance, and, as such, should be considered in its interpretation.

3.5 Intangible elements of a site's heritage such as cultural and spiritual traditions, stories, music, dance, theater, literature, visual arts, local customs and culinary heritage should be considered in its interpretation.

3.6 The cross-cultural significance of heritage sites, as well as the range of perspectives about them based on scholarly research, ancient records, and living traditions, should be considered in the formulation of interpretive programmes.

Principle 4: Authenticity

The Interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites must respect the basic tenets of authenticity in the spirit of the Nara Document (1994).

4.1 Authenticity is a concern relevant to human communities as well as material remains. The design of a heritage interpretation programme should respect the traditional social functions of the site and the cultural practices and dignity of local residents and associated communities.

4.2 Interpretation and presentation should contribute to the conservation of the authenticity of a cultural heritage site by communicating its significance without adversely impacting its cultural values or irreversibly altering its fabric.

4.3 All visible interpretive infrastructures (such as kiosks, walking paths, and information panels) must be sensitive to the character, setting and the cultural and natural significance of the site, while remaining easily identifiable.

4.4 On-site concerts, dramatic performances, and other interpretive programmes must be carefully planned to protect the significance and physical surroundings of the site and minimise disturbance to the local residents.

Principle 5: Sustainability

The interpretation plan for a cultural heritage site must be sensitive to its natural and cultural environment, with social, financial, and environmental sustainability among its central goals.

5.1 The development and implementation of interpretation and presentation programmes should be an integral part of the overall planning, budgeting, and management process of cultural heritage sites.

5.2 The potential effect of interpretive infrastructure and visitor numbers on the cultural value, physical characteristics, integrity, and natural environment of the site must be fully considered in heritage impact assessment studies.

5.3 Interpretation and presentation should serve a wide range of conservation, educational and cultural objectives. The success of an interpretive programme should not be evaluated solely on the basis of visitor attendance figures or revenue.

5.4 Interpretation and presentation should be an integral part of the conservation process, enhancing the public's awareness of specific conservation problems encountered at the site and explaining the efforts being taken to protect the site's physical integrity and authenticity.

5.5 Any technical or technological elements selected to become a permanent part of a site's interpretive infrastructure should be designed and constructed in a manner that will ensure effective and regular maintenance.

5.6 Interpretive programmes should aim to provide equitable and sustainable economic, social, and cultural benefits to all stakeholders through education, training and employment opportunities in site interpretation programmes.

Principle 6: Inclusiveness

The Interpretation and Presentation of cultural heritage sites must be the result of meaningful collaboration between heritage professionals, host and associated communities, and other stakeholders.

6.1 The multidisciplinary expertise of scholars, community members, conservation experts, governmental authorities, site managers and interpreters, tourism operators, and other professionals should be integrated in the formulation of interpretation and presentation programmes.

6.2 The traditional rights, responsibilities, and interests of property owners and host and associated communities should be noted and respected in the planning of site interpretation and presentation programmes.

6.3 Plans for expansion or revision of interpretation and presentation programmes should be open for public comment and involvement. It is the right and responsibility of all to make their opinions and perspectives known.

6.4 Because the question of intellectual property and traditional cultural rights is especially relevant to the interpretation process and its expression in various communication media (such as on-site multimedia presentations, digital media, and printed materials), legal ownership and right to use images, texts, and other interpretive materials should be discussed, clarified, and agreed in the planning process.

Principle 7: Research, Training, and Evaluation

Continuing research, training, and evaluation are essential components of the interpretation of a cultural heritage site.

7.1 The interpretation of a cultural heritage site should not be considered to be completed with the completion of a specific interpretive infrastructure. Continuing research and consultation are important to furthering the understanding and appreciation of a site's significance. Regular review should be an integral element in every heritage interpretation programme.

7.2 The interpretive programme and infrastructure should be designed and constructed in a way that facilitates ongoing content revision and/or expansion.

7.3 Interpretation and presentation programmes and their physical impact on a site should be continuously monitored and evaluated, and periodic changes made on the basis of both scientific and scholarly analysis and public feedback. Visitors and members of associated communities as well as heritage professionals should be involved in this evaluation process.

7.4 Every interpretation programme should be considered as an educational resource for people of all ages. Its design should take into account its possible uses in school curricula, informal and lifelong learning programmes, communications and information media, special activities, events, and seasonal volunteer involvement.

7.5 The training of qualified professionals in the specialised fields of heritage interpretation and presentation, such as content creation, management, technology, guiding, and education, is a crucial objective. In addition, basic academic conservation programmes should include a component on interpretation and presentation in their courses of study.

7.6 On-site training programmes and courses should be developed with the objective of updating and informing heritage and interpretation staff of all levels and associated and host communities of recent developments and innovations in the field.

7.7 International cooperation and sharing of experience are essential to developing and maintaining standards in interpretation methods and technologies. To that end, international conferences, workshops and exchanges of professional staff as well as national and regional meetings should be encouraged. These will provide an opportunity for the regular sharing of information about the diversity of interpretive approaches and experiences in various regions and cultures.