



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report 313408-22

Development	Use of the site as a therapeutic farm for the provision of a healthcare facility.
Location	Former Portee Stables, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare.
Planning Authority	Kildare County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	21/1286
Applicant(s)	Kyrie Therapeutic Farm CLG
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party v. Decision Third Party v. Condition
Appellant(s)	(1) Bernard J. Durkan TD (2) Mildred Hegarty (3) Aidan Bailey & Others
Observer(s)	(1) Patricia Stacke-Kelly (2) Elizabeth Cullen

Date of Site Inspection

26th May 2023

Inspector

Louise Treacy

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site has a stated area of 22.5 ha and is located approx. 1.2 km south-east of the village of Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare. The site is largely rectangular in configuration and comprises agricultural land characterised by 2 no. large fields subdivided by a hedgerow which generally extends across the site in a north/south direction. The larger of the fields is located to the east of the overall landholding, with the smaller located to the west. The site was formerly in equestrian use, with agricultural activity noted to be underway at the time of the inspection.
- 1.2. The site is accessed via local road L2008 which extends in a north-south direction adjacent to the eastern site boundary. A recessed agricultural entrance is located in the south-eastern corner of the site and leads to a tree-lined avenue which extends along the length of the southern boundary. The avenue terminates at a cluster of farm buildings located in the south-western site corner which were associated with the former equestrian use. Three polytunnel structures were in place adjacent to the farm buildings at the time of the inspection. A further 2 no. barn structures are located on the eastern side of the internal hedgerow, which are accessed off the main avenue. An overhead power line extends across the eastern portion of the site in a north-south direction. Two individual standing stones are also in place on the southern and western portions of the site.
- 1.3. The site is bounded by agricultural / equestrian lands to the north, south and west. The adjoining land to the north is also characterised by 3 no. lakes. A row of semi-detached, single-storey dwellings adjoins the site to the east/north-east fronting onto the L2008. The rear gardens of these dwellings back onto the appeal site.
- 1.4. The Grand Canal is located approx. 990 m to the north of the site entrance, with Ardclough village located on the northern side of the canal approx. 1.2 km from the site. The canal is traversed by a single-carriageway bridge known as Henry Bridge. No continuous footpath connection exists between the subject site and Ardclough village, with only a short section of footpath provided along the western side of the public road to the front of the adjoining dwellings.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development will consist of the use of the site as a therapeutic farm for the provision of a healthcare facility for up to 40 guests to operate as a step-down mental health facility. The therapeutic farm will provide therapeutic services with the farm as an essential element of the overall programme of healing and recovery.
- 2.2. The application proposes the demolition of an existing farm building on site and other structures. The new build elements will comprise:
- A new 2-storey communal building (c. 1,564 m²) located centrally within the farm comprising of kitchen / dining, office, therapy, meeting, yoga and meditation and various other rooms.
 - 8 no. single-storey residential buildings to the west of the communal building to provide accommodation for up to 40 guests. These will comprise 4 x 4-bedroom buildings and 4 x 6-bedroom buildings.
 - A single-storey reception building (c. 318 m²) to the west of the site, adjacent to the existing farm buildings, to provide reception and ancillary facilities associated with the proposed use.
 - A single-storey shop/café building (c. 327 m²) to provide a small-scale shop and café which will be linked to the overall use of the site.
- 2.3. The proposed buildings will be clad in vertical timber cladding at regular spacing; the roofs will be vertical timber cladding at regular spacing or dark grey/black zinc roofs. 41 car parking spaces are proposed for the therapeutic farm use and 20 car parking spaces are proposed for the shop/café.
- 2.4. The remainder of the site will be used as agriculture, with which the therapeutic use will be intrinsically linked. This will include general planting and layout of the farm and informal landscaping, including the provision of a lake for irrigation and ecology, internal farm tracks and roads, fencing and planting.
- 2.5. On-site wastewater treatment is proposed and all other associated works.
- 2.6. The new reception building is proposed adjacent to the existing farm buildings in the south-western corner of the site. The proposed community building and the 8 no. residential buildings are located adjacent to the western site boundary. The

proposed farm shop/café is located adjacent to the 2 no. existing barn structures on the eastern side of the internal hedgerow. The percolation area for the proposed on-site wastewater treatment system is located adjacent to the northern site boundary. The remainder of the site will remain undeveloped and will be used for farming and therapy related purposes.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. The Planning Authority issued Notification of the Decision to Grant Permission for the proposed development subject to 32 no. conditions on 30th March 2022.
- 3.1.2. Condition no. 2 requires the following:
 - (a) The site shall be used for agricultural and therapeutic purposes on a not-for-profit basis and the communal building, residential buildings, reception and shop/café shall be operated in a single ownership and not sold, let or leased separately.
 - (b) There shall be no change of use of any building within the development unless authorised by a separate grant of permission.
 - (c) Details of the opening/closing times for the shop/café shall be agreed with the Planning Authority.
- 3.1.3. Condition no. 16 requires a no left-turn arrangement and signage to be installed at the site entrance during the construction period, with details and drawings of same to be agreed with the Planning Authority.
- 3.1.4. Condition no. 18 requires the developer to provide a 2 m footpath and lighting along the entire front boundary of the site to connect to the existing footpaths leading to Ardclough village, with details and drawings to be agreed with the Planning Authority.
- 3.1.5. Condition no. 19 requires the applicant to provide 2 m footpaths within the development.
- 3.1.6. Condition no. 23 requires the developer to complete a Stage 3 Road Safety Audit prior to the taking in charge of the road infrastructure.

3.1.7. Condition no. 26 requires that any heating oil or chemical storage tank shall be sited no nearer than 10 m from a water feature and no closer than 50 m from a drinking water well.

3.1.8. All other conditions are generally standard in nature.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports (29th October 2021 and 30th March 2022)

3.2.2. Following an initial assessment of the application, Kildare County Council's Planning Officer recommended that Further Information be requested in relation to 16 no. items as summarised below:

(1) The applicant is requested to submit details of the proposed lighting scheme at the site having regard to impacts to residential amenity and biodiversity.

(2) The applicant is requested to clarify if any boundary treatments are proposed on the peripheries of the site, particularly having regard to concerns raised regarding security to adjoining residences and lakes.

(3) The applicant is requested to submit a drawing showing haul routes for proposed construction and design details of proposed passing areas along the L2008 which will be required during the construction period and details of resurfacing, drainage and road widths required to provide these passing areas.

(4) Any proposed passing bays shall be agreed with the Municipal District Engineer in advance. The applicant shall submit letters from landowners confirming agreement to any hedge trimming, tree removal and pavement works as required.

(5) The applicant is requested to provide a Traffic Management Plan for all vehicles including staff, delivery and HGV traffic during the construction and operational phases.

(6) The applicant is requested to indicate set down/unloading areas for The Village, Communal Eatery and Therapy/Yoga Hall buildings.

(7) The applicant is requested to detail road widths and surfacing on existing and proposed roads.

(8) The applicant is requested to indicate the location of any proposed footpaths, including their proposed dimensions and surfacing.

(9) The applicant is requested to indicate car parking dimensions.

(10) The applicant is to prepare and submit an independent Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 for the proposed development and surrounding area, with the recommendations to be incorporated into the detailed design.

(11) The applicant is requested to submit a plan detailing how engagement and liaison with local residents will be established and how it is proposed to keep the public and other relevant bodies informed of impending disruption to traffic flow in the area of the proposed works.

(12) The applicant is requested to submit details of warning signage along the haulage routes and in the vicinity of the proposed site entrance.

(13) The applicant is requested to provide details of turning facilities for fire appliances including an auto-track analysis.

(14) Design details of proposed grease trap to be provided and revised site layout plan showing the kitchen waste drainage layout and the location of the proposed grease separator(s).

(15) Submit a Site Suitability Report for the proposed wastewater treatment system.

(16) Submit detailed and labelled cross-section drawing(s) of the site showing the following:

(a) the ground level at the buildings, (b) the gradient of the pipe from the buildings to the septic tank/wastewater treatment system, (c) a cross section of the percolation area/polishing filter and the depth from ground level to water table/bedrock.

3.2.3. The applicant submitted a response to the Request for Further Information on 24th February 2022 which was deemed to contain Significant Additional Information and the application was readvertised to the public. The applicant's response can be summarised as follows:

3.2.4. **Item No. 1:** Details of the lighting proposals are set out in the Site Lighting Strategy Report and accompanying lighting drawing prepared by OCSC. The proposals comprise lighting along the pedestrian walkways, lighting in the car parks, wall

lighting at the shop/café and reception buildings and along the entrance road.

Mitigation measures are proposed with respect to impacts on nocturnal species. The lighting scheme has been designed to ensure there is no impact on nearby residential amenities.

- 3.2.5. **Item No. 2:** It is proposed that the boundaries to the site will be agricultural in nature and retained as hedgerows with normal agricultural fencing where required. Where required, hedgerows will be augmented with additional planting of native species. The agricultural fencing and planting will deter guests from leaving the site to the north-west. The proposed development is not a secured facility, and no risks exist that require further security.
- 3.2.6. **Item No. 3:** The appointed contractor will be required to prepare a Construction Management Plan (CMP) which will ensure that construction deliveries are only made from the south. The proposed haul route comprises good quality rural roads which are used extensively for agricultural traffic, construction traffic, equestrian trucks and waste collection trucks. There is no need for passing bays. No abnormal or large loads are required. The CMP will ensure that Henry Bridge is not used for construction traffic.
- 3.2.7. **Item No. 4:** Passing bays are not required outside the site.
- 3.2.8. **Item No. 5:** A Current, Construction and Operational Traffic Assessment has been prepared. The assessment demonstrates that construction traffic will be at a similar level to that which was experienced during the site's former use as a stud farm. Once operational, traffic levels will be lower than those associated with the previous use and during construction. The proposed use will not lead to an increase in trips along the L2008, Boston Hill and Henry Bridge.
- 3.2.9. **Item No. 6:** It is proposed that all guests arriving at the site will enter the facility through the reception building. Visitors and staff should not go directly to the Village, Community Eatery and Therapy/Yoga Hall buildings. To provide for exceptional circumstances, a set-down area has been provided adjacent to the Community Building as requested.
- 3.2.10. **Item No. 7:** The drawings prepared by OCSC indicate the width of the existing and proposed roads.

- 3.2.11. **Item No. 8:** The proposed paths are shown on the site plans and are generally 2 m in width. They will be constructed of self-binding gravel which will provide a low-impact, durable and natural surface around the farm. Large areas of hardstanding will be avoided. Level access to buildings will be provided.
- 3.2.12. **Item No. 9:** All proposed car parking spaces measure 2.5 m x 5 m, with disabled spaces having an additional 1.2 m around each space.
- 3.2.13. **Item No. 10:** An independent Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit has been prepared. The RSA identified 5 no. problems and the scheme has been amended to address same.
- 3.2.14. **Item No. 11:** Details have been provided of the public consultation which has been undertaken by the applicant. It is not envisaged that there will be any disruption to traffic flow during construction. A mail drop will be undertaken to local residents if required.
- 3.2.15. **Item No. 12:** The construction haul route will be enforced by detailed instructions to contractors, deliveries and visitors. Temporary signage will be in place at the entrance to remind those leaving the site that it is inappropriate to turn.
- 3.2.16. **Item No. 13:** Turning circles in line with Technical Guidance Document B: Fire Safety are proposed.
- 3.2.17. **Item No. 14:** It is proposed to provide a Kent Stainless Steel GIK 9520 (or similar) external grease interceptor, the location of which is shown.
- 3.2.18. **Item No. 15:** A Site Suitability Report has been provided which includes a layout plan of the wastewater treatment system.
- 3.2.19. **Item No. 16:** The requested wastewater treatment drawings have been provided.
- 3.2.20. Following an assessment of the submitted information, Kildare County Council's Planning Officer concluded that the proposed development does not fit into any typical category of development and appears to be the first of its kind in the State. It was further considered that the proposed development is of a scale and nature which is appropriate to the rural, agricultural nature of the site, and it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

3.2.21. **Other Technical Reports**

- 3.2.22. **Environment Section (12th October 2021 and 17th March 2022):** Initial recommendation that Further Information be requested in relation to: (1) detailed design of grease trap (if proposed), (2) revised site layout plan showing the kitchen waste drainage layout and location of proposed grease separator(s), (3) site suitability report for the wastewater treatment system, (4) site layout plan showing the location and design of the wastewater treatment system and polishing filter, (5) detailed and labelled cross-section drawing showing the ground level at the dwelling, the gradient of the pipe from the dwelling to the septic tank/wastewater treatment system, the invert level of the percolation trench or polishing filter, cross section of the percolation area/polishing filter and the depth from ground level to water table/bedrock.
- 3.2.23. Following the applicant's Further Information submission, no objections arose to the proposed development subject to conditions.
- 3.2.24. **Roads, Transportation & Public Safety (26th October 2021 and 28th March 2022):** Initial recommendation that Further Information be requested in relation to: (1) concerns regarding HGV and LGV delivery vehicles accessing narrow local roads during the construction phase of the development, (2) passing bays to be agreed with Municipal Area Engineer, with the applicant to submit letters from landowners confirming agreement to any hedge trimming, tree removal and pavement works, (3) a Traffic Management Plan for all vehicles including staff, delivery and HGVs, (4) set down/unloading areas for The Village, Community Eatery and Therapy/Yoga Hall buildings, (5) details of road widths and surfacing on existing and proposed roads, (6) footpaths to be indicated including their proposed dimensions and surfacing, (7) all car parking dimensions to be indicated, (8) an independent Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit to be submitted and the recommendations incorporated into the detailed design, (9) a plan detailing how engagement and liaison with local residents will be established and how the public and other relevant bodies will be informed of impending disruption to traffic flow in the area of the proposed works, (10) details of warning signage along the proposed haul routes and in the vicinity of the proposed site entrance.

- 3.2.25. Following the applicant's Further Information submission, no objections arose to the proposed development subject to conditions.
- 3.2.26. **Water Services (21st September 2021):** No objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.
- 3.2.27. **Fire Officer (21st October 2021 and 30th March 2022):** The applicant is requested to submit details of turning facilities for fire appliances, with an auto-track analysis carried out to verify the proposed layouts.
- 3.2.28. Report of 30th March 2022 notes that the requirements of the Chief Fire Officer in relation to firefighting water supply and the obtaining of Fire Safety Certificates must be complied with.
- 3.2.29. **Heritage Officer (29th October 2021):** Recommends that the mitigation measures outlined in Section 5.2 of the applicant's Ecological Impact Assessment be attached to any grant of permission and concludes that the proposed development would not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.
- 3.2.30. **Environmental Health Officer:** No objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

- 3.3.1. **Irish Water:** No objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

- 3.4.1. 14 no. third-party observations were made on the application by: (1) Brona Butler on behalf of Boston Road Residents, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (2) Thomas McLoughlin, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (3) Barry Conheady, Boston View, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (4) Peter J. Lawlor, Clonaghilis, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (5) Richard Brophy, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (6) Gerard Lawlor, Boston, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (7) Bernard J. Durkan T.D., Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, (8) Aidan Bailey, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (9) Roy Butler, 1511 Boston Road, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (10) Ger Cullen, 1512 Boston Road, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (11) J. Collett, Boston Road, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (12) Mildred Hegarty, Boston Road, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (13) Niall Kennelly, Bridge House, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (14) James Lawless T.D., Unit 22 Wolfe Tone Street, Naas, Co. Kildare.

- 3.4.2. The issues which are raised can be summarised as follows: (1) excessive scale of development on agricultural land – unsympathetic development in rural area, (2) substantial change of use of the land – commercial development, (3) increased traffic, (4) Henry’s Bridge across the canal must be protected, (5) security concerns, (6) overlooking and loss of privacy of adjoining residential properties, (7) impact on views, (8) noise and light pollution, (9) impacts on local wildlife including bats, (10) loss of children’s play space, (11) no local need for shop/café, (12) shallow soil depths with limestone bedrock, (13) impact on percolation area of the Boston Cottages Sewerage Group Scheme, (14) impact on right of way to service group sewerage tank, (15) groundwater pollution, (16) insufficient engagement with local residents, (17) use does not comply with agricultural land use zoning, (18) visual impacts, (19) extent of farming activities is unclear, (20) impact on local property values, (21) safety concerns regarding access to neighbouring lakes, (21) lack of local infrastructure, (22) insufficient footpath infrastructure along local road, (23) pluvial flood risk not clarified, (24) the proposed health care facility is supported, (25) no benefit to local community.
- 3.4.3. A further 12 no. observations were made on the applicant’s Significant Further Information submission by: (1) Peter J. Lawlor, Clonaghilis, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (2) Ger Cullen, 1512 Boston Road, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (3) Richard O’Sullivan, Bishops court, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (4) James Moody, The Gallops, Boston Road, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (5) Michelle M. Barry, Boston Stables, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (6) Derek Barry, Boston Stables, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (7) James Collett, 1517 Boston Road, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (8) Boston Road Residents, c/o Brona Butler, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (9) Mildred Hegarty, Boston Road, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, (10) Bernard J. Durkan, Dáil Éireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, (11) Niall Kennelly, Bridge House, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, (12) Roy Butler, 1511 Boston Road, Ardclough, Co. Kildare.
- 3.4.4. The new issues which are raised can be summarised as follows: (1) inaccurate traffic figures presented in the Road Safety Report, (2) surface water contamination, (3) inconsistencies in mapping of wastewater treatment system, (3) inadequate capacity in the mains water supply system, (4) demand for power and telecommunications connections not addressed, (5) water requirement for irrigation not addressed, (6)

farm is not economically feasible, (7) previous refusals of permission for one-off houses at this location.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. None.

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

5.1.1. While the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 was in force at the time this planning application was lodged, the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 has been adopted in the interim and is the relevant local policy document for the purposes of adjudicating this appeal case.

5.2. Rural Economy and Rural Enterprise

5.2.1. In rural areas of the county there is a need to balance social and economic activity with the protection of the environment and character of the rural landscape. If land is not within an identified settlement and is not otherwise zoned as part of this Plan, or any other Local Area Plan, the use of such land shall be deemed to be primarily agricultural.

5.2.2. One-off enterprises in the rural area may be situated in the open countryside only where the council is satisfied that there is a demonstrable need for the enterprise at the specific location in the first instance and where it complies with the criteria outlined in Table 9.1 as follows:

- Development proposals shall be limited to small-scale rural based business development with a floor area at circa 200 square meters and shall be appropriate in scale to its location.
- The development will enhance the strength of the local rural economy.
- The proposed development will normally be located on the site of a redundant farm building / yard or similar agricultural brownfield site.
- There is a demonstrable social and economic benefit to being located in a rural area.

- The proposal shall include a comprehensive planting plan of native species to screen the development.
- The proposal will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape.
- The proposal will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby properties, and in particular the amenities of nearby residents.
- The existing or planned local road network and other essential infrastructure can accommodate extra demand generated by the proposal.
- The proposal shall be accompanied by a mobility plan catering for employees' home to work transportation.
- Adequate proposals to cater for any waste arising at the facility.
- All advertising should be kept to a minimum and be suitable in design and scale to serve the business.
- Proper planning and sustainable development.
- The proposals should conform to all other objectives of the County Development Plan.

5.3. **Community Infrastructure**

- 5.3.1. Section 10.1 of the Plan notes that essential services, such as healthcare, have a significant role to play in quality of life and should ideally be located within each town/village to provide easy access and optimise the opportunity for people to walk and cycle to them.
- 5.3.2. **Policy SC P2:** Require the delivery of a range of universally accessible, integrated, and well-connected social, community, cultural, and recreational facilities, close to the communities they serve through the designation and safeguarding of specific land uses at appropriate strategic and optimised locations in settlement plans and mandatory Local Area Plans in County Kildare.

5.4. **Health Services**

- 5.4.1. Section 10.14 of the Plan states that the primary role of the Council in healthcare provision is to ensure that there are adequate lands available in development plans

and local area plans to provide for new facilities and the expansion of existing facilities. Proposals relating to healthcare facilities should reflect the County's Settlement Hierarchy and be accessible and integrated into communities.

5.4.2. **Policy SC P14:** Support the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the system of hospital care and the provision of community based primary care facilities appropriate to the size and scale of each settlement.

5.4.3. **Objective SC O92:** Support the increased provision of sufficient and accessible mental health services at appropriate locations across the county.

5.5. Landscape

5.5.1. The appeal site is located within the "Northern Lowlands" landscape character area, which has "low sensitivity" (Class 1). Table 13.2 of the plan describes these areas as ones with the capacity to generally accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.

5.6. Development Management Standards

5.6.1. The development management standards for different classes of development are set out in Chapter 15 of the development plan. While the proposed development is sui generis in nature, the standards relating to social and community developments and health facilities are considered most relevant in the context of this appeal case.

Social and Community Developments

5.6.2. Any application for community facilities including, inter alia, health facilities, shall have regard to the following:

- Overall need in terms of necessity, deficiency, and opportunity to enhance or develop local or county facilities.
- Practicalities of sites in terms of site location relative to uses, impact on local amenities, desirability, and accessibility.
- Conformity with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines.
- The potential multifunctional use of community facilities, including daytime and night-time usage.

Health Facilities

5.6.3. The Planning Authority will consider applications for health care facilities on their own merits. The following standards apply to larger medical practices accommodating two or more medical practitioners and staff:

- Shall be in rural villages, and town centre locations.
- Should not have negative impacts in terms of generating overspill of car parking, traffic hazards, or negative impacts on adjoining residential amenity.
- Shall complement existing uses/buildings and only have modest signage.

5.6.4. Minimum **cycle parking** standards of 1 space per 5 staff and 0.5 space per consulting room applies to clinic / group medical practices. A maximum **car parking** standard of 2 spaces per consulting room applies to clinic / group medical practices.

Agricultural Developments

5.6.5. The following standards are considered relevant in this case:

- The removal of hedges to accommodate agricultural developments shall only be permitted with the written agreement of the Planning Authority and shall only be considered as a last resort.
- Considerations which will arise in the assessment of agricultural developments will be traffic safety, pollution control and the satisfactory treatment of effluents, smells and noise. Proper provision for the disposal of liquid and solid wastes must be made. In addition, the size and form of the buildings and the extent to which they can be integrated into the landscape will be factors which will govern the acceptability or otherwise of such development.
- Agricultural developments shall also demonstrate that the proposal does not impact significantly upon SACs, SPAs, NHAs, Areas of High Amenity, Landscape Sensitivity Areas, Key Scenic Views and Prospects and Key Amenity Routes, sites of heritage or cultural value, or areas at risk of flooding.
- Proposals for preventing surface water run-off onto the public road shall be included.

5.7. Natural Heritage Designations

5.7.1. None.

5.8. EIA Screening

5.8.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, comprising the use of the site as a therapeutic farm for the provision of a healthcare facility, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. A total of 3 no. third-party appeals has been lodged against the Planning Authority's Notification of the Decision to Grant Permission by:

(1) Bernard J. Durkan TD, Dáil Éireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2,

(2) Mildred Hegarty, Boston Road, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare, and

(3) Ger Fahy Planning & Development Consultant on behalf of Aidan Bailey, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Roy Butler, 1511 Boston Road, Ardclough Straffan, Co. Kildare, Ger Cullen, 1512 Boston Road, Ardclough Straffan, Co. Kildare, Mr. J. Collet, 1517 Boston Road, Ardclough Straffan, Co. Kildare, Thomas McLoughlin, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Gerard Lawlor, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Niall Kennelly, Bridge House, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, Peter J. Lawlor, Clonaghilis, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Richard Brophy, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Richard O'Sullivan, Bishops court, Straffan, Co. Kildare, James Moody, The Gallops, Boston, Straffan, Co. Kildare, Michelle M. Barry, Boston Stables, Ardclough, Co. Kildare, Derek Barry, Boston Stables, Ardclough, Co. Kildare and the residents of Nos. 1507, 1508, 1509, 1510, 1511, 1512, 1513, 1514, 1515, 1516, 1517 and 1518 Boston Road Cottages c/o Bruna Butler, Boston Road, Ardclough, Straffan, Co. Kildare (hereafter referred to as Aidan Bailey & Others).

6.1.2. The appeal which has been lodged by **Bernard J. Durkan TD** can be summarised as follows:

- Permission should be refused based on the impact on neighbouring properties.
- Kildare County Council and An Bord Pleanála previously refused permission for a dwelling house at the entrance to this development on the basis that the area could not absorb further development (Planning Authority Reg. Refs. 17/309, 18/56, 18/671 and ABP Ref. 302353-18).
- Increased traffic on local road network.

6.1.3. The appeal submission includes a copy of the appellant's observation on the planning application, the contents of which are summarised in section 3.4 of this report.

6.1.4. The appeal submission from **Mildred Hegarty** relates to condition no. 18 of the Planning Authority's decision and can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed pathway to the left of the entrance does not lead to Ardclough village and will not connect to an existing pathway as there is none. Pedestrians will be forced to step out into the roadway or walk on the grassed area in front of the appellant's home – health and safety issues arise.
- Insufficient space may be available to accommodate the proposed footpath.
- Proposed pathway is incongruous with a rural setting.
- The proposed pathway should link to the existing path from the access on Boston Road and not from the entrance gate.

6.1.5. The appeal submission from Ger Fahy Planning & Development Consultant on behalf of **Aidan Bailey & Others** can be summarised as follows:

- The proposed development of a 40-person, self-contained mental health facility is of a scale which is unsuitable for this rural area and would be more appropriate to a town or city.
- The remote rural location disconnected from any urban settlement and 1 km from a small rural node does not constitute a “whole system approach” to health and wellbeing. The proposed development fails to provide any

opportunities for physical activity, social interactions, access to workplace or healthcare and other services in the urban area.

- The proposed development would be entirely car dependent for staff and service users. It fails to promote traffic safety and fails to promote healthier lifestyles and is therefore contrary to NPO 27 of the NPF.
- The number of guests to be accommodated is excessive in scale relative to the rural location and the lower order settlement of Ardclough.
- The proposed development is speculative in nature and does not fall within the scope of normal farm diversification. The proposed farming activities have not been substantiated in the planning application.
- The location of this proposed step-down facility would set an undesirable precedent for similar facilities in rural areas.
- The proposed development would accommodate 40 residents and staff which exceeds the proposed population for a small rural village.
- It is questionable why a shop/café of the scale proposed is required when a communal dining room is being provided.
- The proposed development has no locational requirement to be in this rural area and involves the demolition of existing farm buildings rather than their reuse/restoration.
- No RIA has been submitted demonstrating the need for the proposed retail unit which is over 300 m².
- The proposed community building (1,564 m²) is grossly excessive in scale relative to the number of patients/service users and is excessive in scale relative to the rural area. The provision of 8 no. offices in the community and reception buildings is also excessive in scale.
- The proposed farm shop (139.8 m²) is larger than the Retail Planning Guidelines maximum acceptable area for a petrol filling station (100 m²) and would give rise to unacceptable levels of commuting from urban centres.
- No proper plans for agricultural or horticultural development have taken place.

- The proposed development is on a local road where inadequate sightlines are available. Access from Ardclough is via a canal bridge which is narrow and poorly aligned and an increase in traffic would give rise to serious safety concerns and give rise to a traffic hazard.
- The site entrance does not have sufficient sightlines or forward visibility to cater for a development of this scale and nature.
- The layout of the proposed development is unacceptable due to its large scale and scattered layout, which would have a serious negative visual impact on the rural amenity of the area.

6.2. First Party Response

6.2.1. A first party response to the appeals was submitted by RPS on behalf of the applicant on 23rd May 2022 and can be summarised as follows:

- Several development plan policies permit agricultural diversification (ECD27 and RE8). The proposed development meets the requirements of policy HS2 and Objective HSO 2 in the provision of mental health facilities at an appropriate location in the county.
- The provision of the mental health use at this location is justified and appropriate as agriculture is central to the therapeutic function of the overall development, and as such, the proposed development cannot be located in an urban setting.
- The development is not speculative. It is proposed by a charity and will be a not-for-profit development and will remain so as required under condition no. 2 of the Planning Authority's decision. The proposed development cannot be considered to be a commercial venture.
- The scale of development proposed is required to cater for 40 no. guests. While the shop/café will be open to the public, its role is central to the therapeutic offering of the farm. Its purpose is primarily therapeutic and not to generate profit.

- The proposals for the agricultural use of the site are intentionally flexible and it is planned that the use of the farm will change over time. The current plans are for the growing of vegetables and the keeping of chickens.
- Should the Board require details of the future agricultural use on the site, it can be agreed by condition. However, it is noted that this is not normally a matter for consideration under the planning code.
- The planning application included sightline drawings which demonstrated compliance with DMURS. This was supplemented with a Road Safety Audit at Further Information stage, which amended the entrance to ensure it meets the required standards.
- During the construction phase, significant measures will be put in place to protect the local road network and Henry Bridge. These include the provision of a Construction Management Plan, the use of an agreed haul route away from Ardclough and Henry Bridge, no left turn from the site during construction and construction signage.
- The Current, Construction and Operational Traffic Assessment identifies that on completion of the development, HGV numbers show a dramatic reduction and staff journeys indicate that there will be little or no impact on peak traffic in the area.
- The layout of the proposed development has been designed due to the constraints and topography of the site. The eastern end of the site is constrained by the percolation area for the existing cottages and the 110 kV power line which traverses the site. The proposed buildings are located on the western portion of the site, where their visual impact will be reduced.
- The proposed development has been designed to integrate with the local community, in particular, the shop/café.
- The proposals are for a therapeutic farm and not a residential development and as such, rural housing policies do not apply.
- The provision of a footpath along the entire front boundary of the appeal site was not proposed by the applicant but is required under condition no. 18 of the permission. The applicant is happy to provide the requested footpath or to

consider alternative arrangements including: (i) the provision of a footpath from the pedestrian access towards Ardclough; (ii) from the vehicular access towards Ardclough, or (iii) the removal of the requirement to provide a footpath.

- The appeal submission from Bernard Durkan TD identifies cases where planning permission has been refused for residential development on a site c. 70 m south of the entrance to the appeal site (Planning Authority Reg. Refs. 17/309, 18/56, 18/671 and ABP Ref. 302353-18 refer). These applications were refused permission due to the applicants failing to meet the local need requirements of the Planning Authority. Such local need requirements do not apply to the development which is the subject of this appeal case.
- The concept and nature of the proposed development are clearly described in the planning application documentation.
- The existing use generates a level of transport movements which will be similar to the proposed use. There will not be an increase in trips on the L2008, Boston Hill and Henry Bridge.
- The Road Safety Audit identified five problems in relation to the design of the site entrance, traffic management measures, improved pedestrian facilities within the site and the provision of passing bays on the private entrance road. Each of these issues is addressed in the Further Information Response.
- The initial design, the improvements made at Further Information stage and the safeguards provided by the conditions attached to the Planning Authority's decision will ensure that the proposed development will not have a negative effect on the road network in the vicinity of the site.
- The majority of the site is located in the Northern Lowlands Landscape Character Area which is a Class 1 Low Sensitivity Area. The proposed development will not be readily visible from the public road network, has been designed to integrate with the rural landscape and will not have a negative impact on the visual amenities enjoyed by nearby residents.

6.2.2. Appendix A of the appeal response includes letters in support of the proposed development from Agnes Higgins (Professor in Mental Health, School of Nursing and

Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin), Patrick Braken (Consultant Psychiatrist) and Martin Rogan (Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Ireland); a copy of the Kildare County Council Planning Officer's report dated 30th March 2022 (Appendix B), and a copy of the report of Kildare County Council's Roads, Transportation & Public Safety Department dated 28th March 2022 (Appendix C). The content of these appendices has been reviewed and taken into consideration in the adjudication of this case.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

- 6.3.1. A response to the appeal was received from Kildare County Council on 17th May 2022. The Planning Authority considers that the appeal issues have been addressed in the Planning Officer's assessment. It is requested that the Notification of the Decision to Grant Permission be upheld in this instance.

6.4. Observations

- 6.4.1. Observations have been made on the appeal by: (1) Elizabeth Cullen, Thomastown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, and (2) Patricia Stacke-Kelly, 838 Fontstown, Athy, Co. Kildare. Both observers express their support of the proposed development. The issues which are raised can be summarised as follows: (1) current absence of suitable mental health facilities, (2) employment opportunities, (3) economic benefits to the surrounding area.

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. I am satisfied that the main issues arising for consideration in this case include:

- Principle of the Development
- Visual Impact
- Traffic Impacts and Access Considerations
- Wastewater Treatment
- Appropriate Assessment

- 7.2. Each of these issues is addressed in turn below.

7.3. Principle of the Development

- 7.3.1. The appeal submission of Aidan Bailey & Others states that the scale of the proposed development is unsuitable for this rural area, would be more appropriately located in a town or city, is disconnected from any urban settlement and fails to provide any opportunities for physical activity, social interactions, access to workplaces, healthcare and other services. It is also submitted that the location of the proposed development would set an undesirable precedent for similar facilities in rural areas. It is considered that no proper plans for agricultural or horticultural development have taken place.
- 7.3.2. In response, the applicant's agent submits that agriculture is central to the therapeutic function of the overall development, and as such, the proposed development cannot be located in an urban setting. It is further submitted that the proposals for the agricultural use of the site are intentionally flexible, and it is planned that the use of the farm will change over time. The current plans are for the growing of vegetables and the keeping of chickens.
- 7.3.3. In assessing the principle of the proposed development, Kildare County Council's Planning Officer acknowledged that, in general, healthcare facilities should be located in more urban locations close to a critical mass of patients and accessible by public transport. In this instance, it was noted that the integral delivery of healthcare is through working the land and that the extent of land required to service the needs of 40 no. guests would not be available in an urban location.
- 7.3.4. The Planning Officer further considered that the proposed development was supported by Policy HS 2 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 which seeks "to support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations" and Objective HSO 2 which seeks "to support the increased provision of accessible and equitable primary care and mental health services at appropriate locations across the county".
- 7.3.5. The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 has been adopted since this planning application was lodged. Section 10.14 of the plan states that the primary role of the Council in healthcare provision is to ensure that there are adequate lands available in development plans and local area plans to provide for new facilities and

the expansion of existing facilities. Proposals relating to healthcare facilities should reflect the County's Settlement Hierarchy and be accessible and integrated into communities. Policy SC P14 is relevant in this case which is to "support the Health Service Executive (HSE) and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the system of hospital care and the provision of community based primary care facilities appropriate to the size and scale of each settlement". Objective SC O92 is also relevant which is to "support the increased provision of sufficient and accessible mental health services at appropriate locations across the county".

- 7.3.6. In my opinion, the local policy context does not support a development of this nature on the appeal site, and as such, the principle of the proposed development is unacceptable. The development plan provides for one-off rural enterprises in the open countryside subject to compliance with certain criteria including, inter alia, that the proposals be limited to small-scale, rural based business development with a floor area of 200 m² and that the development will enhance the strength of the local rural economy. In my opinion, the proposed development, which is noted to include 2,705 m² of new floorspace including a shop/café of 327 m², does not fall within this category of development.
- 7.3.7. While the purpose and aims of the proposed therapeutic farm and the need for increased mental health support facilities are fully accepted, I do not consider that the provision of a healthcare facility on unzoned, unserviced, agricultural lands which are located approx. 1.2 km from the nearest small settlement, would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. While the appeal site is proximate to Ardclough, I note that it is not contiguous to its existing built footprint. As such, I consider that the proposed development would represent piecemeal, inappropriate development on agricultural land.
- 7.3.8. Thus, in conclusion, I consider that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy SC P14 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, which seeks to support the development of appropriate healthcare facilities appropriate to the size and scale of each settlement, would comprise an inappropriate use on unzoned, agricultural land and would set an inappropriate precedent in this instance. As such, I consider that planning permission should be refused for the proposed development on this basis.

7.4. Visual Impact

- 7.4.1. Aidan Bailey & Others submit that the proposed development is unacceptable due to its large scale and scattered layout, which would have a serious negative visual impact on the rural amenity of the area. In response, the applicant's agent submits that the layout of the proposed development responds to the constraints and topography of the site, with the buildings located on the western portion, where their visual impact will be reduced.
- 7.4.2. In considering the issues which have been raised I note that all the proposed buildings, apart from the community building, are single-storey in height. The community building is 2-storeys, with a maximum overall height of 11.68 m. This building is set back from the eastern site boundary adjoining the existing, semi-detached dwellings by approx. 470 m. The farm shop/café, which is the closest building to the public road/eastern site boundary, is set back from the shared boundary with the existing dwellings by approx. 334 m.
- 7.4.3. The Architectural Design Report which accompanies the application states that the built form and materiality is driven by Irish vernacular barn buildings, with the proposed development reading as a cluster of barn buildings similar to those existing on the site and nearby. The proposed materials palette includes dark vertical timber cladding on the building façades and dark zinc roofing, which are noted to be commonly used in agricultural buildings.
- 7.4.4. While I acknowledge that the proposed development would introduce new built forms into the rural landscape which may be visible in views from the adjoining agricultural lands, I do not consider that the layout and scale of the development would have a serious negative visual impact on the rural amenity of this area. In reaching this conclusion I note that the site is located in the "Northern Lowlands" landscape character area as designated under the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, with this area having the capacity to accommodate a wide range of uses without significant adverse effects on the appearance or character of the area.
- 7.4.5. As such, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable visual impact on the landscape and that it would be unreasonable to refuse planning permission for the proposed development on this basis.

7.5. Traffic Impacts and Access Considerations

- 7.5.1. The appeal submission of Aidan Bailey & Others states that the proposed development is located on a local road with inadequate sightlines. It is stated that access to the appeal site from Ardclough is via a narrow canal bridge which is poorly aligned. It is considered that an increase in traffic would give rise to serious safety concerns and a traffic hazard. Bernard J. Durkan submits that the proposed development would increase traffic on the local road network. Mildred Hegarty objects to condition no. 18 of the Planning Authority's decision, which requires a 2 m footpath and lighting to be provided along the entire front boundary of the site to connect to the existing footpaths leading to Ardclough village.
- 7.5.2. The applicant's agent submits that the planning application included sightline drawings which demonstrated compliance with DMURS, supplemented by a Road Safety Audit at Further Information stage which amended the entrance to ensure it meets the required standards. It is submitted that the proposed development will have little or no impact on peak traffic in the area.
- 7.5.3. Drawing No. 0720 (Swept Path Analysis Visibility Splay) which accompanied the planning application demonstrates forward visibility of 45 m in either direction at the site entrance. The Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit undertaken by the applicant at Further Information stage identified that the access road addresses the local road (L2008) at an acute angle, which could result in difficulties for drivers executing right turns and increase the probability of left turning drivers failing to yield to traffic on the local road. It was recommended that the access road alignment be adjusted to address the local road in a more perpendicular manner. The revised alignment is demonstrated on Drawing No. 0101 (Access Road Proposed Passing Bays) which accompanied the applicant's Further Information response. The Transportation Department of Kildare County Council did not raise any objections in this regard, subject to the condition that the developer shall ensure that the lines of sight at the entrance be provided strictly in accordance with DMURS (condition no. 14 of the Planning Authority's decision refers).
- 7.5.4. A Current, Construction and Operational Traffic Assessment was included with the planning application. It states that guests will arrive and depart the farm by car, but residents will generally not be permitted to have a car on site for personal use during

their stay. Medical staff journeys (20 no. in 2 no. shifts) will be off-peak. A maximum of 5 no. journeys will arise for management and administration staff during normal office hours. Henry Bridge is confirmed as being unsuitable to accommodate construction traffic, with a direct route to the site being available from the N7. It is estimated that there will be 3 materials deliveries to the site by van and HGV over a 9-month build programme. Once the proposed development is operational, it is concluded that there will be a dramatic reduction in HGV traffic entering the site compared with the previous equestrian use and that there will be little or no impact on peak traffic in the area.

- 7.5.5. In my opinion, any traffic impacts arising during the construction stage could be appropriately managed through the preparation and agreement of a detailed Construction / Traffic Management Plan with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. This matter could be addressed by condition in the event the Board considered granting permission for the proposed development. While I acknowledge that traffic on the local road would increase on foot of the operation of the proposed development, I consider that the extent of this increase would not result in any significant impact having regard to the nature and scale of the development.
- 7.5.6. In considering the objection of Mildred Hegarty to condition no. 18 of the Planning Authority's decision, I note that the appellant's property adjoins the appeal site to the north. The appellant submits that the required footpath will not connect to an existing pathway as there is none in place and that it will end at the boundary line of both sites. The appellant submits that thereafter, pedestrians will be forced to step out onto the roadway or use the grassed area in front of their home. The appellant raises concerns regarding health and safety issues and public liability.
- 7.5.7. In my opinion, the provision of a 2 m wide footpath within the front boundary of the site is a reasonable requirement. However, I note that the wording of condition no. 18 requires the proposed footpath to connect with existing footpaths leading to Ardclough village. As identified by the appellant, no such continuous connection exists, with a short section of footpath commencing beyond the appellant's property. In my opinion, it is possible to interpret the wording of this condition as requiring the developer to implement the footpath on third party lands outside of their control. As such, in the event the Board grants permission for the proposed development and

considers that a footpath is required at this location, I recommend that the wording of this condition be clarified to ensure it does not require any development to be undertaken on land outside the applicant's control.

7.6. Wastewater Treatment

- 7.6.1. Item no. 15 of the Planning Authority's Further Information Request required the applicant to provide, inter alia, a Site Suitability Report and a Site Layout Plan showing the location and design of the proposed on-site wastewater treatment system and polishing filter in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice "Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent less than or equal to 10)" and the DOELG/EPA/GSI "Groundwater Protection Responses for On-Site Wastewater Systems for Single Houses". Item no. 16 of the request required the applicant to submit drawings of the proposed wastewater treatment system in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice.
- 7.6.2. A table of 'sewage system loadings' is included with the Site Characterisation Form provided as part of the applicant's response (Appendix E of Engineering Services Report) and which identifies a total loading of 7,226 litres / 3,200 BOD5 grams per day. A total design population equivalent of 59 is identified. Having regard to the scale of the proposed development, I note that the relevant EPA guidance in this instance is "Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels".
- 7.6.3. The Site Characterisation Form states that the underlying aquifer is locally important and of extreme vulnerability. Bedrock was encountered in the trial holes at 1.2 m below ground. Topsoil was noted between 0.1 m and 0.4 m, with sandy clay, occasional cobbles and boulders between 0.5 m and bedrock. A result of 36 was recorded for the surface percolation test, with a result of 37 recorded for the subsurface test.
- 7.6.4. It is proposed to install a secondary treatment system with a soil polishing filter discharging to ground. I note that a large, raised percolation area of 900 m² is proposed adjacent to the northern site boundary. I also note the presence of an existing percolation zone towards the north-eastern corner of the site which serves the adjoining residential dwellings.

7.6.5. In my opinion, the proposed treatment of wastewater effluent, which includes that generated from en-suites serving 40 no. individual bedrooms, a shop/café and healthcare facility, through the use of an on-site system rather than public infrastructure, would be inappropriate having regard to the scale of the proposed development, the volume of wastewater arising and the reliance on a heavily engineered system which requires the construction of a large, raised percolation area on foot of the limited depth to bedrock. I am not satisfied that a development of this scale would not give rise to groundwater pollution.

7.6.6. I note that this is a new issue in this instance, and I would highlight to the Board that I have already recommended that planning permission be refused for the proposed development based on the principle of the development.

7.7. **Appropriate Assessment**

7.7.1. I have reviewed the applicant's AA screening report and the screening assessment of the Planning Authority, both of which conclude that an AA of the proposed development is not required. The subject site is not located within or directly adjacent to any European site, and as such, there is no potential for **direct impacts** to occur. The closest European sites include:

- Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code: 001209) located approx. 13 km to the south-east.
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code: 002122) located approx. 14 km to the south-east.
- Red Bog, Kildare SAC (site code: 000397) located approx. 10 km to the south/south-east.
- Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code: 004063) located approx. 12 km to the south/south-east.
- Ballynafagh Lake SAC (site code: 001387) located approx. 14 km km to the west/north-west.
- Ballynafagh Bog SAC (site code: 000391) located approx. 13 km to the west.
- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code: 001398) located approx. 10 km to the north.

- 7.7.2. In considering the potential for **indirect impacts** to occur, I note that there is no hydrological connection between the subject site and the identified European sites and that it does not support any of the habitats or species which are qualifying interests for these European sites (see Appendix 1 of this report for details). Thus, there is no potential for indirect impacts, and as such, any potential **in-combination** impacts can be excluded.
- 7.7.3. In conclusion, in applying the source-pathway-receptor concept, and having regard to the nature and scale of the development, comprising a therapeutic farm and healthcare facility, and the separation distances arising to the nearest Natura 2000 sites, no appropriate assessment issues arise, and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I recommend that planning permission be refused for the proposed development for the reasons and considerations set out hereunder.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 9.1. The proposed healthcare facility is located on unzoned, unserviced agricultural land, outside of any designated settlement, with no public transport connections, and as such, would be contrary to Policy SC P14 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 which seeks, inter alia, to support the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities appropriate to the size and scale of each settlement and Objective SC O92 of the plan which seeks to support the increased provision of sufficient and accessible mental health services at appropriate locations across the county. As such, the proposed development would be inappropriate in this rural area, would set an inappropriate precedent for similar developments and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Louise Treacy
Senior Planning Inspector

14th July 2023

Appendix 1: Natura 2000 Sites – Conservation Objectives & Qualifying Interests

Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code: 001209)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <p>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</p> <p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	<p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) in Glenasmole Valley SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) in Glenasmole Valley SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* in Glenasmole Valley SAC.</p>

Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code: 002122)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) [3110]</p> <p>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</p> <p>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</p> <p>European dry heaths [4030]</p> <p>Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</p> <p>Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]</p>

	<p>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</p> <p>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</p> <p>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110]</p> <p>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</p> <p>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</p> <p><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Alpine and Boreal heaths in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain</p>

	<p>areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)* in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Blanket bogs (* if active bog) in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Wicklow Mountains SAC.</p>
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Red Bog, Kildare SAC (site code: 000397)	
Qualifying Interests	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]
Conservation Objective(s)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Transition mires and quaking bogs in Red Bog, Kildare SAC.

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code: 004063)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]</p> <p>Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

Ballynafagh Lake SAC (site code: 001387)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Alkaline fens [7230]</p> <p>Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</p> <p>Euphydryas aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	<p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Ballynafagh Lake SAC.</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) in Ballynafagh Lake SAC.</p> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Marsh Fritillary (<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>) in Ballynafagh Lake SAC.</p>

Ballynafagh Bog SAC (site code: 000391)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Active raised bogs [7110]</p> <p>Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120]</p> <p>Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Active raised bogs in Ballynafagh Bog SAC.

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code: 001398)	
Qualifying Interests	<p>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220]</p> <p>Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</p> <p>Vertigo moulinsiana (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</p>
Conservation Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To restore the favourable conservation condition of Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* in Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. - To restore the favourable conservation condition of Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (Vertigo angustior) in Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. - To restore the favourable conservation condition of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (Vertigo moulinsiana) in Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC.