

MWP

Visitor and Wildlife Management Plan
Proposed Magherabeg Beach Facility Centre for
Water Sports Activities, Magherabeg Beach,
Castlegregory, Co. Kerry

Kerry County Council

September 2025

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MWP, Engineering and Environmental Consultants

Address: Reen Point, Blennerville, Tralee, Co. Kerry, V92 X2TK,

www.mwp.ie



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Magherabeg Beach is a popular public beach located in the Maherees, Co. Kerry. The beach and surrounding area are subject to large numbers of visitors, in particular during the summer season. Magherabeg is a long established blue flag beach. Blue flag beach accreditation requirements include provision of an adequate number of toilets, water quality monitoring, environmental education and information provision, lifeguarding and health and safety requirements, a supply of drinking water and access and facilities for the physically disabled. There are a number of existing water-sport activity providers, and holiday and caravan parks operating in the area.

Kerry County Council (KCC) wish to develop a beach facility centre for water sports activities at Magherabeg Beach, County Kerry. Ancillary upgrade works, including ancillary upgrade of existing beach access to provide universal beach access, complementary with the blue flag beach designation, are also proposed. The facility will be built on an existing grassed amenity area adjacent to the beach where free-to-use public portacabin-type toilets and recycling facilities are currently available. The area is also used informally for beach parking.

The development is being progressed through a funding scheme offered by Fáilte Ireland. The proposed facility will contain a number of resources such as indoor and outdoor showers and serviced toilets, as well as external and internal seating. The proposed facility will also include a multi-functional outdoor induction space for operators and visitors. A new wastewater and separate stormwater treatment system are proposed to be constructed on-site, and these will replace the existing on-site system. The new facility will provide enhanced sanitation facilities to beach users, relative to what is currently available, and will regularise and improve wastewater and stormwater management on-site. The existing beach access ramp within the site will be upgraded and resurfaced to improve access. New timber and concrete boardwalks will provide defined, improved pedestrian access from the amenity area to the beach. Two designated disabled car parking spaces will be provided.

Malachy Walsh and Partners (MWP), Engineering and Environmental Consultants in conjunction with KCC, have prepared this combined '*Visitor and Wildlife Management Plan*' (VWMP) for the proposed Magherabeg beach facility centre for water sports activities and ancillary works project. The VWMP has been informed by the matters outlined in the Further Information request, submissions and observations received, the environmental reports previously prepared as part of this application and by the results of a breeding plover survey undertaken in 2025.



Figure 1. View looking north-east across the site (Source: Google Maps Streetview)

1.2 Purpose of this Report & Objectives of the Plan

The primary purpose of this VWMP is to set out measures to protect habitats and species in the surrounding area which may be sensitive to impacts arising as a result of a potential increase in visitor numbers or increased seasonal usage as a result of the proposed beach facility, having due regard to several nature conservation designations which are applicable to the immediate and wider area (see **Section 3.2**). The objectives of the VWMP are to:

- To safeguard the environmental and tourism resource.
- To promote greater understanding and appreciation for the area’s natural heritage by educating and informing visitors about the sensitivity of the surrounding environment.

The Plan sets out actions related to visitor and wildlife management for the shared beach facility and which have been incorporated into the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) which has been prepared by MWP for the development.

2. Site Context

2.1 Location and General Site Description

The subject site is located at Magherabeg Beach, situated within a relatively sheltered corner of Tralee Bay known as ‘Béal Geal’ (Sandy Bay), approximately 2.6 km north of Castlegregory village on the Maharees Peninsula (see **Figure 2**). This narrow peninsula separates Tralee Bay to the east from Brandon Bay to the west and is characterised by an extensive dune system. Magherabeg Beach has held “Blue Flag” status since 2010 with most recent 4-year testing cycle (2020 to 2024) yielding an “Excellent Quality” Rating. The beach and general Maharees area are very popular with both tourists and locals, primarily during the main tourist season. Magherabeg Beach is an official ‘Discovery Point’ on the Wild Atlantic Way, a defined coastal driving route which encompasses Ireland’s western coastline. The subject site comprises a grassed amenity area located just off a local road which

fronts onto the beach. Access onto the beach from this area is currently via two man-made concrete and paving stone ramps.



Figure 2. Location of proposed Magherabeg Beach Facility Centre for Watersports Activities

2.2 Existing Visitor Offering

2.2.1 Coastal and Marine Tourism

Magherabeg is a Blue-flag beach located on the Wild Atlantic Way. There are several existing, well-established commercial marine water sports operators located in the immediate and wider area offering recreational leisure activities including paddle boating, kayaking, surfing, windsurfing, stand up paddle boarding and use of inflatable sea trampolines/slides which are located just offshore. A number of well-established caravan and camping parks are located in the immediate and surrounding area. Other recreational activities available in the area include horse-riding and walking.

2.2.2 Natural Heritage

The western shore of Tralee Bay encompasses long stretches of sandy beach and sediment as well as the rocky intertidal habitats and headlands of the Magharees Peninsula, often backed by extensive sand dunes. The intertidal reefs of Tralee Bay and the Magharees Peninsula range from being exposed to sheltered from wave action. On the Magharees Peninsula, extensive areas of fixed 'grey' dunes occur, which feature a number of damp hollows or dune slacks. The fixed dunes are species-rich, with characteristic species such as white clover (*Trifolium repens*), lesser hawkbit (*Leontodon taraxacoides*), common centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*), lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*) and grasses (e.g. *Festuca rubra*, *Poa trivialis* and *Avenula pubescens*).

The Maharees and Tralee Bay are internationally important for wintering birds, including light-bellied Brent goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), wigeon (*Mareca penelope*),

teal (*Anas crecca*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), scaup (*Aythya marila*) and waders such as ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and redshank (*Tringa tetanus*). Breeding species include a variety of smaller species such as skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*). Ringed plover is also known to nest on shingle beaches on the peninsula, including in the wider Magherabeg area. On the Magharees Islands located offshore, breeding species such as storm petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) and little tern (*Sternula albifrons*) can be found.

The natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), Ireland’s only native toad and a protected species, has one of its few strongholds in the Maharees. Wildflowers like bird’s-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) and knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) support pollinators and caterpillars of native moths and butterflies, including species such as the wall brown (*Lasiommata megera*), six-spot burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae*) and painted lady (*Vanessa cardui*).

While the conservation objectives of the Tralee Bay Complex SPA relate to wintering birds only, it is considered appropriate to widen the scope of the VWMP to include considerations of relevance to breeding ringed plover, which were found to be potentially nesting approximately 300m to the northwest of the site, beyond the location of the existing water sports service providers facilities. It is noted that there is presently no information in place in the area on breeding plover and their vulnerability to walkers and dogs.

2.2.3 Cultural Heritage

The Maharees Peninsula is rich in local cultural heritage. The ‘Maharees Heritage Trail’ (Slí Oidhreachta an Mhachaire) comprises a 10 km coastal walking trail which takes in the three bays surrounding the Maharees peninsula -Tralee Bay, Scraggan Bay and Brandon Bay, and which commences at Magherabeg Beach. This looped trail takes in various historical, archaeological and natural locations and features of interest such as various shipwrecks, the ruins of the 7th century St. Seanach’s Church, the 5th century monastic site an Oileán tSeannaigh and a standing stone.

2.3 Current Conditions at the Site

The following table outlines current conditions at the site in relation to site approach and access, signage, parking, site condition and on-site visitor facilities.

Table 1. Current conditions at the site

Site Characteristic	Details
Approach and Access	The site is accessed via the L5014 Local Road from Castlegregory Village. There are two existing entrances to the site, each with vehicle height restriction barriers.
Signage	Existing signage on the Maharees, the Blue Flag Beach, safety information, the Maharees Heritage Trail, local biodiversity information. WAW Discovery Point sign. See Plate 1 .
Parking	The area is used informally for beach car parking.
Site Condition	The site surface consists of a mix of grassed areas, tarmacadamed track and rough gravelled areas. Two rough concrete and paving access ramps provide pedestrian access directly onto the adjacent beach.
On-site Visitor Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grassed amenity area Free to use portacabin-type toilets (managed by KCC on a seasonal basis from March to October)

Site Characteristic	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public recycling bins (glass, cans, food tins) • Public seating (stone benches/tables) • Picnic tables



Plate 1. Some of the existing signage at the site

3. Site Management

3.1 Ownership & Legal Properties

The subject site is under the ownership of Kerry County Council. Much of the surrounding area is largely under private ownership or is commonage land grazed by multiple farmers. As such, any visitor management interventions carried out on these surrounding lands would require agreement from all affected landowners.

3.2 Protective Nature Designations

The site partially overlaps at one minor location with both the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (002070) and the Tralee Bay Complex Special Protection Area (SPA) (004188) (see **Figure 3** below which shows that a very small portion of the development site along the eastern boundary, comprising approximately 15m², overlaps with these designated sites). The Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC is designated for the protection of a variety of primarily marine and coastal habitats, such as mudflats and sandflats, large shallow inlets and bays, reef, salt meadows and sand dunes, as well as otter and the plant species petalwort. The Tralee Bay Complex SPA is designated for the protection of a large number of wintering wader and waterbird species, as well as the habitat complex ‘Wetlands’.

The Dingle Peninsula SPA (004153) is located approximately 0.3km south of the site. This designated site is an important site for chough, peregrine falcon and fulmar. The Magharee Islands are located approximately 4km north of the site, off the northern end of the Maharees Peninsula. The islands are encompassed within both the Magharee Islands SAC (002261) and the Magharee Islands SPA (004125). The Magharee Islands are designated for the protection of reef habitat and a variety of breeding and non-breeding seabirds. Much of the Maharees Peninsula as well as Tralee Bay extending east is designated as the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) (002070).



Figure 3. Natura 2000 sites within the immediate vicinity of the development site

3.3 Current Visitor Management Structure

The site is currently managed and maintained by Kerry County Council. As Magherabeg beach is one of Kerry’s 13 blue flag beaches, KCC commits significant resources to the management of its Blue Flag Beaches annually. Kerry County Council aim to meet and exceed An Taisce’s Blue Flag qualifying criteria. All beaches are risk assessed biannually. These amenities are managed and maintained throughout the year by a multifaceted team as follows:

- Operational staff who manage waste facilities,
- Enforcement staff who monitor and enforce, amongst others, the Litter Pollution Act, Beach Bye-Laws, Casual Trading Bye-Laws and Car Parking Bye-Laws,
- Water Safety Team led by two Water Safety Development Officers who co-ordinate Life Guarding resources and Life Buoy inspections and maintenance.

These teams are further co-ordinated through the Councils Beach Management Steering Committee which meets regularly throughout the year ensuring effective and enhanced service delivery.

The site is part of the Wild Atlantic Way. Fáilte Ireland undertake a programme of on-going environmental surveying and monitoring, including monitoring and surveying of the activities of visitors and the ecological effects of visitors at points along the route. Fáilte Ireland regularly includes Co. Kerry monitoring sites and also sites from the Dingle peninsula (e.g. Inch Beach 2024; Castlegregory Beach approx. 2km to the south in 2016). No monitoring has been undertaken by Fáilte Ireland at the subject site under the national monitoring programme.

3.4 Proposed Visitor Management Structure

The requirement for enhanced beach facilities at Kerry's Blue Flag Beaches has been identified in the County Kerry Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2016 -2022 which was prepared following extensive engagement with multiple stakeholders. Following the submission of a funding application to Fáilte Ireland under Platforms for Growth 2019-2025: Platform 2 – Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities, KCC were successful in securing funding from Fáilte Ireland to develop a facility in Magherabeg.

Under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth investment scheme, Fáilte Ireland have prepared an 'Operating Manual and Standard Operating Procedures' for scheme Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities in conjunction with participating Local Authorities, commercial water sports operators, water sports participants and in line with international and domestic best practice. This guidance provides a clear, detailed, and comprehensive set of principles which outline how these facilities must be managed, maintained, and promoted over the course of their operational lifetime and cover aspects such as detailed maintenance and cleaning schedules, waste disposal, safety, sustainability, environmental protection, and monitoring (including of drainage systems and green roof). It also sets out 'Proposed Terms of Use' outlining agreements between Local Authorities and commercial operators which wish to avail of the facilities. In the event of non-compliance with these terms, commercial operators can be precluded from using the facilities.

The proposed facility at Magherabeg Beach will be required to adhere to this guidance under the Fáilte Ireland Platforms for Growth Investment Scheme. A site-specific 'Operating Manual and Standard Operating Procedures' document, incorporating the above elements, will be prepared for the proposed Magherabeg Facility by KCC. In addition to this, as is required, a 'Facilities Consultative Group' (or Operating Working Group) shall be created in order to allow scope for stakeholder input and to ensure a smooth running of operations. This will comprise representatives from KCC, Fáilte Ireland, an Garda Síochána, local community and commercial operator groups, and will include the Maharees Conservation Association (MCA).

The MCA is a local, proactive community environmental conservation group established in 2016¹. The MCA leads efforts to combat coastal erosion, raise awareness, and implement nature-based solutions. The MCA have run and continue to run a number of successful conservation initiatives in the Maharees area, including installation of fencing to protect the dune systems from human and animal disturbance and monitor and advocate for dune protection and conservation.

The MCA has agreed in principle to partner with KCC on the visitor management of the proposed facilities at Magherabeg. In particular, the MCA has agreed to widen the scope of its community and public engagement to include users of the proposed facility and to monitor visitor behaviour beyond the site boundaries in the wider Maharees area to identify and to address, in conjunction with KCC and other partners, any unforeseen matters arising (see **Appendix 1**).

¹ <https://mahareesconservation.com/>

3.5 Existing and Potential Management Issues

Existing and potential future visitor management issues at the site and environs are considered to comprise primarily of the following:

- **Disturbance of wildlife** through recreational water sports (kayaks, paddle boarders, surfers etc), boats, dogs, walkers, beach users, drones. Human activity/noise and dogs can cause disturbance of wildlife, such as coastal and seabird species or marine mammals, on land or in the water. Disturbance can also result in behavioural disruption of fauna. Animals can flee from actual or perceived threats, such as dogs off leash, which causes them to use up valuable energy reserves. Disturbance can cause species to potentially abandon nests or young, potentially lowering reproductive success, move away from foraging areas or alter feeding patterns, or cause displacement from other important areas, such as for roosting or resting. Species including ringed plover are particularly vulnerable during sensitive periods such as breeding or when with young.
- **Deterioration/degradation of terrestrial habitats** through increased human presence and activity. Walking and hiking in sensitive habitats, such as dune systems, can trample sensitive vegetation increasing the risk of erosion and damaging important wildlife habitats. Footpaths and informal trails can fragment habitats and create channels where wind, water and livestock can exacerbate erosion impacts. This can lead to the collapse of dune structures and loss of habitat. Though it is noted that in the Magharees a certain amount of trail formation is beneficial for the protected petalwort species *Petalophyllum ralfsii*.
- **Increased Litter** which may be associated with an increase in visitor numbers poses a threat to both habitats and species.

3.6 Visitor and Wildlife Management Measures

3.6.1 Signage and Interpretative Facilities

“Interpretation broadly refers to educational activities used in places like zoos, museums, heritage sites and national parks, to tell visitors about the significance or meaning of what they are experiencing” (Moscardo et al., 2004,). It can be used as a tool to both enhance visitor experience and manage their behaviour, thus reducing disturbance of wildlife. Interpretation plays a key role in raising visitors’ awareness and understanding of the special nature of the landscape and the need for management. Signage, when implemented alongside other measures, is an effective tool for education, information dissemination and the protection of wildlife and has been demonstrated to effectively manage the negative impacts of recreation on wildlife.

The effectiveness of education and initiatives, like appropriate, tailored signage, together with the employment of useful technologies, such as QR codes, in increasing the protection of ecologically sensitive habitats and species, and decreasing potential damage from visitor movements and behaviours, is widely documented in research literature^{2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7}. Herstine *et al.* (2006) concluded that signage can be an effective approach for passively managing human behaviour and tourism in natural resource settings. A study from Iceland (Marschall *et al.*, 2017) on the impact of signage on visitor behaviour around seals showed that signage was effective, but in particular, ‘teleological’ signage which provided an explanation as well as a command was more effective.

² <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/23/16251>

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2213078016300706>

⁴ <https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Publications/sustainable-tourism-understanding-the-opportunity.pdf?ext=.pdf?app=true>

⁵ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13504622.2022.2117796>

⁶ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09669582.2022.2095392>

⁷ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1617138120301618>

Tailored, uniform biodiversity signage and interpretation facilities, including on-site notice/interpretation boards, will be installed at various locations within the site for the operational phase of the project to inform and raise awareness among visitors as to the sensitivity of the surrounding area.

Ecological signage, consisting of at least 2 No. signage structures, will be installed at appropriate and carefully considered locations within the site. The locations of the ecological signs shall be chosen carefully to be in areas of gathering and/or resting – i.e., in areas where visitors are most likely to encounter and interact with the signage. It is proposed that signage/interpretive facilities are to be installed both inside and outside the proposed building facility (i.e., within internal building spaces within the covered induction space and at appropriate locations within the wider development site). One of the signs will be installed within the proposed shared facilities building itself, and the second will be installed outside of the proposed shared facilities building. The facility design, which incorporates induction space, is ideally suited to provide for information dissemination of this nature.

The purpose of this signage is to educate visitors on habitats and species occurring in the area, encourage visitors to be cognisant of the sensitive nature of coastal habitats to impacts such as from trampling and erosion, direct visitors away from sensitive areas and encourage appropriate behaviours and activities, such as sticking to designated walkways and boardwalks, avoiding trampling of vegetation, and disposing of all rubbish appropriately. Signage will aim to educate visitors as to the sensitivity of otter and bird species to disturbance, in particular during certain periods, such as breeding, or when foraging or roosting on-land. Signage will educate visitors on the importance of keeping dogs on leads and 'Leave No Trace' principles.

Signage is to be site-focussed to the sensitivities and characteristics of the development site and surrounds (i.e., make specific reference to nearby SACs/SPAs, including the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC, the Tralee Bay Complex Special SPA, the Dingle Peninsula SPA, the Magharee Islands SAC and the Magharee Islands SPA, and sensitive habitat/species groups for which they are designated and other sensitive ecological receptors, such as:

- dune habitats
- reef
- off-shore islands
- chough
- otter
- wintering waders and waterbirds
- breeding seabirds, including breeding ringed plover.

Signage will also include general information in relation to recreational activities, including water sports, and minimising disturbance of wildlife, including birdlife, with the primary aim of educating and raising awareness among visitors as to the impact that recreational users can inadvertently have on wildlife, in particular during sensitive periods and/or in sensitive areas, such as off-shore islands. Fáilte Ireland have produced guidance on recreation and waterbirds '*Good Practice Behaviours for Water-based Recreation Users Relating to Water Birds*'⁸. This guidance will be circulated to water sports providers and can be made available to the public via QR code access.

Signage will also include information on managing and reducing beach litter to encourage visitors to clean up after their visit and/or clean the beach generally. Beach management systems have been installed around the country as part of the '#2MinuteBeachClean' Initiative run by Clean Coasts An Taisce and supported by Fáilte Ireland.

⁸ Available at [https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Activities/Watersport-Users-FI-178696-ATT-0924-AF-LR-FINAL-\(1\).pdf](https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Activities/Watersport-Users-FI-178696-ATT-0924-AF-LR-FINAL-(1).pdf)

Signage should be clear, engaging and of sufficient size that is readily visible and prominent. Signage is to include a combination of site-specific text, imagery and mapping. QR codes can be incorporated allowing users instant access to other relevant sources of information.

Each sign will be designed in a format that is tailored for the expected audiences – which for this site will be families with young children, and couple and singles. Research has shown that signage which is designed specifically with its audience in mind, especially with technological interaction (e.g., the use of QR codes) significantly increases visitor use and therefore, effectiveness⁹.

Signage/interpretative facilities will be developed in line with the above and maintained by Fáilte Ireland and KCC over the lifetime of the project.

Signage flexibility is required in order to keep displays fresh and engaging and in order to prioritise matters, as appropriate.

In summary, signage and notice boards will be provided as part of the operational phase of the proposed shared beach facility. Signage will:

1. Highlight the protected European sites which are adjacent to the proposed shared facilities site;
2. Highlight the key protected wader and winter bird species and protected habitats for which these European sites are designated;
3. Highlight how the behaviour of visitors while they are moving around the proposed shared facilities site can negatively or positively affect these species and habitats; and,
4. Be designed in a format that is tailored for the expected audiences, ideally with interactive (QR code) elements to increase visitor use.

See **Figures 4 to 7** below for examples of signage/interpretive facilities for biodiversity, including signage which is being developed for a similar Fáilte Ireland beach facility located at Fenit, Co. Kerry, and signage which has been developed for an inland water sports facility at Ballycuggeran, Co. Clare, which abuts the Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA.

⁹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2213078016300706>

Fenit Beach Facilities

Teeming with life from sea bed to shore, Fenit is set against the stunning backdrop of the Slieve Mish mountains.

Pay your respects to the mermaid statue at the end of Fenit Pier, and visit Little Samphire Island's historic 1850s lighthouse. Explore Great Samphire Island where you can see a tribute to Saint Brendan the Navigator, a locally-born legendary voyager.

Teeming with life from sea bed to shore, Fenit is set against the stunning backdrop of the Slieve Mish mountains.

Pay your respects to the mermaid statue at the end of Fenit Pier, and visit Little Samphire Island's historic 1850s lighthouse. Explore Great Samphire Island where you can see a tribute to Saint Brendan the Navigator, a locally-born legendary voyager.



5 ways to be safer in water

- Check the weather**
Find out how weather may affect water conditions.
- Stay where it's safest**
Check for signs warning of hazards or danger. If there's a lifeguard on duty, ask where it's safest to enjoy the water.
- Stay together**
Go out with someone else and tell someone your plans.
- Stay afloat**
Wear a buoyancy aid or have a form of buoyancy attached to you.

Figure 4. Example of signage being developed for another similar Fáilte Ireland beach facility at Fenit, Co. Kerry which includes general information on the area and surrounding environment. Similar signage will be developed for the Magherabeg Shared Beach Facility.

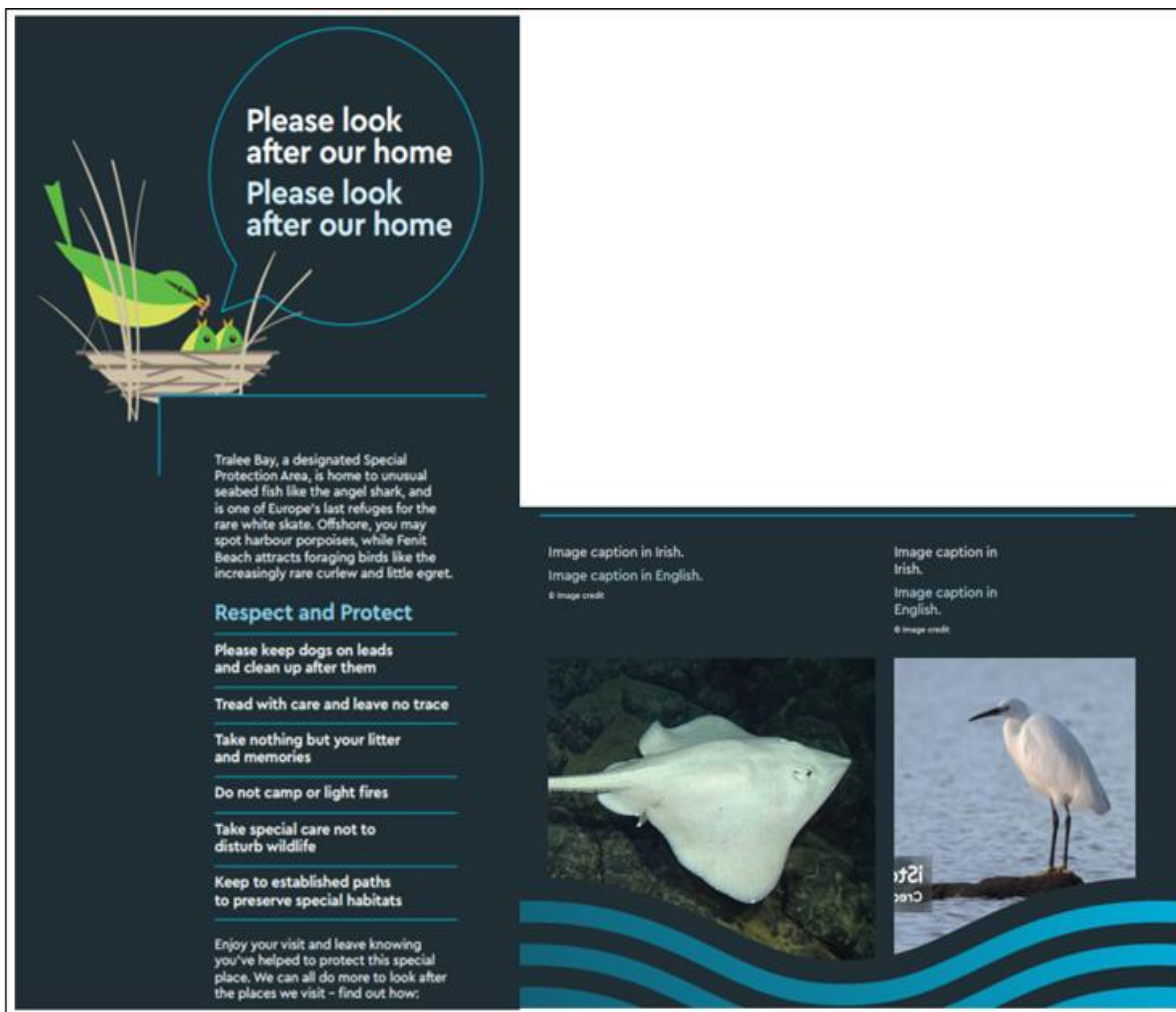


Figure 5. Example of signage being developed for the Fáilte Ireland beach facility which includes site-specific information on the ecology of the area and how visitors and users can reduce their impact on the surrounding environment. Similar signage will be developed for the Magherabeg Shared Beach Facility.



**Please look after our home
Please look after our home**

Several significant bird species like cormorant, tufted duck, goldeneye and common tern live at Ballycuggeran, which is part of the Lough Derg (Shannon) Special Protection Area (SPA).

Birds nest on the lake's islands and shallow reedbeds. Please take care while exploring not to disturb the resident birds.

Respect and Protect

Please keep dogs on leads and clean up after them

Tread with care and leave no trace

Take nothing but your litter and memories

Do not camp or light fires

Take special care not to disturb wildlife

Keep to established paths to preserve special habitats

Enjoy your visit and leave knowing you've helped to protect this special place. We can all do more to look after the places we visit – find out how:
leavenotraceireland.org

Stop the spread of invasive plants and animals which can harm wildlife, kill fish and block waterways.

CHECK
all gear, clothing and footwear after leaving the water for mud, aquatic animals or plant material. Remove anything you find and leave it at the site.

CLEAN
everything as soon as you can. Pay particular attention to nets, waders and areas that are damp and hard to inspect. Use hot water (at least 45°C) or a high-pressure spray when possible.

DRY
all equipment and clothing until dry for at least 48 hours as some invasive species can live for weeks in damp conditions. Disinfect all items if complete drying is not possible.

CHECK CLEAN DRY

Figure 6. Example of Fáilte Ireland environmental signage developed for an inland Water sports facility at Ballycuggeran, Co. Clare. Source: Ballycuggeran PFG Facility signage design



Figure 7. Example of good practice signage for nature conservation. Source: Stonehouse Designs.

3.6.2 Standard Operating Procedures

As outlined in Section 3.4, a ‘Operating Manual and Standard Operating Procedures’ document will be put in place for the facility in line with facility. The ‘Proposed Terms of Use’ outlining agreements between Kerry County Council and commercial operators who wish to avail of the facilities will be outlined. As part of this, Commercial operators/providers who sign up to use the facility will be required to outline, as part of their induction talks, the environmental sensitivities and responsible recreational behaviour. They will also be required to draw attention to the signage and notice boards and Fáilte Ireland guidance on recreation and waterbirds ‘Good Practice Behaviours for Water-based Recreation Users Relating to Water Birds’¹⁰.

In the event of non-compliance with agreed terms and conditions, commercial operators can be precluded from using the facilities.

Litter management will also be managed on-site via the comprehensive Site Maintenance measures set out in the Fáilte Ireland Operating Guidelines. These include for emptying of waste bins and replacing liners, collecting litter and debris, and disposal of waste.

3.6.3 Beach Bye-laws

Existing beach bye laws prohibit the use of jet skis at Magherabeg

¹⁰ Available at [https://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Activities/Watersport-Users-FI-178696-ATT-0924-AF-LR-FINAL-\(1\).pdf](https://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Activities/Watersport-Users-FI-178696-ATT-0924-AF-LR-FINAL-(1).pdf)

3.6.4 Community level environmental vigilance, engagement and monitoring

The Maharees Conservation Association (MCA), which has a proven track record in environmental vigilance, engagement and action in the Magharees, has agreed in principle to partner with Kerry Council Council on the visitor management of the proposed facilities at Magherabeg.

It is considered that the provision of ‘off-site’ visitor management measures are not required in this instance, particularly having regard to the small scale of the proposals at an established recreational location. Notwithstanding this, it is noted and welcomed that the MCA has agreed to widen the scope of its community and public engagement to include users of the proposed facility and to monitor visitor behaviour beyond the site boundaries in the wider Maharees area, to identify and to address, in conjunction with KCC and other partners, any unforeseen matters arising.

4. Actions and Implementation

Table 2. Summary of Actions and Implementation

Issue 1	Inadequate/Outdated signage and Interpretive Facilities	
Agreed Action	Update signage and interpretative panels within the site.	
Tasks	Provide new site-specific signage and interpretative panels (text, imagery, graphics) at various carefully selected internal and external locations within the site.	
Responsible Person/Group	Kerry County Council & Fáilte Ireland	
To be Completed	Prior to commissioning of the site.	
Date of Action		
Results		
Issue 2		
	For future use, where required	
Issue 3		
	For future use, where required	

5. Adaptive Management

Consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including the Maharees Conservation Association, which has agreed in principle to partner with KCC on the visitor management of the proposed facilities at Magherabeg, will remain on-going.

This will inform adaptive management planning. Flexibility will be retained to respond to new concerns and impacts that may arise. The Visitor Wildlife Management Plan shall be updated, as and when required.

6. References

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Appendix 1

Letter from the Maharees Conservation Association (MCA)



Maharees Conservation Association

Protecting | Enhancing | Preserving

Ballinknockane
Camp
Tralee
Co Kerry

23.07.2025

Re. Proposed Facility Centre for Water-Based Activities at Magherabeg

To whom it may concern,

I write regarding the proposed facility centre for water-based activities at Magherabeg, Maharees, Co Kerry. I am a member of Maharees Conservation Association (MCA), which is a registered charity, and has been actively engaged in coastal habitat conservation and visitor management in Maharees since 2016.

In principle, MCA supports the proposed facility centre for water-based activities at Magherabeg. The proposal offers opportunities for improved environmental awareness through signage and displays and induction talks. The provision of free toilet facilities, the upgraded wastewater treatment proposals and the enhanced / more controlled beach access aspects are all welcomed.

The MCA has agreed in principle to partner with Kerry County Council (KCC) on the visitor management of the proposed facilities at Magherabeg. In particular, the MCA will widen the scope of its community and public engagement to include users of the proposed facility. In addition, the MCA will continue to monitor visitor behaviour beyond the site boundaries in the wider Maharees area to identify and to address, in conjunction with KCC and other partners, any unforeseen matters arising.

The MCA looks forward to engaging further with KCC and Fáilte Ireland on the sustainable management of visitors to Maharees.

Yours faithfully,

Martha Farrell

Board member and charity trustee of Maharees Conservation Association CLG