Our Case Number: ACP-324610-26

An Coimisiún Pleanála

Garrett O'Neil
33 Pembroke Road
Dublin 4

Date: 23 October 2026

Re: Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project
Hodson Bay, Townland of Barrymore, Co. Roscommon

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it or approved it with conditions.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin McGettigan

Kevin McGettigan
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737263

JA02

An Coimisiún Pleanála

SID Online Observation

Online Reference
SID-OBS-006172

Online Observation Details

Contact Name	Lodgement Date	Case Number / Description
garrett o neill	16/10/2026 16:23:54	324610

Payment Details

Payment Method	Cardholder Name	Payment Amount
Online Payment	garrett o neill	€50.00

Fee Refund Requisition

Please Arrange a Refund of Fee of
€

Lodgement No
LDG—

Reason for Refund

Documents Returned to Observer
☐ Yes ☐ No

Request Emailed to Senior Executive Officer for Approval
☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed

EO

Date

Finance Section

Payment Reference
ch_3URCz8B1CW0EN5FC1j8NTcZm

Checked Against Fee Income Online

EO/AA (Accounts Section)

Amount
€

Refund Date

Authorised By (1)

SEO (Finance)

Authorised By (2)

Chief Officer/Director of Corporate Affairs/SAO/Board Member

Date

Date

GARRETT O'NEILL
33 PEMBROKE ROAD,
DUBLIN 4
TEL + 353 1 668 4622
mail@oneillarch.ie

An Coimisiún Pleanála
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

15th October 2026

Re: Proposed Development at Hodson's Bay
aCP Reference JA20.324610

Dear Sir or Madam

I attended the recent presentations of the above project at the Hodson Bay Hotel and spoke to a number of the technical staff on hand to explain the project.

In my view the whole project is an inappropriate development for the area for the following reasons:

The Shannon is an exceptionally long river and runs through Roscommon from the middle of Lough Allen to the River Suck, places some 92km apart. The length of the actual shoreline in the county is of course much longer than this and might be twice as long. Of all waterside locations within Roscommon's borders, Hodson's Bay is probably the most intensely used. There are currently some 350 car spaces many of which are occupied on a year-round basis. In addition to the thriving business at the hotel, and the busy golf club, there is the very busy, if unsightly, "Baysports" business, which seems to have grown in a haphazard manner over the last fifteen years so. There are also perhaps fifty private houses accessed off the Roscommon Road, a number soon to be increased, and the Yew Point eco-lodge project, currently under construction.

It seems to me that the entire premise of the project is fundamentally flawed.

There are four elements to the scheme

1 Increase the size of the harbour;

2 Provide better road access for motorists and cyclist and walkers;

3 Construct a new watersports building in lieu of the current Baysports building and its sprawling group of marquees and compounds. This building would be leased to waterpark operator but would have other functions in the off season, and would also have a pubic café;

4 Additional car-parking.

1 Harbour

I have no objection in principle to an upgrade of the harbour. I query whether this particular site should be a priority for Waterways Ireland to upgrade or increase capacity. Certainly, it could do with a small shower block and or a pump-out station, such as provided at Terryglass or Banagher, but there is no reason that this could not be located at the south end of the existing car park. Has WI demonstrated that the harbour is overcrowded at any time of year? The location is not a favourite spot for cruiser owners due to the lack of village atmosphere (such as at , for example, Shannonbridge or Lecarrow). The hotel is very much focussed on wedding and conference guests and is not a must-see destination for most boaters.

The location is very exposed in easterly winds, and any safe new harbour will be required to have a new outer wall if the capacity is to be increased, but one wonders why, in an era of declining numbers of cruisers using the navigation (which can be verified by the lock passage records[1]) WI would be keen to increase the capacity rather than the quality of their facilities. It is difficult to imagine how a new pier of the type proposed can be installed without significant effect on the natural environment in this Special Area of Conservation. I would also ask an Coimisiun to consider the apparent reluctance of the Council and/or Waterways Ireland to control or to limit the use of Personal Watercraft (Jetskis) which are habitually used in Hodson's Bay in a manner which often causes nuisance to other members of the public and always to all residents and wildlife. I note that Bord Pleanála in granting permission for the current watersports building limited the use of powered craft from that facility to one 10hp boat. If permission is granted, a reinforcement of that condition would be appropriate.

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[1] 2024 Shannon Navigation Lock Passages indicate total number in 2023 and 2024 at c. 36,000 compared with c.44,000 in two preceding years

2 Watersports Facility

It seems to me that the council has no more idea now than it did twenty years ago, about what is required in this watersports facility. It is telling that it is now seeking to replace the very building that was foisted on the area in face of strong opposition at that time. The new building appears to have been designed with a generic user in mind, but does not realistically address the requirements of such an operator. For example, it is suggested that the main rooms could be used for community and other recreational use in the off-season, but I imagine the larger indoor spaces would be required for equipment storage and maintenance. It is also extraordinary that the public presentation studiously avoided any representation of the inflatable water park, which is an incredibly large and conspicuous group of objects. No other development in the vicinity of the lakeshore would be considered with the same lack of concern. That the same planning authority is now encouraging what can only be described as an eyesore to be placed semi-permanently in the bay, is somewhat odd. Clearly the watersports centre is bringing great enjoyment to very many young people and one certainly does not begrudge them that, but one wonders how the business will cope with the ever-worsening water quality which already in Lough Derg is barely safe to swim in. There were several instances of dog deaths in summer 2026 in Lough Ree (see random report attached), and while not proven, poor quality is widely suspected as the cause. Areas of Lough Derg, on the same river, were subject to "no swim" notices this year. Is it prudent to plan a development of such magnitude, reported to cost c€30m, whose main function is a waterpark at a time when water quality is steadily declining?

The existing waterpark, whose building is leased to a private operator, has expanded dramatically leading to a proliferation of temporary buildings, fences and signage. I would ask that any continued operation of the site, if permitted, be closely monitored and controlled and be conditional on the cessation of the outdoor playing of loud music, which can be heard across the lake, in this Special Area of Conservation where wildlife is supposed to be protected.

3 Car park

It is pretty well established that car traffic (unlike boat traffic) expands to fill the road space and parking space which is provided. For this reason, most planning authorities now seek to limit the number of car spaces attached to a development, not set a minimum. The waterfront is already severely congested at most times and the addition of 50% more car spaces can only be intended to foster and encourage access by car, even if soothingly described as "overflow". This is, by any reckoning, bonkers, and if the council is determined to seek to increase visitors to the location, as opposed to encouraging them to visit their other 150km + of lake and riverside in the county , then surely a more sustainable approach would be to establish a bus service from

Athlone or Roscommon, or even to place the car park on the Roscommon road and operate a free shuttle bus to the harbour area.

4 Road Improvements.

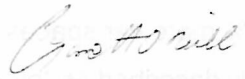
The current road from the N61 to Hodson's Bay serves dozens of private houses and gateways and is already over-capacity. Additional traffic will require its "upgrading" and likely limit future landowner access to it. I would welcome the provision of proper cycle lanes and footpaths from the Roscommon road to the hotel, but urge an Coimisiún should it decide to grant permission, to consider shared surfaces as the way forward for the amenity area itself. It is the provision of footpaths which give motorists a sense of entitlement to drive quickly whereas, if the area were more obviously a shared surface, they might drive with more consideration and awareness of the numbers of small children walking around.

Conclusion

It is bizarre that Roscommon should seek to intensify the use of an already overcrowded location when so many other waterfront locations in its area are becoming deserted. Rooskey and Ballyleague, to mention just two, have increasing numbers of disused buildings and investment in those areas might yield much greater benefits

I think this whole idea is ill-conceived and inappropriate but see that the council has push forward on the basis that it thinks it knows best and that it has committed too much to the project to turn back now. I urge an Coimisiún to consider how well the Council's last scheme has aged and whether it reflects well on its ability to plan and manage projects of this nature. I would ask instead that an Coimisún to refuse permission which might encourage the council to set about tidying up the terrible mess that has developed over the last twenty years, for which it is mostly responsible, and then to turn its attention to spreading the tourism spend around the county rather than concentrating it in this already congested area.

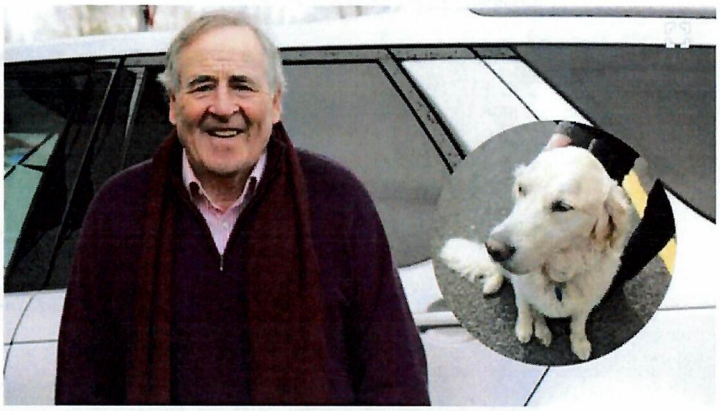
Yours sincerely



Garrett O'Neill
Dip Arch MUBC FRIAI
Architect and Conservation Architect

Independent Westmeath

Published: Thu 6 Aug 2026, 2:40 PM
Last updated: Fri 7 Aug 2026, 12:56 PM



Anton Shevlin and his dog Tango, who passed from alleged poisoning.

Athlone Sweets founder issues warning after beloved dog dies following swim at Hodson Bay

Warning over algal bloom dangers following detection at Lough Derg

Updated / Friday, 25 Sep 2026 12:00



The public advisory is effective immediately and will remain in place until Monday (file image)

Dogs or livestock could die if they ingest harmful toxins at Lough Derg, while people could be susceptible to vomiting or liver damage if they swallow the water while swimming, a Tipperary councillor has warned.