

# Inis Cealtra, Mountshannon, County Clare

LANDSCAPE DESIGN REPORT - APPENDIX I

Landscape and Conservation Management Plan  
December 2024



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR  
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

# Authors

Mitchell + Associates  
Claire Walsh  
MWP  
CMK

Mitchell + Associates

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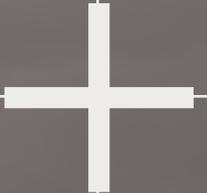
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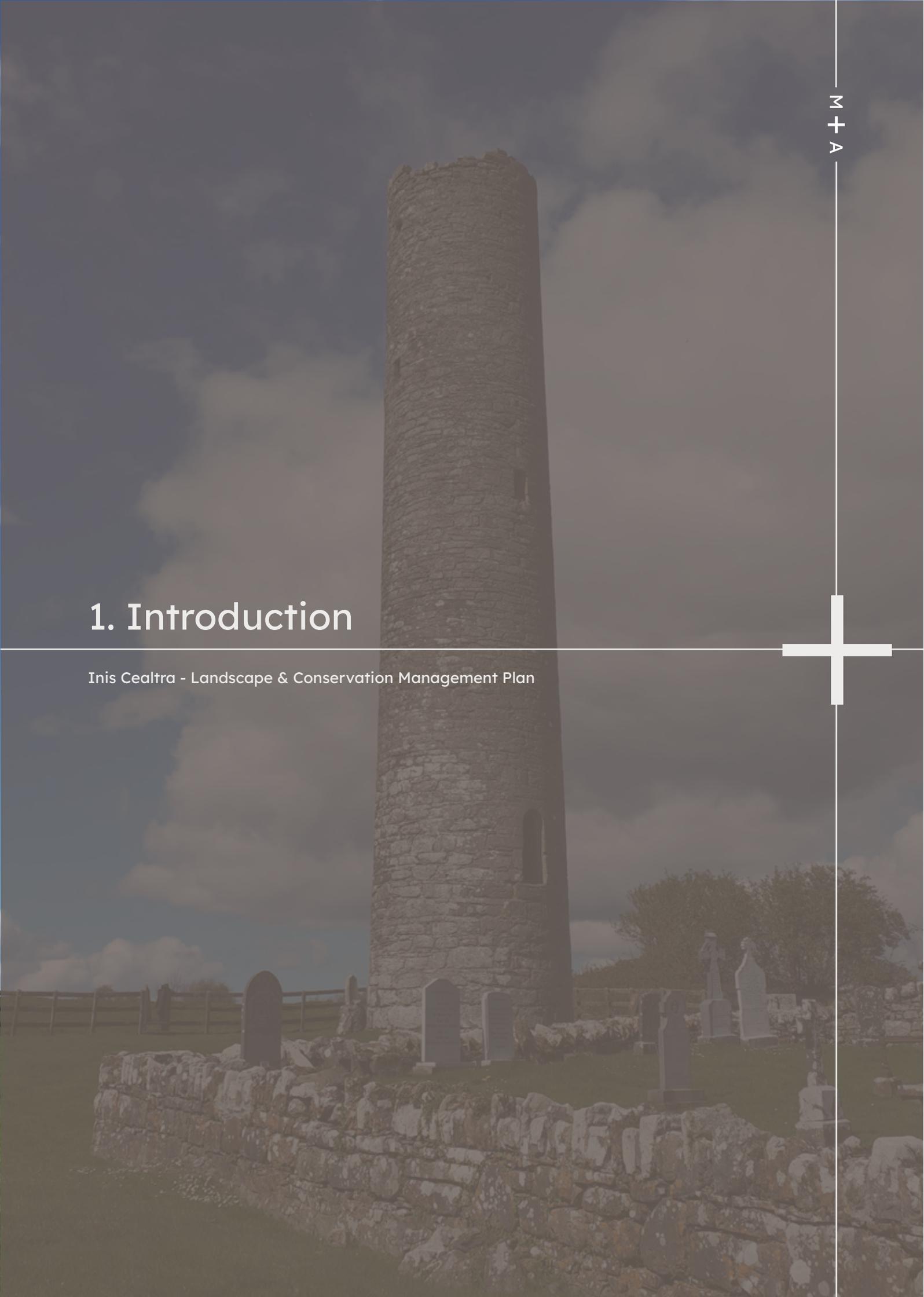
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# 1. Introduction

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



# 1.0 Introduction

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

Inis Cealtra - Holy Island - is, as the name suggests, an island rich in ecclesiastical history, as well as other cultural and natural heritage. It is located on Lough Derg, which is part of the Shannon river system, and is a Special Protection Area. The monastic built heritage of the island is owned by the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, and managed by the Office of Public Works. Clare County Council own and manage the island. As a national monument in state ownership, the island is afforded the highest statutory protection in Ireland. It is located approximately 2km to the south west of the town of Mountshannon in Co Clare, and some 300m from Knockaphort slip to the northwest. The 20 hectare island has a peaceful and ethereal ambience, separated as it is from the mainland.



Sheep Grazing on the Island

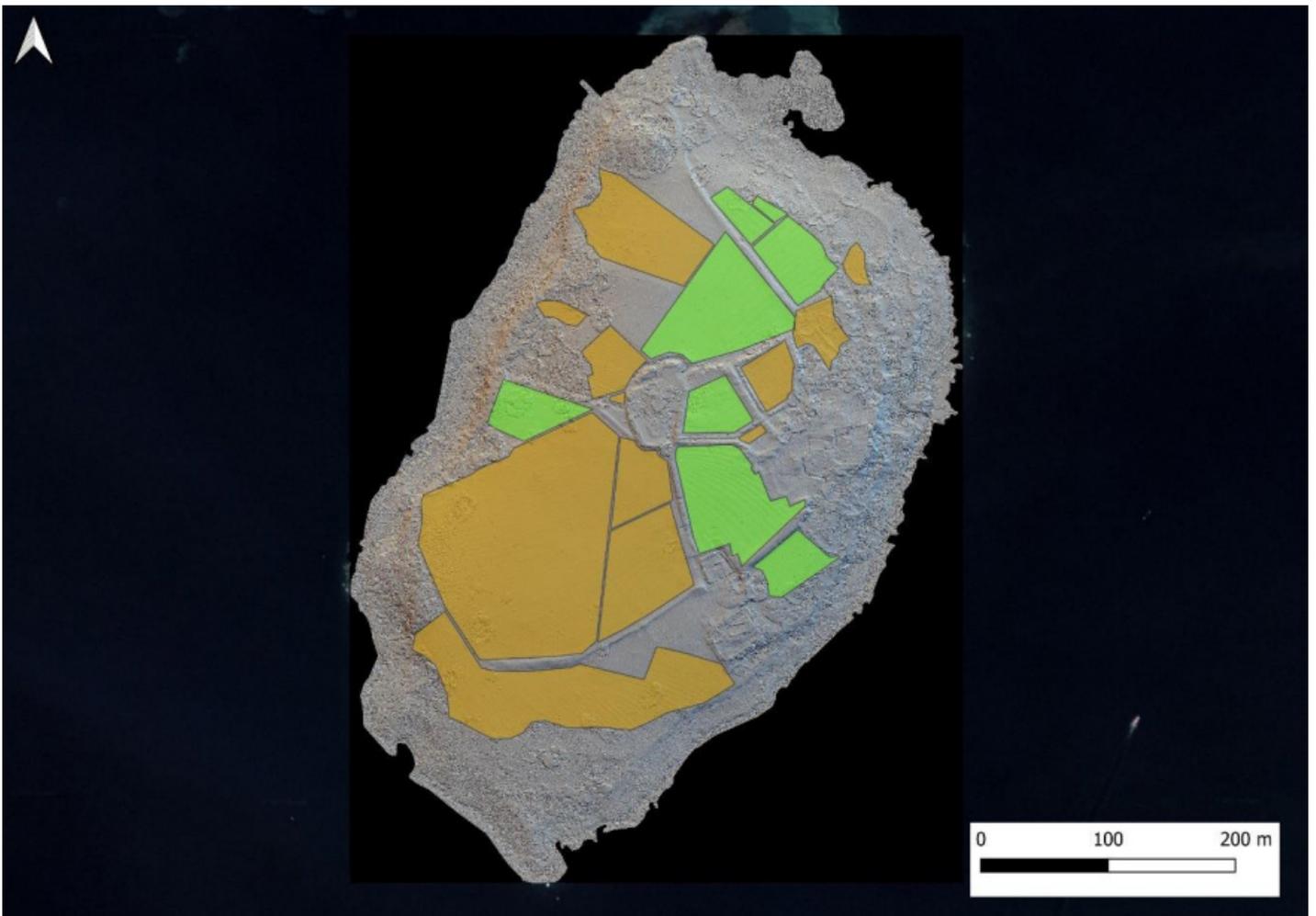
## 1.2 Landscape and Conservation Management Strategy

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The dome-shaped island is currently grazed by sheep from early summer to winter. This management maintains a landscape of meadow down to the marshy foreshore, and to a lesser extent the encroaching scrub. Pockets of woodland offer shelter to the sheep, and add to the diversity of habitats on the island. Areas around the 5 churches and round tower are enclosed, and currently managed as regularly mown grass.

The verdant grass growth points to a relatively high nutrient content, and the Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) survey carried out in 2021 demonstrates that much of the island was formerly ploughed for arable and potato crops.

The strategy for the island is to maintain a grazing regime, and to limit the requirement for mowing to any areas that need to be protected from sheep, and are therefore not accessible for grazing. It is considered that sheep are less likely to damage the island, are reasonably compatible with visitors, and can help maintain a species rich meadow. Sheep grazing has replaced cattle grazing over the last 5 years. It has been limited to between May and October, partly to encourage spring flowering species, however the recommended flock size has not been sufficient to help control scrub growth. Scrub and woodland development is currently being monitored and managed through the grazing regime, with some vegetation management by mechanical means required to restrict growth as required.



Extract from the LIDAR Survey showing areas of ploughing (brown denotes narrow ridges likely for potatoes, and green denotes wider ridges likely denoting cereal crops) The survey area is limited by vegetation.

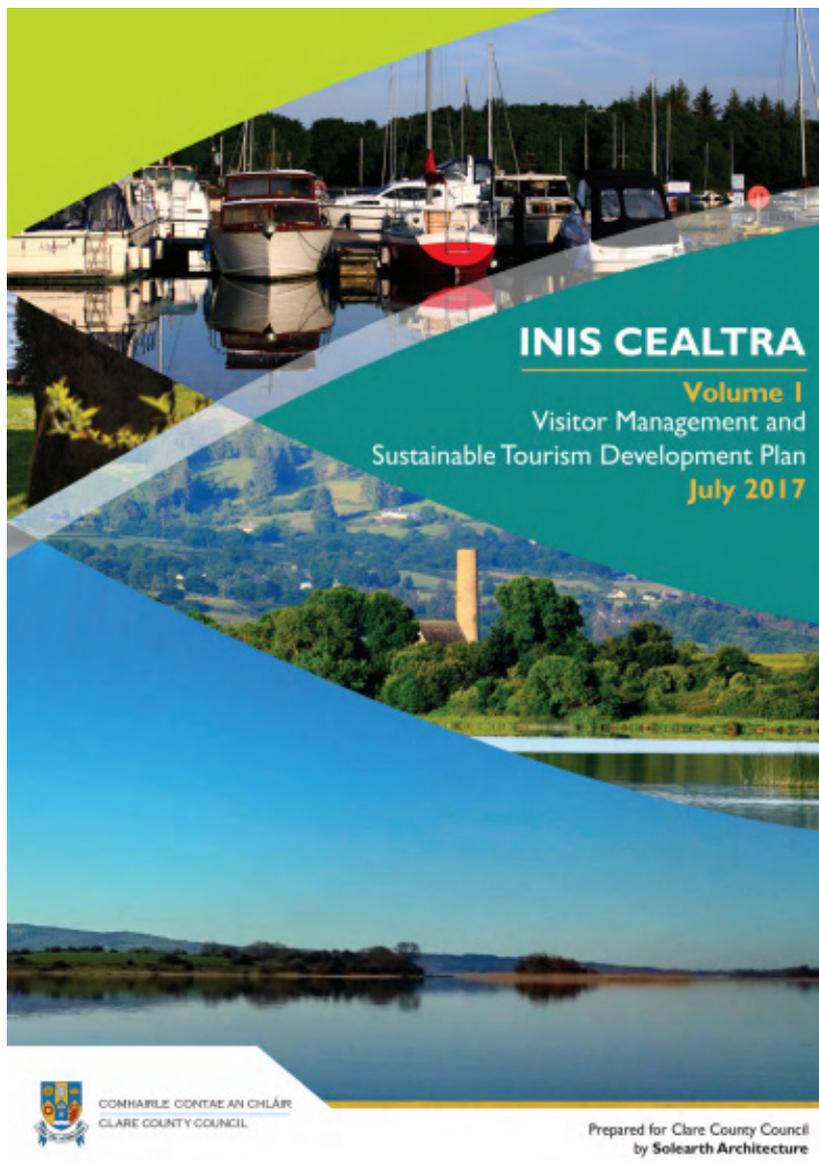
# 1.3 Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

A comprehensive Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan (subsequently referred to here as the VMP) was completed in 2017. The VMP forms the background to the proposed tourism development at Mountshannon and the management of visitors to the island. The VMP consists of 4 volumes:

1. The Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan including Appendices -
  - 1 Response to Public Submissions and;
  - 2 Supporting Material
2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
3. Natura Impact Report
4. Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

This Landscape and Conservation Management Plan is written with the VMP objectives as a reference, and supported by the core plan and the wealth of discussion and background information contained in Appendix 2, Supporting Material.



Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan 2017

## 1.4 Landscape, Archaeology, Ecology - How they Work Together

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

Initially, two documents were proposed; a Landscape Management Plan, dealing with the management of the natural heritage of the island, and a Conservation Management Plan, dealing with the cultural heritage of the island.

Through a series of workshops across the project team, it is evident that the two are so closely interwoven, with sometimes competing, and sometime complementary goals, that the draft combines both natural and cultural heritage management.

Landscape management, in this context, consists of finding a balance between protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the island through habitat management, whilst at the same time maintaining an appropriate setting for the monuments, including the legibility of the spatial context of those monuments, as well as, simply, a meaningful, accessible and visually attractive place to visit. The management embraces the disciplines of ecology and archaeology, with overlapping concerns, combined through the view of the visitor in this landscape.

Landscape Management and farming practices are developed to work in harmony with the conservation and protection of the visible monuments and underground archaeology, and to protect and enhance the habitats and biodiversity on Inis Cealtra.



The potential for path erosion and scrub encroachment around monuments are two key issues that the LCMP addresses.

## 2. Sensitivities and Protection

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



## 2. Sensitivities and Protection

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The sensitive areas of the island that require protection, either continued, or re-envisaged, are the ecological habitats contained within the following zones:

- Meadow (Dry & Wet Grassland)
- Scrub
- Woodland
- Foreshore (including Marsh)
- Stonewalls

The built monuments themselves are generally protected by enclosures of their dry stone walls and the addition of timber fences keep livestock away from the buildings. There is some soil erosion of the earthworks in the centre of the island which requires temporary protection to allow the sward to re-establish. Monuments such as Lady's Well, Bullaun Stones and the Bargaining Stone that sit in open areas are unlikely to need any additional protection. There is minor evidence of anti-social behaviour or damage on the island, and it is considered that the implementation of active management of visitors will further reduce any risk.

There are also off-shore sensitivities, particularly the reed beds to the north of the island, and the underwater archaeology which has been mapped around the shoreline. The controlled management of visitors, arriving at a designated jetty will minimise any risk to these sensitive areas.



Foreshore with reedbeds in the middle distance. Photo: Mitchell +associates



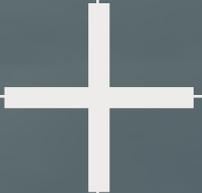
Bullaun stones in open meadow. Photo: Mitchell + associates



A camp fire was unlikely to be considered damaging or anti-social by the people who built it, however the stones have been moved from elsewhere on the island, causing disturbance to monuments or habitat. Photo: Mitchell + associates

# 3. Landscape, Archaeology and Habitat Typologies

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan





# 3.1 Landscape Typology

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

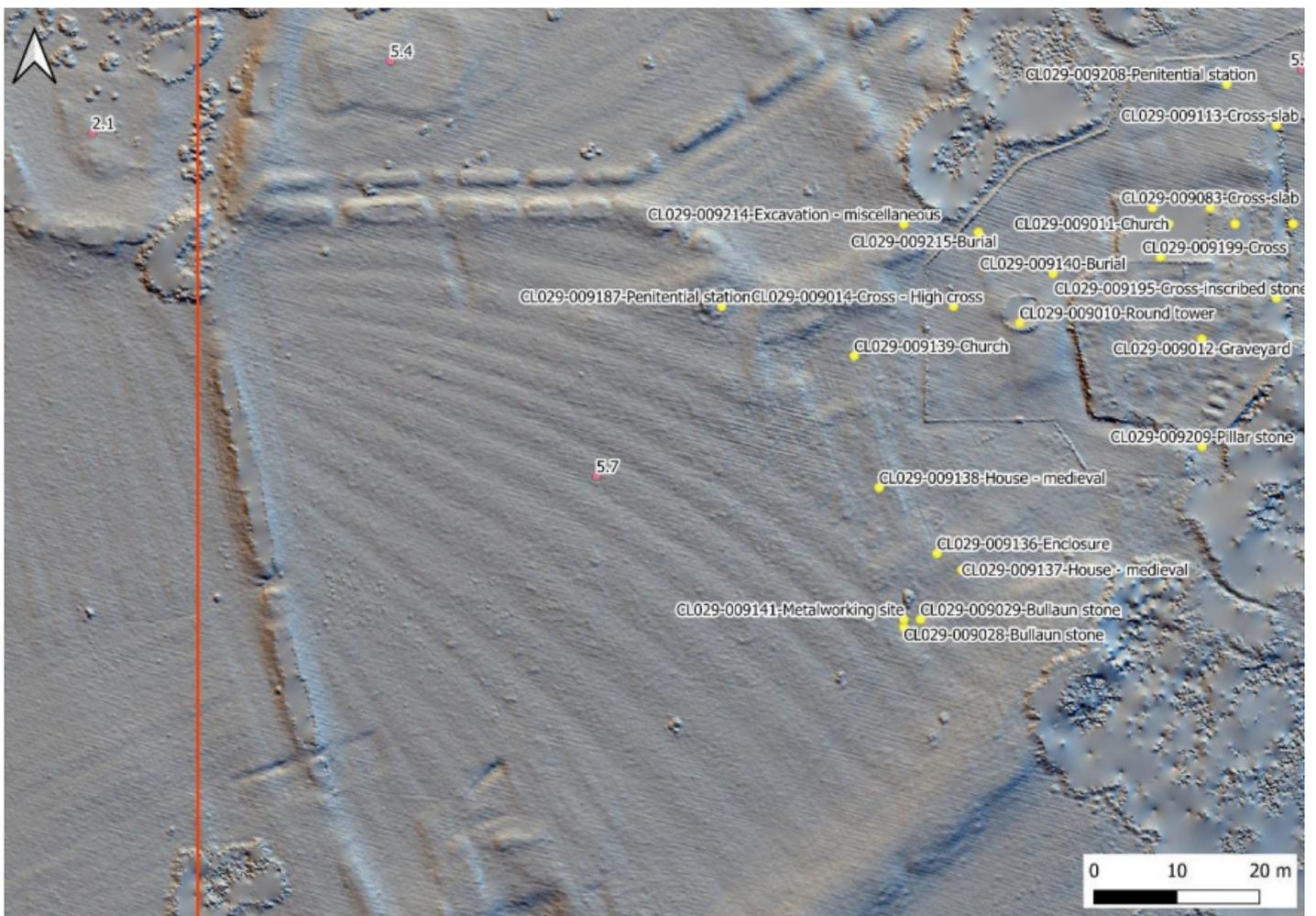
## 3.1.1 Landscape Character

The character of the island - a domed meadow flanked by trees which form the setting for the ecclesiastical ruins - is that of a pastoral landscape. This landscape character is formed primarily by the monuments themselves - in simple visual terms, striking romantic ruins. The reality is of course that this is much more than a visual setting, this is a landscape of archaeology and history. Not least of this is the hierarchy of buildings and enclosures and routes, the legibility of which has been partially lost through alterations and landscape management.

## 3.1.2 Reading the landscape

The ability to read the early monastic landscape setting is diminished to some extent due to historical farming practices, when much of the island was ploughed for crops. The extensive ridge and furrow patterns across the island are demonstrated in the LIDAR survey of 2021. The subsequent geophysical survey (2021) reveals elements that are no longer visible on the surface, notably the rediscovery of the alignment of enclosures that are so important in understanding the hierarchical status of the landscape and buildings when they were in use. The encroachment of scrub vegetation across these now invisible alignments has an effect on the cultural heritage by diminishing those historic spatial definitions around the monuments. The scrub itself has an ecological value as both a habitat and a protection from grazing of emerging sapling trees.

The landscape management plan therefore aims to balance the natural and cultural heritage of the island, as well as present a sound basis for the future of the island landscape, including its legibility.



Opposite page: Marsh and Shoreline vegetation. Photo Mitchell + associates

Above: Extract from the LIDAR & Geophysical Survey 2022 Dr Stephen Davis UCD School of Archaeology

## 3.1 Landscape Typology

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

### 3.1.3 Visual setting

The visual quality and the setting of the monuments is also taken into consideration from the perspective of Lough Derg; views from boats, shoreline and local environs demonstrate that the island is an important landmark. Further from the shore on rising ground, both in counties Clare and Tipperary, the island is visible across the lough. The round tower is a distinctive landmark of the island when viewed from a distance. In closer views, there are glimpses and vistas through clearings, across the domed meadow towards the monuments.



Inis Cealtra viewed from the south across Lough Derg. Photo : Mitchell + associates

# 3.1 Landscape Typology

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

## 3.1.4 Trees and Woodland

The presence of Ash Die-Back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, formerly *Chalara fraxinea*) is evident on some of the mature ash. Some mature trees have died and some trees have fallen. These are mainly ash according to the tree survey carried out by CMK Arborists. There is no legal requirement for the removal of diseased timber or leaf debris from the site, and indeed allowing it to remain on site is likely to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. Removal of dead or dangerous trees of any species will need to be prioritised to protect the public, as well as the monuments themselves. However, the presence of dead trees on the skyline lends a sublime effect to the visual quality of the landscape, and they also provide habitats for biodiversity. As such, dead trees will be retained subject to individual risk assessment on at least an annual basis.

Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) competes with native species as it encroaches across the island, but also appears to be filling the niche left by the failing ash. It also offers an abundance of spring blossom which is food for pollinators. Management of sycamore in particular will therefore need to strike a balance between its competitive nature and the benefits it brings.



Dead and fallen trees on the island should be left if they do not pose a danger to people or monuments. .  
Photo: Mitchell + associates

## 3.2 Archaeology Typology

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The island and its surroundings has a large array of monument types. These have been identified through the following methods:

Underwater survey, previously carried out by the Underwater section of National Monuments Service, where log boats have been located on the lake bed. A further focused underwater survey was undertaken in Spring 2021 by ADCO. A further dive survey, preceded by a sonar survey, was carried out on the south and western part of the island by Mizen.

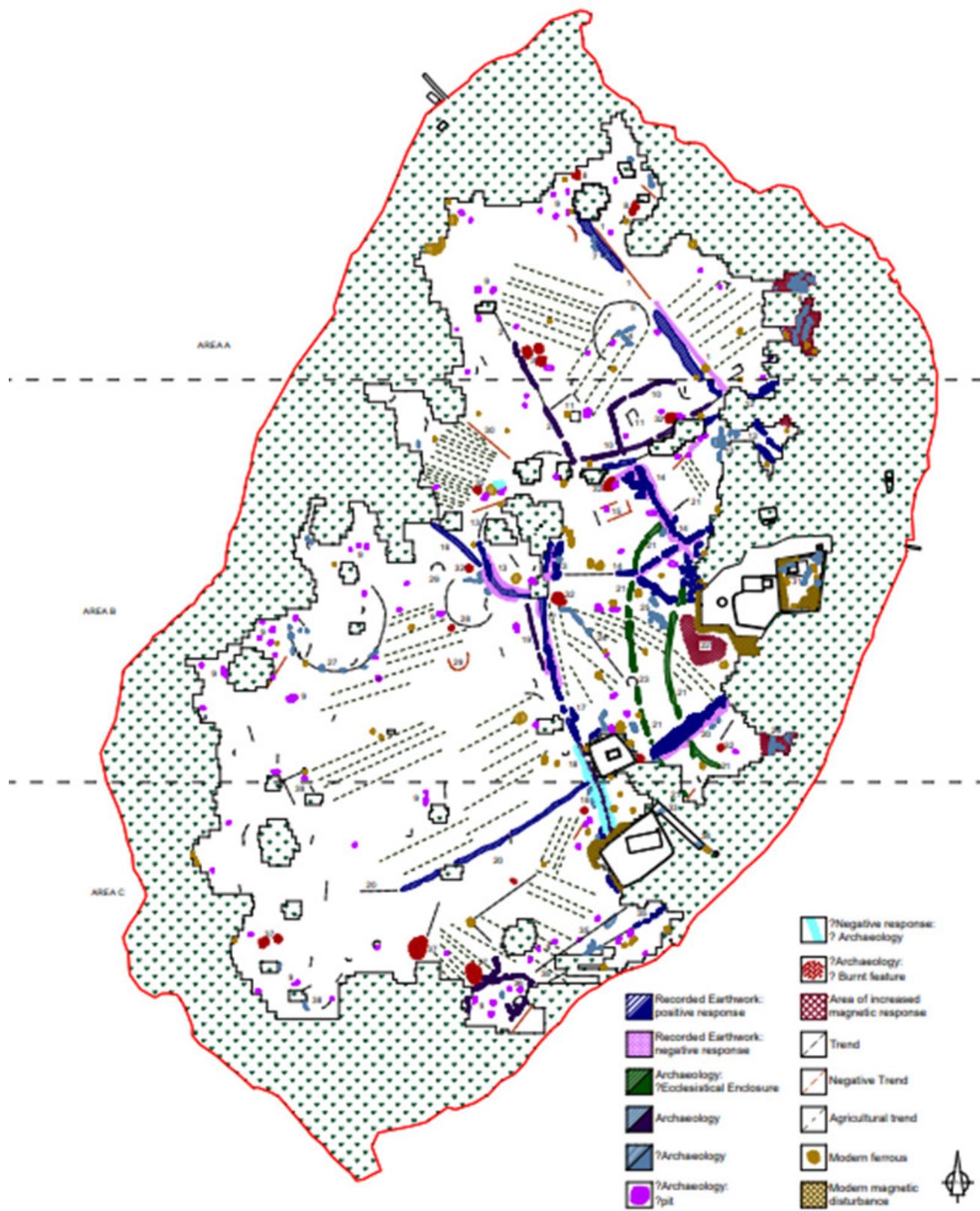
Archaeological excavation was carried out from 1970-1980 by Liam De Paor. The excavations 'showed that habitation of one kind or another was virtually continuous from a date round about AD600 down to the nineteenth century. The island was apparently visited by hunters in Neolithic and Early Bronze Age times..'. The excavations, targeted around the monastic remains, recovered many artefacts, ecofacts, and samples for C14 dating. These have been the subject of a Royal Irish Academy grant, carried out by the Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin. Three test trenches each measuring 1m by 1m, were hand excavated in September 2024 under Ministerial Permit in the area of the western jetty: no archaeological deposits were present here. A detailed analysis of sources for the island was undertaken as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. This tended to concentrate on the visible monuments on the island.

A geophysical survey was undertaken in early summer 2021. This uncovered important data relating to the monastic enclosures, in particular the potentially earliest enclosure which extended towards the eastern lake shore. The early date of this semi- circuit is in agreement with the series of radiocarbon dates undertaken as part of the Royal Irish Academy funded study and is worthy of any further fieldwork to be carried out on the monastery. Several further enclosures have been identified towards the western part of the island, outside of the enclosures around the monastery.

A LIDAR survey was undertaken in Spring 2021. The images yield high resolution of the landscape, particularly the extent of the heavy ploughing which has taken place on the island. Areas of interest include the eastern part of the island, presently under shrub, and potential monuments on the south- west of the island. The LIDAR survey also provides an accurate reading of the masonry monastic features.



Image from LIDAR & Geophysical Survey 2022 by Dr Steve Davis, UCD School of Archaeology



Geophysical survey Preliminary Summary Map 2021 JML Surveys

### 3.3 Habitat Typology

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

Figure 1. below shows a habitat map of the island. Figure 2. below shows the assessment of each habitat for its ecological significance based on the National Roads Authority (NRA) Site Evaluation Scheme

The habitats are classified in accordance with Fossitt (2000). Of particular note, are the three habitats, that on completion of further surveys, may be Annex type habitats.

- Marsh (GM1)
- Wet Grassland (GS4)
- Dry meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2)

These are potentially protected under Habitats Directive which ensures the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species.

Figure 2. shows habitat that may link with Annex type habitats. It should also be considered that as the site is within the boundary of an SPA it is considered internationally important as a whole.

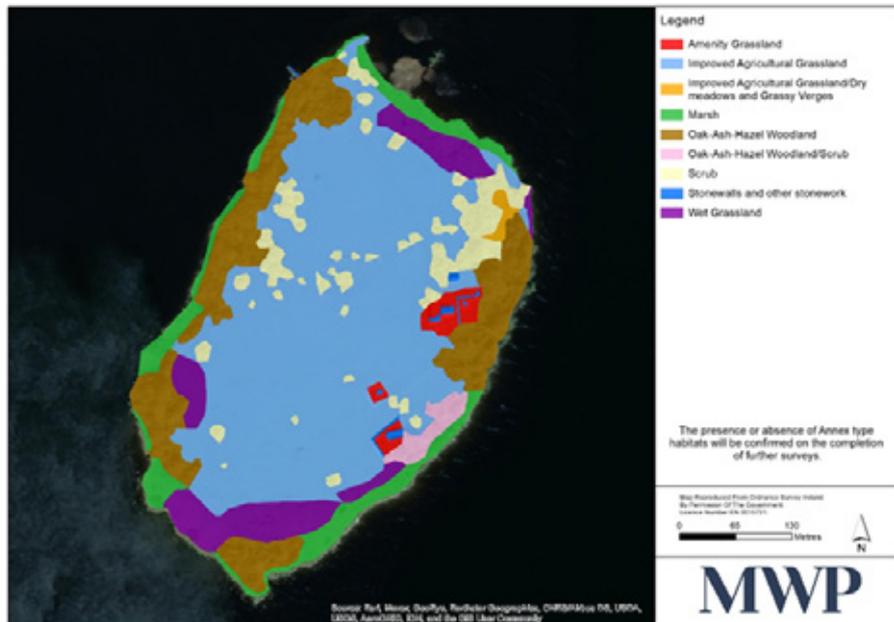


Figure 1 - Habitat Map

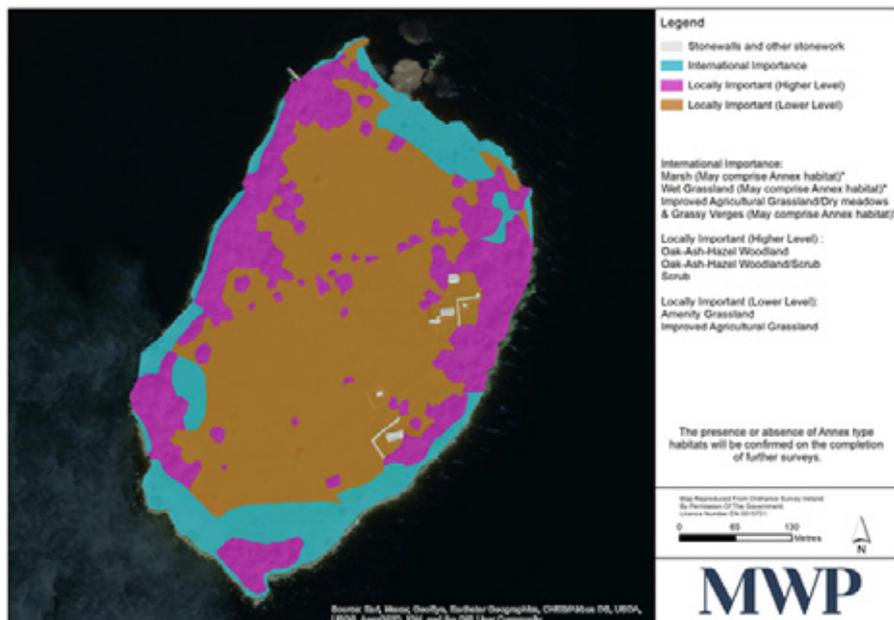
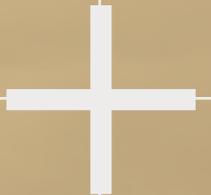


Figure 2 Habitat by importance according to National Roads Authority (NRA) Site Evaluation Scheme

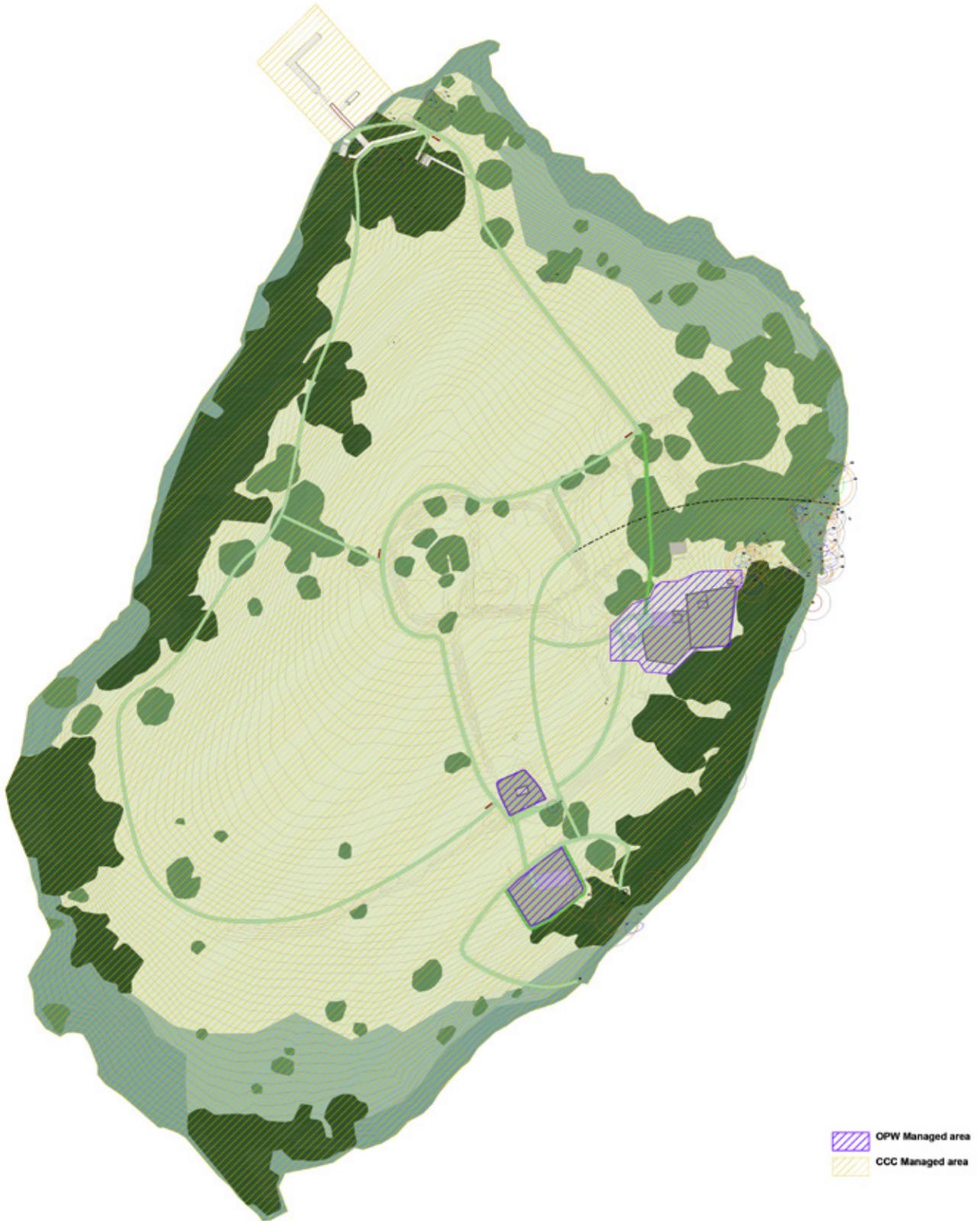
# 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



# 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



Plan of Inis Cealtra showing OPW (Blue) and CCC (Yellow) areas of responsibility

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The draft composite landscape management plan for this island incorporates the requirements of ecology, archaeology and landscape. These are:

- Protection of Monuments
- Protected and enhanced habitats for biodiversity
- Agrarian management
- Limited operations
- Access, amenity and interpretation
- Visual quality

The status quo of sheep grazing and hand mowing around monuments will continue until this final plan is implemented in the context of the VMP, and as visitor numbers increase. However, in the meantime, the season for sheep grazing has been adjusted to allow the spring flowers to bloom in the meadow, and for the vegetation to re-establish on eroded banks. Further management of scrub took place by mechanical means in February 2023 in order to reduce its encroachment on grazed areas.

### 4.1. Protection of Monuments

The use of sheep established a low intensity meadow management regime for the island. The sheep are excluded from the stone wall enclosures, particularly the graveyards at St Caimin's and St Mary's Churches. St Bridget's is also enclosed by a stone wall. The OPW has renewed the timber fence enclosure around the tower. The other artefacts that lie outside the enclosures include Lady Well, bullaun stones and the Bargaining Stone. The low impact of sheep grazing will need to be monitored to avoid any breaking of the soil surface leading to erosion.

It is not intended that scrub be cleared from the island as it has an important function as a habitat for birds. The scrub gives protection from grazing for sapling trees that may be allowed to develop to maturity, maintaining a healthy age profile for tree cover on the island. However, scrub encroachment towards monuments, and where underground artefacts have been recorded, should be prevented.

The use of equipment to for mowing, strimming and scrub management presents a potential threat of damage, and so operators must be inducted in to their use to prevent stones being damaged, ground being broken or roots being lifted which can cause disturbance to underground artefacts or lead to erosion.



Diagram of scrub and woodland development for Inis Cealtra

# 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

## 4.2 Protected and enhanced habitats for biodiversity

The island is the setting for a range of habitats ranging from the shoreline marsh through meadow, scrub and woodland. The stone walls are also a habitat. Maintenance operators, sheep managers, and building managers must be inducted so that the management requirements of each habitat is understood.

### Marsh

The current sheep grazing regime appears to be maintaining the marsh habitat. However the area should be monitored for scrub encroachment and over-grazing.

### Wet Grassland

The current sheep grazing regime appears to be maintaining the wet grassland habitat. However the area should be monitored for scrub encroachment and over-grazing.

### Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges

The current sheep grazing regime appears to be maintaining the dry grassland habitat. However the area should be monitored for scrub encroachment and over-grazing.

### Scrub

Scrub development should be actively managed to ensure there is sufficient habitat, and to assist in the establishment of new trees. However it should be prevented from growing over known underground artefacts.

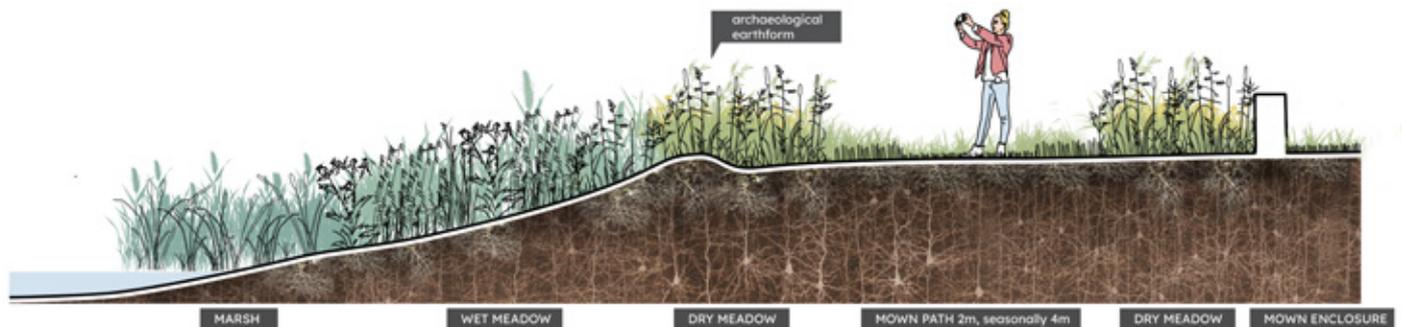


Diagram of shoreline, marsh and grasslands for Inis Cealtra

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

### Woodland and trees

The management of trees on the island should maintain a healthy age profile, increase the amount of native species, and allow woodland and individual trees to regenerate particularly on the less archaeological sensitive areas to the west of the island where they will provide shelter. Ivy on trees can act as a sail in winter storms, destabilising trees. Therefore excessive ivy growth should be avoided, however it should not be removed entirely as it provides habitat and a source of food for pollinators early in the year. However The dead and dying trees are a habitat in their own right, and also lend a sublime atmosphere or timelessness and spirituality. These should be retained as long as possible, where they do not pose a risk to people or monuments.

### Stone Walls

The traditionally built stone walls are typically a home to lichens, ferns and stonecrops. Where these are not damaging the boundary structures they should be left as far as possible. Occasionally gaps in the boundary walls may host nesting birds and bats, but this is more likely on the taller buildings. Best practice should be followed in retaining habitats without compromising the integrity of the monuments.

There is a possibility that areas protected from grazing may develop ivy growth. No ivy should be allowed to take hold on the buildings and boundary walls. to avoid damage. Ivy is a good habitat and source of food for pollinators early in the year. Some ivy can be retained on the trees (see Woodland and Trees section above).

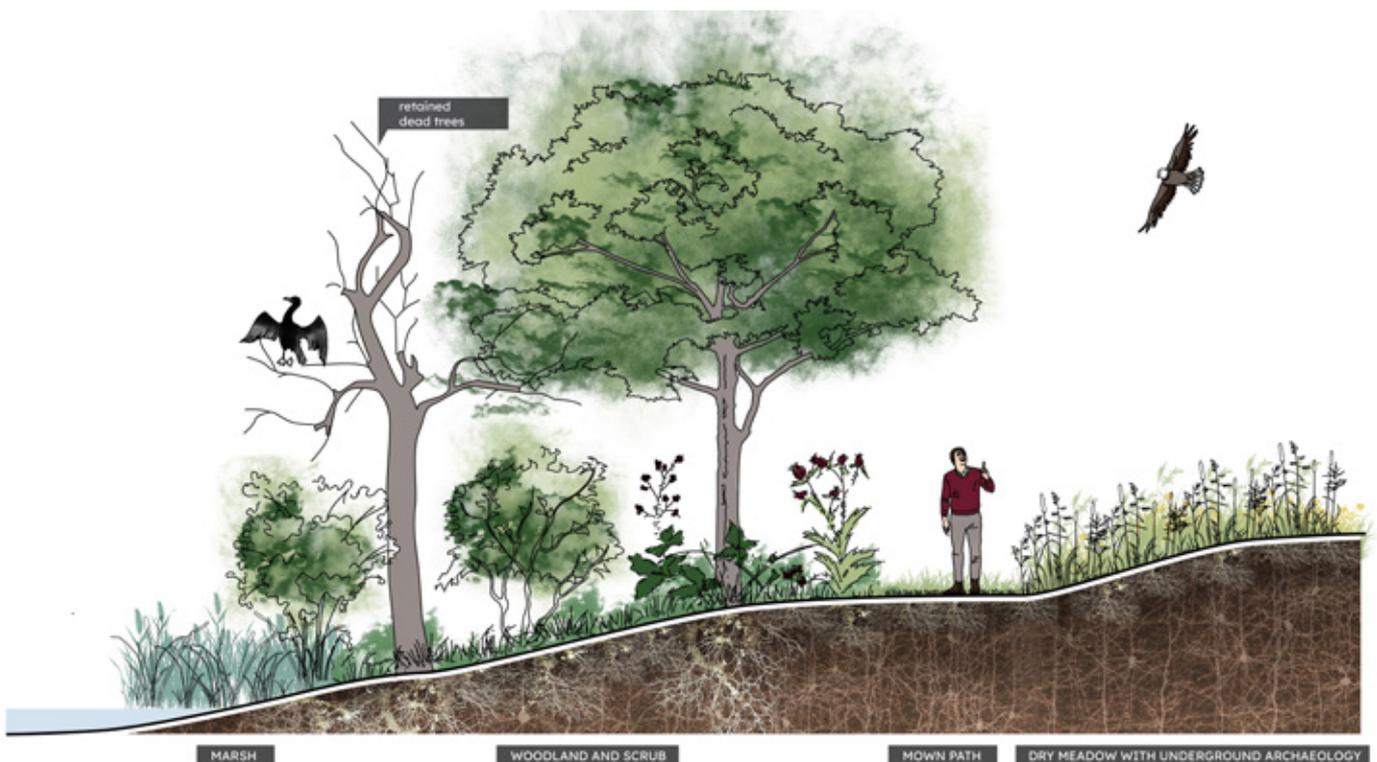


Diagram of shoreline and woodland for Inis Cealtra

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

### 4.3. Agrarian Management

The island is managed as a meadow pasture with fringes of woodland. From reviewing LIDAR imagery, the landscape outside of the walled enclosures was entirely ploughed in the past, and the Ordnance Survey First Edition shows no trees at all. Since the grazing has changed from cattle to sheep in the last 8 years more scrub vegetation has developed. This needs to be actively managed to ensure it doesn't grow excessively near the monuments and to keep the pasture open, which also maintains the setting and the inter-visibility between monuments.

The management of the grass sward does not require fertilising. If there are opportunities to reduce the nutrient content of the ground, the amount of grassland species would increase with less competition from grasses. This could be done by cutting and lifting hay, or by introducing nutrient- competing species such as Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*).

Sheep grazing takes place from Spring to Autumn. They are removed from the island in winter to reduce the potential for erosion. The sheep numbers for the island are approx 67, however both the numbers and timing should be actively managed in order to respond to seasonal variations, and to graze emerging scrub and rank grass before it gets too tough.



Sheep grazing and using scrub for shelter on Inis Cealtra. Photo: Mitchell + associates

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

### 4.4 Limited operations

The intention of the management of the island is to minimise operations and therefore reduce potential impacts. These include the avoidance of chemicals such as fertilisers and herbicides; no litter bins, so that visitors bring home their own waste; and limited signage to avoid potential vandalism, and repairs.

No dogs other than service dogs should be allowed on the island to avoid disturbance to sheep and wildlife, and to avoid dog faeces.

### 4.5 Access, amenity and interpretation

The island is a living landscape. It is actively managed through farming; it is the site of two active grounds which are visited by people paying their respects; and it is a destination for those who wish to visit and study the monuments. It is considered a 'natural' landscape, although of course it is tempered by its history as a monastic settlement and its earthworks. As a tempered landscape, a term used by the National Disability Authority, one may expect reasonable accessibility without compromising the quality of the place. The barriers to access should not be modern interventions, but there are the challenges of the natural and historic topography, and ultimately to the walled enclosures and churches themselves.

The proposed implementation of advanced interpretation at the visitor centre and guided access will alleviate the requirement for any further signage other than the existing OPW signage. Advanced information will also inform visitors of the challenges to access.

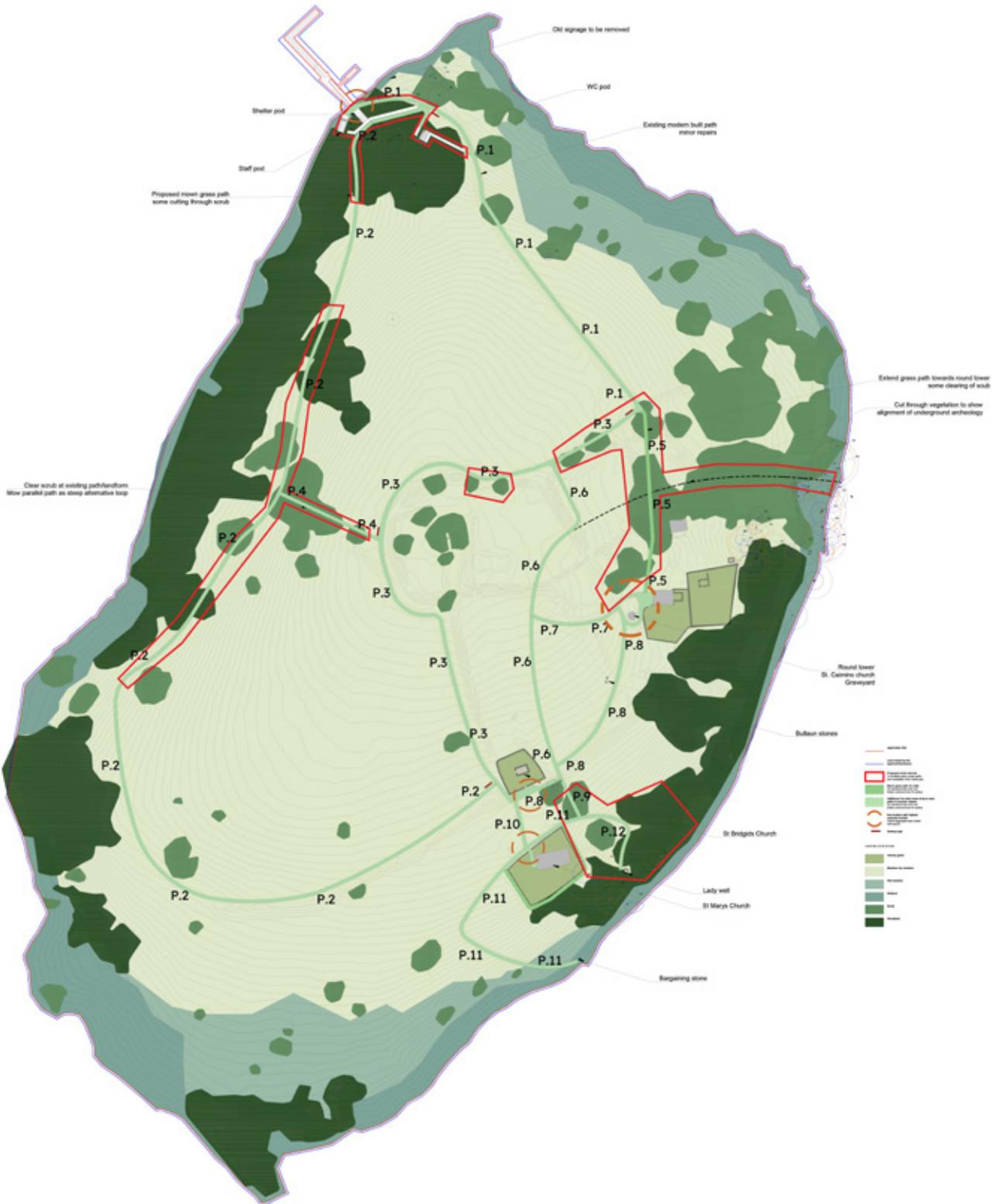
The mown grass paths are identified in the planning drawings, and for ease of reference are marked P1-P14 on the plans. This key map can be used to identify specific paths that may require attention. The proposed layout identifies removal of terram from path P1, no new terrams are proposed for the minimal interventions on some routes. At locations where erosion becomes apparent, the addition of small quantities of crushed limestone aggregate (10-6mm) with a fine 10-20mm layer of topsoil to allow vegetation to grow over. Crushed limestone is a locally sourced material that is traditionally used in path construction. A locally sourced crushed sandstone may be considered but it should match the existing stone materials on the island, and therefore limestone is more suitable. This is to allow air and moisture in the path layer, enabling vegetation to grow. The proposal is not to use plastic grids or meshes on the island as they detract from the setting, are not natural materials appropriate to this setting, and are seldom successful in allowing vegetation to grow over.



Plastic grid ground reinforcement seldom establishes vegetation and can detract from the ambience of naturalistic or historic sites. Photo : Mitchell + associates

# 4. Composite Plan

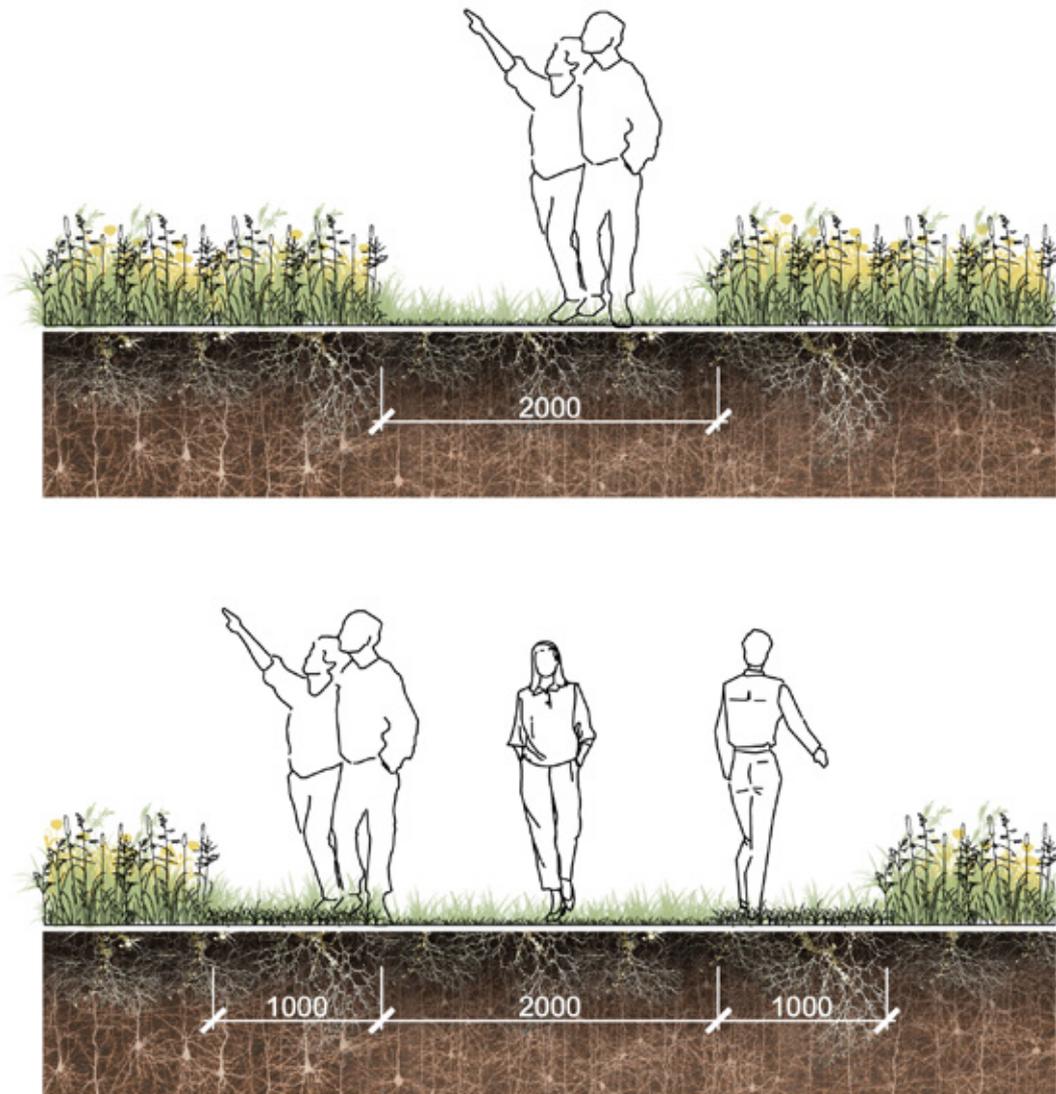
Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



Extract from the Landscape Plan for the island showing the mown grass path network.

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



In order to manage the potential path erosion that may be caused in summer months or following periods of wet weather and allow grass growth, the path network should be managed in two ways:

1. A standard 2m mown grass path network is shown as a baseline network. This allows people to be guided follow alternative routes if some areas start to become eroded. This will allow them time to recover.
2. In period of high visitor numbers, the most popular 2m wide paths are mown an additional 1 meter either side on a less intensive mowing regime. This is likely to be most useful from Easter to September, mown on a 6 week cycle. This broader path allows visitors to spread out across the same route and avoid excessive trampling, thus reducing potential for path erosion, as illustrated in the diagram above.

## 4. Composite Plan

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

### 4.6 Visual quality

The perception of Inis Cealtra as a ‘pristine’ landscape in the VMP 2017 is one that should be maintained. However the definition of pristine is not simple in this context; it is not a wild natural landscape. People’s perception is however that it is unspoilt. The island setting, removed from mainland, feels like a place apart. The ruins of the ancient churches, and their graveyards invokes a timeless spiritual setting. The management of the meadow by grazing sheep, along with stagheaded trees contribute to this timeless feeling. The very limited amount of discreet signage means there is little distraction.

The management aim is therefore to maintain this sense of place and not disturb the quality that allows people to feel that Inis Cealtra is a place apart. Each management action therefore should be considered with this in mind, and mitigation should avoid disturbance of this impression.



Inis Cealtra image of ancient ruins and stag-headed trees.

# 5. Management

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



# 5. Management

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The vision for the island is to maintain a dynamic and ecologically sound landscape of meadow, foreshore, scrub and woodland as an appropriate setting for the monuments, whilst absorbing higher visitor numbers from the proposed visitor centre in Mountshannon.

In broad terms this means that the western side of the island continues to regenerate woodland, giving shelter to the setting of the monuments which sit in areas of open meadow with a backdrop of localised scrub and woodland. The management plan is based on a temporal cycle; seasonal; annual; and over decades.

## 5.1 Extensive management

The management of the meadow by grazing and the cultivation of scrub and woodland is considered an extensive management practice requiring low levels of specific intervention.

## 5.2 Intensive management

Areas around the monuments require more intensive management, in particular mowing regimes that maintain access in areas where sheep are not grazing. The encroachment of vegetation around and on the monuments requires specific intervention, such as ivy removal which may otherwise take hold in areas where sheep cannot graze it. Encroaching scrub will require mechanical removal every few years if it is not sufficiently grazed. A 5.5tonne track machine excavator with a flail head attachment, has been successfully used in 2024 to cut and mulch scrub. No ground should be broken, or roots excavated to avoid disturbance to underground archaeology. Scrub clearance must be avoided during the nesting season (1st March to 1st September). The window of opportunity in winter months must avoid wet ground to prevent damage and compaction to the soil and any underground archaeology. Mulched material may be left in place or transferred and spread in areas of woodland., away from the monuments. Scrub clearance must be supervised by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.

## 5.3 Vegetation species selection

A review of archaeological analysis of charcoal from the excavations points to the species that have had a presence on the island. Of these, oak, ash, elm and hazel are predominant. As indigenous elm have generally succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease (*Ophiostoma novo-ulmi*), and there is a moratorium on the propagation of ash, it suggests that regenerating woodland should be directed towards an oak woodland with hazel understorey, as well as other associated native species such as birch, holly and cherry and apple.

The proximity to native woodland in the locality means that a seedbank of local provenance can be sourced for replenishing the islands tree species.



Proximity of a native seedbank of local provenance to Inis Cealtra.

# 5. Management

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

## 5.4 Biosecurity

Despite being an island, Inis Cealtra is susceptible to diseases, and will continue to be, especially with the movement of people and livestock. Any biosecurity measures that are required in the event of an outbreak will need to be implemented according to government directives.

## 5.5 Machinery

Machinery will be limited to hand controlled mowing, strimming and mulching equipment on the island.

## 5.6 Livestock

Sheep are used to manage the grassland from May to October each year. No further livestock is envisaged, however, it is possible that specific breeds of sheep may be trialled, and that goats may be used for specific grazing operations. Cattle have been considered as being potentially damaging to the monuments.

## 5.7 Chemicals

The intention of the management plan is to avoid the use of chemical herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers. However it is not envisaged that the sheep will be managed as organic livestock.



Eroded earthwork, probably by cattle, and scrub encroachment at the centre of the island.  
Photo Mitchell + associates

# 6. Monitoring

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan



# 6. Monitoring

Inis Cealtra - Landscape & Conservation Management Plan

The Landscape and Conservation Management plan is a living document that will require an annual review with stakeholders.

## 6.1. New Actions

Key monitoring operations throughout the year that can take place on a daily basis but with a formal fortnightly check for formal action:

- Litter collection
- Clearance of any camp fires
- Damage to monuments
- Damage to habitats
- Grazing regime
- Path erosion
- Scrub encroachment
- Tree health

### Additional actions:

Actions that vary from the Landscape and Conservation Management Plan will need agreement with some or all of the following: Clare County Council (Tourism, Heritage & Biodiversity), OPW (Architects), and the National Monuments Service, and Waterways Ireland.

## 6.2 Useful references:

- Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Plan 2017
- Inis Cealtra LIDAR and Geophysical Survey 2022
- Clare County Development Plan
- ACCESS Guidance to heritage sites and buildings
- National Disability Authority Building for Everyone accessibility guidance.
- Managing Species Rich Grassland Farming For Nature
- Management Guidelines for Ireland's Native Woodlands

