

Joe Sheahan, GALRO – Statement

We purchased a bungalow and land on the shores of Lough Rea, Newtowncashel, Co. Longford on 19th July, 2021. It was our intention to develop the property and bring it into use as a holiday respite place for children with Autism and other related disabilities. At the time of purchase, we had no knowledge of areas of special conservation or regulations pertaining to such sites.

The property comprises of a three-bed bungalow and lands of approximately seven acres. The property benefits from its location on the shores of Lough Rea and includes a stone harbour which has been in existence for many decades.

Following purchase of the property on 19th July, 2021, I visited the property and met an individual who described himself as a neighbouring farmer. During my interaction with this individual, he informed me of the history of the lake amenity and of the property. The conversation was jovial and friendly. However, some four weeks or so later, I received a letter from a solicitor representing the same farmer, claiming adverse possession of the property. It took some months for the conveyancing to conclude, and when it did, I approached the farmer and asked him to remove his cattle from the property.

However, despite my request to the neighbouring farmer, the cattle remained on the property. On 02nd November, 2021, Mr. Maken, Macken Plant Hire, upon my instruction, commenced works on the site to construct a fence and to lay a new top layer of stone on the existing driveway and front yard of the property. However, Mr. Macken was unable to gain access to the property with the necessary plant machinery due to the very narrow entrance. In order for Mr. Macken to gain access, it was necessary to remove the existing entrance piers to the property.

While Mr. Macken was on the property to undertake the necessary fencing works, I also asked him to level the harbour as there were a lot of big stones protruding; I believed this would involve tracking the digger up and down the surface to compact the loose stone. I then intended putting a marine timber cover over the harbour.

On my return to the site some days later, I noted that Mr. Macken had shortened the harbour by removing stone from the outer end of the harbour and replacing them in the water nearer the shore. Ms. Moles, Wildlife Warden, visited the site on that same day, 22nd November, 2021. We were advised by Ms. Moles that we may need planning for the works and we should cease work. Works ceased immediately and Mr. Macken left the site.

Signed:



Date:

