

Submission to Draft Louth County Development Plan 2021-27

Made on Behalf of

Termonfeckin Development Board

By

Kimmitt Sayers (Chairperson)

Termonfeckin Development Board (Louth PPN No. 00435)

TDB was established in November 2020. The group is affiliated to the Louth Public Participation Network and is in the process of registering as a charity. The group is a voluntary community based organisation which aims to make a constructive impact on the social, cultural, recreational and economic potential of the local area. This includes interaction with local authorities to develop physical infrastructure (e.g. cycleways, playground, walking trails) and community amenities in the Termonfeckin area. The group also aims to help protect the local environment by promoting sustainable approaches and activities.

Many thanks for considering our Submission. Kimmitt Sayers (Chairperson; contact details overleaf) can be contacted to discuss the content of this submission.

Submissions

The Termonfeckin Development Board would like to make **three** submissions to the Draft Louth County Development Plan:

1. Provision of a Cyclepath linking Termonfeckin Village to North Drogheda
2. Development of a structured Heritage Trail within the environs of the village boundary
3. Provision of a playground facility

1. **Greenway**

The rural villages north of Drogheda town have shown a significant population increase over the last 15 years. Between 2006 and 2011 the population of Termonfeckin village more than doubled, from 653 to 1443 persons. This increase was due to a significant house building programme. Local services have not maintained pace with the population growth. Termonfeckin village currently boasts a population of 1579 persons with families and young children comprising a significant portion of this total. Of the current population approximately 30% are children (U19). Another 30% are in the age group 30-50. The area has a significant retirement age cohort. Over the next number of years the population age profile indicates that the retirement age cohort will increase in line with moving demographics.

In addition, the village continues to act as a popular destination for large numbers of people from Drogheda and the surrounding region for recreational purposes, walks and access to beaches. This has led to a large rise in vehicular traffic on the main Drogheda to Termonfeckin road (R166) and the Termonfeckin-Baltray-Drogheda road (R167).

In light of the large numbers of residents and non-residents now residing and passing through the village, the TDB believes the Louth County Development Plan should provide for improved connectivity of Termonfeckin village with Drogheda town via provision of a two way cyclepath. The potential benefits of this proposal include:

1. Significant reduction in the overall number of local area car journeys
2. Improved physical and mental well-being for the local population, including younger and older age cohorts through use of the cycleway.
3. Development of a linking route for touristic and recreational development of the area, including Beaulieu House, An Grianan, Termonfeckin Castle and Termonfeckin Heritage Trail (currently being developed by TDB). Provision for integration into any future Louth Coastal Cycleway should be included at the design stage.
4. Act as an access route for local sporting facilities e.g. Seapoint Pitch n' Putt Course, Seapoint Golf Club, Termonfeckin Celtic Soccer Club, Termonfeckin Tennis Club, St. Fechin's GAA Club, Drogheda & District AC.
5. Act as an access route for pupils travelling from Termonfeckin to Drogheda Secondary schools including St. Joseph's CBS, Greenhills Secondary School and Ballymakenny College

Currently the vast majority of journeys from Termonfeckin to Drogheda (for points 4 and 5 above) are undertaken by car due to the precarious nature of the R166 and R167. Short distance journeys to schools or local sporting facilities etc. are taken by car from necessity. This has a knock on effect on local air quality, morning & evening traffic congestion (particularly in the environs of North Drogheda) and greenhouse emissions. As part of the national approach to sustainable transport provision, opportunities to link areas of high population density offer obvious means to help meet national environmental targets.

There are a number of possible options for implementation of a cycle path. All options will require due consideration and analysis as part of any broader plan for integrated cycleway access in Co. Louth. The TDB are currently starting to examine some of these options. It is the strong view of the TDB that inclusion of the cycleway in the Louth County Development Plan will provide recognition of the merits of the proposal in general terms and will stimulate broad acceptance of the importance of cycleway provision.

2. Heritage Trail

Termonfeckin village and its hinterland has a long and rich historical heritage. The village is designated as a Zone of Archaeological Protection under the National Monuments Act. The village region has approx..40 archaeological features that are contained within the Record of Monuments and Places. There are also 11 protected structures within the village boundary. These most notably include Termonfeckin Castle and the High Cross. The village is identified through its name with St. Feichin who was an influential and well travelled church figure in period 600AD who is linked to religious sites in Connemara and Scotland. The character of the village bears witness to this rich tradition through the presence of two church grounds, two graveyards and a large number of stone walls. The Termonfeckin Historical Society has been an active contributor to increased awareness of the historical heritage of the village for the past 20 years.

The village is located within the broader Boyne Valley Heritage area and more generally along Ireland's Ancient East. As a consequence it is well positioned to capitalise on this geographical position. Therefore, Termonfeckin Development Board wish to propose that the rich heritage of the village be brought to greater public awareness through the development of a structured and signposted heritage trail. It is the intention of the TDB to develop this trail on an ongoing basis through provision of educational resources, navigational app and to act towards integrating the trail into the wider touristic attractions on offer within the region. In addition, the heritage trail will offer scope for increased local education, awareness of historical evolution and cross-generational interaction within the local community.

3. Playground

The rural villages north of Drogheda town have shown a significant population increase over the last 15 years. Between 2006 and 2011 the population of Termonfeckin village more than doubled, from 653 to 1443 persons. This increase was due to a significant house building programme. Local services have struggled to maintain pace with the population growth. Termonfeckin village currently boasts a population of 1580 with families and young children comprising a significant portion of this total. Of the current population approximately 30% are children (U19).

The village has no playground to service this young population. In addition, visitors to the village who come to avail of its beach and walks have no focal play area for their children to avail of. The benefits of unstructured play from the viewpoint of social, physical and mental development are well recognised. However children within the environs of Termonfeckin village are not in a position to avail of these benefits without car journeys and structured planning. The nearest playgrounds are located in Clogherhead village (approx. 3km) or Drogheda town (approx. 8km). Access to both of these facilities requires car journeys.

The TDB proposes that provision of a village playground be formally recognised as a priority for the area within the Louth County Development Plan. The TDB has begun to examine a range of options for provision of this facility and is ready to work with funding bodies and state agencies to further this proposal. While the need for a playground is referenced in the current draft plan, it is our opinion that provision of a village playground should be explicitly recognised, so that it will inform all local discourse relating to future development within the village. The rate of population increase in the period since 2006 indicates that the ongoing absence of this facility will continue to present significant difficulties for local families.