

## **Background**

Not every parish is lucky enough to have a beautiful wooded area, which is well maintained by its owners, Coillte. Not only that, it is open and free of charge to the public.

One of the suggestions from our 5 Year Plan Questionnaire was a safe place to park, when using the forest walks in Liskennett Wood.

The Development Assoc felt that a car park would add immense value to this existing resource by giving the opportunity to utilise it more frequently.

We identified an unused plot of ground, belonging to Coillte, on the Liskennett Road.

This area can be used to create a safe car park area, from which people can access the forest walks to enjoy the fresh air and stunning views of the countryside. There is an existing walkway leading into the forestry from this area already.

We met with Coillte officials to explain our proposals and they were very impressed and fully in favour of our project.

We engaged a surveyor to show the existing levels and proposed finish levels of car park.

We employed the services of an Engineer to do the drawings and submit our application for planning.

## Expected Outcome

It will encourage support to set up a local walking group which will have a positive impact on community cohesion, health & well-being.

- It will remove the need for people using the roads for walking and will remove the danger element.
- It will provide a safe, off-the-road area for cars and their occupants, who will then be able to disembark safely.
- It will provide clear visibility for cars pulling back out onto the road.
- It will be an added attraction for visitors to the parish.
- It will help increase the use of a local resource.
- It will encourage families and people of all ages to get out and pursue a healthy lifestyle.
- It will promote greater environmental awareness, as more people access the hill walks.
- It will make people more aware of the local wildlife, flora & fauna.
- By encouraging the creation of this local service, it will feed into the development of the local economy.

## **Facilities to be provided**

- 14 bay car park.
- The existing walkway leading into the Wood will be gated for pedestrian access only.
- This is also a right-of-way for a nearby farmer, for whom we will erect a locked gate. This is to restrict the walkway from being used by horses, motorbikes & quads, as per Coillte instructions.
- The regular height barrier will be installed.
- It is proposed to fit a retractable barrier in the middle of the entrance, which will close off the car-park at night to eliminate anti-social behaviour.

## **Potential Benefits**

- It will benefit our local Schools who can then use the Wood for nature studies & hands-on learning. They would be able to study the Flora and Fauna and learn how important it is to protect our biodiversity.
- It will benefit our local Crèches, in Banogue & Ballingarry, who could avail of the facility for their pupils.
- It will benefit the local Pebbles Pre-School who can use it for Nature trips, Teddy-bear Picnics, etc.

- It will benefit our local Youth Club. They have already experienced a Halloween Night Walk through the forest with their Leaders. They plan to use it for Nature walks, exercise nights, treasure hunts, picnics and Club bonding trips. Hopefully our youth will then learn to protect our local resources and not destroy them.
- It will benefit those who are health conscious & need a safe place to exercise.
- It will be free of charge and so will benefit families of low income.
- It will benefit those who are retired – having a free local amenity will mean less travelling, it will provide a social outlet and help keep them active.
- It will benefit local employment – we have only one shop which employs locals, so extra visitors to the area would increase the possibility of continued ongoing employment.
- These improvements will enhance the natural environment.
- There is a Holy Well on the Hill – by improving access and signage, this feature will be an added attraction.