



Kerry Way Committee
Coiste Shlí Uíbh Ráthach



THE KERRY WAY

Slí Uíbh Ráthach

A Walk Through History



**THE KERRY WAY
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Kerry Way Committee members and South Kerry Development Partnership CLG for their contributions of text, images and maps.
Photographs courtesy of Valerie O'Sullivan.

Some of the property traversed by the Kerry Way is private property.
Access is available by kind permission of all landowners/holders on the route.



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PART FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

TO THE KERRY WAY

The Kerry Way/Slí Uibh Ráthach is one of Ireland's longest established recreational walking trails. It consists of over 220 kilometers of old highway and paths, green lanes and local roads.

It is designated as a National Waymarked Trail by the National Trails Office (NTO), the unit within Sport Ireland that co-ordinates the recreational trails programme on a national basis. It is managed in mutual cooperation by The Kerry Way Committee, South Kerry Development Partnership, Killarney National Parks and Wildlife Services and Coillte.

Recreational trails in Ireland are developed on a permissive access basis with both public and private landowners.

PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Management Plan has been prepared by the Kerry Way Committee and South Kerry Development Partnership. It gives a brief history and description of the trail. It sets out the objectives for the maintenance and development of The Kerry Way, in particular to encourage the development and management of walking trails in Kerry for the purpose of recreation and health, education, conservation/heritage and community and rural development.



Brief Description

OF THE KERRY WAY

The Kerry Way is a looped trail that circumnavigates the Iveragh Peninsula in South Kerry. It passes through the Kerry towns and villages of Killarney, Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, Waterville, Caherdaniel, Sneem and Kenmare.

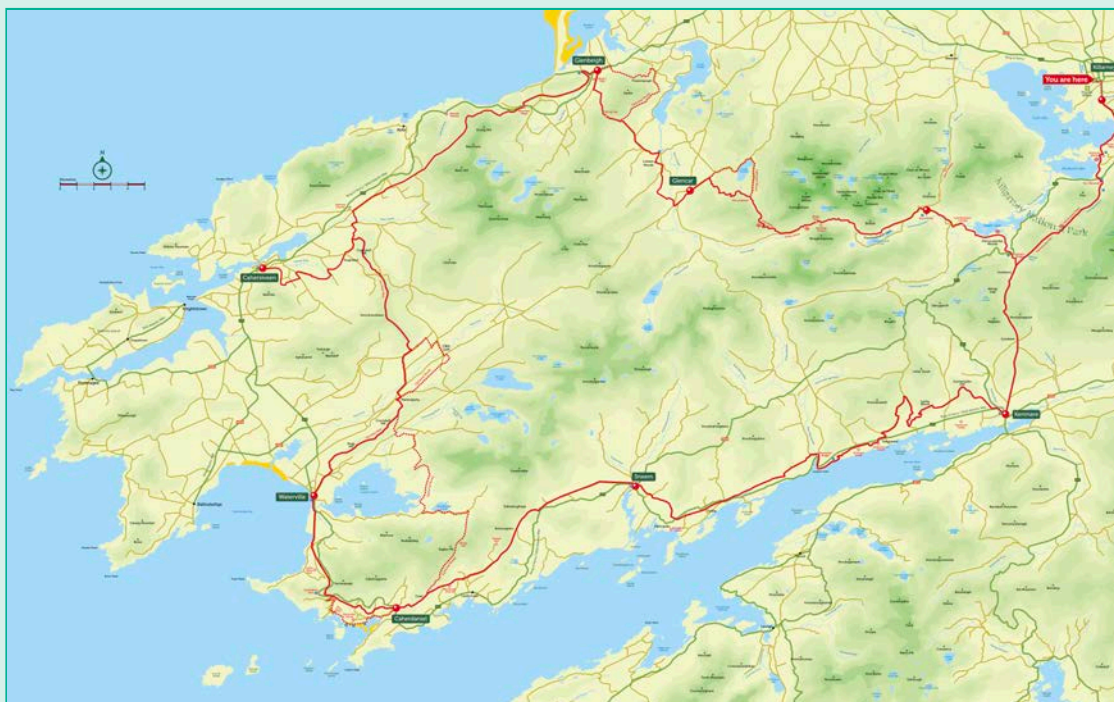
TERRAIN

The terrain along The Kerry Way is a mixture of quiet roads, peatland and open fields, woodland, field paths and boreens. The Way is mostly below the 300m contour, but rises above this where it crosses through mountain passes, the highest point is 385m above sea-level, at Windy Gap between Glenmore and Caherdaniel. Where it does not follow a public road, the Way has been set up by agreement with local farmers and landowners. It is signposted and waymarked over its entire circuit.

It also includes many stiles at field boundaries, wooden and metal bridges, board walks and bog boards across boggy ground.

The first section takes the walker through the Killarney National Park – the landscaped demesne of Muckross House and Gardens, passing the shores of Lough Leane and Muckross Lake to reach Torc Waterfall. From Torc, the

trail follows the Old Kenmare Road and crosses Esknamucky Glen to the ancient oak woods of Derrycunihy. The Way then traverses the inland Alpine-like valleys of mid-Kerry in the shadow of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks – the Black Valley and the Bridia Valley. It follows the Lack Road over another mountain pass into Derrynafeana Glen to reach Lough Acoose and Glencar. From Glencar, the trail follows the Caragh River before circling Seefin Mountain to reach Glenbeigh. From sea-level at Glenbeigh, it largely follows a line overlooking the coast, on the southern side of Dingle Bay passing Drung Hill. A spur at Foilmore connects the Way with Cahersiveen. From Foilmore, the trail traverses two ridges to reach Waterville. There are two possible routes from there to Caherdaniel, a coastal trail around Farraniaragh which touches the sea at Derrynane or an inland trail, crossing the mountains via the Windy Gap, the highest point of the Kerry Way. An old coach road brings the walker to Sneem and on to Kenmare following the coast above Kenmare River. This was a commercial "butter" road in the 18th and 19th centuries used by farmers bringing butter in firkins on horseback to the Cork Butter Exchange. It returns to Killarney along the historic Old Kenmare Road.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRAIL

The idea of the Kerry Way was first proposed in 1978 with a number of objectives:

- Conservation of old highways, Mass Paths and driving routes
- Rural development
- Provision of a marked low-level walking trail (in the light of a history of accidents on the Kerry mountains).

Work on the first section – from Killarney to Glenbeigh – was largely carried out by members of the mountaineering clubs of Kerry, financed by the Cork-Kerry Regional Tourism Organisation, with assistance from the local authority and statutory bodies.

It was opened officially by Minister Dick Spring TD in September 1985 – the second long-distance trail in the Republic after the Wicklow Way. With the cooperation of many community groups and schemes, the full circuit with spurs was completed by September 1989 and opened officially by Minister Frank Fahey TD.



THE KERRY WAY COMMITTEE

The Kerry Way was initially developed by members of the Laune Mountaineering Club, Killorglin and the Kerry Association of An Taisce. This formed the basis of the Kerry Way Committee. They were inspired by a series of local history lectures given by Father John Hayes. Realising that "there was a spider's web-like network of roads and paths that could be combined to form a route around Kerry", the group began devising the trail that would become The Kerry Way.

Mission Statement of the Kerry Way Committee: To encourage the development and management of walking trails in Kerry for the purpose of recreation and health, education, conservation/heritage and community and rural development.

Aims of the Kerry Way Committee: To manage and promote (in association with other relevant parties) and continue the development of the existing Kerry Way walking trail and associated loops; to conserve the historic legs (old highways, roads and paths) and the history thereof; to engage in appropriate educational and environmental activities; to promote the use of the trails by local residents and visitors; thus to facilitate safe use and enjoyment of the countryside.

THE RURAL SOCIAL SCHEME

The introduction of the Rural Social Scheme in 2004 was a significant development for the Kerry Way. The Scheme, managed by South Kerry Development Partnership, provides income support for farmers and fishermen in

receipt of long term social welfare payments, who in turn provide certain services of benefit to rural communities for 19.5 hours per week. One of the eligible project categories for support through the RSS is the maintaining and enhancing of way marked ways, agreed walks & bog roads. SKDP assigned a number of Rural Social Scheme participants to the Kerry Way. Local farmers, through the Rural Social Scheme, provided the Kerry Way with an important local labour resource for the undertaking of maintenance tasks on the Kerry Way.

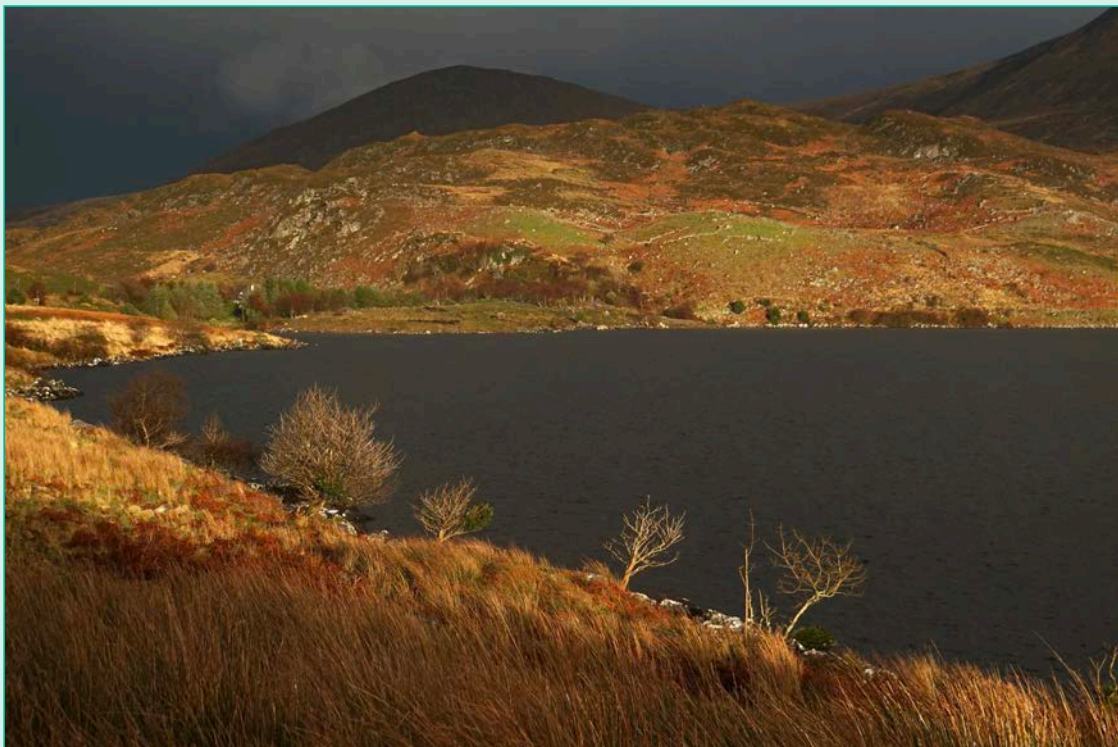
THE WALKS SCHEME

The introduction of the Walks Scheme in 2008 was a further significant development for the Kerry Way. This is a national scheme involving all landholders on National Waymarked Ways, Looped Walking Routes and Heritage Routes, along with other trails that have been approved by the National Trails Office.

The scheme ensures that National Way Marked Ways and priority walks that traverse public and private lands are maintained and accessible. Participants in the Walks Scheme undertake to complete the enhancement and maintenance of the trails.

A Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) was employed by South Kerry Development Partnership and SKDP implement the Walks Scheme on behalf of the Department of Rural & Community Development.

Currently there are 248 Walks Scheme participants on the Kerry Way.



CULTURE & HISTORY

Aside from the superb landscape and views, the unparalleled culture of this trail adds to the walker's enjoyment.

History, Mythology, Archaeology: The Kerry Way has been deemed 'a walk through history'. The backbone of the trail is old highway, much of it upgraded in the late 18th century following older lines of travel. A number of legs are recognised as butter roads used in former times for the important economic activity of transporting, on horseback, butter made in the homes of South Kerry mainly to the internationally-recognised Cork Butter Exchange and to ports such as Bantry.

Mythology is 'lived' while walking the Kerry Way. The Glencar area is rich in Fianna lore, supported by placenames, Derrynafeana (Doire na Féinne, oak wood of the Fianna) and Seefin (Suí Finn, Fionn's seat). The legs from Waterville to Kenmare overlook the locations of Milesian landings/ invasions (Ballinskelligs Bay, Kenmare River/Bay). The Drung Hill leg (Glenbeigh-Kells) has multiple associations with recorded mythology: the magician's journey from Valentia Island via Glenbeigh and

Killarney on to North Cork; Tonn Toirne, the magic wave that took Oisín and Niamh to Tír na nÓg; the year-long battle of Fionn Trá, Ventry. A walk along The Kerry Way from Cahersiveen to Glenbeigh largely follows in the footsteps of the magician and his students (ancient myth: Forbuis Droma Damhghaire).

History abounds. Since much of the line is old highway, it must have been the route for all activity – economic, insurrection and the likes. The Daniel O'Connell's Road, Bóthar an Chuinsailéara is the (coastal) leg between Waterville and Caherdaniel/Derrynane, also recognised as a butter road. The Old Kenmare Road once was deemed the most westerly route in the (then-known) world.

There is a plenitude of archaeological sites to be viewed from the trail. An archaeological base-line survey, *The Kerry Way – An Ancient Highway*, published 2009, covers the many archaeological sites on the trail.



FLORA & FAUNA

The Kerry Way has been termed A Walk through History. It might equally be titled A Walk through Nature and History. Along its main line and the spurs and loops off it, one meets a range of habitats – old oak woods, forestry, blanket bog (mountain and lowland), heathland, hill cliff and sand-dune. While one can expect to see the flora and fauna of such differing habitats, there is the enjoyment of meeting species that are rare in world terms but plentiful in Kerry/Southwest Ireland. Additionally, the Killarney National Park sees the meeting of the acid soils of the highlands with the lowland limestone, resulting in interspersing of species. Add to that the mild climate resulting from the Gulf Stream and exotics/non-native flourish. Finally, the southwest of Ireland has a number of rare Lusitanian flora (otherwise native of Spain and Portugal, the Roman province of Lusitania).

The native trees of woodland are the sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*), birch (*Betula pubescens*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and hazel (*Corylus avellana*). Another attractive native tree with its sprays of red berries is the mountain ash or rowan tree (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Killarney National Park is famous for the arbutus or strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), one of the Mediterranean plants flourishing better here than in its native surroundings and also for the yew trees (*Taxus baccata*).

Heathland and blanket bog share plants giving obvious colour through the seasons. Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) and ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) create the purple hillsides of the Autumn. That season sees the contrasting yellow flower of the autumn or dwarf furze/gorse (*Ulex galli*) while the common furze (*Ulex europaeus*) displays earlier in the year. The dominant plants of bogland are Sphagnum mosses. Bog cotton (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) with its white whisker seems to be increasing its spread and bog rush (*Schoenus nigricans*) is a distinctive plant of western blanket bogs. One can see wild orchids, bog asphodel and lousewort. On drier ground, fruit in the form of the ground-hugging whortleberry or hurt can be found. The aroma of the bog myrtle is best enjoyed by crushing a leaf under the nose. Among the Lusitanian flora is St. Patrick's Cabbage (*Saxifraga Spathularis*), deemed to be a high mountain plant but seen in profusion on stone walls and rocks along The Kerry Way. The great butterworth (*Pinguicula grandiflora*) is so plentiful that it is known as the Kerry Violet. It is carnivorous, absorbing insects as nourishment, a feature shared with the sundew (*Drosera*). Irish Spurge (*Euphorbia hyberna*) is to be found by streams.



Animals to be seen – aside from grazing sheep and cattle – include rabbits and hares, the Irish Hare being a separate species. Stoats and foxes are common, the latter more often smelt than seen. Hedgehogs, shrews and wood and field mice are plentiful. Herds of wild goats can be seen from time to time. Deer are spreading out of the Killarney National Park, particularly the Sika deer, to be seen now in many woodlands along the Way. The Park itself is famous for its native Irish Red Deer, the only herd that is pure (not interbred with other species) and for its herd of rare black Kerry Cattle. Unique to the area is a Lusitanian fauna, the greater spotted slug of Kerry. Frog spawn is plentiful in bog pools.



Mountain lakes are generally low in nutrients. Rivers and streams are home to char, salmon and speckled trout. The freshwater pearl mussel (FWPM) is present in the waters of the Rivers Caragh and Blackwater both of which are located on the Iveragh peninsula along the Kerry Way. Ireland possesses 46% of the entire European population of the FWPM, which makes it important from a European conservation standpoint. KerryLIFE is an EU funded demonstration project set up in 2014 which aims to restore the two internationally important FWPM populations in Co. Kerry to full viability.



Birdlife, for those with the eye to see, abounds. We are told now that with declining numbers elsewhere, Ireland is the European HQ of the chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*). There are separate Irish species of three birds: the jay (*Gallus glandarius*), red grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*), and dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*). The grey wagtail (*Motilla cinerea*) may be seen in company with the dipper. Birds of prey are represented by the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), and merlin (*Falco columbarius*). The carrion grey crow (*Corvus corone cornix*) nests in heather or trees. The twite (*Acanthis flavirostris*) and the raven (*Corvus corax*) are native, as are the meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) moving to higher ground in summer. That season gives us visitors from abroad including the wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), swift (*Apus apus*) and house martin (*Delichon urbica*). The corncrake (*Crex crex*) seems to have disappeared but the cuckoo (*Cuculidae*) can still be heard but it is becoming rare. In winter, the bird population is increased by visitors. The snow bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) is one. You may see the white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*) which travels from Greenland to feeding grounds by Killarney Upper Lake. During the summer of 2007, White-Tailed Sea Eagle was re-introduced into Killarney National Park and there have been sightings over a wide area of South Kerry.



FARMING PRACTICES & THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE BIODIVERSITY ALONG THE KERRY WAY

"Farming the Iveragh Uplands: A tale of humans and nature" by Kramm, N; Anderson, R; O'Rourke, E; Emmerson, M; O'Halloran, J; and Chisholm, N (2010), published by University College Cork studies how farming systems function in the Iveragh uplands.

"Upland farmed landscapes provide clean water, maintain a rich plant and animal life and help to keep families in regions that offer few alternative employment opportunities – at the same time as attracting millions of tourists each year.

Such areas, also termed High Nature Value farmland, cover about 25% of all agricultural land in Ireland. The farming systems of these areas are characterised by extensive mixed livestock grazing and little agro-chemical inputs combined with labour-intensive management practices. Without dedicated farmers and their families, the character of these areas would change completely leading to the disappearance of unique cultural landscapes with effects such as rural depopulation and the loss of local communities.

Only recently have traditional farming systems become the subject of political and scientific discourse. This is the result of increasing recognition of the important role played by such systems in maintaining cultural landscapes, producing high quality food, preserving rare breeds, providing an economic base for tourism and maintaining demand for rural services.

Importantly, the concept of High Nature Value farming is based on the explicit recognition that nature conservation goals in European cultural landscapes cannot be met solely by protecting particular habitats or species, or by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), but is dependent on the continuation of the traditional land uses."



Objectives

OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1: MAINTAIN THE TRAIL IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

The Kerry Way Committee, South Kerry Development Partnership, Killarney National Parks and Wildlife Service and Coillte are currently responsible for the management and maintenance of The Kerry Way. Sport Ireland Trails (NTO) undertakes a bi-annual inspection of The Kerry Way. A Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) develops detailed work plans for the maintenance of the various sections. Maintenance of the trail is carried out by landowners who participate in the Walks Scheme and by the Rural Social Scheme. The Walks Scheme makes payments to landowners who wish to participate in maintenance work along the trail. The Rural Social Scheme is administered by South Kerry Development Partnership (SKDP). The work is planned and managed by the RRO. This ensures that the trail meets the standards set down by NTO.

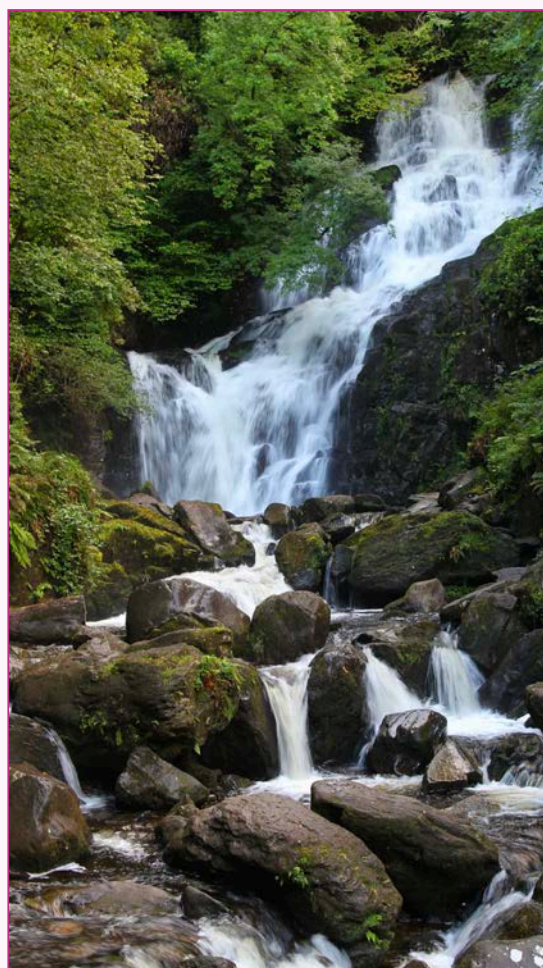
The Kerry Way is inspected by the NTO using a standard template and scoring methodology developed nationally by the National Trails Office. The Kerry Way is an accredited trail that meets Standards for Recreational Trails. To maintain this standard there are identified work schedules and improvement plans agreed with stakeholders, landowners and partnership groups. In 2017 Sport Ireland Trails advised all trail responsible bodies of the need to introduce a documented trail maintenance and monitoring system for their trails. SKDP is listed as the responsible body on the Sport Ireland National Trails register for the Kerry Way. Whilst ongoing monitoring and maintenance has always been undertaken on the Kerry Way – Sport Ireland Trails now require that the system is formalised and documented. SKDP will work closely with the Kerry Way to ensure that this system is developed and put in place, the key elements of which are:

1. Regular Maintenance
2. Regular Monitoring to check for issues
3. Repair of any issues found
4. Record keeping (of all of the above)

The NTO guidelines for sustainable recreational trails, used as the standard to be met by The Kerry Way, state that:

Sustainable and sensitive recreational trails should:

- be robust, durable and fit for purpose, may be located in rural or urban environments and are usually waymarked.
- have a positive impact on the environment, heritage and communities, address landowner and user needs and concerns and generally support responsible outdoor recreation.
- be developed to a standard and maintained at this standard on an ongoing basis.



OBJECTIVE 2: CONTINUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KERRY WAY

South Kerry Development Partnership, the Kerry Way Committee, NPWS and Coillte work together to continue the development of the trail. This includes ongoing improvements to the trail surface, waymarking, development of new loop walks and rerouting sections off-road.

Some current and recent examples of this work are off-road rerouting at Lough Acoose, Glenbeigh, Mastergeehy and Templenoe.

There are a number of proposed extensions to the Kerry Way and links with other way marked ways. See Appendix 1: Maps of Proposed Links/Extensions.

Proposed for Main Line:

1. Link with Fossa Way: outward line through Gap of Dunloe, instead of using the Old Kenmare Road for outward and inward legs, thus providing an alternative to the line along Killarney Upper Lake (liable to flooding occasionally);
2. Route through Kells (Roads) and 'Over the Water', thus changing a spur to Cahersiveen into part of main circuit (and advancing the ambition of a coastal walk). Connection to other marked national trails:
3. Duhallow Way via Rathmore/The Paps;
4. Dingle Way – Glencar/Glenbeigh-Killorglin-Milltown-Castlemaine-Boolteens-Inch.
5. Beara Way – at Kenmare.

Given the existing connection (at Kenmare) of the Kerry Way with the Beara Way and (at Tralee) of the Dingle Way with North Kerry Way, the original national objective of achieving a National Route/ Trail would be much advanced, much of the line coastal.

Extensions within Gaeltacht areas:

6. "The Skellig Way", an extension from Cahersiveen to Ballinskelligs incorporating the existing NTO Bolus Loop, Skellig Monks Trail and the Emlagh Loop will offer much to the walker in terms of the rich culture and scenic beauty of coastal Gaeltacht areas.
7. Glenar to Dromid link could use the ancient butter road through the beautiful and isolated Bealach Oisín and Dromid areas.

Other possible Loops/Extensions:

8. Lickeen Wood Loops
 9. Lough Fadda Loop
 10. Cahersiveen-Renard link along the old railway line.
- Preliminary surveys of feasible lines have been carried out but precise mapping is not possible without further investigation and contact/agreement with landowners.

TRAIL COUNTERS

The recent installation of electronic trail counters will provide information on the actual usage of the various sections of The Kerry Way and associated loop walks. The information gleaned from the counters will be used in planning new loops and extensions of the trail as well as trail-surface improvements, parking and transport facilities.

NAME & LOGO

It is proposed to register and protect The Kerry Way name and logo in such a way that they are in public ownership.



OBJECTIVE 3: CONSERVE THE HISTORIC LEGS (OLD HIGHWAYS, ROADS AND PATHS) & THE HISTORY THEREOF

A report "*The Kerry Way – An Ancient Highway*" completed by Mary Sleeman in 2003 examined the archaeology of The Kerry Way.

"As a general statement one could say that the majority of the old road network is 18th century in date. By this I mean constructed at that period. Due to its mountainous nature, the Iveragh peninsula tends to funnel roads towards mountain passes. This was certainly the case before the 19th century when gradient became a predominant consideration and new roads were then built with this in mind. Therefore, where a road that looks 18th century in construction, heads for a mountain pass one suspects that it is following a very ancient route, for example the road to Eagles Hill. It also seems likely that where the old road is following an ancient route, parts of it, for example stepping stones and roughly paved paths, may be much older than the "made" 18th century sections.

To have so much of an ancient system of roads and tracks preserved in this way makes The Kerry Way unique from an archaeological point of view".

The report concludes that The Kerry Way is an important part of the heritage of county Kerry but it also has national importance as a unique system of ancient highways.

The study recommends that a more detailed archaeological survey be carried out to

- Identify the various types of roads along the Way
- Map these types accurately
- Establish their date
- Examine the relationship between type of road and its date
- Understand more fully the social and historic background of these ancient roads.

The study also recommends that a conservation plan be drawn up to work out a scheme for maintaining the Way that comes up to the standards of best practice from a conservation point of view.

It is widely accepted that the old highway sections are public rights of way.



OBJECTIVE 4: MINIMISE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

TRAIL SURFACE

- Activities that potentially damage the delicate trail surface i.e. mountain biking and horseriding are not encouraged.
- Large groups at one time are not recommended.
- Charity events/races need to be managed carefully to minimize the impact of the participants on the trail surface and support crews on the surrounding areas.

TRAIL FURNITURE

Materials sympathetic to the environment should be used e.g. wood/recycled plastic finger posts and stiles in the off-road rural sections of the Way.

LEAVE NO TRACE

All walkers are encouraged to adhere to the Leave no Trace outdoor ethics principles:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the effects of fire

WILDERNESS

- The wilderness aspect of the Way should be preserved
- Waymarkers should be used appropriately – where the trail surface is well established use fewer markers.

ANIMALS TRAVELLING WITH WALKERS

Dogs are not allowed on The Kerry Way except in limited areas of Killarney National Park.



OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE THE USE OF THE TRAILS BY LOCAL RESIDENTS & VISITORS FOR RECREATION & EDUCATION

PROMOTION

- Develop a Kerry Way website where potential trail users can plan their walks, download trail maps and get up to date information on terrain, temporary diversions etc. Links to be provided to enrich the walker's experience and give information on local history, archaeology, flora and fauna etc.
- Link with tourism bodies e.g. Failte Ireland to market the trail effectively both in Ireland and overseas.
- Promote the use of the trail appropriately using brochures, maps, apps and a website. The Kerry Way offers another significant attraction for visitors to the area as there is a significant amount of folklore and heritage associated with the areas through which walkers pass along the route. Stories abound of Lords who appear from within lakes to Rock Art and old ancient burial grounds. Much of this detail has now been gathered and made available in an App called "The Kerry Way Folklore & Heritage App". This App is designed to assist walkers enjoy their experience as they go through each section of the Kerry Way. The Kerry Way Folklore Committee, with support from LEADER and Kerry Group, have compiled interviews with locals who tell stories of life along the route as well as undertaking research to identify some of the key heritage sites in the area. This detail has been divided into a total of 9 individual stages that are now available to download free of charge from either the App Store or Google Play for Android phones. It is available in six different languages to help ensure it is available to as wide an audience as possible.
- Provide additional map boards and informative panels where appropriate. The erection of some information boards along the Way adds to appreciating the richness of history, folklore and wildlife the route has to offer.
- Raise awareness of the Kerry Way amongst local communities and businesses to enable them to better promote the trail to locals and visitors.
- Encourage schools to get involved in The Kerry Way.
- Encourage local groups to use The Kerry Way for recreation and health purposes.



TRAIL GRADING

- Grade each section of the trail to make it easier for people to select a walk to match their preferences. Publish the grade on mapboards, brochures, and the website so that people know what to expect before undertaking a section of the Way.
- Aim to develop Class 1 multi-access sections near towns and villages.

EDUCATION

Gather and make available materials associated with The Kerry Way. This could be achieved by creating a website for The Kerry Way which would give information on the following topics:

- Topography, including maps of each section
- Geography
- Geology
- Wildlife
- Flora
- History
- Mythology
- Archaeology



OBJECTIVE 6: PROMOTE COMMUNITY & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

The Kerry Way attracts a large number of visitors to the area.

In late 2017 Failte Ireland released market profile information on Ireland's four main tourism markets of the USA, Britain, Germany and France. In identifying what types of holiday activities visitors from each of these four markets would consider doing in Ireland – walking typically ranked highly across all. The profiles noted that outdoor activity appeals to the US market more than other markets and in keeping with this, walking has been ranked as an increasingly important activity for Americans to do while on holidays. Both gentle walking and hiking appeal to the British market as a means of exploring and getting out in nature. Getting active in nature is important for the Germans. Rather than passive appreciation of scenery they prefer more energetic sightseeing. Easy walking and hiking along with easy cycling are key activities for the German market.

Increasing visitor traffic to the Kerry Way will present opportunities for growth for the tourism sector through the provision of accommodation, meals, guiding, and transport facilities to the benefit of walkers and local business alike.

The Kerry Way has proved very popular with walkers. Outsider Magazine (2017) rated The Kerry Way as Number 1 of the 10 Best Long Distance walks in Ireland. "Kerry is already well known for its rural beauty. And the Kerry Way is no exception, it is stunning. Boasting views across emerald green fields and out to the crashing Atlantic ocean. There are few better places in the world...



TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Employment in trail maintenance, through the Rural Social Scheme and local providers of machinery and materials is of mutual benefit to the local community and the trail users and managers.

TRAIL FURNITURE SUPPLY & INSTALLATION

Trail furniture e.g. mapboards, stiles, finger posts, bridges, seating to be sourced locally where possible.

WALKS SCHEME

Under the Walks Scheme, launched in March 2008 by Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, participating landholders receive a payment for the development, maintenance and enhancement of National Waymarked Ways and Looped Walking Routes that pass through their land. The payment is based on a detailed work plan and a five-year contract. A large number of landowners along The Kerry Way are participants in the Walks Scheme which was renewed in 2014 for a further 5 year period.

South Kerry Development Partnership and the Kerry Way Committee, working with its national body and with farming organisations, were active in the development of the Walks Scheme which brings substantial annual income into South Kerry.



OBJECTIVE 7: FACILITATE SAFE USE & ENJOYMENT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

WAYMARKING

Consistent clear waymarking is key to the walkers enjoyment and safe use of the trail.

- Use yellow waymarking throughout, yellow being reserved for the long-distance waymarked ways such as the Kerry Way. See Fig. 3 Kerry Way Trail Motif.
- Use materials consistently throughout the Way.
- Use markers with reflective strips with discretion to make the route easier to find on the open mountain.
- At 3-way junctions the route should be waymarked clearly with a 3-way signpost with directional text and a support marker also with the same directional text. These 3-way signposts to be in wood/recycled plastic in rural sections to fit in with the environment.



TRAIL FURNITURE

Trail furniture includes map boards, signage, stiles, steps, gates, boardwalks, bridges, seating etc.

- Trail furniture used on The Kerry Way should be designed, constructed, installed and maintained such that it is fit for purpose, robust, reliable and safe. The materials used should be appropriate to their setting.
- The walking surface on stiles, board walks, bridges and steps should have a non-slip finish.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Trail

Risks to users arise from the condition of the trail and the furniture. Bi-annual inspections by Sport Ireland/National Trails Office, supplemented by regular inspections and maintenance by landowners engaged in the Walks Scheme, together with reporting of issues by Kerry Way Committee volunteers and by other walkers on the trail, assist safety.

Maintenance/Upgrading

South Kerry Development Partnership and the Rural Recreation Officer ensure that there is a specific Safety Statement for work under the Rural Social Scheme or contract work.

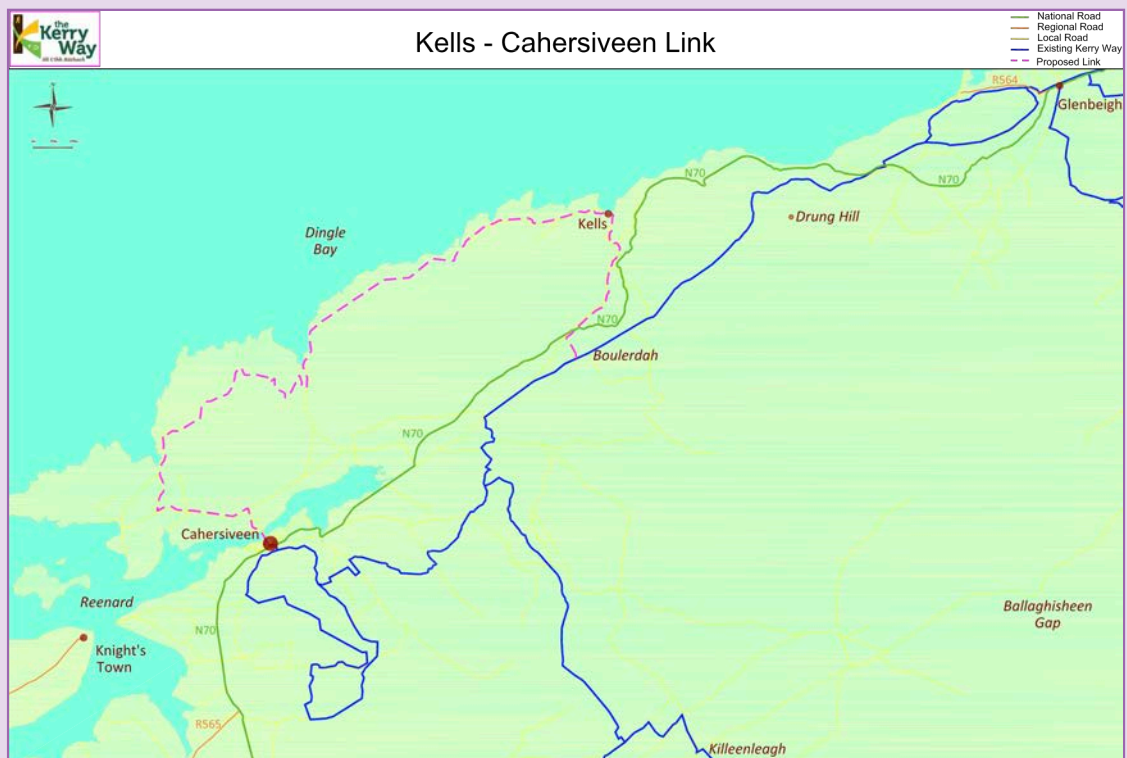
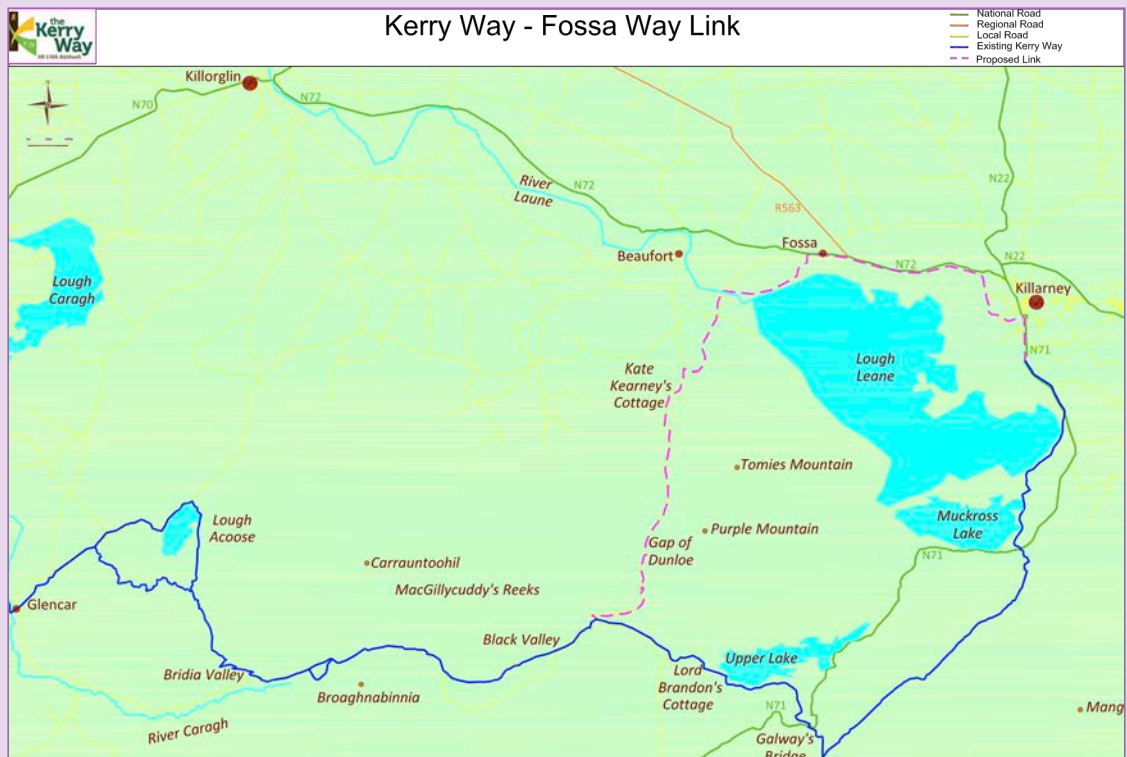
Personal Responsibility

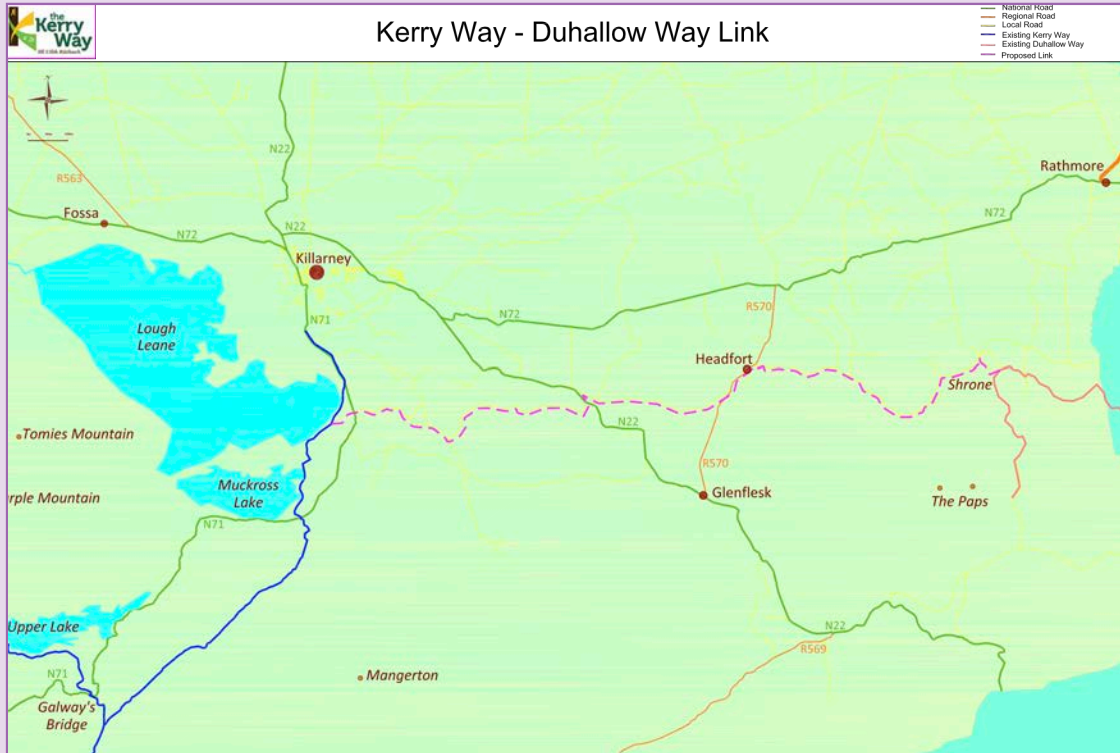
All walkers need to take responsibility for their personal safety. Hill walking can be dangerous and lead to personal injury. Walkers should be aware of and accept these risks. Users of the Kerry Way should take due care and have regard for their own health & safety when traversing the Kerry Way and using trail furniture.

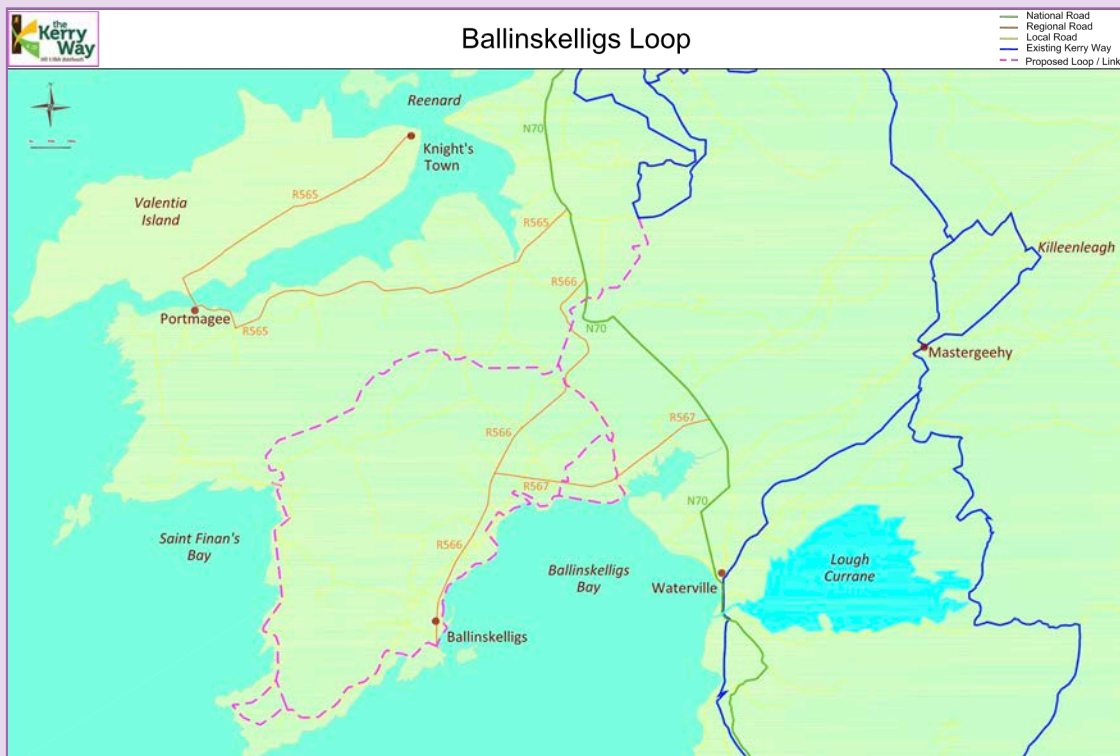
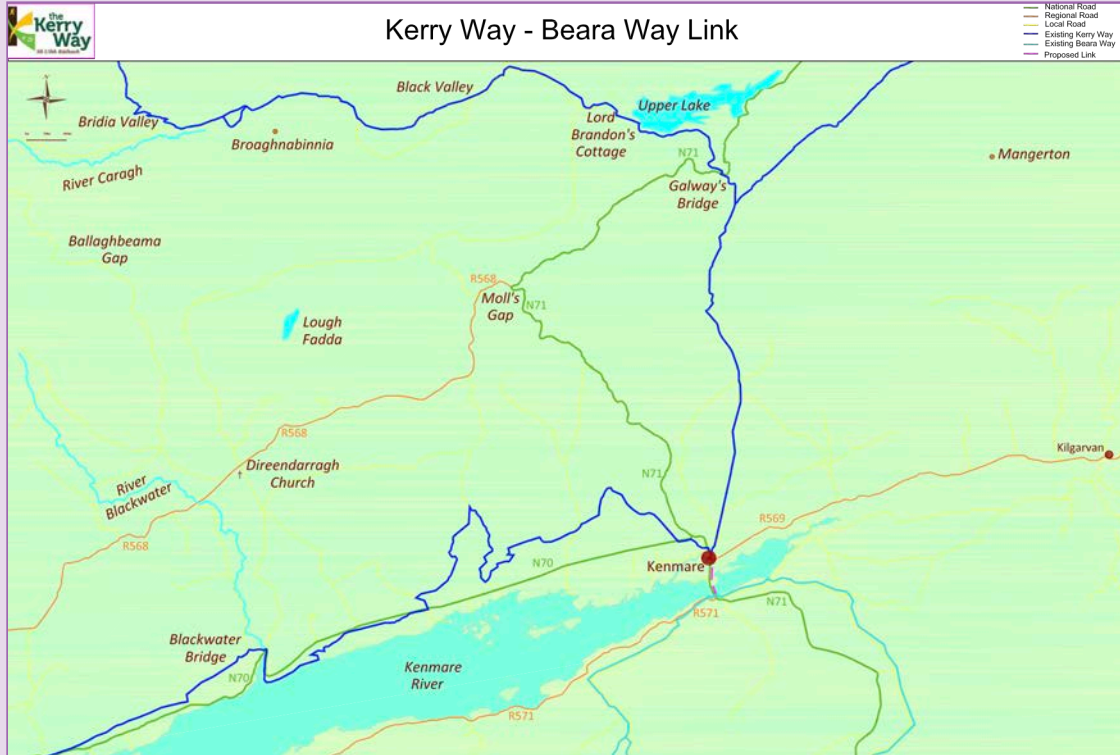


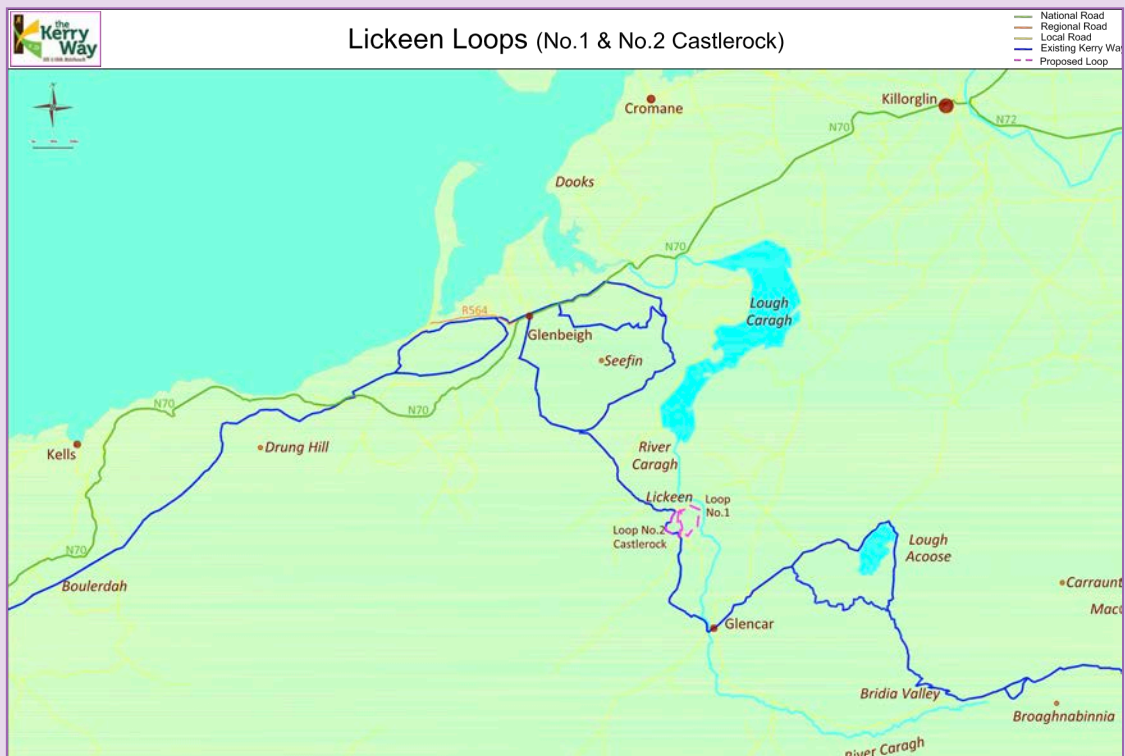
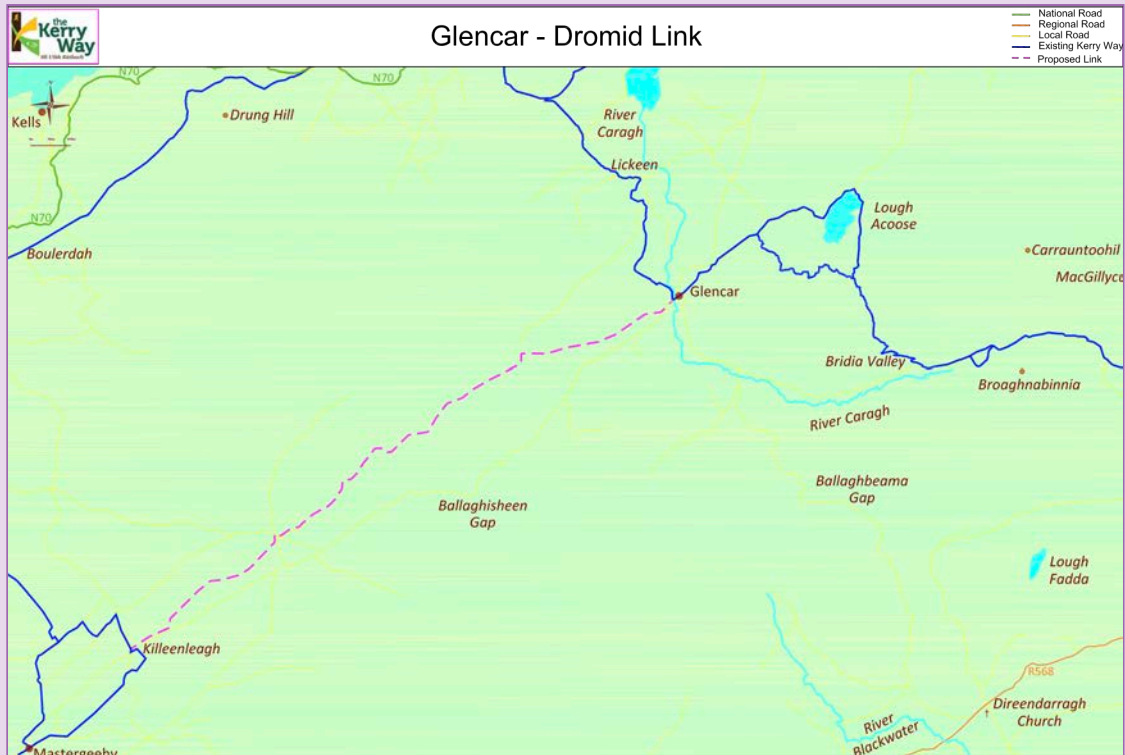
Appendix 1

MAPS OF PROPOSED LINKS/EXTENSIONS

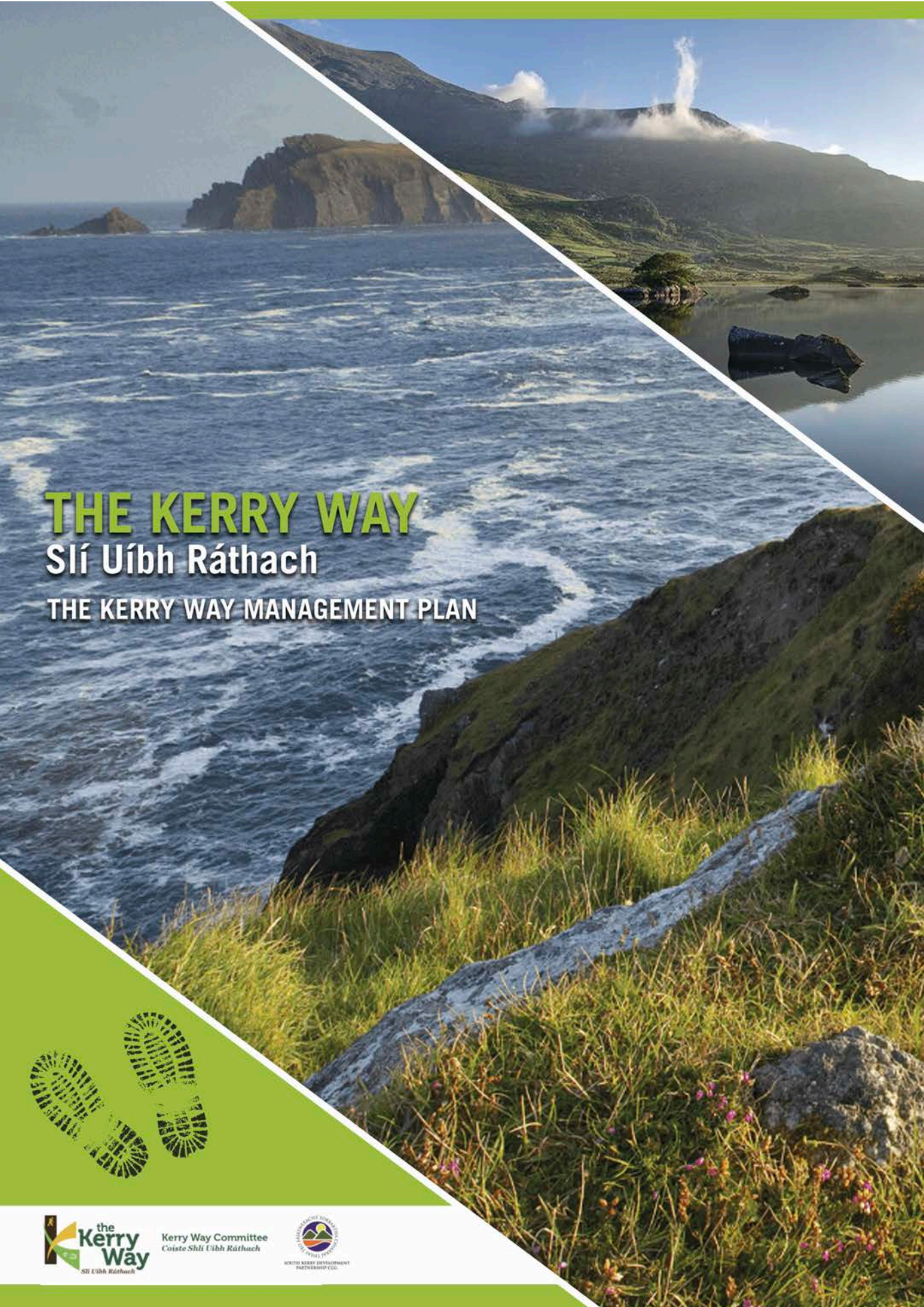












THE KERRY WAY

Slí Uíbh Rathach

THE KERRY WAY MANAGEMENT PLAN



Kerry Way Committee
Coiste Shlí Uíbh Rathach

