

Community Plan

for Delgany Village Blackberry Lane/Priory Road.

Notes; This plan is open to ongoing modification in accordance with the wishes of the local community and the county council.

The community plan must respect both the zoning and the long term objectives for the area as stated in the 2013-2019 Delgany Greystones and Kilcoole Local Area Plan. It must respect the privacy of adjacent private landowners, while allowing public access to the vast majority of the site which is zoned as "Open Space". This is defined "*to preserve, provide for and improve public and private open space*". "*Uses generally appropriate for open space zoned land include tourism and recreational uses, community facilities, open space, sports grounds, public utilities, civic amenity and ancillary developments for open space uses in accordance with the County Development Plan.*" Much of the site is also marked as "floodplain" on council maps.

As well as creating a public amenity, the plan should also facilitate better local pedestrian and cyclist "permeability" within the village area, in line with best planning practice. It is anticipated that the community plan can be implemented with a mixture of public and private funding.

Map Key

The following numbers correspond with the numbers marked on the associated map plan.

1. Social housing unit. Social housing should be integrated into any community, and as a council house existed previously on the site (recently demolished by WCC and replaced by a mobile home) the Community Plan should allow for the development of a new and properly built social housing unit in the same area of high ground along Priory Road as the existing one. This particular part of the site is zoned "RE - Existing Residential" which is defined; "*To protect, and preserve existing residential uses and provide for infill residential development. To protect provide and improve residential amenities of adjoining properties and areas while allowing for infill residential development that reflects the established character of the area in which it is located.*" Therefore any such house would have to be designed and built in such a way as to blend in with the other houses in the area, and without detracting from the amenity of the neighbouring houses.

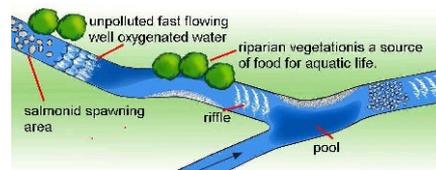
The immediate curtilage of this council house should be considered a strictly "private" open space, for the purposes of the general public accessing the public open space area (in the same way as the adjacent privately owned properties would be).

2. The Band Hall. This building was formerly dedicated to community use, but in recent years it has unfortunately been boarded up, and undoubtedly the structure of the building will have deteriorated somewhat due to dampness and disuse. In the long term it is proposed to restore this building to community/educational use. In the short term it could be used by those working to implement the other aspects of the plan. All the above subject to a structural survey confirming that the building is safe.

3. Water feature. This large pond will form an attractive entrance to the site, while also forming a barrier against unauthorised vehicular incursions onto the site. It is envisaged that the water feature will be easily viewable by passing motorists and pedestrians on the road at Blackberry Lane, and also from parts of any future development at the adjacent Stylebawn House site, on the other side of the bridge. The water feature will be dug out adjacent to the north riverbank of the Three Trout Stream, and will fill with fresh water naturally. The unused septic holding tanks that were previously installed in this area will be removed and broken up/disposed of. Before any more excavation works proceed, the area will be carefully inspected for the presence of the invasive species known as Japanese Knotweed. A small patch of this invasive plant has existed for several years along the roadside at the bridge, but works by council machinery during last winter may well have spread the rhizomes of this prohibited plant throughout the site. If that has happened, we will be legally required to remove the plant using a specialist procedure.

When finished the new pond will quickly become a magnet for native plants and wildlife, including ducks, herons, possibly swans, possibly otters, frogs, newts, dragonflies and various species of fish. It will be essentially self-maintaining, as it will have its own supply of fresh water from the stream.

The Three Trouts Stream is designated as an important biodiversity area in Appendix C of the 2013-2019 Delgany Greystones and Kilcoole Local Area Plan; *"The Three Trouts stream which feeds the Glen of The Downs SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and flows into the sea between Charlesland Golf Club and the Driving Range is a natural asset for the area and its importance cannot be underestimated. It is an important stream that contains migrating sea trout, eels, grey heron, dipper and otters and provides a strong natural wildlife corridor/refuge that divides the Delgany/Greystones area. No other designated areas occur in the area."* The proposed pond would enhance and improve the biodiversity capacity of the stream, and can provide an extra habitat for the young of the aforementioned sea trout and eels, before they return to the sea.



This diagram is taken from the Eastern Fisheries Board document *"Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries*

Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites". As the river is known to contain certain "salmonids" (brown trout and sea trout) there is a legal requirement to consult with the Fisheries Board before undertaking any works adjacent to it. We will respect these requirements, and take on board any suggestions or instructions they may have. From the diagram it can be seen that the three main elements required for these species are a) a fast flowing stream with gravel beds for spawning, b) riparian (riverbank) vegetation to encourage insects for food, and c) a slow moving pool or pond in which the young fish can grow. It is hoped that the community plan as outlined above will meet with their approval in that it incorporates all these elements, and can actually enhance and improve the suitability of the habitat, as compared to what is there at present.

For safety reasons there will be a shallow edge area surrounding the pond (zone A) where the water depth is no more than 30cm. Beyond this shelf (extending out to approx 1.5

metres) the depth will increase gradually in zone B to a maximum depth of approx 1.2 metres; a depth more suited to fish and diving ducks. A weir maintains the water level. Some stone reinforcement may be applied to the far bank of the stream, but there will be no interference with the private property to the south.

4. This is a sloped earth bank topped by a low stone wall at the roadside. The bank is necessitated and created by the difference in height between the road and the water level. A few bare-stemmed trees planted along here such as Scots Pine and/or Silver Birch could enhance the overall scene when viewed from the road.

5. A small car parking area to take 3 or 4 cars will facilitate visitors. Essentially, this area already exists and is currently used as the temporary access entrance for the footpath up to the mobile home. A lockable steel barrier (as commonly used at forest entrances) would prevent unauthorised vehicular access beyond this point (to the Band Hall) A pedestrian swing gate adjacent to the steel barrier would be permanently open. The final arrangement would be confirmed to adequately facilitate wheelchair access.

6. Provision for the Green Route to continue westwards into the development site at Stylebawn House. The exact nature of this to be agreed as part of any future planning permission between the developer, Wicklow County Council, and Delgany Community Council. If there was a pedestrian link up through this adjacent site to any future commercial/retail buildings along the main street, then a safe pedestrian crossing could be installed opposite the Old Graveyard. Currently the 4-way junction at the top of Blackberry Lane/Priory Road is a very unsafe place for pedestrians.

7. Provision for the Green Route to continue eastwards at some future time. It would form a valuable link for pedestrians/cyclists between Delgany village and the Charlesland residential area, which would also be good for local hospitality businesses. This Green Route link along the stream has been a long term objective of WCC, and accordingly a linear strip of land along here has been zoned "OS"- open space.

8. At this point, in the longer term, the Green Route crosses Priory road at the second road bridge and continues towards the nearby "Jacobs Ladder" pedestrian bridge route, which in turn passes through the nearby Glenair housing development. That path, in turn, forms part of the Delgany Heritage Trail.

For the purposes of this community plan, this Point 8 on the map is the second access point into the site. The access point needs to be recessed slightly into the existing wall to protect pedestrians from passing cars while they wait to cross the bridge. This recess would also greatly enhance the safety of other pedestrians walking on Priory Road when crossing the bridge, even if they did not intend to access the site.

Some steps or a ramp would need to be built here, due to the difference in height between the road and the path within the site. There is also a tributary ditch into the Three Trouts Stream which needs to be crossed. This tributary takes stormwater from drains along Priory Road and excess water from a roadside trough outside the entrance to the old ICA Hall.

Therefore a small ornate stone footbridge similar to the one at the Jacobs Ladder could be considered, or as a cheaper option the tributary could be culverted inside a concrete pipe.

9. An informal Nature Trail (unsurfaced) winds its way off the main path, and through an area to be replanted with native trees. Any mature trees which have escaped the council works of last winter will be retained. Local primary schools (St. Laurence's School and Delgany National School) will be encouraged to participate in this. It will be possible for staff and pupils to walk to the Nature Trail in groups. It is envisaged that nest boxes for birds, squirrels and bats will be installed around the Nature Trail, and the children will be encouraged to monitor these.

10. The main Green Route will pass through the site, roughly following the line of the stream, but slightly set back from it. The vegetation and riverine habitat immediately adjacent to the riverbank will be retained in an undisturbed state. The width and surface of the path would be open for discussion, and dependent on the level of input from WCC. At a minimum, it could consist of a crushed stone (804 grade) compacted into place. A more costly alternative would be a full tarmac route with white painted markings dividing a cycle path side from a pedestrian side. Either way, it must be capable of withstanding the occasional river flooding, during which times users would have to divert along Priory Road.

11. This is the splayed entrance to the existing pumping station. These gates are occasionally used by maintenance engineers attached to the council (and/or a future national water authority). Between the pumping station and the road there is a narrow overgrown avenue leading to the social housing unit, which already benefits from the existing street lighting on Priory Road. This could be resurfaced as the vehicular entrance to the proposed new council house, in which case the council would not have to construct a new splayed entrance on a more dangerous stretch of the road, closer to the junction.

12. The concrete roadside trough adjacent to the old ICA hall is associated with surface water run off from Delgany Village. If this water collects at the bottom of the hill in the vicinity of the bridge, instead of draining through pipes alongside the road into the tributary, it creates a traffic hazard (aquaplaning). Any works conducted between this point and the bridge must avoid impeding this roadside drainage, and if possible seek to improve it.

13. The existing temporary "pedestrian only" pathway access to the mobile home can be allowed to return to nature. In a previous planning application on the site in 2007 it was acknowledged that the entrance to any residential development would have to be on Priory Road due to the substandard nature of the junction at Blackberry Lane. The hill at that point is so steep and slippery as to be unusable in certain weather conditions. It is also unreasonable to expect the residents of the social housing unit to carry their shopping up a long pedestrian pathway from Blackberry Lane to the housing unit located adjacent to Priory Road, and in all kinds of weather.