



Attention- Senior Executive Officer
 Transportation, Infrastructure Delivery and Emergency Services Department
 Wicklow County Council
 County buildings
 Whitegates
 Wicklow town
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 E: wicklowgreenway@wicklowcoco.ie

Re: Objection to emerging preferred route Wicklow to greystones greenway

To whom it may concern,

I wish to formally object, as a [REDACTED], to the preferred inland route of the proposed greenway. My objection is based on procedural failures, serious ecological and legal concerns, and the availability of a more appropriate coastal alternative. The construction of this greenway would significantly affect my family's way of living and especially the viability of [REDACTED]. This submission is structured under the following headings.

1. Failure of Notification and Procedural Fairness

I first became aware of the proposed greenway on 11 January 2026, not through any formal engagement or consultation process, but through a neighbouring landowner. At that point, I learned that the project had already progressed to Phase Three of commencement. This represents a fundamental failure of early engagement, transparency, and procedural fairness, particularly given that the preferred route traverses privately owned land. As daughter or a landowner, I was denied the opportunity to participate meaningfully in route selection at an early stage, contrary to best practice and established guidance for greenway development in Ireland.

2. Ecological Impact and Legal Protection of Fauna on the Land

The lands in question support a high concentration of protected species, many of which are afforded the highest level of protection under Irish and EU law. Any disturbance, destruction of habitat, or interference with breeding or resting places would constitute a criminal offence.

2.1 Protected Species Present on the Land

The land is known to support, among others:

- Red kites (with over 10 established nesting sites)
- Bats (multiple species)
- Otters
- Hares
- Dragonflies
- Great spotted woodpecker

- Badgers (with established setts)

2.2 Legal Protections Applicable

(a) Wildlife Acts 1976–2018

Under the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended:

- Section 22 provides strict protection for wild birds, including red kites and woodpeckers, making it an offence to:

- Kill, injure, or disturb protected birds
- Damage or destroy nests or eggs
- Disturb birds during breeding or rearing

- Section 23 & Section 24 extend protection to fauna and their habitats, including hares and other protected species.

Penalties under the Wildlife Acts include significant fines and/or imprisonment, as well as liability for remediation.

(b) EU Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC)

Red kites are listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive, requiring:

- Special conservation measures
- Protection of breeding sites and habitats
- Avoidance of disturbance, particularly during breeding seasons

This Directive is binding in Irish law.

(c) EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC)

Species such as bats and otters are listed under Annex IV, affording strict protection.

This Directive is transposed into Irish law by the:

- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

(S.I. No. 477/2011)

Under Regulation 23, it is an offence to:

- Kill, disturb, or capture protected species
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places

These protections apply regardless of land ownership.

(d) Bat Protection (Absolute Protection)

All bat species in Ireland are protected under:

- Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended)
- Habitats Directive / S.I. 477/2011

Importantly, bat roosts are protected at all times, whether bats are present or not. Any works impacting trees, hedgerows, buildings, or linear features used for commuting would require extensive licensing and assessment, with no guarantee that consent would be granted.

2.3 Badger Setts and Legal Protection

Badgers are protected under:

- Wildlife Act 1976
- Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000
- S.I. No. 356/2015 – Wildlife Act 1976 (Protection of Wild Animals)

Regulations

It is an offence to:

- Damage, destroy, or interfere with a badger sett

- Disturb badgers intentionally or recklessly

Licences are required for any interference, and such licences are only granted in exceptional circumstances.

2.4 Precedent: Badger Disturbance and Bovine Tuberculosis

During the construction of the N11 motorway, badgers were forcibly displaced, causing significant stress and migration. This disturbance reactivated previously dormant bovine tuberculosis (TB) within the badger population.

As a direct consequence, TB spread to cattle on this land, resulting in:

- Positive TB outbreaks
- Complete shutdown of farming operations for two years
- Severe economic and operational loss

This is a documented and well-established risk associated with badger disturbance. Any further interference presents an unacceptable biosecurity risk and exposes landowners to consequences entirely outside their control.

I would also like to disclose we are in partnering with the department of agriculture in the official recording and monitoring of badger sets of Ireland.

3. Position on the Greenway – Opposition to Route, Not to the Project

I wish to state clearly that I am not opposed to a greenway in principle. My objection is specifically to the preferred inland route currently proposed.

4. The Coastal Route as a Necessary and Preferable Alternative

The east coast of Ireland has the highest rate of coastal erosion in Europe. Wicklow's coastline is a cultural, historical, and economic asset that requires immediate and long-term protection.

A coastal greenway route would:

- Act as a protective buffer against erosion
- Support coastal reinforcement and monitoring
- Preserve inland farmland and sensitive habitats

The railway line, which runs along the coast, is a vital mode of transport for Wicklow residents. Failure to protect it from accelerating erosion would have serious social and economic consequences, including loss of connectivity and increased risk to public safety. Recent erosion-mitigation initiatives demonstrate the benefits of proactive intervention, including recent funding initiatives in County Dublin aimed at actively reducing erosion rates. Similar strategic investment is required in Wicklow.

5. Conflict with IFA Greenway Guidelines

The proposed preferred route represents a significant departure from the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) Greenway Pathway, particularly given that 90.2% of the route is on privately owned land, making it the first greenway of its kind in Ireland.

The proposal has already failed to meet five of the six core IFA principles, namely:

1. Voluntary agreements
2. Use of public land first
3. Avoidance of farm severance
4. Active and early engagement with landowners
5. Addressing operational and biosecurity risk

This approach is neither fair nor respectful and places a disproportionate burden on private landowners while viable alternatives exist.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above procedural failure, breach of ecological and wildlife protection law, biosecurity risk, conflict with national guidelines, and the availability of a more appropriate coastal route. The construction of this greenway will significantly affect my family's farm. I strongly object to the preferred inland greenway route and request that it be reconsidered in its entirety.

I await hearing from you to confirm safe receipt of this latter,

