

Greystones to Wicklow Greenway - Observation

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Sat 2/7/2026 7:33 PM
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 1 attachment (80 KB)
submission Greenway.pdf;



Wicklow to Greystones Greenway Project,
Senior Executive Officer,
Transportation and Infrastructure Delivery Department,
Wicklow County Council,
County Buildings,
Whitegates,
Wicklow Town,
A67 FW96.

Feb 06, 2026

A Chara,

I am writing to make a formal observation regarding the currently proposed route of the Bray to Wicklow Greenway.

The emerging preferred corridor passes through the East Coast Nature Reserve, adjacent Murrrough Wetlands, and our home. This is also an area of high ecological sensitivity.

According to the plans on public display, the proposed Greenway will run within approximately 3 metres of our house, directly alongside our living room and bedroom windows. We understand that perhaps we should not have built our house so close to the boundary. However, I had a reasonable expectation when we built over 30 years ago that it would remain agricultural land and in fact it has become East Coast Nature Reserve.

We understand that significant consideration was to be given always given to the impact of the proposed routes on private property and land. However, we contend that the level of proximity is wholly inappropriate for a public walking and cycling route and represents a serious challenge to our privacy and unacceptable intrusion to enjoyment of our home.

The route, as proposed, would place members of the public so close to our windows that we would be able to see the colour of people's eyes as they pass. This is not a minor impact; this would fundamentally alter the character of our home and daily life. Our living room and bedrooms are private domestic spaces, and the proposed alignment would subject them to constant overlooking, noise, and disturbance.

Even if you are to disregard the impact of this Greenway to the people living in the area, we would hope that you would consider the ecological and conservation significance of

East Coast Nature Reserve and Murrough Wetlands?

- The East Coast Nature Reserve forms part of the broader Murrough Wetlands—a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under EU law.
- These habitats include calcareous fen, wet grasslands, reed beds, and woodlands which host important waterbird populations and rare flora.

Importance for Birds

- Nearby on Kilcoole Beach lies Ireland's most important breeding colony of Little Terns and are traditionally protected and monitored.
- The greater area supports a range of breeding and wintering waterbirds, including lapwing, oystercatcher, redshank and others of conservation concern.

Primary Environmental Concerns with the Greenway Proposal

Habitat Loss and Disturbance

- Construction of a greenway with an embankment and hard surface can significantly alter local hydrology and wetland functions, leading to loss of wet grassland habitat.

- The route, potentially up to 10 m wide in parts, would permanently fragment breeding and feeding areas for sensitive species.

Increased Human and Dog Disturbance

- The increased footfall, cycling traffic, and associated dog walking can disturb ground-nesting birds and other wildlife, especially during critical breeding and wintering periods. This disturbance is a known driver of declines in waterbird species nationally.

Impact on Little Tern Colony

- Little Terns are extremely sensitive to disturbance and habitat change. Their nests are on open shingle beaches; even small increases in human presence can reduce breeding success. For example, BirdWatch Ireland employs 24/7 wardens to protect this colony due to its national and international importance.

Effects on Protected Species Beyond Birds

- Adjacent wetlands and waterways support otters and other protected fauna. Construction activities—especially drainage alterations and culverting—can affect water flow, water quality, and aquatic ecosystems.

Cumulative Effects on Sensitive EU Conservation Sites

- Independent environmental reports (e.g., SEA for greenway planning) note that greenway routes adjacent to or within SPA/SAC zones pose risks including water pollution and recreational disturbance, potentially undermining conservation objectives required under EU nature directives.

Planning & Regulatory Considerations

- The route would be detrimental to Special Protection Areas and the Little Tern colony, and it could threaten long-term viability of key conservation initiatives.

Precautionary Principle from Other Cases

- Recent Irish planning decisions (e.g., Blessington Greenway) refused permission on grounds that environmental impacts on wildlife and landscape had not been sufficiently assessed or mitigated.
- This reflects statutory obligations under EU Habitats and Birds Directives to ensure developments do not adversely affect site integrity.

Broader Biodiversity Crisis and Policy Implications

Bird populations in Ireland are in serious decline overall, with a substantial proportion of regularly occurring species categorized as of conservation concern. This underscores the need to prioritise habitat protection over amenity infrastructure in sensitive areas.

Based on evidence from conservation organisations, environmental assessments, and planning precedents:

- The East Coast Nature Reserve and adjacent Murrough Wetlands are of high ecological significance with protected habitats and species.
- A greenway route through or adjacent to these areas would likely cause irreversible habitat loss, disturbance, and degradation.
- Increased human presence poses a well-documented threat to sensitive bird populations, including the Little Tern breeding colony.
- Planning laws and EU directives emphasise the protection of Natura 2000 sites and require rigorous demonstration that developments will not adversely affect them—a standard difficult to meet given current evidence.

This proposed Greenway should be halted or rerouted away from the East Coast Nature Reserve and Murrough Wetlands in favour of alternatives that do not compromise the integrity of these critical conservation areas.

We understand and support the broad objectives of this greenway in promoting sustainable transport, recreation, and community well-being. However, as under the clear impression that respect for existing homes and residential amenity formed a core part of the ethos of such projects. The current proposal, in this location, fails to uphold that principle.

We strongly urge Wicklow County Council to reconsider the alignment of the Greenway at this location and to explore alternative routing options that:

maintain a reasonable setback from existing dwellings,

utilise public land or less sensitive corridors, and

protect the privacy, security, and amenity of residents and farmers.

We respectfully request that our objection be fully considered as part of the planning and route selection process and that the proposed alignment adjacent to our home, and neighbouring homes, be revised.

[Redacted signature]

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