

NIALL JONES

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL
Planting Department

12 MAY 2022

RECEIVED

Email: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Re Draft Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029

Strategic Policy Context: Cultural Heritage.

12TH May 2022

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to submit the following proposal for inclusion in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

To add a public car park and visitor facilities to Drumanagh Promontory Fort at Loughshinny, using an existing road entrance off the Rush to Skerries road with direct access to a 2.83 acres field as marked on the attached map.

Visitor facilities to include a surfaced car park, a visitors' information centre including light refreshments, combined car and pedestrian entrance and exits, toilet facilities and improved road walking surface from the car park to the site. Signage and turnstiles to be erected.

The position of the field as proposed is ideal for all the above facilities while being far enough away and out of sight of the Drumanagh site to preserve its privacy, its unique landscapes and its ancient character. The field's square outline will allow for optimum use of the carpark/visitor facilities area.

It should be noted that an automatic tracking device placed at the entrance of Drumanagh over the last twelve months recorded a 28,000 footfall entering the site for the year. Considering the small amount of publicity presently generated by Drumanagh, which is still more of a speciality interest site than a tourist attraction, this is a serious indicator of the potential it has as a future major tourist attraction for the area.

HISTORY OF FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL'S INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT IN DRUMANAGH TO DATE

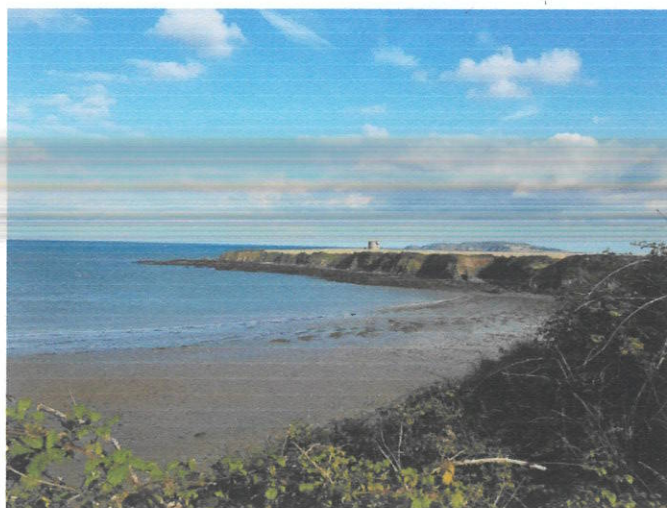
Since the 2017-2023 Development Plan Fingal County Council have dedicated a lot of time, money and effort to preserving and making known to the public the site of Drumanagh at Loughshinny, County Dublin. Drumanagh has been described as the most important Iron Age promontory fort on the east coast of Ireland. The headland has been a designated National Monument since 1977. The site sprang to public prominence in the mid-1990s amidst claims of its being 'a significant Roman beachhead.'

Customer Care Unit

12 MAY 2022

Fingal County Council

The site has extensive 360 degrees views of the surrounding land and sea. To the north the view is of Loughshinny harbour overlooked by the highly visible Pope's Hill and the seaward side is dominated by the view to Skerries Islands, including Shenick Island where the Martello tower is visible and St Patrick's Island with the Mourne Mountains as a backdrop on a clear day. There are unimpaired views of the sea lanes of the Irish Sea punctuated by Rockabill island. Towards the south-east the view is dominated by Lambay Island, while there are clear sightlines over Roaring Water Bay and the coastline to Rush with the backdrop of the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. On the landward side the relatively flat fields slope and fall away gently to the south-west and the view is unimpeded westwards to the relict hedgeline of the Kenure Estate and the Skerries-Rush road.



The site is a Recorded Monument, protected under the Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and by a Preservation Order placed on it in 1977. Fingal County Council finalised the purchase of the national monument at Drumanagh in Loughshinny in late 2016 at a reported cost of around €1 million in a deal that they announced could open up an exciting new tourist draw for Fingal. Their stated plans included protecting Drumanagh from damage by motorbike scrambling and its future integration into coastal walking paths.

A Public Consultation was launched in January 2018. The Mayor of Fingal Cllr. Mary McCamley commented at the time "On visiting this beautiful site today I can see the potential for not just archaeological research and education but also the tourism and recreational opportunities.

Senior Parks Superintendent Kevin Halpenny commented "This site is not only a very significant National Monument it will also become a major new open space for Fingal and form part of the Fingal Coastal Way used by locals and visitors to Fingal alike." Christine Baker, Community Archaeologist said that "The Conservation Plan will help us to balance all the various uses of the site with the need to protect it for future generations". During the public consultation period, a total of 25 written submissions and observations were made by individuals and groups with an interest in the site's future

By October 2018 the Drumanagh Conservation Study & Heritage Plan 2018-2023 was launched. This excellent and detailed report set out Fingal County Council's policies and objectives for the future protection and management of the site. It could form the basis for a tourist guide to Drumanagh. https://www.fingal.ie/sites/default/files/2019-03/Drumanagh%20Promontory%20Fort%20-%20Conservation%20Study%20and%20Management%20Plan%202018_2023r.pdf

Commenting on the significance of the site, Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, Paul Reid said: "Drumanagh is of huge value not only to Fingal but also in a national context. Council staff across various Departments are working together on the site's ongoing protection, conservation and management so as to realise the full potential of this important site."

The council reported: 'The response to the Draft Drumanagh Conservation Study and Management Plan was extremely positive.'

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE DRUMANAGH CONSERVATION STUDY & MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The purchase of Drumanagh was an essential step towards the facilitation of the Fingal Coastal Way. This is a long-term aim of the Council to provide a coastal and walking amenity from Sutton to Balbriggan. The character and route of the Coastal Way has yet to be decided but it will cross Drumanagh to link to the cliff walk to Loughshinny and will impact on the underlying archaeology.
- Those who currently visit the site walk from Rush, Loughshinny or from the nearby housing estates off the Skerries-Rush road. These routeways need improvement in terms of health and safety as the cliff between Drumanagh and Loughshinny can be dangerous. There have been fall fatalities in the past.
- There is an issue with unauthorised access as many people access the site across privately owned land. The laneway to the site is often waterlogged and muddy in winter and overgrown with nettles and vegetation in summer making direct access difficult.
- Increased awareness and access to the site will increase visitor numbers which may lead to an increased demand for parking facilities in the vicinity. At present there is a small car park at the harbour in Loughshinny, another at the end of North beach in Rush and a carpark at the lodge in St. Catherine's estate. However provision of car parking and facilities for Drumanagh may need to be addressed.
- Most site users have little knowledge of the international archaeological significance of the site although interest may be centred on the upstanding Martello tower. The site is lacking guides, interpretative signage or easily accessible reference material. This is further compounded by the gaps in definitive knowledge about the site that currently exist.
- Fingal County Council as the owner of the site has a duty of care not only to the site as an archaeological monument and protected structure but to those that use the site. It needs to protect the integrity of the site while ensuring the health and safety of its users and also providing access to the site.

OPPORTUNITIES HIGHLIGHTED IN THE DRUMANAGH STUDY & MANAGEMENT PLAN

- The Martello tower is a highly visible landmark on the Fingal coastline. Unlike the majority of the surviving Fingal Martello towers, Drumanagh Martello tower has not been modified and appears in relatively good condition. Subject to a structural survey; the provision of safe access, the glazing of the windows to prevent birds accessing the interior and the replacement of the floor and door would provide a unique visitor experience. This is an opportunity to see a largely unmodified Martello tower in its original landscape setting, with the extensive views it provides.
- An important context for Drumanagh is the coastline of Fingal, already popular with walkers and seaside visitors. The development of the Coastal Way will formally connect Drumanagh to Loughshinny and Rush. Drumanagh facilitates the completion of the Rush to Loughshinny section of the route.
- Given the number of archaeological and historical sites in the vicinity there is an opportunity to develop an integrated heritage trail, with smaller heritage loops linking to the Kenure demesne and the church and castle remains in St Catherine's. This could be combined with the geological and natural assets of the area to attract specialised and educational groups.
- The visitor experience to the region would be enhanced by information panels and digital tours to highlight the rich and varied heritage of the area

My proposal as outlined in this submission offers Fingal County Council an ideal opportunity to build on the work already put into the preservation and development of Drumanagh. This project would be a perfect continuation of their 2017-2023 Development Plan for the site, it would attract national and international interest while adding another major tourist attraction to Fingal.

I am available to enter into discussion on any details or outstanding issues which may arise.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,  . 12th MAY 2022 .

Niall Jones



★
Drumarnagh

Road
Entrance

Field for
Development

Field
Entrance

Pedestrian
Exit

★
Kenure
estate
storage
room

★
Kenure

Skerris
Road

Loughishilly
Reception
Terminal

LAND REGISTRY

County.....**DUBLIN**

Folio.....**4769**.....O.S. **2/A**

This map should be read in conjunction with the folio (Plan No. on 1st page)

This map does not show appurtenant or servient rights

It is not conclusive evidence as to the boundary or extent of the land. (See Section 25 of the Registration of Title Act 1964)

Where a boundary has been transferred from a smaller scale map, accuracy is limited to that of the smaller scale.

This map, subject to the provisions of the L.R. Rules, is acceptable for subdivision purposes.

25/2/94

