

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, Oughterard, Co. Galway: Conservation Management Plan 2025–2035



Prepared for Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group

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The results, conclusions and recommendations contained within this document are based on information available at the time of its preparation. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that all relevant data have been collated, the authors and Southgate Associates accept no responsibility for omissions and/or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available subsequent to the document's completion.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ruined medieval church and graveyard of Kilcummin lies on the north side of the N59, southeast of Oughterard town which is located on the banks of the Owenduff River. The church is located in the townland of Lemonfield which is in the civil parish of Kilcummin and the barony of Moycullen, County Galway.

The church is part of a wider early medieval ecclesiastical complex with links to St Cuimín of the Uí Amolngada of North Mayo. The archaeological monuments include the ruins of a medieval parish church (Recorded Monument GA054-045---) and graveyard (Recorded Monument GA054-045001) while a nearby holy well (Recorded Monument GA054-044----) associated with the monastic enclosure was originally not subject to this Conservation Management Plan (CMP) but was included in the CMP process subsequently. The site is owned by Galway County Council (GCC); however, it is not considered a national monument by the National Monuments Service (NMS; pers. comm.).

Concern was previously expressed by the local community regarding the stability of the medieval ruins of the church and in response, the Heritage Officer of GCC invited the Galway Community Archaeologist to inspect the site. The recommendations which followed the June 2021 site visit was that a costed CMP with scope of works should be prepared by a Conservation Architect/Buildings Specialist with input from a consultant archaeologist, ecologist and structural engineer to inform the community, GCC and the NMS of the best heritage practice for the site. The Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group (OCHG) proceeded to make a successful application to the Heritage Council through the Community Heritage Grant for the production of a CMP.

This CMP is prepared on behalf of OCHG. The OCHG comprises a group of local volunteers whose main aim is to maintain and preserve the church and graveyard for current and future generations. Thus, a key objective of this CMP is to provide a framework that enables OCHG, GCC and the local community to conserve and preserve the archaeological, architectural, cultural and natural heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard in accordance with best practice. This CMP also provides the necessary guidance to appropriately address issues around the site's conservation, access and interpretation over the ten-year timeframe of the plan (2025–2035).

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Abbreviations and Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
AMS	Archaeological Management Solutions
CMF	Community Monuments Fund
CMP	Conservation Management Plan
DAHGI	Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GCC	Galway County Council
GCDP	Galway County Development Plan.
HEV	Historic Environment Viewer
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IFC	Irish Folklore Commission
ITM	Irish Transverse Mercator
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NHL	Naturally Hydraulic lime
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NMS	National Monuments Service
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OCHG	Oughterard Culture and Heritage Group
OS	Ordnance Survey
pNHA	proposed Natural Heritage Area
RMP	Record of Monument and Places
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
SPA	Special Protection Area
ZoN	Zone of Notification

Coordinate System

All grid coordinates in this report use the Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinate reference system unless otherwise stated.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The early medieval ecclesiastical site of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is located in the townland of Lemonfield, southeast of the town of Oughterard, County Galway (Figure 1).¹ Also known as Cill Chuimín (the church of Cuimín), this site has been linked to St Cuimín of the Uí Amolngada of North Mayo.² Designated archaeological monuments include the ruins of the medieval parish church (Recorded Monument GA054-045----) and associated graveyard (Recorded Monument GA054-045-001); a nearby holy well (Recorded Monument GA054-044----) associated with the monastic enclosure is located c.280m South west of the church.

This CMP is prepared on behalf of Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group (OCHG). OCHG comprises a group of seven local volunteers including four active members, one member who is responsible for financial oversight and two members who are Directors from the Oughterard Courthouse Board. It was formed in 2006 and partnered with Galway County Heritage Office and the National Museum of Country Life. A key objective of the group is to maintain and preserve Kilcummin Church and Graveyard for current and future generations; a number of the group also have relatives buried in the graveyard.

Since their foundation the OCHG have undertaken a number of actions to conserve, enhance and promote the heritage of the church and graveyard. Oughterard Culture & Heritage Group volunteers and participants of the local Community Employment scheme have undertaken the recording of graves within the Kilcummin Cemetery under the guidance of Galway County Council (GCC). The information shall be made public once complete, enabling visitors to access information.³

Following the award of Heritage Council funding, OCHG enlisted the services of Southgate Associates, heritage conservation specialists⁴ and conservation engineers who put together a cross-disciplinary team of specialists to assist in the preparation of the CMP, which included:

- Archaeological Management Solutions (AMS)⁵

¹ ITM centroid: 513291, 742340.

² <https://www.oughterardheritage.org/content/people/st-cuimin-of-kilcummin> [Accessed: 14 08 2025].

³ Website: <https://www.oughterardheritage.org/content/category/place/kilcummin-cemetery-mapping-project> [Accessed: 14 08 2025].

⁴ Website: <https://www.southgateassociates.ie/> [Accessed: 14 08 2025].

⁵ Website: <https://www.ams-consultancy.com/> [Accessed: 01.08.25].

- Steven Blake, surveyor
- Ruth Minogue, ecologist

OCHG understand that the church, graveyard and associated features are not only an important space for the local community, but also comprises a significant archaeological complex (i.e. the site of the ecclesiastical complex). OCHG aim to conserve the church and graveyard to prevent any further loss of historic fabric and for the significance of the site to be better understood and adequately interpreted for the benefit of the wider public. Thus, a key objective of this CMP is to provide a framework that enables OCHG, GCC and the local community to conserve and preserve the archaeological, architectural, cultural and natural heritage of Kilcummin Church and graveyard. This CMP provides the necessary guidance to appropriately address issues around the site's conservation, access and interpretation.

1.2 Site Location

Kilcummin Medieval Church and Graveyard is located on the N59 - Moycullen Road southeast of the town of Oughterard, Co. Galway (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the south by a substantial stone wall, where there is an entrance to the graveyard (Plate 1), and to the north by a low stone wall (Plate 2) with views to the north towards Lough Corrib.

The oldest part of the graveyard appears to be towards the south and southwest of the church, with a more modern cemetery (Kilcummin cemetery) extending to the north and northeast of the church, beyond what appears to be an inner enclosure or boundary of the site, also marking the edge of the ridge upon which the church stands.

For the purposes of the CMP, the study area was limited to the graveyard; however, the nearby holy well (Recorded Monument GA054-044----) was visited during the site survey completed by AMS in order to provide an overall view of the ecclesiastical complex in the landscape. It should be noted that an unclassified ringfort (RMP: GA054-033----) is located south of the graveyard and while there are no extant remains above-ground, the Zone of Notification (ZoN) for this monument extends into the southeastern corner of the Kilcummin graveyard (see Figure 3: 25" Ordnance Survey Map, published 1900.).

Table 1: Townlands in the study area.

Townland (English)	Gaelic Name	Suggested Meaning	Civil Parish	Barony
Lemonfield	<i>An Chorr</i> ⁶	round hill, pointed hill, hollow; pointed, conspicuous, odd	<u>Cill Chuimín/Kilcummin</u>	Moycullen

1.3 Ownership and Access

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is publicly accessible and owned and managed by GCC. After consultation with the National Monuments Service (NMS), Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is not considered to be a national monument.⁷

1.4 Preparation of the Conservation Management Plan

This CMP is a working document that provides a framework to care for and conserve the values of the place based on the principles of collaboration and best practice. The process has been informed by international charters, conventions and policy documents, which set out principles and best-practice guidelines for the development and implementation of CMPs, these are listed in the references.⁸

A CMP describes the special qualities that contribute to the cultural and natural significance of a place and sets out objectives and policies to ensure that such significance is retained for the benefit of present and future generations. The provision of a CMP for places of cultural significance is an integral element of *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS⁹ Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, 2013 (hereafter ‘Burra Charter’),¹⁰ which is accepted as best international standard for the development of CMPs.

The Burra Charter defines conservation as: “all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance’ (Article 1.4). Article 3.1 of the Burra Charter promotes a cautious approach to conservation: “...based on a respect for the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. It requires a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary but as little as possible.” Furthermore, Article 5.1 states that “Conservation of a place should identify and take into consideration all aspects of

⁶ See: <https://www.logainm.ie/en/20875> [Accessed: 17 09 2025].

⁷ As per pers. comm. dated 15 08 2025.

⁸ See references subsection: Charters, Conventions and Guides.

⁹ International Council on Monuments and Sites.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf> [Accessed: 12 08 2025].

cultural and natural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one value at the expense of others.”

1.5 Scope of the Conservation Management Plan

The Kilcummin Church and Graveyard CMP sets out to:

- Give an understanding of the ecclesiastical site in space and time.
- Increase awareness of the site’s cultural heritage, landscape, natural heritage and intangible heritage.
- Establish a baseline for monitoring the condition of the built heritage, archaeological heritage and natural heritage of the site.
- Understand the values attributed to the place.
- Assess the significance of the site.
- Identify the structural conservation issues and vulnerabilities.
- Set out conservation and management policies for the site.

The CMP covers a ten-year timeframe (2025–2035). OCHG, GCC Community Archaeologist, NMS and other relevant stakeholders will review the programme’s progress on an annual basis with a mid-period review after five years.

2 Existing Statutory, Policy and Guidance Framework

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard CMP is informed by existing local, national and international legislation, policy documents, charters and guidelines.

2.1 Archaeological Heritage

The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta, 16.I.1992),¹¹ was ratified by Ireland in 1997. It relates to the protection of archaeological heritage and includes the setting and context of archaeological sites. *Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (DAHGI) 1999),¹² outlines guiding policies for the protection of the archaeological heritage of Ireland. Under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 and the Heritage Act 1995, Ireland is party to the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage.

The Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 is the primary legislation aimed at protecting and preserving archaeological heritage in the Republic of Ireland.¹³ The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is the statutory list of protected monuments and places (referred to as Recorded Monuments), established under Section 12(1) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The RMP for County Galway was published in 1997 in paper form with accompanying location maps, which have been scanned and published online.¹⁴

Some Recorded Monuments are also national monuments, as defined by Section 2 of the National Monuments Act 1930. A national monument means a monument “the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto....” The current List of National Monuments in State Care (Ownership and Guardianship) for County Galway was published in 2009¹⁵. Consultation with the NMS has established that Kilcummin Church and Graveyard—which are under the ownership of GCC—are not considered to be a national monument (as per pers. comm. with NMS 15 08 2025)

¹¹ Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/168007bd25> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

¹² Available at: <https://www.archaeology.ie/collections-and-publications/publications/framework-and-principles-for-the-protection-of-the-archaeological-heritage/> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

¹³ Available at: <https://www.archaeology.ie/publications-forms-legislation/legislation> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.archaeology.ie/app/uploads/2025/03/Archaeology-RMP-Galway-Manual-1997-0015.pdf> [Accessed: 17 09 2025].

¹⁵ Available at: <https://www.archaeology.ie/about-us/what-we-do/monuments-in-state-care/national-monuments-in-state-care/> [Accessed: 17 09 2025].

The NMS of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) maintains a publicly accessible database known as the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), available through the Historic Environment Viewer (HEV).¹⁶ This contains current information on all known archaeological sites and monuments; the dataset also includes a ZoN for sites and monuments. The zones do not define the exact extent of the monuments, but rather are intended to identify them for the purposes of notification under Section 12(3) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

Table 2. Archaeological heritage sites within the CMP study area (see Figure 3).

RMP/ SMR No.	Site Type	Designation	Townland	ITM (centroid)
GA054-045----	Church	Recorded Monument	Lemonfield	577518, 769751
GA054-045001-	Graveyard	Recorded Monument	Lemonfield	513293, 742340

The Recorded Monuments that form the ecclesiastical complex include the ruins of the medieval parish church and a historic graveyard (see Table 2) monuments which are outside of the study area but are likely to be related to the ecclesiastical complex are St. Cummins Well Holy Well (RMP/SMR: GA054-044----) and the nearby site of a former ringfort (RMP/SMR: GA054-033----).

2.1.1 Proposed works and legislative requirements for archaeology

NB The implementation of the policies put forward in this plan should take place in compliance with legal requirements under the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. Therefore, it is important to note that any proposed future works at or near the monument must be submitted through the S12 notification to the National Monuments Service. This includes actions such as vegetation removal. Other stakeholders who should be consulted prior to any works include: GCC Environment Section, Architectural Conservation Officer, Community Archaeologist, Heritage Officer and Biodiversity Officer.

2.2 Natural Heritage

Ireland aims to conserve habitats and species, through designation of conservation areas, as required under European and National legislation. The NPWS of the DHLGH is responsible for the designation of conservation sites in Ireland and maintains a publicly accessible database known as the NPWS

¹⁶ Available at: <https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/> [Accessed: 16.09.25].

Designations Viewer which displays NPWS Designated Areas.¹⁷ The provisions of the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive¹⁸ and Birds Directive (2009/147/EC),¹⁹ as well as the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2021 and the Heritage Act 2018 (S.I.No.15/2018) Part 3,²⁰ form the basis for the protection and conservation of natural heritage. Since the initial 1976 Act, two acts in particular have strengthened nature conservation legislation – the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 (S.I.No.38/2000)²¹ and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I.No.477/2011), as amended.²²

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level.²³ The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive. The Regulations endow each Local Authority with the obligation to ensure compliance with the Directive's requirements. Under the terms of the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) Ireland is required to designate Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are for the protection of listed rare and vulnerable species, regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands, especially those of national importance.²⁴

The basic national designation for wildlife is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA), which is an area considered important for the habitats present, or which holds species of plants or animals whose habitat needs protection.²⁵ Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. These sites are of significance for wildlife and habitats. Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000), NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation, while pNHAs are subject to limited protection.

¹⁷ Add URL here.

¹⁸ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

¹⁹ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²⁰ Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/15/enacted/en/html> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²¹ Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/38/enacted/en/html> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²² Available at: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2011/si/477/made/en/pdf> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²³ See: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²⁴ See: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

²⁵ See: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha> [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

The closest designated European sites to the study area are the Lough Corrib SAC and the Lough Corrib SPA, which are located c.949m to the north-northwest and 1.09km north-northwest, respectively.

2.3 Galway County Development Plan 2022–2028

The Galway County Development Plan (GCDP) 2022–2028²⁶ sets out the statutory framework for landuse, planning and sustainable development in Galway County, in addition to the aims, policies and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to cultural and natural heritage. These include protection for sites of archaeological significance and built heritage. The General and Specific Policy Objectives relating to cultural, natural and intangible heritage of relevance to the CMP, are set out in Chapter 10 and 12 of the GCDP.

Objectives outlined in Chapter 12.2 relevant to this CMP include:

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate agencies, state bodies, stakeholders and landowners to ensure that the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the County is protected and developed in a sustainable manner that is in accordance with the following strategic aims:

- *The Council recognises the importance of identifying, valuing and safeguarding the archaeological and architectural heritage of Galway for future generations which can be achieved through the proper management, sensitive enhancement and/or appropriate development of this resource;*
- *The Council will promote best practice and seek to undertake the appropriate maintenance of the historic assets in the care of the local authority where resources permit;*
- *Support the implementation of County Galway Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2017-2022 (and subsequent plans) in relation to the promotion and protection of its Cultural Heritage;*
- *Protect, support and promote the conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the County's archaeological heritage within the plan area. Take cognisance of the "Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage" (1999), and the Convention for the protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe (revised) (Valletta, 1992) which sets out policy and broad principles for the protection of the archaeological heritage;*
- *Engage with all relevant stakeholders (and in particular local communities) in matters relating to the protection of the architectural, archaeological, and cultural heritage and The Arts;*
- *Encourage understanding of the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the County. Shall have regard to the advice series for owners issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

²⁶ Available at: <https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/adopted-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028> [Accessed: 18 09 2025].

Objectives outlined in Chapter 12.4 (Climate Change) relevant to this CMP include:

- *Support and enhance appreciation of the built heritage, archaeological heritage and cultural heritage to ensure that it can be enjoyed by both local residents and visitors to the County and safeguarded for future generations. The principles of conservation-led regeneration are adopted in this plan and the plan promotes awareness and the appropriate adaptation of Ireland's built and archaeological heritage to deal with the effects of climate change. The guidance outlined in the Sectoral Adaptation Plan 'Built and Archaeological Heritage' has been incorporated into the Plan so as to help deal with the effects of climate change on our built and archaeological heritage. It is also important to create awareness of the increased threat climate change presents to the historic built environment and archaeological heritage including appropriate adaptation.*

Table 3. Policies of the Galway County Development Plan 2022–2028 relevant to this CMP.

Policy	
AH	Custodianship
11	Promote an inter-disciplinary approach demonstrating best practice with regard to the custodianship of protected structures, recorded monuments and elements of built heritage.
ARC	Protection of Archaeological Sites
4	Protect archaeological sites and monuments their settings and visual amenity and archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments, or that are newly discovered and seek to protect important archaeological landscapes.
ARC	Burial Grounds
6	Protect the burial grounds, identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

2.4 Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030

Galway County Council through the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030²⁷ is a thorough document outlining the councils commitment to promoting and facilitating active citizenship in relation to cultural heritage and working with communities in developing models of good cultural and heritage practice. It outlines GCCs intentions to be available to encourage and support communities in applying for funding and build capacity within the cultural heritage sector.

With regard to built heritage, archaeology and climate change specifically, the heritage office has committed to assist communities through actions, objectives and key performance indicators; these have been extracted and are outlined in Appendix 2.

²⁷ Available at: https://dpdgay9x1sxad.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2025/05/Gal_Co_Co_Heritage_Biodiversity_Poll_Plan_132pp_MAY_2025_ENG.pdf [Accessed: 19 09 2025].

3 Developing the Conservation Management Plan

3.1 Gathering Information

Information from a wide variety of sources was drawn on during the compilation of the Kilcummin Church and Graveyard CMP. These range from local, national and international legislation, charters and policy documents to local knowledge and consultation with public and private stakeholders, specialists and the wider public. Key sources of information on the cultural and natural heritage of the CMP study area and the parish of Kilcummin include:

- Published research, surveys and excavation reports.
- Published plans and policies of GCC (e.g. GCC Development Plan 2022–2028, GCC Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030).
- Archives and online databases of the NMS, National Museum of Ireland (NMI), National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), The Heritage Council, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC), and other relevant heritage bodies.
- Cartographical analysis, including historical maps and Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, as well as aerial and satellite imagery.
- Site assessments and surveys undertaken as part of the CMP.
- Information obtained from the OCHG.
- Public consultation?

References to publications and online sources are provided in the footnotes and the accompanying References section (p66).

3.2 Consultation

A range of public and private stakeholders were consulted during the planning and preparation of the CMP. The OCHG acted as the principal platform for consultation, which included a public consultation strategy by Southgate Associates to understand the views of the local community. The questions that were asked of participants in the consultation strategy are provided as Appendix 3. OCHG also organised a public talk for Heritage Week in August 2025 that provided information on the CMP process. The community Archaeologist and Heritage Officer were asked to comment on a draft of the CMP.

3.3 Site Assessment and Surveys

A series of site assessments and surveys were conducted as part of the CMP process.

- Initial site visits were undertaken by the GCC Community Archaeologist in May 2022

- Conservation engineer, Chris Southgate, visited on 17 June 2025 to assess the condition of the church structure.
- The conservation engineer undertook a second site visit for Heritage Week in the company of Heritage Consultant and Anthropologist Dr. Karen Lysaght.
- A site inspection and photographic survey was carried out on 5 September 2025 by Jonathan Montieth of AMS.
- A laser survey was carried out by Stephen Blake on 28 August 2025.

3.4 Developing Policies

The development of conservation and management policies was undertaken following consideration of the policy, framework and methodology information detailed above, and in consideration of the current condition of the church, graveyard and any other cultural or natural heritage assets in the study area, as well as the values and significance attributed to the place by locals consulted as part of the process.

Proposed policies for conserving and, where possible, enhancing the significance of the church and graveyard, including the protection of cultural and natural heritage assets, are set out in detail in Section 9, but in summary can be categorised under three headings – ‘Protection’, ‘Conservation, Management and Maintenance’, and ‘Interpretation, Research and Education’.

These policies aim to assist the OCHG and GCC, as well as other relevant heritage and statutory authorities in the protection and enhancement of the archaeological, architectural, historical and ecological character and setting of the site, while allowing for wider understanding of the cultural heritage values.

4 Understanding Kilcummin Church and Graveyard

4.1 Topography and Landscape Setting

Kilcummin Church sits on the northern edge of a low ridge to the south of Lough Corrib in the townland of Lemonfield (*An Chorr*) in the civil parish of Kilcummin and the barony of Moycullen, County Galway (Figure 1). The site of the church and the earlier part of the graveyard is located on an elevated ridge which falls away towards Lough Corrib, c.1.2km to the north. To the south, west and east of the church the topography is generally flat and level. The older part of the graveyard appears to be located to the south of the church, while the more modern areas of the graveyard extend to the north and northeast beyond the low ridge. Historical mapping depicts the edge of the low ridge as a dotted line, which may also represent the northern extent of the church enclosure defined by topography.

There appears to be relatively few burials, or at least evidence of burials (only a few possible grave markers) to the north of the church within this area. This may reflect a Christian belief that burial location was a marker of social, religious and moral distinctions in early modern Ireland (Tait 2002). Studies have also shown that in the eighteenth century only soldiers, strangers and unbaptised children were buried to the north and west of churches (Latocnaye (de.)1917).

4.2 Historical Background

4.2.1 Prehistoric Period (8000 BC–AD 400)

The Irish Mesolithic is subdivided into two phases on the basis of stone tool technologies and cultural traditions – the Early Mesolithic (8000–7000/6500 BC) and Late Mesolithic (7000/6500–4000 BC) (Bayliss & Woodman 2009; Chapple *et al.* 2022; Woodman 2011). Evidence for the Irish Mesolithic tends to be concentrated around or in close proximity to coastal areas, along river and lake shores, and elevated river valley positions. Mesolithic society was characterised by small kin groups of nomadic hunter-fisher-gatherers that exploited seasonally available food resources such as fruit, nuts, berries, fish and wild fowl. The archaeological record of this period presents as the remains of temporary settlements, fishing technology, chipped stone implements and production waste (debitage). Lough Corrib is situated to the north of the church and provides some evidence for Mesolithic settlement. For example, a Bann flake was discovered where the Owenriff river flows into the lake in August 1975 with further flint flakes discovered in the same location several years later.²⁸

²⁸ Jim Higgins, 'A Bann flake from Oughterard, Co. Galway, in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. 36, 1977–8, pp 84–5, Jim Higgins "Some further Mesolithic finds from near Oughterard Co. Galway", in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. 40, 1985–6, pp 144–5.

These finds are likely reflected in the HEV as lithic scatter GA054-047----. These findings suggest that further evidence for Mesolithic activity in this part of Galway may be identified through time; the Bann flake and lithic scatters clearly indicate the potential for more sites of this date to be identified at similar locations in the future.²⁹

The Neolithic period (4000–2400 BC) witnessed the introduction of agriculture to Ireland and the change from a highly mobile hunter-gatherer lifestyle to one of a more sedentary nature based on livestock husbandry and cereal cultivation. This brought corresponding changes in settlement form, food production, burial practices and material culture (e.g. Cooney 2000). The time between 3750 and 3600 BC saw a period of rapid expansion across the country, which included the construction of timber-built rectangular houses and monumental hilltop enclosures, as well as monumental court tombs and portal tombs (e.g. Lynch 2014; Schulting *et al.* 2012; Whittle *et al.* 2011).

There was an increasing focus on monumentality during the Middle Neolithic (c.3600–3000) when passage tombs were constructed in specific locations throughout the island (e.g. Cooney *et al.* 2011; Whitehouse *et al.* 2014). There are unclassified cairns in the wider study area which may be a form of monumental tomb (for example: GA054-071----, GA054-062---- and GA067-030----).

The Bronze Age (2400–500 BC) is typically associated with the introduction and development of metal technology, the production of a diverse range of copper, bronze and gold objects, as well as the emergence of a distinct warrior elite class defined by high-status weaponry towards the end of the period (Waddell 2000). The material culture included not only weapons and tools, but also high-status items of personal adornment. This technological innovation went hand-in-hand with an intensification of agriculture that was largely facilitated by the availability of more efficient tools.

There is significant evidence from the wider landscape for settlement and ceremonial activity spanning from the Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age, in the archaeological record. For example, there is a *fulacht fia* (GA068-020----) which is likely of Bronze Age date showing possible habitation in the wider landscape. There is further evidence of Bronze Age activity from the excavations record, for example, a burnt spread excavated in 2024 (24E0973) and two burnt mounds (12E0288 and 12E0100) which suggest that there was settlement in the area in this period. There are also numerous enclosures which may be of Iron Age date (GA054-027----, GA054-028---- and GA054-058----).

²⁹ O'Drisceoil, K. Lithics Ireland. Available at: <https://www.lithicsireland.ie/index.html>. [Accessed: 11 11 2025].

4.2.2 Early Medieval Period (AD400–1100)

The early medieval period saw significant social, cultural, political and technological changes in Ireland. The beginning of the period saw the arrival of Christianity, the gradual conversion of the population, the flourishing of Irish monasteries, the development of church sites and the spread of literacy. The period, which spanned 700 years, also comprised a time of economic and environmental change. Surviving law tracts provide valuable insights into the nature of Irish society at the time, which suggest Ireland was roughly divided into small kingdoms (*tuatha*) that largely operated as pastoral communities bounded by ties of kinship (Edwards 1996, 8).

The key early medieval settlement indicator in the wider study area is ringforts, three of which are within 1km of the Kilcummin Church (GA054-025----, GA054-033---- and GA054-037----). Ringforts/raths and related monuments, such as cashels and raised/platform raths, are forms of early medieval enclosed settlement (Stout 1997). Excavation and topographical studies have shown that within the ringfort classifications are a wide variety of morphologies and dates (O’Sullivan *et al.* 2013, 51–72). They can be univallate, bivallate or trivallate, can vary greatly in size, can occur singly or in dense concentrations and may or may not contain evidence of settlement. Stout (2015, 73) suggested that of the c.60,000 recorded ringforts in Ireland, most were occupied between the early seventh and ninth centuries AD. Although the vast majority appear to have been built during the second half of the first millennium AD, in areas of Gaelic-Irish rule such as County Galway they were sometimes inhabited into later times (e.g. Fitzpatrick 2009; O’Conor 1998). However, when considering the early medieval settlement landscape, it is also worth noting that other forms of settlement existed, such as unenclosed settlements, crannogs, settlement cemeteries, rectangular enclosures and ecclesiastical sites (e.g. O’Sullivan *et al.* 2013). Crannogs and ecclesiastical sites also appear near the church at Kilcummin; for example, there is a crannog on the Mayo side of Lough Corrib (MA123-054----) while there is an ecclesiastical site at Inchagoill Island (GA040-013001–004).

In terms of the church/ ecclesiastical site there is also a suggestion by Gwynn and Hadcock that there was an earlier foundation at Kilcummin before the present church was built (Gwynn and Hadcock 1988, 390). It is also not clear when the initial phase of the masonry church we see today was built. It would not be accurate to date the masonry by the windows as these may be later alterations and in addition to deeper historic research, analysis of mortar would be an accurate way of establishing an approximate date of the initial phase which may be early Medieval.

4.2.3 Late Medieval Period (1100–1600)

In 1111, the Synod of Ráth Breasail sought to bring Ireland into line with the rest of Europe and thus begin the diocesan structuring of the Irish church. The work was further advanced at the Synod of

Kells in 1152, which divided the country into four ecclesiastical provinces: Armagh, Cashel, Dublin and Tuam with Kilcummin being part of the diocese of Tuam. The Anglo-Norman settlement of Connacht did not largely occur until after 1235 when Henry III granted twenty cantreds here to Richard de Burgh and a lordship was established (Dempsey 2014, 47). The church at Kilcummin is generally described as dating to the fourteenth century (see O'Donovan's field book entry below) based primarily on the diagnostic evidence of the ogee-headed window and is described in the HEV as being:

On a low ridge overlooking Lough Corrib to NE. The remains comprise a medieval church (E-W; L 15.4m, Wth 6m) with later S transept (L 4.15m, Wth 4.05m). There is a doorway in S wall and opposing windows at E end of N and S walls, all robbed. The E gable contains a single-light ogee-headed window. A second doorway at end of S wall leads to the transept which is lit by a twin-light window, crowned by a circular ope, in S wall. The large graveyard is mainly modern, but its curving N wall may reflect the line of an early ecclesiastical enclosure. Possibly the site of St Cummin's E. Chr. monastery. (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 390; Killanin 1947, 124; O'Flanagan 1927a, Vol. 3, 143a-5).

Apart from the possible association with St Cummin and the suggestion that the church replaced an earlier one there is very little evidence directly relating to the church itself. Killanin for example states that it is a late medieval church 'situated on what must have been the site of an earlier church' (Killanin 1947, pp 121–31 and 125). This may also be the case at Kilcummin with later additions and window alterations during a later phase of use (e.g. the ogee-headed light in the east gable may be added into earlier fabric. The evidence for this is largely circumstantial with a curvature in the field boundary to the north on the 1st edition OS six-inch map (1841) possibly suggesting the outer boundary of an earlier church enclosure or religious foundation but there is little further evidence to support this supposition. A holy well marked on the 1st edition OS six-inch map (1841) is annotated as St Cummin's Well (Tobar Cuimin) to the southwest of the church and might have associations with an earlier church.

A number of additional medieval enclosures and ringforts are recorded within 1km of the church and include GA054-024----, GA054-025---- and GA054-037----. GA054-024----, located c.750 to the west, also features a drystone-built souterrain (GA054-024001-). GA054-025-----, located c.905m southwest of the church contains a *cillín* or graveyard for unbaptised children (GA054-025001-).

As the advance of the Anglo-Normans gathered pace, a network of castles, fortresses, boroughs and towns were developed across the country. The earliest castles, which were erected during the Anglo-Norman conquest and subinfeudation of Connacht, included motte-and-bailey type monuments and ringwork castles. There is an unclassified castle to the northwest of the site (GA054-069----) while a tower house c.2km to the east is a national monument (GA054-002----, nat. mon. no. 470).

4.2.4 Post-Medieval and modern Period (c.1600–2000)

The post medieval period has numerous references to the townland of Lemonfield and the civil parish of Kilcummin. The earliest reference is from 1497 and refers to Kicummin while the first reference to the townland of Lemonfield—in which the church is located—is from 1617. These early references are scant and are summarised on [logainm.ie](https://www.logainm.ie)³⁰.

There is little further information on the church until the early nineteenth century and in 1839 O'Donovan described the church as follows:

*The ruins of this church are still to be seen near Lemonfield house to the right of the road as you go from Galway to Oughterard. There is no part of the original church of St. Cummin now remaining, for the present building is certainly not older than the beginning of the 14th century [note: as mentioned above this CMP suggests the masonry fabric of the East Gable to be of earlier origin and that the window should not be used to date the first phase of construction as it may be a later alteration], if even so old. It is about 60 f. long and 18' 0" broad. The East Gable is perfect and contains a window which is broad on the inside and gradually narrows towards the outside. On the outside it is 5f. 0in. high and 11 inches broad (wide) and on the inside 6f. 4in. in height and 4f. 0in. in breadth. This church consisted of two wings, the northern (one) of which is totally destroyed, but the southern is in a good state of preservation. It is about 13f. square. A pointed doorway (5' 8" high and 3' 10" broad) leads into it from the body of the church, and in the south wall of it is rather a neat window in the round but modern style. The west gable of this church is nearly destroyed, and of the north wall there remains but a fragment 20f. 0in. in length and 10' 0" in height. The north and south walls, within 3f. 6in. of the N.E. and S.E. corners contained each a window which is now formless. The doorway was in the south side wall not far from the west gable, but it is now so injured that I could form no idea of its dimensions or characteristics. There is a large cemetery attached to this church in which many of the ancient and modern families of the district are interred.*³¹

Following this, the church is annotated on the OS first edition six-inch map (1841) where it is noted as 'Church in ruins'. There is a curved field boundary shown to the north of this which may be the boundary of an earlier religious foundation. There are also two unpublished maps from the Landed Estates Court from 1854 and 1864 neither of which display any more information than the 1841 OS first edition six-inch map. The accompanying descriptions of the sale in 1854 however show that the rent of Lemonfield included two islands in Lake Corrib with a yearly rent of £200. It also states that there was a silver lead mine on the lot. By 1864 the yearly rent had increased to £275.

³⁰ <https://www.logainm.ie/en/20875> [Accessed September 2025]

³¹ John O'Donovan OS letters. Galway Vol. 3. 1839. Pp 141–146. Unpublished. Available at https://www.askaboutireland.ie/aai-files/assets/ebooks/OSI-Letters/GALWAY%20VOL%203_14%20C%2022.pdf [Accessed: September 2025].

4.3 Cartographical Analysis

4.3.1 *County of Galway, by William Petty (1655)*

William Petty's map of 1685 shows the baronies of County Galway (Figure 4). A church and/or tower is indicated at the approximate location of present day Oughterard and parish of "Killcomen" is denoted on the map.

4.3.2 *Ordnance Survey First-Edition Six-Inch Map (1841)*

The first-edition OS six-inch map published 1841 shows the outline of the "burial ground" (as denoted) and contains the church which is noted as being "in ruins" and positioned at the northeast of the site. A curved boundary further to the north is indicative of a possible outer ecclesiastical boundary. On the north of this boundary is bogland which appears not to have been cultivated until later. The St. Cummins Well is depicted to the west and a univallate ringfort to the south (see Figure 2).

4.3.3 *Ordnance Survey First-Edition 25-Inch Map (1906)*

The OS 25-inch map, published in 1906, depicts an expanded burial ground which has spread to the east in a more formal rectilinear boundary (Figure 3). The nearby well (GA054-044) is still indicated however the ringfort GA054-033) is no longer depicted; rather, the map depicts an empty field. The curved boundary to the north depicted on the First Edition OS map is also removed and replaced with a rectilinear field boundary/drain as the bogland appears to have a more structured approach to harvesting peat as indicated by new straight access roads.

4.4 Archaeological Heritage of the Site

4.4.1 *Kilcummin Church and Graveyard*

Historically, it appears that Kilcummin Church (RMP GA054-045-) and Graveyard (RMP GA054-045001) was surrounded by an enclosure as suggested by a curvature in the northern wall of the graveyard depicted on the First Edition map. No archaeological excavations have been carried out in the vicinity of the church and graveyard. The graveyard is largely modern, but a possible outer ecclesiastical enclosure is indicated on the First Edition 6-inch OS map (Figure 2) as a curvilinear line north of the modern graveyard. Large early Irish ecclesiastical foundations are usually delimited by two or sometimes three concentric enclosures – the innermost enclosing the principal graveyard and churches (Ó Carragáin 2010, 57). The graveyard is now bounded by a limestone boundary wall with cow-and-calf coping (Plate 2) and is accessed from the main road via a double gate. The path to the graveyard is tarmacadamed to enable the access of funeral traffic (Plate 1). The medieval church ruin is located on a small rise (Plate 5) which drops away to the north towards Lough Corrib.

Early medieval Irish stone churches were built from 900AD onwards, often replacing earlier timber, turf and wattle structures (Ó Carragáin 2010, 15–33). Like many early examples, the church is aligned from east to west (Duffy 2005, 54) and is rectilinear in shape, with an apparently later transept to the south suggested by the lack of masonry tie between the two sections of the church (Plate 13). It is worthy of note that a northern transept is described in the 1839 Ordnance Survey Letters include quote or info from those letters? (reference needed). The church possesses no *antae*, or projections of the side-walls beyond the end-walls, and the Ordnance Survey Letters describe a “pointed” arch which suggests that the building is post-Romanesque in date. There is an ogee-window in the eastern gable; this architectural design was a product of the high medieval period and first appeared in textiles from the twelfth century (Lewis & Darley 1986, 218). The twin-light round-headed window in the South Transept is a product of Romanesque influence which flourished in Ireland in the twelfth century (O’Keeffe 2003, 15); however, the execution and style suggest a later date. It appears that the building we see today is fourteenth century with the possible incorporation of twelfth to thirteenth century fabric in the East Gable together with possible later additions and alterations. The central window on the East Gable is off-centre when viewed externally (**Error! Reference source not found.**) which suggests that the earliest phase of the structure may have been incorporated into a later iteration. This structure may indeed have replaced an early Christian church, however, no above-ground evidence survives.

The building measures 15.4m in length from east to west with the later transept to the south measuring 4.15m in length and 4.05m in width. The structure is of roughcut but flat-faced limestone masonry, bedded in lime mortar, with quoins at corners. The masonry is laid to courses with relative ease given the propensity of limestone to break horizontally making it easy to shape for masonry. The surface of the mortar joints have been completely washed out and extensive ivy growth has led to the dislodging of masonry. The entrance appears to have been via a doorway in the west end of the south elevation. In addition to the main east window, the nave was lit by opposing windows at the eastern end of the north and south walls, both of which have been robbed (Plate 15 and Plate 30 and Plate 30).

The South Transept

Masonry is laid in alternating bands made of courses of large rough-cut limestone alternating with bands of courses of narrower, smaller limestone slabs with strong corner quoins (Plate 12). Masonry is bedded and jointed with lime mortar. All coping has been lost leaving the masonry exposed at the top and vulnerable to weathering. The South Transept is not tied into the masonry of the principal structure (Plate 13) suggesting it is a later addition.

The transept was lit by a twin, round-headed light window with circular overhead in the south wall and is one of the primary remaining features of the church (Plate 7 and Plate 8). This round-headed window has a tri-partite, finely carved limestone hood-moulding with chamfered edges and is mostly intact with one upper section missing. It is thirteenth/fourteenth century in style. Internally the window opening is splayed with a square head reveal. The internal lintel (presumably stone given the survival of its equivalent on the east elevation) has been lost. A relieving arch above the lintel is of vertically placed limestone and the stone is carved to a fine, flat finish. The lower sections of this window have been blocked up with rough-cut but flat faced masonry bedded in mortar and the central mullion is of a single piece of limestone, the cill is also of well carved limestone. The interior is overgrown with brambles making inspection of the window cill difficult.

South elevation

The south elevation at the eastern end contained a window which has since been removed (Plate 14 and Plate 15)

East elevation

The neatly laid masonry courses are clearly visible on this elevation. The nave would have been lit from the east by an ogee-headed single light with squared hood moulding and triangular spandrels above (Plate 18). Curiously, when viewed from the outside, this window is located slightly off-centre (Plate 17). The style of carving is thirteenth/fourteenth century in character. Masonry of the ogee-window is finely tooled with punch dressing. All coping stones are lost with the exception of two pieces of a sloping carved coping stone which remains on the north pitch of the gable (Plate 28). Internally this elevation retains its stone lintel of the square-headed window opening, which also retains a good sample of the smooth internal lime render on the splayed window reveal (Plate 22). Sockets for window joinery transepts are to be seen and a socket for closing a window shutter is evident (Plate 27). Limestone memorial plaques have been fixed to the interior in the mid-nineteenth century:

"ERECTED IN 1855 BY ROBERT JOHN MARTIN ESQUIRE M.A.T.C.D. ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF SIR JOHN OFFLHERTIE OF LEMONFIELD WHO DIED 9TH OF MAY 1808, AGED 80 YEARS

MARY OFFLAHERTIE OTHERWISE ROYSE HIS WIFE WHO DIED 1ST OCTOBER 1826 AGED 88 YEARS

CAPTn THOMAS PARKER OFFLAHERTIE HIS NEPHEW WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 1823 AGED 53 YEARS

MARY MARTIN DAUGHTER OF SIR JOHN WHO DIED 30TH SEPT 1833 AGED 53 YEARS

CAPTn BOERT MARTIN HER HUSBAND WHO DIED

20th MAY 1840 AGED 71 years

THOMASHENRY ROBERT SON OF F J MARTIN A...

GRANDSOEN OF CAPT R AND MARY MARTIN WHO DIED

21st AUG t 1843 aged 8 years

LOUISA ? OFLAHERTY

3rd FEB 18...

On the north side of the central window is a small protruding piece of masonry and an adjacent socket, which may have had a liturgical purpose.

North elevation

The north elevation contained a window at the eastern end; however, this has since been lost (Plate 30).

Graveyard

Historic OS 6-inch and 25-inch maps Figure 2: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, published 1841 and Figure 2 and Figure 3 show that the graveyard remained the same size throughout the nineteenth century. Aerial photography from the late twentieth century indicates that the graveyard remained within the northern curved wall. However, the turn of the twenty-first century saw an expansion of the graveyard to the northeast with the removal of the wall and the construction of a pathway running northwest–southeast. The oblong graveyard now measures c.2.14ha. and is bounded by a coursed rubble wall.

A survey of headstone memorial inscriptions was facilitated by the OCHG, which indicated that the oldest identified grave markers dated to the early nineteenth century.³² These range from simple unworked grave markers to nineteenth-century Celtic-style crosses with kerbs and surrounds and iron railings.

Close to the entrance is a gravestone with the following inscription: Colm de Bhailís / 2-5-1796 / 27-2-1906 / *File agus Fear Ceirde* (Poet and Craftsman)/ R.I.P. He was a poet and long-time resident of Oughterard Workhouse who received attention from Pádraig mac Piarais (Pádraig Pearce, one of the executed leaders of the Easter Rising) who campaigned for his welfare.³³

³² <https://www.oughterardheritage.org/content/category/place/kilcummin-cemetery-mapping-project> [Accessed: August 2025].

³³ <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000615169> [Accessed: August 2025].

4.4.2 Archaeology in the Vicinity of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard

The holy well of St. Cummin (ref. no) is located c.280 m south west of the church. It is located in grazed pasture with a mature beech tree growing adjacent to it (Plate 41). It is defined by a circular arrangement of uncut limestone (**Error! Reference source not found.**, Plate 43, Plate 43). The well is accessed from the road by formal steps and a pedestrian gate (Plate 44). The pattern day of the 15 of October is inscribed on a piece of modern stonework nearby.

In the wider landscape, a ringfort (Recorded Monument GA054-033----) is recorded as an enclosure on the historical First Edition 6-inch OS map located c.115m southeast of the church (see Figure 2). The ZoN for this monument traverses the southeastern corner of the graveyard. Early medieval ecclesiastical sites were not designed to be isolated foundations, often located close to focal points of secular settlement (Stout 2000, 84). Stout (1997, 113-4) has argued that univallate ringforts belonged to non-noble classes (*ócaire* and *bóaire*, “cattle minders”). Conversely, high-status ringforts were seldom found close to communication routes where ecclesiastical centres were located (Stout 2000, 99). This indicates a possible inter-dependent relationship between the two sites, with both providing physical resources for the other, in addition to the monastic establishment gifting patronage and political protection and fulfilling spiritual needs (Stout 2000, 95; Simms 1986).

4.5 Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage includes archaeology, architectural heritage, folklore and history.³⁴ Archaeology and architectural heritage together comprise ‘tangible heritage’, while folklore and history as well as mythology, placenames, language, literature, poetry, musical traditions, traditional crafts and skills are considered ‘intangible heritage’.

Intangible cultural heritage is intrinsic to understanding the significance of sites such as Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. There is a rich repository of folklore related to the graveyard and nearby well in the IFC Schools’ Collection (Appendix 1).

The church is believed to be associated with St Cuimín (St Cummin) of the Uí Amolngada of North Mayo, which gave its name to the civil parish Kilcummin. A holy well (Recorded Monument GA054-044----) associated with St Cummin is located c.280m west of the church, which may have been located in proximity to the original ecclesiastical enclosure. The well is stone-lined, circular and open (Plate

³⁴ Under Annex IV(4) of amended EIA Directive 2014/52/EU, as interpreted in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 2022 (Section 3, 32).

42–Plate 44), however, there is no extant holy tree, a common feature of sacred wells in Ireland.³⁵ This well was traditionally visited on the fifteenth of October, and oral history states that attempts were made to block the well in the mid-nineteenth century; however, the two men employed to block the well died the following morning. Another story describes how the landowner tried to block the well but attempts were thwarted and those involved became blind.³⁶ Another folk account recounted that a man's blindness was cured after a night of prayer at the well.³⁷ There is a broad tradition of healing in relation to holy wells in Ireland. St Brigid is particularly associated with eye cures at wells, due to a tale of her eye being miraculously damaged to prevent her marriage. Her eye was subsequently healed when she took the veil (Connolly 1989, 18). The discovery of a stone artefact, decorated with a Roman oculist's stamp in Golden, County Tipperary in 1842, suggests the presence of a Hiberno-Roman curative cult for eye conditions (Daffy 2002, 8). There are two other designated holy wells within Oughterard (RMP GA054-015---- and GA054-031----). It has been suggested that the presence of holy wells may have influenced the location of certain monastic sites³⁸ suggesting a possible pre-Christian importance.

A potential link with the pre-Christian/early Christian era of the well, church and the surrounding landscape is the name of the adjacent townland of Billymore/Carrowantober, situated directly south of the holy well.

This townland's name hints at a very ancient past. The ancient Irish didn't build temples to their Gods like other cultures but instead treated nature as a temple. Trees were the oldest living things and were treated as sources of great wisdom. Fairy Thorns and Rag Trees were considered to be frequently visited by beings of the Otherworld. Mass Bushes served as locations for sermons and Monument Trees as the location for weddings, royal inaugurations, seasonal festivities and other social events. As sacred trees were often planted near or connected with holy wells it is interesting that Billymore is also known as Carrowntobar (Ceathrú an Tobair – 'Quarter of the well'). The presence of both a sacred tree and a holy well (most likely St. Cummins well now located in Lemonfield) in such close proximity could indicate that the area was of great significance to the ancient inhabitants of the region, serving various religious and ritualistic needs.³⁹

³⁵ <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Holy-Wells-of-Ireland.pdf> [Accessed: August 2025].

³⁶

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609668?HighlightText=Oughterard&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga> [Accessed: August 2025].

³⁷ <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609666/4626796> [Accessed: August 2025].

³⁸ <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Holy-Wells-of-Ireland.pdf> [Accessed: August 2025].

³⁹ https://www.oughterardheritage.org/content/place/townlands_of_oughterard/town_land_-_quick_reference/billymore_carrowntobar [Accessed: August 2025].

Sacred use of features in the landscape such as holy well and tree, may have influenced the choice of site for the church.

4.5.1 Ritual

Kilcummin Graveyard is the main plot for local funerals and so the ritual association with the site is very much to the present day. Mass is held at the graveyard annually on the last Sunday of July, known as Garland Sunday. This coincides with the pre-Christian festival of *Domhnach Crom Dubh* (a.k.a. *Crom Cruach*, a pre-Christian deity) and the festival of Lughnasa, a festival of assembly strongly linked with Croagh Patrick in Co. Mayo which finds modern expression in Co. Galway in the festival of the Galway Races. There is a tradition in the western lands to set the potatoes on St. Patrick's Day and have the first dig at the time of the Galway Races, which coincides with Garland Sunday. There is no known pattern ritual other than mass associated with the church and graveyard.

4.6 Ecology

A full ecology report is included in Appendix 5. To summarise, the habitats identified at Kilcummin Church and Graveyard are dry meadows (Ireland's most endangered habitat), amenity grassland, built land, mature trees, mature hedgerow, artificial surfaces and stone walls. All of these provide habitat for small mammals, birds, insects and plants.

Regarding bats as protected species, the masonry of the church which is clad in ivy is considered to have moderate roost potential, however, not as a maternity roost. No bats were observed exiting the structure and very low occasional activity was reported during the survey (detailed in section 3.2 of the Ecology Report in Appendix 5).

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan provides useful guidance including to community groups for actions for pollinators and it is recommended that the OCHG familiarise themselves with this document.

4.6.1 Recommendations

It is a policy aim of the CMP to ensure that all native flora and fauna are protected, and the landowners should be supported in such efforts. An ecology survey has been carried out, and the following biodiversity actions are recommended:

- Restricting vegetation trimming to outside the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August)
- The addition of raised earthen mounds are also recommended with NMS approval to promote pollinator habitat (solitary bees etc.) and the pollinator friendly mowing regime.
- Bat boxes to be placed in trees and other suitable locations to increase available roosting for bats.

- Bird boxes to be placed in trees to increase the nesting potential for crevice nesting birds such as the blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and great tit (*Parus major*).
- Any dead wood in graveyard to be left *in situ* to support habitats for fungi and invertebrates.
- Fill gaps in treeline of graveyard with native hedgerow species such as hawthorn, blackthorn and furze to create wildlife corridors and increase the foraging and nesting potential for small mammals and birds. Schemes such as 'Trees on the Land'⁴⁰ provide trees free of charge to community projects.
- Convert grassy margins in historic graveyard to flower-rich margins to support insects (including pollinators), which will support mammal and bird populations. For example, grassy verges can be managed as a wildflower patch, while shade-tolerant flowering species such as foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) and bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) can be planted near hedgerows and walls.
- Suitable groundcover comprising ivy and native species should be encouraged and maintained in the graveyard to counter the effects of erosion and/or subsidence due to climate change and severe weather, provide food for pollinators and habitat for invertebrates.
- Ivy to be retained on trees and not removed. Ivy forms an integral part of woodland habitats and plays a crucial role in providing pollen, nectar and berries during winter months, while its broad evergreen leaves also supports hibernating bats and invertebrates.
- Should they be identified, protect relict plant species and control the graveyard vegetation with localised strimming at key times of year, as recommended by an ecologist. Furthermore, in light of recent research on relict species associated with medieval ecclesiastical sites (Dempsey 2021),⁴¹ the habitat survey should include an analysis of the site flora to determine if any relict species are extant.
- The use of total spectrum weed killers, herbicides, biocides and the burning of vegetation has had a detrimental impact on the local habitat. The use of weed killers, herbicides and biocides should not be used in the graveyard.
- Install educational signage that describes the local habitat and explains the biodiversity actions being undertaken at Kilcummin.

⁴⁰ Available at: <https://www.treesontheland.com/> [Accessed: 25.08.2025].

⁴¹ Available at: <http://castlestudiustrust.org/blog/2020/05/05/sowing-seeds-of-interdisciplinary-work-relict-plants-at-medieval-castles/#:~:text=%27Sowing%20the%20Seeds%20of%20Interdisciplinary,lived%20experiences%20in%20the%20garden> [Accessed: 25.08.2025].

5 Community Consultation

The purpose of community consultation is to help inform how the place is regarded by the local community and how it is used.

5.1 Methodology

A structured questionnaire was circulated to local stakeholders, including graveyard committee members and community residents. Responses were transcribed verbatim and grouped thematically. The sample included long-standing locals and recent arrivals with varying levels of site knowledge.

5.2 Church & Graveyard – Community Perceptions

a) Historical Significance

- Strong consensus that Kilcummin Church is a site of deep historical and spiritual importance.
- Multiple references to its role in local identity, burial traditions, and family heritage.
- Some respondents cited generational ties to the graveyard, with burials spanning over a century.

b) Condition & Maintenance

- General satisfaction with current maintenance, though some noted overgrowth and stone instability.
- Requests for improved signage, discreet lighting, and better access for elderly visitors.
- Concerns about erosion and water ingress near boundary walls.

c) Associated Holy Well – Awareness & Attitudes

Sparse Knowledge

- Majority of respondents were unaware of the well's location, history, or significance.
- Some confusion between Kilcummin's well and other regional wells (e.g., St. Annagh's).
- Only one respondent recalled childhood visits to the well, describing it as "a place of quiet blessing."

Conservation Potential

- Despite low awareness, several respondents expressed interest in restoring or interpreting the well.
- Suggestions included discreet signage, oral history collection, and inclusion in local school heritage projects.

5.3 Recommendations

a) For Conservation Management

- Include interpretive signage for both church and well, with QR codes linking to oral histories.
- Commission a short heritage induction guide for committee members and volunteers.
- Stabilize boundary walls and assess drainage near grave plots.

b) For Community Engagement

- Host a “Heritage Day” at Kilcummin Church and Graveyard with guided tours and storytelling.
- Invite older residents to share memories of the well and church for archival recording.
- Consider a school-led art or essay competition themed on the heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard.

5.4 Strategic Notes

The presence of recent committee members with limited site knowledge presents both a challenge and opportunity: targeted induction can build capacity and continuity. The holy well, though currently obscure, offers a low-cost, high-impact opportunity for community re-engagement and spiritual heritage revival.

6 Assessment of Significance

6.1 Basis of Assessment

Places of cultural significance have been described as those which “enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to the community and landscape, to the past and lived experiences” (ICOMOS Charter 2013, 1). The cultural significance of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is multi-layered and encompasses many of the values set out in the Burra Charter – aesthetic, historic, social, educational and spiritual (ICOMOS 2013, Article 1.2). The present assessment concerns the cultural significance of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, as well as considering the key elements and values of the site.

The criteria used in assessing degrees of significance include rarity, quality, integrity, cultural/historical associations and the ability to demonstrate important social or cultural phenomena.

6.2 Statement of Significance

6.2.1 Aesthetic Value

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is located atop a low rise looking northwards to Lough Corrib. The historic character of the graveyard itself has a visual appeal, as a site with standing medieval and post medieval remains.

Furthermore, the biodiversity of the site has an aesthetic appeal as an oasis for native flora and fauna, including mammals, birds, invertebrates and bats.

6.2.2 Historic Value

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is associated with the introduction of Christianity to Ireland in the early medieval period and occurs in close proximity to a number of other medieval sites. The location, heritage and setting, the role of the church, holy well, the interactions of people both in the past and the present with the site are all important attributes which add to a sense of identity and place on a local and regional level.

6.2.3 Spiritual Value

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard has been a centre of local religious worship and burial for well over a millennium. Especially as a burial ground, it is a place of spiritual value, of solace and of remembrance. The site forms an important aspect of local identity and belief systems. There is an annual mass on the last Sunday of July, also known as Garland Sunday, *Domhnach Crom Dubh* or Lughnasa. The graveyard remains in use by the local community.

6.2.4 Educational Value

Having upstanding medieval structures (albeit in ruin) offers a valuable scientific and educational resource, with demonstrable potential for new discoveries, knowledge and as a focus for community engagement that will benefit the local community, students, historians, ecologists, archaeologists, genealogists and scientists of all ages. Carrying out sub-surface analysis with GIS is also highly informative and educational opportunity.

6.2.5 Social and Economic Value

The local community have a deep attachment to Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, especially as a burial ground, as evidenced by the formation of OCHG whose initiative and concern for the monument, with support from the GCC and the Heritage Council, has motivated the compilation of this CMP. The site has the potential to become a regional attraction by presenting the opportunity for community archaeology/folklore projects and heritage related events.

7 Identifying Issues and Vulnerabilities

This section outlines the key issues and vulnerabilities of the site that have been identified through the CMP process. These are common to many places of cultural significance. Both the archaeological and historic environment are the product of thousands of years of human intervention. This landscape has been altered over time as field systems, houses, farm buildings and land use developed and changed. Due to the attachment of the local community to the place, coupled with national planning, development and heritage legislation, the landscape setting of the church and graveyard has largely survived.

It is important to note that any proposed future works at or near the monument must be submitted through the S12(3) notification to the National Monuments Service. This includes actions such as vegetation removal. Other stakeholders who should be consulted include: Galway County Council Environment Section, Architectural Conservation Officer, Community Archaeologist, Heritage Officer and Biodiversity Officer.

7.1 Technical Condition Analysis of the Church Ruins

7.1.1 Introduction

Visual inspection of the mortars has shown an unusually strong and structurally competent lime mix. This suggests that the ruinous condition of the church did not occur entirely from natural causes and may instead reflect deliberate destruction—potentially during the Reformation—or physical intervention. The mortar does not appear to have failed structurally, nor does it show signs of widespread erosion consistent with environmental decay.

Despite this, the structure is under threat of spalling at the top of the walls and active deterioration due to ivy growth concentrated along the upper masonry. Ivy—whether bedded in at the top of the walls or at ground level—poses a structural risk through root action and mechanical displacement, particularly where it has penetrated joints or bedding planes of the masonry. Following vegetation management, a competent mortar coping will be required to consolidate the wall heads and prevent further loss of material. While not in imminent danger of collapse, the structure presents localised risks—particularly at wall heads—requiring exclusion zones and phased stabilisation.

The overall condition may be graded as fair, with critical deterioration concentrated at the north wall lintel which is cracked and upper masonry zones where there is a mild spalling risk.

Ground-level inspection confirms that the overall structure is not in imminent danger of collapse, but targeted conservation works are required. These include structural pointing, crack tying, and vegetation control.

In relation to the phasing of the church, the large window in the East Gable appears to be of a possibly earlier form. Its slight eccentricity from the main gable suggests that an alteration may have occurred, raising the possibility that an earlier church of slightly narrower span may exist. The South transept is not tied into the masonry which suggests that it is a later addition, and the different style of the carved masonry window would support this hypothesis.

As a result, it will be important during conservation works to carefully examine and test mortars to identify inconsistencies between the East gable and other areas of the church. Mortar sampling should be undertaken in various areas to determine aggregate distribution and composition, which may help confirm the presence of an earlier phase or sequence of interventions.

7.1.2 Access and Scaffolding

Access to the church ruins shall be facilitated via pathways no greater than 1 metre in width. These shall be installed during the contract works using Terram 1000-gauge geotextile laid directly onto the prepared ground surface, followed by a compacted layer of clean hardcore in accordance with Clause 802 of the Specification for Highway Works. A PVC-reinforced grass surfacing system shall then be laid to provide a durable, low-visual-impact finish suitable for long-term visitor access.

The reinforced grass system shall be selected to ensure adequate load-bearing capacity for scaffold erection and occasional maintenance traffic, while maintaining permeability and visual compatibility with the surrounding heritage landscape. Installation shall follow manufacturer specifications and be subject to approval by the GCC Conservation Officer and the NMS.

Any large boulders or obstructions encountered during enabling works shall be removed under archaeological supervision, following a licensed excavation protocol approved by the NMS.

Scaffolding shall be erected only on the prepared hardcore base and shall conform to current safety standards. All scaffold components shall be delivered manually or via tracked plant, subject to ground conditions and conservation constraints. No mechanical excavation or intrusive anchoring shall be permitted within the monument footprint.

All access and scaffolding works shall be carried out in accordance with the specifications outlined in this chapter and shall be subject to review by the project archaeologist, GCC Conservation Officer, and the NMS prior to commencement.

7.1.3 Ivy Treatment (Phase 1 Enabling Works)

As part of Phase 1 enabling works, ivy growth across the church structure will be surface trimmed to masonry level across all elevations. This will facilitate access for inspection and conservation while retaining ecological safeguards. Full ivy removal will be undertaken in the East Gable and north wall, which are subject to masonry works under Phase 1 proper.

In these areas, ivy will be carefully removed from coping stones and wall surfaces. Where root systems have penetrated joints, stones will be lifted under supervision, roots excised, and stones re-bedded in their original positions using lime mortar. Residual root material will be treated in situ using Eco Plugs to prevent regrowth without compromising historic fabric.

Surface spraying with glyphosate may be used to treat remaining ivy stems. This will be strictly controlled in liaison with the appointed ecologist to prevent overspray and avoid damage to adjacent grassland, pollinator habitat or protected fauna.

Remaining elevations will be addressed under Phase 2, following completion of structural and ecological works in the East Gable and north wall.

Once treatment and parapet works are complete, the East Gable may be protected until Phase 2 as shown in Sketch D (in the Appendix 4). Ivy removal shall follow ecological best practice, with root excision, in situ treatment using Eco Plugs or copper pipe insertion, and controlled glyphosate application under ecologist supervision.

7.1.4 Essential Repairs to the Lintel on the North Wall

The medieval limestone lintel on the north wall is severely deteriorated and at risk of collapse. Although it carries minimal structural loads, a durable and concealed repair is required.

Prior to commencement, the lintel shall be propped using 3 no. 100mm × 75mm timbers with a 225mm × 50mm head to prevent displacement during drilling; refer to Sketch C for detail (Appendix 4).

Three 12 mm diameter threaded rods shall be tapped, fitted and welded into a 5mm thick × 150mm wide stainless-steel plate positioned beneath the lintel. These fixings are mechanically secured without resin and grouted in lime using a colour-matched lime-based repair mortar.

The stainless-steel plate will be concealed below with a lime-based repair mortar reinforced with stainless-steel mesh. Above, bolt heads and washers will be covered with a lime-based mortar flaunching (NHL 3.5), designed to shed water and protect the lintel from future deterioration.

Micro-cracks will be grouted using Masons Mortar, a proprietary non-shrink nano grout, applied via syringe.

7.1.5 Masonry Defects and Pointing Strategy

The pointing strategy shall involve doing as little as possible and as much as is necessary. The original pointing is in good condition—surprisingly competent for a building of this type and age—and carries important information regarding the dating and phasing of the structure.

However, significant mortar loss has occurred at the top of the wall due to continued exposure. This condition is addressed above and will be treated as part of the structural repair strategy.

During works in each phase, regular mortar sample testing shall be undertaken. Samples will be analysed in a laboratory to determine constituent materials, lime-to-aggregate ratio, and the type and distribution of aggregate. The mortar appears to be well carbonated; however, carbonation testing and thin-section analysis will also be carried out. Mortar typology appears to be consistent across the building, but any changes or weak areas will be recorded during works.

Once all samples are complete, results shall be carefully recorded on drawings, and a comparative analysis undertaken to identify any statistical evidence that may inform phasing.

During inspection, surface loss of mortar to a depth of approximately 50mm may be tolerated. Structural pointing shall only be considered where significant bedding mortar is missing, and structural integrity is compromised. The predicted extent of pointing is limited to approximately 5% of the total area across both the internal and external faces of the wall.

Pointing shall be carried out using an NHL 3.5 mortar consisting of Cecil lime mixed with Wexford sand or similar, incorporating a 3–5 mm grit. Pinning stones shall be used where necessary to match the texture and aggregate distribution of the original mortar.

Sample panels shall be prepared for approval by the Conservation Officer and the NMS prior to commencement of works. Care shall be taken to match the colour and texture of the original mortar throughout.

All works shall be executed by competent masons with demonstrable experience in historic fabric conservation.

7.1.6 Phasing Strategy

A phased approach is required due to a number of constraints affecting the execution of conservation-standard repairs. The phases are described in more detail in Table 4 below. The first constraint is extensive ivy coverage across the ruin. This will be removed during Phase 1 to allow full inspection, with only part of the building completed initially, as shown on Sketches A and B (Appendix 4). This sequencing allows concealed areas to be properly assessed before intervention.

Ecological considerations also inform the phasing. Works are scheduled to commence after the bird and bat breeding season, and by addressing half the building at a time, habitat continuity is maintained under the direction of a qualified ecologist. This approach preserves options for wildlife while enabling targeted conservation.

The phased strategy also reflects funding limits and is distributed over a two-year period, as described in Section 7.1.6.

7.1.7 Condition Monitoring and Recording Protocols

All condition observations, sample results and interventions shall be recorded via annotated drawings and photographic logs to support future monitoring and interpretation.

Once vegetation is completely removed, a revised laser scan is recommended. A preliminary laser scan has been carried out as part of this CMP process.

7.2 Preliminary Budget

Table 4. Schedule of recommended stabilisation works to Kilcummin Church (Sketches available in Appendix 4).

Phase 1 A Lintel repair and essential works to the North Wall			
1.1	Preliminaries		€ 2,000.00
1.2	Lintel repair		€ 3,800.00
1.3	Scaffolding Phase 1A area		€ 3,500.00
1.4	Preliminary Ivy treatment		€ 1,200.00
1.5	Masonry rebuilding and grouting wall tops	750	€ 4,200.00
	Sub total		€ 14,700.00
	VAT		€ 1,984.50

Supervision	€ 3,000.00
PSDP	€ 1,500.00
Archaeological	€ 1,500.00
Ecologist	€ 1,000.00
VAT	€ 1,610.00

Total Budget phase 1 A (Heritage Council funding) Year 1

€ 25,294.50

Phase 1 B		Green area on Sketch A	
1.6	Preliminaries		€ 5,000.00
1.7	Scaffolding gable		€ 6,900.00
1.8	Archaeologist and contractor removing boulders		€ 3,500.00
1.9	Terram 1000 and average 150 hardcore		€ 5,600.00
1.1	Reinforced pvc pathway topsoil and seeding	150 sq. m	60 €5,600.00
1.11	Levelling interior of church with topsoil	125 sq. m	15 € 1,875.00
1.12	Seeding		€ 500.00
1.13	Hop up		€ 1,500.00
1.14	Trimming Ivy		€ 1,200.00
1.15	Deep pointing	45	€ 8,750.00
1.16	Protection		€ 2,500.00
1.17	Ecology bat boxes etc		€ 3,200.00
1.18	Masonry rebuilding and grouting wall tops to gable to gable		€ 11,500.00
			€ 57,625.00
	VAT		€ 7,779.38

Supervision	€ 8,643.75
PSDP	€ 1,000.00
Archaeological	€ 2,200.00
Ecologist	€ 1,500.00
VAT	€ 3,069.06

CMF FUNDING YEAR 1

€ 81,817.19

Phase 2	Orange area on Sketch A and well
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1.0.	Preliminaries	€8,000.00
1.1.	Archaeologist supervising well	€1,200.00
1.2.	Minor clearing to well and signage	€6,000.00
1.3.	Repairs to memorial	€9,000.00
1.4	Scaffolding Phase 1 area	€8,900.00
1.5	Treat phase 1	€1,500.00
1.6	Masonry rebuilding and grouting wall tops	€12,000.00
1.7	Deep pointing	€6,000.00
1.8	Protection	€2,500.00
1.9	Interpretation and signage	€8,000.00
		€63,100.00
	VAT	€8,518.50

Supervision	€8,000.00
PSDP	€2,200.00
Archaeological	€2,800.00
Ecologist	€1,000.00
VAT	€3,220.00

CMF FUNDING YEAR 2

€88,838.50

7.3 Knowledge and Information

There are significant gaps in our understanding of the historical and archaeological development of the site. While not essential for conservation work, the site would benefit from geophysical survey and other non-intrusive archaeological investigations to reveal if other structures exist below the surface. Geophysical surveys can also be used to help determine use-history of an area. While historical research was carried out as part of this CMP process further archival/historical work could be carried out to learn more about the church and possible ecclesiastical complex.

7.4 Maintenance

The OCHG are actively engaged in raising awareness of the significance of the site locally and in ensuring the site does not suffer loss of any historic fabric; however, the management of the graveyard is under the control of GCC. The majority of maintenance works are undertaken through a Community Employment scheme which is managed from the local community centre.

7.5 Current Use

Kilcummin Church offers a sense of tranquillity and has spiritual, recreational and educational value for visitors and as a destination for leisurely strolls and exploration of the grounds which could be enhanced through the appropriate care and conservation of its archaeological, natural and historic attributes. The site is still in use as a burial ground and there is an annual mass on Garland Sunday (the last Sunday of July). The ongoing use of the historic graveyard for burial has the potential to disturb archaeological remains and it is recommended that this be discussed by the community especially for the portion of the graveyard which is outlined in the First Edition OS map (see Figure 2).

Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is regularly visited by members of the local community and other visitors, and access for people with restricted mobility and disabilities is acceptable. Access from the N59—a busy road—is via a set of gates and the site is traversed by a tarmacadamed roadway leading to the back of the graveyard. New pathways are indicated on Sketch A and B (Appendix 4).

7.6 Climate Change and Sustainability

The standing remains of Kilcummin medieval church, as well as architectural fragments and burials are vulnerable to climate change related events such as storm damage, heavy and intense rainfall, flooding and windthrow. This is the primary concern of the OCHG. For instance, extreme precipitation may result in surface erosion and weathering and collapse of the structure and loss of fabric. Hotter summers with prolonged drought conditions may cause increased thermal weathering and risk of fires, changing burial-preservation conditions, as well as accelerated deterioration and desiccation of organics.

Studies of the climate record in Ireland clearly show that the long-term prevailing weather conditions (i.e. the climate) are changing (Dwyer 2012). The late twentieth century has been characterised by an upward trend in temperatures, resulting in warmer and wetter winters, and hotter, drier summers, accompanied by an increase in extreme weather events. This pattern is likely to continue (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) 2013, 18; Nolan 2015). In 2019, in response to the climate change crisis, the DCHG (now DHLGH), developed a *Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate*

*Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan.*⁴² The key objectives of the adaption strategy and accompanying action plan are to build adaptive capacity within the sector and reduce the vulnerability of built and archaeological heritage to climate change.

The direct effects of climate change on built and archaeological heritage may be immediate or cumulative – damage from catastrophic events such as storms and floods are likely to increase at the same time as slow-onset environmental mechanisms (DCHG 2013, 20). For example, Storm Gert brought extreme rainfall to County Donegal in 2017, which resulted in flash flooding and landslides that caused severe damage to buildings, including Buncrana Castle Bridge, a Protected Structure.⁴³

The overall view of the CMP team is that the church structure, once stabilised as recommended in this CMP, will be resilient to the effects of climate change due to the relatively robust mortars. A 10-year review should take place to reevaluate the performance of the ruined church.

⁴² Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/75639/a0ad0e1d-339c-4e11-bc48-07b4f082b58f.pdf#page=null> [Accessed: 08 08 2025].

⁴³ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/over-300-parts-of-donegal-road-network-damaged-by-floods-1.3201492> [Accessed: 12 08 2025].

8 Vision for the Future: Kilcummin Sacred Heritage Initiative

8.1 Overview

Kilcummin Church, graveyard, and holy well St Cummins Well(*Tobar Cuimín*) form a layered sacred landscape in Oughterard, County Galway. This CMP initiative, while focussed on the church does mention the well as the two are inextricably linked. The CMP, envisions a multi-phase programme to conserve, interpret, and activate the site as a living heritage destination—anchored in best-practice conservation, ecological stewardship, community engagement, and transparent governance. The site’s emotional, spiritual, and historical significance is reinforced by oral tradition, pilgrimage customs, and biodiversity value.

8.2 Strategic Objectives

1. Conservation and Stabilisation

- Deliver a two-year capital works programme to stabilise the medieval church ruin, treat invasive vegetation, and carry out protective pointing and capping.
- Repair vulnerable structural elements including the north wall lintel, and restore damaged monuments and railings.
- Improve drainage near boundary walls and grave plots to mitigate erosion and water ingress.
- Adopt a CMP framework to guide statutory compliance and long-term care.

2. Interpretation and Public Understanding

- Develop a site-wide interpretation scheme integrating the church, graveyard, and St Cummins Well(*Tobar Cuimín*) into a coherent narrative.
- Install discreet signage with QR-linked digital resources, clarifying site features and distinguishing Kilcummin’s holy well from regional variants. Consider professional heritage interpretation e.g. Abartha Heritage audio guides
- Record and archive oral histories including healing motifs, pilgrimage rituals, and sacred taboos associated with the well.
- Commission a heritage induction guide for committee members and volunteers to ensure continuity and informed stewardship.

3. Ecological Protection and Biodiversity Enhancement

- Implement ecological recommendations from the Ecology report (see Appendix 5), including protection of bat roosts, breeding bird habitats and native flora.
- Preserve dry meadows, hedgerows and mature trees, ensuring all conservation works are habitat-sensitive and compliant with Natura 2000 designations (Lough Corrib SAC and SPA).
- Integrate biodiversity actions from the Galway Heritage Plan, including planting schemes for nocturnal pollinators and spiritually resonant species.
- Monitor protected species and maintain ecological records in collaboration with local and national databases.

4. Community Activation and Events

- Improve access for all visitors, including elderly and mobility-impaired individuals as shown on Sketch A and B (Appendix 4).
- Schedule annual events to activate cultural memory and spiritual tradition such as: outdoor masses and seasonal rituals, heritage plays and storytelling sessions, community picnics and guided tours, school-led art and essay competitions themed on heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, “Heritage Day” events with archival displays and intergenerational storytelling.

5. Pilgrimage and Ancient Pathways

- Explore the pilgrimage concept and Kilcummin Church and Graveyards potential role in those by researching ancient routes and ritual movement across Connemara.
- Map and interpret historical connections using placename studies, archival sources and community memory.
- Develop reflective walking trails that honour both ancient movement and contemporary spiritual practice.
- Collaborate with tourism bodies to integrate Kilcummin Church and Graveyard into regional sacred landscape itineraries.

6. Governance and Capacity Building

- Implement structured induction and training to address committee turnover and limited historical grounding.
- Promote transparent governance and community-led stewardship.
- Clarify access rights and ownership boundaries through legal mapping and stakeholder consultation.
- Link with other community groups undertaking similar projects to share knowledge and build capacity.

7. Digital Presence and Fundraising

- OCHG has an active website and it is recommended that project updates, historical content and ecological data continue to be shared on this platform.
- Update the Storymap on the OCHG Storymap to include Kilcummin Church, graveyard and holy well.
- Launch a fundraising platform to support capital works, interpretation, and biodiversity enhancement.
- Use film, photography and social media to share stories, events and conservation progress.

8. Research and Documentation

- Commission further research into the site's pre-Christian use and transition to monastic settlement.
- Digitally transcribe and translate key folklore contained in www.duchas.ie for local archives and interpretive displays.
- Preserve burial records, architectural documentation and contemporary testimonies.
- Disseminate findings through exhibitions, publications and digital media.

8.3 SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Deep emotional and spiritual connection among local families
- Rich archaeological and ecological value, including protected species and habitats
- Existing community interest and volunteer engagement
- Scenic location with views toward Lough Corrib

Weaknesses

- Overgrowth, erosion and structural vulnerability
- Committee turnover and lack of historical continuity
- Confusion around site features and access rights

Opportunities

- Community Monuments Fund (CMF) or Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme funding and alignment with Galway Heritage Plan actions
- School-led heritage projects and oral history collection
- Pilgrimage route development based on ancient pathways
- Biodiversity enhancement through habitat-sensitive planting
- Community events to reactivate cultural memory
- Limited awareness of St Cummins Well (*Tobar Cuimín*) and its significance identified during the CMP is now being addressed and a Holy Wells Audit is currently underway by Zena Hctor and Marie Mannion

Threats

- Risk of over-intervention or loss of spiritual character
- Ecological degradation if unmanaged
- Vandalism or inappropriate use of sacred space
- Disengagement due to lack of consultation or transparency

8.4 Implementation Timeline

Year 1

- Initiate capital works and ecological monitoring
- Launch oral history and school engagement projects
- Begin interpretation planning and pilgrimage route research
- Improve access see Sketch A and B (Appendix 4) and signage infrastructure

Year 2

- Complete monument and railing restoration
- Activate event programme and pilgrimage linkages
- Finalise biodiversity planting schemes and governance protocols

Year 3

- Install interpretive materials and digital platforms

8.5 Legacy and Impact

This initiative will secure the long-term conservation of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard's sacred and ecological and cultural heritage, foster community ownership, and establish the site as a model for integrated heritage activation. It will honour the memory of generations past while creating space for contemporary reflection, education, biodiversity and celebration.

9 Conservation and Management Policies

9.1 Philosophy of Conservation

An overarching framework for identifying, conserving and managing the significance and setting of heritage sites and landscapes is essential. ICOMOS guidance sets out the internationally recognised best practice principles for cultural heritage conservation. The primary aim of such conservation guidance is to support quality decision-making, with the objective of creating a sustainable, clear and transparent management system for all aspects of the historic environment. The Burra Charter advocates “a cautious approach to change: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained” (ICOMOS 2013, 1).

International best practice in heritage conservation promotes collaborative approaches in the management and conservation of heritage sites and landscapes. An agreed framework identifies the baseline conditions of the site, sets out proposed aims and actions, and a plan for future measures to conserve and protect the heritage assets identified. This approach also helps ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to input into the process and are informed of the part they may play in the site’s conservation.

9.2 Management of the Site

Kilcummin Graveyard is in the ownership and stewardship of GCC. The site is maintained through a Community Employment scheme run through the local community centre. There is presently, however, no dedicated framework or plan for the management of the structure of the church and safeguarding it to prevent loss of historic fabric/masonry collapse. This CMP sets out to provide the necessary guidance to allow for the appropriate conservation management of the church and its conservation. OCHG are concerned about the stability of the masonry and in collaboration with GCC have undertaken this CMP process to plan well-informed interventions for the conservation of the structure. Current members of the OCHG are: Mary Kyne, Antoinette Lydon, Geraldine Bresnihan (Finance), Jack Connolly, Bill Daly, Deirdre Forde, Leslie Lyons and Pat Mc Donagh.

9.3 General Conservation Policies

Conservation policies are derived from the significance appraisal and identification of key vulnerabilities, as well as from consultation and collaboration during the preparation of the CMP. These policies are not intended to cast judgement on the maintenance and management of the site to date, but rather are intended to represent a vision for how Kilcummin Church and Graveyard can

be preserved long-term and enhanced into the future. Some policies will necessitate the express cooperation between the parish of Kilcummin, the NMS of the DHLGH and GCC.

The following overarching policies have been identified for the church and graveyard:

1. **Protection** – to ensure that conservation is paramount in the preservation of all aspects of the archaeological, architectural, natural and intangible cultural heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard.
2. **Conservation, Management and Maintenance** – to ensure the archaeological, architectural, natural and intangible cultural significance of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. is retained and protected in accordance with international best practice with regard to any intervention, conservation and/or stabilisation works at the site.
3. **Interpretation, Research and Education** – to foster appreciation and promote the significance of the church, graveyard, holy well, standing archaeological monuments and subsurface remains. To promote research that will add to and enhance existing knowledge about the archaeology, history, folklore and natural heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. and its surrounding landscape.

9.4 Overarching Policies

9.4.1 Policy 1: Protection

To ensure that conservation is paramount in the preservation of all aspects of the archaeological, architectural, natural and intangible cultural heritage at Kilcummin Church and Graveyard.

Recommended actions to be implemented for Policy 1:

- Action 1. Encourage continued collaboration between key stakeholders to ensure the protection and preservation of the site.
- Action 2. Ensure that information on the impact of climate change on the structural remains, burials, subsurface archaeological remains and natural heritage is as widely understood, communicated and appreciated as far as possible. Ensure that phased conservation work is carried out over the next two years subject to funding. This includes a safe access corridor to the church using reinforced grass.
- Action 3. Continue to provide the OCHG, the parish of Kilcummin and GCC with best-practice advice and practical guidance in relation to the protection of the church and graveyard, other standing remains and subsurface archaeological remains.

9.4.2 Policy 2: Conservation, Management and Maintenance

To ensure the archaeological, architectural, natural and intangible cultural significance of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is retained and protected in accordance with international best practice with regard to any intervention, conservation and/or stabilisation works at the site.

Recommended actions to be implemented for Policy 2:

- Action 1. Establish a ten-year programme for the effective maintenance and conservation of the site with consolidation works occurring over the first two years, with appropriate

- review by OCHG, the parish of Kilcummin, the NMS, GCC and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.
- Action 2. Support OCHG, the parish of Kilcummin, the NMS and GCC in the preparation and development of a maintenance plan for Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, to include the graveyard. This should ensure that conservation, stabilisation and maintenance works, as well as any associated impacts, are controlled and minimised in accordance with best practice.
- Action 3. Initiate consultations between OCHG, the parish of Kilcummin, the NMS, NMI and GCC Heritage Officer to formulate an appropriate policy for burial within the SMR ZoN of the graveyard going forward.
- Action 4. Devise a strategy and programme for the conservation and maintenance works with key stakeholders. This should be informed by the recommendations set out in the CMP and the appendices.
- Action 5. Ensure that all intervention, conservation, and stabilisation works are in accordance with best international practice.
- Action 6. Ensure that any physical conservation, stabilisation, and maintenance works are undertaken with the requisite licences, assessments, reports, approvals and recommendations in place and in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.
- Action 7. Ensure that archaeological surveys and/or conservation works are undertaken by suitably qualified practitioners with the requisite skills, experience and consent, as appropriate, to conduct such works.
- Action 8. Ensure that all cultural heritage statutory obligations in relation to conservation and maintenance works are observed and understood.⁴⁴
- Action 9. Maintain a log of conservation works, as well as any maintenance and repairs.
- Action 10. Manage the site to enhance and improve its biodiversity value.
- Action 11. Only cut back vegetation growth and hedgerows outside of the nesting season, under the supervision of a specialist and ensure that any impacts to local fauna are minimised.
- Action 12. Ensure that appropriate care and protection is afforded to the vulnerability of the local habitat.
- Action 13. Conserve and protect native flora and fauna species through the preparation of a habitat survey and bat survey for the site.
- Action 14. Support, encourage and protect the biodiversity within the graveyard enclosure. When planting, use pollinator friendly species.
- Action 15. Ensure that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into any proposals for conservation and/or maintenance works to ensure that activities do not have adverse impacts on the local flora and fauna.
- Action 16. Explore all available funding opportunities to enable conservation, repair, stabilisation and/or maintenance works to be carried out, as appropriate.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 6 for statutory requirements with respect to Recorded Monuments.

Action 17. Promote a Leave No Trace principle at the site.

9.4.3 Policy 3: Interpretation, Research and Education

To foster appreciation and promote the significance of the church, graveyard, St Cummin's Well (Tobar Cuimin) and associated architectural fragments, as well as any standing archaeological monuments and subsurface remains. To promote research that will add to and enhance existing knowledge about the archaeology, history, folklore and natural heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard and its surrounding landscape.

Recommended actions to be implemented for Policy 3:

- Action 1. Provide a narrative and photographic survey of the proposed conservation works. Publish on social media with Heritage week events informing of skills and actions.
- Action 2. Obtain funding for a 3D laser scan post conservation works, or comparable reality capture technology such as photogrammetry survey, to produce a 3D model of the medieval parish church. This should be made available online to enable virtual interaction with and appreciation of the site, particularly for people with disabilities and people who might not ordinarily be able to visit the site.
- Action 3. Promote and support the use of non-invasive archaeological techniques to identify possible early-medieval, medieval and post-medieval remains. These may include LiDAR survey, geophysical survey, topographical survey, drone survey, systematic fieldwalking in suitable adjacent lands (with landowners' permission) and palaeo-environmental surveys in the blanket peat, between the site and Lough Corrib. Pursue these research methods as a means to enhance our understanding of the story and significance of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard.
- Action 4. Foster local awareness of the archaeological and heritage value of the site through the development of a community archaeology project. This should be undertaken in consultation with the GCC Community Archaeologist/Heritage Officer.
- Action 5. Ensure funding for a detailed historical analysis of the site's development by a suitably qualified early-medieval and medieval researcher with reference to the annals, church records, deeds and other primary and secondary sources.
- Action 6. Develop an oral history project that records local history, folklore and traditions concerning the Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. This could tie into other projects by the Galway County Heritage Office.⁴⁵
- Action 7. Develop a strategy and obtain funding for a historic grave marker/ historic grave slab assessment to assess their condition and devise a conservation strategy going forward for those that have collapsed.

⁴⁵ See: <https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/heritage-publications/collecting-preserving-folklore-oral-history> [Accessed: 14 08 2025].

- Action 8. Carry out an interpretation plan for the site. In advance of this, a heritage audit should be undertaken to explore the best interpretation options for the site and local area. For example, a series of QR codes could link to information about the cultural and natural heritage of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. The Heritage Council⁴⁶ and other counties such as Roscommon County Council⁴⁷ have produced guidance on heritage signage, the preparation of interpretation plans and heritage trails.
- Action 9. Ensure that findings from all studies, surveys and works are disseminated as widely as possible and in a format that respects the target audience.

With the collaborative agreement of these policies by the relevant specialists, the process of developing the CMP is completed for this phase. The implementation of the policies will be undertaken over the next ten years (2025-2035), in consultation with the NMS, GCC Heritage Officer and the relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies.

⁴⁶ Available at: https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/bored_of_boards_1mb.pdf [Accessed: 06.08.2025].

⁴⁷ Available at: <https://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/download-it/heritage-publications/telling-people-about-our-heritage-interpretation-signage-guidance-2010-pdf.pdf> [Accessed: 06.08.2025].

10 Management and Implementation Framework

10.1 Management Structure

The current management structure for Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is based on the proactive ownership of GCC as well as the management and stewardship of the OCHG. To steer the implementation of the policies set out in the CMP going forward, and facilitate the stewardship of the site, the formalisation and continued collaboration between these groups is essential.

10.2 Management Guidance

10.2.1 Funding

At the time of writing there are two major funding avenues that should be considered to assist with the future conservation, maintenance, interpretation and management of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard. These include the CMF and the Community Heritage Grant/scheme, which is provided by the DHLGH and the Heritage Council, respectively.

10.2.1.1 Community Monuments Fund

A national grant for recorded monuments with funding from Heritage Council and the NMS (DHLGH) and administered by the local authority usually via the Heritage Officer or the Architectural Conservation Officer. There are three streams of funding available:

- **Stream 1:** Up to €100,000 for capital works and repair of recorded archaeological monuments (RMP)
- **Stream 2:** Up to €30,000 for Conservation Management Plans & Specifications
- **Stream 3:** Up to €30,000 for access enhancement, interpretation or emergency conservation works

The core aims of the CMF are:

- To enable conservation works to be carried out on monuments that are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support.
- To build resilience in our monuments to withstand the effects of climate change.
- Encourage access to our monuments and improve their presentation.

The CMF provides grants for essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repair of archaeological monuments, as well as for interpretation (including virtual/online) at archaeological

monuments.⁴⁸ It is administered through GCC and the closing date for applications is usually the end of January each year – see the GCC or Galway Community Archaeology websites for up to date information.

The key objective of the ‘Adopt a Monument Scheme’, which is funded by the Heritage Council and managed by Abartha Heritage, is to assist communities to become actively involved in the conservation and interpretation of their local archaeological and cultural heritage sites.⁴⁹ The Heritage Council and Abartha Heritage provide specialist expertise, mentoring and support through the scheme to ensure ongoing maintenance and greater protection of the ‘adopted’ monument. See <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/aam> for information and updates.

10.2.1.2 Community Heritage Grant Scheme

The Heritage Council’s ‘Community Heritage Grant Scheme’ funds projects by community groups and not for profit organisations that improve the management and maintenance of heritage collections, objects, buildings and sites.⁵⁰ It is anticipated that the grant scheme will be announced in January 2026 and applications should be made via the Heritage Council’s Online Grants System.⁵¹

10.2.2 Archaeological and Historical Research

It is a policy of the Heritage Council to support further research on the church, graveyard and surrounding landscape through historical research, non-invasive archaeological techniques, and community-led archaeology initiatives as part of an agreed research agenda. These works may include:

- Further historical and documentary research to link the archaeological evidence with the historical development of the local area, particularly through the early medieval and medieval periods.
- Geophysical survey offers a non-invasive approach to assess the character and extent of subsurface archaeological features in the historic graveyard. With the permission of

⁴⁸ See: <https://www.galwaycity.ie/news/2024/community-monuments-fund-2025#:~:text=The%202025%20Community%20Monuments%20Fund%20will%20invest%20in,for%20the%20benefit%20of%20communities%20and%20the%20public>. [Accessed: 06.10.25]. Note at the time of writing the information was not available on the Galway County Council website and the Galway City Council link was used – the basic information is the same, however, there will be a different contact within the County Council.

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/A-Guide-to-the-Adopt-A-Monument-Scheme.pdf> [Accessed: 06.10.25].

⁵⁰ Available at: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/1-5-million-available-to-support-irelands-heritage-through-community-heritage-grant-scheme> The Heritage Council’s funding page can be viewed here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding> [Accessed: 06.10.25].

⁵¹ Available at: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/on-line-grants-system> [Accessed: 06.10.25].

landowners, future geophysical surveys could focus on the fields to the north of the graveyard to look for evidence of features associated with a monastic settlement.

- Palaeoenvironmental assessments should be undertaken to investigate landscape change and the human impact on the local environment and site morphology through space and time. For example, the blanket peat deposits in Lemonfield townland, to the north of the graveyard, are a suitable environment for coring.

The management of any such works would be in collaboration with the landowners/managers and key stakeholders, and support for same should be provided. It should be borne in mind that works would need to be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced personnel working under an appropriate licence and consents from the NMS where required.

10.2.3 Historic Grave Marker Recording Project

OCHG volunteers and participants of the local Community Employment scheme have recently completed the recording of graves at Kilcummin Cemetery, Oughterard, County Galway under the guidance of GCC. A new surveying technique was trialled, whereby an aerial photograph of the graveyard using drone footage was used to capture grave locations and information which was then uploaded onto software using mobile devices to pin-point grave locations. 'Survey 123' is being piloted by The Heritage Office, GCC, and encourages communities to record the information on the ground and then up-load to a central system hosted by GCC. The information is being made public, enabling visitors to access information. For further information please see OCHG Website at the following link: <https://www.oughterardheritage.org/content/category/place/kilcummin-cemetery-mapping-project>

10.2.4 Ecological Habitats

Please see section 4.6 for recommendations on how to manage biodiversity optimally.

10.2.5 Climate Change

Proactive work to protect Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, including the standing remains, subsurface burials, archaeological remains and flora and fauna from the adverse effects of climate change through advance planning should be considered. Possible actions may include:

- A risk and vulnerability assessment should be undertaken of the medieval parish church, mausolea, grave markers and architectural fragments.
- Risk registers should be produced for the archaeological and architectural heritage remains.
- The medieval parish church, mausolea, architectural fragments and grave markers should be digitally recorded and monitored on an ongoing basis.
- A disaster management plan should be commissioned by suitably qualified professionals.

- Liaise with the NMS and the NMI to enable a rapid and efficient response should human remains be exposed as a result of erosion and/or subsidence.
- Suitable groundcover comprising ivy and native species should be encouraged and maintained in the graveyard to counter the effects of erosion and/or subsidence. The use of total spectrum weed killers, herbicides, or the burning of vegetation is not encouraged.

11 Conclusion and Next Steps

The priority for the future of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard is to consolidate, maintain and protect the church and prevent any further loss of historic fabric. Foremost in the implementation of any policies of the CMP should be the consideration of the site as a place of worship, a place for burial, an archaeological site, a genealogical resource and a habitat for native flora and fauna. Continued liaison with the following stakeholders on the issues of conservation and interpretation is recommended:

- OCHG
- GCC Heritage Officer
- Galway Community Archaeologist
- GCC Architectural Heritage Officer
- GCC Biodiversity Officer
- GCC Environment Section (who manage GCC graveyards)
- The NMS
- Parish Priest of Kilcummin Church
- The NMI
- The Heritage Council
- Southgate Associates
- AMS

The implementation of the policies put forward in this plan should take place in compliance with legal requirements under the Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2021, the Planning and Development Act 2024 and other applicable legislation.

Next steps

The condition of the church ruin is a concern to the local community and GCC and without consolidation work in the short term more historic fabric will be lost. A phased approach to repairs has been recommended above in section 7.1.6. This CMP document enables the OCHG to proceed with applications for funding to initiate the repairs and consolidation work required. Various funding streams were outlined above in Section 10.2.1. It is therefore recommended that with the support of GCC Heritage Office and Environment Section that OCHG proceed in making applications for phase 1 works. Any repairs and/or prevention measures should be conservation-led and be planned and agreed with the necessary stakeholders, with permissions and professional advice obtained in advance where necessary (see Appendix 6). All works should adhere to DHLGH published guidance, specifically

The Conservation and Repair of Historic Ruins (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) 2010).⁵²

11.1 Duration of Plan

It is suggested that a ten-year timeframe for the CMP period (2025–2035) should be considered with a mid-period review to be undertaken after five years. The review structure and responsibility for undertaking same will need to be agreed between the key stakeholders in due course. This CMP provides a comparative baseline that can be used in conjunction with conservation measures and systematic monitoring to determine the effectiveness of any mitigation measures, over time.

⁵² Available at: <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/app/uploads/2019/10/Ruins-The-Conservation-and-Repair-of-Masonry-Ruins-2010.pdf> [Accessed: 17.08 2025].

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Figures



Figure 1: Location of Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, Oughterard, Co. Galway.

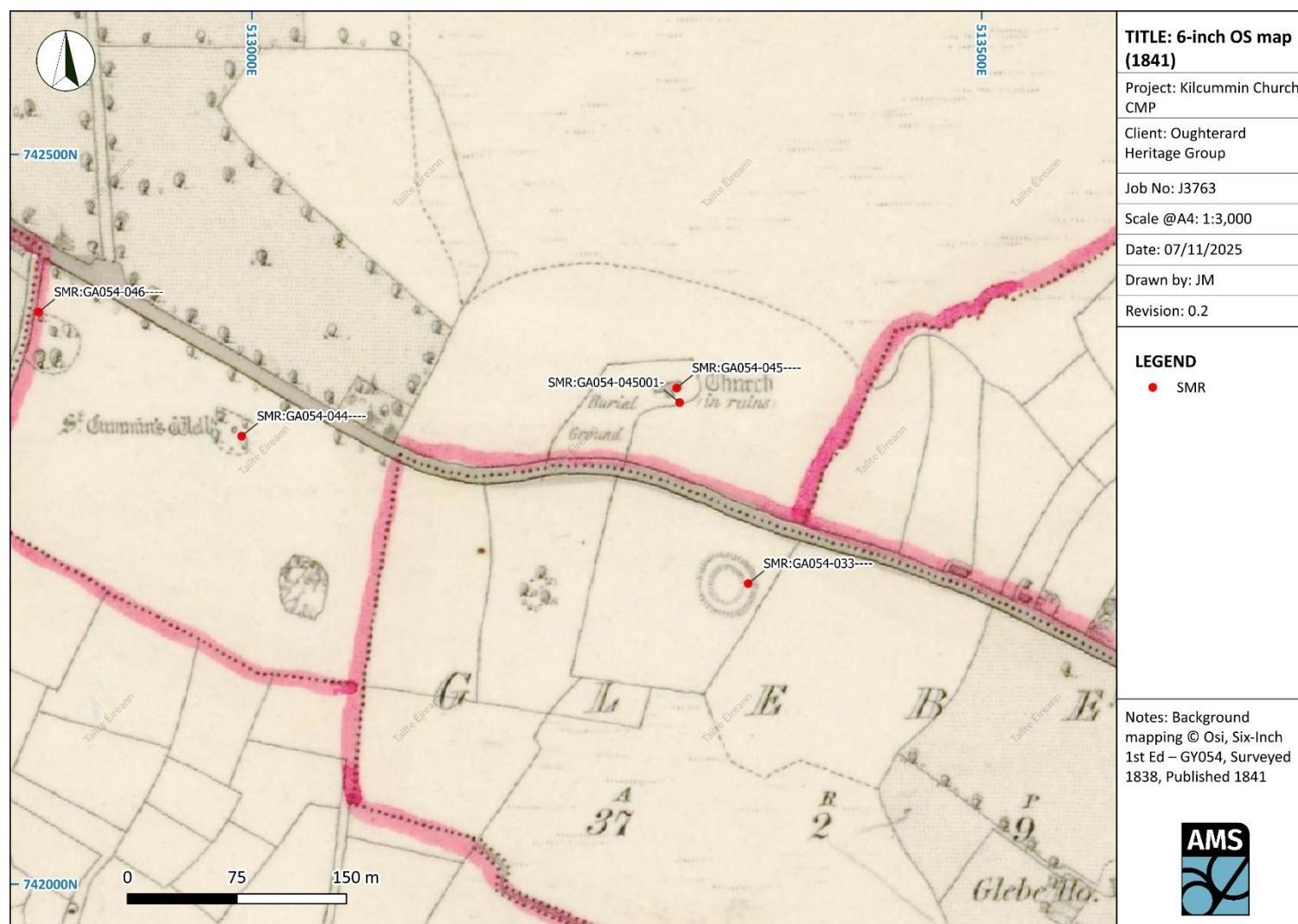


Figure 2: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, published 1841.

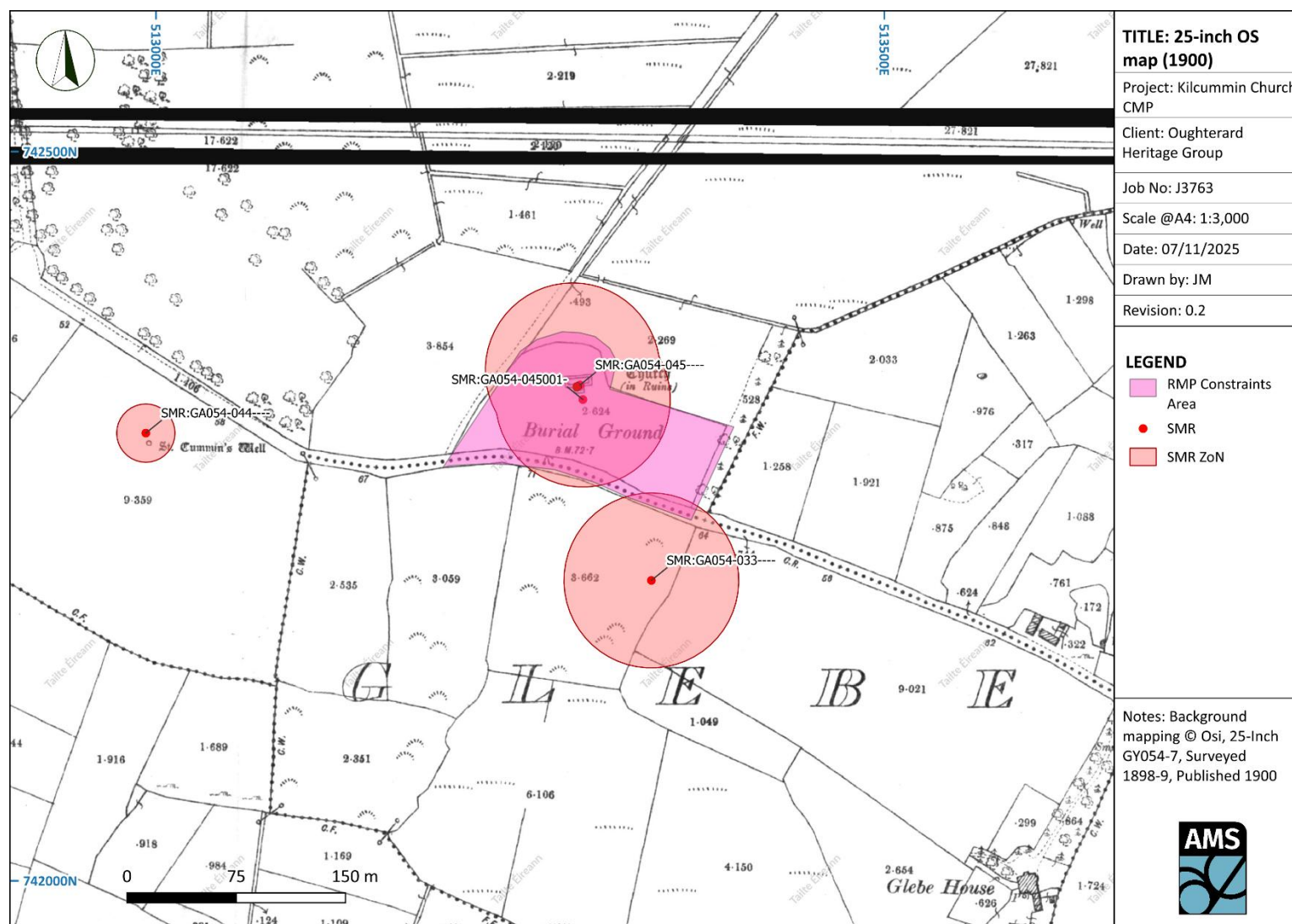


Figure 3: 25" Ordnance Survey Map, published 1900.

A historical map of the County of Mayo, Ireland, showing various towns and geographical features. The town of Kilcoman is circled in red. Other towns labeled include Horib, Downpatrick, Anagh Cambo, Moycully, Dereheile, and Gallway. The map also shows the coastline, rivers, and some fortifications.



Plates



Plate 1: Graveyard entrance pillar and dry-stone boundary wall.



Plate 2: Northern boundary wall; dry-stone wall with cow-and-calf mortared coping



Plate 3 Approach showing south transept gable access is difficult and will require clearing



Plate 4 View of east gable (right) and south transept (left), facing northwest.



Plate 5 Ridge upon which Kilcummin Church sits which drops to the east of the east gable.



Plate 6 Kilcummin cemetery to the north of Kilcummin Church



Plate 7 View of the south transept of the south elevation



Plate 8 Twin light, round-headed window with circular oversight and tri-partite carved limestone hood-moulding in the south elevation.



Plate 9 South elevation window partially blocked



Plate 10 South elevation of south transept.



Plate 11 South transept adjoining south elevation of the nave.



Plate 12 View of the east elevation of the south transept

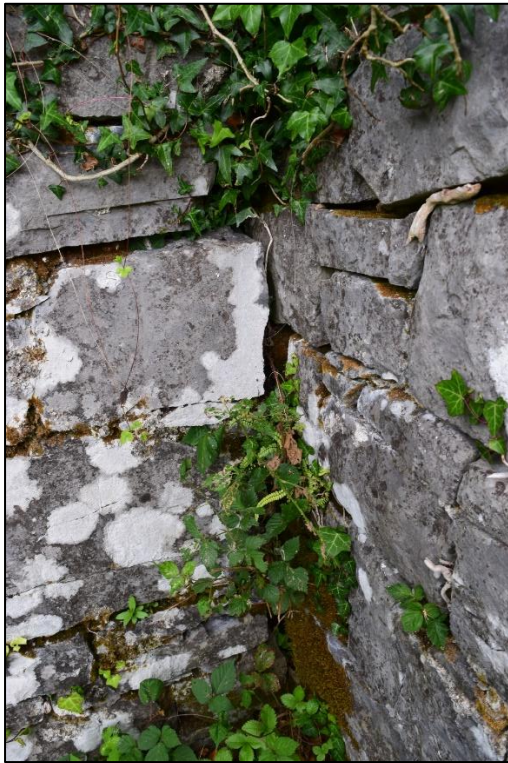


Plate 13 Masonry join of south transept with south elevation of nave showing no signs of masonry ties, suggesting the transept is a later addition.



Plate 14 South elevation showing fallen masonry



Plate 15 South elevation showing window opening



Plate 16 South elevation of the nave, east end. Window opening where window masonry has been lost.



Plate 17 View of the east elevation; note the off-centre single ogee-headed light which is centrally located when viewed from the interior. Ivy has been previously treated and is affecting wall tops and requires removal, treatment with eco plugs and pointing and grouting in phase 1



Plate 18 East elevation exterior: ogee-headed single light window



Plate 19 Mortar was noted as competent and strong; while pointing is missing, the bedding mortar is solid.



Plate 20 View of the East Gable (exterior): coping has been lost with only two pieces remaining.



Plate 21 East elevation exterior: fallen masonry, carved coping stones may be part of the architectural fragments on the ground



Plate 22 East elevation, interior of slightly off-centre ogee-headed light suggests a fourteenth century date however this may be set into earlier fabric as a later alteration. Note later remining interior lime plaster.



Plate 23 East elevation interior view with South Transept to right hand side. Note, despite being off-centre externally, the ogee-headed light is centrally located when viewed internally.



Plate 24 Tying stone in cyclopic style masonry in the northeast corner of the nave. The differing masonry style may be indicative of different phases.



Plate 25: East elevation, interior: north side of window an opening is present and low masonry projection with small socket presumably part of interior liturgical scheme.



Plate 26: East elevation, interior; ogee-headed window opening, sockets for window joinery (transoms) visible.



Plate 27: East elevation, ogee-headed window reveal with sockets for window joinery and large socket possibly for securing a window shutter closed.

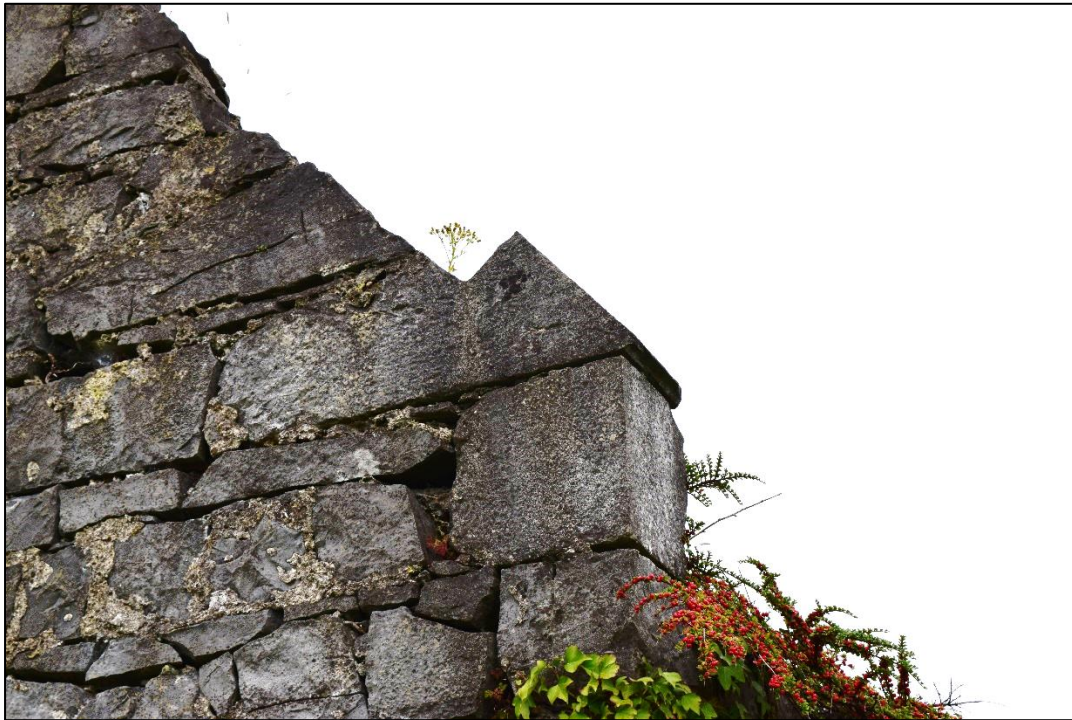


Plate 28: East elevation, northeast corner carved coping kneeler-stone remains on gable of assumed fourteenth century origin/ phase.



Plate 29: North elevation of the church.



Plate 30: North elevation, window surround has been lost. Cracked lintel requires conservative repair as per Sketch B (Appendix 4)



Plate 31: Detail of crack in lintel.



Plate 32: North elevation, interior view of missing window.



Plate 33: North elevation, a northern transept was reported in 1839 and is now no longer extant.



Plate 34: Typical wall construction with fragile tops and edges requiring consolidation



Plate 35: West elevation: The doorway which could help date the structure more accurately is gone, however, architectural fragments may still exist on the ground.



Plate 36: South elevation of nave, west end, masonry has mostly been lost. Appears to have been original point of entry according to 1839 description (see section 4.2.3).



Plate 37: West elevation of south transept

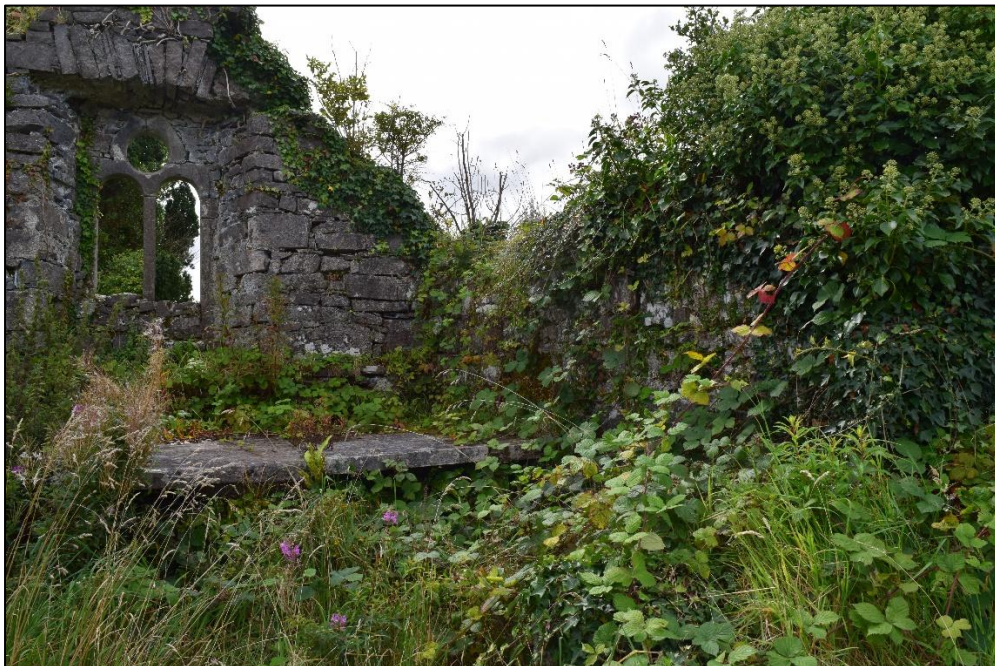


Plate 38: South transept, west elevation interior



Plate 39: Overview of the graveyard from the church facing north.



Plate 40 Memorial requires minor repairs to reinstate capping. Base of missing cross can be found on the ground ready for reinstallation. <maintenance to the railings is advised. This work is incidental to phase1 proposals



Plate 41 St. Cummin's well looking north with accompanying beech tree



Plate 42 St Cummin's well (Tobar Cuimin) is stone lined lying in a grazed pasture



Plate 43 St. Cummin's well view of back of the well



Plate 44 Access to the well is formalised with steps and a pedestrian gate



Plate 43: St. Cummin's well

Appendix 1: Samples of the Schools Folklore Collection pertaining to the churchyard and well

Lemonfield is a place where the sun shone right down on so one of the O'Flahertys - one of the tribes of Galway - tried to sow lemons in it but he failed. Ever since it is called Lemonfield and also the fields that surround it.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609605/4626161>

In the Churchyard near Oughterard the people say that every time a corpse was buried a serpent used come at night and eat it. This serpent had a beaten path up from Lough Corrib. It happened at this time that a woman died in a village called Glann. She was taken to the grave yard to be buried. After the burial her three sons drew lots to see which of them would watch the mother's grave and keep away the serpent. The lot fell on the married son but the youngest of them would not [let] him go. So he stayed himself. At about midnight he heard the whistling of the serpent coming up from Lough Corrib. It came to the grave and put down its head and was about to take up the corpse when the man hit him with his sword and nearly killed it. Then the serpent who was already dead said "Hit me again". The man then said "once is enough to hit you" for he knew that if he hit him again he would get alive again and by leaving him that way he would die. The man then got his horse and went home by a short cut to Glann. When he was at the Pucas Bridge a little white woman got up behind him on the horse and stayed there until he was nearly at home and this is why the bridge got its name. When the man went home he tied up his horse and went to bed. This man or the horse never again saw the daylight because they both died that night. Until about three years ago the blood of the serpent was to be seen on a stone on one of the windows of St Cummins Church. The stone is not there now and it is said that it must have [been] taken to Dublin.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609552/4626006>

Saint Cummin's Well is in a field near the Galway road. It was closed in by the Salvation Army in the olden days. It sprung up again in the same place. Three times it was closed and each time it sprung up again. The last time it was closed it sprung up in the grave yard which is not far from it. It flowed from the grave yard down to its right place. It got its name from the grave yard.

The people go to it on the nineteenth of October. They have different ideas about the prayers that should be said. Some go around the well fourteen times and say the stations. The most common thing is to say the stations five times in honour of the five wounds of Our Lord.

Michael Heraghty's grand mother who lived in Callnamuck long ago brought her son who was blind to the well. She stayed three days with him at the well. At the end of the three days he got his sight in one eye. Then the mother and himself made Novenas for three years and at the end of that time he got sight in the second eye. This well is supposed to be great at curing blindness.

Long ago the people used to leave money at the well. If any one could not afford that they left a garment of some kind or a pair of boots with their names on them as a token to say they were at the well. That is not done now.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609702/4626911>

There are three blessed wells around Oughterard. St Cummin's Well(Tobar Cuimin), St Michaels Well and St Cuthberts Well. St Cummin's is situated in a field down the Galway road. St Michaels is in a field near the Connemara road. The people visit them. They visit St Michael's well on the 29th of September. The people visit St Cummins Well on the 15th of October. There is a bush near each of the wells. It is said that the devil appeared in the bush beside St Cummins Well. The people bring home holy water from the well. They do not use it in the house. Once upon a time Captain O'Flaherty's servant brought in some of the holy water to use in the house. They put it down for the breakfast and it would not boil. he visit the people make is called a Station. They leave money at the well. There was a man named Tom Bolk from Oughterard who had a bad leg and he washed his foot in the well and it got better. Some time after that he was passing by the well and he threw a stone in the well and his foot got bad again.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609686/4626880>

In the parish of Ougherard there are three holy wells. St. Michael's Well, St. Cummin's Well and St. Cuthberts Well. St Cuthberts Well is in Glann and the other two are in Oughterard and are in fields.

People visit St Michaels Well on 29th of September and St Cummins Well on the 15th of October. These visits are called Stations. They go around the well seven times and drop in a stone in the well each time There is a story told of St. Cummins Well. The owner of the field in which the well is, tried to cover it up and men he had working were told by him to roll a large rock over it. They roll it along to the edge of the well but it would go no farther for them and the rock is still to be seen there. It is also said that this well cures diseases. There was an old man whose legs were very sore and he went to St Cummins Well and bathed his feet in it and he got cured. Sometime after he came back and threw a stone in the well and he got bad again.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609679/4626806>

In Wellfield, about a quarter of a mile below Oughterard there is another well called Saint Cummins. At one time they tried to stop it but they failed twice and the third time it sprang up in the graveyard and it flowed down to where it is now. The people make the stations round the well on the fifteenth of October.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609676/4626803>

People go on visits to St. Cumins well on the 15th of October. They call these visits stations. They say three Hail Marys going around the well and they fire in a stone going around to count the rounds they do. It is said a man lived in Billamore long ago who was against the Catholics and he did not like to see the people going to the well and he drowned a dog in the well and closed the well and the next morning when the man got up the dog was sitting by the fire. There were people cured of sores in the well, they put the water on the sore and after a few days it would be cured. The people always bring home a bottle of water from the well and they leave medals in the well. There are a few big trees near the well.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609672/4626801>

Long ago an atheist who owned the field tried to drain St. Cummin's well. He sent three men to shut up the well because he did not want the people to be trampling his grass. After a few days the three men got blind and they could not shut it up. Then himself got an iron chain and tied it around a dog's neck and then tied a big stone to it and threw the dog into the well. The next morning when he opened his door the dog was outside alive and well.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609668/4626798>

An English man called Flight came to live in a house near St. Cumman's Well. It was the time of the famine and he wanted the people to turn Protestants and he paid two men to close the well. They closed it and the two of them died that night. A man from Connemara was cured from blindness. He stayed a whole night praying and in the morning he was cured. He was three small fishes in the well when he was cured. The people bring some of the the water home. They leave money, broaches and buttons and all kinds of thing at the well. Certain people can see a fish in the well and others can't see it at all.

If the water in the well is brought to any house and put in a kettle or pot it will never boil.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609666/4626796>

There are three Holy wells in the Parish St. Cummins well, St. Michaels Well and the other well is down near the Ivy Gable. The Holy water used be blessed in this well by the Priests. On the 27th of September the people visit St. Michaels well. The people visit St. Cummins well on the 15th of October. They say the stations in their bare feet and they also throw seven pebbles in to the well in honour of the seven colours of the blessed Virgin. There are no certain days to visit the well near the Ivy gable. The people just go in when they are passing. It is said that the water in that well cured people who had warts. The prayers they say when they are going around the well seven time are one Our Father and seven Hail Marys. The people also throw in a coin as well as a stone. The people usually bring a bottle of the water home with them. There are trees near these wells. There are no fish in them. Mrs Callaghan told me this.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4613696/4609664/4626795>

Appendix 2: Heritage Plan 2024 – 2030: Actions, Objectives and Key Performance Indicators

Built and Archaeological Heritage

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Community Engagement			
BAH 1.1	Assist communities through the provision of advice, both on-line and in-person, to achieve their heritage projects and objectives to the standards of best heritage practice. Encourage cooperation with other communities, groups and jurisdictions, and support compliance with legislation.	To facilitate positive outcomes so that communities adopt best heritage practice, exchange knowledge, experience and cooperate with relevant heritage agencies and organisations.	The number of projects, communities and individuals supported.
BAH 1.2	Highlight and celebrate the work of the communities in built and archaeological heritage.	To raise awareness of the work of communities.	The number of projects highlighted through social media channels, iCAN and public events.
BAH 1.3	Consult and work with communities using an inclusive and collaborative approach.	To support the invaluable role of communities as stewards of built heritage throughout the county.	The annual number of communities engaged with and supported, online and/or in person.
BAH 1.4	Develop and deliver training programmes and projects in partnership with communities and other bodies, that showcase built and archaeological heritage best practice.	To showcase and promote archaeological and built heritage best practice.	The number of programmes delivered in partnership with communities and other bodies.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Community Engagement			
BAH 1.5	Organise networking events for communities, heritage professionals and stakeholders to engage and learn from each other through exhibitions, familiarisation tours, conferences, etc.	To facilitate connections between communities, heritage professionals and other stakeholders, to ensure that diverse groups have opportunities to partake in programmes, events and projects pertaining to built and archaeological heritage.	The numbers of programmes, events and projects organised.
BAH 1.6	Publicise funding opportunities and application deadlines for built and archaeological heritage projects.	To encourage and support communities in applying for funding and build capacity within our built and archaeological heritage sector.	The number of funding opportunities publicised and groups/individuals supported.
BAH 1.7	Create an awareness of existing and potential heritage citizen science projects, develop relevant survey methodology, technology and training where needed.	To promote, encourage and facilitate public participation in citizen science projects within the community, to create a better connection with and understanding of its built and archaeological heritage.	The number of citizen science events and projects promoted.
BAH 1.8	Continue to develop the heritage office projects and resources on Galway County Council digital platforms.	To maximise potential of digital platforms and technologies to disseminate heritage information and materials.	The annual total number of page views and users.
BAH 1.9	Support and/or deliver multi-disciplinary events.	To consult and work with a broad spectrum of community groups to give them a voice, to encourage and facilitate their active participation and collaboration with others.	The annual number of multi-disciplinary events.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Community Engagement			
BAH 1.10	Create awareness of European, national and regional initiatives, assist in promotion and encourage participation.	To support and promote participation in European, national and regional initiatives.	The annual number of European, national and regional initiatives supported by the Heritage Office.
BAH 1.11	Incorporate built and archaeological heritage into creative arts projects in Galway County and develop built and archaeological themed creative arts events with the community.	To increase the appeal and accessibility of built and archaeological heritage outreach events in the community.	The number of projects and outreach events incorporating music, visual art, film, performance art including dance, poetry, photography, etc.
BAH 1.12	Highlight and promote the work of the county Heritage, Biodiversity, Architectural Conservation, Climate Action, Arts, Culture, Library, and Archives services.	To raise awareness of the work being undertaken by Galway County Council.	The annual number of promotional activities online and in person.
BAH 1.13	Provide information to community groups through the Galway County Public Participation Network (PPN).	To raise awareness and knowledge of built and archaeological heritage among community groups and organisations.	The number contributions to PPN communications.
BAH 1.14	Take cognisance of Galway County Council's Scéim Teanga, in communications, actions, projects, activities, resources and communications.	To promote and encourage the use of Gaeilge as a living language.	The annual number of projects, activities and resources incorporating Gaeilge.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Education & Training			
BAH 2.1	Provide and promote local, regional and national networking events and workshops.	To facilitate interactive, community-based learning and knowledge-sharing between heritage and other community-action groups at local, regional and national level. To ensure understanding, collaboration and cooperation between community groups.	The number of events held per annum that facilitate more than one group or organisation.
BAH 2.2	Provide training in best practice, national legislation and regional initiatives and policies in relation to built and archaeological heritage and conservation through advisory engagement, site visits and workshops.	To ensure participants develop an understanding and insight into best practice and apply these when undertaking built and archaeological heritage projects so that they can become exemplars.	The number of training programmes provided.
BAH 2.3	Identify gaps in built heritage specialisms and resources and provide support through resources and training to address these gaps.	To identify and address gaps in built heritage expertise through resources and training.	Completion of training needs-gap analysis. Provide a list of competent, qualified specialists.
BAH 2.4	Continue to facilitate the development and delivery of programmes to pass on traditional building and craft skills.	To ensure that traditional skills do not die out and that those who wish to learn them can avail of tuition from competent specialists.	A list of competent specialists. The annual number of training events facilitated by the Heritage & Architectural Conservation Office.
BAH 2.5	Promote and support the Heritage in Schools programme or other educational initiatives.	To support specialist training in our built and archaeological heritage to students and educators.	The number of Galway County schools engaging with the Heritage in Schools programme and heritage experts per annum.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Research, Monitoring & Conservation			
BAH 3.1	Strengthen and sustain the knowledge base for decision makers in relation to the protection, conservation and enhancement of built and archaeological heritage.	To ensure up to date information for decision makers is available and relevant, including 'new thinking', new technologies, new findings, new policies and new legislation.	The number of relevant updates publicised and events held per annum.
BAH 3.2	Identify gaps in knowledge relating to built and archaeological heritage among decision makers and address accordingly.	To ensure informed decisions are made regarding our built and archaeological heritage.	Completion of gap analysis. The number of targeted communications to decision makers addressing these gaps.
BAH 3.3	Procure and make accessible information on heritage legislation, protected sites, Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures, etc.	To ensure that information regarding our built and archaeological heritage legislation is made accessible.	The number of relevant updates on digital media channels for Galway County Council per annum.
BAH 3.4	Develop and maintain links with researchers, educational institutions, museums, libraries and archives.	To increase accessibility to built and archaeological heritage information for all and to widen the scope for research and education.	The number of institutions engaged with per annum.
BAH 3.5	Encourage information sharing between third level institutions and built and archaeological heritage stakeholders.	To facilitate communication between educational institutions and the built and archaeological heritage stakeholders.	The number of collaborations per annum.
BAH 3.6	Digitise and make available built and archaeological heritage material to a wide and diverse audience.	To utilise established and emerging datasets and technologies to disseminate built and archaeological heritage material in open access formats to local, national and international audiences.	Annual number of users, page views and downloads using data analytics.
BAH 3.7	Undertake and support others to deliver built and archaeological heritage projects.	To increase our knowledge and understanding of our built and archaeological heritage.	The number of projects undertaken and supported per annum.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Research, Monitoring & Conservation			
BAH 3.8	Develop guidance for community groups in respect to access, acceptance, care and preservation of donations of materials, documents and artefacts.	To ensure proper care, conservation, storage and access to heritage items offered for donation to community/volunteer groups.	Production of a guidance document for community groups in relation to offers of heritage materials, donations or artefacts.
BAH 3.9	Raise awareness of the heritage and ecological benefits of stone walls and structures.	To safeguard the ecological and heritage importance of stone walls and structures.	The number of social media posts, workshops, guided walks and educational materials that raise awareness of the heritage and ecological importance of stone walls and structures per annum.
BAH 3.10	Explore opportunities for conducting research into emerging themes in Heritage Futures – e.g. cultural heritage as a form of resilience in climate action, biodiversity restoration, domestic and agricultural practices, and sustainability.	To help individuals, groups, communities and organisations to identify aspects of our heritage that can help create a more sustainable future. To document identified research opportunities in relation to Heritage Futures.	The number of contributions and collaborations regarding Heritage Futures.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Galway County Council: People, Property and Works			
BAH 4.1	Continue to promote best practice within Galway County Council in relation to conservation and safeguarding of built and archaeological heritage while also integrating biodiversity, natural heritage and cultural heritage considerations.	To ensure that all directorates within Galway County Council adopt best practices.	The number of training events promoting best practice principles and regulations.
BAH 4.2	Provide targeted traditional skills training for relevant staff.	To equip relevant Galway County Council staff with the knowledge of, and skills in, traditional conservation work.	The number of training events for Galway County Council staff.
BAH 4.3	Continue to implement and develop the Community Archaeology Project.	To ensure that Community Archaeology Project is adequately resourced in providing advice and guidance to communities, schools, individuals and Local Authority with respect to its archaeological heritage.	Community Archaeologist post is secured. Production of Galway County Community Archaeology Project Annual Report.
BAH 4.4	Continue to undertake audits, surveys and plans of the built and archaeological heritage of the county.	To gain a greater understanding and knowledge of the built and archaeological heritage assets in Galway County.	The number of audits, surveys and plans of the built and archaeological heritage undertaken.
BAH 4.5	Continue to raise awareness on enforcement measures, existing and incoming heritage legislation and provide related training.	To ensure that all Galway County Council staff are made aware of new or impending heritage legislation so that it can be incorporated in all policies, plans, works and projects.	The number of updates of heritage legislation. The annual number of training sessions for Galway County Council staff.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Galway County Council: People, Property and Works			
BAH 4.7	To raise awareness of and encourage sensitive public-realm development that gives appropriate consideration to built and archaeological heritage and to urban morphology (development of street patterns, existence or former existence of town walls, nature of historic building plots, architectural conservation areas, etc.).	To maintain and enhance existing historic street layouts, landscapes, townscapes, townland boundaries, etc.	The annual number of public realm projects requiring Heritage Office/ Architectural Conservation Office collaboration.
BAH 4.8	Support the provision of suitable interpretative methods and materials for built and archaeological heritage sites with best practice advice.	To provide tailor-made site-specific interpretation where appropriate.	The number of heritage sites that benefit from support on interpretation from the Heritage and Architectural Conservation Offices.
BAH 4.9	Seek to expand the human and financial resources within the Heritage and Architectural Conservation Offices.	To seek enhanced resources for the Heritage and Architectural Conservation Offices in proportion to the large geographical area and demographic profile of the county and the public's high expectation for engagement and participatory opportunities.	The amount of enhanced resources attained over the course of this plan.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Stakeholder Engagement and Collaborative Opportunities			
BAH 5.1	Promote dialogue between stakeholders and relevant government departments and agencies regarding overlapping policies, legislation and practices to facilitate effective action on built and archaeological heritage.	To share knowledge and promote collaboration between relevant organisations.	The number of networking opportunities facilitated per annum.
BAH 5.2	Work in partnership with national, regional and local agencies, Galway County PPN, NGOs, various relevant professional bodies, academic institutions, local communities, public libraries and others on the promotion and development of projects and the implementation of heritage best practice.	To ensure that built and archaeological heritage is recognised and considered and heritage best practice is implemented when local authority plans, projects and strategies are being developed.	The annual number of local authority plans, projects and strategies that have input from the Heritage and Architectural Conservation Offices.
BAH 5.3	Identify funding opportunities and work with all stakeholders on developing projects and initiatives relating to the built and archaeological heritage.	To avail of funding streams, initiatives and schemes relating to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the built and archaeological heritage of the County.	The number of initiatives/schemes/funding opportunities applied for/availed of per annum.
BAH 5.4	Liaise with tourism sector, inc. Fáilte Ireland, and highlight best practice relating to built and archaeological heritage.	To ensure accurate interpretation and respectful signage at heritage sites. To adhere to heritage best practices for any works, considering the site's character and visual amenity and to maintain sustainable tourism levels at built and archaeological heritage sites.	The number tourism-related projects and initiatives that received heritage input per annum.

Code	Action	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Climate Action			
BAH 6.1	Undertake a Built and Archaeological Heritage and Climate Change Risk Assessment to develop appropriate adaptation and mitigation methodologies for heritage assets in the Council's ownership.	To coordinate collaborative, evidence-based mechanisms to develop resilience, adapt or mitigate the impacts of climate change on the archaeological and built heritage of the county.	Risk assessment undertaken
BAH 6.2	Support and develop citizen science projects as a means of monitoring climate change impacts on Galway County's heritage assets.	To raise awareness and understanding of the resilience and vulnerability of Galway County's built and archaeological heritage to climate change.	The number of citizen science projects undertaken that relate to climate change and built and archaeological heritage over the course of this plan.
BAH 6.3	Co-operate with other agencies in the assessment of the potential for climate change to impact on monuments, architectural heritage, heritage gardens and parks, wrecks, industrial heritage, landscapes, archaeological structures, inland waterways, etc.	To minimise the impacts of climate change on the built and archaeological heritage assets of the county.	The number of collaborations and assessments of the impact of climate change on built and archaeological heritage assets undertaken over the course of this plan.
BAH 6.4	Include climate resilience and future proofing in new built heritage and archaeological projects, plans and policies.	To minimise the impacts of climate change on and recognise the resilience of the built and archaeological heritage of the county.	Monitoring climate resilience and the development of a future proofing checklist for projects, plans and policies by 2027.
BAH 6.5	Ensure events are climate-friendly by incorporating the Climate Unit's sustainable events guidelines and checklist.	To reduce the climate impact of any programmes or events.	The number of events per annum that adhered to the Climate Unit's checklist.
BAH 6.6	Integrate climate change education and communication into heritage projects, emphasising the value of existing assets that embody carbon and offer potential for adaptive reuse.	To highlight circular economy opportunities in the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and structures to reduce climate change impacts.	The number of heritage projects that include climate change education and communication from the Architectural Conservation and Heritage Office over the course of this plan.
BAH 6.7	Support projects that build on existing local knowledge and other relevant sources with regards to climate resilience.	To create opportunities to increase climate mitigation options and efficacy.	Develop exemplars of best practice with regards to climate resilience.

Appendix 3: Community Consultation

Executive Summary

Analysis of community feedback reveals a strong, deeply felt connection to Kilcummin Church & Graveyard. The site is valued as a sacred burial ground, a historical landmark, and a tranquil open space. Key community priorities are the physical protection of the structures from environmental threats, sensitive management of the graveyard, and the enhancement of visitor facilities and interpretation. There is a clear consensus supporting the establishment of a formal volunteer group to assist in the site's conservation and promotion.

1. Community Connection & Perceived Significance

- **Deep-Rooted Connection:** A significant portion of the feedback comes from individuals with long-standing, often lifelong, ties to Oughterard.
- **Primary Valuations:** The site is important to the community for several key reasons:
 - **Heritage & Identity:** It is considered a cornerstone of local heritage, essential for preserving the area's identity for future generations.
 - **Spiritual & Commemorative:** Its primary function as a active graveyard and a place of worship makes it a sacred space for remembrance and reflection.
 - **Passive Recreation:** It is used as a quiet place for walks and contemplation.
- **Historical Knowledge:** Knowledge of the site's history varies widely within the community, from detailed architectural and historical awareness to a general acknowledgment of its antiquity, indicating an opportunity for shared learning.

2. Site Condition & Conservation Priorities

- **Structures at Risk:** The church building itself is consistently identified as the structure most in need of urgent conservation. Historic grave markers, walls, and carvings are also noted as vulnerable.
- **Key Threats:** The following threats were consistently raised:
 - **Environmental Degradation:** Weathering, storms, and erosion are perceived as the most significant and immediate threats to the site's fabric.
 - **Biological Growth:** Invasive plants and unchecked tree growth are seen as potential causes of damage to structures and graves.

- **Areas of Sensitivity:** The presence of numerous unmarked graves was highlighted as an area requiring the highest level of care, respect, and sensitivity in any management or conservation work.

3. Biodiversity & Grounds Maintenance

- **Flora:** There is support for the preservation of native trees and vegetation, aligning with the site's natural and tranquil character.
- **Grounds Management:** Regular maintenance of paths, control of vegetation, and management of hedge walls to prevent erosion were mentioned as ongoing needs to keep the site accessible and safe.

4. Visitor Experience, Tourism & Interpretation

- **Visitor Facilities:** There is a identified need for improved basic amenities. The most frequently cited requirement is for **adequate parking**. The provision of information points and seating was also supported.
- **Interpretation & Education:** There is strong community support for enhancing the visitor experience through:
 - **On-site Information:** Physical signage, information boards, and maps.
 - **Digital Resources:** The use of QR codes to provide access to historical information was suggested.
 - **Guided Offerings:** A clear interest exists in establishing guided tours and educational programs focusing on the site's heritage, architecture, and natural history.
- **Suggested Activities:** Heritage talks and nature walks were proposed as suitable and engaging activities for both the local community and visitors.

5. Vision for the Future & Community Involvement

- **Long-Term Vision:** The community's vision for Kilcummin is one of preservation and careful enhancement. The core desire is to protect the site's essential character as a sacred and historical space while making it more resilient and accessible. Goals include ensuring safe access for walks and fostering a modest, respectful increase in visitor numbers.

- **Volunteerism:** A prominent theme across the feedback is the willingness to participate in a "**Friends of Kilcummin**" volunteer group. This indicates a strong community desire to be directly involved in the stewardship, upkeep, and promotion of the site.
- **Funding & Upkeep:** While not detailed in specific financial terms, there is an understanding that ongoing upkeep is necessary and that a mixture of grants, donations, and community-led initiatives will be key to long-term maintenance.

A1. Respondent Profile

- **Residency:**
 - Lifelong residents of Oughterard: ~45%
 - Residents >20 years: ~30%
 - Residents 5–20 years: ~15%
 - Residents
- **Connection to site:**
 - Family burials at Kilcummin: ~40%
 - Emotional/spiritual connection: ~25%
 - No personal connection: ~35%

A2. Duration & Depth of Familiarity

- **Familiarity with site:**
 - Lifelong or generational familiarity: ~45%
 - Moderate familiarity (5–20 years): ~20%
 - Recent or limited familiarity: ~35%
- **Knowledge of site features:**
 - Clear awareness of altar, holy well, boundary walls: ~40%
 - Confusion with other sites or features: ~20%
 - No architectural awareness: ~40%

A3. Site Usage & Visitation

- **Frequency of visits:**
 - Regular (weekly/monthly): ~35%

- Occasional (annual/special events): ~40%
- Rarely/never: ~25%

- **Purpose of visits:**

- Reflection/prayer: ~30%
- Maintenance/volunteering: ~15%
- Funerals/heritage events: ~40%
- No visits: ~15%

A4. Perception of Site Condition

- **Described as neglected/overgrown:** ~50%
- **Described as peaceful or acceptable:** ~30%
- **Unaware of current condition:** ~20%
- **Common descriptors:** “overgrown,” “sacred,” “peaceful,” “in need of care”

A5. Conservation Awareness & Attitudes

- **Supportive of conservation efforts:** ~65%
- **Skeptical or disengaged:** ~20%
- **Unaware of conservation plans:** ~15%
- **Concerns raised:**
 - Over-intervention or “modernisation”
 - Loss of spiritual character
 - Lack of local consultation

A6. Emotional & Cultural Significance

- **Spiritual importance cited:** ~50%
- **Cultural/historical value cited:** ~60%
- **Desire for respectful conservation:** ~70%
- **Common themes:**
 - “Sacred ground”
 - “Part of our heritage”

- “Shouldn’t be tampered with”

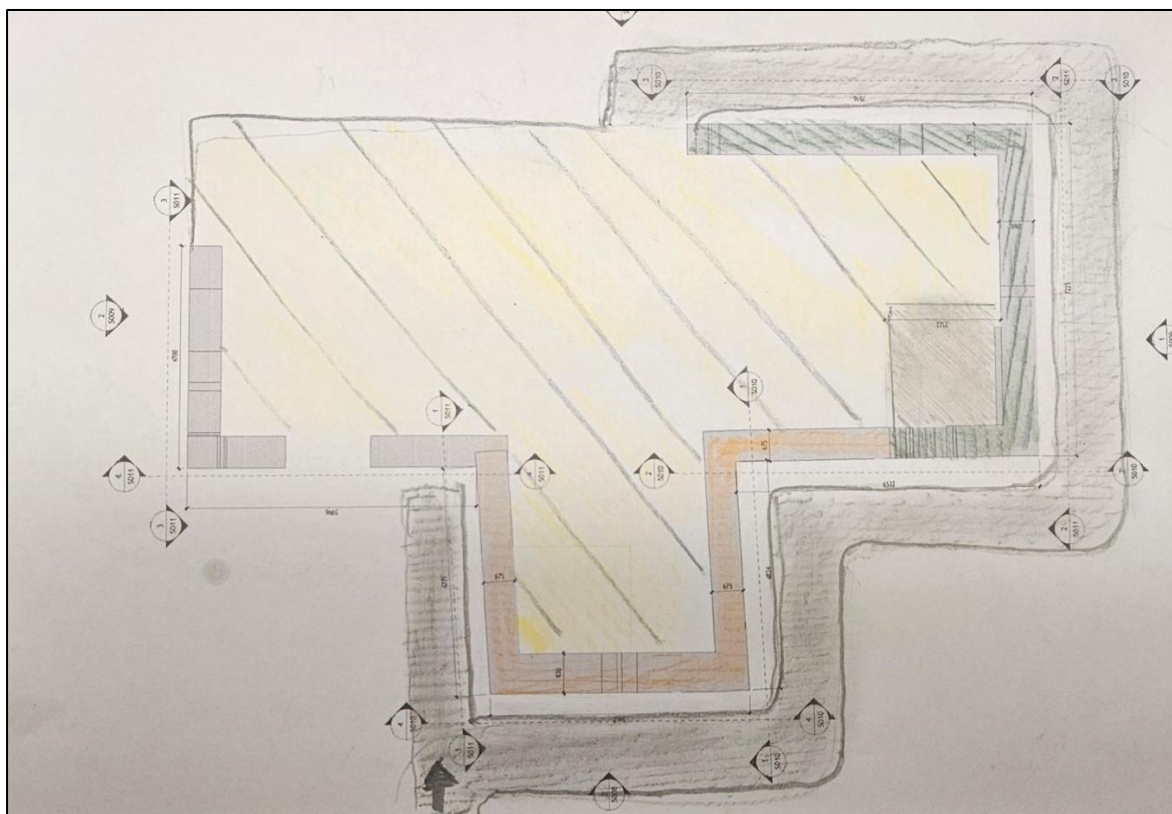
A7. Observations on Governance & Access

- **Concerns about committee turnover:** ~20%
- **Perceived lack of transparency:** ~15%
- **Uncertainty about site access or ownership:** ~25%
- **Suggestions for improvement:**
 - Clear signage
 - Public access guidelines
 - Community-led stewardship

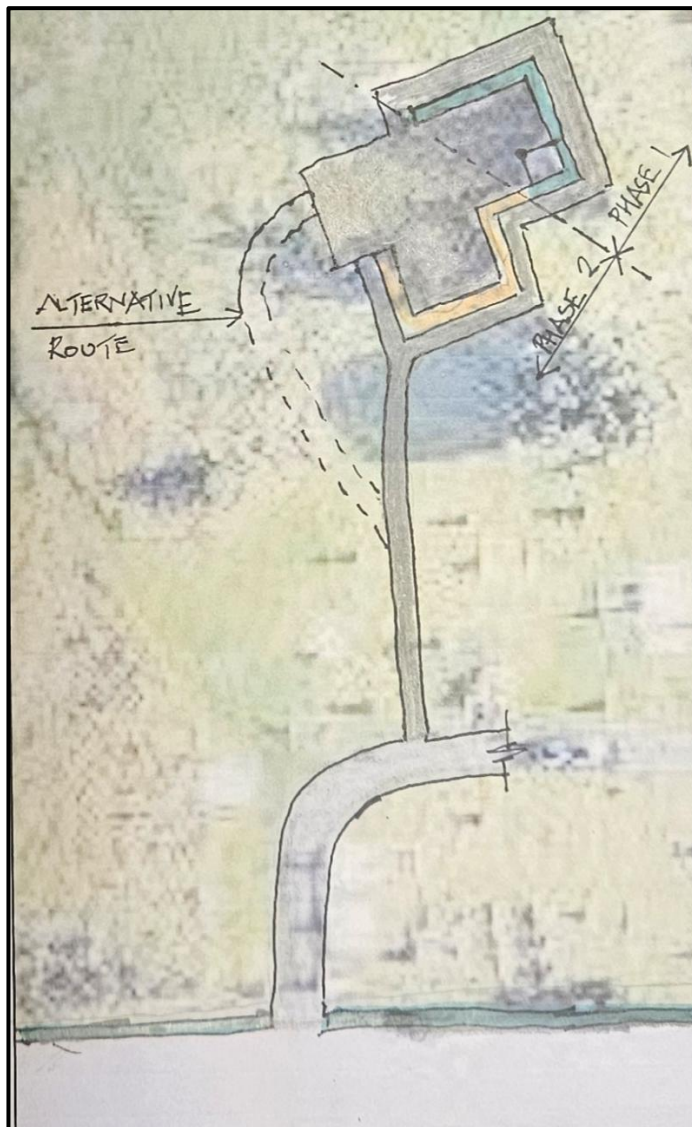
A8. Recommendations Based on Feedback

- **Interpretive clarity:** Address confusion around site features (e.g., holy well vs. other wells)
- **Access & signage:** Improve visibility and public understanding of access rights
- **Maintenance strategy:** Balance natural character with respectful upkeep
- **Community engagement:** Ensure ongoing consultation and transparency
- **Documentation:** Preserve oral histories and burial records where possible

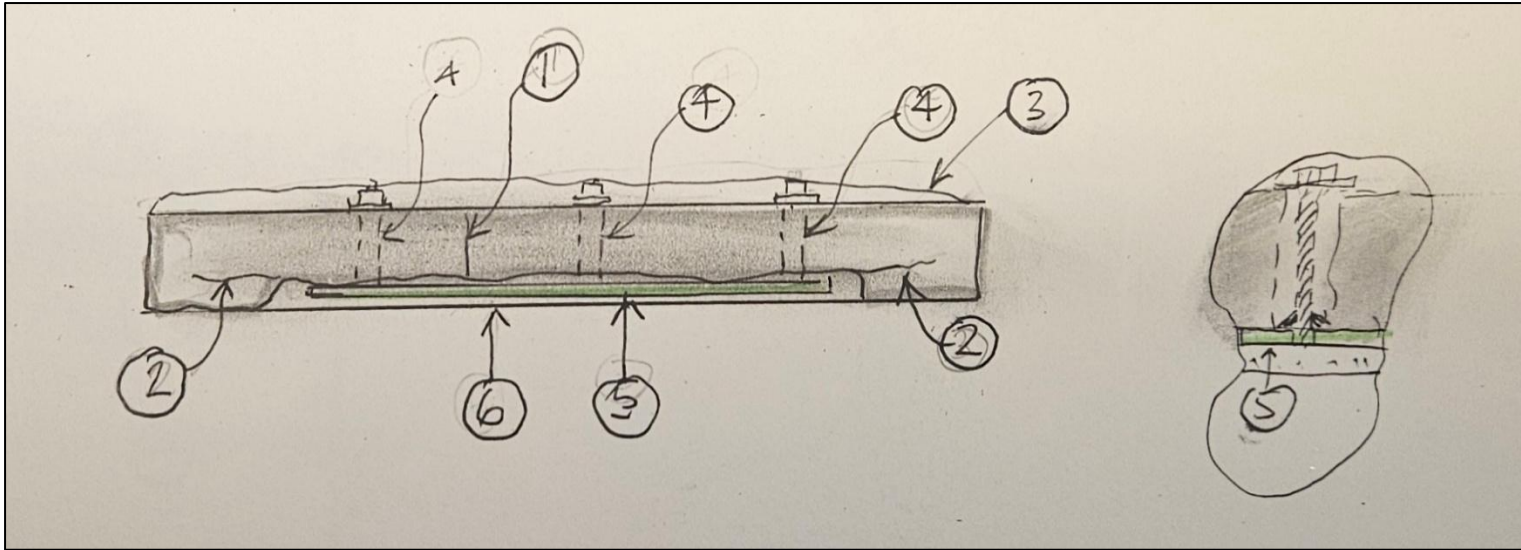
Appendix 4: Sketches



Sketch A: General access provisions around church showing levelled interior of the church (yellow) and external reinforced grass (grey). Phase 1 stabilisation works shown in green (hatched) and Phase 2 shown in orange.

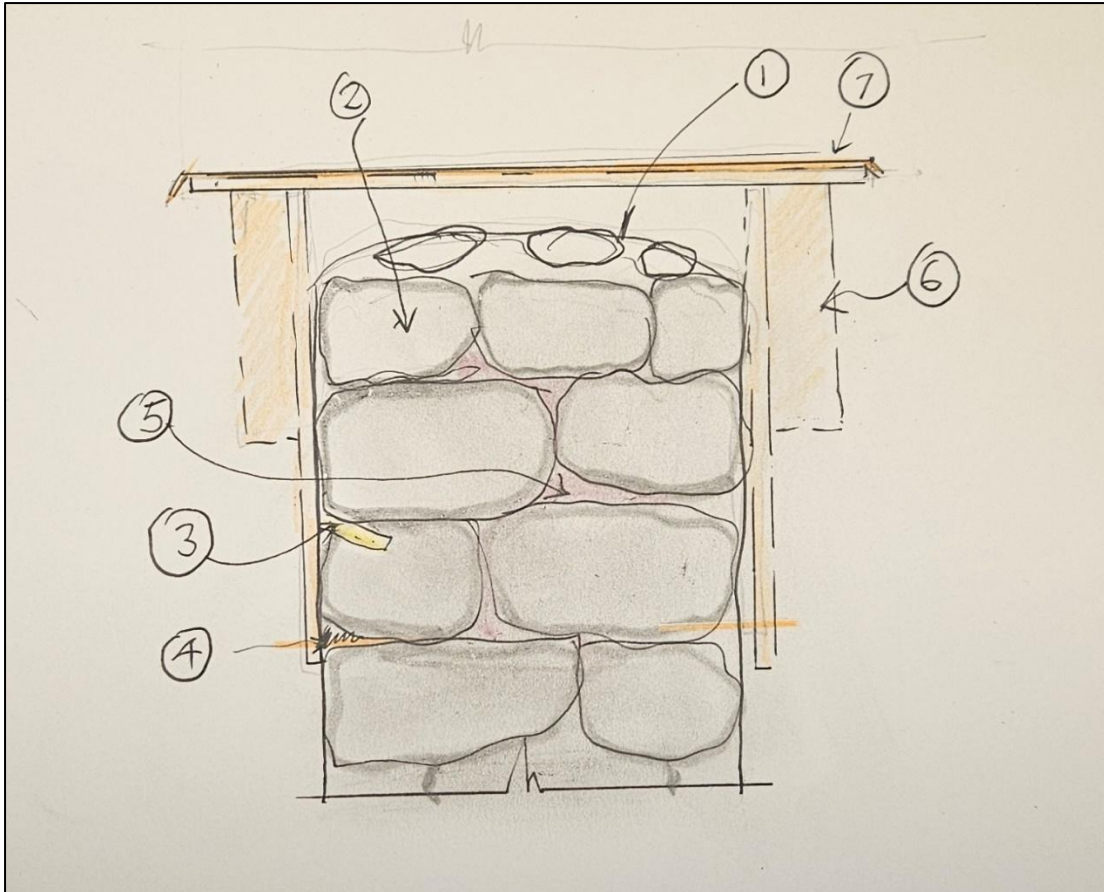


Sketch B: Approach needs more description



Sketch C: Lintel repair to north wall.

- 1) Point vertical crack with masons mortar.
- 2) Point horizontal cracks with masons mortar.
- 3) Provide mortar flaunching above.
- 4) M16 hole for M12 stainless steel threaded rod.
- 5) Provide 150mm x 5mm stainless steel plate.
- 6) Provide remmers repair mortar, reinforced with stainless steel mesh.



Sketch D: Wall capping and temporary protection.

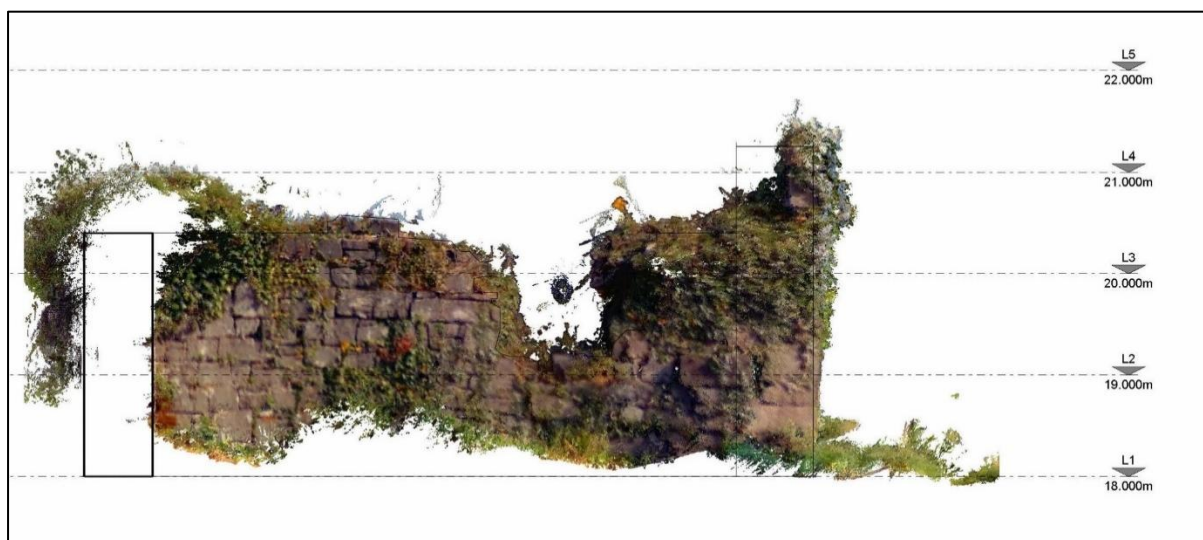
1. Domed mortar capping in NHL 3,5 with flat stones.
2. Carefully reset loose stones at top of wall.
3. Eco plugs applied to roots in wall.
4. Deep pointing in NHL 2,5 lime mortar.
5. Grout voids with NHL 3,5 Coulinex or similar.
6. 225mm x 50mm timber ply and torch on temporary protection.



Sketch E: Orthophoto of East Gable wall to be carried out in Phase 1.



Sketch F: Orthophoto of north wall and lintel, works of which will be carried out in Phase 1.



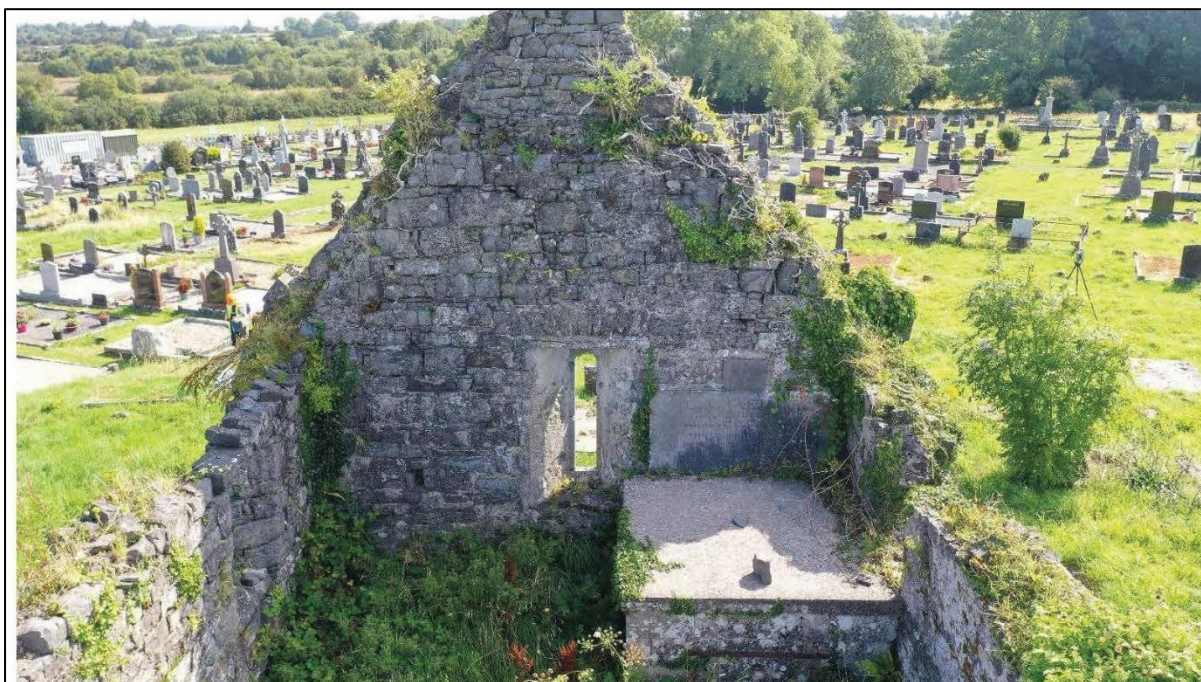
Sketch G: Orthophoto of south Wall to be carried out in phase 1 (2m at SE corner)



Sketch H: showing east elevation of South Transept. Vegetation treatment to be completed in Phase 1 and masonry works in Phase 2.



Sketch I: Orthophoto of South Transept gable and south wall of nave. Vegetation treatment to be addressed in phase1 and masonry works in phase 2.



Sketch J: Drone photo of interior of East Gable.



Sketch K: Drone photo facing northeast: South Transept with the west wall overgrown.

Appendix 5: Ecology Report

KILCUMMIN CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD,
OUGHTERARD, CO. GALWAY: CONSERVATION
MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025–2035



This report has been prepared by Minogue Environmental Consulting Ltd with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

Doc Version

Prepared

1

Ruth Minogue MCIEEM



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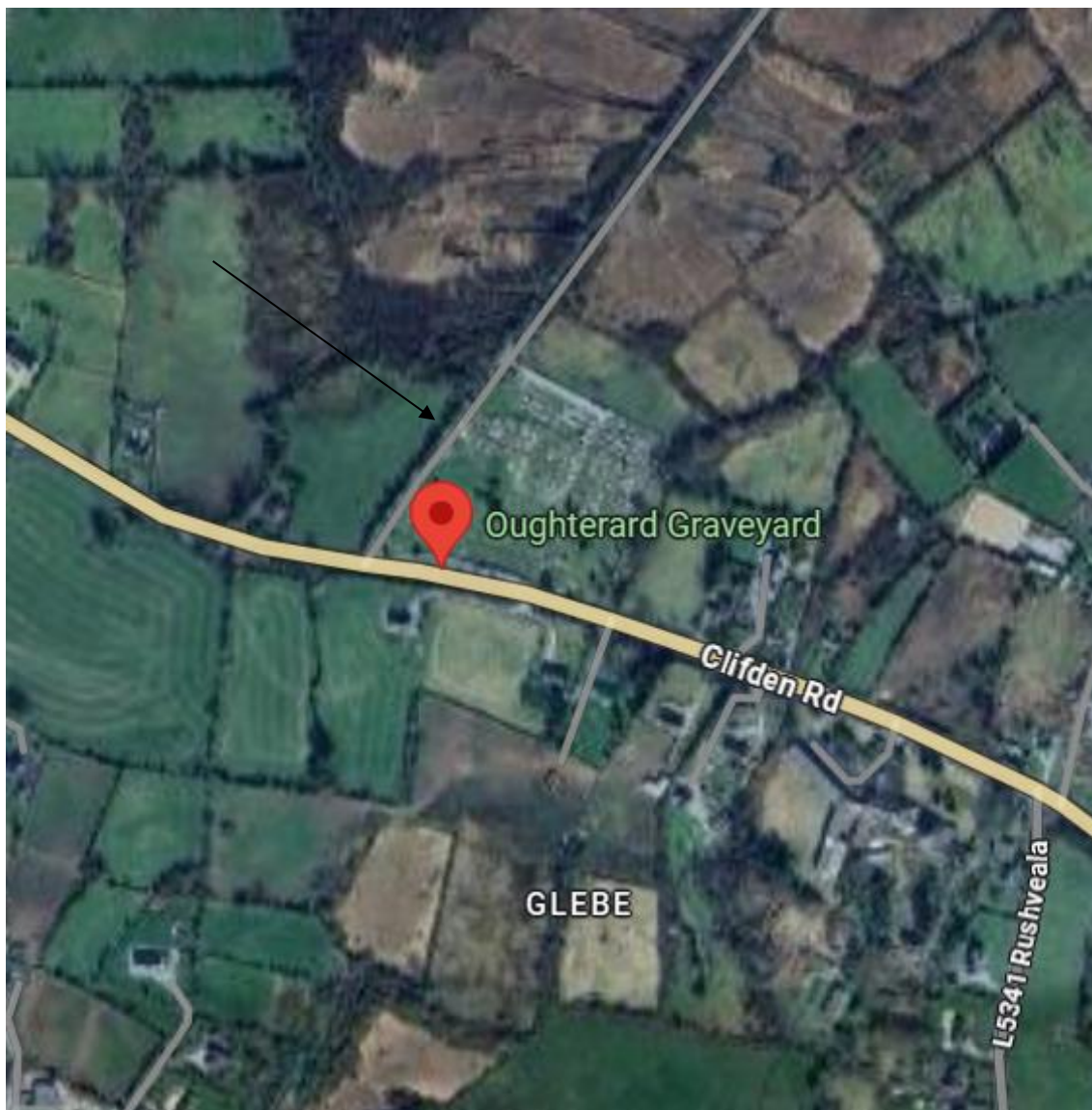
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Introduction

MEC (MEC) Ltd. has been commissioned by Southgate Associates on to prepare the chapter for the ecology element of the Conservation Management Plan for Kilcummin Church and Graveyard, Clifden Rd, Glebe, Co. Galway. Site location is shown below in Figure 1.1.

Figure 0-1 Site location



Legislation

Introduction

Flora and fauna in Ireland are protected at a national level by the Wildlife Act, 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000 and the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999 (SI 94/1999). They are

also protected at a European level by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

The transposition of the EU Habitats and Birds Directive by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011(as amended) (referred to as the Habitat Regulations) provides the legal basis for the protection of habitats and species of European importance in Ireland.

The legislative protection of habitats and species provided by the Habitats Directive has been implemented in Ireland and throughout Europe through the establishment of a network of designated conservation areas known as the Natura 2000 (N2K) network (with individual sites being referred to as Natura 2000 Sites). The N2K network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), under the EU Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. SACs are designated in areas that support habitats listed on Annex I and/or species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. SPAs are designated in areas that support: 1% or more of the all-Ireland population of bird species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; 1% or more of the population of a migratory species; and more than 20,000 waterfowl. Under the Habitat Regulations all designated Natura 2000 Sites are referred to as European Sites.

The Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended) also provides for the statutory designation of nature conservation areas. These areas are referred to under the Wildlife Acts as Natural Heritage Areas and are designated in areas that support habitats and/or species of national importance. Other relevant national legislation concerning the protection of flora, fauna and fisheries include the:

- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended);
- European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations, 1988;
- The Freshwater Fish Directive 1978 (78/659/EEC); and
- The Surface Water Regulations, 2009.

Local Authority Plans

The following plans and policies are relevant to the proposed management plan

- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (Galway County Council, 2022)

The Galway Heritage plan 2025 -2030 is also available and includes many actions and objectives relevant to the conservation management plan, an example of these are listed below; the full report can be found at: [Galway-County_Plan-2025.pdf](#)

- BD 5.4 Seek funding opportunities, benefit in-kind opportunities and work with project partners to achieve the aims of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.
- BD 5.5 Promote and participate in biodiversity events such as National Biodiversity Week, National Hedgerow Week, National Heritage Week, World Wetlands Day and other themed events and programmes
- BAH 3.1 Strengthen and sustain the knowledge base for decision makers in relation to the protection, conservation and enhancement of built and archaeological heritage.

In addition to the relevant policies and objectives in the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028. There are also useful resources that apply in terms of planting schemes for nocturnal pollinators and community groups, these are listed under the Recommendations Section.

Desktop Research

Site overview

Kilcummin cemetery is situated in Glebe, on the N59 (Clifden Road), just outside the town of Oughterard, County Galway, near the western shore of Lough Corrib. The site is in a rural landscape of semi-improved grassland and mature trees, bounded partly by low stone walls, with views toward the lake and the surrounding mountainous terrain to the west. The terrain is gently sloping towards Lough Corrib, with scrub and small patches of more natural vegetation in adjacent areas.

The site lies within the catchment of the Corrib catchment (catchment code: 30), the nearest surface water feature is a stream that runs northeast of the site and flows into Lough Corrib which is labelled as not at risk (Corrib Upper IE_WE_30_666b) according to the most recent data from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

According to the National Bedrock Aquifer Map, the GSI classifies the bedrock aquifer beneath the subject site as a Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (conduit). The church and graveyard are within the 'Galway' groundwater body (GWB) and is classified under the WFD Status 2013-2018 (EPA, 2020) as 'Good status'. The site is under an area of high groundwater vulnerability.

Designated Conservation Areas

There are Natura 2000 sites directly adjacent to the proposed development site. The graveyard lies beside Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code: 000297), a large protected lake and wetland complex of international importance. In addition, the area also falls within the Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code: 004042), designated for the protection of waterfowl and breeding bird populations.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated under the Wildlife Acts to protect habitats, species or geology of national importance. In addition to NHAs there are proposed NHAs (referred to as pNHAs), which are also sites of significance for wildlife and habitats and were published on a non-statutory basis in 1995 but have not since been statutorily proposed or designated. Lough Corrib is also a proposed NHA.

Protected Species Records

A review of protected species recorded by the National Biodiversity Centre was accessed and a report returned on the 2km grid M14G. The results are presented below.

Table 0-1 Protected Species recorded in the 2km Squares M14G

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>)	9	24/03/1997	Irish National Frog Database	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex V Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)	4	29/06/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>)	2	11/06/2016	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section III Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Common Tern (Sterna hirundo)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Curlew (Numenius arquata)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Goldcrest (Regulus regulus)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Goldeneye (Bucephala clangula)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Greenfinch (Chloris chloris)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Grey Wagtail (Motacilla cinerea)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
House Martin (Delichon urbicum)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
House Sparrow (Passer domesticus)	3	30/05/2013	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis)	1	25/11/2019	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Linnet (Linaria cannabina)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Meadow Pipit (Anthus pratensis)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Merlin (Falco columbarius)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mistle Thrush (Turdus viscivorus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mute Swan (Cygnus olor)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Peregrine (Falco peregrinus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species
Pheasant (Phasianus colchicus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species
Redshank (Tringa totanus)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Robin (Erithacus rubecula)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sand Martin (Riparia riparia)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Skylark (Alauda arvensis)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Snipe (Gallinago gallinago)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section III Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Sparrowhawk (Accipiter nisus)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Spotted Flycatcher (Muscicapa striata)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Starling (Sturnus vulgaris)	3	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Stonechat (Saxicola rubicola)	1	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swallow (Hirundo rustica)	2	15/04/2021	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swift (Apus apus)	1	28/06/2014	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Teal (Anas crecca)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >>

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
				Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section II Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus)	1	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex I Bird Species Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Woodpigeon (Columba palumbus)	2	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: EU Birds Directive Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species
Irish Lady's-tresses (Spiranthes romanzoffiana)	4	08/08/2021	Vascular plants: Online Atlas of Vascular Plants 2012 Onwards	Protected Species: Flora Protection Order (FPO) Protected Species: Flora Protection Order (FPO) >> FPO 2022 Schedule A (Vascular Plants) Threatened Species: Near threatened
Badger (Meles meles)	4	31/12/2016	Badger Setts of Ireland Database	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Brown Long-eared Bat (Plecotus auritus)	1	01/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Daubenton's Bat (Myotis daubentonii)	108	25/08/2021	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Species name	Record count	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Hedgehog (Erinaceus europaeus)	5	03/09/2023	Hedgehogs of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Leisler's Bat (Nyctalus leisleri)	1	20/08/2008	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus nathusii)	1	05/09/2007	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Otter (Lutra lutra)	3	07/02/2017	Mammals of Ireland 2016-2025	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Pygmy Shrew (Sorex minutus)	1	10/07/2018	Mammals of Ireland 2016-2025	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Red Squirrel (Sciurus vulgaris)	1	31/12/2001	The Irish Squirrel Survey 2007	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Soprano Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)	1	01/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

Habitats on site

Habitats on the site include dry meadows and grassy verges, amenity grassland, built land and artificial surfaces and stone walls. A mature hedgerow/treeline is present on the lane to the west of the site and similarly a treeline bounds the eastern perimeter of the graveyard.

On the church itself some saplings have established and a blackthorn or hawthorn is growing on the gable of the church. The ground is very uneven around the church due to collapsed stones and species recorded including ivy, wild strawberry, with purple loosestrife on ground, Herb Robert, brambles. Ragwort and umbellifers.

Mature yew trees are present also.

Bat Survey and Breeding Bird survey

A bat survey (emergent and static) were conducted over the 10th August and night of 10-12th August 2025. This was accompanied by a breeding bird survey on the church building.

The church and ivy was inspected for any evidence of nesting birds as part of the overall visual inspection and at dusk surveyors recorded any behaviour that indicated nesting activity. No such behaviour was identified.

Bat surveys

An external daylight survey of the upstanding walls of the church was undertaken on the 10th August 2025 to identify any potential roost features and to look for signs of roost activity such as presence of bats, dropping and evidence of staining as well as insect remains. The inspection survey was conducted in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) methodology (Collins, 2016). The walls were investigated and allocated a potential roost classification using criteria in Collins et al (2023). Each structure was then assigned a level of suitability for roosting bats as outlined in Table 3.3 below.

Table 0-2 Roost Suitability Potential Buildings (Collins, 2023)

No roosting suitability		No features likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year
Negligible suitability	roosting	Buildings with few, if any, features suitable for roosting, however a small amount of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low roosting suitability		One or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. The features do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate suitability	roosting	One or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity or hibernation).
High roosting suitability		One or more potential roost sites that could be used by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis/ longer periods of time, due to their space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable

surrounding habitat. These structures could support roosts of high conservation status (e.g. maternity or hibernation).

Confirmed roost

Evidence of bat occupation found

Static detectors

Static bat detectors were used to ascertain bat activity around the church structure and were deployed for a single night, placed within an enclosure within the form of the building.

The data generated from the surveys was analysed using Bat explorer bat analysis software to differentiate species by their sonograms. Calls were identified against species descriptions within British Bat Calls: A Guide to Species Identification (Russ, 2012).

Emergent survey

These were undertaken on the 10th August 2025. Two surveyors were positioned to the front and rear of the church and were able to view the gable elevations also. They stayed in position for 2 hours starting 10 minutes before sunset at 21:00 (sunset at 21:14) until 23:15.

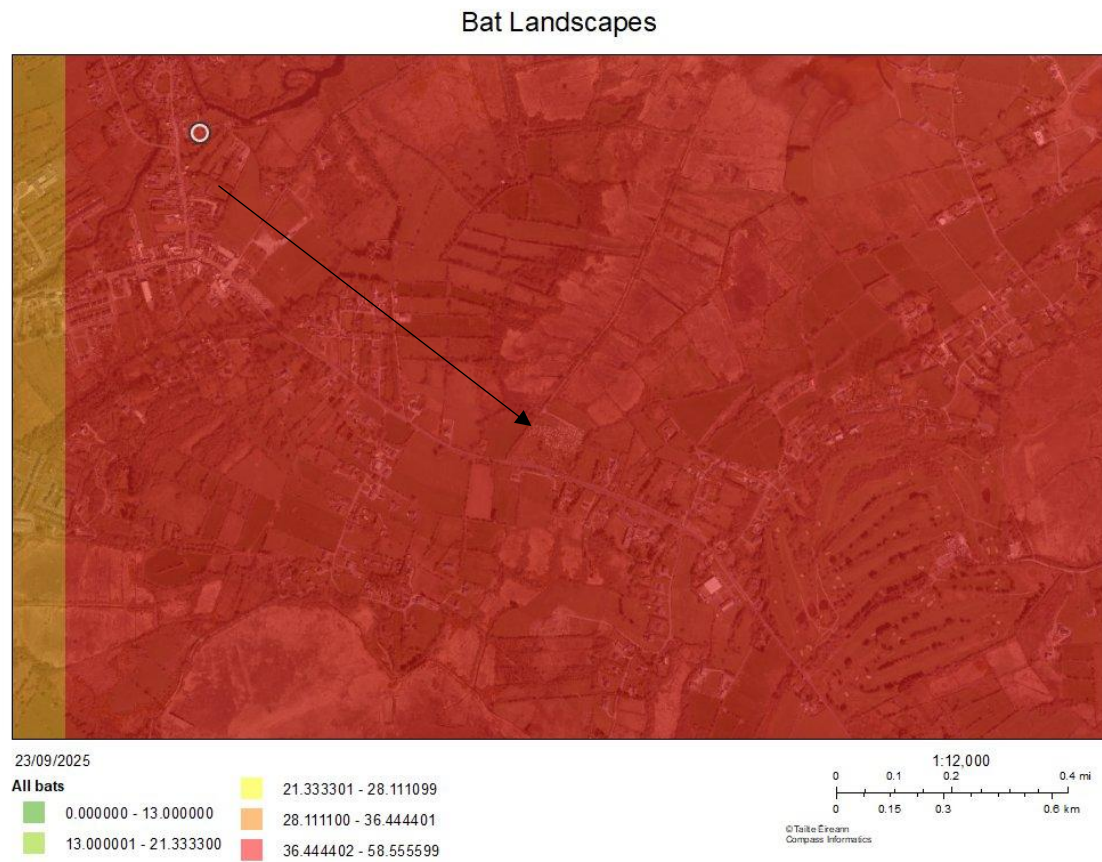
A search of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) for records of rare and/or threatened species previously identified in the vicinity of the project site was completed in August 2025. A 2km grid search was undertaken for protected species (M14G). The protected species identified as occurring within 2km of the project site from 2014 to 2025 are listed below in Table 2.1 below.

Brown Long-eared Bat (Plecotus auritus)	1	01/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Common Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus)	1	01/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	

pipistrellus sensu stricto)				
Daubenton's Bat (Myotis daubentonii)	108	25/08/2021	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Leisler's Bat (Nyctalus leisleri)	1	20/08/2008	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus nathusii)	1	05/09/2007	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Soprano Pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)	1	01/09/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

The Bat Conservation Ireland mapping on suitability of landscapes for bats was accessed and the lands are identified as having the highest suitability for all bats, see Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 0-2 Bat habitat suitability



The Lesser Horseshoe bat database was also accessed and as Figure 3.2 below shows, no such roosts are recorded within 5km of the project lands though LSH were recorded to the north west of the graveyard in 1998.



Survey results

The surviving walls of the church are quite heavily covered in ivy and gaps in the stonework increases overall roost potential. The absence of roof reduces the overall roost potential to moderate roost potential and the surviving structures do not provide roosting opportunities for significant roost such as a maternity roost.

Emergent Survey

Overall bat activity on the night of the emergent survey was very low with occasional records of common and soprano pipistrelles associated with the woodland and individual bats observed flying across the graveyard. No bats were observed or recorded existing the church walls during the course of the survey.

The first bat recorded was a soprano pipistrelle at 1:46 and the final bat recorded was also a soprano pipistrelle at 22:49.

Weather conditions were good with temperature at sunset 16C, slight breeze and damp but no rain. 7/8 cloud cover, 69% relative humidity.

The static detector recorded higher levels of activity across the site including *Myotis* spp; the results of the static bat detector in terms of bat species/ calls/ per hour are shown below in Table 3.2.

Table 0-3 Bat species/ calls/ per hour 10th -11th August 2025

Timestamp	Pipistrellus pygmaeus (Calls / 3600s)	Myotis spec. (Calls / 3600s)	Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Calls / 3600s)		Ø Temperature [°C]
10/08/2025 21:00	39	0	0	39	19
10/08/2025 22:00	17	67	0	84	19
10/08/2025 23:00	66	0	0	66	18.3
11/08/2025 00:00	84	42	0	126	18.6
11/08/2025 01:00	97	12	7	116	19
11/08/2025 02:00	72	19	17	108	18.9
11/08/2025 03:00	83	0	8	91	19
11/08/2025 04:00	47	0	0	47	19

Recommendations

Any vegetation trimming should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August).

Continuing the policy of no/limited herbicide use would be of great benefit to the area.

A.

The All Ireland Pollinator Plan provides useful guidance including to community groups for actions for pollinators, as well as actions for nocturnal pollinators which could comprise relevant actions for planting schemes or actions around the churchyard. Some are presented below and can all be accessed at the following link: Resources » All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (pollinators.ie)

Planting of fruiting trees close to the site would be positive and could provide over time additional foraging habitat for wildlife in addition to the species suggested above.

All kinds of insects including wasps, and wild bees (non-stinging) are ground nesting and require open sections of earth with frequent sun and well drained soils where they nest in colonies. Therefore, sandy/ dry clay substrate is perfect for insect burrows these naturally can occur along worn sections of banks in hedgerows, woodland edges etc. It can be as simple as adding mounds of dry earth material to areas however, an area within the graveyard that is south facing, subject to archaeological considerations could be considered.

Therefore, raised mounds back filled with material, sloped towards sunlight and capped with sand/clay (30cm or deeper) on southward facing area would provide optimal nesting opportunities. In tandem with these insect beds, heritage fruit trees (Irish Seed Savers Association) could be added along with a pollinator friendly mowing regime to provide the insects with forage.

- See similar approach here Mining Bee Nesting Behaviour | Learn To Create A Mining Bee Haven (attractbees.co.uk) & How-to-make-a-habitat-for-ground-nesting-bees.pdf (ptes.org) (UK guidance but similar approach)
- See heritage fruit tree provider here Irish Seed Savers Association – Irish Seed Savers, Scariff, Ireland are dedicated to the preservation of traditional native varieties of fruit and vegetables. Buy our seeds online.
- Once completed, the only management to the bank is to remove any vegetation to keep the substrate exposed to sun light and allow the insects to have full access. This should be carefully done by hand when necessary but high levels of disturbance should be avoided.

Guidance for Pollinator Friendly measures that the community could consider are provided below: [Resources for Community Groups » All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#)

References

Heritage Council (2002). Draft Habitat Survey Guidelines. Heritage Council.

IEEM (2006). Guidelines for Ecological Impacts Assessment. IEEM.

JNCC (1993). Handbook for Phase I habitat survey. JNCC.

NPWS (2019). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report

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Photographic record

West boundary -WS1 habitat



Photo 2: dense ivy growing up the church walls





Appendix 6: Potential Notification, Licence and Consent Requirements

Cultural Heritage Asset	Potential Notification, Licence & Consent Requirements	Programming Requirement
Works at or in relation to a Recorded Monument or Registered Monument	Notification to the Minister under Section 12 (3) of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 (Recorded Monument) and Section 5 (8) of National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 (Register of Historic Monuments). Section 26 Archaeological Licence. Where relevant Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence. Where relevant Section 2 Detection Device Licence (for Metal Detection or Geophysical Surveys).	Notification form must be completed and submitted to the National Monuments Service at least 2 months before any work is carried out at a Recorded Monument (listed on the RMP) or Registered Monument (listed on the RHM). Allow minimum 4 weeks for processing and issue of Section 26 Archaeological Licence, and where relevant for Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence and Section 2 Detection Device Licence.
Asset listed in the SMR	Section 26 Archaeological Licence. Where relevant Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence. Where relevant Section 2 Detection Device Licence (for Metal Detection or Geophysical Surveys).	Allow minimum 4 weeks for processing and issue of Section 26 Archaeological Licence, and where relevant for Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence and Section 2 Detection Device Licence.
Protected Structure	May be subject to Section 14 Ministerial Consent (where/if also considered a national monument in the ownership/guardianship of the local authority) or Section 26 Archaeological Licence. May be subject to Section 5 Exempted Development Declaration or planning permission. May be subject to Section 57 Declaration.	Allow minimum 6 weeks for processing and issue of Consent in advance of development; allow minimum 4 weeks for processing and issue of Section 26 Archaeological Licence. Allow sufficient time for reporting and preparation of information to support Section 5 and/or Section 57 application detail.

Cultural Heritage Asset	Potential Notification, Licence & Consent Requirements	Programming Requirement
Asset listed on the NIAH Building Survey	May be subject to Section 14 Ministerial Consent or Section 26 Archaeological Licence (where/if also considered a national monument in the ownership/guardianship of the local authority or where also included/protected on a statutory list).	Allow minimum 6 weeks for processing and issue of Consent in advance of development (if required); allow minimum 4 weeks for processing and issue of Section 26 Archaeological Licence.
Undesignated Cultural Heritage Asset	May be subject to Section 26 Archaeological Licence. May be subject to Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence. May be subject to Section 2 Detection Device Licence (for Metal Detection or Geophysical Surveys).	Allow minimum 4 weeks for processing and issue of Section 26 Archaeological Licence, Section 3 Underwater Dive/Survey Licence and Section 2 Detection Device Licence.