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### **Part 8 Consultation: Proposed Grand Canal Greenway – Co. Kildare**

Celbridge Community Council wishes to express its support to Kildare County Council for the development of the Grand Canal Greenway in Co. Kildare.

Celbridge Community Council also wishes to compliment the pragmatic decision taken by South Dublin County Council and Kildare County Council to enter into a Section 85 agreement for completion of the small stretch through the Stacammy Cottage and Balscott townlands in Co. Kildare. This decision will see both County Councils be able to follow through on objectives in their respective County Development Plans.

We have a number of points to make relating to the proposals for the Grand Canal Greenway:

#### **Gates on Greenway**

It is unclear from the Part 8 documentation what format gates will take but we wish to request that any gates used be disability and family friendly therefore easily traversed by wheelchairs, side-by-side double buggies and by cargo bikes.

#### **Surface Treatment**

We feel that an Asphalt surface will be most suited to all types of users and will require the least maintenance.

#### **Width of Cycle Treatment**

The agreed TII guideline width for cycle routes is 3 metres for a low volume cycle route and 5 metres for a high volume route. Based on population growth forecasts for North Kildare, we believe the Grand Canal Greenway has the capability to become a high volume route for commuters, so the width should be future-proofed at 5 metres particularly at the Dublin end of the Greenway.

#### **Commuter Benefit**

While the section of the Greenway between Hazelhatch and the 12<sup>th</sup> Lock is to be completed by South Dublin County Council and is subject to their Part 8 consultation, we wish to highlight that that particular section has the potential to have significant impact for the people of



Celbridge, Ardcloagh and beyond due to the possibilities it opens up for commuters who currently travel to parts of Dublin that can be easily reached from the Greenway and for people who will now be able to consider job opportunities along the route of the Greenway. The option of a safe, scenic and very direct cycling route for commuters will hopefully attract many to choose a healthier mode of commuting to South Lucan, Grange Castle, Clondalkin and beyond.

### Safety at Hazelhatch

Once South Dublin County Council closes the gap in the Greenway between the 12<sup>th</sup> Lock and Hazelhatch, this will pose a safety issue for pedestrians and cyclists as the Greenway will switch over from the northern bank of the canal to the southern bank of the canal at Hazelhatch so pedestrians and cyclists will need to traverse the single lane humpbacked road bridge in order to cross over the canal. We will support South Dublin County Council's proposal for the provision for a separate pedestrian and cyclist bridge parallel to the road bridge at Hazelhatch when they put this out to Part 8 consultation but wish to call out this concern for the attention of Kildare County Council.

### Tourism Benefit

This Greenway will undoubtedly have much potential for tourism and we hope that completion of the Grand Canal Greenway will attract many additional visitors to Celbridge.

### Deficits in Cycling Infrastructure on the Hazelhatch Road

Cyclists need to get to the Greenway safely and members of the community regularly raise concerns about the inadequacy of the cycling infrastructure on the Hazelhatch Road.

The Hazelhatch Road forms the middle section of the **Arthur's Way** heritage trail so the cycling infrastructure should be prioritised in order to maximise the benefits that can be gained from this tourism investment.

With car dependency at 70% amongst commuters to Dublin and traffic congestion crippling Celbridge, cycling in and around the town absolutely must be encouraged. Safety fears are a huge factor preventing many "would be cyclists" from cycling around Celbridge and only when the safety of cyclists is prioritised will we see the sort of increases in cycling that would be required to make a dent in our high rate of car dependency.



While we accept that this Part 8 consultation relates only to the greenway along the canal, Celbridge Community Council wishes to highlight the gravity of the deficits in cycling infrastructure leading to the greenway and requests that this be given serious and immediate consideration. The degree of segregation between cyclists and motorists is so insignificant in many parts of Celbridge that many motorists impatiently jeopardise cyclists' lives as they give insufficient clearance to allow for unexpected events such as a cyclist hitting a pothole or getting blown off course by a gust of wind. Many cyclists, especially children, cycle on footpaths for safety. Motorists complain about cyclists not using the cycle lanes that are provided but the reality is that some cycle lanes are just not fit for purpose.



Cyclists travelling between the Grand Canal and Celbridge will use the Hazelhatch Road. The 650m



stretch nearest to Celbridge (between the Liffey bridge and Hazelwood estate) has no cycle lanes. The road space that cyclists share with vehicles has many poorly designed drains with notable dips which result in cyclists swerving around them.

Where there is a cycle lane on the Hazelhatch Road (from Hazelwood estate out to the roundabout before Hazelhatch train station), it suffers from a number of issues as follows:

1. The cycle lane only runs from Hazelwood to the train station on the side of the road that cyclists coming towards Celbridge from Hazelhatch would use. While cyclists heading out to Hazelhatch could in theory use it too, it is a single rather than double cycle lane and crossing the road to and from it would be extremely awkward for cyclists.
2. The cycle lane is raised above the height of the road and there is insufficient provision for points at which a cyclist can merge from the cycle lane to the road or back without having to negotiate the kerb.
3. The Cycle Path is not practical between the GAA Club and Hazelwood resulting in it not being used by many cyclists as to do so means transversing many junctions, losing the right of way.
4. The cycle lane is on a shared surface with the footpath and maintenance to foliage is needed to prevent overgrowth of bushes and trees. Encroachment of foliage over the footpath in some places makes cycling in the cycle lane tricky especially when pedestrians are being pushed out to the middle of the path to avoid the overgrowth.
5. The Cycle Lane disappears near the roundabout, and there are no pedestrian or cyclist crossing facilities.

The success of the Greenway (and the nearby rail station) is reliant on safe and modern pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to actually get from Celbridge to the Grand Canal. Sub-standard cycling infrastructure will constitute a missed opportunity for Celbridge so a properly designed and maintained cycling route is essential and we implore you to address this urgently.

We trust that the points raised by Celbridge Community Council will be taken into consideration in your planning of the Grand Canal Greenway.

Yours faithfully

Helen Rice  
Secretary  
Celbridge Community Council