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Naas Canal Quarter Masterplan
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Below please find the IWAI's submission regarding the proposed Naas Canal Quarter Masterplan. The IWAI supports Kildare Council's vision for the Canal Quarter, with the addition of some observations which we believe will ensure a more successful delivery of this plan for the betterment of the town and it's long-term tourism potential.

1. Setting the Scene

To quote the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 "*The canal area of Naas is a hidden gem or a potential jewel in the crown for a regenerated town centre for Naas.*"

*"The Harbour provides a **unique sense of place**, with the peaceful and tranquil ambience. It provides a green lung connecting the town to the countryside. The area is **rich in heritage** and there is an opportunity for the Canal Quarter to make its archaeological, historical and industrial heritage a key centre of focus, and in the process become one of the most visually attractive and legible districts within the town."*

All of this is true, Naas has so much potential, the plan presents a wonderful image of a vibrant, active, living canal section and harbour. **Unfortunately, it fails to recognise the linchpin which will secure the delivery of this vision, which was highlighted in IWAI's original submission, the reinstatement of access to the Corbally Branch of the Canal.**

The Plan, (page 150) recognises the value of the busy boating community in Sallins and again rightly points out that Naas has none. The Naas Branch of the Grand Canal, though beautiful and full of potential, is barely two miles in length and has a series of five locks (not 6) in close succession. Unassisted it can take 15-25 mins to transit just one lock, so a set of five locks along with the short cruises between them, amounts to between 1.5-3 hrs to complete the journey up to the harbour from Soldiers Island where the branch begins. The destination needs to be worthwhile to attract boat traffic. However, the journey is still too short for many boats to be attracted onto the branch.

The Plan continues on (page 150) to describe how the Newbridge Road (R445) runs across the canal at Jigginstown, and so obstructs access to another four miles of excellent canal cruising onward to the gorgeous Corbally harbour. We must remember that it was Kildare Co Co who culverted the canal thereby closing the Corbally Branch. We would strongly urge the Council's design team to consider the inclusion of a new bridge to replace the obstructing culvert on the aptly named Newbridge Road. **The time to build a new bridge is definitely upon us, before the surrounding lands become built upon** and the presence of adjacent housing makes for a deterrent, should the proximity of buildings encroach on the bridge location.

Vision

Or the lack of it, has been responsible for some terrible decisions and plans to rid us of valuable inland waterways in the past. The Circular Line of the Grand Canal would now be a road if IWAI had not lobbied and fought for it's protection. Similarly, the Dublin section of the Royal Canal prior to restoration was being hungrily viewed as a site to fill in and replace with another road. Where would the now coveted Greenways be if these sections of canal had been allowed to disappear back then. The culverting of the Newbridge Road (R445) was, at the time of it's doing, the cheapest and simplest solution to an obstruction to road development. Thankfully there is hope, the council recognises the huge aesthetic and health value of extending Greenways and plans to develop the path onward from Naas to Corbally Harbour. Being able to walk alongside these waterways with ease does not just have to be a nod to our heritage and industrial past, to do only that would be to snub the living heritage that awaits the arrival of a bridge and the inevitable barges which will float under it. We must remember that the canal branch is still there, the Council need only provide a bridge, Waterways Ireland (WI) would then be responsible for dredging and reopening the canal. WI have already dredged Corbally Harbour and removed the silt mound from the harbour. It should also be noted that reopening the branch will greatly improve water supply from Corbally to the Naas Harbour and Branch. The Corbally Branch is very heavily silted, further prolonged silting drastically increases the possibility of flooding. The feeder is well supplied and very strong, the water has to go somewhere and the 'line of least resistance' will take it elsewhere from a silted and blocked canal. There is so much to be gained by installing a bridge and building firm foundations for increased tourism to the area, this further supports the Council's aim to increase boat traffic to the Harbour.



Corbally Canal beyond the (R445) culvert. A densely blocked, silted and almost dead waterway. Weed volumes hold water back, starving supply to the Naas Line. The Greenway here, though a pleasant tranquil walk, will look down upon this decaying monument to poor decision making in Kildare.

2. Introduction & IWAI History

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) was established in 1954. It has 24 branches across the 32 counties of Ireland and has 2000 members. It represents a wide range of members interests regarding inland waterways use and activities, community interests, navigation issues, tourism development, protection of heritage, all in relation to the socio and economic benefits of the waterways. Our members come from all walks of life and many are not boat owners.

IWAI has a long history of working with statutory agencies, funding groups, and community interests with regards to promoting access to the waterways. In recent years this has taken the form of working with Waterways Ireland – the navigation authority and Government Departments in relation to legislative reform regarding byelaws on boating use on the Canals and Barrow sections of the waterways. We also undertake large infrastructural refurbishment projects, such as the regeneration of the Boyne Canal in Co. Meath. IWAI also supports Special Interest Groups (SIGS) such as the CSIG which has undertaken a digital national mapping and charting project of the Shannon, Erne, Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Barrow Navigations. In late 2018, as a response to the severe difficulties encountered by boating users of the Grand Canal and Royal Canal, which collectively along with a

partial route on the River Shannon form the **Green and Silver Route**, a special interest Nav-Watch¹ Group was established within the Canal branches of IWAI. The purpose of this group is to constructively contribute to the knowledge base regarding access to waterways, their navigational maintenance, development and use from a boating perspective. Sharing this information with the relevant agencies for better and more focussed maintenance of these navigations.

3. Developing a Successful Canal Quarter in Naas Harbour



The annual IWAI Naas Rally attracts many boats by providing a unique experience. Developing a destination is about providing facilities, experiences and unique cruising opportunities.

A vibrant and successful canal quarter requires the firm foundation of a canal system fit for purpose. The development of a canal quarter should also be an opportunity to future proof this canal line, which is two hundred and thirty+ years old, well into the future.

The draft plan makes the point that the Naas Line of the Grand Canal has five locks but the Corbally Line has none. It then fails to develop the possibilities here. It mentions Corbally only in terms of a Greenway and does not fully consider the reopening of the canal. It mentions that Sallins has a vibrant barging community while Naas Harbour is generally empty of boats. There are a variety of reasons for this which need to be addressed for the project to be successful:

- The Naas Line is short and requires passage through five locks to reach it

¹ Nav-Watch – comprising expert members of Canals & Barrow branches of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland from the Royal Canal, Kildare, Dublin, North Barrow, Barrow, Offaly, and Shannon Harbour IWAI areas.

- Water taps for boats are needed in the harbour
- A pump-out for emptying the waste tanks of barges is required
- The back of the harbour is heavily silted and requires dredging
- The silt trap, which is a walled area adjoining the garden of the bungalow at the back of the harbour needs to be dredged, restored and maintained to keep the harbour from silting in the future.
- A service Block within in the harbour area is essential in providing services to visiting boats and any residents of liveaboard barges proposed for the entrance to the Corbally Branch. A service block will also serve all waterways activities and essentially, will also serve the growing traffic along the Greenway. There are currently no services for Greenway users, which is a severe design oversight.
- Jetties along the green bank opposite the harbour buildings would provide quiet and tranquil moorings for visiting boats. The proposed pedestrian bridge would give them easy access to the town side of the harbour.
- The pedestrian bridge should adhere to the minimum height requirements for canal bridges. It is an opportunity to design something which pays homage to the heritage of the canal.

The proposed pedestrians bridge across the harbour is illustrated in the Draft plan as a low-level construction. It is essential that this bridge conforms to bridge heights on the canal network, critical to this is the air draft beneath the bridge which must be adequate to allow barges to pass beneath. This oversight was made in the construction of a pedestrian bridge in Tullamore town which has lower than average air-draft and creates an unnecessary pinch point on the Grand Canal which prevents some vessels from exploring the canal further.

The suggestion of moorings for liveaboard barges just outside the harbour, round the bend on the Corbally Branch, is an exciting proposition. However, for this to be successful, adequate services would have to be installed to serve these liveaboards with water, power, a pump-out and a floating jetty. The barge liveaboard lifestyle is currently booming and there is enormous demand for berths and appropriate services for these people. Liveaboard communities have much to offer, they add hugely to the atmosphere along the canal and are a great draw to local tourism. There would also need to be a sufficiently wide section on the canal for these barges to turn. Currently, these vessels would have to travel to the culverted bridge at Jigginstown where there is a sufficiently wide section to turn.

4. Sports & Recreational Facilities

Better facilities such as a toilet/service block lend themselves to the development of canal tourism. Boat Rentals, Bike Rentals, Kayak and Paddleboard Hire are all more likely and possible when there are supporting facilities to lean on. **The enormous success of the Greenways has emphasized the need for**

public toilet facilities along those Greenways. These facilities are maintained by waterways Ireland and are accessed free by way of a smart card. They are generally well maintained and are unlocked in daylight hours. Access to showers or other facilities are by smart card which protects facilities against vandalism.



Life has been brought to the Greenways, bringing life to the waterway completes the picture and enhances the experience for all users.

5. Liveaboard Boat Communities

For a variety of reasons, many people are choosing to make their home on a barge, a lifestyle more aligned with the rhythm of nature, anywhere they can in Dublin and its surrounding counties.

With only twenty official liveaboard berths in Dublin's Grand Canal Dock demand has exploded and to-date both Waterways Ireland and Councils have been slow to respond to the increased interest in this seemingly idyllic and low stress way of life. We estimate in the region of 1000 liveaboards in various pockets throughout the country, the main concentration being in Dublin City and Kildare. **Planning sensitively for these growing communities is long overdue.** A vast number of people have applied to Waterways Ireland for a liveaboard berth and have created a long waiting list. Many others have simply bought a barge and had it craned into the canal, moved to a desired location where they have begun their liveaboard lifestyle.

Poor conditions

An ancient system is currently straining under the pressure, minimal services cannot cope with the new level of demand. New byelaws are pending which will give Waterways Ireland the power to deal better with the growth and introduce revised charges which will aid the delivery of better services for those liveaboards. At the same time there is much that DCC & KCC can do to improve the situation.

Currently boats are congregating in groups on both the Royal and Grand on a 200+ year old beautiful heritage canal system which still operates, but has little in the way of essential services. There is generally no drinking water available, very limited sewage pump-out facilities (one in GCD, one in Lowtown and one in Sallins), there is little lighting, few jetties and crucially almost no electricity. Blanchardstown Harbour at Lock 12 on the Royal is an example of all of these issues, barges crammed into a wonderful cut-stone, heritage harbour but with no facilities. The harbour is congested, uncontrolled and visiting boats have nowhere to moor for short term visits. Hazelhatch has a large liveaboard population surviving with almost no facilities or services.

While most barge owners are proud to be off the grid, using solar panels, large batteries and LEDs to generate power for their homes and offices, it only takes one vessel to continually pump its toilet directly into the canal to pollute the whole area. Dublin and Kildare urgently need fully serviced liveaboard berths where people can live safely and securely in this fast expanding vibrant communities.

6. Naas Harbour – Expand Facilities



Naas Harbour, alive and full of boats.

Infrastructure

The development of liveaboard facilities in this location would preserve and enhance the existing structure of the harbour in a sensitive marrying of old with new. The inclusion of jetties or quayside moorings on the edge of the harbour would be required, equipped with bollards supplying barges with power and water, a broadband link would be essential also. The berths would be sensitively lit with lights atop the service bollards. A pumpout station at a dedicated berth would allow boats to move there temporarily as required to empty their holding tanks. Holding tanks are fitted to barges to store all sewage/black water. **A handful of berths could be reserved for short stay visitors such as hire boats or travelling boaters coming from the Shannon, Grand Canal Main Line or Barrow.** This would help encourage and develop much needed tourist links between the Shannon, Dublin and the South East.



The back of Naas Harbour is so silted it cannot be accessed by boats.

Low-carbon Community

By their nature, boating communities are low-carbon communities. Shore power is not always available. When disconnected from any communal electricity grid, each boat is responsible for its own electricity and heat generation. Boats commonly use off-grid electricity production methods such as solar panels and wind turbines to meet the electricity needs of the boatowner. Every electrical appliance is carefully chosen in order to reduce the electrical demand. Most boats run on a 12 volt system similar to that used in cars.

Every decision to switch on an application is a calculated decision for the boatowner, based on an assessment on whether there has been enough electrical power generated that day and whether the use of electricity is necessary. In comparison with conventional housing, there is a much greater awareness of energy usage and no demand on the electricity grid. With recent advances in the efficiency solar panels, there is a growing number of liveaboards boaters who are completely off grid with their electricity usage.

Alongside this, the lifestyle of a liveaboard boater is in general very eco-friendly. There is less often household waste generated due to space restrictions. Water usage is kept to a minimum as the size of

the water tank limits daily usage. This focus on renewable energy, low waste and water conservation results in a very low carbon lifestyle.

Rent

These serviced berths would generate some small income for WI, which would in turn be reinvested in facilities along the canals. Rates for liveaboards in Waterways Ireland's berths are restricted by limits imposed within the 1980's byelaws, these are currently being revised. The original permits were specifically intended for cruising boats and did not cater for the demands placed upon the system by liveboard communities.

7. Year Round Boat Tourism Potential

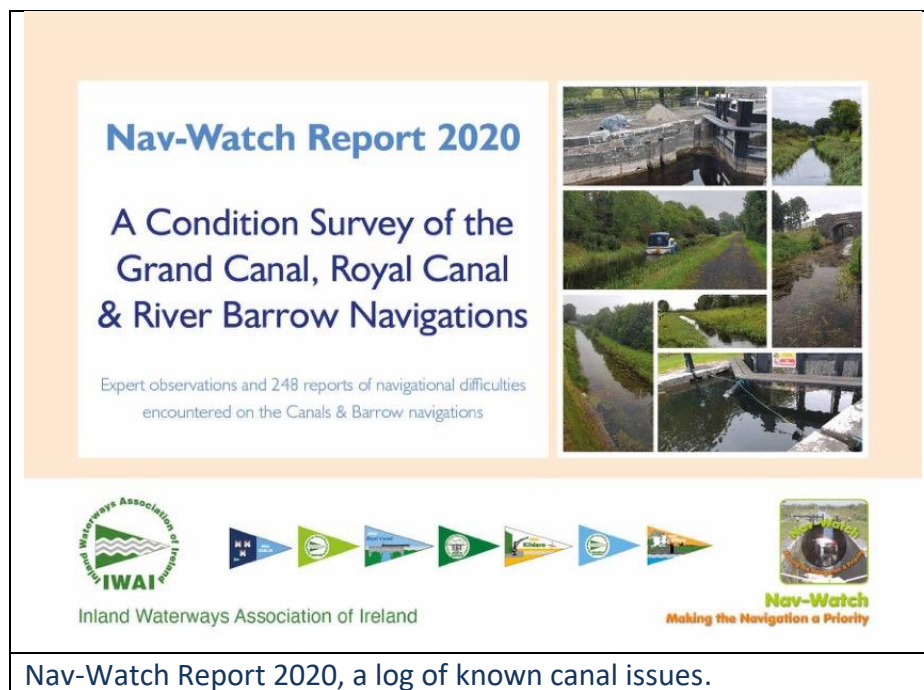
Since the downturn in 2008 a cash strapped Waterways Ireland has focused it's attention on areas where funding was available, i.e. the development of Greenways. These have been very well received by the general public. Now, there is considerable scope to develop boat tourism on both Canals culminating with a boat tourism hub in the city centre linking the canals.

Boat tourism on the Shannon is basically restricted to a 6-7 month season, April to September-October. The canals offer the opportunity for year round boat tourism, cruising the canals is possible all year round (the winter months are termed Maintenance Season when works can result in localised closures, but generally the canals are open). Our warmer climate in recent years makes winter cruising on the canals all the more viable. The days are gone when the canal could be expected to freeze over for a period each winter. The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland's Nav-Watch group have recently surveyed the canals and documented areas where dredging or maintenance needs are greater (see/download Nav-Watch Report 2020: www.iwai.ie/nav-watch/surveyreport). It is hoped that this focus on critical maintenance will improve the navigation and leave it better able to cope with a variety of vessels travelling between Dublin and the Shannon.

Potential and Opportunity

There is a real opportunity to create something truly special here. As the number of liveboard boats and barges grows ever larger, the demand for facilities to service and repair these vessels grows too. Dublin has long closed access to the valuable Graving Docks site at Grand Canal Docks. With liveboard communities growing around Kildare there is a need for more servicing facilities. There is no dry dock in Monasterevin but the inclusion of one would add enormously to the attractiveness of Monasterevin as a canals town. Alternatively or complementing that, a service yard adjacent to the canal, where boats can be craned out to be worked on would be a huge advantage. There is a need for a

maintenance hub on the Grand Canal, where boats can be lifted or dry docked, welded, painted and refitted. All of these industries could operate from one location, providing valuable employment opportunities for the town. Currently, boats needing a dry dock have to travel from Dublin to Athy or from Dublin to Shannon Harbour. A dedicated facility with the complete range of skills does not exist, yet.



We take our canals very much for granted, they are just there, people are very surprised and always attracted and intrigued when they see a boat or barge pass by. The built heritage of these tremendous assets is largely overlooked. **Much of this 200 year old system still functions well today, it is working living history.** The longest hand-made structure in this country is the 146km length of the Royal Canal, yet few people are aware of this. We find original bridges, locks and some buildings are added to each counties' List of Protected Structures. Yet none have taken the obvious step and listed the structure of the canal cut which is arguably the greater achievement of our early 19th century canal builders.

Neglect

Looking at other capital cities around Europe we can see how much tourism has developed around their canals and waterway facilities. Water draws people to it, boats moving on that water have an even greater draw. **Everywhere in Europe that there are canals traversing a city there are thriving communities and vibrant tourism attractions built upon the back of that draw to water... except in Dublin where it has been neglected.**

Future-proofing the canals network

To fail to plan for the future life of the canals is to begin the process of decline and ultimately closure. IWAI's Nav-Watch was established to document problems and focus essential maintenance on critical issues by bringing them to the attention of WI. It is also a means to lobby Government for increased funding to allow WI to reinstate necessary programmes of maintenance and bring the state of the navigation back to where it should be, reversing the state of gradual neglect which had set in during years of budgetary reduction. Specific project funding and pressure from councils will help to drive this appreciation and development of our heritage waterways network.

Services and planning

As mentioned earlier in our submission, barges need services. As one answer to our lack of housing stock this growing community is struggling without services and safe places to berth their homes. One of the more essential services is the availability of a dry dock in the city. Dry docks in the Dublin region on both canals have long since been demolished or filled in. There remains still the two Graving Docks in Grand Canal Dock, Although these heritage structures are currently closed and are being kept out of use. They are not defunct and are still viable. Currently if you have a barge in Dublin and discover a leak or require maintenance to the hull your only options are:

- a. If it is urgent, hire a crane at great expense and lift it out. But that's difficult in the confines of a congested city, cranes block roads, and where do you lift it out to?
- b. The second option is you take a journey of several days to Athy Dry Dock; the other end of the Grand Canal to Shannon Harbour in Banagher; or to Mullingar on the Royal, where there are functioning dry docks.

These facilities were originally built at regular intervals on the canals, the builders understood their essential nature.

In short, dry docks in Dublin and Kildare have never been more important or essential. As we sit on the cusp of an explosion in vessel numbers on the canal's waterways. While the future of the Graving Docks site is unclear, it is important to note the existence of a dry dock in Sallins. This dry dock is currently filled in but could easily be excavated and returned to service. It is this essential restoration of a heritage structure which will help copper-fasten plans for Naas Harbour and indeed the surrounding canal infrastructure and communities.



A barge in dry dock (Shannon Harbour). Essential facilities for all canal based vessels.

8. The Importance of Through Traffic

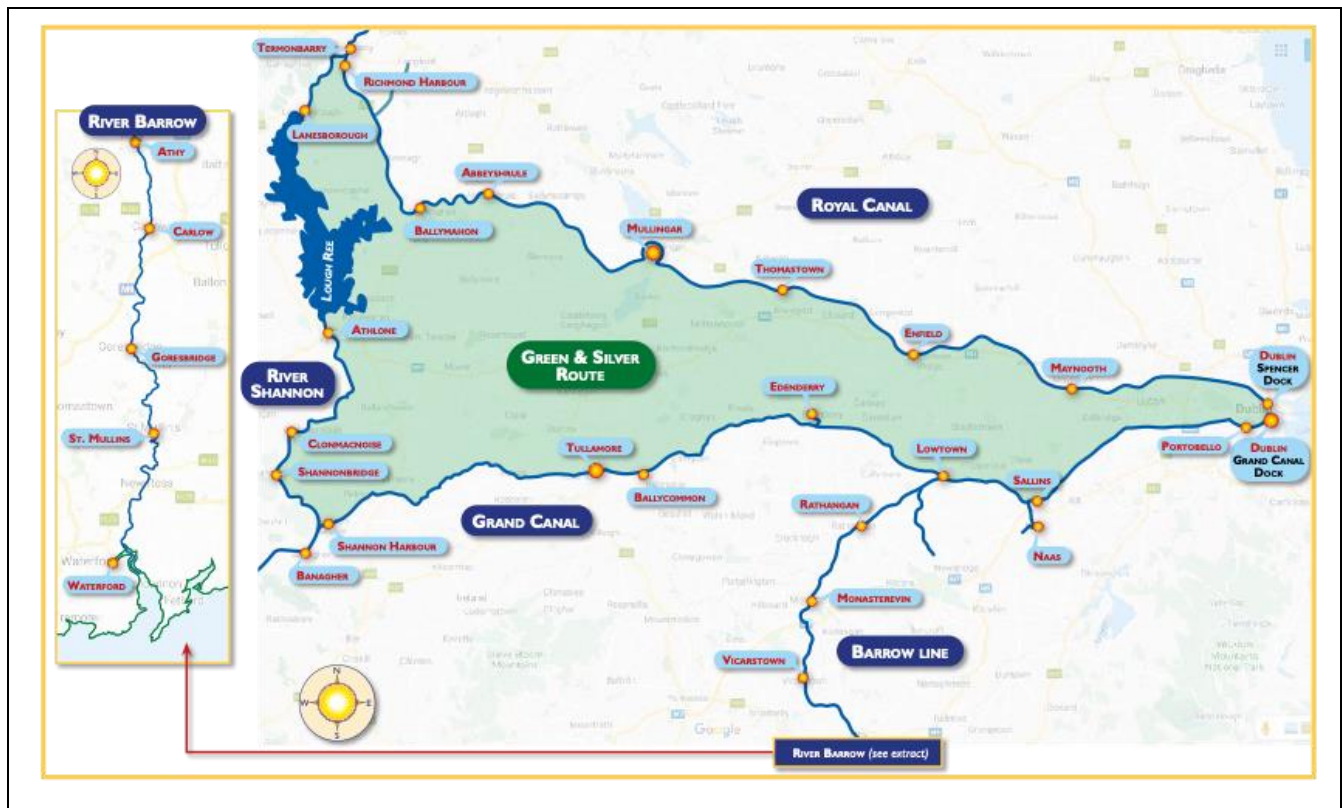
By through traffic we mean the ability for boats to easily travel through one canal, out onto the Liffey and onward into the other canal, in either direction.

The potential here for developing a thriving boat tourism business through Dublin, Kildare and the Midlands is as great as it is in any other European capital with a canal network. We have a canals network which is still operational in its original state, nothing has been automated, simplified, or plasticized. One has to travel to other countries to gain a true understanding of the value of this living history heritage. There are only a couple of barge hire companies operating on the canals and Barrow Line at present. Poor maintenance of the navigation hampers their clients and businesses struggle accordingly. There is great demand for these hire services and **tourists who do come will frequently take a boat for a week, spending heavily on food and drink in the towns they pass through.** The Nav-Watch group through their Report 2020 are lobbying government for an increased maintenance budget for Waterways Ireland so they may better maintain the canals navigation in the future. (see Nav-Watch Report 2020: <https://branch.iwai.ie/nav-watch/surveyreport/>)

The Spectacular *Green & Silver* Route

The 'Green and Silver' route is based on the route taken on a documented triangular journey undertaken by L.T.C. Rolt in 1946. His subsequent publication of 'The Green & Silver' book in 1949, is now its 7th edition and as a boating 'classic' has become a bible for canals navigation enthusiasts in Ireland and many visitors from overseas. Rolt was one of the founders of the Inland Waterways Association (UK) in 1946.

This Green & Silver waterways route between Dublin and the midlands², which is of huge potential for economic benefit and social activity for the regions it passes through. It comprises a waterways triangular route of the Royal Canal, a section of the River Shannon, Grand Canal and into Dublin (crossing the Liffey to get back to the Royal to complete the journey). This navigation route is of international significance, ignored by our tourism organisations, **it is the only circular boating route in Ireland and needs to be elevated to national planning status level to flourish**. This route runs right through Westmeath and the beautiful harbour in Mullingar, a significant stop-off point on the Royal Canal leg of the journey. **This is a spectacularly beautiful route and a bucket-list goal for many boaters. It's potential for development as a tourist route has yet to be realized.** To-date it has been the goal of the private boat tourist to complete this special route but the potential for commercial boat rental tourism remains untapped.



² Green & Silver Route - Dublin, Royal Canal, River Shannon, Grand Canal triangular navigation route.

Green & Silver route – the Royal Canal, The Grand Canal (crossing the Liffey in Dublin) and the Mid Shannon region. As yet this is an unexplored route for major heritage value/boating tourism.



Green and Silver book cover – comprised of the Royal Canal, the Grand Canal and the mid-Shannon. The route is approx. 320 km and can be completed in 10-12 days of continuous travel by boat, however it is preferable to take as long as you can.

Boaters who currently do this route in Ireland can register to take part in the Green & Silver logbook challenge, by which they get various passport style stamps on an old fashioned log book format; a certificate; and a polished metal plaque to mark their achievement. The Dublin branch of the IWA have been the main drivers behind the promotion of this route and administer the registration, log book and plaque allocations. However it is also the users of the Green & Silver route who have contributed to it becoming known in the boating community over the last decade (only possible since the reopening of the Royal Canal) and it is an excellent example of 'ground up' grassroots user based perspective being able to contribute to regional development, once the relevant support and resources to push it on further are considered and applied. It is 70 years since the publication of the original book so it is timely that in 2024 it gains more exposure.

	
Green & Silver Log Book	Green & Silver Certificate

The Green & Silver route runs through nine of the twelve local authority areas – from Dublin City Council out the Royal Canal through Fingal, Meath, Kildare, Westmeath and Longford to the River Shannon (with access from the Shannon to the Camlin River – a particularly tranquil and secret spot on the overall navigation), back in the Grand Canal through Offaly, Kildare and South Dublin, with a spur line off in into Laois to access the River Barrow system. This route has the potential to be a major international level boating destination servicing both the city and the wider region and should be viewed as a collective resource with regard to its navigable future.

The canals network in Ireland is some 200 years old, and still functioning in much the same way as it is in the early 1800's. Manually operated lock are still operated the same way, the canal banks ensure the immediate natural environment is available and local history and heritage is on its doorstep in the many towns and villages through which the Green & Silver route passes. We are very good at presenting our nation's history through documentaries, drama, theatre and so on, but there is nothing that can evoke the actual real experience of canal boating except to undertake it. We constantly hear said by German and British tourists on our waterways ***"You have the best waterways in Europe, why don't you use them more!"*** In the case of the canals, this could not be more true. We have failed to invest in their tourist potential so far.

The Green & Silver route runs through large and small towns such as Longford, Mullingar, Enfield, Kilcock, Leixlip, Maynooth, Naas, Edenderry, Tullamore and Athlone. These can offer local boating route points e.g. weekend hire boats, to use the local areas of the Green & Silver from those locations. Small businesses in this area are starting up and indeed somewhat established - notably Royal Canal Boat Trips operating trips between Clonsilla and Kilcock on the Royal Canal (ref

<https://royalcanalgreenway.ie/listing/royal-canal-boat-trips/>); on the Grand Canal bargetrip.ie based in Sallins and more recently boattrips.ie on the Barrow adding to the long established Barrowline cruisers in Vicarstown. Also, as mentioned earlier, there are several hire companies on the Shannon that would be willing to send their tourist hire boaters into the midlands if they could be confident of access and reliability of use.

9. Expansion of the Record of Protected Structures

While the bridges, locks and some buildings associated with the canals are 'Listed' on the Record of Protected Structures in the counties through which the canal passes, the NIAH (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage) through their www.buildingsofireland.ie website fails to list the original 200 year old structure of the canals as 'Listed' structures. Built in the days before mechanization, our canals were built entirely by hand. **They are, collectively or individually, the largest man-made structures on our island and should be recognised as such with 'Listed' status for the entire structure as a whole** (Bridges, Locks, the Navigation, Banks, Bed and Cut). They are national routes, too often compromised by infringement through poor planning at county level. They need to be considered at a national level to insure their working future. They were built to operate commercially, with trading boats that hauled goods to and from Dublin, Limerick and Carrick, most notably Guinness. Many of these boats are still around today, lovingly re-purposed by their owners as residential or recreation barges. It is important to re-evaluate that importance at County level. Although they are over two hundred years old and considered affectionately in terms of heritage, it must be recognised that these structures have a unique place within our national heritage and should be promoted and explored more as offering a **Living History** experience. Though 200 years old, they still function and can be used in the same way that several generations of boatmen have experienced.

Awarding 'Listed' status to selective elements of the Royal, Grand and Barrow Navigations seems somewhat pointless, these items are interesting and individually contribute to our national heritage. But as parts of the whole, the entire canal, they come into their own and fully display their importance and function as essential parts of the canal's heritage. The greater part of the Royal Canal, its channel or 'cut' remains unlisted by some councils though it is a massive handbuilt construction which is often elevated far above the surrounding landscape which required the labour of thousands of Navvies each moving thousands of barrows of clay and soil. They form our largest national hand built structures. The Royal now also comprises the National Famine Way, a pilgrimage route which commemorates the suffering of famine victims being transported to Dublin docks and onward to North America.

10. Conclusion

Naas Harbour and it's environs has the potential to offer a range of wonderful experiences to canal users and tourists, be they travelling by boat or along the Greenways and Blueways. The addition of vital facilities for visiting boats, liveaboards and all users of the Harbour must be considered as essential for the Naas Harbour LAP to be successful. However, the success or failure of this plan to return the harbour to a vibrant energetic destination will depend on whether the council has the vision to expand on the potential of the Naas Branch by building a bridge to recreate access further to the Corbally Branch where it's harbour could become another destination experience in Kildare's tourism portfolio.

The canals network represent the living history of our industrial development. There are opportunities here to copper-fasten their future as 'working' and 'living' structures which can be reimagined in a modern and useful way. Demand is pushing for supply and communities need essential services and amenities. Allowing liveaboard life to grow on our canals assures their future but will also become the driving attraction in a tourism sector which we have only sampled so far on the canals.

The IWAI will be available to offer experience or guidance on any area of canal development, we warmly welcome opportunities to ensure the future of these heritage navigations and their infrastructure.