



Draft Houseboat Mooring Investment Programme

Introduction

Waterways Ireland manages the Royal Canal, Grand Canal & Barrow Navigation under the Canals Act 1986 (Bye Laws) 1988. Much has changed in the intervening 36 years such as the growth in Houseboats and the resultant need to provide serviced Houseboat moorings on the canals.

The revised Canals Bye-laws 2024 create a Houseboat permit and allow for the greater regularisation of houseboats on the canals. In addition to the introduction of new bye-laws, Waterways Ireland will deliver a houseboat mooring investment programme which will assist with the further regularisation of houseboats.

This Houseboat Mooring Investment programme will see the delivery of 172 serviced houseboat moorings on the canals over a 7 year period and will necessitate an estimate capital outlay of €12.5m. The programme also envisages the delivery of between 200 and 300 moorings off line at purpose built marinas, estimated costing for which have not yet been finalised.

This Houseboat Investment programme is an illustrative document and a more detailed, costed programme will be developed in the coming months.

Growth of Houseboat numbers

Living on the water has become attractive as an affordable alternative for people living and working in the Greater Dublin area. The high cost of accommodation and the shortage of suitable housing has led to a significant increase in the numbers of people seeking to live on the canals in the Greater Dublin area. For example, Grand Canal Dock has 20 houseboat mooring spaces with a waiting list of 270 interested parties.

Waterways Ireland estimates that 170 boats are being lived on throughout the canals network. The disposition of the houseboats on the canals is mainly focussed on public transport connectivity along with access to nearby facilities such as shops.

The numbers of houseboats on the canals are estimated as follows:

Navigation	Location	Number
Royal Canal	Castleknock	19
	Confey	12
	Pike Bridge	1
	Enfield	3
	Rural	4
Grand Canal	Hazelhatch	30
	Sallins	43
	Lowtown	17
	Grand Canal Dock	27
	Shannon Harbour	7
Barrow	Monasterevin & Graiguenamanagh	7
Total		170

Further growth in the demand for house boat moorings is also anticipated given the projected population growth, lifestyle changes etc. For the purposes of this programme an estimated growth of 10% per annum has been taken into account and factored in.

Rationale for Houseboat moorings

It is incumbent on Waterways Ireland to manage the growth in houseboats and to provide adequate facilities.

Based on international best practice, it is proposed that the optimal method of regulating the use of Houseboats on the canals is by providing a fit for purpose Houseboat permit combined with serviced Houseboat moorings.

The provision of serviced houseboat moorings will enhance water quality, improve safety of houseboat occupiers, and improve the houseboat mooring options available on the canals.

Standardised jetty type and services

Waterways Ireland will utilise a standardised houseboat jetty design on the canals (outside of Grand Canal Dock).

Waterways Ireland has three houseboat mooring locations at present. Grand Canal Dock caters for 20 serviced moorings on floating jetties with Sallins providing 12 moorings and Shannon Harbour providing 8 moorings at hard edge jetties.

The Sallins Houseboat jetties which were installed in 2010 have proven to be a low maintenance model that is fit for purpose. This model provides linear houseboat moorings along one side of the canal thereby allowing through navigation to continue without impediment. The Sallins Houseboat jetty model will be adopted as the standardised design for Waterways Ireland.

The structural elements of the jetty are constructed with hardwood timber (Ekki) and walkways were designed to 'Universal Access' standards.

The standard services at the houseboat jetties will be:

- a. Hard-edged mooring
- b. Electricity
- c. Potable water supply (tap)
- d. Public lighting
- e. Eircode

The services which will be provided adjacent to the houseboat jetty will be:

- a. Pump-out station
- b. Waste disposal
- c. Postbox location
- d. Car parking

Optional services that may be provided are:

- a. CCTV
- b. EV charging Points
- c. Bike Rack

d. Internet capability

It is considered that the level of services outlined in the above paragraphs will ensure that houseboat owners can live in a safe and sustainable way on the canals.

The Figure below provides a cross section view of the Houseboat jetty installed on one side of the canal with a Houseboat moored alongside. This design allows for the free movement of boats along the canals passing by the moored Houseboats.

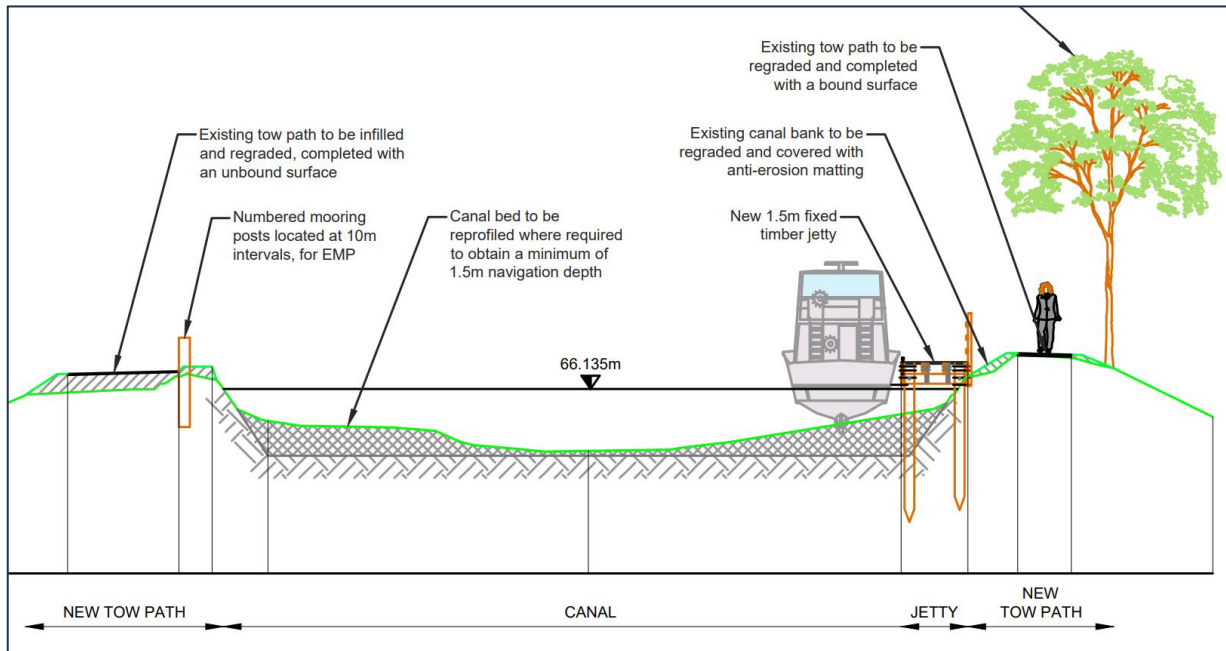


Fig 1. Cross section of a canal with houseboat jetty

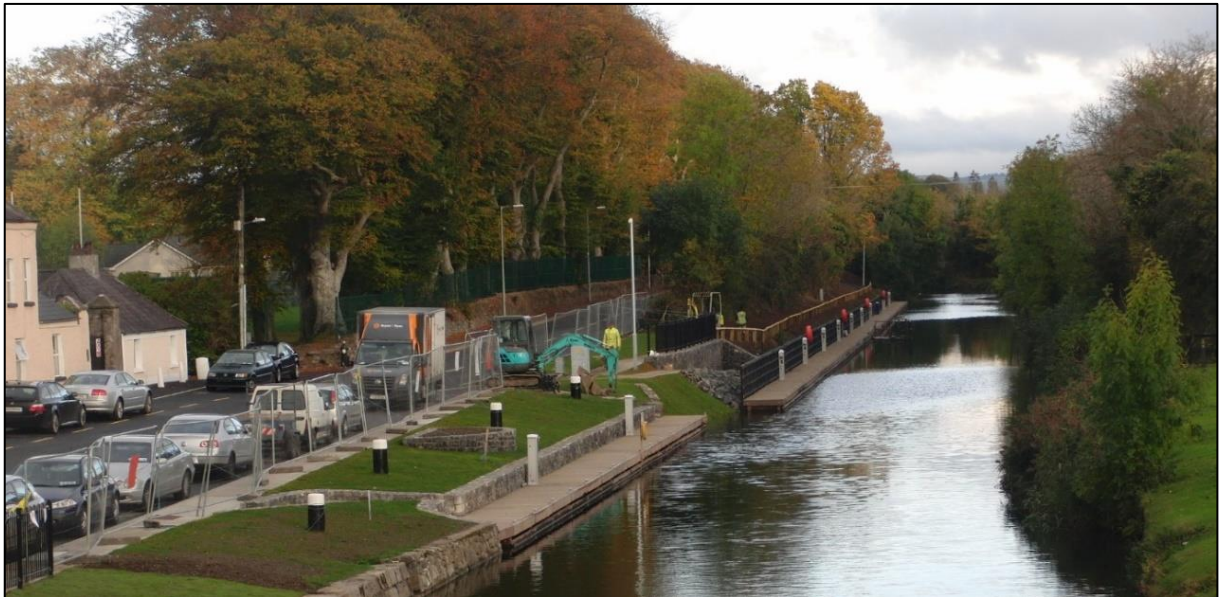


Photo 1. Houseboat jetties at Sallins – Linear jetty along one side of the canal



Photo 2. Houseboat jetties being stalled at Shannon Harbour in 2011.

Waterways Ireland installed houseboat jetties in Shannon Harbour in 2011. These jetties were installed off the canal line as shown in the photograph above. This layout involves cutting into land off the canal, this method will not be employed during the programme of investment in houseboat jetties on the canals from 2024 to 2030.

Capital Investment Programme

Waterways Ireland will undertake a programme of investment in houseboat jetties on the canals from 2024 to 2030. The investment will be structured across 3 Phases. Phase 1 and 2 will seek to develop on line facilities for houseboats while Phase 3 will seek to develop large scale marina type developments off the canal line.

Phase 1 involves the installation of jetties in locations where there are currently concentrations of houseboats and where there are already houseboat jetties in existence.

Location	Moorings		Cost of construction	Income Proposed numbers based on fees and
	Existing	Seek planning		
Grand Canal Dock	20	20	€100k	€160k
Sallins	12	15	€1.6m	€54k
Hazelhatch	0	15	€1.6m	€30k
Lowtown	0	10	€1.1m	€10k
Castleknock	0	10	€1.1m	€20k
Shannon Harbour	8	5	€0.6m	€13k
Pike Bridge	0	10	€1.1m	€20k
Total	40	85	€7.2m	€307k

Table 1: Phase 1 of the Houseboat Investment Programme

Phase 2 involves the installation of jetties in locations in the more rural towns along the canals.

Suggested Location	Mooring Numbers - Seek Planning	Cost of construction	Income based on Proposed fees and numbers
Enfield	5	€0.6m	€5k
Ballynacargy Harbour	7	€0.8m	€7k
Edenderry Harbour	8	€0.9m	€8k
Monasterevin	5	€0.55m	€10k
Athy	5	€0.55m	€5k
Kilcock	10	€1.1m	€10k
Tullamore	7	€0.8m	€7k
Total	47	€5.3m	€52k

Table 2: Phase 2 of the Houseboat Investment Programme

It is anticipated that the jetties will have a 40-year life span.

The maintenance and running costs of the additional jetties will be covered by the houseboat permit fees. The estimated running cost of each Houseboat mooring on an annual basis is:

Staff Costs (inspection, maintenance and repair)	€1,107
Ongoing maintenance & repair	€1,659
Total annual cost per mooring	€2,766
 Total annual cost for 172 houseboat moorings	 €475,752

The key enabler for the installation of jetties at each of the locations is Planning Permission from the Local Authority. Waterways Ireland will apply for Planning Permission for each location as the programme is rolled out over several years.

Phase 3 will entail the identification with other stakeholders of suitable and available lands adjacent to the canals for potential marina development. Waterways Ireland will begin the process this year. The optimum scale of marina would ideally seek to cater for between 50 and 100 berths with one third of available berths catering for houseboat and the remaining berths catering for normal boating storage over winter. There is potential to explore private sector involvement or other models of partnership in the development and management of such marinas. No sites have yet been identified and consequently no cost estimates are available for Phase 3.

Programme for 2024.

The programme for 2024 will involve Planning Permission applications for the following locations:

- a. Grand Canal – Hazelhatch – 15 houseboat berths
- b. Royal Canal – Pike Bridge – 10 houseboat berths

Waterways Ireland (Technical Services) will provide the design services and prepare the Planning Permission applications.

Once Planning Permission is received the installation work can commence.

Hazelhatch on the Grand Canal was selected for 15 houseboat berths for several reasons including:

- Connectivity by rail to Dublin,
- Numbers of Houseboats already in situ,
- The need to improve the environmental and aesthetic appearance of the area,
- To improve water quality.



Photo 3. Aerial photo of Hazelhatch – Eastern side looking westwards towards the bridge

Pike Bridge on the Royal Canal was selected for 10 houseboat berths for reasons including:

- Nearby connectivity by rail to Dublin,
- Numbers of Houseboats already in situ,
- The need to improve the environmental and aesthetic appearance of the area,
- To provide Houseboats in Confey with the option of serviced Houseboat moorings.

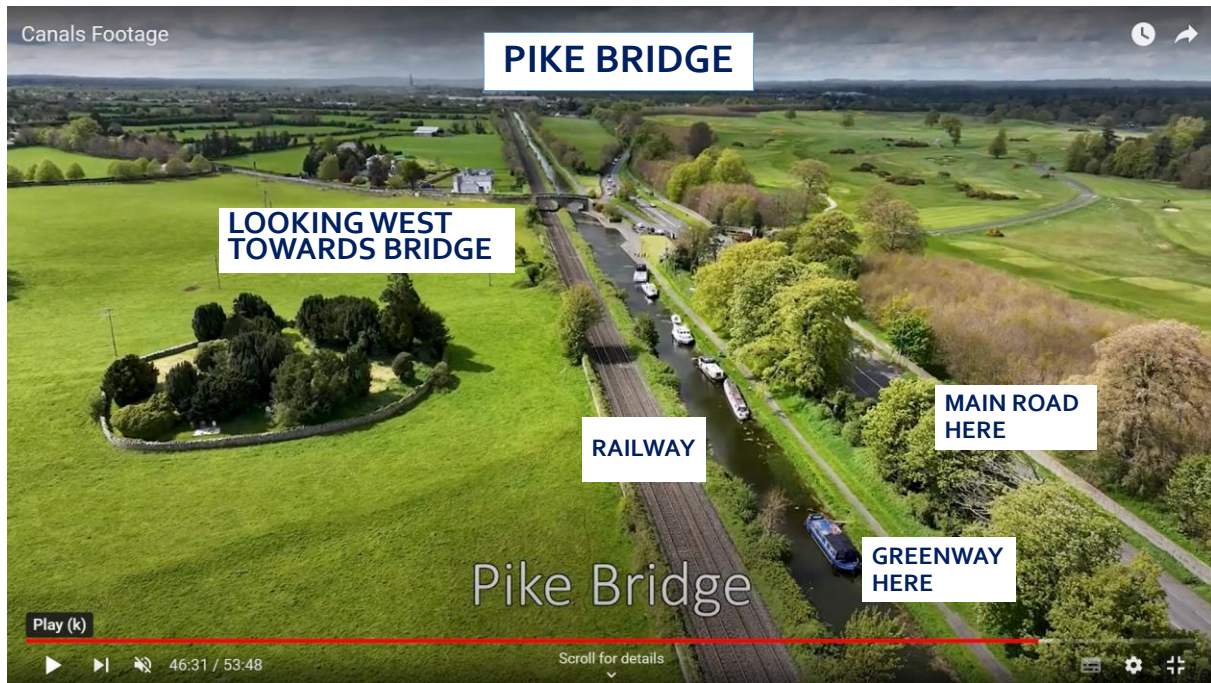


Photo 4. Aerial photo of Pike Bridge – Eastern side looking westwards towards the bridge

Conclusion

The introduction of revised Canals Bye-Laws in 2024 presents the opportunity to regularise the situation with Houseboats on the canals including the introduction of a Houseboat mooring permit.

The introduction of revised Bye-Laws puts an onus on Waterways Ireland to provide serviced Houseboat moorings and to improve safety and environmental standards on the canals.

This Houseboat Mooring Investment Programme envisages over 170 houseboat moorings (in Phase 1 and 2) on the canals providing safe secure and sustainable living for those living on boats. Phase 3 development could potentially cater for a further 200 to 300 house boat berths.

This programme provides an additional option in the housing mix within the environs of the canals in the East of Ireland.

Ends