

International Conference on Greenways and Sustainable
Tourism. Rome (Italy). 20 November 2023

Example of Product Development

Royal Canal Greenway

Mervyn Hamilton

Senior Engineer





Waterways Ireland





Royal Canal



Royal Canal Timeline

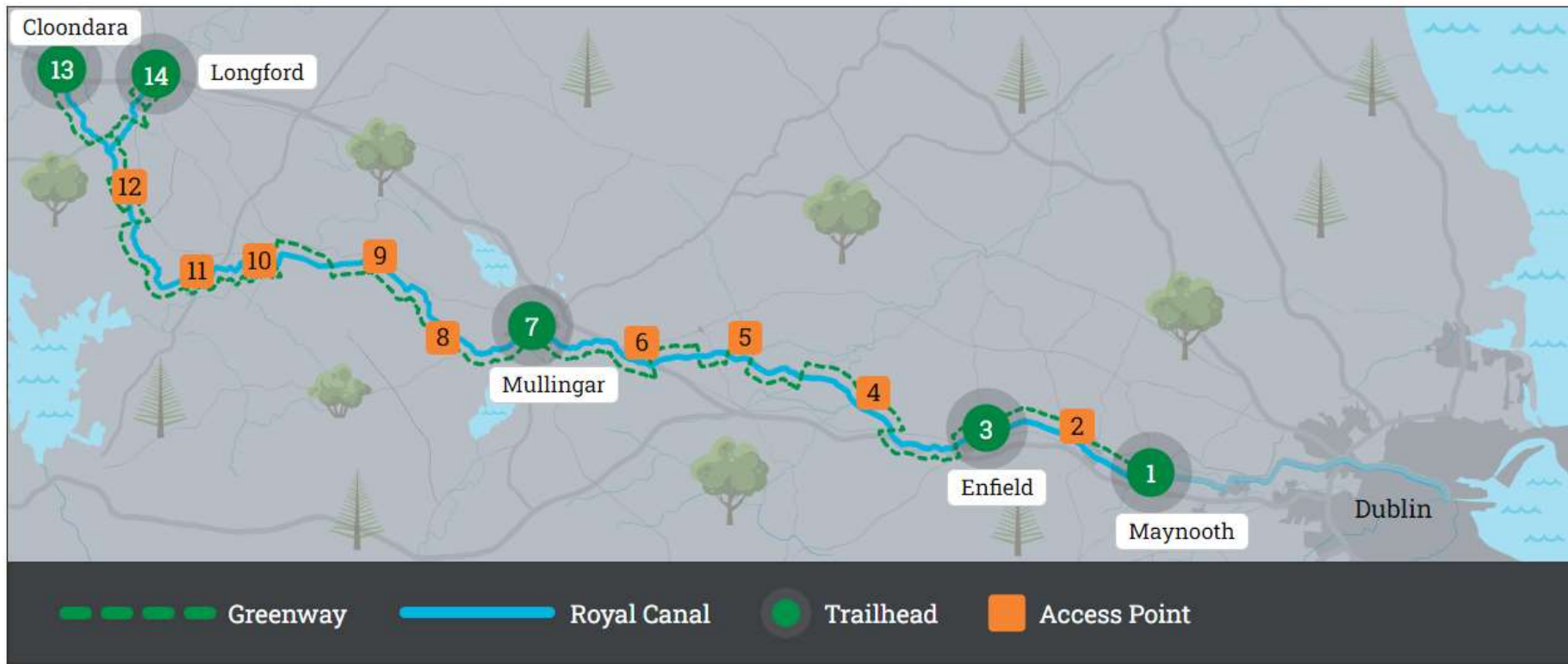
- Canal originally built from Dublin to River Shannon between 1790 and 1817. Total cost £1.42m
- Operated relatively successfully in the 1820s and 1830s
- Decline started after purchased by railway company in 1845
- Continued decline until official closure in 1961; route fell into disrepair and overgrowth
- Navigation restoration started by volunteer groups from 1974; involving canal dredging, replacing lock gates (102 pairs), re-watering and structure reconstruction
- Completed and re-opened to navigation 2010

- Greenway development was now an opportunity area on this re-opened canal





Royal Canal Greenway





One Trail, Endless Discoveries

Royal Canal Greenway

Layered upon a distinctive 225 year-old heritage asset

- 130km Towpath
- 4 Aqueducts
- 90 Bridges
- 17 Harbours
- 33 Locks



Consumer Perspective How it Looks





Greenway Development Timeline

- Regularisation of Property issues from 2009
- Bank and Path Works Commenced 2016
- Works Completed in Stages up to 2020, in partnership with Local Authorities
- Visitor Experience further Developed
- Product Launch in 2021
- Ongoing Review





Funding

- Funding primarily from central government under National Greenways Strategy through the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in Ireland
- Overall Cost **€12.32m**



Greenway Construction Works

- Widening & raising of canal banks
- Surfacing of 130km of towpath
- New structures
- Provision of softer infrastructure to follow: signage, seating



Access Ramp at Moyvalley



-
-
-
-
-

After

Before

-
-
-
-



Underpass west of Maynooth - Before



Royal Canal
Greenway

One Trail, Endless
Discoveries



Underpass west of Maynooth - **After**



Canal Overflow west of Kilcock

Before



After



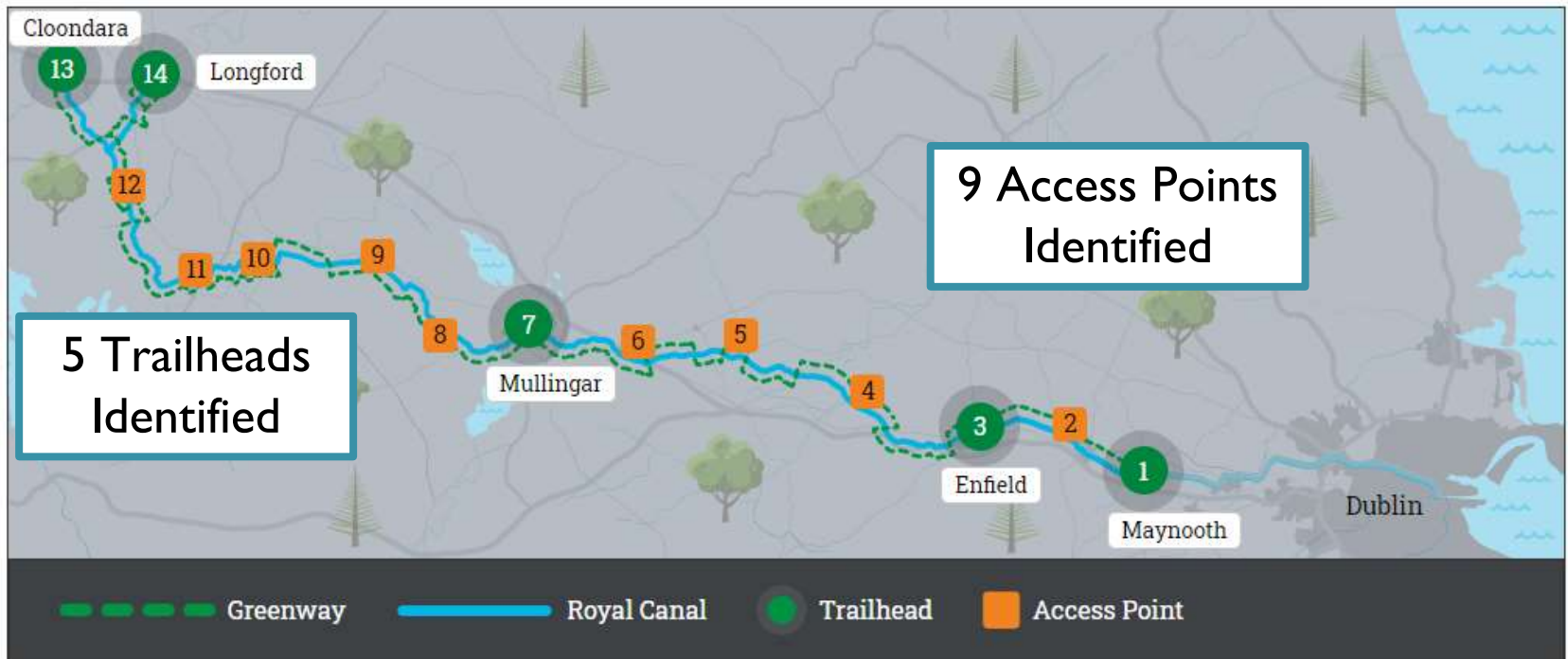
Visitor Experience Development

- Gap Analysis and Route Breakdown
- Development of Tagline & Narrative
- Ancillary Infrastructure
- Signage & Storyboards
- Business Operators
- Nearby Visitor Attractions



Route Breakdown

- 130km route from Maynooth to Cloondara where the Royal Canal joins the River Shannon, and along the Longford Branch
- Divided to 13 shorter journeys of between 6km and 15km



Strategic Linkage to:

- Other National Greenways
- Euro Velo 2 – The Capitals Route

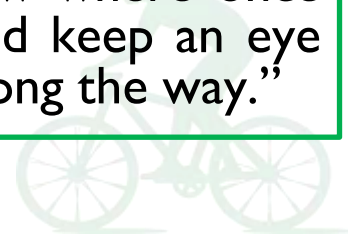


Tagline



Narrative

“The enchanting Royal Canal Greenway is 130km of level towpath, ideal for walkers, runners and cyclists of **all ages and stages**. Starting in cosmopolitan **Maynooth**, it follows the 200 year old canal through unassuming **Enfield** and lively **Mullingar** to charming **Cloondara** in Longford, with cafés, picnic spots and attractions along the way. Rustic and industrial **landscapes** combine, with rolling fields, pretty waterside villages, working locks and historic landmarks. Cycle between any of the main towns and return by **train** to where you started. Follow where once horse-drawn **barges** journeyed and keep an eye out for hidden **wildlife** wonders along the way.”



Storyboards





An Chanáil Ríoga
Royal Canal

Longwood Longwood



NULLAM NA GULA & A CURSU ODDIO

LONGWOOD & THE ROYAL CANAL

MORBI LAOREET / BOYNE AQUADUCT

Sed acelerisque ex et hendrerit volutpat. In sed blandit, variis aliquet pellentesque urna id aliquet. Fusce nibh tellus, rhoncus vel fermentum sed, volutpat non ligula. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum. Sed acelerisque ex et hendrerit volutpat. In sed blandit, velit in aliquet pellentesque urna id dictum. Fusce nibh tellus, rhoncus vel fermentum sed, volutpat non ligula. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum.

The construction of the Royal Canal was a complex engineering and architectural challenge. Civil engineer Richard Beane had to solve the problem of how to carry the Royal Canal over the River Boyne. He designed the architectural marvel, the Boyne Aquaduct, which you can see about 200 metres from Longwood harbour. Unfortunately, Evans did not live to see the Boyne Aquaduct completed as he died in 1863, two years before it was finished. The Boyne Viaduct was then built in 1840 to carry the new rail line across the river.



Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

MORBIGIFU LAOREET RIBBONTAIL BRIDGE

Sed faucibus, neque id portitor maecis, lectus ante accumsan nisi, id molestie nibh lectus eget lorem. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci. Sed faucibus, neque id portitor maecis, lectus ante accumsan nisi, id molestie nibh lectus eget lorem. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci.

Today Longwood Harbour is home to the Ribbontail Paddlers Canoe Club which is named after nearby Ribbontail Bridge. It was supposedly built for messengers travelling by foot to Longwood and is possibly named after the Ribbon Society's first society action in rural Ireland in the early 19th century that agitated on behalf of poor tenant farmers and labourers.



Image courtesy of Meath County Council

MORBI LAOREET / LONGWOOD VILLAGE

Sed faucibus, neque id portitor maecis, lectus ante accumsan nisi, id molestie nibh lectus eget lorem. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci.




Image courtesy of Meath County Council

The village of Longwood, is accessible via a walkway which links to the Royal Canal Greenway towpath.

MORBI LAOREET URNA TO THE NATIONAL FAMINE WAY

Sed acelerisque ex et hendrerit volutpat sed blandit velit. In aliquet pellentesque urna id dictum. Fusce nibh tellus, rhoncus vel fermentum sed, volutpat non ligula. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum. Morbi laoreet ante in velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum, velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum, velit aliquet, eget aliquet sapien dictum.

The National Famine Way passes by Longwood and marks the poignant 150-year story of assisted emigration in Ireland during the Famine in 1847 when 1,450 poor and hungry were forced to seek safety from the Shrikecove Park Estate, County Roscommon to Custom House Quay in Dublin along the banks of the Royal Canal.



Image courtesy of Meath County Council

SED FAUCIBUS NEQU?! DID YOU KNOW?

Sed faucibus, neque id portitor maecis, lectus ante accumsan nisi, id molestie nibh lectus eget lorem. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci. Nam eget enim facilisis, ornare fella id, porta orci. Sed acelerisque ex et hendrerit volutpat in sed blandit velit, in aliquet pellentesque urna id dictum, velit aliquet sapien dictum, velit aliquet sapien dictum. Sed acelerisque ex et hendrerit volutpat, in sed blandit velit, in aliquet pellentesque urna id dictum.

In Longwood, a group of Ribbonmen (part of the Ribbon Society) concocted a scheme where they breached the canal walls to let the water out. When the breach was spotted, the Ribbonmen offered to carry out the repair job at 14 shillings a week! This scheme was eventually halted when the canal company issued a ban on hiring local labour.

For more information visit royalcanalgreenway.org

















Directional and Wayfinding Signs



Key Business Operators

Royal Canal Greenway Bike Hire

Featured bike hire providers located along the Royal Canal Greenway.



Nearby Visitor Attractions



Built, Cultural, and Natural heritage which add to the visitor experience

Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre



An incredible Iron Age road, dating from 148BC sits carefully preserved within the visitor centre.

Maynooth Castle



Standing sternly at the entrance to Maynooth University is the remains of the once-great castle.

Belvedere House



An idyllic lakeside mansion, a wicked earl and a monument to family dysfunction.

Clonfert Pet Farm



A visit to Clonfert Pet Farm will provide the family with a fantastic fun day out.

St Mel's Cathedral



The stark, imposing exterior of St Mel's Cathedral belies the treasures you'll find within.

Castletown House



When Ireland's richest man built himself a country house, the results were predictably spectacular.





Product Launch 2021



Royal Canal
Greenway

One Trail, Endless
Discoveries

Website and Social Channels

www.royalcanalgreenway.org



Media Launch Coverage



RTE News Six One
Wed 24, 2015
600K

RTE News: Six One
600K Viewership



RTE - Morning Ireland
Wed 24, 2015
491K

RTE: Morning Ireland
491K Viewership



Irish Times x2
572K Viewership



RTE.ie
57.5K Views



IrishTimes.com
37.6K Views

IrishTimes.com
Wed 24, 2015
25.5M
376K



lonelyplanet.com
6.63K Views



Launch Campaign



Achievements of initial Campaign in Early 2021:-





Ongoing Review



Visitor Monitoring Project

Undertaken later in 2021

- Annually **640,500** visitors
- Weighted average spend **€27**
- 1 Year Economic Impact **€17.2m**
- Vs Build **Cost** of €12m
- Payback period < **8 ½ months**



Continuing Media Success

Since launch, ongoing Marketing campaigns have resulted in strong follower growth across all Social Media channels

	July 2021 (pre-Turley)	May 2023	% +/-
Facebook	3,598	9,498	163.97%
Instagram	1,966	2,774	56.91%
Twitter	1,043	1,587	52.15%



Continued Operation



- Work with Strategic Partners e.g. Failte Ireland
- Service Level Agreements
- Maintenance / Upgrades
- Extension eastwards into Dublin & links to other Greenway Routes



Thank you

