

# Naas to Corbally Harbour Greenway Proposal

**Initiative to restore the Naas to Corbally Canal and create  
a Greenway/Blueway amenity for the people of Naas and Kildare**

Proposed by Eamon Sinnott

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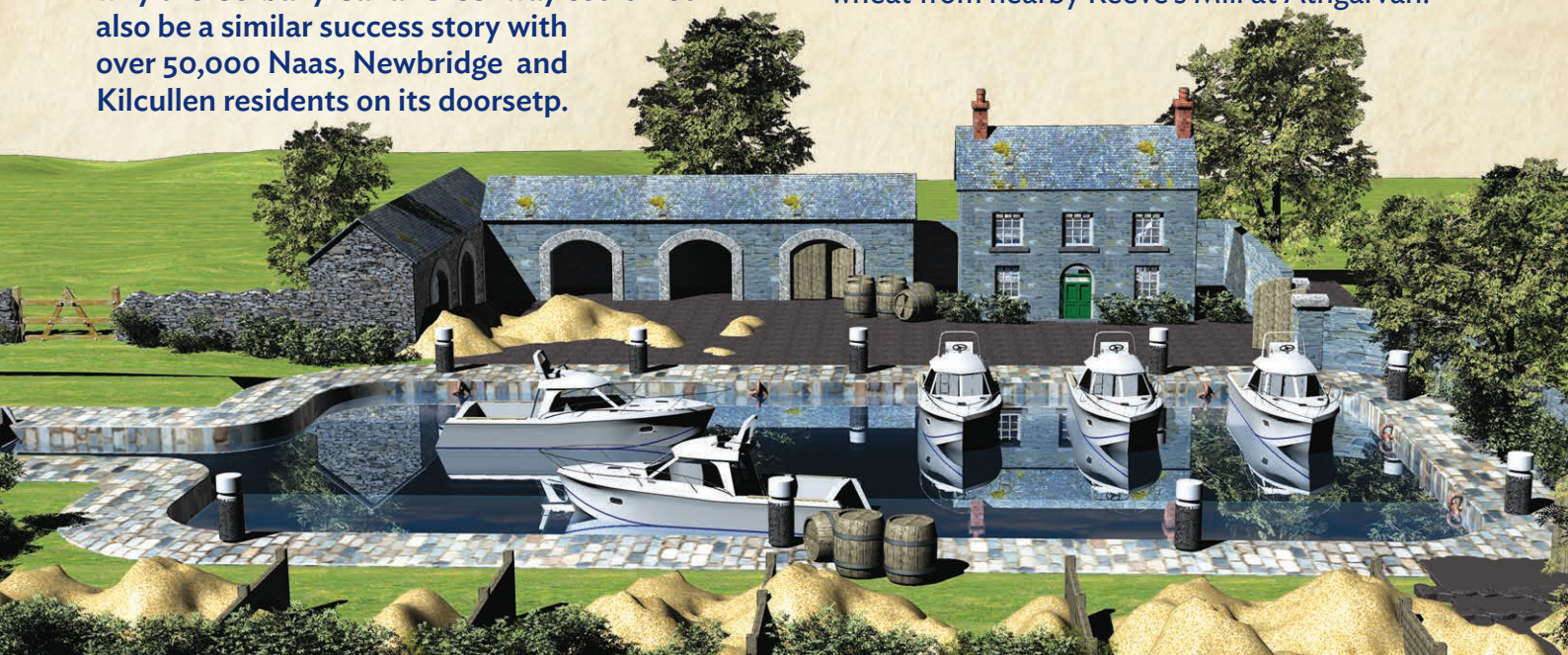
The development of Blueways presents valuable opportunities for rural communities to attract more visitors. These values lie not only in the recreational opportunities that they offer but also in their potential to stimulate local businesses and regenerate local areas. Blueways also provide an effective model of partnership between private, community, and voluntary sectors and relevant state bodies.

Blueway offer a great recreation amenity where the pace of life is slow, along glistening waters, softly fringed and abundant with nature and can link nature reserves, parks, cultural features and historic sites with each other and with populated areas.

With the success of the recently opened Royal Canal 120 mile Greenway, there is no reason why the Corbally Canal Greenway could not also be a similar success story with over 50,000 Naas, Newbridge and Kilcullen residents on its doorstep.

Without a huge amount of construction and land clearance a perfectly walking and cycling route could be easily achieved. It would be great to think that the Naas to Corbally Canal could be brought back into public use, enhancing the quality of the local environment, creating a new linear path which would have huge long-term health benefits for the people of Naas town.

It would encourage boaters and barge owners to navigate a twelve mile stretch of canal from the Main Grand Canal at Soldier's Island, rising up through five locks to Naas and then onto the original Corbally Harbour once an important destination for the transportation of wheat from nearby Reeve's Mill at Athgarvan.



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## The Corbally Canal

**The Corbally Canal extends from Naas Harbour to the townland of Corbally within 3 miles of the village of Athgarvan on the edge of the Curragh. Extending to 7,25 km/4.5 miles, this canal branch was built in 1810 mainly to service the transportation of grain to and flour from Reeves Mill at Athgaran on the banks of the River Liffey.**

The Corbally branch diverges from the Naas branch canal at a junction on the west bank just before the harbour. It was completed in 1810 as something of an afterthought following the completion of the isolated Corbally harbour remote from any population or industry

A good starting point for the Corbally walk is the Naas library located at the harbour. Follow the footpath along the canal bank passing housing estates and a park on your left. Continue under the intriguingly named Ploopluck bridge. The path continues under a modern bridge with the K Leisure Sports centre and playing fields, on your right across the canal- a hive of sporting activity all year round.

You emerge onto a footpath on the busy R445 Naas to Newbridge road. Take great care and cross over to a footpath on the far side. Turn right on this footpath in the Newbridge direction. On your left is the 17th century brick mansion known as Jigginstown Castle.

Commissioned by Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, as a royal residence, alas, the king never visited, the house was never finished and his grand vision gave way to ruination. The site is not accessible pending ongoing restoration.

Past the castle take a left after 200m into Jigginstown, continue though this quiet enclave, keep left onto the tow path before the canal bridge. You are now at the start of the rural section of the Corbally line. Its main traffic in the era of canal transport was malting barley for Reeves's mill at Athgarvan, two miles to the west of Corbally harbour. Local folklore that it was used to ferry the building material for the Curragh camp remains uncertain,

At the next bridge, Connaught Bridge, (supposedly named after the army of labourers that built this canal and who hailed from the west of Ireland) change over to the west bank and follow this side all the way to Corbally. The path soon changes from laneway to open fields following the curved line of the canal under a standing of fine beech trees.

The towpath is clear walking all the way to Corbally. Look out for Hoare's bridge - fifth canal bridge out from Naas - which was widened in 1995 and rebuilt in a manner sympathetic to the original design. Before Mooney's bridge on the right is an old 19th century canalside cottage, its traditional style reflective of a bygone era.

The walk ends at the intriguing Corbally Harbour, once a hive of activity as recreated in the artist's impression illustration below.



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## The present condition of the Canal

Presently the the Corbally line is in excellent walking condition with the tow path traversing between urban footpath, grass tracks, open fields and tarmacked lane-ways in some area. From Naas Harbour the line extends to 8.8km over very flat terrain, with no lock gates or chambers which is a major attraction for boat owners, barge owner, canoeists and paddle boarders.

However the biggest obstruction is the canal culvert over the R445 at Jigginstown. Originally the old Newbridge Road ran through the hamlet of Jigginstown and when diverting the route in the 1950's Kildare County Council made no provision for traversing the canal at this point, thus abandoning the canal for boat users and barges.

To successfully re-open the Corbally Canal as a Greenway a new Road bridge would have to be constructed at this point to accommodate, walkers, cyclists and boat owners.

Ploopluck Bridge 0.8km

Jigginstown Bridge 1.5km

Limerick Bridge 2.3km

Connaught Bridge 4.0km

At Moneys bridge 1km north of the Corbally Harbour the original 19th century bridge has been partially demolished to accommodate farm access for large machinery over the canal. The original stonework lies in the bed of the canal and this would have to be retrieved and a new farm access bridge re-instated.

The Corbally Canal also presently acts a nature reserve with a rich abundance of flora and fauna and protecting the natural and delicate ecology of the canal would also be an important factor in preserving this wonderful natural amenity.

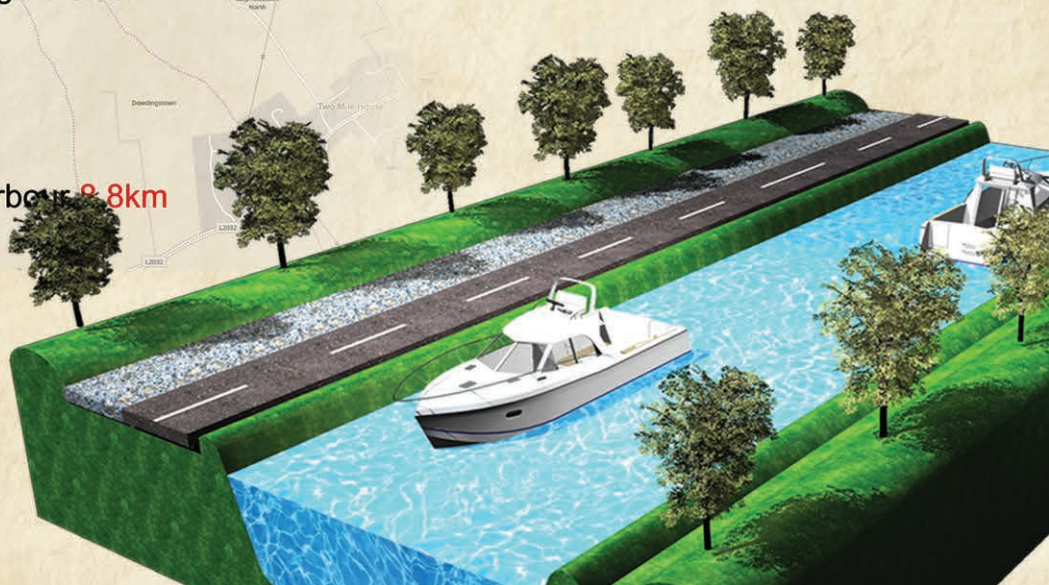
Weir

Cottage

Hoare's Bridge 6.75km

Mooney's Bridge 7.8km

Corbally Harbour 8.8km





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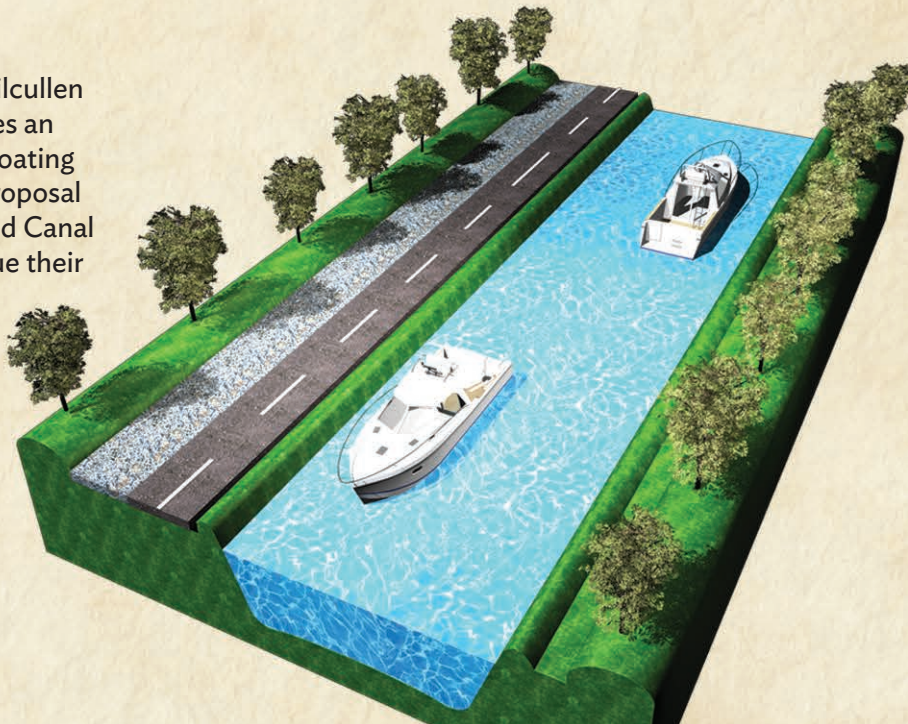
## Corbally Harbour

The buildings and wharf at Corbally harbour though derelict for over 60 years remain fairly intact. Through a careful restoration programme this neglected heritage site should be brought back to life and future uses could include water activity centre, canoe club base, restaurant, Kildare Canal Heritage Museum, coffee shop etc, etc. It could be a perfect destination end point for walkers cyclist and boat owners. Commercial return barge trips could be offered out from Naas town to Corbally Harbour creating a whole new tourism opportunity for the area.



### An exciting New amenity...

With the large population centres of Naas, Kilcullen and Athgarvan close by, this proposal provides an exciting new Blue way walking, cycling and boating amenity for the benefits of everyone. This proposal plans to link the Corbally canal with the Grand Canal at Naas harbour allowing for boats to continue their journey on a lock free section of navigable canal to Corbally. The health benefits from this Blueway will benefit the population of Kildare for future generations while also providing a wonderful tourist amenity.



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## The Canals in Co Kildare

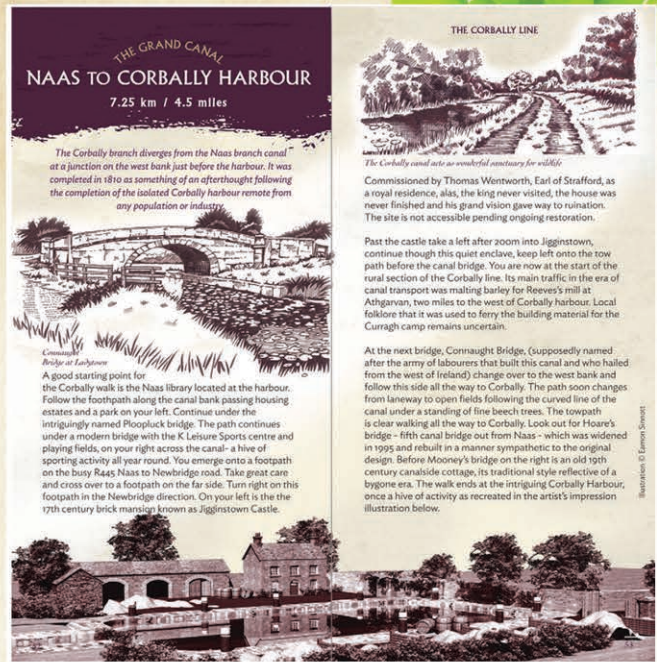
Construction on the Grand and Royal Canals in Kildare commenced around 1780 and continued until the early 1820. They provided a critical commercial life line for the transportation of agricultural goods and passengers for nearly 200 years until the late 1950's. Railways presented major competition from the late 1880's onwards. The legacy left by the Canal Builders has had a huge impact on our county and given us a beautiful man made natural amenity extending to over 300 miles. Now is the time to rediscover our Canal network and protect them as a major amenity for this and future generations.

### Rights of Way and accessibility.

Obviously as stated earlier all of this proposal is subject to the co-operation, goodwill and agreement of all local landowners, all stakeholders and farmers in the immediate area. All relevant suitable Planning Applications, Feasibility Studies, Planning Permissions, Land Surveys, EIS Reports, Route Planning, Construction Tenders would all have one sought and agreed. Check Land Registry to determine exact ownership of all Lands in proposal.



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## Kildare Tow Path Trails

Hugely popular with walkers throughout the County this Booklet details over 100 Miles of our county's wonderful Tow Path Trails. Detailing the Walks on the Grand Canal, The Royal Canal and Barrow this illustrated guide book is supplied with informative maps and illustrations highlights all the architecture and landscapes along each route. Designed for serious walkers or family groups this book will introduce the walker to a whole new landscape awaiting to be discovered on County Kildare Tow Path Trails.

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 friendly 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 water-side villages, working locks and historic landmarks. Cycle between any of the main towns and return by train to where you started.



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Corbally Harbour Images & 3D Illustrations  
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