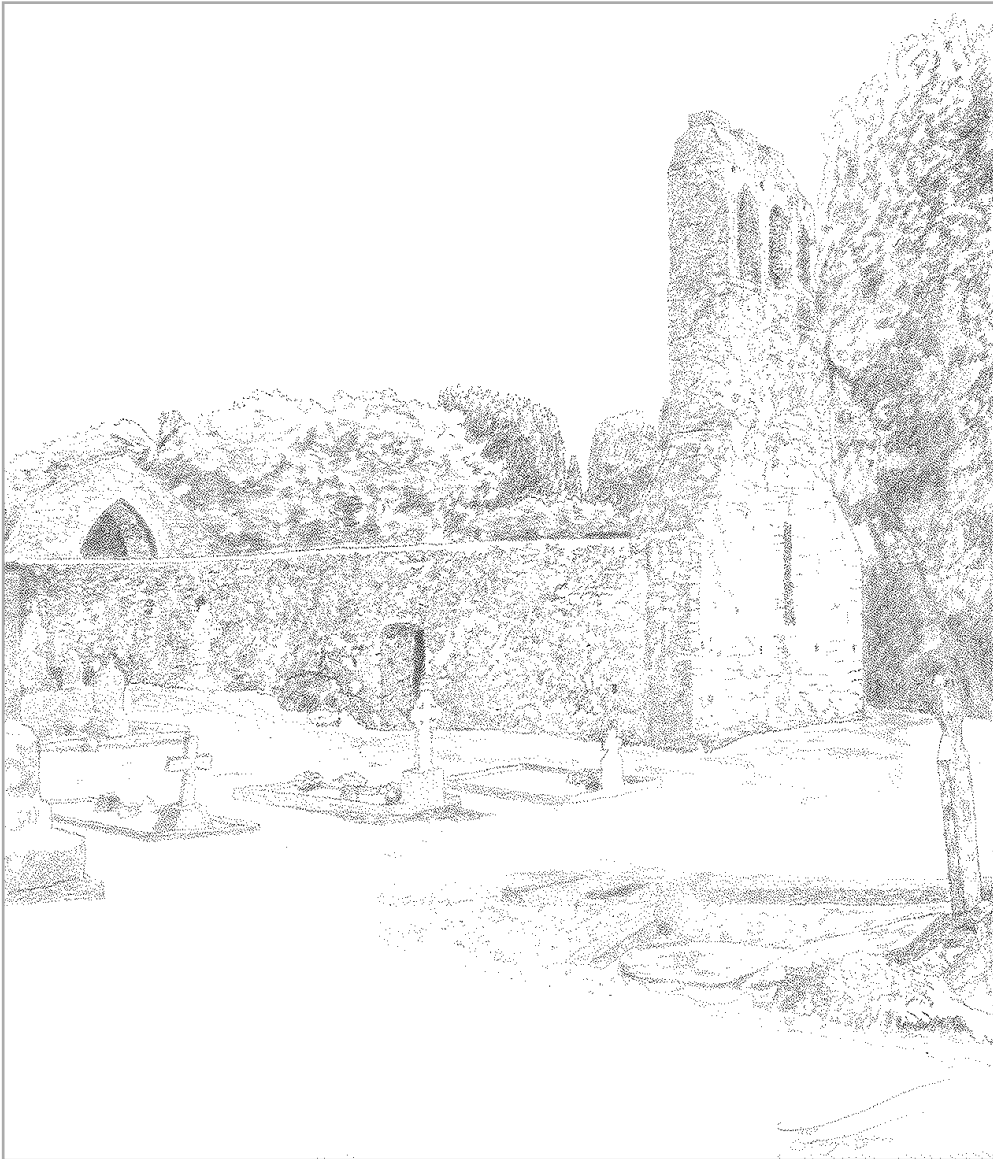




Ballyboghil

Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance



The old church at Ballyboughal

Pencil drawing by Tina Geoghegan

The Ballyboghil Village Development Framework Plan was produced between September 2010 and February 2012. It was assembled by a team of architects and urban designers, Philip and Delphine Geoghegan of iCON Architecture | Urban Design | Conservation, and Bernard Voortman of CUMMINS + VOORTMAN, Sustainable Architecture & Urban Design.

The steering committee for Fingal County Council Planning Department, Marjorie O'Shee, Patricia Conlon and Peter Byrne compiled and developed the brief and liaised regularly during production of the Plan.

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Ballyboghil

Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance

The Character of the village and A Vision for the Future

Fingal County Council seeks to maintain and strengthen the physical character of Ballyboghil village; to guide careful urban improvement and to plan for appropriate future growth. These guidelines highlight:

- The distinctive character of the village and its setting in the landscape,
- Current issues, particularly concerning two incomplete housing schemes.
- The need for conservation, sustainable growth, consolidation, and the protection of the quality, character and distinctiveness of important assets.

Creating a strategy for sustainable development should deliver not only solid economic and environmental benefits but also should provide an urban development framework, to guide Ballyboghil village into the future.

Policy Context

The challenge of a successful village development framework, through the identification of local distinctiveness, is to unlock opportunities and deliver a high quality environment, improved amenities and a better economic future.

The Village Development Framework Plan is an advisory plan with a long term vision for the future. It offers support to the Local Area Plan, within the structure of the Fingal County Development Plan.



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Section 1

The Character of Ballyboghil Village

1.0 Introduction

Ballboghil, also named Ballyboughal, is a simple single street village which has retained a rural character. It is located approximately 20 km north of Dublin City Centre and 8 km north of Swords. The village is part of a network of villages in Fingal which function as small local service centres for their immediate agricultural hinterlands. It is situated at the junction of the R108 and the R129 regional roads and has developed in a north-south direction from the original village core, which is centered on the church and school. The village is located within designated **Low Lying Landscape Character Type** in the County Development Plan. It is an area characterised by a mix of pasture and arable farming on low lying land comprising large fields with few tree belts and low roadside hedges and few protected views or prospects.



1.1 Village Form and Structure

Introduction

The village presents a 'ribbon' of development along a country road which has gradually evolved into a settlement. The origins of the village derive from church lands which were established in mediaeval times on the farmlands associated with St Mary's Abbey in Dublin.

2009 Aerial Photograph

The map, **right**, is the aerial map from 2009. It shows how little the field boundaries have changed in 170 years, (although many fields have been enlarged) and how accurately the maps match each other. The old church, established in mediaeval times on the farmlands of St Mary's Abbey in Dublin, **circled in white**, was the first step in the gradual development of the village.

OSI First map 1839 - 1846

The first Ordnance Survey map, **centre right**, shows the original church and its 'burial ground'. South of the church, a cluster of permanent buildings is evident, **circled in yellow**, including the pub with the old national school opposite and the 'R.C. chapel' which has since expanded into a substantial church. Other buildings appear to be farm clusters.

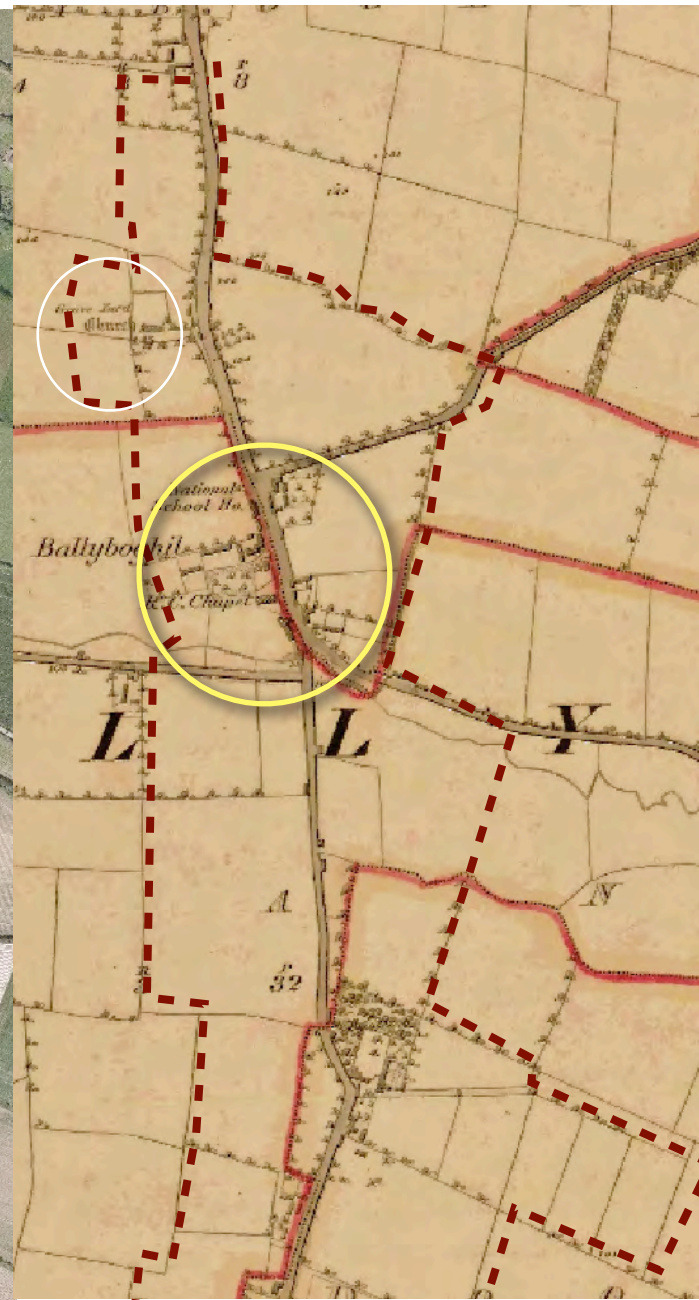
On the first OS map, the junction beside the pub appears to be the key space, and the prime routes, probably following the early roads, travel from north southwards, to an eastwards direction after passing the centre. The continuation of the road due south appears to be relatively new. Field patterns appear to have changed little around the village, except that some fields are enlarged. The only vegetation indicated on the map is along the principal roads, and a woodland area at the bottom of the map. The OS map of 1910, **far right**, shows little change: the enlarged church, presbytery and a group of three houses appear at the south end.

Left: Village seen from the South, extending as far as the GAA pitch at the top of the picture. Main routes are picked out in **gold**.

Aerial Photo 2009 Yellow circle shows traditional village core; expansion southwards, and unfinished Cnoc Dubh estate northwards



First OS map 1839-46 Circle shows National School and RC chapel; white circle is early mediaeval church



OS map 1910 Little change is evident over the period of about 70 years separating the maps: church is enlarged, presbytery and three houses added



The road provided frontage and access for a series of farms close to the old church. The river crossing divides the village, defining a north end and a south end to the village. Over time, and particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the buildings coalesced into a street, open to the landscape, with the river maintaining a thread of green between the two halves. The nineteenth century brought the new church, the pub and the National School onto the street in the **northern** half. In time the spaces between those buildings has been infilled and, in relatively recent times, new housing, the new school and a group of shops have taken their place alongside the church, agricultural buildings and farmhouse. This has been effective in developing the character of the village, generating a sense of a village centre.

The **southern** end of the village has a similar story, with petrol station and post office centrally placed opposite the Keeling Juices plant. Most village development occurred between working farms, in an apparently random way. The traditional buildings of the farm complex at the southern end in Development Area 6 appear to be in poor condition. The absence of a clear village form is compensated for by the agricultural landscape, comprising vernacular farm buildings and hedgerows, which is still discernible.

Public Space

There is some public open space in the village, located along the river, but there is no village green, village square or village park. West of the bridge there is a pleasant and well looked after attractive memorial garden with Celtic Cross, commemorating St Patrick's staff. East of the bridge there is a small but attractive linear riverside park. Both of these areas are relatively small spaces for the scale of community. The pitch and putt area on the Main Street is delightful, yet is a gated site. The school generates considerable activity for a short time twice a day, yet the footpath outside is relatively narrow and cars drive up onto it to keep the road clear. It would be an ideal place for a designed civic space as it is located opposite the church which is another gathering place.



Above, left: Northern half of the village in aerial view.



Above, right: Southern half of the village; Keelings and petrol station / supermarket generate a centre of activity.

Below, left: memorial garden at the bridge.



Left: Celtic cross memorial. The text is as follows:

“Ballyboughal” (Town of the Staff) was the name given to the town in c, 1113, when Ceallach Archbishop of Armagh built the church and made grants of land around Ballyboughal for the protection of the Bachall Iosa, so called as it was believed that it had been given by Jesus to St Patrick. This staff was the most important relic of the time, and right up to the 16th century hands were laid on it when oaths were taken. In c.1173 Strongbow and his forces removed the staff to Christchurch Cathedral where it remained until 1538 when it was taken out with other relics and burnt during the Reformation.

1.2 Green Village

Within the village the presence of the landscape is striking, with a backdrop of mature trees and hedgerows, patches of green and colourful plants. They, with the buildings of character, generate the special identity, the **local distinctiveness of place** that defines Ballyboghil.

Thus, the greatest asset of Ballyboghil is the greenery and vegetation which permeates every part of the village. With significant growth, the relationship between landscape and built areas is bound to change. Crossing through fields along old mass routes is no longer possible, and it is necessary to provide specific recreational space to make green areas accessible again. The existing green infrastructure including the river banks are of amenity and recreational value. A delightful 'Hedgerow Round' is shown on an information panel beside the stream, which delineates a route and describes the flora and fauna of the area, which may be observed on the route. There are riverbank areas, not yet accessible on the western side of the village, which could offer local recreational potential. A further extension of walking / cycleways might include the riverside land north of the Oldtown Road, out towards the Grange, and onwards to Oldtown village.



Above: Backdrop of the mature hedgerows and open fields, as the R129, the road eastwards to the M1 and the coast, leaves Ballyboghil.



Above and below: Attractive green interlude in the consolidation of the village - a small green lawn beside the river, managed, but not excessively, resulting in a natural feel to the river and its banks.

Below, left: The road to Oldtown follows the river. There are houses along this road but the mature hedgerow largely masks their impact.

Below, centre: The river West of the bridge meanders along the roadside protected by an attractive mature hedgerow.





1.3 Shops and workplaces

There is a cluster of shops in both the northern and the southern sections of the village. In the **northern** part there is the Forge; a newsagent / grocer, Enricos; a take-away, Red Velvet Hairdressing, and there is planning permission for a medical centre premises in the thatched cottage. These are grouped in an interesting development which tries, quite successfully, to imitate the random and diverse architecture of a village even if it is not very indigenous in appearance.

In the **southern** part, the rural character is interrupted by the high canopy of a petrol service station incorporating a supermarket and a village post office. Whilst it has dubious architectural merit, there is no doubt that it acts as a focal point for this end of the village, providing services to the local community.

Top, right: row of shops at northern end, an interesting collection of pastiche architectures - flat roof / pitched roof, slated roof / thatched roof, stone wall / rendered wall.

Centre, right: prominent projection onto the road by Campus petrol canopy, with a welcome background of mature trees.

Lower right: entrance to Keeling Juices with lawn frontage.

Below: aerial view of Keeling Juices with its neat frontage to the road. Across the road is the petrol station and convenience shop.



1.4 Housing Schemes in the Village

Housing schemes are a twentieth century approach to dealing with demand for housing, which followed from the tradition of building estate cottages into villages. In Ballyboghil, the village form was a succession of farms and outbuildings, using the road frontage for access, to be followed by some single dwellings, and eventually an attractive crescent of cottages at the southern end of the village started a new pattern of development in the village. These images record the occurrence of housing schemes in the village with a selection which illustrates their impact, and includes two large unfinished housing schemes.

1.41 Completed Housing Schemes in the Village

The illustrations on this page show how two existing schemes which are connected to the Main Street have fitted in well and have used and benefitted from their immediate landscape context.

Right: village scheme at the junction in the centre which gives a strong frontage to the Main Street with a terrace of five dormer cottages. Along the Ballyboghil Road, dormer houses are set back with a green area in front of the houses.



Left: view towards the bridge at the centre of the village with the terrace of five dormer cottages and attractive stone wall boundary.



Left and right and below: Ballyboughal Square, a terrace of wide frontage semi-detached houses with attractive avenue trees maturing and grassed area along the road gives this development a pleasant green setting, and a background of mature hedgerow trees. The aerial photograph shows how well the houses are captured within the hedgerow trees and planting which now contributes to the green village character.



1.42 Two unfinished estates - a key issue in the future development of the village

Two unfinished housing schemes, one in the northern part (Cnoc Dubh), the other in the southern part (The Grange), present immediate challenges for the village and need to be given priority.

Cnoc Dubh Development

This large development site is located in a key location in the centre of the village with substantial road frontages. Only four houses appear to be occupied. The unfinished unsightly development at Cnoc Dubh is problematic. It comprises:

- **Completed** houses which are **unoccupied** (there are several of these).
- **Built, but not completed** houses which form part of existing terrace frontage (three houses).
- **Partially built** with walls built up to first floor level only, for proposed terrace of three-storey shops and apartments,
- **Foundations and slabs** for several houses.
- **Undeveloped lands.**

The **completed**, unoccupied houses are vulnerable to vandalism.

Action needs to be taken to complete the **built but not completed** houses so that they are not vulnerable to damage.

The **partially-built** structures have already suffered serious damage because of exposure and may need to be demolished back to foundation level.

The footpath along the Main Street needs to be completed. In addition, attention needs to be given to the erection of secure fencing around the site and provision made for the screening of the area containing partially built structures.

In the interest of safety and security, residential and visual amenities, it is essential that early attention be given to these issues.



Left: aerial photograph of unfinished site shows extent of frontage completed along the Main Street, approaching the village. The proposed frontage built up to first floor level only, is intended to be 3 storeys high, as shown **left, centre**, in its projected completed form. It will make a good visual stop to the village from the south, although the scale might suit the village better if it were limited to two storeys without the dormer level.

Left, lower: The near-finished terrace to the north of Ballyboghil has a very successful scale and frontage, making attractive village housing which contributes to the character.

Below, upper: Houses almost finished are in a conspicuous and vulnerable location at the north entry to the village. The protective plastic sheet on the windows may be doing more harm than good as it was wrapping the units for protection during transport only.

Below, lower: These unfinished structures are not only a safety and security issue but they are visually unsightly at a key location in the village. (Photographs were taken in September 2010, aerial photograph in Sept 2009)

