

SUBMISSION IN RELATION TO RE-ZONING OF LAND AT STAPLESTOWN COUNTY KILDARE FOR SEAN FLANNERY ESQ.

Proposal submitted on behalf of Sean Flannery by;
John Barry & Sons, Laragh, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. W23 KXP4

INTRODUCTION.

Staplestown is designated as a rural settlement in the **Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023—2029**, (published in March 2022).

While Staplestown is designated as a rural settlement it would better be designated as a small rural village with its own very strong identity. The village has a church, primary school, a number of small local businesses and a village community centre. The village is also the home of the successful St Kevin's GAA Club and their grounds, dressing rooms, community centre and bar are open to all sport clubs and other organisations in the area. Staplestown as a small village is the centre for a number of adjoining areas such as Donadea, Timahoe, Coolcarrigan, Derry, Gilltown. etc. and the educational, religious, social and sport's needs and facilities of these areas are provided by Staplestown. The existing village has always been the centre of this vibrant hinterland, but in recent years its growth has been hampered by a lack of adequate services. While the Draft Plan states that the water supply is adequate it is also stated that the village does not have the benefit of a wastewater treatment plant.

The recent closedown of the Bord na Móna's Works at Gilltown Bog has also had an effect on the area. While this has resulted in a reduction in the Economic Base in the area, there has been a noted positive reduction in the number of heavy vehicles using the roads in and around the village. The **Just Transition Plan for West Kildare** recently commissioned by Kildare County Council will help to reduce the negative impact of the closure of Bord na Mona in the area. The purpose of this plan is to identify projects to support and advance sustainable social, economic and environmental development in the transition to a low carbon future in the West Kildare region. This plan has already been discussed by the community in Staplestown and while they are fully supportive of the plan and its objectives, they feel that there needs to be an increase in available housing in the area. Concerns have also been expressed in relation to the effects on the community of the stringent rural housing policy proposed in the Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023—2029. The surrounding areas referred to above contain a number of families who have built their

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houses over the years based on their connections with these rural areas and their employment in operations such as agriculture, forestry and the bogs in the area. With the now proposed new rural housing policies, the next generation of these existing houses will be forced to move into the larger urban settlements and thus break the very important social and familial links that have been built up over the generations. This will have a devastating effect on the existing schools, clubs and other facilities in the area and on small villages such as Staplestown. This can only be addressed by the provision of small schemes of low-density housing such as that now proposed by us.

As stated above the growth of the village has been hampered by a lack of adequate services primarily a wastewater treatment plant. The Draft Plan refers to this absence of a wastewater treatment plant. As part of our planning scheme it is proposed to provide a new state of the art wastewater treatment plant, including a reed bed. Provision will be made in this scheme to allow for the connection of existing development in the area to this new plant. It is hoped that this scheme will be carried out as a joint scheme between ourselves, Irish Water and Kildare County Council. Funding will be on shared agreed basis between the parties.

This is in our opinion in line with the recent announced funding by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien. On Thursday 28 April 2022, he announced the commencement of a new funding scheme targeting the wastewater collection and treatment needs of villages and settlements without access to public wastewater services. The scheme is funded by a €50 million commitment under the National Development Plan.

The Minister said:

"The improved waste water services will enable local authorities to work in partnership with the community to enable villages and settlements to be better places to live, work and visit, to support overall government objectives under Housing for All and give practical effect to our vision for a vibrant rural Ireland under Our Rural Future."

Policy context

Under existing government policy, there are a number of commitments to:

- *support rural communities through investment in sustainable infrastructure*
- *protect our environment;*
- *protect water quality in the environment*

Our Rural Future contains Policy Measures to address wastewater infrastructural deficits in order to support the revitalisation of rural towns and villages.

In response to Policy Measure 66 (Review the situation in relation to water services for towns and villages that are not currently on the Irish Water network), the department has carried out a review on the waste water policy requirements of villages and similar settlements that do not have access to public waste water infrastructure.

Category 2 – Designated villages/settlements that do not have the potential to connect to existing Irish Water infrastructure: Villages/settlements for which it is viable to develop a collection network to serve the ‘core’ area’ (with capacity for future expansion) connected to a standalone waste water treatment plant

The wastewater treatment plant to be developed based, appropriate to circumstances, on Irish Water’s sustainable technologies. This would include, for example, nature-based solutions which treat wastewater through natural biological processes such as Integrated Constructed Wetlands.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

The area of which this request for rezoning is sought is shown on the attached map and consists of an area of 5.9 Hectares and shown in red.

River bank walk and conservation area 0.75 of a Hectare, marked in green.

The proposed treatment facilities shown as 0.6 Hectares, marked in grey.

We also request that the area shown blue by us, presently zoned existing residential be rezoned mixed development to allow for commercial offices light industry – e.g., a creche, digital/hub, retail units etc.

TRANSPORT FACILITIES.

Staplestown at present does not have the benefit of a bus service. The nearest bus services pass through Prosperous (4.5 Kms) and Coill Dubh (5 Kms). The Clane-Kilcock Bus Route passes through and stops at Painstown (4 Kms). The nearest train station is at Kilcock (10 Kms). It is appreciated that there is a shortfall in relation to transport facilities, but this can be addressed in a number of ways;

- incorporation of Staplestown in a Local Links Bus Scheme.
- diversion of a number of existing bus routes that exist in the area.

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- provision of a small park-and-ride facility which would link Staplestown with Kilcock and even Sallins Railway Stations. This would also facilitate some of the other towns and villages in the area, such as Coill Dubh, Prosperous, Clane, Rathcoffey, etc. We would be prepared to enter into discussions with the relevant parties in relation to the provision of this facility.

TOURISM AND AMENITY.

Staplestown is the nearest village to a number of major tourism and amenity sites in the North West Kildare Rural Area. Among these are;

- Donadea Forest Park. This area has been the subject of ongoing investment by Coillte and continues to attract a very large number of visitors.
- Coolcarrigan House and Gardens. This is becoming a popular visitor destination with numbers continuing to grow annually.
- Ballynafagh Reservoir and Bog North of Prosperous. This has always been a popular visitor location which will continue to attract more visitors annually.
- Gilltown Bog. This will become part of the proposed National Peatlands Park for Ireland.

These are the major Tourism and Amenity sites that exist in close proximity to Staplestown. There are many other sites, which are too many to mention here. The continued development of Staplestown as a centre to attract visitors to these would be a very desirable objective and in line with **Just Transition Plan for West Kildare**. This would also attract investment into this area which has suffered from the economic loss caused by the cessation of Bord na Móna activity in the area.

CONCLUSION.

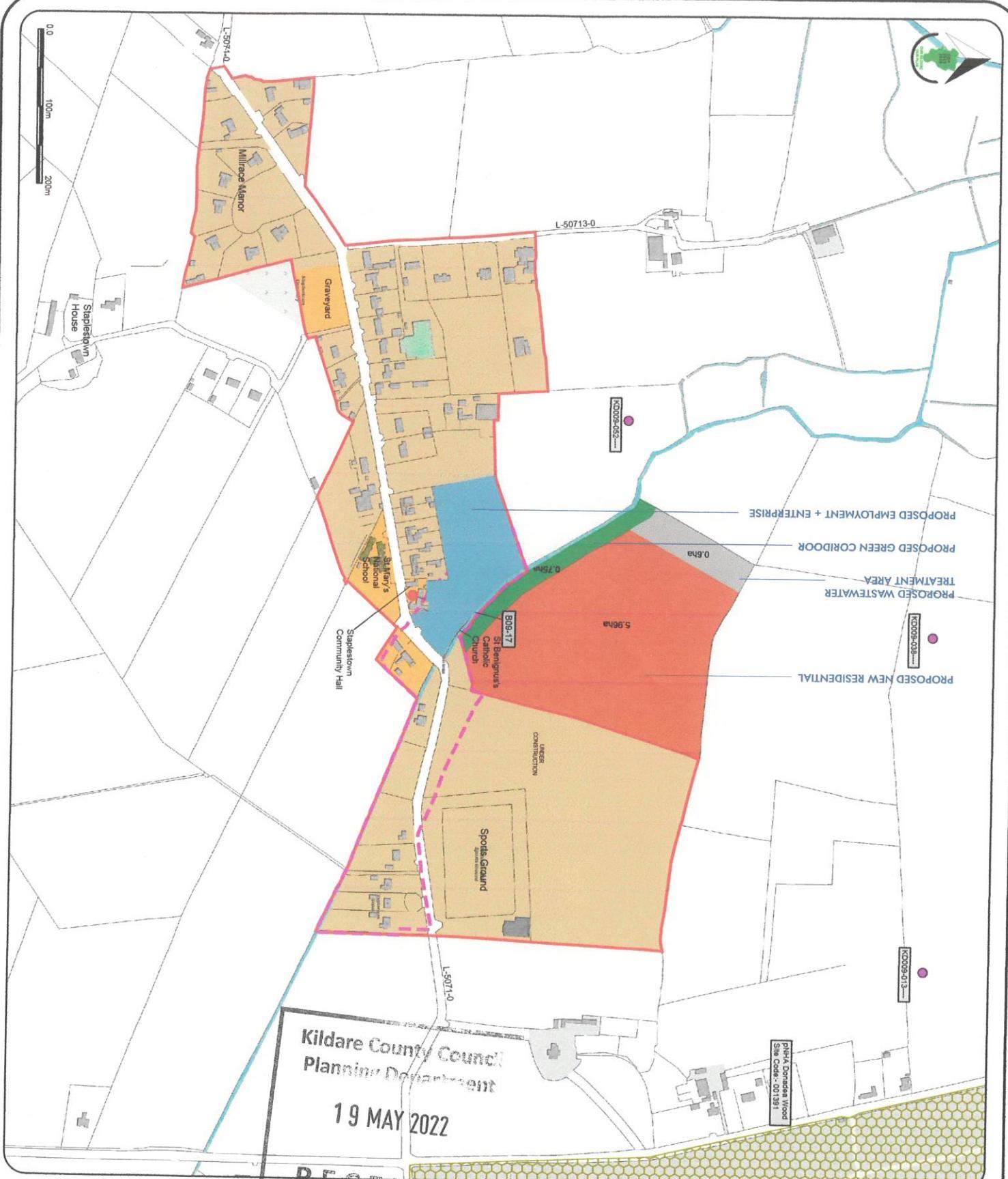
We therefore request Kildare County Council to agree to this request for rezoning and to include the area of land we request for residential and associated uses.

Signed on behalf of Seán Flannery: _____

Date:

19 May 2022.





Draft County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

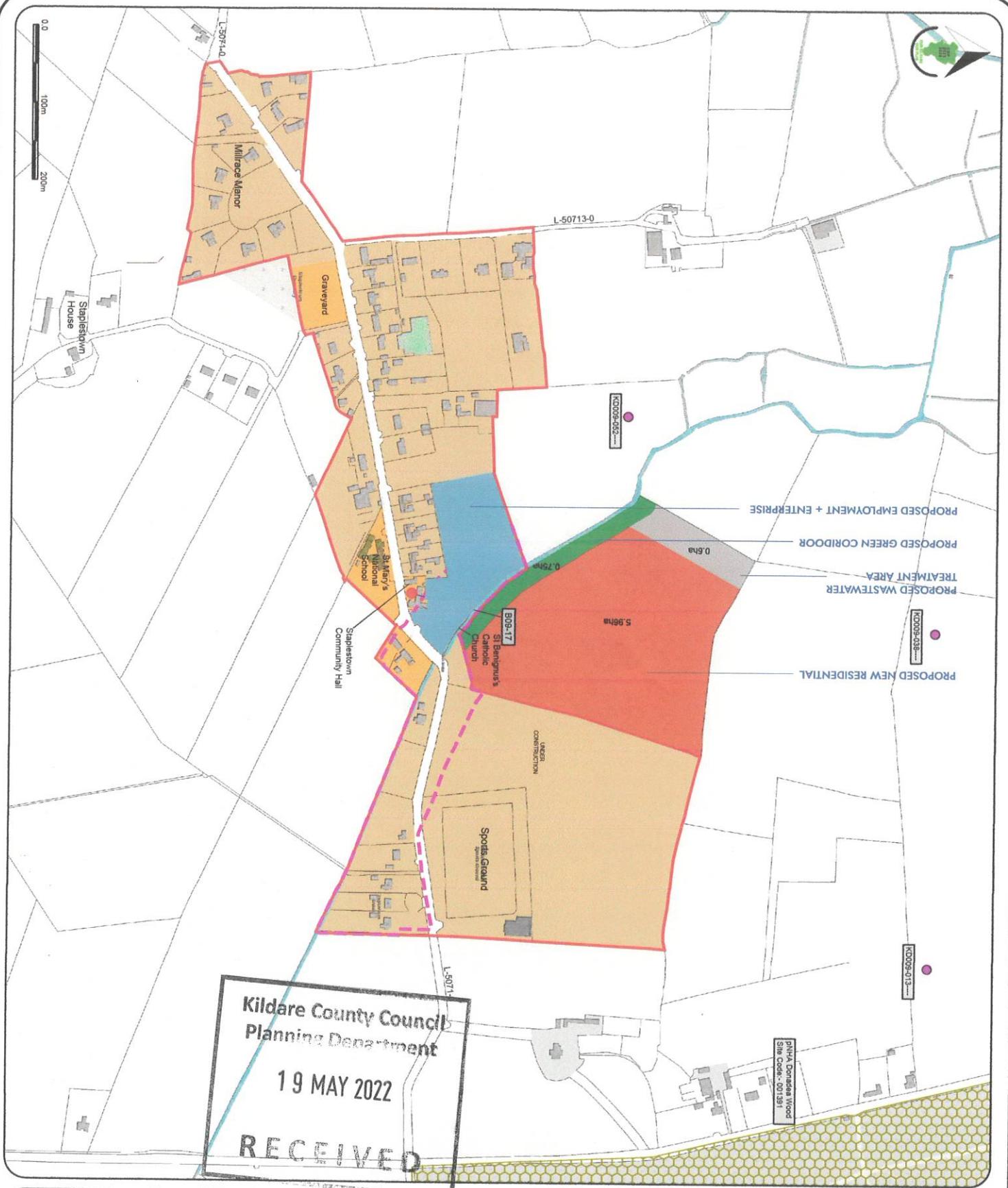
Staplestown



Kildare County Council
Planning & Strategic
Development Department
Aras Chil Dara,
Devey Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Rural Settlement Map

Stage	Date	Description
Development Plan	12/12/2021	Draft Plan Issued to Elected Members
Draft County Development Plan	14/03/2022	Draft Plan Issued for Public Consultation



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ANSWER

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the written statement

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Proposed Natural Heritage Area

RPS Record of Protected Structures

 Flood Risk Assessment

Existing Settlement

Settlement Core

Rural Settlement Boundary

Legend :

2023 - 2029

Staplestown Draft County Development Plan