

# Local Area Plan Multyfarnham Village 2007

Comhairle Chontae na h-Iarmhí



Westmeath County Council



# Multyfarnham Village Plan/ Local Area Plan

## 1 Introduction

This Plan takes the form of a Written Statement, and accompanying Zoning Map. If any conflict or ambiguity arises between the written statement and the supporting plans, the written statement will take precedence.

Multyfarnham is a moderate sized rural village with a population recorded in the 2002 Census of 153 (The population of Multyfarnham DED in the 2006 census was recorded as 466 persons an increase of 6.2% on 2002). Multyfarnham is located approximately 10 Km to the north of Mullingar approximately 3 Km from the N4. It is village of considerable rural character situated in a high quality landscape dominated by hills and lakes. Multyfarnham is experiencing unprecedented development pressure with a number of residential developments under construction or with the benefit of planning permission. The projected population at completion of granted planning applications including the existing population will be in the region of 400 persons based on an average occupancy of 3 persons per unit.

Multyfarnham performs a number of key functions in relation to its wider rural context, not least of which is to provide alternative residential opportunities in an area where the landscape is of such quality that it presents limitations to rural development.

This document sets out the framework in which Multyfarnham can continue to function as an active rural village, valuing, preserving, and utilising its many quality attributes to facilitate its ongoing development.

## 2 Context

Multyfarnham is designated in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2002-2008 as a priority settlement and as such a village plan is required. This village plan has been prepared as a Local Area Plan as set out in section 18, 19 and 20 of The Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2006, as such this plan must be consistent with the policy and objectives of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2002-2008, and the Midland Regional Authority, Regional Planning Guidelines 2004.

### 2.1 Key Issues for Village

- Protection and enhancement of Multyfarnham's character.
- Deciding upon appropriate scale and timing of new development.
- Consideration of future role for village (Tourism & Lough Derravarragh).
- Reflect with the community to shape the future of Multyfarnham.

## 2.1 Natural Heritage:

Multyfarnham has rich natural heritage both in and within easy access of the Village.

### 2.1.1 Recognised designations:

- Lough Derravaragh is approximately 1.5km to the North of Multyfarnham. It has been designated a Natural Heritage Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation, and is a Special Protection Area for birds. The Gaine River, which runs through the centre of Multyfarnham drains into Lough Derravaragh and is therefore performs an important role in its wider context.
- There is a high amenity area designated in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2002-2008 for the area of Lough Derravaragh, this is within 600m of the boundary of the LAP.
- The landscape surrounding Multyfarnham is of the *Northern Hills and Lakes* type as described in the Westmeath Rural Design Guidelines.

### 2.1.2 Other elements of special natural heritage:

- There are abundant mature hedgerows and numerous mature trees within and surrounding the LAP Boundary.
- The river Gaine provides a range of natural habitats locally and contributes to those of Lough Derravaragh.

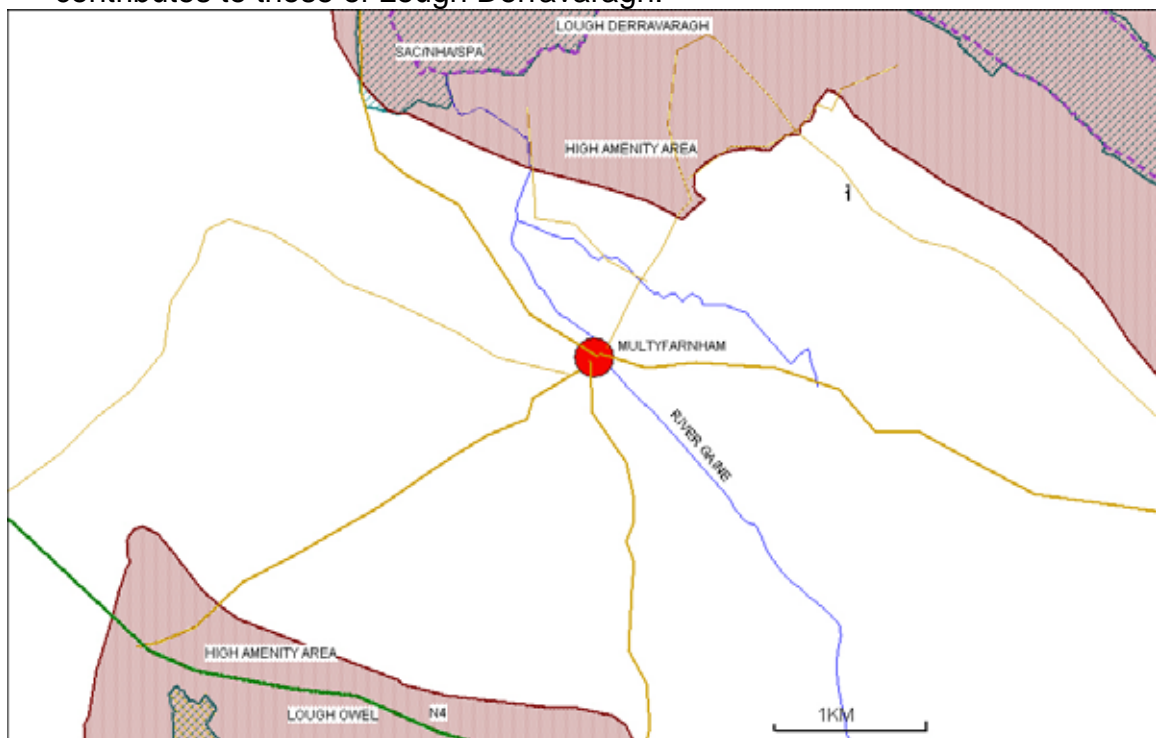


Fig 1 Natural Heritage designations in the wider area.

## 2.2 Cultural heritage

### 2.2.1 Recognised designations:

- There are currently 2 entries in the record of protected structures within the boundary of the LAP.
  - The Franciscan Friary (B151)
  - W. Walsh façade (B152) (*no longer in existence*)

(a further 16 structures have been recommended for inclusion in the RPS by Ministerial recommendation issued following completion of the NAIH survey of County Westmeath.) *available in draft form only.*

- There are 3 Recorded Monuments with the area covered by the LAP:

<b>Monument Number</b>	<b>Townland</b>	<b>Classification</b>
WM 006-058	Abbeyland	Friary
WM 006-061	Ballindurrow	Church
WM 007-072	Ballindurrow	Motte

There are further Recorded Monuments outside the LAP Boundary.

- There is a proposed Architectural Conservation Area set out in this LAP encompassing the village core
- Protected Views, there are two protected views set out in the County Development Plan in the proximity of the town, these are V.33 and V.36

### 2.2.2 Other elements of special cultural heritage:

- The street pattern, plot sizes and layout of the village are of heritage value, contributing strongly to the village character, these are a major asset to the village.

The potential for discovery of archaeology is high due to the long history of settlement in Multyfarnham.

## 2.3 Architectural Conservation Area

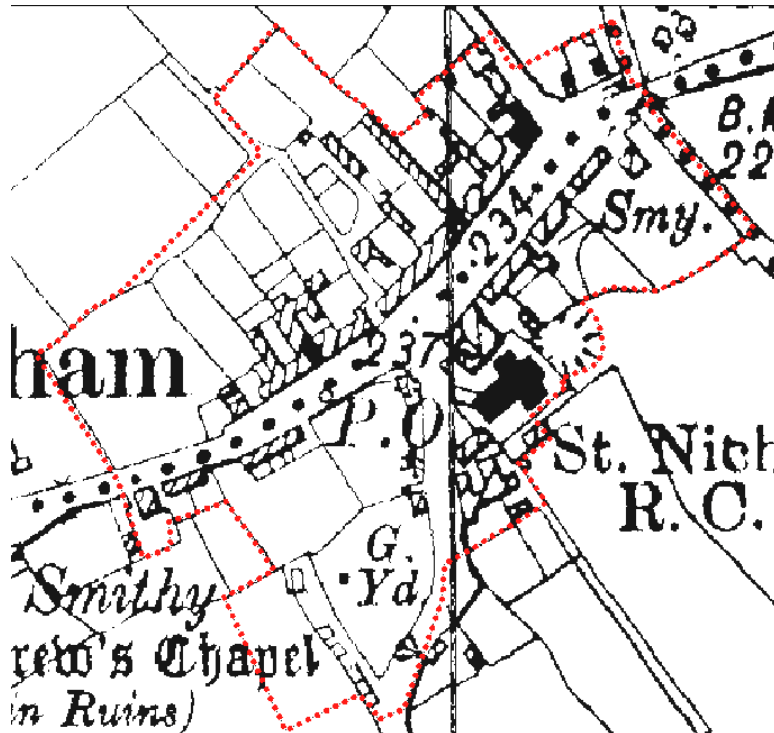
An Architectural Conservation Areas has been designated in the Multyfarnham Village Plan/Local Area Plan for the historic core of the village. A summary character statement is set out below.

### 2.3.1 Layout

The Layout of Multyfarnham has evolved over a considerable period around its wide main street and the four principle roads to Crookedwood, Coole, Ballynafid and Bunbrosna. The crossing on the river Gaine has also had a clear impact upon the layout of the village. The earliest surviving evidence of settlement is a Motte to the south of the main street and to the east of the church. In its current layout the village appears to be constricted to the south by the presence of the Motte. It is likely that it pre-dates the Abbey on the other bank of the River Gaine, which was founded in the 13thC.

There is little surviving fabric to suggest any particular spatial relationship between the village and the adjacent Multyfarnham Abbey. This may be at least

partially as a result of the provision of a new (current) entrance to the Abbey in the relatively recent past.



**Map 1 ACA boundary on 1911 revision of 6 inch mapping**

The grain of the village street is typical of traditional village building width, there are a good proportion of substantial two storey buildings providing a good sense of enclosure and a comfortable width to height ratio.

Plot sizes vary but are generally in the region of 60m deep to the north side of the street. Access to the rear of the street front properties is generally through arches and side passages from the street. A number of these side passages to both sides of the street have been built on with infill development. This creates a less regular rhythm to the street than would have been the case previously.

Many of the large plots have been combined and now comprise larger individual plots with considerable yards to the rear. At least one of these yards has a number of high quality cut stone sheds and boundary walls. (OB3 on zoning map)

Traditional village buildings within the ACA are all built directly onto the street with no setback and are primarily of terraced construction contributing to the strong urban village character of Multyfarnham. There are a small number of exceptions to this particularly to the west end of the village where the village form is weaker.

### 2.3.2 Built form

As with the vast majority of traditional Irish village buildings, the built form of structures in the ACA fall within a number of broad categories each contributing strongly to the character of Multyfarnham;

- Single storey vernacular housing
- Two storey vernacular residential
- Two storey mixed commercial and residential
- Ecclesiastical
- Industrial (forges)

Roofs throughout the ACA are of traditional pitches and spans, with a large number of chimney stacks punctuating the roofscape, this contributes strongly to the character of Multyfarnham. There are three examples of hipped roofs within the ACA, the hipped roof used to turn the corner of the main street and the Coole road, works well in this context as does the hipped roof to the garage on the western end of the village.



FIG 2 Townscape

Due to the topography, particularly as the street falls towards the river the stepped roofs are an important feature of the built form reinforcing the heterogeneity and evolution of the built form of the village over time.

There are very few modern roof lights visible to roofs in the ACA these are not considered to be in keeping with the established character. There is one instance of low-level dormers flush with the front wall of the building typical of the wider area.

Window, door openings and shop fronts throughout the ACA are of traditional proportions with solid to void ratios typical of rural villages. Only one, single storey building has a significantly altered window opening in its facade.

### 2.3.3 Materials

Materials used in Multyfarnham are predominantly of traditional, vernacular types, typical of a rural Irish village.

There are a number of very high quality natural slate roofs in the village, many have been replaced and the predominant roof covering is currently man made slate.

Chimneystacks are predominantly rendered with a small number of exceptions in the form of fair-faced brick stacks. These represent the only original use of fair-faced brick in the village.

Rainwater goods are of mixed types across the village.

Examples of all common types of windows and doors are on show through out ACA with few good timber sash windows surviving in varying condition, many of the original windows have been replaced with PVC at this stage. Gates to side passages are either of timber or sheet metal.

Predominant wall construction is most likely to be of random rubble stone or in a smaller number of cases cut stone, with a number of fine cut stone shallow arches visible in the village to side passages. Typical wall finishes in the village are renders of different styles with, painted and unpainted, dry and wet dash and smooth renders all present. There are a small number of stone structures in which the stone was intended to be exposed including, the church, the stone house on the corner of the street adjacent to the church, the cut stone sheds to the yard on the north of the main street, Wier's pub, the forge to the east end of the street, the bridge and a number of stone boundary walls. Pointing is not of the original style in a number of these cases.



Fig 3 Stone sheds and walls to North east of street

The render has been striped from a small number of originally rendered houses however the predominant character is that of rendered walls.

### 2.3.4 Use

The area encompassed by the ACA is of mixed village centre use, the predominant use is residential, with pubs, a restaurant/B&B, garage, shop, post office and Garda station. There is also a former farm yard and two former forges within the area. Elements such as the forges and farmyard are of particular significance due to their social and historical interest.

### 2.3.5 Other features

The views into and out of the village as a result of the local and wider topography provide a considerable element of rural village character, most notable is the long view to the north east along the main street, reinforcing its rural character.



Fig 4 Long View to the North east

The public open space within the ACA punctuates the urban form contributing strongly to its rural village character.

There are a number of mature trees, to the rear of the north side of the street and in the area of the church, which make a positive contribution to the character of the village. There are also a number of conifers to the front of the graveyard with have a negative impact on the village character.



Fig 5 Front of Graveyard

Original stone kerbing survives in a small number of locations around the village, and provides a characterful point of interest in the ground plain.

### **2.3.6 ACA Boundary**

The boundary that has been chosen to the ACA takes in historic core of the village, encompassing the vast majority of the older structures. There are two sites included in the ACA on which there are structures, which contribute little to the character of the village. These sites are, the Garda station and the derelict site on the west bank of the river at the junction of the main street with the Coole road.

Both of these sites have been included in the ACA due to their potential to affect the character as opposed to their current contribution to the character. These sites are in key locations in relation to the urban form of the village and the design of any proposed development to these sites will require careful consideration of the established predominant character of the village and ACA.

### **2.4 Social Infrastructure:**

There is a National School S N Chruimin Naofa to the West of the Village occupying a site of 2.7 Acres with an enrolment of 130, this is considered to be adequate space for a school of this size and is sufficient to accommodate future expansion.

There is a Community Hall on the Coole Road, a former school on a site of 0.65 acres currently providing childcare services.

There is a GAA pitch on the east bank of the River Gaine adjacent to the riverbank park. The riverbank park is under construction and on completion will be a major asset to the village.

There are other incidental open spaces at the junction of the Mullingar Road and the Main Street and to the centre of the Y junction at the west end of the main street these contribute to the character and provide passive open space.

There is a historic graveyard of 0.5 acres containing a national monument (remains of a church). The graveyard has been extended with a further 0.5 acres of modern graveyard, in which there is currently considerable spare capacity

Multyfarnham has performed well in the national Tidy Towns competition in the past and was the overall winner in 1977.

## **2.5 Tourism**

There is a development of holiday homes to the east side of the riverbank park and a well established caravan park on the banks of Lough Derravaragh approximately 2km to the north. Tourist accommodation is also provided in "The Tintain" at the east end of the village.

Multyfarnham is on a number of locally and regionally important tourist trails including the Tain Trail, however no reference is made to this on the information board in the village, although it does identify other routes for touring the area.

## **2.6 Physical infrastructure:**

### **2.6.1 Waste water**

The design PE of the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Multyfarnham is currently 700, the estimated current usage in 2004 was estimated at 190 PE.

### **2.6.2 Water supply**

A new water main has been completed in the last year from Bunbrosna this removes any constraints to development on the grounds of water supply.

### **2.6.3 Surface water drainage**

A new surface water drain is being constructed from the west end of the main street to the river Gaine as part of planning application 01906 and will be taken in charge by the Council, this may have a role in surface water management for other proposed and existing developments.

### **2.6.4 Transport**

Road infrastructure is generally good, the proximity of Multyfarnham to Mullingar (10Km) and the upgraded N4 (3Km), with its increased accessibility to Dublin are resulting in increased commuter based development pressure.

There is one bus to Dublin in the morning and one bus to Longford in the evening each day except Sundays.

Footpaths in the village vary in quality with several patches inadequate in design and materials; there are areas where local distinctive stone kerbing is intact.

Parking is currently on an on street and ad-hoc basis, this does not appear to cause any difficulties currently. However, it is recognised that there is a need to provide a designated car park to serve the church and cemetery services.

### 3 Village Plan Goals and Policies

#### Goal of the Local Area Plan:

To cater for the needs of the existing and future population of the village and its surroundings, having regard to sustainability, quality of life, social cohesion, and retention of the village's character through the protection of its considerable built and natural heritage assets.

Policies in this plan are subject to and guided by policies, objectives and standards of the Westmeath County Development Plan.

#### 3.1.1 Social Infrastructure and tourism

It will be the policy of the council:

To facilitate the completion of works to the riverbank park.

To provide signage and details regarding existing, and to propose further recreational walking and cycling routes for locals and visitors,

To secure a level of childcare and healthcare to match the requirements of the local community.

#### 3.1.2 Residential:

Zoned lands will be subject to the provisions of Section 96 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2006 regarding social and affordable housing.

It will be the policy of the council:

To ensure that future residential development is carefully sited, designed, laid out and of a scale, such that it contributes positively to the character of the village in its immediate and wider context.

To provide a range of house types and sizes in order to fulfil the needs of the community over time.

To ensure that the long term future expansion of the village is within the environmental carrying capacity, with particular reference to wastewater treatment.

#### 3.1.3 Mixed Use/Village Centre:

It will be the policy of the council:

To facilitate the sensitive expansion of commercial functions in the village in order to ensure a range and level of service appropriate to cater for the demands of both residents and visitors alike, taking Multyfarnham's position in the County retail strategy into account.

To prevent inappropriate shop fronts and signage from detracting from the village character.

To protect the vitality of the village centre and to facilitate appropriate mixed use development

### **3.1.4 Transport, roads and parking**

It will be the policy of the council:

To ensure that adequate parking is provided for residents and/or customers of any new development. To provide for car-parking accommodation to serve the church.

To provide for car parking accommodation to serve the church/ cemetery

To facilitate the renewal of existing footpaths and the provision of new footpaths where necessary.

To facilitate where possible increased public transport provision.

### **3.1.5 Conservation and Design:**

It will be the policy of the council:

To encourage the re-use of existing buildings in the village rather than demolition and replacement.

To ensure that any application for development within the Local Area Plan will be of high quality design, taking account of its specific site and wider surroundings.

To ensure that any application for development within the Architectural Conservation Area will positively contribute to the rural Village Character of Multyfarnham.

To encourage the redevelopment of derelict, underused and unsightly sites within the village in order to maintain and improve the village character.

To maintain or improve the quality of existing natural heritage assets within the LAP.

To secure the under grounding of overhead cables where the opportunity exists.

To secure the provision of new high quality coordinated street lighting where possible.

To secure the provision of new coordinated street furniture, throughout the village.

To ensure that proposals for surface water drainage to the River Gaine are in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

## 4 Specific Objectives

The above policies will be implemented through the following specific objectives on the zoning map:

1. Secure a high quality development to:
  - a. the derelict corner site to the north east of the main street at the junction of the Coole road,
  - b. the Garda station site to the west of the village to achieve greater enclosure of the village street.In order to increase the enclosure of the main street whilst having regard to the character of the ACA
2. High quality landscaping and maintenance to be provided for public open spaces in the village.
3. High quality stone buildings and boundary walls to the north back lands shall be retained as part of any development of this site.
4. Car parking and frontage of the Cemetery to be upgraded to reflect its position as principle gateway to the Village.
5. Road markings and bollards should be provided in to the entrance of the Friary for the purpose of clarity for road users crossing the bridge from the west.
6. To provide off street car parking to service the Church and cemetery.
7. The ecological importance of the banks of the River Gain shall be taken into account in the design of any development with the potential to affect the river.

## 5 Village Plan description

Multyfarnham Village Plan\LAP is primarily concerned with the protection and enhancement of Multyfarnham's considerable assets.

Areas of existing development within Multyfarnham have been zoned according to the predominant existing land use or proposed land use in cases where land has the benefit of planning permission.

If all of the 3.7 acres of land zoned for '*extended village centre*' was to be developed with a residential element together with an increased residential zoning, this would result in an additional projected population in the region of 200. This would be in addition to the estimated existing and committed resident population of 400. This total estimated projected resident population of 600 would retain in the region of 100 PE of unused capacity in the waste water treatment plant to, accommodate visitors in tourist season and some level of commercial development within the lands zoned for extended village centre use without overloading the treatment plant and compromising the sensitive receiving waters. This plan does not reserve any capacity for future reviews of this village plan\LAP.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Westmeath County Council has complied with the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 and concluded that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Area Plan would be unnecessary in this case.