

## Treanor, Bronagh

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**From:** Joe Gillespie [joe.gillespie@waterwaysireland.org]  
**Sent:** 25 May 2018 16:08  
**To:** ldevplan  
**Subject:** Waterways Ireland submission re Draft Monaghan County Dev Plan 2019 2025  
**Attachments:** WI response to Draft Monaghan County Dev Plan 2019-2025.docx

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Attn: Forward Planning Unit, Planning Department, Monaghan County Council, The Glen, Monaghan.

Please find attached document which is the Waterways Ireland submission re the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025.

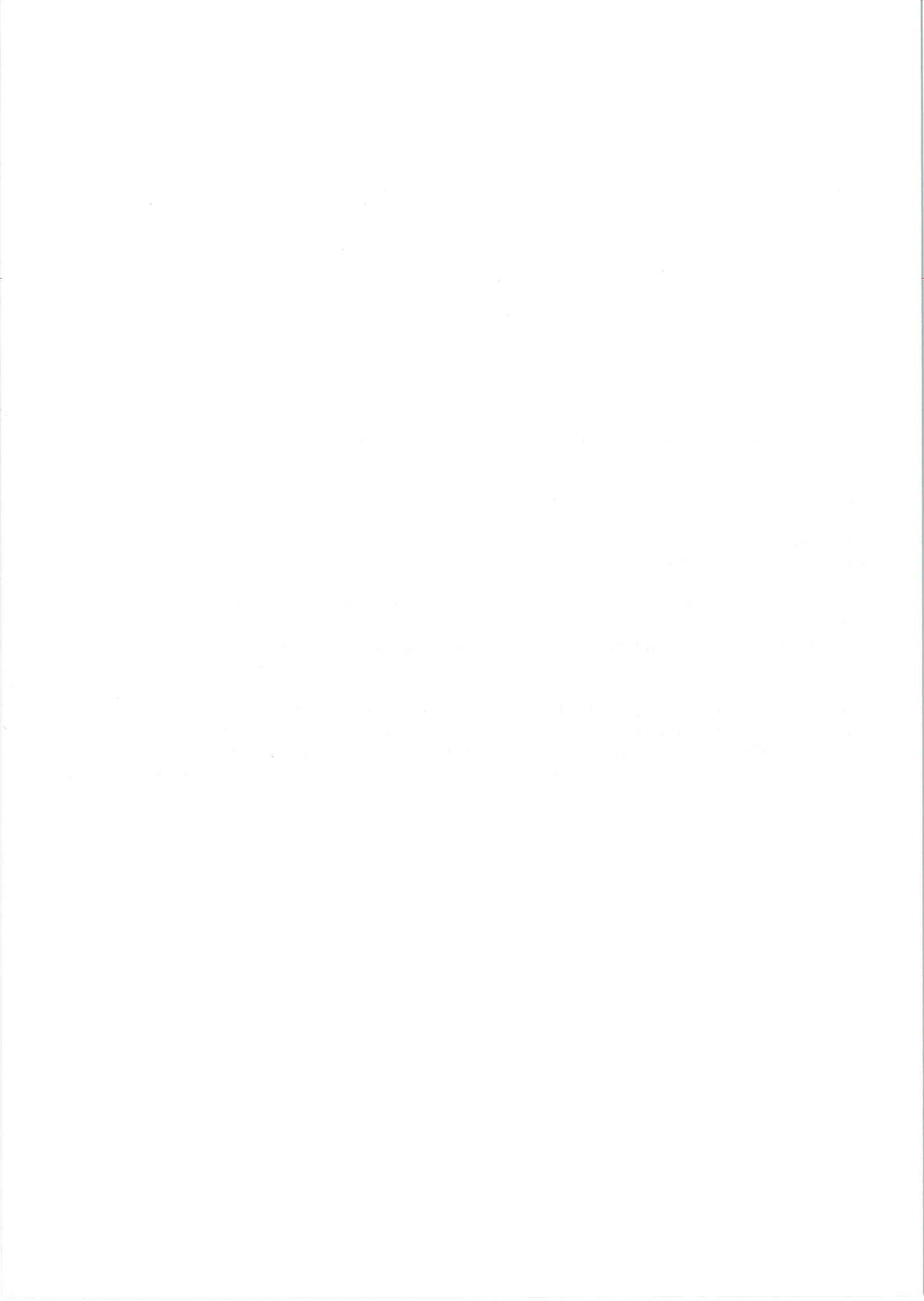
The submission is made by Joe Gillespie, Northern Regional Manager for Waterways Ireland. Please see contact details below.

Regards

**Joe Gillespie**  
*Regional Manager, North Region*

*Operations Division, Waterways Ireland, Somerview House, Old Dublin Road, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, Ireland N41 K5X7  
T: +353 (0)7196 50562; F:+353 (0)7196 23450; E: [joe.gillespie@waterwaysireland.org](mailto:joe.gillespie@waterwaysireland.org)*

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**Subject:** Submission by Waterways Ireland to Monaghan County Council on the Draft Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025

**From:** Joe Gillespie, Northern Regional Manager

**Date:** 25.05.18

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Please note that Waterways Ireland's suggested changes in text are entered below in red font. Comments are entered in blue font.

**Policy TMP5** To support the continued development of the Ulster Canal project and the expansion of the Greenway **network in County Monaghan centred on the Ulster Canal from Clones to Armagh.**

**Policy TMP6** To support the reopening of the Ulster Canal given its tourism and economic potential for County Monaghan and the wider region.

### 5.9 Cycling & Walking

Consider including reference to the health benefits of outdoor activity and recreation such as walking and cycling – a secondary benefit of using sustainable modes of transport.

In relation to walking and cycling, consideration must be given to the distinct ways in which these modes are used in everyday life. In keeping with the principles of sustainable development, they are the most realistic alternative modes of transport to the private car within County Monaghan where public transport provision is low. The Council must consider solutions which enable the urban population to walk or cycle instead of using the car. In addition, they are very frequently used as a leisure activity and for recreational purposes with the increasing number of greenways and walking festivals nationally an indicator to how much of a tourism attraction these types of recreational facilities are.

#### Fig: 5.0 – ~~Phase 2~~ Ulster Canal Greenway **Network** Route Map

Monaghan County Council has prepared a Walking and Cycling Strategy for the county, in response to the increasing demand from the community sector for more walking and cycling infrastructure and amenities, both to facilitate leisure activity and commuting. Strategies have also been prepared in Monaghan, Carrickmacross and Castleblayney Towns. The County's first Greenway opened in 2013, when Phase 1 of the Ulster Canal Greenway, a 4.2km section **following the line of the Ulster Canal** through Monaghan town opened. Since then, Monaghan County Council has developed proposals for a long distance Ulster Canal Greenway Network in partnership with Waterways Ireland, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council, Cavan County Council, Fermanagh & Omagh **District** Council, ~~and~~ Mid Ulster **District** Council **and East Border Region Ltd**. The 190km Ulster Canal Greenway Network strategy proposes to develop a greenway along ~~the towpath of~~ the Ulster Canal and along several disused railway lines to connect the main towns and villages throughout the region. The Ulster Canal Greenway network is intended to be delivered on a phased basis. Phase 2 of Ulster Canal Greenway secured funding of €4.95m through the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme in 2016. This 22km cross-border greenway between Smithborough in Co. Monaghan and Middletown in County Armagh is due for completion by 2021.

**Policy CFP9** To promote and facilitate the development of walkways, ~~and~~ cycleways and recreational trails in appropriate locations throughout the County as identified in the County Walking and Cycling Strategy.

This policy is largely duplicated by CWP1.

**Policy CFP10** To promote and encourage the development of looped walks and cycle ways in accordance with the Smarter Travel Policy and to protect established routes from development which would adversely impact upon them.

Looped and all types of walk and cycle trails in the community need to be promoted.

This policy is largely duplicated by CWP2.

**Policy CFP11** To develop in conjunction with adjoining local authorities and cross border bodies an extension of the ~~Ulster Canal Monaghan~~ Greenway in Monaghan town along the Ulster Canal and including along disused railway lines to connect the main urban centres and neighbouring villages throughout the mid Ulster region.

This policy should be worded to also enable Monaghan County Council to support the development by other parties of sections of the Ulster Canal Greenway network which may not be within the county but which will bring connectivity to the county's sections and benefits to the county by way of sustainable travel/ tourism/ recreation etc.

This policy is largely duplicated by CWP3.

## 6.1 Heritage Plans & Biodiversity Plan

Heritage Plans set out objectives and actions to help understand, promote and conserve the heritage of the county for the future. The Heritage Plan comprises a five year work plan which involves a local partnership with a range of individuals and organisations in order to be realised. The Heritage Council are a key national partner in this relationship, as they provide technical and financial support to develop and deliver the heritage plans.

Previous heritage plans have played an important role in facilitating research, education, awareness and training in relation to our built and natural heritage. The collection and dissemination of data in relation to species, habitats, buildings and places provides for evidence based decision making and the setting out of priorities and objectives for the future. The Heritage Plans have been effective in improving our knowledge on aspects of our natural heritage such as wetlands, fen species, hedgerows, dragonflies, butterflies amongst others and promoting best conservation policy and practice.

In relation to built heritage, survey work and recording has been carried out in relation to our industrial architecture of mills, railways and canals; early medieval sites with church ruins, historic graveyards and more recent church architecture.

It is important to plan to protect the industrial built heritage of the Ulster Canal. It is also important to plan to interpret and present the story of this linking inland waterway to the local community and wider population. The development of greenways along the Ulster Canal will bring a better appreciation of the canal's significance in the inland waterway network, of its heritage, and will enable the stories of the canals to be told in the community.

### 6.11.2 Areas of Secondary Amenity Area

In addition to the areas of primary amenity, there are a number of other scenic and amenity areas that require protection from inappropriate and insensitive development. These areas are generally associated with river valleys, uplands, woodlands and lakes and provide an important community, recreational and tourism resource. It is an objective to manage development in these areas to ensure that the scenic value is maintained and ensure any development proposals are sensitively designed and compatible with the overall landscape character of the area.

**Policy RSAP 1** To limit development in Areas of Secondary Amenity Value and to only permit compatible amenity developments where they do not unduly impact on visual amenity. The development of a greenway along the Ulster Canal should be permitted under this policy as it is providing a new amenity which is compatible with the heritage of the waterway and will add to the visual amenity.

Table 6.6

Constraints Map	Areas of Secondary Amenity
SA1	Emy Lough & Environs
SA2	Blackwater River Valley
SA3	Mountain Water River Valley
SA4	Mullyash Mountain
SA5	Ulster Canal and Environs
SA6	Rossmore Park and Environs

### 6.13 Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems within a defined geographical area which can vary in size from the local level to the county level. Green Infrastructure incorporates wild, semi natural and developed environments and can include features such as uplands, bogs and wetlands to urban parks, canals etc. The Green Infrastructure approach can provide a range of benefits to quality of life and the maintenance and improvement of ecosystems including; biodiversity management, water management, recreational and tourism opportunities, regulation of climate change and the promotion of sustainable movement patterns.

It is an objective of this plan to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County which will identify, connect and protect green infrastructure resources and enhance their environmental and human benefits. The achievement of this objective will require partnership and stakeholder engagement from state agencies, local communities and interest groups.

Development of projects such as the Ulster Canal Greenway enable disused waterway infrastructure to be re-imagined as green spaces to be experienced and enjoyed by the local and broader community.

It is notable that many of the features that make up County Monaghan’s Green Infrastructure have a cross border dimension i.e. Sliabh Beagh/Bragan, Mullyash, River Fane and the Ulster Canal and these both require and can foster a more co-ordinated approach.

Evidence of this co-ordinated approach is to be found in the partnership approach adopted to develop the cross-border Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal Greenway project.

### 7.18 Greenways

The first phase of the Ulster Canal Greenway project opened in 2013. The 4.25km route passes through travels from the east to west of Monaghan Town following the line of along the disused Ulster Canal. Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal project was launched in September 2017. This cross border project is being led by Waterways Ireland and is being carried out in partnership with Monaghan County Council, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council and the East Border Region.

### 7.19 Ulster Canal

The Ulster Canal has additional potential other than as a greenway and tourist asset. It is considered that consideration?? should be given to its re-opening as a mode of transport within the region.

**Policy CWP1** To promote and facilitate the development of walkways and cycleways in appropriate locations throughout the County as identified in the County Walking and Cycling Strategy and any subsequent strategy document.

This policy is largely a duplication of policy CFP9. See comments/edits entered there.

**Policy CWP2** To promote and encourage the development of looped walks and cycleways in accordance with the Smarter Travel Policy and to protect established routes from development which would adversely impact upon them.

This policy is largely a duplication of policy CFP10. See comments/edits entered there.

**Policy CWP3** To develop in conjunction with adjoining local authorities and cross border bodies an extension of the Monaghan Greenway along The Ulster Canal including along disused railway lines to connect the main urban centres throughout central Ulster.

This policy is largely a duplication of policy CFP11. See comments/edits entered there.

**Policy CWP4** To encourage the provision of bicycle infrastructure such as shelters and parking facilities in appropriate locations and make provisions for such infrastructure in new developments.

## 9. Strategic Objectives for Settlement Plans

### 9.15 Tourism

Monaghan needs to establish itself as a tourism destination by improving the visitor facilities and amenities on offer. This can be achieved by focusing on protecting the built and natural environment and capitalising upon the vibrancy of the towns. It is recommended that the town centres should be developed as attractive places to visit.

See STO 3. Development of the amenity of the Ulster Canal will also encourage tourism e.g. current greenway development from Smithborough to county border to Middletown. Tourism product will be stronger if development of the strategic network of greenways centred on the Ulster Canal and linking to other strategic greenway routes is encouraged/ accommodated/ permitted.

#### Table 9.13 Objectives for Tourism

##### STO 3

Encourage and accommodate the reopening of the Ulster Canal.

## 10. Settlement Plan for Monaghan Town 2019-2025

### 10.9 Tourism

Specific objectives for Tourism in Monaghan Town are:

**MPO7** To support the established festivals and events and to deliver on increased bed nights in suitable locations.

**MPO8** To support the re-opening of the Ulster Canal in Monaghan Town.

Development of the amenity of the Ulster Canal will also encourage tourism e.g. current greenway development from Smithborough to county border to Middletown. Tourism product will also be stronger if development of the strategic network of greenways centred on the Ulster Canal and linking to other strategic greenway routes is encouraged/ accommodated/ permitted.

#### 10.10.1 Open Space

The Council will endeavour to protect and preserve areas of high amenity and open space value and restrict over development of urban land as well as seeking to develop further amenity areas in the town. The Council will seek to maintain existing rights of way and investigate the creation of additional public rights of way either, by agreement or by use of compulsory powers, for the creation of rights of way.

Development of Ulster Canal greenways will support the protection of areas of high amenity and open space value. New rights of way will support better access to greenways and canal heritage.

### 10.10.2 Monaghan Greenway

The first phase of the **Ulster Canal** Greenway project opened in 2013, the 4.5km route **passes through travels from the east to west of** Monaghan Town along the disused towpath of the Ulster Canal. The greenway has proved very successful with walkers and cyclists and high usage figures have been recorded, with in excess of 100,000 trips made on the greenway in 2015 (102,344) and 2016 (104,385). The facility is used by a number of walking groups and is utilised during a number of recreational and charity events throughout the year including Darkness into Light and the Greenway Challenge. **Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal Greenway network will add 22km of new greenway to Phase 1 and extend to Smithborough and Middletown, County Armagh – a total length of just over 26km of greenway centred on Monaghan town. Subsequent development phases of the Ulster Canal Greenway network will reach the other main urban centres in central Ulster.**

## 13. Clones Settlement Plan 2019-2025

### 13.11 Tourism

The town's important archaeological and historic sites, together with its heritage features, such as the **Ulster Canal**, have the potential to be developed as a significant tourist attraction, given its pivotal position and profile.

The reopening of the Ulster Canal to connect the Shannon-Erne Waterway and Lough Neagh would also offer significant opportunities to develop tourism related facilities throughout the town. A marina development is proposed as part of the Ulster Canal regeneration project and it is acknowledged that such a development affording for the overnight stopping for canal users, offers great tourism potential for the town. The Canal Stores restored by Clones Development Society signals the potential for regeneration the re-opening of the canal would offer.

**Development of the amenity of the Ulster Canal will also promote Clones and its environs and encourage tourism. The local tourism product will also be strengthened by the development of a strategic network of greenways centred on the Ulster Canal and linking to other strategic greenway routes.**

#### 13.11.1 **Ulster Canal**

The Ulster Canal (74.93Km in length) stretches from **the River Blackwater at Charlemont/ Moy Lough Neagh** in the centre of Northern Ireland **to the River Finn on the Erne System**, and **thereby links up with the Shannon-Erne Wwaterway and the inland waterway network at Lough Erne in County Fermanagh**. Along its route it passes through several towns including Monaghan and Clones. The canal is an invaluable heritage and cultural resource. It shall remain an objective of Monaghan County Council to support the re-opening of the Canal in Clones, due to its potential to improve the economic development and tourism potential for the town. **Complementary developments along the Ulster Canal which would benefit Clones include extending the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway network to connect Clones and enhancing the amenity of the Ulster Canal where feasible.**

**Specific Objectives for Tourism in Clones Town are:**

**CPO7 Encourage and accommodate the reopening of the Ulster Canal and complementary developments along the Ulster Canal including the development of the proposed Ulster Canal Greenway network, and the provision of a marina at an appropriate location within the town as it provides a vehicle for regeneration.**

### **13.12 Recreation and Amenity**

A number of new recreational and amenity facilities have been provided in Clones in recent years which provide a range of economic, social and health benefits to the town and will improve the quality of life for residents of the towns and its hinterland.

The Peace Link has extensive facilities on site including a 400m Tartan running track, soccer pitch, 3G multi purpose playing pitch, indoor sports facilities for badminton, basketball and a fully equipped gymnasium. The facility has been designed to host major sporting competitions which has the potential to improve the economy of the local area. The facility won the Best Overall Fitness Facility in 2016 and also won a Supporting Active Community's award in the same year.

The playground at Cara Street has been redeveloped to complement the refurbishment of the Canal Stores building. A community run cafe "The Canal Stores Cafe and Bistro" has been established in the Canal Store building which will enhance the tourism product on offer in Clones.

Monaghan County Council has plans in place to provide a new linear park adjacent to the Ulster Canal (completed recently?). This development will provide access from the R212 to the Town Park at Cara Street. The provision of the linear park in this location will add to the quality of life of citizens and to the attractiveness of the town as a whole. **There are opportunities to develop the amenity of Clones by linking this park with the strategic Ulster Canal Greenway network as phased construction progresses through central Ulster.**