

withdrawn in their entirety, and not re-issued until and unless the matters covered by these proposals have been examined in far greater depth, and with due consideration of the circumstances of each beach and of the need to permit the greatest freedom possible to locals and visitors alike. The proposals as they stand are vexatious and egregious.

As a final observation, there appears to have been precisely zero consultation with locals. Surely this should be a *sine qua non*; it seems to me to be pitiable practice to omit consultation in matters such as these.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

1.11 It seems to me that the Council should not wish to put in place regulations and bye-laws that represent an unnecessary restriction on people's freedoms.

1.12 There are existing bye-laws in place governing people's activities in areas such as Omey Strand. The Council and the Garda Siochana appear not to have sufficient resources and/or motivation to enforce existing bye-laws and regulations. Why draw up yet more, especially when they may simply exacerbate existing problems or make the enforcement of existing bye-laws more difficult to apply and more widely disregarded?

2. Rossadilisk beach

2.1 (Part 2, paras k, q): It's clear that these proposed bye-laws simply don't apply to Rossadilisk Beach (ie Tra Bhríde, which is the part of Rossadilisk designated in the proposed bye-laws), because motor vehicles or horses simply cannot access this beach.

2.2 (Part 2, paras n, o, s, t, u): The points made above in relation to Omey Strand more or less apply equally here.

2.3 (Part 2, para p): It seems not unreasonable that on such a small beach dogs should be restricted to being on a leash, and of course that owners should ensure that any fouling by their dogs is cleared up and removed. However, many visitors wish very strongly to be able to bring their pets to the beach with them, and providing they obey existing regulations, it seems unduly harsh to prevent this altogether.

2.4 Rather than introducing further bye-laws and restrictions, the Council might be better advised to ensure that free public access to this small and beautiful beach is maintained; as things stand, people's ability to park adjacent to the beach, and indeed to access the beach safely, has been either restricted over time or left up to owners of private residences adjacent to the beach to manage. The public feel more and more that the beach is regarded as a private beach for use by the nearby houses only; that is a very great shame, and the Council should direct their attention to this. I might observe that prolonged camping (by camper-vans) has further served to restrict access to this beach, and the Council would do well to address this.

3. Cleggan Beach

3.1 As a general observation, Cleggan Beach is very little used by bathers, or indeed for other purposes, since (relatively speaking) the beach is stony and less attractive to users than other nearby beaches. Therefore, the proposed bye-laws in their totality seem pointless and unnecessary.

3.2 However, the beach is used by local people exercising their dogs and/or ponies. These activities cause no problem to others. It is therefore unduly restrictive, and indeed pointless as it imposes an unnecessary restriction on people's freedoms, to apply bye-laws such as paras p and q to this beach.

I am making this submission in my name, to the official email addresses of Galway County Council (as well as to our local County Councillors), within the period permitted. My overall proposal is that the Council's proposed Beach Bye-laws 2022 should be

for the environment. Again, this seems like an egregious attempt to restrict people's freedom and people's enjoyment.

1.6 (Part 2, para s): Omey Strand must be one of the safest places in Ireland where people can engage in activities such as windsurfing, kitesurfing, paddle-boarding, kayaking, etc. The water adjacent to the Strand is shallow and it is extremely well sheltered; people getting into difficulties would quickly find a shore, and in most cases are able to simply get off their equipment and into water no higher than their knees, or waist at most. The area is sufficiently wide as to mean that people engaging in these activities in general don't come anywhere near to other people. This proposal is utterly unnecessary.

The Council should be encouraging such healthy pursuits rather than banning them. They are good for people. These activities are also engaged in by thousands of tourists from other places in Ireland and from overseas. Omey Strand represents a paradise for these activities.

If the Council bans them from places such as Omey, practitioners will simply move to other, far less safe, locations. That will increase the danger and will surely lead to accidents and even deaths. Is that what the Council wants?

1.7 (Part 2, para t): This seems like an unnecessary piece of proposed red tape. The Council should be encouraging people and businesses to promote activities such as exercising (are exercise classes really to be banned or regulated out of existence?) or water-sports. Again, Omey Strand is an ideal place for conducting such activities. The Council should encourage them.

1.8 (Part 2, para u): This seems unduly restrictive, especially in a safe location such as Omey Strand.

Does the Council really wish to ban the use of inflatable swimming support/learning devices for toddlers?

1.9 (Part 2, para v): Is the Council unaware that local people have for hundreds of years moored their boats in the vicinity of Omey Strand, and in some cases kept them on moorings which dry at low tide (and hence are not only within 300m of the Strand, but actually *on* the Strand? Is the Council unaware that Aghrus Pier itself, with many moorings for working and pleasure craft, lies within 300m of the low water line of the Strand? And in any case, why should the Council wish to restrict this movement of craft in this way?

1.10 (Part 2, para w): I can understand that the Council may wish to regulate the making of commercial films on public lands. However, individuals and companies have for many years been making films and for a wide variety of purposes – including promoting the area, and indeed promoting the area's suitability for the activities you now wish to ban. The powers that the Council wishes to take upon itself seem too sweeping and are in most cases completely unnecessary (it should go without saying that any major film-making activity involving large film crews, etc, should be licensed; but this should be the exception; the Council should not wish to regulate *everything*).

to cross the strand on foot); I access the island for recreational purposes and also for research on aspects of the island

- And many other purposes.

The draft bye-laws (in particular, Part 2, para l) would appear to prevent all of the above from taking place in the future.

Omey Strand is visited by vast numbers of tourists and local people, especially during the summer months but at other times of the year also. The car park provided is far too small to accommodate the numbers of cars, motor-bikes, bikes, camper vans, etc, which need to park in order to enjoy the beach. For many years it has been customary for people to park their cars on the Strand and leave them while they enjoy the amenity afforded by the beach. The Strand is so large that this can easily be done without causing any problem to others who are also enjoying the amenities. To prevent this would be to create chaos, and to prevent thousands of people from enjoying the Strand as they should be allowed. The Strand belongs to all.

Furthermore, if people are prevented from parking on the Strand, they will clog up the narrow access road, and indeed create a parking problem around the area of Claddaghduff Church and National School.

1.3 (Part 2, para n): This seems unduly restrictive. The Council should be encouraging people and businesses to provide activities for visitors, rather than placing undue restrictions on them. There are businesses which promote orienteering, kayaking, windsurfing and the like, and which have to access safe places such as Omey Strand in order to conduct their business. This should be encouraged rather than prevented.

1.4 (Part 2, para o): It seems unnecessary to restrict all such activities. At times during the year, hastily organised activities involving a limited amount of amplified music, and 'fun' activities take place organised and participated in by local people, without creating any nuisance or difficulty. Such activities help to pass the time during the off-season, and often they raise money for charities.

1.5 (Part 2, para p): Omey Strand at low water covers a vast area. It is one of the very few places where dog-owners can exercise their dogs without disturbing anyone else. Such exercise is vitally important for dogs, and indeed it is important for their owners. To restrict dogs in the way proposed would be unnecessary and it would represent an infringement on people's freedom which is completely unnecessary. This is an example of the Council apparently being unaware of what they are proposing, and/or of the area the proposed bye-laws cover.

The above applies both between the hours of 11am and 7m and at other times.

It goes without saying – since it is covered by other laws/bye-laws – that owners must take responsibility for their dogs' behaviour, and indeed for any fouling by their dogs. I should, however, just point out that Omey Strand is swept clean by the tide, twice every day.

1.5 (Part 2, para q): Why should horse/pony-owners not exercise their animals on the Strand? This has been done since time immemorial, and it is a joy for others to see. The Strand is of sufficient size, and has a sufficiently small density of people even during the summer periods, that such activities create no problem either for other people or

Submission to Galway County Council On Draft Beach Bye-laws 2022

Introduction

This submission is in relation to Galway County Council's Draft Beach Laws 2022. The submission focuses **specifically** on the beaches on the Aughrus Peninsula named in the draft (Omey Strand, Rossadilisk Beach [Tra Bhride], and Clifden Beach), but most of the points made should be regarded as **generally** applicable in many cases to the other beaches named in the draft bye-laws.

General

The draft bye-laws, as drafted, appear to show a lack of knowledge of the beaches concerned that is both surprising and disappointing. It is a great pity that so many people's time must be taken up in writing submissions against the points contained within the draft bye-laws: this constitutes a waste of people's time, and the fact that the Council has published such a poorly considered proposal for the beaches included does not reflect well upon the Council itself.

In this submission, I address my points to each of the three beaches in turn:

1. Omey Strand
2. Rossadilisk Beach (Tra Bhride)
3. Clifden Beach

1. Omey Strand

1.1 (Part 2, para k): Omey Strand is an amenity and provides space for people to play games such as football, sports of various kinds, etc, when the tide is low. Naturally no one wishes to cause a nuisance by engaging in such activities, and there must be existing laws/bye-laws which cover such nuisance should it arise. So far as I am aware, no one has up till now raised any objection that engaging in such activities causes a nuisance or presents a danger to others. This para in the draft bye-laws therefore seems completely unnecessary; it seems to be seeking a problem which simply doesn't exist. Passing bye-laws for problems which have not presented themselves previously appears as an unnecessary restriction on people's enjoyment of the beach.

1.2 (Part 2, para l): Omey Strand is, as the Council is undoubtedly aware, a large tidal beach extending at low tide over a very wide area. It provides pedestrian and vehicular access to Omey Island, which is vital for purposes of:

- Working access to the island by those farming on the Omey Island land
- Access for home owners to their residences on the island – most of which are rented for holiday purposes throughout the summer, during holiday periods and at other times in the year
- Access to the Cemetery on Omey Island, for funerals, mourners, and others
- Access to the island by locals, visitors, tourists, etc, for a variety of amenity purposes afforded by the natural beauty, environmental diversity, habitats, and historic importance of the island (it should be noted that in some cases vehicular access is important, when - for instance - as in my case mobility problems make it impossible