

Nea Christian

From: O'Malley Vincent
Sent: Tuesday 21 January 2020 16:44
To: Nea Christian
Subject: RE: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N04-008.00 Behy Bridge

Christian,
Having reviewed the attachment, I am happy to accept the reasoned determination as set out below.
Sincerely
Vincent

From: Nea Christian [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday 15 January 2020 16:32
To: O'Malley Vincent [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N04-008.00 Behy Bridge

Vincent,

Having reviewed Paul's email below (with figures attached) and having regard to the minor nature of the works, I recommend that the following reasoned determination can be made:

Having performed screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed reactive maintenance works detailed in the email received from Paul O'Donoghue PhD dated the 9th of January 2020 and entitled 'Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N04-008.00 Behy Bridge, I accept the recommendations of Atkins Limited that the proposed reactive maintenance works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the best scientific knowledge and the site's conservation objectives. I determine that an Appropriate Assessment of these proposed works is not required, as it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following the screening done that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European site.

Kind regards,

Christian.

Christian Nea B.E., LL.B., LL.M., C.Eng., M.I.E.I.
Chartered Engineer

Senior Engineer (Environment)
Environmental Policy and Compliance Section,
Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Parkgate Business Centre, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8.

From: O'Donoghue, Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 9 January 2020 15:55
To: Nea Christian [REDACTED]; O'Malley Vincent [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

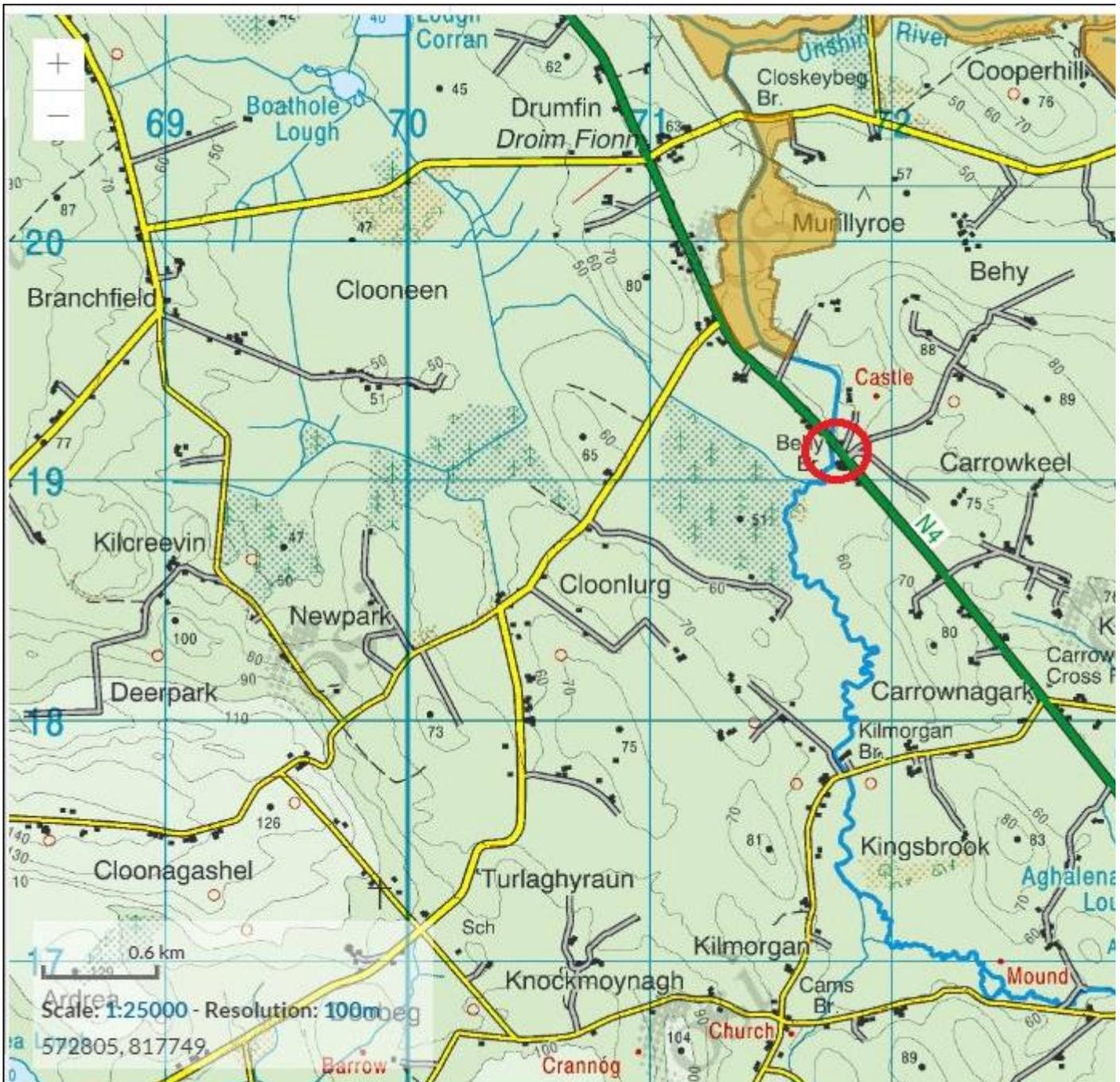
Subject: Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N04-008.00 Behy Bridge

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Christian

Re. Reactive Maintenance works at SO-N04-008.00 Behy Bridge

The structure location is illustrated here (bridge location circled in Red).



[Source: NBDC maps].

Behy Bridge is located on the N04 in the townland of Carrowkeel; to the west of Riverstown, Co. Sligo. It spans the Drumflin (River Code: 35D11) a third order river. This is river is a tributary of the River Unshin which flows out into Ballysadare Estuary. (Note: River Names are taken from EPA Maps - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>).

Proposed Works: Clearance of watercourse. Accumulated vegetation has become stuck on the upstream side of the arch, extending up to 2m under the bridge. This will be removed by hand. No rooted vegetation is to be removed from the river channel. Work will take no more than 1 day. Any vegetation removed will be collected and taken off site for appropriate disposal.

Ecological Characteristics:

This bridge is located 0.48km upstream of the Unshin River SAC (001898). It also shares a remote connection with Union Wood SAC (000638), Ballysadare Bay SAC (000622) and Ballysadare Bay SPA (004129) at 15.1km, 18.3km and 18.5km downstream respectively.

Qualifying interests of the Unshin River SAC

[3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation

[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)

[6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)

[91E0] Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)

[1106] *Salmo salar* (Salmon)

[1355] *Lutra lutra* (Otter)

QI Species

IFI surveying of the Unshin River upstream of the Unshin/ Drumflin river confluence found salmon in two age ranges (Fry and Parr). Salmon are therefore also likely to use the Drumflin River, including the river at the bridge site. Otter spraints have been recorded at Behy Bridge in 1998 (Source: Shiel, C. 1999, *Bridge usage by bats in County Leitrim and County Sligo*. Unpublished report prepared for The Heritage Council).

There are no records of white-clawed crayfish from Behy Bridge. However, 68 crayfish were caught in Lough Labe during a survey of Ballysadare / Lough Labe waterbodies in upper most part of the neighbouring Owenmore[Sligo]_SC_010 WFD sub-catchment (*Monitoring of white-clawed crayfish Austropotamobius pallipes in Irish lakes in 2007*); crayfish are likely to occur in the Drumfin River.

The bridge is not in a Margaritifera Sensitive Area and there are no records of FWMP at the bridge or downstream of it.

The bridge was surveyed for bats by Woodrow on behalf of Atkins as part of the current project in 2018. A Stage 1 preliminary survey noted that a bat box in place on the bridge was not being used. An old dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) nest was present. Bat droppings were, however, observed on rocks. A Stage 2 detailed bat survey was therefore undertaken - No bats were seen to emerge from the bridge. A single Soprano Pipistrelle passed, significant numbers at nearby lake. Area of high activity and potential for roosting bats.

Ecological data collated for the N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin road scheme were also checked. The Drumfin River was identified as being key ecosystem for Annex II listed Atlantic salmon, Brook lamprey and White-clawed crayfish (*N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Oral Hearing*).

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) or Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) have not been recorded from the bridge location (Source: NBDC).

Water quality was noted to be Q4 (Good) by the EPA at the Closkeybeg Bridge monitoring station (downstream of Behy Bridge). The Drumflin river has been designated as Good under WFD Status 2013-2018.

QI Habitats

The photos provided (see above) indicate the presence of floating river vegetation – potentially equivalent to the EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat 3260 Floating river vegetation in the watercourse at the bridge. Under the Contract it is not permitted to remove this vegetation.

It should be noted from google street view imagery (see below) that the field upstream of the bridge on the left bank (looking downstream) appears to be colonised by a range of wetland species such as Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), willowherbs (*Epilobium* sp.) etc. This habitat could potentially correspond to, or include elements of, wetland habitats such as Marsh (GM1), Tall-herb swamps (FS2) or fen (PF). Correspondence with EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitats such as 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb (or [6410] Molinia meadows. No access to this area is permitted.



Upstream of **Behy Bridge** (Source: Google Street view Aug 2018) (<https://goo.gl/maps/ZEUppsSoE8rxS6vg9>).

There are no works to the bridge itself. Negative impacts to the qualifying interests of Unshin River SAC are not anticipated.

Atkins Findings -

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment is based on the best available scientific information. It is concluded that the proposed project poses no likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Thus, it is recommended that it is not necessary for the proposed project to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Findings of TII Appropriate Assessment -

Can you please provide a Reasoned Determination?

Paul O' Donoghue *BSc PhD CEnV MIEEM*
Principal Ecologist
Ireland

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