

Glasbhealach Mór an Iarthair Great Western Greenway

Great Western Greenway Overview

The World Class Great Western Greenway (Westport - Achill) is primarily a 43.5km traffic free cycling and walking facility which mainly follows the line of the famous Great Western Midlands Railway, which closed in 1937. Its development has been made possible by agreement of local landowners who have allowed permissive access to users to pass through their lands.

This route offers gentle gradients and some of the most idyllic scenery in the west of Ireland. The route forms part of the National Cycle Network and it is the longest off road cycling experience in the Country.

From Railway to Greenway

The Great Western Midlands Railway was one of the so-called 'Balfour Lines', called after Arthur J. Balfour, Chief Secretary for Ireland during the years 1887-91, who introduced the Light Railways (Ireland) Act which provided State assistance for the construction of narrow gauge lines to disadvantaged areas such as West Mayo. The first station on this extension was Newport which opened in February 1894, followed by Mallaranny in August of the same year. The line to Achill was completed in May 1895. The promoters of the line had high hopes for its future and it proved to be a great social and economic asset to West Mayo, however traffic never consistently reached the levels originally anticipated. Development of road traffic in the 1930's sealed the fate of the line. The last train ran in the Autumn of 1937, a mere 42 years after the line had opened.

Today the section of the line between Westport and Achill with its many fine engineering structures, gentle gradients and outstanding scenery has been converted into an off road walking and cycling trail – a fitting reminder to the glorious railway era. Individual towns prospered with the arrival of the railways. When Irish railway companies became involved in the hotel business, the luxury Mullranny Hotel opened in 1897. From 1898, a combined rail and hotel ticket was available. The hotel was equipped with every modern convenience of the time, including electric light, and by 1900 hot and cold water baths were also available. Patrons had access to sandy beaches and the use of the hotel's boats and golf links



An National
Líonra Cycle
Rothaíochta Network

Section 01 Westport - Newport

Start/ Trailhead: In Westport an official access point is located to the right just off the N59 travelling in the direction of Newport approximately 500m from Westport town centre. Follow the directional signpost signs on to the Greenway. In Newport an official access point is located to the left just off the N59 travelling in the direction of Westport located approximately 2km from Newport town.
Distance: 12.5 km
Estimated Time: 1-1.30 Hours Cycling, 3-3.30 Hours Walking
Terrain: Greenway off road cycle and walking trail.
Waymarking: Trail is waymarked using the National Cycle Network symbol and a white directional travel arrow.
To Suit: Suitable for people with moderate levels of fitness.
Minimum Gear: Helmet, Bike, Mobile Phone, Snacks, Fluid and waterproof.
Services: Services available Westport and Newport.

Section 02 Newport - Mallaranny

Start/ Trailhead: In Newport an official access point is located to the left just off the N59 travelling to Bangor. An access point is also located to the right just off the N59 travelling to Bangor. Access point is also located to the rear of the Maloney Park Hotel.
Distance: 18 km
Estimated Time: 2-3.30 Hours Cycling, 5-5.30 Hours Walking
Ascent: 82m
Terrain: Greenway off road cycle and walking trail.
Waymarking: Trail is waymarked using the National Cycle Network symbol and a white directional travel arrow.
To Suit: Suitable for people with moderate levels of fitness.
Minimum Gear: Helmet, Bike, Mobile Phone, Snacks, Fluid and waterproof.
Services: Services available at Newport, Mallaranny and Trianan.

Section 03 Mallaranny - Achill

Start/ Trailhead: In Mallaranny an official access point is located to the right just off the N59 travelling to Bangor. An access point is also located to the rear of the Mallaranny Park Hotel. On Achill Island an official access point is located at Ostaí Ostaí Achá / Achill Island Hotel at the gateway to Achill Island.
Distance: 13 km
Estimated Time: 1-1.30 Hours Cycling, 4-4.30 Hours Walking
Terrain: Greenway off road cycle and walking trail.
Waymarking: Trail is waymarked using the National Cycle Network symbol and a white directional travel arrow.
To Suit: Suitable for people with moderate levels of fitness.
Minimum Gear: Helmet, Bike, Mobile Phone, Snacks, Fluid and waterproof.
Services: Services available on Achill Island and Mallaranny.

Strictly No Dogs Allowed
Help to Maintain this Greenway
Please report any dangerous obstructions or missing / damaged signs to:
Mayo County Council 096 41169
Email: mayowalk@mayococo.ie

For more information on walking and cycling in Mayo, please log on to the following website: www.greeway.ie
www.mayotrails.ie
www.doncorofinlaghycycling.ie

Leave no trace

Principles of Outdoor Ethics
Please adhere to this code in any trips to the outdoors

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Respect wildlife and farm stock
- Be considerate of others
- Minimise the effects of fire



National Cycle Network

The National Cycle Network is being developed throughout Ireland. A number of linear trails, greenways and cycle hubs towns are located across the country. Each hub town has a number of looped cycle groups consisting of half day and day cycles.

Acknowledgement

Mayo County Council wishes in particular to thank local landowners without whose cooperation, enthusiasm and support this project would not have been made possible.

The Local Authority would also like to acknowledge the support and assistance of CIE, South Mayo Development Company (LEADER), the Local Rural Social Schemes, the North West Regional Fisheries Board, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the National Trails Office.

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