

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Official Opening of Phase 1 of South East Greenway**

Wexford and Kilkenny County Councils along with Waterford City and County Council are delighted to announce that the official opening of Phase 1 of the South East Greenway will take place on Tuesday 25th July 2023 at 11am at the Greenway car park in Rosbercon and the Greenway will open to the public at 2pm on the same day.

This project commenced in 2018 and is funded by the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Kilkenny County Council, Wexford County Council and Waterford City and County Council.

Jack Chambers T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, will carry out the official opening in the presence of Councillor John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, Councillor Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council, as well as Wexford and Kilkenny Councillors, Oireachtas members and invited guests.

Phase 1 of the South East Greenway is approximately 6km in length from New Ross to Glenmore. It is the first part to be opened of the 24km of the South East Greenway, which will be a spectacular off-road cycling, walking and wheeling Greenway. Once fully completed, it will run along an old railway line from the quays of Ireland’s oldest Viking City of Waterford to the Norman town of New Ross along the banks of the beautiful Barrow River, through the scenic countryside of South Kilkenny. It will in future phases, include historic elements such as the Red Bridge and old rail tunnel at Mount Elliot and will ultimately connect to the renowned Waterford Greenway.

Speaking about the Greenway, Minister Chambers said:

“The opening of the first section of the South East Greenway represents an exciting development for the South East Region. A figure of €8 million has been invested by the Department of Transport in developing this wonderful Greenway route to date. This investment signals the Government’s commitment to providing high-quality cycle infrastructure that will generate many benefits for cyclists and communities across Ireland. This Greenway will encourage greater levels of travel via cycling and walking rather than private car use amongst leisure users, tourists, and commuters. The opening of this route along the River Barrow and its connection with the Waterford Greenway will, in due course represent a valuable tourism amenity in Ireland in attracting visitors to Ireland’s Ancient East.”

Also attending the official opening on Tuesday 25th July, Peter Walsh Chief Executive of TII stated, "I am delighted to welcome the opening of the first section of the South East Greenway. This is a major milestone in the development of this important project, which will provide a spectacular 24 km off-road cycling and walking trail adjacent to the banks of the River Barrow. The Greenway is an attractive amenity for communities along the route as well as enhancing the existing tourism offerings throughout County Wexford and County Kilkenny."

Acting Chief Executive of Wexford County Council, Eamonn Hore said

“I am delighted to see that this day has finally come to pass with the opening of the first section of the South East Greenway. Thanks to all the people involved, right back to the original genesis of the project in 2014. I hope everyone enjoys the experience.”

Mr. Sean McKeown, Acting Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council commented, “This is an important day for not just Kilkenny but the entire southeast region. While the opening of Phase 1 from New Ross to Glenmore is an important first step, the realisation of the full South East Greenway will greatly enhance the tourism offering and the reputation of the region. I would like to acknowledge our Project partners in Wexford and Waterford local authorities, along with the Department of Transport and Transport Infrastructure Ireland for their collaboration in delivering this strategic project.”

Cllr Michael Doyle, Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny County Council and Cllr John Fleming, Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council, welcomed the opening of Phase 1 of the South East Greenway and looked forward to the opening of future stages.

Cllr. Doyle said, “The old rail corridor is steeped in natural, built and cultural heritage, with a blend of urban in New Ross and Ferrybank and rural through the farmland of south Kilkenny and I’m delighted to see it now re-imagined into the South East Greenway, a world class amenity that locals can be very proud of and one that they and visitors can enjoy for many years to come.”

Cllr Fleming said “As Cathaoirleach of Wexford County Council as well as a Councillor representing New Ross Municipal District, and being from Kilkenny originally, I am enormously proud to attend the opening of the Greenway between those counties and soon to include Waterford as well. The Greenway will bring economic benefits as well as very important health and social benefits to our communities and I look forward to its completion, in particular, to the Red Bridge and the tunnel at Mount Elliot, which will be spectacular.

With three Municipal Districts bordering Phase 1 of the South East Greenway, the Cathaoirligh of the three districts expressed their delight with the opening.

Local man Cllr. Ger Frisby, Cathaoirleach of the Piltown Municipal District commented, “It’s a great day for the region and in particular South Kilkenny and I’d like to acknowledge the hard work of all those involved in bringing the project to this stage and I’m really looking forward to seeing the project completed in its entirety. We are already progressing plans to develop links from the Greenway to the villages of Glenmore and Slieverue, and the delivery of these links will be a real economic shot in the arm for these villages, so exciting times ahead.”

Cllr Anthony Connick, Cathaoirleach of New Ross Municipal District said, “I’m delighted to see the first section of the Greenway open. It will be a historic day for Wexford, New Ross in particular, and Kilkenny and Waterford. Being the closest elected member to the Greenway, living in Rosbercon itself, I would have passed this location every day for years and am delighted to see what it has now become, from the underutilised space it was for many years. It will be a major attraction for local people and for tourists alike, bringing people to New Ross and the South East region.”

Cllr. Deirdre Cullen, Cathaoirleach of the Callan – Thomastown Municipal District noted, “I am delighted to attend to mark what is a very exciting occasion for South Kilkenny and the adjoining counties. The scenery along the greenway across the River Barrow valley and surrounding countryside is spectacular. It is an area rich in biodiversity creating a real immersive experience for users with the great outdoors.”

For further information, check out www.southeastgreenway.net

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