

Update from the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR)

Railtrail Working Group

IT IS NICE to be able to report another year of progress in our efforts to convert the old SLNCR route to a multi-use trail. Local landowners have been very supportive of this project as have the local Councils. The working group has been very busy all year and a few of the notable achievements are listed below.

We have attended several conferences on Greenway development. We are very fortunate that one committee member with a degree in environmental science has commenced a masters focusing on the ecological development of greenways, enhancing them as wildlife corridors while minimizing the effect on the environment. An output from this masters will be a document outlining best practice for Greenway development.

The group has continued to raise awareness about the project. A highlight in 2014 was the building of a replica SLNCR steam engine to take part in the St Patrick's Day parades in Manorhamilton, Dromahair and Sligo. Constructed in 'Bohey Engineering Works' the replica engine had an internal smoke machine which allowed it to puff out smoke as it moved along the parade route. Our innovative float won joint first prize in the Manorhamilton parade and we were also awarded a trophy in the Sligo parade. Stands at the



Manorhamilton Show, the Organic Centre open day and the Family Fun Day in Dromahair also helped to bring the message to a wider audience. On the fundraising front we have held successful pub quizzes in Manorhamilton and Sligo. The working group recently organised a study visit for landowners to the Great Western Greenway in Mulranney, Co Mayo where they had an opportunity to meet landowners who had a working greenway across their lands. This visit was a great success and helped to build links between the two projects.

The current focus of the working group is to open a demonstration stretch from the Clubhouse in Dromahair to the next railway crossing cottage at Edergole. This is a beautiful stretch of the line with mature Beech trees and all the landowners along

this stretch have kindly given legal access to allow the trail to be constructed. It is envisaged that this one kilometre stretch of line will form part of a five kilometre looped walk, along the Planting Road to Creevelea Friary, then following the river walk back into the village and finally along the road back to the Clubhouse. This demonstration stretch is now ready for construction. The only hurdle remaining is raising the funds required to complete the stretch. The group continues to fundraise and are confident that this stretch will be open for use in the near future.

If you would like to be involved with this project or support our work with a donation please contact: manor.maguire@gmail.com

The working group are grateful to all the landowners along the SLNCR route who have very kindly supported the greenway project.