

# Irish Architecture Foundation

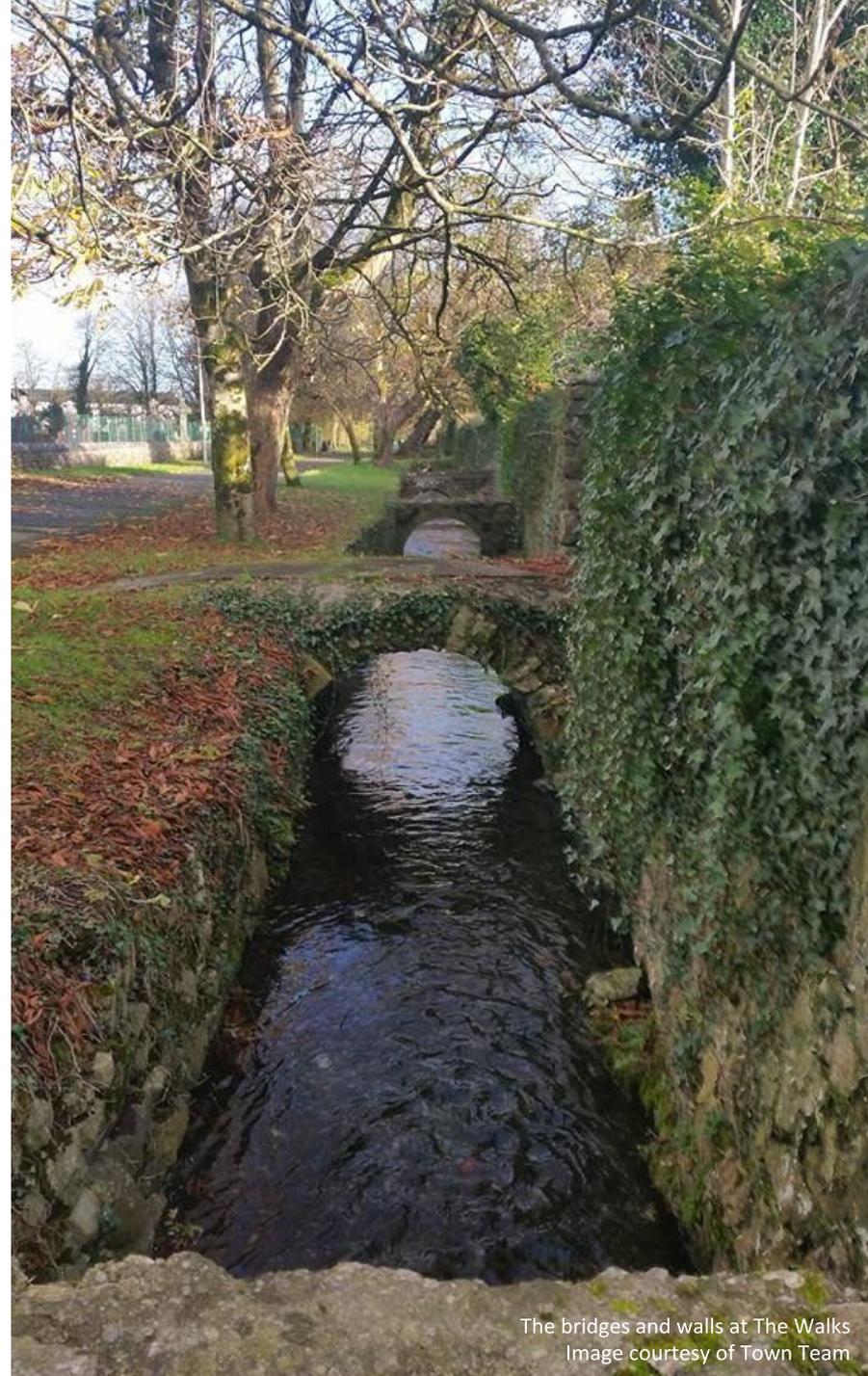
## Reimagine Loughrea 2019

Research Report on Attitudes to Creating an  
Architectural Intervention on The Walks, Loughrea

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) launched a national campaign in 2019 called Reimagine.... This programme works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to challenges or problems they've identified in their locality. The Walks, Loughrea was selected as one of these towns for 2019.

In this project we looked at the area known as The Walks in Loughrea. The Loughrea Town Team's Steering Group (for the purpose of this report shall be referred to as the Town Team) approached us as they wanted to raise awareness and use of this area. They also wanted to draw attention through this project to a larger conservation project which was happening in the same space.

The IAF, with Town Team have proposed to create a temporary architectural intervention to frame conversations and activities along The Walks. The project is being partially funded by Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture Small Town Big Ideas.

As Reimagine... aims to ensure as many people from the community have a say in their local environment. Therefore the IAF have spent a number of months researching how people use The Walks, how they feel about them and how they feel about a project such as this.

This report outlines the observations seen during this research and the responses of the local community. It also highlights what people see as important in The Walks and what they want to have reflected in such a project





## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Description of project

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) launched a national campaign in 2019 called Reimagine... This programme works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to challenges or problems they've identified in their locality. The Walks, Loughrea was selected as one of these towns for 2019.

The IAF came on board with Loughrea Town Team to create an architectural intervention along The Walks, Loughrea. The purpose of this intervention is to raise awareness of the importance of The Walks, the ongoing large scale conservation project that is preserving the medieval walls and bridges along The Walks and to create a structure that will increase activity and dwell time along The Walks.

This project has been funded by Galway County Council and has been awarded money from Galway 2020 to create this intervention in 2020.

A crucial element of Reimagine is that all the projects are developed by the community and designed with a bottom up approach. As part of this, this research report was carried out. The research examined how people currently use The Walks, how often they use The Walks, what they would like to see on The Walks and what they consider would make them use The Walks more. This research has been used to shape an open call for a multidisciplinary team to design an intervention along The Walks. The project has been running for five months so far.

### 2.2 Introduction to the The Irish Architecture Foundation

The Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) was officially convened and launched in June 2005. The intention was that this new cultural organisation would be independent, formative and above all else, ensure that architecture served the people. For more than a decade, the IAF has established a network and track record of delivering major projects, primarily aimed at developing audiences for architecture in Ireland, while also raising the profile of Irish architecture abroad. Its programme of exhibitions, talks, film screenings, symposia,

competitions, publications, school and community workshops is intended to raise awareness and generate conversations, as well as critically engage a diverse public. The IAF's mission is to champion the power of architecture to transform lives and improve the places where we live, learn, work and play. Over the course of the next five years we will continue to do this my driving forward our strategic goals;

#### Advocacy

Through a dynamic programme of activity, we inspire people to understand and shape their world. We believe that the quality of buildings and urban and rural landscapes depends on the demands of an informed public coupled with open and resourced architectural practice. We will continue to promote the importance of architecture to the wider society by communicating the potential of architecture and advocating for its societal, economic and cultural value. On a practical level, as an organisation with an overview of the creative industries, we can share our knowledge, experience and expertise to help others deepen their connection to architecture and encourage them to develop related initiatives.

#### Empowerment

The IAF believes that cultural participation and engagement can significantly enhance the well being of society. We create the conditions where people working with design teams can shape their own environment actively and not reactively. We support groups to become more involved in the design process in their neighbourhoods in response to a need that they have identified.

#### Innovation

There are new ways of thinking about and practicing architecture. The IAF is an independent, open and reflective agency strongly attuned to current developments and future trends in the realm of architecture and related disciplines. We believe that architecture, as subject and practice, must be open and self-reflective in order to maintain its relevance in society. At a moment in which the ways we live, work, and think are shifting, we should take time to consider and question how we frame our understanding of architecture and its relationship to people, culture, society and the environment.



## Connection

The original concept that drove the formation of the IAF was one of connection; that of people to architecture and architecture to people. We believe good design is in everyone's interest, and that our reach and impact is always amplified by working together. As an organisation that is a facilitator and initiator, connection is central to our practice. Our role is in facilitating wide public engagement and being a channel across multiple sectors including culture, arts, community, education and innovation.

## Consolidation

Survival means reinforcing our people, know-how and financial resources over the duration of this plan. Our existence relies on an imaginative and transformational programme, educational and learning opportunities, institutional marketing and an audience to serve.

## 2.3 Introduction to Reimagine...

Reimagine... is a national campaign that works with communities across Ireland to co-create and co-design solutions to challenges or problems they've identified in their locality. It is a new initiative launched by the Irish Architecture Foundation, with seed funding from Creative Ireland's National Creativity Fund. It builds on the IAF's 14 years experience of engaging the public with their built environment. Reimagine... aims to help people create the built environment they want. Through the Reimagine... programme the IAF works with selected communities to get a deeper understanding of what the issues, potential assets in an area are; we then work with the people in the area to get ideas of what solutions or actions they would like to see; what would work best for the wider community; we then connect the community with people who have the expertise to make this happen.

The Reimagine programme is built upon 4 of the IAF's strategic goals; Advocacy, Empowerment, Innovation and Connection. Through the IAF's Reimagine programme people engage with their built environment, understanding the impact architecture has on their lives, the power they have to influence change over this environment and new ways of working to connect wider communities to each other and the expertise needed to ensure this change is actualised.

In April, 2019, the IAF did an Open Call asking communities to come to us with problems we might be able to help them solve, opportunities for change they have identified or ways to maximise on great local assets, enhancing good places to make them better. At the end of the day the IAF realises no one more more about what an area needs than the people who live there. A shortlist of entries were selected based on a designed matrix of factors, including geographical requirements, timelines and interest from local communities...etc. The IAF then visited this short list of town and met directly with the community leads who would be involved in the project. After careful consideration six town were then selected to work with in 2019.

A key stone of every Reimagine is that it is a people first design process. This means the the town teams and wider communities have to be consulted and considered at all phases of design and allowed input at all times, where possible, ideally with each project having 5 milestones where the wider community are consulted. This consultations range in scale and scope but it is necessary that they occur throughout the project.

These consultations will happen throughout the different phases of the project. For example in the initial research phase, in some cases we test the hypothesis put forward by the town team, i.e. is that public space as disused as the people who put forward the proposal believe, we also assess what the needs of the wider community in an area are. In the ideations stage we carry out consultations with the wider community to see if people have thought of other opportunities have other ideas on the area. At this point we also consult with the community to see how they feel about potential change and how we can include them in the journey. We then begin to test ideas, this may be through consultations and suggesting to people what may happen based on research and then recording and gaging their responses, it may be a case of asking wider communities to review any brief which are being proposed at this time. In the selection of any work to be produced we also consult with the community asking them to be part of selection panels and ensuring any feedback is integrated into the design at all stages. If changes are made we again bring this back to the community to ensure feedback has been interpreted as intended Lastly we also consult with community once things are in place to get their feedback after the process.



SHOW US HOW  
YOU WOULD LIKE  
THESE PLACES TO LOOK

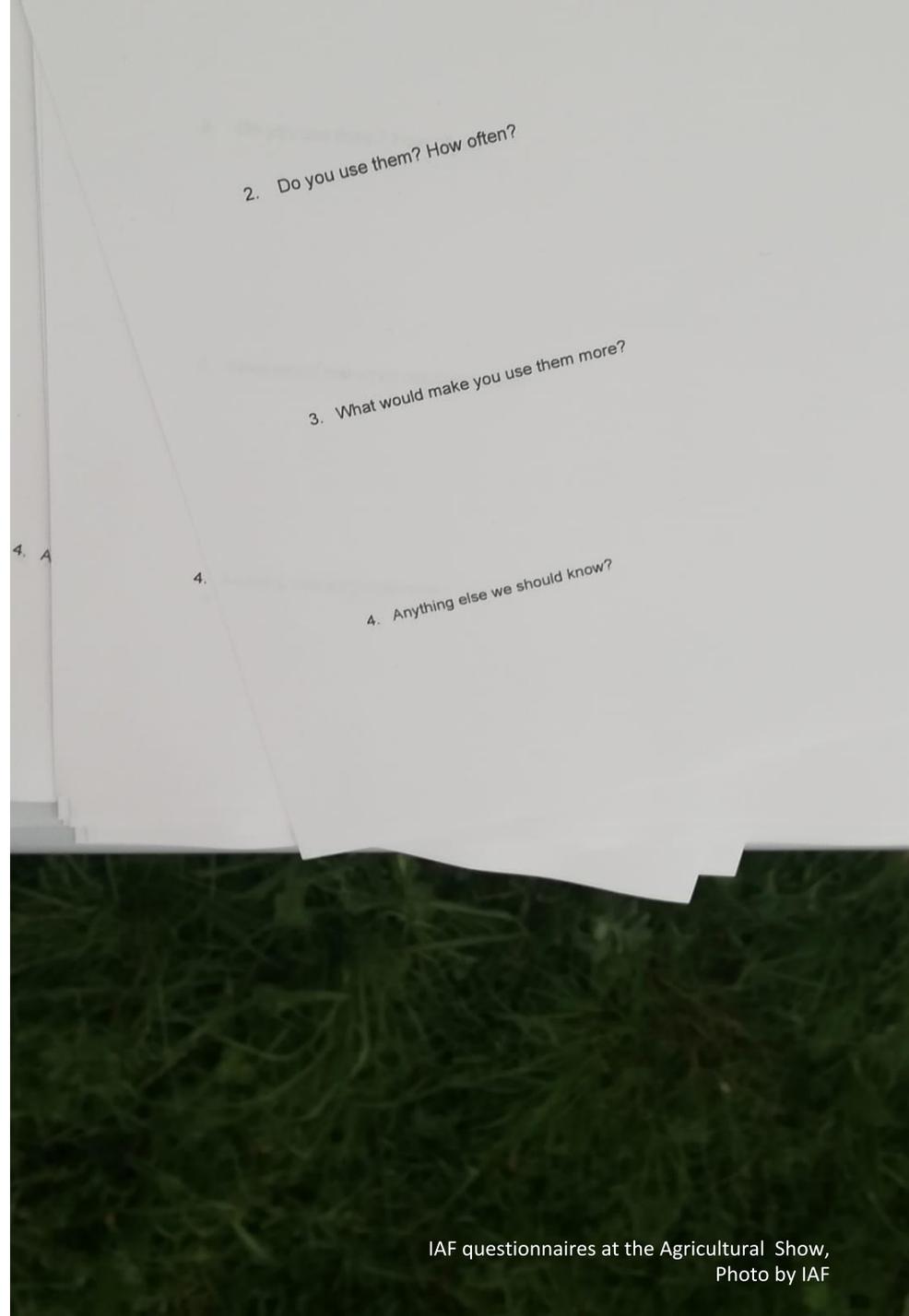
DO the  
place up  
and put the  
photos

## 2.4 Introduction to Reimagine...The Walks, Loughrea

Loughrea town team were directed to us through Galway County Council. The town team had identified the importance of the walls and bridges along the Walks. These date from the original moat of the town and the Town Team have done an excellent job beginning a conservation project to preserve these structures. The team were aware however that they would like to get more people using The Walks to be aware of this conservation project, the importance of The Walks and also to see this valuable community space used by the wider community.

Firstly, the IAF assessed how the area is currently being used. They will then work with and across local communities to codesign a brief for an open call to design and build a temporary architectural intervention along the Walks. It is the intention of this project that it will complement and draw further attention to the excellent work the community is doing in conserving and maintaining The Walks. It is hoped that this activation will create further awareness of area and also the hard work taking place, enabling further fundraising and a greater use within the community. It is also hoped that the project will provide valuable information regarding current use of the space, potential use and opportunities for permanent interventions.

The IAF Reimagine project proposes to work with local groups already working in the area, local students and the Galway CoCo and Creative Ireland to great a temporary structure to activate the Walks in Loughrea and the North Mount. This structure will be used in 2020 for events in the town. It will be part funded through Galway2020 and we will work with them and Architecture at The Edge Festival to plan events around this temporary structure. It is the aim that this structure will form a frame for conversations and events and will be able to be installed and dismantled as needed.



## 2.5 The process

Once The Walks, Loughrea had been selected as a Reimagine town. The IAF met with the town team and visited the proposed site. We then visited a second time to let the team know our approach and plan.

The IAF then began a period of research, firstly looking at documentation and work already carried out by the council and town team. This included reviewing the materials generated for the conservation project by the Town Team and Galway County Council such as 'A Conservation Action Plan for the repair of the walls and bridges' prepared for Galway County Council.

The IAF then began contacting different bodies who could be useful. Including submitting an application to Small Towns Bigs Ideas Round 2 Galway 2020 to fund the build of the project.

The IAF simultaneously at this began research on The Walks. We began by spending blocks of time, 30 minutes-2 hours, on The Walks observing activities taking place and using methods such as The Gehl Institute's People Moving Count.

At the time the IAF updated the town team on preliminary findings in person over the phone or for instance at the Launch of the conservation project of The Walks.

During this time we also began connecting with other resources in the town such as the Loughrea Library and the Medieval Festival. We have found through Reimagine that coming under the umbrella of other activities have led us to talk with people who may not be regular users, or in fact users at all of something in their locality and this can help us get a balance of voices in this phase of the project. It helps us to ascertain what people love or dislike in an area. It also helps us assess the values that people feel are important in a locality, that they want to carry through in a project like this.

The findings have been compiled from the interactions with the groups and organisations that the IAF spoke to during the course of the project.

Over the course of this project so far we have spent 11.5 hours on the ground in Loughrea observing and speaking to people about what they want to see and how they use The Walks.

It became clear to the IAF team that by this point young people's opinions on the projects had not been considered. These voices we felt were crucial to the project as they are future users, residents, and potentially returning visitors to the area. In an effort to counteract this a workshop was set up as part of Architecture At The Edge festival to engage people in the space to investigate what they'd like to see there.

This finalised research report and Open Call brief were then submitted to the Town Team



IAF stand at the Agricultural Show,  
Photo by IAF

### 3. Findings

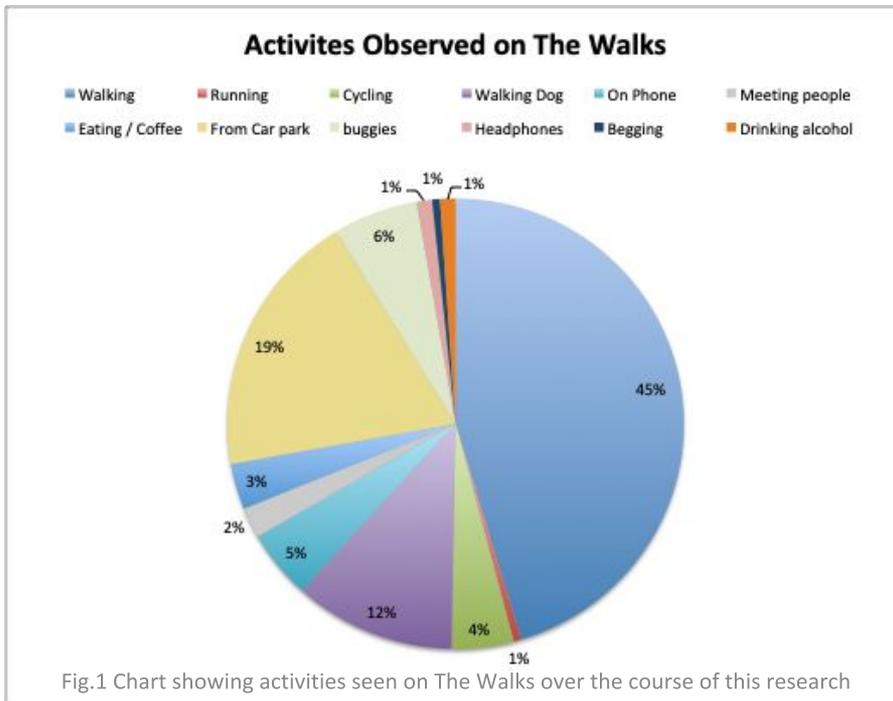
#### 3.1. Overall

In this section we outline the findings from the local community about their needs and thoughts on the project. It outlines findings from observations of activities currently happening on The Walks.

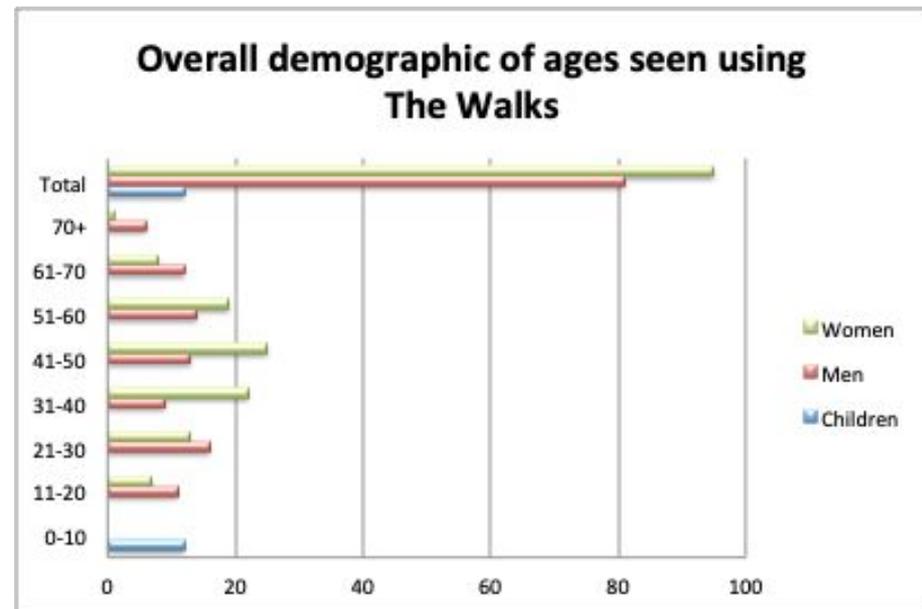
The findings have been broken into activities and demographics observed using The Walks and information gathered from longer interviews exercises.

By this point clear findings and trends were appearing in the perceived needs of potential users. It seemed these findings were so far in line with what the town team and local council had suspected. However, there were some points repeated by those interviewed that were interesting. These will be discussed further in the recommendations

#### 3.2 Activities Observed on The Walks?



- The area is mostly used for people strolling through the space
- Many people use it as a shortcut from the carpark
- Some anti-social behaviour was witnessed even at unexpected times, ie 12pm on a Sunday
- Of all the activity that was observed, there were only a handful of times when people stopped on The Walks rather than passing through. Those observed stopping did so to sit on a bench and have a phone call, or people were observed sitting on the bridge to the car park waiting to meet people
- Dog Walking was the third most common activity observed
- There was generally a large mix of activities and a diverse mix of ages and genders using the walks.
- Most common age for users was 31-60 for women and it was used by men across all age brackets.



- Very few children were observed using the walks. Most were still in buggies or being carried.
- Lunch times were the busiest times observed on the Walks. There second busiest time being after mass in the Abbey on Sunday.

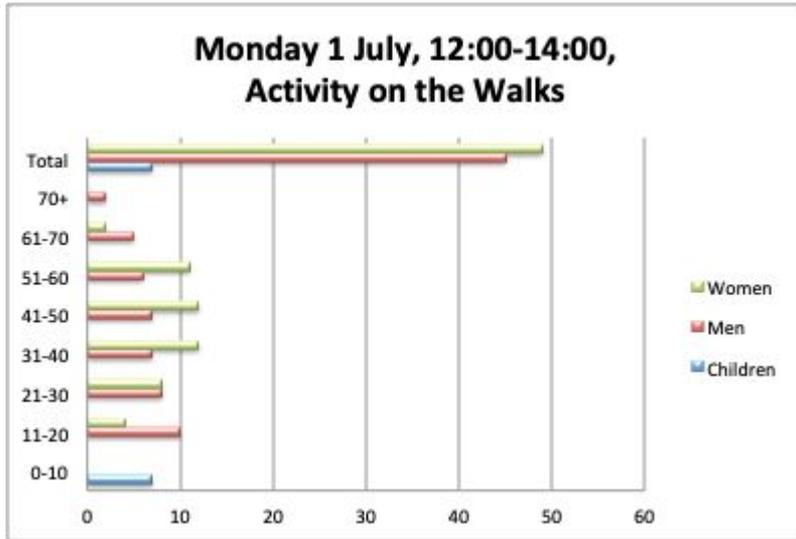


Fig.3 Chart showing demographic of those use Walks on Mon 1 July

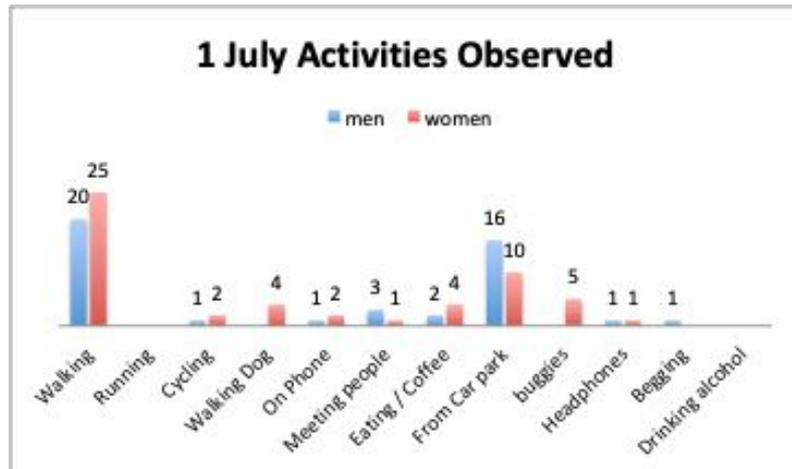


Fig.4 Chart showing activities observed of those use Walks on Mon 1 July

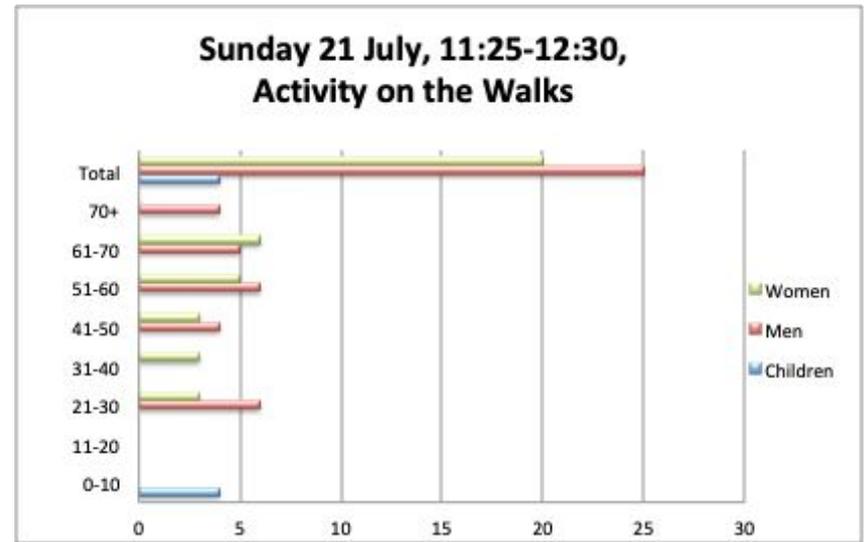


Fig.5 Chart showing demographic of those use Walks on Sunday 21 July

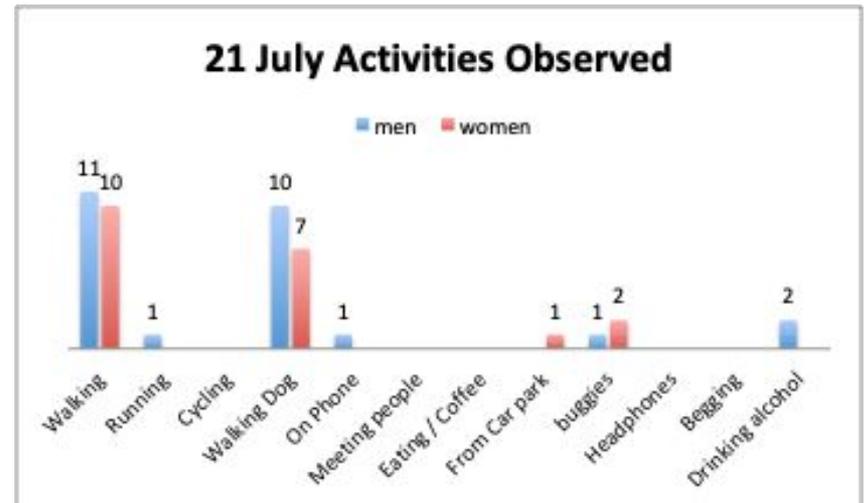


Fig.6 Chart showing activities observed of those use Walks on Sunday 21 July

- While weather did affect how the walks were used. They were still used on overcast and wet days.
- On average 12 people use The Walks every half hour.

## Friday 2 August 2019, 14:25-14:55 Activity on the Walks

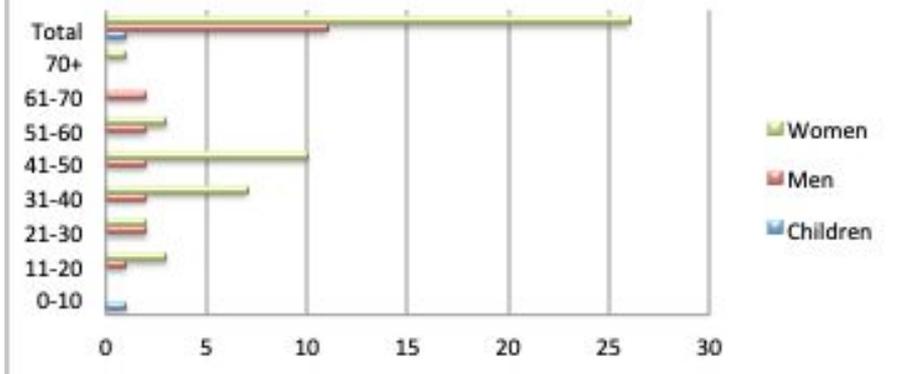


Fig.7 Chart showing demographic of those use Walks on Fri 2 Aug

## 2 August Activities Observed

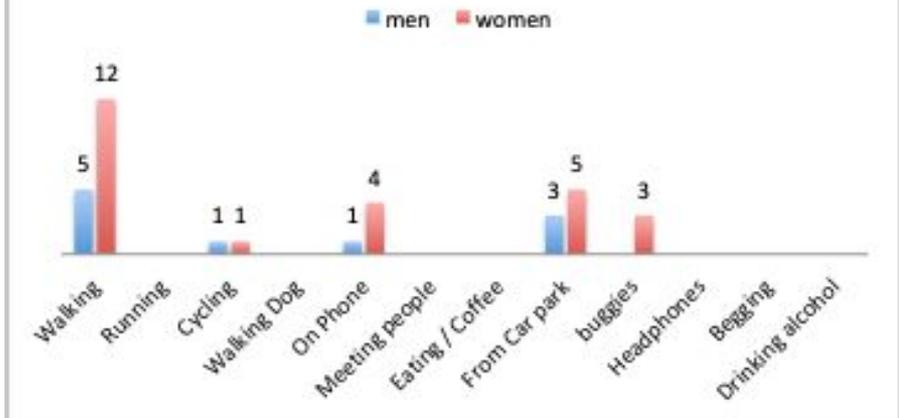


Fig.8 Chart showing observed activities of those use Walks on Fri 2 Aug

### 3.3 Survey Responses

- The majority of those surveyed use The Walks sometimes to lots. With nearly a third of those asked using the Walks the odd time. Five of those surveyed, almost 1/3 of the group no longer or do not use The Walks

## Do you use The Walks, How often?

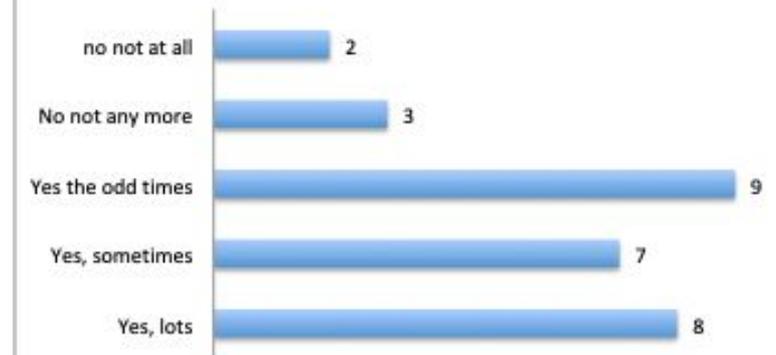


Fig.9 Chart shows how often people surveyed used The Walks

- Of the 29 groups surveyed through interviews all knew of The Walks, including those not from Loughrea for instance those visiting for the Medieval Festival

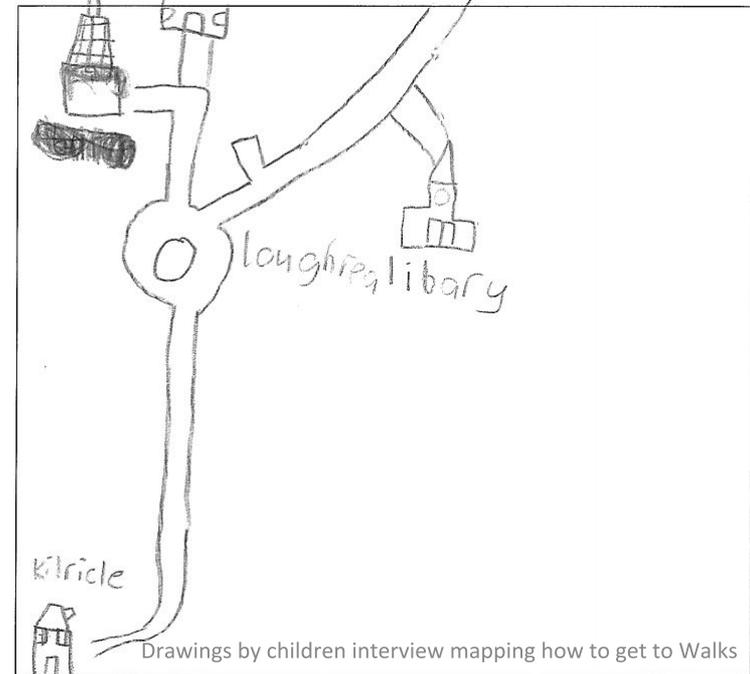


Fig.10 Chart shows all respondents know The Walks

- The Walks were also known by the local children who were asked how they would get there from the library. This question was to explore how children entered and used The Walks. The majority of children question entered the walks through the gate towards the east. When the beginning of the fairy gates are marked.



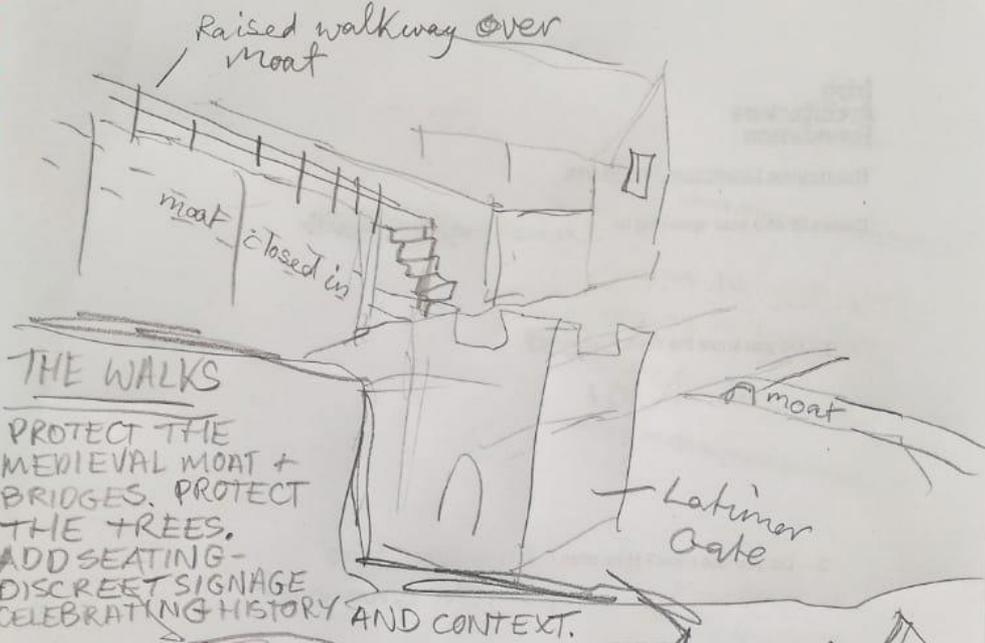
Drawings by children interview mapping how to get to Walks



Drawings by children interview mapping how to get to Walks

WALKS

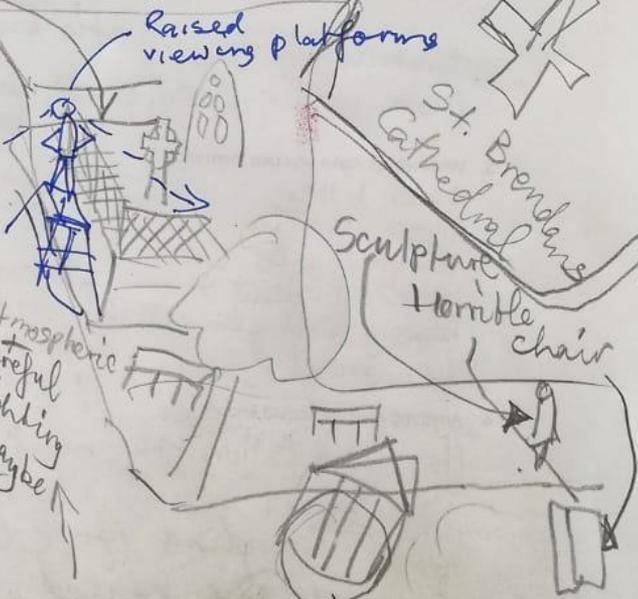
Raised walkway over moat



THE WALKS

PROTECT THE MEDIEVAL MOAT + BRIDGES. PROTECT THE TREES. ADD SEATING-DISCREET SIGNAGE CELEBRATING HISTORY AND CONTEXT.

Hate the Fence. It blocks view + flow. Open up paths in and out.



Raised viewing platforms

St. Brendans Cathedral

Sculpture  
Horrible chair

Atmospheric  
Careful lighting  
maybe

LOUGHREA Medieval Festival



Architecture Architecture Foundation.ie

- Ways in which people use them:

The Walks are used for cycling walking doing loops around the town going to church...etc

*'Cycling, walking (Respondent K, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

*'... Came to the 2018 Medieval Festival and explored the walks and medieval moat and rest of town.'*(Respondent L, Question 4, Appendix 1)

- When people use them:

People use them every day, to a couple of times a month to going to The Walks specially for the fairy doors.

*Every week we walk them*

*(Respondent R, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

*Use them daily. (Respondent AA, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

*Walk around the town, going to church etc.*

*(Respondent X, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

*My husband still does with the dog or kids looking for fairy doors (Respondent Z, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

- People not from the town still use the Walks

*Familiar with the Walks know them for many years. When in Loughrea, use them as a running route in the evening as well as more general*

*(Respondent V, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

*Not from Loughrea but used to use them when I worked here. Used to have my lunch there it would be lovely and peaceful. The kids love it they find it really magical. The like to drop magic sticks and watch them flow under the bridges. Also helpful short cut cause used to park down Abbey street so would walk down that was* (Respondent AC, Question 4, Appendix 1)

- Reasons people don't use them:

One local did comment that the only time they use The Walks is when queuing for funerals.

*Don't use them would only go up and down the main street. the only time I would use them is when queuing for a funeral so it's not really a great connotation*(Respondent AB, Question 4, Appendix 1)

Another commented that they live the otherside of the town so not over that way very much

*I'm down the other side of the town so don't use it much*

*(Respondent W, Question 4, Appendix 1)*

Cleanliness was seen as a deterrent

*'...I would use them more often if clean up'* (Respondent P, Question 4, Appendix 1)

- Over 7 people responded that they would like to see the area cleaned up more. The activity mentioned most to encourage more use of The Walks

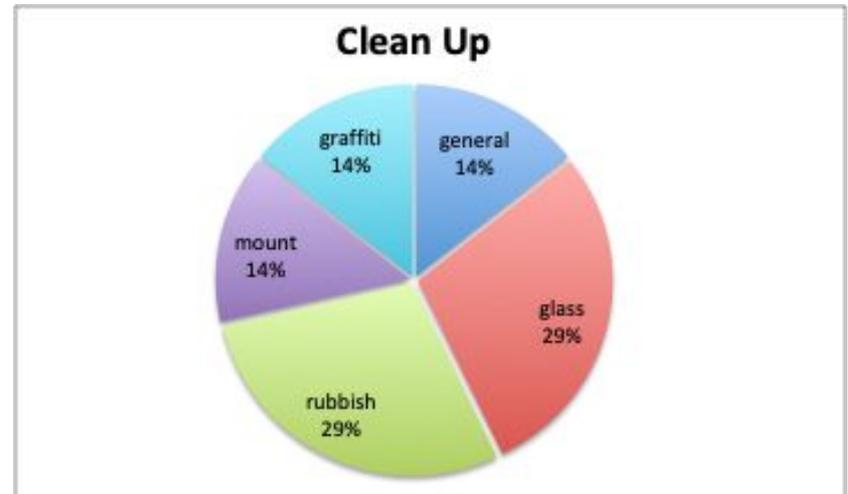


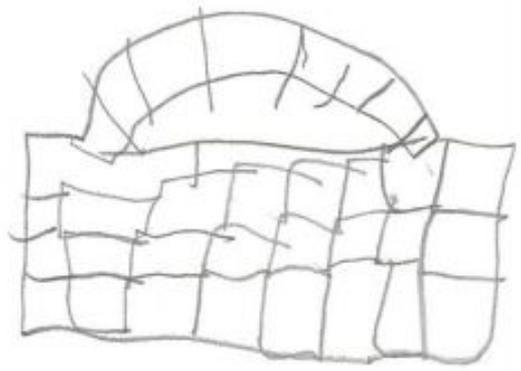
Fig.12 Chart shows what people referred to specifically as 'clean up'

Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?

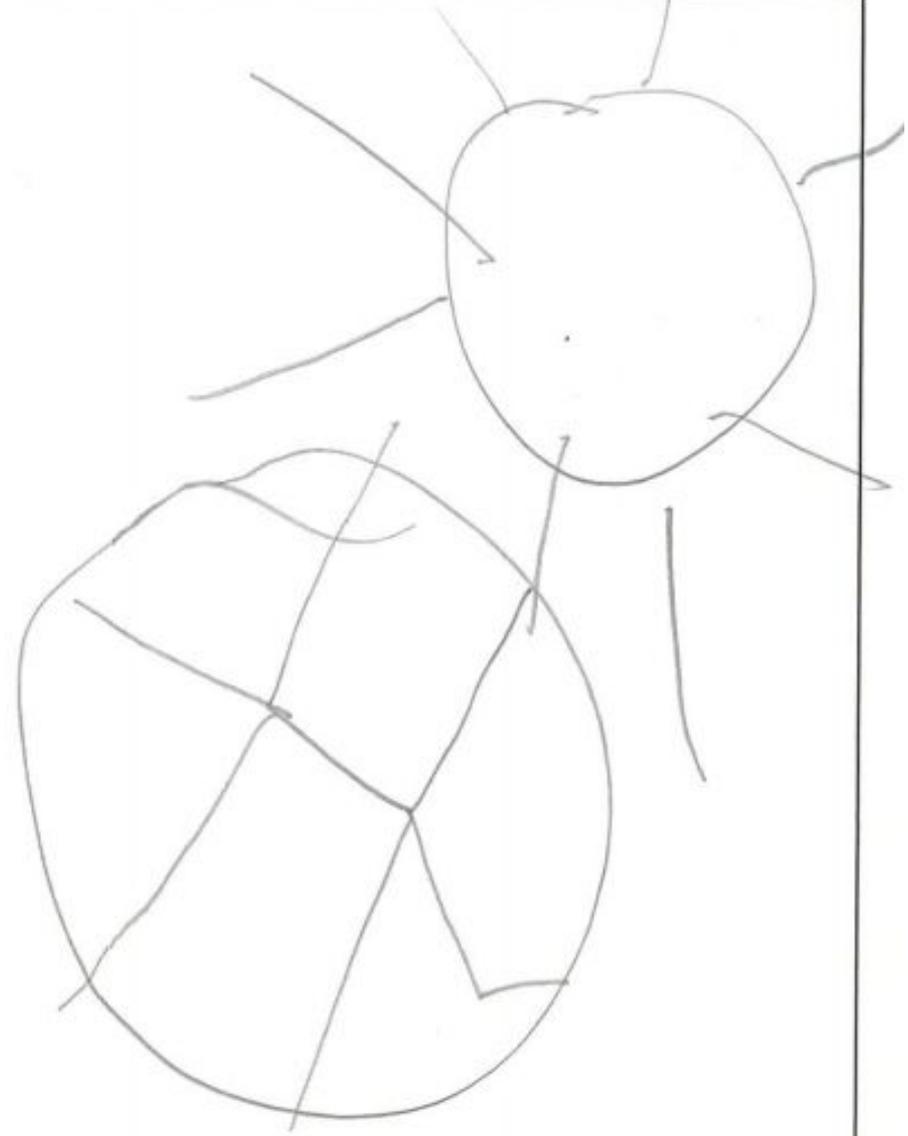
Female / Gyr...



Fishing Rod



Picnic



Match



- Activities that people would like to see on The Walks

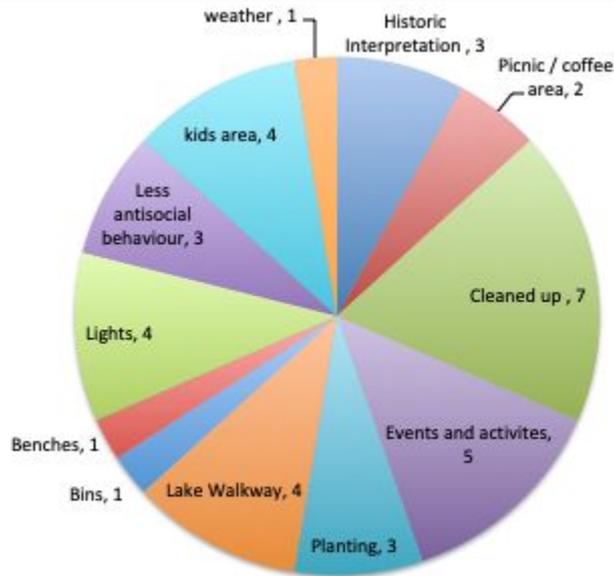


Fig.13 Chart shows what activities people would like to on Walks, in terms of mentions

- Aside from cleaning at the other activities people would most like to see in the area are:

- Events and activities, 5 mentions
- Lights, 4 mentions
- Kids area, 4 mentions
- Joining The Walks to the lake for a longer walkway, 4 mentions
- Planting and historic interpretations both received 3 mentions
- Less anti social behaviour was also mentioned. However, it was also commented that people were aware teenagers needed a space to meet and hangout.

- There is lots of different opinions about young people in the area, largely everyone agrees they need a space too. However limited space, seats and poor lighting seems to make people uncomfortable when there is larger groups there. It was also commented that there's never police presence there.

*Most evenings there are young people in the Walks which is not a problem. Probably a reasonably safe space. They are no different than when we were young! (Respondent V, Q2, Appendix 1)*

*The town is so busy that it's so nice to have somewhere so peaceful behind. Kids like it there which is great. You'd have the kids down at lunch which is a little intimidating but fine cause they need to have their lunch somewhere but can kind of take over. Maybe if the grass wasn't so overgrown you could sit. it's not too inviting to stop there maybe if there were more places to sit (Respondent AC, Q2, Appendix 1)*

*There's lots of anti social behaviour. Especially on Friday's when O' Deas across the road has student discos but then it's never policed. Don't know why it's not but there's never a police presence down there. Also if you go up the mount there's a seat down there that there often couples around and that's fine but then there's time when you go up and there's lots of empty cans and old condoms and things. Don't know how to make it better maybe better lit. It's a pity because it's a nice facility, the moat and a stroll are lovely (Respondent X, Q2, Appendix 1)*

*They've done a lovely job for the children but it hasn't really progressed much and is looking a little tired so maybe something like that for children. No one wants to stop / or there's a hesitancy to. Could be because of the anti social behaviour. Don't want to stop there which is understandable. It should be a use for all people not just for a few so everyone has a voice about how is should be used and right to use it so then they have an obligation to it and mind it. (Respondent AA, Q2, Appendix 1)*



3rd Loughrea Scouts installing tents for Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop

### 3.3. Findings from Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop

During this workshop the IAF engaged 2 facilitators to create an activation in the space to further integrate the findings we had found so far and to raise awareness of the project. We worked with the 3rd Loughrea Scouts (the local scouts troop) to install two large tents in the area to show people what it might look like to have something happen in the space. We also asked what people would like to see happen on The Walks, this was then plotted on a timeline with an alternate timeline of what steps would be necessary to achieve these goals displayed below. We also used visualising boards. We asked people to select a number of images/ words that indicated what they currently felt about The Walks. They were asked to lay these out on a board. We then asked people to do the same for a second board but this time to select images/ words that indicated how they would like to feel about the Space.

### 3.4 Findings from workshop

During the course of this workshop people identified some things they didn't like about The Walks, but mostly their responses were positive outlining what they like about The Walks, and ideas they have for other potential uses these have been documented in the below table

Bad	Good	Ideas to improve
<p>Lighting</p>	<p>Darkness into light walk;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More lights, fairy lights atmospheric</li> </ul>	<p>Better lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better lighting down North Mount</li> <li>• Better Atmospheric Lighting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lighting in water</li> <li>○ Fairy Lights</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Up keep of nature in area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dead trees to go</li> <li>• Grass to long at times, messy</li> <li>• Debate over whether long for biodiversity or cut shorter for increased use and people able to see more so feel safer</li> </ul>	<p>Having nature that close to the town seen as really positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'So close to nature here, live by Corey Field but prefer it here because it's so peaceful'</li> <li>• Green space in town centre</li> </ul>	<p>Lots of ideas around nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree planting as part of world tree day (EVENT)</li> <li>• Seedbombing or rewilding of certain space in walks could be down with Beaver Scouts</li> <li>• Allotment area to North of Walks, have constant monitoring then in a way</li> <li>• Forest playground</li> <li>• Forest playground, gardening for local schools</li> <li>• Introducing animals back to the space</li> <li>• Fruit Trees and Fruit bushes</li> </ul>



Local teenagers engaging with facilitators at Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop

Bad	Good	Ideas to improve
<p>Children's Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairy walk was put in and received well but not maintained</li> </ul>	<p>Putting in activities such as fairy walk</p>	<p>Ideas for children's activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Putting in small play equipment, swings etc</li> <li>Putting in children's activities such as hopscotch, chess board etc</li> <li>Outdoor sculptures create with local schools etc</li> </ul>
<p>Antisocial behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vandalism</li> <li>Antisocial behaviours, begging, mugging etc</li> <li>Littering after nights at discos</li> </ul>	<p>Couple who live on The Walks think that antisocial behaviour isn't too bad it's all relevant. Call gardai if here screaming just to be safe. Wouldn't feel unsafe there. Teens need something to do</p> <p>One group of teenagers we spoke to pointed out that while doing the visualising exercise that all they saw the space as now was a drinking space. However, this upset them they wanted the opportunity to do more in the space, and it not be thought of that drinking was the only thing the wanted to do. They wanted outdoor gyms. More activities etc</p>	<p>Including the youths more to increase sense of ownership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co create murals for back seat</li> <li>Get teens, faorige involved to maintain space, to paint, to create changes they want to see</li> <li>Have a discussion around the disco about who was responsible for that clean up should the hotel be playing a bigger role</li> <li>Increased garda presence, gardai on bikes or on foot not cars so approachable and people can feel comfortable alerting them to something etc</li> </ul>



Local community engaging with facilitators at Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop



Local community engaging with facilitators at Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop

Bad	Good	Ideas to improve
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● lack of bins</li> <li>● Litter, in particular, broken glass</li> <li>● lack of usable benches</li> <li>● Lack of signage directionally and historically</li> </ul>	<p>Work being currently done is very well received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● -'Lovely to see The Walks being done up, keep it up!'</li> <li>● -'Lovely, great work on The Walks, keep it up!'</li> <li>●</li> <li>● One group of teenagers didn't want to participate but did add that they like the work on the walls and to keep it going.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More bins, some recycle ones</li> <li>● Dog poo seen as an issue but was suggested that if bags were added as well as bins people might use it more</li> <li>● Canopy, bit of shelter for when it does rain</li> <li>● Firepit- teenagers have lit fires anywhere if they'd somewhere specific to do would it help, could be useful for scouts.</li> <li>● Signs directing people from the town that there is a green space and walkway there, especially from car parks.</li> <li>● Using embedded plaques or getting teenagers to use graffiti to add mantra's mottos in the path to help with mindfulness and mental health</li> <li>● Communal/ meeting area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communal table</li> <li>○ Get seating to be more like a European square</li> <li>○ Coffee shops/ wines</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Bad	Good	Ideas to improve
<p>Event and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing happens currently other than walks.</li> </ul>	<p>Event and Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous events such as darkness into light were seen as great</li> </ul>	<p>Event and activities in the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scouts using it more <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using it for pioneering activities</li> <li>○ Scouts show and tell</li> <li>○ Practise Camps</li> <li>○ Need key from group for gates has been agreed tentatively</li> <li>○ Coffee morning to find raise for scouts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Afternoon tea / street feast</li> <li>• Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Buskers</li> <li>○ Performances,</li> <li>○ Bandstand idea</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Artificial Beach in summer</li> <li>• Markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Move market from barrack street to Walks esp on a sat</li> <li>○ Christmas market</li> <li>○ Stalls</li> <li>○ Somewhere to get a coffee on your walk</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



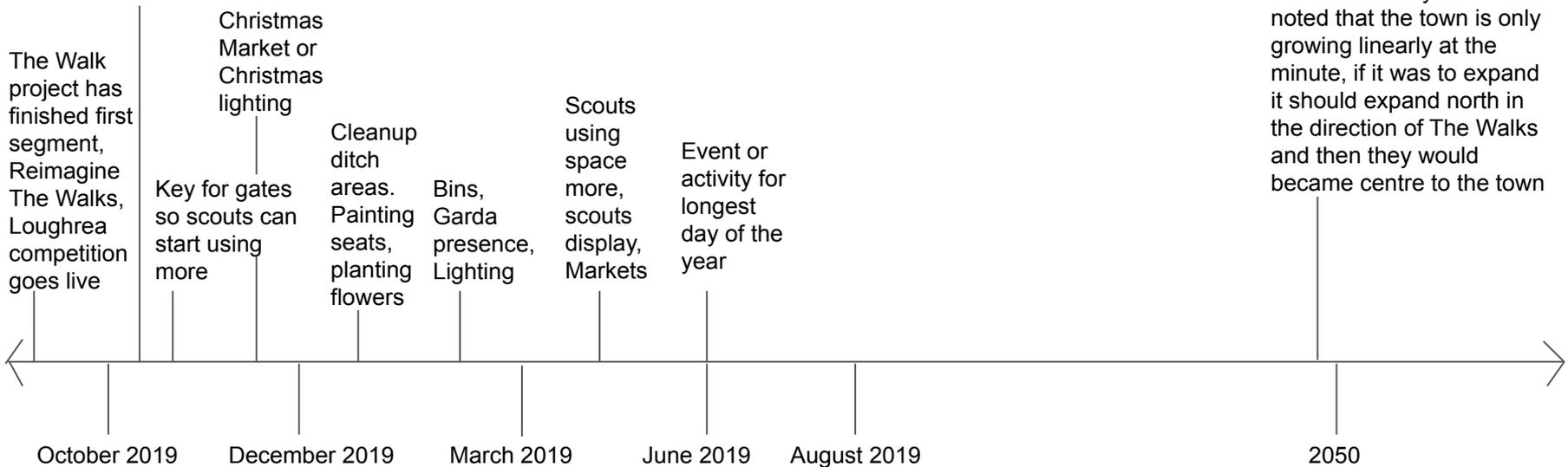
## Community response to what they wanted to see happen in The Walks

The community were asked what they'd like to see happen in The Walks. We then plotted these activities on a timeline of approximately when they could happen in the workshop. We also noted certain steps which would allow these things to take place. This timeline has been outlined below.



Timeline from Architecture At the Edge 2019 Workshop Setup

set up instagram  
and Facebook to  
get thoughts



## 4. Recommendations

People in the area are happy to celebrate The Walks and have more activities and events happen within them.

### 4.1 Community response

The wider community seem very happy for anything to happen on The Walks, there is a sense that it is believed to be a special amenity to the area. People would like to see it more approachable as they'd like to use it more.

The Walks is an area that everyone the IAF has spoken too is aware of, though not everyone uses them all the time. There is some reluctance to use The Walks for a number of reasons cleanliness, lighting, limited space to be shared with large groups of teenagers. It is noted by a few of the respondents that the teenagers need a space too and it is the balance of sharing the space that is required.

It is evident from the feedback the community are happy for some sort of event or activity to happen in The Walks. The IAF hope that a temporary architectural intervention would be a good starting point to have more activities happen in the area. It would also be hoped that by having more activities in the area, and thus more people some of the isolation and fear that stops people from dwelling there may be alleviated.

The other ways mentioned by the community to try make the space feel safer were better lighting and possibly a garda presence, for reassurance. These were seen to be beneficial to The Walks to encourage use. While these are outside the remit of The IAF Reimagine project it would be hoped that this report could be used to let the wider county council know that these are issues within the town identified by the local community

Planting and gardening were mentioned. Respondents remarked that the North Mount was overgrown seemed messy which limited places to sit. In contrast to that wild-flowering was mentioned as something to be done in that area also. Again this is not within the scope of IAF Reimagine Loughrea but perhaps these responses can be shown as

evidence to county council responsible for the upkeep of this area.

It is clear that rubbish and access to bins is also an issue in the area with many mentioning the glass and cans scattered around. The IAF would hope that with increased presence in The Walks and more people around this behaviour may abate. It is also hoped that by asking local school children their opinion on the brief before it goes out to open call and asking them to submit what they would like to see might add a greater sense of ownership and pride and so reduce some of this waste.

### 4.2 What should be incorporated into the design brief?

There is little to no lighting along the walks therefore the architectural intervention should consider lighting and timing of events and activities. The IAF does note this would be difficult on budget.

People are happy to see events and activities. If the multidisciplinary team could propose a series of events alongside or as part of the intervention that would be interesting.

The history and heritage of The Walks is important to many. The brief should indicate that whatever intervention is proposed it reflect the rich historic importance of The Walks. Ideally it should also highlight the continued conservation work happening on the bridges and walls.

Planting and gardening were also mentioned and should be considered in the brief.

As graffiti and rubbish have been mentioned as issues in the area this should also be considered by the multidisciplinary team

### 4.3 Limitations of this report

The IAF is aware that not all of the community was reached through this research. We feel parts of the wider community have still not been reached. This will be done in part through when we consult the schools. at this time we will also send flyers home with students with contact details for any further ideas people have.

This project is a relatively limited budget. It will operate in relative isolation. Other issues such as lighting, ground keeping, rubbish collection

and garda presence would have to be considered by wider county council and others before any meaningful change can happen

#### 4.4 Next Steps

The IAF will create a draft brief based on this information. We will then run a number of facilitated workshops. One of which as part of the Architecture At the Edge festival and others with the local schools. This will allow some of the groups we have not yet interacted with a chance to feed into the brief and shape the outcome of the project.

We will then run an open call with the winning team to be announce and contract signed by December 2019. The piece is then to be in place in 2020 in line with Galway 2020's funding requirements.

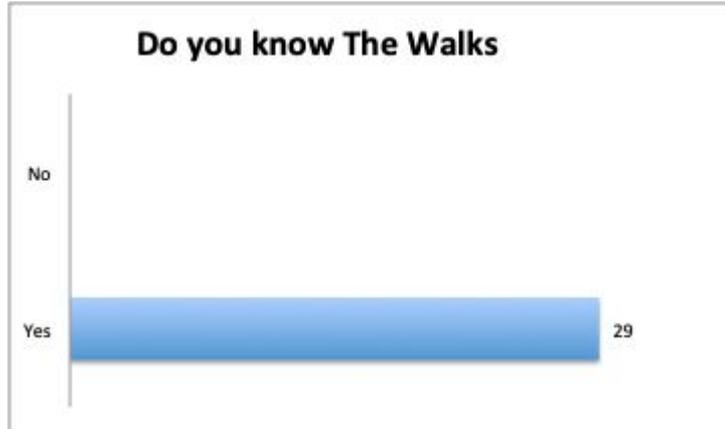


Mainistir Mhuire  
St. Mary's Abbey

## 4. Appendices

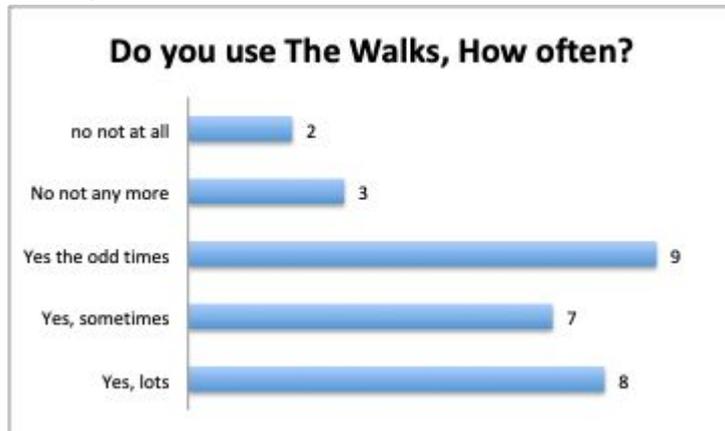
### 4.1 Appendix 1 Responses from Questionnaires

#### Q1 Do you know the Walks?



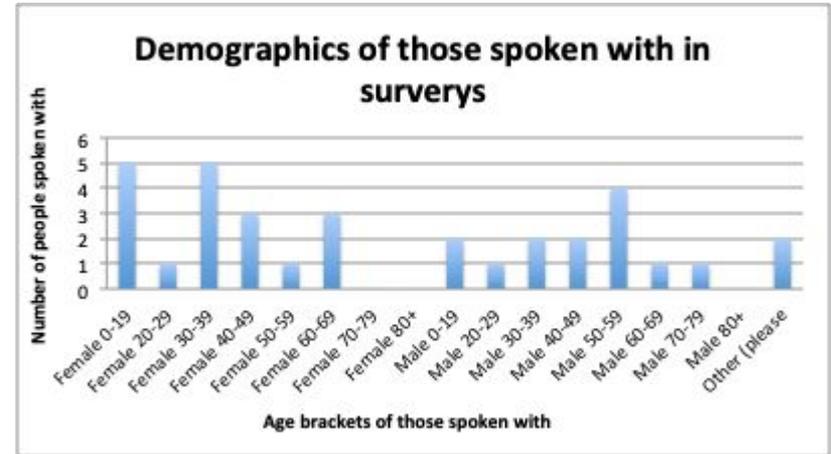
Yes 29  
No 0

#### Q2 Do you use them?



Yes, lots 8  
Yes, sometimes 7  
Yes the odd times 9  
No not any more 3  
no not at all 2

#### Q3 Demographic of those answering questions?



#### Q3 Demographics of those answering the questions

Female 0-19	5
Female 20-29	1
Female 30-39	5
Female 40-49	3
Female 50-59	1
Female 60-69	3
Female 70-79	0
Female 80+	0
Male 0-19	2
Male 20-29	1
Male 30-39	2
Male 40-49	2
Male 50-59	4
Male 60-69	1
Male 70-79	1
Male 80+	0
Other (please specify)	2

**Q4 How / when do you use them?**

- A Skipped  
 B Skipped  
 C yes 6 times a month  
 D 6 times a month  
 E Twice a week  
 F Yes I would walk regularly with kids age 4 and a half and 18 months  
 G Skipped  
 H Skipped  
 I Skipped  
 J Once / twice a week  
 K Cycling, walking  
 L Yes. Came to the 2018 Medieval Festival and explored the walks and medieval moat and rest of town. Yes, at 2018 and 2019 Medieval festival tried to follow the moat around the town  
 M Rarely  
 N Four times a year  
 O I use them a lot  
 P I would use them more often if clean up  
 Q Skipped  
 R Every week we walk them  
 S Every weekend  
 T Yes, going to the Abbey Church. Taking a shortcut through town. I helped with the tidy town group during the year. I was horrified with the drain bordering the mart  
 U No, we are from co. Clare but would be an active family. We would be interested in the amenity  
 V Familiar with the Walks know them for many years. When in Loughrea, use them as a running route in the evening as well as more general  
 W I'm down the other side of the town so don't use it much  
 X Walk around the town, going to church etc.  
 Y Yeah but not too much sometimes go down from school. Usually we'd go to Carrabawn (sp?) woods cause it's closer to where we live  
 Z My husband still does with the dog or kids looking for fairy doors  
 AA Use them daily.  
 AB Don't use them would only go up and down the main street. the only time I would use them is when queueing for a funeral so it's not really a great connotation  
 AC Not from Loughrea but used to use them when I worked here. Used to have my lunch there it would be lovely and peaceful. The kids love it they find it really magical. The like to drop magic sticks and watch them flow under the bridges. Also helpful short cut cause used to park down Abbey street so would walk down that was

**Q5 What would make you use them more**

- A Picnic Area  
 B Locate Loughrea castle and mark it's foundations- Richard de Burgh would be happy  
 C Loop all around the lake plus a greenway. More vegetation planted along the path and wildflowers- maybe a wildflower/community garden?  
 D Full loop around the lake. Information plaques on Flora/ Fauna  
 E The weather  
 F - Coffee area  
 - A designated area with 1-2 benches area. A new children's fair walk area.  
 G -More lighting at night  
 -No loitering and alcohol consumption  
 H A few notice boards highlighting their unique history  
 I Festivals and events  
 J -An area for kids.  
 -Less broken glass / maintenance  
 K -Less glass  
 -The moat cleaned regularly it's very bad  
 -Graffiti  
 L -If there was less rubbish.  
 -If some of the grass in the middle section [Mount] was 'wilded'. If the concrete bench was re-painted and the rubbish up around it was cleared.  
 -If there was a way to connect the whole moat to the walks so that you could walk along the whole length. Not sure if the abbey grounds are open to the public: to be able to walk through the abbey as well as along the walks would create roughly a 30 minute walk/reflection/ relaxation space that would help me clear my head. I have only visited Loughrea in the Summer I wonder if the lighting is adequate along the walks for people to use them in the dark winter months.  
 M If they fed into a walk around the lake to have a larger walk so that it was longer.  
 N If a guided walk was on  
 O Maybe put in fairy doors for kids to enjoy it more  
 P Clean up  
 Q Images to reflect the original line of the medieval town walls  
 R Make them more interesting to the age 10-age 20 group. Activities such as engaging with the sky (astronomy Ireland), art evenings, music evenings, bird listening. Different benches highlighting the history of Loughrea  
 S Art tent. Bins!  
 T Hold some events there. A market, music events  
 U Knowing if it is family friendly, buggy suitable. Interactive fairy doors/ small activities  
 V Most evenings there are young people in the Walks which is not a problem. Probably a reasonably safe space. They are no different then when we were young!  
 W It's a bit of a stretch

- X There's lots of anti social behaviour. Especially on Friday's when O' Deas across the road has student discos but then it's never policed. Don't know why it's not but there's never a police presence down there. Also if you go up the mount there's a seat down there that there often couples around and that's fine but then there's time when you go up and there's lots of empty cans and old condoms and things. Don't know how to make it better maybe better lit. It's a pity because it's a nice facility, the moat and a stroll are lovely
- Y Skipped
- Z Maybe lights or if you could walk through it more around the mount make it more visually clear
- AA They've done a lovely job for the children but it hasn't really progressed much and is looking a little tired so maybe something like that for children. No one wants to stop / or there's a hesitancy to. Could be because of the anti social behaviour. Don't want to stop there which is understandable. It should be a use for all people not just for a few so everyone has a voice about how it should be used and right to use it so then they have an obligation to it and mind it.
- AB Skipped
- AC The town is so bust that it's so nice to have somewhere so peaceful behind. Kids like it there which is great. You's have the kids down at lunch which is a little intimidating but fine cause they need to have their lunch some where but can kind of take over. Maybe if the grass wasn't so overgrown you could sit. it's not too inviting to stop there maybe if there were more places to sit

**Q6 Anything else we should know**

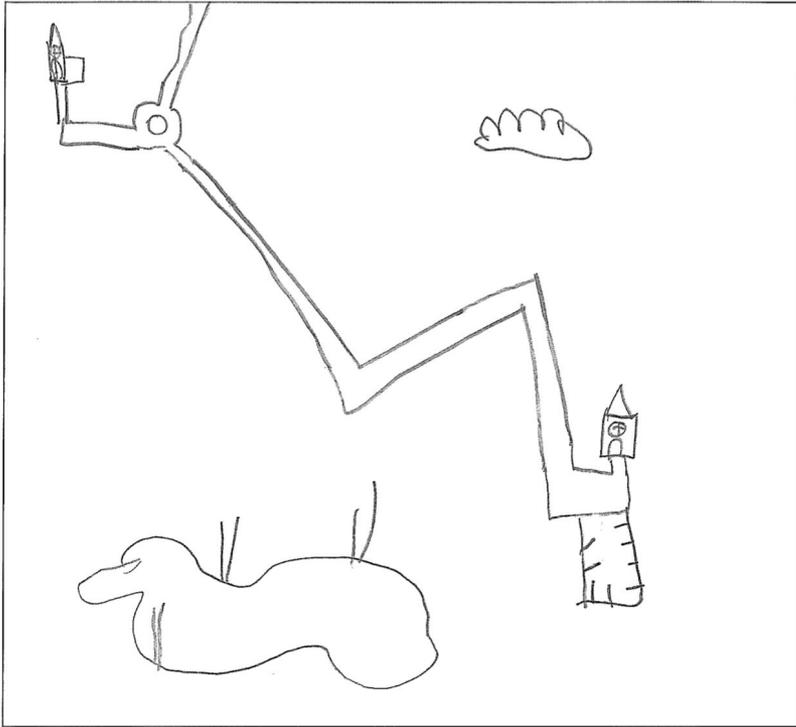
- A Skipped
- B Uses it once a year perhaps
- C NA
- D Skipped
- E Great for a run
- F -Very peaceful area  
-More attention to litter management
- G Skipped
- H The walks need to be highlighted a lovely peaceful experience
- I Skipped
- J Skipped
- K -Not too well advertised  
-The wall in the the car park is blocking awareness  
-Good lighting
- L Skipped
- M want to have a walk out of the town
- N Not appreciate how important they are
- O Skipped
- P If lighting it would be more use in Winter
- Q As a visitor I could see them as something that could be better protected

- R Make this an area interesting to teenage groups instead of ignoring it. Start them early
- S No
- T It was a wonderful discovery when I moved to Loughrea
- U Promotion via facebook. We recently completed Gort River walk after seeing their page.  
-Paddling area?  
-No dogs- dog poop is a nightmare with children
- V Pleased to see the walks being improved. Would be good if the back entrances were also improved and the gardens tidied up. Good to see this being done in Loughrea.
- W Skipped
- X ex garda
- Y Skipped
- Z Skipped
- AA The car park in the library should be library use only
- AB Skipped
- AC Skipped



**Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks**

Can you draw a map of how you got here?



**Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks**

Can you draw a map of how you got here?



Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks

Can you draw a map of how you got here?



Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks

Do you know where The Walks? *there at the church*  
Can you draw how you would get to there from here in the box below



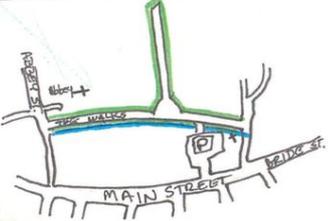
4.2 Appendix 3 Drawing Responses from Medieval Festival

Architecture  
Foundation

Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks  
Do you know where The Walks are?  
Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?



Where would you place it on the walks?

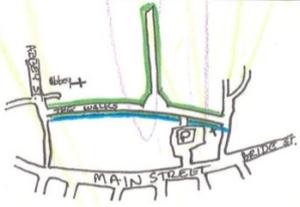


Irish  
Architecture  
Foundation

Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks  
Do you know where The Walks are?  
Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?



Where would you place it on the walks?



**Irish  
Architecture  
Foundation**

Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks

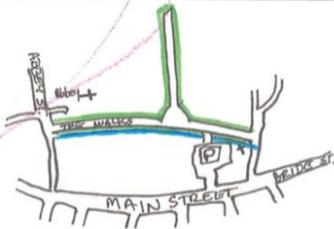
Do you know where The Walks are?

Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?

Male  
3yr



Rainbow



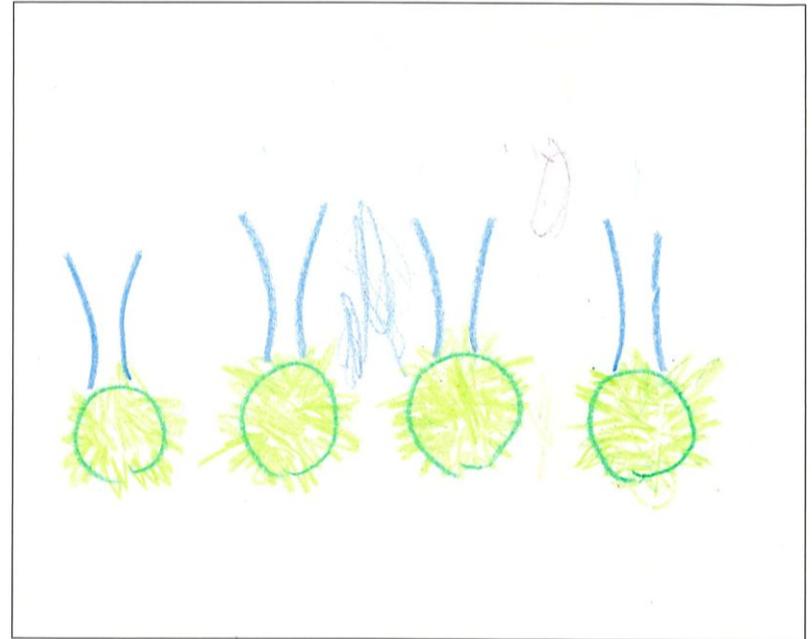
Where would you place it on the walks?

**Irish  
Architecture  
Foundation**

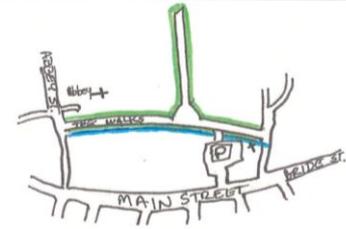
Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks

Do you know where The Walks are?

Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?



2yr  
Tree Jumping



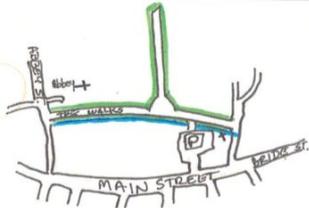
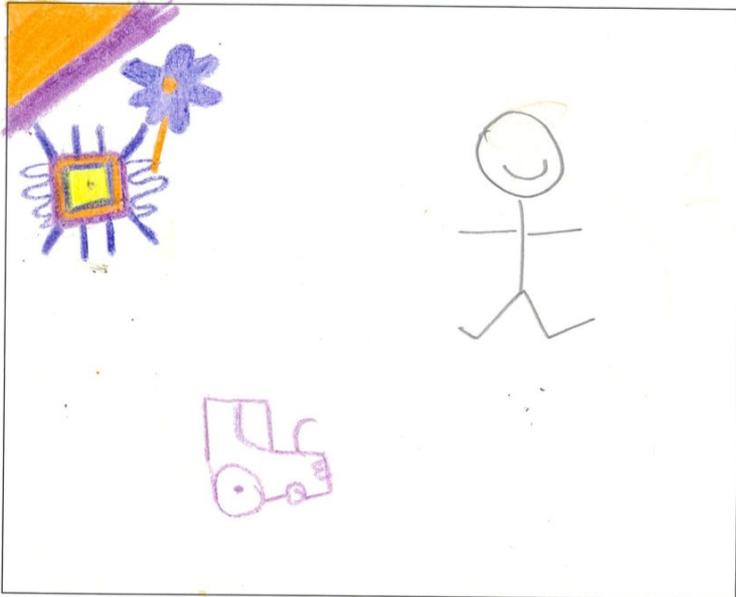
Where would you place it on the walks?

**Irish  
Architecture  
Foundation**

**Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks**

Do you know where The Walks are?

Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?



Where would you place it on the walks?

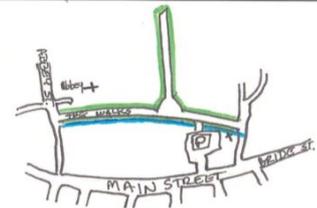
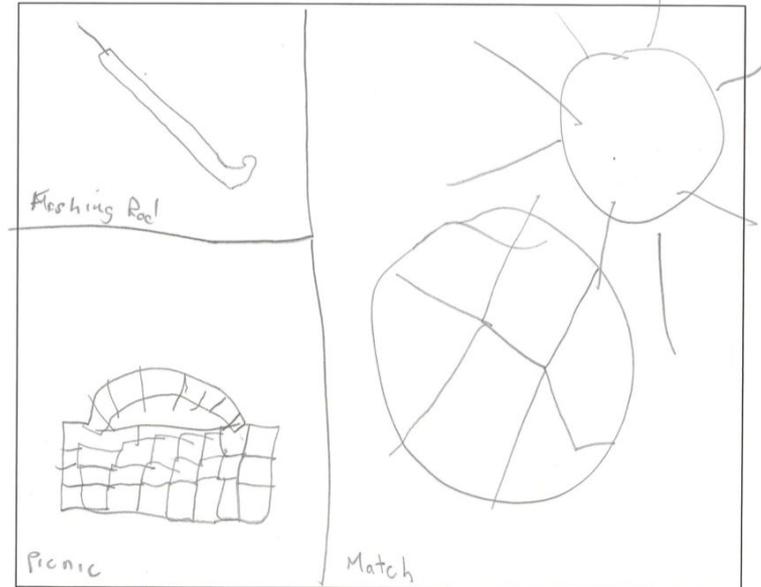
**Irish  
Architecture  
Foundation**

**Reimagine Loughrea...Reimagining the Walks**

Do you know where The Walks are?

Can you draw what you would like to see on the walks in the box below?

*Female Gyr..*



Where would you place it on the walks?

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