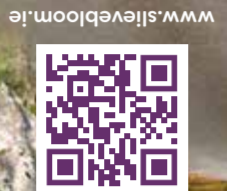


Walk a while, stay a while
Siúl tamall, fan tamall

Mapguide for Slieve Bloom Way & Offaly Way



are you inclined... SLIEVE BLOOM

The Slieve Bloom Way and Offaly Way are two of a national network of more than 30 approved waymarked Ways in Ireland. Located in Counties Laois and Offaly in the centre of Ireland, the Ways follow a mix of forest tracks, river banks, old roadways, grassy trails, sandy tracks and minor roads. There are a few rough and rugged sections - but they rarely rise to high altitude and do not demand great stamina.

The Ways are signposted, and stiles and bridges have been erected where necessary to ensure ease of access - making them suitable for people of 'medium' levels of fitness or higher.

Using this Mapguide
This mapguide has been developed as a guide for walkers of the Slieve Bloom Way or Offaly Way. Every effort has been made to ensure that the line of travel is accurately represented at time of printing - but this may change on the ground on occasion. The mapguide should be used, therefore, in conjunction with waymarking along the routes. As the areas adjacent to the Ways may not be entirely accurate this mapguide should not be used as a general map - see instead Sheets 48 and 54 from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland Discovery Series.

Clothing and Equipment
The recommended minimum gear is:
- sturdy walking boots
- waterproof jacket
- water/liquid and snack
- mobile phone
- this mapguide or Ordnance Survey Sheets 48/54.
Additional useful items include a warm hat and gloves, a whistle, waterproof over-trousers, a torch, a first aid kit - and a rucksack to carry them!

Safety Tips
Ensure you have the fitness, clothing and equipment needed for the route you choose. Check the weather forecast and be prepared for changing weather conditions. Contact Weather-Dial on 1550 123 851 or www.meteireann.ie
Leave details of your plans with somebody and contact that person when you return.
Allow plenty of time for your walk - and plan to finish your walk well before dark. As a rough guide, allow one hour for every 3km.
If parking your car unattended, do not leave items on view or anything too valuable in the car.
If in a group, stay together and watch out for each other. Take regular breaks and be guided by the pace of the slowest walker.
Be aware of traffic when walking on roads.
Know where you are at all times. Pay attention to the waymarking, stay on the official Way, and use this mapguide or another map to keep track of your location.
In the event of a serious accident or genuine emergency contact **Mountain Rescue Service** at 999 or 112.

- Leave No Trace on your Way**
The Slieve Bloom Way and Offaly Way have been developed with the agreement and kind cooperation of local landowners - public and private. Help preserve goodwill by adhering to the following guidelines:
1. Plan ahead and prepare
 2. Be considerate of others
 3. Respect farm animals and wildlife
 4. Travel and camp on durable ground
 5. Leave what you find
 6. Dispose of waste properly
 7. Minimise the effects of fire

For more information see www.slievebloom.ie

Slieve Bloom Way

The Slieve Blooms

Situated close to the geographical centre of Ireland, the Slieve Bloom Region is made up of forests, blanket bog of a type which is unique to Ireland, interspersed with hidden valleys of great character, and interest to lovers of archaeology and nature. It is an extremely peaceful area which permits the opportunity to be close to nature. The wild and mysterious Slieve Bloom Mountains form a link between the counties of Laois and Offaly and boast hidden valleys and rocks ranging in age from 300 to 450 million years. Much of the higher reaches of the mountains have been designated as an Environmentally Protected area for special preservation, as an amenity for generations to come. Modest in height, the highest point in the Slieve Blooms is Arderin (translated as Height of Ireland) at 527m.

The Slieve Bloom Way

The Slieve Bloom Way is a circular route of some 70.5km which takes the walker through the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The walker is taken on a pleasurable trip past many remarkable glens, rock outcrops, heathery hills, wondrous waterfalls and lofty summits which have a strange brooding personality of their own. By contrast, the Way also visits the quaint rural villages of Clonaslee, Cadamstown and Kinnitty.

The Ways follow a mix of forest tracks, riverbanks, old roadways, grassy trails, sandy tracks and minor roads. There are a few rough and rugged sections - but they rarely rise to high altitude and do not demand great stamina.

The Way is moderate to hard in difficulty and suitable for people of medium levels of fitness or higher.

Walking the Slieve Bloom Way

The Slieve Bloom Way is best accessed at any one of five key trailheads which provide car parking and are reasonably close to services such as shops, restaurants and accommodation. They are located at:

- Trailhead 1 - Glenbarrow Carpark** N 367 081
- Trailhead 2 - Brittas Woods Entrance at Clonaslee Village** N 317 106
- Trailhead 3 - Cadamstown Village Carpark** N 227 085
- Trailhead 4 - Kinnitty Forest Entrance near Kinnitty Village** N 211 046
- Trailhead 5 - Monicknew Forest Carpark** N 306 023

The Way can be walked in its entirety by experienced walkers over three days, but can be broken into a series of shorter trailhead-to-trailhead treks - each approximately 4-5hrs long. A number of shorter loop walks (ranging from 1hr to 4hrs) start and finish at each trailhead and are more suitable for the occasional walker.

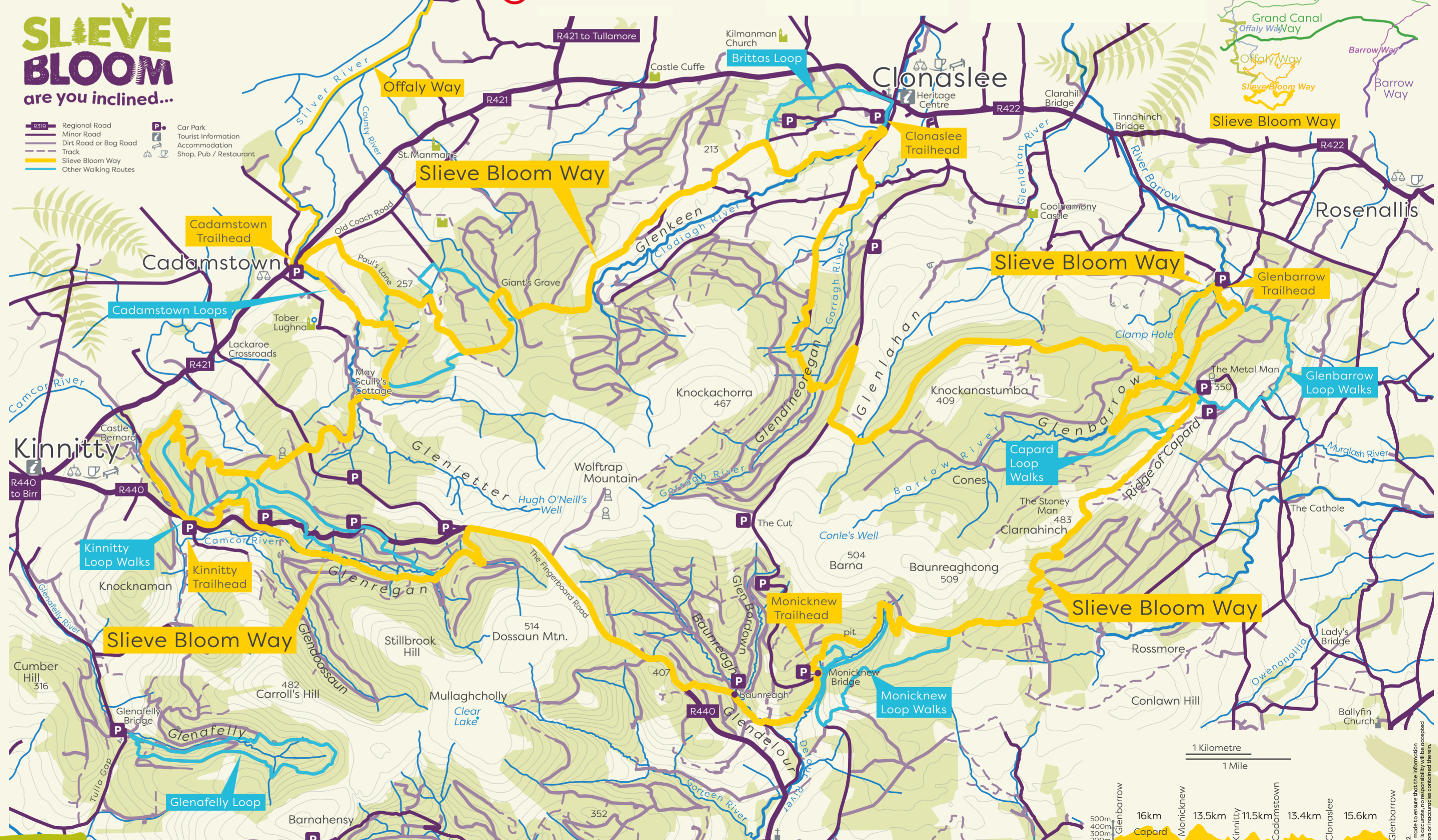
The route is waymarked using a mix of 1m high black posts and brown signpost fingers bearing YELLOW ARROWS and TREKKING MAN. [Note: On occasion you may encounter directional arrows of other colours - these are for shorter looped walks which start and return to one of the Trailheads.

Mountain Bike (MTB) Trails are intended for MTB use only and **should never be used by walkers**. MTB trails cross walking trails in many places and appropriate signage is erected at these points to inform both walkers and cyclists. Mountain bikers are asked to only use **waymarked MTB trails** and not to use other forest roads or tracks.



Waymarking posts will confirm and guide you on your journey along the route.

Dogs are not permitted on the Slieve Bloom Way as sections of it cross private farmland



In Summary

Distance/Duration: 70.5km / 3 days
Trail Grade: Strenuous. These are physically demanding trails, which will typically have some sections with steep climbs for long periods and the going underfoot can be extremely rough including many obstacles. Suitable for users accustomed to walking on rough ground and with a high level of fitness.
Minimum Gear Requirements: Specific outdoor walking footwear and clothing required.
Trailheads: Glenbarrow, Clonaslee, Cadamstown, Kinnitty and Monicknew Forest.

Parts of the Slieve Bloom Way cross private property. Persons entering such private property do so by permission with the consent of the landowner and no right of access or right of way is created as a consequence. No amount of expenditure by the partners to this agreement or by private individuals on the route being used will alter this position. Nothing in this notice shall impact or address any pre-existing public rights of way.

Slí Sliabh Bladhma

Directions to Slieve Bloom Trailheads

- Trailhead 1 Glenbarrow**
Start from Rosenallis village on the R422 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr. At the sharp bend opposite the Church take the minor road signposted Glenbarrow. After 2.5km turn right at a 3-way junction, and after a further 2km turn left at a crossroads signposted Festival Fields and Glenbarrow. [The trailhead is signposted from Rosenallis. Total Distance 5Km]
- Trailhead 2 Brittas Woods Entrance, Clonaslee**
Clonaslee village is located on the R422 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr. Start at the bridge over the River Clodiagh in the village, and take the road signposted Brittas Lake and Glenkeen. The forestry entrance is on your left after 200m. [The trailhead is signposted from Clonaslee. Total Distance 0.2Km]
- Trailhead 3 Cadamstown Village Carpark**
The trailhead is located at the carpark in Cadamstown village on the R421 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr.
- Trailhead 4 Kinnitty Forest Entrance**
Kinnitty village is located on the R421 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr. Take the R421 following the signposts for Cadamstown but after only 200m veer right onto the R440 signposted Mountrath. [The trailhead is signposted from Kinnitty. Total Distance 2.8Km]
- Trailhead 5 Monicknew Forest Entrance**
Start from Clonaslee village on the R422 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr. From the River Clodiagh bridge in the village take the R422 following the signposts for Mountmellick. After 0.6km turn right onto a roadway signposted Mountain Drive. Ascend for 8.4km to The Cut - the highest point in your drive clearly identified by a high peat bank on each side. Descend for 3.6km to reach the Picnic Area at Monicknew Forest Entrance. [The trailhead is signposted from Clonaslee. Total Distance 12.0Km]

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The Offaly Way Slí Uíbh Fhailí

County Offaly

Originally known as King's County, Offaly was established in 1557 with the lands of the O'Connor Faly, the principal native family. It formed part of the ancient kingdom of Leinster. A variety of land additions and boundary adjustments took place over the centuries and the name was changed from King's County to county Offaly in 1920 as an act of local defiance of British government in Ireland.

There is clear evidence of early inhabitation from an encampment for hunters some 6800-6000BC uncovered in archaeological excavations at Boora (through which the Offaly Way passes). The hunting site lay on the

pre-bog surface on the shore of a lake much larger than the modern Lough Boora. Evidence of settlement in the Bronze age was also found near Kilcormac as was the impressive gold collection, the Derrinboy hoard and the famous Dowris hoard of the later Bronze age 900-600BC. Evidence of more recent history is to be found in numerous points of interest in the towns and countryside including castles, raths (hill fortresses), ancient churches, abbeys and monasteries. Clonmacnoise is one of the most important early monastic sites in the country.



In Summary

Distance/Duration
38km / 2days

Degree of Difficulty

Moderate. These trails may have some climbs and may have an uneven surface where the going is rough underfoot with some obstacles such as protruding roots, rocks, etc. The routes are appropriate for people with a moderate level of fitness and some walking experience.

Minimum Gear Requirements

Sturdy walking boots and waterproofs. Rucksack, fluid, snacks and mobile phone.

Trailheads

Cadamstown, Kilcormac, Lough Boora and Lemanaghan

Additional Local Information

www.visitoffaly.ie
www.kilcormac.com

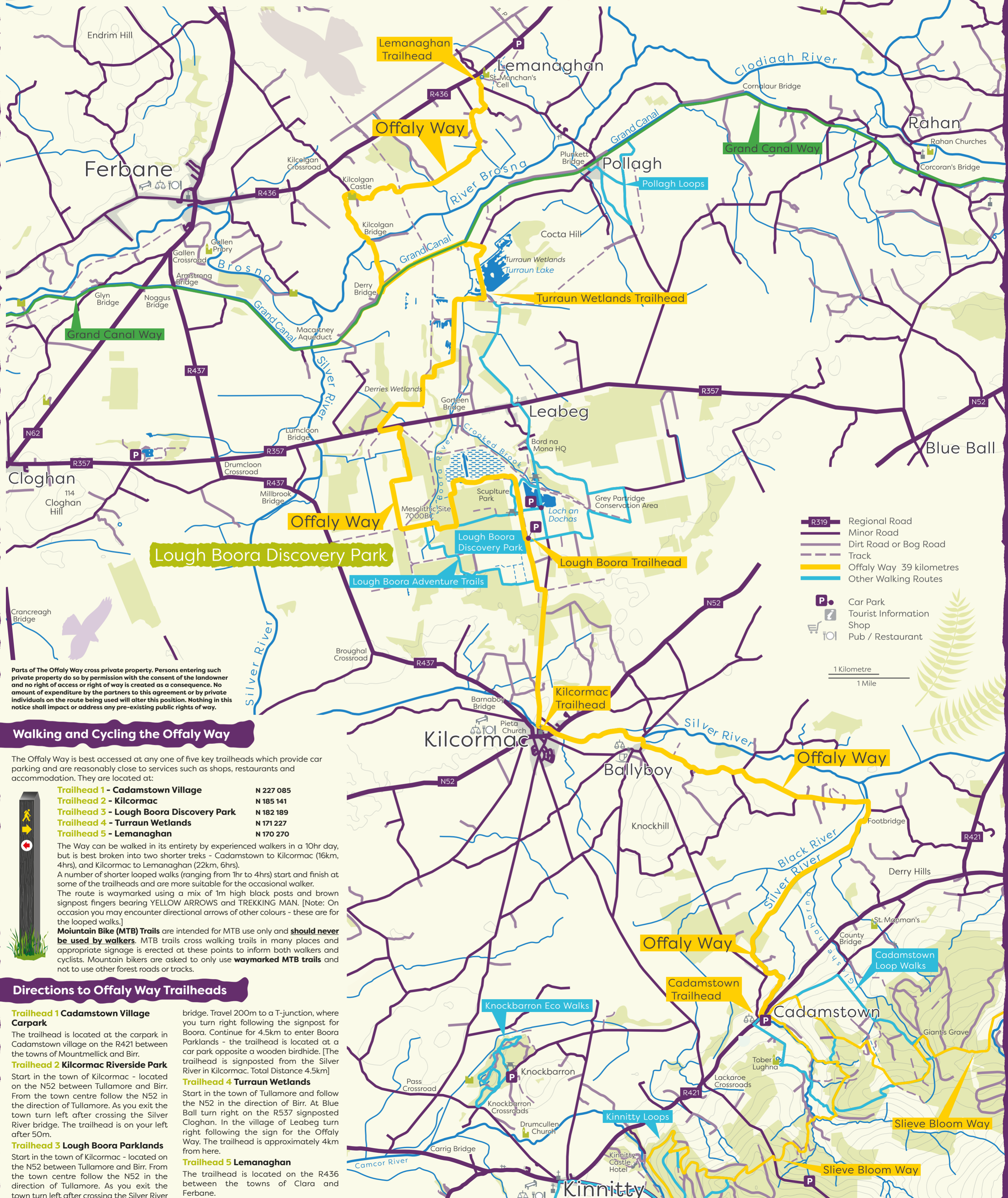
The Offaly Way

The Offaly Way is a linear route of some 38kms linking the Slieve Bloom Way (at Cadamstown) to the Sli Mor (at Lemanaghan) - and crossing en-route the Grand Canal Way. The route includes sections of riverbank, stretches of bogland, green mass paths and quiet country roadways. Although the highest point is only 120m, much of the Way commands wide views over a comparatively flat landscape. The Way follows a mix of forest tracks, riverbanks, bog roadways and minor roads. As the route is mainly flat, it is easy to moderate in difficulty and suitable for people of average levels of fitness or higher.

Cadamstown Village which marks the junction with the Slieve Bloom Way is the best starting point. From the village, the route travels northward along the Silver River and quiet country roads to Ballyboy Village, where it rejoins the Silver River into the town of Kilcormac. The Way then enters the award winning Lough Boora Discovery Park. With access for all ages and abilities, this amenity can be explored for its outdoor activities, nature and biodiversity, sculptures and historical Mesolithic Site. The Way traverses Turraun Nature Reserve where more than 80 species of birds and 150 species of plants have been recorded. After crossing the Grand Canal at Derry Bridge, the final section takes the walker to Lemanaghan - the site of a monastery founded by St Manchan in 665AD.



Dogs are not permitted on the Offaly Way as sections of it cross private farmland



Walking and Cycling the Offaly Way

The Offaly Way is best accessed at any one of five key trailheads which provide car parking and are reasonably close to services such as shops, restaurants and accommodation. They are located at:

- Trailhead 1 - Cadamstown Village** N 227 085
- Trailhead 2 - Kilcormac** N 185 141
- Trailhead 3 - Lough Boora Discovery Park** N 182 189
- Trailhead 4 - Turraun Wetlands** N 171 227
- Trailhead 5 - Lemanaghan** N 170 270

The Way can be walked in its entirety by experienced walkers in a 10hr day, but is best broken into two shorter treks - Cadamstown to Kilcormac (16km, 4hrs), and Kilcormac to Lemanaghan (22km, 6hrs).

A number of shorter looped walks (ranging from 1hr to 4hrs) start and finish at some of the trailheads and are more suitable for the occasional walker.

The route is waymarked using a mix of 1m high black posts and brown signpost fingers bearing YELLOW ARROWS and TREKKING MAN. [Note: On occasion you may encounter directional arrows of other colours - these are for the looped walks.]

Mountain Bike (MTB) Trails are intended for MTB use only and **should never be used by walkers**. MTB trails cross walking trails in many places and appropriate signage is erected at these points to inform both walkers and cyclists. Mountain bikers are asked to only use **waymarked MTB trails** and not to use other forest roads or tracks.

Directions to Offaly Way Trailheads

Trailhead 1 Cadamstown Village Carpark

The trailhead is located at the carpark in Cadamstown village on the R421 between the towns of Mountmellick and Birr.

Trailhead 2 Kilcormac Riverside Park

Start in the town of Kilcormac - located on the N52 between Tullamore and Birr. From the town centre follow the N52 in the direction of Tullamore. As you exit the town turn left after crossing the Silver River bridge. The trailhead is on your left after 50m.

Trailhead 3 Lough Boora Parklands

Start in the town of Kilcormac - located on the N52 between Tullamore and Birr. From the town centre follow the N52 in the direction of Tullamore. As you exit the town turn left after crossing the Silver River

bridge. Travel 200m to a T-junction, where you turn right following the signpost for Boora. Continue for 4.5km to enter Boora Parklands - the trailhead is located at a car park opposite a wooden birdhide. [The trailhead is signposted from the Silver River in Kilcormac. Total Distance 4.5km]

Trailhead 4 Turraun Wetlands

Start in the town of Tullamore and follow the N52 in the direction of Birr. At Blue Ball turn right on the R537 signposted Cloghan. In the village of Leabeg turn right following the sign for the Offaly Way. The trailhead is approximately 4km from here.

Trailhead 5 Lemanaghan

The trailhead is located on the R436 between the towns of Clara and Ferbane.