

5.6 Saleen

Saleen Wood, Midleton, Co. Cork

This part of the report was written by Mr. Adrian O’Sullivan, PRO of the Save Saleen Wood Campaign and local man.

The wood was originally part of Rostellan Estate and once had a flax mill and an opencast mine. This is a mixed wood with Alder, Ash, Willow, Hawthorn and Oak which has a large variety of woodland birds and animals. It boasts a saltwater marsh which supports a lot of wildfowl. It goes into Saleen Creek (or Poul nabibe Inlet) which is an SPA (Special Protected Area). It would be a big loss to the community and the area as there are not many unspoilt natural areas in the region. Locals can access the wood without having to cross a road and it is possible to walk to Rostellan village through the wood and along the shore of the creek.



Saleen Wood

As part of the Midleton Electoral Area Local Area Plan Public Consultation Draft January 2005 roughly 10 hectares of Saleen Wood were proposed for development of a housing estate, despite the fact that the stated objectives of Cork County Council state that “*Development be **avoided** within the vicinity of Poul nabibe Inlet*”.

Some years ago Planning Permission was granted for three houses on this site. It was appealed by Mr. O’Sullivan and the permission was rescinded by An Bord Pleanala, who stated that, as the development was between a public road and the water in a designated “Scenic area”, it was inappropriate.

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The wood is owned by Coillte.

Even though it was called a public consultation draft, no local people in the village where the wood is situated were consulted. The locals first heard of the plan in March 2005, whereas submissions against the plan had to be in by 21st February to Cork County Council.

Mr. O'Sullivan started a petition against the proposed redevelopment of Saleen wood which is used as an amenity by many locals and contacted our local newspaper. The local paper covered the story on May 5th 2005.
(http://www.imokillypeople.ie/index.cfm?page=headlines_viewNews&newsId=182)

Not one person that signed the petition was aware of the plan. Most of the signatures were collected in the village and surrounding area. Even though it was passed the deadline for submissions against the proposed development Mr. O'Sullivan sent one to the Planning unit of the County Council. One other person from the village also sent a submission to the Planning Unit. Neither received acknowledgement for these submissions.



Part of the Woodland

Local county councillors were lobbied for support. A review meeting of the plan was scheduled on May 13th 2005. On the 19 May 2005, on the advice of the Macroom and District Environmental Group and the Woodland League, Mr. O'Sullivan contacted Coillte's representative in charge indicating they were contravening FSC principles in their plan for redeveloping Saleen Wood. On the 20 May 2005, Mr. O'Sullivan contacted various councillors he had lobbied as to the outcome of the review meeting

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on May 13th. Their response was vague. He later found out that the meeting went on for two days and it was 3 a.m. when Saleen was discussed on the second day.

On 03 June 2005 the National Parks and Wildlife representative confirmed that Saleen Creek which starts in Saleen Wood is an SPA. However the wood is not part of the designation. On the 14th June, Mr. O’Sullivan received a copy of the document ‘Proposed Amendment To The Midleton Electoral Area Draft Local Area Plan’. Nothing had changed regarding the Saleen Wood area, despite the groups efforts.

On the 15th June 2005, Mr. O’Sullivan spoke with the Cork County Council’s Heritage Officer to voice his concerns. He had previously written to her. She had not visited the site and said “*from the aerial photograph it looked like a small strip of woodland*”.

On the 27th June 2005, Mr. O’Sullivan sent a submission to Cork County Council (Cork Co. Co. had posted a sign at the local office saying “*Submissions – Amendments are invited from members of public 6 June to 5 July*”). A local independent councillor also sent a submission.

On the 12th August, an archaeological consultant is invited to the site. There are two historical monuments in the wood, a corn/ flax mill and a mound structure. They are indicated on a survey map dated 1842.



The Corn Mill on site

On the 6th September 2005 at the Cork County Council LAP meeting, Saleen Wood was not discussed as original submissions were not made in time. The final plan is due be published three months from that date.