

Mr. Brendan Curtin

03 Nov. 2023

Mr. Damien Ginty,  
Senior Planner,  
Kerry County Council.

**Reference: Submission to Kenmare MD Draft Plan – Online Submission**

Dear Mr. Ginty,

Please note below observations in relation to the draft Kenmare MD plan.

**2.11.2 Ports, Harbours & Piers**

*'The Council have recently received funding to upgrade the Renard Pier which will enable further economic and tourist growth.'*

This opportunity to upgrade Renard Pier is welcome, however, the statement suggests the upgrade would be an enabler for economic and tourist growth. This is difficult to imagine given there has been NO public consultation on the upgrade. Given the significance of Renard Pier for all marine users in Valentia Harbour, any upgrades should support all users of this pier.

Separately, it is disappointing that this para. of the draft plan does not scope any ambition for Valentia Harbour in a wider context.

**3.4.7 Knightstown**

**3.4.7.1 Context**

*'The breakwater and marina offer a broad range of marine based activities.'*

This statement is incorrect, as there is no marina at Knightstown.

KCC are familiar with the failed efforts to establish a marina at Knightstown. The Council are in the privileged position to be aware of the significant benefits a marina would bring to Knightstown given the construction and operation of Fenit Marina since 1997.

The development of a publicly supported marina, shore facilities, security and fuel provision similar to Fenit would have a significant positive socio-economic impact across South Kerry.

### 3.4.7.2 Planning Considerations and Proposals

*‘Knightstown has the potential to capitalise on its heritage and marine based activities, and the work carried out by the Valentia Development Agency, to further grow visitor numbers and create sustainable long-term employment.’*

This statement does not quantify the ‘work’ carried out (if any) in Knightstown. Also, it does not reflect or acknowledge the closure of the Tourist Office adjacent to the town clock. Previously, the tourist office located in the centre of Knightstown proved to be a successful focal point for visitors to the area and for traffic disembarking the car ferry. This point should be reflected as a Tourism Objective in this section of the plan. Finally, the entity ‘Valentia Development Agency’ is not one I am aware of.

### KENMD-KS-5

*‘Promote the sustainable enhancement of the promenade/waterfront area, including the provision of further service facilities subject to environmental assessments.’*

The area around the seafront and promenade in Knightstown the majority of which is owned by the council lacks oversight and daily management. This objective should be backed up with ambition and intent to manage the area and develop public realm plans to enhance the provision of leisure facilities.

### 3.4.7.6 Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

- *‘Knightstown offers a very high-quality tourism product including year-round attractions of golfing, fishing and hiking/walking.’*

This statement does not reflect the tourism products on offer in Knightstown on a year-round basis, nor seasonally.

- *‘There is a need to market Knightstown as a tourism destination, both in terms of the facilities available in the town and as a base from which to access the surrounding area.’*

This statement appears to isolate Knightstown from the wider Valentia and Skellig Coast region. The statement could be replaced by the need for a full-time tourist office and tourism development cell promoting Valentia as a destination to visit.

#### 3.4.7.6.1 Marine Activity

*‘The Local Authority recognises that the maritime sector is a growing sector and selling point for the region. KCC is committed to supporting and facilitating the development of a vibrant and successful marine leisure and tourism sector. The development and completion of Valentia Harbour Marina and associated facilities is supported in this plan.’*

In general, the above statement is welcome and accurate. The provision of a marina, associated shore facilities and enhanced seafront realm would massively benefit Valentia Harbour and surrounding areas. The breakwaters currently in position provide ample evidence of a unique and ideal location for Transatlantic, European and domestic boaters to call in South Kerry and berth for

free. The open harbour is presently unsuitable for unattended seasonal berthing, let alone year-round berthing options.

The Valentia Harbour Marina, as rightly titled above, should provide safe and secure year-round berths for leisure and commercial boaters. The harbour has many additional opportunities through education, artificial reef creation for diving and an enhanced Blueway network.

As a public facility, the council are expected to proactively pursue and develop this regionally significant opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Brendan Curtin

3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2023