

### 3.4 Villages (Baile an Sceilg, Beaufort, Chapelstown, Dún Géagáin, Glenbeigh, Kilgarvan, Knightstown & Portmagee)

#### 3.4.1 Baile an Sceilg

##### 3.4.1.1 Context

Baile an Sceilg is a dispersed coastal village located on the R566 on the Iveragh Peninsula. Baile an Sceilg is an important tourist settlement both on the Skellig Ring and WAW driving routes. It is located within An Gaeltacht, Uíbh Ráthaigh. Dún Géagáin, with which it shares many services, is located 1.5 km to the north of the settlement. Although a certain level of development has taken place between the two settlements in recent years, they remain two distinct settlements. Baile an Sceilg is the more dispersed of the two villages with fewer services. The settlement has a public house, café and an industrial unit. The settlement benefits from a local post office. The local GAA (St Michaels) pitch is located between Baile an Sceilg and Dún Géagáin.

The Ballinskelligs community benefits from the presence of Ballinskelligs Community Centre which provides services and facilities for the village and surrounding hinterland. In 2020 CLG Naomh Mícheál, Baile an Sceilg was awarded funding to purchase gym equipment under the Community and Language Supports Programme. It was announced in late 2022 that Ballinskelligs Community Care would receive funding under the Community Centres Investments Fund launched in April 2022. Ballinskelligs Community Care also have also received funding under the Community Enhancement Programme Round 2 allocations in 2020.

##### 3.4.1.2 Planning Considerations and Proposals

It is important to maintain the open countryside between Baile an Sceilg and Dún Géagáin. The development strategy for Baile an Sceilg is to promote its organic development as a rural village and tourist centre commensurate with the level of infrastructure provision.

Growth in recent years has been largely confined to the holiday home sector. The village is located within a Gaeltacht area, and it is important that development takes place which supports the promotion of the Irish language as set out in Chapter 8 of the KCDP. It is considered that the revival of the Irish language college would add a further attraction to the area, increasing visitor numbers and sustaining employment.

##### 3.4.1.3 Population and Sustainable Land-Use Development

There are no population figures for the village of Baile an Sceilg itself. It is located within the ED of Baile an Sceilg. The population in this ED decreased slightly between 2002 and 2006 from 358 to 355 people. However, it increased in the 2011 census to 375 people and the 2016 Census recorded a population of 390, a further 4% increase. Census 2022 recorded a population of 419, an increase of 7.4%.

|                    | 2006 | 2011 | 2016 | 2022 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Baile an Sceilg ED | 355  | 375  | 390  | 419  |

**Table 3.11: Population Change 2006-2022**

##### 3.4.1.3.1 Residential Development

Several housing developments on both sides of the main street have been completed in recent years. These dwellings are primarily used as holiday homes. A few single houses for permanent residents have been completed over the same period. The number of holiday homes constructed in recent years far outweighs the number of permanent residential completions. Baile an Sceilg has not been given a specific population growth and housing target under the Core Strategy of the KCDP, consequently lands have not been zoned for R1 (*Proposed Residential*). However suitably located lands have been identified and zoned as R4 (*Strategic Residential Reserve*) to ensure that the long term residential needs of the village can be met. The development of this land is dependent on the availability of adequate wastewater infrastructure.

### 3.4.1.4 Sustainable Communities

**3.4.1.4.1 Coiste Forbartha na Sceilge** is a voluntary development organisation which covers the Ballinskelligs area. It deals with the economic, social and cultural development of the area. One of its main activities is the provision of services from the Community Centre in the villages of Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg.

The Council will work with the Coiste to ensure the provision of adequate accommodation services in Dún Géagáin and Baile an Sceilg to meet the local need.

### 3.4.1.5 Heritage

#### 3.4.1.5.1 Built Environment & Heritage

Baile an Sceilg has evolved to consist of a scattered linear settlement comprising a number of detached residences. In recent years the development of a number of holiday developments has altered the character of the settlement and has led to a significant increase in the built-up area. These new developments are comprised of relatively uniform house types in cluster formations. The development of a streetscape would give the village a more defined core area, urban structure and sense of place.

The complex of buildings attached to the cable station was a significant landmark in the area, but over the years most of these buildings have been demolished. A terrace of four two-storey houses remain, which were part of the original Cable Station complex, and represent an attractive vernacular style forming a prominent part of the built up area. Kinard House, in the centre of the village, is recorded as a protected structure (KY-097-001).

There are no recorded monuments within the Plan area. The development boundary for Baile an Sceilg defines the existing extent of the area where new development may be considered, including for development within the village core. It is an objective of the Plan to encourage the development of a compact and sustainable

village structure by ensuring that new development is contiguous with existing development and makes effective use of infill sites. All new development shall reflect the existing vernacular design and contribute towards the creation of a streetscape.

### 3.4.1.6 Economic Development

The largest all year-round employer in the village is Delpac, which manufactures bags and other forms of packaging for the Irish and British markets. Additional seasonal employment occurs during the summer months which centres round the tourism sector. The gteic hub at Ballinskelligs provides remote working facilities. The project received financial supports through rural development funding. The facilities currently centre on six coworking spaces divided across two rooms, along with kitchenette facilities and with 1GB fibre broadband available.

### 3.4.1.7 Tourism & Outdoor Recreation

#### 3.4.1.7.1 Natural Environment & Recreational Amenity

Baile an Sceilg is located on the shoreline of Ballinskelligs Bay. The beach has a Blue Flag designation, offering significant potential to grow visitor numbers. It is an objective of this Plan to facilitate the provision of ancillary facilities (at beaches) to maximise in a sustainable manner this unique natural beauty. Walking trails in the area, including the existing Monks Trail, between Ballinskelligs carpark and pier, are an amenity for both residents and visitors.

The southern side of the village is designated a *Visually Sensitive Area* in the KCDP. The bay area is part of the Baile an Sceilg Bay and Inny Estuary candidate SAC which is of considerable conservation significance because of the presence of two types of salt marsh, which are listed in Annex 1 of the EU habitats Directive. The area also has a significant population of Ringed Plover and Common Scoter and the sand dunes in the area support a population of rare liverwort species called the Petalwort (*Petalophyllum ralfsii*). In heritage terms, McCarthy's Castle and Ballinskelligs' Priory are recorded




archaeological monuments, and form part of the Monks Trail. These monuments coupled with the Blueflag beach and surrounding designated habitats offer opportunities for tourism and overnight stays.


**3.4.1.8 Water & Wastewater Management**

Baile an Sceilg is served by a public water supply and primary wastewater treatment. Upgrading of the wastewater treatment infrastructure is required to ensure the sustainable development of the area.

**3.4.1.9 Connectivity**

Significant public investment has taken place to alleviate peak summer traffic. In particular, the car park at the beach has recently been extended into an area to the south of the toilets.

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| <b>KENMD-BG-5</b>  | Support the provision of camping facilities in the village, at an appropriate location.  |
| <b>KENMD-BG-6</b><br> | Seek the improvement of pedestrian connectivity between the village & beach, subject to environmental assessments.   |
| <b>KENMD-BG-7</b><br> | Support upgrade of the existing Monk's Trail Walk, as required and subject to environmental assessments.   |
| <b>KENMD-BG-8</b><br> | Support the sustainable provision of a Blueway in Ballinskelligs' Bay, between Ballinskelligs' Beach and Ballinskelligs' Pier, subject to inclusion in National Strategy and subject to environmental assessments. |

| General Objectives   |  |
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| Objective No.  | It is an objective of the Council to:  |
| <b>KENMD-BG-1</b>  | Preserve and promote the use of Irish as the community language.   |
| <b>KENMD-BG-2</b>  | Promote sustainable mix used development that will enhance the function of the village.  |
| <b>KENMD-BG-3</b>  | Support the Uíbh Ráthach Task Force and any reports/plans/actions that they promote, subject to environmental assessment.                                |
| <b>KENMD-BG-4</b><br> | Facilitate and support the upgrade of existing wastewater treatment infrastructure in a timely manner to ensure the sustainable development of the area. |



**Figure 3.80: Baile an Sceilg Castle**