

Save Our Seafront



Our Harbour is Not for Sale An Alternative Vision for Dún Laoghaire Harbour

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The Naval Tradition of Dún Laoghaire Harbour



“Dun Laoghaire harbour is a protected structure: the Cruise Berth proposal needs to be fully assessed for impact on existing sailing and marine activities, as well as established harbour users operating successfully within the harbour.”

Cllr Victor Boyhan



The harbour must be a fully public amenity



Learning to sail in the Harbour



The naval tradition of Dun Laoghaire Harbour



One million people walk the east pier every year



“The majority of the People of Sandy Cove and Glashule feel this development will destroy the amenity value of the harbour without any discernible benefit to the town of Dún Laoghaire.”

**Bob Waddell, former chairperson
Sandy Cove and Glashule Residents
Association**

Save Our Harbour – Invest in our Town



Richard Boyd Barrett speaking as campaigners gather at People's Park to show their support for the Harbour as a public amenity – May 2015

The Harbour is the 'jewel in the crown' of Dún Laoghaire. It is our most important asset if we are to regenerate and rebuild a vibrant town centre that encompasses both the harbour and the town itself. Exactly two hundred years after the first plans were drawn up for the harbour, we still have one of the finest intact historic harbours in the world.

Our vision for the harbour includes a National Diaspora Centre, the development of the Fishing Fleet, a Centre for Eco Tourism, a Planetarium and a museum to the building and development of our historic harbour.

Unfortunately the recent ending of the Ferry Service means that the harbour is facing an uncertain future. We believe the Harbour Company's Development Plan is not the way forward. They propose to stake everything on developing the harbour as a Cruise Ship terminal for the super sized ships of the future in an effort to safeguard the commercial future of the Harbour.

However, this is only part of the plan; the **Dún Laoghaire Harbour Master Plan** (<http://dlharbour.ie/masterplan/>) is proposing a

€200m commercial development of **Apartments, Retail Outlets and Offices**, within the confines of the existing harbour.

Already the Harbour Company has put up part of the back of the West Pier for sale.

The Master Plan, in reality, is only a more expensive rehash of the 1989 development plan for Bars, Restaurants, and Shops on the old Mail Boat pier that caused such an outrage that it was quickly abandoned.

We think this plan is inappropriate development – This will destroy the distinctive and unique aspect of the harbour that is such an attraction to all who visit Dún Laoghaire.

This document is Save Our Seafront's contribution to a different vision of what a low impact development of the harbour would look like. We are asking for your support and input to make this an inclusive vision that will safeguard the future of the harbour.



"These plans are the first step towards the privatisation of our Harbour. Mass protests stopped the sell-off of our baths and seafront – now we need to do the same to safeguard our harbour as a public amenity."

Richard Boyd Barrett TD

Democratic Control or Expensive Quango?

The Government has recently published legislation to transfer the ownership of the harbour from the Minister for Transport to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. This is an ideal opportunity for the Council and the Government to dissolve the Harbour Company and ensure that our Harbour is finally brought under the democratic control of the local Council.

The Harbour Company is **unelected** and does not appear to be answerable to anybody. **Richard Boyd Barrett TD** has asked numerous questions in **Dáil Eireann** regarding the governance of the Harbour Company, excessive salaries and unexplained **expenses** to directors and executives of the Company. Despite assurances from the Minister that these issues were being dealt with – we understand that the money has not as yet been returned to the Company. The Company also appears to be operating outside of its remit by developing plans other than commercial shipping without ministerial consent.

The Council now has two choices under the new legislation

- 1) To keep the existing Harbour Company and operate it as a wholly owned corporate subsidiary.
- Or**
- 2) To bring the harbour under Council control as a department of the Council.

Save Our Seafront favours the second option. This would give control of the harbour to our elected councillors and by extension the people of Dún Laoghaire, rather than an unelected board. This would also safeguard the pay and conditions of the workers in the harbour. The removal of the top layer of bureaucracy would also achieve substantial savings for the Council.

Richard Boyd Barrett TD will be submitting amendments to the legislation this autumn that will seek to ensure the Council takes full control of the harbour. Currently, the Council management favour leaving the Harbour Company in charge. Most **Fianna Fail** and **Fine Gael** councillors signed a motion expressing their preference for the same option. **People Before Profit, Labour, two independents** and **Sinn Fein** all expressed their preference for it becoming a department of the council.

It is, as yet, unclear whether the decision will rest with the Councillors or the Council Management but it is important that we all lobby our councillors to get their commitment to bring the **Harbour** under local **Democratic Control**.



‘Dún Laoghaire Harbour is a major part of our national heritage and must be protected and preserved in the best interests of the people’.

Fergal McLoughlin, An Taisce.



“The Council will make shortly have to make a decision between a private quango and more democratic control of our harbour. Write or e mail your councillors urging them to support our proposal.”

Cllr Melisa Halpin

Cruise Ships: The Trojan Ships of Privatisation

The argument about the future of the harbour is being posed in terms of whether you are **for** or **against** Cruise Ships. Let us state from the beginning we are **in favour** of Cruise Ships using Dún Laoghaire Harbour. But we are **against** the Harbour Company's plans to build a Cruise berth pier 435 metre long through the centre of the harbour, thereby almost cutting it in half.

They also propose to dredge a channel 120 metres wide into the middle of the bay, and dump the spoil at sea. The total cost at current estimates will amount to €18 million. The Harbour Company does not have this money and their plan to raise it includes selling off areas of the harbour to private development. **So this deal is not just about a new cruise berth in the harbour it is about a cruise berth PLUS private apartments, hotels and retail outlets.**

The proposers of this plan claim that if we do not go with it the cost of the harbour will be footed by the people and ratepayers of Dún Laoghaire but in reality the people and rate payers could well end up paying the price of an €18 million white elephant while the Cruise Ships sail in and out of Dublin City.

Cruise Ships have a part to play in sustaining Dún Laoghaire as a working harbour – but as a niche market that will attract the smaller ships that can use the existing facilities. A modest development of the pier at Dún Laoghaire would enable it to take Cruise Ships and Ferries up to 200 metres in length. The larger ships can anchor in the bay and passengers can come ashore by tender as at present. The only argument in favour of this proposal is the debatable tourist and financial benefit to the town.

The Cruise Ship facility will have a Coach Park for 42 vehicles at the front of the terminal capable of delivering up to 3000 passengers to Dublin, Avoca, or Glendalough and the surrounding attractions. A recent survey by the Dún Laoghaire Rate Payers Association showed that currently only 7% of local businesses benefitted from the large cruise ship trade – 93% got nothing. It is not spelled out in the Harbour Plan that Dún Laoghaire Harbour is in effect an access point for the greater Dublin area - not a destination in itself that will benefit the town. But the damage will have been done!



The Queen Mary docked off the East Pier – Spring 2015

A message from Siracusa in Sicily

The beautiful Sicilian town of Siracusa is faced with the same issue as Dún Laoghaire. Their harbour on the island of Ortigia is being decimated to accommodate berths for large cruise liners - against the wishes of the people.

The people of Siracusa sent the following message to the people of Dún Laoghaire:

“Siracusa, due to the blindness of its politicians who can see no further than their noses, is having this destiny. The lesson of Venice doesn't seem to have enlightened them...This is a message of support to the people of Dún Laoghaire in your fight to keep out Cruise Boats from your beautiful harbour.”

The People of Siracusa

A Vision for Dún L

Harbour & Town

Under new legislation to be enacted by the Dáil the Harbour will be handed over to the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

Save Our Seafont believe that the harbour should be owned and operated by the Council for the benefit of the town. The harbour should be central to the plans to regenerate the town.

The most successful regeneration projects in similar cities elsewhere were based on an **integrated plan for both the harbour and the town**. The business community have also made proposals to improve the town centre and they must be supported in this endeavour. We have a unique opportunity to transform our town for the benefit of all.

A Working Harbour

Dún Laoghaire has always been a working Harbour. Our priority should be to develop marine activity including ferry services, fishing, and cruise ships that can utilise the existing facilities in the harbour. We should make clear that Dún Laoghaire is still open for business as a **Ferry Port**, and engage with the shipping companies to find a suitable replacement for the Stena Line.

The **Fishing Industry** has been neglected for years. We should develop a section of the Harbour for the inshore fishing industry. This would enable us to promote the town as a gourmet seafood centre with more fish restaurants that would provide additional jobs and tourism in the town. A week-long sea food festival every year would highlight the town's attractiveness at very little cost. In addition Sandycove and Dalkey would benefit from this strategy. Howth and Kinsale have benefited by positioning themselves as centres of excellence based on fishing and seafood. Dún Laoghaire should do the same.



Dún Laoghaire town – desperately in need of regeneration



Coastguard Cottages in the Harbour



Fishing boats in the harbour

Laoghaire Harbour



Environmentally Friendly Development

We need a strategy that develops leisure, tourism, and heritage in a way that benefits the entire town with the **least possible environmental impact**. This starts from the proposition that it is the historic and unspoilt aspect of the harbour that people find attractive. Dún Laoghaire has 1.5 million people on its doorstep. We need to provide a unique marine experience that is both commercial and leisure orientated. This could include a **Diaspora Centre** that is linked to the **Maritime Museum** and the **New Library**. This way both locals and visitors can access family and emigrant history archives.

Dublin Bay has just been named a **Biosphere Reserve** by UNESCO. A biosphere is an area of biological diversity that is managed to promote a balanced relationship between humans and nature. Surely this is exactly what we want for Dún Laoghaire. Fáilte Ireland has said the Biosphere Reserve will open up tourist possibilities across the bay. Dún Laoghaire is uniquely placed to capitalise on this opportunity. From the Bird Sanctuary in Booterstown, to Seapoint, Sandycove, Bullock Harbour, Coliemore Harbour, Dalkey Island, and Killiney Bay, we can position Dún Laoghaire as a centre

for low impact marine study, leisure, and tourism.

The **Dublin Bay Biosphere** will be used by students and research institutes to study local habitat and the environment. This is an outstanding opportunity for Dún Laoghaire to position itself as the centre of this activity. An Eco-Campus in Dún Laoghaire linked to a third level college that specialised in Maritime Research and Oceanography would bring jobs, students, and tourists that could contribute substantially to the regeneration of the town.

Low Impact Development

The Dún Laoghaire yacht and boat clubs have approximately 5000 members. We need to develop a strategy that maximises the commercial potential of this presence. The Harbour should develop **mooring facilities** for larger yachts and try to attract **international sailing events** such as the **Volvo Race** and the **Tall Ships** to the harbour. On the last occasion the Volvo Race visited Dún Laoghaire the town benefited by over €3m. The Irish Sailing Association newsletter reports on the type of International sailing events that could be staged in the harbour. (<http://www.sailing.ie/>)

The Harbour Company Plan takes little account of the impact on existing users of the Harbour, the local community, or of alternative ways the Harbour could be developed to safeguard its future. We can develop a low impact **marine cluster** using the existing derelict building, including **new slipways, a repair yard, a sail making loft, small engine repair yard, and a marine service base** that would encourage marine and ancillary activity. We can use the existing facilities to build a base for

maritime research activity. In this way over **200 jobs** could be sustained that would help revitalise the town.

As part of this regeneration Save Our Seafront believes that the refurbishment of Dún Laoghaire Baths with a heated indoor pool and modern facilities would add to the tourist and public amenity attraction of the town on a year round basis.

Dún Laoghaire has a wonderful cultural and literary heritage. If we also focus on promoting the town as a maritime centre with an **annual national maritime festival** we can rebuild the cultural and business life of the town in a way that connects the harbour area and the town together that benefits all.

The Harbour and surrounding area is steeped in maritime history, ferry, and naval heritage. Along with the military fortifications at the end of pier, the metals, the railway, and the adjacent Martello towers, heritage tourism must be an important aspect of the town's regeneration plan.

A Cruise Ship Strategy to Benefit the Dublin Region



The Wind Surf – a 5 masted sailing ship – in Dún Laoghaire ahead of 7-day Gaelic Explorer cruise

The Dublin Port Company is investing €230 million to redevelop the Alexandra Basin that will include a twin berth Cruise Ship facility beside the Point Depot. This will be capable of accommodating the next generation of Cruise Ships. Dublin Port has the support of Fáilte Ireland and Dublin City Council for this project, and has been recommended for co-funding under the Connecting Europe Facility. Two large and expensive cruise ship facilities within 5 miles of each other make **no sense**.

Dublin Port is Ireland's most popular Cruise Ship destination; 'industry observers believe it has the potential to become a turnaround port, where cruises start and finish, as well as a port of call for one day visits'. In 2015 Dublin Port is projected to

receive 83 ships and Dún Laoghaire 22. The Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company Plan is projecting that by 2040 this will grow from 22 to 230 ships a year in Dún Laoghaire while Dublin Port will stagnate at 79. This is just **nonsense**. There is no basis for these figures except wishful thinking and could lead to a **financial disaster** for both ports.

Cruise tourism is important to this country. We think the Department of Tourism should act to develop a coherent policy for cruise tourism that takes account of the benefits that both harbours can offer, while not impacting on the historic aspect of Dún Laoghaire Harbour. **We urge you to write to the Minister for Transport to make this point.** (paschal.donohoe@oireachtas.ie)

“The development of our harbour almost 200 years ago is of great historic interest. Apart from the human interest, the fascinating technical details and the scale of the project, the connection with famous people, such as British Royalty, Captain Blighe, and the harbour civil engineer, John Rennie, would attract visitors. A great idea would be the establishment of a more modest Titanic style exhibition which would be a great tourist attraction?”

A Frequent Visitor

Is this what we want for our Harbour?



The Harbour Company's vision for private retail and apartments in the harbour

Our intact Georgian harbour is a major tourist attraction. We need to utilise this unique asset to build tourism and related activities that will benefit the town. To destroy the harbour with **Apartments, Retail outlets**, and **Offices**, in addition to a cruise berth facility that is out of scale with the existing layout of the harbour is not the way forward. Even the Harbour Company acknowledges in their **Environmental Impact Statement** that it would have 'a significant impact on all existing views of the harbour... and existing users... *'may consider the sheer scale of the docked ships to be negative'*.

A Financial Disaster?

The Harbour Company has no internal source of **Finance** to spend €18 million on this development, or indeed the €200m Harbour Development, and is potentially the first step towards the **privatisation** of the harbour. **What they are not telling you is that they propose to raise the finance by selling off part of the harbour to developers to build Apartments, Offices, and Retail Units** (<http://dlharbour.ie/masterplan/>).

This is totally unacceptable and could be a financial disaster for the Harbour, DLR County Council, and the tax payers of Dún Laoghaire who will be left paying the bill. Do we want or really need **shops, takeaways, or pubs** in the Harbour itself. Surely we should be encouraging tourists and visitors to utilise the town centre facilities.

An Environmental Disaster?

Cruise ships have been described as floating cities and like cities, they have a lot of pollution problems. Their per capita pollution is actually worse than a city of the same population. On average, a cruise ship discharges three times more carbon emissions than aircraft, trains, and passenger ferries, even when they are tied up in the harbour. Cruise ships burn bunker fuel – that has a very high sulphur content that is very injurious to health.

Friends of the Earth have produced an extensive report **Getting a Grip on Cruise Ship Pollution** detailing the issues involved. <http://www.foe.org/projects/oceans-and-forests/cruise-ships>

Proposed Commercial Development in Harbour Precincts

Old Harbour:

Residential 1000/1200 M sq.

The Gut:

Residential – 4,100/4,300 M sq.

(This parcel of land has just been put up for sale by the Harbour Company)

St. Michael's Wharf:

Food & Beverage Outlets - 6000/7000 M sq.

Residential – 28,000/30,500 M sq.

Hotel – 2000/2,500 M sq.

We can do it a lot Better

Many harbours around the world have had to reinvent themselves as the ships and the cargoes they were built for have moved elsewhere. But we can learn from their experience. **We can take the best of what they have done to create a model development that can save the unique features of the Harbour for the future.**

Malta: Valetta Grand Harbour Plan

The regeneration plan aimed at transforming the City and the surrounding areas of this natural harbour. They started with a vision that the **Grand Harbour** remains the region's most important infrastructure that attracts most visitors to experience its rich history, architectural heritage, and unique setting. The plan envisaged a strategy that linked the harbour and the town and preserved and restored the historical structures and buildings of the harbour. They propose to establish a **Museum** and **Heritage Promenade** and the development of historical walking routes that combine the harbour and the city. To complement the museum, a research centre is also being created with an archive, library, and a viewable reserve collection. They have developed the **cultural activity** in the area of the Grand Harbour, through food fairs, historical festivals, pageantry, art exhibitions, concerts and new cultural attractions all of which have increased visitor numbers. **All of this is possible in Dún Laoghaire with a little imagination.**

Cork Harbour Regeneration

The Cork Harbour regeneration project was based on a voluntary partnership between key statutory agencies, local stakeholders, and the public that focused attention on the Harbour as a whole, and endeavoured to deliver a set of agreed actions to enhance the future management of the **entire coastal zone**. They set themselves a number of goals:

1. To protect and promote the unique natural environment of the Harbour;
2. To protect the social and cultural assets of the Harbour to maintain / protect the unique identity of the area;
3. To promote the economic development of the Harbour in line with the principles of sustainable development;
4. To promote and develop the Harbour as a facility for water based sport and leisure activity.

They got everyone involved – by including all relevant statutory bodies, stakeholders, and local people in the decision-making process to harness local solutions to local problems. This was **not the case** in Dún Laoghaire.

An Inclusive Harbour Forum



Instead of their proposal to build apartments and shopping facilities in the harbour area the Council and Harbour Company should create an inclusive Harbour Forum that includes representatives from all sections of the **harbour users** and the **town** to develop and promote the harbour's potential for the benefit of the all the **people** of Dún Laoghaire. All of the initiatives that we have proposed can generate jobs, tourism, and commercial activity without any negative impact on the structure of the harbour. We also acknowledge that the Harbour

Company Plan proposes a number of **less controversial initiatives** that can be incorporated into an alternative strategy for the harbour without impacting on the historic nature of the harbour itself.

Harbour Company's Master Plan

While the plan has a number of imaginative suggestions that could be implemented, these are of minor importance in the overall scheme of things. The **Master Plan** has staked everything on **super-sized Cruise Ships** and the commercial exploitation of the Harbour with no regard for its historical importance or the visual impact of this unwanted development.

Unlike other regeneration plans the stakeholders group has been narrowly constructed to represent a small group of vested interests, whose only concern seems to be to protect their own self-interest and high paid jobs. The much trumpeted local consultation with the local Councillors consisted of a twenty minute presentation with no time for questions; neither were they presented with a model that provided an overall perspective of the proposed development.

The examples the Harbour Company proffer in the **Master Plan** of the regeneration of **Liverpool** and **Bristol** are not analogous in any way with **Dún Laoghaire** – they were industrial ports in a large built up urban area with extensive warehouse and port building already in existence. These examples only seek to **mislead** people in relation to the plans for Dún Laoghaire.



Liverpool docks – nothing like Dún Laoghaire Harbour

John De Courcy Ireland maintained that a unique feature of the harbour was the way that its development drove the establishment of the harbour and the railway. Today a new plan for the harbour could be a new beginning for Dún Laoghaire town.

The Financial and Social Benefits of our Proposal

The costs of the Cruise berth for liners, dredging, and ancillary services proposed by the Harbour Company are conservatively estimated at €18m. The low-impact marine cluster which we propose could be built at a fraction of this, as well as re-generating existing derelict buildings. The Diaspora Centre, Marine Study Centre, international sailing events, and maritime festivals would be permanent attractions that would generate income and business for the entire town, as well as promoting Dún Laoghaire as a national maritime centre.

'Dún Laoghaire needs to develop as a maritime centre of excellence – save our harbour – invest in our town'.

DLR Ratepayers Association

'The Harbour should be developed as a State Park, a major sporting and recreational amenity for the people, not a commercial white elephant'

**Liam Shanahan,
National Yacht Club.**

What You Can Do to Save Our Harbour

Write to your Local Councillors and Election Candidates: Let them know of your opposition to the Cruise Ship Development plan and the Master Plan for the Harbour. (names and addresses can be obtained from www.saveourseafront.net)

Write to: Paschal Donohoe, Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, 44 Kildare street Dublin 2.

Email your concerns to: paschal.donohoe@oireachtas.ie

Details on all the documents in relation to the proposed Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company cruise berth planning application are now available from the dedicated website: www.dlcruiseplan.ie



On Dún Laoghaire Pier looking at the Stena Berth, I recall the excitement when its ribbon was cut in 1995 the promise of jobs and positive impact on our local economy. Today it lies abandoned and useless. Stena and other Ferry Operators now sail the extra few miles to the Port of Dublin and leave this costly White Elephant in their wake. Soon we may be saddled with yet another White Elephant. There is a new plan - A plan, hatched privately, the cost to be borne publicly. A plan created by Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company at the expense of the local community whose services are already being axed throughout the Borough. Whats next for the axe if we allow this latest scheme to go ahead? Let our voices be heard. Let us remember those who are driving this scheme when election time comes around."

Christy Moore, Singer and Songwriter.

Christy Moore photographed at a recent Save Our Seafront public meeting



The people of Dún Laoghaire protest to Save Our Harbour – May 2015

The committee to **Save Our Seafront** is chaired by **Richard Boyd Barrett TD.**

Committee members include:

Anne Carter, Davnet Cotter, Jim Curtis, Cllr Melisa Halpin, Lola Hynes, Valerie Lagrave, Anne Martin, Fergal McLoughlin, Mary McLaughlin Beck, Paul O'Brien, David Russell, Derek Sheil, Bob Waddell.

Pictures – thanks to **Lar Flynn** and others.

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