

## DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT  
ERRIGAL GLEN, COUNTY LONDONDERRY. ARTICLE 28 OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area described and delineated on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the "Errigal Glen Area of Special Scientific Interest".

The area is of special scientific interest for oakwood and its nationally significant number of rare and notable woodland plants. This unique woodland plant assemblage is one of the richest in Northern Ireland and has been recognised by prominent botanists such as David Moore as early as 1832, and Robert Lloyd Praeger in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Today, the overall diversity of the woodland has been largely maintained with a number of rare species given special protection. Three species that have been recorded over the last 25 years include Small Cow-wheat *Melampyrum sylvaticum*, Serrated Wintergreen *Orthilia secunda* and Intermediate Wintergreen *Pyrola media*. All have a restricted distribution throughout Northern Ireland and are listed as Red Data Book and Northern Ireland Priority Species. Small Cow-wheat *Melampyrum sylvaticum* is particularly scarce, recorded from only five other known locations in Northern Ireland since 1985 and together with Serrated Wintergreen *Orthilia secunda* is further protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. In addition, Yellow Bird's-nest Orchid *Monotropa hypopitys* was recorded in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This species is also protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and is listed as a Red Data Book and Northern Ireland Priority Species. However, it has not been recorded for more than 60 years, although this may be a consequence of under recording. There are further historical records for Bird's-nest Orchid *Neottia nidus-avis*, which is also protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and is listed in the Red Data Book.

Other notable species regularly recorded in Errigal Glen include Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*, which is also a Red Data Book Species, Common Wintergreen *Pyrola minor*, Toothwort *Lathraea squamaria* and Wood Fescue *Festuca altissima*.

Errigal Glen lies to the west of Garvagh on the Agivey River with the wood extending along both sides of the glen for over one kilometre. Despite its moderate extent, the glen includes a number of woodland plant communities, ranging from strongly acidic to flushed and base-rich. This variation of local edaphic conditions has resulted in a diverse woodland flora including the rare and notable species described. The structure of the woodland has largely been shaped by past management and although it is described as oakwood, much of the canopy, particularly along the northern side of the glen is dominated by mature non-native trees. This reflects a period of past planting



with species such as Beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and a range of conifers. By comparison, the woodland on the southern side of the river and a small area to the north east of the glen, is generally more natural in composition with a mature canopy dominated by Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea* and Downy Birch *Betula pubescens*. Other native canopy species include Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* which is found in more base-rich conditions on the drier parts of the valley floor, and Alder *Alnus glutinosa* which is characteristic of the wettest parts.

The shrub layer is largely natural and consists of Hazel *Corylus avellana*, which in the absence of mature trees frequently forms a dense, low canopy. Other shrub species include Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and the notable Bird Cherry *Prunus padus*, with Willow *Salix* spp. in wetter conditions. Where present, the field layer consists of a mixture of ferns including Broad Buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*, Male-fern *D. filix-mas* and Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, thickets of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., and locally in the most acidic conditions, the dwarf-shrub Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. The herb layer of the glen slopes reflects the acidic nature of the wood and is dominated by Great Wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*, with Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* locally prominent in damper conditions. On the more base-rich soils of the damp valley bottom, there is a notable increase in species richness. Commonly occurring species include Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Water Avens *Geum rivale*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Lesser Celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Enchanters Nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and Wood-sedge *Carex sylvatica*. Where the ground becomes waterlogged species such as Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*, Marsh Hawk's-beard *Crepis paludosa*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and Remote Sedge *Carex remota* are prominent.

The combination of local edaphic factors, particularly the humidifying influence of the river together with the range of living trees and dead wood, has resulted in a site rich in lichens and fungi. Fungi associated with trees are particularly well represented with ectomycorrhizal species such as Birch Milkcap *Lactarius tabidus*, Fiery Milkcap *L. pyrogalus* and Charcoal Burner *Russula cyanoxantha* all being commonly recorded. A recent notable record was Destroying Angel *Amanita virosa* associated with Sessile Oak *Quercus petraea*.

The rare and notable species that occur in Errigal Glen today have been influenced by past management of the woodland and the variation of local edaphic conditions. Recent management of the wood has been one of minimal intervention. It is hoped that continued sensitive management of the woodland will ensure that the rich assemblage of species in Errigal Glen is maintained.

Errigal Glen also provides an important habitat for animals, including breeding birds and mammals. Mammals present include Otter *Lutra lutra* and Badger *Meles meles*.

## SCHEDULE

**The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and fauna of the area:**

1. Any activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing,

rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including sand, shingle, shell, gravel and peat.

2. Introduction of grazing animals.
3. Introduction of rolling, mowing or cutting regimes.
4. Application of manure, slurry or artificial fertiliser.
5. Application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
6. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material.
7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
8. The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.
9. Burning.
10. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.
11. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
12. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.
13. Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including marsh, fen, rivers, streams and open water), e.g.
  - (i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;
  - (ii) modification to the structure of any watercourse;
  - (iii) lowering of the water-table, permanently or temporarily;
  - (iv) change in the management of bank-side vegetation.

14. The killing or taking of any animal in a manner likely to affect the continued existence of the species within the area except as provided for under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.
15. The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:
  - (i) Educational activities;
  - (ii) Research activities;
  - (iii) Recreational activities;
  - (iv) Exercising of animals.
16. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.
17. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

#### **FOOTNOTES**

(a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

(b) Also note that many of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is "large" and what is "small", the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case, the Department would normally give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.

**Errigal Glen**  
**Views About Management**  
**The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)**

**A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of the Errigal Glen Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")**

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the Schedule on pages 2 - 4 for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

#### **MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

Errigal Glen incorporates both oakwood and a nationally important higher plant assemblage. It is an important habitat for wildlife providing food and shelter for a wide variety of mammals, birds and invertebrates.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the woodland and its unique assemblage of rare and notable woodland plants through the development of the woodland structure and the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Specific objectives include:

To retain the rare and notable plants in Errigal Glen it is essential to sustain a sympathetic woodland management programme. This may include the maintenance of mature non-native trees in areas of the wood where they predominate to ensure the preservation of the local edaphic conditions required to support these important species.

Where it is conducive to the maintenance of the rare and notable plants in Errigal Glen, encourage the woodland to become more "mature" by avoiding disturbance. The structure of the wood will gradually become more diverse, with well-developed canopy, shrub and ground layers, and an abundance of species like Ivy, mosses, liverworts and lichens that live on the trees themselves.

Encourage the retention of dead wood, both on the woodland floor and still standing in the canopy. Dead wood is a very important habitat for some of the less conspicuous woodland species, such as fungi and invertebrates.

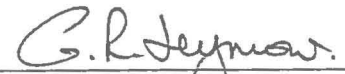
Encourage regeneration of native woodland species through the control of grazing. In general, natural regeneration is preferable to planting.

Discourage the spread of non-native species through appropriate control measures.

Ensure that disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the woodland, such as river, scrub and grassland. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the  
Department of the Environment  
hereunto affixed is authenticated  
by



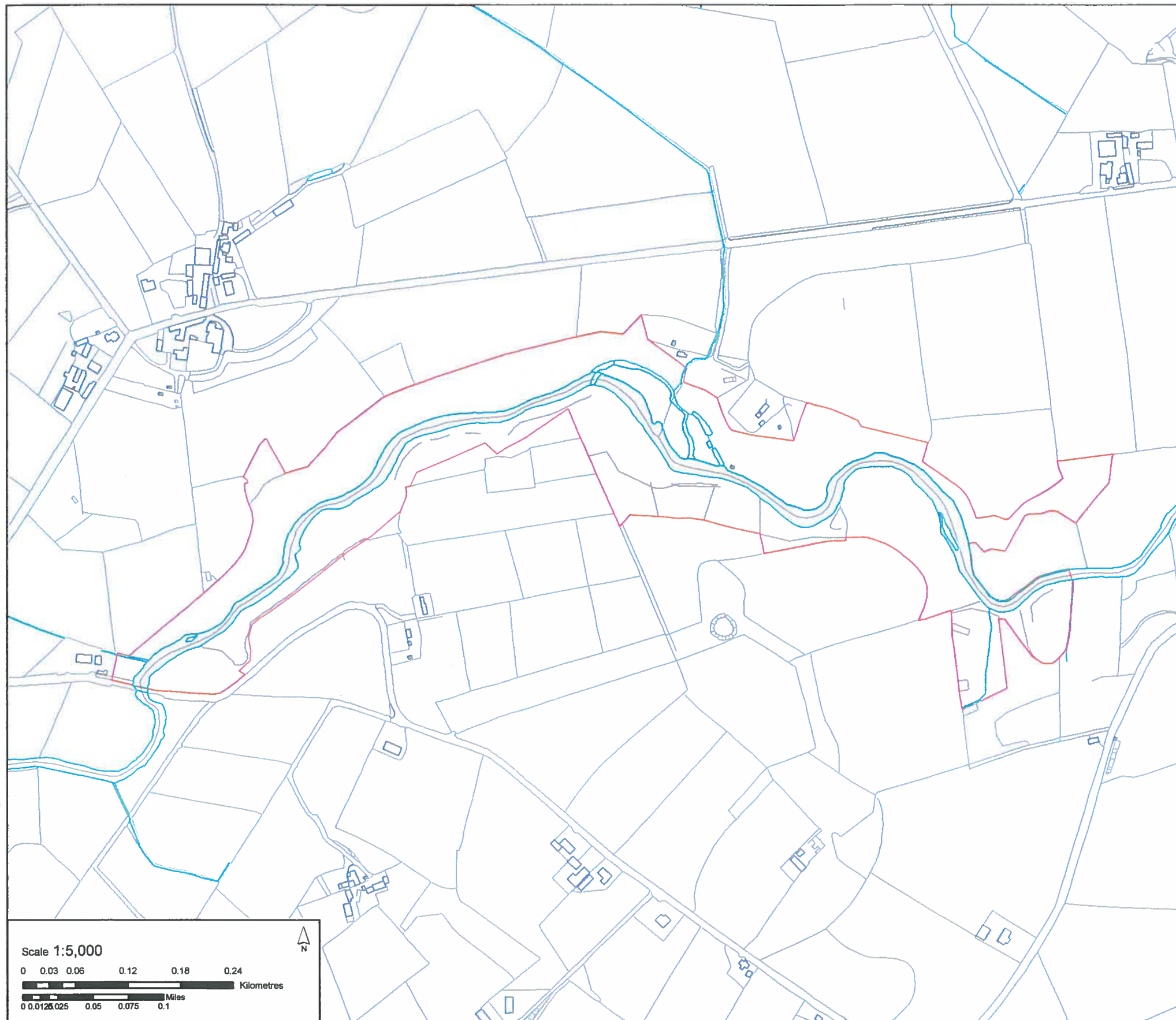
---

Mr G R Seymour  
Senior Officer of the  
Department of the Environment

Dated the 15<sup>TH</sup> of MARCH 2007



# ERRIGAL GLEN ASSI



Scale 1:5,000

0 0.03 0.06 0.12 0.18 0.24 Kilometres

0 0.0125 0.025 0.05 0.075 0.1 Miles

## ERRIGAL GLEN AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Map referred to in the Confirmation dated: 15 OCTOBER 2007

SITE BOUNDARY: The Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) includes all the lands highlighted within the solid coloured line.

AREA OF SITE: 14.78 hectares

OS MAPS 1:50,000: Sheet No. 8  
1:10,000: Sheet No. 40

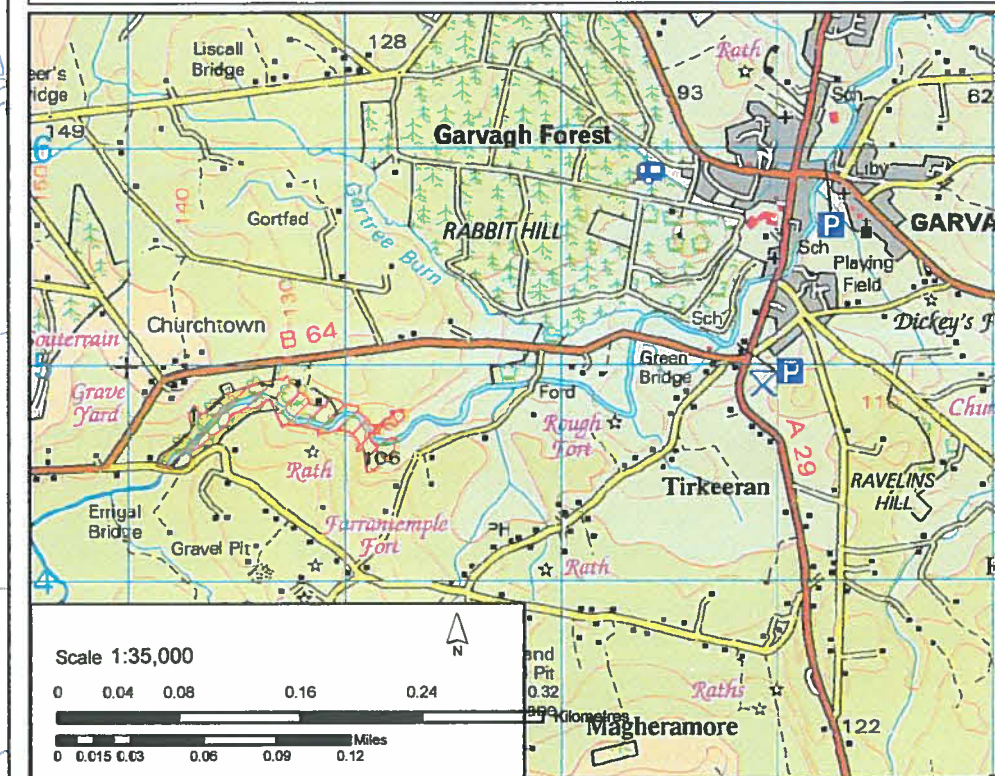
IRISH GRID REFERENCE: C 817 148

COUNCIL AREA: COLERAINE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNTY: LONDONDERRY

*G. Seymour*

MR G R SEYMOUR  
SENIOR OFFICER OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Scale 1:35,000

0 0.04 0.08 0.16 0.24 Kilometres

0 0.015 0.03 0.06 0.09 0.12 Miles