

1.0 CONTEXT

1.1 Location

An Gleann is a small rural development node and is located approximately half-way between Baile na Sceilg and Portmagee at the head of St Finans Bay on the Iveragh Peninsula.

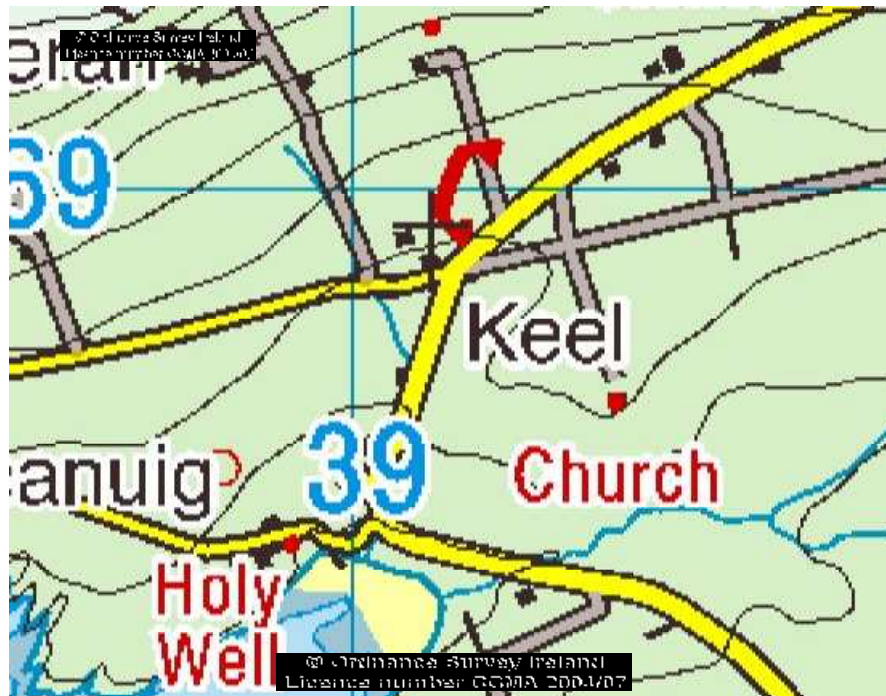


Fig 1; Location of An Gleann settlement

1.2 Population

There are no population figures for the village of An Gleann itself. It is located within the ED of St Finians (Toghroinn Fhíonáin). The population in this ED increased between 2002 and 2006 from 137 to 154 people. It increased marginally in the 2011 census to 161 people.

1.3 Functions & Facilities

An Gleann is a small coastal residential village with limited facilities, which include a Roman Catholic Church, a primary school, a children's playground and community centre. The beach area attracts a number of holidaymakers during the summer months, but the village lacks any tourist facilities. The main employer in the area is Skelligs Chocolate located less than a kilometre from the village centre. An Gleann is essentially a rural area with a high density of dispersed rural housing. It is a dispersed settlement rather than a village in the traditional sense.

An Gleann Ionad lae offers a preschool service, day care centre and community centre.

1.4 Infrastructure

While there is a public water supply available in the village, water quality is an ongoing issue during the summer months. If required can be connected with and utilise surplus capacity from the Waterville Scheme

There is no public sewage treatment unit in the village at present. A preliminary report is in place for the provision of a new treatment plant. This is unlikely to occur within the life of the plan.

1.5 Urban Form

An Gleann is a dispersed rural settlement located at the intersection of two local roads with the church, the village shop(closed) and community services centre, located at the core. There is no developed streetscape; rather, the village is comprised of detached dwellings with varied setbacks. House types are varied. There is no distinct divide as such, between the village and the surrounding countryside. The beach area is 350 metres to the south of the village core area and there is only a limited amount of development at this location

1.6 Built Heritage & Archaeology

There are two Protected Structures located just outside the development boundary. A Celtic cross style memorial is located on the eastern boundary of the village. The old Catholic church now in ruins, is also a Recorded Monument, is located to the south of the village. There are no archaeological monuments within the proposed boundary although there are a large number in the vicinity of the village

1.7 Natural environment and Amenity

An Gleann is located in a low lying pocket of land at the head of St. Finans Bay, surrounded by a ring of hills some rising to almost 400 metres. Its physical isolation and dramatic seascapes and views of the Skelligs, give the area a unique character. The north-western half of the village is zoned Secondary Special Amenity in the Kerry County Development Plan 2009 –2015. The Iveragh Peninsula SPA is in close proximity to An Gleann.

The beach is located a short distance from the settlement node. Due to strong currents the beach is unsuitable for swimming and other water based activities.

1.8 Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic

Tourist traffic during the summer months creates a busy atmosphere but during the winter months, because of its relatively isolated location traffic is mainly local. There is no footpath network in the village.

1.9 Employment

Skellig Chocolates is located at An Gleann and is the main source of employment in the area. The business has reopened after been renovated due to fire damage. The vitality of the area and its small businesses are dependant on the spending power of customers from the rural areas and the passing tourists.

1.10 An Gaeltacht

An Gleann is located within a Gaeltacht area and the preservation and promotion of the Irish language is critical in its future development

1.11 Growth and Residential Development

This area is comprised of scattered one off housing. There has been a considerable level of ribbon development on the approach roads over the years and this has largely been confined to the northern or landward side of the road. All new residential dwellings will have to comply with the rural settlement policies as contained in the County Development Plan.

The development boundary for An Gleann defines the existing extent of the area where new development may be considered, whilst also allowing for some expansion for development adjacent to the settlement core.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The overall vision for An Gleann is to maintain the character of this distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, to promote the area as an attractive place to live in and to visit, while preserving and enhancing the use of Irish as the daily communal language.

An Gleann is a dispersed rural settlement area. Given the lack of any facilities in the area and the absence of an existing village/settlement structure, the need to prioritise investment into existing settlements, it is not intended to develop a new village settlement in An Gleann.

The development strategy for An Gleann therefore is to:

- Ensure that any future developments should be sensitive to the existing character of the area and should be appropriate in scale. Developments which are open on a year round basis should be encouraged.
- Promote the redevelopment of commercial/retail outlet serving the local community
- Preserve and promote the Irish language
- Ensure that all residential development shall cater for the needs of the local population who wish to live in the area on a permanent basis.
- Encourage the sustainable development of ecotourism and other niche markets along with the sustainable extension and diversification of tourist facilities as a possible source of employment

3.0 OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Objective No.	It is an objective of the Council to:
OO-1	Promote the development of ecotourism and other niche markets in a sustainable manner.