

Proposed Jetty at Clifden Beach

Immediate, Medium and Long Term plan



Immediate plan:

Phase1: Install permanent 20m gangway to floating landing.

Phase2: Install seasonal 75m floating jetty with concrete floating landing.

Benefits:

1. Shallow draft boats have access to shallow water landing, at all heights of tide, all year round.
2. Deep draft boats have access to deep water floating jetty on all tides.
3. Boats waiting to gain access to the Town Harbour at high tide have a "Waiting Pontoon" and access to shore facilities without the need to drop anchor and tender (dinghy) ashore.

Short Term plan and benefits:

Build a slip for launching of trailer boats at all heights of tide.

The slip at the beach at present can only be used at half tide or above.

The nearest slip with access at, almost, all heights of tide is Cleggan.





Medium Term plan and benefits:

Gate the Town Harbour keeping boats in the harbour afloat full time.

A single set of gates will make the harbour accessible at high tide only and for a limited period like Galway Harbour.

Build Marina, in phases. There are many options here.

Pictured is one option I see being the best.

The simplest and probably quickest system, for 1st phase, would be to just put down “Bow Pick Up” lines to enable boats to tie to the pier wall, stern to, Mediterranean style. This would just entail a line of moorings set at correct distances away from the pier wall. This should facilitate at least 20 boats of varying sizes while keeping the end of the pier with the car park free for boats (i.e. Fishing boats) to load/unload or make repairs etc.

We have already had one “Shannon Cruiser” last year who chose Clifden as its base to sail the west coast.

They kept the yacht on a mooring for the summer and also kept the boat here for the winter on “Dry Dock”.

We’ve also had various yachts, over the years, base themselves here for the summer months while cruising up and down the west coast.

If we have Marina Berths available boats will come and base themselves here, even for the winter months. This will open opportunities for the various associated Marine Services to set up and therefore create employment. To quote a movie: *“If you build it, they WILL come” (Field of Dreams)*.

Galway announced, last year I think, that they were installing 50 berths in the harbour and were accepting applications for them. I believe they got 150 applications. I feel we would get the same response, or more.



First Phase:

Gate the Town Harbour keeping water in the harbour at all times. Most will agree the harbour looks much nicer when the tide is in.

This gives boats access to the harbour at high tides only but gives them the benefit of staying afloat at all heights of tide in a sheltered harbour for medium to long term mooring.

Illustrated above is how the Town Quay could look. This example shows 21 boats, approx 50ft each, tied up, stern-to, using their own anchors on their bows. All that has to be supplied is a series of mooring points on the town quay. The same space could facilitate 35 boats of 30ft size.

An option after this is to supply water and electricity for each of the berths. This is chargeable to each boat.

This example still only uses two thirds of the quay wall, keeping the end of the quay free for loading and unloading as is used by existing vessels using the harbour.

This shows the immediate benefits of gating the Town Harbour.

Second Phase:

Install mooring blocks and buoys for the boats to tie their bows to. This eliminates the chance of the individual boat's anchors getting tangled. This also makes the berth a more chargeable one.

Also then install swinging moorings in the middle of the harbour for the more security concerned boater and giving more berthing opportunities and options.

Third Phase:

At this point we have to decide whether to keep this classic look in the harbour or go ahead and modernise it by installing the finger pontoon systems.

The other option at this stage is to install the finger pontoon system at "The Beach" area where there is deeper water.



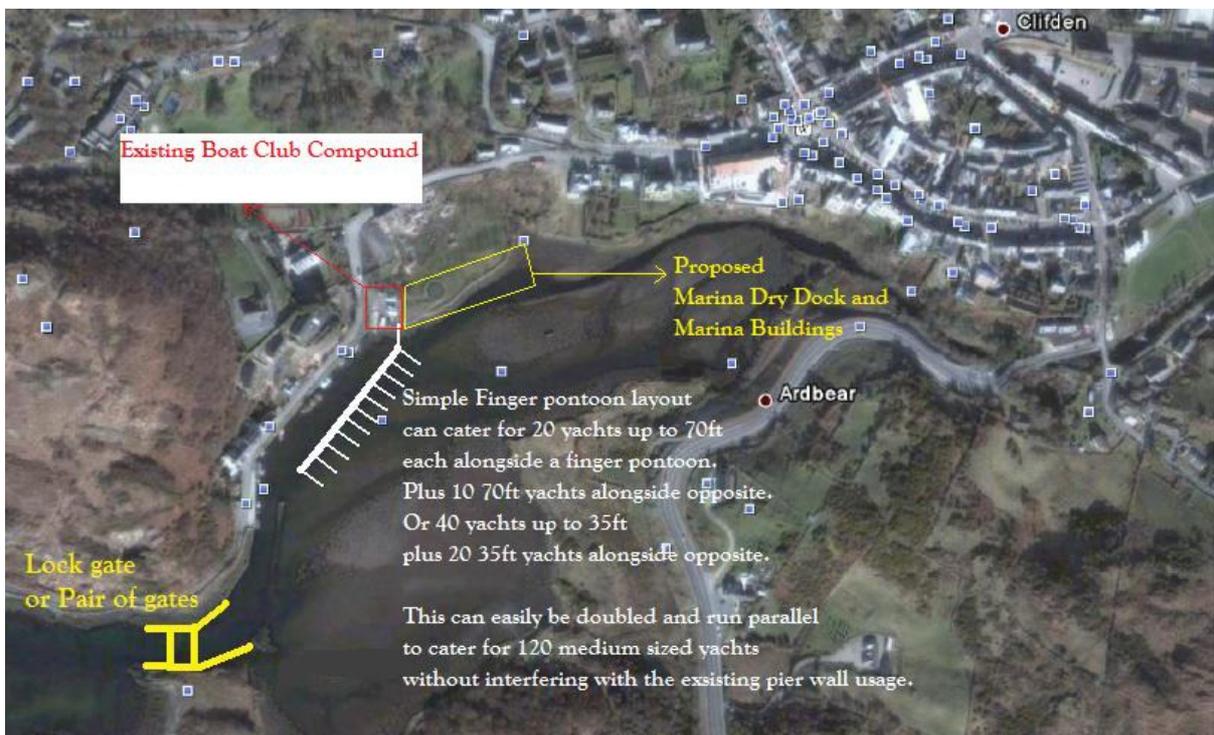
Long Term plan and benefits:

Option 1:

Dredge a channel from deep water, “Double Rock Beacon” off the Boat Club, to the Town Harbour Marina gates.

A second set of gates, or lock gates, instead of the fore mentioned single set, would be needed at the entrance to the Harbour to give access at all heights of tide like Kilrush Marina.

This will give access to the Town Harbour Marina at all heights of tide.



Once the Harbour is gated and has pontoon berths the Town Harbour Marina will need Dry Dock and Marina Buildings. This also can be done in phases.

Option 2:

Instead of dredging a channel in to the Town Harbour and the modernising the Harbour just gate the Town Harbour and have the 'Stern-To' tie up system keeping the more classic look of the town and harbour.

Build all the modern marina systems at "The Beach Area", which is already accessible at all heights of tide.



This would involve building a proper breakwater (drawn here in red), from stone or other recommended materials, to protect the marina inside.

Also inside this breakwater a concrete finished surface capable of giving vehicular access allround the proposed marina area (drawn here in grey).

And finally finger pontoon systems including water and electricity at each berth.

The simple system, drawn here in blue, can facilitate 100 medium sized yachts (50ft) with extra room for larger yachts, even up to 100ft.

This example shows the very first phase, the jetty and seasonal pontoons, being incorporated as a reception/waiting pontoon where visiting yachts can tie up, check in at reception, load/unload, with out having access to the secure and gated marina.

This plan can easily be expanded on to include all marina type buildings and businesses

Summary:

Clifden needs a new attraction, a new angle, a new draw for tourism/business in general. The building of these local amenities will give Clifden the edge it needs. It will bring a whole new client/custom to the area, giving Clifden a whole new dimension.

This will build a whole new Primary, Secondary and Tertiary business line for the town and community, creating new business opportunities and employment.

Clifden Boat Club hosted the “West Coast Sailing Championships” in 2007 and 2008. This brought 40 plus yachts, and their crews, to Clifden for most of a week each year. The nearest time we can host these again is 2011.

The “National Sailing Championships” were this year, 2009, in the west coast (Tralee) for the first time ever. We have an option to host them on the west coast again in 2011.

The criteria, at the moment, for hosting “The Nationals” are having a marina that can facilitate 100 yachts. This should be our time line for full development. Both of the events may be able to be postponed to 2012 for Clifden’s Bicentenary if need be. The decision to host either of these events has to be done 3 years in advance (now).

At time of writing this article, early May 2009, there are 7 local yachts and 4 local fishing vessels tied up at the town pier, 2 of them just after returning from a weekend’s pleasure trip to Bofin. Imagine what could be seen here if we build this marina.

Damian Ward.