

Open

Geashill Railway Station

Opening Geashill Railway Station is an opportunity that should be recognised and acted upon. This opportunity would offer access to jobs and wealth, to a disadvantaged rural region which includes 6 villages. More importantly rail travel is green and sustainable, reducing carbon emissions and stress for commuters going to work. The railway station is already there, it just needs to be opened. Decisions have to be made, by politicians and Irish Rail management, to invest in this opportunity.



View of Geashill Station from the railway line.



Waiting room and veranda (left photo). View of the double line track from the bridge (right photo).

History

Geashill Railway Station was built in 1853. It is a listed building with regional status and has significant architectural merit. The building is very attractive and is well maintained. The fact that it is already there is the most obvious reason to reopen the station for public transport, at this time when so many people commute long distances by car to Kildare and Dublin. The existing infrastructure includes a ticket office, waiting room, veranda for waiting passengers, storage building and station master's house.

The station closed in 1979 at a time when commuting to Dublin and the Kildare Computer Belt was unimaginable. Now however the situation has changed completely, with rush hour traffic to Kildare and Dublin for commuters struggling to get to work on time on overcrowded roads. If a portion of these commuters could choose the green option and travel by rail, then this should be enthusiastically supported by local and national government.

Green Commuting & Travel

Government and politicians and members of the public are focused on reducing our pollution from fossil fuel powered cars driving daily towards Dublin, often with only one passenger. This is an obvious way to reduce pollution at our doorstep and the station is already there. All we need is decisions to be made by politicians and Irish Rail to open the station and invest in the required infrastructure.

The carbon emissions from commuting cars could be reduced by 1,400,000kg per year if Geashill Station were reopened. (based on 200 passengers, 75km return journey, commuting on 250 days/yr).

Access to Jobs

The villages between Portarlington and Tullamore are financially disadvantaged compared to the more affluent County Kildare. It is part of the BMW region (Border Midlands and West). Offaly is the third poorest county in Ireland as evaluated by household income and investment. For these reasons this region should be supported by a capital investment such as refurbishing the railway station.

Access to well paid jobs in Kildare and Dublin would have a very significant influx of wealth to this local region. A rail link for commuters working in well paid jobs would give a massive boost to the local economy. The cost of refurbishing Geashill Station would be a fantastic return on investment over the longer term when comparing the initial investment upgrading the station and the wages earned by local households.

Access to the high paid jobs in Kildare and Dublin would alleviate high house prices in Kildare/Dublin and at the same time reduce local unemployment in Offaly.

Wages coming to a disadvantaged area

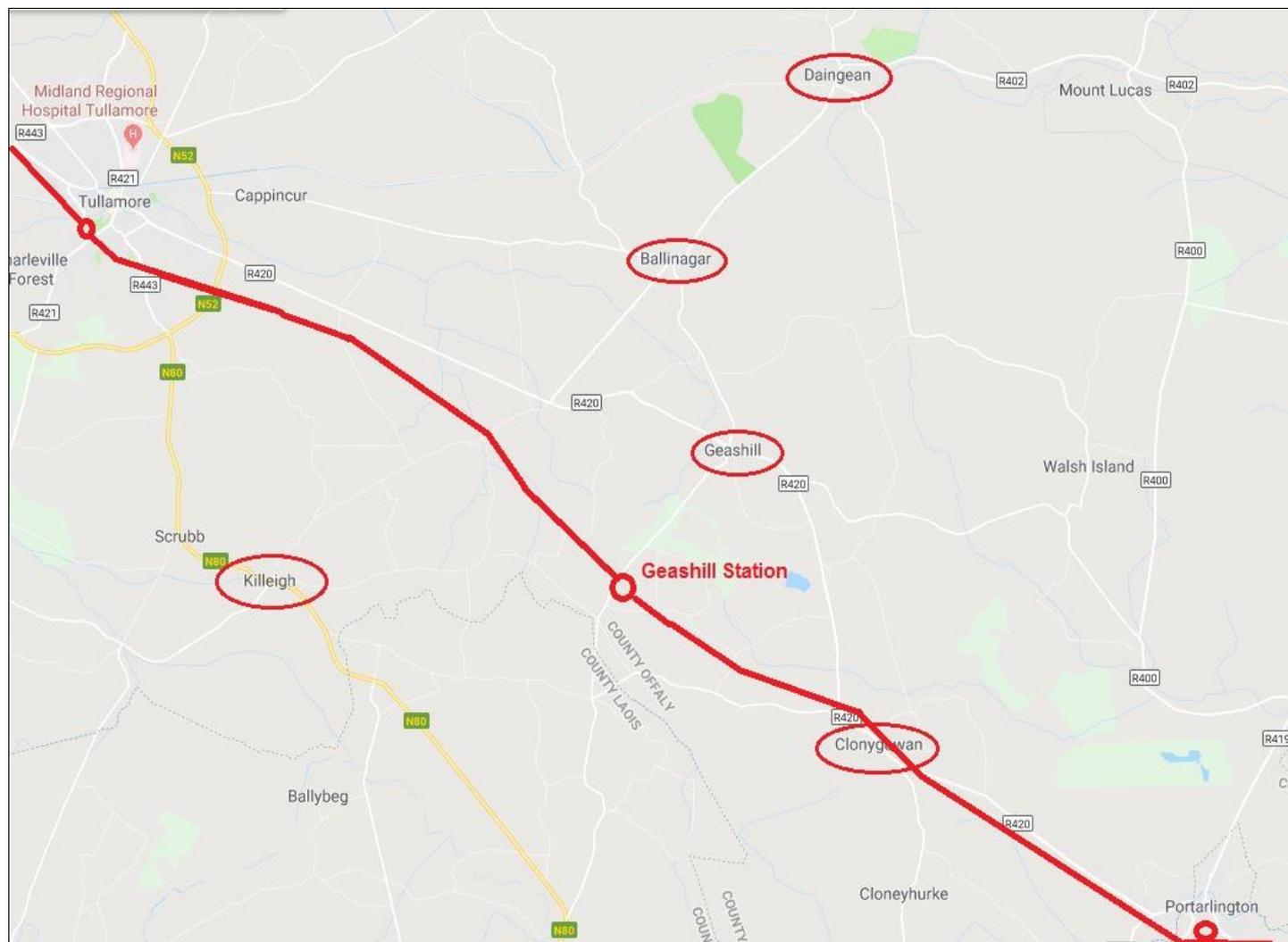
If within a decade of the station being reopened 200 extra jobs with associated wages were established in the region then €10,000,000 per year would flow into this local region. Based on 200 jobs at €50,000 per year.

National government would pay millions of euro to a foreign multi-national through the IDA for such jobs. Why not invest in the reopening of Geashill Railway Station to achieve a similar result.

Villages & districts served by Geashill Station

Geashill Railway Station is the nearest rail access point for the following villages.

- Geashill
- Balinagar
- Daingean
- Killeigh
- Cloneygowan
- Clonaghadoo



Map showing location of villages which would profit enormously from the reopening of Geashill Railway Station.

Besides these villages there are a very significant number of residents between these villages in the wider rural district.

It is important to note that the alternative rail access of Tullamore and Portarlington are difficult to access during rush hour. Portarlington has a 3 mile long urban bottleneck with the barrow bridge and town centre which must be crossed to get to the railway station on the far side of the town. Similarly, Tullamore station is in the town centre with significant delays in the mornings and limited parking opportunities for commuters.

Required Investment

The principal investments required are rebuilding the two station platforms which were removed several years ago. Acquiring space for a public car park for commuters which could require purchasing land from an adjoining landowners. Probably a pedestrian bridge would be required to cross the railway for access to the opposite side traveling in the other direction.

Currently the station building is a residence on lease to a former station master employee. It is important that any proposed development is done in consultation and agreement with this former employee.

If Geashill Station is reopened, then it could easily be managed as a staff free station with only a ticket vending machine and security cameras. Such systems are in use in many stations in Dublin and other countries. This would reduce the running costs of the station and contribute towards profitability.



Land registry map showing folio boundaries in red. Irish Rail already own the land surrounding the station, parts of the public road and the railway line as shown above.

Lobbying Strategy

The individuals in Irish Rail Management who have the authority to reopen Geashill Station would have to be identified and lobbied for a positive outcome. This lobbying would have to be done by politicians at national and local level.

A public campaign over social media and a petition of signatures would have to be organised to support the politicians and give them a mandate.

At ministerial level politicians would have to be encouraged to implement a strategy of green travel for the sake of our environment and to promote rural development of a disadvantaged district.

Signs would have to be erected at the railways station on the public road in both directions to create public awareness and support.