

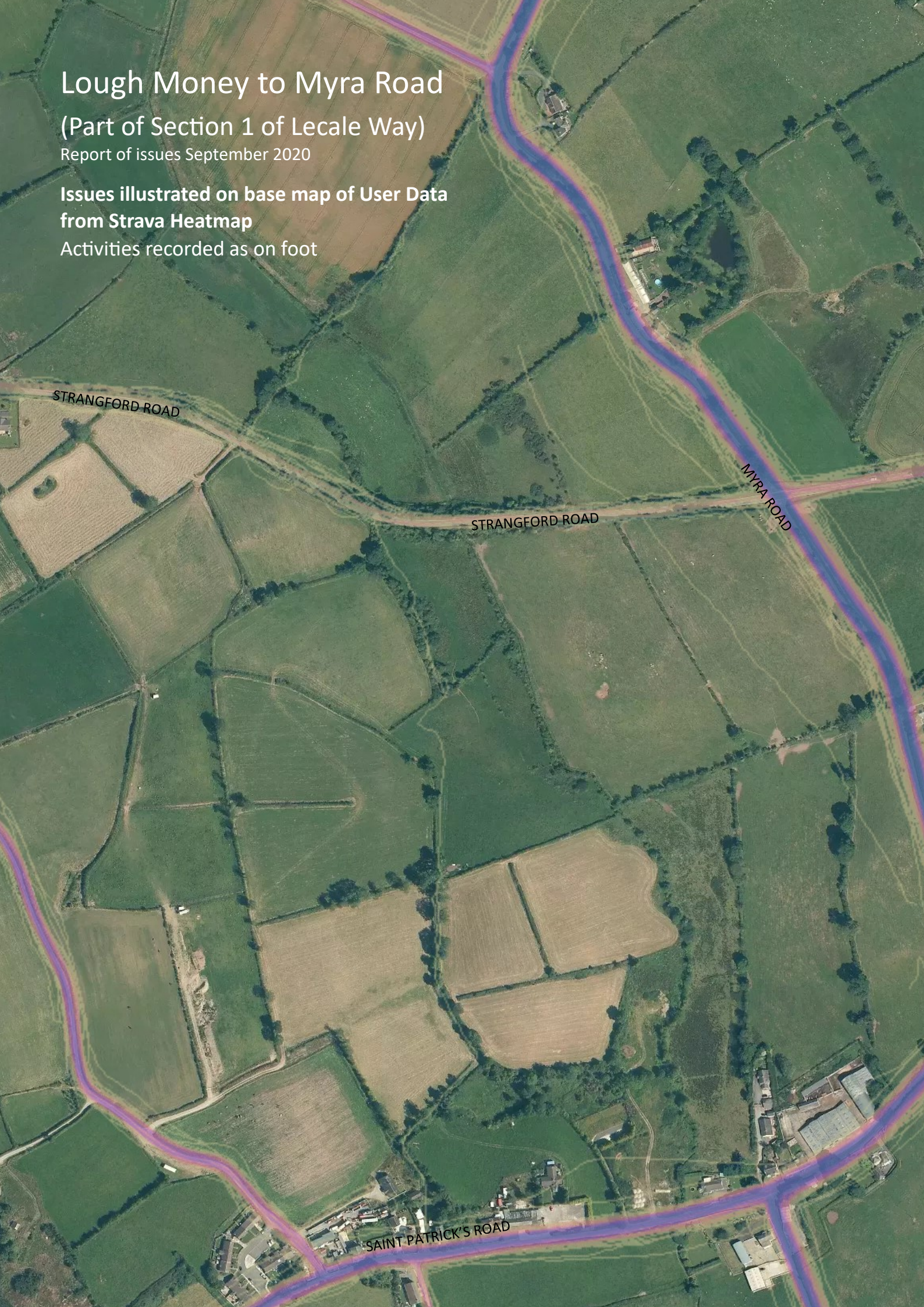
# Lough Money to Myra Road

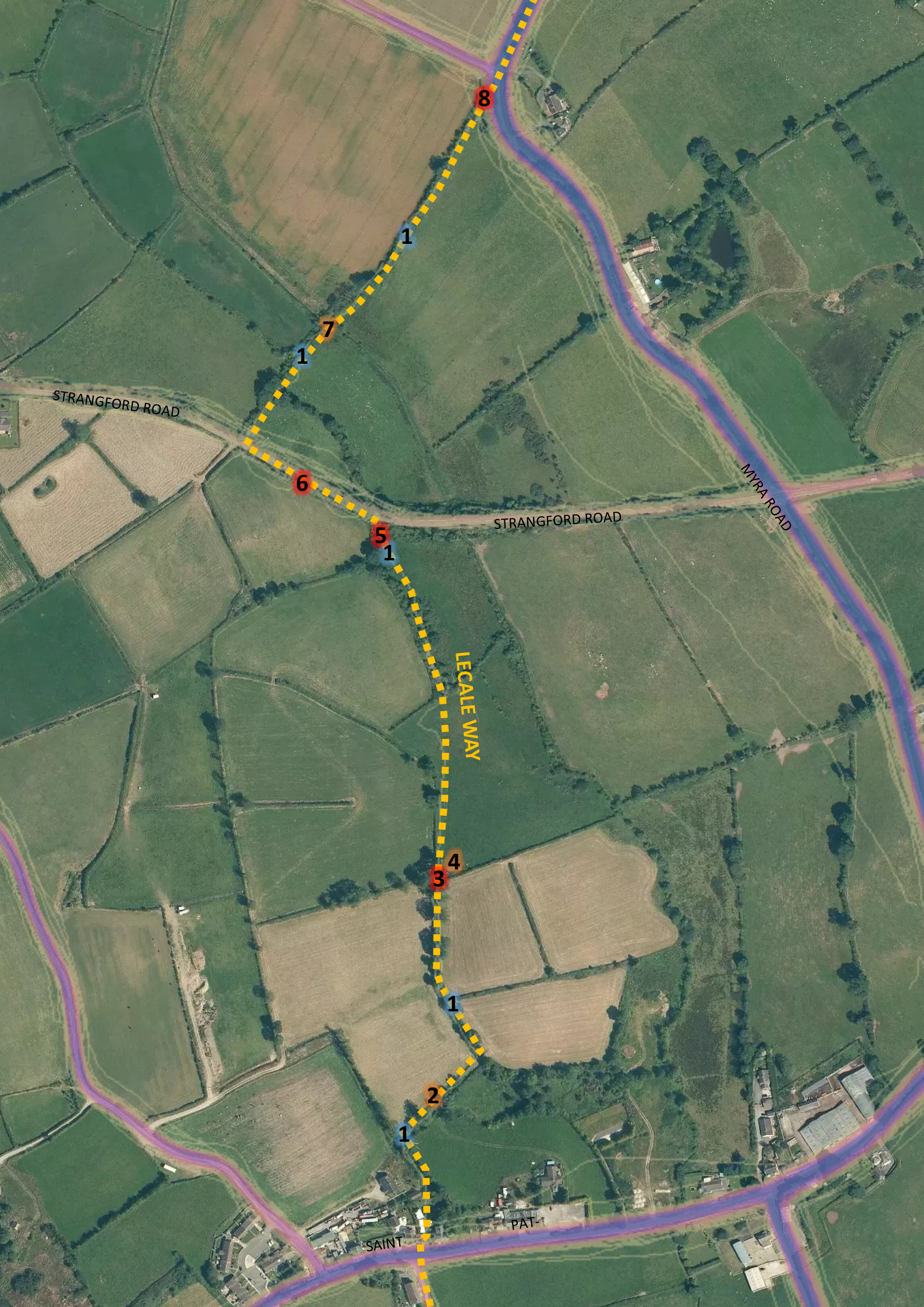
(Part of Section 1 of Lecale Way)

Report of issues September 2020

Issues illustrated on base map of User Data  
from Strava Heatmap

Activities recorded as on foot





8

1

7

1

STRANGFORD ROAD

6

STRANGFORD ROAD

MYRA ROAD

5

1

LECALE WAY

4

3

1

2

1

SAINT

PAT

This report is reflective of issues on the Lecale Way encountered during August 2020. It deals with particular issues on the section between Saint Patrick's Road in Raholp known as Roneystown and the Myra Road on the route to Saint Patrick's landing. The issues are recorded on the attached map, with each supported by photos and text to enable proper maintenance. The issues are recorded in the order they are to be found on the Lecale Way Section 1 as if walked from Downpatrick to Audleystown.

On a positive note, the upper section between Lough Money and Saint Patricks Road was found to be in good condition and records on Strava shows it to be a well-used walk.

However the 5 year long Council diversion at Myra Road has caused sections of the southern section of the route shown on the map to become overgrown or impassable with unofficial diversions emerging to overcome the lack of maintenance. The issues are detailed below in the Map Notes.

## Map notes

### 1 – Growth of vegetation on the path.

This particular section has notably more vegetation growth that the preceding section to Roneystown. This is in part due to a lack of use which has been encouraged by diversions in recent years. The vegetation causing issues also includes fallen boughs on trees. These areas are denoted on the map by a number 1.

### 2 – Presence of gates on the path

On the section from Saint Patrick's Road to the Strangford Road there are a few locations where agricultural gates cross the path. In the most part these are unlocked but are likely to deter walkers from their enjoyment of the path.

### 3 – Stile in disrepair and hazardous telephone line

At the point where the path leaves the lane to cross the field the stile is partially broken and dangerous to use. On the other side of the stile there is a telephone line down which acts as a trip hazard.

See Photo 1

### 4 – Presence of agricultural electric fencing

Around the field which the pathway crosses there is an agricultural electric fence. This is likely to deter use of the path.

N.B. On the route to this point the general appearance of the route would lead a user to believe they may be trespassing.

### 5 – Overgrown stile



Photo 1 — Issue 3. The telephone line is lying adjacent to the stile in the foreground. The use of the stile is hampered by the broken down fence also in the foreground.



Photo 2 — Issue 4. On various occasions the electric fence has been found to be blocking access to the field. This requires walkers to take it down, climb over or duck under it.



Photo 3 — Issue 5 and an example of Issue 1.



Photo 4 — Issue 5. Lecale Way signage on right hand side adjacent to the stile which walkers should be using.

#### 5 – Overgrown stile

As the field path joins onto the Strangford Road the path to the stile is overgrown. There are two sections of heras fencing placed deliberately in the corner to stop use of this section. This issue has been in situ for a number of years when the section of off-road path from Strangford Road to Myra Road was diverted. The issue is circumvented by the presence of an agricultural gate adjacent. However, use of this gate does leave the user liable for damages if they were to forget to close it correctly.

#### 6 – Volume of traffic on Strangford Road

Between the two off road sections there is an 200m on road section. Following the Highway Code would dictate that walkers travelling in the direction of Audleystown should walk on the right hand side uphill which gives drivers ample time to identify their presence on the road. Walking in the opposite direction is more problematic as it is downhill on the right hand side of the road to a blind corner. There is little time for drivers to identify the presence of walkers. Speeds on this road also tend to be higher and often cars and HGVs are under pressure to catch the ferry sailings from Strangford to Portaferry.

It is therefore suggested that the Council engage with the Department for Infrastructure to create a path on the southern side of the Strangford Road or widen the verge to what was historically found at this location.



Photo 5 — Issue 5 as seen from above. Lecale Way marker post can be seen clearly. Heras fencing has been placed against the wall stopping use.

## 7 – Lack of drainage

Around the new footbridge across the River Slaney the ground is sodden at all times. The western section can be crossed with some trepidation. The eastern section is more problematic. The remains of the old stone bridge have been left in situ and the surface of the path has not been returned to its original state. As you walk towards the Myra Road there is an excavated trench which floods and the right hand side of the path is formed of a raised bank which is uneven.

The remedial works for this particular issue should in the first instance to construct two sheughs on both sides of the bridge to allow the water to freely drain away. In addition the bridge surface should be extended to create a raised boardwalk on both sides of the bridge.



Photo 6 — Issue 7. The area immediately in the foreground is flooded and is an excavation trench. The walkable path is on the left hand side of the photo. Remnants of old bridge can be seen in front of the footbridge.



Photo 7 — Issue 8 overgrown stile and example of Issue 1.

## Issue 8 – Over grown stile

The stile at the Myra Road is overgrown which means that walkers must use the gate.

## Notes on Strava Heatmap

Strava is a publicly available free and subscription service for athletes and recreational users. When a user openly records their activity it generates a GPS trail which is consolidated with other data from other users to create a heatmap. As is evidenced in the map you can see there is a large proportion of on road recreation. The exception to this is on the Lecale Way to the south which goes through Roneystown to Lough Money. It is however very evident that there is a general lack of use of the Lecale Way between Saint Patrick's Road and the Myra Road. This will be for two reasons:

1. The adverse impact of the diversion when the Council allowed the Public Right of Way from the Strangford Road to the Myra Road to become overgrown in contravention of its duties under the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.
2. The map represents two years of user data. Thereby other areas will appear more used as this section only became usable last year because of new footbridge infrastructure to enable crossing the river.