



## Old Head of Kinsale Climbers' Code of Conduct

### Introduction

The Old Head of Kinsale is a special and spectacular place. As well as being a great location for climbing, the headland hosts the largest seabird colony on the south coast, mainly on the cliffs on the western side. The Old Head of Kinsale is a traditional climbing venue, where equipment is placed and removed by climbers, this requires training and experience to be able to use the venue safely. Those who climb at the Old Head are urged to do so responsibly, minimising any adverse impacts on other people or the natural environment.

The Cork Youth Climbing Club (CYCC) in cooperation with Mountaineering Ireland developed this Code of Conduct to manage access to the Old Head of Kinsale climbing area (Appendix A). Access to the Old Head of Kinsale for climbing will be limited to Mountaineering Ireland members and be subject to approval by both the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) and the Old Head Golf Links.

Continuation of climbing at the Old Head of Kinsale depends on climbers adhering to this Code of Conduct. All climbers who go to the Old Head of Kinsale share in the responsibility of ensuring that the relationship between the climbing community and the landowners remains positive.

### Access arrangements

- Climbing is not available on a small number of dates each year due to large scale events taking place at the Golf Club and the Lighthouse which are incompatible with climbing visits.
- Maximum of ten climbers per visit.
- Maximum of two cars per visit.
- Requests for access to the Old Head must be made at least three days in advance.
- All requests for access to the Old Head must be sent via email to the Local Climbing Access Coordinator (John Healy, or Mountaineering Ireland's Climbing Officer Damien O'Sullivan, both can be reached via the following email address: [oldheadclimbing@mountaineering.ie](mailto:oldheadclimbing@mountaineering.ie)). The request must include a full list of climbers wishing to climb at the Old Head and include an expected date and time of arrival.
- The Local Climbing Access Coordinator (LCAC) will contact the Old Head Golf Links and request permission.

- The Old Head Golf Links will communicate the decision to the LCAC and will notify security at the facility of the list of climbers and their ETA.
- Upon arrival at the Old Head Golf Links the climbers have to present their Mountaineering Ireland membership cards and they will be checked against the list provided by the LCAC.
- The climbers should park at the car park outside the lighthouse compound entrance gate, or if this is full, the lower Old Head Golf Links car park (see Appendix A).
- Note that access is limited to a specific area of the Old Head of Kinsale and only through the gate provided (see Appendix B).
- No access is permitted through the grounds of the lighthouse at the Old Head of Kinsale. This is a working environment and also a family home.

### General behaviour

- All land at the Old Head of Kinsale is owned by either the CIL or the Old Head Golf Links and access is only with the goodwill of the owner.
- Be friendly and courteous when you meet landowners, golf club members, staff and other users.
- Respect private property and do not interfere with any property of CIL, Old Head Golf Links or any other private property.
- Make no unnecessary noise, as you could disturb golfers or the lighthouse residents.
- The CIL buildings just above the climbing area are a family home; please respect the privacy of the residents by keeping your distance (e.g. no picnics by the wall).
- Dogs are not allowed at the Old Head of Kinsale climbing area.

### Preparation and climbing

- The Old Head of Kinsale is a traditional climbing venue, with no in situ or fixed equipment; climbers should have the requisite training and experience.
- Climbers should have regard to the risks and mitigation measures in the Risk Assessment for climbing at the Old Head of Kinsale (Appendix C).
- The base of the sea cliff is subject to overwash by waves, climbers should be very aware of sea conditions and as far as possible minimise time spent at the base of the cliff.
- Be properly equipped and fit for the climbing at the Old Head.
- Have the skills to cope with your chosen routes.
- Have an up-to-date weather forecast and know the time of dusk.
- Be aware of the potential hazards and know what to do if something goes wrong.
- Access to the Old Head climbing area is through a small gate (see Appendix B) and along the top of a cliff. The path is clear however all parties should be aware of trip hazards. Always leave the gate as you find it.
- Accept the risk that is inherent in climbing, and take responsibility for your own safety.

### Leaders' responsibilities

- Be competent to lead groups and be suitably equipped to ensure the safety of the group.
- Have regard to the risks and mitigation measures in the Risk Assessment for climbing at the Old Head of Kinsale (Appendix C).
- Be trained in first aid and carry an appropriate first aid kit.
- Know the area and the ability of the group members, and ensure that they are all properly equipped.
- Avoid having people untethered at the base of the cliff due to the potential for waves to overwash this area.
- Be prepared to change your intended climbing route to meet the needs and interests of the group.
- Encourage group members to develop their climbing skills.
- Show a good example to the group, with regard to conservation issues and relations with landowners, staff and other users.
- Ensure that all members of the group understand that continued climbing at the Old Head depends on each climber behaving responsibly.
- Ensure that the group as a whole adheres to this code of conduct.

### Environmental considerations

- Keep the Old Head clean by using the public toilets in Kinsale on your way to climb.
- The removal of vegetation including mosses and lichens (gardening) should be avoided wherever possible.
- Avoid any form of chipping or defacement of the rock; never carve your name in the rock etc.
- Take care to avoid disturbing birds or wildlife.
- Carry a small bag to take away all litter, including biodegradable items such as fruit peels and tea bags.

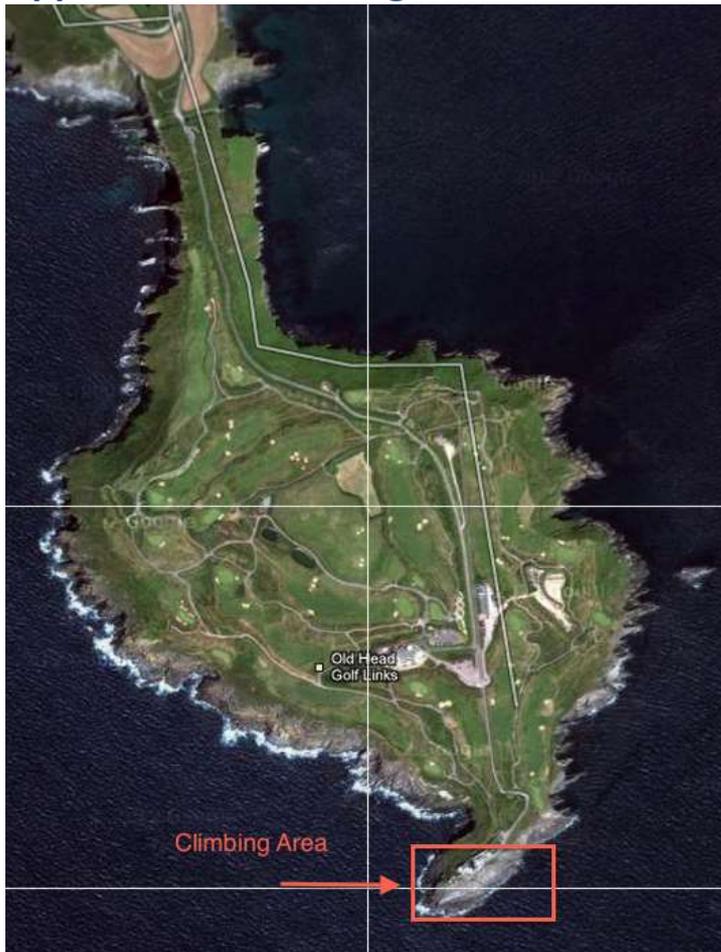
### Fixed equipment

- The use of any permanent or semi-permanent fixed equipment (including pitons and bolts) is not allowed at the Old Head of Kinsale.
- All equipment used for accessing the climbing areas, such as abseil or belay slings and 'tat' must be removed when leaving the climbing area.

### *Can we leave for tomorrow what we enjoyed today?*

Learn more about how you can reduce the impact of your recreational activity on <http://www.mountaineering.ie/accessandenvironment/GoodPracticeGuide/default.aspx>

## Appendix A – Climbing Area



General view of Old Head of Kinsale with climbing area indicated



Specific climbing areas outlined (more detail on [http://wiki.climbing.ie/index.php/Old\\_Head\\_Of\\_Kinsale](http://wiki.climbing.ie/index.php/Old_Head_Of_Kinsale))



Aerial view showing lower Old Head Golf Links car park, Lighthouse car park and access gate to cliff.



Car park at lighthouse.



Lower Old Head Golf Links car park. To be used if car park at lighthouse is full.

## Appendix B



Gate access to cliff path



Cliff path leading to headland, note: keep close to the wall. More detailed climbing information can be found on [http://wiki.climbing.ie/index.php/Old Head Of Kinsale](http://wiki.climbing.ie/index.php/Old_Head_Of_Kinsale)

## APPENDIX C

### Risk Assessment - Old Head of Kinsale

This is a site-specific risk assessment for Mountaineering Ireland members accessing the Old Head of Kinsale for the activity of rock-climbing.

- The Old Head of Kinsale is a locally important rock-climbing site.
- Rock-climbing has been recorded at the Old Head of Kinsale since the early 1960s.
- We have no evidence of any rock-climbing related incidents or accidents at the site.

	Hazard	Risk	Mitigation
1.	<p><b>Access path to the top of the cliff.</b></p> <p>The path from the 'small gate' to the top of the cliff is bounded by an exposed cliff edge.</p>	Falling	<p>1.1 The group leader should assess the state of the path in advance of the group.</p> <p>1.2 All participants should wear appropriate footwear.</p>
2.	<p><b>Top of the cliff.</b></p> <p>The flat area at the top of the cliff is bounded on three sides by an exposed cliff edge.</p>	Falling	<p>2.1 The group leader should identify a suitable location for the group to wait when not climbing.</p> <p>2.2 All participants should be secured with a climbing rope as appropriate when close to the cliff edge.</p>
3.	<p><b>Access route to the base of the cliff.</b></p> <p>It is possible to access the base of the cliff by scrambling down an access route.</p>	Falling	<p>3.1 All participants should access the base of the cliff by abseil or be belayed on descent.</p>
4.	<p><b>Base of the cliff.</b></p> <p>The non-tidal area at the base of the cliff is exposed to wave-wash in some sea states.</p>	Immersion	<p>4.1 The group leader should assess the sea state for possibility of wave-wash. If there is a reasonable possibility of wave-wash the base of the cliff should not be accessed.</p> <p>4.2 All participants should minimise the amount of time spent at the base of the cliff.</p> <p>4.3 All participants should be secured with a climbing rope when at the base of the cliff.</p>

- This risk assessment has been prepared by Mountaineering Ireland and John Healy.
- John Healy holds the Mountaineering Instructor Award (MIA) and is personally familiar with the site.
- Date of assessment: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

**Mountaineering Ireland Participation Statement:**

Mountaineering Ireland members are aware that hillwalking and climbing are activities that can be dangerous and may result in personal injury or death. Participants are aware of and accept these risks and are responsible for their own actions and involvement.