

Very interested party favoured to purchase the Conor Pass

The Conor Pass, a scenic and world famous mountain road located on the Chorca Dhuibhne peninsula in west Kerry, is set to be purchased by the Irish Government and be turned into a national park. It is located between the town of Tralee and the town of Dingle in Kerry. The Conor Pass which takes ten minutes or so to complete is one of highest mountain passes which becomes quite narrow and with severe bends and is adored by locals and tourists alike. This breath-taking drive is also part of the world renowned Wild Atlantic Way.

Officially it was put up on the market on the 3rd of August 2023 by estate agent Mike Kennedy. As of today it has been up on the market for 211 days. On the 8th of January of this year it was announced that the state is on track to purchase it.

The saga of the sale of the Conor Pass is set to come to a close in the coming months as a state purchase looks increasingly more likely. The land which is approximately 1,400 acres of mature forestry, four lakes, a waterfall, salmon stream and ancient ruins is highly regarded as one of the most scenic drives in the country. The Irish Government has been called upon by locals, the Green party, Labour candidate / Auctioneer Mike Kennedy and Fianna Fáil councillor Breandán Fitzgearld to purchase the property and turn it into a national park.

However there is a very slight majority who do not agree. Micheal Healy Rae Kerry TD is one of those in the slight majority. He believes that such money would be better spent on providing housing for the town of Dingle.

According to Auctioneer Mike Kennedy there has been huge interest, mainly from the international market. Micheal Noonan, a Chicago man, who made his fortune through commercial property and an electrical business says ' I would entertain anyone from Asia. It would be nice if the Irish Government could squeeze a few pennies out and look at buying all the property to protect it. I haven't had any discussions with them, but I hope someone reaches out to the right person, or Michael O'Leary. It could help offset some of his carbon emissions."

Micheal Noonan of Chicago, Illinois is the man behind the sale, as he is the man who started purchasing the land over 25 years ago. Mr Noonan who has roots in Ireland due to his grandparents coming from Galbally, Co, Limerick has said that the asking price is "not too great" as there must be a 33% capital gain tax in effect. Mr Noonan, a father of three who is in his late sixties added 'I initially bought the forestry land for my retirement and the rest for its scenic value. It's pristine land. It hasn't been altered in any way and there's no turf cutting in it.' Calls have also been made for Micheal Noonan to gift the land to the state as the Killarney National Park was gifted to the nation in 1932 by US Senator Vincent Bourne. FIE Director Tony Lowes said that ' even if he was unable to gift the entire holding to the state a

meeting of minds over combination charitable donations and tax advantages could be arranged with good will on both sides.'

A petition has been set up by former Green Party European and general election candidate Saoirse McHugh in order to indicate that Ireland is 'serious about restoring nature for the benefit of all of us. The petition which is already at 19,319 signatures believes that the Conor Pass is a rich cultural and archaeological area that has enormous potential for a nature reserve.

With a purchase by the state the Conor Pass shall be a sanctuary for wildlife to thrive and have nature and people share the property. However a purchase by a private owner could cause uproar with councillors and locals alike. Hence the reason that a state purchase is far more preferable by most residents of Chorca Dhuibhne including animals.