



**BILLE CHOLÁISTE TALMHAÍOCHTA CHAISLEÁN BHAILE
SHEONACH (LEASÚ), 2014
JOHNSTOWN CASTLE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
(AMENDMENT) BILL 2014**

EXPLANATORY AND FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

Background to and Purpose of Bill

Johnstown Castle Estate is located close to Wexford town. It was gifted to the Nation by private owners under the Johnstown Castle Agricultural College Act 1945 on condition that it would be used exclusively as a lay agricultural college. The use of the Estate was later extended to the conduct of agricultural research under the Johnstown Castle Agricultural College (Amendment) Act 1959. The Estate transferred to Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in 1988.

The Estate comprises of agricultural lands and castle and gardens. The castle and gardens are no longer used for agricultural education and research purposes and Teagasc wish to develop them as a visitor destination for the South East region. At the same time, the local community wish to purchase a small plot of Estate land for a burial ground. The scope of the Bill is narrow and involves technical amendments to existing legislation to allow Teagasc develop the castle and gardens for heritage, tourism, amenity or recreational purposes and to provide for the disposal of land for a burial ground.

Main Provisions

Section 1 is a standard interpretation provision for the Bill.

Section 2 amends section 1 of Johnstown Castle Agricultural College (Amendment) Act 1959 to include reference to the Agriculture (Research, Training and Advice) Act 1988 and describe the map which has been deposited with Ordnance Survey Ireland delineating the castle and gardens from the rest of the Estate for the purposes of the Bill.

Section 3 amends section 3(2) of the 1959 Act to include burial ground in the list of purposes for which land from the Estate may be disposed of. The existing limit of 5% on land disposals remains in place. This provision also extends the use of part of the Estate comprising the castle and gardens to heritage, tourism, amenity or recreational purposes and to permit Teagasc to lease the castle and gardens for those purposes, subject to the consent of the Minister.

Section 4 provides for depositing the map in the Central Office of the High Court and the Circuit Court Office for the County of Wexford. It also provides that the map shall be retained by Ordnance

Survey Ireland and copies shall be available for inspection and supply to members of the public.

Section 5 inserts a new subsection in section 4 of the Agriculture (Research, Training and Advice) Act 1988, which outlines the functions of Teagasc, to permit Teagasc to develop and operate the castle and gardens for heritage, tourism, amenity or recreational purposes.

Section 6 is a standard provision for short title and collective citation.

Cost to Exchequer

Johnstown Castle Estate will remain in State ownership and continue to be vested in Teagasc. The Bill is an enabling provision to allow the castle and gardens to be developed for heritage, tourism, amenity or recreational purposes. There are no direct costs to the exchequer on enactment of this Bill.

*Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine,
May, 2014.*