

ISSUE 60  
FEBRUARY 2026

FREE MAGAZINE

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Councillor **JK ONWUMEREH**

Your Fianna Fáil Councillor for Mulhuddart, Corduff, Waterville,  
Tyrrelstown, Hollystown, Meakstown, Lanesborough Communities.  
(Blanchardstown - Mulhuddart LEA)

Phone : 089 9642783

Email: [jk.onwumereh@cllrs.fingal.ie](mailto:jk.onwumereh@cllrs.fingal.ie)



Councillor

**John Walsh**



Phone: 087 6486228 Email: [john.walsh@cllrs.fingal.ie](mailto:john.walsh@cllrs.fingal.ie) | [@JohnWalshDWest](https://twitter.com/JohnWalshDWest)



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## EDITORIAL

**W**elcome to the latest edition of Little Village Magazine and thank you, as always, for the continued support from our readers around Dublin 15.

This issue celebrates community spirit, with our cover story looking at the growing "Love Local, Shop Local" movement and how D15 residents are choosing local producers over bigger suppliers. We also turn our attention to everyday life in the area from commuting out of D15 and enjoying the colour of the St. Patrick's Day parade, to navigating the high cost of suburban living and the big housing decisions facing residents in 2026.

There's plenty of lighter relief too, including some last-minute "get out of jail" tips for anyone who may have overlooked Valentine's Day, alongside a look at Green D15, stretching from the Royal Canal to the Phoenix Park.

As ever, we aim to reflect the issues, conversations and character of our local community. We hope you enjoy the read.

Until next time,

**The Little Village Team**

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- Laurel Lodge Community Centre
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- Leisure Plex
- Super Valu Blanch
- Tesco Roselawn
- Blakestown Community Centre
- Mountview Community Centre
- Huntstown Community Centre
- Eurospar Hartstown
- Dunnes Ongar
- Cu Chulainns Ongar
- Lidl Clonee
- Aldi Clonee
- Lidl Blakestown
- Lidl Tyrrelstown
- Tyrrelstown Community Centre
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- Corduff Sports Centre
- Spar Waterville
- Centra Corduff
- Castleknock Golf Club
- Castleknock Hotel
- Elmgreen Golf Club
- Hollystown Golf Club
- Westwood Gym
- Westwood Golf Club
- Phibblestown Community Centre
- Costcutter Clonsilla Road
- Credit Union Clonsilla Road
- The Greyhound Blanch Village
- The Grasshopper Clonee
- Clonsilla Inn
- The Carpenter Inn
- The Carlton Hotel Tyrrelstown



### LITTLE VILLAGE MAGAZINE

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**Ronan Bright**  
Director / Head of Sales  
bightronan83@gmail.com  
085 199 8321

**Patrick Browne**  
Graphic Design  
hello@patrickbrownedesign.com  
086 831 9322

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# Castleknock resident awarded Photography Distinction

**C**ongratulations to Castleknock resident Evelyn Pender who recently achieved her Associate distinction from the Irish Photographic Federation. Evelyn has been a member of the St Brigid's Photo Group in Blanchardstown for a number of years. Evelyn chose bees and bumble bees as her chosen subject which she photographed mainly in her garden and around Castleknock.

The IPF Associate distinction (AIPF) is the second level of the Irish Photographic Federation's three tiered awards, recognising sustained ability, individuality and a cohesive personal style. To achieve this distinction requires submission of a panel of 15 images demonstrating unique vision, technical control and artistic intent. An Associate distinction sets a higher standard than the entry-level Licentiate (LIPF) which Evelyn had achieved in 2021. The upper distinction is the Fellowship (FIPF).

Evelyn's interest in bees and bumble bees was heightened by her involvement in the Tidy Towns movement since forming Castleknock Tidy Towns (CTT) in 2019. The considerable work that the CTT volunteers carry out improving biodiversity (and pollinator numbers, in particular) in Castleknock strengthened this focus.

You can hear more about this interesting project and see the 15 successful A-panel images up close at the CTT Annual General Meeting on the evening of Friday 13th March 2026 when Evelyn will give a short talk and display the 15 mounted photographs. For more details, please contact [castleknocktidytowns@gmail.com](mailto:castleknocktidytowns@gmail.com)





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Who are they? Lorraine Halpin, the Service Manager in Jigsaw Dublin 15, is a dedicated leader in supporting youth mental health in North Dublin.

**W**ith her wonderful team they work hard to meet the needs of the young people in Dublin 15. The team consists of a Clinical Manager, Clinicians, Senior Clinicians and a Youth & Community Engagement Worker, who all come from various backgrounds and trainings that make our team very diverse, but also highly skilled and knowledgeable in their roles.

What is Jigsaw Dublin 15? We are a free, non-judgemental and confidential mental health service in your local community. We provide support to young people and their families in the Dublin 15 area from the age of 12 to 25 and from all backgrounds.

Why do we need a service like this? Well, from research gathered through the “My World Survey”, we are noticing that trends in youth mental health have been on the decline for the last 20 years. There are many things that may have been contributing to this, such as unregulated social media, smart phones, sleep hygiene, cost of living, housing and even more global issues such as climate change, war and displacement. In other words, young people need our help, now more than ever. This is where Jigsaw can come in. If you notice a young person who is starting to withdraw from activities that they usually enjoy, become less social, have difficulty navigating relationships, experience grief, express feeling low or avoid school, then maybe they need to talk to someone about what they are feeling. The first person they can turn to might be a trusted adult in their lives, maybe a parent or coach, but if it seems like this might be an issue for a professional then you could contact a GP or give Jigsaw a call. We pride ourselves on our openness to equality, diversity and inclusion and want to make everyone feel welcome in our vibrant hub located on the 2nd floor of Blanchardstown Library. Jigsaw Dublin 15 are passionate about amplifying the youth voice, so we encourage the young people to have their say in how we shape and deliver our services across the board. We have a dedicated team of volunteers from ages 16 to 25 who meet regularly to design publications, organise events, make sure our hub is youth friendly and so much more. Visit [jigsaw.ie/](http://jigsaw.ie/) volunteer for more information.

How do I contact Jigsaw? We are an appointments-based service, so if you are a parent or a young person aged 18+ then you can give us a call on 01 525 3090 or email [dublin15@jigsaw.ie](mailto:dublin15@jigsaw.ie) for information and to book in or simply go online to [jigsaw.ie](http://jigsaw.ie).

ie and there will be a portal available to you there. If you are a young person between 12 and 17, you can reach out to us, but we will need a parent/guardian to give consent for you to attend our service.

Alternatively, we have an online text, email or chat service which is available to all young people aged 12 to 25 Monday to Friday, available at [jigsaw.ie/online](http://jigsaw.ie/online). This service is run by trained professionals so you will never be talking to a robot. Our service is funded by the HSE but also, more importantly, through donations from our communities. Running fundraising initiatives for Jigsaw helps us to keep our services free and allows us to engage in meaningful work in the community. As well as free therapy and mental health support, we also offer free workshops to community settings such as clubs, organisations, groups and education facilities. If you think your setting could benefit from a workshop focusing on supporting mental health, please

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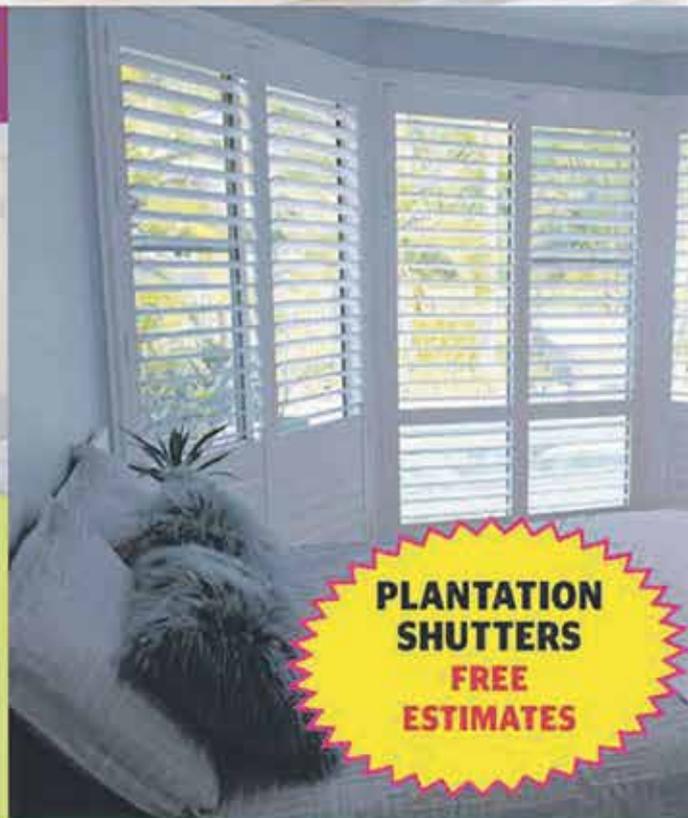
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## ‘Race is on’ for Dublin schools

**N**ews likely to have appeal for Dublin teachers and pupils looking to get the New Year off to an active and healthy start is the reminder from Fyffes that its search to find ‘Ireland’s Fittest School 2026’ is still open for school registrations ahead of the January 26th start.

Running for 8 weeks, the top four schools from each province will then compete head-to-head across four live regional qualifier events in April, after which the top school from each will progress to May’s grand final at which the prize package will include €8,000 worth of sports equipment.

Schools can register online at [www.fyffesfittestschool.ie](http://www.fyffesfittestschool.ie)



# children's art

1955

2026



## Search to find 2026 Texaco children’s art competition winners launched

**T**he search to find the young artists who will excel in this year’s Texaco Children’s Art Competition has begun. Acknowledged as the longest running arts sponsorship in the history of arts sponsoring in Ireland, the Competition has been in existence since 1955 and has enjoyed an unbroken history of success.

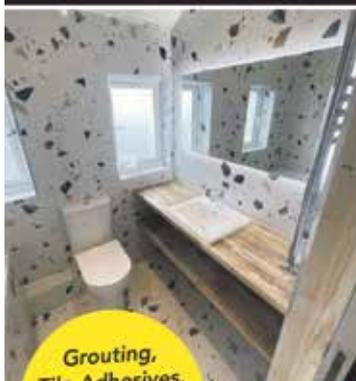
The closing date for entries is Friday, 27th February. Judging will take place in March with winners to be announced in April.

Details are available at [www.texacochildrensart.com](http://www.texacochildrensart.com) or at Texaco service stations throughout the county.



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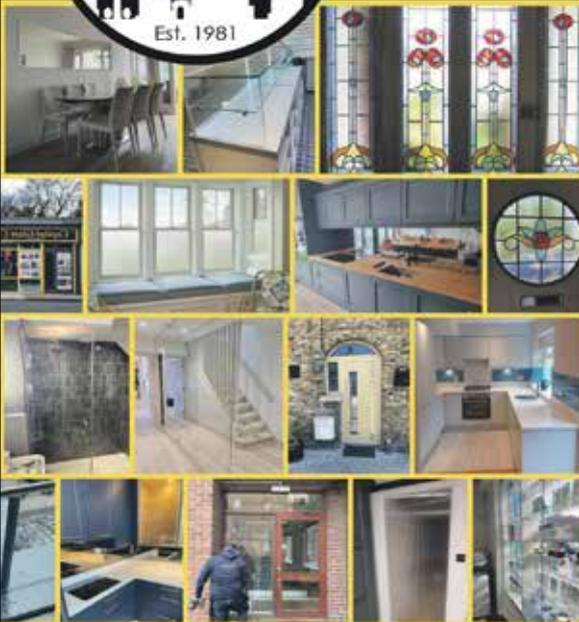


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# Roderic O'GORMAN TD

## A Chairde,

Below I share some of the latest updates on issues I have been working on in the constituency. Further info and updates are shared on my website and on my social media.

### Blanchardstown - Dublin Airport Bus Update

Although Blanchardstown is just 14 kilometers away from Dublin Airport, there has not been a direct bus service since 2010. A new route - the N8 - is included in BusConnects plans, but we had been told that the project would be pushed back until 2027. More recently, Minister Darragh O'Brien has spoken on record in the Dáil, committing to deliver the N8 by the end of this year. I plan on holding him to this promise.



### HPV Vaccine Catch-Up Programme

The recent announcement of an extension of the HPV vaccine programme to include a catch-up option for fifth and sixth-year students is a welcome move from the Minister for Health.

As Chair of the Oireachtas Cross Party Group on Cancer, I will continue to work to seek further extension of the program to young adults that may have missed the vaccine in school. I continue to push the Minister to adopt these inclusions in the catch-up scheme.

### Laurel Lodge Playground



Laurel Lodge Playground is now open! This facility is a fantastic addition to the Blanch - Castleknock area. Major thanks to Fingal County Council, the Laurel Lodge Playground Group and my colleague Pamela Conroy for their work over the years in making this happen.



At the "Turning the Sod" event for Powerstown ETNS's new extension recently, with Principal Helena Trench

At the opening of the RCSI community dental school at Connolly Hospital. Classes will begin at this facility in September 2027.



Please don't hesitate to get in touch on any issue

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Councillor

# John Walsh

Phone: 087 6486228 Email: [john.walsh@cllrs.fingal.ie](mailto:john.walsh@cllrs.fingal.ie)  @JohnWalshDWest

*Dear Resident*

Please find below details of the Programme of Works by the Operations department of Fingal Council for 2026. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or for any additional information regarding works in your area (for instance, minor works or footpath improvements not included here).

*John*

## PROGRAMME OF WORKS 2026

### PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

#### Blanchardstown

- Path works, Verona.
- Pollinator bed, 43 Broadway Road.
- Landscape project, hexagonal bed, Main St., Blanchardstown.
- Rejuvenate/replace planters, Roselawn Road.
- 3 benches: Tolka Valley entrance, Mill road.
- Benches in St Patrick's Park (1), St Brigid's Park (up to 2) and Glenville Green (1).
- Tree and hedge planting along wall, Summerfield Green.

#### Clonsilla

- Dig out and relay damaged path, Willows Green.
- Pollinator bed, Lohunda Road and Stonebridge Drive, at Allendale entrance.
- Landscaping project at entrance to Castlefield Wood & Park and bulb planting, Castlefield Court.
- Planting works, Clonsilla Park and Close.
- Rejuvenate entrance beds, Aldemere and Windemere.
- Benches at Porter's Gate (1), Mount Symon (1), Aldemere (1) and Windemere (1).
- New entrance stone, St. Mochta's estate.
- Painting railways and kissing gates, Limelawn and Aspen wood.
- Bollards and railings, Windmill open space.

#### Castleknock & Carpenterstown

- Footpath restoration around trees, Castleknock Road.
- Boundary planting works (5 trees and hedging), Ashleigh.
- Pollinator bed & landscaping feature, Castleknock Road/Dunsandle.
- Pollinator bed and entrance stone rejuvenation, College Grove.
- Bulb and pollinator bed planting, College Road.
- 2 pollinator beds, Park Manor.
- Hedge planting opposite Auburn apartments, Old Navan Road.
- Hedge planting around entrance, the Beeches.
- Benches in Phoenix Park Racecourse (3), Park Manor (1), Fairhaven (1) and Georgian Village (1).
- Refurbish entrance stone, Georgian Village.
- Footpath concrete construction, Laurel Court/Oaktree.
- Shrubbery planting, Riverwood Road and tree planting (x6), Riverwood Court.
- Brickwork repair, Riverwood entrance.

#### Mulhuddart

- Renew Footpath 50mx2.5m, Bealing Close.
- 2 additional planters, stone wall and bench, Mulhuddart Village.
- Boundary planting noise mitigation, Westway.
- Pollinator beds, Corduff (2) and Saddlers (1).
- Pollinator bed and wall, Blakestown (opposite community centre).
- Fencing and planting works, Hollywoodrath Drive
- Fencing works, Tyrellstown open space.
- Bulb planting, Newtown cottages.

## Working with Cllr Mary McCamley

**Labour**



### Ongar & Littlepace

- Planting and design, Ongar roundabout.
- Boundary works and planting, Lily's Way.
- 18 trees to be planted, Linnetfields.
- Entrance works/landscaping, Hansfield Wood Park.

### TRAFFIC CALMING AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Diswellstown Avenue, Carpenterstown	Upgrade ramp into signalised zebra crossing
Ongar Distributor Road, Station Roundabout	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing
St. Margaret's Road	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing
Porters Road, Coolmine Industrial Estate	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing
Ongar Village, Sweeney Mews	Type B Zebra Crossing
Castleknock Manor	2 Type B Zebra Crossings and 3 ramps
Lanesborough Road, Charlestown	5 Traffic Calming Ramps
Willow Wood, Hartstown	7 Traffic Calming Ramps
Tyrellstown Boulevard	Replace 4 modular speed cushions
Sheepmoor	Replace 3 ramps

### RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT/ MAINTENANCE

Concrete road repairs will be undertaken in Coolmine Park. Surface restoration of roads will take place at the following locations:

- Homeleigh estate.
- Castleknock Green/ Dunsandle Court/Grove.
- Mulhuddart Village Junction.
- Whitestown Green.
- Snugborough Road (north of interchange).
- The Boulevard, Tyrellstown.
- R135 Coolquay.

### PUBLIC LIGHTING

Walkway between Willow Wood Grove & Stonebridge Road, Clonsilla	New Lighting scheme across green
Old River Rd, Blanchardstown	New lantern to be installed onto existing ESB pole.
Mick Walsh Park, Mulhuddart	New lighting scheme to be installed in car park
Porterstown Overflow Carpark, Porterstown	New lighting scheme in new overflow carpark.
Annaly Grove, Ongar	New lighting scheme on entrance road
Castleknock Manor, Castleknock	Relocation of existing lighting column to accommodate new road crossing
College Road/Carpenterstown Road Junction - Castleknock College entrance	New electrical supply for traffic lights at junction of College Road/Carpenterstown Road
Whitestown Park walkway	New Lighting scheme across green
Walkway between Hazelbury Park & Littlepace Park	New lighting Scheme on walkway linking Hazelbury Park to Littlepace Park
Hazelbury Park, Cycleway LED Upgrade	Upgrade of 33 existing LED lanterns to new LED lanterns



# Raising Teenagers in D15

## Sports, Screens and the Search for Safe Spaces

**R**aising teenagers has never been simple, but in Dublin 15 in 2026, it comes with a unique mix of opportunity and anxiety. Parents across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart talk about the same balancing act: encouraging independence while worrying about safety, managing screen time without constant conflict, and finding positive outlets that keep teenagers engaged in real life.

It is a stage of parenting defined less by control and more by negotiation.

### Sport as Structure

For many families in Dublin 15, sport remains the cornerstone of teenage life. GAA clubs, soccer teams, athletics groups and gyms provide more than physical activity; they offer routine, discipline and a sense of belonging.

Training schedules create structure in otherwise fluid teenage weeks. Coaches become role models. Teams become social circles that extend beyond school gates. Parents often describe sport as a protective factor—something that keeps teenagers busy, motivated and connected.

However, access is not always equal. Costs for gear, travel and membership can add up, and not every teenager wants a competitive environment. As a result, there is growing demand for more inclusive, low-pressure options that focus on fitness and fun rather than performance.

### The Reality of Screen Life

Screens are unavoidable. Phones, gaming, streaming and social media dominate teenage downtime, and most parents accept that digital life is not a phase but a permanent feature. The challenge lies in setting boundaries without alienation.

Many households in D15 now approach screen time pragmatically. Total bans have given way to negotiated limits, shared expectations and honest conversations about online behaviour. Parents talk less about hours and more about balance: homework done, sleep protected, offline interests encouraged.

There is also increased awareness of mental health impacts. Anxiety, comparison culture and online conflict are real concerns, prompting parents to stay informed rather than simply restrictive.

### Safe Spaces, or the Lack of Them

One recurring issue for parents is the shortage of informal, supervised spaces for teenagers. Younger children have playgrounds and organised activities; adults have cafés and gyms. Teenagers often fall between.

Shopping centres and fast-food outlets become default hangouts, not always by choice. While these spaces offer visibility and shelter, they are not designed for young people to simply exist without spending money.

Community centres, youth clubs and sports facilities help fill the gap, but availability varies by area. Parents frequently call for more neutral, low-cost spaces where teenagers can socialise safely and independently.

### Independence and Transport

Mobility is central to teenage independence, and transport remains a pressure point in Dublin 15. While public transport has improved, gaps remain—especially in the evenings and at weekends.

Parents describe a gradual easing of control: walking to local training sessions, cycling short distances, taking buses independently. Each step is a small negotiation between trust and worry. Well-lit routes,

reliable services and safe crossings matter more than ever during these years.

### Community, Not Just Parenting

Raising teenagers is not a solo effort. Informal networks—other parents, coaches, teachers and neighbours—play a crucial role. Information is shared quickly: which routes feel safe, which activities work, where support is available.

There is also a growing openness around mental health, peer pressure and stress. Parents are more willing to talk to each other, recognising that shared challenges require shared understanding.

### Growing Up in D15

For all the concerns, many parents remain optimistic. Dublin 15 offers space, sport, diversity and strong community roots. Teenagers grow up with access to green areas, clubs and opportunities that many urban areas lack.

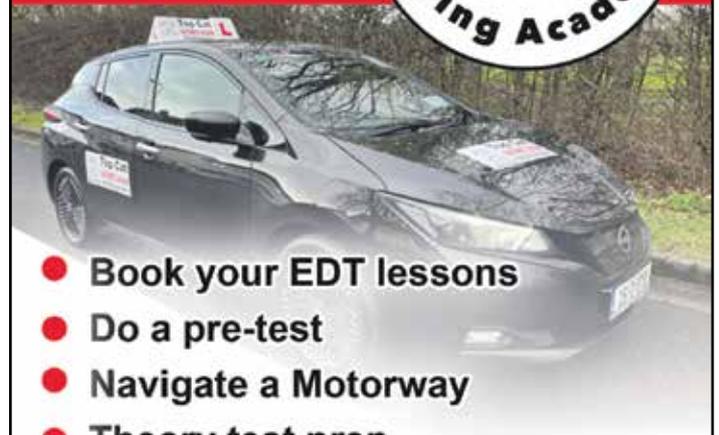
The task for families is not to shield teenagers from every risk, but to guide them through it—gradually, imperfectly and with trust. In Dublin 15, raising teenagers is about helping young people claim their space in the world, while knowing there is a community close behind them.

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# Living Well in a High-Cost Suburb

## How Dublin 15 Households Are Managing the Cost of Living

**D**ublin 15 has long sold itself on balance. Close enough to the city to stay connected, far enough west to offer space, green areas and a sense of community, it has become one of the capital's most popular places to put down roots. But in 2026, that balance is under pressure. Rising household bills, persistent inflation and high housing costs have turned "living well" into an active, ongoing strategy rather than a given.

Yet across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart, residents are not simply tightening belts. They are adapting—making conscious lifestyle choices that protect quality of life while keeping finances under control.

### Energy Smarts at Home

For many households, the cost-of-living conversation begins with energy. Older housing stock, fluctuating electricity prices and long winters have pushed energy efficiency up the priority list. In D15 estates, it is increasingly common to hear neighbours compare insulation grants, heat pump experiences or solar panel outputs.

Small changes have become mainstream: smart thermostats, zoned heating, LED lighting throughout the house. Larger investments—external insulation, attic upgrades, solar PV—are often framed not as green gestures but as long-term lifestyle decisions. The payback may take years, but the immediate benefit is comfort: warmer homes, fewer drafts and more predictable bills.

There is also a quiet culture of shared knowledge. WhatsApp groups and local Facebook pages trade tips on grant applications, reliable installers and real-world savings—information that once felt technical but is now part of everyday conversation.

### Rethinking the Weekly Shop

Food inflation has changed shopping habits more than any other expense. D15 residents still value convenience, but brand loyalty has softened. Many households now split their weekly shop: essentials from discounters, fresh produce from local greengrocers, and occasional "treat" items saved for weekends.

Meal planning has become a lifestyle skill rather than a chore. Batch cooking, freezer use and midweek meat-free dinners are less about sacrifice and more about control—control over spending, waste and time. Parents speak openly about teaching teenagers how to cook basic meals, not just as a life skill but as a way of keeping takeaway costs in check.

Interestingly, eating well remains non-negotiable. Quality coffee, good bread and fresh ingredients still matter. The difference is intentionality: fewer impulse buys, more conscious choices.

### Local Living as a Cost Strategy

One of the strongest trends in Dublin 15 is hyper-local living. Reduced commuting—whether through hybrid work or job changes—has anchored people closer to home. This has reshaped spending patterns.

Instead of city-centre nights out, residents favour local restaurants, neighbourhood pubs and daytime cafés. Gym memberships, fitness classes and children's activities are chosen based on proximity as much as price. Walking or cycling locally replaces car trips where possible, saving fuel and reclaiming time.

Supporting local businesses is often framed as a community value, but it is also practical. Local services reduce travel costs, offer flexibility, and build relationships that feel reassuring in uncertain times.

### The New Definition of "Luxury"

In a high-cost environment, luxury has been redefined. For many D15 households, it no longer means big-ticket purchases or frequent foreign travel. Instead, it is found in smaller, repeatable pleasures: good coffee at home, a well-designed living space, reliable broadband, a warm house, a Saturday walk along the canal or in the Phoenix Park.

Holidays still happen, but they are planned with care—shorter stays, off-peak travel, or a mix of Irish breaks and carefully chosen



trips abroad. Home improvement budgets are targeted rather than expansive, focusing on rooms that are actually lived in.

There is less interest in keeping up appearances and more focus on comfort, functionality and long-term value.

### Community as a Buffer

Perhaps the most overlooked factor in managing rising costs is community. In Dublin 15, informal networks play a quiet but significant role. Carpooling for school activities, swapping childcare favours, sharing tools, passing on uniforms or sports gear—these everyday exchanges reduce costs while strengthening social ties.

Community events, free activities and local clubs offer low-cost ways to stay connected and entertained. They also reinforce a sense that people are navigating similar pressures together.

### Living Well, Differently

Life in Dublin 15 has not become cheaper, but it has become more deliberate. Households are making informed, value-driven choices that prioritise wellbeing over excess. The suburb's appeal—space, community, access to green areas—still holds, but residents now work harder to protect it.

In 2026, living well in a high-cost suburb is less about what you earn and more about how you organise your life. In Dublin 15, many are proving that quality of life can be preserved—even strengthened—through adaptability, local focus and a clear sense of what truly matters.



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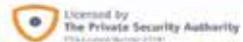
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# Supermarket price wars

Is there going to be a supermarket price war in Ireland in 2026



**T**he competitive landscape in Ireland's grocery sector is shifting, with clear signs of price competition emerging on key staples. Major supermarkets like Aldi and Lidl have implemented cuts on essentials such as milk and butter, with competitors quickly matching them on these core products. This has the feel of early skirmishes, a dynamic further evidenced by moves like SuperValu cutting prices on hundreds of items to sharpen its competitive position at the start of 2026.

However, analysts caution that this does not yet constitute a full-blown, sector-wide price war. Many observers frame the current reductions as tactical marketing and competitive positioning, particularly on high-profile items like milk, which are often described as "loss leaders" aimed more at generating positive headlines and footfall than at triggering a deep margin battle across the store. The highly concentrated structure of the Irish market, dominated by Tesco, Dunnes Stores, SuperValu, Aldi, and Lidl, means strategic price matching is a key tool, but these firms remain financially wary of the sustained profit erosion a true, unrestricted price war would necessitate.

For the Irish shopper, this creates a mixed and sometimes confusing picture. On one hand, there are tangible savings to be had on specific, heavily promoted essentials. A shopper diligently comparing prices may secure a cheaper basket of staples. On the other hand, this is unfolding against a complex economic backdrop where overall food inflation, though easing, remains elevated year-on-year. The cost pressures on categories like meat, processed foods, and household goods have not disappeared. Consequently, while shoppers welcome relief on select items, the broader weekly grocery shop may not feel dramatically cheaper, leading to a perception gap between advertised price cuts and the final tally at the checkout.

The strategic calculus for retailers is equally nuanced. Price cuts are a powerful lever to win market share and demonstrate value to cost-conscious consumers. Yet, with rising operational costs—including recently announced wage increases for staff—retailers must balance attractive pricing with protecting their bottom line. This often leads to a targeted approach: absorbing losses on a limited

range of high-visibility products while maintaining margins elsewhere, or using sophisticated loyalty card schemes to offer personalised discounts rather than across-the-board price slashes.

In summary, 2026 has begun with aggressive, tactical price cutting on essentials, marking a competitive intensification. Whether this escalates into a wider, more painful price war will depend on a fragile equilibrium. It hinges on how far one major player is willing to go in sacrificing margins for market share, how consumers vote with their wallets, and whether external cost pressures from suppliers and energy markets continue to ease. For now, the sector is in a period of heightened price competition, but stops short of the all-out conflict that would redefine the market.

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## Why PhysioCare Might Be a Good Choice for You!!!

### Did you know....?

Physiotherapy can help someone in physical pain by addressing both the symptoms and the underlying causes of that pain. Here are the main ways it works:

#### 1. Reducing Pain Directly

**Manual therapy:** Hands-on techniques like joint mobilization, soft-tissue massage, and stretching reduce muscle tension and improve movement.

**Modalities:** Heat, ice, ultrasound, TENS, and electrical stimulation can calm irritated tissues and reduce pain signals.

#### 2. Restoring Movement and Function

**Targeted exercises:** Strengthening weak muscles and stretching tight ones helps correct imbalances that often cause pain.

**Mobility training:** Improves joint range of motion, making everyday tasks easier and less painful.

#### 3. Addressing the Root Cause

Pain often comes from issues like poor posture, overuse, muscle weakness, or limited joint movement. Physiotherapists:

- Assess how you move
- Identify contributing factors
- Create a personalized treatment plan

#### 4. Preventing Future Pain or Injury

Physiotherapy teaches:

- Proper body mechanics
- Injury-prevention exercises
- Lifestyle changes (ergonomics, posture habits, activity pacing)

#### 5. Supporting Recovery After Injury or Surgery

If the pain is due to trauma or surgery, physiotherapy helps:

- Reduce swelling
- Restore strength
- Improve stability
- Speed up safe return to daily activities or sport

#### 6. Improving Overall Quality of Life

Better movement and less pain often mean:

- Improved sleep
- Reduced need for medications
- More confidence performing daily tasks

#### Highly Qualified Staff

- Their physiotherapists are chartered physiotherapists, meaning they have strong, university-level training.
- They also have postgraduate training in manual therapy and exercise therapy.

#### Evidence-Based, Tailored Treatment

- PhysioCare doesn't do "one-size-fits-all": they assess you, figure out exactly what's causing your pain, and tailor a treatment plan that could include manual therapy, acupuncture or dry needling, exercise therapy, etc.
- Their goal isn't just to make you feel better now, but to prevent chronic or recurring problems ("fix, manage or refer" philosophy).

#### Good Facilities

- They have five clinics in Dublin. Another location set to open soon in North Dublin!!
- Their clinics are private, spacious, and well-equipped with modern physiotherapy tools (e.g. shockwave therapy, ultrasound).
- Some clinics have an in-house "PhysioGym" for more active/rehab-type work.

#### Flexible and Accessible

- They run appointments from 8 am to 8 pm on weekdays, and on Saturdays too in some clinics.
- Home visits are available when needed.
- No GP referral is necessary to see their chartered physiotherapists.

#### Patient-Centered Philosophy

- They emphasize working with you: giving home exercises, reassessing progress every time, and educating you so you can prevent future pain.
- Their "fix, manage or refer" principle suggests that they will explore realistic options: they'll aim to fix what can be fixed, manage what needs managing, or refer you for further care if required.

#### Insurance & Cost Considerations

- In many cases, you can reclaim some or all of the cost through health insurance (depending on your cover).
- They also note you can claim via tax (in Ireland) on physiotherapy costs.

# Recipe

## Carrot Biryani

By Elena Silcock

### SERVES 4

Easy

Prep: 10 mins

Cook: 15 mins

Prepare and cook our low-calorie vegetarian biryani in just 25 minutes using carrot, cashew nuts and Indian spices. Serve with coriander and dollops of yogurt

### Vegetarian

### INGREDIENTS

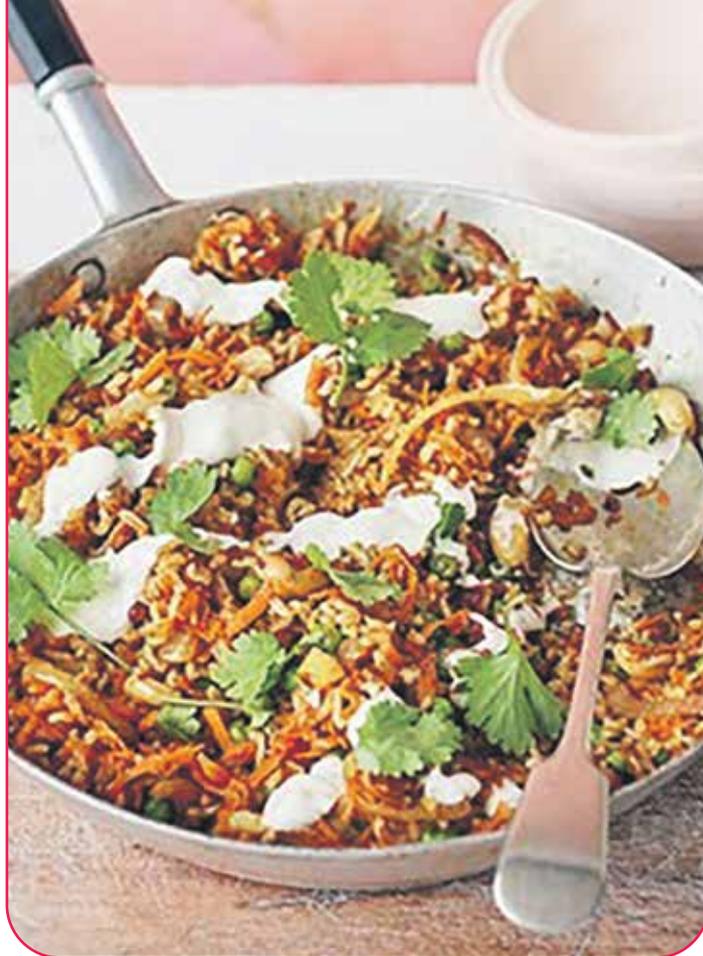
Nutrition

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion sliced
- 1 green chilli chopped (deseeded if you don't like it very hot)
- 1 garlic clove peeled
- 1 tbsp garam masala
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 3 carrots grated
- 2 x 200g pouch brown basmati rice
- 150g frozen peas
- 50g roasted cashews
- coriander and yogurt, to serve

### METHOD

#### • step 1

Heat the oil in a large frying pan, tip in the onion with a big pinch of salt and fry until softened, around 5 mins, then add the chilli and crush in the garlic and cook for 1 min more. Stir in the spices with a splash of water and cook for a couple of mins before adding the carrots and stirring well to coat in all of the spices and flavours.



#### • step 2

Tip in the rice, peas and cashews, then use the back of your spoon to break up any clumps of rice and combine with the rest of the ingredients, cover and cook over a high heat for 5 mins (it's nice if a bit of rice catches on the base to give a bit of texture to the dish). Scatter over the coriander with spoonfuls of yogurt, then serve straight from the pan.



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# Cllr. Ted LEDDY

February Update



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Working with Emer Currie TD, Siobhan Shovlin and Regina Doherty MEP

## Summary of the 2026 Programme of Works for Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart/Castleknock/Ongar

### Parks and Open Spaces - Castleknock

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Castleknock</b>			
			€
1	Laurel court/Oak tree	Footpath concrete construction	4,000.00
2	Castleknock road	Footpath restoration around trees	10,000.00
3	Park Manor	2 pollinator beds	6,000.00
4	Castleknock road/ Dunsandle	Pollinator bed and landscaping feature	10,000.00
5	College road	Bulb and pollinator bed planting	2,000.00
6	College grove	Pollinator bed and entrance stone rejuvenation	2,500.00
7	Park Manor	1 bench	3,000.00
8	Fairhaven	1 bench	3,000.00
9	Georgian village	1 bench	3,000.00
10	Phoenix park race course open space	3 benches	12,000.00
11	Ashleigh	Boundary planting works - 5 trees and hedging	3,000.00
12	The Beeches	Hedge planting around entrance	1,000.00

### Parks and Open Spaces - Castleknock

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Castleknock (Contd)</b>			
			€
13	Riverwood road	Shrubbery planting	4,000.00
14	Riverwood court	Tree planting x6	1,000.00
15	Riverwood entrance	Brickwork repair	1,500.00
16	Old Navan road	Hedge planting opposite Auburn apts	3,000.00
17	Georgian village	Refurbish entrance stone	500.00
Sub-Total			69,500.00

### Parks and Open Spaces - Clonsilla / Ongar / Littlepace

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Clonsilla/Ongar/Littlepace</b>			
			€
1	Willows green	Dig out and relay damaged path	8,000.00
2	Lohanda road	Pollinator bed	3,000.00
3	Castlefield woods	landscaping project at entrance	6,000.00
4	Castlefield park	landscaping project at entrance	5,000.00
5	Clonsilla park/close	Planting works	2,000.00
6	Stone bridge drive	Pollinator bed at allendale entrance	2,000.00
7	Aldemere/Windemere	Rejuvenate entrance beds	1,500.00
8	ongar roundabout	Planting and design	2,000.00
9	Mount symon	1 bench	3,000.00
10	Portenagale	1 bench	3,000.00

### Parks and Open Spaces - Clonsilla / Ongar / Littlepace

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Clonsilla / Ongar / Littlepace</b>			
			€
11	Aldemere	1 bench	3,000.00
12	Windemere	1 bench	3,000.00
13	Castlefield court	Bulb planting	6,000.00
14	St Mochtas	New entrance stone	1,100.00
15	Lilys way	Boundary works and planting	2,000.00
16	Windmill open space	Bollards and railings	4,000.00
17	Linnottfield	18 trees to be planted.	3,600.00
18	Hansfield wood park	Entrance works/landscaping	5,000.00
19	Linelawn entrances/Apenwood	Painting railings and kissing gates	4,000.00
Sub-Total			67,200.00

### Parks and Open Spaces - Mulhuddart / Tyrrelstown / Meakstown

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Mulhuddart/Tyrrelstown /Meakstown</b>			
			€
1	Brianwood/ The farm	Renew Footpath 60m x 1.8m	6,500.00
2	Beating close	Renew Footpath 50m x 2.5m	7,500.00
3	Heathfield park	New dig footpath 25m x 2.5m	4,000.00
4	Brianwood/ the farm	bulbs and hedgerow planting	2,500.00
5	Gaddens	Pollinator bed	2,000.00
6	Corduff	Pollinator beds x 2	2,500.00
7	Blakesstown (opposite community centre)	Pollinator bed and wall	5,600.00
8	Mulhuddart village	2 additional planters	1,000.00
9	Brianwood/the farm	1 bench	3,000.00
10	Stonebridge	1 bench	3,000.00

### Parks and Open Spaces - Mulhuddart / Tyrrelstown / Meakstown

Item	Location	Description	Budget
<b>Mulhuddart/Tyrrelstown /Meakstown (Contd)</b>			
			€
11	Mulhuddart village	Stone wall and bench	6,000.00
12	Newtown cottages	Bulb planting	2,000.00
13	St Margarets	Tidy Towns improvements	2,500.00
14	Tyrrelstown openspace	Fencing works	4,000.00
15	Heathfield	Tree planting works 20 trees	3,000.00
16	Hollywoodrath drive	Fencing and planting works	4,000.00
17	Washway	Boundary planting noise mitigation	1,500.00
Sub-Total			61,100.00

## Parks and Open Spaces - Dublin 15

Item	Location	Description	Budget
Dublin 15 General Improvement Works			€
1	Laraghon luan	Tree planting x 10 trees and benches x 2	9,200.00
2	Laraghon luan	Pollinator bed on roundabout	3,000.00
3	Tree planting Street Trees	Dublin 15 areas	25,000.00
4	Seagrave park	Footpath works	25,000.00
5	Mulhuddart / Blakestown road	Landscaping works	20,000.00
6	Clonsilla road	Opposite St Mochtas landscaping project	20,000.00
7	D15 Tree works - Specialised	Tree works	20,000.00
8	Village Floral displays	Planting and Maintenance	42,700.00
9	Residents Bulb allocation	Bulb allocation	15,000.00
10	Coolmine woods	Landscaping works	20,000.00
Sub-Total			199,900.00
Total			457,290.00

## PUBLIC LIGHTING

Total € 150,000

## Public Lighting

Item	Location	Description	Budget
1	Walkway between Willow Wood Grove and Stonebridge Road, Clonsilla	New Lighting scheme across green linking Willow Wood Grove and Stonebridge Road to nearest bus stop on the Ongar Distributor Road.	31,000
2	Old River Rd, Blanchardstown	New lantern to be installed onto existing E58 pole near entrance to Woods End estate. Tree cutting required	5,000
3	Mick Walsh Park, Mulhuddart	New lighting scheme to be installed in car park	8,000
4	Porterstown Overflow Carpark, Porterstown	New lighting scheme to be installed in new overflow carpark.	20,000
5	Annaly Grove, Ongar	New lighting scheme to be installed on entrance road into Annaly Grove.	26,000
6	Castleknock Manor, Castleknock	Relocation of existing lighting column to accommodate new road crossing for Traffic Section	3,000
7	College Road/Carpenterstown Road junction at entrance to Castleknock College, Traffic	New electrical supply for traffic lights at junction of College Road/Carpenterstown Road to decouple from the public lighting supply and protect the supply to the traffic lights	4,000
8	Whitestown Park walkway, Coolmine	New Lighting scheme across green linking Whitestown Park to nearest bus stop on Blakestown Way.	23,000
9	Walkway between Hazelbury Park & Littlepace Park, Littlepace	New lighting Scheme on walkway linking Hazelbury Park to Littlepace Park.	16,000
10	Hazelbury Park, Cycleway LED Upgrade	Upgrade of 33 existing 1st generation LED lanterns to new LED lanterns	14,000
Total			€150,000

## Summary

Item	Description	Budget
		€
1	Roads -Minor Works Improvement Programme	€543,000
2	Roads – Restoration Improvement Programme	€965,200
3	Traffic – Traffic Management Schemes	€445,000
4	Parks – Parks and Open Spaces Programme	€457,200
5	Public Lighting	€150,000
TOTAL		€2,560,400

## Surface Restoration Improvement & Maintenance Works

Minor Works Improvement € 543,000

Restoration Improvement € 965,200

Total €1,508,200

## Restoration Improvement / Maintenance

Item	Location	Description	Budget (€)
1	Homefeigh Castleknock	Surface Restoration	108563
2	Castleknock Green / Dunsandle Court/Grove	Surface Restoration	109984
3	Mulhuddart Village junction	Surface Restoration	163440
4	Smugborough Road Corduff (North of Interchange)	Surface Restoration	96000
5	R135 Coolquay	Surface Restoration	168761
6	R108 St Margarets	Surface Restoration	130525
7	Dunbro Lane	Deep Patching & Surface Restoration	45400
8	Whitestown Green, Avenue & Gardens	Surface Restoration	80670
9	Coolmine Park, Blanchardstown and Oak Lawn, Castleknock	Concrete Road Repairs	36320
10	The Boulevard Tyrellstown	Surface Restoration	25537
Total			€965,200

## Minor Works / Footpath Improvements

Item	Location	Description	Budget
1	Park Drive Castleknock	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	68003
2	Portersgate Clonsilla	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	44832
3	Roselawn Road Blanchardstown	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	27240
4	Castleknock Park Castleknock	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	65830
5	Elmwood Mulhuddart	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	38590
6	Willow Wood Green Blakestown	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	24970
7	Huntstown Lawn Blakestown	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	20430
8	Lanesborough Finglas	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	40860
9	Wellview/Warrenstown Mulhuddart	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	22700
10	Whitechapel Hartstown	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	21565
11	Oak Lawn Castleknock	Footpath Improvement Works (Concrete)	37455
12	Dublin 15 Accessibility Dishing	Various Locations Dublin 15	56750
13	Dublin 15 Minor Drainage Works	Various Locations Dublin 15	73775
Total			€543,000

## Traffic Management Schemes

Traffic Signals € 373,000

Traffic Calming Replacements € 24,000

Traffic Calming € 48,000

Total € 445,000

Traffic Management			
Item	Location	Description	Budget
Traffic Signals	Diswellstown Avenue, Carpenterstown	Upgrade existing ramp into a signalised zebra crossing	€43,000
	Ongar Distributor Road, Station Roundabout	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing	€115,000
	St. Margarets Road	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing	€75,000
	Porters Road, Coolmine Industrial Estate	Signalised Pedestrian Crossing	€55,000
	Ongar Village, Sweeney Mews	Type B Zebra Crossing	€25,000
Traffic Calming Ramps	Castleknock Manor	Two-number Type B Crossings and associated ramps	€60,000
	Lanesborough Road, Charlestown	5 Traffic Calming Ramps	€20,000
Traffic Calming Replacements	Willow Wood, Hartstown	7 Traffic Calming Ramps	€28,000
	Tyrellstown Boulevard	Replace modular speed cushions - 4 sets	€10,000
	Sheepmoor	Replace 3 number ramps	€14,000
TOTAL			€445,000

Parks and Open Spaces - Blanchardstown			
Item	Location	Description	Budget
Blanchardstown			
€			
1	Verona	Path Works	7,500.00
2	43 Broadway Road	Pollinator Bed	3,000.00
3	Main Street, Blanchardstown	Landscape Project at hexagonal bed	7,500.00
4	Roselawn Road	Rejuvenate/Replace planters	3,000.00
5	Glenville green	Bench	3,000.00
6	Tolka Valley entrance/Mill road	3 Benches	9,000.00
7	St Patricks park	1 Bench	3,000.00
8	St Brigids park	2 Benches Tidy towns	6,000.00
9	Glenville Drive	Bulb planting	6,500.00
10	Boundary Summerfield lawn	Tree and hedge planting along wall	8,000.00
11	Willow wood green	Painting railings	3,000.00
Sub-Total			59,500.00

Parks and Open Spaces

Total € 457,200

In summary, the 2026 Programme of Works represents a significant investment in the physical and environmental infrastructure of the operational area. It prioritises road safety and accessibility through targeted road and footpath repairs, enhances pedestrian safety with new traffic crossings, and aims to improve the quality and usability of local parks and open spaces for communities across Blanchardstown, Mulhuddart, Castleknock, and Ongar.



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# Is 2026 the year to go electric with your new car in Ireland?

Yes — but with caveats

**F**or many drivers in Ireland, 2026 presents one of the strongest cases yet to switch to an electric vehicle (EV), thanks to continuing government support, evolving market dynamics, and lower running costs. At the same time, a range of practical and financial hurdles still contribute to hesitation among some buyers.

## What SEAI Says for 2026

Recent commentary from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) emphasises that 2026 is a prime year to consider buying an EV:

- SEAI reports that it supported more than 18,600 EV purchases and 16,000 home charger installations in 2025, showing strong momentum in adoption.

- Ruth Buggie, Head of Mobility and Smart Networks at SEAI, said there “really never has been a better time to buy an electric vehicle,” citing lower fuel costs, reduced maintenance, and lighter tax burdens as compelling financial reasons to switch.

- SEAI estimates that, based on average usage (~18,000 km/year), drivers could save around €900 per year with an EV compared to a petrol/diesel car — even more if charging at off-peak electricity rates.

- SEAI continues to support government grant schemes that make EV purchases and home charger installations more affordable.

## Grants and incentives in 2026 include:

- A grant of up to €3,500 for qualifying new passenger EVs (BEVs).
- Additional support toward charging infrastructure, such as the Electric Vehicle Home Charger Grant (up to €300).
- Continued tax advantages including favourable motor tax and reduced Benefit-in-Kind (BIK) treatment for company EVs.

These supports are aimed at reducing the total cost of ownership and making EVs competitive with traditional internal-combustion vehicles.

## Why 2026 Is Attractive for EV Buyers

### 1. Stronger Market and Choice

Ireland’s EV market continues to mature, with increasing availability of both new and used models — which helps improve affordability and choice for different budgets.

### 2. Lower Long-Term Running Costs

EVs typically cost less to operate due to cheaper electricity compared with petrol/diesel, fewer moving parts (lower maintenance), and favourable tax regimes designed to encourage uptake.

### 3. Growing Charging Infrastructure

While still expanding, Ireland’s network of public and home charging options continues to improve, increasing convenience for everyday users.

## Why Some Drivers Are Still Reluctant

Despite the positives, many drivers remain hesitant to switch to electric. The main reasons include:

### 1. Higher Upfront Costs

Even with SEAI grants, new EVs can still have a higher purchase price than comparable petrol or diesel cars, particularly for models with long range or premium features. This cost barrier is cited repeatedly by buyers.

### 2. Charging Infrastructure Concerns

Drivers without access to reliable home charging (especially apartment dwellers) or those worried about public charging availability continue to see EVs as less convenient — especially for longer trips and rural driving.

### 3. Range Anxiety

Although the average EV range for new models (350-550 km) is improving, some consumers still worry about range limitations and charging delays, particularly outside urban centres.

### 4. Perceived Reliability and Familiarity

Some drivers prefer the familiarity and perceived robustness of internal combustion vehicles and are hesitant to adopt newer technologies. Others await even more advanced battery technology before committing.

### 5. Incentives Changing Over Time

Government incentives like VRT relief and certain subsidies are scheduled to taper in coming years, making the timing of incentives an important factor in purchasing decisions.

## Conclusion: Is 2026 the Right Year?

For many buyers, yes.

2026 benefits from substantial government backing through SEAI and other incentives, improving total ownership costs and making EVs an increasingly compelling choice. Continued improvements in charging infrastructure and growing used EV markets strengthen this case.

However, hesitations remain valid for drivers concerned about purchase price, charging access (especially for those without dedicated parking), and the ongoing evolution of EV technology.

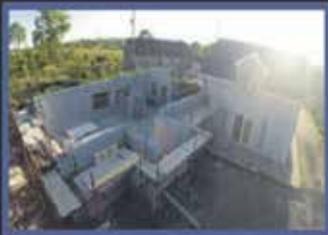
If your priorities include lower long-term costs, environmental goals, and access to incentives before they diminish, 2026 is a strong year to go electric in Ireland — provided the current barriers align with your personal use case and budget.

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# Commuting from Dublin 15

## Has Remote Work Really Changed Daily Life?

**F**or decades, commuting defined daily life in Dublin 15. Early alarms, congested roads, crowded buses and trains, and long journeys into the city were accepted as the price of suburban living. Then remote work arrived—and with it, the promise of reclaimed time and calmer mornings. In 2026, the question many residents are asking is whether that promise has truly been delivered.

The answer, like most things in modern working life, is complicated.

### Fewer Commutes, Different Patterns

There is no doubt that full-time commuting has declined. Across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart, hybrid work is now the norm rather than the exception. Offices are busier midweek, quieter on Mondays and Fridays, and many households have adjusted their routines accordingly.

Morning rush hours are less intense than they once were, but they have not disappeared. School drop-offs, staggered office days and increased car use for short local trips mean congestion still flares at familiar pinch points. The commute has shortened for many, but it has not vanished.

### Time Gained, Time Reallocated

Ask residents what remote work has changed most, and the answer is time. Hours once lost to travel are now redistributed—often immediately. Mornings are calmer, with fewer rushed breakfasts and more flexible school routines. Evenings feel longer, allowing space for exercise, family time or simply rest.

However, that time is not always experienced as “free”. Workdays can stretch subtly, with emails answered earlier and later. The boundary between home and office has blurred, particularly in houses not designed with dedicated workspaces.

For some, the commute acted as a psychological buffer. Its absence has required new rituals to mark the start and end of the working day.

### Local Life Comes Into Focus

One of the most visible impacts of reduced commuting is how much more time people spend locally. Mid-morning cafés are busier. Lunchtime walks along the canal or through nearby green spaces are part of routine rather than a weekend treat.

Local services have benefited from this shift. Gyms, cafés, childcare providers and small retailers see more consistent weekday trade. Residents talk about feeling more connected to their area, noticing changes and engaging in community life in ways they never had time for before.

Remote work has, in effect, pulled daily life back into the suburb.

### The Transport Question

Public transport remains a mixed experience. While peak pressure has eased, reliability and coverage continue to shape commuting choices on in-office days. Many residents still default to the car for flexibility, particularly when balancing school runs and work commitments.

There is also a sense that transport planning has yet to fully catch up with new work patterns. Services designed around five-day commuting do not always align with hybrid realities, leaving some residents feeling underserved.

### Who Benefits Most?

Remote work has not been evenly experienced. Those in office-based, knowledge-driven roles have gained flexibility; others in retail, healthcare, logistics and on-site services continue to commute daily. This creates subtle divisions in how time, cost and stress are distributed across households.

Parents often benefit most, using flexibility to manage school schedules and activities. Younger workers, particularly those sharing accommodation, sometimes struggle to find quiet or suitable workspaces, making the office a welcome escape rather than a burden.

### A Permanent Shift, With Caveats

Few residents believe commuting will ever return to pre-2020 norms. Remote and hybrid work are now embedded in how people organise their lives. Yet the long-term effects are still unfolding.

Dublin 15 has gained time, local engagement and flexibility. It has also inherited new challenges: blurred boundaries, uneven benefits and infrastructure that must adapt to changed rhythms.

Remote work has not eliminated the commute—but it has changed its meaning. For many in Dublin 15, daily life is now less about enduring the journey and more about making choices: when to travel, where to work, and how to use the time in between.

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# Get Out of Jail Tips for Those Who Forgot Valentine's Day



**T**here are few moments in modern Irish domestic life more chilling than the realisation, sometime around 7.42pm on 14 February, that Valentine's Day has come and gone—and you have done absolutely nothing about it. No card. No flowers. No hastily assembled “I meant to, honestly” gesture. Just the quiet hum of the dishwasher and the growing sense that you are about to spend the evening in emotional custody.

Fear not. Redemption is still possible. Not guaranteed, mind you and possibly expensive but possible. Here is a practical, field-tested guide to damage limitation for those who forgot Valentine's Day and now wish to avoid sleeping on the couch until Easter.

## 1. Do Not Pretend You Don't Believe in Valentine's Day

This is the rookie error. Claiming that Valentine's Day is “a commercial scam” while your partner is scrolling through Instagram posts of surprise weekends in Lisbon will only deepen your predicament. You may not believe in Valentine's Day, but your partner does—and right now, belief trumps ideology.

Instead, acknowledge the miss. Calmly. Sincerely. Without qualifiers like “I was busy” or “I assumed we weren't doing anything this year.”

## 2. Immediate Contrition Beats Elaborate Excuses

A clean apology is more effective than a complex alibi involving work deadlines, traffic on the M50, and a dying phone battery. Say the words clearly:

“I forgot, and I'm genuinely sorry.”

Do not add:

- “But you know I love you anyway”
- “I thought we said we weren't exchanging gifts”
- “Sure every day should be Valentine's Day”

Those phrases are not apologies. They are accelerants.

## 3. The Emergency Gesture (Timing Is Everything)

If it is still Valentine's night, act fast. Petrol stations are no longer just for diesel and despair. A respectable bunch of flowers, decent chocolates (not the crushed box behind the till), and a card with more than your name written inside can still salvage the evening.

If Valentine's Day has already passed, do not attempt to backdate your effort. Late flowers with a sheepish explanation are acceptable. Flowers with “Happy Valentine's Day” written three days later are not.

4. Plan Something—Properly—And Own It  
Vague promises are worthless currency. “We'll do something nice soon” translates as “I hope this blows over.”

Instead, propose a specific plan:

- A booked restaurant
- A night away (even one night counts)
- Tickets to something they actually like
- A planned day off together

Details matter. Dates matter. Bookings matter. Screenshots of confirmations matter most of all.

## 5. The Thoughtful Pivot Strategy

If romance isn't your strong suit, lean into thoughtfulness. This is not about cost—it is about effort.

A handwritten note acknowledging what your partner means to you will outscore an expensive but impersonal gift every time. Mention shared memories. Reference something they care about. Prove, in writing, that you are emotionally present, even if calendar-challenged.

## 6. Do Not Attempt Humour Too Early

Irish wit is powerful—but timing is everything. Self-deprecating jokes about “forgetting dates” or “being useless at romance” may eventually land, but not while the offence is still fresh. Earn forgiveness first. Quips can follow.

## 7. Accept That Forgiveness Is Not Instant

You may do everything right and still face a frosty reception. This is normal. Stay consistent. Stay kind. Stay patient. Redemption is a process, not a transaction.

And whatever you do, do not ask, “Are you still annoyed about that?” within the first 48 hours.

## 8. Learn for Next Year (Or At Least Set a Reminder)

Once peace is restored, take preventative action. Calendar alerts. Notes on your phone. A discreet reminder from a trusted friend. There is no honour in repeating the same mistake annually.

## Final Word

Forgetting Valentine's Day does not make you a bad partner—but how you respond might. Own the error. Make the effort. And remember: romance isn't about perfection; it's about showing up, even when you get it wrong.

Now put the magazine down and go fix it.



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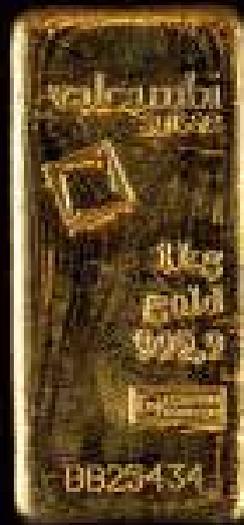
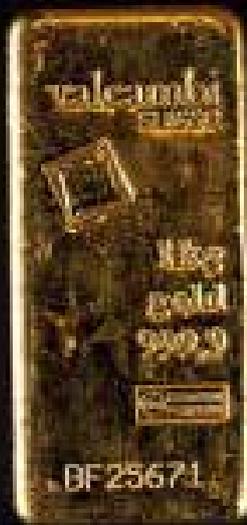
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# Rent, Buy, or Stay Put?

## The Housing Choices Facing Dublin 15 Residents in 2026

**F**or many people in Dublin 15, housing is no longer just about finding a place to live. It is a lifestyle decision shaped by cost, stability, family needs and an uncertain outlook. In 2026, residents across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart find themselves weighing three increasingly complex options: renting, buying, or staying exactly where they are.

None of the choices feels straightforward, and each carries its own compromises.

### Renting: Flexibility at a Price

Renting remains the entry point for many younger residents and newcomers to the area. Dublin 15 offers proximity to employment hubs, good transport links and established amenities, making it an attractive location. The trade-off, however, is cost and insecurity.

High rents consume a large share of household income, leaving little room for saving or long-term planning. While recent regulatory measures have brought some predictability, renters still describe a sense of impermanence—short leases, limited control over their living space, and uncertainty about future rent increases.

As a result, renting in D15 is increasingly seen as a short-term solution rather than a lifestyle choice. Many tenants stay not because it suits them, but because the alternatives feel out of reach.

### Buying: A High Bar to Entry

Home ownership remains the long-term aspiration for many households, but the path to buying in Dublin 15 has narrowed. Property prices, deposit requirements and strict lending rules mean that even well-paid professionals can struggle to make the numbers work.

For those who do buy, compromises are common. Smaller homes, longer commutes or properties requiring significant upgrades are accepted as part of the deal. The emotional appeal of ownership—security, control, the ability to put down roots—often outweighs financial caution.

Yet there is a growing cohort of residents who question whether buying at current prices makes sense. Rising interest rates and high upfront costs have shifted the conversation from “when” to “if”.

### Staying Put: The Hidden Fourth Option

Perhaps the most overlooked housing choice in Dublin 15 is staying exactly where you are. Long-term homeowners who might once have traded up are now choosing to extend, renovate or simply adapt their existing homes.

This trend is driven by several factors: the high cost of moving, lack of suitable alternative housing, and a strong attachment to neighbourhoods built up over years or decades. For families, staying put means continuity—schools, clubs, neighbours and routines remain intact.

For older residents, downsizing is often discussed but rarely acted upon. Suitable smaller homes within the same area are limited, and the emotional cost of leaving a familiar community can outweigh the financial logic.

### Cost-Rental and New Models

New housing models, particularly cost-rental schemes, have entered the conversation in Dublin 15. For some households, they offer a middle ground—greater security than private renting without the financial burden of ownership.

While still limited in availability, these options are influencing how residents think about housing. The idea of long-term renting with predictable costs is slowly gaining acceptance, particularly among those who prioritise stability over ownership.

### Housing as a Lifestyle Decision

What has changed most in 2026 is how openly people discuss housing trade-offs. Conversations once dominated by property ladders and capital gains are now more grounded. Quality of life, commute times, mental wellbeing and community ties feature just as prominently as financial calculations.

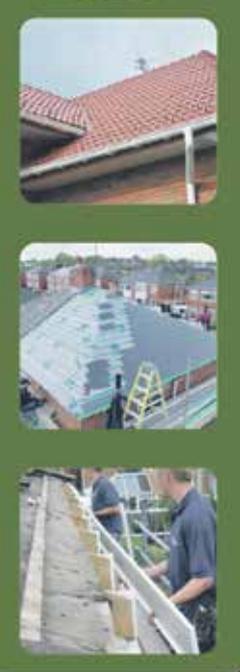
Families weigh space against stress. Professionals weigh flexibility against security. Older residents weigh independence against isolation. There is no single “right” choice—only what fits at a particular stage of life.

### Choosing in an Uncertain Market

Dublin 15 remains a desirable place to live, but its housing landscape reflects wider pressures felt across the capital. Rent, buy or stay put—each option carries risk, cost and compromise.

For many residents, the decision is less about timing the market and more about protecting everyday life. In a period of uncertainty, housing choices have become deeply personal, shaped not just by affordability but by how people want to live, now and into the future.

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## Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.

It's been an incredibly busy time for me and my Aontú colleagues in the Martin Savage Cumann in Castleknock

We took our campaign against the new increases on tolls hikes to Motorway bridges across Dublin, flying banners across bridges to protest the latest set of toll hikes.



"The M50 is Ireland's busiest route, with 160,000 commuters daily, most of whom cannot avoid it. This increase is hard going for those already struggling with punitively high living costs."

"Tolls and fuel taxes are not uncontrollable expenses; these are direct government decisions.

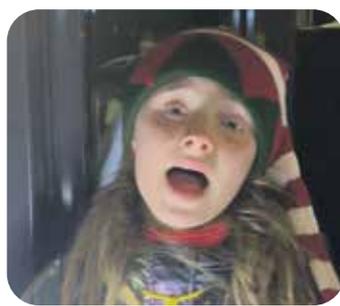
"Since 2008 the government has collected an estimated €2.2 Billion in M50 toll revenues.

This Government may use weasel words to try and wriggle out of any responsibility for these unjust hikes but remember the M50 is a state-owned motorway, fully paid for by the public. The bridges around the M50 were built for 58 Million punts at the time and the private company behind the project recouped its costs within just one year of tolling. The state later bought the bridges for €600 Million in 2007, yet motorists are still paying.

These are the people who get up early for heaven's sake

We received huge support from motorists. They need support and people who will stand up for them.

We are continuing our campaign, we are determined that motorists are not unfairly penalised for the privilege of using the M50 as they go about their daily business and I will be updating constituents on our future plans, so please keep an eye on my social media accounts.



"SONAS, a women's refuge in Blanchardstown was the beneficiary of a lovely Christmas Carol event I organised and we raised almost €1,400 for the centre.

"SONAS is providing a home, a haven and hope for women whose lives have been blighted by adverse circumstances. It is literally a lifeline to women and children fleeing from domestic abuse".

Sadly, figures show there is a disturbing rise in reported incidents of domestic violence across the country including in Dublin West.

"Tougher sentences together with a zero-tolerance policy must form part of a suite of efforts to come to terms with this".

### CALL FOR NATIONAL TESTING PROGRAMME FOR HAEMOCHROMATOSIS

Given that Ireland has the highest incidence of Haemochromatosis in the world there is an urgent need for National testing programme for the genetic condition. It can lead to serious health complications if left untreated.

I have it myself and I suffered for years without knowing why. I was very tired, and had many other symptoms. Once I was tested, I had a medical plan. Crucially I then encouraged my siblings to go and get tested and four of them tested positive and were able to get the help they needed.

A simple blood test can prevent these outcomes and significantly improve patients' quality of life.

I am urging this government to prioritise funding and resources for a nationwide haemochromatosis testing initiative. Not only would it save and improve lives it would also alleviate the long-term pressure on healthcare services which as we all know are creaking under the strain".

**"This is an investment in our future."**

So, here's to more busy times ahead and thank you for your continuing and unwavering support.

Slán go fóill - Cllr Ellen Troy

# SPOT THE BOT

## A Modern Guide to Identifying AI-Generated Images

Once upon a time, a photograph was proof. Today, it is merely a suggestion.

From flawless holiday snaps to viral news images and eerily perfect portraits, AI-generated visuals are now woven into daily digital life. Some are playful and creative; others are misleading, commercial, or deliberately deceptive. For anyone scrolling social media, reading online news, or even browsing property listings, the ability to identify AI-generated images has become a modern life skill—up there with spotting fake reviews or phishing emails.

So how do you tell what's real, what's retouched, and what was never real at all?

### 1. Hands, Teeth and Other Human Giveaways

AI has become astonishingly good at faces—but it still struggles with anatomy.

Hands are the biggest tell. Count fingers carefully. Extra digits, fused fingers, odd nail shapes or hands that seem to melt into objects are classic signs. Teeth are another giveaway: overly uniform smiles, too many teeth, or teeth that blur into gums without clear separation.

Ears, jewellery and glasses also deserve scrutiny. Look for asymmetry, floating earrings, or spectacles that don't quite sit on the nose or align with the ears.

### 2. The "Too Perfect" Problem

AI images often look better than reality—suspiciously so.

Skin can appear airbrushed to the point of plasticity, with no pores, blemishes or texture. Lighting may be cinematic but inconsistent, with shadows falling in impossible directions. Interiors and landscapes can feel staged, immaculate, and oddly sterile, as if designed rather than lived in.

If an image looks like a stock photo on steroids, pause before believing it.

### 3. Backgrounds That Don't Make Sense

While AI focuses heavily on the main subject, backgrounds are frequently an afterthought.

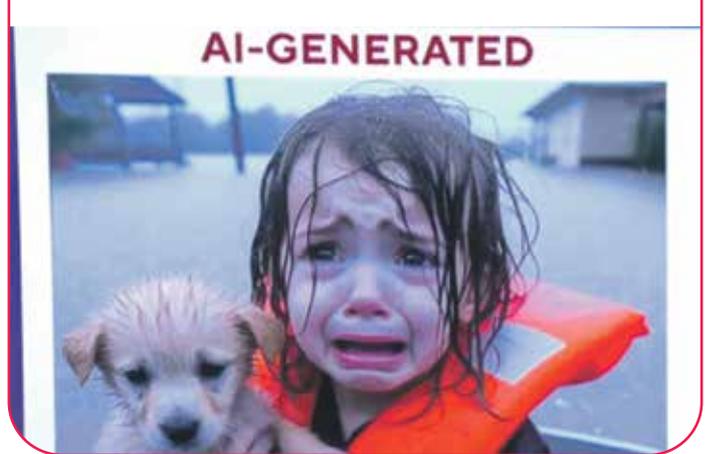
Watch for warped railings, bending door frames, roads that fade into nothing, or crowds that repeat the same faces like a visual echo. Text in the background—shop signs, street names, labels—is often gibberish or almost legible but not quite right.

In lifestyle and travel imagery, this is particularly common: beautiful cafés with menus that spell nothing, or city streets that feel familiar but don't exist anywhere.

### 4. Clothing, Logos and Branding Errors

AI struggles with logos and consistent typography.

Look closely at branded clothing, sports kits, or signage.



Letters may be slightly off, logos distorted or designs subtly incorrect. A GAA jersey with the right colours but the wrong crest proportions, or a luxury handbag logo that's just nearly right, should raise suspicion.

This matters commercially too—AI images are increasingly used in advertising mock-ups and fake product listings.

### 5. Emotional Flatness and the "Uncanny Valley"

Even when everything looks correct, something can still feel off.

AI faces often lack emotional depth. Smiles don't reach the eyes. Expressions feel frozen, neutral, or oddly intense. Group photos may show people reacting differently to the same moment, as if each face belongs to a separate scene.

Trust your instinct here. The uncanny valley is real—and your brain is good at detecting it.

### 6. Check the Context, Not Just the Image

Images rarely exist in isolation.

A dark grey advertisement for TRC Heating & Plumbing. The text is white and bold. It includes the company name "TRC", services "Heating & Plumbing", "GAS • OIL • Heatpumps", and contact information "All aspects of heating & plumbing", "M. 085 228 6311", and "E. jamie@trcheating.ie".

**TRC**  
**Heating & Plumbing**  
**GAS • OIL • Heatpumps**  
**All aspects of heating & plumbing**  
**M. 085 228 6311**  
**E. jamie@trcheating.ie**

Ask where it came from. Is it shared by a verified source? Is there a photographer credit? Has the image appeared suddenly with no backstory? Reverse image searches can help, but many AI images are entirely new—no prior history because they were never taken by a camera.

In news or political contexts especially, a single striking image with no corroboration should always be treated cautiously.

#### 7. Look for Disclosure (or the Lack of It)

Ethical creators increasingly label AI-generated content, especially in advertising, design, and editorial work. Phrases like “AI-assisted,” “created with generative tools,” or platform labels are becoming more common.

The absence of disclosure doesn’t automatically mean deception—but transparency is quickly becoming the mark of credibility.

#### Why It Matters

This isn’t about distrusting everything you see. AI imagery can be creative, useful and legitimate. The problem arises when artificial images are passed off as real—shaping opinions, selling false narratives, or quietly rewriting reality.

In a world where images once meant truth, visual literacy is the new critical thinking.

The rule of thumb is simple:

If an image makes you stop, stare, or feel something strongly—take a second look.

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 [jk.onwumereh@cllrs.fingal.ie](mailto:jk.onwumereh@cllrs.fingal.ie)

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 **Fianna Fáil**  
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

# LOVE LOCAL SHOP LOCAL

## The New Localism



### Why Dublin 15 Residents Are Choosing Independent Over Big Brands

**N**ot so long ago, convenience in Dublin 15 meant one thing: the shopping centre. Big brands, long opening hours and everything under one roof defined how people shopped, ate and socialised. While those options remain firmly in place, something quieter—and more personal—is happening across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart.

Residents are increasingly choosing independent businesses over national and international chains. It is not nostalgia, nor is it a rejection of modern life. It is a lifestyle shift rooted in trust, value and a desire for connection closer to home.

#### Familiar Faces, Real Relationships

One of the strongest pulls of independent businesses is familiarity. In local cafés, gyms, salons and food shops, customers are recognised. Orders are remembered. Conversations pick up where they left off.

For many residents, particularly those working from home or juggling family life, these everyday interactions matter. They provide a sense of routine and belonging that large-format retail rarely offers. A coffee becomes more than a caffeine stop; a haircut becomes a catch-up; a gym session feels less transactional and more communal.

In an era of automated checkouts and app-based everything, human interaction has quietly become a luxury.

#### Value Reconsidered

Independent does not automatically mean cheaper, but many D15 residents argue it offers better value. Portions are generous, quality is consistent and service feels invested rather than scripted. Mistakes are corrected quickly because reputations are local and fragile.

There is also greater transparency. Customers know where food is sourced, who runs the business and how long it has been part of the community. That knowledge builds trust—and trust reduces the temptation to shop around endlessly for marginal savings.

In high-cost times, value is increasingly measured in reliability and satisfaction, not just price.

#### The Rise of the Local Routine

Localism has also been shaped by changing work patterns. Hybrid and remote work have anchored people closer to their neighbourhoods during the day. Mid-morning coffees, lunchtime errands and after-school activities now happen locally rather than near city-centre offices.

This has allowed independent businesses to build steady, repeat trade rather than relying solely on weekend footfall. Residents speak of “their” café, “their” butcher, “their” gym—places that fit naturally into daily life rather than requiring a special trip.

The result is a more walkable, self-contained rhythm that feels calmer and more sustainable.

#### Supporting Local, Without Making a Statement

Interestingly, most people do not describe their choices as political or ideological. Supporting local is rarely framed as a protest against big business. Instead, it is practical and instinctive.

Parents value flexibility and understanding from local service providers. Older residents appreciate accessibility and familiarity. Younger professionals seek authenticity and quality. Across demographics, the

motivation is less about making a point and more about making life easier.

The pandemic accelerated this mindset, but rising costs have cemented it. When spending is careful, people want to know where their money is going—and who it is helping.

#### Independent Businesses as Community Anchors

Local businesses often do more than sell products or services. They sponsor youth teams, host charity events, display community notices and provide informal meeting spaces. Over time, they become part of the area’s social infrastructure.

In Dublin 15, this role is increasingly visible. Independent cafés double as remote work hubs. Local gyms foster supportive networks. Small retailers act as informal information centres, connecting people to what is happening nearby.

These are functions that no app can replicate.

#### A Balanced Future

Big brands are not disappearing from Dublin 15, nor are residents abandoning them entirely. Convenience, scale and choice still matter. But the automatic default has shifted.

The new localism is about balance: using large retailers when they make sense, but consciously choosing independents when quality, connection and trust matter more. It is a lifestyle decision shaped by time, cost pressures and a renewed appreciation for community.

In choosing independent, Dublin 15 residents are not looking backwards. They are shaping a way of living that feels more grounded, more human and—quietly—more resilient.

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# “No, Not American!”



## A Canadian in Ireland and the Art of Telling Them Apart

**C**anadians are not travelling to the USA as much now for reasons we all know. Some are coming to Ireland. They are, of course, very welcome, but if you want them to come again we need to avoid upsetting them.

The easiest way to do this is to call them American! So how do we recognise a Canadian. Here is some advice.

There's nothing quite like the soft “eh?” of a Canadian explaining to a bemused Irish barista that they are not, in fact, American. For Irish hosts who encounter visitors from across the Atlantic, this linguistic tangle comes with a wink and a shrug: tell a Canadian they're American at your peril.

After all, Canadians themselves will happily napkin-sketch the difference if given half a chance — especially these days. With trans-border tourism trends shifting in 2025, fewer Canadians are making the traditional pilgrimage southward to the United States and are increasingly peering toward destinations with greener landscapes, friendlier vibes, and — critically — fewer mistaken identities.

### A Subtle Shift in the Wind

Reluctance to cross into the United States isn't just a punchline at social gatherings — it has real travel consequences. In 2025, Canadian travel to the U.S. has been noticeably down, with road crossings plunging and flights cancelled or rethought. Political frictions, uncertainties at the border, and a growing desire for new experiences have combined to make destinations beyond the traditional southern road trip more appealing.

Some Canadian travellers are now exploring Europe, Mexico, and the Caribbean with renewed zeal; trends for travel searches from Canada to European destinations including Ireland have climbed in the first half of the

year.

Ireland may not yet be the number one alternative to the U.S., but it's steadily rising on Canadian radar screens. In 2023, around 180,000 Canadians visited the island of Ireland, spending handsomely and lingering for over a week on average.

This is precisely the sort of thoughtful wanderlust that fits seamlessly into Irish travel lore: friendly land, rolling hills, good craic and, crucially, correct national labels.

### How to Spot a Canadian (Without Asking Directly)

Irish hosts and fellow travellers might enjoy learning a few fun behavioural clues to help distinguish a Canadian from their southern neighbour:

#### 1. Accent Melodies

Canadian English has its own rhythm — softer vowels, gentler inflections, and the occasional “eh?” — that a quick-ear listener in Dublin or Galway might recognise. It's a subtle song compared to the broad chorus of American accents.

#### 2. Linguistic Clues

If someone asks where the washroom is, mentions Zed instead of zee for the letter “Z,” or says holiday instead of vacation, you're likely in friendly Canadian territory.

#### 3. Apologising as a National Sport

Canadians are famously polite — “sorry” is practically part of the tourism package. If a visitor says “sorry” after you bump into them, don't be fooled: they might just be Canadian in disguise.

#### 4. Hockey, Politics and Passports

Ask about sport or politics carefully. A chat about the NHL or a cheer for a non-U.S. hockey team, paired with mild disdain for being called “American,” is a reliable giveaway.

### The Great “Not-American” Mantra

Canadians are quick to correct “You’re American, right?” — and often with good humour. But the insistence is real: “American” in daily parlance typically means a citizen of the United States, and Canadians are happy to remind you of their distinct identity. This isn’t just etiquette; it’s part of how they see themselves on the world stage. Indeed, being mistakenly lumped under the giant “American” umbrella can provoke anything from a patient smile to a polite lecture on global geography.

### Ireland as a Warm Transatlantic Refuge

Ireland’s tourism numbers in 2025 show a mixed picture overall, but North America remains an important contributor, with visits from both the U.S. and Canada helping to counteract declines elsewhere.

Whether they’re watching sheep on the Dingle Peninsula, sharing pints in Temple Bar, or simply enjoying the long summer evenings in Killarney, Canadians bring a curious blend of politeness, dry humour, and yes — corrective national pride — to Ireland’s welcome mat.

So, to all the Irish hoteliers, bartenders and travel-obsessed locals: next time someone politely declines your offer of “American fare”, smile, hand over the Guinness, and say, “Ah, Canadian — got it.” They’ll appreciate it, and you’ll get the story next time around.

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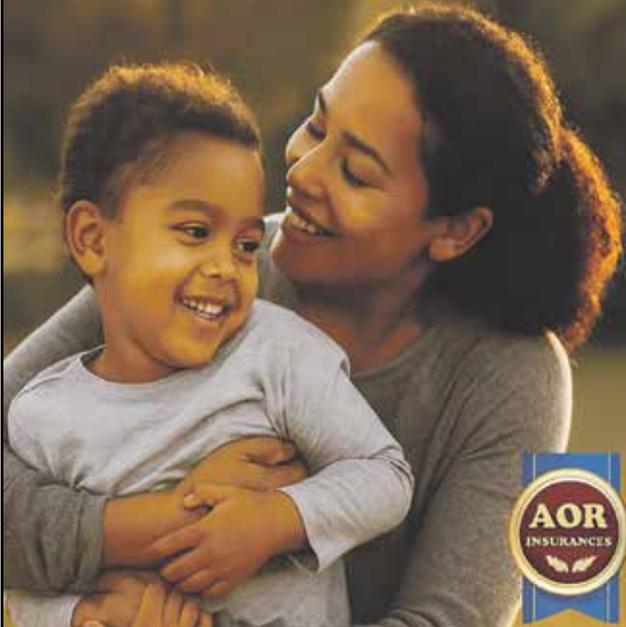
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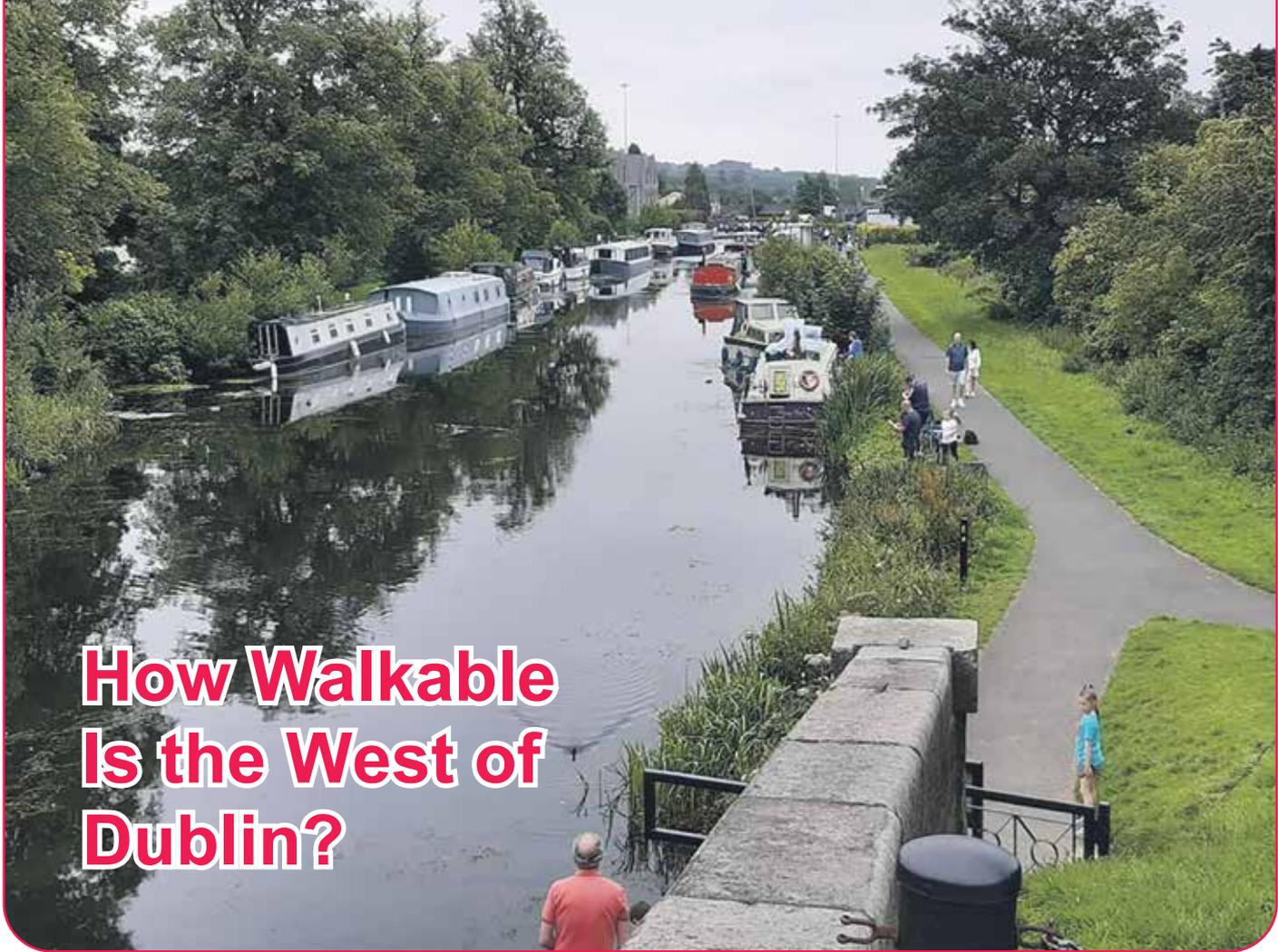
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# How Walkable Is the West of Dublin?

## Green D15 - From the Royal Canal to the Phoenix Park

One of Dublin 15's great selling points has always been space. Not just bigger homes or wider roads, but room to breathe—canals, parks, playing fields and green corridors that thread their way through daily life. In an era when walkability and access to nature are increasingly tied to wellbeing, D15 is often described as “green”. But how walkable is it in practice?

For residents of Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar and Mulhuddart, the answer depends on where you start, where you're going—and how much patience you have.

### **The Royal Canal: D15's Quiet Backbone**

The Royal Canal remains one of the west of Dublin's most underrated assets. Stretching through Castleknock and beyond, it offers a largely traffic-free route that suits walkers, runners, cyclists and families alike. On weekday mornings it doubles as a commuter artery; by evenings and weekends it becomes a social space, dotted with dog walkers, parents with buggies and people simply clearing their heads.

Its greatest strength is continuity. Unlike fragmented footpaths elsewhere, the canal delivers a sense of flow—something urban planners often talk about but residents immediately recognise. The weakness, however, lies in

access points. In some estates, reaching the canal involves navigating indirect routes, poorly signed entrances or narrow crossings that discourage casual use.

Lighting, too, remains uneven. While some sections feel safe well into the evening, others empty quickly after dusk, limiting their usefulness in winter months.

### **Phoenix Park: A World-Class Amenity on the Doorstep**

Few suburbs can claim a resource like the Phoenix Park on their doorstep. For Castleknock and surrounding areas, it functions as a shared backyard: a place for long walks, family cycles, early-morning runs and quiet reflection.

The park's internal walkability is exceptional—wide paths, long sightlines and multiple routes that encourage exploration. The challenge lies in getting there. Pedestrian crossings at key entry points can feel hostile during peak traffic, and cyclists often find themselves negotiating fast-moving cars just to access what should be a sanctuary.

For many residents, the park is used most at weekends, when traffic eases and time allows. As a weekday, everyday amenity, it still feels slightly out of reach for those without direct, safe walking routes.

Estate Design: Walkable in Parts, Fragmented in Whole  
Within individual estates, Dublin 15 generally performs well. Cul-de-sacs, green spaces and local playgrounds

create pockets of walkability that suit families and older residents. Short trips—to schools, local shops or sports facilities—are often achievable on foot.

Problems emerge when journeys cross estate boundaries. Footpaths can disappear abruptly, crossings may favour traffic flow over pedestrians, and direct routes are sometimes blocked by poor design decisions from earlier phases of development. What looks close on a map can feel awkward and unsafe in reality.

Parents frequently cite the “last 500 metres” problem: a walk that is pleasant until it reaches a busy junction or poorly designed crossing, where confidence drops—particularly for children walking independently.

### Cycling and Shared Spaces

Cycling infrastructure in D15 has improved, but inconsistently. Shared paths along green corridors work well for leisure cycling, yet everyday cycling—especially to schools, shops or transport hubs—still requires confidence and caution.

The tension between walkers and cyclists is also becoming more visible. Narrow shared paths can feel crowded at peak times, leading to calls for clearer separation, better signage and more generous design standards.

Residents are not asking for perfection—just predictability and safety.

### Nature as a Daily Luxury

Despite the shortcomings, what sets Dublin 15 apart is how woven nature is into daily life. Trees, open fields, rivers and canal paths are not destination experiences; they are part of routine. A lunchtime walk, an evening loop, a spontaneous stop to watch the light change over water—these moments matter.

For many residents, this access offsets longer commutes, housing pressures and the general busyness of suburban life. Walkability here is not just about getting from A to B; it is about mental health, social connection and the simple pleasure of moving through space at human pace.

### A Green Future, If Joined Up

Dublin 15 has the raw materials of a truly walkable suburb: world-class parks, historic waterways and established communities that value outdoor life. What it lacks is consistent, joined-up thinking—routes that connect rather than stop, crossings that prioritise people, and lighting that extends usability beyond daylight hours.

As expectations around liveability rise, the question is no longer whether D15 is green—it clearly is. The real challenge is whether that green can be fully accessible, safely and seamlessly, for everyday life.

For now, walkability in Dublin 15 is a story of contrasts: moments of calm and beauty, interrupted by pinch points and compromises. Residents have learned to navigate both—but many are quietly hoping the balance tips more firmly in favour of people on foot.

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# DUBLIN ON PARADE

How St Patrick's Day Became the City's Biggest Street Theatre

**T**here are a few mornings each year when Dublin feels like it's running on a different current. St Patrick's Day is one of them. Before noon, the city centre has already shifted into festival mode: families staking out kerbside vantage points, faces painted in green and gold, cafés doing brisk trade, and the soft, collective hum

of anticipation that builds as O'Connell Street fills.

Then the first beat lands—drums, brass, cheering—and the National St Patrick's Day Parade turns the capital into a moving stage. What looks effortless from the footpath is, in reality, one of the largest and most logistically complex annual events in the country: an international-scale production that still manages to feel

unmistakably local.

From State Ceremony to Citywide Spectacle

Although St Patrick's Day has long been marked in Ireland, Dublin's parade—at least in its official, state-sponsored form—is relatively modern. The first official state-sponsored St Patrick's Day parade in Dublin took place in 1931, in the early decades of the Irish Free State.

That origin matters, because it explains the parade's distinctive character. Dublin's event evolved from civic ceremony into something more ambitious: a public statement of identity, creativity and confidence, staged not in a stadium or theatre but along the capital's main streets. Over time, the parade became the centrepiece of a broader programme—today's St Patrick's Festival—which frames the day as part of a multi-day cultural moment rather than a single afternoon's procession.

### The Route That Becomes a Runway

Part of the parade's magic is geographical: Dublin lends itself to pageantry. The current route typically begins at Parnell Square, travels down O'Connell Street, crosses O'Connell Bridge, and continues through the south city to its finish around the Cuffe Street/Kevin Street area.

For spectators, that route functions like a runway and a reunion point all at once—northside and southside stitched together by performance, sound and colour. For the city, it is a moment of choreographed disruption: traffic paused, public space reclaimed, and familiar streets briefly transformed into a civic living room.

### Scale: When Dublin Becomes the Audience

If Dublin's parade began as an official event, it is now a major international draw. Recent editions have attracted crowds in the hundreds of thousands—around half a million spectators in Dublin is a commonly reported figure—creating an atmosphere closer to a major sporting final than a traditional procession.

On the parade itself, the numbers are equally striking. Reporting on the 2025 celebrations described around 4,000 participants taking part in the Dublin parade, with marching bands and performers drawn from Ireland and overseas.

The result is a rare kind of urban energy: a day when Dublin feels both intimate (children on shoulders, neighbours comparing notes) and global (multiple accents in the crowd, visiting bands, international media).

International Involvement: The World Marches with Dublin

St Patrick's Day has always had a strong diaspora dimension, and Dublin's parade now reflects that outward-facing story. International marching bands—recently including groups from North America and continental Europe—bring different musical traditions into the heart of the city, adding a distinctive “world festival” texture to an Irish national day.

International involvement is not only in who marches, but also in who watches. Coverage of recent St Patrick's Day festivities has noted substantial visitor numbers and international attention, reinforcing the parade's role as a tourism and cultural showcase as much as a community event.

And beyond Dublin, the day is amplified by a worldwide visual language—landmarks lighting up green, global cities staging their own parades—which loops back into the capital's celebrations: a sense that Dublin is both host and symbolic centre of a worldwide Irish moment.

### Why It Still Feels Like Dublin

For all the scale, the parade's tone remains rooted in Dublin's character: a blend of showmanship and self-awareness, tradition and invention. One minute you're watching tight musical formations and precision marching; the next you're drawn into theatrical street performance, giant-scale artistry, and the kind of whimsical imagery that turns into family folklore—“remember the year the whole street turned into a storybook?”

That balance—heritage without stiffness, spectacle without losing the everyday warmth—is why the parade continues to work. It's not simply a commemoration. It's a public expression of Ireland as it wants to be seen, creative, welcoming, modern, and confident enough to invite the world in, then send it home humming.



 THERE IS A SOLUTION GROUP

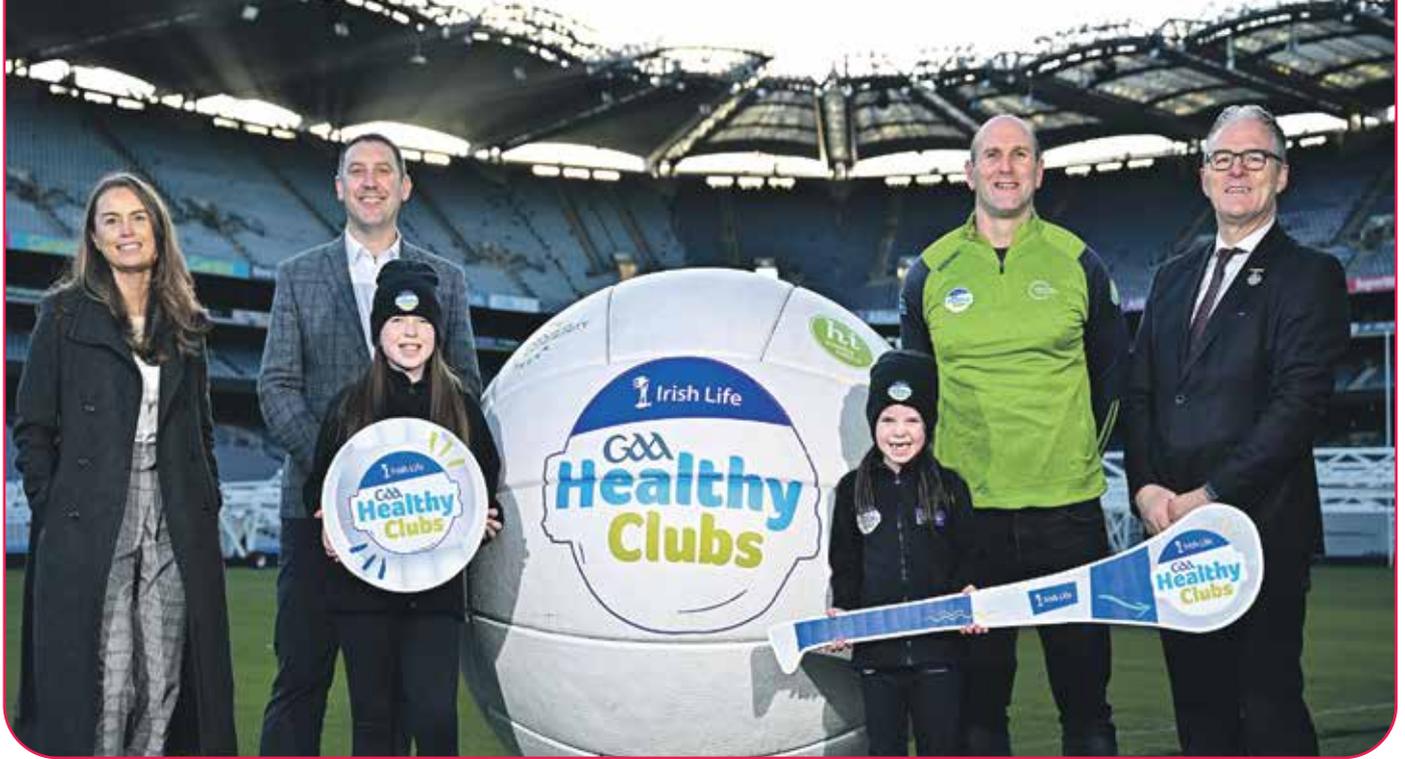
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# Connected to their Communities

Almost 90% of Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs participants feel more connected to their communities

Irish Life has renewed its support of the GAA Healthy Clubs Programme, which helps clubs support the holistic health of their members and communities they serve.

A record 1,100 GAA clubs and 39,000 participants took part in the 2025 'Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge' challenge, clocking over 7 million kilometres.

Dublin, January 6: 90% of participants in the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs 2025 steps challenge reported feeling more connected to others after completing the programme, highlighting the prominent role of local clubs in fostering community connection, social inclusion and positive physical and mental wellbeing in communities nationwide. The milestone comes as Irish Life renews its partnership with the GAA Healthy Clubs Programme, building on ten years of supporting the holistic health of members and communities across Ireland.

The 2025 Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge, a flagship initiative of the overall Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs programme, saw participants record over 7 million kilometres of walking, with a record 1,100 GAA clubs and 39,000 participants taking part nationwide.

Nine out of ten participants reported feeling more connected to their community following completion of the challenge, a 16% increase from the previous year's challenge, demonstrating the power of community challenges to foster widespread health benefits. On

average, participants in the challenge increased their active days from 4.5 to 5.5 per week, highlighting the Steps Challenge's contribution towards increased physical activity and wellbeing.

The results come as Irish Life and the GAA celebrate 10 years of their Healthy Clubs partnership, which aims to promote health and wellbeing within communities across Ireland.

Stacey Machesney, Head of Health and Wellbeing at Irish Life, said: "We are proud to be celebrating 10 years of partnership with the GAA on their Healthy Clubs Programme. This programme has a huge impact in local communities. By encouraging people to incorporate more movement into their daily lives, we're not only supporting improved physical fitness but also helping to strengthen mental wellbeing and boosting social connection. The record participation over the last year shows a growing awareness of how staying active can reduce stress, boost mood, and create strong, connected communities. Through our Irish Life Health of the Nation research, we discovered that 35% of Irish adults sit in the 'fair' or 'poor' health category, so there is still work to do in encouraging increased levels of activity. Fortunately, our research indicates that 90% of people are aware that physical activity contributes to stress management, meaning we have a solid foundation to build upon."

Jarlath Burns, President of the GAA, said: "After a decade

of landmark success, high achievement and impact, it is fantastic news to be able to announce that our successful partnership with Irish Life will continue until 2030. Since 2015 the visionary input of Irish Life in the support of our suite of initiatives synonymous with the GAA's Community and Health Department has had a profound and lasting impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people all over the country.

The GAA is about Games but, in truth, it is about people and supporting people – on and off the field. That is where a GAA Club is at its best and the Irish Life sponsorship supports this work. We see the results daily in the physical and mental health benefits of our members and the knock-on effect this has on the communities that our clubs serve. Our investment in Community and Health is one of the biggest success stories in our history and the support of Irish Life allows us to plan for the future with confidence.”

Declan Bolger, CEO of Irish Life said: “Irish Life is proud to extend our sponsorship of the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs programme for another four years. Our decade-long partnership is a reflection of our commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of people across Ireland. We are genuinely delighted to continue this journey and to

champion a programme that benefits people’s health, helps communities thrive and builds better futures.”

Rory O’Connor (Rory’s Stories), Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Ambassador, said: “As someone whose own club is part of the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs programme, I’ve seen how powerful it can be in bringing people together. What stands out to me is how much it supports overall wellbeing - not just physical health, but I’d say more importantly mental wellbeing and that sense of connection we all need, especially on those dark winter days. Whether it’s community events, the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge or simply having a space where people feel supported, the programme creates real, positive change in everyday lives. It reminds us that looking after ourselves is easier when we look after each other and I’d encourage anyone looking to start healthy habits this year to get involved in their local Irish Life GAA Healthy Club, meet new people and as always, have a bit of craic along the way.”

The 2026 Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Steps Challenge is now open for registration and is free to enter for all residents on the island of Ireland aged 18 and over. Participants can track and measure their progress via Irish Life’s MyLife app.

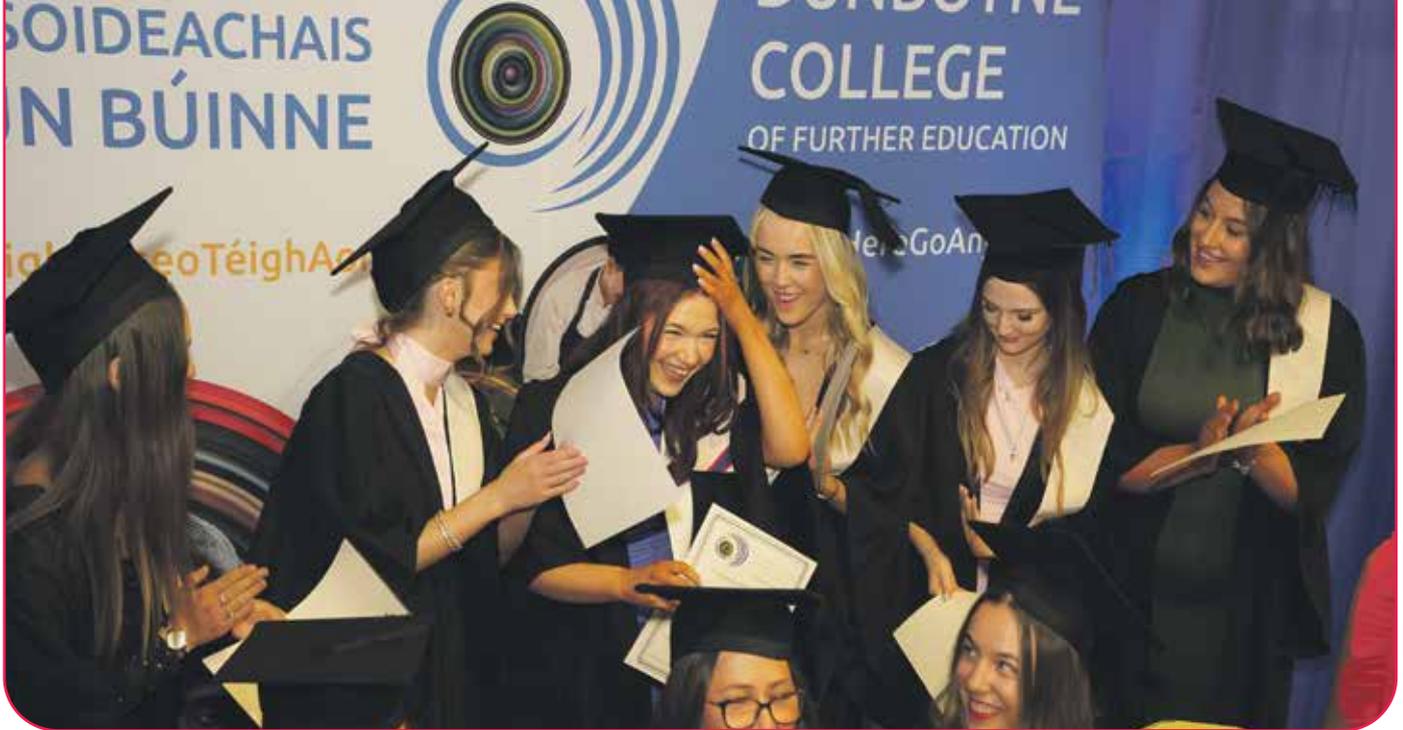
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# Dunboyne College

A smart, flexible and cost-effective career pathway for students in Dunboyne College

**A**s Leaving Certificate students start thinking of what next, further education vocationally focused and pre-university courses in Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFET) are emerging as a smart, flexible and cost-effective pathway to future success.

With over 1400 students Dunboyne College is now the largest college of further education and training in the country, offering over 70 further education and training (FET) courses but many people are still unaware of the opportunities that a FET course can offer a student according to Catherine Fox, Principal, DCFET.

Information about what is on offer in Dunboyne College will be available at its Open Night on Thurs 5th Feb 2026 from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. “We are constantly hearing from students and their parents that they unsure of what they really want to do or don’t know if they are ready to face into a costly 4 year degree. So we have decided that on our Open Night this year we will really focus on talking to students about what is involved in a course in Dunboyne and the progression and career opportunities.”

The DCFET Principal believes that it is important that students and their parents fully understand the potential of a FE course. “We find that many students think that the only route to a career is via the CAO but one of the key benefits of our courses is how effectively they allow the students to develop a clearer sense of career direction in a supportive environment without huge costs – all our full-time courses are €30.”

“Students who complete a course in Dunboyne

College can use their results instead of their Leaving Certificate points to access Level 7 or 8 degrees in universities while also developing practical, job-ready skills. Over 90% of our students who apply to progress to university receive a CAO offer. This includes places on degrees in Law, Nursing, Science, Engineering, Business and Information Technology in all the universities.”

Dunboyne College courses also place a strong emphasis on employability according to its Principal. “Mandatory industry placements give students real-world experience in their chosen field. So if you are thinking of a career in healthcare then you will discover very quickly what it requires. A course in DCFET acts like a foundation year to a degree often mirroring the 1st year modules. Students also develop essential skills such as critical thinking, independent learning, time management and academic writing. These skills build confidence and ensure students are ready to thrive in either the workplace or progress to university. We hear from many universities that they really welcome the fact that students have these skills.”

Cost is increasingly a major issue according to the Dunboyne College Principal. “Further education programmes provide high-quality training at a fraction of the cost of direct entry to higher education, making them an accessible option for students and families. All our full-time courses only cost €30 which makes further education a very cost-effective investment in your future career.”

**Further information on courses in Dunboyne College are available at [www.dunboynecollege.ie](http://www.dunboynecollege.ie)**

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**05<sup>TH</sup>**  
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**2026**  
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# DUNBOYNE COLLEGE

OF FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING  
COLÁISTE BREISOIDEACHAIS AGUS OILIÚNA DHÚN BÚINNE

## Healthcare

- Pre-University Nursing
- GP Practice Assistant
- Healthcare Assistant
- Pre-Paramedic Fire & Ambulance (with PHECC EFR)
- Physiotherapy Assistant
- Pre-Occupational Therapy Studies/OT Assistant
- Pre-Speech & Language Therapy Studies/SLT Assistant
- Pharmacy Assistant

## Social Care, Criminology & Psychology

- Social Studies with Psychology/Social Care
- Youth & Community Work
- Applied Psychology with Criminology
- Criminology, Psychology with Law

## Education & Childcare

- Early Learning & Care (Childcare)
- Pre-University Arts/Teaching
- Special Needs & Classroom Assistant Primary & Post Primary

## Science

- Pre-University Science
- Pre-University Agricultural Science
- Pre-University Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Science
- Pre-University Forensic Science
- Pre-University Environmental
- Pre-University Science with Sports
- Pre-University Food Science & Nutrition
- Pre-University Physiotherapy Science

## Law & Politics

- Pre-University Law
- Pre-University Law with Politics
- Pre-University Business Law
- Pre-University Politics, Economics & Social Science

## Arts

- Pre-University Arts
- Pre-University Liberal Arts
- Musical Theatre **NEW**

## Animal/Equine

- Equine Studies
- Pre-University Animal Science
- Advanced Equine Studies
- Advanced Animal Science
- Animal Care Assistant



## Engineering & Construction

- Pre-University Engineering
- Pre-University Construction/Furniture Studies **NEW**

## Business & Accountancy

- Pre-University Business
- Advanced Pre-University Business
- Human Resource Management
- Pre-University Business, Finance & Accounting
- Accounting Technician Apprenticeship
- Auctioneering, Valuation & Estate Agency
- Office Administration - Legal & Medical Secretary
- Office Accounts & Administration
- Hospitality & Business with Event Management
- Pre-University Marketing & Public Relations

## Computing & Technology

- Software Development & Games Design
- Pre-University Computer Networks & Cyber Security
- Graphic Design with Digital Media
- Mobile App Development
- Augmented & Virtual Reality

## Visual Art & Design

- Art & Design with Portfolio
- Animation
- Higher National Diploma In The Animation Industry
- Graphic Design with Digital Media
- Architectural Technology & Design

## Music & Sound

- Music Performance
- Sound Production
- Higher National Diploma in Artist Development for Musicians
- Higher National Diploma in Sound Engineering

## Film & Media

- Media & Film Production
- Higher National Diploma in Film Production
- Journalism

## Hospitality & Tourism

- Hospitality & Business
- Tourism & Airline Studies
- Culinary Techniques
- Advanced Professional Cookery

## Beauty & Hairdressing

- Beauty Therapy
- Pre-Apprenticeship Hairdressing
- Hairdressing Apprenticeship
- Advanced Beauty Therapy
- Barbering **NEW**

## Sports

- Pre-University PE Teaching & Coaching
- Sports Management with Business
- Personal Training & Fitness Instruction
- Sports Rehabilitation & Physiotherapy Assistant

### Get in touch:

📍 Dunboyne Business Park, Dunboyne, Co. Meath, A86 FH01  
☎️ (01) 8026577 ✉️ DunboyneCollege@LMETB.ie

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