

ISSUE 55

MAY 2025

Little Village

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our May Edition of Little Village.
Hope you are all enjoying our summer weather whilst still having time to read this edition of Little Village.
Interesting to see our article on the Blanchardstown Boom and see how rapid growth is reshaping one of Dublin's most dynamic districts.

As the sun sets, and Dublin's streets quieten read how a dedicated team of individuals begin their work ensuring the city remains vibrant and functional for the day ahead.
Finally, have a look at what's next for Dublin Transport in West Dublin.
On behalf of the Little Village Team we hope you enjoy our magazine and that it makes an interesting read for you all..

The Little Village Team

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- Clonsilla Inn
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- The Carlton Hotel Tyrrelstown



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



Patrick Browne
Graphic Design
hello@patrickbrowndesign.com
086 831 9322

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DUBLIN AFTER DARK

These night workers play an essential role in maintaining the rhythm of Dublin. Their dedication ensures that the city remains clean, safe, and vibrant, even when most of its inhabitants are asleep. Their stories and contributions are a testament to the resilience and spirit of Dublin's community.

Night Shift: Portraits of Dublin After Dark

As the sun sets and Dublin's streets quieten, a dedicated group of individuals begins their work, ensuring the city remains vibrant and functional for the day ahead. From street cleaners and Gardaí to bakers and artists, these night workers are the unsung heroes of the capital.

Street Cleaners: Keeping Dublin Pristine

Every night, Dublin City Council's waste management teams take to the streets, ensuring the city remains clean and welcoming. Their efforts are especially notable during major events, such as St. Patrick's Day, where over 440 staff members worked through the night to restore the city to its pristine state by morning.

Gardaí: Ensuring Safety After Dark

An Garda Síochána officers patrol the city during the night, maintaining public safety and order. Their presence is crucial

in preventing crime and assisting those in need during the quieter hours. The dedication of these officers ensures that Dublin remains a safe place for both residents and visitors.

Bakers: Rising Early for Fresh Delights

Before dawn breaks, bakers across Dublin are already hard at work, preparing fresh bread and pastries for the day's customers. Their commitment to quality and tradition ensures that the city wakes up to the comforting aroma of freshly baked goods.

Artists: Capturing the City's Nocturnal Beauty

Dublin's night also inspires artists who find creativity in the city's quiet hours. Photographers, like those featured in various publications, capture the essence of Dublin after dark, showcasing its unique charm and the people who inhabit its streets during these hours.



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Dublin's Forgotten Histories: The Hidden Stories Behind Everyday Streets

Beneath the surface of Dublin's bustling streets lies a rich tapestry of history, often overlooked by passersby. From tales of rebellion to remnants of bygone trades, the city's thoroughfares whisper stories of its multifaceted past.

Monto: Echoes of a Red-Light District

Nestled between O'Connell Street and Connolly Station, the area once known as Monto was Europe's largest red-light district from the 1860s to 1925. Streets like Mabbot Street, now James Joyce Street, bore witness to this era. Following a significant raid in 1925, which led to numerous arrests, efforts were made to erase this chapter from the city's narrative, including renaming streets to shed their notorious reputations.

Marrowbone Lane: A Nexus of Industry and Insurrection

Marrowbone Lane, located in The Liberties, carries a name derived from London's Marylebone, reflecting the influence of English settlers. In 1916, during the Easter Rising, the street became a strategic stronghold for rebels under Éamonn Ceannt. The area also showcases early modernist architecture, notably the social housing designed by Herbert George Simms in the 1930s.

Culinary Chronicles: Streets Named After Sustenance

Dublin's gastronomic history is etched into its street names. Cook Street and Fishamble Street hint at the city's medieval food markets, while Cornmarket and Winetavern Street reflect the trade of grains and wines. These names offer insights into the daily lives and diets of Dubliners across centuries.

Ghost Signs: Fading Testaments of Commerce

Scattered across Dublin are "ghost signs"—faded advertisements painted on brickwork; remnants of businesses long gone. Photographer Emma Clarke has been documenting these signs, capturing the city's commercial history before it's lost to redevelopment. These signs serve as poignant reminders of Dublin's evolving urban landscape.

Preserving the Past: Community Efforts and Resources

Initiatives like Donal Fallon's "Three Castles Burning" podcast and book delve into the lesser-known stories of Dublin's streets, shedding light on the city's hidden histories. Additionally, projects like the digitization of Dublin's street name origins by Conor Lucey provide valuable resources for those eager to explore the city's past.

Dublin's streets are more than mere pathways; they are storytellers of a city that has continually evolved, bearing witness to triumphs, tragedies, and transformations. By pausing to uncover these hidden narratives, one gains a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry that is Dublin's history.



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Urban Wild: How Nature Is Reclaiming Dublin's Hidden Spaces

In the heart of Dublin, a quiet transformation is unfolding. Amid the city's historic streets and modern developments, nature is making a resilient comeback, reclaiming forgotten corners and reshaping the urban landscape.

From community-led green spaces to citywide biodiversity initiatives, Dublin is witnessing a rewilding movement that brings ecological vitality and community spirit to its hidden spaces.

Rediscovering Nature in the City

Dublin's urban expansion has often come at the expense of natural habitats. However, recent years have seen a shift towards integrating green spaces within the city fabric. Community-driven projects are at the forefront of this change, transforming neglected areas into pockets of biodiversity and recreation.

One notable example is the St. Anne's Road Pocket Park in Drumcondra. Once a derelict strip of land, it has been revitalized into a vibrant community space teeming with native plants and insects. This transformation, led by local residents and supported by Dublin City Council, showcases how grassroots initiatives can breathe new life into urban areas.

Similarly, Irishtown Nature Park stands as a testament to nature's resilience. Developed from a former waste dump in the 1980s, this 21.6-acre park now hosts diverse flora and fauna, including rare bird species and wild orchids. Its evolution from rubble to a thriving ecosystem highlights the potential for ecological restoration within city limits.

Citywide Initiatives for Biodiversity

Beyond individual projects, Dublin has embraced broader strategies to enhance urban biodiversity. The Dublin City Biodiversity Action Plan 2021–2025 outlines measures to reduce mowing and pesticide use, promoting pollinator-friendly environments across 80% of the city's green spaces.

Educational programs like those by Bí URBAN further engage communities in ecological stewardship. Their initiatives, such as the honeybee apiary and wildflower meadow in Broadstone Park, not only support local biodiversity but also foster a deeper connection between residents and their natural surroundings.

A Greener Future for Dublin

The rewilding of Dublin's hidden spaces reflects a growing recognition of the importance of nature in urban settings. These green enclaves offer more than aesthetic value; they provide essential ecosystem services, enhance mental well-being, and strengthen community bonds.

As Dublin continues to grow, integrating nature into its urban planning will be crucial. The city's experience demonstrates that with community involvement and supportive policies, it's possible to create a harmonious coexistence between urban development and the natural world.



What to Do in the Garden This Time of Year

As the days grow warmer and the light stretches longer into the evening, gardeners everywhere feel the pull of the soil.

Spring is the season of renewal, and the garden is no exception. This time of year is all about waking things up—clearing out the remnants of winter and making space for new life to emerge.

One of the first steps is tidying up: removing dead leaves, broken stems, and any debris that may have gathered over the colder months. It's also a good moment to loosen compacted soil and work in some compost or organic matter to nourish the beds for the months ahead. Pruning is often necessary now too, especially for shrubs and perennials that benefit from a tidy cut before new growth begins. Plants like roses, hydrangeas, and butterfly bush respond well to spring shaping, and dividing overgrown perennials helps keep them healthy and productive. As for planting, much depends on your local climate, but hardy vegetables such as peas, spinach, and lettuce can typically be sown early, even before

the last frost. Once the danger of cold snaps has passed, more delicate crops like tomatoes, cucumbers, and beans can go into the ground.

Flower gardeners can start with cool-season blooms like pansies and snapdragons, with summer favorites waiting just a bit longer. Fertilizing is another task best done early in the season, giving plants the nutrients they need to start strong. A balanced, slow-release fertilizer works well for most garden types. Adding mulch around young plants helps conserve moisture, suppress weeds, and keep soil temperatures steady. Speaking of weeds, they tend to make their presence known quickly in spring. Catching them early, while they're still small, makes them far easier to manage. Regular weeding now saves hours of work later in the summer. With every small task—from pulling a weed to planting a seed—you're setting the stage for a vibrant and fruitful growing season. The garden is stirring to life, and there's no better time to be out in it.



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LABOUR PARTY MOTION - EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE AN APPROPRIATE SCHOOL PLACE

Every week, families in Dublin 15 are forced to battle to secure basic educational rights for their children with additional needs, reflecting an ongoing failure by the State to plan adequately for school places for children with additional educational needs.

- 399 new special classes were announced for the 2025/26 school year, but many children are struggling to secure places appropriate to their needs in their local community due to delays in providing essential school accommodation.
- parents and educators have significant concerns about the dysfunctional process of planning for special educational needs, where schools are asked at short notice to open classes without adequate resourcing, appropriate accommodation or training for staff, and with little or no specialised support.

The Labour Party proposed a Private Members' Motion in the Dáil on 30th April to ensure that every child has an appropriate school place in their locality in September 2025.

Among the key proposals are:

- Introduce a central application system for special educational places, drawing on the valuable experience of the Autism Class Application Trial (ACAT) process in Dublin 15, and develop protocols on the sharing of information at every step of the educational system. The lack of joined up thinking and even basic communication between the Departments of Education & Health and the NCSE has exacerbated the crisis in special education in Dublin 15.
- Guarantee that every school will receive sufficient funding for the full equipping of classrooms including modular buildings, sensory and play spaces and assistive technology when new special classes are opened.
- Provide a timeline for the national rollout of in-school therapists to provide certainty for schools and parents.
- Publish the finalised review of the EPSEN Act and commit to commencing the long delayed measures in the legislation.
- lift the arbitrary cap on SNAs and ensure that positions are funded when the NCSE has recommended a post is required.

This motion received support from other opposition parties, but unfortunately was not accepted by the Government.

Among other issues raised in the debate were:

- Essential training should be provided for teachers and SNAs through localised training hubs in particular areas, which draw on outstanding inclusive practice in some existing schools.
- The treatment of **Danu Community Special School** in Dublin 15 is a continuing scandal, where 12 students with additional educational needs were accepted for September 2024 but cannot enter the school because the Department of Education has failed for a full school year to deliver essential modular accommodation.
- The Minister should act urgently to ensure 1) that the modular accommodation is delivered for Danu CSS and 2) that wraparound therapeutic support is guaranteed for these students, so that they are not faced with a two tier educational experience.



Local Updates

I have included a few local updates on issues which I have been working on:

KELLYSTOWN CEMETERY

The contract for the construction of Kellystown cemetery was signed on 30th April, a contractor has been appointed and the cemetery is due to be completed this year.

CLONSILLA FRAMEWORK PLAN

The draft Master Plan for the Old School House, Clonsilla is being finalised for publication and public consultation in May 2025.

Following preparation of the Chief Executive's report on extensive submissions received during the public consultation, the amended draft Clonsilla Framework Plan will come to the full Council meeting on 12th May.

TAKING IN CHARGE – ONGAR AND HANSFIELD WOOD

- Phase 1 of Hansfield Wood was taken in charge following a vote at the full Council on 14th April 2025. The remaining areas of the estate are scheduled to be advertised for taking in charge in the coming months.
- Ongar Park has been advertised for taking in charge and will come for approval of Taking in Charge, probably at the Council meeting on 9th June.



LAUREL LODGE PLAYGROUND

Fingal Council has appointed a contractor for design and build of the new Playground for Laurel Lodge. A programme of works will be available shortly and the project works will be completed within three months of the date of commencement.



Working with
Cllr Mary
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What's Next for Public Transport in West Dublin?

West Dublin, encompassing areas like Blanchardstown, Castleknock, and Clonsilla, is undergoing a significant transformation in its public transport infrastructure

With major projects like MetroLink and BusConnects on the horizon, residents can anticipate improved connectivity, reduced commute times, and enhanced accessibility.

MetroLink: A Game Changer for Dublin's Transit

The MetroLink project is poised to revolutionize Dublin's public transport system. This €9.5 billion initiative aims to establish a high-capacity, high-frequency metro line stretching from Swords to Charlemont, covering approximately 19.4 kilometres with 16 stations. Key stops include Dublin Airport, O'Connell Street, and St. Stephen's Green.

While the current proposed route doesn't directly pass through Dublin 15, the project's impact will be felt across the city. Enhanced connectivity to central hubs will benefit West Dublin residents, especially those commuting to the city centre or the airport. The MetroLink is expected to alleviate traffic congestion and contribute to a more sustainable urban environment.

BusConnects: Redefining Bus Services in Dublin 15

Complementing the MetroLink, the BusConnects program is set to overhaul Dublin's bus network, with significant implications for Dublin 15. Phase 6a of the rollout, launched in January 2025, introduced new routes and 24-hour services, enhancing accessibility across the region.

Notably, new local routes such as the L1, L2, L3,

L12, L14, L15, L26, and L27 have become operational, providing improved connections to local centres and onward transport links. These developments aim to reduce reliance on private vehicles, decrease traffic congestion, and promote sustainable commuting options.

Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042: A Long-Term Vision

The National Transport Authority's Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042 outlines a comprehensive plan for the region's transport infrastructure. Key objectives include expanding public transport services, integrating different modes of transport, and promoting active travel options like cycling and walking.

For West Dublin, this strategy envisions enhanced bus services, improved cycling infrastructure, and better integration with other transport modes. The goal is to create a more connected, efficient, and sustainable transport network that meets the needs of a growing population.

The Road Ahead

As these projects progress, West Dublin residents can look forward to a more accessible and efficient public transport system. While construction and implementation may present short-term challenges, the long-term benefits promise to transform commuting experiences and support the region's development.

Stay informed about these developments by visiting the official websites for MetroLink and BusConnects.



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Blanchy Throwbacks

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Virgin Megastore

A haven for music lovers. Buying your first CD here was a rite of passage.

Xtra-vision

Pre-Netflix, this was the Friday night stop. Popcorn and a PS2 game rental, anyone?

Abrakebabra (original corner unit)

Late-night bites after the cinema — messy, delicious, unforgettable.

Quasar Laser Tag

Short-lived but legendary among 90s and early 2000s kids. You felt cool here.

Juice Bar (Food Court level)

Nothing screamed “healthy era” like ordering a wheatgrass shot after a Penney’s haul.

MINI-INTERVIEW: Linda McHugh – 27 Years at Boots

“I started working at Boots in ‘98. There was only one main corridor back then — and we still knew most customers by name. Watching the place grow, and now seeing customers come in with their kids? It’s surreal. But in the best way.”

MINI-INTERVIEW: Omar Sheikh – Local Youth Worker & Blanch Regular

“As a teenager, Blanch was more than just shops. It was where we met our mates, flirted with freedom, and figured out who we were. We didn’t have much, but we had Blanch.”

SNAPSHOT: “Did You Know?”

Blanchardstown Shopping Centre is the second largest in Ireland by floor space.

It hosted one of Ireland’s earliest 12-screen multiplexes. In 2024, plans were submitted for a cycle-accessible ‘green loop’ linking the centre to nearby parks and estates.

FEATURE: “Voices of Blanch – Resident Memories”

“I remember queuing outside Smyths for a Furby in ‘99 it was chaos, but we got one!”

— Sharon Nolan, Castleknock

“I met my now-husband at the food court. We were both working part-time there in college. That was 2006!”

— Deirdre Hanley, Clonsilla

“We used to save our lunch money to buy a single CD from Virgin. Then all sit around and listen to it on a Discman, one earbud each.”

— Tommy Kavanagh, Ongar

FUTURECAST: What’s Coming to Blanch Next?

Outdoor Seating Zones

Inspired by European-style plazas, perfect for socialising and relaxing.

Greener Infrastructure

Solar panels, eco-roofs, and pedestrian-first design in planning.

Smart Shopping

App-based parking, virtual queueing, and local loyalty programs on the horizon.

Community-Led Markets

Plans for monthly artisan and makers’ markets showcasing D15 talent.

FINAL THOUGHT

Blanchardstown Shopping Centre isn’t just concrete and commerce. It’s the sound of childhood footsteps echoing through tiled floors. It’s first jobs, awkward teen encounters, Christmas Eve dashes, and spontaneous catchups. It’s a living, evolving part of the D15 story — and its next chapter looks just as exciting.

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Weekend Warriors: Best Local Activities for Families in D15

When the school bags are flung onto hallway floors and the Friday night chips are wrapped up, there's one question every parent hears like clockwork:

"What are we doing this weekend?"

Luckily, in Dublin 15, you don't need to stray far for a weekend packed with fun, fresh air, and memory-making moments. Whether your crew is sporty, artsy, outdoorsy — or a little bit of everything — here's your ultimate guide to the best family-friendly things to do as the days grow longer and brighter.

For Nature Lovers: Parks & Playgrounds Worth the Trip

Tolka Valley Park (Dublin 15 Entrance)

With winding walking trails, duck ponds, and wide-open fields, this under-the-radar park is perfect for a bike ride or a nature scavenger hunt.

Top Tip: Pack a picnic and set up under the big trees near the playground. There's plenty of shade and space to spread out.

Hartstown Park

A community gem with a well-equipped playground, basketball courts, and walking paths. It's especially buzzing on Saturday mornings with junior sports.

For Active Families: Clubs & Classes

Coolmine Sports Centre

From family swims to indoor courts, this is a great rainy-day fallback. Check their weekend timetable for drop-in badminton and open pool hours.

St. Mochta's FC Mini Leagues (Porterstown Road)

Got a little footballer in the family? Their Saturday morning academy for younger kids is full of energy and good vibes — with coffee nearby for grownups.

Castleknock GAA Club

A brilliant intro to Irish sports with friendly community spirit. Keep an eye out for seasonal "GAA for All" family events that are inclusive and free.

For Creative Minds: Workshops & Weekend Fun

Draiocht Arts Centre (Blanchardstown)

A treasure for all ages. From puppet shows to parent-and-child art workshops, there's always something engaging happening on weekends.

Coming Up This Spring:

- Family Day Drop-In Workshops (no booking required!)
- Sensory-friendly performances for children with additional needs.

Imaginosity Pop-Ups (Various Libraries)

While Imaginosity's main space is in Sandyford, they often run pop-up creative workshops in Blanchardstown and Corduff libraries. Think science, art, and storytelling in one fun-filled hour.

For Outdoor Adventurers: Trails & Treasures

Royal Canal Greenway

A gentle, family-safe cycle route starting near Coolmine or Clonsilla. Bring a scooter, trike, or just your walking shoes and follow the water.

Wildlife Watch: Spot herons, ducks, and maybe even an otter!

The Fairy Trail at Millennium Park (Ongar)

A little magic goes a long way. Kids love spotting fairy doors hidden in trees — and there's a new one added almost every season by locals.

Family-Friendly Events This Spring/Summer

Blanchardstown Library Storytime Saturdays

Free weekly events for under-6s with crafts and singing.

Summer in the Park (Tolka Valley & Hartstown)

Outdoor theatre, food stalls, and pop-up sports days — keep an eye on Fingal County Council's event page.

Family Art Sundays at Draiocht

Casual, drop-in creative fun for all ages — from painting to paper crafts.

The Takeaway

You don't need to plan a big trip to make weekends special. D15 is bursting with low-cost, local gems for family fun — many of them outdoors, creative,

and community-driven.

So next Saturday morning, when you hear that familiar "What are we doing today?"

— you'll be ready with an answer.

Now go on, get out there — your D15 adventure awaits.

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Royal Canal Greenway: The Quiet Trail That Goes Forever

While much of Dublin 15 buzzes with the hum of traffic, shopping bags, and school runs, there's a quieter rhythm running right alongside it — one that flows with the water, rustles with the reeds, and whispers in the footsteps of early morning walkers.

Welcome to the Royal Canal Greenway — an often-overlooked ribbon of tranquillity that stretches from the heart of Dublin 15 all the way to the city centre and beyond. Whether you're a cyclist chasing the sunrise or someone looking to clear your head after work, this peaceful path offers a scenic escape with stories at every turn.

A Hidden Gem Between Suburb and City

Snaking quietly past Blanchardstown, Coolmine, and Castleknock, the towpath was once used by horses pulling cargo barges. Today, it's a scenic corridor loved by locals in the know — but often passed over in favour of more popular spots like Phoenix Park or the Tolka Valley.

But those who do venture here know the truth: the Royal Canal Greenway isn't just a path — it's a portal. One step in, and the city melts away. Birdsong replaces bus horns. You trade queues for quiet. And best of all, it's right on your doorstep.

"It's where I go to think, walk the dog, or just breathe," says Clonsilla resident Jamie Byrne, who runs the trail daily. "You forget you're still in Dublin."

Walk It, Run It, Ride It

The Greenway caters to all paces and people:

- Walkers will love the flat, even path and the benches dotted along the way — perfect for a book or a coffee break.
- Runners can build routes from Coolmine to Ashtown or all the way into the city, away from traffic and noise.
- Cyclists can cruise westward toward Maynooth or even continue all the way to Longford — a 130km route that's now Ireland's longest greenway.

Pro Tip: Start your journey at Coolmine Station and head east — the stretch toward Ashtown is beautifully shaded, with stunning views of old stone bridges.

Wildlife and Waterways

Beyond its peaceful charm, the Greenway is also a haven for urban wildlife. Along the quieter sections near Coolmine and Clonsilla, keen-eyed visitors might spot:

- Swans gliding in silence
- Hérons standing sentinel on the banks
- Otters — rare, but magical when they appear
- Dragonflies and wildflowers in summer

"We saw a heron catch a fish last week," says local teacher Aine McGrath. "My kids were amazed. You don't expect that kind of David Attenborough moment in Dublin 15."

A Path with a Past

Originally constructed in the late 1700s, the Royal Canal was a vital transport link before the railway age. It carried grain, peat, and people across the country, pulled by tow horses that walked the very same path that joggers use today.

Remnants of the old infrastructure — stone mile markers, lock houses, iron bridges — still pepper the trail, adding a layer of history to your journey.

Rest, Refuel, Repeat

One of the joys of the Greenway is its connection to local stops where



you can take a well-earned break:

Grab a coffee and pastry at Lock Six Café near Castleknock

Chill on a bench near the Collins Bridge lock, a quiet corner for reflection

Treat yourself at the Tolka Valley scoop shop in summer (a hidden local secret)

The Quiet Side of Dublin 15

In a postcode known for its energy — from busy schools and sports clubs to crowded shopping hubs — the Royal Canal Greenway is a necessary contrast. It reminds us that slowness can be a strength, that beauty often hides in the in-between, and that sometimes, the best place to escape... is just around the corner.

So next time the day gets too noisy, lace up your runners or hop on your bike. The Royal Canal is waiting — flowing quietly, forever forward.

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Roderic O'GORMAN_{TD}

A Chairde,

I hope you are keeping well. 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 in my **spring newsletter** which will shortly be delivered to homes all across the Dublin West constituency.



Public Transport Updates

BusConnects

In areas where the new BusConnects network has already been implemented, **passenger boardings have risen by up to 40%** compared to the rest of the network.

While we await the rollout of the new **B Spine** to Blanchardstown, I am working to tackle capacity issues on current services, to progress the new bus to the airport and to reduce the instances of ghost buses.



At a recent meeting with the National Transport Authority

DART+West

The DART+ West project is progressing, following the granting of a railway order last year.

I am advocating for the trialling of planned level crossing closures, so their impact can be understood and addressed before the introduction of **ten minute DART frequencies**.

Drones

The increased use of drones in Dublin West has been raised by many residents, who have concerns over safety, noise pollution and privacy.

Airborne drones have are a new technology with many potential benefits, but as they are used in more areas, it is really important that we get the regulations around them right.



Acting as quizmaster for the Community Credit Union table quiz in the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

SEN School Spaces

I am aware of the acute need for more spaces for children and teenagers with special educational needs in Dublin West. I have met with key stakeholders and I presented their concerns and needs at a recent meeting with the National Council for Special Education. I will be liaising closely with local schools and parents in the coming months and communicating updates directly - please get in touch if there is any support I can give to you.



With members of Fingal Comhairle na nÓg recently

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Fingal Community Volunteers

Get involved in your community



The public are invited to the free Volunteer Expo on the 19th May in the Malahide Grand Hotel anytime from 3 - 6 PM.

The event will showcase 30+ local and national not-for-profit organisations like Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living, Community First Responders, Park Run Junior, Meals on Wheels as well as charities like Pieta, RNLI, Irish Red Cross, Foroige, ALONE, etc. People

can come and chat to see which organisation they might be interested in volunteering with.

Phoenix FM will do an outside broadcast during the Expo. There will be free CPR demonstrations and complimentary 'Message in a Bottle' to take home.

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Emer CURRIE TD

Dear Resident,

In this edition, I wish to provide an update on some work I've been doing in Castleknock Village relating to important issues raised during the General Election. In addition to my role as Assistant Government Chief Whip, I have been appointed to the Fine Gael Front Bench by Tánaiste Simon Harris as Spokesperson for Childcare.

Best wishes, *Emer*



The Future of Castleknock Village

By far the biggest local issue that came up on the doorsteps during the election was concern around the future of Castleknock Village. Since then, I have engaged with both the Council and Government about the possibility of utilising a 'regeneration framework' for Castleknock that has been successful in rural towns and villages.

I'm now pleased to say I have been given assurances by Fingal County Council that Castleknock Village will benefit from a 'Health Check' under Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Town Centre First Policy towards the end of the year. A Health Check is a collaborative tool for determining some of the issues with a town/village, its health and vibrancy, leading to recommendations and a localised strategy. Stakeholders such as local businesses and community organisations would be involved – something I believe is vitally important.

I am engaging with retailers and prospective retailers in the Village to support them as much as possible. Here is an update at the time of printing, but this is an ongoing process.

Castleknock Village Businesses



D ONE 5

A new Cafe, Bar and Restaurant called 'D One 5' will open in the former Twin Oaks unit under local management.

NAIL SALON



The tenancy agreement with Lidl is at final stages. Hopefully there will be news to share later this month.

O'BRIEN'S



An O'Brien's Wine Off-Licence has taken over the Castello Bruno unit. Permission has now been granted to subdivide the unit into two separate premises — one part will become a café/restaurant, the other an off-licence. Works are scheduled to begin at the end of May, with a target opening in June for both units.

VISION IRELAND

ReLoved by Vision Ireland will be opening its doors in Castleknock on the 1st of May. Building on the success of their first concept store in Greystones, this new location will offer more premium preloved fashion.



P

LIDL CAR-PARKING

Residents and businesses contacted me about the impact of the enforcement of a two-hour car-parking stay policy and clamping. Following my direct engagement with Lidl Ireland, I'm happy to share that they've agreed to extend parking to three hours. This change should provide a better balance between access and turnover for shoppers.



Emer is working in Dublin West with...



Regina
Doherty MEP



Cllr Kieran
Dennison



Cllr Ted
Leddy



Cllr Siobhán
Shovlin



Cllr Gayle
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PUBLIC TRANSPORT Update 37 & 38 Bus Route

Residents continue to raise major concerns about the prevalence of 'ghost' and late buses on a number of routes serving Dublin West. I share those concerns. Following representations, I have secured a revised timetable for the 37 and 38 routes, which was implemented on April 13th.

As a TD I have been able to delve more deeply into the public transport issues. The NTA (National Transport Authority) has stated its priority is to fix capacity issues on existing services, rather than to enhance them, citing a limited budget for new or additional services in 2025. We have also lost out on additional train carriages which were earmarked for the Maynooth line pre-2020 but post Covid were moved to intercity services.

I raised concerns about delays and decisions made by the NTA with the Taoiseach in the Dáil. He said he would look into those matters and committed to holding the NTA to account. I am also meeting the new Minister for Transport in coming weeks about Dublin West.

Fingal County Council has received an allocation of €500,000 under the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme for 2025. If there are any bus stops which you believe may require a shelter, RTP1 installations or other works, please contact my office.



Pictured with Jeremy Ryan from the NTA, as we discussed Transport issues in Dublin West

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Pictured with James O'Higgins, Norman Principal Mrs Eileen Cuddy-Higgins and Cllr Siobhan Shovlin

Mount Sackville 160th Anniversary Gala Dinner

It was a real privilege to attend a special event celebrating the 160th anniversary of Mount Sackville. The evening brought together parents, teachers, and past pupils to honour the school's rich history and lasting impact on the community.

Safe Routes to Edmund Rice College

Residents with children attending Edmund Rice College continue to raise concerns with me about the safety of the current walking and cycling routes to the school. Myself and Cllr Siobhan Shovlin have re-engaged Fingal County Council on the issue since improvements at Circle K were not included in last years Programme of Works.

A new pedestrian and cycling accessway will be introduced as part of the development at Phoenix Park Racecourse, in the longer term. This will join up to changes introduced under Busconnects.

In the meantime, the Operations Department have committed to including interim upgrade works for pedestrians and cyclists at Circle K in the 2026 Programme of Works, subject to the members approval, available funding and resources. Cllr Shovlin will continue to keep this on the agenda at Council level.

Hot School Meals

The Hot School Meals Programme has been extended to more schools in Dublin West - please get in contact if your school is not included for more information.

In addition, following concerns about nutritional quality and waste, a review is being conducted by the Department of Social Protection. As a parent myself I very much welcome this.



With Minister for Education and Cllr Ted Luddy at St Philip the Apostle Senior National School in Mountview

Our chaotic secondary school lottery needs a major redesign

Emer Currie
Opinion

Common applications process would simplify admissions, alleviating stress for parents, teachers and schools

As a TD I have been able to delve more deeply into the public transport issues. The NTA (National Transport Authority) has stated its priority is to fix capacity issues on existing services, rather than to enhance them, citing a limited budget for new or additional services in 2025. We have also lost out on additional train carriages which were earmarked for the Maynooth line pre-2020 but post Covid were moved to intercity services.



Questions to the Minister for Education

SCHOOL PLACES Minister commits to Common Application Process Pilot in 2026-7

Some of you will know that as a Senator and Election Candidate I campaigned for a Common Application Process to be implemented in areas like Dublin West where secondary school places are in high demand, waiting lists are long, and families can face disappointment when it comes to securing their preference.

You may recall my opinion piece about the benefits of same in the Irish Times - please google if you would like to read more.

I was successful in getting a commitment in the Programme for Government about rolling them out. This approach has been tested by secondary schools in areas like Limerick and Ennis and is now also being trialled by principals in Dublin 15 for primary school special class places.

The Minister for Education has recently committed to me in the Dáil that a pilot for a broader system for secondary schools will begin for school year 2026-2027, aiming to streamline enrolment and admissions, reducing stress and worry for both parents and students. I have asked the Minister to include Dublin West in this pilot.

Sustainable D15: How Local Initiatives Are Going Green

A closer look at how community-led efforts are helping Dublin 15 build a greener, more sustainable future.

From lush community gardens tucked behind libraries to refill stations popping up in cafés, Dublin 15 is quietly but confidently making waves in the local sustainability scene. While climate action often feels like a global challenge, the truth is that some of the most meaningful change starts right on our doorsteps.

Across Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Ongar, and beyond, a growing network of residents, businesses, and organisations are embracing eco-conscious living — not as a trend, but as a way of life.

Here's a roundup of the people and projects making Dublin 15 a little greener every day.

Community Gardens: Growing More Than Just Vegetables

Mulhuddart Community Garden (Behind the Community Centre)
This vibrant space has become a local hub for sustainability education, food growing, and intergenerational bonding. Volunteers grow herbs, vegetables, and pollinator-friendly flowers — and host workshops on composting and biodiversity.

"It's not just about the garden," says volunteer Niamh Byrne. "It's about showing people that change is doable — and even joyful."
Mountview Allotments

Locals can rent small plots to grow their own produce. It's a wonderful example of land being used not for development, but for shared purpose and food security.

Recycling & Upcycling: Beyond the Green Bin

Rediscovery Centre Pop-Ups (Hosted Seasonally in Blanch Library)

Workshops on furniture upcycling, mending clothes, and creative reuse are offered free to the public thanks to partnerships with Fingal County Council.

WEEE Recycling Days (Blanchardstown & Castleknock)

These "drop-and-go" events make it easy to recycle old electronics, batteries, and small appliances — and they're incredibly well attended.

"We collected over 7 tonnes of electrical waste at the last event in D15," said a WEEE Ireland spokesperson. "The demand is real — people want to recycle right."

Green Transport: The Rise of Pedal Power

With the Royal Canal Greenway and increased investment in cycle lanes through Castleknock and Clonsilla, more locals are ditching the car for shorter trips.

Blanchardstown Cycle Bus

A volunteer-run initiative where parents and local cyclists escort school kids by bike in a safe, social convoy. It's as charming as it is impactful.

"It's changed our mornings," says local mum Deirdre Nolan. "It's safer, healthier, and the kids love it."

Schools & Youth: The Next Generation of Eco-Leaders

Green Flag Schools (D15 Has Over a Dozen!)

Primary and secondary schools across the area have earned Green Flags for efforts in energy, water, waste, and biodiversity. Students take the lead on eco committees and awareness campaigns.

Foróige Environmental Groups (Corduff & Mulhuddart)

Teens meet weekly to work on upcycling projects, clean-ups, and climate activism. One recent success? A "Trash to Treasure" fashion show using only reused or recycled materials.

What's Next for a Greener D15?

- Expansion of community composting schemes
- Sustainable living fairs and "green days" at local shopping centres
- Roll-out of public refill water stations at busier walking routes
- A new "Green Map of D15" being developed by Fingal's sustainability team (coming this summer!)

Final Thought

Sustainability in Dublin 15 isn't about perfection — it's about progress. It's about neighbours sharing seeds, cafés swapping plastic for paper, and young people leading climate conversations at school.

In a world that often feels overwhelmed by environmental issues, D15 offers a hopeful reminder: real change starts small — and it starts here.

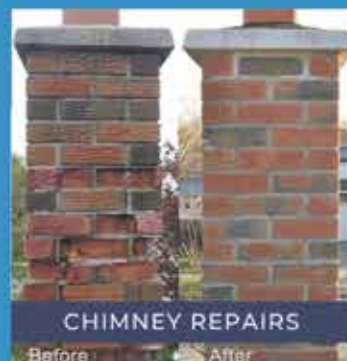


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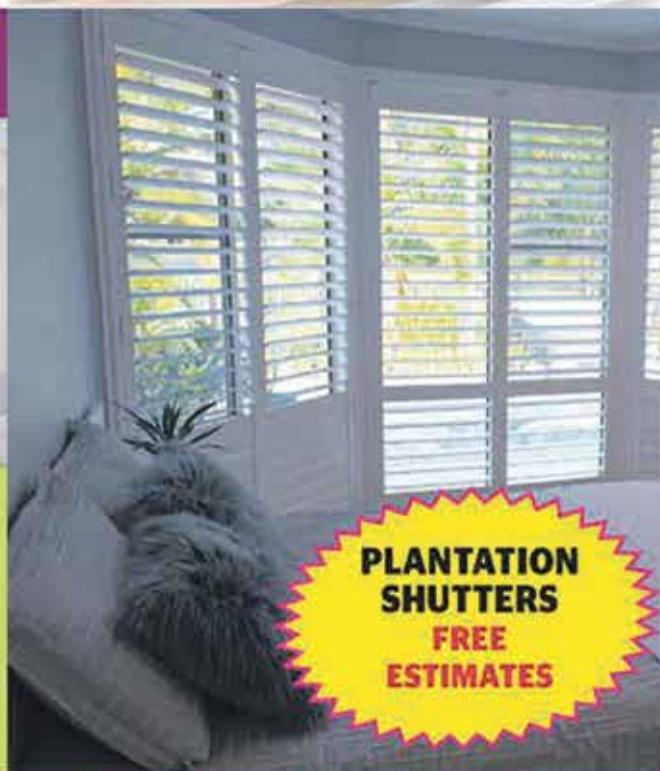
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Rambles in Dublin - Chapelizod Part Three

By guest author Jim Lacey. Parts 1&2 were featured in the February and March editions of Little Village. View them online at littlevillage.ie



It was once home to the Lord Deputy or Irish Viceroy whose state residence was on the southside of Chapelizod hill road opposite Chapelizod Court. William of Orange stayed there after the Battle of the Boyne.

British Prime Minister Henry John Temple 3rd Viscount Palmerstown who was British Prime Minister for two terms in 1855-1858 and again from 1859-1865. He was a member of the Temple family who were once landlords of Chapelizod and Palmerstown. The Temple family sold their land to Robert Wilcox from Mountmellick in Laois. He in turn sold these lands in 1763 to John Hely-Hutchinson. Tim Healy no relation to Hely-Hutchinson was a member of the Irish Party at Westminster and lived at Glenaulin in Chapelizod.

It was Tim Healy who did more to bring down the great Parnell than any other apart from probably, only Parnell himself. Healy was the first Governor General of the Irish Free State and was an uncle of Kevin O'Higgins Minister for Home Affairs in the first Free State Government. Healy was suspected by some historians of being a British agent with the codename Thorpe. It is believed that he had been reporting to British intelligence since as early as the Phoenix Park assassinations. Some sources say he deluded Arthur Griffith during the Treaty negotiations into believing that Lloyd George would plan to reduce the area of Northern Ireland to such a size that it would be unworkable. He held these meetings in secret with Griffith, a classical ploy to weaken the unity of those on the Irish side in the tense negotiations and this led on to sow the seeds of the Civil War.

Another literary figure who lived nearby was Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu. Le Fanu bought three Dublin newspapers and amalgamated them into the Dublin Evening Mail. It would continue to be published until 1962. He also was editor and owner of the Dublin University Magazine. He also wrote a lot of gothic horror short stories and novels in a similar vein such as The House by the Churchyard set in Chapelizod, Uncle Silas and a novel featuring a female vampire 'Carmilla.' Bram Stoker the author of the novel Dracula worked as a journalist with Le Fanu's Evening Mail. Le Fanu's novel Carmilla greatly influenced Stoker's Dracula although it must be said Stoker's work of gothic horror is a far superior piece of writing.

Chapelizod's literary past does not end there. Lord Northcliffe the newspaper magnet responsible for the Daily Mail, Daily Mirror and Evening News was born in Chapelizod in 1865 as Alfred Charles Harmsworth. He later owned the Sunday Dispatch and rescued the Observer and The Times from financial difficulty and acquired the Sunday Times. He also published The Children's Encyclopaedia and Harmsworth Universal Encyclopaedia. His brother also another Alfred, Alfred Sydney Harmsworth 1st Viscount

Rothermere was involved with the same newspapers and also founded the Glasgow Daily Record and the Sunday Pictorial Record. He served as President of the Air Council in Lloyd George's government during The Great War. He was an early admirer of Adolf Hitler and was photographed with him, but his support cooled shortly before the war broke out. He died in 1940. Another brother Cecil Bishop Harmsworth 1st Baron Harmsworth was born in London and served in government. Another brother, Sir Robert Lester, was a barrister and a director of Amalgamated Press and was also a Member of Parliament.

"Not bad from a family of fourteen children." Their home was at 'Sunnybank,' Chapelizod.



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Blanchardstown Boom: The Changing Face of D15

How rapid growth is reshaping one of Dublin's most dynamic districts



Once a quiet suburb on the edge of the capital, Blanchardstown has become a symbol of Ireland's 21st-century transformation. From mushrooming housing estates to the constant churn of construction cranes, D15 is evolving—fast. With new developments reshaping skylines and fresh faces arriving from every corner of the globe, the area is no longer just a commuter base. It's a destination, a hub, and a community in flux.

This is the story of the Blanchardstown Boom—a closer look at what's driving change, and what it means for those who call D15 home.

Bricks and Mortar: Housing on the Rise

Walk around Ongar, Clonsilla, or Tyrellstown and it's hard to miss the new builds. Apartment blocks, duplexes, and sprawling estates are sprouting up to meet soaring demand. With Dublin's city centre pushing residents outward, Blanchardstown has become a focal point for both first-time buyers and renters seeking space and affordability (at least relative to Dublin 2).

According to local estate agent Niamh Redmond, "Interest in the area has skyrocketed post-COVID. Families love the green spaces and access to the M50, and investors see long-term potential in the rental market."

But with growth comes pressure. Residents are voicing concerns about infrastructure—overcrowded schools, GP shortages, and traffic congestion topping the list. "It's great to see homes going up," says Jason, a father of three in Castleknock. "But services have to keep pace."

Retail Renaissance: More Than Just a Shopping Centre

Blanchardstown Shopping Centre has long been a commercial anchor for the region. But now, the area's retail landscape is diversifying. Local business hubs like Westend Retail Park and the Village Centre are seeing rejuvenation, while pop-up markets and food trucks signal a shift toward independent and multicultural offerings.

"There's a real buzz around small business," says Aisha Mohammed, owner of a new Ethiopian café near Waterville. "People here are ready for something different—global flavours, new ideas."

Upcoming plans to redevelop parts of the Blanchardstown Centre with co-working spaces and residential units further underscore the area's shift from suburban mall to urban micro-hub.

A Tapestry of Cultures: D15's New Demographics

With one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country, Blanchardstown is a case study in modern Irish multiculturalism. Over 35% of residents were born outside Ireland, with communities from Nigeria, Poland, India, Brazil, and the Philippines forming vibrant social and cultural networks. Local schools like Luttrellstown Community College and St. Mochta's reflect this diversity in their student bodies and programming. "We've gone from celebrating St. Patrick's Day to celebrating everyone's day," says principal Declan Byrne. "Diwali, Eid,

A photograph of a modern loft conversion interior. The room features a large window with a view of greenery outside, a contemporary lamp, and a comfortable seating area. The text overlay promotes loft conversions as a way to add value and space to a home.

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This shift is being felt in arts, sport, and politics too, as new voices demand space in local conversations about planning, representation, and identity.

The Big Question: Can Community Keep Up with Growth?

As development accelerates, long-time residents worry that the area’s identity is getting lost in the rush. “It’s all happening so fast,” says Marie O’Sullivan, who’s lived in Blanchardstown since the early ‘80s. “There used to be a stronger sense of ‘neighbourhood.’ Now I don’t know half the people on my street.”

In response, grassroots groups are stepping up. Community gardens, youth programs, intercultural festivals, and resident-led cleanups are helping to build cohesion in this expanding landscape.

Looking Ahead: D15 in 2030 and Beyond

With MetroLink planned to extend into the area and ongoing upgrades to public amenities, the future of Blanchardstown is poised to be even more interconnected. But the real question is not whether D15 will continue to grow—it will. The question is: how?

Can the area preserve community spirit amid rapid change? Will young people be able to afford to stay? And will the benefits of development be shared equally?

Blanchardstown is no longer a suburb watching from the sidelines. It’s a living, shifting symbol of what Ireland’s urban future might look like—diverse, dynamic, and defined not just by new buildings, but by the people who live and thrive in them

Why It Matters

Understanding the evolution of Blanchardstown isn’t just about planning permission and property prices. It’s about identity, inclusion, and what kind of place D15 is becoming—for all of us.

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Help is finally here for young people suffering from anxiety

As exam time approaches, ISPCC is now offering free Digital Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes to support the increasing numbers of young people experiencing mental health difficulties

The busiest times for the Childline Listening Service is around exam times and holiday times

April 22, 2025

A parent whose child is suffering from anxiety can feel utterly helpless. They are desperate to help them but simply don't know what to do. For a parent whose child is on the CAMHS waiting list, the waiting time can feel catastrophic. But ISPCC can help parents to help their children.

ISPCC provides three separate but complimentary Digital Mental Health and Wellbeing programmes, two of which are available to parents/carers of either anxious children or teens while the third is aimed at teenagers experiencing low to moderate levels of anxiety.

These programmes are available to all, it isn't necessary to be on a CAMHS waiting list to avail of them.

Regional services manager at ISPCC South Aoife Griffin says that holiday periods can be very stressful for some young people

It's a time when there can be quite a lot of calls from young people who are experiencing anxiety and stress, especially as the exams come closer.

The online programmes, which are all free, are based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, or CBT, and are created by SilverCloud, a leading digital mental health provider.

Emma Smylie's teenage daughter Eimear completed the Space from Anxiety programme after her GP recommended it for the 17-year-old. Emma says that Eimear has suffered from anxiety for years and while they have previously sought help many times, now it's different.

"I've never asked her if she thought that the programme was working because I know that it is," Emma says. "My parents can see it too."

Eimear's dad died when she was just a toddler and by the time she was eight years old, she was suffering with anxiety. Emma describes the ISPCC programme as a "blessing. It's interactive and she has got into a routine of following the programme and sticking to it.

"I know that she's figuring things out in a calmer manner. The relief of seeing her so much happier is great. This course is just so valuable. I really think that it should be implemented in secondary schools as part of their curriculum, especially during transition year. I'm going to do the parent programme Supporting an Anxious Teen. I think I'll really benefit from it as well."

Supporting an Anxious Child and Supporting an Anxious Teen are programmes that will help users to understand anxiety and better support their child or young person. Space from Anxiety is aimed at

15–18-year-olds, and it is designed to empower young people who experience low to moderate anxiety. An adult can refer themselves or their child to the programmes.

The programmes include interactive tools, activities, mood monitors and journals to encourage users to apply CBT to their own lives. Users have 12 weeks in which to complete the programme under the guidance of a volunteer, known as a supporter, and can avail of an unsupported version of the programme for one year after this time.

Dee Higgins, an ISPCC volunteer who works on its Digital Mental Health and Wellbeing programmes, believes that the programmes are empowering for users of all ages. "It gives parents and young people a chance to deal with their anxieties before it becomes a huge issue," she said, adding that "if parents can understand what their child is going through, that's a huge step."

To find out more, go to <https://www.ispcc.ie/guided-digital-programmes/>

•ISPCC delivery of these programmes is supported by the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention, as part of 'Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide

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Heritage in Your Backyard: The Untold History of D15

Nestled in the northwest reaches of Dublin, the D15 area is often associated with its bustling retail hubs, vibrant suburbs, and multicultural communities. But peel back the modern layers, and a deeper story emerges—one written in stone, whispered through ruins, and rooted in centuries past.



Welcome to the hidden heritage of Dublin 15: a journey through abbey grounds, ancient castles, and sacred churches that have shaped the identity of this evolving region.

Clonsilla's Abbey Grounds:

Walk the quiet paths near the Royal Canal in Clonsilla, and you may come across the remains of what was once a thriving religious site. The old abbey grounds—though modest and partially overgrown—still hold traces of a medieval monastic presence.

Local lore suggests the site may have been part of a 12th-century settlement, possibly linked to the Augustinians, who were active in the region. The surrounding graveyard, with its weathered headstones and moss-covered walls, feels like a portal to another time. It's a popular spot for walkers, but few realize they're strolling through living history.

"You feel something spiritual here," says local historian Maeve Kearney. "Even with the hum of the nearby train, there's a stillness. It's like the land remembers."

Castleknock Castle: Ruins with a View

Perched above the Phoenix Park boundary in Somerton Park lies Castleknock Castle, a striking Norman ruin dating back to the 12th century. Built by Hugh Tyrrel, one of Strongbow's knights, the castle once commanded a strategic view over the surrounding lands.

Despite now being in ruins, Castleknock Castle remains a favourite for curious explorers and amateur photographers. Its remaining towers and curtain walls hint at a time when the site served as both a stronghold and a symbol of power.

The castle also has its share of dark legends. According to folklore, a Lady of the Castle haunts the grounds, weeping for a lost love. Whether myth or memory, it adds an air of mystery to an already captivating site.

St. Brigid's Church, Mulhuddart:

Set back from the main road, St. Brigid's Church in Mulhuddart is often overlooked, but this humble church dates back to the 13th century. It's believed that an earlier Christian site existed here, linked to the area's namesake, St. Brigid.

The church's medieval tower still stands tall, surrounded by an old graveyard filled with Celtic crosses and locally carved headstones. The site is known for its "rag tree," where people still tie cloth and ribbons as a form of prayer or remembrance—an ancient pagan tradition that blends with Christian devotion.

"People come here looking for peace or answers," says parish volunteer Patrick Byrne. "It's a special place, full of soul."

Preserving the Past

While much of Dublin 15 has rapidly urbanized over the past few decades, these heritage sites remain quiet anchors to its roots. Local


groups like the Castleknock Historical Society and Fingal County Council are actively working to document, preserve, and raise awareness of these treasures.

Digital heritage trails, walking tours, and school projects are helping a new generation connect with the past. It's a reminder that history isn't just something in books—it's right outside your front door.

Take the Journey Yourself

Next time you're walking in the Phoenix Park's western fields, passing through Blanchardstown village, or cycling along the canal, look a little closer. Dublin 15 is not just a postcode—it's a palimpsest of stories, carved into ruins, whispered through old stones, and waiting to be discovered.

So, grab your camera, your curiosity, and a good pair of boots. The history of Dublin 15 is right there in your backyard.




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116% Rise in Cancelled Outpatient Appointments

A 116% rise in cancelled appointments at Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown over the past year has been described as a “dangerous indictment of an understaffed and under resourced health system”.

Aontú Cllr Ellen Troy says the deeply disturbing rise in cancellations was uncovered in figures released to her party by the Minister for Health showing that outpatient appointment cancellations at Connolly Hospital more than doubled, rising from 614 in 2023 to 1,332 in 2024, an increase of 718 cancelled appointments in just 12 months.

She says “This situation is shocking.” “Over 1,300 individuals in our community experienced disruptions in their care within a single year. These figures represent real people who are suffering, awaiting responses, and facing real risks to their health.”

“This is a national issue regarding hospital capacity and planning or rather lack of capacity and lack of planning. The challenges experienced at Connolly are indicative of a broader issue across the country. Hospitals are operating beyond their capacities, staff are under significant strain, and patients are adversely affected. The Government’s reluctance to implement decisive measures is causing direct harm to individuals.



She repeated Aontú’s call for elective-only hospitals to take the pressure off general hospitals like Connolly and help prevent mass appointment cancellations during periods of overcrowding.

“Instead of pushing ahead with urgently needed reforms, this Government continues to sit on its hands while the health system continues to deteriorate”

Figures also released to Aontú last week show 109,000 adverse incidents occurred in Irish hospitals in 2023 alone, with 469 of these incidents resulting in death, including 160 suspected suicides.

Cllr Troy concluded: “This is an issue of life or death. Patients are being let down at every level. Behind every cancellation is a missed diagnosis or delayed treatment which we know can have fatal consequences for patients. It’s time this Government stopped hiding behind spin and started fixing the system. Communities like Castleknock, Blanchardstown and beyond deserve better.”

CRIOCH.

For further information contact Cllr Ellen Troy 089 2677330

An advertisement for Richard's Tyres. It features a red car parked next to a white van with 'MOBILE TYRE UNIT' and 'RICHARD'S TYRES' written on it. Several spare tyres are stacked on the ground. The text below the image reads: 'RICHARD'S TYRES', 'MOBILE TYRE FITTING WE COME TO YOU!', 'Professional tyre fitting at your home/work', 'Supply Budget, Mid-range & Premium New Tyres', 'Mobile Tyre fitting car, van, SUV', 'Premium New tyres Budget New tyres', 'Puncture Repairs Wheel balancing', '089 466 2018', and 'mobiletyreunit.com'.

A green and white poster for Aontú. At the top is the Aontú logo with a tree icon and the tagline 'LIFE | UNITY | ECONOMIC JUSTICE'. Below this, it says 'Councillor Ellen TROY' in large white letters. Underneath, it says 'Castleknock - Fingal County Council'. At the bottom, it includes the hashtag '#aontu' and the email address 'ellen.troy@cllrs.fingal.ie'.

New Irish Identity: Voices from the Next Generation

In the heart of Ireland's changing social fabric, a new generation is shaping what it means to be Irish. These are the voices of second-generation immigrants and multicultural youth—young people growing up in Dublin and Kildare who navigate life between cultures yet proudly root themselves in the Irish experience.



Their stories reflect a broader evolution in Irish identity—one that is less about bloodlines and more about belonging, expression, and shared futures.

"I'm Irish, and I'm Nigerian. There's no conflict in that."
— Amina, 17, Dublin

Amina, a Leaving Cert student from Clondalkin, spends her weekdays debating with her school's Model United Nations team and weekends at church choir. Her parents moved from Lagos in the early 2000s, but to her, Dublin is home.

"I speak Yoruba with my parents and slang with my friends," she laughs. *"I can tell you who scored for Shamrock Rovers last weekend and how to make proper jollof rice. That's Irish too. Our Ireland."*

For Amina and others like her, dual identity isn't a contradiction—it's an enrichment.

"I didn't see people like me on TV growing up. Now, we're telling our own stories." — Amir, 20, Maynooth

In Kildare, Amir, born to Pakistani parents, is part of a student collective producing short films about multicultural life in Ireland. "We're not waiting for someone to represent us—we're doing it ourselves," he says.

His latest project, Green, White & Us, features young people from Syrian, Indian, Brazilian, and Polish backgrounds—all discussing what being Irish means in 2025. "It's not about passports. It's about home."

The Rise of 'Hyphenated Irishness'

Terms like "Nigerian-Irish," "Polish-Irish," and "Pakistani-Irish" are no longer oddities—they're realities. With over 12% of Ireland's population born abroad, and many more born to immigrant parents, today's youth are creating a hybrid identity.

Community groups like Foróige's Multicultural Youth Program and Youth Work Ireland have seen participation grow rapidly. "There's a hunger for spaces where cultural pride and Irish identity can coexist," says Siobhan O'Leary, a youth development officer in Kildare. "These kids are showing us what Ireland already is."

Cultural Fusion as Everyday Life

From hip-hop in Irish to hijabs at GAA matches, multicultural youth are blending traditions in powerful ways. TikTok creators in Ballymun discuss mental health in Urdu and Irish, streetwear designers in Naas remix Celtic knots with North African motifs.

And in classrooms, conversations once defined by "Where are you from?" have shifted to "What's your story?"

Challenges and Change

Despite progress, many still face racism, stereotyping, or a lack of representation. But young people are vocal, organized, and pushing back.

"We're not guests here," says Lara, 16, from Tallaght. *"We're Irish. And we're changing what that looks like."*

Her youth council recently launched a campaign called This Is Irish Too,

spotlighting stories from multicultural teens across the country. The project, now backed by the Department of Children and Equality, will feature in schools this autumn.

Redefining the Narrative

As Ireland continues to diversify, the next generation isn't waiting for permission to belong—they're redefining the narrative on their own terms.

In the words of Amir: *"Ireland's no longer a monoculture. It's a mosaic. And every piece—every story—matters."*

Why It Matters

This new Irish identity is inclusive, evolving, and deeply hopeful. At a time when the global conversation is shaped by migration, representation, and belonging, Ireland's youth offer a compelling case study in how nations can adapt—and flourish.

They're not asking if they're Irish enough. They're telling us what Irishness is becoming. And that future? It's bright, bold, and beautifully diverse.



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Castleknock Update

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On **Sunday June 15th** the Castleknock Village Festival will take place for the fourth year in a row. Once again it will be operating along side the Castleknock 5k run which will be in aid of St Francis Hospice.

The run will start from the grounds of Castleknock College and finish in Castleknock Village. The village will remain closed to traffic until 6pm and a whole range of activities for all age groups will take place. If anyone is interested in taking a stall or participating in the festival please contact us at castleknockvillagefestival@gmail.com or if you wish to sign up for the run you can do so at <https://www.popupraces.ie/race/castleknock-5km-2025/>



Kate O'Neill of the Castleknock 5k Run and Cllr Ted Leddy of the Castleknock Village Festival.

Cllr Ted Leddy



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Then and Now: The Evolution of Blanchardstown Shopping

For anyone who grew up in or around Dublin 15, the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre isn't just a place to buy shoes or catch a film — it's a local landmark, a rite of passage, and, for many, a memory factory.

Since opening its doors in 1996, Blanchardstown Shopping Centre (or just “Blanch” to locals) has evolved dramatically. What began as a suburban retail hub on the edge of Dublin has become one of Ireland's largest and busiest shopping centres — and it's still growing. But the story of “The Centre” is as much about community as it is about commerce.

The Birth of a Giant (1990s)

When Blanchardstown Centre first opened, it was a big deal. The 1990s were a boom time in Ireland, and the centre's sleek, American-style layout — with open atriums, escalators, and hundreds of parking spaces — was unlike anything locals had seen.

It had an iconic Dunnes, a Superquinn (now SuperValu), and the beloved Virgin Megastore for music lovers. Kids would beg their parents for an hour in the arcade, teens made it their weekend hangout spot, and the food court was a novelty all its own.

“The day it opened, we went as a family and treated it like a day trip,” recalls local resident Maeve Brennan. “I remember thinking the escalators were the fanciest thing I'd ever seen!”

The 2000s: Expansion and Entertainment

The early 2000s brought major additions: new retail units, upgraded food courts, and the opening of The West End extension in 2004 — a stylish annex with flagship stores like Zara and H&M that added a more European feel.

Entertainment options boomed too. The Odeon Cinema (originally UCI) became the go-to spot for date nights, while Leisureplex gave families a spot to bowl and play. Blanch was no longer just a place to shop — it was a full-blown lifestyle destination.

Blanch Today: A Community Crossroads

Fast-forward to today, and the centre looks slicker than ever. International giants like JD Sports, River Island, and Apple have joined the roster, while longtime staples like Penneys and Boots

remain strong.

But what makes Blanch special isn't just the brands — it's the community that flows through it. On any given day, you'll see students from TU Dublin Grangegorman grabbing bubble tea, young families heading to Smyths, and pensioners enjoying a cuppa in Butlers or O'Brien's.

“We basically raised our kids here,” laughs Liam O'Reilly, who's lived in Castleknock for over 30 years. “Saturdays were Blanch days — it had everything.”

Looking Ahead: What's Next for the Centre?

The future of Blanchardstown Centre is shaping up to be just as ambitious as its past. Under new ownership and with fresh investment pouring in, plans are in motion for:

- More Outdoor Dining Spaces
- Green Zones and Walkable Features
- Modernisation of Interiors and Storefronts
- Integration with Sustainable Transport Routes

There's even talk of introducing coworking hubs or “town square”-style community spaces — acknowledging that shopping centres now serve more as community anchors than just commercial hubs.

Blanch: A Mirror of a Changing Ireland

In many ways, the evolution of Blanchardstown Shopping Centre reflects the evolution of Ireland itself — from the Celtic Tiger era, through recession and recovery, to today's vibrant multicultural society.

What started as a suburban shopping centre is now a vital part of the region's identity. It has seen generations grow up, trends come and go and continues to adapt to the changing rhythms of life in Dublin 15.

So, whether you remember queuing for Pokémon cards, loitering by the fountain with your mates, or just stopping in for a quick bite on your lunch break — one thing's for sure:

Blanch isn't just a centre. It's a story — and it's still being written.



Congratulations to Iveth – Castleknock Tidy Towns New Social Media and Website Support

We are delighted to announce that Iveth Veronica Soto Colchin de Perez, a dedicated CTT volunteer since June 2024, has stepped into the role of social media & website Support.

Since joining CTT, Iveth has been an enthusiastic volunteer in various projects, including tree planting, litter picking, weekly village clean-ups, composting, and work in the polytunnel. She studied in the University of San Carlos of Guatemala and has a master's degree in organizational communication and has worked in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in Guatemala.

Iveth brings valuable skills that will help community

engagement and help more people get involved in Tidy Towns.

We look forward to Iveth's contributions in supporting CTT's mission:

"Castleknock Tidy Towns is an environmental, sustainability, and climate action group, working together to make Castleknock a better place to live, work, attend school, visit, and enjoy."

Thank you, Iveth! We're thrilled to have you in your new role.

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Outstanding Progression success for Dunboyne College students

Figures released by the CAO underline the continuing popularity of the post leaving certificate further education sector as a route into higher education degrees.

This is particularly evident in Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE), one of the largest providers of further education and training (FET) courses in the country and one of the largest feeder colleges to third level institutions in this region.

Denis Leonard, Principal of Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE), says that over 90% of eligible DCFE students who applied through the CAO in 2024 received offers based on their QQI results rather than their Leaving Certificate points including a growing trend of DCFE students securing offers for Level 8 degree courses requiring over 500 points based on QQI results alone.

Five hundred and ten (510) DCFE graduates primarily secured places on Level 8 honours degree courses totalling four hundred and ninety nine students (499), with three hundred and one (301) also receiving a second offer at Level 7. These figures do not include those who went to Northern Ireland, the UK or further afield for their chosen course or those who applied as mature students which is a separate competition.

Among 2024 offers to DCFE graduates were multiple places on DCU's Athletic Therapy and Training, Sports Science and Health, Physical Education/Biology and numerous Science and Business courses. DCFE students also secured places on Biological/Biomedical, Geography, and Physical Sciences in Trinity, Law, and Veterinary Nursing, Commerce, Psychology and over



10 students into various science courses in UCD.

Approximately 50% of DCFE graduates complete Pre-Employment programs and enter the workforce in sectors like childcare, healthcare, animal care, airline/tourism, business/IT, hairdressing, beauty therapy, and professional cookery. Mr. Leonard notes, "In fact we cannot meet the employers demand for graduates in some sectors."

Further information on all current courses can be found on www.dunboynecollege.ie



Accredited QQI Level 5 & 6 Courses . Open to all applicants.
Applications open November 2024.

For enquiries regarding our courses contact our Guidance Counsellors:
Derek Ball and Meabh Nimmo by email: guidance.dbc@lmetb.ie

Course duration is 1 or 2 years depending on the course. All courses are full time requiring on campus attendance.

Healthcare

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

Social Care, Criminology & Psychology

- Social Studies with Psychology/Social Care
- Youth and Community Work
- Applied Psychology with Criminology
- Criminology, Psychology with Law *NEW*

Education & Childcare

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

Science

- Pre-University Science
- Pre-University Agricultural Science
- Pre-University Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Science
- Pre-University Forensic Science
- Pre-University Environmental and Geographical Science
- Pre-University Science with Sports
- Pre-University Food Science and Nutrition
- Pre-University Physiotherapy Science
- Pre-University Animal Science
- Advanced Animal Science
- Animal Care Assistant

Law & Politics

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

Arts

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

Animal & Equine

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

Engineering & Construction

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

Business & Accountancy

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

Computing & Technology

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

Visual Art & Design

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

Music & Sound

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

Film & Media

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

Hospitality & Tourism

- Hospitality and Business
- Tourism and 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 and Coaching
- Sports Management with Business
- Personal Training and Fitness Instruction
- Sports Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy Assistant




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