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**THE CURIOUS LIFE OF THE
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See Page 11

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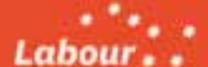
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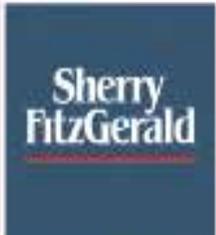
See Page 26

Happy Easter to all our clients



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The Kildare Commute

A County Embracing When the Road to Opportunity Becomes the Long Way Round

How can you tell someone is from Kildare?

They say they live “in the countryside” but still spend two hours a day on the M7.

For thousands of people living in County Kildare, the day begins before the sun has fully risen. Coffee in hand, they join the steady migration east toward Dublin — a daily ritual that has become one of the defining features of life in Ireland’s fastest-growing commuter county.

Kildare has long been marketed as the perfect compromise: countryside living within reach of the capital. Spacious homes, strong schools, and vibrant towns like Naas, Maynooth, Leixlip and Newbridge have attracted families priced out of Dublin but still tied to its employment opportunities. Yet for many residents, that dream comes with a familiar catch: the commute.

A County Built Around the Journey

Kildare’s population has surged over the past two decades. Once quiet market towns are now bustling hubs of modern housing estates, cafés and retail parks. With this growth has come a daily movement of workers heading to Dublin’s business districts, tech campuses and hospitals.

The main arteries — the M4, M7 and the commuter rail lines — carry the bulk of this traffic. On paper the infrastructure is impressive. In practice, it often feels stretched to its limits.

Morning congestion on the M7 near Naas or the M4 approaching Lucan can turn what should be a 35-minute journey into a frustrating crawl. Even small incidents ripple quickly

across the network, turning a routine drive into an unpredictable marathon.

The Train That Everyone Wants

For many commuters, rail is the preferred option. Stations in Maynooth, Sallins, Leixlip and Newbridge offer regular services to Dublin city centre, and the trains are often full long before they reach the capital.

Peak-time services can feel like a daily game of strategy: arriving early enough to get a seat, timing connections perfectly, or accepting the inevitability of standing shoulder-to-shoulder for the final stretch into the city.

Yet despite the crowds, trains remain popular because they offer something precious — predictability. Compared with motorway traffic, the railway often feels like the calmer choice.

The Cost of Commuting

Beyond time lost in traffic, commuting carries a financial cost. Rising fuel prices, toll charges, parking fees and public transport fares can quickly add up.

For families who moved to Kildare for more affordable housing, the savings can slowly be eroded by daily travel expenses. It’s a calculation many households quietly run every month: lower mortgage versus higher commuting costs.

The Rise of Hybrid Work

One development has softened the strain slightly — remote and hybrid work. Since the pandemic, many employers have embraced flexible working patterns, allowing commuters to

Continues P04

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring Edition of Little Village. For thousands of people living in Counties Kildare, the daily commute is a familiar routine. Choosing the right car for commuting has become more important than ever. Have a look at our article on the Best Cars for Commuting.

Did you know that although the Chinese company SHEIN operates globally, its European Headquarters are based in Dublin. Regulators in Europe have launched a formal investigation into the company and IRELAND is at the centre of it. See our report on why SHEIN is facing investigation in Ireland and Europe.

Finally, as Easter approaches we must remember that once upon a time an Easter Egg was exactly that....an Egg!!!!!!But not in today's world. Enjoy our interesting and amusing article on the "Curious Life of the Easter Bunny" which also enlightens you on the marketing of the Easter Bunny and the Easter Egg.

Until next time, THE LITTLE VILLAGE TEAM

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

Patrick Browne
Graphic Design
hello@patrickbrownedesign.com
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travel only two or three days a week instead of five.

For Kildare residents, this shift has been transformative. A commute that once dominated daily life is now a periodic inconvenience rather than a permanent burden.

The change has also reshaped local life. Cafés are busier mid-week, co-working spaces have appeared in towns, and more residents are spending daytime hours in their own communities rather than in Dublin offices.

A County Still Worth the Journey

Despite the challenges, few Kildare residents would choose to leave. The county offers something that Dublin often cannot: space, community, and a pace of life that feels just a little more manageable.

Children grow up near parks and playing fields. Weekends are spent along the canal greenways, in the Curragh plains, or browsing bustling town markets.

For many commuters, the journey is simply the price of living somewhere that still feels like home.

The Road Ahead

As Kildare continues to grow, the commuting question will remain central to its future. Expanded rail capacity, improved bus corridors and smarter planning could all help ease the pressure.

But until those solutions fully arrive, tomorrow morning will look much like today: headlights stretching along the motorway, platforms filling before sunrise, and thousands of Kildare residents beginning another familiar journey east.

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Fitness and Wellbeing in Kildare

A County Embracing Healthy Living

Across County Kildare, a growing number of people are embracing a healthier and more balanced lifestyle.

From early morning running clubs to yoga studios and luxury spa retreats, the county has developed a vibrant fitness and wellbeing culture that reflects a wider shift in how people approach health.

With its combination of scenic outdoor spaces, modern gyms and a thriving community spirit, Kildare has become an ideal place to pursue an active lifestyle.

The Rise of Community Fitness

One of the most noticeable trends across the county is the rise of community-based fitness groups. Running clubs, boot camps and outdoor exercise sessions have become a common sight in parks and green spaces, particularly in towns such as Naas, Maynooth, Celbridge, and Newbridge.

For many participants, the appeal goes beyond physical fitness. These groups provide a strong social connection, bringing together people of all ages and abilities. Early morning jogs or evening fitness classes often become as much about community as exercise.

Parkrun events, social cycling groups and charity runs have also become increasingly popular, reflecting a wider enthusiasm for accessible fitness activities.

Yoga, Pilates and Mindful Movement

Alongside high-energy workouts, there has been a significant rise in interest in mindful exercise such as yoga and pilates. Studios across the county now offer a wide range of classes designed to improve flexibility, strength and mental wellbeing.

These practices have grown particularly popular among people seeking balance in busy lives. Many residents working in Dublin commute daily, making relaxation and stress management a key priority.

Classes focusing on breathwork, stretching and mindfulness are now common features in wellness studios, helping participants reduce stress while improving overall physical health.

The Outdoor Advantage

Kildare's natural landscape also plays an important role in the county's wellbeing culture. The Royal Canal Greenway has become a favourite destination for walkers and cyclists, offering scenic routes through peaceful countryside.

Meanwhile the open grasslands of the Curragh Plains provide a unique environment for runners and horse riders alike. These vast plains, famous for their connection to Ireland's horse racing heritage, offer miles of open space perfect for outdoor exercise.

For many residents, the ability to step outside and immediately access beautiful landscapes is one of the county's greatest lifestyle benefits.

Spa and Wellness Retreats

Wellbeing in Kildare is not limited to exercise. The county is also home to some of Ireland's most luxurious spa destinations, offering relaxation and rejuvenation.

The spa facilities at The K Club and Carton House have become popular for both residents and visitors seeking a restorative escape. Treatments ranging from deep tissue massage to thermal spa experiences provide the perfect complement to an active lifestyle.

Many wellness centres now combine fitness classes with holistic treatments, reflecting a growing focus on both physical and mental wellbeing.

A Healthier Lifestyle

The popularity of fitness and wellness activities across Kildare reflects a broader cultural shift. More people are prioritising health, balance and outdoor activity as part of their everyday lives.

With its mix of modern facilities, welcoming communities and beautiful natural surroundings, the county offers the perfect environment to support that lifestyle.

Whether it's a sunrise run along the canal, a lunchtime yoga class or a relaxing afternoon at a luxury spa, Kildare is proving that wellbeing is not just a trend—it's becoming a way of life.



Siobhán Orsi Skincare

My name is Siobhán Orsi, I am an experienced aesthetic nurse practitioner with a background in both nursing and skincare. I qualified as a registered general nurse in 1998 and I hold a Level 7 Master's Diploma in Aesthetics from the Aesthetic Training Academy of Ireland (ATAI) and am qualified in advanced treatments such as medical-grade chemical peels, microneedling, and dermal fillers. With experience as a registered nurse, I bring a clinical understanding of skin health to my aesthetic practice, focusing on non-invasive treatments that promote long-term skin health.

In 2022 I established my own clinic, where I personally perform every treatment to ensure the highest level of care and attention to detail. I believe in providing truly tailored skincare solutions to address the individual needs and concerns of my clients. My focus is on building lasting relationships with my clients, ensuring they receive tailored, results-driven treatments in a supportive and professional environment.

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Dream Kitchens and Home Transformations

The Heart of the Modern Irish Home

Across County Dublin and Kildare, homeowners are transforming their kitchens into stylish, multifunctional spaces that serve as the true heart of the home. No longer just a place for cooking, the modern kitchen is where families gather, friends socialise, and much of daily life unfolds.

With property prices remaining strong and many families choosing to upgrade rather than move, kitchen renovations have become one of the most popular home improvement projects in Ireland.

The Rise of the Open-Plan Kitchen

One of the biggest trends in recent years has been the move toward open-plan kitchen and living spaces. Walls that once separated kitchens from dining rooms are being removed to create large, light-filled areas where cooking, dining, and relaxing can happen in one seamless environment.

In suburban homes across Lucan, Maynooth, Naas, and Celbridge, homeowners are extending to the rear of their houses with glass-walled kitchen extensions that connect indoor spaces with gardens and patios. Large sliding or bi-fold doors allow natural light to flood the room while creating an easy flow between indoor and outdoor living.

These spaces are ideal for family life and entertaining, making them one of the most desirable upgrades for modern homeowners.

The Kitchen Island Revolution

If there is one feature that defines today's dream kitchen, it is the kitchen island. More than just additional workspace,

Continues P.8

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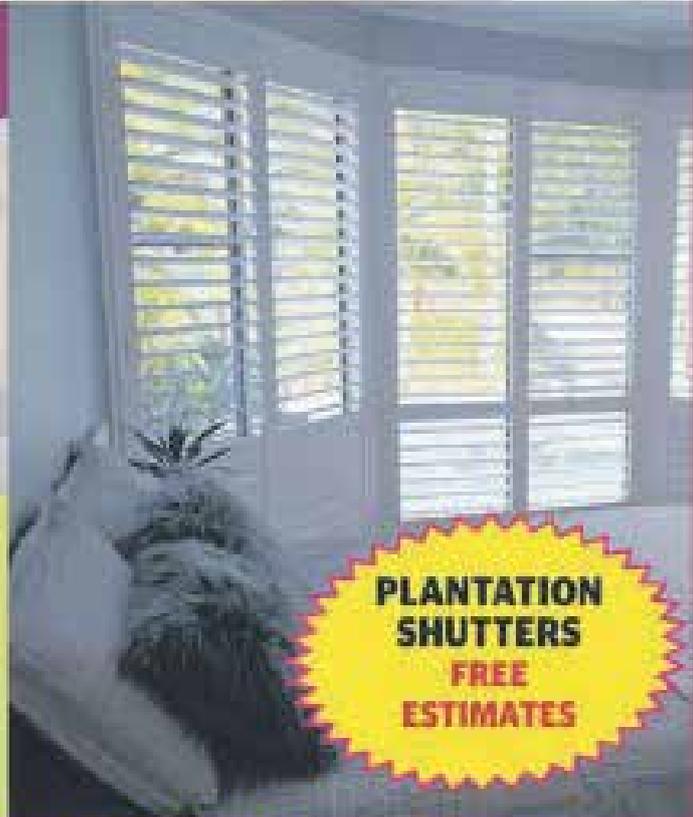


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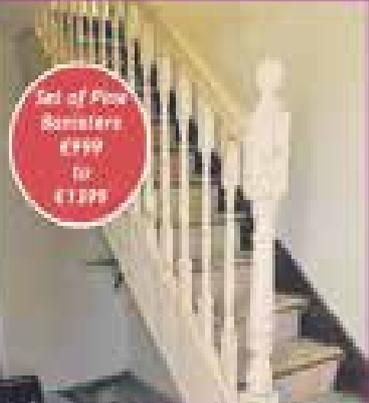
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the island has become a social hub where people gather while meals are prepared.

Modern kitchen islands often include:

- Integrated breakfast bars
- Hidden storage and drawers
- Wine coolers or beverage fridges
- Induction hobs or prep sinks
- Seating for casual dining

For families, the island becomes a place where children do homework, guests chat over coffee, and everyday life naturally centres.

Materials That Combine Style and Durability

Irish homeowners are increasingly choosing materials that offer both beauty and practicality.

Popular choices include:

Quartz worktops, Durable, stain-resistant, and available in a wide range of colours, Natural wood cabinetry, Adds warmth and texture to modern designs.

Stone or porcelain splashbacks, Provide a sleek, easy-to-clean finish. Matte finishes, Handleless cabinets and soft matte colours are replacing glossy surfaces for a more contemporary look.

Neutral tones such as soft greys, warm whites, and earthy colours remain favourites, creating timeless kitchens that will age well.

Smart Kitchens for Modern Living

Technology is also playing a bigger role in kitchen design. Smart appliances, energy-efficient lighting, and hidden charging stations are becoming standard features in many new kitchens.

Homeowners are incorporating:

- Smart ovens and induction hobs
- Integrated coffee machines
- Under-cabinet LED lighting
- Built-in recycling systems
- Wireless charging points for phones and tablets

These innovations make kitchens not only more stylish but also more efficient and easier to use.

Adding Value to Your Home

Estate agents frequently note that a high-quality kitchen renovation can significantly increase a property's appeal. For buyers, the kitchen is often the room that makes the biggest impression during viewings.

A modern, well-designed kitchen suggests that the home has been carefully maintained and upgraded, making it a strong selling point in competitive property markets across Dublin and Kildare.

For many homeowners, investing in a dream kitchen is therefore both a lifestyle upgrade and a long-term investment.

More Than Just a Kitchen

Today's kitchen is no longer a purely practical space. It has become the centre of family life—a place where meals are shared, conversations unfold, and memories are made.

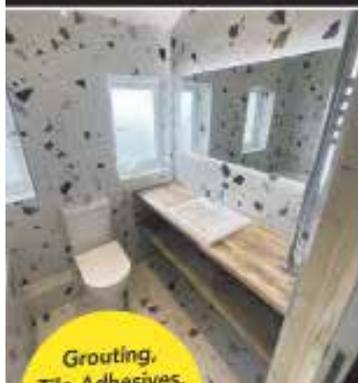
Whether it's a sleek contemporary design or a warm country-style space, a thoughtfully designed kitchen has the power to transform not only a house but the way people live within it.

And in homes across Dublin and Kildare, that transformation is happening every day.



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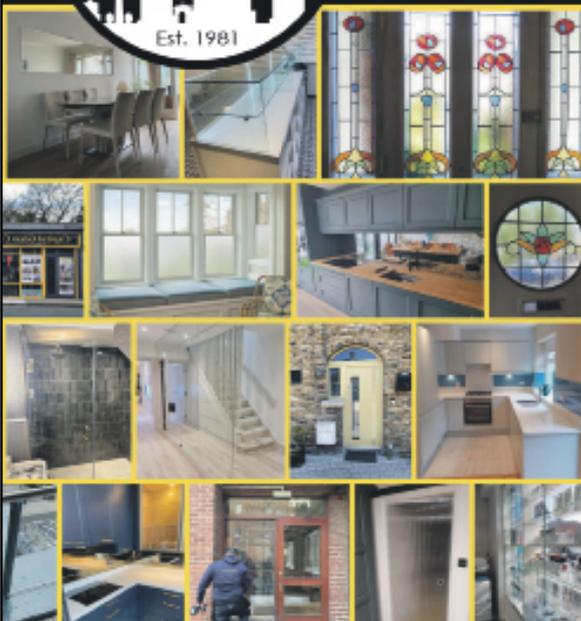
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Luxury Living Inside Kildare's Most Beautiful Homes

County Kildare has long been associated with elegance and refinement. Known for its expansive countryside, historic estates and thriving commuter towns, the county has quietly become one of Ireland's most desirable places to live.

From restored Georgian houses to sleek contemporary builds, Kildare offers a fascinating mix of architectural styles and luxury living.

For homeowners seeking space, design and a strong sense of community, the county provides something increasingly rare within commuting distance of Dublin: room to breathe.

The Rise of Contemporary Country Living

Across Kildare, particularly around towns such as Naas, Maynooth, Celbridge, and Leixlip, a new generation of homeowners is blending modern architecture with rural surroundings.

Architect-designed homes with large glass panels, open-plan interiors and seamless indoor-outdoor living spaces are becoming increasingly popular. Many of these properties are built to take advantage of countryside views while maintaining energy efficiency through high-performance insulation, heat pumps and solar panels.

Inside, the emphasis is on space and light. Expansive kitchens flow into family living areas, often centred around oversized islands and statement lighting. Floor-to-ceiling windows connect interior spaces with landscaped gardens, creating homes designed as much for entertaining as for everyday family life.

Restoring the Past

Kildare's appeal is not limited to new builds. The county is rich in historic properties, many of which have been beautifully restored. Georgian farmhouses, Victorian country residences and converted coach houses are increasingly sought after by buyers looking for character alongside modern comfort.

Properties near historic landmarks such as Castletown House often reflect the architectural heritage of the region, with high ceilings, original fireplaces and elegant sash windows. Many renovations now combine these period features with modern kitchens, contemporary bathrooms and advanced heating systems.

The result is a style that feels both timeless and practical—old-world elegance adapted for modern life.

Interiors That Reflect Lifestyle

Luxury homes in Kildare increasingly focus on lifestyle-driven design. Dedicated home offices have become common, reflecting the rise of hybrid working. Cinema rooms, gym spaces and bespoke wine cellars are also appearing in high-end properties.

Interior designers note that natural materials are a key trend. Oak flooring, stone countertops and neutral palettes dominate many of the county's most striking homes. These materials complement the surrounding landscape while creating interiors that feel calm and sophisticated.

Statement kitchens remain a centrepiece of many homes, often incorporating bespoke cabinetry, premium appliances and social seating areas that transform cooking spaces into the heart of the home.

Space, Privacy and Accessibility

One of Kildare's greatest advantages is its balance between countryside living and accessibility. Residents can enjoy spacious homes and large gardens while remaining within easy reach of Dublin.

Excellent transport links and proximity to the capital have made towns such as Maynooth and Naas particularly attractive to professionals seeking a quieter lifestyle without sacrificing convenience.

For many homeowners, this combination of space, connectivity and design potential is what makes Kildare so appealing.

A County Defined by Elegance

Luxury living in Kildare is not simply about property size or price. It reflects a broader lifestyle—one that combines heritage, countryside beauty and thoughtful modern design.

Whether it's a contemporary glass-fronted home overlooking rolling fields or a lovingly restored Georgian residence full of character, the county offers a remarkable variety of homes that embody both style and substance.

As demand for high-quality homes continues to grow, Kildare's reputation as one of Ireland's most elegant places to live looks set to endure.

WEDDING COUNTY

WHY COUPLES ARE CHOOSING KILDARE



When couples begin searching for the perfect wedding location in Ireland, one county appears again and again on their shortlist: Kildare. Known for its elegant estates, historic castles and luxurious country houses, the county has quietly become one of the most sought-after wedding destinations in the country.

Located just a short distance from Dublin yet surrounded by countryside, Kildare offers the rare combination of accessibility, romance and world-class hospitality that modern couples are looking for.

Grand Venues with Timeless Style

One of the key reasons couples are choosing Kildare is the remarkable range of wedding venues available. The county is home to some of Ireland's most spectacular estates and castles, many of which have been carefully restored and adapted to host unforgettable celebrations.

Among the most popular venues are Carton House, a magnificent historic estate with sweeping parkland and elegant reception rooms, and The K Club, renowned internationally for its luxury accommodation and stunning riverside setting.

For couples dreaming of a castle wedding, Kilkea Castle offers an extraordinary medieval backdrop with dramatic stone towers and beautifully landscaped grounds. Meanwhile the intimate charm of Barberstown Castle appeals to couples seeking a more private and romantic celebration.

These venues combine historic architecture with modern luxury, creating settings that feel both timeless and contemporary.

Perfect for Destination Weddings

Kildare's location is another major attraction. Situated just 30–40 minutes from Dublin and within easy reach of Dublin Airport, the county is ideally placed for destination weddings.

Couples with international guests can offer the beauty of the Irish countryside without requiring long travel times. Visitors can easily explore nearby attractions, historic estates and vibrant towns during their stay.

Many venues also provide on-site accommodation, allowing wedding celebrations to extend across an entire weekend rather than just a single day.

A Complete Wedding Experience

Modern weddings are about more than just the ceremony and reception. Couples increasingly want a full experience for themselves and their guests, and Kildare's venues are designed with that in mind.

Pre-wedding dinners, spa treatments, golf outings and relaxed post-wedding brunches have become part of the celebration. Properties such as The K Club and Carton House offer extensive facilities including championship golf courses, luxury spas and fine dining restaurants.

This ability to create a full wedding weekend experience has made the county particularly attractive for couples looking to celebrate in style.

A Thriving Wedding Industry

Kildare's growing reputation as a wedding destination has also helped build a strong network of local suppliers. Photographers, florists, bridal boutiques, musicians and event planners across the county now specialise in weddings, offering couples a wide range of professional services.

Many couples choose to work with local suppliers who understand the venues and landscapes of the area, helping create seamless and beautifully coordinated celebrations.

Romance in the Heart of Ireland

Perhaps the biggest reason couples choose Kildare is the atmosphere. The county combines historic elegance, beautiful countryside and warm hospitality in a way that feels perfectly suited to weddings.

From castle courtyards and Georgian gardens to candlelit banqueting halls, the settings available in Kildare provide the kind of romantic backdrop that couples dream about.

As word continues to spread about the quality of its venues and the beauty of its landscapes, it seems certain that Kildare will remain one of Ireland's favourite places to say "I do."

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Shane Moynihan TD

TD for Dublin Mid-West

Clinic times

Monday, April 13th

Muintir na Tire Hall, Lucan Village K78 RY11

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Neilstown Community Centre D22 YP74

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Newcastle 'The Den'/St Finian's D22 Y5T7

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday April 20th

Adamstown Community Centre K78 E7F8

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Palmerstown Youth and Community Centre

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Orchard Lodge Meeting Centre, Clondalkin Village

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Friday, April 24th

Fettercairn Community Centre D24 W92N

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Brittas Community Centre D24 CF88

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Monday, April 27th

Ballyowen Community Centre K78 N263

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Quarryvale Community Centre D22 NW54

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Saggart Schoolhouse D24 V04D

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday, May 11th

Ballyowen Community Centre K78 N263

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Bawnogue Community Centre D22 DY68

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Rathcoole Community Centre D24 DX57

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday, May 18th

Muintir na Tire Hall, Lucan Village K78 RY11

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Quarryvale Community Centre D22 NW54

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Saggart Schoolhouse D24 V04D

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Friday, May 22nd

Fettercairn Community Centre D24 W92N

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Brittas Community Centre D24 CF88

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Monday, May 25th

Adamstown Community Centre K78 E7F8

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Palmerstown Youth and Community Centre

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Orchard Lodge Meeting Centre, Clondalkin Village

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday, June 8th

Bawnogue Community Centre D22 DY68

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Quarryvale Community Centre D22 NW54

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Saggart Schoolhouse D24 V04D

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday, June 15th

Adamstown Community Centre K78 E7F8

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Palmerstown Youth and Community Centre

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Orchard Lodge Meeting Centre, Clondalkin Village

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Monday, June 22nd

Ballyowen Community Centre K78 N263

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Bawnogue Community Centre D22 DY68

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Rathcoole Community Centre D24 DX57

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Friday, June 26th

Fettercairn Community Centre D24 W92N

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Brittas Community Centre D24 CF88

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Monday, June 29th

Muintir na Tire Hall, Lucan Village K78 RY11

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Newcastle 'The Den'/St Finian's D22 Y5T7

2:30pm - 3:30pm

Neilstown Community Centre D22 YP74

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Shane
Moynihan TD
TD FOR DUBLIN MID-WEST

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Property Hotspots

Where Everyone Wants to Live in Kildare

Over the past decade, County Kildare has transformed into one of Ireland's most desirable places to live. Offering a balance of countryside charm, vibrant towns and excellent connectivity to Dublin, the county has become a magnet for families, professionals and investors seeking space, community and quality of life.

While demand for property across the county remains strong, several towns have emerged as clear hotspots—locations where lifestyle, accessibility and amenities combine to make them particularly attractive to buyers.

Naas: The County Town with Everything

As the county town, Naas has long been one of the most sought-after places to live in the region. Its appeal lies in the combination of strong transport links, excellent schools and a thriving town centre filled with restaurants, cafés and shops.

Naas also benefits from close proximity to major employment hubs and easy access to the M7 motorway, making it an ideal location for commuters. With a wide mix of modern housing developments, family homes and countryside properties nearby, the town offers something for a variety of buyers.

The presence of attractions such as Naas Racecourse also adds to the town's social and cultural appeal.

Maynooth: A University Town with Energy

Few towns in Ireland have experienced the growth and transformation of Maynooth. Anchored by Maynooth University, the town has developed into a vibrant hub combining historic charm with a youthful atmosphere.

The presence of the university brings cafés, restaurants, cultural events and a lively social scene, making Maynooth especially popular with young professionals and families.

Excellent rail connections into Dublin and easy motorway access have further increased demand for housing, with new developments appearing alongside established residential areas.

Celbridge: Village Charm Close to the Capital

Located along the River Liffey, Celbridge has built a reputation as one of Kildare's most attractive commuter towns. The town offers a welcoming village feel combined with modern amenities and strong transport links to Dublin.

Celbridge is also home to one of Ireland's most impressive historic estates, Castletown House, whose extensive parklands provide a stunning outdoor space for walking, cycling and family outings.

This blend of heritage, community spirit and proximity to the capital has made Celbridge particularly appealing to young families.

Leixlip: Where History Meets Modern Living

Just minutes from the Dublin border, Leixlip offers another highly desirable location for homebuyers. The town sits at the meeting point of the River Liffey and River Rye, creating a

picturesque setting with deep historical roots.

Leixlip is also close to major employers and business hubs, making it an attractive option for professionals working in the wider Dublin region. At the same time, its strong sense of community and excellent schools make it a popular choice for families.

Nearby landmarks such as Leixlip Castle add to the town's distinctive character.

The Kildare Lifestyle

What unites all of these property hotspots is the lifestyle they offer. Residents enjoy spacious homes, access to green spaces and the atmosphere of thriving towns while remaining within easy commuting distance of Dublin.

As hybrid working continues to reshape how people choose where to live, the appeal of locations like Naas, Maynooth, Celbridge and Leixlip is only expected to grow.

For many buyers, Kildare represents the perfect balance—modern living set against the backdrop of Ireland's beautiful countryside.



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PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR LUCAN IN A SHAMBLES

I have raised the issue of public transport in Lucan for many years. From helping to organise a campaign to keep the 25 bus to fighting for improved bus services.

The recent news that the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael government didn't provide funding for construction of Dart Plus Southwest is an absolute disgrace. Both Adamstown and Clonburris SDZ rely on the roll-out of Dart Plus for the new housing being built in the area.

Traffic congestion in Lucan is at breaking point and the only solution is a reliable and efficient public transport system. If serious about public transport provision the government has to fund the Dart Plus immediately.

In addition to the Dart we need more buses on the roads. The 25 route should be restored as well as additional buses on the C1 and C2 routes.



NEW PLAY SPACES PROPOSED:

- Ballyowen Park (New)
- Hermitage Park (upgrades)
- Griffeen Valley Park (upgrades)
- Adamstown Castlegate (upgrades)

COUNCIL ISSUES:

I'm always raising a lot of issues on the council including:

- Motion passed in solidarity with school secretaries and caretakers
- **Voted AGAINST the increase in the Local Property Tax**
- Local issues such as tree pruning, road maintenance, traffic and more
- Representing constituents with housing issues



Join my WhatsApp channel for regular updates and information.

COMMUNITY ADVICE CLINIC

Ronanstown Youth Service Fridays 11am-12noon

Cllr. Joanna Tuffy

Lucan Electoral Area

South Dublin County Council

South Dublin County Council Update

Q &A: Proposed Variation No. 2 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 -2028

Why is this Variation being proposed?

Because all City and County Councils have been instructed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to rezone additional land to meet revised National housing targets.

What is proposed for rezoning in South Dublin County?

The Chief Executive has proposed 16 sites be rezoned. Most are currently zoned either Rural or Open Space . 2 are currently zoned High Amenity, including St. Edmundsbury. The Proposed Variation also identifies 4 sites as Future Strategic Long-Term Development Areas. These are being earmarked for rezoning in future County Development Plans.

What is the Current Zoned Land Capacity in South Dublin County?

Current Zoned Land Capacity, considered to be deliverable by 2040 which is in keeping with the National Planning Framework timeline, is estimated at 35,480 dwellings. There are also lands identified as “Long Term Zoned Potential” that are estimated to have a capacity for 21,695 dwellings. (Source: Settlement Capacity Audit Report which is available on consult.sdublincoco.ie)

What is the extra Zoned Land Capacity in the Proposed Variation No. 2?

The extra Zoned Land Capacity in South Dublin County if the Variation is adopted will be 7.453. Did councillors get to vote on what is contained in the Proposed Variation?

No - these proposals have come from the Chief Executive acting on the instructions from the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Heritage.

Where in Lucan are lands proposed for rezoning for housing?

St. Edmundsbury, Finnstown Castle, Adamstown West, Tubber Lane North, Stonewall, Foxhunter.

What happens next?

The Chief Executive will prepare a report, with recommendations on issues raised during the public consultation process. Councillors will vote on the Proposed Variation at the June Council meeting.

All the documents that make up the Proposed Variation together with submissions from the public can be viewed at consult.sdublincoco.ie. Updates about this and other local issues on my.linktr.ee/joannatuffy. You can email me at jtuffy@cllrs.sdublincoco.ie or Whatsapp me at 085 770 3140 with any further questions.



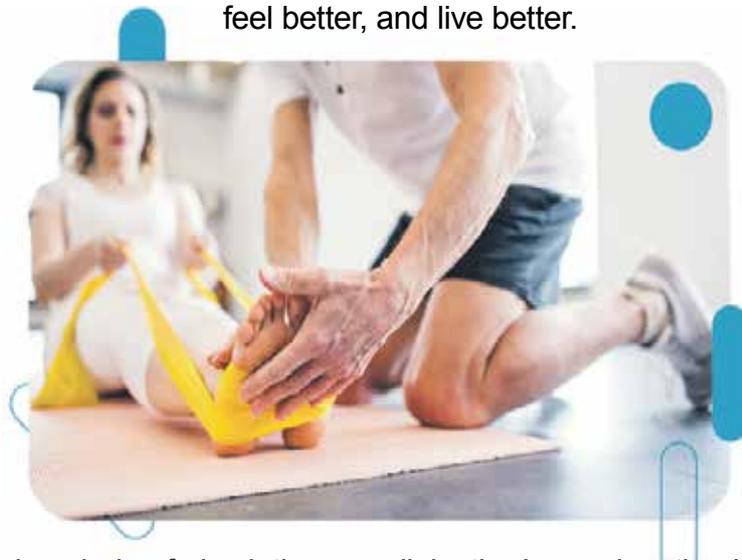


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Whether you're dealing with sports injury, chronic discomfort, post surgical rehabilitation or simply want to improve your mobility and strength, our Lucan team is here to support you.

We look forward to welcoming new patients and becoming a trusted part of the Lucan community.

Be the Hero of your Own Recovery!!!

For more information, please call us on 01 5310007



Fast Fashion Under the Microscope

Why SHEIN Is Facing Investigation in Ireland and Europe

In just a few years, SHEIN has transformed the global fashion landscape. With ultra-cheap prices, constant new styles and a social-media-fuelled shopping experience, the Chinese-founded online retailer has become hugely popular with younger shoppers across Ireland and Europe. But the brand's meteoric rise has also triggered growing scrutiny. In 2026, regulators in Europe launched a formal investigation into the company — and Ireland is at the centre of it.

Why Ireland Is Involved

Although SHEIN operates globally, its European headquarters are based in Dublin. That means Irish authorities have an important role in overseeing the company's compliance with EU digital and consumer laws.

Ireland's media and online regulator, Coimisiún na Meán, is assisting the European Commission in a major investigation under the Digital Services Act (DSA) — the EU's sweeping law designed to regulate large online platforms.

The probe will examine whether the platform has adequately prevented illegal products from appearing on its marketplace and whether its systems meet transparency requirements for large digital services.

Concerns About Illegal Products

One of the most serious allegations relates to the sale of illegal or inappropriate products through the platform. Regulators say they are investigating listings that may breach EU law, including reports that items resembling child-like sex dolls appeared for sale on the site.

Under EU rules, online marketplaces must actively prevent the sale of illegal goods and remove them quickly when detected. The investigation will examine whether SHEIN's internal systems are robust enough to do this.

The "Addictive Design" Question

Another focus of the investigation is the design of the shopping platform itself. Regulators are examining whether the app and website use "gamification" techniques that encourage compulsive spending.

Features under scrutiny include:

- Points systems and rewards for frequent purchases
- Flash sales and countdown timers
- Highly personalised recommendation algorithms

Authorities believe such systems may push consumers — particularly younger users — to shop impulsively or spend

more than intended.

Consumer Protection Complaints

Beyond the current investigation, consumer groups have already raised concerns about SHEIN's sales tactics. European regulators previously flagged issues such as:

- Fake or exaggerated discounts
- Pressure-selling techniques such as "limited stock" warnings
- Unclear refund or returns policies

These practices may breach EU consumer protection rules designed to prevent misleading marketing and manipulative online selling.

Environmental and Ethical Concerns

For many critics, the controversy goes beyond legal questions. SHEIN has become a symbol of ultra-fast fashion, where thousands of new items appear online each week at extremely low prices.

Campaigners argue that this model encourages over-consumption and creates enormous textile waste. In recent years the company has also faced criticism over greenwashing claims, with regulators in Italy previously fining the brand for misleading sustainability messaging.

There are also ongoing debates about labour conditions in global garment supply chains — a long-standing issue across the fast fashion industry.

What Happens Next?

The EU investigation could take months to complete. If regulators conclude that the company breached the Digital Services Act, significant fines or corrective measures could follow.

For Irish shoppers, the outcome could also influence how online fashion platforms operate in the future — from clearer pricing and advertising rules to stronger safeguards for younger users.

A Turning Point for Fast Fashion?

For many consumers, SHEIN represents convenience and affordability. But the investigation highlights a growing question facing the entire industry: how fast fashion fits into a world of stronger consumer protections, environmental awareness and digital regulation.

As online retail continues to evolve, Ireland — home to many global tech and e-commerce operations — is increasingly at the heart of that debate.

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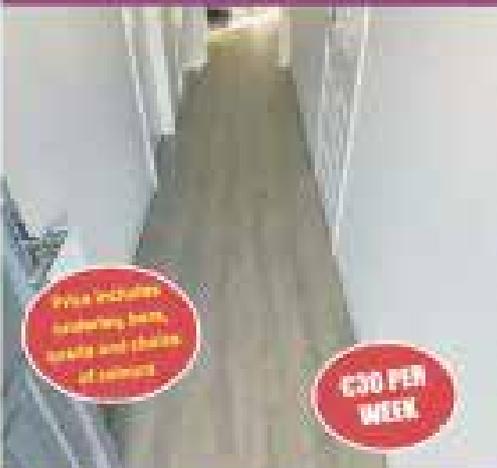
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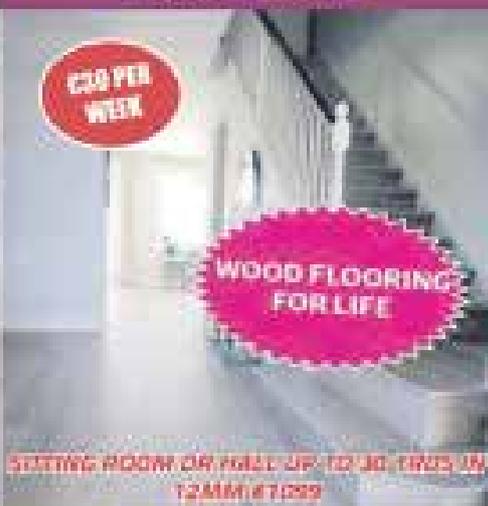
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Sea Swimming Nation

Ireland's Love Affair with the Cold Atlantic

Across Ireland's coastline, from the rugged Atlantic shores of the west to the calmer waters of Dublin Bay, a quiet revolution has taken place. What was once the pastime of hardy enthusiasts has become a national movement. Sea swimming is no longer niche—it's a lifestyle.

Every morning, regardless of the season, thousands of swimmers gather at beaches, coves, and harbours across the country to take the plunge into the Atlantic.

A Tradition with Deep Roots

Ireland's connection with sea swimming goes back generations. One of the most famous locations is the historic bathing spot at Forty Foot, where locals have been swimming in the Irish Sea for more than 250 years.

What began as a male-only bathing place eventually became a beloved public swimming location. Today, swimmers of all ages gather there daily, forming a community bonded by the simple ritual of entering the cold water.

The tradition spread along the coast, from quiet Atlantic beaches in the west to sheltered harbours along the east coast.

The Pandemic Effect

While sea swimming had been growing steadily for years, its popularity surged during the COVID-19 pandemic. With gyms closed and travel restricted, many people rediscovered the outdoors.

Ireland's coastline—long, dramatic, and easily accessible—became the perfect place for exercise and escape. People who had never considered sea swimming before suddenly found themselves embracing the invigorating shock of cold water.

What began as a temporary activity quickly became a habit.

The Science Behind the Plunge

Advocates of sea swimming often talk about the powerful sense of wellbeing it brings. Cold water immersion triggers a rush of endorphins and adrenaline, which can lead to improved mood and reduced stress.

Many swimmers report that regular sea swimming helps with:

- Mental wellbeing
- Improved circulation
- Better sleep
- Reduced anxiety

While the scientific research is still developing, there is growing evidence that controlled cold water exposure may provide genuine health benefits.

A Social Experience

One of the most striking aspects of Ireland's sea swimming culture is the strong sense of community. Early morning swim groups have formed along the entire coastline.

Friends meet at dawn, share a quick dip in the water, and often finish with a warm coffee on the beach. For many, the social element is just as important as the swim itself.

The ritual is simple: arrive, swim, laugh at the cold, and leave energised for the day ahead.

Safety in the Water

Despite its benefits, sea swimming does require care and preparation. The Atlantic can be unpredictable, and conditions change quickly.

Experienced swimmers advise newcomers to:

- Start slowly and limit time in cold water
- Swim with others rather than alone
- Check tides and weather conditions
- Wear bright swim caps for visibility

Many swimmers also use neoprene gloves, boots, and wetsuits during colder months.

Ireland's Natural Advantage

Ireland's geography makes it ideal for sea swimming. With more than 7,500 kilometres of coastline, there are endless places to enter the water—from sandy beaches to rocky coves and sheltered harbours.

Whether it's a sunrise dip on the east coast or a wild Atlantic swim on the west, the experience is both exhilarating and deeply connected to nature.

More Than a Trend

Sea swimming in Ireland has evolved into something bigger than a fitness trend. For many people, it has become a daily ritual—one that provides clarity, calm, and a sense of belonging.

In a fast-moving modern world, the simple act of stepping into the sea offers a moment of stillness. The water is cold, the air is fresh, and the reward is a feeling of vitality that lasts long after the swim is over.

And along Ireland's shores, every morning, the swimmers return.

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Lucan's Voice:

My name is Councillor Helen Farrell, an Independent Local Councillor sitting on South Dublin County Council (SDCC).



My role is to bring the voice of Lucan people to the table and help better shape decisions that affect our lives. As an Independent Local Councillor, but working with Paul Gogarty, TD, means that we can collaborate on local and national issues effectively.

Having lived most of my life in Lucan, I am working to improve life for residents and visitors. I co-founded the campaign @Pool4Lucan to lobby for a public swimming pool 11 years ago. I also co-founded Society for Old Lucan (SOL) to record, protect and promote Lucan's rich heritage. It's been a privilege to meet Lucan people and work with them, to achieve positive things for our area.

Some of my work for Lucan & Adamstown over the last 6 months included:

Improved Oversight of Bus Services

Ensured constituent transport concerns are formally documented and escalated at inter-agency level – currently awaiting NTA date for workshops.

Safer Roads & Pedestrian Crossings

Achieved same-day repair of faulty pedestrian lights at Dodsboro Road

Ongoing escalation of repeated signal failures at Outer Ring Road / Castle Road

Public Safety

Sought increased Garda focus on e-scooter enforcement

Clearer Rules for Dogs in Parks

Passed Council motion requiring clearer signage enforcing dogs-on-leads byelaws in all public parks (outside of dog parks).

Investment in Young People

Guaranteed user consultation so local young people shape the final design of new teenspace / skatepark enhancement in Griffeen Valley Park

Support for Local Businesses

Passed Council motion requiring an Economic Recovery Plan for Lucan village, following works.

Requested SDCC commit to working directly with local traders, not imposing top-down solutions

Improved Leisure Services

Delivered extended weekend and evening opening hours at Aura Leisure Lucan, following my representation to SDCC

Secured further extensions once the pool reopens, hopefully in Q2 2026.

Progress on Lucan Village & Demesne Works

Requested clearer timelines and public updates on delayed village, promenade, and Demesne works

Kept pressure on SDCC regarding business and service disruption

Environmental & Biodiversity Gains

Successfully influenced SDCC's "Living with Trees" policy to include:

Protection for homes affected by tree root spread

Climate-resilient native tree planting

Community sculpture from felled trees

Initiated a schools-based native seed collection and local replanting project – contact me if you're interested in getting involved.

Housing & Planning Accountability

Actively challenged infrastructure-light rezoning proposals

Delivered clear guidance, templates, and support to help residents engage in statutory planning consultations

Health Infrastructure Scrutiny

Engaged early on the proposed St. Edmundsbury Hospital extension

LUCAN REZONING THREAT: ACT NOW!

The most pressing issue currently is the proposed residential rezoning of much green space around the County, but much of it in Lucan. SDCC has opened its Public Consultation on major residential rezonings proposed for Lucan & County. This is the only opportunity for the public to respond to plans that would add significant new residential land across areas, including St. Edmundsbury, Adamstown West, Aderrig, Finnstown Castle lands, etc. Building of homes is urgently needed, but Lucan's infrastructure and services are at capacity before additional rezoning of land for housing. Our green spaces need strong protection.

To make this easier, I've created a webpage -<https://helenfarrell.com/2026/02/04/rezoning-2026/> and QR code below - that outlines:

- What's being proposed
- How you can respond
- A template submission

The consultation closes on 13 March 2026; your early action is essential.



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Designing a Space That Works

In recent years, working from home has evolved from a temporary solution into a permanent feature of modern life. Across County Dublin and Kildare, thousands of professionals now split their week between the office and home, creating a demand for home workspaces that are not only functional but also stylish and comfortable.

Whether you live in a suburban semi-detached house in Lucan, a modern apartment in Dublin, or a family home in Maynooth or Naas, the home office has become one of the most important rooms in the house. The challenge is creating a space that supports productivity without feeling like a sterile corporate cubicle.

From Spare Room to Productivity Hub

Early in the remote working era, many people simply opened a laptop at the kitchen table. But as hybrid work became the norm, homeowners began investing in proper workspaces.

Interior designers now emphasise three key elements when planning a home office:

- Ergonomic comfort
- Good lighting
- A visually calm environment

A well-designed workspace can improve concentration and reduce fatigue, particularly for people spending six to eight hours a day at their desk.

A dedicated room is ideal, but it isn't always necessary. Clever layouts mean that even a corner of a living room or a converted attic space can become a highly effective work area.

The Rise of the “Built-In” Office

One of the biggest trends in Dublin and Kildare homes is custom built-in office furniture. Bespoke joinery allows homeowners to create shelving, storage cabinets, and desks that fit perfectly within existing spaces.

Built-in units are particularly popular in newer housing developments where homeowners want to maximise space without adding bulky furniture.

Typical features include:

- Integrated shelving for books and décor
- Hidden cable management
- Soft LED strip lighting under shelves
- Matching cabinetry to complement the rest of the home

The result is a workspace that blends seamlessly into the interior design rather than looking like a temporary setup.

Lighting Makes the Difference

Lighting is one of the most overlooked aspects of a home office, yet it has a huge impact on comfort and productivity.

Interior experts recommend combining three types of lighting:

Natural light: Positioning a desk near a window helps reduce

eye strain and improves mood throughout the day.

Task lighting: Adjustable desk lamps provide focused illumination for reading and detailed work.

Ambient lighting: Soft background lighting—often from wall lights or LED shelving strips—creates a warm and professional atmosphere, particularly useful during video calls.

Technology Meets Design

Modern home offices increasingly incorporate smart technology. Wireless charging pads built into desks, concealed power sockets, and high-speed mesh Wi-Fi systems are becoming standard features.

Soundproofing is also gaining popularity, particularly for professionals who regularly attend online meetings. Acoustic wall panels and soft furnishings can dramatically reduce echo and background noise.

Large monitors, docking stations, and ergonomic chairs have also become essential investments for those working long hours at home.

Adding Personality

While functionality is critical, the best home offices also reflect the personality of the homeowner.

Designers suggest incorporating elements such as:

- Artwork or framed photography
- Indoor plants for a calming atmosphere
- Decorative shelving with books and personal items
- Neutral colours paired with warm wood finishes

These touches transform the workspace from a purely practical area into a room that people genuinely enjoy spending time in.

A Space That Adds Value

Interestingly, estate agents across Dublin and Kildare report that a well-designed home office can increase the appeal of a property. As hybrid working continues, buyers are actively looking for houses that already include dedicated workspace.

In many cases, a stylish home office can become a key selling feature—especially in commuter towns where residents often split their working week between home and the city.

The Future of Work at Home

Remote work is no longer a temporary trend; it is a fundamental shift in how many people live and work. As a result, the home office is evolving from a spare corner into an integral part of modern home design. For homeowners across Dublin and Kildare, investing in a stylish and functional workspace is not just about productivity—it's about creating a better balance between professional life and home life.

And when done well, the home office becomes something more than a desk and chair. It becomes a space where ideas grow, careers develop, and work fits seamlessly into everyday living.



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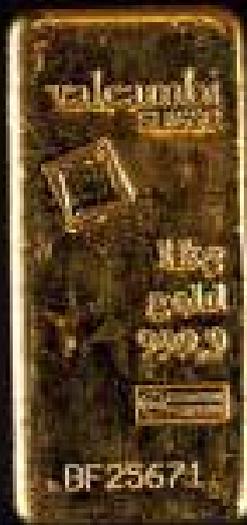
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The Magic of Frog and Tadpole Season

Every spring across Ireland, something quietly magical happens in ponds, garden water features, roadside ditches and wetlands. Beneath the surface of still water, clusters of jelly-like frogspawn begin to appear—an unmistakable sign that frog and tadpole season has arrived.

For many people, spotting frogspawn is a nostalgic moment. It recalls childhood afternoons spent exploring streams and ponds, peering into jars to watch tiny wriggling tadpoles slowly grow. Yet beyond the nostalgia, this seasonal event is also a fascinating window into Ireland's natural biodiversity.

Ireland's Only Native Frog

Ireland has just one native frog species — the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*). After spending winter hidden in frost-free places such as compost heaps, leaf piles, stone walls or pond mud, frogs emerge as temperatures rise in late winter.

One of their first priorities is finding a suitable pond to breed.

Between February and March, female frogs lay clusters of eggs known as frogspawn. Each clump may contain thousands of tiny eggs suspended in clear jelly, usually floating near the surface in shallow water warmed by spring sunshine.

Within a few weeks the eggs hatch into tadpoles—small, black aquatic larvae that resemble tiny fish with tails. Over the following months they undergo one of nature's most remarkable transformations: growing back legs, then front legs, absorbing their tail and eventually emerging as miniature froglets ready for life on land.

A Sign of a Healthy Environment

Frogs play a crucial role in the ecosystem and are often considered environmental indicators. Because they have permeable skin and spend part of their lives in water and part on land, they are particularly sensitive to pollution and habitat changes.

Healthy frog populations usually indicate:

- Clean water
- Good insect populations
- Thriving wetland habitats
- Balanced garden ecosystems

They also provide a natural form of pest control, feeding on insects, worms, slugs and other small invertebrates.

A Seasonal Wildlife Spectacle

During frog season ponds can suddenly burst into life. On mild evenings the sound of croaking frogs may echo across fields or gardens as males compete for mates.

For a few weeks the water may appear almost alive, with clouds of tadpoles darting beneath the surface. Birds, dragonflies and other wildlife are drawn to the pond too, creating a miniature ecosystem.

For families and children, watching the stages of development—from frogspawn to tadpole to froglet—can be one of the most accessible wildlife experiences in Ireland.

Creating a Frog-Friendly Garden

The good news is that frogs don't need large lakes or rivers. Even a small wildlife pond can become a breeding site if

conditions are right.

Gardeners who want to encourage frogs can:

- Avoid pesticides near ponds or garden water features
 - Include gently sloping pond edges so frogs can enter and leave easily
 - Plant native aquatic plants for shelter
 - Leave small wild areas with logs, stones or long grass
- Once frogs discover a suitable breeding site, they often return to the same pond year after year.

A Quiet Sign That Spring Has Arrived

In Ireland, the changing seasons are often marked by simple signs: daffodils pushing through the soil, lambs appearing in fields, or brighter evenings after a long winter.

But in quiet corners of the countryside—and increasingly in suburban gardens too—another seasonal signal is unfolding.

Clusters of frogspawn floating on still water may seem modest at first glance, yet they mark the beginning of an extraordinary transformation that will unfold over the coming months.

For those who pause to look, frog and tadpole season is one of the small but magical moments that remind us just how alive Ireland's landscapes really are.

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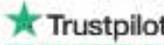


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A graphic for St. Patrick's Day Bash. It features a scroll with a list of bands performing on various dates in March. The scroll is decorated with musical notes and a small Irish flag. In the foreground, there is an acoustic guitar, a glass of beer, and a pot of gold with a horseshoe.

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Waste disposal and illegal dumping in Ireland



How big is the problem?

Illegal dumping (often called fly-tipping) is a persistent environmental problem in Ireland. It ranges from small-scale dumping of black bags on rural roads to organised criminal dumping of construction waste. The overall picture is mixed: major organised dumping has declined compared with the early 2000s, but smaller-scale illegal dumping remains widespread and costly to tackle.

Scale of Illegal Dumping in Ireland

Thousands of incidents each year

Local authorities deal with large numbers of waste-related complaints and enforcement actions annually. In 2022, roughly 135,000 inspections related to waste and litter enforcement were carried out across Ireland, and 93% of environmental prosecutions were linked to waste offences. This includes illegal dumping (fly-tipping), backyard burning, unauthorised waste collectors, and illegal waste storage sites.

Significant volumes of waste dumped

Environmental clean-up groups show the physical scale of the problem. For example, the PURE Project (working in Dublin/Wicklow uplands) removed 146,580 kg of illegally dumped waste from 890 sites in 2024. The waste included furniture, construction debris, appliances (fridges, TVs, washing machines), mattresses, and household rubbish. Earlier years were even worse — one year saw 440 tonnes removed in the same region alone.

Illegal dumping occurs nationwide

It is not just an urban problem. Illegal dumping frequently occurs on rural boreens and forestry tracks, boglands and upland areas, lay-bys and quiet roads, industrial estates, and riverbanks and quarries. These locations make enforcement difficult.

Organised Waste Crime

Illegal dumping is sometimes linked to criminal activity. Examples include unlicensed waste collectors (“man-in-a-van” operators), illegal waste transfer stations, and cross-border dumping. At one point tens of thousands of tonnes of waste were illegally transported from the Republic to Northern Ireland and dumped in unlicensed sites. Waste crime can be lucrative because it avoids landfill charges, recycling costs, and transport and regulatory compliance.

Trends Over Time

Improvement in large-scale dumping

Government enforcement has reduced some major dumping operations. The EPA says large-scale illegal dumping is far less common today than it was in the early 2000s. Measures that helped include waste collection permits, landfill regulation, enforcement networks, and tracking of waste movements.

But smaller dumping remains common

Despite improvements, small-scale dumping is still frequent, especially where households lack proper waste collection. Investigations in Dublin found thousands of homes with no registered waste-collection service, raising concerns about where their rubbish goes.

Why Illegal Dumping Happens

The main drivers are economic and behavioural. Disposal costs lead people to avoid paying for skip hire, recycling centres, or bulky waste charges. Construction waste is particularly expensive to dispose of legally. Illegal collectors offer cheap waste removal but dump it illegally instead of paying disposal fees. Rural isolation and Ireland’s geography make enforcement difficult, with thousands of small roads, forests, bogland, and quiet scenic areas. Common household dumped items include mattresses, sofas, DIY rubble, garden waste, and black bags of household rubbish.

Cost to the Public

Illegal dumping costs Irish taxpayers millions every year through clean-up operations, environmental damage, enforcement and prosecutions, and landfill remediation. Local authorities and volunteer groups carry much of this burden.

Overall Assessment

In simple terms, large organised dumping operations are much less common than 20 years ago. However, small-scale fly-tipping remains a significant national problem, with rural areas and uplands particularly affected. The issue is persistent rather than catastrophic.

Counties and Regions with the Worst Illegal Dumping in Ireland

Wicklow is frequently reported as the worst-affected county based on complaints. At least 600 complaints of illegal dumping were recorded through the national environmental complaints line in a multi-year period. Wicklow is heavily affected due to

its proximity to Dublin (making it easy to dump waste in rural areas), its mountain roads and forestry tracks, and scenic areas like the Wicklow Mountains which attract dumping of household and construction waste.

Dublin (especially South Dublin) has urban dumping hotspots. South Dublin County Council received over 3,600 complaints in one year alone relating to illegal dumping and littering. Problem areas often include housing estates, laneways, industrial areas, and mountains near Tallaght and Rathfarnham. Dublin councils spend millions each year cleaning illegal waste.

Kildare frequently appears in dumping reports because it borders Dublin. Rural roads, boglands, and quarries are common dumping locations. Many Dublin-generated wastes are dumped just outside the city in counties like Kildare and Wicklow.

Limerick recorded around 1,876 complaints relating to littering and illegal dumping in one year. Issues include illegal construction waste and rural roadside dumping.

Kerry had nearly 1,000 reported fly-tipping incidents in a year. Dumping often occurs in rural lanes, tourist areas, and coastal roads.

Cork City and county frequently appear in national complaint statistics. One dataset recorded around 220 complaints linked to Cork City Council.

Illegal dumping in Ireland is widespread but mostly small-scale, involving thousands of incidents annually. While enforcement has reduced large criminal dumping operations, illegal disposal of household and construction waste remains a regular environmental problem across both urban and rural areas.

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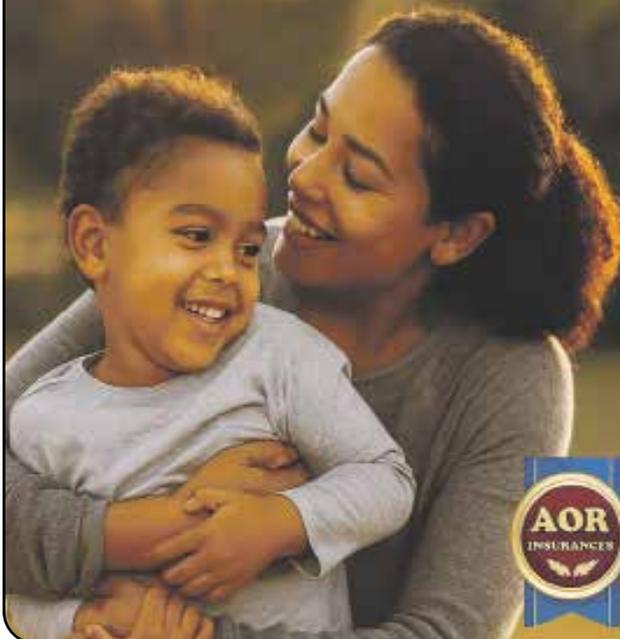
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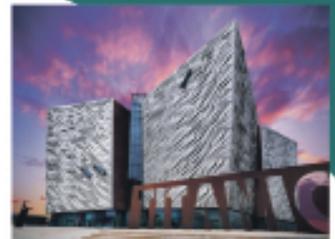
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The Curious Life of the Easter Bunny

Every spring, just as Ireland finally begins to believe the worst of the winter might be over, a mysterious character hops quietly into our lives: the Easter Bunny.

Unlike Santa Claus — who travels with a noisy entourage of reindeer, elves, and the occasional suspiciously jingling sleigh — the Easter Bunny works alone. No PR department. No workshop. No visible logistics chain. Yet somehow, by Easter morning, gardens and kitchens across the country are filled with chocolate eggs, brightly coloured treats, and the unmistakable scent of melted cocoa and childhood excitement.

For a creature that technically shouldn't even lay eggs, the bunny has built a remarkably successful brand.

A Marketing Genius in Fur

Let's be honest: if a business consultant had pitched the Easter Bunny concept in a boardroom, it probably wouldn't have survived the first slide of the presentation.

"Right," someone would say, "so we have a rabbit... delivering eggs... made of chocolate... once a year."

But sometimes the most improbable ideas are the ones that work best. In fact, the Easter Bunny may be the most underappreciated marketing mastermind of the seasonal calendar. Christmas may dominate the winter, but Easter has quietly built an empire of chocolate aisles,

pastel packaging, and elaborate egg hunts in gardens from Donegal to Dún Laoghaire.

The Egg Hunt Economy

The true genius of the Easter Bunny lies in the egg hunt.

Unlike Christmas morning — where gifts arrive neatly wrapped and ready — Easter requires effort. Children must search under hedges, behind flowerpots, and occasionally inside wellington boots to uncover their sugary treasure.

Parents, meanwhile, become amateur event planners.

There are routes to design. Clues to invent. Chocolate logistics to manage. And all of this usually happens before the first cup of tea has properly kicked in.

Across Ireland, Easter egg hunts have become mini festivals. Parks, hotels, farms and community groups host elaborate hunts, turning what was once a simple backyard game into a springtime ritual.

The bunny, of course, takes all the credit.

Chocolate Inflation

Another sign of the Easter Bunny's influence is the remarkable transformation of the humble egg.

Once upon a time, an Easter egg was exactly that: an egg. Perhaps painted. Perhaps hidden behind the couch.

Today, it is more likely to be:

- A giant chocolate egg
- Containing smaller chocolate eggs
- Paired with a mug
- Or a branded toy
- Or an entire chocolate bar collection the size of a small suitcase

Supermarkets dedicate entire aisles to Easter. Chocolatiers release limited editions. Even the most disciplined among us inevitably end up buying “just one more egg” — usually for someone else, though strangely it often gets eaten before Easter Sunday arrives.

A Quiet Symbol of Spring

Beyond the chocolate and the chaos, the Easter Bunny represents something older and simpler: the arrival of spring.

Rabbits have long been symbols of fertility and new life. Eggs represent rebirth. Together they capture the moment when the year begins to turn again — when days grow longer, gardens wake up, and the first warm sunlight makes us think about barbecues, sea swims, and summer plans.

In Ireland especially, Easter sits at that hopeful intersection between winter and spring. The hedgerows

are greening, lambs are appearing in fields, and suddenly the world feels lighter.

The bunny, it seems, knows exactly when to arrive.

The Most Mysterious Seasonal Worker

And yet the Easter Bunny remains the most mysterious figure in the holiday calendar.

Where does the bunny live the rest of the year?

Who manufactures the chocolate?

How does one rabbit cover every household in a single night?

These are questions best not asked too closely — much like the mechanics of Santa’s chimney navigation system.

Some traditions are better left unexplained.

Until Next Spring

By Easter Monday the evidence of the bunny’s visit has largely disappeared. Foil wrappers remain. Half-eaten eggs sit quietly in the fridge. Children begin negotiating when they can open the next chocolate egg.

The bunny, meanwhile, vanishes as quietly as it arrived.

No fanfare. No farewell.

Just a few muddy footprints in the garden and the lingering suspicion that somewhere, in a field not too far away, a rabbit is already planning next year’s operation.

And judging by the chocolate sales figures, business is hopping along nicely.



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Cholesterol



Research shows more people know their pet's birthday than their cholesterol levels, despite being aware of the importance of regular health checks

- Importance of Regular Health Checks widely recognised, but proactivity varies by age
- People aged 35-55 are the least proactive about their health and are less likely to track their key health indicators
- People more likely to know their car registration or Netflix PIN rather than their cholesterol or BMI
- Irish Life Health launch Essential Health Check to enable people to take control of their health and understand the most important numbers in their lives

Despite the majority of the population acknowledging the importance of regularly tracking health metrics, people are more aware of details like their pet's birthdays (58%) and Netflix PINs (58%) than knowing their cholesterol (47%), blood sugar (40%) or resting heart rate (38%), according to new research commissioned by Irish Life Health. These findings come as Irish Life Health continues to record a steady increase in cardiovascular related claims, including amongst younger members. Health screening is the foundation of good health and is critical to supporting early detection and prevention.

The research indicates that people can recite certain numerical details from memory yet often draw a blank when it comes to their own health indicators. The majority of people can seamlessly recall everyday items like their mobile number (96%) and ATM pin code (95%). However, strikingly, people were shown to be more aware of their car registration (72%), Netflix PIN (58%), and even their pet's birthday (58%) than their key health numbers, such as cholesterol (47%) or blood sugar levels (40%).

The research is released in conjunction with the launch of Irish Life Health's Essential Health Check, an at-home blood test kit that makes it easy for people to measure key health markers in a convenient, timely, and affordable way. A clinician reviews both the blood test results and a lifestyle assessment, and customers receive personalised insights and recommendations through an interactive dashboard, along with expert support to help them build a

tailored health action plan.

The research findings highlight how disconnected people can be from the information that matters most for their long-term wellbeing; blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, blood sugar - which are the foundation of good health and wellbeing. This reinforces the need to make health awareness and routine screening as familiar and accessible as the details relied upon every day.

While the vast majority of people know the importance of health screening, less than half of those surveyed had had a health check-up in the last 12 months. Those under 35 are most engaged (74%) as they tend to take a self-directed approach, focusing on key health markers such as calories and step counts to optimise overall health, fitness and performance. People over 55 closely follow (72%), with 1 in 5 tracking their health in tandem with healthcare professionals. However, 35-54-year-olds emerged as the least proactive with their health (62%), prefer simpler health routines and are less likely to regularly track their health.

GP and Chief Medical Officer at Inuvi, Dr. Nisa Aslam, who has collaborated with Irish Life Health to deliver the Essential Health Check said: "Rates of heart disease and related metabolic conditions are rising fast, including among younger people. The challenge is that in the early stages these conditions are silent, so people are often unaware of their risk and don't take action until it's too late. Irish Life Health's Essential Health Check makes health screening more accessible, convenient and reliable, allowing people to take preventative steps and take full control of their health - particularly from mid-life onwards, when proactive screening becomes increasingly important."

Behaviour Change Specialist, Dr. Heather McKee said: "As a nation, we are pretty proactive when it comes to monitoring things like steps and sleep on our wearables, and tracking your health numbers can create awareness, but awareness alone doesn't change behaviour. What makes this new Essential Health Check service different

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is that it bridges the gap between ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’: it highlights what matters most for you, reduces overwhelm, and provides clear, tailored guidance on where to start. That clarity removes one of the biggest barriers to action - uncertainty - and helps people build healthier habits they can sustain.”

Cost remains the biggest barrier to seeking routine health checks (34%), followed by a widespread perception among many people that they feel healthy and therefore don't need to be tested (22%). Access also continues to be a challenge, with difficulty securing appointments and long waiting times preventing 19% of respondents from attending health checks, while a similar number cite busy schedules as a deterrent. Worryingly, the fear of receiving potentially worrying results plays a significant role in up to 15% of people delaying preventative action.

Ann Marie Nestor, Managing Director of Irish Life Health, said: “We know two of the biggest barriers preventing people from carrying out routine health checks is cost and access. Many people struggle to get GP appointments or are constrained by work, caring responsibilities or time. Our new Essential Health Check seeks to remove these barriers, enabling people to conduct a convenient and affordable at home blood test to proactively monitor key health indicators and, ultimately, take control of their health.”

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THE NEW IRISH RURAL REVIVAL



For decades, the story of modern Ireland seemed to revolve around cities.

Young people moved to Dublin, Cork, and Galway in search of jobs, while rural towns struggled with declining populations and shuttered shops. But in recent years, something remarkable has begun to happen.

Across Ireland's countryside, a quiet revival is underway.

Small towns and villages—particularly along the Atlantic coast and in scenic rural counties—are attracting new residents who are seeking a different kind of lifestyle: one that offers space, community, and a stronger connection to nature.

Remote Work Changing the Map

One of the biggest forces behind this shift is the rise of remote and hybrid working. As technology allows more professionals to work from home, many people no longer need to live within commuting distance of a city centre.

Instead, they are choosing locations that offer quality of life over proximity to an office.

For families leaving cities like Dublin, rural Ireland offers larger homes, access to nature, and often a stronger sense of community. Places that once seemed too remote for daily commuting are now viable options for people working online several days a week.

Government initiatives supporting broadband expansion have also helped make this shift possible.

A Return to the Coast and Countryside

Scenic areas along Ireland's western seaboard have been among the biggest beneficiaries of this rural revival. Coastal towns, historic villages, and countryside communities are seeing new life as people rediscover the appeal of living close to nature.

The dramatic landscapes along the Wild Atlantic Way have long attracted tourists, but now they are also attracting new residents—people drawn by the beauty of the coastline and the slower pace of life.

Many buyers are renovating traditional cottages or converting older farmhouses into modern homes, blending historic character with contemporary design.

Creativity in the Countryside

Rural Ireland has also become a magnet for creatives and entrepreneurs. Artists, designers, writers, and digital professionals are increasingly choosing countryside locations where inspiration is abundant and living costs can be lower.

Small towns are seeing the opening of new cafés, craft shops, galleries, and independent businesses. These ventures not only bring economic activity but also help create vibrant cultural communities.

Local markets, food festivals, and artisan producers are flourishing as a result.

Stronger Communities

One of the biggest appeals of rural living is something that can be difficult to find in larger cities: a genuine sense of community.

In many towns and villages, neighbours still know each other, local sports clubs are at the centre of social life, and community events bring people together throughout the year.

New residents often find themselves quickly welcomed into these networks, creating a blend of long-standing traditions and fresh perspectives.

Challenges and Opportunities

Of course, the rural revival also brings challenges. Increased demand for housing can place pressure on small communities, and local services must adapt to growing populations.

Infrastructure—particularly public transport and healthcare access—remains an important issue in some areas.

However, many experts believe the shift toward more balanced regional living could ultimately benefit the entire country, easing pressure on major cities while strengthening rural economies.

A New Chapter for Rural Ireland

Ireland has always had a deep cultural connection to its countryside. For generations, rural communities shaped the nation's traditions, language, and identity.

Today, that connection is being rediscovered in a modern context. Remote work, improved infrastructure, and changing lifestyle priorities are making rural living more attractive than it has been in decades.

What is emerging is not simply a return to the past, but a new chapter—one where Ireland's towns and villages combine tradition with innovation.

The result is a countryside that feels vibrant once again, where old stone cottages sit alongside modern homes, and where the rhythm of rural life continues to evolve in exciting ways.

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Is This Kildare's Year?

Local Clubs Rally Behind the Lilywhites

As another championship season builds excitement across the country, supporters in and around Lucan are watching closely as the Kildare county football team push forward in the race for the famous Sam Maguire Cup in the All-Ireland Senior Football Championship. With encouraging performances and a growing sense of belief among players and supporters alike, the big question now being asked is simple: Could this finally be Kildare's year?

While the county team carries the hopes of thousands, the real foundation of Kildare football lies with its local clubs. Across north Kildare, clubs continue to develop young players, support the county panel and maintain the strong Gaelic football tradition that has existed for generations.

Strong Clubs, Strong County

Several clubs close to Lucan play an important role in sustaining the success of Kildare football. Celbridge GAA is widely regarded as one of the county's most competitive clubs, with a strong record in senior competitions and an impressive underage structure. The club regularly produces players capable of stepping up to the inter-county stage.

Nearby, Leixlip GAA continues to develop talented footballers through its youth programmes. The club has long been known for its commitment to grassroots development and remains a key contributor to football in the region.

Further west, Maynooth GAA has seen significant growth in recent years. With the town expanding and a thriving sporting culture around the university community, Maynooth has developed a vibrant club environment that supports both youth and senior football.

Another club with deep roots in the county's football tradition is Clane GAA. Known for their competitive spirit

and strong club identity, Clane has consistently produced determined players who bring resilience and experience to county panels.

The Power of Grassroots

Behind every county player stands a network of coaches, volunteers and supporters who dedicate countless hours to local GAA clubs. Training sessions, school partnerships and underage competitions are all vital in nurturing the next generation of players.

For young footballers growing up in Kildare, the dream of wearing the county jersey often begins on local club pitches. These clubs teach the fundamental skills of Gaelic football while also instilling teamwork, discipline and pride in representing one's community.

When the county team plays championship football, the support from clubs across the county becomes clear. Fans travel in large numbers, proudly wearing club colours while cheering on the Lilywhites.

Building Momentum

In recent years, Kildare GAA has placed strong emphasis on developing coaching structures and improving pathways for young players. These efforts are beginning to show results, with emerging talent joining experienced players to create a balanced and energetic team.

Kildare's style of play has also evolved. Faster movement of the ball, improved defensive organisation and sharper attacking play have made the team far more competitive against traditional powerhouses.

However, the challenge of winning the All-Ireland remains immense. Counties such as Kerry, Dublin and Mayo have long dominated the championship and bring considerable experience to the latter stages of the competition.

What Will It Take?

If Kildare are to make a serious push for the Sam Maguire

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Cup, several key elements will be crucial. Defensive discipline will be vital when facing high-scoring teams, while accuracy in front of goal could make the difference in tight championship games. Strong leadership on the pitch and contributions from impact substitutes will also play an important role.

Consistency is often what separates contenders from champions. If Kildare can maintain their performance levels throughout the championship, they could prove difficult opponents for any team.

Hope for the Future

One of the greatest strengths of Gaelic games is the connection between clubs and counties. Every player representing Kildare at senior level began their journey in a local club, supported by coaches and communities who believed in them from the start.

For supporters in Lucan and surrounding areas with close ties to north Kildare, the county team represents more than just results. It represents community pride, shared effort and the dream that local players can succeed on the biggest stage.

Whether or not Kildare go all the way this year remains to be seen. But with strong clubs, committed supporters and growing confidence within the squad, there is genuine optimism.

And sometimes in sport, belief can be the most powerful advantage of all.

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Drive Smart : The Best Cars for Irish Commuters

For thousands of people living in County Dublin and Kildare, the daily commute is a familiar routine.

Whether travelling from Naas to the city centre, Maynooth to the Docklands, or Lucan to Sandyford, Irish commuters spend a significant amount of time on the road each week.

As fuel prices fluctuate, traffic increases, and environmental concerns grow, choosing the right car for commuting has become more important than ever. Today's drivers are looking for vehicles that combine fuel efficiency, comfort, reliability, and modern technology.

What Makes a Good Commuter Car?

Not every car suits the demands of Irish commuting. Drivers need vehicles that can handle motorways like the M4, M7, and M50, while still being practical in tight urban streets and parking spaces.

The key factors many commuters consider include:

Fuel efficiency

With daily travel distances often exceeding 50–80 kilometres, a fuel-efficient vehicle can save thousands of euro each year.

Comfort: Commuters may spend one to two hours in their car each day. Supportive seating, smooth suspension, and low cabin noise make a major difference.

Technology: Features such as Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, adaptive cruise control, and parking cameras make driving easier and safer.

Running costs: Insurance, servicing, and road tax all play a role in the total cost of ownership.

Hybrid and Electric Cars on the Rise

Across Dublin and Kildare, hybrid and electric vehicles are becoming increasingly popular. Government incentives, improved battery technology, and expanding charging infrastructure have made these cars more practical for everyday use.

Hybrid cars offer the advantage of excellent fuel

economy without relying entirely on charging, making them a safe choice for longer commuters. Electric vehicles, meanwhile, appeal to drivers who want lower running costs and reduced emissions.

Public charging points have expanded significantly in recent years, and many commuters now install home charging units, allowing them to start each day with a full battery.

SUVs: Comfort Meets Practicality

While smaller hatchbacks remain popular, compact SUVs have seen huge growth in Ireland. These vehicles offer higher driving positions, spacious interiors, and improved safety features.

For families commuting from towns like Celbridge, Clane, or Leixlip, SUVs provide the versatility needed for school runs, shopping trips, and weekend travel.

Modern SUVs also benefit from improved fuel efficiency compared with earlier generations, making them more suitable for regular commuting.

The Importance of Reliability

Irish motorists often keep their cars for many years, so reliability remains a key consideration. Brands known for strong reliability records continue to dominate commuter choices, particularly in the hybrid and family hatchback segments.

Regular servicing, good fuel economy, and long warranties give drivers confidence that their vehicle will handle the demands of everyday travel.

Technology Changing the Driving Experience

Modern commuter vehicles now include advanced technology designed to make driving safer and less stressful.

Many newer cars feature:

- Adaptive cruise control that adjusts speed automatically in traffic

- Lane-keeping assistance for motorway driving
- Automatic emergency braking
- Parking sensors and 360-degree cameras

For commuters navigating busy routes like the M50 or city-centre traffic, these systems can significantly reduce fatigue.

Planning for the Future

Ireland's transport landscape is changing quickly. With government targets aimed at reducing emissions, the shift toward electric and hybrid vehicles is expected to accelerate over the next decade.

At the same time, improved public transport and remote working options are reshaping commuting patterns. However, for many residents of suburban Dublin and Kildare, the car remains the most practical and flexible way to travel.

Choosing the right commuter car is therefore about more than just getting from A to B. It's about finding a vehicle that delivers efficiency, comfort, and reliability, making the daily journey easier and more enjoyable.

For Irish drivers spending hours each week on the road, the right choice can transform the commute from a chore into a far more pleasant part of the day.



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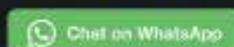


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