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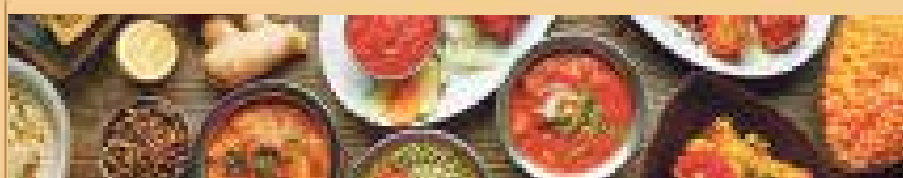
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Kildare County Council Announces the First Ever Kildare Inclusivity Festival – 2025

At Kildare County Council, we are continuously working to break down barriers and contribute to positive changes for people living with disabilities in County Kildare.

In collaboration with the County Kildare Access Network (CKAN) and partners Nua Healthcare Services, Kildare Sports Partnership, Barretstown and The Curragh Racecourse, we are proud to announce the official launch of the first Kildare Inclusivity Festival - a landmark event celebrating disability, inclusion, and the boundless potential of people of all abilities.

The festival will take place on Sunday, 11th May 2025, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at The Curragh Racecourse. This free community event aims to foster a culture of inclusion, by celebrating the limitless potential of individuals of all abilities through engaging activities, live performances, and meaningful community interactions.

Speaking at the festival launch, Michael Hurley, Access Officer, Kildare County Council and Chairperson of County Kildare Access Network (CKAN), said; “We are thrilled to introduce this festival as a platform to showcase ability, break down barriers, and bring people together in a truly inclusive environment. We invite everyone to join us for a day of fun, engagement, and celebration.”

Kildare County Council remains dedicated to creating opportunities that promote inclusivity and accessibility for all. The Kildare Inclusivity Festival represents a significant step toward fostering unity, respect, and celebration within the community.

Festival Highlights:

Attendees can enjoy a range of activities suitable for all ages and abilities, including:

- Family Fun Zone : Packed with engaging activities for children and families.
- Exhibition Stands & Service Provider Zone: Showcasing local services, supports, and organizations.
- Inclusive Sports Zone: – Experience adaptive and inclusive sports.
- Barretstown Magic Moments: An opportunity for families to experience the Magic of Barretstown with fun therapeutic programs for all ages.
- Live Entertainment: A vibrant lineup of music acts, magic and

puppet show, and funfair games.

- Artisan Food & Craft Market: Featuring local food producers and craftspeople.
- Nua Healthcare Services’ ‘Ultimate Obstacle Course’: A fun and inclusive physical challenge designed for everyone to participate in, either as a group or individually.

A Collaborative Commitment to Inclusion in Kildare:

As Kildare County Council introduces this unique and innovative inclusion festival, many partner organisations have joined them to support the event.

JJ Carey, Director of Supported Living Service, Nua Healthcare, said; “We at Nua Healthcare Services are thrilled to support the Kildare Inclusivity Festival, in what promises to be a wonderful celebration of diversity and community. This event is a testament to the power of inclusion and connection in Kildare, and we look forward to joining everyone on May 11th for what promises to be an inspiring and enjoyable day.”

Evan Arkwright, Racing and Sponsorship Manager, The Curragh, commented: “The Curragh is delighted to be the host venue for the inaugural Inclusivity Festival. We are fully committed to working collaboratively with all partners as part of our focus to engage with the community and we are very pleased to support this exciting initiative as inclusivity is one of the principal core values of the racecourse.”

John Doran, Community Sport Development Officer, Kildare Sports Partnership, adds: “At KSP, we strive to increase participation in physical activity and sport for everyone in County Kildare and we are delighted to have the opportunity to support Kildare County Council at this amazing inclusion festival.”

Paula Conlan, Barretstown team member explains: “At Barretstown we offer free therapeutic programs for children and their families living with a serious illness. We are very excited to support this event and are looking forward to bringing the Magic of Barretstown to the Curragh on the 11th of May”.

Join Us!

Join us for this free event at the Kildare Inclusivity Festival on Sunday, 11th May 2025, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at The Curragh Racecourse.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our May Edition of Little Village. Rediscover the Liffey's role in our lives – it's more than just water. Have a read of our article and see for yourself. Staying active is one of the best things we can do for our physical and mental health. Read our article and see how you can improve on your chances of staying healthy.

Finally, just minutes away from the hustle and bustle of suburban life in Lucan and Leixlip there's a world waiting to be discovered, see our article on Secret Nature trails and Biodiversity hotspots.

Hope we have something for you all to read and enjoy.

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Lucan vs. Leixlip: A Friendly Rivalry Through Time

They're two towns separated by a river, a county border, and about ten minutes of travel time — but ask a local from Lucan or Leixlip, and they'll tell you: we're not the same.

Sure, they share schools, friends, supermarkets, and even the same N4 headaches. But for generations, Lucan and Leixlip have playfully sparred over everything from sports scores to school reputations, accents to Aldi car parks. And through it all, there's been a quiet understanding — we may be rivals, but we're neighbours first.

This is the story of two towns, one friendship, and a rivalry that's as Irish as tea and begrudgery.

Ancient Roots, Shared River

Let's start with the history. Leixlip, meaning "leap of the salmon" in Old Norse, has Viking and Norman roots. It even boasts Leixlip Castle, one of Ireland's oldest continuously inhabited castles. Lucan, meanwhile, has its own claim to ancient fame — St. Finian's Church, a heritage spot linked to early Christian Ireland, and Lucan Demesne, which dates back centuries.

And between them? The mighty River Liffey, quietly flowing past both towns, keeping them connected in geography — and occasionally in debate about who has the better riverside walk.

Game On: GAA and the Great Divide

No rivalry is complete without sport. And around here, GAA is king.

•Lucan Sarsfields and Leixlip GAA have faced off for years — and it's not just about the senior teams. From under-8 blitzes to minor championships, bragging rights are built early and remembered forever.

•"We beat them in 2015, and I still remind my cousin," laughs Conor, a Sarsfields player. "Even if he wasn't on the team."

When the jerseys come out, it's game faces on — but after the final whistle, you'll usually find both sides sharing chips in Supermac's.

Schools, Shops, and Saturday Haircuts

Lucan and Leixlip teens have been crossing county lines for years. Some Leixlip kids go to schools in Lucan (especially for DEIS or Gaelscoil options), and vice versa. They might roll their eyes at the crossover, but when it comes to big moments — like exams or concerts — they're often showing up for each other.

Retail rivalry also plays a role. Lucan has Liffey Valley, but Leixlip defends its Main Street charm, not to mention a Tesco that has somehow become a social hotspot. Add in Barber Wars™ (who gives the best fade?) and the great Chinese takeaway debate, and you've got plenty of fuel for the fire.

Legends, Tall Tales & Celebrity Sightings

Locals love a good story — and both towns claim their fair share of folklore.

•Arthur Guinness famously set up his first brewery in Leixlip in 1756, before making the move to St. James's Gate. You'll still hear Leixlip referred to as the "home of Guinness".

•Lucan, meanwhile, is home to Lucan House, which once hosted Pope John Paul II during his 1979 visit — a story still told with pride in the parish.

And who can forget the rumours that Bono was spotted walking a dog near Lucan Demesne or that Pierce Brosnan once passed through Leixlip on his way west? We can neither confirm nor deny.

Different Vibes, Same Heart

Lucan, with its sprawling estates, big parks, and growing diversity, feels a little more like a Dublin suburb every year. Leixlip, smaller and more compact, holds on to its Kildare village charm — but with tech giants like Intel just down the road, it's anything but sleepy.

Still, at the heart of both places are tight-knit communities, local legends, and weekend warriors making the most of the parks, pubs, and people.

"We're different, yeah," says Aisling, a Leixlip resident whose partner is from Lucan. "But it's like siblings. You wind each other up — but God help anyone else who tries."

Final Score? Draw (But We'll Argue Anyway)

In the end, Lucan and Leixlip are more alike than different. They share postcodes, postmen, playgrounds — and a quiet pride in their shared corner of the world.

So next time someone says, "Lucan's better" or "Leixlip's got more character", just smile and ask the real question:

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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.

An advertisement for Maid in Ireland Cleaning Services. It features a smiling woman in a blue and white checkered shirt. To her left is a circular logo with a green shamrock and a blue figure holding a mop, with the text "Maid in Ireland Cleaning Services". Below the logo, the text reads: "Beauty Salons, Crèches, Offices, Gyms, Schools & Private Homes", "From deep cleaning to regular weekly, biweekly, or monthly rotations," and "Specialise in move-in/move-out, end of tenancy, before-sale, and event cleaning." At the bottom, the phone number "089 943 9360" and website "www.maidinireland.com" are listed. A circular seal in the bottom right corner says "BUSINESS ALL-STARS MAID IN IRELAND 2024 ACCREDITED".

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New Publication Launched on Guidelines for Age Friendly Housing Design



Age Friendly Ireland has announced the launch of a new publication titled 'Ten Universal Design Features to include in a Lifetime Adaptable and Age Friendly Home'. These guidelines are aimed at anyone who is interested in making homes more age friendly, including:

- Practitioners involved in providing social housing for our ageing population
- Private developers
- Homeowners who wish to adapt their current home or move to a more suitable home.

The document can be downloaded from the Age Friendly Ireland website at: <https://agefriendlyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/AFI-10-Universal-Design-Features.pdf>

Age Friendly Ireland (AFI) supports cities, counties and towns across Ireland to prepare for the rapid ageing of the population, by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. AFI works through local programmes to provide walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for older people to participate in community activities.

Kildare County Council is committed to providing services that meet the needs of the current older population and to future-proof for ageing for all our citizens. To this end, Kildare launched the County Kildare Age Friendly Strategy, 2023 -2027. This document sets out the ambition and goals of the Kildare Age Friendly Programme over the next 4 to 5 years. A copy of the strategy can be found at: <https://kildarecoco.ie/media/Kildare%20age%20friendly%20Strategy.pdf>

Kildare County Council's Housing and Regeneration Department's Architectural Services Section is central in the design and provision of housing that allows older people to live in their own homes and communities with dignity and independence.

Various other supports for older people are available, including:

- Healthy Age Friendly Homes scheme: which provides assistance to older people to allow them to age in the home and avoid premature admittance to long-term care. Information on this scheme is available at: [Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme | Age Friendly Ireland](#)

- Rightsizing: Rightsizing is the term that describes a process of adjusting a house to suit the current needs of the resident. There are several rightsizing options available including adapting a home to better suit housing needs, home-sharing, supported housing and moving to a more appropriate or age friendly housing development. A guide to rightsizing can be found at: <https://agefriendlyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AFI-Rightsizing-Policy-Guide.pdf>

Details of the allocation requirements are available at <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/Housing/AllocationPolicy/>

- Housing Aid Grant for Older People: This scheme assists older people (aged 66 and over) living in poor housing conditions

- Mobility Aids Grant: This grant is for older people and/or disabled people who find it hard to move around their home due to mobility issues.

- Housing Adaptation Grant – Used to improve access in homes, this grant is for people with a physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual disability.

Further details of these grants can be obtained from housinggrants@kildarecoco.ie.

Carmel Cashin, Senior Community Worker and Age Friendly Coordinator, Kildare County Council works to coordinate the support and services with the needs and requirements of the older cohort. Carmel can be contacted at ccashin@kildarecoco.ie.

Kildare County Council's Age Friendly Technical advisor is Colm Cosgrove, Senior Executive Architect in the Housing and Regeneration Department. Colm can be contacted at ccosgrove@kildarecoco.ie

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Kildare County Council Launches its DZ Climate Champions Award Programme

Are you a community organisation, school, business or farmer in Maynooth that's taking action towards a more sustainable future? Let us acknowledge your efforts and take part in our DZ Climate Champions Award Programme.

Kildare County Councils Climate Action Team is excited to announce the launch of the DZ Climate Champions Award Programme. The aim of the awards is to support and encourage climate and biodiversity action in the Maynooth Decarbonising Zone (DZ) and to celebrate those who are leading the way in this area and inspiring others to do the same.


The awards feature four categories; communities, schools, businesses and farmers. Applicants are encouraged to apply throughout the duration of the programme, allowing the awards to serve as both a measure of progress, as well as an occasion to celebrate success. Participants are invited to complete a questionnaire, which will be evaluated by representatives from local community organisations. Award winners will receive promotional material to mark their achievements, and a tree will be dedicated to each champion as a symbolic recognition of their efforts on the wellbeing of future generations.

Paula O'Rourke, Climate Action Co-ordinator, Kildare County Council explains that: "As a local authority our role is to embed climate action throughout KCC and the communities we serve. The DZ Climate Champions Award Programme is a celebration of the wonderful work the people of Maynooth DZ have planned and achieved in climate and biodiversity action. Let's celebrate together for a sustainable tomorrow."

Applications are open now until 22nd May and can be submitted online via our website <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/ClimateAction/ClimateChampions>.

Please contact the Climate Action Team if you would like to submit your application another way, by emailing climateactionoffice@kildarecoco.ie.


Winners will be announced on 10th June, and the awards ceremony will take place at the annual Picnic in the Park on 15th June in Harbour Field Park, Maynooth.



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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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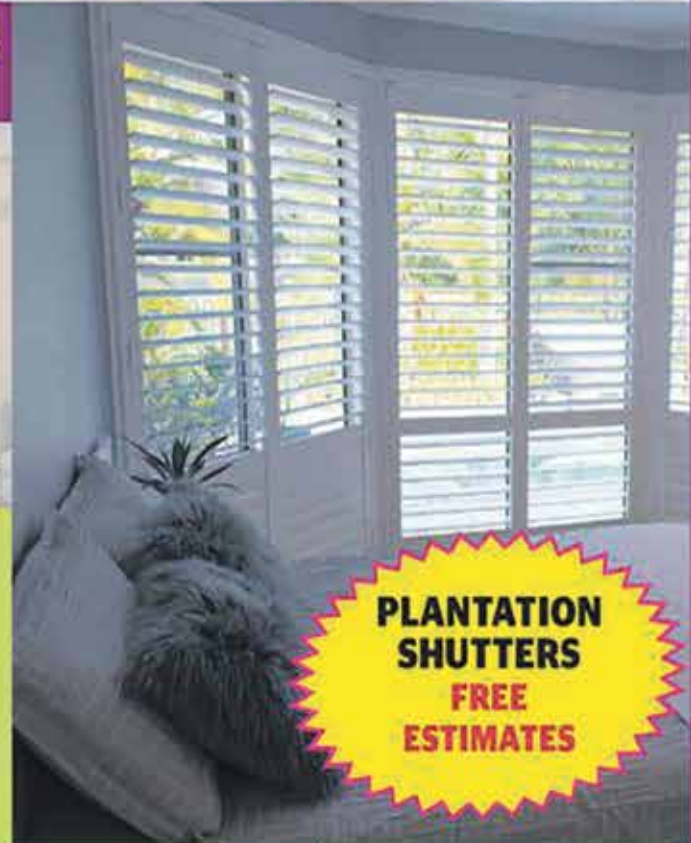
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Horse Country in a High-Tech Age: Kildare's Dual Identity

County Kildare, long celebrated as the heartland of Ireland's equestrian heritage, is undergoing a quiet but powerful evolution.

While thoroughbreds still thunder across The Curragh and stud farms remain global icons of prestige, just a few kilometres away, tech startups and global data giants are reshaping the economic landscape.

In 2025, Kildare wears two hats—and it wears them with style. One is mud-splashed and centuries old; the other is sleek, digital, and buzzing with innovation. Together, they form a dual identity that reflects modern Ireland in motion.

The Pastoral Pulse: A Legacy of Hooves and Heritage

Kildare's relationship with horses is storied and deep-rooted. Home to the Irish National Stud and the world-renowned Curragh Racecourse, the county has raised legends and trained champions. Bloodlines are traced like royal families, and horsemanship is not just tradition—it's an art form.

In villages like Kilcullen and Kildangan, the rhythm of rural life is still set by feeding times, foaling seasons, and race day routines. Families pass down stable knowledge with the same pride as heirlooms.

As John Flaherty, a third-generation trainer from Newbridge puts it, "In Kildare, we don't just raise horses—we raise history."

The New Frontier: Tech, Data, and Global Business

Yet just down the M7 motorway, a different kind of horsepower is on display. Business parks in Naas and Maynooth now host global names in pharmaceuticals, fintech, and logistics. Facebook (Meta) and Intel operate nearby facilities, and Lidl's €75 million distribution centre in Newbridge is among Europe's most advanced.

Local colleges, like Maynooth University, are nurturing the next wave of STEM talent, while innovation hubs and co-working spaces are popping up from Leixlip to Athy, feeding a tech ecosystem that's growing by the month.

This is not a county caught in contradiction—it's a county capitalizing on contrast.

Two Worlds, One Identity

What makes Kildare remarkable isn't just the coexistence of old and new—but how these worlds are beginning to cross-pollinate.

Equestrian analytics startups are using AI to track performance and predict race outcomes. Drone technology assists with pasture management. Even traditional stud farms are adopting

blockchain for bloodline verification and digital records.

Meanwhile, heritage tourism and agri-tech startups are leveraging the county's horse reputation as a brand of authenticity. Tourists might watch a morning gallop at The Curragh and later attend a virtual reality demo at a startup incubator—all within a half-hour drive.

Voices from the Crossover

Roisin Daly, a 28-year-old software engineer from Naas who grew up riding ponies in Sallins, sees no disconnect: "I go from writing code to mucking out stables—and both worlds challenge me in totally different ways. That's the beauty of Kildare."

For Sean Connolly, who runs a digital marketing agency serving the equine industry, the fusion is strategic: "The horse world is global—and we're helping it speak the language of the internet. Tradition doesn't mean outdated. It means storied. And stories sell."

Kildare's Balancing Act: A Model for Modern Ireland

What's unfolding in Kildare is more than a geographic coincidence—it's a model of modern rural-urban synergy. As Ireland balances its identity between rich tradition and rapid innovation, Kildare proves the two aren't mutually exclusive. In fact, they can amplify each other.

Where horses once connected the county to the world through trade, now fibre optic cables and air freight do the same. But the values—craft, pride, endurance—remain remarkably consistent.

Looking Ahead: Bridging Legacy and Leadership

In the coming years, Kildare's challenge won't be choosing between horse and hub—it will be ensuring both thrive together. That means investment in infrastructure, education, and community engagement that values both the stable hand and the software developer.

Because in Kildare, the sound of progress isn't just the click of a keyboard—it's also the steady beat of hooves on heritage-rich ground.

Why It Matters

Kildare shows us that modern Ireland doesn't have to sacrifice its soul to move forward. In fact, it's in the saddle of tradition that some of the boldest strides are made.

Whether it's breeding champions or building networks, this is a county galloping confidently into the future—with both boots firmly in the stirrups.

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Wild Suburbia: Secret Nature Trails & Biodiversity Hotspots

Just minutes away from the hustle and bustle of suburban life in Lucan and Leixlip, there's a world waiting to be discovered — a world of lush green spaces, peaceful walking trails, and hidden biodiversity hotspots.

Far from the crowded parks and popular spots, these lesser-known areas offer locals a rare opportunity to reconnect with nature and explore the wildlife that thrives just on our doorstep.

From ancient woodlands to serene lakesides, these secret nature trails and wildlife havens are perfect for families, keen walkers, or anyone looking to escape the noise of daily life. Whether you're interested in birdwatching, exploring biodiversity, or simply enjoying a peaceful walk, Lucan and Leixlip have a wealth of natural beauty just waiting to be explored.

St. Catherine's Park, Lucan: A Hidden Gem

Located just a short distance from Lucan Village, St. Catherine's Park is an expansive, largely undiscovered green space that offers something for everyone. This quiet park sits along the River Liffey, with trails winding through lush woodlands and wetlands. The wetland areas are a haven for birdwatchers, with species like kingfishers, swans, and waterfowl frequenting the area.

The park's woodland paths lead walkers through a mix of ancient trees and dense undergrowth, making it a fantastic spot to spot woodland creatures and discover wildflowers. It's also a wonderful location for families, with large open spaces for picnics and games. Be sure to check out the Walled Garden, an often-overlooked area in the park with beautiful seasonal blooms.

"St. Catherine's is my favourite place for a walk," says Laura Hughes, a local resident. "It's peaceful, and you can always spot something interesting, whether it's wildlife or just the stunning views by the river."

Lucan Demesne: Nature's Playground

The Lucan Demesne is another hidden treasure in Lucan,

stretching out over 200 acres and offering a stunning mix of natural landscapes. Part of the Liffey Valley Regional Park, this area is home to a variety of habitats, including forests, meadows, and riverbanks.

For families, the Lucan Demesne is perfect for a leisurely stroll or a more active adventure, with trails leading through mature woodland and past serene fishing lakes. The area is a fantastic spot for birdwatching, with regular sightings of woodpeckers, buzzards, and songbirds.

The riverbank along the Liffey provides a tranquil escape, with the opportunity to sit quietly and watch the water ripple by, occasionally catching a glimpse of otters or herons hunting along the shore.

"Lucan Demesne has so much to offer. It's amazing how close we are to so much wildlife," says Mark O'Reilly, a nature enthusiast from Lucan. "Whether you're walking, cycling, or just sitting by the lake, it's a great spot to disconnect from everything."

Leixlip Spa: A Peaceful Nature Retreat

Tucked away in Leixlip, the Leixlip Spa is a tranquil, almost secret, nature spot known primarily by locals. Located near the junction of the River Liffey and Griffeen River, this quiet haven boasts a rich history and natural beauty. The spa itself, once a popular health retreat in the 18th century, is now surrounded by scenic walking paths and wooded areas that are perfect for a nature walk.

The spa's surrounding grounds are home to many species of plants and animals. As you stroll along the river, you'll likely spot otters, water voles, and a variety of bird species. The river itself provides a habitat for salmon and trout, making it a great spot for anglers and nature lovers alike.



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For families looking to explore nature, Leixlip Spa is a hidden gem that offers quiet paths, beautiful views, and the opportunity to reconnect with the natural world.

“We love taking the kids to Leixlip Spa for walks,” says Fiona Byrne, a mother of two from Leixlip. “It’s so peaceful, and the kids love spotting the birds and animals. It’s our little escape from the town.”

The Royal Canal Greenway: A Serene Escape

For those who want to combine nature with a bit of exercise, the Royal Canal Greenway is an excellent choice. While the greenway is popular with cyclists and runners, it also offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy the wildlife and scenery along the canal banks. Stretching from Leixlip to Dublin City, this scenic route follows the Royal Canal and passes through some of the area’s most picturesque and biodiverse spots.

Along the canal, you’ll encounter a range of birdlife, including swans, ducks, and herons, as well as the occasional kingfisher. The canal itself is home to various aquatic life, including fish and insects, making it an important ecological corridor.

The route is ideal for both beginners and experienced walkers, with several points of interest and green spaces to stop and take in the views. The Liffey and the canal often run side-by-side in this section, allowing you to enjoy both waterways at once.

“The Royal Canal Greenway is perfect for a family outing. It’s flat, scenic, and you can walk, cycle, or even just sit and enjoy the views,” says Ronan Kelly, a Leixlip resident. “We’re lucky to have such a beautiful spot right in our backyards.”

Lesser-Known Greenways: Exploring Off the Beaten Path

Beyond the well-trodden paths, there are several lesser-known greenways that pass through the outskirts of Lucan and Leixlip, offering a more peaceful and private nature experience. These trails often follow old railway lines or quiet country roads, where you can enjoy an abundance of wildlife and discover hidden parts of the local landscape.

For example, Leixlip’s Lucan Road Greenway, a smaller trail tucked away in the northern part of Leixlip, offers stunning views of the surrounding countryside and is ideal for those who want to experience the rural side of the area without venturing too far out.

Another hidden gem is The Esker, an elevated ridge running through both Lucan and Leixlip, offering panoramic views of the surrounding area and an incredible vantage point for spotting hawks, falcons, and even deer on the slopes below.

Reconnect with Nature

Lucan and Leixlip may be suburban hotspots, but they’re also home to an incredible array of green spaces, nature trails, and biodiversity hotspots just waiting to be explored. Whether you’re a keen birdwatcher, nature enthusiast, or simply looking for a place to take the family for a peaceful day out, these secret spots offer the perfect opportunity to reconnect with nature.

From the peaceful paths along the Liffey to the birdlife-filled woods of Lucan Demesne, there’s a wealth of wildlife and beauty right at your doorstep. So, grab your walking shoes, pack a picnic, and take a moment to rediscover the wild side of Lucan and Leixlip — you won’t regret it.



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



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Beyond Dublin Bus: The Future of Transport in Lucan & Leixlip

As Dublin's suburbs continue to expand, Lucan and Leixlip are facing a transport conundrum: how to keep up with the increased traffic while maintaining an efficient, sustainable, and accessible public transport network.

With Dublin's population growing, it's clear that the days of relying solely on Dublin Bus and private cars are numbered. Thankfully, the future of transport in these areas is looking brighter — and greener.

The Struggle with Traffic

If you've ever been stuck in traffic on the N4 or the Lucan Road at rush hour, you're not alone. Both Lucan and Leixlip have become major commuter hubs, with thousands of people relying on roads that were never designed for such volume. Congestion around Liffey Junction and Lucan Village is a daily challenge, and the ever-expanding housing estates only add to the pressure.

The problem is evident — with more cars on the road, travel times increase, and public transport options start to feel stretched. As the urban sprawl continues and more people move to these areas for the quieter, suburban lifestyle, the need for alternative transport solutions has never been more urgent.

The Rail Solution: LUAS & Rail Upgrades

One of the most promising developments on the horizon for Lucan and Leixlip is the upcoming expansion of public rail services.

The LUAS green line extension, which will connect Lucan with the city centre, is one of the most anticipated infrastructure projects for the area. Expected to start service in 2025, the Luas Red Cow to Lucan extension will provide faster, more frequent access to the heart of Dublin. For commuters in Lucan, this means fewer buses, more direct routes, and much less time spent in traffic.

For Leixlip, the DART+ project promises an extension of the existing DART services. The expansion will include new stations

at Leixlip Confey and Leixlip Louisa Bridge, offering better connectivity to both Dublin and the surrounding counties. This expansion is part of the broader DART+ initiative, which aims to modernize and electrify the rail network across the greater Dublin area, easing the strain on the roads and providing more sustainable travel options for locals.

"The LUAS extension will make a massive difference," says Tom Kavanagh, a Lucan commuter who works in the city centre. "It'll be a lot quicker than the bus, and I won't need to worry about parking in town."

Cycling Infrastructure: Pedal Power Takes the Lead

While the rail network is expanding, cycling infrastructure is also undergoing a transformation in Lucan and Leixlip. The popularity of cycling in Dublin is on the rise, and the area is starting to catch up.

Several key cycling routes are being developed to help commuters ditch their cars in favour of bikes. The Royal Canal Greenway, which runs through Lucan, is already a popular cycling and walking route. But plans are in the works to extend this greenway and create new bike lanes connecting Leixlip to Lucan and beyond. Local cycling groups are advocating for safer cycling spaces, including dedicated bike lanes on key commuter routes and safer crossings at busy intersections.

"Cycling is becoming a viable option for so many of us who live just outside Dublin's core," says Elaine O'Reilly, a cycling advocate from Lucan. "With the right infrastructure, it's a much faster and healthier way to get to work."

These improvements will not only reduce traffic congestion but also promote healthier, more sustainable commuting options for families and professionals alike.

Public Transport Upgrades: Dublin Bus and Beyond

While rail and cycling infrastructure are key to the future of transport in the area, Dublin Bus will continue to be a primary mode of transport for many residents. With more people opting for buses as the rail network is still being developed, bus priority lanes and improved timetables are essential for keeping the system efficient.

In response to growing demand, Dublin Bus has already introduced express routes for Lucan, cutting down on travel times to and from the city. The Dublin Bus Connects project, which aims to redesign the bus network in Dublin, will improve the frequency and reliability of services, providing better connections between residential areas, shopping centres, and public transport hubs.

But it's not just about the buses — last-mile connectivity is also becoming a focus. Several schemes are being introduced that will help improve transport links to and from bus stops and train stations. New park-and-ride facilities, like the one planned for Leixlip Confey, will give commuters more flexibility and reduce reliance on driving into the city.

Walkability: Getting Around on Foot

As the public transport network improves, so does the emphasis on walkability. Both Lucan and Leixlip are undergoing urban renewal projects aimed at making the towns more pedestrian-friendly. In Lucan Village, plans are in place to create wider pedestrian zones, improve crosswalks, and introduce

more green spaces. In Leixlip, the revitalisation of the town centre aims to make the high street more accessible to walkers, with less traffic congestion and better pedestrian crossings.

“Improving the walkability of Lucan Village is important,” says Cliona McDermott, a Lucan resident. “We need to make it easier and safer for people to walk to the shops, schools, and transport links.”

The Future: Sustainable Transport for All

Looking ahead, sustainability is at the core of transport planning in Lucan and Leixlip. Both towns are committed to reducing carbon emissions and providing greener alternatives for residents. Electric vehicles (EV) charging points are becoming more prevalent in public spaces and residential areas, encouraging the shift towards cleaner cars. Meanwhile, carpooling and shared mobility services are gaining traction, offering more affordable and eco-friendly options for commuters.

The future of transport in Lucan and Leixlip is undoubtedly exciting. From improved rail services to greener streets and more cycling paths, the upcoming developments offer hope for a more connected, less congested, and more sustainable way of life.

As the population grows, these transport upgrades will not only make commuting easier but will help improve the overall quality of life in Lucan and Leixlip, making both towns a more attractive place to live, work, and play.

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Kildare County Council to Host 9th Irish Military Seminar

Events to take place in Kildare Town, Naas and Newbridge from Tuesday, 13th to Saturday, 17th May 2025.

Kildare County Council's Library & Arts Service is pleased to announce the details of the 9th Irish Military Seminar, with events taking place in Naas, Kildare Town and Newbridge between Tuesday, 13th May and Saturday, 17th May 2025. All events are free to attend, but early booking is advised for the events in the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge on Friday, 16th and Saturday, 17th May. You can reserve your free space on the Riverbank Arts Centre website – www.riverbank.ie

The main event of the 2025 Irish Military Seminar will be held on the evening of Friday 16th May at the Riverbank Arts Centre, focusing on the Irish Defence Forces. Cathaoirleach of the County of Kildare, Councillor Kevin Duffy, will officially launch the weekend's events at 7:30PM. This will be followed by a special event featuring former Lieutenant-Colonel Ray Lane, in conversation with Cathal Berry, who will discuss his wide range of experiences both at home and abroad dealing with landmines and other explosive devices. This is based on his fascinating best-selling memoir, "Only a Soldier Knows".

On Saturday, 17th May, the programme of talks at the Riverbank Arts Centre includes an exciting line-up of published authors exploring a range of topics including the Irish in the Resistance, the life and death of I.R.A. leader Rory O'Connor, the Irish Military in France from 1690 to 1815 and Colour & Conflict in Ireland between 1922 and 1945.

Other events include a special screening of two films on Tuesday 13th May at 7:00PM at Naas Library & Cultural Centre – 'The Rathbride Flying Column - Kildare in the Civil War,' produced by Prosperous Heritage Society and a WWI short 'The Land,' produced by Framelt Productions. This event will also feature author and film historian Wayne Byrne, interviewing Joe Murphy about the making of a film documentary on Kildare's Civil War and discussing with Joseph Butler the filming of a war movie shot in Kildare.

Kildare Community Library will host Michael Rowley's photographic exhibition 'All the Queen's Men and all the Queen's Women; The portrait photographs of J. F. Church on the Curragh Camp 1860-1880', during

library opening hours from Thursday 15th May onwards.

The full programme is available in all Kildare Libraries and also as a pdf on www.kildarelibraries.ie/ehistory

The Irish Military Seminar is supported by Kildare County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

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The Kildare Food Revolution: From Pasture to Plate

County Kildare, traditionally known for its lush pastures and equestrian heritage, is experiencing a transformative shift in its food landscape.

Embracing the “pasture to plate” philosophy, local farmers, educators, and entrepreneurs are redefining the journey of food from the fields to the fork, emphasizing sustainability, education, and community engagement.

A Family’s Commitment to Sustainable Farming

At the heart of this revolution is Kildare Farm Foods, a third-generation family farm that has evolved into a multifaceted agri-tourism destination. Starting with turkey farming, the farm expanded to include a diverse range of fresh, frozen, and ambient products, all available at their on-site Farm Shop. Visitors can immerse themselves in farm life, feeding animals, enjoying the Tractor Café, and even taking a ride on the farm’s railroad adventure. This hands-on approach not only provides fresh produce but also educates the public about sustainable farming practices.

Educational Initiatives: Cultivating Knowledge from an Early Age

Recognizing the importance of educating the younger generation, initiatives like the Agri Aware Farm-to-Fork Experience at Lidl’s Newbridge distribution centre have been established. Spanning 8.5 acres, this free educational resource offers primary school students a firsthand look at crop cultivation, livestock care, and the intricacies of the food supply chain. Such programs aim to instill an appreciation for local produce and the efforts behind food production.

Strategic Vision: Kildare’s Food, Beverage, and Hospitality Strategy

To bolster these grassroots efforts, Kildare County Council introduced the Food, Beverage, and Hospitality Strategy 2021–2023. This comprehensive plan focuses on building local culinary talent, enhancing food tourism, and supporting sustainable practices. By fostering collaborations among producers, educators, and hospitality providers, the strategy aims to position Kildare as a leader in Ireland’s sustainable food movement.

Community Engagement: The Rise of Pasture & Plate

Adding to the county’s dynamic food scene is the recent launch of “Pasture & Plate,” a dining experience that emphasizes the direct connection between farmers and consumers. This initiative offers patrons the opportunity to select meals sourced directly from local farms, participate in butchery workshops, and gain insights into

sustainable cooking practices. Such ventures exemplify Kildare’s commitment to transparency and community involvement in the food journey. Instagram

Looking Ahead: A Model for Sustainable Food Systems

Kildare’s holistic approach to food—from production and education to consumption—serves as a blueprint for regions aiming to create sustainable and community-driven food systems. By valuing local produce, investing in education, and fostering community engagement, Kildare is not only preserving its rich agricultural heritage but also paving the way for a resilient and sustainable future.

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Publication of Corporate Plan sets goals up to 2029 for Kildare County Council

Following the adoption of the Corporate Plan 2025-2029, by the Councillors for this County in December 2024, Kildare County Council is pleased to announce the publication of the Corporate Plan today.

This Plan is built upon and linked to many other plans for the County and sets out the strategic goals for Kildare County Council over the next five years.

The Plan is informed by consultation with council staff, elected representatives, and other stakeholders across Kildare. Consultation identified the views and aspirations people had for their County, which were incorporated into the Plan having considered existing council plans, legislation, dependencies with partner organisations and groups and the demographic and economic horizon.

Kildare is one of Ireland's fastest growing counties, home to almost 250,000 people, with around 80,000 people employed in jobs based in the county in over 15,000 active enterprises.

It is also diverse, with 70% of the people in urban areas, over 11% persons who are non-national, over 20% persons with a disability and 8.6% of the population living in disadvantaged areas.

Reflected in our vision, is an understanding that Kildare County Council can impact the quality of life of everyone in the County through our role as a service provider, enabler and provider of infrastructure, as a regulator and custodian of our environment, and a key facilitator of economic and community development.

Welcoming publication of the Corporate Plan, [Cathaoirleach of the County of Kildare, Councillor Kevin Duffy said;](#)

"It reflects the shared dedication of staff, Councillors, community groups and agencies to work together for the benefit of everyone and to continue to protect Kildare's precious environment.

A lot has been achieved in the last challenging five years, and I look forward to the goals in this Plan being progressed in the next five years to ensure our County remains a great place to live, work, invest in and visit."

[Sonya Kavanagh, Chief Executive, Kildare County Council stated;](#)

"On behalf of the Council's management team and employees, I welcome this new Corporate Plan.

In setting out the strategic framework for delivering on our vision, the Corporate Plan will strongly influence resource and budget priorities over the next five years. One of our key priorities is to plan and invest in



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infrastructure that meets current and future demands.

In serving the present, we must however protect the future for everyone in Kildare, and in this regard our continued investment and activities around climate action, environmental protection, community support, town and village regeneration and sustainable economic growth remain essential.

In our rapidly growing County, housing remains a challenge and a central focus, and we are committed to providing adaptable and varied housing options that cater to the diverse needs of people at all stages of life.

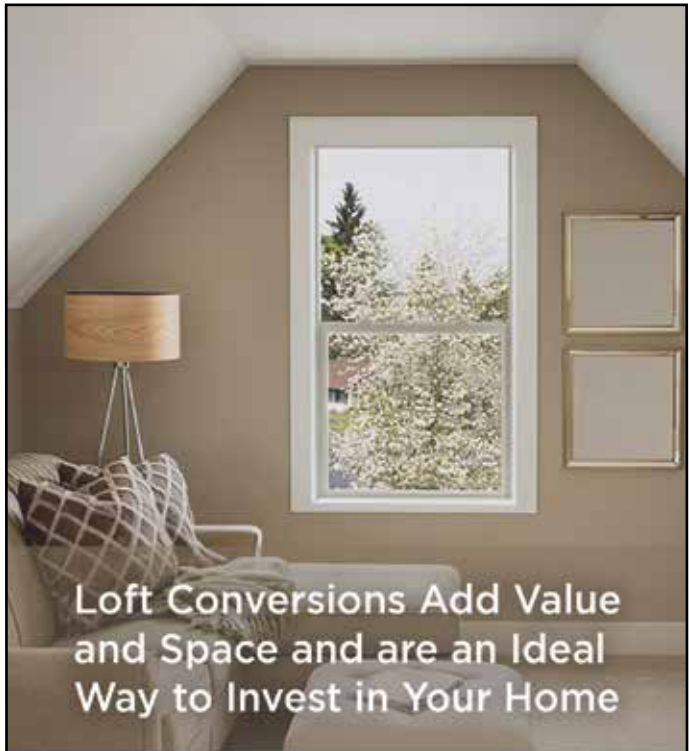
The challenges of the last five years remind us that we must continue to be innovative, inclusive and flexible to meet the diverse needs of our growing communities.

Underpinning this is an organisational focus on attracting, expanding and retaining the staff levels, funding and skills necessary for successful delivery, given the rapid and projected high growth of the County's population.

I look forward to working with our teams, our Councillors and all the groups and agencies that are vital to maintaining and improving quality of life for all the people of Kildare."

The Corporate Plan outlines 8 high-level goals and over 100 supporting strategies, covering all services and roles. Progress will be published monthly through the Chief Executive Report and annually in both our Annual Service Delivery Plan and Annual Report.

Kildare County Council Corporate Plan 2025-2029 is available to read in both Irish and English, under the Publications section of kildarecoco.ie: <https://kildarecoco.ie/YourCouncil/Publications/Corporate/CorporatePlan/>



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Playing our way to better health, together

Staying active is one of the best things you can do for your physical and mental health, for every single age group.

This isn't new information, however, in Ireland we have some room to improve our health. We have one of the highest rates of overweight and obesity in Europe, with over 60% of adults in that category (1). Weight is a complex topic, with multiple drivers (including genetics and socioeconomics) and stigma attached for those who are obese. It's important to move from a place of shame to focusing on driving the availability of ways to be active, both for health and for fun. Ireland also struggles in the mental health area, with 21% of the population suffering from mental health issues, which is much higher than the EU average of 16.7% (2). Anxiety is the most prevalent issue with an estimated 7.6% of the Irish population suffering (2). In addition, loneliness is becoming an epidemic, with 20% of Irish people reporting feeling lonely compared to 13% of EU respondents (3).

Almost half of Irish adults participated in sport every week in 2023, almost 2 million people. That's more than ever before, but there's still over half of adults who aren't regularly active! And the vast majority of those are participating in individual sports: Personal exercise, swimming and running are the top 3 sports (4).

Any activity is important to feel better and reduce risk of major illnesses, Sport Ireland said that almost 100,000 cases of disease were prevented by participation in sport and exercise in 2019 (11), but team sports specifically bring added value for both physical and mental health.

Playing sports with a team or group has been found to have better outcomes for mental health - like reductions in depression and anxiety - and increased life satisfaction compared to playing individual sports, regardless of volume of activity (5). This has been replicated in many studies (6). The key here is that team sports provide social connection, networking, a sense of belonging and emotional support (8).

Team sports even have physical health benefits over individual exercise. One study found that the V02 max of people participating in a recreational soccer league improved slightly more than people who participated in continuous running (7). Researchers say that team sports are ideal for addressing lack of motivation which is a key challenge for people to stay fit (7). This finding has been repeated, people who play team sports report lower perceived exertion than those who jogged or did strength training even if exertion was the same and tended to stick with it for longer and attend more sessions. One researcher, Dr Filipe Lobelo, concluded "For some of us, playing group sports can be an appealing way to remain active. Broader implementation of programs using group sports as a vehicle to deliver lifestyle change can help reduce the growing burden of physical inactivity" (9).

Team sport participation goes down with age, and spontaneous sport has been decreasing since the mid 1900s (10). It is crucial to have organized team sports available and made to fit into the modern adult's life.

Hive Sport & Social's adult recreational sports leagues are low commitment, social and fun while also keeping a bit of competition! Hive will be running leagues in an array of sports - from pickleball to basketball to dodgeball to rounders to soccer - during the week, on weeknights and weekends.

We will launch our first league in July 2025 in Leixlip. There will be more leagues available in Fall 2025 in the Leixlip/Maynooth/Celbridge/Lucan area and we want to continue to grow our offering locally and expand to the rest of Ireland.

Our mission is to get more of us busy adults back playing sports together in order to be healthier and more connected. For health and for fun! Come join us. This is what you're looking for.

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Liffey Life: Rediscovering the River That Connects Us

The River Liffey, winding its way through the heart of Dublin, plays an essential role in shaping the landscape, culture, and history of not just the city but also the suburbs of Lucan and Leixlip.

From its peaceful banks to the vibrant activities it hosts, the Liffey connects these two communities in ways that many may overlook. Whether you're out for a walk, kayaking on a sunny afternoon, or simply enjoying the wildlife, the river offers something for everyone — a reminder of the vital role nature plays in our daily lives.

In this article, we explore the significance of the River Liffey as it flows through Lucan and Leixlip, uncovering its history, beauty, and the many ways locals are rediscovering its value.

The Historical Importance of the Liffey

The River Liffey is much more than a body of water. For centuries, it has been the lifeblood of Dublin and its surrounding areas, connecting people, places, and cultures. The river has played a vital role in trade, industry, and daily life, providing sustenance, transportation, and even power.

In Leixlip, the river is home to the Leixlip Mill, which dates back to the 18th century. The mill was powered by the river's waters, marking it as an important site in the town's industrial history. Today, the Liffey's presence continues to shape the town's character, with the Leixlip Dam being another key historical landmark that tells the story of the river's importance in harnessing water for power.

For Lucan, the Liffey played a similarly important role in agriculture and trade. The Lucan Demesne, which borders the river, was once part of the estate of the Earls of Lucan, and the river's banks still offer locals a glimpse into the past with historic landmarks, such as the Old Lucan Bridge.

Liffey Walks: Scenic Trails and Tranquil Paths

One of the best ways to experience the River Liffey in Lucan and Leixlip is through the many walking trails that follow its banks. The Royal Canal Greenway, which runs parallel to the Liffey, offers a peaceful route for walkers, runners, and cyclists, stretching from Leixlip all the way to

Dublin City Centre. This path provides stunning views of the river, with lush greenery on either side, creating an escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The St. Catherine's Park in Lucan, with its scenic walking paths along the river, is another popular spot for locals. This park is not only perfect for a leisurely stroll but also offers beautiful picnic areas, ideal for families and nature lovers alike.

For those who want to take their walks further, the Leixlip Spa provides another stunning riverside destination, perfect for those interested in discovering some hidden gems while staying close to the water's edge.

"The walks along the Liffey have become a daily ritual for me," says Sarah Lynch, a Lucan resident. "I feel connected to the river, and the peacefulness helps me unwind after a busy day."

Kayaking and Water Activities: An Active Adventure

For the more adventurous, the River Liffey offers excellent opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, and other water sports. The calm stretches of the river near Leixlip provide the perfect conditions for paddlers of all levels to explore the water and enjoy the surrounding nature.

The Leixlip area is home to Leixlip Canoe Club, where locals can take part in kayaking lessons, river tours, or even competitive events. It's an activity that encourages people to engage with the river in a way that connects them to both nature and their community.

In Lucan, kayakers can enjoy a scenic paddle through St. Catherine's Park, where the river winds through mature trees and grassy meadows, offering an immersive experience that highlights the serenity of the area.

"Kayaking on the Liffey is an unforgettable experience," says Darren O'Callaghan, a local kayaking enthusiast. "You get to see the river in such a unique way, and it's fantastic for both the body and the mind."

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Wildlife and Biodiversity Along the Liffey

The River Liffey is also a haven for wildlife, making it an essential part of local biodiversity. The river and its banks are home to a range of bird species, including swans, herons, and kingfishers, which can often be spotted by keen-eyed walkers and paddlers. The peaceful waters attract a variety of animals, from waterfowl to small mammals, adding a touch of nature's beauty to the already stunning landscapes.

In the quieter stretches near Coolmine in Lucan, local residents often report seeing otters, an increasingly rare sight that highlights the growing health of the river ecosystem. For nature lovers, these encounters serve as a reminder of the importance of preserving the river's health and its surrounding environment.

"I've spotted otters several times near Coolmine," says Aoife Ryan, a keen wildlife photographer from Leixlip. "It's incredible to think that such vibrant wildlife is thriving so close to the urban areas."

Sustainability: Protecting the River for Future Generations

As the river continues to play such a central role in the lives of Lucan and Leixlip residents, efforts are underway to protect and enhance the Liffey's sustainability. Local environmental groups and councils are working together to promote clean-up initiatives, improve water quality, and increase biodiversity along the river's banks.

One example is the work being done to reduce invasive species and encourage the growth of native plants along the river's edges. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to promote eco-friendly transport options like walking and cycling along the river, which help reduce carbon footprints and increase public awareness of the importance of the Liffey in local life.

"The Liffey is a lifeline for our communities, and we have to protect it for future generations," says Paul Brady, a local environmental activist. "We're seeing more and more people taking part in clean-up events, and it's heartening to see the river being looked after."

Conclusion: Rediscovering the Liffey's Role in Our Lives

From its rich history to its abundant wildlife, the River Liffey is more than just a body of water — it's a thread that connects Lucan and Leixlip, and a source of enjoyment, peace, and adventure for residents of all ages. Whether it's a quiet walk, a lively kayaking adventure, or simply observing the beauty of the river's wildlife, the Liffey offers countless opportunities to engage with nature and appreciate the world around us.

So, next time you find yourself walking along the river or enjoying its scenic views, take a moment to appreciate all that it provides — not just for us today, but for generations to come.



A pawstive step for charity at Dunboyne College of Further Education

On a bright and breezy Saturday afternoon, the village of Dunboyne came alive with the joyful sight of walkers and their beloved dogs strolling side by side for a day of fresh air, fun, and fundraising.

The annual Dunboyne College of Further Education (DCFE) Ulreeka's Wagathon community walk was held in support of the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Ulreeka, a certified therapy dog, is a member of staff in Dunboyne College. She joined the college in 2022, as part of a growing initiative to support student wellbeing through animal-assisted therapy. With regular visits to classrooms and student support spaces, Ulreeka has had a pawstive impact by helping reduce stress and brighten days. Each year she hosts a fundraising event for Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind who enabled her to join DCFE.

"Having Ulreeka on campus has been an incredible boost for student morale. She brings comfort, calm, and a whole lot of tail wags to campus. The initiative reflects the college's ongoing commitment to mental health and creating a supportive, inclusive environment



for all students. Whether it's exam stress or just needing a friendly face, she brings a sense of ease and joy wherever she goes. Sometimes, the best kind of therapy has four legs and a wagging tail," according to Catherine Joyce, Learning Hub Co-ordinator in Dunboyne College and Ulreeka's handler.

Funds raised from the event will go directly to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, helping to provide life-changing services.

"We're so grateful for everyone who showed up with wagging tails and open hearts. Ulreeka's Wagathon continues to be a celebration of compassion, community, and of course—our canine companions," according to Catherine Joyce.

To learn more or contribute to the cause, visit www.ulreekaswagathon.ie.





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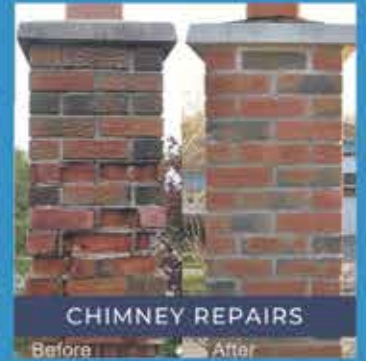


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