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SEPTEMBER 2025

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# WHAT IS BEHIND RECENT RACIST ATTACKS IN IRELAND?

The pressure points, policy fixes and the road ahead



**T**he recent racist attacks in Ireland aren't coming from one cause—they're the product of a tight housing crunch and visible strain on services, an organized (but small) anti-immigrant fringe that mobilizes online, and an information vacuum that lets rumours and disinformation spread. The immediate spike in July–August has particularly hit the Indian community (prompting an embassy advisory and the postponement of Dublin's India Day).

## What's driving it (in plain English):

- Housing + visibility of migration: Ireland's severe housing shortage collided with record accommodation needs for refugees and asylum seekers, turning proposed sites and visible tent encampments into flashpoints. That mix has been shown to fuel "us vs. them" narratives and local protests.

- Online disinfo + small but organized far-right activism: Researchers document coordinated mis/disinformation and "Ireland is full" messaging that helped turn protests into intimidation or violence; electorally these groups remain marginal, but their online reach is outsized.

- Copycat incidents at accommodation sites: Arson and attacks around buildings earmarked for asylum seekers (and later, street camps) created a contagion effect—footage spread online, feeding anger and fear.

- A specific August surge against Indians: Multiple assaults on people of Indian origin drew national attention; the Indian Embassy issued a caution and India Day at Farmleigh was postponed for safety.

- Law & enforcement context: Ireland's new Hate Offences Act (in force since 31 Dec 2024) lets courts treat racial hatred as an aggravating factor at sentencing, but debates over broader "hate speech" rules and online incitement have been contentious.

## What's been happening in Dublin

- Tallaght (Sat 19 Jul):** An Indian man was violently assaulted at Parkhill Lawns, Kilnamanagh. Gardaí are treating it as racially motivated; the attack sparked a silent vigil at the Dept of Justice on Fri 25 Jul and larger protests that weekend.

- City response:** The Indian Embassy issued a safety advisory on 1 Aug, citing a rise in physical attacks nationwide, including Dublin.

- Fairview (Sun 10 Aug):** Another Indian man reported being attacked by three teenagers in Fairview Park around 5:30pm; he needed stitches.

- India Day (Phoenix Park):** The Ireland-India Council postponed India Day on Sun 11 Aug "out of respect to victims" of recent attacks; Government met community reps the same day.

- Policing line:** On 22 Aug, the Garda Commissioner said recent attacks on Indians are driven by racism, criminality, and picking on the vulnerable, with the involvement of juveniles "particularly concerning."

The advertisement for TITAN DRIVEWAYS features a background image of a newly paved driveway. At the top, the company logo "TITAN DRIVEWAYS" is displayed in a bold, stylized font, with a yellow and black graphic element. Below the logo is the website address "www.titandriveways.ie". To the right, a circular badge states "20 YEARS EXPERIENCE". The central text reads "RELIABLE &amp; LOCAL DRIVEWAY CONTRACTORS". A list of services is provided: "BLOCK PAVING", "PATIO SERVICE", "TARMAC", "WALLING", and "GARDENS". A large black circle on the right contains the text "15% OFF with this Advert". At the bottom, the contact numbers "01 685 2480 | 087 357 8777" are listed.



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## EDITORIAL

**W**elcome to our latest edition of Little Village. This edition is packed with milestones for our area. We're celebrating Kildare's planning excellence, looking ahead to the transformative DART+ West project, and finally marking the dates for Lucan's long-awaited pool. It's a testament to the vibrant community we're proud to report on.

.....until next time

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All correspondence should be addressed to:  
Little Village Magazine, 11 Cherryhill Avenue, Kells, Co. Meath.  
Creative Top Publishing Ltd. publishes Little Village Magazine.

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# “Killer Scooters” Crisis - Fine Gael Motion Fast-Tracked for Tough New Measures

Dublin City Council to Debate E-Scooter, E-Moped, and Surron Model Dangers This Week

**D**ublin City Council will formally consider urgent measures to crack down on illegal use of high-powered e-scooters, e-mopeds, and Surron-type models on footpaths and in pedestrian areas.

At last night's meeting of Dublin City Council, the Lord Mayor accepted Fine Gael's emergency motion and fast-tracked it to the Mobility and Public Realm Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for detailed discussion this week.

The SPC will then report its findings back to the October full Council meeting, where formal action is expected.

Cllr Colm O'Rourke, Leader of the Fine Gael Group on Dublin City Council, said:

“This is a positive step forward; our motion has now been fast-tracked for discussion this week. We cannot lose sight of the fact that every day, high-powered e-scooters and Surron-type models are racing down footpaths, putting children, pensioners, and all pedestrians at risk.

The Fine Gael Group on Dublin City Council is determined to see Dublin lead on this issue, with strict enforcement and clear rules to keep our footpaths safe. The public will be watching this debate closely, and we will be pushing for immediate measures to protect pedestrians before more lives are lost or seriously harmed.”

## The Fine Gael motion calls for:

- Full commencement and enforcement of the Road Traffic and Roads Act 2023 to ensure licensing, registration, and insurance for high-powered e-scooters, e-mopeds, and Surron-type models.
- Targeted enforcement blitzes in Dublin in partnership with An Garda Síochána.
- Local bye-laws banning the use of such vehicles on all footpaths and pedestrian zones within the Dublin City Council area.
- Monthly reporting to Dublin City Council on collisions, seizures, and enforcement actions.
- A national public information campaign on safe and legal use of these vehicles.

Here's the Ireland “new e-scooter law” in a nutshell (in force since 20 May 2024):

## What's legal

- Age: 16+ only. No licence, insurance, or tax required.
- Where you can ride: On local/regional/national roads, cycle lanes and bus lanes; not on footpaths or pedestrianised areas; not on motorways.
- Public transport: E-scooters aren't allowed on NTA public transport (since 7 Oct 2024).
- The vehicle must meet all of these (or it's illegal on public roads)
- Max speed: 20 km/h (both design speed and while riding).
- Max power: 400 W continuous rated.
- Max weight: ≤25 kg (unladen). Wheels ≥200 mm diameter.
- Equipment: Two independent brakes (front & rear), front & rear lights (used during lighting-up hours), reflectors, and a bell/horn.
- No seat (standing only), no passengers, no carrying goods, no towing, and no mods to increase speed/power.
- Markings/docs: CE-marked and fitted with a manufacturer's plate; retailers provide a declaration of conformity.

## Penalties & enforcement

- Many breaches (e.g., >20 km/h, on footpaths, missing lights/bell, >400 W, carrying a passenger/goods) are fixed-charge offences of €50.
- Gardaí can seize non-compliant PPTs/e-scooters.
- The legal bits (for reference)
- S.I. 199/2024 – Road Traffic (Electric Scooters) Regulations 2024: defines what an e-scooter is and sets the technical + use rules.
- S.I. 222/2024 – Traffic & Parking (Amendment): slots e-scooters into the road rules (e.g., bus/cycle lanes; footpath ban via traffic regs).
- S.I. 224/2024 – Use of Powered Personal Transporters: bans other PPTs (and non-compliant e-scooters) in public places.
- S.I. 227/2024 – Fixed Charge Offences: sets the €50 fines for e-scooter offences.
- Government/RSA guidance summarises the above in plain English.



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## Chewing gum on pavements – Is it still a problem?

Yes, but it's getting better

### How big is the problem?

•Chewing gum made up 8.6% of all recorded litter in Ireland in 2023—unchanged from 2022. The National Litter Pollution Monitoring System (NLPMS) also notes gum has been the single biggest “food-related” litter item and the second-largest litter component overall for years (after cigarette litter).

•By comparison, cigarette-related litter was 42.6% of the national litter composition in 2023; packaging 19.9%; food-related (incl. gum) 9.9%.

### Trend over time

•Gum litter has fallen dramatically from ~30%+ in the late 2000s to 8.6% today—roughly a 70% reduction since 2007. Multiple official updates and council releases attribute this to the long-running Gum Litter Taskforce (GLT) education campaign.

### Where you still notice it

•The issue is most visible on busy city-centre pavements and older paving, where staining persists even between cleans. IBAL cleanliness audits frequently call out heavy gum residues on certain streets (e.g., Dublin city centre).

### What authorities are doing

•Education & behaviour change: The GLT runs annual roadshows and school/community programmes. Recent surveys reported by local authorities indicate rising correct disposal (e.g., “92% properly dispose of gum,” “1 in 7 still drop gum,” depending on the survey/year).

•Cleaning: Councils contract specialist steam/jet cleaning to remove gum. Dublin City Council has budgeted seven-figure sums for dedicated gum removal (e.g., €1.6m over three years) and continues to procure scheduled gum removal in the city core.

•Enforcement: Dropping gum counts as littering. Typical penalties are an on-the-spot €150 fine, and up to €4,000 on conviction (with additional daily fines for continuing

offences).

### Bottom line

•\*\*Yes, it's still a problem—especially as staining on high-footfall pavements—but it's far smaller than it used to be. The latest national data shows gum at 8.6% of litter (stable year-on-year), against a backdrop of a long-term ~70% decline since 2007 thanks to education, regular cleaning, and enforcement.

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# DART+ West is finally moving

What it means for Castleknock, Coolmine & Clonsilla

**A**fter years of process and protest, the upgrade that will turn the Maynooth/M3 Parkway line into full DART territory has cleared its biggest hurdles. An Coimisiún Pleanála approved the DART+ West Railway Order on 18 July 2024; legal challenges were withdrawn on 23 June 2025, unlocking the next phase. For Dublin 15, that means more frequent electric trains—and major changes at our level crossings.

## The promise: more trains, quieter trains

DART+ West will electrify the line from the city to Maynooth and to M3 Parkway, doubling peak capacity from 6 to up to 12 trains per hour per direction (subject to demand). In plain terms, that's a train roughly every five minutes at Castleknock, Coolmine and Clonsilla once the full upgrade is bedded in. Irish Rail's figures also point to an hourly capacity jump from about 5,000 to 13,200 passengers each way.

City-side, a new Spencer Dock station forms part of the approved scheme, improving interchange with the Luas Red Line and increasing options for west Dublin commuters heading to the Docklands.

## The trade-offs: gates down for good

To run DART reliably at that frequency, the old gates have to go. The approved plan closes multiple level crossings on the Maynooth line and provides a mix of diversions and new walking/cycling links. For D15 specifically:

- Coolmine: road crossing to be permanently closed; cars will divert via Castleknock Road and Diswellstown Road. A new pedestrian & cycle footbridge will link across the tracks beside the station.

- Ashtown: the level crossing closes and is replaced by an underpass running under both the rail line and Royal Canal—removing a notorious pinch point.

- Porterstown & Clonsilla: vehicular closures with diversions to Diswellstown Road and a new Barberstown road bridge; each gets a pedestrian/cycle bridge at the

station. Barberstown gains the new vehicular bridge over canal and railway. Blakestown closes with no replacement (low usage).

If you remember the early, much-criticised proposal for a major road bridge through Riverwood at Coolmine, that's gone—the option was dropped after consultation; the approved approach is closure plus a lighter footbridge.

## The wrinkle: where will the new DART fleet sleep?

There's one big condition attached to the green light. The board refused permission for a new maintenance & stabling depot on the lands west of Maynooth (near Kilcock) due to flood risk. Irish Rail says the depot is now a separate project ("DART+ Depot") and that an alternative proposal will be brought forward. In May, the Department confirmed the West order was granted "subject to certain conditions, notably that the proposed depot west of Maynooth not be constructed due to concerns about flood risk."

## Timeline: what happens when?

With the court cases withdrawn, Irish Rail has moved into procurement. Current public statements point to enabling works from 2026, with main construction contracts targeted by late 2026, subject to funding approvals. Reporting this summer suggested services could start around 2031. In the meantime, expect intermittent weekend/night works as designs are finalised and utilities are diverted.

## Day-to-day in D15: the lived experience

- Fewer tailbacks at the gates: Closing Coolmine and Ashtown crossings should end the long morning queues—and the risky last-minute dashes—caused by barriers down for most of the 8–9am hour. (At current frequencies those gates are down for roughly 40 minutes in that peak.)

- Better on foot and bike: New footbridges at Coolmine, Porterstown and Clonsilla aim to make short, direct trips across the line safer key for school runs and station access. [dartplus.ie](http://dartplus.ie)

- Construction disruption: Temporary weekend

[Continues Page 10](#)



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closures—like the March overnight closure at Coolmine for surfacing—give a flavour of what's ahead. Expect traffic management, localised noise and some timetable changes as works roll out. Fingal Consult

#### Why it's worth it

For workers, students and families across Castleknock–Coolmine–Clonsilla, a five-minute-frequency electric train is transformative: faster city trips, fewer missed connections, and a credible alternative to the N3/M50 grind. Pair that with the already-approved DART+ South West and future MetroLink interchanges at Glasnevin/Cabra, and west Dublin's rail network becomes a mesh, not a set of spokes—more ways to get where you're going without a car.

#### At a glance

- Planning: DART+ West Railway Order approved 18 Jul 2024. Judicial reviews withdrawn 23 Jun 2025.

- Frequency & capacity: up to 12 trains/hour/direction; capacity to ~13,200/hour each way.

- Level crossings: Coolmine, Ashtown, Porterstown, Clonsilla, Barberstown, Blakestown—closures with a mix of diversions, new bridges and an underpass at Ashtown.

- Depot: Maynooth–Kilcock depot refused; standalone DART+ Depot project in development.

- Next steps: procurement underway; enabling works expected 2026; main works targeted late 2026 (funding dependent).

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## CARROLL'S IN THE HEART OF LUCAN

It is almost two years since Donal Walshe took over Carroll's in the heart of Lucan Village. Carroll's first opened its doors as a pub in 2013 and established a strong reputation for tasty food, terrific service, and a welcoming atmosphere among an already vibrant pub scene in the historic Lucan village centre. Donal's vision was to continue to build Carroll's into a destination for both locals and people in the wider area. Carroll's benefits from having a large carpark to the rear of the premises offering free parking to customers so they don't have the stress of worrying about finding a spot or paying a meter in the village especially at the moment with the village under major construction.

Donal's main addition to Carroll's has been his many televisions so no sporting event will be missed.

Carroll's has live music every weekend, facilitating all kinds of social events which options for a la carte menu or finger food.

While the kitchen team are always on hand to showcase their talents in cooking for you, if you fancy testing out your own skills, Carroll's are delighted to serve you their "world famous steak on a stone".

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER 2025

### CARROLLS LUCAN VILLAGE

FECH	SEPT 6	FECH	9.30PM
LAURIE HARTZ	SEPT 13		9.30PM
	SEPT 20	EX REFLEX 80'S	9.30PM
ROCK OF AGES	SEPT 27	ROCK OF AGES	9.30PM



# Do supermarket loyalty card prices represent real savings?

**G**rocery prices in Ireland and the UK have increased by as much as 5-6% over the last year. This pressure on household budgets make loyalty card offers attractive to many consumers but do they offer real savings? Not according to Aontú Councillor Gerard Sheehan who recently accused the Irish Government and major supermarket chains of profiting from the suffering of ordinary families, declaring the cost-of-living crisis a “cost of-survival emergency”.

Cllr Sheehan directly criticised large supermarket chains for what he described as “manipulative loyalty pricing tactics”, calling for urgent investigation by the CCPC and consumer regulators. “Loyalty cards are being used as camouflage for price gouging. Essentials like milk, bread, butter — they’re advertised at ‘discounted’ prices, but only after inflation and only if you sign up and scan your data,” said Sheehan. “It’s cynical, predatory, and it’s hurting the people who can least afford it. This is corporate profiteering dressed up as value.”

One of readers commented ‘They must think we consumers are extremely gullible if we believe that we are really getting products cheaper with their card. All they’ve done is jack up the non-card prices.’

We have delved into the topic to establish if loyalty card prices represent real saving.

**Short answer: often yes—but not always, and the “saving” can look bigger than it really is.**

•The UK competition regulator analysed 50,000 loyalty-priced grocery items and found 92% did offer a genuine saving vs the usual in-store price, with average discounts of 17–25%—but some items were still cheaper at rival supermarkets, so it pays to compare.

•Consumer group Which? looked at price histories and concluded most member prices were genuine, yet a minority (about 5–16% depending on retailer) had non-member “reference” prices that were higher than typical recent prices—meaning the headline saving could be overstated for those items.

•In Ireland, enforcement has focused on how prices are displayed. For example, on June 24, 2024, Tesco Ireland pleaded guilty for failing to include unit pricing on Clubcard shelf labels—important because unit prices help you check if a “deal” is actually good value.

•Irish rules also require that when a shop announces a price

reduction, the prior price shown must be the lowest price in the previous 30 days (with some scope-specific details). That improves transparency around “was/now” claims.

## How to make sure you’re really saving

- Check the unit price (€/kg, €/L). If it’s missing, that’s a red flag—unit price is what makes comparisons fair.

- Compare across stores/brands. Regulators found many loyalty prices are competitive, but not always the lowest vs other supermarkets.

- Watch the anchor. Don’t assume the non-member price is the “normal” price—Which? found cases where recent typical prices were lower.

- Mind promo types. Multi-buys and bundles can beat (or underperform) single-item loyalty deals; check what you’ll actually use.

## What the big Irish retailers do

- Tesco Clubcard Prices: yellow shelf labels for members; extra points and occasional coupons in the app.

- SuperValu Real Rewards: money-back vouchers, targeted coupons, and “mix & match” promos.

- Dunnes VALUEclub: money-off vouchers (e.g., €10 off €50) and app-only offers that change weekly.

- Lidl Plus: app vouchers, scratch-cards, and rotating discounted “Plus” prices.

- Aldi: no points scheme; relies on everyday low pricing and weekly specials

In summary loyalty card prices usually deliver a real discount at that supermarket, but not always the best deal overall. Check unit prices and shop around on the items that matter to you

## When loyalty prices are a real saving

- The unit price beats the non-member price and generic alternatives.

- You’d buy it anyway (not just to trigger a voucher threshold).

- The deal lines up with your brand/pack size, not a larger pack that looks cheaper but won’t be used.

## When to be cautious

- Anchor price tricks:** the “non-member” or “was” price may be higher than what the item typically sells for.

- Multi-buys vs singles:** “2 for €X” can be worse than one item at a loyalty price—or vice versa.

- Personalised coupons:** a high “% off” can still lose to another store’s everyday or own-brand price.



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## Kildare County Council Shortlisted in Four Categories at the Irish Planning Institute's Planning Awards 2025

Kildare County Council is delighted to announce that it has been shortlisted in four categories at the Irish Planning Institute's Planning Awards 2025.

**T**his recognition highlights the Council's commitment to excellence in planning and sustainable development. The national winners of this prestigious competition will be revealed at a gala ceremony in Clontarf Castle Hotel on Thursday 25th September 2025.

**The four nominations are:**

### **Plan Making – Two Counties, One Town: Coordinating the Low Carbon Future of Maynooth**

The project, 'Two Counties, One Town: Coordinating the Low Carbon Future of Maynooth' has been shortlisted in the Plan Making category and showcases the collaborative efforts of Kildare County Council and Meath County Council. Together, they have prepared, adopted and implemented the Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031. This Joint Plan represents the successful culmination of a number of years of sustained and dedicated efforts of both authorities and demonstrates the potential for local authorities to work together to ensure the sustainable growth of settlements divided by administrative boundaries.

### **Heritage and Culture - The revival of Naas Town Centre – Reimagining the Potato Market**

This project involved the complete restoration, reinvention and reimagining of the historic Potato Market of Medieval origin located on Church Lane, Naas. The restored marketplace reaffirms its historic function in the town centre, within the Castle Quarter of Naas. This sustainable and exciting reuse of a long-standing derelict and underutilised site is recognised as a catalyst for change, reanimating the town centre, by supporting heritage, culture, creativity and tradition while promoting living and trading in the town centre.

### **Climate Action - Tackling Climate Change in County Kildare: Bringing Communities from Grey to Green**

Kildare County Council are tackling climate change through

a series of actions including three transformative planning-led projects. These projects include the Kildare County Council Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Guidance Document, Kildare County Council Permeability Guidelines, and Kildare County Council Allotments and Community Gardens Strategy. Together, these initiatives establish the Planning Department as a leader in Ireland in providing practical tools to assist in achieving environmentally responsible placemaking that contributes to achieving macro level climate action benefits.

### **Planning Authority – Kildare County Council – Challenging, Progressive, Dynamic**

Over the past two years, Kildare County Council has transformed its function, operations and approach to creating sustainable communities, in creating a progressive, dynamic and solution-focused work environment. Kildare County Council has expanded its team to include 32 dedicated planners and new multi-disciplinary teams including an ecologist, urban designer and biodiversity officer. This expansion is bolstered by a successful Graduate Planner recruitment programme, addressing the significant volume of plans and projects in this fast-paced local authority. By working closely with Elected Members, key stakeholders and the community, the Kildare Planning Authority is actively shaping a sustainable future for its citizens, businesses, visitors and communities grounded in meaningful engagement, transparent planning and sustainable future development.

The shortlisted entries across four competitive categories highlights the creativity and dedication of Kildare County Council's Planning teams, as well as the Council's commitment to continuing to deliver a high-quality planning service.

Kildare County Council would like to wish all shortlisted nominees the best of luck in the upcoming awards.

For more information visit <https://ipi.ie/professional-development/ipi-events/irish-planning-awards-2025/>



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- Pick-your-adventure: book the Carlingford Adventure Centre (kayaking, laser combat, climbing) or SkyPark, billed as Ireland's largest aerial adventure park with multiple zipline courses.

- A dash of history: wander up to King John's Castle above the harbour for Norman walls and big lough views; tours run via the Heritage Centre in season.

### 36-hour sketch

- Day 1: roll the Greenway to Omeath and back; sunset along the pier.

- Day 2: short hike on the lower Slieve Foye trails or a SkyPark/Adventure Centre session; finish with a castle visit and coffee in the village.

### Getting there (car-free friendly)

Train Dublin → Dundalk, then Bus Éireann 161 to Carlingford. Bringing bikes? They're free off-peak on DART/Commuter services (not permitted 07:00–10:00 & 16:00–19:00 Mon–Fri).

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- Takeaway / off-site: If you're taking the drink away, the business must charge the deposit (15c for 150–500 ml; 25c for >500 ml–3 L). In that case the container is yours to keep, and you can redeem the deposit at any participating return point. The deposit must be shown as a separate line on your receipt.

If a venue charges you the deposit but refuses to hand over the can/bottle, that's not okay—Re-turn has said customers who paid a deposit are entitled to the container; report issues to them.

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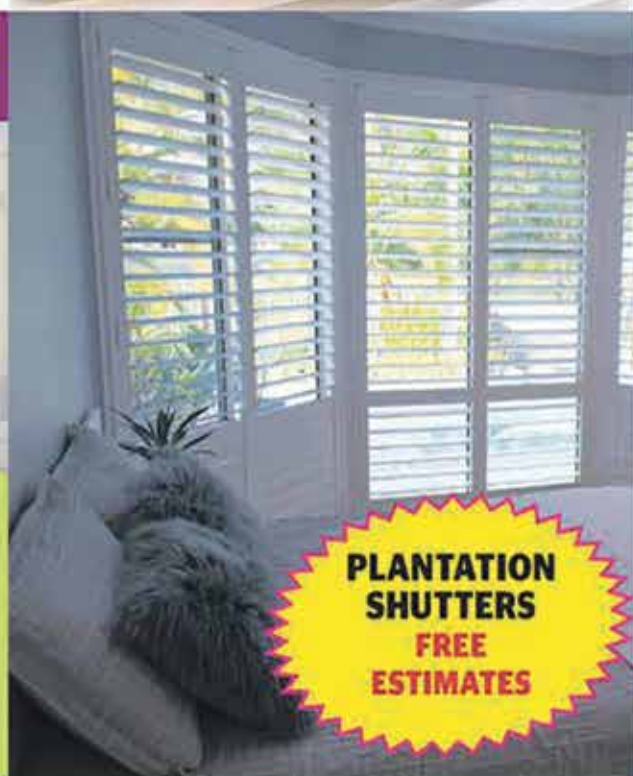
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# ROYAL CANAL GREENWAY LEIXLIP'S NEW FRONT DOOR FOR BIKES AND WEEKEND WALKS

The towpath between Leixlip (Louisa Bridge) and Maynooth Harbour has had a quiet transformation—and it's (finally) paying off.

**K**ildare County Council says works on the Louisa Bridge–Maynooth stretch are nearing completion and parts have reopened, creating a smoother, safer, more continuous greenway on Dublin's western edge. For Leixlip and Lucan readers, that means an easy weekend spin or stroll, plus a handy off-road link to Maynooth's cafés and train station.

What's new on the ground

This upgrade fills a key gap on the Royal Canal Greenway west of Dublin. Waterways Ireland lists Leixlip–Maynooth (≈8.5 km) “under construction”—with Kildare's section now substantially complete—while the adjacent Confey (Fingal) link is advancing through design with the council and consultants.

Kildare's published drawings show resurfacing, lighting in targeted areas, new wayfinding and safety treatments (for example, buff anti-skid strips at crossings). The route weaves past Deey Bridge / 13th Lock, Pike Bridge, Intel, and into Maynooth Harbour—a run of canal-side heritage that's now far friendlier to everyday users.

A “first ride” you can do this weekend

Start at Leixlip (Louisa Bridge) station and roll west along the canal. It's roughly 6–7 km to Maynooth Harbour, flat the whole way—ideal for families. Turn back for a 12–14 km out-and-back or take the train home from Maynooth.

Look out for:

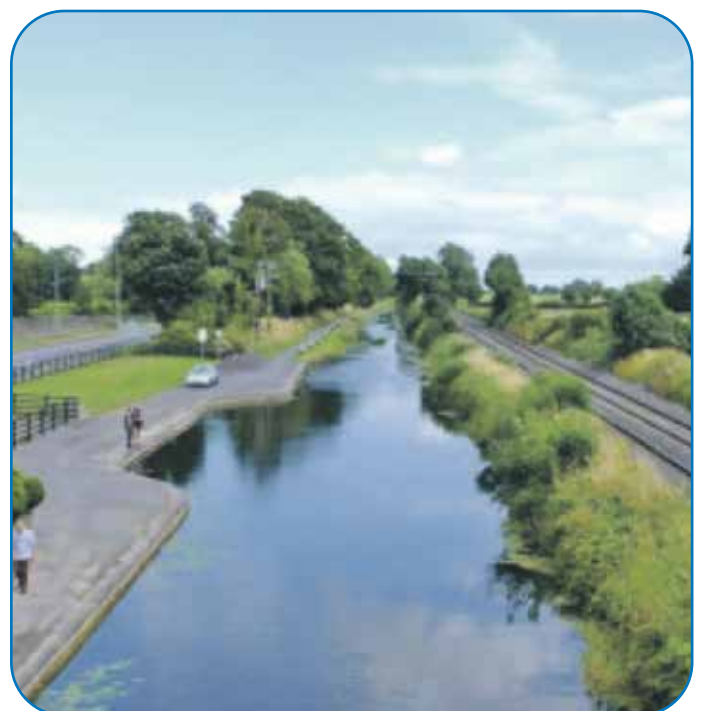
- 13th Lock / Deey Bridge folklore (yes, the “haunted”

lock!)—a fun bit of canal lore to tell the kids.

- Pike Bridge and the views across Carton Demesne.
- Maynooth Harbour—bike racks and coffee within a few minutes' walk. (Station bike parking is signposted.)

Getting there (and back) by train—with bikes

This is one of those rare Dublin-area routes where the rail line shadows the greenway. Off-peak, full-size bikes are welcomed free of charge on DART and Commuter services (including the Maynooth line), but not on weekdays 07:00–10:00 and 16:00–19:00. Both Leixlip (Louisa Bridge) and Maynooth stations have bike parking; Louisa Bridge also has a small





number of lockable bike lockers.

How the Dublin links are catching up

Inside the city, the canal route is being finished in phases:

- Phase 3 (North Strand–Phibsborough) is scheduled to open on 8 September 2025, plugging the greenway into the Clontarf-to-City-Centre corridor.

- Phase 4 (Phibsborough–Ashtown) is progressing (final leg in the DCC area). When complete, you'll be able to ride Docklands ↔ Ashtown off-road.

- In Fingal (Confey → Castleknock), the Royal Canal Urban Greenway is at preliminary design, with the council preparing a planning submission to An Bord Pleanála and seeking consents from Waterways Ireland. (Recent council updates pointed to Q2–Q3 2025 for lodging the application.)

Put together, these pieces will give Leixlip residents a near-continuous, high-quality route from Kildare into the city—and vice-versa.

Why it matters locally

- Safer school and club trips: A consistent surface and clearer crossings make it easier for teens to cycle to train stations, training, or part-time work.

- Weekender economy: The greenway funnels footfall into Leixlip village and Maynooth for coffees, lunches and supplies.

- Tourism & heritage: This stretch is rich in stories—from the 13th Lock to Leixlip Spa at Louisa Bridge—making it a natural “first stage” for visitors.

Quick trip plan

- Start/finish: Leixlip (Louisa Bridge) ↔ Maynooth Harbour

- Distance: 6–7 km each way; flat and family-friendly.

- Rail backup: Off-peak bikes allowed; hourly trains between Maynooth and Louisa Bridge.

- What's next: DCC's central city link opens 8 Sept 2025; Fingal set to lodge planning for the Confey–Castleknock link.

Summary

With Kildare's works wrapping up, Leixlip now has a true canal-side front door—a greenway that's great for a spin with the kids today and will soon plug seamlessly to Dublin's core routes. Grab a coffee, pick a lock (for a photo, not literally), and enjoy what's becoming one of the east's most useful and enjoyable short greenway rides.



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## Does paying motor tax by instalments cost more?

**Short answer (Ireland): yes**—paying motor tax in instalments costs more per year than paying for 12 months at once.

### How much more?

6-month disc: 55.5% of the annual rate each time → two discs ≈ 111% of the annual cost.

3-month disc: 28.25% of the annual rate each time → four discs ≈ 112–113% of the annual cost (rounding rules apply).

### Why is it higher?

The Department says there's a surcharge for non-annual discs; arrears are also charged at one-tenth of the annual rate per month if you let tax lapse. Government has kept this surcharge, noting that making instalment rates equal to the annual rate would cost about €35m per year in lost revenue.

### Extras to know:

Motor tax discs are issued only for 3, 6 or 12 months (there's no true monthly payment option—the “10% per month” figure refers to arrears, not an instalment plan). Vehicles with an annual tax of €119 or less can only be taxed for 12 months.

If you'll keep the car on the road all year, the 12-month disc is cheapest overall.

### Scrap the Motor Tax Instalment Penalty

Labour's Transport Spokesperson Ciarán Ahern TD has today called on the Minister for Transport to abolish the penalty imposed on motorists who pay their motor tax in instalments. Labour is demanding that Budget 2026 include a commitment to remove the higher charges applied to quarterly and half-yearly motor tax payments, and to phase out similar penalties across the public sector.

### Deputy Ahern said:

“Motorists who pay their tax in instalments are being unfairly penalised simply because they cannot afford to pay the full amount upfront. In the midst of a cost of living crisis, this is indefensible. Labour is calling for the Minister for Transport to act in Budget 2026 and scrap these outdated and unjust charges.

“We know that drivers who opted for quarterly or half-yearly payments have paid over €106 million more than those who could afford to pay annually. These are not luxury payments – they are mandatory charges for a public service.

“The Minister may argue that the extra charge is to cover administrative costs, but in this digital age, that simply doesn't hold water. Surely most of these systems are automated. Penalising people for using instalment options is not only unfair, it's outdated.

“There are many reasons why someone might not be able to pay their motor tax in one go – from unexpected bills to irregular income. These people should not be punished for their financial circumstances. Public services should be accessible and fair, not structured to penalise those who need flexibility.

“Labour is calling on the Minister for Transport to abolish the higher charges on motor tax instalments in Budget 2026 and to conduct a full review of similar penalties across the public sector. It's time to modernise how we treat people who need to pay in instalments – with fairness, not financial punishment.”



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## LUCAN'S LONG-AWAITED POOL: WHAT'S OPENING WHEN?

After years of stop-start progress, Lucan finally has movement—just not the splash everyone hoped for yet.

**T**he gym (“dry side”) of the Lucan Leisure Campus opened on 28 July 2025, with tours and memberships now underway. But the pool remains closed while the council reshapes the project team and finishes critical works. Facebook

### Where things stand right now

•Gym, studios & sports hall: Open and trading under operator Aura Leisure. A café and community rooms are part of the campus offering. Aura is running a temporary membership discount until the pool opens (promo code noted on its site).

•Pool (“wet side”): On 22 August 2025, South Dublin County Council (SDCC) removed the main contractor and put an interim team on site while it procures a new main contractor. Outstanding tasks include water filtration/commissioning, a moveable floor, and accessibility lift installation before test-filling and safety sign-off. SDCC says it’s “exploring all options” to complete the pool as soon as possible; no opening date is confirmed.

### What the facility will include (when fully open)

The Part 8 scheme provides for a modern public pool building in Griffeen Valley Park with parking and bike spaces, alongside the refurbished leisure centre next door. Inside: a 25-metre main pool (approx. 25m x 13m) plus a separate multi-depth/learner pool (c. 13m x 8m), health suite, changing-places facility and accessibility hoists.

### Prices & access

A June council reply set out pay-as-you-go prices proposed by the operator (e.g., adult swim €10.50; child



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€6; OAP €6; family €28), with concessions such as free entry for under-3s and free carer admission. Members and residents have pushed for lower prices; SDCC says it continues to engage with Aura on affordability.

#### Why the delay—and what's next?

- **Contractor reset:** Removing the main contractor should allow SDCC to directly drive completion with critical sub-contractors while a new lead contractor is procured. Expect a fresh programme once that appointment is made.

- **Safety & compliance:** Earlier in the summer, minor health & safety issues triggered additional checks, reinforcing that commissioning (filters, water quality systems, plant) must be completed and certified before public use.

- **Costs:** Inflation, scope adjustments and direct payments to sub-contractors have pushed the project above the original €13.5m contract sum; SDCC figures referenced by local representatives point to costs in the high-teens (c. €18–19m) as of late spring, with some reporting suggesting an eventual out-turn near €20m.

The realistic timeline (as of early September 2025)

- **Now:** Gym, classes and memberships live; community rooms and café activity building.

- **Autumn 2025:** Procurement for a new main contractor;

interim works continue. A pool opening date will only be clear once the new programme sets out test-fill, commissioning, and BCAR certification milestones.

#### What this means for Lucan

The campus is finally delivering day-to-day value (fitness, classes, space to meet), but the public pool—a core promise for Lucan families, clubs and schools—remains the missing piece. The upside: once the contractor transition is complete, the focus narrows to finishing mechanical systems, accessibility and commissioning rather than large-build items. The ask from locals is simple: clarity—on timeline, on pricing, and on how community hours will be prioritised when the doors to the pool do open.

#### At a glance

- **Operator:** Aura Leisure (appointed via public tender).
- **Opened:** Gym/studios from 28 July 2025. Pool TBC.
- **Specs:** 25m main pool + separate multi-depth pool; changing-places facility; health suite.
- **Latest twist:** Main contractor removed 22 Aug 2025; interim arrangements in place; new contractor to be procured.
- **Indicative PAYG prices:** Adult swim €10.50; child €6; OAP €6; family €28; concessions for under-3s and carers.



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## Dunboyne College courses offer the smart route forward

**01 Sept 2025:** As students across the country weigh up their options after secondary school, many are feeling the pressure of making the “right” choice when it comes to their next step.

**W**ith so many pathways available — university, apprenticeships, employment — deciding on a course can be overwhelming. But for an increasing number, a place in Dunboyne College of Further Education and Training (FET) is proving to be the ideal starting point.



Catherine Fox

Catherine Fox, Principal of Dunboyne College of Further Education and Training (DCFET), is encouraging students and parents to look seriously at the benefits of a Further Education and Training course. “We know how difficult it can be for students to choose their next step, especially with so many options and financial considerations,” said Ms Fox. “An accredited QQI course in Dunboyne offers the perfect balance – it gives students time to develop their academic and personal skills, explore their interests, and either progress to a Level 8 degree or move straight into the workforce. We still have limited places available on some courses and waiting lists on other courses, but we encourage anyone still considering their options to apply immediately.”

One of the main advantages of studying at a FE college is the focus on real-world skills and employability. Courses are designed in partnership with industry, offering students opportunities to gain hands-on work experience and learn from professionals working in their chosen field. Whether it’s business, healthcare, speech

and language therapy, journalism, or the creative arts, every course in Dunboyne College combines academic development with practical, workplace-relevant learning.

At a time when the job market demands more than just a qualification, Dunboyne College, is helping students graduate with both the knowledge and experience employers are looking for according to Ms Fox. She says the college is seeing a steady rise in applications from students who are seeking more flexible, affordable, and job-ready alternatives to university. “Those who have completed the Speech and Language Therapy Assistant or Occupational Therapy Assistant courses are finding employment in the health services. These courses also offer an ideal opportunity for those already working in the healthcare sector to upskill and add to existing qualifications.”

For students considering university in the future, courses in Dunboyne College provide a solid stepping stone. Many courses offer pathways to Level 7 and Level 8 degrees, giving students the chance to build the academic skills and confidence needed for higher education — in smaller class sizes with more personalised support than they might receive in large first year groups at university.

“Half the places on the new BSc in Nursing degree course in Maynooth University are reserved for Further Education and mature, including those who have completed a Pre-Nursing course. This is a major step forward in providing more access for FET students to Nursing degrees,” according to Ms Fox.

For further information on courses see [www.dunboynecollege.ie](http://www.dunboynecollege.ie) Applications for vacant places are still been accepted on a limited number of courses.





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Applications open November 2024.

**For enquiries regarding our courses contact our Guidance Counsellors:**

**Derek Ball and Meabh Nimmo by email: [guidance.dbc@lmetb.ie](mailto:guidance.dbc@lmetb.ie)**

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

### Healthcare

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

### Social Care, Criminology & Psychology

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

### Education & Childcare

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

### Science

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

### Law & Politics

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

### Arts

- Pre-University Arts
- Pre-University Liberal Arts
- Theatre Studies and Performance

### Animal & Equine

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

### Engineering & Construction

- Pre-University Engineering <sup>NEW</sup>
- Pre-University Construction/Furniture Studies <sup>NEW</sup>

### Business & Accountancy

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

### Computing & Technology

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

### Visual Art & Design

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

### Music & Sound

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

### Film & Media

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

### Hospitality & Tourism

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

### Beauty & Hairdressing

- Beauty Therapy
- Pre-Apprenticeship Hairdressing
- Hairdressing Apprenticeship
- Advanced Beauty Therapy
- Barbering <sup>NEW</sup>

### Sports

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

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# ACCESS TO GP CARE IN IRELAND, 2025

The pressure points, policy fixes and the road ahead

## Why GP Access Matters More Than Ever

General practice serves as the first port of call for Ireland's 5.3 million people, delivering approximately 88,000 consultations every day. This workload has risen sharply since the pandemic and the expansion of free care schemes. Yet, this frontline is looking increasingly thin. Ireland has only about 4,500 practising GPs and 1,130 doctors in training; a supply that the Irish College of GPs (ICGP) warned at its 2025 annual conference is "not expanding fast enough to meet growing demand."

This situation is a clear case of demand outrunning supply. An ESRI capacity review published in June projects that annual GP consultations will climb from 19.4 million in 2023 to at least 23.9 million by 2040. To keep pace, Ireland will require between 943 and 1,211 extra GPs and up to 868 more practice nurses. While population growth is a factor, it is only part of the story. Rising chronic disease programmes and the policy drive to treat more patients outside hospitals under Sláintecare are pushing complex work that was once reserved for hospitals into local surgeries.

The reality in waiting rooms across the country in 2025 is stark. According to an Irish Independent survey cited by Newstalk in January, 61% of GP practices cannot accept new patients. Patients now commonly report waits of one to two weeks for routine appointments, with some rural areas experiencing waits of several weeks or feeling forced to resort to emergency departments instead. These intense pressures have created what investigators call emerging "medical deserts." Counties such as Monaghan and Meath sit at the bottom of the GP-per-population league table, while urban deprived districts also feel the pinch.

The expansion of free GP care has been a success in policy terms but has had significant side effects. Successive budgets have widened eligibility for GP visit cards to all children under 8 and to households below the median income. This reform means about 2.3 million people now have free GP care. However, take-up among newly eligible adults has lagged at just 72,500 (17%), partly because many practices are already full and cannot accept new patients. While the policy has successfully

removed financial barriers for families, it also funnels extra consultations into a system that is already overstretched.

Several critical workforce pinch points threaten to exacerbate the crisis. Firstly, it is an ageing profession, with roughly one-third of Irish GPs over 55, raising the spectre of a retirement cliff in the next decade. Secondly, although the training pipeline has improved—with GP training places rising 80% since 2019 to 350 per year, alongside continued recruitment of international medical graduates—the ESRI says this may still not meet projected demand. To address the specific issue of rural cover, a new locum-support scheme launching this summer will help 239 single-handed or remote GPs find paid cover for leave, a long-sought safeguard against burnout and sudden practice closures.

The question remains: will these government fixes be enough? The ICGP's July manifesto argues that without a comprehensive national workforce strategy, universal free GP care will remain "an aspiration rather than a reality," and rural communities will face deepening gaps in primary care. Health-economics researchers suggest pulling four key levers: expanding training even further, as the ESRI projections assume today's consultation length and will need to be increased if complexity rises; creating retention and return programmes to entice emigrated Irish GPs home with relocation grants and flexible contracts; scaling up task-sharing by allowing practice nurses and pharmacists to lead chronic disease schemes, freeing up GP time; and offering targeted incentives, such as tying rural infrastructure grants to long-term practice commitments.

Ireland's GP system is at a pivot point. The State is investing more than ever, with primary care spend rising 70% since 2019, yet patient-facing access remains fragile. The reforms rolling out in 2025 lay important foundations, but closing the gap between demand and supply will ultimately hinge on whether the forthcoming Strategic Review can translate evidence into sustained funding and attractive career paths. Until then, many patients will still dial their surgery at 9 a.m. and simply hope for the best.



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