



**Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil:** KCC-C55-495

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Draft Kildare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

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## 12 - Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure

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### County Development Plan

It is important that the County Development Plan reflects the importance of our environment because a healthy environment provides us with clean air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat. Without these things, humans cannot survive.

This principle should underpin everything we do in County Kildare.

In line with Ireland's commitment to conserve 30% of land by 2030, Kildare needs to conserve 30% of Kildare land.

Right now we have a biodiversity crisis in Ireland with some species on the brink of extinction and we need to action this as soon as possible before it is too late.

### No. 1 SUPPORT THE NATIONAL PEATLANDS PARK INITIATIVE

One of the best things we can do in Kildare is to conserve our peatlands (the "superheroes of ecosystems") in Kildare for the following reasons:

- Protect endangered species of bird
- Absorb carbon from the atmosphere.
- Reduce flooding in the county.
- Generate jobs in tourism and conservation.
- Do not allow windfarms to be created on bogs as this is harmful for biodiversity and this does not provide any jobs in Kildare once they are established.
- Support the development of peatways and linkage to greenways and blueways by linking in with local communities. This has enormous potential in Kildare in Lullymore & Lullybeg and in Umeras Peatlands Park for

biodiversity, heritage, tourism and the well-being of Kildare citizens.

## **No. 2 WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

- Existing trees and hedges need to be fully protected.
- Do not allow any trees to be cut down in the county unless there is a critical reason for it. An environmental impact assessment should be completed. Planting new trees does not compensate for cutting down mature trees as we are in a biodiversity and climate emergency.
- Do not allow for any hedgerows to be cut unless there is a critical reason for it.
- Plant trees in wet areas or areas that are prone to flooding.
  - Oak trees have an expansive and efficient root-system for drawing water. A mature oak tree can absorb ~50 gallons per day.
- Pesticides are POISONOUS to our environment and should be banned.
- Stipulate green roofs or solar roofs are a requirement for all new buildings in the county.
- It should be required that for any new estate or development, that pesticide-free fruit trees and hedges and a herb garden are planted for the residents. Any fencing or walls should also be designed to permit wildlife such as hedgehogs to freely pass through.

## **No. 3 HEALTHY AIR TO BREATHE AND COMMUNITY SPACES**

- Target Sundays as car-free days in town centres during the summer months. This would also support businesses as this approach has been demonstrated to increase footfall and business.
- Prioritise pedestrian and cyclist access over car access to all areas in the county.
- Have local markets situated in town centres to bring people back into the town.
- “Green” our streets and prioritise development of green spaces as this has been shown to have mental health benefits which is particularly important as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Do not allow the building of large service stations or retail parks outside towns or villages that take business away from the town centres.
- Support development of brownfield sites rather than greenfield sites.
  - Derelict properties in towns and villages should not be allowed to sit vacant.
  - Living above shops/restaurants in towns needs to be made viable and attractive.

## **No. 4 REDUCE WASTE AND LITTER**

- Install water dispensers in all Kildare towns to reduce plastic bottle waste. This has been done extremely well in

Paris.

#### **No. 5 QUARRIES IN KILDARE & EXTRACTION**

- The quarrying away of Kildare heritage at the Hill of Allen is a disgrace and should be stopped immediately. Kildare is supposed to be part of the Ancient East and we are allowing our heritage to be completely destroyed.
- More sustainable ways of supporting the housing and building industry must be found as we do not have a bottomless pit to quarry away here in Kildare.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl