Biodiversity and green infrastructure strategy / Built & Cultural Heritage

Heritage Officer – Bridget Loughlin via the KCC podcast series encouraged locals to recommend bio-diversity hotspots/areas in County Kildare that need to be protected from intrusive development.

An area that I feel should be protected due to its rich biodiversity & heritage is Swordlestown / Gowran Grange. According to an Independent Ecologist Report by Dr Mary O’Connor, it is home to red listed birds and many other protected mammals such as pine martens, bats, otters, badgers and even the vulnerable freshwater crayfish inhabit the Swordlestown Stream. Gowran Grange Demesne is approx. 370 acres including 50 acres of woodland that is home to some trees that are over 200 years old.

The entire estate should be added to the Green Infrastructure network and concept map as either a ‘stepping stone’ or by inclusion in the Development Plan as a County Biodiversity Site due to its high ecological and exceptionally high biodiversity value.

The house at Gowran Grange is of significant local historical importance and although the house itself is not protected it has been noted in the archaeological archives in Merrion Square as a ‘house of significance’. Gowran Grange Country house is on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. This is the precursor to a structure becoming protected. The house was commissioned by the 4th Baron de Robeck and designed by John McCurdy who also designed the Shelbourne Hotel and the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire. The house should be immediately listed to the record of protected structures due to its cultural importance both locally and nationally