



BACKGROUND

The **Liffey Valley Park Alliance (LVPA)** is a federation of local community groups and national eNGOs including the Irish Wildlife Trust and An Taisce, whose objectives are to conserve the built and natural heritage of the Liffey Valley as it stretches from Islandbridge to Straffan. The protection and conservation of the Liffey Valley, its unique landscapes, biodiversity and outstanding built heritage. It includes community groups across the four council areas bounding the valley, through Dublin City Council (DCC), South Dublin County Council (SDCC), Kildare County Council (KCC), and of course Fingal County Council (FCC); together with a number of national organisations such as An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland, Birdwatch Ireland, and the Irish Georgian Society. Dublin is acknowledged to have three great natural jewels: Dublin Bay, The Dublin Mountains and the valley of the river Liffey. However despite the fact that, The landscapes within the valley have been acknowledged as being of “outstanding natural beauty and importance both nationally and internationally” by an Foras Forbartha; and that the first special amenity area order in the state was designated for a portion of the valley;

Our Liffey Valley Park Vision
 A landscape rich in :
 Beauty
 Biodiversity
 Built and Natural Heritage

Sites of Interest

- Lutyens Rose Garden
- Dublin Zoo
- Shakleton's Mill
- Mill race
- Guinness Bridge
- Lucan single-span bridge
- Lucan Weir
- Lettlip Spa
- Wonderful Barn
- Conolly's Folly
- Straffan Weir

Leisure

- Walking
- Cycling
- Canoeing
- Bowling
- Golf
- Nature
- Home Hiding
- Angling
- Football
- Hurling
- Photography

Public Parks

- Phoenix Park
- War Memorial park
- Longmeadows Park
- Waterstown Park
- Hermitage Lands (to be formally named)
- Lucan Demesne
- Vesey Park
- St Catherine's Park
- Castletown Demesne
- Celbridge Abbey

Great Houses

- Annas Uachtairin
- American Ambassador's residence
- Farmleigh house
- Luttrelstown Castle
- Carton House
- Hermitage Golf club
- Foxhill House
- Lucan House
- (Italian Ambassador's residence)
- Lettlip Castle
- Wonderful Barn complex
- Donagh Cooper House
- Castletown House
- Kildrough House
- Celbridge Abbey
- Lodge Park
- Kildoon
- Barbentown Castle
- K Club

WONDERFUL BARN RESTORATION

The LVPA is delighted that this project is going ahead and is fully supported by our organisation. One of our main goals is to see the restoration and preservation of buildings along the Liffey Valley region as shown in the image above where the wonderful barn is listed. There are potential opportunities during the restoration of the environs and surrounding buildings especially for some birds and bat species. Could there be opportunities to install swift boxes and Barn owl boxes to promote nesting for swallows, swifts and owls? The Environmental impact assessment has shown the presence of bats and most likely in large numbers before fires damaged their roosting locations. . Will the restoration facilitate bats returning to this location and swallows and swifts to the barns? Could there be a structure with swift boxes installed that is sensitive to the heritage of the site?

There is mention of exterior lighting to highlight the structure. Will this have an impact on bats at night time?

TOURISM POTENTIAL

The new cycling and walking links connecting Barnhall into the Wonderful barn location will help improve connectivity in the locality. What will the bike path widths be located within the development. They should be at least 4 metres due to high usage and population density of the area and potential for high usage when connectivity is completed to Castletown demesne. Also in light of the recent announcement of new potential cycling and walking links from the old Hewlard packard site.

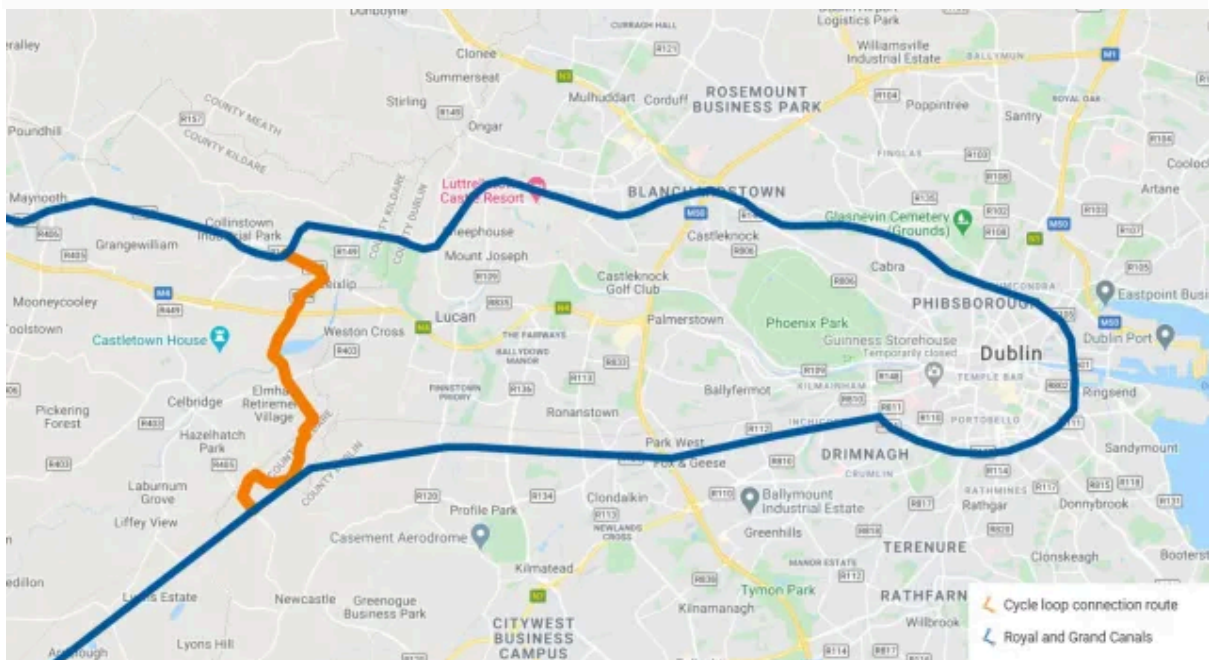
Source: Extract from NTA, GDA Network Plan, 2023

prospective pedestrian/cycle overpass over the M4 Motorway secured by the Kildare Innovation Campus planning permission (ref: 2360047) that will connect Celbridge, to the south with The Wonderful Barnsite. The provision of this connection across the M4 also forms Walking and Cycling Policy MT1.11 of the Leixlip Local Area Plan (2020 –2023, extended to 2026) which states, “To support the delivery of a pedestrian and cycle overpass of the M4 to link The Wonderful Barn Leixlip to Castletown Demesne in Celbridge in consultation with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

Kildare CoCo should think of the potential tourism opportunities from connecting both the Royal and Grand canals so tourists can stop and visit the Wonderful barn. There are suggestions already to connect the canals closer to Dublin City, with inner and outer cycle Dublin loops. <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/active-travel/cysd-programme/now-projects-progressed-within-the-next-2-years-2021-2023-/grand-canal-to-lucan-urban-greenway/>

A 'Kildare Canal Loop' of just over 52km would allow people to start cycling in the Docklands (or other locations) on one canal and loop back on the other canal. A possible route could be between Hazelhatch and Leixlip Louisa Bridge (see map below).

It makes sense for Co Kildare to have its own loop link which could be a link for leisure, tourism and also help people to cycle safely to school, work, sports clubs, and to the train stations at both ends. So, the Hazelhatch to Leixlip Louisa bridge canal loop idea is being proposed for consideration by residents, commuters, tourists and Kildare County Council. The concept is to promote sustainable transport, tourism and active travel in the area. It would connect to Celbridge via Castletown House just south of Hewlett Packard, somewhere close to MU Barnhall RFC.



Why connect the canals? Tourists, Commuters, safe routes to schools

It would benefit local residents who would be able to make their safer journeys to schools and shops and go for a coffee in a safe manner. It would allow more people to choose to cycle and walk to work in the many large organisations such as Intel at one end and Hewlett Packard in the middle of the route. One of the main reasons for

the connection would be to increase tourism and generate revenue for the local and wider economy in Celbridge which would benefit many of the local cafes and restaurants.

It is estimated that cycling tourism generates €44 billion across the EU. Ireland is on the cusp of completing some of its major greenway routes and these routes could eventually be connected and integrated into a greenway network across the country. This will make Ireland in a few years a more desirable destination for active travel holiday makers. The opportunity for tourism is quite significant if we consider Celbridge as your base during your stay and holiday. International tourists and local day trippers could take a train to Hazelhatch or Leixlip Louisa bridge and cycle into Celbridge with its many fine restaurants and pubs. From Dublin. It would take a good day of cycling at a slow pace along the Royal Canal to get to Louisa Bridge and the last part of the Journey into Celbridge would take another approximately 20 minutes . Local and nearby tourist attractions could offer people options for things to do on a longer stay such as Castletown House, Rye River Brewery, Arthur's Way-Guinness trail, wonderful barn, and Ballykellys mills in Monasterevin

This idea is outlined in more detail here. <https://irishcycle.com/2021/02/06/34355/>

CONCLUSION

- Liffey Valley park Alliance is delighted to support this project. We believe there are some potential opportunities to improve nesting and roosting sites for native bird and bat species. Would exterior lighting at night time impact bats?
- Promote way finding to other attractions such as Authors way and Castletown Demense. <https://intokildare.ie/arthurs-way/>
- Kildare CoCo should explore tourism potential of connecting both the Royal and Grand Canals as the Dublin to Galway route will be close to completion in a few years and the section along the Grand Canal to Hazelhatch will be completed soon by SDCC.
- SDCC is about to start improvements of the connecting Lucan village to the Royal Canal. There will be potential opportunities to promote local trips from Lucan to the Wonderful barn via the Royal canal and the Grand canal.
- AECOM came to the same conclusions about tourism potential as mentioned in their report.

AECOM have prepared this Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA)

The redevelopment of The Wonderful Barn will result in increased tourism to the area, an opportunity identified in the Leixlip Local Area Plan, which states, "The Wonderful Barn, Leixlip Castle and Leixlip Spa in particular present opportunities to

attract tourists to Leixlip. Together with its links to Castletown House in Celbridge, Leixlip offers the opportunity for visitors to visit a cluster of attractions in the area.

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