**Public Participation: Identification of Bathing Waters**

Local authorities must identify official bathing areas in their area every year so that they can be monitored for safety, water quality and their level of use.  To help with this process, Kildare County Council are asking people who swim at lakes and rivers to tell them if they think they should maintain existing designated bathing waters designations or give a new official bathing area designation to areas that are commonly used for swimming, but not identified at the moment.

Under European and Irish law, Irish local authorities must identify bathing waters each year so that these areas can be monitored to ensure they meet stringent microbiological water quality standards. In some cases, the official bathing areas are also the areas where local authorities focus their resources providing lifeguards during the summer season*.*  These laws also require that the local authority prepares detailed descriptions or profiles for each of the identified bathing water sites that describe not just the bathing area but also areas in the surface waters catchment area that could be a source of pollution. The profiles include an assessment the risk of pollution and what action would be taken if pollution occurs.

If you are a regular swimmer and want to help your Council decide which bathing areas should be classified as such, it might be helpful to consider the following:

* **How your swimming area has been used up to now;**
* **How many people use the site;**
* **What facilities** **(e.g. signage, parking, toilets etc.) exist at the site and how accessible is it;**
* **Any safety issues.**

If you wish to propose your favourite river etc as a new bathing water site smerrins@kildarecoco.ie

**Closing date for submissions to Kildare County Council is 26/9/2024.**

**For further information please contact**: **Syl Merrins, Kildare County Council Water Safety Officer, Áras Chill Dara, Naas. Email:** **smerrins@kildarecoco.ie**

**ENDS**

Note to editors: Local authorities are required under the Bathing Waters Directive and the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (SI No 79 of 2008) to identify bathing waters on an annual basis. The Directive requires that water quality at all designated bathing waters meets stringent microbiological standards in order to protect the health of people who choose to bathe there.