County Kildare
HERITAGE PLAN
2026–2031



Ceangal
Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta
A Heritage Council programme

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Photo on outside cover:
"Fionn Mac Cumhaill and His Dogs" by Lynn Kirkham

This image: © Siobhan O'Brien



Acknowledgement

Kildare County Council and the County Kildare Heritage Forum wish to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Heritage Council in the preparation of this plan and through its contribution to the funding of the post of the Heritage Officer and the implementation of projects under the Heritage Plan.

The efforts of many groups and individuals in Kildare who have worked to protect the heritage of county is also acknowledged here - the current Heritage Plan builds on many years previous work to record, conserve and highlight heritage matters, large and small. In addition to countless dedicated individuals, groups such as the County Kildare Archaeological Society, Kildare Animal Rescue, the County Kildare Federation of Local History Groups, Kildare's Tidy Towns groups, Irish language groups, the Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and the Irish Peatland Conservation Council all play a vital role in protecting and raising awareness of Kildare's built, cultural and natural heritage and it is hoped that the Plan will continue to support their efforts into the future.

Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

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VIRGINIA TEEHAN

Chief Executive of the Heritage Council



DR. MARTINA MOLONEY

Chairperson of the Heritage Council

A Message from the Heritage Council

It gives us great pleasure to welcome the Kildare County Heritage Plan 2026–2031.

This plan is the result of extensive collaboration between the Kildare Heritage Forum, local community groups, and national partners, all united by a commitment to safeguarding Kildare's unique identity. By integrating rich archaeological sites, diverse natural landscapes, and vibrant cultural traditions, the plan ensures that Kildare's heritage remains a living asset that is protected, understood, and appreciated by generations to come.

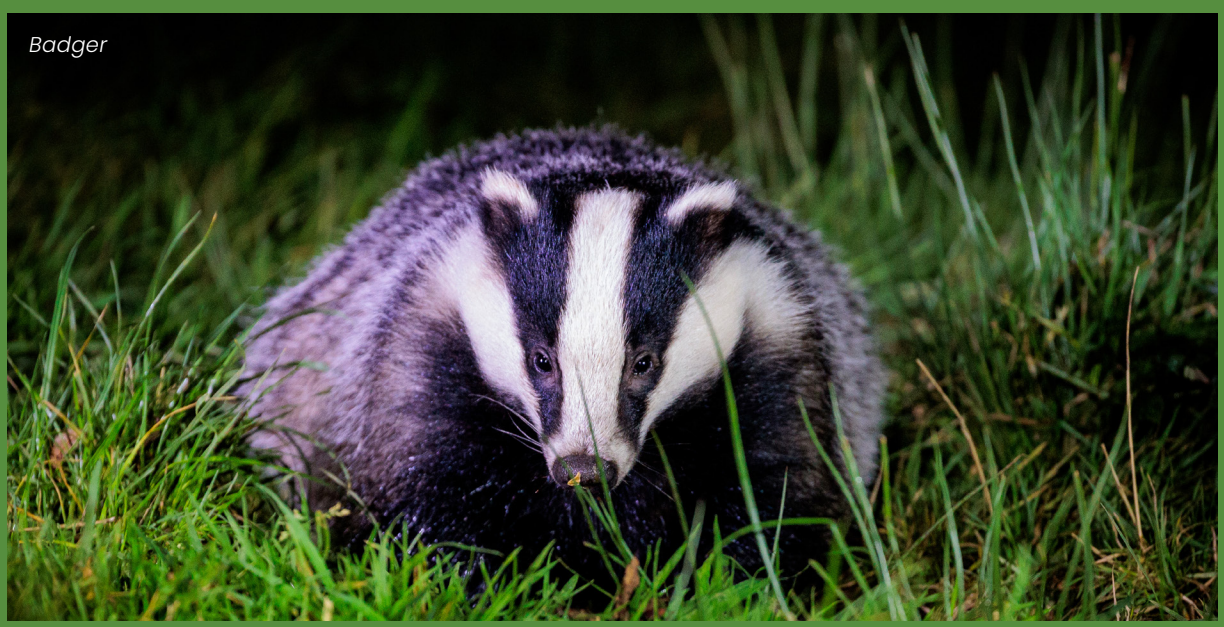
The Heritage Council has consistently championed this collaborative model within local government, a commitment that started with the Heritage Officer Network in 1999 and has since expanded to include specialists in biodiversity, archives, and architecture. Together, under our Ceangal Programme, they form a strong foundation for an integrated and forward-thinking heritage response.

We are proud to support Kildare through our many programmes including the Adopt a Monument programme which has recently selected the historic church and graveyard in Dunmanoge, offering the community direct access to expertise, mentoring and support to help them to protect, preserve, and promote their local heritage.

We want to acknowledge the community groups, heritage organisations and experts who took part in shaping this heritage plan. Their input gives it energy and keeps it grounded in local priorities.

We are proud to have supported the development of this plan and commend Kildare County Council for its leadership. We particularly acknowledge the outstanding work of Kildare's Heritage Officer, Dara Wyer.

The Heritage Council looks forward to supporting Kildare County Council, the Heritage Forum, and the wider community as this ambitious plan is brought to life.



Badger



SONYA KAVANAGH

Chief Executive of
Kildare County Council

I am delighted to introduce this Heritage Plan, the third for County Kildare, which will run from 2026 to 2031. Kildare has a rich natural, built, and cultural heritage, and we know that this heritage provides multiple benefits across our society; from social benefits, such as participating in a local heritage group, to economic and educational benefits, such as the recently opened Shackleton Experience in Athy. Ongoing work on the Green and Blueway projects, the stunning conservation work on Kildare Round Tower and the ongoing legacy of the Brigid 1500 initiative, all underline that much of the heritage in Kildare is of significance beyond the county level. At the local level, our network of Tidy Towns, and the Federation of Local History Groups, to name but two, provide a great example of advocates for heritage protection in the heart or communities.

With the recent publication of the 1926 census, it is timely to reflect on the changes in the county over the last century, with the population rising from 58,000 to 248,000 and major changes in how we travel, work and live. While we need to develop and maintain the infrastructure to support the needs of this growing population, it holds true that we also need to protect, promote and make accessible our shared heritage to underpin our communities with a sense of place. The aim of this Heritage Plan to "recognise, the value and opportunity of Kildare's unique heritage resource and to manage, conserve and protect it, in partnership, for present and future generations" provides the roadmap to achieve these goals.

The development of this Heritage Plan, demonstrates the ongoing commitment to heritage by Kildare County Council's executive and elected members. Delivering the Plan itself required the commitment of all the members of the County Kildare Heritage Forum and the staff in the Heritage and Nature Team, as well as the wider community that contributed so positively to the public consultation process. The continued involvement of the Heritage Council through the Ceangal Programme in supporting and developing the Kildare Heritage Plan must be especially acknowledged. I take this opportunity to wish the Kildare Heritage Forum, and all the statutory and voluntary bodies working on heritage matters every success in the implementation of the strategic heritage actions it sets out.



CLLR. CARMEL KELLY

Former Cathaoirleach
of Kildare

As the Cathaoirleach of Kildare County Council, (and an honorary Kildare woman!), it gives me great pleasure to present the County Kildare Heritage Plan, to run from 2026 to 2031.

This plan, the third Heritage Plan for the county, was developed by the County Kildare Heritage Forum following extensive public consultations, establishes a coherent strategy for the future management of heritage in the county and will build on the success of the previous plans. The implementation of this plan relies on all stakeholders working together to achieve the common aims of identifying, protecting and promoting the built, natural and cultural heritage of the county. Within this county there are many individuals and groups who are dedicated to caring for and managing our heritage this plan strives to support and co-ordinate the work of these people.

"Heritage" is such a broad concept it is useful to look at what is happening on the ground to show what heritage means in practice. I think of the voluntary groups working to protect our canal heritage, the County Kildare Archaeological Society, the proliferation in Irish language groups, the increasing popularity of National Heritage Week and the ongoing work of the committees tending to our historic graveyards as examples that resonate with me, and there are many other examples right across our county.

I would like to wish everybody working on implementing the actions in this Heritage Plan every success and I look forward to seeing the actions contained within it being realised over the next five years.

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1.

Introduction to the County Kildare Heritage Plan 2026-2031

This Heritage Plan sets out a range of actions to protect and enhance the heritage of County Kildare for the next five years (2026-2031). The plan is a result of the work undertaken primarily by the County Kildare Heritage Forum a partnership committee set up by Kildare County Council, in consultation with the local community and local, regional and national organisations with an interest in and remit for the heritage of County Kildare. This work is facilitated by the Council's Heritage Officer and staff from the Heritage and Nature Team. County Kildare Heritage Forum is comprised of elected representatives, council officials and representatives from state agencies, local heritage and community groups and the farming, education and business sectors.

Following a pre-draft public consultation process held in June 2025, submissions were received from the public and prescribed bodies on a range of heritage issues. The Heritage Forum looked at each submission and assessed it for possible inclusion as an action or set of actions in the plan. The Forum also assessed the strategic objectives and actions in the current (2019-2025) Heritage Plan. These two strands were then combined into the strategic objectives and actions in this plan.

The next phase in developing the new Heritage Plan was to ask the people of Kildare to have their say. Public engagement is a cornerstone of a successful Heritage Plan. Much of the heritage of the county is in the care of groups and individuals – from voluntary committees maintaining historic graveyards to the different biodiversity-focussed groups protecting bats, birds and wider habitats, as well as local history groups and those maintaining old craft traditions in the county. All are interested to see that their goals and aspirations are reflected in this plan. The public consultation process sought to engage as widely as possible across the county in order to gather the broadest range of views and suggestions possible. The draft was made available on the council's consultation portal and the public was encouraged to make submissions. All submissions received were assessed by the Heritage Forum and a final Heritage Plan will be presented to the elected members of Kildare County Council for adoption in March 2026 following this process. This process results in a plan that will help to shape the way we record, protect and explain our built, cultural and natural heritage over the next five years.



Rope wear marks from horses towing barges, Grand Canal

2.

Policy Context

The following are the main strategic policy documents that have influenced the preparation of the Heritage Plan.

2.1 National and Regional Policy

Project Ireland 2040- National Planning Framework (NPF): The NPF is a high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment. Within the NPF, Enhanced Amenities and Heritage has been identified as a National Strategic Outcome and has been identified as a Strategic Investment Priority. The framework was revised in 2025 to more directly address housing delivery and affordability challenges.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031 - East and Midlands: A RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO). A number of these in the RSES address built and natural and heritage issues.

Heritage Ireland 2030: Is Ireland's national Heritage Plan- it establishes a framework for the understanding and enjoyment of heritage for the next decade under three themes – "National Leadership and Heritage", "Heritage Partnerships" and "Communities and Heritage". A series of objectives under each theme are detailed in the plan.

Heritage Ireland 2030 sets out a framework for action across government, local authorities, communities, and individuals. It promotes stronger leadership, better coordination, and more meaningful public engagement, while also supporting innovation, education, and sustainable development.

Culture 2025 & Creative Ireland: Culture 2025 - Éire Ildánach A Framework Policy to 2025 was published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2016. The aim of this policy is to put culture at the heart of our lives and develop a more collaborative approach across all sectors. This policy is underpinned by a commitment to increase resources for arts and heritage and to improve funding structures for investment in national and local services. Priorities include the identification of priority actions in the heritage area. The Culture 2025 policy is supported by the implementation vehicle, Creative Ireland Programme/ Clár Éire Ildánach 2017-2022 (extended to 2027), which commits to an increased investment in arts and heritage, the promotion of collaboration and the production of a Culture and Creativity Plan by the Culture Team in each local authority.



Common Lizard, Ballynafagh

National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) 2023-2030: Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the national biodiversity agenda for 2023 - 2030, building on the progress made through previous plans. It outlines key objectives, targets, and actions for government, civil society, and the private sector to help achieve Ireland's Vision for Biodiversity. The plan takes a "whole of government, whole of society" approach and provides a framework to monitor progress across five strategic areas, including conservation, restoration, public engagement, and international cooperation. The proposed Heritage Plan will align closely with the NBAP, incorporating its priorities and contributing to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in County Kildare.

All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025: This plan encourages landscape-level change to support biodiversity and provides practical, sector-specific guidelines that continue to inform and support this work in Kildare. This Heritage Plan will align with the Pollinator Plan's goals, incorporating its guidance to help protect pollinator species and promote biodiversity across the county.

The associated sectoral guidelines produced through the Pollinator Plan provide a valuable resource to promote collaboration in Kildare and assist the implementation of related actions in the Kildare Heritage Plan 2026-2031.

Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht sectoral plans for Climate Change Adaptation: The Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht are preparing Climate Change sectoral plans for climate change adaptation for Built and Archaeological Heritage and Biodiversity. These plans will contain climate change adaptation actions, for the benefit of heritage, to be implemented by local authorities and the general public.

A new plan for Built Archaeological Heritage and Climate Change is currently being finalised, replacing the previous 2019 version and reflecting updated risks, priorities, and stakeholder input.

Sustainable Development Goals, National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2020: In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Targets and measures for the protection of ecosystems, landscapes and cultural heritage have been set by the SDGs such as SDG Target 11.4, which is an overarching objective for heritage to: "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage". The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2020 is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Waters and Communities: The Local Authority Waters and Communities Offices (LAWCO) is a relatively new approach to public participation in the management of our natural waters and delivery of the Water Framework Directive. It recognises the value of local partnerships in the management of local rivers, lakes or coastal waters and offers advice on technical issues and funding opportunities for community projects. There is great potential for such projects to enhance the water quality, habitat value and recreational use of Kildare's water.

The National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025: This strategy, prepared in consultation with the Peatlands Council and with relevant Government Departments, agencies and semi-State companies was published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2015. The strategy arose from the need to take a broad strategic approach to the future management of Ireland's peatlands. This aims to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations.



Old chimneys, Kilcullen

2.2 Local Policy


St. Brigid's Well, Kildare

Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 as verified

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 (CDP) as verified sets out the statutory framework for land use planning and sustainable development in County Kildare. The Heritage Plan sits within the policy framework of the CDP and aims to support and strengthen the role of the CDP and other land use plans by providing baseline information to inform policy for the protection, conservation, management and promotion of heritage.

Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029

The Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is a six-year plan prepared by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in conjunction with Kildare County Council. It contains objectives and actions to promote and support economic, local and community development of County Kildare. The LECP will form the strategic framework for all publicly funded local, economic and community development programmes. Heritage makes a significant contribution to quality of life and well-being, and plays a role in strengthening of communities and contributes to the socio-economic development of County Kildare.

County Kildare Heritage Plan 2019-2025:

The second County Kildare Heritage Plan, covering the period 2019 - 2025, built upon the foundations laid by the original plan (2005 - 2018), and continued to guide heritage management and consultation in the county. This Plan reaffirmed a strategic approach to the protection and promotion of Kildare's heritage and identified actions aligned with its core objectives.

This Heritage Plan sets out to build upon the achievements of the previous Plan and identifies priorities for heritage in County Kildare over the next five years, taking account of changes at local, national and international levels since the publication of previous plans.


Sparrowhawk

County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031

Kildare County Council has adopted a new Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP). Following the launch of the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan in 2023, all Local Authorities are required to have a local Biodiversity Action Plans in place by the end of 2026.

This overlapping in the time period covered will allow for integrated and collaborative approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in County Kildare.

Kildare County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Kildare County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029 replaces the previous Climate Adaptation Strategy and sets out a framework for both climate adaptation and mitigation across County Kildare. It aims to mainstream climate action into all functions of the local authority and supports the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. The Plan includes actions to address the impacts of climate change on built and natural heritage, ensuring that heritage is considered in planning, policy, and service delivery.

3.

Guiding Principles

The overall objective of the County Kildare Heritage Plan is:

To recognise the value and opportunity of Kildare's unique heritage resource and to manage, conserve and protect it, in partnership, for present and future generations.



Towerhouse, Oughterard

The County Kildare Heritage Plan 2026-2031 presents an opportunity to build on, and consolidate, the progress and achievements made through the implementation of the previous County Heritage Plans.

The Heritage Plan seeks to continue this work with the wider community and various stakeholders to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of Kildare's built, natural and cultural heritage assets. It represents a strategic approach to the management of heritage in Kildare. It is an opportunity to identify heritage issues and needs at a county level and to address them locally, within a regional and national framework underpinned by both national and local heritage policy.

The process for agreeing the plan is guided by the Heritage Act (1995), which includes as examples of heritage: monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways. Additionally, the Kildare Heritage Plan makes provision for other aspects of cultural heritage such as history, genealogy, traditional skills and creative arts including local music, place names and folklore and the cultural heritage of all communities in the county

Factors underpinning this plan include:

- Local democracy
- Customer service
- Sustainability
- Social inclusion
- Community development
- Efficiency and accountability

The County Kildare Heritage Forum is committed to an *integrated heritage* approach (built, cultural and natural) when implementing actions within the Heritage Plan. This will ensure that the benefits for heritage are maximised from actions undertaken and that there is no net damage to Kildare's heritage resource. For example, actions with a strong archaeological focus will also be required to consider any potential benefits to or impacts on biodiversity or other heritage elements and vice versa.



Irish Hare

The following principles were referred to throughout the process of preparing the Heritage Plan:

***Community*:** Through the implementation of the Heritage Plan, the Kildare Heritage Forum will endeavour to build the capacity of communities to engage and participate in heritage initiatives across the county.

***Inter-generational Approach*:** The Heritage Forum will develop an intergenerational approach when delivering the projects and initiatives and seek to pass on to future generations the unique heritage knowledge and traditions of the county.

***Working in Partnership*:** The Heritage Forum believes in the partnership model of working with the public/statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

***Heritage as a Resource*:** In this plan heritage is seen as an intrinsic valuable resource in its own right. The Heritage Forum also considers that Kildare's heritage resource has a strategic economic potential that could be exploited with careful consideration of sustainable balanced development.

***Irish Language*:** The Heritage Forum will endeavour to promote the Irish language as part of our unique Irish heritage and culture in the delivery of the plan.

To illustrate how these principles can be integrated into the actions arising from this plan, it is worth quoting from the Planning and Development Act 2024 which provides for a number of relevant strategies. Of particular note is the following:

A planning authority shall prepare a strategy for the creation, improvement and preservation of sustainable places and communities for the functional area of the planning authority.

The strategy shall include objectives for:

a) the provision, improvement, extension and preservation of amenities, facilities and services to meet the social, community, recreational and cultural requirements of the functional area, including the needs of children, the elderly and persons with disabilities;

b) the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage, including the protection of Irish as the community language of any Gaeltacht in the functional area to which the development plan relates;

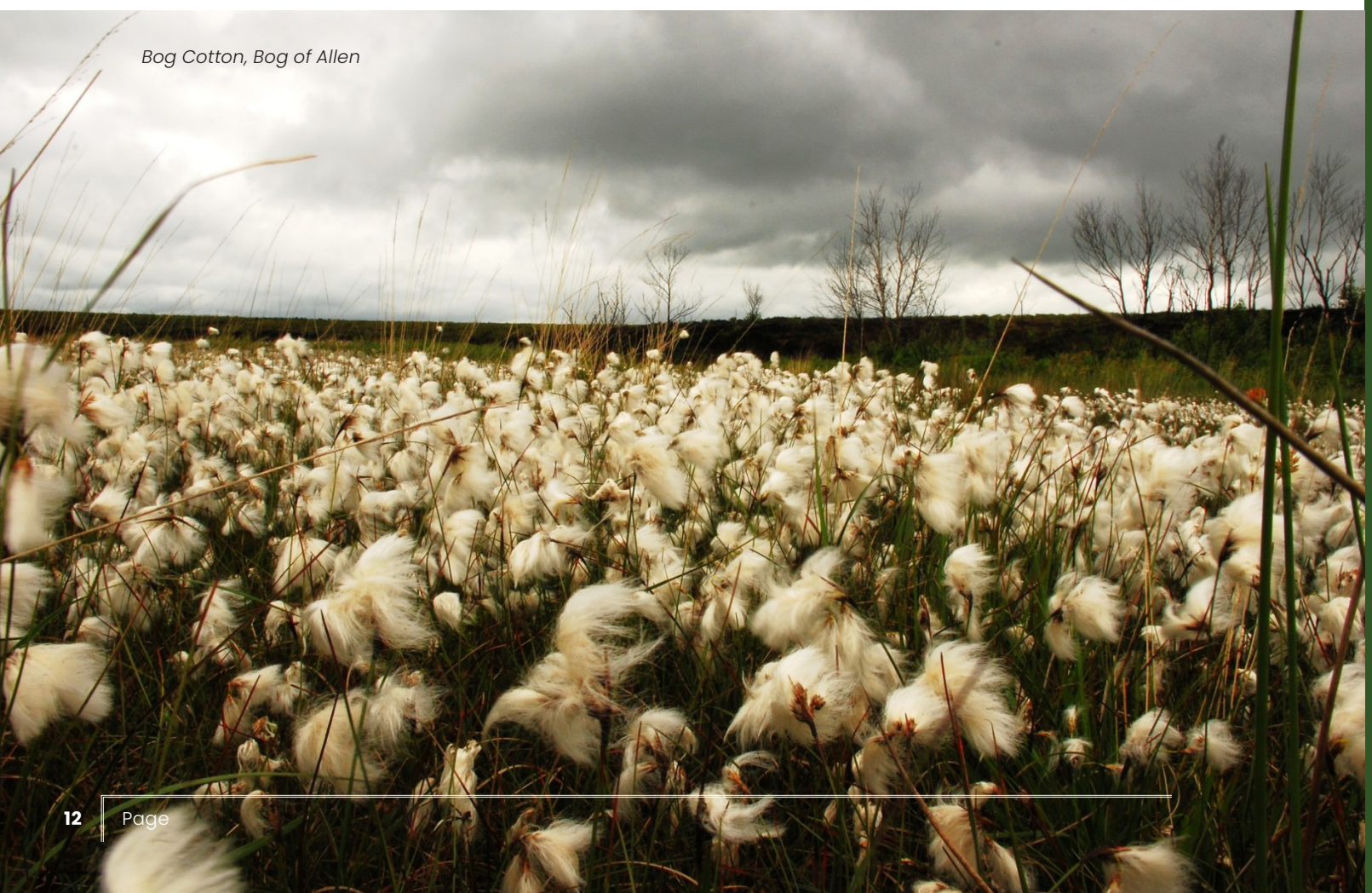
c) the promotion of high standards (including high standards in public areas) of urban design, architecture and landscaping to enhance, improve and maintain the quality and character of urban and rural areas;

d) the reservation of land use and cultivation as allotments and prescribed community gardens and the regulation, promotion, facilitation or control of the provision of land for that use;

e) such other matters as may be prescribed.

As a development strategy framework, these measures will enable heritage issues to be dealt with as core principles of development.

The delivery of projects arising from proposals identified in the Heritage Plan will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to determine the potential for likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.



Bog Cotton, Bog of Allen

4.

Preparing the Heritage Plan 2026-2031

This Heritage Plan was prepared in accordance with the Heritage Council's Guidelines for the Preparation of City/ County Heritage Plan. The membership of the Forum was renewed early in 2025 and set to work on the draft Plan. When required, additional relevant people with appropriate knowledge and expertise can be added to the Forum.



Heritage Forum at work

The public was invited to a series of five in person public information sessions and one online session to suggest issues that they would like to see addressed in the Heritage Plan. Submissions from the public were collated from the consultation portal into a summary report. A total of 22 submissions were received. A number of broad themes and issues were identified. The Heritage Forum, having considered all submissions had regard to the issues highlighted and used these as the basis of discussions which has resulted in the formulation of five strategic objectives with related actions in this County Kildare Heritage Plan (2026-2031).

The draft Plan was published in November 2025 and submissions from the public were invited. The draft was widely circulated with two public consultation events organised to engage with stakeholders on the issues. This was a useful exercise in refining the draft actions and raising broader issues. A total of 48 submissions were received as part of this process. These submissions were reviewed by Heritage Forum and a Submissions Report was completed by the Heritage Officer informed by their recommendations. This has resulted in additional policies being listed in the appendices, 3 new actions and 5 amended actions being included in the final Plan. This report was then considered by the Planning Enterprise and Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee in March 2026.

The Heritage Forum acknowledges the many organisations, individuals and agencies already working to protect and enhance heritage within the county. The Heritage Plan seeks to expand on this work by concentrating on local heritage issues and seeks to further involve local communities in caring for their local heritage.

5.

Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

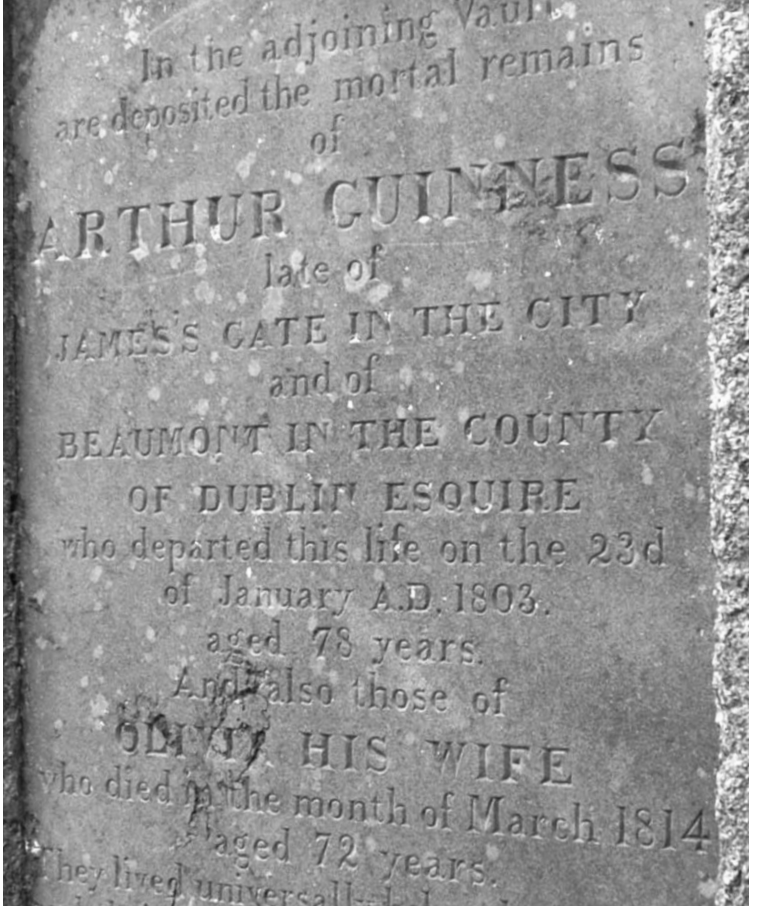
The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 requires that all plans and projects must be screened for potential significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)). Screening aims to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Directive is required.



Blackbird

Screening of the draft Heritage Plan 2026-2031 was undertaken in Summer 2025 and the findings have informed the Plan as presented. Overall, it was concluded that the plan would have no significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites and that no further assessment was necessary. Kildare Heritage Forum is committed to the implementation of the requirements of the Habitats Directive and an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the final draft of the Kildare Heritage Plan was undertaken prior to its consideration and approval by Kildare County Council. Screening of individual projects for appropriate assessment will be undertaken as required, during the implementation of the Plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme, or strategy, before a decision is made to adopt it. The SEA Directive requires that an SEA is undertaken for certain plans and programmes. Screening is the process for determining whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. Under the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004) amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011), Kildare County Council is required to determine whether the draft plan needs to be subject to SEA. Following an assessment of the final Plan, a Determination was made that the Plan does not require a full SEA. The full reports of both screening exercises are available to view on the council website.



Arthur Guinness headstone, Oughterard

6. Implementation of the Plan

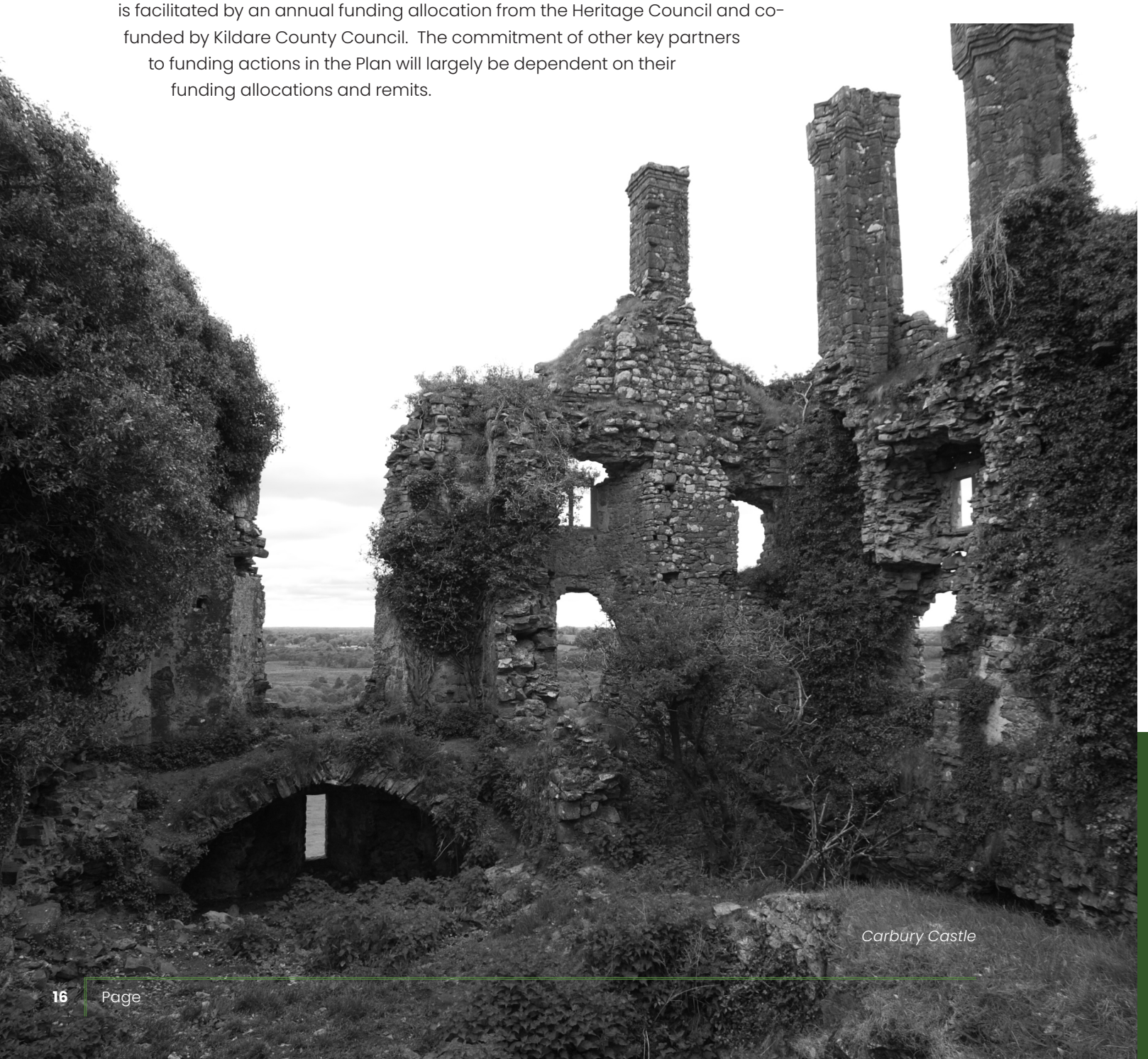
The Heritage Plan is a strategic six-year work plan which will be implemented through the Heritage section's annual work programme, with input from the Heritage Forum and co-ordinated on a day to day basis by the Heritage Officer of Kildare County Council. While the Heritage Forum, Kildare County Council and the Heritage Council are key partners in the delivery and funding of the Plan, successful implementation of the Heritage Plan is dependent on the continued active engagement, support and participation of the wider community in Kildare including heritage groups, agencies, third level institutions and individuals. Opportunities to work in cooperation with partners within and outside the county for the delivery of the Plan will be availed of wherever possible. An annual work programme will be developed based on the contents of the plan and current heritage priorities at local and national level. This will then be used to apply for funding to the Heritage Council and other sources. A mid-term report on the Heritage Plan actions undertaken and the progress made will be submitted to the members of Kildare County Council and published on the council's website.

Some events and organisations of note that contribute towards the objectives of the Plan include:

- National Heritage Week - a very popular national showcase event for heritage in the country. Now in its twentieth year, Heritage Week encourages groups and individuals to raise the profile of their heritage interest, be it a much-loved local monument, or a traditional craft or conservation projects to support wildlife and habitats by holding an event during the week.
- Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee. Kildare is one of only two counties nationally that have this committee in place. Provided for under National Monuments legislation, the Committee's role is to advise and support Kildare County Council in in looking after protected structures and sites in it's care.
- Other sections within Kildare County Council. Given that heritage covers a very wide range of issues, apart from the Heritage team directly and the wider Planning section of the council, many other sections contribute through their work to the objectives in the plan. This includes, Archives and Local Studies, the network of Kildare Libraries, the Parks section, Climate team and the Environment section as well as the five Municipal District offices.

7. Funding

Kildare County Council is committed, in partnership with other agencies and organisations, to delivering this Heritage Plan, over the next six years, as resources permit. The Council will consider the funding allocation for the delivery of the Plan in accordance with the annual budget. The Council will also support the delivery of the Plan through the work of its Heritage Officer and other professional staff. Each year a detailed work programme is drawn up from the actions in this Plan, which will be submitted to the Heritage Council and other funding bodies as appropriate. The Heritage Council has agreed, in principle, to consider the Plan as a six-year strategic funding application. The Heritage Council will consider funding actions in the Plan, consistent with normal funding criteria, which are compatible with its objectives. Delivery of the Heritage Plan is facilitated by an annual funding allocation from the Heritage Council and co-funded by Kildare County Council. The commitment of other key partners to funding actions in the Plan will largely be dependent on their funding allocations and remits.



Carbury Castle



Bluetit

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Heritage Plan sets out a series of actions to be achieved over a six-year period. The annual work programme will detail the projects to be undertaken, and the partners responsible for their delivery. The Forum will monitor the annual work programme and will meet a minimum of four times annually to review and evaluate progress. In this regard, the Heritage Officer will report to Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning Strategic Policy Committee (S.P.C.). Working groups will be convened as needed for the purposes of achieving specific actions in the work programme.

9.

Availability of Resources and Expertise

Specialist professional expertise will be sought where required and as resources permit, to implement the actions of the Heritage Plan. However, in order for the principles of heritage conservation and management to be fully integrated into the day-to-day operation of Kildare County Council, the appointment of full-time, suitably qualified additional staff in relevant areas, for example, community archaeology, would be desirable. The provision of staffing and other resources is an operational matter for Kildare County Council and is dependent on budget considerations.

It should also be noted the wealth of experience and expertise that exists in the network of groups and individuals concerned with heritage in the county and that these groups contribute significantly to the objectives of this and previous plans.


© Siobhan O'Brien



Oughterard Round Tower



Crafts Workshop, Kildare Community Garden

10.

Strategic Heritage Objectives & Actions

The aim of the Heritage Plan is "to recognise the value and opportunity of Kildare's unique heritage resource and to manage, conserve and protect it, in partnership for present and future generations".

The Heritage Forum formulated the following 57 actions to address the various issues raised in the consultation process as well as considering the objectives and actions in the current plan. These actions have been grouped under five Strategic Objectives.

STRATEGIC HERITAGE OBJECTIVE 1 **Increase understanding of Kildare's heritage through awareness, education and training:**	
1.	Support community groups, the Tidy Towns Network and NGOs in the development of community-led pilot projects supported by built heritage conservation professionals which would act as best practice conservation models.
2.	Continue to support the nomination for Dún Ailinne, Kilcullen, as a candidate for the "Royal Sites of Ireland" UNESCO World Heritage Site designation.
3.	Develop the Kildare County Council Heritage Hub- an accessible online resource for built, natural and cultural heritage matters in the county.
4.	Use available online media platforms and other new technology (such as 3D Modelling) to bring heritage to new audiences.
5.	Inform the network of heritage groups and NGOs in the county through the Public Participation Network (PPN).
6.	Continue to support the involvement of all four Kildare towns in the Irish Walled Towns Network.
7.	Resource local heritage initiatives through the Kildare County Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme.[1]
8.	Develop a rolling heritage education awareness programme based on an audit of current heritage education programmes to include seminars, walks, exhibitions and workshops and to increase participation in annual events such as Biodiversity Week, Heritage Week and Culture Night.
9.	Increase awareness of Kildare's significant military heritage, working with the Department of Defence and other stakeholders.
10.	Work in partnership with relevant agencies/organisations, local voluntary groups and the public to protect and promote waterways heritage in Kildare.
11.	Establish links with the owners of historic houses and other heritage sites to promote those open to the public during National Heritage Week.
12.	Promote and support training for relevant Citizen Science projects.[2]
13.	Explore the designation of significant trees or groups of trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders as resources allow.
14.	Continue to support the Geological Survey Ireland to identify and protect the Geological Sites of Importance in the county.
15.	Support the Landscape Character Assessment and its integration into the County Development Plan.
16.	Support the preparation of a County Kildare Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy to inform the County Development Plan.
17.	Support heritage-related actions in the Kildare County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 including: **a.** N1- Develop Green Infrastructure Plan **b.** N12- Support the Heritage in Schools programme **c.** N17-Engage with Bord na Móna to explore the appropriate and sensitive diversification of former cutaway peatlands
18.	Organise an annual/biennial heritage seminar for all interested parties to increase awareness of heritage in the county.
19.	Develop communication and promotional strategy for Kildare's heritage which maximises the existing structures, such as local and online media, community and business networks.
20.	Assess current heritage training supports for teachers and develop a strategy to raise awareness of heritage in the county.

STRATEGIC HERITAGE OBJECTIVE 2 **Promote best practice in the conservation and management of County Kildare's heritage resource:**	
21.	Assist community groups and property owners/operators to avail of funding and advice from all relevant sources for the conservation and management of heritage sites.
22.	Develop Feighcullen Woodland Creation on Public Land project subject to project level environmental assessment and to progress additional locations for similar projects across other municipal districts, where possible and feasible.
23.	Seek to leverage funding for a County Archaeologist.
24.	Collaborate with Kildare County Council Architectural Conservation Officer to prepare a Buildings at Risk Register for heritage buildings in the county.
25.	Update the County Kildare Thatched Cottage Survey and undertake a wider survey of vernacular architecture based on available data sources.
26.	Continue to update & maintain the Record of Protected Structures, ensuring that structures of significant historic, architectural, cultural, scientific and technical interest in the county are included by owners and occupiers.
27.	Support and collaborate the implementation of the County Kildare Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031.
28.	Work with all stakeholders to implement the Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan which seeks to protect and promote archaeological, cultural, natural and built heritage of this significant heritage resource. It is envisaged that the delivery of projects contained in the CPMP will require separate Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA).
29.	Facilitate traditional skills workshops in association with relevant bodies and explore feasibility of developing heritage skills training centre at county or regional level.
30.	Develop links with other Local Authorities and other public bodies to assess opportunities for potential shared heritage projects.
31.	Support preparation of a feasibility study to determine viability of developing of a County Museum.
32.	Support communities in the recording of oral histories. Where possible, compile oral histories with other relevant media such as photographs and written materials.
33.	Promote best practice in the management, conservation, and recording of historic graveyards and develop a conservation management programme for historic graveyards in the care of Kildare County Council with the County Kildare Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and graveyard maintenance groups across the county.
34.	Support delivery of objectives in County Development Plan to develop a National Peatlands Park, including identification of potential sites and development of strategy with landowners and other stakeholders.
35.	Prioritise the protection of heritage in the sustainable development of greenways, blueways and peatways in the county.
36.	Assess towns in Kildare for suitability for inclusion as Architectural Conservation Areas.

STRATEGIC HERITAGE OBJECTIVE 3: **Collate and publish heritage data and information to a wide audience, undertake surveys & research to inform policy:**	
37.	Compile a list in collaboration with Architectural Conservation Officer of all council-owned built heritage sites and develop conservation/management strategies for these structures as resources permit.
38.	Continue to promote citizen science recording projects such as the Meitheal Logainm Minor Placenames Project, National Biodiversity Data Centre and the National Benchmark Survey to expand datasets of local heritage knowledge.
39.	Publish surveys and reports prepared as actions of the Heritage Plan and deposit these along with supporting materials to the Kildare Archives and Local Studies section to ensure access for future research.
40.	Establish and maintain an archive of reports on archaeological sites and finds.
41.	Encourage appropriate access to National Monuments and publicly owned archaeological monuments in the county and facilitate partnerships to provide appropriately managed access to these sites.
42.	Advise as required on the naming of new estates in Kildare to accurately reflect the cultural heritage of the county.
43.	Support audit of natural heritage sites in the ownership of Kildare County Council and implementation of conservation/management strategies for these sites.
44.	Commission a recording project of local traditional music.
45.	Expand Heritage GIS Databases by gathering and displaying further audits on heritage in the county in conjunction with Kildare County Council GIS team.
46.	Ensure that the objectives of the Heritage Plan are incorporated into all statutory plans where appropriate.





Small Heath butterfly.

STRATEGIC HERITAGE OBJECTIVE 4 **Promote heritage as a resource that contributes to quality of life, cultural and economic development in County Kildare:**	
47.	Liaise with heritage and tourism organisations and other relevant partners to promote the development of promotional material for publicly accessible heritage sites and routes in the county.
48.	Continue to support the network of Kildare Museums and Heritage Centres.
49.	Support and provide guidance for the sensitive development of themed heritage access trails on existing established routes in the county e.g. geology, natural heritage, pilgrimages and ancient roadways, canal trails and military heritage. Possible route concepts include: • Túras Columbanus • Industrial heritage trails (including canals and peatlands) • St. Brigid's Way
50.	Consider provision of on-site information for Kildare's heritage sites through the use of technology such as QR codes or similar.
51.	Prepare an audit of existing heritage-related directional signage and seek to improve the provision and quality of directional signage. Develop design standardisation for heritage signage in the county where possible.
52.	Collate materials and publish findings relating to Kildare's sporting heritage, including the equine heritage of Kildare as "Thoroughbred Country".
53.	Support the work of Kildare's Local Studies and Archives team.
54.	Support development of a school's project based on 1930's Folklore Commission Schools Collection.
55.	Support the work of community organisations to develop the Irish language as a community language.

STRATEGIC HERITAGE OBJECTIVE 5 **Foster stewardship and involvement in heritage with the wider community of Kildare:**	
56.	Work with Creative Ireland and local arts groups to promote Kildare's cultural heritage.
57.	Promote supports for community heritage groups, including the Adopt a Monument Scheme, as well as promoting national and local grant schemes.
58.	Support existing national education programmes such as the Heritage in Schools Programme and develop a scheme to bring schools and community groups to heritage sites in the county.
59.	Promote accessible and inclusive heritage events and services.
60	Develop strategic links with third level institutions to encourage research and mapping of Kildare's heritage and other relevant projects.

Notes:

1. The Kildare County Council Community Heritage Grant is an annual small grants scheme for groups and individuals undertaking a heritage project. Successful projects must undertake an event for wither Biodiversity Week or Heritage Week as part of the project.

2. Citizen Science projects are research projects conducted with participation from the general public. This data is frequently collected centrally with the results being analysed by specialist professionals.



National Heritage Week, Leixlip Castle.

Appendix I

Membership of County Kildare Heritage Forum

Listed here are the organisations currently represented on the County Kildare Heritage Forum. In order to facilitate the development of the Kildare Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2026-2031) concurrently with this plan, a separate Biodiversity Working Group was convened by the Biodiversity Officer. The combined membership is as follows:

Kildare County Council Elected Representative	Cllr. Noel Heavey
Kildare County Council Elected Representative	Cllr. Brian O'Loughlin
Kildare County Council Elected Representative	Cllr. Claire O'Rourke
National Parks & Wildlife Services	Killian Brennan
Coillte	Niall O'Neill
BnM	Mark McCorry
Teagasc	Margaret Farrell
Kildare Branch Birdwatch Ireland	Neil Bourke
Forward Planning Kildare County Council	Daragh Maginn
Forward Planning Kildare County Council	Carol Forde
Biodiversity Officer Kildare County Council	Dr. Méabh Boylan
Forward Planning Kildare County Council	Patricia Hyland
Planning Ecologist Kildare County Council	Dr. Mary O'Connor
Kildare Public Participation Network	Denis Dennehy
Kildare Public Participation Network	Brian McCabe
National Monuments Service	Grace Fegan
Kildare Heritage Centre	Tom McCutcheon
County Archivist Kildare County Council	Karel Kiely
Archaeologist	Noel Dunne
Heritage Officer Kildare County Council	Dara Wyer

The members of the current Forum would like to acknowledge the input of all previous members of the County Kildare Heritage Forum into the Heritage Plan process.

Appendix II

Submissions received on pre-draft Heritage Plan

In addition to comments and suggestions received in person during the pre-draft consultations, 22 formal submissions were made via the consultation portal. A number of broad themes and issues were identified and these are summarised as follows:

- Importance of the Curragh and need to implement the Curragh Plains Conservation Management Plan
- Improving access to heritage data
- Ensuring sensitive development of heritage sites
- Sports and heritage
- Development of town parks
- Need to collate heritage data and make this available
- Collaboration with neighbouring local authorities on a range of projects
- Importance of industrial, cultural and natural heritage of Kildare's waterways and other historic industrial sites
- Need for a County Museum
- Increasing awareness of Kildare's musical heritage
- Development of heritage trails, including pilgrimage routes
- Importance of scientific heritage
- Uniform heritage signage/branding across the county

The summary of submissions made at the draft stage is available as a separate document online with this Plan and related documents.

Appendix III

National and EU Legislation

Heritage and Planning:

- Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and 2024
- Heritage Acts 1995 and 2018
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directives (Council Directive 2011/92) 2011 and (Council Directive 14/52EU) 2014
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (Council Directive 2001/42/EC)

Archaeological Heritage:

- National Monuments Acts 1930-2014
- Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
- National Cultural Institutions Act 1997

Architectural Heritage

- Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and 2024
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) & Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999

Appendix III continued

National and EU Legislation

Landscapes

- Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) and 2024
- Museums and Archives
- National Cultural Institutions Act 1997
- Local Government Act 2001
- National Archives Act 1986 (regulations 1988)

Natural Heritage

- Wildlife Act 1976 & Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000
- Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) 2009
- Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) 1992
- Water Framework Directive (Council Directive 2000/60/EC) 2013
- International Conventions and Agreements which Ireland has signed and ratified

Archaeology

- European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta Convention) 1997

Architecture

- European Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) 1997

Cultural and Natural Heritage

- UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (ratified 1992)

Natural Heritage

- Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 (ratified 1996)
- European Landscape Convention 2000
- Convention on the Conservation of the European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention) 1979 (ratified 1982)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) 1979 (ratified 1983)
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention) 1971 (ratified 1984)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) 1973

Landscape

- European Landscape Convention 2000 (ratified 2002).