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c/o Celbridge Community Council  
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Celbridge  
Co. Kildare  
W23 P6P5  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

## Submission on Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2021-2031

Dear Sir / Madam

As a representative voice for the community, Celbridge Community Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the County Kildare **Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2021-2031**. Celbridge Community Council was established as a voluntary community group in 1975 and has since been actively involved in many aspects of community life in Celbridge. Our goal is to promote and improve community life and to influence in a positive way the physical development of the area for the benefit of all those who live and work there.

This submission is organised under the following headings

- Public Consultation Questions
- Appraisal of our Current Assets
- Need for Open Space and Recreation Facilities in Celbridge
- Conclusion
- Appendix A: Review of Kildare Play Strategy 2018-2028

## Public Consultation Questions

In response to the questions Kildare County Council poses as part of this public consultation

- **Q: Is there an adequate quantity and quality of play, open space and recreational facilities in your area for your needs/age group? Or for your family members?**
- **A:** No, see our *Appraisal of our Current Assets*, *Established Need for Open Space & Recreation Facilities in Celbridge* and *June 2020 Survey Results* sections in this submission.
- **Q: What are County Kildare's strengths in open space and outdoor recreation? What's working well and should be protected and strengthened?**
- **A:** Focusing purely on the Celbridge area, the River Liffey, the Grand Canal and small wooded areas at Castletown House, Donaghcumper Demesne, Killadoon and trees along the banks of the Liffey. The small amounts of woodland that remain should be protected at all costs and made accessible to the public.
- **Q: What does County Kildare lack? What needs fixing and how might it be fixed?**
- **A:** Again focusing on Celbridge, the level of provision of play facilities is very poor for a town with almost 22,000 residents. While there is some play equipment for young children, there are a number of issues with these as outlined in the *Appraisal of our Current Assets* section in this



submission. Teenagers have no outdoor recreational facilities targeted at their age group. See the *Established Need for Open Space & Recreation Facilities in Celbridge* and *June 2020 Survey Results* sections of this submission.

Open space provision in tandem with new development should be planned from the start. Clearly spotting a need for open space provision to the west of Celbridge, Kildare County Council's Draft LAP for Celbridge proposed delivery of a neighbourhood park in conjunction with the development of the Oldtown KDA. There was an objective in the Draft LAP to include a multi-use games area. The quantum of housing to be delivered in the Oldtown KDA was reduced in the adopted LAP and, with this reduction, the proposal to provide a neighbourhood park was removed. Given the deficits in open space provision to the west and south of the town, provision of open space must be explicitly prioritised in development plans and the Open Space and Recreation Strategy in close alignment with the standards for open space provision outlined in the 2011 strategy. The goals should be for residents in sizeable towns to have access to a neighbourhood park within a maximum of 15 minutes walk of home for but ideally within 10 minutes for a large proportion of the population. So long as the only provision of open space is the 15% that developers are required to provide in tandem with development, deficits in open space provision in towns like Celbridge will never be redressed. It is essential that specific initiatives be taken for Celbridge.

- **Q: Where are the opportunities to improve open space and outdoor recreation facilities in your area? Or around the County?**
- **A:** Since the gap to be redressed is so big and since each of the nine locations under consideration for youth facilities comes with a list of issues (including peripheral location of sites relative to the population, challenges accessing sites, lack of passive surveillance, etc.), identifying opportunities in Celbridge is not easy.

Residents in many housing estates are likely to resist suggestions to provide facilities in their housing estates for young people for fear of anti-social behaviour yet, in the absence of busy retail areas like where the skate park in Newbridge is located, residential areas are the best chance of providing passive surveillance in Celbridge.

There is no truer saying than "build it and they will come" when it comes to provision of recreational facilities and it is likely that anything Kildare County Council can provide for Celbridge will be embraced by large bodies of the population.

Parts of town where residents cannot currently access open space within a 15 minute walk should be prioritised for the provision of recreational facilities rather than investing in locations that do not serve that many people. Passive surveillance is also essential where facilities for children and young people are to be provided. Other uses of open spaces such as community gardens could be located in less supervised locations.



		Pop. w/in 15 mins	Pop. w/in 20 mins	Owner- ship	Access	Passive Surveillance	Issues
1	Hazelhatch Road (8,000 sq. m)	4692	6856	KCC	Possible from R405	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhead wires</li> <li>Drainage issues</li> </ul>
2	Ardclough Road (6,000 sq. m)	2651	5601	Private	Limited	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor sightlines on bend</li> <li>Residents' objections</li> </ul>
3	Crodaun West CDC SHD (9,000 sq. m)	2092* +2,100	5566* +2,100	Private	On foot & by bike	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not the area of town most in need of recreational facilities</li> </ul>
4	Crodaun East Ardstone SHD (40,000 sq. m)	910* +2,100	4039* +2,100	KCC <sup>§</sup>	Through Estate – no access from R449	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not the area of town most in need of recreational facilities</li> </ul>
5	Castletown House	3118	5748	OPW	On foot & by bike	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservation</li> </ul>
6	Castletown Woods (90,000 sq. m)	3571	7236	KCC	Through Estate	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic Landscape</li> <li>Anti-Social Behaviour - Residents' objections</li> </ul>
7	Donaghcumper Lands (110,000 sq. m)	9424	15627	KCC	Land-Locked	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surrounded by privately owned land – pressure to develop</li> </ul>
8	Abbey Farm (48,000 sq. m)	1961	3439	???	Through Estate – no access from R403	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No access from R403</li> <li>Residents' objections</li> </ul>
9	St. Raphael's Manor (5,000 sq. m)	6305	9712*	???	Through Estate	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overhead wires</li> <li>Residents' objections</li> </ul>

\* Population in catchment area will increase once Strategic Housing Developments completed

§ Anticipating that developer will cede lands to Kildare County Council

- **Q: How do you think the Strategy can provide for good connectivity for recreational walking and cycling purposes?**

**A:** Permeability, safe cycle tracks and walkways are essential to facilitate journeys to the places people need to go (schools, both existing open space areas and new ones – parks, greenways, canals, woodlands and rivers). Ideally cycle tracks would be separated from roads thereby making them safer, more direct and more pleasant to travel on. Pedestrian/ cycling bridges for crossing the Liffey both upstream and downstream of the narrow 200+ year old bridge.



- **Q: How can natural resources and biodiversity be protected whilst facilitating recreational uses?**  
**A:** Focus on natural play areas, protect existing and plant new trees and hedges
- **Q: Has the COVID 19 Pandemic changed the role of open space for the future? If so, how?**  
**A:** It is likely that significant numbers of those who have been working from home since March will continue to do so even after COVID becomes less of a threat. This means that people who may have exercised in parks close to their workplaces would now be looking to do this in their home towns so facilities must be provided for them. People will get used to meeting outdoors. Provision of sheltered areas and WiFi will be important.
- **Q: What are your ideas for open space in your local area?**
- **A:** Everything... Celbridge has so little that it simply needs everything that a town of almost 22,000 people should have. Everything from play facilities for teenagers, for older people and for children to a dog park to community gardens to free to use ball courts, etc. Look at Griffeen Valley Park, St. Catherine's Park, Trim playground, Blanchardstown, etc..



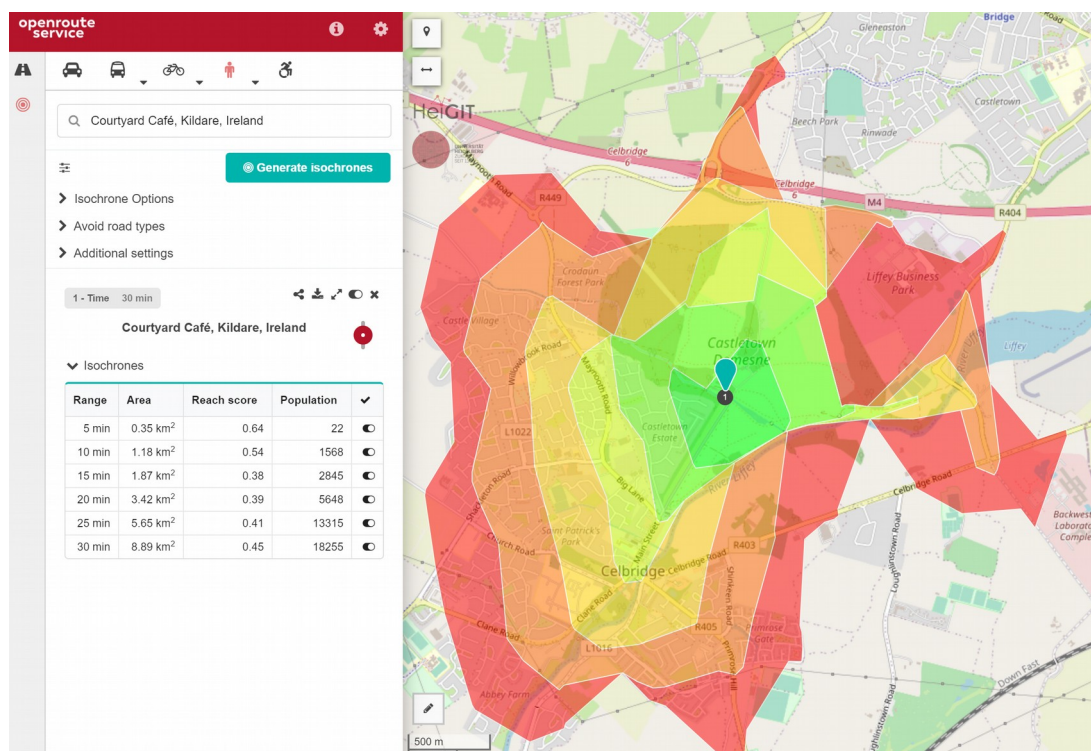
## Appraisal of our Current Assets

### Castletown House and Parklands

Residents of Celbridge acknowledge the amazing open space and outdoor recreation asset that we have in Castletown House and Parklands to the east of Celbridge, yet feel that the existence of this country park detracts from progress being made towards meeting the wider open space and recreation needs of the community.

The grounds of Castletown do not and are unlikely ever to *fully* meet the needs of the people of Celbridge for a number of reasons, most notably:

- It is an OPW owned site and the OPW has shown no enthusiasm to install the types of recreational facilities that residents are calling for (playground open to the public, skate park, ball courts, adult exercise equipment, etc.)
- It is too far away for the majority of the town's residents to access by active modes of transport - when restricted to only travelling within 2km of home due to COVID restrictions last spring, the grounds of Castletown fell outside this limit for people living to the west and south of Celbridge and these residents could only really walk around their own housing estates. Thankfully, the new limit is 5km but, due to the absence of cycling infrastructure to get there, it cannot be safely accessed using active modes of transport. This is especially the case for families travelling with young children.



Isochrones showing that < 15% of the town's population can walk to Castletown within 15 minutes (green and yellow) and only 25-30% of the town's population can walk to Castletown within 20 minutes





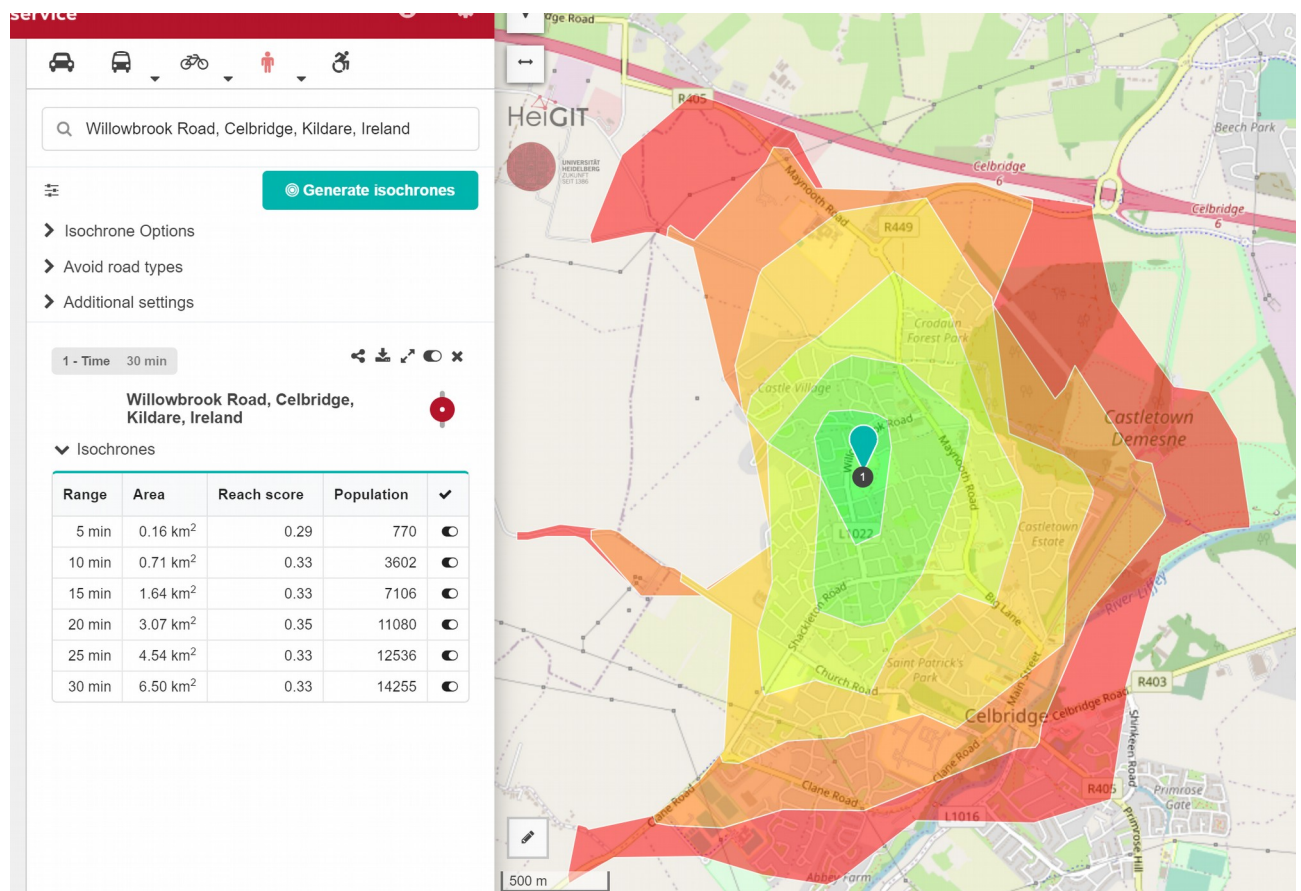
- The amount of legal parking in the village close to the gates of Castletown House is inadequate. An additional 4.8km journey to the car park at the other side of Castletown House via the M4 interchange is not an environmentally judicious course of action.

## Willowbrook Park

Willowbrook Park has Celbridge's only playground on Kildare County Council owned lands. It is a small playground and the equipment is primarily suited to younger children. The lack of provision for teens has a knock on effect as young people continue to use the playground as a hangout space after they outgrow the equipment. This can prevent younger children from using the equipment and can be intimidating for parents with young children. While the intimidation is for the most part unintended, it is an unfortunate reality.

Residents in the vicinity who have witnessed anti-social behaviour resist further development of facilities at this location and some even call for the playground to be completely removed.

While more central than Castletown, Willowbrook Park is still a long distance from some parts of town. It's a 25-30 minute walk from Clane Road estates and 30 minutes and more from the Hazelhatch Road area.



**Isochrones showing that about a 1/3 of the town's population can walk to Willowbrook Park within 15 minutes (green and yellow) and about 1/2 of the town's population can walk to Willowbrook Park within 20 minutes**



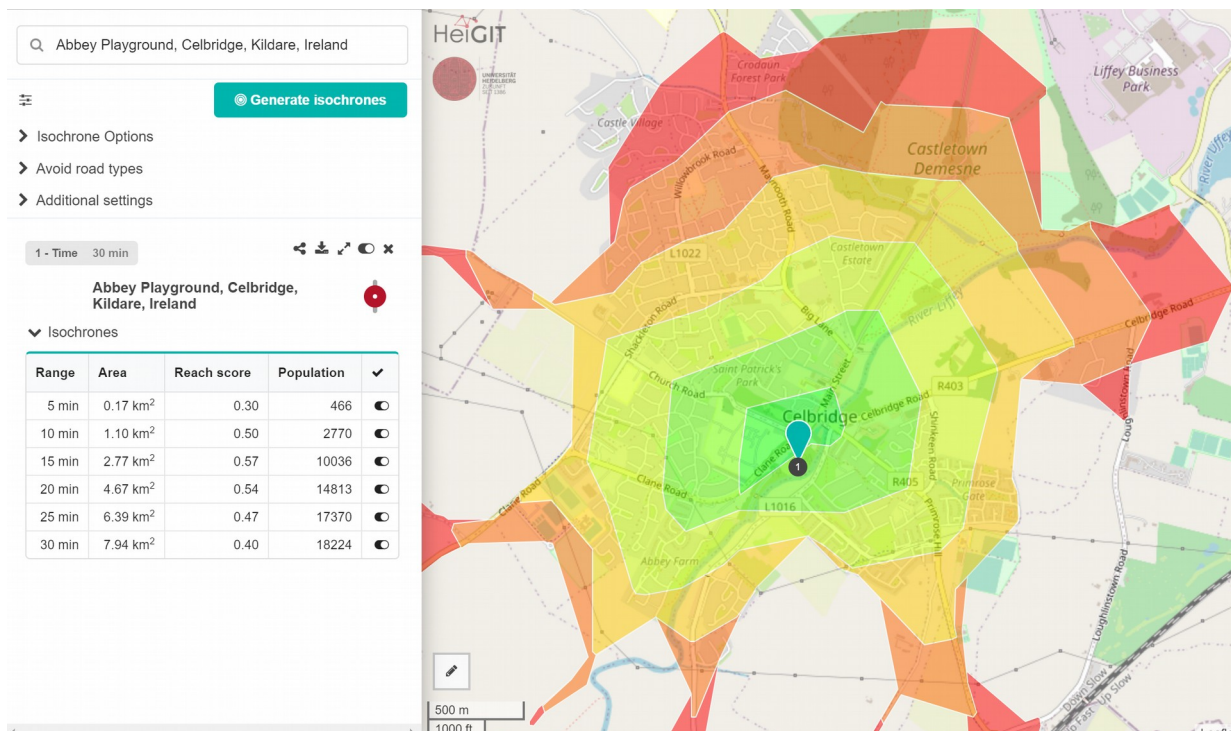
## Celbridge Abbey Playground

While there is theoretically a playground in the grounds of Celbridge Abbey, the grounds are privately owned by St John of God's and there has been a long-running issue pre-dating COVID in that the playground was rarely open even when it was supposed to be. The playground in Celbridge Abbey had extremely restrictive opening hours (the closing time is advertised as being 4pm Mondays to Thursdays and 3pm on Fridays) which mostly just suited children of pre-school age and worse still, it was rarely if ever open when it was supposed to be.

The playground has been permanently closed since March as St John of God's clients use the grounds of Celbridge Abbey for exercise. While the community understands that we must protect vulnerable people in our community, the issues pre-date COVID-19 by a long time. After repeatedly disappointing their children on finding the playground closed when it was supposed to be open, many parents have reported to us that they have had to give up on it.

Given its prime location at the heart of the town within 15 minutes walk of almost half the town's population and within 20 minutes walk of 70% of the town's population, it is devastating for many that this playground is unavailable for use. It must also be hugely disappointing for Kildare County Council after investing in the refurbishment of the playground.

It is unacceptable that this playground is counted as a playground for the population of Celbridge when it has been unavailable for use for quite some time.



**Isochrones showing that almost 1/2 of the town's population could walk to the Celbridge Abbey Playground within 15 minutes (green and yellow) and 70% of the town's population could walk to the Celbridge Abbey Playground within 20 minutes... if only it was open when needed**



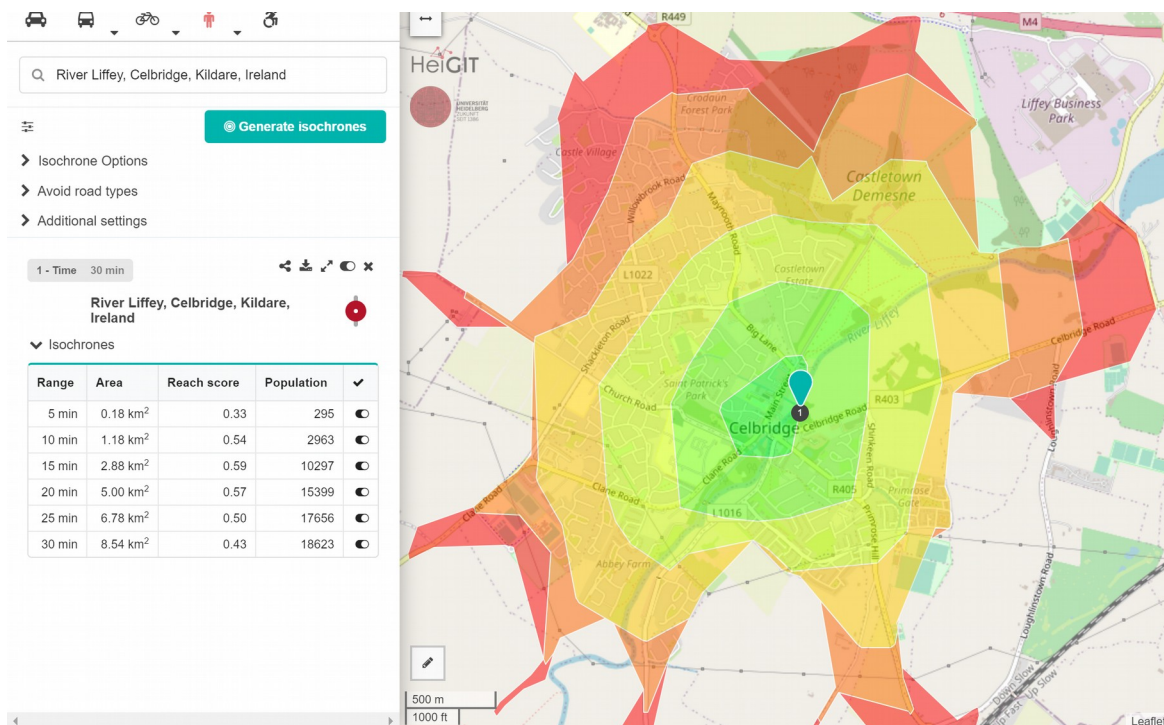
## River Liffey

The River Liffey has the potential to be a far more significant amenity for residents of Celbridge and to breathe vitality into the heart of the town, if only it wasn't surrounded by privately owned lands.

The only locations where the public can walk along the banks of the Liffey are in the grounds of Castletown House and in Abbey Farm housing estate. The South-West to North-East 1km stretch of the Liffey in the town centre from Celbridge Abbey Nurseries beside the Texaco Spar on the Clane Road to the gates of Castletown (via the grounds of Celbridge Abbey, The Mill and along the Main St backlands) is all in private ownership.

The [2006 Liffey Valley Strategy "Towards a Liffey Valley Park"](#) needs to be resurrected. This strategy concentrated on actions to create a Liffey Valley Park between Islandbridge and Celbridge, including recommendations for the development of a riverside park in Celbridge. Every opportunity should be taken to obtain land along the banks of the Liffey and to make the Kildare County Council owned lands in Donaghcumper Demesne accessible to the public for purely recreational purposes; access to these lands cannot be dependant on development of the grounds of Donaghcumper Demesne for residential and/ or commercial purposes.

The Kildare County Council owned lands in Donaghcumper Demesne are even more centrally located for the town's population than Celbridge Abbey Playground. About half of the population could walk to it within 15 minutes and over 73% of the population could walk to it within 20 minutes.



**Isochrones showing that almost 1/2 of the town's population could walk to the Celbridge Abbey Playground within 15 minutes (green and yellow) and 70% of the town's population could walk to the Celbridge Abbey Playground within 20 minutes... if only it was open when needed**



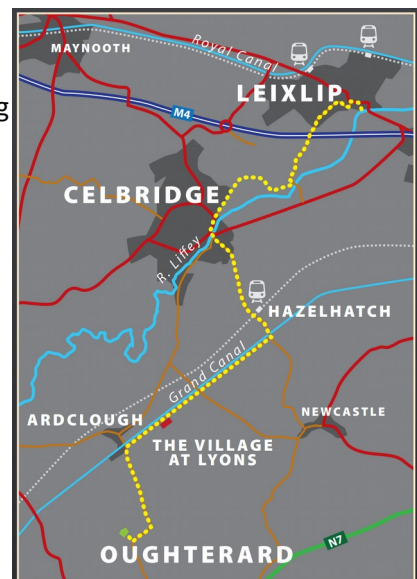


## Grand Canal

The Grand Canal flows 2.7km South-East of Celbridge town centre. The canal offers great potential for recreational use for residents of Counties Kildare, Dublin and well beyond.

A 4.6km stretch along the banks of the Grand Canal from the 12th Lock, Lucan to Hazelhatch traverses the County Kildare border. It is a muddy and grassy canal bank for much of the year. It is impassable except for single-file walkers. South Dublin County Council is taking the lead on this in agreement with Kildare County Council yet, while the proposals went to Part 8 consultation and were subsequently approved, funding has not been allocated for the project. Completion of this stretch of the Grand Canal Greenway truly would be the 'missing piece in the jigsaw' and would open up both a very direct and safe cycling commuter route into Dublin city addition to opening up tourism possibilities. Completing this small section of the Grand Canal Greenway is crucial for attracting cycling tourists into other areas of Co. Kildare, linking up with the Barrow, South-East Greenway & the Waterford Greenway.

Part of the Arthur's Way Heritage Trail (shown in this map in yellow) runs along the Grand Canal Greenway between Hazelhatch and Ardclough. However, the R405 (Hazelhatch Road) lacks a safe & accessible route from Celbridge to the Grand Canal. At present, the footpath ends close to the Dublin county boundary, leaving walkers on a busy road and there are no cycle tracks other than on a short stretch between Celbridge GAA and Hazelhatch Train Station. Quality cycling infrastructure should be prioritised for this location to allow residents maximise the benefits from the Grand Canal Greenway.





## Need for Open Space & Recreation Facilities in Celbridge

### Celbridge Community Council Survey Findings (June 2020 )

Celbridge Community Council conducted a survey in June 2020 relating to physical and social infrastructure in Celbridge which attracted over 700 responses. The findings from the survey in relation to Recreational Spaces & Amenities were as follows:

- Residents overwhelmingly recognise the lack of free to use outdoor spaces for our young people (outside of sporting clubs, paid activities, etc.)
- Residents feel that the existing playgrounds for children are inadequate
  - unless you live within walking distance of Willowbrook Park, there is no other option as the playground in Celbridge Abbey is accessed through private grounds which are rarely open to allow the public through
  - many travel outside of Celbridge to access playgrounds
- Many highlighted the lack of green spaces / parks / recreational spaces other than the grounds of the OPW owned Castletown House. Residents are crying out for recreational facilities that the OPW will never provide on OPW owned lands so public parks with facilities on a par with those provided in parks elsewhere in the country are essential. Additionally, Castletown House is difficult to access from the west and south of Celbridge for families with young children because the journey to it is unsafe for cycling with children and the distance is too far to walk.
- While we have some good sports grounds / pitches in Celbridge, they are poorly located for many so give rise to significant access issues
- Places in sporting and non-sporting clubs and activities can be difficult to source with long waiting lists

An optional open question gave participants the opportunity to tell us what mattered to them in their own words. 318 points were made in response to the open question and 208 of these related to outdoors space and recreation.

Outdoor Playspaces	Hangout / Playspace for Young People	71
Outdoor Playspaces	Children's Playground	46
Indoor Facilities	Swimming Pool	44
Green Spaces & Parks	Green Spaces at Locations other than Castletown	30
Outdoor Playspaces	Public Ball Courts (Basketball, Squash, Tennis) / Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)	19
Outdoor Playspaces	Skate Park	15
Indoor Facilities	Public Sports / Leisure / Amenities Centre	14
Indoor Facilities	Multi-Purpose Community Facility	13
Access to Clubs / Amenities	Too far (traffic congestion &/or parking issues)	12
Arts & Culture	Performing Arts Space	11
Outdoor Playspaces	Public Playing Fields / Pitches	10
Entertainment	Cinema	7
Outdoor Playspaces	Outdoor Gym Equipment	7
Arts & Culture	Exhibition Space	6
Green Spaces & Parks	Dog Park	4
Outdoor Playspaces	Bike Park / BMX Track	4



Access to Clubs / Amenities	Long Waiting Lists	3
Outdoor Playspaces	Running track	2
		<b>318</b>

The relative importance of the 208 items relating to outdoor space and recreation are illustrated in the following chart.





## Celbridge Integrated Services Plan 2016-2020

The demographic profile of Co. Kildare indicates a very clear need for amenities targeted at young people. This assertion is supported by research for the [Celbridge ISP 2016-2020](#) report which observed as follows regarding amenities and services for young people:

- A number of organisations that provide amenities and services to young people (including the GAA, scouts, soccer and library book clubs) are operating to full capacity and are experiencing challenges in including new members.
- Cost is an issue in attending a number of youth activities and there are very few free or low cost fun facilities for young people apart from sports.
- Lack of youth services and engagement is translating into a disaffected youthful population.
- There are no outdoor amenities in Celbridge aimed at teenagers which results in a lot of young people 'hanging around'.
- Based on the population size, there is a significant need for a single large (all ages) playground or a spread of smaller playgrounds around the town. In particular play and recreation areas targeting pre-teens/ teens need to be considered.

Unfortunately, the following Celbridge ISP 2016-2020 objectives have not been realised to date:

- to *"extend youth provision through the expansion of services and recreation facilities for young people in Celbridge"*.
- to *"develop existing and new play space targeting pre-teens/ teens"*

## Conclusion

There is a clear consensus on the open space and recreation deficits in our town – this is documented in Celbridge Community Council's June 2020 survey, in the Celbridge ISP report and in reports from numerous surveys/ research carried out by others (e.g. Town Health Check survey). The community knows what it wants and there is huge enthusiasm amongst residents to have open space and recreational facilities available in our town. Equally though, residents are frustrated by the compilation of strategy after strategy coupled with lack of action. Celbridge Community Council recently reviewed the Kildare Play Strategy 2018 and observed that there has been little progress on the strategy for Celbridge – see Appendix A for this review.

The community of Celbridge is ready for action and would welcome the opportunity to engage with Kildare County Council to discover ways to move forward. The Open Space and Recreation Strategy needs to be the foundation for action. Action cannot happen without effective engagement or funding. The strategy must outline funding will be allocated for open space and recreation projects and how Kildare County Council will work effectively with the community.

We trust that the points raised by Celbridge Community Council will be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Liam O'Dwyer  
Secretary

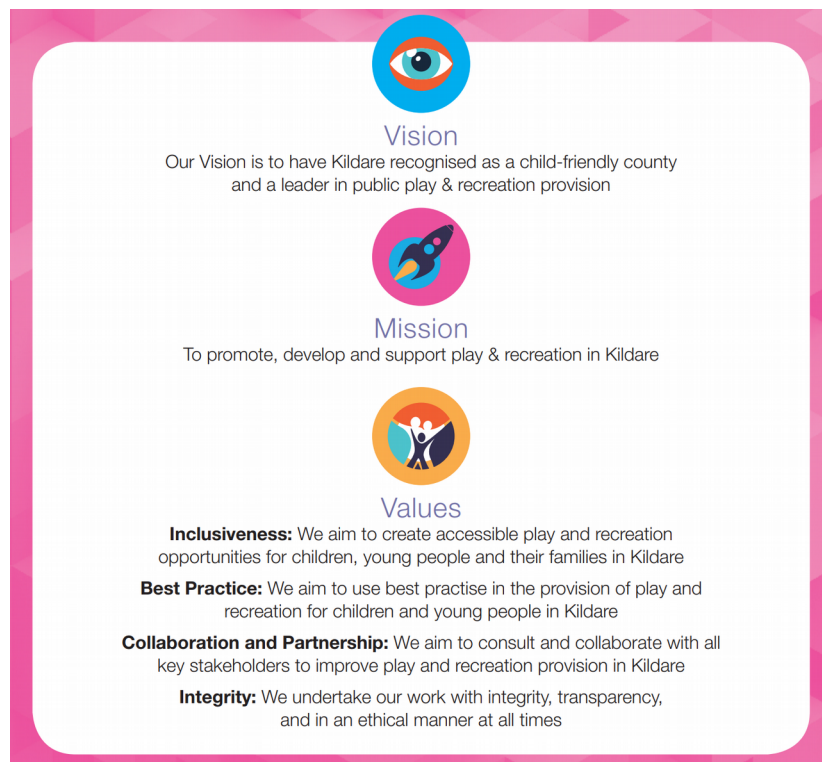




## Appendix A: Review of Kildare County Council's Kildare Play Strategy 2018-2028

This document reviews the Kildare Play Strategy 2018-2028 from the perspective of Celbridge.

The Vision, Mission & Values are as follows:



- Regarding the **vision**, residents of Celbridge do not perceive our town to be child-friendly nor do they consider Kildare County Council to be a leader in public play & recreation provision. Families frequently have to travel out of town to facilities in neighbouring towns and observe far superior facilities provided by South Dublin County Council, Meath County Council and Fingal County Council.
- Regarding the **values of Collaboration and Partnership and Integrity**, the residents have not been consulted in any meaningful manner until the current Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy. There is an air of weariness amongst residents of Celbridge because the current Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy is for the whole county yet it has been beyond obvious that action is needed in Celbridge for many years. Residents are tired of strategies and talk about talk when action is long overdue. Action seems to be able to happen in other towns without being supported by countywide strategies. Celbridge residents wish to be consulted by people who are ready and able to take action to meet the needs of our town.



**Objective 1.2 “To promote play and recreation in Kildare”** has action items that are challenging for Celbridge

- **“Provide information on the Council website on existing playgrounds around the county”**
  - While a [list of parks](#) was published on KCC’s website, information on the playgrounds was not been provided.

**List of Parks in Kildare**

Park Name	Town	Address
People's Park, <a href="#">Athy</a>	<a href="#">Athy</a>	Church Road, <a href="#">Athy</a> , Co. Kildare, Ireland
Woodstock Castle	<a href="#">Athy</a>	Castle Park, <a href="#">Athy</a> , Co. Kildare
The Fairgreen, <a href="#">Castledermot</a>	<a href="#">Castledermot</a>	<a href="#">Keenan's Lane</a>
<a href="#">Willowbrook Park</a>	<a href="#">Celbridge</a>	<a href="#">Beside Willowbrook Estate, Celbridge</a>
<a href="#">Bawnogues</a>	<a href="#">Kilcock</a>	Commons West, <a href="#">Kilcock</a> , Co. Kildare
<a href="#">Rye River Walk, Leixlip</a>	<a href="#">Leixlip</a>	Extends from Rye Bridge to Louisa Valley Estate
William <a href="#">Roantree</a> Park	<a href="#">Leixlip</a>	along the river bank behind the Courtyard Hotel, <a href="#">Leixlip</a>
The Wonderful Barn, <a href="#">Leixlip</a>	<a href="#">Leixlip</a>	<a href="#">Barnhall, Leixlip</a>
St. Catherine's Park, <a href="#">Leixlip</a>	<a href="#">Leixlip</a>	Vehicular entrance beside Fire Station
Carton Avenue	<a href="#">Maynooth</a>	Carton Avenue from Main Street to Carton Demesne, <a href="#">Maynooth</a>
Harbour Field, <a href="#">Maynooth</a>	<a href="#">Maynooth</a>	<a href="#">Leinster Street, Maynooth, Co. Kildare</a>
Pound Park, <a href="#">Maynooth</a>	<a href="#">Maynooth</a>	<a href="#">Pound Lane, Maynooth, Co. Kildare</a>
<a href="#">Moone</a> Pocket Park	<a href="#">Moone</a>	<a href="#">Moone, Co. Kildare, Ireland (Opposite Church)</a>
Riverside Park	<a href="#">Monasterevin</a>	Between the canal, Barrow and Railway Bridge
Wildlife Garden	<a href="#">Monasterevin</a>	Beside the Fire Station
The Lakes, <a href="#">Naas</a>	<a href="#">Naas</a>	Beside the hospital
Monread Park, <a href="#">Naas</a>	<a href="#">Naas</a>	<a href="#">Monread Avenue, Naas, Co. Kildare</a>
<a href="#">Liffey</a> Linear Park, <a href="#">Newbridge</a>	<a href="#">Newbridge</a>	<a href="#">Athgarvan Road, Newbridge, Co. Kildare</a>
Lakeside, Highfield and Dara Park Open Space ( <a href="#">LHD</a> )	<a href="#">Newbridge</a>	At Newbridge Family Resource Centre, Dara Park, Newbridge

- The KCC has spent money on [two playgrounds in Celbridge](#) but the residents are not benefiting fully from the investment for the following reasons:
  - The playground in the grounds of Celbridge Abbey/ St John of Gods re-opened to the public in May 2015 but has remained closed to the public since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; some of the St John of Gods service users who are vulnerable users are using the grounds for exercise rather than exercising outside of the grounds. However, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the playground at Celbridge Abbey had overly restrictive opening times. It opened for a time on Saturdays in 2016 but reverted to weekdays only closing at 4pm Monday-Thursday and 3pm on Friday. Not only were the hours overly restrictive (suited mostly to preschool children) but the playground was regularly closed during hours when it was supposed to be open and there was no way of knowing this without travelling to Celbridge Abbey so people stopped expecting it to be open.
  - The playground in Willowbrook Park is considered by many to be unsuitable for their children due to the number of older children who use it as a hangout area.
- **“Continue to develop outdoor play and recreation facilities in our libraries”**
  - While at a prime location in the town centre, Celbridge library is very small and does not have any outdoor space associated with it.



**Objective 1.3 “To research how and by whom existing play spaces and playgrounds are used, to inform the future design of play spaces in Kildare”** has an action item that indicates shared responsibility between KCC and local communities

- **“Survey existing playgrounds to identify trends in use”**
  - KCC has not engaged with local communities on this matter.
  - As a representative body for the community, Celbridge Community Council would be delighted to assist KCC with this

**Objective 1.5 “To ensure that parents, children, young people and the wider community are consulted on an on-going basis in the planning, development & use of play and recreation amenities”** has action items relating to a user-friendly consultation process & tools for consulting with children & young people yet we haven’t seen any of this and we you are now conducting a public consultation for an Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy

- **“Develop a user-friendly consultation process & tools for use by Kildare County Council staff in consulting with children & young people.”**
- **“Train Kildare County Council staff & relevant others in consultation process & tools.”**
- **“Make parents, children, young people and the wider community aware of the system & process for inputting into the planning & development of new play & recreation amenities, including those in housing developments and public spaces.”**
- **“Act as an information hub and support service for communities setting up playgrounds.”**

**Objective 2.5 “Ensure that the built environment is child friendly and accessible for children”** has an action item that stands out very prominently for Celbridge

- **“Develop cycle lanes to facilitate easier access to play and recreational opportunities for children and allow for independent mobility”**
  - Only certain stretches of road in Celbridge have cycling infrastructure that facilitate safe cycling
    - The problem areas without any cycling infrastructure are:
      - the 1km long Aghards Road
      - the 1km long Tea Lane/ Church Road
      - the 1.5km stretch of the Clane Road between the bridge and the junction with the Shackleton Road
      - the 1.2km stretch of the Hazelhatch Road between the bridge and the GAA
      - the 400m stretch of Big Lane/ Maynooth Road between Castletown Gates and the point where the paint on road cycle lane begins at Colourtrend
      - the 350m long Main St
    - The paint on road cycle lanes are also a problem as there is no segregation from vehicular traffic and, for the most part, there is insufficient space for both cyclists and vehicles and would be impossible for motorists to pass a cyclist giving enough space for unexpected swerves, etc.:
      - the 500m stretch of the Shackleton Road between the Maynooth Road (Tesco) and the junction with the Aghard’s Road where a cycle lane is painted in the road
      - the 1km stretch of the Maynooth Road between where the paint on road cycle lane begins at Colourtrend and where the cycle lane becomes raised at Henry Grattan’s (north of Aldi)



- Children and teenagers cycle on footpaths, some of which are particularly narrow
- Teenagers begin cycling on footpaths as children and don't make the transition to cycling on the road for safety reasons
- Parents and children from households without an available car have to walk long distances because they feel unsafe cycling
- Parents from households with a car use the car rather than bikes for distances that children should easily be able to cycle and this has significant consequences in terms of traffic congestion and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

**Objective 2.6 "To develop appropriate play and recreation spaces for older young people (teens) in which they feel welcome and safe"** has an action item that sounds perfect for Celbridge

- **"Taking account of the research findings, develop a pilot project in the county in relation to play & recreation spaces for teens."**
  - As the largest town in Co. Kildare without any provision for play and recreation spaces for teens, the proposed pilot project should be in Celbridge.

**Objective 4.1 "To provide natural open spaces and opportunities for children and young people within the county to play and socialise"** has some action items of particular note for Celbridge

- **"Develop natural play areas in close proximity to woodlands, rivers, grassland and canals."**
  - Celbridge has all of these in close proximity though the amount of land in private ownership along the banks of the River Liffey means that residents are unable to access the river anywhere other than in Castletown Demesne and in Abbey Farm housing estate
  - The woodlands adjoining Castletown and Crodaun Forest Park housing estates are renowned for anti-social behaviour and do not benefit from passive surveillance
- **"Promote & develop outdoor classrooms where feasible with the appropriate educational material for use within them. "**
  - This is a particularly interesting action item in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and should be explored further.

**Objective 5.1 "To develop and continue partnerships with other state and semi-state organisations with a remit for children, young people play and recreation"** is particularly important for Celbridge given the prominence of the OPW owned Castletown House & Demesne

- **"Investigate the feasibility of developing play and recreation facilities and opportunities around forests and canals and other public amenities owned by other public bodies such as Waterways Ireland, Coillte, OPW and the Department of Defence."**
  - Residents of Celbridge feel that the OPW is not open to development of facilities in the grounds of Castletown Demesne and would benefit from transparency in relation to this.
- **"Seek the input of the Youth Officer for Kildare into the development of play in the county."**
  - Is the Youth Officer referred to here in KWETB? (KCC/KWETB jointly responsible)
  - A youth area profile and needs assessment was completed for many towns in Co. Kildare in 2019 but Celbridge and Maynooth were noticeable omitted because there is no existing provision for young people in either town. Towns without provision for young people must be prioritised for identification of gaps which will form the basis for service provision – instead they were completely omitted!





- UBU Your Place Your Space funding is linked to the 2019 needs assessment so Celbridge will be ineligible for this

**Objective 5.2 “Continue to develop partnerships with communities throughout Kildare”** has an action item to

- **“Promote and support community involvement in the location, design and management of existing and new play facilities and spaces.”**
  - While play facilities have long been discussed for Celbridge, engagement with the community has yet to happen on this.