

Laois Heritage Plan 2020 – 2025

Consultation with young people | Information Pack

We are writing a new Heritage Plan for County Laois and we'd like your help! We want the new plan to include the views of children and young people: what you'd like to see protected, what information you think should be gathered, and what kind of events you'd like to attend.

What do we mean by Heritage?

Heritage is a word that can mean lots of different things to different people. It can mean things from the past or present that we value, and want to protect for future generations. In Ireland we have the Heritage Council working to protect all parts of our heritage, and they include wildlife, landscapes, archaeology, architecture, museums, artefacts, our inland waterways, coasts and seascapes. Many people also include traditional music and dance, the Irish language, crafts, traditional skills like thatching, history, folktales and genealogy.

So what is a Heritage Plan?

A County Heritage Plan celebrates the best of a county's heritage and lays out what the community will do to protect, conserve and raise awareness of that heritage in the next five years. The plan contains **Objectives**, which say in broad terms what we hope to do, and under each objective we have **Actions**, these are the detailed projects that we will take on each year. We'd like your help in suggesting objectives and actions that are relevant for young people for the new plan.

What have we done already

Here are just some of the projects we have worked on in the last five years. Most of the work was done in partnership with other groups, and with funding from the Heritage Council.

- We brought the School of Irish Archaeology to the Timahoe Heritage Festival, with their Big Dig archaeology and Viking coin making for kids.
- We published a guide for communities on how to look after swifts, a book on the maps of Laois and a guide to the archaeology of the Great Heath
- We worked to look after the walls of the Old Fort in Portlaoise, which are almost 500 years old, and we installed a new park at Fitzmaurice Place.
- We created radio ads all about bees and how important pollinators are, and had them broadcast on Midlands 103
- We organised stonemasons to look after medieval church ruins in Killabban Church, Kilteale Church and Kilmanman Church.



- We started work on a guide to helping wildlife in your garden
- We surveyed Swifts in Laois, with the help of BirdWatch Ireland, and put up Swift nest boxes.
- We published a Passport to Laois, to encourage young people and families to visit heritage sites.
- We helped the community of Ballyroan to put a new roof on Ballyroan Schoolhouse.
- We remembered the contribution of important Laois people like patriot and writer James Fintan Lalor, railway engineer William Dargan, pilot James Fitzmaurice and scientist Thomas Prior.
- We are working on projects to make sure the role of women is remembered too, with projects on County Librarian Helen Roe and educator Ann Jellicoe
- We surveyed the important geological sites of Laois, with help from the Geological Survey of Ireland.
- Each year we help communities celebrate their local heritage during Heritage Week, with events for young people, adults and families.
- We recorded audio guides to heritage sites in Laois in lots of different languages, for Irish people and visitors to Ireland.
- We saved the dining hall of Donaghmore Workhouse from falling down and helped the local committee open it to the public as part of their museum.

Where do you come in?

We'd love to hear your views on what the next Heritage Plan for the county should include. If you'd like to take part, fill in the consultation form, or just write us a note on what you think we should focus on, to make the Heritage Plan the best it can be for young people.

Can you help us illustrate the new plan?

We'd love to include artwork from young people across Laois in the new plan. This can be a drawing, a painting, a photo, a poem or any artwork you like, that shows something you value about any part of the Heritage of County Laois. We will include the best artworks in the new published plan, and we will have two prizes of Family Heritage Cards for the best entries. Send your entries to the address below!

Where to send your details

Send your submissions to heritage@laoiscoco.ie or post to the Heritage Office, Laois County Council, Portlaoise, Co Laois. The closing date for submissions is 31st May 2020.

