# LAOIS HERITAGE PLAN
2007 - 2011

The Laois Heritage Forum wishes to acknowledge the role of the Heritage Council in initiating and supporting the preparation of this Heritage Plan in association with Laois County Council. In addition, the Forum acknowledges the support of the Heritage Council through its contribution to the funding of the post of the Heritage Officer and the implementation of projects under the Laois Heritage Plan 2002 – 2006, in association with Laois County Council.

Is mian le Fóram Oidhreachta Laoise aitheantas a thabhairt don Chomhairle Oidhreachta as an Plean Oidhreachta seo a thionscnamh agus a ullmhú i gcomhlachas le Comhairle Chontae Laoise. Ina theannta sin, aithníonn an Fóram tacaíocht na Comhairle Oidhreachta agus í ag cur le maoiniú phost an Oifigigh Oidhreachta agus ag cur i gcrích tionscadal faoi Phlean Oidhreachta Laoise, i gcomhlachas le Comhairle Chontae Laoise.

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Front Cover
Sculpture dedicated to St. Mochua in Timahoe, with the Timahoe Round Tower in the background and the former Church of Ireland, now used as a library, on the right. Photo by Patrick Casey.

Back Cover
Dunrally Bridge near Vicarstown (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage), Emo Court and Gardens (Patrick Casey), Slieve Bloom hillside framed by gorse (Catherine Casey), Glenbarrow waterfall (Dom Reddin), Heywood Gardens (Catherine Casey).

Photographs: Dom Reddin, Patrick Casey, Caimin O'Brien, National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Catherine Casey, Michael Scully, Eddie Dunne and Jack Carter.

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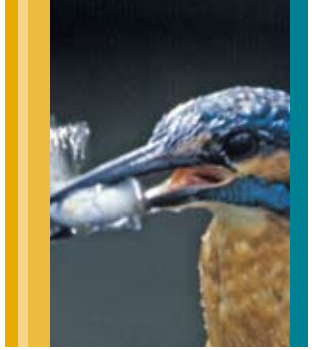
Kingfisher feeding by the riverside
Photo by Eddie Dunne



# FOREWORD

As Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council, I am proud to be associated with the publication of the second Heritage Plan for County Laois. Heritage provides us with a sense of belonging and a key to our identity. The Heritage Plan for County Laois aims to help us to explore our past, understand our present and shape our future. The enthusiastic participation of community groups and individuals in the process of preparing this plan is testament to the contribution such plans can make in reconnecting people with their local heritage and celebrating the cultural heritage of each part of the county. In a survey of heritage awareness in Laois, the affinity felt by many people to the very local aspects of their heritage was highlighted - the placenames, graveyards, hedgerows and monuments of each area are precious to the people who live there. I am confident that this new plan will build on this connection, bringing heritage to a wider audience around the county, and ensuring that the collective concern of all who experience and value heritage, will help to ensure its future protection.

The Laois Heritage Plan is a working document, with many detailed, specific and achievable actions. Implementing this ambitious plan will require commitment from all the groups involved in the Heritage Forum, from central Government and from the communities of Laois. On behalf of Laois County Council, I welcome this challenge, and look forward to the realisation of the aims of the plan over the next five years.

*Cllr. Michael Laloor*

Cathaoirleach

I am delighted to join with the Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council in welcoming the publication of the second Heritage plan for Laois, which will run from 2007 – 2011. Laois County Council has taken the lead in the Heritage Plan process in Ireland, and the fact that Laois is now among the first counties to publish a second five-year plan for heritage conservation, serves to highlight the enthusiasm and commitment of the elected members of the County Council.

Much has been learned about the heritage of Laois since the publication of our first plan. Scientific information has been collected on topics as diverse as eskers, hedgerows, canals and mills. A range of well-attended events and high quality publications have helped to raise the public's awareness of the wide and varied heritage on our doorsteps.

In addition to the conservation of our heritage for its own sake, I would like to highlight the contribution that the Heritage Plan makes to some of the key policies of Laois County Council – the creation and nurturing of sustainable and inclusive communities. Our environment, amenities, heritage sites, parks and gardens, landscapes and streetscapes all make a significant contribution to developing and maintaining high quality of life for all our citizens. I would particularly like to welcome the commitment made in this plan to the principles and practice of social inclusion, and I am confident that the delivery of the plan over the next five years will contribute to the developing confidence of Laois as a socially and culturally diverse society.

This plan is the result of a participative consultation process, stretching over a full year. I wish to congratulate all who have been involved with the development of the Laois Heritage Plan, particularly the Elected Members of Laois County Council and of Portlaoise and Mountmellick Town Councils, the members of the County Development Board and the County Community Forum and the many organisations and individuals, locally, regionally and nationally, who contributed to the consultation process. The commitment of all the member organisations of the Laois Heritage Forum, and the continued involvement of the Heritage Council in supporting and developing the Laois Heritage Plan must be especially acknowledged. I look forward to working with all of these groups in the implementation of this plan. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Ms. Catherine Casey, Heritage Officer, Laois County Council for the excellent work and significant contribution she has made to this plan and the ongoing appreciation of the heritage of County Laois.

*Peter Carey*

County Manager

# REAMHRÁ

Mar Chathaoirleach Chomhairle Chontae Laoise, is cúis mhórtais dom baint a bheith agam le foilsiú an dara Plean Oidhreachta seo do Chontae Laoise. Cuireann ár n-oidhreacht ár muintearas in iúl dúinn agus is í eochair ár bhféiniúlachta í. Tá sé de sprioc ag Plean Oidhreachta Chontae Laoise cuidiú linn ár stair a iniúchadh, ár saol i láthair a thuiscint agus ár dtodhchaí a mhúnlú. Ó rannpháirtíocht dhíograiseach grúpaí pobail agus daoine aonaracha i bpróiseas ullmhúcháin an phlean seo is léir an méid a chuireann pleananna mar seo le hath-aithne dhaoine ar a n-oidhreacht áitiúil agus le ceiliúradh oidhreacht gach coda den chontae. I suirbhé ar fheasacht oidhreachta i gContae Laoise aibhsíodh an dáimh atá ag daoine le gnéithe rí-áitiúla a n-oidhreachta – tá logainmneacha, reiligí, fálta sceacha agus séadchomharthaí gach ceantair rí-luachmhar don mhuintir a chónaíonn ann. Tá mé cinnte de go dtógfaidh an plean seo ar an nasc sin, go gcuirfidh sé oidhreacht i láthair pobail níos leithne ar fud an chontae agus, maidir lena gcúram siúd i gcoitinne a chuireann aithne agus luach ar an oidhreacht, go gcinnteoidh an plean go gcuirfidh an cúram sin bonn faoi chaomhnú na hoidhreachta amach anseo.

Is doiciméad oibre é Plean Oidhreachta Laoise lena lán gníomhaíochtaí atá mionsonraithe, sainiúil, agus indéanta. Chun an plean uaillmhianach seo a chur i gcrích  ní mór do na grúpaí go léir atá bainteach leis an Fóram Oidhreachta, idir Rialtas láir agus phobail Laoise, tiomantas a léiriú. Thar cheann Chomhairle Chontae Laoise, fáiltím roimh an dúshlán seo agus táim ag tnúth le baint amach spriocanna an phlean i rith na gcúig bliana seo romhainn.

Cllr. Michael Laloor

Cathaoirleach

Is cúis lúcháire dom, in éineacht le Cathaoirleach Chomhairle Chontae Laoise, fáiltiú roimh fhoilsiú an dara plean Oidhreachta do Laois a bheidh in áit ó 2007 – 2011. Tá Comhairle Chontae Laois ar thús cadhnaíochta i bpróiseas na bPlean Oidhreachta in Éirinn. Anois go bhfuil Laois ar na chéad chontaetha atá ag foilsiú an dara plean cúig bliana i leith chaomhnú na hoidhreachta is léir, mar sin, a dhíograise is a thiomanta atá baill thofa na Comhairle Contae.

Tá a lán foghlamtha faoi oidhreacht Chontae Laoise ó fhoilsiú ar gcéad phlean. Bailíodh eolas eolaíoch ar ábhair chomh hilghnéitheach le heascracha, fálta sceacha, canálacha agus muilte. De thoradh réimse imeachtaí a raibh freastal maith orthu agus foilseacháin d'ardchaighdeán, tá méadú tagtha ar eolas an phobail ar an oidhreacht ilghnéitheach atá ar leac an dorais againn.

I dteannta chaomhnú ár n-oidhreachta ar a son féin, ba mhaith liom aird a dhíriú ar an méid a chuireann an Plean Oidhreachta le cuid de bhunpholasaithe Chomhairle Chontae Laoise – cruthú agus cothú comhphobal inmharthana agus chuimsitheach. Ár gcomhshaol, ár bhfóntais, ar suímh oidhreachta, ár bpáirceanna agus gairdíní poiblí, ár dtírdhreacha agus ár sráid-dreacha, cuireann siad go léir go mór le forbairt agus le cothabháil ardcháilíocht bheatha dár saoránaigh go léir. Cuirim fáilte ar leith roimh an tiomantas atá déanta sa phlean seo do phrionsabail agus cleachtas an chuimsithe shóisialta, agus tá mé cinnte de go gcuirfidh cur i gcrích an phlean seo i rith na cúig bliana seo amach romhainn le forbairt mhuinín Laoise mar phobal ilghnéitheach go sóisialta agus go cultúrtha.

Is toradh é an plean seo ar phróiseas comhairliúcháin rannpháirtíoch a mhair bliain iomlán. Is mian liom tréaslú le cách a bhí bainteach le forbairt Plean Oidhreachta Laoise, go háirithe Baill Thofa Chomhairle Chontae Laoise agus Chomhairlí Bhaile Phort Laoise agus Mhóinteach Mílic, baill Bhord Forbartha an Chontae agus Fóram Pobail an Chontae agus an iomad eagras agus duine, ar bhonn áitiúil, réigiúnach agus náisiúnta, a chuir leis an bpróiseas comhairliúcháin. Ní mór aitheantas ar leith a thabhairt do thiomantas bhalleagrais uile Fóram Oidhreachta Laoise, agus do rannpháirtíocht reatha na Comhairle Oidhreachta, as tacú agus forbairt Plean Oidhreachta Laoise. Táim ag tnúth le bheith ag obair leis na grúpaí seo go léir i gcur i crích an phlean seo. Ar deireadh, is mian liom moladh a thabhairt do Catherine Casey, Oifigeach Oidhreachta, Comhairle Chontae Laoise, as an obair den scoth agus as an méid nach beag a chuir sí leis an bplean seo agus le léirthuiscint leanúnach oidhreacht Chontae Laoise.

Peter Carey

Bainisteoir an Chontae.

Knockanina Mill, on the River Nore, Castletown

Photo by National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Portlaoise Railway Station

Photo by Jack Carter

# INTRODUCTION

This is the second Heritage Plan for County Laois, covering the period 2007 to 2011. It aims to identify, conserve, raise awareness and promote enjoyment of all aspects of the built, natural and cultural heritage of the county. The plan has been written by the Laois Heritage Forum (see Appendix 1), in consultation with the people of the county and local, regional and national organisations with an interest in the heritage of Laois. For the purposes of the Laois Heritage Plan, heritage is considered to include monuments, archaeology, heritage objects, architecture, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.

The new Heritage Plan aims to build upon the achievements of the first plan, while taking account of changes in the national and local environment since the publication of the first plan. Two key pieces of Government policy have been published since 2002: the National Heritage Plan and the National Biodiversity Plan.

The Laois Heritage Plan reflects many of the policies and objectives of the National Heritage Plan. The major themes of the National Heritage Plan (placing heritage at the heart of public life, protecting heritage, acquiring knowledge and promoting awareness) are broadly parallel to those of the Laois Heritage Plan. The central role of the County Heritage Forum and Local Heritage Plans is acknowledged in the National Heritage Plan. The Laois Heritage Plan aims to deliver one of the key objectives of the National Biodiversity Plan, which states that it is essential that action is taken at local level for biodiversity. The Laois Heritage Plan aims to deliver this objective in several ways – through a commitment to write a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Laois, and also by collecting data on biodiversity through research and surveys, and promoting awareness of its importance through events, seminars and training.

**The Laois Heritage Plan 2002 – 2006**

The first Heritage Plan for County Laois covered the period 2002 to 2006, and was among the first Heritage Plans published nationally. The key achievements of the first Laois Heritage Plan are summarised below. Detailed reports on projects delivered through the first plan, as well as an independent evaluation of the plan, are available from the Laois Heritage Office.

**Key achievements of the Laois Heritage Plan 2002 – 2006**

| Collecting Information | Raising Awareness | Promoting Best Practice |
|---|---|---|
| • Surveys of<br>- Eskers<br>- Hedgerows<br>- Countryside habitats<br>- Industrial heritage<br>- Mills<br>- Mountmellick Canal<br>- Traditional crafts<br>- Biodiversity data<br>• Microfilm and CD of burial registers and Poor Law Union material<br>• Bannon collection catalogue<br>• Conservation plans for graveyards | • Posters on architecture, archaeology and wildlife<br>• Heritage Calendars<br>• Heritage programmes on Local Radio<br>• Guide to Heritage Gardens<br>• Laois Heritage Trail<br>• Golden Mile of Laois Competition<br>• Portlaoise Heritage Trail<br>• "Know your County" Tours<br>• Support for Tidy Towns<br>• "Dawn Chorus Day" walks<br>• Annual "Celebrating Laois Heritage" seminar<br>• Heritage Week events | • Museums Sustainability Study & Museums Network<br>• Durrow Courthouse Conservation work<br>• Placenames Committee<br>• Pilot studies: Village Design Statements, Wildlife audit, Tidy Towns five year plan<br>• Reminiscence Project<br>• Seminars & Workshops: Heritage Interpretation, Protected Structures, Hedgerows, Graveyards<br>• Heritage Appraisal of County Development Plan<br>• Memorial Recording |

**How this plan was written**

The plan was drawn up according to methodology agreed by the Heritage Council. A discussion document was circulated to all households in the county in early 2006, inviting comment and promoting a consultation response form, which aimed to make it as easy as possible for people to submit their comments. Letters were sent to a range of public bodies and organisations with an interest in or impact on the Heritage of the county, inviting submissions. Public meetings were held in each of the five electoral areas, in association with the County Community Forum. Formal presentations were given at these meetings and notes made of all issues raised in question and answer sessions. Presentations were also given to Elected Members of Laois County Council, Mountmellick Town Council and Portlaoise Town Council, and a range of other groups. A timetable for the writing of the plan is shown in Appendix 3. Details of submissions and attendance at meetings are given in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7.

A report on all issues raised in the first phase of public consultation was prepared by the Heritage Officer and circulated to Heritage Forum Members, and to those who had sent submissions. A one-day facilitated workshop of the Laois Heritage Forum was held, objectives for the new plan agreed and preliminary actions discussed. The Heritage Forum then broke into working groups (representing built, natural and cultural heritage) and each of the working groups worked to draft and agree actions for the draft plan. Thus the input of the member organisations of the Heritage Forum was through these working groups, rather than through formal submissions.

The draft plan was presented to the Housing, Social and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) of Laois County Council and recommended to the full Council. Following adoption of the draft plan on 25th September, a further phase of public consultation was undertaken (to 3rd November) and the views of the public incorporated. The amended plan was again discussed at an SPC meeting and the final plan was adopted by Laois County Council on 12th December 2006.

This is a specific action plan for heritage in County Laois. It is informed by, but does not restate, relevant aspirations, policies and principles contained elsewhere (e.g. the County Development Plan, County Development Board Strategy and the National Heritage and Biodiversity Plans). Most of the actions state not a general aspiration, but how the relevant objective will be achieved. However, some flexibility remains, to allow the Heritage Forum to respond to changing priorities during the lifetime of the plan.

The inclusion of performance indicators (Appendix 2), and the setting up of systems to ensure that relevant performance data is collected from the start of implementation, will ensure that the impacts of the Laois Heritage Plan can be measured on an ongoing basis.

This plan includes only actions which are within the direct power of the Heritage Forum to deliver. However, the Plan does not exist in a vacuum and the Heritage Forum will aim to work with and influence outside bodies in delivering policies and programmes to benefit Laois heritage throughout the Plan period. In particular, the very great contribution that local community and heritage groups around the county make to the conservation and presentation of the heritage of Laois is acknowledged. The Forum will work with these groups wherever possible and partners will be identified in annual work programmes.

Experience of the first Heritage Plan for Laois has shown that an average of about eight actions per year can be delivered by the Heritage Forum. This is a five-year plan, and it is important to be realistic about what can be achieved in this time frame. Therefore, on the recommendation of the independent evaluators of the first plan, the Heritage Forum decided to limit the number of actions included in this plan to 50. Actions included have been prioritised using the issues raised during the lifetime of the last plan, the evaluation of that plan and the public consultation process undertaken in preparation of this plan as a guide. It is therefore realistic to aim for complete delivery of this plan over its five-year time scale.

**How the plan will be implemented**

Implementation of the Heritage Plan will be through a detailed annual work programme, agreed with the Heritage Council, overseen by the Laois Heritage Forum and co-ordinated on a day to day basis by the Heritage Officer of Laois County Council. Opportunities to work in co-operation with partners within the county, or with neighbouring counties will be taken wherever possible. Budgets, detailed timetables and partners for individual projects will be agreed by the Laois Heritage Forum and detailed in the annual work programme, which will be made available to the public. A detailed report on progress each year will also be made available.

**How progress will be measured**

It is essential to the success of any plan that its impact be monitored and evaluated. Ongoing monitoring will allow changes to be made to implementation of the plan as necessary, and evaluation mid-way through and at the end of the plan delivery period will allow the results of the plan to be quantified. To this end, a set of performance indicators has been developed (Appendix 2), to measure the impacts of the plan objectives. These are quantitative indicators and will be used with qualitative results to form a detailed picture of the full impacts of the plan on the heritage and communities of the county.

**Guiding principles**

Certain principles underpin all the objectives of the Heritage Plan and will be borne in mind at all stages of implementation. These are summarised below:

- The principles of *Sustainable Development* will be applied to all actions undertaken by the Laois Heritage Forum. An accepted definition of sustainable development is "Development which meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs". Comhar, the National Sustainable Development Partnership, has outlined seven themes for sustainable development in Ireland: Satisfaction of human needs by the efficient use of resources; Equity between generations; Respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity; Equity between countries and regions; Social equity; Respect for cultural heritage/diversity; Good decision-making.

- In dealing with residents, visitors and communities of Laois, the principles of *Social Inclusion* will be applied at all times. In particular, every effort will be made to ensure that all events undertaken as part of the delivery of this plan reflect the interests of the socially and culturally diverse community of the county, and are accessible to people of all abilities. In dealing with customers of Laois County Council, the commitments of the *Charter for Socially Inclusive Services* will be adhered to.

- *Dissemination of Information* The Laois Heritage Forum will ensure all reports of surveys and studies carried out under the Laois Heritage Plan are made as widely available as possible, including publication on the laois.ie website, and lodgement in the County Library.

- *Co-operation* The Laois Heritage Forum will work to identify opportunities for co-operation with organisations within Laois and in surrounding counties in relation to implementation of the Heritage Plan. This will be especially relevant in the case of projects involving shared natural features, such as the Slieve Bloom Mountains and the Rivers Barrow and Nore. Co-operation will also be important in the area of tourism and in relation to monuments in State ownership, particularly the Rock of Dunamase.

- Laois Heritage Forum believes that in order for the principles of heritage conservation to be fully integrated to the day to day operation of Laois County Council, the appointment of full-time, suitably qualified staff will be necessary in the areas of archives, conservation and biodiversity. However, the Forum recognises that the provision of such staff is an operational matter for Laois County Council, dependant on resources, and that considerable progress has been made to date.

Exploring the wildlife of the Grand Canal

Photo by Michael Scully

# OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

## OBJECTIVE 1: Collect Information relating to all aspects of the heritage of County Laois

*Carry out surveys of aspects of the built, natural and cultural heritage of Laois*

1. Continue the Laois Habitats survey, on a broad level, townland by townland
2. Continue the Laois Habitats survey, focusing on specific habitats, including peatlands, waterways and wetlands and trees & woodlands, building on the national Native Woodland Survey
3. Assess the current conservation status of legally protected and endangered plant species in County Laois
4. Work with professional geologists and representative bodies to prioritise collection and dissemination of data on important geological sites in the county
5. Survey of thatched and farm buildings
6. Resurvey of buildings listed as locally important in NIAH survey of Portlaoise, making recommendations for buildings to be included on the Record of Protected Structures for the town
7. Survey of traditional shop fronts throughout County Laois
8. Survey of street furniture such as iron gates, milestones, pumps, letter boxes
9. Carry out survey of built, natural and cultural heritage of graveyards and churches in County Laois
10. Carry out survey of built and natural heritage of Laois bridges
11. Audit and provide information on artefacts from Laois in the National Museum of Ireland
12. Initiate survey of local and traditional place- and fieldnames throughout the county, working with, among others, schools and the Community Forum, to inform the work of the Placenames Committee

## OBJECTIVE 2: Raise awareness and promote enjoyment of the heritage of Laois

*General Awareness Raising & Promotion*

13. Promote wider awareness of all aspects of heritage in Laois through participation in national programmes and events such as Heritage Week, Water Day, Biodiversity Day and Tree Week
14. Promote participation in the "Heritage in Schools" programme, through active support and recruitment of Laois-based heritage experts and promotion of the programme to Laois schools
15. Prepare and publish regular series of heritage-related articles in local print and broadcast media
16. Monitor developments at Clara Bog Interpretive Centre, with a view to investigating the possibility of developing interpretive material relating to peatlands and bogs in Laois
17. Promote heritage awareness through regular competitions, starting with a photographic competition on the theme of vernacular architecture in Laois
18. Promote importance of traditional building skills and crafts through data collection, seminars and exhibitions
19. Promote the commemoration of important historical figures from Laois, including Helen M. Roe, first County Librarian for Laois, through naming of places, development of scholarships etc

*Dissemination of Information*

20. Disseminate key survey/research information on Laois Heritage, in an accessible format
21. Hold an annual seminar to report on progress in implementing the Heritage Plan, to present the upcoming work plan, and to discuss current issues in relation to heritage in the county

22. Work with Planning Section to ensure that copies of all Environmental Impact Assessments conducted in the county are lodged in the County Library
23. Raise awareness of the existence and importance of designated nature conservation sites in Laois, in association with the National Parks and Wildlife Service
24. Raise awareness of the particular importance of Laois for Nore Pearl Mussel, in co-operation with the National Parks and Wildlife Survey (NPWS), through production of leaflet on Nore Pearl Mussel friendly farm and forest management and a targeted information pack for schools
25. Raise awareness of inland waterways, water quality and aquatic heritage in association with Environment Section of Laois County Council, NPWS, Southern Regional Fisheries Board and South Eastern River Basin District
26. Promote awareness of the culture and heritage of the Slieve Blooms through co-operative projects
27. Investigate possibility of "travelling" or temporary exhibitions in co-operation with the National Museum of Ireland
28. Erect bilingual nameplates at a selection of townland boundaries, to raise awareness of both traditional names and the biodiversity value of townland-boundary hedgerows

*Provision of Training & Education*

29. Develop and deliver an education and training programme for Laois County Council Elected Members and staff on all aspects of built, natural and cultural heritage, to include:
    - Biodiversity, including farmland and waterways, and designated sites
    - Heritage aspects of the planning process
    - Legislation relating to and affecting built and natural heritage
    - Management of hedgerows and other boundary types
30. Provide training for community groups, in particular continuing to work with Tidy Towns to ensure best practice in heritage management, through provision of targeted training
31. Provide practical support, information and training for owners, potential purchasers and auctioneers dealing with important built and natural heritage sites, including information on practical management and maintenance, and potential sources of funding

## OBJECTIVE 3: Establish and promote best practice in heritage management

*Development & Implementation of policies*

32. Initiate and publicise a process to develop and resource a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Laois, to build on and complement the actions outlined in the County Heritage Plan. The first step in this process will be the establishment of a Laois Biodiversity Working Group, to meet the requirements of the National Biodiversity Plan
33. Develop and implement Hedgerow Policy for Laois County Council, in association with all sections of the organisation, based on the recommendations of the hedgerow survey carried out in 2005
34. Agree and implement a policy to ensure integration of heritage with all aspects of operation of Laois County Council
35. Publish guidance information to support the operation of the Laois Placenames Committee, which aims to ensure that names for new developments are appropriate (following on from Placenames Survey, Action 12)

*Establishment of best practice through practical studies and provision of advice*

36. Carry out a heritage audit of Laois County Council property and use the information collected to develop and implement a best practice guide to heritage management within Laois County Council

37. Establish & promote best practice in care, conservation, maintenance & recording of built and natural heritage in graveyards (following on from survey, Action 9)

## OBJECTIVE 4: Promote active conservation of Heritage in Laois

*Undertake initiatives to protect, conserve and enhance the heritage of Laois*

38. Work with Forward Planning Section to carry out Landscape Character Assessment for County Laois to identify sensitive areas, and ensure controls on development in these areas
39. Work with Forward Planning Section to enhance protection of buildings identified in built heritage surveys
40. Undertake initiatives to promote community involvement and best practice in maintaining and enhancing rural roadside heritage
41. Select one pilot site for participation in the NeighbourWood Scheme, to develop appropriate woodland amenities for public use

*Enhance the role of existing initiatives (legislation, schemes, funding mechanisms) in the conservation of Laois Heritage*

42. Work with Forward Planning Section to promote use of Architectural Conservation Areas to conserve built heritage in towns
43. Work with Forward Planning Section to develop & promote best practice guidelines for urban and rural housing design, to ensure that new developments and renovations have regard to the existing character and style of an area
44. Promote awareness and uptake of schemes, initiatives and programmes which have a positive impact on built, natural and cultural heritage, such as
    - Rural Environment Protection Scheme
    - NPWS Designated Area Compensation Scheme
    - Heritage Council Museums Accreditation scheme
    - Forest Service Schemes such as the Native Woodland and Neighbour Wood Schemes
    - "Leave no Trace" initiative

*Promote Networking and Communication between all those with an interest in conservation of heritage in Laois*

45. Work closely with the County Development Board and County Community Forum to ensure communities throughout the County are involved in the delivery of the Heritage Plan and that the principles of social inclusion are fully integrated to all aspects of delivery of the Plan
46. Promote enhanced communication on heritage issues both within Laois County Council and with outside bodies
47. Assist establishment of local conservation groups (aimed at all aspects of natural, built and cultural heritage conservation) and provide appropriate support to such groups once established
48. Involve all relevant national, regional and local bodies in implementation of actions in the Heritage Plan
49. Develop Laois Museums Network and work to ensure support for small local museums
50. Work with organisations carrying out research & surveys in Laois, to ensure dissemination of information locally

Laois countryside in winter sunlight

Photo by Patrick Casey

# APPENDIX 1:
# Membership of the Laois Heritage Forum

Listed here are the organisations currently represented on Laois Heritage Forum, along with the individual representatives in 2006. While the organisations on the Forum have remained relatively constant (with some additions) over the period since 2002, the individual representatives have occasionally changed. The members of the current Forum would like to acknowledge the crucial input to the Heritage Plan process of all previous members of the Forum.

Some recommendations on the make-up of the Forum were made during the evaluation of the plan and the public consultation process. These will be addressed through a review of membership of the Heritage Forum during the life-time of the plan.

| **Organisation** | **Representative (July 2006)** |
|---|---|
| Bord na Móna | Tom Egan, BnM, Leabeg, Boora, Tullamore |
| Coillte | John Prior, Coillte, Bank Place, Portarlington |
| County Community Forum | Eric Lewis, Parkview, Portlaoise |
| County Development Board | John Joe Fennelly MCC, Ballymullen, Abbeyleix |
| Housing, Social and Cultural SPC | Brian Stanley MCC, 53 O'Moore Place, Portlaoise |
| Independent | Teddy Fennelly, 4 Parkview, Portlaoise |
| Irish Farmers' Association | John Finlay, Ballycuddy, Ballacolla |
| Laois County Council Environment Section | Martina Bracken, Administrative Officer, Laois County Council |
| Laois County Council Planning Section | Peter Dolan, Senior Planner, Laois County Council |
| Laois Federation Tidy Towns | Noreen Byrne, Oldglass, Rathdowney |
| Laois Heritage Society | Mary Lalor, The Heath, Portlaoise |
| Laois LEADER | Anne Goodwin, Laois LEADER, Pepper's Court, Portlaoise |
| Laois Tourism | Tom Cox, Heritage House, Abbeyleix |
| National Parks and Wildlife Service | Ciara Flynn, NPWS, Station Road, Kildare |
| Slieve Bloom Organisations | Mick Dowling, Derry, Camross |
| Teagasc | Con Maloney, Teagasc, Knockiel, Rathdowney |

# APPENDIX 2: Performance Indicators

These indicators will be used as part of the ongoing monitoring of the Laois Heritage Plan 2007 – 2011. They will also contribute to a mid-term evaluation of the plan, in 2009 and a final evaluation in 2011.

**Overall Administration of the Heritage Plan**

1. Number of actions from the Laois Heritage Plan implemented
2. Funding sourced for implementation of the Plan
   a. From the Local Authority
   b. From other sources
3. Number of meetings of Laois Heritage Forum held

**Collect Information relating to all aspects of the heritage of County Laois**

4. Number of baseline surveys carried out for biodiversity
5. Number of baseline surveys carried out for built heritage
6. Number of surveys of cultural heritage

**Raise awareness and promote enjoyment of the heritage of Laois**

7. Number of heritage talks and events organised
8. Number of people attending events instigated by the Heritage Office
9. Number of publications on Laois heritage produced/supported
10. Percentage of Laois County Council Staff and Elected Members receiving training

**Establish and promote best practice in heritage management**

11. Number of policies discussed by Strategic Policy Committee & adopted by Laois County Council

**Promote active conservation of Heritage in Laois, through the development of practical studies, enhancement of existing initiatives and promotion of networking and communication**

12. Status of the local authority's contribution to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) process

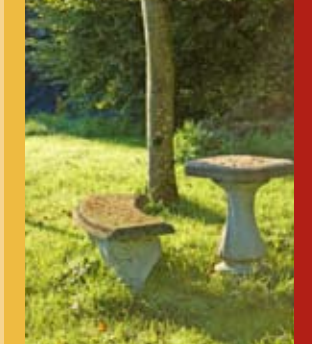
# APPENDIX 3: Plan Preparation Timetable

| Date | Action |
|---|---|
| January 25th 2006 | Laois Heritage Forum planning meeting and agreement of timetable |
| February 24th 2006 | Start of Public Consultation Period Phase I |
| February 2006 | Publication and distribution of discussion document<br>Consultation with County Community Forum<br>Invitation issued to public, local groups and national and regional agencies to comment |
| March - April 2006 | Public meetings in each Electoral Area<br>Presentations to Elected Members of Laois County Council, Portlaoise Town Council and Mountmellick Town Council<br>Consultation with young people at Comhairle na nÓg |
| April 30th 2006 | End of Public Consultation Period Phase I |
| May 23rd 2006 | Laois Heritage Forum Workshop |
| June 2006 | Meetings of Laois Heritage Forum and Built, Natural and Cultural Working Groups |
| July 2006 | Heritage Plan drafted and agreed by Laois Heritage Forum |
| September 4th 2006 | Presentation of draft Heritage Plan to Housing, Social and Cultural Strategic Policy Committee |
| September 25th 2006 | Adoption of draft Heritage Plan by Laois County Council |
| October 2006 | Public Consultation Phase II |
| November 2006 | Amendment of draft following public comment |
| December 4th 2006 | Discussion of amended draft at SPC |
| December 12th 2006 | Adoption of final Laois Heritage Plan by Laois County Council |

# APPENDIX 4: Relevant Local and Regional Plans and Strategies

The following documents contain policies which have informed the writing of the new Heritage Plan for County Laois and will be adhered to by Laois Heritage Forum in the implementation of the plan. In many cases, the actions of the Laois Heritage Plan aim to achieve some of the objectives of these plans.

- Hickie D & Carter J (2006) Independent Evaluation of Laois Heritage Plan
- Laois County Council (2006) Corporate Plan
- Laois County Council (2006) Laois County Development Plan 2006 – 2012
- Laois County Development Board (2002) Realising Our Potential: A Strategy 2002 – 2012
- National Spatial Strategy 2002
- National Heritage Plan 2002
- National Biodiversity Plan 2002



# APPENDIX 5: Bibliography

Much has been written about the heritage of Laois. The following works give a good general introduction to the built, natural and cultural heritage of the County.


Carrigan, W. 1905 *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory.* (4 Vols) Sealy, Bryers & Walker, Dublin

Feehan, J. 1983 *Laois An Environmental History.* Ballykilcavan Press

Feehan, J. 1979 *The Landscape of Slieve Bloom: a study of its natural and human heritage.* Blackwater Press

Lane P.G. & Nolan W. 1999 *Laois: History & Society.* Geography Publications, Dublin

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage 2002 *An introduction to the Architectural Heritage of County Laois.* Dúchas, the Heritage Service

O'Hanlon, J. & O'Leary, E. 1907 *History of the Queens County, (2 Vols) Sealy, Bryers & Walker, Dublin.* Reprinted 1981 by Roberts Books, Kilkenny

Roe, H.M. 2006 *Notes on the Placenames of County Laoighis.* From an original typescript by Helen M. Roe 1932. Laois County Library Service

Sweetman, D.P., Alcock O. & Moran B. 1995 *Archaeological Inventory of County Laois.* Stationery Office, Dublin

# APPENDIX 6: Written submissions received during public consultation

**Organisations**

Abbeyleix Tidy Towns, Mary White
Bat Conservation Ireland, Donna Mullen
Church of Ireland (Abbeyleix), Patrick Harvey
Church of Ireland (Stradbally), Nancy Gillespie
Clonaslee Tidy Towns, Maura O'Gorman
Department of Agriculture & Food, Philip Carr & Ann Maguire
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Michael O'Mahony
Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Teresa Halloran
East Coast & Midlands Tourism, Deirdre Cole
Forest Service, Patrick Farrington
Heritage Council, Architecture Officer, Colm Murray
Heritage Council, Inland Waterways Officer, Beatrice Kelly
Institute for the Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works in Ireland, Maighréad McParland
Institute of Geologists of Ireland, Geoff Wright
Irish Farmers' Association, Ger Bergin
Irish Georgian Society, Donough Cahill
Irish Peatland Conservation Council, Caroline Hurley
Killenard & District Development Association, Siobhan Kavanagh
Laois County Council, Yvonne Murphy
Laois County Development Board, Declan Byrne
Laois Heritage Society, Teddy Fennelly
Mills & Millers of Ireland, William Hogg
National Monuments Service, Caimin O'Brien
National Parks and Wildlife Service, Teresa Halloran
Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Aideen Ireland
Slieve Bloom Association, Margaret Mullins
Slieve Bloom Rural Development Society, Christina Byrne
Society of Archivists Ireland, Leah Benson & Lisa McElhinney
Waterways Ireland, John Martin

**Individuals**

James Conroy
Marc Conroy
Tom De Vesci
John Dunne
Catherine Egan Violett
Jim Fleming
Pam Hamilton
Jim Kennedy
Joseph Kennedy
Michael Lynch
Mervyn Ross
David Treacy
Patrick J Walsh
Ion White

# APPENDIX 7: Attendance at public meetings during public consultation

**13th March 2006, Emo Electoral Area, Portarlington Community Centre**

Elizabeth Redmond
Gerry Maher
Jackie Hyland
Tom Cox
Ray Cribbin MCC
Dom Reddin
Jim Kenny
Declan Byrne
Thomas Curran
Martin Flynn
Ronnie Matthews
Michael J Cobbe
Mary Lalor
David Orford
James Deegan MCC
Yvonne Murphy

**14th March 2006, Portlaoise Electoral Area, Áras an Chontae, Portlaoise**

Maria Groarke
Catherine Fingleton
Gerry Maher
Brian Stanley MCC
Michael O'Brien
Ann Lannigan
Maureen Ryan

**15th March 2006, Mountmellick Electoral Area, MDA, Mountmellick**

Joan Culleton
Dennis O'Meara
Liam Dempsey
Jacqueline Berry
Maureen O'Connell
Frances O'Loughlin
Carmel Hibbits
Anne-Marie Hourigan
Rosemary Whelan
Mary B Culleton
Ger Lynch
Maura Conroy
Paul Dempsey
Jim Kennedy
Joan O'Reilly
Jim O'Brien
Dave Conroy
Patrick Bracken MCC
Dolores Murray
Bobby Delaney TC
Sheelagh Coyle
Imelda Carew
Mary Kennedy
Bridie Dunne
John O'Donnell
David Connolly
Mary Dolan

**21st March 2006, Luggacurran Electoral Area, St Anne's Hall, Ballylinan**

Bridie Brennan
Anne Goodwin
Declan Molloy
Peggy Byrne
Kathleen Gorman
Michael Rice MCC
Mary McWey
Bridie Kaye
Tony Lacey

**22nd March 2006, Borris in Ossory Electoral Area, Peadar's Inn, Rathdowney**

Mick Dowling
Noreen Whelan
Pam Hamilton
Robert Roe
Jeanne Moles
Frances Coyne
Abe & Meta Moynan
Ann Condron
Ray Fitzpatrick
Betty O'Brien
Mary Walsh
Peter Stokes
George Roe
Sr Catherine O'Brien
Louie Moynan
Ivan Jestin
Joe Phelan
Tommy Whelan
Fiona Clay
Noreen Byrne
Martin Jestin
Stella Keogh
John Roe
Brendan Phelan MCC
Henry Roe

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

For Further Information Contact:
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