

	<h1>Greystones-Delgany & Kilcoole LPF Variation No.4</h1>
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Who are you:	Group
Name:	Kilcoole Tidy Towns
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Local Planning Framework PART A Strategy

- A.2 County Development Plan strategy for Greystones – Delgany & Kilcoole

Please select which town you want to comment on:

Kilcoole

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Kilcoole Tidy Towns

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Submission by Kilcoole Tidy Towns on the Local Area Plan Greystones, Delgany and Kilcoole **19/06/2025**

Kilcoole Tidy Towns would like to submit comments on the current local area development plan and request the inclusion of several key environmental and community priorities to ensure sustainable development and long-term benefit to our local area and to protect our biodiversity. As a voluntary group we are committed to enhancing Kilcoole's environment and quality of life and protecting our history and heritage and promoting biodiversity

Protection of our heritage paths

Kilcoole is home to a number of historic paths, masspaths and walking routes which reflect our local heritage, community identity and rural character, these paths are not only of cultural and historic significance but also serve as a valuable recreational routes for residents and visitors. The Ballydonarea Loop Walk proves to be immensely popular with visiting walking groups.

We strongly urge that the plans officially designate and protect our heritage paths as assets of our community and cultural value, ensure development does not encroach on or obstruct these paths, provide support to keep them accessible and safe.

Buffer zones along our heritage paths and Kilcoole stream

Buffer zones play a critical role in maintaining the environmental and visual integrity of heritage paths and local watercourses-Kilcoole Stream that runs from Glen of the Downs, through the masspath and on down to the Breaches, home to Irelands largest Little Tern colony which is protected by Birdwatch Ireland since 1985, and a winter haven for Greenland white-fronted geese and Brent geese. We recommend a minimum buffer zone of 15-20metres be maintained on either side of our heritage paths and the Kilcoole Stream to protect ecological habitats and preserve scenic quality, these buffer zones must be kept free from development including fences or garden extensions from new housing developments. Natural vegetation must be retained or restored within buffer zones to support biodiversity and reduce surface water runoff. These buffer zones should be designated as green infrastructure in the Local Area Plans, natural planting, and habitat restoration within these buffer zones to support pollinators and aquatic life.

Green spaces

Green spaces are essential for the mental and physical well being of residents and play an important role in local biodiversity and climate resilience, we request that existing green spaces be protected from infill development, any new development include provision for new publicly accessible green spaces, policies be adopted to support rewilding and tree planting in underused or neglected green areas. Identify and zone new community green spaces for long term protection and use.

Inclusion of a Community Dog Park

There is a growing need and demand for a secure designated dog park where residents can exercise their pets safely, this would help address concerns about dogs off-lead in ecologically sensitive areas such as Kilcoole Beach and our heritage paths, it would reduce conflict in natural areas where wildlife and livestock are present, it would also promote responsible pet ownership, enhance community well-being through social interaction. Ideally the dog park should be located near existing footpaths, designated parking, with access to wastebins, a water supply and seating for users.

Protection of Trees and Hedgerows

Protecting trees and hedgerows is a key part of safeguarding biodiversity, local character, and climate resilience. Given the upsurge in building and development in our area it is vital that all planning applications take the protection of mature trees and hedgerows into consideration. We have a particular concern about the mature trees along the old convent grounds and surrounding areas as this area has become a wildlife haven for several decades. The removal of trees and hedgerows during development must be prohibited unless absolutely necessary and justified by ecological assessment, requiring replacement planting with mature and native species where removal is unavoidable, also maintaining ecological corridors by ensuring hedgerows are linked and not fragmented by development.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity-the variety of life around us is one of Kilcoole's greatest assets, Kilcoole Tidy Towns believes that promoting biodiversity should be a key part of every local policy, project and development in Kilcoole, we are calling for the protection of natural habitats and wildlife corridors, green space design that supports pollinators, birds and native species, sustainable landscaping in new developments, by embedding biodiversity into planning and land use, Kilcoole can continue to thrive as a vibrant sustainable community that values our natural heritage.

A Greener Kilcoole

We encourage the Local Area Plan to adopt principles of sustainable transport both walking and cycling infrastructure to reduce car dependency, support healthier lifestyles and meet climate action targets, Kilcoole has great potential for enhanced walking and cycling due to its compact layout and safe, connected walking and cycling routes that would link us to Greystones, NewtownMountKennedy and Newcastle villages. We could support "safe routes to school" initiatives to encourage more children to walk or cycle.

Protection of our rural character is vital for our village, we urge the Local Area Plan to protect along with our heritage walks our key views, such as the view of the Sugarloaf mountain on the masspath and the view of the sea from Kilcoole Rock, ensure any new developments are sensitively designed to respect Kilcoole's rural setting including scale, materials and landscaping, avoiding high-density or visually intrusive development in areas of natural beauty and scenic spots, this would protect not only our cultural and environmental heritage but also protect Kilcoole's distinctiveness and long term appeal as a liveable, low impact community.

As the impacts of climate change become more visible it is vital that any future plans be developed with climate resilience at its core, we urge that the Local Area Plan adopt policies that reduce climate risks through natural low impact solutions-promotion of tree planting using native species in public spaces and new developments, support projects such as community gardens, green roofs and pollinator corridors, protect existing mature trees.

Require the use of sustainable drainage systems-rain gardens, permeable paving to manage surface water naturally, avoiding over-reliance on hard drainage infrastructure, use nature-based solutions to reduce runoff especially near the Kilcoole stream to keep our water quality healthy. Zone adequate connected open spaces to serve as natural flood plains and biodiversity hubs, maintain greenbelts and undeveloped land between Kilcoole and our neighbouring villages-Newtown Mount Kennedy, Newcastle, and Greystones to reduce sprawl and support climate adaptation. All this will reduce long-term costs, protect our community from environmental risks, and create a greener future for Kilcoole.

Kilcoole Tidy Towns has worked tirelessly over many years to enhance and protect the natural, cultural and environmental qualities that make Kilcoole a special place to live, our volunteers are deeply committed to creating a greener, more sustainable and biodiversity-rich future for our village, we believe that the Local Area Plan can present a crucial opportunity to embed these values into planning policies and ensure that any future development respects and enhances Kilcoole's unique character, landscape and community

spirit. All information on our community, history, heritage walks is available at www.kilcoole.ie a website designed and maintained by one of our volunteers James Scott. We remain available to engage further as needed. Kilcoole Tidy Towns hope all these suggestions will be included in the shaping of a responsible and inclusive Local area plan and we thank you for allowing us to give our recommendations and that they will be considered.

Yours sincerely

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