



# Draft Blessington Local Area Plan Submission - Report

Who are you:	Private Individual
Name:	Eimear Deegan
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## Topic

Community Development (incl. sports facilities & schools, etc.)

## Submission

I am a member of, and volunteer with, Lakeshore Striders Athletic Club. I joined the club in 2021 having previously been a member of Crusaders AC who are based at Irishtown Sports & Fitness Centre, a multi-purpose sports facility operated by Dublin City Council.

Lakeshore Striders is the only athletics club operating in West Wicklow drawing members from villages around the Blessington lake and along the N81 corridor. The lack of facilities available to the club or other groups such as Community Games has shocked me. Lakeshore Striders AC operates on a temporary basis from a sports pitch at Blessington Community College, this sports pitch will soon become unavailable due to construction works at the school. As a female member I have seen how a lack of toilets, lighting and changing facilities has discouraged women in particular from joining the club. The space we use is also shared and it is not unusual to see an athlete getting hit by a football during a session.

Over 500 children participate annually in Community Games in the area via 3 organisations, they have no dedicated training facilities. Lakeshore Striders juvenile section is endeavouring to support the Community Games organisations, but this is proving difficult without a permanent home.

Athletics does not enjoy the same profile as team sports, in part due to a lack of infrastructure. Every 4 years we get a glimpse of how successful our athletes can be at the Olympics. There is an opportunity for Wicklow County Council to promote athletics by providing best in class facilities and become a template for what can be achieved outside cities.

While athletics profile is not always as high as it should be it is one of the most accessible sports. It is age and ability inclusive from young children through to masters' athletes competing in their 80s. Lakeshore Striders AC in particular has a very inclusive ethos with new members joining every year through a Couch to 5k programme. The Club is a strong advocate of parkrun, providing volunteers and Run Directors to our local Russborough parkrun. Lakeshore Striders has endeavoured to support new members to our community with frequent shoe and clothes collections for the Direct Provisions Centres at Kippure and Crooksling. We are delighted to be joined by residents from these centres for our annual parkrun takeover day.

Lakeshore Striders does punch above its weight at county championships, particularly in road and trail racing however the lack of a proper track sees the club members not reaching their potential in track events. Similarly local children participating in Community Games do not see a track until county or regional finals, putting them at a distinct disadvantage. I ask that Wicklow County Council dedicates land for a 400 meter running track in Blessington with the facility to also provide access to other field sports such as long jump, shot

put, high jump and javelin. I view lands in Blessington Demesne, adjacent to the Glending Greenway and the new community park as an ideal location for athletics facility. It is in close proximity to the town centre, schools and housing developments.

Please see attached map.

I am also a member of Poulaphuca Paddlers, a kayaking club currently operating from containers at Russelstown carpark. The club would benefit immensely from a dedicated club house close to the town and lake. Lands at Burgage would be suitable.

## Topic

[Local Transport Assessment / Transport Strategy Map](#)

### Submission

Blessington, as a commuter town, is underserved by buses to the city. The Dublin Bus 65 route needs to be more frequent with more buses completing their journey in Ballymore Eustace to serve the wider community. An express bus service to the city centre is also required.

## Topic

[Active Travel Strategy Map](#)

### Submission

While I know the Blessington Greenway may now be subject to judicial review Wicklow County Council, in conjunction with the ESB, should still seek to link the lakeside villages via an off road network allowing safe travel via bicycle or on foot

## Topic

[Strategic Environmental Assessment \(LAP\)](#)

### Submission

The quality of water in the Poulaphuca reservoir is very poor with visible algae. There seems to be little action in respect of this with no understanding as to why the lake is deteriorating. This likely requires a combined approach from Wicklow County Council, Uisce Éireann and the ESB

## Topic

[Any other issues](#)

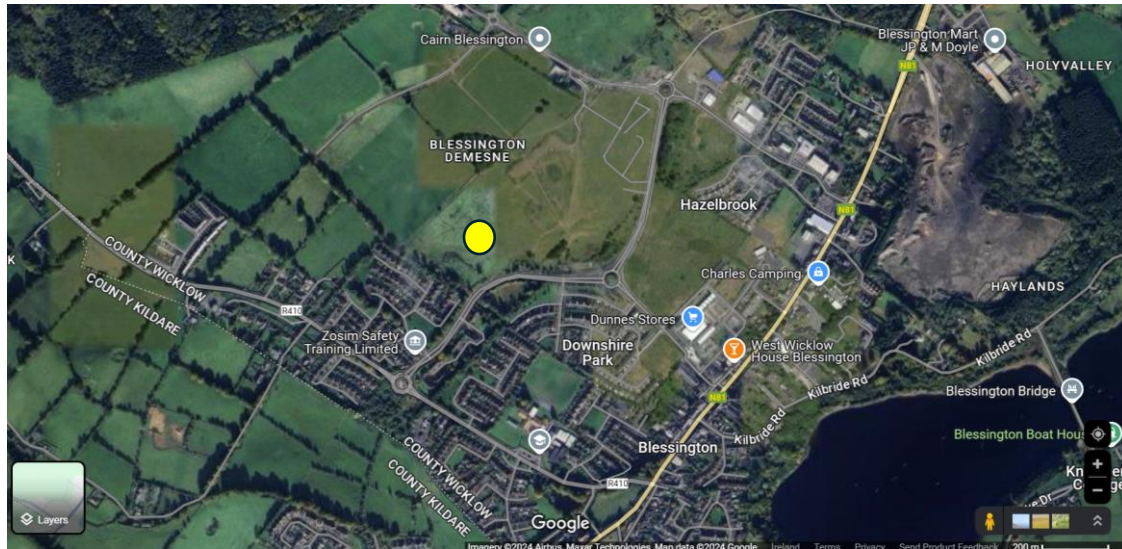
### Submission

Blessington straddles two counties, there would be merit in developing a joint LAP with the current plans not covering areas such as Kilmalum.

## File

Potential Track Location at Blessington Demense.pdf, 0.32MB





Potential Track Location at Blessington Demense



Example of a track in a suburban/ rural setting. Dundrum A.C South Dublin