



# Draft Wicklow Town – Rathnew LAP Submission - Report

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## Topic

Heritage / Biodiversity / Heritage Maps

## Submission

To whom it concerns,

Thank you for sparing the Fairy Tree and recognising its cultural significance to the area. It thankfully remains as a reminder to our ancient tradition of storytelling.

The late German farmer who for several decades owned the field where it stands was once asked why he didn't cut it down as it presented an obvious obstacle in the middle of the field. He replied saying that he had asked a few men from the village to cut it down but they refused because they didn't want to incur the wrath of the fairies. Pressed as to why he didn't just cut it down himself? He revealed that once he had heard the stories and folklore about the fairies he was cautious not to interfere with the tree for fear that there might be an element of truth to the tales.

This idea that a man originally from Germany can arrive and respect the local heritage of the place should serve as a lesson to us all.

There is a value in the old ways of "being" and "knowing" the world that can guide us in our contemporary lives. We live in an age that is under the spell that the only route to progress is through modernity, efficiency and numbers; but this is not the truth. We are the stories we tell about ourselves and the lessons we learn as we try to make sense of things. Unsurprisingly, there are other routes to progress; perhaps counter-intuitive; maybe less glamorous and with less fanfare, but progress nonetheless. Perhaps these other routes provide a deeper silent progress; the type of progress most of us really yearn for. Maybe this progress doesn't look shiny and sleek but instead it is rather old and gnarled?

And with that I will make an appeal on behalf of the old and gnarled trees that dwell amongst our community. Can the draft of the Wicklow Town – Rathnew Local Area Plan 2025 be amended to include a provision that requires planning submissions on zoned lands to accommodate the mature trees please? Far too often, planning applications are reducing sites to convenient blank canvasses, or the council are instructing applicants to remove trees. With careful tree management from a skilled and knowledgeable tree surgeon most hazards can be significantly reduced. The hedgerows of the fields that form the area where the recent development at Tinakilly Park has taken place contained impressive mature specimens of Scots Pine, Oak, Beech, Copper Beech, Sycamore and other species. They were all removed and the developer has now planted some "replacements". An important fact is that trees sequester two thirds of the carbon of their lifespans in the

final third of their lives, so retention of mature trees is extremely important. Obviously, it is easier to plan a development on a clean slate and the number of units can be maximised but overall the character and charm is diminished. Tinakilly Park would in my view look far more aesthetically pleasing if an effort had have been made to retain at least some of the trees within the development rather than just being bordered by them. This would have come at the cost of reducing the number of residential units but it would have been a worthwhile sacrifice.

So, once again in the name of a deeper silent progress I ask you to please include a provision which protects the mature trees of the community?

Thank you.

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