

KEEP KILCOOLE TIDY – NEWSLETTER 2018



Who We Are

Keep Kilcoole Tidy are a group of about twenty-five volunteers working to maintain and improve our village and surroundings. Every day we are out and about picking up litter, painting, planting, and working on projects to make Kilcoole a better place to live.

We urgently need volunteers!

You can get involved and share your ideas for Kilcoole by emailing us at kilcooletidytowns@gmail.com

2018 Tidy Towns Committee

Joseph Hunt	Litter, painting, strimming, streetscape maintenance
James Scott	Signs, newsletter, website, history
Hugh Guy	Funding applications, greenways
Aidan Smith	Walkways, trees, pollination project
Lorraine O'Toole	Secretary, finances
Tom Fortune	County council representative

What We've Done

Here are some of the things our group have accomplished in the last year, working with many other people in the community and with the county council.

- Picked litter every day on nine kilometres of roadside
- Received several grants to fund community projects
- Relaunched the Ballydonarea Walk with new surfacing, bridges, fencing and gates
- Installed fingerpost signs for heritage sites and walks
- Planted trees, painted walls, and removed graffiti
- Fenced the Mass Path to separate cattle from walkers
- Built our community website (kilcoole.ie)
- Planted a pollination project on Main Street
- Installed a new village information sign at the beach

What We're Working On

- Install a second information sign on Main Street
- Put up heritage information plaques at historic sites
- Continue to plant trees and pollinator-friendly flowers
- Work to establish environmentally-sensitive greenways from Kilcoole to Newtown, and to Greystones/Wicklow along the coast
- Improve waymarking along countryside walks connecting Kilcoole to surrounding villages
- Work with the council to ensure we have bins installed at litter hot spots
- Conduct an environmental survey of the Cannistown River (Kilcoole stream) and identify water improvement projects
- Work with other community groups to establish a community garden, orchard and allotments
- Commission artwork for the train station
- Develop improved public amenities in our open spaces, for example on the Upper Green
- Install benches at the playground and community centre
- Work with the council to widen footpaths along Main Street, and install a footpath along the lower Sea Road



New information sign and bin at beach car park

Nature and Wildlife

Justin Ivory

We are fortunate to have a wealth of wildlife and biodiversity on our doorstep, with a myriad of species to be seen and encountered.

With farmland, hedgerows, wooded demesnes and protected coastal areas beside us we have a wide selection of mammal species in the area – Badger, Fox, Rabbit, Stoat, Otter, Irish Hare, Hedgehog to name but a few. Bats and grey seal are common; harbour porpoise and bottlenose dolphin are spotted from time to time.



Well over 100 species of bird can be seen in the wider Kilcoole area. Geese, ducks and waders spend the winter, while little terns, swifts, swallows and passerines come in summer. We are very lucky to get so many species of birds of prey in the area – Buzzard, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Hen Harrier, Merlin, Peregrine, Red Kite, Barn Owl, Long-eared Owl and Short-eared Owl to name but a few.

There are 33 species of butterfly that are resident or regular migrants in Ireland. 14 species can be seen with relative ease during the summer months in Kilcoole, with several other species a possibility if you are lucky.

Of the 20 species of bumblebee recorded from Ireland, 6 species are easily found and relatively common in our village. In addition to the Honeybee, there are 77 solitary bee species to be found in Ireland. We get 11 damselflies and 17 dragonflies in Ireland. Common Darter, Common Hawker and Migrant Hawker are just 3 of the species that can easily be seen in the Kilcoole area.

Common Frog and Viviparous Lizard can be found locally. Smooth Newt is likely to also be present. It has been recorded at East Coast Nature Reserve.

The above might paint a wonderful picture, but in fact there are huge pressures and challenges for the wonderful biodiversity we have on our doorstep. An ever expanding urban area, hedgerows and grass margins being cut too severely and at the wrong times, increasing human population using our wild areas for recreation, a huge level of dog activity in the area, hunting, pollution from plastics and other sources, an increase in wild foraging and much more besides. And that is before we even look at larger challenges such as climate change!

We can all do small things to help, for example provide food and shelter for wildlife in our gardens (bird feeders, nest boxes, insect hotels, and bat boxes). Put in a small pond – brilliant for frogs, newts, damselflies and dragonflies. When deciding on plants for your garden, use species that are good for our pollinators – bumblebees, wasps, hoverflies and solitary bees – or plants that provide fruits, nuts, or berries. Avoid using weed-killers and slug pellets. If there are hedgehogs in your area feed them with cat/dog food and cut a small hole in your fence/gate so they can easily travel from one garden to the next.

Community Development Association

Tom Fortune

Tidy Towns are a sub-group of *Kilcoole Residents and Community Development Association*. KCDA was founded in 1999 as a limited company covered by charitable status. KCDA works on behalf of the community and is owned by the community.

Since 2004 KCDA has contributed to local area plans that affect Kilcoole. Groups aligned to KCDA include the Community Centre, Tidy Towns, Youth Cafe, Scout Group, Walking Group, and Playground. We facilitate a business expo event every two years.



Kilcoole Community Centre. Photo courtesy Chris Dobson

The members of the board are Tom Fortune, Mary Keddy, John Byrne, Colette Hunt, Sarah Donnelly, Declan Green, Mark Blake, Kathy Hoctor, Ger Bateman, John Kinsella, Mike O'Brien, James Scott, and Cliona Dodd. All of the board are members of various committees in our community. We have a number of volunteers that help with the centre, including: Martin Devitt, David Keddy, Maine Ni Shiodail, Doni Cullen, and Kevin Green.

Kilcoole has changed a lot over the years. Our population has grown from 500 to 4,200. We now have a large national school, a 700-student secondary school, church, community centre, and playground. We have over fifty different community groups.

Looking ahead there are lots of things we can achieve as a community. We would like to see all community committees, groups and clubs directly linked to KCDA. We have great people in our community, so let us all work together and make Kilcoole great.

Kilcoole Walkways

Aidan Smith

We can consider ourselves very fortunate in Kilcoole to have inherited several lovely walks that are the envy of neighbouring towns and villages. However, we tend to take them a little bit for granted and over time parts of these paths have become overgrown and prone to anti-social behaviour while other sections have been lost forever.

Kilcoole Walkways is a local group of volunteers formed under the umbrella of *Keep Kilcoole Tidy* to act as custodians of these paths and help maintain and promote them on behalf of our community. To this end, we have engaged with all landowners regarding public access and are in the process of getting official recognition from The National Trails Organisation as well as Public Liability insurance.

Kilcoole Walkways has carried out extensive re-surfacing on Ballydonarea Lane (Strawberry Lane). This walk runs from Lott Lane to the sea, and we have installed new footbridges and styles, put up cattle fencing, and planted trees. Signage, including fingerposts and way-markers, have been erected to direct walkers.

Our group also look after the Mass Path which starts at the Upper Green. We campaigned to have the section known as the Sally Walk fenced off from cattle and will be doing ongoing improvement works in the coming months.

Walks in Kilcoole

For detailed information about walks in Kilcoole, including maps and directions, visit www.kilcoole.ie.

Mass Path. From the Upper Green (opposite Nicky's) to Kilquade Church, with options to connect to Drummin, Delgany, Downs Hill, and the Sugarloaf

Ballydonarea Loop. From the beach car park to the village via a quiet laneway, and then back along Sea Road

Coastal walk north to Greystones, then connecting to the Cliff Walk and Bray

Coastal walk south to the Breaches, Newcastle and Wicklow



Mass Path starting at the Upper Green

Many people think the Mass Path ends at the Kilquade road, but turn right and 30m on you can take the path on your left. This will bring you right to the top of Farrankelly road. Directly opposite, signage directs the public along this ancient path to Drummin Lane. From here you have the choice to turn up Blackberry Lane to Delgany, connect to Glen of the Downs nature park or proceed along the historic route to Downs village.

We and other groups have campaigned for several years against Kelly's Drain Services who blocked off a section of path to Drummin Lane with steel palisade fencing. For two years the path was closed to the public, but a planning enforcement notice issued by Wicklow County Council has ordered them to dismantle the fencing, restore the path and uphold the public's right of access. Unfortunately, the fence remains in place and walkers should ignore the intimidating signage and proceed.

These ancient paths have been handed down to us for hundreds of years and we must as a community fight to keep them.

Walks are an important part of our heritage and we hope many of you will join us to improve, protect and enjoy them for years to come.



Kilquade Church

The start of the Mass Path has unfortunately been blighted by public drinking and littering over the years and it is high time we stood up as a community and put an end to it. It is an offense to drink on the Mass Path and we would urge all users to report immediately to our local Garda (666 5800) who have assured us they will act on any complaints.

History of Kilcoole: Did You Know?

James Scott

Kilcoole's Name. Kilcoole received its name from St Comghaill or Comgall. There are several people by that name in Irish history, the most famous of whom founded a monastery at Bangor, County Down in AD 555.

The name "Kilcoole" has been spelled many ways over its long history. Older spellings show that Kilcoole was once pronounced "kill-cole" rather than "kill-cool".

Cellcomgaill	AD 1179	Kilcowl	AD 1531
Killecohell	AD 1190	Kilcowill	AD 1533
Kilkoel	AD 1199	Kylcoyle	AD 1567
Killquoil	AD 1200	Killcoole	AD 1604
Kilcohul	AD 1216	Killcowle	AD 1619
Kilcowyl	AD 1280	Killcole	AD 1630
Kylcowyll	AD 1294	Killcool	AD 1685
		Kilcool	AD 1855

Rock of Kilcoole. This geologic feature is probably responsible for the location of the village, as it affords excellent views over the coastal plain and would have been valuable for defence in prehistoric times. The Rock is composed of the same material that makes up Sugarloaf and Bray head. *To visit the Rock, follow the laneway beside Nicky's.*



Rock of Kilcoole

Rebellions. Wicklow was a centre of resistance to many invaders through the years. A battle was fought at Kilcoole on 1st December 1641 during the rebellion against the English. Some local landowners were killed and their property seized during Cromwell's invasion starting in 1649. During the 1798 rebellion several Kilcoole residents died and the church at Kilquade was burned.

Horse races were often held at Kilcoole. The first written document describing a race meeting at Kilcoole is from 1771. Foot races were held too until recent times.

Holidays. After the coming of the railway in 1855, Kilcoole became a place for people from Dublin to holiday during the summer. Some of the old houses on Sea Road and at the beach were holiday homes for Dubliners escaping the unhealthy air of the city. A sanatorium for tuberculosis patients operated on Sea Road from 1907-1910.

Ancient Church. The medieval church (now ruined) near the base of the Rock dates from at least the 12th century and was probably a religious site earlier. Before the English Reformation, this was the parish church. The site was also associated with St Lughaidh, the bishop who ordained St Comghaill.



Church of St Comghaill

Mass Path. After the 1500s the church at Kilcoole declined and was eventually abandoned as a place of worship. The Catholic church in Kilquade, which has existed in some form at least since the 1600s, became the parish church. Generations of Catholics walked the Mass Path from Kilcoole to Kilquade, until a modern church was built in Kilcoole in 1968. Several of the mass paths leading to Kilquade remain popular walks today.

Shipwrecks frequently occurred up through the 1800s. The cargo and timber from wrecked ships washed up on shore and were auctioned off on the spot. Residents kept a lookout for ships in trouble and often assisted survivors.

Ballygannon. The O Byrne family lived at the end of Lott Lane near the coast in the 1600s. A sea captain named Hopton Scott was shipwrecked near Kilcoole and was given shelter by the O Byrne's. Scott married a daughter of the family and their descendants lived at Ballygannon until the early 1900s. The ruins of several large and beautiful stables are still visible from the coastal path. Many people in the village call Ballygannon "The Lost Village", as indeed the stable buildings remind one of a village street.



Ruins at Ballygannon Demesne