

Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031



2026-2031

HERITAGE



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council



Ceangal

Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta
A Heritage Council programme

“Time unfolds beauty, wonder, and mystery to reveal the auspicious tapestry of life.”

A.D. Posey

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Cathaoirleach

Foreword

I very much welcome the publication of the Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026–2031. This document sets out clear priorities for protecting and promoting the heritage that shapes our county - our landscapes, historic buildings, archaeological sites, traditions, and the stories that connect our communities.

The strategy has been developed with strong input from the public, community groups, and stakeholders across Monaghan. Their feedback highlighted the value people place on heritage and the need to ensure it is properly cared for, understood, and made accessible to everyone.

Over the next five years, the Council will work with partners and local communities to deliver practical actions that support conservation, build knowledge, and encourage engagement. I want to thank all those who contributed to the preparation of this strategy and who continue to support heritage initiatives across the county.

Cllr P.J. O'Hanlon

Cathaoirleach,

Monaghan County Council



Chief Executive

Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026–2031, which sets out a clear and practical framework to protect, manage and celebrate the rich built, natural and cultural heritage of our county over the next five years. Our heritage is central to who we are, reflected in our diverse landscapes, historic settlements, archaeological sites, natural environment and the cultural traditions that continue to flourish in our communities.

The preparation of this strategy has provided an important opportunity to better understand the condition of our heritage, the pressures it faces and the actions required to safeguard it for the future. Engagement with sectoral bodies, community groups and specialists has been invaluable in identifying gaps in our knowledge, highlighting areas where management can be strengthened, and shaping priorities that require coordinated action across Council services.

This strategy outlines practical objectives across five key themes: protecting heritage, building knowledge, supporting communities, strengthening partnerships and responding to climate challenges. It provides a strong framework to guide Council departments as they embed heritage into planning, regeneration, climate policy and community development.



We acknowledge the significant progress made under the previous plan and the vital contribution of volunteers, heritage groups, the Heritage Council and Council staff. Their dedication and expertise have been central to advancing heritage protection in Monaghan, and their continued commitment will be essential as we move into the next phase.

I wish to thank the Heritage Officer and all who contributed to the development of this strategy. Through collaboration and shared purpose, we can ensure that Monaghan's heritage remains a valued, resilient and celebrated resource for all who live in, work in and visit our county now and into the future.

Robert Burns
Chief Executive,
Monaghan County Council

Monaghan a **BRIEF** timeline



1

GEOLOGICAL ORIGINS

Over 400 million years ago

Much of Monaghan is made up of ancient limestone, shale and sandstone, formed when this area lay beneath a warm tropical sea. Later earth movements folded and tilted these rocks.



2

EARLY PREHISTORY (Ice Age & Post Ice Age)

c. 10,000 BCE and earlier

During the Ice Ages, powerful glaciers reshaped the land, creating Monaghan's rolling drumlins, lakes and bogs. Large animals such as the Giant Irish Elk (*Megaloceros Giganteus*) roamed this landscape.

Example: Giant Irish Elk antlers found on the Bath Estate in south Monaghan, now displayed in the Great Hall at Longleat House.



3

MESOLITHIC (Hunter Gatherers)

c. 8000 – 4000 BCE

Small groups of people began to use Monaghan's rivers and lakes seasonally, hunting, fishing and gathering wild plants.



4

NEOLITHIC (First Farmers)

c. 4000 – 2400 BCE

Farming reaches Monaghan. **Example:** Monanny, Carrickmacross – remains of three Neolithic houses discovered during the N2 roadworks.



5

BRONZE AGE

c. 2400 – 500 BCE

Metalworking developed. **Example:** Lisdrumturk Cauldron, found near Carrickmacross under deep bog, dating to around 800 BCE.



6

IRON AGE

c. 500 – 400 BCE

Large earthworks and boundaries appeared

Example: The Black Pig's Dyke/The Worm Ditch, a long linear earthwork running across southwest Monaghan.

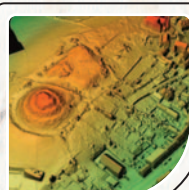


7

EARLY MEDIEVAL

c. 400 – 1160 CE

Ringforts, crannógs (lake dwellings) and monasteries became common. Christianity shaped settlement and learning. **Examples:** Lisanisk Crannóg, St. Daig's Inniskeen, The Clones Shrine, High Cross & Round Tower.



8

MEDIEVAL

c. 1160 – 1660 CE

Castles and towns developed following the Anglo Norman arrival. Gaelic lordships later declined during the Plantation of Ulster. **Examples:** Mannan Castle, Donaghmoynne, motte and bailey sites at Clones and Inniskeen.



9

18TH CENTURY

Large country houses and estates reshaped parts of the landscape. **Example:** Hope Castle, built in 1799 on the shores of Lough Muckno.



10

19TH CENTURY

Industry, canals and railways connected Monaghan to wider markets. Linen production became important. **Examples:** Ulster Canal, Ballybay-Clones railway, Mullan Village flax mill.

Heritage generally refers to the legacy of physical, cultural, and natural resources passed down through generations. It includes:

- ✿ **Cultural Heritage:** Traditions, language, music, crafts, literature, and social customs.
- ✿ **Built Heritage:** Historic buildings, monuments, and architectural features.
- ✿ **Natural Heritage:** Landscapes, biodiversity, geology and sites of ecological importance.
- ✿ **Intangible Heritage:** Skills, folklore, and practices that define a community's identity.

what is HERITAGE?

“In short, heritage is what we inherit from the past and value enough to preserve for the future. It shapes identity, fosters continuity, and connects people to their history and environment.”

In County Monaghan, heritage encompasses its distinctive drumlin landscape, archaeological sites, historic towns, and plantation-era architecture, alongside industrial relics, natural habitats, and vibrant cultural traditions. From early settlements and ecclesiastical remains to lacemaking and Patrick Kavanagh's literary legacy, Monaghan's heritage connects its past with its present and future.

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ibed as a collection of traditions
nd values passed down through

“Heritage is the legacy of the past, defining our present and shaping our future. It is often described as a collection of traditions, stories and values passed down through generations.”

HERITAGE

present and shaping our future
ditions, stories,
rough generations.

Heritage *in County* **Monaghan**

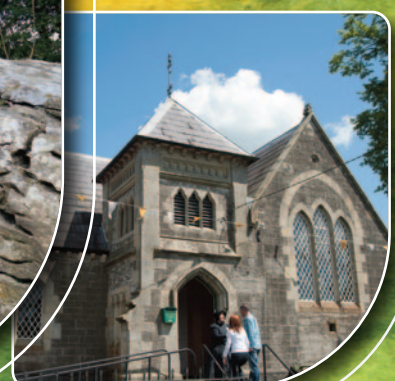


Muineachán means a place abundant in thickets. Over the millennia the county's unique landscape of drumlins, lakes, and wetlands has been shaped by the action of glacial ice, changing agricultural practices, settlement patterns, and development. The cross-cutting ribbed moraines or ridges near Scotshouse are a unique geological landscape feature, which form part of the largest field of this type of moraine found in the world.

The traces of early settlers remain in rock art at Drumirril, and the ringforts, cairns, crannógs and burial grounds scattered around the county. A notable feature is the Black Pig's Dyke Cláí na Muice Duibhe or Worm Ditch Cláí na Péiste, a group of linear earthworks running for almost 10km through southwest Monaghan. In various forms and names, it spans nine counties in total and dates from over two thousand years ago (the late Iron Age). Locally the name comes from a folk tradition that the landscape was torn up by an angry, mystical marauding schoolteacher turned pig.

The county has numerous early ecclesiastical sites, associated with various Irish saints. While St Maeldoid founded a church near Lough Muckno in the 7th Century, there was a monastic site in the town of Carrickmacross referred to as Cell Rois around the same period. Saint Tiarnach established a Church and monastery named Cluain Eois in the 6th Century in Clones, which has a long history of being at the centre of cultural, religious, social and commercial life, as evidenced by the Round Tower and Abbey, the High Cross, and the Ring Fort. Today, the graveyards and funerary monuments of the County such as those at Tydavnet, are of national interest from a heritage perspective.

Monaghan's historic towns have a rich history still very prominent today in their physical fabric. Clones has a well-preserved Motte and Bailey, built during the Anglo-Norman period and there are references to settlement in Monaghan Town in the fourteenth century when the McMahon family resided in a crannóg on Convent Lake.





“OUR DIVERSE HERITAGE
CREATES OUR COUNTY'S
UNIQUE IDENTITY AND
OUR SENSE OF PLACE.”



The location of Monaghan, in Ulster and on the border contributes to the county's unique identity and sense of place. Monaghan Town displays some characteristics associated with Ulster plantation era towns, with its central diamond or market square. Castleblayney's development is also associated with the plantation of Ulster which saw the Blayney family granted lands forfeited from the MacMahons resulting in the construction of Blayney Castle - an early 17th century bawn and fortified house. Another Planter's castle erected and garrisoned by English settlers in the 17th century overlooks O' Duffy's Street in Clones. In terms of commerce Carrickmacross was a noted market town from the 16th century and housed the main pig and butter market for the region. The 18th Century saw industries grow in the town including bakeries, distilleries, a brewery, a tan yard, and a tobacco manufacturer.

The Fever Hospital, Workhouse, and old famine graveyard "*Bully's Acre*" in Carrickmacross reflect the profound impact of the Great Famine, *an Gorta Mór* on the local community in the following century, when the population of Monaghan plummeted.

Ballybay served as a hub for markets, fairs, and public gatherings, hosting events for local organisations and societies. Skilled tradespeople such as blacksmiths, saddlers, and carpenters maintained carts and carriages, and these traditional crafts remain an important part of the county's heritage. Monaghan's industrial heritage encompasses its linen production, the social history tied to mills and local placenames, as well as surviving features of the Great Northern Railway and the Ulster Canal.



The Ulster Canal opened in 1841 followed by the construction of the railway line from Dundalk to Enniskillen via Ballybay and Clones in 1854, which carried passengers, livestock, fuel, and goods. The restored Ulster Canal Stores and the railway turntable building remain today. Mullan village, site of a 19th century flax mill, is one of the few well-preserved examples of early rural industrial development in existence in Ireland.

Carrickmacross lacemaking, another traditional craft long associated with Monaghan originated in the early 1820's inspired by Italian lace of that era. Lacemaking was a source of income for rural families, and the craft lives on today with both traditional and contemporary designs available from the Gallery in Carrickmacross.

Monaghan has some fine examples of “*Big Houses*” and designed landscapes or demesnes which reflect the system of land ownership in Ireland from the 17th to 19th Century including Castle Leslie, Hope Castle,

Hilton Park, Dartrey Estate and Rossmore Park (in some cases the original houses have been demolished, but aspects of the demesne landscape remain).

In terms of architectural heritage Monaghan has 20 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and one proposed ACA, recognised as having special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest. Most ACAs are in the town centres of Monaghan, Carrickmacross and Clones. Glaslough Village is also designated as an Area of Architectural Heritage.

As well as seven hundred Protected Structures ranging from industrial and religious buildings and houses to post boxes, stone bridges and water pumps, there are also houses and outbuildings of distinctive traditional styles dotted across the landscape. These homes were built using readily available materials, designed with traditional skills and materials which reflect the individual way of life and unique character of previous generations. In 2021-22 a survey of built heritage noted seven thatched properties in Monaghan.

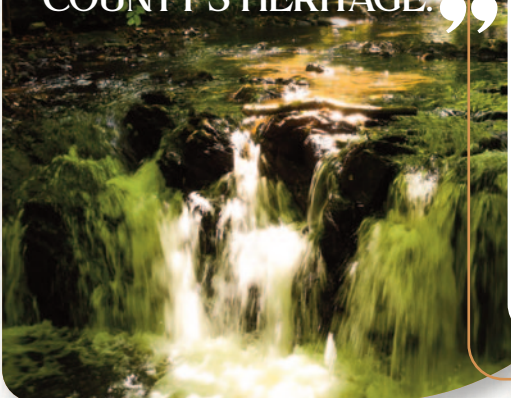
Actions to protect natural heritage and biodiversity, a key aspect of the County's heritage, will be covered under the separate Monaghan County Council Local Area Biodiversity Action Plan 2026-2031. Sites protected at EU level because of their conservation value include the Kilroosky Lough Cluster, Clones (a habitat for white clawed Crayfish). Sliabh Beagh provides a breeding area for Hen Harrier, and an important habitat for other birds including Greenland White Fronted Geese. At national level, the Eshbrack Bog on Sliabh Beagh is designated as

a Natural Heritage Area, because it is a key area of blanket bog and a site of high conservation value. Lough Muckno with its lakes, drumlins, wooded parkland, and integral location within Castleblayney is designated as an Area of Primary Amenity Value. Rossmore Park south of Monaghan town (purchased from the barony of Rossmore in 1950) has been replanted with broad-leaved and conifer species by Coillte and now provides a habitat for wildlife as well as woodlands and lakeshore walks.

There is a strong and vibrant Irish language community in Monaghan and the rich cultural heritage, and social history of the county encompass traditional farming methods and skills such as thatch, the céilí houses, traditional music and poetry. Patrick Kavanagh, one of the country's best-known poets, was born in Inniskeen in 1904 and worked on a small farm. Kavanagh drew inspiration from the landscape and community around him and wrote of the ploughman and the stony grey soil – "*Billy Brennan's Barn*" is one of his best loved works.



“OUR NATURAL HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY ARE KEY ASPECTS OF OUR COUNTY'S HERITAGE.”



County Monaghan's *Protected* Heritage



700
PROTECTED
STRUCTURES



1365
RECORDED
MONUMENTS



7
NATIONAL
MONUMENTS



2
SPECIAL
PROTECTION AREAS



1
SPECIAL AREA OF
CONSERVATION



7
NATURAL HERITAGE
AREA (and 38 proposed)



20
COUNTY
GEOLOGICAL
SITES



10
HISTORIC HOUSES
AND DESIGNED
LANDSCAPES



1
COUNTY
MUSEUM

About the Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031

This document is a county-wide strategy led by Monaghan County Council that sets objectives for the identification, protection, conservation, management, enhancement, and interpretation of the built, natural, and cultural heritage of the County.

Preparing the strategy helps to identify heritage issues and needs in the county, and to address them locally, within a regional and national framework.

Every five years a new County Heritage Strategy is prepared and implemented, based on the outcome of consultation and ongoing evaluation. An Annual Action Plan will set out specific projects and actions needed to deliver the objectives in the strategy. The Local Area Biodiversity Action Plan sets out in detail the actions that will be taken to deliver objectives (highlighted purple) relating to protection of biodiversity.

How is the Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031 delivered?

Delivering the strategy involves collaboration and partnership by a range of stakeholders, underpinned by the principle of shared stewardship of heritage.

Monaghan County Council

The Heritage Officer oversees and manages the development and implementation of the County Heritage Strategy. Monaghan County Council has other professional staff working across a range of departments that have a role in delivery of heritage services across the County, including the Biodiversity Officer, County Museum Curator, Architectural Conservation Officer, and County Archivist (latter two pending appointment at time of writing).

Management and protection of the County's heritage assets and community engagement also involve cross departmental collaboration with various teams within the Council e.g. climate action, planning, town regeneration, arts, tourism, and libraries.

The process of developing this strategy included conducting a pre-draft consultation through an online survey on Monaghan County Council consultation portal, written submissions, and public information sessions in libraries (Clones, Monaghan, and Carrickmacross). The Draft County Heritage Strategy was then put out to consultation, finalised following a review of submissions received, and approved by Monaghan County Council.

The Heritage Council is a statutory body established under the Heritage Act 1995 with a mission to engage, educate and advocate to develop a wider understanding of the vital contribution that heritage makes to social, environmental, and economic well-being. The Heritage Council is a key national partner, as it provides technical and financial support to develop and deliver heritage plans. Heritage Officers are employed by local authorities in partnership with the Heritage Council under the auspices of the Ceangal Programme.

Monaghan Heritage Forum is an advisory group, which provides advice on the preparation and implementation of the County Heritage Strategy. The Heritage Forum is made up of representatives of organisations and groups involved with Monaghan's heritage e.g., state agencies and bodies which have a heritage remit, Councillors, non-governmental organisations and representatives of community groups (a list of members is available in Appendix 3).

The wider community play a crucial role in stewardship of the rich heritage of the County. Monaghan benefits from a strong and active community of interested individuals, heritage and community groups, and volunteers who cherish Monaghan's heritage and are keen to record, protect and celebrate it at a local level.



“Delivering the strategy involves collaboration and partnership by a range of stakeholders, underpinned by the principle of shared stewardship of our heritage.”

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

A pre-draft public consultation took place to facilitate individual members of the community, interested groups, and organisations to share their views and ideas on priority themes for the next County Heritage Strategy and to assist with identifying local issues and needs.

An online survey was available on the Monaghan County Council Consultation Portal from 12 June to 8 August 2025. The survey was promoted through social media, in local newspapers, in libraries, through the members of Monaghan Heritage Forum and to organisations in the Public Participation Network.

A series of County Heritage Strategy public information drop-in sessions were hosted by the Heritage Officer in Monaghan, Clones and Carrickmacross library branches during June 2025. In total forty-four responses to the survey and four written submissions were received from individual members of the community, heritage, arts, and community development groups, historical societies, Tidy Towns groups and public bodies. Additional written submissions were received during the second round of consultation in response to the draft strategy.

The consultation process revealed that heritage is seen as important for a myriad of reasons, primarily related to the stories of the community or social history, and the role heritage plays in connecting us to a place and enhancing where we live. There is strong awareness among the majority of survey respondents that heritage is important because once lost, it cannot be replaced.

A number of priority themes emerged during consultation including protecting heritage and supporting community engagement. There is strong support for prioritising the conservation of the County's heritage, particularly archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and architectural heritage. Protecting and celebrating cultural heritage including folklore, stories, traditions, language, place names, songs, poems, and traditional crafts and skills were also frequently ranked as a high priority.

Supporting communities to actively engage with local heritage and enabling access for everyone were also seen as a priority; raising awareness, celebrating and communicating heritage are also key. The need to engage young people in ways they find interesting and relevant was highlighted. The importance of providing everyone with opportunities to connect to heritage through engagement that reaches people living in rural areas and people from all cultural backgrounds and ages was raised.

The main threats and challenges to the heritage of the County are perceived as lack of awareness or knowledge of heritage and its value, lack of engagement and education and lack of interest in heritage. This is seen as having negative impacts on biodiversity and resulting in a loss of intangible heritage including folklore, traditions and the stories of older generations, which are unrecorded. Suggestions to address barriers to engagement again highlight the need for outreach and education for schools, landowners and the wider community.

Concern was expressed about the threat posed to heritage by pressure from residential, commercial and agricultural development, loss of older buildings and poor land use planning. Lack of funding for restoration and maintenance, and the negative impacts of climate change on built and natural heritage sites are also causing concern.

The key themes that emerged in respondents' comments on what would make it easier for them to connect with heritage included better communication and promotion, and a county-wide calendar of events. Opportunities for interested groups and individuals to meet or network, take part in training, and attend or host events supported by the Heritage Section would be welcome.

There is strong interest among survey respondents in community-based heritage training and projects, which would increase capacity for recording, protecting and stewardship at local level e.g., local history research, recording headstones, collecting folklore and placenames, and community archaeology projects.

Ideas for heritage projects or resources shared by those consulted, and within the remit of the Heritage Section, have been recorded and will be considered when developing annual operational plans.

“HERITAGE PLAYS A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONNECTING US TO A PLACE AND ENHANCING WHERE WE LIVE.”



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LAST PLAN

The Monaghan Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025 set out thirteen thematic areas of focus ranging from climate change mitigation through heritage conservation to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Considerable progress has been made across multiple themes since 2020, most notable in biodiversity conservation, wetland protection, Conservation Management Plans, and capital works to historic graveyards and churches and heritage surveys as well as production of heritage publications and podcasts.

The successful appointment of a Climate Action Team and Biodiversity Officer in 2023, significantly strengthened Monaghan County Council's expertise for heritage protection and management and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Local Biodiversity Action Framework (LBAF) project, commenced in summer 2025, will deliver a comprehensive two-year assessment of county biodiversity assets.

In terms of built heritage, a critical capacity gap can now be addressed as Monaghan County Council has secured part-funding for an Architectural Conservation Officer, which will enable more progress on delivering objectives and actions in this strategy which relate to built heritage. The Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 includes recommendations for a review of the Record of Protected Structures as well as a review of Architectural Conservation Areas in the County.

Strong cross-jurisdictional relationships have developed with councils in Northern Ireland and cross-border workshops and public events support community engagement.

Public engagement has been particularly successful with the **"*Magic under Monaghan*"** film, annual World Wetlands Day celebrations, publication of the Beginner's Wetland Manual, and establishment of the Fearghal Duffy Memorial Award recognising outstanding biodiversity recorders. Capacity building continues through bat and bee workshops and the formation of a local Bat Group.

Other successful biodiversity related initiatives included practical workshops on traditional hedge planting and laying, which successfully transferred skills to landowners and the Heritage at the Heart podcast series and Mart TV films which

communicated hedgerows' landscape significance. A key achievement was the publication of the Flora of Monaghan book which documents over 1200 plant species and highlights the county's rich biodiversity.

In terms of the archaeology of the county the publication of *Materialising Power - **The Archaeology of the Black Pig's Dyke*** represents a significant achievement, creating a permanent research record for the site. Since its establishment in 2020 Community Monuments Funding has been secured from the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage for conservation works at Killeevan Abbey, Old Errigal Truagh, Tydavnet old graveyard, and St Patrick's Holy Well, Clonfad and Conservation Management Plans have been completed for many of the council owned historic churches and graveyards.

The historic graveyard network is growing stronger and more connected through initiatives such as digital survey and recording and care and conservation workshops as well as Heritage Week walks and talks and there is significant local interest in famine era burial grounds. Progress has been made in the research and understanding of these sites including drone and LiDAR (remote sensing technology) surveys of Bully's Acre in Carrickmacross and Mousewood in Monaghan.

Progress continues in terms of conservation management planning for demesnes and estates through the previously completed report for Rossmore Park and the forthcoming Muckno Masterplan, with further liaison and collaboration through productive relationships established with landowners and with colleagues in tourism and planning.

The holy wells survey was published as the latest volume of the Heritage Series in 2025, and the Field Names project continues to actively collect and expand its efforts across the county. Musical heritage research has been supported through the publication of a book on the music of Sliabh Beagh, and Heritage Week talks address a range of other intangible heritage topics.

“ WE ADDRESS HERITAGE CONSERVATION
AS WELL AS THE PRESERVATION OF
OUR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE. ”



“ From heritage publications, podcasts, events
and films to the community taking practical
steps to protect and conserve local
monuments, here are some examples of
projects that happened over the lifetime of
the Monaghan Biodiversity and Heritage
Strategic Plan 2020-2025. ”

MATERIALISING POWER – THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE BLACK PIG'S DYKE



Published in 2021 (funded by the Heritage Council and Monaghan County Council) this book offers a fresh perspective on linear earthworks, an overlooked but fascinating form of prehistoric field monument. The Black Pig's Dyke in County Monaghan is one of the best-preserved and largest examples of this monument type in Europe. The book includes a review of prehistoric linear earthworks in Ireland and offers new insights into their purpose and role in late prehistoric settlement patterns and societies.

HERITAGE AT THE HEART PODCASTS

The popular Heritage at the Heart podcast (*now in its sixth series*) features local people, custodians, and heritage specialists, and brings the listener a mix of discussions and stories. *The series explores Monaghan's heritage from Carrickmacross Workhouse, Mullan Mills and Shanco Church to the Black Pigs Dyke, vernacular houses, and a farmer who keeps Dexter cattle on Sliabh Beagh to help with conservation.*

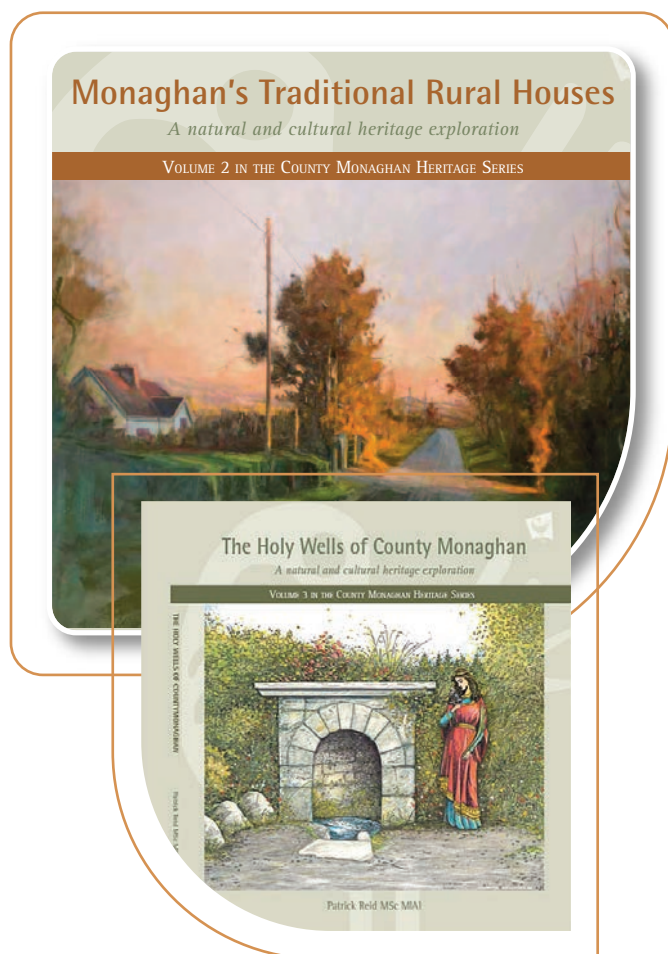
There are also interviews with people involved in traditional trades like Blacksmith Peter Cassidy, at work in his forge just outside Monaghan town. Each fifteen-minute episode is accompanied by specially commissioned music by Monaghan composer Michael Gallen.

MAGIC UNDER MONAGHAN

Magic under Monaghan is an educational short film, exploring and highlighting the peatlands and wetlands of Monaghan. The film was shot on location at Sliabh Beagh, Monaghan's only expanse of blanket bog habitat and home to rare and unusual species including the Hen Harrier and insect-eating Sundew plant. John Sharpson (also known as Múinteoir John from the RTE schools' hub) takes young viewers on a journey to explore the role peatlands and fens play not just as habitats, but in storing carbon and tackling climate change. The film, which highlights the importance of peatland restoration as one of the nature-based solutions for the climate crisis was funded through Monaghan's Creative Ireland programme, produced by Macalla and led by the Heritage Office.



THE HERITAGE SERIES



Two additional publications were produced as part of the heritage series under the Monaghan Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025. This series, which explores Monaghan's heritage is produced and published by the Heritage Section and funded by both Monaghan County Council and the Heritage Council.

The second volume in the Heritage Series, which looks at Monaghan's Traditional Rural Houses, is both a celebration and a call to action. The book traces the evolution of rural houses from simple byre-dwellings to long cottages or two-storey farmhouses. Features that now seem quirky but once had functional uses like jamb walls and spy windows are explained, together with characteristic windows, doors and house layouts. There are inspiring stories of re-use and successful restorations, which demonstrate that vacant traditional houses can once again be vibrant, comfortable homes.

The third volume of the series, launched in 2025, is on the Holy Wells of County Monaghan, and was published as a result of a 2021 county wide survey. This involved recording the associated saints, beliefs and practices, local knowledge, current conditions and providing recommendations.

NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK AWARDS - IRISH LANGUAGE EVENT WINNER FOR AR THÓIR AIRGÍALLA

In 2024, the Heritage Section alongside Déaglán Ó Doibhlin (Mid-Ulster District Council) and Brian Mac Domhnaill (author and local historian) won the National Heritage Week Award for best event in the Irish Language Category for Air Thóir Airghíalla – In Search of Airghíalla. In keeping with the 2024 Heritage Week theme Connections, Networks and Routes this was a cross-border, bilingual event which explored archaeological sites, boundaries and landscapes associated with the ancient kingdom of Airghíalla (Oriel) which spans parts of the modern-day counties of Tyrone, Monaghan and Armagh.



THE COMMUNITY MONUMENTS FUND, MONAGHAN PROJECTS



The Community Monuments Fund (CMF) was established by National Monuments Service in 2020 and aims to conserve, maintain, protect, and promote local archaeological monuments and historic sites.

In 2025 Monaghan County Council was awarded additional funding under the Community Monuments Fund for restoration works at Saint Laobhán's Church, Killeevan Abbey, which enabled commissioning of a comprehensive arborist report to assess the condition of trees on the grounds, tree maintenance work, and repairs to a damaged section of the boundary wall.



ST. PATRICK'S HOLY WELL

The Heritage Section also supported Killeevan Heritage Group in their successful application for funding to enhance St. Patrick's Holy Well in Clonfad near Scotshouse. The project reinstated public access to the well and developed appropriate interpretative materials to educate visitors about its historical significance. The cooperation and goodwill of the landowner have been instrumental in making this project possible.



OLD ERRIGAL TRUAGH AND TYDAVNET BURIAL GROUND CONSERVATION

In 2025 Monaghan County Council's Heritage Section was awarded funding to develop a Conservation Management Plan for Tydavnet burial ground and continue restoration works at Old Errigal Truagh graveyard. The latter is an important early medieval church site and has benefitted greatly from the Community Monuments Fund, which has enabled conservation of both upstanding gable walls and removal of vegetation overgrowth from the Singleton and the Anketell burial enclosures.



“A concerted effort to preserve our heritage is a vital link to our cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational and economic legacies - all of the things that quite literally make us who we are.”

Steve Berry

An overview of the policy context for the **Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031**

The Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031 is influenced by or aligned with a range of policies relating to heritage, planning and development, biodiversity and climate change at international, national and local level (*See Appendix 3 for details of key policies*).

At County level the Monaghan County Development Plan 2025-2031 provides an overall strategy for proper planning and sustainable development. The Plan recognises the importance of our heritage in terms of placemaking and the community, climate adaptation and mitigation, and the economy and tourism. Other Monaghan County Council policies and plans in the areas of regeneration, tourism, culture and creativity, arts, outdoor recreation, libraries and the County Museum support the protection, celebration and promotion of heritage and community engagement in this regard.

At national level, The Heritage Act 1995 is a key piece of legislation that promotes public interest in and knowledge, appreciation, and protection of heritage. Other national policies that frame how we protect and manage our heritage include Heritage Ireland 2030 and Our Place in Time -The Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028. These policies provide a framework for the protection, conservation, promotion and management of Ireland's heritage.

At an international level, the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership to end poverty, protect the planet and move towards prosperity for all by 2031. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) published a policy on harnessing the power of heritage to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

Loss of biodiversity is causing major concern globally and a range of policies and legislative instruments aim to address the issue. The EU Birds and Habitats Directives require Ireland to designate areas for the protection of birds and prime wildlife conservation areas. At a national level the fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2031 strives for a ***“whole of government, whole of society”*** approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. Other policies and legislation such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the Wildlife Act also shape the approach to the protection of biodiversity. At county level the Local Biodiversity Action Plan sets out actions for protecting, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity across County Monaghan up to 2031.

The climate crisis cuts across policy at all levels as we attempt to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. At international level Ireland is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Conference of the Parties (COP) meets every year to assess progress made in achieving this objective. At a national level the Climate Action Plan, which is published annually, sets out how we will achieve our national targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and increased energy efficiency by 2050. The delivery of national emissions targets is translated at county level in the Monaghan County Climate Action Plan 2024-2029.



<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>¹

¹ The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

MISSION

To safeguard, celebrate, and sustainably manage Monaghan's rich natural, built, and cultural heritage through collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and community engagement, ensuring it thrives for present and future generations.

VISION

A county where heritage is valued as a cornerstone of identity, wellbeing, and sustainable development - connecting people to place, inspiring creativity, and fostering resilience in the face of environmental and social change.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1

PROTECT AND ADVOCATE

Lead the conservation and sustainable management of Monaghan's heritage assets, embedding heritage considerations into planning, policy, and decision-making.

2

GROW KNOWLEDGE

Strengthen research, data collection, and interpretation to inform evidence-based decisions and make heritage knowledge accessible to all.

3

EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

Enable inclusive engagement with heritage through education, events, citizen science, and support for local stewardship initiatives.

4

NURTURE PARTNERSHIPS

Build strong collaborations across local, national, and cross-border stakeholders to enhance heritage protection, promotion, and innovation.

5

BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Integrate nature-based solutions and sustainable practices into heritage management to mitigate climate impacts and protect biodiversity.

1 PROTECT AND ADVOCATE

We will lead the management and protection of Monaghan's archaeological, architectural, cultural and natural heritage by building capacity, working across the Council to embed effective stewardship of heritage into policy, adopting and promoting best practice and advocating for heritage to be fully considered in decision making processes.

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
Strengthen capacity to meet growing demand for heritage services by securing additional resources and staffing to enable stronger compliance with legislation and policy and enabling the effective delivery of the County Heritage Strategy.	<i>Expanded capacity and enhanced delivery of heritage services.</i>
Embed heritage considerations in planning and policy decision making by collaborating across Council Departments to protect, manage and promote assets.	<i>Heritage policy is reflected in all Council programmes and plans.</i>
Explore alternative funding sources and diversified funding streams for protection, interpretation, access, engagement and sustainable management of Monaghan's heritage.	<i>Increased resources to meet demand.</i>
Collaborate with owners and custodians to conserve archaeological monuments through the Community Monuments Fund.	<i>Community partnerships safeguard archaeological monuments, improving their condition and long-term protection.</i>
Promote Conservation Management Plans as best practice in protecting and sustainably managing significant sites. Collate and prioritise works recommended in existing Conservation Management Plans e.g. historic graveyards.	<i>Improved protection and sustainable management of significant heritage sites.</i>
Work collaboratively with the Planning Department, Municipal Districts, Regeneration Team and Architectural Conservation Officer, to support heritage led regeneration of towns and villages.	<i>Revitalised historic streetscapes.</i>
Encourage uptake of measures to promote and demonstrate the sustainable re-use of historic buildings in our towns and rural landscape e.g. through the Historic Towns Initiative ² , The Town and Village Renewal Scheme ³ and the Croí na Cónaithe Scheme ⁴ .	<i>Historic buildings in towns and rural areas are sustainably reused.</i>
Promote best practice in traditional skills and encourage upskilling of custodians and those working in the construction sector to carry out appropriate and sensitive repair works to historic buildings e.g., through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme ⁵ .	<i>Increased availability and application of traditional skills, enabling sensitive and appropriate repair of historic buildings.</i>
Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems in Monaghan through effective policy, land management, and community-led conservation.	<i>Enhanced biodiversity and healthier ecosystems across Monaghan.</i>
Monaghan County Council to lead the way by mainstreaming biodiversity into policies and strategies, ensuring biodiversity is at the heart of all decision making, land management and community engagement efforts.	<i>Biodiversity integrated into all Council policies driving sustainable land management.</i>
Look for opportunities to promote and include the Irish language in heritage events, resources or projects.	<i>Irish language incorporated into heritage events, resources, and projects to strengthen cultural identity.</i>

² The Historic Towns Initiative aims to provide support to historic towns engaged in a programme of heritage-led regeneration and is operated by the Heritage Council in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

³ The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is designed to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre economic and social vibrancy and regeneration in line with the Town Centre First policy.

⁴ The Croí Cónaithe (Cities) Scheme is a vacant property refurbishment grant to bring vacant properties back into residential use.

⁵ The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) is for the repair and conservation of structures that are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and supports the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment.

2 GROW KNOWLEDGE

Current, accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the condition and significance of the County's heritage assets enables evidence-based decision making and supports advocacy for appropriate management and protection. We will work collaboratively with stakeholders to update, expand and share research and data on heritage to address knowledge gaps, while enhancing access to heritage knowledge for the public.

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
Explore working in partnership with third level institutions to address identified research and knowledge gaps e.g. DCU for field names research and collection. Continue to expand the Monaghan Field Names Project to the rest of the county and develop new strands such as schools project and work towards a publication on the findings. Develop a systematic approach to collection of folklore, traditions, cures and vernacular language with reference to UCD Dúchas National folklore collection for best practice. Conduct an audit of oral history and folklore collections in the county.	<i>Strengthened local heritage knowledge.</i>
Leverage the opportunities presented by digital technology to share heritage research and knowledge and information more widely e.g. the development of storymaps for historic sites, such as historic graveyards.	<i>Digital tools expand access to heritage knowledge.</i>
Identify and conduct thematic surveys aimed at addressing knowledge gaps for specific archaeological site types such as crannógs, cilínís, and lesser-known historic features such as flax holes, eel weirs, sweat houses, border infrastructure etc.	<i>Enhanced recording and awareness of unique structures and monuments.</i>
Support the review, maintenance and updating of the Record of Protected Structures in the county in consultation with the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Support the review and updating of Architectural Conservation Areas within the County. And work towards developing consistent and sympathetic public realm design palettes for Monaghan's towns.	<i>Up to date, accurate data supports effective protection measures.</i>
Develop a Monaghan Historic Shopfront guidance document in collaboration with Architectural Conservation Officer.	<i>Supports sensitive restoration and preserves streetscape character.</i>
Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity in Monaghan by conducting a comprehensive biodiversity audit, identifying, recording, and mapping the full range of species, habitats, and ecosystems present in Monaghan, including those that are under threat or poorly understood.	<i>Ecological data informs evidence-based decision-making.</i>
Ensure that any data collected is provided to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversity data) and to the Heritage Council directly (for all other data).	<i>Integrated and up to date records support national objectives.</i>

3 EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

The community of Monaghan is the heart of the County's cultural heritage and has a crucial role to play in protecting biodiversity and built heritage. We will provide and promote opportunities for the whole community to engage, learn about, celebrate and protect the heritage that's on our doorstep. We will foster awareness and Community led stewardship, through relevant and appealing events, networks, citizen science projects, best practice guidance and advice, training and funding opportunities, and improved access to heritage assets and information.

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
Support delivery of a diverse, inclusive, county wide events programme open to all, for National Heritage Week, National Biodiversity Week and encourage schools to avail of the Heritage in Schools Scheme ⁶ .	<i>Communities and students connected with heritage and biodiversity.</i>
Encourage and support stewardship of heritage by the community and landowners at local level through participation in schemes such as Adopt a Monument ⁷ , the Community Monuments Fund ⁸ and Community Heritage Grants Scheme ⁹ .	<i>Shared responsibility for conservation and long-term protection of local heritage assets.</i>
Develop a toolkit with guidance and equipment to facilitate citizen science projects on recording, mapping and digitisation of heritage e.g., historic graveyards.	<i>Communities equipped with skills and resources to lead heritage initiatives.</i>
Promote measures that support owners to protect vernacular and traditional buildings and to adopt best practice in conservation and maintenance.	<i>Reverse the loss of traditional buildings and historic fabric.</i>
Explore and support initiatives that enhance physical, digital, and virtual access to Monaghan's heritage sites.	<i>Improved and inclusive access to heritage sites.</i>
Raise awareness of and support access to local history archives for the community.	<i>Better research opportunities and increased knowledge of our past.</i>
Promote awareness and appreciation of the geological heritage of the County and County Geological Sites through Heritage Week events, talks or guided tours highlighting important features e.g., drumlinised ribbed moraines and cave systems.	<i>Increased awareness of Monaghan's unique geology.</i>
Support inclusive community engagement with local heritage by using creativity as a catalyst to highlight and celebrate social history, the role of women, traditional crafts, an Ghaeilge, music, folklore, and the county's industrial, literary, and artistic heritage.	<i>Under-served audiences engaged.</i>
Connect people to nature by empowering communities in Monaghan to become stewards through increased awareness, engagement and appreciation of biodiversity e.g., developing green spaces and community gardens, awareness, education, outdoor experiences, and active involvement in conservation efforts.	<i>Active participation and ownership of outcomes.</i>

⁶ The Heritage Council's Heritage in Schools Scheme provides a panel of 160 Heritage Specialists who visit primary schools in-person and virtually throughout the country. The visit is part-funded by both the school and the Heritage Council.

⁷ The Heritage Council's Adopt a Monument Scheme helps communities become actively involved in the conservation and interpretation of their local archaeological and cultural heritage sites.

⁸ The Community Monuments Fund (CMF) was established by National Monuments Service in 2020 and aims to conserve, maintain, protect and promote local archaeological monuments and historic sites.

⁹ The Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grants Scheme is an annual grant scheme for community groups and not-for-profit non-governmental organisations around the country for heritage projects.

4 NURTURE PARTNERSHIPS

We will work collaboratively with stakeholders in the public, private and community sectors at local, national and cross-border levels to enable more effective protection, management, research, and promotion of heritage.

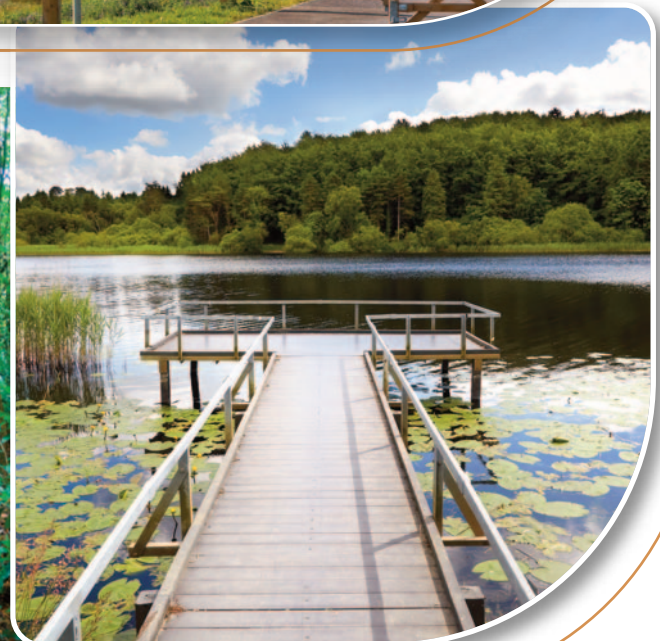
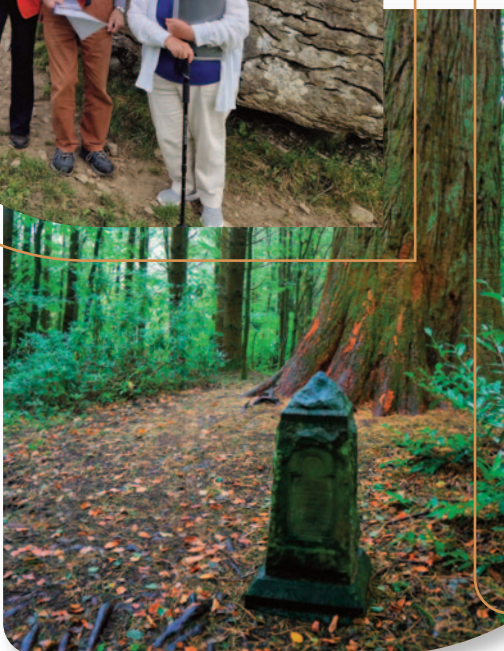
PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
Maintain and further develop cross border links with relevant agencies, local authorities and communities to support heritage initiatives e.g. through Shared Island- Home Place funding.	<i>Joint cross-border heritage initiatives between local authorities and communities.</i>
Foster strong partnerships with stakeholders at local and national levels across public, private, and community sectors to champion heritage conservation and promotion through shared expertise, collaboration, and innovative initiatives.	<i>Collaboration resulting in better outcomes for heritage protection, access and engagement.</i>
Collaborate across council departments including museum, libraries, arts, tourism, regeneration, climate, biodiversity, and environmental services to deliver integrated heritage initiatives. Foster partnerships that enhance cultural preservation, promote sustainability, and support community engagement e.g. the Community Archaeology project with the Museum.	<i>Collaborative partnerships amplify resources and expertise, resulting in a greater number and impact of heritage initiatives.</i>
Facilitate and strengthen stakeholder engagement to ensure that protection of biodiversity is integrated into all sectors, from agriculture and forestry to urban planning and tourism by enabling collaboration and knowledge sharing.	<i>Biodiversity protection is embedded across key sectors.</i>
Work with stakeholders who engage underserved audiences such as youth, schools, community groups, and cultural services to co-create meaningful heritage experiences.	<i>Increased engagement and representation in heritage initiatives.</i>



5 BUILD CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate change and biodiversity loss are major challenges globally. To build climate resilience we will work towards assessing the risk to the County's heritage assets and biodiversity posed by climate change. We will promote nature-based solutions, sustainable practices, and energy efficiency to mitigate impacts and support adaptation. Community engagement through citizen science and volunteering will highlight the link between climate and nature conservation.

PRIORITIES	OUTCOMES
Explore options to fund a climate vulnerability assessment for key Council-owned built heritage sites.	<i>Informed future conservation and adaptation strategies.</i>
Promote sustainability and climate action at heritage events to reduce the environmental impact and encourage best practice.	<i>Reduced environmental impact and increased public awareness.</i>
Provide advice and guidance on best practice for improving energy efficiency of heritage properties, vernacular buildings and protected structures in private ownership.	<i>Improved energy efficiency without compromising heritage value.</i>
Promote nature-based solutions for climate and water management. Integrate biodiversity-friendly approaches into flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, and water quality improvement efforts.	<i>Biodiversity aware and nature-based practices become standard for climate resilience and sustainability efforts.</i>
Promote hands-on engagement through citizen science and volunteering to highlight the link between climate and nature conservation. Encourage community participation in biodiversity surveys, habitat restoration, and conservation projects.	<i>Building a sense of ownership and active stewardship among the community.</i>



Appendix 1.

Contributors to the Consultation Process

Thanks to everyone who took part in the pre-draft consultation or made a submission in response to the draft strategy.

Corduff Raferagh Heritage Group

Tydavnet Historical Society

Killeevan Heritage Group

An Bhoth Town Team

Inniskeen Enterprise & Development Group

Clogher Historical Society/Cumann Seanchais Chlochair

Yarney Army (Monaghan Library)

Emyvale Tidy Towns

John Doran

Nelius Flynn

Inland Fisheries Ireland

The Heritage Council

Lough Egish Community Development Group

Friends of Old Donagh

Jack Tenison

Paul McGlade

Muineacháin le Gaeilge

Ethne McCord

Gerry Hand

Johnny McConnell

Thanks also to Sinéad Begley of Sinéad Begley & Associates for her contribution to the consultation and formulation of this strategy.

Appendix 2.

Monaghan Heritage Forum Members 2024 – 2025

We acknowledge with gratitude the late John Keenan, whose valued contribution to our heritage work endures.

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Cllr. Bronagh McAree, Monaghan County Council

Cllr. Sean Conlon, Monaghan County Council

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Máiréad Treanor, *Senior Librarian*,
Monaghan County Council

Helen Irwin,
Glaslough Community Development Association

Appendix 3.

Policy context for Monaghan County Heritage Strategy 2026-2031

COUNTY LEVEL

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2029

The Plan draws together the strategic ambition of the Council and sets out five-year programme of work to deliver on the vision for a thriving, entrepreneurial, and vibrant community in Monaghan, supported by a prosperous economy and a sustainable environment, enabled by the mission and corporate values of the Council.

MONAGHAN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DRAFT 2025-2031

The Plan provides an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Monaghan that balances between the common good and the interests of individuals. The Plan includes objectives for preservation of the character of the landscape and views, places and features of natural beauty or interest, the protection of structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and the preservation of the character of Architectural Conservation Areas.

MONAGHAN LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN (LECP) 2023-2029

The LECP aims to develop and promote social and economic opportunities for all people living in and visiting County Monaghan. The LECP and the County Development Plan are complementary policy documents, which share the same vision to provide an overall strategy for the social, economic, cultural and physical development of the County.

MONAGHAN COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024-2029

The plan sets out how Monaghan County Council will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services and infrastructure, while influencing, advocating, and facilitating other sectors.

MONAGHAN BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

This Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a roadmap for protecting, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity across County Monaghan, ensuring that it thrives for the benefit of current and future generations through community engagement, sustainable practices, and collaborative stewardship.

MONAGHAN COUNTY MUSEUM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN (2025-2030)

Monaghan County Museum has recently celebrated 50 years of serving the community in the County and the surrounding border region and moved into a new, purpose-built facility at the Peace Campus in Monaghan Town. The plan will guide efforts over the next five years as Monaghan County Museum aims to engage a wide audience be a vibrant, inclusive space where everyone can explore the county's rich culture, fostering inspiration, connection, and learning to enrich lives and deepen appreciation for our shared heritage.

MONAGHAN COUNTY CULTURE AND CREATIVITY STRATEGY 2023-2027

This strategy aims to build on the engagement, understanding and adoption of creative and cultural programming and practices, delivered by the previous strategy, and to reach an even broader population base in the county. Efforts will focus specifically on three pillars: Creative Youth, Creative Communities and Creative Industries while embedding the two Pillars of Creative Health & Wellbeing and Creative Climate Action and Sustainability. Creativity is a catalyst for community engagement, interpretation and celebration of heritage.

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL TOURISM STRATEGY 2023 -2028

The Strategy aims to provide a confident, evidence-based and forward-looking roadmap to guide future tourism development across the county and sets out recommendations for the effective development of immersive and sustainable experiences to meet tourism demand and expectations. The strategy seeks to address deficits, capitalise on opportunities, and grow new partnerships within the county's tourism and recreational sectors.

MONAGHAN COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN 2025 - 2030

The priority for outdoor recreation in County Monaghan over the next five years. The plan seeks to ensure the integrity of Monaghan's environment and heritage is not compromised moving forward, environment and biodiversity considerations will be woven into the fabric of all future recreation development.

MONAGHAN COUNTY LIBRARIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2028

Libraries support community engagement with heritage and culture and provide a meeting place, a diverse programme of events, and access to local studies collections. The five-year plan sets out priorities to meet the changing needs of the community and support literacy, lifelong learning and cultural engagement.

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL ARTS STRATEGY 2025 - 2031

The plan sets out the three strategic areas of focus for the Arts Office as follows; Supporting Artists; Young People and the Arts and Creating Capacity. The Arts Office will also seek to support professional arts initiatives impacting on tourism and heritage.

NATIONAL LEVEL

THE HERITAGE ACT 1995

The Heritage Act 1995 promotes public interest in, and knowledge, appreciation and protection of the national heritage. The Heritage Council was established as a statutory body under the Act, with a mission to develop a wide understanding of the vital contribution that our heritage makes to our social, environmental and economic well-being.

HERITAGE IRELAND 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is a framework for the protection, conservation, promotion and management of Ireland's heritage prepared by Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The strategy recognises the fundamental importance of heritage to our society, well-being and economy, against the backdrop of increasing challenges including land-use change, climate change, biodiversity loss and dereliction. It embraces the diversity of heritage in Ireland's multicultural society and supports inclusivity and engagement with all communities.

OUR PLACE IN TIME, THE HERITAGE COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

The Heritage Council's five-year strategy for how heritage will be valued, cared for and enjoyed is set out under six strategic pillars: Leadership and Stewardship, Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss, Research, Partnership, Communities and Education and Engagement. The Heritage Council Local Authority Heritage Plans Guidelines (2024) set out how Councils can support delivery of specific pillars and actions at local level.

THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2024

The Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out actions to meet the national climate objectives of achieving the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. This is to support achievement of a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emission and to increase energy efficiency by 2050. Sectoral Adaptation Plans are currently being developed/updated under Ireland's second statutory National Adaptation Framework (2024) for Built & Archaeological Heritage and Biodiversity.

IRELAND NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2030

The fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 aims to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance and of the implications of its loss. It also sets out to increase understanding of how we can all address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to “act for nature”. The plan will continue to implement actions within the framework of five strategic objectives set out in the previous plan, while addressing new and emerging issues.

ALL IRELAND POLLINATOR PLAN 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for 2021-2025 aims to protect and support bees, other pollinating insects and biodiversity by encouraging a better and sustained way of managing our whole landscape. The Plan sets out 186 actions across six objectives with implementation coordinated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

CULTURE 2025

Culture 2025 is a National Cultural Policy Framework, which sets the direction for Government policy across the cultural sector, including the arts, the Irish language and the creative, heritage and audiovisual sectors. The framework recognises the value of culture and creativity to the individual and society, the need to support creative practice and cultural participation and a commitment to cherish Ireland’s cultural heritage. These aims are already being progressed through current Government initiatives including the Creative Ireland Programme.

CREATIVE IRELAND 2023-2027

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government initiative committed to enhancing access to, engagement with, and enjoyment of Ireland’s culture and creativity. The programme will deliver through collaboration and partnership promoting understanding and appreciation of the value of creativity in all its forms, whether through the arts, culture, heritage, or technology. Priority themes include Creative Youth, Creative Communities, Creative Industries, Creative Health and Wellbeing and Creative Climate Action and Sustainability

TOWN CENTRE FIRST, A POLICY APPROACH FOR IRISH TOWNS 2022

Town Centre First is a cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into town centres. It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development as Irish towns are facing significant challenges and opportunities that require a coordinated and comprehensive response.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership to end poverty, protect the planet and move towards prosperity for all by 2030. In 2021 The International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS¹⁰ published policy guidance for heritage and development actors, which clearly sets out the links between all 17 SDGs and heritage. The main policy directive is to harness the power of heritage to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

EU BIRDS DIRECTIVE

The Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EEC) was adopted in 1979 and aims to protect all naturally occurring wild bird species present in the EU and their most important habitats. In addition to halting the decline or disappearance of bird species, the Directive aims to allow bird species to recover and thrive over the long-term. To achieve these aims, EU countries are required to take any necessary measures to maintain or restore bird populations.

EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) was adopted in 1992 and aims to protect over a thousand species, including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish invertebrates, and plants, and 230 characteristic habitat types. The overall objective is to ensure that these species and habitat types are maintained, or restored, to a favourable conservation status within the EU. In addition to halting the further decline or disappearance of these species and habitats, the Directive aims to allow them to recover and thrive over the long-term

CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF EUROPE (VALETTA, 1992)

The convention established a body of basic legal standards for Europe, to be met by national policies for the protection of archaeological assets as sources of scientific and documentary evidence, in line with the principles of integrated conservation. It makes the conservation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage one of the goals of urban and regional planning policies and is concerned with co-operation among archaeologists and town and regional planners to ensure optimum conservation of archaeological heritage.

CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF EUROPE (GRANADA, 1985)

The main purpose of the Convention is to reinforce and promote policies for the conservation and enhancement of Europe's heritage. It also affirms the need for European solidarity regarding heritage conservation and is designed to foster practical co-operation among the Parties. It establishes the principles of "*European co-ordination of conservation policies*" including consultations regarding the thrust of the policies to be implemented.

¹⁰ The International Council on Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS, was established by UNESCO in 1965 and is made up of a network of experts, who work for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage across the world. ICOMOS Ireland was founded in 1984 and has a wide membership drawn from the State heritage services, local government, semi-state, museums, universities and private practice and a multidisciplinary membership of archaeologists, historians, planners, architects, engineers and other conservation practitioners.

Monaghan County Heritage Strategy *2026-2031*



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council



Ceangal

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