

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a wooden structure, possibly a windmill or a tower, silhouetted against a bright orange and yellow sunset sky. A large, bright sun is visible in the center of the frame. The structure has a lattice-like body and a dark, pointed roof. A person is visible on the structure, holding a long pole. The bottom of the image features a green geometric shape, a triangle, which serves as a backdrop for the title text.

ENTENTE FLORALE — 2016 —

TULLAMORE
— PORTFOLIO —

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PLANNED / DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Under the National Spatial Strategy (framework for future development of Ireland) Tullamore is designated as part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. This means that at a strategic level Tullamore is well placed as being a driver for growth in the Midland Region of the country. Tullamore is the county town for Offaly.

The Tullamore Town and Environs Plan 2010 -2016 outlines the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Tullamore. This plan through its implementation sets out a clear vision:

That all people in Tullamore will enjoy equal opportunity and a good quality of life – which they will look forward to the future with confidence while cherishing the past.

The strategic goals in this plan being implemented ensures that physical development takes place in a sensitive and co-ordinated manner while at the same time conserving and enhancing the town's character, heritage value and environmental quality.

The plan sets a strong foundation for 'green infrastructure' which sees a network of green spaces that connectively function for the maintenance, protection and promotion of biodiversity within the urban setting.

Tullamore Tidy Towns have a 5 year plan in place that is updated annually based on feedback from their Annual Tidy Towns report. Tullamore Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Rotary Club and Tullamore Credit Union all support the ethos of Tullamore Tidy Towns and the Tullamore Town and Environs Plan 2010 -2016.



ENVIRONMENT

Natural Environment

Tullamore possess a wealth of natural resources including Charleville Wood and the Grand Canal which are both designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 as proposed Natural Heritage Areas in recognition of their important habitats and species. Charleville Wood is also designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Tullamore River along with its tributaries and its riparian corridor including hedgerows is also another natural resource that Tullamore has.

Water quality

A new state of the art Wastewater Treatment Plant and sludge treatment centre was opened in Tullamore in 2012 (for a population equivalent of 45,000). This Treatment Plant facilitates the sustainable residential, commercial and industrial development of Tullamore and the surrounding region.

The sludge treatment centre

- can cater for 80,000 population equivalent and treats indigenous sludges
- sludges from other water and wastewater treatment plants throughout County Offaly
- produces a Class A sludge dried to 92% dry solids and is suitable for agricultural and industrial use.

Water Conservation

Under the water services investment plan in 2012 to 2014 Offaly County Council carried out extensive water main rehabilitation works in Tullamore as part of the water conservation programme for the county.

- 17km of old cast iron pipeline has been replaced in Tullamore to remove leakage from the network. Extensive replacement of lead pipes has also been carried out in the town.

Responsible use of chemical products

All stakeholders in Tullamore are reminded of the Offaly County Council Policy on Pesticides based on the EU 2009/128/EC Directive on the Sustainable Use Directive that was enacted in Ireland in 2012. Large Industrial Parks maintenance and landscaping contractors and Local Authority maintenance teams are encouraged to carry out organic methods of weed control to help reduce chemical use.





Rain water collection

Colaiste Choilm is perhaps the best example of rain water collection in Tullamore. This secondary school has a water consumption 65% lower than a typical school, with 90% of flushed water recovered from rainwater. The Aura Leisure Centre, Grovelands Childcare, National Learning Network and a number of Primary Schools all have rain water collection in place. Schools in Tullamore are encouraged to collect rain water as part of the Green Schools Programme.

Water efficiency

An example of water efficiency in Tullamore is evident at Lloyd Town Park. Here the water for the water fountain feature area is on a continuous cycle and is stored in a sump tank under the water jets. It is pumped from this tank through the pump station where it is filtered and returned to the water jets on a repetitive cycle. Water is refilled only when the system is emptied for cleaning which happens twice yearly.

Waste minimisation

There are currently 3 “bring centres” for recyclables available for public use in Tullamore (Car Park at Bury Quay, Car park at Tesco and Car Park on Daingean Road) and this service has been enhanced by civic amenity site at Derryclure Landfill site. The Local Authority will encourage the provision of recycling infrastructure where it is considered necessary and will assess requirements for recycling facilities on a case by case basis as part of the Development Management process.

Composting and green waste recovery

As there is 25 hectares of public green space, the Local Authority have a clear responsibility for how green waste is dealt with. The town park comprises of approximately 5 hectares which is mowed and mulched weekly (in summer) to maintain a high level of presentation for visitors and minimises the green waste generated.

In public areas, high quality well maintained machinery is used to cut the designated grass areas and minimise the green waste generated. With regard to garden waste; wood branches, leaves and grass are all recycled in the public maintained areas. Except for pathways, leaves are left to provide shelter and ground cover for habitats. Pruning off cuts are recycled on site or the nearest available wild green area. There are many fine examples of home composting throughout town along with the community composter in the Town Park, which happens to be a good source of worms for some fishing folk non-intentionally.

Pollution reduction and air quality

The Council supports, and is committed to, the National Climate Change Strategy. In this regard, the Council will support any initiatives taken to provide for more sustainable forms of energy use that have an impact on the living elements of the town e.g. at Lloyd Town Park Tullamore, Machinery is regularly serviced and maintained to maximise the energy efficiency of the engines. Grass cutting is well maintained to allow the minimum amount of time using fuel on the Park grounds.

Policies and actions taken for sustainable energy

A number of buildings in Tullamore have been acknowledged for their achievement of high standards in sustainable resource management. Coláiste Choilm, a Secondary School are holders of Green Building Award. The school is the first A2 rated and most airtight school in Ireland.

- Total annual energy use of only 57kWh/m²/yr while offering notably improved air quality
- Carbon impact reduction of approximately 40% relative to current standard
- An average U-Value 50% below current building standards

The Tullamore Court Hotel

The Tullamore Court Hotel has been recognised under the Green Hospitality Programme for the significant reduction in energy costs.

- Annual energy savings of €70k and reducing CO₂ by 507 tonnes per year

Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada

Gaelscoil Eiscir Riada - a Primary School, has received Business Services and Sustainable Energy Ireland awards for its innovative energy conservation and sustainability.

- The building has achieved energy reductions of more than 80%, compared to similar schools built to current standards and zero CO₂ emissions

Under the Smarter Travel Initiative 4km of new cycle lanes are designated in Tullamore and 23 cycle stands have been erected in O'Connor Square, Market Square, Lloyd Town Park and other town centre locations.

Built environment

Tullamore has a rich diversity of architectural heritage, of which the town can be justifiably proud. Many of these buildings tell a story about their role in the history and evolution of the town, architectural merit and general contribution to the town.

An extensive record of structures, which are deemed worthy of protection, has been included in “The Architectural Inventory of County Offaly” (2004).

Complementing that traditional legacy is a rich and diverse style of modern architecture such as: Áras an Chontae, Charleville Rd, Aura Leisure Centre, Hophill, Garda Station, Regional Hospital, Tullamore Library, O’Connor Sq. and the refurbished Tullamore DEW Visitor Centre at Bury Quay.

The following buildings/structures built in the 18th & 19th centuries are particularly noteworthy

- Round House, High St. (c1730)
- Bury Bridge, Convent Rd. (c1799)
- Boland’s Lock Keeper’s House, Grand Canal (c1800)
- Charleville Castle, Charleville Demesne (1801-12)
- St Catherine’s Church, Hophill (1808-15)
- “Tullamore Gaol” (Kilcruttin Business Park), Cormac St. (1826-30)
- Tullamore Courthouse, Cormac St. (1833)
- Tullamore Railway Station (c 1855)
- Bank of Ireland, O’Connor Sq. (c1870)
- Hoey and Denning, High St. (c1879)

Some examples of buildings that contribute to the townscape of Tullamore

Tullamore Courthouse

Completed in 1835 marked the end of a lengthy journey to have Tullamore designated as the County Town of Offaly. The building takes a neo-classical style with a hexastyle Ionic Portic to the front.

Acres Hall

A five bay two storey over basement building with a limestone ashlar façade was built in 1786 as a private residence.

Charleville Castle

A wonderful Gothic Castle that is located about 1.5 Km from the town 150 to 500 years old. Charleville Demense boasts its famous ‘King Oak’ at its entrance.



Street Enhancement Project:

- At present High Street, O'Connor Square and Columcille Street are subject to a Street Enhancement Project that is seeking to rejuvenate and redevelop the public realm of this central area
- This project is co-funded by Offaly County Council and the European Regional Development Fund
- The project is set to include the undergrounding of cables, new paving, lighting, street furniture, planting of trees, new layout of public areas including wider footpaths and increasing pedestrian priority
- It is envisaged that a new urban space will be created for O'Connor Square, providing a focal point for the town centre. The works proposed will be commenced in 2017

Streetscape and street furnishings

The streetscapes within Tullamore town centre are largely traditional in layout and form. The buildings group together in terraced chains and are predominantly of a two to three storey nature with ground floor retail and commercial uses.

The core area streets are wide and take on a grid like nature thanks to a legacy from the late eighteenth century. The streetscapes incorporate many features including street furniture, trees and planting, bollards and litter bins.

Tullamore offers a selection of quality views or visual experiences even from a considerable distance outside of the town. The spire for example of the Church of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady located on Harbour Street in the town can be viewed from a number of vantage points outside the town centre and from the town bypass. This provides an identity to the town as well as providing legibility also.

Other noteworthy buildings

The Church of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady

The third church to be built at this location on Chapel Street.

Saint Catherine's Church of Ireland

Located in Hophill is a Gothic styled Church with an impressive focal point standing on an elevated site. The church was completed in 1815. The setting of the church is enhanced further by its domineering position, its boundary walls and the tall yew trees.

The Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre

Located along the banks of the Grand Canal. Built in 1897, the original use of this building was as a bonded distillery warehouse.

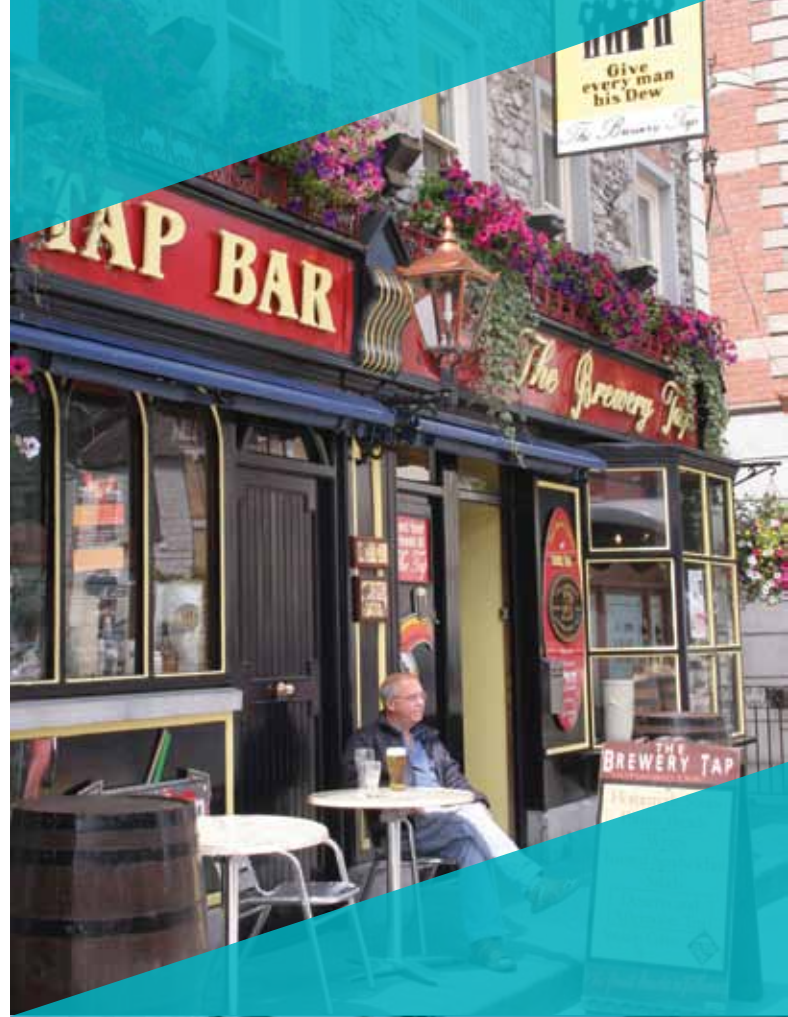
The historical core of the town represents the town centre of today. Two public squares are located within the town centre. O'Connor Square is the central most civic space in the entire town, and as such it is both the heart and identity of the town.



Cleanliness and tidiness

Tullamore stakeholders acknowledge that a litter free and clean environment contributes significantly to the social and economic wellbeing of the town. It is clear to all involved that no single organization or agency can alone tackle the litter problem. In this regard the Tidy Towns Committee, in partnership with Offaly County Council, Chamber of Commerce and Waterways Ireland have joined an Inter-Agency group, established by the Municipal District in 2009, to focus on litter management reflective of the Waste Management Acts 1996-2001 and the Litter Pollution Acts 1997-2001.

Residents' Groups carry out the on-going maintenance of the residential areas including planting of shrubs/flowers and grass cutting. Most of the residential areas in the town participate in the Credit Union's annual Tidy Tullamore competition.



LANDSCAPE

Tullamore town is located in the midlands of Ireland, on a landscape defined by the last Ice-Age around 10,000 years ago. The ice-cap was over a kilometer thick and moved slowly over the midlands. As it melted snake-like gravel features called eskers were left, created by stones and gravel left from the river beds under the ice-cap.

Several of these large eskers are close to Tullamore. In general they are east- west in orientation. From prehistoric times until the present day, these eskers have been used to travel across the country as they rise above the surrounding lands. The esker at Tullamore brings travellers to the monastic site of Clonmacnoise on the Shannon and on to Galway. This esker was bisected during the construction of the Tullamore bypass in 2003. This led to the artist Maurice Harron designing four pilgrims as sculptures which are dramatically placed in the landscape.

Wildlife Habitats & Biodiversity of fauna and flora

Tullamore is a relatively compact settlement with farmland coming right up to the outskirts. The esker passes to the north of the town.

The Grand Canal reached Tullamore from Dublin in the east in 1798. Over the past 200 years it has developed as a wildlife and recreational linear park, changing from its original use as a transport hub. It is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area.

Tullamore has a number of old stonework habitats, including walls, bridges and graveyards, which can be valuable habitats for a suite of specialist mosses, ferns and flowering plants.

Some of the best old stone habitats for wildlife in Tullamore include canal bridges, the Church of Ireland and the old graveyard in the Town Park.

The eskers have their own seed bank – different from the intensive grassland in the surrounding farms – and provide an increasingly rare habitat of ‘unimproved’ soil for a whole range of plants that are marginalized. This has led to the decision not to over plant this habitat with grass/ shrubbery or trees. Unimproved grassland is now uncommon. We have one area in town where there is a great variety of grassland, on the Arden road at the Workhouse burial ground.



In areas where there is evidence of significant biodiversity in the town, the Council may recommend the following actions to be taken in order to protect and enhance the identified ecological features:

1. Retain existing habitats e.g. trees, scrub, grassland, ponds, and incorporate into open space areas.
2. Leave rough grassland areas (with appropriate mowing regimes) as wildlife corridors, particularly adjacent to linear features such as roads and watercourses).
3. Retain existing boundary hedgerows between the Park boundary and private property. Fencing and man-made boundaries should be erected where necessary but not in the place of a hedgerow.

Based on the 2013 Biodiversity study for Tullamore

- a total of 199 plant species in Tullamore were listed including flowering plants, ferns, horsetails, mosses, liverworts, lichens, algae and conifers.
- The most notable plant species that has been recorded in Tullamore is the endangered and legally protected opposite-leaved pondweed
- 38 bird species were recorded in the 2013 Biodiversity plan.
- The Grand Canal supported some riparian/ wetland species including Mallard, Moorhen, Kingfisher (only recorded during the winter visit), Grey Wagtail, Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting.

23 species of hoverflies, 10 species of bees and wasps, and a range of additional species from other insect groups all exist in Tullamore.



- Fish known from Tullamore include Brown Trout in the Tullamore River and coarse fish, including Bream, Tench, Perch, Roach, Rudd, and Pike in the Grand Canal
- A more interesting Canal resident is European Eel. It is now an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) critically endangered species and is Red Listed in Ireland

One of the most important habitats in the town is the houses that have swifts nesting under their eaves. The swifts come to Ireland for the summer in early May – and stay just long enough to nest before heading south again in mid-August. Most Swifts start breeding only in their 3rd or 4th year, they stay permanently in the air for 2 or 3 years, except for checking possible nesting-holes, when they cling onto a wall for a few seconds to look inside. They are a species that are in decline and we are working with the national organization BirdWatch Ireland to identify their nesting sites and to provide new sites where possible.



OPEN GREEN SPACES

Feature open green spaces in Tullamore are Lloyd Town Park, Grand Canal banks, Srah Industrial Park, Workhouse Burial Ground on Arden Road, Wildlife Garden Charleville Road and Castle View.

The Grand Canal located to the north of the town centre passing in an east-west axis is our largest open green space allowing for a number of pedestrian access points to tow paths adjoining the waterway. The tow paths alongside the Grand Canal are used predominantly for recreational purposes.

The Grand Canal is adjoined on both sides by open space and vegetation. This is supplemented in the Town Development Plan with landscape buffers along its length through the urban area. This serves to provide a positive visual and amenity experience while also proving to safeguard and enhance the ecological corridor that the Grand Canal is recognised for through its proposed Natural Heritage Area designation.

Lloyd Town Park Tullamore is a great open space. Ample parking and a stroll from the town centre, it's perfectly located. It is very well maintained and has plenty of areas and even some spaces for quiet contemplation. It is a lovely place for a safe solo walk or a place to entertain children too. The Park caters for children, teens through to older members of the community who visit daily. There is an attractive and well used children's play area. The play equipment for young kids is well designed and varied. There is ample area to laze around in or to have a picnic, as well as a skate board park which is just beside a bowls area. Distinctive to the Park is the water feature area.

Walking around the old graveyard in the park and reading the old headstones proves popular with lots of visitors to the Park. It also attracts weekend breakers (served well from Dublin/ Galway by train) or tourists wanting to see a little of what's on offer in mid Ireland. Lloyd Park is a highly recommended activity for anyone visiting Tullamore town for any reason. (Lloyd Town Park Management Plan is available).



Srah Industrial Park in Tullamore is an excellent example of how the fundamental purpose of landscaping used to mitigate against conflicts between land uses, can have a secondary recreational and amenity use. The Srah Industrial Park is a planned industrial area that was designed with extensive landscaping in order to lessen the impacts of industrial uses and increase separation distances from nearby residential areas. Today this area is recognized, used and enjoyed as an amenity area.

Sport and play grounds

Tullamore offers an abundance of sporting opportunities to residents and visitors alike. There are over 30 outdoor sports facilities some of which include O'Connor Park the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Stadium with a capacity of 20,000. It is the principal grounds of the Gaelic football and hurling teams. Tullamore Harriers is a very successful Athletics Club with an Olympic standard tartan track.

Exciting work has begun on a brand new sports facility near the centre of Tullamore called Sportlink. Based at a 9.75 acre site at the rear of Tullamore Tennis Club on the Ardan Road, the new facility will have two playing pitches, a circular walking route with exercise stations, changing facilities and a car park.

Cemeteries

There are four burial grounds in the town, namely St. Josephs Cemetery, St. Catherine's Cemetery, Kilcruttin burial ground in Lloyd Town Park and the Workhouse Burial ground on the Arden Road. Kilcruttin graveyard is a major conservation feature of the Park. The graveyard dates from the 1720's and has been closed since 1893.



Streams, ponds, lakes and banks

The Tullamore River is a key area of focus to improve its value as an aquatic habitat. Further collaborative work is required to improve water quality and remove rubbish including metal and non-organic debris from instream. In addition work is required with local agencies to identify measures to reduce pollution within the river from urban sources. Downstream of the Town Park, we are allowing a wide margin of uncut vegetation to develop. This will be kept uncut until September, then mowed to 10 cm height or more and cuttings will be removed.

Based on the Tullamore Biodiversity report 2013, it is the intention to remove excessive silt deposits in the river sections between Main Street and the Town Park and install rounded clean gravels from a local quarry provider (ideally limestone) to encourage brown trout to spawn. Consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), the Office of Public Works (OPW) and local anglers will be required to progress this action.

Ongoing river maintenance includes, monitoring rubbish in the river, recording trout numbers in the river, recording dragonflies and damselflies, annual river clean-up each Spring and Silt removal to take place in Summer 2016.



PERMANENT PLANTING

Extensive areas of deciduous and coniferous woodland together with trees and hedgerows which surround the town of Tullamore and traverse the wider landscape are recognized as being of crucial importance and define the landscape context of the Town. These wooded areas also provide important leisure and recreational opportunities for local people.

Lloyd Town Park is a feature area for permanent planting. During the 2007/2008 Park redevelopment significant horticulture and arboriculture work took place. Around the margins of the park are some mature trees, including white willow, hybrid black poplar, ash, and very nice pedunculate oak and beech by the graveyard.

The main area of young woodland, mainly sycamore with some cherries, is fairly dense and supports understorey for some flowering plants including the woodland species lesser celandine and pignut. The understorey is being allowed to develop thus improving the habitat value of this area of the park.

Charleville Demesne located adjacent to the Town contains many fine stands of deciduous trees including Common Oak (*Quercus robur*) and one specimen, the so called 'King Oak' is reputed to be the oldest oak tree growing in Ireland, at over 400 years old.

The Charleville Demense boundary planting on Charleville Road is a fine example of street trees in a residential area. Many housing estates have quality tree planting schemes that are maturing nicely. Notable Street Trees are the Cherry Blossoms on Batchelors Walk, which signifies the start of Summer in Tullamore when they bloom. Coillte (the National Forestry Company) are responsible for large areas of permanent tree planting on the outskirts of Tullamore Town.



Key new areas for permanent planting are located at the Junction at Arden Way / Kilbeggan Rd, Charleville Gate and Charleville Rd., Kilbride Car Park, Arden Rd., O'Carroll St. and Acres Hall (Municipal District of Tullamore offices).

Srah Industrial Estate and Cloonminch Business Park are some of the town's good examples of permanent planting in an urban setting.

In April 2016 seven oak trees were planted in Lloyd Park to mark the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916. The seven were subsequently executed. This Remembrance Garden marks the 100 years since the Easter Rising.

In 2015 the National Biodiversity Data Centre launched the All-Ireland Pollinator Strategy. This is a comprehensive plan to promote planting and habitats that support our bee population which is under increasing pressure. This plan has influenced the range of species we are planting in Tullamore and more actions will be carried out to support pollinators.



SEASONAL PLANTING

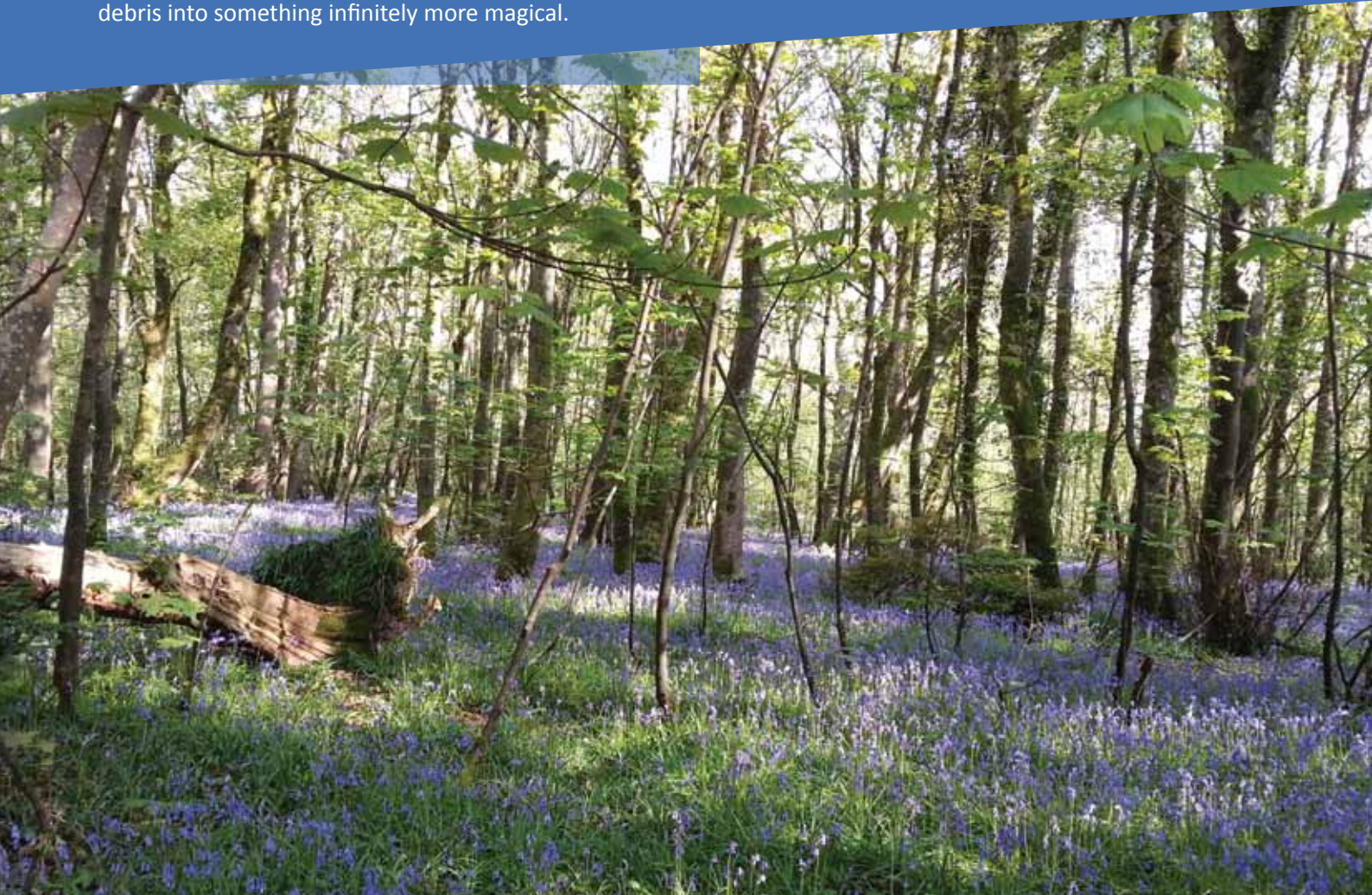
Spring daffodils are the first sign of seasonal colour. Golden daffodils are planted at Charleville Gates, Srah Industrial Estate, Tullamore Town Park and on main entrance routes to the town.

Bluebells

A feature of seasonal flower in Tullamore are the bluebells at Charleville Demense. In late Spring the woodland area is a sea of rich purple as the bluebells transform the dense woodland.

Wildflowers are a distinct feature of the landscape in Tullamore. Some of the wildflowers that can be found along the canal banks are wild angelica, meadowsweet, creeping buttercup, red clover, valerian and nettles, which are unpopular with some people but very popular with some butterfly caterpillars.

Bluebells hung around the feet of the trees like a low lying mist, transforming the usual moss and leaf debris into something infinitely more magical.



Plant Containers

The Tidy Towns Committee looks after the upkeep of planters at O'Connor Sq., Market Sq. and Patrick St. The Credit Union looks after the upkeep of planters they supplied on Patrick St. The Council maintains the 14 tree planters in the town centre area.

This Year Tullamore Chamber of Commerce has co-ordinated a hanging basket planting scheme for business premises in the town. This will provide a mass of colour throughout the town in a year where there will be many extra visitors to enjoy the seasonal blooms.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In the An Taisce “Green Schools” programme –
Tullamore has 16 education centres participating in:



Litter & Waste

St Mary's Youth & Community Centre
Offaly School of Special Education
National Learning Network

Energy

Charleville N S – primary
Tullamore College – secondary
Rehab Care - Kilcruttin
RehabCare Resource Centre
Tullamore Educate Together N S

Travel

St Philomena's - primary
Gaelscoil an Eiscir Riada - primary

Biodiversity

Scoil Eoin Phoil 2 - primary
St Josephs N S – primary
Coláiste Choilm - secondary

Global

Scoil Mhuire – primary
Sacred Heart School – secondary
Scoil Bhride N S – primary

With regard to permanent planting, the Local Authority Heritage Officer encourages the planting of native tree and plant species for improved biodiversity in the area. Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee try to inform the community of what is appropriate permanent planting through the network of Residents Associations, the group take an active role in explaining this to the wider community.

EFFORT AND INVOLVEMENT

Approximately 40 groups buy into improving the physical aspects of Tullamore Town each year. Some examples of the recent initiatives with stakeholders include Chambers Ireland – Tullamore & District Members are partners in the “IBAL” Inter-Agency Group, Participate in the “Best Business Street” competition and engage in cleanups in partnership with our committee members. Lions Club, Waterways Ireland, Local Residents all contribute in many different ways to improve Tullamore.

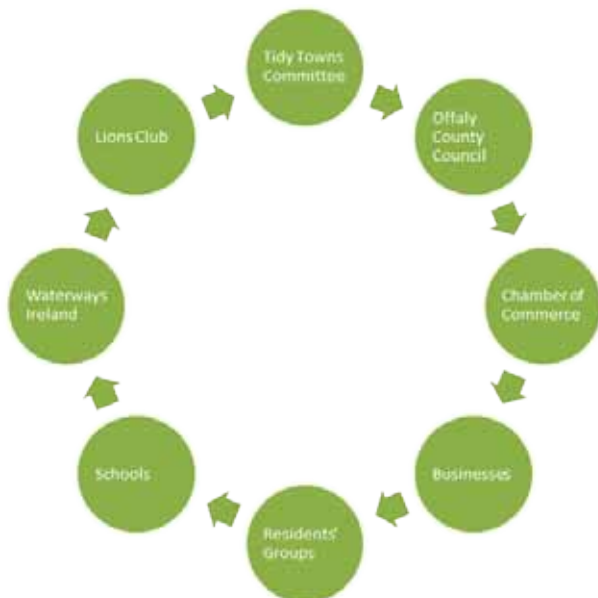


Evidence of residents taking ownership of their environment:

The “Tidy Tullamore” Tidy estates Initiative run by the Credit Union, in partnership with Tullamore Municipal District and the Tidy Towns Association has seen a remarkable transformation of the residential areas of the town over the past 15 years. Local residents’ groups have put in tremendous efforts at enhancing their local environments through landscaping, maintenance and clean-ups. Local businesses and schools have also engaged in this programme.

The competition continues to grow in popularity year on year. It has been instrumental in mobilising local community effort and generating a level of pride and interest throughout residential areas of the town. The community benefits as neighbours come together to enhance their road, or estate. The businesses who participate benefit by becoming more attractive to shoppers. The benefits to Tullamore and the surrounding villages creates a wonderful sense of pride in the community.

Team Tullamore comprises of Tullamore Tidy Towns Committee, Tullamore Chamber of Commerce, Tullamore Credit Union, Grand Canal Committee, Grand Canal Anglers Club, Waterways Ireland, Tullamore Environmental Group, Local Residents and Business Groups, Scoil Iosagain preschool, 3 Secondary Schools, 15 Primary Schools involved in Green Schools, Learning Centres, Covidien, Offaly Local Development Company, Tullamore Lions Club, Tullamore Rotary Club, Tullamore Comhaltas, St.Mary’s Youth Centre, local businesses and service providers and Offaly County Council as the lead agency.



TOURISM AND LEISURE

Situated on the Grand Canal, the town is a popular destination for boating enthusiasts, while golfers are spoilt for choice with the nearby Esker Hills and Tullamore Golf Club offering pristine courses in scenic surroundings. Esker Hills Golf course is the club of International Golfer Shane Lowry.

Internationally Tullamore is best known as the home of the world-famous Tullamore Dew whiskey. The old distillery warehouse on the banks of the Grand Canal has been totally re-furbished and now houses an impressive Visitor Centre. At the Visitor Centre there is an interactive guided tour of the history of Tullamore Dew that attracts 30,000 visitors annually as the number 1 tourist attraction in Tullamore.

Offaly Historical Society has what is probably the most active historical society in Ireland. Located adjacent to the Tullamore Dew Visitor Centre they are the genealogy Centre for Offaly, they have the largest collection of archives in Offaly and have their own publishing group Esker Press. This is in addition to the more common activities of hosting talks, lectures and arranging tours. It is a key tourism resource for visitors to the town.

The town offers a wide variety of accommodation from 4-star hotels to guest-houses and B&B's, plus plenty of eateries both in and around the town, catering to all tastes and appetites.

In 2015 Offaly underwent a new branding process for tourism and a redevelopment of the website resulting in the site www.visitoffaly.ie – Ireland's Hidden Gem. Tullamore is marketed as part of the Visit Offaly marketing campaign.

Key Events Being Hosted in 2016 include Tullamore International Agriculture Show- the largest show in Ireland each August, Canal Quarter Festival in August, International Summer Organ Series July, St. Patrick's Weekend Festival March, 1916 Commemorative Events ongoing. The National Ploughing Championships will be held in Tullamore in September which is a 4 day event that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors, Castle Palooza and Shakefest are held at Charleville Castle and Offaly Biodiversity Summer School takes place each Summer.



The Greenways project offers great potential for increased visitors numbers to Tullamore. Offaly County Council in conjunction with Waterways Ireland (who look after the maintenance and management of the canal) are developing a 'greenway' along parts of the canal. This will see linkages for walking and cycling being formally developed between Tullamore and other Canal areas. Stage 1 of this project has been approved for planning and links Tullamore to one of the county's key tourism sites at Lough Boora Parklands.

No one knows what led builder Michael Hayes to abandon the modest dimensions of a standard lockkeeper's house when he built the 26th lock house near Tullamore in 1800. The resulting structure has three storeys at the rear and two facing the canal. Unlike the usual rectangular lock houses, it is oval in shape, with a curved bow on one side and a castellated projecting porch on the other. Unimpressed, the directors of the Grand Canal Company refused to meet 'the extraordinary and unnecessary' extra expense of £42.17s.7d sought by Hayes for the design and construction of the lock keeper's house. Today, however, the protected structure is a treasure. It is known as Boland's Lock Keeper's house, after the last family of lock keepers who lived here.



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