



**Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil:** MH-C52-182

**Údar:** Giovanna Feeley

**Stádas:** Submitted

**Aighneacht:**

Greening our Town: A Park for Ashbourne - a recreational, social, health, and cultural necessity for our community

**Comhairliúchán:**

Material Amendments to Draft Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027

**Dáta a cuireadh isteach:** 28.06.2021 - 22:12

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## Chapter 7: Community Building Strategy

**Caibidil:** Volume 1 Written Statement Material Amendments» Chapter 7: Community Building Strategy

**Proposed Amendment Number:** Proposed Amendment Chapter 7.5

Ashbourne is one of the largest and fastest growing towns in south-east Meath. With its proximity to Dublin city and county, Dublin Airport, and the coastal areas of Meath, it serves as the gateway to the Royal County.

The community comprise a mix of natives, new Irish, and many recent residents who commute to Dublin daily for work. This engenders a community of flux and diversity. Notwithstanding, there is a vibrant community spirit and a wealth of community organisations committed to building cultural and social capital, investing in the future of the town for generations to come, and maximising its potential for all residents of all ages living in Ashbourne today.

There is a dearth of greenspace in our town. Private, fee-paying clubs have some acreage for their activities, but this is not available to the general population of the town. There are narrow strips of grass and concrete pathways throughout Ashbourne, which are supposed to constitute our greenspaces. We must pollute our environment by driving considerable distances to avail of parks and natural beauty amenities.

There are no suitable public spaces in which to hold social, community, or cultural events. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought this into sharp relief, where there is no worthy public greenspace available to our residents to gather safely now: no covered areas, bandstand, picnic areas, or other amenities, which would be a lifeline at this point in time. When the restrictions were in full force and no travel was permitted, Ashbourne residents had nowhere to go. We were pounding concrete footpaths alongside main road and through housing estates in order to gain some 'fresh' air.

There are serious implications for the mental and physical health of our residents with this deprivation. With the national and global drive towards ecofriendly systems and ways of life, as well as an incontrovertable body of evidence on the necessity of attending to wellbeing and health, a worthy park is overdue in our community. An accessible and appropriate greenspace can be the focal point for Ashbourne's growth at this point in time, and the healthy functioning and development of our community in all its social, cultural, sporting, and health dimensions is not something we can afford to ignore.

Ashbourne needs a park, and 80 acres secures the vital health of this flagship community in south east Meath. This is a necessity, not a luxury, which will enrich the county and its residents in a much wider catchment area than Ashbourne for generations to come.

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**Documents Attached:** Níl

