



# Fingal Heritage Plan 2018–2023



## Acknowledgements

Fingal Heritage Forum and Fingal County Council wish to acknowledge the role of the Heritage Council in supporting the preparation of this Heritage Plan, in association with Fingal County Council. In addition, the Forum and Fingal County Council acknowledge the role of Dr Gerry Clabby (Fingal Heritage Officer 2003-2018) and Sinéad Begley of Sinéad Begley & Associates Ltd. in formulating the Heritage Plan and to all those who took part in the consultation process. The Forum and Fingal County Council also acknowledge support of the Heritage Council through its contribution to the funding of the post of the Heritage Officer and the implementation of projects under the Heritage Plan.



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# Foreword

## A Message from the Chief Executive

I am proud to welcome the third Heritage Plan for Fingal, which reflects the ongoing commitment of Fingal County Council's Executive and Elected Members in caring for our Heritage. Fingal has a very special identity, one that is founded on community and tradition, interconnected with our rich heritage of coast and countryside, towns and villages. Sustainable management of our heritage will not only protect our archaeological sites, historic houses, landscapes, coastline and habitats but will support tourism and leisure and promote well-being. The population of Fingal is young, ethnically and culturally diverse and this plan reflects the new approaches required to engage new audiences with heritage.

The Heritage Plan is the result of a participative process involving the community, environmental groups, various statutory bodies, and individuals who generously gave of their time through the Fingal Heritage Forum and otherwise contributed to the preparation of this plan. We have seen the value of partnership in addressing local heritage needs and concerns and the collaborative approach taken to produce this plan will, I believe, be crucial to its success. I look forward to the implementation of this strategic framework for the protection, management and promotion of Fingal's heritage. I look forward to the implementation of the plan over the next five years, and I believe it will bring benefits for our heritage and for all those living in, working in or visiting Fingal.



**Paul Reid**  
Chief Executive

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## A Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of Fingal County Council, I am delighted to be associated with the publication of the Fingal Heritage Plan 2018 – 2023. Fingal has a rich and varied wealth of heritage, of which we are proud. This plan puts a clear framework in place through which we can protect, manage and celebrate that heritage in the coming years, building on the strength of previous plans and on work done to date. By promoting a better understanding of heritage, encouraging its inclusion in strategic development and acknowledging its pivotal role in place making and sustainable growth this new plan will bring heritage to a wider audience, so that the involvement of all who experience and value heritage, will help to ensure its protection.

As the County grows and develops it is important that we communicate the value of our heritage to new residents and the next generation. This partnership approach, across communities and between the departments within the Council, will strengthen the social, educational and economic benefits associated with heritage and enable the delivery of this plan. On behalf of Fingal County Council, I would like to thank the members of the Fingal Heritage Forum and all those who made invaluable contributions to the new heritage plan. I would also like to thank the Heritage Council who supported this process. The Fingal Heritage Plan 2018-2023 is for the people of the County and I look forward to its implementation over the coming years.



**Cllr. Anthony Lavin**  
Mayor



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# Introduction

## The Value of Heritage

Heritage gives us a sense of place and is there to be experienced and enjoyed as part of everyday life by everyone in the community. We are surrounded by natural heritage including landscapes, geology, habitats, wildlife and the distinctive coastline and islands off the coast of Fingal.

Clues to the past and traces of previous generations are reflected in archaeological sites, monuments, historic houses and demesnes, local history, music and folklore across the county. Whether you're from Blanchardstown or Balbriggan, Swords or Santry, Porterstown or Portmarnock, heritage tells the story of the place you were born, or now live, and how it has changed and developed over thousands of years.

There is also a growing recognition of our dependence on our natural heritage and the benefits and services it provides such as clean air, water, food and raw materials. Increasingly natural assets are being recognised as a form of green infrastructure, which perform key functions for our communities. Sustainable management of our natural heritage will not only support leisure and tourism and attract businesses to Fingal, but will play an important role in adapting to the impacts of climate change.



*Howth Portal Tomb*

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## Introduction



*Skerries Mills*

Our cultural heritage enriches our lives and adds to a sense of well-being and belonging. It is part of each local area's distinct identity and adds to our sense of place. Sharing and celebrating our heritage and diverse cultures promotes wellbeing and adds to a sense of belonging. In short our heritage is part of who we are.

The value the community in Fingal places on heritage is evident in the number of local groups actively involved in appreciation and protection of heritage at a local level. This is also reflected in the findings of recent research commissioned by Fingal County Council, which revealed that the qualities that residents associate with Fingal include green spaces, fields, beaches, heritage and castles, which reflects the positive contribution of heritage in terms of quality of life.

While heritage has intrinsic historic, conservation and amenity value, it also contributes to the economy through tourism and by making Fingal an attractive place to work

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and locate a business. Tourism and the agri-food sector are widely expected to be drivers of economic growth in Fingal with tourism heavily dependent on day trips, particularly to the coast and heritage attractions<sup>1</sup>. Four key heritage properties (Malahide Castle, Ardgillan Castle, Newbridge House and Skerries Mills) attract approximately 200,000 paying visitors annually with an estimated economic value of €10.5 million per annum to the wider Fingal economy<sup>2</sup>. It is also the case that the combined number s of visitors to the County's beaches, parks and heritage properties and to other popular destinations such as Howth Head far exceeds this number. Agriculture is an important component of the County's economy and a number of international food businesses have developed out of the county's longstanding horticultural tradition. These growing sectors rely on high environmental quality and sustainable management of natural heritage.

It is clear that protecting and sustainably managing heritage is vital for a wide range of social, environmental and economic reasons, as well as for its intrinsic value to the community and the individual.

## Fingal's Heritage

Fingal has a rich and varied natural and cultural heritage characterised by the coastline, islands, rural landscapes, villages and townscapes, monuments, historic houses, local history, and folklore. Fingal's subtle but distinctive landscape includes 21 important County Geological Sites, identified by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), such as Lambay Island and others sites along the coast.

There are numerous important biodiversity sites including the estuaries at Baldoyle, Rogerstown and Malahide, which have important habitats and species and host a range of breeding and migratory birds. The waters off the Fingal Coast are designated as a Special Area of Conservation and this area provides an important habitat for harbour porpoise. The coastline, stretching from Howth to north of Balbriggan, includes 13 major beaches with strong amenity and leisure value for residents and the growing tourist sector in the county. Fingal County Council is continuing to develop the Fingal Coastal Way, which will enhance access to the beaches, coastal heritage and amenities. The Council also plays a key role in the Dublin Bay Biosphere

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<sup>1</sup> Fingal Tourism strategy 2015-2018

<sup>2</sup> Fingal Heritage Properties Review 2016, report prepared by SLR Consulting in association with Alan Hill Tourism and Nevin Associates.



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## Introduction



*Ireland's Eye*

Reserve which aims to find sustainable solutions to managing Dublin Bay and its environs for people and nature<sup>3</sup>.

Fingal's farmland, parks, demesnes, woodland and hedgerows also support a range of wildlife including protected species. The county has many areas of high quality landscape including Liffey Valley and the Naul Hills. Howth peninsula, is designated as an area of special amenity (as is the Liffey Valley) and attracts high visitor numbers with its cliff walks, distinctive vernacular architecture, archaeological heritage and rich biodiversity.

Fingal also has a rich cultural heritage with over 1,000 monuments and archaeological sites recorded to date, almost 800 protected structures, and 32 Architectural

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<sup>3</sup> The Biosphere is managed by the Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership which includes Fingal County Council, Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Dublin Port Company, and the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

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Conservation Areas. For almost 10,000 years Fingal has attracted settlers and invaders because of access to the sea, fertile soil and proximity to Dublin. The long history of settlement is reflected in the county's archaeological and architectural heritage including the passage tombs of Bremore, the Iron Age promontory at Drumanagh, ecclesiastical settlements such as the round towers at Swords and Lusk and the tower house at Dunsoghley. Continued development can be traced over time through the thatched cottages, farm complexes, designed landscapes, demesnes and country estates including Ardgillan, Newbridge House, Malahide Castle and Luttrellstown Castle. The vernacular heritage of modest historic buildings and structures, evident in the countryside, towns and villages across the county offers opportunities for appropriate re-use.

Fingal County Council is also one of the largest owners of heritage sites in the country including a range of historic houses and demesnes, historic library buildings and martello towers. The Council manages and maintains over 2,000 Hectares of parkland and public open space and approximately 40% (800 ha) of this land is located in historic demesnes and designed landscapes dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Hidden remnants of our past lie beneath the surface in many parks and open spaces, such as the burial sites at Holywell, Swords, or the Iron age enclosures at Rosepark, Balrothery.

The county has strong traditions of horticulture, agriculture and fishing. Fingal's industrial and agricultural heritage is evident in a range of sites associated with transport, manufacturing and food production, such as the windmill at Skerries and Shackleton's Mill in the Liffey Valley.

The distinctive cultural heritage of the county is reflected in language, music and traditions. Fingal's linguistic heritage is evident in colloquialisms used in the county, referred to in historical records as 'Fingallian Speech', which is thought to have origins in both Gaelic and French. The importance of the Irish Language is recognised and promoted through the Coiste Gaeilge Comhairle Fhine Gall (Fingal Irish Language Committee). The Fingal Development Plan has a range of objectives to facilitate promotion and protection of the Irish language in relation to provision of Irish facilities, place names and use of Irish on shopfronts.

Fingal has a strong association with the Irish uilleann pipes, which in 2017 were inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of



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## Introduction

Humanity<sup>4</sup>. The Seamus Ennis Centre in the Naul, named in memory of the renowned uilleann piper, folklore and music collector, and Draóicht in Blanchardstown are hubs for the arts, creativity and cultural activity. Fingal's heritage is further enriched by the ethnic diversity of our community, which brings a multicultural dimension to our story.

### Fingal Heritage Plan 2011–2017

The second heritage plan for the county outlined 48 actions over the six-year period of the plan, set out under four themes relating to communications, caring for our heritage, increasing the level of community activity for heritage and supporting the local economy. Over the period of the current plan almost 80% of the actions have been completed or are ongoing.

All heritage plan projects have a communications element from the outset. Heritage information is available on the Council's website at [www.fingal.ie/planning-and-buildings/heritage-in-fingal/](http://www.fingal.ie/planning-and-buildings/heritage-in-fingal/), and social media is utilised regularly to communicate to a wide audience (e.g. [www.facebook.com/fingalculthralheritage/](http://www.facebook.com/fingalculthralheritage/)). Heritage has been integrated into smartphone apps, such as the Swords Heritage Trail Audio Guide. Heritage signage templates have been developed for the county and signage at historic properties has been upgraded. Collaborative initiatives to communicate the value of heritage have been undertaken such as the project "All Bread is made of Wood" with the Fingal Arts Office, which used environmental evidence retrieved from the excavations at Swords Castle combined with methods of baking and food production from North County Dublin's past to explore contemporary and ancient local food culture.

Actions implemented under the Caring for Heritage theme have included the publication of public realm plans for Balbriggan and Malahide, several village development framework plans (as part of Local Area Plans), and Masterplans for Rogerstown Estuary and Ireland's Eye. In total 26 actions from the Fingal Biodiversity Plan have been completed or are underway. Projects have included innovative conservation projects such as the Grey Partridge reintroduction project, in association with the Irish Grey Partridge Conservation Trust and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

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<sup>4</sup> The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance.





*Malahide Castle Courtyard*

Conservation Plans have been completed for Newbridge House and Bremore Castle, together with a Masterplan for the Swords Cultural Quarter. Conservation works have been undertaken at several sites including Swords Castle, Newbridge House, Drumanagh Promontory Fort, Stella's Castle and the church in St. Catherine's Park. Assessment of archaeological monuments across Fingal has been completed as part of the Field Monuments Advisor programme together with the development of maintenance regimes for archaeological sites and monuments located in open space.

A notable, recent development was the creation of a Community Archaeologist role in 2017, supported by the Heritage Council. A Community Archaeology strategy is in development to facilitate the community of today to engage with the people of the past in a variety of ways such as excavations and surveys.

A digital archive of records arising from archaeological investigations conducted in Fingal has been created through Fingal's participation in the Dublin Archaeology GIS project, which presents licenced archaeological activity reports, and complementary

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## Introduction

historical data, for all of County Dublin (see [heritagemaps.ie/](http://heritagemaps.ie/)). The website 'Buried in Fingal' was developed containing records of burials in Fingal and historical notes on each of the Council's graveyards.

Advice has been provided to owners of nature conservation sites, archaeological monuments and protected structures on an ongoing basis and the care of important heritage sites and collections has been supported through, for example, ongoing engagement with the National Transport Museum, Howth and the owners of Dunsoghley Castle. In 2016 a major review of protected structures was undertaken with 92 additions and 172 deletions made to the Record of Protected Structures. Inputs to the planning process are made on an ongoing basis, including heritage inputs to the Council's many plans and strategies. During the period of the Plan the Council has also developed a Naming and Commemorative Memorials Policy and established a Naming and Commemorative Memorials Committee of the Council.

Fingal County Council has continued to support local communities to care for heritage by supporting the work of the Fingal Heritage Network and local heritage groups, through, for example the Fingal 2016 Centenary Programme and Creative Ireland community grants schemes. The Council also supported local river and coastal clean ups and participated in national initiatives such as the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Tidy Towns Award. Young people were also facilitated in exploring the archaeological heritage of the Dublin 15 area through the Hidden Treasures project for schools and youth groups, developed with Safer Blanchardstown.

The evolving role of the council has resulted in more direct involvement in the delivery of an extensive events programme for the community, including flagship events such as Flavours of Fingal. Heritage themes are integrated into these events on a regular basis and Heritage Week and Culture Night programmes for Fingal are also supported by the Council.

In 2016 the Council led the delivery of the Centenary Commemorations in the County with a range of events including poetry, theatre, film, proclamation readings, commemorative tree planting ceremonies and historical re-enactments. Fingal archives mounted an exhibition on the Fingal Brigade entitled 'Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom'.

In 2017 the first annual Creative Ireland Programme for Fingal (a legacy of the Centenary Commemoration programme) included a diverse programme of events





Archaeological dig at Swords Castle

and projects starting with Crínniú na Casca, which brought over 4,000 people to Swords Castle to celebrate creativity and culture in Fingal. The Creative Ireland Programme for Fingal showcased heritage projects such as the very successful *Swords Castle Digging History*, a community archaeology project which enabled local people to partake in an archaeological dig at Swords Castle.

Fingal County Council also participated in the Green Infrastructure Network (GreenInfraNet) an Interreg project, which brought 12 regions across Europe together to learn from each other in relation to green infrastructure policy and provision.

Fingal's Tourism strategy 2015-2018 recognises the importance of the heritage of Fingal, which forms an integral part of the evolving Fingal brand and a strategy for marketing nationally and internationally through outreach and proactive promotion is in place. In addition, websites have been developed for Malahide Castle, Newbridge

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## Introduction



House, Ardgillan Castle and Skerries Mills. A Strategic Review of the Management of Fingal's Heritage Properties has been undertaken and will inform plans for viability and sustainability in to the future.

### **Fingal Heritage Plan 2018–2023**

The third Heritage Plan for Fingal presents an opportunity to review progress and to develop a road map to guide renewed efforts to protect, manage and promote Fingal's rich and diverse heritage. The Heritage Forum, which is a non-statutory advisory group, advises the Council on preparation and implementation of the Plan, generally meets three times a year.

Consultation with both internal and external stakeholders and changes in the wider operating context have informed the development of the themes and actions for the new Fingal Heritage Plan 2018–2023.

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## Context

### Fingal, a diverse and growing county

To be effective and engage the community the themes and actions in the Heritage Plan will need to respond to the demographic, social and economic landscape of the county. Fingal is one of the fastest growing counties in Ireland. The population is young and ethnically and culturally diverse; The 2016 census results show rapid population expansion over the past 20 years, close to 80%<sup>5</sup>, compared to 30% nationally over the same period. Since the 2011 census the population of Fingal has increased by 8% and by 2021 the population is expected to be over 330,000<sup>6</sup>. The towns of Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan have experienced accelerated growth in recent times.

Fingal has a young and diverse population and new approaches will be required to engage new audiences with heritage. Ireland 2016, the Centenary Commemoration, demonstrated how heritage, culture and the arts can be a catalyst for strong grass roots engagement. Inclusion of people of all social, ethnic and age groups will be vital for successful public engagement with heritage in Fingal.

While the on-going economic recovery is clearly welcome, resumption of building and development to meet the demands of the community for housing, services and facilities, will require increased action to protect and sustainably manage heritage. This will require best practice approaches, appropriate visitor management and adequate resources for maintenance and management of sites.

Fingal County Council is committed to developing sustainable communities, through place-making, which encompasses a multifaceted approach to planning, design and management of development. This approach, set out in the Fingal Development Plan, aims to deliver accessible, safe and sustainable natural and built environments, which reflect the distinctive character and heritage of the county.

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<sup>5</sup> Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2020

<sup>6</sup> Fingal County Council Corporate Plan 2015-2019



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## Context

### The evolving role of Local Authorities

Putting People First, the Government's Action Programme for Effective Local Government<sup>7</sup>, published in 2012, is based around four key principles, the first of which is *'Doing more for the economy, enterprise and the local community*. This has resulted in an increased role for the Council in supporting economic development and contributing to national recovery and economic growth, closer involvement in community and local development, and a broad co-ordination and leadership role locally. The evolving role of the Council has been reflected in the development of this Heritage Plan.

Furthermore, there has been an increasing recognition by the Council that heritage is a mainstream concern, because it provides key economic, social and environmental benefits for the County and its citizens. This is reflected in key projects such as the restoration of Swords Castle, which lies at the heart of the planned Swords Cultural Quarter, which will encourage clustered cultural activity and provide a hub for community engagement with arts, creativity and heritage.

A greater focus on community engagement and consultation, is now a core aspect of Fingal County Councils work. The Council has trialled new methods for public consultations, including for example, on-street surveys for Malahide and Balbriggan Public Realm Plans, public and staff consultation on the Swords Cultural Quarter and the new Consult Fingal online consultation portal.

The Council is also engaged in developing new approaches to engaging audiences with heritage and culture. For example, a World Music Festival is planned at Ardgillan Castle in May 2018, centred around the idea of shared culture and the celebration of diverse communities. Through dance, arts, heritage, culture and drama, in a shared space, the festival will offer a family friendly opportunity to engage the community.

### The policy context

The development of the Heritage Plan is contextualised by a range of policies at national and county level. The Fingal Development Plan 2017–2023, which the

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<sup>7</sup> Putting People First; Key principles include *Doing more for the economy, enterprise and the local community*; *Local government will have a greater role in supporting enterprise and promoting wider economic development, thereby sustaining and creating jobs. The potential of local government to play a leadership and coordination role locally will be explored, building on its role in developing sustainable communities; for example, in relation to sectors such as education, health and welfare* [http://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/putting\\_people\\_first.pdf](http://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/putting_people_first.pdf)



*Grant repair of thatched roof Old Kilbush House, Rush*

Council has a statutory duty to implement, fully supports the implementation of the Fingal Heritage Plan and has a range of specific objectives to support the protection and integration of heritage and green infrastructure in the planning process. The Plan ensures that the inherent value of our natural, cultural, archaeological and architectural heritage is protected and managed as part of the planning process.

The Heritage Council's recent consultation document<sup>8</sup> sets out a vision of enhanced identification of individuals and communities with their locality and notes the prominence given to heritage in a range of recent national policy documents including Creative Ireland, Culture 2025, the National Landscape Strategy, Growing Tourism to 2025 and the Action Plan for Rural Development. It should also be noted that the Government has also committed to the development of a National Heritage Plan with the process commencing in 2018.

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<sup>8</sup> Valuing People and Place, The Heritage Council 2018-2022, Consultation Document (2017)

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## Context



*Lanistown Castle*

At county level the heritage plan aligns with current and evolving plans, which reflect the importance of heritage in the Council's wider remit such as strategies relating to Biodiversity, Arts, Libraries, Tourism, Open Spaces, Community Archaeology, Age Friendly County and Creativity and Culture. This presents opportunities for cross-departmental, integrated action, potential synergies and increased public engagement. This will facilitate an integrated approach to heritage services and heritage management in Fingal.

While Fingal County Council continues to support the community in engaging with heritage through a variety of heritage and cultural services (see next section for details), a notable, recent development in terms of community engagement with heritage and culture is the Creative Ireland Programme. Creative Ireland is the Government's Legacy Programme for Ireland 2016, which was characterised by unprecedented levels of historical enquiry, community activity and cultural engagement. In Fingal the Centenary Commemoration programme consisted of a diverse range of events including re-enactments, exhibitions, talks Memorabilia Days, where members of the public shared artefacts, documents and stories of 1916, many of which have potential for inclusion in a new archive collection.



Creative Ireland is also the main implementation vehicle for the priorities identified in the Government's policy document, Culture 2025, Éire Ildánach, A Framework Policy to 2025. Local Authorities have a crucial role in the overall local delivery of the Creative Ireland programme and are exclusively mandated, through their culture teams<sup>9</sup>, to deliver Pillar 2 of the programme – Enabling Creativity in Every Community. The Creative Culture Team in Fingal County Council was formed in 2017, to lead the development and implementation of a Programme for Fingal and to inspire others to participate in cultural activity, to drive personal and collective creativity. This development represents an important additional channel for enhanced cross-departmental working to protect and promote heritage.

The themes and actions in the new plan are framed by these contextual factors to provide a road map for a dynamic and responsive approach to caring for heritage and engaging the wider community in this regard.

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<sup>9</sup> Establishment of Cultural Units in the Local Authorities to support enhanced cultural service delivery at a local level was proposed in Culture 2025, Éire Ildánach, A Framework Policy to 2025 (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and the Gaeltacht 2016).

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## Consultation

As part of the process of drafting the Heritage Plan a consultation process began in October 2017. Submissions were invited from interested parties on Fingal County Council's online consultation portal [www.consult.fingal.ie](http://www.consult.fingal.ie). Meetings were also arranged with the following groups to invite their input:

- Fingal Heritage Network
- Fingal Comhairle na nÓg
- Fingal Public Participation Network

Key themes which emerged during the consultation include the following: protecting and maintaining our heritage, whether in the ownership of Fingal County Council or others, at a time of strong economic growth; engaging our young and ethnically diverse communities; supporting local communities and community groups effectively in caring for heritage; more cohesive and integrated, cross-agency approaches to management and access to heritage sites; integrating a heritage element into the extensive public events programme which the Council now delivers or supports; providing heritage information and free access to heritage; ensuring that tourism is sustainable and supports protection of the heritage resources upon which it is based; reviewing the membership of the Heritage Forum to include more community, business and tourism representation.

The consultation process indicated that the four themes featured in the Fingal Heritage Plan 2011–2017 provide a robust framework for action and should be retained. A public consultation on the Draft Fingal Heritage Plan was held from 19 February to 3 April 2018. Submissions were invited via [consult.fingal.ie](http://consult.fingal.ie), by email and surface mail with publicity in the local press and via social media. In addition two public information sessions were held in Swords and Blanchardstown. A total of 7 written submissions/observations were received and a small number of amendments were proposed on foot of the consultation process.



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## Fingal County Heritage Services

Fingal County Council provides a wide range of heritage services delivered by a team of professional staff. Heritage expertise is spread across a range of Departments that collaborate to deliver an integrated approach to managing, protecting and promoting heritage.

### Architects Department

The Architects Department provides Architectural Services to Fingal County Council. The department has a particular Architectural Conservation expertise as an RIAI accredited practice. The County Architect is a Grade 1 Accredited Architect and there are three other Architects accredited in Architectural Conservation working in the department. As practitioners, the department designs and contract manages works to historic properties in the ownership of Fingal County Council and provides architectural conservation advice to the Council.

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### Biodiversity Officer

The main role of the Biodiversity Officer is in formulating and implementing the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan. Fingal was the first county in the state to have a mapped biodiversity plan, which includes 100 actions that will create an Ecological Network for the County. The concept of an Ecological Network ties into the concept of Green Infrastructure in the Fingal Development Plan 2011-2017. To date has many surveys have been carried out to provide baseline data and to identify and map the most important sites for biodiversity in the county. A GIS database has also been created using the data collected. This has provided the basis for subsequent management of sites including removing invasive species like sea buckthorn from Rush beach or cherry laurel from the Council's woodlands, and working on river restoration in the Tolka Valley. Community involvement in the Ecological Network is very important and is encouraged, through projects like the 220 acre Turvey nature reserve beside Rogerstown Estuary. Demonstration projects have also been developed to show good practice in farming and restoration work.

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## Fingal County Heritage Services

### Conservation Office

The Conservation Office is based in the Architects Department. The Conservation Office advises Council staff, owners and the general public on the architectural heritage of the County, including Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas [ACAs] and Fingal's surviving historic and vernacular buildings. The Conservation Officer identifies and proposes structures for addition to the Record of Protected Structures and areas to be designated as ACAs. They input into the planning process on a regular basis where it impacts on the architectural heritage, ranging from commenting on planning files, infrastructure projects and enforcement cases to producing policies for the County Development Plan. The Conservation Officer also administers and assesses grant schemes for repairs to the historic fabric of Protected Structures and buildings of merit within ACAs. These grants schemes include the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Structures at Risk Fund and Fingal County Council's Architectural Heritage Fund. The production of Statements of Characters for ACAs along with Conservation Plans for Council owned heritage properties are overseen by the Conservation Officer.

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*Malahide Castle Gardens*

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## Community Archaeologist

The Community Archaeologist is based in the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Department and works across the Council providing specialist advice and guidance on archaeological matters. One of the main functions of the Community Archaeologist is to engage the public with Fingal's archaeological resource. This involves designing and undertaking community-based archaeological projects such as the Swords Castle Digging History project, the Bremore Castle Big Dig and Digging Drumanagh. Providing support and advice to local groups with an interest in archaeology and history is a priority, both on an individual basis and by organising seminar and information days. The Community Archaeologist is responsible for the disseminating the results of community archaeological projects and for reaching new audiences through the production of accessible publications, heritage-based tourism products, public exhibitions and social media.

The Community Archaeologist also inputs into the planning process on a regular basis where it impacts on the archaeological heritage, ranging from commenting on planning files, infrastructure projects and enforcement cases to providing inputs for the Fingal Development Plan and Local Area Plans and producing policies for the protection of the archaeological resource.

The Community Archaeologist is currently developing a Community Archaeology Strategy for Fingal.

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## Fingal County Archives Service

Fingal County Archives Service is located in 46 North Street, Swords and is open to the public daily. The Archives include the original records of Fingal and Dublin County Councils, and their predecessors, such as the County Dublin Grand Jury, and the Boards of Guardians. The Archives also acquire, list, preserve, and publicise private collections which are related to the Fingal area, such as the Hely Hutchinson papers. Since the Archives moved to Swords a lot of effort has been put into raising public awareness of its location and work, through information brochures and leaflets, exhibitions, publications, articles in historical journals, and by hosting evening lectures and talks.



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## Fingal County Heritage Services

The Archives Service is currently involved in a number of digitizing projects involving the records of Dublin County Council and those of Fingal, both to preserve them for future generations, and to increase access to items such as drawings, maps and photographs.

However, access to original items, properly preserved will continue, as despite the constantly improving quality of digital versions of documents, nothing compares to physical interaction with the real thing. Indeed, this aspect will probably become more rather than less attractive, as people become more and more surrounded with virtual reality.

In essence the aim of the Archives Service is to strike the delicate balance between making sure archival collections are stored and cared for, given conservation treatment if necessary, and preserved for future use, while facilitating as much as possible their availability for research by the general public.

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*Bremore Castle Dig*

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## Fingal County Libraries Local Studies Section

The Fingal County Libraries Local Studies Section is located in 46 North Street, Swords, Co. Dublin and is open to the public on a daily basis. When Fingal County Council was established in 1994, the Fingal Libraries Department set up a dedicated Local Studies section to acquire, preserve and make accessible to the public all the resources necessary to facilitate the study of the rich historical heritage of the new County. The resources have developed into the Fingal Local Studies Collection, an impressive collection that includes: books, directories, maps, journals, estate papers, newspapers, photographs, postcards, church records, state papers and a wide range of ephemeral material.

The promotion of the service within the community is an important concern. This is achieved in a number of ways which include: investment in various local history publications, the initiation of a Fingal Oral History Collection, exhibitions and talks, liaising with local history societies and the launch in 2010 of our local history journal Fingal Studies. The journal will be published annually and will provide a forum for the vast knowledge and ability of all the local history enthusiasts who will contribute to the journal over the coming years.

Through these initiatives and their commitment to future investment in the service, Fingal County Libraries continues to actively celebrate the rich and varied heritage of Fingal.

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## Fingal County Heritage Services

### Heritage Officer

The Heritage Officer is based in the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Department and contributes to heritage, green infrastructure and environmental issues across the Council. One of the main functions of the Heritage Officer is to lead the formulation and implementation of the County Heritage Plan. This involves working across the Council and working with the Fingal Heritage Forum to formulate and implement the Plan. It also involves co-ordinating and managing the delivery of heritage plan actions on an ongoing basis. The Heritage Officer also provides professional inputs to the planning process including the Fingal Development Plan, local area plans and a range of other plans and projects. The Heritage Officer works to support the Fingal Heritage Network and other community groups and co-ordinates the Council's input to National Heritage Week each year. The Heritage Officer is also a member of the Council's Culture Team which is responsible for the development and implementation of the Creative Ireland Fingal Programme and is a member of the Council's Climate Change Steering Group.

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### Parks and Green Infrastructure Division

The Parks and Green Infrastructure Division has responsibility for Open Space related Policy, Planning and Major Projects in Fingal. The Division also plays a leading role in the planning, design, development and management of Green Infrastructure in Fingal. Other responsibilities of the Division include devising and implementing the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan, The Fingal Open Space Strategy and the Fingal Tree Strategy.

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## Management of Fingal's Heritage Properties

The Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Development Department have overall responsibility for the management of Fingal's diverse and unique Heritage Properties. The Department oversees the day to day management of the properties that are currently open to the public and their requirements for capital investment to safeguard their future for the enjoyment of the generations to come; these are Malahide Castle & Gardens, Newbridge House & Farm, Ardgillan Castle, Skerries Mills and Swords Castle. Each of these properties provides a valuable addition to the lives of citizens in Fingal.

In addition, there are a number of heritage properties in Fingal's ownership that the Council is in the process of developing as tourist attractions/facilities (Malahide Casino/Howth Court House) or looking at how to preserve and utilise them to their full potential (Shackleton Mill/Bremore Castle).

Following a Strategic Review of the Management of Fingal's Heritage Properties, the Council is looking at imaginative and innovative ways of managing this impressive portfolio to ensure its viability and sustainability in to the future.

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## Themes and Actions

Sustained and effective communication is key to engaging the whole community in caring for our heritage and in raising awareness of the rich and varied natural and cultural heritage of Fingal. Sharing and celebrating heritage and culture can nurture belonging and a sense of place. Given the young and diverse population in the county innovative and targeted action is needed to reach new audiences. Recent developments present opportunities for synergy and enhanced, focused promotion of heritage, targeting new audiences across all social, ethnic and age groups. This includes the establishment of the Fingal Public Participation Network, the expanded role of the Council in tourism and events, and the establishment of the Council's Creative Culture Team with a strong focus on public engagement and communication.



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## Themes and Actions

### Theme 1: Communicating our heritage to a wide audience

1. Ensure the Heritage Plan, progress on implementation, and any information generated through implementation, is accessible to all and widely available.
2. Integrate a communication element into implementation of the Heritage Plan, which uses a range of traditional, digital and social media and other channels available to the Council such as libraries, community centres, parks and heritage properties, to target a range of audiences and encourage engagement with, and awareness of the value of our heritage.
3. Use the opportunities created by the Council's programme of public events to integrate a heritage element in such events, and to promote awareness and enjoyment of our heritage.
4. Work cross departmentally and leverage the opportunities presented by the Creative Ireland programme for Fingal, and the recently formed Fingal Culture Team<sup>10</sup> to develop and implement innovative, integrated ways of public engagement with heritage, targeting new audiences across all social, ethnic and age groups with programmes and events.
5. Collaborate and consult with existing networks such as the Fingal Heritage Network, Fingal Public Participation Network, Fingal Comhairle na nÓg, the Fingal Senior's Forum and local business, to develop and enhance channels for public engagement with heritage.
6. Explore ways to make all available research and data on Fingal's heritage widely available, through a range of media.

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<sup>10</sup> The Creative Culture Team will work to promote the Creative Ireland Programme both within the Council and across the community of Fingal and collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to maximise widespread awareness of, and engagement with, the Creative Ireland Programme.

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## Theme 2: Caring for our Heritage

Caring for our heritage is at the core of the Heritage Plan. Compliance with relevant legislation and alignment with national heritage and cultural policy are key to delivering this theme. On-going research, consultation, capacity building and upskilling are fundamental to supporting the community in caring for heritage.

### A. Adding to our knowledge and facilitating training

7. Develop a dynamic and flexible heritage research framework for Fingal, which identifies and addresses knowledge gaps and proactively responds to changing circumstances and trends that potentially impact on heritage. Ensure priority areas for research are reflected in the annual implementation plan.
8. Use research opportunities presented by preparation of Local Area Plans (LAPs), and other planning and policy frameworks and strategies, to add to our knowledge of heritage as appropriate.
9. Address the loss of traditional skills and develop heritage management capacity in communities in the context of a wider programme for public engagement e.g. heritage management events for Tidy Towns and heritage groups.
10. Support the collection of community histories from the people of Fingal, by local groups, as part of wider public engagement activity.

### B. Managing our heritage

11. Ensure that the requirements of relevant national and EU legislation are met by the Council in undertaking its functions.
12. Participate in the formulation of national policy relating to heritage, as appropriate, and ensure that the Heritage Plan is aligned with same.
13. Develop Council policy and guidelines in relation to heritage matters, as the need arises.



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## Themes and Actions

14. Explore the development of a charitable trust model, The Fingal Heritage Trust, as recommended by the recent strategic review of Fingal Heritage Properties<sup>11</sup>, to deliver an integrated and strategic approach to managing key heritage properties. The central objective of the Trust would be to evolve a management proposition and an integrated tourism product offer that will ultimately deliver a financially sustainable operating model for Fingal's heritage properties.
15. Continue to develop masterplans for key Natura 2000 sites in the county in consultation with stakeholders including the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
16. Develop and implement holistic management plans for heritage properties and associated designed landscapes that employ an integrated, multidisciplinary approach.
17. Pursue interagency collaboration (e.g. Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, The Heritage Council), and collaboration with third level institutions, in relation to the management and understanding of Fingal's heritage including the management of heritage sites.
18. Support the role of the Community Archaeologist, in partnership with The Heritage Council in managing Fingal's archaeological heritage for the benefit of all.
19. Create an archive of records arising from archaeological investigations conducted in Fingal (including historic records, as far as is practicable) and establish a requirement that a copy of new records from any future archaeological investigations commissioned or sought by the Council in carrying out its functions is lodged with the proposed archive.
20. Support the care of collections in Fingal and work to secure a sustainable future for significant collections, including those in museums (e.g. National Transport Museum, Howth) and in the Council's ownership.
21. Support the care of important heritage sites in Fingal through the provision of best practice guidance to owners and/or managers
22. Support owners of protected structures and owners of structures in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) through the implementation of Government funding

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<sup>11</sup> Fingal Heritage Properties Review 2016, report prepared by SLR Consulting in association with Alan Hill Tourism and Nevin Associates.





*Guinness Bridge*

schemes (e.g. Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Structures at Risk Fund) and Fingal's Architectural Heritage Fund.<sup>12</sup>

23. Develop awareness raising, conservation and management initiatives for County Geological Sites in Fingal in partnership with site owners, the Geological Survey of Ireland and other stakeholders as appropriate.
24. Use the sensitive and sustainable development of the Fingal Coastal Way to manage, protect and promote Fingal's maritime and coastal heritage features and sites.
25. Sustain the vibrancy of the historic core of towns through heritage-led regeneration (e.g. Swords Castle Cultural Quarter). Promote best practice in ensuring continuous and sustainable use of buildings in our towns and villages.
26. Make adequate provision in operational and capital budgets, across all Departments of Fingal County Council, to implement the Heritage Plan.

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<sup>12</sup> Fingal County Council's Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF): Fingal County Council operates a fund out of its own budget for minor repair/maintenance works or restoration of features to Protected Structures and historic buildings of merit in Architectural Conservation Areas. This is for works that cost under €5,000.

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## Themes and Actions

### Theme 3: Increasing the level of community activity for heritage

The Council will promote community awareness of the value of Fingal's heritage and enable proactive involvement in caring for and managing heritage at a local level. Local groups and communities in Fingal have demonstrated their commitment to caring for their local heritage and a suite of measures will be put in place to inspire and empower communities to be involved. Ensuring that heritage is integrated into Fingal events and community festivals will allow our diverse communities to share and celebrate heritage and culture and promote a sense of belonging.

#### [A. Supporting local communities to care for heritage](#)

27. Support the Fingal Heritage Forum in performing its functions. Review membership of the Forum in 2018 ensuring increased community, tourism and natural heritage representation.



*Swords Castle Digging History*

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28. Support the work of local historical societies and heritage groups through the Fingal Heritage Network.
29. Have a multidisciplinary approach to supporting local communities, across all social, ethnic and age groups, in engaging with their local heritage. Trial and replicate successful models in consultation with local communities, aimed at achieving the following outcomes:
- Building capacity for local groups in managing local heritage through workshops and training events (e.g. Tidy Towns groups).
  - Supporting local communities in researching local heritage and publishing the results.
  - Providing small heritage grants to support local communities in managing heritage.
  - Providing clear guidance on funding streams for local heritage groups and how to access these.
  - Identifying a key point of contact/liaison in the Council for groups organising community heritage events.
  - Recognising the contribution of groups and individuals to heritage awareness and management in Fingal through the development of an awards scheme.
30. Work with a range of stakeholders including schools, youth groups, heritage organisations and heritage sites to support young people engaging with local heritage.
31. Support provision of heritage related teacher continuing professional development and teaching resources and promote the Heritage in Schools Scheme.

### [B. Integrate heritage in to Fingal County Council's public events programme](#)

32. Use the calendar of international and national heritage days/weeks/years to promote heritage awareness and engagement in Fingal including Heritage Week, Culture Night, European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, International Day for Monuments and Sites, Tree Week and Biodiversity Day.
33. Develop a broad and inclusive Commemorations Programme for Fingal.



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## Themes and Actions

### Theme 4: Supporting the local economy

Heritage is important to the local economy and has a role to play in making Fingal a great place to live and do business. The Council has an increased remit in economic development and tourism in the county. The role of heritage is recognised in the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, which outlines specific objectives to support the protection and integration of heritage and green infrastructure in the planning process. Heritage underpins tourism and recreation in Fingal so adequate investment in sustainable management of our heritage resources and assets is vital for sustainable tourism.

#### A. Integrating care for our heritage with economic development

34. Work cross-departmentally to ensure that the care, conservation and enjoyment of heritage is integrated into planning processes and significant capital projects.
35. Support the achievement of the Fingal Development Plan's heritage objectives.

#### B. Supporting heritage as an amenity for Fingal

36. Support the sensitive and sustainable development of a network of walking and cycling routes to enhance access to the County's heritage, as set out in the Fingal Development Plan.
37. Support communities to develop local heritage trails, as part of an integrated county heritage trail programme.
38. Utilise the opportunities which the Council's parks and heritage properties provide to promote Fingal's heritage.
39. Work cross departmentally to ensure the Heritage Plan aligns with and supports implementation of current and pending Fingal plans and strategies relating to heritage e.g. the Development Plan, Arts Plan, Library Plan, Biodiversity Action Plan, Culture and Creativity Strategy, Community Archaeology Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Tree Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Age-Friendly Strategy.

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40. Resource and implement holistic, cross departmental approaches in relation to archaeological sites and monuments, protected structures and biodiversity in parks and open spaces, owned and/or managed by Fingal County Council.
  41. Safeguard the authenticity of heritage related tourism by ensuring that best practice in relation to heritage management underpins tourism development in the County.



*Newbridge Demesne*



*Grallagh Graveyard*



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## Implementation

The Heritage Plan is a strategic framework for protection, management and promotion of heritage in Fingal and sets out a series of themes and actions for implementation. While Fingal County Council is a key partner and will lead delivery of many projects and actions, the support and input of a range of stakeholders will be vital. Collaboration cross-departmentally within the Council, and with a range of other agencies and organisations will be required to effectively implement the Heritage Plan.

An implementation team will be established to drive delivery of the plan and to ensure integration into the wider work of the Council. An implementation plan will be developed, every 3 years, setting out specific initiatives and projects. The Plan will be reviewed annually to facilitate dynamic, responsive delivery of the themes and actions depending on priorities, opportunities and resources available, and taking account of developments in the wider operating context for the Heritage Plan.

Adequate resourcing, through provision in operational and capital budgets, across all Departments of Fingal County Council, will be required to implement the Heritage Plan. Specific finance requirements will be addressed on an on-going basis as part of planning for implementation.



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## Monitoring

The Heritage Plan sets out a series of actions to be implemented over the period 2018-2023. Each three-year implementation plan will set out specific initiatives and projects, which will be reviewed and agreed annually. Each year the Heritage Officer will prepare a report on progress in implementation of actions and this will inform the priorities identified for the following year.

The annual progress reports will be presented to the Heritage Forum and submitted to the Planning and Development Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and to the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Community SPC of Fingal County Council.



*Natura Islands, from Howth*