



## **PRESS RELEASE-SUNDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY**

### **CLANE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OPENS LIFFEYSIDE NATURE PARK**

Clane Community Council and its Tidy Towns Sub-Committee marked International Bio-Diversity Day, Sunday 22nd May, in style with the official opening of its Liffeside Nature Park and the unveiling of its "Wild About Clane" information panels.

The Nature Park is a small triangle of land adjacent to Alexandra Bridge, which once housed the old sewage works. It was bought for a nominal sum from Kildare County Council 15 years ago and the demolition and clearance was completed with the financial support of what is now Clane Project Centre. Some 7 years ago it was decided to plant native Irish trees to create a nature habitat in the area. Later, improved access was provided by the addition of bridges and pathways, courtesy of local developer John O'Connell, connecting the Nature Park to the Liffey Walk of his Alexandra developments and enhancing the amenity value of the whole area.

"The completion of this project - necessarily long term because of the need for the trees to grow - comes today with the unveiling of the signs, which explain the fascinating wildlife, trees and plants of this new amenity area for the people of Clane," commented Nick Fitzgerald, Chairman of Clane Community Council. "The concept was to create a small woodland area of native Irish deciduous trees that could offer a habitat to flora and fauna which in turn could be used for educational purposes and encourage greater appreciation of the natural environment". Mr Fitzgerald went on to thank Clane Project Centre for their substantial early support and the members of past Community Councils for their foresight, as well as members of the current one for their work on the project.

John Kennedy of Clane Tidy Towns and the leader of the project, thanked Kildare County Council for its financial support for the information panels and local Councillors for their help, notably Pádraig McEvoy for his help on a number of issues - and before him his father Tony, the person who had the initial concept. He also mentioned that much of the planting was done by the much-loved, but now sadly deceased, local musician Billy Hopkins. John, a keen amateur birdwatcher himself, also thanked the contributing photographers - from local schoolchildren to professional wildlife authors and photographers - whose work features on the signs, and Fr Jackie O'Connell of Caragh for his input on the flora. John also acknowledged the time and effort that volunteers from Birdwatch Ireland Kildare branch, Clane Trout and Salmon Anglers Association, Bat Conservation Ireland and Moths.ie put into the wildlife showcase events on the day, and explained that there are valuable wildlife resources and links to these organisations on the Clane Community Council website, [www.ClaneCommunity.ie](http://www.ClaneCommunity.ie).

The Mayor of Kildare, Councillor Brendan Weld, performed the official opening of the Park, adding that as a local Clane Area Councillor he was delighted that Kildare County Council could be of help in supporting the Park. "Clane Community Council has a great record in its provision and maintenance of facilities around Clane and this Nature Park is further evidence of the value of the Community Council - and its Tidy Towns Committee - to the locality. It has created something useful and

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attractive out of what was, not so many years ago, a derelict piece of ground. Whilst I particularly hope that the young people of Clane will gain knowledge and pleasure from better understanding the local flora and fauna of this area, it has to be recognised in the light of recent sad events that rivers can be dangerous and need to be treated with caution. Nonetheless, this Park, its new nature panels and its integration with the Liffey Walk provide an important amenity for all.”

For more information contact anyone on Clane Community Council or see <http://www.ClaneCommunity.ie>