



social participation

communication & information

civic participation & employment

community support & health services

respect & social inclusion

housing

transportation

outdoor spaces & buildings

# ARDEE

Age-Friendly Town

Actions & Processes 2010-2013



# Ardee an Age-Friendly Town

## Review of Actions and Processes 2010-2013

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to review the actions and processes undertaken in the Ardee Age-Friendly Town Initiative following a full 2 year implementation phase. The objective of carrying out the review is to capture the learning from the stakeholders involved so that other towns following the initiative can learn from the successes and challenges experienced in making Ardee the first Age-Friendly Town in Ireland.

### Background

The Louth Age-Friendly County Initiative was launched in Nov 2008 and is based on the World Health Organisation's criteria of the establishment of a governance group, the Louth Age-Friendly Alliance, the structured inclusion of the voice of the service users - older people and the development of a strategic plan. The Louth Age-Friendly Strategy has two actions in relation to planning:

- "The County Council will develop its own Principles for Age-friendly Planning based on the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities guidelines;
- These principles will be incorporated into the County Development Plan;
- The Council will begin reviewing all planning applications to check their adherence to these principles;
- At a later stage, the Council will work with the Department of the Environment to develop technical guidelines which will be communicated to planners, architects and developers"

Louth Age-Friendly County Strategy:

Page 9 [www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie](http://www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie) (Downloads)

The Louth Older People's Forum was set up to represent the voice of older people in the decision making processes affecting them. The LOPF developed an action plan in 2010 with a key action to "Make Ardee an Age-Friendly Town". In 2010 Louth County Council were in the process of preparing the Ardee Area Development Plan 2010-2016. The Louth Older People's Forum was invited to make a submission with the assistance and direction of Conor Skeehan, DIT, Grace Howell, Graduate Planner and the Ardee Active Retirement Group, Ardee SVP and Moorehall Lodge.

The process included a mapping exercise of the Ardee Town area, a full public consultation with key invitees and several one-to-one interviews carried out with key people from An Garda Síochána, HSE, Area Engineers and planners Louth County Council, Netwell Centre, DkIT, and relevant NGOs in the area. Full detail of the consultation processes can be obtained in the Ardee Age-Friendly Toolkit on [www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie](http://www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie) (What we do)

## National Age-Friendly Town Programme

Ageing Well Network is now building on the Ardee experience by replicating the process in other towns in the country. This initiative is developing a network of eight Age-Friendly Towns, two from each of the four regions and two cities during 2013 building on the work previously done in Ardee, Co Louth. This initiative is part of the wider national Age Friendly Counties (AFC) programme, and an intrinsic part of the AFC Strategy, monitored by the Alliance in each county. The programme's vision is to make every county in Ireland a great place in which to grow old.

It is collaboration between the AFC Programme, participating Local Authorities, the Irish Planning Institute, Alzheimer's Society of Ireland and DIT. People living with dementia will be included, so the outcome will be a Dementia Friendly Communities (DFC).

The objectives of the Age-Friendly Town initiative are to:

- Make the town a great place to grow old.
- Engage older adults in shaping and enhancing their communities for the benefit of everyone.
- Demonstrate the benefits of a multi-stakeholder planning approach, informed and supported by older adults.
- Learn 'what works' in this context and use the findings to inform better approaches to planning.

# The Ardee Experience

# The Ardee Experience

The vision for Ardee was to create Ireland's first Age-Friendly Town and the best place in Ireland to grow older. The vision included providing a choice of homes for older people supported by a range of services, facilities and meeting places in close proximity, to enable them to remain active, healthy, independent and contributing members of their community.

Population ageing is a major concern for societies throughout the world, as the percentage of older people in the population is rapidly increasing. It is expected that the percentage of people 65 and older will rise from 11% to 15% of Ireland's total population by 2026 and to 20% by the year 2041 (based on CSO Population and Labour Force Projections 2011-2041).

In the 2006 Census, Ardee's population was recorded as 4,301 persons. 26% (1,130 persons) were aged between 40-65, while 13% (576 persons) were 65 years of age and older. This means that the percentage of people aged between 40-64 was twice the number aged 65 and over. Therefore by 2031, the population of people aged 65 and over in Ardee will be double that of today.

The results of a survey of Ardee's population/housing and their connectivity to services and facilities, carried out in July 2010, show that 25% of the town's population live in the area north of the River Dee. This area has all essential age friendly services and community facilities. Therefore this area would be ideal for the future development of an enabled age friendly community i.e. where new housing options built to age friendly standards could be located. This would facilitate older people to be active, independent and contributing members of their community.

The results of the survey also showed that 75% of the town's population live in the area south of the River Dee near to the town's Primary and Secondary Schools but showed a lack of Age Friendly services and facilities. This area will need extensive improvement in the provision of essential services and community facilities in order to cater for the existing population, as they grow older.

## Key Areas of Interest Highlighted in Submission made to LCC

- 1** Ardee has a growing ageing population - by 2036 the population of people over 65 will have doubled.
- 2** 25% of Ardee's population live north of the River Dee close to essential services and community facilities. Recommendation to preserve space to develop an enabled age friendly community (independent and ambient assisted) living standards.
- 3** 75% of the population live south of the river which will need extensive improvement in the provision of essential services and community facilities in order to cater for existing population as they age.
- 4** **Housing** - Older People are not a homogenous group. They have different lifestyles and different socio-economic circumstances. Two areas of concern emerged - single storey housing options and more social housing customised for older people near services were identified. Zoning an enabled mixed-use residential area in the town centre will prepare Ardee to meet the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly ageing population.
- 5** **Mobility** - Age Friendly communities enable older people to be mobile in a safe environment, 5 minutes walking distance or 10 minutes cycling distance from essential services. Areas of concern included; a shortage of pedestrian crossings, uneven footpaths, adequate time to cross the main street, better connectivity between residential areas and main shopping area and bus shelters near older people's homes.
- 6** **Public Facilities** - Seating and toilets were identified as the key needs of older people under public facilities. The provision of seating enables older people to leave their homes in confidence and with dignity and provides opportunity for social interaction. The provision of toilets was also brought up.

- 7 Recreation Amenities** - encourages healthy lifestyles and contributes to social interaction and intergenerational activity. Ardee is fortunate to have good quality and quantity of outdoor spaces. Three areas with potential were identified, the Fairgreen, Riverside Walk and Millennium/College Park with suggestions including; tone zones, improved lighting, outdoor seating and hedge cutting would contribute greatly to making the space age friendly.
- 8 Economy and Employment** - meeting the needs and demands of older people as consumers will increase economic activity. The consultation process identified that the provision of opportunities for older people in volunteering and assisting community organisations will improve the participation and strengthen the community.
- 9 Town Centre** - the people of Ardee are very proud of the historic and archaeological heritage dating back to the 5th century. The provision of a Pedestrian and Cycle path circuit of the old town wall was seen as an asset to the town. This will also improve access to the Moorehall Lodge along the Dee. The Ardee Walled Town, Conservation and Management Plan 2010, has as an action to restore the Market Square to a paved Public Open space with seating which can be enjoyed by all.

## Submission

The following recommendations on policy were made in the submission:

- 1** Improve pedestrian, wheelchair and cycle connectivity to essential services and community facilities from existing housing estates and residential developments for older people.
- 2** Improve the experience for older people using public transport.
- 3** Promote opportunities for economic and social participation of older people in the town.
- 4** Strengthen Ardee's role as an important economic centre for Age Friendly activity within the country.



## Suggested Actions included:

- 1** The development of housing for older people should be a preferential priority in the allocation of lands within 300m of direct access of the Town Centre - 'Enabled Area'.
- 2** Transport Plans and Policies need to keep a balance between engineering and traffic management efficiency on the one hand and the maintenance of safety and amenities for an ageing population on the other.
- 3** Provide appropriately designed outdoor seating in convenient locations throughout the town.
- 4** Bus Shelters - Provide a bus stop with shelter, seating and lighting on Market Street Sliabh Breagh, Church of the Nativity, Ardee Monastery NS, Irish St and N33 roundabouts.

Provide a pedestrian crossing with lights and age friendly countdown timers at Drogheda Road adjacent to Lidl and Sliabh Breagh, Drogheda Road adjacent to the Church of Nativity and Our Lady and Ardee Monastery N.S., John's Street adjacent to the Church of Nativity and Our Lady and at the junction of the N52 (Kells Road) and N2 on the Main Street.

- 5** Relocate Pedestrian crossings at Market St further south and Castle St further north to Ask Walk. Improve ped crossing and visibility at the junction of Boat Trench and Castle St.
- 6** Survey and upgrade all pavements.
- 7** Provide priority car parking for older people outside essential services - health, food and money.
- 8** Upgrade pedestrian route along River Dee and provide a ped bridge adjacent to New Dawson's Demesne.
- 9** Develop a pedestrian and cycle route around the town centre.

- 10** Provide direct ped and cycle access with public lighting from Ferdia Pk to St Brigid's (future PCC) Ferdia Pk and St Joseph's Nursing Home to town centre, and St Brigid's (PCC) to town centre via Ash Walk.
- 11** Promote opportunities for intergenerational activity in public green spaces i.e. Age-Friendly exercise equipment beside playgrounds and sports facilities.
- 12** A proportion of future housing developments in Ardee should adhere to lifetime adaptable design principles.

## Development scenarios for rapidly growing older population in Ardee

### Scenario A 'Do nothing' approach

The population of older people in Ardee will increase as a proportion of the population of the town. These citizens of Ardee will become more isolated as they age, due to lack of access to the town's essential services and community facilities. They will become increasingly dependent on others and this will have a knock-on effect on family members who will have to act as messengers and carers. They will become less active and less healthy leading to an increased demand for health and social services at levels that will be economically unsustainable. The potential opportunity for older people to be a strong contributing force to society will be missed.

### Scenario B Incremental approach Remove barriers for older people in the community

This approach plans for the present population of older people without taking into account the demographic shift in population of the town in the future, as evidenced in Section 1.

These are some of the proposed changes as identified in the Community Consultation Workshop and supported by the WHO Age-friendly Cities: a Guide, 2007 – Outdoor Spaces Checklist:

Level, uncluttered and weather-proof pavement and kerb design; pedestrian crossings with countdown timers; access to public toilets; good street lighting; accessible public transport; appropriately located bus stops; priority parking for older people; outdoor seating placed at regular intervals particularly in parks and provision of public spaces with seating and toilets.

### **Scenario C** Pro-active Age Friendly approach, a place where people aspire to live

This approach plans for the present population as well as for the needs and demands of older people in the future in order to promote active, healthy and independent living in a welcoming community. This scenario will cater not only for the existing population of Ardee as they grow older but will also attract older people to relocate to the town. Ardee's built environment will be improved as recommended in WHO Age-friendly: a Guide, 2007 - Outdoor Space Checklist.

- Existing housing stock including sheltered housing (Moorehall Retirement Village), nursing homes (St. Joseph's Nursing Home, Moorehall) and social housing (OAP dwelling in Ferdia Park, De la Salle Crescent and on Sean O'Carroll Street) will have essential services provided within close proximity i.e. within 300 metres or will have better access to essential services including public transport.
- Existing housing will be improved to enhance quality i.e. use of Housing Adaptation Grants and Insulation Grants.
- Create an enabled area in Ardee town centre where the physical provision of housing and the necessary infrastructure and services are brought together. A percentage of new housing in this area will be Lifetime Adaptable Housing.
- Require service and facility clustering and mixed use development for all future residential development.
- Provide a choice of housing options that meet the needs and aspirations of older residents. All new homes are to be adaptable to the changing needs of people as they age i.e. wide and level front door, downstairs toilet (Technical Guidance Document, Part M, 2010).



# Ardee Area Development Plan Process

# Ardee Local Area Plan Process

The Ardee Local Area Plan was prepared over the course of 2010 utilising the standardised methods for preparing a local area plan as proscribed in the Planning and Development Act 2000 and specifically Sections 19 and 20 of the legislation (since amended). It should be noted that the local elected members make the final decision on the content of statutory plans such as that of Ardee with the County Manager and planning officials providing professional guidance

The process prescribes public consultation as fundamental to the development of the local area plan and as such submissions, comments and observations are invited from interested parties including a significant number of statutory bodies from the outset. The submissions made can significantly inform the nature of the new plan as every submission is considered in detail and the County manager makes recommendations to the elected members (Councillors) on foot of submissions which they can then accept or reject thereby altering the draft plan.

The submission by the Louth Older Peoples Forum was received after the initial pre-draft stage of public consultation and as such related to the draft plan itself. The submission was made following a community consultation event held on 7th September 2010 and forwarded to the Council on 11th October 2010. This was in addition to a number of public consultation events facilitated by the Forward Planning Unit of Louth County Council in relation to the formulation of the plan.

The submission contained highly detailed, site specific suggestions as to how the status of Ardee as the State's first age friendly town, could be further enhanced through the planning process. A wide variety of issues were covered including housing, mobility, public facilities, recreation and amenity, economy and employment and the town centre. The submission was considered in some detail by the Forward Planning Unit and a summary of it included in the Managers Report on submissions received by way of addendum. The opinion of the Manager and his subsequent recommendations in the report whilst not including all the site specific interventions called for in the submission, nonetheless significantly changed the final plan as it was adopted by the elected members.

In particular, a designated site and specific zoning termed an enabled area was included in the zoning map and land use zoning matrix. This site is located in the heart of Ardee to the immediate west of the town centre and within easy walking distance of the majority of the town's amenities and services. The land has the unique zoning of EA;

"To provide for the development of housing for older people, specifically designed for flexibility and adaptability to accommodate the physical and cognitive needs of residents as they develop over time"

Elsewhere the plan specifically references the status of Ardee as an Age-Friendly Town and promotes many of the infrastructural improvements requested through the submission. These include footpath improvements and upgrades, a new street crossing and outdoor gym equipment in Fairgreen Park.

Further work has included the commissioning of a walking and cycling strategy for the town which details a potential network around the town together with other infrastructural measures which would greatly enhance the quality of life both for local residents of all ages but also of visitors. The implementation of these measures will be subject to the availability of funding.





# Implementation Phase

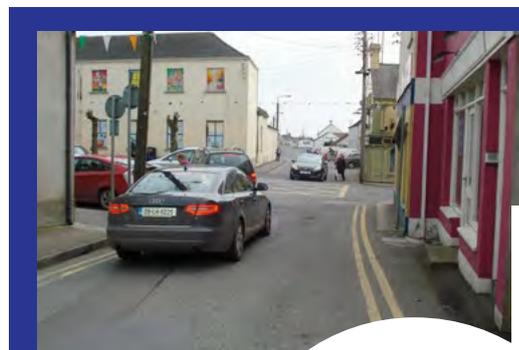
## Challenges in Ardee

The N2 runs through the main street of Ardee and carries high volumes of traffic. Ardee is a major hub joining the N2, N52 and M1. The Main St of Ardee stretches 991m from the West end at Fairgreen to the Church of the Nativity/Boys School on South side and is the N2.



Many streets accessing the Main St are narrow and provide little and sometimes no opportunity for adequate sized footpaths.

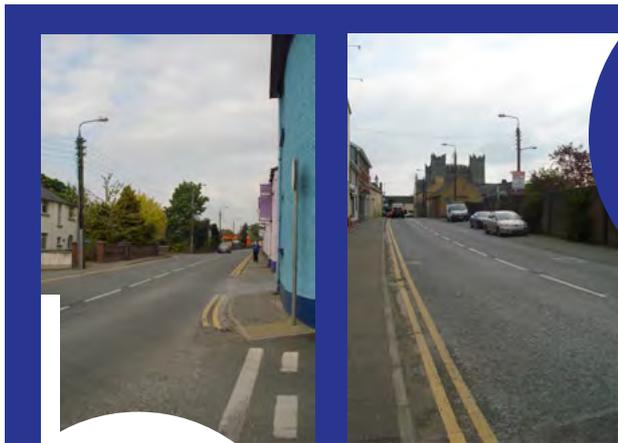
The narrow width of the N52 joining the Main St in Ardee hampers any additional widths to footpaths and therefore pedestrian access to the Garda Station and St Brigid's PCC centre.



## N52 west and east bound

As a result of the submission to LCC the Ardee Age-Friendly Group met with the Area Engineer in Ardee-Mid Louth to discuss the action plan which was developed from the submission. The Ardee Age Friendly group comprised: LCC Engineers (Sean O'Reilly & Keith Matthews), Ardee Town Clerk, Miriam Roe, Ardee Active Retirement Group, Mary Dunne, Moorehall Lodge Michael McCoy, Ardee Tidy Towns, Brendan Matthews, Ardee Traders Association Hughie O'Neill, IWA, Scoil Mhuire na nGael Deirdre Sweeney and An Garda Siochana, Superintendent Eugene Brennan and Inspector Paul Kiernan.

The following action plan was agreed:



## Enabled Area

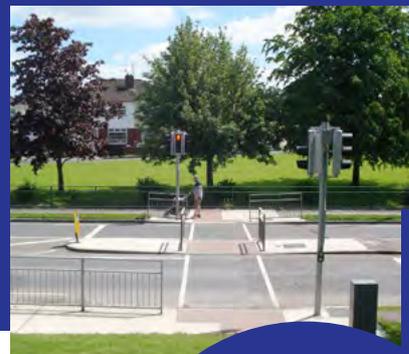
The largest landowner in the Ardee town area is the HSE with lands backing onto the Main St. This land was identified as appropriate for housing for older people. The land is adjacent to St Joseph's Nursing Home and St Brigid's Psychiatric Hospital and PCC.

In 2012 St Joseph's Nursing Home was reviewed in terms of meeting HIQA regulations and a proposal was submitted to develop the land with new Nursing Home accommodation and both ambient and independent assisted living units. The site can provide huge potential for the building of a primary school and provide the intergenerational environment suitable for community interactivity.

Future plans to develop this area would encompass new infrastructure, roadways, footpaths, public lighting, amenity areas, etc., which would facilitate improved interconnectivity. These works will also 'open up' this land bank and allow for further development.

## Mobility & Accessibility

Action	Challenge	Cost
Pedestrian Crossing between Sliabh Breagh & Cherrybrook on N2	Providing a crossing point, which services two residential estates and two bus stops, on the N2 which experiences heavy volumes of traffic.	€55,000



The installation of this pedestrian crossing has addressed the need for unimpeded pedestrian movement across the N2. It has also provides a much needed safe access to bus stops on both sides of this main route.

Action	Challenge	Cost
Provide Pedestrian Crossing on Castle St/ Market St near Sean O'Carroll St	To provide a pedestrian crossing within town centre and to encourage pedestrians to utilise this crossing as the safest point at this junction.	€11,000

Prior to the installation of this crossing it was observed that pedestrians would cross this busy junction uncontrolled. This caused concern both for pedestrian and vehicular traffic at this intersection. This became the natural location for the installation of a pedestrian crossing and barriers. Since it was installed it is our experience that the majority of pedestrians now cross using this crossing.

A zebra crossing was the preferred option over traditional push button traffic lights as it is more efficient as it allows for a more free flowing traffic movement.



View 1: Pedestrian Crossing at Junction of Sean O'Carroll St & Castle St / Market St



**View 2:** Pedestrian Crossing at Junction of Sean O'Carroll St & Castle St/Market St

As this crossing point is in close proximity to the junction of Sean O'Carroll St Louth County Council installed warning/notification signs along Sean O'Carroll Street alerting vehicular traffic to the pedestrian crossing on the main street.



**View 3:** Traffic Measures at Sean O'Carroll St approaching the Pedestrian Street

Action	Challenge	Cost
Relocate pedestrian crossing further north from existing position at Credit Union on Market St	Having examined the current location, it was decided that the crossing was ideally located providing access to the Credit Union, Post Office, Clinic, Day Care Centre, Shops and Chemist. Louth County Council may revisit this issue at some point in the future	N/A
Upgrade pedestrian lights at Credit Union at Market St. to incorporate countdown timers	Budget Constraints	€20,000

Going north approach to Pedestrian Crossing at Credit Union the approach is down hill and can be difficult for vehicles to stop quickly if needed. There has already been a fatality on the crossing. The long term action is to upgrade the Pedestrian Lights subject to funding.



**View 1:** The Entrance to the Occupational Health Centre, St Joseph's day Centre and the Medical Centre is in close proximity to the Pedestrian Crossing at the Credit Union

Action	Challenge	Cost
Provide Pedestrian lights at Townspark Fairgreen Rd	To provide a link from the main street to the playground, schools, housing estates, golf and rugby clubs and St Josephs Nursing Home.	€11,000

## Townparks/Fairgreen Rd



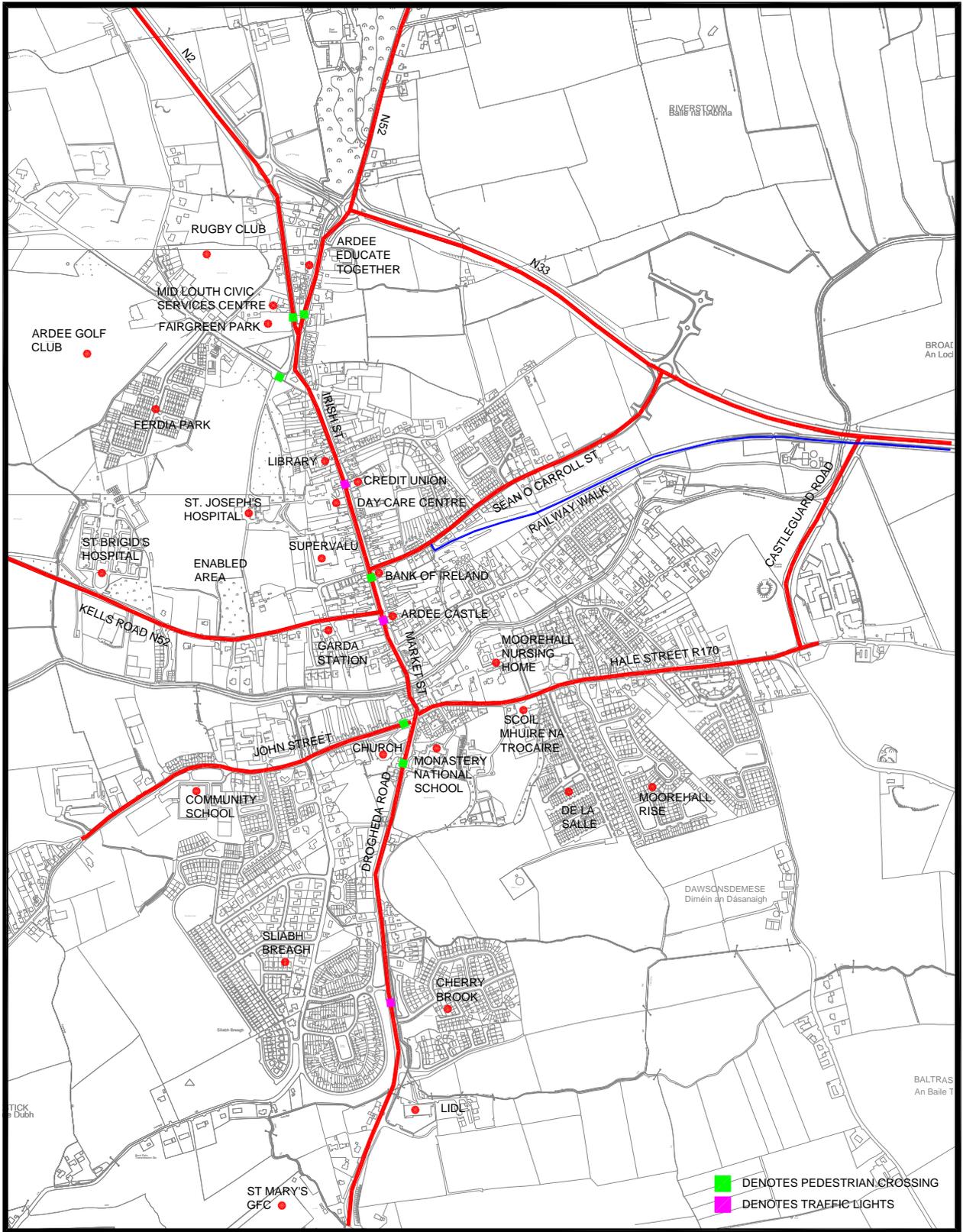
The challenge identified here was how to direct both older people accessing St Joseph's Nursing Home and children accessing the Educate Together School across a dangerous open geography of merging roads at a town exit point where speed would be an issue.

Pedestrian Crossings and Safety Railings were installed from the entrance to St Joseph's Nursing Home to the N52 (Dundalk Rd).



View 1: Pedestrian Crossing Lights at entrance to St Joseph's Nursing Home Townparks Rd/Fairgreen







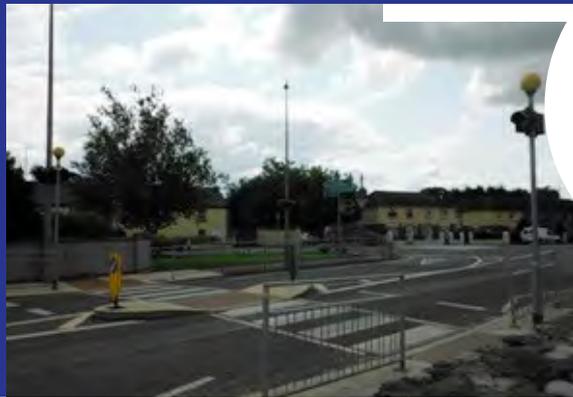
View 2: Crossing towards Fairgreen



View 3: Approach towards N2.



View 4: Path along N2



View 5: Pedestrian Crossing at Statue of Christ the King



View 6: Railings to Roundabout from south viewpoint



View 7: Railings at Roundabout from north viewpoint



View 8: Pedestrian Crossing at N52 (Dundalk Road)

Action	Challenge	Cost
New Ramp at Fairgreen to access Park	To provide unimpeded access for people of all ages and abilities wishing to use the Fairgreen amenity area.	€15,000

The installation of the new pedestrian crossings, pedestrian railing and the access ramp has now opened up this amenity area to the wider community as it caters for people of all ages and abilities.



Action	Challenge	Cost
Ramp at ATM outside Bank of Ireland	Prior to the introduction of this ramp, wheelchair users found it difficult to access this ATM service. The Council also installed a disabled parking space adjacent to the ATM which allows unimpeded access.	€2,500

Access to the ATM at the Bank of Ireland was improved through a sloped footpath.



View 1: Sloped raised footpath at ATM Machine



View 2: ATM Machine from across the road

Action	Challenge	Cost
Raised platform junction for ease of access at Ask Walk/Main St	Instead of dishing the footpath at this location it was decided to raise the level of the road to meet the level of the path. This allows for a level crossing point which is easier for those with reduced mobility and parents with buggies	€3,000

This junction and narrow street (Ash Walk) provides access to a number of shops, a large supermarket and car park. Louth County Council reduced traffic movement to 'one way' in order to provide footpaths along this narrow yet busy street.



View 1: Raised Footpath at Ash Walk

The installation of this raised platform has a dual purpose as it provides a safe and more 'comfortable' crossing for pedestrians while at the same time slowing vehicular traffic wishing to access Ash Walk.

Action	Challenge	Cost
Installation of pedestrian crossings at John St junction to facilitate safe crossing to the Church of the Nativity	<p>This is an extremely busy junction with the N2. Currently the 'mouth' of this junction is very wide thus making pedestrian crossing difficult.</p> <p>It is our experience that pedestrians traverse this junction in an ad hoc fashion when a gap in the vehicular traffic appears. Some works have already started and it is envisaged that all works will be complete by Mid August 2013</p>	€60,000

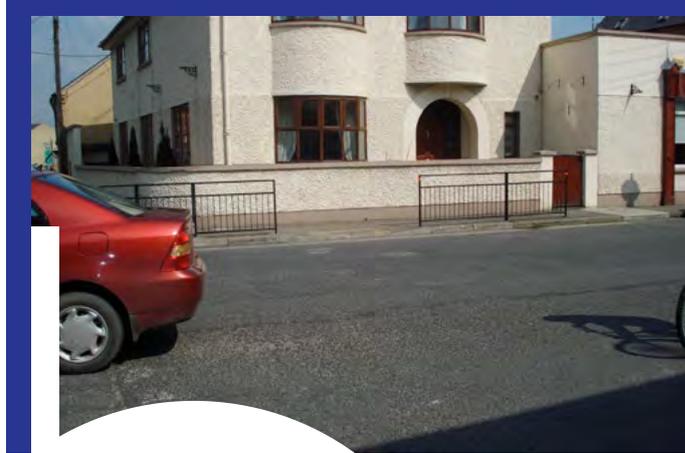
The John St Junction, the entrance point of the N2 to the town centre is a connection point for primary and post primary schools the Catholic Church and the nearby Moorehall Lodge, Nursing Home. Safety railings were installed to direct people to cross at safe points across a very busy and wide staggered junction.



View 1: St John's St Junction very busy junction at Church of Nativity



View 2: installation of Railings to direct pedestrians cross at safe points



View 3: Railings to direct safe crossing



View 4: Railings to provide safe crossing at Drogheda Rd (N2) at Church of Nativity



View 5: Railings to provide safe crossing at Church of Nativity on N2



The Public Car Parks at Bridge St and Market Square were blacktopped to eliminate the trip hazards and drainage issues.



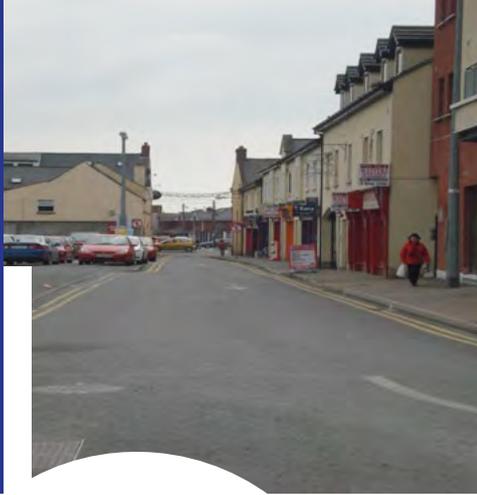
View 6: Bridge St Car Park



View 7: Market Square, Ardee

Action	Challenge	Cost
Provide direct pedestrian access to St Brigids Complex (proposed HSE Primary Care Centre) from Ferdia Park	<p>This may occur at a future stage following the building of the Educate Together School which would be the 'start' to opening up these lands. Planning conditions and budgetary constraints would play a large part in the fruition of this goal.</p> <p>This may be possible pending agreements with HSE, planning and security issues would have to be addressed.</p> <p>Budget constraints</p>	N/A
Provide direct pedestrian access from Super Valu car park to St Brigids Complex (proposed HSE Primary Care Centre) to facilitate direct connectivity to essential services	It is possible if conditions imposed on Super Valu regarding the construction of a new road/footpath linking Ash Walk with the Kells Road close to Cois Abhainn are enforced	N/A

To allow the Pedestrian access required development of the land owned by the HSE would need to be used. Any development with regard to the "Enabled Area" should take these proposals into consideration at the planning stage.



View 1: Ash Walk at Super Valu Car Park



View 2: St Brigids Lands from Super Valu Care Park

New Footpaths were constructed on:

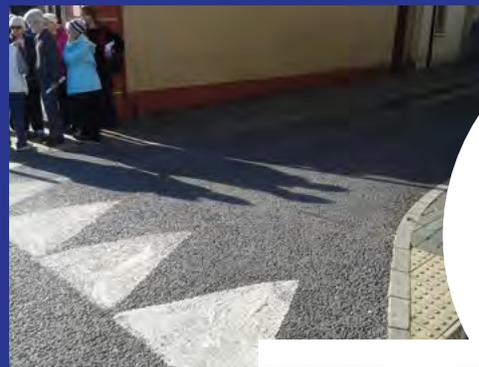
The Castleguard Rd, to link Hale St with the Railway Walk

The west side of the Drogheda Rd.

Footpaths were also refurbished at various locations throughout the Town in line with the Ardee Access Audit.



View 3: Footpath on Castleguard Road



View 4: Raised Platform, Ash Walk, Main Street



View 5: Pedestrian Crossing Super-Valu



View 6: Railway Walk

## Safety & Security

Action	Challenge	Cost
Maintaining/clearing overhanging trees at Pedestrian Bridge/Walkway	Trees can be pruned at the correct time of the year under the possible supervision of a tree surgeon.	€2,000 to prune trees
Providing adequate lighting along pedestrian Bridge/Walkway	It is possible if conditions imposed on Super Valu regarding the construction of a new road/footpath linking Ash Walk with the Kells Road close to Cois Abhainn are enforced	€1,000 per new 'head' where/if needed
Provide clear signage at all entrance points to pedestrian bridge/walkway from Bridge St and Hale St	Signage can be erected – dependent on budget constraints. However there are an ever increasing number of signs erected in the Town and any additional signs may provide an obstruction to pedestrians. It may require the doubling up of existing/new signs	€200 per sign if/where required



View 1: Maintained trees and lighting  
at Pedestrian Bridge/ Walkway

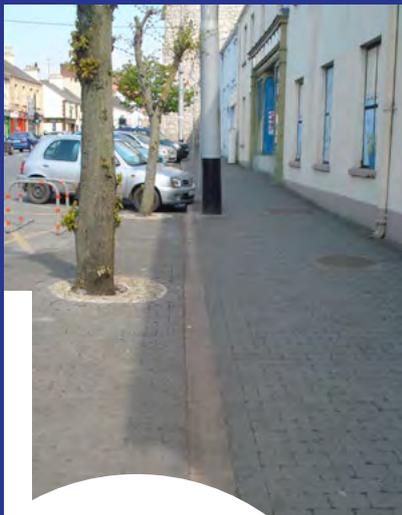
Vegetation was cut back along the Railway Walk. Airtricity carried to an audit of the Public Lighting output at the Pedestrian Bridge/Walkway over the River Dee on Bridge St as this area was deemed to be dark and dangerous. Trees were pruned around the Town particularly around the public lighting standards to improve visibility. Trees were also pruned in College Park and the existing overgrown hedge was removed and a new fence line was created around the park.



View 2: Maintained trees at Pedestrian  
Bridge/ Walkway

Action	Challenge	Cost
All pavements throughout the town and in all estates need to be upgraded over time	Budgetary constraints will dictate the amount and scope of works that can be achieved in the future	€100 m2 if/ where required

Kerb lines and footpaths were dished at various locations to provide ease of access onto footpaths. Existing channel kerbs were replaced with new channel kerbs with a smaller drop to reduce the jolt for wheelchair users. Existing ACCO drains were replaced with channel kerbs to try and eliminate trip hazards.



View 1: Bicycle parking along Castle Street



View 2: Channel kerb with low drop

Public Lighting was installed on:

The Castleguard Rd, The Railway Walk, Kells Rd near the Town boundary



View 1: Lighting of the Castleguard Road



View 2: Pedestrian Security

View 3: Pavement access and safety  
between Moorehall Lodge  
and Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire

Railings were installed at strategic locations of high traffic movement to provide safety for all generations to allow safe crossing.



**View 4:** Railings at Pedestrian Crossing on Drogheda Rd



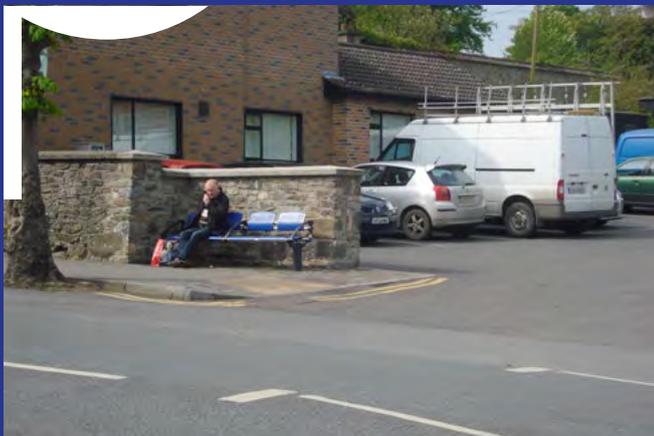
**View 5:** Safety Railings at Fairgreen

## Intergenerational Activity

Action	Challenge	Cost
Location of public seating throughout town	A number of seats were installed throughout the town at locations requested and suggested through consultation with various groups and stakeholders	€ 4,000 per seat

Seats were installed at different locations around the Town:

Drogheda Rd, Sliabh Breagh, Dawson's Demesne, Moorehall Lodge, adjacent to the Day Care Centre on Main St, adjacent to the Church of the Nativity, on the Kells Rd adjacent to St Brigid's Hospital, in College Park and on the Castleguard Rd.



**View 1:** Seat provided at entrance to St Joseph's Day Centre as requested by the Older People.



**View 2:** The most used seat in Ardee



View 3: Seat at Church of Nativity and Bus Stop



View 4: Seat at Sliabh Breagh.



View 5: Seat at Church in Centre of Town



Action	Challenge	Cost
Installation of Adult Exercise Equipment	Adult exercise equipment was installed in the Fairgreen area and provides a safe and social area in which to work out. Adults can exercise whilst smaller children are within sight in the playground area. Equipment was clustered for improved 'social interaction' at the request of the Ardee Active Retirement Group.	€15,000

Additional exercise equipment was installed in the Fairgreen and more will be purchased in the future. These were erected in close proximity to the Children's Playground but far enough away for the more mature adults to use and still chat. Picnic tables were installed in the Fairgreen, Riverside Walk and at the lay by on the Drogheda Rd and are all used extensively.







# Business Recognition Scheme in Ardee

There have been several key achievements:

Ireland's first Age-Friendly Business Consumer Fair was held in Darver Castle, Ardee, in October 2012. Sixty businesses were able to showcase their products and services available to older people, to assist them live longer and healthier lives in the best possible way. Additionally, there was also expert advice on finance, legal and security issues. The success of the event means that another Trade Fair has been scheduled for Sunday 6th October 2013 at the same venue.



An Age-Friendly Business information page has been created on the Louth Local Authorities Business Support Unit website, with contains information on age friendly business in County Louth to include Ardee. See, [http://www.louthcoco.ie/en/Services/Business\\_Support\\_Unit/Age-Friendly\\_Business/](http://www.louthcoco.ie/en/Services/Business_Support_Unit/Age-Friendly_Business/)

The Successful roll out of an Age-Friendly pilot study and the On-line Age-Friendly Business Survey, designed by Netwell/CASALA, DkIT to the Business community in Ardee took place during 2012.

Ardee Traders and local business were invited to an open evening in October 2011 to learn how to tailor their business to meet Age-Friendly practices and the major potential to increase business profits in this regard. Those who attended were encouraged to sign up to the Ardee Age Friendly Business Charter of which 25 businesses agreed to do so.

They subsequently completed an on-line survey about their business, which includes information on how their business could be improved to make it more age friendly and the data was then analysed by CASALA.

In March 2013 an Age-Friendly Business 'Customer Care Development Strategy / Customer Service Delivery Workshop' for the retail/service sector in Ardee was delivered over two sessions to various businesses by Dermot McConkey of McConkey Performance Management Ltd and Gavin Duffy of RTE's "Dragon's Den" TV Show.

A new Age-Friendly Category has been added to the annual Louth Business Awards in association with Dundalk Chamber of Commerce. It has been designed specifically for those businesses that successfully implement and encourage an age friendly service / policy / ethos in their premises/ place of work.



# Business Awards.

## List of Categories

- **Best Customer Service Award, Independent Retailer.** Sponsored by The Argus. This award is designed to celebrate customer excellence in the retail sector. In order for your business to succeed in this category you must highlight what your business offers to customers that separates you from the competition. It will be mystery-shopped.
- **Best Retail Premises for both Exterior and Interior Visual Impact** Sponsored by Dedco. Open to all retailers this award will recognize excellence in both exterior and interior retail premises in terms of visual impact for the customer. It will be mystery-shopped.
- **Special Community Group Award.** Sponsored by Dundalk Credit Union. This award is open to an organisation in the voluntary sector who provides services, funds, resources, knowledge and skills to sustain and develop an important community service.
- **Age Friendly Award.** Sponsored by myhomecare.ie. This award is for a business who implements an age friendly service/policy and how this impacts the older person. Please include in this statement why this service or policy merits this award in no more than 500 words on your application.
- **Business Growth Award.** Sponsored by VHI Healthcare. For a company which has grown considerably in the past 5 years or had great success with a particular product.
- **Best Exporter of the Year Award.** Sponsored by Enterprise Ireland. For a company who has achieved an increase in their export sales over the past few years.

- **Best Pub/Bar.** Sponsored by Diageo. This award recognises excellence in pub/bar licensed trade and will look for outlets that offer excellence in quality, service and value to customers. This will be mystery-shopped.
- **Best New Business Under 3 Years.** Sponsored by the School of Business & Humanities, DKIT. This award is open to all businesses new to the area or have undergone a significant change within the past 3 years.
- **Best Training Initiative.** This award recognizes a company/ organization which has implemented the most effective training programme for its employees in support of the company's objectives.
- **Best Tourist Attraction.** Sponsored by the Crowne Plaza Dundalk. This award is open to all tourism and leisure businesses that are committed to offering the highest levels of service to customers. This will be mystery shopped.
- **Dundalk's Best High Growth SME.** Sponsored by Louth County Enterprise Board. This is open to all small businesses who employ 15 staff or less and who have demonstrated strategic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in this sector.
- **Best Business Website.** Sponsored by The Fairways Hotel. For a company who has an excellent business website.
- **Best Use of Internet Technology.** Sponsored by Fastcom. To enter this category your company needs to demonstrate how it uses internet based technology in an innovative way to significantly enhance their business.

- **Corporate Social Responsibility Award.** Sponsored by Prometric. Open to all organizations or businesses who have in the past 3 years demonstrated innovative corporate social responsibility initiatives or strategies that make a real contribution to the local community.
- **Best Hair Salon Award.** Sponsored by L'Oreal Professional Products Division. This award recognizes excellent customer service in this sector. Does your salon offer an outstanding service to clients? It will be mystery-shopped.





# Arts & Culture in Ardee

Ardee Baroque is a festival of Baroque music, which takes place in November each year. Celebrating its tenth birthday in 2013, Ardee Baroque offers a programme of concerts, recitals, talks, school events and community activities, all taking place in the historic castles and churches of mid-Louth. With the Irish Baroque Orchestra in residence for the week in Ardee, and with musicians and singers from the UK, continental Europe and the United States, Ardee Baroque combines music of the highest quality with a welcoming and informal atmosphere. The festival is programmed and managed by the Arts Service of Louth Local Authorities, in partnership with the Board of Ardee Baroque, and with support from the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíonn.



# Tidy Towns in Ardee

Ardee has been an active participant of the National Tidy Towns Competition for over 30 years and the fruits of the local committee's labours were recognised in 2012 with the award of the first Bronze Medal for the town. The committee has undertaken many streetscape improvement works and highlighted the heritage and ecology value of the town as part of their annual work programme. The committee works closely with many other organisations in the town including the Traders Association, Active Retirement and of course the four Green Flag Schools delivering a truly age friendly work programme to improve the environmental presentation and increase the amenity value of the town.

## Moorehall Healthcare, Ardee, Ardee Tidy Towns, Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire The Garden Studios

Studios are interactive and artistic spaces in which to work through new ideas. Gardens can also be studios where new ways of thinking and creating can be explored. Gardens are meeting places for collaboration, places where growers of different ages can work to further environmental aesthetics. In this project, the Fourth Class students from Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire were inspired by imaginative ways of gardening. They learned how to see arrangements of plants as artistic compositions.

Ardee Tidy Towns and Moorehall Healthcare for older people have collaborated with Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire to offer residents in the Moorehall Retirement Village an opportunity to develop vegetable, herb and flower gardens. The gardens have been designed by Ardee Tidy Towns to create visual landmarks within the village. The gardens are planted not in rows, but in drifts and textures of growth. The aesthetics of the garden studios stimulate conversations between the residents of the retirement village and the Fourth Class students. The conversations between gardeners of different ages are the central feature of this intergenerational endeavour. Sharing stories of childhood and the history of Ardee are two topics of conversation that carry on besides the planting of vegetables, herbs and flowers. The purpose of the project is to cultivate habitats for intergenerational communication, and to inspire nourishment for body, mind and spirit.



# Long Term Care

# Long Term Care

## Places to Flourish Moorehall Lodge

Moorehall Lodge Ardee provides a positive living experience for people in a place to flourish and call home. The centre comprises of a nursing home where 81 people live and a retirement village with 41 purpose built retirement houses. Set within the town of Ardee the centre plays an active part in the local community linking with various social clubs, schools, Ardee Aged Friendly Town initiatives and the local active retirement group. We are a vibrant contributor to the Louth Age Friendly County initiative and a partner with DKIT in developing a strategic direction for aging in our county.

Following extensive research and international site visits, we undertook a physical and cultural transformation of our nursing home. We reconfigured the building into four individual households each with its own front door, bell, post box, kitchen and living rooms. Each house has its own private and shared public spaces protecting the privacy and dignity of all. Our staff has undergone a significant change to our care approach, moving from task based care tailored to the individual. So if somebody wants to sleep in then that's just fine.



As a result of our work we have seen very real attitudinal and behavioural changes in our staff, families of residents and residents themselves all of which has lead to a more positive living experience constructed around the concept of "home".

Moorehall Lodge Ardee was recently awarded the status of Ireland's only accredited "Butterfly Centre" which is a specialist approach to caring for people with a dementia. Working with Dementia Care Matters ([www.dementiacarematters.com](http://www.dementiacarematters.com)) staff are encouraged and trained to emotionally engage and connect with the person living in the moment as we believe moments matter. For everyone with or without a dementia all we have is now. Showing people living with a dementia that we know their feelings matter most which from our experience can transform lives.









# Louth Community & Voluntary Forum

# Access Louth Awards

The Social Inclusion Unit of Louth Local Authorities, in conjunction with the Disability Forum of the County Louth Community & Voluntary Forum launched the Access Louth accessibility competition in 2011.

At any one time throughout the European Union 15-20% of the population will have a significant level of disability of a temporary or permanent nature.

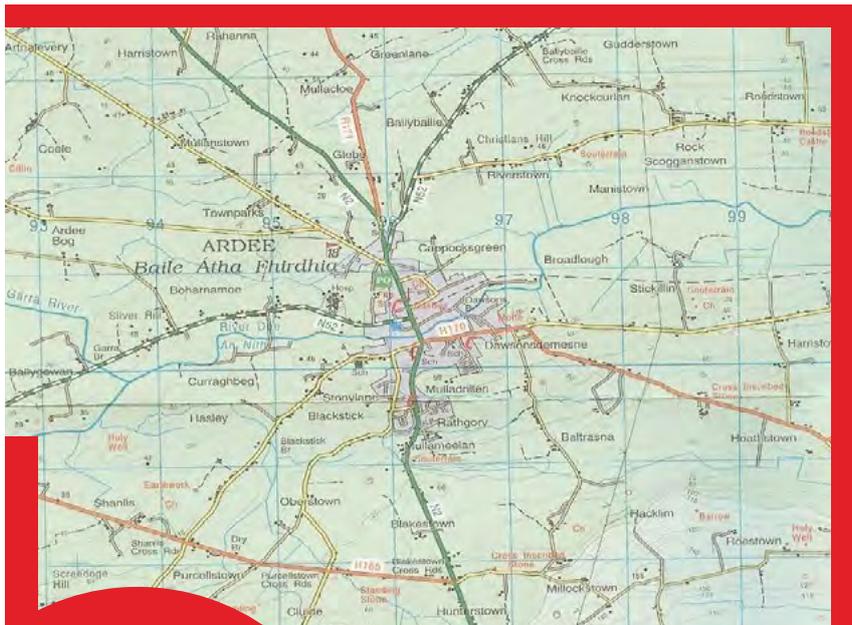
Everyone requires equal consideration, for example someone who is short of breath or has a broken ankle will find stairs difficult or impossible. Even a single step can deny entry to a person pulling a suitcase on wheels, or a person using a wheelchair. The Access Louth awards will help focus attention on issues such as these and encourage businesses to improve access for all.

The aim of the initiative is to highlight and promote those businesses that provide "access for all" in County Louth. Members of the public had opportunity to nominate those businesses they found most accessible in each of the following categories: Accessible Transport, Chemist, Chiropodist, Dental Surgery, Doctor's Surgery, Financial Institution, Hotel, Optician, Playground, Post Office, Public Building, Pub, Restaurant/Take Away, School / College, Sporting venue / Facility, Shopping Centre & Supermarket.

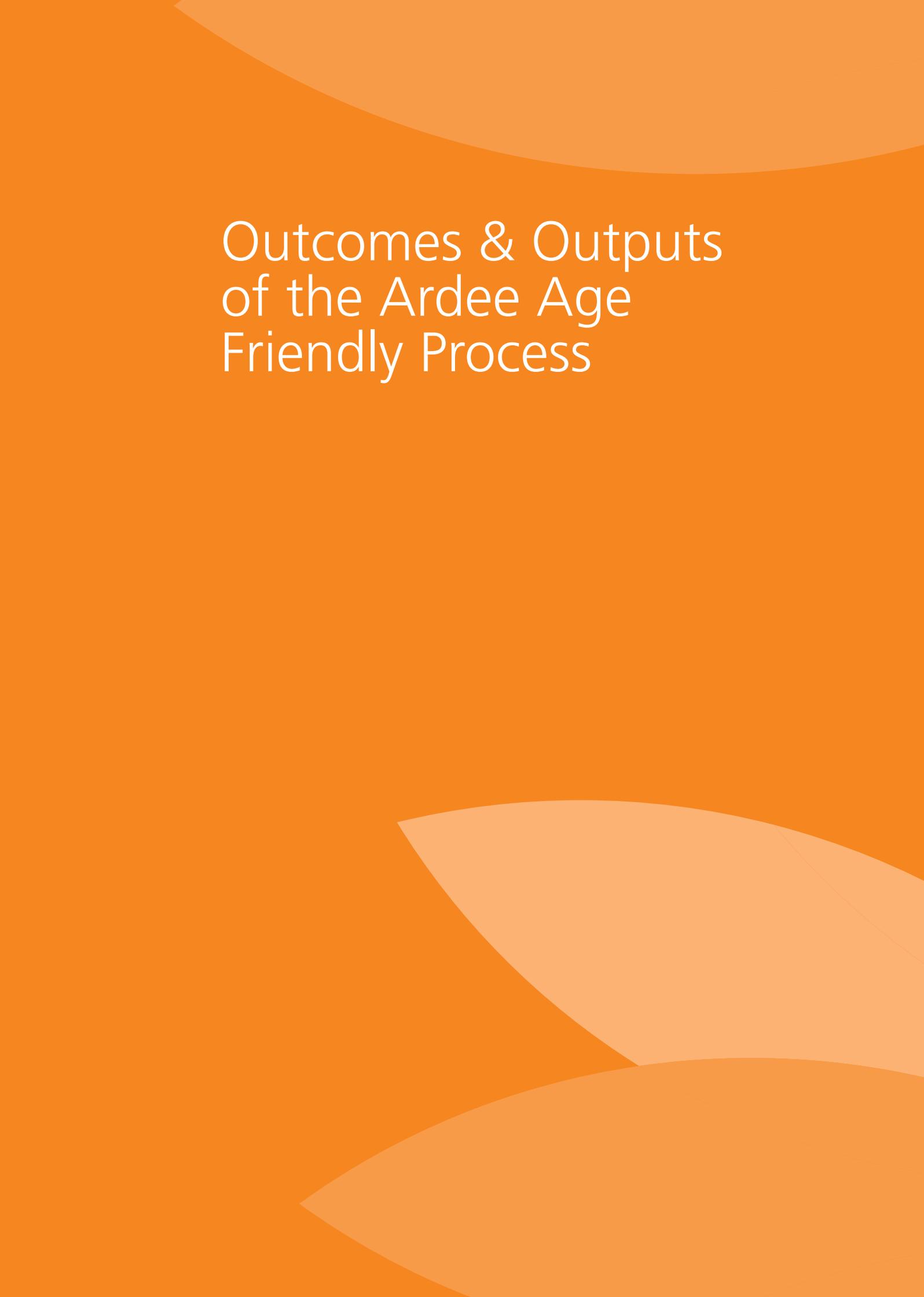
The winner in each category was awarded a certificate endorsed by some of the most widely recognised disability groups in the County including Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association and PWDI (People with Disabilities in Ireland).

Ardee won 4 out of the 14 Access Awards in the following awards:

- Doctor's Surgery – John Street Medical Centre Ardee
- Financial Institution – Ardee Credit Union
- Playground – Fair Green Ardee
- Restaurant/Take Away – Mario's Ardee





The background is a solid orange color. There are several large, abstract, white, curved shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals, scattered across the page. One large shape is at the top, another is in the middle-right, and a third is at the bottom. The text is centered in the upper half of the page.

# Outcomes & Outputs of the Ardee Age Friendly Process

The greatest impact of the Ardee Age Friendly Town Project is the strong relationships and consultation processes developed over the period of the programme. From the outset the process was set by the Area Engineer who brought clarity and vision to it. He has to work within a given geography faced with many challenges such as national routes traversing the town to deliver safe and appropriate passage to vehicular users and pedestrians of varied abilities alike. Delivering on appropriate actions in the opinion of one group of users does not necessarily deliver for all groups. For this purpose the Ardee Age Friendly Group was established to work together in harmony to identify the best possible solutions to achieve a maximum result for the town and the users. This process is now being replicated in 16 other towns across the country.

The Ardee Age Friendly Group is made up of:

- Area Engineers
- Town Clerk
- Ardee Active Retirement Group
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- An Garda Siochana
- Ardee Tidy Towns
- Ardee Retailers Association
- HSE
- Moorehall Lodge Nursing Home
- Reps from Schools in Ardee

The lesson learned from the process is that all generations need to share space and respect each others space. From this we named the project Ardee Age Friendly Town "Sharing the Space".

The Ardee Age Friendly Town Programme received full political backing from Ardee Town Council. Ardee was declared an Age Friendly Town in 2010 and this review was presented to the Council in 2013.

Ardee is very proud of its status as the first Age Friendly Town in Ireland and has embedded Age Friendliness into several civic and community actions.

- The Business Community of Ardee has embraced a Business Recognition Scheme signing a Business Charter committing to areas of action making their businesses more Age Friendly.
- It is strongly felt in Ardee that Nursing Home care should be very much integrated as part of the community. A very modern and innovative model of Nursing Home Care is being delivered in both Nursing Homes in Ardee called "Places to Flourish". Intergenerational projects were developed with Moorehall Lodge and Scoil Mhuire na Trocaire.
- The Tidy Towns Group, when hosting President Michael D Higgins to their town, displayed a specially designed Age Friendly banner.
- The local GAA club developed a sensory garden for older residents and children in the town
- Louth County Council Arts Office, in hosting the only Baroque Festival in Ireland outside of Dublin, organises an event in the Moorehall Lodge Nursing Home each year.

To date several visitors have come to Ardee to experience at first hand the Age Friendly Town. Visitors have included Bosch Foundation Europe, the North East Regional Co-ordinators Group, the North East Regional Older People's Forum and a group from Creggan in Derry. On all occasions Town Clerk Miriam Roe and Area Engineer Sean O'Reilly gave presentations on the work carried out.

## Outputs

Apart from the obvious physical improvements made to the town and included in the previous chapter the following outputs were achieved:

- The Louth Age Friendly Programme produced a Toolkit on facilitating and preparing the submission to the planning process. The Toolkit is available on [www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie](http://www.louthagefriendlycounty.ie)
- Presentations were made in Ardee to Bosch Foundation Europe, the North East Regional Coordinators Group and the North East Regional Older People's Forum. The Age Friendly Town Programme is now being replicated in 16 other towns in Ireland.
- Ardee is now 3 years in the Age Friendly Town process and the most advanced in Ireland. It is expected that this review will provide an insight to future towns wishing to follow the Age Friendly Town process.

## Going Forward

As the National Age Friendly Programme was drawing to an end Louth Age Friendly County Programme proposed carrying out an audit of the Town to identify any further actions which would build on the work carried out.

### Ardee in 2013 Walkability Audit

Members of the Ardee Active Retirement Group met with Sean O'Reilly and Keith Matthews, Ardee Town Council and Mary Deery and Bernadette Donnelly, Louth Age Friendly County Initiative to carry out a walkability audit throughout the town on the 24th October 2013.

The aim of the walkability audit was to assess the actions carried out and identify any further actions which would enhance the Age Friendly Town process.

The attendees met in Mid Louth Civic Service Centre, Ardee, Co. Louth. It took approximately two hours to complete. The walk started at the Civic buildings (near Irish street) and continued through the town as far as John Street.

This walkability audit looked at the behaviour of people, and the challenges they are faced with. The associations between the physical structure of Ardee and individuals' walking habits were also examined.



### Feedback from the Audit

Ardee is an exemplar for other Age Friendly Town Programmes due to the collaboration of Ardee Town Council, the Ardee Tidy Towns Group the Ardee Active Retirement Group and the Ardee Retailers Association. Ardee is a beautiful town, well maintained and although issues arising from various challenges are present the people of Ardee have a strong work ethic and pride which carries through in their support for any initiatives which will enhance their town.

The Ardee Active Retirement Group were very pleased with the Age Friendly focus placed on Ardee. They are particularly pleased with the actions on safety measures such as the pedestrian crossings and the railings which provide not only safety features for all ages but also for people with dementia. The provision of seating and new footpaths around the town is greatly appreciated. The Ardee Active Retirement Group are now hosting groups from all over the country explaining the achievements made by the Age Friendly Town process.

The following actions were identified:

**Fairgreen Park:** The installation of the exercise equipment in the Fairgreen was welcomed. There were some concerns around the location of the exercise equipment in relation to their proximity to the civic building and a request for future equipment to be located closer to the children's play area or in a more secluded area. It was explained to the Audit Group the reason behind the location of the exercise equipment. Regard must always be held in relation to Child Protection Policies in the vicinity of playground facilities. The issue of public toilets close to the Fairgreen was also raised.



**View 1:** Narrow Footpaths on Ash Walk



**View 2:** Steep gradient to avoid steps

**Footpaths:** In general the footpaths in Ardee are very good. Footpath size in some places is problematic, however in all cases there is no solution to achieving the desired widths. Issues were cited in relation to the gradients of some of the footpaths where steps were avoided but again the gradient was the best possible given the narrow width of the path. Obstructions on footpaths especially at the Educate Together School are causing problems for older people who are frail or of varying abilities having to step down from the footpath onto the road and step up further down.

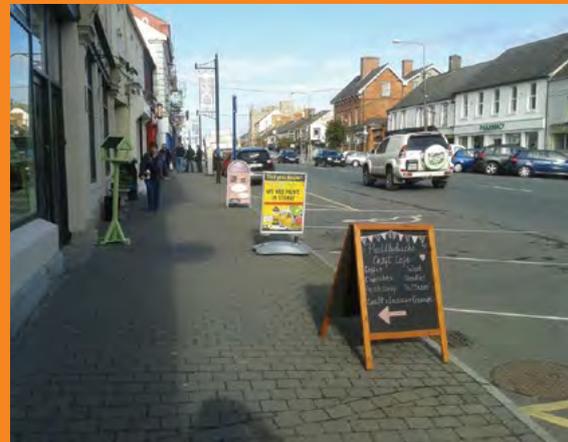
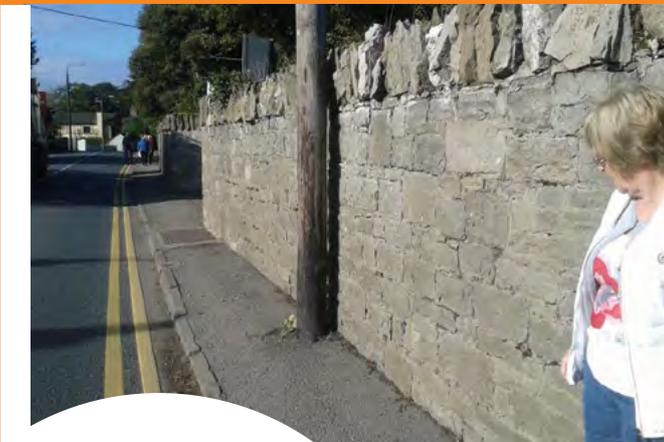


View 1: Narrow Footpaths on Ash Walk

View 2: Steep gradient to avoid steps

**Street Furniture & Signage:** The provision of seating around the town was greatly welcomed especially the seating around the Drogheda road area at Sliabh Breagh. The location of the dustbin beside the monument in the town square was questioned. The audit identified the obstruction the ESB pole causes on Jervis St and asked if it could be moved to a place behind the wall.

The audit asked for the relocation of the Information sign on John St as it obstructs the view of drivers.



View 7: ESB pole obstruction on N52

View 8: Obstructions on footpath



**View 1:** Laneway linking N52 to St Joseph's, Fairgreen



**View 2:** Ash Walk link to the N52 at Sean Kerr Building Providers

**Access:** The audit identified the potential for all ages of the laneway linking the N52 to St Joseph's, the Fairgreen and the "Enabled Area". Access to Sean Kerr Building Providers on the N52 is very dangerous. Could access be achieved through Ash Walk? The Audit identified the possibility of a crossing at the junction of the N2 and N52.

**Bus Shelter:** The provision of bus shelters is contained in the action plan. The audit identified the bus shelter at the Church of the Nativity as a priority.

**Railings:** The provision of railings at John St—Hale St and the Fairgreen has been very welcomed and has contributed to making Ardee Age Friendly for all ages due to the safety they achieve at difficult crossing points. The audit asked for the provision of railings along Bridge St and on top of both sides of the bridge wall to raise the level of the low wall. Louth County Council has prepared a walking/cycling strategy for Ardee which will include a pedestrian/cycling path adjacent to the Bridge wall.



**View 2:** Narrow footpath on Bridge Street

## Recommendations

The reviewed actions outlined above could be presented to the Ardee Age Friendly Town Group and when fully explored then presented to Ardee Town Council.

Louth County Council has the opportunity to explore how the learning taken from Ardee can be up-scaled to the bigger towns of Dundalk and Drogheda.

Louth County Council has the opportunity to participate in national workshops with the Department of the Environment and the Centre of Excellence for Universal Design to gather the learning from the national Age Friendly Town process and explore the potential to upscale to County Development Plan level.

National workshops including the participation of all Age Friendly Town Programmes can explore ways to upskill planners, engineers and technicians to apply Age Friendly guidelines to the planning process.

Louth County Council can work with Ireland's Age Friendly Cities & Counties Programme and the Dept of the Environment to define Age Friendly principles within planning guidelines.

## Notes



