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# Celbridge

Moving towards an Age Friendly  
Town



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## Celebrating Celbridge – An Age Friendly Town

The town of Celbridge has had a true desire to be designated the status of an Age Friendly town. The community has worked tirelessly over the past few years to bring this about. What this means for the older people of Celbridge is that their main street is now fully accessible, safer and more pleasurable for them as an experience. They can now walk more safely, park their cars in the designated Age Friendly parking space, do their shopping, socialise, and rest on any one of the new Age Friendly seats that has been installed in this old and historical town of Celbridge.

As you will see from (appendix 1), the population of the over 65's in Celbridge in 2016 was at 6.47% which is half the national average of 13.3%. At first glance, this may appear that there is a small cohort of older people in Celbridge but if you look at the statistic for the 45 to 64yr. olds, it is 24% above the national average. Taking into consideration that this data was accurate in 2016 apart from more and more people stepping up from 64yrs to 65 years there has been significant building of new houses in the town since then, consequently, the figure will now be much higher. The World Health Organisation recognises people as approaching old age from 55yrs onwards and this is the basis on which Age Friendly Ireland operate.

### **Moving towards The Vision of making Celbridge and Age Friendly Town**

#### **Objectives**

- Consult with the older people of Celbridge and put together a process that would identify their needs from a physical, health, social integration, educational and ease of movement perspectives.
- Engage the older people themselves in the planning process that would shape and enhance their communities for the benefit of everyone.
- Demonstrate the benefits of a multi-agency approach and engage the members of the Kildare Age Friendly Alliance who have Celbridge as part of their remit.
- Inform businesses' in Celbridge on the valuable asset that older customers make and outline changes that could be made as to how to make minor adjustments to their shopping experience allowing it to be an easier and more pleasurable experience.
- Assist older people in building a rewarding relationship with the volunteer members of the Kildare Older Persons Council for the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District who advocate on their behalf.
- Promote and advance opportunities in Celbridge for greater participation in social, sporting and educational projects specifically designed for older people i.e. Digital Poverty Training, Active Retired, Silver Threads, Choir and Men's Shed.

## The Process

Initially, a Walkability Audit was arranged and carried out on the main street to allow older people from the town identify physical hazards that they experience when they walk up the town to shop, socialise or keep appointments. Older people from varying groups in the town accompanied us, the Area Engineer for the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District and his assistant attended, Councillors representing the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District, a member of An Garda Siochana, members of the Kildare Older Persons Council representing the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District, the Programme manager of the Kildare Age Friendly programme and her assistant . The Irish Wheelchair Association was represented bringing people with varying disabilities. Members of Celbridge Access group, Kildare County Council's Health and Safety Officer participated as well as a representative of the Celbridge Library service.

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> audit participants completed a questionnaire and relayed back the following observations:

## Questionnaire

9 people completed questionnaire - Ratings

	Very Good	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor
Overall condition of footpaths		5	4		
Crossings and Junctions		6	2	1	
Pleasing environment	1	6	2		
friendliness of public spaces, buildings and parking		2	5	1	
Feelings of safety		6	2		
Overall walk friendly		7	1	1	

Below are details of the “follow up” walkability audit which was carried out some time after the initial audit showing some improvements that had been made.

## **Kildare Age Friendly County Programme Follow up Walkability Audit Celbridge Town 9th May 2017**

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### **Attendees:**

Kildare County Council, elected members.

Kildare County Council staff from Community & Cultural, Roads & Transportation & Library Services.

Member of an Gardaí.

Members of Celbridge Access Group

Members of Kildare Older Persons Council.

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### **"How walkable is your Town"**



## **Introduction**

A follow up meeting was held in the youth Cafe at the Mill in Celbridge on Tuesday 9th May 2017. The group was made up of local community representatives from Kildare Older Persons Council, Celbridge accessibility group, elected members and staff from Kildare County Council and a member of an Garda Siochana. The group assessed the last report and discussed improvements with the area engineer. After agreeing a safe approach, the group then set off on a walk around the agreed route. The aim being to assess effectiveness of the works carried out to date and to agree future priorities.

## **Improvements to date**

- Footpath repairs were seen as a very positive development.
- Outside the Abbey Cemetery disabled parking bays have been re-surfaced and painted & new disabled parking bays provided.
- Provision of a new age friendly parking space with signage provided outside the post office.
- 2 new seats were provided to enhance the public realm.
- Some of the business premises have been re-painted and this enhanced the appearance of the town making it a more pleasurable experience for the older person.



## **Outstanding works**

### **Pedestrian Footbridge & Pedestrian Crossing:**

Pedestrian Foot Bridge - Scabble concrete and tarmac trip hazards along bridge and at pedestrian crossing.



Sluice Valve Marker Plate - Water Services (Can they be removed or replaced by a plate attached to wall).



Pedestrian Crossings on Dublin Road - Line marking is starting to fade and could do with repainting.

Fire Hydrant on bridge footpath - concrete surround needs replacing.

**Main Street: (right hand side)**

Outside Bank of Ireland - loose kerb stone along road edge (Reset)

Outside Post Office - Age friendly sign is too small and should be replaced for visibility reasons

Outside Post Office - Can the two post boxes on footpath be removed as they are taking up too much room and prevent two buggies passing each other

Dished footpath - There are a number of sections of dished/ramped footpath sections that are serving no purpose. Review to see if they can be replaced with level existing path paving.

Outside Carryout Shop - Replace loose paving

Outside Hok Kai Do - Loose Eircom frame and surround

Centra Shop - Wheelchair and mobility accessibility issue with step into shop

Outside Re MAX Shop - Eircom Lid to be reset





## **Pedestrian Crossing proposal at Castletown End of Main Street**

Letter to be sent to Area /engineer outlining the necessity for a crossing and how it would help pedestrians cross at the top of the town and also for visitors to Castletown House.

The area engineer agreed to speak with the Technical Assessment Group regarding possible options for a pedestrian crossing at Michelango's Restaurant

## **Main Street: (Left hand side)**

Eircom lid outside the Canteen Restaurant needs repair.

Would there be a possibility of getting an exercise machine beside one of the street benches?

Outside Coonan Auctioneers - Loose water meter

Outside AIB - Loose tactile paving crossing at St Patrick's Park





## **Future possibilities**

1. Could shop front grant scheme be extended to include support for business to provide accessibility ramps at entrances etc.
2. Cobble locking will be replaced with concrete at roadway entrances along each side of the town centre.
3. Inspection chambers for services need repairing.
4. The group identified the need for a safe way to cross the street at the Castletown end of the town. A proposed crossing to be reviewed.
5. The possibility of a new boardwalk across the Liffey is being investigated by the roads department.
6. All new benches to be Age Friendly
7. Bus shelters to be further discussed.
8. More seats needed for older people and people with limited mobility along inroads.



## **Making Celbridge a more Age Friendly town** **Solutions/Priorities**

A meta-planning exercise was carried out to explore and identify possibilities to make the town more Age Friendly/Accessible. Each person was given 5 votes to place on whichever item they felt was most important to meet this objective.

Following this exercise and a lot of discussion the following were agreed as priorities in order of preference.

<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Number of votes</b>
1. Pedestrian/safe crossing at Castletown end of Celbridge.	16
2. New boardwalk over Liffey bridge.	5
3. New benches to be Age Friendly	5
4. Cobble-locking will be replaced with concrete at roadway entrances.	4
5. shop front grant scheme be extended to include support for business to provide 6accessibility ramps at entrances etc.	4
6. More seats on inroads.	3
7. Inspection chambers for services need repairing.	3
8. Bus shelters to be further discussed.	1

Of the priorities outlines actions numbered 1,3,4,5, and 7 have been completed and the other two are under ongoing consideration.

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Over the period of 2 years, two Roadshows for older people were held in the Celbridge Manor Hotel and 100+ older people attended each of them. Participants received the feedback from the Walkability Audit and on the intended and ongoing improvements to the street scape. These Roadshows supplied very specific information to the older residents of Celbridge and older people from the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District. Workshops on areas such as health and wellbeing, dementia, chronic illness, personal and household security, money

management were delivered. A variety of organisations, all with an older persons' remit set up information stands on these days and proved an invaluable resource.

## **Plan and Deliver**

After the issues were identified, as per the two completed Walkability Audits, the process began of creating actions that were deliverable. The actions such as re-surfacing, repairing and creating new age friendly parking bays, lighting, seating etc., were agreed. Very generous donations of LPT {Local Property Tax} monies by the Celbridge/Leixlip Municipal District members over a period of 3 years meant that the works could go ahead and be carried out immediately by the area engineer and his staff.

Celbridge is a town rich in history and heritage both natural and built and none more so than the major visitor attraction that is Castletown House one of Ireland's finest Palladian country houses. Castletown was built in 1722 for William Connolly, the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. Celbridge is also the birthplace and is close to the resting place of Arthur Guinness and has links to Henry Grattan and Johnathan Swift. The town of Celbridge grew and developed as a result of the building of Castletown House and the gates of Castletown are directly facing the wider than normal main street.

As Castletown House has developed into a major visitor attraction with all the beautiful parklands and House available to the public, it was imperative that the proposed crossings, directly in view of the gates of Castletown House, be sympathetically created to enhance this section of the main street. In addition, it could not in any way detract from the local and visitor experience of viewing this magnificent historical feature. Up to 250,000 visitors a year visit Castletown.

A difficulty arose as well for older people considering crossing the street that it was very wide at that end and they had concerns with the pace they would need to walk at to get across safely. This fear was founded on the fact that a pedestrian crossing with traffic lights was not an option and neither was a pelican crossing with its flashing orange lights.

The older people on the walkability audit discussed how they would best get across this road and in conjunction with the area engineer and his team came up with the design. A really safe alternative crossing which met the needs of the older person was planned. As well as the older people being delighted with their new crossing, the heritage and tourism groups were pleased as well. Their design went on to become a model of best practice and is being replicated in other towns and villages in Kildare.

You will see from the pictures below that what has been achieved has universal design value totally upholding the principle that "when you design for the elderly you design for everybody". Dished tactile surfacing at either end plus the middle of the crossing allows for ease of movement. The island in the centre of the crossing is



deep enough to allow pedestrian and mobility scooter users, electric wheelchairs etc., to stop and rest half-way before completing their journey to the other side.

Another vital piece of information is that although there is no stop/go mechanism on the crossing, the design creates an optical illusion that the road is narrower than it actually is and therefore traffic slows down automatically and has time to stop and give way to pedestrians. See below:



This improvement to the top of the town of Celbridge has proved an invaluable asset to the older population of Celbridge and to the community at large.

### **Community Dementia Choir – The Voices of Spring**

Following on from the success of the Dementia choir in McAuley Place Naas, a new choir was set up in Celbridge both for dementia sufferers and their carers'. The dementia choir had become an integral part of the social life of residents in Mc Auley Place along with visiting families experiencing a member with dementia. McAuley Place is a congregation of 59 apartments for older people supporting independent living. McAuley Place also has a very well used community centre and a café.

The choirs are a HSE initiative and totally complement the Age Friendly Town ethos. Supports were given to the HSE by the Library Service and Arts Office of Kildare Local Authority. The choir in Celbridge has proved to be very sustainable and is going from strength to strength with new members joining.



Do you love to sing?  
Do you want to connect with people  
and experience the joy  
of group singing?



You are welcome to join our new  
**Community Choir**

Supporting people living with dementia and their carers  
Join us and see the positive impact music has on memory and wellbeing

Coming to The Mill Celbridge from 15th Feb 2017  
Rehearsing in the Kate Walsh Room  
Wednesdays 11am - 1pm

For more information contact Anne Harris  
087 605 7264 / [anne.harris1@hse.ie](mailto:anne.harris1@hse.ie)

Everyone welcome!



## Ongoing Supports

As a result of the Age Friendly Town process there is much more awareness of the needs of the older person in Celbridge and ways to meet those needs. Out of this awareness and understanding has come an increased respect for the older person and they are now viewed as the valuable asset that they are.

The re-opening of the Celbridge Manor Hotel has been a major boost to the town and also to the older people as a place to socialise, eat and meet their friends.

Oakley Park provides homes for older people who are homeless but on the social housing list. They provide one and two bedroom apartments as well as a small amount of 3 bedroom ones. This charity provides the living space but residents must furnish and decorate themselves. The Society of Vincent de Paul and other agencies provide great support.

Coincidentally, one of the members of the Kildare Older Persons Council and his wife who live in Celbridge also provides a service to the residents on a voluntary basis. A large Tesco supermarket in Celbridge gives them surplus food at the end of each week which is then distributed to the residents of Oakley Park. They receive both fresh and dry foods and are immensely grateful for it.

## Our Partners in Celbridge

<p><b>The Library Service, Kildare County Council – Celbridge Library</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to roll out the OWL programme, a programme created especially for older people in Kildare.</li> <li>• Providing classes to tackle “Digital Poverty”.</li> <li>• Provide meeting space upstairs for older persons groups and members of the Kildare Older Persons Council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Roads, Transport and Public Safety, Kildare County Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed all works on main street.</li> <li>• Plans for any new works to be age friendly proofed before commencement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Section</b> <b>Community Workers- Kildare County Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Worker for Celbridge promoting and assisting the Residents Associations’ with delivery of Age Friendly principles in all plans and decisions made in relation to their estates.</li> <li>• Intergenerational projects are strongly promoted.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Age Friendly Programme</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Patrick's Park will be seeking the status of An Age Friendly social housing estate when Covid allows. A precedent has been set in Sallins, Co. Kildare.</li> <li>• Kildare Age Friendly newsletters regularly distributed through Celbridge Library</li> </ul>
<p><b>Arts Service – Kildare County Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Arts Service are strongly supportive of the Dementia Choir and continuously develop programmes that support older people, service users and carers especially in the area of well-being, mental health and dementia</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing Department - Kildare County Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting older householders remain in their home and sustain independent living for as long as possible</li> <li>• Provide a percentage of new builds in Celbridge specifically designed for older people.</li> <li>• Fund and grant aid projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Enterprise Office</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and deliver Shop Front Scheme funding for businesses in Celbridge incorporating funding for business premises making the entrance to their shops wheelchair accessible and age friendly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>FAI</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fai created and delivered "Walking Football" in the Mill in Celbridge. It is totally suitable for the older person. It is ongoing on a weekly basis and is loved by the older generation, especially the men.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Kildare Sports Partnership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing exercise programmes being delivered to engage as many people as possible in physical activity in Oakley Park. Computer classes were also delivered there.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Celbridge Mens' Shed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the Kildare Older Persons Council's members was a founder member of the Celbridge Mens' Shed. They have available</li> </ul>

	to them continuous mentoring, support and grant aid.
<b>Garda Siochana and Joint Policing Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kildare Older Persons Council hold a seat on the Joint Policing Committee and inform them of the needs of the older person.</li> <li>• In Celbridge and other areas countywide, a Risk Register is being compiled of vulnerable older adults in the area.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Celbridge Integrated Services Programme 2016-2020</b></p> <p>This programme brings together state and voluntary sector bodies, local community, business representatives and elected members to agree priorities based on factual research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation and co-operative working arrangements took place between the Kildare Age Friendly programme manager and the Celbridge Integrated Services Programme co-ordinator and most of the actions were completed by the ISP/Network of Celbridge</li> <li>• A comprehensive profile of the Celbridge area including an audit of local area resources has been an invaluable asset when looking at it from an age friendly perspective.</li> <li>• 700+ people from Celbridge were consulted in relation to this programme.</li> <li>• 87% agreed that Celbridge is a very good, excellent place to live.</li> <li>• This study clearly defined spaces where older people could meet, socialise, avail of educational opportunities. The four main centres where older people meet is in the Library, The Mill, Slip Hall and The Acre.</li> </ul>

## Cause and Effect

**(From Webinar Mobility makes sense: Walkability neighbourhood design and the future of mobility and housing in Ireland”**

Dr. Lorraine D’Arcy Senior Lecturer in the School of Transport, Engineering, Environment and Planning at Technological University, Dublin outlined in this webinar on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 the significant difference between “Transport”

and “Mobility”. Transport for her translates simply the act of just getting from one place to another. Whereas, Mobility is a much broader concept in that it allows people to move around freely and easily. In the case of Celbridge, the aim from the outset of moving Celbridge in the direction of becoming an age friendly town was always focused on the notion of “mobility”. Dr. D’Arcy shared some findings from her research taking the norm that the needs of the pedestrian takes precedence over cyclists, and they in turn take precedence over the movement of cars. Her findings obviously held bias towards pedestrianizing main streets and even though that is not what we are about in the case of Celbridge, some of her findings make for interesting reading.

In the area of community and personal development relating to the use of town centres for all sectors of the population, where traffic is heavy, people have the potential to meet with 1.5 friends and 2.8 acquaintances. However, where the traffic is light the figure increases significantly. In light traffic, pedestrians are likely to meet up with 5.3 friends and 6.1 acquaintances. Having suitable places to walk, including main streets provides the person with escapism leading to stress reduction. She even goes so far as to measure the land mass that a parked car takes up. 1 car takes up the equivalent of 5 cyclists, 20 walkers and 12 cycle parking spaces.

Her research discovered that 14% of deaths is premature due to a lack of physical activity and not surprisingly 25% of deaths has a loneliness element. These figures are for the population as a whole and is bound to be even higher in relation to older people.

## **Summary**

The timing of the start of the process of attempting to make Celbridge an Age Friendly town coincided with the research and development of the Integrated Services Plan followed by Celbridge’s Tourism and Heritage Strategy. Major consultation took place across all age groups and walks of life in Celbridge. As this Plan and Strategy is coming to the end of its life, the Walkability Audit report is just going live.

As we see from the consultations held, Celbridge is a great town in which to grow old. Older people feel safe and included in Celbridge as well as having a variety of organisations who value their membership and commitment and are really glad to have them as members. There are also plenty of group activities and opportunities to socialise. With the new street scape being so ‘age friendly’ Celbridge hopes to attract many more tourists who can come and enjoy this unique older person experience that the town has to offer. Going into the future, the town will continue to serve its ageing population well and will adapt age friendly principles both at planning and implementation phases of projects.



## Appendix 1.

Source – Title	Details	Stats
<b>Celbridge Local Area Plan 2017-2023</b>	Population 2016	<b>20,000+</b>
	Population 45-64	<b>5039</b> - 24% + national average
	Population 65+	<b>1313</b> - 6.47% - national average 13.3%
	Moderate sustainable growth town within metropolitan area of Dublin	
	Vibrant retail part of north Kildare economic cluster. <b>Assets:</b> Tourism and Heritage	
	High quality public transport connections but link required between Celbridge and Leixlip	
<b>ISP Celbridge Plan 2016-2020</b>	Community groups + business community committed to make town – key tourist destination	
Domiciliary	Excellent place to live	87% agreed
Health	Increased services and supports to St. Raphaels Special School	
Community Facilities and Amenities	Maximised and supported existing facilities. Central component of town planning Further development of library and arts service	
Transport	Increased access, reduced cost, promoted cycling and repair and developed walking routes	
<b>Tourism and Heritage Strategy 2016-2020</b>	Key Drivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland's Ancient East</li> <li>• Closeness to Dublin</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association with famous people</li> <li>• Heritage product</li> </ul>	244,000 visitors per annum to Castletown House
	Celbridge is key town in the north Kildare necklace of Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge	
Public Realm	Access improvement to Heritage sites and buildings Prioritised Public Realm infrastructure, Tidy Towns support + co-ordinated approach to signage	Funding sought 2020 for easy access to Heritage sites especially Tea Lane, supported by Kildare Age Friendly programme
Experience Development	Increased development and lengthen season Create themed calendar of events.	
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Opportunity utilised to involve older/retired people	Oakley Park – residents benefited from Computer courses with KWETB and Exercise mornings supplied by the Kildare Sports Partnership.

<b>AIRO REPORT CENSUS 2016</b>	General data for Celbridge MD and town		
<b>Population aged 0-4</b>	MD;2814	Cel:1635	Leix; 1080
<b>Population aged 5-12</b>	4699	2762	1754
<b>Population aged 13-17</b>	2562	1512	955
<b>Population aged 0-18</b>	10075	5909	3789
<b>Population aged 0-24</b>	13135	7561	5077
<b>Population aged 18-24</b>	MD; 3060	Cel; 1652	Leix; 1288
<b>Population aged 65+</b>	<b>3527</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>1897</b>
<b>Youth dependency rate 0-14</b>	8611	5057	3228
<b>Non Irish Nationals</b>	4081	2417	1561
<b>Polish Nationals</b>	776	501	263
<b>Ethnic Group Travellers</b>	124	55	58
<b>Lone Parent Families (Children under 15)</b>	706	414	278

