

Introduction



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park is an award winning and International Green Flag recognised 30 acre facility on the banks of the River Feale which attracts over 40,000 visitors annually.

The layout of the Park has the perfect combination of meandering Walkways, Public Sculptures, Woodland Area, Pond Area, Fairy Village, Children's Playground, All-Weather Mini-Pitch, Tennis Court, Basketball Court, Picnic Area, Outdoor Gym, Summer Sensory Garden and Public Facilities, to mention just some of the features that make up this space.

This ever evolving success story is the result of many years of acting upon feedback from its users, combined with the sympathetic planning and engagement by the Town Park Committee, associated Volunteers and Community Employment (CE) Staff to ensure that all users have equal and free access to this welcoming, safe and quality green space and its associated amenities.

Part of that long-term planning is to aim at continuously researching and implementing best practice standards in order to ensure that the 30 acre facility is appropriately managed and strives to meet the needs of both the local Community and thousands of passing visitors that use the Park and its amenities on an annual basis.

The Committee is also proud to highlight the efforts of all those who have contributed to the development of the Park and its amenities, be they representative of; the Community Employment (CE) Scheme, the Management Team, Individual Volunteers, local or regional Voluntary Groups, Abbeyfeale Community Council, Abbeyfeale Tidy Towns, Limerick City & County Council, or others.

Bio-diversity plays a major part in the overall makeup of the Park with an array of interesting Flora and Fauna and is the perfect environment for walking along the river's edge and taking in the views of the surrounding countryside.

Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park is easily accessible just off the main N21 Route on the outskirts of Abbeyfeale Town and on the border between Counties Limerick and Kerry. It is designed to be a family friendly environment with a little extra added to suit all age groups.



Everyone is Welcome

Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park has an “Everyone is Welcome” policy with free access to the Park and its facilities at all times during opening hours (Summer 8am - 9pm / Winter 8am - 6pm) including free Car Parking.



The 30 acre facility is well signposted throughout and has easy and safe access to all its internal sections which has seen it grow into one of the most sought after stop-off points for families and tourists travelling to and from the South West region. With over 40,000 visitors to the Park annually it is the Committees goal to ensure that the “Everyone is Welcome” policy continues well into the future and that all of its users continue to feel safe and comfortable while enjoying its surroundings.

Health, Well-Being, Safety and Security



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park takes the Health, Well-Being, Safety and Security of its Staff, Volunteers and Visitors very seriously.

Its Committee is continuously looking for ways to enhance all such aspects via ongoing open-door communication with all the above and evaluating any feedback that is forthcoming.

Examples as follows;

- Resurfacing of Walkways at Junction with steep incline.
- Installation of wheelchair friendly Outdoor Gym.
- Installation of Defibrillator.
- Installation of CCTV system.

It is the Committees aim to continue building on this success while being open to feedback from all of the Parks users, other local Voluntary Groups, Individuals and International Green Flag Judges.

Maintenance & Cleanliness

Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park has formed a close partnership over the past several years with Staff from the Community Employment (CE) Scheme where general Maintenance and Cleaning of Grounds, Infrastructure, Facilities and Equipment is carried out on a regular basis along with the on-going implementation of various enhancement projects.



Examples as follows;

- Installation of 1916 Centenary Memorial Garden.
- Installation of Summer Sensory Garden to help benefit children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Installation of Public Toilets.
- Installation of wheelchair friendly Outdoor Gym.
- Improvement works around Pond Area and water runways.

Expert advice is regularly sought on matters such as Waste Management, Horticulture and Arboriculture.

Examples as follows;

- 2017 - General Feedback on 30 acre facility following visit by Sandro Cafolla of Design by Nature, who was originally engaged over 20 years previously for the designing of Town Park layout.
- 2017 - Feedback on Woodland Area following visit by Mid Western Forestry Services.

It is the Committees aim to continue building on this success while being open to feedback from all of the Parks users, other local Voluntary Groups, Individuals and International Green Flag Judges.

Environmental Management



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park Committee fully understand the importance of correct environmental management and how the right choices taken in the everyday management of the Park can lead to a positive long lasting impact on the surrounding environment, both locally and globally, now and for the future.

Every effort is being made to be aware of and take appropriate actions to environmental management when dealing in all aspects of the upkeep and maintenance of the 30 acre facility such as those involving procurement, landscaping, building maintenance etc.

Examples as follows;

- Grasses cut throughout the 30 acre facility are left in situ to act as natural fertiliser.
- Water Harvesting / Recycling Tanks were introduced in 2019.
- Highlighting awareness to Staff is done via training by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and its Community Enhancement (CE) Scheme, such as but not limited to the following courses; Induction, H&S, Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Risk Assessment, etc.

- Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) is visible in Pond area where natural hill water adds to the enhancement of two Ponds which in turn are vital habitats for wildlife and also of huge importance during Frog spawning season.
- The ESB deliver Mulch once or twice a year which in turn is used on Flower and Plant Beds etc

It is the Committees aim to continuously look for ways of minimising energy, resource consumption and waste, along with looking at ways in which to relentlessly reduce or completely eliminate the use of peat, chemicals and fertilisers.

Bio-Diversity, Landscape and Heritage



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park Committee are continuously aiming at best practice approach when implementing appropriate and sensitive management and conservation techniques involving natural features, wildlife, flora, landscape, buildings and structures.

Examples as follows;

- Dedicated habitat area within Town Park for Insets and Ladybirds with information signage to highlight same.
- Sustainability Management of Woodland area.
- Installation of 1916 Centenary Memorial Garden.
- Installation of Summer Sensory Garden to help benefit children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Ongoing training of CE Staff in various approved Department of Social Protection / CE courses such as; Horticultural Tools & Equipment (Complete), Sports Surfaces Maintenance (Complete), Safe Horticultural Practice (In Progress at time of creating this Document), Plant Identification Care & Maintenance (Planned), Hard Landscape Construction (Planned), Work Practice (Planned), etc etc

Feedback from the Parks many users along with on-going professional advice plays a major part on how Bio-Diversity, Landscape and Heritage are catered for within the one all-encompassing environment.

Examples as follows;

- Following feedback from Active Retirement Group, a wheelchair friendly Outdoor Gym was installed.
- Following feedback from various Community Groups, a 1916 Centenary Memorial Garden was installed.
- Following general feedback from Park users, a Stone Sculpture named “Light on Stone” was installed.

- Following feedback from Parents of young children, an additional walkway to connect Children's Playground and All-Weather Pitch was installed.
- Following feedback from Parents and Schools, a Summer Sensory Garden to help benefit children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder was installed.

It is the Committees aim to continue building on this success while being open to feedback from all of the Parks users, other local Voluntary Groups, Individuals and International Green Flag Judges.

Community Involvement



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park Committee have always worked closely with various individuals and Groups within the Community including but not limited to; Staff and Management involved with the Community Employment (CE) Scheme, Individual Volunteers, local or regional Voluntary Groups, Abbeyfeale Community Council, Abbeyfeale Tidy Towns, Abbeyfeale Active Retirement Group, Limerick City & County Council, and others.

Examples as follows;

- All Groups and Organisations and their respective Projects as previously mentioned in this document.
- Abbeyfeale Dog Show which is held annually in May or June by local organisers, with proceeds going towards upkeep of Town Park.
- Templeglantine Camogie Club who regularly use the All-Weather Pitch for training sessions - particularly for the younger players.
- Montessori Schools who use the Park for Picnic outings during Summer months.
- Brothers of Charity who bring Special Needs Groups on outings to the Park once every one to two weeks.

The Parks development over the past 20 years and the now 40,000 plus annual users is a testament to the success of the on-going feedback and involvement from all sectors of the Community in creating an appropriate space to suit their needs.

Marketing and Communication



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park has its own page on Green Flag Awards website @;
<http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/park-summary/?park=3591>
 along with an additional support page on www.Abbeyfeale.ie website @
<http://www.abbeyfeale.ie/townpark.html>

There is an Abbeyfeale Town Park Facebook Page with general info regarding the Park often communicated via other forms of media by numerous other individuals and Groups. The Park has become ubiquitous in the lives of locals and those in the surrounding region and automatically generates online promotional content as “the” place to meet up.

Hotels and B&B’s throughout the region often promote Abbeyfeale Town Park as one of the main attractions in the area.

The children from all five local National Schools and the local Secondary School are regular users of the Park with modern-day communication techniques between these youngsters taking on a life of its own. Social Media Platforms such as Snapchat, Facebook and Messenger being the favoured tools of communication amongst the younger generations to organise outings and meetups at the Park.

Abbeyfeale Community Council has carried out random surveys at numerous times each month over the past two years to evaluate overall visitor / user numbers to the Town Park with expectations that these surveys will continue throughout 2020 / 2021 / 2022. Initial survey results indicate that daily visitor / user numbers are averaging less than 50 on days of very inclement weather - predominately during Winter months, and averaging over 175 and sometimes 250 on most fine days - predominately during Summer months. National and International tourists are also very evident throughout the Park during the Summer months.

As per previous section the Parks development over the past 20 years and the now 40,000 plus annual users is a testament to the success of the communication models in place, the on-going feedback and involvement from all sectors of the Community in creating an appropriate space for their needs.

Overall Management



Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park Committee realises that overall Management of this facility is an ever evolving process involving an awareness of all previous points mentioned in this document and being able to appropriately manage and improve on these while understanding the regulations and limitations affecting same.

The Town Park Committee fully realises that their greatest asset are predominately the Community Employment (CE) Staff - approx 15 at time of writing this document - along with all other Volunteers who have varying inputs to the upkeep and promotion of the Town Park. Community Employment (CE) Staff are recruited and trained by Department of Social Protection and are overseen by locally based CE Scheme Supervisors who work as per Department of Social Protection requirements while also liaising with the Town Park Committee in understanding work schedule requirements.

Feedback received from the Parks users throughout its lifetime has seen the original concept on paper just over 20 years ago evolve into a multi-themed facility enjoyed by all age Groups that it is today. The Town Park Committee is fully committed in continuously supporting this working and communication relationship in order to further develop this truly amazing Community based success story.

Overview of Recent Projects

Páirc Cois Féile / Abbeyfeale Town Park Committee are continuously looking for ways to enhance this wonderful 30 acre facility. Examples of Projects that have been completed over the last few years are as follows;



2015
New Public Toilets

2016
1916 Centenary Commemorative
Garden



2017
Resurfacing of Walkways



2017
Installation of Defibrillator

2017
Installation of Summer
Sensory Garden



2018
Installation of wheelchair friendly
Outdoor Gym

2019
Installation of Water
Harvesting
Tanks



Making Contact

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