

# **Kildare County Council**

## **Twinning Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

Twinning can be defined as a coming together of two communities/regions seeking to strengthen or develop common interests including education, economic development, arts/culture, tourism, sports and community.

### Benefits of Twinning:

- Builds capacity through the exchange of skills and knowledge both at community and organisational level.
- Allows the sharing of best practices that have been used by others and that have proven effective.
- Potential for collaboration with the proposed town or region on projects which may be of benefit to both.
- Economic benefits, which are likely to be gained in terms of trade, commerce and tourism.
- The benefits to be gained from political co-operation and interaction.
- Promotes solidarity and a feeling of belonging to a larger community.
- The potential for cultural exchange between community, arts and sporting groups.

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## 2. Legislative background

Twinning is a reserved function of the Council. A reserved function that may be performed under Section 131A (1) (b) in respect of a Municipal District by Municipal District members or the Local Authority.

Section 75 of the Local Government Act 2001 states:

75. (1) A local Authority may enter into arrangements for the twinning of its administrative area or a part of it or establish other similar links with any other area, whether within or outside the state.
- (2) The decision to enter into an arrangement under subsection (1) is a reserved function
- (3) The local authority shall not enter into an arrangement under subsection (1) unless, having had regard to the following matters, it is satisfied that the arrangement is justified:
- (a) The benefits likely to accrue to its administrative area and the local community
  - (b) The social, cultural and general interests of its administrative area and the local community, and
  - (c) The total cost involved.
- (4) The minister may issue directions to local authorities or specified classes of local authorities for the purposes of this section.
- (5) There shall be recorded in the annual report of a local authority for every year expenditure and other particulars in relation to the performance of its function under this section.

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### 3. Twinning in Kildare

County Kildare and a number of towns within Kildare have established successful twinning partnerships over the years.

At present the establishment and management of twinning in Kildare is either by:

- Kildare Local Authority Twinning Committee as in the case of County Twinning - Lexington and Deauville  
Or
- An independent community led committee e.g. Town twinning's

All Twinning committees in the county shall be supported by their Municipal District Committee and adhere to the Kildare County Council Twinning Policy.

#### 3.1 **Twinning Budget:**

The County Twinning Committee is managed by a Local Authority staff member and has a budget assigned.

The town twinning can apply for grants to the local authority, "Europe for Citizens" funding programme or other sources where appropriate to run their activities.

Local Authority Grants are issued based on submitted work programmes.

#### 3.2 **Kildare Twinning Details**

<b>MD</b>	<b>Name of town</b>	<b>Twinned with</b>	<b>Dates</b>
County	County Kildare	Lexington & Deauville	1984 and Early 1990
Kildare/Newbridge	Newbridge	Bad Lippspringe, Germany	1997
		Ocala, Florida	2008

		Argentré-du-Plessis, France	2017
	Kildare Town	Corps-Nuds, France	1992
Celbridge/Leixlip	Leixlip	Bressuire, France	1996
		Niles, USA	2000
	Celbridge	Versailles	2018
Athy	Athy	Grandvilliers, France	2003
Naas	Naas	St David's, Wales	
		Dillingen, Germany	
		Casalattico, Italy	
		Allaire, France	
		Omaha, USA	
Maynooth	Maynooth	Canet-en-Roussillon, France	2011
Naas	Kilcullen	Saint Contest	2018

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## **4. Protocol for Twinning**

### **4.1 New Twinning Liaison Committee:**

A Twinning Liaison Committee is to be established. It is envisaged that the committee should meet twice a year with a view to having a strategic overview of twinning.

- 1 elected representative from each of the five MD
- Chair of County Twinning Committee
- 1 Local Authority staff member
- 1 LEO Staff member
- Kildare Tourism Manager
- Kildare County Council Arts Officer.

There is further scope for developing stronger economic, cultural and tourism links which can be achieved by involving Kildare Fáilte and Kildare LEO, Kildare Chamber of Commerce and the Arts.

### **4.2 Role of the Twinning Liaison committee**

- Ensuring that any new or established twinning is complying with Kildare County Council Twinning policy.
- Reviewing and approving established and new twinning committees annual plans and budget.
- Providing support and advice where necessary to twinning committees on tourism and economic, arts/culture activities.
- Presenting end of year twinning report to Council/MD.

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### 4.3 Procedure for establishing Twinning Committees

- a) Find the right partner - Each twinning is unique but a twinning partner should have a number of common interests e.g. geographical locations, population sizes, economic and tourism activities.
- b) Submission in writing or a presentation should be made to the local Municipal District requesting their approval for the twinning arrangement.
- c) Two elected representatives should sit on each twinning committee. They should be nominated through the Municipal District Committees. Three elected representatives only in the case of County Twinning. The nomination lasts for the term of their office.
- d) Following approval, exploratory visits should take place, based on these visits it can be confirmed if the twinning arrangement is compatible.
- e) Define clear common objectives - both twinning partners should be very clear from the outset about what they want from the twinning and be clear on their objectives and activities.
- f) Twinning Ceremony to take place, one in each community. A Charter is signed and the partnership is formalised.
- g) Plan activities that build the basis for new exchanges - not just once off activities.
- h) Plan budgets and keep good financial records.
- i) An annual work plan should be developed along with budget and submitted to Twinning Liaison Committee for approval.
- j) A Twinning committee that wishes to un-twin from their twinning partner must make the request in writing to the Local Authority.

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## 5. **Twinning Committees**

All twinning committees should have a strong foundation in the community, Committees should include representatives from:

### 5.1 **Membership**

- Elected Representative from County or Municipal District
- Educational sector - School, Youth reach etc
- Tourism
- Chamber of Commerce/Enterprise
- Arts/Culture/Sport
- Young people

This list is not exhaustive local twinning committees should consider further representation on their committees if they have a particular focus they would like to develop.

### 5.2 **Role of Twinning Committee**

- Co-ordinate and liaise with the overseas partner
- Develop a strategy - Programme of activities
- Funding - Grant application, fund raising
- Financial management - Make financial returns to local authority
- Travel - Coordinate transport, bookings etc
- Membership - Encourage new membership and ensure community involvement
- Manage and organise host families/activities
- Develop a PR strategy - newsletter, press releases and updates for website etc.

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### 5.3 Financial and reporting requirements

- An annual work plan (Template provided) which should include your overall objectives for your twinning to be submitted along with a detailed budget request. This will be required in the first quarter of each year.
- Once approved by Twinning Liaison Committee grant will be issued.
- All vouched receipts will need to be submitted no later than the last quarter of each year. (Groups will be notified in writing)
- End of year report including photos will need to be submitted by December. Report will be feature on Kildare County Council twinning webpage.
- Elected Representatives if attending twinning events overseas recoup expenses as per Circular 04/2017- "Revised arrangement for subsistence allowances abroad with effect from 1st April".
- Where possible gifts should be purchased from businesses based in Kildare with a maximum spend of €600.00. If appropriate, gifts received should be displayed in public buildings e g Libraries/Community Centres.

### 6. Student exchanges

Student exchanges should only be completed through an approved youth exchange programme (to be approved by Twinning Liaison Committee).