



Kildare County Council
Twinning Policy
2021

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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.

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 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 an arrangement under subsection (1) is a reserved function
- (3) The local authority shall not enter 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.

3. Twinning in Kildare

County Kildare and several 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. Emma Murtagh, is the national contact point for the Europe for Citizens, her email is: emma@wheel.ie.

Twinning Grants are issued based on assessment of submitted applications.

Groups funded must adhere to guidelines and complete applications. Funding will be based on the previous year's grant being reconciled and/or events taking place in the current year.

3.2 Kildare Twinning Details

MD	Name of town	Twinned with	Dates
County	County Kildare	Lexington, Kentucky & Deauville, France	1984 & 1990
Kildare/Newbridge	Newbridge	Bad Lippspringe, Germany	1997
		Ocala, Florida	2008
		Argentré-du- Plessis, France	2017
	Kildare Town	Corps-Nuds, France	1992
	Kilcullen	Saint Contest, France	2018
Celbridge/Leixlip	Leixlip	Bressuire, France	1996
		Niles, USA	2000
Athy	Athy	Grandvilliers, France	2003
Naas	Naas	St David's, Wales	1990
		Dillingen, Germany	1990
		Casalattico, Italy	1990
		Allaire, France	1990
		Omaha, USA	1990
Maynooth	Maynooth	Canet-en- Roussillon, France	2011

4. Protocol for Twinning

4.1 Twinning Liaison Committee:

A Twinning Liaison Committee was established in 2018. The committee meets twice a year, has budgetary control and a strategic overview of all twinings throughout the county. The focus of this committee is to develop stronger economic, cultural and tourism links which can be achieved by involving Kildare Fáilte, Kildare LEO, Kildare Chamber of Commerce and Kildare Arts Services.

The committee is made up of the following:

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

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 budgets.
- 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 if requested.

4.3 Procedure for establishing Twinning Committees

- a) Find the right partner - Each twinning is unique but a twinning partner should have several common interests e.g. geographical locations, population sizes, economic and tourism activities.
- b) Submission in writing or a presentation should be made to the Twinning Liaison Committee requesting their consideration of the twinning arrangement.
- c) Following agreement from Twinning Liaison Committee, exploratory visits should take place, based on these visits it can be confirmed if the twinning arrangement is compatible. During this visit clear common objectives and activities should be established. A report should then be submitted to the Twinning Liaison Committee for their final approval and progress to municipal district.
- d) Presentation to local municipal district to propose the establishment of formal twinning based on recommendation by Twinning Liaison Committee.
- e) Where possible a local elected representative should sit on each twinning committee.
- f) A minimum of three elected representatives should sit on the committee in the case of County Twinning. The nomination lasts for the term of the council.
- g) To formalise a new friendship a twinning ceremony will take place in each community. A Charter is signed, and the partnership is formalised.
- h) The newly established committee should work with their twinning counterpart to create an annual work programme.

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
- Any representative that will enhance the links of the twinning.

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 when requested.
- 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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- Adhere to KCC Twinning guidelines

5.3 Financial and reporting requirements

- Complete twinning application form, with all requested documents.
- 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. End of year report including photos. Report will be feature on Kildare County Council twinning webpage.
- 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

Where local or county committees organise student exchanges, it is the committees' responsibility to adhere to national legislative guidelines including, but not limited to;

- Garda Vetting –
<https://vetting.garda.ie/>
- Child protection guidelines –
<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/>
<https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/programme>

7. Insurance

Kildare County Council, through its insurance provider does not indemnify twinning committees or their activities. It is the responsibility of each committee to procure their own insurance.