

NEWS RELEASE



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

1st May 2025

UK Shared Prosperity Funding Supports Planting and Landscape Improvements in Kilbroney Park

On 1 May 2025, over 50 pupils from four local primary schools—Killowen Primary, Kilbroney Integrated, St Bronagh's and St Patricks Mayobridge—joined Council staff in Kilbroney Park to plant nearly 100 new trees. The initiative, supported by UK Shared Prosperity Funding, is part of ongoing landscape improvement efforts in the area.

A major environmental project is underway to renovate and transform the Forest and Destination Parklands across the district, with significant improvements already taking place in Kilbroney Park. Supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this initiative focuses on reconnecting people with the natural landscape, forming a key part of a developing **Nature Recovery Network**. Seven strategic locations have been selected district-wide for enhancement.

In Kilbroney Park, work has included:

- Arboricultural works, including clearance and health and safety-related structural pruning
- Removal of invasive species
- Renovation of degraded landscape areas and the historic tree collection
- Restoration of the historic arboretum
- Installation of new seating and renovation of the Cloughmore parking area
- Installation of new interpretation signage

Each landscape improvement scheme will provide clear environmental benefits while involving extensive community participation.

Long-term benefits include:

- **Net Zero Contributions:** Specific planting areas will be monitored using digital tools such as i-Tree Eco to measure carbon sequestration and pollution reduction from road traffic.
- **Nature Recovery:** Each site contributes to the government's overarching aim of reversing biodiversity loss—shifting from protection to active restoration. In urban areas, this work focuses on locations with high footfall and traffic. In rural parklands, designs respond to the *genius loci* (spirit of the place) and historical context, creating destination spaces that support community health and wellbeing.

Newry Offices, O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row, Newry, BT35 8DJ

Downpatrick Offices, Downshire Civic Centre, Downshire Estate, Downpatrick, BT30 6GQ

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- **Natural Capital Approach:** Enhancing habitats for wildlife and pollinators, improving soil quality, and expanding green space instead of increasing hard surfacing. Soil itself will be promoted as a valuable carbon sink.
 - **Air Quality and Wellbeing:** Improved air quality from new planting schemes will deliver direct health benefits to local residents and visitors.

Public information signage and promotional materials will accompany each project, clearly illustrating the green infrastructure benefits.

This landscape transformation programme directly supports several priorities outlined in the Northern Ireland Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework.

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